

# *Mother's Boundless Love*



by

G. K. ANANDA KUMARASIRI



Holistic Education Books

Published by:  
Human Development and Peace (HDP) Foundation

President : Ambassador Dato' Dr G. K. Ananda Kumaraseri  
373/47B Ambuldeniya Lane,  
Old Kottawa Road, Nugegoda,  
Sri Lanka.

Malaysian address:  
No: 3, Jalan 14/37, 46100 Petaling Jaya,  
Selangor Darul Ehsan,  
Malaysia.

Tel. No: (603) 79584182 or (603) 79310731  
or 60- 123911942 or (603)56315299  
or (603) 56348181

Fax No: (603) 56315262

Email: akumaraseri@yahoo.com. or sjba@po.jaring.my

Website: www.livingbybuddhism.com

Illustrator: Gamini Weerasinghe

Printed By: Cybergate Services (Pvt) Ltd.  
57 A, Sri Soratha Mawatha, Gangodawila,  
Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.  
Tel: +942801283  
E-mail: info@cybergate.lk  
Web: www.cybergate.lk

ISBN: 978-955-7711-01-0

January 2015

© A. Kumaraseri

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

## About the Author



Ambassador Dato' Dr. G.K. Ananda Kumara-seri was a distinguished career ambassador. (1966-1995). He has the rare distinction of setting up and heading the Centre for International Relations and Strategic Studies (1979-1981) for the Malaysian public service. The assignment stimulated his interest in education, human resource development and professional training. He retired in 1995 as Director-General ASEAN. He is the founder president of the Human Development and Peace (HDP) Foundation. Apart from being appointed Adjunct Professor at University Utara Malaysia, he is an active Dhamma speaker, giving regular public talks across the country and abroad. He has authored several landmark books:

- My First Word Book: Buddhist Pedagogical Approach
- A Compendium of Buddhist Personal Names: Heritage and Significance of Adoption
- Living Buddhism: The Way Forward
- Living Buddhism: Advancing from Knowing to Being
- My Alphabet Book : Buddhist Pedagogical Approach
- SIDDHARTHA : The Prince of Peace
- Professional Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs Management: An Ambassador's Insight
- Siddhartha : My First Story Book

- The Way of Siddhartha : Glorious Righteous Prince
- The Terrifying Drug Menace: Relevance and Role of Buddhism
- Welcoming the Birth of a Child
- Angulimala : Transforming Life
- Matu Posaka : Joy of Honouring Parents
- Mothercare and Parenting: Key to Social Structuring.
- King Bimbisara the Great: A Father's Unremitting Love
- SIDDHARTHA : Colouring and Drawing Book
- Glorious Prince Siddhartha
- The Great Matu Posaka
- Dhamma Weera : Wise Student of Nagaloka
- Nipunna : The Expert Archer of Taxila

Soma and Karuna lived in a village in Sri Lanka. They were blessed with a handsome son who they loved very dearly. They named him Priya, (love) because of the immense joy his birth had brought into their lives.

Both Soma and Karuna spent many joyful times with Priya. Each day after working hard in the rice field, Karuna would return home and delightfully play with his little Priya. Soma would join her beloved Karuna as soon as she completed cooking dinner and cleaning up the kitchen. Priya also happily welcomed the playful times that he had the good fortune to spend with his loving and caring parents.

As Priya grew up, he proved a smart lad. He consistently obtained good grades in his year-end school exams. His teachers had high praise for the diligence he always showed in his studies. His parents naturally had high hopes for him to do well in life.



