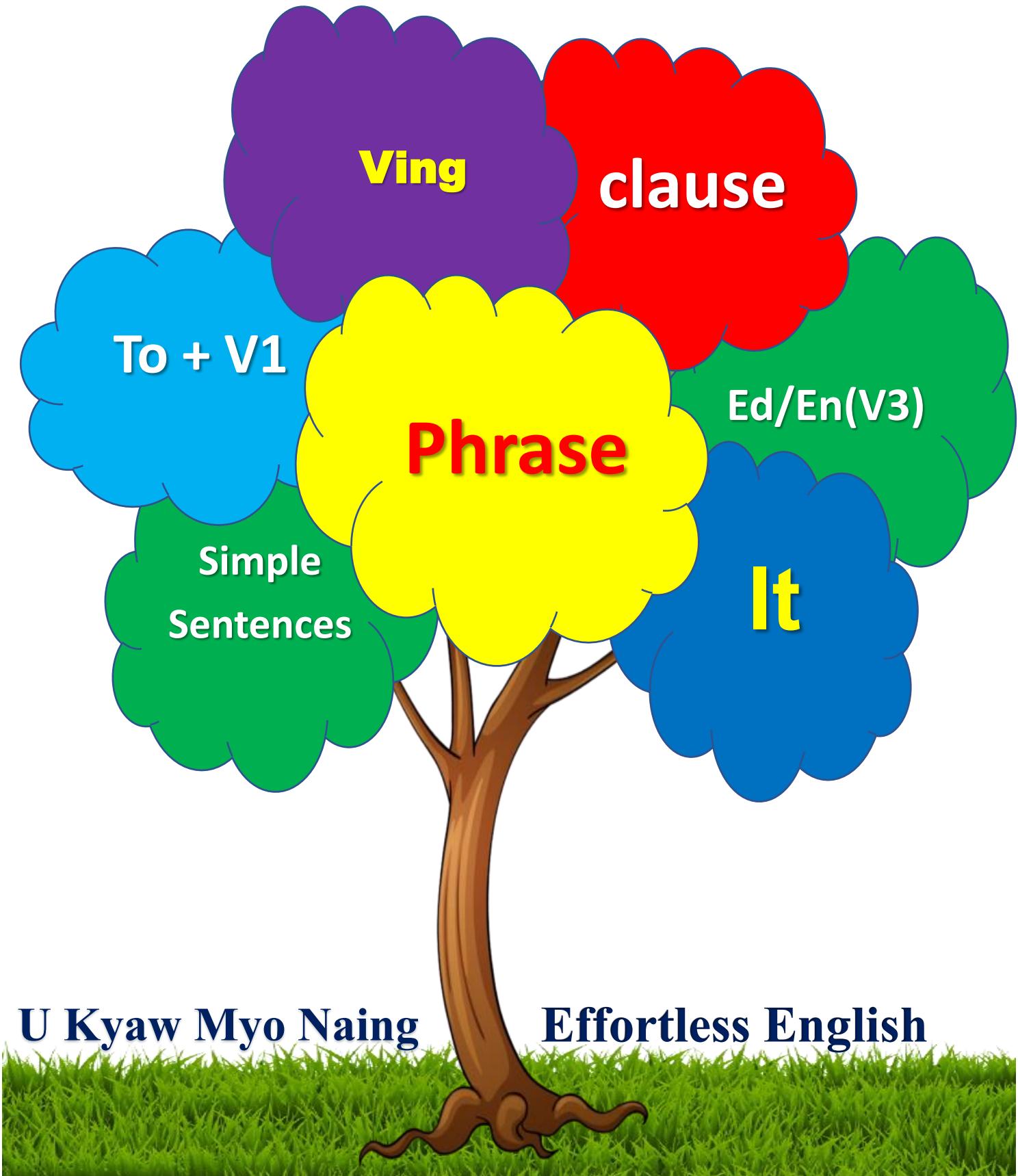


# Reading with COC Formula



U Kyaw Myo Naing

Effortless English

## Condense Of Composition

(1) S + V (5)

N- Adj      N-      N-  
(5) S + V + O + C  
-Adj

(2) Phrase

N / Adj / Adv

D , M , P , T , R or P  
C , C , C , Q

(3) Clause

(4) Ving

On+Ving=When  
In+Ving=While

\* S + find + it + hard + to + V1.....  
make                          easy

(5) Ed/En (V3)

\* Who is it ?

(6) To + V1

(7) It

T  
W  
D  
S

It  
that  
who  
where  
when

Activate W  
Go to Settings

## **The Old Cat**

An old woman had a cat. The cat was very old; she could not run quickly, and she could not bite, because she was so old. One day the old cat saw a mouse, she jumped and caught the mouse, she jumped and caught the mouse. But she could not bite it; so the mouse got out of her mouth and ran away, because the cat could not bite it. Then the old woman became very angry because the cat had not killed the mouse. She began to hit the cat. The cat said, `` Do not hit your old servant. I have worked for you for many years, and I would work for you still, but I am too old. Do not be unkind to the old, but remember what good work the old did when they were young.

## **The City Mouse and The Country Mouse**

Once there were two mice. They were friends. One mouse lived in the country and the other mouse lived in the city. After many years the country mouse saw the city mouse, he said, `` Do come and see me at my house in the country. '' So the city mouse went. The country mouse took him to his house in a field. He gave him the nicest food that he could find. The city mouse said, `` This food is not good, and your house is not good. Why do you live in a hole in the field? You should come and live in the city. You would live in a nice house made of stone. You would have nice food to eat. You must come and see me at my house in the city. ''

The country mouse went to the house of the city mouse. It was a very good house. Nice food was set ready for them to eat. But just as they began to eat, they heard a great noise. The city mouse cried. `` Run! Run! The cat is coming!'' They ran away quickly and hid.

After some time, they came out. When they came out, the country mouse said, `` I do not like living in the city. I like living in my hole in the field. For it is nicer to poor and happy, than to be rich and afraid.

### **The Bear and The Two Friends**

Once two friends were walking through the forest. They knew that anything dangerous can happen to them *at any time* in the forest. So, they promised each other that they would remain united in any case of danger

Suddenly, they saw a large bear approaching them. One of the friends *at once* climbed a nearby tree. But the other one did not know how to climb. So being led by his common sense, he lay down on the ground breathless, pretending to be a dead man.

The bear came near the man lying on the ground. It smelt in his ears, and slowly left the place. Because the bears do not touch the dead creatures. Now the friend on the tree came down and

asked his friend on the ground, `` Friend, what did the bear tell you into your ears?'' The other friend replied, `` The bear advised me not to believe a false friend.''

Moral: *True friends is the one who always supports and stands by you in any situation.*

## **Think Before You Judge**

A doctor entered the hospital in a hurry after being called in for an urgent surgery. He answered the call asap, changed his clothes and went directly to the surgery block. He found the boy's father pacing in the hall waiting for the doctor.

On seeing him, the father yelled, `` Why did you take all this time to come? Don't you know that my son's life is in danger? Don't you have any sense of responsibility?''

The doctor smiled and said, `` I am sorry. I wasn't in the hospital and I came as fast as I could after receiving the call, and now I wish you'd calm down so that I can do my work.''

`` Calm down?! What if your son was in this room right now, would you calm down? If your own son dies while waiting for doctor than what will do you do?'' said the father angrily. The doctor smiled again and replied, `` We will do our best by god's grace and you should also pray for your son's healthy life. Giving

advices when we're not concerned is so easy," murmured the father.

The surgery took some hours after which the doctor went out happy, `` Thank goodness! Your son is saved!'' And without waiting for the father's reply, he carried on his way running by saying, `` If you have any questions, ask the nurse.''

`` Why is he so arrogant? He couldn't wait some minutes so that I ask about my son's state," commented the father when seeing the nurse minutes after the doctor left. The nurse answered, tears coming down her face, `` His son died yesterday in a road accident, he was at the burial when we called him for your son's surgery. And now that he saved your son's life, he left running to finish his son's burial.

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## My Family

I am Mike. I am seven years old. I study in standard six in a convent school. My father is Mr. Mikel. He is a doctor. He is a heart specialist. My mother Mrs. Catherine. She is a clerk in a bank. My younger brother is John. He *reads* in standard four. My grandmother is very old and has white hair. She leaves her bed early in the morning. After taking her bath, she goes to the nearby tea-shop to enjoy the tea. She is *too active for her age*.

My grandfather is also old, but he is very energetic. He is a social worker. He always tries to solve problems of the

neighborhood. Sometimes, he helps the poor people. My uncle is Mr. William. He works in the post office. He loves me very much. My aunt is Mrs. Jane. She is a very nice lady. She is a teacher in Higher Secondary School. She always tells me stories at night. She calls me her pretty doll. We all live happily together in our house where it is the only one of our *spiritual home*. Our family is the happiest one in the world.

## **My Father**

My father is my *role model*. He is *a man of many virtues*. Born of poor, uneducated parents in the countryside, he worked hard to rise in life. During the day time, he helped grandpa at his family shop. He attended evening classes to complete his school education. He pursued his degree by correspondence.

What surprises me is that father had no time for his education. Even then he completed his academic pursuit up to M.A level. He passed all his examinations *in the first division*. He scored the first position in the university in M.A (English). Now he is a lecturer in a university.

I never see my father wasting away his time. For him, ‘resting is rusting’. He loves everyone in the family. He is greatly dedicated to all of us. He is fond gardening and has grown a beautiful garden in the house compound. He is *a regular reader*

*of great writers.* He even writes short stories and many of which are published.

Father is *in constant touch with* my school principal and teachers in my school. He asks from them about my progress in the class. He is popular with the neighbors. He is always ready to help anyone in difficulty. I feel proud of my father.

## **My Mother**

The dearest person for me in the world is my mother. She serves me like a nurse, loves me like an angel and cares for me as the mother cow does its calf. She is, actually, *the soul of the house*. My mother's name is Mrs. Jane. She is a qualified doctor and works in a local hospital. She takes care of her patients with all sincerity and dedication. They speak very high of her.

When she is not in hospital, my mother is busy at home. She prepares our breakfast in the morning, packs lunch for everyone and is ready with delicious dishes for all of us in dinner. She is immensely popular in the neighborhood. She is the President of the Presidents' Welfare Association. I am lucky that I have got a very *good-hearted, well-spoken* and *affectionate* mother. I am really proud of her. I always pray for her *well-being* and wish that she remains forever with me in my life.

## The Were-Tigress

Long, long ago there was a young girl called Ezo living in a Palaung village. Besides being pretty, Ezo was also a good talker. But being an orphan, she had to live alone.

However, though Ezo was pretty, no young man took the slightest notice of her. For the whole village knew that everyone skilled on witch-craft, and knew how to turn themselves into were-tigers. For this reason, then, the villagers were afraid of Ezo and avoided her.

One day, a young man called Ahein came to the village. He worked as a labourer in the house of a rich man called Tapaulein and did whatever he was bidden to do in that house.

The villagers took no notice of Ahein seeing that he was but a labourer in another man's house, and they did not trouble to explain anything to him.

One day, Ahein met Ezo and he fell in love with her as soon as he set eyes on her. He went to visit her in her house off and on. Only then did the rich man Tapaulein tell Ahein all about Ezo's family history. He tried to stop the young man from visiting her house. But all in vain, for Ahein went on visiting her as usual, refusing to believe what he had not seen with his own eyes. When Ahein would not listen, his rich employer threw him out of the house.

Ahein simply moved into Ezo's house and married her. Within three or four years they had a son and a daughter.

One day, Ahein told his dear wife everything that he had heard about her. Now his pretty Ezo knew how to get round dear husband the it was just jealous people spreading rumours about her. Ahein believed the words of his pretty wife. All was well until their elder child, a son was eighth years old and their daughter was five.

Early every morning Ahein used to go to the farm and only got back home when it was dark at night. So it was that he did not discover the truth about his wife who was left behind at home. But the children gradually got to know about their mother Ezo. One day, when Ahein got back home from the farm, the elder son brought a leg and the head of a chicken to show his father.

“Father,” he said, “when you were not here mother turned herself into a big bird and as she flew, swooped down and snatched up a chicken. Then she ate it. When I asked for some because I was hungry, she gave me this leg and the head of the chicken.”

Ahein pondered for a while, “Don’t say anything and don’t do anything,” he advised his son.

Then he pretended to throw away the leg and head of the chicken, but he did them away. On the next day, Ahein left going to the farm as before. When it was time for Ezo and the children to fetch water, he crept back quietly into the house and hid on the rack above the fire for smoking meat.

After coming back from fetching water, Ezo fed the children. Then, secure *in the knowledge* that Ahein had gone to the farm as usual, she turned herself into a big bird and flew away from the

house. Meanwhile, Ahein, who had hidden himself above the fire, and had seen what his wife was doing, was really horrified.

Getting down from his hiding place he asked the children, “Does the mother of my son and daughter do this sort of thing every day?”

