

# STORYTELLING TRADITIONS OF EAST AND WEST: EXPERIENCE OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

ERSHOVA IULIA

PhD student in Chinese Folk Literature,  
Central China Normal University,  
Wuhan, the P.R. of China

**Abstract.** This article is devoted to problem of late storytelling origin and its formation as a particular genre of vernacular literature in Europe and Asia. In comparative studies, vernacular literature still remains insufficiently explored. The process of storytelling tradition development is also described. The author resorts to thorough analysis of the structure of storytelling masterpiece, its language and style, and features some points of process how a masterpiece becomes an oral story.

**Keywords:** folklore, oral literature, traditions of storytelling, comparative studies

Such a unique phenomenon of traditional culture as an oral epic, is rightfully regarded as one of the peak achievements of the folk creativity of peoples. Thanks to numerous observations and studies (including famous Russian scientists such as B. Radlov, p. Rybnikov, A. Gildfering in the second half of the 19th century, and V.M. Zhirmunski, B.N. Putilov, P.G. Bogatyriov, B.L. Riftin and S.Y. Neklyudov in the 20th century), there is enough evidence in world science to speak about the universal type of epic artist on the scale of all the world's cultural traditions that are available to us. To refer to this type of domestic science, we use the special terms "narrator" and "storytelling". Until recently, there were many "hotbeds" of epic poetry around the world, where storytelling remained a living tradition: China, Mongolia, Karelia and Russian north, Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro and others.

The wealth of material accumulated over the years is highly diverse and heterogeneous, in the light of which it is interesting to discover some common patterns of the creating of the oral epic creations of different peoples and to compare the most fully described storytelling traditions.

In a total set of inseparable characteristics this shape a particular storytelling tradition, three properties are most easily identified, which could be set as properties of the epic environment:

- (1) The circumstances of existence epic creativity (when and under what conditions storyteller can be heard).
- (2) How to form an epic manner (how this epic tradition is passed in the culture).
- (3) The average age of perception (and in many cases direct perception) of the epic culture.

Among the circumstances of the existence epic, three model situations can be described. These are collective gatherings and festivals when narrator speaks

to a special audience gathered to listen to him (in Yakutia, Khakasia, Mongolia, and other ethnic cultures [Putilov 1997, p. 13-22]. Then seasonal work and collective training (fishing, repair of the gear etc.) when the oral epic is performed in parallel with the work, "for himself" [Epics of the north, 1938, c. 15]. This situation was particularly characteristic of the folklore of the Russian North. Third situation of the existence of epic, previously common in most ethnic cultures, is the presence of an artist in the family, at home, in other words - the ancestral tradition. There is ample evidence of the existence of family storytelling traditions among the Chinese [Riftin 1970, c. 263], the singers of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina [Murko 1951, p. 150], Karelia [Lavonen 1986, p. 57-61].

Now we're going to learn more about how to form an epic manner of folk performers. There are two varieties that most likely were existing in the tradition in parallel to the date of its birth, and it should be mentioned separately the trend that emerged in the late 19th century and which is survived till now.

1) Availability of schools and family dynasties. The existence of certain style, meaningful and performing qualities unites and distinguishes with each other those narrators, which were learning in this manner. The training is based on the role of imitation. Future narrators are living in an epic environment, learning the epic's content and penetrating its spirit. The manners of the outside narrators is not entirely excluded, but is perceived as an additional experience. South Slavic guslar N. Chutovich said that he had come to the neighbouring village just to listen to one particular singer [Putilov 1997, p. 18; Murko 1951, p. 73]. A very similar picture can be seen in many Asian narrators' and singers' stories: in Yakutia, Khakasia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and other countries [Putilov 1997, p. 15-22].

2) Mixed learning in the community. The number of teachers is always greater than one, sometimes it is unknown and cannot be fixed at all. As a rule, the young storyteller is able to digest one "work" in a particular manner from each available teacher. The number of "works" acquired depends on the needs and mnemonic abilities of the storyteller beginner.

3) The creation of a author' manner. Has been fixed since the late 19th and early 20th century. It can be described as a random game with shape, style, content, and a conscious choice of the verbal behavior model according to the individual preferences of the performer. The enriching of the storytelling tradition by the external sources (musical drama, Folk Theater, book works). For the Chinese narrators of the mid-20th century (40-50 years), such a sources were classical novels and book novels in the dead written language -wényán (for example, world famous novels of Pu Songling, translated into a number of European languages and repeatedly reprinted).In Yugoslavia, after the end of the First World War, the beginner - narrators after studying in the family and learneding the traditions, created their repertoire with the help of popular books and Pesmarics, folklore publications of the songs of the famous singers such as Vuk Karadžić , Peter Petrovich Gosha and others [Murko 1951, p. 73]. In Serbia and Montenegro, since the late 19th century, narrators "turned to books in searching for new texts" [Murko 1951, p. 73], like Ukrainian minstrels did.

