



Gentle stories that inspire & uplift little hearts...

Awaken
Children's Series

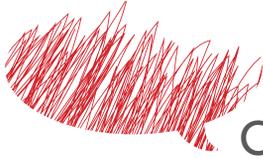


A Demon In The House &

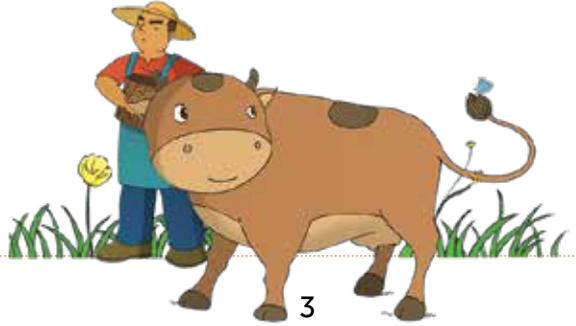
OTHER STORIES

ILLUSTRATED BY: BEELI CHUA

RETOLD BY: ESTHER THIEN



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A Demon In The House &



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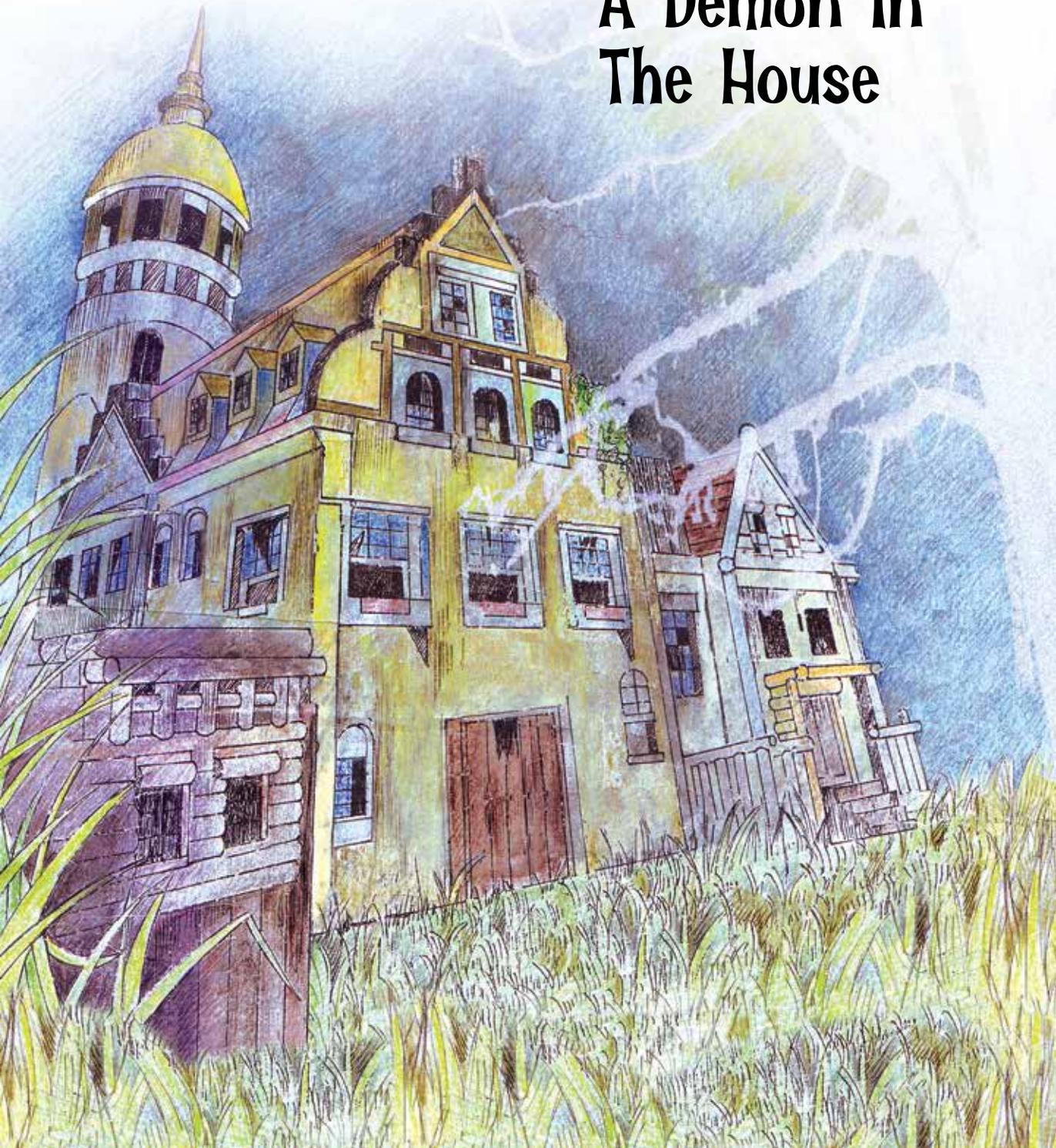
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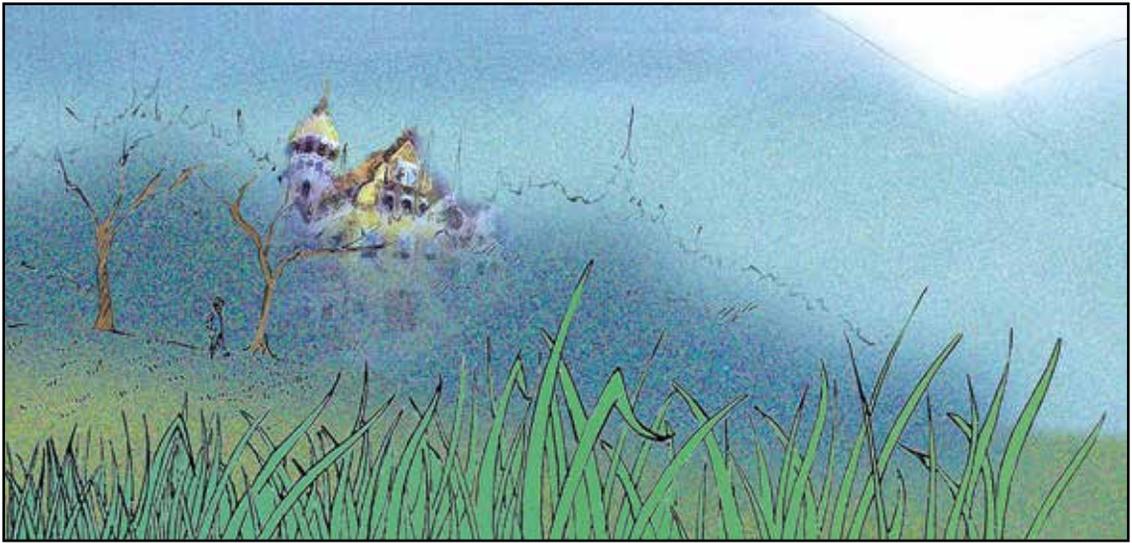
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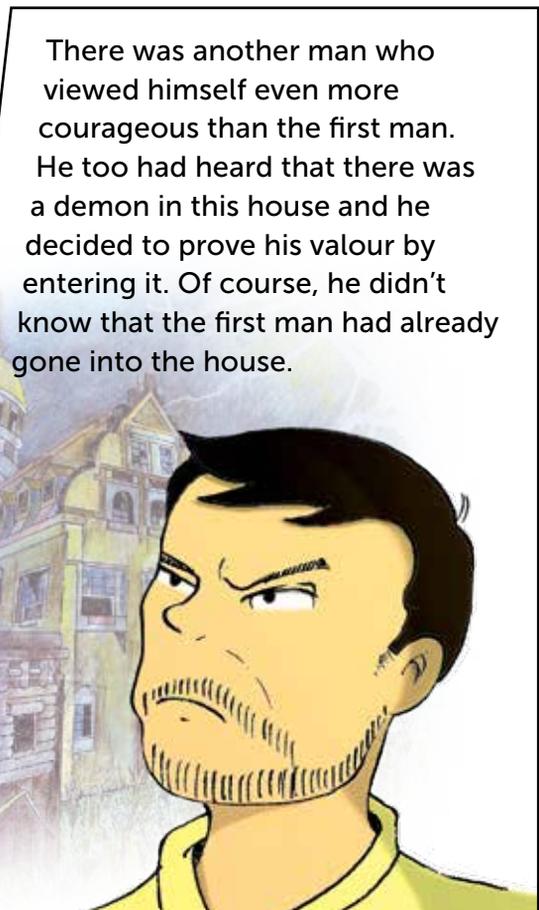
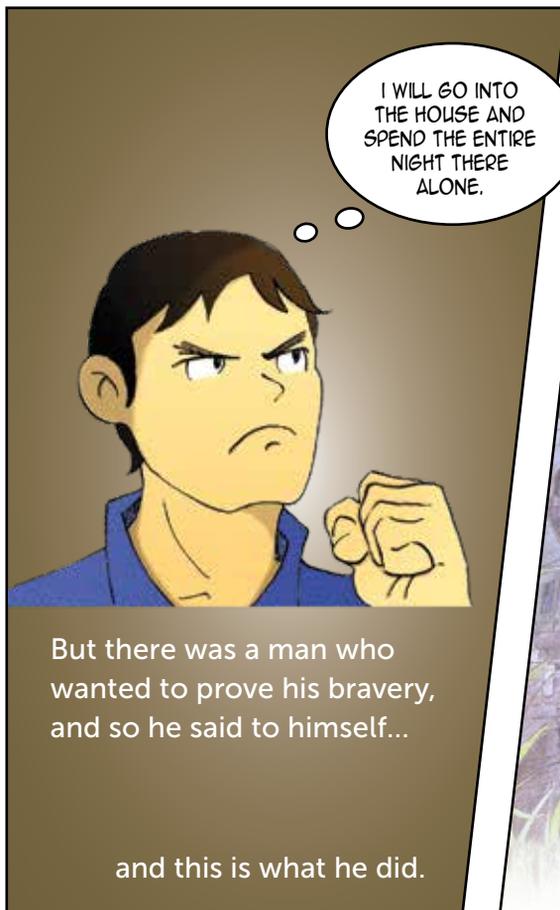
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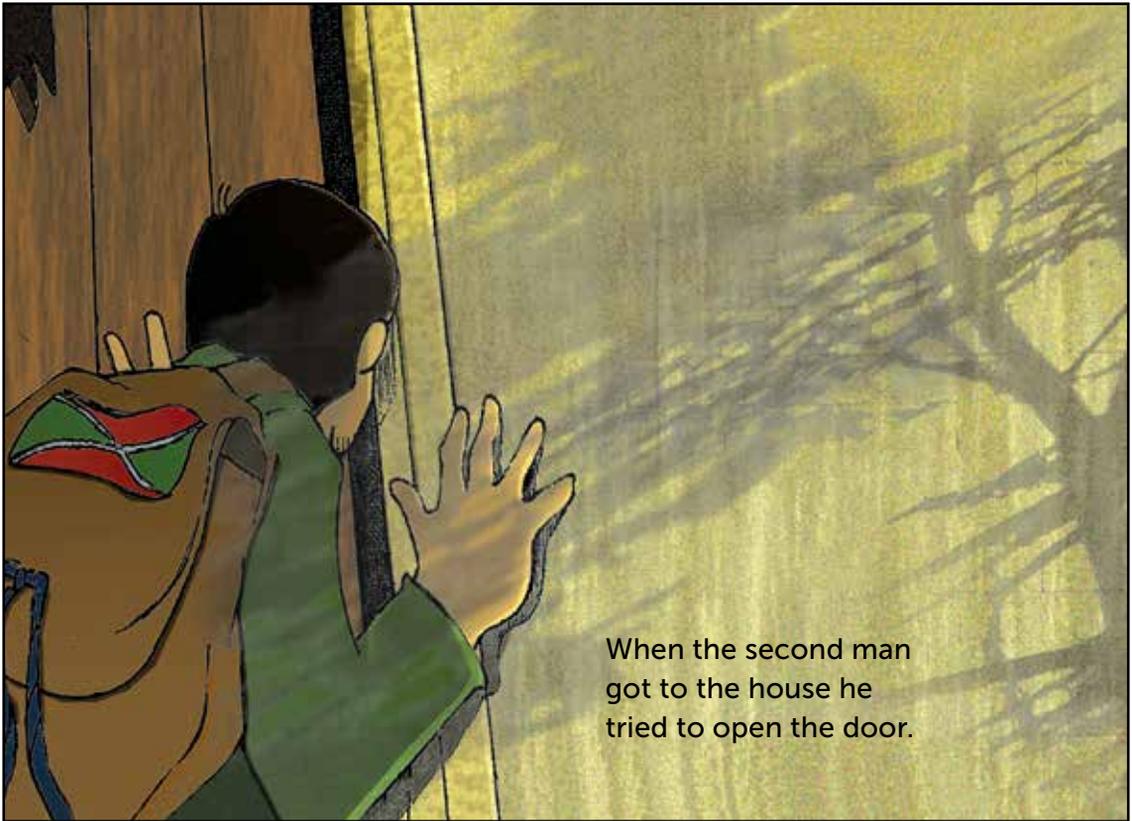
A Demon In The House



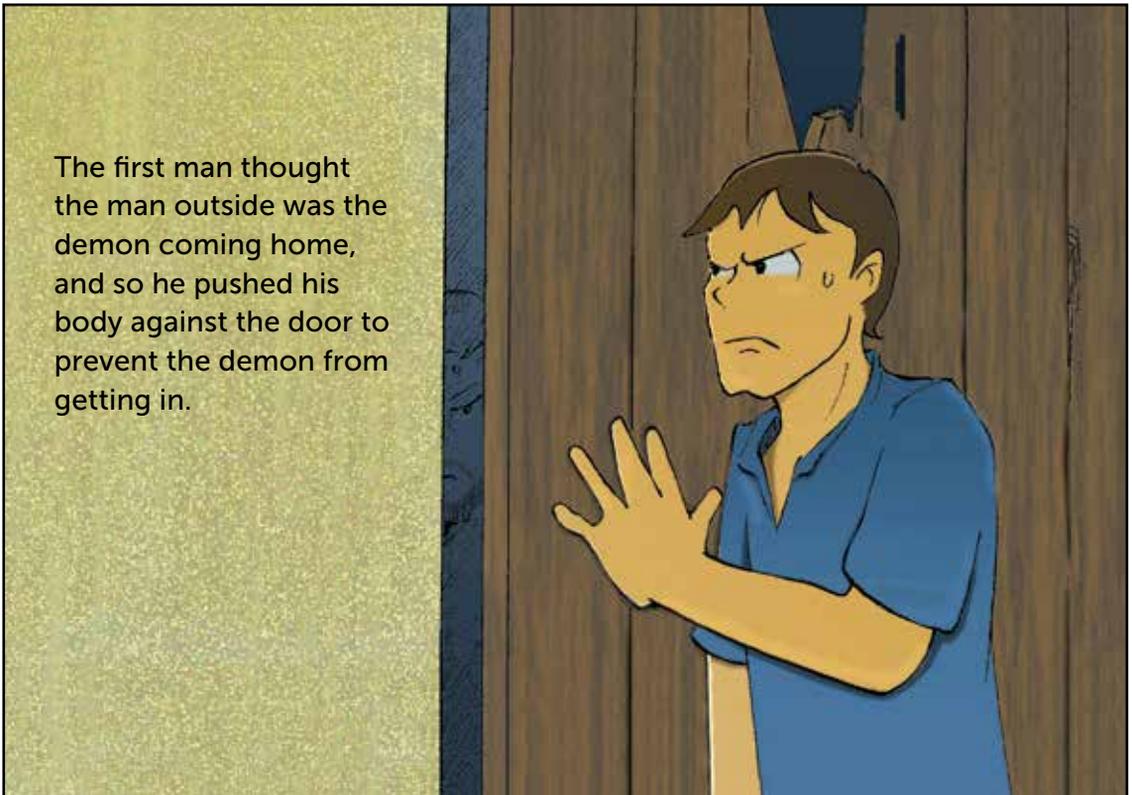


Long ago there was an old abandoned house where it was said a demon lived. Everyone was so terrified of the demon that no one would go near the house during the day and certainly no one would step inside to sleep at night.

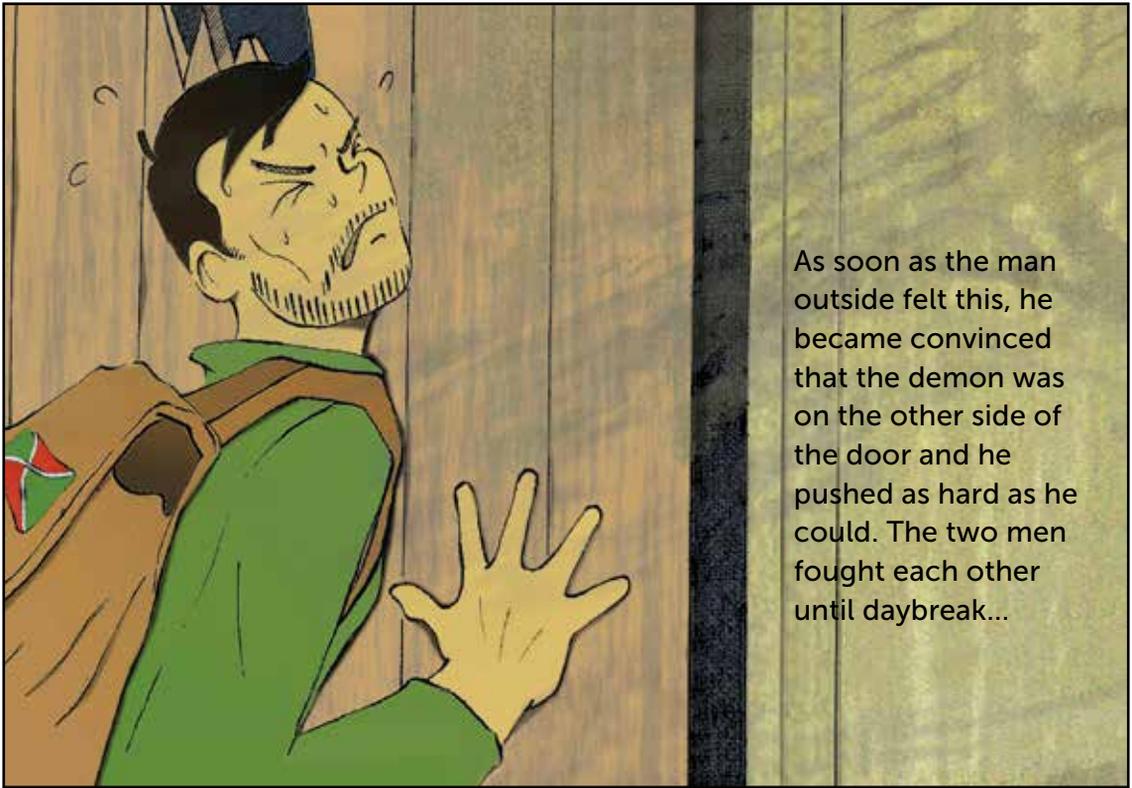




When the second man got to the house he tried to open the door.



The first man thought the man outside was the demon coming home, and so he pushed his body against the door to prevent the demon from getting in.



When they finally saw each other clearly in the daylight, they realised that neither of them was the demon they had struggled against so hard.



Many people in the world are just like this. Conditions and beliefs bring causes and effects together temporarily such that belief in an enduring self develops.

If you look deeply at cause and effect, you will discover that there is no permanent self that endures. How unfortunate it is that sentient beings mistakenly believe there are selves who are right and selves who are wrong and so, based on this belief, fight with each other like these two men.

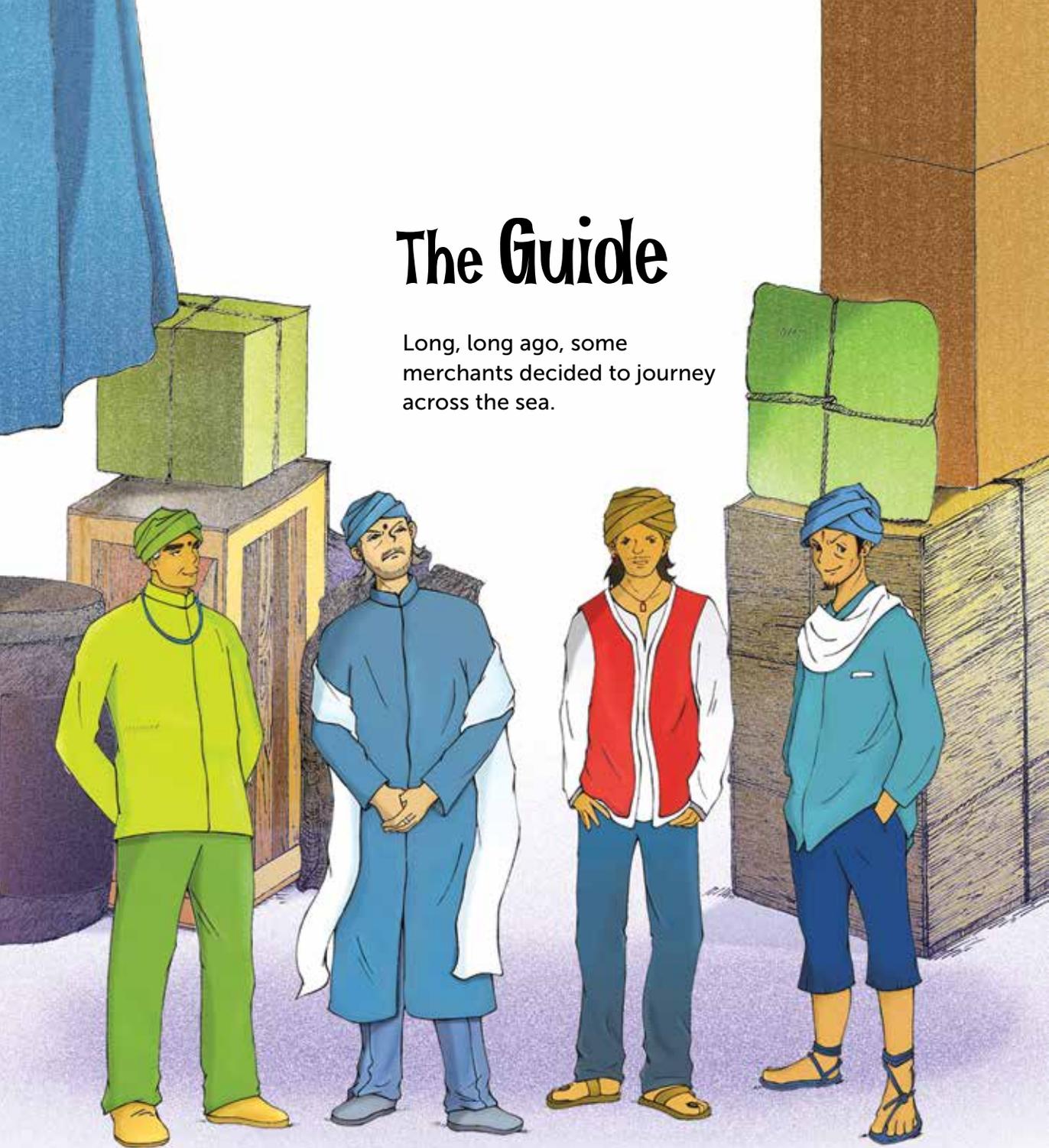
There isn't the slightest difference between them.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra

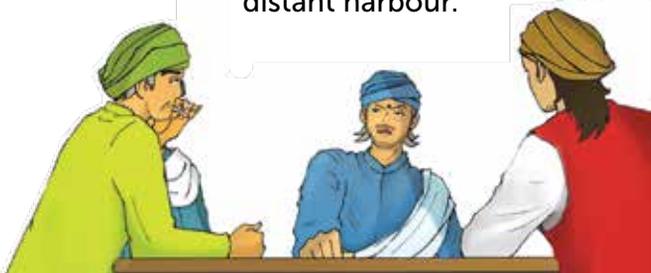


The Guide

Long, long ago, some
merchants decided to journey
across the sea.



However, they needed a guide to help them find their way to the distant harbour.



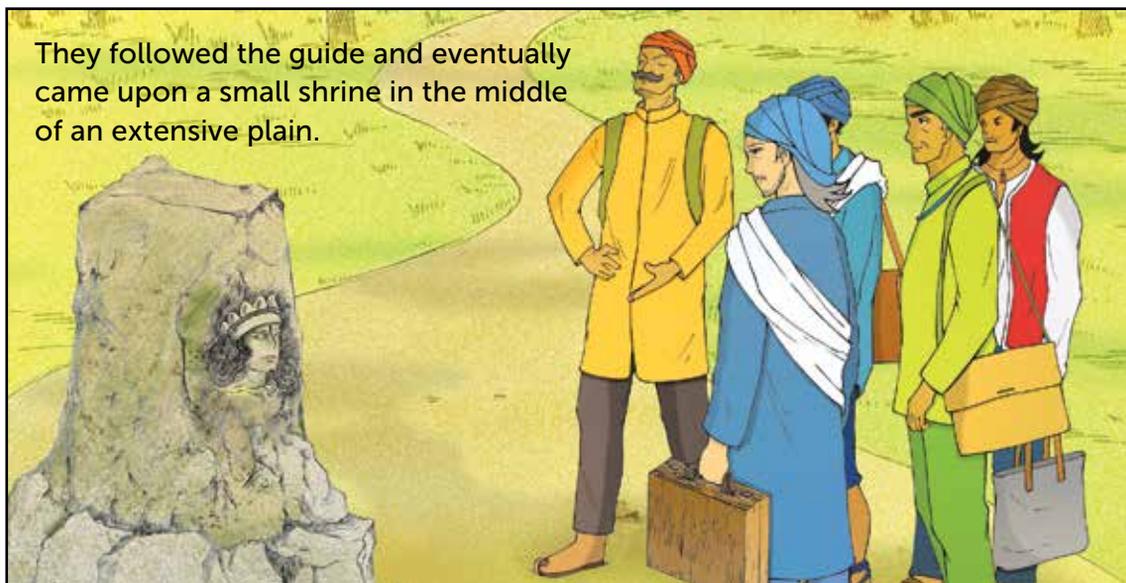
So they set out to search for one.



After some time, they managed to hire the services of a well-respected guide and thus started their journey.



They followed the guide and eventually came upon a small shrine in the middle of an extensive plain.



It was common knowledge that to travel past the shrine they were required to make a human sacrifice to the gods. The merchants pondered this dilemma carefully and came to a consensus that since it would be impossible for them to slaughter one of their own...



... they would sacrifice the guide, perform the sacred ceremony, and be on their way.



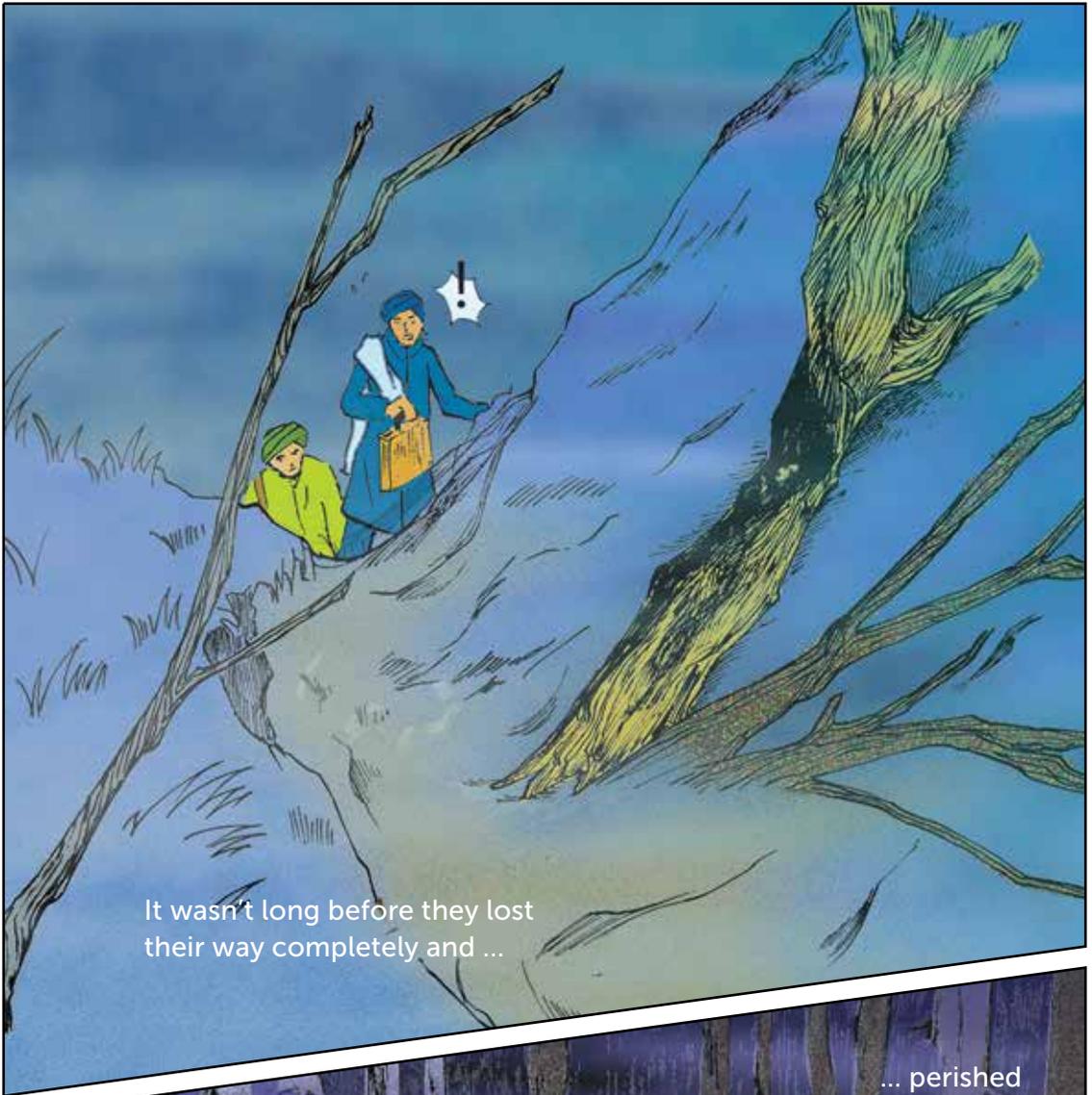
When they had finished the ritual they resumed their journey...





?!

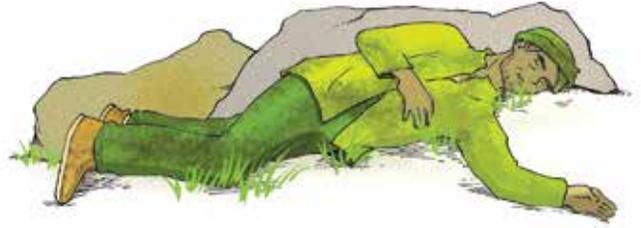
... but because there was no longer anyone to guide them, they didn't know which route to take.



It wasn't long before they lost their way completely and ...



... perished without ever reaching the harbour they had sought...



The Moral is :

Many people are like this. They want to enter the Dharma ocean and obtain its precious treasures.

To achieve that, they should practise wholesome deeds and make these deeds their guide. Instead, they sacrifice the virtuous deeds and hence can never achieve liberation from the unending cycle of birth and death.

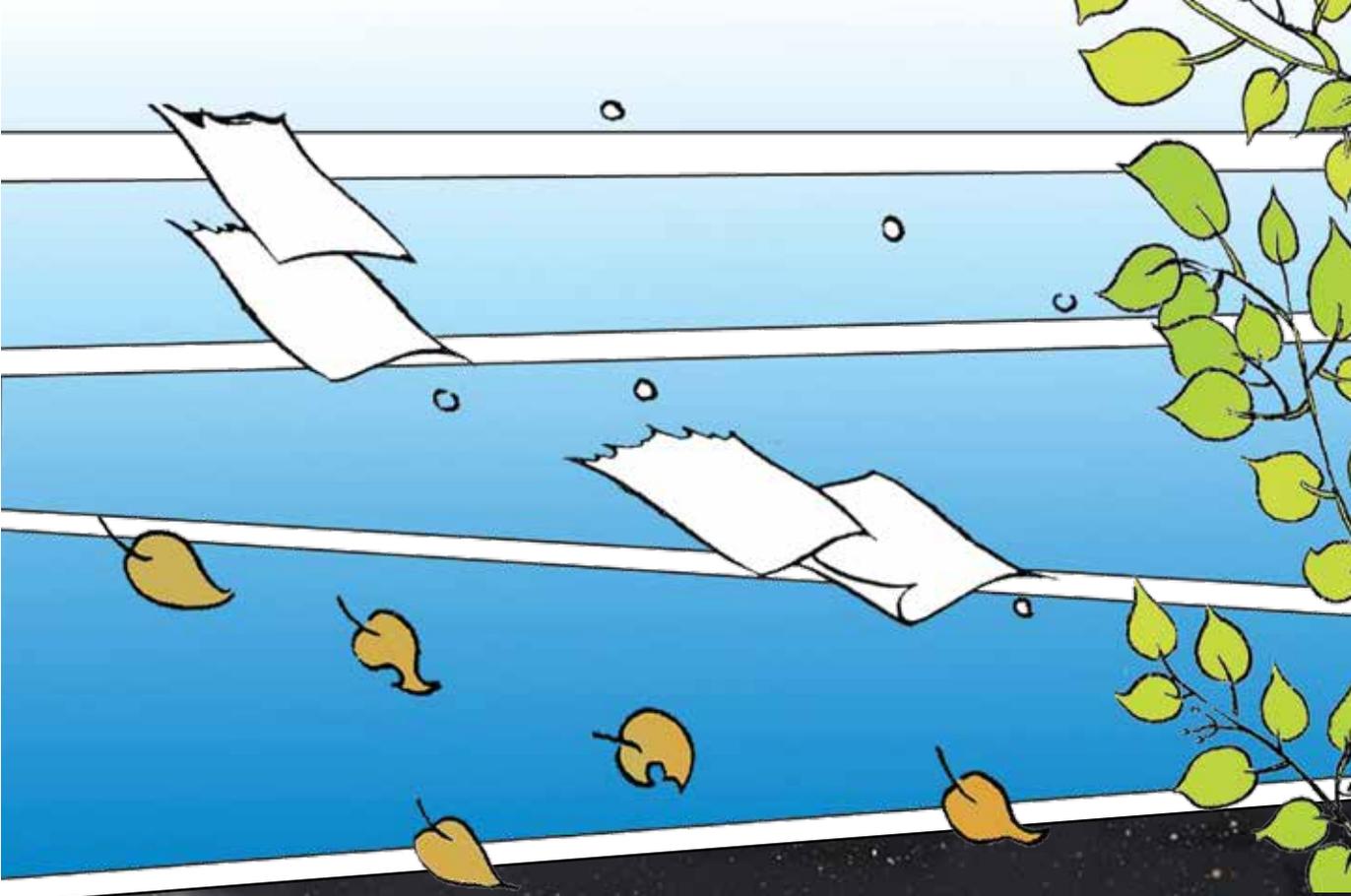
Helplessly, they wander in the three lower realms, like the travelling merchants who wanted to cross the great ocean but slaughtered their guide and so were unable to reach their destination. In the end, they perished from their ignorant act.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra



Polishing a Rock





There was once a man who spent his days and nights chiselling and polishing a rock.





Week after week, month after month, he worked with diligence at his chosen task.

Finally, after a long period of time, he managed to shape a toy cow out of the rock.



In the end, his labour was massive, but the outcome was small indeed.



The Moral is :

People often work with great diligence, studying for prolonged periods of time, and after much sweat and pain they acquire some understanding. Yet they use their enormous effort only to try to gain more fame than the next person. How foolish!

Those whose studies are broad enough to give them insight and understanding should continue to work deeply, seeking only the highest fruits of understanding. If all they seek is fame and a feeling of pride, before long they will come to great trouble and all their efforts will be in vain.



– The One Hundred Parable Sutra

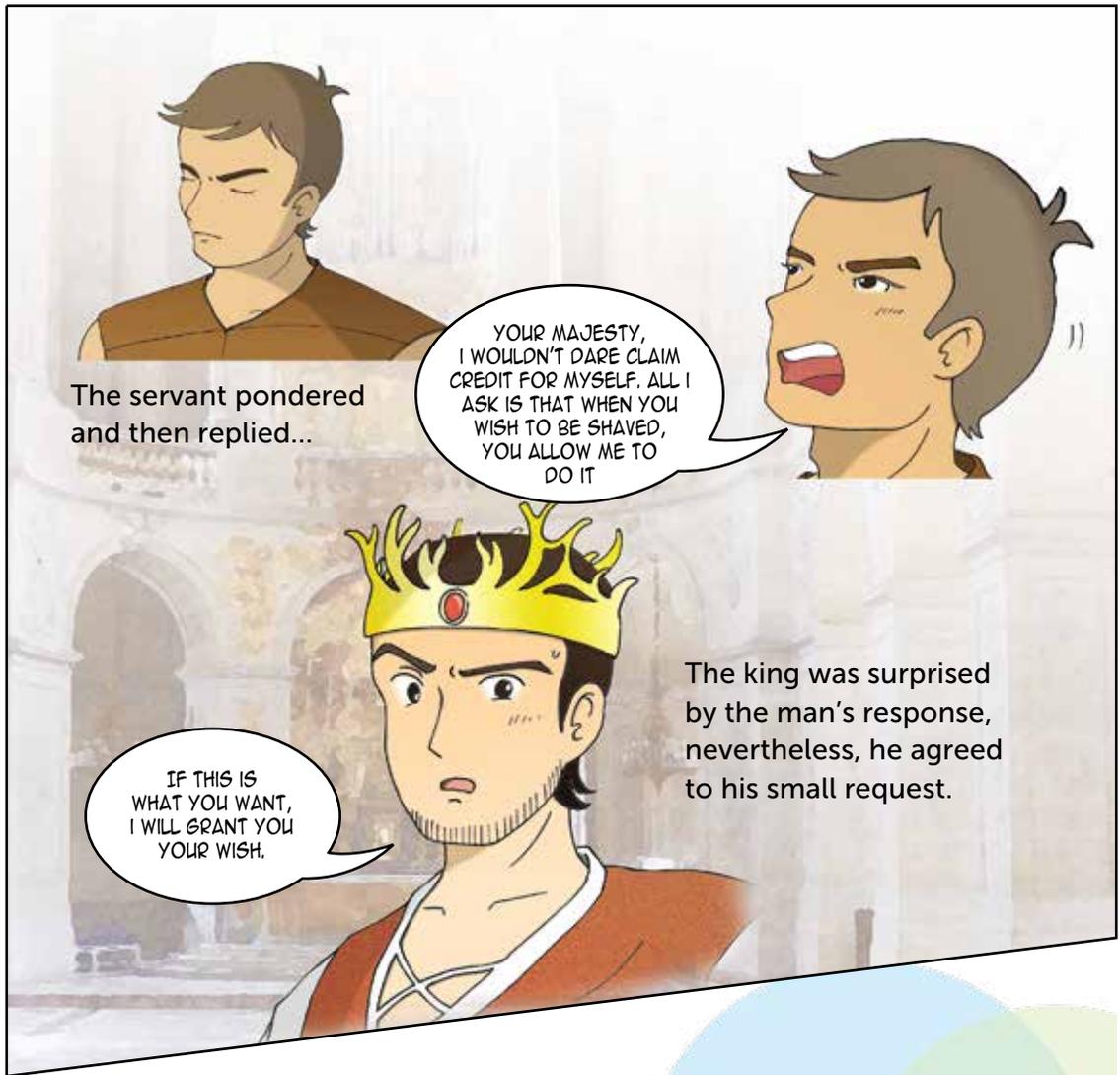


The King's Beard

There was once a king who had a loyal servant. He was so faithful and courageous that he risked his life and limb to save the King in a battle.