“In the day time, mother turns herself into a big bird like this and flies away. For a long time, on the nights when father was away, she would turn herself into a tiger and would leave the house. We boiled the remains of her food and we kept the things which she brought home. Come and see, father.”

Ahein went with the children to look at what they had to show him. Besides chicken-leg bones, he also found the bones from dog’s legs. He also saw in the same place rings, bracelets and anklets such as are worn by children. Ahein’s heart was filled with sadness. Now, he thought, she only eats chickens, dogs and children. Later, when she’s older, she will be eating cows and buffaloes from the village. In the end, she will be devouring me and the children and the other villagers.

After much thought, he decided that the lives of his family and the villagers must come first. Something must be done even if it was at the cost of Ezo’s life.

“When your mother comes home,” he said to the children to calm them, “don’t tell her that father is at home. Just say I’ve gone to the farm.

Then he left the house. Ezo, who had turned herself into a big bird, glided down from high up in the sky and flew towards

the front of the house. Once hear it, she swooped down swiftly and as soon as her feet touched the ground, she became a human being again.

When she got home, Ezo did all the household chores. Nothing was left cooking and fed the children, she said to them coaxingly, “Don’t ever tell your father about your mother, children. Later, when you grow older, I will teach you my art. Don’t you want to go up and up and fly high in the sky.

With such talk she tried to keep them happy.

When the sun went down and night fell, Ahein returned home with a happy smile on his face. First, he told Ezo about the farm work just as he usually did. Then he told her he had to go and help search for a cow his friend had lost. So he would not be back that night.

When Ezo heard this, she was secretly delighted. For to have him away for the night was just what she wanted.

“Of course,” she said, “it is your duty to help your friend. You must look for the cow until you find it.”

Ahein took up the sword he usually carried with him and sharpened it on a grinding stone.

“You won’t be going alone,” said Ezo, “when you go to look for the cow, so why are you grinding the sword to make it so sharp?”

Ahein pretended not to hear her question went on grinding the sword. When he thought it was sharp enough, he called Ezo and asked her for a strand of her hair which he put on the edge of

his sword. Nodding his head with satisfaction, he told her that everything would be all right.

Then Ahein said goodbye to Ezo and after lighting a torch, left the house.

Ezo followed him with her eyes as she stood in the doorway until he was out of sight, pretending to be worried about her husband going on a long journey. But she came back indoors with a satisfied smile on her face when the light of his torch had finally disappeared from sight. Then Ezo calmed the children and persuaded them to sleep. In case she should be back late, she took off her blouse and longyi laying them in a heap on the ground and rolled about. Suddenly, she turned into a tiger and was a human being no more.

Meanwhile, Ahein had returned home again and was waiting outside the door gripping his sword tightly with both hands. He kept his eyes fixed on the place where he thought she would come out.

Suspecting nothing Ezo poked her head out of the house and then came out. Ahein had been waiting to slash the tiger with his sword. Now he struck the animal and cut it in two. Thus, the were-tigress met her end.

## **Our House**

We live in a very big and beautiful house. It is *in the heart of* the city. The shops and markets are *at a stone's throw away distance*. There are two lawns on both sides of the main gate of the house. With velvety, green grass and different varieties of flowers, they are really soothing and colorful to behold. My father has a gardener to look after the lawns. The porch is decorated with potted plants.

Our house is a double-storeyed building. My grandparents and my uncle live on the ground floor. On the ground floor, we have the drawing room, the dining room, two bedrooms and kitchen. We live on the first floor. The first floor consists of two bedrooms, the store and the study room. My sister and I study in it. There is a terrace on the first floor. In winter, we sit there and enjoy the warmth of the sun. My parents have decorated our house with beautiful paintings and pictures. There are big windows in each room to let the fresh air in. All the floors have marble tiles.

We always keep our house neat and clean. I love my house very much. It is my only *paradise on earth*.

## **My School**

I study at Abraham Lincoln Private School in my town. It is very big and spacious. It has a two-storeyed, red brick building. The ground floor has *the primary wing* and the first floor is used for the junior classes. The building has about 40 classrooms. All of them are *spacious and well-ventilated*. There is a big library, a science laboratory, and two office rooms. We have a big playground, where students play different games. There is a small garden *filled with* full of beautiful and colorful flowers and has green grass. The gardener looks after them. He lives in the school. At night he guards the school.

We have 50 teachers *who are guided* by the principal. All the teachers are highly *educated and well-trained*. Our principal is an M.A, M.Ed. She is a very *strict and disciplined* lady and believes in '*simple living and high thinking*'. The principal also lays great emphasis on games. This is the reason why our students win many trophies in *inter-school tournaments* each year. There are about a thousand students studying in my school. They do well in examinations. The teachers and students of my school are *disciplined and well-mannered*.

My school is one of the *leading, reputed* school in the district and province. I love my school very much. I am really proud of my school, teachers and *being a student* in this school.

## The Rightful Owner

A long time ago, a man left his own village and went to another village in the hope of making money there, but toil as he might he could not save anything. So, he returned home penniless. On his way back to his own village, he was resting under a banyan tree when he saw a pot of silver among the roots of the tree. He was delighted, for in spite of three years' hard work which had brought him nothing, it seemed as if now at last his luck had turned with the discovery of this pot of silver.

He took the pot out from among the roots of the banyan tree. Just as he was doing this, he heard a voice from high up in the tree saying. “Don’t take that pot of silver. It is not meant for you, it’s meant for Ngato.

But the old man did not pay any attention to the voice from up the banyan tree. He took out the pot of silver and started for home with the pot on his shoulder. When darkness fell, he had covered about half the journey home.

He went to a certain house in a nearby village and asked if he might stay the night.

“I am a traveler who has come from very far away,” he explained. “Please allow me to put up at your house for the night.”

The good-natured house owner let the old man stay. Now the old man left uneasy about his precious pot of silver, so he pretended to his host that it was only a pot of oil.

“I will keep my pot of oil here,” said the old man. “If cats and mice should come, please frighten them away.”

Being exhausted after his long journey, the old man fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow and nothing woke him. After midnight, house owner's wife woke her husband up and told him that she was about to give birth. Then, except for the guest, the whole hose woke up and made arrangements for the confinement. In due course, she gave birth to a son. As the newborn child did not have any fingers, its grandmother said,

"It's a Ngato. Just call him Ngato so that he will be healthy." Thus, she gave the baby its name.

As oil was needed in the delivery room, the baby's grandmother told her son: "The pot in the basket under the house is full of oil, but it is difficult to get at it at night. Take a little of the old man's oil for us to use now and we can fill his pot up again in the morning."

When the house owner opened the old man's pot to get oil, he found that it was full of silver. He took all the old man's silver, then put oil from the pot under the house into the old man's pot.

In the morning, when the old man was preparing to continue his journey, he took a casual look inside his pot. He was astonished not to find any sign of the silver. The pot was full of oil. How was he to tell his host when he had said from the beginning that the pot was full of oil? Gloomily, he took his pot of oil and left the house.

When he got home, he put the pot of oil aside in one corner with a heavy heart and sat looking miserable. His wife came back from the farm late that night. She did not ask how he had been doing but as soon as she came indoors, she said in a rush, "I have

something important to tell you. When the banyan tree on the farm fell down, a pot of silver came out of it. As I could not carry the pot by myself, I left it. Please, come straight away and bring it in for me.”

When the old man caught the words “pot of silver,” he said gloomily, “Enough, my wife, don’t say any more about the pot of silver. If it is my rightful property, it will come to my house.”

Now there was a thief hiding under the house waiting for an opportunity to rob them. When he heard what the old couple were saying, it seemed like a stroke of good luck for him, so he went to the old woman’s farm to get a pot of silver. He found a big pot near the fallen banyan tree, just as the old woman had said. He opened the pot carefully and looked inside. He found some very poisonous snakes inside, but no silver. The couple know that I was hiding under their house, he thought to himself. They are plotting my death. They said it was full of silver not snakes as a cunning way of luring me to the pot. Well, I will take my revenge on them, he thought. The thief then covered the pot full of snake and closed it securely before bringing it back to the old man’s house. Then he left it at the old people’s door and went away.

His idea was that when morning came, either the old man or the old woman would open the door to come out. When they saw the pot, they would open it to look inside and then one of the snakes from inside the pot would certainly bite and kill them.

When morning came, the old woman opened the door and came out to do her work. Then to her surprise she found the pot which she had seen inside the hole in the banyan tree the previous

day now standing by the door. She went into the house, woke up the old man and told him joyfully that the pot she had seen the previous day had come to their house.

“Well,” he said, “if it is my rightful property it must come to my house.” He got up, opened the pot and had a look inside. There was no sign of the snakes the thief had seen. The pot was full of silver.

## **My Favorite Teacher / Our Principal**

I am a student of Modern Public School. I study in standard eight. Mrs. Anna is the principal of my school. She is an M.A., B.Ed. and has all the good qualities of an *ideal teacher*. She is also an efficient administrator. She is *kind, considerate, respectful* and *hard-working*. This is why she is my most favorite teacher. She is *tall and thin*. Mrs. Anna is very *active and painstaking*. She supervises all the important jobs in the school. Some of the jobs she does herself. She teaches us English. She makes it easy for us to understand a foreign language. Her method of teaching is *so nice that* students always praise her.

My principal never *goes on leave* and is *punctual* in her duties. She comes to school at *the right time* and guides the teachers. She is fully devoted in school functions. She visits each class daily and helps teachers and students in their problems. She addresses the morning assembly daily. Every day brings a moral

for us from her. She helps *poor and weak* students by giving extra coaching to them.

Mrs. Anna is a *rare example of simple living and high thinking*. She wears *sober, ordinary* teacher uniform and is always willing to help teachers and students. The whole day she is busy like a bee in her work. She always listens to complaints patiently in her office. All of us love and respect her a lot.

## **My Best Friend / Our Next-Door Neighbor**

I am Saw Mikel and my best friends is Kyi Thein. He is not only my classmate but is my next-door neighbor as well. There are various kind of friends. I know two: *long-suffering friend and fair-weather friend*. My friend, Kyi Thein is a long-suffering friend for me. We are, therefore, in each other's company in and outside the school. Our parents are also friends.

Kyi Thein is a very *intelligent, brilliant and simple* boy. He works hard and always *comes first in the class*. He is the monitor of our class. He is always there, whenever I am in any difficulty.

Kyi Thein is very handsome. His parents lovingly call him their handsome boy. He is his *parents' pet*. He is *well-mannered*. He always respects his elders and teachers. They all love him and are *proud of* him. We take our lunch together. We do our homework together. She helps me in my studies. She is good *not only* in studies *but also* in games and sports. His favourite game

is badminton. He has won a trophy in inter-school competition. We spend our evenings *playing* together. Sometimes, we quarrel but we soon *make up*. My parents also praise my friend for his handsomeness, intelligence and good manners.

I am really proud of my *long-suffering friend*, Kyi Thein. I hope we will *be friend forever*.

## **My Hobby**

A hobby is something that we do for pleasure in our free time. It is different from a profession. While a profession is followed to make money, a hobby is an activity for leisure and earns us satisfaction. Different people have different hobbies. They include activities like reading, writing, singing, dancing, etc. We can develop some of these activities into our hobbies. A hobby lifts our spirits high when we *lose heart*. There are people who, at one time or the other, followed hobbies as professions and earned for themselves name as well as fame.

My hobby is gardening and I have grown a beautiful garden in my house. It is divided into two parts, one of which is for flowers and herbal plants of different varieties. I *look after* my plants and water them daily. I keep the spot *neat and clean*. Colours and fragrance of flowers are *a source of pleasure* for me.

Sometimes, I invite my friends to visit my garden. They also enjoy the beauty and smell of flowers and sit *relaxed*. In *the*

*second half* of my garden, I grow vegetables. I grow tomatoes and some seasonal vegetables in it. Daily I pluck two or three tomatoes and *eat them raw*. They taste very refreshing and tasty. My garden is very useful to me. It keeps me busy and saves me *from useless gossips*. I am really proud of my beautiful garden.

## **My Home Town/ The City I like Most**

*I hail from* a place which most people desire to visit. Situated on the bank of the giant river called the Ayeyarwady, it can be reached in less than half-an-hour by car from Mandalay, located *in the heart of* Myanmar. In the past it used to be the *commercial city* of Myanmar and had remained *a famous cultural center* of quite a long time.

My home town is famous *all over the world*. It is visited by *a large number of* tourists for its monuments, Sagaing hill and pagodas, which some were gilded and whitewashed across the town. The most famous of them all is the Kaunghmudaw Pagoda that it is a large Buddhist pagoda on the northwestern outskirts of Sagaing in central Myanmar. It is an important *pilgrimage and tourist destination* in the Sagaing area.

I think you have already known the name of my city. Well, it is Sagaing, also a busy trade center and the home of me. I always boast to my friends that I come from this city.