The third property of the epic environment ( or the age of the perception of the epic culture) is in direct depending on the first two. The existence of schools and family dynasties in the ethnic tradition makes it possible to perceive this culture at an early age, in childhood, often from the earliest years of life, when children "sing on grandparents ' knees" or "ask to sing their fathers". For the South Slavonic epic tradition, the most important stage

in the formation of the singer is the perception of guslar' art at an early age [Ibid., p. 70]. As the distinguished Montenegrin narrators said, "The guslar studies how to play and sing from the age of five, no later" [Putilov 1997, c. 13]. In a more conscious, adolescence or early adolescence, a mixed learning takes place in the community, both in a variety of meetings and holidays or during seasonal work. The recourse to external sources of enriching the storytelling tradition and the formation of the individual, the author's manner, tends to take place in adulthood (about 20 years or more). In China, young people over the age of 20 were often pupils of known narrators, deliberately choosing the profession and having a passion for art. Because of the great competition, it was not possible to build a successful performance on a single role, therefore, young chroniclers often synthesized the most favorite elements of the performances of different masters (game, scene, language) and always added their own, often also turned to written sources to enrich the narrative.

In many countries, storytelling was an art with a complex shop organization. In contrast to the storytelling traditions prevailing in Eastern Europe, in China, the choice of such a profession was often not the result of professional inadequacy or disability. If Ukrainian or Montenegrin chroniclers-minstrels were almost always blind, there was no such trend in China.

As in many of the epic traditions of the world, China had a whole set of storytelling' customs. People were studying this art, passing through a complex rite of initiation and only then celebrated "the beginning of an official career" (下海). Three gifts on the Red Dish were donated to the apprentice by a teacher, three essential things in his craft: Sinmu (the "box"), a towel, and a fan. The incense were ignited and kneeling student received "three gifts", while bowing to the teacher. It was only then that he could start

speaking on his own, and the Sinmu, the fan and the towel should have been used throughout his career. They were the most important and expressive tools: the beating of Sinmu determined the beginning and end of parts of the narrative, the fan depicted military action or elements of the landscape (houses and bridges), the towel played the role of a letter or message [陈汝衡 [Chen Zhuhjen] 1958, 157 页].

In China, narrators had the custom to take a stage name in which one part was the same as the teacher's name to emphasize the continuity of tradition. The chroniclers-self-taught were brutally deplored and punished by storytellers' community. There were special tests to determine whether the newcomer belonged to the storytellers' community. For example, the custom "携家伙", which can literally be translated as "to select things", was detailed by the famous Beijing storyteller Lian CoDzu. [连阔如 1995, 332 页], as well as by the researcher Jing Shou Shen [金受申 1959, 59-60 页] and by academician B.L. Riftin [Riftin 1970, p. 200]. When the professional narrators noticed the newcomer, they could come and interrupt his story by putting a towel on the top of Sinmu. If he's didn't understand what is going on, they could have taken all his prop, and the money they had earned on the performance, requiring to find a teacher. If the newcomer has passed the traditional school, he made a long speech, returning the requisites to the same places (such a speech has been translated into Russian by B.L. Riftin [ibid., c. 264]). He continued his speech, and nobody no longer dared to stop him. There have been cases in which the narrators were meeting a gambling man who, after a speech, could refold the Sinmu, towel, and fan and suggest

to the narrators to move them once again. One of them customary had to take the fan in the left hand and say the following:

-A tool for life-a Sinmu, I earn my food with the help of a fan , my home - all the land between the river Yangtze and the river Huanhe (literally "lake-sea between Jiang and Huan"), I am not fear the highest waves. He then had to remove the towel and postpone it to the left, take it to the right hand Sinmu and to continue:

-Sinmu, which is made by people, is not adorned and is not manufactured from flowering trees. "Both scientists and military are all the students of three Chjen." He then had to put the Sinmu on the table and continue a story from the interrupted place to the end of the section-hui (回, "chapter"). If he was unable to do so, he was obliged to pay his daily fee to the enemy. Therefore, few were brave enough to become "the story interrupters", in the professional jargon it is called Pandao (盘道, "Disputing in accordance with canon").

In the middle of the Qing Dynasty (XVIII century), there was no ordinary opening of special storytelling performance, and they took place directly in lively streets outdoor, in the storytelling' jargon it is called La Shunr (拉顺儿).

In the middle there was a large desk with benches around it, with a aromatic vessel-incense (in case of a large number of tobacco enthusiasts) and an empty not very deep basket (to collect the money ). Prior the performance began, narrator usually glanced at the audience carefully: there was a rule that his colleagues might have come to listen to the speech free of charge. In that case, they held the benches behind the table, but in no way could they occupy the two front benches in front of the narrator' table, the so-called Dragon Mustache (Lunsjuj, 龙须). Then narrator was preparing to start his performance. He put a towel on the table with one hand, took the fan to the

other, and put it aside, a little bit held it in the air. A bit after that he took Sinmu and uttered the welcoming words. Beijing narrator Lian Ko D Zhu described one way of making the welcome speech as follows. While raising the fan in the left hand and with the help of right hammering sinmu on the table, narrator had to say:

(1) One Sinmu is divided into 7 parts, (2) at the top it goes to the ruler, at the down - to his subordinates. (3) One part- is how the rulers manage the government and the wars, the other part is how the governance and the wars affect a simple people. (4) One part-is about how the wise Men keep the Confucian doctrine, the other - how the celestial mentors are watching on evil and good spirits. (5) One part is about how the Buddhist monks follows canons, the other - how the philosophers of the Taoists learn the innermost doctrine. (6) One part fell into the hands of a free storyteller, which is hanging out around all the countries of the world and teaches people. (7) Hope my arts fellows won't condemn me, because if I did not have the skills - would not enter "the family".

