



Walking with **Head Erect**

An example of hard work and self-dependence.

I saw this boy at the entrance to the Srirangam temple last week. He was pestering my daughter to buy raw groundnut from him. My daughter was persistently declining, but the lad continued to nag her. “I do not need groundnut, but I will give you ten rupees,” said my daughter.

The boy politely refused. “I am selling groundnut after coming back from school on account of my family circumstances. If I sell a packet for Rs. 20, I get a profit of Rs.5. I sell 30 packets a day and get 150 rupees. I do not want to beg. Please do not make me lazy by gifting me anything. If I accept it once, it will make me lazy. I want to earn my money.” It was like a slap on the cheek for my daughter.

She paid him Rs.20 and bought a packet. He walked along with her, narrating where he was buying his nuts, how he was making the packets, etc. As he kept talking, my daughter was amazed. She offered to buy something for him to eat. That also he declined.

“Sister, I am strict in this matter. Whenever anybody offers something to me, I decline, because, once I accept such an offer it will become a habit and make me always expect something from somebody or other. I will then become lazy. This is also a sort of laziness.”

Family of Toilers

He is studying in seventh standard. He showed us his mother, selling flowers at the temple entrance. Lean and lanky, she was talking to somebody in a feeble tone. She has six sons including him and two daughters. His father became sick and died a couple of years ago.

They calculate the requirements for the month and decide how much each one should earn. Apart from attending school, all of them engage in some activity and earn

something to meet the family expenses.

My daughter enquired about his studies. “I manage to come within the first three ranks,” he said. Asked what his name was, he said, “Ranganathan.” “I had a feeling Lord Ranganatha himself appeared before me and taught me something,” my daughter said.

Some people wallowing in poverty because of circumstances turn into beggars as they are too lazy to work. Their life circle starts and stops there. The society also, without knowing it, offers them something in the name of charity and turns them into beggars. Only a few escape from getting entangled in it, work with an ambition and succeed in life.

Self-confidence, integrity and clarity are visible in this boy’s speech. There are signs that he will toil and succeed. He deserves all emulation by youngsters of the impressionable age 🙏

viswanathan0605@gmail.com

G. VISWANATHAN