

MOTIF OF MAGIC IN UZBEK AND JAPANESE FOLKTALES

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Annotation: This article analyzes the motif of magic in Uzbek and Japanese folk tales. In both traditions, magic functions as a symbolic element that represents the struggle between good and evil, morality and temptation. The study explores various forms of magic, their moral meanings, and their role in the spiritual growth of fairy-tale characters. Uzbek tales such as *The Magic Bell*, *Zumrad and Kimmat*, *The Fire Thief*, and Japanese tales like *Momotaro*, *Urashimataro*, and *Issunboshi* are examined to highlight similarities and differences between the two cultures.

Keywords: folk tales, magic, mythology, good and evil, symbolism, Uzbek folklore, Japanese folklore, heroism.

Introduction

Folktales are a priceless literary genre that embodies the spiritual heritage, worldview, and values of every nation. Through them, a people's aspirations, moral ideals, perceptions of good and evil, relationship with nature, and philosophy of life are transmitted from generation to generation. One of the most significant artistic elements of such tales is the motif of magic, which functions as a symbol of wonder, hope, and faith in human life.

The motif of magic is interpreted differently in Uzbek and Japanese folktales; however, its essence is common — the human quest for goodness, justice, and perfection. In Uzbek folktales, magic is often associated with virtue, loyalty, and diligence. In tales such as *Zumrad and Kimmat*, *The Magic Bell*, and *The Fire Thief*, miraculous forces typically assist protagonists who are pure-hearted, honest, and hardworking.

In Japanese folktales, magic is perceived as an inseparable part of nature. In tales like *Urashimatarō*, *Momotarō*, and *Issunbōshi*, magical elements arise from the harmony between humans and the spirit of nature. These narratives reflect the ancient religious and philosophical beliefs of the Japanese people, influenced by Shintoism and Buddhism.

Thus, the motif of magic in the fairy tale traditions of both peoples becomes a symbol of human virtues, moral values, and spiritual development. This motif reflects the inner world of the people, their dreams and ideals, and their connection with nature, turning the fairy tale not only into a work of art but also into a means of spiritual experience.

In Uzbek folktales, magic is often associated with the idea of popular wisdom and justice, whereas in Japanese tales, it represents a part of the spirit of nature, expressing the balance between humans and the natural world. In both folklore traditions, the magic motif promotes the triumph of goodness and the power of loyalty and compassion.

The Motif of Magic in Uzbek Folk Tales

In Uzbek folktales, magic is usually portrayed in a positive light. Heroes often receive assistance from magical objects or beings while undergoing trials. For example, in the tale

Zumrad and Kimmat, Zumrad receives magical help due to her noble intentions and loyalty—she is rewarded for every act of goodness, while Kimmat is punished for her selfishness.

In the tale The Magic Bell, the bell possesses miraculous powers and serves to protect justice and goodness. Here, magic reflects the people's faith in justice and their hopes and aspirations. In Uzbek folktales, magical power is always connected with a moral idea, symbolically representing the triumph of good over evil.

The Motif of Magic in Japanese Folktales

In Japanese folktales, magic is often depicted in harmony with nature. In the tale Urashimataro, the fisherman Urashimataro is taken by a tortoise to the magical realm of the Sea Princess as a reward for his kindness. Here, magic appears as a force that transcends the limits of time and space, granting rewards without violating the laws of nature. In this realm, Urashimataro experiences a life that is calm, pleasurable, and seemingly perfect, as if living in a dream.

In the tale Momotaro, magic is present from the hero's birth—he emerges from a peach. This miracle reflects the people's belief in the power of goodness, as well as the ideas of courage and unity.

In the tale Issunboshi, the hero achieves his goal through a magical needle and spiritual determination. Here, magic symbolizes the inner strength and willpower of the individual.

Similarities and Differences

The motif of magic in Uzbek and Japanese folktales exhibits several similarities:

- ✓ In both traditions, magic represents the struggle between good and evil.
- ✓ Heroes undergo trials and challenges with the aid of magical powers.
- ✓ Magic emphasizes moral purity and loyalty.

The difference lies in the interpretation of magic: in Uzbek folktales, magic is often given as a reward for human virtues, whereas in Japanese folktales, it is portrayed as an inseparable part of the natural and spiritual world. Uzbek folktales are didactic in nature, concluding with a moral lesson, while Japanese folktales tend to convey philosophical reflections on the balance of life, time, and fidelity.

Conclusion

The analysis of the magic motif in Uzbek and Japanese folktales shows that the oral traditions of both peoples express distinctive national spirit, spiritual values, and worldview. In these tales, the motif of magic appears not merely as a supernatural phenomenon, but as an artistic symbol of human dreams and the struggle between good and evil.

In Uzbek folktales, magic often serves as a means to highlight ideals such as justice, courage, and compassion, whereas in Japanese folktales, it reflects the harmony between humans and nature, spiritual purification, and the idea of unity with the cosmos. In Uzbek tales, magical beings are usually depicted as forces that assist the hero, while in Japanese tales, magic more often functions as a means of trial, self-realization, and achieving inner balance.

Demak, o‘zbek va yapon ertaklarida sehr motivining o‘rganilishi nafaqat ularning badiiy xususiyatlarini, balki milliy tafakkur va madaniy o‘zlikni anglashda ham muhim ahamiyatga ega. Bu jihatdan sehr motivi ikki xalqning ruhiyati, tarixiy tajribasi va qadriyatlarini uyg‘unlashtiruvchi umumiy badiiy ko‘prik sifatida namoyon bo‘ladi.

In the folktales of both peoples, the motif of magic embodies the spiritual culture, ancient beliefs, religious faith, and life philosophy of the community. Moreover, this motif enhances the artistic and aesthetic value of the tales, enriching them with philosophical meaning.

Thus, the study of the magic motif in Uzbek and Japanese folktales is important not only for understanding their artistic features but also for comprehending national mentality and cultural identity. In this respect, the magic motif serves as a common artistic bridge, uniting the spiritual life, historical experience, and values of both peoples.

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