



The Bird of Happiness

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Notes and Solved Textbook Exercises

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SUMMARY

- In a very poor area in Tibet - no rivers or good land, no warmth or fresh flowers, no trees or green grass.
- The people suffered from hunger and cold and did not know what happiness was like.
- They believed that happiness existed in the form of a beautiful bird that lived on a snowy mountain far away in the east.
- Nobody who went looking for the bird returned. A bright boy named Wangjia was sent to find the Bird of Happiness.
- The girls of the area gave him barley wine and the mothers, in accordance with Tibetan custom, spread barley grains on his head to wish him a good journey.
- After travelling for very long eastwards, Wangjia met three monsters.

Details of Monsters	Wangjia's response	Punishment	Effect on Wangjia
<p>Monster 1 - old, a long black beard, crow like voice. Lived on a mountain that shone like silver.</p> <p><u>Demand</u> - To kill Lousang's mother</p>	<p>"I love my own mother, and I'll never kill another person's."</p>	<p>Monster blew through his beard and changed the smooth road into a scree.</p>	<p>100 miles - Wangjia's boots were ripped apart. 200 miles - Wangjia's feet were cut to pieces. 300 miles - Wangjia's hands were torn to shreds.</p> <p>He then lay on the ground and began to crawl forward - his clothes got torn, his knees and shoulders were bruised.</p>
<p>Monster 2 - was old with a brown beard and a voice like whistling wind.</p> <p><u>Demand</u> - To poison old gaffer Silong</p>	<p>"You can shout for all you are worth! But I am fond of my own grandpa, and I'll never kill another man's!"</p>	<p>Monster blew through his long beard, Wangjia's bread-bag flew into the sky. The blue mountains and green rivers turned into a desert with no food.</p>	<p>100 miles - Wangjia's stomach rumbled in hunger. 200 miles - Wangjia's head swam in hunger, and he began to see stars. 300 miles - he felt sharp pains in his gut like he was being cut by a knife.</p> <p>Wangjia drank cold river water to keep up his strength and continued his journey. He was skin and bone by the end.</p>
<p>Monster 3 - was old with a white beard.</p>	<p>"You must be dreaming! No one has the right to destroy a</p>	<p>Monster blew through his long beard, Wangjia's eyeballs</p>	<p>Wangjia groped the path with his hands and travelled another nine hundred miles in the direction of the rising sun.</p>

<u>Demand</u> - To gouge out Bhima's eyeballs	girl's pretty eyes! I'll never gouge Bhima's eyes!"	jumped out of the sockets, and he was blind.	
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- Once he climbed a snow-covered mountain, he met the Bird of Happiness.
- Wangjia requested the bird to travel back with him to bring warmth, happiness, forests, flowers, fields and rivers to his people.
- The bird caressed Wangjia gently with his wings. All Wangjia's wounds healed, he got back his eyeballs and became stronger than ever. He was also given dried meat and cream cake to eat.
- The bird then travelled back to with Wangjia and gave three loud cries.
At the first cry - the golden sun broke through the clouds and a warm breeze came down from the sky.
At the second cry - forests appeared all over the mountains and peaches and other mountain flowers bloomed on trees. Cries of birds like thrushes and larks could be heard.
At the third cry - green rivers and fields were formed. Little white rabbits also appeared.
- The people in the poor place experienced happiness from that day onwards and never faced hardships again.

Textbook Exercises - Solved

Think about the text

1. "Will I ever make it?" Why did Wangjia feel so?

Answer: When Wangjia refused to obey the first monster's demand to kill Lousang's mother, the monster blew through his beard and turned the landscape into a scree to punish Wangjia. As the boy walked on the scree, his boots were ripped to shreds, his hands and legs tore to pieces and shreds. Through the pain and hardship, he faced, he remembered his people and kept going. However, there were moments where he questioned if he'd be able to make it.

