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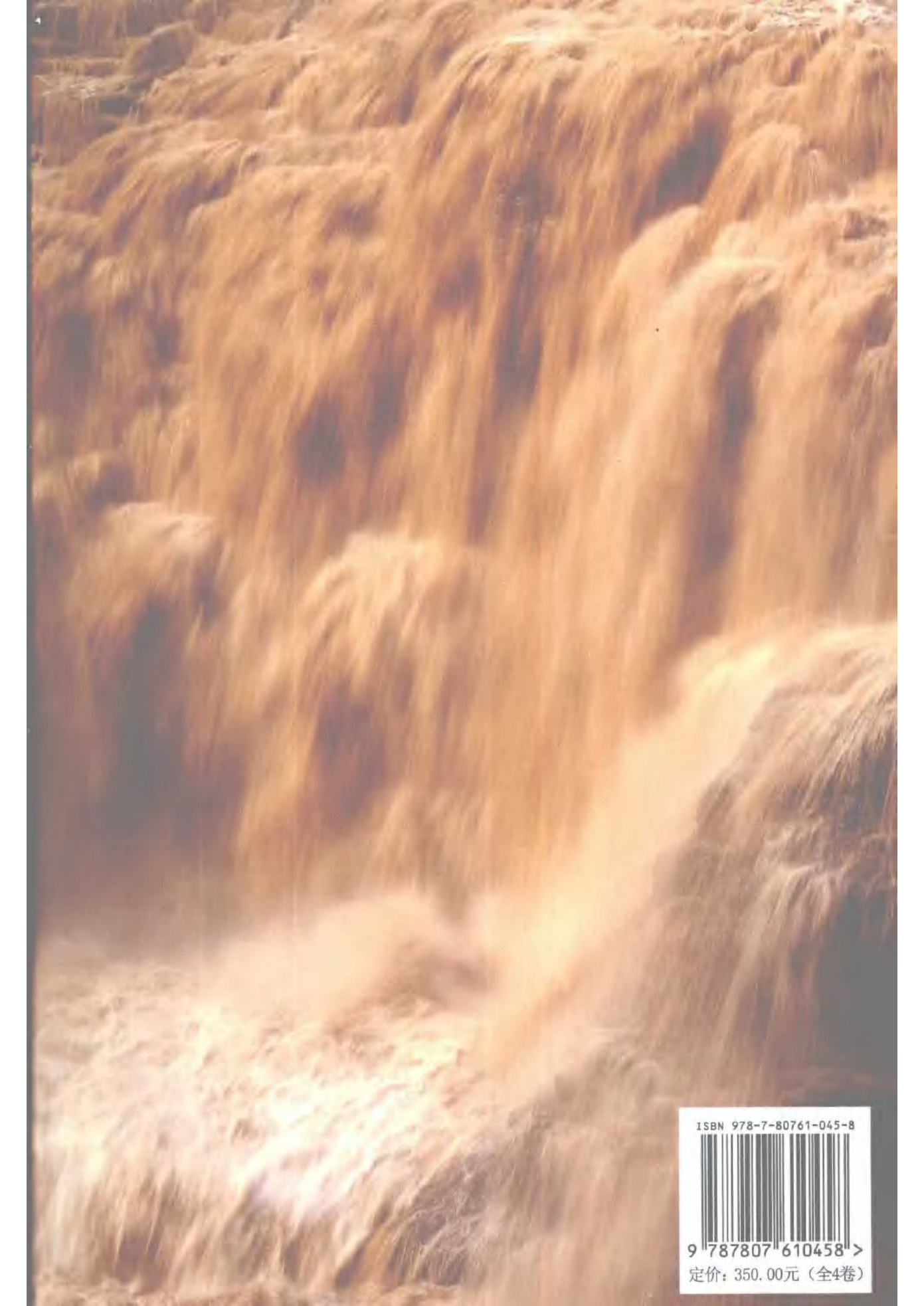
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汉英对照

警世通言

STORIES TO CAUTION
THE WORLD

IV



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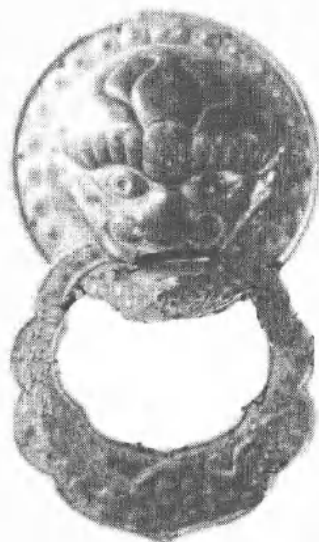
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Chinese-English

警世通言

Stories to Caution the World

IV



[明] 冯梦龙 编著
杨曙辉 杨韵琴 英译

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Translated into

inqin Yang

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第三十三卷

乔彦杰一妾破家

世事纷纷难诉陈，知机端不误终身。
若论破国亡家者，尽是贪花恋色人。

话说大宋仁宗皇帝明道元年，这浙江路宁海军，即今杭州是也。在城众安桥北首观音庵相近，有一个商人，姓乔名俊，字彦杰，祖贯钱塘人。自幼年丧父母，长而魁伟雄壮，好色贪淫。娶妻高氏，各年四十岁。夫妻不生得男子，止生一女，年一十八岁，小字玉秀，至亲三口儿。止有一仆人，唤作赛儿。这乔俊看来有三五万贯资本，专一在长安崇德收丝，往东京卖了，贩枣子、胡桃、杂货回家来卖，一年有半年不在家。门首交赛儿开张酒店，雇一个酒大工叫做洪三，在家造酒。其妻高氏，掌管日逐出进钱钞一应事务，不在话下。

明道二年春间，乔俊在东京卖丝已了，买了胡桃、枣子等货，船到南京上新河泊，正要行船，因风阻了。一住三日，风大，开



Story 33

Qiao Yanjie's Concubine Ruins the Family

*Affairs of the world are too numerous to tell;
Wise men keep themselves out of harm's way;
Those who ruin the state and the family
Are men with a weakness for the other sex.*

Our story begins during the first year of the Mingdao reign period [1032], under Emperor Renzong of the great Song dynasty, in Ninghai, Zhejiang, known in our day as Hangzhou. In the vicinity of the Guanyin nunnery, to the north of Zhong'an Bridge in the city, there lived a merchant, a native of Qiantang, who was called Qiao Jun, courtesy name Yanjie. He had lost his parents in his childhood. He was a lustful and debauched man with a powerful physique. He and his wife were both forty years of age and had no sons. They only had a daughter Yuxiu, who was eighteen years old. This family of three had a servant called Sai'er.

With capital most likely ranging from thirty thousand to fifty thousand strings of cash, Qiao Yanjie traveled regularly to the towns of Chang'an [in Haining county, Zhejiang Province] and Chongde [in present-day Tongxiang County, Zhejiang] to buy silk and then to Dongjing, the Eastern Capital, where he exchanged it for dates, walnuts, and other miscellaneous items. He then brought these goods back to his hometown to sell. He was thus absent from home six months out of the year. He had Sai'er open a wineshop in front of his house and hired a brewer, called Hong San, to make wine. His wife, Gao-shi, was in charge of all the money that went in and out of the house and the shop every day, but of this, no more need be said.

In the spring of the second year of the Mingdao reign period [1033], Qiao Jun, having disposed of his silk in the Eastern Capital and bought walnuts, dates and other items, was on his way home when his boat made a stop upon reaching the Shangxin River in Nanjing. By the time the boat was ready to continue on its way, a windstorm had sprung up, and the boat could not set sail. For three days



船不得。忽见邻船上有一美妇，生得肌肤似雪，髻挽乌云。乔俊一见，心甚爱之，乃访问梢工，道：“你船中是甚么客人？缘何有宅眷在内？”梢工答道：“是建康府周巡检病故，今家小扶灵柩回山东去。这年小的妇人，乃是巡检的小娘子，官人问他做甚？”乔俊道：“梢工，你与我问巡检夫人，若肯将此妾与人，我情愿多与他些财礼，讨此妇为妾，说得这事成了，我把五两银子谢你。”梢工遂乃下船舱里去说这亲事。言无数句，话不一席，有分教这乔俊娶这个妇人为妾，直使得：

一家人口因他丧，万贯家资指日休。

当下梢工下船舱问老夫人道：“小人告夫人跟前，这个小娘子，肯嫁与人么？”老夫人道：“你有甚好头脑说他？若有人要娶他，就应承罢，只要一千贯文财礼。”梢工便说：“邻船上有一贩枣子客人，要娶一个二娘子，特命小人来与夫人说知。”夫人便应承了。梢工回复乔俊说：“夫人肯与你了，要一千贯文财礼哩！”乔俊听说大喜，即便开箱，取出一千贯文，便教梢工送过夫人船上去。夫人接了，说与梢工，教请乔俊过船来相见。乔俊换了衣服，径过船来拜见夫人。夫人问明白了乡贯姓氏，就叫侍妾近前



in a row, the wind was too strong for the boat to leave. All of a sudden, Qiao Jun caught a glimpse of a beautiful woman in the boat next to his, her skin as white as snow and her hair done up like a black cloud. Quite smitten, he asked the boatman, "Who is your client? Why is he bringing his family on his travels?"

The boatman replied, "Inspector Zhou of Jiankang Prefecture has died of an illness. His family is now in my boat, escorting his coffin back to Shandong. The young woman is the inspector's concubine. But why do you ask, sir?"

"Boatman, do this for me," said Qiao Jun. "Go and ask the inspector's widow if she would be willing to give up the concubine. I would be glad to offer a handsome betrothal gift and take her as my concubine. If you can accomplish this for me, I'll give you five taels of silver by way of thanks."

So the boatman went down into the cabin to deliver the message. After a brief exchange of words, the woman became Qiao Jun's concubine. As a consequence,

*Everyone in the family perished;
All the family wealth was wiped out.*

To retrace our steps, the boatman went down into the cabin and asked, "Madam, would you be willing to marry off that young woman?"

"Do you have a good candidate in mind? If someone is willing to take her, I'll agree. A betrothal gift of only a thousand strings of cash will do."

"There's a date merchant on the next boat who wants a concubine. He sent me over to talk with you."

The lady agreed. The boatman went back to Qiao Jun and said, "The lady is willing to give her to you for a betrothal gift of a thousand strings of cash."

Immensely delighted, Qiao Jun opened his trunk, took out a thousand strings of cash, and had the boatman deliver them to Madam Zhou. She accepted the money and instructed the boatman to invite Qiao Jun over to exchange greetings. Qiao Jun changed his clothes and crossed to the neighboring boat to see Madam Zhou.



分付道：“相公已死，家中儿子利害。我今做主，将你嫁与这个官人为妾，即今便过乔官人船上去。宁海郡大马头去处，快活过了生世，你可小心伏侍，不可托大！”这妇人与乔俊拜辞了老夫人，夫人与他一个衣箱物件之类，却送过船去。乔俊取五两银子谢了梢工，心中十分欢喜。乃问妇人：“你的名字叫做甚么？”妇人乃言：“我叫作春香，年二十五岁。”当晚就舟中与春香同铺而睡。

次日天晴，风息浪平，大小船只，一齐都开。乔俊也行了五六日，早到北新关，歇船上岸。叫一乘轿子抬了春香，自随着径入武林门里，来到自家门首，下了轿，打发轿子去了。乔俊引春香入家中来，自先走入里面去与高氏相见，说知此事，出来引春香入去参见。高氏见了春香，焦躁起来，说：“丈夫，你既娶来了，我难以推故。你只依我两件事，我便容你。”乔俊道：“你且说那两件事？”高氏启口说出，直教乔俊有家难奔，有国难投。正是：

妇人之语不宜听，割户分门坏五伦。

勿信妻言行大道，世间男子几多人！

当下高氏说与丈夫：“你今已娶来家，我说也自枉然了。只是要



After asking him about his hometown and what his name was, the old lady had the concubine come out and said to her, "With the master gone and my son a difficult person to get along with, I have decided to marry you to this gentleman as his concubine. You may go to Mr. Qiao's boat now. Ninghai is a busy and prosperous town, a nice place in which to enjoy life's pleasures. Be sure to serve Mr. Qiao well, and remember not to put on airs!"

The young woman and Qiao Jun took leave of Madam Zhou, who then had a trunk of clothes and various items delivered to the other boat as a gift to the concubine. After rewarding the boatman with the promised five taels of silver, Qiao Jun asked the woman, his heart brimming over with joy, "What is your name?"

"My name is Chunxiang. I'm twenty-five years old."

That very night, Qiao Jun shared a bed on the boat with Chunxiang.

The next day, the weather cleared. The wind died down, and the waves became smooth. All boats, big and small, got under way.

After five or six days, Qiao Jun arrived at Beixinguan [near Hangzhou], moored the boat, and went ashore. He hired a sedan-chair for Chunxiang, and he followed behind, through Wulin Gate and all the way to his house.

After Chunxiang descended from the sedan-chair, he dismissed the carriers and led her into the house. But only after he first told his wife, Gao-shi, about the matter did he take Chunxiang to see her. Gao-shi flared up at the sight of Chunxiang. Turning to her husband, Gao-shi said, "Since you've already brought this woman here, there's precious little I can do to turn her away. But you have to promise me two things before I agree to let you have her."

"What two things, pray?"

As a result of Gao-shi's demands, Qiao Jun ended up as a man without a home or country. Truly,

Never listen to a woman's advice;

A split household violates social customs.

Ignore your wife's words and take the high road;

But how many men have such good sense?

Gao-shi continued, "Since you've already brought the woman



你与他别住，不许放在家里！”[眉批]祸本。乔俊听得说：“这个容易，我自赁房屋一间与他另住。”高氏又说：“自从今日为始，我再不与你做一处。家中钱本什物，首饰衣服，我自与女儿两个受用，不许你来讨。一应官司门户等事，你自教贱婢支持，莫再来缠我，你依得么？”乔俊沉吟了半晌，心里道：“欲待不依，又难过日子，罢罢！”乃言：“都依你。”高氏不语。次日早起去搬货物行李回家，就央人赁房一间，在铜钱局前，今对贡院是也。拣个吉日，乔俊带了周氏，点家火一应什物完备，搬将过去。住了三朝两日，归家走一次。

光阴似箭，日月如梭，不觉半年有馀。乔俊刮取人头帐目，及私房银两，还勾做本钱。收丝已完，打点家中柴米之类，分付周氏：“你可耐静，我出去多只两月便回。如有急事，可回去大娘家里说知。”道罢，径到家里说与高氏：“我明日起身去后，多只两月便回。倘有事故，你可照管周氏，看夫妻之面！”女儿道：



home, anything I say now is too late. But I do have one request: the two of you go live somewhere else. I won't have her in this house." (*The source of all troubles to come.*)

At these words, Qiao Jun said, "That is easily done. I'll just rent a separate house where I can live with her."

Gao-shi went on, "As of today, I'll have nothing to do with you. All the money, jewelry, clothes, and other items of the household will be for the exclusive use of me and my daughter. Don't come and ask for anything. As for government taxes and duties as well as household chores, just have the maidservant take care of them. Don't bother me with these things. Now, will you do as I say?"

Qiao Jun fell silent, thinking to himself, "If I don't, she'll make things difficult for me. Well, well, so be it!" Aloud, he said, "All right, you shall have your way in everything."

Gao-shi gave no response.

The next morning, Qiao Jun rose early and had his merchandise and personal effects carried from the boat to the house. Then he had someone rent a separate house for him. The house was right in front of the mint opposite what is now the civil service examination grounds. On a chosen auspicious day, Qiao Jun took Zhou-shi, for this was how Chunxiang came to be called, along with all the furniture and household goods that they would need, to the new place. Henceforth, he returned home to his wife only once every two or three days.

Time went by with the speed of an arrow, and the days and months passed as quickly as the weaver's shuttle. Before they knew it, more than half a year had gone by. With the money he charged his clients plus his private savings, Qiao Jun now had enough capital for another business trip. Having collected all the silk he needed, he bought firewood, rice, and other household necessities and admonished Zhou-shi with these words: "Be patient. I'm going away on a trip, but it's only for two months at most. If some emergency comes up, go tell my wife."

He then went home and said to Gao-shi, "I'm leaving tomorrow on a trip, but I'll be back in two months at most. If something happens,



“爹爹早回！”别了妻女，又来新住处打点明早起程。此时是九月间，出门搭船，登途去了。一去两个月，周氏在家终日倚门而望，不见丈夫回来，看看又是冬景至了，其年大冷。忽一日晚，彤云密布，纷纷扬扬，下一天大雪。高氏在家思忖，丈夫一去，因何至冬时节，只管不回？这周氏寒冷，赛儿又病重，起身不得，乃叫洪三将些柴米炭火钱物，送与周氏。[眉批]有此美意，何不搬回做一家？周氏见雪下得大，闭门在家哭泣。听得敲门，只道是丈夫回来，慌忙开门，见了洪大工挑了东西进门，周氏乃问大工：“大娘、大姐一向好么？”大工答道：“大娘见大官人不回，记挂你无盘缠，教我送柴米钱钞与你用。”周氏见说，回言：“大工，你回家去，多多拜上大娘大姐！”大工别了，自回家去。

次日午牌时分，周氏门首又有人敲门。周氏道：“这等大雪，又是何人敲门？”只因这人来，有分教周氏再不能与乔俊团圆。正是：

闭门屋里坐，祸从天上来。



please take care of Zhou-shi, for my sake!"

His daughter said, "Be sure to come back early, Father!"

After saying good-bye to his wife and daughter, he went back to his new place to pack up, for he was to start his journey the very next morning. It was the ninth month of the year. He left the house, boarded a boat, and set out on his journey.

Two months went by. Day after day, Zhou-shi stood expectantly at the door, waiting in vain for his return. Soon, winter set in, and a cold winter it was.

One evening, the sky became overcast with dark clouds and snowflakes came swirling down in a storm that lasted throughout the night and into the next day. Gao-shi began to wonder why her husband would choose not to return when winter had already begun. She thought that Zhou-shi must be feeling cold and wanted to do something for her, but as Sai'er the maid was confined to bed with an illness, she had Hong San, the hired winemaker, send firewood, rice, charcoal, and money to Zhou-shi. (*Since she was so kindly disposed to the young woman, why not take her into the house and be one family?*)

Zhou-shi was weeping at home behind closed doors at the sight of the heavy snow when she heard a knock at the door. Thinking it must be her husband, she eagerly opened it, only to see Hong San, carrying a load. She asked, "Have the mistress and the young lady been well?"

"The mistress is worried that you don't have much money left because the master hasn't returned. So she sent me to bring you firewood, rice, and money."

"Give the mistress and the young lady a few deep bows for me when you go back," said Zhou-shi.

Hong San went away. At around noon the next day, another knock came at the door. Zhou-shi wondered who could be there in such heavy snow. As a consequence of this visit, Zhou-shi was never to be united with Qiao Jun again. Truly,

*While one sits peacefully at home behind closed doors,
Disaster strikes right down from heaven.*



当日雪下得越大，周氏在房中向火。忽听得有人敲门，起身开门看时，见一人头戴破头巾，身穿旧衣服。便问周氏道：“嫂子，乔俊在家么？”周氏答道：“自从九月出门，还未回哩！”那人说：“我是他里长，今来差乔俊去海宁砌江塘，做夫十日，歇二十日，又做十日。他既不在家，我替你们寻个人，你出钱雇他去做工。”[眉批]周氏合当推向大娘家去。周氏答道：“既如此，只凭你教人替了，我自还你工钱。”里长相别出门。次日饭后，领一个后生，年约二十岁，与周氏相见。里长说与周氏：“此人是上海县人，姓董名小二。自幼他父母俱丧。如今专靠与人家做工过日，每年只要你三五百贯钱，冬夏做些衣服与他穿。我看你家里又无人，可雇他在家走动也好。”周氏见说，心中欢喜道：“委实我家无人走动，看这人，想也是个良善本分的，工钱便依你罢了。”当下遂谢了里长，留在家中。至次日，里长来叫去海宁做夫，周氏取些钱钞与小二，跟着里长去了十日回来。这小二在家里小心谨慎，烧香扫地，件件当心。

且说乔俊在东京卖丝，与一个上厅行首沈瑞莲来往，倒身在他家使钱，因此留恋在彼，全不管家中妻妾。只恋花门柳户，逍遥快乐，那知家里赛儿病了两个馀月死了。高氏叫洪三买具棺木，



To return to our story: While the snowstorm gathered force outside, Zhou-shi was sitting by the fire when she heard a knock at the door. She opened the door and saw a man wearing worn-out clothes and a tattered cap. "Sister," he said, "is Qiao Jun at home?"

"He left on a trip in the ninth month and hasn't returned yet."

"I'm the local headman," said the man. "I'm here to order Qiao Jun to go to Haining for ten days of corvée service on the dike project. He will rest for twenty days and then go back to work for another ten days. But since he's away, let me find someone else to do it for him. You'll just have to pay the man." (*Zhou-shi should have sent him on to the mistress.*)

"In that case," said Zhou-shi, "please go ahead and find someone. I'll pay for the service."

The local headman went off. After lunch the next day, he brought a young man of about twenty years of age to Zhou-shi. "This young man," said the headman, "is a native of Shanghai County.¹ He's called Dong Xiao'er. He lost his parents very early on and makes a living doing odd jobs for people. You need only pay him three to five hundred strings of cash per year, plus some winter and summer clothes. Without a man in the house, you'll need his services."

Zhou-shi said, delighted, "I do need help around the house. He looks like a nice, well-behaved man. The wages will be as you say." She thanked the headman and kept Xiao'er at home.

On the following day, the headman came with the order for corvée service in Haining. Provided with money by Zhou-shi, Xiao'er left with the headman. Ten days later, he came back and did odd jobs around the house, attending to the incense and sweeping the floor, doing everything with the utmost care.

In the meantime, Qiao Jun, while selling silk in the Eastern Capital, got involved with a celebrated courtesan named Shen Ruilian and spent lavishly on her. So enamored he was of this woman that he stayed on with her, indulging in all manner of pleasures, and completely forgetting about his wife and concubine. Little did he know that the housemaid, Sai'er, had died after more than two months of illness. Gao-shi had Hong San buy a coffin, which was then carried



扛出城外化人场烧了。高氏立性贞洁，自在门前卖酒，无有半点狂心。〔眉批〕真圣贤决不做自了汉，高氏自倚贞洁何用？不想周氏自从安了董小二在家，到有心看上他。有时做夫回来，热羹热饭搬与他吃。小二见他家无人，勤谨做活。周氏时常眉来眼去的勾引他，这小二也有心，只是不敢上前。〔眉批〕欲火近干柴，即使不燬，亦非体矣。一日正是十二月三十日夜，周氏叫小二去买些酒、果、鱼、肉之类过年。到晚，周氏叫小二关了大门，去灶上烫一注子酒，切些肉做一盘，安排火盆，点上了灯，就摆在房内床面前桌儿上。小二在灶前烧火，周氏轻轻的说道：“小二，你来房里来，将些东西去吃！”小二千不合万不合走入房内，有分教小二死无葬身之地。正是：

僮仆人家不可无，岂知撞了不良徒。

分明一段跷蹊事，瞒着堂堂大丈夫。

此时周氏叫小二到床前，便道：“小二你来，你来！我和你吃两杯酒，今夜你就在我房里睡罢！”小二道：“不敢！”周氏骂了两声：“蛮子！”双手把小二抱到床边，挨肩而坐。便将小二扯过怀中，解开主腰儿，教他摸胸前麻团也似白奶。小二淫心荡漾，便将周氏脸搂过来，将舌尖儿度在周氏口内，任意快乐。周



out of the city to the crematorium. Being a chaste woman, Gao-shi went about her work selling wine by the front door without ever a wild thought. (*True saints don't watch only their own behavior. How much does Gao-shi accomplish by preserving her chastity alone?*)

As it turned out, after Dong Xiao'er came to live in her house, Zhou-shi took a fancy to the young man. Sometimes, when he returned from a corvée assignment, she would serve him hot soup and hot meals. There being no man in the house, Xiao'er applied himself diligently to his work. Zhou-shi tried to lead him on with significant glances. Although he felt attracted, he did not dare to do anything. (*With the flames of passion burning nearby, even if the pile of dry wood does not ignite right away, a scandal is in the making.*)

On New Year's eve, Zhou-shi had Xiao'er go out to buy wine, fruit, fish, and meat for the occasion. In the evening, she told him to bolt the front gate while she heated a flask of wine on the stove and filled a plate with slices of meat. She then set out the dishes on the table in front of her bed, had a fire going in a brazier, and lit a lamp. As Xiao'er tended to the kitchen fire, she called out softly, "Xiao'er, come to my room. I have some treats for you." Xiao'er never should have set foot in that room, for he was to die without even a burial place. Indeed,

*Households cannot be run without servants;
 But here, along comes an evil one.
 A sordid affair it turned out to be,
 With the husband completely in the dark.*

Zhou-shi summoned Xiao'er to her bed and said to him, "Come here, Xiao'er! Let's have a couple of drinks. You may sleep here in my room tonight."

"I wouldn't dare!" Xiao'er protested.

"What a slave you are!" While thus cursing him a few times, she put her arms around him and made him sit shoulder to shoulder with her on the bed. She then pulled him close to her bosom, untied her girdle, and had him fondle her white breasts, which were as soft and smooth as dumplings made of glutinous rice. Enraptured, Xiao'er held her face in his hands and stuck his tongue into her mouth. After



氏将酒筛下，两个吃了个交杯酒，两人合吃五六杯。周氏道：“你在外头歇，我在房内也是自歇，寒冷难熬。你今无福，不依我的口。”小二跪下道：“感承娘子有心，小人亦有意多时了，只是不敢说。今日娘子抬举小人，此恩杀身难报！”二人说罢，解衣脱带，就做了夫妻。一夜快乐，不必说了。天明，小二先起来烧汤、洗碗、做饭，周氏方起，梳妆洗面罢，吃饭。正是：

少女少郎，情色相当。

却如夫妻一般在家过活，左右邻舍皆知此事，无人闲管。

却说高氏因无人照管门前酒店，忽一日，听得闲人说：“周氏与小二通奸。”且信且疑，放心不下。[眉批] 疑人勿用。因此教洪大工去与周氏说：“且搬回家，省得两边家火。”[眉批] 迟了。周氏见洪大工来说，沉吟了半晌，勉强回言道：“既是大娘好意，今晚就将家火搬回家去。”洪大工得了言语自回家了。周氏便叫小二商量：“今大娘要我搬回家去，料想违他不得，只是你却如何？”小二答道：“娘子，大娘家里也无人，小人情愿与大娘家送酒走动。只是一件，不比此地，不得与娘子快乐了。不然，就今



they had thus enjoyed each other to their hearts' content, Zhou-shi poured the wine. They drank one cup, crisscrossing their arms, and shared five or six more cups in the same manner.

"If you sleep outside, I'll be in here alone, suffering from the cold. You'll miss a great deal of fun if you turn me down."

Dropping to his knees, Xiao'er said, "You are so kind! I've had my heart set on you for quite some time now. I just never dared say anything. I'll never be able to repay you for such kindness, not even in death!"

At this point, they took off their clothes and belts and became man and wife. Of their amorous sport throughout the night, we shall speak no more.

At the crack of dawn, Xiao'er rose first, boiled water, washed the dishes, and prepared breakfast. When everything was done, Zhou-shi rose, did her toilette, and ate breakfast. Truly,

*Both are in the bloom of youth,
 Well matched in passion and lust.*

Henceforth they lived like husband and wife. All the neighbors knew what was afoot, but none wanted to be meddling.

In the meantime, Gao-shi was taking care of the wineshop herself because she had no one to help. One day, she overheard a casual comment about Zhou-shi and Xiao'er having an affair. She could not quite believe what she had heard but could not dismiss it out of hand either. (*Never employ a person you can't trust.*) So she had Hong San relay the following message to Zhou-shi: "Move back into the house so we can cut down on expenses." (*Too late.*)

Upon hearing these words from Hong San, Zhou-shi fell silent. Finally, she forced herself to say, "The mistress is most kind. I'll move back this very evening, along with all the furniture."

After Hong San had gone to transmit the reply, Zhou-shi called Xiao'er in for a discussion. "The mistress wants me to move back. I can't very well disobey her, but what's to be done about you?"

"Well, she doesn't have anyone to help her out around the house either. I'll be glad to work for her, delivering wine and doing other chores. There's one thing though: we won't get to enjoy ourselves as



日拆散了罢！”说罢，两个搂抱着，哭了一回。周氏道：“你且安心，我今收拾衣箱什物，你与我挑回大娘家去。我自与大娘说，留你在家，暗地里与我快乐。[眉批]老脸皮。且等丈夫回来，再做计较。”小二见说，才放心欢喜，回言道：“万望娘子用心！”当日下午收拾已了，小二先挑了箱笼来。捱到黄昏，洪大工提个灯笼去接周氏。周氏取具锁锁了大门，同小二回家。正是：

飞蛾扑火身须丧，蝙蝠投竿命必倾。

当时小二与周氏到家，见了高氏。高氏道：“你如今回到家一处住了，如何带小二回来？何不打发他去了？”周氏道：“大娘门前无人照管，不如留他在家使唤，待等丈夫回时，打发他未迟。”高氏是个清洁的人，心中想道：“在我家中，我自照管着他，有甚皂丝麻线？”遂留下教他看店，讨酒坛，一应都会得。不觉又过了数月。周氏虽和小二有情，终久不比自住之时，两个任意取乐。一日，周氏见高氏说起小二诸事勤谨，又本分，便道：“大娘何不将大姐招小二为婿，却不便当？”高氏听得大怒，骂道：“你这个贱人，好没志气！我女儿招雇工人为婿？”[眉批]此时该打



we do here. Or let's go our separate ways as of today." With that, they fell into each other's arms and cried.

Zhou-shi said, "Don't worry. I'll go ahead and pack. You can carry the load to the mistress's house. Then I'll ask her for permission to keep you there, so that we can still enjoy ourselves when no one's around. (*Shameless!*) Let's wait for my husband to return before deciding on what to do next."

Relieved upon hearing these words, Xiao'er said happily, "Take good care of yourself!" The packing was done that afternoon, and Xiao'er went first, carrying the load of trunks and cases. When dusk finally came, Hong San took a lantern and went to get Zhou-shi. She locked the gate with a padlock and set out for the mistress's house with Xiao'er. Truly,

*A moth darting into a flame courts death;
 A bat hurtling against a pole will not live.*

So Xiao'er and Zhou-shi went into the house and greeted Gao-shi.

"Why do you have to bring Xiao'er with you?" said Gao-shi. "You'd better dismiss him."

"You have no one to do chores around the house, ma'am," replied Zhou-shi. "Wouldn't it be better if you kept him and had him run errands for you? You can always dismiss him after the master comes home."

Being a virtuous woman with an unblemished reputation, Gao-shi thought, "Even if he stays, nothing can go wrong with me keeping a watchful eye on him."

So she let Xiao'er stay on as a handy man who did everything from attending to the shop to acquiring wine jars.

All too quickly, another few months went by. Despite her attachment to Xiao'er, Zhou-shi was unable to consort with him as much as she had before, when she was in her own house. One day, encouraged by Gao-shi's praise of Xiao'er's industriousness and good behavior, Zhou-shi suggested, "Why don't you take him on as a son-in-law? Wouldn't that be quite convenient?"

Rage seized Gao-shi. "You cheap hussy!" she snapped. "How can you think of lowering our family like that? A hired worker for my



发小二去。周氏不敢言语，吃高氏骂了三四日。高氏只倚着自身正大，全不想周氏与他通奸，故此要将女儿招他。若还思量此事，只消得打发了小二出门，后来不见得自身同女打死在狱，灭门之事。

且说小二自三月来家，古人云：“一年长工，二年家公，三年太公。”不想乔俊一去不回，小二在大娘家一年有馀，出入房室，诸事托他，[眉批]既疑小二，又重托他，何也？便做乔家公，欺负洪三。或早或晚，见了玉秀，便将言语调戏他。不则一日，不想玉秀被这小二奸骗了。其事周氏也知，只瞒着高氏。似此又过了一月。其时是六月半，天道大热，玉秀在房内洗浴。高氏走入房中，看见女儿奶大，吃了一惊。待女儿穿了衣裳，叫女儿到面前问道：“你吃何人弄了身体，这奶大了？你好好实说，我便饶你！”玉秀推托不过，只得实说：“我被小二哄了。”高氏跌脚叫苦：“这事都是这小婆娘做一路，坏了我女孩儿，此事怎生是好？”欲待声张起来，又怕嚷动人知，苦了女儿一世之事。当时沉吟了半晌，眉头一蹙，计上心来，只除害了这蛮子，方才免得人



daughter, indeed!" (*It's high time she kicked Xiao'er out of the house.*)

Zhou-shi dared not say another word. Silently, she endured more tongue-lashings from Gao-shi for a good three to four days. Being an upright and straightforward person, Gao-shi did not have the slightest suspicion that Zhou-shi had made the suggestion in order to continue her adultery with Xiao'er. Had she thought of that, she could have just put Xiao'er out and escaped being beaten to death along with her daughter while they were in prison later on, and the Qiao family would not have been wiped out.

Now, let us turn our attention to Xiao'er, who joined the mistress's household in the third month of the year. As the ancients put it, "A hired hand the first year, master of the house the second year, and patriarch the third year." More than a year later, it turned out, quite unexpectedly, that during Qiao Jun's prolonged absence, Xiao'er had gained ready access to the various rooms of the house and won Gao-shi's trust in many matters. (*Why trust him so much when he's suspected of wrongdoing?*) Thus, he put on the airs of a veritable Master Qiao and began to bully Hong San. Whenever he laid eyes on Yuxiu, Gao-shi's daughter, he enticed her with flirtatious words. Soon, he was able to have his way with Yuxiu. Zhou-shi knew what was happening, Gao-shi was the only one who was kept in the dark.

Another month went by. It was now the middle of the sixth month, and Yuxiu was bathing in her room in the extreme heat of the season when Gao-shi walked in. Much taken aback by the sight of her daughter's swollen breasts, she summoned her after the girl had put on her clothes and asked, "Who did this to your body? Look at these swollen breasts! I won't punish you if you tell me the truth."

Seeing that she would not be able to lie her way out of this, Yuxiu told the truth. "Xiao'er seduced me."

Gao-shi stamped her feet and gave a mournful shriek. "So, that wench has allied herself with him to ruin my little girl! Oh, what's to be done?" She could not very well say anything in public for fear that her daughter's marital future would be jeopardized if the story became known. Knitting her eyebrows, she plunged into thought. A



知。[眉批] 此时逐了小二，还是下策；欲杀之，是无策矣。不觉又过了两月。忽值八月中秋节到，高氏叫小二买些鱼肉、果子之物，安排家宴。当晚高氏、周氏、玉秀在后园赏月，叫洪三和小二别在一边吃。高氏至夜三更，叫小二赏了两大碗酒。小二不敢推辞，一饮而尽，不觉大醉倒了。洪三也有酒，自去酒房里睡了。这小二只因酒醉，中了高氏计策，当夜便是：

东岳新添枉死鬼，阳间不见少年人。

当时高氏使女儿自去睡了，便与周氏说：“我只管家事买卖，那知你与这蛮子通奸。你两个做了一路，故意教他奸了我的女儿。丈夫回来，教我怎的见他分说？我是个清清白白的人，如今讨了你来，被你玷辱我的门风，如何是好！我今与你只得没奈何害了这蛮子性命，神不知，鬼不觉。倘丈夫回来，你与我女儿俱各免得出丑，各无事了，你可去将条索来！”周氏初时不肯，被高氏骂道：“都是你这贱人与他通奸，因此坏了我女儿，你还恋着他？”周氏吃骂得没奈何，只得去房里取了麻索，递与高氏。高氏接了，将去小二脖项下一绞。原来妇人家手软，缚了一个更次，绞不死。



good while later, she came up with a plan. The only way to keep this a secret was to murder that swine. (*Even firing him at this moment would have been unwise. Killing him is the height of stupidity. It's because she loves her daughter too much.*)

Quite unnoticeably, two more months passed. When the Mid-autumn Festival came around in the eighth month of the year, Gao-shi had Xiao'er buy fish, meat, and fruit and set out a family feast. That evening, Gao-shi, Zhou-shi, and Yuxiu went to the backyard to view the moon, and Hong San and Xiao'er were told to eat by themselves off to one side. At midnight, Gao-shi called for Xiao'er and offered him two big bowls of wine as a reward. He did not dare to decline the offer and drank up both bowls. Soon, he was overcome by the wine and collapsed. Hong San, who had also been given some wine, went to sleep by himself in the brewery room. In his drunken state, Xiao'er fell victim to Gao-shi's plan, and, that very night,

Hell gained another murdered soul;

The mortal world lost one young man.

Gao-shi sent her daughter off to sleep and then addressed Zhou-shi in the following words: "My mind has been so full of the family's business that I knew nothing of your adultery with that swine. Now, you have conspired with him and made him seduce my daughter. What shall I say to the master when he comes home? I'm a woman of spotless reputation, but with you in the house, the family's good name has been tarnished. What's to be done? There's no other choice but for you and me to kill that beast. This will be unknown to god or ghost. When my husband comes back, you and my daughter will both be spared a scandal. Now go find a rope for me!"

At first, Zhou-shi refused, but Gao-shi lashed out, "Slut! It was because of your adultery that my daughter became involved. Don't tell me you're still in love with him!"

Wilting under Gao-shi's scolding, Zhou-shi gave up and went to her room. She returned and handed Gao-shi a hempen rope. Gao-shi put the rope around Xiao'er's neck and tightened it. Being a woman, she did not have the strength to finish him off quickly but spent what seemed like two hours pulling on the rope without succeeding. As



小二喊起来，高氏急了，无家火在手边，教周氏去灶前捉把劈柴斧头，把小二脑门上一斧，脑浆流出死了。高氏与周氏商量：“好却好了，这死尸须是今夜发落便好。”周氏道：“可叫洪三起来，将块大石缚在尸上，驮去丢在新桥河里水底去了，待他尸首自烂，神不知，鬼不觉！”高氏大喜，便到酒作坊里叫起洪大工来，大工走入后园，看见了小二尸首，道：“祛除了这害最好，倘留他在家，大官人回来，也有老大的口面。”周氏道：“你可趁天未明，把尸首驮去新河里，把块大石缚住，坠下水里去。若到天明，倘有人问时，只说道小二偷了我家首饰物件，夜间逃走了。他家一向又无人往来的，料然没事！”洪大工驮了尸首，高氏将灯照出门去。此时有五更时分，洪大工驮到河边，掇块大石，绑缚在尸首上，丢在河内，直推开在中心里。这河有丈馀深水，当时沉下水底去了，料道永无踪迹。洪大工回家，轻轻的关了大门，高氏与周氏各回房里睡了。高氏虽自清洁，也欠些聪明之处，错干了此事。既知其情，只可好好打发了小二出门便了。千不合，万不合，将他绞死。后来却被人首告，打死在狱，灭门绝户，悔之何及！

且说洪大工睡到天明，起来开了酒店，高氏依旧在门前卖酒。



Xiao'er screamed, an exasperated Gao-shi, lacking a tool at hand, had Zhou-shi go to the stove and bring her an axe used for woodchopping. She swung it against Xiao'er's forehead. One blow dashed out his brains, and he died.

Gao-shi said to Zhou-shi, "He's dead all right, but we have to get rid of the body before the night is out."

"Let's wake up Hong San," Zhou-shi suggested, "and have him carry the body to New Bridge River, tie a big rock to it, and dump it in. The body will rot at the bottom of the river, unknown to god or ghost."

Gao-shi was greatly pleased. She went to the brewery room, woke Hong San, and brought him to the backyard. At the sight of the body, Hong San said, "It's a good thing this pain in the neck has been done away with. If he's still here by the time the master comes back, there'll be quite a scene."

"Before it grows light, carry the corpse to New Bridge River," said Zhou-shi to Hong San. "Then tie a big rock to it and dump the body into the river. If anyone asks about him tomorrow, just say that Xiao'er stole our jewelry and valuables and slipped away in the night. He had no friends. So nothing will happen."

At about the fifth watch of the night, with Gao-shi lighting the way with a lamp, Hong San carried the corpse on his back to the riverside. He lifted a big rock, tied it to the body, and tossed the rock and the body into the middle of the river. Right away, the rock sank to the bottom of ten feet of water, taking the corpse with it. Believing that no shred of evidence would ever be found, Hong San returned home and quietly bolted the gate. Gao-shi and Zhou-shi went back to their own rooms and retired for the night.

Gao-shi may have been a woman with a spotless record, but she lacked good sense and did the wrong thing. Upon learning the facts, she should have expelled Xiao'er and left the matter at that. On no account should she have strangled him, because she was later to be accused of murder and beaten to death in prison, and the family line was to be cut off. By then, regrets were too late!

Now, to continue with our story. Hong San slept until daybreak,

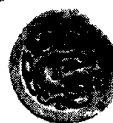


玉秀眼中不见了小二，也不敢问。周氏自言自语，假意道：“小二这厮无礼，偷了我首饰物件，夜间逃走了！”玉秀自在房里，也不问他。那邻舍也不管他家小二在与不在。高氏一时害了小二性命，疑决不下，早晚心中只恐事发，终日忧闷过日。正是：

要人知重勤学，怕人知事莫做。

却说武林门外清湖闸边，有个做靴的皮匠，姓陈名文，浑家程氏五娘，夫妻两口儿，止靠做靴鞋度日。此时是十月初旬，这陈文与妻子争论，一口气，走入门里满桥边皮市里买皮，当日不回，次日午后也不回。程五娘心内慌起来。又过了一夜，亦不见回，独自一个在家烦恼。将及一月，并无消息。这程五娘不免走入城里问讯。径到皮市里来，问卖皮店家，皆言：“一月前何曾见你丈夫来买皮？莫非死在那里了？”有多口的道：“你丈夫穿甚衣服出来？”程五娘道：“我丈夫头戴万字头巾，身穿着青绢一口巾。一月前说来皮市里买皮，至今不见信息，不知何处去了？”众人道：“你可城内各处去寻，便知音信。”

程五娘谢了众人，绕城中逢人便问。一日，并无踪迹。过了



when he rose and opened the wineshop for business. Gao-shi went about selling wine, as usual. Yuxiu noticed Xiao'er's absence but dared not ask about him. Zhou-shi, talking to herself, murmured purposefully, "That swine Xiao'er stole my jewelry and fled during the night." Yuxiu kept to her room and refrained from asking any questions, nor did the neighbors care whether Xiao'er was there or not. With Xiao'er's murder weighing on her conscience, Gao-shi became dejected, afraid at all times of the day that the murder would come to light. Truly,

If you want the respect of others, study hard.

If what you might do can't be made known, don't do it.

Our story forks at this point. By Clear Lake Dam, outside Wulin Gate, there was a shoemaker called Chen Wen. He and his wife, Cheng Wuniang, supported themselves by making shoes and boots. One day, at the beginning of the tenth month, he quarreled with his wife. In a huff, he went to buy leather at the leather market by Full Bridge, on the other side of the gate. He didn't return that day, nor the day after. On the afternoon of the second day, Cheng Wuniang began to fear for him. Another night passed, and her husband still did not show up.

After fretting alone at home for almost a month without any idea of his whereabouts, Cheng Wuniang went to town to make inquiries, as is only to be expected. She headed straight for the leather market and asked around, only to be told, "Your husband was here buying leather about a month ago? We didn't see him. Could he have died somewhere?"

Some busybody asked, "What clothes was he wearing when he left home?"

"A two-tiered cap shaped like the character *wan* and a sleeveless, sheathlike blue silk gown. A month ago, he said he was going to the leather market to buy leather, but I haven't heard anything from him since then. I wonder where he could be."

"Why don't you ask around in the city?"

Cheng Wuniang thanked them all and went off to the city, where she asked everyone she saw about her husband. A whole day went by



两日，吃了早饭，又入城来寻问。不端不正，走到新桥上过。正是事有凑巧，物有偶然。只见河岸上有人喧哄说道：“有个人死在河里，身上穿领青衣服，泛起在桥下水面上。”程五娘听得说，连忙走到河岸边，分开人众一看时，只见水面上漂浮一个死尸，穿着青衣服。远远看时，有些相像。程氏便大哭道：“丈夫缘何死在水里？”看的人都呆了。程氏又哀告众人：“那个伯伯肯与奴家拽过我的丈夫尸首到岸边，奴家认一认看。奴家自奉酒钱五十贯。”当时有一个破落户，叫做王酒酒，专一在街市上帮闲打哄，赌骗人财，这厮是个泼皮，没人家理他。当时也在那里看，听见程五娘许说五十贯酒钱，便说道：“小娘子，我与你拽过尸首来岸边你认看。”五娘哭罢道：“若得伯伯如此，深恩难报！”这王酒酒见只过往船，便跳上船去，叫道：“梢工，你可住一住，等我替这个小娘子拽这尸首到岸边。”当时王酒酒拽那尸首来。王酒酒认得乔家董小二的尸首，口里不说出来，只教程氏认看。[眉批]和奸者不至死，所以董小二仍算枉杀。只因此起，有分教高氏一家死于非命。正是：

闹里钻头热处歪，遇人猛惜爱钱财。
谁知错认尸和首，引出冤家祸患来。



without any news.

Two days later, after eating breakfast, she went back into the city to continue her inquiries. Of all places in the city, she found herself on New Bridge. Indeed, coincidences do happen. At this point, she saw a crowd gathered on the shore. Someone was shouting, "A dead body in a blue gown has floated up under the bridge!"

Upon hearing this, Cheng Wuniang rushed to the shore and pushed through the crowd. There, floating on the river for all to see, was a corpse in a blue gown, looking at such a distance not unlike her husband. Cheng-shi wailed, "Husband! Why did you have to drown like this?" The bystanders were astounded. Plaintively Cheng-shi said, "Which of you gentlemen would be kind enough to pull the body to the shore so that I can see for sure if it's my husband? I'll offer a reward of fifty strings of cash."

Among the onlookers was a local ruffian known as Wino Wang who spent his time loafing on the streets, searching for people who might need his services in stirring up trouble, and looking for opportunities to gamble and cheat people out of their money. He was the kind of rogue whom decent people kept at arm's length. His ears pricked up at the mention of a reward, and he said, "Young lady, I'll do it!"

