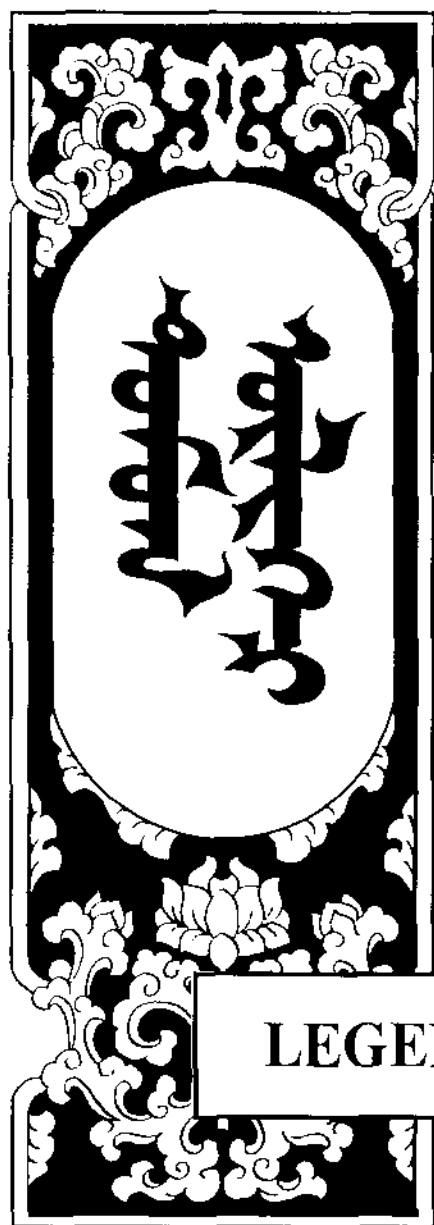


MONGOLIAN FOLKTALES AND LEGENDS



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LEGENDS

1.ERKHII MERGEN

Once upon a time, there rose seven suns in this universe, and it was exposed to a burning drought. The earth was heated fiercely, the streams and rivers evaporated, the plants and trees were parched. People and living beings suffered from intolerable heat, and horses and animals were tormented by painful thirst. It was dreadfully difficult to live or even survive. However, there lived a very good archer, called Erkhii Mergen. He was an excellent archer, who could shoot skillfully what he saw and he hit accurately what he aimed at. A stream of people went to him, and requested him to shoot and destroy the many suns which rose in the sky. Erkhii Mergen was very proud of his accurate shooting. Because he was born a real man among men.

His thumbs were great with strength,

His liver was bursting with health,

He was blessed with the fullness of youth,

His blood was flaming.

Then he said, "I will shoot the seven suns with one arrow each and destroy them," and he made a promise and swore an oath. "If I should not succeed, I will cut off my thumbs and be no longer a man! I will become an animal which never drinks pure water and eats the dry grass of the preceding year and lives forever in a dark hole!" From the Eastern side Erkhii Mergen began shooting the seven suns, those rose in a file from the East to the West, in the sky. He hit and destroyed six of the suns with six arrows. As he shot his seventh arrow, aiming at the seventh sun, a swallow crossed in front of his arrow, its flight screening the sun. Erkhii Mergen's arrow hit the swallow's tail and ripped it. Since then, the swallow's tail has been forked. Nevertheless, the last sun was afraid of the powerful archer and it disappeared to hide behind a western mountain.

When Erkhii Mergen, the archer wanted to follow on his piebald horse and kill the swallow that had impeded his shooting, his horse said, "I'll chase and catch up with the swallow from dusk to dawn," and he vowed, "if I should not succeed, my master, you may cut my legs off and throw them away in a desert. Then, I would no longer be a horse with a saddle, but would live in a hollow and shallow place!"

So Erkhii Mergen chased the swallow on his piebald horse, and when the horse had almost caught up with the swallow, the swallow flew a tortuous twisting path to avoid the horse. This went on from dusk to dawn, but the horse could not catch it.

Then Erkhii Mergen got angry and he cut off his piebald horse's fore-legs and threw them away in a desert. Thus this horse changed into a jumping mouse (or jerboa) and for this reason the jerboa's front legs are shorter than his hind ones.

Also the swallow still flies to and fro around a man riding a horse. The swallow flies around the man mocking, "Can you catch up with me? Can you catch up with me?"

According to his promise as a man, Erkhii Mergen cut off his thumbs and was no longer a man, but changed into a marmot, which never drinks pure water and eats the grass of the preceding year, and lives in a dark hole. The marmot's claws are four, because of the fact that Erkhii Mergen cut off his thumbs. The marmot comes out from its hole by the morning and evening sun. Erkhii Mergen the archer, wants to forget that he has changed into the marmot, and wants to wait and shoot the last sun at its rising or setting. However, in the marmot's flesh there is a piece of meat called 'man meat', which was Erkhii Mergen's flesh, and to this day people never eat it.

People say the last sun of this world was frightened of Erkhii Mergen and went behind a mountain, and it is for this reason that the day and night appear in succession.



2. THE SWALLOW AND THE WASP

A long time ago, KhanGarid,* King of the Feathered World, sent for a Swallow and a Wasp. After they had bowed before him, the Khan said: I command the two of you to fly around the world tomorrow and seek out the animal with the tastiest meat. I will eat only that animal in the future. Return by nightfall with your news!"

Early the next morning, the Swallow and the Wasp set out on their important quest, each flying off in a different direction. As the sun rose higher, the day became warm, bright and beautiful. The Swallow sang as it soared through the blue skies, just happy to be alive, and soon forgot Khan-Garid's command altogether.

In the meantime, on the other side of the world, the harmful Wasp was carrying out the Khan's orders. Leaving a trail of pain-ful stings in its wake, the Wasp methodically tasted the blood of every creature it came across. As the day drew to a close and the sun began its descent, the two royal emissaries met before the palace of the Khan-Garid to exchange their news. The Swallow, having played away the entire day, was now worried about the Khan's wrath. Hoping that the Wasp had discovered the tastiest animal, the Swallow asked "Well, Wasp, Were you successful today? Did you find out which animal's meat tastes the best?"

The Wasp answered: "Indeed I did, Swallow! After tasting hundreds of different animals, I found that the human beings are the most delicious of all. From now on, our respected Khan-Garid must eat only humans."

The Wasp's surprising announcement greatly upset the Swallow, as he liked the men and women of the Earth. "Oh dear," thought the Swallow. "How can I save those poor Humans from being hunted by Khan-Garid for eternity?"

Devising a plan, the Swallow asked the Wasp: "Brother, how did you manage to taste the Humans?" "Oh! It was easy," replied the Wasp. "I pierced their skins with my stinger and tasted their blood with my tongue!"

"How interesting!" exclaimed the Swallow. "Where is this powerful tongue of yours?" And when the Wasp opened its mouth to show the bird its tongue, as quick as can be, the Swallow pecked it out. Before the shocked Wasp could react, the two flying creatures were called before the Khan-Garid.

"So, tell me what you have discovered," boomed the Khan. "Wasp, you

“speak first!” But the tongueless Wasp could no longer speak. All it could do was fly round and round the great Khan’s head, protesting and complaining with a loud buzzing sound.

“What in Heaven’s name are you trying to say, Wasp?” roared the Khan. “I can’t understand a single word!”

In exasperation, Khan-Garid shooed away the droning Wasp. “Swallow,” he said. “You tell me whose meat is the sweetest.”

“With pleasure, Your Majesty,” replied the Swallow. “The tastiest meat in the world belongs to the snake.”

Thanking the Swallow, Khan-Garid vowed to hunt and eat only snakes from that day on. This royal tradition is still carried on today by the descendant of Khan-Garid, the eagle. As for the Wasp, from the moment the Swallow pecked out its tongue it lost its voice completely and now it can only make a whining, buzzing sound.

3. WHY THE CAMEL ROLLS IN THE ASHES

A great many years ago, the Buddha began assigning an animal to each of the years of the twelve-year Mongolian calendar. When he had finished assigning eleven animals, the Buddha paused to consider which animal should be allotted the twelfth and final year. On hearing this, the camel and the mouse, neither of whom had been selected, rushed to see the Buddha. Bowing respectfully before the Great Sage, each presented himself as a worthy candidate. The Buddha listened in silence as each animal argued his case. When the elaborate pleas came to an end, the wise Buddha, not wishing to offend either of the eager and equally deserving animals, quietly told the camel and the mouse that they would have to resolve the matter themselves in a friendly and honest way.

The big camel and the tiny mouse, after much discussion and debate, finally agreed that they would settle the issue with a contest. The first to see the light of the new morning sun the very next day would be the winner, and the winner would enter the twelve-year Mongolian calendar for all time.

That night, in the darkness, in the middle of a wide, open plain, the camel took up a position facing East. The mouse, who had asked the camel if he could sit on his hump, fixed his eyes in a faraway mountain to the West.

Eyes propped wide open, the two anxious contestants settled down to wait for the critical moment.

At dawn, when the great fiery ball began its slow ascent, one thin early ray glanced off the snowy western mountaintop. The mouse squealed out:

"There it is! I see the sun! I win!"

"What?" cried the camel, who knew that the sun rose in the East. "Why, you little sneak! You've cheated! You'll pay for this!"

As the terrified mouse scurried down the camel's hump to seek safety in a nearby pile of ashes, the camel charged after him. He threw his heavy body on the ground, and rolled back and forth on the ash pile, hoping to crush the mouse with his weight. The camel didn't squash the mouse that time, but he's certain that one day he will. Whenever he spies a pile of ashes, he thinks the mouse must be hiding inside. He snorts, stamps his feet, then lies down and rolls around and around, trying to flatten his tricky little foe.

So it happened that the little mouse entered the twelve-year Mongolian calendar while the big camel was excluded. Feeling sorry for the camel, the wise Buddha told him gently that he would never be forgotten. No, in fact the camel would be his represented in the Mongolian calendar by possessing one feature of each of the twelve different animals.

If you look carefully at the camel, you will see that the Buddha has kept His word, because the camel has:

the ears of the Mouse

the stomach of the Cow

the paws of the Tiger

the nose of the Hare

the body of the Dragon

the eyes of the Snake

the mane of the Horse

the wool of the Sheep

the hump of the Ape

the head-crest of the Rooster

the crooked back-legs of the Dog

and the tail of the Pig.

4. WHY THE BAT LIVES IN THE DARK

Once, a long time ago, a terrible battle broke out between the Birds and the Beasts of this Earth. No one remembers any more what caused this battle to start, but the fighting was so ferocious that the whole earth shook and the land was covered with broken feathers, bloody hair, and the bodies of fallen creatures.

On one side of the battle swarmed the animals of the air. All the birds, great and small, were massed in the heavens, from the most powerful eagle, sharp-eyed hawk, and swift falcon to the tiniest finch and fragile sparrow. Opposing the birds were formi-dable adversaries: the kingly lion, menacing tiger, mighty stag, massive bear, and all the other beasts of the land.

The only animals in the whole world that did not choose sides in this war was the Bat. As a mouse with wings or a birdy beast, the Bat gambled on its dual nature, waiting to see which side would win. In this way, when the time came it could claim victory with the conquering army.

When it looked as though the birds of the air were gaining the advantage, the Bat would become like a bird, flap its wings and screech:

"I'm a bird, too! I'll peck at the beasts below, pierce their skins and dig my sharp talons into their flesh! Forward to battle, birds!"