2. What hardships did Wangjia undergo on his way to find the Bird?

Answer: Wangjia underwent several hardships at the hands of the three monsters he met while on his way to find the Bird of Happiness. The first monster asked Wangjia to kill Lousang's mother if he wanted to meet the 'Bird of Happiness'. When Wangjia refused, he blew through his beard and turned the entire landscape into scree. Wangjia had to walk for nine hundred miles, his hands and feet were cut to pieces and his shoulders were bruised. The second monster asked Wangjia to poison old gaffer Silong. When the boy refused, the monster blew through his beard, Wangjia's bread-bag flew into the sky, the blue mountains and green rivers were turned into a boundless desert with not a scrap of food to be found. Wangjia had to walk through another nine hundred miles, starved and drinking only cold water. Lastly, when Wangjia refused to gouge out Bhima's eyeballs as per the third monster's request, it blew through his beard and gouged out Wangjia's eyeballs. Wangjia had to walk blind sensing the direction towards the east based on the sun's position.

3. What changes came over Wangjia as the Bird of Happiness caressed him?

Answer: When the Bird of Happiness caressed Wangjia gently with its wings, his eyeballs that were gouged out by the monster flew back into the sockets. He could see brighter than before, all his wounds healed, and he felt stronger than ever.

4. Wangjia was face to face with three monsters. Each monster had his own wish. Wangjia too had a wish. What contrast do you draw between the wishes of the monsters and the wish of Wangjia? What does the folktale suggest with this contrast?

Answer: The wishes of the monsters were selfish as it was for personal gain, and they wished to hurt others. In contrast, Wangjia's wish to find the Bird of Happiness was a selfless one as he was doing it for the happiness of his village. Also, the monsters didn't seem to be principled as their wishes revolved around hurting and maiming people. However, Wangjia stood by his principles and refused to hurt another person just to make the journey easier for himself. With this contrast, perhaps the folktale wants to suggest that people who are principled and selfless always end up with happiness even if they go through a lot of hardships. Also, that they end up with happiness not only for themselves but for the people around them as well.

5. Read paragraph 1 and paragraphs 28 and 29. What do you understand from them about the meaning of real happiness?

Answer: According to paragraph 1, 28 and 29, the villagers' and Wangjia's definition of happiness involved having forests, flowers, field, rivers and warmth. Since they lived in a cold place and were hungry all year long, it makes sense that the villagers

would want resources that would dispel the discomfort of being cold and provide them with food and shelter. The author perhaps is trying to suggest that true happiness comes from being surrounded by nature. Having our basic necessities met like having warm breeze, forests and fields to obtain food from so that nobody goes hungry, having these basic needs met is sufficient for happiness. Hence happiness lies in the simple and not the extravagant.

6. What do you like the most in the story? Support your answer giving reasons.

Answer: I liked Wangjia's character. He was a brave and persistent child who kept going to achieve his goal despite obstacles and hardships coming his way. Also, the challenges and stories of the monsters was unique to this story. Usually, in folk tales the monsters would recognise the character's righteous nature and reward them, however it was refreshing that the same thing didn't happen in this story.

7. Read the story. Discuss with your partner and fill in the table given below.

Answer:

	Monster's challenges	Wangjia's answer/ action
First monster	Kill Lousang's mother	"I love my own mother, and I'll never kill another person's." Thus, Wangjia refused the monster's demand.
Second monster	Poison old gaffer Silong	"You can shout for all you are worth! But I am fond of my own grandpa, and I'll never kill another man's!" Thus, Wangjia refused the monster's demand.
Third monster	Gouge out Bhima's eyeballs	"You must be dreaming! No one has the right to destroy a girl's pretty eyes! I'll never gouge Bhima's eyes!" Thus, Wangjia refused the monster's demand.

8. We want to lead a happy life. What according to you can make us happy? Some ways are suggested below. Think whether they are practicable or impracticable. Discuss and write them under the two columns appropriately.

Answer:

- working hard to satisfy everybody's wants.
- giving up all selfish desires.
- striking a balance between selfishness and sacrifice.
- working together for the good of all.
- leading a simple contented life
- devoting some time of the day for the good of others.

Practicable	Impracticable
c. striking a balance between selfishness and sacrifice.	a. working hard to satisfy everybody's wants.
d. working together for the good of all.	b. giving up all selfish desires.
e. leading a simple contented life	
f. devoting some time of the day for the good of others.	
