

The Ashes That Made Trees Bloom

In the good old days of the **daimios**, there lived an old couple whose only pet was a little dog. Having no children, they loved it as though it were a baby. The old **dame** made it a **cushion** of blue **crape**, and at mealtime Muko—for that was its name—would sit on it as **snug** as any cat. The **kind** people **fed** the pet with **tidbits** of fish from their own **chopsticks**, and all the boiled rice it wanted. Thus treated, the **dumb creature** loved its **protectors** like a **being with a soul**.

The old man, being a rice farmer, went daily with **hoe** or **spade** into the fields, working hard from morning until O Tento Sama (as the sun is called) had gone down behind the hills. Every day the dog followed him to work, never once harming the white **heron** that walked in the footsteps of the old man to pick up the **worms**. For the old **fellow** was **patient** and kind to everything that had life, and **often** **turned up** a **sod on purpose** to give food to the birds.

One day the dog came running to him, putting his **paws** against his legs and **motioning** with his head to some **spot** behind. The old man at first thought his pet was only playing and did **not mind** it. But the dog **kept on whining** and running **to and fro** for some minutes. Then the old man followed the dog a few **yards** to a place where the animal began a **lively scratching**. Thinking it was possibly a **buried** bone or **bit** of fish, the old man struck his hoe in the **earth**, when, **lo!** a **pile** of gold **gleamed** before him.



Thus in an hour the old couple were made rich. The good souls bought a piece of land, made a **feast** for their friends, and gave **plentifully** to their poor neighbours. As for the dog, they **petted** him till they nearly **smothered** him with **kindness**.

Now in the same village there lived a **wicked** old man and his wife, not a bit sensitive and kind, who had always kicked and **scolded** all dogs whenever any passed their house. Hearing of their neighbours' good luck, they **coaxed** the dog into their garden and set before him bits of fish and other **dainties**, hoping he would find **treasure** for them. But the dog, being afraid of the **cruel pair**, would neither eat nor move.

Then they **dragged** him out of doors, taking a spade and hoe with them. No sooner had the dog got near a pine tree growing in the garden than he began to paw and scratch the ground, as if a **mighty** treasure **lay beneath**.

“Quick, wife, hand me the spade and hoe!” cried the **greedy** old fool, as he danced with joy.

Then the **covetous** old fellow, with a spade, and the old **crone**, with a hoe, began to dig; but there was nothing but a dead **kitten**, the smell of which made them drop their tools and shut their noses. **Furious** at the dog, the old man kicked and **beat him to death**, and the old woman finished the work by nearly **chopping off** his head with the sharp hoe. They then **flung** him into the hole and **heaped** the earth over his **carcass**.

The owner of the dog heard of the death of his pet and, **mourning** for him as if he had been his own child, went at night under the pine tree. He set up some bamboo tubes in the ground, such as are used before **tombs**, in which he put fresh flowers. Then he laid a cup of water and a tray of food on the **grave** and burned several costly **sticks of incense**. He mourned **a great while** over his pet, calling him many dear names, as if he were **alive**.

That night the **spirit** of the dog appeared to him in a dream and said, “Cut down the pine tree over my grave, and make from it a **mortar** for your **rice pastry** and a **mill** for your **bean sauce**.”



So the old man **chopped down** the tree and cut out of the middle of the **trunk** a section about two feet long. With great **labour**, partly by fire, partly by the **chisel**, he **scraped out** a **hollow** place as big as a small bowl. He then made a longhandled **hammer** of wood, such as is used for **pounding** rice. When New Year's time **drew** near, he wished to make some rice pastry. When the rice was all boiled, **granny** put it into the mortar, the old man lifted his hammer to pound the mass into **dough**, and the **blows** fell heavy and fast till the pastry was all ready for **baking**. Suddenly the whole mass turned into a **heap** of gold coins. When the old woman took the hand-mill, and filling it with beans began to **grind**, the gold dropped like rain.

Meanwhile the **envious** neighbour **peeped in** at the window when the boiled beans were being **ground**.

“**Goody** me!” cried the old **hag**, as she saw each **dripping** of sauce turning into yellow gold, until in a few minutes the tub under the mill was full of a shining mass of gold.

