# The Waters of Life

Summary of the stories

Waters of Life: Nekumonta goes to look for medicine for his dying wife, but the healing plants are all hidden under the snow. Because Nekumonta is a good man, the animals of the forest ask the god Manitou to help him and the answer comes to him in a dream.
Krishna and the River Snake. The King of Snakes has polluted the river and the cows are dying. The young God Krishna defeats the snake and sends him far away.
White Cloud Fairy: With the help of the Moon Goddess, White Cloud Fairy brings life-giving water to the people of Dunhuang.
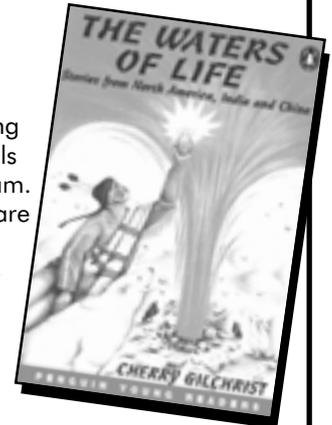
Background to the stories

The three stories come from the Iroquois Indians of North America; India: Krishna and the River Serpent, and China: the White Cloud fairy, linked by the theme of the benefits of water. Cherry Gilchrist has published many books on world folk tales, including tales from the Silk Road from which comes the White Cloud Fairy.

Topics and themes

Animals Animals feature strongly in two of the stories. Expand to cover wild and farm animals; how man treats and uses animals. How many animals can pupils name? How many have they seen or handled in real life/ in books/on TV or films. In India, only the cows' milk is used and many people do not eat their meat (they are vegetarians). What do pupils think of this? Can they think of any advantages or disadvantages?

Celebrations How do the people celebrate at the end of these stories. Do pupils do the same or different things? These celebrations are outdoors. Have pupils been to an outdoor celebration? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Family People in these stories care very much what happens to others in their family: Nekumonta for his wife, Kaliya's wife for his safety, the people of Dunhuang for their children. The topic could be set off by asking who has anyone sick in their family.

Magic Animals, fire and wind talk to people. Gods, goddesses and fairies change the world. The magic is their ability to do things that humans cannot, for example: find medicine and bring water, where there was none, make water clean.

Senses Hearing is important here, for work on, for example the differences between hearing/listening, seeing/looking. Use as basis for work on sense vocabulary. The theme also suggests exploring the senses around water: in water, thirsty, ill.

World/Environment. Pupils can find India, North America and China on a map or globe. There are references to forests, lakes and rivers. The weather and geography of these three places is very different. Use to revise and expand vocabulary: hot, wet, dry, cold, mountains, valleys, jungle, desert etc. Discuss world water problems through natural and man made causes: lack of water, water pollution, diseases carried by water, loss of land and homes through building dams, canals etc.

Making use of the Reader

Uses of Water Elicit all the uses of water described in the stories (drinking for people and animals, home for fish, swimming, washing, watering fruit and vegetables) and write them on the board. Add any others pupils think of (use in industry, as a transport route for goods and people). Ask pupils to put the uses in order of importance (1= most important). Discuss their choices. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. Each group should collect pictures, drawings or other material about one of the uses. The group material can be put together in a display.

Map/Plan drawing: Start with the map/globe exercise (see World theme). Ask pupils to think about how White Cloud Fairy would have seen Dunhuang (from above). Use a few model houses and trees to show what the plan view is. Elicit vocabulary for the things she would have seen at first, people, dying plants, sand (p. 22, 23), and later, temple, lake, green plants (p.28, 29). What is the difference between the views of White Cloud Fairy and the Moon Goddess (higher)? In groups of 4, pupils should draw and colour a map of Dunhuang at the end of the story. Display the maps. Extend to the bird's view of the Iroquois lands and Krishna's view of the river lands when he has grown 'bigger then the world', first eliciting vocabulary for each. Can pupils map their own region or area around the school?

