



Beng

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Beng, m. devil, from Sanskrit "vyanga" – 1. spotted, 2. frog.

Among the *Slovak Roma*, *Beng* does not have a specific role as, for example, among (Argentine) *Kalderaš*, where he is the negative, but equal, partner of God (*Devel*). This is probably due to the influence of Russian folk (*Bogomilsky*) dualism. The Roma must have come into contact with the culture of the *Kalderaš* when, after the abolition of Roma slavery in Moldavia (1855) and Wallachia (1856), they emigrated to Russia, where they stayed for several generations.

For *Slovak Roma*, *beng* is an evil force, but it is far from clearly defined, as compared with, for example, a *bosorka*, a *čohaňi* (witch), a *mamuna* (nightmare), and other supernatural forces and beings. In fairy-tales, *beng* often appears as a simpleton whom a clever *Rom* manages to outwit. The dim-witted devil plays a similar role in Slovak and Czech tales.

The word *beng* is used in a precise sense for a bad person and also for a naughty child. In that case, the diminutive *bengoro* is used.

All evil forces are called by the simple taboo word *bižužo* (unclean). Certain unclean animals can also be called *bižužo*. *Žamba* (frog) and *sap* (snake) are at the head of the list.

For more information, see entry *De(ve)l*.



Literature

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