## A Brief History of Yangon

The town which is known as Yangon today is said to have been founded over 2,600 years ago (BC 588). Mon chronicles of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century refer to it as Dagon or Lagun, and it was Dagon until King Alaungpaya renamed it Yangon (anglicized as Rangoon) in 1755. According to Mon chronicles, King Anawrahta of Bagan came to Dagon to extend his authority over Lower Myanmar in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. King Anawrahta conquered Thaton, the capital of the Mon Kingdom, which is only about 140 miles east of Dagon. So it is possible that he visited Dagon about this time. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was only with the fall of the Bagan dynasty that Dagon began to emerge. But Dagon was not yet a port and it was to the Mon ports of Pathein, Thanlyin, Motetama and Bago that the earliest recorded visitors came. Dagon was still insignificant until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. And it was not a port until the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was only in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century that Dagon, gradually achieved enough significance to gain the mention of foreign travellers.

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the change in the course of the Bago River, which no longer flowed directly into the Gulf of Motetama, Thanlyin replaced Bago as the main Mon port. Dagon was still a small stockade town by the river. However, it was said that during the festivals, the town was too crowded to travel by land or by boat. In fact, the main religious festivals were accompanied by fairs, which were by this time sufficiently attractive to people from foreign countries, making Dagon market for overseas trade.

In May 1755, King Alaungpaya conquered Lower Myanmar, including Dagon. This marked an important stage in the history of Yangon for it led to the growth of the modern city. He wanted to make a fresh start and have a new port. As a result, Dagon became an obvious choice for a new port as it had already been a place of some commercial importance because of the fairs that accompanied the main religious festivals at the Shwedagon. Dagon became the lead port in Myanmar with its new name, Yangon.

## **Orchid**

The orchid is a kind of flower liked by many people. Nevertheless, not many people know how this flower originally came to exist. The following is the story about the orchid's origin used to be told by the Chin Pon people.

Long ago, there lived in Chin village two couples, Pi Lun and Pu Son Su, and also Pi Laing and Pu Ngiu Mu. Far from being strangers to each other, Pi Lun and Pi Laing were sisters born from the same womb. They all lived together in the same house both because of their being related and also because there were so few people in those days.

One day, Pu Son Su and Pu Ngiu Mu asked their wives to weave them a longyi each. Their wives said that in order to do this they would need porcupine quills and their husbands should

go and look for a porcupine. The two men called their hunting dogs which they would need on the trip and set out for the forest. The two of them traveled far and wide in their efforts to find a porcupine, but without success. They simply got tired out and wasted their time all for nothing. So, they laid a chicken egg on a slab of stone and offered it to the Nat. As they were offering it, they prayed that they would get a porcupine. When they had done this, they continued their search until they found the animal. Now that they had found it, they returned home and full of joy presented it to their wives.

“Now, please weave our longyis,” they said.

A week after the longyis had been woven, Pi Lun and Pi Laing saw a very beautiful young girl coming towards them. On her head the sisters were amazed to see a lovely sweet-smelling flower of a kind they had never seen in their lives before.

So, Pi Lun said to the young girl, “We would like to know our little sister’s name, please tell us. And what is the lovely sweet-smelling flower you have in your hair?”

“My name is Pi San Hmun, and the flower I am wearing in my hair is the ‘tree-fork flower,’ ” the young girl answered sweetly. She explained that the so-called ‘tree-fork flower’ got its name from the fact that it was to be found growing in the forks of trees.

The two sisters, Pi Lun and Pi Laing, told their husbands the name of the young girl and the name of the flower. Then the two husbands curious to know how the ‘tree-fork flower’ came into being, went out into the forest to find out. And indeed, when the

two men reached the forest and tried to find out what they wanted to know, they learnt about the origin of the flower.

Now earlier they had gone into the forest to look for a porcupine so that they might each get a new longy. When they did not get the porcupine quills, they had laid a chicken egg on a slab of stone and had offered it to the Nat. They discovered that this egg which they had offered to the Nat, had been carried off by a crow. But the egg had got broken and had dripped here and there in the forks of trees. In the places where the egg had dripped down, it was said, plants with little flowers had sprung up. This was what they learnt about the origin of the flower.

Since that time, the Chin Pon people have called the orchid (called ‘tree-fork flower’ in Burmese) by the name *ar ek par*.

In the Chin hills, there are orchids of many shapes, white, blue, red and yellow.

## My Country

My great country is a land of *perennial* rivers, high mountains, lakes and forests. It is *vast and beautiful*. It lies in the Asia continent. It is one of the most beautiful country in the world. It extends from Tanintharyi Division in the south to Putao, the northernmost town of Kachin State, Myanmar. It is the home of the colourful people. *Populationwise*, Myanmar has 54 million of people.

Myanmar has *rich, fertile plains, snow-covered mountains, hot and dry flat lands*. Mighty perennial rivers like the Ayeyarwady, the Thanlwin, the Chindwin and the Sittaung flow through Myanmar. It also has a *vast coastline*. It is known for its *golden and gilded pagodas* and relics. It is the home of the ancient city of Bagan that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Mandalay Region of upper Myanmar.

It is a land of Theravada Buddhism and great people. It is the motherland of the venerable Mogok sayadaw, Mahasi Sayadaw, Ledi Sayadaw, Mingun Sayadaw, Sunlun Sayadaw, Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw and Maha Godhi Myaing Sayadaw. Great people like the great king of Anawrahta, Kyansittha, Bayinnaung, Alaungpaya, General Aung San and U Thant were born in Myanmar.

It is a land *filled* with diversity. Many languages are spoken in my country. All religions co-exist in our society. People are bound by love for their motherland. Myanmar festivals are famous for their joy and colourfulness.

I am proud of being a Myanmar. I shall live and die *for the sake of* my country.

## My Favourite Game

Cricket is my favourite game and CZY is my ideal star. Though I like to play badminton, table tennis, and volleyball too, but they are all *secondary* for me.

Cricket started first in England. Later this game spread to many other countries of the world, including India, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Kenya and Bangladesh.

In a cricket team, there are eleven players. The team has a captain and a vice-captain. There are two kinds of cricket matches-a test match and a one-day match. In a one-day, each team plays fifty overs. Each over has six balls and a bowler can bowl a maximum of ten overs. The captain, who wins the toss, decides whether his team will bowl first or bat. Test matches are played for five days. In a test match, both teams have to play two innings to get the result. But five days are not enough to play two innings. So, most of the test matches end in a draw.

Last Sunday, our school cricket team played a one-day match against the team of Modern School. I was a member of my school team. Our captain, Mr. Mike, won the toss and decided to bat first. We made a big score of 200 runs. The team of Modern School was all out at the score of 176 runs. We won the match by 24 runs. Our captain, who is the best bowler of our team, bowled out five players and was declared the Man of the Match.

The game of cricket is really *exciting and fascinating*. It keeps the spectators *spell-bound*. Those who cannot make it to the stadium enjoy the game on their TV sets. I wish I play in an international match of cricket from India one day.

## My Favourite Book

We know that food is important for a healthy body. Similarly, books are important for a healthy mind. Books are our true friends. They make us know the world around us. Through books we are able to study the thoughts of different people. They make us forget the worries of life.

Though I have read many books written by different authors, but ‘My Experiments with Truth’ is my favourite book. It was written by Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. I like the book because of many reasons. First of all, it tells us about the life of the great man, who got us freedom from the British. It has been written in a simple, easy and racy style to understand. The language is not *bombastic*. It is very interesting and keeps a reader spell-bound *from the beginning to the end*.

‘My experiments with Truth,’ is full of interesting incidents and moral lessons. It appears Bapu did not hide anything in his *autobiography*. His description of how he felt guilty after smoking in his childhood is quite *straightforward*. He tells how the stories of King Harish Chandra and Shravan Kumar influenced him in life. It is *eye-opening* to read how this great man with *frail body* fought against *untouchability* and *racial discrimination*. ‘My Experiments with Truth’ is a great book, indeed!

## The Saddest Day of My Life

*Sorrow and happiness are the two sides of a coin.* They both are equally important in one's life. As one always remembers the happiest day of one's life, in the same way no man can ever forget the saddest day of his life.

As for me, I shall never forget the day of last year's Thingyan. It is a festival of waters. In our country, it is celebrated with great joy. Till last year, Thingyan used to be my favourite festival.

But on last Thingyan, my views were changed, when some of my friends came to my house and applied 'Thanaka' and throw some water at each other. We were busy in dancing and singing. Suddenly, we heard the cry of a girl. I looked around and saw my *long-suffering friend*, Phyu Sin, crying. Someone had applied toxic 'Thanaka Paste' on her face and particles of it had entered her eyes. She was unable to open them and tears were continuously running down her cheeks. We took her to the dispensary in our factory campus. The doctor cleaned and put eyedrops in her eyes.

Till evening, her eyes were swollen. She was suffering from *severe pain*. Then we took her to an eye specialist. He tested her eyes and informed that there was an infection in her eyes and an urgent surgery had to be done. Her eyes were operated upon. Phyu Sin took more than two months to heal. Since then, I have been terribly afraid of different types of cheap Thanaka, available in the market. I made up my mind that I would never play Thingyan with toxic Thanaka.

## A Myanmar Farmer

Most Myanmar people live in villages. They are farmers. They grow food for us. They grow paddy, pulses, fruits and vegetables. *Actually speaking*, they are the backbone of Myanmar economy.

But the life of a Myanmar farmer is very difficult. Even after working like a slave the whole day, he does not get the reward he deserves. He gets up early in the morning and goes to his fields. He works there till evening. He ploughs his fields, sows seeds, waters plants and harvests crops. He *enjoys* no holidays. Quite often, the poor fellow has no time for food, or rest. Even visiting a doctor in time of an ailment is a luxury for him.

He works hard but lives in a mud house. He feeds others but his own family remains hungry. He eats simple food. He wears simple clothes. The farmer rears cattle such as cows, buffaloes and oxen. These cattle are his valuable property. He gets milk from cows and buffaloes. But he uses only a little quantity of it. A Myanmar farmer *lives hand to mouth*. He hardly saves money to educate his children. Yet he is *satisfied and contented with his life*.

A rare example of an ascetic, indeed! The farmer is the backbone of our society. His importance in the economy of a country cannot be overlooked. The government should encourage him to use modern machines for farming and good quality of fertilizers. For this, he needs generous financial help. It is our sacred duty to prevent farmers from committing suicides.

## **The Man who looked for the Lord of Death**

Long, long ago, in a certain country there was a man living in such depths of poverty that he wanted to leave this world. Longing to die, he began to search for the Lord of Death. He would ask any one he met if they knew where the Lord of Death was. The people he asked, taking him to be a madman would walk away without giving any reply. When they walked away like this, or worse still, avoided him completely, he thought it meant that they did not look on him as a fellow human being and despised him because of his poverty. The result was that he no longer wanted to live with his fellowmen. Overwhelmed with misery, he left the village. Then he went from place to place, always avoiding the hunts of men, till finally he came to the seashore. Thinking the Lord of Death might be there, he sought him along the shore.

One day, he met an old man walking towards him supporting himself with a staff.

“Where are you going, young man?” the old man asked as he came up to him.

“I’m so miserably poor,” the unhappy young man replied, “that I no longer want to live in this world and I am looking for the Lord of Death.

On hearing this, the old man laughed heartily and said, “Young man, you really are out of your mind!

The old man's words discouraged the young man who was turning away when the old man reached out and caught hold of his hand.

"Wait!" said he. "You aren't going away, are you? I am the Lord of Death you wanted to meet."

"In that case, why are you looking at me like that, Lord of Death? Please take my life now. I have been waiting to die my life now. I have been waiting to die for such a long time."

"Young man," said the Lord of Death laughing, "though you may want hour has not yet come. When the time comes, you will surely die even if it is against your will. You will not escape however hard you try to hide yourself."

"Do please tell me when the day of my death will be."

"On the seventh day after leaving this place, you will become a rich man. You will die on the day it is ten years since you become rich. Here's a bow and ten arrows. Use them as you like."

With these words the Lord of Death disappeared.

The young man took the bow and arrows and went away. On the way he started to feel very hungry as he had had no food for two days. Looking round, he saw a bird and shot it with his bow and arrow. When he found that the bird for a good plot of land. Then, shooting an arrow from his bow, he commanded a house full of gold and silver to appear immediately. The house he wished for appeared at once and he became a rich man.

Time flew but he did not notice as he was enjoying himself living in his fine house complete with servants and every kind of luxury. Amidst all this, the words of the old man were forgotten.

But one day, when nine years and nine months had passed in this way, he dreamt in his sleep about his own past from the day before he became a rich man. He woke up really *frightened*. Only now he remembered what the Lord of Death had told him. “You cannot die yet even though you may want to die. After leaving this place you will become a rich man and on the day you have been a rich man for ten years, you will die.”

When he thought over the time he had spent enjoying the pleasures of wealth, left till the ten years were up. He began to fear that he would die at the end of those three months.

Next morning, he called his servants and told them to make a watertight box. They were to put in it enough food which would not go bad to last for three months and to take the box to the seashore.

