

SOURCE MATERIALS

Oromo Proverbs

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Introduction

The following is a collection of Oromo proverbs and wise sayings gathered as a hobby. Oromo is one of the major Cushitic languages that is spoken in Ethiopia. The Oromo inhabit mainly the areas of Harar, Arusi, Shoa, Wälläga, Jimma, parts of Bali and Wällo. This collection, by no means exhaustive, deals mainly with proverbs from Harar.

The Oromo of Harar call themselves "Qotu", which means "farmer". It seems that this name was first given to the Oromo there and then adopted by them in the course of time, after the name Oromo or Galla had been dropped for some unknown reason.

Some of the sayings have a brief commentary immediately following them, where a literal translation is difficult to understand. The commentaries are intended to be helpful to non-Oromo readers of different culture, where a difference of phraseology and content might make the proverb incomprehensible.

Oromo has no script of its own, and Geez script has been employed here. For rendering a sound which does not exist in Amharic, we have coined the letter (ደ), as in (ዳዳን), meaning "butter".

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GOOD ADVICE AND COMMENT

1. ሠብተ : ደመን : ቆራን : ሠብተ : ነመ : ወራንቲ ።

Thorns prick lightly the man who walks slowly.

2. ሠብተ : ሠብተ : ሃደኒ : ደጋ : ሙራ ።

Slowly the rope cuts the stone.

— This is used after the story of a rope and a well made of stone as told by an Arab scholar who mentioned that he returned to his studies after his journey to his home having failed his grades. The story tells of the scholar's observation of a rope cutting the stone of the well through long repetition. This means that through repetition and persistence one can achieve what one wants.

3. **ሢርቦ : ቡአን : ሸኒ : ዱረ : ላለተን ።**
Before anyone starts to dance, he has to take his turn.
4. **ሢሲቁ : ገብን ።**
It becomes full moon bit by bit.
- Things reach their full scale slowly.
"Rome was not built in a day".
5. **ሢሪን : ሐማቲ : ጄኤ : ዳኛን : ነማን : ሀንሎሎ ።**
Because of ill faith the judge does not become angry.
- The judge passes his judgment based on the observable elements.
6. **ቁብኒ : ቶኮ : ቲጉቶ እንቀቡ ።**
One finger does not catch a fly.
- Often spoken to indicate that many are better than one.
7. **ደላን ከይሱማ : እንቀብዱ ።**
Woman is never a guest.
- It is a belief here that a woman is required to help the host.
8. **ፈዲስ ገማን : መስኖ ።**
It is fertile beyond Fadis.
- Fadis is a district of Harar which is noted for its fertility. The saying is used in expressing a wish for greater abundance or fortune.
9. **አምኒ : ገንመ : ሐፌ : ፉኒ : ጆሎማ : ሐፌ ።**
The best part of the journey is in the morning and of marriage while the person is young.
10. **ቱሪን : ከይስቲ : ክሌን : ማላን : ዴምቲ ።**
The egg goes on foot over a period of time.
- Things change or improve with time.
11. **ቄይላን : ፈንዲሸ : እንታኔ ።**
"Keila" cannot be "fandish".
- Both *keila* and *fandish* are kinds of sorghum, the latter being superior in quality to the first. Used when comparing two things of differing qualities.
12. **ቤለራ : ቦኸኸ : ወየ ።**
Indigestion is better than hunger.
- It is better to have much rather than none.
13. **ቤኻን : ሞቲማ : እንቀቡ ።**
One need not be a king to know something.
14. **ሐዱ : ናነዉረ : ጢቆ : ደለጉ : ወየ ።**
A little work is better than too much loafing.
15. **ሐንቱታ : ለቡ : በሹሬፍ : ተበ ።**
It is a joke to the cat, but a matter of life and death to the rat.
16. **ሐራን : ዱቲ : ጆአኒ : ከራ : እንኦለን ።**
Because of a donkey's death one does not refrain from a journey.
- The donkey being a beast of burden is often used to carry goods. One does not mourn the death of a donkey. Used to mean that because of something inferior, a superior thing is not sacrificed.

17. ሐንቱኒ : ደልቴ : ደልቴቲ : ኤጌን : ሐፍናኒ : ሆቴ ።
The rat giving birth to its young cried when only the tail remained.
- Applied to a person who complains at the last moment.
18. ሐረ : ቆማ : ካዬ : አዱሬን : ሀንፋኔ ።
The luck that God reserved for the tortoise, the cat cannot get.
- Luck is untransferable.
19. ሸንብሮን : ለገ : ለጋ : አፋን : አፋኒን : ዱብቲ ።
Birds of different rivers chatter differently.
- People speak according to their environment.
20. ቀልቀሎን : ዋኑመ : እትኪነን : ፉቲ ።
A sock [leather container] holds whatever is put into it.
21. እልሞ : ነማ : ገድሱረ : ሠሬ : ገድሱ : ወዩ ።
Better to bring up a dog than another person's child.
- A human child might become an impostor when it grows up, but dogs stay with their masters.
22. በሬዱ : ሕሬን : እቲ : ሐማቴሪ : ፎኩቲ : ሕሬን : እትሐማቴ : ወዩ።
22. It is better [appreciated] to say that the lot of an ugly person is bad than to say the same of a pretty one.
23. ሐርከ : ጨብሱ : ደደብዱ : ዱንገዱ ።
Kiss the hand that you cannot break.
24. ሞግዱ : ዳንታፍ : ማዳወ ።
Salt tastes for its own sake.
- Be good for your own sake.
25. በከ : ፈቴቲ : ዳኸ : ዳኸን : ናገሊ ።
No matter where you grind, come home with the flour.