But when the tide of the great battle shifted, and suddenly it seemed as though the beasts would win, the Bat would hide its wings and flash its mouselike grin. Baring its sharp teeth, it would bark:

"Beware! I am a dangerous beast! Come on beasts! Let's at-tack the birds and bite them till they fall from the sky! Hooray for the beasts!"

As the battle raged on and on, both the birds and the beasts displayed courage in their terrible fight, never ceasing for a mo-ment to give their best for the sake of their cause. After many weeks of struggle, however, it became clear to everyone that both sides were evenly matched, that neither side would ever be able to overcome the other. And so the birds and the beasts agreed to cease fighting. They declared a truce.

In the quiet that followed, both armies counted their dead, collected their wounded, and called out the names of their broth-ers, sisters and friends who might not have perished on the battle-field.

No one called the name of the Bat. No one wanted the one who had darted

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from one camp to the other throughout the long war, not knowing where it belonged, telling false things to each army in turn.

The animals had seen it fighting like this, first on one side, then on the other side of the battlefield. They were angry. Neither the birds nor the beasts would now, or ever, agree to claim the Bat as one of their own. Instead, for its disloyalty, they banished the Bat from their midst.

The sorry Bat, a traitor to both birds and beasts, was now ashamed of its behaviour during the feud. It curled up its mousy body and took flight. Seeking out a remote corner of the world, it entered the recesses of Mother Earth and concealed itself in her black and silent caves, venturing out only at night in search of food.

From that day, the Bat has made its home in the dark, wrapped against the dampness in its leathery cloak, living out the life of a lonely outcast

5. HOW THE HARE SPLIT ITS LIP

Many, many years ago, the Grand elder of all the hares summoned his clan together and said to them gravely:

"Brothers and Sisters There is not a living thing on this earth that does not know how to defend itself or frighten away its enemy. We hares are the sole exception: we are afraid of everyone and everything!

"When the leaves on the trees rustle slightly, our hearts sink to our paws; when another creature so much as glances in our direction, we immediately hop away in fright. "Brothers and Sisters! We are the most wretched of all the animals on the Earth. I have thought this over carefully: it is better that we should all drown ourselves than continue living this way, as the most shameful creatures in the animal world."

The hares sighed deeply and flopped their long ears in agreement. Then, with tears of self-pity welling up in their pink eyes, they formed a long line behind the wise Grand elder, and set out, hopping slowly on their big feet.

Just before reaching the cold waters of their destination, a deep watery pit, a black magpie swooped out of the skies. Perching on a branch near the long line of weeping hares, she cried in alarm:

"My dear Hares! What has happened! Where are you all going?"

Without answering the magpie, the hares kept on marching to their doom. So

the magpie became insistent:

"Hares! Why are you all so sad? What is the meaning of all these tears? One of you, please tell me what is going on."

The Grand elder told the magpie:

"Oh, Missus Magpie! No one in this World is afraid of us and we miserable creatures, are scared of simply everybody. It is best for us to vanish from the face of the Earth."

"What?" cried the magpie. "What foolishness is this! Stop! All of you."

The whole long line of hares halted their mournful march and gathered around the commanding magpie, who told them

"Hares, you may drown yourselves if you so desire, but before you do, please do as I ask. Please hide behind those bushes over there. A shepherd boy is about to come here to water his sheep. When he arrives, you must all jump out and run in every direction. You'll see for yourselves what will happen. I assure you, hares are not the only timid creatures on this Earth!"

So saying, the kindhearted magpie flew away.

The hares followed the magpie's instructions and gathered to hide behind the bushes. After a few minutes, a shepherd boy did indeed appear over the hill, herding his flocks towards the spring

The moment the sheep drew near, the hares sprang out of the bushes and went bounding and bouncing about. When they finally stopped and looked back, they saw that the sheep had been thoroughly startled and had thundered off in all directions. The poor shepherd boy was desperately trying to stop the wild scramble and was shouting at the top of his voice and cracking his whip.

So surprised were the hares at what had happened that they stood on their big hind legs and began laughing with glee. They had actually managed to frighten a whole herd of sheep! The hares laughed so long and so hard that their upper lips split in the middle, and that is why their lips look as they do right up till today.

Owen Lattimore

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1. THE FOX AND THE LION

Long, long ago, a lion and a fox were living together, hunting wild animals. The lion always used to carry the game they caught. One day, however, they caught a deer, and the lion said to the fox, "You carry it." "I can carry it if you wish," the fox replied. "But there's a difficult job to do and that's the groaning. Can you act that?" "Now" the lion thought to himself, "It would be a shameful thing that I, the king of the beasts, have to go groaning behind this poor fox." So he said, "Oh, I can't groan. I'll carry the deer meat, but you do the roaning!" So the lion put the deer meat on his back and walked proudly biting its legs. The fox followed the lion, moaning, and when they reached their place, the fox shared the deer meat without any shame.

2. THE FOX AND THE WOLF

One day, as a she-fox and a he-wolf were hunting together, they came upon a bag full of butter that some human had accident-ally dropped by the side of the road.

The two animals agreed to divide the butter equally between them, but suddenly the fox said:

"It's not a good idea to eat the butter here by the roadside. Someone might come along and disturb us. Let's take the bag up to the mountaintop and eat it there."

So the two animals carried the butter to the top of a high mountain. Just as the wolf prepared to start eating his share, the fox said:

"It's not a good idea to share this butter. Only one of us should eat it."

The wolf asked: "Well then, which of us should get to eat it?"

"The one of us who is oldest," answered the fox. "How old are you?"

he wolf, who wanted that butter all to himself very much, decided to try and trick the fox. He said to her:

"When I was little the Great Mountain Sumner was just a small mound of earth, and the Great Ocean was a tiny puddle."

On hearing this the fox burst into tears. The wolf, surprised, thought to himself:

"Oh, poor sensitive fox! But it doesn't matter to me whether you cry or not because now the bag of butter will all be mine!"

Still, curious to know why the fox was so stricken with grief, the wolf asked her, "Why are you so sad?"

Whereupon the fox, wiping her tears, said in choked voice:

"I have three cubs. My youngest is exactly the same age as you. When you mentioned your childhood, I began to think of my youngest cub and I miss him so much that I began to cry!"

Her story saddened the wolf and suddenly he was ashamed of himself for his trickery. He gave the bag of butter to the fox and went slinking off to his lair, his mouth still watering over the lost delicacy.

When the wolf was out of sight, the sly fox began to eat the butter all by herself, chuckling between each delicious mouthful.

3. THE FOX, THE HEDGEHOG AND THE WOLF

Once upon a time a wolf, a fox and a hedgehog lived together. Then one day they found a plum and they discussed who should eat it. The wolf said, "The one who gets drunk most easily, eats the plum." They agreed on this idea. So the wolf continued "As soon as I taste a drink I am drunk." Then the fox said, "As soon as I smell a drink I am drunk." The hedgehog said, "As soon as I hear about a drink I am drunk," and he swayed.

So the hedgehog started to eat the plum. But the fox said, "Let's have a race, and the winner will eat the plum." The others all agreed. So they began the race. The hedgehog hung on to the fox's tail. The fox ran as fast as he could and thought that he had come in first, but when he looked over his shoulder, the hedgehog, who had dropped off, was right by him, and said, "Oh, are you just coming in. I'm waiting for you." Then the wolf and the fox agreed that the hedgehog was the winner, so he ate the plum.

4. THE FOOLISH WOLF

Once upon a time, a wolf was going along a path and he found a blood pudding made of sheep's blood lying on the path. When the wolf saw it he was going to eat it, but the blood pudding said, "Wolf, you can't eat me. To the South

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not far from here there's a horse stuck in the mud. Can't you go there and eat that, please?"

The wolf listened to the words of the blood pudding and when he came to where the horse was he found that it was true. When the wolf was going to eat the horse, the horse said, "Mr. Wolf, if you want to eat me, won't you first pull me out of the mud?" The wolf pulled him out and then got ready to eat, but then the horse said, "Are you going to eat me while I'm still covered with mud? You may eat me if you first clean me." The wolf licked the body of the horse all over and then he wanted to eat him, but the horse said, "There's some writing on the hoof of my hind leg. Before you eat me, read that, please." When the wolf went to look at the writing on the hoof of the horse's hind leg the horse kicked at the back of the wolf's head and smashed it in, and then ran away. The dying wolf howled to himself:

"I was big-headed going along the road, I was a blockhead when I was, tricked by a sheep's blood pudding.

Am I the owner who should have pulled the horse from the deep mud?

Am I the mother who should have licked and cleaned the horse's body?

When did I learn to read and write? I am stupid and now I am dying."

5. THE SPARROW

In ancient times, when the sun was first rising, and leaves were first sprouting, when the state was just being established and people were beginning to gather, there lived a sparrow. The spar-row stuffed a pinch of grain into his crop and kept a handful of grain in his stomach in order not to feel the pangs of hunger in a winter cold, and not to starve through a hard spring until the next crop.

Then one day the sparrow flew into the sky, and when he was tired, sat on a bush. But the bush stung his poor belly, nearly slashing it open. Then the sparrow requested the bush not to harm his winter supplies and not to do any physical harm to him. But the bush was too arrogant and rude. Then the sparrow had no way out. So he threatened the bush, saying: "Well, then I'll tell a goat to eat you up." The sparrow flew to a goat and said, "Mr. Goat, Mr. Goat, the bush is going to cut my poor belly, and he is not listening to my requests not to harm me. Please, eat the bush for me and punish him for his arrogance."

The goat replied, "Oh, now I'm thinking more of eating my fill of juicy grass



rather than eating your dry bush," and he would not eat. So the sparrow hurled a threat at him, saying, "Then I'll tell a wolf to eat you." Coming to a wolf, the sparrow said, "Mr. Wolf. Mr. Wolf, the bush stings my poor crop and it's about to cut my poor belly. But the black goat wouldn't eat the bush to punish the wrong-doer. Please, eat the black goat to set an example for wrong-doers and those who ignore such acts."

But the wolf wouldn't listen to him, saying:

"Now I am planning to eat the big animals that are my game during my hunting season, rather than eating your skinny goat!"

So the sparrow got very angry and threatened the wolf, saying: "I shall tell a hunter to kill you." *The sparrow went to a hunter and said, "Mr. Hunter. Mr. Hunter, the bush stings my poor belly and is going to cut it. But the black goat wouldn't eat it. And the wolf wouldn't eat the black goat. You, please chase and kill that blue wolf for me. You should not allow injustice to prevail in this world."* But the hunter paid no attention and said, "I can't even hunt my game in the valleys, much less chase your hungry wolf." So the sparrow threatened him, saying: "I will tell a mouse to cut your bow-string and damage your clothes." And he went to a mouse and said, "*The bush stings my poor little belly, and it is going to cut it. But the black goat wouldn't eat it. And the blue wolf wouldn't eat the black goat. And the hunter wouldn't chase the blue wolf and kill him. So you, please damage the hunter's clothes and bowstring.*" But the mouse also refused to gnaw the hunter's clothes and said, "Now I can hardly pile up my grass and grain for my winter provision, much less gnaw your hunter's clothes." Then the sparrow threatened the mouse, saying: "Well, I will have a shepherd boy to kill you." And he went to the shepherd boy and said:

to "My dear shepherd boy, my dear shepherd boy, the bush is going to cut my poor belly. But the black goat wouldn't eat the bush. And the blue wolf wouldn't eat the black goat. *The hunter wouldn't chase the blue wolf and kill him. And the mouse wouldn't damage the hunter's clothes and bow-string. You please pour a pitcher of water into the mouse hole and kill it for me!*" But the shepherd boy did not think much of the sparrow and said: "I can barely herd my lambs and kids, without chasing after mice and rats." So the sparrow threatened him, saying, "I will have you beaten by your parents." And he went to the shepherd boy's parents. They were fluffing wool to make felt. However, the sparrow asked them: "The bush is going to cut my poor little crop, but the black goat wouldn't eat the bush. And the blue wolf wouldn't eat the black

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goat, and the hunter wouldn't chase and kill the blue wolf. And the mouse wouldn't gnaw the hunter's bow-string and sheepskin coat. And your shepherd boy wouldn't kill the mouse. You, please, just give your shepherd boy a beating for me!"

