

## **Ta-in and Ta-na**

Once upon a time there were two men who lived in the same coastal village in Thailand. One was named Ta-in and the other was named Ta-na. They became good friends and liked to do things together. Ta-in and Ta-na were very good fishermen so they decided to fish together in the bay. They built a small boat and caught lots of fish in the following days. They shared their catches and cooked them for their evening meal. After many months, their luck changed, and they caught fewer and fewer fish.

One day the two men had tried every place they knew to find fish but had no luck. Finally, Ta-in caught one fish, which they brought home. Since Ta-na had not caught a fish, Ta-in said that he would take the head and middle part of the fish and Ta-na could have the tail part. Ta-na did not like this: he also wanted the head and middle of the fish. But Ta-in shouted that it was not fair as he was the real owner of the fish since he caught it. He deserved the head and middle, and Ta-na should be happy to take the tail. They could not agree. In fact, they became angrier and angrier and finally started to fight with each other. Their swinging blows at one another and their loud shouts brought the villagers running.

A village elder called Ta-yoo came by and also heard them fighting. He pulled the men apart, saying, 'Stop fighting!' Ta-in and Ta-na calmed down and agreed to let the elder solve their problem. They were afraid that otherwise they might hurt each other seriously. Ta-yoo thought about the problem for a long time. The villagers waited in silence for his decision. Finally he spoke.

'Ta-in, you caught the fish so you take the head. Ta-na, you did not catch any fish so you take the tail part. Because I have had to solve the problem for you, I will take the middle part of the fish.'

The two men were stunned but could not think of any other solution, so they agreed. Ta-in then took the head, Ta-na took the tail part and Ta-yoo took the biggest and best part of the fish. The villagers thought that it was a fair solution and walked away.

Both Ta-in and Ta-na were very sad. 'How foolish we were', said Ta-in. 'I caught the fish, and Ta-yoo got the best part. I should not have been so selfish.' 'No, I was the selfish one', said Ta-na. 'I didn't catch a fish, so I should have been happy to take the tail part.' The two men looked at each other. They finally realised that they had both been greedy. Because of this, they were both losers that day, but they had learned a valuable lesson.

From that day on, they worked together and helped one another. They shared their catches, no matter who had caught the most fish. In time the fish returned again in great numbers, and Ta-in and Ta-na caught so many fish that they could sell most of them. They even hired other men to help them with their fishing. They not only had become good friends again, they had also become wealthy.