Wuniang stopped weeping. "I'd be ever so grateful to you, sir!"

Seeing a boat passing by, Wino Wang jumped on it and called out, "Stop, boatman! I'll help that young lady drag the corpse to shore."

And so Wino Wang brought the body ashore. He recognized the dead man to be Dong Xiao'er of the Qiao family, but he kept the knowledge to himself and told Cheng-shi to take a good look. (*Adultery is not punishable by death. So there was no justification for Dong Xiao'er's murder.*) This was going to lead to the violent deaths of Gao-shi and the other members of her household. Truly,

*He found his way to every scene of excitement,
To extort money, to make a profit.
A claim for the wrong corpse in this case*



此时王酒酒在船上，将竹篙推那尸首到岸边来，程氏看时，见面皮肉却被水浸坏了，全不认得。看身上衣服却认得，是丈夫的模样，号号大哭，哀告王酒酒道：“烦伯伯同奴去买口棺木来盛了，却又作计较。”王酒酒便随程五娘到褚堂作李团头家，买了棺木，叫两个火家来河下捞起尸首，盛于棺内，就在河岸边存着。那时新桥下无甚人家住，每日止有船只来往。程氏取五十贯钱，谢了王酒酒。

王酒酒得了钱，一径走到高氏酒店门前，以买酒为名，便对高氏说：“你家缘何打死了董小二，丢在新桥河内？如今泛将起来，[眉批]何以知其打死？只为私情事，众所共闻故。你道一场好笑！那里走一个来错认做丈夫尸首，买具棺木盛了，改日却来埋葬。”高氏道：“王酒酒，你莫胡言乱语，我家小二，偷了首饰衣服在逃，追获不着，那得这话！”王酒酒道：“大娘子，你不要赖！瞒了别人，不要瞒我。你今送我些钱钞买求我，我便任那妇人错认了去。你若白赖不与我，我就去本府首告，叫你吃一场人命官司！”高氏听得，便骂起来：“你这破落户，千刀万剐的贼，不长俊的乞丐！见我丈夫不在家，今来诈我！”[眉批]高氏一生受了刚愎自用之过。王酒酒被骂，大怒而去。能杀的妇人，到底无志气，胡乱与他些钱



Led to events that had tragic results.

Wino Wang punted the boat toward the shore with a bamboo pole. Cheng-shi looked at the face, but it was so bloated that it was unrecognizable. The clothes, however, she thought were his. Bursting into loud wails of grief, she entreated Wino Wang, "Please go with me to buy a coffin before I decide what to do next."

So Wino Wang followed her to Undertaker Li's shop, where she bought a coffin and hired two men to retrieve the body from the water. After the body had been placed in the coffin, Cheng-shi left the coffin by the riverside for the time being because, at the time of this story, there were very few people living near New Bridge, only some boats going back and forth.

As promised, Cheng-shi rewarded Wino Wang with fifty strings of cash. With the money in his possession, he went straight to Gao-shi's wineshop and, posing as a patron, said to her, "Why did you people beat Dong Xiao'er to death and throw the body into New Bridge River? The body has floated up. (*How can he be so sure that the man was beaten to death? It's because the scandal is by no means a secret.*) And the funniest thing happened: A woman appeared out of nowhere and claimed the body to be that of her husband. What a mistake! She has bought a coffin for the body and will be burying it soon enough."

"Wino Wang!" Gao-shi shot back. "What nonsense is this? Our Xiao'er is on the run after he stole some jewelry and clothing, and I wasn't able to have him caught. What a story you made up!"

"Ma'am, don't try to talk your way out of this! You can fool others, but not me! Now, cough up some money, and I'll let that woman go on believing it's her husband. If you refuse, I'll report you to the authorities, and you'll be tried for murder!"

Gao-shi burst into an explosion of bitter words: "You low-life swine, you deserve death by a thousand cuts! You good-for-nothing beggar, here to blackmail me because my husband is away!" (*Gao-shi's willfulness is the bane of her life.*)

At this torrent of abuse, Wino Wang went off in a huff. A woman capable of killing is, after all, not on high moral ground. Had she



钞，也不见得弄出事来。当时高氏千不合万不合，骂了王酒酒这一顿，被那厮走到宁海郡安抚司前叫起屈来。安抚相公正坐厅上押文书，叫左右唤至厅下，问道：“有何屈事？”王酒酒跪在厅下，告道：“小人姓王名青，钱塘县人，今来首告。邻居有一乔俊，出外为商未回。其妻高氏，与妾周氏，一女玉秀，与家中一雇工人董小二有奸情。不知怎的缘故，把董小二谋死，丢在新桥河里，如今泛起。小人去与高氏言说，反被本妇百般辱骂。他家有个酒大工，叫做洪三，敢是同心谋害的。小人不甘，因此叫屈。望相公明镜昭察！”安抚听罢，着外郎录了王青口词，押了公文，差两个牌军押着王青去捉拿三人并洪三，火急到厅。

当时公人径到高氏家，捉了高氏、周氏、玉秀、洪三四人。关了大门，取锁锁了，径到安抚司厅上，一行人跪下。相公是蔡州人，姓黄名正大，为人奸狡，贪滥酷刑。问高氏：“你家董小二何在？”高氏道：“小二拐物在逃，不知去向。”王青道：“要知明白，只问洪三，便知分晓。”安抚遂将洪三拖翻拷打，两腿五



placated him with some money, nothing would have happened. She should never have given Wino Wang such a tongue-lashing. That swine went to the office of the commissioner of Ninghai District and cried out, "Injustice!"

The commissioner, who was processing documents in the main hall, had his men bring Wino Wang to him and asked, "What injustice?"

On his knees, Wino Wang said, "I am Wang Qing, a native of Qiantang County, here today to report a murder. I have a neighbor, Qiao Jun, who is away on business. He has a wife, Gao-shi, a concubine, Zhou-shi, and a daughter, Yuxiu. There was an adulterous affair going on in the house involving Dong Xiao'er, a hired hand. And then, for some reason, Dong Xiao'er was murdered, and his body was dumped into New Bridge River. It has just come to the surface. I went to tell Gao-shi about it, and she yelled at me in the most vicious language. They also have another hired laborer in their wineshop, called Hong San, who must have been in on it, too. I'm here to report the murder because I feel that justice should be served. Please consider this case with all your wisdom!"

The commissioner had the clerk record Wang Qing's deposition and sent two officers, equipped with an arrest warrant, and Wang Qing to bring the three women and Hong San to court without delay. They headed straight for Gao-shi's home, and the officers arrested Gao-shi, Zhou-shi, Yuxiu, and Hong San. They then closed the gate and padlocked it. Once in the commissioner's court, the suspects all fell to their knees.

The commissioner, named Huang Zhengda [Righteousness], a native of Caizhou, was a mean-spirited man much given to applying torture. He asked Gao-shi, "Where's that Dong Xiao'er who works for you?"

Gao-shi replied, "Xiao'er stole my things and has fled no one knows where."

"If you want to know the facts, Your Honor," said Wino Wang, "just ask Hong San, and everything will be clear."

Thereupon, the commissioner had Hong San thrown to the floor



十黄荆，血流满地。打熬不过，只得招道：“董小二先与周氏有奸，后搬回家，奸了玉秀。高氏知觉，恐丈夫回家，辱灭了门风。于今年八月十五日中秋夜赏月，教小的同小二两个在一边吃酒，我两个都醉了。小的怕失了事，自去酒房内睡了。到五更时分，只见高氏、周氏来酒房门边，叫小的去后园内，只见小二尸首在地，教我速驮去丢在河内去。小的问高氏因由，高氏备将前事说道：‘二人通同奸骗女儿，倘或丈夫回日，怎的是好？我今出于无奈，因是赶他不出去，又怕说出此情，只得用麻索绞死了。’小的是个老实的人，说道：‘看这厮忒无理，也祛除了一害。’小的便将小二尸首，驮在新桥河边，用块大石，缚在他身上，沉在水底下。只此便是实话。”安抚见洪三招状明白，点指画字。二妇人见洪三已招，惊得魂不附体，玉秀抖做一块。安抚叫左右将三个妇人过来供招，玉秀只得供道：“先是周氏与小二有奸，母高氏收拾回家，将奴调戏，奴不从。后来又调戏，奴又不从。将奴强



and given fifty strokes on the legs with the rod. Blood flowed across the floor. Unable to withstand the pain any longer, Hong San confessed: "Dong Xiao'er had an adulterous affair with Zhou-shi before they moved back to the house. Later, he seduced Yuxiu. When Gao-shi learned about this, she grew afraid of what her husband would say about such a disgrace to the family name after he returned.

"On the fifteenth day of the eighth month of this year, when viewing the moon on the night of the Mid-autumn Festival, she told me to have a few cups of wine with Xiao'er a little distance away from family members. We both got drunk. Afraid of doing something foolish under the influence of the wine, I went to the brewery room to sleep. At about the fifth watch of the night, Gao-shi and Zhou-shi came to my door and told me to go to the backyard, which I did, and there, I saw Xiao'er's corpse lying on the ground. I was told to carry the body to the river and dump it. I asked Gao-shi why this had happened. She told me and said, 'Those two colluded to seduce my daughter. What am I going to do when my husband comes back? I did this because there was nothing else I could do. I couldn't drive him out, nor could I reveal the truth. I had no choice but to strangle him with a hempen rope.'

"Being a straightforward man, I said, 'That fellow was a crook. It's a good thing this pain in the neck has been done away with.' So I carried the body on my back all the way to the river by New Bridge, tied a large rock to him to make him sink to the bottom, and dumped him into the water. Everything I have said is true."

The commissioner found the confession clear enough and told Hong San to affix his signature to the deposition. Now, Hong San's confession scared the two women out of their wits. Yuxiu, too, was so frightened that she trembled all over. When the commissioner ordered his men to bring the three women to him to make their confessions, Yuxiu felt obliged to tell the truth. "It all started with the adulterous affair between Zhou-shi and Xiao'er. After my mother, Gao-shi, made them move back home, he began to take liberties with me, but I rejected his advances. He tried again, I rejected him again, but he forcibly carried me off to the backyard, where he had



抱到后园奸骗了。到八月十五日，备果吃酒赏月，母高氏先叫奴去房内睡了，并不知小二死亡之事。”安抚又问周氏：“你既与小二有奸，缘何将女孩儿坏了？你好好招承，免至受苦！”周氏两泪交流，只得从头一一招了。安抚又问高氏：“你缘何谋杀小二？”高氏抵赖不过，从头招认了。都押下牢监了。安抚俱将各人供状立案，次日差县尉一人，带领仵作行人，押了高氏等去新河桥下检尸。当日闹动城里城外人都得知。男子妇人，挨肩擦背，不计其数，一齐来看。正是：

好事不出门，恶事传千里。

却说县尉押着一行人到新桥下，打开棺木，取出尸首，检看明白。将尸放在棺内，县尉带了一干人回话。董小二尸虽是斧头打碎顶门，麻索绞痕见在。安抚叫左右将高氏等四人各打二十下，都打得昏晕复醒。[眉批] 四人岂无主从，好糊涂官府。取一面长枷，将高氏枷了。周氏、玉秀、洪三俱用铁索锁了，押下大牢内监了。王青随衙听候。

且说那皮匠妇人，也知得错认了，再也不来哭了。思量起来，一场惶恐，几时不敢见人。这话且不说。再说玉秀在牢中汤水不



his way with me. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, while viewing the moon over cups of wine and fruit, my mother told me to leave the party first and retire to my own room for the night. I knew nothing about Xiao'er's death."

The commissioner turned to Zhou-shi. "You had an adulterous affair with Xiao'er. Why would you want to ruin that girl? Out with the truth now, if you don't want to be put to torture!"

Tears gushing, Zhou-shi gave up and admitted the truth. The commissioner then turned to Gao-shi. "Why did you have to murder Xiao'er?"

Realizing that she was not going to be able to talk her way out of this, Gao-shi confessed everything. All the accused were taken under guard to jail. The commissioner placed the depositions on file. The next day, he dispatched a county marshal leading a team of officers, who took Gao-shi and the others to New River Bridge to examine the corpse. That very day, the news spread throughout the town and beyond. Untold numbers of men and women swarmed over to watch the spectacle. Truly,

*Good news stays behind closed doors,
 Scandals travel a thousand li.*

To get back to our story, the county marshal marched the group to New Bridge, opened the coffin, and removed the body for an examination. Afterward, the body was returned to the coffin, and the county marshal marched the group back to report to the commissioner. The corpse's forehead had been smashed by an ax, and marks of the hempen rope were still evident. At the commissioner's order, Gao-shi and the other four were given twenty strokes each, fainting and reviving several times. (*No distinction is made between the principal offender and the accessories. What a brainless commissioner!*) Gao-shi was then put in a long cangue, and Zhou-shi, Yuxiu, and Hong San were locked up in iron chains. All were taken under guard to jail. Wino Wang stayed behind to render service to the court.

In the meantime, the shoemaker's wife had realized her mistake and no longer went around crying out her grievances. The memory of what had happened still made her shiver with fear. For a time, she



吃，次日死了。又过了两日，周氏也死了。洪三看看病重，狱卒告知安抚，安抚令官医医治，不痊而死。止有高氏浑身发肿，棒疮疼痛熬不得，饭食不吃，服药无用，也死了。可怜不勾半个月日，四个都死在牢中。狱卒通报，知府与吏商量，乔俊久不回家，妻妾在家，谋杀人命，本该偿命。凶身人等俱死，具表申奏朝廷，方可决断。不则一日，圣旨倒下，开读道：“凶身俱已身死，将家私抄扎入官。小二尸首，又无苦主亲人来领，烧化了罢。”当时安抚即差吏去，打开乔俊家大门，将细软钱物，尽数入官。[眉批] 乔俊何罪，乃没其家私耶！烧了董小二尸首，不在话下。

却说乔俊合当穷苦，在东京沈瑞莲家，全然不知家中之事。住了两年，财本使得一空，被虔婆常常发语道：“我女儿恋住了你，又不能接客，怎的是了？你有钱钞，将些出来使用；无钱，你自离了我家，等我女儿接别个客人。终不成饿死了我一家罢！”



dared not even show her face in public, but of her, no more.

Let us return to the jail. Refusing all offers of food and water, Yuxiu died on the second day of her imprisonment. Two days later, Zhou-shi also died. Hong San fell gravely ill. The prison warden reported his illness, and the commissioner sent over a physician, but Hong San died anyway, leaving Gao-shi all by herself. Her body a swollen, aching mass of welts and bruises from the beating, she did not eat or drink anything except medicinal soup. The medicine failed to work, and she also died. How tragic that all four died in jail in less than half a month! Upon receiving the warden's report, the prefect consulted with lesser officials about his course of action. Since Qiao Jun had been away from home for a long time, his wife and concubine were rightfully the ones who should pay with their lives for the crime of premeditated murder.

All those involved in the murder being dead and gone, a memorial was written to the imperial court to ask for a settlement of the case. Some days later, the imperial decree came. The scroll containing the decree was spread out and read aloud. It said, "As those involved in the act of murder have perished, all possessions of the Qiao household are to be confiscated. There being no kith and kin to reclaim Dong Xiao'er's corpse, let it be cremated." Right away, the commissioner dispatched officers to Qiao Jun's house. They forced open the front gate and confiscated all the valuables. (*What crime did Qiao Jun commit to be thus deprived of his possessions?*) Dong Xiao'er's corpse was then cremated, but of this, we shall speak no further.

Throughout this time, Qiao Jun had been living in Shen Ruilian's quarters in the Eastern Capital, totally ignorant of what was happening at his own home. Being destined for a decline in his fortunes, he found himself penniless at the end of two years. The madam often said bitterly, "My girl is so infatuated with you that she doesn't accept other clients, and that simply won't do! If you have money, don't begrudge it. If you don't have money, why don't you get out of here and let my girl get back to work? Surely, you don't want our whole family to die of hunger!"



乔俊是个有钱过的人，今日无了钱，被虔婆赶了数次，眼中泪下。寻思要回乡，又无盘缠。那沈瑞莲见乔俊泪下，也哭起来，道：“乔郎，是我苦了你！我有些日前趲下的零碎钱，与你些做盘缠回去了罢。你若有心，到家取得些钱，再来走一遭。”乔俊大喜，当晚收拾了旧衣服，打了一个衣包，沈行首取出三百贯文，把与乔俊打在包内，别了虔婆，驮了衣包，手提了一条棍棒，又辞了瑞莲，两个流泪而别。

且说乔俊于路搭船，不则一日，来到北新关。天色晚了，便投一个相识船主人家宿歇，明早入城。那船主人见了乔俊，吃了一惊，道：“乔官人，你一向在那里去了，只管不回？你家中小娘子周氏，与一个雇工人有奸。大娘子取回一家住了，却又与你女儿有奸。我听得人说，不知争奸也是怎的，大娘子谋杀了雇工人，酒大工洪三将尸丢在新桥河内。有了两个月，尸首泛将起来，被人首告在安抚司。捉了大娘子、小娘子、你女儿并酒大工洪三到官，拷打不过，只得招认。监在牢里，受苦不过，如今四人都死了。朝廷文书下来，抄扎你家财产入官。你如今投那里去好？”乔俊听罢，却似：

分开八片顶阳骨，倾下半桶冰雪来！



Qiao Jun was a man accustomed to spending freely. Now reduced to poverty and humiliated by the madam's repeated attempts to oust him, he found the tears gushing from his eyes. He would have returned home but had no money for traveling expenses. At the sight of his tears, Shen Ruilian also began to cry. "Mr. Qiao!" she said. "I'm so sorry I've brought you to this pass! I have a little private savings. Take some for your trip back home. If you really care for me, you can withdraw some money when you get home and come back again."

Qiao Jun was immensely pleased. That very night, he packed his old clothes into a bundle. Courtesan Shen gave him three hundred strings of cash, which he also placed in the bundle. After bidding the madam farewell and taking tearful leave of Shen Ruilian, he set off on his journey, the bundle on his back and a staff in his hand.

Qiao Jun reached Beixinguan by boat in a few days. The hour being late, he made his way to the home of a boat owner, an acquaintance of his, where he could stay for the night and enter the city the next day.

Much taken aback at the sight of Qiao Jun, the boat owner said, "Mr. Qiao, where have you been all this time? Why didn't you come back earlier? Your concubine Zhou-shi had an affair with a hired worker, so your wife moved them back to the house, and the fellow then had an affair with your daughter. I heard that, out of jealousy or whatever other reason, your wife murdered the worker, and Hong San the winemaker dumped the corpse into New Bridge River. Two months later, the corpse rose to the surface, and someone reported them to the commissioner, who then had your wife, concubine, daughter, and Hong San arrested. They confessed under torture and were thrown into jail. All four died because of the ill treatment they received there, after which the imperial court issued a decree and confiscated all your family possessions. Now where are you going to live?"

At these words, Qiao Jun felt as if

The eight pieces of his skull opened up;

Half a bucketful of ice and snow poured in.



这乔俊惊得呆了半晌，语言不得。那船主人排些酒饭与乔俊吃，那里吃得下！两行泪珠，如雨收不住，哽咽悲啼，心下思量：“今日不想我闪得有家难奔，有国难投，如何是好？”番来覆去，过了一夜。

次日黑早起来，辞了船主人，背了衣包，急急奔武林门来，到着自家对门一个古董店王将仕门首立了。看自家房屋，俱拆没了，止有一片荒地。却好王将仕开门，乔俊放下衣包，向前拜道：“老伯伯，不想小人不回，家中如此模样！”王将仕道：“乔官人，你一向在那里不回？”乔俊道：“只为消折了本钱，归乡不得，并不知家中的消息。”王将仕邀乔俊到家中坐定道：“贤侄听老身说，你去后，家中如此如此……”把从头之事，一一说了。“只好笑一个皮匠妇人，因丈夫死在外边，到来错认了尸。却被王酒酒那厮首告，害了你大妻、小妾、女儿并洪三到官，被打得好苦恼，受疼不过，都死在牢里，家产都抄扎入官了。你如今那里去好？”乔俊听罢，两泪如倾，辞别了王将仕。上南不是，落北又难！叹了一口气，道：“罢，罢，罢！我今年四十馀岁，儿女又无，财产妻妾俱丧了，去投谁的是好？”一径走到西湖上第二桥，望着—湖清水便跳，投入水下而死。这乔俊一家人口，深可惜哉！

却说王青这一日午后，同一般破落户在西湖上闲荡，刚到第



In short, Qiao Jun was dumbfounded. For a considerable while, speech was beyond him. His host set out wine and food for him, but he had no appetite. Two streams of tears kept flowing from his eyes as uncontrollably as rain. As he sobbed mournfully, he thought, "I never imagined I would end up without a home or country. What am I going to do?"

After tossing and turning throughout the night, he rose before dawn, took leave of the boat owner, and raced off to Wulin Gate, his bundle on his back. He stopped at the door of an antiques shop owned by Mr. Wang, staring across the street at the empty lot where his house had stood, for it had been torn down. Mr. Wang just happened to open the door at that moment. Qiao Jun put down his bundle and stepped forward with a bow, saying, "Mr. Wang, I never expected to return home to such a mess."

"Mr. Qiao, where have you been all this time?"

"I wasn't able to come back because all my money was gone. I didn't know what had happened at home."

Mr. Wang invited Qiao Jun inside, offered him a seat, and said, "Now, let this old man tell you what had happened in your home after you left." He recounted everything up to the murder and then continued, "Then, along came a foolish woman, wife of a bootmaker, who claimed that the corpse was her husband, who, she said, had died away from home. But that swine Wino Wang went to the authorities and had your wife, concubine, daughter, and Hong San brought to court. There, they were beaten so badly that they died in jail. All your family possessions have been confiscated and placed in government coffers. Now, where will you go?"

Weeping copiously, Qiao Jun took leave of Mr. Wang. With nowhere to go either north or south, he heaved a sigh and said to himself, "Oh well, being in my forties now, with no children, with all my possessions taken and both my wife and concubine dead and gone, to whom can I turn for help?" He went straight to the second bridge on West Lake, threw himself into the clear water, and drowned. How tragic the fate of Qiao Jun and his whole family!

Let us come now to Wino Wang. That very afternoon after Qiao



二桥坐下，大家商量凑钱出来买碗酒吃。众人道：“还劳王大哥去买，有些便宜。”只见王酒酒接钱在手，向西湖里一撒，两眼睁得圆滴溜，口中大骂道：“王青！那董小二奸人妻女，自取其死，与你何干？你只为诈钱不遂，害得我乔俊好苦！一门亲丁四口，死无葬身之地。今日须偿还我命来！”[眉批]少此项报应不得。众人知道是乔俊附体，替他磕头告饶。只见王青打自己把掌约有百馀，骂不绝口，跳入湖中而死。众人传说此事，都道乔俊虽然好色贪淫，却不曾害人，今受此惨祸，九泉之下，怎放得王青过！这番索命，亦天理之必然也。后人诗云：

乔俊贪淫害一门，王青毒害亦亡身。
从来好色亡家国，岂见诗书误了人？



Jun had died, Wino Wang was loafing by West Lake with other bums like himself when they sat down by the very same second bridge of the lake and tried to scrape together some money for a bowl of wine. “Big Brother Wang,” said the others to Wino Wang, “please go and buy the wine for us, since you know how to get a good deal.”

Lo and behold, as soon as Wang had the money, he tossed it into West Lake. His eyes popping wide, he yelled, “Wang Qing! Dong Xiao’er deserved to die because he had seduced another man’s wife and daughter. What business was that of yours? You put me, Qiao Jun, through such misery just because your blackmail attempt didn’t work! All four members of my family died and don’t even have a proper burial place. Now, pay me back for all those lives!” (*An act of retribution is indispensable.*)

Realizing that Qiao Jun was speaking through Wino Wang, all those witnessing the scene kowtowed and asked for mercy for Wino Wang. Before their very eyes, Wang Qing slapped himself across the face more than a hundred times, heaping curses upon himself as he did so. He then jumped into the lake and drowned.

As the story went around, people commented that although Qiao Jun may have been a lustful man, he had done no harm to anyone. Having died so tragically, how could he, under the Nine Springs, let Wang Qing off lightly? Demanding Wino Wang’s life in return was nothing less than an act of divine justice. A later poet had this to say:

*Qiao Jun’s lust ruined the whole family;
 Wino Wang’s malice led to his own death.
 Lust brings ruin to family and state, but
 No one’s ever hurt by scholarly pursuits.*

¹ There was no Shanghai County at the time the story is supposed to have taken place. Shanghai County was not established until the Yuan dynasty.



第三十四卷

王娇鸾百年长恨

天上乌飞兔走，人间古往今来。昔年歌管变荒台，转眼是非兴败。须识闹中取静，莫因乖过成呆。不贪花酒不贪财，一世无灾无害。

话说江西饶州府馀干县长乐村，有一小民叫做张乙。因贩些杂货到于县中，夜深投宿城外一邸店，店房已满，不能相容。间壁锁下一空房，却无人住。张乙道：“店主人何不开此房与我？”主人道：“此房中有鬼，不敢留客。”张乙道：“便有鬼，我何惧哉！”主人只得开锁，将灯一盏，扫帚一把，交与张乙。张乙进房，把灯放稳，挑得亮亮的。房中有破床一张，尘埃堆积，用扫帚扫净，展上铺盖，讨些酒饭吃了，推转房门，脱衣而睡。梦见一美色妇人，衣服华丽，自来荐枕，梦中纳之。及至醒来，此妇宛在身边。张乙问是何人。此妇道：“妾乃邻家之妇，因夫君远出，不能独宿，是以相就。勿多言，久当自知。”张亦不再问。天



Story 34

Wang Jiaoluan's One Hundred Years of Sorrow

*In heaven, the crow flies and the hare runs; ¹
On earth, the days and the months rush by.
Bustling theaters of old now overgrown with weeds;
Rights, wrongs, rises, falls — all change places in a trice.*

*Be sure to seek peace amid noisy surroundings;
Do not fall victim to your own cleverness.
Stay free of lust and greed,
And no harm will ever come your way.*

Our story takes place in Changle Village, Yugan County, Raozhou Prefecture, Jiangxi, where there lived a certain Zhang Yi, a man of humble circumstances. On a trip to the county seat to sell some miscellaneous goods, he stopped one night at an inn outside the city gate, but it was already full. There was, however, a vacant room, all locked up, adjacent to the inn.

“Why don’t you give me that room?” Zhang Yi asked the innkeeper.

“That room is haunted. I dare not let any patron stay in it.”

“Even if it is, I’m not afraid.”

The innkeeper resignedly opened the padlock and handed Zhang Yi a lamp and a broom.

Once inside, Zhang Yi put the lamp down in a safe place and picked the lampwick until the flame was nice and bright. In the room, there was a rickety old bed covered with dust. He swept it clean, spread his bedding on it, and went out for some wine and food. As soon as he returned, he took off his clothes and went to bed. In a dream, a beautiful woman, elegantly dressed, approached him to offer her services. It was an offer he accepted. When he awoke, the woman was still by his side. He asked who she was, and she replied, “I live in a nearby house. My husband is away on a trip, and I found it hard to sleep by myself. So I came here to seek your company.



明，此妇辞去。至夜又来，欢好如初。如此三夜。

店主人见张客无事，偶话及此房内曾有妇人缢死，往往作怪，今番却太平了。张乙听在肚里。至夜，此妇仍来。张乙问道：“今日店主人说这房中有缢死女鬼，莫非是你？”此妇并无惭讳之意，答道：“妾身是也！然不祸于君，君幸勿惧。”张乙道：“试说其详。”此妇道：“妾乃娼女，姓穆，行廿二，人称我为廿二娘。与馮干客人杨川相厚，杨许娶妾归去，妾将私财百金为助。一去三年不来，妾为鸨儿拘管，无计脱身，挹郁不堪，遂自缢而死。鸨儿以所居售人，今为旅店。此房，昔日妾之房也，一灵不泯，犹依栖于此。杨川与你同乡，可认得么？”张乙道：“认得。”此妇道：“今其人安在？”张乙道：“去岁已移居饶州南门，娶妻开店，生意甚足。”妇人嗟叹良久，更无别语。又过了二日，张乙要回家。妇人道：“妾愿始终随君，未识许否？”张乙道：“倘能



Don't tell anyone about this. Just keep the knowledge to yourself." Zhang did not ask any more questions.

At daybreak, the woman departed but she came again at night to resume the joys of the night before. Three nights went by in like fashion.

Seeing that Mr. Zhang was still alive and well, the innkeeper casually remarked that the room used to be haunted by a woman who had hanged herself there. He added that all was evidently well again. Zhang Yi made a mental note of what he had heard but said nothing.

At nightfall, when the woman appeared again, Zhang Yi asked, "Earlier today, the innkeeper told me that a woman had hanged herself in this very room. Might it be you?"

"Yes, it's me," she replied without a hint of shame or evasiveness. "But I won't hurt you. Don't be afraid."

"I'd like to hear more," said Zhang Yi.

"I was a prostitute. My surname is Mu. Since I was twenty-second in seniority at the brothel, they called me 'Sister Twenty-two.' I was very fond of a patron from Yugan called Yang Chuan, who promised to marry me and take me to his home. I gave him a hundred taels of silver from my private savings to help him out, but he left and never returned. I felt so miserable that three years after his departure, I hanged myself because the madam kept such a close watch on me that I had no chance to escape. The madam sold this room, which ended up being part of the inn. But my soul, which did not perish, still lives here, where I lived before my death. Yang Chuan comes from the same place as you do. Do you happen to know him?"

"Yes, I do."

"Is he still around?"

"He moved last year to the South Gate of Raozhou, where he married and opened a shop, and business is good."

The woman sighed with emotion for a considerable while, and relapsed into silence.

Two days later, when Zhang Yi wanted to return home, the woman said, "May I follow you wherever you go?"

"Yes, by all means."



相随，有何不可。” 妇人道：“君可制一小木牌，题曰：‘廿二娘神位。’ 置于篋中。但出牌呼妾，妾便出来。” 张乙许之。妇人道：“妾尚有白金五十两埋于此床之下，没人知觉，君可取用。” 张掘地果得白金一瓶，心中甚喜。过了一夜。

次日张乙写了牌位，收藏好了，别店主而归。到于家中，将此事告与浑家。浑家初时不喜，见了五十两银子，遂不嗔怪。张乙于东壁立了廿二娘神主，其妻戏往呼之，白日里竟走出来，与妻施礼。[眉批] 白日能见形者，借男子之精气也。妻初时也惊讶，后遂惯了，不以为事。夜来张乙夫妇同床，此妇亦来，也不觉床之狭窄。过了十馀日，此妇道：“妾尚有夙债在于郡城，君能随我去索取否？” 张利其所有，一口应承。即时雇船而行，船中供下牌位。此妇同行同宿，全不避人。不则一日，到了饶州南门，此妇道：“妾往杨川家讨债去。” 张乙方欲问之，此妇倏已上岸。张随后跟去，见此妇竟入一店中去了。问其店，正杨川家也。张久候不出。忽见杨举家惊惶，少顷哭声振地。问其故，店中人云：



“Please make a small wooden tablet, inscribe on it ‘To the memory of Sister Twenty-two,’ and put it in your trunk. I’ll come whenever you take out the tablet and call my name.”

Zhang Yi agreed. The woman continued, “I have fifty taels of silver buried under this bed. No one knows about it. You may have them.”

Zhang Yi dug under the bed, and to his great joy, there was indeed a jar filled with silver. The night passed without ado.

The next day, Zhang Yi prepared the tablet, put it in his trunk, took leave of the innkeeper, and set out on his journey home. Upon arrival, he told his wife about what had happened. She was displeased at first, but at the sight of the fifty taels of silver, she relented. Zhang Yi then placed the tablet to the memory of Sister Twenty-two by the eastern wall. When his wife playfully called out her name, she did indeed emerge in broad daylight and saluted Mrs. Zhang. (*Ghosts that assume human shape in broad daylight do so on the strength of male sperm.*) Mrs. Zhang was quite startled, but later became accustomed to the ghost and began to take her for granted. At night, Sister Twenty-two shared the bed with Zhang Yi and his wife, yet the couple never felt crowded.

More than ten days later, the woman said, “I have some old debts to settle in the city. Could you go with me to collect them?”

Zhang Yi readily agreed, coveting her money. Right away, he hired a boat and set out but not without first placing the tablet in the cabin. All along the way, the woman was at his side day and night, making no attempt to remove herself from the presence of other people. Some days later, they found themselves at the South Gate of Raozhou. The woman said, “I’m going to Yang Chuan’s house to collect the debts.” Before Zhang Yi could ask a question, she was already ashore.

He followed her and saw her disappear into a shop. Upon inquiry, he was told that it was Yang Chuan’s house. Zhang waited a long time in vain for her to reemerge. Suddenly, a commotion broke out inside the house, and, a few moments later, the earth shook with wails of grief. A clerk in the shop answered Zhang Yi’s question



“主人杨川向来无病，忽然中恶，九窍流血而死！”张乙心知廿二娘所为，嘿然下船，向牌位苦叫，亦不见出来了。方知有夙债在郡城，乃杨川负义之债也。有诗叹云：

王魁负义曾遭谴，李益亏心亦改常。

请看杨川下梢事，皇天不佑薄情郎。

方才说穆廿二娘事，虽则死后报冤，却是鬼自出头，还是渺茫之事。如今再说一件故事，叫做《王娇鸾百年长恨》，这个冤更报得好。此事非唐非宋，出在国朝天顺初年。广西苗蛮作乱，各处调兵征剿，有临安卫指挥王忠所领一枝浙兵，违了限期，被参降调河南南阳卫中所千户，即日引家小到任。王忠年六十馀，止一子王彪，颇称骁勇，督抚留在军前效用。到有两个女儿，长曰娇鸾，次曰娇凤。鸾年十八，凤年十六。凤从幼育于外家，就与表兄对姻，只有娇鸾未曾许配。夫人周氏，原系继妻。周氏有嫡姐，嫁曹家，寡居而贫，夫人接他相伴甥女娇鸾，举家呼为曹姨。



by saying, "My master Yang Chuan, who had always enjoyed the best of health, suddenly fell violently ill and died, with blood flowing from all his nine apertures."

Knowing all too well that it must have been the doing of Sister Twenty-two, Zhang Yi quietly stepped onto the boat and called out in front of the memorial tablet, but however hard he tried, the woman did not appear again. He now realized that the debt to which she had referred was Yang Chuan's debt of betrayal. There is a poem that laments:

*The ingrate Wang Kui was rightly punished;²
 The heartless Li Yi also came to grief.³
 Consider again the case of Yang Chuan;
 Heaven never blesses scoundrels like these.*

In the above story, although Sister Twenty-two was avenged in the end, it was the work of a ghost, hardly a dependable redresser of wrongs. Let me now tell a story called "Wang Jiaoluan's One Hundred Years of Sorrow," in which the aggrieved is vindicated in a better way.

The story takes place not in the Tang dynasty, nor the Song dynasty, but in the first year of the Tianshun reign period [1457] of this dynasty. When garrison troops from various regions were redeployed to Guangxi to put down a rebellion by the Miao people, Wang Zhong, commander of the Lin'an region, was impeached because his contingent of Zhejiang soldiers had arrived late. He was thus demoted to battalion commander of the Nanyang region in Henan and reported immediately for duty, with his family in tow.

Wang Zhong was in his sixties and had only one son, Wang Biao, quite a valiant warrior, whom the military commissioner kept in his service. Wang Zhong also had two daughters. The older one, Jiaoluan, was eighteen years old, and the younger one, Jiaofeng, was sixteen years old. Jiaofeng had been raised from an early age by her maternal grandparents and was betrothed to her cousin. Jiaoluan, however, was still unbetrothed. Wang Zhong's wife, Zhou-shi, who had married him after the death of his first wife, had an older sister, Mrs. Cao, a widow who was living in poverty before Zhou-shi invit-



娇鸾幼通书史，举笔成文。因爱女慎于择配，所以及笄未嫁，每每临风感叹，对月凄凉。惟曹姨与鸾相厚，知其心事，他虽父母亦不知也。

一日清明节届，和曹姨及侍儿明霞后园打秋千耍子。正在闹热之际，忽见墙缺处有一美少年，紫衣唐巾，舒头观看，连声喝采！慌得娇鸾满脸通红，推着曹姨的背，急回香房。侍女也进去了。生见园中无人，逾墙而入，秋千架子尚在，馥香仿佛，正在凝思。忽见草中一物，拾起看时，乃三尺线绣香罗帕也，[眉批]此祸胎也。生得此如获珍宝。闻有人声自内而来，复逾墙而出，仍立于墙缺边。看时，乃是侍儿来寻香罗帕的。生见其三回五转，意兴已倦，微笑而言：“小娘子，罗帕已入人手，何处寻觅？”侍儿抬头见是秀才，便上前万福，道：“相公想已检得，乞即见还，感德不尽！”那生道：“此罗帕是何人之物？”侍儿道：“是小姐的。”那生道：“既是小姐的东西，还得小姐来讨，方才还他。”



ed her to live in the Wang house as a companion to Jiaoluan. She came to be called "Auntie Cao" by those in the household.

Since an early age, Jiaoluan was well versed in the classics and the histories and gifted in literary composition. The parents being too cautious in selecting a husband for this beloved daughter, she remained unbetrothed at the marriageable age of fifteen. Every so often, she would heave a sigh to the wind and share her melancholy with the moon. Only Auntie Cao, who was very close to her, knew what was weighing on her mind and was aware of what her parents were not.

One day, with the Clear and Bright Festival drawing near, Jiaoluan was playing on the swing in the back garden with Auntie Cao and the maid Mingxia when, in the midst of the merriment, she saw a handsome young man in a purple robe and a cap in the Tang style standing by a gap in the wall. He was craning his neck for a better view and giving one cheer after another. Mortified, Jiaoluan pushed Auntie Cao along and scurried back to her chamber, her face flaming red. The maid followed them into the house.

With the garden quite deserted, the young man scaled the wall and neared the swing, where a fragrance lingered. He was deep in thought when his eyes caught something in the grass. He picked it up and saw that it was a three-foot-long embroidered silk kerchief. (*The source of all trouble to come.*) He was as delighted as if he had found a piece of treasure. At the sound of footsteps coming from the direction of the house, he climbed over the wall again to stand, as before, by the gap in the wall. It was the maid, coming to look for the kerchief. Noticing the look on the maid's face, weary after much searching, the young man said affably, "Young lady! Someone has picked up the kerchief. You are not going to find it!"

Raising her eyes the maid saw that it was a young man who looked like a scholar. She stepped forward and said with a curtsy, "You must be the one who picked it up, sir. Would you please give it back to me? I'll be ever so grateful."

"Whose kerchief is it?"

"It belongs to my mistress."

"Since it's your mistress', I'm not going to give it back unless



侍儿道：“相公府居何处？”那生道：“小生姓周名廷章，苏州府吴江县人，父亲为本学司教，随任在此，与尊府只一墙之隔。”原来卫署与学宫基址相连，卫叫做东衙，学叫做西衙。花园之外，就是学中的隙地。侍儿道：“贵公子又是近邻，失瞻了。妾当禀知小姐，奉命相求。”廷章道：“敢闻小姐及小娘子大名？”侍儿道：“小姐名娇鸾，主人之爱女，妾乃贴身侍婢明霞也。”廷章道：“小生有小诗一章，相烦致于小姐，即以罗帕奉还。”明霞本不肯替他寄诗，因要罗帕入手，只得应允。廷章道：“烦小娘子少待。”廷章去不多时，携诗而至，桃花笺叠成方胜。明霞接诗在手，问：“罗帕何在？”廷章笑道：“罗帕乃至宝，得之非易，岂可轻还？小娘子且将此诗送与小姐看了，待小姐回音，小生方可奉璧。”明霞没奈何，只得转身。

只因一幅香罗帕，惹起千秋长恨歌。

话说鸾小姐自见了那美少年，虽则一时惭愧，却也挑动个情字。口中不语，心下踌躇道：“好个俊俏郎君，若嫁得此人，也



she asks for it herself.”

“Where do you live, sir?”

“My name is Zhou Tingzhang, I’m a native of Wujiang County, Suzhou Prefecture. My father is the local education commissioner, and I’ve come to live with him in the house on the other side of this wall.”

As a matter of fact, the commander’s mansion and the education commissioner’s mansion were parts of the same compound, the former being the eastern wing, and the latter the western wing. Beyond the garden lay a patch of unused land that belonged to the education commissioner.

The maid said, “I didn’t know that you were a next-door neighbor, sir. I apologize for not having shown you proper respect. I’ll report back to my mistress about your request.”

“May I ask your mistress’ name and your name?”

“My mistress is Jiaoluan, beloved daughter of the old master. I am her chambermaid Mingxia.”

“I’ll give the kerchief back to you if you’ll present a little poem of mine to your mistress,” said Tingzhang.

Mingxia did not like the idea of delivering poems, but in order to get back the kerchief, she gave her consent.

“Please wait,” said Tingzhang, turning away. A few moments later, he returned with a piece of peach-blossom-patterned stationery paper folded into a double square. Mingxia took the poem and asked, “But where’s the kerchief?”

Tingzhang said with a chuckle, “The kerchief is nothing less than a treasure, hard to come by. How can you expect me to return it just like that? I’ll give it back only after you show her the poem and bring me her response.”

Resignedly, Mingxia departed.

An ordinary silk kerchief

Led to a song of eternal sorrow.

Now, let us come to Jiaoluan. In spite of her embarrassment upon seeing the handsome youth, her passion was aroused. She thought to herself, “What a dashing young man! If I could marry him, I



不枉聪明一世。”忽见明霞气忿忿的人来，娇鸾问：“香罗帕有了么？”明霞口称怪事：“香罗帕却被西衙周公子收着，就是墙缺内喝采的那紫衣郎君。”娇鸾道：“与他讨了就是。”明霞道：“怎么不讨！也得他肯还！”娇鸾道：“他为何不还？”明霞道：“他说‘小生姓周名廷章，苏州府吴江人氏，父为司教，随任在此。与吾家只一墙之隔。既是小姐的香罗帕，必须小姐自讨。’”娇鸾道：“你怎么说？”明霞道：“我说待妾禀知小姐，奉命相求。他道，有小诗一章，烦吾传递，待有回音，才把罗帕还我。”明霞将桃花笺递与小姐。娇鸾见了这方胜，已有三分之喜，拆开看时，乃七言绝句一首：

帕出佳人分外香，天公教付有情郎。

殷勤寄取相思句，拟作红丝入洞房。

娇鸾若是个有主意的，拚得弃了这罗帕，把诗烧却，分付侍儿，下次再不许轻易传递，天大的事都完了。奈娇鸾一来是及瓜不嫁，知情慕色的女子；二来满肚才情不肯埋没，亦取薛涛笺答诗八句：

妾身一点玉无瑕，生自侯门将相家。

静里有亲同对月，闲中无事独看花。



won't have lived in vain, however brilliant I am." All of a sudden, she saw Mingxia enter her room in a huff. "You found the kerchief?" she asked.

"The strangest thing happened!" said Mingxia. "It was picked up by Young Master Zhou of the west wing, the very one in purple who cheered by the gap in the wall."

"Get it from him, and that will be that."

"As if I didn't try! But he has to agree to return it first!"

"Why didn't he give it back to you?"

"This is what he said: 'My name is Zhou Tingzhang. I'm a native of Wujiang County, Suzhou Prefecture. My father is the local education commissioner, and I've come to live with him in the house on the other side of this wall.' And he said since it's your kerchief, you have to ask for it yourself."

"So, what did you say?"

"I told him I would report back to you about his request. Then he said he had a little poem for me to present to you and would give back the kerchief only after I brought him your response." So saying, Mingxia handed the stationery to the young lady. Joy stirred in Jiaoluan at the sight of the folded double square. She opened it and saw written inside a quatrain:

*The silk from the beauty, with its sweet scent,
 Is sent by heaven to the admirer.
 Tenderly I send over words of love,
 Words that will lead me to the bridal chamber.*

If Jiaoluan had known better, she would have forgotten about the handkerchief, burned the poem, and told the maid never to deliver letters again, and all would have been well. However, partly because she had reached puberty still unbetrothed and yearned for love and partly because she did not want her literary talent to go unrecognized, she wrote an eight-line poem on a sheet of fine stationery:

*This piece of flawless precious jade
 Was born in a noble house.
 In peace, I look at the moon with my family;
 In leisure, I view the flowers, all alone.*



碧梧只许来奇凤，翠竹那容入老鸦。

寄语异乡孤另客，莫将心事乱如麻。

明霞捧诗方到后园，廷章早在缺墙相候。明霞道：“小姐已有回诗了，可将罗帕还我。”廷章将诗读了一遍，益慕娇鸾之才，必欲得之，道：“小娘子耐心，小生又有所答。”再回书房，写成一绝：

居傍侯门亦有缘，异乡孤另果堪怜。

若容鸾凤双栖树，一夜箫声入九天。

明霞道：“罗帕又不还，只管寄什么诗？我不寄了。”廷章袖中出金簪一根道：“这微物奉小娘子，权表寸敬，多多致意小姐。”明霞贪了这金簪，又将诗回复娇鸾。娇鸾看罢，闷闷不悦。明霞道：“诗中有甚言语触犯小姐？”娇鸾道：“书生轻薄，都是调戏之言。”明霞道：“小姐大才，何不作一诗骂之，以绝其意。”娇鸾道：“后生家性重，不必骂，且好言劝之可也。”〔眉批〕鸾心久已有生矣。再取薛笺题诗八句：

独立庭际傍翠阴，侍儿传语意何深。

*The green wutong tree admits only the phoenix;
The verdant bamboo grove allows no ravens.
A word to the forlorn soul in an alien land:
Let not confused thoughts weigh on your mind.*

Bearing the poem, Mingxia went to the back garden, where Tingzhang was already waiting by the gap in the wall. Mingxia said, "My mistress has a poem for you in reply. Now you can give me back the kerchief."

Tingzhang read the poem and was so impressed by Jiaoluan's talent that he decided to win her over. "Please wait, young lady," he said to the maid. "Let me write a reply." He returned to his study and wrote a quatrain:

*By a predestined bond, I live nearby,
A wretched, forlorn soul in an alien land.
With the pair of phoenixes in the same tree,
Flute notes echo through the sky all night long.*

Mingxia snapped, "I'm not going to deliver another poem if you keep the kerchief!"

