

Story 855 (1964 Tape erased on field trip after contents transcribed) Narrator: Nebiye Birkan, c. 55
Location: Taşköprü, kaza town in Kastamonu Province

Date: July 1964

Deli Mehmet¹ Turns Cure into Victim

Once a member of the padişah's household became ill. The doctor who examined this person prescribed Demir Hindi² the patient. The padişah called Deli Mehmet and said, want you to go out and find the Demir Hindi ingredients then take them to the basement and smash them for the medicine we need."

"Yes, Your Majesty," said Deli Mehmet, although he did actually know what ingredients were needed. He did not know that Demir Hindi was made of a mixture of fruit juices. Now there happened to be an infidel merchant nicknamed Demir Hindi who had a shop in the "Covered Bazaar"³ in Istanbul Deli Mehmet went to his shop and said, "Demir Hindi, you are

¹ Deli Mehmet means Crazy Mehmet, but we have retained the Turkish here because it refers to a type. He is not really crazy but rather a dummer, a simpleminded boy who takes all instructions literally.

² Demir Hindi means Iron Turkey [the bird]. Why a medicinal fruit drink or a person should have such an absurd name is not explained.

³ With over 4,000 shops under the same roof, the Covered Bazaar is the most famous shopping center in all Turkey.

Story 855

wanted at the padişah's palace."

The poor man was frightened to receive this summons to the palace, but he followed Deli Mehmet there. When they reached the palace, Deli Mehmet took Demir Hindi to basement and started striking him with a hammer. He thought that it must be blood that they wanted to mix in the medicine.

When the padişah was informed that Deli Mehmet had returned and was spending much time in the basement, the padişah went to the stairway and called down, "Mehmet, where have you been all this time, and what are you doing down there?"

"I have Demir Hindi here, sir, but I have not yet been able to smash him completely.

When the padişah heard this, he rushed downstairs to see what was happening. He was amazed to find Deli Mehmet standing over and beating a half-dead man who was covered with blood. This was the Demir Hindi that the padişah found instead of the Demir Hindi medicine.