

# Icons of Gender Justice

Paving the way for women's rights in Asia



FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG

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**Icons of Gender Justice**  
**Paving the way for women's rights in Asia**

Nepal March 2021





To Lyka, a dear friend and colleague, without whom  
this project would not have been the same.



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# Preface

History is full of extraordinary women, but their stories are seldomly told. In Asia as elsewhere the icons of political and social struggles that are talked about in school or media are overwhelmingly male. Nonetheless, there are also many women who accomplished outstanding achievements and made great sacrifices for their beliefs, often against high odds. In many cases these women inspired others and made a long-lasting impact on their societies.

Therefore, the team of the FES Gender Justice Hub Asia (GEHA), together with the regional communications team, and the gender coordinators of the FES offices in the region, set out to identify and tell the stories of some of these Asian icons of gender justice. With this anthology, we want to share their inspiring messages beyond the borders of the countries we work in as well as show how manifold the roots of feminism and gender equality are in the Asia and Pacific region. Since we had to limit ourselves to one story for each country, some hard choices had to be made. Most certainly many more stories could and should be told of the women working and fighting for gender justice in the region. We chose the icons based on their contribution to gender justice in their respective context. Therefore, the stories in this publication do not cover their whole lives but focus on their contributions to gender justice within a specific historic, political and social context.

The women whose stories are told are diverse in many aspects: age, class, race, education, and upbringing. Some used their privileged position in society to drive change towards social justice, while others had to fight hard to create space for themselves in the first place. But they all have one thing in common: determination to change the lives of women and girls for the better, and with this they paved the way for women's rights in Asia.

It is a complex coordination task to make such a project happen. However, most of the work was done by our colleagues in country offices, who identified the stories and the writers and illustrators who brought them to life. Many thanks to: Omulbanin Paigee, FES Afghanistan; Iqbal Hossain, FES Bangladesh; Anna

Brachtendorf, FES China; Damyanty Sridharan and Jyoti Rawal, FES India; Rina Julvianty, FES Indonesia; Tae Hyun Kim, FES Korea; Oyungerel Chogdon, FES Mongolia; Lar Say Waa, FES Myanmar; Sidra Saeed, FES Pakistan; Renee Magpantay-Tumaliuan, FES Philippines; Wasu Vipoosanapat, FES Thailand; and Tran Hong Hanh, FES Vietnam for all the work and effort you have put into making this happen!

Special thanks go to Pabitra Raut and Priyanka Kapar, who not only worked on the Nepal story as members of the FES country team, but also – as members of the GEHA team – contributed to bring things together in many ways. So did Coco Quimpo who supported the project on the part of the regional communication team.

Our colleague Lyka Aguilar particularly pushed the project in the first days and contributed many wonderful ideas that formed this project. Although we lost her in June, her joyful spirit stayed with us while we kept working on bringing these stories to life. We miss her and hold the memory of working and being with her very dearly!

We hope you enjoy reading these stories as much as we enjoyed bringing them to life in this anthology.

**Isabelle Mischke**

Regional Communications Coordinator, FES in Asia

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Director, Gender Justice Hub Asia, FES Nepal

March 2021

# Kang Ju-ryong

1900-1931

On May 28, 1931, Kang Ju-ryong, a 31-year-old female worker, headed to Ulmil Pavilion, known as the highest point in Pyongyang, Korea, and climbed up on the rooftop. Here, she cried out for the liberation of women and the liberation of labor. “I have come up on this roof prepared to die, and I will not come down until the boss of Pyongwon rubber factory comes here to roll back his statement regarding our wage cut,” she said. It is historically known as the first high-altitude sit-in protest in Korea.

At that time, the wages of Korean female workers were not even close to half of what their male colleagues got paid. Korean women were continually being subjected to exploitation and violence in their workplaces during the dark days of Japanese colonization. The wide-scale wage cuts were practiced by the employers as a method of managing the Great Depression.

Kang's sit-in protest took some eight hours. All 49 female workers who has been engaged in the strike at the rubber factory were forcibly arrested by Japanese police. The story of this protest was also reported in the media. Kang did not stop her protest and linked hunger strikes. Then she was released on bail due to her serious health conditions and passed away two months later.

Nowadays, Kang Ju-ryong is remembered as a symbolic figure for the female protest movements against Japanese capitalists. The so called aerial protest was the first starting point for Korean female workers to begin their own fight against them. Following up this protest, female workers organized a series of joint strikes and contributed as one of the key actors for the independence movements in the long run.

The high-altitude sit-in protest is understood as the last battleground both for female and male workers who have nowhere else to turn. Even if the working conditions generally have been improved since Kang's time, the amount of time that workers remain on the rooftops has increased - beginning from the train attendants up to the tower crane drivers who protest against unjust layoffs and unfair labor practices.

The hardship at the workplace that Kang Ju-ryong has faced still hold women back today. Sexual harassment and sexual assault occur not only at the workplace but also during the recruiting process. Work-Life-Balance is only a dream for precarious female workers. The gender pay gap is the highest among OECD countries. These are just a few reasons why female workers are still raising their voices against inequalities.

**Illustrator: Cha Eun Hye**

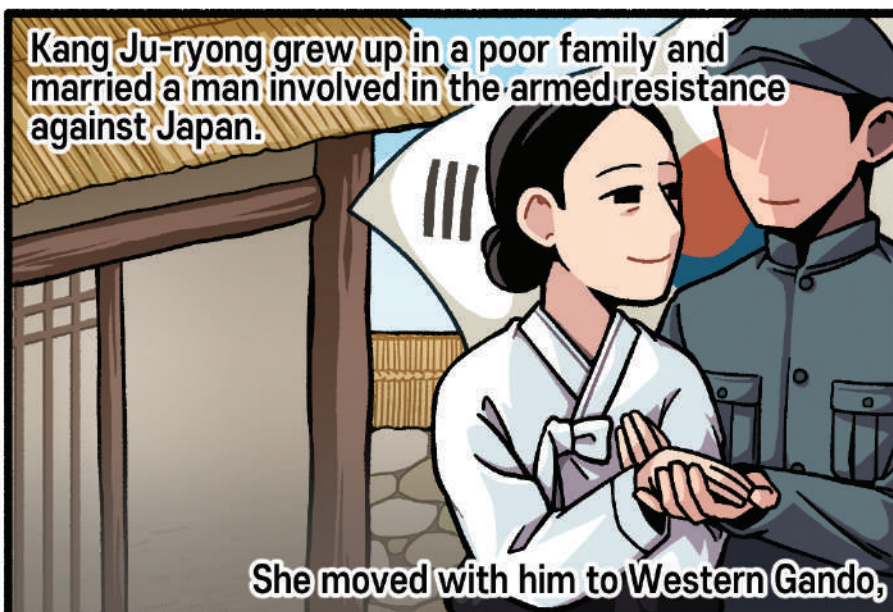


# Kang Ju-ryong:

The high-altitude  
sit-in protester









Kang's life as a women worker under Japanese occupation was fraught with labour exploitation, and sexual harassment and violence.



One day, the factory management unilaterally announced



a 17-percent cut in the wages of its 2,300 workers.



A group of 49 women workers including Kang launched a protest, but it was brutally suppressed by the Japanese police.

Late at night on 28, 1931, Kang headed for the Ulmil Pavilion, known in Korean as Eulmildae,



an ancient landmark that towered over the city of Pyongyang.



Kang climbed onto the roof of Eulmildae and shouted out for "liberation of women and liberation of labour" at the break of day.

I climbed up here ready to die if need be!

I'm never coming down unless the wage cut is called off!

In the evening, a fireman climbed up the Eulmildae behind Kang's back and pushed her off from the roof. The Japanese police arrested her and the women workers who had joined Kang on a hunger strike.

Kang did not stop her hunger strike even behind bars.

She was released on bail due to her failing health, only to pass away at the tender age of 31.

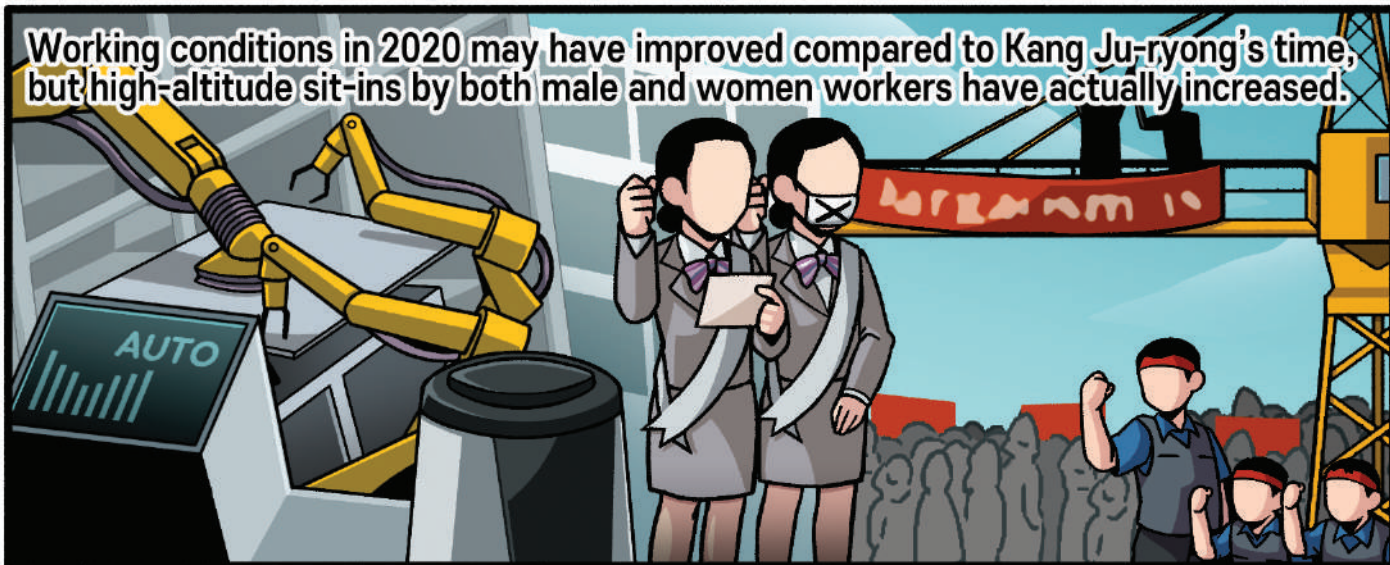
Kang Ju-ryong's struggle became the launching pad for women's advancement,

sparking solidarity strikes by women workers and imbuing women with the courage to hold their own in the independence movement.

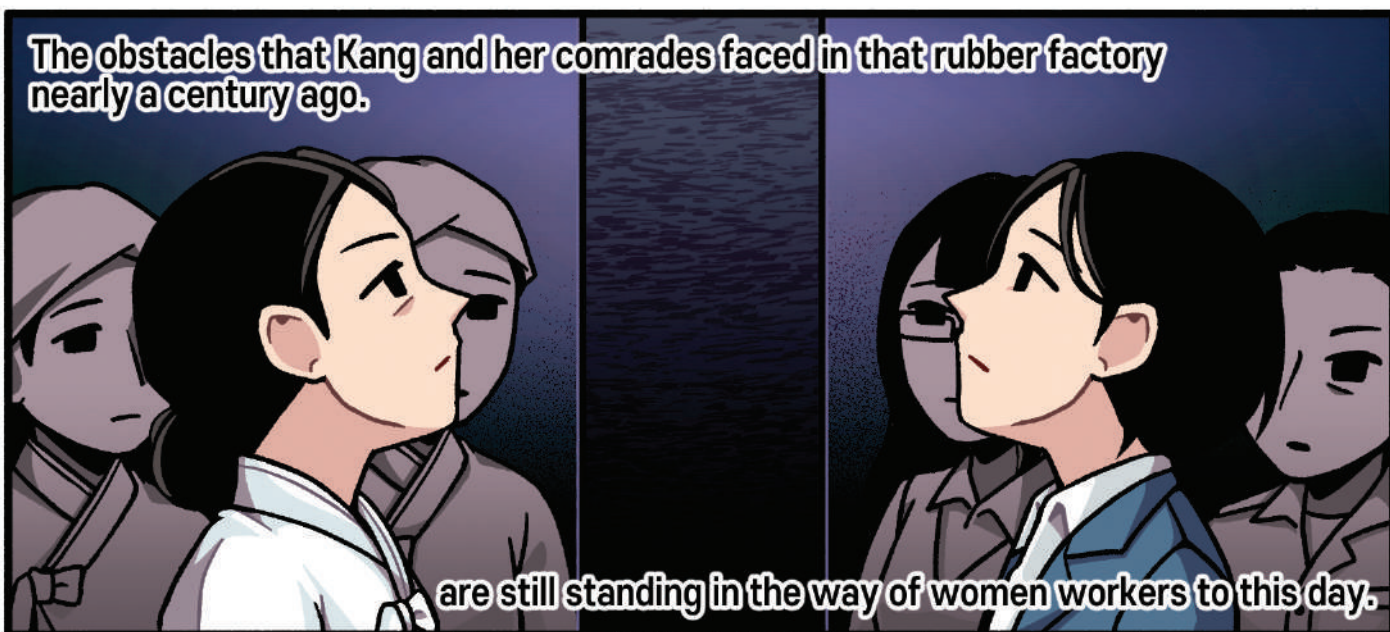




Working conditions in 2020 may have improved compared to Kang Ju-ryong's time, but high-altitude sit-ins by both male and women workers have actually increased.



The obstacles that Kang and her comrades faced in that rubber factory nearly a century ago.



are still standing in the way of women workers to this day.



That is why so many women workers are still fighting for gender justice both on- and offline today.

# Deng Yingchao

1904-1992

Deng Yingchao was a pioneer of the Chinese women's movement in the 20th Century. She has made outstanding contributions to the emancipation of women in China.

On 4 February 1904, Deng Yingchao was born in Nanning in the province of Guangxi in southern China. Her father passed away when she was very young, and her mother made a living by practicing Chinese medicine. Her mother's self-reliance deeply impressed Deng Yingchao. In 1910, the family moved to Tianjin, where Deng Yingchao came in contact with new ideas and social movements. From 1919 onwards she participated in the creation of women's groups, girls' schools, and women's publications. Most notable, aged 20 she founded the first newspaper in China that specifically discussed women's issues. Having become a well-known figure in the women's movement, she served as a Minister of Women and Secretary of the Women's Movement Committee on the Tianjin Municipal Communist Party Committee in 1925.

During the Second World War, Deng Yingchao worked to organize and unite women to resist Japanese occupation. In the countryside, she helped carry out land reforms and continued to lead the women's movement. On the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China, she led the preparation and presided over the First National Congress of Chinese Women. Through this, the women's movement was institutionalized in the newly established government. The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, drafted by Deng Yingchao, was the first law promulgated after the founding of the People's Republic of China. It played an important role in establishing equality between men and women in marriage and family.

As the vice chairwoman of the National Women's Federation, Deng Yingchao led and organized women to contribute to building the nation that China is today. She also participated in the international women's exchanges and cooperation. After the People's Republic of China was founded, Deng Yingchao led delegations of Chinese women to attend the Asian Women's Representative Conference in China in 1949, and the Executive Committee of the International Democratic Women's Federation in East Berlin in 1975, East Germany. During this period, Deng Yingchao had extensive exchanges with women leaders from all over the world, and established deep friendships with them. Thanks to her efforts, the All-China Women's Federation established friendly relations with women and women's groups in 53 countries in just a few years. Deng Yingchao is a widely respected and revered advocate for gender equality.

**Research: Enlai Foundation**

**Illustration: XU Jingwen**



# Deng Yingchao

ADVOCATE  
FOR GENDER EQUALITY

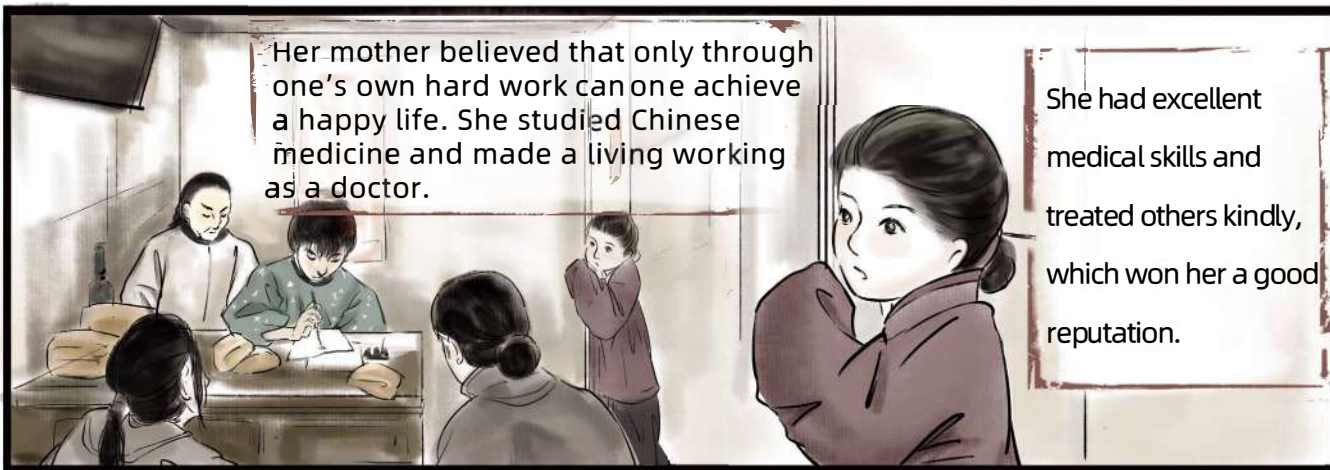




In 1904, Deng Yingchao was born in Guangxi, Southern China. When she was still very young, her father passed away. Her mother brought her up alone, which was considerably difficult at the time.



Her mother believed that only through one's own hard work can one achieve a happy life. She studied Chinese medicine and made a living working as a doctor.

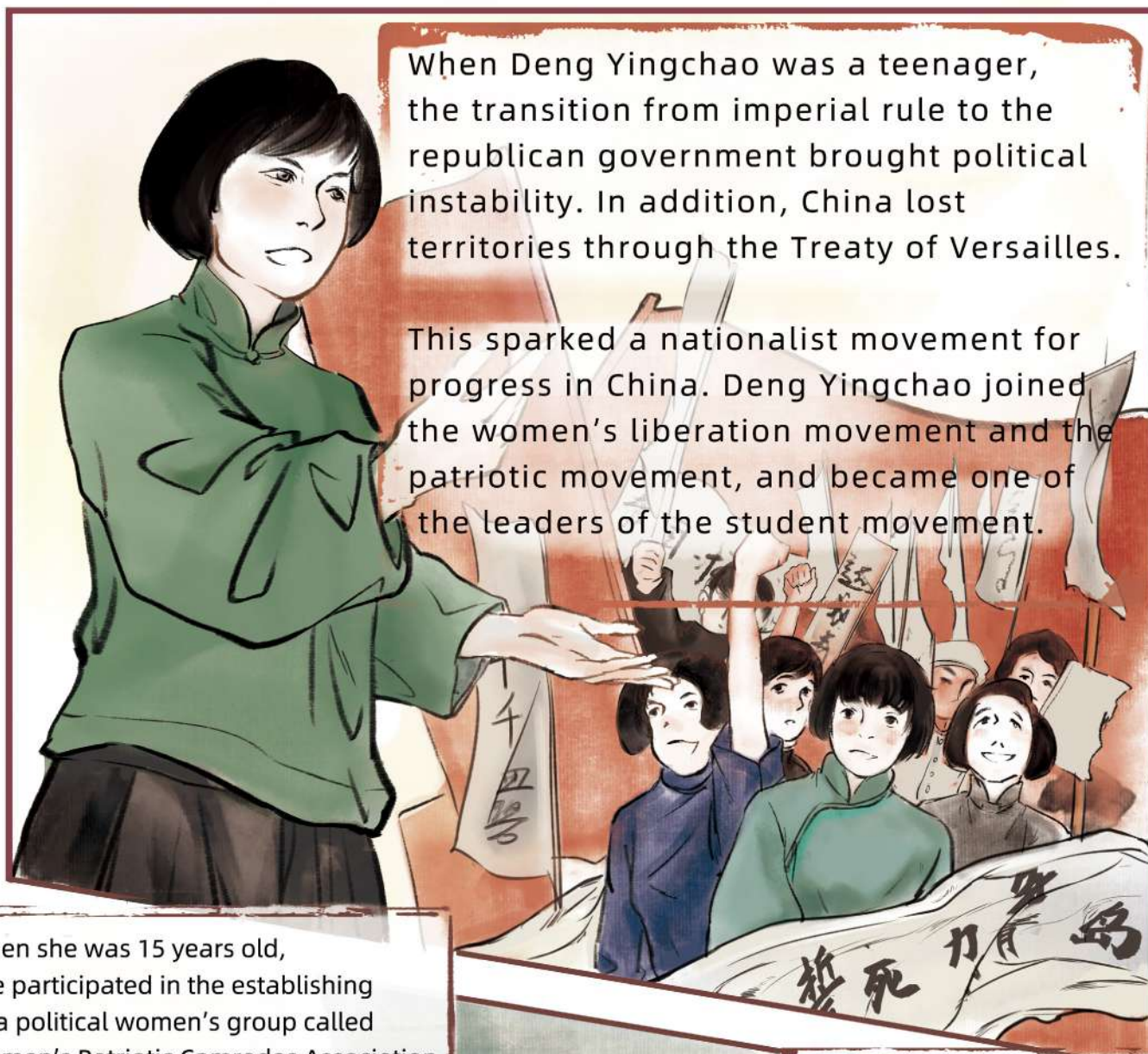


She had excellent medical skills and treated others kindly, which won her a good reputation.

Through her mother's example, Deng Yingchao understood that women must rely on themselves to gain a foothold in society.







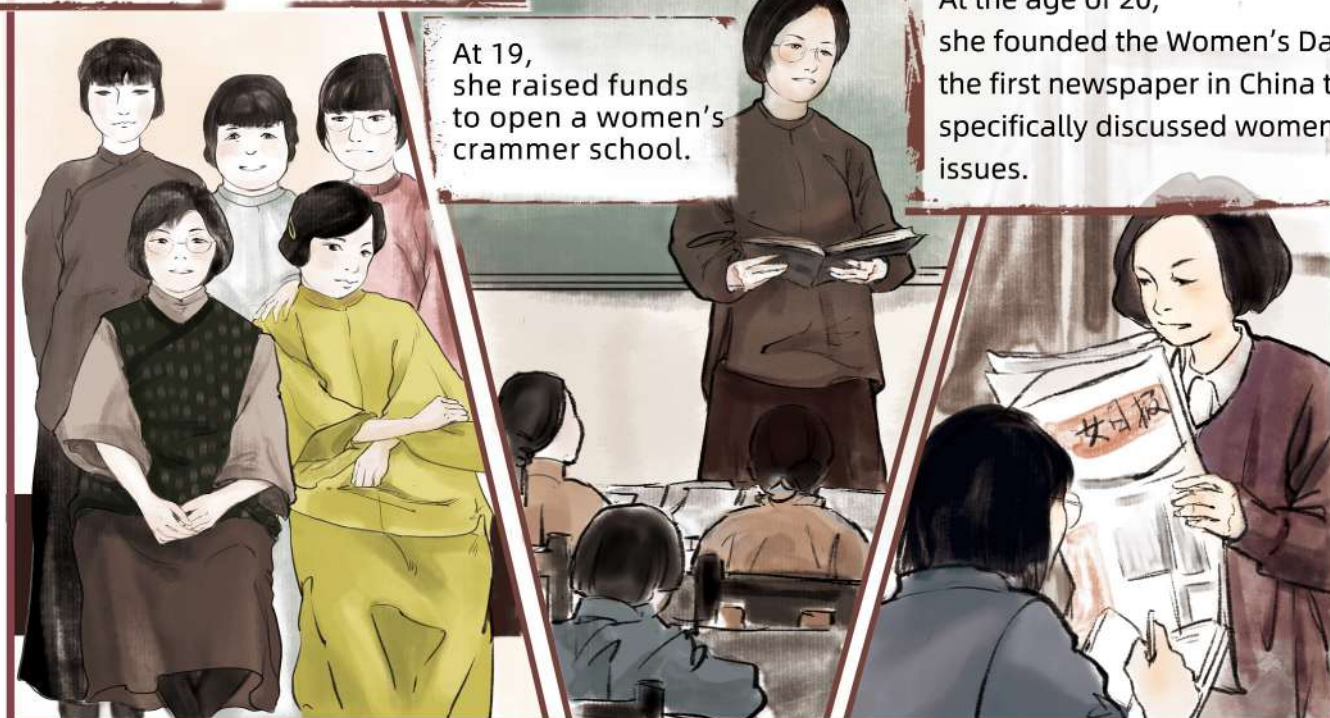
When Deng Yingchao was a teenager, the transition from imperial rule to the republican government brought political instability. In addition, China lost territories through the Treaty of Versailles.