Map of Sri Lanka

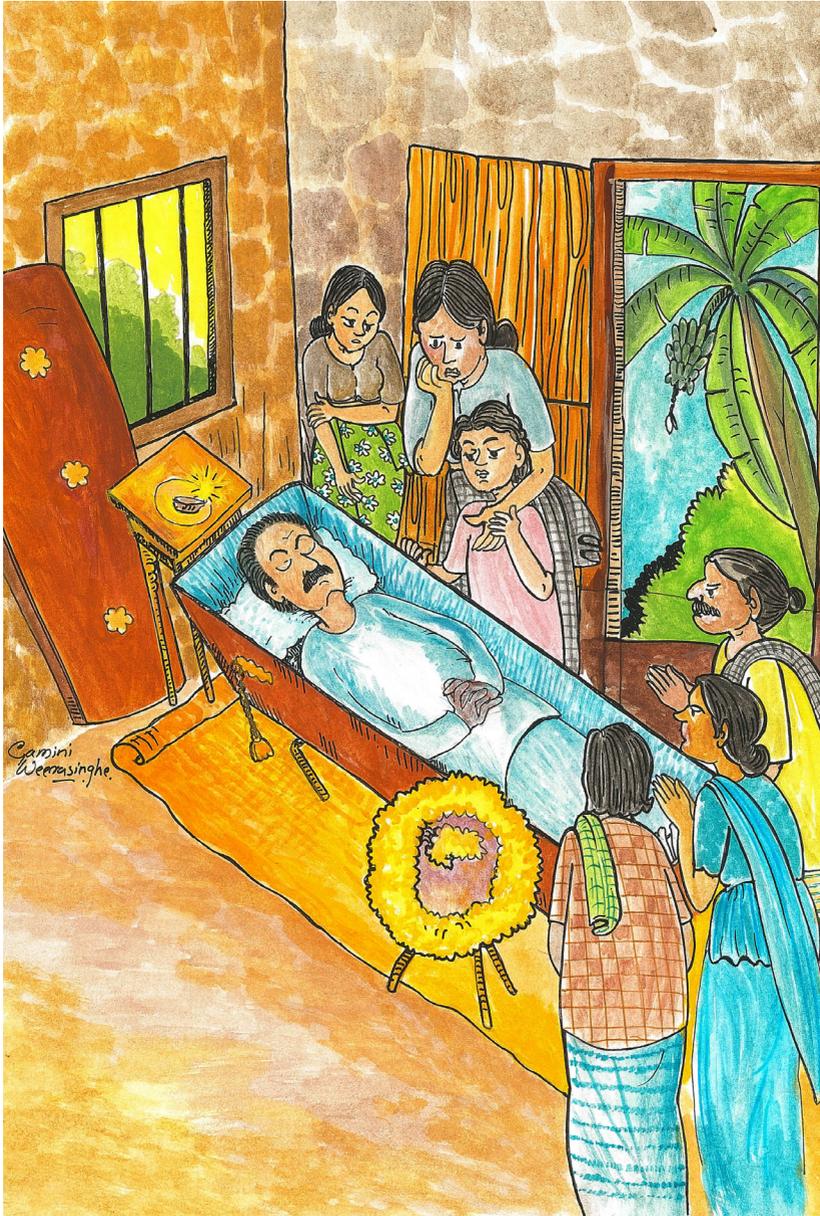


The happy family

Karuna and Soma were proud of Priya's steady progress in school. They vowed that they would do everything possible to provide him a good education. They knew that this would enable him to live a comfortable family life of his own in the capital city of Colombo when he grows up. Otherwise, he would have to work laboriously in the rice fields throughout the year like his father. From his personal experience Karuna knew only too well the hardships entailed in a farmer's life.

One fateful day, when Priya was still a child, Karuna did not return from working in the rice fields. He was bitten by a very poisonous king cobra on his way home. Soma and little Priya were struck by deep sadness. The great laughter and delight that usually filled their home was suddenly replaced with a blanket of sorrow.

Priya could not accept the unexpected death of Karuna. He just could not understand why his father's life had to suddenly end just like a flame that is blown out by the wind. He cried his heart

