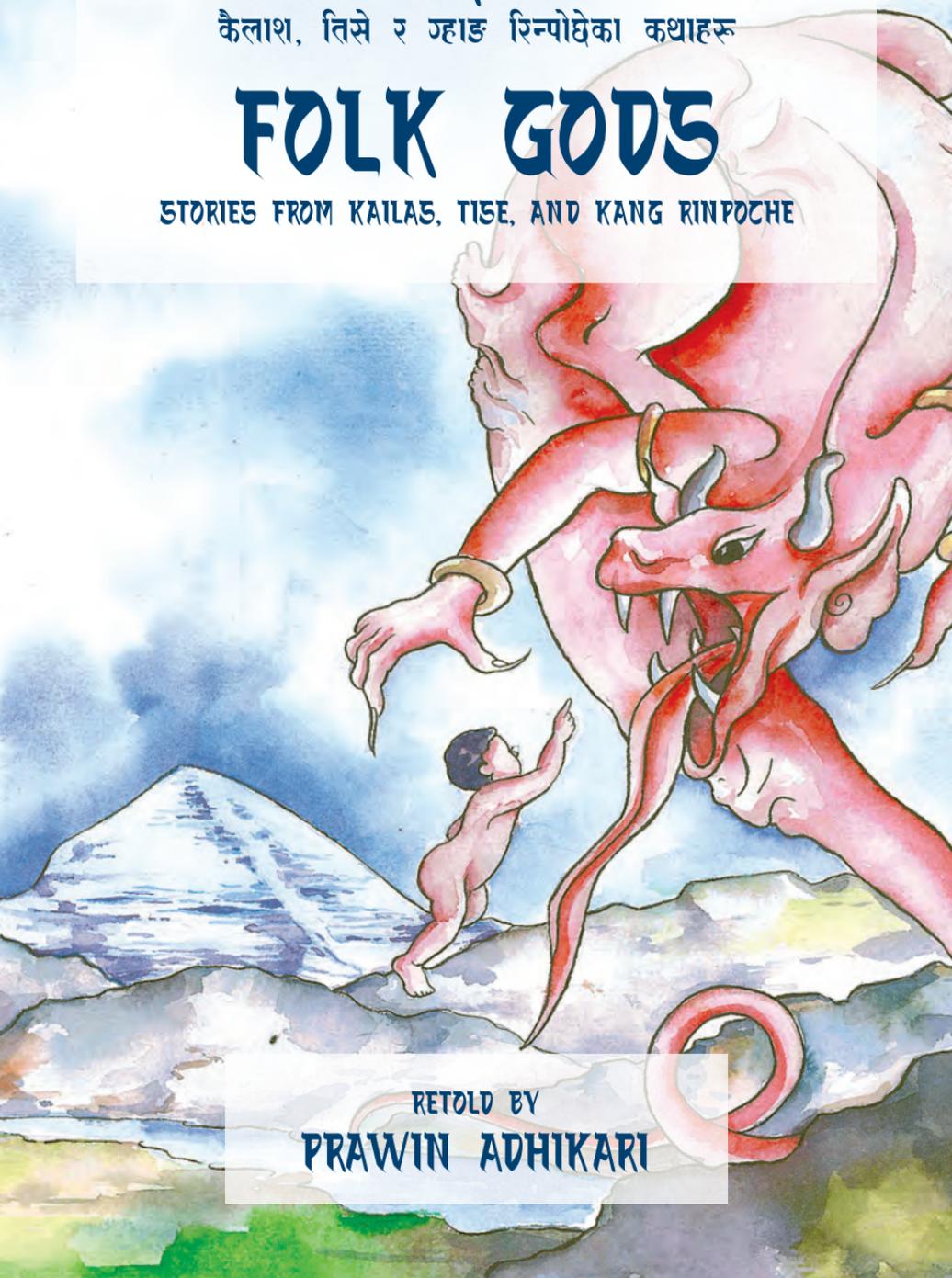


लोक देवताहरू

कैलाश, तिसे र जहाङ रिन्पोचेका कथाहरू

FOLK GODS

STORIES FROM KAILAS, TISE, AND KANG RINPOCHE



RETOLD BY
PRAWIN ADHIKARI

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GOVINDA ADHIKARI



SAFU

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लोक कथा कृतित्वबारे

कथन तथा पुनर्कथनको प्रक्रिया सदैव एक सामूहिक पहल हुन्छ । विभिन्न व्यक्तिले हामीलाई आफ्ना समय र कथा नदिए यो पुस्तक सम्भव हुनसक्ने थिएन । यी लोक कथाहरू नेपाल र भारतका हिमाली क्षेत्र तथा चीनको स्वायत्त क्षेत्र तिब्बतमा तीन वर्षको अन्वेषणको क्रममा संग्रह गरिएका हुन् । यी कथाहरू हाम्रो अन्वेषण टोली समक्ष हिमालका धुलाम्मे बाटोहरूमा, स्थानीय व्यक्तिहरूसँग उहाँहरूकै घरमा, अनि लामा, पुरोहित, कथावक्ता तथा गाउँका अग्रजहरूसँगको भेटवार्तालगायत थुप्रै साक्षात्कारहरूमा सँगालिएका हुन् । हामीले एउटै कथा पनि विभिन्न संस्करणमा सुन्न पायौं । प्रवीण अधिकारीले यी छानिएका कथाहरू पाठनीय बनाउन सम्पादन तथा पुनर्लेखन गर्नुभयो । हामी उहाँको सहयोगप्रति अत्यन्त आभारी छौं । भावी पुस्ताको हितको लागि आफ्ना कथाहरू प्रदान गर्नुहुने गाउँका स्थानीय बासिन्दाप्रति पनि हामी असीमित कृतज्ञता व्यक्त गर्न चाहन्छौं । तपाईंको हातमा यही सामूहिक प्रयासको परिणाम छ । कथाहरू संग्रह गर्ने समूहका व्यक्तिहरूबारे थप जानकारी परिचयमा समावेश गरिएको छ ।

यी कथाहरूलाई स्थानीय भाषामा बुझ्न मद्दत गर्ने अनुवादकगण गोविन्द अधिकारी, जिग्मे, केलसाङ्ग चिमी, कुङ्गा येशे, तेन फुङ, तेन्जिङ स्याङ्गमो, भुचुङ्ग ड. सोनाम, दोर्जे र चन्द्रेशा पाण्डेलाई पनि हामी हार्दिक धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छौं ।

Note on Folk Story Authorship

The process of telling and retelling stories is always a group effort. This book would not be possible without many individuals sharing their time and stories with us. These folk stories were collected over the course of three years of exploration in the Himalayan areas of India, Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. The stories were shared with our research team in many places—on dirt paths in the mountains; in communal halls around a fire; with locals one-on-one in their homes; and in meeting with lamas, priests, storytellers and village elders. It was often the case that we would hear the same story told in multiple versions. The well-known Nepali writer Prawin Adhikari helped edit a selection of these stories for readability. We are very grateful to him for his help. Most importantly, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the local villagers who shared their stories for the benefit of future generations. What you hold in your hands is the result of this collective effort. More information about the individual team members who collected the stories is included in the Introduction.

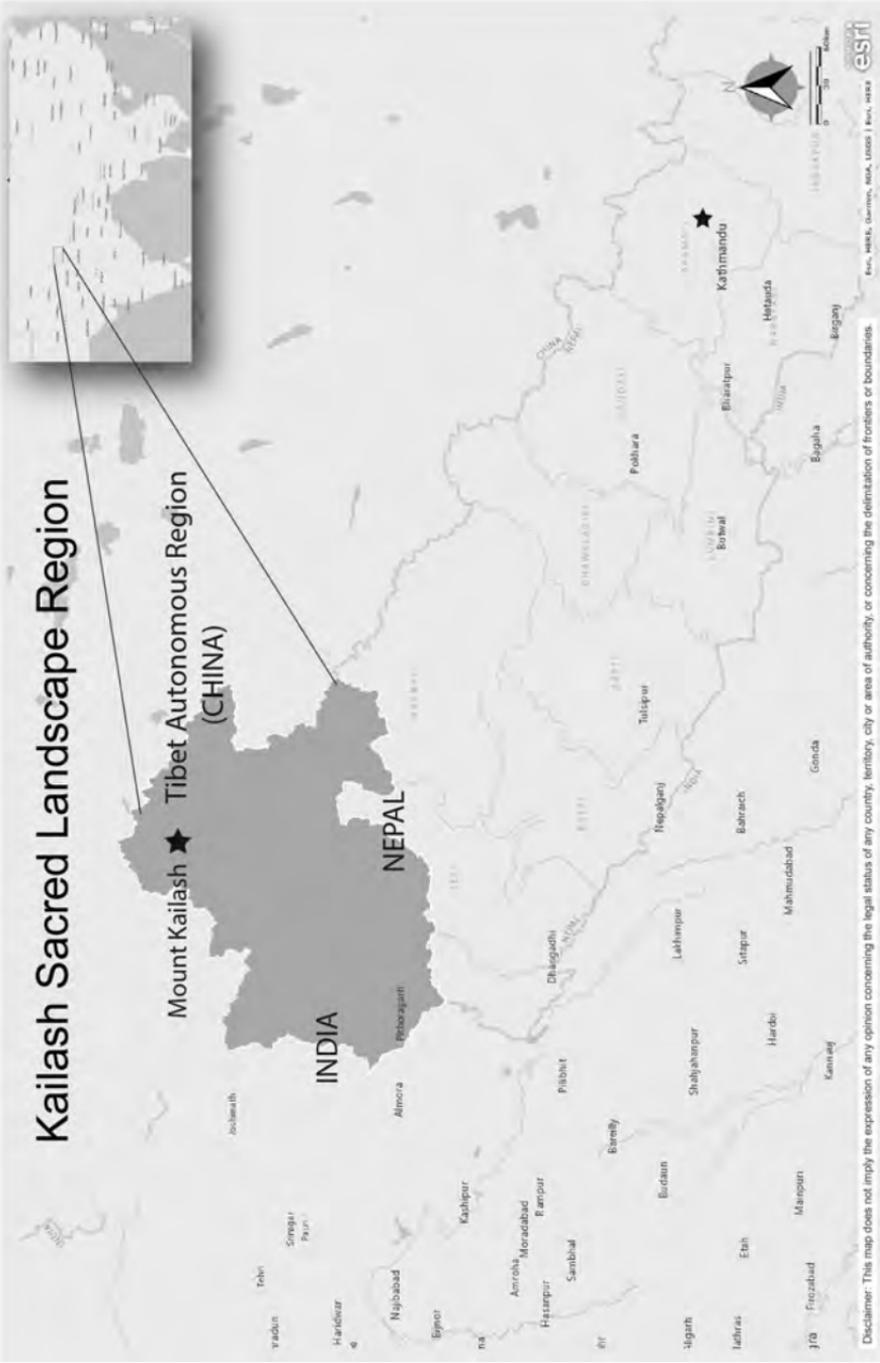
We also would like thank the talented translators who helped make sure these stories would be understandable in each local language: Govinda Adhikari, Jigme, Kelsang Chimee, Kunga Yishe, Ten Phun, Tenzin Sangmo, Bhuchung D Sonam, Dorje, and Chandresha Pandey.

Kailash Sacred Landscape Region

Mount Kailash ★ Tibet Autonomous Region (CHINA)

INDIA

NEPAL



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परिचय

हिमालय शृंखलामा थुप्रै पवित्र सरोवर तथा पर्वतहरू छन् । तर तीमध्ये सबैभन्दा प्रख्यात पर्वत कैलाश छ भने सबैभन्दा पवित्र ताल मानसरोवर । कैलाशलाई तिब्बतीहरूले खाङ रिन्पोचे र तिसे पनि भन्छन् । हिन्दु, बोन्पो, बुद्धमार्गी, जैन, सिख तथा प्रकृतिपूजक सबैले कैलाशलाई पवित्र तीर्थ मान्छन् । थुप्रै धर्ममा स्वर्गको सबैभन्दा नजिकको तीर्थ भनेर पनि कैलाशलाई नै भन्छन् ।

नेपालको हुम्ला, भारतको उत्तराखण्ड तथा चीनको तिब्बत स्वायत्त क्षेत्रबाट संकलन गरिएका यी कथाहरूले कैलाश क्षेत्रका बासिन्दाहरूले जमिन र पुर्खाहरूसँगको नाता कसरी बुभेकाछन् भन्ने केलाउँछ । हाम्रो जमिनसँग हाम्रो के सम्बन्ध छ ? कल्पनाले भ्याएसम्म सुदूर विगतदेखि आजसम्म यहाँका पवित्र वन, ताल, टाकुरा र नदीहरूसँग हाम्रा पूर्वजहरू र हाम्रो के साभा सम्बन्ध छ ? हाम्रा पूर्वजहरूले यहाँका लोककथाहरूमार्फत हाम्रालागि कस्तो सौन्दर्य, कस्ता चेतावनी र ज्ञान छोडिराखेका छन् ? यी कथाहरूले यस्तै केही प्रश्न सोध्छन् ।

हजारौं वर्ष बित्दै जाँदा कैलाश वरपरका मानिसहरू विभिन्न राष्ट्र र धर्ममा विभाजित भएका छन् । तर उनीहरूले सास फेर्ने हावा एउटै हो, पिउने पानी एउटै हो । उनीहरूले पूजा गर्ने ताल र पर्वत यौटै हुन् । उनीहरू सबैको सपनामा हिमाली हिउँको उज्यालो हुन्छ अनि आकाशभरि कन्याडकुरुड गर्दै उड्ने सारसको गीत । न्यु योर्कस्थित न्यु स्कूलको इण्डिया चाइना इन्स्टिच्युट र एकीकृत पर्वत विकासकालागि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय केन्द्र (इसिमोड) को आशा छ कि नयाँ पुस्ताका पाठकहरूले यी कथाहरूमार्फत आफ्नै जमिन, हावापानी र कथाहरूबारे नयाँ ढंगले सोच्नेछन् । यस पुस्तकले यी देशका युवा पाठकहरूलाई र विश्वभरीकै पाठकहरूलाई आफ्ना समुदायमा,

राष्ट्रहरूमा र ऐतिहासिक कालखण्डमा के साभा अनुभूति र अवधारणा छन् भन्ने बुझ्दै प्रत्येक समुदायमा अद्वितीय विशेषता के छ भन्ने पनि बुझ्न प्रेरित गर्नेछ ।

यो पुस्तक इण्डिया चाइना इन्स्टिच्युटको नेतृत्वमा सम्पन्न गरिएको तीन वर्षे परियोजनाको प्रतिफल हो । न्यु स्कूलको योगदानका साथै यसका लागि हेनरी लुस फाउन्डेसन र इसिमोडको पनि सहयोग प्राप्त भएको थियो । म हाम्रा सबै साभेदार तथा सहयोगीहरूप्रति कृतज्ञता जाहेर गर्न चाहन्छु । फिल्डवर्क समूहलाई विशेष धन्यवादः सागर लामा, हिमानी उपाध्याय, केल्साड छिमी, कुङ्गा यिशे, पासाड याङ्जी शेर्पा, शीतल ऐतवाल, नवराज लामा, शेखर पाठक तथा छेवाड लामा (छक्कबहादुर लामा) जसले कैलाश क्षेत्रबाट यी कथा संकलन गर्नमा महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गरे । साथै, इसिमोडका सहकर्मी अभिमन्यु पाण्डे, राजन कोत्रु तथा स्वप्निल चौधरीलाई यस परियोजनाकालागि अथक सहयोग तथा सहभागिताका लागि मुरीमुरी धन्यवाद ।

पासाड याङ्जी शेर्पा, शीतल ऐतवाल, सागर लामा, तथा छेवाड लामाले नेपालका हुम्ला तथा दार्चुला जिल्लाबाट कथाहरू संकलन तथा पुनर्वाचन गरे । हिमानी उपाध्यायले शेखर पाठकको सहयोग र मार्गदर्शनसहित भारतको उत्तराखण्ड राज्यको पिथौरागढ जिल्लामा कथा संकलन तथा पुनर्वाचन गरिन् । कुङ्गा यिशेको सहभागितामा केल्साड छिमीले चीनको तिब्बत स्वायत्त क्षेत्रको डारीबाट कथा संकलन तथा पुनर्वाचन गरिन् । शोध सहायकहरूले सडक र पैदलमार्ग हुँदै रोचक कथाहरूको खोजमा यात्रा गरेका थिए । तत्पश्चात प्रवीण अधिकारीले ती कथालाई पुनर्लेखन गरे भने गोविन्द अधिकारीले कथाहरूको नेपाली अनुवाद गरेर कथाहरूलाई नेपाली भाषामा पाठकहरूमाभ ल्याउन सहयोग गरेका छन् । तेजिङ नोर्बु नाङ्साल, लिउ स्यावकिङ र शेखर पाठकको सहयोगको लागि धन्यवाद । यी कथाहरू संकलन गरिएको क्षेत्रमा विद्यमान सामाजिक, संस्कृतिक तथा धार्मिक विविधता दर्शाउन अँग्रेजी र म्यान्डरिन, हिन्दी, नेपाली तथा तिब्बती भाषामा अनुवाद गरी चार भिन्न द्विभाषी पुस्तकका रूपमा प्रकाशित गरिँदैछ ।

यसका अतिरिक्त कथा, फोटोहरू, मानचित्रहरू, अडियो रेकर्डिङ तथा अन्य सन्दर्भ सामग्रीहरू लुस फाउन्डेसनद्वारा आर्थिक सहयोग प्राप्त हिमालयमा धर्म, संस्कृति तथा प्रकृतिसम्बन्धी अध्ययन सेक्रेड हिमालय इनिशिएटिभ

परियोजनाको अंगका रूपमा इण्डिया चाइना इन्स्टिच्युटको वेबसाइट www.indiachinainstitute.org/sacred-landscapes-book/ मा सार्वजनिक रूपमा उपलब्ध छन् । साथै, सहयोगी संस्था इसिमोडको कैलाश पवित्र भूपरिधिसम्बन्धी परियोजनाको वेबसाइट lib.icimod.org/record/32580 मा पनि उपलब्ध छन् । प्रत्येक भाषाका प्रकाशनका इलेक्ट्रोनिक प्रति व्यक्तिगत तथा शैक्षिक प्रयोजनका लागि निःशुल्क डाउनलोड गर्न सकिनेछ ।

अशोक गुरुङ

वरिष्ठ निर्देशक, इण्डिया चाइना इन्स्टिच्युट
प्रोफेसर अफ प्याकटिस्,
जुलियन जे स्टडली ग्रेजुएट प्रोग्राम इन इन्टरनेसनल अफेयर्स
द न्यु स्कुल

Introduction

There are many sacred mountains and lakes in the Himalayas, but the most famous amongst them is Mount Kailas. It is also called Kang Rinpoche or Kang Tise by the people of Tibet. Hindus, Bönpos, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and animists all consider Kailas a sacred place. Many religions believe Mount Kailas to be the closest humans can get to the heavens.

This collection of folktales from Humla in Nepal, Uttarakhand in India, and the Tibet Autonomous Region in China explores the ways in which people from the Kailas region have understood their relation to their land and ancestors. Some of the questions these stories explore are: How are we related to the land where we grow up? What do we and our ancestors, going as far back as memory or imagination can reach, share with the sacred groves, lakes, peaks and rivers of our land? And, what beauty, warnings or wisdom have our ancestors left behind for us?

For thousands of years, people of the land around Kailas have been divided into different nations and religions, but they still share the same air and waters, and still worship the same lakes and mountains. Their dreams have the brilliance of Himalayan snow and the clamour of cranes in the skies. Through these stories, the India China Institute at The New School in New York and the International Centre

for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) hope to reach young readers from the region and invite them to once more reflect on their own land, air and stories as found in these folktales. This book seeks to remind young readers in these countries – and readers all around the world – to recognize what is common across communities, nations and periods in history, while also recognizing what the unique inheritance of every community is.

This book emerged out of a three-year project designed and led by the India China Institute at The New School in New York City. In addition to contributions from The New School, primary support for the project came from the Henry Luce Foundation and ICIMOD. I want to use this opportunity to thank all of our supporters for their partnerships and generous contributions. Also, a very special thanks to our fieldwork team: Sagar Lama, Himani Upadhyaya, Kelsang Chimee, Kunga Yishe, Pasang Y. Sherpa, Sheetal Aitwal, Nabraj Lama, Shekhar Pathak, and Tshewang Lama (Chakka Bahadur) – for their crucial role in gathering stories from the region. We also thank Abhimanyu Pandey, Rajan Kotru and Swapnil Chaudhary of ICIMOD for their tireless support and participation in the project. And my special thanks to Toby Volkman of Luce Foundation for their continued support and encouragement over the years.

Pasang Sherpa, Sagar Lama, Sheetal Aitwal and Tshewang Lama (Chakka Bahadur) collected and retold stories from Humla and Darchula districts in Nepal. Himani Upadhyaya collected stories from the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand state in India, with the support and guidance of Shekhar Pathak. Kelsang Chimee collected stories in the Ngari Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region in China, with participation from Kunga Yishe. The research associates collected and translated these stories from many

different sources, traveling by road and by foot in search of interesting tales. Later, Prawin Adhikari expanded them into their present form in English. Govinda Adhikari translated the stories into Nepali. Thanks to Tenzin Norbu Nangsal for editing the Tibetan, Liu Xiaoqing for editing the Chinese, and Shekhar Pathak for editing the Hindi. To reflect the great diversity of societies, cultures and religions from where these folktales were collected, the stories have been published as four bilingual books, with stories in English, alongside translations in Mandarin, Hindi, Nepali, and Tibetan.

Additional stories and materials, including photographs, maps, audio recordings and other related information, are publicly available on the India China Institute's website as part of its Sacred Himalaya Initiative, a three-year Luce Foundation-funded project exploring religion, nature and culture in the Himalayas. Electronic versions of each language may be downloaded free of cost for personal or educational use from the ICI website at: www.indiachinainstitute.org/sacred-landscapes-book/ and from ICIMOD's website at: lib.icimod.org/record/32580.

Ashok Gurung

Senior Director, India China Institute, and Professor of Practice, Julien J. Studley Graduate Program in International Affairs, The New School

नश्वर देवताहरू

कतिपय संस्कृति र धर्ममा उहिल्यै देवता र राक्षसहरू मानिसहरूसँगै बस्थे भन्ने कल्पना गरिएको पाइन्छ । यस्तै परापूर्व कालमा हिमालयका एक देवताका पाँच भाइ बलिया तन्देरी छोरा थिए । कान्छा छोराको नाम पिपिह्या थियो जसको अर्थ चार दाजुहरूको भाइ भन्ने हुन्छ ।

पाँचै भाइ एक अर्कालाई माया गर्थे र जहाँ जाँदा पनि सँगसँगै जान्थे । उनीहरू थारलाई हिमालयपारि तिब्बतका चरनसम्म लखेट्थे । कहिले हिमनदी गङ्गाको चिसो पानीमा स्नान गर्थे भने कहिल हुम्लाको केमीको तातो पानीको कुण्डमा नुहाउँथे । उनीहरू सबैसँग उड्ने रथ भएकाले उनीहरू जताततै घुम्थे । लाडार त्सोका टापुमा चराले हिउँदमा गुँड बनाइरहेको हेर्थे । लिमी उपत्यकामा हिउँ चितुवा हेर्थे । तोरीबारीमा नाचन गोठालाको भेषमा ब्याँस उपत्यका भर्थे ।

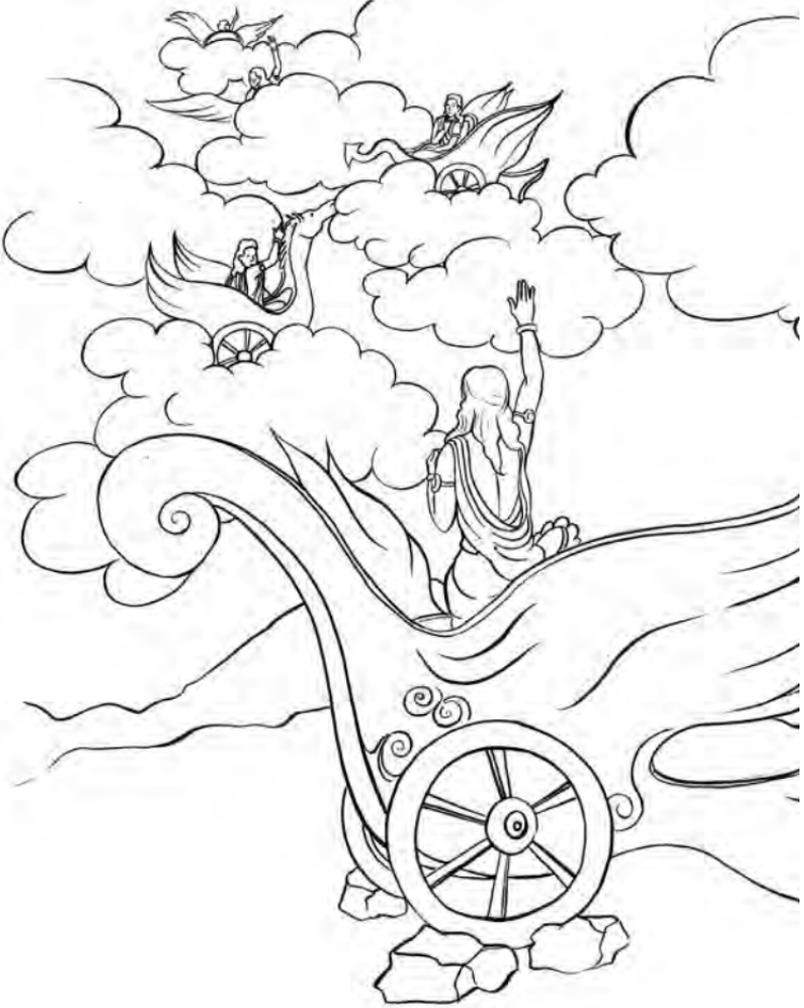
एक दिन गढवालको पुष्पावती उपत्यकामा सयपत्री र कान्ता फूलको मुकुट बनाउँदै गर्दा यौटा गीत गुञ्जिएको सुने ।

‘दाजुहरू’, पिपिह्याले भने — ‘हामी देवता भए पनि यो गीत गाउनेलाई देख्न पाइन भने म त मर्छु !’

दाजुहरूले चेतावनी दिँदै भने — ‘पिपिह्या, केही प्रकारका इच्छाहरू जन्मने र मर्ने मानवहरूकालागि मात्र हुन्छन् । जसरी हामी अमर छौं, आकांक्षाबाट उत्पन्न हुने दुःख पनि सधैं रहिरहन्छ ।’

पिपिह्याले भने गाउने मान्छे पत्ता लगाउन कर गरिरहे । उनका जेठा दाजुले भने — ‘ठीकै छ पिपिह्या । तर, हामी सबैले मानिसहरूले दिएको कुनै पनि कुरा नखाने वाचा गर्नुपर्छ । हाम्रो मुखमा एक दाना चामलमात्रै पन्यो भने पनि हामी सधैंका लागि पृथ्वीमा जालमा पर्नेछौं ।’

उड्ने रथमा चढेर केही बेर खोजेपछि उनीहरूले रङ जातिका मानिसहरू बस्ने व्यास उपत्यकामा गीत गाउनेहरूलाई भेटे । रङलिन



देउताका पाँच बहिनी छोरी संसारमै सबैभन्दा राम्रा थिए । पिपिह्या र उनका दाजुहरूले आफ्नो परिचय दिए र उनीहरूसँग तुरून्तै मित्रता गाँसे ।

रङलिनले छोरीहरूकालागि आनन्द महल बनाइदिएका थिए । त्यहाँबाट दिदीबहिनीहरूले उत्तरपूर्वमा साइपाल पर्वत र त्यसै तल उपत्यकामा महाकाली नदी बगेको देख्नसक्थे । ती देउता र युवतीहरूले रातभर गफगाफ र हाँसो गर्दै मखमली बिछ्यौनामा बुद्धिचाल खेले र नाङ्गै खुट्टा घाँसे मैदानमा नाचे । देउताहरूले बाँसुरी र ट्याम्को बजाए भने युवतीहरू नाचे । युवतीहरूको आग्रहमा देउताहरू पनि रमाएर नाचे । तर, पिपिह्या र उनका दाजुहरूले उनीहरूलाई दिइएका खानेकुरा भने अनेकौँ बहाना बनाएर नखाईकन टारे । अनि, सूर्योदय नहुँदै उनीहरूले आनन्द महल छाडे ।

केही दिनको रमाइलो मित्रतापछि ती दिदीबहिनीले उनीहरूले पाहुनालाई खान दिएको सबै खानेकुरा छुँदा पनि नछोई जस्ताको तस्तै छाडिएको देखे । 'जिउडाल र रूपरङ्ग हेर्दा उनीहरू देउता हुन् भन्नेमा कुनै शंका छैन । हाम्रा खानेकुरालाई उनीहरूले बिटुलो ठाने की क्या हो ?' दिदीबहिनीहरूले सल्लाह गरे । अनि उनीहरूले एक एक दाना चामल आफ्नै हातले छोडाएर खिर पकाउने निधो गरे । उनीहरूले भने — 'यति माया गरेर बनाएको खाना पनि नखाने त कुन साथी होलान् ?'

