

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

Folk Tales of Kashmir

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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

Manut & Paanzuv

Children were right on time. Kishmish had a school friend named Huma with her. She also wanted to hear Grandma and had come here with her parents' permission. Grandma was pleased to meet Huma. She kissed her forehead and blessed her. In fact Huma lived in the vicinity only, a few houses away from Grandma's home. Her parents were closely known to Grandma and other members of the household.

Today's story was 'Manut & Paanzuv' in English.

Grandma started thus:

There was an old mother. She had two sons. Elder one was named Paanzuv and the younger one Manut. Paanzuv used to look after his farms and Manut was studying in school. Paanzuv had to toil hard to run his home, so the old mother would feed him a little more than Manut. Manut would always cry in his heart against this step-motherly treatment of his mother, and also be angry at Paanzuv. He could not get to the root of his mother's disliking for him, when, he and Paanzuv were both her sons and should have been equally dear to her. But he did not ever muster enough courage to question his mother.



“I have heard a relation of ours telling his son ‘batû manút chhúkh khêvàn’. How can Manut be a name?” Asked Huma.

“You are right” said Grandma. “In fact Manut and Paanzuv are two weights in Kashmiri language. Manut is one and a half seer and Paanzuv is three seers. Seer again is a weight. A seer weighs slightly less than today’s kilogram. Since their parents had chosen these names only for them, nobody should have any objection.” Children nodded their heads.

Coming back to the story, one day, mother had kept enough quantity of food for Paanzuv in a plate and a small quantity for Manut in another plate and was herself busy spinning yarn. Manut came from his school, grabbed his plate and ate the food. He looked at Paanzuv's plate and noticed it contained more food than his.



He took a little food from Paanzuv's plate and put it in his mouth. Mother saw it. She abused him for doing so. To show his mother down, Manut took another handful of food from Paanzuv's plate and thrust it into old mother's mouth like he used to feed cows. The food got stuck in her food pipe and she collapsed in a few moments.

“Oh, that was very bad for Manut. How could he do that?” Said Kishmish.

“Bad it was but he did it. He was not a good son.” Said Grandma.

Manut noticed that mother was dead. He went running to his brother Paanzuv at the farms. On reaching nearer, he shouted, "Oh my brother, mother is dead." Paanzuv shouted back, "How did she die?" Manut said, "I reached home from my school and saw her dead at the spinning wheel." Paanzuv came running and crying to his home and found that his mother was really dead. He wept bitterly.

Paanzuv gave some money to Manut and asked him to get shroud and some oil for burial of their mother. Manut got the items and on his way home, saw a tree trembling due to winds. He thought the tree was shivering with cold. So he wrapped the shroud around its trunk. Few yards ahead, he saw a piece of farm land with surface cracks. He poured the oil into the cracks and returned to his home empty-handed. Paanzuv was waiting for him. When asked where was the shroud and oil, Manut replied, "Father's tree was shivering with cold. I wrapped the shroud around it. Then again the farm land had developed cracks due to scarcity of water, so I poured oil into its cracks". Paanzuv was annoyed. He rebuked his brother and went to get the things himself.



“What happened then?” asked Babloo.

“I am telling you that. Listen carefully.” Said Grandma.

In a few days, Paanzuv went back to his normal work and Manut resumed going to his school. But they could not go along well and started quarreling with each other on petty issues. This led them to part ways and live separately. They shared their assets equally. They had two bulls and each of them got one.



One day, Manut had to feed salt to his bull. He asked Paanzuv, "How much salt should be fed to the bull?" Paanzuv said, "Feed it a seer and half." So Manut did exactly that, a seer and half instead of half a pau. Bull died. Manut was now sure, his brother had ill-advised him. He now hated Paanzuv.

“What is a pau?” Asked Raju.

“Pau is quarter of a seer.” Said Grandma.

“Oh. You mean cow was given twelve times what was actually required.” Said Kalhan.

“Yes, and that is why the cow died”, said Grandma. “Now listen, what happened then.”

Manut got the dead bull skinned and kept the skin safely at his place. When skin was dry, he took it to the city for selling. There

was no customer for his skin. On his way back, he had to rest for the night at a place where there was nobody living. He climbed up a tree and took the skin also with him. At the dead of night, four thieves came that way. They sat under this very tree and started distributing their looted money. One of the thieves said to other thieves, "First keep eleven rupees aside for Kahnov. Then distribute the balance. If we don't do that, some divine thunder will strike us." Another thief said, "First let us distribute the money, then we will see what to do for Kahnov."

"Who was Kahnov?" Asked Biloo.

"Kahvnov is one who has eleven names. In Kashmir, Peer Dastgeer Sahib is said to have eleven names and he is called Kahnov as well. In Hindu mythology, Rudra (a form of Shiva) appears under eleven forms and he is also called Kahnov. Keeping something for Kahnov while we take up a new work, is an old tradition in Kashmir." Grandma explained.

