

## CHAPTER 2

# A Day in School

Has there ever been something you really wanted to know about? How did you learn about it? (*Allow response.*) Do you remember what Ringu wanted to learn? (*Allow response.*)

### Slide 1

When it was time for school the next morning, Ringu dragged himself to the front porch.

He dropped onto the rope bed. His foot and leg hurt terribly; he was feverish and his head ached. Nothing the witch doctor had done was helping—not the black powder, not the peacock feather—nothing. He was very disappointed. Can you make a disappointed face? (*Allow response.*) Great job!

Ringu saw a large group of people in the distance. First he saw Pandu, the man who had played the music box at the bazaar. Maybe he would play some music! And there was the missionary, Grubbs Sahib, with a black book in his hand. Ringu quickly unwound his turban and took out the paper with God's words.

When the men reached the front of the house, the missionary greeted Ringu's father. Ringu heard him say he would like to show pictures in the village.

"Yes, yes, sometime," Ringu's father said, "but my son's foot is hurt, Sahib. The witch doctor doesn't seem to have any power these days. Can you help?"

The tall man followed Ringu's father to the porch while the people from the village stood around to see what the sahib would do. As he came close to Ringu, a look of surprise flashed across his pale face.

"Aren't you the boy who ran into me at the bazaar? Ah! I see you have the paper I gave you. Have you been reading it?"

Ringu's father answered for his son. "Yes, yes, Sahib," he agreed, wanting to please. "My son goes to school. But now his foot is very bad."

The missionary sat down beside Ringu. He looked closely at the sore foot, touching it gently. "Yes, I think I can help. Bring a large pan of hot water."

Ringu's mother hurried to obey, her ankle bracelets clinking as she went.

Can you help Ringu's mother get water? (*Do these actions with the children.*) Let's stand up and pump the water from the well. Now put it over the hot fire but be careful not to get burned! Let's test it. Is it hot enough? (*Allow response.*) I think it is. Let's bring it over and set it down next to Ringu. You may sit down now. Thank you for helping!

### Slide 2

The missionary poured some white powder into the water. After testing it with his hand, he said, "Here, Ringu, put your foot in this."

"You tell my son to put his sore foot all the way into water?" Ringu's father asked fearfully. "The evil spirits in the water will get into the sore and make it worse!"

"Oh no," the missionary said. "There is medicine in the water. It will draw the soreness out. Just let him put his foot in for half an hour."

"It is a strange thing," said Ringu's father. "But we will see what happens."

Ringu touched the water. He didn't dare put his foot in farther. Surely the spirits would make his heel worse! But the missionary pushed Ringu's foot into the water. *Ahh, it does feel good*, Ringu thought.

### Slide 3

Then something happened that was completely new to Ringu. Mr. Grubbs said, "I am going to pray that Jesus will make your foot well." He bowed his head and said, "You can pray with me too. Bow your heads."

Ringu looked down at his lap then up again as the missionary began to pray. Grubbs Sahib asked God to watch over this family and to heal Ringu's foot. Ringu decided he would wait to see if this God heard and answered.

After he bandaged Ringu's foot, the missionary handed Ringu's father a bag of powder as he stepped off the porch. "Be sure to soak Ringu's foot or it will not get well," he said. Then he was gone.

Soon Ringu's foot felt better and his headache disappeared. Maybe what Grubbs Sahib said was true! Maybe Mr. Grubbs' God really would make Ringu's foot well so he could go to school. Ringu wanted more than ever to learn to read. He wanted to read the paper with God's words because the things Mr. Grubbs had said made him think. Could it be true that the God the missionary talked about was more powerful than evil spirits? Ringu knew he had to find out more.

That evening Ringu's foot was very sore again. The water must have hurt his foot. The evil spirits must have gone further into the sore!

"Don't soak it again," his father said. "After all, we have no goodness in our hands like the sahib. We may not do it right."

Ringu almost cried. *Why were the evil spirits so angry?* He thought. *Did they know about the paper with God's words? What if they make me even sicker so I can never go to school and learn to read?*

#### Slide 4

Several times during the night Ringu woke up because his foot hurt so badly. Finally he heard his father feeding the oxen in their stalls on the other side of the wall. Ringu knew it was almost time to get up. He moaned and tossed in his bed. When he saw his mother sweeping the porch Ringu hobbled out to sit on the rope bed.

“Mother, my foot is bad,” he moaned. “It aches and hurts. The sahib told us to put it in water. If we don’t do as he says maybe I’ll be sick and...and not be able to go to school and learn to read. Maybe I’ll die!”

“Don’t say such a thing, Son!” his mother pleaded fearfully as his father joined them. “It is dangerous for the evil spirits to hear you talk that way.”

“We will use the water as the sahib said,” Father decided reluctantly.

Mother quietly brought the water from the fire and poured it into a pan. Carefully she added the medicine. Ringu lifted his foot hesitantly over it. Slowly he put his heel down in the water. He let out a sigh of relief as the pain started to go away.

