

1

Sandrembi and Chaisra.

Once upon a time, there lived two stepsisters called Sandrembi and Chaisra. After the death of their father, they were brought up by their mothers. Chaisra was the lone child of her mother while Sandrembi had a younger brother. Chaisra's mother always thought of harming Sandrembi, her brother and mother. Sandrembi's mother never nurtured any ill feelings for Chaisra and her mother.

One day, the two mothers went fishing. Sandrembi's mother caught a large number of fishes. Chaisra's mother could not catch any fish. Instead she caught a number of snakes and she put all of it



in her *tungon*. The *tungon* was full of snakes. As dusk approached, they were tired. They took rest under a fig tree full of ripe fruits. Chaisra's mother climbed the tree and cried, "Sister, open your mouth. I'll throw down ripe figs." Sandrembi's mother opened her mouth. A ripe fruit was dropped. "Sister, is it good? Close your eyes and open your mouth for more," cried Chaisra's mother again. This time, she took her *tungon* and poured all the snakes into the mouth of Sandrembi's mother. Immediately, Sandrembi's mother died. Chaisra's mother pushed the dead body into the water and came home alone.

Sandrembi was worried when she saw Chaisra's mother coming back alone. She asked about her mother. "Your mother is still fishing. She didn't want to return with me," was the only reply. As night fell, Sandrembi and her brother felt helpless. She wept bitterly and went to sleep without eating. Late in the night, her mother came in her dream. "Sandrembi, my daughter, I have been murdered by your step mother. I have turned into a turtle. Come and catch me in the morning. Put me in a pitcher inside the kitchen and keep it there for five days. I will turn to my human form." Sandrembi woke up and cried. At dawn, she went to catch the turtle. She caught many fishes but threw them back to the water. Finally, she caught the turtle. She carefully brought it home. Chaisra's mother was waiting for her. "How much fish did you catch?," she asked. "Mother, my *tungon* is

empty. I couldn't catch any fish today," replied a worried Sandrembi. "Then go to the kitchen and cook food," ordered the angry woman.

Chaisra saw Sandrembi putting the turtle in the pitcher. She told her mother about it and they hatched a plan. Chaisra started crying for water and her mother told her to drink water from the pitcher in the kitchen. The turtle was discovered. The wicked woman ordered Sandrembi to boil it in water.

A helpless Sandrembi had to obey her wicked step-mother. She started boiling the turtle in a pot. A voice cried, "Oh daughter! the heat has reached my feet." Sandrembi wept and pulled the



firewood out. Chaisra's mother shouted angrily, "Slap this

disobedient girl.” Chaisra slapped Sandrembi. Then she started burning the firewood again. The voice kept crying, “Oh daughter! the heat has reached my waist. Now it has reached my chest. It has reached my neck”. Finally, the turtle died. Chaisra and her mother ate it greedily. Then, they threw the bones near the house.

At night, Sandrembi`s mother came in her dream again and said, “My daughter! collect the bones. Wrap them and keep them in a basket for seven days. I will try to change to my human form”. The girl did the same. Curiosity and eagerness tempted her. On the sixth day, she opened the basket. As the number of days fell short, a swallow flew out of the basket. The helpless girl wept bitterly.

Time passed. Sandrembi and Chaisra became full-grown girls. One day, they went out to fetch water. Sandrembi`s clothes were old and torn while Chaisra wore beautiful new clothes. The king passing by saw them. He fell in love with Sandrembi because her beauty struck his heart. He came closer and said, “O fair lady, I am thirsty. Please give me some water”. Sandrembi was afraid of her cruel step-mother and said, “I am sorry, Sir, please drink water from my sister”. The king quietly went away without drinking. Chaisra narrated everything to her mother at home.

Next day, the wicked woman gave the torn clothes to her daughter and she gave Chaisra`s beautiful new clothes to Sandrembi. As they came near the river, the king was waiting for

them. Riding on his horse, he came near and said, “O fair lady, I am thirsty.” He immediately caught Sandrembi by the waist, pulled her up on his horse and took her to the palace. There they got married and Sandrembi became the queen. The following year, she gave birth to a son.

Chaisra and her mother became very angry. Again they hatched a plot to kill Sandrembi. They came to the palace to invite her for a meal. The king agreed but did not allow her to take their young child.

Sandrembi came for the meal alone. After eating, she found Chaisra wearing her clothes. She said, “Sister, I am getting late. My baby must be crying. Give my clothes back.” Chaisra took out the clothes and threw them under the bed. Sandrembi crept under the bed to collect her clothes. As she came out, Chaisra and her mother poured boiling water over her. She died immediately. Her soul turned into a dove and flew away. Now, Chaisra put on the clothes and went to the palace. The king was surprised to see the ugly woman. He asked, “What happened! Why are your eyes sunk, your heels also cracked?”

“My lord, remembering my departed parents, I wept and my eyes sank. Thinking about my baby, I ran fast. Thus, my heels got cracked,” came the reply. The king remained silent.

A few days later, the dove flew in to the garden of the palace.
The gardener was cutting grass. The dove started singing:

“O gardener of the King,
Go, tell your queen,
Go, tell your king,
Don't harm my young child.
Sandrembi sitting on a tree,
Chaisra sitting on the throne,
O king forgetful of wife,
Have you forgotten your real wife?”



The gardener was surprised to see a bird singing in human language. He immediately informed the king, who came out and said, “O dear dove, if you are my beloved Sandrembi, please come and eat the grains from my palm.” The dove flew down and ate the grains. The king kept the dove in a small cage. In his dream, Sandrembi appeared and said, “My lord, keep me for seven days. I will change into my human form.” The king woke up and hid the cage.

One day, the king went hunting. In his absence Chaisra killed the dove and cooked it. When the king returned, he was furious to find the cage empty. Chaisra said, “My lord, it tried to harm our child. I got angry and killed it. I have cooked it. Please eat it.” The king shouted angrily, “Throw it away immediately.” She threw it near the palace. After a few days, a beautiful mango tree started growing on the spot. Gradually it grew into a huge tree. It bore only one fruit. The king kept a close watch on the fruit. One day, the gardener plucked it and took it home.

Next morning, the gardener looked for a knife to cut the mango. He could not find a knife. The following day, with knife in hand, he looked for the mango. He couldn't find the mango. Like this, it went on for seven days. On the eighth day, the mango turned into a beautiful woman. She cooked food for the gardener. When the gardener came home, he was surprised to find delicious

food. The woman hid herself in a dark corner. It went on like this for a few days. One day, the gardener decided to find out the mystery. He quietly hid himself near his house. When the beautiful woman came out to prepare food, he rushed in quickly. To his surprise, he found that she was none other than Sandrembi. She told him her sad story. The gardener went to the king and narrated everything. The king sent his men to escort Sandrembi to the palace. Then, the king ordered Sandrembi and Chaisra to fight a duel in front of the people. Both were given a sword each. The swords were swords of justice. Chaisra first struck at Sandrembi but nothing happened. The sword did not touch her body. Sandrembi's turn came. She struck at Chaisra. The sword struck Chaisra's body. She died on the spot instantly. Everyone rejoiced. Sandrembi became the queen once again. Thus, the king and the queen lived happily thereafter.

A Manipuri folk tale retold

GLOSSARY

nurtured : fostered

tungon : a traditional container used to collect fishes caught during fishing

hatched : devised a plot

- wrap** : envelop in slash folder or soft encircling material
- crept** : crawled, moved stealthily or slowly
- escort** : accompanying another for protection
- instantly** : immediately

COMPREHENSION

1. Answer the following questions :

- i. Who were the two step sisters ?
- ii. What thought was nurtured by Chaisra's mother?
- iii. How did Sandrembi's mother die ?
- iv. What did Sandrembi's mother tell her in her dreams ?
- v. How was the turtle killed ?
- vi. How did Sandrembi's mother turn into a swallow ?
- vii. Why did Chaisra's mother make Sandrembi wear the new clothes ?
- viii. How was Sandrembi killed ?
- ix. Why was the gardener surprised ?
- x. How was Sandrembi reunited with the king ?

2. A. Read the following passage:

I learned many things about cooperation, tolerance, self-sacrifice, honesty, love and affection in the family. My parents always told me to behave properly with others. We must show respect and regard for elders. We should never offend our elders. They have more experience and wisdom than us. We are very young and we can learn many things from them. If we are polite to our elders, we have learned something about discipline. And discipline is very important for all of us in life. Because discipline will give us strength to stand for truth.

Now, answer the following questions in one sentence each:

i. What are the things I learned in the family?

ii. What do my parents always tell me?

iii. Whom should we show respect and regard for?

iv. Whom should we never offend?

iv. Who have more experience and wisdom than us?

Again, answer the following questions in about 20-25 words each:

v. From whom can young people learn many things and why?

vi. Why is discipline very important for all of us in life?

vii. What have we learned if we are polite to our elders?

B. Read the following passage:

In the American War of Independence, a corporal and a party of soldiers were told to raise a heavy beam for a battery that was being repaired. There were too few men at work; but the corporal full of his dignity, did nothing but stand by and shout orders. Presently an officer, not in uniform, rode up. "Hallo", he said to the corporal, "Why don't you lend your men a hand to get that beam up?" "Don't you know that I am a corporal?" was the reply. "Are you?" said the officer, who then got down from his horse and joined the men. He worked till the sweat streamed down his face. When the beam had been raised and put to its place, he turned to the corporal and made him a low bow. "Good day, Mr. Corporal. Next time when you have too few men for this kind of work, send for the Commander-in-Chief, and I shall be happy to help you again."

It was Washington himself.

Now, answer the following questions in one sentence each:

i. When did the incident stated here take place?

ii. What were the corporal and a party of soldiers required to do?

iii. What did the corporal do himself?

iv. What did the officer ask the corporal?

v. What was the corporal's reply?

Again, answer the following questions in about 20-25 words

:

i. How did the Officer work and whom did he turn to?

ii. What did he say to the corporal when the work was done?

2

The Magic Ring

Once upon a time, there lived a poor widow and her son. The boy worked hard to help his mother. One day, as he was going to market to sell a cock, he found a python trapped in a net. Some Kabuis had set the trap. Seeing the helpless python, he felt sad. He made a plea to the Kabuis, “Please don’t kill it. Set it free. You can take my cock in its place.” The Kabuis took his cock and



freed the python. With no money to buy food for himself and his mother, the boy returned sadly. On the way, a stranger stopped him and said, “Don’t be afraid. I am the python you saved. I owe you my life, dear friend. Please come to my house. My mother will be pleased to see you. She will give a big reward to you.” The boy was surprised and confused. The stranger went on, “Don’t accept anything. Just ask her to give the ring she wears. Not knowing what to do, he simply followed the stranger.

They reached a big lake. The stranger spoke, “Friend, my family lives inside the water. We shall have to dive.” Before the boy could turn back, the stranger caught his legs and pulled him in the water. A little later, they reached a spot where there was a huge mansion. They went inside. There, he found the stranger’s parents waiting for their son. After listening to the story, the parents were very happy. The mother said gratefully, “You have saved the life of my only son. I am extremely pleased. The house is full of valuable wealth. Take as much as you want.” The boy was unable to speak. Seeing this the son spoke, “Mother, he is very poor. If you want to reward him, please give him the ring on your finger.” “My dear, he can have whatever he wants but I cannot give him the ring,” replied the mother.

“Mother, I am your only son. He saved my life and you cannot give him even a ring! It seems that your ring is more

precious than my life. I will go and fall in the trap again. Let those men kill me. I don't want to live anymore."

The mother was worried. She immediately gave the ring to the boy, saying, "Nothing is more precious than the life of my son. Take the ring". The son felt happy and said "Come, I will take you to the surface of the lake". On the way, he told the boy that it was not an ordinary ring, "It is a magic ring. When you make a command, it will provide whatever you want. But be careful. Keep it a secret," he continued.

As soon as he reached home, the boy asked his mother to serve food. The mother took out empty plates and scolded him



for not bringing food. Then the son went into the kitchen and ordered the magic ring to bring the choicest dishes for them. The mother was surprised to see the tastiest dishes in front of her. In this way, with the help of the magic ring, they began to live happily.

One day, the son requested his mother to go and ask for the hand of the village Chief's daughter for him. The mother approached the Chief, "O great one, please give your daughter in marriage to my son." The Chief laughed, "Look at yourself. You are a poor widow. How can you dream of your son marrying my daughter?"

"My son will make your daughter happy and comfortable, O great one," replied the mother.