But the boy's parents were not impressed by the sparrow's words, saying: "Just when we can finish fluffing all the wool we have spread out? We have no time to go running after a naughty boy."

So the sparrow threatened them, saying: "Then I will scatter your wool all over the mountain and steppe." So the sparrow decided to defend his own strength and willpower rather than to request aid from unhelpful fellow creatures who were all selfish and self-centred. So he decided to fan his wings to raise a wind, and flew over an isolated hill. As soon as the wind got up, the beaten wool started flying in the air, which surprised the shepherd boy's parents so much that they went up to the sparrow and promised: "Please, stop your wind, we will beat our shepherd boy for you." And when the parents were first about to beat the shepherd boy, he promised to kill the mouse and when he went to kill the mouse, it promised to gnaw the hunter's bow-string and sheepskin coat, when the mouse was going to gnaw the hunter's clothes and bow-string, he promised to chase and kill the blue wolf. When the hunter went to chase and kill the blue wolf, he promised to eat the black goat, and when the wolf came to punish the black goat, the black goat promised to chew and eat the bush; and when the black goat went to chew and eat the bush, it vowed not to sting and cut the sparrow's poor little crop.

In this way, the sparrow defended his poor little belly and lived happily ever after.



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6. THE STORY OF THE LAME MAGPIE WHICH HAD SEVEN GREEN EGGS

Once upon a time, there was a lame magpie which had seven green eggs. But one day, a fox came to the magpie, and said, "Will you give me one of your seven green eggs? I would like to take it and eat it." The magpie answered at once, "I will not give you any of my seven green eggs."

"If you won't give me some of your eggs, I shall batter and break down your golden aspen, and I shall scatter all your things far and wide," said the fox.

The magpie was frightened, and gave him one of its eggs. In this way, the fox came every day and spoke as before, and ate the eggs until only one remained.

Then the magpie began to cry. However, a mouse came out and asked, "Why are you crying?" The magpie replied, "Before, I had seven green eggs. But a fox came and said that I should give him some of my eggs. I refused many times, but he took my eggs saying to me, 'If you don't give me your eggs, I shall batter and break down your golden aspen, and I shall scatter all your things far and wide.' And I have only one egg left."

When the mouse heard this, he taught the magpie the following words: "Now you should say, 'I will not give you my last egg. Then the fox will say as before, 'I shall batter and break down your golden aspen, I shall scatter all your things far and wide!' Then you should ask him, 'Where are your horns, which will batter and break down my golden aspen? And where are your hooves, which will scatter my things far and wide? Then the fox will certainly say, 'Who taught you such words?' Then you should say, 'I thought and thought, so this idea came to my mind. I slept and slept, so this wisdom came to my mind. I remembered and remembered, so this memory came to my mind!'"

Soon the fox came and said to the magpie, "Will you give your last egg?" The magpie replied, "No!" Then the fox said, "I shall batter and break down your golden aspen, and scatter your things far and wide." Then the magpie asked, "Where are your horns, which will batter and break down my golden aspen, and where are your hooves, which will scatter my things far and wide?" Then the fox asked, "From whom did you hear these words? Tell me!" The magpie did not tell, but replied, "Myself. I thought and thought, so this idea came to my mind. I slept and slept, and this wisdom came to my mind. I remembered and remembered, so this memory came to my mind." Then the fox said, "If

you do not tell the truth about who taught you such words, I will make use of one of the fox's thirteen tricks, and I will catch you and eat you now."

When the fox threatened her, the magpie was very frightened and with no way out, told the truth. "The mouse which lives in that hole taught me."

The fox came to the opening of the mouse's hole and called him out. The mouse replied, "Not now, I am sweeping my rubbish." The fox waited and called him out again. The mouse said, "Not now, I am wiping my mirror." The fox waited and called him out again. Then the mouse poked its head out of its hole. The fox said:

"Your head is so exquisite, it must be prettier than your body!" Then the mouse showed its body. "Your body is so pretty, it must be prettier than your back," said the fox. Then the mouse showed its back. "Your back is so pretty, it must be prettier than your tail," said the fox. Then the mouse showed its tail. "You have such a pretty body. It will seem even prettier if you skip on a rock," said the fox. When the mouse started to skip, the fox caught it in its mouth.

Then the mouse said, "If you chew me, it will be smelly. But if you take one big bite at me, it will be tasty." And when the fox started to take a big bite in the way the mouse said, the mouse dropped out of his mouth.

7. THE SLY RED FOX

Once upon a time there was a boy who was poor and had no goods or possessions other than what he got himself by a snare and net, hunting mice and susliks. One day he went hunting mice and susliks, and while he rested a little, a sly red fox suddenly came rushing up and said, "Oh, I met up with many horsemen and now they are coming and pursuing me, if they ask about me, please tell them that I have already gone over a hill," and he lay at the bottom (or hem) of his coat. Many horsemen with guns and other weapons came galloping up to him and asked, "Have you seen a big red fox come by here?" He replied, "Already the fox has gone over the hill, if you chase well, soon you will find him." Those many horsemen again galloped away in great haste. Then the fox came out of his coat hem and said, "You have saved my life, I will repay your kindness, but how is your life?" The boy replied truthfully, "I live on hunting mice and susliks - putting snares and nets for them."

"At this time, mice and susliks are not so valuable but wolf's skin is another

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The boy saw the roped tiger and wolf, and cried out, "Oh, my poor wolf who owes me a lot comes leading a tiger! For him prepare a leg of the tiger which was killed from the southern mountain, together with a sternum of the lion which was brought from the northern mountain! But hobble and tie up quickly this tiger which brings the wolf!" The tiger heard this and exclaimed, "It must be so!" and ran back at his fastest speed; the wolf couldn't follow the tiger; he was dragged and hadn't time to catch his breath, and so he snarled showing his teeth. When the tiger glanced behind and saw the wolf's grinning teeth his anger grew so much that he raced even more quickly. The wolf died long ago and having been very frightened, the lion and tiger ran off to a far off place and the boy lived happily ever after.

8. SEVEN MICE

Once upon a time there lived seven brother mice. They owned as much land as the palm of a hand. One day, when a handful of snow fell on the ground, the seven brothers were clearing it away they found some butter as big as an ankle-bone. They gave it to the youngest mouse to keep, but he licked it up and ate it. So the other six brothers beat him to death.

Then they went to a lama (monk) and told him about this deed:

there were seven of us."

You have a large family."

We have as much ground as the palm of your hand.

"you have a big piece of ground."

One day a handful of snow fell on our ground."

that sounds to me like a disaster."

We seven brothers cleared it away."

You all worked hard."

while we were clearing away the snow we found some butter as big as an ankle-bone."

"You became rich."

"We gave it to the youngest brother to keep, but he licked it up and ate it."

"He is a good storekeeper."

"The six of us beat him to death."



"That was almost a war," the lama answered. And he paid also-lutely no attention to them.

The six mice had come to the lama to get a decisive answer, but they didn't. They were very disappointed and they knew that the lama didn't know anything and was a fool. Also, they repented of their mistake very much, that they had done the wrong thing in killing their youngest brother.

9. THE CLEVER RABBIT

Once upon a time, a lion destroyed a mother rabbit. Some then rabbits have thought about taking revenge upon the lion. One rabbit tied a long rope with a loop from a big tree along the lion's path and it played swinging on a rope tied to a small tree. The lion came and asked:

"Oh, I'll eat you up!" The clever rabbit said "Of course, Mr. Lion." The lion asked: "What are you doing?" The rabbit replied, "Such skinny beasts as we get fat if we swing like this." Then the lion said,

"Rabbit, leave it and come down. I'll swing on it so that I might become fat." "Oh, I'll become fat before you," said the rabbit and swung more. The lion then observed the other rope and said, "Oh, here is a loop. May I get into it and swing?"

"Oh wait. What shall I do? But the Lion got angry and said: A bear said to me that he'll come soon to swing and play on it.

You had better wait a little." said the rabbit.

"Should the bear get fat and I become lean?" Then he jumped into the loop and was suspended by his neck. Seeing this, the rabbit came down from its swinging and said,

"Mr Lion may swing and become fat forever! I'll come back and make a dinner of my rabbits for you!" Then the rabbit flowed up into the forest.

10. THE BEAR, THE WOLF AND THE DOG

A long time ago a bear, a wolf and a dog used to live together. At night they all stayed in one hut, and during the daytime went in search of food. Every night they came to their hut and told each other what had happened to them during the day, and laughed about it. One day the bear was lost, and he didn't

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return for a while two days. The dog worried about him and said to the wolf, "Poor bear is lost. I'll go after him."

"Oh, don't worry. That fool won't go so far. Maybe he has found something and is eating it alone somewhere," said the wolf.

"Oh, no! Bear is not such a beast. Your words are too harsh." Thus, the wolf and the dog quarrelled a bit and went in search of the bear. The wolf said, "You go to the East, I'll go to the West, don't follow me!" Then the wolf jogged to the west. But the dog thought, "Why does the wolf order me not to go after him" and he secretly followed the wolf. Meanwhile the poor bear was captured by the hunter's trap and was suffering greatly. Eventually, coming upon the bear the wolf howled loudly and at once bit the back of his knee, and attacked to bite his throat. The bear said, "You and I lived in one hut for many years. Are you going to eat me instead of saving me from this suffering?" The wolf said, "Living in one hut doesn't matter. Don't you know what Buddha ordered? 'The powerful ones should eat the weak ones!' Instead of going hungry it's better to eat you rather than die." And again the wolf attacked the bear, coming upon this scene, the dog attacked the wolf to defend his friend the bear. The wolf and the dog fought equally until suddenly there was a gun shot, and the evil-minded wolf collapsed onto the ground. The dog came up to the bear and barked pitifully. A hunter came to them and put his gun on the ground. Now he wanted to kill the bear with his big knife, but the dog dashed towards the hunter. The hunter, being unarmed apart from his knife, ran away. The good-hearted dog separated the bear from the trap with much difficulty and licked and licked the bear's wounds so that they might heal. Then they went to their hut and lived happily ever after. But the ill-minded wolf's carcass was eaten by crows.

11. WHY THE DOG, THE CAT AND THE MOUSE HATE EACH OTHER

Once upon a time, a dog, a cat, and a mouse lived peacefully and happily together, the best friends in the world. The cat and mouse spent most of the day lazing about and sneaking bits of food, but the dog worked hard. The big, loyal animal not only looked after his Master's property and his many sheep, horses, goats, and other animals, but also diligently protected his Master's family and ger from danger.

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The dog did his job so well, in fact, that one day the Master decided to show the dog his gratitude. While in town trading sheep-skins, the Master had a beautiful certificate made, embossed with shining gold letters. He tied it with a bright red ribbon and that evening presented it to the dog in a little ceremony, as his family looked on smiling.

