

3 The Most Precious Gift



It was Leima's first *ningolchakkouba* after her marriage. *Ningolchakkouba* is a big festival. For this festival every married daughter is invited by her parents to a grand feast. Her father and mother would be so happy to see her. Her elder brother always loved to see her. He never called her by her name. She was always 'Ibema' to him. 'Ibema' is a term of love and affection. They would have special gifts, tokens of love, for her. That is the custom.



Her mother-in-law said, "Don't go late to your home, Leima. This is your first *ningolchakkouba*. You should be there by 10 or 10.30 a.m. Here is a basket of fruits, a few coconuts and some sweets. Don't forget to take them with you. Let Biren drop you."

The house of Leima's parents looked neat and clean. Her mother had mopped and cleaned it the day before.

Her mother received her, “Come, *Ibema*. You look so beautiful! The meal is almost ready. Did your husband bring you here? Has he gone back?”

“Yes, he’ll come at 3 o’clock to take me back,” Leima replied.

After the meal her father and mother gave her a *phanek mayek naiba* as their gift. Her brother gave her a Kashmiri shawl. Leima gave each one of them her sincere blessings. Such blessings from a daughter on the day of *ningolchakkouba* are taken as precious.

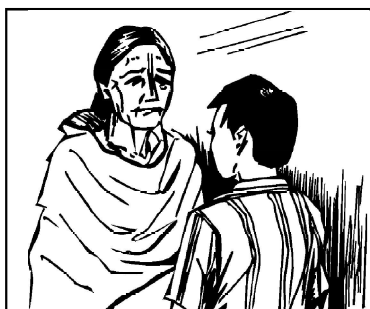
“*Iche*², *iche*,” suddenly they heard.

“Who is it? Oh, David! David, after so many days! We have n’t seen you for ages, David,” Leima’s mother said.

“*Ima*³, I’ve come because it is *ningolchakkouba*. I want to meet *iche*,” David said.

David was a poor tribal boy. He lived with his mother in the village at the foot of a hill. David’s mother used to come to Leima’s house to sell vegetables, charcoal and dry wood. David always came with his mother until he began to go to the local school. But whenever there was a holiday David would come to meet his *iche*. David was now twelve years old. Over the years, they loved each other dearly.

Leima was at the door. She said, “David, my brother! I’m so happy to see you! Come in, come in. Have you had your meal? Will you have some food here?”



“*Iche*, I’ve had my meal. I’ve come because to-day is *ningolchakkouba*. A brother must give a gift to his sister to-day. I’ve brought a present for you. Here it is. It’s a tribal shawl. I bought it from a woman in our village.”

“David, my brother! How did you get the money? Did your mother give you the money? Why have you bought it?”

“*Iche*, I must give a present to my *iche* today, or how can I be your brother? I worked in a hotel for ten days after school and got the money. The shawl is not a costly one, but I know you will take it.”

“Oh, David, surely I’ll take it. It’s the most precious gift for me to-day, my darling,” Leima said as she embraced David.

EXERCISES

1. Read and learn the following words with their meaning:

Precious : of great value

gift : present

affection : love

token : sign

custom : practice

darling : person or object very much loved

embraced : hugged

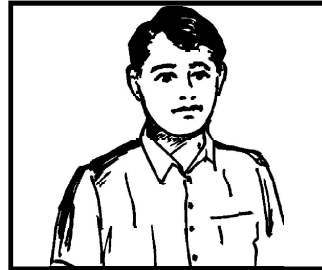
2. Answer the following questions orally:

1. How did Leima's brother call his sister?
2. What did Leima's mother-in-law give her?
3. Why did the house of Leima's parents look neat and clean?
4. Why did David's mother come to Leima's house?
5. How did David get the money to buy his present?
6. What is the most precious gift for Leima ?

3. You have learnt what a mother-in-law is. Now, find out the English word for the following:



Mother's sister



Uncle's son



Uncle's daughter



Father's sister

4. Write the names of two or more festivals in which people give gifts to others.

5. Look at the word *beautiful*. It is made of two words: **beauty and full**. Now add –*full* to the following words to make new words:

help	:	_____	care	:	_____
cheer	:	_____	thought:		_____
hope	:	_____	sorrow :		_____

Note : *Full* changes to *ful*

6. **Choose words from the capsule to complete the paragraph given below:**

husband present	worked fruits parents
--------------------	-----------------------------

Leima's _____ were happy to see their daughter. Leima brought a basket of _____ to her parents' house. Leima's _____, Mr. Biren, drove her to her home. Leima's brother gave her a Kashmiri shawl as his _____. David _____ in a hotel to buy his gift.