That night and the next morning Ringu soaked his foot. Do you think he got better? If you think Ringu started to feel better, pat your head. (*Allow response.*) If you think that his foot got worse, touch your nose. (*Allow response.*) If you patted your head, you are correct! The aching pains began to leave. Ringu was relieved. His father said, “Good! I hope the sahib’s medicine will make your foot well very soon, Ringu. It is almost time to guard the crops at night from the hyenas and jackals. My helpers will be gone for two days so you and Battu must do it.”

A few days later Ringu was able to walk without flinching. “The sahib’s God is very powerful. He made my foot well with only powder and water! Today I am going to school with you, Battu,” he said joyfully. “I will take my paper with God’s words with me. Maybe I will learn enough today to be able to read it.”

“Do you really think you should take that to school?” Battu asked.

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The boys sat cross-legged on the hard dirt floor of the schoolhouse. When the teacher came in, everyone stood and saluted.

Ringu felt in his turban for his paper. How he wanted to read it!

The teacher began drilling the class on numbers. “Ek (ache), do (doe), tiin (teen), chaar (char), paanch (pahneh),” he counted in Hindi.

“Ek (ache), do (doe), tiin (teen), chaar (char), paanch (pahneh),” the class repeated after him. It almost sounded like they were singing.

Ringu moved restlessly. He wanted to learn to read, not count!

The teacher wrote the numbers one through five on the small chalkboard. “Take your slates and copy these numbers,” he commanded. “Practice so you are able to write them well.”

Ringu frowned. His fingers were still a little clumsy and he would rather make words. But it wasn’t long before his numbers looked as good as the ones the teacher wrote on the board.

As the boys worked, the teacher slowly walked between the rows.

#### Slide 6

He saw the corner of the piece of paper peeking out of Ringu’s turban. “What is this?” he asked, snatching the paper from Ringu. Ringu gasped and ducked, expecting to get hit.

The teacher slipped the paper into his coat pocket and continued to walk up and down the rows of students. It was so hard for Ringu to concentrate on his school work. How could he get the paper back? It had the words from God on it! He just had to have it!

Looking up from his slate Ringu saw the teacher walk to the door, take the paper out of his pocket and read it carefully. Ringu’s hands got sweaty and his heart beat faster. Suddenly the teacher crumpled the paper and threw it down.

“Ringu, come here!”

Ringu trembled as he got to his feet and forced himself to walk to the front of the room.

“This is about the Christians’ God!” the teacher exclaimed. “Don’t ever take a paper like this again!”

### Slide 7

Ringu hesitated then anxiously crossed his arms and pulled his earlobes—his people’s way of making a promise. He apologized then said, “I promise to never take such a paper again.”

But in his heart Ringu desperately wanted to know what the paper said and was determined to get it back.

After school Battu urged his brother to hurry. He was excited for their job that night. “Come on, Ringu! Tonight we get to guard the fields. I can’t wait to see those hyenas and jackals run! We will make more noise than anyone!”

### Slide 8

“I’m coming, Battu. I’m coming!” Ringu stalled until the teacher and all the other boys left. Then he quickly scooped up the ball of paper from the corner of the schoolroom.

“Is that the paper the teacher told you not to read?” Battu asked. “What are you doing? Throw it away!” Do you think Ringu threw it away? If you think he kept it, wiggle your eyebrows. If you think he threw it away, touch your elbow. (*Allow response.*) If you wiggled your eyebrows, you are correct!

“I don’t care what the teacher says,” Ringu answered. “I am going to keep it. I want to find out more about God. I like to think about Him because Grubbs Sahib says the true God loves me. I never like to think about the evil spirits. They make me afraid. Someday soon I am going to read this paper and find out what it says.”

“But, Ringu,” Battu objected, “if you don’t worship the evil spirits, they will eat you. They might hurt me too! Throw the paper away and forget about it!”

“I’m going to keep this paper and you can’t change my mind,” Ringu insisted as he smoothed it out and carefully returned it to his turban. “The evil spirits haven’t eaten the sahib. They haven’t eaten Pandu. Someday soon I’ll learn more about God. Now come on, let’s go home.”

As they neared their home, Ringu shouted, “Listen! Look! There’s Pandu playing the music box! And there’s Grubbs Sahib!” Ringu started to run. He could not read the paper yet but the sahib could help him. Now he was surely going to hear more about the one true God!

### Cliffhanger

What will Ringu learn? Will his teacher find out? What will his father and mother think? You’ll have to come back tomorrow and find out!

## Review Questions

1. What did the missionary do to help Ringu’s foot? (*He soaked it in water with medicine and prayed.*)
2. Why didn’t Ringu’s father want Ringu to soak his foot? (*He was afraid there were evil spirits in the water.*)
3. What did Ringu learn about God when his foot healed? (*He is powerful.*)
4. Why was the teacher angry that Ringu had a paper with words from God? (*He thought it was wrong to learn about the Christians’ God.*)
5. Why did Ringu get the paper back? (*He wanted to find out what it said about God.*)