THE FITNESS OF THINGS

26. በቁ : ኤቢቸ : ደቦቴ : ኑንጎድን ።
We ask from God, not to make us like a gourd that feels thirst in the midst of water.
- Gourds are used to draw water with. This is a kind of prayer asking the “Rabbi” not to make us seek for more things before we use what we have.
27. ቀበንቲ : ራቸ : ፈያን : ብላቸ ።
Cold and frog; as health and moth.
- A sick person is always as cold and complaining as a frog is, but a healthy person is as light or as energetic as a moth.
28. በከ : ሎን : ሀንዖሌ : ፈልቲ : ሀንበርባደን ።
One does not look for dung where the cattle were absent.
- Know where to look for things.
29. መነ : ወራቤይሳቲ : ፎን : ሊቂን : እንበርባደን ።
One does not borrow meat from the house of the hyena.
- Know where to look for things.

30. በከን : ረፍኔ : እንሙገን ።
One need not feel drowsy where one cannot sleep.
- Know where and when to do something.
31. ነምኒ : ወልእርኩ : መሌ : ወሊን : ቁዱ ።
Unless people test one another, they will not congratulate one another.
32. ነምኒ : አከረ : ቤኩ : ዋሐዩ : ህንጾይይሱ ።
He who knows much does not speak much.
33. ነማኒ : ጨቤ : ቤኩ : ጨባ : ሂደ ።
He who was once broken [in the arm, leg, etc.] knows how to mend what is broken.
- The person with experience is the best resource.
34. ነዶን ጆሉማ : እንቀብዱ ።
Woman is never a child.
- This is used when a man underrates a woman (usually in sex matters) because she is young.
35. ኒንሲርባፊ : ጉንቱታን : ደይፈደን : ወለቲ : ህንዱፍቱ ።
Dancing and hiding one's own breast do not come together.
- If one is to do a job, one has to do it fully.

STOICISM AND FATALISM

36. ሐንገ : ቀኒን : ናበሐ : ገብሪኸ : አባኪያቲን : ሄሩማ ።
Until my lot improves, I will marry my father's slave.
37. ሐርኪ : ዑፊ : መዳውሌ : ሙረኒ : እንደርባን ።
One does not amputate one's own hand because of a wound.
38. ሐርኪ እፍ እፍካዩ : እንቁቁ ።
The hand that one puts into one's own "wound" does not call for complaint.
39. በደኔ : ሐማ : መረኸ : በሬዳን : ኛተን ።
One eats a bad loaf with good sauce.
40. ሐሮ : ጅረን : ቡጡረን : ዱአን : ኑመ : ሱንቱረን ።
As long as one lives, one swims in the pond. However, when death comes, one shrinks.
41. ሐሪያ : ጋፈ : ለፋ : እንአርከን : ጋፈ : ነፋ ።
Childhood friends are not often around when one wants them to help.
42. ሐራርኒ : ሕሬ : እንቀቡ : ሕሬን : ደበርሳ : እንቀቡ ።
Misfortune does not call for anger, as luck is not transferable.
43. ሐሬን : ዋኑማ : አባን : እትፊኤን : ዴምቲ ።
The donkey goes with the load it is loaded with.
44. ሐንገማሌ : ቱርቱ : ሐሬን : ገሩመ : ወራቤይሳ : ገልቲ ።
Regardless of the age of the donkey, surely it goes into the belly of the hyena.