This sparked a nationalist movement for progress in China. Deng Yingchao joined the women's liberation movement and the patriotic movement, and became one of the leaders of the student movement.

When she was 15 years old, she participated in the establishing of a political women's group called Women's Patriotic Comrades Association.

At 19, she raised funds to open a women's crammer school.

At the age of 20, she founded the Women's Daily, the first newspaper in China that specifically discussed women's issues.





**In 1950**, one year after the People's Republic of China was founded, as part of her work as representative to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Deng Yingchao drafted the Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China. This new law abolished the feudal marriage system. Monogamy, equality between men and women and the protection of the rights and interests of women and children became the law.



**The Marriage Law**

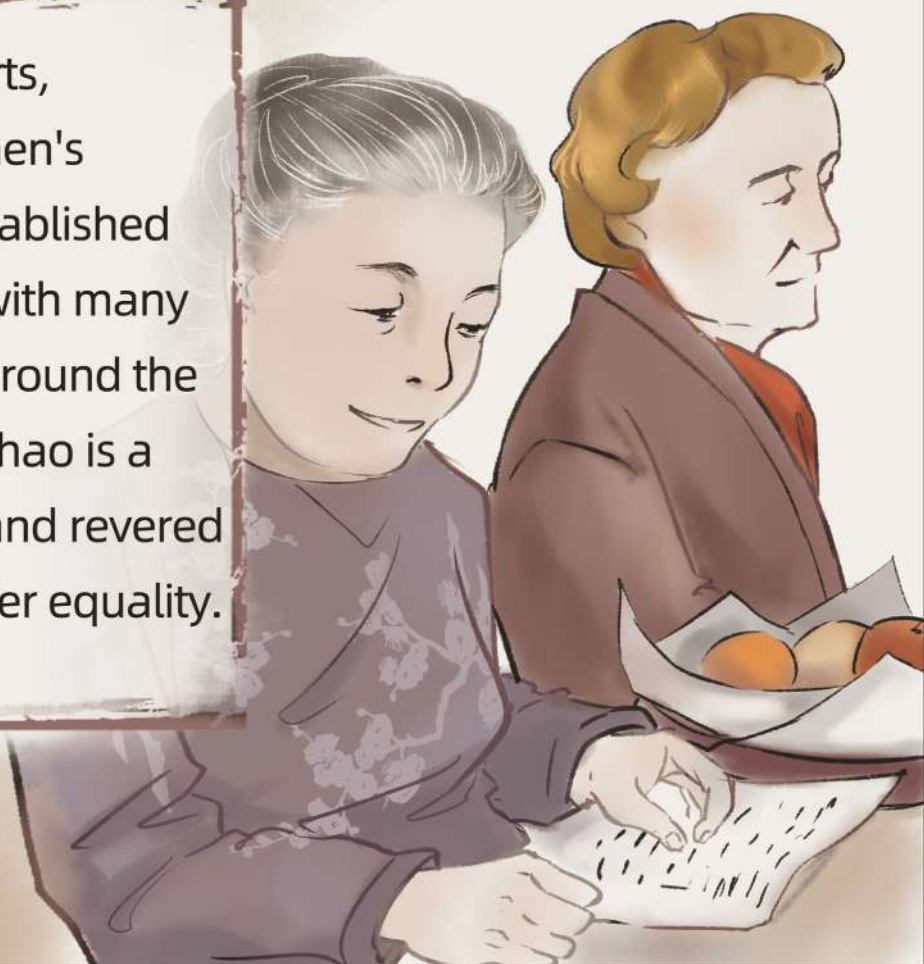
was the first national law in the People's Republic of China, and it was a big step towards increased gender equality.



As the vice chairwoman of the National Women's Federation, Deng Yingchao led and organized women to contribute to building the nation that China is today. She also actively participated in international cooperation between different women's groups.



Thanks to her efforts, the All-China Women's Federation has established friendly relations with many women's groups around the world. Deng Yingchao is a widely respected and revered advocate for gender equality.



# Karina Constantino -David

1946-2019

Born on 19 March 1946, Karina was the second child of prolific historians Renato Constantino and Letizia Roxas-Constantino. She was educated at the University of the Philippines (UP) where her parents' works enjoyed a large and dedicated following. Later she herself taught in the UP's Department of Sociology, and College of Social Work and Community Development, where she mentored a generation of feminist community organizers and development workers.

When Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, Karina was a young faculty member at UP. She committed herself to the fight against the dictatorship of the Marcos regime. In the 1980s together with vocalist Becky Demetillo-Abraham she formed the folk-duo 'Inang Laya' (Mother Freedom). Karina was the guitarist and songwriter of the duo and they bravely performed protest songs during anti-Marcos rallies. Through their music, they exposed injustices and called people to action.

Despite all this feminist and activist background, Karina considered herself as a late comer in the feminist cause. She had not formally joined organizations belonging to the women's movement in the Philippines as they were highly partisan, as she viewed it. However, she saw how she was relegated to the sidelines of the anti-Marcos movement, while her husband took a leading role, even though both had contributed equally. This became consequential in her feminist undertakings confronting gender inequality inside and outside of her movements.

Karina's feminism was not mere rhetoric. She put it in concrete practice through various NGOs and government agencies. After the dictatorship's fall in 1986, Karina took part on the country's rebuilding and re-democratization. She was then appointed in different government positions by different administrations. She served the role of Development Undersecretary, Chair of the Urban Housing Council, and Chair of the Civil Service Commission, and in-between terms of offices, she also juggled doing organizing work as part of the civil society.

Her feminism was evidently manifested in her advocacy and community work. She formed and campaigned for the women's party, Abanse Pinay (Forward Filipina), in the first party-list election in 1998. Karina also led Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge (HASIK, the acronym can be interpreted in English as 'to sow or spread contagiously')—an organization focused on the urban poor's empowerment through initiatives on gender and development, children's rights, and housing. She also served in different capacities in NGOs that advocated for women's rights like Women's Action Network for Development, Independent Commission on Population and the Quality of Life, and Caucus of Development NGO Networks. Karina was at the frontline of the blossoming civil society that followed the global wave of democratization in the 1980s and the 1990s.

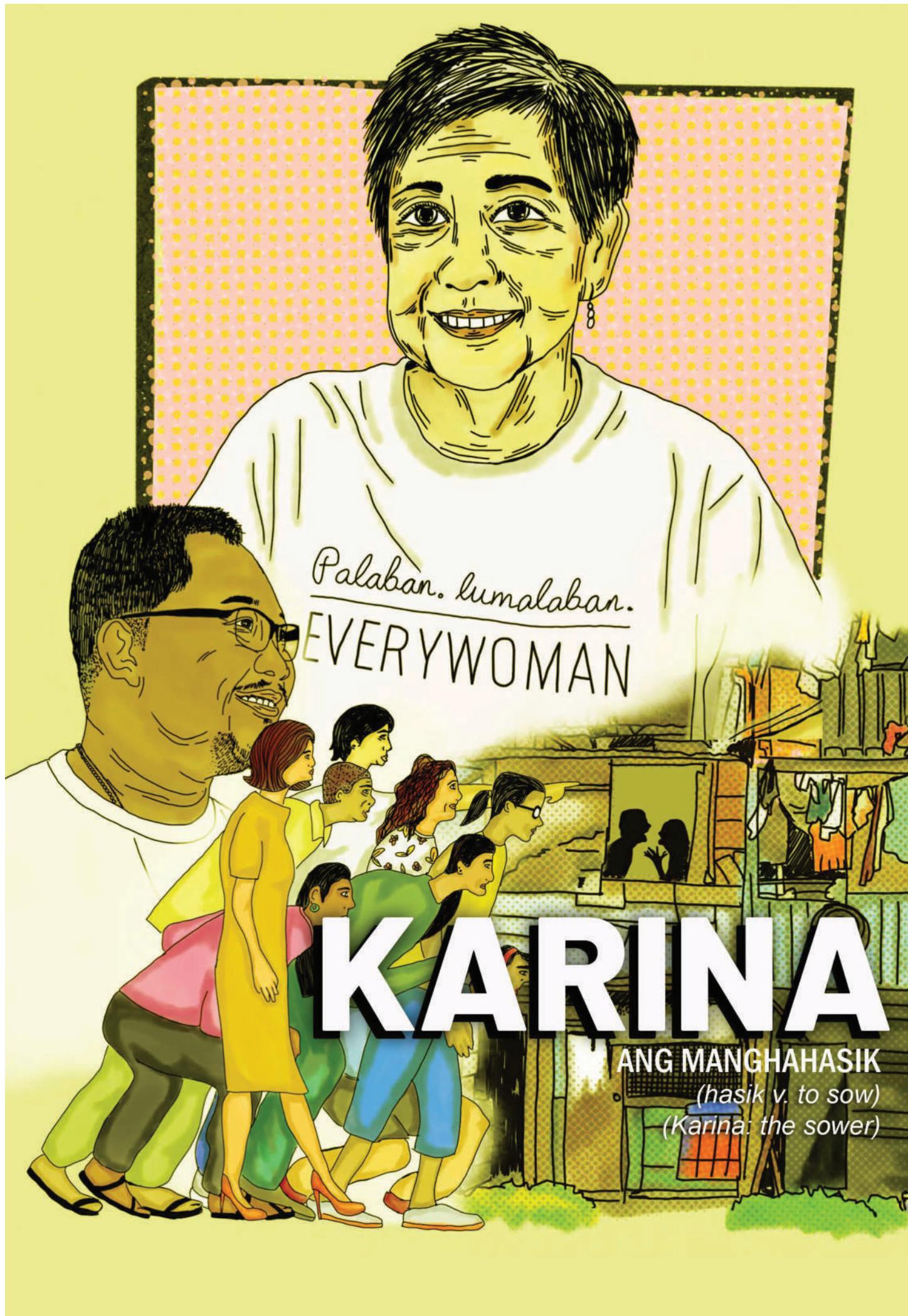
In old age, Karina continued the fight against injustice. She was one of those who founded Tindig Pilipinas (Take A Stand, Philippines)—a network that led political campaigns to end extra-judicial killings in the government's 'war on drugs'—consistent to her opposition of authoritarian and misogynist governments.

Karina always emphasized the importance of looking at "the feminist side within the larger structures." For her, a feminist who refuses to transcend the individual self does a great disservice to the movement. A real feminist reaches out and works to create and reclaim the space of women in the realm of politics, economy, culture, and society.

**Author: Veronica Alporha**

**Illustrator: Lester "Jumjum" Ouano**









AT 72, I OFTEN CATCH MYSELF REMINISCING AND WONDERING: IN MY LONG YEARS IN THIS WORLD WHAT HAVE I DONE FOR THE PEOPLE? WHAT HAS BECOME OF MY WORK? IN THE LONG RUN, DID IT MATTER AT ALL?

YOU TOOK ME UNDER YOUR WING WHEN I WAS 21. I HAVE BEEN TO MANY PLACES, DONE COUNTLESS OF JOBS. I'M 46 NOW BUT WHEREVER I WENT, WHATEVER I DID, I HAVE ALWAYS CARRIED EVERYTHING I HAVE LEARNED FROM YOU DURING OUR DAYS IN HASIK. EVERYTHING STARTED IN THAT SMALL NGO THAT WE BUILT



WE WANT PEOPLE TO HAVE THE RESOURCES AND THIS THE FREEDOM TO DETERMINE HOW THEY WANT TO LIVE THEIR LIVES AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS COMMUNITIES. WE VALUE THEIR CHOICES. WE DO NOT PATRONIZE. WE SOW IDEAS, BUT THE PEOPLE TEND THE PLANTS SO THAT THEY WILL OWN THE FRUITS. WE ARE HASIK.



HASIK. THAT LITTLE HOME OF OUR DREAMS AND IDEALS; THERE WE ENVISIONED THE COMMUNITY THAT WE ASPIRED TO.

HASIK WAS AN EXPERIMENT. IT WAS INSPIRED BY THE VISION THAT I SHARED WITH COMRADES WHO DREAMED OF A SOCIETY WHERE PEOPLE RECOGNIZE THE POWER THAT THEY HOLD AS COMMUNITIES.



IT WAS. BUT LOOKING BACK IT WAS THE KIND OF DREAM THAT WE OUGHT TO BE DREAMING. HOW ELSE COULD WE WORK WITH SUCH GRIT?



IT WAS SUCH A LOFTY DREAM.

THE PROGRAMME WAS GOOD. IT WAS INNOVATIVE, RESPONSIVE TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND CAPACITIES. IT WAS INSTRUCTIVE BUT NOT PATRONIZING AND YET...

...THERE'S SOMETHING MISSING.

AND IT'S ALWAYS THE MAN OF THE HOUSE!

IT SEEMS LIKE THE PROBLEM IN THOSE HOUSEHOLDS WAS NOT JUST MONEY. THERE IS ALSO A PROBLEM ON HOW EACH HOUSEHOLD IS MANAGED... ON WHO HAS THE SAY.



IT WAS A LOT OF HARD WORK. BUT WE KNEW QUITE WELL THAT THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY OF DOING IT. COMMUNITY WORK IS HARD BECAUSE COMMUNITIES ARE COMPLEX ORGANISMS PULSATING WITH COMPLEX ISSUES...

HOW DO YOU COPE WITH LIFE THESE DAYS? HAS OUR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME HELPED?

YES. HE SAYS HE EARNES ENOUGH MONEY AS A SECURITY GUARD TO FEED ME AND THE CHILDREN. HE SEES NO NEED FOR ME TO DO SIDE JOBS.

BUT SOMETIMES THE CHILDREN GET SICK OR THEY NEED SOMETHING FOR SCHOOL... IT IS HARD TO MAKE OUR MEET. IT'S NOT ALWAYS ENOUGH.

IT IS HELPFUL, BUT MY HUSBAND GETS ANGRY THAT I SPEND SO MUCH TIME OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE.



IT WAS DURING THE CONDUCT OF HASIK'S MORE BASIC PROGRAMMES THAT WE REALIZED THAT THE PROBLEM OF GENDER INEQUALITY WAS MORE PERVERSIVE THAN IT APPEARED.

A LOT OF TIMES, THINGS ESCALATE. IN ONE COMMUNITY, WE FOUND OUT THAT 6 OF 10 WOMEN EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE."

HE WAS DRUNK

HE HITS ME WHEN I NAG. IT'S MY FAULT.

HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER, MY FATHER DID IT TOO. IT WAS NORMAL.

ONE TIME THE HITTING GOT SO BAD THAT I BLED AND ALMOST DIED... THIS CANNOT BE RIGHT.

HE LOSES PATIENCE WHEN HE'S TIRED. HE DOESN'T HIT EVERY DAY.





THE PROBLEM WAS SO DEEPLY EMBEDDED WE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO START.



SURELY, THERE WERE WOMEN LIKE CLARA WHO KNEW THAT THINGS OUGHT TO CHANGE...



WE BELIEVE IN EQUALITY, TOO, BUT HOW WILL WE MAKE THE MEN BELIEVE THE SAME THINGS? HOW DO WE CONVINCE THEM THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF THINGS OTHER THAN HOUSEHOLD CHORES?

BUT THE MEN THEY HOLD THE IMPORTANT POSITIONS, THEY HAVE THE RESOURCES, THEY HAVE THE POWER.

I DON'T KNOW IF WE REALLY STAND A CHANCE.

WE NEED TO ACT COLLECTIVELY AND IN CONCERT. WE NEED TO DO IT TOGETHER.

WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT WOMEN AND MEN ARE EQUAL BUT THEY AREN'T TREATED EQUALLY, AND WE JUST CAN'T ACCEPT THIS SITUATION.

WE ARE NOT PUNCHING BAGS OR PLAYTHINGS. WE ARE CAPABLE AND STRONG. WE ARE NOT DEFINED BY OUR OPPRESSION.



I IMAGINE THAT IT WOULD BE VERY HARD TO CONVINCE MEN THAT SOMETHING IS EXTREMELY WRONGS WITH A SYSTEM THAT BENEFITS THEM GREATLY.

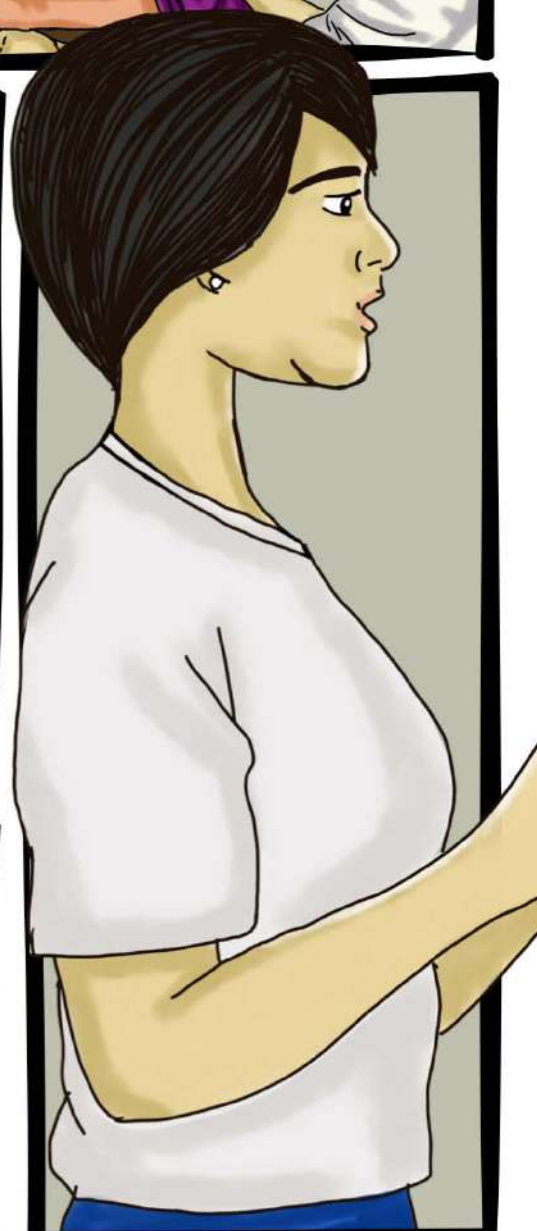
THE WOMEN ARE AWARE OF THEIR SITUATION AND THEY KNOW THAT SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT, BUT THEY ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT CONVINCING THE MEN.

WE NEED TO MAKE THEM REALIZE THAT THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN ARE THEIR PROBLEMS TOO.

WELL, THAT MAKES SENSE. WE CAN EMPOWER WOMEN THROUGH INTENSIVE TRAININGS, BUT REALLY CHANGING HOW MEN SEE AND TREAT THEM IS ANOTHER STORY.



MY PARENTS WERE AMAZING SCHOLARS. THEY WROTE EVERYTHING TOGETHER. MY MOTHER DID AS MUCH WORK AS MY FATHER DID BUT SHE REMAINED IN HIS SHADOW... I KNOW THAT MY DAD WAS A GOOD MAN. HE LOVED AND RESPECTED MY MOTHER. I DON'T THINK HE INTENDED TO KEEP MY MOTHER FROM THE RECOGNITION SHE DESERVED... IT WAS JUST THE WAY THINGS WERE. HE WAS NOT A BAD PERSON. HE WAS TRAPPED IN A SYSTEM AS MUCH AS WE WERE.





IT WAS A CRAZY IDEA. IT WAS NEW, GROUND-BREAKING. NO OTHER WOMEN'S GROUP HAS THOUGHT OF IT AND I WASN'T SURE IF YOU WERE GENIUS OR CRAZY... CONSIDERING HOW THINGS TURNED OUT, I'M NOW CONVINCED IT'S THE FORMER.



IT WAS A SIMPLE IDEA, REALLY. HOW ELSE DO YOU CONVINCE ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE IF YOU REFUSE TO INCLUDE THEM IN THE CONVERSATION?



OH MY! THIS IS GONNA BE HARD. HOW DO WE CONVINCE MEN THAT WOMEN ARE OPPRESSED AND THAT THEY ARE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE?

IT'S HARD BUT I'M SURE IT CAN BE DONE. WE JUST NEED TO TAKE A NEW APPROACH.

WE NEED TO APPEAL TO BOTH THEIR REASON AND THEIR EMOTIONS. INTELLECT AND AFFECT.

WE NEED TO DO TWO THINGS. ONE, WE NEED TO MAKE MEN UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE OF GENDER INEQUALITY. SECOND, WE NEED TO TURN THEM INTO OUR ALLIES IN PUSHING FOR GENDER EQUALITY.

IT IS ALREADY HARD AS IT IS TO CONDUCT GENDER SENSITIVITY TRAINING WITH WOMEN. IMAGINE HOW HARD IT WOULD BE WITH MEN.

WE GOT TO WORK AND STARTED THE WAY WE USUALLY DID... WITH AN ENERGETIC AND PASSIONATE EXCHANGE OF QUESTIONS AND IDEAS.



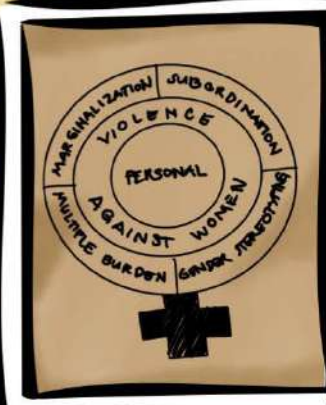
IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE BUT HOW COME NOBODY HAS THOUGHT OF IT BEFORE?

WELL? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I AM NOT SURE IF THIS IS GENIUS OR INSANE...

BECAUSE THIS IS THE KIND OF IDEA THAT ONLY KARINA WOULD DARE THINK ABOUT.

THIS IS HOW WE WOULD ILLUSTRATE THIS --- THE WOMEN'S SYMBOL CONTAINS THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDER BIAS, THIS RIGHT HERE... IS THE CROSS THAT EVERY WOMAN CARRIES.



I'M HARDLY SURPRISED. KARINA IS A SOCIOLOGIST, AN ACTIVIST, AND A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER. THIS IS WHY SHE SEES EVERYTHING WITH SUCH CLARITY.

YEAH. HOW DID SHE ILLUSTRATE SUCH COMPLEX PROBLEM WITH A... UH A DOUGHNUT?

SHE'S REALLY SOMETHING ELSE, ISN'T SHE?

THE IDEA WAS TO REMIND MEN THAT EVEN THOUGH THEY BENEFITTED FROM A SYSTEM THAT HURT WOMEN, THEY WERE NOT THE ENEMIES. AND EVEN IF THEY HAVE HURT THE WOMEN IN THEIR LIVES... IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO CHANGE AND TO CORRECT PAST MISTAKES.

WE HAVE TO SHOW HOW GENDER BIAS IS EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN IN MULTIPLE LAYERS AND FORMS. WE NEED TO MAKE MEN UNDERSTAND WOMEN'S MARGINALIZATION AND SUBORDINATION. HOW WOMEN CARRY MULTIPLE BURDENS AND HOW GENDER STEREOTYPES HARM THEM...



IT WAS NOT EASY. GSM GOT MIXED REACTIONS. SOME WERE RECEPTIVE, OTHERS WERE JUST CURIOUS, BUT THERE WERE ALSO MEN WHO WERE OUTRIGHTLY HOSTILE.



