

Grandma's Stories ~ दादी माँ की कहानियाँ ~ नानि हंजु कथु ~ M.K.Raina

Folk Tales of Kashmir

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[Content Source: kâshîr talmîh & kâshîr lûkû kathû ~ Publications of J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages. Transliteration & Re-written for Children by M.K.Raina]



Note : Main aim of this work is to bring old Classic Kashmiri literature closer to our younger generations. Stories reproduced in Kashmiri language in this series are written in Devanagari-Kashmiri Script to reach those Kashmiris who are not well versed with the Nastaliq Script. And those written in English and Hindi are meant to reach those people who can't read Kashmiri. This will be a way to reach our rich Kashmiri literature to people outside Kashmir. It may be noted here that J&K Academy's works are already published in Nastaliq Script and need not be reproduced in that script again.

- M.K.Raina



Folk Tales of Kashmir

dyànath Honesty



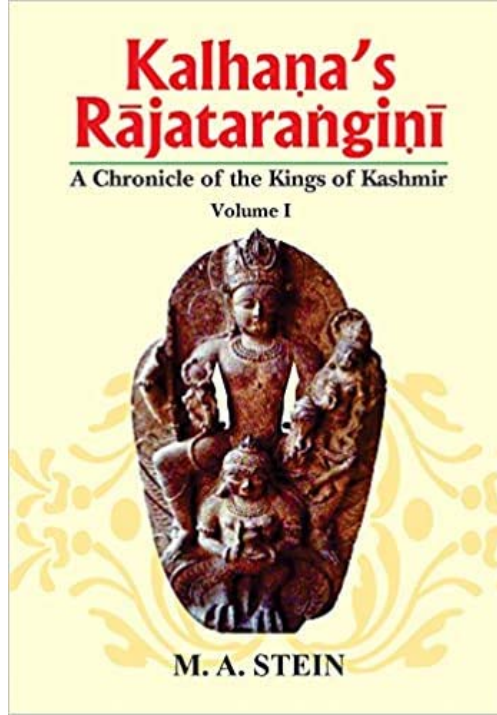
It was Raju's birthday today. He had invited one of his friends on dinner. Grandma was also there on the dining table and so were all parents. After the dinner, they accompanied Grandma to her room for the story. Raju's friend was there too. He had stayed back with the permission of his parents. Grandma asked him his name. His name was Kalhan.

"So you are also Kalhan. We already have one Kalhan here. Kalhana is a famous name in the Kashmir's history. Do you know who he was?" Grandma asked Kalhan.

"Yes Kàkanì Jígrì. I have read a little in books and my parents have also told me about him. Kalhana was a historian. He lived in 12th century and wrote Rajatarangini, the historical chronicle of Kashmir." Said Kalhan.

"Do you know in which language Kalhana wrote Rajatarangini?" Asked Grandma again.

"I don't know. I did not go into those details", said Kalhan.



"OK. Let me tell you. Kalhana wrote it in Sanskrit verse. It has about 8000 verses, divided into 8 books, called Tarangas", said Grandma, "and that is enough for you at this age. Let us start today's story now. Today's story is *dyànath*. *dyànath* means honesty".

Dapaan, in olden times, there lived a poor man called Bula. Bula had a big family. Being poor, he was not able to make his both ends meet. This Kashmiri proverb fitted like a tee on him '*lamàn ôs ràdas tû tshôtàn òsús hònz, hònzas díyíhè drasû tû tshôtàn òsús ràd*'.

"What is that Grandma? Can you explain it? What is *hònz* and what is *ràd*?" Asked Kalhan.

Grandma explained, "Normally *hònz* and *ràd* are used for cloth and clothes but here it refers to his poverty. If he managed one thing, he had to forget other. His income was much less than his expenditure."

At last Bula thought of leaving his village for good. He went to another place, his family was with him. They were dead tired and hungry but had nothing to eat. His children were obedient to him. Wind was blowing. They camped under the shade of a big tree.

Bula looked at the tree above. He saw a small but coloured and beautiful bird sitting on a branch. The bird looked frightened because of the pressure of winds. Bula said to one of his sons, "Please give me the knife." Son pulled a knife from a bag and gave it to his father.

"Oh God! Was he going to kill the bird?" Asked Kalhan.



"Listen carefully, you will know it." Said Grandma

Bulla started sharpening the knife. He said to his second son, "Can you get some wood for fire." He obliged. Poor man said to his third son, "Come on, make a fire place here." He did. Then he said to his wife, "Lit the fire and put a pot over it." His wife said, "Have you gone crazy? You have nothing to cook, why this drama?"

Bird above was witnessing all this. Bulla, pointing to the bird above, said to his wife, "Don't you see, God has sent us a beautiful bird to eat. It will suffice us for the breakfast." His wife had never seen such a beautiful bird in her life."



