

THE SLEEPING PORTER

Laxmi Prasad Devkota

Laxmi Prasad Devkota was born on the 12 November 1909 in Kathmandu. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Patna University in 1929. He was a renowned poet and storywriter of his time. In 1948, he presided over the first national poetry festival of Nepal organized by Nepali Sahitya Parishad. Immediately after this poetry festival, he exiled himself to Varanasi, India, to edit Yugvani (The Voice of the Age), which was a mouthpiece of the Nepali Congress. In Nepal, his house and properties were confiscated by the government.



A. Work in small groups and discuss the question given below:

- 1. Suppose you have to climb up the fourth floor of a building with a heavy load on your back. Will you feel any trouble doing so? Talk about the trouble that you will face.**

THE SLEEPING PORTER

A twenty-five kilo load on his back
 spine double bent
 a six-mile climb up in the snows of winter
 naked bones, skeleton- like frail frame
 yet facing an uphill task
 he is challenging the mountain.

He is wearing a black cap
 dirty, sweat-stained
 his body is an abode of fleas and lice
 his mind very dull
 although it emits a sulphur-like sour smell
 but what a stout human figure!

Like a bird
 his heart is twittering, panting
 he is sweating and out of breath

B.1. Answer the following questions very briefly:

1. How much load does the Porter have on his back?
2. What distance does the Porter cover in the snows of winter?
3. Who is challenging the mountain?
4. What type of cap is he wearing ?
5. What type of smell does the Porter emit ?

A hut on the cliff
his son shivering with cold
woes of hunger
the mother searching for nettles and vines.

Beneath this hero of the mountain
the proud conqueror of nature
are the snow-clad peaks
above
only the star-studded lid of night.
In this night
the porter is in deep slumber
"reigning over the rich kingdom of sleep."

B.2. Answer the following questions:

1. What is there on the cliff?
2. What is the mother searching?
3. Who is the hero of the mountain?
4. What is meant by 'lid of night'?
5. Who is 'reigning over' the 'rich kingdom of sleep'?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

spine (n) : the back bone

naked (adj) : unclothed, uncovered, nude

skeleton (n) : the bony frame work of the body

frail (adj) : weak, infirm

frame (n) : a structure, shape

uphill (adj) : ascending, difficult

sweat (n) : perspiration

stain (n) : mark

fleas (n) : a kind of small jumping insect

lice (n) : pl. of louse; a parasitic insect

stout (adj) : strong, brave

twittering (adj/n) : uttering interrupted sound

panting (n) : gasping

woe (n) : grief, sorrow

nettle (n) : stinging plant

vines (n) : the creeper which bears grapes

conqueror (n) : one who conquers, a victor

clad (adj) : clothed

studded (v) : p.t of stud adorned with studs

lid (n) : the cover for the top of something

slumber (n) : a short sleep



C.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. The poet has focused on trials and tribulations of the porter. Elucidate.
2. A mother is searching for nettles and vines who is she? Why is she searching such things?
3. Determination, hard work and continuity win the race. Do you agree? Write your opinions with reference to the poem "The Sleeping Porter?"

C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The porters are the symbols of hard work.
2. All human beings are porters on this earth.

C.3. COMPOSITION

1. Write a letter to your mother explaining how labour never goes in vain.

D. WORD STUDY

D.1. Dictionary Use

1. Write the meanings of the words given below:

rule

a luggage-carrier

curse

under

consisting of two

spot

2. Write the antonym for each of the following words:

load

hill

honest

correct

far

dull

dirty

natural

D.2. Word Formation

Read the following lines carefully:

“A twenty-five kilo load on his back spine double bent.”

‘Bent’ is the past form of ‘Bend’; other words derived from bend are as follows:

bend, bent, bends, bendable, bender, bending.

Write as many words derived from the following verbs:

hope

write

do

help

jump

E. ACTIVITY

Do a project work on the life of coolies on a Railway station.

F. TRANSLATION

Translate the poem into Hindi or any other language that you know.