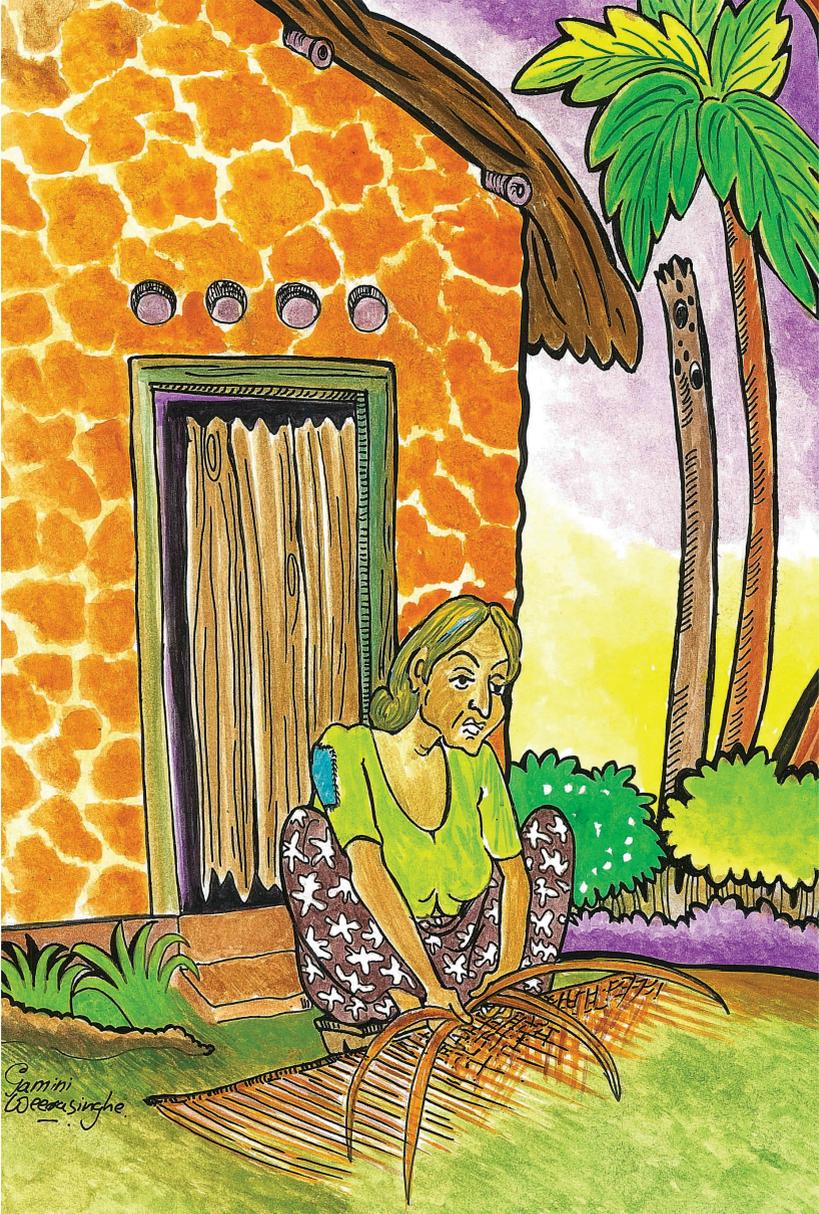


Unexpected death of Karuna

out wailing why he had to be robbed of his loving dad. The elders tried to console him. They explained the brutal reality of death that everyone must face one day. Even so, he could not accept the truth that, “Life is uncertain, but that death is certain”. He just cried and cried until there were no more tears to shed.

Life was never the same for Soma and Priya after Karuna’s sudden death. Soma now had to work and earn money for the family. She worked as a maid in several houses and did back-breaking odd jobs from time to time in order to earn some extra money for her dearest Priya’s future. Despite her overworked limbs and tired body, she went to labour in the rice fields for long hours, especially during the harvesting season when more hands are needed.

