

The Ashes That Made Trees Bloom

William Elliot Griffis

4

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

I

In the 19th century Japan there lived an old couple. Their only companion was a little pet dog named Muko. They loved it as if it were their baby. They gave it pieces of fish and boiled rice to eat. Muko also loved its noble master.

The old man was rice farmer. He worked hard with his spade from morning till sunset. Muko followed him everyday to the field. It did not attack the white heron bird which used to kill corn worms. The farmer was kind to all the living creatures.

One day the dog came running to its master. It motioned him to some place behind. The old man followed Muko to the place, where it began to scratch. The old man used his hoe to dig the earth. He found a lot of gold there. The old couple became rich. They bought land, hosted a party to their friends and gave generously to their poor neighbours.

In the same village there lived a wicked old man and his wife. They were unkind to all dogs. When they heard of their neighbour's good luck, they called Muko to their garden and offered it fish. They hoped that Muko would find treasure for them also. But Muko refused to eat any fish. The dog took them to a pine tree in the garden. The greedy old fool danced with joy. He began to dig. But he found only a dead cat in the pit. In a fit of anger he beat Muko to death.

The owners of Muko mourned for their pet. They put flowers and water on its tomb. That night the spirit of Muko appeared to the old farmer in a dream. It asked him to cut down the pine tree over its graves, make a mortar for rice pastry and a mill for his

bean sauce. Soon the old farmer made a hollow place in the tree trunk. He with his wife made a hammer of wood for pounding rice. They baked the pastry and suddenly the whole mass changed into gold coins.

The jealous old neighbour noticed bean sauce turning into gold. The old couple were rich again. So the neighbours also did the same. But their pastry and sauce turned into worms. They destroyed the mill borrowed from the old couple and burnt it.

II

The good old man had another dream. The spirit of their pet dog told him to take the ashes of the mill and spread it on the withered pine trees. He assured him that they would bloom again.

The old man brought some ashes of mill. He spread a pinch of it on the cherry tree. The tree was covered with blossoms. The greedy wicked couple gathered the remaining ashes of the wooden mill.

The wealthy landlord of the village was to pass by that road. According to the custom all the people had to shut up their high windows. Nobody was allowed to look down on lordship. They also knelt upon their hands and knees until the procession passed by. A tall man marched ahead asking the people to get down on their knees.

But the good old man didn't kneel down. Instead of it he scattered a bit of ashes over the withered cherry tree. Suddenly it burst into blossom. The landlord got out to see the wonder. He thanked the man, offered him presents and also invited him to the castle.

When the greedy neighbour heard of it, he also took the magic ashes to the highway. He waited until the landlord's train came along, and instead of kneeling down like the crowd, he climbed a withered cherry tree. When the landlord was directly under him, he threw handful of ashes over him. But the tree showed no change. The dust rather blew into the nose and eyes of his lordship. The man who was escorting the lord dragged the greedy man from the tree and threw him into the ditch. He also beat him soundly. The greedy man thus died in the mud. The kind owner of Muko lived happily to a green old age.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

COMPREHENSION CHECK

(Page 60)

1. Why did the neighbours kill the dog?

Ans. The jealous old neighbours killed the dog out of anger and frustration. They first tried to please the dog. They hoped that the dog would lead them to a treasure. But when the dog led them to a dead kitten, they got angry and killed it.

2. Mark the right item.

- (i) The old farmer and his wife loved the dog.
- (a) because it helped them in their day-to-day work.
 (b) as if it was their own baby.
 (c) as they were kind to all living beings.
- (ii) When the old couple became rich, they
- (a) gave the dog better food.
 (b) invited their greedy neighbours to a feast.
 (c) lived comfortably and were generous towards their poor neighbours.
- (iii) The greedy couple borrowed the mill and the mortar to make
- (a) rice pastry and bean sauce.
 (b) magic ash to win rewards.
 (c) a pile of gold.

Ans. (i) (b) as if it was their own baby.

(ii) (c) lived comfortably and were generous towards their poor neighbours.

(iii) (c) a pile of gold.

WORKING WITH THE TEXT

(Page 63)

Answer the following questions:

1. The old farmer is a kind person. What evidence of his kindness do you find in the first two paragraphs?

Ans. The old farmer was very kind-hearted and loving. He loved and fed his pet dog as though it were their own baby. When he went to his fields, he often turned up a sod so as to give food to the heron birds.

2. What did the dog do to lead the farmer to the hidden gold?

Ans. The dog came running to his master. It wanted the man to follow him to a spot. He led them to a place where a lot of gold was buried. Thus the poor old couple became rich.

3. (i) How did the spirit of the dog help the farmer first? (ii) How did it help him next?

Ans. (i) The spirit of the dog first appeared in the old man's dream. It urged him to cut down the pine tree, make a mortar for the rice pastry and a hand mill for his bean sauce. The farmer followed the instructions and got gold coins.