दिदीबहिनीले दिनभर चामल छोडाउँदै बिताए । दिक्क नलागोस् भनेर गीत गाउँदै असाध्यै रमाएर काम गरे । किनभने खिर देखेपछि देउताहरू खुसी हुनेछन् भन्ने उनीहरूलाई थाहा थियो । उनीहरूले केरला र कारिमरबाट ल्याएका मसला राखेर शुद्ध दूधमा शुद्ध चामल हालेर पकाई पाँच कचौरा खिर तयार गरे ।

साँभमा देउताहरू आइपुगे । दिदीबहिनीहरूले देउताहरूलाई नरम उनबाट बुनेको गलैचामा बसाएर चौरीको पुच्छरले हम्कै खिरका कचौरा टक्राए ।

जेठा दाजुले आँखा भिम्क्याएर भाइहरूलाई खाएजस्तो गर्न तर एक दाना पनि मुखमित्र नहाल्न इसारा गरे । यो पवित्र देउता र अपवित्र मानिसहरूलाई छुट्याउने कडा नियम थियो । यस नियमलाई भङ्ग गर्नु विधाताले बनाएको नियम उल्लंघन गर्नु हुन्थ्यो । भाइहरूले दाजुको इसारा बुभे र हाँसै उनीहरूले खिरको प्रशंसा गर्न थाले ।

एक भाइले भने – ‘आहा दालचिनीको बास्ना कति मीठो !’ अर्काले थपे ‘हो त, केशरको बास्ना त भन लोभ्याउने खालको !’

देउताहरूले खिर खाएजस्तो गरेर आँठसम्म लैजान्थे र चलाखीपूर्वक आआफ्नो काँध पछाडि फाल्थे । तर, चर्को स्वरमा हाँसदै खिरको प्रशंसा गर्दैगरेका पिपिह्याको मुखभित्र एक दाना चामल त परिहाल्यो ।

रात बिल्दै जाँदा देउता र ती दिदीबहिनीहरू मनका कुरा साउती मार्न र एकअर्काको कम्मर समातेर नाच्न थाले । मयुरको प्वाँखले काउकुती लगाएको कसले धेरै बेरसम्म सहन सक्ने भनेर काउकुती लगाई खेलन थाले । उनीहरूले उषाकी देवीले पूर्वको आकाशमा लालिमा छर्न नथाल्दासम्म दिमाग र शरीरका खेल खेले । देउताहरूले साँभ परेपछि फेरि आउने वाचा गर्दै दिदीबहिनीहरूको अँगालोबाट फुस्केर रथ चढे ।

आनन्द महलबाट सुन र चाँदीका रथहरू उँडेसँगै पाँचै बहिनीहरूले बिदाइमा रेसमका गुच्छा भएका पछ्यौरा हल्लाए । तर, छिट्टै नै पिपिह्याको रथ भने कुनै अदृश्य बोभले तानेजसरी बिस्तारै तल भर्न थाल्यो । उनका दाइहरू त्यो देखे र चिन्तित भए । जब रथ सिरकामा अडियो उनीहरूले बादल पछाडिबाट भने – ‘पिपिह्या, तिमीले मानिसले खाने खाना खायो । त्यसैले तिमीले त्यसको सजाय त भोग्ने पर्छ । यहाँ राजा भएर बस । हामी तिमीलाई चाहिने सबै कुरा पठाइदिउँला ।’

पिपिह्या दाइहरूका आज्ञा मान्न तयार भए र उनले आफ्नालागि सिरकाको पहाडी भागमा एउटा किल्ला बनाए । मूल चोकमा आफ्नो रथ राखे । त्यो अठार तले किल्ला संसारकै सबैभन्दा उत्कृष्ट भवन थियो । दाजुहरूले डकर्मी, सिकर्मी, जुलाहा र भरियाहरूलाई कामको ज्याला दिन धन र किल्ला बनाउन चाहिने सबै प्रकारका कामदार पठाइदिए । पिपिह्याले सैनिक पनि भर्ती गरे र तालिम दिए । पृथ्वीमै अड्किएपछि आखिरमा उनले मानिसहरूकै खाना खान थाले । यहाँ बस्नुछ भने किन आनन्दसँग नबस्ने ?

उनीसँग यति धेरै धन सम्पत्ति थुप्रियो कि छतबाट बाहिर पोखिन थाल्यो । पिपिह्याले आफूसँग भएको धन सैनिक लगाएर गरिब किसान र व्यास उपत्यकाका भँडागोठाला अनि भान्से, सफाइ गर्ने, गाईगोठाला र सुचिकारहरूलाई बाँडे । तिब्बतसँग सजिलो र छिटो व्यापार गर्नकालागि बाटाघाटा, पुल र धर्मशालाहरू बनाए । उनले

युवायुवतीलाई जडीबुटी चिन्न, प्रशोधन गर्न र थन्क्याउन तालिम दिए जसबाट केही आर्जन होस् र बिरामीको उपचार गर्न सकियोस् ।

पिपिह्याको समय उनको वरपरका अरू मानिसकालागि भन्दा बेग्लै गतिमा बित्थ्यो । उनी पाँच दिदीबहिनी बूढी भएर नमस्जेल उनीहरूलाई भेट्न गइरहन्थे । किल्लामा रहेको रथमा खिया लाग्यो र भत्क्यो । सेवकहरूको पुस्तौँपुस्ताले जाँगर लगाएर उत्साहपूर्वक सेवा गरे । उनीहरू बलिया तन्देरी हुँदै आउँथे, कुप्रा बूढा हुन्थे र मर्थे । जन्म मरणको चक्र अब पिपिह्यालाई पनि मन पर्न छाड्यो र उनले पनि मुक्तिको कामना गर्न थाले ।

‘मलाई यस धर्तीमा बाँधिराख्ने सम्पत्ति र समृद्धिसँग दिक्क भइसकेँ । स्वर्गबाट आएर दाइहरूले मलाई लिएर गए हुन्थ्यो !’ उनले बिस्तारै भनेको उनका लागि अंगुरका बोक्रा छोडाइरहेकी सेविकाले सुनिन् । यी सेविका पिपिह्याकालागि अंगुरका बोक्रा छोडाउँदा छोडाउँदै बूढी भएकी थिइन् । एउटा एउटा अंगुर छोडाउँदा आँखामा भएको अटेरो र हातका आँलामा बाथ भएको गुनासो भने उनले गरेकी थिइन् ।

‘तपाईँलाई धनी र सुन्दर हुनपरेकोमा दिक्क लागेको हो भने वार्षिक श्राद्धमा पितृहरूलाई पीठोको साटो खरानीबाट बनेको ढाल र बोकाको साटो कुकुरको बलि किन नचढाउनु भएको त ?’ उनले भनिन् ।

समाज र धर्मका केही नियमहरू स्पष्टसँग स्थापित भएका हुन्छन् र धेरै मानिसले थाहा पाएका हुन्छन् । केही नियम भने सबैले जानेका हुँदैनन् तर भङ्ग गरे दण्ड भने पाउँछन् । केही नियम अज्ञानतावश भङ्ग हुन्छन् । तर, कुनै कुनै बेला भने देउताहरूले नै समाजमा परिवर्तन ल्याउन जानीजानी नियम भङ्ग गर्छन् । पिपिह्याले आफ्ना विश्वासिला व्यक्तिहरूलाई बोलाए र भने — ‘मैले मेरो सबै सम्पत्ति नष्ट गर्ने भएँ ।’

आआफ्नो सम्पत्ति र शक्ति पनि नाश हुने डरले मन्त्री र सेनापतिहरूले भने ‘हुँदैन ! त्यसो भयो भने हामीलाई विपत पर्छ ।’ तर, पिपिह्याले आफ्ना पितृहरूलाई पीठोको साटो खरानीको ढाल बनाए र बोकाको सट्टा कुकुरको बलि चढाए । यो घोर अपमान थियो । समाजको आधारभूत नियम भङ्ग गरेपछि कसैले पनि सम्पत्ति र समृद्धि पाइरहन सक्तैन । पिपिह्याको सम्पत्ति घट्न थाल्यो । उनको रथमा बाँकी रहेको सुन र चाँदी चोरहरूले लगे । अन्त्यमा एक दिन किल्ला ध्वस्त भयो र पिपिह्याले पराइले फालेको खानेकुरा खाएर बाँच्नुपयो ।

पिपियाँसँग खानेकुरा खान एउटा काठको कचौरामात्र बाँकी रह्यो । पिपिह्याका सबै सौन्दर्य र तेज हराए । भात खाँदा उनको एउटा दाँत भरेपछि पिपिह्या बौलाहाले भैँ हाँसे ।

‘दाजुहरू ! मलाई बिसिसक्यौ ?’ उनले स्वर्गतिर फर्केर भने ।

उनका दाजुहरू सुन र चाँदीका चम्किला रथमा आए र उनलाई टपक्क टिपेर आकाशमा लगे । पिपिह्यालाई एक दाना अन्न खाएकोमा अन्ततः क्षमा दिइयो । त्यस दिनदेखि उनका बारेमा कसैले केही पनि सुनेका छैनन् ।

त्यो किल्ला ठूलो र समृद्ध भएका बेला व्यापारी र किसान गरी रडहरूको ५ सय परिवार किल्लाको पश्चिमतर्फ बसोवास गर्थे । किल्लाका पूर्वतर्फ बस्ने ३ सय परिवार विश्वकर्माहरूले किल्लामा र सेनामा काम गर्थे । तर, जब पिपिह्याले पितृहरूलाई खरानीको ढाल र कुकुर बलि चढाए सबैले अब त्यस ठाउँले धनसम्पत्ति कहिल्यै देख्नेछैन भन्ने बुभे । उनीहरूले त्यो ठाउँ छाडे र कहिल्यै त्यहाँ फर्केनन् ।

सिका जाने यात्रुहरूले अझै पनि डाँडामाथि किल्लाका भग्नावशेष देख्न सक्छन् । यी भग्नावशेषले देउताले पनि नियम तोड्दा के हुन्छ भन्ने सम्झाउँछन् ।

Mortal Gods

Many cultures and religions imagine a time very long ago when gods and demons lived among the people. In such an age, a god in the Himalayas had five young and strong sons. The youngest was called Pipihya, and his name meant ‘one who has four older brothers’.

The five brothers loved each other and went everywhere together. They chased blue sheep over the Himalayas into the meadows of Tibet. They bathed in the glacial waters of the Ganga and in the hot-water springs of Kermi, in Humla. Each of them had a flying chariot, so they traveled widely. On the islands in the Langar Tsho they watched birds build nests in the spring. In the Limi Valley they watched snow leopards. Disguised as shepherds they traveled down to the Byans Valley to dance in the mustard fields.

One day, when they were making crowns of marigolds and poppies in the Valley of Flowers in Garhwal, they heard an enchanting song.

‘Brothers,’ Pipihya said to his elders, ‘we may be gods, but I will die if I don’t see who sings this song!’

‘Pipihya,’ his brothers warned, ‘some kinds of desires are only for humans who live and die. For us, youth is eternal, and so will longing be if we are made unhappy.’

But Pipihya insisted upon finding the singers. His eldest brother said, ‘Alright, Pipihya. But we must all promise never



to eat anything the humans offer us. If even a grain of rice goes into our mouths, we will be trapped on earth forever.’

After a short search on their flying chariots they found the singers in the Byans Valley, where the Rung people still live. The five daughters of Lord Runglin were the most beautiful in the world. Pipihya and his brothers introduced themselves and immediately befriended them.

Lord Runglin had built a pleasure palace for his daughters. From there, the sisters could see the Saipal Mountain to the north-east, and the Mahakali flowed in the valley beneath it. There, the gods and the young women played chess on beds covered in red velvet and danced barefoot on soft grass and spent the entire night laughing and talking. The gods played flutes and drums while the young women danced. When the sisters asked, the gods happily danced for the young women. Pipihya and his brothers always made excuses to avoid eating any food that was offered to them. And they left the pleasure palace before sunrise.

After a few days of blissful friendship, the sisters noticed that all the food they laid out for their guests was left untouched. ‘From their stature and beauty it is clear that the brothers are gods. Maybe they think our food is impure,’ the sisters said. They decided to peel with their own hands every grain of rice, and to make rice pudding themselves. They wondered – ‘What kind of a friend would refuse to eat something made with so much affection?’

The sisters spent the entire day peeling rice grains. They sang to chase away the boredom of the work. But they were also happy because they knew the pudding would make the gods smile. After boiling the pure rice in pure milk with the finest spices from Kerala and Kashmir, the sisters prepared five big bowls of *kebeer*, milk-and-rice pudding.

The gods arrived in the evening. The sisters asked them to sit on rugs made of the finest wools, fanned them with yak-tails, and put bowls of pudding before them.

With a wink and a nod, the oldest of the brothers signaled to the others to pretend to eat the pudding but never let a single grain of rice into their mouths. This was a strict rule that separated the pure gods from the impure humans. To break this rule was to defy Creation itself. His brothers understood the signal, so they laughed and praised the pudding. ‘Oh, the cardamom smells beautiful!’ one said. ‘Surely the fragrance of saffron is more enticing!’ another added.

The gods pretended to take the pudding to their lips, but cleverly threw it over their shoulders. But as he was loudly laughing and praising the pudding, a grain of rice went into Pipihya’s mouth.

As the night passed, the gods and the sisters whispered secrets to each other and danced with arms around each other’s waists. They tested who could resist the tickle of a peacock feather the longest. They played games of the mind and of the body, until the goddess of dawn painted the eastern skies red. The gods promised to return in the evening, gently peeled away from the embrace of the sisters, and mounted their chariots.

Five chariots of gold and silver flew up from the pleasure palace as the five sisters waved silk-tasseled shawls in goodbye. But Pipihya’s chariot soon began descending slowly, as if an invisible burden pulled him back to earth. His brothers saw that and worried. When the chariot finally settled at Sirkha, they spoke to him from beyond the clouds.

‘Pipihya! You have eaten human food, and now you must endure your punishment. Settle here, and live like a king. We will send you everything you need.’

Pipihya agreed with his brothers and built himself a great fort on the Sirkha hillside with the chariot in the middle of the courtyard where he had fallen. The eighteen-story fort was the most magnificent building in the whole world. His brothers sent him the wealth needed to hire masons and carpenters, weavers and potters, and every kind of worker needed for a large fort. Pipihya also hired and trained an army. He began eating mortal food. After all, he was stuck on earth. Why shouldn't he enjoy his time here?

But he had so much wealth that it spilt out of the windows and roofs of the fort. Pipihya used his army to distribute his wealth among the poor farmers and shepherds of the Byans Valley, and to his cooks and cleaners and cowherds and tailors. He built roads, bridges and rest-houses to make trade with Tibet easier and faster. He trained young men and women to recognize, process and store the herbs in the mountains so that they could heal the sick and also earn a living.

Time passed at a different pace for Pipihya than it did for the humans around him. He visited the five sisters as they grew older and finally died. The chariot in his courtyard rusted and broke. Generations of servants joined his service with energy and enthusiasm, then grew thick around the waist, then stooped and squinted, and finally died. This journey from birth to death stopped amusing Pipihya and he, too, began desiring liberation.

'If only my brothers would come from heaven and take me away! I am tired of all this wealth and prosperity because it keeps me here,' he moaned one day as a maid peeled grapes for him. This maid had grown old peeling grapes for Pipihya and was tired of hearing him complain. After all, she didn't get to complain about how peeling grapes strained her eyes or gave her arthritis in her fingers.

‘If you are so tired of being rich and beautiful, why don’t you offer your ancestors a shield made of ashes instead of flour and a dog instead of a goat for the yearly feast?’ the old woman said.

Some rules of society and religion are very clearly established and most people know them. Some rules are not clearly known by everybody, but they still bring punishment if broken. Some rules are broken unknowingly. But sometimes even gods knowingly break society’s rules to invite change. Pipihya called the people he trusted and said, ‘I am going to destroy my fortune.’

‘No! That would be bad for us,’ said his ministers and commanders, fearing the loss of wealth and power. But Pipihya made a shield of ashes instead of flour and chose a dog instead of a goat to offer to his ancestors. This was terribly insulting. That misfortune soon befell Pipihya should surprise nobody. His wealth decreased. Thieves stole what was left of his chariot of gold, silver and rust. Finally, a day came when his fort lay in ruins, and he had to eat scraps thrown to him by strangers.

Pipihya only had a wooden bowl to eat out of. All splendor and beauty disappeared. When a tooth fell off while he was chewing rice, he laughed like a mad man and rolled in the dirt.

‘Brothers! Have you forsaken me?’ he said to the heavens.

His brothers appeared on their magnificent chariots of gold and silver and picked him up from the dirt and pulled him into the skies. Pipihya had finally been forgiven for eating one grain of rice. Nobody has heard from him since that day.

When the fort was great and prosperous, five hundred Rung families of traders and farmers had settled to the west of the fort. To the east lived three hundred families

of blacksmiths who served the fort and its armies. But after Pipihya offered a shield of ashes along with a dog to the ancestors, the people knew that the land would never see wealth again. They left, never to return.

Tourists who visit Sirkha today can see the ruins on the hill. These ruins are a reminder of what happened when a god broke a simple rule.

आमाको वेदना

संसारभरका मानिसहरू पवित्र वस्तु, मन्दिर, पहाड, तालहरूको परिक्रमा गर्छन् । सृष्टिकर्ताप्रति आदर देखाउने यो पुरानो चलन हो । तिब्बती भाषामा स्तूप, मूर्ति, ताल वा पर्वतको परिक्रमालाई कोरा भनिन्छ ।

तिब्बत स्वायत्त क्षेत्रमा पर्ने डारी क्षेत्रको पवित्र पर्वत खाङ रिन्पोचे मानिसहरूले सम्झनुभन्दा पनि पहिलेदेखि पवित्र स्थल रहिआएको छ । विभिन्न धर्म मान्नेहरूले कैलाश र मेरु भन्ने त्यस पवित्र पर्वतको परिक्रमा गर्छन् । यो पर्वत हिन्दु, बौद्ध, जैन, शिख, बोन्पो र अरु थुप्रै धार्मिक सम्प्रदायमा पनि पवित्र मानिन्छ । बोन धर्म मान्नेहरू देब्रेबाट परिक्रमा गर्छन् भने अरूले दाहिनेबाट परिक्रमा गर्छन् । बौद्ध धर्मावलम्बीहरू पवित्र पर्वत खाङ रिन्पोचेको १३ परिक्रमा गरेमा सबै पुण्य प्राप्त हुन्छ भन्ने विश्वास गर्छन् ।

यो विश्वासको थालनी कसरी भयो त ?

तिब्बतको डारीबाट सुदूर पूर्वमा पर्ने खाम क्षेत्रमा एउटी असल महिलाले छोरा पाइन् । अनि उनले पुण्य कमाउने इच्छा गरिन् । उनले विचार गरिन् – 'सबैजना खाङ रिन्पोचेको परिक्रमा गरेमा सबैभन्दा ठूलो पुण्य हुन्छ भन्छन् । म छोरालाई पनि सँगै लिएर तीर्थयात्रामा जान्छु । अनि, हामी आमाछोरा दुवैले पुण्य र देवताको कृपा प्राप्त गर्नेछौं ।'

परिवारजन र ईष्टमित्रहरूसँग बिदावारी भएर उनी आफ्नो बालक छोरालाई साथमा लिएर कैयौं महिना यात्रा गरिन् । उनीहरूले सुख्खा चिसो मरूभूमि र जङ्गली गधाका बथान चर्ने फराकिला घाँसे मैदान पार गर्नुपर्थ्यो । आकाशमा कालो घाँटी भएका सारसहरूको चिरबिर सुनिन्थ्यो । मैदानमा घुँडाघुँडासम्म आउने घाँसे मैदानमा चर्दै हरिणहरू दौडन्थे । कुनै दिन उनीहरूले बाटामा मुस्कुराउँदै मनमनै मन्त्र जपेर



हिँड्ने तीर्थयात्रीहरू भेट्थे । बोन धर्म मान्नेहरू ओम मा त्री मु ये सा ले दु, बौद्धहरू ओम मणि पद्मे हुँ र हिमालयको दक्षिणी भेगबाट आएका हिन्दु धर्मावलम्बीहरू योगीहरू ओम नमः शिवाय भन्ने मन्त्रको जप गर्थे । कुनै दिन भने कोही पनि भेटिँदैन थिए । बरू जङ्गली कुकुरहरू मैदानमा दौडिरहेका भेटिन्थे ।

धेरै महिनापछि आमा र छोरा खाड रिन्पोचे पुगे । आमाले छोरालाई पिठ्युँमा एउटा मजेत्रोले बलियोसँग बाँधिन् र परिक्रमा सुरु गरिन् । पहाड चड्दै गरेका बेला उनलाई भोक र तीर्खा लाग्यो तर उनलाई द्रोल्मा भञ्ज्याङ कोरामा पर्ने सबैभन्दा अग्लो ठाउँ हो र त्यसलाई पार गरेपछि डाँडाको पल्लोपट्टि सास फेर्न सजिलो हुन्छ भन्ने थाहा थियो । प्रत्येक सासमा उनले ओम मणि पद्मे हुँ भन्ने मन्त्र जप गर्थिन् र छोरालाई आफ्नो शरीरमा अम्फ टाँस्थिन् । अनि उकालोमा पाइला चाल्थिन् । अन्ततः उनी द्रोल्मा भञ्ज्याङ पनि उक्लिन् र कृतज्ञताको प्रार्थना गरिन् । उनलाई असाध्यै तीर्खा लागेको थियो । तर, त्यहाँ खाने पानी थिएन र उनको वरपरको पातलो हिउँ पनि हिलोमा मुछिएको थियो । उनले बाटाभन्दा पचास मिटरजति तल केही ससाना पोखरी देखिन् ।

आमालाई थाहा थियो ती पोखरीहरू डाकिनीका नुहाउने तलाउ थिए । डाकिनी देवी असल मानिसकालागि अत्यन्त दयालु र खराब मानिसकालागि अत्यन्त रिसाही थिइन् । हिन्दुहरू यी पोखरीलाई महादेव शिवकी पत्नी गौरीका नुहाउने तलाउ भन्थे । तिब्बतमा डाकिनीलाई खद्रोमाका रूपमा चिनिन्छ । तीर्खाएका तीर्थयात्रीलाई डाकिनीले उनको घरमा कोही आएर भिँभो लगाएको मन पर्दैन भन्ने थाहा हुन्थ्यो । तर, तीर्खाले खपिनसक्नु भएकी आमा तल पोखरीसम्म ओर्लिन् र पानी खान निहुरिन् ।

उनी कति तीर्खाएकी थिइन् भने तल पुग्नेबित्तिकै पोखरीको पानी खान हतारिइन् । अनि त, उनको पिठ्युँमा पछ्यौराले बाँधेर बोकेको सानो बालक छोरा चिप्लिएर हिउँजस्तो चिसो पोखरीको पानीमा खर्स्यो ।

‘नाइँ नाइँ !’ भन्दै तिनी चिच्याइन् । उनले छोरालाई पानीबाट बाहिर निकाल्न सकेसम्म कोसिस गरिन् तर चिसो पानीमा खसेको बालक तत्कालै मर्‍यो ।

आमाको मन विह्वल भयो । उनले आफ्नो अनुहार चिथोरिन् र छाती पिटिन् । उनले टाउकोमा माटो दल्दै रून् थालिन् र देवताहरूसँग

आफ्नो छोरालाई जिवनदान दिन पुकारा गरिन् । तर, देवताहरूले उनको छोरालाई फेरि जिउँदो बनाइदिएनन् । उनले छोरालाई छातीमा टाँसिन् तर उनको मुटुको धडकनले पनि छोराको मुटुमा फेरि धडकन ल्याउन सकेन । उनका ताता आँसुका थोपाहरू बालकको अनुहारमा खसे । तैपनि, तिनले बालकको शरीर न्यानो बनाउन सकेनन् ।

उनी पुण्य कमाउन खाड रिन्पोचेसम्म हिँडेर पुगेकी थिइन् । तर, एकैछिनको लापरबाहीले उनको सबैभन्दा प्यारो कुरा उनीबाट खोसेर लगेको थियो । आफ्नै लापरबाहीबाट सन्तानको मृत्यु भएपछि ती आमाले कति ग्लानि महसुस गरिन् होला भन्ने कसैले कल्पना पनि गर्न नसक्ला ।

आमा रातभर रोइन् र शोक मानिरहिन् । बिहान उनको आँखामा आँसु नै सुकिसकेपछि र रूँदारूदा घाँटी नै बसिसकेपछि उनलाई शोक अलिकति कम भएजस्तो लाग्यो । आफ्नो पाप कटनी गर्न परिक्रमा पूरा गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने उनले ठानिन् । 'ए, खाड रिन्पोचे ! म तपाईँसँग मेरो पाप क्षमा गर्न र यो सहनै नसक्ने दुःखको भारीबाट मुक्त गरिदिन प्रार्थना गर्छु । मलाई क्षमादान भएको संकेत नपाउँदासम्म म तपाईँको परिक्रमा गरिरहनेछु । पूर्ण क्षमादान वा मृत्युले मात्र म मुक्त हुनेछु ।' उनले पवित्र पर्वतसँग पुकारा गरिन् । अनि उनले मनको बोझ हलुङ्गो नहुँदासम्म परिक्रमा गरिरहने निधो गरिन् ।

परिक्रमा मार्गको पूरै ५२ किलोमिटर बाटो भुइँमा घिसिएर र मन्त्र उच्चारण गर्दै पूरा गर्ने तीर्थयात्रीलाई उछिन्दै अगाडि गइन् । उनी गुफामा बसेर योग गर्दै गरेका लामा कपाल भएका योगीहरूलाई पछि छाड्दै गइन् । उनले कसैसँग पनि खानेकुरा वा पिउनेकुरा मागिनन् । जतिपटक द्रोल्मा भञ्ज्याङ उक्लिन्थिन् त्यति नै पल्ट उनले आफ्नो सानो छोरा मरेको पोखरीलाई शोकविह्वल भएर टोलाएर हेर्थिन् ।

उनले सात, दस, बाह्र कोरा पूरा गरिन् तर शोक र ग्लानि भने रहिरह्यो । तैपनि, उनले त्यस पवित्र पर्वतको परिक्रमा गरिरहिन् । तेह्रौँ परिक्रमाको क्रममा उनी धेरै थाकिन् । अर्को पाइला चाल्ने वा आँखा खुल्ला राख्ने पनि शक्ति नभएपछि उनी एकैछिन झुपुक निदाउन एउटा चट्टानमा पल्टिन् ।

जब उनी बिउँफिन् उनले आफू सुतेको चट्टानमा आफ्नो हात, खुट्टा, शरीरको गहिरो छाप परेको देखिन् । उनले खाड रिन्पोचेले उनलाई क्षमादान गरेको र उनलाई शोक र ग्लानिबाट मुक्त गरिदिएका

थाहा पाइन् । चट्टानमा लागेका चिह्नहरू त्यसैका प्रमाण थिए । उनले पवित्र पर्वतलाई धन्यवाद दिइन् र आम्दोस्थित आफ्नो गाउँ फर्किन् । अनि त्यहाँ उनले नयाँ जिन्दगी सुरू गरिन् ।

कैलाश पर्वत पनि भनिने खाड रिन्पोचेको यात्रामा जाने तीर्थयात्रीहरूले अभैसम्म छोरा गुमाएपछि पनि पवित्र पर्वतको तेह्र परिक्रमा पूरा गरेकी ती आमाको चिह्न देख्न सक्छन् । चट्टानमा ती चिह्नहरू देखिएदेखि नै बौद्ध धर्म मान्नेहरू पर्वतलाई दाहिने पारेर तेह्र कोरा पूरा गर्ने तीर्थयात्रीले ठूलो पुण्य कमाउने विश्वास गर्छन् ।

Mother's Grief

People all around the world walk around objects, temples, mountains or lakes that are sacred to them. It is an ancient way of showing respect to the Creator. In the Tibetan language, such a walk around a great stupa, statue, lake or mountain is called a *kora*.

Kang Rinpoche, the holy mountain in the Ngari region of the Tibet Autonomous Region, has been a sacred site for far longer than anybody remembers. Pilgrims of many faiths travel there to perform *koras* around the mountain, which is also known as Kailas or Meru. The mountain is respected in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Bönpo, and pilgrims from many other religious traditions visit. The Bön walk the *kora* in the anti-clockwise direction while others do it clockwise. Buddhists believe that performing 13 *koras* around Kang Rinpoche brings most merit. How did this come about?

In the Kham region of Tibet, far to the east of Ngari, lived a devout woman who gave birth to a son and was overcome with the desire to earn religious merit. 'Everybody says that the greatest merit comes from performing a *kora* around Kang Rinpoche. I will take my son with me, so that we will both gain merit and the kindness of the gods,' she thought.

After saying goodbye to her family and friends, she walked for many months with her young son. They had to



cross dry, cold deserts and vast grasslands where wild donkeys ran in herds. Flocks of black-necked cranes crossed the skies and deer darted through the knee-high grass of the marshes. On some days they met many pilgrims on the road, smiling and silently reciting their mantras. The Bön recited *Om Ma Tri Mu Ye Sa Le Du*; the Buddhists recited *Om Mani Padme Hum*; the ascetic Hindus from the south of the Himalayas recited *Om Namoh Shivaaya*. On some days the mother and baby boy met nobody but wild dogs scurrying across the plains.

