

A LUCKY MAN

Rnam rgyal རྣམ་རྒྱལ།

A very diligent woman famous for her quick wit and caring ways lived a long time ago in a sleepy village high in the mountains rich in pine, fir, and spruce trees, and many types of wildlife. Her husband, Me nyug gser tog, was quite different. He sought neither wealth nor fame. He preferred to do nothing more than laze about at home in the sun. Late one afternoon, the diligent wife made her way home from the fields with her basket full of grass for the livestock and found her husband lounging half-asleep in the corner as usual. She was downhearted at this pathetic sight and wondered once again what she could do to make him more ambitious. She yearned for a useful and energetic man about the house. She often spent the whole night turning this matter over in her mind.

Early the next morning, just as the sun was creeping over the mountain peaks to the east, the wife from her kitchen window, spied a band of merchants packing up their campsite and loading their wares onto horses while the sun's rays gently warmed their backs. Just then, she hatched a crafty plan. Unseen by anyone, she took an unopened pack of leaf tea down from the shelf, and scuttled off to the campsite, placing the tea on the exact spot where the merchants had slept. Then she quickly snuck home to wake her husband.

"Why wake me so early?" the husband demanded.

"Come see! There are hundreds of crows hovering around the campsite. Those merchants must have left something," she explained.

"It's unlikely to be anything valuable," her husband said.

"Maybe not, but you know the saying: a man is like an eagle - he should be out exploring the world, not sitting at home all day doing nothing. Why not go have a look?"

So, to please his wife, the husband got himself up from bed and ran straight to the campsite to see what he could see. To his great

surprise, there on the ground before him, on the exact spot his wife had said, lay a large pack of tea which, without a moment's hesitation, he picked up and brought home.

Very pleased with his good fortune, he said, "My dear, you were right! There was something there after all."

"Oh, dear husband, just as I said; a man is like an eagle - he should be out exploring the world, not sitting at home all day doing nothing. I am so happy you proved me right!"

"Well, if it makes you that happy, I will go exploring every day!"

"Husband, you could make a fortune if you but tried a little bit harder," his wife persuaded. And from that very moment on, Me nyug gser tog went out every day to explore the world and see what he could see.

One day he surreptitiously filched a sturdy cobbler's needle and noticed, by chance, a small jeweled ornament dangling precariously from a pilgrim's saddle. He was sure the ornament would work its way loose if he only waited long enough. Tagging along with the pilgrims, he eventually came to a village he did not know. The leader of the pilgrims unfastened the flute from his waist and blew a message outside the house of a wealthy local family to signal they pilgrims and begging for food.

At that very moment the youngest daughter was milking a yak and, alarmed by the sudden and unfamiliar sound of the flute, the yak jumped up nervously, kicking the young girl. The precious jade bracelet around her wrist broke, flew up into the air and, unseen by others, landed in some fresh dung near where Me nyug gser tog was standing. Quick as a flash, he scooped up the bracelet, pressed it into fresh dung, and stuck it to a wall where many other dung patties to be used for fuel were drying in the sun.

Meanwhile, the whole family rushed around searching for the bracelet. Several hours later there was still no sign of the jade bracelet.

"If you like, I could do a divining ritual to find the bracelet," Me nyug gser tog offered.

"What kind of divining ritual can find jade?" asked the head of the family.

"The famous pig head divining ritual, of course," Me nyug gser tog replied.

"How is it done?" the family head asked.

"Well, if you cook me a delicious pig head, I will show you."

And so the best pig was slaughtered and the head was prepared for Me nyug gser tog. He was shown to the best carpet in the house and sat there in splendor with butter tea, cheese, sugar crystals, and yak beef laid out on the table before him. Very soon the pig head was ready and, smelling heavenly, it was delivered ceremoniously to the table. With the utmost respect, it was placed before him. The family sat in a circle and watched him relish his favorite food.

"Now, let the divining ritual commence," said Me nyug gser tog standing up.

Taking a stick in his right hand, he made his way out to the yard, with everybody following behind. Rhythmically, he pointed the stick to the left and to the right, chanting at the same time while performing strange little dance steps, and periodically murmuring, "Here or there? Here or there?"

Wherever he pointed, all eyes gazed. He searched the yard for several minutes, dancing slowly towards the part of the wall where he had hidden the bracelet. Then, with an expression of seemingly utter amazement on his face and a great flourish of his arm, he pointed the stick at the dung patty on the wall and announced grandly, "There! It's there!"