(ii) The dog's spirit asked the farmer in his dream to take the ashes of the mill and spread it on a withered tree to make it green at once. The farmer scattered the ash on the cherry tree when the landlord passed along the road. The rich landlord gave him many rewards. This way the dog's spirit helped the farmer a second time.

4. Why did the daimio reward the farmer but punish his neighbour for the same act?

Ans. The daimio rewarded the kind old man for turning the tree into scented flowers in a moment. But he punished the wicked and greedy farmer for scattering foul smelling ash on the tree.

WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

(Page 64)

1. Read the following conversation.

Ravi : What are you doing?

Mridu : I'm reading a book.

Ravi : Who wrote it?

Mridu : Ruskin Bond.

Ravi : Where did you find it?

Mridu : In the library.

Noitce that 'what' 'who', 'where', are **question words**. Questions that require information begin with question words. Some other question words are 'when', 'why', 'whose' 'which' and 'how'.

Remember that

- *What* asks about actions, things, etc.
- *Who* asks about people.
- *Which* asks about people or things.
- *Where* asks about places.
- *When* asks about time.
- *Why* asks about reason or purpose.
- *How* asks about means, manner or degree.
- *Whose* asks about possessions.

Read the following paragraph and frame questions on the italicised phrases.

Anil is in *school*. I am in school too. Anil is sitting in the *left row*. He is *reading a book*. Anil's friend is sitting in the *second row*. He is *sharpening his pencil*. The teacher is writing on the blackboard. Children are writing in their copybooks. Some children are *looking out of the window*.

- (i) _____
 (ii) _____
 (iii) _____
 (iv) _____
 (v) _____
 (vi) _____
 (vii) _____

- Ans.** (i) Where is Anil?
 (ii) Which row is he sitting in?
 (iii) What is he doing?
 (iv) Where is Anil's friend sitting?
 (v) What is his friend doing?
 (vi) Who is writing on the blackboard?
 (vii) What are some children doing?

2. Write appropriate question words in the blank spaces in the following dialogue.

- NEHA : _____ did you get this book?
 SHEELA : Yesterday morning.
 NEHA : _____ is your sister crying?

SHEELA : Because she has lost her doll.

NEHA : _____ room is this, yours or hers?

SHEELA : It's ours.

NEHA : _____ do you go to school?

SHEELA : We walk to school. It is nearby.

Ans. (i) When (ii) Why (iii) Whose (iv) How

3. Fill in the blanks with the words given in the box.

how what when where which

- (i) My friend lost his chemistry book. Now he doesn't know _____ to do and _____ to look for it.
 (ii) There are so many toys in the shops. Neena can't decide _____ one to buy.
 (iii) You don't know the way to my school. Ask the policeman _____ to get there.
 (iv) You should decide soon _____ to start building your house.
 (v) Do you know _____ to ride a bicycle? I don't remember _____ and _____ I learnt it.
 (vi) "You should know _____ to talk and _____ to keep your mouth shut," the teacher advised Anil.

Ans. (i) what; where (ii) which (iii) how
 (iv) when (v) how; where; how (vi) when; where

4. Add im- or in- to each of the following words and use them in place of the italicised words in the sentences given below.

patient proper possible sensitive competent

- (i) The project appears *very difficult* at first sight but it can be completed if we work very hard.
 (ii) He *lacks competence*. That's why he can't keep any job for more than a year.
 (iii) "Don't *lose patience*. Your letter will come one day," the postman told me.
 (iv) That's *not a proper* remark to make under the circumstances.

(v) He appears to be *without sensitivity*. In fact, he is very emotional.

- Ans.** (i) The project appears to be **impossible** at first sight but it can be completed if we work very hard.
 (ii) He is **incompetent**. That's why he can't keep any job for more than a year.
 (iii) "Don't be **impatient**. Your letter will come one day," the postman told me.
 (iv) That's an **improper** remark to make under the circumstances.
 (v) He appears to be **insensitive**. In fact, he is very emotional.

5. Read the following sentences.

It was a cold morning and stars still glowed in *the* sky. An old man was walking along *the* road.

The words in italics are articles. 'A' and 'an' are indefinite articles and 'the' is the definite article. 'A' is used before a singular countable noun. 'An' is used before a word that begins with a vowel.

- a boy
- a mango
- a university
- an actor
- an apple
- an hour

Use *a*, *an* or *the* in the blanks.

There was once (i) _____ play which became very successful. (ii) _____ famous actor was acting in it. In (iii) _____ play his role was that of (iv) _____ aristocrat who had been imprisoned in (v) _____ castle for twenty years. In (vi) _____ last act of (vii) _____ play someone would come on (viii) _____ stage with (ix) _____ letter which he would hand over to (x) _____ prisoner. Even though (xi) _____ aristocrat was not expected to read (xii) _____ letter at each performance, he always insisted that (xiii) _____ letter be written out from beginning to end.