The Chief wanted to humour her. He said, "If you want my consent, bring a big bull, a sack of gold and a diamond necklace tomorrow morning. Only then, will I say yes."

The mother returned home sadly. She told her son about the Chief's demands. Her son laughed, "Mother, be ready to go to him tomorrow morning." At midnight, he ordered the magic ring to build a mansion with several servants. He also ordered the ring to provide all the things the Chief demanded.

In the morning, the Chief was surprised to see the widow with all the things. He could not refuse now. Thus the widow's son and the Chief's daughter were married.

As they lived happily many people became jealous of them. One day when they visited the Chief's house, a servant stole the ring. On discovering the loss, the son felt sad. He called his dog and cat near him, "Find my ring. Don't come back until you find it." The dog and the cat went in search of the ring. They searched for days but did not find it. Tired and exhausted, they were lying on the ground when a rat came out in search of food. They pounced on the helpless rat and said, "We are hungry, we have to eat you." The rat was frightened and said, "Please don't eat me. I will do whatever you say." Then they said, "Promise us to bring back our master's lost ring. We will spare your life."

The rat promised and went off in search of the ring. Soon, the rat found it hidden in the servant's cupboard. He quietly took it out and gave it to the dog and the cat. They were happy. Soon, they started arguing on who should take the ring to the master. "I will carry it half way through and you carry it for the remaining half, said the dog. The cat agreed. The dog took the ring inside its mouth. As they were crossing a river on a floating log of wood, the dog saw a fish swimming nearby. Immediately, he started barking. The ring fell into the water. The fish swallowed it and swam away. They were helpless. They sat on the bank of the river and thought deeply. Suddenly, they saw a pair of otters going to the river to catch fish. They immediately pounced upon the otters and threatened to kill them. "Please don't kill us. We will do whatever you want us to do," pleaded the otters.

“Go, find the fish which swallowed our master’s ring. We will spare your lives.”

One of the otters dived into the water and caught the fish. He gave it to the dog and the cat.

They split open its belly and found the ring there. They washed it in the river and kept it on a stone to dry. A kite suddenly swooped down and flew away with the ring. They were helpless again. Then they caught a lynx from the jungle and ordered it to



find the kite. After climbing many trees, the lynx found the kite and the ring. It was soon returned to the dog and the cat. Now the cat put the ring round its tail and they hurried to their master’s house. “Our master will be delighted,” said the cat. “He will reward us with sweets and other good things to eat,” added the dog.

“Let our importance be felt in the house. We will wait outside. Only when our master calls us and offers us the sweets by himself, we will eat,” suggested the cat.

“Yes, it will show how much he loves us,” replied the dog. Both agreed and returned home.

The master was delighted to see them. He was overjoyed to see his ring. He ordered his servants to serve the choicest food for the two. The servants brought delicious food and called them. However, they did not enter the house. They were waiting for their master’s call. The servants called them again. But they did not respond. In the meantime the aroma of the delicious food tempted the dog. He could not resist it any longer. He started eating. After finishing his share, he started eating the cat’s share too. The cat was very angry. He slapped the dog and scratched his face. They began fighting. Hearing the noise, the master came out. He asked, “Why are you fighting? What is the reason?” They remained silent. But, ever since that day dogs and cats have continued to fight whenever and wherever they meet.

- A Thadou Folk Tale retold

GLOSSARY

plea	:	appeal, entreaty
dive	:	plunge into water (here)
mansion	:	large grand house
swooped	:	come down suddenly to pounce
lynx	:	animal of cat family with short tail
aroma	:	tasty smell

COMPREHENSION

1. Answer the following questions :

- i. What was there in the trap?
- ii. How was the python released?
- iii. What did the stranger say to the boy?
- iv. How did they reach the mansion?
- v. What did the boy finally get as a reward?
- vi. Why was the widow angry with his son?

- vii. What was the proposal made to the Chief?
- viii. What were the things demanded by the Chief?
- ix. How was the magic ring lost for the first time?
- x. Who went in search of the magic ring?
- xi. How did the fish get the magic ring?
- xii. How was the ring restored to the master?
- xiii. Why did the cat and the dog fight?

2. A. *Read the following passage:*

Learning to be modest and humble is very important. Decent behaviour means modesty. My grandfather says, “It is important to behave properly with everyone we come into contact with. As we show respect to our elders, we must behave properly with those who are younger than us. That is we must show the same behaviour to all the people around us. Now, human beings pursue different occupations in life. We must not be rude to those who are doing manual labour.

Now, answer the following questions in one sentence each:

- (a) i. What is the very important thing to learn?

ii. What does human beings pursue in life?

(b) Fill in the blank with words from the passage:

We must not be to those who are doing manual labour.

(c) Answer the following question in about 20-25 words.

Is it a must to show the same behaviour to all the people around us? Why?

B. Read the following passage:

The Incas were an Indian people who lived in the Andean region of South America. The first Inca ruler, Manco Capan (c.A.D. 1200) was believed to have descended from the sun god.

The Incas thirsted for power. They warred against and defeated their neighbours, and soon their empire extended from central Chile to the present Colombia-Ecuador border. Having a highly developed agricultural system, they grew maize, beans, tomatoes, chillies, peppers, cotton— almost all them completely unknown in Europe.

Most of the Inca people were farmers. Nobody paid taxes, but every man was periodically called to service in the army, or on building roads and temples, or mining. The Incas built suspension bridges, hillside terraces, long irrigation canals and immense fortresses. Medicine and surgery were highly developed.

The Incas were conquered by a Spanish adventurer, Francisco Pizarro, in 1532.

(a) Now, answer the following questions in one sentence each:

i. Who were the Incas?

ii. Who was the first Inca ruler?

iii. What kind of bridges did the Incas build?

iv Who conquered the Incas?

b. Fill in the blanks with the words from the passage:

i. The Incas thirsted for

ii. Nobody paid, but every man was
called to service in the army.

iii. and were highly developed.

c. Answer the following question in about 20-25 words:

What kind of agricultural system was used by the Inca farmers?

What did they grow in their fields?

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VOCABULARY

3. Find the opposites of the following words and write in the blanks:

- | | |
|-------|---------|
| Gain | |
| | smooth |
| pull | |
| | despair |
| frown | |
| | enemy |
| heavy | |

Now, fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the Antonyms of the words in italics:

- i. The *entrance* to the hall is wide, but the is narrow.
- ii. The *guilty* were punished, but the were rewarded.
- iii. The Parliament House is a *modern* structure but, the Red Fort is
- iv. Glass is *transparent* but, wood is
- v. The area around the river is *fertile* but, the other side is
- vi. This post is *temporary* but it is likely to be

GRAMMAR

4. A. Present Participle:

The Present Participle is a non-finite verb which ends in *-ing* and works as an adjective or a noun:

Examples:

I saw a *flying* kite.

Saying nothing, she rushed out.

A *rising* sun is beautiful to see.

Seeing the police, the thief ran away.

The above words in italics are Present Participles.

Now, fill in the blanks using the Present Participle forms of the given verbs:

shine

weep

speak

make

shout

forget

talk

scream

- i. He heard a voice.
- ii. softly, she tried to reason with him.
- iii. Rina's mother had a diamond ring.
- iv. loudly, the boys ran to the playground.
- v. to lock the door, he fell asleep.
- vi. bitterly, she narrated the incident.
- vii. to himself, the old man started walking.
- viii. herself comfortable, she sat down to read the novel.

B. Past Participle:

Verbs ending ends in *-ed*, *-d*, *-t*, *-en* or *-n* are Past Participle forms. Both the Past Participle and Present Participle are non-finite forms. They can be used as adjectives.

In the Past Participle the non-finite verb which is the third form of a verb works as an adjective.

Look at the following:

Remove the *broken* chair.

Learned men will never talk much.

The *stolen* car was found by the police.

I ate the *boiled* egg.

PRONUNCIATION

5. *Here are some words. Read them aloud. Find the difference of the vowel sounds in -o-, -oo- in the following words:*

do	rot	room	polish
so	god	foot	bottle
go	sob	noon	logic
no	mob	book	phone
on	rock	wood	foster
of	rod	root	forty

3

A Great Man Really Honest and Humble

You must have heard of Abraham Lincoln, the famous President of the U.S.A., who put an end to slavery and brought freedom to millions of Negro slaves. He is remembered not only for the great things he did as President of his country but also for his great and good qualities as a man. He rose from humble beginnings to the highest office in his country by hard work and strength of character. His life has been lovingly described as a journey from the Log-Wood to the White House.

From the time he was a little boy, Lincoln had to help his father in the fields. On many days he was not able to go to school because he was too busy working at home. But he practised reading and worked at arithmetic, keeping awake late into the night. Although he went to school for less than a year in all, he taught himself a great many things by reading all the books he could get hold of. There are some moving stories of the trouble he used to take to get books. One afternoon he walked twenty miles just to borrow a book he wanted to read. Another time, he borrowed from a neighbour a biography of George Washington; but two nights later the rain coming through the roof of his poor hut completely spoilt the book. “Well, you can have the book for

yourself if you make good the cost by working on my farm,” the neighbour said. Although Lincoln had to do some hard jobs at the farm for a few days, he had the joy of having the book for himself.

Lincoln was always ready to work with his hands and he thought no job too humble for him. Once, when he was running a store in New Salem, he saw a man splitting some logs outside the store.



“It must be very cold out there,” said Lincoln. “Why are you splitting logs now?”

“To earn a dollar to buy a pair of shoes,” the man replied.

“You come into the store and warm yourself at the fire,” Lincoln said.

The man came in. Lincoln went out, picked up the axe and started splitting the logs. An hour later he went in and handing the axe to the man, said, “The logs are all split. Go and collect your dollar, and buy those shoes.”



Once, in Springfield, where Lincoln was practising as a lawyer, he saw a little girl standing at the gate of her house, crying. She was all dressed up to go out. He went up to her and asked what the matter was. The little girl told him her trouble. She was to go on her first railway journey alone. It was time for her to go to the station, but the man who was to carry her trunk had not yet appeared. "How big is the trunk?" asked Lincoln. She took him into the house and showed him the trunk. He lifted it on his shoulders and asking the girl to follow him, walked with quick steps down the road. They reached the station on time. Lincoln put her on the train, waved goodbye and left.

Lincoln's neighbours enjoyed his company very much, because he was always full of jokes. Once he was walking along a road near Springfield, when he saw a cart pass him. He went up to the cart and said to the man driving it, "Will you take my coat into town for me." "Certainly," the man said, "but how will you get it back?" "That is easily done," replied Lincoln. "I mean to stay in it."

When he was President, one day a visitor from abroad saw him polishing his shoes. "Mr. President," he said with surprise, "in our country we don't polish our own shoes." "Then whose shoes do you polish?" asked Lincoln.

Lincoln once played a practical joke upon a rich client of his. This man wanted Lincoln to take a poor neighbour to court, for not paying back a small sum of two and a half dollars. The

poor man had refused to pay it because, he said, he didn't really owe it. Lincoln had an idea. He agreed to take up the case if he was paid ten dollars, cash down. The client readily paid him the cash. Lincoln at once went and gave the other man five dollars and said, "Now go and pay two and a half dollars to that neighbour of yours and take two and a half dollars for yourself." Both Lincoln and the poor man gained some money and the rich client was completely satisfied.

People used to call Lincoln "Honest Abe" because he was unfailingly honest. Here is a story about his honesty. In the days when he was working as a clerk in a store in New Salem, a woman came one evening to buy a pound of tea. Lincoln was closing the store. Still he weighed out the tea for her. She paid for it and went away. The next morning Lincoln found that he had given the woman only half a pound of tea. Perhaps she might not know about it but that made no difference to Lincoln. He weighed out another half pound and taking up the packet, closed the store and walked a distance of six miles to give her the tea. He could not wait for the woman to find out the mistake and come back.

As a lawyer, Lincoln would never agree to take up a case that appeared to have no justice in it. One day he told a client, "Though you have a good case in law, I can't win it for you. There isn't much justice in it. All the time I'm talking in court,

I'll be thinking I am a liar; and I may forget myself and say it aloud." There are many stories of Lincoln's kindness to animals. Once he was riding in the company of some lawyer friends. On their way they saw a pig struggling to get out of a deep mud hole into which it had fallen. If left in the hole the poor animal was sure to die. Lincoln could not bear the thought of it. He went up to the hole and stood there for some time, looking now at the pig and then at the new clothes he had on. His friends, who knew what he was thinking, made fun of him, saying, "You can stay here and attend to the pig if you like. You are dressed for the job. We shall go along." Lincoln waited for them to pass around a bend on the road. Then picking up some rails that were lying



nearby he used them to get the pig out of the hole, and watched it run to the nearest farm. Then he looked down at his clothes and found them covered with mud and completely spoilt. Though he could not join his friends, he was happy that he had saved the pig's life.