The king was extremely grateful and said to the man...

YOU MAY HAVE
ANYTHING YOUR HEART
DESIRES. WHAT WOULD
YOU LIKE AS A
REWARD?



The servant pondered and then replied...

YOUR MAJESTY, I WOULDN'T DARE CLAIM CREDIT FOR MYSELF. ALL I ASK IS THAT WHEN YOU WISH TO BE SHAVED, YOU ALLOW ME TO DO IT

IF THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT, I WILL GRANT YOU YOUR WISH.

The king was surprised by the man's response, nevertheless, he agreed to his small request.

When people heard this story, they laughed at him. He could have become an official, or even received great wealth, yet he chose to ask for such a trivial task.





The Moral is :

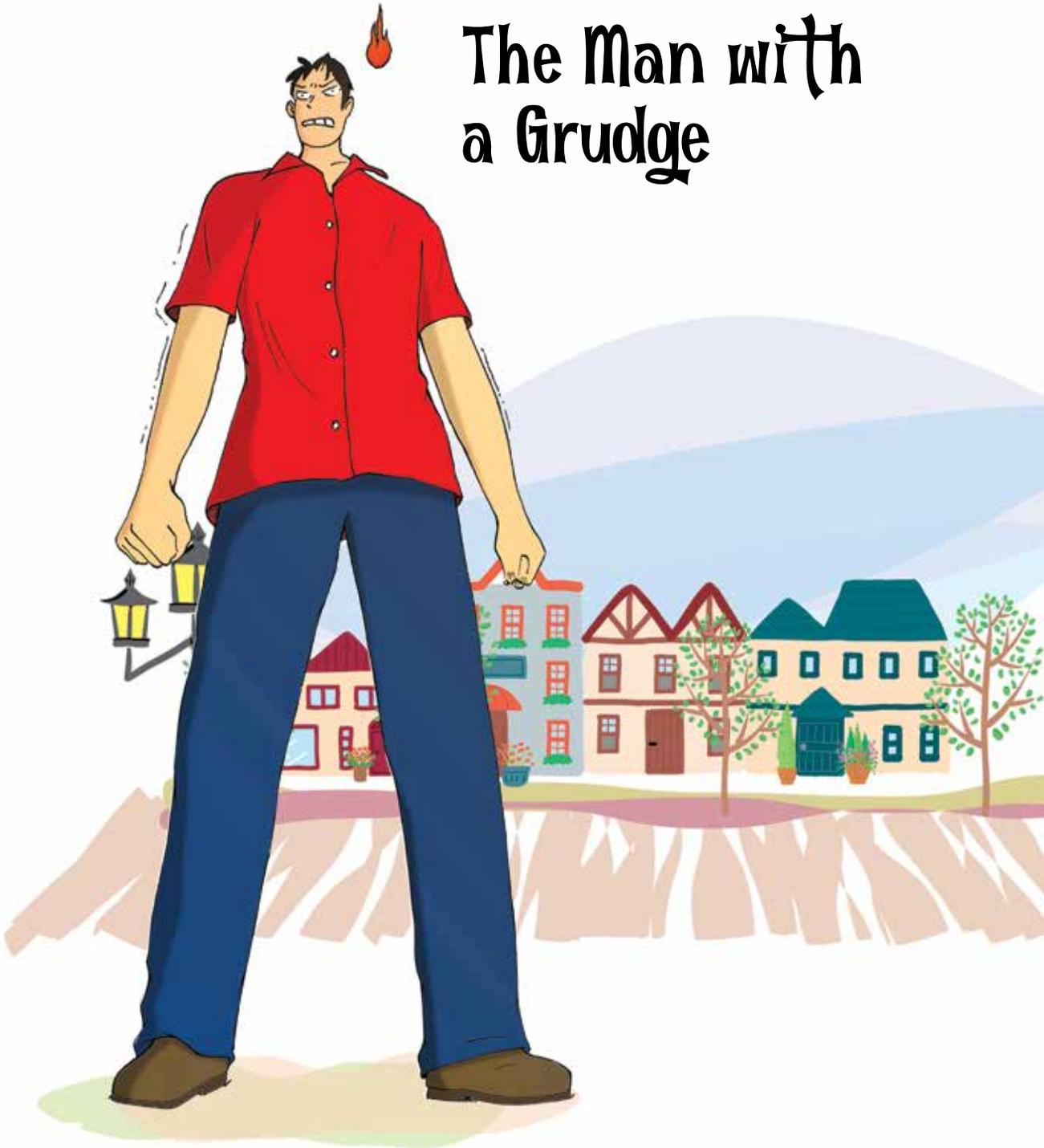
Some people are just like him. The Buddhas perfected their virtues and qualities strenuously for aeons until they became Buddhas. To meet with a Buddha or to encounter the Dharma or the Triple Gem, and yet have a human body at the same time, is exceptionally rare. It is like the story of the blind turtle that swam in the boundless sea but ended up putting its head through a hole in a floating log when it came up to the surface. It is almost impossible for these two things to come together and yet they have.

But samsaric minds are weak. They are content with lesser teachings, never seeking further. As a result, their minds do not develop and they commit unskilful and misguided acts. Not considering to pursue the inconceivable and wondering fruits of Enlightenment, it consequently remains out of their reach.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra



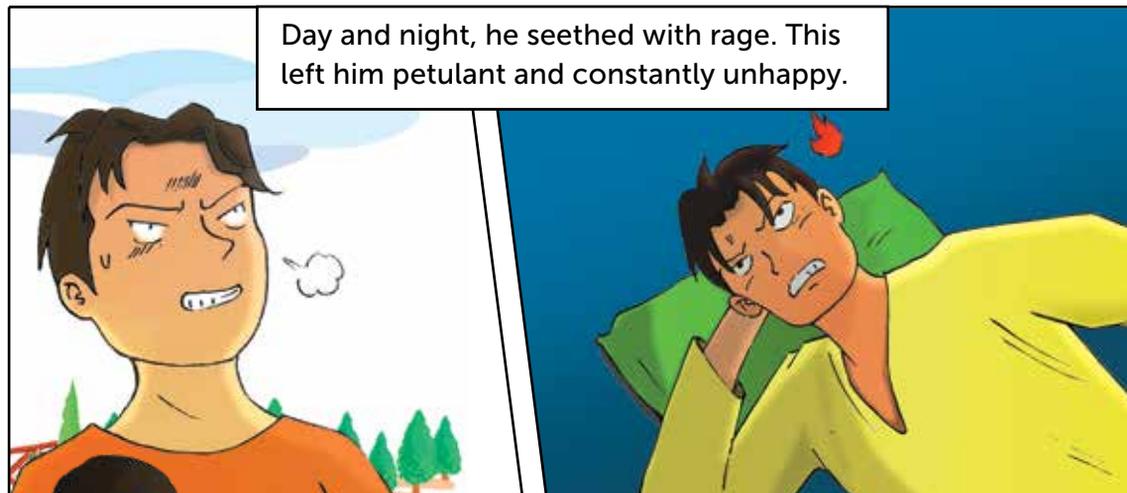
The Man with a Grudge



Once upon a time, a man was burning with anger at another man.



Day and night, he seethed with rage. This left him petulant and constantly unhappy.



One day, a friend dropped by for a visit and seeing the state he was in, his friend asked,





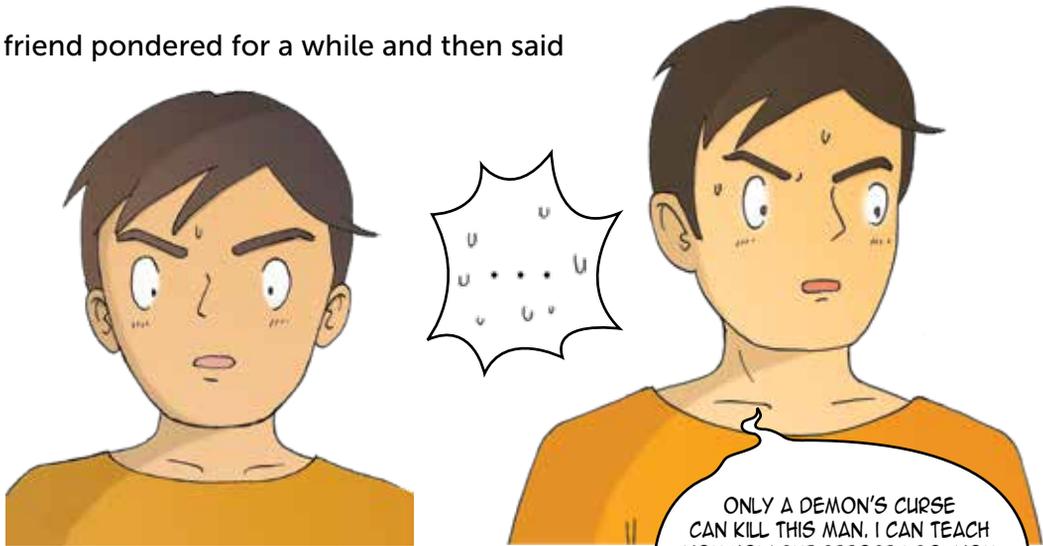
THERE IS THIS
MAN IN THE VILLAGE
WHO SPOKE BADLY
OF ME AND I HAVE
NOT BEEN ABLE TO
GET BACK AT
HIM!

BANG!

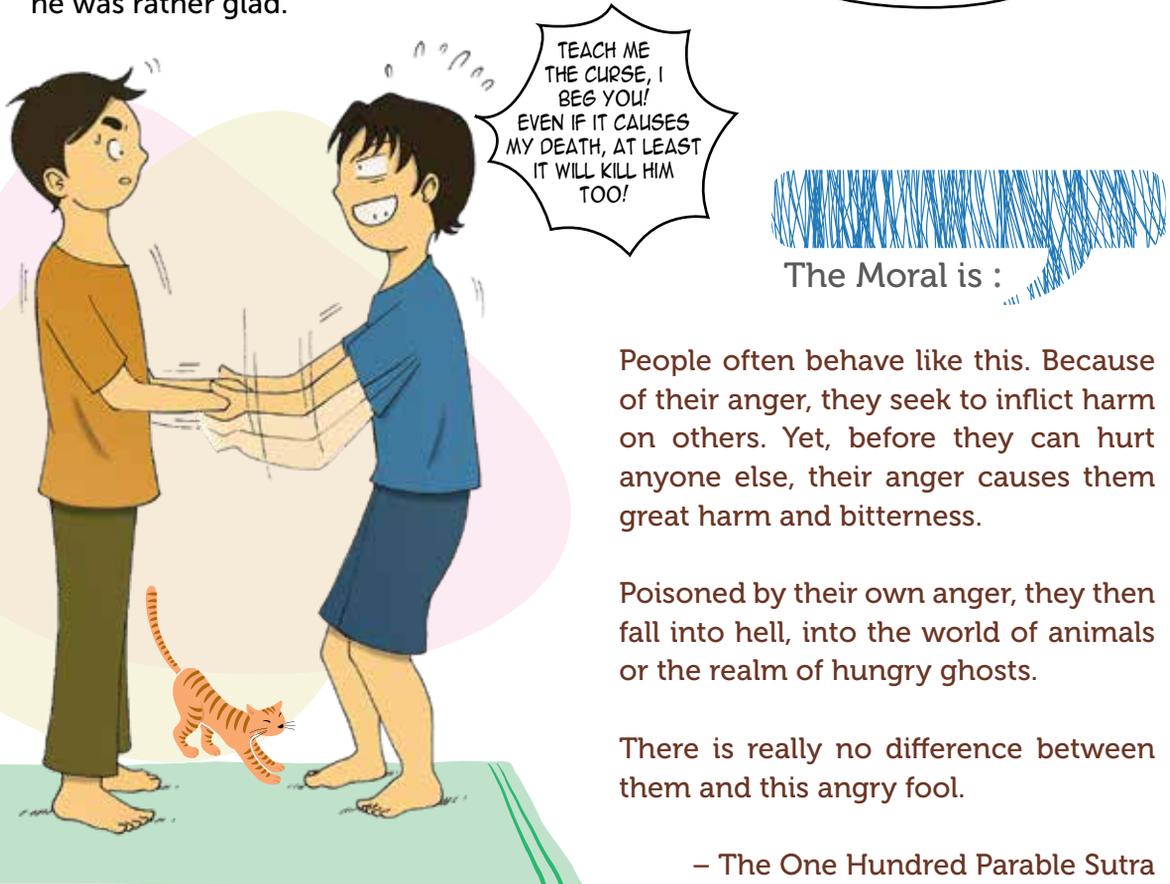


I
WANT MY
REVENGE!! AND
IT IS DRIVING
ME NUTS
TRYING TO
THINK OF A
PLAN TO
DO IT!!

His friend pondered for a while and then said

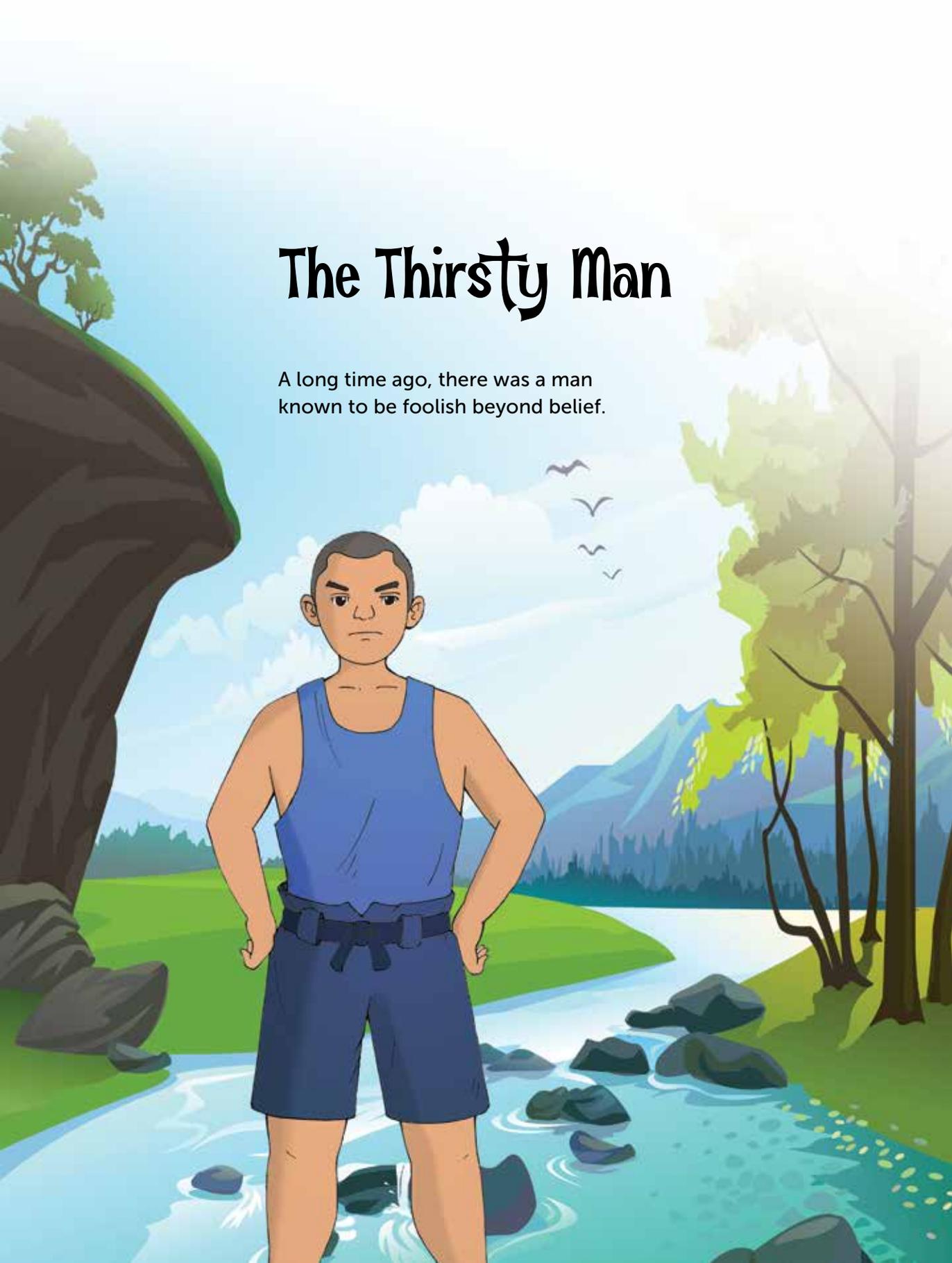


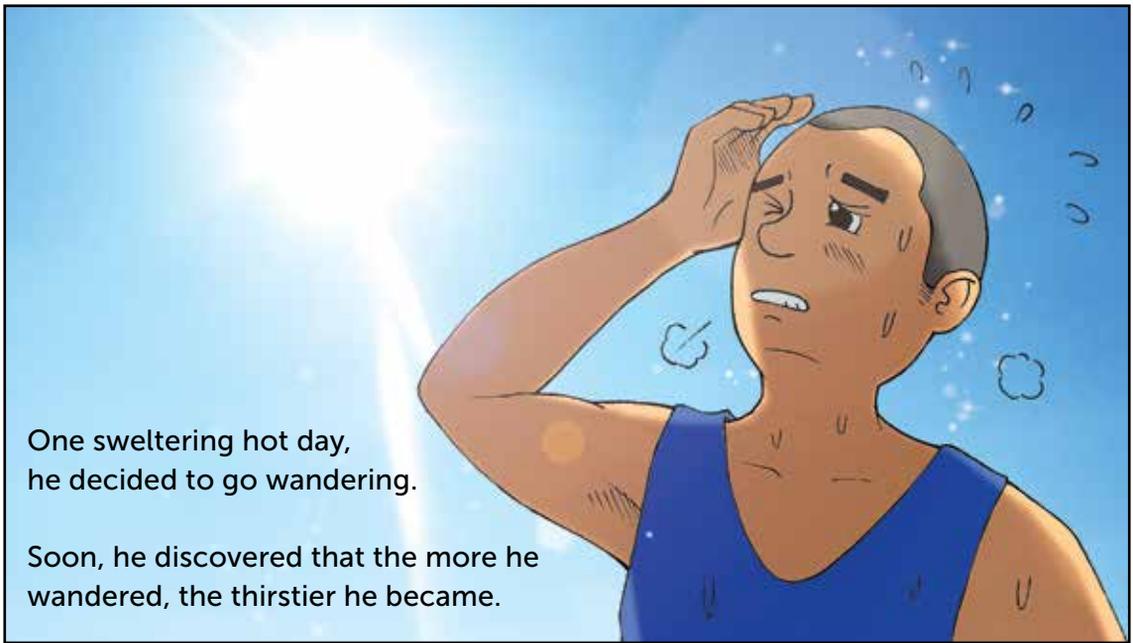
When the man heard this, he was not disturbed or dissuaded at all. In fact, he was rather glad.



The Thirsty Man

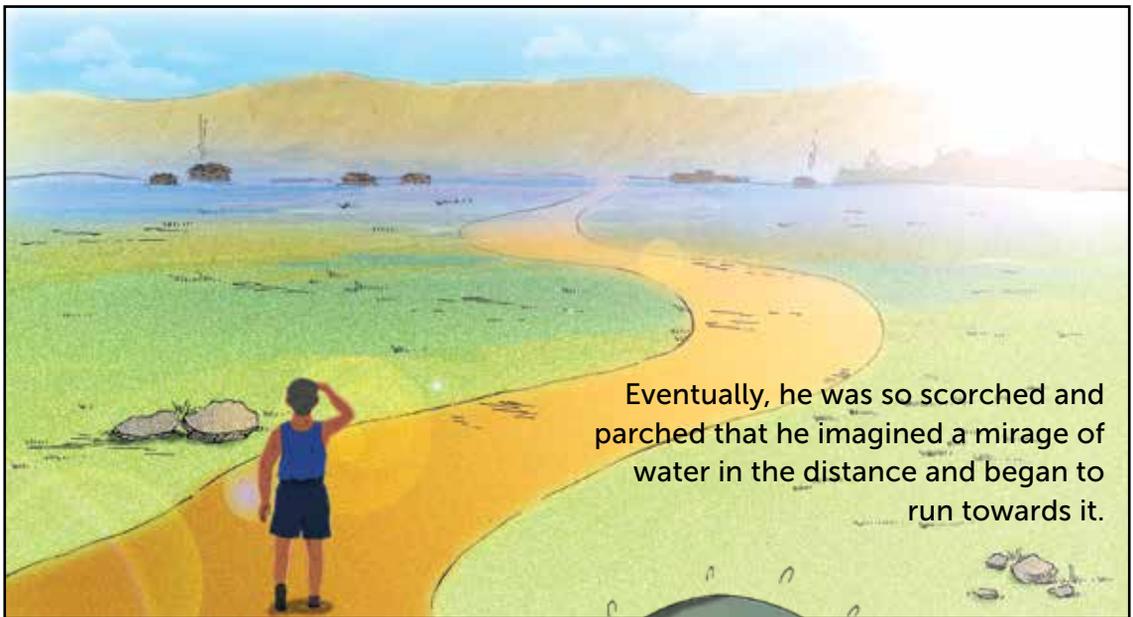
A long time ago, there was a man known to be foolish beyond belief.





One sweltering hot day,
he decided to go wandering.

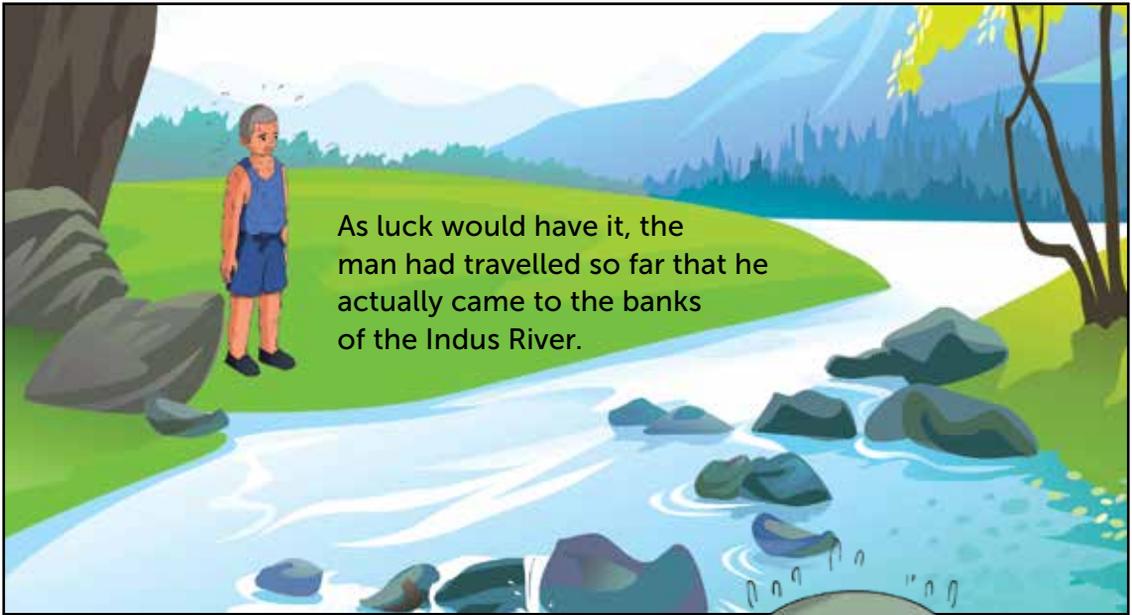
Soon, he discovered that the more he
wandered, the thirstier he became.



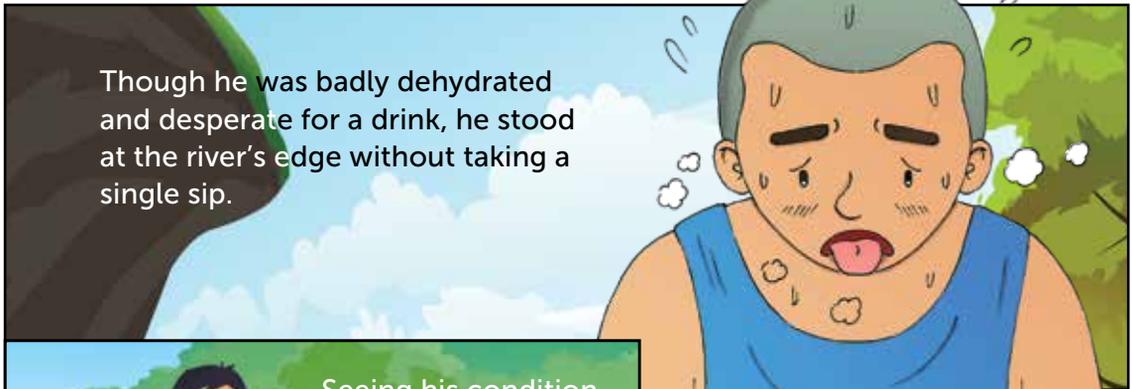
Eventually, he was so scorched and
parched that he imagined a mirage of
water in the distance and began to
run towards it.

All day long, he chased after
the mirage which perpetually
seemed out of his reach
until he was sticking out his
tongue in thirst.

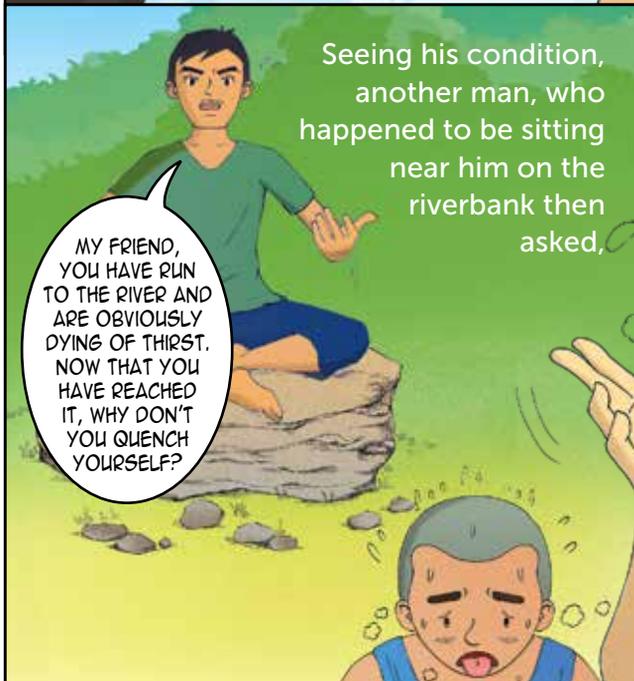




As luck would have it, the man had travelled so far that he actually came to the banks of the Indus River.



Though he was badly dehydrated and desperate for a drink, he stood at the river's edge without taking a single sip.



Seeing his condition, another man, who happened to be sitting near him on the riverbank then asked,

MY FRIEND, YOU HAVE RUN TO THE RIVER AND ARE OBVIOUSLY DYING OF THIRST. NOW THAT YOU HAVE REACHED IT, WHY DON'T YOU QUENCH YOURSELF?

The foolish man replied,



I'LL BE OKAY, BUT IF YOU LIKE, PLEASE QUENCH YOUR THIRST. I WANT A DRINK, BUT THIS AMOUNT OF WATER IS FAR TOO MUCH FOR ME. THERE IS NO WAY IN THE WORLD THAT I CAN FINISH IT.



The Moral is :

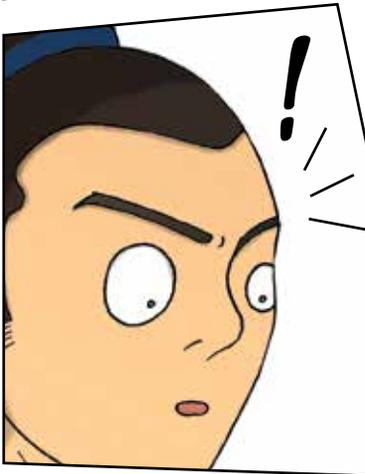
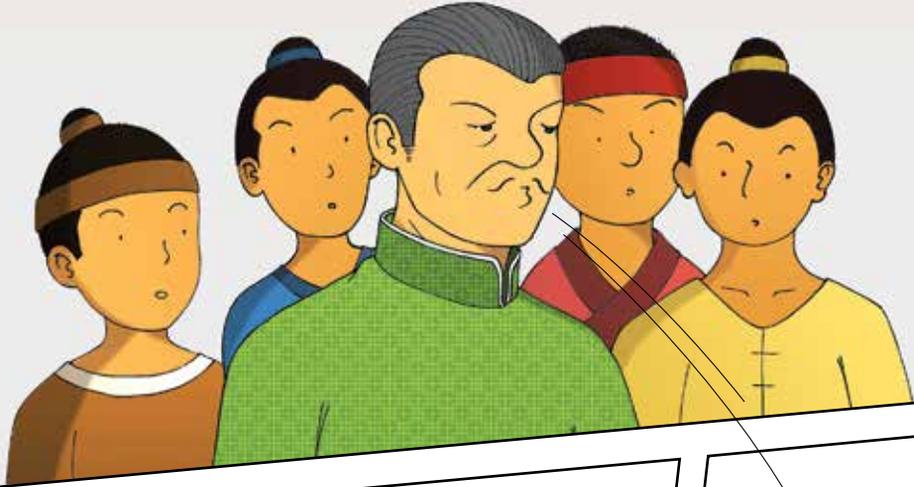
This fool is like the person who misunderstands the basic teachings of the Buddha. Afraid that he will never be able to maintain all of the precepts, he refuses to receive even one. Due to this, it is likely he will never attain true understanding but be doomed to roam forever in samsara. Do not be such a fool.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra

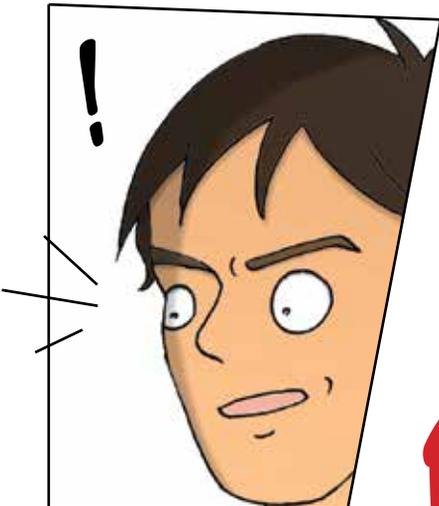
The Rich Man's Spittle



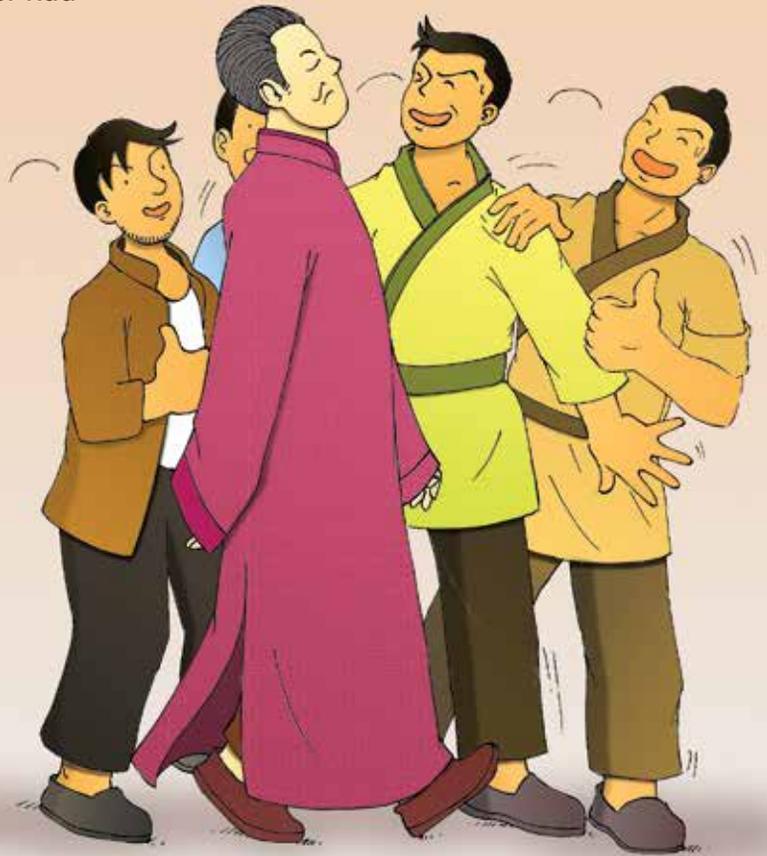
Long ago, there was a very rich man who had many treasures. He was often surrounded by people who were quick to please him at every chance, wanting to gain his favour.



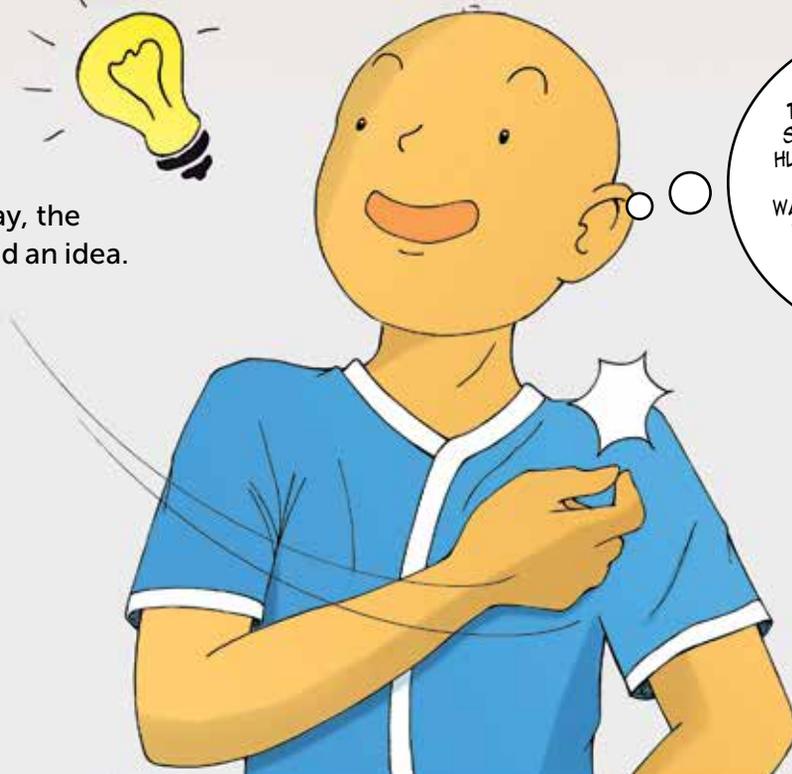
The rich man could not even spit without somebody in attendance hurrying to tread his spittle into the ground.



But there was a fool who never had an opportunity to do this.

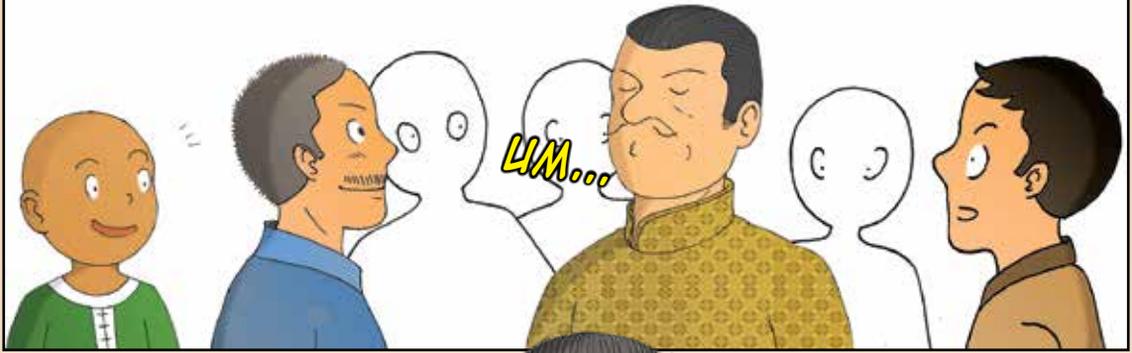


One day, the fool had an idea.



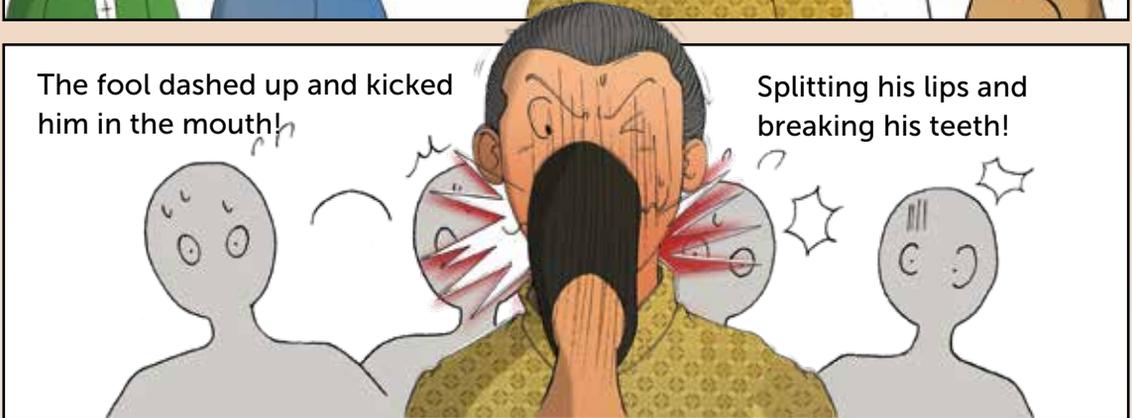
IF THAT MAN'S SPITTLE TOUCHES THE GROUND, FOR SURE, SOMEBODY ELSE WILL HURRIEDLY STEP ON IT BEFORE I DO. SO I SHALL KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE AND STEP ON IT WHEN HE'S ABOUT TO SPIT. WHAT WOULD PLEASE THE RICH MAN MORE THAN THAT?

