Anno’s Magic Seeds

Jack is a lazy carefree man. Once a magician gives him two golden seeds. Jack eats one and surprisingly does not feel hungry for one whole year. He sows the other seed, and next year there are two more golden seeds. He eats one sows the other. This continues for a few years. But one year Jack sows both the seeds. That is when the magic begins. This story shows the power of compounding. Simple maths is interwoven into this beautiful story. This is a world classic!
जादुई बीज : मित्सुमासा ऐनो
Anno’s Magic Seeds : Mitsumasa Anno
हिन्दी अनुवाद : अरविन्द गुप्ता
Hindi Translation : Arvind Gupta

जनवाचन के तहत
भारत ज्ञान विज्ञान समिति द्वारा प्रकाशित

ग्राफिक्स : अभय कुमार झा

प्रकाशन वर्ष : मार्च, 2005

सहयोग राशि : 12 रुपये

Published by Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti
Basement of Y.W.A., Hostel No. II, G-Block,
Saket, New Delhi - 110 017
Phone : 011- 26569943, 26569773
Fax : 011- 26569773
email: bgvs@vsnl.net
One fine winter day, a happy-go-lucky young man named Jack was strolling down the road, feeling a little hungry. Suddenly, he was surprised to meet an old man he had never seen before. In one hand the man held a long staff; in the other were 2 large golden seeds. "I am a wizard," the old man said "and I have something for you..."

The wizard handed Jack the 2 golden seeds. "These are magic," he said. "Bake 1 seed in the oven until it is red and then eat it. You will not be hungry again for a whole year. Bury the other seed in the ground now and care for it well. I promise you it will grow and give you 2 more magic seeds in the fall."
Jack did exactly what the wizard told him to do.

The next spring, one tiny sprout came up. It grew and grew into a sturdy plant.
In the summer 2 beautiful flowers bloomed on the plant. A little later, 2 fruits appeared where the flowers had been.

And in the fall the 2 marvellous fruits produced 2 seeds, just like those the wizard had given him.

In the winter Jack baked one seed to eat and buried the other in the ground.
The next spring came. Just as before. One tiny plant grew from the seed Jack had buried.

Summer came. 2 beautiful flowers bloomed on the plant followed by 2 marvellous fruits.

फिर गर्मी आई। पौधे में दो सुंदर फूल खिले, जो बाद में दो खूबसूरत फलों में बदल गए।

फहले की तरह फिर वसंत आई। और जहां जैक ने बीज बोया था वहां एक छोटा पौधा निकल आया।
Fall came. And again the marvellous fruits produced 2 seeds.

In the winter, Jack ate one baked seed and buried the other seed in the ground.

Once again in the year after this, one plant came up and 2 flowers bloomed and 2 marvellous fruits grew and 2 seeds were made. And again, Jack ate one seed and buried the other.
The next year, while Jack rested and watched, a plant came up, flowers bloomed on it, then 2 fruits appeared and 2 seeds were made. And as before, Jack ate one seed and buried the other in the ground.

The next year, while Jack rested and watched, a plant came up, flowers bloomed again and the marvellous fruits grew and 2 seeds were made, just as before. Again, Jack baked one seed and ate it and buried the other seed in the ground.
But finally, Jack began to think about it. "This can just go on and on, in the same way forever," he said to himself, "if I just go on doing the same thing every year. And in the next year after that, the flowers bloomed and the marvellous fruits grew and the 2 seeds were produced as well. Again, Jack ate one seed and buried the other. Well this year, I will bury both the seeds in the ground.

"I will get through the winter somehow, by eating something different." So, that winter, he buried 2 seeds in the ground. He tended them very carefully.
In the spring, 2 sprouts came up, and in the fall 4 seeds were produced.

The next year - that is, the first year after he planted both seeds - what do you think happened?
In the winter, Jack baked and ate one seed and buried the other 3 seeds in the ground.

Then in the spring of the second year after his discovery, 3 sprouts came up. And in the fall, 6 seeds were made. That winter, Jack ate one seed and buried the other 5. He made a noisemaker to scare away crows and sparrows, so they wouldn’t come and eat the seeds. When the wind blew on it, the noise it made startled the birds.

How many fruits will grow in Jack’s garden next fall?
In the winter, Jack buried 9 seeds in the ground. He baked one seed and ate it.

Well the next year - that is the third year after he got the idea - all the sprouts came up in the spring. And in the fall, 10 seeds were made from the 10 marvellous fruits.

उसके अगले साल - यानी तीसरे साल - वसंत में सारे बीजों में से अकुर फूटे। और पतझड़ में 10 फलों में से 10 सुंदर सुनहरे बीज निकले।

सर्दियों में जैक ने 9 बीज बोए। उसने एक बीज को धूनकर खाया।
The next year, the fourth year, in the spring there came the sprouts and in the fall there were 18 seeds. That winter, Jack buried 17 seeds in the ground.

The next year - that is, the fifth year - in the spring all the sprouts came up and in the fall the new seeds were made. That winter, Jack ate one seed and he buried the rest of them in the ground.  

*How many seeds did he bury?*
The next year, the sixth, all the sprouts came up, just as before. And that fall many seeds grew, so many that Jack didn’t bother to count them anymore. While he was busy gathering in the harvest of seeds, a nice young woman came along. Her name was Alice. Alice stopped to help him.

*How many seeds grew that year?*
In the spring of the next year, the seventh year, all the sprouts came up, and in the fall there were many seeds from all the fruits.

