Rice Without Rain, by Minfong Ho

Chapters 1-5

Questions

1. Why is Dao so angry and defensive when Jinda tells her that her baby is hungry in Chapter One?

2. Even though the visitors coming along the path may be Communist insurgents, why do Jinda and Dao go to the river that evening?

3. At the end of Chapter One, how can you tell that Jinda has an attraction to the stranger (whose name we learn is Ned)? Quote a sentence or phrase from the book to support your answer.

4. Why was the song a good way for Ned to introduce his group to the villagers?

5. List four ideas the visiting students say they share with Communists.
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 
   d)

6. Why does Jinda not react positively when Sri mentions she’s been to Europe and New York?

7. The grandmother puts on Sri’s glasses. What are the sudden benefits of the eyeglasses for Grandmother? What are the negative aspects of wearing the glasses?

8. “Ned says we’d be parasites if we didn’t contribute,” says Sri. Use your vocabulary list or a dictionary: What does she mean? What’s a parasite?

10. At the beginning of Chapter Four, Jinda thinks, “It’s not right…that a university student with hands smooth and uncalloused should do such work.” What would Ned answer if she said that to him?

11. Sri is a medical student. In what ways is this of benefit to the village? Why would this be a problem for anyone? Why does it sometimes only make Sri frustrated and angry?

12. When the baby Oi is brought to Sri, she diagnoses Marasmic Kwashiorkor. What, according to Sri, is that? What caused it?

13. At the beginning of Chapter Five, why is Dao so angry at Sri? (What does she say are the reasons? What do you think are the actual reasons?)

14. How and why is it that “little Oi’s death affected the entire village”?

15. In Chapter Five, Ned gives a speech to Jinda about the rent the farmers pay. What is his solution to the high rents?

16. Then at the end of the chapter: What is the comparison Ned makes between a buffalo and a man?