The dog was proud and happy, but the cat and mouse, who had witnessed the ceremony from under the bed, became jealous and resentful. When the two animals were alone, the cat whispered to the mouse:

"We should take the dog's certificate with the golden writing, so that the Master will think the dog does not respect him. Then the Master will like us better! Since you're so small and fast, you steal the certificate tonight and hide it!"

As the sun set and the household slept, the mouse, on quiet little paws, crept near the sleeping dog and stole the certificate with the beautiful letters. Instead of just hiding it, however, she gave it to her mouslings, who quickly nibbled it up.

The next morning, the cat and mouse came to the dog and asked: "How did you manage to become the man's favourite? The King of the beasts never gave dogs this privilege!"

The dog replied: "I know that. But our Master seems to like me very much and he granted me special rights. He even gave me a certificate with beautiful golden letters. Didn't you see it?"

The cat and the mouse looked at each other, then, turning to the dog, said innocently: "What certificate?"

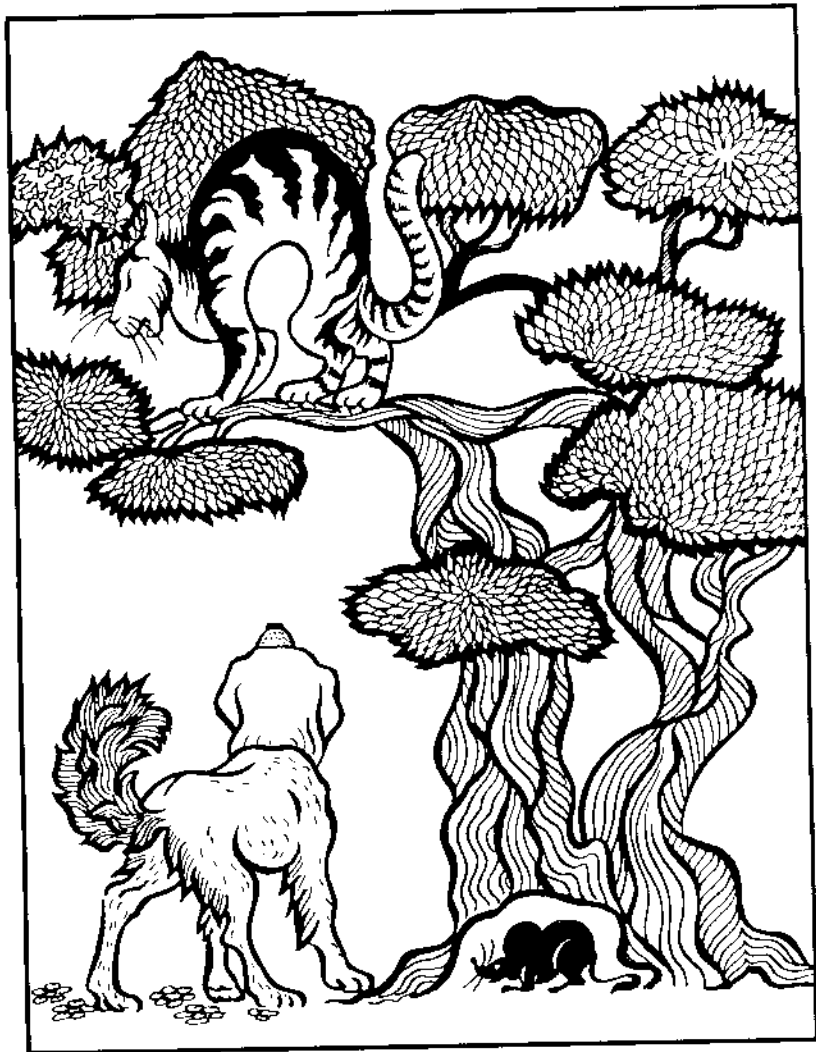
"I'll show you!" Off ran the dog to find his certificate, so that he could show it to his best friends.

He searched and searched, but couldn't find his certificate anywhere. Near the nest of the mouse, however, he came across some tiny scraps of shredded paper, some with touches of gold, and he understood what had happened. Hurt and angry, he growled at his 'friends':

"Why, you thieves! You've stolen my certificate and destroyed it!"


And the big dog charged after the little mouse, trying to catch her in his big mouth. Scurrying frantically this way and that, the mouse squeaked RB out, pleading with the dog:

"Brother! It wasn't my idea to steal your certificate! The cat Gy, ordered me to take it!"



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So the dog stopped chasing the mouse and began bounding after the cat. The cat, in turn, began chasing after the mouse.

"I'm going to catch you and eat you!" the cat shrieked at the mouse. "I may have told you to steal the certificate, but I didn't tell you to destroy it!"

The terrified mouse fled into the safety of her deep hole, while the cat scrambled up a tree on sharp claws, clinging to a high branch. The furious dog, betrayed by his best friends, remained below barking.

Since the days of the story of the gold-lettered certificate, the dog, the cat, and the mouse have hated and mistrusted each other.

12. THE TWO GOOD HORSES

Once upon a time two horses which had been sold to a distant place began to dream about their native steppe. They finally de-cided to run away and find their home.

On the long and arduous journey, the elder of the two horses became so tired and lame that he began to lag behind his younger brother. At last he was unable to go a step further. Sighing, he lay down for the last time by the side of the road.

"Brother," he said. "I cannot go on. You must continue home without me. As your elder, I will give you three pieces of advice for a safe journey. First, do not take any paths. Always keep to the main roads. Second, do not be curious - do not approach anything that you cannot clearly see. Third, do not unwrap anything that is already wrapped up."

So saying, the older horse gave the younger his blessing and closed his eyes to sleep.

The younger brother now set out on his own and, as younger brothers often do, immediately forgot the advice of his older sibling.

After walking along the main road under a hot sun for some hours, he came across a path that cut over the mountains through a forest. Ignoring the first piece of advice, the younger horse said to himself,

"I'll bet this path will get me home sooner. And it will be so much cooler walking under the trees."

The shaded path did indeed wind over the mountain. On the other side, it led onto the open plain. Far ahead, as the track almost disappeared in the distance,

the horse spied an indistinct brown object. Wondering what it could be in such a remote spot and forgetting his brother's second warning, he galloped towards it.

Coming up close, the younger brother discovered that the object was a securely tied sack, with something large inside that appeared to be moving. Curious to find out what was trapped in such a big bag, he quickly unfastened the rope. Out of the sack sprang a large, angry wolf, one that was clearly ravenously hungry. With yellow eyes fixed on the horse, the wolf snarled.

"I wonder what kind of horse has opened my bag. When I was catching and eating the cattle of a well-to-do family, the owner chased me on a fast horse rather like yourself, and when he had caught me he tied me up in this bag. But now I'll eat you."

Just as the wolf was about to pounce on the trembling horse and eat it, up hopped a rabbit.

"Hey there!" he yelled, "What's going on between you two?"

Wolf and horse each told the rabbit his own version of the story. The rabbit, who knew all about hungry wolves, believed the horse and quickly thought of a plan to save the innocent animal. He said:

"Well, Mr. Wolf, that's an interesting story, but it's really hard for me to believe that a big, strong fellow such as yourself was trapped in such a little bag. Are you telling the truth? Because if you are, I'll not only let you eat Mr. Horse but, as a reward, I'll give you myself to eat as well."

"What?" cried the wolf. "You don't believe me?"

"With all due respect, Mr. Wolf," the rabbit replied, "I simply cannot believe that you fit in that sack until I see it with my own eyes."

To prove he was telling the truth, the wolf jumped back into the sack. Since his head was still uncovered, the rabbit exclaimed:

"Mr. Wolf, it seems you are indeed too big for that sack— your head doesn't fit inside!"

Whereupon the wolf, eager to prove himself and to eat both horse and rabbit, drew the sack up over his head.

Before the wolf knew what had happened, the quick little rabbit sprang forward, tied the opening tight and trapped the wolf in the sack once more. The horse neighed with admiration and glee, and the two animals ran off laughing to safety.

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Thanking the rabbit, the younger-brother horse continued on his journey. Now carefully following his older brother's advice, he arrived safely in his beloved rolling steppes and there lived happily for many, many years.

In this way, and in spite of his size, a small resourceful rabbit saved a large, old horse.

13. THE FAMOUS WHITE MARE

Once upon a time a famous white mare and her speckled white colt lived with seventy-two other mares and a prize tawny stallion. It was a very dry summer and the grass hadn't come through their usual grazing grounds.

"We had better move on from here," said the white mare to her seventy-two friends and the prize tawny stallion, and they left their pasture to look for green grass, and wandered for three whole years. At long last, they came to a place with fine lush pasture. They stayed there drinking the clear water, eating the succulent grass and licking at the best salt marshes.

One day, as the white mare together with the other mares and the sacred tawny stallion was frisking about on the bank of the river she trampled on seven goose eggs by accident.

"Oh dear!" said the white mare. "Now we shall have to leave. How can we stay on a strange pasture after trampling on these goose eggs? The birds will take revenge on us. They are not ordinary birds. Let us return to our home pasture. By sunrise those birds' army will have arrived to attack us."

But the other mares disagreed and stayed on. Sure enough the next morning a huge flock of birds armed with bows and arrows came swooping down on them, and slew all the horses except the white mare and her white colt. But the bird army had surrounded them with the intention of completing the slaughter. Having nearly run out of arrows, they attacked the mare and her colt from one wing, allowing the mare to shield her colt from the arrows. When the bird army attacked from the other side, she took her colt to her front and defended it. When the bird army attacked and shot at the white mare from the slopes of a mountain, she took her colt downhill of her body and defended it. The bird army attacked the white mare from every direction and eventually had no more arrows to fire and turned away having given up hope of killing the white mare and her white colt.

So the white mare and her white, speckled colt were spared of the fate of the

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rest of the seventy-two other mares and the prize tawny stallion.

"Well, son," she said. "We had better return to our home pas-ture."

They turned homewards with a three-year journey ahead of them. They were so desperate to return to their poor but safe grazing ground that they covered a year's distance in a single month and a month's journey in a single day.

"Oh, Mummy!" cried the colt one day. "Why is your body covered with prickly things?"

"Most likely because it is covered with prickles of caragana and budargana when we went through the Mountain pass of Caragana," she replied. "O, Mummy!" cried the colt again, "Why is your skin so

"Most likely, son because the red clay must have stuck to it as we crossed the pass at Ochre Mountain."

"Oh Mummy! Why are your usually sturdy legs trembling so?"

"Because I'm tired. I have been over so many mountains and crossed so many rivers ..."

At long last, the white mare brought her colt back to their home pasture, but, her duty done, the white mare collapsed from exhaustion and knew she had not long to live. Before dying, she gave her last advice to her colt:

"Son, never go to sleep on the North side of a hill. There are many snowstorms there and wolves go in that direction. Sleep on the South side where it is warm and safe. Never pass in front of man's gers lest the children and dogs fall on you. Always pass behind them so people won't see you. Never lie down and sleep where a family has been pitched or settled before, for you may be pricked by small or large needles. Always sleep on fine, virgin land. Always trot at the edge of the herd, and run in front only to watering holes to drink the clear water first. Don't lag behind the herd lest the herdsman beats you. If you stay in the middle of the herd, the other horses will kick you to death. So, my son, come back here in three years time to pay homage to my remains. But the speckled white colt quickly forgot his mother's advice. He lay down to sleep on the north side and was almost frozen in a blizzard. Another time, he was almost devoured by wolves; as he galloped away, weeping he recalled his mother's wise words. From then on he slept on the southern side where it was safe and he slept very well. Once, again forgetful of his mother's instructions, he passed in front of families' gers and the dogs were about to bite him and the children to catch him, but he just managed to escape.