BUT WE KNEW THAT IF WE COULD CONVINCE JUST ONE MAN OUT OF THE 30 OR 40 PARTICIPANTS THAT WOMEN AND MEN OUGHT TO BE EQUAL AND THAT GENDER VIOLENCE OUGHT TO STOP, THAT WOULD BE A REASON TO BE HAPPY.

GENDER INEQUALITY? WE HAVE WOMEN BECOMING PRESIDENTS NOW! BESIDES, THIS SORT OF TRAINING MAKES SENSITIVE BOYS OUT OF HARDENED MEN. WHO WANTS THAT?



OH, THIS IS INTERESTING. I MEAN, I ALWAYS GET UPSET WHEN MY DAD BEATS UP MY MOM. IT IS WRONG AND MOM DOESN'T DESERVE THAT. I MEAN SHE'S AN AMAZING WOMAN. I WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY MY DAD DOES THAT AND WHY MOM PUTS UP WITH IT.



HMM. I DON'T KNOW. I ALWAYS TREAT MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS FAIRLY. STILL, I HAVE A SENSE THAT MY GIRLS ARE NOT AS HAPPY AS THEIR BROTHERS. I WONDER WHY.




MY... MY 16-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER... SHE GOT PREGNANT AND I WAS FURIOUS. I WAS ASHAMED OF HER. I KICKED HER OUT OF THE HOUSE... I SAID TERRIBLE THINGS. THINGS I DIDN'T MEAN. I WAS JUST SO ANGRY... A FEW DAYS LATER, I GOT A CALL. SHE... MY BABY GIRL SHE... FELT ALL ALONE. SHE DECIDED TO END IT ALL. MY BABY. SHE'S GONE. IT'S MY FAULT. SHE'S GONE.



THERE WERE TIMES THAT I WISHED... WE HAD COME SOONER.

WHEN I GET ANGRY... I BEAT UP MY WIFE. TERRIBLY. I... I DON'T KNOW WHY I DO IT. I JUST... I JUST FEEL POWERFUL AND STRONG WHEN I DO IT... I DID HORRIFIC THINGS. MY... WOOD PLANE... I SHAVE WOOD WITH IT AND I... I USE IT ON HER LEGS... SHE CRIES IN PAIN, EVERY SINGLE TIME. SHE PANICS AT THE SIGHT OF THE WOOD PLANE...



THAT STORY STILL HURTS AFTER SO MANY YEARS. BUT DO YOU REMEMBER LANDO? THE CARPENTER?

THIS SOUNDS BAD. THINGS MAY GET PHYSICAL, AS THEY HAVE BEFORE.

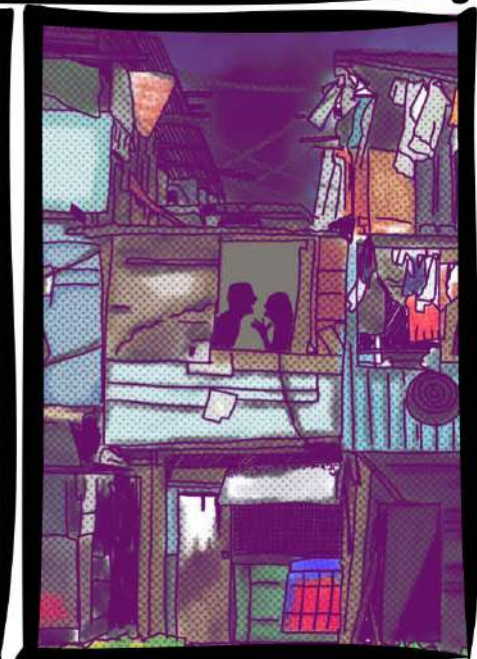
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. I SHOULD TRY TALKING TO LITO. WE GREW UP TOGETHER. MAYBE HE WILL LISTEN.

IT'S SATURDAY NIGHT. LOTS OF MEN ARE DRUNK. LITO AND AMY ARE FIGHTING AGAIN.

WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING! I'LL TRY THROWING SOME PEBBLES AGAINST THEIR WINDOW... AT LEAST LET LITO KNOW WE'RE LISTENING.



LANDO BECAME ONE OF OUR SUCCESS STORIES. HE DID NOT ONLY STOP WITH THE WOOD PLANE, HE TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF THE MOST COMMITTED MALE ADVOCATES AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE.







FOR KARINA AND GUS.

# Sorghaghtani Beki

**1190-1252**

Women in ancient Mongolia were more free and powerful than in other patriarchal societies. Elite women such as queens and princesses often played an important part in ruling the Mongol Empire. Had it not been for them, we maybe would not have heard of the Mongol Empire at all.

Undoubtedly the most prominent of them was Empress Sorghaghtani (c. 1190-1252). Sorghaghtani was the wife of Chinggis Khan's youngest son and heir Tolui. After the death of her husband, Sorghaghtani gained enormous power. She became an influential advisor of Tolui's successor and brother Ugudei. Sorghaghtani recognized the value of education for governing the far-flung state and supported the establishment of schools and libraries throughout the Mongol Empire. She made sure that each of her sons, who all became heirs to Chinggis Khan's throne, learned a foreign language. Sorghaghtani, a Nestorian Christian, is best remembered for her tolerance towards all religions and beliefs. The famous religious tolerance of the Mongol Empire was her and her sons' legacy. Sorghaghtani grew the cultural and commercial ties of the Mongol Empire with the world, and paved the way for an era of prosperity.

Sorghaghtani is a great example of the beneficial power that women wielded over the history of the Mongol Empire.

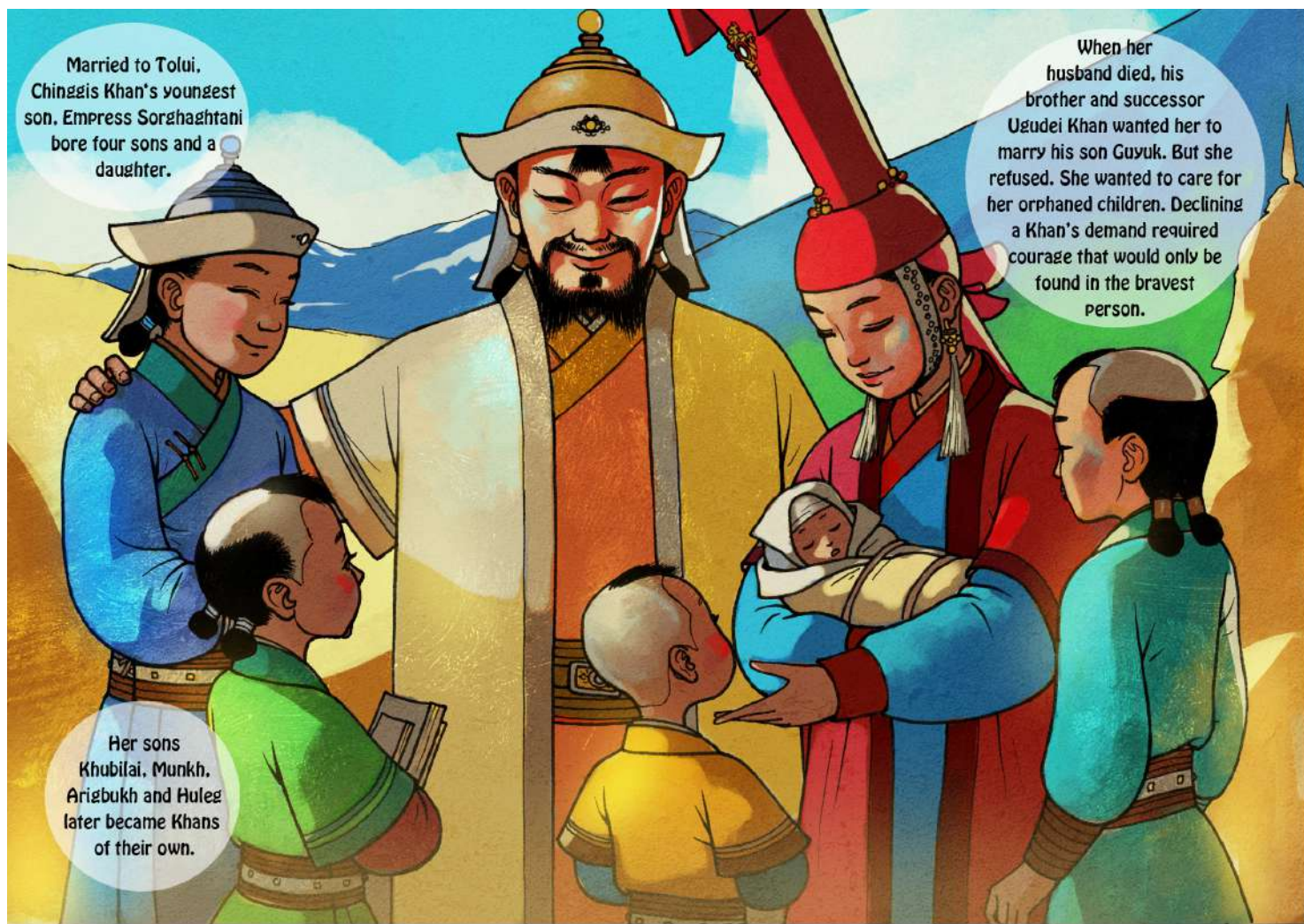
**Author: Oyungerel Chogdon**

**Illustrator: Tuguldur Ishgombo**

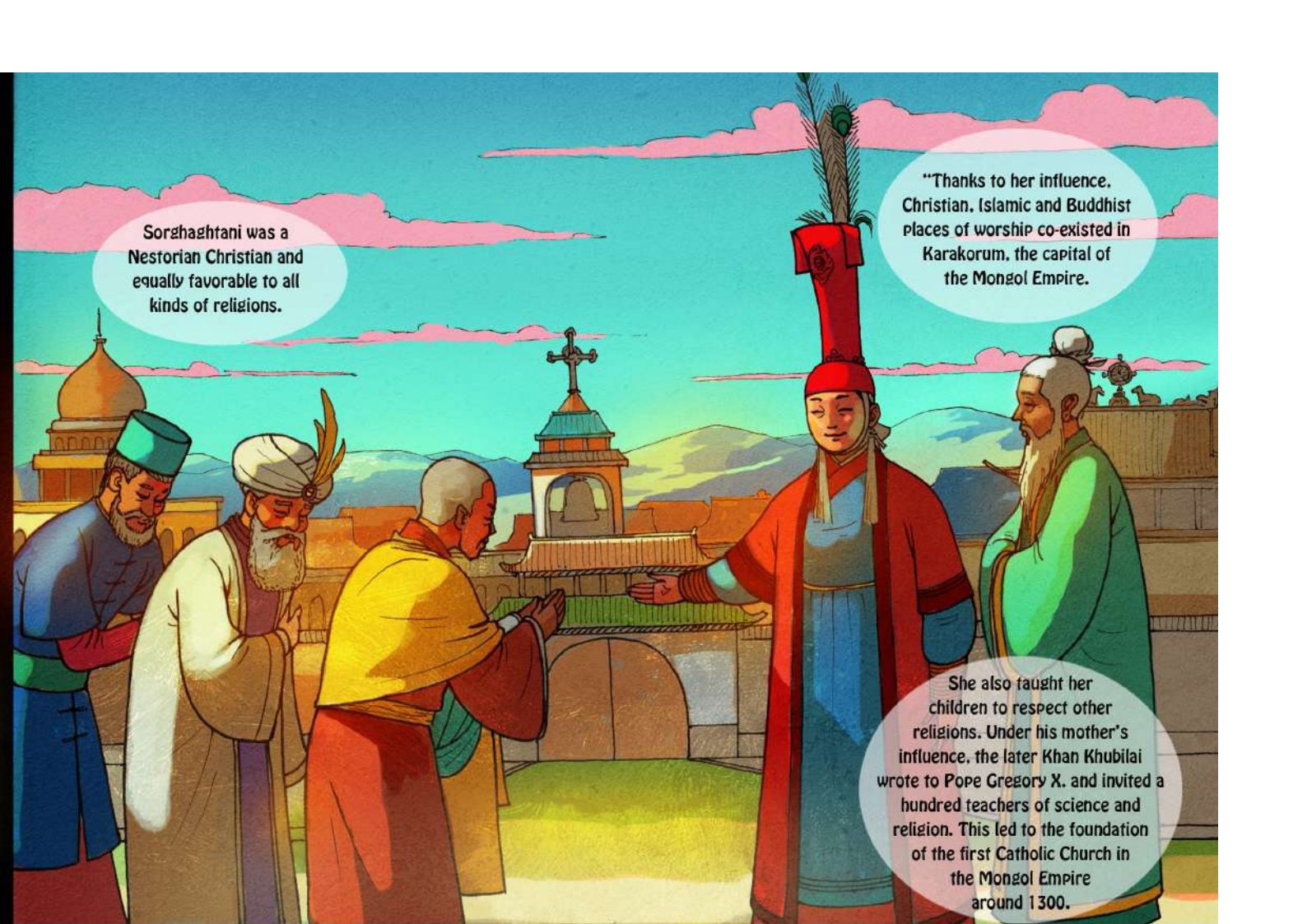













Sorghaghtani was a Nestorian Christian and equally favorable to all kinds of religions.

"Thanks to her influence, Christian, Islamic and Buddhist places of worship co-existed in Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire.

She also taught her children to respect other religions. Under his mother's influence, the later Khan Khubilai wrote to Pope Gregory X. and invited a hundred teachers of science and religion. This led to the foundation of the first Catholic Church in the Mongol Empire around 1300.



Sorghaghtani was a great policy maker. Her husband's successor Ugei Khan put her in charge of Tolui's estate and the Mongol Empire's administration.

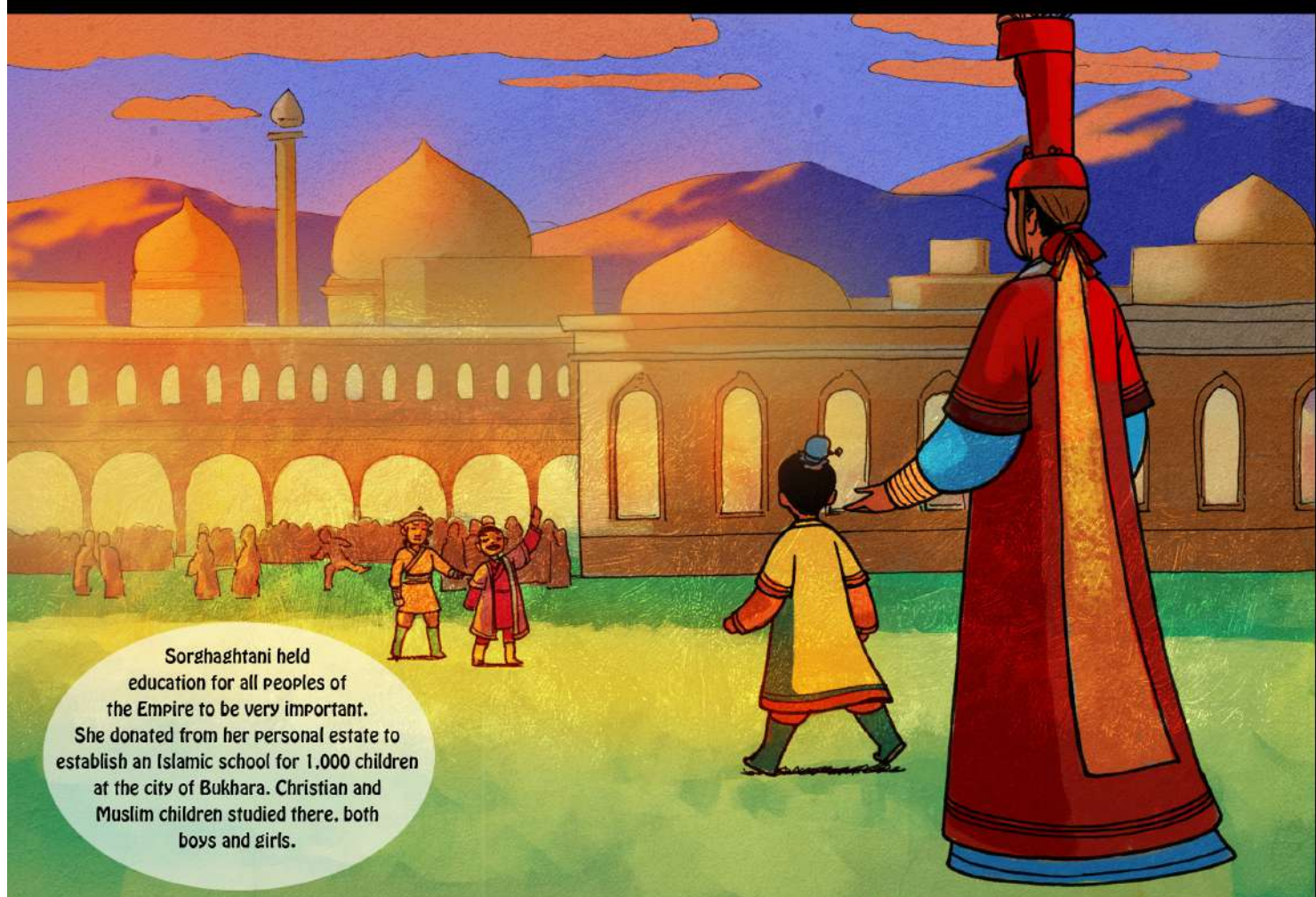


Under her leadership the Empire flourished. Vast territories were developed into farmland and the tax revenue was increased. Sorghaghtani demanded that the diverse peoples of the Empire must be supported rather than exploited.






Ugei Khan held Sorghaghtani in high regard and consulted her on important matters of the state. He never came to a decision without seeking her advice.



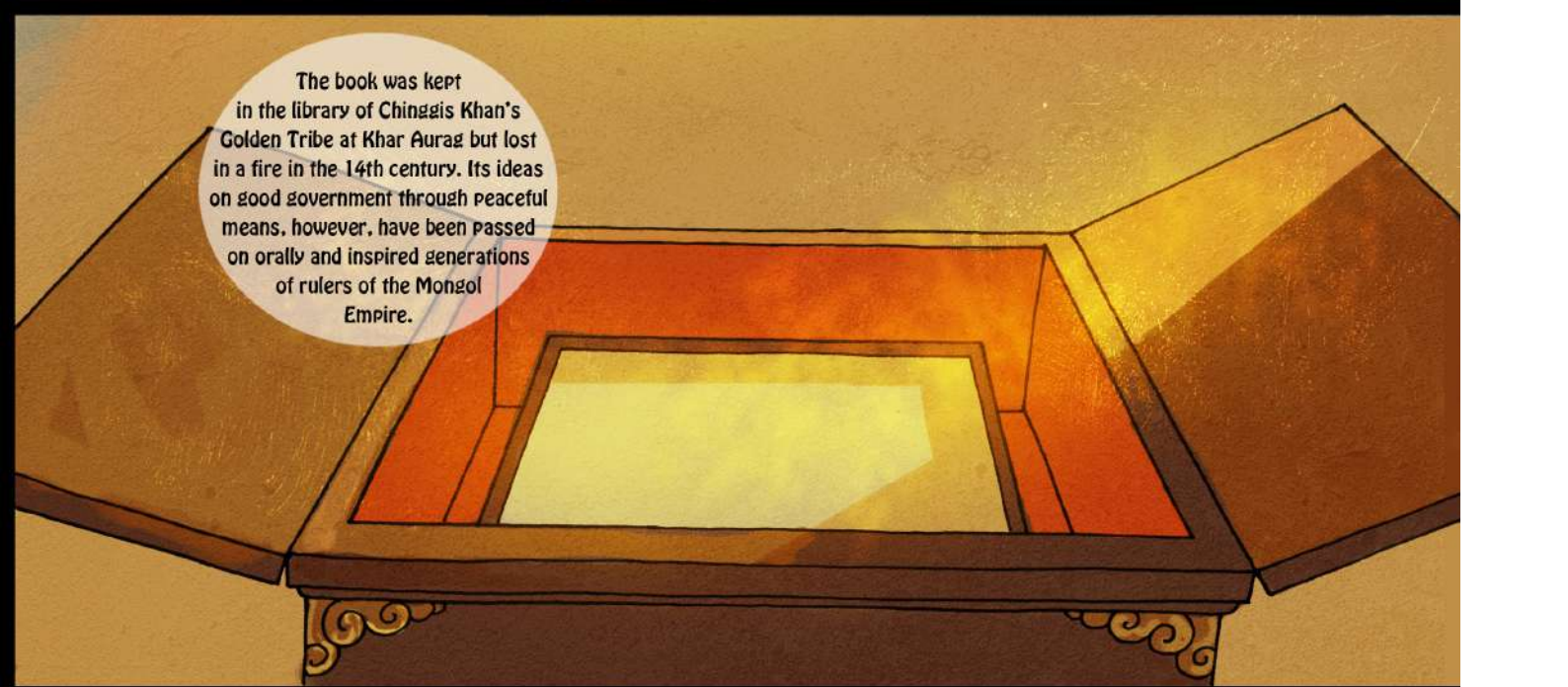
Sorghaghtani held education for all peoples of the Empire to be very important. She donated from her personal estate to establish an Islamic school for 1,000 children at the city of Bukhara. Christian and Muslim children studied there, both boys and girls.





Together with the most wise and powerful men of her time, Sorghaghtani wrote a book of great wisdom on the policy of the state. Unfortunately, the book was lost shortly thereafter."

In 1251, at the time of her son Munkh's accession to the Khan's throne, she compiled the essence of the lost book from her memory and called it The Golden Melody. She read it aloud during the coronation ceremony.



The book was kept in the library of Chinggis Khan's Golden Tribe at Khar Aurag but lost in a fire in the 14th century. Its ideas on good government through peaceful means, however, have been passed on orally and inspired generations of rulers of the Mongol Empire.



It is said, that when Sorghaghtani passed away she was buried at the Burhan Khaldun Mountain where only the Great Khans were allowed to rest in peace. Sorghaghtani was respected as equal to the male Khans of her time.

# Lian Gogali

1978-present

Lian Gogali is the founder and leader of Mosintuwu Institute, an organization based in Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia that empowers women and local communities in the sectarian conflict-torn region. Growing up in the province, where she attended school in Poso in the 90s, years before the Muslim-Christian conflict erupted, Lian obtained her bachelor's degree in theology in Yogyakarta. Instead of pursuing a career in the clergy, however, she decided to attend graduate school for Religious and Cultural studies.

For her thesis, she conducted research into women and children post-conflict in Poso and their memory of the violence. Years later, the thesis was published as a book, and her time spent at camps for displaced people had left an indelible mark in her, giving her a purpose to return and build the conflict-torn communities in the district.

Eventually, Lian returned to Poso, where she ran a Women School for the locals. After a while, however, she saw that the programme needed to be improved, if it were to be successful. With a couple of friends, she founded Mosintuwu Institute in 2010 and ran the first batch of Sekolah Perempuan (Women School), gathering women from different ethnicities, villages, and religions. The school aimed to empower the women politically, culturally and economically with a curriculum that ranged from peace studies, gender, sexual and reproductive health rights, social and economic rights, women and politics, to public speaking.

Her grounded and localized approach mixed with the progressive curriculum have successfully reached and empowered over 500 women from dozens of villages across Poso. In less than a decade, what she has started has evolved into a true grass roots movement whose members have become effective agents of peace and change in their communities. Beyond the typical post-conflict programmes, she empowers women, so they are not just able to survive but also to thrive, applying feminist values grounded in local wisdoms and approaches.

Lian says she only teaches the women to “resist” in a society where women's position is still secondary to men. In doing this, she learned from other women's movements in Latin American countries: “In resisting, we have to be smart. The key is to do this together.”

Her leadership and success has served as an inspiration to other organizers and leaders of communities of women across Indonesia, and even more so in conflict-torn areas. Though her work focuses on communities in Poso, she continues to maintain a strong network with other women's movements across the country and internationally. For her work, Lian has received both national and international acknowledgement.

