

Lesson - Eight ***Diamond Rice*** (Ranga Rao)

1. Who are the members of the Temple Construction Committee? (2013) Or Why was the Sanskrit teacher chosen to serve on the committee? (2014)

The town people planned to construct a new temple. The Temple Construction Committee was responsible for collection of funds and donations. The committee had local lawyer, doctor, teacher, oil-dealer, grocer and onion-merchant as members. The Sanskrit teacher taught Maths when the Maths teacher was on leave. He was chosen to serve on the temple committee to keep accounts.

2. Describe the physical appearance of Kondiah, the grain merchant. (2013, 2015)

3. What did Kondiah do when he received an order of rice on the phone? (2014)

Kondiah owned the Laxmi Rice Mills. When he received an order on the phone, he said that he sold all varieties of rice and had enough stock for any large order. He boasted that he had customers from distant places. Kondiah mixed stones with rice. The phone was a trap against him and he was later arrested for adulteration.

4. On what condition did the grain merchant promise to donate money for the temple? (2013, 2015)

Kondiah was a big rice merchant in a South Indian town. He owned the Laxmi Rice Mills. Kondiah promised to donate as much money as necessary for the temple. But his condition was that the wedding hall of the temple should be named after his mother. Kondiah was willing to donate money for the temple even after his arrest for adulteration.

5. What is the message of the story ***Diamond Rice***?

Lesson - Nine *The only American from our village* (Arun Joshi)

1. Who was Dr. Khanna and where did he live and work? (2013)

2. Explain why Dr. Khanna's trip to India is described as a success. (2014) Or Was Dr. Khanna's trip to India really a success?

Dr. Khanna came back to India after fifteen years. His trip was a great success for three weeks. He gave lectures and met important people. In the fourth week, Radhey Mohan, an old friend of Dr. Khanna's late father, came to see him. The meeting with Radhey Mohan ultimately wrecked Dr. Khanna's mind and destroyed his career.

3. Give a brief description of Radhey Mohan's appearance and profession. (2014, 2015)

Radhey Mohan was an old friend of Dr. Khanna's late father, Kundan Lal. He was not very educated and sold stamp papers. Radhey Mohan's eyes were heavy with cataract. His jacket was dirty. Radhey Mohan spoke plainly and told Dr. Khanna that his indifference was the cause of Kundan Lal's early death.

4. What did Dr. Khanna's father wear on his feet when he had no money to buy shoes? (2013, 2015) Or On the way back from the school, what did Dr. Khanna's father do? (2014)

Kundan Lal's son, Dr. Khanna, was a physicist at the University of Wisconsin in the USA. Kundan Lal had no money to buy shoes in his childhood. He tied leaves to his feet with a string and walk on the hot sand in the hot month of May. Dr. Khanna completely neglected his old father. Kundan Lal lost his mind and behaved like a mad man. One day he and Radhey Mohan visited their old school. On the way back from the school, Kundan Lal took off his shoes and walked barefoot on the hot sand. He died the next day.

5. Why did Kundan Lal begin to shave every day? Or Why did Dr. Khanna's father want to shave every day? (2015)

6. What made Dr. Khanna develop a strange disease of mind?

Lesson - Ten *The Taipan* (William Somerset Maugham)

1. **Why is the taipan reluctant to visit England? (2015) Or What are the taipan's retirement plans? (2014)**

2. **Describe the taipan's memories of having high tea every evening after school. (2013)**

Thirty years ago, the taipan came to China from England as a clerk in an English firm. He rose to a higher position during these years. He remembered his childhood. He had a modest house in an ordinary suburb in England. Every evening when he came home from school he had a high tea with his family. He had a slice of cold meat, bread and butter and tea. Now he ate luxuriously in China.

3. **Why did the taipan want to make a second visit to the cemetery in the company of the overseer?**

4. **What made the taipan panic and why did he want to leave China? Or What made the taipan wish that he had not gone into the cemetery? (2014)**

5. **What was the thing that mattered to the taipan in the end? Or What was written in the letter that people found in the dead taipan's hand? (2013, 2015)**

On the last night of his life, the taipan began to hate China and wanted to return to England at once. The only thing that mattered to him in the end was to leave China. He wrote a letter to inform the head of his firm that he was seriously ill and died that very moment. Next morning people found the letter in the dead taipan's hand.

Lesson - Eleven: *Luck* (Mark Twain)

1. What were the two things that the narrator was well aware of in the story *Luck*? (2013, 2015)

Lord Arthur Scoresby had become a public hero for his military achievements. A banquet was held in his honour in London. The narrator met a clergyman at the banquet. The clergyman had known Scoresby during his service in the army. He told the narrator that Lord Scoresby was an absolute fool. The narrator was surprised but he was also aware of the clergyman's truthfulness and his judgement of men.

2. What, according to the clergyman, is the very best thing that can befall a man? (2013)

3. Who was Scoresby? What was special about him, according to the clergyman?

4. What was the narrator's first impression of General Lord Scoresby? Or Why was the narrator astonished by the clergyman's statement?

The narrator had heard about Lieutenant General Lord Scoresby's military achievements but saw him for the first time at a banquet in London. Everybody admired Lord Scoresby. He looked quiet, grave, and noble. But a clergyman told the narrator that Lord Scoresby was an absolute fool - a donkey. The narrator was astonished by the clergyman's statement.