45. **ሐሬ ወሪ እሺ ገቱ ፣ ወራቢይሲ እንገቱ ።**
Even though the owner of the donkey loses it, the hyena will not fail to find it.
46. **ሐሬን ሃዶ ከቴ ጆናን ፣ አፍቱ ገባብሱቴ ።**
If the donkey cuts the rope, it has only shortened it for itself.
- Applied to one who hurts himself.
47. **ሪዝቂን አቡመ ፣ ኤገቱ ።**
A man's own fortune awaits himself.
- A man gets only the things that God blesses him with.
48. **ሐሬን ፣ እልሞረቲ ፣ ሐረ ፣ ፉደቲ ።**
The donkey is relieved from work by its young.
49. **ቲቴቲቲ ፣ መን ፣ ቡሌ ፣ ከኒስኒ ፣ አለ ፣ ቡሌ ።**
The fly spends its night inside the house while the bee spends the night outside.
- This is used when those who deserve the credit do not get it.
50. **ሦግዶ ፣ እንዋደን ፣ ዋን ፣ ደብሬ ፣ እንያደን ።**
As one does not roast salt, one also need not remember what is past.
51. **ረቢ ፣ ብራን ፣ ሺራ ።**
It is abundance with God.
- God is rich.
52. **ረቢ ፣ ዱባን ፣ ለፍቲ ፣ እንባፍቱ ።**
The products of the earth are not unknown to God.
- God is all-knowing.
53. **ቢያ ፣ ፈርዲ ፣ ቢዴ ፣ ሐሬቱ ፣ ገርማማ ።**
Where a horse is absent, a donkey appears.
54. **ቢሻን ፣ ሐንጉመ ፣ ደቀበን ፣ የልቀበን ።**
One stops the water from pouring at the spot where one sees it pouring.
- Right the wrong from the time you see it. Do not worry about the past but make use of what is left.
55. **ሜና ፣ ቦዴ ፣ እንበርባዳን ።**
One does not look for the causes of past regret.
56. **መደቱ ፣ ራዶ ፣ ቀለን ።**
Necessity forces one to kill a cow.
- Usually cows are left for breeding purposes. This is used when someone parts with things dear to him because of a pressing need.
57. **መኻክ ፣ ጅጌቲ ፣ ቆቶን ፣ እቲሄዱማቲ ።**
On the fallen trees axes are many.
- Misfortune never comes singly.
58. **ሐራር ፣ ፈጉ ፣ አቡመ ፣ ጌሲ ።**
Anger only hurts the angry person.
59. **ሐንገፈ ፣ ዶፌ ፣ ቁጡሱን ፣ ከረ ፣ ዳልቱ ።**
The last child inherits [all of his parent's goods] if the first one becomes an idiot.
- Used when young ones outwit the big ones and get the benefits.

60. ነምኒ : ዱኤ : እፊን : ቦዩ ።

A dead person does not weep for himself.

- Weeping is associated with sympathy or sorrow. Used when a person deserving praise and sympathy does not get them when he is in need of them.

61. ነምኒ : ዋይ : ቀቡ : አካዊ : ኛቴ : ሐርከ : አራብ ።

He who is in straits licks his hand after eating roasted grain.

- Eating roasted grain for the main meal is usually a sign of poverty.

62. አርጁ : ሶዳ : ሂሪብ : ህንዳበን ።

Because of dreams one does not avoid sleeping.

- Although one has dreadful dreams, one does not stop sleeping. Fearing the bad result, one does not stop doing what one must do.

63. አዋንሳ : መና : ሲቆ : ቡቴ : ወያ ።

The coming of a "siqo" is better than a locust.

- *Siqo* is a kind of small locust. Usually siqo infests small areas and is not capable of flying for as long distances as the locust. The saying is used to express the wish of a smaller rather than a large amount of bad luck (if it is unavoidable).

64. ወይዋኒ : ዱአ : ነመንአልቸ፣ ።

Apprehension never saves one from death.

65. እልሚ : ዲራ : ጋራ : ደሉቴ : ዱኤ ።

A male person is dead from his birth.

- Used to encourage men to die for a cause.

FOLLY

66. መኒ : ጎዋ : ኤይሠ : ጀናን : ኸራ : ኬይሣ ።

If one asks the whereabouts of the fool's house, it is in the street.

- Applied when one misuses his possessions out of misjudgment.

67. ሓጃን : ታቴ : ተይፊን : ወልአቴ ።

When their need was satisfied, the fleas picked a quarrel.

- Applied when people voice disagreement and pick a quarrel with those who have done them good.

68. ሓድንሌ : ሃረያቴ : ዋሂደ ።

A fresh (new) rope serves most.

- People always value new things - or faces - most highly.

69. ሐዩይሲ : መላንቀቡ : ቦሰቴን : ሕሬንቀብዱ ።

The orphan has no expediency; the bad house-wife has no friends.

- Both lack somebody to advise them.

70. ሑቀታን : ከአባቴ ።

The emaciated child or animal belongs to the father or owner.

- What is useless is wanted only by the owner not by others.

71. መኑ : መና : ዋደሐ ።

Only certain houses hide secrets.

- Applied when one's own household secrets leak out.

