

## The Priest and the Boy

Long, long ago, in a mountain temple, there lived a Buddhist priest and his young disciple. The priest was mean, and he never gave the young boy the sweets that were left by the visitors at the temple.

One day, the priest was given some amazake by one of the visitors. He had to go out of the temple, so he said to the boy, "Listen to me. This is a poison called amazake. If you drink it, you'll die at once. Never, ever drink it. Do you understand?"

When the boy was alone in the temple he said to himself, "My master told me that if I drink this, I will die at once. But I'm sure it's a lie. He must be afraid that I might drink it."

He opened the bottle, put some amazake on his finger, and licked it. "Wow, I've never tasted such a sweet drink before," he thought. He drank more and more. He couldn't stop.

Soon he found that he had drunk all the amazake, and he became worried. He thought, "Oh no. What will happen when my master comes home? He's going to be angry, and I know he'll punish me... What should I do?"

After thinking for a while, he had a good idea. The temple had a big Dharma doll made of clay. He kicked it, and it broke into pieces.

When the priest came home, the boy sat on the porch and pretended to cry. The priest asked, "Boy, what's the matter with you? Why are you crying? What happened to you?"

The boy said, "Master, I'm so sorry. When I was cleaning the room, I broke the Dharma doll. I wanted to die, so I drank the amazake. I drank and drank, but I haven't died yet."

The master laughed and then said to the boy, "You're very smart, but I'm still going to punish you."