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**Comparison of fox image in  
chinese and persian folklore**

The article discusses one of the most popular animals in folk literature – the fox, in such different Eastern folklore as Chinese and Persian. It compares the role of the fox in the fables and animal tales, identifies differences and similarities of using this character in the fairy tales of two countries. As literature is one of the tools which always used to reflect reality, the study of such ancient literary genre as fairy tale, allows lifting the veil and showing the realities of two cultures. Thus, a comparative analysis of the article can be used to further study the reflections and worldviews of the two poles of one East.

**Key words:** fox, fairy tale, fable, Chinese, Persian, folklore, literature.

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**Қытай және парсы  
фольклорындағы түлкі  
бейнесінің салыстырмасы**

Мақалада қытай және парсы сияқты әртүрлі Шығыс мәдениеттер фольклорындағы ең танымал жануарлардың бірі – түлкі образы қарастырылады. Жануарлар туралы ертегілер мен мысалдардағы түлкі рөлі салыстырылады, екі елдің ертегілеріндегі осы бейненің ұқсастықтары мен айырмашылықтары анықталады. Әдебиет шынайылыққа құрылатын болғандықтан, ежелгі әдеби жанр ретінде ертегіні зерттеу, бізге екі мәдениеттің шындығын көрсетуге мүмкіндік береді. Осылайша, мақаланы салыстырмалы талдау Шығыстың солтүстігі мен оңтүстігіндегі ойлау қабілеттілік пен дүниетанымын зерттеуге пайдалануға мүмкіндік береді.

**Түйін сөздер:** түлкі, ертегі, аңыз, қытайлық, парсылық, фольклор, әдебиет.

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**Сравнение образа лисы в  
китайском и персидском  
фольклоре**

В статье рассматривается одно из самых популярных животных в народной литературе – лиса, в фольклоре таких разных восточных культур, как китайская и персидская. Сравняется роль лисы в баснях и сказках о животных, выявляются сходства и различия использования этого персонажа в сказках двух стран. Так как литература является одним из инструментов, который используется для отражения действительности, то изучение такого древнего литературного жанра, как сказки, позволяет приподнять завесу и показать реалии двух культур. Таким образом, сравнительный анализ статьи может быть использован для дальнейшего изучения различий мышления и мировоззрений двух полюсов одного Востока.

**Ключевые слова:** лиса, сказка, басня, китайский, персидский, фольклор, литература.

**COMPARISON OF FOX  
IMAGE IN CHINESE  
AND PERSIAN  
FOLKLORE**

Fox is one of the most popular heroines of fairy tales. And just as the fairy-tale image it is endowed with traits characteristic of these animals in real life. Fox is a symbol of cunning, longevity, fertility, hypocrisy and iniquity.

The fox is one of the most popular mammals in the traditions since antiquity. It has both negative and positive qualities and faculties. The negative includes cunning, slyness, perfidy, and wickedness. The positive are ingenious mind, readiness to care for and help others, quickness, and circumspection. It looks weak but it still is a predator. This contrast could confuse and alert human beings, due to which attract his attention and cause a desire to get to know it better. Deceptive appearance and mysterious nature of fox has caused such an interest on the part of, especially writers, who in turn gave the fox even more incredible abilities and character.

Due to the characteristics mentioned above, the fox becomes favorable personage of animal fables. This allows us to compare even such different cultures as Chinese and Persian. Thus, despite the huge difference in culture, language, religion, mentality and, in general, almost in all, such countries as China and Iran may suddenly be united by folk fairy tales.

As noted earlier, the interest caused by the image of a fox, turned it into a nearly ubiquitous character of fantastic stories, mythology, folklore and fairy tales all over the world. It had an impact up to advanced times, making writers and storytellers to illustrate various independent adventures of the fox and set them into stories. The clever and sly fox imitates the key part in a homogeneous complex of creature figures. The whole of this taken together transforms the fox into an "anecdotal creature". Moreover, there is an incredible assortment of different stories about the fox, therefore showing that there are much a greater number of stories of the fox than of other animals, for example, the dog or the wolf.

Tales that contain entirely variable pictures of human conduct introduce the fox in a double part, as the trickster and the beguiled. Contingent upon the way of life where it happens, a story's principle point might be unique in relation to that of different territories. In any case, in spite of the fact that fox stories may vary as far as sort and theme it is entirely conceivable that they display various normal qualities. For example, the Folk tunes "Strange Tales from

a Chinese Studio” of Pu Songling, where the fox often helps people to correct their behavior or it punishes unscrupulous ones. In mythical narratives of China, Korea, and Japan the fox can change into an enchanting lady as well as a charming woman can change into a miracle vixen. Just as in Europe, it was thought that a beautiful woman can be a witch, in China she often was a fox-shape-shifter. Such a fairy fox acted as a companion who brought comfort to home and created a family or a friend who was always willing to help or just to make the company and moral support, and sometimes vice versa malicious enemy, who was willing to do anything to destroy the life of its victim. In addition fox could act as arms of retaliation, revenge for itself or for a friend or to punish dishonest, unscrupulous people, regardless of their social status.

Thus, at the end of the second century the fox spirits who cause disorder and demise show up in China in human form. From the fourth century the quantity of accounts about ladies who are foxes increments. There are many reports in old writings where they say an old vixen may change herself into a delightful young lady, lure a young fellow, and ruin him physically with the goal that he will bite the dust if no countermeasures are taken. The lady’s motivation is to take such an extensive amount the man’s life compel that she herself gets to be un fading or can figure out how to keep her human structure for good. These sorts of foxes seem constantly as extremely beautiful ladies who never change their clothes, do not grow old or become dirty, and who like to eat chicken meat, drink solid alcohol, and allure men.

