

## The Snake and the Frog

From FolkTales from Simla

*Stories from the Himalayas*

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- 1 A Rajah had two sons. His oldest son became Rajah (king) after his father died.
- 2 He was afraid his brother might want to be king, so he ordered him to be killed.
- 3 The poor boy, hearing of this order, quietly left the house and escaped into the jungles.
  
- 4 He saw a snake with a frog in its mouth. The snake was trying to swallow the frog.
- 5 As the young Rajah (boy) came closer, he heard the frog say, "Oh, if God would only send someone to rescue me from the snake;  
I would be so thankful!"
- 6 The Rajah, full of pity, threw a stone at the snake. The snake quickly let go of the frog, which hopped away.
- 7 The snake was still, dazed by the hurt of the stone.
- 8 Now the Rajah felt sorry for it, and thought to himself, "I have taken away its natural food."
- 9 So he quickly cut off a piece of his own flesh. He threw it to the snake, saying, "Here, take this instead."

- 10 The snake took it home, and when its wife saw it, she said, "This is very good flesh. Where did you get it?"
- 11 The snake told her what had happened. His wife said, "Go back to that man and reward him for what he has done.
- 12 So the snake took the form of a man and went back to the young Rajah. He said, "I will be your servant, if you will take me."
- 13 The Rajah agreed, and his new servant followed him.
- 14 The frog, meantime, had also gone home and told his wife how he had almost been eaten by a snake. He told her how a man had saved him from its very jaws.
- 15 "Go back," said his wife, "and serve him, to prove your gratitude."
- 16 So he also took the form of a man and offered himself as a servant to the young Rajah.
- 17 "Come," said the Rajah, "and we three will live together."
- 18 Then they entered a city of a great King, and the three of them offered to work for him.
- 19 "But," said the young Rajah, "I will only work on condition that you pay me a thousand rupees a day."
- 20 To this the King agreed, and so they worked for him.
- 21 The young Rajah gave his own two servants one hundred rupees a day. After saving one hundred for his own needs, he gave the rest to people in need.
- 22 One day, the King went to take a bath in the pond, and while bathing, his ring slipped off his hand and fell into the water.
- 23 He then called the young Rajah and said to him, "Go and get my ring, which is in that pool."

24 This made the boy feel very sad, for he thought, "How can I get a ring from the bottom of a pond?"

25 But his servant who had once been a frog begged him not to be sad, and said, "I will get it for you."

26 So, quickly taking his old form, he dived into the water and brought the ring to his master, the boy, who took it to the King.

27 Some time after this, the King's daughter was bitten by a snake, and in great danger of dying. "Make my child well," demanded the King of the Rajah boy.

28 But that was even harder to do, and the boy became sadder than ever.

29 "Don't worry," said his servant who had once been a snake, "just put me into the room where the child is, for I understand how to fix snake bite."

30 As soon as he went to the child, he sucked out all the poison; and the child got better.

31 This so delighted the King that he called the young Rajah and offered him his daughter in marriage as a reward.

32 So they got married and lived happily ever afterwards.