72. **ቢይቲ፡ ቢይቲ፡ ጀናን፡ ጃርቲን፡ ከቢራ፡ ክታቦ፡ ዲይጤ ።**
 Too much praising of the teacher's wife made her wash the book.
 - Too much praise is bad.
73. **ቤኸንሲ፡ ጉዳን፡ ሁዱ፡ ቁቦ፡ ነመ፡ ኻየ ።**
 Too much knowledge forces a finger into one's anus.
 - Applied when one hurts oneself with one's own deed.
74. **ቀቢኛቱ፡ ደዳ፡ ሠፒ፡ ደቤ፡**
 Riches coax one to apply butter to one's public hair.
 - Riches coax one to do even bad and unnecessary things.
75. **ሚጠን፡ እፍ፡ እንቱፈቱ፡ ደጋ፡ ባቲ ።**
 Not despising itself, the small black ant carries a stone.
 - People often think highly of themselves.
76. **ቦለ፡ ሐንደቃ፡ እንቆትን፡ እፈ፡ እትሴንቱ፡ እንቢይቱ ።**
 Do not dig a pit; perhaps you do not know if you may fall in it.
77. **ባድ፡ ባድ፡ ያኮቱ፡ ሐርከ፡ ካየ ።**
 A confused person dips his hand into a pot.
 - Used when a person is found doing something he is not expected to do.
78. **በከ፡ ሲጃለተኒ፡ ዮዲምቱ፡ ባከ፡ ሲጅቦን፡ ደይጤ ።**
 If you go away from those who love you, perhaps you go to those who hate you.
 - Said to one who shuns friendship with no cause.
79. **ቃሉን፡ ከእሺ፡ እንቢይቱ፡ ከንንዳ፡ ራገቲ ።**
 The Qalu, not knowing his own affairs, tells a fortune for others.
 - Qalu is one of the Somali tribes. The Qalus are known for their pride and learning. Applied when someone helps others when he is in need of that help.
80. **ቀብሶን፡ ቤረቲ፡ ቡርቃ ።**
 To wrestle is fun to the ladies.
 - Applied when people [often ladies] take things lightly.
81. **ረከታን እጅንቀቡ ።**
 The one who is in difficulty has no eyes.
 - A person who is in difficulty often thinks only about the means of getting rid of it and pays less attention to other things.
82. **ሦባን፡ ነንፋቱ፡ ጀቱ፡ ሐፍቱን ።**
 "You cannot entice me to marry you," said the old spinster.
 - Used when somebody says something unbelievable, since usually spinsters take the first opportunity to marry.
83. **ሦዳ፡ አሌን፡ እሳ፡ ከደን ።**
 The sticks of a coward are many.
 - Applied to a person who often complains of bad weapons or instruments, whereas the truth lies in his being a coward.
84. **ሦዳፈ፡ ሁዱን፡ ቲርፈ ።**
 The in-laws and the buttocks are extra.
 - Do not worry much about distant and unimportant things. Attend to your immediate problems first.

85. ሚሊ : መታ : ጀጃ : መታን : ሚሊ : ጀጃ ።
The foot disdains the head and the head the foot.
- People often despise one another.
86. ነመ : ከፍሉ : ጋራ : ዱኤሌ : ዋኑመ : ከፍሉ : ፈካተ ።
A man who is always laughing is taken as a jest even when he is dead.
87. ሉኩን : ሆዶ : ሃቱ : ሃዱ : እሬን : ቀልቱ : ባፍቱ ።
The hen dug out a knife to be slaughtered with.
- People sometimes seek their own destruction.
88. ሉኩን : ነመ : ገርቱ : መነ : ገድ : ጎደቱ : ሴንቲ ።
Through imitating people, the hen stoops to enter the door.
- Applied when a person imitates things beyond his power.
89. ሐመራን : ተርካፈዳን : ኮራ : ነመ : በቀይወ ።
Stepping too widely splits the pelvic region.
- Applied when one overdoes an action and brings harm on himself.
90. ሐራጌይሲ : ደላፊ : እንኣርኩ ።
The crow not does see its baldness.
- "Bald" here refers to the white spot on the head of some crows: often people do not see their faults but they try to point out others'.
91. ሐሬ : ሲሬረ : እንካየኒ : ደራረ : ገንገለቲ ።
One does not place the donkey on a bed, since it rolls in ashes.
- Used to indicate the ineffectiveness of the help given to a person who misuses it or does not deserve help.
92. ሐንቱኒ : ቁፍቱ : አዋለ : አዱሬ : ደይጢ ።
An arrogant rat goes to the funeral of a cat.
93. ሐርካን : ኬኔ : ሚላን : በርባዶ ።
One goes on foot to look for things that one gave by hand.
94. ሐሐቃን : ጉዶን : አዳን : ፊዳ ።
Too much cleaning (at the anus) brings forth excrement.
- Too much care brings forth unwanted things.
95. ተከ : ዱፋን : ዲሮመ : ለመ : ዱፋን : ሐሮመ ።
To fart once is human, but to fart twice is to be a donkey.
- To err once is human, but to repeat the same mistake is stupid.
96. ቡቲንሌን : ብዬ : ንቁሠቲ ።
Even the snake economizes in soil.
- Applied when somebody is seen spending too much.
97. ሠሬን : አባ : ወረኮ : እንጃቱ : ጆሌን : ሃደኩ : እንጅቱ ።
The dog does not cry for its husband and babies do not lament for their mother.
- Used when someone acts to the contrary of what others expect from him, usually out of ignorance.
98. አምቦቲ : እጃ : ዲቡን : ነመ : መነ : ዱከናቲ : እጃ : ዲቤ ።
He who stares at strangers is like someone who looks into a dark room.
- Both achieve very little.

99. ነምኒ ፡ ጉያ ፡ ቦፈ ፡ አርኬ ፡ (ጌ) ፡ ሐልከን ፡ ቱበ ፡ ዴይሠ ።
The man who saw a snake during the day - time runs from a strap in the dark.
100. ነምኒ ፡ ሃቲ ፡ እራዱቴፈ፡ ፡ ከለገ ፡ ደይጤ ፡ ወልቅጤ ፡ ቦየ ።
He whose mother left to draw water from the river, and he whose mother died, cry equally.
- This is used when children cry because the mothers are away - out of sight. It is also used when two people complain equally for unequal mishaps.