After many months, the mother and son finally reached Kang Rinpoche. The mother tied her son securely to her back with a shawl and started her *korā*. As she climbed the mountain, she felt hunger and thirst; but she knew that the Drolma Pass was the highest place on the *korā*, and that it would be easier to breathe on the other side of the mountain.

She chanted *Om Mani Padme Hum* with each breath, hugged her son close to her body, and climbed. She finally climbed to Drolma Pass and offered her prayer of thanks. She felt very thirsty. But there was no water to drink, and the thin snow around her was covered in trampled mud. She saw a few small ponds about fifty meters below the path.

The mother knew that these were the bathing pools of a *dakini*, a goddess who can be very kind to good people and very angry towards bad people. The Hindus call these ponds the bathing pool of Gauri, who is the wife of the great god Shiva. In Tibet the *dakini* is known as Khadroma. The thirsty pilgrim knew that the *dakini* didn't like it when someone disturbed her home. But unable to bear her thirst anymore, the mother climbed down to a pool.

She was so thirsty that she hurriedly bent down to drink water. Her baby boy slipped off her back and fell into the ice-cold water of the pond.

‘No, no, no, no, no!’ she shouted. She tried desperately to pull him out, but the cold water instantly killed the baby.

The mother was heartbroken. She clawed at her own face and beat her chest. She threw dirt into her hair and cried and begged the gods to make her son live again. But the gods didn’t bring the child back to life. She hugged her son close to her chest, but the beats of her heart didn’t make his heart beat again. Hot drops of her tears fell on the baby’s face, but it didn’t bring warmth to his body.

She had walked all the way to Kang Rinpoche to earn merit. But one moment’s carelessness had taken away everything that was dear to her. Who can imagine guilt greater than that of a mother who has caused the death of her own baby?

The mother mourned and cried throughout the night. In the morning, when her eyes had run dry of tears and her throat hurt from crying, she felt her grief decrease a little. She realized that she needed to continue her *koras* to pay for her sin. ‘O, Kang Rinpoche! I pray to you to forgive my sin and lift this unbearable grief away from me. I shall walk around you until I see signs that I have been forgiven. Only complete forgiveness or death can set me free,’ she said to the mountain.

She set out to perform as many *koras* as were needed to set her heart free. She walked past pilgrims who measured the entire length of the fifty-two kilometer path with their bodies, saying prayers all the while. She walked past long-haired ascetics praying and performing yoga in caves. She asked nobody for food or drink. Every time she climbed up to the Drolma Pass, she looked with longing at the pond where she had lost her child.

She finished seven, ten, twelve *koras*, but the grief and guilt stayed. Still, she walked around the sacred mountain.

On the thirteenth *kora*, she became very tired. Unable to take another step forward or keep her eyes open, she lay down on a rock to take a short nap.

When she awoke, she saw that her body, hands, and feet had left deep dents on the rock where she had slept. She understood that Kang Rinpoche had forgiven her and taken away the guilt and grief from her. The marks on the rock were proof of that. She thanked the mountain and made her long walk back to her village in Amdo where she started her life anew.

Pilgrims who go to Kang Rinpoche can still see the marks left behind by the mother who lost her child and performed thirteen *koras* around the sacred mountain. Ever since, Buddhists believe that performing thirteen *koras* will bring great merit to the pilgrim.

दाजुभाइको युद्ध

भारतको उत्तराखण्डमा पर्ने पाँगु गाउँमा स्याङसेको मन्दिर छ । उनी स्थानीय जनताका देउता हुन् । मूल थलो दक्षिणको गर्मी मैदानमा पर्ने टनकपुर भएकी माता देवी पूर्णागिरीको मन्दिर छिमेकको चौदाँसमा छ ।

स्याङसे व्यास उपत्यकाका बासिन्दा रङहरूको पितृ देउता हुन् । तर, पूर्णागिरी भने प्रसिद्ध हिन्दु देवी हुन् । पूर्णागिरी ओसिलो गर्मी मैदानबाट पहाडी गाउँमा कसरी पुगिन् ?

धेरै पहिले स्याङसे देउताका धामी आफ्ना भाइसँगै टनकपुर गए । अहिले नेपाल र भारतको सीमामा पर्ने टनकपुरमा उनीहरू आइपुग्नेबित्तिकै त्यस क्षेत्रभर नै हैजाको महामारी फैलियो । यो उति बेलाको कुरा हो जति बेला हैजा र बिफरले हिमालयका बेसी भागमा हजारौँ मानिसको ज्यान लिन्थे अनि परिवार र सिङ्गो गाउँ नै मासिन्थे ।

‘टनकपुरमा बस्यौँ भने हामी पक्कै पनि मर्छौँ,’ दाजुभाइले निधो गरे र सकेसम्म छिटो चौदाँसतिरै फर्के । उनीहरू आफूहरूले हैजा लिएर फर्कने र गाउँले र परिवारजनलाई समेत हैजा सल्काउने जोखिम देखेर पनि आत्तिएका थिए ।

परन्तु, नदेखिने कीटाणुहरूले भाइलाई समातिसकेका थिए । उसले जतिसक्यो चाँडो हिँड्ने कोसिस त गर्‍यो तर छिटै नै दाजुभन्दा पछि पर्न थाल्यो । एउटा शक्तिशाली देउताको धामी दाजु चाहिँले भाइलाई हेर्‍यो र उसलाई हैजाले मार्ने ठहर्‍यायो ।

‘दाजु, यति छिटो नहिँड न,’ बिरामी चाहिँले भन्यो । ‘म अझै हिँड्नसक्छु । अलिकति तातो पानी पाए म घर पुग्न सक्छु ।’

‘तिमी अब बाँच्दैनौ । म रोग सर्ने जोखिम लिन सक्तिन । कोही न कोही हाम्रो गाउँसम्म तुरून्तै पुगेर गाउँलेहरूलाई सावधान गराउनु



पनि त छ ।' यति भनेर बाटोछेउमा लडेको बिरामी भाइलाई छाडेर दाजु हतारिएर हिँड्यो ।

'सबै कुरा नबुभीकन कुनै काम राम्रो हो कि नराम्रो हो भन्न गाह्रो हुन्छ,' बिरामी भाइले विचार गर्‍यो । 'मेरो दाइले मलाई यहाँ मर्नकालागि छाडिदियो । तर, ऊ हैजाले नछुँदै गाउँमा पुग्न सक्यो भने त उसले धेरै जनालाई बचाउनेछ ।'

चौदाँस पुगेपछि धामीले इमानसाथ उसको भाइलाई के भयो भनेर बतायो । गाउँलेहरू हतार हतार पानी उमालेर खाने र अर्को गाउँका मान्छेलाई गाउँमा पस्न नदिएर हैजा लाग्न नदिने प्रयत्न गरे । अनि कोही पनि बिरामी परेन र कसैको पनि मृत्यु भएन ।

जुनसुकै अवरथामा पनि मानिसको मनमा आशा बाँकी नै हुन्छ । चौदाँसका मानिसहरू बिरामी मान्छे फर्केर आउला भनेर पर्खिबसे । धेरै साता बिन्दा पनि फर्केर नआएपछि शोकमा डुबेका गाउँलेले उसको अन्तिम संस्कारको तयारी गरे । उनीहरूले उसलाई मरिसकेको मानेर स्वर्ग जानकालागि उसको अन्तिम संस्कार गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने ठाने । जो जीवित थिए उनीहरूकालागि पनि आशा त्यागेर जिन्दगी चलाउन उसको अन्तिम संस्कार गर्नुथियो ।

तर, अन्तिम संस्कार सुरु हुनै लागेका बेला स्याङ्से देउता धामीको ध्यानमा आए र भने उसको भाइ टनकपुरमा जिउँदै छ, पितृलोकमा गएको छैन ।

चौदाँस र टनकपुरका बीचको बाटामा दाजुले मर्नेलागेको भाइलाई छाडेर गएपछि सहायता गर्ने पनि कोही थिएन । त्यतिबेला भाइ मृत्युको निकट पुगेको थियो । जीवन र मृत्युका बीचमा रहेका बेला एक जना योगी दुईवटा चिम्टा बजाउँदै आए । यस्ता चिम्टा साधुहरूले भजन गाउँदा बाजाजसरी बजाउन र आगो टिप्न प्रयोग गर्थे । यी दुई चिम्टामा एउटा सुनको र अर्को फलामको थियो ।

योगीले निहुरिएर बिरामी मानिसलाई एकएक गरी सुनको र फलामको चिम्टाले छोए । अनि योगीले सोधे – 'यीमध्ये तिमि कुनचाहिँ चिम्टा लिन्छौ ?'

बिरामीले विचार गर्‍यो, 'म हैजाले गर्दा कमजोर भएको छु । मैले सुनको चिम्टा लिएँ भने डाँकुहरूले मलाई सुनको लोभमा लुट्न सक्छन् । म बाचेँ र चौदाँस फर्के भने पनि ममाथि आक्रमण हुनसक्छ र म मारिन सक्छु ।' अनि उसले योगीलाई भन्यो, 'म फलामको चिम्टा लिन्छु ।'

बिरामीलाई फलामको चिम्टा दिएर योगी तुरून्तै अलप भए । 'म सपनाबाट बिउँभेको त हैन ?' बिरामीले आफैँसँग प्रश्न गर्‍यो । तर, उसले फलामको चिम्टा आफू नजिकै देख्यो र यो सपना हैन भन्ने विश्वास गर्‍यो । र कुन सपना हो कुन यथार्थ हो छुट्याउन नसक्ने तन्द्रामा पर्‍यो ।

'तपाईँ ठीक त हुनुहुन्छ ?' एउटी बालिकाले सोधेकी उसले सुन्यो ।

तिनी तिब्बती पोसाक लगाएकी सानी बालिका थिइन् । उसले उत्तर दिने कोसिस गर्‍यो तर हैजाले सिकिस्त बनाएकाले बोली नै फुटेन । ती बालिका दौडेर गइन् र केही छिनमै आमाबाबुलाई लिएर आइन् । उनीहरूले उसलाई आफ्नो पालमा लगेर निको नहुन्जेल उपचार गरे ।

बाटामा दाजुले मर्न छाडेर गएको बिरामी भाइ निको भएर चौदौँस फर्कनसक्ने भएपछि पूर्णागिरी देवीले उसलाई आफ्नो धामी बनाएर चौदौँस जाने निर्णय गरिन् । कतै पूर्णागिरीले योगीका भेषमा सुन र फलामको चिम्टा रोज्न दिएर उसको परीक्षा लिएकी त थिइन् ? वा ती उसलाई जीवन र मृत्युका बीचमा रोज्न लगाउन आएका यमराज त थिएनन् ? अथवा पूर्णागिरीले तिब्बतीहरू र पालको माया रचेर उसलाई आफ्नो धामी बनाउन रोजेकी पो थिइन् कि ? ती सानी बालिका देवी आफैँ पनि हुनसकिछन् ।

नयाँ धामी र देवी पूर्णागिरी चौदौँस पुगे । तर, उसको दाजुको माध्यमबाट काम गर्ने त्यहाँका मुख्य देखता स्याङसेलाई गाउँमा नयाँ देवीको आगमन मन परेन । उनले पूर्णागिरीलाई गाउँ छाड्न भने ।

'म देवी हुँ र म कसैसँग दब्दिनँ ।' पूर्णागिरीले स्याङसेलाई भनिन् । अथवा, उनको धामीले स्याङसेको धामीलाई भने ।

देउताहरूले को ठूलो हो भन्ने निर्णय मानवहरूपमै गर्ने निधो गरे । धामी दाजुभाइले एक अर्कामाथि आक्रमण गरे । छक्क परेका गाउँलेहरू सामु उनीहरूले अनेकौँ चमत्कार देखाए ।

पूर्णागिरीले घट्टको पत्थर उठाएर छातीमा हानिन् । पत्थर चकनाचुर भयो । स्याङसेले शक्ति देखाउन ठूलो ढुङ्गा त उठाएनन् । बरू, एक मुठी चामललाई देउताले मात्र फाल्नसक्ने ठूलो शक्तिले फाले । लडाईँ जारी रहयो । दुवै देउताले एकलेभन्दा अर्काले बढी शक्ति देखाइरहे । आखिरमा स्याङसेले पूर्णागिरीसामु हार माने । तराईकी देवीले पहाडका देवतालाई हराइन् । पूर्णागिरीको मन्दिर बनाइयो । तैपनि स्याङसेले उनलाई मन पराएनन् ।

हैजाको अर्को महामारी पहाडमा पनि फैलियो । सिङ्गै गाउँका मानिसहरू मरे वा आत्तिएर पुख्र्रौली थलो छाडेर हिँडे । तर, पूर्णागिरीको धामी त पहिले पनि हैजाबाट जोगिएकाले गाँउलेहरूले उनीबाट केही हुने आशा गरे । 'तिमीले एकपटक त मृत्युलाई जितिसकेका छौ । ए ! पूर्णागिरीका धामी, हाम्रो जीवन बचाऊ !'

भाइ धामीले उनकी देवी पूर्णागिरीलाई पुकारे र देवी उनको ध्यानमा आइन् । 'न आत्तिऊ, मैले भनेभैँँ गर । ठूलो आगो बाल र त्यसमा जौ, घिउ र तीलका दाना होम गर ।'

त्यस होमबाट निस्केको धुवाँ पाँगु गाउँभर फैलियो र सबैलाई हैजाबाट बचायो । तर अरू गाउँका मानिसलाई हैजाले मान्यो । पूर्णागिरीको कीर्ति बढ्यो । स्याङसेले जब पूर्णागिरीको शक्ति देखे उनलाई बहिनी माने । त्यसै बेलादेखि चौदाँसमा पूर्णागिरीको पूजा हुँदैआएको छ र पहाडको देउता र मधेसकी देवी मिलेर बसेका छन् ।

Battle of Brothers

In the village of Pangu in Uttarakhand of India is the temple of Shyangse. Nearby in Chaudans is a temple of the mother goddess Purnagiri whose original home is in Tanakpur, in the hot plains to the south. Shyangse is an ancestor-god of the Rung people of the Byans Valley. But Purnagiri is a famous Hindu goddess. How did Purnagiri travel from the hot, humid plains to a mountain village?

Long ago, a *dhami* (shaman) who worshipped and represented the god Shyangse traveled with his younger brother to Tanakpur. Just as they arrived in Tanakpur, which now lies on the border between India and Nepal, a wave of cholera swept over the region. This was an age when cholera and smallpox regularly attacked the Himalayan foothills, killing hundreds of thousands of people, destroying families and entire villages.

‘If we stay in Tanakpur, we are sure to die,’ the brothers decided and hurried back towards Chaudans as quickly as they could. They were also worried about bringing back cholera to their village and making their friends and families sick.

But the invisible germs had already caught the younger brother. He tried to walk as fast as he could, but soon he started falling behind his brother. The elder brother, who was the shaman to a powerful god, looked at his brother and realized that cholera would kill him.



‘Brother! Don’t walk away so quickly,’ the sick man called out. ‘I can still walk, and if you boil some water for me, I can reach home.’

‘You have been marked for death. I cannot risk catching the disease. Somebody has to run to our village and warn everybody,’ the older brother said and hurried away. He left his sick brother lying by the roadside.

‘It is difficult to say if an action is good or bad without understanding everything,’ the sick man thought. ‘My brother left me here to die, but if he can reach the village without catching cholera, he will save many lives.’

After reaching Chaudhans, the shaman told everyone what had happened to his brother. Villagers made haste and prepared themselves by boiling their drinking water and not letting any outsider enter the village. Nobody became sick, nobody died.

But the heart is always full of hope. The people of Chaudans waited for the sick man to return. When he didn’t return even after many weeks, with great sadness they prepared to perform the man’s funeral. They thought he had died, and he needed a funeral to pass into heaven. Those who were alive also needed the funeral to lay their hopes to rest and carry on with their lives.

Just before the funeral rites could be carried out, the god Shyangse entered the shaman in a trance and told him that his brother was still alive in Tanakpur. He hadn’t passed into the realm of the spirits.

On the road between Tanakpur and Chaudans, where his brother had abandoned him, and without anybody to help him, the younger brother had been close to death. As he suffered between life and death, a wandering yogi carrying two *chimta* tongs walked towards him. These tongs were carried by ascetics to use as a musical accompaniment for

devotional songs, and to help them tend fires. Of the two pairs of tongs, one was of gold, and the other of iron.

The yogi crouched by the sick man and touched him, one by one, with the gold tong and the iron tong. He asked, 'Which of these tongs will you take?'

The sick man thought, 'I am weak from cholera. If I carry gold, I may be robbed by bandits who covet gold. If I live and return to Chaudans, I may be attacked and killed.' He said to the yogi, 'I will take the iron tong.'

The yogi disappeared immediately after giving the sick man the iron tong. 'Am I waking from a dream?' the sick man asked himself. But he saw the iron tong by his side and knew it had not been a dream. He drifted in and out of sleep, unable to separate what was dream and what was real.

'Are you alright?' he heard a young child ask.

She was a young girl in Tibetan dress, a child of the mountains. He tried to answer, but he was weak with disease and could barely speak. The child ran off, and within moments brought her parents, who carried him away to their tent and nursed him back to health.

When the younger brother became strong enough to return to Chaudans, the goddess Purnagiri chose him as her shaman and traveled to Chaudans. Had Purnagiri tested him disguised as a yogi, offering him iron and gold tongs? Or, was it Yama, asking him to choose between life and death? Or maybe Purnagiri had woven the illusion of the tent and the Tibetans to help her chosen shaman. Maybe the girl was the mother goddess herself.

The new shaman and his goddess Purnagiri reached Chaudans. But Shyangse, who was the main god there and worked through the older brother, didn't like the arrival of a new goddess in the village. He told Purnagiri to leave.

‘I am a goddess, and I will not be bullied,’ Purnagiri said to Shyangse. Or rather, she spoke through her shaman to Shyangse’s shaman.

The gods chose to determine superiority through combat in the human world. Each shaman attacked the other shaman, and they performed many miracles before a crowd of amazed villagers.

Purnagiri picked up a millstone and thumped it on her chest. The millstone shattered. Shyangse didn’t pick up large rocks to show his strength. Instead, he grabbed a handful of rice grains and threw them with the great force that only a god can create. The battle continued. Each deity displayed more strength than the other until Shyangse finally accepted defeat before Purnagiri. The goddess from the plains had defeated the god of the mountains. A temple was built for Purnagiri, but Shyangse still disliked her.

Another wave of cholera reached the mountains and spread rapidly. Entire villages died. People panicked and fled their ancestral lands. But the shaman of Purnagiri had survived cholera before, so people put their hopes in him.

‘You defied death once, O shaman of Purnagiri! Save our lives!’

The young shaman prayed to his goddess, and Purnagiri appeared in his mind. ‘Don’t worry, and do as I command. Light a large fire, and offer it barley, ghee and sesame seeds.’

The smoke from the ritual covered the village of Pangu and protected everyone while cholera killed people in other villages. Purnagiri’s glory increased. When Shyangse saw Purnagiri’s powers, he accepted her as a sister. Ever since, Purnagiri has been worshipped in Chaudans, and a mountain god and a goddess from the plains have peacefully coexisted.

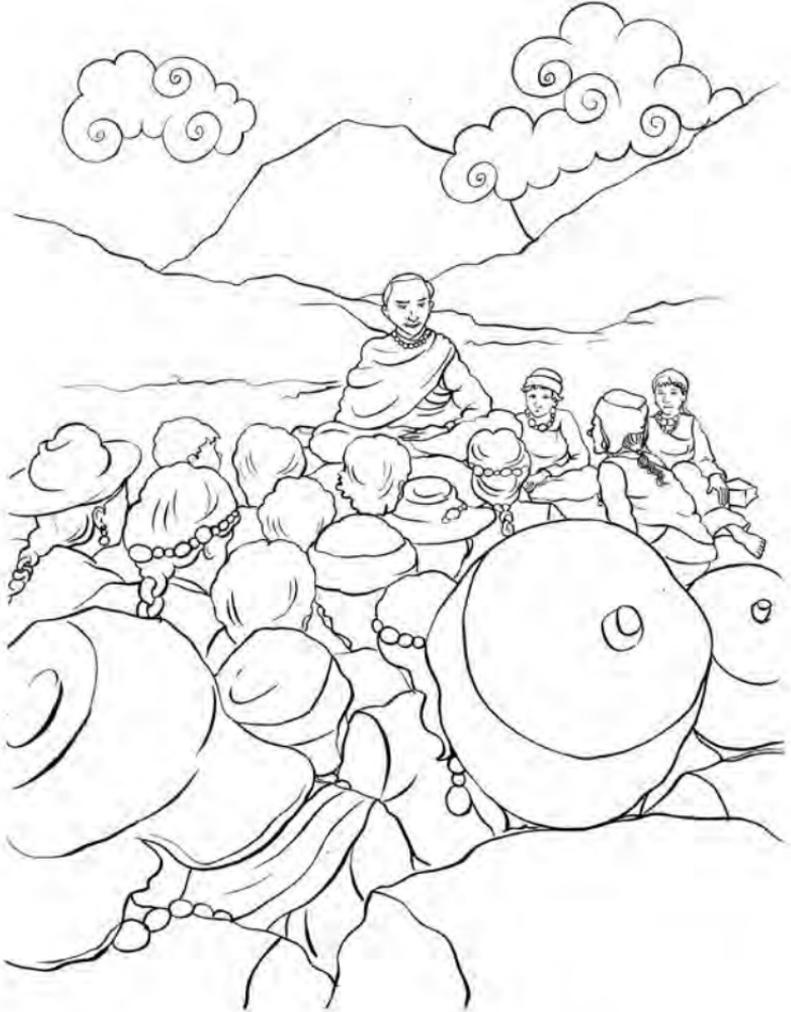
वनमा सात घोडा

हजारौं वर्षअघि तिब्बतमा कसैले खाड तिसे, कसैले खाड रिन्पोछे र कसैले कैलाश भनेर चिन्ने पवित्र पर्वत वरिपरिको क्षेत्रमा एक प्राचीन धर्म मौलाइरहेको थियो । यो धर्मले करुणा र असल कर्म अभ्यास गर्न सिकाउँथ्यो र मानिसहरूको मनमस्तिष्कबाट अज्ञानको अँध्यारोलाई हटाउने प्रयत्न गर्थ्यो । यो धर्मको नाम बोन थियो । प्रशान्त महासागरदेखि अटलान्टिक महासागरसम्म फैलिएको प्राचीन व्यापारिक 'रेशम मार्ग' को ठूलो भूभागमा प्रभुत्व राख्ने फाङभुङ साम्राज्यको यो आधिकारिक धर्म पनि थियो ।

फाङभुङ साम्राज्यमा अत्यन्तै करुणामयी राजकुमार तोन्पा शेनराबको जन्म भयो । उनी बोन धर्मका महान गुरु हुने नियति लिएरै जन्मिएका थिए । मानव जातिलाई दुःखबाट मुक्ति दिलाउन उनको जन्म भएको थियो । आफ्नो देशका मानिसले वरपरका असल देवताहरू र रिसाहा राक्षसहरूलाई पशुबलि दिएको उनले देखे । बलि दिने बेलामा भैंडाबाख्रा तर्सिएर रुन्थे, कराउँथे र उनको मनभरि खिन्नता र दुःख ल्याइदिन्थे । त्यसैले उनले मानिसहरूलाई करुणा सिकाउँथे ।

'भैंडाको बलि दिनुको सट्टा पीटोले बनाएको भैंडाको बलि देऊ । रगत चढाउनुको सट्टा दूध चढाऊ,' उनी भन्थे । सबै मानिसलाई सम्झाइबुझाइ गर्न उनलाई धेरै समय र धैर्य लाग्थ्यो । तर, जब मानिसहरूले करुणाको सही मूल्य बुझ्थे उनीहरू तोन्पा शेनराबका अनुयायी बन्थे । हिंसा र अज्ञानले अन्धकारमय बनाएको देशमा तोन्पा शेनराब एक उज्यालो प्रकाश बने ।

तर, अन्धकारलाई पूजा गर्ने मानिसहरू पनि यही संसारमा हुन्छन् । देवताहरू, राक्षसहरू र राजाहरूलाई सधैं साधारण मानिसहरूको डर र प्रशंसा आवश्यक हुन्छ । प्रशंसा र डर नपाए उनीहरू कमजोर बन्छन् ।



दया र करुणाको सन्देश फैलाउने देवताहरूको शक्ति बढ्न पनि मानिसहरूले विश्वास देखाउनुपर्छ र देवताले भनेभै गर्नुपर्छ । त्यसरी नै डर फैलाउने राक्षसहरू तबमात्रै बलिया बन्छन् जब मानिसहरू उनीहरूसँग डराउँछन् ।

कैलाशभन्दा पर खाड भन्ने ठाउँको राक्षसी राजा चाप्पा लाक्रिड तोन्या शेनराबको ट्याक्कै उल्टो प्रकृतिको थियो । आफ्ना जनताको जीवनको हरेक पाटोमाथि क्रूर नियन्त्रण गरेर शासन गर्ने उसको ढङ्ग थियो । आफूलाई पूजा नगर्ने मानिसहरूकोलागि उसले बाधाअड्चन खडा गर्थ्यो र बलिको रगत, सुनचाँदी चढाउने मानिसहरूलाई मात्रै पुरस्कार दिन्थ्यो । उसलाई पूजा गर्ने नगर्ने बारे कसैले आफैँ निर्णय गर्न पाउँदैनथियो किनभने उसले मात्रै सबैलाई अन्न, कपडा वा औषधि दिन सक्थ्यो ।

जब चाप्पा लाक्रिडले तोन्या शेनराबले सत्य, दया र सौन्दर्यबारे सिकाउँदैछन् भन्ने थाहा पायो ऊ एकदमै रिसायो । करुणा र सौन्दर्यबारे बुझ्ने मानिसहरूले एकअर्कालाई सौहार्द र मैत्रीभावसहित व्यवहार गर्छन् । यसो भए समाजमा डर घटेर हराउँछ । तर राक्षसी राजाकोलागी त डर र त्रास नै बलको स्रोत थियो ।

त्यसैले तोन्या शेनराबले देखाएको बाटोबाट मानिसहरूलाई भ्रष्ट गराउन चाप्पा लाक्रिडले मानिसहरूको मनमस्तिष्कमा अविश्वास, लोभ, इर्ष्या, क्रोध, असत्य, अभिमान, अवज्ञा र आलस्य फैलायो । तर मानिसहरूले तोन्या शेनराबको शिक्षालाई बुझिसकेका थिए । त्यसैले चाप्पा लाक्रिडका दाउपेच निस्फल भए ।

चाप्पा लाक्रिडले आफ्ना लाखौँ राक्षस सेनालाई तोन्या शेनराबमाथि आक्रमण गर्ने आदेश दियो । शक्तिको मात लागेका यी राक्षसले आक्रमण गर्दा तोन्या शेनराबले उनीहरूमाथि करुणा देखाउँदै आफ्नो ज्ञान बाँडे । ती राक्षस आखिरमा घमण्ड र अज्ञान बोकेका साधारण मानिस नै त थिए । त्यसैले उनीहरूले आफ्ना हतियार त्यागिदिए र शान्तिपूर्ण जीवन बाँच्ने भँडागोटाला र व्यापारी बने । करुणाको ज्योति फैलाउँदै अझै टाढाटाढासम्मको यात्रा गरिरहेका तोन्या शेनराबलाई पछ्याउँदै हिँडे ।

तर, राक्षसी राजाको रिस सेलाइसकेको थिएन । कुहिएको मासु वरपर जसरि भिँगामाखा भुम्भुनाउँछन् त्यसरी नै उसको मनमा कुविचार र रिस भुम्भुनाउँथे । एकदिन तोन्या शेनराब चा क्षेत्रमा अझै

धेरै मानिससम्म करुणाको प्रकाश फैलाउन गएको बेलामा चाप्वा लाक्रिड यौटा थाकेको व्यापारीको भेषमा तोन्या शेनराबको पालभित्र पस्यो र त्यहाँका महिलाहरूसँग पानी र सत्तु माग्यो ।

कुरैकुरामा उसले यौटी महिलाको सौन्दर्यको प्रशंसा गर्‍यो भने अर्कीको सिलाइबुनाइको सीपको प्रशंसा गर्‍यो । यौटी पत्नीको कानमा साउती मादैं अर्की पत्नीको मनमा डाहा उत्पन्न गर्‍यो । आमाको मनमा शंका पलाइदियो भने छोरीको मनमा क्रोधको बीउ रोपिदियो । र यसरी चतुर बोलीको मायावी बन्धनले बाँधेर सबै महिलालाई आफ्नो वशमा पार्‍यो र आफूसँगै लग्यो ।

तोन्या शेनराब घर फर्किँदा आफ्नो पाल रित्तो पाए । चुल्होमा आगो बलेको थिएन, बराजुहरूलाई धूप चढाइएको थिएन, र बेरोकटोक हावाहुरी पालभित्रैबाट ओहरोदोहरो गर्दै थियो । उनी उडेर चाप्वा लाक्रिडको देश पुगे । त्यहाँ करुणा र तर्कले भरिएका शब्द प्रयोग गरेर आफ्ना परिवारका महिलाहरूको मनबाट कुविचार र कुकर्मको छाप हटाएर उनीहरूलाई मुक्त गरे । घर फर्किनुअघि सबैले मिलेर चाप्वा लाक्रिडले पापको बाटो त्यागोस् भन्दै प्रार्थना गरे ।

