



The Story of Bagh Bhairav Temple

Rocky Maharjan

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"Friends! I'm going to make another sculpture of a tiger today. Will you please keep an eye on my sheep?" asks Gyanbi.

"Sure! Please make sure that the tiger is bigger and better than the one from yesterday," his friend says.

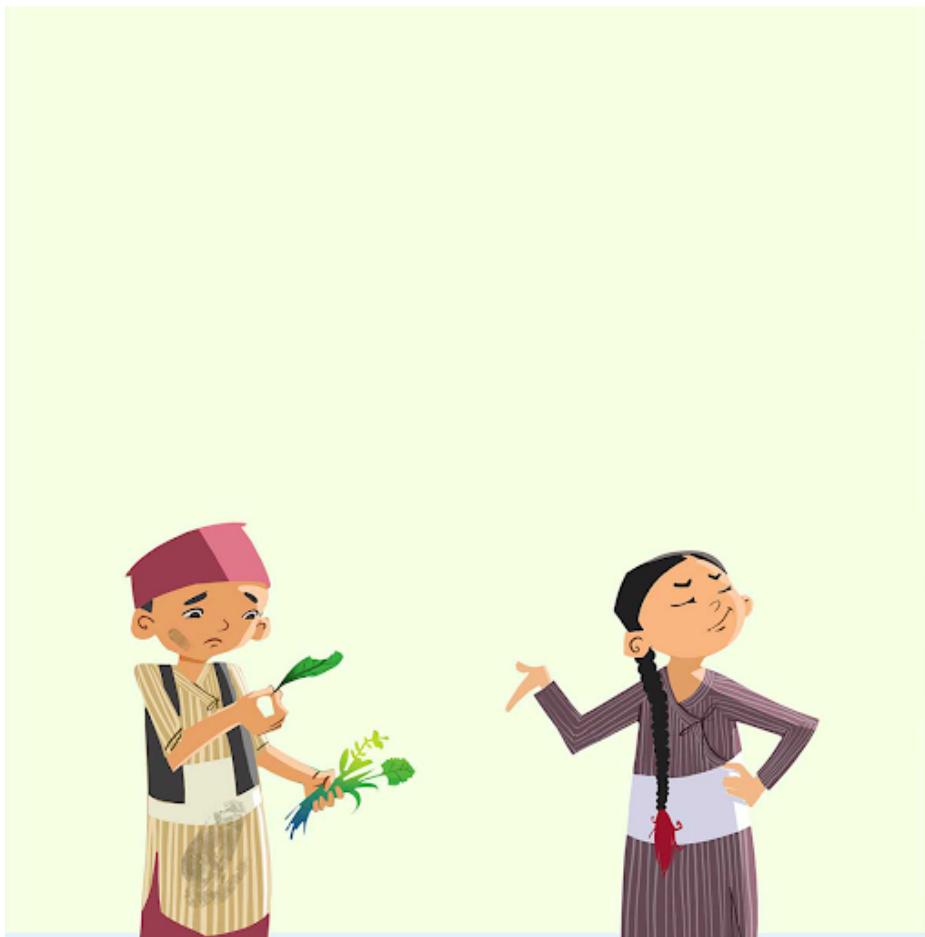


Gyanbi spends the whole day making his tiger sculpture. Sometimes it seems a bit too small. Sometimes the mouth doesn't look right. At other times, the eyes are just too big. Despite it all, by the end of the day, the tiger was just the way Gyanbi had imagined it to be.



"Wow! The statue looks exactly like a tiger! But where's the tongue?" his friend Kantamari asks.

"I didn't want to make a tongue with this black clay. But a leaf would work. Why don't you all help me find a suitable leaf?" Gyanbi asks his friends.



Gyanbi's friends look for leaves but none of the ones they bring back are right.

"Isn't there a single leaf in the forest that can be used as a tiger's tongue?" Gyanbir asks.

"Maybe not, since we have brought leaves from every single tree in the forest!" Kayomai says.



"Let's go to the neighboring forest. We'll surely find one there," Gyanbi said.



"It's already very late! And who will take care of the sheep when we are gone?" Kantamari asks.

"This tiger will," Gyanbi replies.

He then turned to the statue and said, "Oh tiger! Will you please look after our sheep?"