Chinese fox mostly is a supernatural powerful spirit named Huli jing (狐狸精; “fox spirit”), Huxian (狐仙: “fox godlike”), or Jiwei hu (九尾狐: “nine-tailed fox”), which can change into an attractive woman, who can both help to achieve happiness in life or totally ruin beings’ life.

According to traditional Chinese beliefs, all beings have the potential to take human form and acquire magical properties and immortality. The main condition is to find the source of this energy, for example, human breath or elixir from the moon or the sun.

Fox-shifters – the image of Eastern mythology and fantasy. Description of werewolves, foxes can be found in Chinese literature of the Middle Ages. The fox-werewolf, or fox spirit is often female, with many tails, which are difficult to hide, being in the form of a human, “fox-tail gives away the werewolf” (狐狸精露尾). This proverb means that in some respects you can always notice the deceit and

cunning. The more tails has the fox the more magic she has. Often, these foxes have evil intent or seek to fool people, but sometimes a man turns out to deceive the fox or she is honest and fair.

A great writer of Middle aged China, Pu Songling, in his novels “Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio” created many images of fox werewolves, in fact, revived the genre of Chinese stories about evil spirits, and thus saved a lot of folk legends from oblivion. This is especially true legends of the Huli jing – fox-werewolf, a unique phenomenon of the culture of the Far East.

Chinese fox-werewolf Huli jing usually appears as a young and beautiful girl. Meeting with the Huli jing was a bad omen for the man. According to Chinese mythopoetic tradition, dead soul can unite with the body of Huli jing and thus communicate with the livings. The fox-werewolf brings various troubles to people up to the murder. It also happens that the Huli jing provides assistance and support to the person that is in the spirit of their unpredictable and volatile nature.

Fox as the embodiment of the soul of the deceased was carrying a risk, but because the system of her charms was particularly important. Turning to the beauty girl Huli jing seduce men (bright start of Yan) for the vital energy (qi), blood or semen to improve their magic. As a result, human qi is exhausted and he can even die. A fox, reaching in this way a higher degree of development, becomes immortal (狐仙). In modern Chinese the word «Huli-jing» is used to denote the tempting married men seducer and defraud them of money and entertainment.

Persian Fox (روباه). In pre-Islamic Iran, the fox was considered as one of the ten varieties of dog, created against an evil presence called *xabag dēw*. In Islam, albeit devouring fox substance is prohibited by most schools of law, therapeutic utilization of different parts of the fox’s body is took into consideration treatment of an assortment of conditions.

Very common tales in Iran have tales about animals. The main idea in them as in fairy tales is the struggle between good and evil.

In fairy tales about animals traditional negative character is a fox – the embodiment of cunning and deceit, the wolf – the personification of greed, jackal – a symbol of infamy.

Traditional relations in the Persian fairy tales, there is a relationship between a wolf and a sheep, fox and chicken (crane).

Basically, the plot of Persian tales about animals take place as follows: a hungry fox, while traveling meets the wolf (leopard, a rooster), and then together they meet another animal, then the fox cunning

gets all them in a trap and starts looking for a way to eat them, but her plan fails, then a fox wandering alone, struggling with the leopard (or lion) and wins.

Very often in the storylines of the Persian fairy tales the image of the fox-mediator or judge is common. Fox is asked to share some prey, and she “eats up a big part and convinces everyone that there is no better judge than she”. In one Persian tale “Kittens gave her a piece of cheese and let her share it. The fox break the lump in half, and then says. No, that bit is bigger, it is necessary to compare them. Now – she says – this is bigger, it should be trimmed a little. And she bites it again. Thus, she kept comparing until a very small piece has been left”.

But more often we find the image of the fox-liars. Usually they lie to get their food, deceiving the wolf, leopard, hedgehog, or some other animal but it does not work. Leading a parasitic way of life, the fox is always running away from punishment.

Thus, in the folklore of many nations in the role of the trickster often acts fox. This character is endowed with a variety of characteristics: stealth, enterprise, agility and sometimes genuine wisdom. As a rule, fox knows how to behave in any situation, to get the desired result. However, it is rarely burdened themselves reflections on the subject, is it permissible to go to the target, using deception. Cynicism of fox, her ability to play the small weaknesses of others is always manifested purposefully and thoughtfully. But fox is not devoid of emotion: it is capable of faithful friendship and true love. Whoever won the sympathy of this charming roguish creature cannot worry about the future: a rare sequence of the

fox shows in the interests of the ward all its talents as she usually does it for personal purposes.

And although the main features of fox are cunning, guile and determination. However, fox is not alien to the concept of gratitude, loyalty and promise even selflessness. In this role traditional mentor fox features most fully manifested, conductor and a wonderful assistant. Being a person of reasonable and purposeful, fox is looking for the meaning and sees it in friendship, in relationship, free from calculation and self-interest. This rogue is capable of almost poetic experience, it sincerely wants to be someone fit and feel an attachment to another creature (“A friend of drunkard” Pu Songling)

Yet we should not forget about the duality of the character of the fox (or vixen). In this regard, a very illustrative tradition of Chinese folklore, in which vixen (rarely fox) turns into a human and lives among human-beings. Fox – the perfect lover to one who has become dear to her, and who belongs to it with due respect, but woe to anyone who dares to offend this magical creature!

What we can conclude them in all of the above? Though Persian fox unlike Chinese usually lives in animal world and rarely has supernatural power. However both in Chinese and Persian fables fox mercilessly mocks the fools and losers, not testing them indulgence, punishing those who hurt, and generously rewards those who helped her or just won her sympathy. Even if without steadfast ethical attitudes, fox often plays the forms of behavior which she sees as leading to success, this character is capable of and her actions dictated by high motives.

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