101. ነምኒ ፡ ገርባ ፡ ልጤ ፡ ሆሮፈ ፡ ያበተ ።
He who is drowning stretches for the mud.
- A person who is in difficulty looks for any kind of help.
102. ነምኒ ፡ ገለ ፡ ከኤ ፡ ዳምሠ ፡ ደዳመተ ።
He who is to leave (to die) speaks much of messages.
103. ነምኒ ፡ ከዑፈ ፡ በከ ፡ ቡሉ ፡ እንቀብኔ ፡ ከይሱማ ፡ ያመተ ።
He who has no place to sleep on invites strangers.
104. ነአርካ ፡ ነአርካን ፡ ነደይሳ ፡ ቦደ ፡ ጅረ ።
A person who often says "See me, see me," is likely to say "Hide me".
- This is said to a person who always shows off.
105. ዳርሌ ፡ ኤርቤ ፡ ጅቲ ፡ ተተካ ፡ ጁብሪ ፡ እንቃሰሲን ።
I span previously, said the woman who had never even taken out the seeds from the cotton.
- Used when a person brags of unaccomplished deeds.

BAD CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

106. አዖን ፡ ወራቤይሳ ፡ ከይሳፈ ፡ ዳባን ፡ ወሊቃወ ።
The teeth of hyenas share holes.
- Used against those people who help one another because of clannish ties or in friendship which contains much selfishness.
107. ሐሬን ፡ ኤጋን ፡ አንዱኤ ፡ ጨታን ፡ ሀንመይርን ፡ ጅቱ ።
"Let not the grass grow after my death," said a donkey.
- A greedy person wants everything for himself.
108. ሐማን ፡ ከአባቲ ።
The bad boy (or character) remains within a person.
109. ሐማን ፡ ዑፈ ፡ ቦዴ ፡ ነመ ፡ በሌይሠ ።
A bad person spoils the character of others.
110. ሐርኪ ፡ ሐነ ፡ በሬ ፡ ደሉ ፡ ሶሶሐ ።
The hand that has learned to steal would move even if amputated.
111. አባን ፡ ዶይፈቱ ፡ እሬቱ ፡ ሀመ ።
What the person hides, the complexion [more exactly the meat of the upper part of the arm, the "irrey"] reveals.
112. ሐይይሳ ፡ ማል ፡ ወያ ፡ ጅናን ፡ ጭቶረቲ ፡ ጠኔ ።
To remedy the orphan's dreadful condition, a man answered, "Deprivation and itch."
- Applied when someone adds to already existing misery.

113. ሐዱሚን ፡ ኬይሣ ፡ ደይሚ ፡ ሐዳዋ ።
Too much honey turns bitter.
114. ሐማን ፡ ቀረጠ ፡ አባ ፡ ፈልመ ።
The naughty child questions his father's marriage (to his mother).
- He questions the legality of their marriage.
115. ተኒ ፡ አይሊ ፡ ሜሻን ፡ ጉረቱ ፡ ጀቴ ፡ ሐንቱኒ ።
"This is the method of running away with the goods," says the rat.
- This means that when a woman wants to run away with goods, she complains of rats; often people create excuses to accomplish their plan.
116. ቢላቺ ፡ ሁማ ፡ እንተሬ ፡ እፉመ ፡ ዳምሠ ፡ መሌ ።
A moth has no power but for putting out the lamp.
- Applied when a person's demerits are plenty in spite of his or her seemingly kind words.
117. ነመ ፡ ኩፊሰኒፍ ፡ ሉኩ ፡ ኩፊሰን ።
A chicken is slaughtered for the one who has been caused to fall.
- This is said when somebody does a favour because he or she had intercourse with the favoured one.
118. ነመ ፡ ሁማን ፡ ኬኒኔፊ ፡ ህየይስ ፡ ቀቀቡቴ ፡ (ቦኛሠ) ።
He gives nothing, but touches the orphans.
- This is used to criticize a person who merely expresses sympathy towards the poor.
119. ቃሊን ፡ ንባቲ ፡ ቃኚን ፡ ህንባቱ ።
Things of high price may grow cheap, but shame never departs from a person.
120. ቦስቲን ፡ መነሲንተሬ ፡ አምባፊ ፡ ተርቲ ።
A bad housewife attempts to advise other housewives.
121. ባለጉማን ፡ ዱኩብ ፡ ጋፊ ፡ እንቀብኔ ።
Rudeness is a disease from which nobody wishes a person recovery.
122. ቡዴን ፡ ወረ ፡ ጅቦን ፡ ኛተን ፡ ገለኒ ፡ ሐቅሰን ።
Food from a disliked home is vomited.
123. በዳ ፡ ፈገኚ ፡ ህንቴይስፍኔ ።
Distance does not deter the bad person.
124. ቁፈን ፡ መሌ ፡ ህንዑታለን ፡ ዑታለን ፡ መሌ ፡ ህንጨቦን ።
One does not jump unless one is arrogant, and one does not break one's own limp unless one jumps.
- Arrogance often brings misery to the person himself.
125. በዳ (እ) አይሊን ፡ ለመ ።
The mind of the mischievous person is twofold.
- One mind is for good, one for evil.
126. ራዲ ፡ ሐሬ ፡ ጀለ ፡ የልቱ ፡ ዱፉ ፡ በርቲ ።
The calf that spends its days with the donkey learns to fart.
- A person's behaviour is like that of his associates.

