



## • LEGENDS OF LIVELIHOOD

There are legends and stories concerning the way of life of the Mongols, depicting nomadic pastoralism, culture, daily life with the livelihood, struggle, wish and aspiration of ordinary people, which usually found with the reflection of individual thoughts. The protagonist of such types of legends can be anyone, such as wise judge, famous wrestler, beautiful woman, swift horse, dexterous artisan, and ordinary herder.



## • LEGEND OF CULTURE AND CUSTOM

### The legend of HORSE HEADED FIDDLE

**N**amjil, a horse breeder of the eastern periphery, was conscripted into the army and served at the western periphery. When he sang a song in the tuneful voice, local mounted men dismounted and listened to his singing. People stopped walking and listened to his singing.

They extolled and called him Cuckoo Namjil after the singing ability of the cuckoo bird. Cuckoo Namjil served there for a long time and fell in love with a daughter of the local nobleman. But when his term of military service ended, he had to go back to his birthplace. The daughter of the nobleman gave him a horse with concealed wings and asked him to fly with this horse to meet her. Namjil did this, coming back to his birthplace during the day, where he tended horses and looked after his parents, but then flying back to see the daughter of the nobleman each night.

A slave girl noticed that he was away at night and suspected him. She checked Namjil's horse. That night, Namjil had forgotten to conceal his horse's wings. The slave girl examined the horse standing at its hitching-pole, and saw the two wings of the horse fluttering. She cut off those wings. As soon as the

wings of the horse were cut off, the horse died. Namjil grieved greatly at the loss of horse and clipped his horse's mane and tail and twisted the hairs. And then he played the thin skin of his dead horse and stretched it.

He cut off wood from a tree and sawed and lumbered it. Then he put all of the pieces together in a good arrangement and found a way to make a melodious sound from the instrument. He fixed the horse's shaped head on the top of his fiddle and two pegs on the neck of his fiddle. He attached two lines of hair-strings on the front of his fiddle to the bottom of box of his fiddle.

He made a bow by tying two ends of his narrow willow. The bow was covered with the tar of pine. By this he produced melodious and various sounds. In recognition of his good horse he invented the horse-headed fiddle, which can produce the sounds of neighing and whinnying; it can produce the sounds of trotting and clopping. From that time on, Cuckoo Namjil was happy to play this fiddle and was in ecstasy hearing these tuneful sounds. This is how the horse headed fiddle originated.



## 3. GROTESQUE EXAGGERATIONS

• The ridiculous behaviours, oddities and absurdities in society, and ill-dispositions of individual people are described humorously in terse and sarcastic manners. But their critical meanings are mostly hidden. These are called as amusing stories.

## TWO MENDICANTS

Two mendicants on a long journey and starved came to a family and stayed there to recover. One night, they were waiting for supper which was on a fire. Meanwhile, the head of family asked, "Sirs, where are your homes and birth-places?" The reply was, "These sticks belong to the willows of the Tuul River. These emancipated bodies are disciples of the Grand Lama. My family was at the boiling when I left them for journey. I heard later that they camped over the boiling. Now they are, probably, on the dried-down." This was a warning on the supper on the fire.

The family took the supper from the fire and allotted insufficient portions to the hungry mendicants and set the rest of the supper on the rack. Then all those people went to bed. But then some began to speak about the appearance of a ghost that can cut off the head of humans. As soon as the head of family snubbed out the oil-lamp, one of the hungry mendicants groped his way in the dark ger for the boiled meat on the rack and took piece of it and started eating it in his bed. The head of family heard the sound in the dark and cleared his throat. The other mendicant understood the hint and turned his head to his feet and his legs to his pillow. He snoozed and startled to scrape the legs of his companion, saying, "Phew, his head was taken off.

Then he stretched his hands and reached for the ass of his companion and smelled his fingers. Then he extended his arms and held his companion's penis and shouted, "Oh, his throat is hanging." He sprang up and the mendicant who had taken the meat went back to his former position. After this the head of the family said, "What is occurring?" The mendicant, who stole the piece of meat said, "My companion is having a nightmare." The mendicant meat-thief settled his emotions. The



next morning two mendicants were having a tea when they suddenly started quarrelling with each other. The head of family parted them and the wife of the family took one out of the ger. That mendicant said, "I can dissect you just like before." But the mendicant who was in ger replied loudly, "Where is his savvy? You, guilty dog, please control him. Let me arrange my rucksack." In such a manner those two mendicants dissembled to be fighters in other's eyes, but the companion who was inside of the ger took the meat and put it in his rucksack. The mendicant inside of the ger went out and said, "He shall beat me. Let him be free when he was far away." After these two mendicants disappeared, the family knew that they were knaves who had stolen the family's meat. Therefore, the following saying originated.

*Where mendicant lamas go,  
So there are ridiculous stories.  
Where flies lay eggs,  
So there are multitudes of grubs.*

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