Quite often similar speeches can be divided into lines that rhyme with one another, as in the case described above (rhymes are highlighted by author):

- (1) Yi qui sinmu qi xia **feng** 一块醒木七下分
- (2) Shàng zhì jūnwáng, xià zhì **chén** 一上至君王, 下至臣
- (3) Jūnwáng yīkuài xiá wénwǔ, wénwǔ yīkuài guǎn **límín** 一君王一块辖文武, 文武一块管黎民
- (4) Shèngrén yīkuài jǐng rújiào, tiān shī yīkuài jǐng **guǐshén** 一圣人一块警儒教, 天师一块警鬼神
- (5) Sēng jiā yì kuài quàn fófǎ, dào jiā yì kuài quàn **xuán mén** 一僧家一块劝佛法, 道家一块劝玄门

(6) *Kuài luò zài jiānghú shǒu, liúluò bāfāng quàn shìrén* , 一块落在江湖手, 流落八方劝世人

(7) *Hú hǎi péngyǒu bù gòng wǒ, rú yào yǒu yìlùn jiāmén* 一湖海朋友不供我, 如要有议论家门 (*numbered single-line translation is described above*).

This performance obviously has a structure of a spell: it is formalized, has a clear metric shape, and other features that makes it very similar to a conspiracy. After the opening speech, narrator could begin the performance.

In the storytelling' traditions through over the world, there is the another common dimension that combines these traditions: plot or motive. Relying on special pointers [Aarne 1995, 588 P.; Uther 2004, 619 P.; Thompson 1961, 584 p], in folk epics, tales, myths, and legends, it can distinguished a similar mass layer. For example, we can take as a sample the Chinese prose tales -Pinshu by motive of Pu Song-Lin' novels , noted in the 1950s in Tianjin, in the performance of the famous artist Chen Shihje.

In the tale "Lady of the western Lake", Scribe Chen was watching on the princess from Lake West, who were swinging on the seesaw: into the traditional Chinese cultural context was placed the mythological motif of the "Swan Maiden" (AaTh 400\*, Mot K1335), which has place in the World Genre Fund. "To swing on the seesaw" is the original symbol of the sacred marriage (Mot. D 1154.3.1by Thompson' points). The pendulum of the swing was often linked to the motive of death and revival. The reason for swinging on the seesaw is generally found in the myths and rituals not only of the peoples of South-East Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia, etc.), India, but also of Finno-Ugric and Slavic tribes [A. Savelyeva 2001, p. 184; Sarah Hicks 2006]. In India, in particular, in the first month of the year, it was a customary to have a competition between the women who would fly higher on the seesaw. It was believed that this rite had a great magical power: the higher the swing, the

more the harvest would be [Edwards 2005, p. 107]. On the seesaw are swinging the Hindu divinities Krishna and Radha, the archaic etiological features of the Indian fairy tale "The way children born" (which is very close to myth) is also concentrated around the swing [the Fairy Tales of Central India 1971, p. 257] .We can meet the motif of girl's stealing clothes, while she is swimming (Mot. K 1335), in Vietnamese and in Korean fairy tales, again with an amendment to the cultural context : in Vietnam, the future groom steals the girl's femoral blindfold ("Unhandsome son") ["The Tales of the People of Vietnam in 1970,"p. 225], in Korea - a dress ("Fairies from the Diamond Mountains"), [Fairies from the Diamond Mountains: the Korean Folk fables of 1991, p. 42]. Hmong (Miáo) people, which is residing in China, have two fairy tales with the motif even closer to the popular original one: the young man steals the feathers of the girl- wild duck ("The Happy Orphan", "The Tale of the Evil stepfather") [Graham 1954, p. 278-279]. In the fairy tales of the people of Oceania it is known the story of how a young man steals a skin girl-dolphin, making thereby her his wife [Meletinskiy 1970, p. 32].

We did not find in Chinese fairy tales the plot of clothing stolen from the Magic Maiden for the purpose of marriage. It is not marked even in the points of Dean Nai-Tun [丁乃通 2008, p. 77], where it is described, however, a similar scene type called "Wife-snail" (400C), where a wonderful girl at night leaves the sink of a river clam (leaves the picture), etc., and dealing with domestic chores until the master sees it. However, in the famous Gan Bao' collection "Notes on the search for the Spirits" ( created around IV century), one of the oldest story of the genres "The tales of the Miserable about the amazing" (Chzhiguaj Sjaosho), there is one story about a bird's wife: a young man saw seven girls dressed in feathers in the field, and the one

whose dress he stole became his wife [Gan Bao 2004, p. 354]. The motive of the Maiden and the revived painting is combined in the Chinese tale about girl-peacock , where she leaves a picture, hanging on a wall in the house of the poor man [Girl Peacock: Chinese fairy Tales 1963, p. 67]. The storyline of the girl-bird is found in the Thai apocryphal collection "Pannasadzhatoka" [Osipov 1987, p. 457-460]. The Thai fairy tale also shows the motive of the character in the sink, -the way the boy appears in the plot of the story "Sangthong" (Golden sink) [Silver key: The Thai fairy Tales of 1963, p. 230].

Chen Shihje increases the volume of his tales, turning short novels into long narratives, not only by the expense of the "epic swelling" and the trend towards detailed descriptions, what academician B.L. Riftin underlined [Riftin 1970, p. 332], but also by expanding the scene and exposure of the story. The storylines, which were secondary in the works of Pu Song-Lin , the narrator revises and expands to the position of full parts of the narrative. Similar techniques constitute a significant part of the text: At least seven are introduced by storyteller for every twenty detailed episodes. It is interesting to establish the sources of these additional episodes in the famous tale "Taming of Cui Mann".