**Author: Devi Asmarani**

**Illustrator: Adhitya Pattisahusiwa**



# LIAN

# GOGALI

**Empowering Women To  
Become Change Makers.**

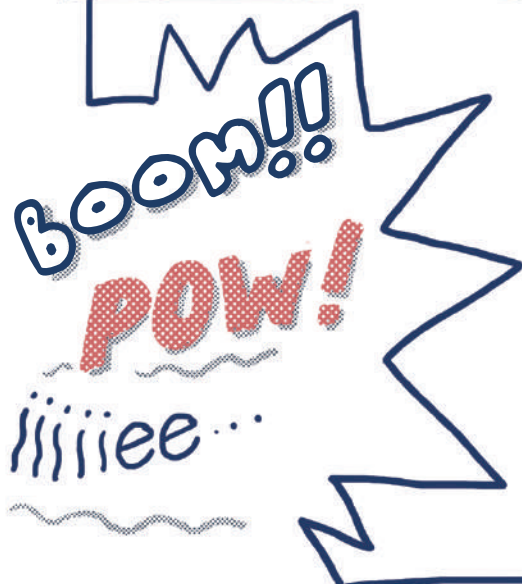




In the early 2000s, Lian Gogali was writing her thesis for her master's degree on women and children living in displaced camps in Poso, Central Sulawesi, to study their memory of violence during the sectarian conflicts in the area..



It was during this time that her eyes were opened to how different the narratives about the conflict were on the ground and in the media.



Quick, Theresa!  
They're coming,  
put this ON!



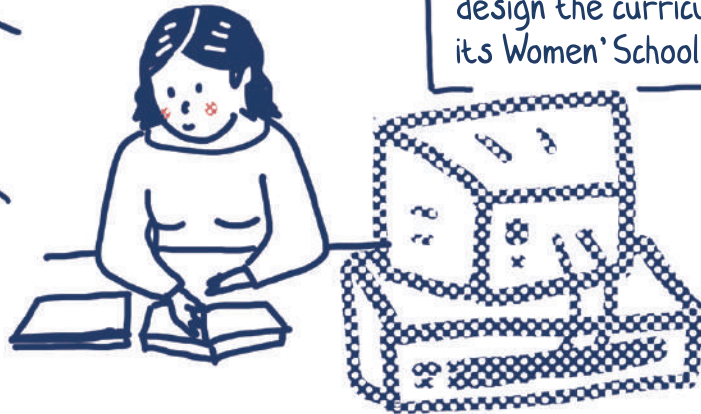
Thank you  
Maemunah  
...





Her thesis was published as a book a few years later,

and eventually she landed a job at a regional organization to design the curriculum and run its Women's School in Poso.



But it wasn't long before she felt the school was not very effective.

There was no local context.

...and the programme had a top-down approach.



\*Village Chief



She felt this kind of approach did not build a sense of ownership on the women's side and was not very sustainable.

Still, she remained a big believer that a school for women is the best means to empower women. The women need knowledge, information, access and skills. They need training to thrive, not just to survive.





Eventually, this led her to co-founding Mosintuwu Institute. Their mission is to emancipate the people of Poso economically, socio-culturally and politically by empowering the women and children, who are among the most marginalized member of society.

## MOSINTUWU INSTITUTE

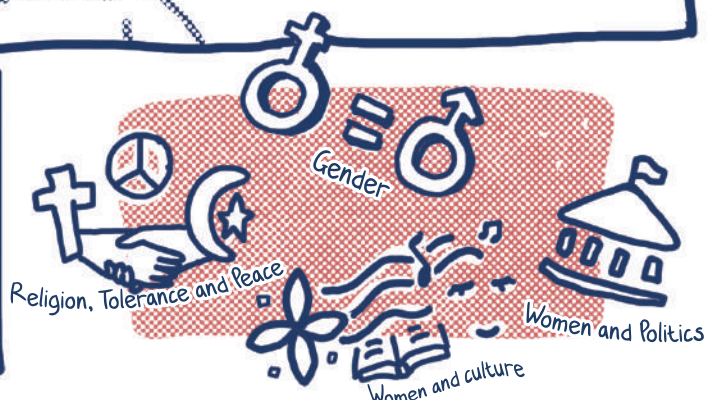


In 2010, the first batch of the Women School started in villages across the district. It's a one-year long programme with a curriculum that reflects their mission.

The school brought together women from Muslim and Christian villages, which merely a decade ago were fighting against each other. Religious sentiment still lingered in post-conflict Poso then.



They used simple language to convey what are actually progressive ideas. They deconstructed everything that the women had known and taken for granted, from religion, gender, cultural limitation to political participation.





In the beginning, it was hard. One of the tougher challenges was having to deal with the women's families, especially their husbands, who often have financial and physical control over them.

It has gotten better since then.

You're not going anywhere!

Despite their newly gained knowledge, however, the women still lacked the confidence to speak out, especially in public space. So the school added a "Reason and Public Speaking" module to the curriculum, which turned out to be a massive boost to their confidence.



Not only were they now able to speak in church or village meetings, but they could also argue with officials about the Village Law and budget. In fact, they have become a force to be reckoned with.





Within a few years, over 500 women from 70 villages across Poso have graduated from the three batches of the Women School. Most of them are low-income housewives who tend to family farmlands and with only primary or middle-school education.

They were then recruited to become volunteers in their respective villages, where they would contribute to programmes such as women and children's save houses, village supervision, or literacy projects.



Now the women are encouraged to become active drivers in the village economy by initiating local markets. Some of the villages have no market of their own, and villagers must travel many kilometers to sell their produce or buy their daily needs.



Mosintuwu helps the women develop and market their own products.



On top of that, the women continue to empower themselves with new skills, technical skills that are often holding them back, from computer to media and writing.

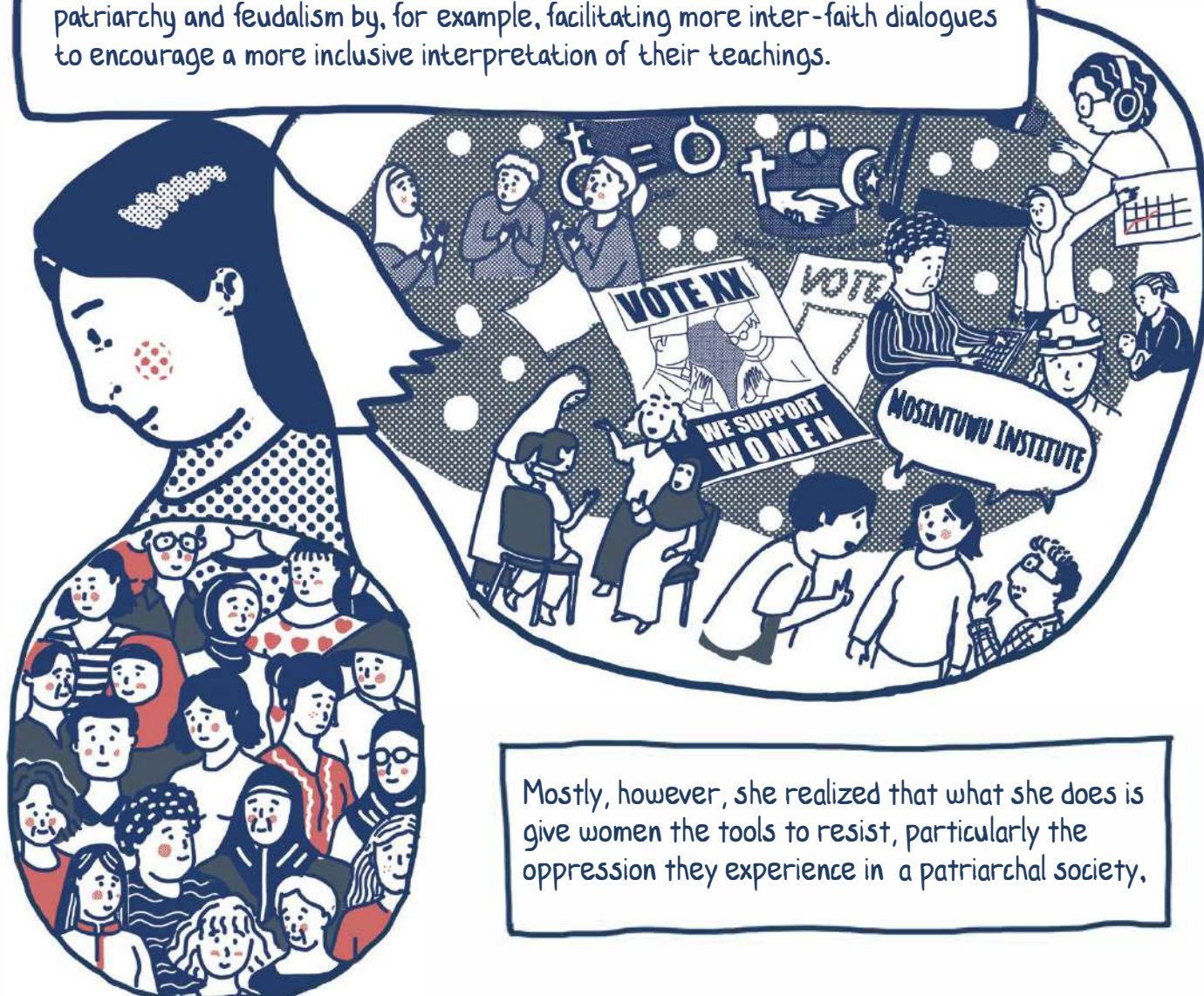




Since then, Sekolah Perempuan programme has transitioned into the Village Reformer School, where graduates of the Women School join with female public and elected officials to relearn the concept of village development and prosperity.

The aim is to ensure that no one is left behind in the development process, and to create village development plans that are not only based on their needs but are also fair and just.

Lian has discovered that empowering women with knowledge and skills is not enough. She has also worked to deconstruct the system and mechanism of patriarchy and feudalism by, for example, facilitating more inter-faith dialogues to encourage a more inclusive interpretation of their teachings.



Mostly, however, she realized that what she does is give women the tools to resist, particularly the oppression they experience in a patriarchal society.



# Trưng Trắc

14-43AD

Almost 2,200 years ago, the independent countries of Van Lang and Au Lac, which covered present-day Viet Nam, were conquered by General Trieu Da's Nam Viet nation which was later occupied by the Han Dynasty. The territory was split into the two districts of Giao Chi and Cuu Chan. On the ground, government was still carried out by the established system of tribal leaders, while the Han Dynasty ruled over the local chieftains.

After nearly 150 years, chaos broke out within the Han. That was when To Dinh, a mandarin from the North, was sent to Giao Chi to take over as the new Governor. According to some scholars, due to the harsh cultural assimilation policy and cruel exploitation of the Vietnamese people by the Han in Giao Chi during that time, the Vietnamese military chiefs decided to band together and fight back. To seal the bond of their two families, who were determined to resist the Han, Trung Trac – the daughter of military chief of Me Linh prefecture – got married to Thi Sach – the son of Chu Dien prefecture's military chief. However, only a short time after their marriage, Governor To Dinh killed Thi Sach to subdue the Vietnamese resistance.

The killing of Thi Sach only fuelled the will to revolt within Trung Trac and other military chiefs. Together with her sister, Trung Nhi, Trung Trac led their forces to protect the commune of Hat Giang (today known as Hat Mon), around 15 kilometres North-West of Hanoi. In February 40 AD, Trung Trac and Trung Nhi officially started the revolution against the Eastern Han Dynasty. The movement quickly gained support by several armies and the people. The two sisters' force took over Luy Lau – the capital of Giao Chi, forcing To Dinh to run away back to Nam Hai, in present-day China.

After capturing 65 cities in the southern territory, Trung Trac declared herself king, titled Trung Vuong (King Trung). It was the first uprising in the history of Vietnam led by a woman. Although the Trung sisters' rebellion only brought Independence to the country for a little less than three years, it remains historically significant and still resounds today. Their legend lives on until this day in Vietnam.

The Trung sisters are the symbol of tenacity and undaunted mettle of our people, an example of great patriotism of Vietnamese women. As the old saying goes: "When enemies invade, even women join the fight". Vietnamese women from ancient times are not only assertive and indomitable, but also have the ability to lead the cause of national liberation and nation-building.

**Author: DeeDee Animation Studio**

**Illustrators: Hoang Ha, Thu Giang**

**Research: Quang Dang**

**Translation: Kim Anh Dang, Hoang Ha**



# The Tale of King Truong





## TRUNG TRAC

When I was a child my parents would tell me that our earliest ancestors were Lac Long Quan (a dragon) and Au Co (a fairy), who fell in love. The fairy gave birth to a hundred eggs, which hatched into a hundred children, who in turn gave rise to the hundred clans that prospered across the land.

But then, around 200 years ago, they were invaded by enemies from the north.

Yet...

Our sacred forest, our fierce water, refused to surrender. Our brave men, our strong women, did not yield. So the enemy lived on the edge, each single day.

So then...


The Northern Emperor had no choice but to accept that the local military chiefs were still the ones who really governed their people.

I'm proud to be the daughter of the military chief of Me Linh.


I am Trung Trac.




## THI SACH AND TO DINH




One day, I met Thi Sach, the son of the military chief of Chu Dien. We fell in love and together made eternal promises.




I also met To Dinh, the new governor just arrived from the North. He seemed different from all the others.




He said he wanted me. Then he murdered Thi Sach.



I just wanted to be a happy silk weaver.



I just wanted to be a wife, together with my husband nurturing our family.



I just wanted to be a mother, watching my children grow up each day with happiness.



Not anymore.



## ME LINH

Men and women all need to stand up  
to an enemy at the gates.

I then began to set things in motion.  
That spring, my sister Trung Nhi and I  
gathered forces against To Dinh.

Among us were more than  
20 female generals, more  
than 300 marshals. All the  
chiefs and vice-chiefs, all  
the clans stood by us.  
Within a few months, we  
took over 65 cities, and  
headed straight to the  
capital Luy Lau.

The enemy fell apart. But we could  
not capture To Dinh. He shaved his  
beard, cut his hair, and blended in  
the crowd to flee.

Our homeland was united.  
I declared myself the King of Me Linh.  
The descendants of Lac Long Quan and  
Au Co were free and proud once more.



## MA VIEN

But then they returned.  
On that windy New Year's dawn, they followed the coast to invade us once more. This time led by their new marshal Ma Vien.

The invaders army had just emerged from a civil war. Their army had become enormous, ferocious, and ruthless. Ma Vien was a seasoned veteran of hundreds of battles, and a skilful warrior.


Their weapons were too strong. They were heavy, robust, and sharp. Our bronze swords and wooden pikes were useless against them.

We lost a huge battle in Lang Bac. We could only fight and retreat. Ma Vien commanded Me Linh to be captured. Our troops had to split up, scatter in the forest, and wage guerrilla warfare.


But we only lasted a few more battles. With the help of traitors, they managed to track us down. Ma Vien had us surrounded in all directions. Would we ever find a way out?




# IMMORTAL



Some say Trung Nhi and I were captured and decapitated by the enemy, our heads brought back to the North to be flaunted.



Some say Trung Nhi and I rather committed suicide by throwing ourselves into the river Hat Giang than being captured.




There are rumours that we escaped and disappeared.

The truth is, even I can't recall quite how it all ended. 2000 years have gone by. Looking back at those 20 years of mine, life and death seem to have happened in the blink of an eye.


Some say that as a woman I should not have taken on such an endeavour. They say, these monumental tasks would have been better suited for a man to shoulder.

But they do not understand. I was born a woman and I followed my destiny, how could I have changed that?

My physique may not be that of a man, but it overflows with my spirit, which is more powerful than that of the strongest soldier.



My soul is shining brighter than the brightest summer sun.



After all, Trung Vuong - King Trung is just a title.

Just as Man and Woman are mere concepts.

Narrative: DeeDee Animation Studio  
Illustrations: Hoang Ha, Thu Giang  
Research: Quang Dang  
Translation: Kim Anh Dang, Hoang Ha



# Angkhana Neelaphaijit

## 1951-present

*"I am always glad every time I can help other women. Sometimes I feel that it doesn't take much for me to help, but it can mean a great deal to them because they get their dignity back"*

Angkhana was born in 1956, and grew up in a Muslim family in Bangkok. She graduated from the Faculty of Nursing, Mahidol University, and later worked as an emergency room nurse at Siriraj Hospital. Her life was turned upside down after Somchai Neelaphaijit, her husband, was forcibly disappeared on 24 March 2004. This was her motivation to take up the defence of human rights.

Angkhana founded the Justice for Peace Foundation (JPF) in 2006 to strengthen non-violent efforts to protect human rights, promote access to justice and end impunity in Southern Thailand. During 2015 - 2019, she was appointed to the Thai National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and encouraged the Commission to form a subcommittee on Gender Equality and Women Human Rights. Resigning from the commission in 2019 was not the end of continuing her work to empower women by encouraging women's participation in Constitution drafting process and tackling cyber-bullying against women.

The mission to defend human rights and women's rights has made Angkhana one of the most prominent human rights defender in Thailand. She received international recognitions on human rights, including the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights, UN Women's "Women of Achievement", the Han Honour, and the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

During her years of dedication to human rights and women's rights, Angkhana did not only worked on gender equality and sexual violence, but also helped different groups of venerable women, from disabled women, female refugees and migrant workers, to women in prisons.

One of the biggest challenges women in Thailand face is the lack of laws to protect them. The human rights activist sees that better laws would systematically improve women's life in Thailand, but passing and amending laws are not easy because it needs support from all stakeholders.

Since it takes many people several steps to pass or amend laws, Angkhana is willing to work with everyone, from victims, survivors, activists, state agencies to political parties. She believes it is important to let everyone give their point of view in order to see the bigger picture and find where they can compromise.

One of the most prominent laws Angkhana worked on has been the Gender Equality Act. Despite all of their differences, she could help all stakeholders find common ground on many aspects of the Act. Even though she thought the Gender Equality Act could have been better, a lot of issues have been improved. She hopes her work might be a shoulder for the younger generation to climb on and push for better laws for women.

Angkhana who has made the voices of women heard to make their rights equal to men said "Success is not defined by having laws to protect women, but by implementation. And we need the younger generation to join us and continue the struggle for better laws and practices for women and girls"

**Authors: Prapapoom Eiamsom and Pinpaka Ngamsom**  
**Illustrator: Wasin Pathomyok**





# Angkhana Neelaphaijit

From Nurse to Human Rights Defender

(1956–Present)



Gender is a part of every issue, whether or not people could see it.

Many girls and women in Thailand suffered from gender inequality. Many opportunities were given to boys and men first. Equal workloads did not come with equal pay.

Many cried for protection. Many took the streets to demand solutions. As a human rights defender, Angkhana Neelaphaijit tried to improve laws.

As always, most of cabinet ministers, MPs, and state officers in the meeting were men.









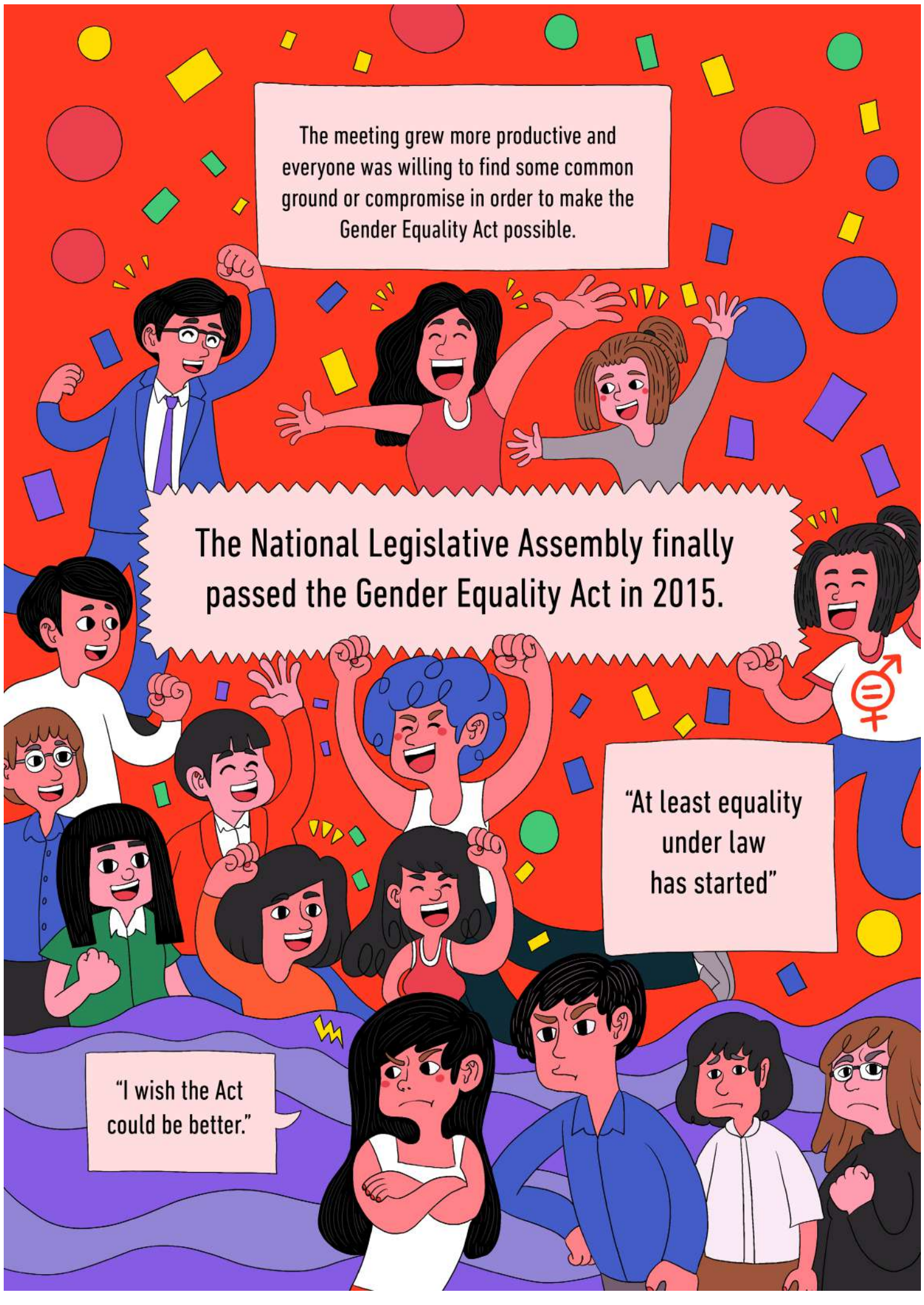
She tried to be open with everyone because she thought solidarity was the key to making the Act possible, and that sometimes people are opposed because they do not truly understand.

"Why do we use the word 'aid' in Chapter 4 of The Act? I don't think we should see it as the perpetrators now helping their victims, it's more about paying the price for their wrongdoings, or some kind of compensation."

"The term 'aid' is typical legal terms in criminal code. There is no difference here, since the victim will get the compensation no matter what it's called."

"The victim might get the money no matter what the term we use, but it is important to respect the victim's rights and dignity by acknowledging their right to access 'remedy' instead of 'aid'."





The meeting grew more productive and everyone was willing to find some common ground or compromise in order to make the Gender Equality Act possible.

The National Legislative Assembly finally passed the Gender Equality Act in 2015.

"At least equality under law has started"

"I wish the Act could be better."



"I know it's not as perfect as I wish, honestly I am not happy with some sections, but I did my best to raise the bar. My success is not only defined by having laws to protect women, but also by having younger women to continue the struggle for better laws and practices to protect women human rights. I would not be able to do it alone. I am not a hero."





# Rokeya Sakhawat

1880-1932

Rokeya was born in 1880, in what was then British India, with a strong sense of gender justice, intellectual rigour and a selfless urge to improve the condition of women. Her experience – and rejection – of the repressive patriarchal culture drove her to become a national figurehead for women's empowerment. She was brought up in a Muslim family that maintained strict purdah, the Islamic rules of modesty that segregate the genders in many settings, restrict women's movements, and require them to wear the veil. Rokeya saw how women of the Bengali Muslim community suffered due to age-old religious norms and patriarchal dominance. However, her brothers helped her to get education. Furthermore, she married Syed Sakhawat Hossain, a Western-educated, liberal and progressive widower. She admits her husband's positive contributions to her writing career. Thus, marriage became a turning point in her life paving her ways towards practicing feminism.

