

The magic of patience.
A story on kindness.
A Jataka tale dedicated to all the children of the world.

Once upon a time, there was a big wild buffalo that was living in the deepest part of an Indian jungle. On the outside, he looked severe and intimidating, but on the inside, he had a wise, kind heart. He was the best creature in the world...

But in the same jungle, there also lived a very, very naughty and crazy little monkey that devoted himself to bother the buffalo day after day. Really! Every single day...

Do you want to know what this crazy Little monkey used to do?

Whenever the buffalo wanted to eat his truly tasty green grass, the monkey showed up and sat right on the grass that the buffalo was about to chew, while saying: "We'll see, we'll see... We'll see if you can eat." Every time the poor buffalo wanted to bathe in the river, do you know what the monkey would do? He would jump to his head, cover his eyes, and sing: "Hey big buffalo, watch your feet, watch your feet...! Hey big buffalo, Don't you slip, don't you slip!"

Poor buffalo!, whenever he tried to lie asleep and take a well- deserved nap, the terrible monkey showed up and, while jumping on his back, he sang: "Let's go for a ride, ride, ride... or I will jump until tonight."

Unbelievable as it may seem, the buffalo never got angry with the monkey ("Hey big buffalo, I touch you, I don't touch you...") and never tried to scare him off. As patient as a tree, he used to bear all the foolish things that the monkey did ("the air is free, the air is free...") and always treated him like a friend. That buffalo was a really special creature.

One day, a magic spirit of the forest saw the jokes of the annoying monkey and got furious! "Hey buffalo, why do you bear this annoying monkey? Why? He is too irritating. Are you afraid of him? By the way, did he turn you into his slave? I don't get it!!!

Does he know about any secret of yours and threaten to reveal it? What a trouble-maker!! Oh!! He angers me so much!

I mean, buffalo, even the strongest lions are afraid of your anger! You could squash him like mashed potatoes with those hooves of yours and make him look like a colander with those horns! You could make him fly away like a feather duster with a slap of your tail!

The buffalo, who was listening without batting an eyelid, answered: "You know, spirit of the forest, there's something that I've learnt all these years and I'd like to share it with you: anger doesn't lead to happiness. Actually, although the little monkey is a rock in my hooves, he does a favour to me by helping me dominate my anger and cultivate my patience. By learning to be kind, I protect myself and others. I feel peace in my heart when I'm patient. And yes, the monkey is really a pain in the neck. But getting angry with him would only make my heart feel uneasy, and it's possible that I'll end up hurting someone, which I'll regret later."

The spirit of the forest scratched his head and continued without understanding.

“But Buffalo, this nitwit’s jokes will get worse and worse if you don’t teach him a good lesson.” “He has to learn!.”

The buffalo, very calmly and while smoothing over his hooves with a stone, said to him: "I can assure you, my friend, that it’s better to be patient. I’ve learnt that patience can awake the deepest feelings. It’s true that the little monkey is the champion of the blockheads but, just like every creature, he also has a true heart.”

The spirit of the forest, who knew a lot about magic and spells to make rain appear, to protect the jungle, to make the grass grow, but did not know what to do with a joker yet, was impressed.

“Yes! Let’s tear out his h... Patience?! What a wonderful amulet! Could you teach me what I can do to have it? Hurry up, I want to use that protection amulet right now!!”

The buffalo, who was meekly smoothing over his horns with an aloe leaf, replied:

“To practise patience, you need the help of a real scoundrel. It’s no use practising it with good, kind creatures; that is easier than stealing a nut from a squirrel! What you need is a naughty little monkey just like mine!”

“No!! Your monkey is more annoying than a stone elephant falling over us! If he tried to bother me, he’d bump into one of my tricks!!!!”

“Do you realize that you’re really cranky? Look spirit of the forest, it’s not easy to cultivate patience. But I kept on trying; it’s actually a magic amulet.”

Then the buffalo noticed that one of his hooves was a little bit untidy. So, veeeery slowly, he started to smooth it over again with a stone. Meanwhile, he kept on saying: "I learnt to be patient by thinking about the annoying little monkey. Surely, his character’s going to get him into trouble. Sooner or later, he’ll anger a fierce animal and he’ll get a huge drubbing.”

No sooner had the buffalo said that, than he stopped smoothing over his hooves, stared at a cloud that was passing by for a while, and continued: "Poor monkey! He must be so lonely! Nobody wants to be near him, everybody wants him out of their way. Poor little monkey, he must be so confused! He uses his faults, not his virtues, turning all his cleverness and energy into dumb, heavy jokes. I feel sorry for the little monkey and I don’t want to make him more upset than he probably is.”

"If I look at it that way," said the spirit of the forest, "perhaps I will also learn to be more patient, even with that crazy shaggy tailed monkey." And away he flew to practise this new magic called patience.

And they all lived happily...

Oh, no!! Hold on! Something else happened....

Just at that moment, the monkey, who had been hidden in the trees and had listened to everything, showed up.

"But buffalo, I didn't know that you were such a good friend of mine. I thought I didn't have a single friend. You're so good and strong being so patient with a naughty monkey like me. Anyway, those things like "champion of the blockheads" and "scoundrel" were completely out of place!!!. Well, whatever... I just wanted to apologize for bothering you so much. Buffalo, do you want to be my friend?"

The buffalo made himself comfortable in the shade of a tree and said to the monkey: "Yes, of course.... But er... now please let me take a nap."

(Snoring)