So the old couple were rich again. The next day the **stingy** and wicked neighbour came and borrowed the mortar and magic mill. They filled one with boiled rice and the other with beans. Then the old man began to pound and the woman to grind. But at the first blow and turn, the pastry and sauce turned into a foul mass of worms. Still more angry at this, they chopped the mill into pieces, to use as firewood.

[To be Continued.....]

Vocabulary

1. **Daimios** (noun) – (in 19th century Japan) wealthy landowners
2. **Dame** (noun) – a woman महिला, बेगम
3. **Cushion** (noun) – a cloth bag filled with soft material or feathers that is used, for example, to make a seat more comfortable तकिया
4. **Crape** (noun) – thin cloth with a surface that has wrinkles (= small, thin folds)
5. **Snug** (adjective) – comfortable आरामदायक
6. **Kind** (adjective) – friendly, sympathetic दयालु, कृपालु
7. **Feed** (verb) – Provide as food खाना खिलाना/ देना
8. **Tidbit** (noun) – A delicate or tender piece of anything eatable मुलायम भोजन
9. **Chopstick** (noun) – One of two small sticks of wood, ivory, etc., used by the Chinese and Japanese to convey food to the mouth
10. **Dumb** (adjective) – unable to speak गूंगा,
11. **Creature** (noun) – animal, beast, प्राणी
12. **Protector** (noun) – a defender; a guardian; a patron रक्षक, संरक्षक
13. **A being with a soul** (phrase) – like a human child (showing emotion)
14. **Hoe** (noun) – a garden tool with a long handle and a thin metal blade, used for breaking up soil and removing weeds कुदाल, फावड़ा
15. **Spade** (noun) – a garden tool with a broad metal part and a long handle, used for digging कुदाल, फावड़ा
16. **Heron** (noun) – a large bird with a long neck and long legs, that lives near water बगुला, सारस
17. **Worm** (noun) – insect कीड़ा
18. **Fellow** (noun) – mate, dude, buddy, companion, comrade साथी, व्यक्ति,
19. **Patient** (adjective) – tolerant, forbearing धैर्यवान, सहनशील
20. **Often** (adverb) – frequently, much, many times, repeatedly, usually
21. **Turn up** (phrasal verb) – dig up खोदना
22. **Sod** (noun) – a layer of earth with grass growing on it पृथ्वी की एक परत जिस पर घास उगना
23. **On purpose** (phrase) – Intentionally जानबूझकर

NCERT: Class VII – By English Madhyam

24. **Paw** (noun) – A clawed foot of an animal especially a quadruped पंजा
25. **Motion** (verb) – to make a movement, usually with your hand or head, to show somebody what you want them to do इशारा करना
26. **Spot** (noun) – Place, distance, position स्थान
27. **Not Mind** (verb) – to not care or not be concerned about something परवाह नहीं करना, ध्यान नहीं देना
28. **Keep on** (phrasal verb) – carry on, continue, go on जारी रखना
29. **Whine** (verb) – to make a long, high, sad sound दबी आवाज का रोना
30. **To and fro** (phrase) – here and there, back and forth, hither and thither, around इधर - उधर
31. **Yard** (noun) – A unit of length equal to 3 feet गज़
32. **Lively** (adjective) – animated, energetic, spirited, active, vivacious तीव्र, जीवंत
33. **Scratching** (noun) – an act of removing something by scratching खरोंचना
34. **Buried** (adjective) – underground, concealed, hidden, burial दफन
35. **Bit** (noun) – A small piece or quantity of something
36. **Earth** (noun) – ground, soil
37. **Lo!** (exclamation) – used to tell people to pay attention and look at something interesting आरे देखो
38. **Pile** (noun) – A collection of objects laid on top of each other ढेर
39. **Gleam** (verb) – shine, glint, glow, glitter, चमकना
40. **Feast** (noun) – A ceremonial dinner party for many people दावत
41. **Plentifully** (adverb) – bountifully, plenteously, profusely, bounteously भरपूर मात्रा में
42. **Pet** (verb) – to touch or move your hand gently over an animal or a child in a kind and loving way लाड़ प्यार करना
43. **Smother** (verb) – to give somebody too much love or protection so that they feel that their freedom is limited
44. **Kindness** (noun) – benevolence, compassion, sympathy, charity, generosity दयालुता
45. **Wicked** (adjective) – evil, sinful, immoral, vicious, corrupt दुष्ट
46. **Scold** (verb) – berate, rebuke, reprimand, chide, upbraid डांटना, भला-बुरा कहना

