
A HUNTER'S DESTINY

Rnam rgyal རྣམ་རྒྱལ།

A hunter with a quiver full of arrows at the right side of his waist and a rainbow-like bow on his back was on his way to a deep, narrow valley that slowly opened to a jungle in which only a bold man would dare set foot. Big trees held their numerous arms around each other so tightly that only tiny rays of light could pass through the leaves to the rich ground. Wild animals enjoyed this jungle as their home and peacefully lived there.

The hunter went there one day, full of hope to find and kill many animals. Unluckily, he had killed nothing when dark night fell and he had to spend the night under a big fir tree. He thought it was shameful to go back home without any game. He made butter tea, had some bread, and then chanted to the mountain deities, beseeching them to help him and expressing his veneration.

He slept under the starry sky and dreamed of a big tree which told him that he would find nothing while hunting and that he must leave the jungle he was in and go to the first village. There, the big tree said, he would find a family with a newborn girl who would become his wife - a wife who would be killed by a pig when she turned forty.

He woke up from this strange dream to find birds singing and squirrels jumping here and there nearby. He had his breakfast and left with his weapon for a new day of hunting. Again, he hunted unsuccessfully. Recalling his strange dream, he felt compelled to go to the village he had dreamed of and then asked at a home in the village if he could stay the night. Receiving permission, he entered the courtyard of the home, and heard a newborn baby crying and the infant's mother singing a lovely lullaby. Suddenly recalling what the

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tree had said in his dream, he wondered again how a twenty-year-old man could marry an infant.

That night, he thought repeatedly of his dream and the newborn baby. He thought, "How unlucky for a baby to be an old man's wife and be killed by a pig when she is only forty!"

The next morning, a cruel intention grew in his heart: it was best to kill the baby before she had to marry an old man and be killed by a pig, as the tree had foretold. He decided it would be better if he killed her so she could be reborn and enjoy a normal life. He got up, took his spear, and resolved to stab the baby girl, but he could not because the baby looked so innocent and vulnerable. Finally, he pointed the spear at the baby's head, stabbed without looking, and then fled.

Twenty years passed, and he was again hunting in the same area when he encountered a beautiful young woman carrying firewood on her back. He also noticed that she had a scar on her forehead. The man stopped and curiously asked, "Which village are you from?"

"The first village," the young woman answered.

"Why do you have a scar on your forehead?" the man inquired.

"My mother told me that a hunter hurt me just after I had been born," she replied.

The man then recalled all the events of twenty years before. He then became very talkative and the young woman asked him to come to her home for tea.

He accepted and, after more conversation, he asked her to marry him and she agreed.

They lived happily for another twenty years. When the man realized that his wife would soon be forty, he ordered her to stay in their house for a year to avoid encountering any pigs. Both husband and wife, however, had forgotten that they kept large pieces of pork tied to beams above the stove, as was the local custom. Smoke from the stove helped cure and dry the pork. Once preserved, the pork could be eaten years after it had been hung up this way.

As the wife was cooking at the stove and thinking about going outside the next day, she did not realize that a pig head was hanging from a beam above the stove. A spark from the stove flew up and burned the string suspending the pig head, which then fell and struck the back of the young woman's neck.

When her husband returned home, he found her dead.

This is the origin of the saying "You can't escape destiny by hiding in your mother's apron."

NON-ENGLISH TERM

rnam rgyal རྣམ་རྒྱལ།