

Story 1323 (1981 Tape 3)

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Location: Karatepe village,  
Düzici kaza,  
Adana Province

Taped at Fırat  
University, Elazığ

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A Karatepe<sup>1</sup> Man Drinking Coffee

Not far from Karatepe there is a village named Gözahmetli  
One day an ağa<sup>2</sup> from Karatepe was a guest in this village. His  
host offered the ağa every gesture of hospitality including a  
cup of coffee.

Unfortunately the Karatepe ağa did not know what coffee  
was, and so, of course, he did not know how to drink it  
Before anyone had touched the coffee that had been served,  
ağa grabbed his little cup with the intention of swallowing  
his coffee all in one gulp. He did not know that the coffee  
was boiling hot. When he got the coffee in his mouth, he  
discovered how hot it was, and so he spat it out onto the palm  
of his hand. But it was too hot even for his hand, and he  
quickly poured it back into the cup.

<sup>1</sup>This isolated village in northeastern Adana Province is  
legendary for the supposed stupidity of its inhabitants. Their  
ineptness and their misadventures are recounted in scores of  
Karatepe anecdotes. This view of Karatepe people is, of course,  
a folk stereotype.

<sup>2</sup>An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes

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The people present asked the ağa, "Why do you drink your coffee that way?"

He answered, "My mouthful is my handful, and that is my cupful. They are all the same to me. That is why I drink my coffee that way

wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.