Nothing gave Lincoln greater joy than saving a life. When he was the President and the American Civil War was going on, a group of soldiers came to him and asked him to pardon a young soldier who was to be shot the next day for sleeping on guard duty. "William Scott slept when he was on duty because he was tired after a long march," they said. Lincoln promised to do what he could in the matter. Lincoln was very busy for the rest of the day and he remembered his promise only late in the evening. He at once set out for the camp where Scott was kept prisoner. He met the young man and talked to him for some time, and then said, "My boy, you won't be shot tomorrow, because I believe you, and I am going to pardon you. But who is going to pay my bill for all the trouble I have been put to?" The young soldier said that his friends would pay if it wasn't more than five hundred dollars. "No", said Lincoln, "there is only one man who can pay and that is William Scott. He can pay the bill by promising to do his duty for his country." Scott gave his word and Lincoln went back pleased with the young man and at peace with himself.

Some months later, Scott was badly wounded in the fighting and as he lay on his death-bed, he sent a moving message to Lincoln, "I have paid all I could towards the bill. If only I could live longer, I would gladly pay more."

As the President of the United States, Lincoln led the Union Forces in the Civil War. Although he fought on one side against the other, he did not have the slightest hatred or anger towards the enemy. He was once on a visit to some hospital tents where wounded soldiers of both sides were lying. As he went near one of the tents, one of his men said, "Mr President, you needn't go in there. They are enemy prisoners." "Then that is just where I want to go," said Lincoln. He went in and shook hands with each one of the enemy prisoners.

"How can you speak kindly to your enemies," an elderly woman once asked him, "when you should really be destroying them?" Lincoln looked at her and said, "Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends."

On Friday, 14th April, 1865, Lincoln was busy arranging for the cease-fire. "Let there be no killing or hanging of people," he told his officers. "Enough lives have been destroyed already."

Late that afternoon he and his wife went out for a ride. "My mind is so peaceful now," he said to her. "I have done a lot of work today to finish up the war."

That night as he was seated in the President's box at the theatre, watching a play, a man named Wilkes Booth, a half-mad Southerner, entered the box and shot the President.

The next morning, between seven and eight o'clock, he passed away. "Now he belongs to the ages," said one of the men who was standing by.

GLOSSARY

- biography** : a book written on the life of a person by another
- client** : person using services of a lawyer or other professional person
- pound** : (here) unit of weight
- Southerner** : a person from one of the Southern States of the USA (the Southern States opposed abolition of slavery)

COMPREHENSION

1.A. Answer the following questions :

- i.** Who was Abraham Lincoln ?
- ii.** What was his most important contribution to human history ?
- iii.** Why couldn't he attend school properly ?
- iv.** Narrate briefly an incident that shows his love for books.
- v.** How did he help a man buy a pair of shoes ?
- vi.** Why did Lincoln help the girl ?
- vii.** How did Lincoln help a poor man pay his debt ?
- viii.** Narrate an incident that shows his unfailing honesty.
- ix.** What was his attitude towards animals ?
- x.** Why did he save the life of William Scott ?
- xi.** Why did he visit the wounded enemy soldiers ?

B. Again, read the following passage:

In games and sports there is no distinction of caste, creed, race, religion and sex. In the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928, women were allowed to take part in the competition for athletics, removing the barrier between man and woman. In the Mexico Olympics of 1968, a woman, Enriquetta Basillio Sotela took oath along with a man. It was a wonderful spectacle symbolising the equality of sexes in sports. In the Sydney Olympics of 2000, a woman competitor and an aborigine, Cathy Freeman lighted the Olympic flame. It sends a clear message to the world that in games and sports there is no barrier of colour, race and religion. Games and sports bring the world together. The modern Olympic Games started in April, 1896 at Athens with 14 countries and in the 2004 games at the same venue in Athens, there were 203 countries of the world. What can bring so many countries together except the spirit of games and sports?

Now, answer the following questions in one sentence each:

- i. When and where were women allowed to take part in the Olympic Games?

Ans.

- ii. Who was Enriquetta Bassillio Sotela?

Ans.

iii. What was the significance when Cathy Freeman lighted the Olympic torch?

Ans.

iv. What proves that games and sports can bring the world together?

Ans.

v. When and where was the modern Olympic Games started?

Ans.

vi. What is the significance of Athens in the Olympic Games?

Ans.

vii. How do the Mexico Olympics symbolise the equality of sexes?

Ans.

Also fill in the blanks using the appropriate forms of the words given in brackets:

In ancient Greece, in Olympic, the Greek (organise) celebration in honour of Zeus. The Olympic games (start) from this. The world is now (unite) in the field of games and sports. Manipuri players (shine) in many competitions in sports and Games as members of the Indian team.

GRAMMAR

2.A. Look at the following sentences:

- i. (a) He went to the Church of Holy Madonna earlier.
(b) Earlier, he had spat on Poulson of Denmark.
- ii. (a) Coubertin revived the Olympic Games.
(b) He had thought of it long ago.
- iii. (a) He went to receive his daughter.
(b) He had got information of her coming.

In each sentence the first one is in the Past tense and the second is in the Past Perfect Tense.

In English, Past and Past Participle are formed in different ways. In the case of Regular Verbs, generally -d, -ed and -t are added to the verb. Now, put the verbs in the correct form:

Regular Verbs:

<i>Base</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
announce
boil
call
compel
cross

In the case of Irregular Verbs, the Past Tense is formed in different ways:

Irregular verbs:

<i>Base</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
am
bear
become
come
do
draw
fall
get
have
keep

The Simple Past Tense is generally used to refer to actions events completed in the past.

Now, Look at the following sentences:

- i. The bird built the nest. It had selected a good tree before it.
- ii. He made the chair. He had made a table before it.

The **Past Perfect Tense** refers to an action earlier than another past action.

Past Perfect Tense has the form **had + Past Participle** form of the verb.

Examples :

- (a) had done,
- (b) had found

PRONUNCIATION

3. *Read the following sentences:*

- i. This is our school.
- ii. I have a pound.
- iii. He found out the formula.

Generally in English the sound of *ou* is pronounced as /au/

Look at the following words:

- i. hour
- ii. doubt
- iii. loud
- iv. louse

- v. lout
- vi. mount
- vii. mouse
- viii. pouch
- ix. proud
- x. shout

The sound of *ou* in each word is /au/. But there are variations in certain words as in *pour* /po/.

COMPOSITION

4. *Fill in the gaps with your own words and complete the following:*

My friend, Bina ___ now much worried. She ___ her father last year. Now her mother ___ ___. She is in class viii. Her mother ___ ___ books. They are ___ ___. She copies some ___ ___ from her friends. I ___ ___ books. I have ___ ___ her. We have ___ ___. Yesterday our teacher ___ as she did not bring ___. I ___ ___ pen today. She can ___ ___ .

4

The Adventures of Don Quixote

DON QUIXOTE was a petty landlord who lived in a village in Spain. He had read a great number of books about the adventures of brave knights in olden days and believed all those tales to be true. They filled him with the desire to become a knight himself and go in search of adventure.

So he polished the old rusty armour of his great grandfather and patched up his broken helmet with cardboard. He put these on and went out riding on his thin old horse which, in his eyes,



was better than the horse of Alexander the Great. He decided to do brave deeds in the name of a good-looking peasant girl of a neighbouring village to whom he gave a very romantic name.

Riding on his horse Don Quixote came to an inn. He thought the inn was a castle and the serving girls there were its noble ladies. He bowed to the girls several times and addressed long speeches to them in praise of their beauty and other fine qualities. The young girls were puzzled, but they liked the fun. They laughed at the strange man, which made Don Quixote very unhappy. He thought these noble ladies were laughing at him because he had not yet been made a knight. So he called the fat innkeeper to his room and bolted the door. Then he fell on his knees before him and said, "My kind host and great knight, I will not rise from my knees till you make me a knight."

The innkeeper thought the man was mad, but he said to him, "Go to the river-bank and wash your armour there all night. Tomorrow morning I will knight you." And the next morning the fat innkeeper, who had never lifted a lance in his life, knighted Don Quixote with the help of his two servant girls. Don Quixote was very happy at this and returned home for money. While he had been away his niece and the housekeeper had burnt all his books and walked up his library because they thought the books about the adventures of old knights had made him mad. So when

Don Quixote reached home they said, “Sir, one day an enchanter came flying on a cloud and entered your library. Since then the room has disappeared.” Don Quixote shook his head wisely and said, “Ah, it must be the work of the enchanter Freston. He is troubling me because he knows that I am going to conquer his favourite knight.”

Don Quixote then went to his fat neighbour, Sancho Panza, who was a simple, honest man. He persuaded him to leave his wife and family and become his squire. He promised that he would kill giants and cruel men and make him the governor of an island. Sancho Panza was very pleased to hear this and followed Don Quixote on his donkey. Don Quixote did not like his squire riding a donkey and said that he would soon kill a knight and give his horse to him.

While riding along a lonely road the knight and his squire saw a thick cloud of dust rising from the roadside ahead of them. Don Quixote told Sancho Panza that a big army was marching towards them. Sancho Panza replied that it was not an army but a flock of sheep, but Don Quixote would not listen to him. He rode as fast as he could and attacked the sheep furiously with his lance and killed nine of them. The shepherds begged him not to kill their sheep but he paid no attention to their words. Then they took out their slings and started hitting him with stones. One stone hit him hard on the face and he fell down from his horse.

The shepherds thought they had killed him and ran away with their sheep.

After the shepherds had gone Sancho Panza ran to his master, who was groaning. Don Quixote said to Sancho, “Put your hand into my mouth and tell me how many teeth I have lost.” Sancho felt the inside of his master’s mouth with his finger and said, “You have lost six teeth in the lower jaw and four in the ‘upper.’” Don Quixote was very unhappy at this and said, “Sancho, it is the doing of the wicked enchanter Freston who changed the great army into a flock of sheep.”

Some time after this Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were riding through a wood where they saw a beautiful young lady and her husband. Sancho found out that the lady was a duchess and her husband was a rich duke, and made a sign to his master to come and greet them. But while getting off their animals the knight and the squire both fell flat on their faces and hurt themselves. The duke and the duchess took them to their castle but soon saw that both of them were great fools. So they decided to have some fun with them.

One day the duke said to Sancho Panza, “I have made you the governor of the island of Barataria. You must go there tomorrow.” Sancho Panza was very very happy. The next morning he left for the island on his beloved donkey. He was given a warm welcome by the people of the island, and a big feast was arranged

in his honour. He ate and drank a lot and slept very soundly that night. But early the next morning he heard a loud noise outside. He got out of bed and went to the window. He saw a lot of people standing in front of the house with torches in their hands. They saw him at the window and said, “ O governor, enemies have attacked the island. Please arm yourself and lead us to the battlefield.”

Sancho Panza began to tremble. “I have never held a lance or a shield in my hand,” he said, “and I don’t know how to put on an armour. Please come and put it on me.” They entered the room and tied a few big, heavy shields to his chest and back. They tied them so tightly and in such a way that he could neither bend his knees nor take a single step. They put a lance in his hand and asked him to march. He took a step forward and fell flat on the ground. No one helped him to get up. He was crying with pain but some of the men came and kicked him. Then a big fat man stood on his stomach and from there gave orders to the soldiers for half an hour.

The enemy was driven out of the island by the evening. Sancho Panza’s servants lifted him and took him to his room. They took the shields off his chest and back and gave him some wine to drink. But he fell on his bed unconscious. The next morning he was hardly able to stand up. Very quietly he put on his clothes, embraced his servants and said, “I am a poor villager.

I can never be a governor. I am leaving your island.” He took some barley for his faithful donkey and some bread and cheese for himself and set out for the duke’s castle.

After travelling the whole day Sancho and the donkey both fell into a ditch. The ditch was deep and it was not possible for them to get out of it. So they both slept there that night. The next morning Sancho started shouting for help. Don Quixote who was riding along the road, recognized the voice of his squire and pulled him and his donkey out of the ditch. When Sancho Panza came to the castle he said to the duke, “Sir, I thank you for making me the governor of Baratania. But I am not fit to be a governor. I am satisfied to remain the squire of my master.”

