



The Hidden Treasure

(A story from Sri Lanka)

Once upon a time there lived a farmer who had four sons. The farmer was very, very old and had recently fallen ill. As time went by he became bedridden and he knew he would not live long.

He worried about his four sons because they idled, did not work in the fields and roamed around the village wasting their time. The old man wanted to teach them the value of hard labour. That if they worked hard, they would live happily.

Lying in bed, the old man thought deeply about this, how to make the lazy boys plough the fields and sow the seeds.

One day the old man called his four sons to his bedside and said, "My dear sons, I have worked hard all my life and all my hard earned wealth is stored in a box buried in my field. When I die you must search for this treasure and share it equally."

They were very pleased.

"Father, can you tell us where exactly in the field your buried this treasure?"


"I'm sorry son, this detail I cannot remember - you will find it when you search for it," he replied.

The old man died a couple of days later and the four sons performed the last rites sadly.

In a few days time, they went to their father's field with agricultural implements. They dug the field one end to the other tirelessly. They turned the soil upside down, but couldn't find the treasure anywhere.

"What shall we do now?" asked the youngest son.





"We've dug the whole field up. It will not be sensible to leave it, so let's till it, fertilize it and sow the seeds. When the treasure turns up, we'll share it then." suggested the eldest. The rest agreed.

The four sons prepared the ground and sowed the field. They irrigated it and tended it carefully. They were fortunate that the seasonal rains too did not fail and the harvest was plentiful. Keeping sufficient grain for themselves, they sold the rest. They earned a lot of money from the successful harvest and they shared the profit equally.

It is then they realized that the hidden treasure their father referred to was the harvest they reaped. The gains of diligent labour are indeed a treasure.

