

Seed of Truth (By Sudha Murty)

Once upon a time, there lived a king named Vidyadhara. He was the king of Gandhara. He was a just and wise king. He was fond of gardening. He spent a lot of time tending his garden. His people were very happy but as the king grew older, everyone got more and more worried. The king did not have any children so they thought who would take over his kingdom after him. To find a successor, the king thought of an idea.

He decided to distribute some seeds to all the children in the kingdom and the one who grew the biggest and healthiest plant within three months would become the prince or princess. The king ordered his minister to issue a proclamation.

The next day, a long line of anxious parents and children, Formed outside the palace.

Everyone was eager to get a seed and grow the best plant.

Pingala ,the son of a poor farmer, was one among these children, who too got a seed from the king.

Pingala went home and sowed it in a pot in his garden. He watered and manured the seed. He took great care of the seed but the seed did not sprout. So, he changed the soil and transferred the seed to another pot. Weeks and months passed but the seed did not sprout. One day, Pingala went near the pot. He knelt before it and said, 'Dear seed, three months have passed. I want to take you to the palace. Please sprout by tomorrow.'

The next day, he saw children walking to the palace, dressed in their best clothes and they all held well grown plants. Pingala stood watching them sadly as his seed did not even sprout. Pingala's father had observed his son's honest effort.

So, he advised Pingala to take the empty pot to the king because he tried his best and worked hard to make the seed sprout. Pingala listened to his father and so he too put on his best clothes and set off to the palace. When the king reached to see the plants , he sighed when he saw all the children with coloured plants and their faces were shining with hope. He was not at all happy.

On reaching Pingala, he stopped and asked him about his empty pot. Pingala held his head down and said, 'Forgive me , Your Highness. I tried my best to grow the seed . I gave the best soil and manure to it. But the seed did not grow.' A smile appeared on the king's face. The king hugged Pingala and announced, 'Here is the crown prince.' He said that,He gave roasted seeds to everyone, which would never grow. Pingala had only shown his honesty by bringing the empty pot instead of changing the seed.

Moral of the story - Always tell the truth.