

Xhosa Transcript:

L: Andithi thina besithe iinkomo zisibhozo kula *ten thousand*? Baphume, babuye besithi, “Madoda ubuso bentombhi yi *five hundred*, iinkomo *three thousand five hundred*. So ngoku ezinkomo zenu njoba benisithi nina zisibhozo, zine, zinethole iinkomo engaphelelanga.” Ewe, akhonto ke ezawuphikiswa kulonto leyo, asizuphikisa nto kuba kaloku besithunyiwe. Sizawuhambha nelagama lithi iinkomo zine noba besiphethe *iten thousand* kodwa noba *yififteen* kodwa uba ngaba bathe *four* bona, zinethole, ithole kengoku lona yimali engaphelelanga. Uba iinkomo bayenza *ithree thousand five hundred* mhlawumbhi thina ngoku sine *two thousand* so kengoku kuzawuthiwa sisijungqu esiya. Iyawuthi kengoku kuqale kugcwaliswe leya ibingaphelelanga ngala *one thousand five hundred* ibeyi *three thousand five hundred*.

Mandiphinde ndize kulendawo kwa phaya ekuloboleni, ngelinye ixesha nithi ngoku nipha ngasebuhlanti, bafike babizane.

M: Ngobani ababizanyayo?

L: Ngabo, aba nizekubo. Nibuzwe nipha ngasebuhlanti nichaze, kuthwe, “Madoda nje ngoko ke kanikhupheni isazimzi.” Nisikuphe pha ngasebuhlanti. Anizanga endlini. Uyabona uba ezindidi zimbhini ngoku, uyazibona uba zimbhini? Nichaze nipha ngasebuhlanti uba umfana ubone intombhi kuthwe, “Kanizidale ezinkomo nize nazo ke, siyanibona ke madoda uba nale ntombhi niyayazi.” Nizibeke pha ngasebuhlanti zonke, zonke ezizinto ndizithethileyo ezibhotile, iizazimzi. Nizibeke pha ngasebuhlanti zonke nigqibe ulobola nipha ngasebuhlanti. Nithi nawugqiba ulobola kengoku nipha ngasebuhlanti bathi kengoku bona sisawubhunga, olahlobo ke bendisithi bathi bayo bhunga noba nisendlini bemke. Bathatha ngoku nala mali xa bemkayo kuba kaloku sebeyikhuphile. Xa bayishiya kuthi ngoku sisenoyi nantsika, bayithathe bathi uyi thatha kwabo bemke babuye besithi kengoku masingeneni endlini. Uyabona uba kulotyolelwe ngasebuhlanti kanti nase ndlini kuya lotyolelwa? Ezindawo zombhini ziyenzeka kuba kaloku ngoku kwangena nesilungu. Nithathwe niphaya niyolobolela endlini kanti xa isisiXhosa ufike kwabantu aba qoto uzawulobola ugqibe pha ngasebuhlanti. Ngoku ke nithi nawu gqiba kengoku niyofakwa endlini. Phaya mhlawumbhi nize *nethirty thousand* lamali ngoku kunyanzelekile ngoku xa nize *nethirty thousand* uba namkelwe ukuba nigabakhosi.

M: Ngenxa yoba iyithirty thousand okanye...?

L: Ngenxa yoba iinkomo zenu xa zifikile kusix ngexesha eliyiwhani. Xa zifikile kusix kuyanzeleka uba banamkele. Bazawuthi kengoku, “Hayi bakhosi siyanamkela.” Kuze kengoku igusha ibekwe apha emnyango.

M: Isuka phi igusha yona?

L: Kubo.

M: Kwababantu balobolayo?

L: Kwababantu nizo lobola kubo. Ewe. Bayanamkela kuba nilobole, intombhi niyibonile. Ize ime apha emnyango. Kuthwe, “Bakhosi, nantsi inkuku.” Abazukutsho uba yigusha, bazawuthi nantsi inkuku esinixwithela yona. Hayi ke nivume ke hayike ke “kuhle ke bakhosi. Abafana bangakhe basincede bahambhe bayoyinqumla.” Kuthwe kengoku, “Bakhosi sibolekeni imela.” Ukuba ngaba imela anibanga nayo ningabakhosi nizawuphinda nikhupke ibhotile yebranti. Nithenga ntoni? La mela apha kubakhosi ngebhotile yebranti. Xa ningenayo ibhotile yebranti nizawukupha esipajini noba yififty rand. Nithenga lamela yokuba kuxhelwe lagusha.