NCERT: Class VII – By English Madhyam

47. **Coax** (verb) – persuade, cajole मनाना, फुसलाना
48. **Dainty** (noun) – something good to eat; a delicacy. मिठाइयाँ
49. **Treasure** (noun) – Accumulated wealth in the form of money or jewels etc खजाना
50. **Cruel** (adjective) – vicious, brutal, savage, ruthless, harsh निर्दयी
51. **Pair** (noun) – Couple जोडा
52. **Drag** (verb) – pull, haul, draw, trail, crawl खींचना
53. **Mighty** (adjective) – enormous, huge, tremendous विशाल
54. **Lay** (verb) – Place, put, set, put down रखना
55. **Beneath** (adverb) – below नीचे
56. **Greedy** (adjective) – grasping, avaricious, avid, covetous, gluttonous लालची
57. **Covetous** (adjective) – greedy, grasping, avaricious, desirous, jealous लोभी
58. **Crone** (noun) – old woman (old man's wife) बुढ़ीया, वृध्दा स्त्री
59. **Kitten** (noun) – kitty, pussycat, puss, cat बिल्ली का बच्चा
60. **Furious** (adjective) – angry, wild, enraged, raging, irate उग्र, क्रोधित
61. **Beat to death** (phrase) – to beat a person or animal so badly that it causes death. पीट-पीटकर मार डालना
62. **Chop off** (phrasal verb) – remove body part by cutting. काट डालना
63. **Fling** (verb) – Throw with force or recklessness फेंकना
64. **Heap** (verb) – to put a lot of something in a pile on something ढेर लगाना
65. **Carcass** (noun) – A dead body, whether of man or beast शव
66. **Mourn** (verb) – grieve, lament, weep, regret, deplore विलाप करना
67. **Tomb** (noun) – grave, crypt, sepulcher, mausoleum समाधि
68. **Grave** (noun) – Tomb कब्र
69. **Stick of incense** (noun) – a stick coated with incense, which burns slowly, releasing a fragrant odour अगरबत्ती
70. **Alive** (adjective) – Possessing life जीवित
71. **Spirit** (noun) – energy, soul, feeling, enthusiasm आत्मा
72. **Mortar** (noun) – a small hard bowl in which you can crush substances such as

NCERT: Class VII – By English Madhyam

- seeds and grains to make them into powder with a special object ओखली
73. **Rice pastry** (noun) – Rice cake
74. **Mill** (noun) – a small machine for grinding a solid substance into powder चक्की
75. **Bean sauce** (noun) – a sauce made from fermented black beans
76. **Chop down** (phrasal verb) – cut down काट देना
77. **Trunk** (noun) – The main stem of a tree तना
78. **Labour** (noun) – Effort, work, toil परिश्रम, प्रयत्न
79. **Chisel** (noun) – a tool with a sharp छेनी
80. **Scrap out** (phrasal verb) – to remove something from inside something else, using something sharp or hard like a knife खुरच कर निकालना
81. **Hollow** (adjective) – empty, cavity, hole, crater खोखला
82. **Hammer** (noun) – a tool with a handle and a wooden head हथौड़ा
83. **Pound** (verb) – Grind, crush, pulverize, mash, squash
84. **Draw** (verb) – pull, attract आना
85. **Granny** (noun) – grandmother, दादी
86. **Dough** (noun) – Paste of bread; a soft mass of moistened flour or meal, kneaded or unkneaded, but not yet baked; गूथा हुआ आटा
87. **Blow** (noun) – Knock, crack, jolt, strike, hit, bash मारना
88. **Baking** (noun) – cooking, boiling, sweltering, burning, searing पकाना
89. **Heap** (noun) – A collection of objects laid on top of each other ढेर
90. **Grind** (verb) – crush, toil, pulverize, mill, pound पीसना
91. **Meanwhile** (adverb) – meantime, in the meantime, at the same time इस बीच
92. **Envious** (adjective) – jealous, covetous, resentful, desirous, grudging द्वेषी
93. **Peep** (verb) – to look at something quickly and secretly, especially through a small opening ताक-झाँक करना, लुक-छिप कर देखना
94. **Ground** (adjective) – Crushed, pulverized, minced, milled, pounded, powdered पिसा हुआ
95. **Goody** (exclamation) – used to show pleasure