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza soon became tired of the idle life of the duke’s castle, so they left for Barcelona where a tournament was to be held. There a man who called himself the knight of the White Moon challenged Don Quixote to fight with him, and Don Quixote accepted the challenge. The man was a friend and neighbour of Don Quixote. He made Don Quixote promise that if he was defeated he would return to his village and stay there for at least a year. The fight began and the Knight of the White Moon attacked Don Quixote furiously. Poor Don Quixote fell from his horse and was badly hurt. He felt very ashamed of himself, and after a few days returned to his village with Sancho Panza.

On his return to his village Don Quixote fell seriously ill. On his sick-bed he realized that he had acted like a madman. He called a lawyer and made his will. In the will he said, “After my death all my property will go to my niece, provided she does not marry a man who reads books about the adventures of knights. If she does marry such a man my property will be distributed among the poor people of my village.”

Sancho Panza was all along by his master’s bedside. Many times he wept loudly and said, “Dear master, do not die. Take my advice and live for some years more.” But Don Quixote decided not to listen to the advice of his squire.



GLOSSARY

- Knight** : In the middle ages a knight was a man of high social rank, whose duty was to fight for the king. This honour was given to him by the king or the queen. He used to ride a horse and wear armour.
- armour** : special metal clothing that soldiers wore in the past
- patched up** : repaired in a temporary way
- inn** : a small hotel, usually in the side country
- puzzled** : felt confused
- lance** : a weapon with a long wooden handle and a pointed metal end that was used by people fighting on horse in the past
- enchanter** : a man who has magic power that he uses to control people
- squire** : a young man who assists a knight before he becomes a knight himself

COMPREHENSION

1 A. Answer the following questions :

- i. What kind of books did Don Quixote read?
- ii. What was the effect of these books on Don Quixote?
- iii. Describe the preparation of Don Quixote for adventure.
- iv. What did Don Quixote take the inn and the serving girls for?
- v. How did Don Quixote receive the knighthood?
- vi. How was Don Quixote's library destroyed?
- vii. How did Sancho Panza become the squire of Don Quixote?
- viii. Describe the encounter of Don Quixote with the flock of sheep.
- ix. How did the duke and the duchess play fun with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza?
- x. Describe Sancho Panza as a governor.
- xi. Describe the fight of Don Quixote with the knight of the White Moon.
- xii. What did Don Quixote write in his will?

A. Read the passage:

Ashangbi knows well that men and women are equals. Women, who are half of the human race, are as important as men. She writes and talks about such topics. Her daughter, though a child, also understands well that her mother is not a person of lesser quality than that of her father. She says, “Our home is full of love with you, mother.”

The mother beams with joy at the words of her daughter. As a matter of fact, mother is the fountain of love in the family. This bond of love is beyond comparison with anything else in the world. It is because of this that motherhood has been glorified and that women accept the challenges in life to become a mother.

Showing deep affection, Ashangbi continues, “Pioneering women testify to the equality of women with men. Life is not possible without women.”

Now, answer the following questions in one sentence each:

- i. How does Ashangbi know that men and women are equals?

Ans.

- ii. What does her daughter know about Ashangbi?

Ans.

iii. What does Ashangbi give to her home?

Ans.....

:

iv. How does Ashangbi respond to the words of her daughter?

Pick out the words that suggest her response.

Ans.

v. What do pioneering women testify?

Ans.

Now, Answer the following question in about 20-25 words:

Why do women accept the challenges in life to become a mother?

Ans.

2. VOCABULARY

Give the noun forms of the following words:

fascinate glorify narrate

humiliate clap pack

believe play build.....

and make sentences using the above nouns:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

This is the story of the snake and the gooseberries and much else beside. So be still, don't interrupt and don't ask questions. Are you listening? Well, then. There was once a snake, and he lived in a gooseberry bush, and every night he turned into a handsome prince. Now there is nothing extraordinary about this, it happens all the time, especially in Burma where everyone is handsome anyway ... But a story can't succeed unless there's a woman in it, so there was also a woman who lived in a little bamboo house with orchids hanging in the verandah, and she had three daughters called Ma Gyi, Ma Lat, and Ma Nge. And Ma Nge was the youngest and the nicest and the most beautiful, because a story can't succeed unless she is all these things.

Well, one day the mother of Ma Nge had to go out to fetch gooseberries from the forest. They were bitter gooseberries. Burmese ladies call them *zi-byu-thi*, and prefer them to sweet gooseberries. And the woman took her basket along: and just as she was starting to pick gooseberries, the snake who lived in the gooseberry bush hissed at her, as much as to say: "Be off." This was the snake who was a prince by night, but now of course it was broad daylight, and anyway Burmese women aren't afraid of

snakes. Moreover, the snake recalled that this was the mother of three daughters and he had a fondness for her daughters, so he changed his mind about sending the woman away, and waited for her to speak first, because she was a woman, and women are remarkable for their business capacity.



The woman said: “Please give me a gooseberry.” Women are always wanting something; it’s a part of their business philosophy.

But the snake said, ‘No’. He had remembered that he was a prince and that princes aren’t supposed to say yes to anything; not at first, anyway. It was a matter of principle.

Then the woman said: “If you like my eldest daughter, Ma Gyi, give me a gooseberry.” He didn’t care for Ma Gyi, because he knew she had a terrible temper (or perhaps it was a distemper),

but he gave the woman a gooseberry as a matter of policy. “One gooseberry is about all that Ma Gyi’s worth,” he said to himself.

But women all over the world, from Burma to Bermuda and beyond, are never satisfied with only one of anything, and she said: “If you like my second daughter, Ma Lat, give me another gooseberry.”

The prince knew that Ma Lat had a squint but he didn’t want to hurt anyone’s feeling, so he gave the woman another gooseberry; and thus encouraged, she said: “And if you like my youngest daughter, Ma Nge, give me another gooseberry.”

At that, the snake trembled so violently from top to tail that every gooseberry fell off the bush; for the snake-prince knew that Ma Nge was the youngest and nicest and most beautiful of them all. And the woman gathered up the gooseberries; put them in her basket, and took them because they were bitter (zi-byu-thi), and because she was a woman of remarkable business capacity.

On the way she met a signpost and gave it a gooseberry, saying: “If a snake comes enquiring which way I have gone, don’t tell him, but point in the opposite direction.” She said this because she knew the signpost would do just the opposite.

Then she went on and said the same thing to two more signposts (everything has to be done three times in the best stories), and the posts all did the same thing, which was to show the snake the

proper road, because that is what signposts are supposed to do.

The snake had little difficulty in following the woman to her house. He hid in a large jar, and when she came to get something, he slid out and coiled round her arm in the manner of a prospective son-in-law.

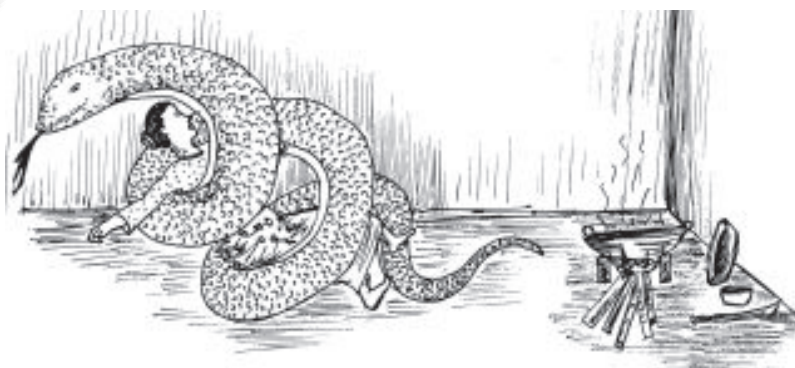
“If you love my daughter Ma Gyi, let go,” cried the woman, pretending to be frightened. (She knew quite well that the snake was a prince.)

But the snake hung on, because he didn't love Ma Gyi, who had a bad temper and probably distemper too.

“If you love Ma Lat, let go!”

But the snake hung on. Although he, personally, had nothing against squinty-eyed women, he did not relish the prospect of being stared at by one all his life.

And then (because everything must be done three times) the woman cried: “If you love my daughter Ma Nge, let go!”



The snake fell swooning to the ground. And as night had come on quite suddenly, in the snake's place the mother found the supplicant prince, smitten with love for her youngest daughter. And she wasted no time in getting him married to Ma Nge.

That ought to be the end of the story. But in Burma stories don't end, they just go on and on forever, so that sometimes it is difficult to print them. But the prince had to do something to break the spell, because after some time Ma Nge found it rather irritating being married to a prince who was her husband by night and a snake by day. She said she preferred a man about the place even during the day. It was she who managed to break the spell because, like her mother, she had this remarkable business capacity. All she did was to find her husband a job of work, and the shock was so great that it broke the spell. It was the first time in his life that the prince had been expected to do any work, and he was so shaken that he completely forgot how to turn himself back into a snake.

But the prince stuck to his job, and worked so hard that sometimes his wife felt quite lonely; she didn't know that his employers had given him a beautiful secretary, and that this was encouraging him to work overtime. And so, when he came home late and went straight to bed after dinner, she began to scold him and complain of his indifference. One morning he became so

disgusted with her constant nagging that he found he could remember the magic spell and immediately turned himself into an enormous snake.

He started by trying to swallow his wife's feet. Ma Nge called out to her mother, but her mother said that was quite all right.

“He has swallowed my knees,” wailed poor Ma Nge.

“Never mind, dear,” replied her mother, who was cooking in the next room. “You never can tell what an amorous husband will do.”

“He has swallowed upto my neck.”



The mother thought this was going too far; and when no further calls came from her daughter, she burst into the room and remonstrated with the snake who had entirely swallowed Ma Nge.

“Give her up at once,” cried the indignant mother.

“Not unless you agree to my terms,” said the snake. “First, I’m to be a snake whenever I feel like it. Second, I’m to be a real prince and go to work only when I feel like it. How can your daughter love me if I come home tired from the office like any other man? You wanted a prince for a son-in-law. You got one. Now you must let me live like a prince.”

The mother agreed to his terms, and he unswallowed his wife, and from that day onwards the two women did all the work while the prince sat in the verandah under the hanging orchids and drank a wonderful beer made from bitter gooseberries.

Are you still listening? If so, and if you are looking for a moral, it is this: no matter how remarkable a woman’s business capacities, in the long run, she is no match for a man.

- A Burmese folk-tale retold by Ruskin Bond.

GLOSSARY

- gooseberry** : a small, round, green, sharp-tasting fruit that grows on a bush
- fond** : having a great liking or love
- squint** : a disorder of the eye muscles causing the eyes to look in two different directions
- slid** : go smoothly over a surface, wind or twist round and round
- coil** : a continuous circular shape
- temper** : state or condition of the mind
- relish** : to enjoy; be pleased and satisfied with
- smitten** : to have a powerful, sudden effect on; becoming suddenly fond of a person
- supplicant** : a person begging something from someone in power
- spell** : a condition caused by magical power
- enormous** : extremely large
- amorous** : feeling or expressing love

B. Read the following passage:

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going on a journey; but I like to go myself only. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of door, nature is company enough for me... Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner — and then to thinking ! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy... I begin to feel, think, and be myself again.

Now answer the following questions in a sentence each:

i. What is one of the pleasantest things in the world?

Ans.

ii. How does the writer like to go?

Ans.

iii. Where can he enjoy society?

Ans.

iv. What is the company enough for him out of doors?

Ans.

v. What does he do for joy?

Ans.

vi. What does he do in the lone heath?

Ans.

vii. What words in the passage are associated with nature?

Ans.

Then, answer the following question in about 20 - 25 words:

i. Why does the writer like to go on a journey alone?

VOCABULARY

2. Give the antonyms of the following words:

Example: good bad

absent arrive full.....

hope knowledge long.....

modern noble rich.....

success smile true.....

