

# *The Fox and the Raven*

The Chinese Fairy Book

Chinese

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*3 min read*

The fox knows how to flatter, and how to play many cunning tricks. Once upon a time he saw a raven, who alighted on a tree with a piece of meat in his beak. The fox seated himself beneath the tree, looked up at him, and began to praise him.

“Your color,” he began, “is pure black. This proves to me that you possess all the wisdom of Laotzse, who knows how to shroud his learning in darkness. The manner in which you manage to feed your mother shows that your filial affection equals that which the Master Dsong had for his parents. Your voice is rough and strong. It proves that you have the courage with which King Hiang once drove his foes to flight by the mere sound of his voice. In truth, you are the king of birds!”

The raven, hearing this, was filled with joy and said: “I thank you! I thank you!”

And before he knew it, the meat fell to earth from his opened beak.

The fox caught it up, devoured it and then said, laughing: “Make note of this, my dear sir: if some one praises you without occasion, he is sure to have a reason for doing so.”

Note: Traditionally narrated, it may be taken for granted that this is simply Æsop’s fable in Chinese dress. The manner of presentation is characteristically Chinese. For “the wisdom of Laotzse” compare, p. 30, “The Ancient’s Book of Wisdom and Life”: “Who sees his light, yet dwells in darkness.” Master Dsong was King Dsi’s most faithful pupil, renowned for his piety. The raven is known in China as “the bird of filial love,” for it is said

that the young ravens bring forth the food they have eaten from their beaks again, in order to feed the old birds.

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