Pulling a gold hairpin out of his sleeve, Tingzhang said, "This is a small gift for you as a token of my respect. Please give my warm regards to your young mistress."

Mingxia liked the gold hairpin so much that she again acted as messenger. After reading the poem, Jiaoluan sank into gloomy silence.

"Is there anything in the poem that you find offensive?" asked Mingxia.

"It's full of flirtatious improprieties. What a frivolous scholar!"

"With your great talent, why don't you write a poem to scold him and put a stop to his advances?"

"Young men tend to be short tempered. I don't need to use harsh words. I'll just give him a nice piece of advice." (So, Jiaoluan already has her heart set on the young man.) On another piece of fine stationery paper, she wrote eight more lines:

*There he stands, amid the green in the yard;
What tender words — those relayed by the maid!*



满身窃玉偷香胆，一片撩云拨雨心。
丹桂岂容稚子折，珠帘那许晓风侵。
劝君莫想阳台梦，努力攻书入翰林。

自此一倡一和，渐渐情熟，往来不绝。明霞的足迹不断后园，廷章的眼光不离墙缺。诗篇甚多，不暇细述。时届端阳，王千户治酒于园亭家宴。廷章于墙缺往来，明知小姐在于园中，无由一面，侍女明霞亦不能通一语。正在气闷，忽撞见卫卒孙九，那孙九善作木匠，长在卫里服役，亦多在学中做工。廷章遂题诗一绝封固了，将青蚨二百赏孙九买酒吃，托他寄与衙中明霞姐。孙九受人之托，忠人之事，伺候到次早，才觑个方便，寄得此诗于明霞。明霞递于小姐，拆开看之，前有叙云：“端阳日园中望娇娘子不见，口占一绝奉寄：

配成彩线思同结，倾就蒲觞拟共斟。

雾隔湘江欢不见，锦葵空有向阳心。”

后写“松陵周廷章拜稿”。娇娘看了，置于书几之上。适当梳头，未及酬和。忽曹姨走进香房，看见了诗稿，大惊道：“娇娘既有



*Bent on stealing the piece of fragrant jade,
Eager to stir up the clouds and rain.⁴
Red cassia is not meant for one too young,
Bed curtains do not yield to morning gusts.
Be advised: dream not of the balcony;
Study hard, and join the Academy!*

And thus the letters went back and forth in an endless stream, growing warmer in tone as Mingxia's feet busily trod the path in the back garden while Tingzhang kept his eyes glued to the gap in the wall. There were too many poems to be cited in full here.

When the Dragon Boat Festival came around, Commander Wang held a family feast in the garden pavilion. From his place at the gap in the wall, Tingzhang gathered that the young mistress was in the garden, but he had no excuse for seeing her, nor was the maid Mingxia free to deliver a message.

Feeling dejected, he suddenly ran into Sun Jiu, a footman. Sun Jiu was also a skilled carpenter and had long served both the commander and the education commissioner. Tingzhang sealed up one of his poems, gave Sun Jiu a tip of two hundred in cash, and asked him to deliver the poem to Sister Mingxia in the commander's wing of the compound. Faithful to the task entrusted to him, Sun Jiu waited until the next morning before he saw an opportunity to deliver the poem. Mingxia then passed it to her young mistress, who opened the seal and saw that the line preceding the poem read, "Having looked for you in the garden in vain during the Dragon Boat Festival, I send you the following quatrain, which I intoned on the spur of the moment:

*"Weave colorful threads into lovers' knots;
Fill both cups with dogwood wine.
With the loved one hidden by river fog,
The sunflower seeks the sun, but in vain."*

The poem was followed by the line, "Respectfully, Zhou Tingzhang of Pine Hill [another name for Wujiang County, Jiangsu]." After reading the poem, Jiaoluan put it on her table and went to do her toilette. In the meantime, before she had time to write a reply, Auntie Cao suddenly walked in. Astounded upon reading the poem,



西厢之约，可无东道之主，此事如何瞒我？”娇鸾含羞答道：“虽有吟咏往来，实无他事，非敢瞒姨娘也。”曹姨道：“周生江南秀士，门户相当，何不教他遣媒说合，成就百年姻缘，岂不美乎？”娇鸾点头道：“是。”梳妆已毕，遂答诗八句：

深锁香闺十八年，不容风月透帘前。
绣衾香暖谁知苦？锦帐春寒只爱眠。
生怕杜鹃声到耳，死愁蝴蝶梦来缠。
多情果有相怜意，好倩冰人片语传。

廷章得诗，遂假托父亲周司教之意，央赵学究往王千户处求这头亲事。王千户亦重周生才貌，但娇鸾是爱女，况且精通文墨，自己年老，一应卫中文书笔札，都靠着女儿相帮，少他不得，不忍弃之于他乡，以此迟疑未许。[眉批]为结末《长恨歌》张本。廷章知婚事未谐，心中如刺，乃作书寄于小姐。前写：

松陵友弟廷章拜稿：“自睹芳容，未宁狂魄。夫妇已是前生定，至死靡他；媒妁传来今日言，为期未决。遥望香闺



she said, "So, there's a love affair going on without a matchmaker's blessing! Why hide this from me?"

Shyly, Jiaoluan replied, "There have been letters going back and forth, but that's the full extent of the relationship. I wouldn't dare hide anything from you, Auntie."

"Young Mr. Zhou being a scholar from south of the Yangzi River and of a matching family background, why don't we tell him to find a matchmaker and fulfill this marriage bond? Wouldn't that be nice?"

"Right!" said Jiaoluan with a nod. After her toilette was finished, she wrote the following eight lines by way of a reply:

*Sequestered in the boudoir for eighteen years,
With no sweet air allowed through the curtains,
I live in comfort, but who knows my pain?
I sleep through the cold spring in my brocade bed.
How I fear the sound of the cuckoos!
How I worry that butterflies would haunt my dreams!
If he with tender feelings so wishes,
Through a medium shall word be sent.*

After he received the message, Tingzhang sought the help of a Scholar Zhao, falsely claiming that it was the wish of his father, Commissioner Zhou, that Zhao present the marriage proposal to Commander Wang. Commander Wang was indeed impressed with Mr. Zhou Junior's talent and looks, but Jiaoluan was his much beloved daughter, and one with literary talent at that. Being advanced in years, he was highly dependent on his daughter's services in writing his official correspondences and could hardly entertain the thought of letting her follow a husband to some distant place. So he hesitated and withheld his consent. (*Foreshadowing "Song of Eternal Sorrow" at the end.*)

Bitterly stung by the news, Tingzhang wrote the following letter to Jiaoluan:

Respectfully from Tingzhang, your friend from Pine Hill:

Ever since I laid eyes on your beauty, my heart has not known a moment of peace. As marriage bonds are predestined, I shall have no other while I live. The matchmaker brought me a



深锁，如唐玄宗离月宫而空想嫦娥；要从花圃戏游，似牵牛郎隔天河而苦思织女。倘复迁延于月日，必当夭折于沟渠。生若无缘，死亦不瞑。勉成拙律，深冀哀怜。诗曰：

未有佳期慰我情，可怜春价值千金！

闷来窗下三杯酒，愁向花前一曲琴。

人在琐窗深处好，闷回罗帐静中吟。

孤恹一样昏黄月，肯许相携诉寸心？”

娇鸾看罢，即时复书。前写：

虎銜爱女娇鸾拜稿：“轻荷点水，弱絮飞帘。拜月亭前，懒对东风听杜宇；画眉窗下，强消长昼刺鸳鸯。人正困于妆台，诗忽坠于香案。启观来意，无限幽怀。自怜薄命佳人，恼杀多情才子。一番信到，一番使妾倍支吾；几度诗来，几度令人添寂寞。休得跳东墙学攀花之手，可以仰北斗驾折桂之心。眼底无媒，书中有女。自此衷情封去札，莫将消息问



message earlier today, saying that no consent has been given. Watching your inaccessible boudoir from afar, I feel like Emperor Tang Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty longing in vain for Chang'e the moon goddess after his legendary visit to the moon palace. Yearning to visit your garden, I feel like the Herdboy aching for the Weaving Maiden on the other side of the Milky Way.⁵ Should this misery last for days and months, I will surely die in some gutter before my allotted span of life expires. If I cannot fulfill the bond in this life, I shall not rest even after I die. I have composed the following clumsy poem in the profound hope of winning your sympathy:

*Without a happy union to look forward to,
 The priceless season of spring goes to waste.
 In gloom, I drink three cups of wine by the window;
 In sorrow, I play the zither for the flowers.
 I feel better leaning against the window
 But lament in bed amid dead silence.
 The forlorn moon, dull and dim —
 Would you kindly convey my feelings?*

After reading the letter, Jiaoluan wrote a reply:

Respectfully from Jiaoluan, beloved daughter of the commander:

In the moon-viewing pavilion, facing lotus flowers that adorn the water, near curtains fluffy with willow catkins, I listen languidly to the cuckoo cries borne on the east wind and spend the long days embroidering lovebirds by the window where orioles sing. When I was feeling drowsy, your poem suddenly fell upon my dressing table. I opened and read it, which only added to my boundless sorrow. Regrettably, I am blessed in looks but not in fate, much to the chagrin of the loving and talented scholar. Every letter that I receive deepens my pain; every poem that arrives accentuates my loneliness. Do not scale the east wall and pluck the flowers, but set your eyes on the star of learning and win academic honors. If a match does not present itself at the moment, wait until one emerges from the



来人。谨和佳篇，仰祈深谅！诗曰：

秋月春花亦有情，也知身价重千金。

虽窥青琐韩郎貌，羞听东墙崔氏琴。

痴念已从空里散，好诗惟向梦中吟。

此生但作干兄妹，直待来生了寸心。”

廷章阅书赞叹不已，读诗至末联，“此生但作干兄妹”，忽然想起一计道：“当初张珙申纯皆因兄妹得就私情。王夫人与我同姓，何不拜之为姑？便可通家往来，于中取事矣！”遂托言西衙窄狭，且是喧闹，欲借卫署后园观书。周司教自与王千户开口。王翁道：“彼此通家，就在家下吃些见成茶饭，不烦馈送。”周翁感激不尽，回向儿子说了。廷章道：“虽承王翁盛意，非亲非故，难以打搅。孩儿欲备一礼，拜认周夫人为姑。姑侄一家，庶乎有名。”周司教是糊涂之人，只要讨些小便宜，[眉批]爱讨便宜，便是糊涂之本。道：“任从我儿行事。”廷章又央人通了王翁夫妇，择个吉日，备下彩缎书仪，写个表侄的名刺，上门认亲，极其卑逊，



books. I seal my deep feelings in this letter. Make no inquiries of its deliverer. What follows is my response to your fine poem, for you to read with a forgiving heart:

*The autumn moon and spring flowers are sentient;
 Well aware of their priceless worth.
 Through the latticed window, I caught a glimpse of Han⁶;
 By the east wall I heard the lute meant for Cui's ears.⁷
 All foolish thoughts have vanished into thin air;
 In dreams I intone my better poems.
 In this life, let us just brother and sister be,
 And wait till our next lives to fulfill the bond.*

After reading the letter, Tingzhang was filled with admiration. When he came to the penultimate line "In this life, let us just brother and sister be," an idea suddenly came to him. "Zhang Gong and Shen Chun had acknowledged their lovers in public as sisters.⁸ Jiaoluan's mother and I share the same surname. Why don't I honor her as my aunt? In that way, the two families will see a lot of each other, and that means I'll have my chance!"

So, saying that the west wing of the compound was too cramped and noisy, he asked for permission to do his studies in the commander's back garden. When Commissioner Zhou raised the matter with Commander Wang, the latter agreed, adding, "Since we're neighbors, he's very welcome to join us at our meals, so as to save us the trouble of delivering the food to him."

Grateful beyond measure, Mr. Zhou Senior told his son about the commander's offer. Tingzhang said, "It's very kind of Mr. Wang to say so, but I really shouldn't impose on him without being related to the family in any way. I'm thinking of preparing a gift and honoring Mrs. Wang as my aunt. With the two families thus linked, my actions will be fully legitimate."

Being a muddleheaded person content with gaining small advantages (*Petty acquisitiveness is the cause of muddleheadedness.*), Commissioner Zhou said, "Have it your way." Thereupon, Tingzhang asked someone to notify Mr. Wang and his wife.

Consequently, an auspicious day was chosen, gifts of colorful



极其亲热。王翁是个武人，只好奉承，[眉批]文官难说不爱奉承。遂请入中堂，教奶奶都相见了。连曹姨也认做姨娘，娇鸾是表妹，一时都请见礼。王翁设宴后堂，权当会亲。一家同席，廷章与娇鸾，暗暗欢喜，席上眉来眼去，自不必说，当日尽欢而散。

姻缘好坏犹难问，踪迹亲疏已自分。

次日王翁收拾书室，接内侄周廷章来读书。却也晓得隔绝内外，将内宅后门下锁，不许妇女入于花园。廷章供给，自有外厢照管。虽然搬做一家，音书来往反不便了。娇鸾松筠之志虽存，风月之情已动。况既在席间，眉来眼去，怎当得园上凤隔鸾分。愁绪无聊，郁成一病，朝凉暮热，茶饭不沾。王翁迎医问卜，全然不济。廷章几遍到中堂问病。王翁只教致意，不令进房。廷章心生一计，因假说：“长在江南，曾通医理。表妹不知所患何症，待侄儿诊脉便知。”王翁向夫人说了，又教明霞，道达了小姐，方

silk and other items were prepared, a visiting card was written presenting the young man as a nephew, and Tingzhang went next door, all humility, to claim kinship. And a cordial scene it was. Being a military officer, Mr. Wang enjoyed flattery. (*Who says civilian officials do not succumb to flattery?*) So he invited the visitor into the main hall and introduced him to the lady of the house. Auntie Cao became his aunt, and Jiaoluan his cousin. When the greetings were over, Mr. Wang had a feast set out in the back hall to celebrate the occasion. With everyone now seated at the same table as one family, Tingzhang and Jiaoluan were secretly overjoyed. How they conveyed their love through meaningful glances need not be described here. The feast did not come to an end until everyone had fully enjoyed the occasion.

*Their marital future yet unknown,
 They're taking actions on their own.*

The next day, Mr. Wang readied a room in which his nephew Zhou Tingzhang could study and had the young man brought to the room, but not without first locking the back door that led to the women's quarters so as to keep the women away from the garden. The staff employed in the frontal section of the house took care of Tingzhang's daily needs. Though Tingzhang and Jiaoluan were in the same house, communication became, if anything, more difficult. Despite her unflinching determination to keep her chastity, Jiaoluan's amorous desires had been aroused. Moreover, their proximity and the significant looks they exchanged at the dinner table made their separation during the rest of the day even more unbearable.

Jiaoluan's depression led to illness. Her temperature was low in the morning but rose to a feverish high late in the afternoon, and she forsook all food and beverage. Mr. Wang engaged physicians and fortune-tellers, but nothing worked. Time and again, Tingzhang went to the main hall to inquire about her health, and Mr. Wang accepted his regards without ever inviting him into the girl's chamber. But Tingzhang came up with a plan. He said, lying through his teeth, "When I was growing up south of the Yangzi River, I learned the theories of medicine. If I could feel my cousin's pulse, I'd be able to





才迎入。廷章坐于床边，假以看脉为由，抚摩了半晌。[眉批]生尽多贼智，亦乘王翁之愚耳。其时王翁夫妇俱在，不好交言。只说得一声保重，出了房门，对王翁道：“表妹之疾，是抑郁所致，常须于宽敞之地，散步陶情，更使女伴劝慰，开其郁抱，自当勿药。”王翁敬信周生，更不疑惑，便道：“衙中只有园亭，并无别处宽敞。”廷章故意道：“若表妹不时要园亭散步，恐小侄在彼不便，暂请告归。”王翁道：“既为兄妹，复何嫌阻？”即日教开了后门，将锁钥付曹姨收管，就教曹姨陪侍女儿，任情闲耍，明霞伏侍，寸步不离，自以为万全之策矣！

却说娇鸾原为思想周郎致病，得他抚摩一番，已自欢喜。又许散步园亭，陪伴伏侍者，都是心腹之人，病便好了一半。每到园亭，廷章便得相见，同行同坐。有时亦到廷章书房中吃茶，渐渐不避嫌疑，挨肩擦背。廷章捉个空，向小姐恳求，要到香闺一

make a diagnosis.”

After informing his wife and having Mingxia the maid tell Jiaoluan, Mr. Wang led the young man in. Sitting at the bedside, Tingzhang caressed the young lady's wrist for the longest time, pretending to be feeling her pulse. (*This fellow, in his devious, clever way, does know how to take advantage of Mr. Wang's stupidity.*) With both parents present, Tingzhang couldn't exchange a word with the girl other than to tell her to take care of herself. Once out of the chamber, he said to Mr. Wang, “My cousin's illness is caused by depression. If she could take frequent walks in some open space with female companionship and thus take her mind off things, she would be all right again without the aid of medicine.”

Mr. Wang respected and trusted the young man so much that not the slightest suspicion crossed his mind. “The only open space in this establishment is the garden,” said he.

Purposefully, Tingzhang replied, “If my cousin is to take frequent walks in the garden, I'm afraid I will be in her way. I'll have to return home.”

“Being brother and sister, why stand on ceremony?” said Mr. Wang.

That very day, Mr. Wang ordered the back door to be unlocked and the key entrusted to Auntie Cao, who was to keep Jiaoluan amused as best she could. Mingxia was to attend to her young mistress's needs and never leave her for a moment. Mr. Wang thought the arrangement flawless.

To return to Jiaoluan: Since her illness was a result of her longing for young Mr. Zhou, she was overjoyed that he had managed to caress her wrist. In addition, the two people allowed to accompany her on her walks in the garden and attend to her needs were her confidantes. Immediately, her illness was half gone.

Every time she went to the garden, Tingzhang was there to see her and be with her, walking or sitting. Sometimes she also stopped by his study for tea. Gradually, they cast all caution to the winds and began to touch each other, shoulder to shoulder, back to back.

On one occasion, when the coast was clear, Tingzhang pleaded



望。娇鸾目视曹姨，低低向生道：“锁钥在彼，兄自求之。”廷章已悟。次日廷章取吴绫二端，金钏一副，央明霞献与曹姨。姨问鸾道：“周公子厚礼见惠，不知何事？”娇鸾道：“年少狂生，不无过失，渠要姨包容耳！”曹姨道：“你二人心事，我已悉知。但有往来，决不泄漏！”因把匙钥付与明霞。鸾心大喜，遂题一绝，寄廷章云：

暗将私语寄英才，倘向人前莫乱开。

今夜香闺春不锁，月移花影玉人来。

廷章得诗，喜不自禁。是夜黄昏已罢，谯鼓方声，廷章悄步及于内宅，后门半启，捩身而进。自那日房中看脉出园上来，依稀记得路径，缓缓而行。但见灯光外射，明霞候于门侧。廷章步进香房，与鸾施礼，便欲搂抱。鸾将生挡开，唤明霞快请曹姨来同坐。廷章大失所望，自陈苦情，责其变卦，一时急泪欲流。鸾道：“妾本贞姬，君非荡子。只因有才有貌，所以相爱相怜。妾既私君，终当守君之节；君若弃妾，岂不负妾之诚。必矢明神，誓同白首，若还苟合，有死不从。”说罢，曹姨适至，向廷章谢日



with Jiaoluan for permission to see her boudoir. Casting a glance at Auntie Cao, Jiaoluan replied in a subdued voice, "My aunt has the key. You'll have to ask her." Tingzhang understood.

The next day, he came with two bolts of fine silk from the Wu region and a pair of gold bracelets and asked Mingxia to present them as gifts to Auntie Cao.

"I wonder why Mr. Zhou is so generous," Auntie Cao remarked to her niece.

"An impetuous young man is prone to committing improprieties. He wants you, Auntie, to look the other way."

"I know what's going on between you two but you can go ahead and see each other. I'll never say a word to anyone." So saying, she gave the key to Mingxia. Exultantly, Jiaoluan wrote a quatrain and sent it to Tingzhang. It said,

*Quietly I send word to the talented one;
 Act not rashly with others present.
 Tonight the boudoir will be free of lock and key;
 In the shadow of the moon and flowers comes she.*

The poem threw Tingzhang into raptures. When dusk set in and the watch drum had struck, Tingzhang tiptoed into the inner section of the house and sidled through the gate that had been left ajar. He had a vague memory of the route from his last venture into the boudoir to feel Jiaoluan's pulse and inched his way forward until he saw Mingxia the maid standing in a pool of light by the door. Hardly had he stepped into the chamber and exchanged a greeting with Jiaoluan when he tried to embrace her, but she pushed him away. As she did so, she told Mingxia to bring in Auntie Cao and have her sit with them. Bitterly disappointed, Tingzhang protested and accused her of breaking her word. In his chagrin, tears came to his eyes.

Jiaoluan said, "I am a chaste woman, and you are not some lecherous rake either. We have fallen in love because we are attracted to each other's talent and looks. Since I have privately promised myself to you, I will surely stay loyal to you till the end. If you ever abandon me, you will be betraying my devotion. We must vow to the gods that we will live out our lives together. Without a proper ceremo-



间之惠。廷章遂央姨为媒，誓谐伉俪，口中咒愿如流而出。[眉批]轻咒者必慢神。曹姨道：“二位贤甥，既要我为媒，可写合同婚书四纸，将一纸焚于天地，以告鬼神；一纸留于吾手，以为媒证；你二人各执一纸，为他日合卺之验。女若负男，疾雷震死；男若负女，乱箭亡身。再受阴府之愆，永堕酆都之狱。”生与鸾听曹姨说得痛切，各各欢喜。遂依曹姨所说，写成婚书誓约。先拜天地，后谢曹姨。姨乃出清果醇醪，与二人把盏称贺。三人同坐饮酒，直至三鼓，曹姨别去。生与鸾携手上床，雨云之乐可知也。五鼓，鸾促生起身，嘱付道：“妾已委身于君，君休负恩于妾。神明在上，鉴察难逃。今后妾若有暇，自遣明霞奉迎，切莫轻行，以招物议。”廷章字字应承，留恋不舍。鸾急教明霞送出园门。是日鸾寄生二律云：

昨夜同君喜事从，芙蓉帐暖语从容。
贴胸交股情偏好，拨雨撩云兴转浓。



ny, I would rather die than comply.”

At this point, Auntie Cao arrived. She thanked Tingzhang for his gift, whereupon Tingzhang asked her to serve as matchmaker. When he took the marriage vow, he poured out a stream of curses against himself should he be remiss in his devotion. (*In fact, people prone to taking violent oaths hold the gods in contempt.*)

“My dear children,” said Auntie Cao, “if you want me to be the matchmaker, draw up four copies of a marriage contract. One copy is to be burned as an offering to heaven and earth and the gods. One is to be kept by me as proof of my services as matchmaker. The two of you will keep one each, to serve as proof in the case of a reunion after a separation. Should the wife betray the husband, she shall die from a thunderbolt. Should the husband betray the wife, he shall die under myriad arrows. Whoever betrays the other will be tormented in the netherworld and will never be delivered.”

Delighted by Auntie Cao’s impassioned speech, Tingzhang and Jiaoluan put their marriage vows on paper. They bowed, first to heaven and earth, and then to Auntie Cao. Auntie Cao set out fresh fruit and mellow wine and offered toasts of congratulations. The three sat together, drinking wine until the third strike of the night watch. After Auntie Cao left, the young couple went to bed, hand in hand. The joys of their union can well be imagined.

At the fifth watch, Jiaoluan urged Tingzhang to get up and leave, saying, “Now that I have given myself to you, you must not betray me. Nothing escapes the eyes of the gods. Whenever I see an opportunity, I will send Mingxia to bring you over. Do not, on any account, come here on a whim, so as not to give rise to gossip.”

Tingzhang agreed with every word but was loath to leave. Quickly, Jiaoluan told Mingxia to escort him as far as the garden gate. Later that day, Jiaoluan wrote him two poems:

The first one said:

What joy, what delight, what a blissful night!
The bed curtains warm, the words tender,
The two bodies joined, the passion at its height,
In a raging storm of clouds and rain.



一枕凤鸾声细细，半窗花月影重重。
晓来窥视鸳鸯枕，无数飞红扑绣绒。其一
衾翻红浪效绸缪，乍抱郎腰分外羞。
月正圆时花正好，云初散处雨初收。
一团恩爱从天降，万种情怀得自由。
寄语今宵中夕夜，不须欹枕看牵牛。其二

廷章亦有酬答之句。自此鸾疾尽愈，门锁竟弛。或三日，或五日，鸾必遣明霞召生，来往既频，恩情愈笃。

如此半年有馀。周司教任满，升四川峨眉县尹。廷章恋鸾之情，不肯同行，只推身子有病，怕蜀道艰难；况学业未成，师友相得，尚欲留此读书。[眉批]未能为子，岂能为夫。周司教平昔纵子，言无不从。起身之日，廷章送父出城而返。鸾感廷章之留，是日邀之相会，愈加亲爱。如此又半年有馀。其中往来诗篇甚多，不能尽载。廷章一日阅邸报，见父亲在峨眉不服水土，告病回乡。



*On the pillow, the soft chirp of the phoenix;
By the window, the shadow of flowers and the moon.
In the morning, a peek at the pillows of love;
On the quilt, dots of red fallen petals.*

The second one said:

*The quilt rolling in red waves of passion,
Shyly I embraced the loved one for the first time.
With the moon at its roundest, the flowers in full bloom,
The clouds dispersed, and the rain let up.
Conjugal love, a gift from heaven,
Has released feelings of all descriptions.
I send you these lines on this mid-month night,
Without having to watch the Herdboy star.⁹*

Tingzhang wrote some lines back.

Soon, Jiaoluan had fully regained her health. As the gate was no longer padlocked, every three or five days she dispatched Mingxia to bring Tingzhang over.

As they were so often together, their love for each other grew more profound.

About half a year went by in like fashion. Commissioner Zhou's term of office expired, and he was promoted to be magistrate of Emei County, in Sichuan. Loathing the thought of leaving Jiaoluan, Tingzhang refused to go with his father, pleading illness and anxiety about the hardships of the journey. In addition, with his studies not yet completed and his teacher and classmates being congenial company, he simply had to stay behind and pursue further studies. (*How can a disobedient son be a good husband?*) Being a doting father, Commissioner Zhou never failed to grant every one of his son's wishes.

On the day of the commissioner's departure, Tingzhang saw his father off as far as the city gate before returning. Grateful to Tingzhang for his decision to stay, Jiaoluan asked him to come over later that very day, and their union was doubly tender. Things went on this way for another six months and more, during which time they wrote more poems for each other than can be recorded here.

One day, Tingzhang was reading the official newspapers when

久别亲闱，欲谋归覲，又牵鸾情爱，不忍分离。事在两难，忧形于色。鸾探知其故，因置酒劝生道：“夫妇之爱，瀚海同深；父子之情，高天难比。若恋私情而忘公义，不惟君失子道，累妾亦失妇道矣！”曹姨亦劝道：“今日暮夜之期，原非百年之算。公子不如暂回乡故，且覲双亲。倘于定省之间，即议婚姻之事，早完誓愿，免致情牵。”廷章心犹不决。娇鸾教曹姨竟将公子欲归之情，对王翁说了。[眉批] 娇鸾志气不减齐姜，惜周公子之非晋公子也。此日正是端阳，王翁治酒与廷章送行，且致厚赆。廷章义不容己，只得收拾行李。是夜，鸾另置酒香闺，邀廷章重伸前誓，再订婚期。曹姨亦在坐，千言万语，一夜不睡。临别，又问廷章住居之处。廷章道：“问做甚么？”鸾道：“恐君不即来，妾便于通信耳。”廷章索笔写出四句：

思亲千里返姑苏，家住吴江十七都。





he came upon a story about his father, saying that Magistrate Zhou, unaccustomed to the climate of Emei, had returned to his hometown for reasons of health. Tingzhang had been separated from his parents for so long that he did wish to visit them but could not bear the thought of leaving his beloved Jiaoluan. Facing such a difficult choice, he became visibly depressed.

Upon learning the cause of his low spirits, Jiaoluan set out wine and gave him these words of advice: "Conjugal love may be as deep as the sea, but the love between father and son is vaster than the sky. If you neglect your higher obligations for the sake of romantic love, you will not only be remiss in your duties as a son but will also make me remiss in my duties as a wife."

Auntie Cao also said, "Meeting on the sly in this way is by no means like a proper marriage. You might just as well return to your hometown and visit your parents. During your stay with them, bring up the subject of marriage so as to fulfill your marriage vow as soon as possible and relieve your mind of a burden."

While Tingzhang was still debating with himself, Jiaoluan told Auntie Cao to inform her father about the young man's wish to return home. (*Jiaoluan is by no means any less proud of spirit than Jiang of Qi. Too bad that Mr. Zhou is no Prince of Jin.*¹⁰)

That day being the day of the Dragon Boat Festival, Mr. Wang set out a farewell feast in Tingzhang's honor and gave him lavish gifts. Tingzhang's sense of duty won out over his less worthy inclinations, and he resignedly set about packing his belongings. That night, Jiaoluan served wine in her chamber and, in the presence of Auntie Cao, asked Tingzhang to reaffirm his vows and set a date for the wedding. They had so much to tell each other that they talked throughout the whole wakeful night. Before they parted company, she asked for his address.

"Why do you ask?" said Tingzhang.

"If you don't come back soon enough, I'll write to you."

Tingzhang requested a brush-pen and wrote the following quatrain:

Missing my parents, I travel a thousand li



须问南麻双漾口，延陵桥下督粮吴。

廷章又解说：“家本吴姓，祖当里长督粮，有名督粮吴家，周是外姓也。此字虽然写下，欲见之切，度日如岁。多则一年，少则半载，定当持家君柬帖，亲到求婚，决不忍闺阁佳人，悬悬而望。”言罢，相抱而泣。将次天明，鸾亲送生出园，有联句一律：

绸缪鱼水正投机，无奈思亲使别离。廷章
花圃从今谁待月？兰房自此懒围棋。娇鸾
惟忧身远心俱远，非虑文齐福不齐。廷章
低首不言中自省，强将别泪整蛾眉。娇鸾

须臾天晓，鞍马齐备。王翁又于中堂设酒，妻女毕集，为上马之饯，廷章再拜而别。鸾自觉悲伤欲泣，潜归内室，取乌丝笺题诗一律，使明霞送廷章上马，伺便投之。章于马上展看云：

同携素手并香肩，送别那堪双泪悬。

*Back to Wujiang, the seventeenth township of Suzhou.
Ask for Double Ripple Point in South Hemp,
Where Grain Overseer Wu lives by Yanling Bridge.*

Tingzhang explained, "My mother is of the famous Wu clan, descended from the local Grain Overseer Wu. Zhou is the surname of my father, who married into the Wu clan. You won't have much use for this address because I'll miss you so much that a day will be as long as a year, and so I'll surely come back in half a year, or at most a whole year, with a letter from my parents proposing marriage. I will never allow my beauty to wait for me in anxiety." They fell on each other's shoulders and burst into sobs.

When daybreak drew near, Jiaoluan escorted Tingzhang out of the garden. The following is an eight-line poem that they composed together:

*However deeply in love the two may be,
One has to leave for his parents. (by Tingzhang)
Henceforth, who will wait for the moon in the garden?
Who will be in the mood for chess in the boudoir? (by*

Jiaoluan)

*I fear that absence will make the hearts grow distant;
I care not if my luck does not match my talent. (by*

Tingzhang)

*My head lowered, I keep my thoughts to myself;
Holding back my farewell tears, I trim my brows. (by*

Jiaoluan)

At the first light of dawn, the horse and the saddle were made ready. Mr. Wang set out wine in the main hall, where his wife and daughter were also present, to bid the young man farewell. As Tingzhang was bowing, Jiaoluan, on the verge of sad tears, quietly returned to her own room. There, she wrote a poem on black-traced stationery and gave it to Mingxia, who then slipped it into Tingzhang's hands when she was helping him mount the horse. In the saddle, Tingzhang opened the letter and read,

*Hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder,
We part company in sad tears.*





郎马未离青柳下，妾心先在白云边。
妾持节操如姜女，君重纲常类闵骞。
得意匆匆便回首，香闺人瘦不禁眠。

廷章读之泪下，一路上触景兴怀，未尝顷刻忘鸾也。

闲话休叙。不一日，到了吴江家中，参见了二亲，一门欢喜。原来父亲已与同里魏同知家议亲，正要接儿子回来行聘完婚。生初时有不愿之意，后访得魏女美色无双，且魏同知十万之富，妆奁甚丰。慕财贪色，遂忘前盟。过了半年，魏氏过门，夫妻恩爱，如鱼似水，竟不知王娇鸾为何人矣。

但知今日新妆好，不顾情人望眼穿。

却说娇鸾一时劝廷章归省，是他贤慧达理之处。然已去之后，未免怀思。白日凄凉，黄昏寂寞。灯前有影相亲，帐底无人共语。每遇春花秋月，不觉梦断魂劳。捱过一年，杳无音信。忽一日明霞来报道：“姐姐可要寄书与周姐夫么？”娇鸾道：“那得有这方



*Before your horse has gone past the willows,
My heart has flown to the white clouds afar.
One is as chaste as Gongjiang,¹¹
The other as filial as Min Jian,¹²
Come back as soon as your wish is fulfilled,
For the sake of the one pining in the boudoir.*

His tears flowing after he had read the poem, Tingzhang was overcome with emotion as the sights of the journey all reminded him of his loved one. To do him justice, he did not forget about Jiaoluan right away.

Let us not encumber our story with unnecessary details but tell of Tingzhang's arrival at the family mansion in Wujiang some days later. As he greeted his parents, the entire household rejoiced, for his father had arranged his marriage with the daughter of Prefect Wei, who lived in the same neighborhood, and his father was about to have him escorted back home for the wedding ceremony. After an initial show of reluctance, Tingzhang accepted the offer once he learned of Miss Wei's unparalleled beauty as well as the lavish dowry and Prefect Wei's immense wealth. His greed and his lust made him forget about the vows he had taken.

Half a year later, Wei-shi crossed the threshold of the Zhou family as a bride. As happy as a fish in water in his loving new marriage, Tingzhang no longer remembered the existence of someone by the name of Wang Jiaoluan.

*Enamored of the new love, he forgot
The one awaiting his return.*

Jiaoluan had urged Tingzhang to go to his parents out of a sense of wifely duty, but after he was gone, she sorely missed him. Her days were spent in misery, her evenings in loneliness. Beside the lamp, she had none but her own shadow for a companion. Behind the bed curtains, she had no one to share her thoughts. Her sorrows were deepest when spring flowers were in bloom and when the autumn moon shone brightly. A year passed painfully without a word from Tingzhang.

Suddenly, one day, Mingxia came to inquire, "Do you want



便？”明霞道：“适才孙九说临安卫有人来此下公文。临安是杭州地方，路从吴江经过，是个便道。”娇鸾道：“既有便，可教孙九嘱付那差人不要去了。”即时修书一封，曲叙别离之意。嘱他早至南阳，同归故里，践婚姻之约，成终始之交。书多不载。书后有诗十首。录其一云：

端阳一别杳无音，两地相看对月明。
暂为椿萱辞虎卫，莫因花酒恋吴城。
游仙阁内占离合，拜月亭前问死生。
此去愿君心自省，同来与妾共调羹。

封皮上又题八句：

此书烦递至吴衙，门面春风足可夸。
父列当今宣化职，祖居自古督粮家。
已知东宅邻西宅，犹恐南麻混北麻。
去路逢人须借问，延陵桥在那村些？

又取银钗二股，为寄书之赠。书去了七个月，并无回耗。时值新春，又访得前卫有个张客人要往苏州收货。娇鸾又取金花一对，央孙九送与张客，求他寄书。书意同前。亦有诗十首。录其一云：



to send Brother-in-law Zhou a letter?"

"Is there a messenger?" asked Jiaoluan.

"Sun Jiu was saying just a moment ago that there's a government courier from the Lin'an District, where Hangzhou is located. Wujiang being on the way to Lin'an, he can very well deliver a letter on his return trip."

"In that case, tell Sun Jiu to make sure that the courier doesn't leave too soon." Right away, Jiaoluan wrote a letter, expressing her feelings for the one far away and reminding him to come to Nanyang as soon as possible so that they could return together to his hometown and fulfill their marriage vow. Let us skip the letter and cite only one of the ten poems attached to it:

*Nothing has been heard from you since we parted;
Between us, there's only the lambent moon to share.
For your parents' sake, you left this compound;
Do not be detained by the pleasures of the South.
In the Immortals' Hall, I seek divination;
At the Moon Pavilion, I have my fortune told.
Would that you looked into your heart
And shared with me the joys of conjugal life!*

On the envelope she wrote another eight lines:

*To the Wu house please deliver this note;
An imposing mansion, a source of pride.
The father, the education commissioner,
Among the ancestors, the Grain Overseer.
Be sure of the location of the house;
Do not confuse South Hemp with North Hemp.
Ask for directions as you find your way there;
In which village stands Yanling Bridge?*

She tipped the messenger with two silver hairpins.

Seven months elapsed without a reply. When New Year's Day drew near, Jiaoluan learned that a traveler named Zhang would soon be leaving the neighborhood to purchase merchandise in Suzhou. She took out a pair of gold flower-shaped hairpins and again had Sun Jiu ask the traveler to deliver a letter. The letter contained the same mes-



春到人间万物鲜，香闺无奈别魂牵。
东风浪荡君尤荡，皓月团圆妾未圆。
情洽有心劳白发，天高无计托青鸾。
衷肠万事凭谁诉？寄与才郎仔细看。

封皮上题一绝：

苏州咫尺是吴江，吴姓南麻世督粮。
嘱付行人须着意，好将消息问才郎。

张客人是志诚之士，往苏州收货已毕，賚书亲到吴江。正在长桥上问路，恰好周廷章过去。听得是河南声音，问的又是南麻督粮吴家，情知娇鸾书信，怕他到彼，知其再娶之事。遂上前作揖通名，邀往酒馆三杯，拆开书看了。就于酒家借纸笔，匆匆写下回书，推说父病未痊，方侍医药，所以有误佳期。不久即图会面，无劳注想。书后又写：“路次借笔不备，希谅！”张客收了回书，不一日，回到南阳，付孙九回复鸾小姐。鸾拆书看了，虽然不曾定个来期，也当画饼充饥，望梅止渴。过了三四个月，依旧



sage as before. The following is one of the ten poems attached to it:

*Spring brought new life to everything on earth,
But the one in the boudoir is lost in sorrow.
The east wind blows, and my loved one floats with it;
The moon waxes full, but I'm not made whole.
Worn down with sorrow, my hair turns hoary;
I seek a messenger, a blue bird in the sky.
To whom can I pour out my heart?
To the talented one I send this note.*

On the envelope, she wrote a quatrain:

*Near Suzhou lies Wujiang, where stands
The house of Grain Overseer Wu of South Hemp.
Please look for the place with care,
And convey my questions to the talented one.*

Being a sincere and responsible man, Mr. Zhang, the traveling merchant, went to Wujiang to deliver the letter personally after he had concluded his business in Suzhou. He was asking for directions on Long Bridge when Zhou Tingzhang happened to pass by. Hearing a voice with a Henan accent asking about Grain Overseer Wu of South Hemp, he knew it must be a messenger bearing a letter from Jiaoluan. Afraid that the messenger would go to his home and find out about his new marriage, he stepped forward with a salute. After introducing himself, he invited the messenger to a wineshop for a few drinks. There, he opened the letter, read it, and, with a brush-pen and a piece of paper borrowed from the shop-owner, hastily wrote a reply saying that he had to postpone the wedding because his father was recovering from an illness and needed his services. He added that he would soon see her again and told her not to worry. At the end of the letter, he wrote, "Written on the road in haste with a borrowed brush-pen. Please accept my apologies."

Mr. Zhang took the letter. Some days later, he returned to Nanyang and sent it via Sun Jiu to Jiaoluan. She opened the letter and read it. Even though no wedding date was given, the letter was, for her, a painted cake that allayed her hunger and an imaginary cluster of plums that quenched her thirst.



杳然无闻。娇鸾对曹姨道：“周郎之言欺我耳！”曹姨道：“誓书在此，皇天鉴知！周郎独不怕死乎？”忽一日，闻有临安人到，乃是娇鸾妹子娇凤生了孩儿，遣人来报喜。娇鸾彼此相形，愈加感叹。且喜又是寄书的一个顺便，再修书一封托他。这是第三封书，亦有诗十首。末一章云：

叮咛才子莫蹉跎，百岁夫妻能几何？
王氏女为周氏室，文官子配武官娥。
三封心事烦青鸟，万斛闲愁锁翠蛾。
远路尺书情未尽，相思两处恨偏多！

封皮上亦写四句：

此书烦递至吴江，粮督南麻姓字香。
去路不须驰步问，延陵桥下暂停航。

鸾自此寝废餐忘，香消玉减，暗地泪流，恹恹成病。父母欲为择配，娇鸾不肯，情愿长斋奉佛。曹姨劝道：“周郎未必来矣，毋拘小信，自误青春。”娇鸾道：“人而无信，是禽兽也。宁周郎负我，我岂敢负神明哉？”



Three to four months passed without another word from Tingzhang. Jiaoluan said to Auntie Cao, "He must have been lying to me!"

"But his written oath is here, and heaven is a witness. He can't be courting death, can he?"

Suddenly, one day, word came that a messenger had arrived from Lin'an with the news that Jiaoluan's younger sister, Jiaofeng, had given birth. The glad tidings plunged Jiaoluan into melancholy over her own status, as compared with her sister's. But she was glad that, at least, someone could deliver a letter for her again. So she wrote another letter, the third one. There were another ten poems attached to it. The last poem said,

*To the gifted one I say, seize the day!
 How much more time remains for our wedded life?
 Daughter of a Wang, son of a Zhou,
 One of military background, one civilian.
 To the blue bird I entrust all three letters,
 As I languish in grief in the depths of my room,
 My feelings deeper than the letters can convey,
 My thoughts painfully torn between the two places.*

On the envelope, she wrote four lines:

*To Wujiang please deliver this letter,
 To Wu of South Hemp, Grain Overseer.
 Take your time as you ask your way;
 Pause for a rest when you reach Yanling Bridge.*

Henceforth, Jiaoluan neglected her meals and spent her nights sleepless. She grew emaciated, and as her tears furtively flowed, her gloominess made her ill. Her parents offered to select a husband for her, but she turned a deaf ear, saying that she would rather devote the rest of her life to Buddhism and adopt a vegetarian diet.

Auntie Cao tried to talk her out of the idea. "Mr. Zhou is not likely to come back," she said. "While you're young, don't jeopardize your prospects by holding yourself to a minor promise."

Jiaoluan countered, "A person who breaks promises is nothing short of a beast. I'd rather have him betray me than betray the gods



光阴荏苒，不觉已及三年。娇鸾对曹姨说道：“闻说周郎已婚他族，此信未知真假。然三年不来，其心肠亦改变矣。但不得一实信，吾心终不死！”曹姨道：“何不央孙九亲往吴江一遭，多与他些盘费。若周郎无他更变，使他等候同来，岂不美乎？”娇鸾道：“正合吾意，亦求姨娘一字，促他早早登程可也。”当下娇鸾写就古风一首。其略云：

忆昔清明佳节时，与君邂逅成相知。
嘲风弄月通来往，拨动风情无限思。
侯门曳断千金索，携手挨肩游画阁。
好把青丝结死生，盟山誓海情不薄。
白云渺渺草青青，才子思亲欲别情。
顿觉桃脸无春色，愁听传书雁几声。
君行虽不排鸾驭，胜似征蛮父兄去。
悲悲切切断肠声，执手牵衣理前誓。
与君成就鸾凤友，切莫苏城恋花柳。
自君之去妾攒眉，脂粉慵调发如帚。



myself.”

Time sped by. Quite unnoticeably, three years passed. Jiaoluan said to Auntie Cao, “I heard that he has married again, but I don’t know if it’s true. Three years’ absence means that he must have had a change of heart. And yet, I won’t give up hopes without some kind of confirmation.”

“Why not give Sun Jiu a generous sum of travel money and ask him to go to Wujiang? If Young Master Zhou’s status hasn’t changed, wouldn’t it be nice if Sun Jiu could stay there for a while and then come back with him?”

“That’s exactly what I’ve been thinking. Could you also write a few lines, Auntie, to urge Sun Jiu to be on the road as soon as possible?”

