When Rita's mother visits the school
When Rita’s mother visits the school
Lost in her own thoughts, Chameli was a bit late to finish her morning chores today. Her neighbours had already taken their animals to herd.
In few winks, her animals headed towards the school compound where grass is relatively greener.

**Maya Teacher:** ‘Namaste! Aren’t you Rita’s mother? I am Maya, her new teacher. Come, I will show you the school.’

**Chameli:** ‘Yes, I am her mother but I will leave now. I am shy and I don’t want to embarrass the Sirs either.’

**Maya Teacher:** ‘Don’t worry. The two male Sirs are absent for few days and the Head teacher rarely comes to the school. It is only me, new Miss, Kopila and the Peon sir!’

She agrees still with some hesitation.
तमस्कार!
तपाई रीताकी आमा होइन र्‍या म नयाँ सिक्षक माया।
आउनौंसु न्, म तपाईलाई इस्कुल देखाउँछु।

हो, म रीताकी आमा हुँ।
सित्र आउनौ र्‍या मलाई लाज लाग्छ। सरहुँलाई पति अनीछो लाग्छ।
Chameli is shocked. Classrooms are so filthy – full of pieces of paper, plastic wrappers and everything covered in dust. Window panes are broken, broken benches are piled in one corner. Little children have to sit on a piece of dirty vinyl carpet. Classroom is very hot under the metal roof.

**Chameli:** *(thinking)* ‘Oof! This is filthier than my animal shade.’
छबा! यो त
गाइकस्तुको गोठ भन्दा
पनि फोहार रहेछ!
Chameli: ‘The school is very dirty. Don’t you want to clean your classroom yourself once in a while?’

Teacher Maya: ‘No, sister, teachers are not supposed to do the menial jobs. If we do, everybody will look down upon us.’
इसक्ल यस्तो फोहोर रहेछ। तपाईलाई कहिल्याई पनि एक पटक आफूले पढाउने कोठा सफा गरी जस्तो लागदेन?

होइन दिवी, शिक्षकहरुले सफा गर्न थालियो भने त सबैले हामीलाई हेपिनाल्छन् नि! हाम्रो काम त पढाउने पो हो त!
It was time for Chameli to leave. Maya sensed her disapproval of the whole thing. Maya shared this encounter with the new lady teacher and the Peon Sir.

Looking at the school, Chameli was anxious to tell this to children’s aunt, who was known as everybody’s aunt Mynah, as soon as possible.

**Teacher Maya:** ‘You know, if we have to hear such things often, it will be difficult to continue this work. After all, what do we get out of all this.

**Chameli:** *(thinking)* ‘I feel sorry. I have often shouted at my children for not putting things properly and making things filthy. School is such a chaos. I must tell this to Mynah aunt.’
सुनुभो, आमाबाबुको कुरा यसरी सुनिरहू पनि भो भने, यो काम गर्न सकिन्दैन होला। आखि, यो कामले हामीलाई के नै भएको छ र?

मलाई निवाड लाग्यो। मैले मेरा छोराछुरीलाई सामान ठीक काउँस्ला राख्नौं, घर फोहो भन्नी भनेर बेलाबेला गाली गाई। इस्कूलुङ्गे त यस्तो लाखाउँ रहेछ। यो कुरा कतिपया मैनै फूलाई भनी।
Next day at the school.

Maya came to school earlier than anybody else. She sprinkled water over the dusty floor, swept her classroom, and brushed the dust off the carpet. The children noticed the cleaner classroom and looked happy. This gave Maya a good feeling.

**Boy:** *‘Our teacher is the best.’*

**Girl 1:** *‘How nice!’*

**Girl 2:** *‘How clean!’*
हाम्रो मिस त सबै भन्दा राम्रो हुनुल्ला नि?

आहा! कति सफा!

आहा! कति राम्रो!
Next day in the village.

Chameli met Mynah, the aunt, and told her what she saw at school. Her heart was shrunk too. She asked Chameli to gather as many villagers as possible in her house. In the evening, few people mostly women and children turned up in Mynah's house. A few other women shared experiences similar to Chameli's but nobody knew what to do. When everybody was pausing, Mynah the aunt said in her heavy voice:

‘I have an interim proposal. Can each of us go to the school in turn for some time? Then, we'll have a better insight. Then we know what we can do. It cannot change overnight.’

Villeger A: Committee dose not sit together. Head sir and committee chair are relatives—what to talk about them?
मेरे एउटा प्रस्ताव छ।
हामी हरेक घरबाट पालै पालो दिनसम्म इस्कूल जा न सक्छौ। त्यसो गयो भने, हामी रामोसंग कुरा थाहा पाउन सक्छौ। के गर्न भने विचार पनि आउँछ। आजको भोलि वै यो अवस्थामा परिवर्तन आउने होइन।
The villagers started dropping by, one, each day, quietly.

