

## Kodilikane

Because Kodilikane was without a doubt the most attractive maiden in the whole village, all the other girls were jealous of her beauty, and so they decided to play a trick on her. Claiming that they had thrown all their jewellery into the water to pay homage to the River God, they urged Kodilikane to do the same. So she took off her jewellery, and threw it into the river. The girls laughed, collected their jewels from where they had hidden them and ran off. Kodilikane swam into the pool to get them and found a dry cave which she went into. And there stood an old wrinkled woman, with only one arm and one leg.

"Laugh at my deformities!" said the woman.

But Kodilikane said, "No, I shall not laugh or mock for I do not find you ugly or deformed."

The woman's voice softened a little, "clean up my place." And a tear trickled down her wrinkled face as she saw Kodilikane starting to do these chores. And when she spoke again, her voice had lost all its harshness and was kind and gentle. Kodilikane told her what had happened and the woman replied:

"Kodilikane, you are a girl full of compassion." The old woman gave her food, and jewellery. She then helped her get back to the bank.

The nasty girls were envious when they saw her jewellery. So they visited the old woman in the pool.

"Laugh at my ugliness!" shouted the woman. And because these girls knew neither love nor compassion, they laughed.

"Clean up my place!" the old woman roared.

But they refused to.

The old woman's anger was terrible to see. "You are all wicked and selfish girls," she cried, "I will send you back to your village. You've lost your jewellery, for these things you have not earned."

And one by one the girls escaped before the crocodiles could eat them.

Everybody in the village was astounded by the change in them. Their experience turned them into the most charming and unselfish women you could imagine.