- Ans.** (i) a (ii) A (iii) the (iv) an (v) a
 (vi) the (vii) the (viii) the (ix) a (x) the
 (xi) the (xii) the (xiii) the.

6. Encircle the correct article.

Nina was looking for (@ / the) job. After many interviews she got (a / (the)) job she was looking for.

A : Would you like (a/an/the) apple or (a/an/the) banana?

B : I'd like (a/an/the) apple, please.

A : Take (a/an/the) red one in (a/an/the) fruit bowl. You may take (a/an/the) orange also, if you like.

B : Which one?

A : (A/An/the) one beside (a/an/the) banana.

Ans. A : an, a

B : an

A : the, the, an

B : X

A : the, thee.

SPEAKING AND WRITING

(Page 67)

1. Do you remember an anecdote or a story about a greedy or jealous person and the unhappy result of his/her action? Narrate the story to others in your class.

Here is one for you to read.

Seeing an old man planting a fig tree, the king asked why he was doing this. The man replied that he might live to eat the fruit, and, even if he did not, his son would enjoy the figs.

"Well," said the king, "If you do live to eat the fruit of this tree, please let me know" The man promised to do so, and sure enough, before too long, the tree grew and bore fruit.

Packing some fine figs in a basket, the old man set out for the palace to meet the king.

The king accepted the gift and gave orders that the old man's basket be filled with gold.

Now, next door to the old man, there lived a greedy old man jealous of his neighbour's good fortune. He also packed some figs in a basket and took them to the palace in the hope of getting gold.

The king, on learning the man's motive, ordered him to stand in the compound and had him pelted with figs. The

old man returned home and told his wife the sad story. She consoled him by saying, "You should be thankful that our neighbour did not grow coconuts."

Ans. *Do yourself.*

2. Put each of the following in the correct order. Then use them appropriately to fill the blanks in the paragraph that follows. Use correct punctuation marks.

- English and Hindi/both/in/he writes
- and only/a few short stories/many books in English/in Hindi
- is/my Hindi/than my English/much better

Ravi Kant is a writer, and _____. Of course, he is much happier writing in English than in Hindi. He has written _____. I find his books a little hard to understand. _____.

- Ans.
- He writes both in English and Hindi.
 - Many books in English and only a few short stories in Hindi.
 - My Hindi is much better than my English.

Ravi Kant is a writer, and he writes both in English and Hindi. Of course, he is much happier writing in English than in Hindi. He has written many books in English and only few short stories in Hindi. I find his books a little hard to understand. My Hindi is much better than my English.

3. Are you fond of reading stories? Did you read one last month? If not, read one or two and then write a paragraph about the story. Use the following hints.

- title of the story
- name of author
- how many characters
- which one you liked
- some details of the story
- main point(s) as you understand it

Tell your friends why they should also read it.

Ans. *Try yourself.*



★ Chivvy

Michael Rosen

SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The word 'chivvy' means urging someone continuously to do something. Grown-ups usually have the habit of asking the children to do or not to do something in order to teach them good manners. They would tell the child to speak up, not to talk while eating something, not to look fixedly at anybody, not to point, not to pick or clean the nose. Most children don't like such instructions.

Grown-ups also teach the young ones to say please, to keep quiet, to shut the door behind them, keep a hankie, not to drag feet, and take their hands out of their pockets.

They shout at the children to pull their socks up, to stand straight, to say 'thank you', not to cut in, and not to rest their elbows on the table. They try to teach manners, and rules of a cultured life. They also expect the children to think independently and behave nicely.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

WORKING WITH THE POEM

(Page 70)

1. Discuss these questions in small groups before you answer them.

(i) When is a grown-up likely to say this?

Don't talk with your mouth full.

(ii) When are you likely to be told this?

Say thank you.

(iii) When do you think an adult would say this?

No one thinks you are funny.

Ans. (i) A grown-up is likely to say this when you are eating something.

(ii) You are likely to be told to say 'Thank you' when any service is done to you.

(iii) An adult would say this when a child cracks a joke or laughs.

2. The last two lines of the poem are not prohibitions or instructions. **What is the adult now asking the child to do? Do you think the poet is suggesting that this is unreasonable? Why?**

Ans. The adult is asking the child to learn manners and take decisions like grown-ups.

No, the poet is not suggesting that the child is behaving badly. He only wants the child to think and act on his own.

3. **Why do you think grown-ups say the kind of things mentioned in the poem? Is it important that they teach children good manners, and how to behave in public?**

Ans. Grown-ups are in the habit of asking the child to do/not to do something. They mean to guide the latter one how to live and behave nicely. It is important for the children to learn good manners and how to behave in public. Only the elders can teach all this.

4. **If you had to make some rules for grown-ups to follow, what would you say? Make at least five such rules. Arrange the lines as in poem.**

Ans. (i) Don't scold a child, please.

(ii) Let them play and enjoy.

(iii) Don't humiliate a child.

(iv) Love them, and

(v) Let them live with joy.