तर, अज्ञान जिद्दीवाल हुन्छ । चाप्वा लाक्रिड आफ्नै हत्केलाले आँखा छोपेर भिरभिरै दौडिने मूर्ख मान्छेजस्तै थियो । लडाइभगडाले उसलाई आफू शक्तिशाली भएको भ्रम दिन्थ्यो, पाखुरीमा जोस भरिदिन्थ्यो । त्यसैले दौडँदै गएर उसले तोन्या शेनराबका सातवटा अत्यन्तै सुन्दर र बलिया घोडा चोरेर गडबु भन्ने ठाउँमा लुक्न पुग्यो ।

चाप्वा लाक्रिडलाई करुणा र प्रकाशको बाटोमा नल्याउन्जेल यो भगडाको अन्त्य हुँदैन भन्ने तोन्या शेनराबले बुझिसकेका थिए । त्यसैले उनी चाप्वा लाक्रिड लुकेको ठाउँसम्म गए । प्रकाशका राजकुमार आफूतर्फ आउँदै गरेको देखेर राक्षसी राजाले सातैवटा घोडालाई रूखको भेषमा ठूलो जङ्गलमा लुकाईदियो ।

तर तोन्या शेनराबसँग ज्ञानका आँखा थिए । त्यसैले उनले जङ्गलका रूखहरूमाभ आफ्ना घोडालाई पहिल्याए । यसरी भुटको पर्दाफास हुनेबित्तिकै अघि भर्खरैसम्म आफूले किन घोडाहरूलाई पनि रूख देख्नु भनेर मानिसहरूले अचम्म मान्दै टाउको हल्लाए । रूखका जराहरू घोडाका खुट्टा बने, हरियै झ्याउ लागेका रूखहरू सुन्दर घोडाका शरीर बने । अनि हावामा हल्लिरहेका हाँगाहरू हिन्डिनाउने घोडाका टाउका बने ।

चाप्पा लाक्रिड फेरि पनि हान्यो । रिसले चुर भएर उसले चिच्याउँदा आकाश कालो, अँध्यारो भयो । उपत्यकाभरि बौलाएको समुद्रजस्तै कुहिरो उम्लिन थाल्यो । चाप्पा लाक्रिडले फेरि घोडाहरूलाई चोरेर एउटा ठूलो, रातो ढुङ्गामुनि लुकायो र सबैतर्फ बाक्लो अन्धकारको चादर बिछाइदियो । कतै केही नदेखिने अँध्यारो भयो ।

तोन्पा शेनराबले ध्यानमग्न भएर आफूलाई प्रश्न गरे, 'धैर्यको सीमा कहाँसम्म हुन्छ?' उत्तर स्पष्ट थियो – यदि आफू धैर्यशाली बन्नाले कसैलाई अज्ञानी पापी बनिराख्ने छुट मिल्छ भने त्यस अवरस्थामा धैर्य उपयोगी हुँदैन । राक्षसी राजाको डरमा बाँच्न बाध्य मानिसहरूप्रतिको करुणासहित तोन्पा शेनराबले एक तेज उज्यालो सिर्जना गरेर सम्पूर्ण अन्धकारलाई हटाइदिए ।

तोन्पा शेनराबको सहिनसक्नु तेजले पनि परिवर्तन गर्न नसकेको चाप्पा लाक्रिडले आफूलाई यौटा विशाल कालो पर्वत बनायो र तोन्पा शेनराबलाइ रगत, हड्डी र कपालको किमा बनाउने उद्देश्यले हावामा उफ्रियो । तोन्पा शेनराबले आफूलाई तन र मनका विकार र व्याधि सबैलाई उपचार गर्न सक्ने भन्ने ठूलो पर्वत बनेर चाप्पा लाक्रिडको अँध्यारो रूपलाई छोपिदिए ।

करुणाको विशाल बोभले थिचिएपछि चाप्पा लाक्रिडले आफूलाई आकाशबाट ढुङ्गाको वर्षा बनाएर आक्रमण गऱ्यो । यौटा तेजिलो चम्चामाउँदो तरवार लिएर नाच्दै तोन्पा शेनराबले त्यो ढुङ्गेभरीलाई पनि तितरबितर पारिदिए । राक्षसी राजाको हरेक आक्रमण तोन्पा शेनराबको करुणाअधि निस्तेज भयो । पराजित भएपछि अन्त्यमा उसले पवित्र पर्वत बोनरी चिन्बूको अवतार लियो र सधैंकालागि शान्त भयो ।

तिब्बतका मानिसहरूले हातहतियारभन्दा करुणा बलियो हुन्छ भन्ने देखे र सहिष्णुता तथा दयाभाव डर र आतंकको शासनभन्दा धेरै बेर रहन्छ भन्ने बुझे । तोन्पा शेनराब र चाप्पा लाक्रिडबीचको यो महान् युद्धपछिका हजारौं वर्षमा धेरै दुष्ट शक्तिहरूले करुणालाई पराजित गर्ने कोसिस गरेकाछन् । तर, आजसम्म पनि तिब्बतमा नयाँ बोनपो गुम्बाहरू बनिरहेकै छन् र विश्वभर दयाभाव जीवितै छ ।

Seven Horses in a Forest

Thousands of years ago in Tibet, an ancient religion thrived around the mountain known to some as Kang Tise and to others as Kailas or Kang Rinpoche. The religion practiced compassion and good deeds, and tried to erase ignorance from people's minds. It was called Bön, and was the religion of the great Zhang Zhung empire which ruled over a vast stretch of the ancient Silk Road.

A greatly compassionate prince named Tonpa Shenrab was born into the Zhang Zhung empire. He was destined to be a great leader of the Bönpo. He had arrived to lead humans away from suffering. He saw people sacrificing animals to the good and evil spirits of the land. The animals bleated with terror before dying, and that filled his heart with sadness. So he taught the people compassion.

'Instead of offering the life of a sheep, offer a sheep made from dough. Instead of offering blood, offer milk,' he said. It took time and patience for him to convince the people, but when people truly understood the value of compassion, they followed him. Tonpa Shenrab became a beacon of bright light in a land darkened by violence and ignorance.

But darkness also has its worshippers. Gods, demons and kings need the praise and fear of ordinary people, otherwise they grow weak. Gods spreading kindness grow powerful only if people believe in what they preach.



Similarly, demons spreading fear can grow stronger only if people fear them.

Chapba Lakring, the demon king of a place called Kong, far from Kailas, was the opposite of Tonpa Shenrab: he ruled over his people by controlling everything in their lives. He created trouble for people who didn't worship him, and rewarded only those who sacrificed animals to him or offered gold and jewels. Nobody was free to choose if they wanted to follow him, because only he could give them grains, cloths and medicine.

When Chapba Lakring heard that Tonpa Shenrab taught about truth, kindness and beauty, he was very upset. People who understand compassion and beauty treat each other with respect, because of which fear in society decreases. But fear was the strength of the demon king. Worried that he would lose power, he came to Kailas to attack Tonpa Shenrab.

He spread mistrust, greed, jealousy, anger, lies, arrogance, disobedience, and laziness among the people to lead them away from the light of compassion shown by Tonpa Shenrab. But the people had already understood Tonpa Shenrab's teachings, so his tricks failed.

Chapba Lakring commanded his army of a million demons, who were always intoxicated with power, to destroy Tonpa Shenrab. When the demons attacked, Tonpa Shenrab showed them compassion and shared his wisdom with them. The demons, who were humans distorted by arrogance and ignorance, gave up their weapons and became peaceful shepherds and traders. They followed Tonpa Shenrab as he traveled even farther to spread the light of compassion.

But the demon king's anger hadn't disappeared. Evil thoughts buzzed around him like flies around rotting flesh.

One day, when Tonpa Shenrab was traveling around the Cha area to bring the light of compassion to even more people, Chapba Lakring entered his tent as a tired traveler and asked the women inside for water and porridge.

He praised one woman's beauty and the fine weaving skills of another. He whispered into the ear of one wife to make her jealous of another wife. He put suspicion in the heart of the mother and anger in the mind of the daughter. In this manner, with magical ropes made of clever words, he captured the women and took them away with him.

Tonpa Shenrab returned to find his tent empty. No fire had been lit, no incense had been offered to the ancestors, and the wind passed right through without permission. He flew to Chapba Lakring's kingdom and with words of logic and the light of compassion took away the evil thoughts and deeds that had tied the women to the demon king. Before traveling back, Tonpa Shenrab and the women prayed that Chapba Lakring would abandon evil.

Ignorance is stubborn. Chapba Lakring was like a man who wants to race over a mountain while covering his eyes with his own hands. Quarreling gave him pleasure and made him feel alive and strong. So he ran ahead to Tonpa Shenrab's pastures and stole seven beautiful horses and fled to a place called Gongbu.

Tonpa Shenrab understood that unless he showed Chapba Lakring the light of compassion, the fighting would never end. So he traveled to the place where Chapba Lakring hid. The demon king saw the prince of light approach Gongbu and transformed the horses into trees and hid them in a thick forest.

But Tonpa Shenrab possessed eyes of wisdom, so he correctly recognized the seven trees that were his horses. Once the lie was caught, people shook their heads and

wondered why they had seen the horses as trees. The roots of the trees became hooves, the mossy trunks became the shiny coats of fine horses, and instead of nodding in the wind the horses snorted and neighed.

Chapba Lakring was defeated again. He roared in fury and turned the sky black. The valley became a churning sea of fog. Chapba Lakring quickly stole the horses back from Tonpa Shenrab and hid them under a large red rock and spread thick darkness over everything. Nobody could see anything.

Tonpa Shenrab meditated and asked himself: 'Until when should someone be patient?' The answer was clear: if being patient allowed another person to continue being an ignorant sinner, patience is no longer good. Out of compassion for the people who lived in fear of the demon king, Tonpa Shenrab created a bright white light and the darkness disappeared completely.

Even though the brightness of Tonpa Shenrab's light blinded him, Chapba Lakring transformed himself into a black mountain and leapt on Tonpa Shenrab with the intention to crush him into a red paste of blood, bones and hair. Tonpa Shenrab took the form of an even larger mountain with the ability to heal the body and the mind and softly covered the black mountain that was Chapba Lakring.

When the weight of compassion smothered him, Chapba Lakring turned himself into a rain of rocks, which Tonpa Shenrab scattered by dancing with a gleaming, bright sword. The demon king's attacks were defeated one by one by Tonpa Shenrab's great compassion. Finally, he collapsed and became Bonri Chinbu, the sacred mountain.

The people of Tibet saw that compassion is more powerful than weapons, and that tolerance and kindness outlive fear and tyranny. Since this great battle between

Chapba Lakring and Tonpa Shenrab, many evil forces have tried to defeat compassion. But even today, new Bönpo monasteries are being built in Tibet, and kindness is alive all over the world.

राक्षसीको पतन

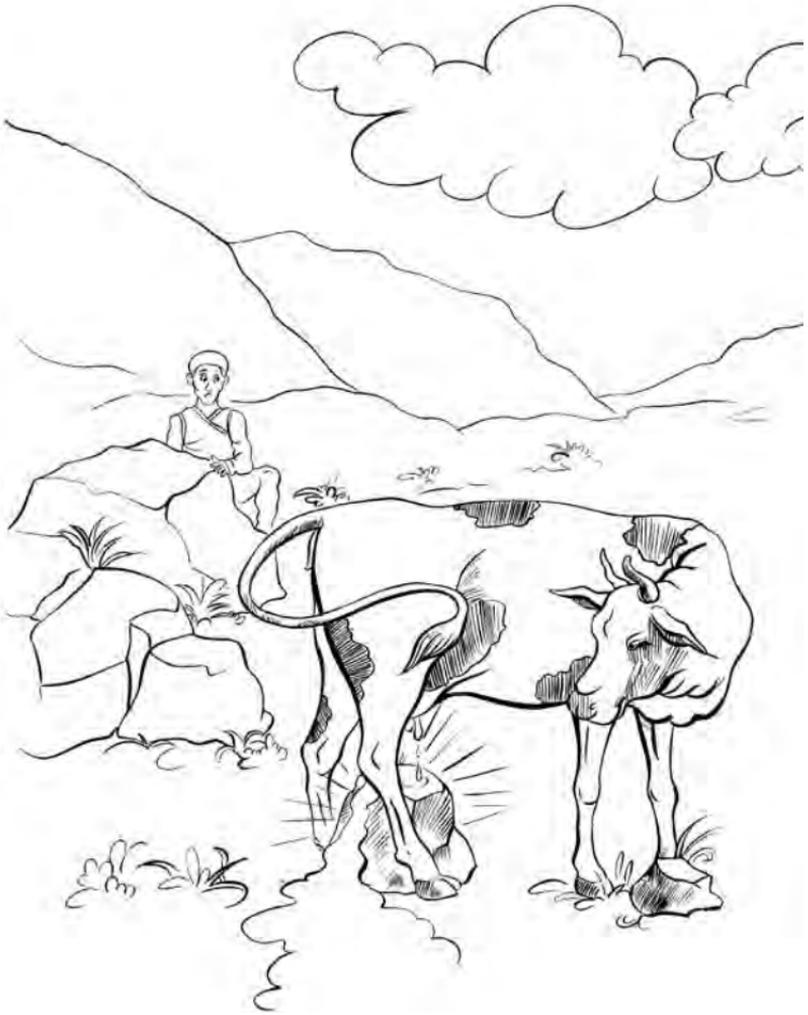
नेपालको जुम्ला जिल्लामा पर्ने जैरा गाउँमा हर्की देउता भेटिएका थिए । एउटा चम्किलो पत्थरमा एउटी गाईले दिनहुँ बिहानै दूध चढाउँथिन् । त्यो देखेर रिसाएको गोठालाले त्यस चट्टानमा प्रहार गर्दा चट्टान तीन टुक्रा भएर फुट्यो र टुक्राहरू आश्चर्यजनकरूपमा तीनतिर छरिए । र, तीनै ठाउँमा हर्की देउताको स्थान बनाइयो ।

धेरै शताब्दीपछि परियार जातिकी एक महिला उनका बाबुको गाउँ जैराबाट हुम्लामा कर्णालीको एउटा शाखामाथिको डाँडामा पर्ने ठेहे गाउँस्थित उनको पतिको घरसम्म लामो यात्रा गर्दै थिइन् । त्यो खस गाउँ थियो । सयौँ घरहरू एकै ठाउँमा गुजुमुज्ज परेका थिए । केटाकेटीहरू एकअर्कासँग जोडिएका घरका छतमा खेल्थे । एउटा तलाबाट अर्को तलामा जानकालागि काठको मुढामा खुडिकला खोपिएको लिस्नो थिए । परिवार बढ्दै गएपछि मुलुकको अरु भागमा बसाइँ सर्नुको साटो परिवारहरू एउटै घरलाई भागबन्डा गर्दै ससाना घरमा बस्थे । पुरुषहरू कामको खोजीमा भारततिर र तिब्बत स्वायत्त क्षेत्रको डारीतर्फ जान्थे ।

ती परियार महिलाले ठेहेमा कथित 'उपल्लो जाति'का शक्तिशाली देउताहरू जेठा रामपाल र भाइहरूलाई उनीहरूको थानमा देखेकी थिइन् । तर, परियार भएकीले उनका भने आफ्नै देउता थिएनन् र अरूका देउताले उनलाई अरूले जस्तै व्यवहार गर्थे । अर्थात्, उनीहरू मित्रवत् थिएनन् र उनका इच्छाहरूको पनि सम्मान गर्दैनथे ।

'बा, मलाई एउटा ट्याम्को दिनुस् जसलाई मेरो छोरोले बजाओस् र माइती गाउँबाट देउता बोलाउन सकोस्,' उनले बाबुलाई भनिन् ।

उनका बाबुले भने 'रामपालको थानमा रहेका ट्याम्काहरू धेरै ठूला छन् तर म तिमीलाई हर्कीको थानबाट एउटा ट्याम्को दिउँला ।



तर, होसियार, त्यसलाई राम्ररी लुकाउनु नि । कसैले पनि तिमीले त्यसलाई ठेहे लगेको नदेखून् ।’

यसरी सानो ट्याम्को लुगामा लुकाएर छोरालाई डोकोमा बोकेर जैराबाट ठेहे जान कर्णालीको तिरैतिर माथि लागिन् ।

उनीसँगै गएका अरू यात्रु भने सानो ट्याम्को आफैं बजेको आवाज सुनेर छक्क परे । केही दिन हिँडेपछि उनीहरूले आफ्नो उत्सुकता लुकाउन सकेनन् । जब उनीहरू ठेहे पुगे र ती महिलाका घरमा जम्मा भए अनि ट्याम्को आफैं बज्नुको अर्थ के हो भनेर सोध्न थाले ।

चिसो हिउँदमा मंसिर महिनाको शुक्ल पक्षको चतुर्दशीका दिन गाउँलेहरू ती तरूनी आमा र एक वर्षको बालक तथा आफैं बच्ने ट्याम्कोको वरपर जम्मा भएका थिए । त्यो एक वर्षे बालकलाई हर्की देउताले धामीका लागि छानेका थिए । उसको नाम आशे परियार थियो ।

त्यो एक वर्षे बालकमा देउता चढे र सबैलाई भने — ‘म जैरा गाउँको हर्की देउता हुँ ।’

तर, ठेहेमा पहिलेदेखि नै बस्दैआएका देउताहरू भने नयाँ देउतासँग रिसाए । सबैभन्दा मुख्य कुरा हर्की देउताले लुगा सिउने जातकी महिलासँगै आएर उनैका छोरालाई धामी रोजेकोमा देउताहरू रिसाएका थिए ।

रामपाल र उनका भाइ देउताहरू बेताल, मष्टो र वाणपाल सँगै मिलेर हर्की देउतालाई ठेहेबाट भगाउने निधो गरे । ‘जाऊ,’ उनीहरूले हर्कीलाई भने — ‘तिम्रो यहाँ आवश्यकता छैन । न तिमी हामीहरूसँगै मिल्न पाउँछौ । तिमीले तल्ला जातका मानिससँग बसेर हाम्रो अपमान गरेका छौ ।’

तिनताका ठेहे गाउँलाई राक्षसी कोडियामलले आतंकित पारेकी थिई । ऊ गाउँको ठीक तल कर्णाली नदीभिन्नको गहिरो गुफामा बस्थी । त्यो राक्षसी उत्तरमा तिब्बतको मैदानसम्म र दक्षिणमा भारतको मैदानी भागसम्म पुगेर गाउँहरूबाट केटाकेटी चोर्ने गर्थी । उसले जब जब केटाकेटीलाई खान्थी आतंकित गाउँलेहरूले नदीभिन्नको उसको गुफाबाट बगेको रातो रगत पानीमा देख्थे । कर्णालीको तीव्र र गर्ज्दो भेलमा पनि केटाकेटी पानीभिन्न चिच्याएको सुनिन्थ्यो । कोही तिब्बतीमा, कोही हुम्लीमा र कहिलेकहीं ऊर्दूमा समेत केटाकेटीले बिलौना गरेको सुनिन्थ्यो । आमाहरू आफ्ना छोराछोरीबाट रगतको रातो फिँज लुकाउन

र अरु केटाकेटी चिच्याएको सुन्न नदिन उनीहरूको कान र आँखा थुनिदिने गर्थे । तर, राक्षसीले हाड चपाएको र नलीहाडबाट मासी चुसेको आवाज धेरै दिनसम्म गुञ्जिइरहन्थ्यो ।

ठेहेका जनता भने उनीहरूका देउताले कोडियामलबाट रक्षा गर्न सकेनन् भन्ने ठान्थे । बेताल, मष्टो र वाणपाल गाउँले चढाएको बलि लोभिएर स्वीकार गर्थे र कोडियामलसँग लडाइँ गर्न नदीमा हाम फाल्थे । तर, एकैछिनमा उनीहरू शरीरभर घाउचोट लिएर भागेर आउँथे । अनि देउताहरूलाई जितेपिच्छे राक्षसी भने भन् क्रुद्ध र बलियो हुन्थे ।

घर आइपुगेकै भोलिपल्ट आशे परियारकी आमा आफ्नो छोरालाई तेल लगाउन घाममा बसेकै बेला कोडियामलले आफ्नो गुफाबाटै जीब्रो निकालेर त्यसरी नै घाममा तेल लगाउन लागेकी अर्की आमाको काखबाट अर्को बच्चालाई तानेर लगी । आमाको बिलौनाले ठेहेमा सबैको हृदयमा चोट लाग्यो । उनीहरू अत्यास मान्दै हाड टोकेर फुटाएको र मासी चुसेको आवाज सुन्न पर्खेर बसे । तर रगत देखिएन । त्यसको साटो कोडियामलको डकार सुनियो ।

‘हे रामपाल ! तपाईँ सबैभन्दा जेठा र शक्तिशाली देवता हुनुहुन्छ । तपाईँको पूजा अरुको भन्दा पहिले गरिन्छ । तपाईँले पनि मेरो बच्चालाई रक्षा गर्न सक्नुहुन्न भने अरु कसले सक्ला ? म तपाईँलाई मोटो र निखबुर बलि चढाउँला ।’ आमाले पुकारा गरिन् ।

रामपाल हिचकिचाउँदै राक्षसीसँग लडाइँ गर्न नदीभित्र त पसे तर उनीपनि तुरून्तै भागेर आए र आफ्नो थान नजिकै देवदारको घारीमा लुके ।

हर्की देउता आशे परियारका रूपमा आफ्नो घरको छतबाट परियार टोलका घरहरूको छानाछानै उडेर गए । जौ बारी, तोरी बारी र भाड बारी हुँदै उनी कर्णालीसम्मै पुगे ।

‘कोडियामल, बच्चालाई छोड्दै नत्र मसँग लडेर मर्न तयार हो,’ हर्कीले स्पष्ट र चर्को स्वरमा राक्षसीलाई ललकारेको सबैले सुने । वाणपाल, बेताल र मष्टो देउता पनि एक मनले यो नयाँ देउताले हारोस् र कोडियामलले खाओस् भन्ने र अर्को मनले आफूहरूलाई हराउने कोडियामलाई हर्की देउताले जितुन् भन्ने चाहना राखेर लडाइँ हेर्न लुकेका ठाउँबाट बाहिर निस्के ।

कोडियामलले हर्कीको ललकारको जबाफमा के भनी भन्ने कुरा यहाँ लेख्दा पनि डरलाग्दो छ । तर, त्यो जवाफ कति घमण्डपूर्ण थियो

भने हर्की देउता कर्णालीको पानीमा हामफाले । उनीहरूको लडाइँ मार्ग महिनाको पूर्णिमाका दिनसम्म चल्थे । पानीभित्र कोडियामलको गुफामा थुप्रै घन्टा लडाइँ भएपछि पानी रगतले रातो भयो । ठेहेका देउता र जनताले हेर्दाहेर्दै कर्णालीको पानीभित्रबाट हातमा कोडियामलको पेटबाट बाहिर निकालिएको बच्चा लिएर ती चमत्कारी बालक बाहिर आए ।

हर्कीको शक्ति देखेपछि रामपाल, बेताल, वाणपाल र मष्टो ठेहेमा हर्कीको थानका सम्बन्धमा छलफल गर्न जुटे । उनीहरू हर्कीसँग डाहा गर्थे किनभने उनीहरू हर्कीभन्दा आफूहरू शक्तिशाली भएको ठान्थे तर हर्कीले कोडियामललाई मारेर गलत साबित गरिदिएका थिए । रातभर सल्लाह गरेपछि उनीहरू भोलिपल्ट मार्ग पूर्णिमाका दिन हर्की भएका ठाउँमा आए ।

‘तपाईँ शक्तिशाली देउता हुनुहुन्छ’ रामपालले संकोच मान्दै भने — ‘तपाईँ यहाँ बस्न सक्नुहुन्छ । चाडपर्वमा मानिसहरूले मेरोभन्दा पहिले तपाईँको पूजा गर्नेछन् ।’ त्यही दिनदेखि शुक्ल पक्षको चतुर्दशीका दिन ठूलो चाडको एक दिन पहिले हर्की देउताको पूजा गरेर चाड मनाउने गरिन्छ ।

हर्की देउताको धामी आशे परियार ठूलो भएपछि गाउँ वरपरका धेरै राक्षसहरूसँग लडे र ८४ वर्ष बाँचेर हजार पूर्ण चन्द्रको दर्शन गरे । उनको मृत्युपछि हर्की देउताले आशे परियारकै वंशजलाई आफ्नो धामी छान्ने गरेका छन् । कथित ‘उच्च जात’को व्यक्तिले परियार जातिको कसैलाई हेलाँ गन्यो वा ज्यालामा ठग्यो भने उनीहरूले सधैं परियारहरूसँग देउताले अरु चारैवटा देउता मिलेर पनि जित्न नसकेको राक्षसीलाई जितेका थिए भन्ने सम्झन्छन् । जाति प्रथाले ठेहेका परियारहरूसँग अन्यायपूर्ण व्यवहार गर्नसक्छ तर कमजोरका पक्षमा लड्ने, न्यायका पक्षधर र कसैसँग नदबने त उनीहरूकै देउता हुन् ।

The Fall of the Demoness

The god Harki was found in the village of Jaira, in Jumla district of Nepal. Here, a cow offered her milk to a quartz rock every evening. When her angry cowherd attacked the rock, it broke into three pieces and miraculously flew to three places where shrines were built for Harki.

Many centuries later, a woman of the Pariyar caste was making a long journey from her father's village of Jaira to her husband's home in the village of Thehe, which is in Humla. Sitting on a hill above a branch of the Karnali, it is the last Khas village in that direction. Hundreds of houses huddle together. Children play on rooftops joined to each other. Steps are carved into a single tree-trunk to make ladders that go from one level to another level. Families divide the same house into smaller and smaller homes rather than move to another part of the country. Often, men migrate to seek work in India and Purang in the Ngari prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The Pariyar woman had seen the powerful gods of the so-called 'upper castes' in Thehe – the elder Rampal, with his own shrine, and his younger brothers. But, as a Pariyar, she didn't have her own god, and the god of others often behaved as the others did: they didn't respect her wishes, nor were they friendly.

'Father,' she begged, 'give me a drum, so that my son may play it and call upon a god from my village.'



Her father said, 'The drums at the shrine of Rampal are too big, but I will give you a drum from the shrine of Harki. Careful! Hide it well. Let nobody see you take it into Thehe!'

She left Jaira with a small *tyamko* drum hidden under her dress and her son in a wicker basket on her shoulders. They headed up the Karnali towards Thehe.

The travelers in her group were puzzled to hear the sound of a small *tyamko* drum beating on its own. After a few days of walking, they couldn't control their curiosity any longer. When they finally reached Thehe, they crowded at the woman's house and asked what was meant by the omen of the drum that beat on its own.

It was on the fourteenth day of the waxing moon in the month of Magh, in the deepest of winter, when villagers gathered around the young mother, the year-old boy, and the *tyamko* drum that played itself. The year-old baby had been chosen by the god Harki as his *dhami*. His name was Aashe Pariyar.

The year-old baby went into a trance and said to everybody, 'I am the god Harki from Jaira!'

But the other gods already living in Thehe were angry at the new god. What they hated the most was that Harki had traveled there with a woman of the tailor caste, and had chosen her baby as his *dhami*.

The god Rampal and his younger brothers Betal, Mashto and Banpal banded together to chase Harki away from Thehe. 'Go away,' they said to him. 'You are not needed here, neither are you welcome among us. You have insulted us by choosing to live among people of low caste.' That wasn't very polite of them. But Harki replied politely, 'I will live in Thehe with the people I choose.'

In those very days, Thehe was being terrorized by the demoness Kodyamal, who lived in a cave deep inside the

river Karnali, just below the village. She traveled as far up north as the plains of Tibet and as far south as the plains of India to snatch children from villages along the river. As horrified villagers watched, blood gushed out of her underwater home whenever she ate a child. Even from under the fast and roaring waters of the Karnali the screams of children could be heard, some in Tibetan, some in Humli, and sometimes even in Urdu. Mothers blocked the ears of their children and tried to hide the bloody foam coloring the Karnali. But the crunching of bones and sucking of marrow echoed through the valley for many days.

The people of Thehe thought that their gods were incapable of defending them from Kodiyamal. One by one, Betal, Mashto and Banpal had greedily accepted sacrifices offered by the villagers and jumped into the river to battle Kodiyamal. But they had come running back after short battles, barely escaping with their limbs intact. With every victory over a god the demoness grew stronger and angrier.

The day after arriving in Thehe, Aashe Pariyar's mother sat massaging him in the sun when Kodiyamal stretched her tongue all the way from her cave and snatched away another child. The cries of the mother broke the hearts of everybody in Thehe. They waited in dread to hear the crunch and slurp, but no blood was seen. Instead, they heard Kodiyamal burp.

'Rampal! You are the eldest and most powerful god. You are worshipped before any other. If you can't protect my child, who can? I promise you the fattest and purest sacrifice!' the mother cried.

Rampal reluctantly entered the river to fight the demoness, but he too fled back uphill to his shrine to hide in a pine grove.

Aashe Pariyar, as the god Harki in human form, flew from his roof, over the roofs of the Pariyar neighborhood.

He flew south over fields of barley and mustard and hemp until he hovered over the Karnali.