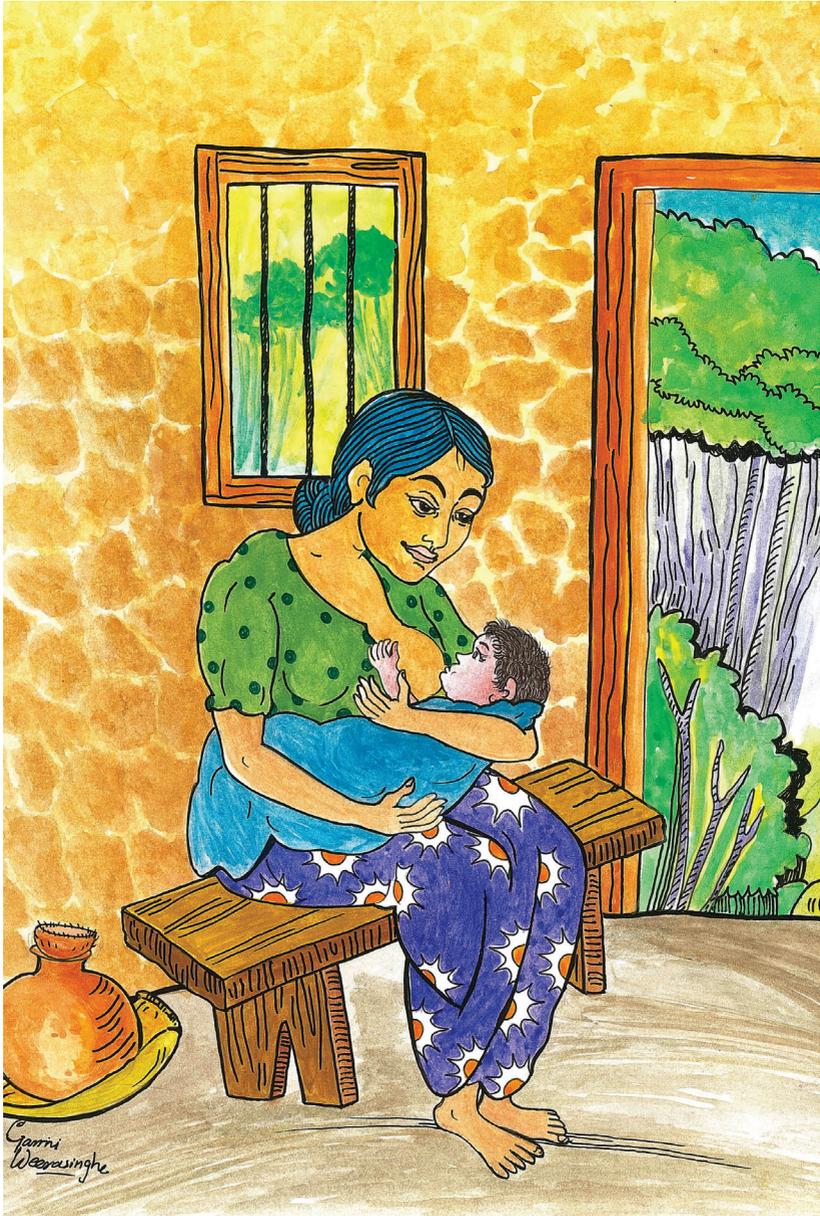
Soma was such a devoted mother that she did not care one bit about the hardships she had to go through to bring up Priya. Her mind was totally fixed on providing for his needs and com-



Soma works hard to bring up Priya

forts as best as she could. She did not think twice about sacrificing her own health and well-being in order to ensure that Priya had a good education and a great career. She was determined to see that he would secure a high-salaried job in one of the big firms in Colombo when he grows up. Her singular goal was to ensure that he enjoyed a comfortable city-life of his own. Such was her boundless love for her dearest Priya.

Soma's love for Priya in fact began from the moment he was growing in her womb. She sought the advice of older experienced mothers about childbirth. She also read the ancient scriptures on how best to nurture her unborn baby. Accordingly, she took special care to eat the right foods for the healthy growth of her unborn baby. Even while Priya was curled up inside her womb, she would talk to him with great affection and radiate loving thoughts towards him. Along with her late Karuna, they would express their aspiration to be blessed with a wonderful child. So it came as no surprise to the loving couple to be blessed



Soma's boundless love for Priya

with a cheerful brown-eyed bundle of joy when Priya was born.

Soma's love for baby Priya was beyond measure. For example, when it came to breast-feed baby Priya, she would tenderly encourage him to suckle as much milk as he desired. She did this to such a degree that Karuna would caution her to be careful about the toll this would have on her future health. He would advise her that over-feeding Priya with her breast-milk, could drain her body of essential nutrients.

However, Soma's deep love for Priya overruled such concerns. She would reply in her characteristic tender motherly smile, "It's perfectly alright, dearest husband, let our Priya draw as much of my breast-milk as he pleases. I want him to be strong and healthy with the mother's milk I nourish him. Please do not be unduly worried about my future health. I am sure I can replenish the loss of minerals and hormones in my body in good time."



Soma recalls her pregnancy

Priya grew up to be a strong and intelligent young man. He attended college and passed out as an engineer with flying colours. Soma could not hold back her tears of joy at Priya's graduation ceremony. She hugged him as if he was still a little baby. How she wished Karuna was alive to share the joyful moment of their son's success.

Within a week of his graduation, Priya was able to secure a good job in a leading engineering firm in Colombo. Here he befriended a beautiful girl named Chaturi. She hailed from a rich family residing in the city. She worked as an accountant in the same firm. After a few years of courtship, the couple got married and lived separately in their newly built bungalow in the outskirts of the city.