Right away, Jiaoluan wrote a poem in the ancient style, an excerpt of which appears below:

*During a Clear and Bright Festival,
 We met by chance and became friends.
 We intoned poems to the wind and the moon,
 Our trysts arousing youthful passion.
 Breaking the gold chains that lock the mansion,
 We toured the sights, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder.
 With our hair, we tied the knot of life and death,
 Exchanging vows of love and constancy.
 When the grass turned green under vast white clouds,
 The gifted one left me for his parents.
 Suddenly, my rosy cheeks lost their color;
 Sadly, I listened for wild geese, the mail bearers.
 You may not have left for war on a chariot,
 Like my father and brother, but it was sadder.
 With heartrending sobs, we repeated our vows,
 Holding each other by the hand and clothes.
 Now that we’ve become a devoted pair,
 Do not fall prey to the beauties of the South.
 Since you left, my brows have stayed knitted;
 My rouge and powder untouched, my hair like a broom.*



姻缘两地相思重，雪月风花谁与共？
可怜夫妇正当年，空使梅花蝴蝶梦。
临风对月无欢好，凄凉枕上魂颠倒。
一宵忽梦汝娶亲，来朝不觉愁颜老。
盟言愿作神雷电，九天玄女相传遍。
只归故里未归泉，何故音容难得见？
才郎意假妾意真，再驰驿使陈丹心。
可怜三七羞花貌，寂寞香闺思不禁。

曹姨书中亦备说女甥相思之苦，相望之切。二书共作一封。封皮亦题四句：

荡荡名门宰相衙，更兼粮督镇南麻。
逢人不用停舟问，桥跨延陵第一家。

孙九领书，夜宿晓行，直至吴江延陵桥下。犹恐传递不的，直候周廷章面送。廷章一见孙九，满脸通红，不问寒温，取书纳于袖中，竟进去了。少顷教家童出来回复道：“相公娶魏同知家小姐，今已二年。南阳路远，不能复来矣！回书难写，仗你代言。这幅香罗帕乃初会鸾姐之物，并合同婚书一纸，央你送还，以绝



*With thoughts of my husband heavy on my mind,
With whom can I share the joys of snow, moon, wind and
flowers?*

*How tragic that in the full bloom of our youth,
We dream in vain of plum blossoms and butterflies.
The wind and moon give me little pleasure;
On the forlorn pillow, my soul writhes in pain.
One night I dreamed that you married again;
The next day I found myself aged and in decay.
Would that the vows had traveled like thunderbolts
To the goddess of the ninth layer of heaven!
You returned to your hometown, not the netherworld;
Why is it so hard to see your face?
Your feelings are fake; mine are genuine;
Here again is a letter that lays out my heart.
Pity the one whose beauty puts flowers to shame;
In my lonely boudoir, my thoughts weigh me down.*

In her letter, Auntie Cao also emphasized how her niece missed her loved one and wished to see him again. The two letters were put into the same envelope, on which was written:

*To the mansion of the great one,
Grain Overseer of South Hemp town.
There's no need to stop the boat and ask around,
For it is the first house by Yanling Bridge.*

Bearing the letters, Sun Jiu traveled by day and rested by night and made his way to Yanling Bridge in Wujiang. Afraid that he might deliver the letters into the wrong hands, he waited until he could see Zhou Tingzhang face to face. At the sight of Sun Jiu, Tingzhang reddened deeply. Without so much as a word of greeting for the visitor, he took the envelope, slipped it into his sleeve, and went into the house. Before long, a page boy emerged to announce, "My young master has been married for two years to the daughter of Commissioner Wei. Nanyang being so far from here, he's not able to go there again. Instead of writing a reply, which is hardly possible, he asks you to convey an oral message. This silk kerchief, a token of his first



其念。本欲留你一饭，诚恐老爹盘问嗔怪。白银五钱权充路费，下次更不劳往返！”孙九闻言大怒，掷银于地不受，[眉批]孙九可取。走出大门，骂道：“似你短行薄情之人，禽兽不如！可怜负了鸾小姐一片真心，皇天断然不佑你！”说罢，大哭而去。[眉批]绝似南霁云乞救不得，哭回睢阳光景。路人争问其故，孙老儿数一数二的逢人告诉。自此周廷章无行之名，播于吴江，为衣冠所不齿。正是：

平生不作亏心事，世上应无切齿人。

再说孙九回至南阳，见了明霞，便悲泣不已。明霞道：“莫非你路上吃了苦？莫非周家郎君死了？”孙九只是摇头，停了半晌，方说备细，如此如此：“他不发回书，只将罗帕婚书送还，以绝小姐之念。我也不去见小姐了。”说罢，拭泪叹息而去。明霞不敢隐瞒，备述孙九之语。娇鸾见了这罗帕，已知孙九不是个谎话，不觉怨气填胸，怒色盈面。就请曹姨至香房中，告诉了一遍。曹姨将言劝解，娇鸾如何肯听！整整的哭了三日三夜，将三尺香罗帕反覆观看，欲寻自尽。又想道：“我娇鸾名门爱女，美貌多

meeting with Sister Jiaoluan, and this copy of the marriage contract are for you to take back and return to her so that she will give up all hope. My young master wished to keep you for a meal, but he's afraid that his father would question him and hold him to blame. Here are five maces of silver to cover your travel expenses. You need not come again."

Enraged by these words, Sun Jiu threw the silver to the ground. (*Good man!*) As he walked out through the gate, he cursed, "Such a heartless man is worse than a beast! You betrayed the poor girl's love! No blessings for you from Heaven!" With that, he departed, crying his heart out as he went along. (*Just like Nan Jiyun crying his way back to Suiyang after a failed attempt at seeking help.*)¹³ Old Man Sun poured out the whole story to every pedestrian who asked him why he was weeping. Henceforth, Zhou Tingzhang's notoriety as a heartless man spread throughout the Wujiang region. His name came to be held in contempt by all decent folks. Truly,

*Those who do nothing that troubles the conscience
Should have no enemies in the world.*

Let us get on with our story. Upon returning to Nanyang, Sun Jiu broke down in sobs at the sight of Mingxia the maid. "Was it a difficult journey for you?" she asked. "Or has Young Master Zhou died?"

Sun Jiu kept shaking his head. Eventually he pulled himself together and told her the whole story, adding, "Instead of writing a reply, he just gave me back the silk kerchief and marriage contract to make our young lady give up all hope. I can't see her." So saying, he wiped away his tears and went off with a sigh.

Mingxia did not dare to hide anything and repeated Sun Jiu's words to her mistress. At the sight of the kerchief, Jiaoluan knew that Sun Jiu was not lying. Her heart filled with rage and her face flushed with anger, she called Auntie Cao to her room and told her what had happened. To Auntie Cao's soothing words, she turned a deaf ear.

She cried for three whole days and nights, examining the kerchief again and again. She thought of suicide but said to herself, "Being a beloved daughter of a distinguished official, endowed with





才。若嘿嘿而死，却便宜了薄情之人。”乃制绝命诗三十二首及《长恨歌》一篇，诗云：

倚门默默思重重，自叹双双一笑中。
情惹游丝牵嫩绿，恨随流水缩残红。
当时只道春回准，今日方知色是空。
回首凭栏情切处，闲愁万里怨东风。

馀诗不载。其《长恨歌》略云：

《长恨歌》，为谁作？题起头来心便恶。
朝思暮想无了期，再把鸾笺诉情薄。
妾家原在临安路，麟阁功勋受恩露。
后因亲老失军机，降调南阳卫千户。
深闺养育娇鸾身，不曾举步离中庭。
岂知二九灾星到，忽随女伴妆台行。
秋千戏蹴方才罢，忽惊墙角生人话。
含羞归去香房中，仓忙寻觅香罗帕。
罗帕谁知入君手，空令梅香往来走。
得蒙君赠香罗诗，恼妾相思淹病久。
感君拜母结妹兄，来词去简饶恩情。



beauty and talent, if I die quietly, won't I be letting that cruel man off too lightly?" Thereupon, she composed thirty-two short poems to serve as a suicide note and a long one titled "Song of Eternal Sorrow." The following is one of the thirty-two poems:

*I lean against the door, my mind lost in thought;
Alas! The union didn't last through a smile.
Tender love brought the advent of spring;
Sorrow floats down the river like withered flowers.
I counted on the return of spring,
Only to know now that all is empty!
Back at the railings overwhelmed by emotion,
I languish in grief and hold the east wind to blame.*

We shall skip the rest of the poems and quote only from "Song of Eternal Sorrow":

*"Song of Eternal Sorrow," for whom is it written?
The very idea leaves me sickened.
Brooding day and night — when will this ever end?
On paper I pour out my grief.
My family used to live in Lin'an,
In imperial good graces for services rendered.
For an error in a military campaign,
Father was demoted to Nanyang.
In the depths of my boudoir I was raised,
Never taking a step beyond the middle court.
At eighteen, disaster struck out of the blue:
With my maid I took a walk to the garden.
Hardly had I descended from the swing
Than a stranger's voice rang out from a corner.
Shyly, I returned to my chamber,
Where I searched frantically for my kerchief.
Little knowing you had it in your hands,
I sent the maid to look for it, but in vain.
A poem you wrote on the kerchief
Plunged me into prolonged lovesickness.
Because you claimed kinship with my clan,*



只恐恩情成苟合，两曾结发同山盟。
山盟海誓还不信，又托曹姨作媒证。
婚书写定烧苍穹，始结于飞在天命。
情交二载甜如蜜，才子思亲忽成疾。
妾心不忍君心愁，反劝才郎归故籍。
叮咛此去姑苏城，花街莫听阳春声。
一睹慈颜便回首，香闺可念人孤另。
嘱付殷勤别才子，弃旧怜新任从尔。
那知一去意忘还，终日思君不如死！
有人来说君重婚，几番欲信仍难凭。
后因孙九去复返，方知伉俪谐文君。
此情恨杀薄情者，千里姻缘难割舍。
到手恩情都负之，得意风流在何也？
莫论妾愁长与短，无处箱囊诗不满。
题残锦札五千张，写秃毛锥三百管。
玉闺人瘦娇无力，佳期反作长相忆。
枉将八字推子平，空把三生卜《周易》。



*We were able to exchange letters of love.
Afraid that our love would appear improper,
We took the vow of marriage and devotion.
Yet unsatisfied with the tender vows alone,
We made Auntie Cao a witness.
To heaven we offered the marriage contract,
Placing our future under heaven's dictate.
After two years of a life sweet as honey,
You fell ill with longing for home.
Pained by the sight of your misery,
I urged you to leave for home
But warned you against the pleasure quarters
During your stay in Suzhou,
And to return soon after seeing your parents,
To the forlorn one anxiously waiting.
With these words, I saw you off,
Leaving you free to choose the new over the old.
Who would have thought that you were never to return?
I'd rather die than be weighed down by thoughts of you.
More than once I heard reports of your new marriage;
I tried but failed to believe they were true.
Through Sun Jiu's trip to your hometown,
I learned for certain your new married status.
Filled with bitterness against the heartless one,
I find the marriage bond hard to sever.
Betraying the love of one so close,
What joy can you find in any romance?
Whether my grief is fleeting or endless,
Every trunk and case is filled with my poems.
Five thousand sheets of paper have been covered with
words;
Three hundred brush-pens have lost their hair.
The fair one in the boudoir, now gaunt and weak,
Has nothing but memories of happier times.
In vain did I seek advice from fortune-tellers;*



从头一一思量起，往日交情不亏汝。
既然恩爱如浮云，何不当初莫相与？
莺莺燕燕皆成对，何独天生我无配。
娇凤妹子少二年，适添孩儿已三岁。
自惭轻弃千金躯，伊欢我独心孤悲。 [眉批] 遗而痛。
先年誓愿今何在？举头三尺有神祇。
君往江南妾江北，千里关山远相隔。
若能两翅忽然生，飞向吴江近君侧。
初交你我天地知，今来无数人扬非。
虎门深锁千金色，天教一笑遭君机。
恨君短行归阴府，譬似皇天不生我。
从今书递故人收，不望回音到中所。
可怜铁甲将军家，玉闺养女娇如花。
只因颇识琴书味，风流不久归黄沙。
白罗丈二悬高梁，飘然眼底魂茫茫。
报道一声娇鸾缢，满城笑杀临安王。
妾身自愧非良女，擅把闺情贱轻许。



*To no avail did I consult The Book of Changes.
As my mind reviews all that has happened,
I see that I've never been unworthy of you.
Had I known that love is a floating cloud,
I would not have offered it to you.
The orioles and the swallows fly in pairs;
I'm the only one without company.
Jiaofeng, my sister, younger by two years,
Is now the mother of a three-year-old.
In shame, I end this life, all too lightly,
My lonesome heart filled with pain while you rejoice. (The
sorrows of an abandoned one.)*

*Where, I ask, is the vow of yesteryear?
Three feet above your head dwell the gods of heaven.
With one south of the Yangzi and the other north,
Between us stand more than a thousand li of mountains.
If I found myself with wings this very instant,
I would fly to Wujiang to be with you.
Our erstwhile trysts were known only to sky and earth,
But henceforth the story will be on every lip.
The beauty hidden behind the imposing doors
Was fated to smile and fall into your trap.
I leave this world, embittered by your foul deed;
Heaven should never have brought me into being.
Henceforth, expect no reply
To letters written to the deceased one.
How sad that the general has raised in vain
A daughter lovely as a flower.
Because of my taste for music and books,
I go to an early grave after a brief romance.
The ten-foot-long white kerchief hangs from the beam,
My soul takes flight before my very eyes.
As reports of Jiaoluan's death spread,
The Wangs in Lin'an will be the joke of the town.
To my shame, I am no well-bred lady,*



相思债满还九泉，九泉之下不饶汝。
当初宠妾非如今，我今怨汝如海深。
自知妾意皆仁意，谁想君心似兽心！
再将一幅罗鲛绡，殷勤远寄郎家遥。
自叹兴亡皆此物，杀人可恕情难饶。
反覆叮咛只如此，往日闲愁今日止。
君今肯念旧风流，饱看娇鸾书一纸。

书已写就，欲再遣孙九。孙九咬牙怒目，决不肯去。正无其便，偶值父亲痰火病发，唤娇鸾替他检阅文书。娇鸾看文书里面有一宗乃勾本卫逃军者，其军乃吴江县人。鸾心生一计，乃取从前倡和之词，并今日《绝命诗》及《长恨歌》汇成一帙，合同婚书二纸，置于帙内，总作一封，入于官文书内，封筒上填写“南阳卫掌印千户王投下直隶苏州府吴江县当堂开拆”，[眉批]亦由不忍没其才情，非但欲彰廷章之心也。打发公差去了，王翁全然不知。是晚，娇鸾沐浴更衣，哄明霞出去烹茶，关了房门，用杌子填满，先将白练挂于梁上，取原日香罗帕，向咽喉扣住，接连白练，打个死

*For I easily surrendered my chastity.
To the Nine Springs I go, all my debts to you paid;
Once there, I will not let you off lightly.
At one time, you smothered me with love;
My rancor now is as deep as the sea.
Full of the best intentions on my part,
I knew not that your heart is like that of a beast!
Here is that silk kerchief of mine
Which I'm dutifully sending along to you,
An article that, alas, brought me love and death;
The killing forgivable, the betrayal not.
All I have to say I've laid down here;
Today marks the end of all my sorrows.
For the sake of our one-time romance,
Kindly read these words from Wang Jiaoluan.*

After finishing the letter, she called for Sun Jiu and again asked him to deliver it, but Sun Jiu flatly refused, his jaws set, his eyes blazing with anger. While Jiaoluan was worrying over the lack of a messenger, her father fell ill from excessive phlegm and internal heat and told her to take care of his official correspondence. When she came upon an order to hunt down a deserter who was under her father's command but a native of Wujiang County, she had an idea. She took out the poems Tingzhang had written in reply to hers and put them into a cloth slipcase along with the suicidal poems, "Song of Eternal Sorrow," and the two copies of the marriage contract. She then added the slipcase to the package of official documents and wrote on the cover "From Commander Wang of Nanyang Commandery, to be opened by the magistrate of Wujiang County, Suzhou Prefecture." (*This is not only to make Tingzhang's actions known to the public but also to do justice to her literary talent.*) The official courier was then sent on his way, and Commander Wang was none the wiser.

That very night, Jiaoluan took a bath, changed her clothes, and, after telling Mingxia to go and brew some tea, closed her door. Standing on a stool, she threw a piece of white silk over the beam, took out the silk kerchief that Tingzhang had returned to her, tied one





结，蹬开杌子，两脚悬空，煞时间，三魂漂渺，七魄幽沉，刚年二十一岁。

始终一幅香罗帕，成也萧何败也何！

明霞取茶来时，见房门闭紧，敲打不开，慌忙报与曹姨。曹姨同周老夫人打开房门看了，这惊非小。王翁也来了，合家大哭，竟不知什么意故。少不得买棺殓葬。此事阁过休题。

再说吴江阙大尹接得南阳卫文书，拆开看时，深以为奇，此事旷古未闻。适然本府赵推官随察院樊公祉按临本县。阙大尹与赵推官是金榜同年，因将此事与赵推官言及。赵推官取而观之，遂以奇闻报知樊公。樊公将诗歌及婚书反覆详味，深惜娇鸾之才，而恨周廷章之薄幸。乃命赵推官密访其人，次日，擒拿解院，樊公亲自诘问。廷章初时抵赖，后见婚书有据，不敢开口。樊公喝教重责五十收监。行文到南阳卫查娇鸾曾否自缢？不一日文书转来，说娇鸾已死。樊公乃于监中吊取周廷章到察院堂上，樊公骂



end of it around her throat, and knotted the other end fast to the white silk. With a kick at the stool, her feet dangled in air. All too quickly, her three souls and seven spirits took flight from her body. She was twenty-one years old.

*The silk kerchief, a witness from beginning to end,
 An object that brought her both joy and death!*

When Mingxia returned with the tea and found that the door remained tightly closed despite all her knocking and pounding, she rushed off in alarm to report to Auntie Cao. Mrs. Wang and Auntie Cao maneuvered the door open, and the sight that met their eyes gave them the shock of their lives. Commander Wang also arrived at the chamber. The whole family burst into wails of grief, not knowing what could have led to this tragedy. A coffin was duly bought and a funeral held, but of this, no more.

Now, Magistrate Que of Wujiang received the package from the Nanyang Commandery, opened it, and was fascinated by what he read, for this was something unheard-of from time immemorial. It so happened that Judge Zhao of the prefectural yamen had just arrived in the county, accompanied by Mr. Fan, of the Inspectorate. Magistrate Que and Judge Zhao had won high honors in the imperial examinations in the same year and therefore knew each other. When Magistrate Que told Judge Zhao about this, the judge read the papers, and he in his turn informed Mr. Fan of this most remarkable story. Mr. Fan perused the poems and the marriage contract. He was greatly impressed by Jiaoluan's literary talent and detested Zhou Tingzhang for his heartlessness. He ordered that Judge Zhao quietly seek this man out.

The very next day, Tingzhang was brought to court, and Mr. Fan personally conducted the interrogation. Tingzhang started out by denying all the accusations, but later, when the marriage contract was produced as evidence, he dared not say another word. By Mr. Fan's order, he was given fifty heavy strokes and thrown into jail. A written order was then sent to Nanyang Commandery to ascertain if Jiaoluan had indeed hanged herself. In a few days, a reply came, saying that Jiaoluan was dead, whereupon Mr. Fan had Zhou



道：“调戏职官家子女，一罪也；停妻再娶，二罪也；因奸致死，三罪也。婚书上说：‘男若负妇，万箭亡身。’我今没有箭射你，用乱棒打杀你，以为薄幸男子之戒！”喝教合堂皂快齐举竹批乱打，下手时官商齐响，着体处血肉交飞，顷刻之间，化为肉酱，满城人无不称快。周司教闻知，登时气死。魏女后来改嫁。向贪新娶之财色，而没恩背盟，果何益哉！有诗叹云：

一夜恩情百夜多，负心端的欲如何？

若云薄幸无冤报，请读当年《长恨歌》。



Tingzhang taken from prison to the hall of the inspectorate.

“The first indictment against you is for the crime of taking liberties with an official’s daughter.” So began Mr. Fan’s severe lecture. “The second indictment: abandoning your wife and marrying another woman. The third indictment: causing a death through fornication. Your marriage contract contains the phrase ‘Should the husband betray the wife, he shall die under myriad arrows.’ Lacking arrows to shoot at you, I’m going to have you beaten to death with bamboo rods, as a warning to all heartless men.”

With that, he ordered the officers in attendance to apply their bamboo rods to the young man. Accompanied by rhythmic shouts counting out the strokes, the rods went up and down, splashing drops of blood and bits of flesh. The young man died in a trice, causing jubilation throughout the whole town.

When word reached Commissioner Zhou, he was so mortified that he dropped dead on the spot. Miss Wei, Tingzhang’s wife, later remarried. The greed for her money and the lust for her beauty had led to the betrayal of a previous marriage vow, but what good did it do? There is a poem that laments:

*Husband and wife one night, lovers a hundred nights;
What is in store for the unfaithful?
If you say the heartless go unpunished,
Kindly read “Song of Eternal Sorrow.”*

¹ According to ancient legends, a crow with three feet lives in the sun, and a jade hare lives in the moon.

² In a Song dynasty story, Wang Kui, a scholar, benefited from financial help he received from his lover, a prostitute named Jiao Guiying. Wang jilted Jiao after he won first honors on the civil service examinations and married someone else. Jiao Guiying takes her own life and, as a ghost, wreaked vengeance on Wang Kui.

³ According to “The Story of Huo Xiaoyu” by Jiang Fang of the Tang dynasty, Huo Xiaoyu was a prostitute in love with a man called Li Yi. When the man later obtained an official post, he got rid of her and married someone else. Xiaoyu took revenge after her death.

⁴ The term “clouds and rain” is a metaphor for sexual encounters.

⁵ The Herdboy and Weaving Maiden stars are separated by the Milky Way. They are able to meet only once a year across a bridge formed by magpies.

⁶ Han Shou was loved by the daughter of his superior, the court minister Jia Chong of the



王娇鸾百年长恨



Western Jin dynasty.

⁷ The reference is to Cui Yingying, female protagonist of the famous play *The Western Chamber*, by Wang Shifu. Cui Yingying's mother reneges on her promise to marry her to Zhang Gong (Zhang Junrui), whereupon Zhang plays the lute on a moonlit night to express his feelings to Cui Yingying.

⁸ On Zhang Gong, see previous note.

Cui Yingying's mother only allowed Zhang Gong and Yingying to address each other as brother and sister.

Shen Chun is the male protagonist of *The Story of Jiaohong* by Song Meidong of the Yuan dynasty. He fell in love with his cousin Wang Jiaoniang but Wang's father refused to let them marry. In the end, the lovers died brokenhearted.

⁹ See note 5 above.

¹⁰ Miss Jiang, of the state of Qi, was married to Chong'er (697 B.C.E. –628 B.C.E.), Prince of Jin, when he was in exile in Qi. Miss Jiang encouraged Chong'er to return to his native state of Jin to assume power, advising him not to be content with the status quo. She plotted with Chong'er's major advisor to get Chong'er drunk and had him driven out of Qi. Later, Chong'er returned to Jin and reigned as King Wen from 636 to 628 B.C.E.

¹¹ According to *The Book of Poems*, when Gongjiang's husband, Gongbo, died an early death, she vowed never to remarry.

¹² Min Jian was a student of Confucius's, who was known for his filial piety.

¹³ During the Tang dynasty, Suiyang (in what is now Henan) was besieged by the troops of An Lushan the rebel (d.757). Nan Jiyun (d.757), one of the defenders of Suiyang, was sent by his superior Zhang Xun (709–757) to seek help from Helan Jinming, but Helan turned him down. Suiyang fell, and Zhang Xun and Nan Jiyun both perished.



第三十五卷

况太守断死孩儿

春花秋月足风流，不分红颜易白头。
试把人心比松柏，几人能为岁寒留？

这四句诗，泛论春花秋月，恼乱人心，所以才子有悲秋之辞，佳人有伤春之咏。往往诗谜写恨，目语传情，月下幽期，花间密约，但图一刻风流，不顾终身名节。这是两下相思，各还其债，不在话下。又有一等男贪而女不爱，女爱而男不贪。虽非两相情愿，却有一片精诚。如冷庙泥神，朝夕焚香拜祷，也少不得灵动起来。其缘短的，合而终睽；倘缘长的，疏而转密。这也是风月场中所有之事，亦不在话下。又有一种男不慕色，女不怀春，志比精金，心如坚石，没来由被旁人播弄，设圈设套，一时失了把柄，堕其术中，事后悔之无及。如宋时玉通禅师，修行了五十年，



Story 35

Prefect Kuang Solves the Case of the Dead Baby

*Spring flowers and the autumn moon inspire romance;
All too soon, the rosy-cheeked find their hair turning white.
Compared to the pines and cypresses,
How many human hearts can withstand wintry cold?*

These four lines talk in general about how spring flowers and the autumn moon torment the human heart, inspiring poems by young scholars lamenting autumn and by beautiful maidens bemoaning spring. More often than not, their poems are veiled expressions of lovesickness, and their eyes speak of passion. Lovers trysting under the moon among the flowers seek instant fulfillment of their desires, with no regard for lifelong reputations. But of these cases of mutual attraction, with each repaying the other a debt from a previous life, we shall speak no further.

There are also cases in which the man is willing but the woman remains unmoved, or the woman is so inclined but the man is imperious. Even though feelings are not reciprocated, the devotion of the one party remains steadfast. Consider how even a clay statue of a god in a deserted temple becomes responsive to incense and prayers offered morning and evening, day after day. Those who are predestined to have but a short-lived bond will unite but eventually separate. Those predestined for a long-lasting one will warm toward each other with the passage of time. Of these situations, which also occur in the world of love, we shall speak no more either.

Now, there is yet another kind of situation in which both the man and the woman are free of amorous thoughts, their determination as firm as the purest gold, their hearts as unflinching as the hardest rock. And yet, without the slightest justification, someone conspires and sets a trap for them. In a moment of weakness, they lose their moral integrity and fall victim to the wicked schemes, to their belated regret.

Abbot Yutong of the Song dynasty, who had practiced Buddhism



因触了知府柳宣教，被他设计，教妓女红莲假扮寡妇借宿，百般诱引，坏了他的戒行。这般会合，那些个男欢女爱，是偶然一念之差。如今再说个诱引寡妇失节的，却好与玉通禅师的故事做一对儿。正是：

未离恩山休问道，尚沉欲海莫参禅。

话说宣德年间，南直隶扬州府仪真县有一民家，姓丘名元吉，家颇饶裕。娶妻邵氏，姿容出众，兼有志节。夫妇甚相爱重。相处六年，未曾生育，不料元吉得病身亡。邵氏年方二十三岁，哀痛之极，立志守寡，终身永无他适。不觉三年服满，父母家因其年少，去后日长，劝他改嫁。叔公丘大胜，也叫阿妈来委曲譬喻他几番。那邵氏心如铁石，全不转移，设誓道：“我亡夫在九泉之下，邵氏若事二姓，更二夫，不是刀下亡，便是绳上死！”众人见他主意坚执，谁敢再去强他！自古云：“呷得三斗醋，做得孤孀妇。”孤孀不是好守的。替邵氏从长计较，到不如明明改个丈夫，虽做不得上等之人，还不失为中等，不到得后来出丑。正是：



for fifty years, was such a victim. He incurred the anger of a Prefect Liu Xuanjiao, who sent a prostitute named Red Lotus to seduce him. Disguised as a widow, she asked to be put up for the night in the monastery and, tempting him in every possible way, nullified all the credit he had gained through the mortification of his flesh.¹ Such sexual encounters are the result of a momentary weakness of will. Let me now tell a story about a widow who is seduced into losing her chastity, to make a pair with the story about Abbot Yutong. Truly,

Those not cleansed of desires, seek not the Dao;

Those immersed in passion, practice not the Chan [Zen].

Our story takes place during the Xuande reign period [1426–36] in Yizhen County, Yangzhou Prefecture, in the district under the direct jurisdiction of Nanjing. There lived in that county a man named Qiu Yuanji, a commoner, but quite well-off. His wife, Shao-shi, was a woman of outstanding beauty and moral rectitude. They were a loving couple, yet without issue in their sixth year of married life. All too unexpectedly, Yuanji fell ill and died. The twenty-three-year-old Shao-shi, in her extreme grief, was determined to maintain widowhood for the rest of her life.

Soon, the three years of mourning came to an end. Considering her youth and the many years of life ahead of her, her parents advised her to remarry. Her husband's uncle, Qiu Dasheng, also sent his wife over a few times to try tactfully to change Shao-shi's mind, but, her heart as firm as iron and rock, she turned a deaf ear and said, "To my late husband under the Nine Springs, I vow that if I ever serve another family and marry another man, I shall die by either the knife or the rope."

Who would ever venture another word to such a determined woman? The ancients said, "Only those who can swallow three gallons of vinegar can endure the hardships of widowhood." Widowhood is by no means easy to maintain. In fact, Shao-shi would have fared better in the long term by marrying another man, for even if she lost her status as a woman of the very best caliber by doing so, she would still have been in the middle range instead of ending up in disgrace, as she did later. Truly,



作事必须踏实地，为人切莫务虚名。

邵氏一口说了满话，众人中贤愚不等，也有啧啧夸奖他的，也有似疑不信，睁着眼看他的。谁知邵氏立心贞洁，闺门愈加严谨。止有一侍婢，叫做秀姑，房中作伴，针指营生。一小厮叫做得贵，年方十岁，看守中门，一应薪水买办，都是得贵传递。童仆已冠者，皆遣出不用。庭无闲杂，内外肃然。如此数年，人人信服。那个不说邵大娘少年老成，治家有法。光阴如箭，不觉十周年到来。邵氏思念丈夫，要做些法事追荐。叫得贵去请叔公丘大胜来商议，延七众僧人，做三昼夜功德。邵氏道：“奴家是寡妇，全仗叔公过来主持道场。”大胜应允。

话分两头。却说邻近新搬来一个汉子，姓支名助，原是破落户，平昔不守本分，不做生理，专一在街坊上赶热管闲事过活。闻得人说邵大娘守寡贞洁，且是青年标致，天下难得。支助不信，不论早暮，常在丘家门首闲站。果然门无杂人，只有得贵小厮买办出入。支助就与得贵相识，渐渐熟了。闲话中问得贵：“闻得



*Stand on firm ground in everything you do;
 Seek not empty fame for vanity's sake.*

Shao-shi's bold words evoked different reactions. Depending on their intellect and moral character, people either praised her profusely or were skeptical and kept their watchful eyes open. But Shao-shi was indeed firm in her determination to remain chaste. She retired further into the inner quarters of the house, with only one maid, called Xiugu, to keep her company and assist her with her livelihood of sewing, and one ten-year-old page boy, called Degui, to guard the middle door leading to her rooms and take care of firewood, water, and other necessary purchases. All male servants twenty years of age or older were dismissed. With no casual visitors in the yard, a quiet solemnity prevailed throughout the household. After several years had passed in this way, everyone was impressed. None failed to admire Madam Shao for being mature beyond her years and maintaining discipline in the household.

Time flew like an arrow. All too soon, the tenth anniversary of her husband's death came around. Wishing to hold a prayer service in his memory, Shao-shi had Degui invite her husband's uncle, Qiu Dasheng, to come over for a consultation. It was thus decided that the prayer service would be held by monks from all the seven classes and last for three days and nights.² "Being a widow," said Shao-shi. "I'll have to rely on you, Uncle, to officiate at the service." Dasheng agreed.

Let us pick up another thread of our story and tell of a man called Zhi Zhu, who had recently moved into the neighborhood. He was a ruffian, certainly not the kind of person who minds his own business. Instead of trying to make an honest living, he spent his time idling on the streets of the neighborhood, poking his nose into other people's affairs. Not believing what he had heard about the young widow Madam Shao's unparalleled beauty and chastity, he loitered at the gate of her house at all times of the day and observed that indeed no one went in or came out of the house except the page boy Degui on his errands. So Zhi Zhu made his acquaintance and gradually became friendly with him. In the midst of a conversation, he asked Degui,



你家大娘生得标致，是真也不？”得贵生于礼法之家，一味老实，遂答道：“标致是真。”又问道：“大娘也有时到门前看街么？”得贵摇手道：“从来不曾出中门，莫说看街，罪过，罪过！”一日得贵正买办素斋的东西，支助撞见，又问道：“你家买许多素品为甚么？”得贵道：“家主十周年，做法事要用。”支助道：“几时？”得贵道：“明日起，三昼夜，正好辛苦哩！”支助听在肚里，想道：“既追荐丈夫，他必然出来拈香，我且去偷看一看，什么样嘴脸？真像个孤孀也不？”

却说次日，丘大胜请到七众僧人，都是有戒行的，在堂中排设佛像，鸣铙击鼓，诵经礼忏，甚是志诚。丘大胜勤勤拜佛。邵氏出来拈香，昼夜各只一次，拈过香，就进去了。支助趁这道场热闹，几遍混进去看，再不见邵氏出来，又问得贵，方知日间只昼食拈香一遍。支助到第三日，约莫昼食时分，又蹙进去，闪在榻子傍边隐着。见那些和尚都穿着袈裟，站在佛前吹打乐器，宣和佛号。香火道人在道场上手忙脚乱的添香换烛。本家止有得贵，



“I heard that the mistress of the house is quite a beauty. Is that true?”

Having grown up in a household run according to the strictest rules of propriety, Degui knew nothing about the ways of the world and replied in his artless way, “Yes, that is true.”

“Does she ever come out to the gate to watch the street?”

Waving a hand in denial, Degui said, “No, she never even goes beyond the middle door, let alone out to watch the streets! What a thing to say!”

One day, Degui was buying vegetarian food when Zhi Zhu ran into him. “Why do you need so many vegetarian supplies?” he asked.

“The mistress needs them for a tenth anniversary prayer service in memory of the master.”

“When is it going to be?”

“It starts tomorrow and will last for three days and nights. It’s a lot of work.”

Making a mental note of the information, Zhi Zhu thought, “Since it’s a prayer service in memory of her husband, she’ll surely come out to burn incense. I’ll steal a look and judge for myself if she’s pretty and if she really has the appearance of a chaste widow.”

The next day, the monks engaged by Qiu Dasheng — monks well-trained in the practice of mortifying their flesh — set up a statue of the Buddha in the main hall and piously struck the cymbals, beat the drums, and recited the sutra as penitence for human sins. Qiu Dasheng made frequent obeisances to the Buddha. Shao-shi also came out to the hall to burn joss sticks, but she did this only once during the day and once in the evening and went back inside as soon as she had finished.

Taking advantage of the bustle in the hall, Zhi Zhu slipped in several times to catch a glimpse of her, but he failed each time. Again through Degui, he learned that she came out to offer incense during the day only at lunchtime. So on the third day, at about that time, Zhi Zhu again slipped into the house and hid behind the partition door. He saw the monks in their cassocks playing musical instruments and intoning the name of the Buddha in front of the Buddha’s statue while the acolytes busily replenished the joss sticks and candles.



只好往来答应，那有工夫照管外边。就是丘大胜同着几个亲戚，也都呆看和尚吹打，那个来稽查他。少顷，邵氏出来拈香，被支助看得仔细。常言：“若要俏，添重孝。”缟素妆束，加倍清雅。分明是：

广寒仙子月中出，姑射神人雪里来。

支助一见，遍体酥麻了，回家想念不已。是夜，道场完满，众僧直至天明方散。邵氏依旧不出中堂了。支助无计可施，想道：“得贵小厮老实，我且用心下钓子。”其时五月端五日，支助拉得贵回家，吃雄黄酒。得贵道：“我不会吃酒，红了脸时，怕主母嗔骂！”[眉批]若非支助之奸，则邵氏贞妇也。得贵亦良仆也。小人之害可畏。支助道：“不吃酒，且吃只粽子。”得贵跟支助家去，支助教浑家剥了一盘粽子，一碟糖，一碗肉，一碗鲜鱼，两双箸，两个酒杯，放在桌上。支助把酒壶便筛。得贵道：“我说过不吃酒，莫筛罢！”支助道：“吃杯雄黄酒应应时令，我这酒淡，不妨事！”



Being the only member of the house present, Degui ran back and forth answering calls for assistance. He certainly had no time to take care of what was happening outside the hall. Even Qiu Dasheng and some relatives were fully occupied, their eyes glued to the monks with the cymbals and drums. Who would bother to check for intruders?

In a short while, Shao-shi came out to offer incense. Zhi Zhu looked his fill. It is often said, "A woman in mourning white / Is a pleasure for the eyes." In her mourning white, Shao-shi appeared twice as fresh and refined as usual. Truly, she was none other than:

*The goddess Chang'e from the moon;
 The fairy of Guye, as pure as snow.³*

Zhi Zhu melted with desire at the sight of such beauty. After he returned home, his mind was still filled with thoughts of her.

With the conclusion of the prayer service that night and the departure of the monks at dawn, Shao-shi no longer ventured beyond the middle door. At his wits' end, Zhi Zhu thought, "Let me work on that simpleton Degui first."

On the fifth day of the fifth month, the Dragon Boat Festival, Zhi Zhu tried to drag Degui to his home, promising the page boy a cup of *xionghuang* wine.⁴ Degui said, "I don't drink. If I get red in the face, I'm afraid the mistress's going to give me a hard time!" (*Had it not been for Zhi Zhu's wickedness, Shao-shi would have kept her good name and Degui would have been a blameless servant. The workings of an evil man — how fearsome!*)

Zhi Zhu said, "All right, if you don't drink, at least have some sweet-rice dumplings!"

So Degui followed Zhi Zhu home. Zhi Zhu had his wife unwrap a plateful of pyramid-shaped sweet-rice dumplings, a saucer of sugar, a bowl of pork, and a bowl of fresh fish. With two pairs of chopsticks and two wine cups laid out on the table, Zhi Zhu picked up the wine flask and began to fill the cups.

Degui objected, saying, "I already told you I don't drink. Don't pour any for me!"

"Just one cup to celebrate the festival. This wine is so weak. It



得贵被央不过，只得吃了。支助道：“后生家莫吃单杯，须吃个成双。”得贵推辞不得，又吃了一杯。支助自吃了一回，夹七夹八说了些街坊上的闲话。又斟一杯劝得贵，得贵道：“醉得脸都红了，如今真个不吃了。”支助道：“脸左右红了，多坐一时回去，打甚么紧？只吃这一杯罢，我再不劝你了。”得贵前后共吃了三杯酒。他自幼在丘家被邵大娘拘管得严，何曾尝酒的滋味，今日三杯落肚，便觉昏醉。支助乘其酒兴，低低说道：“得贵哥！我有句闲话问你。”得贵道：“有甚话尽说。”支助道：“你主母孀居已久，想必风情亦动。倘得个汉子同眠同睡，可不喜欢？从来寡妇都牵挂着男子，只是难得相会。你引我去试他一试何如？若得成事，重重谢你。”得贵道：“说甚么话！亏你不怕罪过！我主母极是正气，闺门整肃，日间男子不许入中门，夜间同使婢持灯照顾四下，各门锁讫，然后去睡。便要引你进去，何处藏身？地上使婢不离身畔，闲话也说不得一句，你却恁地乱讲！”支助道：“既如此，你的房门可来照么？”得贵道：“怎么不来照？”支助道：“得贵哥，你今年几岁了？”得贵道：“十七岁了。”支助道：“男子十六岁精通，你如今十七岁，难道不想妇人？”得贵道：

won't affect you at all."

Thus pressed, Degui obliged him. Zhi Zhu urged again, "Now, a nice young man like you shouldn't have only one cup. Make it two!"

Unable to fend him off, Degui downed another cup. Zhi Zhu also helped himself and, while gossiping about the goings-on in the neighborhood, filled another cup for Degui.

"I'm getting all red in the face! I'm drunk! I really must not take another drop."

"Since your face is flushed anyway, staying a little longer won't do you any more harm. Another cup, and I'll stop pressing you."

Three cups of wine in all did Degui drink. As he had been brought up in the Qiu household under Madam Shao's strict rules, he had never tasted wine, and these three cups turned his brain topsy-turvy. Taking advantage of his drunken excitability, Zhi Zhu said under his breath, "Brother Degui, I have something to ask you."

"Fire away!"

"Your mistress has been a widow for so long that she must be itching for a love affair. Surely she'd like it if she could get a man to sleep with her? All widows are hungry for men. It's just not easy for them to meet one. Now, how about taking me into the house and letting me give her a little test? If it works out, I'll have a nice reward for you."

"What kind of talk is this? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? My mistress is spotlessly chaste and guards her door most closely. During the day, no man is allowed past the middle door. Every evening, she and the maid check every corner with a lamp, and she doesn't go to bed until every door is locked. Even if I take you into the house, where are you going to hide? Her maid never leaves her side. She doesn't even allow a word of idle gossip. You and your fancy ideas!"

"So, does she check your room?"

"Of course she does."

"Brother Degui, how old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"Men are sexually mature by sixteen. Since you're seventeen



“便想也没用处。”支助道：“放着家里这般标致的，早暮在眼前，好不动兴！”得贵道：“说也不该，他是主母，动不动非打则骂，见了他，好不怕哩！亏你还敢说取笑的话。”支助道：“你既不肯引我去，我教导你一个法儿，作成你自去上手何如？”得贵摇手道：“做不得，做不得！我也没有这样胆！”支助道：“你莫管做得做不得，教你个法儿，且去试他一试。若得上手，莫忘我今日之恩。”得贵一来乘着酒兴，二来年纪也是当时了，被支助说得心痒。[眉批] 孔子所以远妇人也。便问道：“你且说如何去试他？”支助道：“你夜睡之时，莫关了房门，由他开着，如今五月，天气正热，你却赤身仰卧，把那话儿弄得硬硬的，待他来照门时，你只推做睡着了。他若看见，必然动情。一次两次，定然打熬不过，上门就你。”[眉批] 可恨。得贵道：“倘不来如何？”支助道：“拼得这事不成，也不好嗔责你，有益无损。”得贵道：“依了老哥的语言，果然成事，不敢忘报。”须臾酒醒。得贵别了，是夜依计而行。正是：

商成灯下瞒天计，拨转闺中匪石心。

论来邵氏家法甚严，那得贵长成十七岁，嫌疑之际，也该就打发出去，另换个年幼的小厮答应，岂不尽善。只为得贵从小走

now, aren't you interested in women?"

"What if I am? There's nothing I can do about it."

"With such a beauty around you at all times, don't tell me you don't feel a thing!"

"You're talking nonsense! She's the mistress and beats me or yells at me every so often. She terrifies me. And you have to tease me like that!"

"If you refuse to take me there, let me teach you something so that you can get her for yourself."

Waving a hand in refusal, Degui said, "I can't do that. I just can't. I'm not bold enough anyway."

"Never mind whether my little trick works or not. Just use it to test her. If you succeed, don't ever forget that I did you a favor."

Partly because he was exhilarated by the wine and partly because he had reached that age, Zhi Zhu's words made Degui yearn for an adventure. (*That's why Confucius stayed away from women.*) He said, "So tell me, how shall I test her?"

"Remember not to close your door when you go to sleep. Leave it open. The weather being hot in this the fifth month of the year, just lie on your back, naked, with that thing of yours standing up nice and hard. When she comes to check your door, pretend to be fast asleep. She'll surely be aroused when she sees you that way. After a couple of times, her desires will get the better of her and make her come to you. (*What a horrible man!*)

"What if she doesn't?"

"Even if this plan doesn't work out, she can't blame you. So you've got nothing to lose and everything to gain."

"All right, I'll do as you say. If it works, I'll surely repay you." Before long, the effects of the wine wore off. Degui left to put the plan into action that very night. Truly,

An evil plot was hatched by the lamplight

To tempt the woman in her resolve.

Considering the strictness of Shao-shi's household rules, she should have replaced Degui with a much younger boy now that he was seventeen and old enough to arouse suspicions. That would have



使服的，且又粗蠢又老实。邵氏自己立心清正，不想到别的情节上去，所以因循下来。却说是夜，邵氏同婢秀姑点灯出来照门，见得贵赤身仰卧，骂：“这狗奴才，门也不关，赤条条睡着，是甚么模样？”叫秀姑与他扯上房门。若是邵氏有主意，天明后叫得贵来，说他夜里懒惰放肆，骂一场，打一顿，得贵也就不敢了。他久旷之人，却似眼见希奇物，寿增一纪，绝不作声。得贵胆大了，到夜来，依前如此。邵氏同婢又去照门，看见又骂道：“这狗才一发不成人了，被也不盖！”叫秀姑替他卧单扯上，莫惊醒他。此时便有些动情，奈有秀姑在傍碍眼。

到第三日，得贵出外撞见了支助。支助就问他曾用计否？得贵老实，就将两夜光景都叙了。支助道：“他叫丫头替你盖被，又教莫惊醒你，便有爱你之意，今夜决有好处。”其夜得贵依原开门，假睡而待。邵氏有意，遂不叫秀姑跟随。自己持灯来照，径到得贵床前，看见得贵赤身仰卧，那话儿如枪一般。禁不住春心荡漾，欲火如焚。自解去小衣，爬上床去。还只怕惊醒了得贵，



been the best solution. But Degui had been running errands for her ever since he was a child, and, moreover, he was simpleminded and honest. Shao-shi herself had maintained no other than the purest thoughts, and so, she put things off.

That night, Shao-shi and her maid Xiugu were checking the various doors with a lamp when they came upon Degui lying on his back, completely naked. "That brute!" Shao-shi lashed out. "He leaves the door open while sleeping naked. How disgraceful!" So saying, she instructed Xiugu to close the door for him.

If Shao-shi had known better, she would have summoned Degui the next day and given him a lecture or even a thrashing for his indecorous behavior of the night before. Degui would not have dared to do the same thing again. However, as it was, she said nothing, for after living a celibate life for so long, the all-too-rare sighting of that object had been enough to add a dozen years to her life.

Degui felt emboldened. The next evening, he did the same thing. Shao-shi and the maid checked his door as before, and upon seeing him in that condition, Shao-shi again burst out, "That dog! He doesn't even cover himself with a quilt like a decent human being!" She had Xiugu the maid draw his quilt up gently without waking him. This was the moment when she first felt her desires stirring, but Xiugu's presence was an obstacle.

On the third day, Degui was out on an errand when he ran into Zhi Zhu, who asked if he had been following the plan. Being as simpleminded as he was, Degui related what had happened the previous two nights.

"If she had the maid pull up your quilt without waking you up, she must already have taken a fancy to you. Something will surely happen tonight, and you'll like it."

That night, Degui again left his door open and waited in his bed, feigning sleep. With her heart set on him, Shao-shi did her rounds alone that night, without Xiugu. She walked all the way up to Degui's bed, holding her lamp, and saw him lying on his back naked, with that member of his as erect as a spear. Aflame with desire, she took off her underwear and climbed onto the bed. Quietly,



悄悄地跨在身上，从上而压下。得贵忽然抱住，翻身转来，与之云雨。

一个久疏乐事，一个初试欢情。一个认着故物肯轻抛，一个尝了甜头难遽放。一个饥不择食，岂嫌小厮粗丑；一个狎恩恃爱，那怕主母威严。分明恶草藤萝，也共名花登架去。可惜清心冰雪，化为春水向东流。十年清白已成虚，一夕垢污难再洗。

事毕，邵氏向得贵道：“我苦守十年，一旦失身于你，此亦前生冤债，你须谨口，莫泄于人，我自有看你之处。”得贵道：“主母分付，怎敢不依！”

自此夜为始，每夜邵氏以看门为由，必与得贵取乐而后入。又恐秀姑知觉，到放个空，教得贵连秀姑奸骗了。邵氏故意欲责秀姑，却教秀姑引进得贵以塞其口。彼此河同水密，各不相瞒。得贵感支助教导之恩，时常与邵氏讨东讨西，将来奉与支助。支助指望得贵引进，得贵怕主母嗔怪，不敢开口。支助几遍讨信，得贵只是延捱下去。过了三五个月，邵氏与得贵如夫妇无异。也是数该败露，邵氏当初做了六年亲，不曾生育，如今才得三五月，



lest she wake him, she mounted him and sat astride. All of a sudden, Degui grasped her tightly and rolled over for a game of clouds and rain:

*She has long abstained from the pleasure;
 He is experiencing the joy for the first time.
 She will not lightly let go of an old friend;
 He longs for more after his first taste of sweetness.
 She, in her hunger, overlooks his uncouthness.
 He, thus emboldened, fears the mistress no more.
 Indeed, a lowly weed, a common vine,
 Is climbing the trellis of a prized flower.
 How sad that the unblemished ice and snow
 Have melted in the spring and are flowing eastward.
 Her good name of ten years' standing has vanished;
 Once besmirched, it can never be made clean again.*

After it was over, Shao-shi said to Degui, "In one night I lost to you the chastity that I had worked hard to preserve for ten years. I must have owed you a debt in a previous life. Now, keep your mouth shut and don't let on about this to anyone. I'll take good care of you."