(1) Episode with the giving name to the main character (AaTh 252). Song-Ling Pu does not explain why the child was named Mann and then renamed Umann. If there was not the interpreter's (V.M. Alexeev) commentary, readers, who did not have the original text, would not have known that the name of the main character has the exact meaning - "furious, indomitable." Later the teacher renamed the boy Umann, which meant "don't rampage", to calm him down. In the folklore of Asian countries, one can trace the tradition of blessing heroes with talking names with magical meaning.

"Happy names" stories are in the Turkic epic "Kitabi Korkud", Uzbek "Alpamyshe", Kazakh "Sura-Batyr" and many others.

(2) Early death of the Father Cui Mann (AaTh at 236.7). The premature death of one or both parents is a common motive in world folklore. In our case, the orphan of the hero is "optional": the hero is the only son in the family, and the mother does not take an active part in his life [Trofimov 1999, p. 25-26]. In the Pinhua of the history of the Three Kingdoms, it is said that Liu Bay grew up without a father and one cared for the mother, earning money on the weaving of the mats.

(3) The mother locks the young hero at home (AaTh 231; 54). Because Tsui was uncontrollable and temper, he was not allowed to leave the house, and he was spending his life locked up. In several tales of Guan Yue There is a similar motive. One described that "[Guan Yu] as a child was naughty, austerity did not help, the parents were angry and locked him in an empty closet in the backyard" [Folk legend "Guan Gong kills the county Chief" 1988, 11-12 页]. Or in the late stories about Guan Yue, there are the following words: "As a young man .. he did not listen to the instructions of his parents, and they feared that he would get in trouble outside the house and decided to lock him up." [梁章钜 [Liang Chzhanczju] 1988, 2 页]

(4) The education of the main character (AaTh 511.3.2). It should be noticed a similarity to the motive "an unusual character teaches a child hero", described by Zhirmunski [V.Zhirmunski 1962, p. 124-127]. In Chinese folk literature and folklore, there are also precedents for the teaching of the hero, usually the teacher is the Chinese wizard [三国人物别传 [Other Tales of the Heroes of "Kingdoms"] 1990, 153 页]. One of the folk books tells how Zhang Fei, a child without parents, was wandering around the world, and finally met an old man, "without a worthy adversary among the Mortales" who later

made the boy his apprentice (三国演义的传说 [Folk Legends of "three kingdom"] 1990, 120-123 页]. The episode with the learning process of the hero at the tale of Chen Shihje can be seen as a weakened reflection of the same motive. There is no "marvelous" component (the young servant's teaches Cui some combat techniques), but it retains the idea of a singular initiation-the learning process determines the future of the hero.

(5) The hero acquires a rare sword (AaTh 1081.1). In the world folk epic, a sword has always had a special role, especially the moment of its acquiring, which involves all kinds of challenges and difficulties. The Chinese tradition is no exception: for example, the story of the Gan Jiang and Mo E swords, which, in one of the modern popular interpretations, were named after a blacksmith and his wife, who burned herself in the oven, sacrificing her love to help her husband to toughen these swords. In fact, a series of the stories about two swords, male (Gan Jiang ) and female (Mo E), embodying the polar male and female origins, were created in China at the edge of our era, and only later the swords were named as a master and his wife. Famous swords are mentioned in the Minsk novel "The Story of the Dancing swords from the rock of the "Green fortress"" (14th-16th centuries), where they appear as altered of the Saints [Stories near the lamp, 1988, p. 311]. The heroes of the novel, the Saints of the righteous, becoming swords, were given to heaven.

The sword acts as a weapon from a different world, the sword description is always replete with metaphors. The personification and humanization of the swords took place in poetry literature. Storytellers used the description of the sword to intended to further emphasize the exclusiveness of its owner, his extraordinary force and other outstanding qualities.

In the Pinshu of Cui Maine, there is a weakened motive of obtaining the sword: the seller does not agree to sell the sword for the highest price and

even refuses to show it at first. In some ways, this sword is also an alien from another world-narrator emphasizes that it is very ancient.

In the novel "River backwaters " it is also described the story of warlord Jan Kyi, who sold a rare sword.

(6) A chaste hero (Mot. T315.2; 271). The wife of the main hero is a passive secondary character, what is not typical of the Chinese novel prose, on the basis of which the late prose of Chen Shihje was created. Her image is fragmented and shallow: narrator describes her as a girl from a rich family, quite pretty and very intelligent. But the important thing in the episode of marriage is to underline the fact that Cui was totally indifferent to the women and all his thoughts were about wushu. Here you can see the link with the literary tradition: in the novel "River backwaters", the hero Sun Jiang is described as a man for whom "the only passion was the art of battle, and the love was not a very important issue" [Shi Nye-An-one 1954, p. 297]. Also Song Jiang often acts as an defender of people and unjustly resentful, like Cui Mann does .

(7) The hero punishes the criminals and the adulterers (AaTh 628.2.5; 900). In the tale the episode is described in details when a furious Cui Mann kills a naughty sister-in-law, who beat her mother-in-law. The motif of the punishments of a naughty woman can be also seen in the novels "Jin, Pin, Mei" and "River backwaters" . In the first case, Song executes his sister-in-law Pan Czinlan', who poisoned his siblings, and in the second, the clerk Song Jiang kills a greedy wild hooker Yan Posi, who's threatening to tell that he's messing with the robbers. All these women are demeaning, grumpy and promiscuous, and their death is represented as a fair punishment for the acts committed. In the tale the motif of punishment is presented in grotesque terms, as Cui Mann kills a maiden wanting to "teach" her for improper

treatment of her husband's mother (she beat and did not feed her), but this was done to demonstrate the temper and justice of the protagonist. Such scenes are also included in the "Taming of Shrew complex" (AaTh 901;) MOT "251.2.), described by American explorer H. Brunvard [Brunvard 1991, p. 24]. Although the scientist has proved that this complex is more characteristic of oral folklore than literary, we have not been able to find the original Chinese fairy tales, including such a motif (one fairy tale called "Grumpy Wife" is found among the Hmong people living in China [Graham 1954, R. 156]), whereas in the written romance of the 14th-16th century it has already been submitted.