As the years rolled on, both Priya and Chaturi were well into their married life. The young couple were fully caught up with the city-lifestyle. Most of Priya's free time was spent with his attractive wife. They were constantly occupied

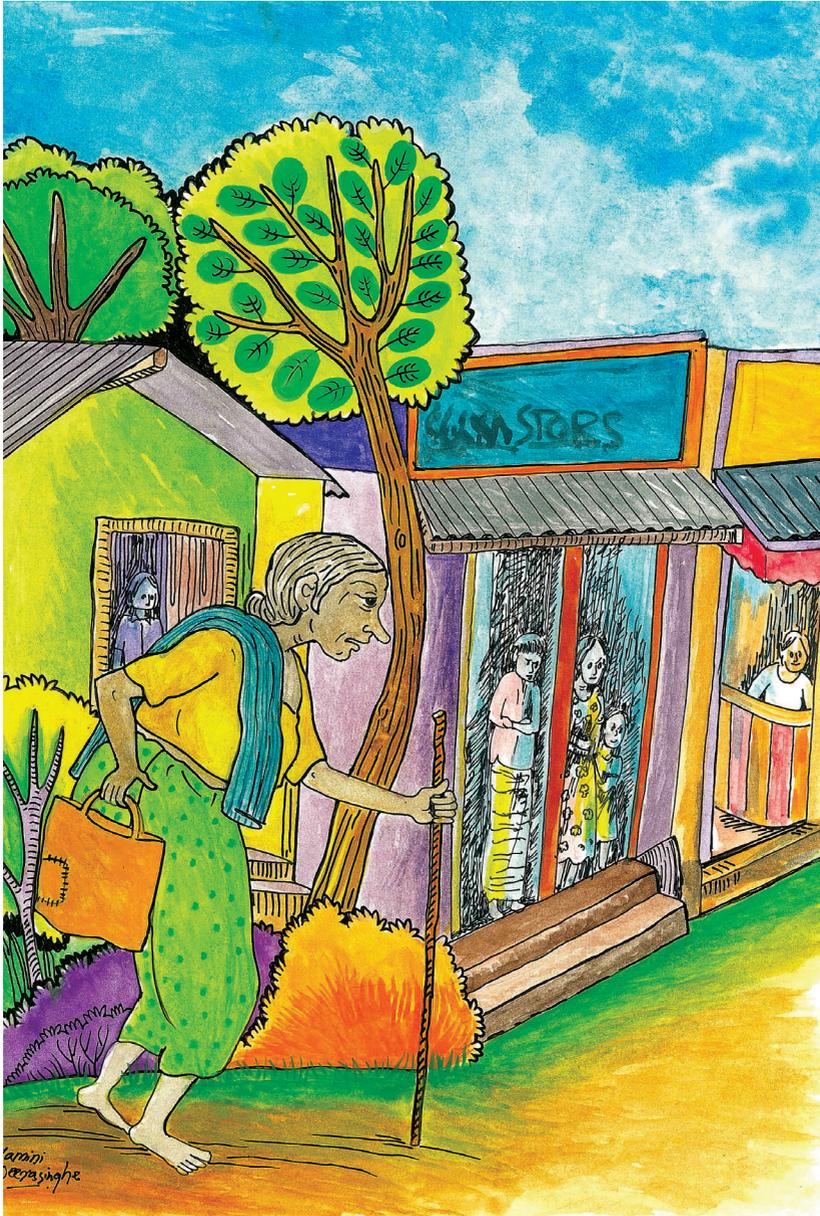


The newly wedded couple, Chaturi and Priya

with the activities and leisurely outings that came along with their successful careers. Priya was so engrossed with creating a fortune and enjoying life with Chaturi that he forgot about his aged mother who continued to live in the village all by herself.

On her part, Soma deliberately kept to herself. Her typical motherly instinct made her believe that Priya had responsibilities of his own. She strongly felt that she should not add to his burden and cause him even the slightest anxiety or difficulty. In the course of time, Soma became feeble. She was no longer able to work. Life became tough for her. Many a night, she would debate in her mind whether to visit Priya to seek help. But then again, she did not want to disturb or burden him with having to relieve her misery. Being the ever thoughtful and caring mother, she could not but think that Priya had responsibilities of his own to fulfil.

