

• HEROIC TALES

These tales retained the heroic manners in the poetic tunes and epic deeds. There are many heroic tales.



• WITTY NARRATIVES

The works in this genre express the conflicts and witticisms experienced in the everyday lives of the nomadic herders. These tales are often humorous and include frequent descriptions of animals, hunters, mendicant Lamas, and noblemen and officials. In them we find popular symbolism of nomadic herders' ways of life. In these tales there are struggles for power and authority, longings for offspring, greed and avarice. These tales usually circle around questions of morality.

Tale of the Witty Daughter-in-law

Once upon a time there was a king who had a stupid son. One day he heard of an old man who had a witty daughter. The king decided to marry his stupid son to this witty daughter and so called for this old man.

The king said to him, "You, old man, bring me an ash hobble with three legs. You must look for it along neither a road nor a non-road. You must walk neither with boots nor without boots. And you must do this neither by day nor by night, and neither outside nor inside. If you make a mistake, your head shall be cut off."

The old man was scared out of his wits and told the king's order to his wise daughter. The daughter told her father not to worry. It will be easy to solve, she said, and then told her father how to reply to the king. The next morning the old man went to the king to complete the king's order in the manner that his daughter had told him to.

Old man said to the king, "Dear sir, I brought an ash hobble with three legs as you ordered. Look at it, please."

The king shouted, "At where are you?"

The old man answered, "I am neither inside nor outside, but I am between the wood framed wall and the felt cover."

The king asked, "When did you arrive?"

The old man answered, "Neither day, nor night. I arrived at dawn."

The king asked, "Which way did you arrive?"

The old man answered, "Neither by a road, nor by a non-road. I arrived along the narrow trail."

The king asked, "How did you make a hobble with three legs?"

The old man answered, "I made a hobble with three legs and placed it on the flat stone. I then burned this hobble and now it is an ash hobble. So, your majesty, you can hobble your horse with it if you favour it."

The king said, "Old man, I will come to your home. You must give me milk from an ox. If you cannot do this your head would be cut off."

The old man thought that the king had become crazy and was in despair. But when he came to his home and told his wise daughter about king's order, she said, "That is not difficult, daddy, do not worry. I can find out a way to do that."

The next morning his daughter caused her father to lean over a pannier and draped a gown over him at the base of

the ger. Suddenly somebody called out, "Hold your dog." The daughter pushed out the capital of the column and went out of her ger.

"Nobody can enter," she said.

"Why? What has happened?" the king asked.

The daughter answered, "My father has given a birth to a child."

"Does a man give birth to a child?" the king asked.

"Does an ox give milk?" the daughter replied.

The king was silent and then returned to his palace. He thought that this girl was witty enough and made up his mind to marry this girl to his stupid son. He supposed that she might have a great hold over him when they married.

One day the king said, "Son, can you saddle a horse with two heads for me?"

The son said he could and placed two horses in opposite positions and bound them with cinches. But the cinches snapped. He tried again and again, but each time he failed.

Then the stupid prince said to his wife, "My father told me to saddle a horse with two heads. I tried and failed. What can I do?"

The witty wife said, "You may saddle a mare to a foal."

As his wife said, the prince saddled a mare to a foal. Then the king asked his son to boil meat in a wooden kettle. The prince said he could, but then when he tried burned all his wooden utensils. It was impossible to boil meat in a wooden kettle. When the prince told this to his wife, she said, "Please pierce the meat with the dwarf cornel skewer and roast it."

The prince did as his wife said. The king then told him to make a man of ice and said, "My son, ask a word and learn it from the man of ice." The stupid prince tried but could not get the man of ice to say a word, so he broke it to pieces and said to his wife, "My father told me to make a man of ice and ask a word from it. The man of ice did not say any word, so I broke it to pieces." Then his wife said, "Tell him: My body consists of water. The nature of water is icy. In winter for three months there is ice. In summer for three months this ice thaws." The prince told these words to his father. The king said, "Son, you have married a witty wife and has a great influence on you. Now you are able to ascend to the throne and to govern others."

One day the king was hunting on another's territory. But