

## Taro's Reward

A YOUNG woodcutter named Taro lived with his mother and father on a lonely **hillside**. All day long he **chopped** wood in the forest. Though he worked very hard, he earned very little money. This made him sad, for he was a **thoughtful** son and wanted to give his old parents everything they needed.



One evening, when Taro and his parents were sitting in a corner of their **hut**, a strong wind began to **blow**. It **whistled through** the cracks of the hut and everyone felt very cold. Suddenly Taro's father said, "I wish I had a cup of **saké**; it would warm me and **do my old heart good**."

This made Taro sadder than ever, for the heart-warming drink called saké was very expensive. 'How do I earn more money?' he asked himself. 'How do I get a little saké for my poor old father?' He decided to work harder than before.

Next morning, Taro jumped out of bed earlier than usual and **made his way to** the forest. He chopped and cut, chopped and cut as the sun **climbed**, and soon he was so warm that he had to **take off** his jacket. His mouth was dry, and his face was wet with sweat. 'My poor old father!' he thought. 'If only he was as warm as I!' And with that he began to chop even faster, thinking of the extra money he must earn to buy the saké to warm the old man's bones.

Then suddenly Taro stopped chopping. What was that sound he heard? Could it be, could it possibly be **rushing** water? Taro could not remember ever seeing or hearing a rushing stream in that part of the forest. He was **thirsty**. The **axe** dropped out of his hands and he ran in the direction of the sound.



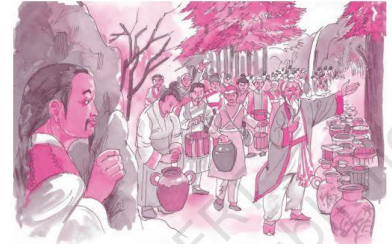
Taro saw a beautiful little waterfall hidden behind a rock. **Kneeling** at a place where the water flowed quietly, he **cupped a little in his hands** and put it to his lips. Was it water? Or was it saké? He tasted it **again and again**, and always it was the delicious saké instead of cold water.

Taro quickly filled the **pitcher** he had with him and hurried home. The old man was **delighted** with the saké. After only one **swallow** of the liquid he stopped **shivering** and did a little dance in the middle of the floor.

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That afternoon, a neighbour stopped by for a visit. Taro's father politely offered her a cup of the saké. The lady drank it **greedily**, and thanked the old man. Then Taro told her the story of the magic water fall. Thanking them for the delicious drink, she left **in a hurry**. By **nightfall** she had spread the story **throughout** the whole village.



That evening there was a long **procession** of visitors to the woodcutter's house. Each man heard the story of the waterfall, and took a **sip** of the saké. In less than an hour the pitcher was empty.

Next morning, Taro started for work even earlier than the morning before. He carried with him the largest pitcher he owned, for he intended first of all to go to the **waterfall**. When he reached it, he found to his great surprise all his neighbours there. They were carrying pitchers, **jars**, buckets — anything they could find to hold the magic saké. Then one villager knelt and held his mouth under the waterfall to drink. He drank again and again, and then shouted angrily, "Water! Nothing but water!" Others also tried, but there was no saké, only cold water.

"We have been tricked!" shouted the villagers. "Where is Taro? Let us **drown** him in this waterfall." But Taro had been **wise** enough to **slip behind** a rock when he saw how things were going. He was **nowhere to be found**.

**Muttering** their anger and disappointment, the villagers left the place one by one. Taro came out from his hiding place. Was it true, he **wondered**? Was the saké a dream? Once more he caught a little liquid in his hand and put it to his lips. It was the same fine saké. To the thoughtful son, the magic waterfall gave the delicious saké. To everyone else, it gave only cold water. The story of Taro and his magic waterfall reached the **Emperor** of Japan. He sent for the young woodcutter, and rewarded him with twenty pieces of gold for having been so good and **kind**. Then he **named** the most beautiful **fountain** in the city **after** Taro. This, said the Emperor, was to encourage all children to **honour** and **obey** their parents.