COMPREHENSION

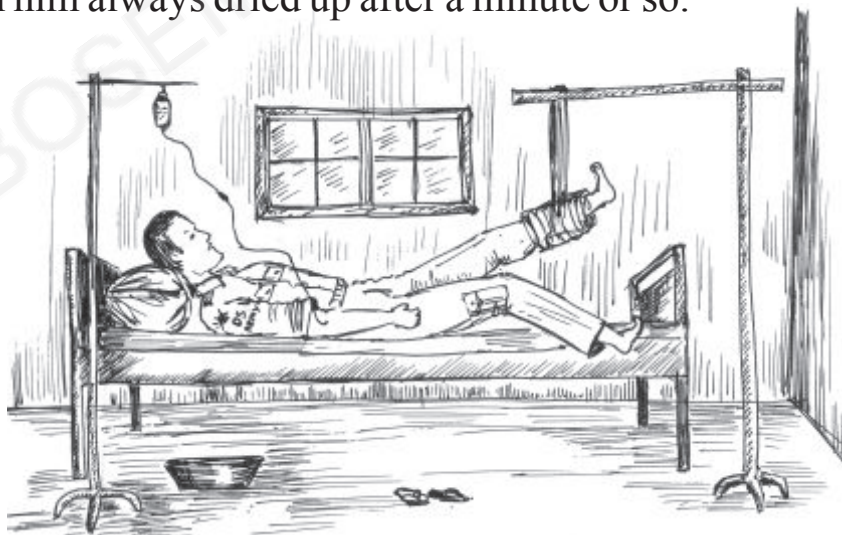
3. Answer the following questions :

- i. Where does the snake live?
- ii. What change came to the snake every night?
- iii. Who lived in a little bamboo house?
- iv. How many daughters did the woman have ?
- v. Give the names of the daughters?
- vi. Why did the woman go to the forest?
- vii. Whom did the snake prince marry out of the three daughters?
- viii. Why does the snake completely forget to turn back into a snake ?
- ix. Why did the snake swallow his wife ?
- x. What are the remarkable qualities of a woman?
- xi. Write the moral of the story.

6

The Woman on the Bus

It was about four years after the war in Vietnam when Jack first came to work in our school. He was a good Spanish teacher; he settled into our routines at once; and he proved to be popular—not quite fitting in with the group of teachers who gathered in the teachers’ lounge at various times during the day. He never had much to do with anyone else, keeping pretty much to himself. We heard through the grapevine that Jack had had a hard time in the war. He ended up in a veterans’ hospital and spent two years there after the war. He had little use of his left hand, and he once told us that it had happened while in a prison camp in the north. Jack, however, was reluctant to talk about the matter, and no one felt comfortable pressing him with questions. Conversation with him always dried up after a minute or so.



I suppose I knew him as well as anyone. On several occasions we had sat near each other to grade exams. We even walked to a fast-food place across the street for lunch a few times. He sometimes talked about his students—who was the best, who had the best pronunciation skills, who was the class clown, etc. But it was all “shoptalk.” He also mentioned his wife and family a few times. He had three sons of whom he was very proud: Andrew, Nick, and Daniel. His parents lived in upstate New York, and he had gone to college there. But these were the only facts anyone knew about him.

It’s strange how you can work alongside a person for such a long time and still know so little about him, particularly about



what goes on inside his head. But some people are like that. Anyway, Jack came into school on this particular morning quite nervous and excited. He also seemed eager to talk. Before the first bell rang, he came over to my desk and to the desk of several others, asking questions and chatting about various school events. After lunch, he stood near the teachers' coffee-pot expectantly looking for someone to talk to. He and I both had free periods. So we began talking at once.

“A funny thing happened to me on my way home from school yesterday afternoon,” he began. “I was on my way home on the New Hampshire Avenue bus, when I looked up and saw a face which seemed very familiar to me. I couldn't place her exactly. Somehow I got the notion that she belonged in a uniform, so I began to visualize her in various uniforms. I mentally dressed her as a firefighter, a police officer, a letter carrier, a nurse—nothing worked. Has that ever happened to you? You see someone you can't place exactly, but you saw him or her in a certain situation?”

I said that this had happened to me several times. I could tell that Jack was ready to talk more than he ever had before.

“Well,” he went on, “the man who was sitting beside this woman got off the bus in White Oak, and I did something I had never done before in my life. I went over and sat next to the woman and asked her who she was. I, of course, realized that she



was Vietnamese, but when I was picturing her in various uniforms, I never supposed that she had been a soldier. I guess I wanted to forget that time and those experiences. She said she didn't know me, but that, yes, she had been in the army. Then, all of a sudden it struck me: she was a North Vietnamese soldier that I had encountered during the war. In fact, I thought that I had shot and killed her.”

“Really?” I said, genuinely surprised. “How did it happen? You mean that you thought you had actually shot and killed this woman? It must have been quite a shock for you to see her. How did you feel?”

“I was really glad to see her. I thought many times about the time when I shot her. It has stayed with me for many years.”

I looked at Jack a little strangely, not just because of what he had said, but also because he was talking so much.

Jack then went to tell me about his experience in Vietnam. He had been drafted shortly after the Tet offensive and sent to the large air base at Da Nang. After several months, he had not taken



part in any fighting and he was starting to get anxious about how he would perform if he ever saw any action. Then he was transferred to an outfit which was fighting in the central highlands. There had been a lot of activity in that area with North Vietnamese Army regulars, and he knew that his test was coming.

One day, Jack and a group of seven other soldiers from his company were sent out on patrol to examine a hill position held by the North Vietnamese or the Viet Cong—no one knew which. The Americans had been trying for several days to take this particular hill. The group moved out slowly. It was early in the morning, before the sunrise. Somehow, Jack got a little ahead of the others in his party and decided to wait until the others caught up with him. There was a shell hole just in front of him, and he jumped into it. There, staring up at him, was a frightened Vietnamese woman soldier.

Jack emptied his gun into her, climbed out of the hole as fast as he could, and left her there for dead. She had also fired at Jack, and missed—except that when he got up out of the hole, he found that his left hand was bleeding badly. He became disoriented and frightened and, in his confusion, ran directly into a North Vietnamese Army position and was taken prisoner. A short time later, he was sent to a field hospital near Hanoi where his hand was taken care of.

“They treated me well at that hospital, but when my hand

healed, they sent me to prisoner-of-war camp near the border with Laos. I spent the rest of the war there. It was very bad. My hand got infected, and I've never had full use of it since then. I'm naturally a left-handed person, and it was my left hand that was shot. I've had to learn to do everything with my right hand."

"I notice that you don't do much with your left hand, but I always thought it was preference," I said. "We heard many things about those camps. It must have been hard on you."

"It was. The food and sanitary conditions were terrible. We had to work twelve hours a day. I began to hate those people. Often they would beat us for no reason at all. I used to lie in bed and plan how I could get back at them. I had it all figured out how I would search them out in their homes after the war and kill them with their families. I knew I could kill, because I had already killed that soldier back in the shell hole. When the war ended, and was sent back to the States, however, I went to pieces. The army sent me to a veterans' hospital, and I was there for two years. After a while, I began to rebuild my life. I married, had children, got this job, but inside me I still hated those people. I'm an intelligent man, and I don't like those feelings, but I had them. I thought that one day I might meet a Vietnamese, get into an argument with him or her, and lose control of myself. I was afraid of what might happen."

"And then you saw that woman on the bus yesterday."

“Yes. And that’s why I feel so good today. She was a pleasant, quiet sort of person. We talked for a while. She told me how it happened that she was not dead (I had only wounded her slightly), and soon I began to feel better about things. She told me about her life and her family. I even invited her and her husband over to our apartment on Sunday to meet my family.”

“It sounds like a story right out of Hollywood,” I said, “How do you feel about her having wounded you and caused you to become right-handed? How do you feel knowing that you never killed anyone?”

Jack’s tone of voice was serious, but I could see from the expression on his face that he was happy deep inside. “I feel great!” he said, looking up at the clock on the wall and then rising with his books and papers. It was time for the next period to begin, and we both had to get to our classes. “I think I can start to change my feeling of hate. She was only doing her job as soldier for her country just as I was. And I’m glad I never killed anyone. I’m really glad.”

-Antonia Moreno

GLOSSARY :

- grapevine (through the grapevine) :** talking through an informal way to other people
- veteran's hospital :** hospitals for soldiers
- clown :** an entertainer
- shoptalk :** talk about one's work with the people one works with
- place :** recognise somebody and be able to identify him or her
- drafted :** chosen for the special task of fighting in the war
- Tet :** Vietnamese new Year Festival
- Tet offensive :** during the Vietnam war, a major Veit-Cong action – was called the Tet offensive because it coincided with the Vietnamese New Year Festival of 1968.

outfit	: people fighting together as a team
disoriented	: confused
infect	: to pass a disease into a person or animal

COMPREHENSION

1. A. Answer the following questions :

- i. What was Jack before he joined the school?
- ii. How did Jack behave in the school and towards the other teachers?
- iii. How did Jack try to remember the identity of the woman he met in the bus?
- iv. Describe the meeting of the woman and Jack .
- v. How was Jack captured during the war?
- vi. How was Jack treated in the camp of the prisoners of war?
- vii. What happened to Jack after the war?
- viii. What did Jack think of the Vietnamese when he was in the prison camp?

- ix. What was Jack's attitude towards the Vietnamese after his encounter with the Vietnamese woman soldier ?
- x. How did Jack's feeling of hatred change at the end of the story ?

B. Read the following passage:

The Curies, continued their work for four more years. Wearing an acid-stained, dust-covered smock, Marie toiled along stirring large pots of pitch-blende in swing that the fires beneath were active throughout the day and night. Then in 1902, success finally came. On a September night the Curies, after a day's tiresome work, went home. Then just as they were about to go to bed they went to the laboratory to have a look at the hundreds of small bowls into which they had poured filtered pitchblende . In the dark laboratory, as they moved cautiously forward there were all around them rays of soft, bluish purple light coming from the small, glass covered bowls. Radium had been discovered! Marie said to her husband, "Do you remember the day when you told me that you wanted radium to have a beautiful colour? Look, Look!"

Now, answer the questions in one sentence each:

i. For how many years did the Curies continue their work?

Ans :.....

ii. What did Marie do with the pots of pitchblend?

Ans:.....

iii. Why did the Curies go to their Laboratory one night?

Ans:.....

iv. What did they discover?

Ans:.....

v. What was the colour of radium?

Ans:.....

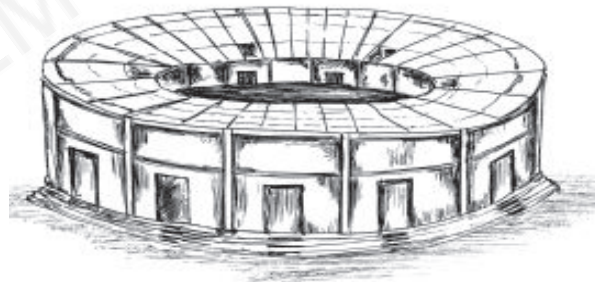
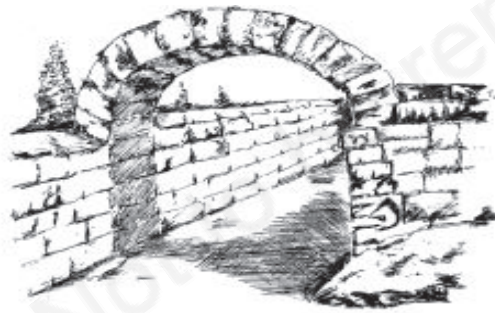
vi. What did Mary say to her husband?

Ans:.....

7

The Quest of Man

(This is a ringing echo from Pre-Independence India. While Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was in prison he wrote many letters to his only daughter, Indira (Priyadarshini) on various subjects like India, its history, the struggle for its independence from the British yoke, the history of the world and the history of mankind. following is an extract from one of the letters.)



Four years ago—or is it three? I began writing these series of letters to you when you were at Mussoorie. What a lot has happened during these three or four years, and how you have grown ! With fits and starts and after long gaps I have continued these letters, mostly from prison. But the more I write, the less I like what I write; and a fear comes upon me that these letters may not interest you much, and may even become a burden for you. Why, then, should I continue to write them?