Identisound parade. Collect items to make sounds: sand to drop or blow in a tray, water to drip or pour into a container, aluminium foil to crackle, add tapes of celebration dancing and singing, animals calls and noises, or include pupil's own mimicry. With the class facing the front, pupils take it in turns to go to the back of the class and choose and make one of the sounds. Without looking, the others say the name of the sound. The exercise can be repeated with pupils writing the name.

Number practice. This requires activity 4 in the factsheet to be done first. Draw a blown-up version with the filled-in numbered dots on the board or flip chart. Elicit body part vocabulary (head, eye, ear, face, mouth, tail, body, leg, paw) and label drawing. Write the following gapped sentences on the board.
1. A (body part) is shown by a line from dots (cardinal number name) to (cardinal number name).

e.g. A leg is shown by a line from dots forty to fifty.
2. A (body part) is shown by a line from the (ordinal number name) dot to the (ordinal number name) dot. e.g. A leg is shown by a line from the sixty-third dot to the seventy-third dot.

Point to any part of the drawing, for example the head, and ask the pupils to use either sentence 1 or 2 to describe where you are pointing. If they are using sentence 1, the correct reply would be 'Numbers 1 to 39 make the head'.
For sentence two, the answer is the head is shown by a line from the *first* dot to the *thirty-ninth* dot.

Dramatization. Divide one of the stories into scenes (let the pupils choose which one) to act out. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and let each group act out a scene, adding more dialogue if they wish. Record the scenes in order. Play them back and let pupils choose their favourite.

Using the accompanying audio cassette

During listening – whole class prediction.
Play the audio cassette all the way through. Listen out for the following sound effects. Page 5, crackling wood; Page 6, the wind in the trees; Page 9, birds twittering; Page 10, waterfall; Page 13, cows ; Page 16, ball hitting water; Page 16, snake heads hissing; Page 17, thrashing in water; Page 20, swimming; Page 24, water; Page 25, blowing sand; Page 28, sound of lake appearing; Page 30, sand blowing. Can the pupils place where the sound is in the text?

White Cloud Fairy – while listening activity
Once the pupils have read this story, elicit the names of the characters: White Cloud Fairy, Sand God, Moon Goddess and the people of Dunhuang. Write the following speeches on the board and ask the pupils if they can remember who said each one: 1. 'I'm the important God here. I'll show them' (Sand God) 2. 'It's very little, it's just a new moon' (Moon Goddess) 3. 'Oh! that's terrible. That poor little baby'. (White Cloud Fairy) 4. 'It's a moon lake. Let's show everyone.' (People of Dunhuang) Then play the cassette. Pupils put up their hands when they hear the sentences and check their answers. A similar exercise can be devised for the other two stories.

Notes on the activities in the Factsheet

1 The pupils put the words into the right pool.
2 The pupils decide if the sentences are true or false. This can be done individually, in pairs, with one pupil reading out and the other deciding, or as a whole class activity with you or a pupil reading out the sentences and the whole class deciding.
3 You may need to show the pupils how to do this activity.
4 Pupils follow the numbers to make a character from the book. Then they should name and write about it, including what it said in the story.

Answers to the activities

Before you read
1. a. North America, b. India, c. China.

After you read
2 a. If she dies I don't want to live. b. If he could not help her she was going to die c. He killed us for clothes and food but not for sport. d. If you come back I will kill you next time. e. When the ball fell in the water no-one was scared. f. But Krishna grew and grew until he was bigger than the whole world. g. He blew sand into the river until there was no more water there. h. They had a great surprise when they saw the new little lake. i. She flew up into the sky higher and higher until she found the moon goddess.

In the Factsheet
Activity 1 *Waters of Life:* snow, waterfall, spring. *Krishna and the River Snake:* river, sea. *White Cloud Fairy:* lake, rain, crying, river. River appears in two pools.
Activity 2 1. False. He began his journey that night. 2. True. 3. False. Kaliya had lived (usually lived) far away. 4. False. Krishna told Kaliya to swim to an island and stay there. 5. False. White Cloud Fairy stopped and began to cry too. 6. True.
Activity 3 a. warm. b. Shanewis. c. polluted. d. temple. e. thirsty. The word in the box is water.

