

Nar Maya and Laxmi Sapkota

[Speaker 1]

My name is Narmaya Sapkota. My name is Narmaya Sapkota. And my name is Lakshmi Sapkota.

The relationship between you and me is that I am the grandma and you are my granddaughter. You have spent 50 years of your life in Bhutan. In those 50 years, how did you feel?

Tell us a little bit about your story.

[Speaker 2]

I spent 50 years in Bhutan.

[Speaker 1]

It was okay.

[Speaker 2]

It was okay and I enjoyed it.

[Speaker 1]

What else did you do in your childhood? What did you do in your childhood?

[Speaker 2]

In my childhood, I used to go to the fields, and sing songs. In my childhood, I used to look after my goats.

[Speaker 1]

And I used to go out in the fields and I would sing the song that she demonstrated. So I used to watch her work and also spend my time singing along.

[Speaker 2]

What do you want to say?

[Speaker 1]

I want to sing a song for you. The song translates to basically a guy approaching a girl and telling her about this palace and just talking about how beautiful it is and then the last bit of the song translates to like how love is killing me. It's basically that, but it's like a love song kind of thing.

I was 11 years old when I got married. Five years I stayed at my parents' house. And then after five years I got sent to my new house.

And after seven years I had my first daughter. And then a son. And after my son, I experienced a miscarriage.

And then I had another daughter and she is still here today. And then after my youngest daughter, after my youngest daughter, I had four sons in a row. And then I had one more daughter.

And unfortunately, it was another miscarriage. I'm forgetting a few things from Bhutan at the moment. Until I was 25, I stayed in Bhutan.

Until I was 25, I stayed in Bhutan. In Bhutan, in my childhood, I used to look after my goats. As I got a little older, I started looking after some cows.

And then once I was, let's say, an adult, then I got sent to my husband's house. In the refugee camp, life was alright. I used to go and weave sheep's wool.

And that was like my hobby. And I would do that most of the time. And come home, eat and sleep.

So that was like my daily lifestyle. When I was 50 years old, these two got married. In those times, they would bring the bride.

And we would put a tika, which is like, we usually put that in ceremonies to signify our culture and the bond between people. And also something to represent the blessings that elders give to everyone. So we did that and we did puja for their marriage.

And she entered our house like that. Yes, I held you right after you were born. Before my parents got married.

[Speaker 2]

They would give us rice to eat. They would give us rice. They would bring it, cook it and eat it.

And my father would do it. Your father would do the work. Bring it, call it, eat it, cook it, give it.

What else was there? Give it, call it, look for it. He would do the work.

[Speaker 1]

Well, in the refugee camp, they did provide us with food to eat. And when my husband passed away, my eldest son, he fulfilled his duties. So instead of my husband, my son did everything for us, such as asking, negotiating, handling the house.

I was very, very happy about the decision. When I came here, I experienced a lot of luck. And a life that is more fulfilling than a life that I had back in the refugee camp.

How is life here in Australia? What do you like? And what do you do every day?

[Speaker 2]

It's very, very good here. It's good, good, good, good. Everything is good.

I went to the temple with my daughter-in-law. I went to the temple. I went to pray.

I came back.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, Mama. Life here is very, very good. I had the opportunity to go on a religious pilgrimage with my family.

Living here provided me opportunities to travel and visit temples in India.

[Speaker 2]
India, Tirtha.

[Speaker 1]
And that's called a Tirtha Yatra, which is like a religious pilgrimage. So my long hair. It's basically her encouragement to keep my hair long due to the cultural belief of girls.

Being considered lucky with long hair, she always encouraged me to never cut my hair and I kind of followed that till today. Growing up, she used to braid my hair, comb my hair, not with those big brushes, but those real harder combs. Yeah, that's the relationship and bonding between us.

And I sometimes do her hair as well and braid and plait it. She braids her hair every single day and keeps it in a plait. How do you feel about me?

[Speaker 2]
Very beautiful. You speak well. You speak well.

