

Xieng Mieng and the Prince's Cat

Note: Xieng Mieng is known among Lao and Thai children as the cleverest boy who ever lived. After serving from three to fifteen days in the pagoda (temple) he became known as Xieng.

One day Xieng Mieng went to the palace where he saw a beautiful cat with a gold necklace. Xieng stole the cat as well as the necklace.

Upon arriving home, Xieng set about testing the cat's food. He prepared two dishes, - one full of bones, the other full of meat. From that day on Xieng kept the cat in a cage and forced him to eat bones every day for every meal. Soon the cat liked the bones.

Meanwhile, in the palace, the Prince fretted and worried about his cat. He ordered his servants to search every house in the kingdom. Several days passed with no results. All the servants were about to give up, when one of them found the Prince's cat in Xieng's house and reported the news to the Prince.

Enraged, the Prince commanded his servant to bring Xieng and the cat to the Palace for trial.

The Prince shouted, "Xieng Mieng! Why did you steal my precious cat?"

Xieng replied softly, "Oh Sir! I did not steal your cat. I raised this cat. He has been mine since he was a kitten. I give him bones in his daily meals."

The Prince still in hot temper added, "No, Xieng! This is my cat and I feed him with meat and fish."

After quarreling back and forth, the Prince decided to test the cat.

"I'm going to present this cat with two dishes, - one full of meat and the other full of bones. If the cat eats the bones he belongs to Xieng and if he chooses the meat the cat belongs to me." Kitty! kitty!"

Without wasting time, the cat ran towards the dish of bones and devoured all of them.

Seeing the situation, the Prince said, "Xieng! Take your cat home. It is your cat."