At a time when women were not educated at all, she dared to talk about women's education. She realized that education had the power to make women self-reliant, help them conquer their groundless fears, and establish themselves as proper human beings. She established Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School and ran slum literary programmes in Kolkata. She emphasized physical education, value-oriented education, and open-air schooling. She went door-to-door trying to persuade Muslim families to allow their daughters to attend school. Women were characterised as producer of heirs, homemakers, wives and mothers. Their position was as subordinate to men Rokeya merged pragmatism and idealism through an outlook that was at once conservative and radical.

She formed Anjumane Khaoyatin-e-Islam (Muslim Women's Association) in 1916 to ensure economic freedom through income-generating works, and to ensure legal and financial assistance for women through this organization. She also stressed gender justice in her writings. Her utopian narrative *Sultana's Dream* published in 1905 was a fictional revenge tale where she inversed the gender roles. She depicted a land where women rule and men are confined to indoor spaces called mardana, the equivalent of the zenana where women were held in real-life society of the time. In the story, the women operating the state machineries, showing women's huge potential for the social and political advancement of the nation.

She had an inclusive feminist view. She did not put the entire blame for gender injustices on men only. Using the term *manoshik dashotto*, or mental slavery, she argued that women share responsibility for their suffering because they help maintain the patriarchy system. Without minimizing men's responsibility, she aimed at making women realize the need to snap out of their mental slavery.

She faced economic hindrances, social barriers and religious criticism to establish gender justice but nothing could stop her. She believed in equal contribution of men and women for the prosperous economy. Her other contributions include ending child marriage and polygamy, and advocating for human rights. She believed in transformative leadership.

Rokeya is relevant today even 88 years after her demise. She was ahead of her time. She emphasized that men need to reflect on the state of their homes by making the home a place where both women and men can seek happiness. Thus, she is still alive in our everyday life, thoughts, and agendas. For Bangladeshi women activists and feminists, she is a role model.

**Author: Tania Hoque**

**Illustrator: Nahida Nisha**



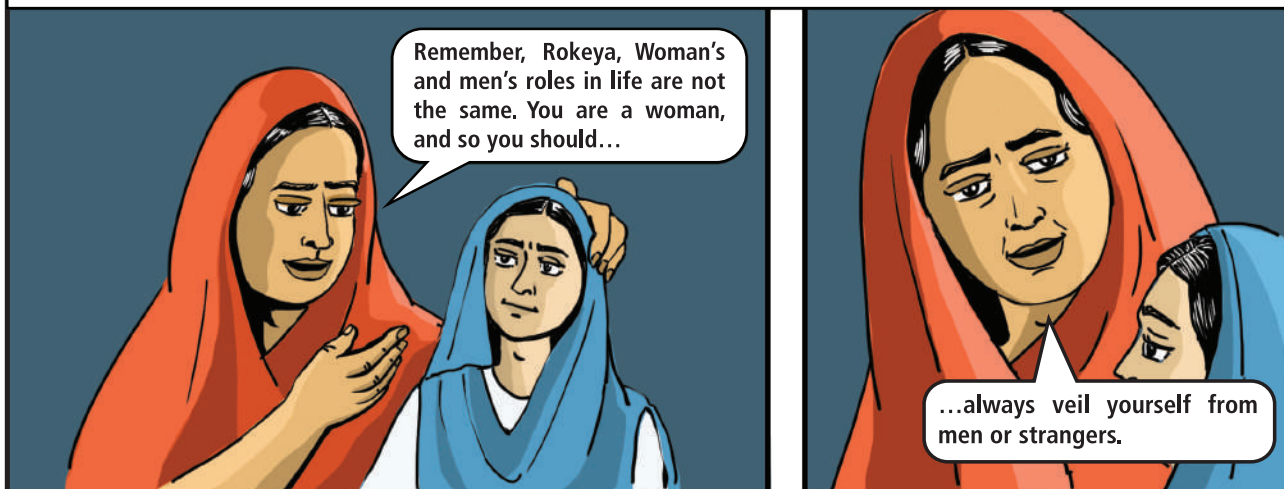
# Ever living Rokeya

**Pioneer of Women's Rights and  
Gender Justice in Bangladesh**





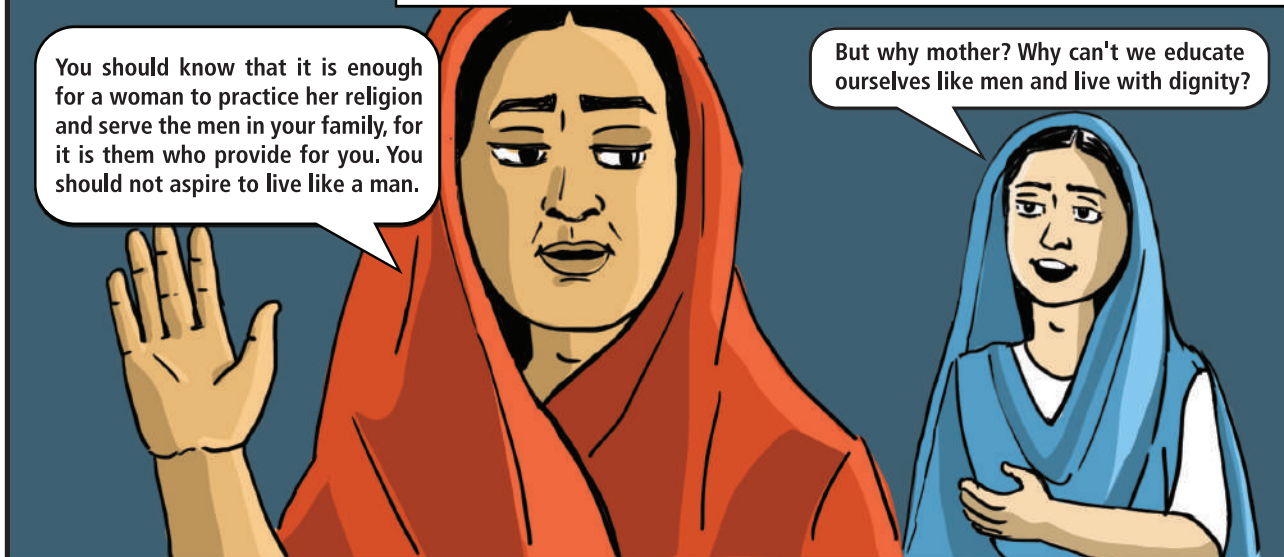
Begum Rokeya lived during a time and in a society in which the opportunity of education for Muslim women was almost non-existent. They could not go out of the house without the company of men, and were not permitted to show themselves to strangers, even other women.



The women's only job was to do housework, to cook and care for the master of the house.



And they were not allowed to study in any educational institution like men.





But Rokeya realized that it is vital to educate women just as much as men.

We belong to the same society as men. If we are left behind, how can society truly progress?

My dear Roku, don't worry, I'll teach you! But don't tell our parents. You will most certainly learn Bangla and English.

When her elder brother Ibrahim Saber and elder sister Korimunnesa Khanam offered to teach her both Bangla and English, she judiciously grabbed the chance to expand her knowledge.

Rokeya was married at 18, to Khan Bahadur Sakhawat Hussain. Fortunately, her husband was a reformist who valued education for all, and held the same beliefs as her. He encouraged her to write. Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain realized the need for the emancipation of women. So Rokeya found herself with the rare opportunity to continue her education, and cultivate herself in her literary pursuits.

I believe you are a brave woman. That's why I will always be with you to help you with your education. Start by writing something about how you feel and what you want to do.

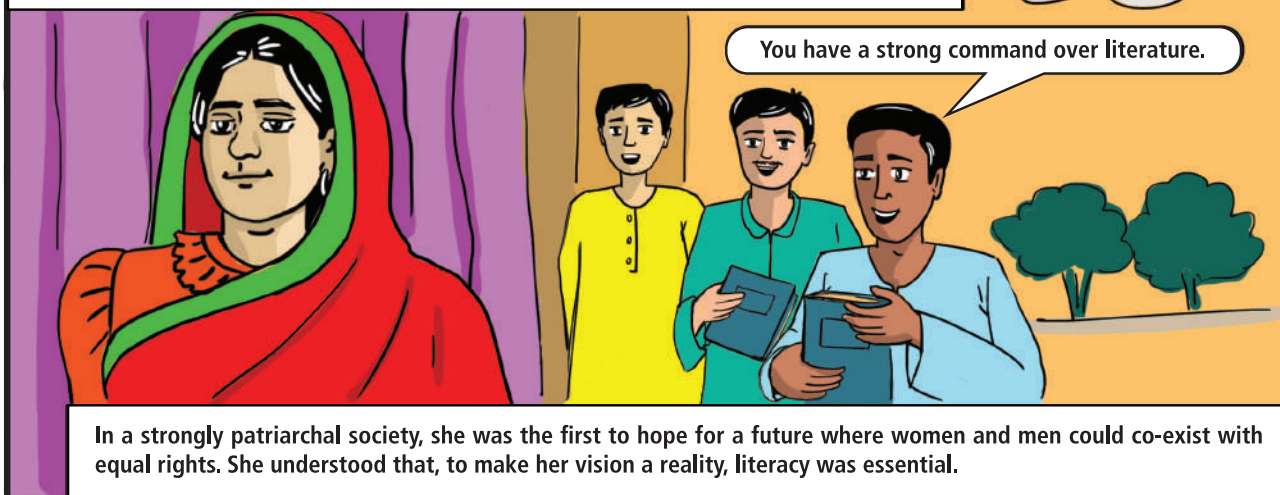
With this revolutionary realization, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain realized the need for the emancipation of women.

If my dear husband had not supported me, I would not have been able to write or publish anything on women's education, rights and empowerment.

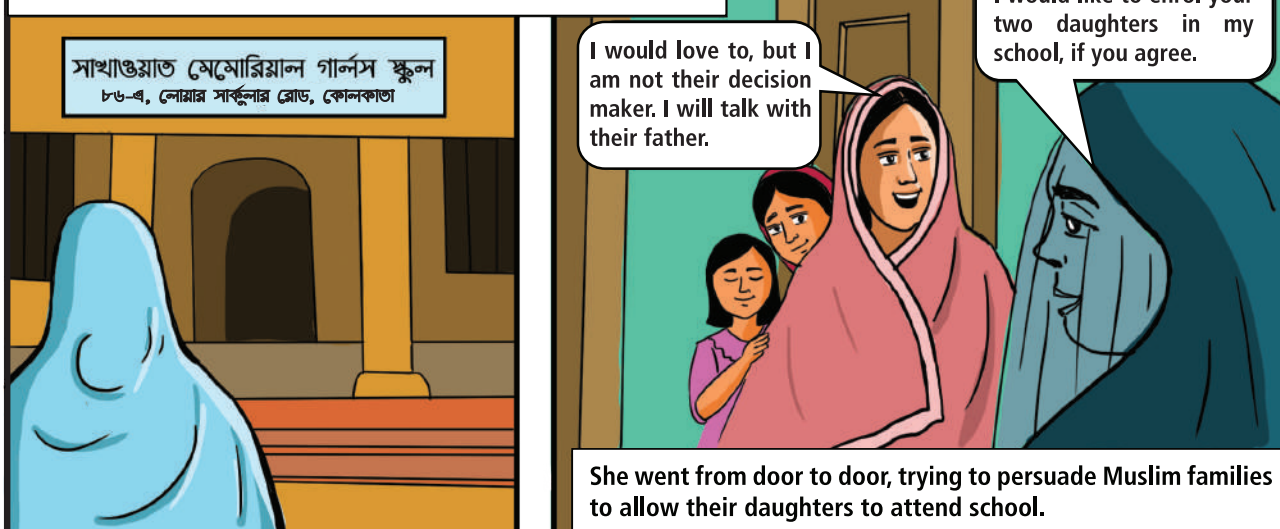
Marriage, hence, was a significant turning point in Rokeya's life, that opened the doors to her progression and she realized, she will write for the development of all her fellow women.



Her writings began to be noticed, and were published in various journals. This is how she started to become a writer. Her first book *Motichur* was much admired, and eminent writers and critics encouraged her to write more.

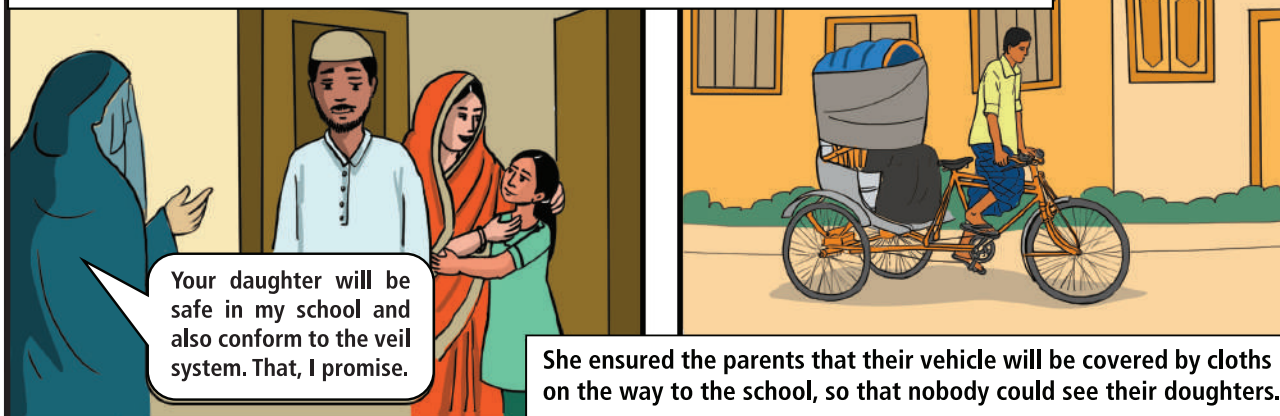


After Rokeya's husband's death, she established the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' High School.



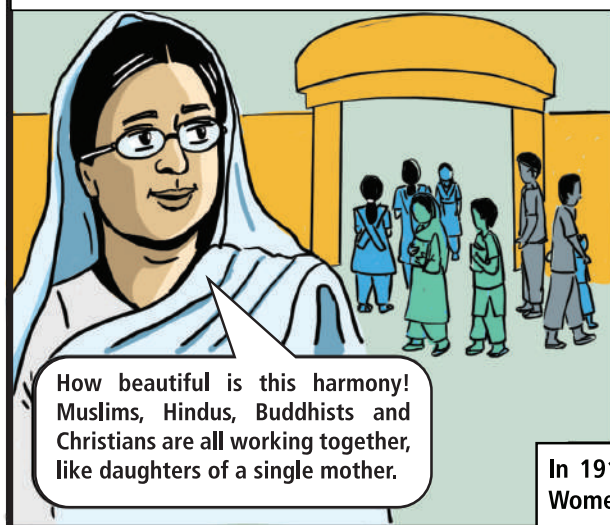
Her own opinion was in favour of women's education, the improvement of women's status in society and the progressive views of women's rights and their emancipation.

At that time, a few schools existed where non-muslim women studied, but girls from most of the Muslim families did not attend those schools, as they would not have been allowed to wear the veil.



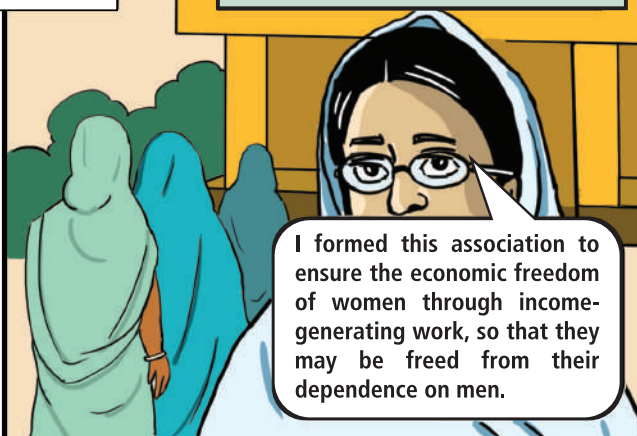


Begum Rokeya had a non-sectarian sensibility. She penned those beliefs into many of her writings.



How beautiful is this harmony! Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are all working together, like daughters of a single mother.

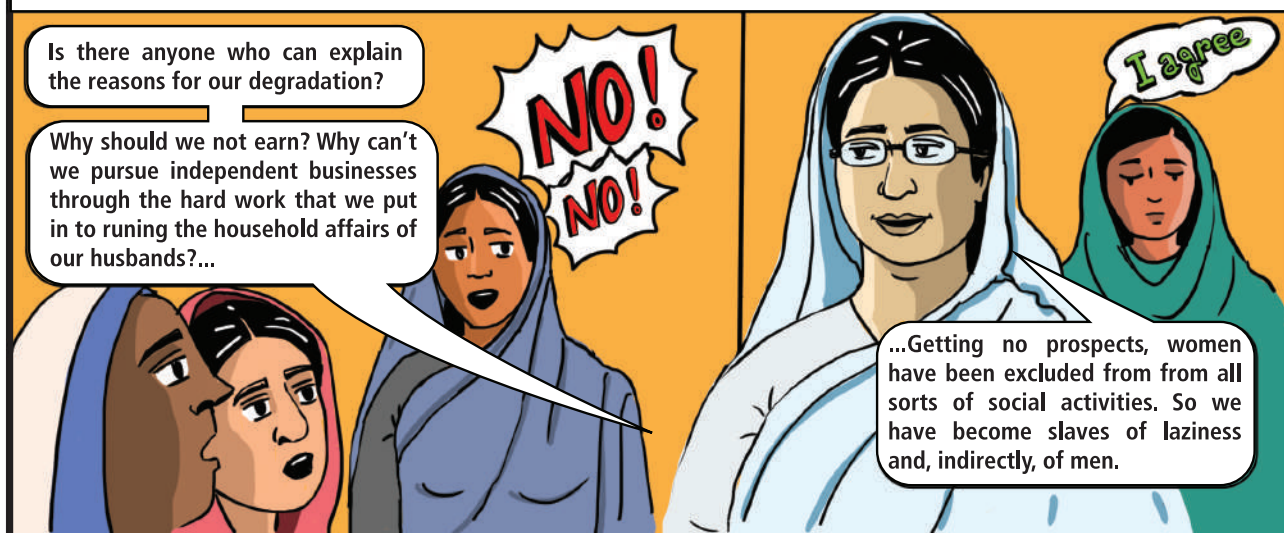
ভাঙ্গুমান-ই খতিন-ই ইসলাম, ১৯১৬



I formed this association to ensure the economic freedom of women through income-generating work, so that they may be freed from their dependence on men.

In 1916 she established the Anjumane Khaoyatin-e-Islam (Muslim Women's Association) in Kolkata, for the welfare of Muslim women.

Rokeya also realised that education alone is not enough to liberate women. She considered the economic freedom of women as the most important issue.



Is there anyone who can explain the reasons for our degradation?

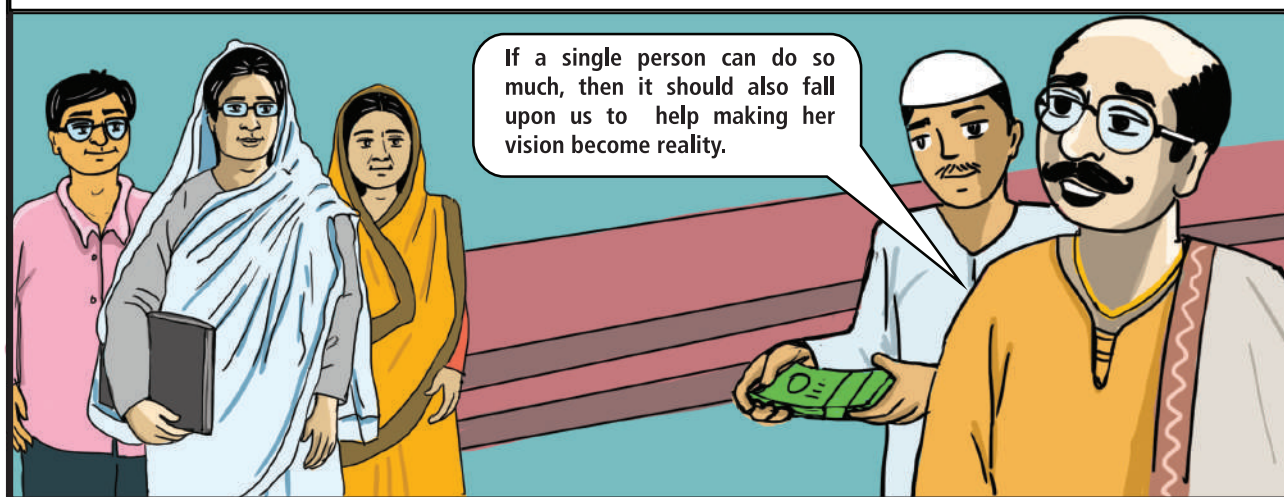
Why should we not earn? Why can't we pursue independent businesses through the hard work that we put in to running the household affairs of our husbands?...

NO!  
NO!

I agree

...Getting no prospects, women have been excluded from from all sorts of social activities. So we have become slaves of laziness and, indirectly, of men.

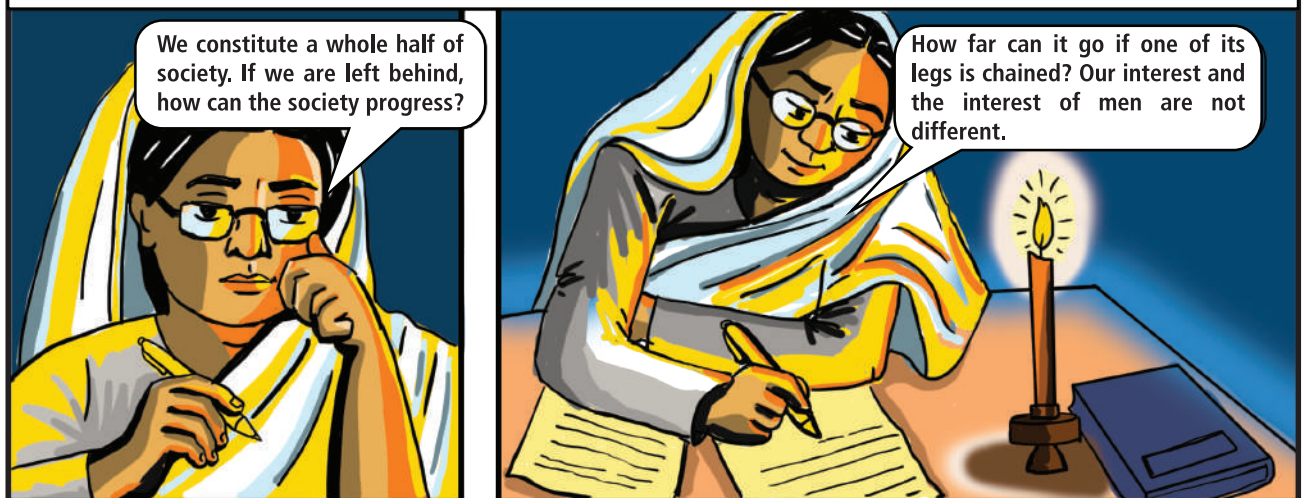
Through her organization she advocated for women's legal and political rights, sponsored women's attendance at school, and tried to make women economically self-reliant. Thereby, she contributed to the education of girls, to alleviate poverty and to help distressed women and orphaned children.



