

Story 2151 (1999 Tape 5)

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The Ubiquitous Tax Collector

As a monkey was walking in the forest one day, it encountered a lion. The lion seemed to be running away from something. The monkey asked the lion, "Where are you going?"

The lion answered, "The tax collector has come even to this forest, and I am running to escape him."

"What would a tax collector have to do with you?"

The lion answered, "I do not know what you mean by such a question. I have a certain amount of wealth which interests him. I am covered with very valuable fur. My wife and my children are also covered with such expensive fur."

The monkey understood the lion's flight now. As it continued walking, it came to a turtle, which, for some reason, was scrambling along the ground as fast as it could go. The monkey asked it, "Why are you fleeing?"

The turtle said, "The tax collector is here in forest. He is the one from whom I am fleeing."

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"What would he have to do with you?" asked the monkey.

"What do you mean? The tax collector is interested in the wealth of everyone. I carry around a house on my back wherever I go. My wife does the same, and so do my children."

"You are wise then to flee," answered the monkey, and then he too began to flee. He ran some distance but then thought better of the matter. "Why should I be concerned about a tax collector? I am so poor that my buttocks are bare. So too are the buttocks of my wife our children."