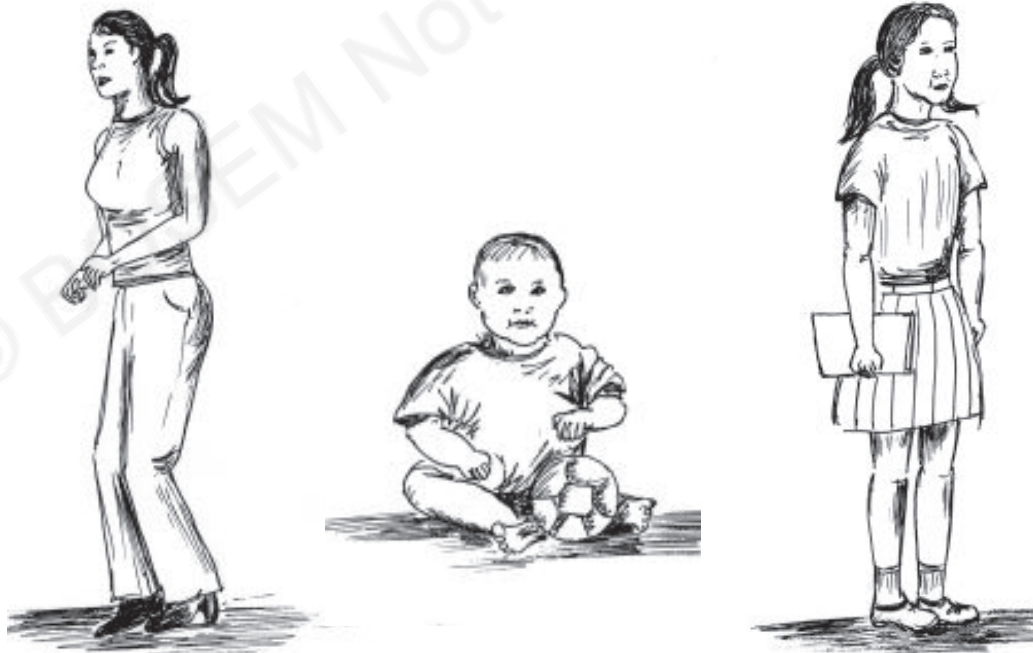
I should have liked to place vivid images of the past before you, one after another, to make you sense how this world of ours has changed, step by step, and developed and progressed, and sometimes apparently gone back; to make you see something of the old civilizations and how they have risen like the tide and then subsided; to make you realize how the river of history has run on from age to age, continuously, interminably, with its eddies and whirlpools and backwaters, and still rushes on to an unknown sea. I should have liked to take you on man's trail and follow it up from the early beginnings, when he was hardly a man, to today, when he prides himself so much, rather vainly and foolishly, on his great civilization. We did begin that way, you will remember, in the Mussoorie days, when we talked of the discovery of fire and of agriculture, and the settling down in towns, and the division of labour. But the farther we have advanced, the more we have got mixed up with empires and the like, and often we have lost

sight of that trail. We have just skimmed over the surface of history. I have placed the skeleton of old happenings before you and I have wished that I had the power to cover it with flesh and blood, to make it living and vital for you.

But I am afraid I have not got that power, and you must rely upon your imagination to work the miracle. Why, then, should I write, when you can read about past history in many good books? Yet, through my doubts I have continued writing and I suppose I shall still continue. I remember the promise I made to you, and I shall try to fulfil it. But more even than this is the joy that the thought of you gives me when I sit down to write and imagine that you are by me we are talking to each other.

Of man's trail I have written above, since he emerged stumbling and slouching from the jungle. It has been a long trail of many thousands of years. And yet how short a time it is if you compare it to the earth's story and the ages and aeons of time before man came ! But for us man is naturally more interesting than all the great animals that existed before him; he is interesting because he brought a new thing with him which the others do not seem to have had. This was mind—curiosity—the desire to find out and learn. So from the earliest days began man's quest. Observe a little baby, how it looks at the new and wonderful world about it; how it begins to recognize things and people; how it learns. Look

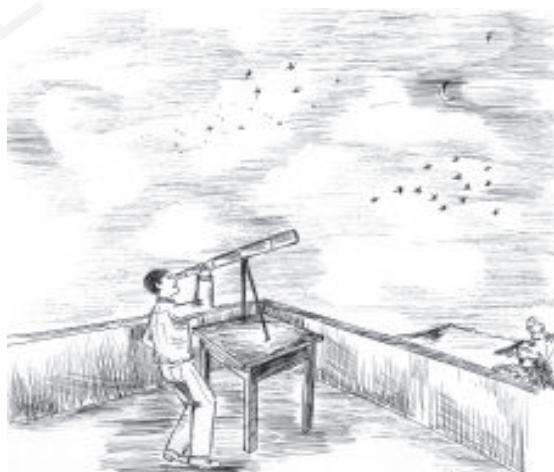
at a little girl; if she is a healthy and wide-awake person she will ask so many questions about so many things. Even so, in the morning of history when man was young and the world was new and wonderful, and rather fearsome to him, he must have looked and stared all around him, and asked questions. Who was he to ask except himself? There was no one else to answer. But he had a wonderful little thing—a mind—and with the help of this, slowly and painfully, he went on storing his experiences and learning from them. So from the earliest times until today man's quest has gone on, and he has found out many things, but many still remain, and as he advances on his trail, he discovers vast new tracts stretching out before him, which show to him how far he is still from the end of his quest—if there is such an end.



What has been this quest of man, and whither does he journey? For thousands of years men have tried to answer these questions.

Religion and philosophy and science have all considered them, and given many answers. I shall not trouble you with these answers, for the sufficient reason that I do not know most of them. But, in the main, religion has attempted to give a complete and dogmatic answer, and has often cared little for the mind, but has sought to enforce obedience to its decisions in various ways. Science gives a doubting and hesitating reply, for it is of the nature of science not to dogmatize, but to experiment and reason and rely on the mind of man. I need hardly tell you that my preferences are all for science and the methods of science.

We may not be able to answer these questions about man's



quest with any assurance, but we can see that the quest itself has taken two lines. Man has looked outside himself as well as inside; he has tried to understand Nature, and he has also tried to understand himself. The quest is really one and the same, for man is part of Nature. “Know thyself”, said the old philosophers of India and Greece; and the *Upanishads* contain the record of the ceaseless and rather wonderful strivings after this knowledge by the old Aryan Indians. The other knowledge of Nature has been the special province of science, and our modern world is witness to the great progress made therein. Science, indeed, is spreading out its wings even farther now, and taking charge of both lines of this quest and co-ordinating them. It is looking up with confidence to the most distant stars, and it tells us also of the wonderful little things in continuous motion—the electrons and protons—of which all matter consists.

The mind of man has carried man a long way in his voyage of discovery. As he has learnt to understand Nature more he has utilized it and harnessed it to his own advantage, and thus he has won more power. But unhappily he has not always known how to use this new power and he has often misused it. Science itself has been used by him chiefly to supply him with terrible weapons to kill his brother and destroy the very civilization that he has built up with so much labour.

—*Jawaharlal Nehru*

GLOSSARY

- vivid** : intense, producing strong clear pictures in the mind
- interminably** : long, endless
- eddies** : moving like smoke
- skimmed** : passed over surface rapidly and lightly with slight contact
- slouching** : standing or moving or sitting in a drooping fashion
- tracts** : region or area of indefinite extent
- dogmatic** : authoritative, rigid, arrogant
- dogmatize** : make positive unsupported statements

COMPREHENSION

1.A. Answer the following questions :

- i.** What does man pride himself of?
- ii.** Why is man more interesting than the animals that existed before him?

- iii. Who answered the questions asked by man ?
- iv. What was the wonderful thing man had and how did it help him ?
- v. What has religion attempted to do ?
- vi. What has science done ?
- vii. What does science rely on ?
- viii. What are the two lines taken by the quest of man ?
- ix. What has man learnt about Nature ?

B. Read the following passage carefully:

Have you ever seen a maiden? I mean what our paviours call a maiden, a thing with which they ran down the paving-stones in the roads. A maiden of this kind is made altogether of wood, broad below, and girt round with iron rings; at the top she is narrow, and has a stick passed across through her waist; and this stick forms the arms of the maiden.

In the shed stood two Maidens of this kind. They had their place among shovels, hand-cards, wheel arrows, and measuring tapes; and to all this company the news had come that the Maidens were no longer to be called "maidens" but "hand -rammers;" which word was the newest and the only correct designation among the paviours for the thing we all know from the old times by the name of "the maiden".

Now, there are among us human creatures, certain individuals who are known as “emancipated women” as, for instance, principals of institutions, dancers who stand professionally on one leg, milliners, and sick nurses; and with this class of emancipated women are the two Maidens in the shed associated themselves. They were “maidens” among the paviour folks, and determined not to give up this honourable appellation, and let themselves be miscalled rammers.

“Maiden is a human name, but hand-rammer is a *thing*, and we won’t be called *things* – that’s insulting us.”

Now, answer the following questions :

i. What is the maiden talked about in the passage?

Ans:.....

ii. What stood in the shed?

Ans:.....

iii. Where is the usual place for the maidens?

Ans:.....

iv. Who are their company?

Ans:.....

v. What is the new name to be given to them?

Ans:.....

vi. Give some examples of emancipated women.

Ans:

vii. What do these maidens feel if they are to be called things?

Ans:

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At long last, I also came to believe that she was mad. It was natural. For my mother said that she was mad. Everyone in the village thought she was mad. It is not that the old woman did unnatural things. But sometimes she would laugh loudly for no reason. She also stared at people so hard as if she saw something deep inside them. She, indeed, looked mysterious.

I talked about this woman to my father. He just looked at me and quietly said, "Perhaps it is sorrow. This burning sun, this merciless drought making us suffer." I didn't know why he said this. I still believe that he was not answering my question. He was just thinking aloud.

The whole country was suffering the pain and sorrow of death. From the ridge up to the neat little huts everything stood bare. The small and beautiful fields were dry. Even the old *mugumu* tree in our village lost its leaves and its greenness. It was never like this before.

Many people had warned of doom. Weather prophets and medicine men were consulted. They also forecast doom.

Radios boomed. The Meteorological Department was watching, using their magic instruments for telling weather. But men and

women in our village watched the clouds with their eyes and waited. Everybody was waiting for the great hour when God would bring rain. Little children used to play in the dusty streets. They had stopped playing. They also were waiting, watching and hoping.

Many people went hungry. My father's words made me think seriously about the old woman. When my mother bought some yams and beans, I took some and went to the mud-hut of the old



woman. That was my first meeting with the woman. I found her huddled in a dark corner. The dying embers of a few pieces of wood flickered. I was frightened and wanted to run away but I did not. I called her, “Grandmother.” I gave her the yams and the beans. She looked at them and then at me. Her eyes brightened a little. She started weeping and said,

“I thought it was ‘him’ coming back to me, oh! The drought has ruined me!”

I could not bear the sight and ran away quickly. Perhaps she was mad.

A week later, I went to her again. She told me about ‘him’. Her story was a sad one.

There was a drought in the village years ago. There was no noise in the streets. The woman was sitting by the side of her only son, watching him. She heard nothing. She sat on a stool and watched the dark face of the boy. He wriggled in agony on the narrow bed near the fireplace. He kept asking, “Do you think I’ll die, Mother”.

She did not know what to say or do. She could only hope and pray. The painful voice of the hungry boy went on, “Mother, I don’t want to die”. But the mother looked on helplessly. She felt as if her strength and will had left her. And again the voice of her

only son was heard, “Mother, give me something to eat”. Of course, he did not know. His mother had nothing. She had already decided not to trouble her neighbours again. They had supported her for more than two months. They were also suffering.

What could a woman do? She had lost her husband during the Emergency imposed by the British. Now she was alone. It seemed so unfair to her. Was it a curse in the family? She thought so. She was lucky to have been saved. Her mother survived the great Ruraya Famine. Her grandmother and grandfather had died. All the sufferings of drought came to her mind as she watched the helpless boy. Why was it only her? Why not other women? He was her only child.



She left the hut and went to the headman of the village. He had nothing. He did not seem to understand her. He did not understand her. He did not understand that droughts could actually kill. He thought that her son was suffering from an old illness. But the woman knew that it was hunger that was killing her child. The headman told her that the British District Officer was giving rations. It was part of the Famine Relief Scheme. That night she slept, but not well. The boy kept on asking, "Shall I be well?"

The queue at the District Officer's place was long. She took her ration and began walking home with a heavy heart. She did not enter but sat outside. Her strength was gone. She could no longer stand. Women and men with strange faces came out from her hut. They did not speak to her. There was no need. She knew that her son was gone and would not return.

The old woman never looked once at me as she told me all this. Now she looked up and continued, "I am an old woman now. The sun has set on my only child; the drought has taken him". She looked down again and poked the dying fire.

I rose to go. She had told me the story brokenly yet in words that certainly belonged to no mad woman. I wondered why some people were born to suffer and endure so much misery. I came home.

I last talked to the old woman about two weeks ago. Now

it has rained. In fact, it has been raining for about a week. Women were busy planting. Hope was there on the faces.