‘Kodiyamal, give up the baby, or prepare for a fight to the death!’ Harki said in a clear and loud voice which everybody heard. The gods Banpal, Betal and Mashto came out of hiding to watch, half-wishing that Kodiyamal would eat this upstart god, but also hoping that Harki would kill the demoness who had defeated them.

What Kodiyamal said in reply is too horrifying to write here, but it was arrogant enough that Harki dived into the waters of the Karnali. Their fight continued until the full moon of the month of Margh shone in the winter skies. After many hours of battle inside Kodiyamal’s underwater cave the river frothed with blood.

As the gods and the people of Thehe watched, the miraculous child flew out from the Karnali carrying the baby that he had torn out from Kodiyamal’s belly.

Having seen Harki’s strength, Rampal, Betal, Banpal and Mashto met to discuss Harki’s place in Thehe. They believed themselves to be superior to Harki, but they had been proven wrong when Harki killed Kodiyamal. After debating through the night, they came to him the next day.

‘You are a strong god,’ Rampal said reluctantly. ‘You may live here. During festivals, people will worship you before they worship me.’ Ever since then, the fourteenth day of the waxing moon, a night before the main festival, has been the day of the god Harki.

Aashe Pariyar, the *dhami* for the god Harki, grew up and battled more demons from around the village, saw a thousand moons, and lived to the ripe old age of eighty-four. Since his passing, the god Harki has chosen men from among the descendants of Aashe Pariyar as his *dhami*. If a person of the so-called ‘upper caste’ treats a Pariyar person

rudely, or cheats them out of wages, they remember that the god of the Pariyars is a powerful god who killed a demoness who had defied their four strong gods. The caste system may treat the Pariyars of Thehe unfairly, but they have a god among them who loves justice and fights for the weak, and who doesn't accept bullying.

तीन असल राजकुमार

चार प्रमुख दिशामा चारवटा राजा थिए । पूर्वमा नाडका वा, दक्षिणमा बाडा होर, पश्चिममा नाडसी ल्हा र उत्तरमा सिङलिङ सा राज्य गर्थे । यी सबैमध्ये नाडका वा सबैभन्दा धनी र शक्तिशाली थिए । उनका ७ हजार ७ सय भैंडा, ५ हजार ५ सय चाँरी र ३ हजार ३ सय घोडा थिए ।

नाडसी लाका नाग्का नामका छोरा थिए जस्की आमा ऊ तीन वर्षका हुँदा बितेकी थिइन् । राजाले बढो कष्टसाथ बालकलाई आफैँले हुर्काए । एक दिन उनले विचार गरे — 'मेरो छोरालाई एकलै हुर्कन धेरै मुस्किल हुनेछ । उसलाई खेल्ने साथी मैले खोजिदिनुपर्छ ।' त्यसपछि उनले आफ्ना छोरा, एउटा थैलामा सुन र अर्को थैलामा चाँदी लिएर छोरालाई साथी किन्नकालागि निस्के ।

राजा र उनका सेवक सेडे राबधान चिसा ग्यामो नामको ठाउँमा पुगे । त्यहाँ उनीहरूले दुई जना केटासँगै एउटी बुढीलाई भेटे ।

'तिम्रा छोरा मलाई बेच्छ्यौ ? मेरो एउटा छोरा छ । उसका दाजुभाइ छैनन् । म तिमीलाई एक थैलो सुन र एक थैलो चाँदी दिनसक्छु र तीनजना बालकहरूले बाँचुञ्जेल एक अर्काको हेरचाह गर्नसक्नेछन्,' राजाले भने ।

ती बुढी महिलाले उत्तर दिइन् — 'म यी केटाकेटीलाई बेचन त सक्तिनँ । तर, अहिले अर्केतिर हेरेर फेरि फर्केर हेर्नुस् ।'

राजाले अर्कातिर हेरे र फेरि फर्केर हेरे । ती बुढी महिला अलप भइसकेकी थिइन् तर ती दुईजना बालक भने त्यहीं थिए । ती बुढी महिला त्यहाँ नभए पनि राजाले सुन र चाँदीका थैला छोडेर बालकहरूलाई घर ल्याए ।



राजाका अब तीन छोरा भए — उनका राजकुमार र दुई बालकहरू । एकजना बालकको नाम चिबुन दायु त्रिबुड र अर्काको नाम लुम्फुन नोर्बु सेन्बा राखियो ।

राजाले दुवै बालकहरूलाई आफ्नै सन्तानजस्तै व्यवहार गरे भने ती बालकहरूले पनि राजालाई आफ्नै बाबुसरह माने । राजाले उनीहरूलाई निष्ठावान्, बहादुर र दयालु बन्न सिकाए । राजकुमार ७ वर्षका हुँदा राजाको मृत्यु भयो । शोक कम भएपछि राजकुमार बुद्धको ध्यानमा लागे ।

छिटै नै राजाको सम्पत्ति घट्यो । ती ७ हजार ७ सय भैंडामध्ये ७ वटामात्र बाँकी रहे, ५ हजार ५ सय चौँरीमा ५ वटामात्र बाँकी रहे र ३ हजार ३ सय घोडामा ३ वटामात्र बाँकी रहे । लुम्फुन नोर्बु सेन्बा अत्यन्त चिन्तित भए । उनले आफ्ना भाइ र सेवकलाई भने — 'हाम्रा बाबुले हामीलाई ७ हजार ७ सय भैंडा छाडेका थिए तर अहिले ७ वटामात्र बाँकी छन् । म मलिलो चरन खोज्छु र पशुहरूको संख्या बढाउँछु । राजकुमारको राम्ररी हेरचाह गर्नु ।'

केही समयपछि चिबुन दायु त्रिबुडले राजकुमारलाई भने — 'हाम्रा बाबुले हामीलाई ३ हजार ३ सय घोडा छाडेर जानुभएको थियो । तीमध्ये अहिले ३ वटामात्र बाँकी छन् । तिनको संख्या बढाउन म प्रशस्त पानी र घाँस पाइने ठाउँ खोज्न जान्छु ।' उनले सेवकलाई राजकुमारको राम्ररी हेरचाह गर्नु भने र आफ्नो खोजीमा निस्के ।

राजकुमार सेवक र ५ वटा चौँरी लिएर घेरै बसे । उनले चौँरीको हेरचाह गरे र निकै कडा परिश्रम गरे । केही वर्षपछि ५ वटा चौँरी ५ हजारवटा भए । सेवकले भने — 'राजकुमार, यो शुभ लक्षण हो । असल मानिसहरूले सधैं असल प्रतिफल पाउँछन् ।'

राजकुमारले उत्तर दिए — 'हाम्रा पशुहरू थुप्रै भए । तर, मलाई मेरा भाइहरूको सम्भना आएको छ । उनीहरू कस्तो अवस्थामा छन् भन्ने जान्ने मन छ । उनीहरूलाई खोज्नुस् र उनीहरूसँग अहिले जतिवटा घोडा र भैंडा भए पनि घर ल्याउनुस् ।'

ती सेवक सेडे राबधन राजकुमारको आज्ञा मानेर दुई भाइलाई खोज्न हिँडे । उनी जब राजाले उहिले ती दुई भाइलाई भेटेको ठाउँ चिसा ग्यामो पुगे त्यहाँ ७ हजार ७ सय भन्दा पनि धेरै भैंडाको बथान भेट्टाए । ती कस्का भैंडा होलान् भनेर चकित भएर थकाइ मार्न पल्टे ।

त्यही बेला एउटी भैंडीले जीउभर टाटेपाटे भएको बच्चा जन्माई जस्को घाँटीमा शंखको माला थियो । सानो भैंडाले आमासँग सोध्यो – 'यो पूर्वी राज्यमा कैयौँ साना भैंडा छन् तर घाँटीमा शंखको माला लगाएर जन्मेको भने ममात्रै हुँ । किन होला ?'

आमा भैंडीले उत्तर दिई – 'छिटै नै थुप्रै परीहरू चिसा ग्यामो नजिकैको तलाउमा नुहाउन आउनेछन् । तिनमा सबैभन्दा सुन्दरी परीको नाम ल्हामो तोडदो मा हो । तिम्रो शंखको मालालेमात्रै तिनलाई समात्न सकिन्छ । उनले राजकुमारसँग बिहा गरिन् भने पूर्वी राज्यमा ठूलो सौभाग्य र खुसी आउनेछ ।'

त्यसपछि ऊ अलि चनाखो भई र बिस्तारै भनी – 'तर, छोरा यहाँ एक जना हाम्रो कुरा बुझ्ने मान्छे छ । हामी अब भाग्नुपर्छ ।'

वास्तवमा सेवक सेडे राबधानले भैंडाको बोली बुझे । उनले उप्रेर भर्खरै जन्मेको भैंडाको बच्चालाई समातेर शंखको माला खोसे र टोपीमा लुकाए । अनि हजारौँ भैंडाको बथानले कुल्चेर उनलाई धुलोपीठो बनाउनुभन्दा पहिले त्यहाँबाट भागे ।

तत्कालै सेवक लुफुन नोर्बु सेन्बालाई राजकुमारको सन्देश सुनाए । लुफुन नोर्बु सेन्बाले भने – 'ठीक छ । म घर आउँछु । तर, तिमिले चिबुन दायु त्रिबुडलाई भेटेर उसलाई घर लिएर आउनुपर्छ ।'

सेवक अझ अगाडि गए र चिबुन दायु त्रिबुडलाई फेला पारे । कालो उनको पालभित्र बसेका थिए र पालबाहिर एउटा घोडा अल्छी मान्दै चरिरहेको थियो । आफ्नो निराशालाई लुकाएर सेडे राबधानले हर्षपूर्वक भने – 'राजकुमारसँग ५ हजार चौँरी छन् र लुम्पुन नोर्बु सेन्बाको भैंडाको बथानमा पनि ७ हजारभन्दा धेरै भइसके । तपाईँको पिताको सम्पत्ति पहिलेजस्तै भइसक्यो । आउनुस् अब घर जाऊँ ।'

यही समाचार सुन्नकालागि पर्खिरहेजस्तो गरेर चिबुड दायु त्रिबुड जुरूकक उठे र भने – 'हो ! अब तुरून्तै घर जाऊँ ।' दुवैजना एउटै घोडामा चढे र चराको प्वाँखले ढाकेभैँ देखिने चट्टानतिर गए । सेडे राबधान हतारिएर पछि लागे । प्वाँखले ढाकिएको चट्टानमा पुगेपछि चिबुन दायु त्रिबुडले भने – 'देवी पाचा ! कृपा गरेर मेरालागि ढोका खोलेदिनुस् !' त्यसपछि उनले तीन पटक थपडी बजाए ।

चट्टान बिस्तारै खुल्यो । चट्टानभित्र ३ हजार ३ सयभन्दा धेरै असल घोडाहरू थिए । चिबुन दायु त्रिबुडले बाबुको घोडालाई गुफाबाट

बाहिर निकाले र भने — 'ल ! अब जाऊँ । अरु घोडा पछिपछि आउनेछन् ।'

चिबुन दायु त्रिबुडले दिएको घोडामा चडेर केही टाढा पुगेपछि सेडे राबदान गुफातिर फर्केर हेरे । सबै घोडा उनीहरूभन्दा केही दूरीमा पछिपछि हिँडिरहेका थिए । कस्ता चम्किला थिए तिनीहरू ! आधारातको अँध्यारो वनजस्तो कालोदेखि दूधजस्तो चम्किलो सेतोसम्मका सबै रङ्गका घोडा थिए । कस्तो रमाइलो दृश्य थियो त्यो !

उनीहरूलाई राजकुमारले हार्दिकतापूर्वक स्वागत गरे र बाबुको राज्यमा बसे । राजकुमार सुनको राजगद्दीमा बसे, चिबुन दायु त्रिबुड चाँदीको सिंहासनमा र लुफुन नोर्बु छेबा तामाको सिंहासनमा बसे । उनीहरूले मिलेर राज्यमा शासन गरे । तर, दरबारको शोभा बढाउन रानी थिइनन् । र, राजकुमार राजा भएका पनि थिएनन् । किनभने अरु राजाहरूले उनको सम्पत्ति र शक्ति देखेका थिएनन् ।

राजकुमारका विश्वासिला सेवक सेडे राबदानले भैंडी र सानो भैंडाको कुराकानी सम्भे । उनको टोपीमा लुकाएको शंखको मालाले टाउको चिलाउन थालेको थियो ।

'यो शंखको माला लिनुस् र आफ्नालागि दुलही बनाउन परीलाई आफैँ समात्नुस्,' उनले सुभाष दिए ।

सेडे राबदानका कुरा सुनेर भाइहरू हाँसे पनि राजकुमारले भने — 'सेडे राबदान सधैं नै हामीप्रति बफादार रहँदैआएका छन् । उनले कहिल्यै झुटो बोलेका छैनन् । उनले भनेपछि म त्यो शंखको माला लिएर उनले बताएको ठाउँमा जान्छु । हेराँ, के हुँदोरहेछ ।'

राजकुमार शंखको माला लिएर निस्के । जब उनी बताइएको पोखरीमा पुगे राजकुमारले पोखरीमा थुप्रै परीहरू पौडी खेलिरहेका देखे । राजकुमार मानिस भएकाले उनको गन्ध पोखरीमा खेलिरहेका परीहरूले थाहा पाइहाले । अनि त उनीहरू तुरून्तै उडेर गए । तर, तिनीहरूमध्ये सबैभन्दा राम्री परी ल्हामो तोडदो मा आधा शरीर पोखरीमा र आधा बाहिर हुनेगरी रहिरइन् ।

एकैछिनकालागि राजकुमारले आफू किन पोखरीसम्म आएको हो भन्ने नै बिर्सो । उनी त ल्हामो तोडदो माको सुन्दरता देखेर मुग्ध भए । तर, बिजुलीको बेगमा राजकुमारले के गर्नुपर्ने हो सम्झिए र चमत्कारी माला पहिन्-याएर परीलाई समाते । उनका गुण र सुन्दरताले दरबारको शोभा बढायो ।

बाबुको सम्पत्ति फेरि पाएपछि र स्वर्गकी सबैभन्दा सुन्दरी परी पत्नी पाएपछि नाग्का सीले विचार गरे – 'मेरो राज्य बाबुको पालामा भन्दा पनि बढी समृद्ध भएको छ । मैले यसको उत्सव मनाउनुपर्छ ।'

आफ्ना सेवक र भाइहरूको सहयोगबाट राजकुमारले संसारका थाहा भएसम्म सबैतिरका राजा र राजकुमारहरूलाई प्रतियोगितामा सामेल हुन निम्ता पठाए । 'तपाईंको सबैभन्दा उत्तम घोडा लिएर आउनुस् ।' निम्तामा शिष्ट शब्दमा भनिएको थियो – 'त्यस्तो घोडा लिएर आउनुस् जुन आकाशमा चराभैँ उड्न सकोस्, पानीमा माछाजस्तै पौडन सकोस् र घाँसे मैदानमा हावा चलेसरी दौडन सकोस् । तपाईंको घोडाले दौडमा जित्यो भने म अरु सयवटा सानदार घोडाहरू पुरस्कार स्वरूप दिनेछु ।'

तिब्बतभरका राजा र राजकुमारहरू केही दिनभित्रै राजकुमारको तबेलाका सय घोडा जित्ने उद्देश्यले जम्मा भए । पाहुनाहरूलाई स्वागत गरी भोजन गराएपछि राजकुमारले भोलिपल्ट बिहान सबैरे दौड प्रतियोगिता सुरु हुने घोषणा सुनाए ।

सम्मानकालागि युवा राजकुमारहरूले प्रतियोगितामा भाग लिएनन् । चार दिशाका राजाले मात्र प्रतियोगितामा भाग लिने भए । राजा बडा होर, राजा नाडसी ल्हा र राजा सिडलिड साले मात्रै राजकुमारसँग प्रतिस्पर्धामा भाग लिने भए । राजकुमार बूढा राजाको सबैभन्दा मनपर्ने घोडामा सवार भए । दौड सुरु हुनेबित्तिकै एकै निमेषमा दौड पूरा भयो । तर, दक्षिणका राजाको घोडाले दौड जिते । पाहुनाले प्रतियोगिता जितेकाले कसैले पनि नाग्का सीलाई छुद्र भएको आरोप लगाउन सकेनन् । उनको अतिथि सत्कारमा रमाएकाहरूको हाँसोले राजकुमारको महलको गौरव बढ्यो ।

पाहुनाहरूको सम्मानमा आयोजना गरिएको भोजमा अतिथिहरूले मन लागुन्जेल नाचे, गाए र खाइपिई गरे । सबै जना खुसी थिए । राजकुमारले आफ्ना सेवकले भनेको सम्भे – 'असल मानिसहरूको सधैं भलो हुन्छ ।' उनले आफूलाई बुद्धको भक्तिमा लगाए, भाइहरूसँग राम्रो व्यवहार गरे र आफ्नी रानीलाई सधैं आदर र प्रेम गरे । उनले असल कामको पुरस्कार पाएका थिए । राजकुमारले बुद्धको आशीर्वाद पाइरहन सधैं गुणवान् भइरहने वाचा गरे ।

Three Good Princes

In the four cardinal directions were four kings: King Nangka Wa in the east, King Bada Hor in the south, King Nangsi Lha in the west, and King Shingling Tsa in the north. Of these, King Nangka Wa was the most powerful and wealthy. He had 7,700 sheep, 5,500 yaks, and 3,300 horses.

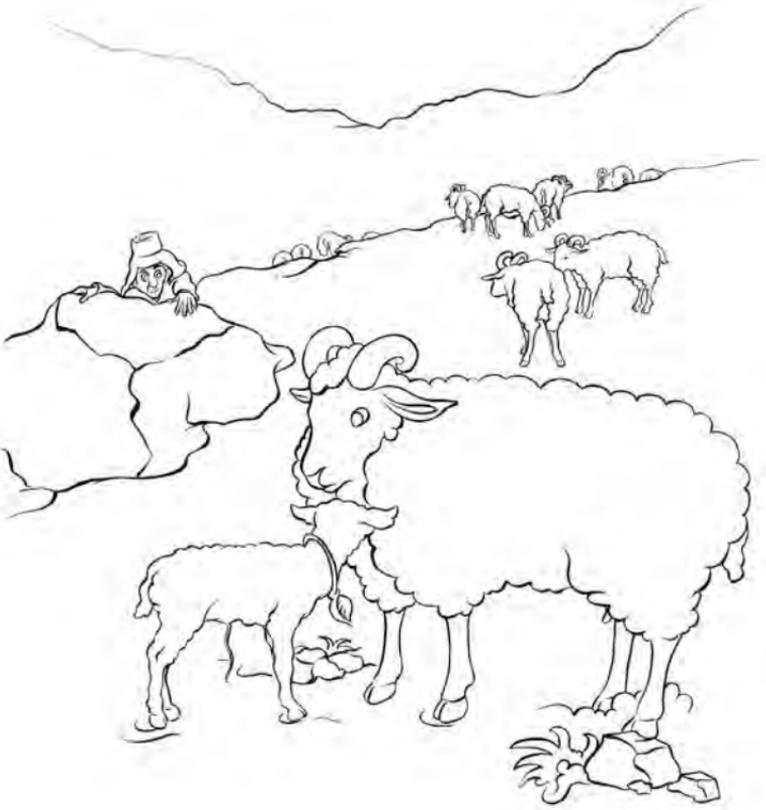
Nangka Wa has a son named Nangka Dsi, whose mother died when he was three years old. The king raised the child by himself and had a very hard time of it. One day, he thought, 'It will be very difficult for my son to grow up alone. I must find playmates for him.' So he took his son, a bag of gold and another of silver, and set off to buy a friend for his son.

The king and his footman Koryu Senge Rabdhan reached a place called Chisha Gyamo. There, they met an old woman with two boys.

'Can you please sell your boys to me? I have a son who has no brothers. I can pay you one bag of gold and one bag of silver, and the three boys can look after each other for the rest of their lives,' the king said.

The old woman replied, 'I cannot sell you these children. But please look away, and then turn back again.'

The king looked away, and turned back again. The old woman had vanished, but the two boys remained. Although the old woman wasn't there, the king left behind the bags of gold and silver and brought the two boys home.



The king now had three sons: his prince, and the two boys. One boy was named Chibun Dayu Tribung, and the other was named Lughun Norbu Tsenba.

The king treated the two boys as his own children, and they also loved him like their own father. He taught them to be loyal, brave and kind. When the prince was seven years old, the king passed away. Overcome with grief, the prince dedicated himself to the Buddha.

Soon, the king's wealth decreased. Of the 7,700 sheep, only seven remained; of the 5,500 yaks, only five remained, and of the 3,300 horses, only three remained. Lughun Norbu Tsenba became very worried. He said to his brother and the footman, 'Our father left us 7,700 sheep, but now only seven remain. I will find a fertile pasture where I can increase the flock. Take good care of the prince.'

Sometime later, Chibun Dayu Tribung said to the prince, 'Our father left us 3,300 horses, of which only three remain. I will find a place with plenty of water and grass to increase their number.' He asked the footman to take good care of the prince, and left on his quest.

The prince stayed home with his footman and the five yaks. He took care of the yaks and worked hard. After a few years, the five yaks increased to over 5,000. The footman said, 'Prince, this is a good sign. Good people are always rewarded.'

The Prince replied, 'We have plenty of livestock. But I miss my brothers. I want to know how they are. Please find them and bring them home regardless of how many sheep and horses they have now.'

Koryu Senge Rabdhan, the footman, obeyed the prince and left to find the other two brothers. When he reached Chisha Gyamo, at just the spot where the old king had found playmates for the prince, he found a flock of sheep

numbering far more than 7,700. He wondered whose flock of sheep they were, and, thus wondering, lay down to rest.

Just at that moment, a ewe gave birth to a lamb covered with spots all over its body and wearing a conch necklace. The little lamb asked his mother, 'There are so many other little lambs in the East Kingdom, but I am the only one born with a conch necklace. Why is that so?'

The ewe replied, 'Soon, many fairies will gather to bathe in the lake near Chisha Gyamo. Of them, the fairest is named Lhamo Tongduo Ma. She can be caught only with your conch necklace. And if she marries the Prince, it will be the greatest luck and brightest joy for all of the East Kingdom.'

Then, suddenly, she became alert and said softly, 'But son, there is a man here who understands our tongue. We must run away.'

Indeed, the footman Koryu Senge Rabdhan understood the language of the sheep. He jumped at the newborn lamb and captured the conch necklace and hid it in his felt hat and set off before the hooves of 7,000 sheep could trample him into the dust.

Very soon, the footman ran into Luphun Norbu Tsenba and gave him the prince's message. Luphun Norbu Tsenba said, 'Alright. I am coming home. But you should find Chibun Dayu Tribung and bring him home.'

The footman walked further on and tracked down Chibun Dayu Tribung, who was sitting inside a tent of black wool, but with just one horse lazily grazing outside the tent. Disguising his disappointment with the utmost good sense, Koryu Senge Rabdhan said to him, 'The prince now has over 5,000 yak, and Luphun Norbu Tsenba now herds over 7,000 sheep. The wealth of your father is sufficiently restored. Come, let's go home.'

Chibun Dayu Tribung sprang up, as if he had been waiting for just this news, and said, 'Yes! Let's go home right now.' He raced off on his only horse towards a rock that shimmered as if covered all over with feathers. Koryu Senge Rabdhan hurriedly followed. When they reached the feathery rock, Chibun Dayu Tribung said, 'Goddess Pacha! Please open the door for me.' He then clapped three times.

The rock opened up slowly. Inside the rock were more than 3,300 fine horses. Chibun Dayu Tribung led his father's horses out of the cave and said to the footman, 'Let's go now. The other horses will follow.'

After traveling some distance, riding the horse Chibun Dayu Tribung had given him, Koryu Senge Rabdhan turned back to look at the cave. All the horses were following them at a respectable distance. And what splendid colors they were! From the black of a midnight in the forest, to the white of mare's milk, there were horses of every color. What a wonderful sight it was!

Each of them was received warmly by the prince, and they lived together in their father's kingdom. The prince sat on a golden throne, Chibun Dayu Tribung sat on a silver throne and Laphun Norbu Tseba sat on a copper throne. They ruled the kingdom together. But the court didn't have a queen to increase its beauty. And the prince wasn't yet a king because other kings hadn't seen his wealth and power.

Koryu Senge Rabdhan, the trusted footman, remembered the conversation between the ewe and her young lamb. 'Take this conch necklace and catch yourself a fairy for a bride!' he suggested.

Although his brothers laughed at Koryu Senge Rabdhan, the prince said, 'Koryu Senge Rabdhan has always been loyal to us. He has never told a lie. If he says so, I will

travel with the conch necklace to the land he describes, and see what happens.'

The prince set off with the conch necklace. When he reached the lake described to him, the prince saw many fairies swimming in the lake. Because the prince was a mortal, the smell of his body scared the fairies playing in the water. They suddenly flew away. But the fairest fairy of them all, Lhamo Tongduo Ma, remained behind, half in the lake, and half out of the water.

For half a moment, the prince forgot why he had traveled to the lake. He was blinded by Lhamo Tongduo Ma's beauty. But, like a flash of lightning, the prince regained his wit and threw the magical necklace around the fairy and caught her. Lhamo Tongduo Ma agreed to marry him and return with him to the palace. Her beauty and her virtues brought glory to the court.

Having regained the wealth of his father, and having found the fairest of the heavenly fairies as a wife, Nagka Dsi thought, 'My kingdom is more prosperous than it was in my father's times. I must celebrate this achievement.'

With the help of his footman and his brothers, the prince sent out invitations to all known corners of the world, inviting kings and princes to come to a tournament. 'Bring your best horses,' the invitation said in polite language, 'Bring horses which can fly like a bird in the sky, or which can swim like a fish in the river, or which gallop like the wind sweeping over the grassland. If your horse wins the race, I will reward you with a hundred more horses that are just as magnificent.'

Kings and princes from across Tibet gathered within a few days to win a hundred horses from the prince's stable. After welcoming the guests and serving them a feast, the prince announced that the race would start early in the morning.

Out of respect, the young prince's brothers did not participate in the race. Only the four kings of the four directions would compete. King Bada Hor, King Nangsi Lha, and King Shingling Tsa would race against the prince. The prince rode Zagar Lheqin, the old king's favorite horse. When the race began, the horses flew from start to finish in the time it takes for the eyes to blink. But it was the horse belonging to the King of the South which won the prize. Because a guest had won the competition, nobody could accuse Nagka Dsi of being ungracious. The laughter of guests enjoying his hospitality brought much honor to the house of the prince.

At the feasts held in honor of the guests, the host and his guests sang and danced and ate to their heart's desire. Everybody was very happy with their lives. The prince remembered what his footman had said – 'Good people are always rewarded.' He had devoted himself to the Buddha, treated his adopted brothers fairly, and shown respect and love to his queen. He was being rewarded for his good conduct. The prince vowed to always be virtuous so that the Buddha would always bless him.

