



Heaven's Uncle Toad

(Vietnam)

Once upon a time, there was a long devastating drought on Earth. Plants yellowed and withered away. Animals suffered and died.

In a dry pond lived an ugly toad. He could foresee the danger of the drought. So he decided to make a long journey to meet the King of Heaven. On the way he met the crab, bear, tiger, bees and fox. All of them asked to follow the toad to the heaven.

Arriving at the heavenly gates, the toad only saw a large drum. Then he told his friends, "Crab, get inside this water jar! Bees, stay behind the gates! Fox, Bear and Tiger hide at the two sides!"

After arranging everything, the toad stepped forward and took the drumstick to beat the three loud rolls. The King of Heaven was very angry to see the tiny and ugly toad who dared to make the heaven noisy.

He ordered the rooster to kill the toad. When the rooster approached the toad, the toad called the fox to kill the rooster.

Then the king ordered the dog to punish the fox. However, when reaching to the gates, the bear appeared and killed the dog right away.

The King was so angry that he asked the Thunder God to kill the bear. Immediately, the Thunder God was stung by the bees hiding behind the gates. Crying in pain, the Thunder God jumped into the water jar.



Inside the water jar, the crab immediately pinched the Thunder God with his big and strong claws. The Thunder God jumped out of the jar but the tiger appeared to fight with him.

“Stop! Stop!” begged the King. “Uncle Toad, tell your friends and the tiger to please spare the Thunder God.” The tiger did not harm the Thunder God.

Knowing that the toad and his friends could not be defeated, the King finally agreed to let the toad in heaven.

“Your Majesty! There has been no rain on earth for so long,” said the toad. “If the drought continues, all living things on earth will die! Rain is needed at once to save them all.”

The King was afraid that living things on earth would rebel if he does not grant them rain. So, he said gently to the toad, “Uncle Toad, go back home. There will be rain on earth right away.”

Before the toad and his friends left, the King said, “Uncle Toad, next time, when you need rain, you do not have to come here to heaven. Just croak and I know I need to send rain to earth.”

When the toad arrived on earth, there was rain everywhere. Since then, when the toad croaks, rain will soon follow.

Supplementary information

- In Vietnam, when you wish to show respect to a male person who is older or of a higher status, you call him “**uncle**”. This expression of respect is common in many Asian cultures.
- The **toad** is the symbol of rain in Vietnam. As expressed in this story, the toad is closely associated with rain, which is similar to its portrayal in the story Phya Kankhaak, the Toad King.