Sure enough, the very next day, as the rich man was about to spit...



The fool dashed up and kicked him in the mouth!

Splitting his lips and breaking his teeth!

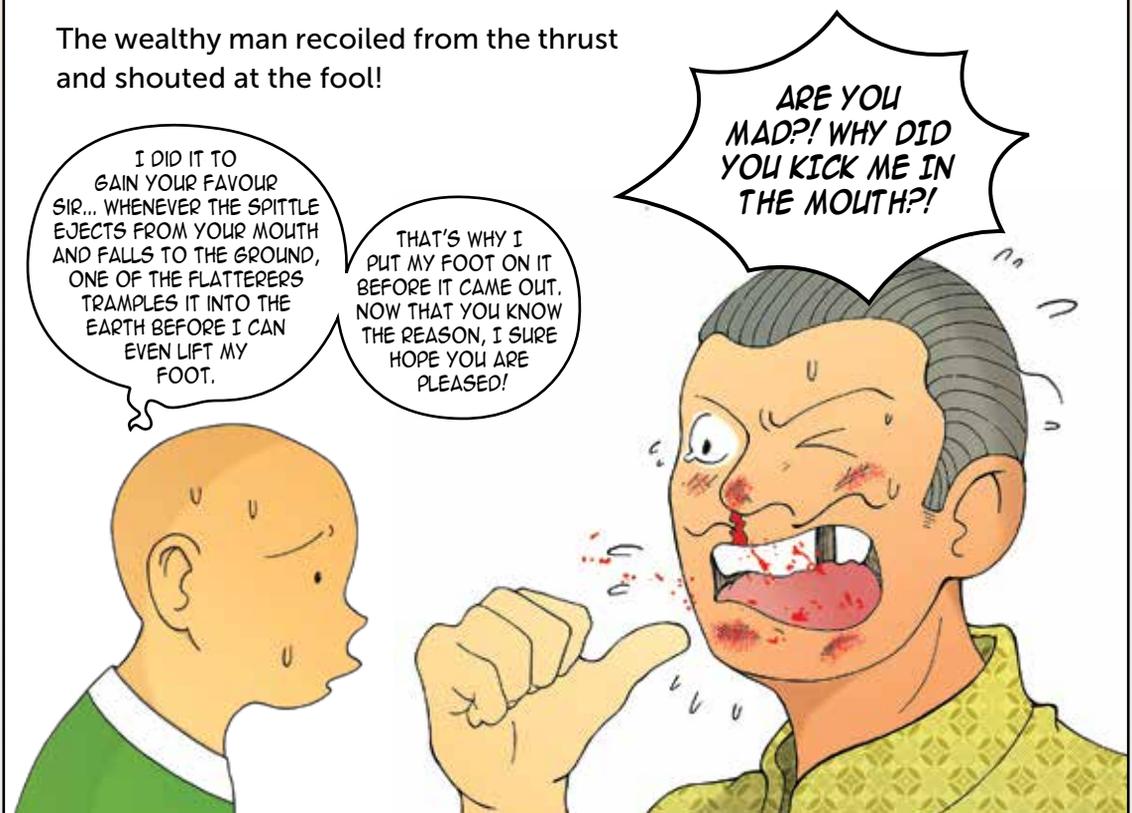


The wealthy man recoiled from the thrust and shouted at the fool!

I DID IT TO GAIN YOUR FAVOUR SIR... WHENEVER THE SPITTLE EJECTS FROM YOUR MOUTH AND FALLS TO THE GROUND, ONE OF THE FLATTERERS TRAMPLES IT INTO THE EARTH BEFORE I CAN EVEN LIFT MY FOOT.

THAT'S WHY I PUT MY FOOT ON IT BEFORE IT CAME OUT. NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE REASON, I SURE HOPE YOU ARE PLEASED!

ARE YOU MAD?! WHY DID YOU KICK ME IN THE MOUTH?!





The Moral is :

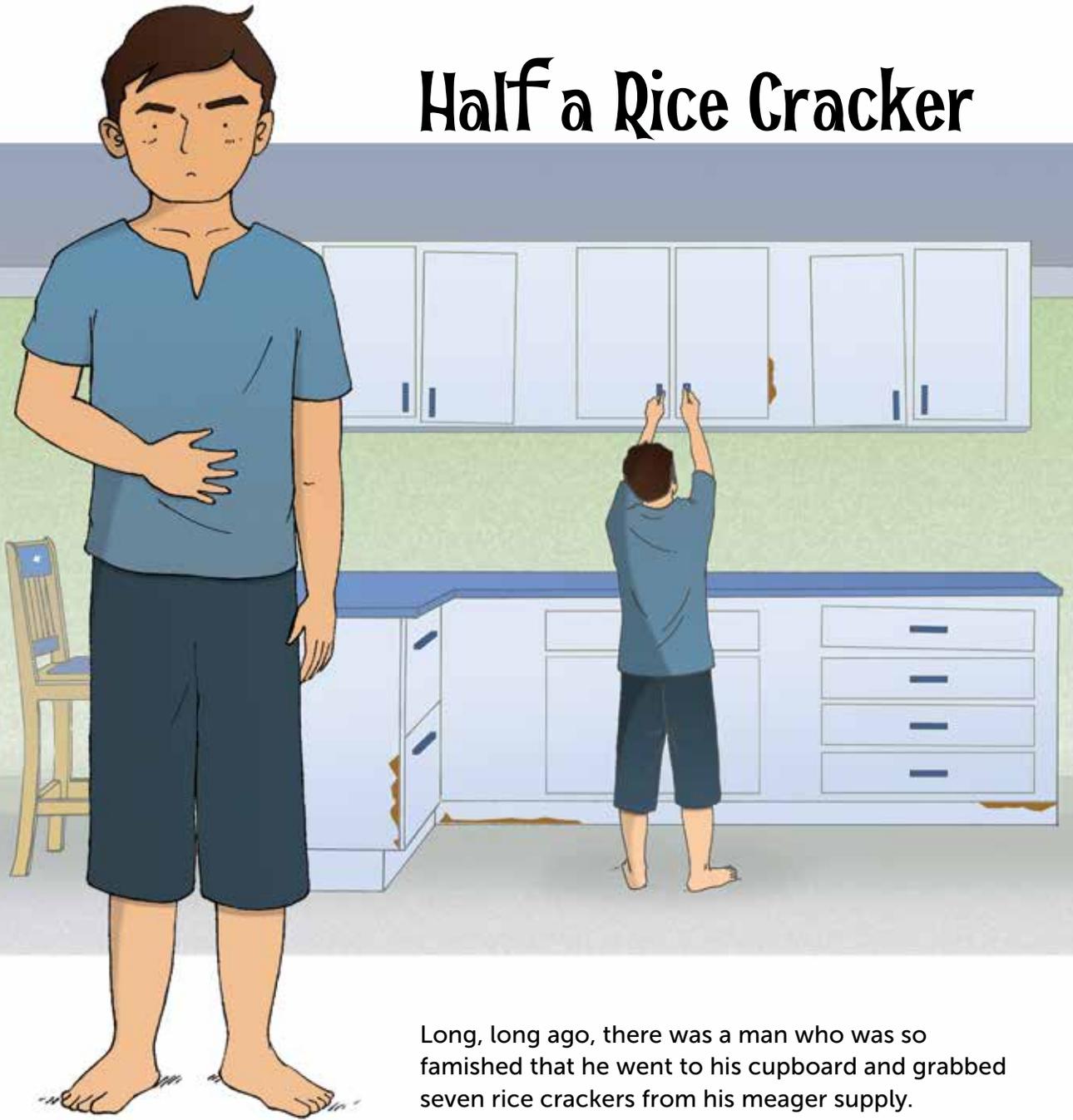
Certainly he is a great fool not to understand that there is a time for everything. If someone tries to force good results before the time is ripe, he will only create pain, hardship and difficulty.

For this reason, people should realise when it is the time to do something, and when it is not.

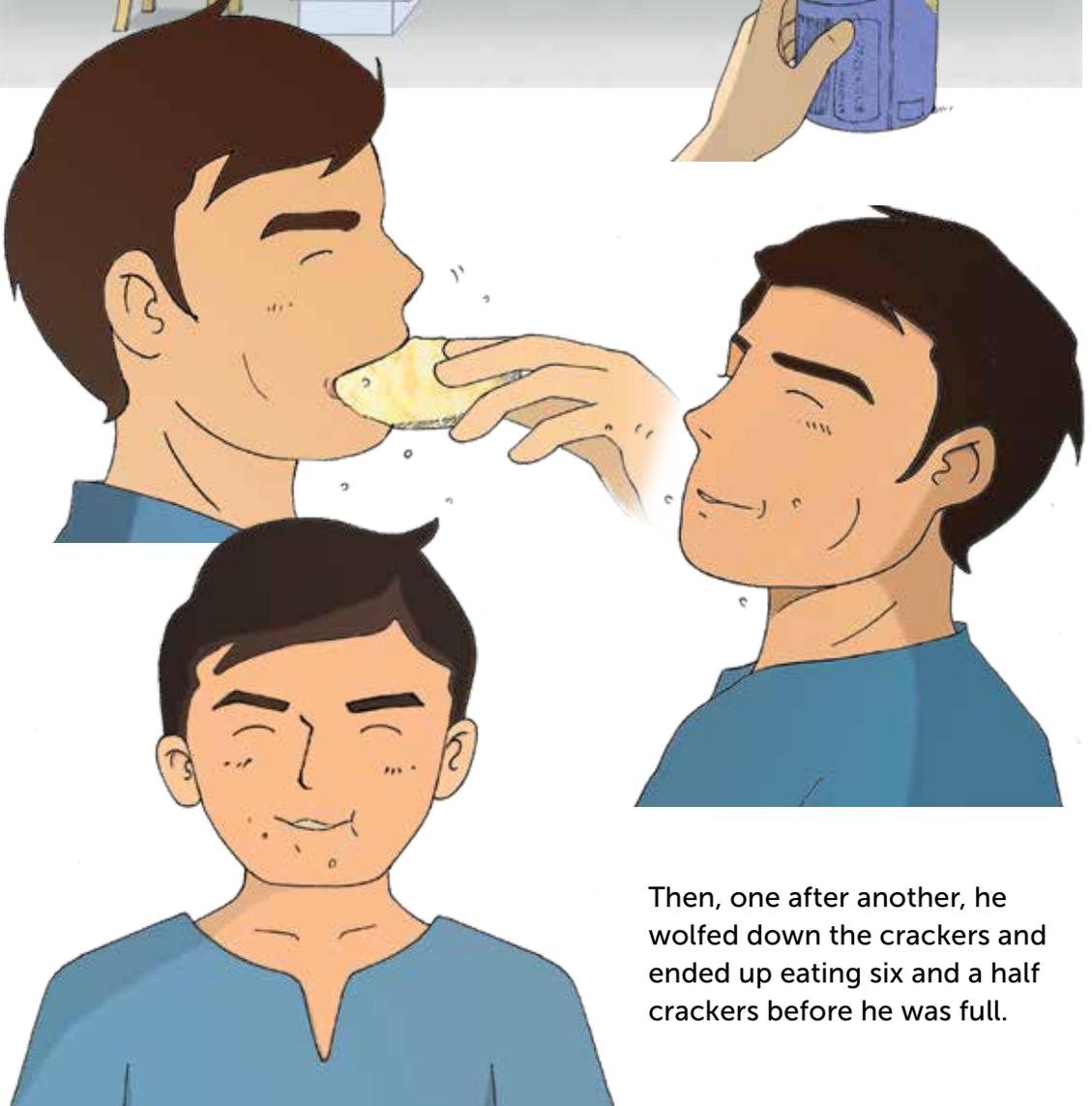
– The One Hundred Parable Sutra



Half a Rice Cracker



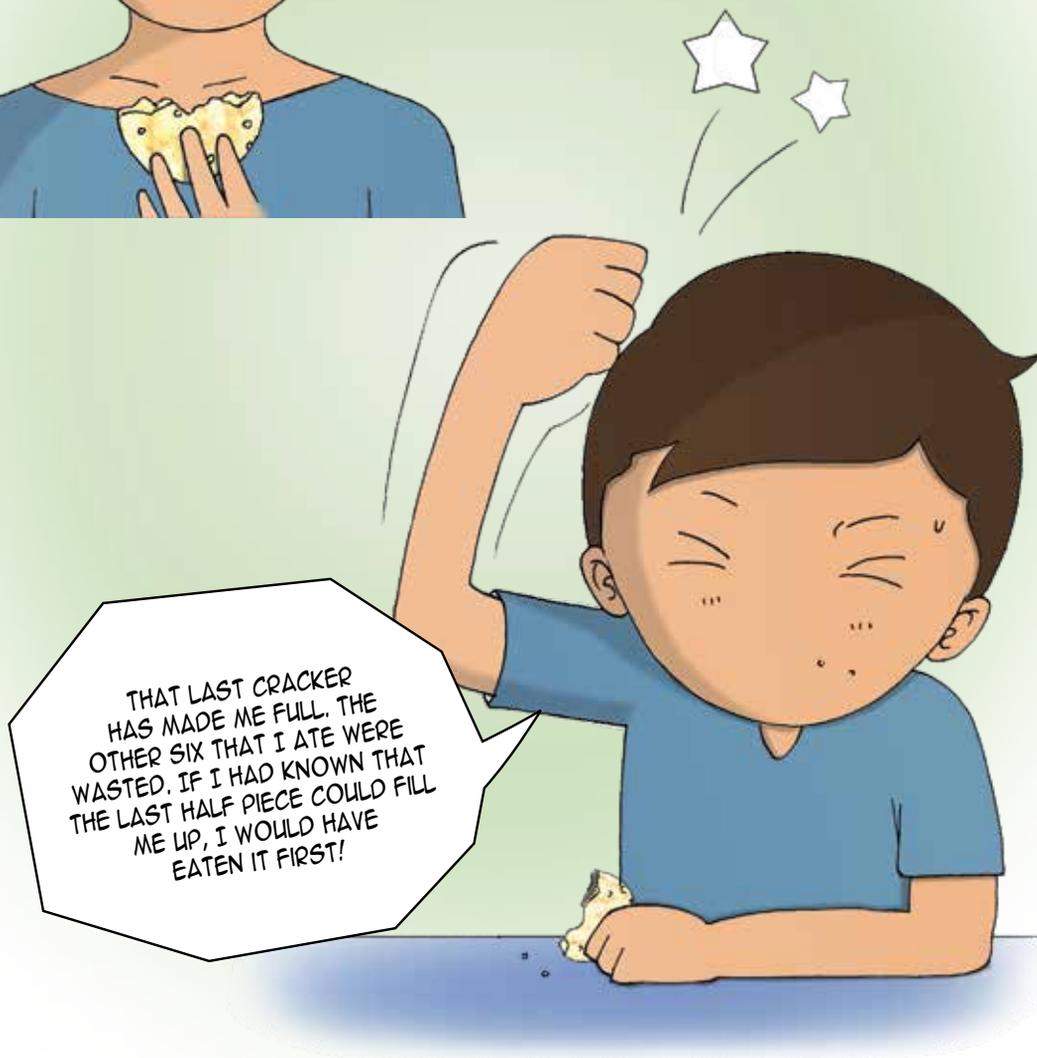
Long, long ago, there was a man who was so famished that he went to his cupboard and grabbed seven rice crackers from his meager supply.



Then, one after another, he wolfed down the crackers and ended up eating six and a half crackers before he was full.



As he looked at the half cracker that remained in his hand... he regretted what he had done and struck himself angrily.



THAT LAST CRACKER HAS MADE ME FULL. THE OTHER SIX THAT I ATE WERE WASTED. IF I HAD KNOWN THAT THE LAST HALF PIECE COULD FILL ME UP, I WOULD HAVE EATEN IT FIRST!



The Moral is :

People often behave like this.

Originally, there is no pleasure, but people with little understanding create an idea of pleasure, just like the fool who mistakenly believed he was full from eating only half a rice cracker. Then they decide that having great wealth is pleasurable and begin to pursue it. The truth is that seeking wealth, obtaining wealth and losing it are all very painful. Things like clothes and food are real pleasures only when they satisfy real needs.

Look carefully and you will see that the thought of pleasure arises only in the midst of pain.

As the Buddha has told us, "In the past, present, and future there is no ease, only pain. But, nonetheless, those with little understanding are confused and mistakenly cling to the idea of pleasure."

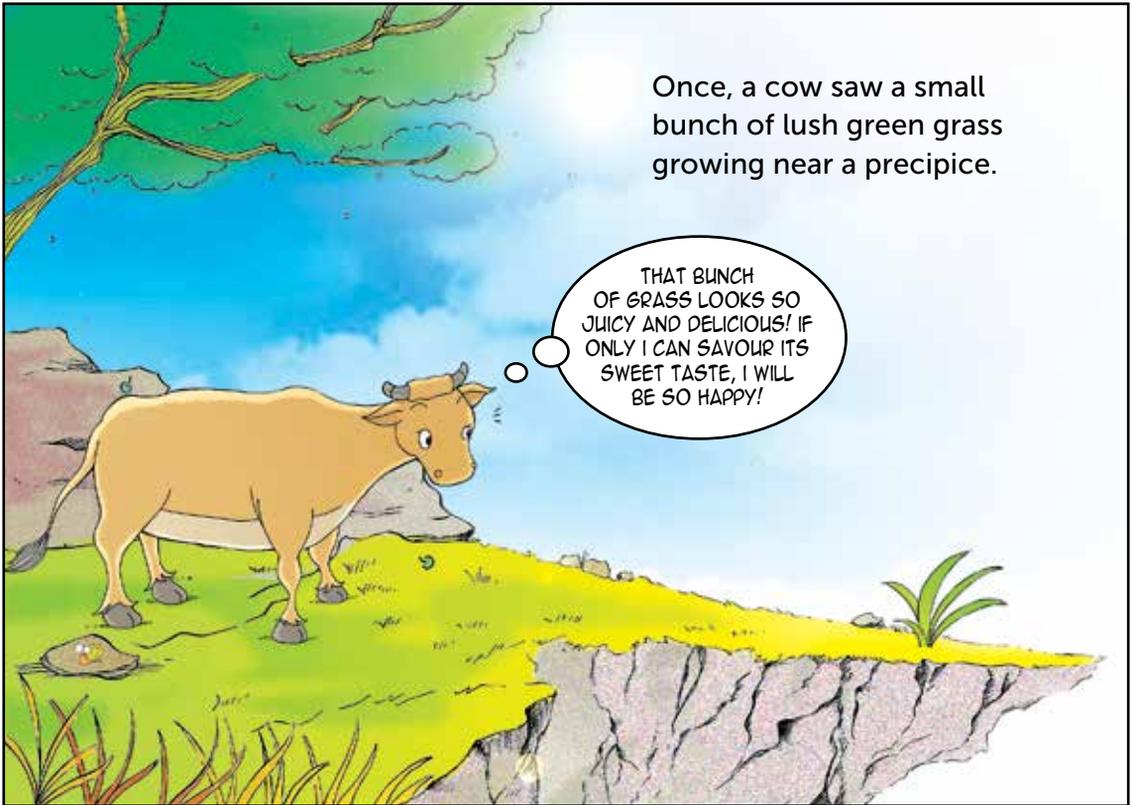
Don't let yourself be caught with such wrong views.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra



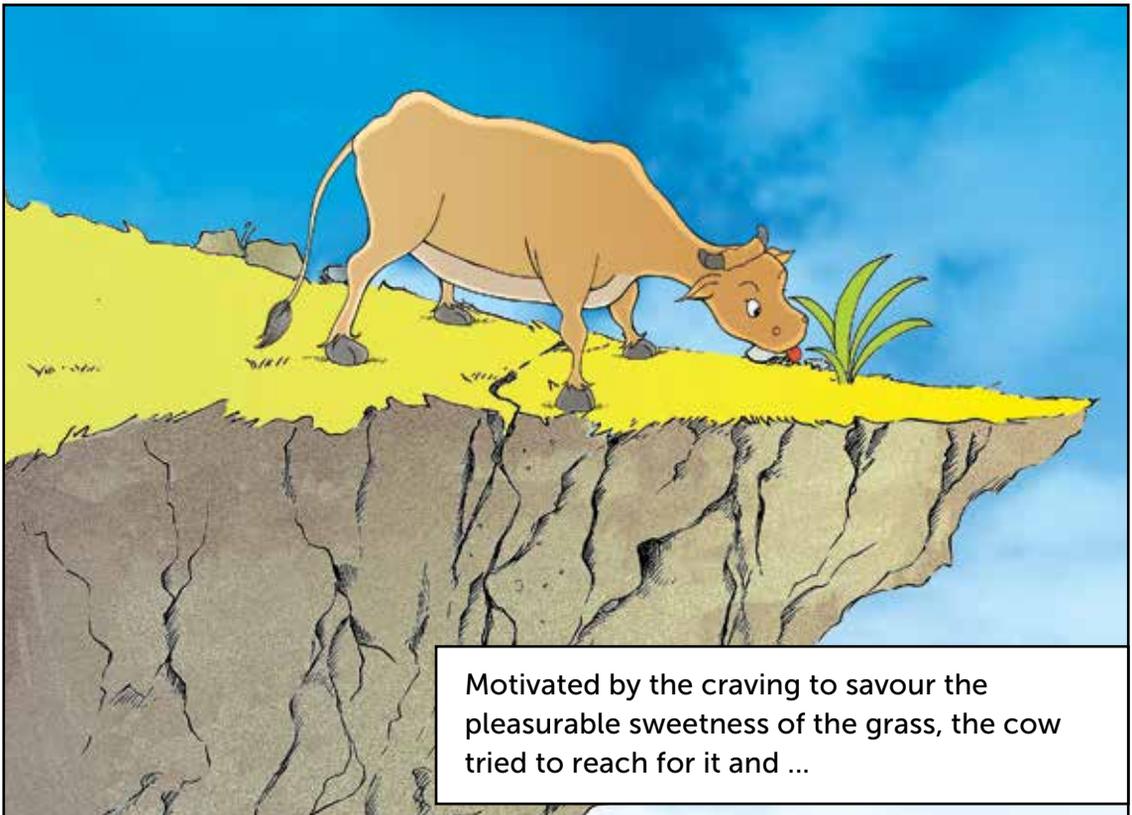
The Cow on the Precipice



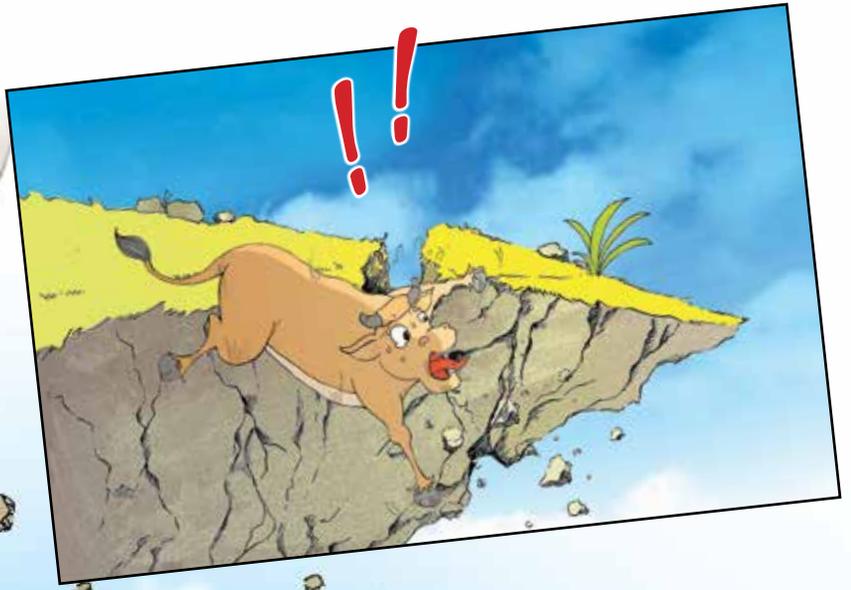


Once, a cow saw a small bunch of lush green grass growing near a precipice.

THAT BUNCH OF GRASS LOOKS SO JUICY AND DELICIOUS! IF ONLY I CAN SAVOUR ITS SWEET TASTE, I WILL BE SO HAPPY!



Motivated by the craving to savour the pleasurable sweetness of the grass, the cow tried to reach for it and ...



... fell over the precipice, killing itself.



The Moral is :

A worldly being who seeks only the happiness of this life is just like the cow. His attachment brings him suffering instead of the happiness he expects. Attached to all sorts of pleasurable experiences, he runs after them without seeing the danger, falls and dies.

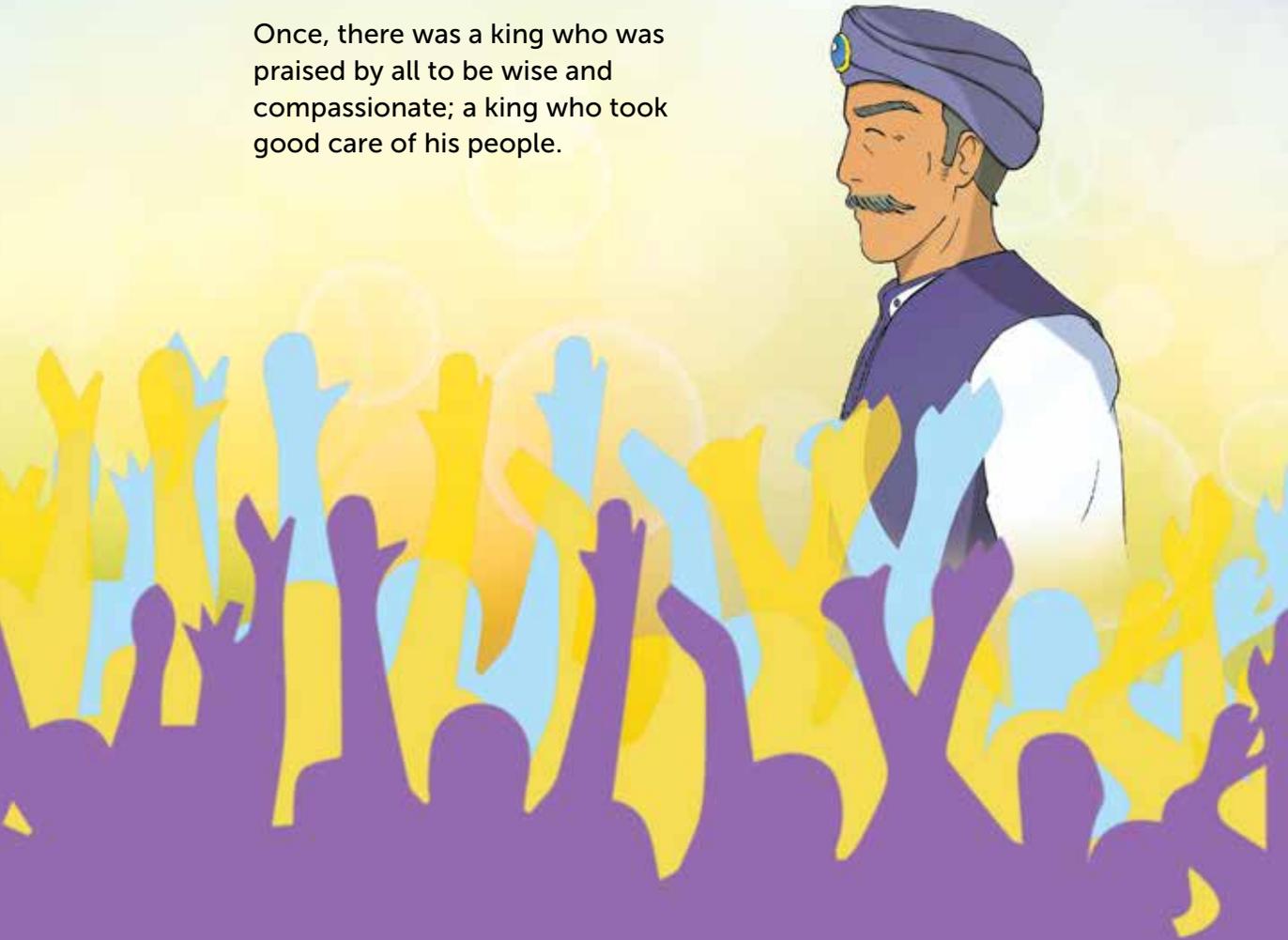
When we are attached and solely seeking the happiness of this life, whatever we do only becomes non-virtue. Just like the cow that falls over the precipice while attempting to savour the happiness of the bunch of grass, we are completely deceived by attachment. Even though we want to be happy, the result of our non-virtuous actions is only rebirth in the lower realms.

So be mindful of the eight worldly concerns in your daily life, strive to abandon them and perform the ten virtues instead.

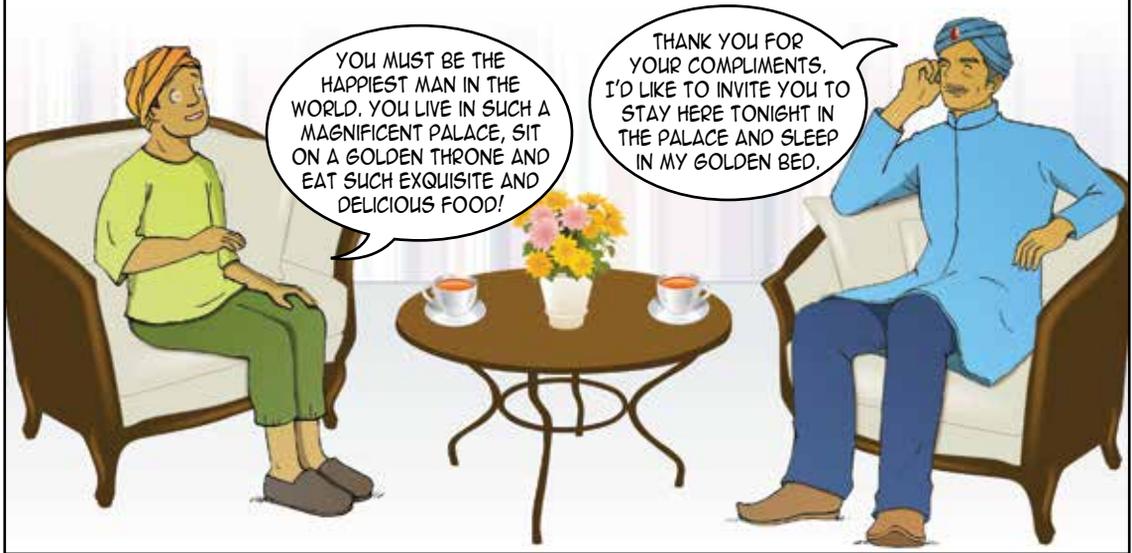


A King's Life

Once, there was a king who was praised by all to be wise and compassionate; a king who took good care of his people.



One day, a man came up to the king.



The man was overjoyed that the king had extended such a great privilege to him. He was served a heavenly gourmet meal before taken to the king's bedroom.





The man tried, but couldn't sleep at all. All night, he was nervous that the sword would fall and kill him at any moment.



The next morning, the king returned.

DID YOU ENJOY MY GOLDEN BED?



NO, I COULD NOT.



THIS IS HOW IT IS FOR ME, TOO. YOU THOUGHT I WAS DELIGHTFULLY ENJOYING GOOD FOOD AND LUXURIES, BUT I TAKE THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNTRY'S WELFARE ON MY SHOULDERS. I CONSTANTLY WORRY ABOUT HOW TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE. I EXPERIENCE NO PEACE WHATSOEVER.



The Moral is :

Most people often think, "I will be so happy when I'm rich. My life will be perfect and my problems will go away." Pleasures, material possessions and great wealth may appear to bring joy, but we can't be sure of what lies below the surface. Underneath, they may bring a lot of suffering. Wealth and possessions may be useful. But are they the real roots of happiness?

Engrossed in momentary pleasures, sentient beings fail to reach the ultimate goal - enlightenment - and instead cycle in samsara. But as long as we are in samsara, dissatisfaction is unavoidable due to its nature of change and impermanence. However much we try to protect our comfort or wealth, when the time of death comes, we leave empty-handed.

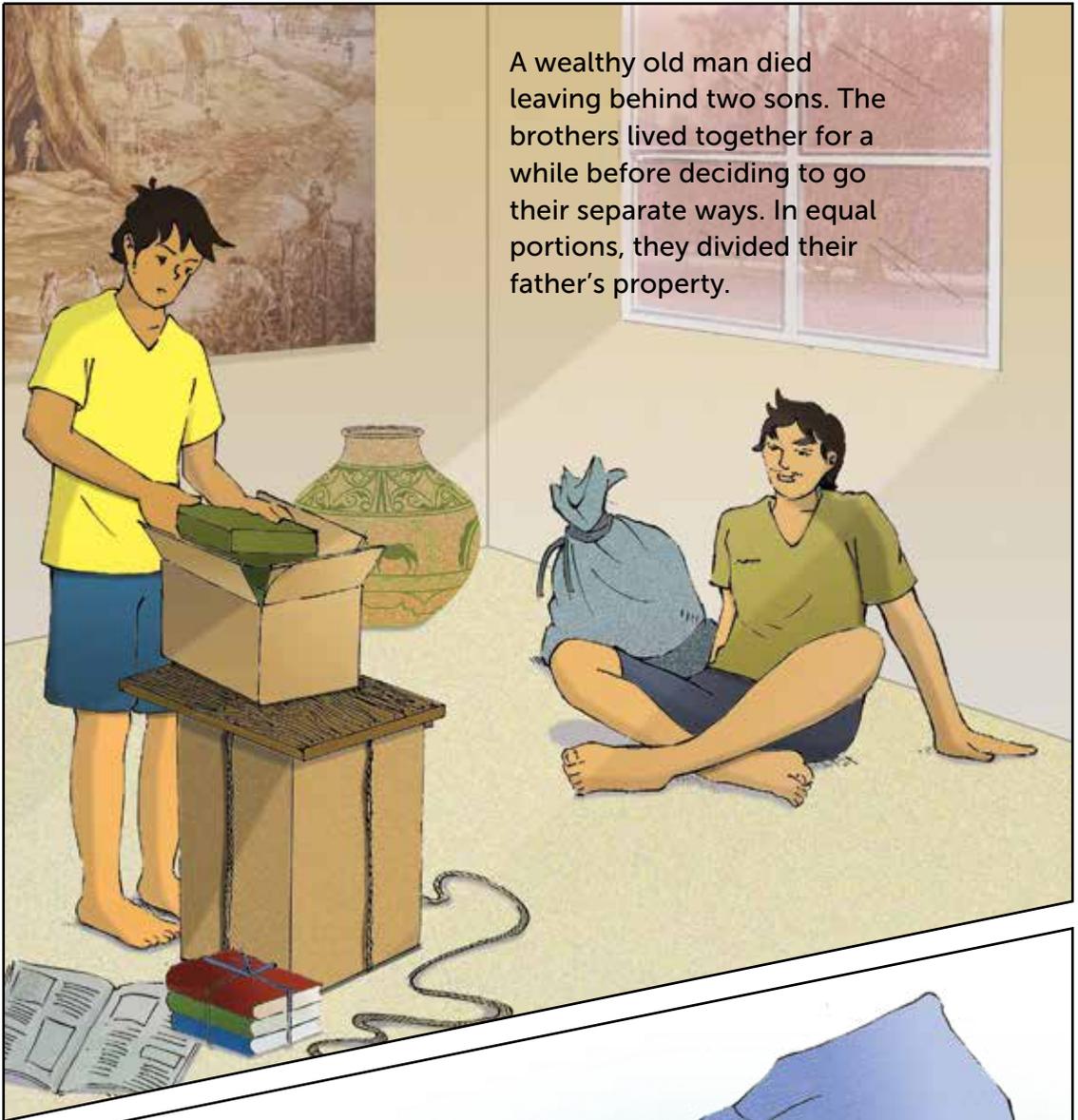
So contemplate the four foundations and practise non-attachment and the precious Dharma instead. It will help you earn the infinite wealth of enlightened qualities, standing you in good stead when death comes knocking.