In addition, Cui Mann also kills a rich man, who stole the wife of Li Sheng. In various variations of folk story "Guan Gong kills the county chief", the main character Guan Yu kills the official, who wanted to take away his younger sister by force [马昌仪 [Ma Chan-Yi] 1998, 75 页; 关公杀县令 [Folk legend: Guan Yu kills the county chief] 1988, 9 页]. In a few other stories, he was a defender of the wives, daughters, or younger sisters of ordinary peasants who were offended by the rich people or the officials, that were hiding from the court.

(8) The victim's secret Funeral (AaTh 61.4.2) : a neighbor burying the murdered by Cui wife, without making the case public, to preserve his own life and reputation.

The motif of the secret funeral, described in detail in tale, is also found in the novels "Jin, Pin, Mei" and "River backwaters", where the body of the brother of the main character U Song, poisoned by the wife U Dalan, is hastily burnt and the ashes is thrown into the pond.

(9) The appearance of the "Magic assistant" (AaTh 1233.1.2). In tale there is a three motive for the appearance of such a character, but he is weakened

because all the miracles have been transformed by storyteller into a domestic stuff or presented as accidents and coincidences. The first variant of the "magic assistant" is a traveling Taoist monk who predicts the fate of Cui Mann and tells him about the future friend Zhao Sjengje. Interestingly, that he only said his approximate place of residence and rank (sjucaj), giving Cui Mann the opportunity to begin his own search. A casual encounter with a monk, a very real face, is a streamlined version of the "collision with the extraordinary", which is characteristic to the Chinese novel. Before the help, the monk does not test the hero in the full sense of the word: verification here replaces the ordinary exchange of courtesies. Convinced of the hero's courtesy and upbringing, the "assistant" makes a fateful prophecy. The Magic element here appears in a weakened, "reduced" form: The mysterious prophecy of the Taoist Monk gives rise to the subsequent development of the story. If in a magical fairy tale a wonderful element has occupied the central part of the narrative, here it is partially offset to the beginning and acts as an introductory element of the action. The motif of the prediction surrounds the novel's description of the vicissitudes of fate, borrowed and developed by storyteller.

Interesting is the way the monk told the hero to go looking for an assistant, and it should be examined in more details. The monk asked him to go to the west of the city on the south road and to rise to the tower. The West is the place where, in accordance with ancient submissions, there was a kingdom of the dead, a different world, a Chinese version of the "Far Kingdom", to which heroes are sent to search for stolen by evil spirits relatives or friends. The heroines of the Chinese fairy tales, kidnapped by werewolves, always ask their husbands to look for them in the western country. The oldest philosophical text – "The Book of Change" – treats the West as a region of

darkness, as the light is fading there [Shhuckij 1993, p. 285]. The same interpretations can be found as following: "The favourable place of finding friends is in the south-west" [ibid., p. 183].

Next, the prophet reports that the friend is sitting in a tall tower. In magic fairy tales the archaic is a motive of isolation, which goes to an ancient mythology, is widespread. Out of fear of the invisible evil forces and the loss of magical abilities, the members of the royal family were not allowed to see the sun (to touch the Earth, to eat a normal food) and that is why they were trapped in the dungeon, "on the pole" or in the tower [Propp 1998, p. 139].

The next assistant is a young Taoist named Zhao Senge. After a long friendship with Tsui, he was forced to leave for distant lands, and all communications were cut off. When, after many years, Cui Meng was brought to trial for murder, then Senge, who by that time had achieved a career success, turned out to be his judge by chance. He recognized an old friend and, risking his position, saved him from the death penalty. In the works of V.Y. Proppa recognition of the hero is a separate fairy-tale function, an additional test for identification, probably a symbolic expression of the hero's passage of the initiation rite [Propp 1998, p.47]. In later Chinese novellistic tales and novels, the hero identification motif is widely used, the role of the element of subsequent recognition is increasing, often the identification test is further developed and appears as a plot of a separate fairy tale (AaTh 881, 882, 883A, 884, 884A, 885A, 888A, 894) [Meletinsky 1990, p.11]. Recognition necessarily correlates with the receipt of a mark by the hero, which causes subsequent identification (Mot. H50; AaTh 314). In our case, this is a scar-tattoo, left as a punishment for misconduct: "Mother took his hand and put out the hieroglyph" ten "on her wrist. ... - You will see it and remember my words. " The motif for recognizing a hero by a scar can not be

found in Chinese tales. But in the work of the song and narrative literature "Baojuan about the fragrant mountain" of monk Jiang Zhiji, the story about the Miao Shan maiden - the earth incarnation of the bodhisattva Guanyin. Thus, it is told in one episode the main heroine donated her hand and eye so that the healers could make her father, the cruel ruler, a drug from an incurable disease [Werner 1994, p.281]. Miao Shan's mother recognized her hand due to an old black scar. Thus, the first use of a motive of this kind in Chinese literature dates back to the 11th century and is associated with Buddhist influence.