He wept bitterly as he passed behind the herd, ahead of the water, as he was beaten by the middle of the herd. He did he keep his head low and not kick him. He wise my mother along play. Longing for her carcass. Now the p... shook his head. He met a sturdy horse. "Will you... "Will you... "Yes," and... "If you are... The boy... "Well," said... and the... believe that... be my mother... The colt... the step... Thus did... the mas...

He wept bitter tears thinking, "How right my mother was!" And from then he passed behind the gers and was always safe. Then again, instead of running ahead of the herd to the watering places, so that he might drink the clear water, as his mother had advised, he lagged behind the other horses and was beaten by the herder, and got muddy water to drink. And he trotted in the middle of the herd and was badly kicked by the other horses. Only after that did he keep to the edge. Then the herdsman did not beat him, the horses did not kick him, and he had the finest grass to nibble and felt much better. "How wise my mother was!" he thought again as he trotted joyfully and galloped along playfully.

Longing for his mother, he returned to her remains before the set time. Finding her carcass there he galloped away to return again after the full three years. Now the place was overgrown with juicy and succulent grass. The colt ate it, shook his head playfully and trotted away with a gay heart. On the road he met a sturdy young man by the name of Erkhii Mergen.

"Will you be my horse?" the boy inquired.

"Will you be my master?" replied the colt.

"Yes," answered the boy Erkhii Mergen.

"If you are my true master," said the colt. "You shall have to catch me first."

The boy duly caught the colt and put on him a silver bridle and silver saddle.

"Well," said the colt, "Now I shall buck till the mountain is as flat as a field, and the steppe becomes one big hollow. And if you can stay on me, I'll believe that you are my master and a real man. But if you don't, you shall not be my master and I shall not be your horse!"

The colt bucked and bucked till the mountain became as fiat as a field and the steppe like a hollow basin. But Erkhii Mergen stayed in his saddle.

Thus did the master find his horse and the horse his master. Since then, both the master and the horse have lived happily ever after.

14. A TALE ABOUT THE OX (A RIDDLE TALE)

Once there was a huge ox. In his head there was a rich man, in his kidney there was another wealthy man and in his hind quarters there was a third rich person. The rich man in the ox's head had a winter place and a spring place. The kidney's rich man had also a winter place, a summer place and a spring place. The rich man in the ox's head said to the rich man in the middle, "This ox has not eaten any grass in the last few days." Then the rich man in the middle told the man in the buttocks, "This hollow and shallow stomach is getting empty." The man in the buttocks replied, "Oh, I have lived here for many years. This ox has never emptied its bowels. What's the reason?" This man used to take the ox's dung to make a fire.

At last, the ox died. A fox ate it for three years and finished it. After that, only the ox's shoulder blade was lying on the ground. On that shoulder blade seventy warriors camped and put up their seventy tents. After the soldiers had moved away, a bird came down and took away the shoulder blade in its beak. The bird sat on a billy goat's horn. Under the billy-goat's beard there lived an old man and a woman. When the bird lost the shoulder blade, it dropped into the old man's eye. Then his neighbours came together and they used shovels and picks, but they couldn't get the shoulder blade out. Then the old woman licked with her tongue and took the shoulder blade out.

Which one was the biggest? If one says, "The shoulder blade", that would be the foolish man's idea. If one says, "The eagle," that would be the uncivilized man's opinion. If one says, "The old man" that would be the far-sighted person's thought. If one says, "The old woman," that would be the short-sighted person's idea. If one says, "The billy-goat" that would be the wise man's thought. If one says, "The seventy warriors," that would be a person of many ideas.

(TALE)

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15. THE FOUR FRIENDLY ANIMALS

Once upon a time, in a beautiful forest in India, lived a dove, a hare, a monkey, and an elephant. One day, after discussing the matter carefully, they agreed "Since we all live together in such a friendly way, we should respect the oldest among us. The younger ones must listen to what- ever he says, serve him and do whatever he wishes."

They all agreed that this was an excellent idea and set about to determine who among them was the oldest. Near the place where they were discussing this important idea stood an old and very large tree. The elephant pointed to the tree and said:

"When I was an elephant-calf, I used to rub myself against that tree. At that time the tree and I were the same size."

The monkey was next to speak. It said:

"When I was little, that tree lacked a single branch on which I might jump and play. The tree was the same size as I was then and its shade was scarcely large enough to cover me "

It was the hare's turn to speak. It said:

"When I was little, the tree's roots were just beginning to grow, and I used to dig down in the earth so that I could eat them "

The dove was the last to speak. It said,

"When I was little, I was pecking at the fallen fruit of a tree and the seeds fell where the tree we are talking about now stands."

So the four friendly animals discovered that the oldest among them was the dove, the next oldest the hare, next the monkey, and La the youngest was the elephant.

Since they had all agreed to respect the eldest, the elephant, as the youngest, carried the monkey on its back. The monkey carried the hare on its back, and the oldest, the dove, rode on top. Being up so high, the dove was able to reach the fruits of the trees and hand them down to the others.

In this way, the four friendly animals mutually respected, protected and helped one another, and lived together in harmony happily ever after.



16. THE TALE ABOUT THE BLIND FROG IN THE WELL

There was, once upon a time, a well somewhere in a corner of this world. In that well there lived a frog, with one eye which was blind. What happened was this:

One day, a great storm broke out on the ocean, and its strong waves threw a turtle up onto dry land. The turtle didn't know where to go and had no idea of the direction in which the ocean lay. The turtle was very hungry and thirsty, but he went wandering until he almost died. Luckily, he came to the well where the frog lived. The well-frog was astonished to see another living being and asked the turtle:

"Who are you? What are you? Where did you come from? Where are you going?"

"My place is the great ocean. Not long ago there broke out a great storm and I was thrown up by its waves onto dry land. So I lost my way back to the great ocean and somehow I reached your place," said the turtle to the well-frog.

"Now, what are you thinking of doing? And what is your decision, then?" asked the well-frog. Then the turtle replied:

"Even if I think of going back, my place is very far away. And I do not know the direction. So there is no possibility of going back, and I wish to live with you in your well as your neighbour."

Then the well-frog, showing the turtle one third of its well water, asked: "Is your 'ocean' water about the size of my well?"

"Oh! The ocean is much greater than this," the turtle replied. Then the well-frog, showing two thirds of its well water, asked the turtle again:

"What about this size, then?"

Then the ocean turtle said, "It is impossible to compare our ocean to this small well. The ocean is so big, it is immeasurable."

Then the one-eyed well-frog got very angry and shouted:

"That 'ocean' of yours, even if it is big, cannot be bigger than my well! I know everything. You are a poor beggar and a tramp, and praise your own place, your 'ocean' and think you can impress and despise others like me! Now off you go to that measureless great ocean!" And the well-frog drove away the poor turtle. Then the turtle looked at the one-eyed well-frog carefully and said to him:

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blind in one eye, you are completely blind men-tally. Your knowledge is restricted to the size of the well!" MORAL: Nobody should think like the well-frog "I know it all." There maybe people who know more than you do. You should listen to them and learn from their experience.

17. THE TURTLE AND THE MONKEY

There were male and female turtles.

A male turtle went up to the mountains on business one after-noon, and there he met a monkey. They introduced themselves to each other, became friendly and had long conversations about this and that. When the male turtle finished his business he returned home feeling very satisfied with his trip and his new female friend. The female turtle became suspicious of the cheerful smile on her husband's face and said to herself, "Hmm. It looks as though my turtle had a fine old time up in the mountains. He probably met a cute female monkey!"

In her jealousy the female turtle devised a plan to punish her husband. The next morning she stayed in bed, moaning:

"Oh! I feel so sick today!"

The concerned male turtle asked:

"Whatever is the matter, my dear? And what will help you recover?"

"The only thing that will help me," groaned the female turtle, "is the heart of a female monkey. I must eat a female monkey's heart or I shall surely die!"

The male turtle, alarmed at his wife's terrible condition, hurried back to the mountains and called out for his friend, the only female monkey he knew. When he found her he told her, not alto-gether truthfully,

"We became such good friends a few days ago that I thought I should invite you to my home and prepare a nice dinner for you."

The female monkey, greatly flattered, accepted the invitation and the two set out together, chatting all the way.

Soon they arrived at the male turtle's house. Before going inside he turned to the female monkey and said,

"My wife is unwell. The only thing that will help her recover is a female monkey's heart. I would like to take your heart out to heal my wife."

The quick-witted female monkey exclaimed:

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"But turtle, why didn't you tell me about this when we were at my house? Don't you know that monkeys hang their hearts from the treetops! We must quickly return together to my house and fetch my heart for your sick wife!" So the two animals set out again for the mountains. The male turtle waited patiently at the bottom of the female monkey's tree while the monkey climbed way up to the top. Once up as high as she could go, she took some of her droppings and threw them down at the male turtle, shouting: "What a nice friend you turned out to be! Let your 'sick' wife eat this, my 'heart'!"

The monkey stayed up in her tree laughing, while the turtle plodded home to his wife.

18. THE TALE OF THE OLD MOUSE

Once upon a time, there were two joined mountains in a vast area. A lion used to live in those mountains and always played at jumping from one mountain peak to the other. In the ravines between the two mountains lived many mice, and among them there was an old mouse. One day he called all the mice and said, "The lion which jumps from top to top of these two mountains is truly getting old. However, he still jumps and plays even though his power is becoming weak and feeble. One day, he may fall between the mountains. This will destroy us, so let's go from here and make holes in a new place!"

Many mice didn't listen to the old mouse's words and said, "You, senile old thing, don't talk nonsense! We may run in fright from the lion, if he falls from the mountains. The blue sky has existed for many years, so why does it not become very old, too? And if it fell down onto the world, where would we run to? We'll never go from here, instead we'll see him die and eat his meat!" Then the old mouse went to another place with his only son and made a hole for them. Not long after, the lion jumped from one mountain to the other, but as his power was becoming weak and

feeble, he couldn't reach an even place on top of the mountain. His legs touched a stiff red rock and he rolled down with many rocks and stones into the ravine in which lived the mice. They were very frightened and ran in such a panic that most of them were killed.

About the mountains lived a boy who rarely did any hunting. But one day as he got ready to hunt, a man called Ariya, a curious person said to him: "Berries will grow from dry and withered trees if you ever come back in three days with

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better hunting prey than mice!" The young fool asked, "Oh, if I come back with better prey than mice, will you give me your wife?" The other man said, "Yes, I will." Then the foolish boy went off and saw the dead lion and strung a bow trap. Then he went back and told Ariya everything. Ariya said joking, "You simply string your bow! How can it destroy something? You should have carried it as does a real hunter. Besides, what animals would come to eat the white lion's dead body?"

The foolish boy was embarrassed and decided to bring his bow back the next day. However, that very night, a fox found the dead lion and thought, "It is mine alone! How lucky I am to find so much food! Now I need not search further. I must remember the old saying, 'Don't finish a whole cow's meat as you would soon die, eat little by little instead of eating much at once!' So I must now begin with the worst meat and keep the tasty bits for the future!" Then the fox began to gnaw the bow string, which suddenly sprang off and the fox was hooked to death.