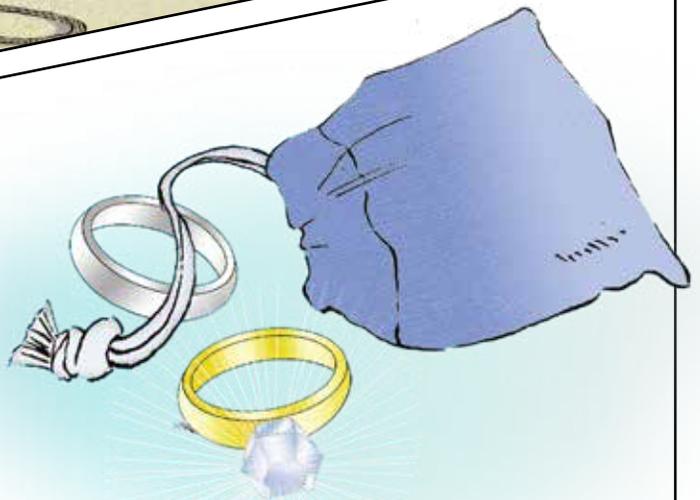
The Two Rings

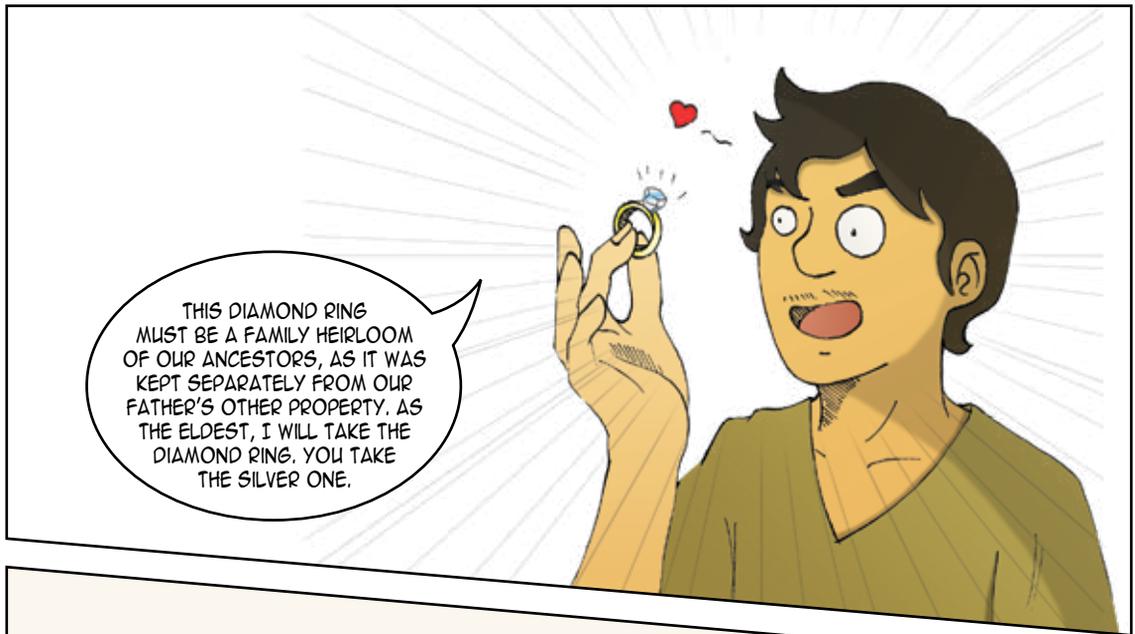


A wealthy old man died leaving behind two sons. The brothers lived together for a while before deciding to go their separate ways. In equal portions, they divided their father's property.



One day, they came upon a small packet belonging to their father. It contained two rings, an expensive diamond ring and a cheap silver ring.





THIS DIAMOND RING MUST BE A FAMILY HEIRLOOM OF OUR ANCESTORS, AS IT WAS KEPT SEPARATELY FROM OUR FATHER'S OTHER PROPERTY. AS THE ELDEST, I WILL TAKE THE DIAMOND RING. YOU TAKE THE SILVER ONE.

The younger brother smiled, agreed and they went their separate ways.



WHY DID OUR FATHER KEEP THIS SILVER RING THAT IS WORTH LITTLE?

Then he saw the engraved words on the ring. "This too shall pass"

THIS MUST BE FATHER'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

Time passed. The elder brother was highly elated when he was at the peak of his life.



But when his life hit rock bottom, he went into deep depression, and developed high blood pressure and insomnia.

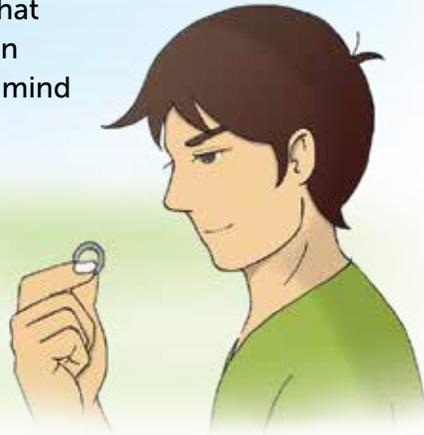
His condition became so bad that he eventually needed electric shock treatment.



WELL, I KNOW THE SITUATION WILL CHANGE, AND IT HAS CHANGED. SO WHAT?

On the other hand, the brother with the silver ring enjoyed the ups that life brought, understanding that they were not permanent.

And when his life hit the lowest point, he looked at his ring and remembered, "This too shall pass." He did not grow depressed or angry, knowing it too would change. As he understood that nothing in life is eternal or carved in stone, he did not lose his peace of mind and so lived a peaceful, happy life.



The Moral is :

If we forget about impermanence and develop attachment to various situations in life, we will suffer when those situations pass away. All situations are more than just impermanent, they are also unsatisfactory. When good things happen to us (getting married, moving into a new home or getting a promotion or a new car), the satisfaction lasts a while and soon passes away, and we will be looking for our next 'success'. Recognising that all things will pass away and are impermanent will help us enjoy the pleasant situations more fully during the brief period when they are in our lives. And when we hit a low point, we will not lose hope because we understand it will not last. Recognising that all things will pass away helps us to enjoy life moment-to-moment, stay centred, and bring balance to our lives.

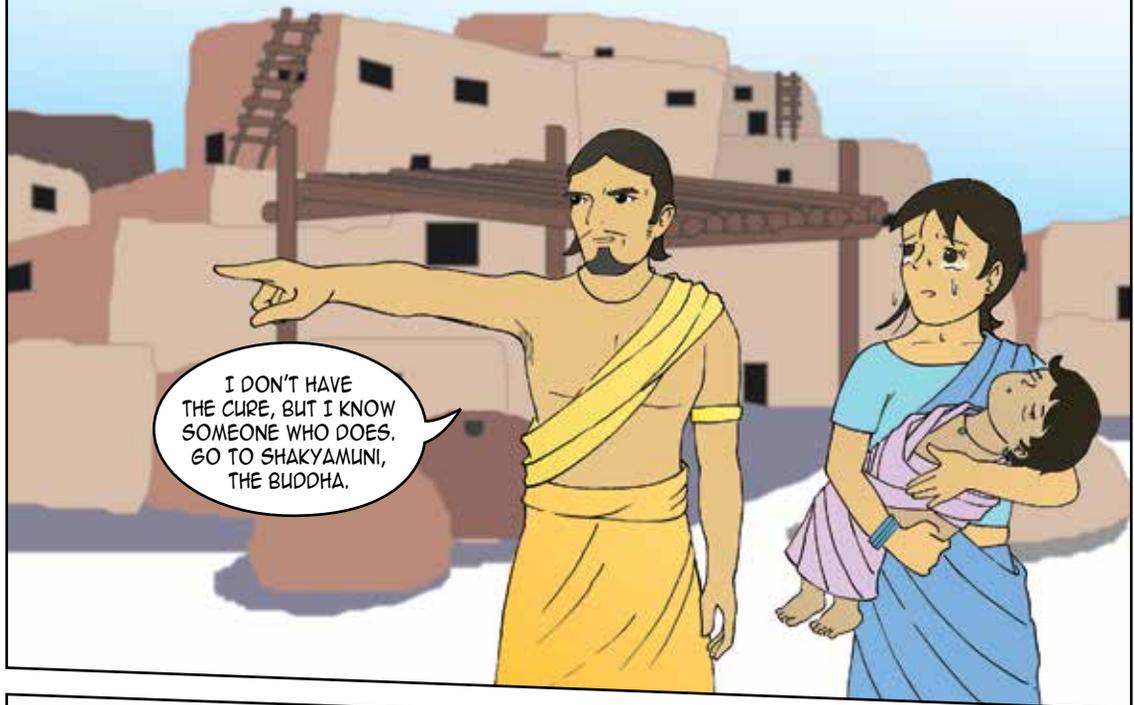
The Mustard Seed

Once upon a time, a young mother named Kisa Gotami lost her only child. The boy was one when he died.

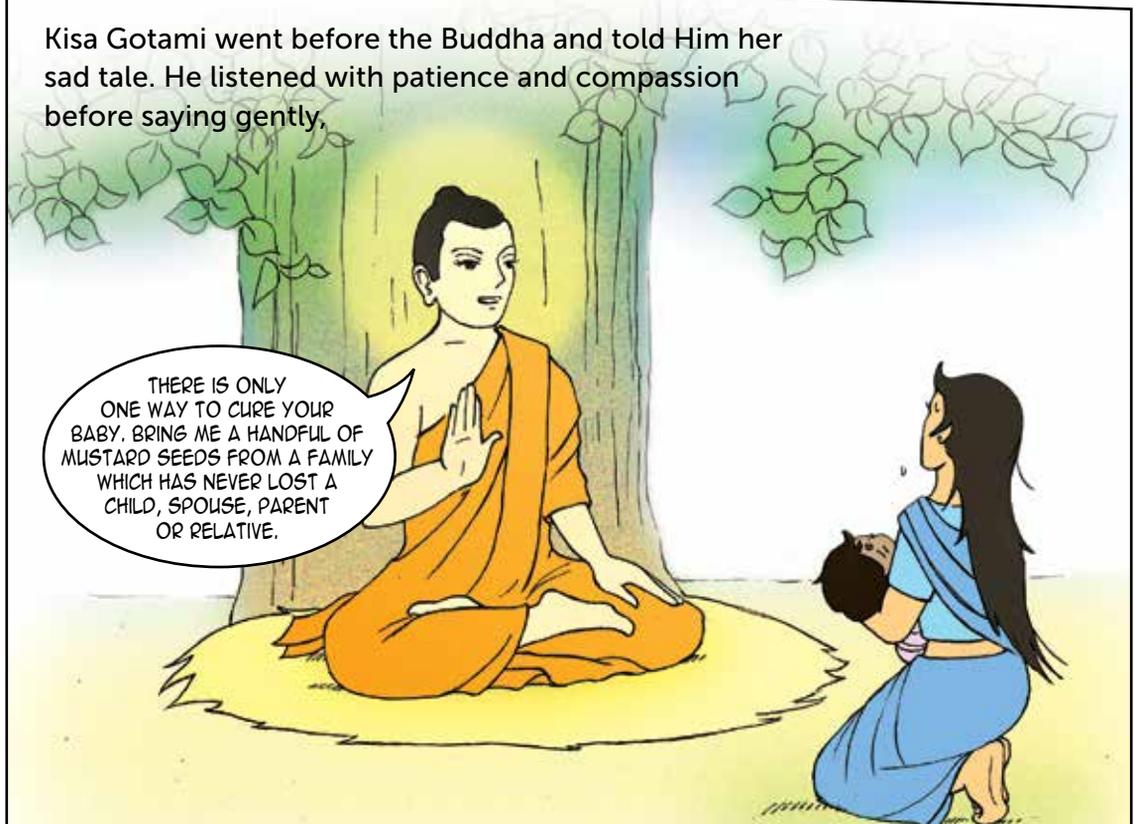
Overcome with grief, she cradled the dead child and went from house to house seeking a medicine that would restore her child to life. Nobody was able to help her.



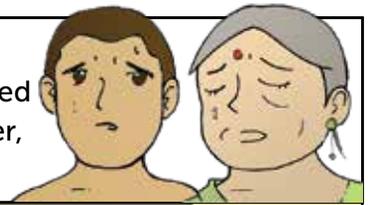
Finally, she met a man who told her,



Kisa Gotami went before the Buddha and told Him her sad tale. He listened with patience and compassion before saying gently,



Going from house to house, she found no household where none had died. Every household had experienced the death of a dearly loved relative – a mother, a father, an uncle, an aunt, a son or a daughter.

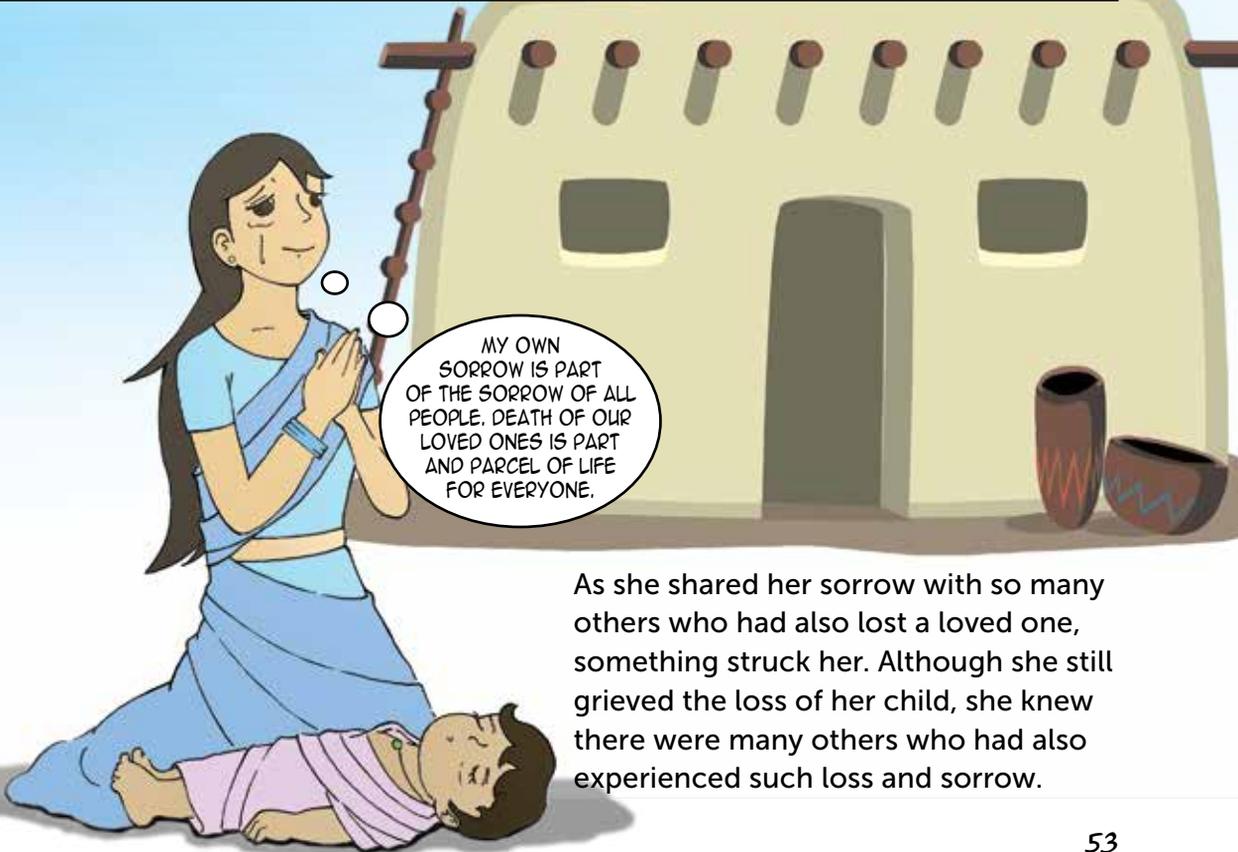


They answered her:

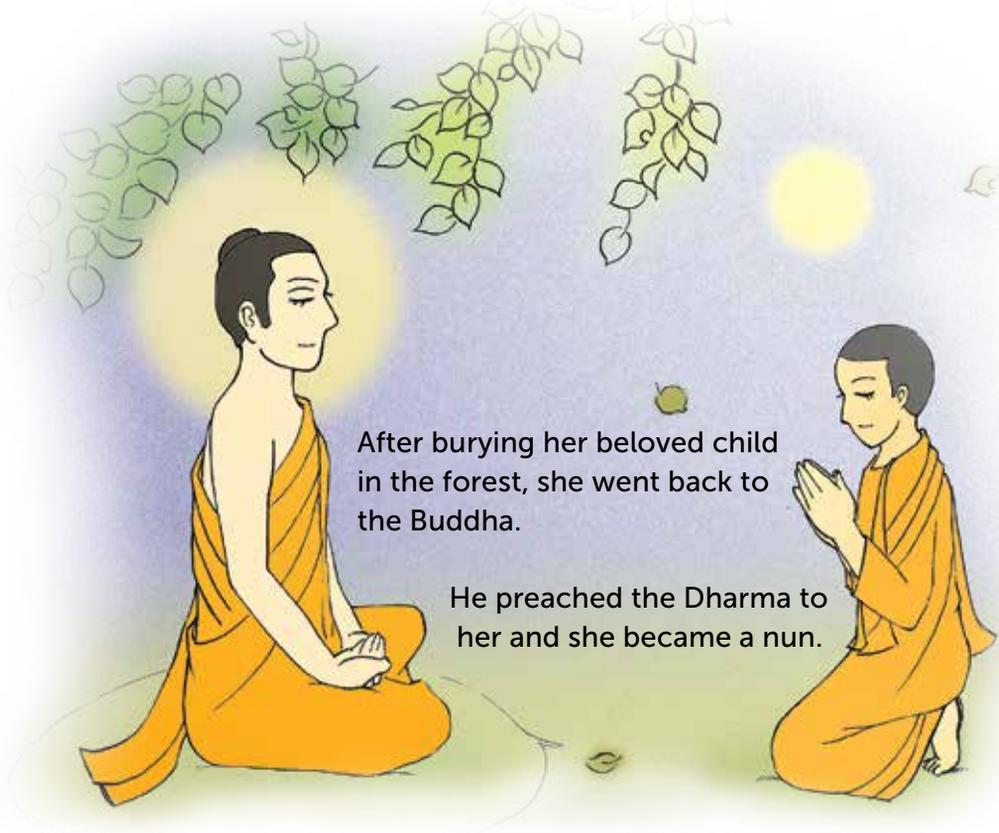
ALAS, THE LIVING ARE FEW, BUT THE DEAD ARE MANY. DO NOT REMIND US OF OUR DEEPEST GRIEF.



MY OWN SORROW IS PART OF THE SORROW OF ALL PEOPLE. DEATH OF OUR LOVED ONES IS PART AND PARCEL OF LIFE FOR EVERYONE.



As she shared her sorrow with so many others who had also lost a loved one, something struck her. Although she still grieved the loss of her child, she knew there were many others who had also experienced such loss and sorrow.



After burying her beloved child in the forest, she went back to the Buddha.

He preached the Dharma to her and she became a nun.



The Moral is :

Life in this world is troubled and brief. There is no means one who is born can avoid dying. After old age, there is death. Such is the nature of living beings. Both the young and old, fools and wise fall into the power of death; all are subject to death and decay.

Nobody can save anyone from death. A father cannot save his son, neither can kinsmen and relatives. Weeping or grieving will not give any person peace of mind. Instead, his pain will be greater. He will make himself sick and pale, yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation. People pass away, and their fate after death will be according to their deeds in previous lives and this life.

He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, complaint and grief. Having drawn out the arrow and becoming composed, he will obtain peace of mind. He who has overcome all sorrow will become free from sorrow, and be blessed.

– The Buddha

Sugarcane



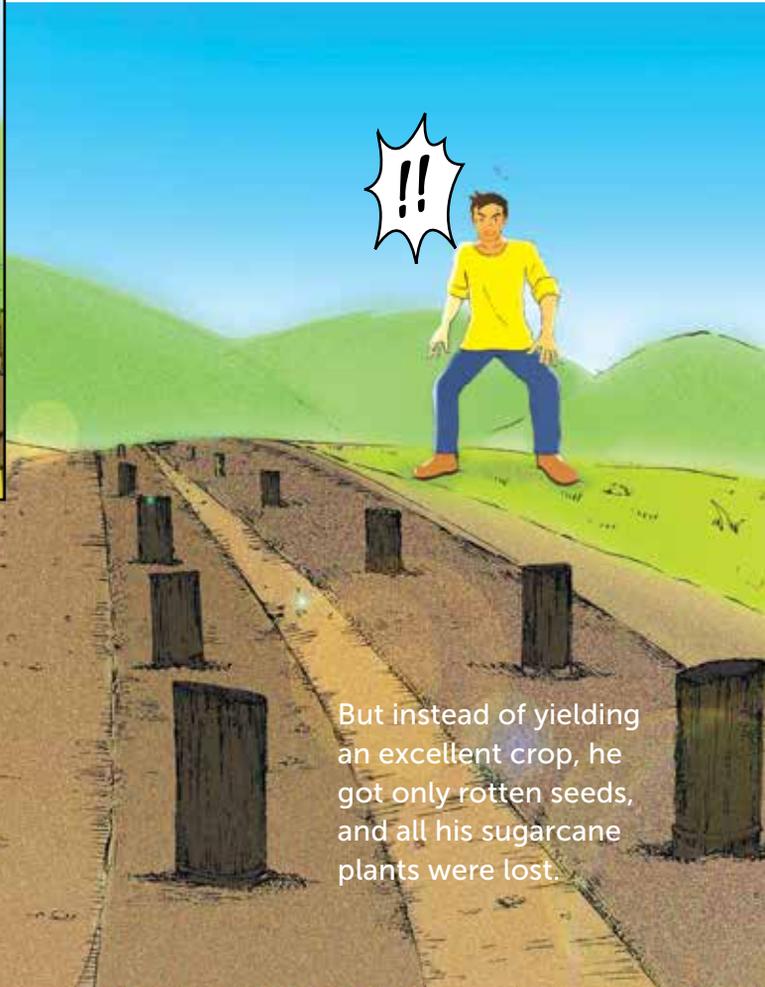
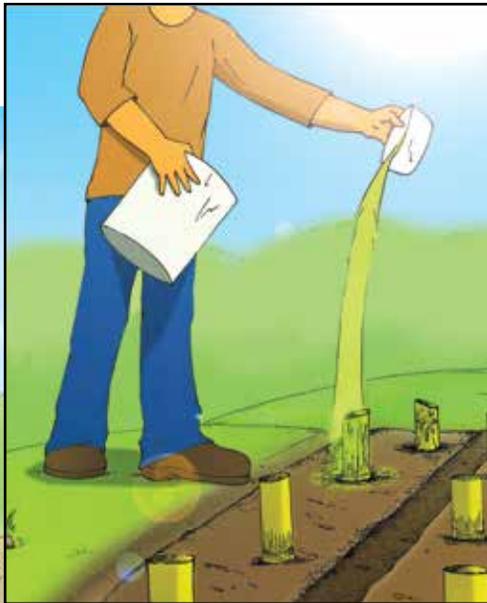
Once upon a time, two men were planting sugarcane in adjacent fields.

The men decided that the one who grew the best cane would receive a reward, while the other with the inferior cane would be punished.

One of the men, who hoped to manipulate the situation to his favour, suddenly had an idea...



The next day, he had his field fertilised with sugarcane juice just as he had planned...



But instead of yielding an excellent crop, he got only rotten seeds, and all his sugarcane plants were lost.



The Moral is :

Everybody seeks happiness. But some do so by relying on violence and wiles. Some may even abuse their power, or rob others in the mistaken belief that getting and owing more will make them happy.

They fail to realise and understand that what goes around comes around, and that in the future they will only experience pain and misfortune.

Do not be like the fool who squeezed the sugarcane juice and ended up losing his entire crop.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra

The Monkey Boy

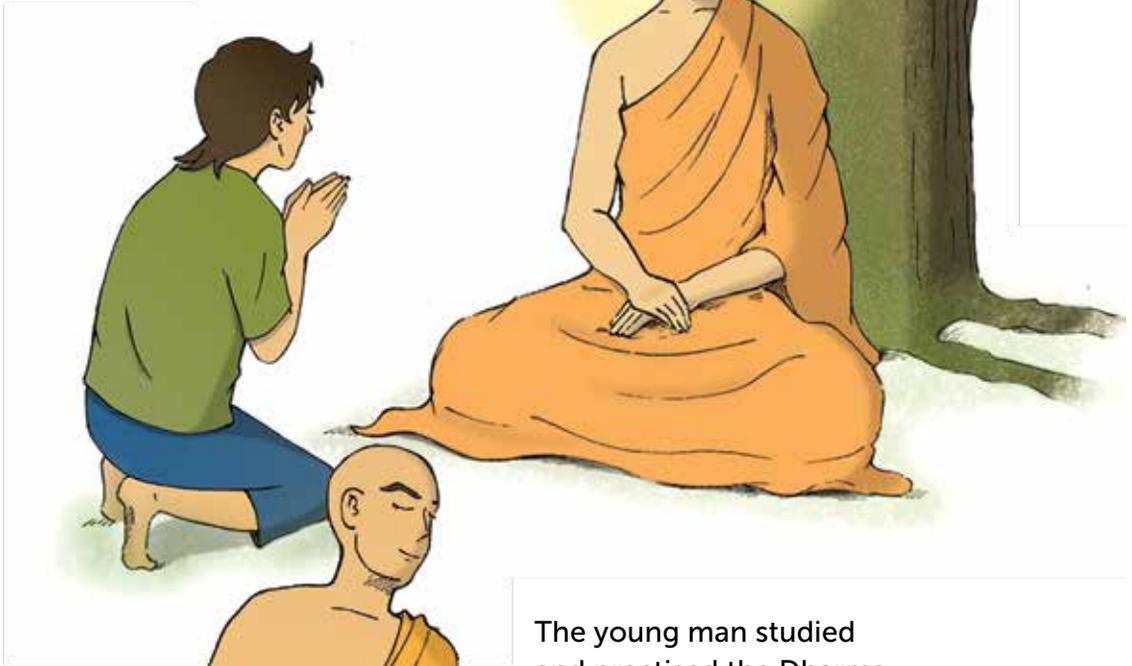


Once, during the Buddha's time, a householder gave birth to a monkey. Later, the monkey turned into a boy.



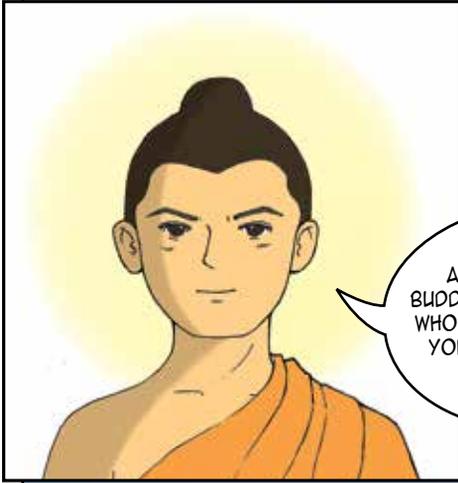
When the boy grew up, he saw the nature of samsara and decided to leave the householder's life.

He requested for ordination from the Buddha who agreed.

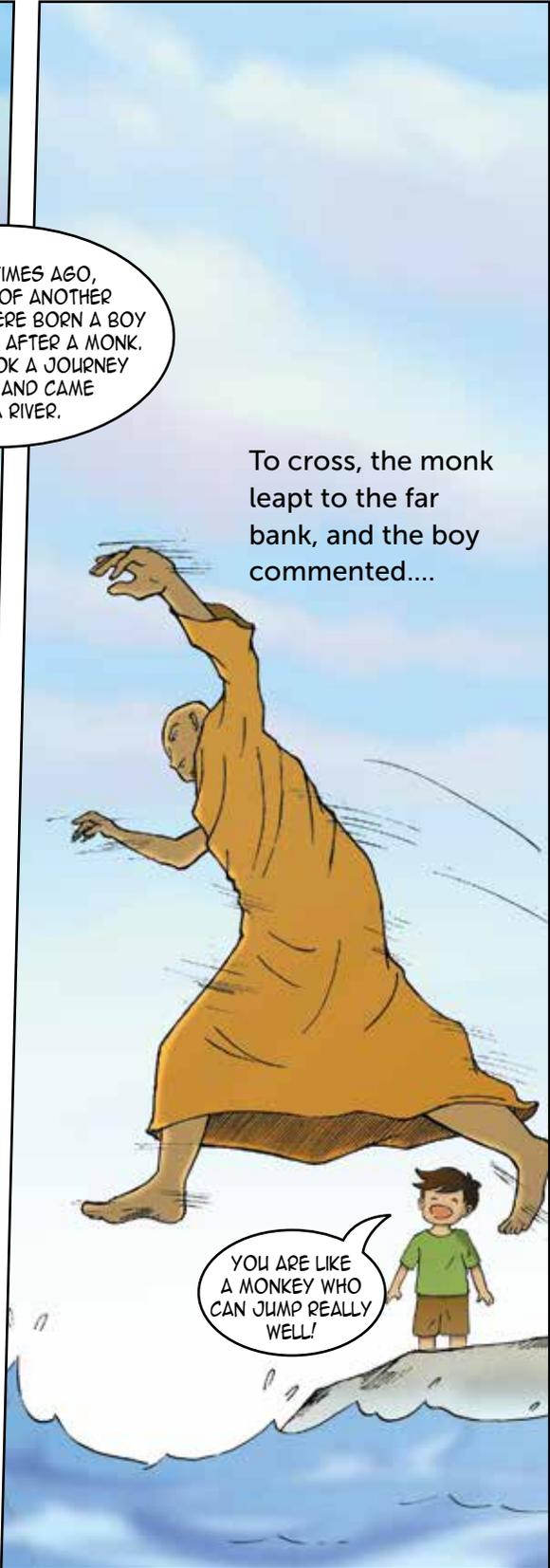
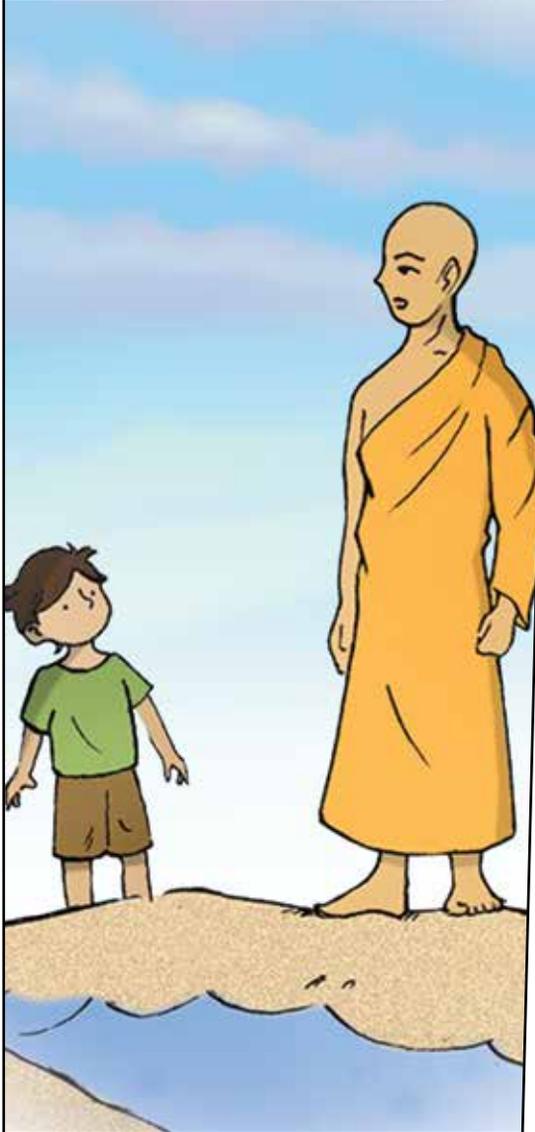


The young man studied and practised the Dharma wholeheartedly and achieved the arhat state.





MANY LIFETIMES AGO,
AT THE TIME OF ANOTHER
BUDDHA, YOU WERE BORN A BOY
WHO FOLLOWED AFTER A MONK.
YOU ONCE TOOK A JOURNEY
TOGETHER AND CAME
UPON A RIVER.



To cross, the monk
leapt to the far
bank, and the boy
commented....

YOU ARE LIKE
A MONKEY WHO
CAN JUMP REALLY
WELL!



DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS! A MONKEY IS AN ANIMAL AND YOU WILL CREATE HEAVY NEGATIVE KARMA BY COMPARING ME, AN ARHAT, TO A LOWER BEING.

YOU, AS THE BOY, FELT GREAT REGRET AND APOLOGISED SINCERELY. EVEN THOUGH, YOU DIDN'T SPEAK WITH ANGER OR NEGATIVITY, YOU WERE BORN AS A MONKEY FOR 500 LIFETIMES. AS YOU APOLOGISED, YOU TURNED BACK INTO A HUMAN BEING EACH TIME.

The Moral is :

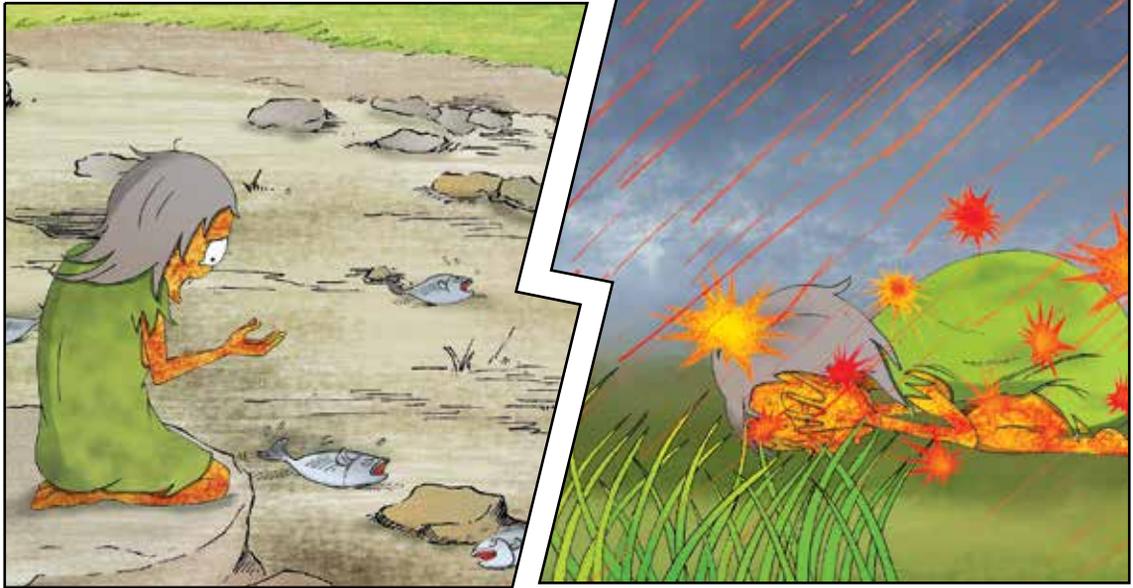
This story offers an example of the possible results of using harsh words. We should always guard our speech as well as the activities of our mind and body. We have to be very cautious of each type of karma we create, whether big or small. The karma that we create, even if it was created one hundred aeons ago, cannot be ignored because it will not disappear unless it is purified. When the time comes and conditions gather, that karma will surely manifest.

An Encounter with a Hungry Ghost



Once, Ven Maudgalyayana and Ven Shariputra met a female hungry ghost whose face was covered with burns.

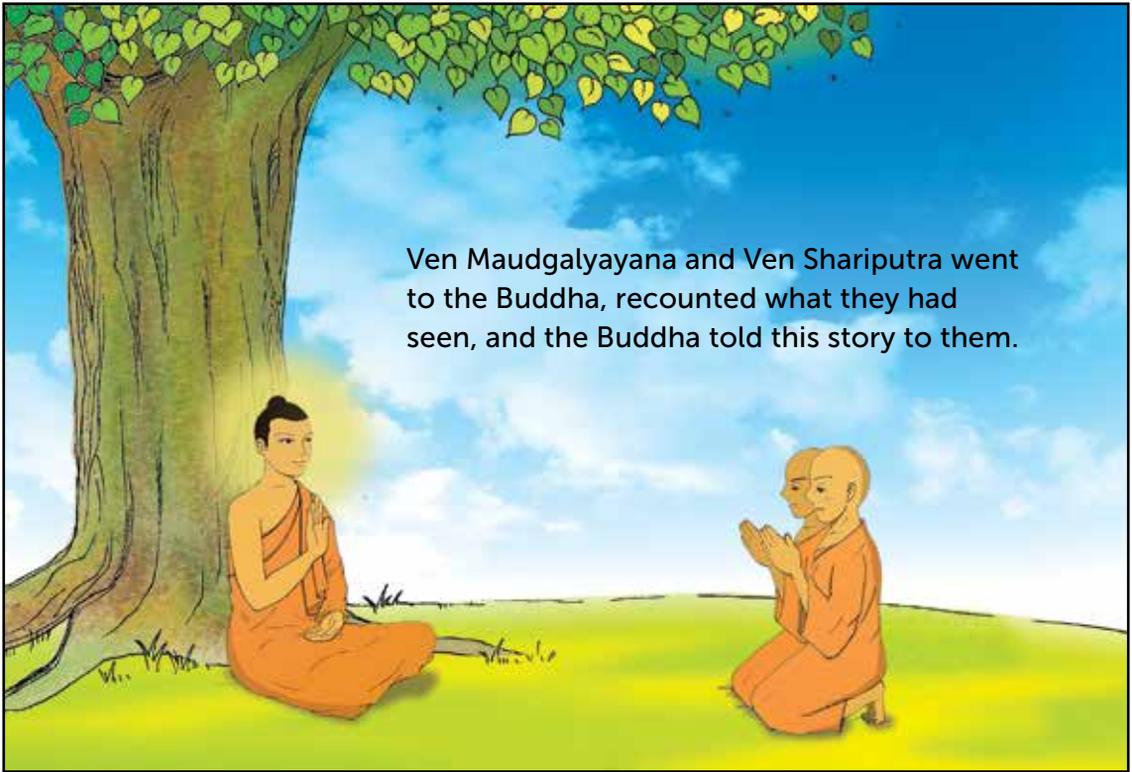
She suffered terribly. Water and rivers dried up when she looked at them, and rain transformed into sparks.



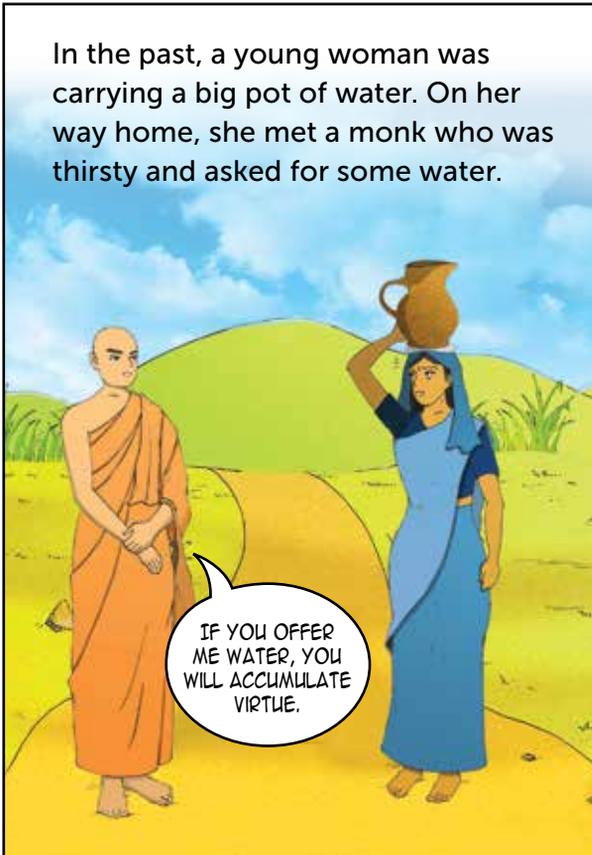
WHAT KIND OF KARMA DID YOU CREATE THAT LED YOU TO ENDURE THIS TERRIBLE SUFFERING?