The third "magical" assistant is Li Shen, rescued by Cui Meng from barbaric arbitrariness and possible death under sticks. Here, as well, we can trace the motive of retribution for good deeds: afterwards the rescued person himself comes to the aid of the protagonist and plays a key role in his life and the action of the work: he relieves him and the whole city from a band of robbers and saves Tsui Man's wife from captivity. It is interesting that in this composite link of the story, the focus of action shifts from Cui Meng to Li Sheng, in fact, the main character changes-a move typical for developed literature, while fairy tales and novels strictly adhere to the principle of one hero-hero-centric. The robbers who stole the wife of the protagonist are rationalized "miraculous opponents" from a fairy tale. They replace the forest demons, dragons and other hostile miraculous creatures. In Chinese fairy tales, the search for a kidnapped wife or bride ("Husband is looking for a kidnapped wife", Mot R10.1; R11.1, AaTh 400 A, B, C, D) is one of the oldest cycles [Chinese folk tales 1972, p. 8]. In the variants known to us, the heroine is abducted by a tiger ("How the Tiger Stole the Bride"), a werewolf ("How a Young Man Was searching for a loved one) or a giant eagle ("A Tale of the Crafty W-gen and the Faithful Shi" [51, 61, 66.]). In the tales of the Chinese

people Miao, living in China, the ogre Luo Yin or a flock of tigers who know how to play the flute abducted women [Graham 1954, p. 192, 199, 261].

The rescue of a woman from robbers is already carried out without magical help: the miraculous power that helped the hero of fairy tales is replaced by his intelligence and cunning. An active hero to achieve the desired goal uses only personal savvy.

(10) The motive of accidental acquaintance with the villain and the abduction of the wife (AaTh 1151.4; 2342.3). Li Sheng's wife, a frivolous beauty, accidentally pours slops on a passerby, notable voluptuary. That one, amazed by her beauty, decides to get his wife into his chambers (AaTh 321.5). The similar case is described in the novels "Jin, Ping, Mei" and "River backwaters", where Pan Jinlian adjusts the door curtain and drops the stave directly onto the head of the passer-by, Simin Qin, who will later ask old Wang to arrange a meeting with them and persuade Jinliang to kill her lawful husband Zhi - a trader in wheat cakes.

The motif of kidnapping a wife in the Chinese tradition is correlated not only with fairy tales and short stories. The development of its rationalized version can be traced in written literary monuments. In the collection of short stories by the Minsk writer Li Zhen (XV century) "Continuation of" New stories in the burning lamp "" (Jian Deng Yu Hua, 剪灯余话) included a short story entitled "Night walk in Chang'an" (Chang'an Esin Lu, 长安夜行录) [Stories at the Lamp 1988, p.301]. But in the versions of story there is a significant difference. In the early writings, the heroes submit to fate - the pancake merchant gives his wife to the prince, and the beauty enjoys a carefree life in wealthy mansions. In the Minsk short story, probably, under the influence of the social atmosphere that developed during the writer's years, the moralistic aspects of the narrative are strengthened. The plot of the "pancake

merchant's 9wife" in the interpretation of Li Zheng entered a series of so-called stories about faithful and valorous wives, moralizing in tone, devoid of emotionality, immediacy and vitality. The destinies of the characters dryly and illustratively embody the ideals of the Confucian canon: loyalty to duty, humility and obedience [Ibid., P. 23]. The heroine of the novel of Li Zhen, taken to the palace by force, swears to die of hunger, and, not yielding to the promises of all the best, keeps faithfulness to her husband. In the end, the prince yields to her entreaties and lets her go, so that the family rejoins happily. In the later novel, Pu Sung-lin, a realistic principle is strengthened: it is not the prince, but the rich man, who kidnapped the wife, under the plausible pretext of paying the husband's big debt. The harsh hero, having known about this, punishes the libertine rich man and the traitor wife. Excluding from the idea of Confucian idealization, the author, however, does not abandon the didactic aspirations of the entire composition: any good or evil deed receives an appropriate retribution: kindness is rewarded, evil deeds are punished [Zhelokhovtsev 1984, p.146-147]. The idea of karmic retribution for deeds came to Chinese literature and then to late urban folklore from Buddhism, the so-called teaching of the Great Chariot-Mahayana [Luo Guanchzhun 1983, p. 6].

(11) Three-part farewell before the separation of the characters (AaTh 315). When, after a long friendship, Senge is forced to leave Cui Meng, he escorts him for a long distance, not wanting to part with him. They say goodbye three times, but each time Cui does not dare leave Senge and escorts him further. Then Senge says the following: "Though go a thousand miles, but at the end of the journey, there is a separation." This phrase, like the whole situation of the threefold farewell, is a tracing note of the farewells of the friends of Song Jiang and Wu Sun in the "River backwaters", where the more

refined Song Jiang pronounces: "As the ancient saying goes, take the guest away for a thousand leagues, but he still has to leave". Then he, just like Senge, with tears in his eyes, takes from his older brother the promise "not to abuse wine, not to quarrel and protect yourself" [Shi Nai-an 1954, p.478]. A similar motif is also present in the legend of Liang Shan-bo and Zhu Ying-tai and is a very common technique [The Legend of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Intai (Liang Shanbo Yui Zhu Intai, 梁山伯 与 祝英台) - the famous tragedy of the love of two young people, transmitted over many centuries in stories, plays and songs.] [Chinese Tales 1972, p. 312].

