

# **An Analysis of Folk Tales of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Germany**

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The folk tales are stories passed down orally from one generation to the other. They have been created by preliterate communities consisting of village life, myths, traditional beliefs, and cultural practices. This paper focuses on a comparative study of some features of the folk tales of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Germany. The cultures of these countries are rich with folk tales, blessed with ample oral and written literature. Sri Lankan folk tales are often based on real human characters and animals while the characters in German folk tales mostly consist of fairy tales. Andare the Royal Comedian, Gamarala- the village headman, Mahadenamutta and his disciples are some of the characters in Sri Lankan folktales. Some gods, goddesses and demons are also seen in some stories while German stories are full of magic, princes and princess as well as fairies and witches as in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, Hänsel and Gretel and the Frog Prince. Meanwhile, Bengali fairy tales mostly have demons and ogres, ascetics and witches, kings and queens, princes and princesses, sons of ministers and constables. Folk tales in Germany have been highly influenced by western culture and the same kind of themes can be seen in other European countries too. Animals with the ability to communicate with humans occur in folk tales of all three countries. Sri Lanka shares the themes with other South Asian countries. However, most of Bengali folk tales originate from the Panchatantra or the Jataka stories while some can be traced back to Arabian and Persian tales. However, there is a similarity between the folk tales across the cultures, though cultural differences affect the narrative. For instance, in many Bengali folk tales, the wicked stepmother in German folk tales is replaced by the jealous wife.

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