In the morning the foolish boy went sluggishly down to get his bow. On seeing the dead fox he was overjoyed. However, he was afraid of it and would not touch it with his hands. He made a loose loop at the one end of his bow and put it round the fox's neck, then dragged it off towards his home. On his way he reflected, "I will sell this fox and buy a house and some furniture. I'll take Ariya's wife and she will be my cook and she will be my servant! I'm going to be a man with much property, no less than others' properties, and with a good wife, no less than others' wives!" Coming home he wanted to take Ariya's wife and fought with Ariya and his wife a whole three days, and at last Ariya's wife went to her parents. So the foolish boy was left alone and tried to sell his fox, but its hair was already falling out and nobody bought it.

Now the other people discussed this situation amongst them-selves, thus: "Ariya should have remembered the old saying, 'Never underestimate a man and never undervalue an ocean!' He insulted the other man too much and hence lost his own wife. Also the tale, 'If one's greed grows, profit and gain move off!' It happened to the foolish boy. Ariya lost his wife after he played an uncertain wager, the foolish boy lost his fox after he dragged it for too long."

At that time there lived a group of 11 robbers stealing things from here and there. When they couldn't find things to steal, they became thirsty and hungry for something. When wandering so, one of them saw the dead lion! They stopped not far from it and while five of them went to bring some meat from

the dead lion, the other six remained to prepare some tea. The five as they went, talked between themselves, "The dead lion is only one, but we are many, and its meat will certainly be finished soon and once again life will be hard for us." Then they took some meat for themselves and put some poison into the meat which they were going to take back to the remaining six people. Meanwhile, the six robbers dis-cussed their other five friends and put some poison in the tea which they prepared to give them. Now they all met and ate and drank their food and drink, and all died there. The old mouse knew all about it and advised his son,

"One will become like the old lion
If he tries to jump as the young.
One will become like curious Ariya
If he inadequately estimates the other.
One will end like the fox
If he acts in an egoistic manner.
One will become like those many thieves
If he keeps such a jealous mind.
So my son think over and try to understand
The very nature of the words of your old father!
Know well, and act within your capacity
And always attempt to go along the right path."

19. THE CAT WHO PRETENDED TO BE A LAMA (MONK)

Once there was a cat who used to filch from a lama. One day the cat even stole the lama's rosary. Infuriated, the lama ran after the cat, caught it by the tail and pulled so hard that the tail came off.

The cat felt miserable without its tail. He put the rosary around his neck and for several days sat immobile, as if in search of Nir-vana. Then a mouse spotted the cat and in its terror made to run off.

"You needn't be afraid," the cat said in a voice dripping with honey as he pointed to the rosary. "Can't you see that I have taken a holy vow? Now I live and let live. I call upon you mice to forget all earthly cares and pray with me." The mice fell for the cat's line and began to pray.

When prayers were over, the cat said to the mice, "Now march around me in single file and then disperse."



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As the last mouse was going by, the cat grabbed it and gobbled it up. He did this after each prayer and soon there were hardly any mice left. The mice grumbled, wondering why their clan was dwindling.

Then one grey-haired mouse, suspicious of the cat, assembled all its brothers and sisters together and said: "Let's put a bell round the cat's neck. Should you hear it tinkle after prayers, look back at once to see what the cat is up to." The mice found a bell and before their prayers presented it to the cat with the words: "This is specially for you, our dear teacher! And with that they proceeded to hang the bell around the cat's neck.

The mice were dispersing after prayers when suddenly the bell tinkled. All the mice looked back to see the cat gobbling up a little mouse who had failed to escape its claws.

"You've become far too fat, teacher," said the grey-haired mouse. "You don't get like that on prayers alone!"

And so the mice moved off to another place, leaving the cat to dwell on its misdeeds.

20. AN ELEPHANT AND A MOUSE

Once upon a time, an elephant lived in the suburbs of a little town. The elephant went to the river to drink water every day. On the bank of the river there also lived a mouse.

When the elephant had drunk enough water, he splashed the mouse's hole and flooded it. When the elephant did this, it distressed the mouse, and he said again and again, "Please, don't devastate my poor little home." But the elephant didn't listen and went on with his devastation.

One day, when the elephant came, the mouse said, "If you don't stop devastating my home, I'll declare war against you." When the elephant heard these words he paid no attention, but just sneered and laughed. Then the mouse announced to the residents of the area, "I've declared war on the elephant, and if you don't move from here before tomorrow, you'll be ruined in the fighting."

The rich people didn't listen to the words of the mouse, and said, "How can this poor little mouse make war on the elephant? People won't be affected," and they didn't move away. But the poor people listened to the mouse's words and began to think "Maybe we'll be affected by the trouble," so they moved.



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The next day, when the elephant came to the river, the mouse went into the nostrils of his trunk and began to tear at his gullet and lungs. The elephant fighting for breath and running along roaring began to act wildly. He bumped against people and their homes. Many families who hadn't already moved were ruined.

The elephant went mad and died. After the elephant's death the mouse came out of his trunk and returned to his little hole in the river and lived happily ever after.

21. THE ORPHANED WHITE CAMEL

Once upon a time there lived a prince and a rich man. The rich man intended to marry into the prince's family, and so decided to present him with one hundred white camels. When he was about to give the hundred camels he noticed that there were only ninety-nine, so he gave the prince his own white she-camel and left her baby camel at home.

The baby camel wandered about howling for his mother, crying night and day. The rich man ordered many beautiful flowers to be set in a large ger, and he put the baby camel into it, but he howled and howled, night and day he cried until the ger fell down. Then the shaggy little camel ran through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts, crying in a thin voice for his mother, until the rich man's horse herdsman saw him. He grabbed his ten-fathom-long iron lasso with a loop made of tigerskin, mounted his light bay horse, and galloped off in pursuit of the baby camel. The herdsman caught the baby camel, whipped him with all his might with the lasso, and shouted, "I'll lay your wretched skin under my dogs and cook your miserable meat for my horse-herd boy. That'll teach you!" He brought the baby camel back and tied him to the neck of a huge black bull camel. The baby camel rushed back and forth on the leash and cried his heart out night and day.

"Why don't you quit howling all the time?" asked the huge black camel. At this the baby camel told him everything about himself. The black camel felt sorry for the little camel and said, "Let me sleep tonight. Don't howl. Before dawn I'll take the rope between my back teeth and try to wear it out on a rock and let you go."

The baby camel spent the night quietly. That night, the bull camel gripped the rope in his big mouth, and gathering his strength he wore out the rope against

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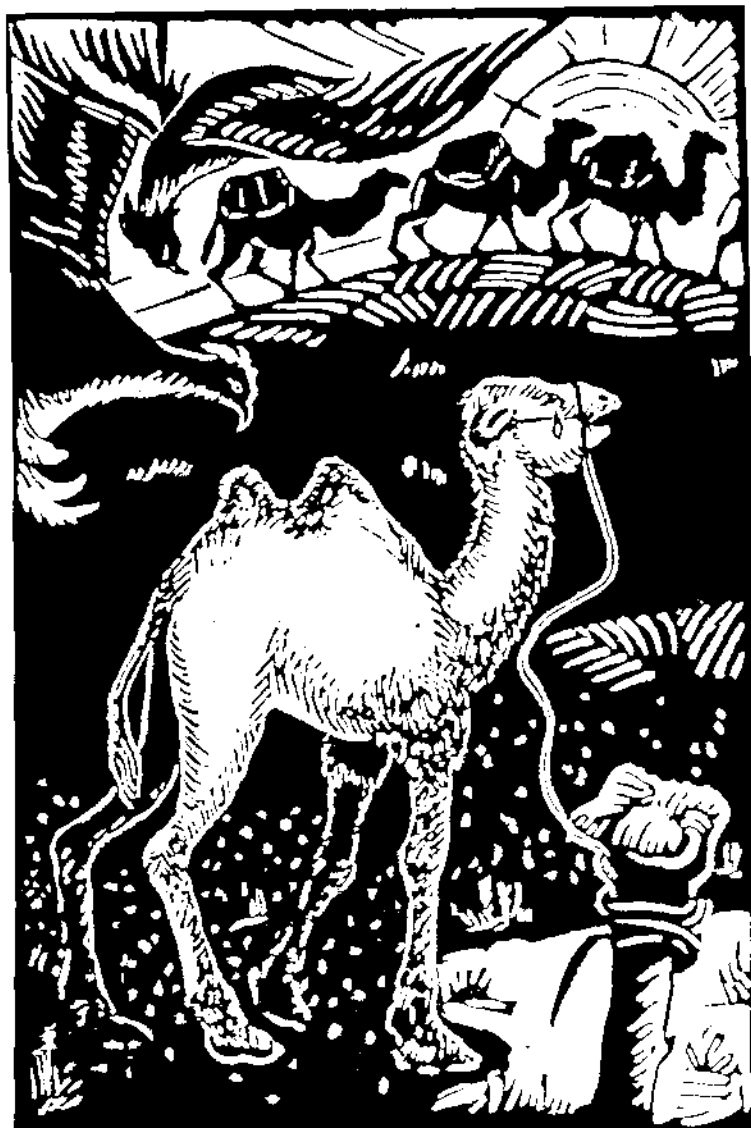
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a rock and set the baby camel free early in the morning. The shaggy baby camel cried out in a thin voice and ran through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts. Again the herdsman galloped after him. He had nearly overtaken the baby camel when his horse suddenly stopped and said, "I've seen many orphans in this world, but never such a miserable one as the baby camel."

With that, the horse died. The baby camel ran on and met a she-wolf with her two cubs. "What kind of a beast are you that you have to yell like this? I will eat you." The baby camel told them how he was separated from his mother and said at last, "Well, then eat me. If you eat me from the front, here is my long beautiful neck. If you eat me from the bottom, here are my sweet feet. If you eat me from the top, here are my little round humps. If you eat me from the side, here are my thin ribs. If you eat me from the back, here are my two fine ankles."

Then said the wolf, "Many orphans I've seen before, but I've never met such an orphan as you." The hungry wolf ate one of her own cubs and didn't ever touch the baby camel.

The shaggy baby camel ran farther through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts. Suddenly a dense black forest appeared in his way, one which he could neither go through, nor pass around. The baby camel cried louder than ever and rushed back and forth until he saw a clearing. He ran through the clearing and out of the woods, on and on until he came to a boiling sea which he could neither swim across nor pass around.

The baby camel howled again, rushing back and forth on the shore, when suddenly a giant turtle the size of a very large ger appeared and said angrily, "What a wretched beast you are! Why don't you leave hardworking people alone?!"

The baby camel told him what he had been through. The giant turtle felt sorry for the baby camel, and carried him across the sea.

The shaggy baby camel cried in a thin voice and again ran through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts, and at last he heard his mother's voice from afar. The mother camel also heard the voice of her baby and called to him. The rich man then put her in an iron house surrounded by three thousand soldiers, but she broke through the wall of the iron house, slaughtered the army of three thousand men, and ran to her child.

The baby camel followed the golden trail of his mother and drank her delicious milk. Soon they met a good herdsman, and lived happily every after.

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TALES OF LIFE CONDITIONS



1. ARSLANDAI MERGEN KHAN

A long time ago there was a khan, called Arslandai Mergen. This khan's kingdom believed that unless their horses were all herded together, and grouped on low ground, they were not properly herded. Among his horses there was a wild chestnut horse. One day, the khan's horses were not together in a herd on the low ground. "Why should this be?" wondered the khan. He guessed that three wolves must have eaten some of his horses. So he prepared to hunt those three wolves to the death and rode out on his chestnut horse, which was born of a chestnut mare. At this, one wolf said to the others: "Arslandai Mergen khan intends to kill us by chasing us on his chestnut horse, the foal of a chestnut mare. As it is also the foal of a young mare, we shall have to try to get away, first, up to the top of a mountain, and then turn quickly and run away down the mountain side, so that he cannot catch up with us." The other wolves agreed with him.

