

# Folklore Science And Bengali Folklore

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IN the following article, we would try to evaluate Krappe's *The Science of Folklore*, an outstanding book on Folklore and examine its application to our Bengali Folklore, which is gaining importance in the soil of Bangladesh.

A. H. Krappe published his *The Science of Folklore* in 1930. Therein he classifies folklore genres into eighteen chapters covering such areas as (1) the fairy tales (2) the merry tales (3) the animal tales (4) the local legends (5) the migratory legends (6) the prose sagas (7) the proverbs (8) the folksongs (9) the popular ballads (10) charms, rhymes and riddles (11) superstition; (12) plant-lore (13) animal-lore (14) mineral-lore, star-lore, cosmogonic legend (15) custom and folk-drama, and (18) folk-lore, myth and religion.

It is needless to say that a professional folklorist today will classify folklore materials into many other divisions. However, we shall come to that point later on.

In his preface Krappe writes "I conceive of folktales and folk-songs as purely literary manifestation of the popular genius acting under the same impulses as the productive mind of literary men, scholars and artists (preface X)."

Krappe demands that folklore materials should be criticised with the same standard as art literature. It seems that Krappe is influenced by west European scholars such as Naumann and to some extent a German who thought that folklore is the degenerated form of higher culture or literature. But unlike Gomme, he clearly says that folklore can never help in the reconstruction of political history—it is "solely and singly" concerned with the history of human idea, i.e. their tales, songs and rites. He dismisses the "survival" theory of Lang, Gomme and MacCulloch and in the question of fairy tale origin he says that though some "motives" (his spelling) could be traced back to primitive culture that should not mean that all tales originated in the primitive age. Krappe rightly points out that Lang and his allies were wrong in the question of polygenesis, since stories with complicated plots could not have originated independently. Krappe's advocacy of migration and also diffusion in the question of distribution of tales, is more reasonable. Krappe is polemic against the anthropological school, but when he faces the question of the origin of superstitions in fairy tales, he falters and admits that "the cases are survival". Again, when he comes