

Story #175 (Tape #3, Summer 1970) Narrator: Ali Şengül, night watchman
at Forestry Compound;
family from Pazar Köy, in
Mengen area, 20 km. or so
from Gerede but in Mengen kaza

Location: Kızılcahamam kaza
Ankara vilayet

Date: July 1970

My Count Is Six Donkeys

One day the Hoca was going to the mill with 7 donkeys. He had loaded 6 of the donkeys, and he himself rode on one. ["The snow man is coming," said the informant.*] When he counted the donkeys while riding, he got the number 6. When he walked and counted, he got 7. He couldn't understand why he got different numbers each time. As a result of this confusion, he was delayed. Finally he encountered a traveler on the road and asked him, "Oh, traveler, I lost a donkey. What shall I do?"

"How many donkeys did you have?" asked the traveler.

"I had 7. Now I have been counting them and I get only 6."

[Narrator's comment: "Each time he counted, he forgot to count the one he was riding."]

The traveler started counting, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-- "and the one you are riding makes 7."

*At Gerede, at Kızılcahamam, and at Bursa ice, ice-making, and refrigeration are now common. Reminders of an earlier day, however, when this was not true are the "snowmen" who still earn their living selling blocks of pressed snow.

During the winter huge pits and caves are filled with snow and tamped down. Eventually the snow in a pit becomes one solid mass of what is almost ice, though it retains a different texture and appearance. This pressed snow is then covered with heavy layers of sawdust and left so covered until summer. It is then uncovered, bit by bit, as ice used to be in old ice-houses, cut into blocks, and sold. Even in summer, the mountains near Gerede and Bursa remain cool and so the packed snow lasts throughout the summer. It is carried down on donkeys' backs, wrapped in burlap.