



# The Kukri



By

**Monica Rhor**

**Houston Chronicle**

In his Daura Suruwal, Anmol Sanyasi stands like the soldier he dreams of becoming, like the Nepali warriors of his ancestral line. Shoulders straight. Gaze certain.

The teenager caresses the ornate burgundy and gold fabric. On his head, a matching hat perches like a mountain peak.

Around his waist, a sheath crafted of buffalo leather is tucked beneath a lavender sash.

Inside the sheath is a curved steel dagger.

This, he says with a note of awe, is a kukri — a combat knife once wielded by the Gurkhas, who “fought for sovereignty, equality, peace.”

Anmol cradles the blade and considers the artistry: rosewood handle, bronze-encased tip, notches carved in metal. His eyes glitter. His dimples deepen.

The objects bind Anmol to the country he left behind as a 9-year-old, to a way of life already receding from his memory, to a story that began long before he was born.

His family are Lhotshampa, Nepalis recruited to work in Bhutan during the mid-19th century. In the late 1980s, the mostly Hindu Lhotshampa were persecuted, and thousands were driven out of the country.

Anmol, now 15, was born in the Beldangi refugee camp in eastern Nepal. There, among the thatched huts in Sector F, he spent his early childhood.

When his family left for America, they could carry only three suitcases. No room for the pet monkey Anmol begged to bring.

Enough for the kukri, the Daura Suruwal and the Dhaka topi hat that represents Mount Everest.

The boy who dreams of someday returning to Nepal stores the knife on the altar near his bed. The Daura Suruwal, in the closet beside his Boy Scout uniform.

## Scouting Career

### **Troop 1881, Houston Tx.**

- Joined 2012
- Senior Patrol Leader 2016, 1 year term
- Quarter Master 2015, 1 year term
- Quarter Master 2014, 1 year term
- Pilmont 2017 Crew Leader

### **Troop 50, Fort Worth Tx**

- Joined 2017
- Den Chief for Pack 350, 2017-2018

## School Activities

### **Alief Hasting High School, Houston Tx**

- Marine ROTC 2014-2017
- ROTC Battalion Commander 2016-2017

### **O.D. Wyatt High School, Fort Worth Txx**

- Army ROTC 2017-2018
- Wrestling Team 2017-2018