

MUNIKA THE PIG (Munika Jataka)



A long time ago, a cow had two calves on a big farm. There were many other animals on the farm, including chickens, dogs, pigs, horses and goats. Many different types of vegetables were grown on the farm.

The older calf was named Big Red and his younger brother was named Little Red.

When they were very young, they enjoyed watching the farmer, his family and the other animals on the farm.



They especially liked to watch the little pig playing around the farm all by himself.

His name was Munika.

Big Red and Little Red were always together, and enjoyed many days running in the cool

grass, exploring the farm, and relaxing in the shade underneath the big trees.



But when they got older, the farmer trained Big Red and Little Red to pull a cart.

Soon, they had to work very hard every day. They pulled a cart whenever the family wanted to travel to the town.



They pulled a heavy plough in the hot sun so the farmer could grow the vegetables.



They pulled a cart heavily loaded with vegetables to sell at the market, and then they pulled the cart, heavily loaded with all of the items the family bought, back to the farm.

At the end of the day, their muscles hurt from all the hard work they did.



But Munika! Munika never did any work!

He happily trotted around the farm, playing and rolling in the mud every day.



And, he was fed a lot of rice and tasty food, just like the food that the farmer's family ate.



He got to eat some really delicious food!



Little Red noticed this, and said to his brother,
“You and I have to pull all the heavy loads for the farmer every day, and all they give us for our hard work is cheap grass and straw to eat. And look at that pig. That Munika! He is being fed all the very best and most delicious food! He gets everything he wants! He doesn’t have to work hard. Why is he being treated so much better than we are?”



Big Red said, “My dear brother, don’t be jealous of him. It’s not good for you to feel envy. It makes you feel terrible. Plus, you don’t have to be jealous of anyone. You never know what will happen to them in the future. But you will have a good future, because you are kind, caring and helpful. Do you know, the farmer’s daughter will be married soon to a young man in the nearby town? Munika the pig is being given such nice food to fatten him so he will be eaten by the guests at the wedding.”

He continued, “Just wait, soon you will see the guests coming, and you will see that pig will get pulled out of the barn by his legs, and killed, and cooked over a fire. So don’t envy poor Munika. Be content with your simple food. It will give you a long and healthy life.”

A few days later, sure enough, the guests began to arrive for the wedding. Poor Munika was killed and cooked, and his meat was made into several types of food.



Big Red said to his little brother, “Did you see what happened to Munika?”

I knew what would happen with Munika feasting on all that rich food.

A hundred times better, or 1000 times better, is our simple food of grass and straw, because it

doesn’t harm us and we can live a good and long life.”

Questions (answers in parentheses):

1. What did Munika get that Little Red wanted ? (delicious food)
2. What was Munika allowed to do on the farm, that Little Red wished he could do? (play and not have to work hard)
3. Was Little Red feeling jealous of Munika? (yes)
4. Was Munika actually lucky by getting a lot of good food? (no)
5. What good qualities did Little Red have that will give him a good future? (he is kind, caring and helpful)
6. What did Red teach Little Red at the end of the story?
(to be happy with what he has, with simple food of grass and straw)

What the Buddha said:

“You should not dislike what you have received, and you should not envy what others have.”

(Dhammapada 365)

DHARMA DISCUSSION - Envy:

Little Red was jealous of Munika.

He wanted to have the tasty food and freedom that Munika had.

“Jealousy” usually means the same thing as “envy.”

What does “jealousy” or “envy” mean?

It means wishing to have something that someone else has.

Or wishing to be like someone else.

Can you think of some examples of what people have that makes others jealous?

Money, lots of free time, a new toy, new clothes.

People are often jealous of another person’s success, for example, envying someone’s popularity, success in a sport, or good grades in school.

Do you ever feel, “I wish I could be like that”?

It’s an uncomfortable feeling when we want what someone else has.

We’re comparing what we have with what someone else has,

And we feel irritable that what we have isn’t good enough.

Envy makes us not appreciate what we have; we want something else, so we feel unhappy.

We might feel unfriendly or even hostile toward a person who has something better than what we have.

Like what Big Red said in the story, “It’s not good for you to feel envy. It makes you feel terrible.”

But what if we had everything we want – would we still feel envy?

Yes! Because even if we were rich, attractive, and successful, there is always someone who has more or better than we have.

Even the richest, most popular and most successful people feel envy!

What can we do to avoid it?

First, we can learn to enjoy what we already have.
Think about the good things that we have now - the kind people we know, our nice family, our good health, a place to live.
This is called contentment.

Next, we should notice that irritable feeling that arises when someone has something that we want to have.

Then, remember what we learned from the story of Munika.

The person may be lucky to have something special now, but in the future, we may be much luckier than him or her.

If we live according to Dharma, being kind, not hurting others, then we will have a good future, we will get what we need.

The next time we see someone who has something that we like, remember the story of Munika!

Let others enjoy what they have.

You can also try to feel happy for someone who is successful.

Just like when we're glad when our best friends do really well or get something they really wanted, try to practice feeling glad in the same way when people who aren't your best friends do something well or get something nice.

Trying to be glad for them is a much better feeling than that terrible feeling of jealousy!

ACTIVITY:

Fill in the blank from the word list below

1. _____ means being happy with what we have.
2. Wanting something that someone else has is called _____.
3. We should not _____ what we have with what others have.
4. If we follow _____ by being kind, then we will have a good future.
5. We feel _____ when we are jealous.
6. _____ means not fancy, elaborate, expensive or luxurious.

Word list:

COMPARE

CONTENTMENT

ENVY

DHARMA

SIMPLE

UNHAPPY