



Folk Tales From Tibet

W. F. O'Connor

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“Students of folk-lore have in this work a store of interesting material gathered together from a comparatively new source, and communicated to the writer by village headmen, monks, servants, peasants and traders resident in Tibet. The difficulty attending the collection of the stories, a difficult task at any time, was enhanced by the shyness and reluctance of the simple folk interviewed by Captain O'Connor, but with tact, and every sign of friendliness, he was able to obtain numerous interesting specimens of the folk-lore of that fascinating and little known country— which were written down as he heard them, and translated as accurately as possible from the Tibetan idiom into ours. Captain O'Connor spent two years in Tibet, at Gyantse, Lhasa and other places, and had therefore many opportunities of carrying on his researches. As to the origin or scientific bearing of the stories he does not express an opinion, except to point out that some of the stories he heard had been imported bodily from India or China and therefore possess but little of that local colouring which is one of the chief charms of folk-lore. The writer has added to the stories a few verses taken at random from popular Tibetan love songs which show the genuine poetic sentiment which is found amongst the inhabitants of this strange country. The pictures which appear throughout the work are the maiden effort at book illustration of a Tibetan artist, and therefore of peculiar interest.”

—*Journal of the Royal Colonial Institute*

“We have an interesting literary result of the opening of south-western Tibet from Captain O'Connor, the British trade-agent at Gyantse. He spent the long dark evenings of his winter exile in collecting stories from the lips of the peasantry around his post, and now gives us a translation of about a score of these in a dainty volume illustrated with twelve coloured pictures by a native draughtsman. The tales are of the Aesop's fable type, the chief characters being the hare, tiger, lion, fox, monkey and crow. Some of them are not new and some are clearly derived from Indian sources. Captain O'Connor would confer a favour on lovers of folklore if in taking advantage of his exceptional opportunities to collect these tales he would confine himself to such as are of a purely indigenous origin ; and in regard to songs, of which he gives eight verses, would supply more precise renderings instead of free paraphrases.”

—*The Saturday Review*, Volume 102.

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