

**A Comparative Study of the Tale of Fereydoun in Ferdowsi's
Shahnameh and Its Re-telling in the Village of Masarm, Fars**

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Introduction

Fereydun is one of the most famous kings in *Shahnameh* and appears in many Persian texts. The attractions of the tales about Fereydun have made him a popular figure in folk tales from a long time ago. There is a narrative in the form of “naqqali” in the village of Masarm in Fars province which has never been written down, but is a very interesting though different narrative from then one in *Shahnameh*. An old “naqqal” (a traditional story-teller in Iran) by the name of “Khavar Qashang” in Masarm still narrates this version of the story. According to the narrator in the interview with the researcher, this tale has been told for children from a long time ago to promote their bravery. Khavar Qashang is now 115 years old; so, it can be presumed that this tale has been popular in the region and has gone through several modifications through time. These modifications have happened in different aspects: characters, incidents and the setting.

Methodology, Review of Literature and Objectives

The researcher has first recorded the oral reproduction of the folk tale and then has compared the folk tale with the tale in *Shahnameh* by the use of the method of library research and with a comparative approach.

There are a lot of scholarly works published about the character and adventures of Fereydun. Jalal Matini (1985) in "Various narratives about the childhood and adolescence of Fereydun" investigates motifs such as the role of the cow in the life of Fereydun and his family and also the name Barmayeh. More recently, Shahnaz Valipour Hafashjani (2017) has studied "The myth of Fereydun and its symbols, motifs and changes". Ismail Normashiri (2014) has studied Fereydun's divine and devilish aspects in "Analyzing the story of Fereydun based on dualism". Mahmood Jafari Dehaqi and Ahmad Majidpour (2011) in "Fereydun's club with the head of the cow and its origin" have referred to various texts, from Avesta to the Islamic period, in order to see why there is a head of a cow Fereydun's club.

Unfortunately, most of the people in the region have forgotten the folk tale. Undoubtedly, with the death of people like Khavar Qashang, these folk tales would be lost forever. Due to their significance in the studies about children's literature, anthropology, mythology and *Shahnameh* Studies, the researcher has undertaken the task of recording the tale and conducting a comparative study of the folk tale with the tale in *Shahnameh*.

Discussion

The folk tale of Fereydun is a completely new and localized tale rather than a rewriting of the tale in *Shahnameh*. The Naqqali narrative is, at some points, very different from the story in *Shahnameh*. These are some examples:

At the time of Fereydun's birth in *Shahnameh*, three significant characteristics are mentioned: his glorious character, his

shining face and his promise of grace for the whole world. But in the Naqqali version, the beginning of the story is greatly influenced by the belief of the local people which results in many differences in the tale; for example, while in *Shahnameh* the setting of the story is in Iran and India, in the Naqqali version the story happens in the region of Kohmareh-Sorkhi which includes Masarm; also, Fereydun starts to talk when he is still in the crib in the folk narrative, and upon his birth, it rains for seven days and nights, but there are no such things in *Shahnameh*.

In *Shahnameh*, Zahhak is a king in the land of Arabs who is selected by Iranians to be their king, too; while in the naqqali narrative, Zahhak is in fact a seven-headed dragon which turns into a human shape during the day.

There are also many differences between the story of *Shahnameh* and the naqqali narrative when it comes to the story of Kaveh. In the naqqali narrative, Kaveh is not a blacksmith but a skillful doctor who also knows how to cook; he does not go to Zahhak's court alone but accompanied by a person named Soroush; and it is by Soroush's command that he goes to Marzangoon, Fereydun's hide-away, to pledge allegiance with him.

The final part of the story, the fight between Fereydun and Zahhak, is also told differently in the two versions: in the naqqali narrative, Fereydun enters the court accompanied by a throng of people; so, Zahhak does not have a choice but to surrender. In both narratives, Fereydun intends to kill Zahhak, but is averted by Soroush.

Conclusion

The comparative study of the story of Fereydun in *Shahnameh* and the naqqali narrative sheds light on these points: first, the naqqali narrative is similar to the *Shahnameh* story only in its basic plot elements. Second, since the 115-year-old narrator claims that she has heard this tale in her childhood, one can surmise that the tale has been popular in this region from a long time ago; however, it is not clear why it has gone through so many changes and modifications. Third, it can be said that most of the modifications in the story are direct results of its localization, which can be traced in three different aspects: words and expressions, beliefs and convictions, and the change in the setting of the story. Fourth, the naqqali narrative focuses mostly on Fereydun's birth to adolescence and his sitting on the throne, without mentioning other incidents in his life. Fifth, the most important difference between the two sources is the Kaveh's revolution. Sixth, three points can be made about the character of the story: About the characters in the story: a few characters, like Simorgh, are added to the story, while some characters, like Jamshid's sisters and Kondro, etc. are omitted; most characters play different roles from their counterparts in *Shahnameh*; in Naqqali narrative, the narrators have tried to depict Fereydun and Faranak in a religious light.

Keywords: Khavar Qashang, Naqqali narrative, Soroush, Zahhak, Fereydun, the cow

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