As she grew older and feebler, life became really

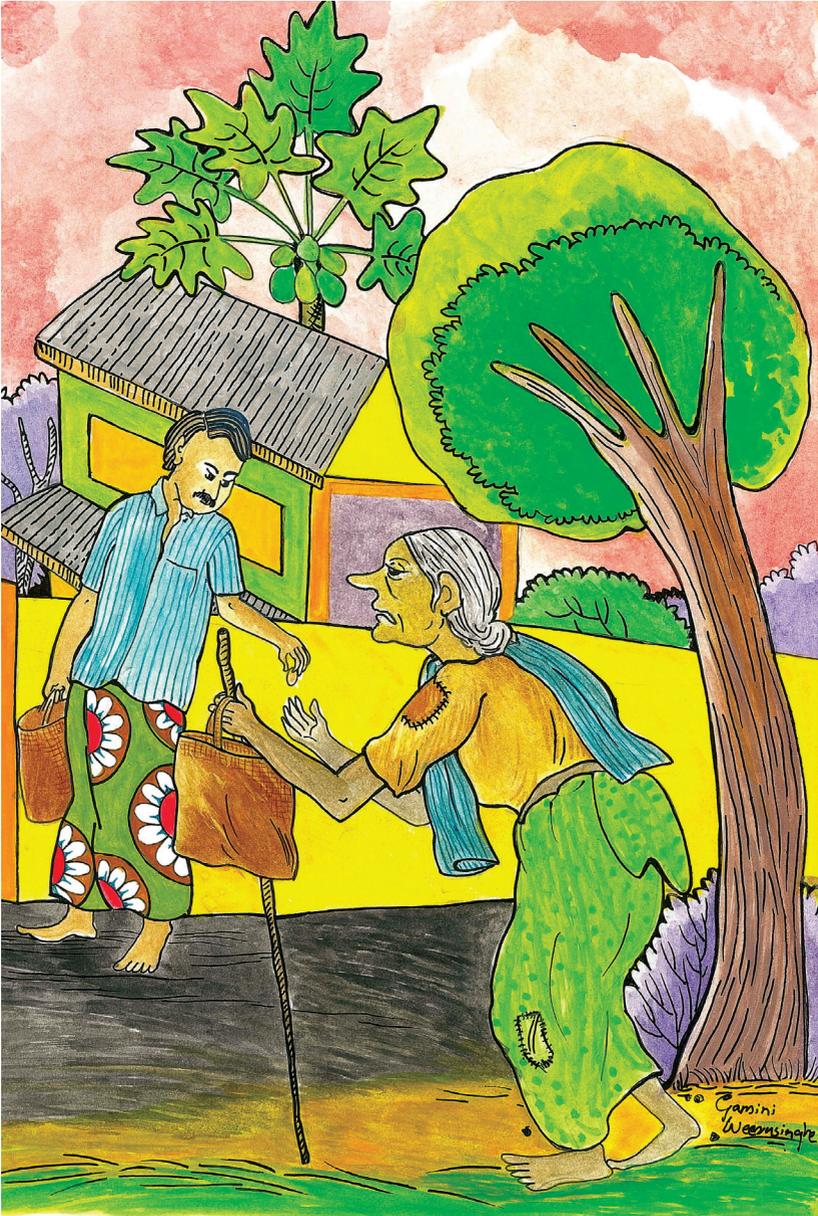


Soma struggles to earn a living

difficult for Soma and she had to beg. There were days when she would go without any food. She was now driven to the point of utter desperation to seek Priya's help. So one blistering hot sunny morning, Soma trekked to Priya's house in the city. The journey was long and arduous for her frail body. She was parched. Pangs of hunger kept gripping at her stomach. Her starved body was about to buckle under its own weight. The thought of seeing her beloved son after so many years was the only thing that kept her going.

As Soma approached Priya's house, her heart leapt with delight. Her spirits were greatly boosted by the prospect of meeting her dear son after so many years. A rare joyful smile broke through her severely wrinkled face like a ray of sunshine as soon as she saw Priya standing at the doorway. Her pace quickened with her new-found strength.