The Waters of Life Level 3

The Waters of Life

Name...
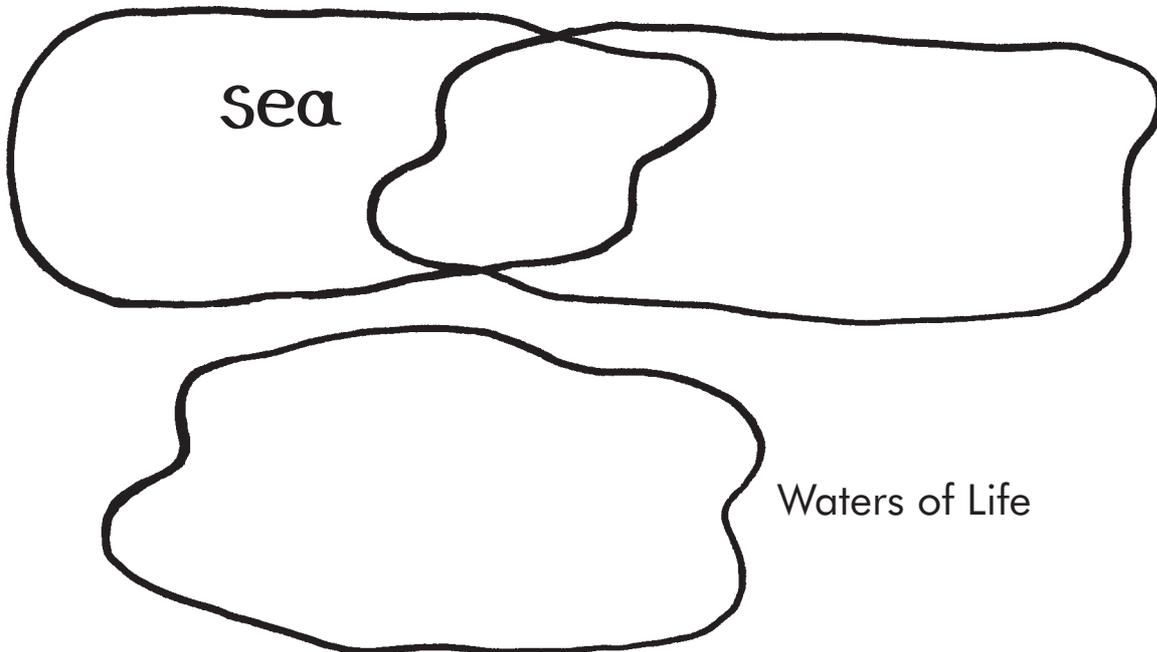
Activity 1

There is a pool for each story. Find these words about water and put them in the right pool. One word appears in two of the pools, which word is it?

river, rain, spring, waterfall, lake, snow, sea, crying

Krishna   White Cloud Fairy

Sea

Waters of Life

Activity 2

Read the sentences and write True or False. Correct the false sentences.

1.   Nekumonta began his journey in the morning. *False.*
     Nekumonta began his journey that night.

2.   The birds and animals asked Manitou to help Nekumonta.

3.   Kaliya had always lived in the river.

4.   Krishna killed the King of the Snakes.

5.   White Cloud Fairy flew on when she heard the woman's cry.

6.   The new moon became a little lake.

The Waters of Life

Name...

Activity 3

Find the answers, then write the words in the crossword.

a. Nekumonta sat by his fire, but he
did not feel _____ .

_w_ _a_ _r_ _m_

b. In his sleep, Nekumonta saw
_____, his wife.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

c. Kaliya had _____ the water.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

d. The people built a _____ for
White Cloud Fairy.

_ _ _ _ _ _

e. The people's children were _____.

_ _ _ _ _ _

Read the letters down in the box.
What is the word?

Activity 4

Follow the numbers with a pencil to make a picture. What is the picture?
Write the name and a sentence about it.