Next day, Arslandai Mergen khan chased after the three wolves. They ran away, first, up to the top of a mountain, and then they turned swiftly down the mountain-side, and he could not catch up with them.

Arslandai Mergen khan intended to hunt the three wolves using his foal of a chestnut mare with a blaze of white down its nose and he went to his home to prepare for the hunt. The wolves learned of this and said to themselves: "Arslandai Mergen khan is getting ready to pursue us on the foal of a chestnut mare with a blaze of white down its nose. But that foal is the foal of an old mare, so we can get away by turning swiftly down the mountain-side and then turn quickly up to the top of the mountain each time he tries to reach us. Then he won't catch up with us." The other two wolves agreed that this would allow them to escape.

The next day, Arslandai Mergen khan chased after the wolves, riding on his chestnut horse, with a blaze of white down its nose, which was the offspring of a chestnut mare, but he could not catch up with them, because after running away down the mountain-side they turned quickly and ran back up to the top. So Arslandai Mergen khan went home intending to hunt them with his wild chestnut horse.

In the night, the wolf said to its companions: "Let's eat the bony chestnut horse from among the herd of Arslandai Mergen khan!" The other two wolves replied: "It would be bad for us if we ate such a lean and skinny horse. Let's

choose a filly mare with more flesh," but they could not agree among themselves.

Afterwards, the first wolf said to the others, "Soon after, let's meet on the shady peak of the Altai Khangai mountain! Let's meet on the rump of the wild chestnut horse! Let's meet on the shoulders of the Arslandai Mergen khan! The next morning, however, Arslandai Mergen khan pursued the three wolves on his wild chestnut horse, and caught up with them and killed them all on the peak of the Altai mountain and put their skins on the back of his lean and wild chestnut horse and returned home. And Arslandai Mergen khan wore a jacket of the skins of the three wolves.

So now those three wolves truly met each other on the three occasions the wise wolf mentioned - on the peak of the Altai mountain; on the rump of the poor wild chestnut horse; and around the shoulders of the Arslandai Mergen khan!

2. THE WISE JUDGE

A long long time ago, there was a very rich man, who was too greedy. One day he lost his wallet, with a hundred togrog* in it. However, two poor men had found it by the roadside and they handed it to their district judge.

As soon as the rich man knew that he had lost his money, he took it so seriously that he lost his appetite. Quickly he went to the judge in order to report the loss of his wallet. When the rich man entered the judge's office, he saw his wallet beside the judge. The rich man felt relieved on seeing his wallet, and he quickly pocketed it. Then the judge asked him:

"Why do you pocket this wallet, is it yours?"

The rich man replied: "I lost this wallet and as it was lying beside you, I took it."

Then the judge said, "If it is really your wallet, you should give a reward to the man who found it, to reward his honesty," and the judge added: "But how many togrogs were there when you lost it?"

The rich man's face changed colour at the prospect of parting with some of his money for a reward and he imagined that the judge himself would take this reward money, so he said: "I lost my wallet with two hundred togrogs in it. But now there is a hundred here. Whoever found it probably took the other hundred for him-self. It appears that the finder has taken the reward himself." Then the

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judge asked, to make sure: "Ah, that means you were to pay a hundred togrogs reward to the man who found your wallet, doesn't it?" Now the greedy rich man replied boastfully "In our family we have always been well off. Of course I would have given a hundred togrogs as a reward to whoever found the precious wallet of mine."

The judge said: "Well, now, this wallet seems not to be yours, because there were a hundred togrogs in it when found, not two hundred. And there is a witness, too, because it was not one man who found it, but two men. Therefore this proves that this wallet is not yours. However, if you search for it immediately you may find your own wallet with two hundred togrogs in it. You may now go." Hearing the judge's words, the greedy rich man began to cry in grief, and said: "Dear judge, I will tell you the truth. This wallet with the money is really mine. On seeing that my wallet had already been found, the mischievous idea cropped up in my mind that I might save the reward money. So I lied to you, saying that there were two hundred togrogs in it, and blamed the finder for having already taken the reward." Thus he expalined the whole truth to the judge and begged for pardon. The judge did not like the rich man's low cunning in trying to put the blame on innocent people just to save the reward money. So he decided to teach the greedy rich man a lesson. He gave the hundred togrogs to the two men who had found the wallet and returned the wallet to its owner. After that everybody called this judge the wisest man.

3. THE OLD MAN AND THE LION

A long time ago there lived an old man and an old woman. One morning the old man got up early and when he went outside, he saw a hungry lion approaching his home. The old man was very frightened. He ran back into his ger, and said to his wife, "A very big lion is coming towards our ger, and it will certainly devour us. What shall we do?"

"The one who is powerful does not always win, the one who is cleverer will win. You take your horse-catching pole and go to the lion! Then the lion will ask you, 'Where are you going?' You should reply, 'I'm going to catch a lion for our food,' the old woman proceeded to tell him.

When she had finished, the old man went out, and met the lion, who asked, "Where are you going, my old man?" The old man replied as his wife advised. The lion was very surprised and said,

"How can you catch me? I'm a hundred times more powerful than you! I can kill you with one swipe of my paw."

The old man replied according to his old woman's words:

"Now let's see who is more powerful. If you're stronger than me I'll be your slave, and if I'm stronger than you, you'll be my slave!" The lion agreed. They went to an open steppe in order to see who was stronger than the other. The old man took a small stone from the ground, and said to the lion: "Squeeze this stone in your paw till its juice comes out." The lion tried and tried but no juice came out. Then the old man took a goose egg out of his pocket and said: "Now, look how powerful I am!" And the old man squeezed the egg in his hand into a pulp and showed it to the lion, saying, "This is the stone's juice!" The lion, recognized his defeat and became the old man's slave. He led the lion with a rope from its nose, and haltered it for riding. For two or three days he rode the lion, and on the fourth day went to the forest to choose some willows to make a bow and arrows.

The old man tried to break off a willow branch, but he couldn't. On the way back the lion asked the old man: "You couldn't even succeed in pulling down a willow. Where is your power, then?" The old man was frightened, and as soon as he came home he told his old woman: "The lion knows that I'm not strong. He will kill me."

"Don't worry!" she said. "When the lion comes back tomorrow you ask me, 'what are you going to prepare for my supper?'"

In the morning when the lion came back, the old man asked his old woman angrily: "Old woman! What are you going to cook for my supper, tonight?"

"Don't be so impatient! Will you be satisfied and happy if I boil and prepare the remaining meat of an old lion, together with a young lion's shank?"

Hearing this, the lion thought to himself fearfully, "Soon they're going to eat me. While I'm still alive, I'd better run away," and he ran off to the forest. On his way, he met a fox who asked him:

"Lion, where are you going? Your nose has a stick and a rope through it like a camel's! What has happened to you?"

The lion told the fox everything that had happened to him. The fox laughed jeeringly and said: "The old man deceived you. Man has never had such power! Let's go together to meet him. You attack and catch the old man and his old woman. But don't forget to share the prey with me!"

The lion led the fox back to the old man's ger, but, as they approached, and

they were coming to the old man's home, the old man saw them, and ran inside fearfully to consult his wife. A few moments later they've appeared, and the woman shouted in a high voice: "You sly yellow fox, you promised to bring me a young lion, so why are you bringing me such skinny old one?" The lion got very angry with the fox and slaughtered it at once, and ran away to the forest. And to this day, the lion keeps well clear of people's homes.

4. THE GUESSING BOYS

A long time ago, there were three orphan boys who had only one cow with a calf. The three boys used to suck three of the cow's nipples, and the calf used to suck the fourth. One day their cow went out to pasture and did not come back. They waited for a day, but the cow did not return. They waited for a second day, but the cow didn't come. When the third day came, the calf died of starvation. The boys searched their cow and came to their noyon. The noyon was cooking a beef shoulder and offered it to them. When they began to eat it, the eldest brother said, "This is our meat." Then the second brother said, "This is a beef shoulder." Last, the youngest brother added, "If it is our meat and a beef shoulder, this is our cow's shoulder." Then the noyon asked, "How do you know it is your cow's shoulder?" The brothers said, "We know, because we guessed." The noyon asked, "Are you good at guessing?" They said, "We can guess what we can guess." The noyon said, "Go outside!" And he put some things in three china cups, and turned them upside down, and he called to the boys. "Now come in!"

When they came in, the noyon said, "Guess what is in the first cup?" The eldest boy answered, "There's something the shape of a ball." The second boy said, "Something pure yellow." Then the youngest boy guessed, "If there's something of the shape of a ball and something pure yellow, it must be a sparrow's egg." When the noyon turned up the cup there was a sparrow's egg. "Now, what is there in the middle cup?" asked the noyon. The eldest boy answered, "There's something pure red in the cup." The second brother said, "There is something very tasty in the cup." Then the youngest brother said, "If there is something pure red and something very tasty, it must be a red plum." Then the noyon asked, "What is there in the last cup?" The eldest boy said, "There is something round in that cup." The second boy answered, "There is something which has a square hole in the middle." The youngest boy guessed, "If there is something round and which has a square hole in the



middle, it must be a brass coin." Thus, all three boys guessed the three things in the three cups.

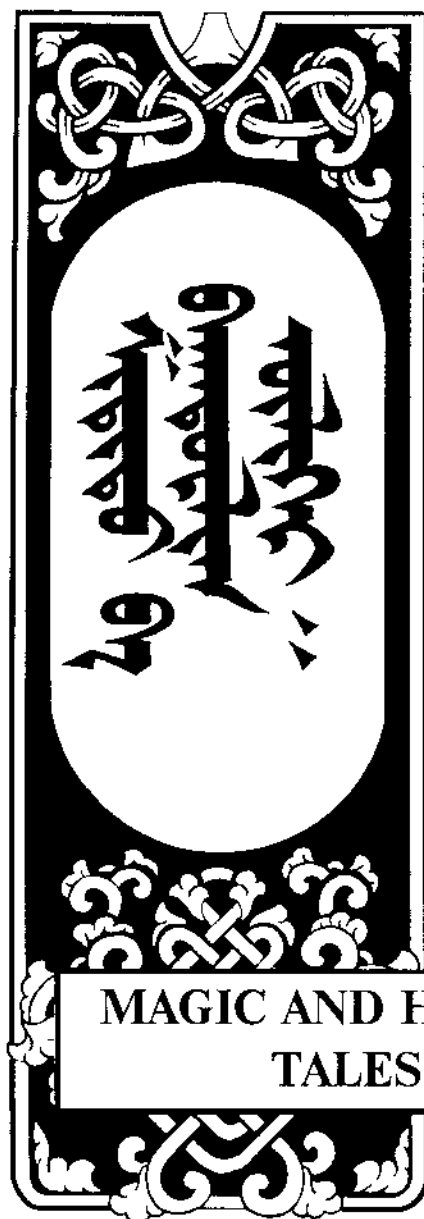
The noyon ordered sheep to be killed and cooked, the mares to be milked and a ger to be erected as a sign of respect for the three boys and a big feast was held. The noyon instructed his servant, "Listen to what they are talking about and come back!" When the servant went and listened to the boys, they were talking like this, "This airag is the best airag. But it has human blood. This meat is the best meat. But it is dog's meat. The noyon is the best noyon. But he is the son of a Chinese." When the servant heard this, he reported back to his master. The noyon grew angry and went to his shepherd and asked, "Did you give me dog's meat?" "No, no. That sheep grew up suck-ing a dog's nipples when it was an orphan lamb," replied the shep-herd. The noyon went to his horseherd and asked, "Did you give me human blood instead of airag?" The horseman said "When I was catching a horse with a lasso, the lasso pole ripped my hand and blood came out and it dropped into some water~ From that water some mares were drinking."