On reaching the seashore, he gave his servants the same instructions again and again: “When I get inside, close and seal the box to make it watertight and let it down into the deep sea until it reaches the bottom. Then tie a really long, strong rope to the cox. In three months counting from today, you must drag it back up into the shore.” So saying, he got into the vox.

His servants closed it and tied a long rope to it as he had instructed. This done, they dropped the box into the sea where it was really deep. The free end of the rope they tied to a tree at the edge of the seashore.

When the Lord of Death looked at the list of people from this world who were to die, he found that the rich young man's turn had come. "Oho," said he, "the rich young man's turn has come. Now we will meet again." With that he went to the world of men to look for the rich young man.

The Lord of Death looked for the rich young man in house after house in one big town after another, but failed to find him. Then he searched house after house in one small town after another. Again, he did not find him. The Lord of Death began to *lose heart*, but when he looked again at the list of people who were to die, he found that the rich young man was definitely on the list. So he searched everywhere in house after house, in village after village. But without success. Now the Lord of Death hardly knew what to do, but still he went on looking. He went over the hills and through the forest till he was weary.

The day on which the young man was to die came nearer and nearer till there were only two days left for him to live. Still the Lord of Death would not give up. He did his best to find the young man but could not. Finally, it looked as if the Lord of Death would have to stop searching. He walked along with weary feet until he reached a certain beach by the sea. He walked along the beach thinking he would rest for a while and wash his tired limbs. Then suddenly he tripped on a rope and fell down. The Lord of Death was very angry. He began to pull up the rope, but it took him a long time as the rope was so long. In the end, however, a big box appeared at the end of the rope. The Lord of Death stared at the strange box in surprise. When he opened it, he found the rich young man inside.

“Young man,” he exclaimed angrily, “do you think you can escape by hiding like this? I am worn out looking for you. Come out of that box this minute!”

Frightened out of his wits, the rich young man got out of the box. He admitted that he had tried to escape and apologized to the Lord of Death.

“Lord of Death,” he begged him, “please spare my life. In return I will give you half of my wealth.

“Don’t I tell you once before,” replied the Lord of Death, “that no one can die before his appointed day, no matter how much he may want to die. On the other hand, when his day comes, there can be no delay. It is all the effect of your Karma, of what you did in the past.”

Turning a deaf ear to the pleas of the rich young man, the Lord of Death, who granted extra time on earth to no man, did not spare the rich young man who long before had wanted to die at once, but who did not want to die when his time had come.

## The Postman

The postman needs no introduction to any of us. We meet him every day, *moving* from door-to-door in the locality. He is an important public servant. He wears a postman uniform and carries a leather bag on his shoulders. He pedals up and down the streets on his bicycle. He is always welcome because he

brings letters, money-orders, parcels and postcards. He keeps all these items in his bag, which he carries with him.

We wait for the postman eagerly every day. Sometimes, he brings letters, containing bad news. In that case, it is not wise to blame him.

A postman has to work very hard to perform his duty sincerely. *No matter what* the weather is, he does his duty every day. Sometimes, it may be *bitterly cold, extremely hot or wet*, but he delivers letters without fail. Every morning, he goes to the post office at his duty time and sorts out letters. Then he takes these letters to their destination. He enjoys few or no holidays. His pay is little, but he is satisfied with what he gets and leads a contented life.

The postman also delivers letters in villages where there are muddy roads. Sometimes he reads out letters to those who are *illiterate* and writes replies for them. The postman works hard the whole day. We must respect him because he is very useful to us. He is just like our friend and deserves our co-operation.

## **A Hawker**

One who sells his goods from his cart moving through the streets and lanes, and *shouting* loudly, is called a hawker. *At times*, he also moves on foot and goes from one house to the other, canvassing for his items. He tries to convince his buyers by pleading that he is selling his wares *at a throw away price*.

I know a hawker who visits our street every morning and evening. His name is Ba Gyi Myaing and he sells fruits. He shouts *at the top of his voice* to attract buyers. *As soon as* the ladies hear his voice, they rush out of their houses with money in their hands. They buy fruits *to their heart's content*. He is an honest person. He brings fruits of good quality and charges a *reasonable price*. That is why he is very popular in our ward.

At noon, he stands near the school gate of our locality to sell sweet-meats. *In the recess*, children flock to him to buy sweet-meats of their choice. He tries to please them with his innocent *jokes and laughter*.

### A Street Beggar

You can see many beggars *wandering* here and there. They are found *in plenty* at bus-stops, in markets and streets. Even though begging is a crime in Myanmar, the number of beggars *goes on increasing*. Many of them are *lame, crippled or blind*. They deserve our sympathy. But a majority of them are healthy and do not deserve our sympathy. Some even pretend to be *handicapped*.

I know a beggar who visits our street every day. He comes in rags with *shaggy hair* and *old, torn shoes*. He has only one leg and moves *on crutches*. He carries a begging bowl. He always sings devotional songs. His voice is very sweet. People pity him

and give him money, flour, food or clothes. Many times, when he shivers with cold, I give him clothes.

Many street beggars are thieves too. They try to steal things, whenever they get a chance. We should be aware of such type of beggars. They should be punished. We should help only those beggars who are disabled and cannot *earn their livelihood* by doing any kind of work.

### **A Rickshaw Puller/ Trishaw Puller**

Rickshaw pullers are commonly seen on city streets. They are generally found at bus stands and railway stations. We also see them near cinema halls, schools and colleges.

A rickshaw puller pedals his vehicle along *rough and smooth roads*. Rain or shine, heat or cold, he has to do his work. Even when he is tired and not feeling well, he takes his passengers to their destination. He has to go, wherever the passenger has ordered him to go. He enjoys no holiday.

A rickshaw puller *deals with* all kinds of passengers, such as *educated people*, villagers, businessmen, students, servicemen or anyone else. He deals with them *tactfully and patiently*.

A rickshaw puller is a poor man. He leads a simple life. He lives in a mud house, eats simple food and wear coarse clothes. In

big cities, many of them spend their night on pavements. If a rickshaw puller takes a rickshaw on hire, he pays the *fixed price* to the owner and keeps the rest of his day's earning with himself to meet the needs of his family. But sometimes in reality, that does not *make his ends meet* and leave him with enough to survive on.

Early in the morning, he takes out his rickshaw. He as tea hurriedly at *a stall* and stands waiting for passengers. At times, the wait is long. He does not get passengers for hours and hours. He fears such situations, for he may have to remain without his lunch or dinner.

## **My Favourite Profession**

Everybody must work to earn his livelihood. The work done by him for his living is called his profession. Quite often, a person chooses his profession according to his taste and aptitude. One should be really careful while choosing one's profession.

The choice of his professions is highly influenced by a person's domestic atmosphere, educational background and availability if finances. A businessman wishes his son should take care of his business. In a family where two or three members are doctors, a member of such a family generally chooses the medical profession.

As for me, I want to become a doctor. It is an independent and noble profession. My aim is to serve the poor. In Myanmar

there are many people, who don't have money for their treatment. It is difficult to say how many people die in our country because they don't get proper medical aid.

Myanmar is a country of villages. Most people live in villages. If our villages are not healthy, our country can't make progress. I find that most of the doctors are settled in towns. They do not care for the people who live in villages. They do not realize that their need in rural areas is really great. But I am eager to be different from others. I like to serve poor villagers who are unable to get proper treatment.

My medication for those who are very poor is going to be absolutely free. I feel very bad, when I find that doctors are money-minded. Their greed has brought bad name and disgrace to their noble profession.

I want to serve the poor and ill people if villages. This is the reason why I like to be a doctor. I pray to the Almighty to grant my wish.

## **Health is Wealth/ The Value of Games**

Someone has correctly said that 'if health is gone, everything is gone.' Life loses interest, in case you are deprived of health. You enjoy neither food nor world. Even spending time joyfully becomes a big problem. We can, therefore, say that real wealth of a man is his health.

Specially for the young, games are essential to remain healthy. They are necessary for our physical and mental development. They keep us fit and lively. No wonder games are now an important part of education. They improve our muscular system. They give shape to our body and sharpen our mind.

Broadly speaking, games are of two types: Indoor Games and Outdoor Games. Games are played inside a room, are called indoor games. They include table tennis, basketball and chess. Outdoor games such as football, hockey, cricket and volleyball are played in an open ground. Every game has certain rules which the players have to follow.

Games make great contribution in character building. They teach us the importance of discipline, cooperation, obedience, team-spirit and tolerance. They implant in us the spirit of sportsmanship. They teach us to take success as well as failure in stride.

Games keep us active and healthy. They are good for our blood circulation, digestion and keep our brain healthy.

Games, however, lose their importance, if they disturb our studies. So, there should be a balance between games and studies.

## The Independence Day

The 4<sup>th</sup> January is considered *a red letter day* for Myanmar. On this day, in 1948, Myanmar became independent from the British rule. All Myanmar celebrate this day *on a large scale* every year *with great joy*.

Yangon, the commercial city of Myanmar, is the focus of the main celebrations. The President hoists the National Flag at the City Hall. The National Anthem is played by a military band and guns are fired. The President delivers his speech to the nation. A large number of people gather to witness the celebration and hear his speech.

Even schools celebrate the Independence Day with great joy. This year we made great preparations in our school. Early in the morning on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, we gathered at the school playground. Everybody was dressed in white uniform. The teachers asked us to stand *classwise* in a queue. *At 7 o'clock a.m. sharp*, our principal arrived. We were eagerly waiting for the arrival of the Chairman of our school. He arrived at 7:20 a.m. The principal requested the Chairman to perform *the flag-hosting-ceremony*. The scout band played the National Anthem. Then the Chairman delivered his speech.

After the speech of the Chairman, our principal also delivered his speech. Our history teacher reminded us of our duties towards the country. We remembered all those, who had fought for the freedom of our country.

Sweets were distributed among all the students. We returned home, *singing* national songs and *shouting* the slogans.

## A Morning Walk

The greatest gift God has provided to man is nature. It is at its best form early in the morning. The air is pure, silence prevails all around and the rising sun looks beautiful like a babe. We can enjoy all this if we go on a morning walk. It ensures good health and refreshes the mind. It is a good exercise too. Regular morning walk keeps us fit, happy and fresh *throughout the day*.

I get up at 5.30 a.m., drink two glasses of water and put on my jogging dress. Then I go out on my walk. My brother, Peter, accompanies me. We go to the National Park. We pass through green fields that give us great joy and happiness.

Dewdrops *on the blades of the grass* look like beautiful pearls. The sweets smell of flowers refreshes the mind. *On reaching* the National Park, we do some light exercises. We see *the golden rays of the rising sun*. Soon, every object looks golden as the sunrays fall on them. It is a beautiful scene to behold.

When we return home, we feel very fresh and full of energy. Thus, a morning walk is a must for everybody. It refreshes the walkers, cheers up his spirit and keeps him *alert, active and agile* throughout the day.

## The Village Blacksmith

Many years ago, in Upper Myanmar, there was a blacksmith. He lived in a small village through which ran a very busy road. It was a busy road because it led to the great River Ayeyarwady. Every day people passed *to and fro* along it. Merchants came that way with their bullocks and small ponies. The animals were heavily laden with paddy and silk and goods from China. Soldiers came along the road too, and men from the king's palace. There was a lot of dust on the road because it was not very well made.

Very few people lived in the black smith's village. The headman, a few poor woodcutters and two old men had wives and children, and the blacksmith had his sister. They were very happy villagers. Their houses had thatched roofs and walls made of bamboo mats. The floors were made of split bamboo. They were built high off the ground because of snakes; but the villagers did not want better houses. They were quite contented.

The blacksmith's house stood in a little garden. The garden was about ten yards square. Around it was a bamboo fence. In the garden were a few plantain trees and some shrubs. Just outside the fence was the blacksmith's forge and his anvil. The forge or workshop, had a grass roof built upon bamboo posts, but it had no walls. The anvil was a huge lump of hard stone put into a hole in the ground. Near it was another hole in which a bright fire roared all day. The blacksmith worked there from sunrise to sunset. Everybody in the village could hear the sound of his

hammer when he worked. It said, “Clang! Bang! Clang! Bang!” all day long and the big fire hissed and roared.

The blacksmith was a very big strong man. When he beat the anvil with his hammer the ground seemed to shake. He wore a cotton longyi but no jacket so the large muscles of his arms and chest could be seen. He held big pieces of iron in the fire until they became red hot. Then he put them upon his stone anvil and beat them with his hammer. He swung his big hammer round his head. He beat the anvil with great force. He made shoes for horses, nails, chains, scythes for cutting grass, knives and axes for cutting wood, hammers, spears and many other things. Many people came to the forge on their way through the village. The blacksmith earned a good living and was happy and contented. He had a strong body, a good trade, and more than all these things, a sister.