One would have expected Priya to rush and greet his mother. But, shockingly, upon seeing her hag-

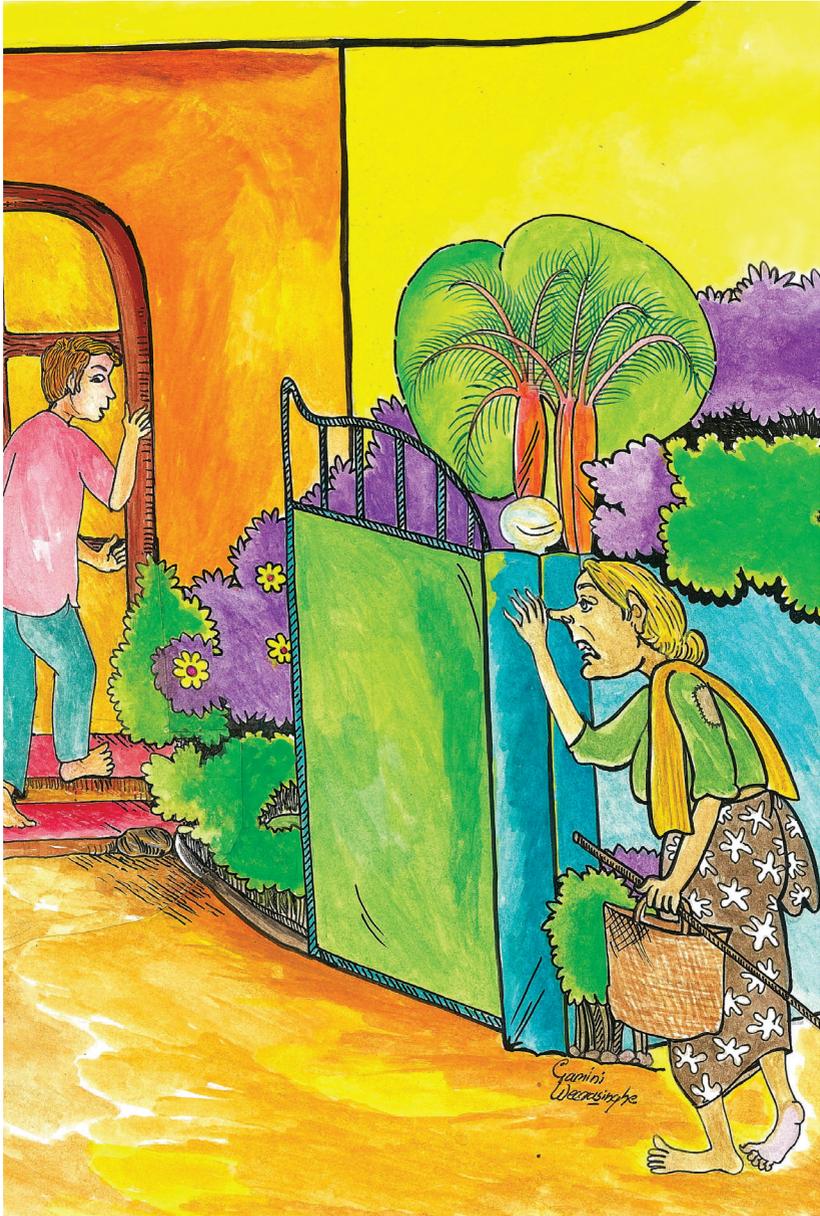


Life becomes really difficult for Soma

gard and in tattered clothes, appearing no different from a miserable beggar, he darted back into the house pretending not to have seen her. He quickly requested Chaturi to despatch his aged mother away before any of the neighbours were to recognise her. Both Priya and Chaturi felt that Soma's tattered clothes and miserable appearance was an utter embarrassment to them. They also anticipated that she had come to ask for help, or worse still, to stay with them.

As soon as Chaturi came out of the house, Soma, greeted her cheerfully, "Sukhi hotu my dear daughter. How are you and Priya? I pray daily that both of you are well and happy always. Where is Priya? I am certain that I saw him as I approached your home. I am longing to see him after all these years."

Chaturi just ignored Soma's warm greeting. Her mind was fixed on carrying out Priya's ruse to forestall Soma from entering their bungalow. She bluffed that he was tied up with urgent office-



Priya quickly darts back in to the house

work and did not want to be disturbed. She then curtly asked Soma, “Anyway, why have you come to our home? What is it that you want from us?”

Soma was taken aback by the rather harsh tenor of Chaturi’s questions and that too without extending the common courtesy of inviting her into the house. Even the customary cup of tea that is offered to visitors to a home was not extended to her. She was saddened by the cold treatment by her beloved son and his wife. But was desperately hungry. So she tucked aside her self-pride and requested for some food. In a gentle pleading voice, she explained how miserable it had been for her to go on for days without having a decent meal.