PLEASE ASK THE BUDDHA THAT QUESTION.





Ven Maudgalyayana and Ven Shariputra went to the Buddha, recounted what they had seen, and the Buddha told this story to them.



In the past, a young woman was carrying a big pot of water. On her way home, she met a monk who was thirsty and asked for some water.

IF YOU OFFER ME WATER, YOU WILL ACCUMULATE VIRTUE.



EVEN IF YOU WERE DYING OF THIRST, I WOULD NOT GIVE YOU ANY WATER.

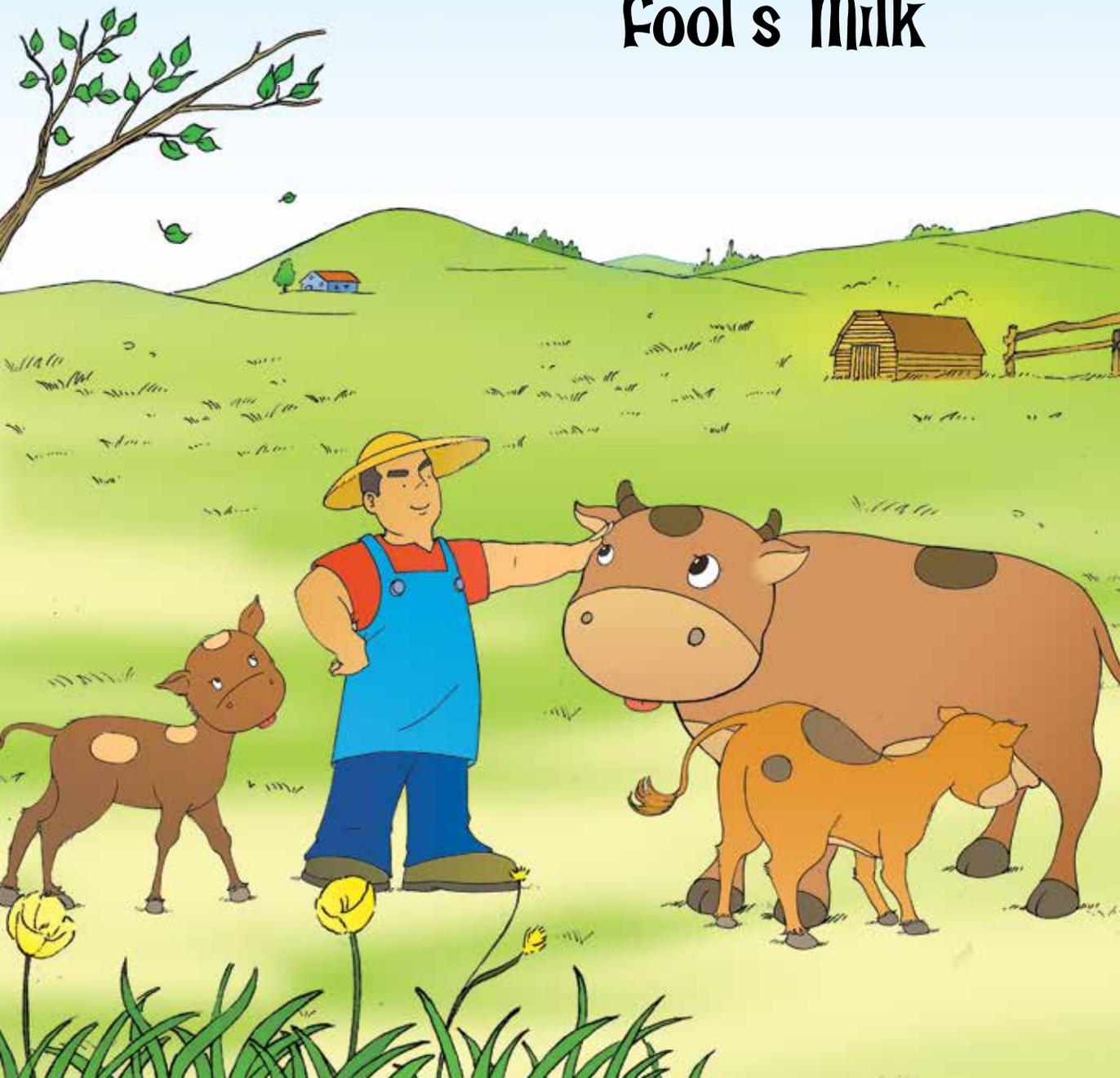


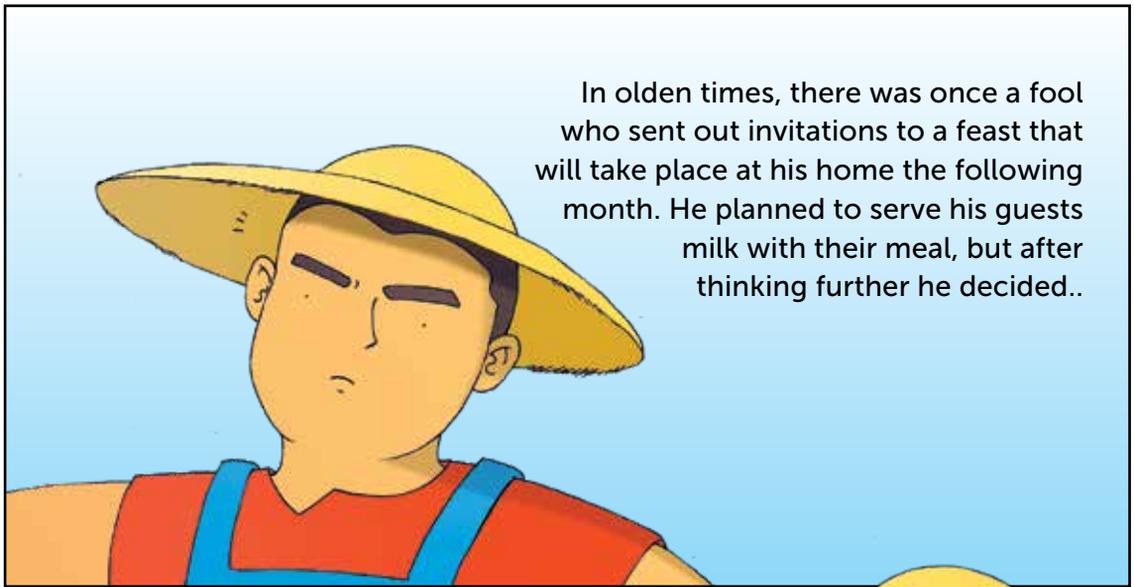
AS SHE WAS SO STINGY THAT SHE WOULD NOT EVEN OFFER SOME WATER, SHE WAS REBORN IN THIS CONDITION AND SUFFERS INCONCEIVABLY.

The Moral is :

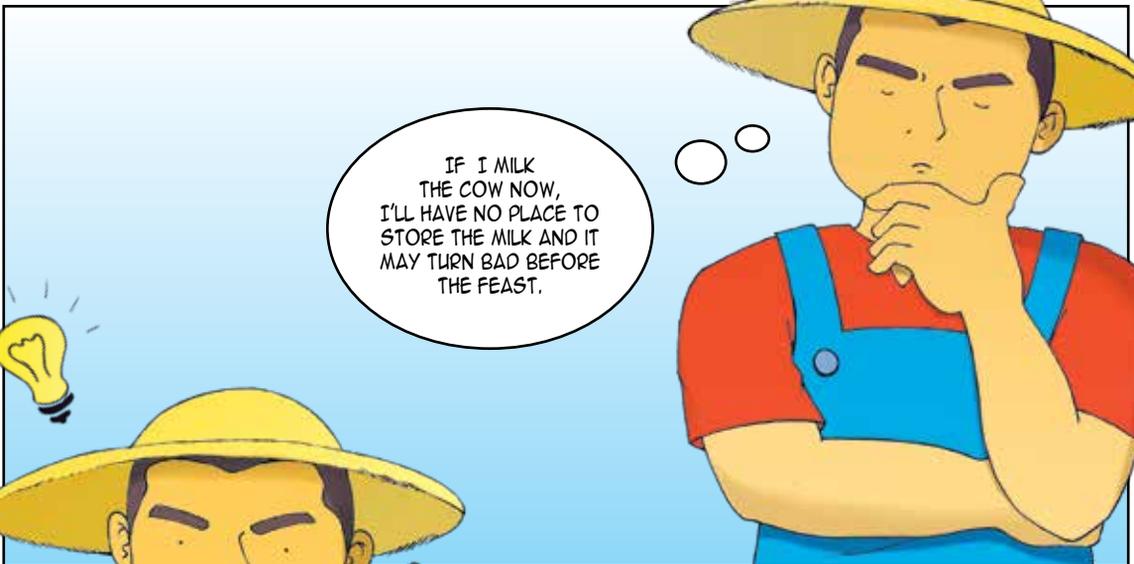
Bearing this story in mind, we should purify all our obscurations of stinginess and attachment, and practise generosity with whatever we have, even if it is just a little water.

Fool's Milk

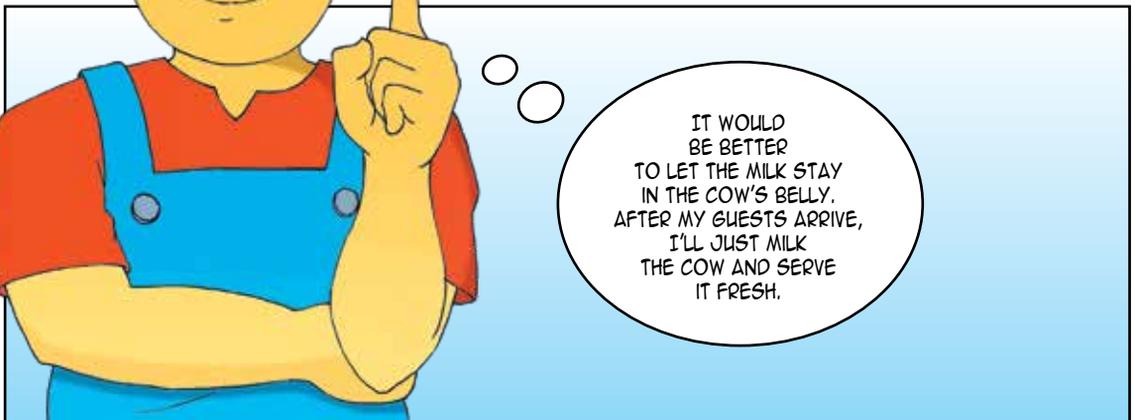




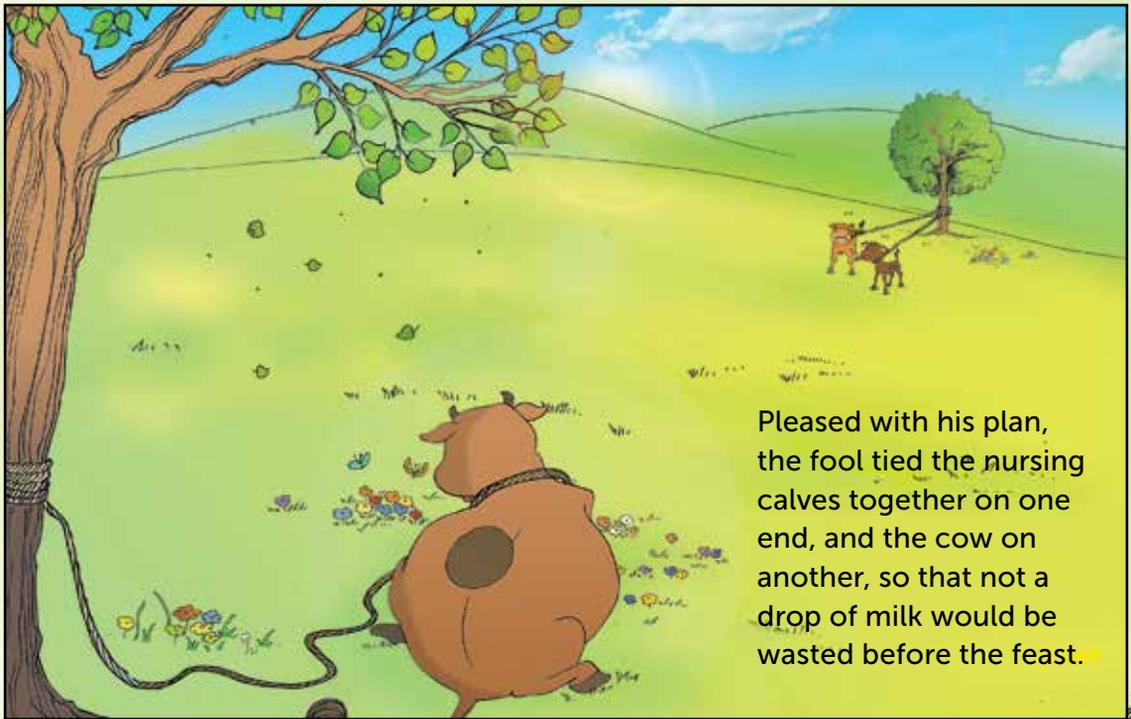
In olden times, there was once a fool who sent out invitations to a feast that will take place at his home the following month. He planned to serve his guests milk with their meal, but after thinking further he decided..



IF I MILK THE COW NOW, I'LL HAVE NO PLACE TO STORE THE MILK AND IT MAY TURN BAD BEFORE THE FEAST.



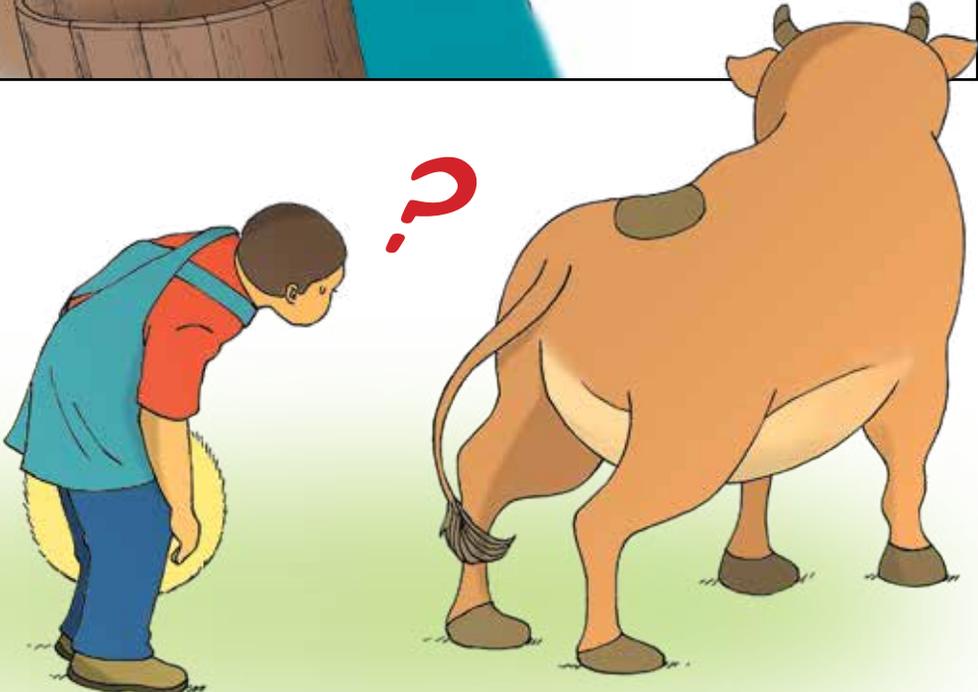
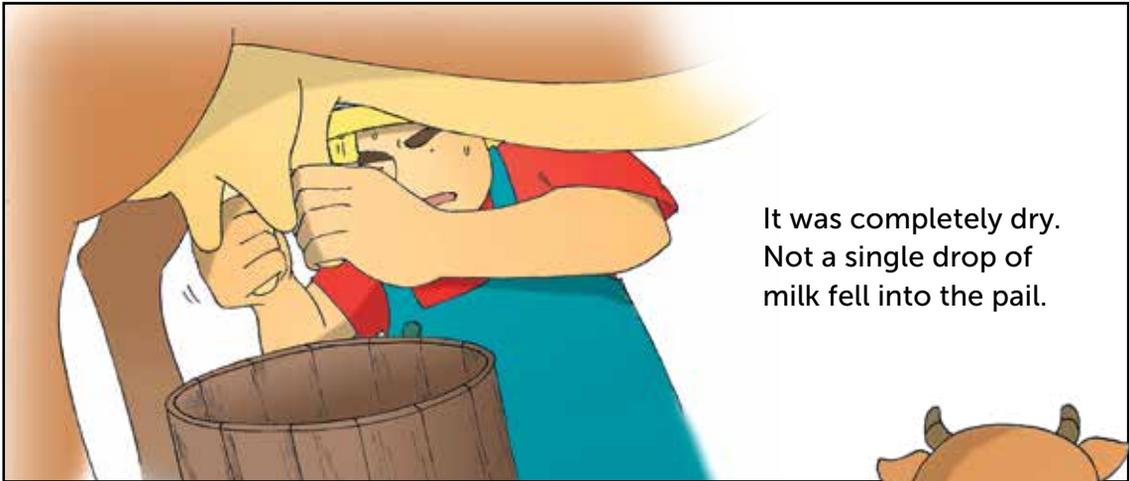
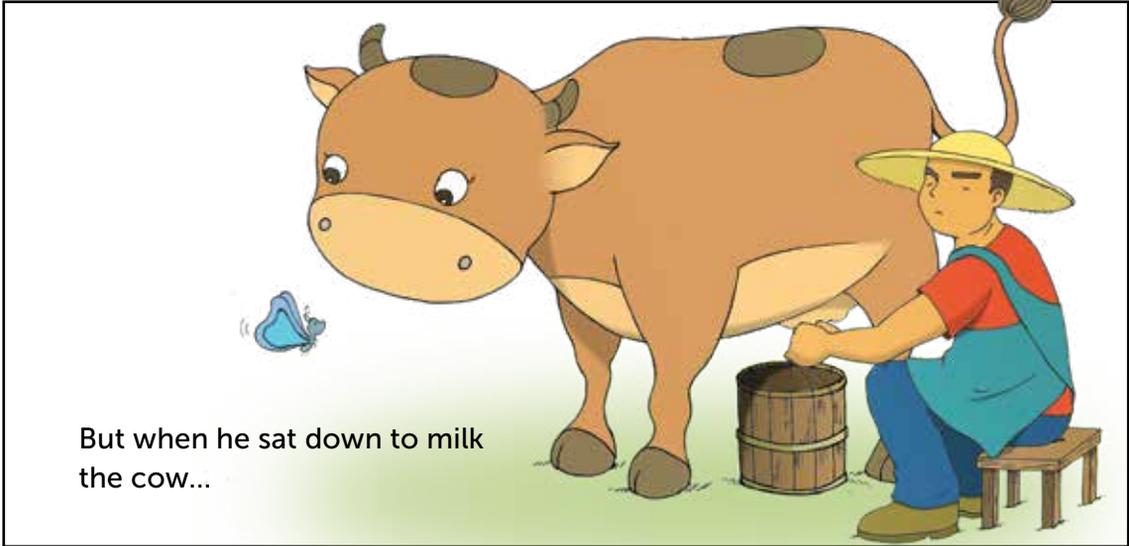
IT WOULD BE BETTER TO LET THE MILK STAY IN THE COW'S BELLY. AFTER MY GUESTS ARRIVE, I'LL JUST MILK THE COW AND SERVE IT FRESH.

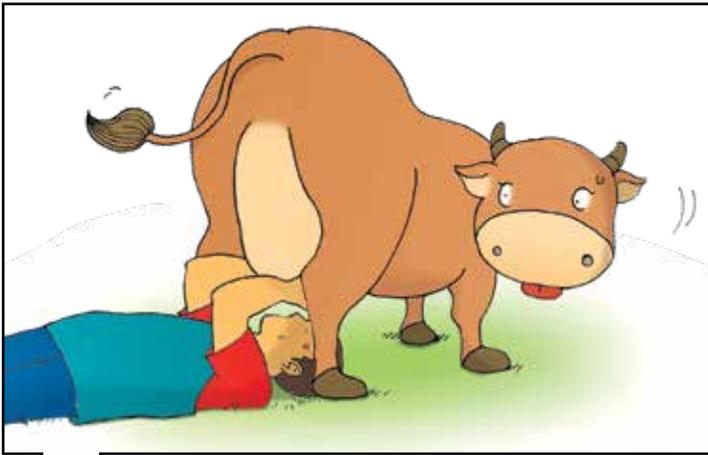


Pleased with his plan, the fool tied the nursing calves together on one end, and the cow on another, so that not a drop of milk would be wasted before the feast.

A month later the foolish man graciously received his guests. After they were assembled, he brought out the cow with much fanfare.







When the guests saw this and heard what he had done, a few became angry, but most of them just shook their heads and laughed at his foolish ways.





The Moral is :

This fool is like someone who wishes to practise the act of giving but decides to wait until he has a lot of money. However, no one knows what the future holds, and before very much can be saved, something unforeseen takes place.

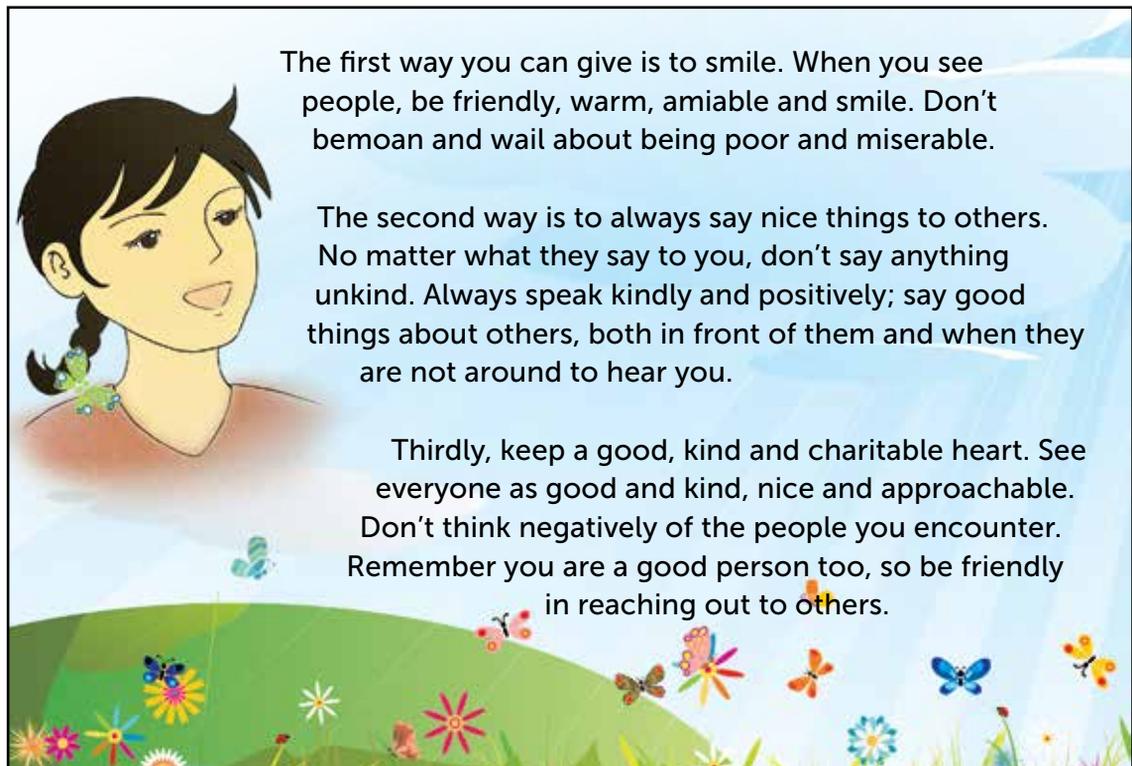
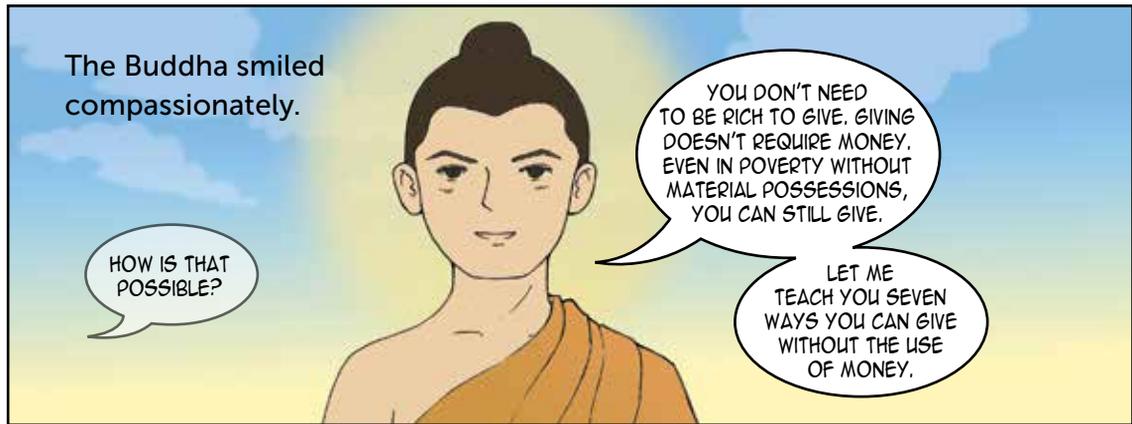
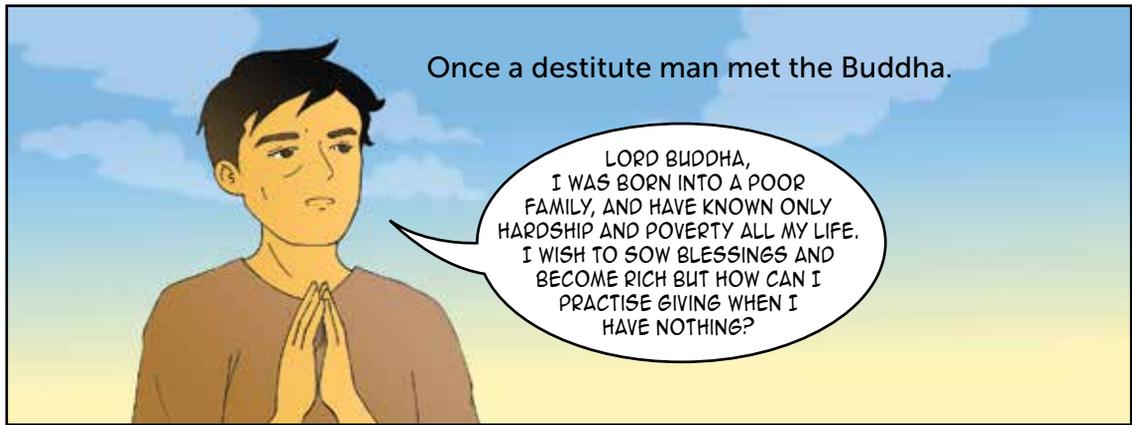
He receives an enormous tax bill or is the victim of a fire or flood, or he is robbed and ends up losing what little he has managed to put away. He might even lose his life. The best way is to give right now. It is so.

– The One Hundred Parable Sutra



The Seven Ways to Give Without Money



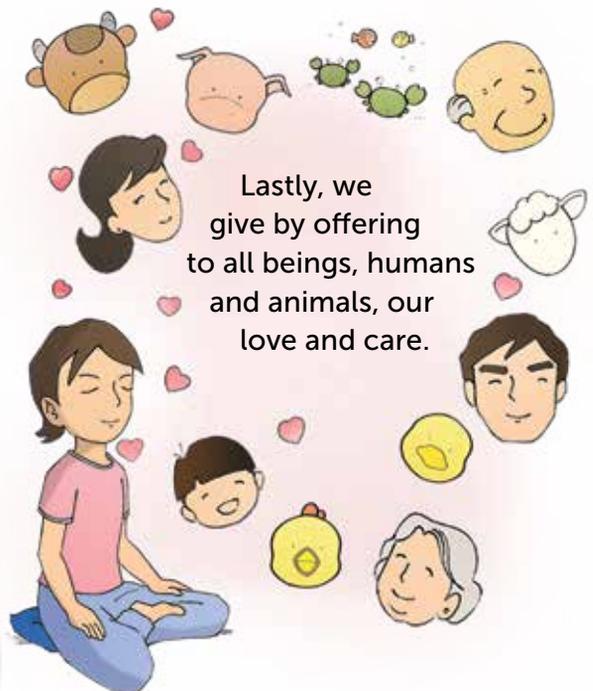
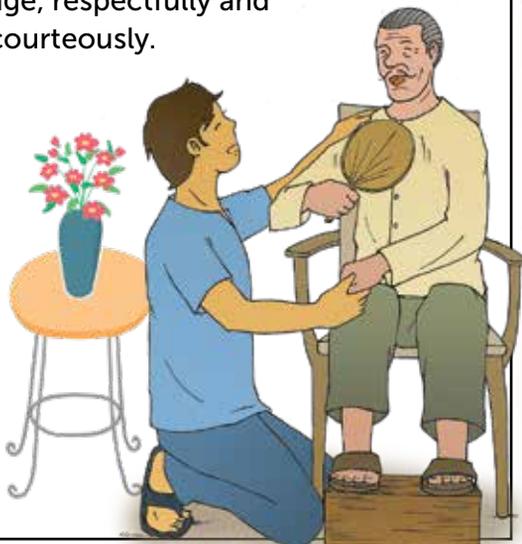


Fourthly, give your sight. Help those with poor eyesight by pointing out the way and guiding them in the correct direction. With your healthy eyes, you can help those who can't see well.

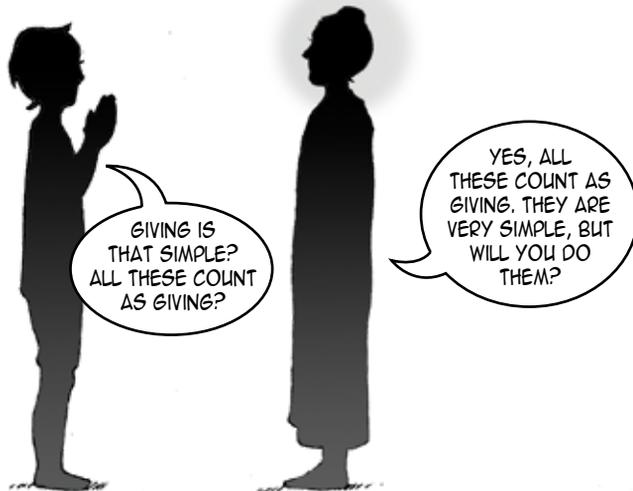


The fifth way is to give your physical strength. Help those who are frail and weak, who cannot do physically taxing work, by helping them when they are in need of help to move something heavy.

The sixth way is to show respect to everyone, including the elderly. We should treat everyone, regardless of age, respectfully and courteously.

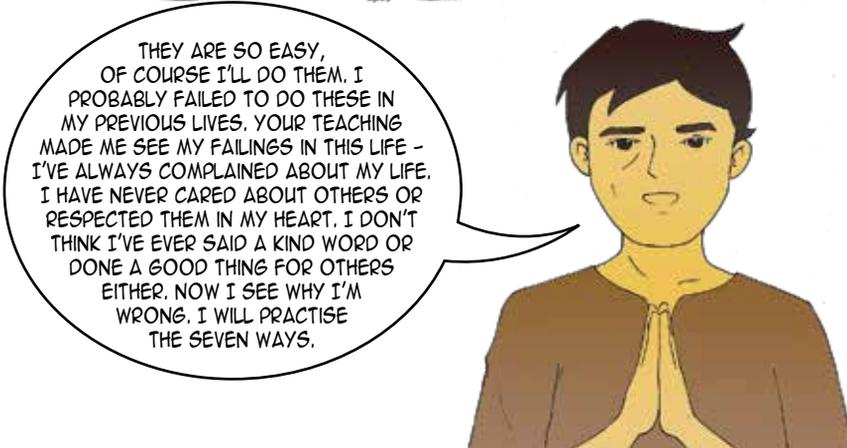


Lastly, we give by offering to all beings, humans and animals, our love and care.



GIVING IS THAT SIMPLE? ALL THESE COUNT AS GIVING?

YES, ALL THESE COUNT AS GIVING. THEY ARE VERY SIMPLE, BUT WILL YOU DO THEM?

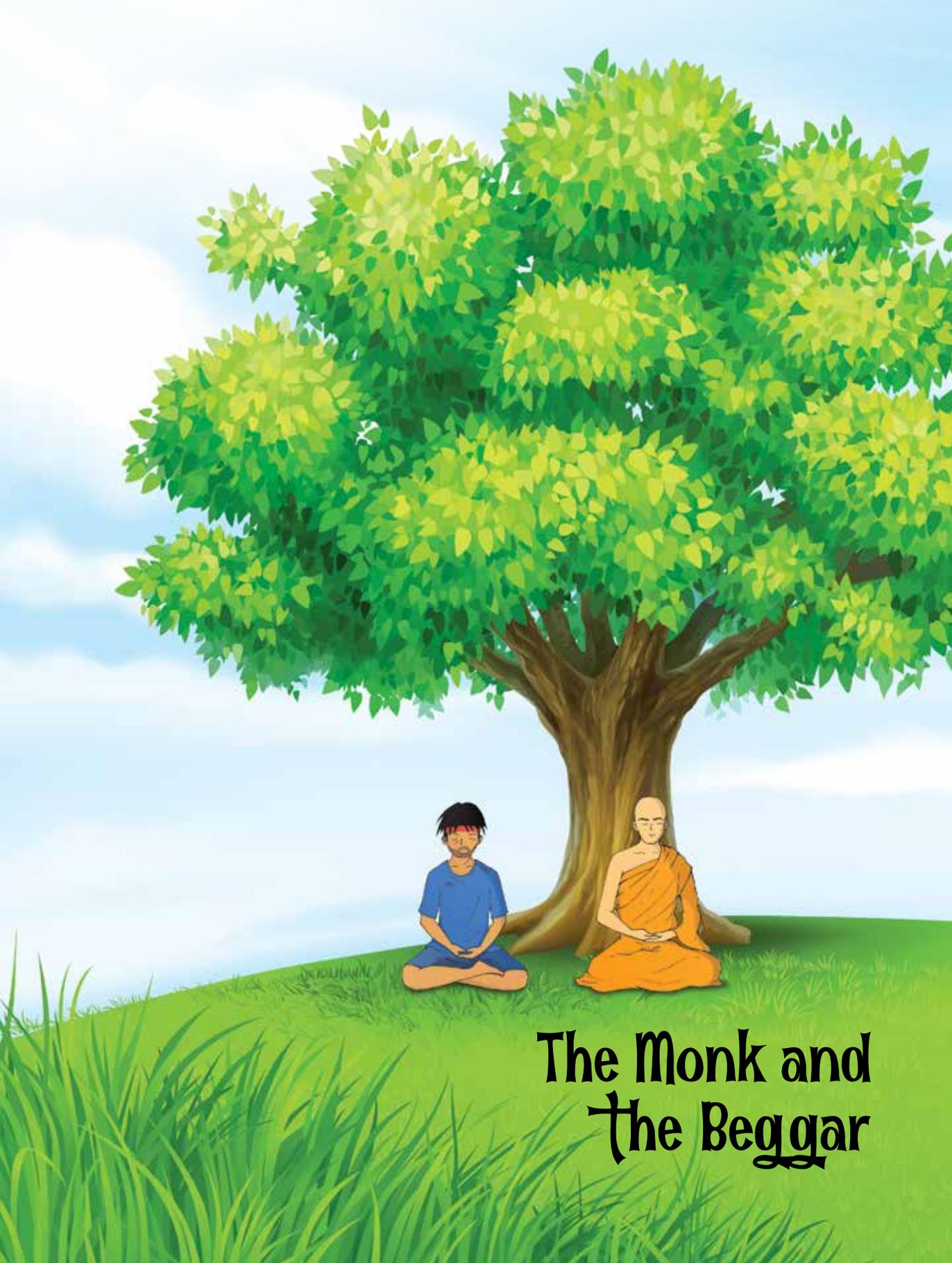


THEY ARE SO EASY, OF COURSE I'LL DO THEM. I PROBABLY FAILED TO DO THESE IN MY PREVIOUS LIVES. YOUR TEACHING MADE ME SEE MY FAILINGS IN THIS LIFE - I'VE ALWAYS COMPLAINED ABOUT MY LIFE. I HAVE NEVER CARED ABOUT OTHERS OR RESPECTED THEM IN MY HEART. I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SAID A KIND WORD OR DONE A GOOD THING FOR OTHERS EITHER. NOW I SEE WHY I'M WRONG. I WILL PRACTISE THE SEVEN WAYS.



The Moral is :

Each of the seven ways the Buddha described is so doable; but the key is whether one will follow them through. As the Buddha had showed, there are many ways we can give, and we can do them in our daily life. We don't need money to practise giving, and anyone can do it. Most importantly, when we give, our lives become rich. It is possible to create a rich life, if we just carry out these simple acts.

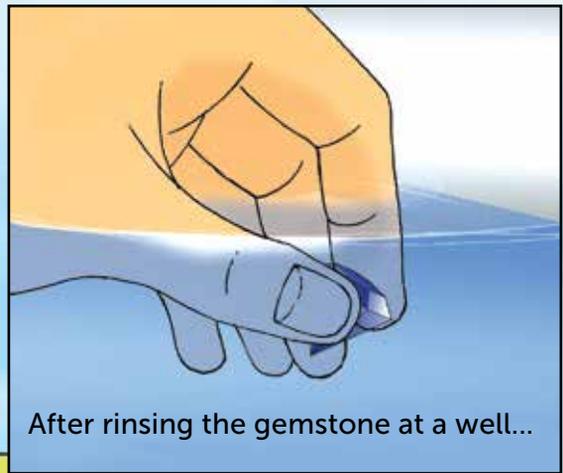


The Monk and The Beggar

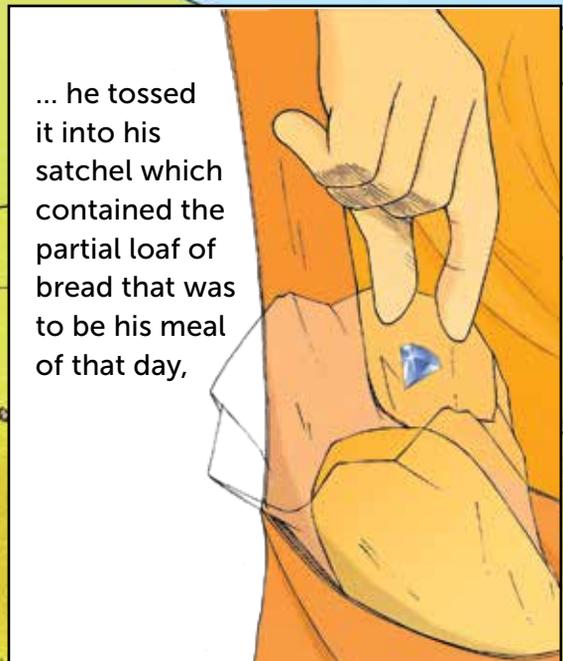
Once, a Buddhist monk was walking barefooted down a dusty road when he stepped on something sharp.