127. ወራቤይሲ : ብዩ : እንቤይኔ : ደቁቲ : አኒ : ሺኸ : ጄኤ ።
The hyena tells strangers [in a strange place] that it is a priest [sheikh].
- Used when a person claims to be what he is not, especially among strangers.
128. ሐቱን : ሐቱ : እንሐመቱ ።
A thief does not back-bite another thief.
- This prevents the spread of their secrets.
129. ሠሬን : ቀልቢ : ህንቀብኔ : ህራተ : ጐፍታ : ከጄልቲ ።
The heartless dog covets its master's supper.
- Applied when a person covets things beyond his means.
130. ሠሬን : ተንኡሬ : እንአርኪቱ : ሬኤን : ኤጌኬ : ገድ : ቀበዱ : ጀቲ ።
Not aware of its own, the dog tells the goat to lower its tail.
- Mind your own business.
131. ነምኒ : ዱአንቤይኔ : ዋን : ረቢን : ጅቡ : ቱቱቀ ።
A man who does not know about death pokes his nose into things which God (Allah) does not approve of.
132. ነምኒ : ሐሬንቀብኔ : ፈርዶ : እንአረብሱ ።
He who has no donkey does not abuse a horse.
- The horse is taken as a better animal than a donkey. Hence one should have better qualifications than the man one is to pass criticism on.
133. ሐማን : ሐመዳዩ ።
A bad person is like frost.
- As frost kills crops, so a bad person harms others.
134. ሐሬን : ደሱ : እንቀብዱ : ሙዮን : ገለተ : እንቀብዱ ።
A donkey has no hump, as the useless person has no gratitude.
135. ሹምቡራን፡ጐጐይዱን : ነመ፡ሁቲ : ጃለልቲ : ጐጐይዱን : ቀልቢ : ነመ፡ፉቲ።
As eating dry chick peas chokes one, so dry love [with no promise of marriage] affects one's own heart.
136. አዶባ : ደባ : ሠሬን : መጋላ : ጀይጢ ።
Because the dog is ill-mannered it goes to the market place.
- This is used when a person is found in a place where he is less expected or not required and consequently receives things that he does not appreciate.
137. አላቲን : ዋን : ሰሚቲፍ : ላፈቲ : ወልፊጢ ።
The hawks fight one another on the ground for the things that are in the sky.
- Used when people disagree or fight beyond their control or means.
138. ነምኒ : ገለ : ከኤ : ነመ : ገላፈተ ።
He who is to leave [to die] endangers others.
- Used when a thief, murderer or a mischievous (old) person endangers others.
139. አባን : ሐሬ : እልሞን ።
If the father [learns to] steal[s], fear for the children.
- Bad (good) habits start from home.
140. አዱሬን : ኬይሠ : ኬይሣን : ብኔንዘ ።
The cat is a beast inside.
- Applied when a person who looks innocent acts the contrary.

141. ነምኒ : ቁፌ። : ረቢ : ዱፌ። ።
 He who is arrogant farts unto God.
 - Usually one farts in the presence of those he is too familiar with. "To fart" here means to speak rudely or to do bad things to displease somebody. An arrogant person says [does] bad things not only against people but also against God.
142. ነኒም። : ሚኒ : ቀቡ። : ዳገ : ሀንኡታሉ። ።
 He who has tapeworm does not jump from elevated ground.
 - "Tapeworm" is associated with shame. A person with shameful acts might try to withdraw from the acts that might expose him.
143. አላ : ንቦና። : መና። : ንቦያ። ።
 He shows proud appearance outside while at home he cries.
 - Applied when someone tries to show off.
144. አላ : ረራ። : መና። : መንጫ። ።
 Beauty for outside but a sickle at home.
 - Used to a person who is good to neighbours or guests but behaves or acts badly at home.
145. ኤጀርሠ። : ቆቦ። : ደሌ። ።
 The olive tree that produced a castor plant.
 - Used when a brave and strong person gives birth to a cowardly or weak person, or a good person gives birth to a wicked child.

