



The Water Bearer

There once lived a water bearer in eastern India. He had two large buckets. These hung on either side of a yoke that the water bearer carried over his shoulders. There was a crack in one of the buckets. The other bucket was still completely intact.

The bucket without a crack was still completely full when the water bearer from the river came back to his master's house. The other broken bucket was only half full.

That went on for years. The water bearer delivered only one and a half buckets of water to his master every day. Of course, the perfect bucket was a source of great pride because it did exactly what it was made to do. But the poor bucket with a crack was ashamed. He felt sad because he could only perform half of what you would expect from a bucket. One day the broken bucket by the river started talking to the water bearer.

"I'm so ashamed of myself and I want to say sorry to you."

"Why?" asked the water bearer, "why are you so ashamed?"

"Because in recent years I could only deliver half a bucket of water. Because of that crack on my side, so much water leaks out of me on the way from the river to your boss's house. Because I can't do it, you have to work so hard. And you don't get what you deserve," the bucket replied.

The water bearer smiled at the broken bucket. He wanted to comfort the bucket and said, "When we go back to my boss's house, pay close attention to those beautiful flowers on the side of the road."

And indeed, as they walked up the hill, the cracked bucket saw the beautiful wildflowers along the side of the road and that brought him some comfort. But at the end of the trip, he felt very sad again because half of the water had drained away. He apologised again to the water carrier, because he had again failed to deliver a full bucket.

The water bearer looked at the bucket. "Haven't you noticed that flowers only grow on your side of the road and not on the other bucket's side? I always knew you were leaking. And that's why I planted flower seeds on your side of the road. And every time we came back from the river you gave water. And so all these years I have been able to pick beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. If you weren't the way you are, his house would never look so beautiful."

Source: Kleur op school 5.1, groep 5-6, Adaptation by Jeroen Hoogerwerf of a Buddhist story from India



Another version of the story can be found here: [The Invaluable Treasure | Jataka Tales Stories of Wisdom | Funny stories for kids! | Read in English](#)

Questions to Reflect on the story

- *What was the most beautiful thing in the story?*
- *In the story, the broken bucket thinks it is worthless. Is that true?*
- *Do you also have something that you are not good at and that you are ashamed of?*
- *What did the bucket prove to be good at?*
- *Was the bucket that wasn't broken perfect?*
- *Can anyone be perfect? Why or not?*
- *How can you be more like the water bearer?*