

The Tale of Dhon Cholecha

Punakhu is a kind and humble girl living under the harsh rule of her stepmother, who favors her own lazy daughter. The stepmother forces Punakhu to do all the housework and gives her little food, but despite this, Punakhu works hard without complaint. Her only solace is the family's old goat, **Dhon Cholecha**, who keeps her company as she grazes the animals.

Out of spite and jealousy, the stepmother decides to slaughter the goat for a family feast. Devastated, Punakhu buries the goat's bones in the garden after the feast. Over time, a fig tree grows where she buried them, and it becomes a source of food and comfort for Punakhu. She quietly enjoys the fruits, never asking for more than she needs.

One day, while sitting under the fig tree, an elderly couple passes by and asks for some figs. Punakhu, despite having little for herself, kindly shares the fruits with them. Moved by her generosity, the couple invites her to their home for a meal. During her visit, they ask her to prepare flatbreads. While cooking, a small mouse appears and warns her that the couple are plotting to rob her and harm her in her sleep. Taking the mouse's advice, Punakhu escapes quietly, taking a small amount of the couple's wealth as she leaves.

When Punakhu returns home, her father and stepmother are astounded by the treasure she brings. Her greedy stepmother becomes consumed with envy, thinking of ways to get more riches. She sends her own daughter to the fig tree, instructing her to act kindly so she too can visit the elderly couple.

The stepsister, driven by greed, follows her mother's instructions but lacks the genuine kindness Punakhu showed. She rudely demands more figs from the couple and behaves impatiently while preparing the flatbreads. The mouse, seeing her greed, stays silent, offering no warning.

That night, the stepsister is tricked by the couple, who see through her false kindness. They murder her in her sleep, believing her greed makes her an easy target. The next morning, the stepmother gleefully prepares to

welcome her daughter back with more treasure, only to hear the dreadful news of her death.

Realizing her own greed led to this, the stepmother is left devastated. Punakhu's father, enraged by his wife's actions, banishes her from their home. In the end, Punakhu, content with the simple life she always had, lives peacefully by her beloved fig tree, free from the poisonous influence of greed.