
CONTEMPORARY STORIES DEVELOPED FROM FOLK TALES:
With Reference to the stories collected by Dr Joginder Singh Karon & Dr Gautam Vyathit

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ABSTRACT

From ancient times till today folk stories have taught, entertained and illuminated our lives. The morals in the end have always meant to play a significant part of the narrative. The animal fables are symbolically important as they are representing the human character with so many variations which is the eloquence of these valuable treasures. Since 2000 BC the traces of folk tales are found on objects and walls of temples in India. Folklorists have collected and retold these stories to share the wisdom which is deeply embedded in them. Remarkable work is done by learned writers and illustrators in preserving and presenting these narratives. To name some of them are R.K. Ramanujan, J.S. Karon, Gautam Vyathit, Sudarshan Vashisht, Sohan Singh Wanjara Bedi and Sudha Nathani. British writers had also collected and illustrated the folktales.

INTRODUCTION

The storytelling involves a storyteller passing a story with a beginning, middle, and end to listeners, using elements like emotions, pictures, and physical movement to create a connection and convey a memorable message. This simple yet meaningful social practice was used worldwide to preserve cultural and traditional values and educate the younger generation. Stories were told for many reasons, which included the sharing of personal experiences and passing on the information in an entertaining manner. Every culture has its own narratives, which are shared as a means of transmitting knowledge and are used in classroom teachings these days. The stories are modified according to the changing times and needs.

The purpose of illustrations is to clarify the subject, and in the expressions of folk stories, this method has always spread the message more effectively. From prehistoric people to today's digitalisation, the illustrations and visuals of folk stories have always been appreciated. Societies undergo many changes, and civilisation develops at a fast pace. May it be literature, art, music, theatre or storytelling, the writers, artists, musicians keep experimenting with new techniques, but the essence remains the same. Many authors have collected the folk stories from different regions and presented them along with the illustrations. The method is not new because human beings have always tried to express their emotions and imaginations through various mediums as dance, drama and simple drawings with charcoal on walls and through threads as embroideries on their attire. Illustrations were carved and sculpted on the 'stupas' under 'Buddhism' as 'Jataka stories' to provide an insight into the social life of people and

their harmony with animals. For example, the toys since the beginning of the civilisation were crafted with whatever material was available to tell a story to the children as a source of easy understanding of the narrative. These raw crafts and designs have inspired the new generation, equipped with technology to create interesting visuals of old and new folk stories. One such experiment by Narinder Uberoi Kelly has been done with the old classic Panchatantra with proper drawings in colours and anatomy by the illustrators of present times, giving a clue of how interesting and inspiring the folktales are. As the change in the names of characters is there but the stories have been told in an easy way and are more understandable. Anand, Mulk Raj. *Folk Tales of Punjab*. Folk Tales of India Series, New Delhi: Sterling, 1974. Fourteen folktales from Punjab embody popular motifs and themes, such as the shrewish wife, magical animals, two sisters who are opposites, moneylender as a wicked character, wit and wisdom of small animals, friendship and goodness, and legends of brave heroes. Anand's retelling, however, captures the regional flavor in his rendering of the speech, attitudes, and lifestyle of the simple peasants of central Punjab.

Other folk stories retold by contemporary authors are

1. Himachal ki Lok Kathayen by Santram Vtasya,
2. Himachal Pradesh ki Lok Kathayen by Pratibha Nath
3. Haryana ki Lok Kathayen by Nisha
4. Rajasthan Ki Lok Kathayen by Mahendra Bhanavat
5. Folk Stories of India by M.S.Randhawa
6. Folk Stories by Dr Chander Mohan
7. Jain, Jagdish Chandra. *A Treasury of Tales*. Illustrated by Manek Pande. Bombay: India Book House, 1969. Thirteen stories retold from the Panchatantra, Jatakas, and Hitopadesa are intended to create an interest and curiosity in young children for practical wisdom. Jain avoids sermonizing by involving readers in the action through his graceful prose and modern idiom. However, when the illustrations use modern styles in clothing, they appear strange with the setting of the stories.

Some of the selected stories retold in his book 'Indian Folk Tales', illustrated by P.S. Goray

1. How the World Began
2. The Sun, the Moon, the Wind and the Sky
3. The Lion and the Goat
4. Castles in the Air
5. A Love Story
6. The Crane and the Fish
7. The Princess Who Loved Her Father Like Salt
8. The Brahmin, the Tiger and the Jackal
9. The Tortoise Who Talked Too Much

"The gods, heroes, demons, witches, fairies, birds, beasts and flowers in the folk tales of India, were the overflow from an anonymous pool of imaginative literature of our people. I go to these sources again and again, to bring back the gift of laughter and tears, which is necessary to bear the yoke of pity that every writer must carry."