(12) The motif of fraternization (AaTh 311). The main characters of famous works often become twins: Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei in the "Three Kingdoms", Song Jiang and Wu Sung in "River backwaters", Liang Shanbo and Zhu Intai and many others.

As can be seen from the above analysis, we observe the growth and expansion of the plot of the story with the help of external sources: literary (in our case, the most famous Chinese novels: "Three Kingdoms", "River backwaters" and "Jin, Ping Mei"), legendary (Legend of Lien Shanbo and Zhu Intai, about the swords of gang Jiang and Moe Xie), as well as folklore motifs that could be identified with the help of the signs of H. Uther and Aarne-Thompson.

It is noteworthy that unlike many other branches of common Chinese literature and world epic traditions in general, the storytelling tradition, in particular "Liao Zhai," continues to this day. Among the numerous followers of the famous storyteller Chen Shihe, Mr. Liu Lifu, a student of Chen Shihe in the fourth generation, enjoys the greatest popularity, continuing his performances and having a large and loyal audience. Admired listeners leave comments on his personal page on the Internet, the archive of

photos and video recordings of performances is constantly replenished. In addition, many radio stations at certain times of the day include ethers dedicated to stories, and we can hear tales of "Three Kingdoms", "River backwaters" or "Liao Zhai." Especially such pastime is popular among taxi drivers who do not have the opportunity to enjoy the performance of the artist live. Schoolchildren and young people, in turn, "download" on their mobile phones and tablets special programs with a library of audio recordings, which include a lot of folk tales. Especially such pastime is popular among taxi drivers who do not have the opportunity to enjoy the performance of the artist live. Schoolchildren and young people, in turn, "download" on their mobile phones and tablets special programs with a library of audio recordings, which include a lot of folk tales. The name of the most popular of them can be translated as "Tales for Loafers" (Lan Ren Tinshu, 懒人听书). We can observe people's genuine interest in traditional culture and folklore, their sincere admiration for the talent of storytellers and folk singers. The epic tradition in China is alive and continues its existence as an important and integral part of popular culture.

Thus, on the basis of the material examined, it can be concluded that in the traditions of the stories of East and West there are a number of unifying features, as well as a number of local features. The main features of the epic environment (the circumstances of the existence of epic creativity, the main way of forming an epic manner, the average age of perception of an epic culture) can be attributed to the first one. Separately, it is necessary to mention the circumstances of the author's style - in the 21st century the tendency of the reinterpretation by the performer of his repertoire and the construction of a fantastic composition is growing. For example, in China, modern city storytellers (He Zouhuan, Liu Lifu), instead of days-long epics, increasingly

prefer small forms - no more than fifteen minutes - which can easily be downloaded from the Internet, viewed from the phone and so on. According to them, the audience of the "digital age" is becoming less persevering and the viewer's attention is being kept more and more difficult, therefore, later the stories will shrink more and more. The difference is that in Asia since XVIII there are cases of mastering the narrative tradition in a conscious and even mature age (from 20 years and more). Attention is also drawn to the rich tradition in Asia of the craft of the narrative customs (for example, the Chinese rhymed ritual speeches). The details of the existence of such a tradition in Europe to the author, unfortunately, are still unknown, and therefore this topic requires further, more in-depth study.

## REFERENCES

### In Russian

1. Алексеев 1988 - Алексеев В.М. Рассказы Ляо Чжяя о необычайном. М., Худ. лит., 1988
2. Алексеев 1973 - Алексеев, В.М. Рассказы Ляо Чжяя о чудесах. М., Худ. лит., 1973.
3. Астахова 1938 - Былины Севера / Записи, вступ. Статья и коммент. А.М. Астаховой. М.;Л., 1938. Т.1: Мезень и Печора.
4. Гань Бао 2004 - Гань Бао. Записки о поисках духов / Перевод с китайского Л.Н. Меньшикова. С-Пб., Азбука, 2004.
5. Линецкая 1963 - Девушка-павлин: китайские сказки / Пер. С.Е. Кожевникова и Р.И.Линецкой. - Новосибирск, Новосибирское книжное издательство, 1963.
6. Желоховцев 1984 - Желоховцев А.Н., Лисевич И.С., Рифтин Б.Л., Соколова И.И., Сухоруков В.Т., Черкасский Л.Е., Эйдлин Л.З. Сунская

народная повесть X-XIII вв.: [Китайская литература] // История всемирной литературы: В 8 томах. М., Наука, 1984. Т.2.

7. Жирмунский 1962 - Жирмунский В.М. Народный героический эпос. М., Худ.лит., 1962.

8. Савельева 2001 - Качели в календарной обрядности Коми /Э.А. Савельева // Традиционная культура народа Коми. Москва, 2001.

9. Рифтин 1972 - Китайские сказки. Пер. Б.Л.Рифтина. М., Худ. Лит. 1972.

10. Лавонен 1986 - Лавонен Н.А. Наследие выдающихся карельских рунопевцев и «Калевала». Петрозаводск, 1986.

11. Ло Гуаньчжун 1983 - Ло Гуаньчжун, Фэн Мэнлун. Развеянные чары: Роман / Пер.с кит. В. А. Панасюка; Вступ. Статья и коммент. Д.Н. Воскресенского. М., Худ.лит., 1983.

12. Пропп 1998 - Пропп, В.Я. Морфология волшебной сказки. Исторические корни волшебной сказки. М., Лабиринт, 1998.

