

Stith Thompson - The Folktale - p115-116

If there is any doubt as to the Oriental and literary origin of The Tsar's Dog, there can certainly be none of another faithless wife story, The Three Snake Leaves (Type 6i2). That tale appeared in the Buddhistic legends of both India and China and became a part of the repertory of medieval monks in their collections of exempla.⁽⁸⁾ Nevertheless, it has frequently been recorded as an oral folktale in all sections of Europe, as well as in India and Indonesia. This story begins with the hero's promise to his bride that if she dies before him he will be buried with her. Shortly after the wedding this happens, and in the grave he sees a snake revive another with leaves. By imitating the snake, he resuscitates his wife. In some other forms of the tale the wife is restored to life in reply to a prayer on condition that the husband give up twenty years of his own life. Sometimes the tale closes at this point, but frequently it proceeds as follows: the wife falls in love with a ship master and the two of them throw the husband into the sea. He is drowned, but is resuscitated by a faithful servant, who uses the snake leaves. The guilty pair are suitably punished. There is considerable difference in the motivation of the variants of this story. In some, the story-teller is obviously most interested in the marvelous cure and its discovery; in some the central point is the willingness of the husband to give up twenty years of his own life in order to recover his wife. But whether it is the central point or not, all of them emphasize the ingratitude of the wife.

(8). For a discussion of the tale, see Gaston Paris, *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, XIII, 1-24, 129-150; Polivka, *ibid.*, XIII, 399; Bolte-Polivka, I, 126; Wesselski, *Märchen des Mittelalters*, p. 188.