He stopped to pull the object out. Lo and behold! It was a very valuable and beautifully carved gemstone.



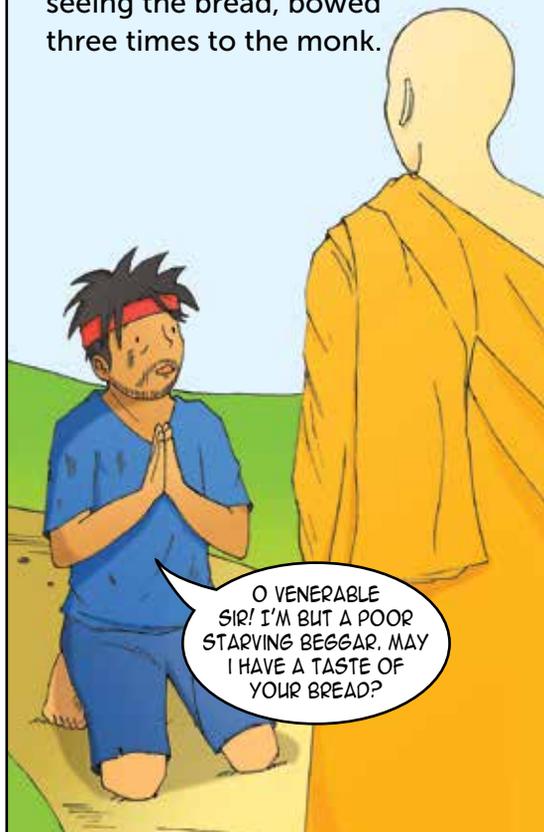
After rinsing the gemstone at a well...



... he tossed it into his satchel which contained the partial loaf of bread that was to be his meal of that day,

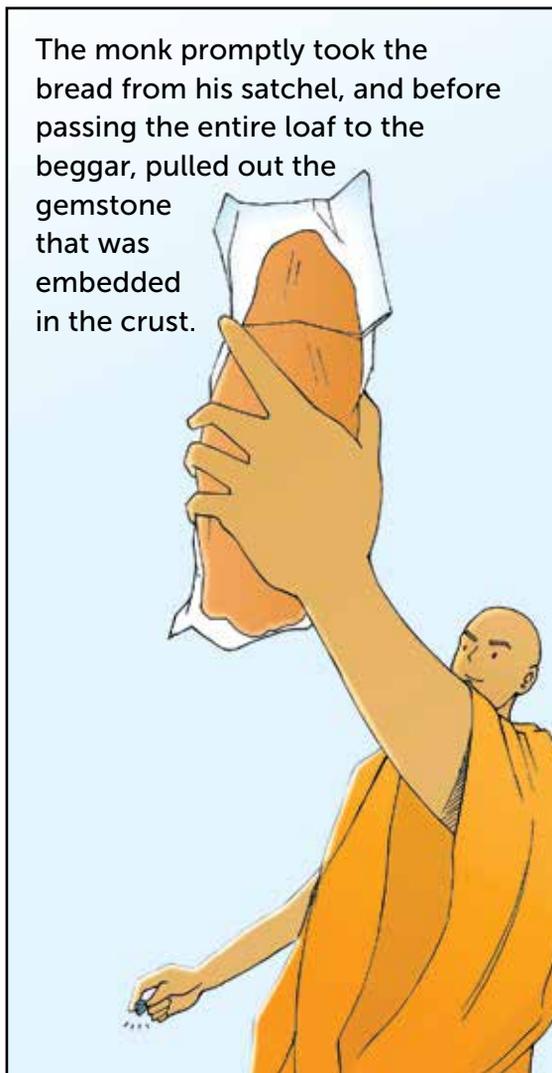


Then he saw a beggar further down the road. The beggar, seeing the bread, bowed three times to the monk.



O VENERABLE SIR! I'M BUT A POOR STARVING BEGGAR. MAY I HAVE A TASTE OF YOUR BREAD?

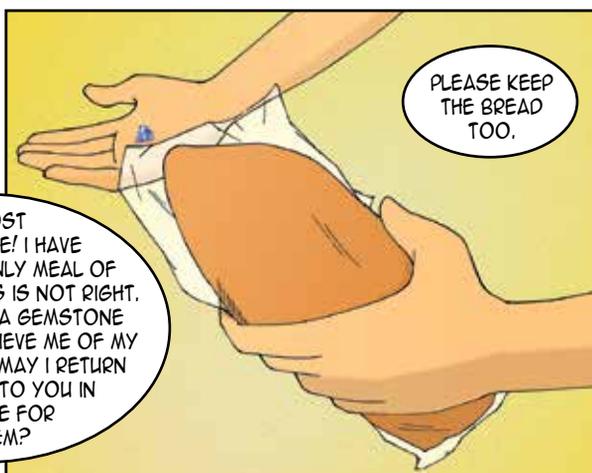
The monk promptly took the bread from his satchel, and before passing the entire loaf to the beggar, pulled out the gemstone that was embedded in the crust.



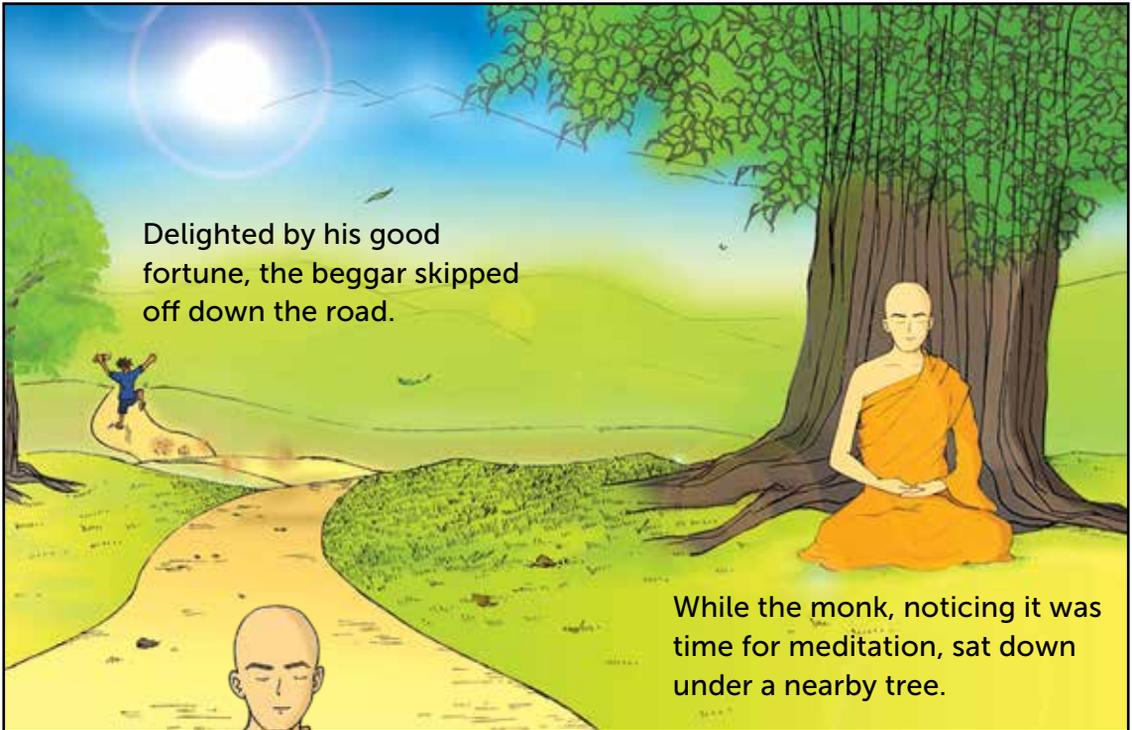
Hearing this, the monk immediately gave the gemstone to the beggar.



O, MOST WORTHY ONE! I HAVE TAKEN YOUR ONLY MEAL OF THE DAY, AND THIS IS NOT RIGHT. I SEE YOU HAVE A GEMSTONE WHICH WOULD RELIEVE ME OF MY DIRE SITUATION. MAY I RETURN YOUR BREAD TO YOU IN EXCHANGE FOR THE GEM?



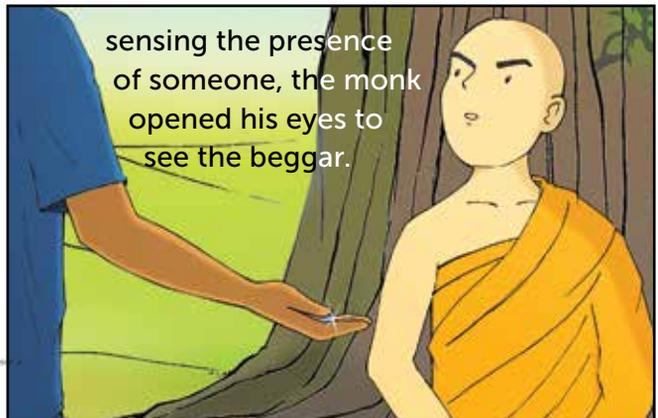
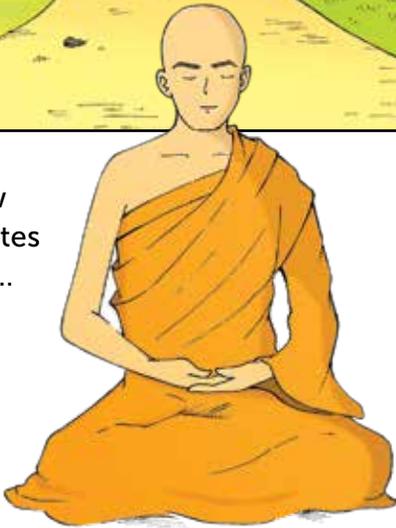
PLEASE KEEP THE BREAD TOO.



Delighted by his good fortune, the beggar skipped off down the road.

While the monk, noticing it was time for meditation, sat down under a nearby tree.

A few minutes later...



sensing the presence of someone, the monk opened his eyes to see the beggar.



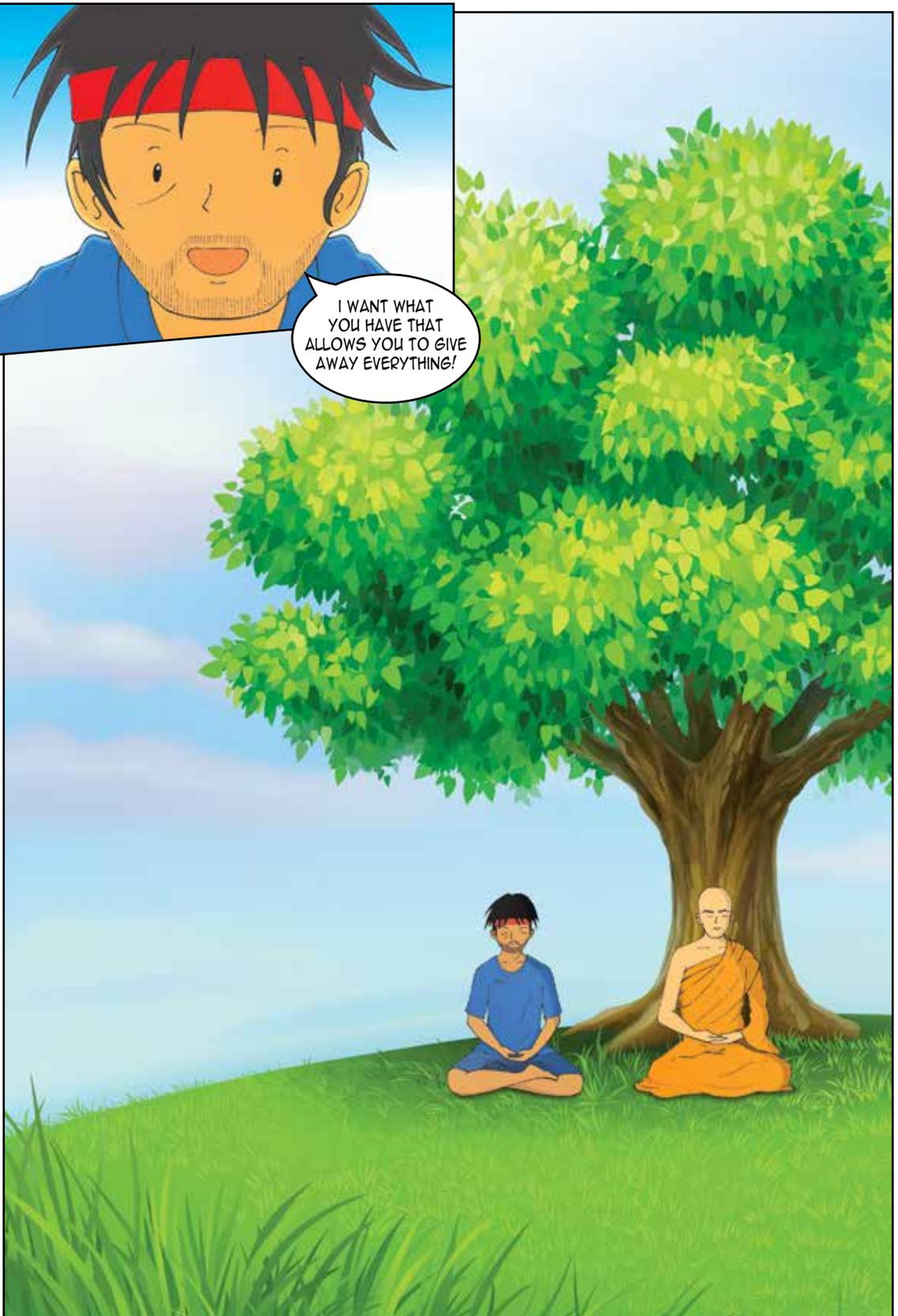
O VENERABLE ONE! MAY I PLEASE RETURN THE GEM TO YOU? I DON'T WANT IT!



WHAT, SIR, DO YOU WANT?



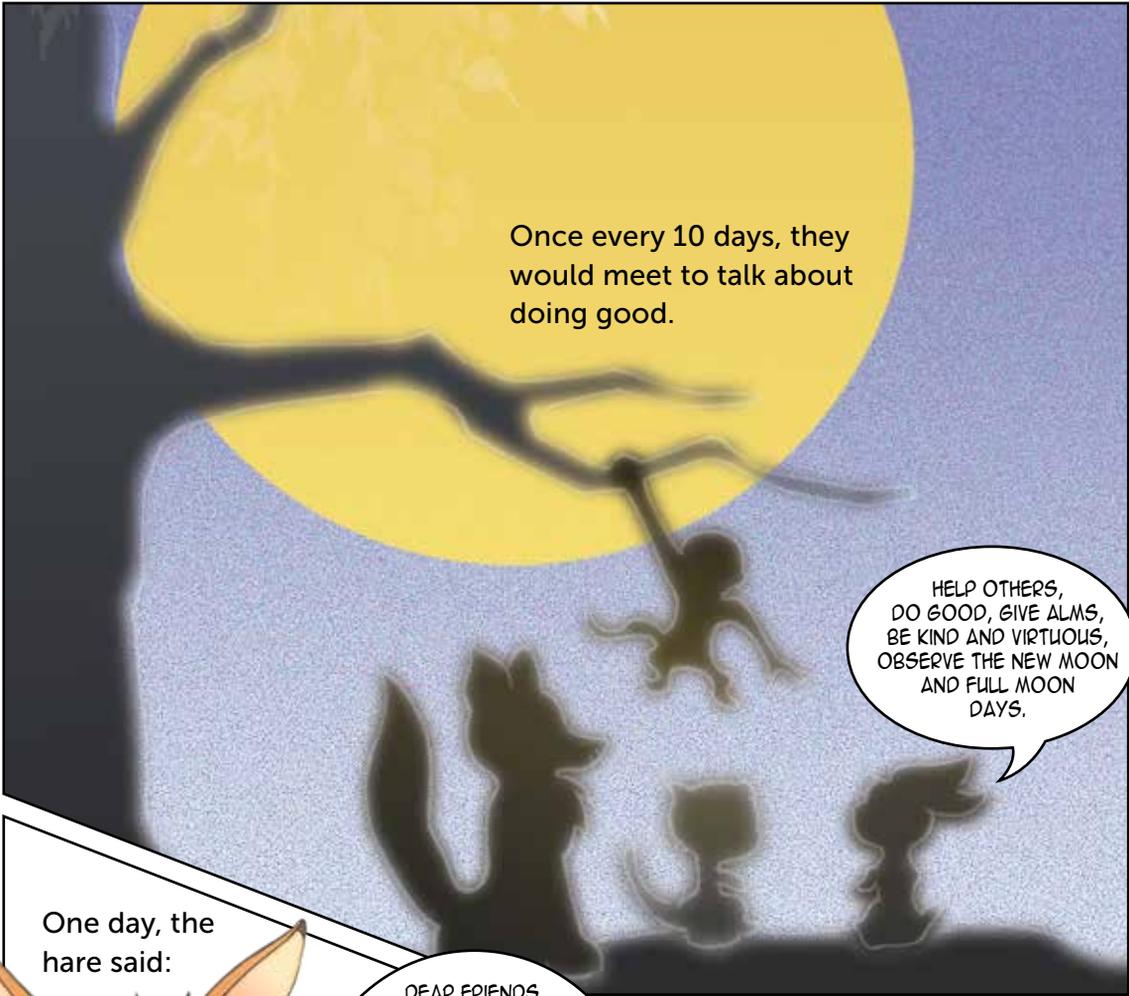
I WANT WHAT
YOU HAVE THAT
ALLOWS YOU TO GIVE
AWAY EVERYTHING!



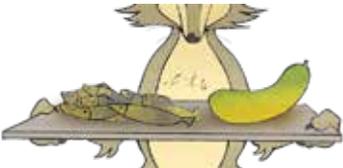
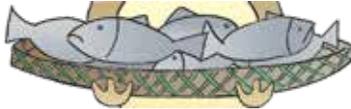
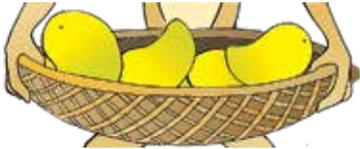


The Selfless Hare

Long, long ago, in a particular forest lived four very good friends: a hare, a monkey, a jackal and an otter. Of the four, the hare was the wisest.



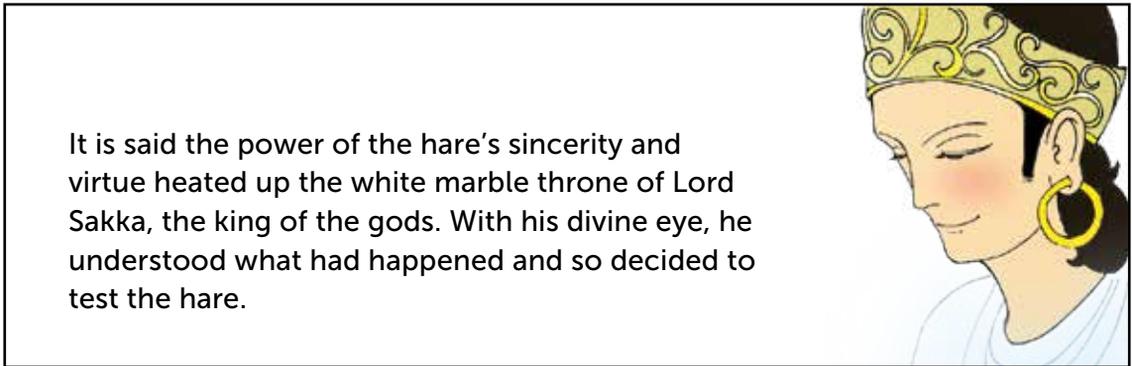
DEAR FRIENDS, IT'S FULL MOON DAY TOMORROW, LET'S BE MORE VIRTUOUS AND OBSERVE THE ETHICAL TRAINING GUIDELINES OF CONDUCT. IF ANYONE SHOULD ASK ANYTHING FROM US, LET'S BE CHARITABLE AND GIVE WHAT WE HAVE. GENEROSITY PRACTISED WITH MORALITY IS SURELY VERY MERITORIOUS.



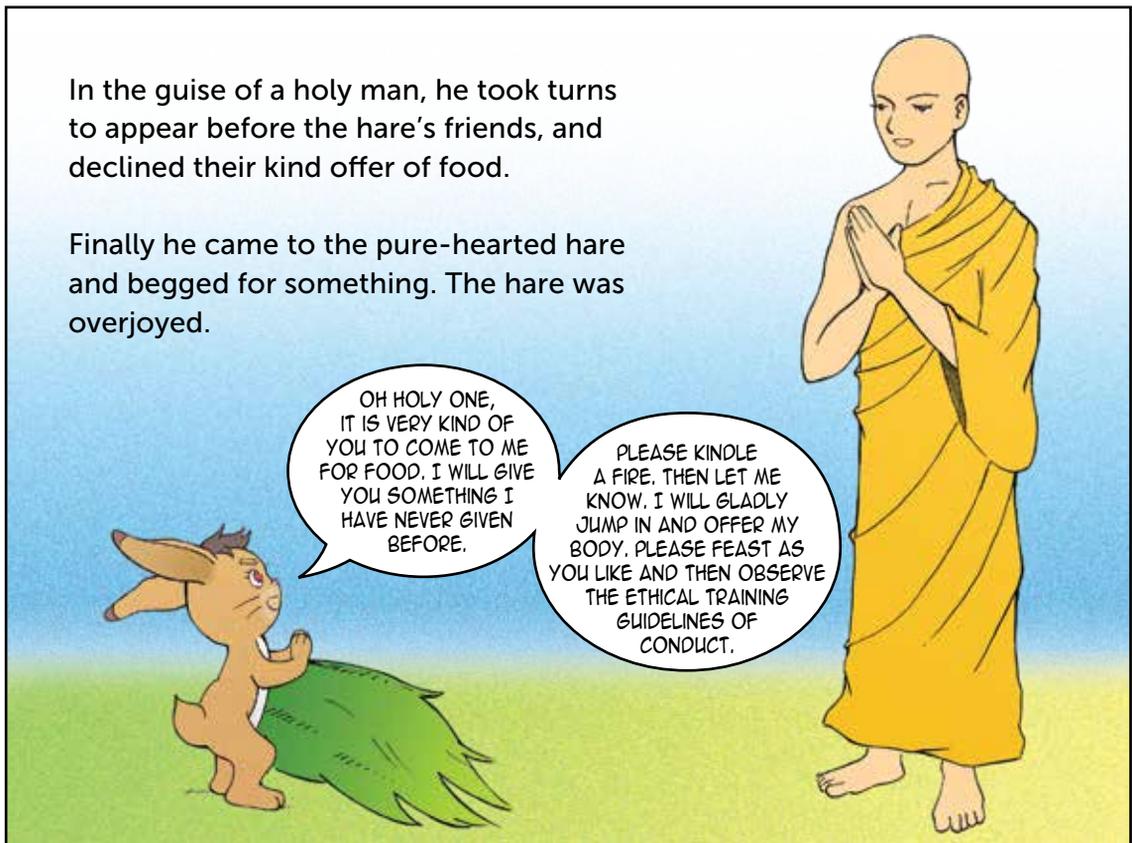
The others agreed and got ready for the following day. The hare obtained some grass, the otter found some fishes lying on the river bank; the monkey prepared some sweet mangoes and the jackal found some dried fishes and a gourd.



The next day, they all observed the ethical training guidelines of conduct. The hare thought with all sincerity.



It is said the power of the hare's sincerity and virtue heated up the white marble throne of Lord Sakka, the king of the gods. With his divine eye, he understood what had happened and so decided to test the hare.



In the guise of a holy man, he took turns to appear before the hare's friends, and declined their kind offer of food.

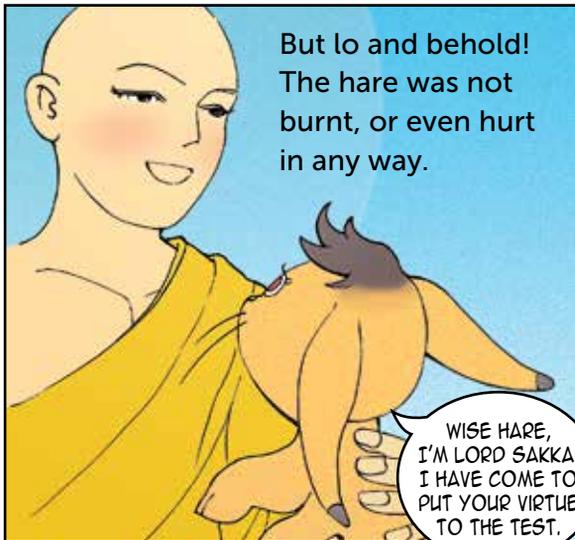
Finally he came to the pure-hearted hare and begged for something. The hare was overjoyed.

OH HOLY ONE, IT IS VERY KIND OF YOU TO COME TO ME FOR FOOD. I WILL GIVE YOU SOMETHING I HAVE NEVER GIVEN BEFORE.

PLEASE KINDLE A FIRE. THEN LET ME KNOW. I WILL GLADLY JUMP IN AND OFFER MY BODY. PLEASE FEAST AS YOU LIKE AND THEN OBSERVE THE ETHICAL TRAINING GUIDELINES OF CONDUCT.

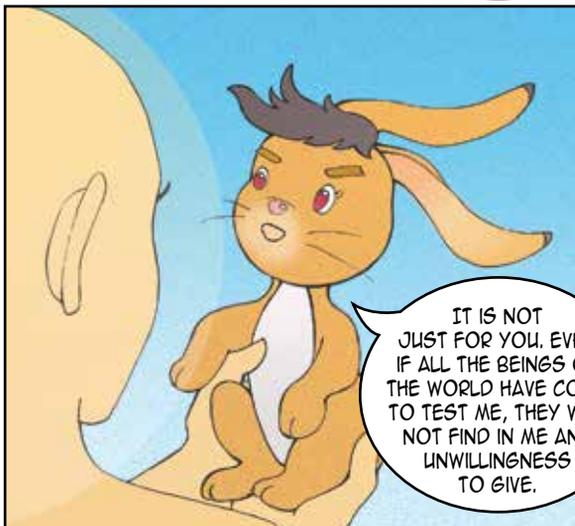


Lord Sakka magically conjured up a fire. The selfless hare shook his body thrice to prevent killing any insect that may be on his body, and joyfully jumped into the scorching fire.

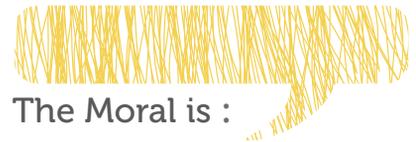


But lo and behold! The hare was not burnt, or even hurt in any way.

WISE HARE, I'M LORD SAKKA. I HAVE COME TO PUT YOUR VIRTUE TO THE TEST.



IT IS NOT JUST FOR YOU. EVEN IF ALL THE BEINGS OF THE WORLD HAVE COME TO TEST ME, THEY WILL NOT FIND IN ME ANY UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE.



The Moral is :

This was how the Buddha practised the Perfection of Giving while he was still a bodhisattva.



The Squirrel

A long, long time ago, the bodhisattva was born as a squirrel. He lived in a nest with his three little babies on a tree branch that stretched out towards the sea.

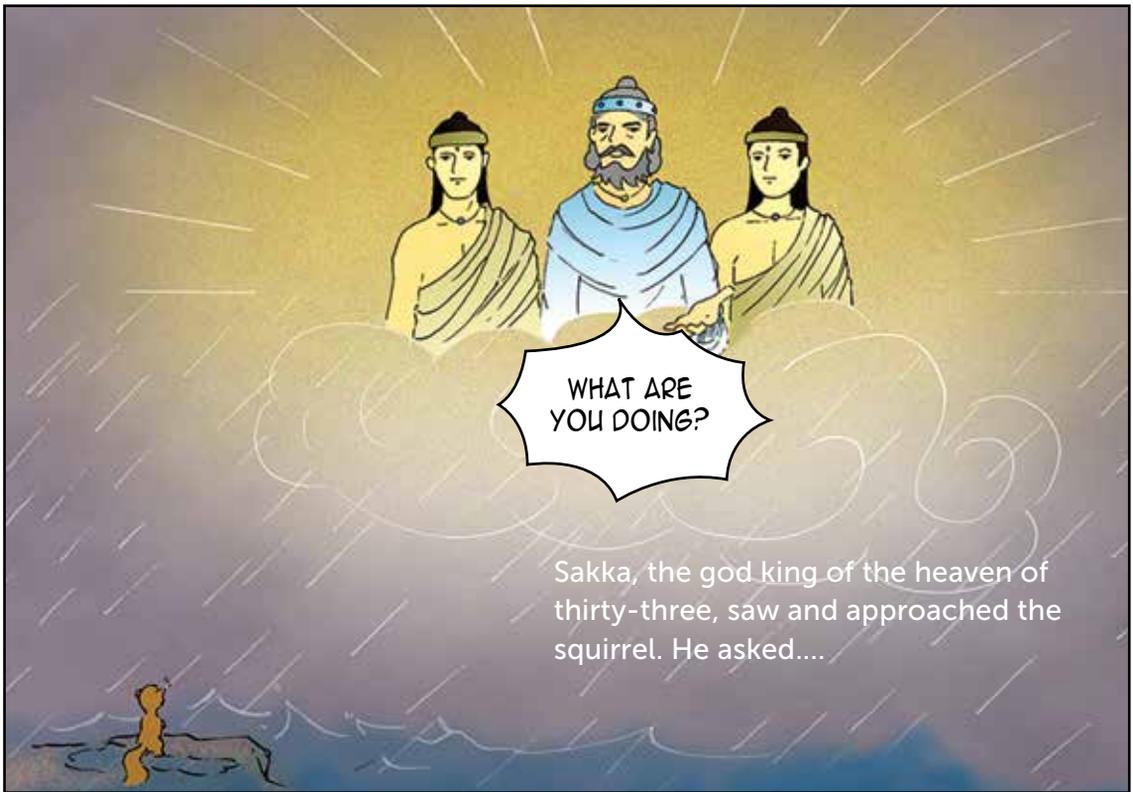




One day, a storm whipped through the forest and broke the branch supporting the squirrel's nest. The nest, together with the baby squirrels, fell into the sea.



The father, on seeing his babies floating helplessly, thought of emptying the ocean to save them. Flipping his bushy tail, he tried to empty the sea.

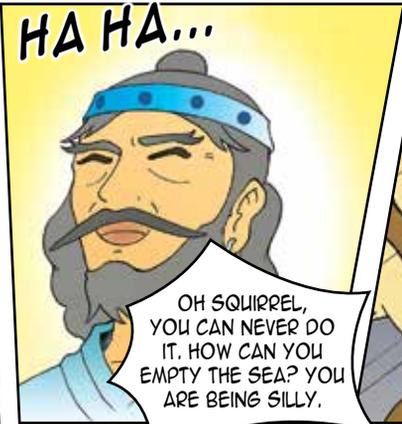


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Sakka, the god king of the heaven of thirty-three, saw and approached the squirrel. He asked....



I'M TRYING TO EMPTY THE OCEAN TO SAVE MY LITTLE ONES.

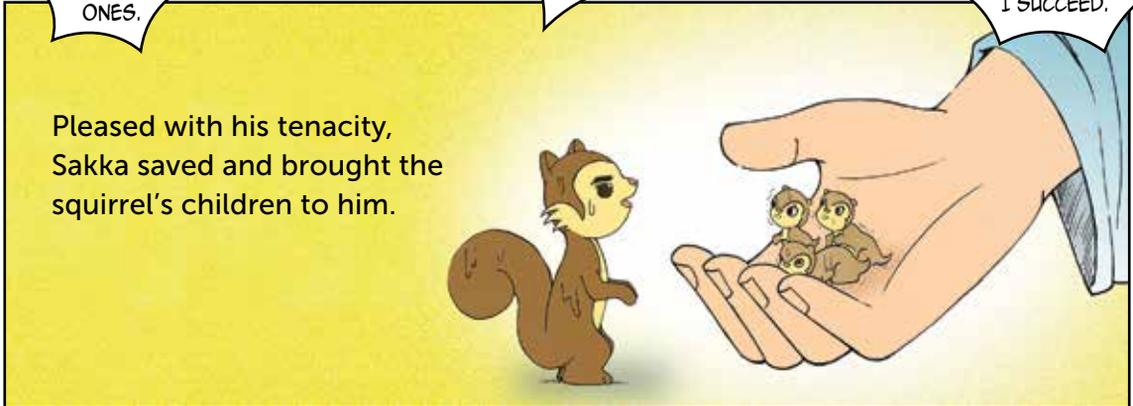


HA HA...

OH SQUIRREL, YOU CAN NEVER DO IT. HOW CAN YOU EMPTY THE SEA? YOU ARE BEING SILLY.



SPEAK NOT SO, MY LORD. I HAVE COURAGE AND WILL PERSIST TILL I SUCCEED.



Pleased with his tenacity, Sakka saved and brought the squirrel's children to him.



Then, with great love and admiration, Sakka gently stroked the father squirrel with his three fingers. The three stripes still on the back of all squirrels are the result of Sakka's soft stroking.



The Moral is :

Perseverance or determination is required for all successes and achievements, worldly or spiritual. Nothing can be achieved if diligence or continuous efforts are lacking in any pursuit.

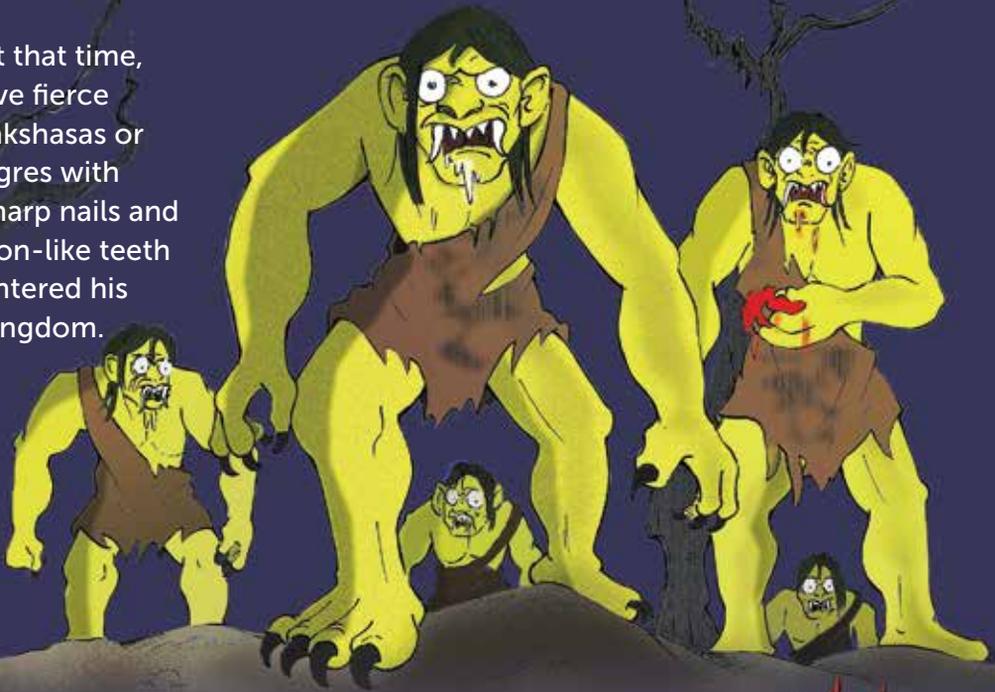
— story from the *Jataka Tales*

A King Called Power of Love

Once upon a time, before Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha, he was a bodhisattva who was born into a royal family. He grew up to become a king named "Power of Love".



At that time,
five fierce
rakshasas or
ogres with
sharp nails and
iron-like teeth
entered his
kingdom.



They were about to kill some shepherds and their sheep,
when they realised they could not inflict even the slightest
injury on both humans and animals.





Amazed to hear of such an extraordinary being, the ogres asked to be brought before the king.



The moment the ogres savoured the flesh of the virtuous king, great love for those around them welled up in their hearts and all desires to harm others vanished.