The blacksmith’s sister was a lovely girl. She was the most beautiful maiden in Upper Myanmar, and she was as good as she was beautiful. All day she stayed in the little thatched house keeping it neat and clean. She prepared her brother’s food. In the evening, when the blacksmith’s work was done, the brother and sister ate their dinner. After dinner they sat outside in the garden, or went for a walk. They loved each other very much and were very happy together.

They had no relations, and made up their minds never to leave each other. One rich young man wanted to marry the sister because she was so good and beautiful, but she refused to leave her brother. She loved him more than anything in the world. The rich young man said, “I will give you silken clothes and jewels to

wear." The maiden replied, "I prefer to wear cotton clothes and flowers from the jungle." Another young man said, "Marry me and I will take you to a fine house in big city." The maiden replied, "I prefer the jungle and the big mountain. It is better than the finest house in the world.

She pointed to a big mountain far away. It looked like a pagod. The blacksmith and his sister often talked about it. It was a beautiful sight when the sun rose and set. People told many tales about it. They said the mountain was fairyland. The rivers there were not full of water; they were full of honey. They said that the flowers on the mountains were made of silk and gold. The brother and sister believed it. They said, "Someday we will go to the mountain. We will see the rivers of honey and the flowers of gold."

When they sat outside in the garden, they talked about the great River Ayeyawady. The sister did not know what a big river was like. She saw the pond in the village and a small lake in the jungle. The blacksmith told her that the Ayeyawady was ever so much larger than the pond and the lake. It rose far away in the mountains in the north of Myanmar. It was a little stream. As it flowed south it got bigger and bigger. It became so large that, in some places, a man could not see the two banks; then it reached the sea. The blacksmith's sister said, "What is the sea like?" The blacksmith said, "I do not know. I have never seen the sea."

The blacksmith said that men went along the busy road through the village to the river. Then they got into boats. They rowed the boats with oars made of wood. When the wind blew, they put up sails made of cotton and did not row. They went to

the south. They saw the sun rise three times; they saw it set three times. Then they came to a big city full of pagodas. Some of them were gilded and shone in the sun; some of the pagodas were made of white marble. The king lived in the city in a beautiful palace. The blacksmith told his sister all about the big city and the king's palace, and she tried hard to understand his words; but she did not wish to go to the city. She did not wish to leave her brother. She was quite contented and happy in the village. Every day she went to the little white pagoda near her house. She did not want gold and jewels.

The king of Upper Myanmar was a very old man. He lived in the beautiful palace in the city on the banks of the Ayeyawady. He was rich and great. He ruled his country well. He protected the poor and punished bad men. His soldiers went all over the land. No enemies came into Upper Myanmar because the soldiers were well-trained. Their leader was the king's son. He was a great prince and everybody loved him.

One day the old king became very ill indeed. The doctors could not cure him. Their medicine was of no use, so he died and the prince was made king. The people held a great funeral feast for many days. When it was over and the old king was buried, the new king said, "I want a wife. I want a son to rule when I die." The chief men in the city were the king's ministers. They said, "We will find a queen." The king said, "She must be good and beautiful." So the ministers sent messengers north, south, east and west to find a good and beautiful maiden. The king said, "All the good and beautiful maidens must come to my palace. I will choose the one I like best. She will be my bride."

One day, when the blacksmith worked at his forge, a soldier came to him and said, "Give me your sister." The blacksmith was very angry. He put down his hammer and clenched his fists and said, "What do you mean? Get out of my workshop or I will hit you." The soldier was afraid; the blacksmith was so big and strong. He said, "Do not get angry, friend. I must take your sister to the king's palace." The blacksmith became very angry indeed. He clenched his fists again and knocked the soldier down. "What do you mean?" he shouted again.

Then the soldier got up and drew his sword. He told the blacksmith that the king wanted all the good and beautiful maidens. He wanted to choose a queen. The soldier said, "Your sister must come to the king and I will kill you with my sword because you hit me." He tried to kill the blacksmith but the blacksmith broke the sword and hit the soldier again. The village headman came. He was afraid and begged the blacksmith to send his sister to the king.

The blacksmith went into the house and called the maiden. He said, "The king wants all the good and beautiful maidens to go to his palace. He wants to choose a wife. You can go if you wish. I will not send you because I do not want you to leave me."

The girl said, "I will never leave you, dear brother. You are very kind to me; you give me everything I wish for. I am contented and happy in this little village. I do not want to go to the palace." After a few days the wife of the village headman came to the blacksmith's house. She was an old woman and very greedy. She did not love the blacksmith's sister but she wanted her to become queen. She said to herself, "The blacksmith's sister

will give rich gifts to the village people when she becomes queen. I will tell her to go to the palace. I am sure of that.” The greedy old woman went to the girl and told her wonderful tales about the king and his palace.

She said, “You will have everything you wish for. You will never have to go to the well to get water. You will never have to cook rice and vegetables. You will be dressed in silk. Lovely jewels will shine round your neck and in your hair. Your hands will be covered with rings and bracelets. You will have many servants to wait upon you. You will have rich food in golden dishes. You will have a lot of money.” The blacksmiths sister said, “I do not wish to leave my brother. I am quite happy and contented.

However, the old woman did not give up. She tried again. She said, “Very well, do not go to the palace. Stay here with your brother. You will wash his clothes and cook his food until you become old and ugly. You will have no husband and no children. The king will find another beautiful maiden to be his wife. He will give her jewels and silken clothes. Perhaps she will have a little son too.” Then the old woman went away.

In the evening the blacksmith and his sister went for a walk. Then the girl burst into tears and told her brother that she wanted to go to the king’s palace. The blacksmith said, “Very well. If you want to go you can go,” but he was very sad. The next day he went into the little garden and dug a hole under a plantain tree. In the hole he found a box. He gave the box to his sister. She opened it and cried for joy. In it was a lot of money, so she got ready to go to the king. Her brother went to the headman’s house. He said

to the soldier, "My sister wants to go with you. Take her to the king." The soldier was very glad. He gave the headman's wife a gold ring. The next day he went away with the blacksmith's sister.

Three days later the soldier and the maiden came to the great city. There were many maidens in the city. All of them were very beautiful; but all were not good. One lovely girl said, "The king will choose me. I am so tall and graceful." Another said, "He will not choose you because you have a small scar on your face. He will choose me." Another said, "The king will make me his wife. I am sure of that, because my teeth are so white." The blacksmith's sister said nothing. She was very sad and afraid. She wanted her brother.

A week later the king ordered all the maidens to appear before him. They got ready and went to the palace. They stood in rows and the king walked up and down the rows many times. All the maidens were so beautiful he did not know what to do. Then he spoke softly to one of his ministers and the minister went away. Five minutes later a little boy began to cry outside the palace. He screamed but the beautiful maidens took no notice. It was nothing to do with them. However, the blacksmith's sister ran outside and took the little boy in her arms. He stopped crying at once. The king laughed and said to the girls, "I ordered my minister to test you. All of you are beautiful, but the blacksmith's sister is beautiful, but the blacksmith's sister is beautiful and good. She has a kind heart. I will choose her to be my queen."

The other maidens were very angry and very jealous. They went away to their villages very sadly. The king prepared great feasts and pwes. He wanted to marry the blacksmith's sister at

once. He said that she was as graceful as a young tree and that her hands were like lotus flowers. Every day she became more beautiful, but she was not very happy. She was afraid and wanted her brother.

When everything was ready the wedding took place. All the courts and offices were closed for seven days. There were feasts and pwes and boat races. Everybody was very happy because the king had a good and beautiful wife. The king and the queen enjoyed the feasts and pwes very much but after a few days, the queen said, "I wish to see my brother. Please send to the village and ask my brother to come to the palace."

The king sent the soldier to the village again. He found the blacksmith in his workshop. He was making a horse-shoe. The soldier said, "Your beautiful sister is the king's wife, my friend. The king and queen want you to come to the palace. The king will make you a great man and give you a lot of money and jewels." The blacksmith was not very pleased. He said in a rough voice, "I thank the king very much, but this village is my home. I will stay here until I die." The soldier went back to the palace. The queen was very sad because her brother refused to come to her.

In the king's palace were many courtiers. They had lived there all their lives. When the king married the sister of a poor blacksmith, they were very jealous and said, "She is only a poor girl. She is not a great princess. They had lived there all their lives. When the king married the sister of a poor blacksmith, they were very jealous and said, "She is only a poor girl. She is not a great princess. Our daughters are more beautiful." The wife of a minister said, "The new queen is only a blacksmith's sister. My

daughter is a great lady. She must be the king's wife." The ministers and their wives began to make plans. They wanted the beautiful queen to go away from the palace. They hated her because they were jealous. They said, "We will get rid of the blacksmith's sister. She is not fit to be queen. We will send her back to her village to cook her brother's food and wash his clothes." They spoke roughly to the queen but she did not mind. She said, "It is true. My brother is only a poor blacksmith, but he is the biggest and strongest man in the world."

When the queen said this, the jealous wives thought of another plan. They made up their minds to tell the king that the blacksmith was the biggest and strongest man in the world. They said, "The king will be very angry. They waited for a few days. Then, one very hot morning, they saw the king in the palace garden. He was alone. The queen was in her bedroom because it was a hot day. The king's chief minister was very ugly. He was very jealous of the new queen because he wanted his daughter to be the king's wife. He went to the king and said, "Sir, are you happy?"

"I am very happy," said the king smiling.

"You have a very beautiful wife," said the artful old minister.

"I have a very beautiful wife," replied the king.

"But your wife is not happy," said the old man.

The king frowned. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"She is unhappy because she wants the biggest and strongest man in the world," said the minister.

The king tried hard to understand his words. “What do you mean?” he asked again. “Tell me all about it.”

The minister said that the biggest and strongest man in the world was the blacksmith. The queen loved her brother more than she loved the king. The king said, “I do not believe it.” The minister said, “Ask the queen about it.”

The king did not believe the chief minister’s words. He loved his beautiful young wife very much indeed. He thought that she was good and kind, but he was puzzled. Two days later, he went to her. She was alone in the palace garden. He spoke kindly to her and said, “Tell me all about your village and your brother.” The queen told him all about her big kind brother. She said that when she was a little girl, he took care of her. He gave her everything she wished for. He was the biggest and strongest man in the world. She loved him very much indeed and wanted him to come to the palace. The king was angry and jealous. He thought to himself, “She wants her brother to be king. My chief minister told me the truth.” He said to the queen, “Write a letter to your brother. Tell him he must come to the palace. I want to see the biggest and strongest man in the world.” The queen was very pleased. She went into the palace and wrote a letter to her brother. She wrote, “You must come to the palace. The king is good and kind. Perhaps he will make you his chief minister.”

The blacksmith was very lonely. He missed his sister very much. There was nobody to cook his food. There was nobody to keep the house clean and neat. Every evening he went for a walk in the jungle. All day he worked hard at his anvil. One day the soldier came to the village again. The headman’s wife saw him.

She hid behind a tree until he went into the blacksmith's workshop. Then she ran as fast as she could and hid behind the blacksmith's bamboo fence. She heard all the words that the soldier said to the blacksmith. She became very excited. She shouted, "Go to the palace, you stupid man. You will become rich and great. When you get to the palace tell your sister that I want a gift. She became the king's wife because I helped her."

The blacksmith was very angry because the old woman was behind the fence. He ran out of his forge and caught her. She shook with fear and her teeth chattered; the blacksmith was so big and strong. She thought that he wanted to kill her. She fell on her knees and begged for mercy and said, "Please do not kill me. I will never hide behind your fence again." The soldier laughed and said, "You are a greedy old woman. You will get no gift from the blacksmith's sister. You will get a beating from the blacksmith." He drew his sword and said he wanted to chop off her head. She screamed with fear and ran home as fast as she could. The blacksmith laughed and went into his house. He told the soldier that he did not wish to go to the palace. He said he was a blacksmith; he was not a minister. He wished to stay in his forge; so the soldier went back to the palace alone, and the headman's wife shouted, "You stupid blacksmith. Go to the palace. I want a gift. Go to the palace. I want a gift." The headman beat his wife and ordered her to be quiet.

When the soldier told the king that the blacksmith refused to leave his village, the king was puzzled. The blacksmith was a poor man. His sister was the queen. But the blacksmith said he did not want to leave his village. He asked the chief minister about it. The

old man said, “He will not leave his anvil because he wants to be king. One day he will come to this city with many soldiers. There will be a battle. He will win because he is big and strong.”

The king went to the queen. He ordered her to write another letter. He said, “Order him to come to the palace.” The queen wept. Big tears rolled down her cheeks. She knew that the ministers and their wives hated her. She knew that they were jealous. She did not sleep all night. The next morning, she went to the king. He sat on a beautiful golden throne. His face was sad. He was jealous and unhappy because he thought that the queen and her brother wanted to kill him. The queen threw herself on the ground before him. She said, “My lord, I do not want to write another letter to my brother. He will not be happy in a king’s palace. It is a plot. Your ministers want to put him in prison. They are angry because I am your wife. I do not want my brother to be put in prison. He is a poor man. He wants to live in his village. He wants to be a blacksmith, not a courtier. Please let me go to him. I do not want to be queen. I want to go away from the jealous ministers and their wives. I am very unhappy. My brother is poor and I wish to be poor too.”