English Translation:

L: So we [the man’s representatives] said 10,000 rand¹ was equivalent to eight cows, right? They [the woman’s family] leave and come back saying that *ubuso bentombhi* is 500 rand and a cow is 3,500 rand. They say that although we say there are eight cows, there are four and a half cows. We cannot argue with what they are saying, and we do not argue with it, because we are just messengers here. We are going to leave with the final word being four cows whether we had 10,000 or 15,000 [rand]; if they say that some of our money does not add up to a whole cow, then we have to accept that. Let’s say they make 3,500 rand the equivalent of one cow, and we make 2,000 rand the equivalent of one cow. Our cow will then become half a cow, or a piece of a cow.

Let me go back to one part I was speaking about before. Sometimes while you [the man’s representatives] are still sitting by the *kraal*², they come and call each other.

M: Who calls each other?

L: Them [the woman’s family], the people you have come to see. They ask who you [the man’s representatives] are, then they ask you to take out the first bottle of brandy called *isazimzi*³. You’ll take that out by the *kraal*. You have not been inside the house yet. Can you see that there are two [locations where the negotiations can be done] now; can you see that there are two? You let them know while you are still by the *kraal* that your son⁴ is asking for their blessing to marry their daughter. They ask you how many cows you

¹ Rand is the currency used in South Africa. R10,000 is approximately \$1,200 USD as of March 2013 but may vary due to currency fluctuations.

² *Kraal* is an Afrikaans word referring to an enclosure for cattle and other livestock.

³ *iSazimzi* is a bottle of brandy that symbolically represents how the man’s representatives located the home of the woman.

⁴ In Xhosa culture, many relative terms do not necessarily signify a biological relationship. For example, one would call any older person “mother” or “father.” In this situation, there is usually a biological relationship, but it is not necessarily a father-son relationship; the representatives could be the uncles of the groom-to-be.

have brought with you, as they can see that we [the man's representatives] know the girl we have come to ask for. You [the man's representatives] will place all these bottles of brandy that I spoke about before by the *kraal*. You will place everything by the *kraal* and be done with all the *lobola* negotiations by the *kraal*. When you are done with the negotiations, they [the woman's family] will leave to go and discuss, just as I said they did when the negotiations were in the house. They also take the money with them when they leave. If they leave it, we might take it back, so they take it and leave. When they come back, we all go inside the house. Can you see that the *lobola* negotiations can be done outside by the *kraal* or inside the house? Both of these ways are now possible, because the tradition has been slightly westernized. You [the man's representatives] are taken from the *kraal* and led inside the house, but if it was the original Xhosa way, the negotiations would be done by the *kraal*. Now you just go inside the house. Let's say you come with 30,000 rand; the family of the bride has to accept you then.

M: Because you brought 30,000 rand with you, or...?

L: Because the amount of money you have with you amounts to at least six cows. When they [the cows] reach six, they [the woman's family] have to accept you [the man's representatives]. They will call you in-laws, and a sheep will be placed at the door for you.

M: Where does this sheep come from?

L: From them.

M: The people that are representing the man?

L: The family of the bride-to-be. It is a way of showing their acceptance and giving your son their blessing. The sheep stands at the door. They will not call it a sheep, though; they will call it a chicken.⁵ You [the man's representatives] accept the sheep and ask the young men of that family [the woman's family] to slaughter it for you. They will then ask you to lend them a knife to slaughter the sheep. If you do not have a knife, then you will have to give them another bottle of brandy. What are you buying with that bottle of brandy? You are buying that knife that you could not provide. If you do not have another bottle of brandy, then you will have to take 50 rand or so out of your wallets. In doing this, you are buying the knife that is going to slaughter that sheep.

⁵ There is no particular reason why the sheep is called a chicken. Calling the sheep a chicken is just part of the idiomatic nature of the *lobola* negotiation process.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2013 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated