**UNIT 2 TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE MAKETH FOOLS**

**Read the passage.**

Once upon a time, there were four youths studying under the famous professor Disaparkmauk of Taxila. They all came of rich families from different lands. Each followed his natural bent and specialized in different branches of study. One studied music and dancing; another studied medicine; another studied astrology; and the fourth, philosophy.

After studying for three years they were considered proficient in their respective subject, and the time came to say good-bye to their professor and return to their respective parents. As a parting gift the professor gave them a cooking pot, as well as some grain, in order that they would have something to cook and eat should their dry rations run out before they reached home.

Then, as his final gift to his students, the professor gave them a piece of advice. “Remember,” he said to them, “the four of you may be proficient, each in your own subject, but if you don’t have the sense to act suitably to the time and circumstance of a situation, you may have go hungry.”

Not quite comprehending what the great teacher meant, they look at one another, but said nothing, and after paying their respects to their professor, set forth on their journey home.

After travelling for a number of days their rations ran out and the pot and the grain given to them by their professor came in very useful indeed. “How thoughtful our great teacher is!” they felt and got down to the business of cooking themselves a meal. There was rice enough for all four of them all right, but they would have to do something about the curry. So they drew lots for the different tasks to be carried out in order to get a decent meal.

Thus, the man of music and dancing was to cook the rice. The medico was to buy meat and fish; the astrologer was to gather vegetables; and the philosopher was to get ghee (which is clarified butter) to cook the curry in. And thus each set out to do his task.

The medico went to the nearest village and there I the bazar he found various kinds of meat and fish. He looked around for some tome and found that noting suited him. His medical knowledge now seemed to warm him which meat or fish was indigestible, which not nutritious, which unseasonable, which would cause what disease, which would upset the stomach and which the bile, till finally he left without buying any meat or fish!

The philosopher, however, got the required ghee, which he packed in a green leaf, and retraced his steps. On the way he soon became lost in philosophical speculations. “Ghee,” He said to himself, “comes from cow’s milk. Cow eat grass, and yes, leaves, too. Ah then, in a way, ghee comes from cow’s milk, and cow’ ilk comes from leaves, and so the ghee and the leaf are related!” On and on he philosophized, quite happily unaware of the ghee in the leaf in his hand melting gradually and dripping.

By the time he met the medico, who was coming back empty-handed from the village market, there was nothing left of the ghee he had bought! He, too, was empty-handed. The two of them looked at each other, not knowing whether to smile or weep and each recounted to the other what had happened to him, as they walked back to where the man of music and dancing was supposed to be cooking the rice. But there, to their horror, they found their friend looking as disconsolate as ever, moping beside a broken pot with the rice strewn all over the fire-place.

“Soon after the three of you left,” wailed the cook, “I built afire, rinsed the rice, put it in the pot, added the required amount of water, and placed the pot on the fire. After some time, the pot began to simmer, and then it started to boil. I watched and could not help but hear the bubbling noise of the boiling rice. To my ears it sounded do much like the rhythmic beats of music coming from a drum that I started dancing to it. And , … and,…”

“And what happened?” asked hid two friends. “And,” continued the cooked, “one backward kick of my right heel caught the pot. And there, as you can see, is the end of our rice!”

The other two, who had come back empty-handed, now found it quite easy to admit to the cook that they, had failed to accomplish what they had set out to do. Suddenly, they remembered their astrologer friend, who was to get some vegetables. Off they went to look for him in the forest, there atop a tall bael tree was their friend, sitting tight.

Before they could say anything, the astrologer called out to them. “Hey, I’ve got all the tender bael leaves that should go well with our meal. See!” he said, holding up the leaves he had plucked.

“Then why are you still there astride that branch? What are you staying on there for?”

“Ah,” replied the astrologer, “the climbing up was easy because at that moment I was under the influence of an ascending constellation. But now, the climbing down is quite a different matter. You see, the star are not just right as yet and I am waiting for the moment when I’ll be the influence of a descending constellation.”

“Oh, to hell with your stars and constellation!” the tree on the ground yelled, almost in unison. “Just come down!”

The poor astrologer was frightened out of his wits. He started to climb down-slowly, shakily. But he was trembling so much that he half-slipped and half-fell, and lay in a stunned heap on the ground. His three friends lifted him up and all he had were bruises and cuts. No tender bael leaves!

Now with no meal in sight, each began to realize how and he had and why he had failed in carrying out his lot. Then, slowly, the wisdom of the parting advice given to them by their great teacher dawned upon them.

“Remember, the four of you may be proficient, each in your own subject, but if you don’t have the sense to act suitably to the time and circumstance of a situation, you may have to go to hungry.”