That winter, Jack and Alice got married and held a wedding party. They gave 2 delicious magic seeds to each of the 5 guests. Each guest saved one seed for a souvenir of this happy day. Jack and Alice ate one seed each.
That year they also built a little storehouse and put 16 seeds in it to keep for a while. The rest of the seeds they buried in the ground.

How many seeds did they bury?

The next spring, the eighth, a lot of sprouts came up, and in the fall many seeds appeared. And then, because they had quite enough seeds, they decided to sell some at the town market.

They took 60 seeds to sell, including all those that they had put in the warehouse, the year before. Then they put 34 new seeds in the storehouse, set aside one seed each to eat and buried all the rest of the seeds in the ground.

How many seeds did they bury in the ground?
The next year was the tenth.

The next year was the ninth, since Jack had had his good idea. In the spring a lot of sprouts came up, and in the fall a lot of seeds were made. That year their baby was born. So in the winter 3 seeds were eaten, since each of them ate one seed. Now, because they had so many seeds, they went to the market to sell 100 of them, including all those they had been keeping in the storehouse. They put 51 of the new crop of seeds into the storehouse and buried all the rest of the seeds in the field.

How many?
It was a hurricane! They had never expected such a terrible storm. The river overran its banks and soon there was a flood. Jack tied the house firmly to a tree, so that it would not be carried away. Then he pulled the cow up onto their cart, which was now floating like a ship. Alice, holding their little boy in her arms, ran up to the attic of the house.

Jack managed to scoop up a small bag of seeds. He tied the bag to the tree.

What a dreadful storm it was?

The wind shook the trees and blew the rain against them. Soon the field looked just like a wild sea.

The wind roared and the dark, muddy water rumbled and rolled over the plants.

The crops and the storehouse were completely washed away.
“Still, our baby is safe, I am glad for that,” said Alice.

“So am I, very glad indeed,” said Jack. “And our son has survived and I was able to save 10 seeds. So cheer up, dear wife. We will start all over and make a new life together.”

Finally, the storm was over. the sky cleared and the sun came out.

But the fields were empty and bare.

“ग्रीमंत है कि बच्चा तो सुरक्षित है,” एलिस ने कहा।

“मैं भी काफी खुश हूँ,” जैक ने कहा। “कम-से-कम तूफान में हमारा लड़का तो बच गया। हम लोग अपनी मेहनत से 10 बीज भी बचा पाए। यह गम का नहीं खुशी का मौका है। हम अब दुबारा से एक नई जिंदगी शुरू करेंगे!”

कुछ दिनों बाद तूफान खत्म हुआ। फिर आसमान साफ हुआ और सूरज दुबारा से चमका।

परंतु तब तक खेतों की पूरी फसल उजड़ चुकी थी।
A note from Mitsumasa Anno

I called this book *The Magic Seeds* because, in fact, because there is a mysterious power in even one tiny seed that seems quite beyond our understanding. Of course, we could not live for a year on one grain of rice or cereal, as Jack did. But if we should bury one seed in the ground and take care of the plant that grows from it, it would not be long before we had a crop of hundreds of thousands of grains. In our real world of nature there are many such magical events - more than are contained in all the most fantastic picture books.

A long, long time ago, human beings learnt to grow plants for their food and other needs. They sowed seeds in the ground and fertilised them; they protected their growing plants from harmful birds and insects. They prayed to God for rain. And when their harvest produced more food than they needed commerce and trade began, and calculating and bargaining and other things we may think of as typical of civilisation. And then, unfortunately, some people began to quarrel and fight with each other.

I don’t mean to refer in this book to all of these difficult matters. Yet I think you will find that many events in our real world are quite a lot like things that happened in this story. I hope you will find this interesting.

The magic begins when the wizard gives Jack two mysterious golden seeds. Jack eats one and, miraculously, isn’t hungry for a whole year! He buries the other seed, just as the wizard had told him to do, and suddenly his life starts to change. His fortune grows by ones and twos, then faster and faster, and so does the reader’s fun - until suddenly a terrible flood threatens to take it all away. Though the story can be followed without any math’s skills beyond simple addition and subtraction, sharp-witted young readers will delight in the increasingly tricky arithmetic puzzles cleverly woven into both the text and illustrations.

This many-layered tale is much more than an entertaining mathematical *tour de force*; it has a deeper message. Anno’s simple but poetic text and exquisite watercolour illustrations invite children to seek out his meaning for themselves. Visual clues “hidden in plain sight” reveal the moment when carefree Jack mends his lazy ways; perceptive viewers will detect at what point he becomes “smarter” (or perhaps more calculating). In the end, a wiser Jack finds the courage to start it all again. Here is a heartening message for viewers/readers of all ages.

Mitsumasa Anno was born in Tsuwano, a small, historic town in the Shimane prefecture of Japan in 1926. His first book was published in 1968; since then, more than 100 others have followed to the delight of children, to the delight of children and adults around the world. He has received many honours for his work, including the Hans Christian Anderson Award in 1984 and the Shiju Hosho decoration.

Mr. Anno believes that children enjoy the playful solving aspect of mathematics and that they use their natural mathematical abilities in many ways as part of their daily lives. In Anno’s Magic Seeds, he has not set out to teach arithmetic by using it within the story; instead the movement is in the opposite direction - it is the math that moves the narrative along and adds to the fun of reading it.

Other titles in Mitsumasa Anno’s innovative collection of beautiful maths books include *Anno’s Mysterious Multiplying Jar*, *Socrates and the Three Little Pigs* and *Anno’s Hat Trick*. 