Heavy rain came yesterday. Such rain had never been seen for years. I went to the old woman's hut with a gift. This time, it was not yams and beans. It was sweet potatoes. I opened the door and found her huddled up in her usual corner. I spoke to her. She slightly raised her head. She opened her eyes a little. She tried to smile, but there was something unearthly. She let out words, weakly: "I see them all now. All of them are waiting for me at the gate. And I am going..."



Then she bent down again. Almost at once the struggling lantern light went out, but not before I had seen in a corner all my gifts. The food had never been touched but had been stored there. I went out.

-Adapted from Ngugi Wa Thiong 'O's

"Gone with the drought"

GLOSSARY

stared	: looked fixedly with eyes wide open
ridge	: long narrow hill-top
mugumu	: a kind of tree that grows in Kenya
doom	: ruin
prophets	: revealers or interpreters of divine will, persons who predict
medicine men	: wizards, person believed to possess extraordinary powers
embers	: small pieces of fuel (wood) in dying fire
wriggled	: twist or turn of the body with short movements
rations	: fixed allowance or individual's share of provisions

COMPREHENSION

1. A. Answer the following questions :

- i.** What did everyone in the village think about the old woman?
- ii.** Why did she look mysterious?
- iii.** What made the villagers suffer?
- iv.** Why did the children stop playing?
- v.** What did the writer do to help the old woman?
- vi.** Why was the old woman's son suffering?
- vii.** Narrate briefly how the old woman lost her son.
- viii.** What did the woman do after it began to rain?
- ix.** What did the boy do?
- x.** What happened to the food in the old woman's hut?

B. Read the following passage:

Bhagat Singh joined the Hindustan Republican Army (HRA), a revolutionary organisation that declared in 1925 that it stood for the abolition of all systems which make the exploitation of man by man possible. Soon after he joined the

HRA, Bhagat Singh presented the people with a radical political programme which stressed on starting labour and peasant organisations and for an armed revolution. As a great innovator of ideas in the Freedom movement, he was deeply concerned with the problems posed by communalism. He understood its threat much more clearly than any of his contemporaries. He always asserted that communalism was as big an enemy as colonialism and should be fought relentlessly. To him, communal killings were barbaric acts as a communal killer did not kill someone for any reason but simply because the person belongs to a particular community. Bhagat Singh would not recognise any differences based on religion and always talk of being a human being in the first place. In a meeting of nearly all the major young revolutionaries of Northern India at the ruins of Feroz Shah Kotla ground in Delhi on 9th and 10th September, 1928, Bhagat Singh spoke of the grave dangers posed by communal forces and political organisations solely interested in power, parading in the guise of Freedom fighters. On his initiative, the HRA changed its name to the *Hindustan Socialist Republican Army*.

Answer the following questions in one sentence each:

- i. What was the name of the organisation that Bhagat Singh joined?

Ans:

.....

ii. After joining the HRA, what did Bhagat Singh present to the people of India?

Ans:

.....

iii. What was regarded as dangerous as colonialism?

Ans:

.....

iv. What are regarded as Barbaric Acts.?

Ans:

.....

v. Where did most of the young revolutionaries meet in 1928?

Ans:

.....

vi. What do the experiences in the past show?

Ans:

.....

v. What will cause the failure of the agrarian revolution?

Ans:

.....

Again, answer the following questions in 20-25 words each:

- i. Why is it important to absorb peasant women into the struggle?

Ans:

.....

- ii. What is the main task of the organisation?

Ans:

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The winter holidays had come. We were eagerly waiting for our annual school excursion. This time, our teacher would be taking us to Ukhrul. Her name was Luingamla and she was from Ukhrul. The hills of Ukhrul are said to be gifted with natural beauty. The beautiful Sirui Lily grows there. The day for excursion finally arrived. Since it was winter, we felt cold but our hearts were full of joy and our spirits were high. We sang and laughed inside the bus. The pine trees on the hill-side seemed to welcome us.

When we reached Ukhrul, our teacher took us to the village open field. There we saw a huge crowd. Renu asked, “Miss, what is going on there?”

“Come, let us take a closer look,” replied the teacher.

Many people in colourful dresses were dancing. Naobi was thrilled, and asked, “Miss, are these the traditional dresses of the Tangkhuls? They are so lovely.”

“Yes, the dancers are wearing traditional dresses,” the teacher replied. “The dance is related to a festival called *Luirea*. It is a very important festival of the Tangkhul community of Manipur,” she continued. Then, Memthoi asked, “Miss, please tell us more about *Luirea*.” The teacher also became interested. Responding to the

request of the young girl, she continued, “*Luir* is an annual festival celebrated during the harvesting season. It is held in connection with the harvest of crops every year in winter. The celebration lasts for seven to ten days. On the first day of the festival, the villagers assemble in the house of the village chief. In this festival, the villagers worship god by sacrificing animals and birds. The villagers dance and make merry. On the second day, all the houses are cleaned and on the third day the villagers observe *Namungba*. During this there is restriction on the entry of outsiders. The village gate is closed. No stranger is allowed to



(Langkhul Dance)

enter the village. The following day, the gate is opened and the villagers pray to god to shower the village with happiness and prosperity. A great feast follows. It is a community feast where all the villagers eat and make merry.”

“Miss, what about the dances that we see now?” asked Achingna.

The teacher replied, “Today is the fifth day. On the fifth and sixth days, villagers dance and sing happily. You will also see games and sports. Many sports items can be seen. On the seventh day, the craftspeople and the artisans bring their wares like clothes, jewellery, ornaments etc. and sell them.”

Everyone was very happy to see such a colourful festival.

Abe looked at Achingna and said, “Achingna, this festival has reminded me of *Gan-Ngai*. You invited me last year.”

Our teacher was pleased and said, “Yes, Achingna, please tell us all that you know about *Gan-Ngai*, which is said to be the most important festival of the Kabui community of Manipur.”

Achingna looked at the group and started, “*Gan-Ngai* is also associated with the annual harvest. It is celebrated in winter. The festival goes on for five to seven days. All the villagers participate in it. It opens with certain rituals. Sacrifices are offered to the village god, *Ragor*. Pigs and mithuns are sacrificed. In the

evening, the youths of the village in their traditional dresses walk up and down the village with spears in their hands. Then, the villagers perform *Phougouba*, which is a ritual to pray to god for a good harvest. Cocks and hens are sacrificed to the god. On the second and third days, the villagers perform rituals known as *Tamchamei* and *Tunananngai*. Various games and sports can also be seen during this festival. On the last day, *Langpatnei* is performed in a grand scale. All the villagers are under the conditions of *Namungba*. Outsiders are not allowed to enter the village. The village priest calls in the life breath of the village granary. Prayers are made to god to restore lost wealth and crops.



(Kabui Dance)

Next day, early in the morning young unmarried males and females mingle by occupying their respective positions at the *Pakhangphan* and the *Leishaphan*. It is a ritual of initiation when the boys and the girls dance together. Then they bid farewell to each other after exchanging gifts.” We were all delighted to hear about this great and fascinating festival. Our teacher suddenly asked, “ Can anyone in the group think of another festival associated with the annual harvest?”

Huten was reminded of a festival of his people. He belonged to the Anal community of Manipur. The Anals of Manipur are also equally colourful. Huten said, “ My dear friends, let me tell you something about a festival celebrated by my community. It is also related with the annual harvest.”

“Tell us quickly, Huten,” cried the whole group in delight.

“It is called *Khutho*. It is the most important festival of the Anals. Like the harvest festivals we have heard about, *Khutho* is celebrated in winter after the annual harvest. The festival is celebrated for two days. On the first day, ash and paddy husks are collected from every house in the village. It is then deposited in the village ground. When night falls, village elders and other important men sleep at the village granary. At midnight, the village priests close the village gate. It is done with the root of a tree called *Rate* in our language. This root is considered to have the

power to drive evil spirits away from the village. On the second day, the villagers would spit into bamboo jars and throw them outside. All these are performed during the period of *Namungba*. After this, restriction on entry in the village ends. Everybody rejoices. Villagers offer clothes, cotton staples, sesame, banana and other fruits to the goddess who is considered to be the consort of god *Wangbren*. The Anals offer sweets, fruits and vegetables to the goddess during the *Wangbren Haraoba* festival, which is a ceremony to please god *Wangbren*. Archery is an important part of the *Khutho* festival. Many villagers take part in the archery



competition, which is called *Wale*. Then, the villagers clean the village drains. On the third day, the men of the village go hunting together. A grand feast is organised with what they hunt. The head of the animal caught in the hunting is offered to the chief of the village.”

We were very much delighted to hear and learn so many things about these great festivals of Manipur. We wanted to know more about other festivals. Our teacher became deeply involved in the whole narration. She suddenly turned to Hoinu and said, “Come on, Hoinu, the Kukis of Manipur are also known for their colourful festival. The *Chavang Kut* is a very popular festival in Manipur. Why don’t you tell us something about it?”



Hoinu responded with great enthusiasm. She started, “Respected teacher and my dear friends, let me tell you something about *Chavang Kut* which is an important festival of the Kukis of Manipur. It is celebrated during the *Chavang* or harvesting season that falls between late October and the whole of November. During this season, the villagers work hard to harvest the crops.”

Naobi spoke in agreement, “Yes, you are right, Hoinu! The fields are bustling with the activities of people harvesting the crops of the season. In Manipuri, it is known as the month of *Poinu*.”

Hoinu continued in the same excited voice, “After harvesting their crops, the villagers offer their thanks to god and pray for his blessings. *Chavang Kut* is a festival closely related to these prayers. The festivities begin after the prayers. For the celebration, a special kind of intoxicating drink is prepared by the mothers in the village. The drink is known as *Vaiju*. It is kept in three different pots. They are known as *Lunbel* or the biggest pot, *Makhaibel* or the medium-sized pot and the *Shikibel* or the smallest pot. During the celebration, the drink from the *Lunbel* is used by the menfolk. A common sight is that of the young people going from house to house to drink *Vaiju*. This is done to select the tastiest *Vaiju* of the season. At night boys and girls in beautiful traditional attire dance together. They dance throughout the whole night. This dance

is known as *Laamkol*. The festival goes on for three to seven days. Towards the end, the villagers hunt together and organise a big feast. Thus, there is a lot of fun and rejoicing in the village during the celebration of this festival.”

The whole group was very thrilled. We still wanted to hear more. Then, our teacher who was in the proper mood, said loudly, “Hang on! Please keep quiet. Now we will let Renu tell us about the *Yaoshang* festival of Manipur.”



Renu was delighted to hear this. She began to speak slowly, “The *Yaoshang* festival is one of the most popular and important

festivals in Manipur. It lasts for five days. Many changes have taken place in the celebration of this festival. It begins on the day of *Lamta Purnima*, the full-moon day of the Manipuri month of *Lamta* which falls approximately in the English month of March. In the past, young boys in every locality used to build a small *Shang* or hut where the image of god was worshipped for some time and then the hut was set on fire in the evening. This tradition has declined considerably now. Once the *Shang* is burnt young children in colourful dresses go from house to house asking for money. It is in full swing the next morning. Splashing each other with coloured water and playing with *aber* are quite common with the young children.”

An excited Wungreiso cried loudly, “What about the *Thabal Chongba*? We want to hear about it!”

Renu replied calmly, “Hold on! I’m coming to that. It is the most exciting part of *Yaoshang*. In olden days, it had some kind of artistic and religious fervour and implications. The movement of the line of young boys and girls hand in hand and dancing together had certain patterns known as the *Lairen Mathek*. It resembles the patterns of the movement of a *Lairen* or a python believed to be a divine entity in our cosmology. Nowadays boys and girls hand in hand dance in circles to the rhythm of music. A new dimension has also been added to the *Yaoshang* in the last

ten or fifteen years. This is the *Yaoshang* sports. During the festival, local clubs organise sporting activities in the localities. Every *Yaoshang* goes with various kinds of sports competitions. The young and the old enjoy and participate in various items. *Yaoshang* sports are increasing in popularity.”

We felt so happy in listening to all these stories of some of the festivals of Manipur. We are very proud of our land, Manipur, where different communities live together. We are proud of these wonderful festivals that make our land a land of colour and rhythm. We thanked our teacher for making our annual school excursion a memorable one by giving us an enjoyable chance to learn many valuable things about the festivals of our beautiful land.