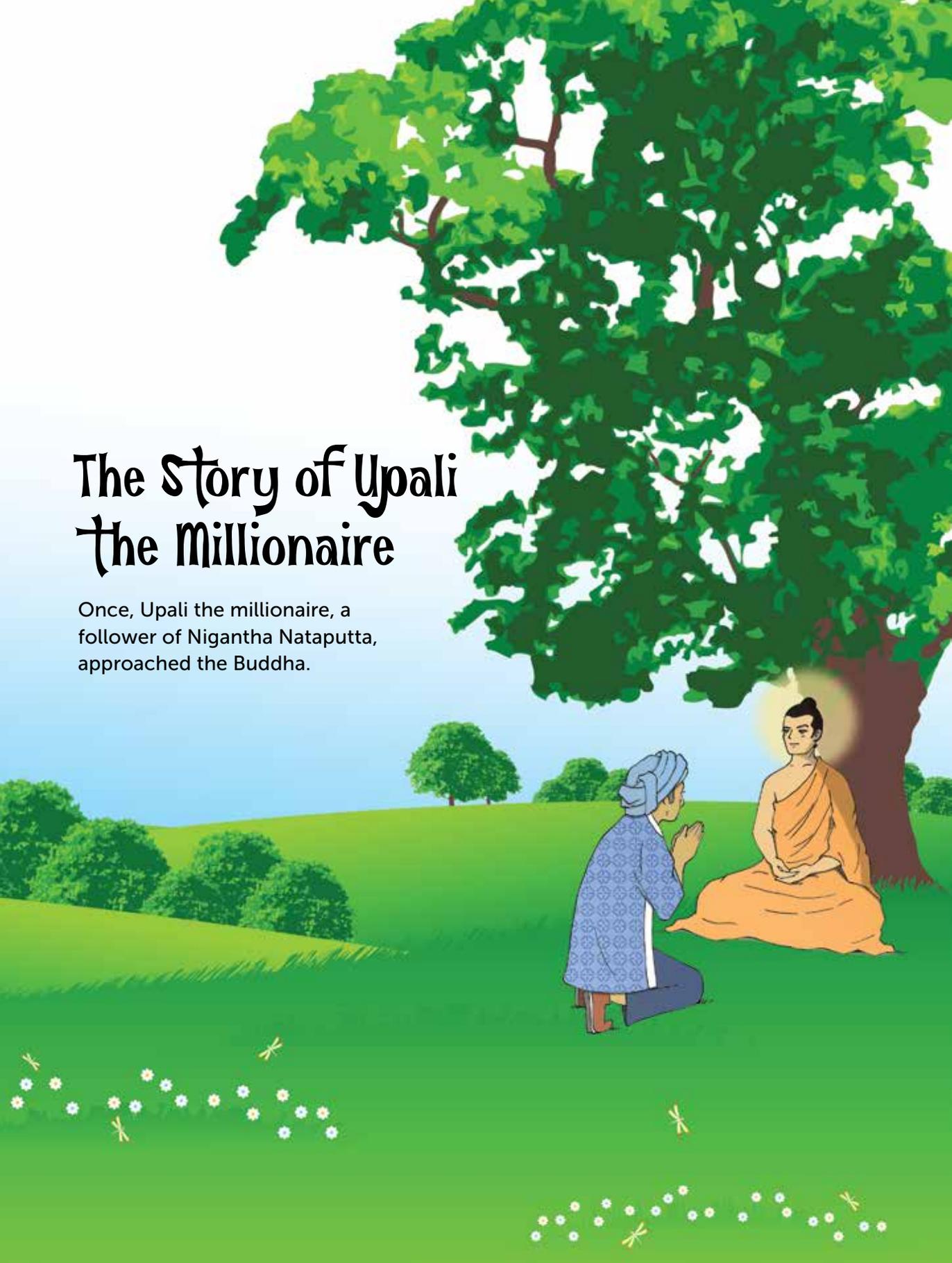
The Moral is :

Loving-kindness is the wish that others will experience happiness and find the causes of happiness. Loving-kindness has immeasurable qualities. If you have this deep love within your being, you naturally benefit others, putting the welfare of others before your own. Because of this, there is no way any kind of evil influence can harm you, for loving-kindness and compassion are the most powerful weapons against negative forces.

– Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

The Story of Upali The Millionaire

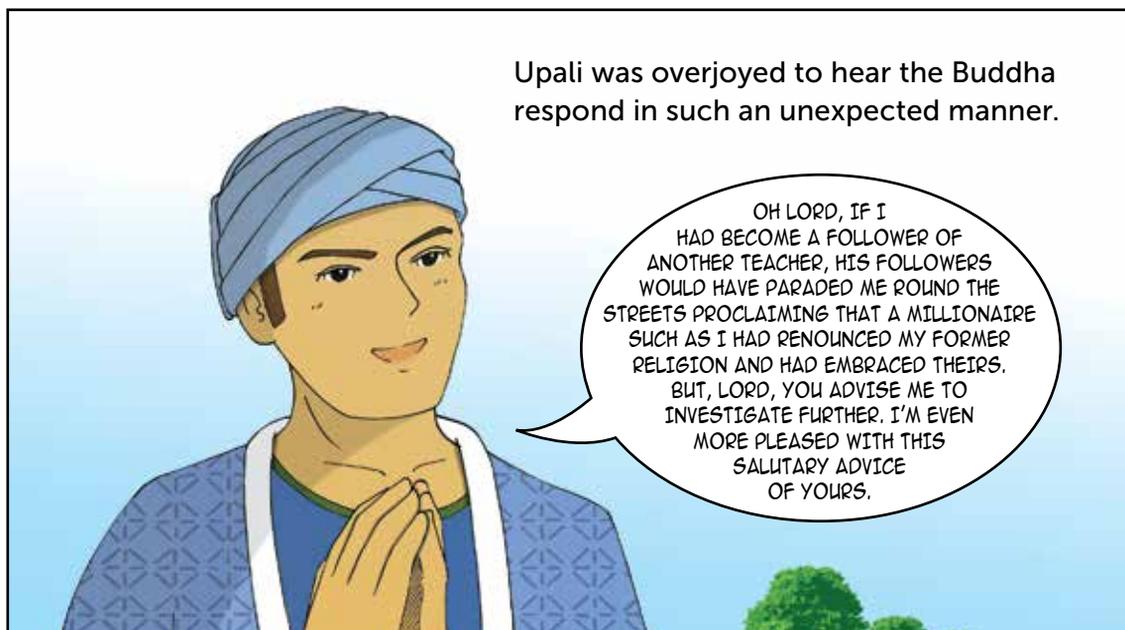
Once, Upali the millionaire, a follower of Nigantha Nataputta, approached the Buddha.



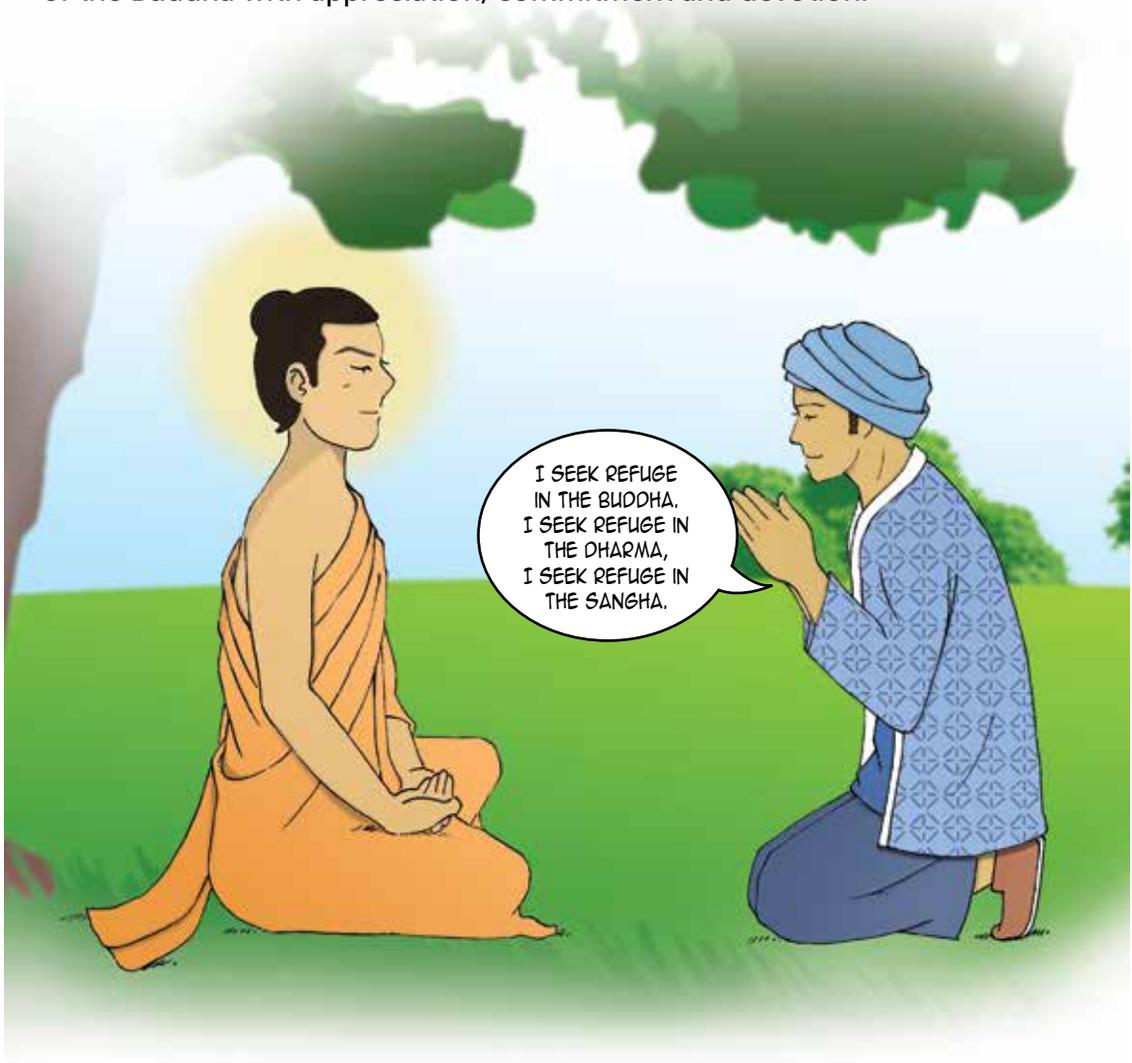
He was so pleased after having heard the Buddha expound the Dharma that he instantly expressed this wish.



Upali was overjoyed to hear the Buddha respond in such an unexpected manner.



Upali then proceeded to repeat his refuge vows thrice in front of the Buddha with appreciation, commitment and devotion.



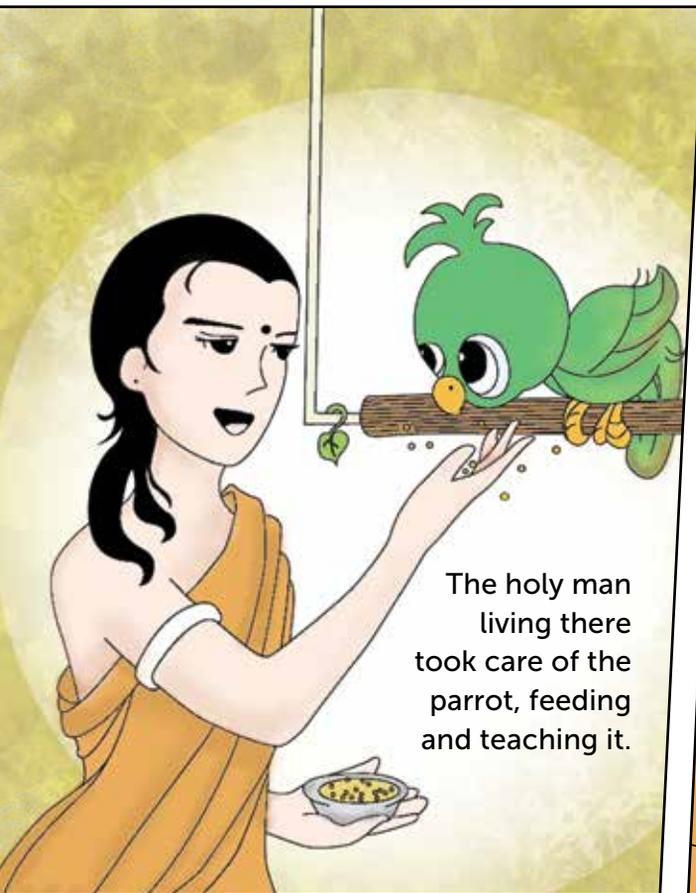
The Moral is :

Though Upali became a staunch Buddhist, the Buddha, embodying boundless compassion, perfect tolerance and gratitude, advised him to support his former religious teacher in accordance with his practice.



The little Parrot's Story

A baby parrot went to live in a forest
monastery.



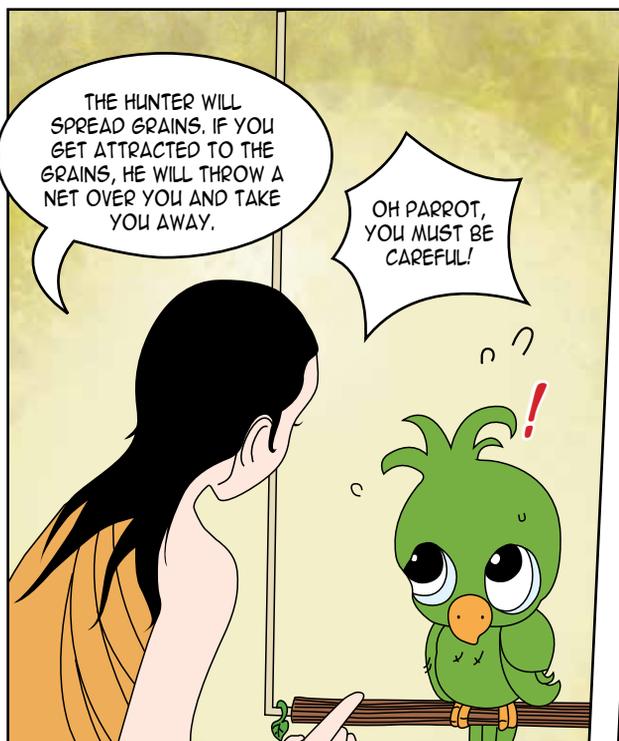
The holy man living there took care of the parrot, feeding and teaching it.



One day, the holy man warned...

OH PARROT, YOU MUST BE CAREFUL!

LOOK, PARROT, YOU MUST BE CAREFUL! A HUNTER OFTEN COMES TO THIS JUNGLE. HE SPREADS GRAINS AND SET TRAPS FOR BIRDS.



THE HUNTER WILL SPREAD GRAINS. IF YOU GET ATTRACTED TO THE GRAINS, HE WILL THROW A NET OVER YOU AND TAKE YOU AWAY.

OH PARROT, YOU MUST BE CAREFUL!

The parrot memorised the words of the holy man and repeated them over and over again as parrots do.

OH PARROT, YOU MUST BE CAREFUL! A HUNTER OFTEN COMES TO THIS JUNGLE... HE SPREADS GRAINS AND SETS TRAPS FOR BIRDS. IF YOU GET ATTRACTED TO THE GRAINS... HE WILL THROW A NET OVER YOU AND TAKE YOU AWAY...



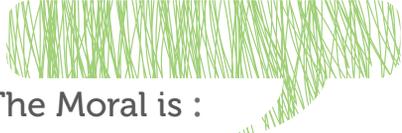


As the parrot was carried away in the net, it kept repeating what the holy man had taught him...





The parrot was very good at repeating those words, but it had no understanding of the truth and wisdom in them!



The Moral is :

Anyone can repeat the words of wisdom spoken by wise people. But unless each of us develop wisdom within ourselves, we are just like parrots, echoing words that have no meaning to us. Practising Anapana sati (mindfulness of breath meditation) and following the Five Precepts help one to develop strength and calmness of mind such that it becomes easier to avoid bad situations in life.

– S.N. Goenka

The Mystery of the Buddha's Flower

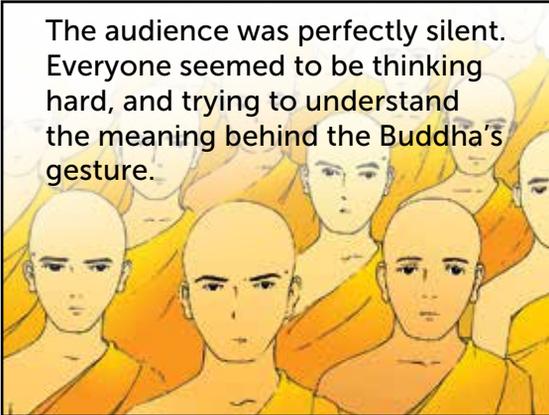


One day, the Buddha held up a flower in front of an audience of 1250 monks and nuns.

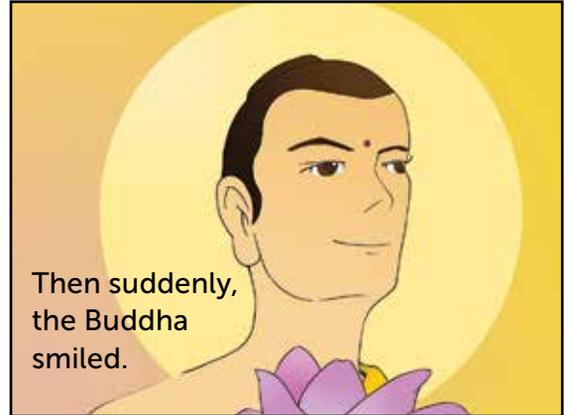


He did not say anything for quite a long time.

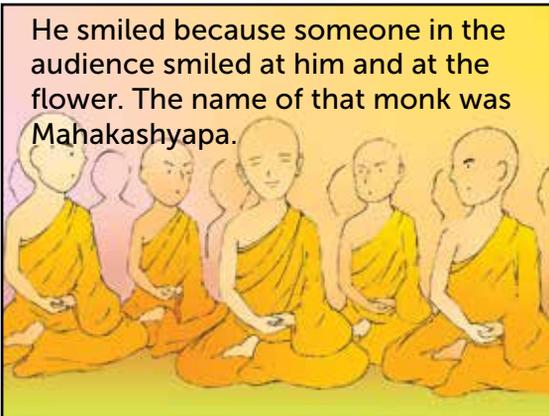
The audience was perfectly silent. Everyone seemed to be thinking hard, and trying to understand the meaning behind the Buddha's gesture.



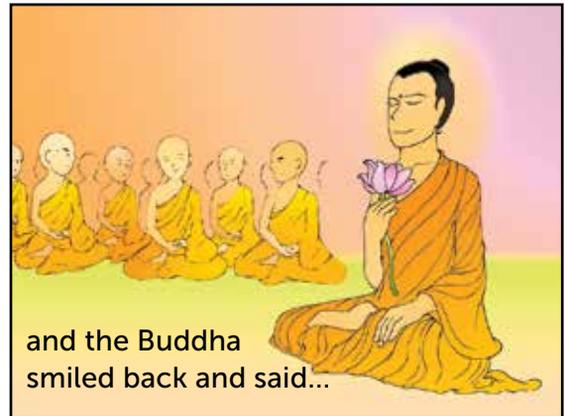
Then suddenly, the Buddha smiled.



He smiled because someone in the audience smiled at him and at the flower. The name of that monk was Mahakashyapa.



and the Buddha smiled back and said...



I HAVE A TREASURE OF INSIGHT, AND I HAVE TRANSMITTED IT TO MAHAKASHYAPA.





The Moral is :

This story has been discussed by many generations of Zen students, and people continue to look for its meaning. To me, the meaning is quite simple.

When someone holds up a flower and shows it to you. He wants you to see it. If you keep thinking, you miss the flower. The person who was not thinking, who was just himself, was able to encounter the flower in depth, and he smiled.

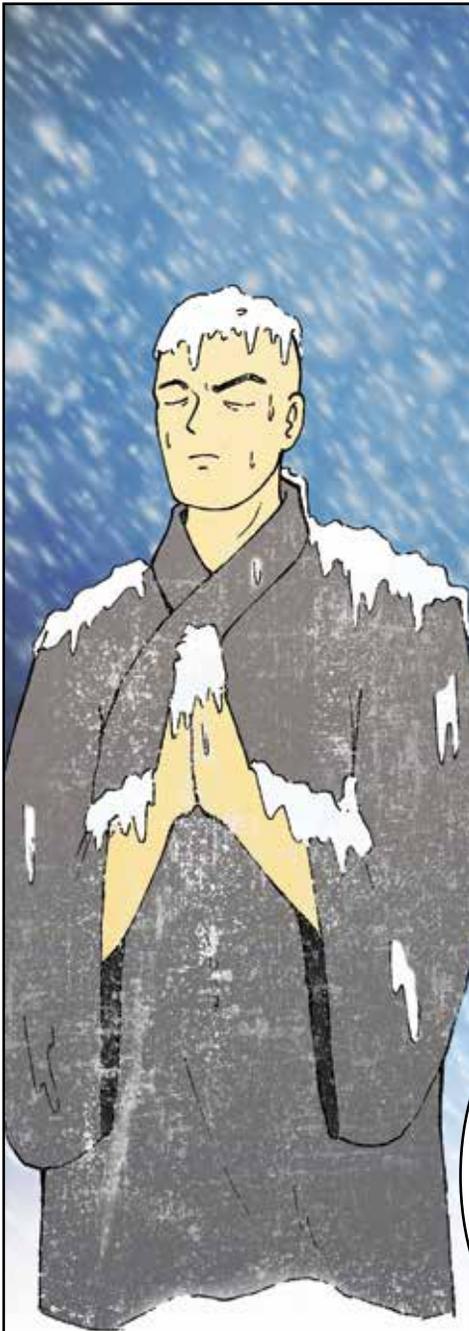
- Thich Nhat Hanh.



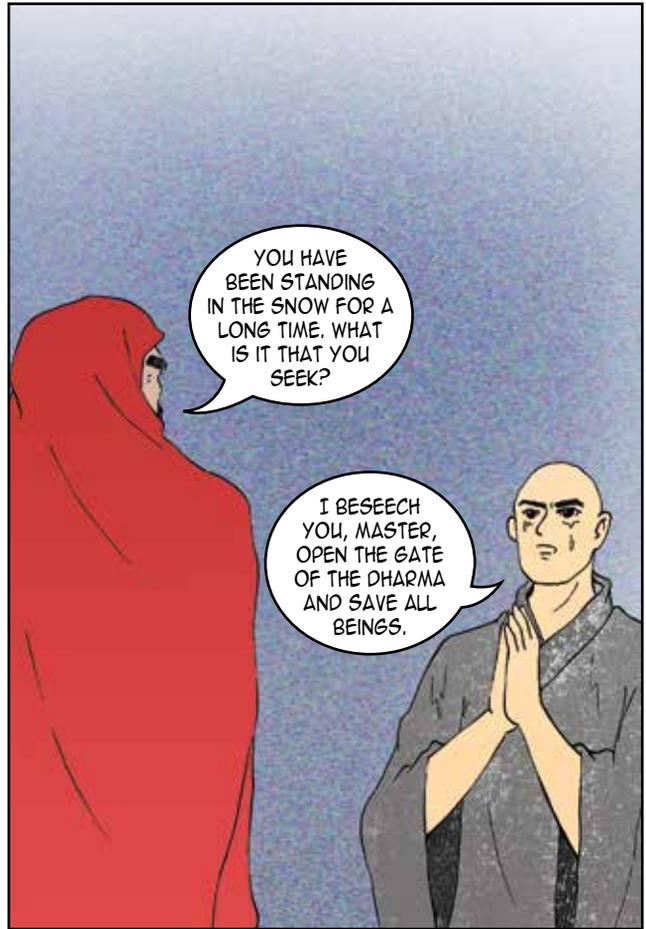
Bodhidharma and No Mind

A long time ago, Shenkuang went over to the Shaolin temple. Day and night, he beseeched Bodhidharma for instruction. The Master sat in *zazen*, facing the wall and paid no attention to his pleas.



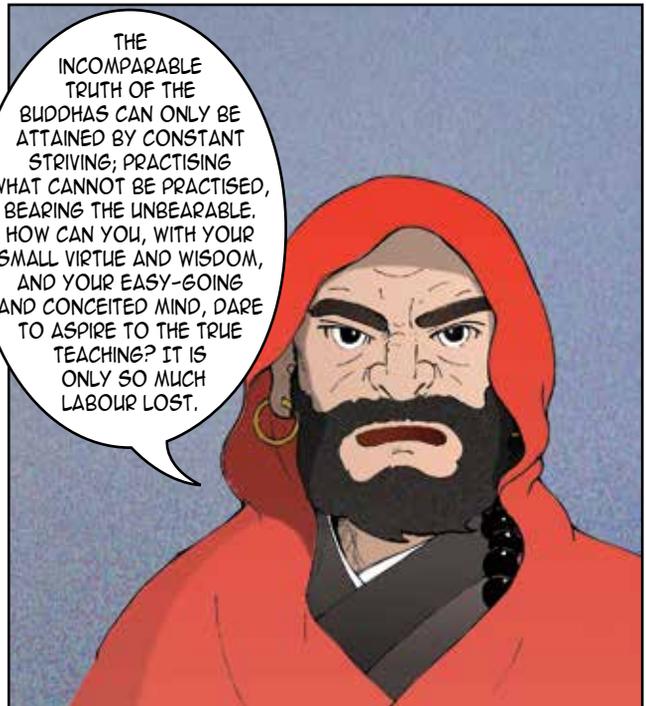


One evening, Shenkuang stood unmoving before Bodhidharma right through a snowstorm. In the morning, the snow had reached above his knees.

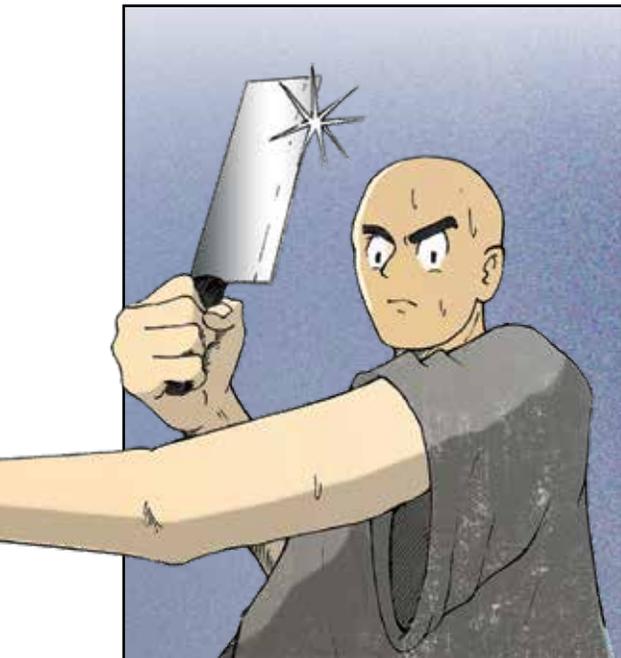


YOU HAVE BEEN STANDING IN THE SNOW FOR A LONG TIME. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU SEEK?

I BESEECH YOU, MASTER, OPEN THE GATE OF THE DHARMA AND SAVE ALL BEINGS.



THE INCOMPARABLE TRUTH OF THE BUDDHAS CAN ONLY BE ATTAINED BY CONSTANT STRIVING; PRACTISING WHAT CANNOT BE PRACTISED, BEARING THE UNBEARABLE. HOW CAN YOU, WITH YOUR SMALL VIRTUE AND WISDOM, AND YOUR EASY-GOING AND CONCEITED MIND, DARE TO ASPIRE TO THE TRUE TEACHING? IT IS ONLY SO MUCH LABOUR LOST.



Hearing this, Shenkuang drew out a knife and cut off his arm, placing it before Bodhidharma. At this, Bodhidharma relented and accepted him as a disciple, giving him the Dharma name Huike.



BRING ME YOUR MIND, AND I WILL PUT IT TO REST.

I HAVE SEARCHED FOR MY MIND, BUT I CANNOT FIND IT.



I HAVE COMPLETELY PUT IT TO REST FOR YOU.



The Moral is :

This story of Bodhidharma is one of the most familiar of all Zen *koans*. According to Mary Jaksch, Bodhidharma is pointing to the fact that all things — though they may come and go, be born and die — are complete and eternally at rest. If we can truly see into that complete rest, our life is transformed.

Explained Barry Magid, “A mind not at rest is a mind that is at odds with itself, plagued by judgment and separation. When Bodhidharma sends Huike away to seek his mind, he goes to fully confront the fact of that restless separation between what is ‘mind’ and ‘non-mind’. Seeing all the self-centredness on display, thinking that the self is all there is, and is the limit of who and what we are in the universe, we are stuck in delusion.

When we practise the Dharma, practising what can't be practised, bearing the unbearable, everything shifts. The boundary between self and life dissolves and there is just this moment. In this moment, where is the world, where is the mind? There is no place outside the world to observe the world, no place outside the mind to observe the mind, no place outside of this moment to be or know anything at all. When there is no separation from mind, there is no finding, no knowing the mind. Then this mind, this body, this life is completely sufficient, with nothing lacking. Practice becomes the natural expression of who we are, and the natural expression of who we are is our practice. Nothing to attain, everything to be. The mind that has completely forgotten about its own condition is, as Bodhidharma says, completely at rest. And such a state of “being at rest” is indistinguishable from the activity of just being in this moment.”

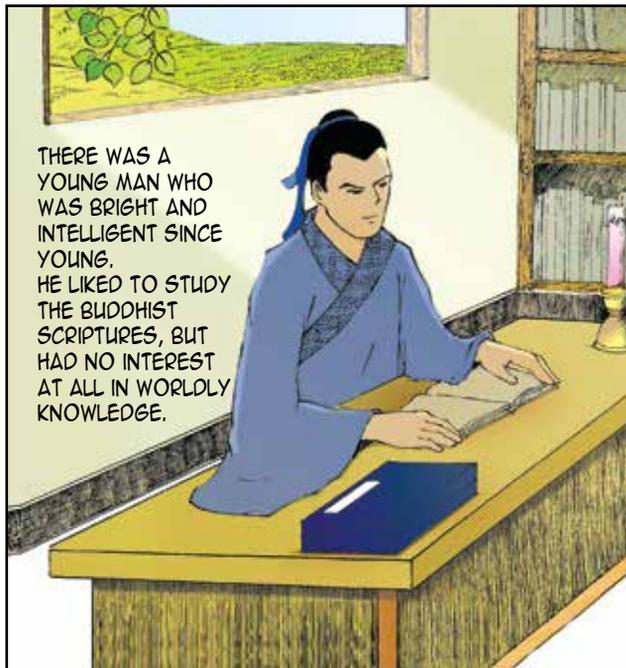


Refrain from Eating Shellfish

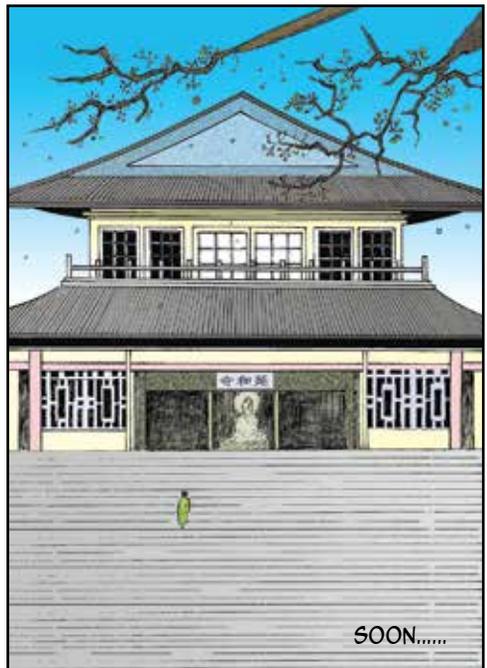


DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR TANG WEN ZONG DURING THE TANG DYNASTY.....

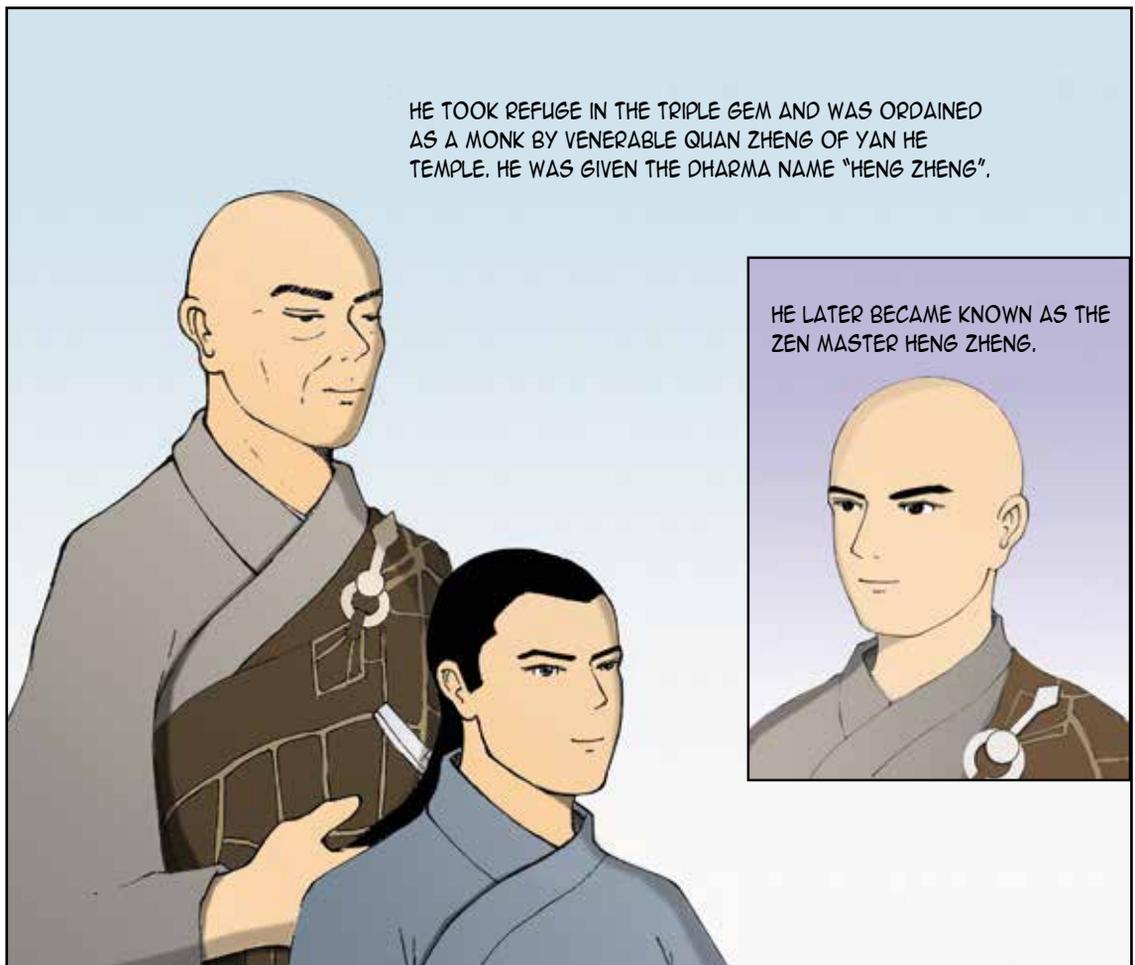




THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS BRIGHT AND INTELLIGENT SINCE YOUNG. HE LIKED TO STUDY THE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES, BUT HAD NO INTEREST AT ALL IN WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE.



SOON.....

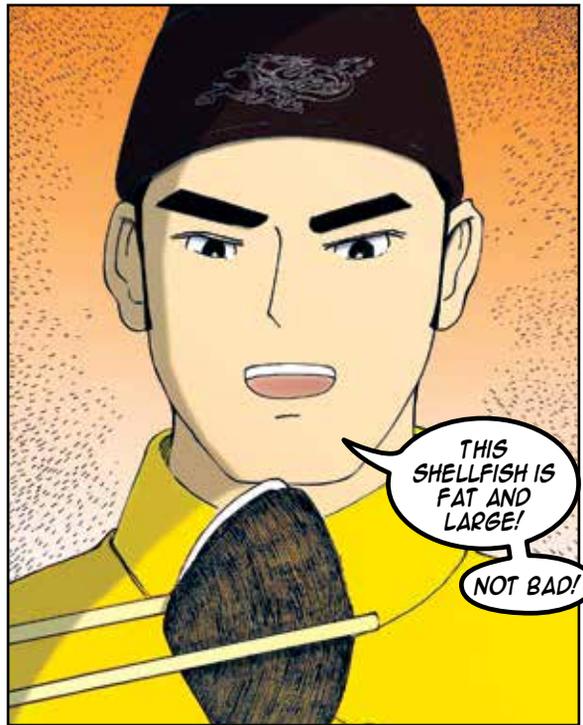
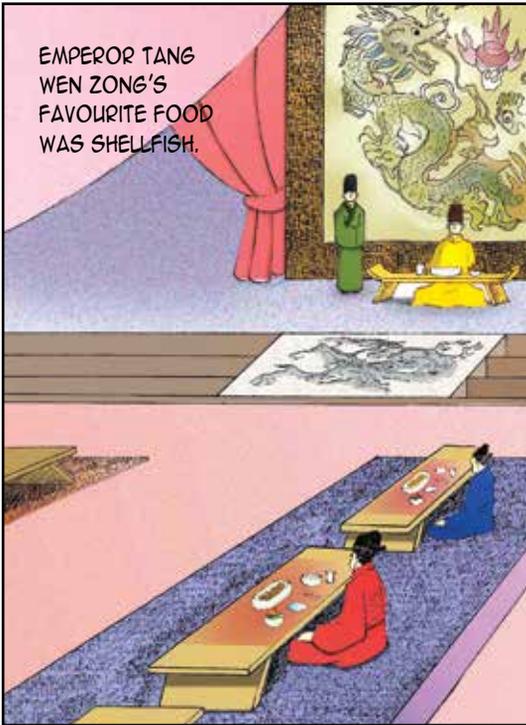


HE TOOK REFUGE IN THE TRIPLE GEM AND WAS ORDAINED AS A MONK BY VENERABLE QUAN ZHENG OF YAN HE TEMPLE. HE WAS GIVEN THE DHARMA NAME "HENG ZHENG".



HE LATER BECAME KNOWN AS THE ZEN MASTER HENG ZHENG.

EMPEROR TANG WEN ZONG'S FAVOURITE FOOD WAS SHELLFISH.



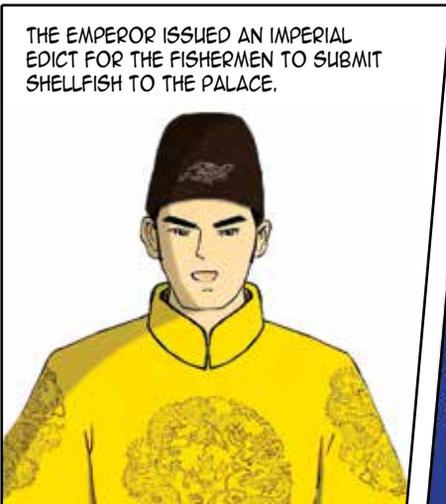
THIS SHELLFISH IS FAT AND LARGE!

NOT BAD!

YOUR MAJESTY, THIS HAS JUST BEEN CAUGHT AT THE SEASIDE AND QUICKLY TRANSPORTED HERE BY HORSE.



THE EMPEROR ISSUED AN IMPERIAL EDICT FOR THE FISHERMEN TO SUBMIT SHELLFISH TO THE PALACE.



ALL OF YOU MUST FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE EDICT AND ATTEND TO THIS MATTER.

THERE MUST NOT BE ANY ERROR!