The noyon came home and asked his mother, "What man's son I am?" Then his mother answered, "Your true father was a Chinese." Hearing this, the noyon was disappointed and he apolo-gized of having stolen and eaten the boys' cow. Then the noyon re-nounced his position and appointed the eldest boy as noyon and his two brothers as his officials and he lived happily ever after.

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MAGIC AND HEROIC TALES

1. DID THE KHAN HAVE A HEAD?

Long, long ago there lived a strict, harsh Khan. Everybody trembled before him and feared to look him in the face. One day the Khan went off hunting and, feeling tired, he got down from his horse to rest near a solitary tree on the steppe. But he did not want to sit on the ground like an ordinary person. "I am the Khan and so should be above you all," commanded the wicked old man. "Bend over this tree to provide me with a seat so that I can enthrone myself like Buddha on his lotus."

The Khan's servants bent the tree over but, springing away from them, it straightened itself and the Khan fell to the ground. When they looked, he had no head - either it was torn off by the bough, or the Khan had never had a head at all. The people were full of wonder and asked one another:

"Did the Khan have a head on his shoulders?" This was not so surprising - you see, the people had been afraid to raise their eyes. Finally, an old servant said:

"Let's go to the Khan's counsellor. Surely he ought to know whether the Khan had a head on his shoulders." They galloped off to the counsellor and told him: "The whole thing was as follows. We wanted to carry out the Khan's orders to enthrone him on the tree, but the Khan fell off and died. He didn't appear to have a head. Where could he have lost it? Had he a head on his shoulders?"

"I don't know, servants," said the counsellor shaking his grey locks. "I was afraid to raise my eyes to him. I only know that he did have a hat, one with the Khan's round ruby on the top."

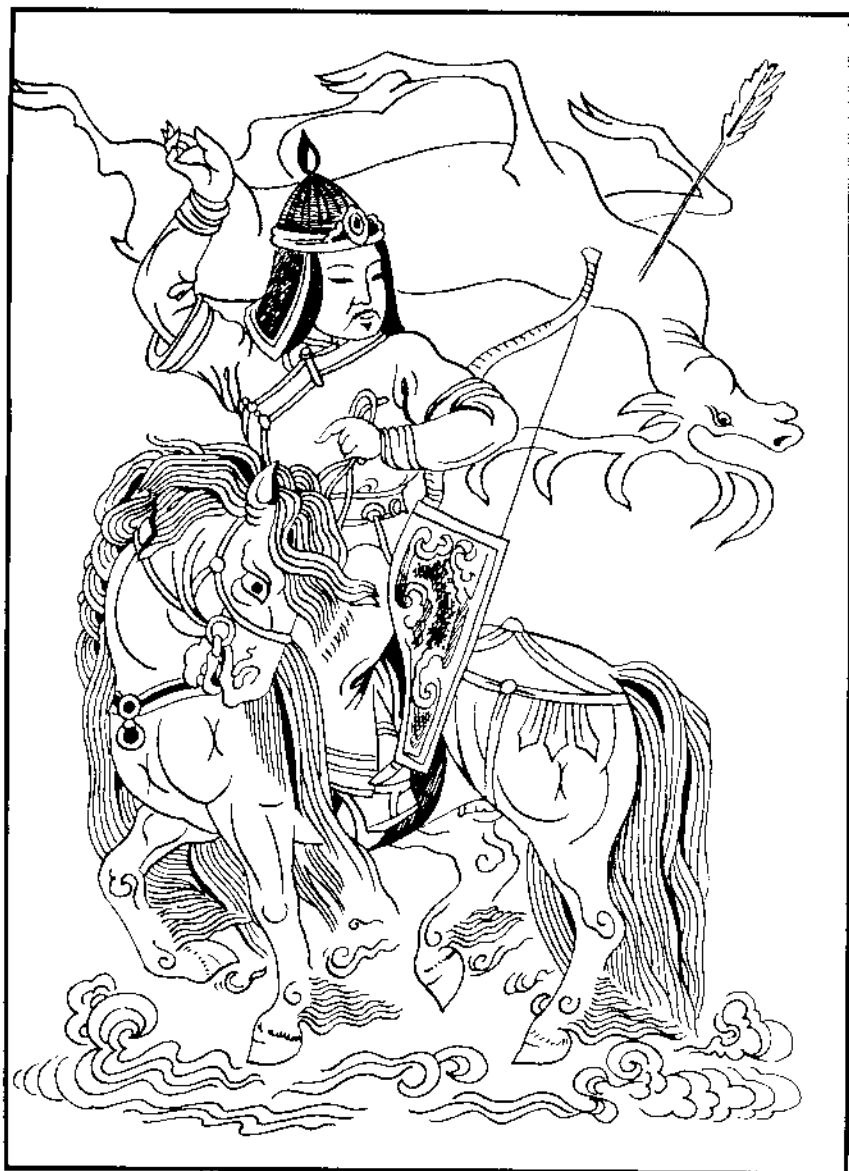
"What shall we do now?" said the servants.

"Go to the Khan's wife. Surely she ought to know whether her husband had a head," advised the counsellor.

The servants went to the Khan's wife and told her about everything that had happened. Finally, they asked:

"Did the Khan have a head on his shoulders?"

"Well, I really don't know," said the Khan's wife, somewhat embarrassed, "But I do know that he had a moustache. It pricked when he kissed me. But you see, being afraid, I screwed up my eyes and I don't know if the Khan had a head." So the servants could not find out whether, in fact, the Khan did have a head on his shoulder. What do you think?



2. YAGANDURAN AND HIS PINK HORSE

Once upon a time in a certain kingdom a boy called Yaganduran lived with his old mother. He had only two treasures - a pink horse, and a toy bow and arrow made of bone. He hunted and shot one deer a day. Then, one time he didn't go hunting for three days. His mother went to fetch water from the golden spring, and saw there a stag and a doe. They were butting each other, saying, "Yaganduran is lying in his ger with his horse outside and the bone bow and arrow on the ger. If only we could meet him now!" The old woman gathered a load of argal (dried dung used as a fuel) and went straight home to tell her son what she had heard and seen. Yaganduran mounted his pink horse, took his bone bow and arrow, rode to the golden spring and shot the deer. All at once they dropped deel (*national costume of Mongolia*) made of coral and flew up into the sky. He took the coral deel home and hid it in a black trunk.

The next morning Yaganduran woke up and found himself in a five-walled white ger with plates and bowls of rich and delicious food. He went out and saw a boundless steppe full of cattle. It made his brain reel, and he stopped lying at home in bed and began to graze the cattle.

Everytime he went to the pasture he said to his mother, "Don't tell anybody that we've grown rich, and don't show anybody the coral deel."

One day it came to the king's ear that Yaganduran had grown suddenly rich. The king sent his old maid to Yaganduran's mother to ask about their fortune, but the old woman said not a word. The maid coaxed the old woman, "We two are of the same age and the same size. What should we have to hide from each other? Come on, tell me."

The old woman finally gave in and told her everything. Then the old maid talked Yaganduran's mother into showing her the coral deel, and while the old woman was looking the other way, the old maid ran away with the deel. Yaganduran came home late in the evening and found his mother without the deel. He lay sadly on his bed and soon fell asleep. In the morning he found himself in a poor hut again.

The old maid brought the coral deel to the king. He put it on, gathered his official and asked, "Do I not look fine with this coral deel on?"

The officials chorused, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" Only one official kept silent. The king asked him, "Why do you say nothing?"

"You look fine with the coral deel on, but you'd look much better if you'd wash your face with milk of the white heavenly she-camel."

"Where is that she-camel, and who will fetch her for me?"

"Yaganduran, who managed mysteriously to get rich, will per-haps fetch it somehow."

The king called for the boy and ordered him to fetch the milk of the white heavenly she-camel. Taking his bone bow and arrow, Yaganduran mounted his pink horse and set off far into north in search of the she-camel.

All of a sudden, his horse said in a human voice, "Well, mas-ter, do you see that black thing like a mountain or a cloud? That is the baby of the white heavenly she-camel. Cut a strip three fingers thick from my rump, tie up the calf with it, and pull him along at a gallop."

Yagandyran loved his horse dearly, but he had no choice but to cut a strip from his rump. Then the horse rolled over on the ground, and the wound became a brown scab. Again he turned over, and it became black, and the third time he turned over, the wound was fully healed. The boy tied up the calf as he was in-structed and pulled him along at a gallop.

All at once they saw the she-camel chasing them. She had nearly caught up with them when Yaganduran released the calf and galloped away. Then the horse said, "We'll sleep here. Tomor-row before dawn we'll follow the tracks of the she-camel, and find where her milk dripped. We'll take it and return home."

Indeed, the next morning they followed the tracks of the she-camel and found a pool of c9ngealed milk. The boy took some of it and went back. He gave the milk to the king and went home to sleep.

The king washed his face with the milk and called to the officials, "Do I not look fine?"

The officials chorused, "Wonderful!"

The same official again kept silent. When the king asked why he was silent, he replied,

"Oh, my king looks fine after washing his face with the milk of the heavenly camel. But if you stick a phoenix feather in your hat, you'll look even more brilliant."

"Where is that noble fowl? Who'll fetch me its feather?"

"Oh, that's very simple. If you send Yaganduran who got so rich, he'll fetch it

somehow."

By the king's order Yaganduran went in search of a phoenix. He went on and on. In the distance he saw a white ger. He approached the ger and went in. Three girls, probably sisters, were sitting there. One of them sat crying, another was deep in thought, and the third girl sat there smiling.

Yaganduran greeted them, and asked the crying girl, "Why are you crying so bitterly?"

"We were nine sisters. A giant snake ate our six sisters and left the three of us. I'm crying because the snake will eat me today."

The boy asked the second girl, "Why are you deep in thought?"

"Tomorrow is my turn," she replied.

Then the third girl spoke up, "He will eat me the day after tomorrow. There is still time for me," she smiled.

Yaganduran then asked, "Where does that giant snake come from? I'll give him something to remember!"

"When the sun is about to set, the snake comes riding on a hurricane out of the sunset and swallows one of us." Meanwhile, the sun had begun to set, and the wind blew ever stronger. Yaganduran looked out and saw a big black thing, not exactly a mountain or a cloud, toward the sunset. He took it for the snake's head and shot his arrow. The wind calmed down and the black thing disappeared. Perhaps it had died. The girls, full of joy, welcomed him.

"Please, come in and have a rest. Mother will come soon. You must meet her!"

The boy went in and fell asleep. He woke up to a violent wind, and everything inside the ger was blowing about. "What's happen-ing?" asked the boy. "That's our mommy coming. The girls replied.

The wind ceased in a moment and a beautiful woman appeared and greeted the boy. She asked him, "What do you desire? I'll do my best to help you, the one who saved the lives of my daughters."

"I'm in search of a phoenix feather for the king. Do you know anything about it? I'll be grateful if you help me." The woman smiled. "I'll help you. I am the phoenix." The boy took a phoenix feather to the king. Overjoyed by the feather, he gave back to Yaganduran his coral deel, and the boy lived with his old mother happily ever after.