Hesitantly, the father of the family approached the wall, picked off the designated dung patty, and rubbed his fingers into the dung. When the bracelet appeared, everyone jumped up and down in joy, proclaiming, "What a diviner! Never in our lives have we seen anything like this!"

Me nyug gser tog returned home with generous gifts, delighting his wife. "You see, a man is like an eagle - he should be out

exploring the world, not sitting at home all day doing nothing," she said, but secretly worried about what he might do next if somebody else needed help. She then suggested he stay at home for some time.

Me nyug gser tog was soon famous as the story of the pig head divining ritual was repeated wherever locals went. A few days later, a family lost a horse-head figurine made from solid gold. The family's maid, Snga las 'Destiny', came to beg Me nyug gser tog to perform a divination. And in the meantime, at home, the other maid, Tshe las, prepared a pig head as the family hopefully waited.

The diviner and the maid rode together on horseback. Me nyug gser tog said nothing for some time, which prompted the maid to ask, "Where will the horse-head be found, distinguished Diviner?"

Me nyug gser tog turned sharply to the maid and confidently said, "Destiny. It was an act of Destiny."

No sooner were his words out than the maid leapt from the horse, knelt, and confessed, "Pig Head Diviner, it was not only me. I had an accomplice. The maid, Tshe las, and I stole the gold figurine together."

"Tell me where have you hidden it," Me nyug gser tog said.

"We put it in the wall of a field," Destiny answered.

"I'll say nothing of your terrible deed if you hide it under the doorstep tonight," Me nyug gser tog

Snga las agreed and thanked Me nyug gser tog for keeping her secret.

The next morning, Me nyug gser tog savored the pig head and then went to the yard where the family was waiting with great interest. As before, he held a stick and pointed to the left and then to the right, murmuring, "Here or there? Here or there?" his every step taking him towards the door. Suddenly, the stick seemed to be pointing at the door and he proclaimed, "It is right here, under the doorstep."

Everybody held their breath while the doorstep was dug up. "It is true!" yelled someone. The gold horse was then held up high for everybody to see.

Me nyug gser tog again returned home laden with gifts, which made his wife even prouder of him. "A man is like an eagle - he should be out exploring the world, not sitting at home all day doing nothing," she again pronounced.

Now with enough wealth to last a lifetime, they agreed that Me nyug gser tog would do no more divining rituals.

However, the king learned of the great diviner's feats, summoned him to his castle, and said, "I have heard of your great success as a diviner. I will now conceal an object in my closed fist and you will guess what it is. If you are as lever as people say and guess correctly, I will reward you with thousands of gold coins. But if you are lying and are wrong, you will lose your head. Now is your chance to prove yourself."

Those in the palace settled down to watch. The king, unseen by anyone, trapped a *sbrang 'bu me nyug* 'tiny fly' in the cup of his hands, held his closed fist out to Me nyug gser tog, and asked, "What is in my fist?"

Me nyug gser tog silently fell to his knees before the throne.

"What is in the king's hands?" hissed one of the ministers.

Me nyug gser tog shook his head and fell flat on the ground gasping for breath as all eyes gazed at him.

"What is in the king's hands?" insisted the minister.

"Me nyug will surely die," whimpered Me nyug gser tog.

In astonishment, the king stood up from his throne and, in full view of the assembled courtiers, raised his arms and slowly opened the palms of his hands to let the tiny *me nyug* fly escape.

"He is right. See! What I had in my hands was a tiny a golden *me nyug* fly! There it goes!"

Me nyug gser tog, much praised by the people, returned home with a large chest full of gold. When his wife saw these riches, she said, "*Skyes pa bya rgod nyal na mi dga' 'gro na dga'* སྐྱེས་པ་བྱ་ཚོད་ཉལ་ན་ མི་དགའ་འཕྲོ་ན་དགའ། A man is like an eagle - he should be out exploring the world, not sitting at home doing nothing."

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

me nyug gser tog མེ་ལུག་གསེར་རྟོག་

me nyug མེ་ལུག་

rnam rgyal རྣམ་རྒྱལ་

skyes pa bya rgod nyal na mi dga' 'gro na dga སྐྱེས་པ་བྱ་རྟོག་ལྷན་ཅི་དགའ་ལ་མོ་ན་

snga las དགའ་ལ་
སྐྱེ་ལས་