





# The Lattice Window

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Many years ago, the city of Kathmandu was known as Kantipur. It contained a small village called Kipu. Today, Kipu is known as Kirtipur. Kipu was a quiet and beautiful village. Farmers enjoyed growing food and raising animals. Merchants bought and sold things, carpenters and artisans worked with wood, and masons built with brick and stone.

Mothers, in their free time, enjoyed weaving Newari dresses. And children were happy in their own world.



Then one day, a ghost appeared in Kipu. It looked like a human skeleton. It was as tall as a two-storied building. It walked through the night carrying a big sack. The villagers called the ghost Kwan. Kwan stole children and carried them away in his sack. Since almost all the houses in Kipu had big windows, it was easy for Kwan to put his hands through the open window

and grab small children. \*Kwan means skeleton



The people of Kipu gathered in front of the big temple of Baghbhairav. The people were miserable because Kwan was taking their children. "How can

we fight this ghost?" they asked one another. The oldest man in the crowd, Shukram Baje, listened to everyone's problems. \*Baje means grandfather



"Tarikaji's eight-year-old daughter was taken yesterday," a villager named Babukaji said. "It has not even

been a week since Chirimaicha's son was kidnapped," a villager named Tuyukaji added. "Seven children have been taken from our village so far," said Tarikaji, bursting into tears. "This is a terrible tragedy!" Shukram Baje said. He looked toward the sky and folded his hands.



Chirimaicha spoke to the old man. "Baje, I tried my best to grab my son tight and pull him towards me. But Kwan was too strong for me. He snatched my son and put him in his sack." "Our daughter was sleeping between us. We were very tired from working in the fields all day. We fell asleep quickly and were in a deep slumber. We didn't wake up even

when Kwan stole our darling daughter," Tarikaji said, tears streaming down his cheeks. "It tried to push its hand through my window as well," said a villager named Balkaji. "But I had a red-hot rod from the fireplace ready. I burned Kwan's hand. He hasn't dared to come near my house since that day."



"Baje, I'm leaving this village. The memory of my son haunts me day and night," Chirimacha said, her eyes brimming with tears. "How can we

just leave our village and go? My land and all my relatives are here, but I am equally tormented by the memory of my daughter," Tarikaji said, sobbing bitterly.



"Do not leave, and do not give up," said Balkaji. "Let's all fight Kwan bravely and bring back our children. I'm ready to lead." The old man shook

his head. "Fighting Kwan is beyond our power. But, at the same time, it is not right for us to sit at home quietly while Kwan steals our children," said Shukram Baje.



A child named Sanubabu stepped forward. He spoke softly to the old man. "Baje, I have heard that Kwan's hands are very big. The windows of

our houses are bigger than his hands.  
That is how he can reach in and steal  
children. Why don't we make our  
windows smaller so that his hands  
can't fit through?"



A villager scolded Sanubabu. "How dare you, as a child, speak in the meeting of elders," said Dhanvir. "And anyway, our houses would get

too hot in the summer if the windows were smaller." Shukram Baje disagreed. "I think it sounds like a good idea. Does anyone have a better suggestion?" Suddenly, everyone was silent. They looked at each other. The only sounds were birds chirping and leaves fluttering in the wind.



"Baje, why don't we make a lattice screen to cover our windows? It can have small holes to let the air through, but Kwan won't be able to reach inside," Dhanvir said excitedly. Shukram Baje laughed happily. Almost all the villagers agreed with Dhanvir and Sanubabu. Chirimaicha and Tarikaji were not convinced, but they agreed to try the

idea. That very day, an announcement was made in the village. All the villagers were asked to put lattices on their windows. Within a few days, the villagers had added lattices to all their windows.



One night, Kwan went to Shukram Baje's house. He tried to push his hand through the window. But, his fingers got stuck in the holes of the

lattice. "Ouch! My fingers are hurting. Could someone please help?" Kwan moaned. "Who is that, screaming so late into the night?" Baje shouted. "Please help me free my fingers from your window. I will give you whatever you want," Kwan cried. "I will help you get your fingers out, but only if you promise me that you will release all the children you have stolen. Also, you have to leave this village and never return," Baje said to Kwan.

