

M407
The fox tricks the crow.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

They tell a story that, once upon a time, a crow went to a Miao village in search of meat to eat. He went and saw a Miao woman cutting up meat at the doorway of the house. When the Miao woman went into the house to find a basin, the crow flew over, took a piece of meat and then flew away. He went and perched on the branch of a tree with the piece of meat in his beak. He thought, "Now I shall have meat to eat!" and felt very pleased with himself indeed.

In this place there was a fox. The fox was very hungry, for all night long he had been searching for food and had found nothing at all. He raised his head and saw the piece of meat in the crow's beak, and muttered to himself, "I am so hungry, how I would love to eat that piece of meat!" So he said to the crow, "Big brother crow, are you well? My word, today you look fine! I wonder whether you are also in good voice, for I love to listen to your singing!" Because the crow had not many friends, and for days on end no one had a good word for him, when the fox praised him in this way he was very pleased, and opened his beak and sang, "Ah-la, ah-la", like this, and the piece of meat fell to the ground. The fox did not wait for the crow to finish his singing. He quickly took the piece of meat and ran home and ate it. Now the crow realised that the fox had tricked him, but all he could do was to caw, "Ah, ah, be-la-la! Ah, ah, be-la-la!"