5. Why did the clergyman refer to his coaching of Scoresby as an act of charity? (2014)

Forty years ago, the clergyman was an instructor at a military academy. Young Scoresby went to this academy for his preliminary examinations. Scoresby was stupid and ignorant but he was honest, sweet, and lovable. The instructor pitied him and helped him pass the examinations. The clergyman considered his help to Scoresby an act of charity.

6. Why did the clergyman decide to follow Scoresby to the Crimean war? (2015) Or What kept the clergyman in a state of apprehension? (2014)

Forty years ago, the clergyman was an instructor at a military academy. He had pitied young Scoresby and helped him pass the examinations. Later Scoresby made serious blunders in wars but each of his blunders won him honours. This fact kept the clergyman in a state of apprehension. The clergyman wanted to save England from Scoresby's blunders and so he decided to follow him to the Crimean war.

7. How did Scoresby's blunder in the Crimean war bring victory to the English army?

Short Notes:

1. Kondiah or ***Diamond Rice*** as a satire on society (2013, 2014) or ***Diamond Rice*** - a story of general corruption (2015)

Diamond Rice is a story about Kondiah, a big rice merchant in a South Indian town. He owned the Laxmi Rice Mills. Kondiah was a pious man. There was a mark of Vishnu on his forehead. He wore a heavy gold ring with an image of some god. Through Kondiah's story the author draws our attention to corruption in society.

The town people planned to construct a new temple. The Temple Construction Committee approached Kondiah for donation. The rich merchant promised to donate as much money as necessary for the temple. Kondiah was a religious man but a dishonest businessman. He mixed stones with rice. There was a trap against him and he was arrested for adulteration.

Diamond Rice questions our religious sincerity and the implementation of law. Though Kondiah was religious he did not consider adulteration a sin. He was willing to donate money for the temple even after his arrest. Kondiah's rivals, the Diamond Mills, also commit the same crime but they are not arrested.

2. The character of Dr. Khanna (2014)

Dr. Khanna was a forty years old physicist at the University of Wisconsin in the USA. His father, Kundan Lal, belonged to a small village in India. Fifteen years ago Dr. Khanna had settled in America. He married an American woman and had two sons. Dr. Khanna visited India with his family first time after fifteen years.

Dr. Khanna's trip was a great success for three weeks. He gave lectures and met important people. In the fourth week, Radhey Mohan, an old friend of Dr. Khanna's late father, came to see him. Radhey Mohan spoke plainly and told Dr. Khanna that his indifference was the cause of his father's early death.

Dr. Khanna's life is destroyed at the end of ***The only American from our village***. His meeting with Radhey Mohan ultimately wrecked his mind. Radhey Mohan said that, in his madness, Dr. Khanna's father walked on the hot sand without shoes and died the next day. When Dr. Khanna returned to America he had periods of burning in his feet and he stared at them like a mad man.

3. The character of the taipan (2013) Or The vanity of human life as expressed in the story (2014) Or The Taipan - a story of overweening ambition (2015)

The Taipan is an interesting story. The taipan in this story is an Englishman who suddenly discovers that he hates China and dies before he can return to England. Thirty years ago, the taipan came to China as a clerk in an English firm. He rose to a high position during these years. In China, the taipan lived in a magnificent house and had many servants. He enjoyed good wines and ate rich food.

The taipan was reluctant to visit England even during vacations. After retirement, he wanted to buy a house in Shanghai and live a comfortable life. One day after a heavy lunch, the taipan was walking back to his office. The cemetery was on the way. Many English men and women had died young in China. The taipan was happy to be alive. He saw two Chinese coolies digging a grave. The overseer told the taipan that there was no new grave in the cemetery. Now he thought that he had hallucinations.

That night the taipan woke up from a terrible dream. Then he felt a horror of everything Chinese - streets, smells, dress, and men. On the last night of his life, the taipan began to hate China and wanted to return to England at once. The only thing that mattered to him in the end was to leave China. He wrote a letter to inform the head of his firm that he was seriously ill and died that very moment. Next morning people found the letter in the dead taipan's hand.

4. Lord Scoresby's rise to success in *Luck* (2013) Or the character sketch of Scoresby (2015)

Luck is an interesting story about Lieutenant General Lord Arthur Scoresby by Mark Twain. Lord Scoresby had become a public hero for his military achievements. A banquet was held in his honour in London. The narrator met a clergyman at the banquet. The clergyman told the narrator that Lord Scoresby was an absolute fool. Forty years ago the clergyman pitied young Scoresby at the military academy and helped him pass examinations.

Lord Scoresby looked quiet, grave, and noble. Everybody admired him. There was something special about Scoresby's luck. As an army officer, Scoresby made serious blunders in wars but each of his blunders won him honours. This fact kept the clergyman in a state of apprehension. When Scoresby went to fight in the Crimean war, the clergyman followed him because he wanted to save England from the fool's blunders.

In the Crimean war, Lieutenant General Lord Scoresby was ordered to attack the Russian forces from the right side of a hill but he charged them from the left. However, by his blunder, Lord Scoresby surprised the Russian reserve forces stationed behind the hill. The sudden charge caused confusion among the enemies and thus the blunder actually brought victory to the English army. Lord Scoresby got honours for his splendid act of bravery. The clergyman said that the very best thing that can befall a man was to be born lucky.