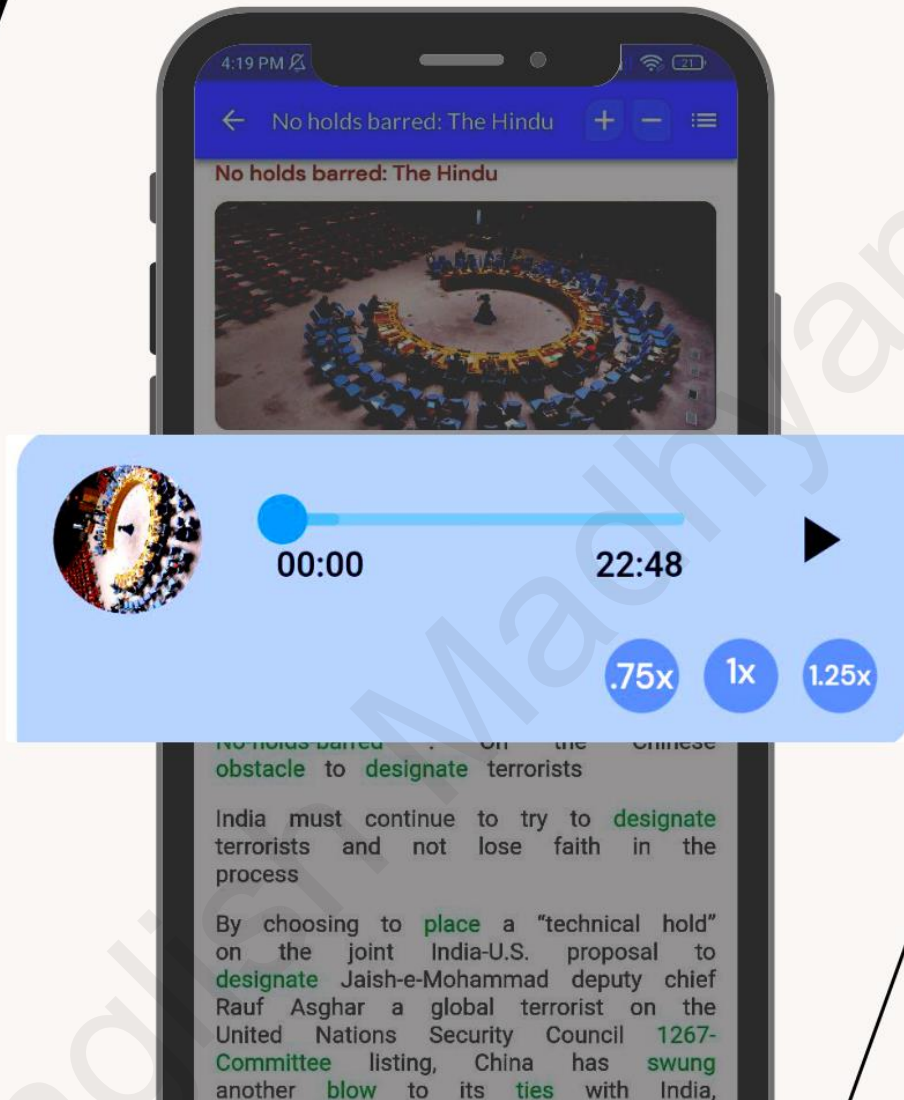
NCERT: Class VII – By English Madhyam

96. **Hag** (noun) – An ugly evil-looking old woman डायन, चुड़ैल

98. **Stingy** (adjective) – miserly, mean, cheap, parsimonious, niggardly कंजूस

97. **Drip** (verb) – (used about a liquid) to fall in small drops (द्रव का) बूँद-बूँद टपकना

Audio Explanation



[Click here to download English Madhyam App](#)