The king was very puzzled indeed. He tried hard to understand. He said to himself, “The ministers have told me the truth. I do not believe what the queen says. She is beautiful. I am sure that she wants to be queen. She wants rich clothes and fine jewels. She wants to live in a palace, but she will go back to her village and make a plan. Then her brother will come with his soldiers. He will kill me and he will become king.” The king made up his mind to see the blacksmith.

He said to the unhappy queen, “Write another letter to your brother. Tell him he must come to the palace. I will not hurt him. I will not put him in prison. I will give him money; I will make him a great man.” The queen wept and said, “I do not want to write the letter. Please excuse me. My brother is happy in his village.

The king became very angry indeed. He said in a rough voice, “Very well. My soldiers will go to your village. They will get your brother. I will put him in prison and you too. You will both be punished because you refuse to write the letter.”

The queen went away sobbing. The next day she wrote to the blacksmith. She begged him to come to her. This time he did not refuse. He left his house and his anvil and after three long days he reached the city on the banks of the Ayeyawaddy. When he got out of his boat two strong soldiers ran to him. They tied up his arms with heavy chains and took him to prison. The king ordered it.

When the queen heard about it, she sobbed and threw herself on the ground. She was very unhappy and did not know what to do. After a time she got up. She washed her face and put on a silken dress and many jewels. She was very beautiful. She went to the king and said, “My lord, my poor brother is in prison. I want to see him.” The king said, “Your brother is in prison because he made a plot to kill me. He wanted to become king himself. Tomorrow he will appear before me in court. He will be killed by my soldiers. You must not see him.”

The queen said, "Please, let me see him. Please let me go to the court. Soon my brother will be dead." The king was not an unkind man. He loved his wife very much, so at last he said, "Very well. I will let you go to the court." The queen thanked him and went out into the palace garden.

The next day the blacksmith appeared before the king and his ministers in court. The ministers said he was a wicked man. They said he wanted to kill the king and become king himself. They said that he must die. Their words were not true. They did not speak the truth. The blacksmith did not want to become king, but the king believed the ministers. He said, "Kill the blacksmith." The people in court were very excited. They shouted, "Let us burn the wicked blacksmith." They ran as fast as they could to the bank of the river. The soldiers put chains on the blacksmith's arms and took him to the river. They went to a big teak tree. They tied the blacksmith to it, and told the people to get wood from the jungle near the river. They put the wood on the ground under the blacksmith. With some dry grass they made a big fire. It hissed and roared and its flames were red and golden an. The blacksmith was not afraid of the fire. He was very brave and stood quite still. He did not look at the people. He looked at the big mountain far away. He thought about the rivers of honey and the flowers of gold. He did not move; he did not scream. But the fire hurt him very much. The smoke from the wood and grass made his eyes smart. It stung his face. It made him choke.

Suddenly the queen appeared. She was in a chair of red and gold. She was carried by some soldiers. When she saw her brother, she jumped out of the chair and ran to him. She jumped

into the flames and threw her arms around his neck. The soldiers could not save her. Soon the lovely queen and the poor blacksmith were burned. The people screamed with fear, but, in spite of the fire, the brother and sister did not die. Many hours later, when the fire was out, and the smoke all gone, their bodies were not tied to the tree. Their bones were not on the ground but they were not dead.

A few days later some merchants sat under that tree to rest in the shade. Suddenly they saw two nats. One was a very big strong man; the other was a very beautiful woman. The man spoke sharply to the merchants. He said, "Go away at once. You must not rest here." The merchants were afraid and went away. The next day some little children played under the tree. The big man appeared again and told the children to go away. They were afraid. They ran home crying. Their father went to the king. He begged the king to cut down the tree because the nats lived in it. The king was afraid too, so he ordered his servants to chop down the tree. They chopped it down and threw it into the river.

The tree floated down the river for many days. At last, it rested on the bank. There was a village in that place. Some of the villagers wanted firewood. They got their axes and went to the river bank to cut the tree, but the nats appeared and the villagers ran away. The nats appeared many times. At last, the headman of the village went to the tree. He was a very brave man; he was not afraid of nats. He said, "Oh, nats, what do you want? The villagers want to make you happy and contented."

The nats said, "We want to go to the big mountain. We want to live near the rivers of honey and flowers of gold." Then the

headman said to his friends, “Let us take the tree to the mountain. The nats will not hurt us.” So the villagers took the tree to Mount Popa and the blacksmith and his sister lived there. They loved their new home and never wanted to return to the king’s palace or to the forge.

The king married the chief minister’s daughter. She was very beautiful but she was unkind to poor people. One day the greedy old wife of the village headman came to the palace. She did not know that the blacksmith and his sister were gone. She said the queen must give her a rich gift. The new queen was very angry with her. She said the old woman was a witch and ordered the soldiers to kill her. The soldiers chopped off her head and that was the end of the poor old woman.

### **A True Friend**

While friendship is a boon, a true friend is a blessing of God. A true friend is always with you in need. He shares your joy as well as sorrow.

It is natural for anyone to have many friends, but a true friend is only one. He is sincere and honest and is ever ready to take risk

for your welfare. He can make sacrifices for you. Whenever you are in need and trouble, he provides you with financial as well as moral support.

In everybody's life, there are certain secrets which a man cannot tell anyone except his friends. Therefore, everybody needs dependable friends.

Friends, who are selfish, remain with you only during your prosperous days. They share your prosperity and joy. But when you need them for help, they desert you. Such persons are not interested in your welfare. You should never bother about such friends.

You can't expect a friend to be loyal to you, if you are not faithful to him. So, there should be mutual understanding and selfless approach between friends.

A true friend is always truthful and gives you the right advice. He doesn't make false promises to please you. He remains with you in your bad days, and is always interested in your welfare and well-being.

This is '*a friend in need is a friend indeed.*'

## A Cloud as a Witness

Once upon a tie there were two friends living in a small mountain village. Both of them were married and they were extremely poor. One day they talked together about their wretched poverty. They decided they must go far away and work on the tea plantations in Assam to make some money. So they left their wives and went away.

Now they had to work in separate places. One of them worked very hard, lived simply and saved up a lot of money while the other spent all the money he earned on drink and opium.

After a year, they met again and decided to return home. They had to travel over mountains and through thick jungles. One night when they camped on the way, the one who had not saved a penny realized that he would be in disgrace going home empty-handed. He had the idea that by killing and robbing his friend he could go home with a lot of money and no one would know about the murder.

So he picked up his dagger to kill his friend, but it hit some pebbles and his friend woke up. When his friend looked up, he said, “Don’t move, I am going to kill you, but I will give you time to say your last prayer.”

“You can take all the money,” answered his friend, “but please spare my life.”

Knowing that he would not be safe as long as his friend was alive, he decided to kill him and said, “I can’t wait much longer. Just say your prayer.”

At that moment, the one who was going to be killed *looked up at* the sky and saw a mass of cloud drifting slowly in the moonlight. “Please, O moving cloud,” he said, “please tell my wife about this if you should pass her village.” Then his head was cut off by his wicked friend.

The murderer then took all his friend’s money and travelled on until he reached home. On his arrival, all the villagers, including his friend’s wife came to see him and enquired about his friend. He told his friend’s wife. “Your husband would not come with me as he was ashamed to come home empty-handed. He told me that he would stay on for a while to save some money.” The woman, being ignorant of the truth was disappointed with her husband.

One night, while he was lying on a dais, the murderer saw a mass of cloud drifting slowly in the sky and he was reminded of the murder.

“What a fool he was!” he thought to himself, “Fancy begging the cloud like that to tell his wife about my murdering him. As if the cloud talk! The thought made him laugh aloud.

Hearing his loud laughter his wife asked him, “what makes you laugh so heartily? Are you having an affair with a girl? And are you laughing at me thinking that I am a fool?

So he explained how his friend had prayed before he had his head cut off and added, “I did it for you because I love you so much. Now you are having an easy life with his money. I don’t love anybody else.” She was delighted by his pleasant talk.

The murderer was a *happy-go-lucky* fellow by *nature* and spent the money he had got so easily on women, drinks and opium. *On hearing* about this behaviour his wife quarreled with him. He hit her hard across the face and drew blood. This made the woman livid. “Now,” she cried, “you have spent the money you got by killing your own friend on drinks, opium and women. How dare you hit me like this? You are not even man enough to work and save money to support me.”

Thus, the neighbours who heard her shouting learnt that he had murdered his own friend for money. The news spread until the wife of the dead man heard the story. She went and reported the matter to the village chief.

The chief arrested the murderer who confessed him crime on being questioned. *In accordance with* local custom, he was put to death.

## **The Uses of Electricity**

Can anyone ever imagine leading a life without electricity these days? Today, man is fully dependent upon machines, which run on electricity. It influences agriculture, industries, communication and domestic activities.

Electricity has made communication quick, safe and cheap. Electric trains carry people from one place to another within a short time. Lifts run on electricity, and carry people to different floors in multi-storeyed buildings. Telegraphs, computers,

telephones, televisions, etc., are also electrical gadgets. They all need power from electricity.

Electricity has also influenced agriculture. Tube-wells, which irrigate fields, are run on electricity. For storing agricultural products like potatoes, peas etc. in cold storages, electricity is needed.

Industries are also totally dependent upon electricity. Every industry, whether it is paper industry or cement industry, needs huge amount of electricity.

Electricity is needed even for our daily work. It lights shops, offices, houses, streets, etc. It helps in cooking. Electric heater, oven, mixer-grinder, coffee-maker and various other items operate on electricity. It is needed for washing clothes. The vacuum cleaner, which works with the help of electricity, is used for cleaning our furniture, carpets, rooms, cars, etc. Fans, tube-lights, bulbs, air conditioners, coolers, refrigerator etc., which are essential commodities of our daily life, run on electricity.

Electricity rules over our lives, but its supply is decreasing day by day. It is generated by water or coal etc., which are non-renewable resources. Therefore, it is necessary to save electricity.

## Newspapers

Newspapers give in-depth, detailed news of the world. They bring the latest information, regarding the happenings of the world. Their coverage includes topics from different fields such as social, political, scientific, business, and cultural etc.

The invention of the printing press has made the task of publication easy. Now newspapers are printed very quickly. They are printed almost in all the languages and their number should run into millions.

Newspapers represent ordinary people. They are a store-house of knowledge. They make us broad-minded. They develop in us a universal spirit. The habit of reading them improves our language.

They provide us information, regarding the market trend, sports, everyday happenings, business, foreign relations and political development. Those without jobs have the pages on ‘SITUATIONS VACANT’ to fall back on.

Different segments of society are benefitted by newspapers. There are matrimonial columns for unmarried persons, and market prices of shares and commodities for the business minded.

But there is also a dark side to the newspaper. Some newspapers are partial to particular political parties. They do not show their real picture. We must practice independent judgement, while reading a newspaper.

The publishers of newspapers should realize their responsibilities. They should present the true picture of an event, as it happens.

### **The Verger (Short Story)**

Mr. Foreman owned ten shops in different parts of London. All the shops sold the same things: cigars, cigarettes, tobacco and pipe. The shops were always very busy and Mr. Foreman was a rich man.

But he had not always been rich. Albert Foreman's parents had been very poor. They did not have enough money to send Albert to school. Albert started work at the age of ten. He was a servant in the house of a rich family. He was young and he did all the dirty work.

Albert was a hard worker. He grew older and was given more important jobs. Albert was always clean and tidy. He was well-dressed and respectable. At the age of twenty, Albert was the head servant in the house of a rich man.

Albert married at the age of twenty-two. His wife was also a working woman. She had been a servant in the same house as Albert. Then, Albert got a new job. He becomes the Verger of St. Peter's Church. St. Peter's was in Neville Square, in the center of the richest part of London. Rich and important people lived in the houses nearby. They were buried near St. Peter's when they died.

The verger was present at all these important times. He stood near the door *wearing* a long black tie. Also, he kept the church clean and tidy.

The people *at St. Peter's* were pleased with Mr. Foreman. He worked there for sixteen years. During this time, there was no trouble. The old vicar liked and trusted Mr. Foreman. He knew that Albert was not able to read or write. But this did not matter. Albert Foreman looked important and respectable and he kept the church clean. That was enough.

But in life *nothing lasts forever*. The vicar grew older. At last, he was no longer able to do work. He had to leave St. Peter's and go and live in the country. A new vicar came to St. Peter's. He was young and wanted to change many things.

Mr. Foreman did not like the new vicar. But he obeyed him. Mr. Foreman did things in new way.

'Don't walk like this,' said new vicar. 'Walk like this.'

'Don't stand like this,' said the new vicar. 'Stand like this.'

Albert Foreman had to change everything. But there was one thing which did not change. Albert was not able to read or write. At last, the new vicar heard about this.