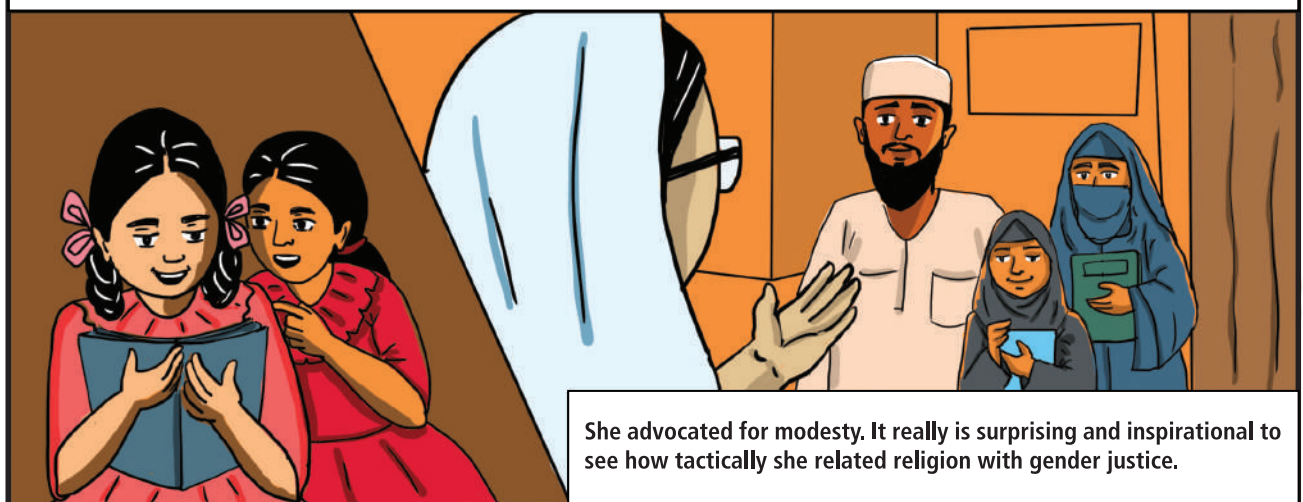
If a single person can do so much, then it should also fall upon us to help making her vision become reality.



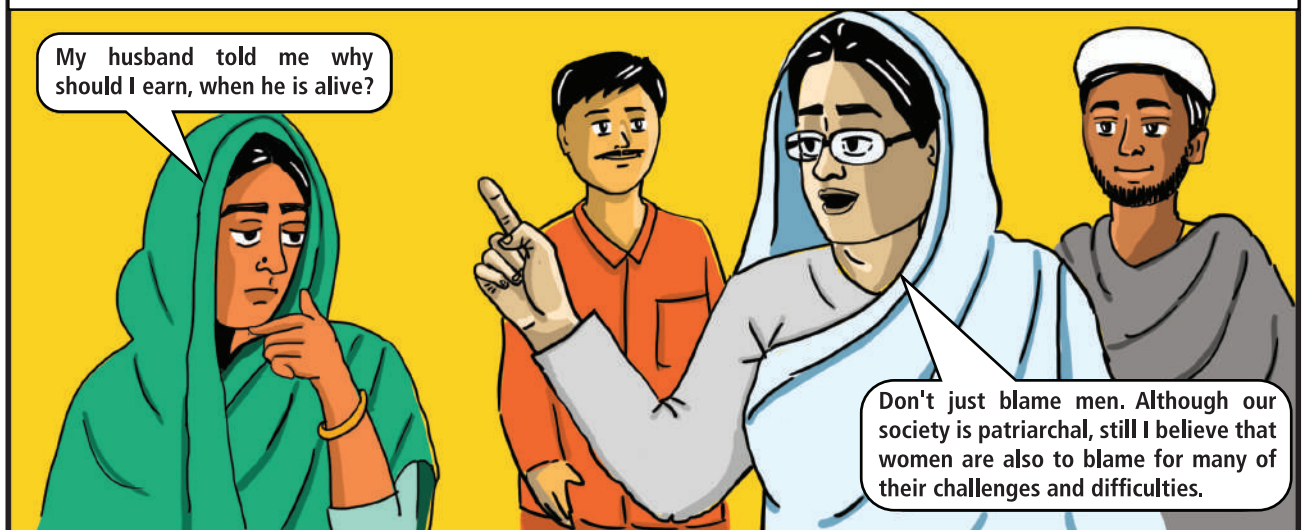
There were not only economic hindrances but also social barriers. She was the first person in this subcontinent to speak about the equal rights of women and men. Having faced all these barriers, nothing could stop her.



Her identity as a worker and a literary person were the same. Both of these were rooted in women's emancipation and awakening. Sultana's Dream, Aborodhabasini and Mardana are some of her literary works that bear witness to this.



One key aspect of Rokeya's feminist consciousness is that she does not put the entire blame of gender injustices on men only. She had an inclusive feminist view.



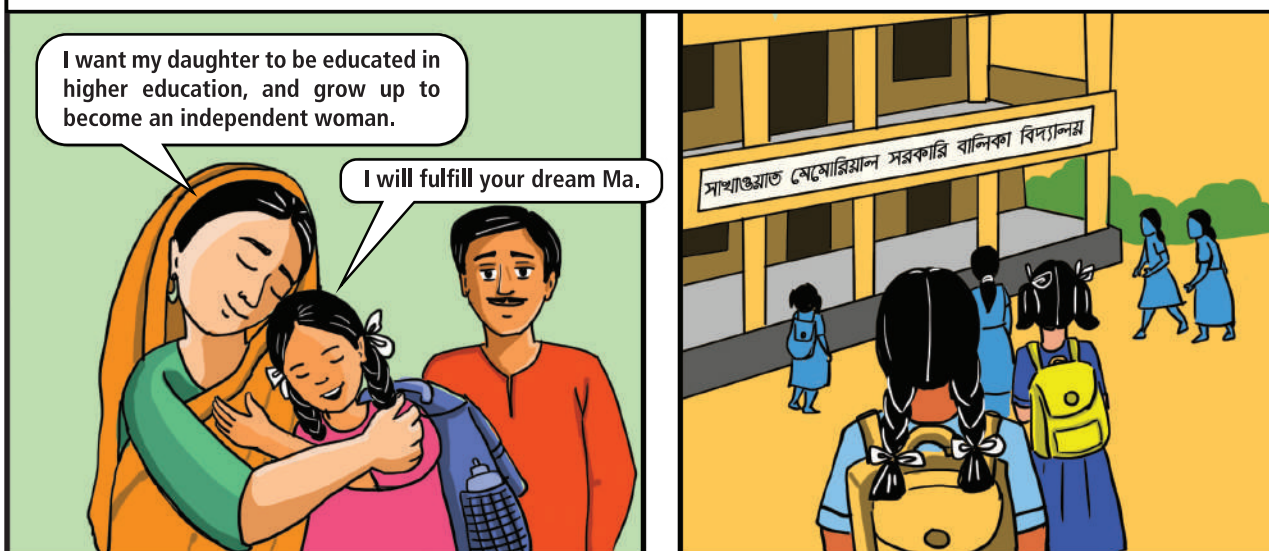


In Strijatir Obonati she addresses her fellow women thus:



Begum Rokeya died on 9 December 1932, on her 52nd birthday. The 9th of December is celebrated as Rokeya Day in Bangladesh.

Her open-mindedness, courage, sense of logic, creativity and scientific approach is a rare combination even today.



Begum Rokeya's legend lives on even today. Her overarching influence and pertinence is strongly felt across Bangladesh and beyond.





# Yogmaya Neupane

1867-1941

Yogmaya Neupane was born into a traditional Nepali family that adhered to the patriarchal culture and the caste system but grew into a staunch opponent of these norms. She challenged not only the customs in her immediate environment, but also courageously addressed injustices with the authoritarian Rana regime, through her poetry and social activism. She ultimately sacrificed her life to draw attention to gender inequalities, and the rights of the poor and marginalized.

Yogmaya was rebellious in nature from an early age. She resisted her child marriage and later left her in-laws and returned to her maternal home, only to find herself cast out. She was constantly criticized and mocked for not giving in to the expectations of married life. She fled to Assam to start a new life on her own terms. Thirty years later, she returned with her daughter, visited pilgrimage sites at a time when women's mobility was curtailed, and decided to live in an ashram (spiritual retreat).

Society was riddled in poverty, illiteracy and discrimination during the autocratic Rana regime. While others were too scared, Yogmaya had no fear to speak up for the marginalized. Even though those who did faced repressions such as being excluded from their caste, dispossessed of property, or even receive brutal punishment including the death penalty. Yogmaya raised her voice against child marriage, slavery, discrimination against the low caste of Dalits and injustice against the poor. She opposed the Hindu practice of Sati, where a widow would sometimes be immolated – voluntarily or under coercion – on her husband's funeral pyre. She also strongly advocated for widows' right to remarry and promoted education for young girls.

This challenge from a woman was not acceptable to conservative society back then. Religious and economic elites were furious - such as the Sadhus (Hindu religious ascetic), the Mahajans (Money lenders) and Pandits (a person with specialised knowledge on religion and scriptures). She was publicly undermined and insulted. But that did not alter her determination to fight for an egalitarian society.

Nepal was ruled by the Rana dynasty for a century from 1846-1950. The Rana government not only deprived the king of his powers, but also denied common people their fundamental rights. At that time, Yogmaya submitted her demand letter for social reform to the Rana government, but her demands were ignored. So, to increase the pressure, she decided to self-immolate herself by performing Yajna (a holy ritual done in front of a sacred fire). Around 240 of her followers were ready to join her sacrifice but the government prevented this by arresting them. They were released after three months, but Yogmaya's determination was not broken. So, at the age of 74, with 68 of her followers, she jumped into the Arun river. "Down with the Rana regime, down with injustice", they chanted.

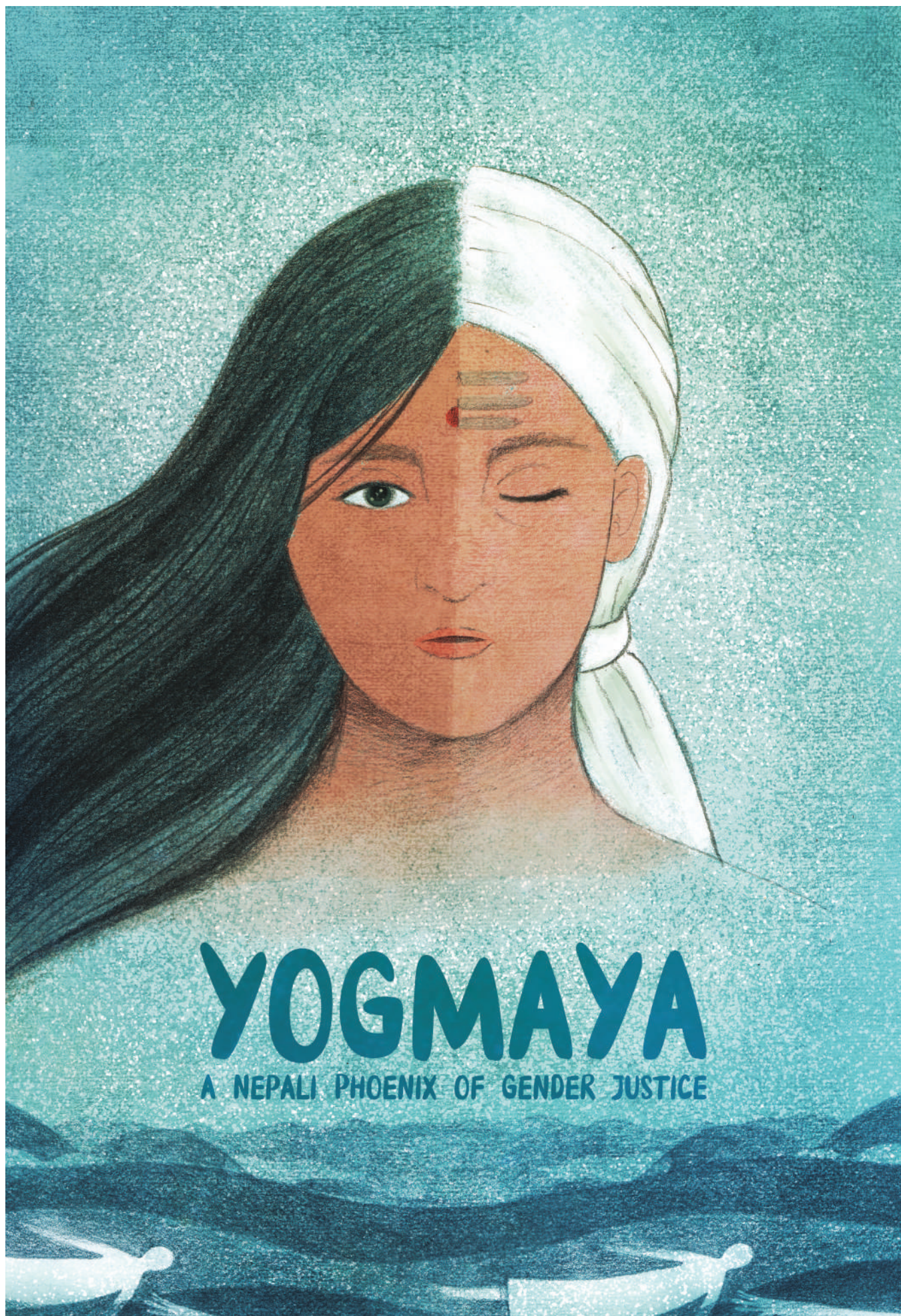
Yogmaya was a revolutionary, from her early years until her last breath. She was illiterate yet she preached and practiced equality. She raised her voice for the rights of women, Dalits and the marginalized. She created a public space for women who were traditionally confined to their house. Women from her ashram were not intimidated by the elites and voiced their demands.

Until today, not much has been written about this rebellious figure. It took a long time for the patriarchal society to acknowledge her courage and determination as a defender of quality and basic human rights. Much on her is yet to be written...

**Author: Anbika Giri**

**Illustrator: Bandana Tulachan**





# YOGMAYA

A NEPALI PHOENIX OF GENDER JUSTICE



Nepal was on the verge of social and political change during the 1940s. However, nobody had imagined a woman leading a revolutionary challenge to the autocratic Rana regime. Yogmaya Neupane, along with 68 of her followers, committed mass suicide by jumping into the Arun River. This is a story of tragedy and rebellion in the history of Nepal.

"DOWN WITH INJUSTICE, RESTORE JUSTICE"

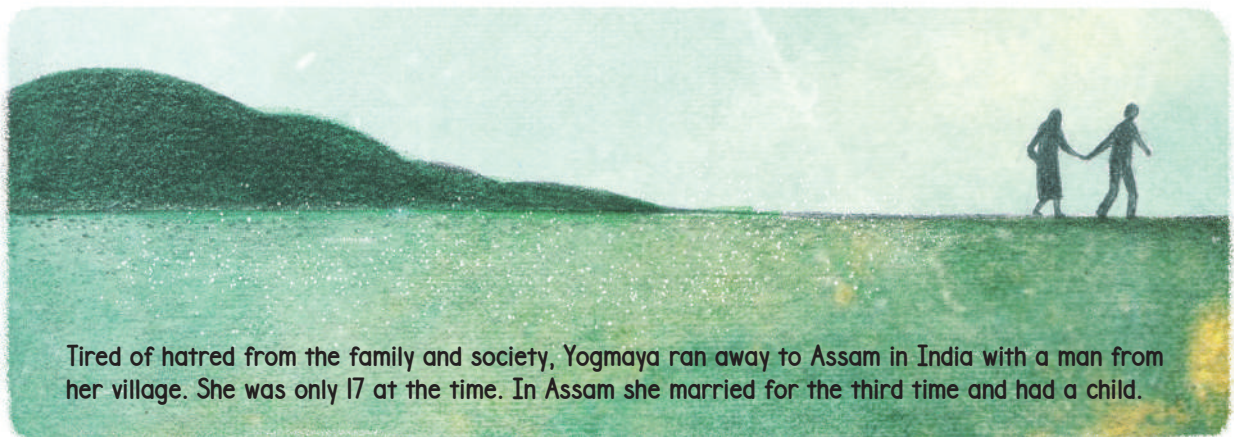
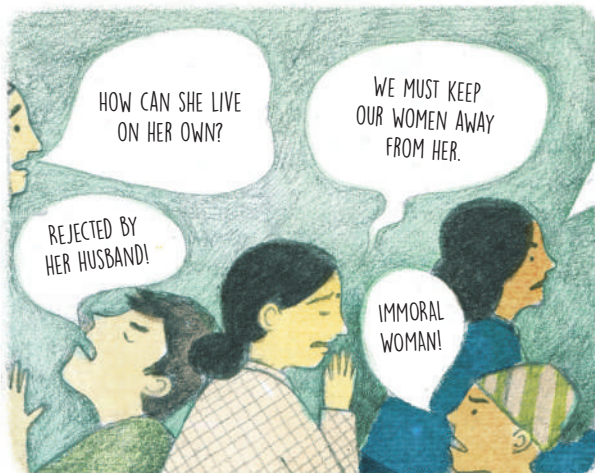




Yogmaya was born in Nepale Danda of Bhojpur district, eastern Nepal, in 1867 as the child of mother Chandrakala and father Shrilal Upadhyaya Neupane. When she was seven years old, Yogmaya was married, as per Brahmin tradition, who sent their daughter off before their menstruating age.



Unable to cope with a life of young bride, she returned to her parents' home. But a married daughter running away from her husband's home to return to her parents, was not common in those time.



Tired of hatred from the family and society, Yogmaya ran away to Assam in India with a man from her village. She was only 17 at the time. In Assam she married for the third time and had a child.



After 30 years, Yogmaya returned to her village, alone with her daughter.

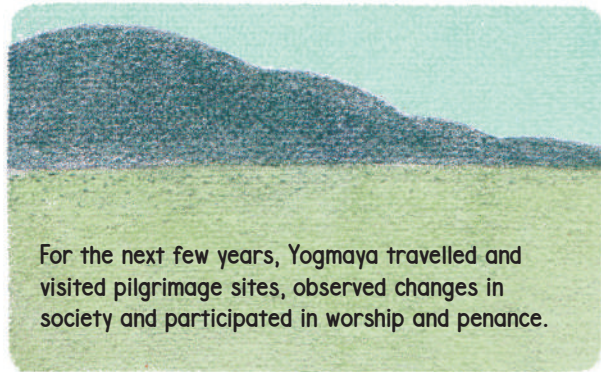
In all these years, nothing much had changed.



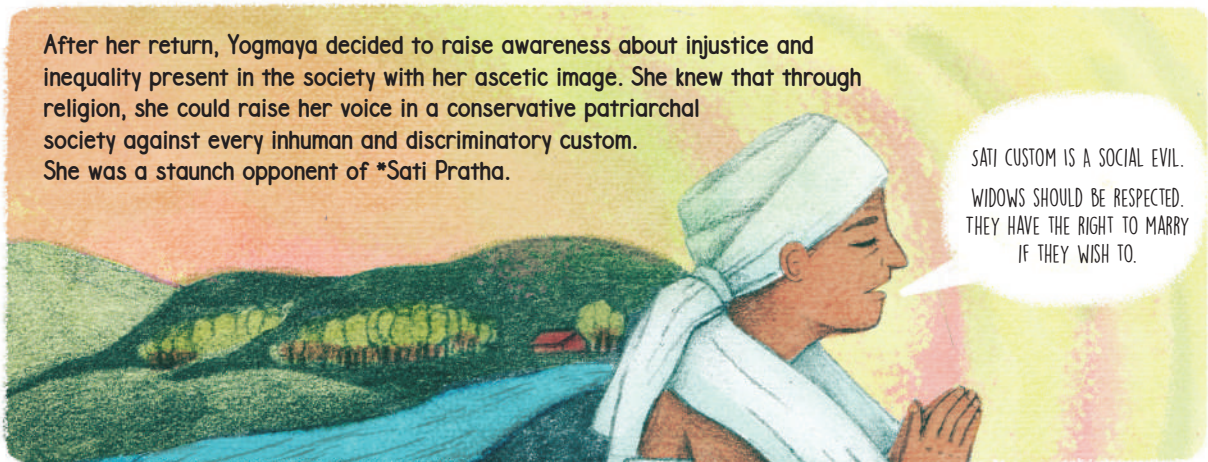
WHY?



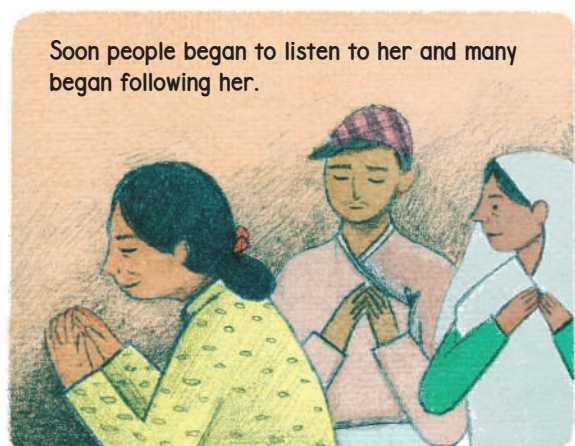
For the next few years, Yogmaya travelled and visited pilgrimage sites, observed changes in society and participated in worship and penance.



After her return, Yogmaya decided to raise awareness about injustice and inequality present in the society with her ascetic image. She knew that through religion, she could raise her voice in a conservative patriarchal society against every inhuman and discriminatory custom. She was a staunch opponent of \*Sati Pratha.



Soon people began to listen to her and many began following her.



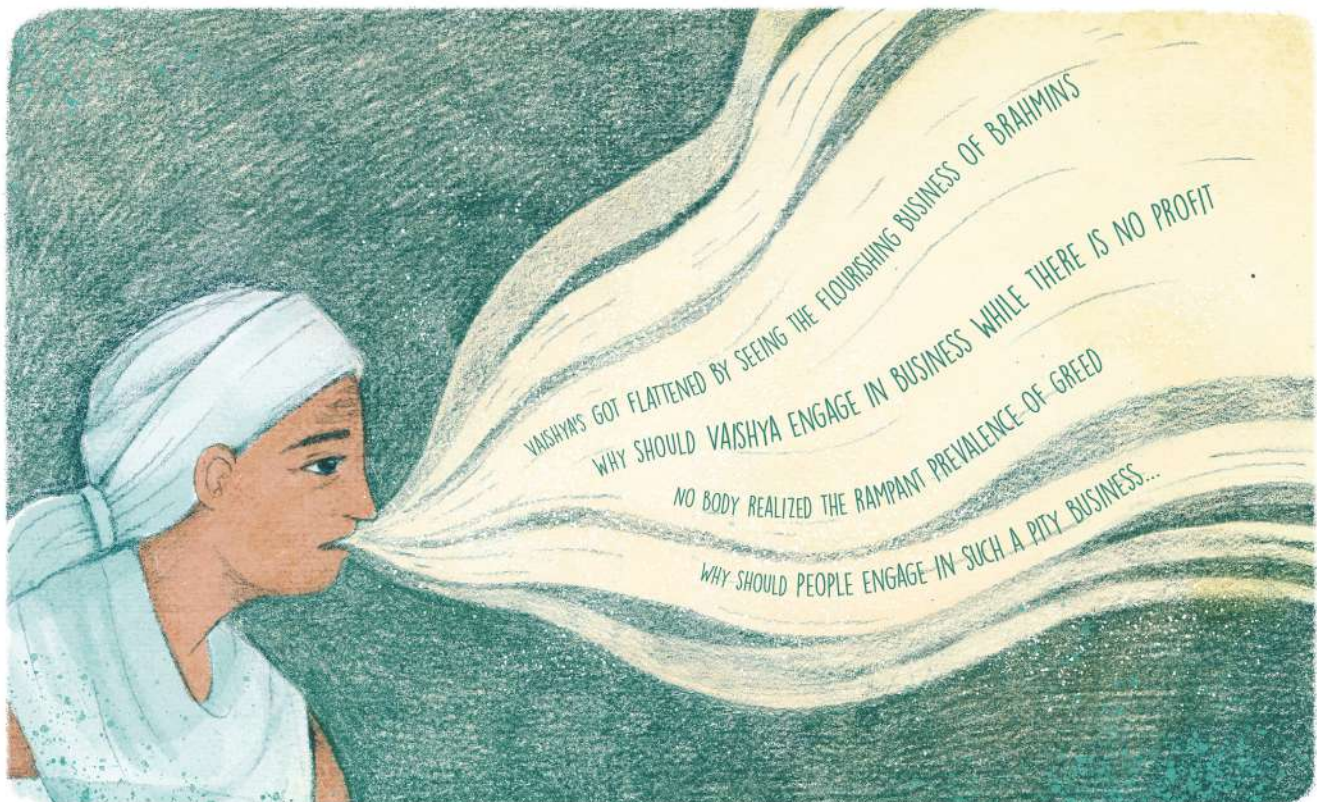
\*Sati Pratha- Widow-burning custom that was prevalent in Brahmin-Hindu community



Yogmaya built her own ashram which became the only public place for women, especially for Dalits and poor women, where they were free to debate and express their views. At a time when women were not allowed to speak in public, she became the representative voice of women.