13. Мелетинский 1970 - Мелетинский, Е.М. Повествовательный фольклор народов Океании. Сказки и мифы народов Океании. М., 1970.

14. Мелетинский 1990 - Мелетинский, Е.М. Историческая поэтика новеллы. М., Наука, 1990.

15. Осипов 1987 - Осипов, Ю.М. Тайская (сиамская) литература XVII в. // История всемирной литературы: в 8 томах / АН СССР; ИМЛИ им. А.М.Горького. - М., Наука, 1987.

16. Путилов 1997 - Путилов Б.Н. Эпическое сказительство: типология и этническая специфика. М., 1997.

17. Голыгина 1988 - Рассказы у светильника: китайская новелла XI-XVI веков. Пер. К.И.Голыгиной. М., Наука, 1988.

18. Рифтин 1970 - Рифтин Б.Л. Историческая эпопея и фольклорная традиция в Китае. М., 1970.
19. Феи с алмазных гор 1991 - Феи с алмазных гор: корейские народные сказки / Пер. с кор. - М., Художественная литература, 1991.
20. Серебряный ключ 1963 - Серебряный ключ: тайские сказки / Пер. В.И.Корнева. - М., Вост.Лит., 1963.
21. Сказки народов Вьетнама 1970 - Сказки народов Вьетнама / Пер. с вьетн. - М., Наука, 1970.
22. Сказки центральной Индии 1971 - Сказки центральной Индии / Пер.Г.А. Зографа. - М.:Наука, 1971.
23. Трофимов 1999 - Трофимов, А.А. Убогий сирота //Живая старина, 1999. № 1.
24. Ши Най-ань 1954 - Ши Най-ань. Речные заводи: роман. Пер. А.П. Рогачева. М., ГИХЛ, 1954.
25. Щуцкий 1993 - Щуцкий, Ю.К. Китайская классическая «Книга перемен» / Под ред. А.И. Кобзева. М., Наука, 1993.
26. Эдвардс 2005 - Эдвардс, М.. Древняя Индия. Быт, религия, культура. - М.: Литрес, 2005.

#### In foreign languages

27. Aarne 1995 - Aarne, A. The Types of the folktale: A Classification and Bibliography. Indiana University Press, 1995.
28. Brunvand 1991 - Brunvard, J.H. The Taming of the shrew. A comparative study of oral and literary versions. Garland Publishers, NY, 1991.
29. Graham 1954 - Graham, D.C. Songs and stories of the Chuan Miao. Smithsonian Institution, 1954.
30. Murko 1951 - Murko M. Tragom Srpsko-Hrvatske narodne epike. Zagreb, 1951.

31. Uther 2004 - Uther, Hans-Jorg: The Types of international Folktales. A Classification and Bibliography. Parts I-III. Helsinki, 2004.
32. Thompson 1961 - Thompson, S. The types of the folktale. A classification and bibliography. Helsinki, 1961.
33. Hicks 2006 - Sarah Hicks. Swinging between traditions: tracing the origins and meanings of narrative motifs in the traditional Malay romantic poems//SOAS Post-Graduate Symposium Abstracts. SOAS, London, 2006.
34. Werner 1994 - Werner, E.T.C. Myths and legends of China. Courier Dover Publications, 1994.
35. Чэнь Жухэн 1958 - Чэнь Жухэн. Шошу Шихуа (История народного сказа). Пекин, 1958.
36. Лянь Ко-жу 1995 - Лянь Ко-жу. Цзянху Цунтань (Собрание записок о вольном люде). Изд. Чжунхуа, 1995.
37. Цзинь Шоу-Шэнь 1959 - Цзинь Шоу-шэнь. Лао шугуань цзяньвэнь соцзи (Записки о виденном и слышанном в балаганах-шугуань). Пекин, 1959.
38. Дин Най-тун 2008 - Дин Най-тун. Чжунго минцзянь гуши лэйсин соин (Указатель сюжетов китайских народных сказок). Изд.Центральнокитайского университета, 2008.
39. Гуань-гун 1988 - Гуань-гун ша сяньлин (Народная легенда «Гуань-гун убивает начальника уезда»), Пуцзи ши саньго гуши чуаньшо. Изд. Вэньхуа гуаньпянь, 1988.
40. Лян Чжанцзю 1988 - Лян Чжанцзю. Гуй тянь со цзи (Праздные записки ушедшего в отставку). Шанхай, 1988.
41. Саньго Жэньу Бечжуань 1990 - Саньго Жэньу Бечжуань (Другие предания о героях «Троецарствия»). Чжунго сицзюй чубаньшэ, 1990.

42. Саньго Яньи ды Чуаньшо 1990 – Саньго Яньи ды Чуаньшо (Народные легенды по роману «Троецарствие»). Наньхай чубаньшэ, 1990.

43. Ма Чан-и 1998 – Лунь минцзянь коутоу чуаньшо чжун ды Гуань-гун цзин ци синьин (Устные народные легенды о Гуань Юе и его культ). Чжунго минцзянь вэньи чубаньшэ, 1998.



Ershova Iuliia now pursues Ph.D. degree in Chinese Folk Literature, Central China Normal University (Wuhan). She is also working as a book translator and an attendant at Folk Art Museum TRADart (Russia). Her main field of studies are folk literature, traditional art and ethnography. Iuliia participated in several scientific expeditions to China, India, Indonesia and Taiwan organized by Russian Humanitarian Science Foundation and Russian leading universities.