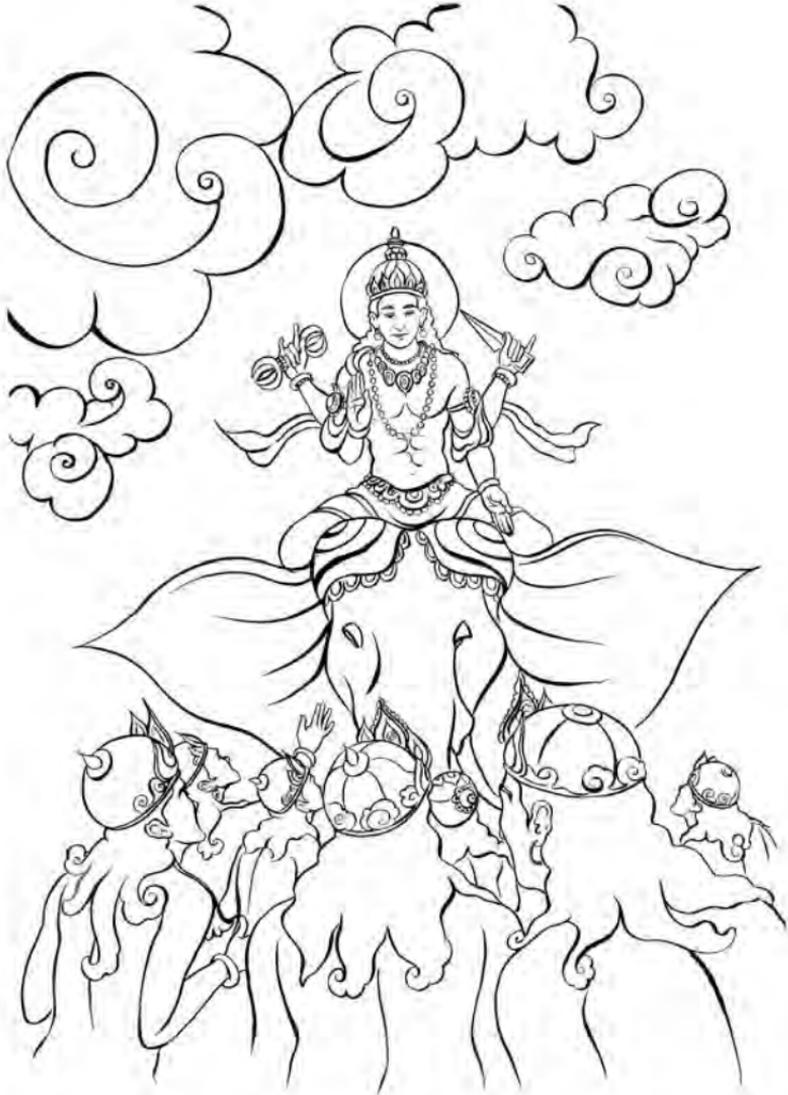
देवभूमि

हुम्ला नेपालको नक्साको माथिल्लो भागको देब्रे कुनामा छ । यसको उत्तरपट्टि तिब्बत स्वायत्त क्षेत्रको डारी प्रान्त छ भने पश्चिममा भारतको उत्तराखण्ड राज्य पर्छ । कर्णाली नदी तिब्बतबाट सुरू भएर हुम्ला हुँदै बग्छ र दक्षिणमा महानदी गङ्गामा मिसिन्छ । यहाँ बौद्ध, बोनपो र हिन्दुहरू बस्छन् । हुम्लामा हिउँले ढाकेका चुचुराहरू, सुन्दर घाँसे मैदान र भिराला पहाड देखिन्छन् । यहाँका केही बासिन्दा किसान छन् भने केही व्यापारी । उनीहरू भारतीय तराई र तिब्बतको रेसम मार्गसँग ऐतिहासिकरूपमा जोडिएका छन् ।

हुम्ला कथाहरूमा धेरै धनी छ । प्रत्येक गाउँमा पुर्खा र देउताहरूका पूजा गरिने पवित्र स्थानहरू छन् । हुम्लाका हिन्दुहरूले रामपाल, हरिपाल, घण्टपाल, वाणपाल, मधुम्पाल, शंखपाल, कालशिल्ल, गुरा, बेताल, शुक्लहंश, दाह्रे मष्टो र दुधे मष्टो नामका १२ देउताको पूजा गर्छन् । तिनीहरूकी बहिनी भवानीको पनि पूजा गरिन्छ । अरुमा लौहासुर, ल्हाडो, हर्की आदि बाह्र भाइ देउताका भतिजा हुन् ।

हुम्लाको गावैपिच्छे विभिन्न देउताका थान छन् । सिमीकोट वा टेहेजस्ता ठूला गाउँहरूमा धेरै देउता छन् भने अरु गाउँहरूमा थोरै देउता होलान् । प्रत्येक देउता वा देवी धामीका रूपमा मानव चोलामा जन्म लिन्छन् । अर्को व्यक्तिलाई देउताको पुरानो भाषा बोल्ने डांग्री हुने तालिम दिइन्छ । डांग्रीले मानिसहरूका पुकार र भाकललाई देउताकालागि अनुवाद गर्छ र धामीलाई ध्यानमा बसेर पुकारा सुन्न लगाउँछ । यसैगरी डांग्रीले देउताको बोली हुम्लाका मानिसहरूकालागि अनुवाद गर्छ ।

यो युग आउनुभन्दा पहिले उहिल्यै देउताका पालामा बाह्र भाइ देउताले कैलाश पर्वत र मानसरोवरको सृष्टिका बारेमा सुने । उनीहरूले



आफ्ना सबैभन्दा जेठा दाजु स्वर्गका राजा इन्द्रसँग पवित्र धामहरूमा जाने अनुमति मागे । उनीहरूले पवित्र सरोवरमा नुहाए, पवित्र पर्वतको परिक्रमा गरे र सृष्टिकर्ताको स्तुतिगान गरे । तर, घर फर्कने बेलामा उनीहरूलाई डाडेचिनको दैत्यले पत्रेर राख्यो । देउताहरूलाई दैत्य र उसका सेनालाई हराउन हजार वर्षसम्म लडाइँ गर्नुपऱ्यो । उनीहरूले उसको टाउको काटेर शरीरभन्दा कैयौँ किलोमिटर पर फाले । तिब्बतको ताक्लाकोटको माटो दैत्यको रगतले रातै भयो ।

देउताहरू इन्द्र भएका ठाउँमा फर्के र भने — ‘हामी हजार वर्षका भोका र प्यासा छौँ । हामीलाई खान र पिउन दिनुस् !’ इन्द्रले उत्तर दिए — ‘हुम्ला जाओ । त्यहाँ पापीहरूलाई दण्ड दिने र पुण्य कर्मकालागि पुरस्कार दिने मेरो नियमको रक्षा गर । त्यसो भए मानिसहरूले तिमीहरूलाई बलि र बालीको भाग चढाउनेछन् । उनीहरूलाई सन्तान र पशुको वरदान दिनु वा बिरामी बनाइदिनु । अनि जब उनीहरूले खानेकुरा र पिउनेकुरा चढाउँछन् उनीहरूको रोग निको बनाइदिनु !’

इन्द्रको भनाइले देउताहरू खुसी भए । उनीहरू स्वर्गबाट हिल्साको नौमुलेमा ओर्ले । नौवटा धारा भएको पवित्र मूलमा नुहाएपछि उनीहरू हुम्लाका विभिन्न गाउँमा बस्नकालागि हिँडे । उनीहरू आफ्ना धामीहरूका माध्यमबाट नाच्ने र गाउने गर्थे र इन्द्रको नियम पालना गराउँथे । त्यसका बदलामा हुम्लीहरू तिनको स्तुति गाउँथे अनि बलि तथा बाली चढाउँथे र पापबाट टाढै रहने तथा असल मानिस हुने वाचा गर्थे ।

हुम्लाबाट दक्षिणमा पर्ने जुम्ला साम्राज्यमा शक्तिशाली राजाले शासन गर्थे । उनी विष्णुका अवतार थिए । उनले हुम्लामा धामीहरूले चमत्कार गर्ने र त्यसका बदलामा हुम्लीहरूले भेटी चढाउने गरेको सुने । देउतासँग कुराकानी गर्न धामी र डांग्रीलाई चढाइने माना चामलले पनि राजालाई रिस उठायो । किनभने राजाले मात्र कर लिन र भेटी स्वीकार गर्न पाउँछ भन्ने उनको विश्वास थियो ।

हुम्लाका देउताहरूले पापीलाई दण्ड दिने र असल काम गर्नेलाई पुरस्कार दिने गरेको सुनेर त राजा भन् धेरै रिसाए किनभने न्याय त राजाबाट मात्र हुन सक्छ । देउताहरूले सबै जातका मानिसहरू पुरुष र स्त्री सबै परम्परागत नियम मानेर बस्ने व्यवस्था निश्चित गरेका थिए । जुनसुकै अवस्थामा पनि समाजमा एउटा प्रथा कायम रहनुपर्छ र

त्यो कुनै अवस्थामा पनि बदलिन सक्तैन । देउताको अवतारका रूपमा धामीहरूले यस्ता नियमहरू लागु गराउँथे ।

त्यसैले रिसाएका जुम्लाका राजाले हुम्लाका धामीहरूलाई पत्रेर दरबारमा ल्याउन भयंकर सैनिकहरू पठाए । अथवा, हुम्लाका धामीहरूले भनेअनुसार विष्णुका अवतारले देउताका अवतारलाई पत्रे ।

‘मेरा प्रजाहरूका बीचमा बस्ने अनुमति तिमीहरूलाई कस्ले दियो ? मेरा प्रजाले चढाएको भेटी लिने अधिकार कस्ले दियो ?’ राजाले धामीहरूलाई हप्काए ।

‘हाम्रा दाजु इन्द्रले हामीलाई हुम्ला पठाएका हुन् । उनले हामीले हुम्लाका जनतामाथि शासन गर्न पाउछौं भनेका थिए ।’ धामीहरूले उत्तर दिए ।

राजा अभै रिसाइरहेको देखेपछि धामीहरूमध्येका एक जनाले आफ्नो शरीरमा चढेका देउताको शक्ति देखाउन मुठीमा जौ हत्केलामै मिचेर कालो पीठो बनाए ।

तर, राजा पनि त विष्णुको अवतार भएकाले शक्तिशाली थिए । उनले पनि मुठीमा जौ लिए र हत्केलैले मिचेर कालो पीठो बनाइदिए ।

‘यस्ता मामुली चालबाजी देखाएर तिमीहरू मलाई चुनौती दिने आँट गर्छौं ?’ राजाले क्रुद्ध भएर सोधे । उनी घमण्डी थिए र धामीहरूले उनीहरू कमजोर र निकम्मा भएको स्वीकार गर्नु भन्ने चाहन्थे ।

अर्का धामीले हत्केलामा एक मुठी जौ लिए र त्यसलाई मिचेर रातो पीठो बनाए । ती घमण्डी राजाले पनि त्यसै गरे । त्यसपछि धामीले हातमा तीलका दाना लिए र हत्केलामै पिसेर तेलको धारा चुहाए । राजाले हाँसेर जुँगामा ताउ लगाए अनि तीललाई हातैले निचोरेर तेल निकाले ।

धामीले एउटा पत्थर हातमा लिएर दैवी शक्ति प्रयोग गरेर धुलो बनाइदिए र राजाले पनि त्यसै गरे ।

जुम्लाका राजाले हुम्लाका धामीलाई हकारे – ‘यस्तो तमासा अति भयो । तिमीहरू देउताका आवाज भएको दाबी गर्न बन्द गर । मसँग नभएको कुनै शक्ति तिमीहरूसँग छैन । तिमीहरूले भेटी लिन र न्याय गर्न पनि छाड !’

तर, धामीहरूले आफ्नो शक्ति देखाउन बाँकी नै थियो । उनीहरूले तामाको ताउलोमा तेल तताए । तेल भक्भकी उम्लेपछि धामीले तलाउको

चिसो पानीजस्तै तन्तनी पिइदिए । राजाले पनि तेलको तातो भाँडो त उठाए, तर पिउने आँट गर्न सकेनन् ।

‘तिमीहरूको शक्ति मेरोभन्दा धेरै छ ।’ राजाले अन्त्यमा हार स्वीकार गरे । ‘तिमीहरू देउताको आवाजका रूपमा हुम्लामा राज गर । म विष्णुको अवतार हुँ । त्यसैले म तिमीहरूको दाजु हुँ । तिमीहरू हुम्लामा मेरो नियम पालन गराऊ । तिमीहरूले नियमअनुसार पुण्य गर्नेलाई पुरस्कार देऊ र पापीहरूलाई दण्ड देऊ । तिमीहरूले कसैलाई पनि व्यभिचार, चोरी गर्न वा कसैलाई धोका दिन नदेऊ !’

‘तपाईँ दाजु हुनुहुन्छ र हामी भाइ हौं ।’ धामीहरूमार्फत् देउताले भने – ‘हामी परम्परागत नियमअनुसार दण्ड र पुरस्कार दिनेछौं । हामी मानसरोवारमा स्नान गर्नेछौं र कैलाश परिक्रमा गरेर पवित्र पर्वतप्रति सम्मान प्रकट गर्नेछौं । हामी आफ्नो हक नपुग्ने केही पनि स्वीकार गर्नेछैनौं ।’

त्यसपछि अहिलेसम्म राजाको नियम लागु हुने जुम्ला विष्णुभूमि कहलाइयो । धामीहरूद्वारा देउताको नियम लागु गराइएको हुम्ला देवभूमिका रूपमा चिनिन्छ ।

Godsland: Devbhumi

Humla is at the top left corner of Nepal. To its north is the Ngari province in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and to its west is Uttarakhand, a state in India. The river Karnali originates in Tibet, flows through Humla, and travels south into India to join the river Ganga. Buddhists, Bönpos and Hindus live here. Great snowcapped peaks, beautiful grasslands and steep mountains are seen in Humla. Some people are farmers, and some are traders who have historically connected the plains of India to the Silk Route that passed through Tibet.

Humla is rich in stories. Every village has sacred spaces where ancestors and gods are worshipped. The Hindus of Humla worship the twelve gods, namely Rampal, Haripal, Ghantapal, Banpal, Madhumpal, Shankhapal, Kalshilta, Gura, Betal, Shuklahansa, Daarhe-Mashto and Dudhe-Mashto. Bhawani, who is their sister, is also worshipped. Others like Lauhasur, Lhango and Harki are nephews of the twelve brothers.

Each village in Humla has shrines for various gods. Big villages like Simikot or Thehe may have more gods than other villages with fewer gods. Each god or goddess is born in human form as a *dhami* shaman. Another person trains to become the interlocutor *dangri*, who speaks the ancient language of the gods. The *dangri* translates the prayers and



wishes of the people for the gods, who take their *dhami* into a trance and listen to prayers. The *dangri* also translates the speech of the gods for the people of Humla.

In the time of gods, before time had become real, the twelve gods heard about the creation of the Mount Kailas and the Lake Manasarovar. They asked their eldest brother Indra, who was the king of the heavens, for permission to visit the sacred pilgrimage sites. They bathed in the holy lake and walked around the holy mountain and sang praises of the Creator. But on the way home, they were captured by the demon of Dangechin. The gods fought the demon's army for a thousand years before defeating him. They threw his head many kilometers away from his body. The soil around Taklakot in Tibet turned red from the demon's blood.

The gods returned to Indra and said, 'We have been hungry and thirsty for a thousand years. Give us food and drink!'

Indra replied, 'Go to Humla. Protect my rule there by punishing evil and rewarding good deeds. So that the people may offer you sacrifices and a part of their harvest, bless them with children and cattle, or make them ill. When they pray to you and offer you food and drink, heal their diseases!'

This pleased the gods. They descended from heaven to Naumule, in Hilsa. After bathing in a holy spring with nine fountains, they danced into Humla to live in various villages. They danced and sang through their *dhamis* and kept the law of Indra. In exchange, the people of Humla sang their praise, offered sacrifices and grains, and promised to be good.

A powerful king ruled over the empire of Jumla, which is to the south of Humla. He was the incarnation of Vishnu. He heard of the miracles being performed in Humla by the *dhamis*, for which the people of Humla made offerings. The half-kilo of rice offered to *dhamis* and *dangris* for making it possible to

talk to the gods also made the king angry because he believed that only a king could collect taxes and accept offerings.

The king became even angrier when he heard that the gods of Humla also rewarded good behavior and punished bad behavior, because justice could come only from the king. The gods made sure that men and women, and people of each caste, lived according to ancient rules. Everybody had a place in the hierarchy of society, which could never change, no matter what happened. As incarnations of the gods, the *dhamis* enforced these rules.

So, the angry king of Jumla sent his fearsome soldiers to arrest the *dhamis* of Humla and bring them to his court. Or, as the *dhamis* of Humla say, Vishnu's incarnation arrested the incarnation of the gods.

'Who gave you permission to live among my people? Who gave you the right to take offerings from my subjects?' the king growled at the *dhamis*.

'Our brother Indra sent us to Humla. He said we could rule over the people of Humla.'

When the *dhamis* saw that the king was still angry, one of them took a fistful of barley and crushed it into black powder to show the power of the god who lived in his body.

But the king was also full of great power as the incarnation of Vishnu. He also crushed barley into black powder with his bare hand.

'You dare challenge me with these simple tricks?' the king roared in anger. He was proud, and he wanted the *dhamis* to say that they were weak and worthless.

Another *dhami* took a fistful of barley and crushed it into red flour. The haughty king did the same. Next, the *dhami* crushed a fistful of sesame seeds until oil flowed from his fist. The king laughed and twirled his moustache, and he also made oil from sesame with his bare fist.

The *dhami* grabbed a rock and crushed it with divine power into dust, but the king also did the same.

‘Enough of these tricks!’ the king of Jumla shouted at the *dhamis* from Humla. ‘You will stop claiming that you are the voice of the gods! You don’t have any power that I don’t have. You will stop accepting offerings and dispensing justice!’

But the *dhamis* hadn’t finished showing their strength. They heated oil in a large copper pot. Once the oil boiled, a *dhami* drank the hot oil like it was water from an ice-cold lake. The king lifted the hot pot of oil, but he didn’t have the courage to drink it.

‘You do have powers greater than mine,’ the king finally accepted defeat. ‘You may rule in Humla as the voices of the gods. I am the incarnation of Vishnu. Therefore, I am your elder. So, you shall keep my laws in Humla. You shall reward good deeds and punish evil deeds according to my laws. You won’t allow anyone to commit adultery or theft, or to deceive anybody.’

‘You are the elder, and we are the younger,’ said the gods through the *dhamis*. ‘We shall reward and punish according to the ancient laws. We shall bathe in Manasarovar and pay our respects to Kailas by walking around the sacred mountains. We shall never accept anything that doesn’t belong to us.’

Forever since then, Jumla has been known as *Vishnubbumi*, where the king’s laws apply. Humla, where the *dhamis* uphold the rules of the gods, is known as *Devbbumi*, or, the land of gods.

बाठा बाजे

हालैसम्म पनि इतिहासका पुस्तकहरूमा राजामहाराजा र तिनीहरूबीचको लडाइँका कथा मात्रै लेखिएका हुन्थे । धनीगरिब, बलियानिर्धा, महिलापुरुष सबैलाई समेट्नेगरी इतिहास लेखिन्नथ्यो । पुराना इतिहासहरूमा राजामहाराजा लड्दा तिनका सेना र गाउँलेहरूलाई सबैले बिर्सन्थे । तर, त्यस्ता युद्धमा मर्ने र मार्ने त सधैं बिचरा सिपाही र गाउँलेहरू नै त हुन्थे !

आजभन्दा करिब दुई सय वर्ष पहिले नेपालको बीचतिर पर्ने गोर्खा राज्यबाट पश्चिम गएको गोर्खाली सेनाले गढवालका गाउँहरूमा आक्रमण गर्‍यो । गढवालको ठीक उत्तरतर्फ हिमालय पर्वतशृंखला काटेर गएपछि पवित्र पर्वत कैलाश अवस्थित छ । खेतीपाती र व्यापारमा निर्भर शान्तिप्रेमी मानिसहरूको गाउँ सिरदांगका वासिन्दा आक्रमणको डरमा थिए । गोर्खालीहरू कुख्यात थिए: उनीहरू अन्न र गाईवस्तु लुट्थे र गाउँ जलाइदिन्थे । तीमध्ये केही सिपाही त युद्धमा मर्नुलाई गौरवको कुरा मान्थे । आफू मर्नबाट डराउँदिन भन्ने देखाउन बित्थामा अर्काको हत्या गर्थे ।

सिरदांगका बासिन्दा रड जातिमध्ये एक बाठा बूढा पनि थिए । उनका धेरै सन्तान थिए जसको उनलाई असाध्यै माया लाग्थ्यो । आफ्ना शाखासन्तानले पछिपछिसम्म आफूलाई बराजुको रूपमा प्रशंसा र पूजा गरून् भन्ने उनलाई चाहना थियो, र त्यसैले उनी सबैलाई बचाउन चाहन्थे । उनका शाखासन्तानले पुस्तौँपुस्तासम्म उनको प्रशंशा गरे उनी देवतानै बन्न पनि के बेर ?

बाठा बूढाको बुद्धिले उनलाई थाहा दियो कि सिरदांगमा भएको मनगो अन्न, उम्दा ऊन र मोटाघाटा भैंडाबाखा र तिब्बतसँगको व्यापारबाट कमाइएको धन लुट्न गोर्खालीहरूले आक्रमण गर्नेछन् ।



‘बाँच्ने हो भने हामी डाँडाको टुप्पामा भएको किल्लासम्म भाग्नुपर्छ,’ बाठा बूढाले गाउँलेहरूलाई भने । ‘गोर्खालीहरू पक्कै आउनेछन् र तिनको लोभ जाति ठूलो छ तिनको क्रूरता त्यतिनै धेरै छ ।’ गाउँलेहरूले आफ्नो सम्पत्ति र परिवारजन बटुले र नजिकैको डाँडाको टुप्पामा भएको किल्लातर्फ कुलेलम ठोके ।

इयाप्प दाही पालेको, घुम्रिएको खुँडा र गैँडाको छालाको ढाल बोकेको गोर्खाली सरदार आफ्ना बर्बर सिपाहीसहित सिरदांग छिन्थे । गाउँ सुनसान थियो । घरहरू चिटिक्क परेका र सुग्घर थिए, तर धन, अन्न वा भैंडाबाखाको नामोनिसान थिएन । यस्सो नजर घुमाएर हेर्दा सरदारले डाँडाको टुप्पामा किल्ला देख्यो र आफ्ना सिपाहीलाई त्यतै हिँड्ने आदेश दियो ।

हतियार नलिईकनै एक लस्कर सिरदांगका मानिस किल्लाको ढोकाबाहिर नजिकैको चिसो मूलको मिठो पानी बोकेर स्वागतकालागि उभिएका थिए । ‘यति माथिसम्म उकालो चढ्दा थाक्नुभयो होला,’ अनुहारमा सौहार्द मुस्कान लिएर उनीहरूले भने र सरदार तथा उसका सिपाहीलाई पानी टक्प्राए । गोर्खालीहरूलाई विषको डर मान्नु पर्दैन भन्ने देखाउन बाठा बूढाले आफैँ तनतनी पानी पिए ।

‘यति टाढासम्म किन आउनुभयो, सरदार ?’ बाठा बुढाले सोधे । ‘तपाईंको घर त एक, डेढ महिना टाढा छ । बिचरी तपाईंकी श्रीमतीलाई कति चिन्ता लाग्दो हो !’

सरदारले शंकालु नजरले बूढालाई हेर्‍यो । ‘म त गोर्खा महाराजको सरदार हुँ । गोर्खा महाराजको साम्राज्य विस्तार गर्न आएको हुँ । तिम्रो गाउँ लुट्न र जलाउन आएको हुँ ।’

‘अनि मारकाट गर्न,’ यौटा सिपाही गर्ज्यो, तर सरदारले आँखा तरेर हेर्नेबित्तिकै खिस्रिक्क परेर चुप लग्यो । त्यो सिपाही न त बुद्धिमान थियो, न बहादुर नै थियो ।

‘लडाइँ भगडा गर्नुपर्ने कुनै कारण नै छैन !’ बाठा बूढाले भने । ‘भिन्न आउनुस्, एक छिन सुस्ताउनुस् । हामी शान्ति मनपराउने मानिस हौं । काटमार टार्न सकिन्छ भने तपाईंलाई जे जति चाहिन्छ हामी राजीखुसी दिन्छौं । हाम्रा देवतालाई काटमार मन पर्दैन ।’

सरदार गजक्क पर्दै खपटे दाँत देखाएर हाँस्यो । कसैले त आफूलाई क्रूर मानिस भनेर चिनेको भन्ने इच्छाले उसले कैयौँ महिला, पुरुष र बालबच्चाको हत्या गरेको थियो । बल्लबल्ल ऊसँग डराउने

मान्छे भेरेर उसलाई खुसी लाग्यो । एकचोटी मरक्क जुँगा मठारेर ऊ किल्लाभित्र छिन्यो ।

एक लहरै गुन्दीमाथि चौरीको उनको राडी ओछ्याइएको थियो । तामाका बडेमान आरीहरूमा भर्खरै पाकेको चिल्लो, तातो मासु थियो । यौटा कुनामा भर्खरै छानेको जाँडले भरिएका गाग्रीहरू थिए । मासु र जाँडले पाहुनाको सत्कार गर्न सुन्दर मुस्कानसहित हट्टाकट्टा टिटाहरू उभिएका थिए ।

सरदारले केही भन्न पाउनु अघि नै उसका सिपाहीले एक सर्को जाँड सुरुप्य पारिहाले अनि खरानीमा पोलेको खसीको कलेजो टोकीहाले । जिब्रो फडकारे अनि सबैले देख्ने गरी घुटुक्क थुक निले ।

'ल, ल, ठिकै छ !' सरदारले पनि राडीमा बस्दै भन्यो । 'जाँड चाहिँ धेरै खाने हैन है ! तल गएर गाउँ लुट्ने छ, यस्सो दुईचार जना काट्ने छ ।'

लोभी गोर्खालीहरू पकापक मासु र जाँड खान थाले । मासुको बोसोले तिनको जुँगा लचप्प भयो अनि जाँडले चिउँडो र दाही भिजायो । एकैछिनमा उनीहरूलाई जाँड लाग्यो ।

किल्लाको पछाडिपट्टि रहेको गोप्य ढोकाबाट सिरदांगका रड मानिसहरू लुसुलुसु भागिरहेका थिए । बूढाबूढी र साना केटाकेटी पहिले भागे, अनि तरुनातरुनी भागे । जब बिहे गरेका महिलाहरूको भाग्ने पालो आयो, उनीहरूले घाँटीमा लगाइरहेको सुन र चाँदीका सिक्काका मालाको छन्छन् सुनेर गोर्खाली सरदार भसंग भयो । आफू बसेको ठाउँबाट बुर्लुक्क उफ्रिएर एकैचोटी किल्लाको ढोकामा पुग्यो ।

'कता भाग्दैछन् हँ सबैजना?' सरदार कुर्लियो ।

बाठा बूढाले मिठो स्वरमा सरदारलाई भने, 'तपाईंहरूको भोक ठूलो छ, अनि तपाईंका सिपाहीलाई अभै तिर्खा लागेकै छ । तपाईंहरूलाई मानमनितो गर्नु हाम्रो गाउँका मान्छेको कर्तव्य बन्छ । भित्र गएर बस्नुस्, अनि अभै मासु र जाँड खानुस् ।'

बाठा बूढाले आफूलाई जिल्ल्याउँदै छन् भन्ने सरदारले सुईको पायो । फर्किएर आफ्ना सिपाहीसँग बसेको भै नाटक गन्यो । जाँडको बटुको मुखैसम्म ल्याएर आफ्नो विश्वासिलो सहयोगीले मात्रै सुन्नेगरि साउती मान्यो, 'बाहिर घुम्न गए भै गर् र सबैजना कता भाग्दैछन् पत्ता लगा !'

उसको सहयोगीले पनि बाहिर घुम्न जानुपरेको नाटक गर्दै किल्लाको ढोका बाहिर गयो । बाठा बूढाले पनि बुझिहाले सरदारले

बुभिसक्यो कि गोर्खालीहरूलाई बूढाले मूर्ख बनाउँदैछन् । बूढा पनि सुटुक्क बाहिर गएर अँध्यारोमा लुके ।

जतिसुकै चनाखो हुन खोजेपनि सहयोगीको पेटभरी जाँड थियो र खुट्टा लर्बराइसकेका थिए । अनि बुद्धि पनि धर्मराइसकेको थियो । सहयोगी गोर्खालीहरूको नजरबाट ट्याक्क ओभेल हुनेबित्तिकै बाढा बूढाले पछाडिबाट आएर एक हातले सहयोगीको घिच्रो अनि अर्काले कछाड समातेर उचाले । फनक्क घुमाएर हावामा फाले । बाँसको खसेको पातभैँ फनन घुम्दै सहयोगी भिरमाथिको अँध्यारोमा बिलायो ।

सरदार भने आफ्नो सहयोगी फर्केला भनेर कुरीरह्यो । एक आरी मासु र एक डबका जाँड खाएर डकान्यो अनि अर्को सहयोगीलाई बाहिर के भयो हेरेर आउन भन्यो ।

बाढा बूढाले दोस्रो सहयोगीलाई पनि त्यसरी नै घिच्रो र कछाडमा समातेर फनन घुमाएर भिरमाथिबाट फालिदिए । हरेक पाँच दस मिनेटमा यौटा गोर्खाली सिपाही बाहिर आउँथ्यो । अनि बूढाले पनि हरेकलाई फनन घुमाउँदै भिरबाट उडाइदिन्थे ।

मध्यरात हुँदा गोर्खाली सरदारले यस्सो किल्लाभिन्न आँखा डुलायो । उसका सबै बलिया, सुरा सिपाही गायब भइसकेका थिए । कोठामा गोर्खालीभन्दा धेरै सिरदांगका रड मानिस थिए । बाँकी रहेका सिपाहीपनि सरदारजस्तै लुते र काँतर थिए । पाहुनाको मानमनितो गर्न खप्पिस शान्तिप्रेमी सिरदांगवासीले कसरी आफूलाई हराइसके भन्ने बुभेपछि गोर्खाली सरदार आत्तिएर यस्सरी ढोकाबाहिर भाग्यो कि बूढाले नठेलीकनै ऊ भिरमाथिबाट आकाशमा उड्यो ।

सरदांग गाउँमुनिको उपत्यकामाथि हावामा गोर्खाली सिपाहीहरू अभैँ कावा खाइरहेका थिए । रातभरि उनीहरू एकअर्कासँग हावामै ठोक्किइ रहे । बिहान घाम उदाउने बेलासम्ममा उनीहरू एकअर्कासँग पूरै जेलिएर हातखुट्टा, दाहीजुँगा, खपटे दाँत, खुँडा र ढालको एक ढिक्को बनेपछि बिस्तारै जमीनमा खसे । बढो मुस्किलले एकअर्काबाट अलगिएर छुट्टिएपछि कोहि हरायो कि भनि सबैलाई पालैपालो गने । डाँडामाथिको सुन्दर सिरदांग गाउँतिर हेर्दा अलिकति सातो फुस्किएको थाहा पाए अनि थरर कामे ।

‘जाँड त मीठै पार्दा रैछन्,’ पहिलो सहयोगीले मसिनो स्वरमा भन्यो । सबैभन्दा पहिलेदेखि हावामा रातभरि कावा खाएर उडेर होला उसको दाही र कपाल दुवैले अहिले सिरदांगभन्दा धेरै टाढा पूर्व गोर्खामा पर्ने उसको घरतर्फ देखाइरहेका थिए ।

‘मासु पनि मिटै थियो नि !’ गोर्खाली सरदारले सबैभन्दा मन मिल्ने साथी गुमाए भँ निन्याउरिएर भन्यो । अनि सबैले लाजले टाउको झुकाएर सिरदांगबाट टाढा बाटो तताए ।

सिरदांगका मानिसहरूले बाठा बूढालाई मीठोमीठो खुवाए, सिरमा सुकिलो नयाँ फेटा गुथिदिए र उनको प्रशंसा गरे । काटमार हुन नदिएर उनले बुद्धिमानी देखाएका थिए । पाहुनाको मानमनितो गरेर गाउँकै इज्जत राखेका थिए । र, गोर्खालीहरूलाई पालैपालो हावामा कावा खुवाउँदै उडाएर बहादुरी देखाएका थिए । आजसम्म पनि उनका शाखासन्तानले उनको प्रशंसा गर्छन् । अभै धेरै मानिसले उनको बुद्धिमानी, बढ्याइँ र इज्जतको प्रशंसा गर्ने हो भने ऊनी एकदिन देवता नै बन्न पनि के बेर ?