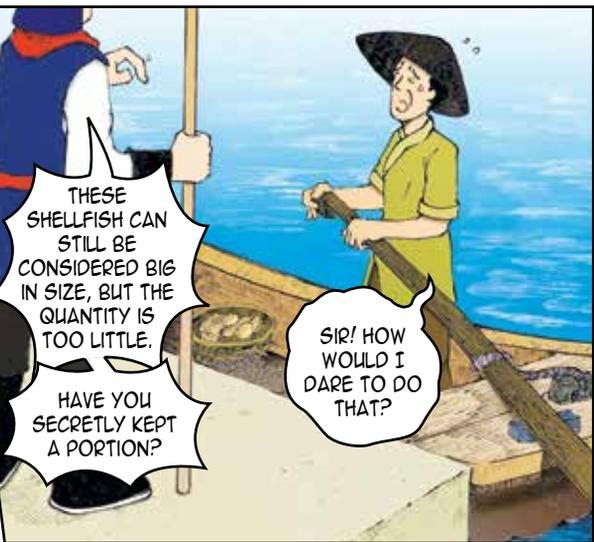
YES! WE ABIDE BY YOUR ORDERS AND WILL CARRY THEM OUT IMMEDIATELY.





NO, THIS WILL NOT DO! WHY ARE THERE SO FEW SHELLFISH, AND THEY ARE SO SMALL IN SIZE! NO, THIS WILL NOT DO!

WE HAVE TRIED OUR BEST. WE REALLY COULD NOT CATCH ANY SHELLFISH THAT IS BIGGER!



THESE SHELLFISH CAN STILL BE CONSIDERED BIG IN SIZE, BUT THE QUANTITY IS TOO LITTLE.

SIR! HOW WOULD I DARE TO DO THAT?

HAVE YOU SECRETLY KEPT A PORTION?



SIR, WE HAVE TRIED OUR UTMOST. HOWEVER, THE YIELD OF SHELLFISH THIS YEAR IS NOT MUCH, PLEASE HELP US.

ALL RIGHT! ON ACCOUNT OF OUR LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP, YOU CAN GO BACK FIRST.



HA! HA! HA!

IF YOU CANNOT PRODUCE THE SHELLFISH, WE WILL PUT YOU IN PRISON.

PLEASE LET ME OFF!



THE PEOPLE LIVING BY THE SEASIDE WERE FULL OF COMPLAINTS AND THERE WAS WIDESPREAD DISCONTENTMENT.

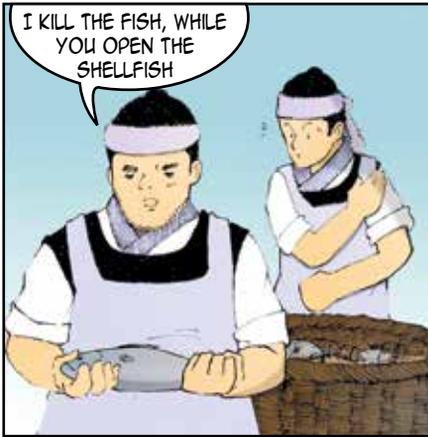
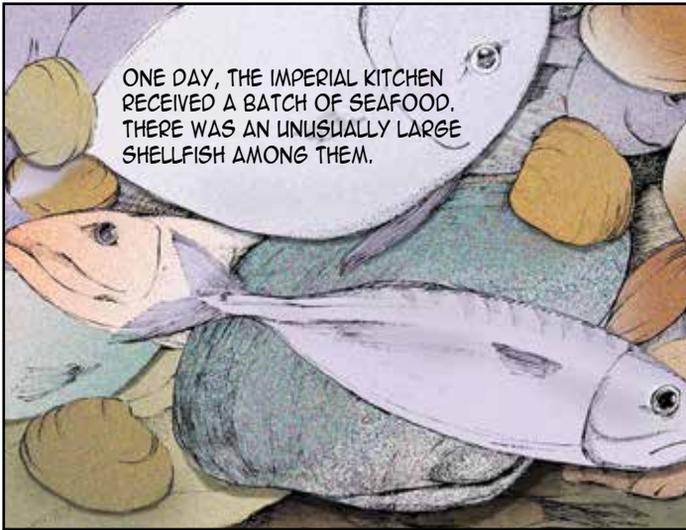
SON... WHAT SHOULD WE DO...

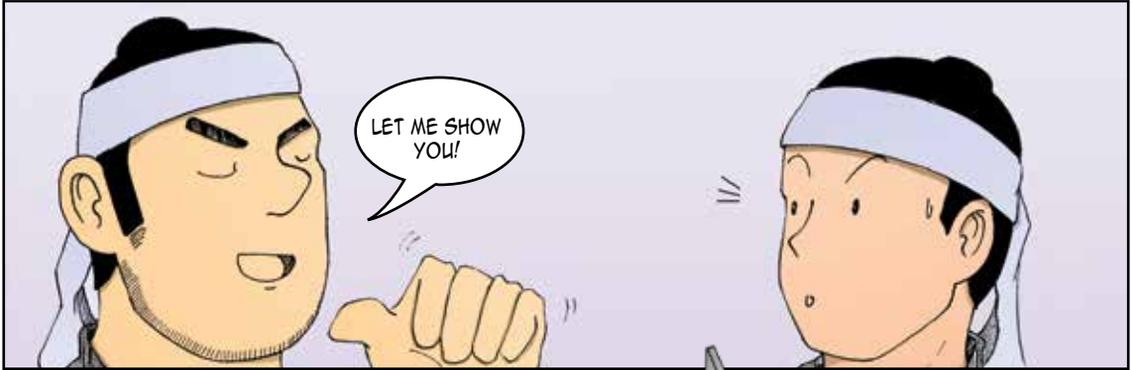
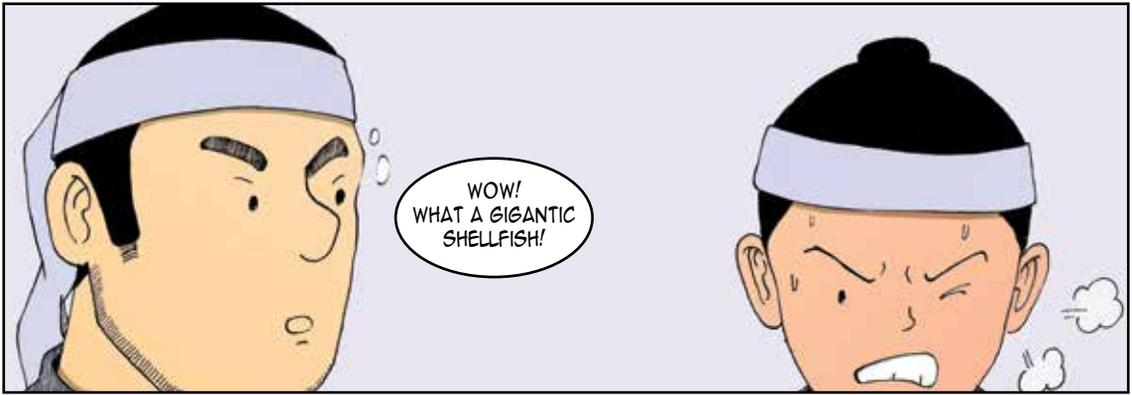
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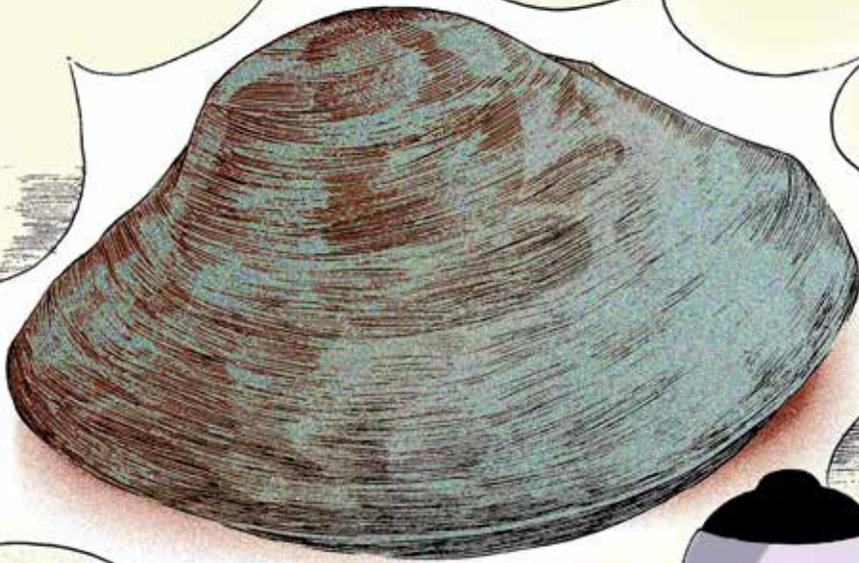
SOB...

THE EMPEROR LIKES TO EAT SHELLFISH, AND THIS HAS BROUGHT MISERY AND DIFFICULTIES FOR US, THE COMMON PEOPLE!

THE MINISTERS USE THEIR POWERFUL CONNECTIONS TO BULLY THE HARMLESS COMMON PEOPLE. WHAT KIND OF WORLD IS THIS?







HEY! THIS IS STRANGE!
THERE IS NOT A TRACE OF
DAMAGE ON THE
OUTER SHELL.



AHH!

OH NO!
INSTEAD, THE KNIFE BLADE
HAS CRACKED. HOW CAN THE
SHELL BE SO HARD?



REPORT TO YOUR MAJESTY!

A REPORT COMES FROM THE IMPERIAL KITCHEN THAT THERE IS A BIG SHELLFISH THAT CHEFS CANNOT OPEN. THE CHEFS HAVE TRIED ALL WAYS. THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO.

OH REALLY?

IS THERE SUCH AN OCCURRENCE? THEN I MUST GO AND SEE FOR MYSELF.



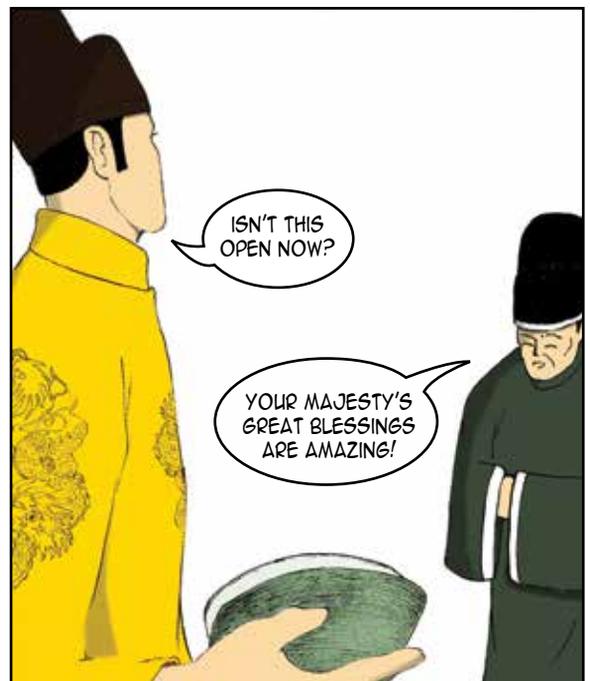
THIS SHELLFISH IS REALLY HUGE! AHH!



LET ME TRY...



PA!



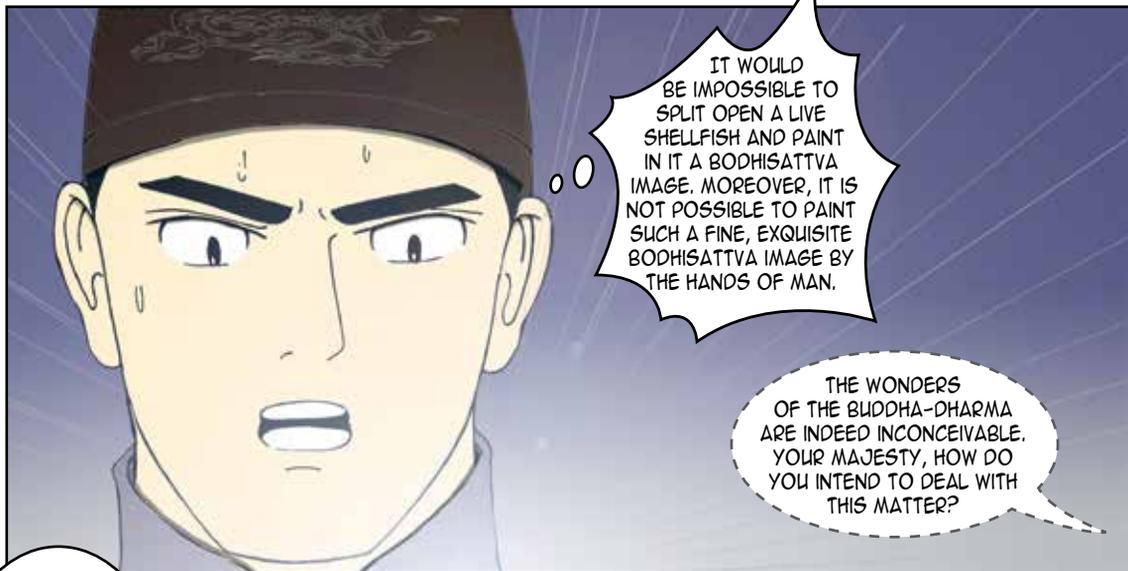
ISN'T THIS OPEN NOW?

YOUR MAJESTY'S GREAT BLESSINGS ARE AMAZING!





A BODHISATTVA
IMAGE INSIDE
THE SHELL!!



IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO SPLIT OPEN A LIVE SHELLFISH AND PAINT IN IT A BODHISATTVA IMAGE. MOREOVER, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PAINT SUCH A FINE, EXQUISITE BODHISATTVA IMAGE BY THE HANDS OF MAN.

THE WONDERS OF THE BUDDHA-DHARMA ARE INDEED INCONCEIVABLE. YOUR MAJESTY, HOW DO YOU INTEND TO DEAL WITH THIS MATTER?



ISSUE AN IMPERIAL EDICT - MAKE A FINE, ELEGANT SHRINE IMMEDIATELY. I WANT TO ENSHRINE AND WORSHIP THIS BODHISATTVA IN AN APPROPRIATE WAY.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.



EMPEROR WEN ZHONG ASSEMBLED HIS MINISTERS TO DELIBERATE ON THIS MATTER.

WHY DOES A BODHISATTVA IMAGE APPEAR INSIDE THE SHELL OF THE SHELLFISH?



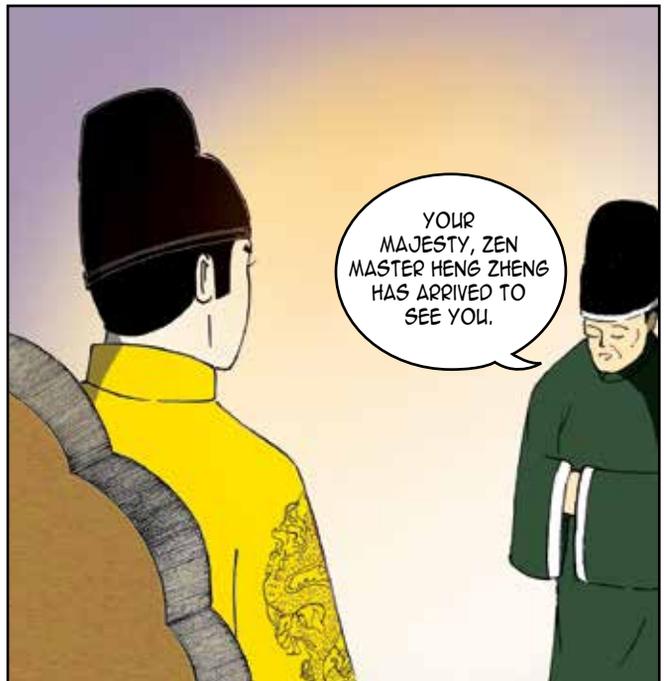
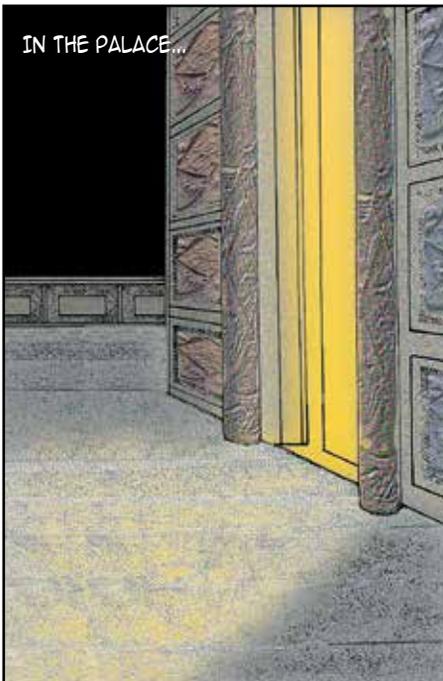
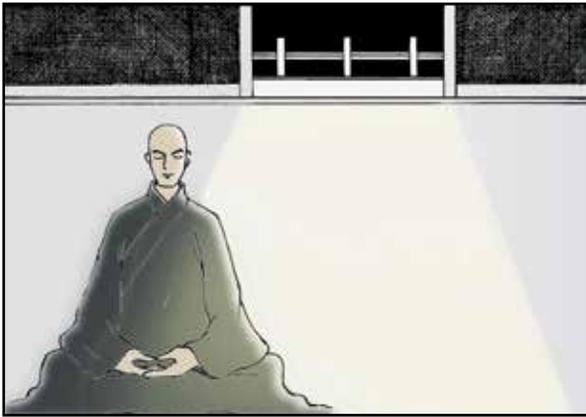
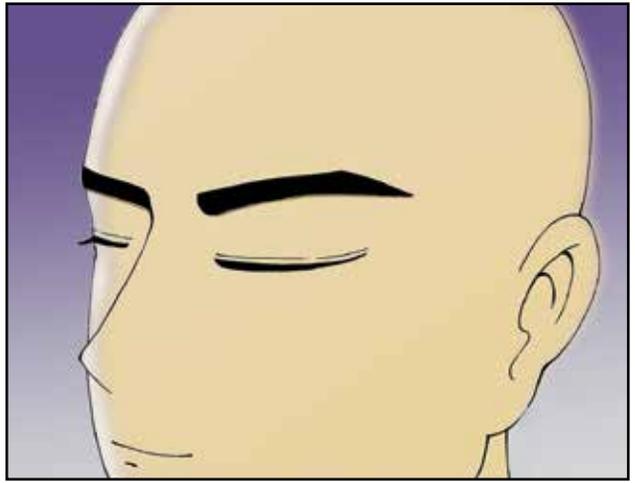
CHIEF MINISTER LI DEYU STEPPED OUT TO MAKE A REPORT

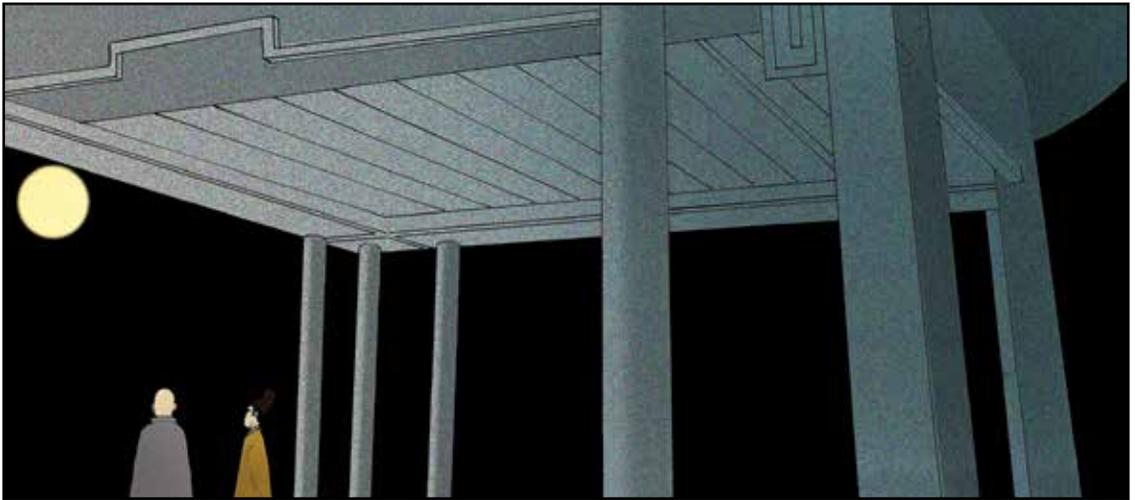
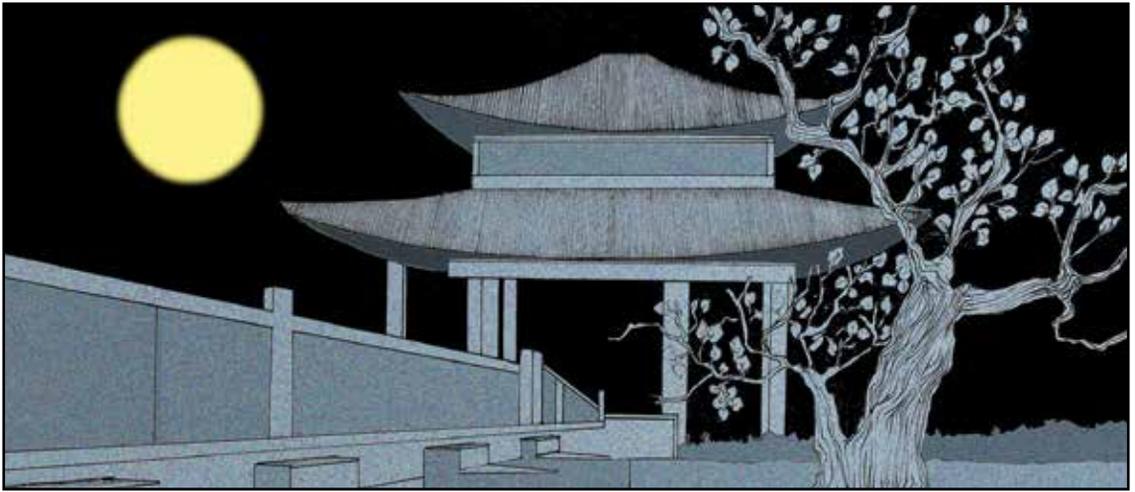
WHAT DO HAVE TO SAY?

IN THE ZHONG NAN MOUNTAIN, THERE IS A ZEN MASTER BY THE NAME OF VENERABLE HENG ZHENG. HE IS PROFICIENT IN THE BUDDHADHARMA AND CAN EXPLAIN THIS.



ALL RIGHT! WE WILL DO IT THIS WAY THEN.



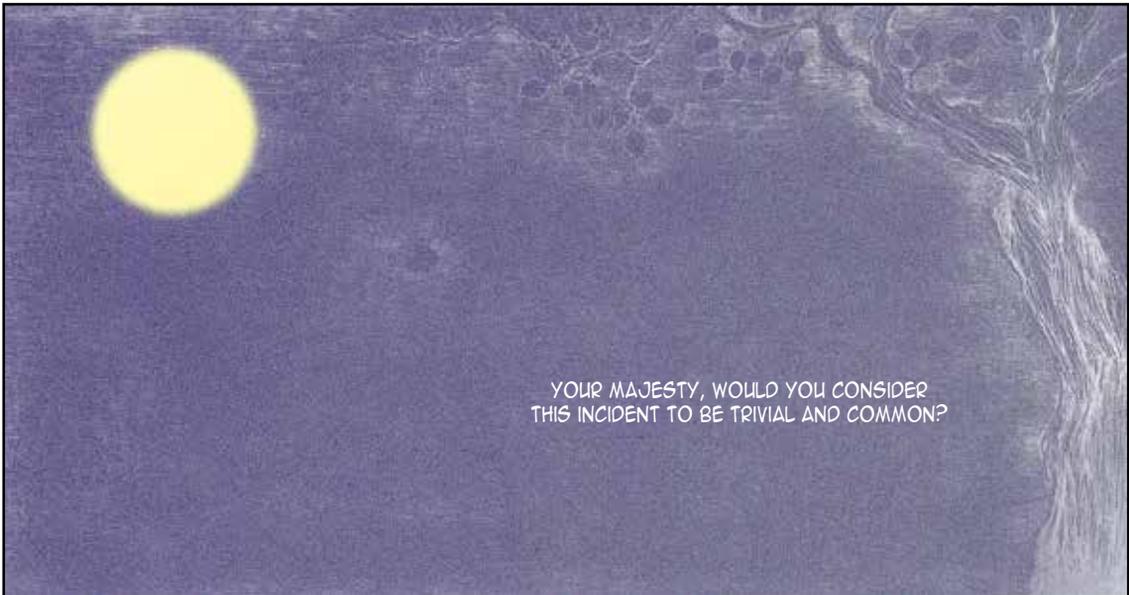




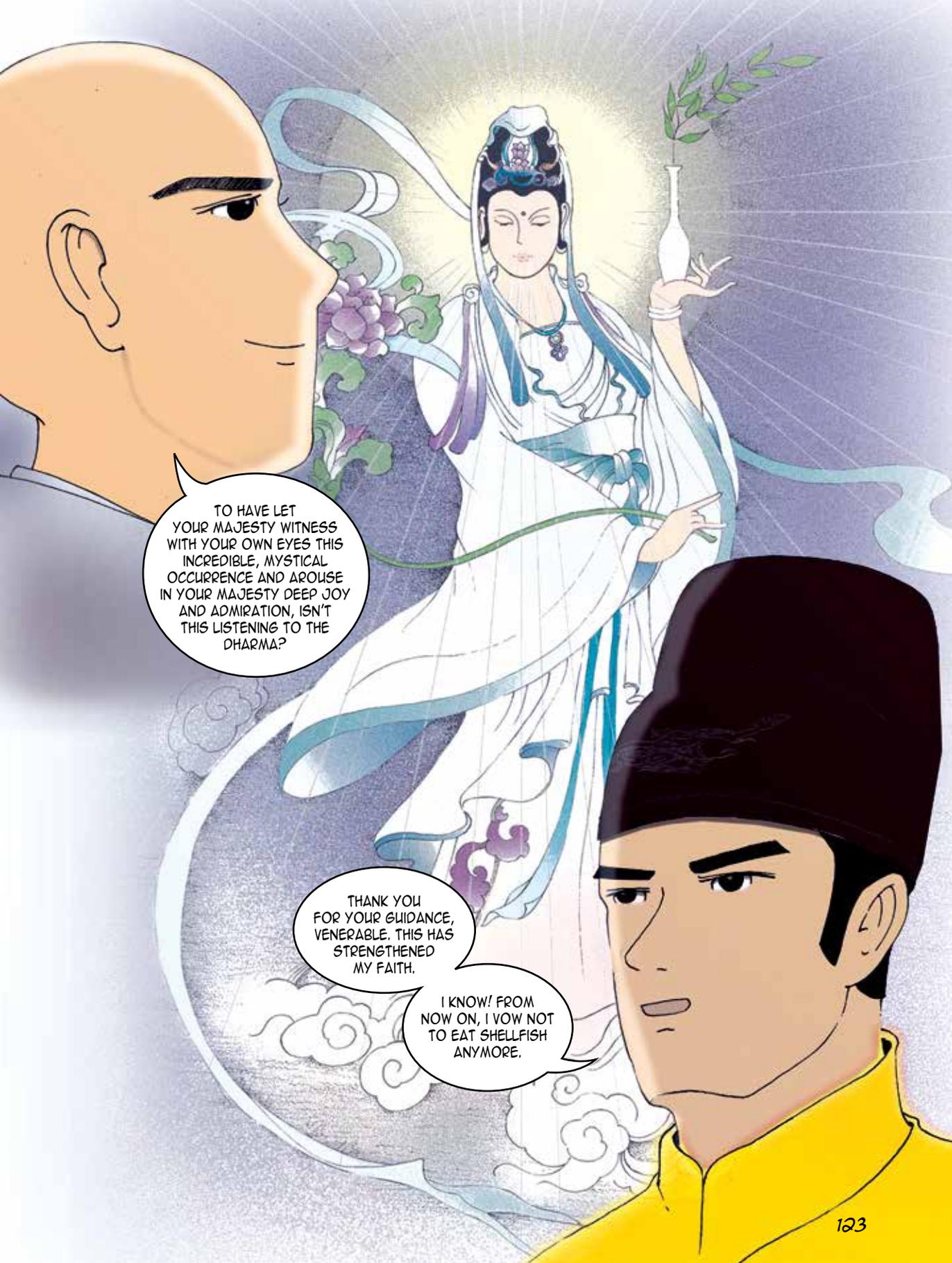
THIS CLEARLY
IS TO AROUSE YOUR
MAJESTY'S FAITH. AS IS
STATED IN THE SUTRA,
"TO THOSE WHO MUST BE SAVED
IN THE BODY OF A BUDDHA, THE
BODHISATTVA APPEARS AS
A BUDDHA AND TEACHES
THEM THE DHARMA."



HOWEVER,
I HAVE ONLY SEEN THE
IMAGE OF THE BODHISATTVA.
I HAVE NOT YET HEARD
THE DHARMA!



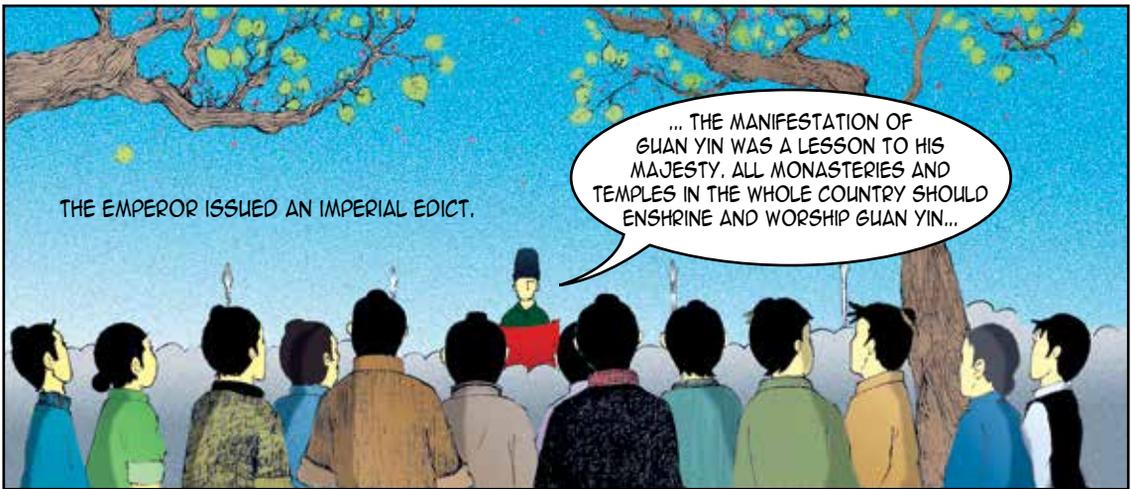
YOUR MAJESTY, WOULD YOU CONSIDER
THIS INCIDENT TO BE TRIVIAL AND COMMON?



TO HAVE LET YOUR MAJESTY WITNESS WITH YOUR OWN EYES THIS INCREDIBLE, MYSTICAL OCCURRENCE AND AROUSE IN YOUR MAJESTY DEEP JOY AND ADMIRATION, ISN'T THIS LISTENING TO THE DHARMA?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GUIDANCE, VENERABLE. THIS HAS STRENGTHENED MY FAITH.

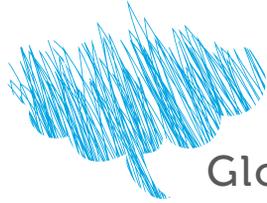
I KNOW! FROM NOW ON, I VOW NOT TO EAT SHELLFISH ANYMORE.



FROM THEN ON, AMITABHA BUDDHA AND GUAN YIN BODHISATTVA WERE WELL-KNOWN AND WORSHIPPED IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD.







Glossary

- Amitabha:** Amitabha is the most commonly used name for the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life. A transhistorical Buddha venerated by all Mahayana schools particularly, Pure Land. Presides over the Western Pure Land (Land of Ultimate Bliss), where anyone can be reborn through utterly sincere recitation of His name, particularly at the time of death Amitabha Sutra is one of the three cardinal Pure Land Sutras.
-
- Arhat:** One who has destroyed dualistic ego-grasping/clinging and achieved liberation of cyclic existence.
-
- Attachment:** Attachments are what keep us turning on the wheel of rebirth. In the Four Noble truths, Buddha Shakyamuni taught that attachment to self is the root cause of suffering: From craving [attachment] springs grief, from craving springs fear; For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear. (Dhammapada) Becoming enlightened is nothing other than severing all our attachments. What is meant by "attachment"? It is the investing of mental or emotional energy in an "object". We can become attached to people, things, experiential states, and our own thoughts and preconceptions. In Buddhist teachings attachments are usually divided into two general categories: attachments to self and attachments to dharmas. For the seasoned practitioner, even the Dharma must not become an attachment.
-
- Bodhidharma:** He was a Buddhist monk who lived during the 5th or 6th century CE. He is traditionally credited as the transmitter of *Chan* to China, and regarded as its first Chinese patriarch.
-
- Bodhisattva:** One who aspires to save all beings from suffering, while saving oneself.
-
- Buddha:** An aspect of the Triple Gem - The Awakened or Enlightened One. A Buddha is one who has attained liberation from all suffering, attaining True Happiness, Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Compassion, among all other virtues for the sake of helping all sentient beings. "The Buddha" refers to the historical Shakyamuni or Gautama Buddha, who is the founder of Buddhism in our world.
-
- Buddhadharma:** Buddhists do not call the teachings of the Buddha, which they follow, Buddhism; they call them Buddhadharma, the Dharma of the Buddhas.

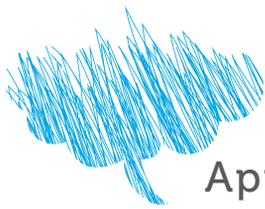
Compassion:	The quality that makes us aspire to help others with no selfish intention; the ending of selfishness.
Cyclical existence:	The cycle of death and rebirth, taking uncontrolled rebirth under the influence of defilement and karmic imprints. The process arises out of ignorance and is marked by suffering.
Dharma:	An aspect of the Triple Gem - the teachings of the Buddha or the general teachings of Buddhism. <i>Dhamma</i> in Pali.
Eight worldly concerns:	These keep one from the path; they are attachment to gain, pleasure, praise, fame and aversion to loss, pain, blame, and a bad reputation.
Enlightenment:	Same as Buddhahood, full enlightenment/ awakening. Highest level of development, having forever eliminated all defilements and karmic imprints, and having developed all good qualities and wisdom to their fullest extent.
Four foundations:	To turn the mind towards the Dharma, we meditate on the Four foundations also known as the Four Thoughts. They are precious human rebirth, impermanence and death, infallibility of Karma (or cause and effect) and the suffering of samsara (or cyclical existence).
Generosity:	The practice of cultivating unattached and unconditional giving.
Guanyin:	Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva; the Bodhisattva who personifies the perfect Compassion of all Buddhas, who hears and heeds the cries of the world.
Impermanence:	All compounded things are constantly changing, as a result or effect of changing causes and conditions. All living and non-living elements are thus subject to decay and renewal.
Karma:	The moral law of cause and effect which states that what we experience is the result of what we had done, that what we do will result in what we will experience.
Koan:	A brief anecdote recording an exchange between master and disciple or a master's enlightenment experience. <i>Koans</i> are used to bring a student to realisation or to help clarify his enlightenment.
Liberation:	State after removing the defilements and karma which cause uncontrolled rebirth in cyclic existence.
Loving-kindness:	The quality which makes us wish for the happiness and well-being of others. <i>Metta</i> in Pali.
Lower realms:	The realms of animals, hungry ghost and hell beings

Mahakashyapa:	One of the principal disciples of Buddha Shakyamuni who convened and directed the First Buddhist Council. He came from the kingdom of Magadha.
Maudgalyayana:	He was one of Buddha Shakyamuni's closest disciples who was considered the second of the Buddha's two foremost disciples (foremost in supernatural powers), together with Shariputra. Maudgalyayana was able to use his powers of mind-reading in order to give good and fitting advice to his students, so they could attain results quickly.
Meditation:	A practice to habituate ourselves to positive and realistic states of mind.
Merits:	Blessings, positive potential. Imprints on the mindstream of positive actions, leading to future happiness.
Mindfulness:	An aspect of the 'Noble Eightfold Path' - the quality that enables us to remember, and keep our awareness and attention on what is beneficial to one and all in terms of thoughts, speech and actions. <i>Satipatthana</i> in Pali.
Patience:	One of the perfections that a bodhisattva trains in and practises to realise perfect enlightenment. Refers to not returning harm, rather than merely enduring a difficult situation. It is the ability to control one's emotions even when being criticised or attacked.
Precepts:	The basic guidelines of moral conduct.
Refuge:	In the Buddhist context to take refuge means to accept the Buddha and the Buddhist teachings as the path one wants to take.
Samsara:	This world of rebirth and suffering.
Sangha:	An aspect of the Triple Gem - the holy community of monks and nuns.
Sentient beings:	Living beings with feelings in the six Samsara realms of hells, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demi-gods and gods.
Shakyamuni:	The historical Buddha who was the founder of Buddhism in our world.
Shariputra:	An Arhat "foremost in wisdom" renowned for his teaching and is one of two chief male disciples of the Buddha along with Maudgalyayana.
Suffering:	The physical and mental feeling of dissatisfaction.
Sutra:	The recorded teachings of the Buddha. Spelt as <i>Sutta</i> in Pali.

Ten Virtues:	Three of the body (not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct), four of the speech (not lying, not using divisive speech, not using harsh words, not engaging in idle talk) and three of the mind (not coveting, not engaging in harmful thought and not holding wrong views)
Triple Gem:	The Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.
Venerable:	An honorific addressing of a member of the Sangha.
Virtues:	Blessings which transcend Birth and Death and lead to Buddhahood. Depending on the mind of the practitioner, that is, on whether he is seeking mundane rewards (merit) or transcendence (virtue), the same action either to merit or virtue.
Wisdom:	The understanding or discernment based on the direct realisation of the Four Noble Truths, Impermanence, Interdependent Origination, Non-self and Emptiness. The Buddha taught that all things are impermanent, arising and passing away, subject to change, and that knowing this — not in a rational, but empirical manner — is wisdom.
Zazen:	The posture of zazen is seated, with folded legs and hands, and an erect but settled spine. The legs are folded in one of the standard sitting styles such as full-lotus or half-lotus. The hands are folded together into a simple mudra over the belly. In many practices, one breathes from the centre of gravity in the belly and the eyelids are half-lowered, the eyes being neither fully open nor shut so that the practitioner is not distracted by outside objects but at the same time is kept awake. The aim of zazen is just sitting, “opening the hand of thought” that is, suspending all judgmental thinking and letting words, ideas, images and thoughts pass by without getting involved in them.
Zen:	A school of Buddhism. Also known as <i>Chan</i> .

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