

Story 1138 (1974 Tape 11

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kaza, Yozgat Province

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A Lesson in Marketplace Bargaining

There was a city man who had heard about bargaining in village marketplaces, and he was curious to know how this was carried on. He bought a tape recorder for 2,200 Turkish liras (which at that time was quite a bit of money¹ and he took it to a village marketplace to record there some of the bargaining that went on. There was no one buying anything when he first arrived at the market, and so in order to create some bargaining himself, he climbed up on a box and announced that he had a tape recorder for sale.

A man offered to buy the tape recorder, and he immediately reached out and shook hands with the owner. Without letting go of the owner's hand, he said, "I'll give you 50 Turkish liras for your tape recorder."

"How can you say that when I paid 2,200 liras for it?"

"I don't care about that, but I shall give you 50 liras for it. Is your equipment for sale?"

¹ Devaluation of the Turkish lira had begun seriously by 1974. From an exchange rate of 9 to the U.S. dollar in 1962, it had fallen to about 100 to the dollar. This devaluation escalated until by 1989 the rate was 2,000 to the dollar.

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"Yes, it is."

"Well, I'll give you 50 liras for it."

As this discussion was going on, the villager was still shaking the owner's hand, and because the villager was a very large and strong man, he held so tightly and shook so vigorously that the city man's arm began to hurt. "Let go of my hand! I have decided not to sell my tape recorder. My arm is hurting."

"No, no, you are committed to selling it. I'll give you 55 liras for it."

The villager did not let loose of the other man's hand. The city man did not want to sell for 55 liras a machine that he had paid 2,200 liras for. When he felt that his arm was ready to fall off, he called the police for help. He said to the police, "This man has offered me 55 liras for a tape recorder that I paid 2,200 liras for. I do not want to sell it to him, but he will not let go of my hand."

The policeman answered, "Well, inasmuch as you have started bargaining with this man, you had better end it by selling it to him."

So the city man tried a little longer, and the villager increased his offer to 60 liras, to 65, to 70, but in the end the owner was able to get him to go up only to 85 liras. He therefore sold him for 85 liras the tape recorder for which he had paid 2,200 liras