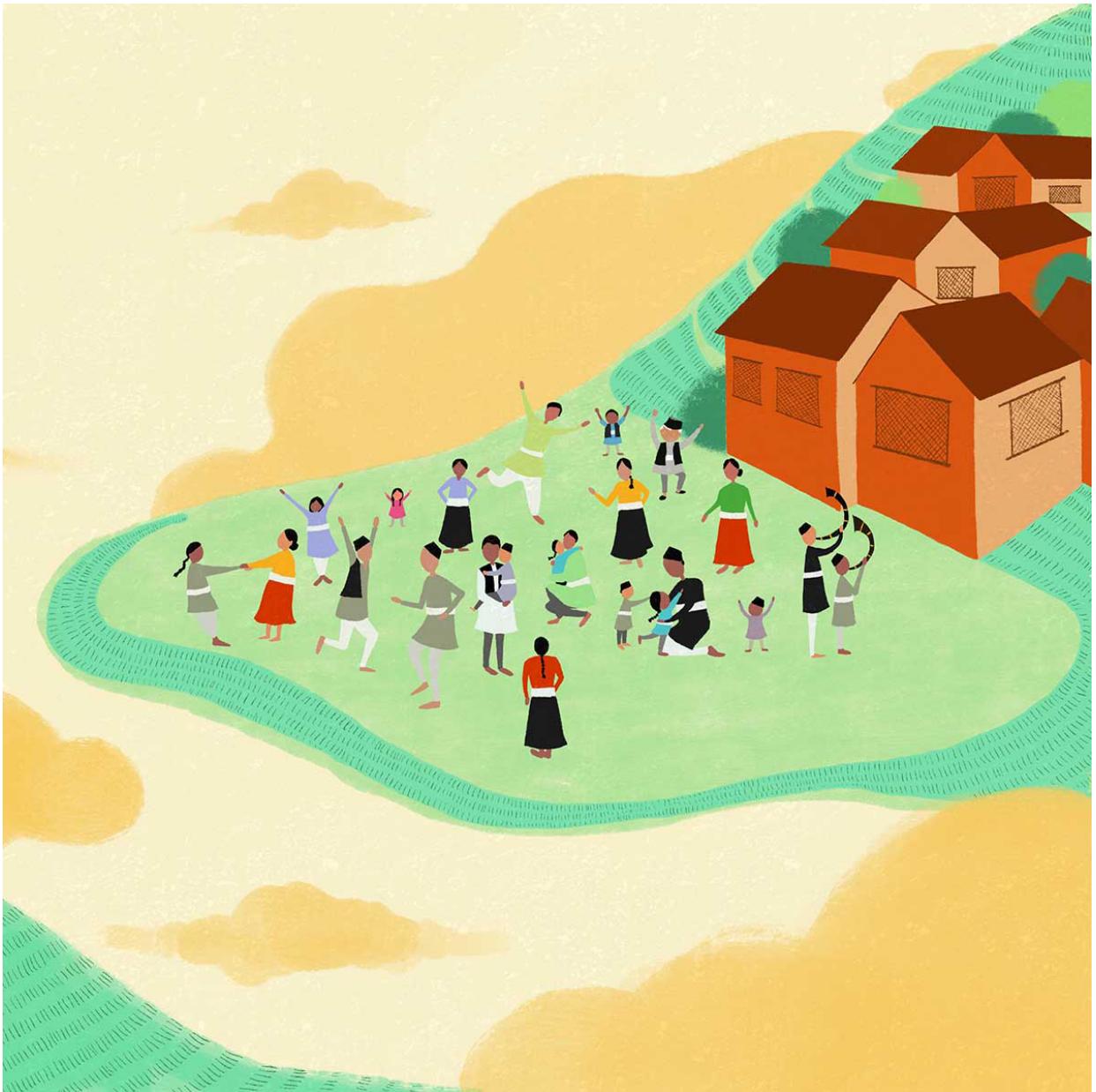


"I will agree to everything you say.  
Please hurry up!" Kwan  
shouted."First, give us back all the  
children you have taken," Baje

shouted even louder. Kwan placed his sack on the ground. Seven children jumped out of the sack one by one. All the children ran into Baje's house. Baje locked the door with them safely inside. Then, they all helped Kwan get his fingers out of the window.



Kwan left Kipu and never returned.  
Nobody knows where he went or what  
happened to him.



Chirimacha held her son close to her chest for a long time. She was very happy. Tarikaji was so happy that he jumped with joy. The other villagers

danced and sang after getting their children back. All the villagers took part in the merry making. Kipu went back to being a quiet and happy village once again.



"These screens have saved our children, and brought our village so much joy," said Shukram Baje as he looked out the window. He made sure

that the village remembered Sanubabu and Dhanvir. Their ideas had saved the village.

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