One day, after an important wedding, the young vicar spoke to Albert.

‘How long have you been verger at St. Peter’s?’ he asked.

‘Sixteen years, Sir,’ replied Albert.

‘You have been verger for sixteen years,’ said the vicar, ‘and you cannot read or write?’

‘That’s true,’ replied Albert. ‘I was born in a poor family. My parents weren’t able to send me to school. I never learned to read or to write.’

‘But this is an important church,’ said the vicar. ‘The Verger of St. Peter’s must be able to read and write.

‘You’ve asked me to change many things,’ replied Albert. ‘I’ve done my best to please you. But I can’t learn to read and write. I’m getting older now. It’s too late for me to learn such things.

‘You must learn to read and write,’ said the vicar, ‘or you cannot be Verger at St. Peter’s.’

‘I’ll leave at the end of this month,’ Albert told the vicar. ‘You must find a new verger. Find another man and I’ll teach him his job.’

Albert said goodnight politely and left the church. He was not angry, but he felt sad. He started to walk home.

‘What will my wife say? Albert asked himself. ‘She’ll be angry and worried. I must find a new job, but it won’t be easy.’

Albert did not smoke much, but now he wanted a cigarette.

I must buy a packet of cigarettes,’ he said to himself. I’ll smoke a cigarette and I’ll feel better.

Albert started to look for a cigarette shop. He turned into a long street where there were many shops. There were bakery shops and butcher shops. There were shoe shops and hat shops. But there were no shops which sold tobacco or cigarettes.

Albert walked all the way home, but he did not find a cigarette shop. ‘

‘I’ve lost my job,’ he told his wife when he got home.

‘You’ve lost your job!’ she said in surprise. Why?’

The new vicar wants a verger who can read and write,’ replied Albert.

‘But what are you going to do?’ asked Albert’s wife. You’re over forty now. You won’t find a new job easily.’

‘I’ve an idea,’ said Albert. ‘On my way home, I wanted to smoke a cigarette, but there wasn’t a cigarette shop. How many other people have wanted a cigarette in this part of London?’

‘A lot of people,’ replied his wife.

‘And they can’t buy them there,’ said Albert. Now, how much money have we saved?’

Albert and his wife had always been careful. They had saved up a little money every week.

‘We have enough,’ said Albert, when they had counted the money.

Enough for what!?' asked his wife.

'To open a cigarette shop,' Albert replied.

At the end of the month, Albert Foreman left St. Peter's forever. He opened a shop and sold cigarettes.

Many people came into his shop because it was the only one in the street. He began to sell other things. But they were all things for smokers. He sold tobacco for pipes. He sold cigars and matches. And every week the shop became busier.

After a year, Albert's shop was making a lot of money. Then Albert had another idea.

'Why don't we open another shop?' he said to his wife. His wife agreed with him.

Albert Foreman walked round London. At last, he found a long, busy street with no cigarette shop.

Albert opened another shop in that street. A young man worked in the shop for him. The shop soon became very busy.

Albert did the same thing again and again. After ten years, he owned ten cigarette shops. All of them were very busy and every week. Albert put more and more money into the bank.

When Albert was in the bank one day, a bank clerk spoke to him.

'Excuse me, Mr. Foreman,' said the clerk. 'The manager wants to speak to you. Can you see him?'

'Of course,' replied Albert, and he went into the manager's office.

The manager wanted to talk to Albert about his money.

‘You have a lot of money in the bank now,’ said the manager.

‘Yes, I know,’ replied Albert. ‘It’s safe in the bank. I don’t need the money. The money is safer here.

‘I don’t know anything about things like that,’ replied Albert. ‘I’ll need help.’

‘But I’ll help you,’ said the manager. He gave me Foreman a piece of paper with lots of writing on it.

‘You must sign here,’ said the manager. ‘Then I can do everything else for you.’

Albert picked up a pen and put a large cross at the bottom of the paper.

‘But why have you made this mark?’ Asked the manager.  
‘Why didn’t you sign it with your name?’

‘Because I can’t read or write,’ Albert replied simply.

The manager sat back in his seat.

‘You’re a rich man, Mr. Foreman,’ said the manager. ‘And yet you cannot read or write. If you could read and write, you would be a millionaire.’

Albert Foreman laughed loudly. The manager was surprised.

‘I’m rich because I cannot read or write,’ said Albert smiling.  
‘If I could read or write, I would be poor, I would still be Verger at St. Peter’s Church in Neville Square.’

## A Journey by Train

Last month, I had to go to Mandalay to participate in a dance competition. My father was accompanying me and we had decided to go by express train. Our reservation was made one week *in advance*.

We reached Mandalay railway station half-an-hour before the departure time of the train. It was to leave at 8:30 p.m. We got into a compartment and the train began to move slowly. After some time, it gained speed. Since it was midnight, we went to sleep.

In the morning, we woke up at 7:00 a.m. The train was moving very fast. I sat near the window, *observing* the outside scene which was very beautiful. The fields, the trees and the houses outside seemed to be running in the opposite direction of the train. We saw many villages, cities and rivers on the way. The train passed through various states. It was nice to see the people of different states.

We made friends with other passengers who were travelling with us. We reached Mandalay railway station at 9:00 a.m. From there, we hired a taxi and went to the hotel. Though it was my longest train journey, I enjoyed it for speed, comfort and punctuality. I had all the fun, excitement and thrill on the way.

## **If I were The Principal of My School**

The principal is the head of a school or a college. His post is full of great responsibility. He has to run the school efficiently, supervise the staff and work as a role model. He should be honest and hardworking. He has to be a living example of ‘simple living and high thinking.’ He should also be a good leader and, most importantly, a good administrator too.

If I were the principal of my school, the first thing that I would do would be to unite all staff members and students. Their unity would help me achieve the goals that I have set forth for myself for the betterment of the school.

My emphasis would be to provide quality education to my students. For this, the students would require clean classrooms and a healthy atmosphere to study. I would advise my teachers to pay personal attention to the students and their problems.

I would try to have friendly, cordial relations with my staff and subordinates. I would go out of my way to achieve this goal. For this I would try to be a loving family member for them. I would give patient hearing to their problems and do my best to sort them out.

Besides paying full attention to studies, extra-curricular activities would also be taken care of. Each student would be made to participate in at least two activities. I would encourage

my staff and students to take part in school dramas, debates and various other sporting activities in which they may be interested.

We have a very big playground for outdoor sports and a gym for indoor activities. Various other sporting facilities, like tennis court, badminton court, table-tennis hall, and a swimming pool are also a part of our school sporting facilities. They would be utilized to the best of their capacity. Participation in games and sports would be made compulsory for all students.



## The Rope

The night felt heavy on the heights of the mountains and the man could not see anything. There was zero visibility; the moon and the stars were covered by the clouds.

When he was just a few feet below the top of the mountain, he slipped and fell into the air, falling at great speed. He could see only black spots as he went down, and felt the terrible sensation of being sucked in by gravity.

He kept falling, and in those moments of great fear, all the good and bad episodes of his life came to his mind. He was thinking now about how close death was getting, when all of a sudden, he felt the rope tied to his waist pull him very hard. His body was hanging in the air. Only the rope was holding him. In that moment of stillness, he had no choice other than to scream, “Help me God.”

All of a sudden, a deep voice coming from the sky answered,

“What do you want me to do?”

“Save me God.”

“Do you really think I can save you?”

“Of course, I believe you can.”

“Then cut the rope tied to your waist.”

There was moment of silence. The moment passed, and the man decided to hold on to the rope with all his strength. The

rescue team says that the next day, the climber was found dead and frozen, his body hanging from a rope, and his hands holding it tight. He was only one foot away from the ground.

How attached are we to our ropes? Will we let them go?

Don't ever doubt God.

We should have enough faith to cut the rope, if that is what God tells us to do, even when it seems to be the most foolish thing to do.

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### **The Kind Prince**

Once upon a time there lived a prince. His father was the king. The prince lived with his father in the palace. The prince had a wife and two sons. He had no daughters. One son was ten years old; the other was only eight. The wife of the prince was pretty and good. She loved her husband and her children very much.

Every day the prince, the princess and the two little boys rose very early. They had some food and went out into the palace garden. They did not go into the garden to play. They had work to do. The prince and his family worked very hard. Every morning many poor people came to the palace kitchen. They sat outside the kitchen on the grass. When the prince came, the poor people bowed their heads to the ground three times. They said to the prince, "May you be happy." The prince replied, "May you be at peace."

Then the prince and his wife and sons went into the kitchen. They asked the cooks for food. When it was ready the cooks put curry and rice on big dishes. The prince told the cooks to give the curry and rice to the poor people. They ate it greedily because they were very hungry. When the poor people had eaten the food, they thanked the prince. Then they went away to their houses in the village.

After that the prince and princess went out. They left the palace garden. They walked into the village and went into the houses of the poor people. When they saw a sick man, they sent the doctor to him. They gave him money for medicine. They gave him good. When they saw a man with no good clothes, they gave him a jacket and longyi. When they saw little boys and girls crying, the prince and his wife gave the children pie.

The prince and princess went to the pagoda. They went there every day. It was a fine pagoda. It was gilded. It shone in the sun. The prince gilded it and gave many jewels for the hti. Every day he bought many flowers and candles. He gave rich offerings for himself and his family. He gave many rich gifts to the priests.

Then the prince and his family went back to the palace. They had their breakfast at half past ten. They did not eat rich food. The poor people ate curry and rice and that was the food the prince ate. After breakfast, the princess and the children went to lie down on their beds to rest. The prince went into his office. He wrote many letters every day. Many people wrote letters to the prince. They asked him for money. He gave money to boys and young men. He gave money to poor farmers.

After a time, the prince became a poor man. He had no money and no jewels because he gave them all away. He did not mind being poor. He did good deeds because he wanted to gain merit. All the people in the land said he was a good prince. Everybody loved him.

One day a poor old beggar came to the village near the palace. He heard about the good prince. He heard about the good prince. He made up his mind to go to the palace; so the next morning he went with the other poor people to the palace kitchen. He saw the prince and his family give away food and money. Then the beggar went to the pagoda. He saw all the jewels and gold leaf on the pagoda. He saw the prince buy many candles and flowers. He saw the princess give rich offerings to the priests, but the beggar did not believe that the prince was a very good man. He made up his mind to test him.

One day the prince and his wife got into their bullock-cart. They wanted to go into the jungle to say their prayers at a holy place. As they went along the road, they saw the beggar. He had a stick in his hand and he was lame. His foot hurt him. It was cut and there was blood on it. When the beggar saw the prince, he

held up his hand. The prince stopped the bullocks. He said to the beggar, "Let me help you." He asked him what was wrong with his foot. The prince was very sorry to see a poor old beggar in pain. The old man told the prince that he was very tired. He said that his foot hurt him very much. He wanted to go to the village, but he was lame. He asked the prince for his bullock-cart. He said that the prince was young and strong. He must walk into the jungle. The old beggar must ride in the bullock-cart.

The prince was very kind. He liked walking in the jungle, so he gave the bullock-cart to the beggar at once. The prince and the princess got out of the cart; the beggar got into it. Then he drove away and the prince and his wife walked on. They did not know that the beggar wanted to test the prince. After that the prince and princess had no bullock-cart, but they liked walking and did not complain.

The beggar still did not believe that the prince was a very good man. He made up his mind to test him again. Once more he went out. He sat by the side of the road near the palace gates. He waited until the prince came. He had to wait a long time. He saw many poor men go to the palace kitchen. He saw them come back with food and clothes. Then he saw the king, the father of the prince. The king rode on a big elephant. Over his head was a golden umbrella. Many servants were with the king. He wore bright jewels and clothes made of silk. At last, the prince came. He was not riding; he was walking.

When he saw the poor old beggar by the side of the road, he stopped. He asked the old man if he was quite well. The prince thought that the beggar looked tired and hungry. The beggar said

that he was quite well. He sat by the side of the road because he wanted to see the prince. All the poor people in the land loved the prince. They said he did many good deeds. When a poor man asked the prince for food or clothes, the prince gave them to him; so the beggar said he came to see this good prince. The prince was very pleased when he heard that all the poor people loved him.

He thought that the beggar wanted a gift. He thought that he wanted food or money. He did not know that the beggar was the man who took away his bullock-cart. The prince thought it was another beggar. He said he wanted to help him. The beggar said, "Give me your father's sacred white elephant." The prince did not know what to do. It was the king's elephant. It did not belong to the prince. The king went to look at the white elephant every day. He loved it. The prince became very sad. He wanted to give the elephant to the beggar, but it was the king's elephant; so the prince said nothing.

Then the beggar laughed. He said the prince was not really good. He gave away money and food and jewels, but he did not give away the elephant because he wanted it himself. The beggar said that the people of the land did not speak the truth. The prince was not a very good man. The prince became very sad. He wanted to do good deeds. He wanted to gain merit; so he made up his mind to give away the king's sacred white elephant.