Yogmaya could not read and write but had the ability to express her thoughts spontaneously in the form of poetry. She attacked social malpractices, corruption, moneylenders charging high interest, the landowners exploiting the peasants, patriarchy, and the Brahmin priesthood with her words.



\*Vaishya were the trader caste who were concerned about Brahmin Priests getting more engaged in the bussiness. Yogmaya commented and pointed out the greed behind it.

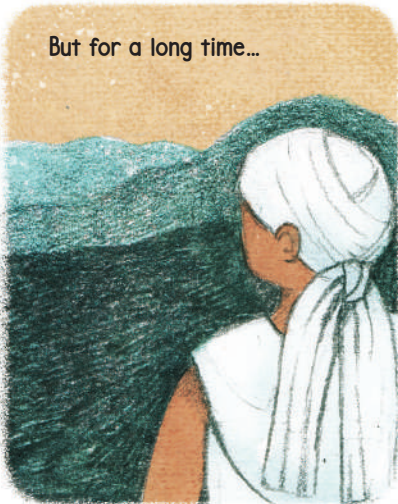


Yogmaya believed that discrimination and other social evils could be eradicated by an order from the state. So, she started to appeal to the Rana government for social reform.

THE RANA RULER HAS DEMOLISHED SATI AND SLAVERY. LET US WRITE A LETTER AND PRESENT TO RANA RULER TO MAKE HIM AWARE OF OTHER SOCIAL EVILS. HE WILL SURELY ADDRESS OUR DEMANDS.



But for a long time...



her demands were not heard...



ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!  
WE CANNOT SIT AROUND AND WAIT. LET US  
PREPARE FOR YAJNA. WE WILL SACRIFICE OURSELVES  
IN THE YAJNA FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE.



The Rana government did not let Yajna happen. Yogmaya and her followers were detained for months.



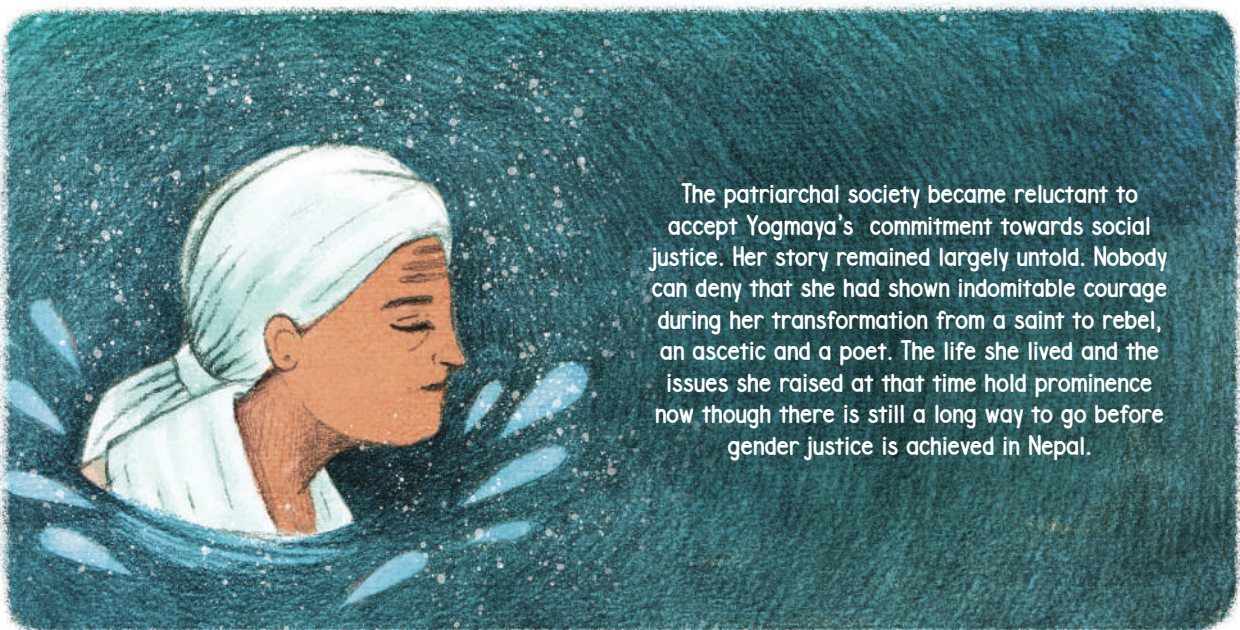
Yogmaya became the first woman to be detained in the history of Nepal.



\*Yajana- a holy ritual done in front of a sacred fire



Yogmaya waited for a long time for the government to act on her demands for social reform. However, there was no sign of a shift towards better governance. Seeing her demands ignored, Yogmaya adopted a strategy of putting pressure on the Rana government even at the cost of her own life and her followers.





# Sonal Shukla

1941-present

For more than three decades now, Sonal Shukla's name has been synonymous with Vacha, the feminist group that transforms adolescent girls from Mumbai's slums into confident citizens who can question the authorities who rule their lives. Every aspect of this transformation bears traces of Sonal's unique personality.

In the spectrum of Mumbai's feminists, Sonal stands apart, and not only for her wry wit. In interviews with the media, her perspective is always fresh, thanks to her lifelong interactions with people from the most deprived sections of society. These interactions started way back in her teens. Her school principal introduced Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education methodology to the school, and topics such as social studies came to life when students met indigenous communities and Dalits in nearby settlements. The interactions continued more meaningfully when Sonal worked with the principal and his wife for 16 years as a teacher and then a lecturer in their college of education, in charge of projects involving sanitation workers, the lowest strata of society, and fisherfolk, Mumbai's indigenous inhabitants.

It is this grounded approach that makes Sonal such a magnet. She has lived the feminist slogan: "the personal is political". Sonal was among the founders of Mumbai's first autonomous feminist group, Forum Against Rape (founded in 1980, it later became Forum Against Oppression of Women), and turned her own home into a support centre for battered women for two years. "Our needs were few," she says about her and her doctor husband's decision to let one room in their house be used as a space for women they hardly knew. These four simple words reveal her deep commitment to women's rights.

In the 80s, feminist voices were flowering. Sonal had a background few others did: brought up without any religious rituals and with the rich literary and spiritual heritage of India. The works of leading Bengali poet and thinker Rabindranath Tagore, and the writings of the saint-poets thanks to her poet father had a great influence on her. She was schooled in her mother tongue; trained in Gandhi's educational methods and had worked with the most deprived sections. The English-language press would have welcomed her as a columnist. But Sonal chose to write a column in her mother tongue: Gujarati. That meant a lower social profile, and less payment, but it also meant reaching out to a larger audience, one that needed to hear what she had to say: i.e., average women. The feedback she received was tremendous; the initial hostility by men an indicator that what she was writing was making a difference.

Sonal has, in fact, made a difference to women's lives in all that she has done. Vacha started off as a resource centre for anyone interested in the women's movement, a space where you could drop in to borrow a book and encounter an award-winning writer giving a talk. The organization has documented and made accessible the lives of those early freedom fighters, the feminists of the early 20th Century. Most of all, it has given space to poor adolescent girls to escape from family and community strangleholds and experience to the fullest this crucial phase of blossoming of their personalities, through a programme of life skills and community work.

**Author: Jyoti Punwani**

**Illustrator: Sharad Sharma**

**Cover illustrator: Garima Sharma**



**An icon of the women's movement  
in India and across the globe!**



**SONAL SHUKLA**



**Sonal's journey makes her an icon across India and indeed the world!**



During the 1975 Emergency\* Sonal sheltered some socialist activists in her home. From this group, which included a feminist trade unionist, emerged the Socialist Women's Network.



\*(21 month period starting June 25 1975 when all civil liberties and elections were suspended in India)



They decided to bring out a newsletter, Feminist Network, which was published from Sonal's home.

Some years later, she would offer the same refuge to victims of domestic violence.



As Vibhuti Patel, Sonal's feminist colleague since 1977, puts it:

"Other feminists are politically correct and articulate but not accessible to common women.

They show paternalistic concern or curiosity, but carefully guard their privacy.

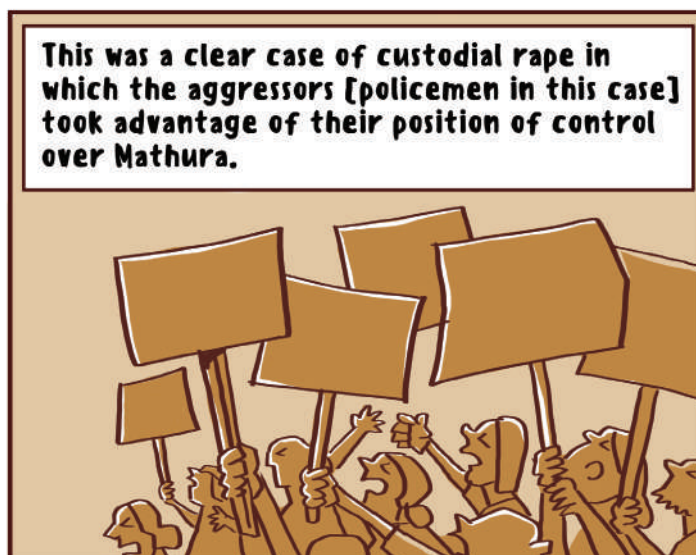
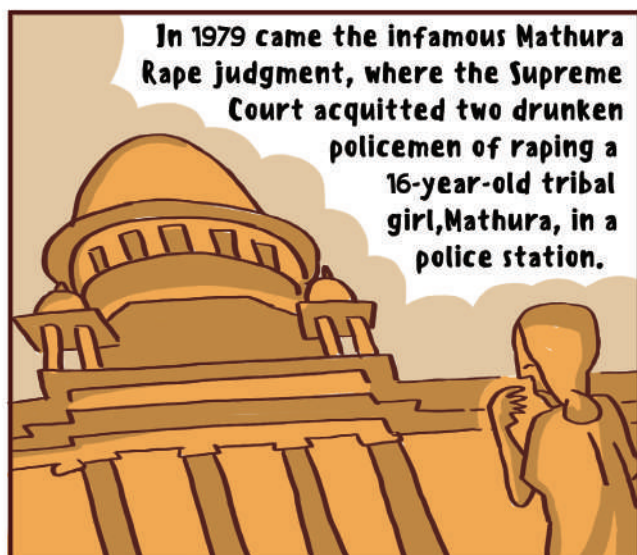


On the other hand, Sonalben\* is a friend in need and specially accessible to women from underprivileged backgrounds."



\*(ben=sister)

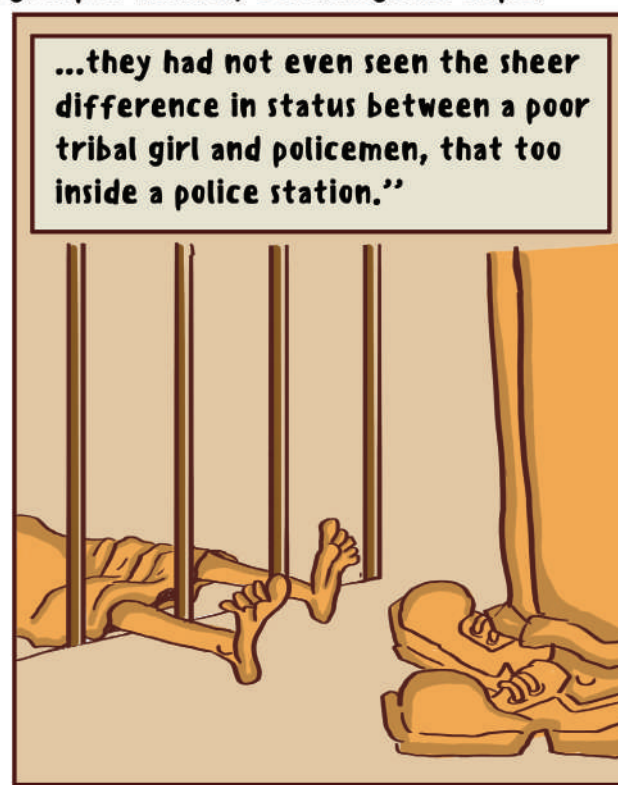
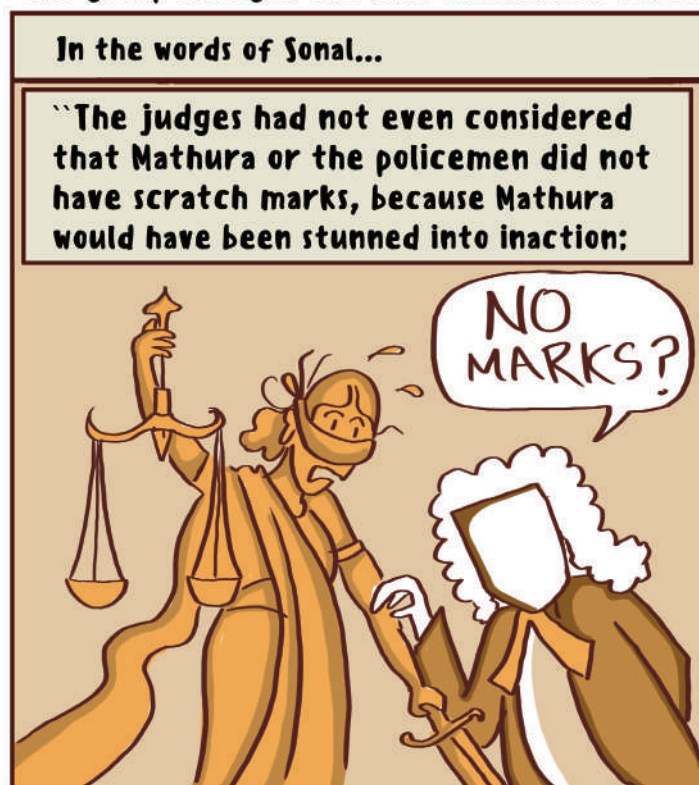




Four law professors wrote an open letter to the Supreme Court against the judgment. This letter became a catalyst for women to come together across the country in protest.



In Mumbai, 49 women met to discuss how to take the issue forward. Sonal was one of them. From this group emerged the first autonomous women's group in Mumbai, 'Forum Against Rape'.



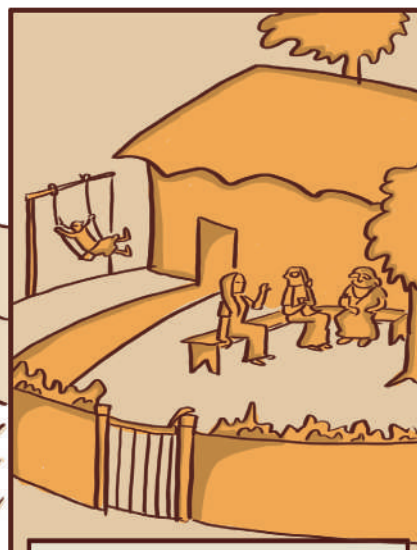


As a member of Forum Against Rape, which later became Forum Against Oppression of Women (FAOW), Sonal was part of all the ground-breaking campaigns that marked the women's movement in the 80s and 90s.



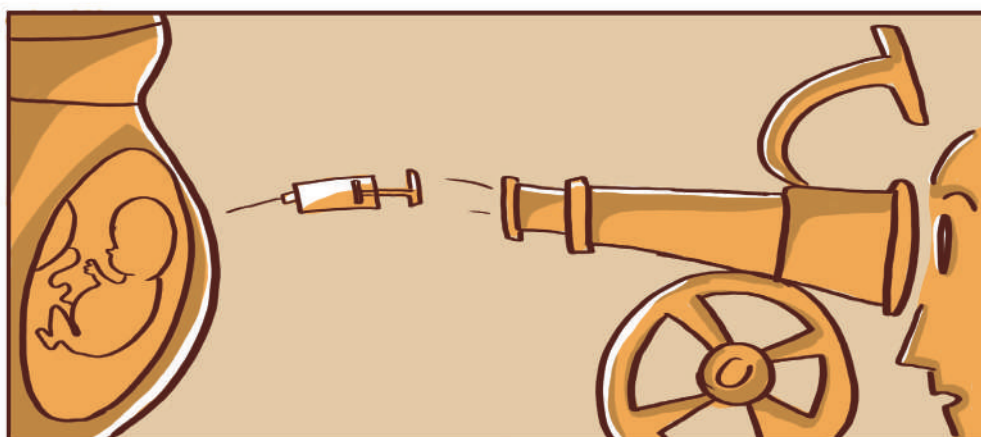
Noteworthy being the campaign to change the rape law, which resulted in the burden of proof of innocence being shifted to the rapist in custodial rape cases.

The second campaign worth mentioning is the campaign against domestic violence, which threw up the practical need for shelters for battered women.



The Women's Centre was started from Sonal's home in September 1981 and remained there till January 1984.

India's skewed sex-at-birth ratio in favour of boys had become cause for concern by the 1970s.



The relatively new technique of amniocentesis had in India become a tool for families to find out the sex of the unborn baby and abort female foetuses.

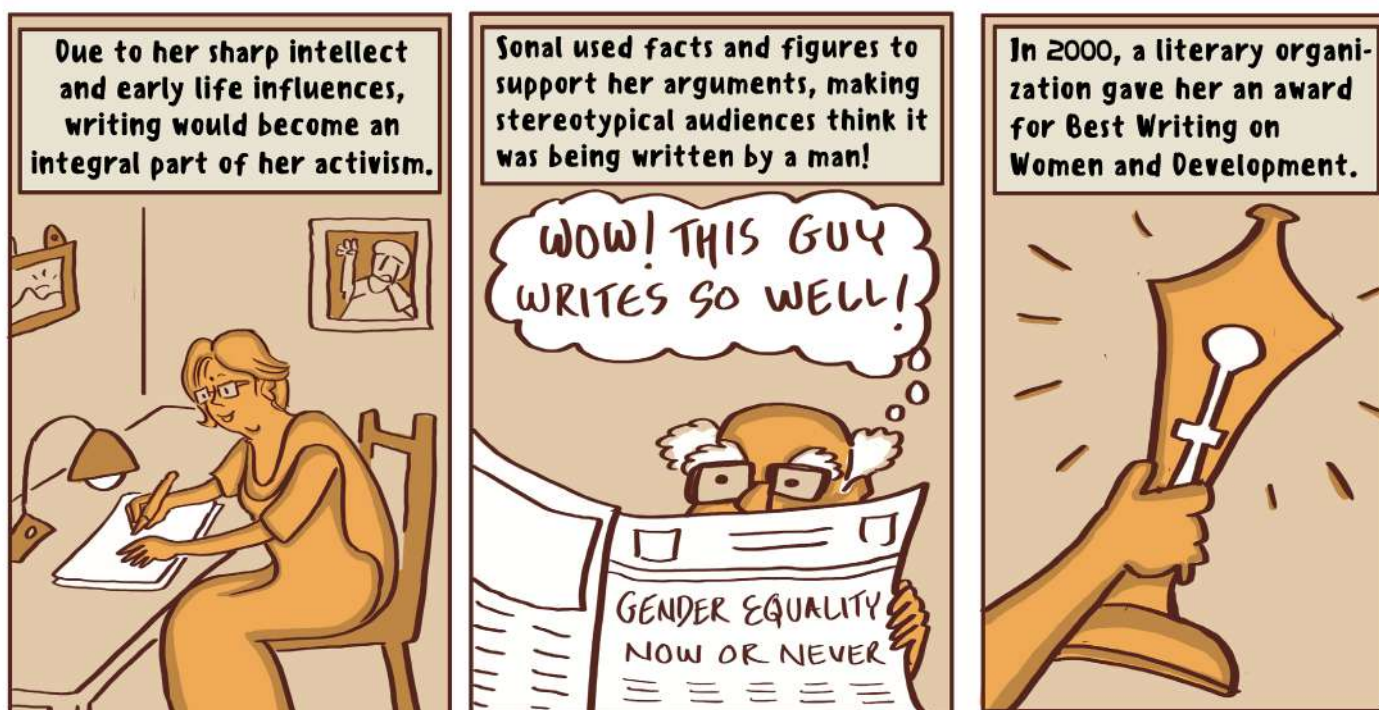
प्रसवपूर्व भ्रूण का लिंग प्रकट करना कानूनी अपराध है।  
PRENATAL DISCLOSURE OF SEX OF FETUS IS PROHIBITED UNDER LAW

FAOW became part of the campaign to ban such pre-natal sex-determination tests.

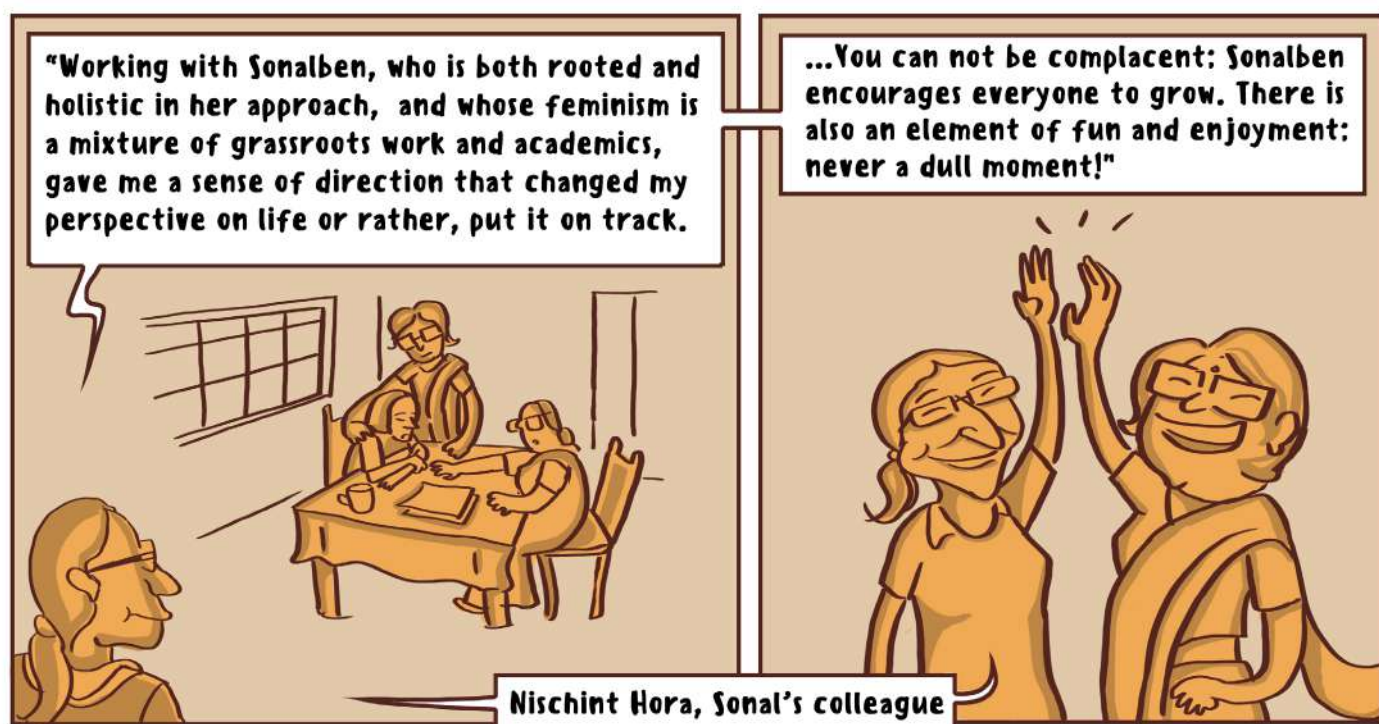
Sonal co-authored a paper on this in the monthly journal Seminar. These tests were banned in 1994.







Those who achieve so much often turn out to be impossible to work alongside.



