

Story 863 (1964 Tape erased on field trip after contents transcribed) Narrator: Mehmet Genişgen, nicknamed Dımbır Mehmet
Location: Taşköprü kaza of Kastamonu Province

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The Bektāşi,¹ Fermented Grapes, and the Ways of God²

There was a Bektāşi tekke² that had extensive and rich holdings in grape vineyards. The Bektāşis used the grapes they harvested from these vineyards to make wine, which they drank all year long.

Once when Sultan Mecit³ was making a tour of the country to visit as many of his people as he could, he stopped one day to inspect this Bektāşi tekke. He said to the sheik,⁴ "You have some very fine vineyards here."

"Yes, Your Majesty, we do."

"What will you do with all the grapes you must harvest?"

¹ A Bektāşi is a member of a dervish order of the same name. The Bektāşi order was once a powerful force in Turkey, both religiously and politically, but, with the other dervish orders, it was outlawed during the Kemalist Reforms of the 1920's. The Bektāşis were often unorthodox in their beliefs, as their drinking of wine attests in this tale.

² A tekke is a dervish monastery.

³ Sultan Mecit was Sultan Abdulmecit, who reigned from 1839 to 1861.

⁴ In the Turkish context a sheik is usually the head of a dervish tekke. In the Arabian context a sheik is the political as well as religious ruler of a tribe or community.

Story 863

"Well, we will eat as many of them as we possibly can.

"And then what will you do with the rest?"

"We shall put them into casks, Your Majesty.

"And won't they ferment in those casks and become wine?"

"Perhaps they will, Your Majesty."

"Don't you know that they will?"

"Ah, Your Majesty, who can be certain about the ways of God in such things?"