You dress well. You eat well. You drink well.

[Speaker 1]
Absolutely beautiful. Your behavior is beautiful. You are beautiful.

What you eat is beautiful. What you drink is beautiful. You're just a beautiful person.

[Speaker 2]
Everything is beautiful.

[Speaker 1]
Everything is beautiful. Everyone is beautiful. All my grandchildren.

All my sons and their wives. Everyone is beautiful to me. Everyone is beautiful.

She's like a bundle of joy in our family. Very well respected. And a leader.

A strong woman as well. I'm very proud of her, of how she's guided our family and preserved our culture and raised us to be just good humans, I guess. I learned many things from her.

To be strong and resilient as well. And to also embrace who we are. Our roots and our cultures.

And keep that kind of legacy moving forward as well. And to appreciate life. And be grateful for it as well.

What would you like to teach your family? What would you like to say to your family?

[Speaker 2]
I would like to tell them not to wake up early in the morning and serve God. And come home. And eat rice.

And go out.

[Speaker 1]

Do you have anything you would like to say to your family? What good things have you taught them?

[Speaker 2]

I've taught them everything. I've taught them the rules. I've taught them about religion.

I've taught them about caste. I've taught them everything.

[Speaker 1]

I've taught my family the daily practice of waking up, showering, doing our religious prayers in the morning. And then going off to enjoy the day. And I have taught my family everything.

From customs to religions to good behaviours and good morals. I think I have taught my family everything. What difficulties have you faced Difficulties?

[Speaker 2]

Problems? There are no problems. Everything is good.

There are no problems. No one has given me any trouble. Everything is good.

[Speaker 1]

Everything is good here. I haven't encountered any difficulties. I have been provided with everything.

So everything is good.

[Speaker 2]

This tilak is called Lakshmi. Lakshmi.

[Speaker 1]

And the tilak which is the red Sri Lakshmi on my forehead This tilak is called Narayan.

[Speaker 2]

Sri Lakshmi. This is also Lakshmi.

[Speaker 1]

So the red tilak on my forehead represents Goddess Lakshmi. And the white tilak on the top of my nose represents Lord Vishnu. Narayan is another name for him.

And the gold around my neck is also Lakshmi as she is the goddess of wealth and beauty.

[Speaker 2]

Goddess. Goddess.

[Speaker 1]

Goddess Lakshmi.

[Speaker 2]

Goddess Lakshmi.

[Speaker 1]

You have been seen as beautiful, bright and colourful.

[Speaker 2]

Yes. I was even more beautiful here.

[Speaker 1]

Yes. Maybe I was more beautiful back then as well.

[Speaker 2]

This is a pattern. This is a pattern. Why is it a pattern?

[Speaker 1]

What is this?

[Speaker 2]

This is a golden pattern. This needs red. This needs a pattern.

This needs red. This needs a pattern.

[Speaker 1]

I have made a pattern to highlight.

[Speaker 2]

This is the price given by Guru.

[Speaker 1]

I will tell you this. I have made a pattern myself to with green and reds.

[Speaker 2]

He lost me, he lost me, he lost me, he lost me, lost me on, he lost me on, lost me on.

[Speaker 1]

Oh.

[Speaker 2]

He lost me, lost me, lost me on. Okay. Lost me on.

[Speaker 1]

I'll just repeat. If you know. I've made a pattern with the greens and reds to highlight the yellow gold in the middle and all that I have around my neck or represent goddess Lakshmi?

[Speaker 2]

Vishnu, Lakshmi, Vishnu, Lakshmi. We are husband and wife. Husband and wife.

There are two people, two people. My husband and I are wife. Old, old.

Old, old, old, old. Say it.

[Speaker 1]

So Vishnu and Lakshmi are also representations of like husband and wife?

[Speaker 2]

Two people. You are also like that. We are also like that.

Two people. You must have two people. Two people.

You are wife. You are husband. Old.

Money is like that. Money is like that. It's like the sky over there.

Oh, she's so funny. Where is it?