He led the beggar into the palace garden. The white elephant lived in a big white cage. One man took care of it. This man did not see the prince and the beggar. He was fast asleep because the sun was very hot; so the prince opened the door of the cage. He gave the white elephant to the beggar. The old man laughed and

led it away into the jungle, but he made up his mind to test the prince again.

The next morning the king went to look at his sacred white elephant. When he got to the cage the elephant was not there. It was gone; the cage was empty. The king clapped his hands and called the servant. He asked him where the elephant was. The man did not answer. Then the king became very angry. The man was afraid. He shook with fear; he fell on his knees before the king. The king asked again where the elephant was, but the poor servant did not know. The angry king called his soldiers. He ordered them to chop off the man's head. The unhappy servant screamed and begged for mercy, but it was of no use. He did not know where the elephant was; so he must die.

Just then the prince came to the king. He knew that his father was very angry indeed, but he was not afraid. He was a brave man. He told the king that he gave away the sacred white elephant to an old beggar. He gave it away because the beggar asked for it. The prince begged the king not to kill the poor servant. It was nothing to do with him.

The king was very angry indeed. He took a bamboo rod and beat the prince as hard as he could. He told him to call the princess and the little boys. They must go into court.

The king's court was a very large room in the palace. The floor and walls were made of teak. The roof was gilded. The king's golden throne was in this room. The king sat on the throne. His soldiers stood near him. The prince, the princess and the two little boys knelt before him. The king spoke in a very angry voice.

He said, "Go away. Go into the jungle. Never let me see you again. Take your wife and your sons with you." The king told the prince that he was a bad stupid fellow. He was not fit to be a prince. He gave away all his money and clothes and jewels. He gave away his bullock-cart. He gave away even the king's sacred white elephant. The elephant did not belong to the prince. It was the king's. The prince was a fool. He liked beggars; so he must go into the jungle and become a beggar himself. The king said again, "Go away at once. Never let me see you again." Then the king went out and the prince and princess wept. Big tears rolled down their cheeks.

When they were ready, they left the palace. They walked slowly out of the gates. They went sadly along the road. The princess wanted to go into the jungle. She said that she was sure that the old beggar was in the jungle. He must help them because they gave him the white elephant. The prince agreed to this. The little boys stopped crying. They wiped their faces with their hands. They walked on quickly. They wanted to find the beggar before the sun set.

Soon they got to the jungle. They walked a long way and became very tired. Then they saw a small hut. It was not a good hut. Its roof was made of leaves. Its walls were made of bamboo. It was not upright. Outside the hut, they found the old beggar. He sat on the grass. His servant was cooking some rice in a black pot over a small fire. When the beggar saw the prince and his family he stood up. He took his big stick and ran to beat them. The princess wept because she was so tired. She begged the old man to be kind. She said, "Please help us and give us food." She told

the beggar that the king sent them out of the palace because he had the sacred white elephant.

The beggar spoke to them in an angry voice. He said he had only a little rice for himself. He had no rice to give away. He said he was a poor man and had to beg for his food. He told them that his hut was very small. There was no room for them. They must go away. The prince said, "Please tell us where we must sleep. Please be kind to us." The beggar led them to a cave. It was a big hole in a high hill. Inside the cave it was very dark. The princess was afraid. She said that bears lived in the cave, but the prince said they must stay there. There was no other place. They must not complain.

The prince and his family lived in the dark cave in the jungle. In the daytime, the cave was very hot; at night it was very cold. They had no blankets. The princess made blankets of green leaves. When the sun rose in the east she got out of bed and called her little boys. When they woke, they went outside the cave and got wood to make fire. After that they had a bath in a stream near the cave. They had to go out and beg for their breakfast. Sometimes, they found nuts and fruit in the jungle. Sometimes poor people in the villages gave them a little rice. The old beggar never gave them anything. The prince and his family led a very hard life. Soon they had no clothes but rags and they were thin and ill.

One morning, the prince said that he was very ill indeed. His head was very hot; he had fever. There was no doctor and no medicine. The princess told the little boys to take care of their father. She must go herself to beg for food. The children agreed

to this. They sat on the floor of the cave near the sick man. They bathed his face and hands with water. The princess walked away into the jungle. She found no nuts and no fruits. She did not know what to do. At last, she saw a very small village. There were only four huts in it. Near the huts grew a little sugar-cane and a few plantain trees.

She saw a poor farmer outside the huts. When he saw the princess, he was very sorry for her. He did not know that she was a princess; he thought that she was a poor beggar woman. He spoke kindly to her. She begged for food for her sick husband. The poor farmer had very little food for himself, but he was a good man. He wanted to gain merit; so he gave her a small pot of rice, a few sticks of sugar-cane and some plantains. The princess wept for joy. Her children were very hungry. She thanked the good man and went back home as fast as she could. She wanted to feed the little boys.

On her way to the cave the princess came to a stream. She had to cross it to get to the other bank, but there were two big tigers drinking at the stream. They had big yellow bodies with black stripes on them. They were very fierce and the princess was afraid of them. She stood quite still. She did not move at all. Then one tiger turned its head. It saw the princess. It roared its head. It saw the princess. It roared and ran up to her. The poor lady was very afraid, but she did not move. She was very brave indeed. The tigers roared at her until the sun set. But she stood quite still all the time. They did not hurt her. When the sun set, they walked away. The jungle became very dark and the princess was more and more afraid. Tears rolled down her cheeks. She sat down

under the trees on the grass to rest. She ate no food because she wanted it for her children. Then she got up and ran to the cave as fast as she could.

When she got there the prince was alone. The little boys were not in the cave. The princess asked the prince where they were. The prince was very ill. He had fever and tossed about on his bed. He did not answer. The princess asked him again about the boys. He began to cry because he was weak and ill. He told her that the children were gone. He had no sons because he had given them away to the old beggar. The princess screamed and threw herself on the floor of the cave. She was very unhappy indeed. She ordered the prince to tell her about it. She was very angry with him because he had given away the little boys. She did not know what to do. The prince stopped crying and told her all about it.

He said that the little boys were very kind to him all the morning. They sat by his bed and bathed his face and hands with water. They gave him cold water to drink. Then, at noon, when the sun was very hot, the beggar came to the cave. He spoke sharply to the prince. He told the prince that he wanted the little boys. He said he was old and ill and the boys must be his servants. The little boys cried and did not want to leave their father, but the prince was very ill. His head ached. He did not know what to do. The beggar said his old servant was dead. He had nobody to beg for food for him; so the prince was sorry for the beggar and told the little boys to go with him. They must be his servants.

When the prince told the princess about it, he sobbed. He was weak and ill; he loved his sons very much. He wanted them in the cave. He told the princess that the beggar beat the little boys

with a big stick. The princess was very angry indeed with her husband. She thought he was a very cruel father to give away his children to a beggar. The prince said that he got out of bed and ran outside the cave when the beggar beat the little boys. He pulled out his knife. He meant to kill the old man. But he did not stab the beggar because he thought it was an act of merit to give away his sons. He let the beggar take away the boys. The beggar was old and weak; he had no servant to beg for his food.

When the princess heard this, she sobbed. She threw herself on the floor of the cave and cried for her children. She became more and more angry with the prince. He gave away his clothes, his jewels, his money, his bullock-cart and his father's white elephant. He even gave away his own children. The prince wept too. They had a very unhappy night.

The poor little boys went to live with the beggar. He took the children because he wanted to test the prince once more. He was very unkind to them. He was very unkind to them. He beat them every day and gave them no food. They had to work very hard. They had to go to the village to beg for rice and fruit for the beggar. Sometimes the village people gave them food, but sometimes they beat the boys. Sometimes the village dogs ran after them. They were afraid of dogs. They walked many miles every day. When they got back to the beggar's hut, they cooked the rice. The beggar ate nearly all of it. The poor boys were starved. They became very thin and weak. At night they had to sleep on the ground under a tree. The beggar did not sleep on the ground; he climbed up the tree and slept in the leaves. He said he was afraid of tigers. The children were afraid of tigers too; so one

boy slept and the other boy watched. Sometimes they were very cold. They had no fire and no blankets. They wanted to die.

One day they made up their minds to run away from the old beggar. They wanted to find their father and mother, but they did not run very far. They were small boys and they were weak and hungry. They sat down under a tree in the jungle. About two hours later, the beggar walked that way. He found the boys and beat them hard and took them back to his hut. They became more and more unhappy.

After many months the old beggar became more kind. He made up his mind to take the little boys back to the king's palace. Their grandfather the king wanted them.

The king was very unhappy. He was sorry because the prince and his family went away. He told the prince he did not wish to see his face again, but when the prince went away the king wept. The prince was his only son. The princess was pretty and good. Their two sons were well-behaved little boys. The king missed them very much indeed. He liked children to play games in the palace, but his grandsons were not there. The poor people did not go to the palace kitchen for food. There was no prince to do good deeds. The poor people wanted the prince to come back to the palace. They went to the king and begged him to find the prince.

Then the king sent his servants all over the land to find the prince. They went north, south, east and west. Some of the servants went over the sea. They asked everybody where the prince was, but nobody had seen him. Nobody knew where the prince lived. The servants went sadly back to the king. They told him

that they did not know where the prince was. The king became very angry. He stamped his feet and shouted, "Chop off the heads of these stupid men." He said they were not fit to be his servants; so the poor servants were killed because they could not find the prince. The king became more and more sad.

One morning he went into the palace garden. He walked to the empty elephant cage. Then he shouted and ran as fast as he could because the elephant cage was not empty. The sacred white elephant was in it. The king rubbed his eyes. He thought it was a dream, but it was not a dream. The white elephant was really there. The king was very glad. He ran back to the palace and called his servants. He told them that they must look for the prince again. They must find him.

Two days after that the king went into the palace garden and he sat down under a shady tree. He thought about his son the prince. Then, because it was a very hot day, the king went to sleep. He slept for five hours. When he woke up it was half-past six and nearly dark. He stood up. He heard a voice. It said, "Here is an old beggar with two little boys." The king saw a very old man. Two poor little boys were with him. They were dressed in rags, but the king knew at once that they were his little grandsons. He was very glad indeed. He cried for joy. He clapped his hands and his servants came. He ordered them to take the boys to the palace and give them good clothes and jewels. He said, "Give them a good dinner." So the servants led away the happy little boys and the king looked round for the beggar, but he was not there. All night the king's servants looked for him, but they did not find him.

Nobody knew where he was. The king was very puzzled. He wanted to find the prince and princess.

One day, at noon, the beggar came to the king. He wore poor clothes and had a stick in his hand. The king asked him where the prince lived. The beggar told the king all about the prince. He said that he knew that the prince was a very good man. He said that the king must send for the prince at once. He must call him back to the palace. The beggar told the king that he made the prince give him the sacred white elephant because he wanted to test the prince. The king was very glad. He sent his servants to get rich clothes and jewels and elephants. They must go to the jungle to find the prince.

The beggar went back to the cave. On his way he made up his mind to test the prince for the last time. He thought of a very hard test. When he got near the cave, he called the prince and princess. They were dressed in rags and were very thin and weak. They had no food and wished to die.

The beggar was very cruel to them. He told them that their little sons were dead and again he had no servant to beg for him. He said the prince must give him the princess to be his servant. The poor prince became very angry indeed. He did not want the princess to be a servant, but after two or three hours he thought it was a great act of merit to give away the princess to the poor old beggar. He said, "Take away my wife and let me die." He had no clothes, no money, no food, no children and no wife; so he wanted to die.

The beggar walked away with the princess. She cried and thought that her husband was a very cruel man to give her away to a beggar, but it was of no use. She must go with him and beg for his food. When they had walked a little way the beggar said to the princess, "Shut your eyes." Then he ordered her to open them again.

When she opened her eyes, she saw the King of the Nats. He was dressed in bright clothes and smiled at her. The princess was afraid, but the king said he wanted to make her happy. He said that he turned himself into a poor beggar to test the prince. He knew that the prince was a very good man. The prince had gained much merit. He told the princess that her two sons were safe with their grandfather in the palace. She must run back to the cave as fast as she could and find the prince. Then the prince and princess must go to the palace and be rich and happy once more. The princess threw herself on to the ground and cried for joy and the King of the Nats went away.

After a time, the princess got up and ran back to the cave as fast as she could. She told the prince all about it. She told him that the old beggar was really the King of the Nats. He turned himself into a poor man to test the prince. The prince was very glad indeed to see his wife and to hear the glad news. They got ready to go back to the palace.

Soon after that the King's elephants came to the jungle with many servants and rich gifts for the prince and princess. They got on the elephants and rode to the king's palace. Their children ran to meet them. Everybody was very happy. The king gave a grand feast and all the poor people came to it. He gave rich gifts to the

pagoda and many offerings to the priests. Everybody shouted for joy.

The prince and his family lived in the palace with the king, but the prince did many good deeds until he died.

~~~~~The End~~~~~

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# Reading with COC Formula



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