

The Fish King

A story on the power of kindness.

A Jataka tale dedicated to all the children of the world.

Once upon a time, in the distant land of India, there was a majestic fish, the king of fish.

The Fish King was living in a small and beautiful lake covered with white and red lotus flowers, and surrounded by mountains and exuberant prairies full of all kinds of flowers, trees and animals. In this wonderful pond, fish and turtles of all shapes, sizes and colours used to live happily. They would swim, play and jump on the lotus flowers and sing under the water.

“Hurray, hurray”

”Marco!”

”Polo!”

“Fish out of water!”

”What??!!!”

The Fish King loved all the creatures of the lake as if they were their own children. Whenever he could, he helped them and taught them not to hurt each other.

Under his guide, the animals of the pond thrived and grew up well fed and healthy.

But suddenly, something happened. The winter rain did not fall down, and when the spring came, the lake started to dry up.

The water was very important, and would evaporate with each sunrise. When summer approached, the days got hotter and hotter. And still, it wouldn't rain, still no rain, still no rain...

“It's so hot, turtle!”

“Yes, I really feel like taking my shell out for a little while!”

“Ah, I need some water!... I can't move my little tail!”

Days became harder.

A dry wind was blowing on the lake, and day after day the lake was becoming smaller and smaller.

The fish and other creatures of the lake were scared and grieving. In a short time, they were so cramped that the fish and turtles got buried in the mud.

“Hey, you are crushing me, turtle!”

“I'm sorry, but I no longer know where to put myself!”

“I think there is more room in business class“

They were floating in the mud trying to reach the little water remaining.

Upon watching them, the king thought:

“My poor friends are going to die soon.”

The lake had dried up so much that it had the size of a pond, so hawks, crows and other fish-eating birds began to get together around it, knowing that soon food was going to be ready for them.

They would be able to catch as much fish as they wanted.

“Hey crow, look at that delicious turtle! It's enough for the two of us!”

“No, it isn't hawk, it doesn't agree with me and it gives me heartburn. I'm looking at this one with the long tail!”

The Fish King heard the birds talking and thought:

“If our lake keeps getting smaller and smaller every day, how will we be able to escape from these birds? There seems to be no way out, what shall we do?”

At that moment, the love in his heart showed him a way to save his friends. It occurred to him to ask for help. Someone could help them.

Then, the powerful fish began to emerge from the black mud, raised his head out of the water and looked up at the Kingdom of Heaven.

He knew that there was a King of Heaven, his name was Shakra and he could help them.

“Oh King of Heaven, please listen to us!. Although now we are desperate to find food and shelter, we don't want to hurt anybody. Since this is true, please make the rain comedown to fill the lake, and throw flashes of lightning and thunders to frighten the birds off.!”

Upon hearing the words of the Fish King and knowing they were truthful, the gods who govern nature were touched and joined their powers to create clouds

filled with rain. They decorated the clouds with flashes of lightning, and filled the air with the music of thunders. Soon, the sky was full of rain streams that looked like rows of pearls pouring down on the lake in big torrents. The fish started to sing in the pond again.

“I'm singing in the rain
Just singin' in the rain
What a glorious feeling
I'm happy again ...”

Very frightened, the crows, the hawks and the rest of the fish-eating birds flew back to their nests in the trees, protecting themselves from the storm.

“We'll have to eat worms again, crow.”

“Krr, my pigeons are going to complain! I wanted to make a picnic of long tail fish with Misses Raven!”

While the lake was being filled with water, the heart of the Fish King was being filled with happiness. Grateful, he looked up at the sky and smiled. But the rain did not stop; the fields would be flooded soon and the land animals would be forced to leave their homes. Rising once again from the water, the compassionate Fish King exclaimed:

“Oh clouds with thunders and flashes of lightning, thank you for filling up our lake, we can all swim happily again. You've provided enough rain, we already have all the water that we need and even more. In fact, we haven't been able to find the balloon fish for a long time. We are grateful for your generosity, but please stop now!”

In that precise moment, the rain stopped. The clouds were dissolved, and finally the sun shone softly on the lake.

Suddenly, with a roar of heaven Shakra appeared, eager to greet the Fish King.

“Oh oh oh, Dear Fish King, This magnificent rain was caused by the power of your truth, King of Fish! Thanks to your love and compassion, this lake won't dry off anymore. And now, allow me: just as I appeared, I disappear!”

After these words, Shakra disappeared and all the fish got together with joy.

“Helloooo, long tail fish!!!! Where were you?”

“I don’t know, the stream took me far away. But I’ve already returned. Give me a hug!!!”

“Hurray, thank you, Fish King. Thank you, rain. Thank you, King of Heaven!!!”

Every following year, the rain always came on time, and the lake and land around it became more plentiful than ever. For many years more, the Fish King and his friends lived happily in the sweet-smelling lake crammed with and full of lotuses.

Do you know why? Because the King knew how to ask for help and also trusted that he would receive such help. What this story is teaching us, is to ask with the heart.