Manut was watching. He hit a plan. He dropped the animal skin on them. Thieves thought it was some divine calamity. They left the money there and ran away as fast as they could. Manut climbed down the tree, collected all money and left for his home.

When he reached his home, Paanzuv came to meet him. Paanzuv asked, "Did you sell the animal skin?" Manut replied, "Oh, don't you see this money here? A trakh of leather fetches a trakh of notes there."

"What is trakh?" Asked Pinki.

"Trakh is a weight of five seers" said Grandma.

Hearing this, Paanzuv got curious. He spoke to his wife and both agreed to kill the bull they had, and to sell its skin in the city. In a few days when the skin was dry, Paanzuv left for the city to sell it. There were no takers. He somehow sold it for some money and came back to his home. His wife asked, "Did you get money

equal to the skin weight?" Paanzuv replied, "Oh, Manut's head. He did a fraud on us." He decided to take revenge.



One night, Paanzuv put Manut's house on fire. House and whatever was there inside, got reduced to ashes. Manut knew it was the mischief of his brother. He hit another plan. He collected charcoal of the burnt wood from the ashes in a bag. He hid four currency notes in the four corners of the bag and left for city. On reaching city, he went to a grocer and said to him, "Brother, can I keep this bag here in your shop. I will collect it back in some time." Grocer agreed. Manut left. In some time, Manut came back to collect the bag. He opened the bag, looked inside it for a moment and then started shouting "Oh my God, this grocer has replaced my notes with charcoal." Grocer was taken aback. People gathered. Manut explained, "I had kept this bag full of currency notes here. This grocer has replaced my notes with charcoal." Shopkeeper tried to tell his side but nobody was ready to listen. An elderly person intervened. He said, "Let us empty the bag. If even a single note is found inside the bag, we must trust Manut, otherwise not." Everybody agreed. Bag was emptied. And Lo, four notes were found in the corners of the bag. Proved that the bag contained currency notes, the shopkeeper had to fill Manut's bag with currency notes.

"But this is gross cheating. How could he do this to an innocent person? Said Huma.

“Cheating it is. Let us promise not to do any cheating in our lives” said Grandma. Children promised.



On reaching home, Manut went to see his brother. Paanzuv asked, "What did you do with the charcoal? Did you get any customer?" Manut replied, "Oh, don't ask any questions my brother. People there pay money equivalent to the weight of charcoal. I got a bagfull of notes." Paanzuv was lured to burn his house and collect the charcoal to sell in the city. But there were no takers again. Paanzuv returned back almost empty-handed, having sold his charcoal for a petty amount. He swore again to teach Manut a lesson.

One day, Paanzuv said to Manut, "You are alone and I can't see you doing everything by yourself. I have seen a beautiful, homely girl for you. I want you to get married now." Though Manut was not ready for the marriage as yet, Paanzuv managed to convince him. Day of wedding was fixed. Manut wore bridegroom's apparels. As per custom, a sedan was also arranged for him. They set towards bride's home early morning. It was a long journey. They reached a plain ground midway. Sedan carriers and Paanzuv were all tired. They placed the sedan under the shade of a tree and started eating food they had carried with them, some distance away. There was a shepherded with his sheep nearby. Manut called him and said to him, "Listen, my brother wants to get me married against my wishes. Can you take my place and get married. You only need to wear my clothes." Shepherded got a boon. He had not even

dreamt of getting married any day. He said to Manut, "I would, but what to do with my sheep?" Manut said, "You leave that to me. I will reach sheep to their owner's home".



Shepherd put on the bridegroom's clothes and sat inside sedan. Manut took his sheep and left. In the meantime, Paanzuv and the sedan carriers finished their meals. In some time they reached the bank of a river. Paanzuv, with the help of sedan carriers lifted the person in the sedan and drowned him in the deep waters. Satisfied that Manut was no more now, Paanzuv returned to his home.

"I feel sorry for the poor shepherd", said Kishmish. Other children seconded her.

"Sorry, yes. But he too was a greedy person. He did not think twice before sitting in sedan and did not care a fig for the cattle and its owner", said Grandma.

Manut returned to his home along with the Sheep. When Paanzuv saw him, he almost fell on the ground. He asked his brother, "Where did you get these sheep from?" Manut said, "My brother, there were sheep everywhere under the water. I collected some of them and got them here. If someone stronger than me goes there, he can collect more of them."



Paanzuv got to the river site along with his wife's two brothers. On reaching the spot, he advised them to jump into the river as soon as he (Paanzuv) signaled them. Paanzuv jumped into the water but did not see any sheep there. Instead he started to drown. He signaled to his brothers-in-law to rescue him. Poor fellows thought he was signaling them to jump into the water. So they also jumped into the river and all of them drowned.

Grandma finished the story and asked children to go to sleep, promising a new story next day.



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