

Watchman of the lake

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1. Why was the headman in a hurry to complete the road Work?

The headman was in a hurry to complete the road work because the king was to arrive to the village next day.

2.The village headman asked Mara to keep away from the road workers because.

He did not want Mara to disturb his workers who were building the road for the King's arrival.

3.How did Mara manage to draw the attention of the King? Why?

Mara who had hid himself among the branches of the tree Jumped down and appeared before the king when he was about to pass on his way.

Mara did so because he was desperate to tell the King about his dream. And also what goddess had revealed to him in his dream.

4.The goddess' command to Mara was to

Tell the King to build a tank for veda and not let her leave the village. They had to give her a home.

5.How does the King respond to mara's information about the tank?

The King does not doubt Mara of his dreams and said him that he had the grace of God upon him and his words were weighty. He asked Mara to accompany him to the capital.

6.what does mara Advise his son in saving the Lake and the creatures.?

Mara told his son that after he was gone, his son had to be the Watchman of the lake. He advised him on what he had to do with the killers who come with the arrows for the gulls which skim over the water or with a rod for the fish in the lake.

He said him the command of the goddess.As per her command, nothing that Flies or swims or walks in the part of the Lake should ever be killed, even the Tiger that comes at night to slake its thirst has to be left untouched. He had to safeguard the Lake and allow nobody to fish or pollute it.

7.Why did the visitor approach Mara?

The visitor approached Mara because he needed water for the crops which had parched up and for the cattle which were dying of drought.

8.Mara rushed to the King because he wanted to save.

- a) his own life.
- b) the King.
- c) the Lake

In this play, when the Goddess appeared in Mara's dream for the first time and commanded him to tell the king to build a tank and not to let Veda leave the village and also to give her a home. Mara dutifully agreed and repeated the Goddess command to the king. He told the king that the river Veda is her own plaything and that which carries in its bosom the nectar which revives Gods and nourishes the mortals. But when the summer sun bakes the soil, she keeps her pet sheltered in the cool glades of the mountain, and then people die of drought. When summer ends and people have the water again, they take what they want and allow the precious stream to dissipate perish in the foul marshes far off. So she had commanded the king to build the tank for her. Here we can see that nature acting so protective, trying to preserve her quality for the good cause of animals and mankind but she can be also destructive where she cause flood and devastate everything .when man acts selfish and greedy and try to over rule nature and control it, then the nature gives him a good answer and teaches him a lesson by ways of destruction. In this play, we can see the furious Goddess who appears in Mara's dream for the second time and threatens to destroy the tank and the village. She says Veda was her plaything and it was her mood to destroy it.

So nature is unpredictable. It is our duty to protect her. If we protect her, she will definitely protect us. But today we can see the man's destructive attitude towards the nature and we are experiencing the way the nature is avenging us in different ways. It is like the proverb, "as we sow shall we reap"

Nature can be protective by giving us different sources of water,rain,crops, natural vegetation , favourable climate etc. At the same time it can be destructive in terms of flood, famine, uneven rainfall and climate etc..

3. How differently did Mara treat the fisherman and the visitor?

When Mara saw a man fishing in the lake, he runs towards the lake and shouts at him to go from that place. He also tells him that he had been the watchman of the lake for years. Mara warns and threatens him that if he found him again with the rod and the hook, he would push him into the lake and the fish would feed on him. He also told that he was the master of that place and the king had made him so and it was Mara who gave Veda her home and so she stays and nourishes the corn fields of the king's subjects. By the king's order Mara watches every stone with which the tank is built and he opens the gate to let water into the fields. He also tells him how much water to give and when to stop and that he tends the lake and see that it is not polluted by man or beast. Even the village headman who once best and bullied him had to beg him his permission he wants to touch the water. He told the fisherman that he was the king and no one dare question him. Thus Mara treats the fisherman very rudely.

When the visitor arrived there, Mara treats him very differently. He invites him to his hut and also offers to have some food. The visitor had come to ask Mara water for the parched up crops and for the cattle which were dying of drought. Mara gladly agreed to give the water and said that the was for all the king's subjects to use for good cause. He also told him that he would come with him to see where he could lay the channels and as soon as it was done, he could have the water.

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Note: only important questions are given from the third comprehension.

Answer c.

9. Mara was trembling at the King's palace because

- a) he was afraid of the King.
- b) he was drenched in the rain.
- c) he was worried about the lake.

Answer c.

10. On what condition did Mara make the goddess wait for him?

On the condition that the goddess Will not carry out her act of devastation until Mara's return from the capital, after informing the King about the breaking of the banks of the tank.

Comprehension II

1. what was the significance of Mara's dream?

