

M412
The fox and the goldcrest.

Told by Yang Ya-go.

The little fox was seeking scraps to eat when he met a goldcrest who said to him, "Where are you going?" The little fox said, "I am going to seek scraps to eat". The goldcrest replied, "If it is scraps to eat that you are looking for, I will take you to find some". One day when the Yi were threshing buckwheat, an Yi woman was carrying out the lunch, a tub of porridge on her back. The goldcrest took the little fox along, and flew round and round the Yi woman's feet. She set down the lunch and ran in pursuit, while the little fox ate up the porridge. Then the goldcrest flew away.

The goldcrest came to the little fox and said, "Did you find a lot of scraps to eat?" He replied, "I have eaten a great deal!" So then the goldcrest said to the little fox, "Would you like still more scraps to eat?" He replied, "I would". So one day the goldcrest again took the little fox to find scraps to eat, and he said to him, "When I have gone, if you hear me calling to you, you must bark with all your might". The goldcrest brought the fox to where the Yi were tending the sheep, and then called to him. At this the fox barked with all his might, and the dogs which the Yi had brought with them gave chase. The goldcrest rose up and flew away, but the dogs chased the fox all day. Afterwards the goldcrest came to the fox and said, "Did you get any scraps to eat?" The fox replied, "Eating scraps is dangerous! See what happened, my leather jacket was very nearly torn off by the dogs.

The goldcrest said to him, "You would still like some scraps to eat?" He answered, "I would". The goldcrest said, "In that case, I will take you again to go in search". The goldcrest took the fox along and saw that the Yi were tending the cattle. He led the fox to the top of the hill where there was a lot of grass and said, "You stay here while I go and search for scraps for you to come and eat". The goldcrest went and chirruped, and the Yi began burning the grass all around the hilltop. As the flames climbed upward, the goldcrest rose and flew away, but they scorched the fox until he was all patchy. Afterwards the goldcrest again came to the fox and said to him, "Did you get any scraps to eat?" He said, "Eating scraps is dangerous! You look, this is what has happened to my leather jacket".