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### Vocabulary

1. **Reward** (noun) – prize, prize money, winnings, purse, award, honour इनाम
2. **Hillside** (noun) – The sloping side of a hill; elevation, पहाड़ी
3. **Chop** (verb) – chop up, cut up, cut into pieces, hew, split, cleave काटना
4. **Thoughtful** (adjective) – careful, selfless, kind, helpful, kindhearted विचारशील
5. **Hut** (noun) – A small house or shelter; shack, shanty, log cabin, shelter, shed झोपड़ी/ कुटी
6. **Blow** (verb) – (of wind) move creating an air current. हवा चलना
7. **Whistle through** (phrasal verb) – to utter a shrill clear sound by blowing or drawing air through something
8. **Sake** (noun) – Japanese alcoholic beverage made from fermented rice
9. **Do one's old heart good** (phrase) – to make one feel very happy
10. **Make one's way to** (phrase) – Go in a particular direction or to a particular destination
11. **Climb** (verb) – (of the sun) go upwards; rise, increase चढ़ना
12. **Take off** (phrasal verb) – remove, doff, divest oneself of, strip off, pull off (clothing) उतारना
13. **Rushing** (adjective) – flowing strongly (water)
14. **Thirsty** (adjective) – in need of a drink, dry, dehydrated प्यासा
15. **Axe** (noun) – chopper, hatchet कुल्हाड़ी
16. **Kneel** (verb) – kneel down, genuflect, bow down, kowtow घुटने टेकना
17. **Cup a little in one's hand** (phrase) – to hold one's hands together to catch something (typically a liquid) in them.
18. **Again and again** (phrase) – Repeatedly, many times, continually बार-बार
19. **Pitcher** (noun) – jug, decanter, ewer, jar, crock घड़ा
20. **Delighted** (adjective) – very pleased, glad, happy, joyful, thrilled, overjoyed प्रसन्न/खुश
21. **Swallow** (noun) – An act of swallowing something, especially drink. निगरण/घूंट
22. **Shivering** (noun) – the action of shaking slightly and uncontrollably as a result of being cold, frightened, or excited. कांपना

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23. **Greedily** (adverb) – In a way that shows an excessive desire or appetite for food  
लालच से
24. **In a hurry** (phrase) – Hastily, quickly, rapidly, in a rush जल्दी में
25. **Nightfall** (noun) – end of day, Sun set, dusk, onset of night सन्ध्या समय/  
सूर्यास्त
26. **Throughout** (adverb) – all over, all round, in every part of हर जगह/ सर्वत्र
27. **Procession** (noun) – A relentless chain of people जुलूस
28. **Sip** (noun) – A small mouthful of liquid.  
घूंट
29. **Waterfall** (noun) – cascade, cataract, shower, outpouring झरना/ प्रपात
30. **Jar** (noun) – A wide-mouthed cylindrical container made of glass or pottery
31. **Drown** (verb) – Deliberately kill (a person) by drowning. डुबकर मारना
32. **Wise** (adjective) – intelligent, prudent, sage, clever बुद्धिमान
33. **Slip behind** (phrasal verb) – to hide behind
34. **Nowhere to be found** (phrase) – Unable to be discovered; completely gone /vanished कहीं नहीं मिला
35. **Mutter** (verb) – murmur, mumble, whisper, speak in an undertone बड़बड़ाना
36. **Wonder** (verb) – ponder, ask oneself, think about, deliberate about सोचना
37. **Emperor** (noun) – ruler, king, sovereign सम्राट/ महाराजा
38. **Kind** (adjective) – kindly, good-natured, kind-hearted, caring दयालु
39. **Name after** (phrase) – Call someone by the same name as another person or thing.
40. **Fountain** (noun) – a natural spring of water झरना /फव्वारा
41. **Honour** (verb) – Regard with great respect; respect, admire सम्मान करना
42. **Obey** (verb) – comply with, adhere to, observe, abide by, act in accordance with पालन करना