"Why would I ever dream of disobeying you, madam?"

Henceforth, under the pretext of checking the doors, Shao-shi never missed a night of joy with Degui before retiring to her room. Afraid that Xiugu might become aware of what was afoot, she contrived an opportunity for Degui to have his way with Xiugu as well. Deliberately, Shao-shi scolded Xiugu but then asked the maid to introduce Degui to her. By doing so, she sealed Xiugu's lips. Like water flowing in the same river, they shared their secrets, hiding nothing from each other.

Grateful to Zhi Zhu for his advice, Degui often asked Shao-shi for things and offered them to Zhi Zhu, although he dared not comply with Zhi's request to be introduced to the mistress for fear of incurring her anger. Again and again, Zhi Zhu pressed for an answer, but Degui put him off each time.

Shao-shi and Degui lived like husband and wife for a few months, but their affair was destined to be exposed. In her six years



不觉便胸高腹大，有了身孕。恐人知觉不便，将银与得贵教他悄悄地赎贴坠胎的药来，打下私胎，免得日后出丑。得贵一来是个老实人，不晓得坠胎是甚么药；二来自得支助指教，以为恩人，凡事直言无隐。今日这件私房关目，也去与他商议。那支助是个棍徒，见得贵不肯引进自家，心中正在忿恨，却好有这个机会，便是生意上门。心生一计，哄得贵道：“这药只有我一个相识人家最效，我替你赎去！”乃往药铺中赎了固胎散四服，与得贵带回，邵氏将此散做四次吃了，腹中未见动静，叫得贵再往别处赎取好药。得贵又来问支助：“前药如何不效？”支助道：“打胎只是一次，若一次打不下，再不能打了。况这药，只此一家最高，今打不下，必是胎受坚固，若再用狼虎药去打，恐伤大人之命。”得贵将此言对邵氏说了，邵氏信以为然。

到十月将满，支助料是分娩之期，去寻得贵说道：“我要合补药，必用一血孩子，你主母今当临月，生下孩子，必然不养，或男或女，可将来送我。你亏我处多，把这一件谢我，亦是不费之惠，只瞒过主母便是。”得贵应允。过了数日，果生一男，邵氏



of married life, Shao-shi had not borne a child, but she found herself pregnant after the few months of the affair. Afraid that her swollen breasts and protruding belly would attract attention, she gave Degui money and told him to secretly buy some medicine for abortion so that she could be rid of the illegitimate fetus and forestall a scandal. Degui, in his ignorance of the ways of the world, had no idea what kind of medicine would serve this purpose. Also, since he appreciated Zhi Zhu's advice, he honored Zhi as his benefactor and held nothing back from him. For these reasons, he consulted the man about this most confidential matter.

Zhi Zhu, depraved rogue that he was, was seething with resentment of Degui because the page boy refused to take him to Shao-shi. When Degui sought his advice, he saw his chance and said, lying through his teeth, "I know an herbalist who has the best medicine for this. Let me get some for you."

From a medicinal store, he bought four packages of herbs used for settling the fetus and gave them to Degui.

Shao-shi took all the medicine, one package after another, but nothing happened. She told Degui to go to another store for better medicine. Again, Degui turned to Zhi Zhu for help. "Why isn't the medicine working?" he asked.

"An abortion attempt is a one-time thing. If you fail once, you're not supposed to try again. What's more, the medicine from that store, and that store alone, is the best of its kind. It failed to work only because the fetus has already settled firmly. If she tries more aggressive medicine, I'm afraid her life will be in danger."

Degui repeated these words to Shao-shi, who took them to be true.

When the pregnancy was almost full term, Zhi Zhu, knowing that Shao-shi would be giving birth soon, sought out Degui and said to him, "I'm mixing up some tonic for myself and need a stillborn baby. Now, your mistress will be giving birth soon. Since she won't be keeping the child anyway, why don't you give me the baby, be it a boy or a girl? Since you owe me a lot, that will be a nice way to pay me back, and it doesn't cost you a penny! You need only keep



将男溺死，用蒲包裹来，教得贵密地把去埋了。得贵答应晓得，却不去埋，背地悄悄送与支助。支助将死孩收讫，一把扯住得贵，喝道：“你主母是丘元吉之妻，家主已死多年，当家寡妇，这孩子从何而得？今番我去出首。”得贵慌忙掩住他口，说道：“我把你做恩人，每事与你商议，今日何反面无情？”支助变着脸道：“干得好事！你强奸主母，罪该凌迟，难道叫句恩人就罢了？既知恩当报恩，你作成得我什么事？你今若要我不开口，可问主母讨一百两银子与我，我便隐恶而扬善。若然没有，决不干休，见有血孩作证，你自到官司去辨，连你主母做不得人。我在家等你回话，你快去快来！”急得得贵眼泪汪汪，回家料瞒不过，只得把这话对邵氏说了。邵氏埋怨道：“此是何等东西，却把做礼物送人！坑死了我也！”说罢，流泪起来。得贵道：“若是别人，我也不把与他，因他是我的恩人，所以不好推托。”邵氏道：“他是你什么恩人？”得贵道：“当初我赤身仰卧，都是他教我的方法来调引



it a secret from your mistress.”

Degui agreed.

Sure enough, a few days later, a baby boy was born. Shao-shi drowned the baby, wrapped it in a rush bag, and told Degui to bury it in some secret place. Degui agreed to do so, but instead of burying it, he gave it secretly to Zhi Zhu. After putting the dead baby away, Zhi Zhu seized Degui and shouted at the top of his voice, “Since your mistress is the widow of Qiu Yuanji, who died years ago, how did she manage to have this baby? I’ll have to report this to the authorities.”

Degui hastened to cover Zhi Zhu’s mouth and said, “I looked up to you as a benefactor and asked for your advice about everything. How can you suddenly turn against me like this?”

Zhi Zhu’s face hardened. “A fine thing you did! You raped your employer, a crime punishable by death of a thousand cuts! You think it’s enough just to call me benefactor? You know that kindness should be repaid with kindness, but what have you ever done for me? If you want me to be quiet, get me a hundred taels of silver from your mistress, and I’ll cover up the evil thing she has done and spread nice words about her. Otherwise, I won’t stop, and I have the dead baby to show as evidence. You can very well try to defend yourself in court, but even the mistress won’t be able to live down the shame. I’ll be waiting here for an answer. Begone now, and come back quickly!”

Degui was so upset that he burst into tears. After he returned home, knowing that he would not be able to hide anything from Shao-shi, he felt he had no choice but to tell her what Zhi Zhu had said.

Shao-shi said reproachfully, “Of all things, how could you have given *that* away as a gift? Now you’ve ruined me!” And her tears began to flow.

Degui retorted, “I wouldn’t have given it to just anyone, but he was my benefactor. I couldn’t turn him down.”

“What kind of benefactor?”

“It was he who taught me to lie naked on my back to lead you



你，没有他时，怎得你我今日恩爱？他说要血孩合补药，我好不奉他？谁知他不怀好意！”邵氏道：“你做的事，忒不即溜。当初是我一念之差，堕在这光棍术中，今已悔之无及。若不将银买转孩子，他必然出首，那时难以挽回。”只得取出四十两银子，教得贵拿去与那光棍赎回血孩，背地埋藏，以绝祸根。得贵老实，将四十两银子，双手递与支助，说道：“只有这些，你可将血孩还我罢！”支助得了银子，贪心不足，思想：“此妇美貌，又且囊中有物。借此机会，倘得捱身入马，他的家事在我掌握之中，岂不美哉！”乃向得贵道：“我说要银子，是取笑话。你当真送来，我只得接受了。那血孩我已埋讫。你可在主母前引荐我与他相处，倘若见允，我替他持家，无人敢欺负他，可不两全其美？不然，我仍在地下掘起孩子出首。限你五日内回话。”得贵出于无奈，只得回家，述与邵氏。邵氏大怒道：“听那光棍放屁，不要理他！”得贵遂不敢再说。

却说支助将血孩用石灰腌了，仍放蒲包之内，藏于隐处。等了五日，不见得贵回话。又捱了五日，共是十日。料得产妇也健旺了，乃往丘家门首，伺候得贵出来，问道：“所言之事济否？”得贵摇头道：“不济，不济！”支助更不问第二句，望门内直闯进



on. If it hadn't been for him, we wouldn't have come to love each other. When he said he needed a dead baby for some medicine of his, how could I not offer it to him? How was I to know that he didn't mean well?"

"What a stupid thing you did! It was in a moment of weakness that I fell into that swine's trap. Regrets are too late now. If I don't redeem the baby with silver, he'll surely report to the authorities, and it will be too late to do anything then."

She had no alternative but to take out forty taels of silver and have Degui try to redeem the baby's body from that brute and bury it secretly, so as to forestall all possible trouble. Being as simpleminded as he was, Degui handed the forty taels of silver to Zhi Zhu with both hands, saying, "This is all the silver. Now give me back the baby."

Zhi Zhu's greed was not satisfied by the silver, and he said to himself, "This woman has looks and a deep pocket as well. If I could take this opportunity and put both the woman and her money under my control, wouldn't that be nice?"

To Degui, he said aloud, "I was joking when I demanded silver. You took me too seriously. But since you brought it, I feel obliged to take it. I've already buried the baby. Why don't you propose to the mistress that I live with her? If she agrees, I'll run the house for her, and no one will dare to bully her. Wouldn't that be good for everyone? Otherwise, I'll dig up the baby and report you to the authorities. You have five days to reply."

Degui had no choice but to return home and relay the message to Shao-shi. "That brute can fart to his heart's content for all I care!" she burst out. Degui dared not bring up the matter again.

In the meantime, Zhi Zhu preserved the baby with lime, put it back into the rush bag, and hid it in a secret place. Five days went by without a word from Degui. He waited for another five days, making it ten days in all. Believing that the woman should have recuperated by now, he went to the Qiu house and waited at the gate until Degui came out. "So, did she say yes?" asked he.

"No, no!" Degui shook his head.



去，得贵不敢拦阻，到走往街口远远的打听消息。邵氏见有人走进中堂，骂道：“人家内外各别，你是何人，突入吾室？”支助道：“小人姓支名助，是得贵哥的恩人。”邵氏心中已知，便道：“你要寻得贵，在外边去，此非你歇脚之所！”支助道：“小人久慕大娘，有如饥渴。小人纵不才，料不在得贵哥之下，大娘何必峻拒？”邵氏听见话不投机，转身便走。支助赶上，双手抱住，说道：“你的私孩，现在我处，若不从我，我就首官。”邵氏忿怒无极，只恨摆脱不开，乃以好言哄之，道：“日里怕人知觉，到夜时，我叫得贵来接你。”支助道：“亲口许下，切莫失信！”放开了手，走几步，又回头，说道：“我也不怕你失信！”一直出外去了。气得邵氏半晌无言，珠泪纷纷而坠。推转房门，独坐凳子上，左思右想，只是自家不是。当初不肯改嫁，要做上流之人；如今出乖露丑，有何颜见诸亲之面？又想道：“日前曾对众发誓：‘我若事二姓，更二夫，不是刀下亡，便是绳上死。’我今拚这性



Without bothering to ask further, Zhi Zhu thrust his way in. Degui dared not stop him but instead went to the street corner some distance off to keep watch on the house.

Noticing someone entering the inner quarters of the house, Shao-shi lashed out, "A house has a front part and an inner part, and there are rules to be followed. Who are you to barge in like this?"

"My name is Zhi Zhu, Brother Degui's benefactor."

Realizing who the man was, Shao-shi said, "If you're looking for Degui, keep to the front part of the house. This is no place for you."

"I've long admired you, madam, like a hungry and thirsty man. However unworthy I am, I don't think I'm beneath Brother Degui in any way. Why do you reject me out right?"

Irritated by the ugly turn the conversation was taking, Shao-shi turned to go, but Zhi Zhu caught up with her and, holding her in both arms, said, "Your illegitimate child is at my place. If you don't do as I say, I'll report you to the authorities."

Shao-shi was outraged beyond measure. Looking for a way to extricate herself, she came up with an excuse, saying, "I'm afraid that people will notice things in the daytime. When night comes, I'll have Degui bring you here."

"A promise is a promise," said Zhi Zhu. "Don't you ever break it!" So saying, he let go of her. Before he had gone many paces, he looked back over his shoulder and added, "And I'm not afraid even if you do!" With that, he left.

Shao-shi was so mortified that she couldn't utter a word for a considerable time. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she pushed open the door to her bedchamber and sat down on a stool. Many and varied were the thoughts that passed through her mind, but she found only herself to blame. It was in order to gain a good reputation that she had refused to remarry, and now, having caused such a scandal, how could she ever bring herself to face the world? Then she thought, "I vowed publicly that if I ever served another family and married another man, I should die by either the sword or the rope. Now if I give up this life to apologize to my deceased husband under



命，谢我亡夫于九泉之下，却不干净！”秀姑见主母啼哭，不敢上前解劝。守住中门，专等得贵回来。得贵在街上望见支助去了，方才回家。见秀姑，问：“大娘呢？”秀姑指道：“在里面。”得贵推开房门看主母。

却说邵氏取床头解手刀一把，欲要自刎，担手不起。哭了一回，把刀放在桌上，在腰间解下八尺长的汗巾，打成结儿，悬于梁上，要把颈子套进结去，心下展转凄惨，禁不住呜呜咽咽的啼哭。忽见得贵推门而进，抖然触起他一点念头：“当初都是那狗才做圈做套，来作弄我，害了我一生名节！”说时迟，那时快，只就这点念头起处，仇人相见，分外眼睁。提起解手刀，望得贵当头就劈。那刀如风之快，恼怒中，气力倍加，把得贵头脑劈做两界，血流满地，登时呜呼了。邵氏着了忙，便引颈受套，两脚蹬开兀子，做一个秋千把戏：

地下新添冤恨鬼，人间少了俏孤孀。

常言：“赌近盗，淫近杀。”今日只为一个“淫”字，害了两条性命。且说秀姑平昔惯了，但是得贵进房，怕有别事，就远远闪开。今番半晌不见则声，心中疑惑。去张望时，只见上吊一个，下横一个，吓得秀姑软做一团。按定了胆，把房门款上，急跑到



the Nine Springs, won't that be a neat end to all the troubles?"

Seeing her mistress in tears, Xiugu dared not step forward to calm her. Instead, she waited by the middle door for Degui to come home.

Only when he saw from the street that Zhi Zhu was safely out of sight, did Degui return. Seeing Xiugu, he asked, "Where's the mistress?"

Xiugu replied, pointing a finger, "She's inside," whereupon Degui pushed open the door to look for his mistress.

Now, let us go back a little in time to the moment when Shao-shi picked up a small knife from the head of the bed with which to cut her own throat. But when her hand failed her, she burst into tears and laid the knife on the table. From her waist, she took a sash about eight feet in length, threw it over the beam, tied it into a noose, and was about to slip her neck through it when she was overcome with grief and broke down in uncontrollable sobbing.

Suddenly, the sight of Degui coming through the door triggered this thought in her mind, "Here's the swine who laid a trap for me in the first place and ruined my good name forever!" What followed happened in less time than it takes to tell. The very moment that thought occurred to her, she picked up the knife, her eyes blazing with anger at the sight of her foe, and swung at Degui with the speed of the wind. Her blinding anger added force to the blow, and she split Degui's head in two. He died instantly, his blood flowing across the floor. In a panic, she slipped her neck into the noose and kicked away the stool. Her body swung to and fro at the end of the sash.

*Two more aggrieved souls in the netherworld,
One fewer pretty widow among the living.*

The proverb says, "Gambling leads to robbery; lust to murder." In this case, lust claimed two lives.

But, to get on with our story. As a rule, Xiugu would make herself scarce whenever Degui entered the room, afraid that she would be in the way. But this time, the prolonged silence made her apprehensive, and she went up for a look. At the sight of one body hanging in the air and the other lying on the floor, she collapsed in



叔公丘大胜家中报信。丘大胜大惊，转报邵氏父母，同到丘家，关上大门，将秀姑盘问致死缘由。元来秀姑不认得支助，连血孩诈去银子四十两的事，都是瞒着秀姑的。以此秀姑只将邵氏得贵平昔奸情叙了一遍。“今日不知何故两个都死了？”三番四复问他，只如此说。邵公、邵母听说奸情的话，满面羞惭，自回去了，不管其事，丘大胜只得带秀姑到县里出首。知县验了二尸，一名得贵，刀劈死的；一名邵氏，缢死的。审问了秀姑口辞。知县道：“邵氏与得贵奸情是的，主仆之分已废。必是得贵言语触犯，邵氏不忿，一时失手，误伤人命，情慌自缢，更无别情。”责令丘大胜殡葬，秀姑知情，问杖官卖。

再说支助自那日调戏不遂回家，还想赴夜来之约。听说弄死了两条人命，吓了一大跳，好几时不敢出门。一日早起，偶然检着了石灰腌的血孩，连蒲包拿去抛在江里。遇着一个相识叫做包九，在仪真闸上当夫头，问道：“支大哥，你抛的是甚么东西？”



fright. After she had pulled herself together, she shut the door and ran to the home of Qiu Dasheng, Shao-shi's uncle-in-law. Alarmed, Qiu Dasheng relayed the news to Shao-shi's parents. Together, they went to the Qiu house, closed the gate, and asked Xiugu what she knew about the deaths. The fact of the matter was that Xiugu did not know Zhi Zhu, nor had she any inkling of Shao-shi being blackmailed for forty taels of silver over the dead baby. So she told them only about the affair between Shao-shi and Degui, adding, "I have no idea why they are both dead." Regardless of the many times she was asked, she repeated the same things.

With shame written all over their faces upon hearing about the scandal, Shao-shi's parents returned home, wishing to have no part in handling the matter. Qiu Dasheng had no alternative but to take Xiugu to the county yamen to report the case.

After a coroner's examination determined that Degui had died from a knife blow and Shao-shi from hanging, the county magistrate put Xiugu through a questioning session and concluded, "Shao-shi's illicit liaison with Degui has been established beyond a doubt. Because the relationship of mistress to servant had been invalidated, Degui must have given Shao-shi verbal offense, and she killed him accidentally in a moment of anger. Then she panicked and hanged herself. And that is the whole truth." By the magistrate's orders, Qiu Dasheng took care of the funeral. Xiugu, who had known about the affair, was given a thrashing and sold by the yamen.

Let us retrace our steps and come back to the day when Zhi Zhu returned home after his failed attempt at seducing Shao-shi. He was still planning to go back at night, as promised, when news came about the deaths. He was so shocked that he dared not venture out his door for quite a long time.

But one day, upon rising early in the morning, he happened to come upon the rush bag containing the dead baby preserved in lime. He picked the bag up, went out, and dropped it into the river. Right after doing that, he ran into an acquaintance called Bao Jiu, a foreman at Yizhen Floodgate.

Bao Jiu accosted Zhi Zhu. "Brother Zhi," he said, "What did



支助道：“腌几块牛肉，包好了，要带出去吃的，不期臭了。九哥，你两日没甚事，到我家吃三杯。”包九道：“今日忙些个，苏州府况钟老爷驰驿复任，即刻船到，在此趲夫哩！”支助道：“既如此，改日再会。”支助自去了。

却说况钟原是吏员出身，礼部尚书胡濙荐为苏州府太守，在任一年，百姓呼为“况青天”。因丁忧回籍，圣旨夺情起用，特赐驰驿赴任。船至仪真闸口，况爷在舱中看书，忽闻小儿啼声，出自江中，想必溺死之儿，差人看来，回报：“没有。”如此两度。况爷又闻啼声，问众人皆云不闻。况爷口称怪事，推窗亲看，只见一个小小蒲包，浮于水面。况爷叫水手捞起，打开看了，回复：“是一个小孩子。”况爷问：“活的？死的？”水手道：“石灰腌过的，像死得久了。”况爷想道：“死的如何会啼？况且死孩子，抛掉就罢了，何必灰腌，必有缘故。”叫水手，把这死孩连蒲包放在



you just throw away?"

"A few pieces of salted beef. I wrapped them up for a trip, but they've gone bad. Brother Jiu, if you're not busy these days, come to my home for a few drinks."

"I'm busy today. Prefect Kuang Zhong of Suzhou⁵ is traveling back to his post, and his boat will be arriving any time now. So I have to gather together some people to serve him."

"In that case, I'll see you some other day." With that, Zhi Zhu went on his way.

Now, Kuang Zhong was known to the people under his jurisdiction as "Blue Sky Kuang" for the fairness and judiciousness he had shown in the one year he had been the prefect of Suzhou. He had risen to the post from a clerical position through the recommendation of Hu Ying, Minister of Rites. At the moment of which we speak, he was returning to his post from his hometown, where he had been observing a period of filial mourning. The mourning period was not yet over, but he had received orders by imperial decree to return to his post with all speed at government expense.

He was reading a book in the cabin as his boat approached Yizhen Floodgate. Suddenly, he heard a baby crying in the river. Assuming that it must be a baby on the verge of drowning, he sent someone to take a look, only to be told that there was nothing to be seen. This happened twice. Prefect Kuang heard the cries, but when he asked his men, they all said that they could hear nothing. "Most extraordinary!" exclaimed Prefect Kuang. He pushed open the cabin window to look with his own eyes and saw a small rush bag floating on the water. He had a boatman retrieve it and open it.

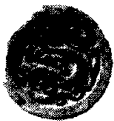
"It's a baby," said the boatman.

"Is it alive or dead?"

"It's covered in lime and looks as if it's been dead for quite some time."

The prefect thought, "How could a dead baby cry? A dead baby might well have been discarded. Why preserve it in lime? There must be something behind all this."

Thereupon, he had the boatman place the baby and the rush bag



船头上：“如有人晓得来历，密密报我，我有重赏。”水手奉钧旨，拿出船头。恰好夫头包九看见小蒲包，认得是支助抛下的，“他说是臭牛肉，如何却是个死孩？”遂进舱禀况爷：“小人不晓得这小孩子的来历，却认得抛那小孩子在江里这个人，叫做支助。”况爷道：“有了人，就有来历了。”一面差人密拿支助，一面请仪真知县到察院中同问这节公事。

况爷带了这死孩，坐了察院，等得知县来时，支助也拿到了。况爷上坐，知县坐于左手之傍。况爷因这仪真不是自己属县，不敢自专，让本县推问。那知县见况公是奉过敕书的，又且为人古怪，怎敢僭越。推逊了多时，况爷只得开言，叫：“支助，你这石灰腌的小孩子，是那里来的？”支助正要抵赖，却被包九在傍指实了。只得转口道：“小的见这贖东西在路傍不便，将来抛向江里，其实不知来历。”况爷问包九：“你看见他在路傍捡的么？”包九道：“他抛下江里，小的方才看见。问他什么东西，他说是臭牛肉。”况爷大怒道：“既假说臭牛肉，必有瞒人之意！”喝教



at the bow of the boat, saying, "Report to me confidentially if anyone has any information. I'm offering handsome rewards." The boatman did as he had been instructed.

Recognizing the rush bag to be the one Zhi Zhu had tossed into the river, Bao Jiu the foreman wondered to himself, "Didn't he say it was a bag of beef that had gone bad? But why does it have a baby in it?" Consequently, he stepped into the cabin and said to Prefect Kuang, "I have no information about the baby, but I know the man who threw the baby into the river. His name is Zhi Zhu."

"If we get the man, we'll know the story," said Prefect Kuang. So he sent men to bring Zhi Zhu quietly to him, and at the same time, he invited the magistrate of Yizhen County to conduct a joint investigation. This done, he went to the office of the Investigation Bureau to preside over the court, carrying the dead baby with him.

By the time the county magistrate arrived, Zhi Zhu had already been brought in under guard. Prefect Kuang took the seat of honor, with the magistrate sitting to his left. Since Yizhen County was not within his jurisdiction, the prefect thought it prudent not to act arbitrarily but let the county magistrate handle it. However, knowing that Prefect Kuang bore a mandate from the emperor himself and was an eccentric person at that, the county magistrate did not dare assume the dominant role. After much demurring on both sides, Prefect Kuang felt obliged to start the interrogation. "Zhi Zhu," he called out, "how did you come by the baby preserved in lime?"

Zhi Zhu was about to deny any knowledge of the case when he noticed Bao Jiu standing by, ready to bear witness. So he said instead, "I happened to see that dirty bag by the road and thought it quite an eyesore, so I tossed it into the river. I know nothing about how it got there."

Turning to Bao Jiu, Prefect Kuang asked, "Did you see him pick it up by the roadside?"

"I didn't see him until he was in the act of throwing the bag into the water. I asked him what it was, and he said it was some beef that had gone bad."

Prefect Kuang flared up. "If he chose to lie, he must have



手下选大毛板，先打二十再问。况爷的板子利害，二十板抵四十板还有馀，打得皮开肉绽，鲜血迸流，支助只是不招。况爷喝教夹起来。况爷的夹棍也利害，第一遍，支助还熬过，第二遍，就熬不得了，招道：“这死孩是邵寡妇的。寡妇与家童得贵有奸，养下这私胎来。得贵央小的替他埋藏，被狗子爬了出来，故此小的将来抛在江里。”况爷见他言词不一。又问：“你肯替他埋藏，必然与他家通情。”支助道：“小的并不通情，只是平日与得贵相熟。”况爷道：“他埋藏只要朽烂，如何把石灰腌着？”支助支吾不来，只得磕头道：“青天爷爷，这石灰其实是小的腌的。小的知邵寡妇家殷实，欲留这死孩去需索他几两银子。不期邵氏与得贵都死了，小的不遂其愿，故此抛在江里。”况爷道：“那妇人与小厮果然死了么？”知县在傍边起身打一躬，答应道：“死了，是知县亲验过的。”况爷道：“如何便会死？”知县道：“那小厮是刀劈死的，妇人是自缢的。知县也曾细详，他两个奸情已久，主仆之分久废。必是小厮言语触犯，那妇人一时不忿，提刀劈去，



something to hide.” Sharply, he ordered his men to select heavy bamboo rods and give the man twenty strokes before continuing with the interrogation. Prefect Kuang’s rods were no ordinary sort, and twenty strokes with his rods did more damage than forty strokes with other rods. Zhi Zhu’s skin ripped open and his blood spurted out, but he still refused to confess. Prefect Kuang then ordered that the ankle squeezers be applied. Prefect Kuang’s ankle squeezers being no ordinary sort either, Zhi Zhu withstood the pain the first time but collapsed the second time. He confessed. “The dead baby belonged to Shao-shi the widow. It was the illegitimate child of the widow and her servant, Degui. Degui asked me to bury it for him, which I did, but a dog dragged it out. And so I threw it into the river.”

Upon hearing this very different version of the story, Prefect Kuang pressed further, “If you were willing to do this for him, you must have been in collusion with the family.”

“No. I was just friends with Degui.”

“If he wanted to bury it, he must have wanted it to decompose. Why did he preserve it with lime?”

Unable to come up with an answer, Zhi Zhu kowtowed and said, “Your Honor, in fact, it was I who preserved the baby in lime. Knowing Shao-shi to be quite well-off, I wanted to keep the baby’s body to demand a few taels of silver from her. But since Shao-shi and Degui both died and there was no money to be had, I threw it into the river.”

“So, did the woman and the servant indeed die?” asked the prefect.

The county magistrate rose from his seat and replied with a slight bow, “Yes, they did. I personally conducted the examination.”

“How did they die?”

The magistrate explained, “The servant’s head had been split open by a knife. The woman hanged herself. I have also learned the details of the case: The two had carried on an adulterous affair for a long time, and the class distinction between mistress and servant had long been ignored. The servant must have said something offensive that angered the woman and prompted her to attack him with a knife.



误伤其命，情慌自缢，别无他说。”况爷肚里踌躇：“他两个既然奸密，就是语言小伤，怎下此毒手！早间死孩儿啼哭，必有缘故。”遂问道：“那邵氏家还有别人么？”知县道：“还有个使女，叫做秀姑，官卖去了。”况爷道：“官卖，一定就在本地。烦贵县差人提来一审，便知端的。”知县忙差快手去了。

不多时，秀姑拿到，所言与知县相同。况爷踌躇了半晌，走下公座，指着支助，问秀姑道：“你可认得这个人？”秀姑仔细看了一眼，说道：“小妇人不识他姓名，曾认得他嘴脸。”况爷道：“是了，他和得贵相熟，必然曾同得贵到你家来。你可实说，若半句含糊，便上拶！”秀姑道：“平日间实不曾见他上门，只是结末来，他突入中堂，调戏主母，被主母赶去！随后得贵方来，主母正在房中啼哭，得贵进房，不多时两个就都死了！”况爷喝骂支助：“光棍！你不曾与得贵通情，如何敢突入中堂？这两条人命，都因你起！”叫手下：“再与我夹起来。”支助被夹昏了，不由自家做主，从头至尾，如何教导得贵哄诱主母，如何哄他血孩到手



After she inadvertently killed him, she panicked and hanged herself. These are all the facts of the case.”

Prefect Kuang was skeptical. He thought, “The two being as close as they were, a mere verbal offense would not have provoked her to kill him. The dead baby’s crying must mean there’s more to be learned.” He asked, “Were there other members of Shao-shi’s household?”

“There was a maidservant called Xiugu,” replied the magistrate. “She’s been sold by the yamen.”

“In that case, she must still be in this area,” concluded the prefect. “Could the county magistrate please have her brought here? We’ll be able to learn the truth from her.”

The county magistrate promptly dispatched officers to bring Xiugu to court. Before long, Xiugu was brought in. Her deposition showed no discrepancy with the magistrate’s statement of the case.

After thinking for a while, Prefect Kuang left his seat and, pointing to Zhi Zhu, asked Xiugu, “Do you recognize this man?”

Xiugu took a close look and replied, “I don’t know his name, but I do recognize his face.”

“That makes sense,” said the prefect. “Being familiar with Degui, he must have followed Degui to the house. Tell the truth. I’ll have the finger squeezers applied to you if you deviate the slightest bit from the truth!”

“I truly had never seen him in the house until the last day, when he forced his way through the middle door into the inner quarters of the house and tried to take liberties with my mistress. My mistress drove him away. When Degui came back after that, my mistress was crying. Then Degui went into her room, and soon afterward, both died.”

Prefect Kuang shouted angrily at Zhi Zhu, “Villain! If you were not in collusion with Degui, how would you have dared to barge into the house? You are responsible for both deaths!” To his men, he ordered, “Apply the ankle squeezers again!”

Dazed by the torture, Zhi Zhu unthinkingly offered a detailed account of how he had taught Degui tricks to seduce Shao-shi, coaxed



诈他银子，如何挟制得贵要他引入同奸，如何闯入内室抱住求奸，被他如何哄脱了，备细说了一遍：“后来死的情由，其实不知。”况爷道：“这是真情了。”放了夹，叫书吏取了口词明白。知县在傍，自知才力不及，惶恐无地。

况爷提笔，竟判审单：

审得支助，奸棍也。始窥寡妇之色，辄起邪心；既乘弱仆之愚，巧行诱语。开门裸卧，尽出其谋；固胎取孩，悉堕其术。求奸未能，转而求利；求利未厌，仍欲求奸。在邵氏一念之差，盗铃尚思掩耳；乃支助几番之诈，探篋加以逾墙。以恨助之心恨贵，恩变为仇；于杀贵之后自杀，死有馀愧。主仆既死勿论，秀婢已杖何言。惟是恶魁，尚逃法网。包九无心而遇，腌孩有故而啼，天若使之，罪难容矣！宜坐致死之律，兼追所诈之赃。

况爷念了审单，连支助亦甘心服罪。况爷将此事申文上司，无不夸奖大才，万民传颂，以为包龙图复出，不是过也。这一家小说，



Degui into giving him the dead baby, blackmailed Shao-shi, and forced Degui to introduce him to Shao-shi so he could share the sexual favors. He went on to describe how he had burst into the interior of the house, held Shao-shi in his arms, and demanded sexual favors and how she had tricked him into letting her go. He concluded by saying, "But I know nothing of what led to the deaths."

Prefect Kuang said, "Now you're telling the truth." He ordered that the squeezers be withdrawn and that the clerk record the deposition. The county magistrate, sitting on one side, was overcome with shame upon realizing his own inferiority in wisdom and ability. Prefect Kuang picked up a brush-pen and wrote the following verdict:

"This court finds Zhi Zhu to be a depraved criminal. After his lecherous desires were aroused by a stolen look at the widow's beauty, he took advantage of the servant's gullibility and used clever words to persuade him to lie naked with his door open. The medicine to settle the fetus and possession of the dead baby were parts of his evil design, to which the widow fell victim. After his attempts at seeking sexual favors failed, he demanded money, which he later found to be unsatisfactory, and consequently reverted to his plan to obtain sexual favors. In the aftermath of a moment of weakness, Shao-shi was reduced to denial and self-deception. Several times, Zhi Zhu attempted blackmail and trespassed in her house. She turned her hatred for Zhi Zhu against Degui and changed a lover into an enemy. After killing Degui, she took her own life, her shame too great to be expiated by her death. With the mistress and the servant both dead, Xiugu the maid was put to the rod, and there the case closed, with the culprit still at large. But it so happened that Bao Jiu caught Zhi Zhu in the act, and the dead baby cried. Since heaven guided the investigation of the case, the crime is not to be tolerated. The culprit is hereby given the death sentence and shall yield to the yamen all the money he has received through extortion in this case."

Prefect Kuang read his verdict aloud. Even Zhi Zhu accepted its fairness. After Prefect Kuang reported the case to his superiors, there was none who did not praise him for his remarkable ability. As the story circulated among the populace, all and sundry called him a rein-

又题做《况太守断死孩儿》。有诗为证：

俏邵娘见欲心乱，蠢得贵福过灾生；
支赤棍奸谋似鬼，况青天折狱如神。





carnation of Judge Bao.⁶ This story has come to be titled “How Prefect Kuang Solves the Case of the Dead Baby.” There is a poem that bears witness:

*The pretty widow's desires were aroused;
The stupid servant's joys were followed by death.
That brute Zhi was as evil as a demon;
Prefect Kuang was as wise as a god.*

This story has been translated by C.T.Hsia and Susan Arnold Zonana as “The Case of the Dead Infant” in *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, ed. Y.W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). In the original edition, a note appended to the title reads “Originally titled ‘How Prefect Kuang Solves the Case of the Dead Baby by the Road.’”

¹ For more on Abbot Yutong and Red Lotus, see story 29 in Feng Menglong, *Stories Old and New: a Ming Dynasty Collection*, trans. Shuhui Yang & Yunqin Yang (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2007).

² There are seven classes of Buddhist disciples: the monk, the female observer of all the commandments, the novice, the male and the female observers of the minor commandments, and the male and the female observers of the five commandments. See *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* by Soothill (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987).

³ Guye, a mountain in present-day Shanxi Province, is said to be an abode of fairies.

⁴ Wine seasoned with *xionghuang* (realgar) is usually drunk at the Dragon Boat Festival to detoxify the body.

⁵ Kuang Zhong (1383–1443), the title character of this story, about whose wisdom and personal integrity many stories were told, served as prefect of Suzhou, from 1430 until his death in 1443.

⁶ Judge Bao (999–1062), as prefect of Kaifeng, gained such fame as a wise and fair dispenser of justice that stories about him abound in folklore and traditional drama.



第三十六卷

皂角林大王假形

富贵还将智力求，仲尼年少合封侯。
时人不解苍天意，空使身心半夜愁。

话说汉帝时，西川成都府有个官人，姓栾名巴，少好道术，官至郎中，授得豫章太守，择日上任。不则一日，到得半路，远近接见，到了豫章，交割牌印已毕。元来豫章城内有座庙，唤做庐山庙。好座庙，但见：

苍松偃盖，古桧蟠龙。侵云碧瓦鳞鳞，映日朱门赫赫。
巍峨形势，控万里之澄江；生杀威灵，总一方之祸福。新建
庙牌镌古篆，两行庭树种官槐。

这座庙甚灵，有神能于帐中共人说话，空中饮酒掷杯。豫章一郡人，尽来祈求福德，能使江湖分风举帆，如此灵应。这栾太



Story 36

The King of the Honey Locust Grove Assumes Human Shape

(Originally titled “County Magistrate Zhao Burns the Honey
Locust Grove”)

*Those who have gained wealth and rank seek wisdom;
Confucius deserved a title even in his youth.
People of our times know not heavenly designs,
But fret and worry needlessly through wakeful nights.*

Our story takes place during the Han dynasty. In Chengdu Prefecture, in Xichuan,¹ there lived an official named Luan Ba, who had been quite devoted to the arts of Daoism since youth. After attaining the rank of Gentleman of the Interior, he was assigned the post of prefect of Yuzhang [in present-day Jiangxi Province]. On a chosen day, he started out to assume his post. A few days later, at about the mid-point of his journey, he was met by officials who had come from far and near to greet him. Upon his arrival in Yuzhang, the seal of office was offered to him in a hand-over ceremony.

In the city of Yuzhang, there was a temple called the Lu Mountains Temple, and a fine temple it was. Behold:

*Embowered in spreading dark green pines,
Overhung by ancient dragon-shaped junipers,
Topped by green tiles rising to the skies,
Guarded by a red gate aglow in the sun.
Its grandeur keeps the mighty river in check;
Its power controls the people's weal or woe.
The new board bears inscriptions in the ancient style;
Two rows of locust trees line the courtyard.*

This was a temple most responsive to prayers. A god hidden behind a curtain would converse with supplicants and cast down winecups from midair. All the county residents had been there to ask for blessings. Prayers were so effective that a wind over the river could be parted to blow the sails of boats going in different directions.



守到郡，往诸庙拈香。次至庐山庙，庙祝参见，太守道：“我闻此庙有神最灵，能对人言，我欲见之集福。”太守拈香下拜道：“栾巴初到此郡，特来拈香，望乞圣慈，明彰感应。”问之数次，不听得帐内则声。太守焦躁道：“我能行天心正法，此必是鬼，见我害怕，故不敢则声！”向前招起帐幔，打一看时，可煞作怪，那神道塑像都不见了。这神道是个作怪的物事，被栾太守来看，故不敢出来。太守道：“庙鬼诈为天官，损害百姓。”即时教手下人把庙来拆毁了。太守又恐怕此鬼游行天下，所在血食，诳惑良民，不当稳便，乃推问山川社稷，求鬼踪迹。

却说此鬼走至齐郡，化为书生，风姿绝世，才辨无双，齐郡太守却以女妻之。栾太守知其所在，即上章解去印绶，直至齐郡，相见太守，往捕其鬼。太守召其女婿出来，只是不出。栾太守曰：“贤婿非人也，是阴鬼诈为天官，在豫章城内被我追捕甚急，故走来此处。今欲出之甚易。”乃请笔砚书成一道符，向空中一吹，一



After arriving in the county, Prefect Luan went to the local temples to offer incense. When he arrived at the Lu Mountains Temple and was greeted by the temple keeper, he said, "I heard that this temple, with a god that talks to people, is most responsive to prayers. I would like to see for myself and ask for blessings."

After making an incense offering, the prefect sank down on his knees and said, "I, Luan Ba, having just arrived in this county, am here to offer incense. Please favor me with a response in your divine compassion." He repeated the request several times but heard no response from behind the curtain. Growing impatient, the prefect said, "This must be a demon who's afraid of me because I have the power to raise thunderstorms to punish evil ones. That's why there's no response." So saying, he lifted the curtain and saw that, strangely enough, the image of the god had disappeared. As a matter of fact, that god was an evil being, afraid of coming out into the open in Prefect Luan's presence.

The prefect remarked, "So, this is but an evil spirit posing as a deity in order to prey on the populace." Right away, he instructed his men to demolish the temple. Thinking that he could not very well let the demon roam around the land, helping itself to sacrificial offerings and deceiving unsuspecting people, the prefect sought information on the demon's whereabouts from the local deities.

It so happened that the demon had taken refuge in Qi Prefecture in the shape of a scholar with a bearing graceful beyond compare and a literary talent second to none. The prefect of Qi married a daughter to him. After locating the demon, Prefect Luan submitted a memorial to his superiors asking permission to be relieved of his official duties. He then headed straight for Qi Prefecture on a demon-catching mission and paid the prefect a visit. The prefect of Qi summoned his son-in-law, but the young man refused to come out.

"Your son-in-law," said Prefect Luan, "is no human being but a demon who tried to pass itself off as a god in the city of Yuzhang. Because I gave orders to hunt it down, it fled all the way here. I can easily make it come out."

He asked for a brush-pen and an ink slab and wrote a magic figure,



似有人接去的。那一道符，径入太守女儿房中。且说书生在房里觑着浑家道：“我去必死！”那书生口衔着符，走至栾太守面前。栾太守打一喝：“老鬼何不现形！”那书生即变为一老狸，叩头乞命。栾太守道：“你不合损害良民，依天条律令处斩。”喝一声，但见刀下，狸头坠地。遂乃平静。

说话的说这栾太守断妖则甚？今日一个官人，只因上任，平白地惹出一件跷蹊作怪底事来，险些坏了性命。却说大宋宣和年间，有个官人姓赵名再理，东京人氏，授得广州新会县知县。这广里怎见得好？有诗道：

苏木沉香劈作柴，荔枝圆眼绕篱栽。
船通异国人交易，水接他邦客往来。
地暖三冬无积雪，天和四季有花开。
广南一境真堪羨，琥珀珠玑玳瑁阶。

当下辞别了母亲、妻子，带着几个仆从迤迳登程。非止一日，到得本县，众官相贺。第一日谒庙行香，第二日交割牌印，第三日



which he blew into the air. As if directed by a hand, the magic figure flew right into the chamber of the prefect's daughter. The scholar said to his wife, "I'll die if I go!" The next moment, with the magic figure between his lips, he walked right up to Prefect Luan.

"Old demon!" Prefect Luan roared. "Show your true form!"

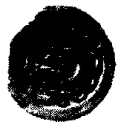
In an instant, the scholar changed into an old fox. As it kowtowed, begging that its life be spared, Prefect Luan said, "For your crimes against innocent people, you shall be executed in accordance with heavenly laws." At a sharp order from Prefect Luan, a sword swung down, and the head of the fox rolled on the ground. Peace was thus restored to the region.

Storyteller, why tell us about how a Prefect Luan subdued a demon? Well, that is to prepare you for a story about an official who, out of the blue, became entangled in a most extraordinary adventure soon after assuming his new post and, as a result, almost lost his life. Here is the story.

In the Xuanhe reign period [1119-25] during the great Song dynasty, a man named Zhao Zaili, a native of the Eastern Capital, was appointed to the post of magistrate of Xinhui County, Guangzhou. We know from the following poem what a nice place Guangzhou was:

*The finest timber is used as firewood;
 Litchi bushes grow around the fences.
 The boats engage in trade with foreigners;
 The waters transport travelers back and forth.
 The ground warm, with no winter snow;
 The weather balmy, with flowers in all four seasons.
 How enviable — the Guangzhou region!
 With amber and precious shells galore!*

To resume. Zhao Zaili bid farewell to his mother and his wife and set out on the journey, followed by a few servants. Some days later, he arrived at the county seat, where the various officials offered him congratulations. On the first day, he visited the temples to offer incense. On the second day, the official seal was handed over to him, and on the third day, he began conducting official business.



打断公事。只见：

冬冬牙鼓响，公吏两边排。

阎王生死案，东岳摄魂台。

知县恰才坐衙，忽然打一喷嚏，厅上阶下众人也打喷嚏。客将覆判县郎中：“非敢学郎中打喷嚏。离县九里有座庙，唤做皂角林大王庙。庙前有两株皂角树，多年结成皂角，无人敢动，蛀成末子。往时官府到任，未理公事，先去拈香。今日判县郎中不曾拈香，大王灵圣，一阵风吹皂角末到此，众人闻了皂角末，都打喷嚏。”[眉批]怪甚。知县道：“作怪！”即往大王庙烧香。

到得庙前，离鞍下马，庙祝接到殿上，拈香拜毕。知县揭起帐幔，看神道怎生结束：

戴顶簇金蛾帽子，着百花战袍，系蓝田碧玉带，抹绿绣花靴，脸子是一个骷髅，去骷髅眼里生出两只手来，左手提着方天戟，右手结印。

知县大惊，问庙官：“春秋祭赛何物？”庙官覆知县：“春间赛七岁花男，秋间赛个女儿。都是地方敛钱，预先买贫户人家儿



Behold:

*Rat-a-tat go the drums;
 In two rows stand the lictors.
 King Yama sits to judge cases of life and death;²
 On East Peak is set the soul-snatching platform.*

The magistrate had just called the court to order when he suddenly sneezed. Everyone else in the hall also sneezed. A clerk said to the magistrate, "It's not that we imitated you, sir, but nine *li* from here is a temple called the Temple of the Honey Locust King, in front of which stand two honey locust trees. Since no one dares to touch the pods that the trees have borne for many years, the pods have been eaten by worms and reduced to powder. Previous county magistrates always went to the temple to offer incense before taking up official business, but since Your Honor hasn't done so, the Honey Locust King has blown the powder to this hall in a show of his supernatural power. It was the honey locust pod powder that induced everyone's sneeze." (*Most bizarre.*)

"How very strange!" exclaimed the magistrate. Right away, he set off for the temple to offer incense. Upon reaching the temple, he dismounted his horse and was escorted into the hall by the temple abbot. When the ceremony was over, the magistrate raised the curtain to see what the god looked like:

*A cap adorned with a gold moth,
 A war robe in a floral pattern;
 A belt of Lantian jade around the middle,³
 Tight embroidered green shoes on his feet.
 Where the face should be, there was only a skull,
 With two hands stretching from the eye hollows:
 The left one holding a halberd,
 The right one making a Buddhist sign.*

The magistrate was dumbfounded. He asked the temple keeper, "What sacrifices are offered in spring and autumn?"