RESPECT AND SELF-RESPECT

146. ነምኒ : ሞዩረ : ታዑ። : ከበጃ። : እንቀቡ። ።
 One who sits on a mortar commands no respect.
 - The mortar is something that is often used for household affairs and the person who sits on it is asked to remove himself because it is often needed. It is impolite to ask someone to get up from the place where he sits, especially if that person is a stranger or elderly.
147. ነምኒ : ኸበጃ። : ሀንቤይኔ። : መቃን። : ያምቱ። : የዋታ። ።
 He who does not know respect answers when he is called by name.
 - It is not respect to call someone who is older than yourself (among Qotus) by his own name, especially if that person has children. The prefix "aba", meaning "father of", or "hadda", meaning "mother of", is added to the name of the first male child or to the first daughter where there is no male issue.
148. ነምኒ : ዋን። : ሶዳቱ። : እንቀብኔ። : መታሳቱ። : ሶዳ። ።
 He who has nobody to fear is to be feared himself.
149. ነምኒ : ቴይሱ። : ከንሰንአገሬ። : የልካቱሰ። : ስንአርኩ። ።
 He who does not see you while you are sitting will not see you even if you stand up.
 - Used when a person is ignored.
150. ነምኒ : አፋን። : ቀቡ። : አፋ። : ሀንደቡ። ።
 He who has the tongue [mouth] gets the mat.
 - This is used when one person gets things that he usually does not, because he has had the courage to speak out.

151. አባን ፡ እፈን ፡ አርኩ ፡ ደጋን ፡ እፍን ፡ ደርቡ ።
A person cannot see himself, as a stone cannot throw itself.
- It is often the most difficult thing for a person to find fault with himself.
152. አሪን ፡ ሙኸቱ ፡ ንቢቂልቲ ።
Even wood grows gray hair.
- Used when a person with gray hair does (speaks of) things unworthy of his age.
153. አውሊዖን ፡ ዱራ ፡ አባ ።
The first saint is the father.
- A saint is often the person who is obeyed, respected and at times worshipped. This saying requires the family to give priority to the father before the saint.
154. አባ ፡ ገባባ ፡ ጆሌን ፡ አባንሴኔ ።
Children often do not take a short father as a father.
- This is used when a short old person is taken for a young man or less old one.
155. አፋን ፡ ሰብለቸራ ፡ ሁንደ ፡ ሰብለቸ ፡ ወዖ ።
It is better to be bad (light) in origin rather than be light in words.
- This is said to a person who boasts of his origin and at the same time speaks of undignified things.
156. ሐንገ ፡ ዑፊ ፡ አባ ፡ ቤካ ።
It is the person himself who knows his abilities.
157. ሐማቱሌ ፡ ዱቤ ፡ ጃርግ ፡ ህንቱፈተን ።
Even if it is disagreeable, the word of an old man is never to be disdained.
158. ሐማኮ ፡ ሐመታኮ ።
Oh, my own bad and back-biting one!
- Used to a relative who is unfaithful, meaning that, with all the defects he has, he is kept as a friend or relative.
159. ሐንገሚሌ ፡ ጃለተን ፡ ሠፊ ፡ ደይነ ፡ ህንቀበን ።
One does not circumcise a dog; because one harbours love for it.
160. ሐሬን ፡ ወልዲቱ ፡ እልኬ ፡ ወልራ ፡ ህንዖፍቱ ።
If the donkeys kick one another, they do not break one another's teeth.
161. ቢሻን ፡ ደጋ ፡ ዱቤሠ ።
Stone forces water to speak.
- Flood gives no sound until it encounters stone or is falling from a cliff; even the quietest person quarrels if provoked.
162. ሐቲ ፡ ጄይና ፡ በዱ ፡ በርባዳ ፡ ቀብዲ ፡ ዱቱ ፡ አዋለ ፡ ቀብዲ ።
The mother of a hero is to be looked for if she is lost, and deserves a burial if she is dead.
163. ቡልቲ ፡ አባ ፡ እትዖደተ ።
Living is the concern of the person himself.
164. ቡልቲን ፡ ቡልቱመ ፡ አከእትቡሉ ፡ አባ ፡ ቤከ ።
Living has to be lived; though it is the person himself who knows how he is living.

165. መነ : አምባ : በሬደረ : ጎጆ : ዑፊ : ወየ ።
One's own cottage is better than somebody else's palace.
166. ነመ : ሆሪ : ቀቡ : ጎሠ : ቀበ ።
He who has money has relatives.
167. ነመ : አፈተ : ቀቡ : ኸበጃ : ቀበ ።
He who has good clothes commands respect.
168. ሐዱ : እቲንዱፍኔቲ : ህንሳለወን ።
One is not ashamed of the podese that did not fart.
- A person need not be ashamed of deeds not his own.
169. ነመ : ፈርዳኪያ : ያቡቲቲ : ጎዲነኮ : ቤከ ።
He who saddles my horse knows my importance.
170. ቁብኒ : አባን : እፍካዬ : እንአጃዉ ።
The finger that one inserts into one's own anus does not stink.
- One does not frown at one's own actions.
171. ረረአ : ረረአ : ወኒ : አምባ : እንፉሲፍቲ ።
Even it is hanging in the open, a man cannot take another man's property.
172. ቲያሬ : ቲኛን : ተካሚቲ ።
It is not the same to say "mine" and "ours".
- Applied when somebody always claims things for himself and tries to exclude others.
173. ቁንጨን : ሙኸ : ቶኮ : ተኩቲ : እንቀብቲ ።
The bark of one tree does not stick to another.
- A man's misdeed or ill-fame does not, or should not, affect someone else.
174. ነምኒ : ገባባን : ያዶ : እንከበጃን : ዱአ ።
A short person dies before he is respected.
- Because he is short, people take him as a young person.
175. መቃ : ሐማ : አባ : እፍራ : ኤገ ።
There is no guardian against a bad name except the person himself.