Nischint Hora, Sonal's colleague

Vacha, the organization Sonal started in 1987, transforms adolescent girls from Mumbai's slums into confident citizens through educational programmes, resource creation, research, training, campaigns, networking and advocacy.



A comment by Professor Vrijendra, sums up 79-year-old Sonal Shukla.





# Asma Jahangir

1952-2018

*"Everyone is entitled to a dignified life, and no society can advance unless the individuals within it are free from fear and can at least enjoy basic political rights" -Asma Jahangir*

Asma Jahangir was a Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist who dedicated her life to securing justice for the most vulnerable people in her country - women, children, religious minorities and the poor. Often putting her own life at risk she courageously took on the most sensitive cases, for which she faced threats to her family, public assault and an attack on her house. Together with three other women lawyers, she founded the first legal aid centre in Lahore, known as AGHS, and a shelter home for women. Both institutions continue to provide relief to thousands of women and their children from different walks of life. In 1986, Asma enlisted the support of eminent journalists, lawyers and civil society activists and founded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, which remains one of the most respected and influential non-governmental organizations in the country and internationally.

Asma Jahangir was born in a politically active family of Lahore. Her father, a civil servant who became active in politics after retirement and served several terms in jail, had a great influence on her life. While still in her teens she petitioned the Supreme Court of Pakistan to challenge her father's detention. The case became known as the Asma Jilani versus Government of Punjab case and is recognized as a landmark in the legal and political history of the country.

As a fearless and sensitive human rights lawyer Asma was able to secure justice for hundreds of desperate women and men, ranging from battered housewives and abused children to exploited landless peasants and victims of religious persecution. She was elected as the first woman President of the Supreme Court Bar Association in 2010 and became widely known as the lawyer who helped women and disadvantaged people to attain justice. In addition to her outstanding achievements in the legal sphere, she was an intrepid and feisty activist who bravely spoke truth to power and fearlessly challenged dictators and violent extremists. As a consequence of her relentless struggle for the rule of law, human rights and democracy she inevitably invited the enmity of those she fought against; but also earned widespread love and respect within the country and in international circles. She was appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion from 2004 to 2010 and served on a fact-finding mission to look into Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine, amongst other assignments.

A legend in her lifetime, Asma Jahangir left this world while still in the midst of her battle against injustice, but her convictions live on: "The morality of a nation is not judged by the behaviour of an oppressed class but by the rules and laws made by the state, which either protect or exploit an already depressed section of society."

**Author and research: Nasreen Azhar**

**Illustrator: Gulnoori Ghani**



# ASMA JAHANGIR

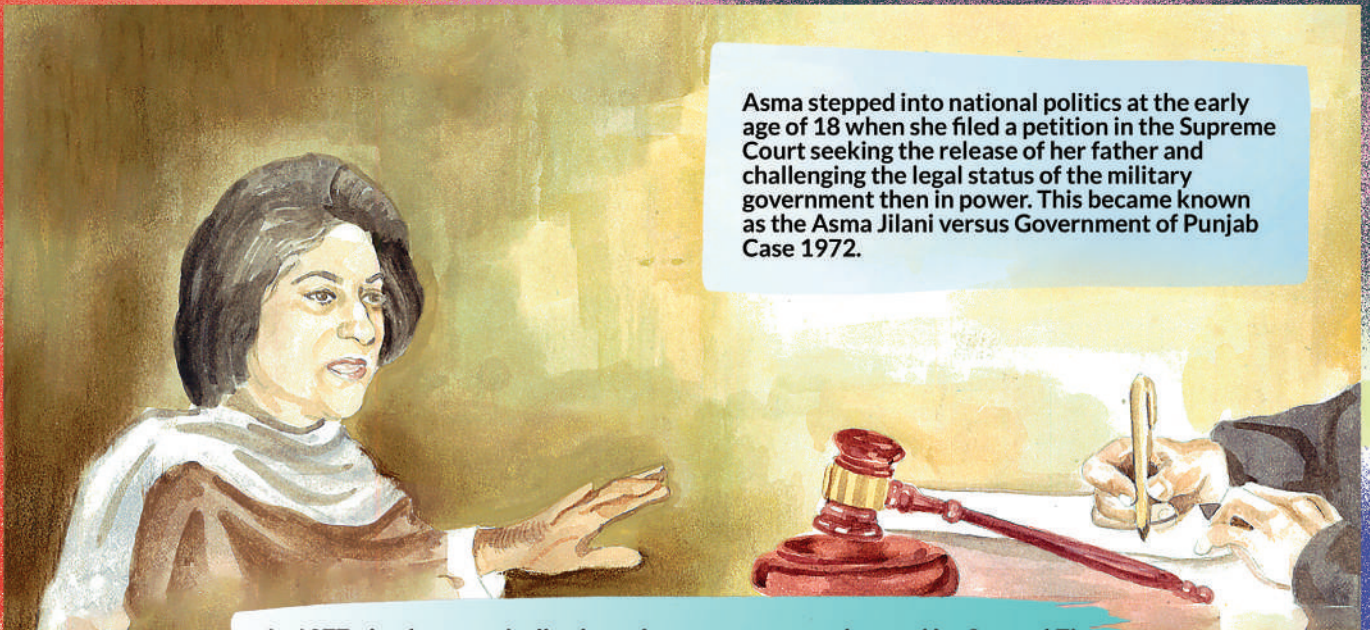
## A GIANT IN THE GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT







Asma Jahangir was a leading human rights lawyer in Pakistan. She took on the most sensitive cases in order to obtain justice for the most vulnerable sections of society – women, children, religious minorities and the poor.



Asma stepped into national politics at the early age of 18 when she filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the release of her father and challenging the legal status of the military government then in power. This became known as the Asma Jilani versus Government of Punjab Case 1972.

In 1977, the democratically elected government was deposed by General Zia ul Haq. The space for dissent was drastically curtailed, as political parties were banned

The Hudood Ordinance (1979) resulted in hundreds of women being imprisoned, accused of having relationships outside marriage.



Press censorship was imposed

Journalists were publicly flogged





Asma and her sister, Hina Jilani along with other women protesters organized a demonstration in Lahore to voice their opposition to the Law of Evidence



As they came out in the street they were confronted by scores of heavily armed policemen



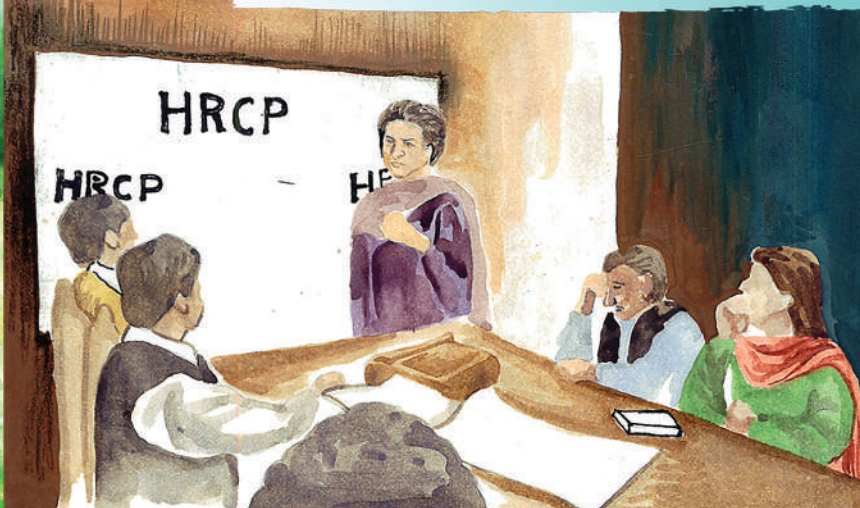
who waded into them mercilessly



Several women, including Asma, were injured

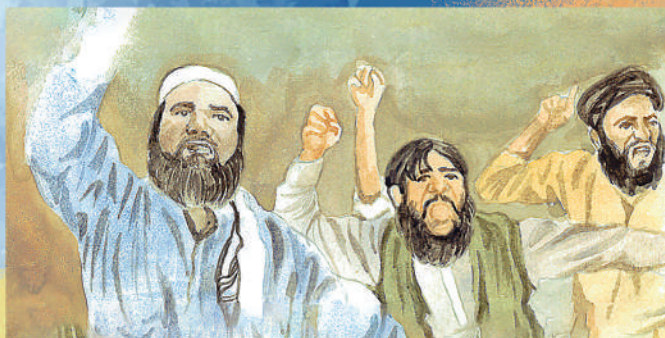
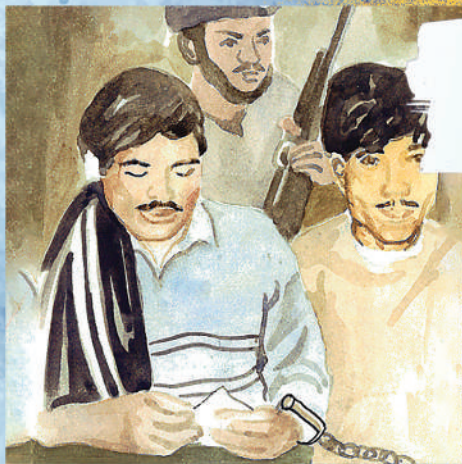


Realizing that a more fundamental change was needed, Asma Jahangir, with the support of renowned journalists I.A. Rahman and Nisar Osmani, she cofounded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).





Among the most sensitive and difficult cases that Asma courageously took on were blasphemy cases. For pleading the case of two Christians accused of blasphemy, 11-year-old Salamat Masih and his uncle Manzoor Masih, Asma had to contend with threats from violent religious extremists who crowded the courtroom in large numbers in an effort to intimidate her.



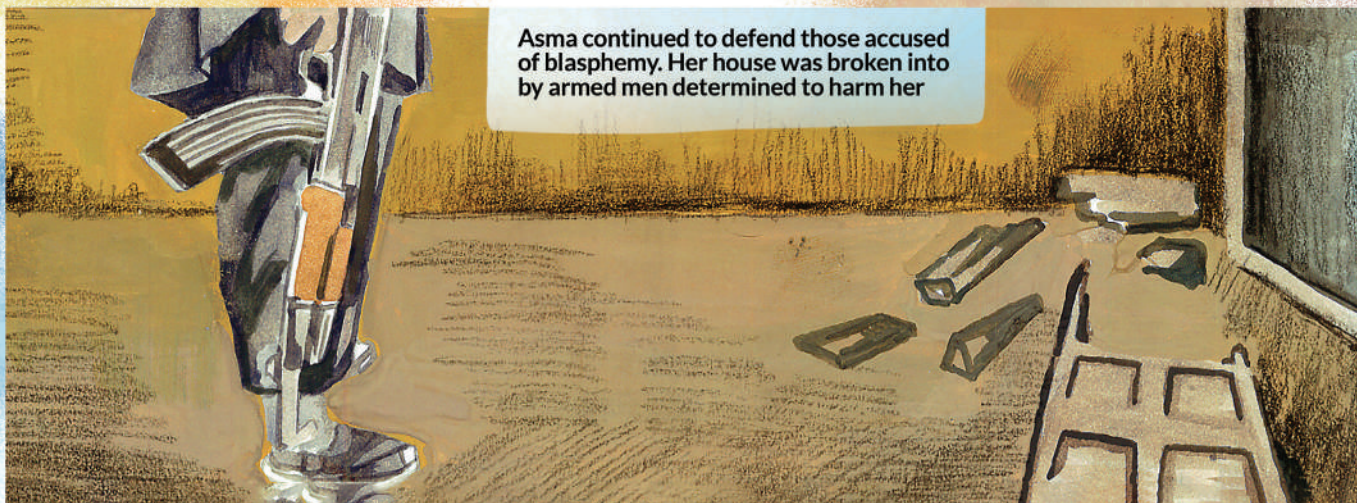
She won the case, but Manzoor Masih was killed outside the district court and the judge who exonerated the accused was later shot dead.



Her lifelong struggle for justice, the rule of law and democracy angered those she opposed. She was vilified and called a traitor.

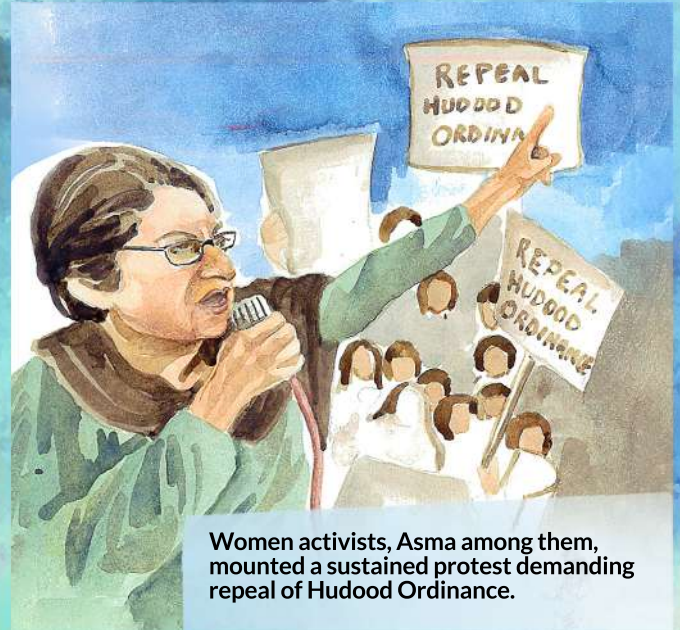


Asma continued to defend those accused of blasphemy. Her house was broken into by armed men determined to harm her





Asma also played a leading role in obtaining freedom for thousands of bonded brick kiln workers and peasants.



Women activists, Asma among them, mounted a sustained protest demanding repeal of Hudood Ordinance.

She won the love and respect of thousands of others who saw her as someone who could always be counted on to stand up for justice.



Apart from many international awards Asma Jahangir was awarded the Nishan-e-Imtiaz. (Nishan-e-Imtiaz, is an honour given by the Government of Pakistan to both civilians and military officers for their outstanding contributions to the country and its people)



Asma Jahangir passed away of cardiac arrest in February 2018, leaving many thousands to mourn her death.





# Soraya Tarzi

1899-1968

Soraya Tarzi was born on 24 November 1899 in Damascus, Syria, the daughter of Afghan progressive thinker and statesman Mahmud Beg Tarzi and Asma Rasmiya. Soraya grew up under the shadows of exile and the Ottoman Empire's rule of Syria, highly influenced by her father's aspirations for an independent and modern Afghanistan. Women in Afghanistan had barely any human rights to education, chose whom to marry or what to wear, and so forth. At the time, the reigning king had a hundred women in his harem as sexual slaves – and four official wives.

After King Habibullah took power in Afghanistan in 1901, exiled families were encouraged to return home. Soraya's family also decided to return in 1905. Her father had close ties with the king, and Soraya was introduced to his youngest son, Prince Amanullah Khan. They married on 30 August 1913, a marriage that lasted till the end of their lives and produced four sons and five daughters.

After King Habibullah's assassination in 1919, Amanullah Khan became king, and Soraya became the queen. Queen Soraya was the first consort in the Muslim world to have public appearances and accompany the king to various public events. She also played a crucial role in the king's initiatives to improve Afghan women's status and abolish patriarchal traditions and rules. Her active involvement in the country's social and political arenas encouraged other elite women and wives of government officials to step in. Together, they established the first women's rights movement. Additionally, her endeavours to improve the lives of women led to tangible and revolutionary achievements for Afghan women's civil and political rights.

In an unprecedented move for a Muslim nation, Queen Soraya accompanied King Amanullah during his travels to Europe, where European politicians warmly welcomed them. After returning home from their Europe tour in late 1929, the royal couple set out to bring more progressive changes to Afghanistan's ultra-conservative society. However, soon they faced strong opposition, which ultimately led to a revolt that forced King Amanullah and Queen Soraya Tarzi to abdicate and leave the country.

This is the story of an ambitious, progressive, and courageous queen whose legacy of strength, audacity, and fight for gender equality will inspire generations to come. She died in exile at the age of 68 on 20 April 1968 in Rome, but her name and role in Afghanistan's feminist history remain prominent. She redefined what it means to be Queen in the cultural and political history of Afghanistan. Afghan feminists look up to Queen Soraya as a role model, and no other queen or first lady since has been able to match her legacy.

**Author: Humaira Rahbin**

**Illustrator: Farahnaz Osmani & Narges Zahid (Code To Inspire)**



# SORAYA TARZI

The Courageous Afghan Queen







In 1919, after the demise of Amir Habibullah Khan, his son Amanullah Khan took the reigns, and hence his wife Soraya became the queen. Together, they endeavored to transform and modernize Afghanistan.



Before King Amanullah, patriarchal norms had dominated the Afghan society for a long time, which deprived the Afghan women of education and any sort of presence in social affairs.



No country can make progress unless all its citizens - both women and men - are educated. It is the right time to widen our young girls' perspectives by providing them with educational opportunities in other countries - they should explore and learn from experiences abroad.



Unlike previous queens, Queen Soraya did not hide behind curtains of traditions. Instead, she accompanied the king in leading his reforms, favoring women's status.



Queen Soraya believed that an independent country needs educated women. Thus, she inaugurated the first-ever girls' primary school, Mastoorat in 1921.





For the first time ever, Afghan girls got the opportunity to go to school; it instigated waves of optimism among families as they saw a bright future for their daughters.

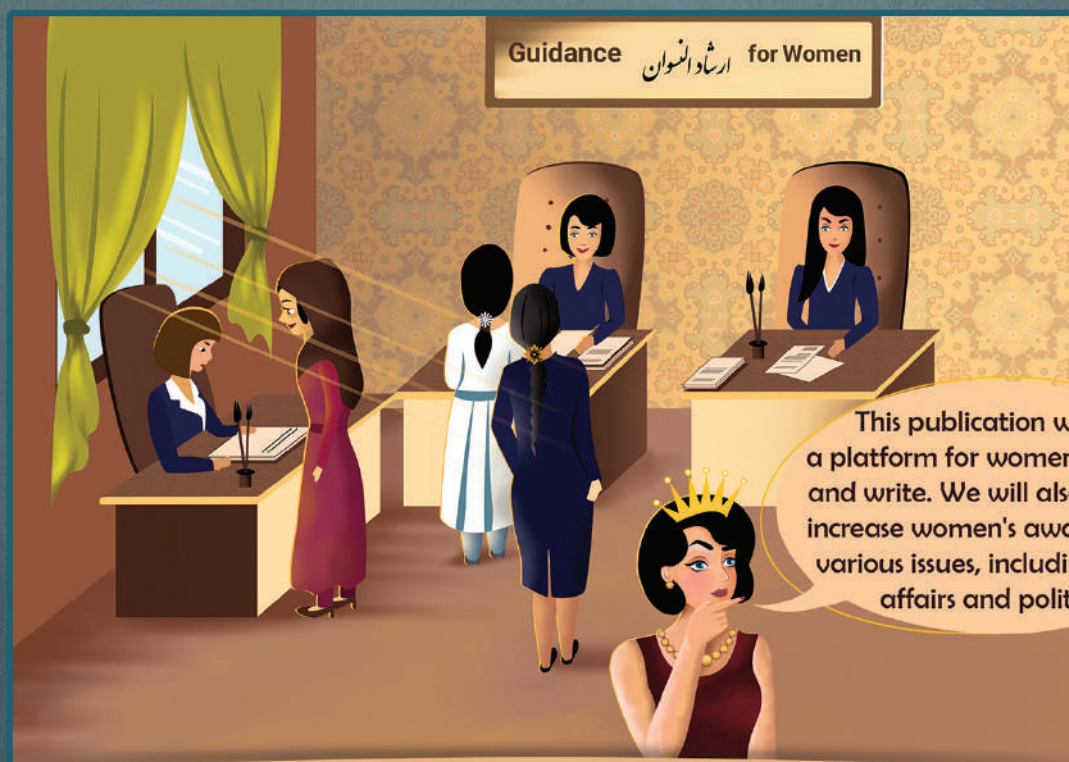


Queen Soraya's ambition to educate Afghan women paved the ground for the first-ever women's cohort to travel to Turkey to pursue higher education in 1928.





She stood up against imposition of the compulsory hijab on women and became the first Afghan woman to remove her hijab in public. She advocated for hijab to be optional.



Queen Soraya also established the first-ever women's weekly publication in Afghanistan, Ershad-I-Niswan to enlighten masses' thoughts, especially those of Afghan women.



This is the first time in history that we have a publication of our own! We will share our thoughts, knowledge, and experience with more of our fellow Afghan women.



We have as much responsibility as men to contribute to the social, cultural, economic, and political affairs of our country. We should stand along our male companions in leading this country towards a bright future – and this can only happen if we are well-equipped with knowledge and good education.



As the queen was very passionate about women's education, King Amanullah Khan announced that she was to be the country's Minister for Education.





What King Amanullah and his queen are doing is blasphemous! They are servants of the infidels! They are misleading our girls and women! Girls' schools?! Education abroad for women?! These are total nonsense! We need to stand against these enemies of our culture and religion!

While Afghanistan was on the right track of progress, ultra-conservatism began to doom the golden era.



King Amanullah and his queen must leave! We don't want their blasphemous reforms! We want our women to stay in their homes and adhere to our cultural and traditional values! We want to restore our dignity!

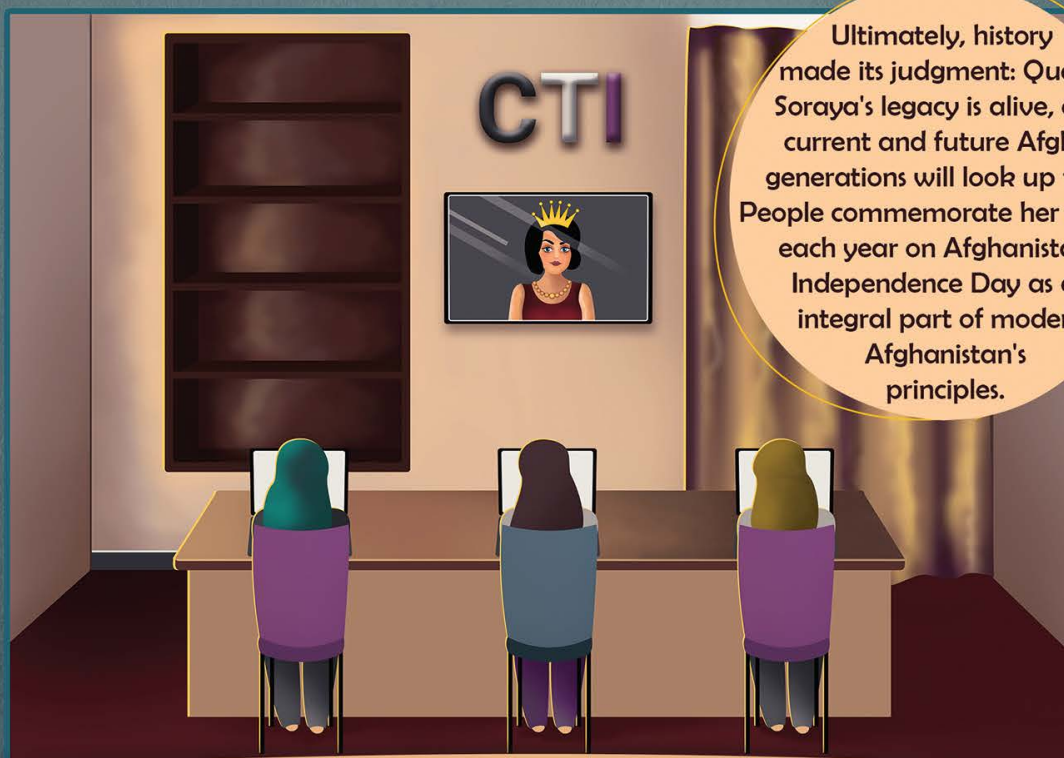
Down with the blasphemous King

The highly traditional society did not accept reforms and modernization programmes of the king and the queen. Thus, they revolted.





As a result, the courageous queen and the reformist king were obliged to leave the country in 1929. They fled to India and then to Italy.



It took decades for the Afghan people to realize that King Amanullah and Queen Soraya were true patriots, and their reforms – if continued - could have placed the country in a much better position than where it stands now.



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