GLOSSARY

harvesting	: gathering of crops
restriction	: confinement or limitation
artisans	: skilled workmen
rituals	: prescribed orders of performing religious services
granary	: storehouse for grain
initiation ceremony	: ceremony marking adulthood,
husks	: dry outer covering of fruits or seed, here it is rice
entity	: thing with real existence
cosmology	: theory of the universe

COMPREHENSION

1.A. *Answer the following questions :*

- i.** Who was taking the children for excursion?
- ii.** Where did the children go for excursion?
- iii.** Write briefly about the *Luirá* festival.

- iv. What happens on the seventh day of the *Luirā* festival?
- v. For how many days does the *Gan-Ngai* festival last?
- vi. Write briefly about the *Gan-Ngai* festival.
- vii. Which community celebrates the *Khutho*?
- viii. Write briefly about the *Khutho* festival.
- ix. Which community celebrates the *Chavang Kut*?
- x. Write briefly about the *Chavang Kut* festival.
- xi. Write briefly about the *Yaoshang* festival.
- xii. What is the new dimension added to the *Yaoshang* festival?

B. Read the following passage:

Bihari soon became the leading figure in the village. A continuous stream of visitors waited on him, the sick for medicine, the litigants for legal advice, fathers asking for jobs for their sons, the illiterate begging him to draft petitions on their behalf. Bihari was not only versatile but also sociable, good-natured and generous. He mixed freely with all, joined the elders at their talks, the lower castes at their merrymaking. Every one felt at home with him and yet one and all respected him.

Now, answer the following questions in a sentence each:

i. What did Bihari become soon in the village?

Ans:

ii. What were the qualities of Bihari?

Ans:

iii. With whom did he mix freely?

Ans:

iv. Who respected him?

Ans:

v. What are the adjectives used in this passage?

Ans:

Also, answer the following question in about 20-25 words:

Who were Bihari's visitors and what were their purposes?

Ans:

VOCABULARY

2. A. Give the prepositions that indicate directions.

Ans:

B. Give the adverbs that indicate time.

Ans:

‘This is for the Kala Nag,’ said Gunga Ram, pouring the milk into the saucer. ‘Every night I leave it outside the hole near the wall and it’s gone by the morning.’

‘Perhaps it is the cat,’ we youngsters suggested.

‘Cat!’ said Gunga Ram with contempt. ‘No cat goes near that hole. Kala Nag lives there. As long as I give him milk, he will not bite anyone in this house. You can all go about with bare feet and play where you like.’

We did not count upon any help from Gunga Ram.



‘You’re a stupid old man,’ I said. ‘Don’t you know snakes don’t drink milk? The teacher told us that a snake eats only once in several days. We saw a snake which had just swallowed a frog. It stuck like a blob in its throat and took several days to dissolve and go down its tail. We’ve got dozens of them in the laboratory in methylated spirit. Why, last month the teacher bought one from a snake-charmer which could run both ways. It had another head with a pair of eyes at the tail. You should have seen the fun when it was put in the jar.’

Gunga Ram shut his eyes in horror.

‘You will pay for it one day. Yes, you will.’

It was no use arguing with Gunga Ram. He, like all good Hindus, believed in the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, the creator, preserver, and destroyer. Of these he was most devoted to Vishnu. Every morning he smeared his forehead with a V mark in sandalwood paste to honour the deity. Although a Brahmin, he was illiterate and full of superstition. To him all life was sacred, even if it was of a serpent or scorpion or centipede. Hence his regard for snakes; above all, the cobra, who was the Kala Nag.

‘We will kill your Kala Nag if we see him.’

I won’t let you. It’s laid a hundred eggs and if you kill it, all the eggs will become cobras and the house will be full of them.



Then what will you do?’

‘We’ll catch them alive and send them to Bombay. They milk them there for anti-snakebite serum. They pay two rupees for a live cobra. That makes two hundred rupees straight away.’

‘Your doctors must have udders. I never saw a snake have any. But don’t you touch this one. It is a phannyar— it is hooded. I’ve seen it. It’s three hands long. As for its hood!’ Gunga Ram opened the palms of his hands and his head swayed from side to side, ‘You should see it basking on the lawn in the sunlight.’

‘That just proves what a liar you are. The phannyar is the male, so it couldn’t have laid the hundred eggs. You must have laid the eggs yourself.’

The party burst into peals of laughter.

Gunga Ram did not like the children's way. They were constantly belittling him with their new-fangled ideas. They never read their scriptures. Nor even what the Mahatma said about non-violence. They talked of shotguns to kill birds and the jars of methylated spirit to drown snakes. Gunga Ram would feed and protect snakes. He left the saucerful of milk by the snake-hole every night and found it gone in the morning.

One day we saw Kala Nag. The monsoon had burst with all its fury and it had rained in the night. The earth which had lain parched and dry under the withering heat of the summer sun was teeming with life. In little pools the frogs croaked. The muddy ground was littered with crawling worms, centipedes, and velvety lady-birds. Grass had begun to grow and the banana leaves glistened bright and glossy green. The rain had flooded Kala Nag's hole. He sat in an open patch on the lawn. His shiny black hood glistened in the sunlight. He was big, almost six feet in length, and rounded and fleshy as my wrist.

‘Looks like a King Cobra. Let's get him.’

Kala Nag did not have much of a chance. The ground was slippery and all the holes and gutters were full of water. Gunga Ram was not at home to help.

Armed with long bamboo sticks, we surrounded Kala Nag before he even scented danger. When he saw us, his eyes turned a

fiery red and he hissed and spat on all sides. Then like lightning Kala Nag made for the banana grove.

The ground was too muddy and he slid along. He had hardly gone five yards when a stick caught him in the middle and broke his back. A volley of blows reduced him to a shapeless mass of black and white smeared with blood and mud. His head was still undamaged.

‘Don’t damage the hood,’ yelled one of us. ‘We’ll take Kala Nag to school.’

So we slid a bamboo stick under the cobra’s belly and lifted him on the end of the pole. We put him in a large biscuit tin and tied it up with string. We hid the tin under a bed.

At night I hung around Gunga Ram waiting for him to get his saucer of milk. ‘Aren’t you going to take any milk for Kala Nag tonight?’

‘Yes,’ answered Gunga Ram irritably. ‘You go to bed.’

He did not want any argument on the subject.

‘He won’t need the milk any more.’

Gunga Ram paused.

‘Why?’

‘Oh, nothing. There are so many frogs about. They must taste better than your milk. You never put any sugar in it, anyway.’

The next morning Gunga Ram brought back the saucer with the milk still in it. He looked sullen and suspicious.

‘I told you, snakes prefer frogs to milk.’

Whilst we changed and had breakfast, Gunga Ram hung around us. The school bus came and we clambered into it with the tin. As the bus started we held out the tin to Gunga Ram.

‘Here’s your Kala Nag. Safe in this box. We are going to put him in spirit.’

We left him standing speechless staring at the departing bus.

There was great excitement in the school. We were a set of four brothers, known for our toughness. We had proved it again.

‘A King Cobra.’

‘Six feet long.’

‘A phannyar.’

The tin was presented to the science teacher.

It was on the teacher’s table, and we waited for him to open it and admire our skill. The teacher pretended to be indifferent and set us some problems to work on. In a matter-of-fact way he fetched his forceps and a jar with a banded krait lying curled in muddy methylated spirit. He began to hum and untie the cord around the box.

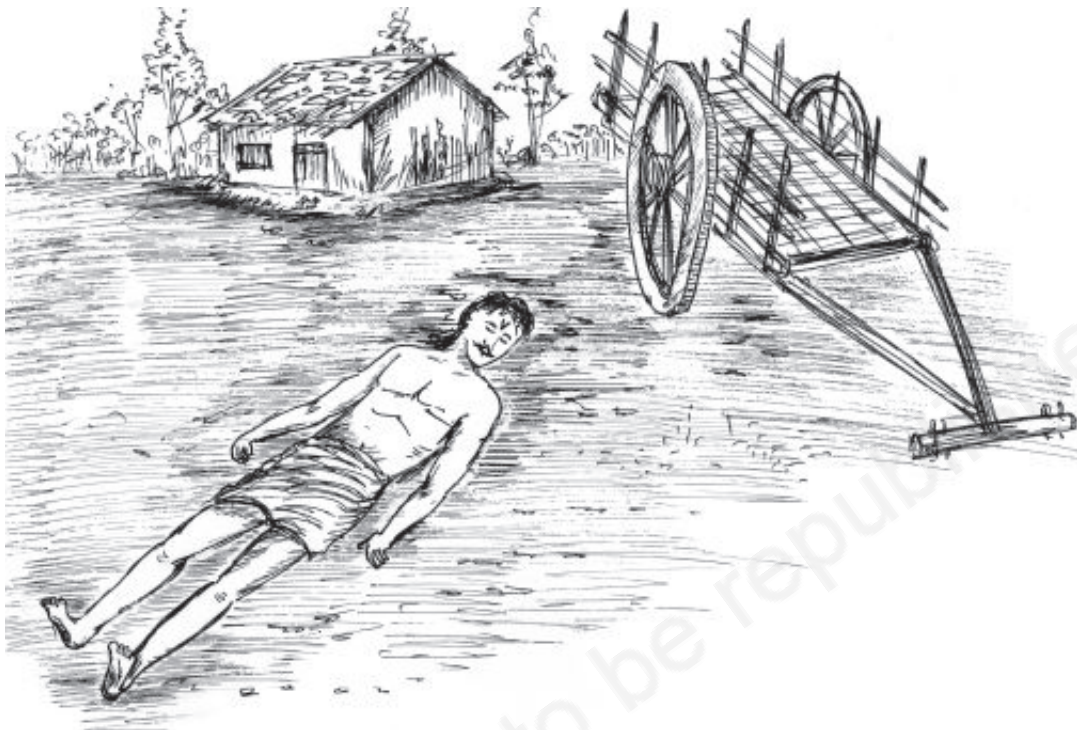
As soon as the cord was loosened the lid flew into the air, just missing the teacher's nose. There was Kala Nag. His eyes burnt like embers and his hood was taut and undamaged. With a loud hiss he went for the teacher's face. The teacher pushed himself back on the chair and toppled over. He fell on the floor and stared at the cobra, petrified with fear. The boys stood up on their desks and yelled hysterically.

Kala Nag surveyed the scene with his bloodshot eyes. His forked tongue darted in and out excitedly. He spat furiously and then made a bid for freedom. He fell out of the tin on to the floor with a loud plop. His back was broken in several places and he dragged himself painfully to the door. When he got to the threshold he drew himself up once again with his hood outspread to face another danger.

Outside the classroom stood Gunga Ram with a saucer and a jug of milk. As soon as he saw Kala Nag come up he went down on his knees. He poured the milk into the saucer and placed it near the threshold. With hands folded in prayer he bowed his head to the ground craving for forgiveness.

In desperate fury, the cobra hissed and spat and bit Gunga Ram all over the head—then with great effort dragged himself into a gutter and wriggled out of view.

Gunga Ram collapsed with his hands covering his face. He



groaned in agony. The poison blinded him instantly. Within a few minutes he turned pale and blue and froth appeared in his mouth. On his forehead were little drops of blood. These the teacher wiped with his handkerchief. Underneath was the V mark where the Kala Nag had dug his fangs.

GLOSSARY

contempt	: disregard or disrespect
blob	: a small round mass
Trinity	: a group of three

phanniyar	: Hindi word for a hooded snake
deity	: god or goddess
slid	: moved smoothly
bask	: enjoy warmth and light
belittle	: cause to seem unimportant
new fangled	: new and strange
banded	: striped
hysterically	: with uncontrolled excitement
krait	: another very poisonous snake
volley	: hurling a number of
petrified	: lost power to think
fury	: violent excitement
wriggled	: twisted and turned
agony	: great pain
froth	: a mass of foamy bubbles
fang	: snake's poison-tooth

COMPREHENSION

1. Answer the following questions :

- i. Who was Kala Nag?
- ii. What made Gunga Ram believe that Kala Nag drank the milk?
- iii. What was the youngsters' view regarding snake drinking milk?
- iv. Why does the narrator say that it was no use arguing with Gunga Ram?
- v. Why did not Gunga Ram like the youngsters' ways?
- vi. Describe the condition that led Kala Nag come out of its hole.
- vii. How was Kala Nag caught?
- viii. Why did the youngsters tell that Kala Nag would not need any milk?
- ix. Why did Gunga Ram look sullen?
- x. What did Kala Nag do when the teacher opened the box?
- xi. What did Gunga Ram do to the fleeing snake?
- xii. Describe the sad end of Gunga Ram.