

Korean myth

Literature



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Korean Myths Autochthonic culture created by ancient Koreans was noticeably influenced by Chinese and Indian buddhistic civilization. In some historic epochs Korea served as cultural and ideological intermediary between continental Eastern Asia and the Pacific islands, first of all Japan. Thus, there was an influence from the both sides. For example, Tangun Myth about the creation of the state Choson had different versions: according to one of them the creator of the state was a Chinese hero, according to another one – Japanese princesses (Philippi 49). Some scientists even reject the existence of Korean mythology calling mythological stories legendary. Ancient Koreans bear was considered an animal, which was an ancestor of humans. It is stated in the Tangun myth. Cock, magpie, frog, snail, dragon, god were also totems. In the middle ages toad, centipede, snake, pig, earthworm were mythologized. The characters like unicorn-cilin, Bird Feng were adopted from Chinese mythology (Chinese myths).

Cult mythology appeared in Korea with the penetration of religious and philosophic systems of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism from China. Many gods and spirits of the primitive religion entered Buddhist pantheon and were re-considered. In the state Silla unique Buddhist myths and legends were created, which differed from Indian and Chinese. Confucianism brought the cult of ancestors and heroes and the legendry about mythological and legendary rulers, perfect personalities, chaste women. Different sacrifices to their spirits were made in confucianist temples of Korea (Korean myths).

The conclusion can be made that Korean mythology was influenced both by China and Japan, but the influence of China was stronger.

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