The Clever Ancestor

Until recently, history spoke only of kings and their wars instead of recording the stories of everyone, rich and poor, strong and weak, man and woman. In older histories, when two kings fought, the soldiers and villagers were forgotten. But it was the villagers and soldiers who fought and lost their lives.

More than two hundred years ago, an army from Gorkha, in central Nepal, attacked villages in Garhwal, which is many days' walk from Kailas, due south of the Himalayas. There, farmers and traders of a peaceful village called Sirdang were worried about being attacked. The Gorkhas had a bad reputation: they would loot the grains and cattle and burn down villages. Some soldiers even believed that dying in battle was a good idea. They would kill unnecessarily just to remind themselves that they were not afraid to die.

Among the Rung people of Sirdang was a wise old man with many children and grandchildren whom he loved. He wanted to protect his family so that they would remember his good deeds and praise him as their ancestor. If enough of his progeny praised him, he might even become a god someday!

Through his wisdom, he realized that the Gorkhas would attack Sirdang for the abundant grains, fine wool, fat cattle and coins gathered through trade in Tibet.



‘We must flee to the hilltop fort to survive,’ the old man told the villagers. ‘The Gorkhas will come, and their greed is as vast as their cruelty is deep.’ The villagers collected their wealth and families, and fled to a fort at the top of a nearby hill.

A bearded Gorkha commander, carrying a curved sword and a round rhinoceros-skin shield, marched into Sirdang with his cruel soldiers. The village was empty. Although the houses were pretty and clean, there was no grain, gold or cattle in them. The commander saw the fort on top of the hill and took his men there.

A group of unarmed men from Sirdang waited outside the fort with cool, sweet water from a nearby spring. ‘You must be tired after climbing up,’ they said with kind smiles on their faces, and offered water to the commander and his soldiers. The wise old man drank the water first to show the Gorkhas that they didn’t need to fear being poisoned.

‘Why have you come here, commander?’ the old man asked. ‘Your home is a month’s walk away, perhaps more. Your wife must be worried!’

The commander looked at the old man with suspicion. ‘I am the emissary of the king of Gorkha. I expand his empire, and am here to loot and pillage your village.’

‘And kill,’ a soldier growled, but became quiet when the commander glared at him. This soldier wasn’t very intelligent or brave.

‘There is no need for war!’ the old man said. ‘Come inside. Rest for a while. We are a peace-loving people. We’ll gladly give you what you need if we can avoid bloodshed. The gods of our village dislike violence.’

The commander grinned. He had burned many villages and killed many men, women and children to build a reputation for cruelty. Finally, somebody was afraid of him. He twirled his moustache and entered the fort.

A long line of mats and yak-hair blankets had been laid out. Freshly cooked meat glistening with fat waited in copper bowls. Large pots of millet beer sat in a corner. Smiling young men stood ready to serve meat and beer.

Before the commander could say anything, his soldiers sat down and quickly took a sip of beer or bit into a nice piece of roasted goat liver. They smacked their lips and salivated.

‘Alright, alright!’ the commander said. ‘Don’t drink too much, because we still have to loot and plunder.’

The greedy Gorkhas started gobbling down the food. The fat from the meat stained their moustaches and beer dribbled down their beards. Soon, they became drunk.

From a secret door in the back of the fort, the Rung people of Sirdang were quietly escaping one by one. The elderly and the children went first, followed by young men and women. When the wives started leaving, their heavy necklaces of silver and gold coins jangled and alerted the Gorkha commander. He leapt up from his seat and rushed to the door.

‘Where is everyone going?’ he shouted.

The wise old man said politely, ‘Your appetite is large, and your men are still thirsty. My people must show hospitality to their guests. Please go back and enjoy the meat and beer!’

The commander realized that the wise old man was fooling him. He pretended to go back and sit with his men. He picked up his bowl of beer and whispered into it just loud enough for his trusted assistant to hear, ‘Pretend to go outside for a walk and see where everybody is fleeing.’

His assistant pretended he was going for a walk and went towards the gate. Now, the wise old man realized that the commander suspected that he was trying to fool the Gorkhas. He sneaked to the outside of the door and hid in the dark.

And, as alert as the assistant may have wanted to be, the beer in his belly made him sway a little and think a bit slower. Once he was out of sight of the Gorkhas, the wise old man grabbed the assistant with one hand on his neck and another by his waist and flung him into the air, spinning away and over a cliff into the darkness.

Inside, the commander waited for his assistant to return. He ate another bowl of meat and drank another bowl of beer, and finally whispered to another assistant to go outside and check.

The old man grabbed the second assistant by the neck and waist and spun him away over a cliff, sending him flying into the dark. A Gorkha soldier came out every five or ten minutes. The old man grabbed each one and sent him flying into the dark.

Finally, just around midnight, the Gorkha commander looked around the room and saw that his best soldiers had disappeared. There were more Rung men around than Gorkhas. The remaining soldiers were feeble and cowardly, just like the commander. When he realized how the peace-loving and hospitable villagers of Sirdang had cunningly defeated him, the Gorkha commander ran towards the door and jumped with so much force that he sailed right into the dark sky. The old man didn't have to throw him over the cliff at all.

There, in the darkness of the valley below Sirdang, the Gorkha soldiers were still spinning and flying in the air. All through the night, they bumped into each other in midair. Slowly, by sunrise, they fell to the valley as a single clump of limbs, beards, teeth, swords and bellies. They untangled themselves and counted each other to make sure everybody was present. They looked up the hill at the beautiful village of Sirdang and shivered with fright.

‘The beer was good,’ the first assistant said in a quiet voice. He had been spinning in the air for the longest, so his beard and hair now pointed straight towards his home in Gorkha, far to the east of Sirdang.

‘The meat was good, too,’ said the Gorkha commander sadly, as if he had lost a dear friend. Then, heads hanging in shame, they walked away from Sirdang.

The villagers in Sirdang served the wise old man with delicious food, put a fresh white turban on his head and praised him. He had been wise to avoid bloodshed, honorable in doing his duty of hospitality towards outsiders, and brave in spinning and throwing away the Gorkhas. He is praised even today by his progeny. If more people praise his wisdom, cunning, and honor, who knows, he may even become a god!

भोकाएको राक्षस

कथामा कल्पना त गर्न सकिने तर अस्तित्वका सबै प्रमाणहरू नष्ट भइसकेको धेरै पुरानो कुरा हो । नेपालको हुम्ला जिल्लामा पर्ने बाख्र्याङ, न्योनद्राङ, द्राङसोदका बासिन्दाले शाब्दाग भनिने राक्षसको आतंक भोग्नु परेको थिए । उसले आतंक फैलाउने ठाउँ चरनको वरपरको वनलाई मी सोल सा अर्थात् मानव बलि स्थल भनिन्थ्यो ।

त्यस राक्षससँग जादूगरी शक्ति थियो र उसलाई मानिसहरूलाई सताउन असाध्यै मनपर्थ्यो । उसले टान्थ्यो संसारको सही स्वभाव नै अरूलाई सताउनु हो । उसले गाउँभरि टुहुरा बालबालिका र निःसन्तान आमाहरूको रूवावासी फैलाएको थियो । ऊ वर्षालाई बन्द गरिदिन्थ्यो र गाउँलेहरूलाई खेती लगाउने बेला बीउ रोप्न पनि ऊसँग पानी माग्नु बाध्य बनाउँथ्यो । उवाको बाला पाकेका बेलामा असिना पारेर उसले बाली नाश गरिदिन्थ्यो । उसले चौँरी र भैंडाका खुट्टा भौँच्ने वा अफ्नो त्यसभन्दा पनि नराम्रो वस्तुभाउ नै हराउने पारिदिन्थ्यो । दुर्घटनामा मरेको भैंडाको त उन काढ्न हुन्थ्यो, मासु खान हुन्थ्यो तर हरायो भने त साँच्चै नै ठूलै मर्का पर्थ्यो ।

यसैकारणले शाब्दागलाई खुसी तुल्याइराख्न गाउँलेहरूले हरेक वर्ष एउटा आठ वर्षको बालक शाब्दागलाई खानकालागि चरनमा छाडेर जान्थे । त्यसपछि उनीहरू हतार हतार घरमा गएर लुक्थे । शाब्दागले पहिले पैताला, अनि खुट्टा, हातका औँला, हत्केला, पाखुरा र भुँडी गरेर बालकलाई खान्थ्यो । गाउँलेहरू हाड चर्मराएको र मासु च्यातेको आवाज सुन्न नपरोस् भनेर कोसिस गर्थे । शाब्दागले बालकको आँखा एक एक गरेर चुस्नुभन्दा पहिले कान चपाउन्थ्यो । उसले सबैकुरा खाइसकेपछि बालकको रूवाइ बन्द हुन्थ्यो । जब सबै स्वर सुनिन छाड्थ्यो गाउँलेहरूलाई ग्लानि हुन्थ्यो ।



त्यहाँका बासिन्दाले यस प्रकारको आतंक हजार वर्षसम्म वा हजारौँ हजार वर्षसम्म सहेपछि गुरु रिन्पोचे पनि भनिने पद्मसम्भव बाख्र्याङमा प्रकट भए । उनले आफूसँगै आफ्नो खड्ग फुर्वा पनि लिएर आएका थिए । त्यस खड्गले उनले तिब्बत यात्रामा बाटामा पर्ने थुप्रै बस्तीबाट अज्ञानको नाश र अन्धकारको अन्त्य गराउँदै आएका थिए । यी ज्ञानी साधुले बाख्र्याङमा आफैँलाई दिव्य दृष्टिले हेर्दा उनी त्यतिबेला जहाँ उभिएका थिए पहिले पनि त्यही ठाउँमा उभिएको देखे । भविष्यमा अर्को घन्टा, अर्को दिन कुन बेला के हुन्छ भन्ने पनि उनलाई ज्ञान थियो ।

त्यसैले उनले भविष्यलाई आफूमार्फत् व्यक्त हुन दिने विचार गरे र भने — ‘हजुरआमा ! मलाई तीर्खा लागेको छ । पानी खान पाइन्छ होला ?’

घरभित्रबाट एक जना बुढीआमाले कामेको स्वरले उत्तर दिइन् — ‘नाति, ढोकानिरको बाल्टीबाट अलिकति पानी सारेर खाऊ । मेरो मानव आकृति एउटा दुष्टले खोसेर लगेकाले मलाई अरू कसैलाई अनुहार देखाउन लाज लाग्छ ।’

तर, पद्मसम्भवले त यो आफ्नो दिव्य दृष्टिबाट देखिसकेका थिए । त्यसैले उनी मुस्काए र नम्रतापूर्वक भने — ‘केही हुँदैन हजुरआमा ! मलाई भित्र आउन र मैले केहीगर्न सक्छु कि हेर्न दिनुस् ।’ हजुरआमाले पहिले त विरोध गरिन् तर ती सिद्धले उनलाई आफूलाई भित्र बोलाउन मनाए ।

घरभित्रको अँध्यारोमा हजुरआमा भँडाको उनको गलैँचामा चिसो भइसकेको अँगेना नजिकै पल्टेकी थिइन् । उनका लामा कपाल सर्प गुजुल्टिएजस्तै लट्टा परेका थिए । पद्मसम्भवले नजिकैबाट हेरेपछि त्यो कपाल अरू कुनै जीवको भएको थाहा पाए । कपाल त हजुरआमालाई बेरेर अँध्यारोमा बगिरहेको थियो । पद्मसम्भवले कपालको एउटा छेउ समाते र बिस्तारै डल्लो पार्न थाले ।

ठीक त्यति नै बेला पद्मसम्भव बाख्र्याङ, न्योनद्राङ र द्राङसोद तीनैवटा गाउँका थुप्रै घरहरूमा पनि एकैचोटी पसेर मानिसलाई बेरेर उनीहरूको मानव आकार लिएर जाने त्यो कपालको डल्लो बनाउँदै थिए । हरेका घरबाट निस्केको कपालको गुजुल्टोको पछि लाग्दैजाँदा पद्मसम्भवले नदीहरू पार गरे र भिरहरूमा चढे, काँडेदार फाडीहरूमा पिँडुला चिथो-याएर अगाडि बढे अनि गहिरा गल्लीहरू उडेर पार गरे । कसैले घुरेको गहिरो स्वरले जमिन थर्किरहेको देखेपछि त्यसलाई

पछ्याउँदै उनी पहाडहरूबीचको एउटा सानो उपत्यका लुङफुङ पुगे जहाँ उनले भीमकाय शाब्दागलाई देखे । उ आफ्नै गुजुल्टिएका राँ ओछ्याएर र आफ्नै गुजुल्टिएका राँ ओढेर रगत, मासु र चित्कारको सपना देख्दै सुतेको थियो ।

पद्मसम्भव उफ्रेर शब्दागको टाउकोमा पुगे अनि उसको टाउकोमा खड्ग बजाउँदै चिच्याए – 'ब्युँभ, ए पापी, उज्यालोतर्फ ब्युँभ !'

खड्गको तेज र शक्तिले शाब्दाग क्रुद्ध भएर उफ्रियो । उसले आफ्नो मुख आँ गन्यो र पद्मसम्भवलाई निल्यो ।

पद्मसम्भवले शब्दागको पेट चिरे र उसको छातीमा पुगे जहाँ जुधिरहेका ठूला साँढेहरू जत्रो मुटु थियो । उनले मुटुलाई समातेर मर्काए । शब्दागको सास फेर्ने फोक्सो ३०० जना विद्यार्थी अटाउने गुम्बाभन्दा ठूलो थियो । पद्मसम्भवले पहिले एउटा फोक्सो निचोरे अनि अर्को । उनले मिर्गौला, कलेजो र भोका आन्द्रालाई बटारे ।

शाब्दाग पीडाले चिच्यायो । उसले घुँडा टेक्यो र दुखाइ कम गर्न पहिले एउटा खोलाको पानी सबै पियो, त्यसपछि एउटा ताल र अनि ठूलो नदी पियो । तर, पद्मसम्भवले आफ्नो खड्गले उसको अङ्गहरूमा प्रहार गरिरहे । शाब्दागले अन्धाधुन्ध मैदानलाई चिथोरन थालेपछि पहाडै धुजाधुजा हुनथाल्यो । तल उपत्यकामा ढुङ्गा र चट्टानको वर्षा हुनथाल्यो । उसले पद्मसम्भवलाई पेटभित्रै मार्न खोज्यो । उ पीडाले लडीबुडी खेलन थाल्यो र एउटा जङ्गल नै नष्ट गन्यो । तर, उसको पेटभित्र पुगेका सिद्ध भने जोडजोडसँग हाँस्रन थाले र उसलाई भन् बढी दुख दिए ।

शाब्दागले पद्मसम्भवलाई बेहोस बनाउन देवदारको जङ्गलै निल्यो र शत्रुलाई सिध्याउन ठूला ढुङ्गाहरू निल्यो । पद्मसम्भवले शाब्दागलाई सही नसक्नु पीडा दिन उसको पेटभित्रै ढुङ्गाहरूको चुलो बनाएर देवदारुका मुढा बाल्दै ठूलो आगो दन्काए ।

'तँ को होस् ? तँ के चाहन्छस् ?' शाब्दाग चिच्यायो ।

'म पद्मसम्भव हुँ । उज्यालोको वाहक र अन्धकारको विनाशक । निर्दोष बालबालिकालाई खान र यी गाउँलेहरूलाई सताउन छाड्ने हो भने म तेरो पीडा निवारण गर्नेछु ।' पद्मसम्भवले उत्तर दिए ।

'हुन्न, हुन्न, मान्दिनँ ! यो मेरो ठाउँ हो र ती यहाँका परम्परा हुन् । मलाई भेट नचढाउने र आतंकित मानिसहरूले मेरो स्तुति नगर्ने हो भने मेरो केही बाँकी हुनेछैन,' शाब्दाग पीडामा चिच्यायो ।

'उनीहरूले तिमीलाई रगतको साटो दूध र मासुको सट्टा अन्न

चढाउन देऊ । उनीहरू तिमीसँग आतंकित हुनुको साटो तिमीलाई माया र सम्मान गरेर बाँच्न देऊ !' पद्मसम्भवले भने । हारेको र सही नसक्नु पीडाले छटपटाएको शाब्दाग आखिरमा मान्यो । पद्मसम्भव उसको मुखबाट बाहिर निस्के र उसको उपचार गरे । उसको पीडा हरायो । गाउँलेहरूलाई बाँध्ने र दास बनाउने उसको लट्टे कपाल पनि हरायो र गाउँलेहरू मुक्त भए ।

'म मेरा जनतालाई कहिल्यै दुःख नदिने र सधैं उनीहरूको, तिनका सन्तानको, बालीनाली र वस्तुभाउको रक्षा गर्ने प्रतिज्ञा गर्छु,' शाब्दागले वाचा गर्‍यो ।

त्यसका बदलामा पद्मसम्भवले उसलाई आशीर्वाद दिए — 'सुख्खा अन्त्य गर्न वर्षा ल्याऊ, जमिनमा उब्जनी धेरै हुने आशीर्वाद देऊ, निसन्तानलाई सन्तान देऊ । यस भूमिको रक्षकका रूपमा रहनु !'

यस प्रकारले त्यस भयानक दुष्ट शब्दागलाई सिद्ध पद्मसम्भवले तह लगाए । किनभने, राक्षसले पनि बुद्धत्व प्राप्त गर्न सक्छ । उसले रगतको साटो दूध र आठ वर्षको बालकको मासुको साटो रोटीबाट बनेको द्राङ्ग्या भनिने बलि लिन थाल्यो । पीडा र दुःख समाप्त भयो र खुसी र सम्पन्नता सुरु भयो । धेरै शताब्दीपछि त्यस ठाउँको मालिक शाब्दागलाई भिबदाग रिन्पोचे भन्न थालियो र त्यस क्षेत्रका महत्वपूर्ण देउताका रूपमा अहिले पनि सम्मानपूर्वक पूजा गरिन्छ ।

The Hungry Ogre

So long ago in the past that only in stories can we imagine the time, the people of Barkhyang, Nyiondrang and Drangshod in Humla of Nepal lived in terror of an ogre called Shabdag. He haunted the forests around the meadow called the Mi Sol Sa, or the human-sacrifice site.

The ogre had magical powers and a great greed for the suffering of people because he thought that was the true nature of the world. He filled homes with the cries of fatherless children and childless mothers. He stopped the rains and forced the villagers to beg him for water during the season to sow new seeds. He destroyed crops by bringing hailstorms when the ears of the *umma* wheat ripened. He broke the legs of yaks and sheep, or worse, he made them disappear. A sheep that dies in an accident can be fleeced and butchered, but a sheep that is lost is truly a heartbreaking loss.

Therefore, to keep Shabdag happy, the villagers brought an eight-year-old boy each year to the meadow and left him to be eaten by Shabdag. Then they hurried to their homes to hide in fear. Shabdag ate first the feet, then the legs, the fingers, palms, arms and the stomach of the boy. The villagers tried not to listen to the crunch of bones and the tearing of flesh. Shabdag chewed off the boy's ears before sucking out his eyes one by one. But only after he slurped



and swallowed the boy's screams did everything became quiet, then the villagers felt a heavy guilt oppress them.

After a thousand years of this terror, or maybe even a thousand such thousand years, the sage Padmasambhava, also called Guru Rinpoche, found himself in Barkhang. He carried his *phurva* dagger with which he had destroyed ignorance and expelled darkness from many other settlements on his journey towards Tibet. The enlightened mystic had already seen himself in Barkhang in an earlier vision, standing exactly at the spot where he stood now. He knew what would happen in the next moment, and in the next hour and the next day. So he let the question form itself and be expressed through him:

'Grandma! I am thirsty. May I have water?'

From inside the house came an old grandmother's feeble reply, 'Grandson! Pour yourself some water from the *chuzum* bucket by the door. My human shape has been taken away by an ogre, and I am too ashamed to show myself to anybody.'

But Padmasambhava had also seen this in his vision, so he smiled and said gently, 'No matter, grandma! Let me come inside and see if I can help.' And, although the old grandmother protested, the mystic convinced her to invite him inside.

In the gloom of the house the grandmother lay on a sheepskin rug by a hearth that had gone cold. Her hair was long and matted and alive, like a coil of serpents. When Padmasambhava looked closely, he saw that the hair belonged to another creature. The hair strangled the grandmother, and swept away into the darkness. Padmasambhava caught hold of one strand of hair and started rolling it into a ball.

Or, at that very moment, Padmasambhava was standing in a dozen different houses in the three villages of Barkhyang, Nyiondrang and Drangshod, and from each

house he was rolling the magical hair that strangled people and took away their human forms. Following the hair from each house, Padmasambhava crossed rivers and climbed over cliffs, scraped his shins on thorny scrubs and flew over deep gorges. He saw the ground shake subtly with deep snores and followed the sound to finally reach Lungphung, a small valley in the inner mountains where he saw the giant ogre Shabdag. He lay on a large mat of his own coiled and matted hair, and he slept under a blanket of his own coiled and matted hair, and dreamed of more blood and flesh, more screams of terror to bring him joy.

Padmasambhava leapt onto Shabdag's head, brought down his dagger on the ogre's head and shouted, 'Wake up, you cursed creature! Wake up to the light!'

The force and brilliance of the dagger made Shabdag jump up in anger. He opened his jaws wide and swallowed Padmasambhava.

Padmasambhava tore through Shabdag's stomach and climbed to his chest where a heart as large as two fighting bulls was beating angrily. He grabbed the heart and twisted it. Shabdag breathed through a pair of lungs larger than a monastery with three hundred students. Padmasambhava first squeezed one lung, then the other. He twisted the kidneys and spleen, the blameless liver and the hungry intestines.

Shabdag roared in pain. He knelt and drank first a stream, then a lake, and then a large river to take away the pain. But Padmasambhava kept jabbing at the ogre's organs with his dagger. Shabdag desperately scratched at a high meadow, making the mountainside crumble. Boulders and rocks rained into the valley below. He tried to crunch Padmasambhava in his belly. He writhed in pain and destroyed a forest. But the mystic in his stomach only laughed louder and louder.

Shabdag swallowed a forest of pines to knock Padmasambhava unconscious, and he swallowed large boulders to crush his enemy. Padmasambhava arranged the boulders into a stove and lit pine logs to build a large fire.

‘Who are you?’ Shabdag roared. ‘What do you want?’

‘I am Padmasambhava, the bringer of light and expeller of darkness. I will take your pain away if you promise to stop eating innocent children and stop troubling the people of these villages.’

‘No, no, no!’ Shabdag whined. ‘This is my land, and these are our traditions. I am nothing without the offerings and terrified praises from my people.’

‘Let them offer you milk instead of blood, and grains instead of flesh. Let them live with compassion and respect for you instead of fear,’ Padmasambhava said. Defeated and suffering unimaginable pain, Shabdag finally agreed. Padmasambhava flew out from his mouth and healed him from the inside, so that the pain disappeared. The hair that had strangled the villagers and kept them enslaved also disappeared and the villagers were liberated.

‘I promise to never bring suffering to my people and forever protect them, their children and cattle, and their crops,’ Shabdag promised.

In exchange, Padmasambhava blessed him, ‘Bring rain to end droughts, bless the fields with plentiful harvests, and grant children to the childless. Live as the protector of these lands!’

In this manner, the ferocious ogre Shabdag was tamed by the mystic Padmasambhava. Because even a demon can attain enlightenment, the Shabdag began to accept milk instead of blood and a figure of dough, called the Drangya, instead of the flesh of an eight-year-old boy. Pain and misery ended and prosperity and joy began. After many centuries,

the Shabdag – the lord of the land – was respectfully called the Zhibdag Rinpoche, the precious deity of the land where he is still worshipped and respected.

पुचावा सेल्भोड

उहिल्यै जादूको युगमा तिब्बतको डारी प्रान्तको दुर्गम गाउँमा एक जना युवती बस्थिन् । उनको गरिब गाउँ कैलाश पर्वतको छायाँमा थियो । हुन त उनी राजाको किल्लाभन्दा धेरै टाढा बस्थिन् तर उनी सर्वत्र प्रख्यात थिइन् । उनीसँग जादूवाला चराको छाला थियो । उनले त्यो छाला पहिरिएका बेला दुष्ट आत्माहरूसँग लड्न सक्थिन् । उनी पुचावा सेल्भोडको नामले प्रख्यात थिइन् जसको अर्थ चराको छाला लगाउने केटी भन्ने हुन्छ ।

पुचावा सेल्भोडको गाउँमा शासन गर्ने राजा घोडदौडका सौकिन थिए । वर्षैपिच्छे उनले समरकन्द र भुटानसम्मका राजा र वीरहरूलाई आफ्ना घोडासँग प्रतियोगिताकालागि निम्त्याउँथे । भारत र अफगानिस्तानका साम्राज्यहरूबाट कस्ले युद्धकालागि योग्य घोडा पालेका छन् भनेर हेर्न गुप्तचरहरू पनि आउँथे ।

उतिबेला प्रतिद्वन्द्वी राजा र व्यापारीहरू आफ्ना शत्रुलाई हानि पुऱ्याउन बोक्सी र दुष्ट आत्माको मदत लिन्थे । उत्सव र घोडदौडको रक्षाकालागि राजाले पुचावा सेल्भोडलाई बोलाउन दूत पठाए ।

‘राजाले तपाईंलाई किल्लामा बोलाउनु भएको छ ।’

गाउँका बूढापाकासँग सल्लाह गरेपछि पुचावा सेल्भोड किल्लामा जान मन्जुर भइन् । उनले दैवी चराको चम्किलो छाला लगाइन् । उनका खुट्टा लामा भए, उनको घाँटी सुरिलो र लामो भयो तथा उनका पाखुरा फराकिला पँखेटाहरूमा परिणत भए । पँखेटा फड्फाउँदै उफ्रेर छिटै नै आकाशमा पुगिन् र सूर्यलाई छेकिन् । दूत फर्केर आउनुभन्दा ४ दिन पहिले नै उनी राजाको किल्लामा पुगिन् ।

राजाले आदेश दिए — ‘तिमी बोक्सी र राक्षसहरूसँग लड्न सक्छ्यौ । त्यसैले घोडदौड प्रतियोगिता हेर र दुष्ट शक्तिहरूलाई टाढा भगाऊ ।’ पुचावा सेल्भोडले भुकेर राजाको आज्ञा स्वीकार गरिन् ।



घोडदौड हुने दिन सयौं राजाहरू र तिनका हजारौं सिपाहीहरूका साथै भिक्षुहरू, केटाकेटीहरूलगायत गाउँलेहरू पनि जम्मा भए । बाजी थापिए र मदिरा पिइयो । यस्तो बेलामा जब लोभ, रिस र धूर्त विचारहरू पुरुष र महिलाका भिडसँगै बढ्न थाल्छ त्यति नै बेला दुष्टता महिला र पुरुषका मनमा सबैतिरबाट प्रवेश गर्न थाल्छ । दुष्ट आत्मा सफल भएमा साथीहरू लड्न थाल्छन्, दाजुभाइ एक अर्कालाई टगछन्, सन्तानले आमाहरूले भनेको मान्दैनन् र प्रेमीहरू एक अर्कालाई धोका दिन्छन् ।

राजाले पुचावा सेल्फोडलाई भिडको निगरानी गर्न अह्नाएका थिए ।

राजाको किल्लाको शिखरबाट निगरानी गरिरहेकी पुचावा सेल्फोडले दुष्ट आत्माहरू जब भिडमा घुस्न लागेका देखिन् दुष्ट आत्मालाई लिएर यति माथि उड्थिन् कि सूर्यको चमकले ति दुष्ट आत्मालाई सिध्याइदिन्थे । नत्रभने आफ्ना नंग्राहरूले चियोरेर धुजाधुजा पार्थिन् । अनि दर्शकका रूपमा रहेका राजाहरू, सिपाहीहरू, पुरुष र महिलाहरू पुचावा सेल्फोडको जयजयकार गर्थे ।

पुचावा सेल्फोडको उपस्थितिका कारण राजाको घोडदौड अत्यन्त सफल भयो । वर्षेनि राजाको ढुकुटी भन् भन् भरिँदै गयो । आखिरमा किल्ला बहुमूल्य पत्थरहरू, सुन र हस्तीहाडले भरिएर नपोखिउज्जेल भरिइरह्यो । तर, राजाको मनमा नयाँ चिन्ता उत्पन्न भयो – पुचावा सेल्फोड राजा र उनको घोडदौडभन्दा प्रख्यात थिइन् । सम्राट र वीरहरू चराको छाला पहिरिएर राक्षसहरूसँग युद्ध गर्ने उनको एक फलक पाउन कट्याग्रिने घाँसे मैदान र चिसो मरुमूभि पार गरेर आउँथे । धर्तीका कुना कुनासम्म पनि केटाकेटीहरू सुन्दरी पुचावा सेल्फोडको कथा आश्चर्य मान्दै सुन्थे ।

वार्षिक दौड प्रतियोगिताभन्दा केही दिन पहिले राजा भरपेट खाना खाएर निदाउनै लागेका बेला सपनामा एउटी बोक्सी देखा परी । राजाले सोधे – 'के चाहन्छौ?'