The temple keeper replied, "A seven-year-old boy is offered in each spring sacrificial ceremony, and a girl in autumn. In both cases, the local headmen collect money and buy the children from poor fami-



女。临祭时将来背剪在柱上剖腹取心，劝大王一杯。”知县大怒，教左右执下庙官送狱勘罪：“下官初授一任，为民父母，岂可枉害人性命！”[眉批]有胆识。即时教从人打那泥神，点火把庙烧做白地。[眉批]是。一行人簇拥知县上马。只听得喝道：“大王来！大王来！”问左右是甚大王。客将覆告：“是皂角林大王。”知县看时，红纱引道，闹装银鞍马上坐着一个鬼王，眼如漆丸，嘴尖数寸，妆束如庙中所见。知县叫取弓箭来，一箭射去。昏天闭日，霹雳交加，射百道金光，大风起飞砂走石，不见了皂角林大王。人从扶策知县归到县衙。明日依旧判断公事，众父老下状要与皂角林大王重修庙宇，知县焦躁，把众父老赶出来。说这广州有数般瘴气：

欲说岭南景，闻知便大忧：
巨象成群走，巴蛇捉对游。
鸬鸟藏枯木，含沙隐渡头。



lies ahead of time. At the ceremony, the child is tied to a post, with arms behind the back, and is then cut open so the Honey Locust King may eat the heart over a cup of wine.”

Ablaze with indignation, the magistrate ordered his men to arrest the temple keeper and send him to jail to await the results of investigations of his crimes. “This being my very first term of office in my career as an official and both a father and a mother to the people under my jurisdiction, how can I allow such wanton killings to take place!” (*Bravo!*) Straightway, he had his men smash the clay statue of the deity and burn the temple to the ground. (*Good!*) As his attendants helped him mount his horse, a voice rang out, “The king is here! The king is here!”

The magistrate asked his men what manner of king it was and was told that it was the Honey Locust King. The magistrate looked for himself and saw a demon king approaching, riding a horse with an ornate silver saddle and with red gauze lanterns leading the way. His eyes were like painted balls, his mouth protruded a few inches, and his outfit was exactly the same as that of the statue he had seen in the temple. The magistrate ordered that a bow and arrows be brought to him. As the arrow shot through the air, the sky darkened and the sun went out amid peals of thunder and a hundred golden flashes of lightning. A strong wind sprang up, blowing sand and stone through the air. The Honey Locust King vanished.

The magistrate was helped back to the county yamen, where he resumed his official duties the next day. The local elders submitted a memorial requesting that the Temple of the Honey Locust King be rebuilt. The memorial so upset the magistrate that he drove the elders out of his presence.

It is said that Guangzhou is a place plagued with miasma and many perils:

*Tell of scenes south of the Nanling Mountains,
And you send a chill down the spine:
Giant elephants move in hordes;
Pythons slither around in pairs.
Poisonous birds hide in withered trees,*



野猿啼叫处，惹起故乡愁。

赵知县自从烧了皂角林大王庙，更无些个事。在任治得路不拾遗，犬不夜吠，丰稔年熟。

时光似箭，不觉三年。新官上任，赵知县带了人从归东京。在路行了几日，离那广州新会县有二千馀里。来到座馆驿，唤做峰头驿，知县入那馆驿安歇，仆从唱了下宿喏。到明朝，天色已晓，赵知县开眼看时，衣服箱笼都不见。叫人从时，没有人应。叫管驿子，也不应。知县披了被起来，开放阁门看时，不见一人一骑，馆驿前后并没一人。慌忙出那馆驿门外看时：

经年无客过，终日有云收。

思量：“从人都到那里去了？莫是被强寇劫掠？”披着被，飞也似下那峰头驿，行了数里，没一个人家。赵知县长叹一声，自思量道：“休，休！生作湘江岸上人，死作路途中之鬼。”远远地见一座草舍，知县道：“惭愧！”行到草舍，见一个老丈，便道：“老丈拜揖，救赵再理性命则个！”那老儿见知县披着被，便道：“官人如



*Venomous water bugs lurk in ferries.
Wild apes' cries are heard here and there,
Stirring up longing for one's home far away.*

After he burned the Temple of the Honey Locust King, everything went well for Magistrate Zhao. Under his governance, no one coveted and pocketed belongings that were lost on the road, the streets were so peaceful and crime free that no dogs were heard barking at night, and farmers had one bumper harvest after another.

Time flew like an arrow. Quite unnoticeably, three years went by, and a new magistrate arrived on the scene. Magistrate Zhao returned to the Eastern Capital, followed by his attendants. After some days on the road, they came upon a government courier station called Peak Station, two thousand *li* from Xinhui County, in Guangzhou. The magistrate went in and was given accommodations for the night. The servants chanted good night to him and retired to their quarters.

When Magistrate Zhao woke up the next morning, his trunks and articles of clothing were nowhere to be seen. He called for his attendants, but no one answered. He called for the courier station staff and heard no response. Wrapping himself in the quilt, he rose and opened his door to look outside, and no man or horse was in sight. Nor was there a person anywhere around the house. In alarm, he rushed out and opened the front gate. He saw only

*A deserted place shunned by travelers,
Frequented by none but the clouds.*

"Where could they all have gone?" he wondered. "Could this be the work of robbers?" Still clutching the quilt around himself, he ran down the hill as swiftly as if he had wings on his feet. Several *li* later, not having come upon even one house, he heaved a deep sigh and thought, "Oh well, in life I am a native of the Xiang River region; in death, I'll be a ghost on the road." Then he saw a thatched hut some way off. "What a shame I didn't see it earlier!" he exclaimed. He walked up to the hut and saw an old man. "Greetings to you, sir!" said the magistrate. "My name is Zhao Zaili. Please help me!"

At the sight of a man with a quilt around his shoulders, the old man remarked, "Why are you in such a state?"



何恁的打扮？”知县道：“老丈，再理是广州新会县知县，来到这峰头驿安歇。到晓，人从、行李都不见！”老儿道：“却不作怪！”也亏那老儿便教知县入来，取些旧衣服换了，安排酒饭请他。住了五六日，又措置盘费擗掇知县回东京去。

知县谢了出门，夜住晓行，不则一日，来到东京。归去那对门茶坊里，叫点茶婆婆：“认得我？”婆婆道：“官人失望。”赵再理道：“我便是对门赵知县，归到峰头驿安歇，到晓起来，人从、担仗都不见一个。罪过村间一老儿与我衣服盘费。不止一日，来到这里。”婆婆道：“官人错了！对门赵知县归来两个月了。”赵再理道：“先归的是假，我是真的。”婆婆道：“那得有两个知县？”再理道：“相烦婆婆叫我妈妈过来。”婆婆仔细看时，果然和先前归来的不差分毫。只得走过去，只见赵知县在家坐地，婆婆道了万福，却和外面一般的。入到里面，见了妈妈，道：“外面又有一个知县归来。”妈妈道：“休要胡说！我只有一个儿子，那得有两个知县来！”婆婆道：“且去看一看。”走到对门，赵再理道：“妈妈认得儿？”妈妈道：“汉子休胡说！我只有一个儿子，那



“Sir, I am the magistrate of Xinhui County, Guangzhou. I am here because I lodged last night at Peak Station, and this morning, my attendants and luggage have all disappeared.”

“How extraordinary!” exclaimed the old man. He then kindly invited the magistrate into the hut, gave him some old clothes to wear, and treated him to wine and food. After five or six days, he put together some money and urged the magistrate to take it for his journey back to the Eastern Capital. The magistrate left with many a word of thanks.

Resting by night and traveling by day, he arrived some days later in the Eastern Capital. He walked up to the teahouse across from his home and asked the old waitress, “Do you recognize me?”

The old woman replied, “No, sir.”

“I am Magistrate Zhao from the house across the street. I took up lodging in a courier station called Peak Station, but when I woke up the following morning, my men and my luggage had all disappeared. Luckily, an old man in a hut gave me clothes and travel money. And then I came back here after several days’ traveling.”

“You are quite mistaken, sir. Magistrate Zhao of the house across the street has been back home for two months.”

“Then that one is an imposter. I am the real Magistrate Zhao.”

“But how can there be two magistrates?”

“Could you please have my mother come over here?”

The old woman studied him carefully and found that he looked exactly like the man who had returned earlier. She had no choice but to walk over to the Zhao house, where she found a Magistrate Zhao sitting. As she bowed in greeting, she noticed that he was the very image of the man outside. She entered the interior part of the house and said to Mrs. Zhao, “There’s another magistrate outside. He just arrived.”

“Nonsense!” said Mrs. Zhao. “I have only one son. How can there be two magistrates?”

“Well, go and see for yourself.”

Accordingly, Mrs. Zhao went across the street.

“Mother!” cried Zhao Zaili. “Don’t you recognize me?”



得两个？”赵再理道：“儿是真的。儿归到峰头驿，睡了一夜，到晓，人从、行李都不见了。如此这般，来到这里。”看的人捋肩叠背，拥约不开。赵再理摔着娘不肯放。点茶的婆婆道：“生知县时须有个癍痕隐记。”妈妈道：“生那儿时，脊背下有一搭红记。”脱下衣裳，果然有一搭红记。看的人发一声喊：“先归的是假的！”[眉批]有心假也要假得像，不似今人假得全不像。

却说对门赵知县问门前为甚乱嚷？院子道：“门前又一个知县归来。”赵知县道：“甚人敢恁的无状！我已归来了，如何又一个赵知县？”出门，看的人都四散走开。知县道：“妈妈，这汉是甚人？如何扯住我的娘无状！”娘道：“我儿身上有红记，是真的。”赵知县也脱下衣裳，众人大喊一声，看那脊背上，也有一搭红记。众人道：“作怪！”赵知县送赵再理去开封府，正直大尹升堂。那先回的赵知县，公然冠带入府，与大尹分宾而坐，谈是说非，大尹先自信了。[眉批]□宾馆谈是说非者皆假也。反将赵再理喝



“This man is talking nonsense!” said the old lady. “I have only one son. And now another one pops up!”

“I am your real son! I stayed for one night at Peak Station, and in the morning, my attendants and my luggage had all vanished.”

As he continued with his account of how he had made his way home, a crowd gathered around them, forming a tight circle. As Zhao Zaili kept a firm hold on his mother, refusing to let go, the old woman of the teahouse suggested, “There must be a birthmark somewhere.”

“There is indeed a red birthmark in the lower part of my son’s back,” said Mrs. Zhao.

He took off his upper garment and, sure enough, the red birthmark was exposed to view. The crowd burst into cheers. “The one who returned first is an impostor!” they cried. (*He who tries to pass himself off as someone else should at least make sure that the resemblance is strong enough. Don’t end up looking like nothing but an impostor, as is so often the case nowadays.*)

The Magistrate Zhao who was sitting in the house across the street asked the janitor what all the commotion was about. The janitor replied, “There’s another magistrate coming back.”

“The temerity! I’m here, so how can there be another Magistrate Zhao?” By the time he stepped out of the gate, the crowd of spectators was beginning to disperse. “Mother,” said the magistrate, “who’s that fellow? How dare he grab you like that?”

“He’s my real son. He’s got a red birthmark.”

The man also took off his upper garment as the onlookers cheered. On his back, for all to see, there was also a red birthmark. “Most extraordinary!” exclaimed the onlookers.

The man took Zhao Zaili to the Kaifeng prefectural yamen, where the prefect’s court happened to be in session. The Magistrate Zhao who had returned first strutted with great pomp and solemnity into the hall, sporting an official robe and belt, sat down in the seat of the guest of honor, and struck up a conversation with the prefect, who readily believed that he was talking to the real Magistrate Zhao. (*Those who strike up conversations in such a manner tend to be im-*



骂，几番便要用刑拷打。赵再理理直气壮，不免将峰头驿安歇事情，高声抗辨。大尹再三不决，猛省思量：“有告劄文凭是真的。”便问赵再理：“你是真的，告劄文凭在那里？”[眉批]行李人从都不见了，却问他告劄文凭，岂不可笑。往时苏州地方呈称河内有无头死尸，县令□问尸有伤否，事即类此。赵再理道：“在峰头驿都不见了。”大尹台旨，教客将请假的赵知县来。太守问：“判县郎中，可有告劄文字在何处？”知县道：“有！”令人去妈妈处取来呈上。大尹叫：“赵再理，你既是真的，如何官告文凭，却在他处？”再理道：“告大尹，只因在峰头驿失去了。却问他几年及第？试官是谁？当年做甚题目？因何授得新会县知县？”大尹思量道：“也是。”问那假的赵知县，一一对答，[眉批]也难不倒他。如赵再理所言，并无误差。大尹一发决断不下。那假的赵知县归家，把金珠送与推款司。[眉批]不着。自古“官不容针，私通车马”。推司



postors, but few would be suspicious of them.) For Zhao Zaili, the prefect had nothing but the harshest words, threatening time and again to subject him to torture. Fully confident of his own innocence, Zhao Zaili spoke out in a ringing voice, giving an account of what had occurred at Peak Station.

The prefect found it hard to come up with a verdict. Suddenly, an idea struck him. "Whoever bears the official appointment letter is the real Magistrate Zhao." To Zhao Zaili, he said, "If you are not an impostor, where's your letter of appointment?" (*Hadn't his attendants and his luggage all vanished? Isn't it ridiculous to ask him for a letter of appointment? It's been said that in Suzhou, when a local headman reported that a headless corpse had been found in the river, the county magistrate asked if there was any wound on the body, showing as much sense as the prefect in our story.*)

"It disappeared at Peak Station, along with my other things."

The prefect instructed that the false Magistrate Zhao be brought forward. "Mr. Magistrate," said the prefect, "do you still have your letter of appointment?"

"Yes," replied the impostor, whereupon he sent his men to Mrs. Zhao, and the document was duly brought back to court.

"Zhao Zaili," the prefect bellowed, "if you are the real magistrate as you claim to be, why is *your* letter of appointment with *him*?"

"Your Honor," said Zaili, "I lost it at Peak Station. Why don't you ask him in which year he passed the examinations? Who was the chief examiner? What were the essay questions? How did he get to be magistrate of Xinhui County?"

"He's got a point," thought the prefect. He then put all these questions to the impostor, who had ready answers for every one of them and never deviated in the slightest from the information Zhao Zaili had provided. (*Nothing baffles him.*) The prefect found a verdict even more elusive.

After returning home, the impostor put together some lavish gifts and had them sent over to the Justice Bureau. (*Wrong thing to do.*) As the ancients put it, "In public, even the gift of a needle is frowned



接了假的知县金珠，开封府断配真的出境直到兖州奉符县，两个防送公人，带着衣包雨伞，押送上路。

不则一日，行了三四百里路。地名青岩山脚下，前后都没有人家。公人对赵再理道：“官人，商量句话。你到牢城营里，也是担土挑水，作塌杀你，不如就这里寻个自尽。非甘我二人之罪，正是上命差遣，盖不由己。我两个去本地官司讨得回文。你便早死，我们也得早早回京。”赵再理听说，叫苦连天：“罢，罢！死去阴司告状理会！”当时颤做一团，闭着眼等候棍子落下。公人手里把着棍子，口里念道：“善去阴司，好归地府。”恰才举棍要打，只听得背后有人大叫道：“防送公人不得下手！”[眉批]世间多少男子汉，谁肯担出良心救人，不如此六七岁孩儿远矣。吓得公人放下棍子，看时，见一个六七岁孩儿，裹着光纱帽、绿襦衫、玉束带，甜鞋净袜，来到目前。公人问是谁？说道：“我非是人。”吓得两个公人，喏喏连声。便道：“他是真的赵知县，却如何打杀他？我与你一笏银，好看承他到奉符县。若坏了他性命，教你两个都回去



upon; in private, gift-laden horse carriages freely come and go." Since the director of the Justice Bureau had been bribed by the fake magistrate, the real magistrate was expelled from Kaifeng prefecture and exiled to Fengfu County, in Yanzhou. With his package of clothing and his umbrella, Zhao Zaili set out on the road, escorted by two lictors.

They covered three to four hundred *li* in a few days. When they came to the foot of Blue Rock Hill, with no sign of human habitation anywhere in sight, the lictors said to Zhao Zaili, "Mister, we'd like to have a word with you. After you get to the prison, you'll do nothing but carry loads of soil and water. You won't survive the back-breaking labor anyway, so why don't you kill yourself here and now? Don't blame us; we're only obeying orders. We really can't do otherwise. We need to get an official reply from the local authorities, but you'll have to die first, so that we can get back to the capital as soon as possible."

At these words, Zhao Zaili burst into cries of woe. "All right! All right!" he said. "I'll lodge a complaint against you in the netherworld!" Trembling all over, he closed his eyes, anticipating the blows of the rods.

Raising the rods high, the lictors chanted, "Have a good journey to the netherworld!"

They were on the point of bringing their rods down when a voice rang out behind them. "Stop!" (*Goodness knows how few grown men would be willing to save someone from danger out of the goodness of their hearts! They don't even measure up to a six- or seven-year-old boy!*)

The lictors were so frightened that they dropped their rods. They looked around and saw walking toward them a six- or seven-year-old boy wearing a plain gauze cap, a green shirt, a jade waistband, and a clean pair of shoes and white socks. When they questioned him as to his identity, he replied, "I am not a mortal being."

The two lictors were awestruck. As they busily muttered in humble tones, the boy said, "He is the real Magistrate Zhao. How can you beat him to death? Here's a piece of silver for you. Take good care of him all the rest of the way to Fengfu County. If something



不得。”一阵风，不见了小儿。二人便对赵知县道：“莫怪，不知道是真的！若得回东京，切莫题名！”迤邐来到奉符县牢城营，端公交割了。公人说上项事，端公便安排书院，请那赵知县教两个孩儿读书，不教他重难差役。然虽如此，坐过公堂的人，却教他做这勾当，好生愁闷，难过日子。

不觉捱了一年。时遇春初，往后花园闲步散闷，见花柳生芽，百禽鸣舞。思想为官一场，功名已付之度外。奈何骨肉分离，母子夫妻，俱不相认，不知前生作何罪业，受此恶报！糊口于此，终无出头之日，凄然堕下泪来。猛见一所池子，思量：“不如就池里投水而死，早去阴司地府告理他。”叹了口气，觑着池里一跳。只听得有人叫道：“不得投水！”回头看时，又见个光纱帽、绿襦衫、玉束带孩儿道：“知县，婆婆教你三月三日上东峰东岳左廊下，见九子母娘娘，与你一件物事，上东京报仇。”赵知县拜谢道：“尊神，如今在东京假赵某的是甚人？”孩儿道：“是广州皂角林大王。”说罢，一阵风不见了。

巴不得到三月三日，辞了端公，往东峰东岱岳烧香。上得岳



happens to him, you two can forget about getting back home.” With a gust of wind, the boy disappeared from view.

To Magistrate Zhao, the two men said, “Don’t hold us to blame! We didn’t know you were the real one. If you ever return to the Eastern Capital, please don’t bring up our names.”

They proceeded to the Fengfu County prison and handed him over to the warden. After the lictors told the warden about what had happened on their journey, he arranged to have Magistrate Zhao tutor his two children in the study instead of assigning him to heavy manual labor. Still, for someone who had served as an official, he found his new duties as a tutor too boring and the days passing too slowly.

One year went by at last, and spring came around again. As Zhao Zaili walked in the back garden to pass the time, the sight of the early spring flowers, the budding willows, and the chirping, dancing birds saddened him. After serving a term as an official, he no longer attached any value to rank and title. What grieved him was the separation from his flesh and blood. Even his mother and his wife had failed to recognize him. What sin had he committed in a previous life to deserve this tragic retribution? Why should he be condemned to such a hand-to-mouth existence in this place without any hope of ever lifting himself from misery? As tears of sorrow fell from his eyes, he suddenly saw a pond. He thought, “I’d better throw myself into the pond and file a complaint against that impostor in the netherworld.”

He sighed and was on the point of jumping into the water when he heard a cry, “Don’t jump!” Turning around, he saw another child in a plain gauze cap, a green shirt, and a jade waistband. “Magistrate,” the boy said, “Granny wants you to go on the third day of the third month to the left corridor of East Peak Temple to see the Patron Goddess of Children. She’ll give you something that you can take to the Eastern Capital and use to vindicate yourself.”

With a thankful bow, Magistrate Zhao said, “Honorable god, who is the man impersonating me in the Eastern Capital?”

“It’s the Honey Locust King of Guangzhou,” replied the child. With that, he departed in a gust of wind.

When the third day of the third month came at last, Zhao Zaili



庙，望那左廊下，见九子母娘娘，拜祝再三。转出庙后，有人叫：“赵知县。”回头看时，见一个孩儿，挽着三个角儿，棋子布背心，道：“婆婆叫你。”随那小儿，行半里田地看时，金钉朱户，碧瓦雕梁，望见殿上坐着一个婆婆，眉分两道雪，髻挽一窝丝，有三四个孩儿，叫：“恩人来了。”如何叫赵知县是恩人？他在广州做知县时，一年便救了两个小厮，三年便救几人性命，因此叫做恩人。[眉批]小厮也知恩报恩，世上负心人视如此可□。知县在阶下拜求。婆婆便请知县上殿来：“且坐，安排酒来。”数杯酒后，婆婆道：“见今在东京夺你家室的，是皂角林大王，官司如何断决得？我念你有救童男童女之功，却用救你。”[眉批]此是以为九子母也。便叫第三个孩儿：“你取将那件物事。”孩儿手里托着黄帕，包着一个盒儿。婆婆去头上拔一只金钗，分付知县道：“你去那山脚下一所大池边头，一株大树，把金钗去那树上敲三敲，那水面上定有夜叉出来。你说是九子母娘娘差来，便带你到龙宫海藏取一件物



bade farewell to the warden and headed in the direction of Eastern Peak Temple to offer incense. He arrived at the temple and went to the left corridor. There, he bowed repeatedly to the statue of the Patron Goddess of Children and offered his prayers. As he made his way out of the temple, he heard a voice calling, "Magistrate Zhao!" Turning around, he saw a little boy wearing a checkered cotton vest, with his hair tied up in three knots. "Granny wishes to see you," said the child.

Zhao followed the little boy across a field and, about half a *li* later, came to a house with a green tile roof and carved beams, behind a red gate with golden nails. In the main hall sat an old lady with snowy eyebrows and a hair bun that looked like a ball of silk. Three or four children around her cried out, "The benefactor is here!"

Why did they call Magistrate Zhao "benefactor"? Well, back when he was a magistrate in Guangzhou, he had saved the lives of two children each year, which meant quite a few lives during his three-year term of office. Hence that form of address. (*Even little children know that kindness should be repaid with kindness. Ingrates of the world, follow their example!*)

The magistrate paid homage to the old lady from his position below the dais. She invited him to go up the steps and said, "Please take a seat. Wine will be served." After several cups of wine, she said, "The one in possession of your house and family in the Eastern Capital is the Honey Locust King. This is by no means anything that a court of law can settle. I am helping you because of what you have done for little boys and girls." (*So she is none other than the Patron Goddess of Children.*) Turning to the third child, she said, "Give me the box." The child produced a box wrapped in a piece of yellow cloth. The old lady removed a gold hairpin from her hair and instructed the magistrate in these words: "Go to the end of the large pond at the foot of this hill, where you'll see a big tree. Knock the gold hairpin against the tree three times, and a yaksha will emerge from the water's surface.⁴ Just say you're sent by the Patron Goddess of Children, and the yaksha will lead you to the Dragon King's palace. There, they'll put something from the palace treasury into this



事在盒子内，便可往东京坏那皂角林大王。”知县拜谢婆婆，便下东峰东岱岳来。到山脚下，寻见池子边大树，用金钗去敲三敲。一阵风起，只见水面上一个夜叉出来，问：“是甚人？”便道：“奉九子母娘娘命，来见龙君。”夜叉便人去，不多时，复出来，叫知县闭目，只听得风雨之声。夜叉叫开眼，看时：

靄靄祥云笼殿宇，依依薄雾罩回廊。

夜叉教知县把那盒子来，知县便解开黄袱，把那盒子与夜叉。夜叉揭开盒盖，去那殿角头叫恶物过来，只见一件东西，似龙无角，似虎有鳞，入于盒内。把盒盖定，把黄袱包了，付与知县牢收，直到东京去坏皂角林大王。夜叉依旧教他闭目，引出水中。

知县离了东峰东岱岳，到奉符县。一路上自思量：“要去问牢城营端公还是不去好？我是配来的罪人，定不肯放我去，留住便坏了我的事，不如一径取路。”过了奉符县，趁金水银堤汴河船，直到东京开封府前，大声叫屈：“我是真的赵知县，却配我



box. You may then go to the Eastern Capital and subdue that Honey Locust King.”

After bowing thankfully to the old lady, the magistrate left the temple and walked downhill to the big tree by the pond at the foot of the hill. As soon as he had knocked the hairpin against the tree three times, a gust of wind sprang up, and a yaksha appeared on the surface of the water, asking, “Who is this?”

“By the order of the Patron Goddess of Children, I’m here to see the Dragon King.”

The yaksha dived down and reemerged a short while later, and told Zhao Zaili to close his eyes. As soon as he did, his ears were filled with the sound of wind and rain. When the yaksha told him to open his eyes, he saw

Auspicious clouds over the palace roof;

A translucent mist over the walkways.

When the yaksha told him to produce the box, he untied the yellow wrapping and handed the box to the yaksha, who then took off the lid, walked to one corner of the hall, and called out, “You evil thing! Come here!”

Lo and behold, an object that resembled a dragon, but without the horns and a tiger, but with scales, got into the box! The yaksha put the lid back on, wrapped the box in a piece of yellow cloth, gave it back to the magistrate, and told him to keep a close watch over it and carry it all the way to the Eastern Capital, where he was to use it to subdue the Honey Locust King. As before, the yaksha told him to close his eyes and led him out of the water.

After leaving East Peak Temple, the magistrate headed for Fengfu County. Along the way, he thought to himself, “Should I ask for the prison warden’s permission? But surely, he wouldn’t let a convict under his supervision go off like that. And if he makes me stay, I won’t be able to do what I’m supposed to do. I’d better keep going.”

He passed through Fengfu County and took a boat, traveling up the Bian River, past bustling and prosperous towns, all the way to Kaifeng, the Eastern Capital. He cried out his grievances in front of the prefectural yamen: “I am the real Magistrate Zhao, now in exile



到兖州奉符县。如今占住我浑家的不是人，是广州新会县皂角林大王！”众人都拥将来看。便有做公的捉入府来，驱到厅前阶下，大尹问道：“配去的罪人，辄敢道我打断不明？”赵知县告大尹：“再理授得广州新会县知县，第一日打断公事，忽然打一个喷嚏，厅上厅下人都打喷嚏。客将禀覆：‘离县九里有座皂角林大王庙，庙前有两株皂角树，多年蛀成末，无人敢动。判县郎中不曾拈香，所以大王显灵，吹皂角末来打喷嚏。’再理即时备马往庙拈香，见神道形容怪异，眼里伸出两只手来。问庙祝春秋祭赛何物。覆道：‘春赛祭七岁花男，秋赛祭一童女，背绑那将军柱上，剖腹取心供养；再理即时将庙官送狱究罪，焚烧了庙宇神像。回来路上，又见喝：‘大王来！’红纱照道，再理又射了一箭，次后无事。捻指三年任满，到半路馆驿安歇。到天明起来，三十余人从者不见一人。上至头巾，下至衣服，并不见，只得披着被走乡中。亏一个老儿赠我衣服盘费，得到东京，不想大尹将再理断配去奉符县。



in Fengfu County, in Yanzhou. The one living with my wife is not a human being but a demon, the Honey Locust King of Xinhui County, Guangzhou!”

As a crowd began to gather around him, lictors appeared and pushed him into the yamen, all the way to the steps of the dais in the main hall. The prefect said sharply, “How dare a convicted felon accuse me of a wrong judgment!”

Magistrate Zhao responded, “On my very first day at my post as the magistrate of Xinhui County, in Guangzhou, I was tending to official business when I suddenly sneezed, followed by everyone else in the hall. A clerk remarked that nine *li* away, there was a temple of the Honey Locust King, in front of which stood two honey locust trees. The worms had reduced the pods to powder, and no one dared touch them. Because I had not been to the temple to make incense offerings, the King demonstrated his magic power and blew the powder to induce sneezes. Right away, I mounted my horse and went to the temple to offer incense. The statue of the deity looked most grotesque, with two hands stretching out from the eye sockets. When I asked what kind of sacrificial offerings were made in spring and autumn, the temple keeper replied that a seven-year-old boy was the spring sacrifice and a small girl was the autumn sacrifice. They were tied to the main column, hands behind their backs, and their hearts were gouged out for the king’s enjoyment.

“The very next moment, I sent the temple keeper to jail to await the results of investigations of his crimes and had the deity’s statue smashed and burned down. On the way back to my office, I heard the cry ‘The king is here!’ Red gauze lanterns were lighting his way. I shot an arrow at him, and nothing untoward happened thereafter.

“After my three-year term of office came to an end, I went back to the capital, lodging in a roadside inn along the way. When I rose the next morning, my attendants had disappeared, all thirty-odd of them. My clothing, including my cap, had also vanished. I had no choice but to gather the quilt around myself and venture out into the country. Luckily, an old man gave me clothes and travel money so that I could make my way to the Eastern Capital. I little expected that



因上东峰东岱岳，遇九子母娘娘，得其一物，在盒子中，能坏得皂角林大王。若请那假知县来，坏他不得，甘罪无辞。”大尹道：“你且开盒子先看一看，是甚物件。”再理告大尹：“看不得！揭开后，坏人性命。”大尹教押过一边。即时请将假知县来，到厅坐下。大尹道：“有人在此告判县郎中非人，乃是广州新会县皂角林大王。”假知县听说，面皮通红，问道：“是谁说的？”大尹道：“那真赵知县上东峰东岱岳，遇九子母娘娘所说。”假知县大惊，仓皇欲走。那真的赵知县在阶下，也不等大尹台旨，解开黄袱，揭开盒子，只见风雨便下，伸手不见掌。须臾，云散风定，就厅上不见了假的知县。大尹唬得战做一团，只得将此事奏知道君皇帝，降了三个圣旨：第一，开封府问官追官勒停；第二，赵知县认了母子，仍旧补官；第三，广州一境不许供养神道。

赵知县到家，母亲、妻子号啕大哭：“怎知我儿却是真的！”

[眉批] 一假而母不认子，妻不知夫，仆不帮主，假之为害如此。叫那三十馀



Your Honor would exile me to Fengfu County.

“On a trip to Eastern Peak Temple, I encountered the Patron Goddess of Children and was given an object, which now lies in this box. This object can subdue the Honey Locust King. Please summon that fake magistrate. If I can’t subdue him, I’ll be reconciled to my sentence.”

“Open that box first,” said the prefect, “and see what it is.”

Zhao Zaili countered, “No, this can’t be done. If the box is opened, I’m afraid an innocent life will be taken.”

Consequently, the prefect had Zhao Zaili taken to one side while they waited for the fake magistrate to be brought to court. Once the impostor arrived and sat down, the prefect said, “There is a complaint against you, saying that you are not a human being but some Honey Locust King of Xinhui County, Guangzhou.”

The fake magistrate rejoined, coloring, “Who says so?”

“The Patron Goddess of Children said so to the real Magistrate Zhao in Eastern Peak Temple.”

The impostor panicked and hastily rose to go. At this point, the real Magistrate Zhao, who was standing at the bottom of the steps, untied the yellow parcel and took off the lid without waiting for the prefect to give the order. In an instant, a blinding rainstorm sprang up, one in which you could not even see your outstretched hand. A moment later, the clouds dispersed, the wind died down, and the fake magistrate had disappeared.

Trembling all over with fear, the prefect saw no option but to report the matter to Emperor Huizong, who then issued three decrees: First, the prefect was to be removed from his post. Second, after reclaiming his family, Magistrate Zhao was to resume his old rank. Third, no idols of deities were to be worshiped in the Guangzhou Region.

When Magistrate Zhao arrived at home, his mother and his wife burst into loud sobs. “How was I to know that you were my real son?” said his mother. *(Once an impostor comes on the scene, the mother fails to recognize her own son, the wife knows not her own husband, and the servants turn their backs on the master. Such is the*



人从问时，覆道：“驿中五更前后，教备马起行，怎知是假的！”众人都来贺喜。问盒中是何物，便坏得皂角林大王。赵知县道：“下官亦不认得是何物。若不是九子母娘娘，满门被这皂角林大王所坏。须往东峰东岱岳烧香拜谢则个！”即便拣日，带了妈妈、浑家、仆从，上汴河船，直到兖州奉符县，谢了端公。那端公晓得是真赵知县，奉承不迭。住了三两日，上东峰东岱岳来，入得庙门，径来左廊下谢那九子母娘娘。烧罢香，拜谢出门。妈妈和浑家先下山去，赵知县带两个仆人往山后闲行。见怪石上坐一个婆婆，颜如莹玉，叫一声：“赵再理，你好喜也！”赵知县上前认时，便是九子母娘娘，赵知县即时拜谢。娘娘道：“早来祈祷之事，吾已都知。盒子中物，乃是东峰东岱岳一个狐狸精。皂角林大王，乃是阴鼠精，非狸不能捕鼠。知县不妨到御前奏上，宣扬道力。”道罢，一阵风不见了。赵知县骇然大惊。下山来，对妈妈、浑家说知，感谢不尽。直到东京，奏知道君皇帝。此时道教



harm that impersonation can do.)

When summoned to answer queries, the attendants, more than thirty altogether, replied, "At about the fifth watch of the night, we were told to prepare the horses for departure from the inn. How were we to know that he was an impostor!"

As they all gathered around to offer their congratulations, they asked what in the box had subjugated the Honey Locust King. Magistrate Zhao said, "I don't know any more than you do. Had it not been for the Patron Goddess of Children, my entire clan would have perished at the hands of that Honey Locust King. I need to go to Eastern Peak Temple to offer some incense in thanks."

On a chosen day, he took his mother, his wife, and some servants on a boat trip down the Bian River to Fengfu County, in Yanzhou. There, they offered thanks to the prison warden, who, knowing that this was the real Magistrate Zhao, danced attendance on him. They stayed for two to three days and then made their way up the hill to Eastern Peak Temple. After entering the temple gate, the magistrate went directly to the left corridor, where he offered thanks to the statue of the Patron Goddess of Children. When the incense was burned, he bade a thankful farewell to the goddess and went out the door. His mother and his wife having preceded him down the hill, Magistrate Zhao was walking at a leisurely pace with two servants when he saw an old lady with a complexion as fair as jade sitting on a craggy rock. "Zhao Zaili," she called out. "Congratulations!"

Magistrate Zhao took a step forward and recognized her to be none other than the Patron Goddess of Children. He quickly bowed in gratitude. The old lady said, "I know about your prayers this morning. The thing in the box is a fox spirit from East Peak. The Honey Locust King being a rat spirit, fox is its natural enemy. You may want to write a memorial to the emperor requesting that wide publicity be given to the power of Daoism." With that, she disappeared in a gust of wind, to the astonishment of Magistrate Zhao. After descending the hill, he told his mother and his wife about the incident, his heart filled with gratitude.

Upon arriving in the Eastern Capital, he reported the matter to

方当盛行，降一道圣旨，逢州遇县，都盖九子母娘娘神庙，至今庙宇犹有存者。诗云：

世情宜假不宜真，信假疑真害正人。
若是世人能辨假，真人不用诉明神。



Emperor Huizong, a believer in Daoism. With Daoism enjoying much popularity at the time, the emperor decreed that temples dedicated to the Patron Goddess of Children be built in all prefectures and counties. Some of these temples remain to this day. As the poem says,

*The world favors the fake rather than the real;
Belief in the fake brings ruin to the real.
If everyone can tell the false from the real,
None will need to appeal to the gods.*

¹ Xichuan is roughly the same as present-day Sichuan.

² In Buddhist mythology, King Yama is the king of hell and, in popular belief, passes judgment on the dead in order to determine their reincarnations.

³ Lantian is a mountain located to the southeast of Lantian County, Shaanxi Province. It is famous for its jade.

⁴ A yaksha is usually an evil spirit in the Buddhist belief.





第三十七卷

万秀娘仇报山亭儿

春浓花艳佳人胆，月黑风高壮士心。
讲论只凭三寸舌，秤评天下浅和深。

话说山东襄阳府，唐时唤做山南东道。这襄阳府城中，一个员外，姓万，人叫做万员外。这个员外，排行第三，人叫做万三官人。在襄阳府市心里住，一壁开着乾茶铺，一壁开着茶坊。家里一个茶博士，姓陶，小名叫做铁僧，自从小时候着角儿，便在万员外家中掉盏子，养得长成二十馀岁，是个家生孩儿。当日茶市罢，万员外在布帘底下，张见陶铁僧这厮牵四十五见钱在手里。万员外道：“且看如何？”元来茶博士市语，唤做“走州府”，且如道市语说：“今日走到馀杭县。”这钱，一日只稍得四十五钱，馀杭是四十五里；若说一声“走到平江府”，早一日稍三百六十足。若还信脚走到“西川成都府”，一日却是多少里田地！万员外望见了，且道：“看这厮如何？”只见陶铁僧牵了四五十钱，鹰觑鹞望，看布帘里面，约莫没人见，把那见钱怀中便揣。万员外慢腾腾地掀开布帘出来，柜身里凳子上坐地，见陶铁僧舒手去怀里摸一摸，唤做“自搜”，腰间解下衣带，取下布袱，两只手提住布



Story 37

Wan Xiuniang Takes Revenge through Toy Pavilions

*Spring flowers in bloom appeal to lovers;
Moonless windy nights appeal to warriors.
The three-inch-long tongues of the eloquent
Delight in commenting on affairs of the world.*

As the story has it, in Xiangyang Prefecture, Shandong, known in Tang times as the East Circuit South of the Mountain, there lived in the center of the city a squire called by all and sundry either Squire Wan, or Third Squire Wan because he was the third son of the family. He owned a tea shop, which was located on one side of his house, and a teahouse, located on the other. He employed a waiter, now more than twenty years old, with the surname Tao and the nickname Iron Monk, who had been born in the house to a maidservant and had worked in the teahouse ever since he began wearing his hair in topknots the way children do. On the day of which we speak, after the teahouse had closed for the day, Squire Wan peeked out from behind the cotton portiere and saw Iron Monk Tao pick up about forty-five in cash. "Let me see what he does with the money," thought Squire Wan.

In the parlance of the local teahouse waiters, stolen money is expressed in terms of a "trip." "A trip today to Yuhang County" means having stolen forty-five in cash, because Yuhang is forty-five *li* away. "A trip to Pingjiang Prefecture" means three hundred sixty in cash. "A trip all the way to Chengdu Prefecture in Xichuan"¹ means a lot more money. As Squire Wan said to himself, "Let me see what he does with the money," Iron Monk Tao shot swift, eagle-like glances around and, believing there were no peeping eyes behind the portiere, slipped the money into his bosom. Unhurriedly, Squire Wan raised the portiere, stepped out, and sat down on a stool by the counter. With one hand, Iron Monk Tao patted his own bosom in a gesture understood as a "self search," took off his waistband, and,



袱角，向空一抖，拍着肚皮和腰，意思间分说，教万员外看道，我不曾偷你钱。万员外叫过陶铁僧来问道：“方才我见你牵四五十钱在手里，望这布帘里一望了，便攥了。你实对我说，钱却不计利害。见你解了布袋，空中抖一抖，真个瞒得我好！你这钱藏在那里？说与我，我到饶你；若不说，送你去官司。”陶铁僧又大拇指不离方寸地道：“告员外，实不敢相瞒，是有四五十钱，安在一个去处。”那厮指道：“安在挂着底浪荡灯铁片儿上。”万员外把凳子站起脚上去，果然是一垛儿安着四五十钱。万员外复身再来凳上坐地，叫这陶铁僧来问道：“你在我家里几年？”陶铁僧道：“从小里随先老底便在员外宅里掉茶盏抹托子，自从老底死后，罪过员外收留，养得大，却也有十四五年。”万员外道：“你一日只偷我五十钱，十日五百，一个月一贯五百，一年十八贯，十五来年，你偷了我二百七十贯钱。如今不欲送你去官司，你且闲休！”[眉批] □个财主算法，不□□法。当下发遣了陶铁僧。这陶铁僧辞了万员外，收拾了被包，离了万员外茶坊里。

这陶铁僧小后生家，寻常和罗槌不曾收拾得一个，包裹里有得些个钱物，没十日都使尽了。又被万员外分付尽一襄阳府开茶



holding his cloth bag by two corners, shook it in midair. Then, patting his belly and his sides, he seemed to be saying, "Watch this well, Squire Wan! I didn't steal your money!"

Squire Wan told Tao to approach him and said, "I saw you pick up forty to fifty in cash just a moment ago. You looked at the portiere and slipped the money into your bosom. Now, tell me the truth. The amount of money doesn't matter, but what a deceitful thing you did, taking the cloth bag and shaking it in midair and all! Where did you hide the money? Tell me, and I'll forgive you. If you don't, I'll take you to the authorities."

His thumb aimed at his heart, Iron Monk Tao said, "Squire, I'm not hiding anything from you. There are indeed forty to fifty in cash hidden somewhere." Pointing upward, he continued, "It is all on a piece of iron inside the hanging lamp."

Squire Wan climbed up a stool and saw that, sure enough, there was a pile of forty to fifty in cash in the lamp. Squire Wan stepped down, reseated himself on the stool, and again made Iron Monk Tao approach him.

"How many years have you been in this house?"

"As a child, I helped my father wash the teacups and wipe the saucers in this house. After Father died about fourteen or fifteen years ago, you, sir, kindly kept me and have supported me all these years."

"You steal fifty in cash from me a day. That comes to five hundred in ten days, one string plus five hundred a month, eighteen strings in a year. In these fifteen years, you've stolen two hundred and seventy strings altogether. I'm not going to deliver you to the authorities, but you are fired!" (*The calculations of a miser.* [Illegible.])

He dismissed Iron Monk Tao immediately. The young man took leave of the squire, packed, and left the teahouse.

Iron Monk Tao found himself without a means of support, having not even a pair of clappers with which to beat time so that he could sing a beggar's songs. In less than ten days, he had used up whatever little money he had in his parcel. Because Squire Wan had



坊底行院，这陶铁僧没经纪，无讨饭吃处。[眉批]人而不仁，疾之已甚。当时正是秋间天色，古人有一首诗道：

柄柄芰荷枯，叶叶梧桐坠。
细雨洒霏微，催促寒天气。
蛩吟败草根，雁落平沙地。
不是路途人，怎知这滋味。

一阵价起底是秋风，一阵价下底是秋雨。陶铁僧当初只道是除了万员外不要得我，别处也有经纪处。却不知吃这万员外都分付了行院，没讨饭吃处。那厮身上两件衣裳，生绢底衣服，渐渐底都曹破了，黄草衣裳，渐渐底卷将来。曾记得建康府中二官人有一词儿，名唤做《鹧鸪天》：

黄草秋深最不宜，肩穿袖破使人悲。领单色旧襖先卷，
怎奈金风早晚吹。才挂体，皱双眉，出门羞赧见相知。
邻家女子低声问，觅与奴糊隔帛儿。

陶铁僧看着身上黄草布衫，卷将来，风飕飕地起，便再来周行老家中来。心下自道：“万员外忒恁地毒害！便做我拿了你三五十钱，你只不使我便了，那个猫儿不偷食？直分付尽一襄阳府开茶坊底教不使我，[眉批]晓得道理。致令我而今没讨饭吃处。这



warned all the teahouses in Xiangyang Prefecture against him, he could not find a job. (*A heartless person is beyond cure.*) It was autumn, the bleakness of which is captured by the following ancient poem:

*The lotuses wither away;
The parasol trees have shed all leaves.
A drizzling rain fills the air with a fine mist,
Urging the advent of winter.
Crickets chirp amid the wilted grass;
Wild geese descend onto flat stretches of sand.
Those who are not drifting from place to place
Know not the misery of it all.*

While the autumn winds alternated with autumn rain, Iron Monk Tao remained jobless. He had thought that he could always find a job at any other teahouse. Little did he know that the squire had alerted all the teahouses against him and thus deprived him of his livelihood. The only two shirts on his back—one made of raw silk, the other of yellow grass—gradually wore out.² As I recall, there is a lyric poem titled “Partridge Sky,” by a gentleman of Jiankang Prefecture:

*Yellow grass clothes are least fit for late fall;
Sadly frayed at the shoulders, tattered at the sleeves,
The collar thin, the color gone, the sleeves torn,
They can hardly ward off the ceaseless autumn wind.*

*Barely covered in these rags, I frown,
Afraid of seeing old acquaintances.
Softly, the neighbor woman asked me,
“May I have your clothes to make shoes with?”*

As he watched his yellow grass shirt curl up in the screeching wind, he made his way again to the home of Mr. Zhou, the local head of the profession, thinking to himself, “What a vicious man Squire Wan is! Granted that I took thirty to fifty cash in from him, he could have just fired me and stopped at that. As they say, ‘No cat doesn’t steal food.’ He didn’t have to warn all the teahouses in Xiangyang prefecture against me. (*So he knows why he can’t find a*



一秋一冬，却是怎地计结？做甚么是得？”正恁地思量，则见一个男女来行老家中道：“行老，我问你借一条匾担。”那周行老便问道：“你借匾担做甚么？”那个哥哥道：“万三员外女儿万秀娘，死了夫婿，今日归来。我问你借匾担去挑笼仗则个！”陶铁僧自道：“我若还不被赶了，今日我定是同去搬担，也有百十钱撰。”当时越思量越烦恼，转恨这万员外。陶铁僧道：“我如今且出城去，看这万员外女儿归，怕路上见他，告这小娘子则个！怕劝得他爹爹，再去求得这经纪也好。”[眉批]铁僧初意甚善，原非必不可用之人。陶铁僧拽开脚出这门去，相次到五里头，独自行。身上又不齐不整，一步懒了一步。正恁地行，只听得后面一个人叫道：“铁僧，我叫你！”回头看那叫底人时，却是：

人材凜凜，掀翻地轴鬼魔王；容貌堂堂，撼动天关夜叉将。

陶铁僧唱喏道：“大官人叫铁僧做甚么？”大官人道：“我几遍在你茶坊里吃茶，都不见你。”铁僧道：“上覆大官人，这万员外不近道理，赶了铁僧多日。则恁地赶了铁僧，兀自来利害，如今直分付一襄阳府开茶坊行院，教不得与铁僧经纪。大官人看铁僧身上衣裳都破了，一阵秋风起，饭也不知在何处吃？不是今秋饿死，



job.) And now, I have nowhere to go to make a living. What am I going to do in the autumn and the winter? What am I going to live on?"

