



The Khutrukke Money Bank

It's Khushi's birthday, and she's disappointed by her father's gift, a khutrukke, or a clay money bank. What will happen when she starts saving her money?



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I am Khushi Kumari. Today was my birthday.



From Aama, I received a dress similar to the one my doll wears. And Kaka got me a harmonica.



Baba placed a big box in front of me. Excited, I opened it. Was it a clay horse? Was that a slot? "A khutrukke. That's it?" I was disappointed.



"What were you expecting from me, Khushi?" Baba asked, trying to console me. On the verge of tears, I mumbled, "T-shirt." Handing me some money, Baba said, "Okay, then. Buy a T-shirt you like, chhori."



But who would sell me a T-shirt this late in the evening? I slipped the money inside my khutrukke.



The following day, Bunu didi said to me, "Give me ten out of what Baba gave you, Khushi. I want to splurge on snacks today."



"But how can I? The money is already in the khutrukke!" I exclaimed. Aama chuckled at my response.



I began slipping all my loose change inside the khutrukke. This was turning out to be an effective way to keep my money out of Bunu didi's hands.



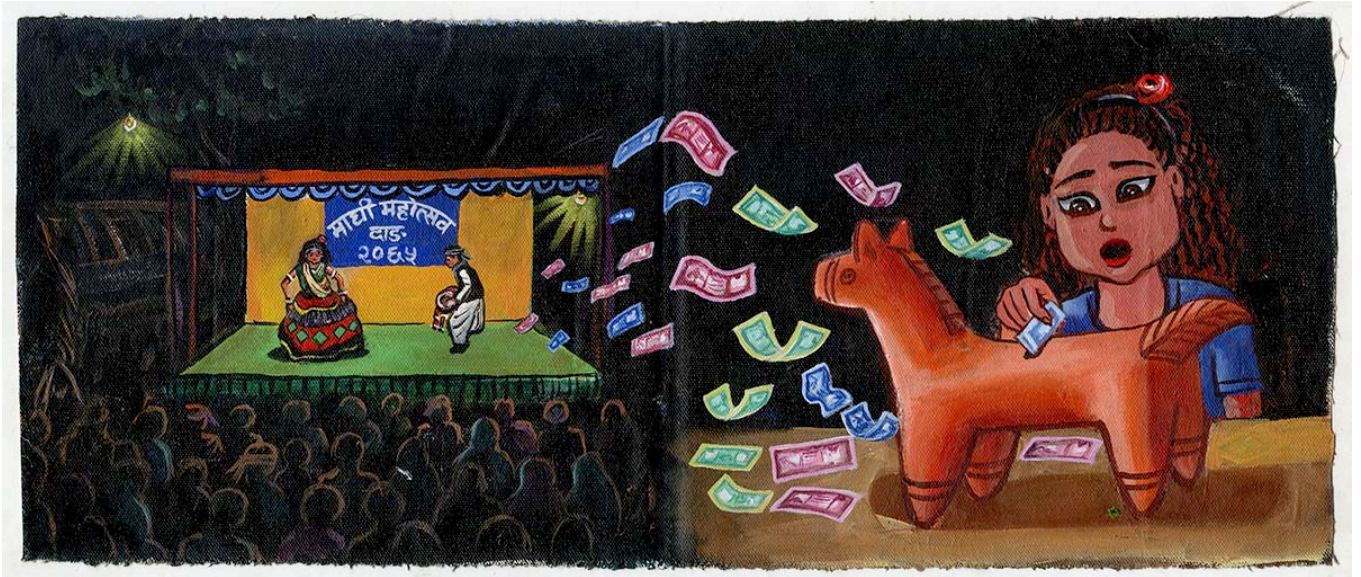
Baba was impressed. "Well done, chhori! You have started using the khutrukke. From now on, however much you put inside the khutrukke, I'll put in the same."



To encourage Bunu didi to save, Baba also gave her some money and asked her to get a khutrukke. But not only did Bunu didi splurge on herself, she also had a habit of paying for her friends. How would she save?



Soon after, Baba's job required us to move to Dang, the district of our ancestral home.



Because it was Maghi, the atmosphere in the village was festive. At home, everyone, including my grandfather, was so pleased with my dance performance that they rewarded me with more rupees. I slipped all the notes and coins inside the khutrukke. After Maghi, I enrolled in a new school close by.*Maghi is a Hindu festival celebrated in Nepal and northern India.



At school, I made a new friend. We shared the same desk. Her name was Anarkali. "She doesn't have a father, and her mother washes dishes at a restaurant. She is from a poor family!" People only said such things about Anarkali. But I felt that Anarkali was just another girl like me. By the end of my first day, we had become good friends.



Although a full week of school had passed, I did not have a school uniform because I was a new student. But why wasn't Anarkali in a school uniform? Maybe hers, like mine, was also at the tailor's. But the following week, Anarkali was still in the same clothes. "Is your uniform not ready yet?" I asked, but Anarkali remained quiet. It turned out that she could not afford one.



I decided to use savings from my khutrukke to get her a new school uniform. As soon as I got home, I smashed the khutrukke and counted the money. I had collected more than a thousand rupees!*rupees are the money used in Nepal



I gave the tailor my measurements because I knew that my clothes would fit Anarkali perfectly.



Wonderful Wordskhutrukke - traditional piggy bank made from red clayaama - Motherkaka - Unclebaba - Fatherchhori - daughter or girldidi - A female older than you. In this story, Bunu didi is Khushi's older sister. Maghi - Hindu festival celebrated in Nepal and northern Indiarupee - name for money used in Nepal



The following morning, I rushed to Anarkali's house. Handing the school uniform to her, I said, "Come on, quick, change into this! Otherwise, we'll be late for school!"



In the beginning, I had been disappointed with the khutrukke, but now I was truly grateful for it!



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