



Traidcraft

Fighting poverty through trade

Chopsticks

This story comes from Korea.

It can be read as it is or could be readily adapted to be acted by two or more people while the narrator reads the story. (4-foot long chopsticks can be improvised from large garden canes.)

Warning: Since it involves lifting the "chopsticks" towards each other's faces it is probably best not to involve young children.

Story:

There was a wealthy farmer who made his money by charging high prices and paying low wages.

He and his family fed well and he considered himself hugely successful and important.

So when he died he wasn't surprised when a guardian angel brought him before a huge table piled high with the choicest foods and delicacies.

But all around him people were starving. Amazed, he asked them why they did not eat their fill.

"This is Hell," one of them explained.

"Everyone who comes here is given a pair of chopsticks four feet long and is required to hold them at the end to eat. But you just can't eat with chopsticks four feet long. Look! You miss your mouth every time. See?"

Appalled that he had been condemned to such a place, the farmer pleaded with the angel to grant him a sight of Heaven before the gates of Hell closed on him forever.

The angel agreed and, in the blink of an eye, the farmer found himself in Heaven. To his surprise, he saw the same table laden with the same food but here the people were happy and well-fed.

"Shorter chopsticks, I supposed," said the farmer. "Oh no," said the angel, "they have the same chopsticks, of the same length, and they must hold them at the end, just as they do in Hell. But here people know that if you feed your neighbour, your neighbour will feed you also."