

Farmer and the Devil

By Michael Tse



Once upon a time, there lived a farmer. He had a simple life and worked very hard in his field, but despite this he was happy. One day the Devil saw the farmer. The Devil did not like people being happy or enjoying themselves. So he sent a little demon to make the farmer unhappy. The little demon made the field very dry and so it was much more difficult to plough and so the farmer had to work even harder. However, even though he sweated more, he was still very happy.

The Devil was very unhappy about this. He told the demon, "You have not done a good job." Then he sent another little demon to try and make the farmer unhappy. This little demon stole the farmer's lunch whilst he was working in the field. When the farmer came back for his lunch it was gone, he could not find it anywhere. The farmer said to himself, "Oh, what a pity! There must be someone who is hungrier than me and needs that food. What a poor person!" Still happy, he went back to work in his field.

This again made the Devil very unhappy but could not think of anything else to do to the farmer. However, there was another little demon who said to the devil, "I think I can make him unhappy." So the Devil sent him to the farmer.

First the little demon turned himself into a friend of the farmer. He told the farmer all about the weather and what kind of plants he should grow to have a better harvest. The farmer listened to him and followed his advice. He thought that the next year he would have a better harvest than all the other farmers and sure enough, it happened just like his 'friend' had said. This made him very happy.

Since the demon had given good advice to the farmer, they became closer and the farmer listened to everything the little demon said. Another year passed and the farmer had an even better harvest than the previous year and also better than the other farmers around him. As a result, he also had a lot more money. Years passed by and each year the farmer made a lot of money and so became very rich. Now he did not need to farm any more but employed other farmers to farm for him instead. In the end all the local farmers worked for him.

One day he decided to throw a party and invited all the upper class people to come and have food and wine. As he did not work anymore the farmer's body was very different from before. He had become fat and was uncomfortable and slow when he walked. Then one of his servants accidentally dropped a bottle of wine. The farmer shouted at him. "You are useless! You dropped my bottle of wine, now you won't have any food to eat!" The servant said to the farmer, "Master, I have not been eaten for a whole day that is why I do not have energy to hold the bottle of wine. Please let me have some food." But because he was so upset, the farmer did not give him any food to eat.

The Devil saw all of this and was very happy. He said, "Now the farmer is fat like a pig and his blood is running like ours. He is truly unhappy."

I always say to my class when I teach, "Poor or rich does not determine whether we are happy or not, it is all about our heart. When we are contented we are happy."