He was in the midst of these thoughts when he saw a man enter Mr. Zhou's house, saying, "Mr. Zhou, I'd like to borrow a carrying pole from you."

"Why do you want a carrying pole?" asked Mr. Zhou.

The man replied, "Squire Wan's daughter, Wan Xiuniang, is coming home today because her husband has died. I need a pole so I can carry her luggage."

Iron Monk Tao said to himself, "Had I not been driven out, I surely would have gone with him to help carry the luggage and made a hundred or so in cash." The more he thought about it, the more he resented the squire. He continued, "I'll go out of the city and watch her homecoming procession. If I meet her on the road, I'll tell her about the whole thing. She may be able to change her father's mind. Then I can go around again and look for a job." (*The Iron Monk started out meaning well. He's not the kind of man whose services are to be rejected out of hand.*)

So thinking, he stepped out of the door and walked all by himself to a place called Wulitou. In his shabby clothes, he was dragging his feet along when a voice behind him cried out, "Iron Monk! I have something to say to you!" Turning around, he saw:

*A man with awe-inspiring looks,
A demon king poised to wreck the earth's axis;
A man with a majestic bearing,
One to subdue the yaksha³ by Heaven's gate.*

Iron Monk Tao chanted out a greeting and said, "So, it's the Master! What do you want to talk to me about?"

"I went to your teahouse several times for tea, but I didn't see you."

"That's because Squire Wan acted most unreasonably and drove me out quite a few days ago. Since then, he's done something even worse: He told all the teahouses in Xiangyang not to employ me. Now, look, Master! I'm all in rags. The autumn wind has started to blow, and I have no idea where my next meal is coming from. I'll die



定是今冬冻死！”那大官人问道：“你如今却那里去？”铁僧道：“今日听得说，万员外底女儿万秀娘死了夫婿，带着一个房卧，也有数万贯钱物，到晚归来，欲待拦住万小娘子，告他则个！”大官人听得道是：

入山擒虎易，开口告人难。

大官人说：“大丈夫，告他做甚么？把似告他，何似自告。”自便把指头指一个去处，叫铁僧道：“这里不是说话处，随我来。”

两个离了五里头大路，入这小路上来。见一个小小地庄舍寂静去处，这座庄：

前临剪径道，背靠杀人冈。远看黑气冷森森，近视令人心胆丧。料应不是孟尝家，只会杀人并放火。

大官人见庄门闭着，不去敲那门，就地上捉一块砖儿，撒放屋上。顷刻之间，听得里面掣玷抽橦，开放门，一个大汉出来。看这个人，兜腮卷口，面上刺着六个大字。这汉不知怎地，人都叫他做大字焦吉。出来与大官人厮叫了，指着陶铁僧问道：“这个是甚人？”大官人道：“他今日看得外婆家报与我，是好一拳买卖。”三个都入来大字焦吉家中。大官人腰里把些碎银子，教焦吉买些酒和肉来共吃。陶铁僧吃了，便去打听消息，回来报说道：“好



of hunger either this autumn or the coming winter.”

“Where are you going now?”

“I heard earlier today that Squire Wan’s daughter Wan Xiuniang is coming back this evening because her husband has died. She’ll be bringing all her belongings, worth tens of thousands of strings of cash. I’m going to stop her and ask her for help.”

As the Master heard these words, the following lines came to mind:

*It’s easier to capture a tiger in the hills
Than to bring oneself to ask for help.*

“A true man doesn’t ask for help,” said he. “Better to help yourself than to ask other people for help.” Pointing into the distance, he said to Iron Monk Tao, “Let’s go there. This is no place to talk. Follow me.”

The two men left the main thoroughfare of Wulitou and took a small path that led to a hut in a secluded spot.

*In front of it, a path trodden by robbers;
Behind it, a hill where murders take place.
Seen from afar, it has a dark and frightening air;
A closer look sends chills down one’s spine.
By no means the house of a kind host,
It harbors men who kill and burn.*

The door was closed, so the Master did not go up to knock at it but picked up a brick from the ground and tossed it onto the roof. In an instant, the door was unbarred and opened, and out came a strongly built man with a square jaw, a big mouth, and six characters tattooed on his face. For whatever reason, the man was called by all and sundry Big Characters Jiao Ji. After exchanging greetings with the Master, he asked, pointing at Iron Monk Tao, “Who is this?”

“He just gave me information about a good client. We’re in business!”

The three men entered Big Characters Jiao Ji’s home. The Master took some loose pieces of silver from his waistband so that Jiao Ji could buy wine and meat for the three to share. After eating, Iron Monk Tao went out to make inquiries. When he returned, he gave



教大官人得知，如今笼仗什物，有二十来担，都搬入城去了。只有万员外的女儿万秀娘，与他万小员外，一个当直，唤做周吉，一担细软头面金银钱物笼子，共三个人，两匹马，到黄昏前后，到这五里头，要赶门入去。”大官人听得说，三人把三条朴刀，叫：“铁僧随我来。”去五里头林子前等候。

果是黄昏左右，万小员外和那万秀娘，当直周吉，两个使马的，共五个人，待要入城去。行到五里头，见一所林子，但见：

远观似突兀云头，近看似倒悬雨脚。

影摇千尺龙蛇动，声撼半天风雨寒。

那五个人方才到林子前，只听得林子内大喊一声，叫道：“紫金山三百个好汉且未消出来，恐怕唬了小员外共小娘子！”三个好汉，三条朴刀，唬得五个人顶门上荡了三魂，脚板下走了七魄，两个使马的都走了，只留下万秀娘、万小员外、当直周吉三人。大汉道：“不坏你性命，只多留下买路钱！”万小员外教周吉把与他，周吉取一锭二十五两银子把与这大汉。[眉批]不是抄。那焦吉见了道：“这厮，却不叵耐你！我们却只直你一锭银子！”拿起手中朴刀，看着周吉，要下手了。那万小员外和万秀娘道：“如壮士要时，都把去不妨！”大字焦吉担着笼子，却待入这林子去，只



this report: "For your information, about twenty loads of miscellaneous things have already been carried into the city, but Squire Wan's daughter Wan Xiuniang, her brother Squire Wan Junior, and a servant called Zhou Ji will be arriving at Wulitou at about sundown before the city gate closes. So, there will be three people, two horses, and a load of valuables."

At this report, the Master said, "Follow me, Iron Monk!" And the three men, each carrying a broadsword, went to the woods in Wulitou to wait for the procession.

Sure enough, at about sundown, Squire Wan Junior, Wan Xiuniang, Zhou Ji the servant, and two grooms reached Wulitou on their way to the city. As they drew near the woods, they saw

A cluster of clouds when viewed from afar,

Drops of rain when seen at close range.

Dragons and snakes wriggling their long bodies,

Making sounds that shake the cold, rainy sky.

The company of five had hardly entered the woods when a loud voice rang out from the trees crying, "The three hundred worthy men of the Purple Gold Mountains, do not come out, so as not to frighten the young master and the young lady!" With that, three men emerged, each carrying a broadsword. The five travelers were so scared that their souls took flight through the tops of their heads and their spirits escaped via the soles of their feet. The two grooms took to their heels and ran for dear life, leaving behind Wan Xiuniang, Squire Wan Junior, and the servant Zhou Ji.

One of the three men said, "We're not going to kill you. Just stand and deliver!"

By Squire Wan Junior's order, Zhou Ji handed a twenty-five-*tael* ingot of silver to the man. (*Not a small amount of money.*)

Big Characters Jiao Ji burst out, "You swine! You mean we are worth only one ingot of your silver!"

He swung his broadsword high, fixed his eyes on Zhou Ji, and was just about to bring it down when Squire Wan Junior and Wan Xiuniang said, "If you want, mighty heroes, you may take everything we have here."



听得万小员外叫一声道：“铁僧，却是你来劫我！”唬得焦吉放了担子道：“却不利害，若放他们去，明日襄阳府下状，捉铁僧一个去，我两个怎地计结？”都赶来看着小员外，手起刀举，道声：“着！”看小员外时：

身如柳絮飘颺，命似藕丝将断。

大字焦吉一下朴刀杀了万小员外和那当直周吉，拖这两个死尸入林子里面去，担了笼仗，陶铁僧牵了小员外底马，大官人牵了万秀娘底马。万秀娘道：“告壮士，饶我性命则个！”当夜都来焦吉庄上来。连夜敲开酒店门，买些个酒，买些个食吃了。打开笼仗里金银细软头面物事，做三分，陶铁僧分了一分，焦吉分了一分，大官人也分了一分。这大官人道：“物事都分了，万秀娘却是我要，待把来做个扎寨夫人。”当下只留这万秀娘在焦吉庄上。万秀娘离不得是把个甜言美语，啜持过来。[眉批] 万秀娘忍小耻而报大仇，是大有作用女。

在焦吉庄上不则一日，这大官人无过是出路时抢金劫银，在家时饮酒食肉。一日大醉，正是：

三杯竹叶穿心过，两朵桃花脸上来。

万秀娘问道：“你今日也说大官人，明日也说大官人，你如今必



Placing the carrying pole of the load on his shoulders, Big Characters Jiao Ji was about to enter the woods when Squire Wan Junior cried out, "Iron Monk, so you're the one who's robbing us!"

In alarm, Big Character Jiao Ji put down the load and thought to himself, "This is bad! If we let them go, they'll report to the Xiangyang Prefectural yamen tomorrow and have Iron Monk arrested. What will happen to me and the Master?" He rushed over to Squire Wan Junior and, his broadsword raised high, cried, "Take this!" As for the young master,

*His body limp as flying willow catkins,
His life hangs by a thread as thin as a lotus fiber.*

Big Characters Jiao Ji killed Squire Wan Junior and the servant Zhou Ji with his broadsword. He dragged the two bodies into the woods and then picked up his load again. Iron Monk Tao took the reins of the young master's horse, and the Master went to lead Wan Xiuniang's horse. "Mighty heroes," pleaded Wan Xiuniang, "please spare my life."

That night, they all went to Big Characters Jiao Ji's house. In the darkness of the night, they knocked on the door of a wineshop, entered, and bought some wine and food. After the meal, they divided the valuables into three portions, one for Iron Monk Tao, one for Jiao Ji, and one for the Master.

"Now that the things have been divided up, I want to keep Wan Xiuniang for myself. She'll be the lady of the camp," said the Master. So, Wan Xiuniang, the only survivor, was kept in Jiao Ji's house, where she bided her time, cajoling the men with sweet words. (*By swallowing minor insults while planning a major revenge, Wan Xiuniang shows she is a woman of great worth.*)

The days went by. The Master spent his time either drinking wine or eating meat in Jiao Ji's house, or went out to waylay travelers and rob them of their valuables. One day, he drank himself into a stupor. Truly,

*Three cups of wine down his throat,
Two peach blossoms on his cheeks.*

Wan Xiuniang asked, "You always call yourself 'the Master,'



竟是我底丈夫，犬马尚分毛色，为人岂无姓名，敢问大官人姓甚名谁？”大官人乘着酒兴，就身上指出一件物事来道：“是。我是襄阳府上一个好汉，不认得时，我说与你道，教你顶门上走了三魂，脚板下荡散七魄。”掀起两只腿上间朱刺着的文字，道：“这个便是我姓名，我便唤做十条龙苗忠，我却说与你。”原来是：

壁间犹有耳，窗外岂无人。

大字焦吉在窗子外面听得，说道：“你看我哥哥苗大官人，却没事说与他姓名做甚么？”走入来道：“哥哥，你只好推了这牛子休！”元来强人市语唤杀人做“推牛子”。焦吉便要教这十条龙苗忠杀了万秀娘，唤做：

斩草除根，萌芽不发；斩草若不除根，春至萌芽再发。

苗忠那里肯听焦吉说，便向焦吉道：“钱物平分，我只有这一件偏倍得你们些子，你却恁地吃不得，要来害他。我也不过只要他做个扎寨夫人，又且何妨。”焦吉道：“异日却为这妇女变做个利害，却又不坏了我。”

忽一日，等得苗忠转脚出门去，焦吉道：“我几回说与我这哥哥，教他推了这牛子，左右不肯。把似你今日不肯，明日又不肯，不如我与你下手推了这牛子，免致后患。”那焦吉怀里和鞘掂着一把尖长靶短、背厚刃薄八字尖刀，走入那房里来。万秀娘正



‘the Master.’ Even dogs and horses can be distinguished by the color of their hair. How can people have no names? After all, you are my husband. May I make so bold as to ask the Master’s name?”

Exhilarated by the wine, the man said, pointing at his legs, “Yes, I am a man to be reckoned with in Xiangyang Prefecture. If you don’t know me for who I am, let me tell you something. You’ll be so impressed you’ll lose your mind.” So saying, he rolled up his pants to reveal some characters tattooed on his legs. “This is my name. Ten Dragons Miao Zhong. Now you know.” But, truly,

If walls have ears,

How can windows have no ears?

Big Characters Jiao Ji overheard the conversation from the other side of the window. He thought, “Look at this Master Miao, older brother of mine! Why should he tell her his name? Doesn’t he have better things to do?” Bursting in, he said aloud, “Brother, now you’ll have to push that cow!” In the robbers’ jargon, to kill a person is to “push a cow.” Jiao Ji was telling Ten Dragons Miao Zhong to kill Wan Xiuniang. Indeed,

Hoe up the roots when you weed,

So that the weeds won’t come up again.

If weeds are not removed by the roots,

They’ll grow back again, come next spring.

Turning a deaf ear to Jiao Ji, Miao Zhong said to him, “We divided everything equally among us, except this woman, whom I’ve kept for myself. And now you are so jealous that you want to bump her off. I’m only making her a lady of the camp. What harm can there be?”

Jiao Ji countered, “Some day, this woman will be a source of trouble, and I’ll be done for!”

One day, after waiting until he saw Miao Zhong go out through the door. Jiao Ji said to himself, “I’ve told this brother of mine several times to push that cow, but he just won’t listen. Since he puts it off day after day, I’d better do it for him, to remove a source of future trouble.” Holding in his bosom a sheathed knife with a short handle and a long, thin, sharp edge, Jiao Ji walked into the room where



在房里坐地，只见焦吉掣那尖刀执在手中，左手摔住万秀娘，右手提起那刀，方欲下手。只见一个人从后面把他腕子一捉，捉住焦吉道：“你却真个要来坏他，也不看我面！”焦吉回头看时，便是十条龙苗忠。那苗忠道：“只消叫他离了你这庄里便了，何须只管要坏他。”[眉批]离了庄更不可知矣，苗忠说差了。当时焦吉见他恁地说，放下了。当日天色晚了。

红轮西坠，玉兔东生。佳人秉烛归房，江上渔翁罢钓。

萤火点开青草面，蟾光穿破碧云头。

到一更前后，苗忠道：“小娘子，这里不是安顿你去处，你须见他们行坐时只要坏你。”万秀娘道：“大官人，你如今怎地好！”苗忠道：“容易事。”便背了万秀娘，夜里走了一夜，天色渐渐晓，到一所庄院。苗忠放那万秀娘在地上，敲那庄门，里面应道：“便来。”不移时，一个庄客来。苗忠道：“报与庄主，说道苗大官人在门前。”庄客入去报了庄主。那庄中一个官人出来，怎地打扮？且看那官人：

背系带砖项头巾，着斗花青罗襦子，腰系袜头裆裤，脚穿时样丝鞋。

两个相揖罢，将这万秀娘同来草堂上，三人分宾主坐定。苗忠道：“相烦哥哥，甚不合寄这个人在庄上则个！”官人道：“留在此间



Wan Xiuniang was sitting. With the knife raised high in his right hand, he held Wan Xiuniang with his left and was about to bring the knife down when a man grabbed his wrist from behind. "So you really want to do it. Don't you have any regard for me?" said the man.

Jiao Ji turned around and saw that it was none other than Ten Dragons Miao Zhong, who continued, "Turning her out of your house will be enough. Why kill her?" (*Actually, he'd be in greater danger if she left the house. Miao Zhong is quite mistaken.*) At these words, Jiao Ji relented. As the day drew to an end,

*The red wheel sinks in the west,
 The jade hare rises in the east.
 The beauty retires to her room, candle in hand;
 The angler by the river calls it a day.
 The fireflies light up the meadow;
 The moon shines through the clouds in the sky.*

At about the first watch of the night, Miao Zhong said, "This is no place for you, woman. Haven't you noticed that they've been trying to kill you at every opportunity?"

"Oh, what am I going to do?"

"Easy." Miao Zhong then placed her on his back and walked until they reached a farmstead at the first light of dawn.

He put Wan Xiuniang down and knocked at the gate. A voice called out from within, "Coming!" A moment later, a farmhand appeared, and Miao Zhong said to him, "Tell your master that Master Miao is here at the gate." The farmhand went in to announce the visitors, after which a man emerged from the house. What was the man wearing? Behold:

*A brick-shaped cap tied at the back,
 A floral green silk vest over his shoulders,
 A pair of pants tied at the waist,
 A pair of silk shoes in the latest fashion.*

After exchanging bows, the two men brought Xiuniang into the main hall, where the three sat down in their proper seats as host and guests. Miao Zhong said, "Brother, I really shouldn't burden you with the care of this person."



不妨。”苗忠向那人同吃了几碗酒，吃些个早饭，苗忠掉了自去。那官人请那万秀娘来书院里，说与万秀娘道：“你更知得一事么？十条龙苗大官人把你卖在我家中了。”万秀娘听得道，簌簌地两行泪下。有一首《鹧鸪天》，道是：

碎似真珠颗颗停，清如秋露脸边倾。洒时点尽湘江竹，感处曾摧数里城。思薄幸，忆多情，玉纤弹处暗销魂。有时看了鲛绡上，无限新痕压旧痕。

万秀娘哭了，口中不说，心下寻思道：“苗忠底贼！你劫了我钱物，杀了我哥哥，又杀了当直周吉，奸骗了我身己，划地把我来卖了！教我如何活得。”则好过了数日。

当夜，天昏地惨，月色无光，各自都去睡了，万秀娘移步出那脚子门，来后花园里，仰面观天祷祝道：“我这爹爹万员外，想是你寻常不近道理，而今教我受这折罚，有今日之事。苗忠底贼！你劫了我钱物，杀了我哥哥，杀了我当直周吉，骗了我身己。又将我卖在这里！”就身上解下抹胸，看着一株大桑树上，掉将过去道：“哥哥员外阴灵不远，当直周吉，你们在鬼门关下相等我。生为襄阳府人，死为襄阳府鬼！”欲待把那颈项伸在抹胸里自吊，忽然黑地里隐隐见假山子背后一个大汉，手里把着一条朴刀，走出来指着万秀娘道：“不得做声，我都听得你说底话。你如今休寻死处，我教你出去，不知如何？”万秀娘道：“恁地时可知道好！敢问壮士姓氏？”那大汉道：“我姓尹，名宗，我家中有八十



“That’s perfectly all right,” said the host.

After drinking a few cups of wine and eating breakfast with the host, Miao Zhong departed. The host led Wan Xiuniang into the study and said to her, “Do you know that Ten Dragon Mr. Miao has sold you to me?” At these words, Wan Xiuniang burst into tears. There is a lyric poem set to the tune of “Partridge Sky” that says:

*The tiny pearls fall, one by one,
Clear autumn dewdrops shining on the cheeks.
They speckle the Xiang River bamboo,
Their sadness causes long walls to crumble.
Her thoughts are on love, fickle or tender,
Her heart sick with grief, she plays the zither.
Her handkerchief bears evidence
Of new tearstains, adding to the old ones.*

Weeping, Wan Xiuniang thought, “That swine Miao Zhong! He robbed me of my money, killed my older brother and Zhou Ji the servant, soiled my body, and now, out of the blue, he sells me! How can I go on living?”

A few days later, when everyone was asleep on a dismal, moonless night, Wan Xiuniang slipped out the back gate into the garden, where she prayed, her face raised to the sky: “My father, Squire Wan, must have been less than a reasonable man. That’s why I’ve been put through so much misery, to end up like this. That brute Miao Zhong! He robbed me, killed my brother and servant, soiled my body, and sold me!” She took off her vest, threw it over the branch of a big mulberry tree, tied it into a noose, and said, “My brother and Zhou Ji, your souls being not yet far off, please wait for me by the Gate of the Dead. I belong to Xiangyang Prefecture, in life and in death.”

She was about to put her neck through the noose when a strongly built man carrying a broadsword suddenly emerged, faintly visible in the darkness, from behind an ornamental rock. Pointing to Xiuniang, he said, “Don’t make a sound! I heard everything you said. Stop trying to kill yourself. I’ll get you out of here, all right?”

“That would be wonderful. What is your name, brave man?”



岁底老母，我寻常孝顺，人都叫做孝义尹宗。当初来这里，指望偷些个物事，卖来养这八十岁底老娘，今日却限撞着你，也是‘路见不平，拔刀相助’，救你出去，却无他事，不得慌！”[眉批] 贼道中有君子，君子中有贼盗。把这万秀娘一肩肩到园墙根底，用力打一耸，万秀娘骑着墙头；尹宗把朴刀一点，跳过墙去，接这万秀娘下去。一背背了，方才待行，则见黑地里把一条笔头枪看得清，喝声道：“着！”向尹宗前心便擢将来，挖折地一声响。这汉是园墙外面巡逻底，见一个大汉，把条朴刀，跳过墙来，背着一个妇女，一笔头枪擢将来。黑地里尹宗侧身躲过，一枪擢在墙上，正摇索那枪头不出。尹宗背了万秀娘，提着朴刀，拽开脚步便走。

相次走到尹宗家中，尹宗在路上说与万秀娘道：“我娘却是怕人，不容物，你到我家中，实把这件事说与我娘道。”万秀娘听得道：“好！”巴得到家中，尹宗的娘听得道：“儿子归来。”那婆婆开放门，便着手来接这儿子，将为道儿子背上偷得甚底物事了喜欢，则见儿子背着一个妇女。婆婆不问事由，拿起一条拄杖，看着尹宗落夹背便打，也打了三四拄杖，道：“我教你去偷些个物事来养我老，你却没事背这妇女归来则甚？”那尹宗吃了三四拄

“I am Yin Zong, known to all as Filial Son Yin Zong because of my devotion to my eighty-year-old mother. I came here to steal some things so that I can sell them to support my mother. It’s fate that I should run into you. As the proverb says, ‘Whenever you see a wrong, draw your sword and set it right.’ Let me get you out of here. You’ll be quite safe. Don’t be afraid.” (*There are gentlemen among robbers, and robbers among gentlemen.*)

Yin Zong placed Wan Xiuniang on his shoulders and went up to the garden wall. With a mighty thrust from his shoulders, she landed on top of the wall. Using his sword as a pole, he vaulted over the wall and helped her down. He had just set her squarely on his shoulders when a brush-pen-shaped lance appeared out of nowhere, clearly visible in the darkness. A voice cried out, “Here it goes,” and the lance flew right toward Yin Zong’s heart but then hit something with a thud. This is what had happened: A patrolman had been making his rounds on the other side of the wall when he saw a big man with a knife vault over the wall and put a woman on his back. The patrolman thrust his lance forward but Yin Zong ducked, and the lance lodged in the wall. While the patrolman was struggling to pull out the lance, Yin Zong ran off with Wan Xiuniang on his back, his broadsword in his hand.

While they were making their way to his home, Yin Zong told Wan Xiuniang, “My mother doesn’t like strangers in the house. So, when you get to my home, you’ll have to tell her about what has happened.”

“All right,” said Wan Xiuniang.

When she heard the much-awaited footsteps of her son, Yin Zong’s mother said, “So, my son’s back!” She opened the door and reached out for him, delighted that he appeared to be carrying a load of stolen goods on his back. Upon realizing that it was a woman, she picked up a staff and began hitting him, without bothering to ask for an explanation. Only until she had hit him three or four times did she say, “I told you to steal something for me. Didn’t you have anything better to do than bring home a woman?”

Thus beaten, Yin Zong dared not speak up. Having witnessed



杖，未敢说与娘道。万秀娘见那婆婆打了儿子，肚里便怕。尹宗却放下万秀娘，教他参拜了婆婆，把那前面话对着婆婆说了一遍，道谢尹宗：“救妾性命。”婆婆道：“何不早说。”尹宗便问娘道：“我如今送他归去，不知如何？”婆婆问道：“你而今怎地送他归去？”尹宗道：“路上一似姊妹，解房时便说是哥哥、妹妹。”婆婆道：“且待我来教你。”即时走入房里，却取出一件物事。婆婆提出一领千补百衲旧红衲背心，披在万秀娘身上，指了尹宗道：“你见我这件衲背心，便似见娘一般，路上且不得胡乱生事，淫污这妇女。”[眉批] 贤哉母。万秀娘辞了婆婆。尹宗脊背上背着万秀娘，迤迳取路，待要奔这襄阳府路上来。

当日天色晚，见一所客店，姊妹两人解了房，讨些饭吃了。万秀娘在客店内床上睡，尹宗在床面前打铺。夜至三更前后，万秀娘在那床上睡不着，肚里思量道：“荷得尹宗救我，便是我重生父母，再长爷娘一般。只好嫁与他，共做个夫妻谢他。”万秀娘移步下床，款款地摇觉尹宗道：“哥哥，有三二句话与哥哥说。妾荷得哥哥相救，别无答谢，有少事拜覆，未知尊意如何？”尹宗见说，拿起朴刀在手，道：“你不可胡乱。”[眉批] 烈性男子。万秀娘心里道：“我若到家中，正嫁与他。尹宗定不肯胡乱做些个。”得这尹宗却是大孝之人，依娘言语，不肯胡行。万秀娘见他焦躁，便转了话道：“哥哥，若到襄阳府，怕你不须见我爹爹、妈妈。”



the beating, Wan Xiuniang also grew afraid. Yin Zong put her down and made her bow to his mother. Wan Xiuniang then told the old lady what had happened, adding, "I'm very grateful to Yin Zong for saving my life."

"Why didn't you mention this earlier?" said the old lady.

Yin Zong then requested permission to escort Wan Xiuniang home.

"How are you going to do that?" asked the old lady.

Yin Zong explained, "All along the way, we'll claim to be brother and sister, and we'll announce ourselves as such when we stay at inns."

"Let me tell you something," said the old lady as she went into her room. When she reemerged, she had in her hands an old, much patched-up red vest, which she put on Wan Xiuniang. To Yin Zong, she said, pointing a finger at him, "You'll be seeing me when you see this vest. Remember not to do anything foolish to this woman." (*A good mother.*) After Wan Xiuniang bade farewell to the old lady, Yin Zong put her on his back and set off for Xiangyang Prefecture.

That evening, they entered the first inn they saw and asked for a room and a meal. Wan Xiuniang slept in the bed, while Yin Zong slept on the floor in front of the bed. At about the third watch of the night, Wan Xiuniang lay awake, thinking, "By his kindness in saving my life, Yin Zong is like a parent who has given me another life. I'll have to marry him as a way of showing my gratitude."

She got down from the bed, gently shook Yin Zong awake, and said, "Older brother, I'd like to have a word with you. You saved my life, but I have nothing to thank you with. I wonder what you might think of an idea of mine."

Picking up his broadsword, Yin Zong replied, "You're not thinking of doing anything foolish?" (*An upright man.*)

Wan Xiuniang thought, "I'll marry him when I get home. Surely he's not one to do anything foolish." As he was a filial son accustomed to obeying his mother, Yin Zong was indeed not one to do anything foolish. But seeing how fierce he looked, Wan Xiuniang said instead, "Brother, when we get to Xiangyang Prefecture, I'm afraid you'll



尹宗道：“只是恁地时不妨。来日到襄阳府城中，我自回，你自归去。”到得来日，尹宗背着万秀娘走，相将到襄阳府，则有得五七里田地。正是：

遥望楼头城不远，顺风听得管弦声。

看看望见襄阳府，平白地下一阵雨：

云生东北，雾涌西南。须臾倒瓮倾盆，顷刻悬河注海。这阵雨下了不住，却又没处躲避。尹宗背着万秀娘，落路来见一个庄舍，要去这庄里躲雨，只因来这庄里，教两人变做：

青云有路，翻为苦楚之人；白骨无坟，变作失乡之鬼。

这尹宗分明是推着一车子没兴骨头，入那千万丈琉璃井里。这庄却是大字焦吉家里。万秀娘见了焦吉那庄，目睁口痴，罔知所措。焦吉见了万秀娘，又不敢问，正恁地踌躇，则见一个人吃得八分来醉，提着一条朴刀从外来。万秀娘道：“哥哥，兀底便是劫了我底十条龙苗忠！”尹宗听得道，提手中朴刀，奔那苗忠。当时苗忠一条朴刀来迎这尹宗，元来有三件事奈何尹宗不得：第一是苗忠醉了；第二是苗忠没心，尹宗有心；第三是苗忠是贼人



have to see my parents.”

“It won’t come to that. Don’t worry. When we get there, I’ll turn back, and you go home by yourself.”

The next day, Yin Zong resumed the journey, carrying Wan Xiuniang on his back. When they were only about five to seven *li* from Xiangyang, truly,

*They saw the city wall looming ahead,
 And heard string and pipe music borne on the wind.*

As they drew near the city, a rain suddenly began to fall.

*Clouds gathered in the northeast,
 A fog rolled in from the southwest.
 In a trice, a rain came pelting down,
 Like a river descending from above.*

There was no shelter to be found in the persistent rain, so Yin Zong continued onward, with Wan Xiuniang on his back. When a farmstead came into view, they headed for it to take shelter from the rain. Because they went to this farmstead,

*She fell back into misery when almost free;
 He became a graveless ghost in alien land.*

Yin Zong was doing nothing short of driving a cartful of his luckless bones right into a well ten thousand feet deep, for this was the very farmstead belonging to Big Characters Jiao Ji. When she recognized the house, Wan Xiuniang was dumbfounded, at a loss what to do. The sight of Wan Xiuniang also confused Jiao Ji. While he was debating with himself whether or not to ask why she was here, a man who was more than half drunk was seen approaching with a broadsword in his hand. Wang Xiuniang burst out, “Older Brother, that’s the very Ten Dragons Miao Zhong who abducted me!”

At this revelation, Yin Zong dashed toward Miao Zhong, his hand on his broadsword, and Miao Zhong stepped forward to meet him, broadsword in hand. The fact of the matter was that Yin Zong should not be defeated for three reasons: First, Miao Zhong was drunk. Second, Miao Zhong had been caught off guard, whereas Yin Zong was prepared to kill. Third, Miao Zhong, being on the wrong



心虚。苗忠自知奈何尹宗不得，提着朴刀便走。尹宗把一条朴刀赶将来，走了一里田地，苗忠却遇着一堵墙，跳将过去，[眉批]穷寇莫追。尹宗只顾赶将来，不知大字焦吉也把一条朴刀，却在后面，把那尹宗坏了性命。果谓是：

螳螂正是遭黄雀，岂解堤防挟弹人。

那尹宗一个，怎抵当得两人。不多时，前面焦吉，后面苗忠，两个回来。苗忠放下手里朴刀，右手换一把尖长靶短背厚刃薄八字尖刀，左手掙住万秀娘胸前衣裳，骂道：“你这个贱人！却不是叵耐你，几乎教我吃这大汉坏了性命，你且吃取我几刀！”正是：

故将挫玉摧花手，来折江梅第一枝。

那万秀娘见苗忠刀举，生一个急计，一只手托住苗忠腕子道：“且住，你好没见识，你情知道我不识这个大汉姓甚名谁，又不知道他是何等样人，不问事由，背着我去，恰好走到这里，我便认得这里是焦吉庄上，故意叫他行这路，特地来寻你。如今你倒坏了我，却不是错了。”[眉批]秀娘大有急智。苗忠道：“你也说得是。”把那刀来入了鞘，却来啜醋万秀娘道：“我争些个错坏了你！”正恁地说，则见万秀娘左手掙住苗忠，右手打一个漏风掌，



side of the law, was panic prone. Knowing that he was no match for Yin Zong, Miao Zhong turned and, sword in hand, showed a clean pair of heels. Yin Zong gave chase, holding on to his own sword. After about a *li*, Miao Zhong came to a fence in the fields and climbed over it. (*Don't ever go after a man in desperate straits.*) Yin Zong was so intent on running after Miao Zhong that he was unaware of Big Characters Jiao Ji following behind, similarly equipped with a broadsword. Yin Zong was struck dead. Truly,

*The mantis stalks the cicada,
 Unaware of the evil-intentioned oriole;
 In its turn, the oriole stalks the mantis,
 Unaware of the catapult aimed at itself.*

How was Yin Zong to fend off two men?

Before long, Jiao Ji turned back, followed by Miao Zhong. The latter put down his broadsword and picked up a pointed knife with a short handle but a long, sharp edge with his right hand. With his left hand, he grabbed Wan Xiuniang by her upper garment and cursed, "You slut! It's all your fault that I was almost killed by that man. Now take a couple of stabs from my knife!" Truly,

*With a hand that had crushed many a flower,
 He was to break off the prettiest plum twig.*

At the sight of Miao Zhong's knife raised high in the air, Wan Xiuniang had a sudden flash of inspiration. She held his wrist and said, "Stop! You've got it all wrong! You don't know the facts! I had no idea who that big man was or what kind of a man he was either. He put me on his back and carried me off without a word of explanation. When he happened to head in the direction of this house, I recognized it as Jiao Ji's home, so I deliberately told him to approach the house, meaning to look for you. Now wouldn't you be making a mistake if you killed me?" (*How quick-witted she is in a desperate situation!*)

"You've got a point there," conceded Miao Zhong. As he put his knife back into its sheath, he remarked teasingly, "So, I almost wronged you!" Before he had quite finished, Wan Xiuniang seized him with her left hand and boxed him on the ear with her right hand.



打得苗忠耳门上似起一个霹雳。那苗忠：

睁开眉下眼，咬碎口中牙！

那苗忠怒起来，却见万秀娘说道：“苗忠底贼，我家中有八十岁底老娘，你共焦吉坏了我性命，你也好休！”道罢，僻然倒地。苗忠方省得是这尹宗附体在秀娘身上。即时扶起来，救得苏醒，当下却没甚话说。

却说这万员外，打听得儿子万小员外和那当直周吉，被人杀了，两个死尸在城外五里头林子，更劫了一万馀贯家财，万秀娘不知下落。去襄阳府城里下状，出一千贯赏钱，捉杀人劫贼，那里便捉得。万员外自备一千贯，过了几个月，没捉人处。州府赏钱，和万员外赏钱，共添做三千贯，明示榜文，要捉这贼，则是没捉处。当日万员外邻舍，一个公公，七十馀岁，养得一个儿子，小名叫做合哥。大伯道：“合哥，你只管躲懒，没个长进，今日也好去上行些个‘山亭儿’来卖。”合哥挑着两个土袋，捩着二三百钱，来焦吉庄里，问焦吉上行些个“山亭儿”，拣几个物事，唤做：

山亭儿、庵儿、宝塔儿、石桥儿、屏风儿、人物儿。买了几件了。合哥道：“更把几件好样式底‘山亭儿’卖与我。”大字焦吉道：“你自去屋角头窗子外面自拣几个。”当时合哥移步

It was as loud as a thunderclap. Miao Zhong

*Opened his eyes wide and
 Gnashed his teeth in a rage.*

To the angry Miao Zhong, Wan Xiuniang said, "You brute! I have an eighty-year-old mother at home. By joining Jiao Ji in killing me, you will come to no good end!" With that, she fell flat on the ground. Only then did Miao Zhong realize that Yin Zhong had attached his soul to Xiuniang's body. Right away, he helped her up and revived her. Nothing more of note happened.

In the meantime, Squire Wan learned that his son and Zhou Ji the servant had been murdered, their bodies abandoned in the Wulitou woods outside the city. He also found out that the robbers had made off with goods worth more than ten thousand in cash and that Wan Xiuniang had disappeared. The squire reported the case to the Xiangyang prefectural yamen. A thousand strings of cash were offered as a reward for the capture of the murderers and robbers, but no trace of them was found. Squire Wan added a thousand strings of his own, but several months went by without a clue. The reward offered by the prefectural yamen and Squire Wan increased to three thousand strings of cash in total. "Wanted" posters were put up, but still, the criminals were not found.

Squire Wan had a neighbor, an old man of seventy-odd years who had a son nicknamed Brother He. One day, the old man said, "Brother He, if you go on being as lazy as you are, you'll never make anything of yourself. Now, why don't you go to a dealer today and buy some miniature mountain pavilions to sell?"

Carrying two bags across his shoulders, and two to three hundred in cash in his pocket, Brother He went to see Jiao Ji the dealer to buy some goods that he could sell. What did he buy?

Miniature mountain pavilions, temples, pagodas, stone bridges, screens, and human figurines.

After buying the items, Brother He said, "I need more pavilions of better design."

Big Characters Jiao Ji replied, "Just go to the corner outside the window and take your pick."



来窗子外面，正在那里拣“山亭儿”。则听得窗子里面一个人，低低地叫道：“合哥。”那合哥听得道：“这人好似万员外底女儿声音。”合哥道：“谁叫我？”应声道：“是万秀娘叫。”那合哥道：“小娘子，你如何在这里？”万秀娘说：“一言难尽，我被陶铁僧领他们劫我在这里，相烦你归去，说与我爹爹、妈妈，教去下状，差人来捉这大字焦吉、十条龙苗忠和那陶铁僧。如今与你一个执照归去。”就身上解下一个刺绣香囊，从那窗窟窿子掉出，自人去。[眉批]秀娘步步精细。合哥接得，贴腰揣着，还了焦吉“山亭儿”钱，挑着担子便行。焦吉道：“你这厮在窗子边和甚么人说话？”唬得合哥一似：

分开八面顶阳骨，倾下半桶冰雪水。

合哥放下“山亭儿”担子，看着焦吉道：“你见甚么，便说我和兀谁说话？”焦吉探那窗子里面，真个没谁。担起担子便走，一向不歇脚，直入城来，把一担“山亭儿”和担一时尽都把来倾在河里，掉臂挥拳归来。

爷见他空手归来，问道：“‘山亭儿’在那里？”合哥应道：“倾在河里了。”问道：“担子呢？”应道：“擗在河里。”“匾担呢？”应道：“擗在河里。”大伯焦躁起来道：“打杀这厮！你是甚



So Brother He went outside. He was busily picking toy pavilions when he heard a voice on the other side of the window whispering, "Brother He!"

He thought the voice resembled that of Squire Wan's daughter and asked, "Who's that?"

"It's me, Wan Xiuniang."

"What are you doing here, young lady?"

"It's a long story. Iron Monk Tao led the others in abducting me and bringing me here. When you go back, please tell my parents to have the authorities send police to arrest Big Characters Jiao Ji, Ten Dragons Miao Zhong, and that Iron Monk Tao. Let me give you something to show my parents." So saying, she untied an embroidered sachet that she had with her, slid it through the window, and turned away. (*Xiuniang plans her every move with care.*)

Brother He caught it and hid it under his waistband. As soon as he had paid Jiao Ji for the items, he picked up his load and was ready to go when Jiao Ji asked, "Were you talking with someone by the window, you lowlife? Who was it?"

Brother He was so frightened that

*The eight pieces of his skull opened up,
Half a bucket of ice and snow poured in.*

Putting down his load of goods, he said to Jiao Ji, "What did you see that made you say I was talking with someone?"

Jiao Ji stretched his neck to look inside the window but saw no one there, whereupon Brother He picked up his load and left. With never a pause, he went straight to the city and threw the load into the river, miniature pavilions and all. In great strides, his arms waving in the air, he strutted his way back home.

"Where are the mountain pavilions?" his father demanded, noticing his empty hands.

"I dumped them into the river."

"Where's the load?"

"I threw it into the river."

"Where's the carrying pole?"

"In the river, too!"



意思？”合哥道：“三千贯赏钱劈面地来。”大伯道：“是如何？”合哥道：“我见万员外女儿万秀娘在一个去处。”大伯道：“你不得胡说，他在那里？”合哥就怀里取出那刺绣香囊，教把看了，同去万员外家里。万员外见说，看了香囊，叫出他这妈妈来，看见了刺绣香囊，认得真个是秀娘手迹，举家都哭起来。万员外道：“且未消得哭。”即时同合哥来州里下状。官司见说，即特差士兵二十余人，各人尽带着器械，前去缉捉这场公事。当时叫这合哥引着一行人，取苗忠庄上去，即时就公厅上责了限状，唱罢喏，迤迤登程而去。真个是：

个个威雄似虎，人人猛烈如龙。雨具麻鞋，行缠搭膊。手中杖牛头钯，拨互叉，鼠尾刀，画皮弓，柳叶箭。在路上饥餐渴饮，夜住晓行。才过杏花村，又经芳草渡。好似皂雕追紫燕，浑如饿虎赶黄羊。

其时合哥儿一行到得苗忠庄上，分付教众缉捕人：“且休来，待我先去探问。”多时不见合哥儿回来，那众人商议道：“想必是那苗忠知得这事，将身躲了。”合哥回来，与众人低低道：“作一



His father flared up. "Now this boy needs a beating! What do you mean by doing that?"

"You're in for a reward of three thousand strings of cash!"

"How's that?"

"I saw Wang Xiuniang, Squire Wan's daughter."

"Don't let your tongue run away with you! But where's she?"

At this point, Brother He took out the embroidered sachet and showed it to his father. The two then went together to Squire Wan's house. After hearing their account and seeing the sachet, Squire Wan called for his wife, who recognized her daughter's needlework on the sachet. The entire family burst into sobs. "Don't cry," said the squire before going with Brother He to the prefectural yamen to report the case. Without a moment's delay, the authorities dispatched more than twenty locally recruited soldiers, all armed, to arrest the criminals. Brother He was told to lead them to Miao Zhong's house. They signed their pledge in court, chanted a farewell, and set out on their mission. Truly,

Everyone was as fierce as a tiger,

All were as ferocious as dragons.

Rain gear, hemp sandals, and bags on their shoulders,

Spears, forks, swords, bows, and arrows in hand.

They stopped only for food and drink,

They rested by night and traveled by day.

Passing apricot blossom villages

And ferry crossings with patches of tender green,

They pressed onward like black hawks after young swallows,

Like hungry tigers after helpless sheep.

Upon arriving at Miao Zhong's farmstead, Brother He told the officers, "Don't do anything yet. Let me go first and find out how things are."

When he had been gone for quite a while, the officers consulted one another, saying, "Miao Zhong must have got wind of this and hidden himself somewhere." But Brother He came back at this point. He whispered to the men, "We'll have to think of a trick to make him



计引他，他便出来。”离不得那苗忠庄前庄后，打一观看，不见踪由。众做公底人道：“是那苗忠每常间见这合哥儿来家中，如父母看待，这番却是如何？”别商量一计，先教差一人去，用火烧了那苗忠庄，便知苗忠躲在那里。苗忠一见士兵烧起那庄子，便提着一条朴刀，向西便走。做公底一发赶将来，正是：

有似皂雕追困雁，浑如雪鹞打寒鸢。

那十条龙苗忠慌忙走去，到一个林子前，苗忠入这林子内去，方才走得十馀步，则见一个大汉，浑身血污，手里搦着一条朴刀，在林子里等他，便是那吃他坏了性命底孝义尹宗在这里相遇。所谓是：

劝君莫要作冤仇，狭路相逢难躲避。

苗忠认得尹宗了，欲待行，被他拦住路，正恁地进退不得，后面做公底赶上，将一条绳子，缚了苗忠，并大字焦吉、茶博士陶铁僧，解在襄阳府来，押下司理院，绷爬吊拷，一一勘正，三人各自招伏了。同日将大字焦吉、十条龙苗忠、茶博士陶铁僧，押赴市曹，照条处斩。合哥便请了那三千贯赏钱。万员外要报答孝义尹宗，差人迎他母亲到家奉养。[眉批]第一义。又去官中下状用钱，就襄阳府城外五里头，为这尹宗起立一座庙宇。直到如今，



come out.”

After searching all through and around the house without finding any trace of the man, the officers said, “Doesn’t that Miao Zhong always act like a parent to Brother He whenever the boy comes to his house? What could have happened this time?” They put their heads together and came up with a trick. They sent a man to set fire to Miao Zhong’s house so that Miao Zhong’s whereabouts would then be exposed. As soon as he saw the officers setting fire to the house, Miao Zhong came out of hiding and raced off in a westerly direction, broadsword in hand. The officers gave chase, like

*Black hawks chasing a desperate wild goose;
 White falcons pouncing on a turtledove.*

Terrified, Ten Dragons Miao Zhong sprinted into a grove of trees. There, before he had taken ten steps, he saw a big man with bloodstains all over his body waiting for him, holding a broadsword in his hand. It was none other than Filial Son Yin Zong, whom he had murdered. Indeed,

*Take this advice: never make enemies;
 You’re bound to run into them, face to face.*

Recognizing Yin Zong, Miao Zhong tried to slip away, but Yin Zong blocked his path. Miao Zhong could not turn back, either, because the officers had caught up with him. They tied up Miao Zhong as well as Big Characters Jiao Ji and teahouse waiter Iron Monk Tao and marched them to the Xiangyang prefectural yamen, where they were taken into the office of interrogation. Under torture, all three confessed.