(Anand, 1974)

Fascinating Folktales of Punjab by Gurmeet Kaur, illustrated by Chhaya Prabhat

1. Tales of Mouse and Snake
2. The Rooster's wedding
3. The Farmer and the Dove
4. The Sparrow and the Crow
5. The Lamb and the Dhol
6. The Sparrow and Peepal

JOGINDER SINGH KARON;

The Punjabi writer thinks it's essential to set our aims in line with the needs of the new society, and to do so, we must understand the complex structure of human behaviour. He further writes about the psychology of people of Punjab as very intricate because of so many foreign attacks and their acceptance of many types of cultures. The studies have shown that the works of so many literary people are based on folktales and sometimes symbolically used in write-ups. When Western countries started collecting the folk stories of their ancestors, the scholars of Punjab also started working in this field, which is definitely appreciable.

This collection of very different and simple stories full of wisdom and humour is done by the writer from his neighbourhood, friends and philosophers with an intelligent mind, although some people who were rich in experience belonged to different areas of Punjab as Lyallpur and Phagwara.

1. Jatt da Uddhar (Loan of the farmer)
2. Jatt da jadoo (Magic by the Farmer)
3. Soney da Hathi (The Golden Elephant)
4. Bakri nu rajaouna (To satisfy the hunger of a Goat)
5. Bakkarey da bhaar (Weight of the Goat)
6. Jatt da karja (Debt of the Farmer)
7. Bharta (The Brinjal dish)
8. Khooh da Niyaan (Justice of Well)

Among these folk tales, the illustrations by the research scholar for the stories 'Jatt da jadoo' (Magic by the Farmer) (*Figure-1*) and 'Bakri nu rajaouna' (To satisfy the hunger of a Goat) (*Figure-2*) are the representations of wisdom and cleverness. The common people of villages had their own way of solving difficult issues.

The story of 'Magic by the farmer' shows how foolish the skilful weavers can be and how smart a peasant can be. The moral of the story is to understand and study the problem before approaching a third person.

In the second story, a common boy finds out the solution to satisfy the hunger of a goat by just striking its nose when the animal wants to eat the green leaves even after its stomach is full. The King, therefore, also gets a wise match for his daughter, and the boy inherits riches. The narrative teaches children social behaviour and the power of wisdom, showing how one can grow through wise decisions.

Some of the folktales depict the quick wit and clever solutions of the poor farmers who save their crop of hard work.

