

Story #367 (Tape #2, 1972)

Narrator: Adem Fidan

Location: Dođla, Karacabey, Province  
of Bursa

Date: Spring 1972

How Some Lazes Measured a Minaret

Once a group of four or five Laz people left their home town to look for work. Since they had no skills, however, they only traveled aimlessly. One day they reached a village, and decided to spend the night there. As it was customarily in those days, the villagers fed them food prepared for guests (gezek food). After the meal they went to the coffee house. One of the villagers asked the Lazes, "What kind of work do you do? We would be willing to give you jobs."

The leader of the Lazes answered, "Sir, we measure the height of minarets."

"All right, then," the villager said, "Why don't you measure the height of the minaret of our mosque tomorrow morning? We'd like to know how tall it is."

The Lazes spent the night at the guest room of the village. The next morning the villagers gathered around the mosque to witness the process of measuring the minaret. The Lazes ascended the balcony. Their leader suspended himself from the balcony, and his friends also suspended themselves downwards by holding to the feet of one another. When the last Laz suspended himself in this fashion, he noticed he was hanging only in the middle of the minaret. The measure stick composed of the Lazes was too short to measure the full height of the minaret. By this time the leader

of the Lazes had grown tired from supporting the waight of four other men, and he decided to do something about it. He called <sup>to</sup> the man at the bottom, "Hey, Memo, hang on fast. I'll spit on my hands--they're getting tired."

As the Lazes secured their grasp on the feet of the man above them, the Laz leader loosened his grip on the balcony. Of course, they all fell down from the minaret. Since the leader happened to fall on top of his friends, he was not hurt. The people curiously gathered around the injured Lazes. Two of them had died. The Laz leader sighed and said, "I'm glad we did not cause an accident." After that, the Lazes swore not to attempt to measure the height of minarets again.