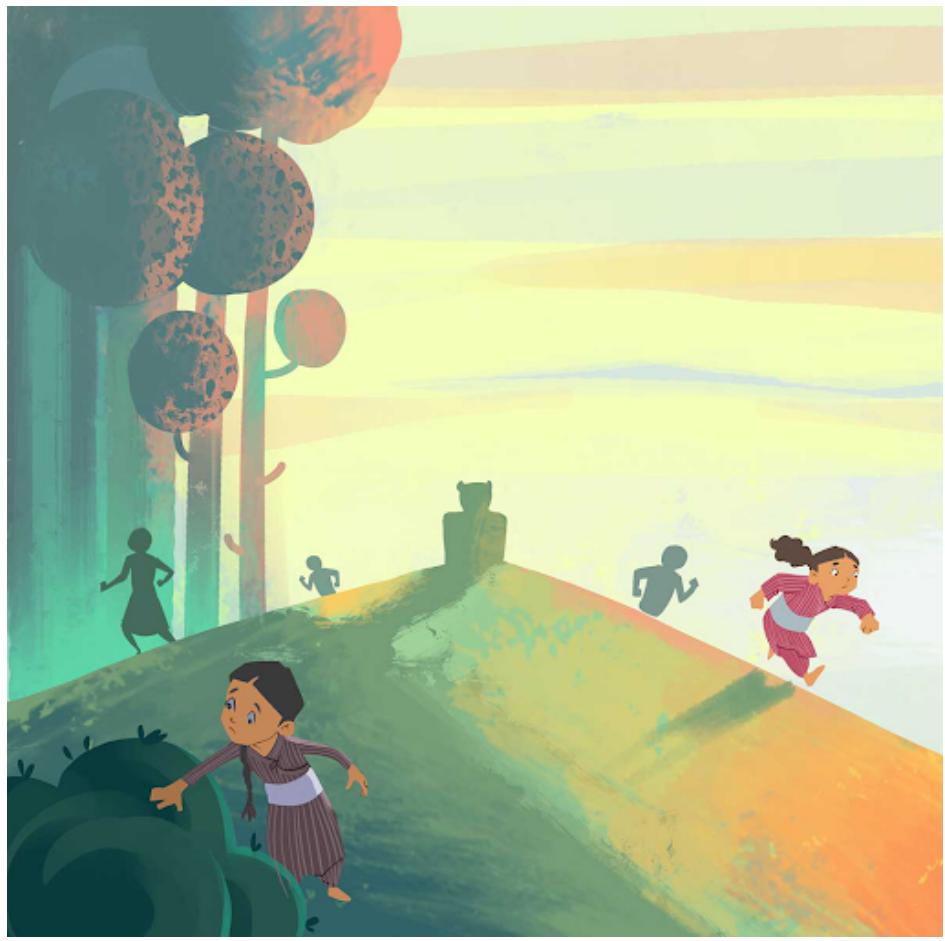
All the children go to the neighboring forest
to look for leaves.



In the end, they return with leaves that might suit the tiger.



"Oh no! Where are all the sheep?" Kantamari shrieks.



"Maybe they're grazing somewhere nearby.
Let's go and find them," Gyanbi sas.
They comb the entire forest but not a single
sheep can be found.



"Look at that! That looks like blood on the tiger's mouth. I hope the tiger did not eat the sheep," Kantamari said, pointing at the statue. Everyone turns toward the statue.

"Yes! There are some pieces of bone next to it as well," Kayomai says.



"Oh tiger, didn't I tell you to keep an eye on our sheep? How could you eat our sheep? I'm not going to give you a tongue anymore. You'll be stuck with your mouth wide open forever," Gyanbi says angrily.

It was getting dark and the children's parents came to the forest looking for them. The children tell their parents everything that happened that day.

"How can a statue eat sheep?" the parents ask

in total surprise.



A sorcerer was among the parents. "Let me use my magic to check," he says. " Maybe there is a mystery hidden behind all this." He closes his eyes and meditates.

Then, the sorcerer shares what he learned. "Lord Mahadev, also known as Lord Shiva, lives within this statue. When Lord Mahadev was very hungry, he entered the statue in his fiercest form, Bhairav, and ate up all the sheep."



“Let’s place this statue in a temple in the village. Eventually, we’ll build a separate temple for Lord Shiva and worship him. There can be no harm in a village that is protected by none other than Lord Mahadev himself,” the village headman said.



Everyone agreed with the headman.
The village built a huge temple to Shiva.



Many years later, people still visit the temple. A festival is held in Kirtipur each year. Students who visit the temple are always amazed by the story of the tiger statue. Some of their mouths fall open in awe, just like the tiger's mouth.

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Original Story

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