'तपाईं जे चाहनुहुन्छ म पनि त्यही चाहन्छु' बोक्सीले भनी – 'त्यो घमण्डी पुचावा सेल्फोडलाई सिध्याउन मलाई मद्दत गर्नुस् । म तपाईंको घोडदौडलाई दुष्ट आत्माहरूबाट रक्षा गर्ने वाचा गर्छु ।'

जब राजा बिउँफे उनले देब्रे हत्केलामा चकमकको ढुङ्गा पाए । उनले बोक्सी साँच्चै नै आएकिरहिछ भन्ने बुफे ।

घोडदौडको दिन पुचावा सेल्फोड राजाको किल्लाको छानामा चढिन् र चराको छाला राखेको भोलामा हात हालिन् । तर, त्यसमा

त खरानीमात्र भेटियो । कसैले उनको चराको छाला पोलेर खरानी बनाइदिएको रहेछ । यसपछि उनको जादू गर्ने शक्ति पनि गयो । उनले आश्चर्य मान्दै चारैतिर हेरिन् । राजा मुस्कुराई रहेका देखेर उनलाई डर लाग्यो ।

भिड उभिएको जमिनमुनि एउटा खैलाबैलाजस्तो सुनियो र एउटी कुरूप बोक्सीको आकार देखापऱ्यो । हावामा नराम्रो कुहिंगन्ध फैलियो । पुचावा सेल्भोड किल्लाभिन्न पस्न खोजिन् तर बोक्सीले उनलाई किल्लाको छानाबाट खसालेर मुटुमा हिकाउँदै भुइँमा लडाई । उसले पुचावा सेल्भोडको छातिबाट धड्कँदै गरेको मुटु खोसी ।

‘म तँलाई मर्न पनि दिन्नं पुचावा सेल्भोड !’ आतंकित भिडमाथि चक्कर लगाउँदै बोक्सीले अट्टहास गरी । ‘तीन वर्षसम्म तैले मेरा आफन्तलाई मारेकी थिइस् । म तेरो मुटु तेस्रो वर्षमा खानेछु । त्यतिन्जेलसम्म तैले कल्पनै गर्न नसकिने पीडा भोग्नेछेस्,’ उडेर जानुभन्दा पहिले बोक्सीले भनी ।

घाम डुबेपछि सबै जना भोजकालागि साथीहरूसँग गए अनि पुचावा सेल्भोड पीडाले छटपटाउन थालिन् र देउताहरूसँग सहायता मागिन् । तीन वर्षदेखि उनले दुष्टात्मासँग गरेको लडाइँ देखेका एक जना युवा धनुर्धारीले उनको पीडा र असहाय पुकारालाई बेवास्ता गर्न सकेनन् ।

‘आकाशकी राजकुमारी !’ पुचावा सेल्भोडका सामु आदरपूर्वक भुकेर उनले भने – ‘मलाई भन्नुस्, म तपाईँको पीडा कसरी हरण गर्न सक्छु ?’

‘बोक्सीले मेरो मुटु लगेकी छे तर मलाई तीन वर्षसम्म मर्न पनि नदिने भनेकी छे । राजाले मेरो चराको छाला र यसको जादू पोलिदिए । मेरो मुटु बोक्सीको हातबाट फिर्ता नभए म मर्नेछु ।’ पुचावा सेल्भोडले भनिन् । उनले युवा धनुर्धारीलाई बोक्सीकै मुटु पनि कहाँ लुकेको छ भन्ने रहस्य बताइन् ।

युवा धनुर्धारीले पुचावा सेल्भोडको मुटु निकालिएको वर्ष, महिना दिन र घन्टा कण्ठ बनाए र खाड रिन्पोचे पर्वतको दक्षिणतिर दौडे । एक सातासम्म उनले हिउँका पर्खाल चढे र हिउँले जमेका तलाउहरू हुँदै हिँडे । रातका बेला हिउँ चितुवाहरूले उनलाई खान सकिन्छ कि सकिँदैन भनेर उनको अनुहार सुँध्ये । तर ती बहादुर धनुर्धारीको दृढ निश्चयले गर्दा सबै प्रकारका दुर्भाग्य टाढा भाग्थे ।

एक सातापछि देवदारको जङ्गलमा एक साँभ उनले चौँरीको उनको पाल देखे । उनलाई घोडदौडको दिनको दुर्गन्धको सम्झना भयो । उनले आफू बोक्सीको पालको सामु आइपुगेको थाहा पाए ।

‘आमा !’ धनुर्धारी त्यहीँ उभिएर चिच्याए – ‘आमा ! म तपाईँको छोरा । म घर फर्केँ आमा !’

पालबाट एउटी महिला बाहिर निस्की । ऊ एक मिनेट जिल्ल परी । उसलाई उसको छोरा छ कि छैन भन्ने पनि सम्झना छैन जस्तो लाग्थ्यो ।

‘मैले कहिल्यै केही जन्माएकी छैन !’ भन्दै एक्कासि धनुर्धारी भएतिर उफ्री ।

‘आमा म तपाईँको छोरा हुँ!’ धनुर्धारीले दोहो-याए ।

बोक्सी उनको अनुहारभन्दा एक इन्च अघि आएर उनका आँखामा हेर्न थाली । उसले ऊ सँधैँ नै कसैलाई मार्ने र रगत खाने दुष्ट आत्मामात्रै थिई वा कुनै बेला आमा पनि भएकी थिई भन्ने सम्झन सकिन ।

‘तिमी मेरो छोरा हौ भने आऊ र तिम्रो छाती फुटेर मुटु र कलेजो बाहिर ननिस्कूञ्जेल मेरो दुध खाऊ ।’

‘हस, आमा !’ भन्दै धनुर्धारीले सानो बच्चाले जस्तै आँखा चिम्ल गरेर सन्तुष्टिको आवाज निकाल्दै बोक्सीका दुध चुस्न थाले ।

बोक्सीले पहिले त धनुर्धारीको मुटु कलेजो मन्द आगोमा पोलेर त्यसमा नुन छर्केर साँभमा खान र पहाडहरूमा सूर्यास्त भएको हेर्दै दाँतमा अड्केका मासु कोट्याउँदा कति मजा होला भन्ने कल्पना गर्न थाली । तर, जब धनुर्धारीले सन्तुष्ट बालकले जसरी पहिले दिनभर, त्यसपछि साता, महिना र वर्षभर दुध चुसी रहे अनि त बोक्सीले आफू साँच्चैँकी आमा र धनुर्धारी उसैको छोरो भएको टान्न थाली र उसका आँखा रसाए ।

धनुर्धारीले बोक्सीकालागि दाउरा खोजिदिने, पानी ल्याइदिने गर्न थाले भने बोक्सीले पनि खाना पकाएर छोरालाई स्नेहपूर्वक खुवाउन थाली । धनुर्धारी सिकार खेल जाँदा बोक्सी उसलाई केही नराम्रो नहोस् भनेर आकाशबाट नियाल्न थाली । उनी जता गए पनि आफ्नो धनु र वाण लिएरै जान्थे र बोक्सीले उनका वाणहरू तिखा र सोभा बनाउन मद्दत गर्थी । उनीहरू लामो हिउँदभर पालभित्र सँगै बसे भने वसन्तमा पुतलीहरू देखापर्न थालेपछि बाहिर घाममा बसेर कुराकानी गरे । आमा हुनुको हर्ष र मान्छेको सङ्गतले बोक्सीको रूप पनि हेर्न

सकिने भयो । दोस्रो र तेस्रो हिउँद बितेर तेस्रो वसन्त पनि आयो । 'राजाले अबको दुई दिनमा घोडदौड आयोजना गर्नेछन्,' धनुर्धारीले मनमनै हिसाब गरे ।

उनले बोक्सीको पालको वरपरको वनमा खोजी गर्दा देवदारुको रूखको टुप्पामा भँडाको भुँडीबाट बनाइएको एउटा भोला भुन्डाइएको फेला पारे । यो भित्रबाटै धड्किरहेको थियो । उनले पुचावा सेल्भोडले भनेको सम्भे – भोलामा बोक्सीको मुटु छ !

त्यो रात धनुर्धारीले मस्त निद्रामा घुरेर सुतेको बहाना गरे तर उनको मनमा भने हलचल मच्चिएको थियो ।

'छोरा, उठ !' बोक्सीले भोलिपल्ट बिहानै भनी । उसले उनलाई एउटा बाल्टी दिई र 'सफा पानी लिएर आऊ !' भनी । 'यसलाई पकाउनुभन्दा पहिले म राम्ररी सफा गर्छु ।' एउटा राम्रो कचौराभित्र एउटा मुटु बिस्तारै चलिरहेको थियो । मुटुको वरपर मलिनो उज्यालो देखेर त्यो पुचावा सेल्भोडको मुटु हो भन्ने धनुर्धारीले थाहा पाए ।

'हस् आमा !' धनुर्धारीले विनयपूर्वक भने र बाल्टी लिएर खोलातिर दौडे । भँडाको भुँडीबाट बनेको देवदारुको रूख पाल र खोलाको बीचमा पर्थ्यो । उनले हिँडाइको गति नरोकीकन भँडाको भुँडीबाट बनेको भोलाभित्रको मुटुमा वाण प्रहार गरे । फरक्क फर्क र अरू दुईवटा वाण त्यो मुटुमा हाने अनि पालतिर दौडे ।

पालको बीचमा एउटा तीखो छुरी लिएर बोक्सी पुचावा सेल्भोडको मुटु भएको ठाउँतिर घिस्री रहेकी थिइ । बोक्सी पीडाले छटपटाउँदै फर्केर उनलाई घृणाले हेरी ।

'तँ मेरो छोरो हैनस् !' बोक्सी गर्जी । उसको हातको छुरी काम्यो । धनुर्धारीले पुचावा सेल्भोडको मुटु बोक्सीले नभेट्टाउने ठाउँमा पुऱ्याए । बोक्सीका दाँतहरू उसका मुखबाट भरे, उसको कपाल पनि ऊ घिस्रिएको ठाउँमै भऱ्यो । उसका छाला चाउरिए र स्तनबाट दुध सुक्यो ।

'तिमी पनि मेरी आमा हैनौ !' धनुर्धारीले बिस्तारै भने । मध्याह्न हुँदा नहुँदै भँडाको भुँडीको छालाले बनेको भोलामा रगत सुक्यो र बोक्सीको मुटु चलन छाड्यो । सास बन्द भएपछि बोक्सी भयानक गर्जन गरेर मरी । धनुर्धारीले पुचावा सेल्भोडको मुटु समातेर पर्वत पर्वत डारीतिर दगुरे ।

धेरै टाढा, राजाको किल्लामा बितेका तीन वर्षदेखि गुञ्जिएको पीडाले रोएको स्वर एकाएक रोकियो । बोक्सीको मृत्युसँगै पुचावा

सेल्भोडको पीडा समाप्त भयो र उनको जादूको शक्ति पनि फर्क्यो । उनी पाहुनाहरूको स्वागत गरिरहेका राजाका सामु पुगिन् । पुचावा सेल्भोडको अनुहारमा क्रोध देखेर राजा काम्न थाले । ती सुन्दरी नारीले एकपटक फेरि आफ्नो भोलामा हेरिन् । त्यहाँ खरानीको साटो उनको चम्किलो जादूवाला चराको छाला थियो ।

बैगुनी राजालाई टुक्राटुक्रा पारेपछि राजाको ढुकुटीको छत फुटाएर चमत्कारी चरा पुचावा सेल्भोड पर्वतहरूतिर उडिन् । युवा धनुर्धारी उनको मुटु लिएर उनी भएतिरै हतारिएर आइरहेका थिए भन्ने उनले थाहा पाइसकेकी थिइन् ।

Puchawa Selzong

In the age of magic, a young woman lived in a remote village in Ngari Prefecture of Tibet. Her poor village was in the shadows of Mount Kailas. Although she lived far from the king's fort, she was famous throughout Tibet. She possessed the skin of a magical bird. When she wore the skin, she became a heavenly bird that could fight evil spirits. She was known as Puchawa Selzong, or, *the girl who wore the skin of a bird*.

The king who ruled over Puchawa Selzong's village was fond of holding horse races. Every year, he invited brave men and powerful kings from as far away as Samarkand and Bhutan to race against his horses. Spies from empires in Afghanistan and India also attended to see who raised the best warhorses.

In those days, rival kings and merchants sought the help of witches and evil spirits to harm their enemies. To protect the festivals and the races, the king sent a messenger to Puchawa Selzong.

'The king wants you at his fort,' the messenger said. After consulting with the village elders, Puchawa Selzong agreed to travel to the king's fort. She put on the shimmering skin of the heavenly bird. Her feet grew talons, her neck became slender and sleek, and her arms changed into broad wings. With a mighty leap and flapping of her wings she



reached the sky and blocked out the sun. She reached the king's fort four days before the messenger returned.

'You can fight witches and demons, so you will watch over the races and keep away evil forces,' the king commanded. Puchawa Selzong bowed obediently.

On the day of the race, a hundred kings and thousands of soldiers gathered with villagers, monks and children to watch the races. Bets were made and liquor was drunk. At such times, when greed, anger and cunning thoughts multiply in a crowd of men and women, evil creeps out from every corner and enters the hearts of men and women. When evil triumphs, friends fight, brothers steal from brothers, children disobey their mothers, and lovers think of betraying each other.

But the king had asked Puchawa Selzong to watch over the crowds. When evil spirits tried to enter, Puchawa Selzong saw them from her place on top of the roof of the king's fort. She would quickly don the magical bird-skin and swoop down from the sky. She would pick up an evil spirit and fly so high that the brightness of the sun would chase it away. Or, she would tear it apart with her talons. The kings, soldiers, men and women in the audience would cheer for Puchawa Selzong.

The king's races became very successful because of Puchawa Selzong's presence. Year after year, the king's treasury grew richer and richer, until his fort bulged outward at the walls from the weight of the precious stones, gold and ivory in his stores. But a new worry ate away at the king's heart: Puchawa Selzong was more famous now than the king or his races. Emperors and brave men traveled across frozen grasslands and cold deserts to catch a glimpse of the quiet maiden who wore the bird-skin to battle demons. Amazed young children in the farthest corners of the earth heard stories about the beautiful Puchawa Selzong.

As the king dozed off after a large meal a few days before the annual race, a witch appeared to him in his dreams. ‘What do you want?’ the king asked her.

‘I want the same thing that you want,’ the witch said. ‘Help me destroy the arrogant Puchawa Selzong, and I promise to protect your races from other witches and evil spirits.’

When the king awoke, he found a flint-stone and steel in his left fist. He understood that the witch had really visited him.

On the day of the race, Puchawa Selzong climbed to the roof of the king’s fort and reached into her bag for the bird-skin. But she found only ashes in the bag. Someone had burned her bird-skin and, with it, taken away her magic. She looked around puzzled and afraid until she saw the king smile.

From the shadows under the feet of the crowd a foul murmur rose as a sound and solidified midair as the outlines of an ugly witch. A strong, rotten smell filled the air. Puchawa Selzong tried to escape into the fort, but the witch plucked her off the roof of the fort, tore out her beating heart, and cast her down to the ground.

‘I will not let you die yet, Puchawa Selzong!’ the witch cackled as she flew round and round above the terrified crowd. ‘For three years you have hunted my people. I will eat your heart on the third year. But, until then, you will suffer in unimaginable pain,’ the witch said before flying away.

When the sun set and everybody went away to feast with their friends, Puchawa Selzong cried in pain and asked the gods for help. A young archer who had watched her fight evil year after year couldn’t ignore her cries of pain and helplessness.

‘Princess of the skies,’ he knelt before Puchawa Selzong with respect. ‘Please tell me how I can take your pain away!’

‘The witch has my heart, yet she won’t let me die. The king burned my bird-skin, and with it my magic. Unless my heart is returned from the witch, I will die.’ She brought the

young archer's ear close to her mouth and told him the secret about where the witch's heart was hidden.

The young archer memorized the year, month, day and hour that the witch had taken Puchawa Selzong's heart and ran towards the towering mountain to the south of Kang Rinpoche. He walked for a week, climbing walls of ice and wading through frozen lakes. At night, snow leopards sniffed his face to see if they could eat him. But the brave archer's heartbeat was strong with purpose, and that scared away all misfortune.

A week later, in an opening in a pine forest, the archer saw a tent of yak wool. He remembered the smell from the day of the race and realized that he was before the witch's tent.

'Mother!' the archer shouted from where he stood. 'Mother! I am your son! I have returned home!'

A woman came out from the tent. She looked puzzled for a minute. It seemed she couldn't remember if she had a son or not.

'I have never given birth!' she said suddenly, taking a long stride towards the archer.

'Mother!' the archer repeated, 'I am your son!'

The witch hovered an inch away from his face and looked into his eyes. She couldn't remember if she had always been an evil spirit that killed and drank blood, or if she had once been a mother.

'If you are my son, come and drink my milk until your heart and lungs burst in your chest!' she challenged.

'Yes, mother!' the archer said. He took the witch's bared breast and closed his eyes like a baby with its mother. The witch first thought of how much fun she would have skewering the archer's heart and roasting it over a low fire, rubbing rock-salt on the cooked flesh, and eating it in the evening, picking meat from her teeth as she watched the sun set over the mountains.

When the archer kept suckling like a satisfied child first for an entire day, then for a whole week, then for a month and a year, the witch's eyes became wet with tears and she became convinced that she was indeed the archer's mother, and the archer indeed her son.

The archer collected firewood and fetched water for the witch, and the witch cooked for her son and fed him lovingly. When he went out to hunt, the witch watched over him, making sure that no harm came to him. He carried his bow and arrows everywhere, and the witch helped him keep his arrows sharp and straight. They sat together in their tent through the long winters, and when the first butterflies appeared in the spring, they sat out in the sun and chatted. The happiness of motherhood and human company made the witch bearable to look at. The second and third winters passed, and the third spring approached. 'The king will hold his race in two days,' the archer told himself.

He searched the forest around the witch's tent and found a pouch made of sheep-stomach hanging from a high branch on a pine tree. It was beating from within. He remembered what Puchawa Selzong had told him: the bag had the witch's heart!

The archer pretend to sleep soundly that night, but his mind was in turmoil.

'Wake up, son!' the witch said the next morning. She gave him a bucket. 'Fetch some clean water,' she said. 'I will clean this before cooking it!' In a pretty ceramic bowl a heart was beating steadily. The archer knew from the soft light around the heart that it belonged to Puchawa Selzong.

'Yes, mother!' the archer said obediently, took the bucket and ran towards the spring. The pine tree with the sheep-stomach bag was between the tent and the spring. Without breaking his stride, the archer shot an arrow through

the beating heart inside the sheep-stomach bag. He turned right around, shot two more arrows into the heart, and raced towards the tent.

In the middle of the tent, with a sharp knife, the witch was crawling towards Puchawa Selzong's heart. She twisted with pain to turn to look at him with hatred.

'You are not my son!' she growled. The knife in her hand shook. The archer quickly pulled Puchawa Selzong's heart away from her reach. The witch's teeth fell from her mouth; her hair fell on the ground where she crawled. Her skin wrinkled and her breasts ran dry of milk.

'And you are no mother of mine!' the archer said quietly. Just before noon, the witch's heart bled dry in the sheep-stomach bag and stopped beating. The witch died with a horrifying grunt as the breath of life escaped. The archer grabbed Puchawa Selzong's heart and raced away from the mountains towards Ngari.

Far away, in the king's court, the cries of pain that had been ringing out for the past three years suddenly stopped. With the witch's death, Puchawa Selzong's pain had ended, and her magic had been restored. She appeared before the king, who was entertaining his guests. The king trembled when he saw the fierce look on Puchawa Selzong's face. The beautiful maiden once again reached into her bag, and there, instead of ashes, was her shimmering, magical bird-skin.

After tearing the ungrateful king into little pieces, and after ripping out the roofs of the king's treasury and scattering his wealth all over Tibet, the magical bird that was Puchawa Selzong raced away towards the mountains. She knew that a young archer was hurrying towards her, carrying her heart.

About the book

Folk Gods: Stories from Kailas, Tise & Kang Rinpoche emerged out of a three-year project designed and led by the India China Institute (ICI) at The New School in New York City and based on collaboration between The New School and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). It is the product of a collaborative endeavor with ICIMOD's Kailash Sacred Landscapes Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI), a transboundary conservation and development initiative working to strengthen regional cooperation among China, India and Nepal.

Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Sagar Lama, Sheetal Aitwal and Tshewang Lama (Chakka Bahadur) collected and retold stories from Humla and Darchula districts in Nepal. Himani Upadhyaya collected stories from the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand state in India, with the support and guidance of Shekhar Pathak. Kelsang Chimee collected stories in the Ngari Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region in China, with participation from Kunga Yishe.

Additional stories and materials, including photographs, maps, audio recordings and other related information, are publicly available on the India China Institute's website as part of their Sacred Himalaya Initiative, a three-year Luce Foundation funded project exploring religion, nature and culture in the Himalayas. Electronic versions of each language may be downloaded free of cost for personal or educational use from the ICI website at: www.indiachinainstitute.org/sacred-landscapes-book/ and from ICIMOD's website at: lib.icimod.org/record/32580

Mortal Gods

Story by Gokul Singh Tatwal in *Himalayan Dipti*, 28 September, 1987.
Sourced and translated into English by Himani Upadhyaya.

The Clever Ancestor

Collected in Sirdang, Uttarakhand, India by Himani Upadhyaya.

Battle of Brothers

Narrated by Jagdish Singh Hyanki, Chaudans, Uttarakhand, India.
Collected and translated into English by Himani Upadhyaya.

The Fall of the Demoness

Narrated by Dabbale Pariyar of Thehe, Humla, Nepal. Collected by Prawn Adhikari.

Godsland: Devbhumi

Based on conversations with *dhamis* Man Bahadur Shahi, Tul Bahadur Shahi and Suvarna Roka of Humla, Nepal. Collected by Prawn Adhikari.

The Hungry Ogre

Narrated by Phuntsok Dorjee, Nyimatang, Humla, Nepal. Collected and translated into English by Sagar Lama.

Puchawa Selzong

Narrated by Dawa Sangbu, Chugyang Village, Tibet Autonomous Region, China. Collected and translated into English by Kelsang Chimee.

Three Good Princes

Narrated by Grandpa Drudi, Hor Xiang, Purang County, Tibet Autonomous Region, China. Collected and translated into English by Kelsang Chimee.

Seven Horses in a Forest

Bönpo legend. Collected and translated into English by Kelsang Chimee.

Mother's Grief

Narrated by Trashi Pingtso from Purang County, Tibet Autonomous Region, China. Collected and translated into English by Kelsang Chimee.

About ICIMOD

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional knowledge development and learning centre serving the eight member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – and based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Globalisation and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people.

ICIMOD aims to assist mountain people to understand these changes, adapt to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while addressing upstream-downstream issues. We support regional transboundary programmes through partnership with regional partner institutions, facilitate the exchange of experience, and serve as a regional knowledge hub. We strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence.

Overall, we are working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream now, and for the future.

Within its Transboundary Landscapes Programme, Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is a flagship transboundary collaborative initiative between China, India, and Nepal that has evolved through a participatory, iterative process among various local and national research and development institutions within these countries. The Kailash Sacred Landscape represents a diverse, multi-cultural, and fragile landscape. The programme aims to achieve long-term conservation of ecosystems, habitats, and biodiversity while encouraging sustainable development, enhancing the resilience of communities in the landscape, and safeguarding and adding value to the existing cultural linkages between local populations across boundaries. The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is supported by partner organizations: Department for International Development (DFID) - UK Aid, and Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung/Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

ICIMOD



About India China Institute (ICI)

The India China Institute (ICI) is based at The New School, a university in New York City. Established in 2005, ICI supports research, teaching and discussion on India, China and the United States, with special focus on making comparisons and understanding interactions among the three countries as well as their joint impact on the rest of the world. Through fellowships, courses, public events, publications, and collaboration with a wide range of institutions around the world, ICI promotes academic and public understanding of issues of contemporary relevance. This publication is part of ICI's Sacred Landscapes and Sustainable Futures in the Himalaya Initiative, funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, The New School and ICIMOD. For three years (2014-2017), ICI worked with a team of scholars, policy makers and artists from India, China, Nepal and the United States to study relationships between religion and ecology, sacred landscapes, pilgrimage routes and ecological, economic and cultural sustainability and resilience in the Himalayas.

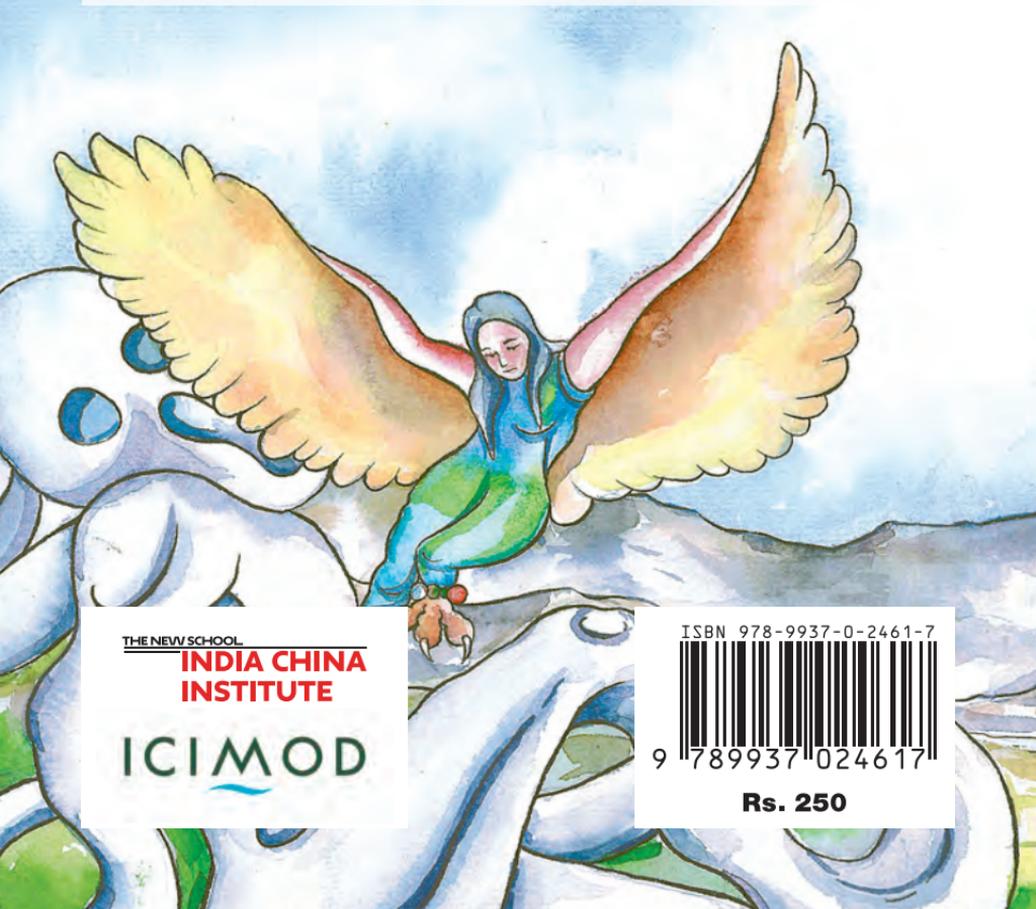
About The New School

The New School is a university founded in New York City in 1919 by a small group of prominent American intellectuals and educators, amongst them Charles Beard, John Dewey, James Harvey Robinson, and Thorstein Veblen, who were frustrated by the intellectual timidity of traditional colleges and envisioned a new kind of academic institution, an innovative college where faculty and students would be free to honestly and directly address the problems facing society. With over 135 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, The New School offers a more creatively inspired, rigorously relevant education than any other.



This collection of folktales explores the ways in which people from the Kailas region have understood their relation to their land and ancestors. For thousands of years, this region has been divided into different nations and religions, but we still share the same air and waters, and still worship the same lakes and mountains.

कैलाश क्षेत्र वरपरबाट संकलन गरिएका यि कथाहरूले यहाँका बासिन्दाहरूले जमिन र पुर्खाहरूसँगको नाता कसरि बुभ्केकाछन् भन्ने केलाउँछ । कैलाश वरपरका मानिसहरू विभिन्न राष्ट्र र धर्ममा विभाजित भएपनि उनीहरूले सास फेर्ने हावा यौटै हो, पिउने पानी यौटै हो । उनीहरूले पूजा गर्ने ताल र पर्वत यौटै हुन् ।



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