Mara gets two dreams in the course of the play. The first time it is the dream of the goddess who urges Mara to get a tank built for River veda so that she could find a home for herself. The power of veda was such that it revived the Gods and nourished mortals and it is the very lifeblood of the king's subjects.

During rainy season, Veda flows to its fullest in the village, people take the water to their content and allow the remaining precious water to dissipate and perish in the foul marshes far off.

During summer, the water of Veda is dried up and people would suffer of drought, so it was necessary to give her a home building a tank for herself. Mara wanted the King to understand that the preserved water would be of great use to the subjects And the people of Sakkarepattana would never be deprived of water even in the hottest summer. The water was not be wasted, rather should be used properly, and wisely.

The second time Mara dreamt that the same goddess was furious that her plaything Veda had been imprisoned in the man made bank and Mara reminds her that it was at her behest the bank was built. The goddess who was in the mood of destruction, retorts that she was then ready for devastation. When Mara realises that nothing can stop the goddess from the act of destruction, he sacrifices himself in order to save the King and his Kingdom. If this is one significant aspect of the dream, there is one more point full of wrath. Maybe the Goddess is displeased by the selfish people who try to exploit the water in the bank for their own good and wants to teach them a lesson. Even here it was Mara's that comes to the forefront. The significance of the dreams is that we have no control over divine design yet if we have the nobility of Mara we can escape the destructive edge of divine plan.

2. What instructions did Mara give his son about the lake and the creatures ? What light do these instructions throw on Mara's character?

Mara instructed his son Ganga he should become the Watchman of the lake after Mara's death. He also said him what he has to do with the killers . whether they come with arrow for the gulls which skim over the water, or with the rods for the fish, they should not be allowed to do so, for

the place is sacred and it belonged to the goddess. And her command is such that nothing that flies or swims or walks in the parts of lake should ever be killed. Even the Tiger that comes down the mountain, slaking its thirst has to be left untouched.

These instructions of Mara shows that he is very much concerned towards protecting the lake. He wants to obey the command of the goddess and wants to protect the lake at any cost. He is a dedicated Watchman and never mind to restrict any man or beast polluting the water of the lake. He is also authoritative and oppose the people who come to fish or kill the creatures of the lake. Yet he does not deny anyone to have the water for irrigation or for the cattle.

3. Bring out the significance of the sacred spot that Mara describes to the king?

Mara tells the King that the place where he was standing, was a sacred spot where once stood the great Hanuman on the day Lakshmana was wounded in the battle – field at Lanka and lay in a deadly faint. Guided by the omens Hanuman Came there and then he went up the mountain to find sanjeevini. There on its Crest, he found Sanjeevani and flew to Lanka with it and Lakshmana rose to his feet with a new life. Such was the power of Sanjeevini and where it grew there arose a stream which came down the mountain and flows down as 'Veda' Which the water is the very lifeblood of the king's subjects.

4. How did Mara react to the Goddess when she appeared before him for

a.the first time?

b. The second time?

The Goddess appeared before Mara in his dream and the vision was such that had never seen of that kind before. She stood before him, her tresses flying wild in the wind; there were stars in her coronet; a ruby as big as the eyes of the Elephant sparkled on her forehead for a red mark; her garment was of gold woven with lightning. Mara looked at her and understood it was the Goddess .He fell at her feet and listened to her command. Mara dutifully agreed to her command and eagerly waited for the king's arrival to deliver the Goddess's command.

When the Goddess appeared in Mara's dream for the second time, she stood before him spreading her tresses wild, her eyes gleamed with a strange light; she carried a sword in her hand and she had splashed her forehead with vermilion. Mara cowered at the sight of her. The Goddess was in a destructive mood. She said Mara that she was the Goddess of the lake and the river Veda was her plaything. She commanded to clear his hut at once. The Goddess told him that she was going to kick away the miserable stones that had piled up to imprison the waters of her Veda, and now she was going to destroy the tank. Mara said her that the tank was built at her command. But the Goddess replied affirmatively. And also said that it was her mood that she wants to destroy then, for , Veda was her plaything. She created it when she wanted it and would splash away its waters when she liked. And no one would dare stop her. Mara pleaded with her pointing out to her the vastness of the lake. But the Goddess laughed at it and flourished her sword. Mara again pleaded with her for hours to spare them and have pity on the poor mortals. But the Goddess was not to be moved. Mara fell on the wet ground, prostrated before her and begged. Finally, Mara took a grant from her that she would carry out her devastation only when she finds Mara back from the capital after informing the king about the destruction. Till then The Goddess had to stay her hand. At the end Mara sacrificed his life to save the village and the people and also saved the lake from destruction.

COMPREHENSION III.

2. "Nature is both protective and destructive." How does the play bring out this idea.