Chaturi responded with a smug look as if she knew even before Soma revealed her pathetic situation that she had come to get something out of them. She quickly darted into the house saying that she needed to discuss with Priya what is to be done. Soma was still hopeful that Cha-



Soma saddened by the cold treatment she received

turi would return with the help she desperately needed. Chaturi soon emerged from the house carrying a little bag. She handed it to Soma saying that it contained two measures of rice grains to quell her hunger. Soma was stunned at the miserly help that Chaturi and Priya had offered her.

Soma thought to herself, “Here I am faint with hunger gripping me and aches clawing all over my body; just two measures of rice grains are all that my son offers me! Is this the gratitude I get after all the hardships and sacrifices I had undergone to provide him the best in life? The aches and pains while I carried him in my womb for ten lunar months and the pangs of childbirth to the many hours I had slaved away to earn enough to provide for his success, well-being and happiness have all been forgotten.

As one would have guessed, Soma was terribly heartbroken by the way her son and daughter-in-law had treated her in her hour of dire need. Tears of sadness welled in her eyes as she cried



Chaturi offers Soma two measures of rice

her disappointment in a moving poem for Priya to search his heart, thus: “I came to the door of my son’s house, as I was famished. But I was given two measures of rice grains. I am devastated. I am in two minds whether to accept this or to leave it at his door step. O’ my son, did I even for once, ever measure out the milk when I breast-fed you? Just think for a moment: if I had not nursed you every two hours throughout the day and even at night for several months, from the day you were born, you would have surely died.

Ever since the time you were growing in my womb, I have prayed for your success, happiness and good health. My dear son, despite your ingratitude, I will continue to pray for you. Thank you for your two measures of rice grains. Sukhihotu my son.”

Soma’s sorrowful words pierced right through Priya’s heart like a sharp pointed spear. A deep sense of guilt overpowered him. He realised that he had terribly wronged his mother. Filled with deep remorse,



A deep sense of guilt overpowered Priya

he out from his hiding and rushed to embrace Soma. With tears of regret flowing down his cheeks, he knelt down at her feet and repeatedly begged her for forgiveness. He then got up and hugged his mother as tightly as he could. Upon realising her folly, Chaturi too knelt at Soma's feet and begged to be forgiven for her unkindness and disrespect. The young couple then led her into the house.

Soma wept uncontrollably with tears of joy that her son had realised his folly. She was greatly relieved that he had understood the depth of her boundless love for him and the great sacrifices she had borne for him.

When Priya regained his composure, he begged his mother to stay with him forever. He vowed to look after her and make sure that she will be well taken care of henceforth. He promised that come what may, she would never ever go without food, tender caring and love. So from that day onwards, Soma lived comfortably with her dearest Priya till she passed on at the ripe old age of ninety five



Priya and Chaturi take care of Soma lovingly

years.

Thus, to this day Soma's emotive poem is deeply etched in the psyche of the Sinhalese as a moral lesson to honour and worship one's mother. Just as in the folk story, we should salute our mother's boundless love and sacrifices. For indeed, a mother's love knows no bounds!

## Understanding and Reflection Time

Parents, care givers and teachers are urged to encourage the child to interact and improve communication skill, thinking, understanding of the story and overall imagination. They are to make a deliberate effort to spend a time to discuss with her or him the questions listed below:

- 1) What kind of life did Karuna and Soma live?
- 2) How did Soma and Karuna prepare for Priya's birth?
- 3) Describe Karuna and Soma's love for Priya.
- 4) Explain little Priya's love towards his parents.
- 5) What was life like for Soma after Karuna's sudden death?
- 6) How did Soma bring up Priya?
- 7) Explain how Priya's attitude changed after getting married.

- 8) In what ways did Priya's thinking and attitude change?
- 9) What have you understood about gratitude?
- 10) In what ways can you show gratitude and to whom?

## Glossary

<i>priya</i>	loved one
delightfully	happily, joyfully
consistent	regularly, always
diligence	hard working, industrious
laboriously	working very hard
scriptures	religious books
aspiration	strong desire, wishes
beyond measure	very great or strong
nutrients	essential nourishment
characteristic	typical, normal, usual
replenish	replace
befriend	to become friends
deliberately	intentionally, purposely
responsibilities	duties
utter desperation	very pressing/urgent need
pathetic	pitiful, sorrowful
<i>Sukhi hotu</i>	May you be well and happy
remorse	regretful
Sinhalese	people of Sri Lanka