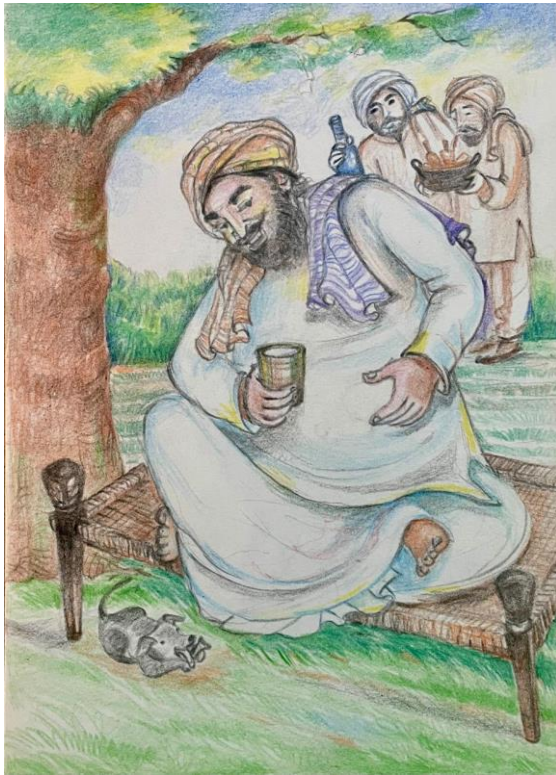


Figure 1: Magic by the farmer

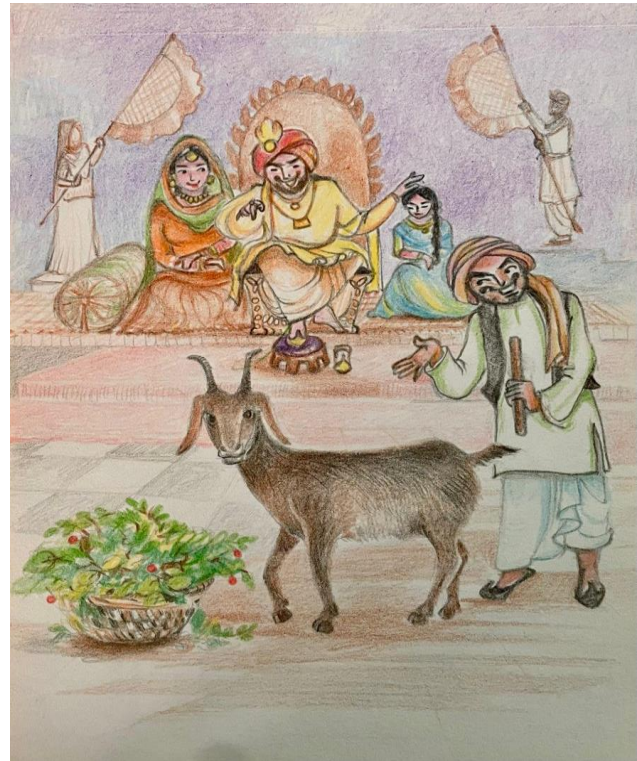


Figure-2: Hungry Goat

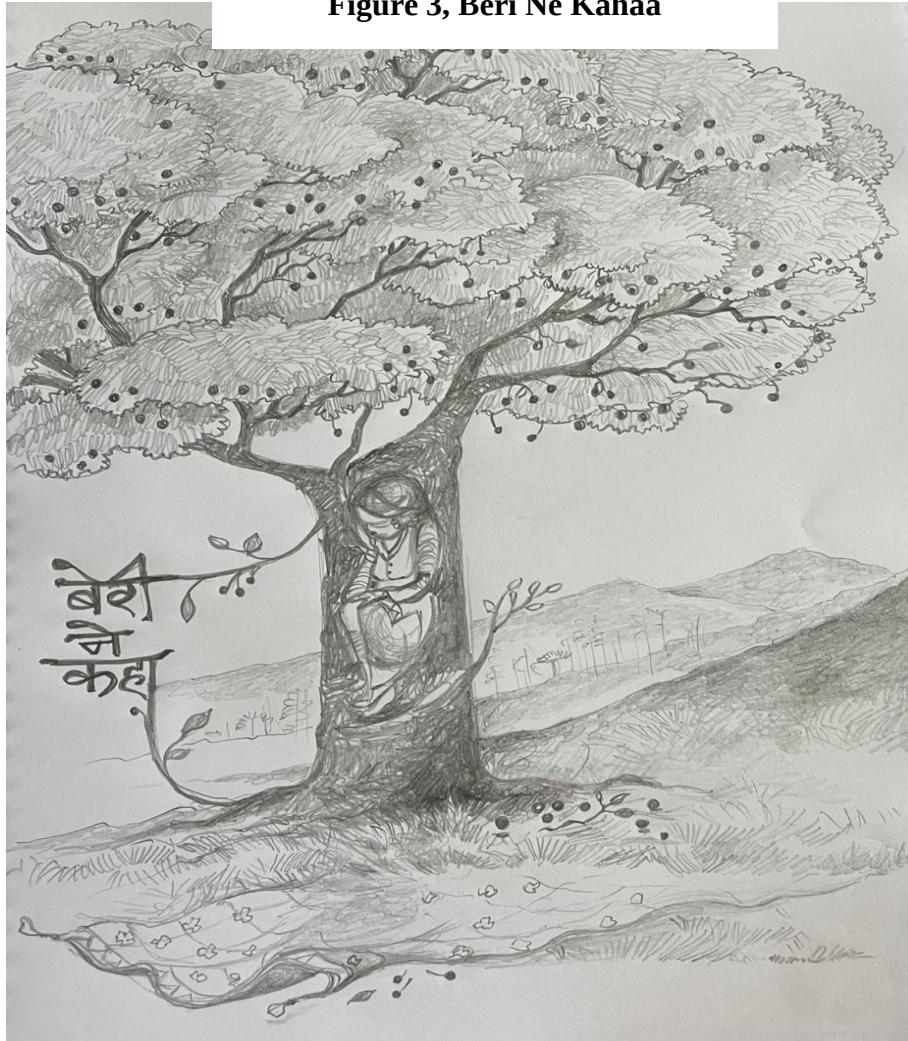
FOLK STORIES COLLECTION BY DR GAUTAM VYATHIT

The folktales of Himachal Pradesh are a retelling of ancient wisdom communicated by elders and experienced folk of villagers, which are very expressive and represent the social behaviour of not only a common individual but also of the kings. The enthusiasm is conveyed in the folktales by metamorphosis of characters, such as a prince and princess into a parrot or a swan. The golden hair girls and nine gem necklaces are important motifs in the weaving of the stories.

1. Sonekesi (The Girl with Golden Hair)
2. Roopkesi (The Beautiful Girl)
3. Raajkumari aur Totaa (Princess and Parrot)
4. Kagaj ka Hans (The Paper Swan)
5. Naulakhia Haar (An Expensive Necklace)

6. **Beri ne Kaha** (As told by Jujube tree) is a story of the innocent sister who wants to carry a silk shawl of her brother's wife to attend a carnival. Her brother tells her not to discuss about it with anyone, but her jealous friends tell her sister-in-law, who wants her to be killed. The brother goes to the forest and keeps her in the hollow tree trunk of a jujube tree, and later, a prince finds her, and both get married, which is usually a happy ending of the struggle of the main character. (Figure-3)

Figure 3, Beri Ne Kahaa



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