"Did he kill the bird?" Babloo asked

"No, he did not", said Grandma.

The bird thought "These people have a perfect understanding between them. Even if I fly away, they will catch me and get me back." In a moment, with the grace of God, it started speaking like a human. It said, "What will you get by killing me? I am not even a Chhataang of meat and you are five people."

"What does Chhataang mean Grandma?" Asked Pinki.

"Chhataang was a measure of weight in recent past. A Chhataang is one fourth of a Paaw, Paaw is one fourth of a Seer, and Seer is slightly less than a Kilogram of modern times. A Chhataang is equal to 58 grams, to be precise", said Grandma, "Now listen what happened."

The bird continued, "I will tell you something of your interest. Right on the tree next to this tree, there is a crow's nest. The crow has collected and hidden many things in its nest. You can get the nest down and collect the precious things. The treasure will suffice you for your entire life." Saying this, the bird flew away.



Bula said to his eldest son, "Will you climb that tree and get crow's nest down?" Son did it. He dropped the nest down.



Father collected it. He was amazed to find a pearl necklace hidden in the nest. His wife and his sons were all happy and celebrating, but Bula said, "This pearl necklace belongs to the king. About ten years back, king lost it. It could not be found despite repeated searches in his palace. So the king imprisoned some of his servants and courtiers. They are all there in king's lockup, undergoing all sorts of torture. I too had thought that someone among them had only stolen it. But now it is revealed that they had no hand in the theft. It is my duty to inform the king and get those unfortunate people released with honour. God will do something new for us."



Next day morning, Bula went to meet the king in his palace. He reached there in the afternoon. Gate-incharge at the palace asked him who he was and why had he come there. Bula said he wanted to meet the king and tell him something important. Gate-incharge would not listen. He tried to shove him away. Bula pleaded, "I am not a beggar. I have not come here to seek any alms from the king. I have come here only to reveal a truth, '*dôdúk dôdas tû àbúk àbas*'."

"What is that '*dôdúk dôdas tû àbúk àbas*'? Raju asked Grandma.

"Well '*dôdúk dôdas tû àbúk àbas*' means to set the record straight, without any doubt", Grandma replied.

Bula continued, "Ten years back, something unfortunate happened in the palace. King has sent some of his servants and courtiers to prison. I have come here to reveal the facts to the king and save those unfortunate people."

The gate-incharge went to inform the king. In some time, he came back and accompanied Bula to the king. Bula said to the king, "*Badshah Salamat*. I am Bula. I have come here to tell you the truth about an unfortunate incident that happened in your palace ten years back. If you promise to spare my life, I will reveal it." King said, "Tell me without fear."

"What is '*Badshah Salamat*'? what does it mean?" Pinki asked.

"This was the way Kings were addressed. *Salamat* means may you be safe", said Grandma.

Bula said, "*Badshah Salamat*. You have done a great injustice ten years back. You have punished some of your servants and courtiers for the theft of your pearl necklace. Haven't you?"

"Yes I did. They deserved it because they stole my queen's necklace."

"*Badshah Salamat*. They did not steal it." Said Bula.

"How can you say that? What proof do you have?" King said angrily.

Bula pulled the pearl necklace out of his pocket and gave it to a courtier. Courtier passed it on to the king.

"Oh, it means not them but you had actually stolen this necklace and gone absconding", said king.

"No *Jahan Pannah*! Had I done that, I would not have been in this condition. And why would have I brought it back today?" Bula pleaded.

"What is *Jahan Pannah* Grandma?" Kalhan asked.

"*Jahan Pannah* means Protector of the world, in other words 'Your Majesty', said Grandma. Kings are addressed like that only.

"Then, how did you get it? Tell me the truth", said king.

Bula revealed the whole story, of their poverty, of the bird on the tree, of the crow's nest and the necklace. For the proof, he had also got crow's nest tied in a rag with him.

King was happy. He asked Bula, "Tell me, what reward do you want for your honesty. Bula said, "*Jahaan Pannah*, I don't want any reward. I want you to release all those innocent people you have imprisoned for the theft of this necklace."

King noticed, poor man was weeping. King asked his Vazir to count how many tears poor man had shed. Vazir counted and said, "Six *Jahaan Pannah*."

King ordered prisoners to be released. They were ten people. King counted the pearls in the necklace. It had sixteen pearls. He said to his Vazir, "These are sixteen pearls. Give six to Bula and one each to the prisoners. Vazir obeyed.

Dapaan, King reinstated all the ten prisoners and paid them their emoluments for the period they remained in prison. He offered the post of a Counsellor to Bula. Bula said, "*Jahan Pannah*, I will accept the post only if you apologise to the prisoners for the injustice you meted out to them. King was kind. He apologised to the prisoners and asked for their forgiveness.

Poor man became the Counsellor and rich too.

Children were happy and went to sleep.



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