FORESIGHT AND THE LACK OF IT

176. ሐዶ : ላለኒ : እንተለ : ፉደን ።
One studies the mother before asking for the hand of the daughter.
177. ለገ : ቦረዌ : ጠለልኸን : መሌ : እንወራብን ።
A person clears the troubled water before he draws from it.
178. ለይኒ : ያገ : በዱ : ፌዴ : እጃን : ራመወ ።
When a river wants to turn bad, it flows worm at the spring.
- When a thing is to get spoilt, it shows bad signs; you might be able to prejudge what a person will become by his present behaviour.
179. ላሉ : ገረ : ኛን : በረ ።
If we look we see, if we eat we learn.
- Never take a decision in a hurry; wait and see.

180. ሌንጫፊ : ጁራን : (ጃርሳን) : ቢዩ : እንጅሬ : ህንጀአን ።
Never say that the lion and the brave man are out of town [sight].
- Do not do things that you should not, in the belief that the person in charge is away.
181. ልልሚን : ከንእፊ : ሴንቱ : መሌ : ከንእሺ : ሴኑ : እንአርኪቱ ።
The needle sees things that it enters, not things that enter it.
- Often people are not aware of things that befall them, but only of what they intend to do.
182. ቢላቺ : ከዑፊቱ : እንቀብኔ : ደጋ : ዑፊሠ ።
A butterfly, not having clothes even for itself, covers a stone.
- Used when a person tries to give assistance when he himself is in need of it.
183. ቡዴኒ : ነመ : ቁብሳ : ቁባባረቲ : ቤዶሲሠ ።
The loaf that satisfies is known while it is on the griddle.
- One can judge whether a thing is satisfying or not from the very beginning.
184. በላን : የደ : ህንቡኔ : መንገፊተን ።
One asks for forgiveness before the calamity occurs.
- In order to avoid any calamity, it is better to repent quickly.
185. መኒ : በሬዳን : አግሠረ ።
The beauty of a house is from the foundation.
- A thing to be appraised should have a good beginning.
186. መራታ : በረቲ : ደካንደርባን ።
One does not place [throw] a stone near a mad person.
- Never give a weapon or power to those who will misuse it.
187. መሉመፊ : ዓረ : ነመ : ባሠ ።
Only one's own contrivance truly satisfies one.
- Depend less on others; look after your own affairs.
188. መርጦን : ፊጋ : ህደተን : ፊጋ : ቡቲ ።
The girdle [apron or loincloth reaching to the knees] which is put on while running comes off while running.
- Things done in haste often turn out badly.
189. ቆሪን : ነመ : ጋሪ : ዓመተ : ነመ : እንባፍኔ ።
The dish of the generous person never lasts a year.
- Presents from others do not last. This proverb is used when advice is given to a man to depend upon himself or his own means of livelihood.
190. ቆቶን : እፈንቀርቱ ።
The pick does not sharpen itself.
- Things do not just happen without any cause.
191. ሮቡስ : ገነ : ሮቡ : ባቱስ : ገነ ።
It is winter whether it rains or not.
- Since winter is associated with abundance, this proverb is used by a person who depends on his ability.

192. ነምኒ : ሳሌ : ተካ : ለፈ : ሬባ : ተካ : ነመ : ሬባ ።
 A poor man either wanders around or tries to overtake another, "rich" person.
 - A poor person has two choices; one to be a vagabond and roam around, the other to work hard to get as many riches as the rich one.
193. ነምኒ : ተደ ባርቱ : ህንያኔ : ተዱፍቱስ : ህንያዱ ።
 He who does not worry about things past does not worry about coming events.
194. ነምኒ : ገባ : መሌ : ኬይሠ : (ኬሣ) : ህንአርኩ ።
 People do not see what is inside but outside.
 - Used to indicate that people often judge from outside appearances.
195. ነምኒ : ኡፊንቶሌ : ነማ : እንቶሉ ።
 He who does not help his own self, does not help others.
196. ኒቲ : አባንወራ : ሌሊሱ : እቲሌቱ : ሙጨጫታን ።
 The lady whose husband spoils her slips from the tanned hide.
 - Usually the tanned hide is used as sleeping material in the country-side.
197. አባን : ሙኸ : አላቲ ።
 Father is an outside bush.
 - Often fathers spend their time outside and are not enough aware of things happening at home.
198. ጨለሌን : ገብነ : ጀባቱ : መሌ : እንበረርቱ ።
 The hawk does not fly until its wings get strong.
199. ነምኒ : አከ : ፈርዳ : ቤኩ : ኡሌ : ፈርዳ : ህንቦቤይሱ ።
 He who knows the character of the horse does not burn its stick.
 - used to mean that one has to know the character or the habit of people with whom one lives. The stick is used to drive the horse; hence burning it means not to use it.
200. ጀርጀሪ : እልሞ : እንደልቺስኔ ።
 (1) Haste does not make one give birth.
 (2) Because one is in a hurry, one does not give birth [it awaits the time].
 - Time is needed to do things.