On the fifth day, it was Kalyani’s turn on the very day, the head teacher had happened to come to the school. He saw her loitering around and noticed something fishy.

**Head Teacher:** *(thinking)* ‘Why is this lady loitering around for so long?’

**Kalyani:** *(thinking)* ‘Oh god, its the head teacher today what I tell if he asks what I am up to?’
आम्मी, आज त इस्कूलमा हैंडसर पो रहेछ। मलाई देखेर के गर्न देखको भनेर सोध्यो भने के भने होला?

यत्रा बरवेखि यी बढी आमेकिन यतातिर अन्याय अन्याय गरेछिन्?
Kalyani could not keep the matter in herself. She revealed immediately that she came to see what happens in the school as decided by the villagers.

Kalyani: ‘We are worried about children. It’s a real problem that no one is paying attention to the worsening situation of this school.’

Head Teacher: ‘Who told you we are absent, not teaching, don’t you see me here? You simple villagers don’t know how bad the government policy is!’

They exchanged some not so friendly chats.
हामीलाई नानीहरूको धेरै चिन्ता छ। इस्क्यूल भर्ने नै विरियेछ। कसैले वास्ता गर्नु?

कसैले भन्नो तपाईलाई हामी इस्क्यूल आउँदै भनेप्रे? शिक्षक छैन रे? तपाईले यहाँ मलाई देखुँबन्न? तपाई सोका गाउँहरूलाई केही थाहा छैन, सरकारी नीति कति खराब छ!
At the school, the head teacher felt a bit anxious. He did not speak to anyone but everybody could feel that there was some upheaval in the head teacher's head.

**Head Teacher:** *(thinking)* ‘The lousy peon has not been doing his job. People don’t point to him for not cleaning but blame me. Stupid villagers! It should be ok, until they start pointing that their children are not learning!’
यो लह़ुवा पिउन आफ्नो काममा गरेन। गाउँले हल्ले मलाई दोष लगाउँछन्। इस्कूल मैले पढाउँै? गाउँले आफ्ना छोराछोरीले किन केही पढन जान्छन् भनेर सोल नयाँएसम्म अँगू कुरा टर्न जाला!
The next day it was Biku’s turn to watch the school. He had just come from the town. He sets off early and got to the school by 9:30. A male teacher came to the school at noon. He got in the office and was signing attendance register also for the days he was not there.

Biku: ‘Sir, please stop signing for the days you have not come. Even today, its 12:30 and school stops at 1!’

Teacher: ‘Who are you? Why is this your business? Do you know who am I? I saved this school on the condition that they allow me to get paid whether or not I teach or come. Bluffs the young chick!’

Biku: ‘You may have but today I won’t let you sign in the attendance register.’

Biku snatched the attendance book, ran to the village and told what had happened.
सर, नआएको दिनको नाजिर गर्न सिलेट र ? आज पत्र तत्पाइ साँडे बाहमा आउनु भो ! इस्कूल मानि एक बजे बन्द भइहाल्लो !

तिमी को हो ?
तिमीलाई कैं मतलब ?
तिमीलाई वाहा छ म को हुँ?
यो इस्कूल बचाउन म आए पत्र न आए पत्र मलाई तलब दिन्छु भनेर मलाई शिक्षक बनाएको हो। बुझनु न सुझनु, धेरै बोल्छ काँचो केटो !

तपाईले भनेको कुरा हुन सक्छ तर आज म तपाईलाई नआएको दिनको नाजिर गर्न बिन्न !
The villagers decided to confront the head teacher on Saturday morning and sent message.

Early morning, the head teacher saw the villagers coming to him. He knew how to deal with officers from the district office but not agitated crowd of parents. He was surprised that people were following people like Kalyani. He realised the time has changed!

**Head Teacher:** ‘I am sorry for the lack of our care. Please give us a chance. If we receive your support like this, school will be definitely improved.’
प्रांत ध्यान नर्मेकोमा मा ताफी चाहन्छ।
हाम्रोलाई एउटा मौका दिनुहोस्।
तपाईहरूले यसौ नै सहयोग गर्नु भयो भने
विद्यालय अवश्य सुधार्ने छ।
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यो किताब शिक्षा नीति तथा अभ्यास केन्द्र र लुका स्कूल अफ आर्ट्स, बेल्जियमको स्वयंसेवी सहकार्यमा तयार गरिएको हो।
आधारभूत चित्र: हान भान दर कुसेन र लिन भम्पुलेन
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