On that same day, Big Characters Jiao Ji, Ten Dragons Miao Zhong, and teahouse waiter Iron Monk Tao were taken under guard to the marketplace to be executed in accordance with the law. Brother He received the reward of three thousand strings of cash. Squire Wan, out of gratitude for Filial Son Yin Zong, sent for Yin’s mother and offered to support her in his home for the rest of her life. (*A most just thing to do.*) He then filed a request with the yamen and, using his own funds, had a temple erected in Yin Zong’s honor at Wulitou, outside the Xiangyang prefectural seat. The Temple of Filial Piety and



襄阳府城外五头孝义庙，便是这尹宗底，至今古迹尚存，香烟不断。话名只唤做《山亭儿》，亦名《十条龙陶铁僧孝义尹宗事迹》。后人评得好：

万员外刻深招祸，陶铁僧穷极行凶。
生报仇秀娘坚忍，死为神孝义尹宗。

Righteousness in Wulitou outside of Xiangyang is this very one, a historic site that has never been short of worshippers making offerings. The story has been titled “Miniature Pavilions” and “The Story about Ten Dragons, Iron Monk Tao, and Filial Son Yin Zong.” A later poet wrote these well-chosen words:

*Squire Wan's meanness led to the tragedy;
Iron Monk Tao did a foul deed in desperation.
Xiuniang endured misery to seek revenge;
Filial Yin Zong died and was honored as a god.*

¹ Xichuan is roughly the same as present-day Sichuan.

² A thin fabric made of yellow grass was specific to the region of Suzhou in the Song dynasty.

³ A yaksha is usually an evil spirit in the Buddhist belief.





第三十八卷

蒋淑真刎颈鸳鸯会

眼意心期卒未休，暗中终拟约登楼。
光阴负我难相偶，情绪牵人不自由。
遥夜定怜香蔽膝，闷时应弄玉搔头。
樱桃花谢梨花发，肠断青春两处愁。

右诗单说着“情色”二字。此二字，乃一体一用也。故色绚于目，情感于心，情色相生，心目相视。虽亘古迄今，仁人君子，弗能忘之。晋人有云：“情之所钟，正在我辈。”慧远曰：“情色觉如磁石，遇针不觉合为一处。无情之物尚尔，何况我终日在情里做活计耶？”

如今只管说这“情色”二字则甚？且说个临淮武公业，于咸通中任河南府功曹参军。爱妾曰非烟，姓步氏，容止纤丽，弱不胜绮罗。善秦声，好诗弄笔。公业甚嬖之。比邻乃天水赵氏第也，亦衣纓之族。其子赵象，端秀有文学。忽一日于南垣隙中窥见非烟，



Story 38

Jiang Shuzhen Dies in Fulfillment of a Love Bird Prophecy

*The love in eyes and hearts never dies;
Furtively, the lovers arrange their trysts.
With marriage beyond reach in this lifetime on earth,
I am seized with feelings of gloom.
Throughout the long nights, my shawl keeps my knees warm;
In low spirits, I play with my jade hairpin.
The cherry blossoms gone, the pear blossoms bloom;
Both are stricken with the gut-wrenching grief of youth.*

The above poem is about passion and physical charm, which are, in fact, one and the same thing in both substance and function. Thus, when physical charm pleases the eye, passion arises from the heart. With passion and physical charm reinforcing each other, the eye and the heart find themselves in greater accord. This is a fact that no worthy gentleman has ever been able to ignore since time immemorial. Someone in Jin times said, "Passion is at its highest in people like me."¹ Also, Monk Huiyuan² said, "Passion and physical charm go together, the way a magnet and a needle do. If this applies even to inanimate objects, how much truer is it for one like me, who goes about his daily work immersed in passion? "

Now, why all this talk about passion and physical charm? Well, because this brings me to a story about a Mr. Wu Gongye of Linhuai County [in what is now Anhui Province], who was an adjutant in the Henan prefectural yamen during the Xiantong reign period [860-73]. He had a beloved concubine named Feiyan, née Bu, who was so delicate in beauty and bearing that she appeared hardly able to withstand the weight of her silk and satin clothes. Being also proficient in the music of the Qin region [in present-day Shanxi and Gansu Provinces] and well versed in poetry and prose, she was much treasured by Gongye. Next to their house lived a Zhao family from Tianshui County [in what is now Gansu Province], also of a distinguished status. The son of the family, Zhao Xiang, was a hand-



而神气俱丧，废食思之。遂厚赂公业之阍人，以情相告，阍有难色。后为赂所动，[眉批]天下何事不为赂所败。令妻伺非烟闲处，具言象意。非烟闻之，但含笑而不答。阍媪尽以语象，象发狂心荡，不知所如。乃取薛涛笺，题一绝于上。诗曰：

绿暗红稀起暝烟，独将幽恨小庭前。

沉沉良夜与谁语？星隔银河月半天。[眉批]情语。

写讫，密缄之，祈阍媪达于非烟。非烟读毕，吁嗟良久，向媪而言曰：“我亦曾窥见赵郎，大好才貌。今生薄福，不得当之。尝嫌武生粗悍，非青云器也。”乃复酬篇，写于金凤笺。诗曰：

画檐春燕须知宿，兰浦双鸳肯独飞。

长恨桃源诸女伴，等闲花里送郎归。

封付阍媪，令遗象。象启缄，喜曰：“吾事谐矣！”但静坐焚香，时时虔祷以候。

越数日，将夕，阍媪促步而至，笑且拜曰：“赵郎愿见神仙

some young man with literary talent.

One day, he caught sight of Feiyan through a crack in the south fence wall, a sight that made him lovesick. His spirits sank, and his appetite vanished. He gave Gongye's doorkeeper a handsome bribe and told him to convey his sentiments to Feiyan. The doorkeeper was reluctant at first, but the bribe helped him make up his mind. (*Is there anything under the sun that bribery cannot ruin?*) By his order, his wife seized a convenient moment and conveyed Zhao Xiang's sentiments to Feiyan. Feiyan smiled but did not give a verbal response. Upon hearing the report from the doorkeeper's wife, Zhao Xiang went into such raptures that he hardly knew what to do. He took a piece of fancy stationery paper and wrote on it the following quatrain:

*The green paled, the red dimmed, an evening mist arose;
 In my small yard I nurse my sorrows, all alone.*

To whom can I talk in the deep, lovely night?

The Milky Way parts the stars in the moonlit sky. (Words of love.)

He sealed the letter and asked the doorkeeper's wife to deliver it to Feiyan. After reading it, Feiyan sighed for a considerable while before saying to the doorkeeper's wife, "I've also caught a glimpse of Mr. Zhao, a most handsome man. It's my misfortune that I won't be able to marry such a man in this life. My husband is an uncouth military man with no outstanding qualities." By way of a reply, she wrote a quatrain on a piece of gold-traced stationery with floral patterns. The poem said,

*Spring swallows build their nests on the eaves;
 Love birds by the water never fly alone.*

*Ruefully I watch maidens of Peach Blossom Spring
 Casually send their lovers home midst the flowers.*

She sealed the poem and had the doorkeeper's wife take it to Zhao Xiang, who, upon reading it, said joyfully, "My wish will be granted." He then spent his time sitting quietly, burning incense, praying, and waiting.

One evening several days later, the doorkeeper's wife walked





否？”象惊，连问之。传非烟语曰：“功曹今夜府直，可谓良时。妾家后庭，即君之前垣也。若不渝约好，专望来仪，方可候晤。”语罢，既曛黑，象乘梯而登，非烟已置重榻于下，既下，见非烟艳妆盛服，迎入室中，相携就寝，尽缱绻之意焉。及晓，象执非烟手曰：“接倾城之貌，挹希世之人。已担幽明，永奉欢狎。”言讫，潜归。兹后不盈旬日，常得一期于后庭矣。展幽彻之恩，罄宿昔之情，以为鬼鸟不知，人神相助。如是者周岁。无何，非烟数以细故挾其女奴，奴衔之，乘间尽以告公业。[眉批]天下又何事不为奴所败。公业曰：“汝慎勿扬声，我当自察之！”后至堂直日，乃密陈状请假。迨夜，如常人直，遂潜伏里门。俟暮鼓既作，蹶足而回，循墙至后庭。见非烟方倚户微吟，象则据垣斜睇。公业不胜其忿，挺前欲擒象，象觉跳出，公业持之，得其半襦。乃入室，呼非烟诘之。非烟色动，不以实告。公业愈怒，缚之大柱，



hurriedly up to him, greeted him jovially, and said, "Mr. Zhao, are you ready to see the beauty?"

Astonished, Zhao Xiang shot a series of questions at her, and she relayed the following message from Feiyan: "My husband is on duty tonight at the yamen. This is a good opportunity. My back garden is connected to your front yard, and I will be waiting for you, if you have not changed your mind."

Soon, it grew pitch-dark. Zhao Xiang climbed up the wall on a ladder, to find that Feiyan had already stacked two stools, one atop the other, on her side of the wall for his convenience. Once he was on the other side, a gorgeously dressed Feiyan came out to lead him into her chamber, where they went to bed, hand in hand, and fulfilled their desires to the utmost.

At dawn, Zhao Xiang said, holding Feiyan's hands, "With your beauty matching my talent, I have already vowed to the gods to devote the rest of my life to your pleasure." With that, he stealthily went back the way he had come. Henceforth, at least once every ten days, he slipped into the backyard for a tryst at which they brought their love to fulfillment, believing they were observed by none and aided by humans and gods.

After a year had gone by in this fashion, it so happened that Feiyan beat her maid on several occasions for some trivial offenses. Resentful, the maid seized an opportunity to inform on her to Gongye. (*Is there anything in the world that anger cannot ruin?*)

"Keep quiet!" said Gongye. "Let me see for myself."

When his turn for night duty came up again, he secretly asked for a leave of absence. When night fell, he left for the yamen as usual but turned back and hid behind the inner gate. At the strike of the evening watch, he tiptoed along the wall to the backyard, where he saw Feiyan leaning against the window, moaning softly, and Zhao Xiang ogling her over the wall. In a rage, Gongye dashed forward to get Zhao Xiang, who sensed danger and fled. Gongye tried to grab him but managed only to tear off a piece of his shirt. He went back into the house and summoned Feiyan for questioning. She turned pale but refused to tell the truth. His rage mounting, Gongye tied her to a



鞭挞血流。非烟但云：“生则相亲，死亦无恨。”遂饮杯水而绝。
〔眉批〕可怜。象乃变服易名，远窜于江湖间，稍避其锋焉。可怜雨散云消，花残月缺。

且如赵象知机识务，离脱虎口，免遭毒手，可谓善悔过者也。
〔眉批〕赵象毕竟终身不安。于今又有个不识窍的小二哥，也与个妇人私通，日日贪欢，朝朝迷恋，后惹出一场祸来，尸横刀下，命赴阴间。致母不得侍，妻不得顾，子号寒于严冬，女啼饥于永昼。静而思之，着何来由！况这妇人不害了你一条性命了？〔眉批〕提纲语。真个：

蛾眉本是婵娟刃，杀尽风流世上人。

说话的，你道这妇人住居何处？姓甚名谁？元来是浙江杭州府武林门外落乡村中，一个姓蒋的生的女儿，小字淑真。生得甚是标致，脸衬桃花，比桃花不红不白；眉分柳叶，如柳叶犹细犹弯。自小聪明，从来机巧。善描龙而刺凤，能剪雪以裁云。心中只是好些风月，又饮得几杯酒。〔眉批〕此回书于街坊妇人亵鄙之态，摹写曲尽，亦能手也。年已及笄，父母议亲，东也不成，西也不就。每兴凿穴之私，常感伤春之病。自恨芳年不偶，郁郁不乐。垂帘不卷，羞杀紫燕双飞；高阁慵凭，厌听黄莺并语。未知此女儿时得



post and flogged her till blood flowed, but Feiyan said only, "I loved him in life, and I shall have no regrets in death." With that, she drank a cup of water and died. (*Poor thing!*)

As for Zhao Xiang, he left home and lived the life of a fugitive, using a disguise and an alias so as to avoid trouble. How sad that the rain stopped, the clouds dispersed, the flowers withered, and the moon waned! Those like Zhao Xiang who have enough good sense to extricate themselves from the tiger's mouth and get out of harm's way may well be prone to repentance. (*But Zhao Xiang would know no peace for the rest of his life.*³)

Now, let me tell of another young man, one without much sense, who also got himself involved in an adulterous affair with a woman that ended in tragedy after many days and nights of joy. Lives were taken by the sword, and souls traveled to the netherworld. He left his mother and his wife with no means of support, his son crying from the cold of the severe winter, and his daughter whimpering with hunger the whole day long. Come to think of it, when all's calm and quiet, was the affair worth it if she was to bring him to such ruin? (*An observation quite to the point.*) Truly,

*Beauty is but a sword in disguise,
 Which kills off all dissolute men.*

Storyteller, where did that woman live? What was her name? Well, she was born of a Jiang family in a village outside of Wulin Gate, Hangzhou prefecture, Zhejiang. Her pet name was Shuzhen, and she was a girl fair to look upon, with cheeks as pink as peach blossoms and eyebrows as fine and arching as willow leaves. Born with a sharp mind and deft hands, she was most adept at embroidery, able to fashion clothes out of snow and clouds. She was also a romantically inclined girl and had a capacity for wine, too. (*Good description of lowly women. An effective pen.*)

When Shuzhen came of age, her parents began to seek marriage proposals for her but could not find the right one. In her longing for romance, she commiserated with spring and felt deep melancholy over wasting her youth in a loveless life. She did not even bother to roll up her curtains, to the regret of the flitting pairs of young swallows.



偶素愿？因成商调《醋葫芦》小令十篇，系于事后，少述斯女始末之情。奉劳歌伴，先听格律，后听芜词：

湛秋波两剪明，露金莲三寸小。弄春风杨柳细身腰，比红儿态度应更娇。他生得诸般齐妙，纵司空见惯也魂消！

况这蒋家女儿，如此容貌，如此伶俐，缘何豪门巨族，王孙公子，文士富商，不行求聘？却这女儿心性有些跷蹊，描眉画眼，傅粉施朱。梳个纵鬓头儿，着件叩身衫子，做张做势，乔模乔样。或倚槛凝神，或临街献笑，因此闾里皆鄙之。所以迁延岁月，顿失光阴，不觉二十馀岁。隔邻有一儿子，名叫阿巧，未曾出幼，常来女家嬉戏，不料此女已动不正之心有日矣。况阿巧不甚长成，父母不以为怪，遂得通家往来无间。一日，女父母他适，阿巧偶来，其女相诱入室，强合焉。忽闻扣户声急，阿巧惊遁而去，女父母至家亦不知也。且此女欲心如炽，久渴此事，自从情窦一开，



She confined herself lazily to her chamber, in no mood to listen to the chirping of the orioles. When would her wish ever be granted? I have composed ten lyric poems to the sad tune of "Vinegar Gourd," to be dispersed throughout the story to describe the girl's feelings as the story develops. Please oblige me, my accompanist. Listen to the song before I continue with the story:

*Her eyes two pools of sparkling water;
 Her golden-lily feet only three inches long.
 Her tiny waist lithe as willow in the spring wind;
 Her charms more endearing than those of Hong'er.⁴
 The sight of such a bewitching girl
 Is enough to send any man into raptures.*

Now, why did no distinguished families, no young men of high birth, no scholars or wealthy merchants ever make a proposal of marriage to the Jiang family for their daughter Shuzhen, as pretty and as smart as she was? Well, in fact, the girl was of a queer disposition, much given to painting her eyebrows, shadowing her eyes, and applying heavy rouge and powder. Her long hair done up in a high knot, courtesan style, she spent her time striking poses in her tight-fitting clothes, leaning against the railings, looking as if she was lost in reverie or wreathing her face with smiles for passing pedestrians. Thus she came to be despised by all and sundry in the neighborhood, and the days went relentlessly by, leaving her still unbetrothed in her twenties.

Next door to her family lived a boy called Aqiao, who had not yet quite grown up. He often went to the Jiangs' house to play, little knowing that Shuzhen had set her leering eyes on him some time ago. Since Aqiao had not reached puberty, his parents took nothing amiss and let him visit freely. One day, Aqiao happened to come by while Shuzhen's parents were away. The young woman tricked him into her room and forcibly had her way with him. Suddenly, rapid knocks were heard on the door. Aqiao scurried away in alarm, and Shuzhen's parents were none the wiser upon their return.

As for Shuzhen, she had been burning with desire for such a long time that she found it hard to control herself after this first taste of



不能自己。阿巧回家，惊气冲心而殒。[眉批]一条命。女闻其死，哀痛弥极，但不敢形诸颜颊。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

锁修眉恨尚存，痛知心人已亡。霎时间云雨散巫阳，自别来几日行坐想。空撒下一天情况，则除是梦里见才郎。

这女儿自因阿巧死后，心中好生不快活，自思量道：“皆由我之过，送了他青春一命。”日逐蹀躞不下。倏尔又是一个月来，女儿晨起梳妆，父母偶然视听，其女颜色精神，语言恍惚，老儿因谓妈妈曰：“莫非淑真做出来了？”殊不知其女春色飘零，蝶粉蜂黄都退了；韶华狼藉，花心柳眼已开残。妈妈、老儿互相埋怨了一会，只怕亲戚耻笑，“常言道：‘女大不中留。’留在家中，却如私盐包儿，脱手方可。不然，直待事发，弄出丑来，不好看！”那妈妈和老儿说罢，央王嫂嫂作媒，“将高就低，添长补短，发落了罢！”一日，王嫂嫂来说，嫁与近村李二郎为妻。且李二郎是个农庄之人，又四十多岁，只图美貌，不计其他。过门之后，两个颇说得着。瞬息间十有馀年，李二郎被他彻夜盘弄，衰

fulfillment. Aqiao was so shaken upon returning home that he gave up the ghost. (*One life gone.*) For all her heart-piercing grief upon hearing the news, the young woman dared not show it on her face. And now, I beg my partner to accompany me on my next song:

*Her fine brows furrowed, her heart heavy with sorrow,
She grieved over the death of the one in her heart.
All too soon, the clouds and rain dispersed;⁵
She missed him sorely after their last encounter.
Overwhelmed by emotions that filled the sky,
She looked forward to seeing him in her dreams.*

After Aqiao's death, the young woman's spirits sank. She said to herself, "I'm the one who drove him to an early grave." Day after day, she could not put her mind at ease. In a trice, another month went by.

She was at her toilette one morning when her parents saw her and noticed that she did not look her usual self and was not talking sense. The old man remarked to his wife, "Could it be that Shuzhen has done something she shouldn't have done?" Little did they realize that their daughter's youth was already fading, much like butterflies and bees lose their color after mating, that the flower was beginning to shed its petals and the willow was past its prime.

The mother and the father blamed each other. Afraid that their kith and kin would laugh at them, they observed, "As the proverb says, 'A daughter of marriageable age is not to be kept at home.' One who is kept at home is like a package of smuggled salt that you should dispose of as soon as possible. Otherwise, if you wait until a scandal breaks out, it won't reflect well on you." Having thus made up their minds, they asked an Auntie Wang to be the matchmaker, saying, "We won't be too picky. We'll try to be more accommodating and just marry her off."

One day, Auntie Wang brought a marriage proposal from Li Erlang of a neighboring village. Li Erlang, a farmhand more than forty years of age, was looking for no other qualities in a wife than beauty. After Miss Jiang crossed his threshold, the new couple got along very well.



急了。[眉批]老夫得少妻者，可视为鉴。年将五十之上，此心已灰。奈何此妇正在妙龄，酷好不厌，仍与夫家西宾有事。李二郎一见，病发身故。[眉批]两条命。这妇人眼见断送两人性命了。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

结姻缘十数年，动春情三四番。萧墙祸起片时间，到如今反为难上难。把一对凤鸾惊散，倚阑干无语泪偷弹。

那李大郎斥退西宾，择日葬弟之柩。这妇人不免守孝三年。其家已知其非，着人防闲。本妇自揣于心，亦不敢妄为矣。朝夕之间，受了多少的熬煎，或饱一顿，或缺一餐，家人都不理他了。将及一年之上，李大郎自思留此无益，不若逐回，庶免辱门败户。遂唤原媒眼同，将妇罄身赶回。本妇如鸟出笼，似鱼漏网，其馀物饰，亦不计较。本妇抵家，父母只得收留，那有好气待他，如同使婢，妇亦甘心忍受。一日有个张二官过门，因见本妇，心甚悦之，挽人说合，求为继室。女父母允诺，恨不推将出去。且张



In the twinkling of an eye, more than ten years went by. The nightly torments left Li Erlang so exhausted that he lost all interest in that business when he was only in his fifties. (*Old men with young wives, take warning from this!*) However, the young woman, now in the prime of her life, was so addicted to her pleasures that she started an affair with the tutor hired by her husband's family. No sooner had Li Erlang found out about the affair than a chronic illness flared up, and died. (*Two lives gone.*) So Shuzhen had two human lives on her hands. I beg my partner to accompany me again on my next song:

*Her married life lasted more than ten years,
 She had three partners in passion.
 Out of the blue, calamity struck,
 Landing her in dire misery.
 A pair of phoenixes now parted,
 She leans tearfully against the railings, wordless.*

Li Erlang's older brother, Li Dalang, fired the tutor and buried his brother's coffin on a chosen day. As required, Shuzhen was in mourning for three years. Knowing what she had done, the Li family kept her under watch, but the woman dared not do anything wild, because of her guilty feelings. Those were days of immense suffering for her. Members of the Li family paid no attention to her needs, caring not if her stomach was full or empty. After more than a year, Li Dalang saw no good reason for keeping her any longer and decided to send her back to her parents so as to forestall any more scandals that would disgrace the family. So he summoned the matchmaker to announce the marriage null and void and ousted Shuzhen without allowing her to take any of her belongings. Feeling as free as a bird out of the cage and a fish out of the net, she did not mind the loss of her possessions. Upon her return home, her parents felt obliged to let her stay, but they treated her none too politely, ordering her about as they would a servant. Even so, she had no complaints.

One day, a Mr. Zhang passed the house and happened to catch a glimpse of her. He was smitten. He sought the services of a matchmaker and proposed that Shuzhen become his second wife, his first wife having died. Shuzhen's parents gave their consent, for they were



二官是个行商，多在外，少在内，不曾打听得备细。设下盒盘羊酒，涓吉成亲。这妇人不去则罢，这一去，好似：

猪羊奔屠宰之家，一步步来寻死路。

是夜，画烛摇光，粉香喷雾。绮罗筵上，依旧两个新人；锦绣衾中，各出一般旧物。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

喜今宵月再圆，赏名园花正芳。笑吟吟携手上牙床，恣交欢恍然入醉乡。不觉的浑身通畅，把断弦重续两情偿。

他两个自花烛之后，日则并肩而坐，夜则叠股而眠，如鱼藉水，似漆投胶。一个全不念前夫之恩爱，一个那曾题亡室之音容。妇羨夫之殷富，夫怜妇之丰仪。两个过活了一月。一日，张二官人早起，分付虞候收拾行李，要往德清取帐。这妇人怎生割舍得他去。张二官人不免起身，这妇人簌簌垂下泪来。张二官道：“我你既为夫妇，不须如此。”各道保重而别。别去又过了半月光景，这妇人是久旷之人，既成佳配，未尽畅怀，又值孤守岑寂，好生难遣，觉身子困倦，步至门首闲望。对门店中一后生，约三



only too glad to push her out of the house. Mr. Zhang, a traveling merchant who was more often on the road than at home, did not investigate her background but rushed into preparations for gifts and a feast, and, on a chosen auspicious day, the wedding took place. It would have been all right if the woman had not gone to Mr. Zhang, but as she did, she was:

*Like pigs and sheep on their way to the slaughterhouse,
 With each step she drew nearer to her death.*

That night, the bride and groom sat at the grand feast, in the light of carved candles amid the fragrance of the hall. Under cover of the embroidered brocade quilt, both revealed what had certainly not been unused before. I beg my partner to accompany me on my next song:

*With the moon joyously at its fullest,
 And the flowers cheerfully in bloom,
 Hand in hand, they merrily go to bed.
 Their desires fulfilled, they drift off to sleep,
 Relaxed and soothed from head to toe,
 Overjoyed at this second chance at married life.*

After the wedding night, the two sat shoulder to shoulder during the day and slept thigh to thigh at night, as happy in their union as fish in water, as inseparable as lacquer and glue. One forgot all about her late husband's tender love; the other could hardly recall the face of his deceased wife. The woman was impressed by the man's wealth; the man was captivated by the woman's charms.

After living in this manner for one month, Mr. Zhang rose from bed one morning and told his servant to pack his luggage, for he had to travel to Deqing to collect debts. Over Shuzhen's objections, he got ready for the journey. As the tears trickled down her cheeks, Mr. Zhang said, "This isn't necessary between husband and wife." With that, they took leave of each other.

About half a month after his departure, Shuzhen, who had not enjoyed her newlywed life to an extent that made up for her prolonged celibacy, began to find her loneliness too hard to bear. Listlessly, she went to the door to look around and saw, in the shop across the



十已上年纪，资质丰粹，举止闲雅。遂问随侍阿瞒，阿瞒道：“此店乃朱秉中开的，此人和气，人称他为朱小二哥。”妇人问罢，夜饭也不吃，上楼睡了。楼外乃是官河，舟船歇泊之处。将及二更，忽闻梢人嘲歌声隐约，侧耳而听，其歌云：

二十去了廿一来，不做私情也是呆。

有朝一日花容退，双手招郎郎不来。

妇人自此复萌觊觎之心，往往倚门独立，朱秉中时来调戏。彼此相慕，目成眉语，但不能一叙款曲为恨也。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

美温温颜面肥，光油油鬓发长。他半生花酒肆颠狂，对人前扯拽都是谎。全无有风云气象，一味里窃玉与偷香。

这妇人羡慕朱秉中不已，只是不得凑巧。一日，张二官讨帐回家，夫妇相见了，叙些间阔的话。本妇似有不悦之意，只是勉强奉承，一心倒在朱秉中身上了。张二官在家又住了一个月之上。正值仲冬天气，收买了杂货赶节，赁船装载到彼，发卖之间，不甚称意，把货都賒与人上了，旧帐又讨不上手。俄然逼岁，不得



street, a young man in his thirties, handsome and graceful of bearing. She asked a servant, Aman, who the man was. Aman replied, "It's Zhu Bingzhong, owner of the shop and a very nice man. Everybody calls him Second Brother Zhu."

The woman went upstairs to retire for the night without bothering to eat supper. A canal ran by her house, and under her window was a berth for boats. At about the second watch of the night, a fisherman's impromptu song came faintly to her ears. She listened intently and heard these lines:

*With twenty gone, twenty-one sets in;
How stupid not to have some romance!
After your beauty is faded and gone,
No man will come to you, however hard you try.*

Her desires stirring again, Shuzhen often went to lean against the door. Zhu Bingzhong came over from time to time for a few flirtatious exchanges. Their eyes conveyed their admiration for each other, but to their chagrin, they were never able to have a good talk. I beg my partner to accompany me in the following song:

*His cheeks full and glowing,
His hair long and shiny.
He spent half his life on wine and romance;
He told nothing but lies to people's faces.
He stayed away from honor and dignity,
But busied himself with clandestine love affairs.*

Shuzhen yearned for Zhu Bingzhong with all her heart, but she could find no opportunity to do anything about it. One day, Mr. Zhang returned from his debt-collecting trip. Husband and wife greeted each other and engaged in the usual small talk necessitated by their days of separation. Wearing an ever so slightly displeased look, Shuzhen forced herself to play up to him, but she had her whole heart set on Zhu Bingzhong.

Mr. Zhang stayed at home for more than a month, until mid-winter, when he began purchasing goods in preparation for the upcoming New Year festival. Then he hired a boat and set out again, the boat laden with goods. But the transactions did not turn out well,



归家过年，预先寄些物事回家支用，不题。

且说朱秉中因见其夫不在，乘机去这妇人家贺节。留饮了三五杯，意欲做些暗昧之事。奈何往来之人，应接不暇，取便约在灯宵相会，秉中领教而去。捻指间又届十三日试灯之夕，于是户户鸣锣击鼓，家家品竹弹丝。游人队队踏歌声，仕女翩翩垂舞袖。鳌山彩结，崑峨百尺矗晴空；凤篆香浓，缥缈千层笼绮陌。闲庭内外，溶溶宝烛光辉；杰阁高低，烁烁华灯照耀。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

奏箫韶一派鸣，绽池莲万朵开。看六街三市闹挨挨，笑声高满城春似海。期人在灯前相待，几回价又恐燕莺猜。

其夜秉中侵早的更衣着靴，只在街上往来。本妇也在门首抛声炫俏，两个相见暗喜，准定目下成事。不期伊母因往观灯，就便探女。女扃户邀入参见，不免留宿。秉中等至夜分，闷闷归卧。



as all the goods were given out on credit while old debts remained outstanding. With the New Year approaching, he was unable to return home for the holidays and contented himself with sending money home for household expenditures.

Let us leave him for the moment and come to Zhu Bingzhong, who took advantage of the husband's absence to pay a visit to the woman, ostensibly to offer his New Year's greetings. After a few cups of wine, they felt quite disposed to engage in some amorous adventure, but with too many visitors coming and going, Shuzhen slipped him an invitation to a rendezvous on the night of the Lantern Festival.⁶ Bingzhong accepted and took leave of her.

In the snap of a finger, the thirteenth day of the first month of the year rolled around. It was the first day of the festival, when lanterns were first hung up, and every household celebrated the occasion by beating gongs and drums and playing flutes and string instruments. Sightseers sang and tapped the ground with their feet to mark the rhythm, and graceful maidens danced, fluttering their long sleeves. Lanterns were piled up like hills that rose to the sky. Strands of fragrant incense drifted over the gaily decorated streets. The houses and the gardens were aglow with candles. The towers and pavilions glittered under the lanterns. I beg my partner to accompany me in my next song:

*Amid charming strains of music,
 Water lilies bloom in the ponds.
 The streets and the fairs swarm with people,
 Laughter fills the town joyous with the advent of spring.
 Lovers wait for each other by the lanterns,
 Afraid they will be missed if they turn away.*

That night, Bingzhong eagerly changed into nicer clothes and shoes and strutted up and down the streets. Shuzhen also displayed herself at her door. Inwardly delighted to be seeing each other, they were determined to plunge into action without delay. All too unexpectedly, Shuzhen's mother, out to view the lanterns, dropped by to see her. Shuzhen had no choice but to invite the old lady in and put her up for the night. Bingzhong waited until night fell and gloomily returned



次夜如前。正遇本妇，怪问如何爽约。挨身相就，止做得个吕字儿而散。[眉批]好事多磨，恶事亦不容易做。少间，具酒奉母，母见其无情无绪，向女言曰：“汝如今迁于乔木，只宜守分，也与父母争一口气。”岂知本妇已约秉中等了二夜了，可不是鬼门上占卦。平旦，买两盒饼馐，雇顶轿儿，送母回了。薄晚，秉中张个眼慢，钻进妇家，就便上楼。本妇灯也不看，解衣相抱，曲尽于飞。然本妇相接数人，或老或少，那能造其奥处。自经此合，身酥骨软，飘飘然其滋味不可胜言也。且朱秉中日常在花柳丛中打交，深谙十要之术，那十要？

一要滥于撒漫，二要不算工夫，三要甜言美语，四要软款温柔，五要乜斜缠帐，六要施逞枪法，七要妆聋做哑，八要择友同行，九要穿着新鲜，十要一团和气。

若狐媚之人，缺一不可行也。再说秉中已回，张二官又到。本妇便害些木边之目，田下之心。要好只除相见。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

报黄昏角数声，助凄凉泪几行。论深情海角未为长，难



home to sleep. The next night went by in the same way. When he happened to run into Shuzhen, he asked her why she had failed to keep the appointment. While he was speaking, he moved closer and kissed her on the lips before bidding her good-bye. (*The proverb says, "The road to happiness never runs smooth." It applies to this case of debauchery as well!*)

Soon thereafter, as she offered wine to her mother, the latter remarked, noticing her listlessness, "Now that you've raised your station in life, you should be content with what you have and try to be a credit to your parents." Little did she know that her daughter had arranged an assignation that she had failed to keep for two consecutive evenings out of sheer bad luck.

The next morning, Shuzhen bought two boxes of pastry, hired a sedan-chair, and saw her mother off. As evening began to close in, Bingzhong slipped into her home when the coast was clear, and went up the stairs. Without bothering to light the lamp, Shuzhen took off her clothes and joined him in a union of delight. So far, the men with whom she had indulged herself were either too young or too old, with little knowledge of the secrets of lovemaking. This new experience shattered her and left her with a feeling of floating lightness, the sweetness of which was beyond words. Zhu Bingzhong, being the rake that he was, knew all there was to know about the ten tricks of the trade as far as women were concerned. Which ten?

First, act wild. Second, don't begrudge time and effort. Third, be generous with sweet, honeyed words. Fourth, be soft and gentle. Fifth, be persistent. Sixth, put the lance to good use. Seventh, act the fool. Eighth, have friends. Ninth, dress well. Tenth, be all affability. In order to captivate a bewitching woman, anything less than all ten tricks would not do.

But let us get on with our story. After Bingzhong left, Mr. Zhang came back again. Shuzhen was left to suffer the pangs of stifled longing, which would not go away unless she saw her lover again. I beg my partner to accompany me in my next song:

*The army taps announced the onset of evening,
 Bringing tears of sadness down the cheeks.*



捉摸这般心内痒。不能勾相偎相傍，恶思量萦损九回肠。

这妇人自庆前夕欢娱，直至佳境，又约秉中晚些相会，要连歇几十夜。谁知张二官家来，心中纳闷，就害起病来。头疼腹痛，骨热身寒。张二官颺望回家，将息取乐，因见本妇身子不快，倒戴了一个愁帽。遂请医调治，倩巫烧献，药必亲尝，衣不解带，反受辛苦，不似在外了。且说秉中思想，行坐不安，托故去望张二官，称道：“小弟久疏趋侍，昨闻荣回，今特拜谒。奉请明午于蓬舍，少具鸡酒，聊与兄长洗尘，幸勿他却！”翌日，张二官赴席，秉中出妻女奉劝，大醉扶归。已后还了席，往往来来。[眉批]欲取因与，不为还席。本妇但闻秉中在座，说也有，笑也有，病也无。倘或不来，就呻吟叫唤，邻里厌闻。张二官指望便好，谁知日渐沉重。本妇病中，但瞑目，就见向日之阿巧和李二郎偕来索命，



*The longing traveled to the corners of the earth,
Making the heart itch in mysterious ways.
Unable to be in his arms,
She found herself weighed down with sorrow.*

Having enjoyed herself to the fullest the other night, Shuzhen had asked for another rendezvous, hoping that the pleasure would last tens of nights. When her husband returned home all too unexpectedly, she was plunged into such low spirits that she fell ill with a headache and a stomachache. Her bones burned, but her body felt cold. Mr. Zhang had been eagerly looking forward to coming home for some rest and diversion. Witnessing his wife's illness, he became so worried that he engaged physicians to treat her and priests to make offerings to the gods. He tasted the medicinal soup before serving it to her and attended her day and night without ever taking off his clothes for a good sleep, working harder than he did on his business trips.

In the meantime, thoughts of Shuzhen made Bingzhong restless. On some excuse, he went to see Mr. Zhang, saying, "I've been remiss in my services to you, sir. I heard yesterday that you had returned home. That's why I'm here to pay you my respects and also to invite you to my humble home for lunch tomorrow. I will lay out some simple fare by way of welcome. Please do not turn me down!"

The next day, Mr. Zhang duly went to Bingzhong's house for dinner, in the course of which Bingzhong had his wife and daughter ply Mr. Zhang with so much wine that he drank himself into a stupor and had to be supported by his arms when he went back home. Mr. Zhang then reciprocated with an invitation to Bingzhong, and so the comings and goings went on. (*He gave in order to take something else. He was not after the reciprocation of hospitality.*)

Whenever she learned that Bingzhong would be at the table, Shuzhen would talk and laugh, all her illness forgotten. If he did not show up, she would moan and scream, to the irritation of the neighbors. Mr. Zhang was hoping she would get better, but instead, her condition worsened day by day. As soon as she closed her eyes, Aqiao and Second Brother Li appeared, demanding that she pay them



势渐狞恶。本妇惧怕，难以实告，惟向张二官道：“你可替我求问：‘几时脱体？’”如言径往洞虚先生卦肆，卜下卦来。判道：“此病大分不好，有横死老幼阳人死命为祸，非今生乃宿世之冤。今夜就可办备福物酒果冥衣各一分，用鬼宿度河之次，向西铺设，苦苦哀求，庶有少救。不然，决不好也。”奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

揶揄来苦怨咱，朦胧着便见他。病恹恹害的眼儿花，瘦身躯怎禁没乱杀！则说不和我干休罢，几时节离了两冤家！
[眉批] 词俱当行。

张二官正依法祭祀之间，本妇在床，又见阿巧和李二郎击手言曰：“我辈已诉于天，着来取命。你央后夫张二官再四恳求，意甚虔恪。我辈且容你至五五之间，待同你一会之人，却假弓长之手，与你相见。”言讫，欵然不见了。本妇当夜似觉精爽些个，后看看复旧。张二官喜甚，不题。

却见秉中旦夕亲近，馈送迭至，意颇疑之，尤未为信。一日，张二官入城催讨货物。回家进门，正见本妇与秉中执手联坐。张二官倒退扬声，秉中迎出相揖。他两个亦不知其见也。张二官当



back with her life. As they grew fiercer and fiercer, the woman got afraid. Finding it difficult to tell the truth, she said to her husband, "Please consult a fortune-teller as to when I will recover."

Accordingly, Mr. Zhang sought the services of a fortune-teller, who did a divination and said, "This is an almost hopeless case. She has on her hands the deaths of two men, one young and one old. Actually, the grievances go back to a previous life. Tonight, you may prepare some offerings in the way of wine, fruit, and some paper clothes for the dead and lay them out in a westerly direction at midnight. If you pray hard enough, she may have a chance. Otherwise, her time has come." I beg my partner to accompany me in my next song:

*They come to taunt me in my misery,
 Whenever I'm about to drift to sleep.
 In my illness, my vision goes blurry;
 My gaunt frame can hardly hold my perturbed thoughts.
 When am I ever to be left alone,
 Never to see those foes of mine again? (Not badly written.)*

Mr. Zhang was in the middle of his sacrificial services when Shuzhen saw Aqiao and Li Erlang again. Clapping their hands, they said, "We complained against you to heaven and are here to take your life, but, out of consideration for your current husband's sincere pleas on your behalf, we'll give you until the fifth day of the fifth month. We'll see you then, through the help of a certain Zhang, when you are with a certain man." With that, they suddenly disappeared.

That very night, Shuzhen began to feel better. Gradually she regained her health, much to Mr. Zhang's joy. Of this, we shall speak no further.

With Bingzhong frequently visiting the house and bringing gifts, Mr. Zhang began to have misgivings, but he could not be sure. One day, upon returning home from a trip to the city to collect some goods, he stepped through the door and saw Shuzhen and Bingzhong sitting hand in hand. Mr. Zhang recoiled and made some noise, whereupon Bingzhong came out to greet him. Bingzhong and Shuzhen



时见他殷勤，已自生疑七八分了，今日撞个满怀，凑成十分。张二官自思量道：“他两个若犯在我手里，教他死无葬身之地！”遂往德清去做买卖。到了德清，已是五月初一日。安顿了行李在店中，上街买一口刀，悬挂腰间。至初四日连夜奔回，匿于他处，不在话下。再题本妇渴欲一见，终日去接秉中。秉中也有些病在家里，延至初五日，阿瞒又来请赴鸳鸯会，秉中勉强赴之。楼上已筵张水陆矣，盛两盂煎石首，贮二器炒山鸡，酒泛菖蒲，糖烧角黍。其余肴馔蔬果，未暇尽录。两个遂相轰饮，亦不顾其他也。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

绿溶溶酒满斟，红焰焰烛半烧。正中庭花月影儿交，直吃得玉山时自倒。他两个贪欢贪笑，不提防门外有人瞧！

两个正饮间，秉中自觉耳热眼跳，心惊肉战，欠身求退。本妇怒曰：“怪见终日请你不来，你何轻贱我之甚！你道你有老婆，我便是无老公的？你殊不知我做鸳鸯会的主意。夫此二鸟，飞鸣



had no idea they had been seen. Bingzhong's attentiveness had already made Mr. Zhang more than half inclined to suspect that something was wrong. This encounter fully confirmed his suspicions. He thought, "If I ever catch them in the act, I'll make sure that their dead bodies won't even have a burial place!"

He then set off for Deqing on business, arriving on the first day of the fifth month. After depositing his luggage at an inn, he went to a shop and bought a knife, which he then strapped to his waist. On the fourth day of the month, he hurried home under cover of night and hid, but let us leave him there for now.

In the meantime, Shuzhen, burning with desire, sent over one invitation after another for Bingzhong, who was at home nursing some minor illness. On the fifth day of the month, Aman the servant went again to invite him to a rendezvous. Bingzhong forced himself to go.

At Shuzhen's house, a feast had been laid out upstairs, with products of the river as well as the land. There were two plates of fried yellow croakers, two vessels of sautéed pheasants, cups of wine flavored with sweet flag, pyramid-shaped dumplings made of sweet rice, and more dishes of vegetables and fruits than can be enumerated here. The two drank to their hearts' content, totally oblivious to everything around them. I beg my partner to accompany me in the next song:

*The cups filled to the brim with green wine,
 The candles aglow with bright red flames,
 The flowers merging in shadow in the moonlit yard,
 They went on till they were the worse for drink;
 Forgetting themselves in merry laughter,
 They had no idea they'd soon be seen.*

In the midst of the drinking, Bingzhong felt his ears burning, his eyelids throbbing, and his heart and flesh quivering. He rose from his seat and asked to be excused. The woman flared up. "No wonder you've been turning down my invitations day after day! How can you treat me so shabbily! So you have a wife. Don't I have a husband? Let me tell you my idea of imitating a pair of mandarin ducks. These



宿食，镇常相守，尔我生不成双，死作一对。”昔有韩凭妻美，郡王欲夺之，夫妻皆自杀。王恨，两冢瘞之，后冢上生连理树，上有鸳鸯，悲鸣飞去。此两个要效鸳鸯比翼交颈，不料便成语讖。况本妇甫能闹闹得病好，就便荒淫无度，正是：

偷鸡猫儿性不改，养汉婆娘死不休。

再说张二官提刀在手，潜步至门，梯树窃听。见他两个戏谑歌呼，历历在耳，气得按捺不下，打一砖去。本妇就吹灭了灯，声也不则了。连打了三块，本妇教秉中先睡：“我去看看便来！”[眉批]如画。阿瞞持烛先行，开了大门，并无人迹。本妇叫道：“今日是个端阳佳节，那家不吃几杯雄黄酒？”正要骂间，张二官跳将下来，喝道：“泼贱！你和甚人夤夜吃酒？”本妇吓得战做一团，只说：“不，不，不！”张二官乃曰：“你同我上楼一看，如无便罢，慌做甚么？”本妇又见阿巧、李二郎一齐都来，自分必死，延颈待尽。[眉批]李二郎索命，理之当然，阿巧何必来哉？秉中赤



are love birds that stay together all the time, whether flying, sleeping, or eating. If you and I can't be a couple in this life, we'll be one in our next lives."

In the olden days, there was a Han Pin who had a most beautiful wife. Both killed themselves when the king tried to take her away by force. In anger, the king had them buried in two separate graves. Later, two trees grew from the graves and merged into one. On top of the tree was seen a pair of mandarin ducks that later flew away, crying sadly. Now, this talk about turning into mandarin ducks would soon prove prophetic. This was a woman who would indulge in wanton debauchery as soon as she recovered from an illness. Truly,

*Cats will always steal chickens,
Whores will always steal men.*

Knife in hand, Mr. Zhang tiptoed to the door and climbed up a tree to listen to what was going on. The flirtatious talk he heard so enraged him that he threw a brick into the window. Shuzhen blew out the lamp and quieted down. After the third brick, she told Bingzhong to go to sleep first, adding, "I'll go take a quick look." (*Good detail.*) Aman the servant led the way, holding a candle, and opened the front gate, but nothing suspicious was seen. The woman cried out, "Today being the Dragon Boat Festival, who would begrudge themselves a few cups of *xionghuang* wine?" ⁷

Before she could go on, Mr. Zhang leaped down from the tree and roared, "Whore! With whom were you drinking at this time of the night?"

Trembling all over with fear, the woman could only manage to say, "No! No! No!"

"Follow me upstairs and let me take a look. Everything will be fine if there's no one up there. What are you afraid of?"

At this point, Shuzhen saw Aqiao and Second Brother Li coming toward her again. Knowing that this must be the moment of her death, she stretched out her neck in anticipation of the fatal blow. (*Second Brother Li is fully justified in coming to demand her life. But why should Aqiao tag along?*)

In alarm, Bingzhong got down from the bed, completely



条条惊下床来，匍匐口称：“死罪，死罪！情愿将家私并女奉报，哀怜小弟母老妻娇，子幼女弱！”张二官那里准他，[眉批] 好汉。则见刀过处，一对人头落地，两腔鲜血冲天。正是：

当时不解恩成怨，今日方知色是空。

当初本妇卧病，已闻阿巧、李二郎言道：“五五之间，待同你一会之人，假弓长之手，再与相见。”果至五月五日，被张二官杀死。“一会之人”，乃秉中也。祸福未至，鬼神必先知之，可不惧欤！故知士矜才则德薄，女炫色则情放。若能如执盈，如临深，则为端士淑女矣，岂不美哉！惟愿率土之民，夫妇和柔，琴瑟谐协，有过则改之，未萌则戒之，敦崇风教，未为晚也。在座看官，漫听这一本《鸳鸯刎颈会》。奉劳歌伴，再和前声：

见抛砖意暗猜，入门来魂已惊。举青锋过处丧多情，到今朝你心还未省！送了他三条性命，果冤冤相报有神明。

又调《南乡子》一阙，词曰：

春老怨啼鹃，玉损香消事可怜。一对风流伤白刃，冤冤，



naked, and prostrated himself, said, "I deserve death! I deserve death! But I'd be happy to offer you all my possessions and my daughter. Please have pity on my aged mother, my young wife, and my little children!"

Turning a deaf ear to his pleas (*A real man!*), Mr. Zhang swung down his knife. Two heads rolled to the ground amid squirting streams of blood. Truly,

They knew not that love would turn to hate;

They know now that lust will bring them death.

When Shuzhen had been ill in bed, she had heard Aqiao and Second Brother Li say, "On the fifth day of the fifth month, we'll see you again, through the help of a certain Zhang, when you are with a certain man." Sure enough, she was killed by Mr. Zhang on the fifth day of the fifth month. "A certain man" was a reference to Bingzhong. How fearsome that spiritual beings never fail to foretell the coming of calamity or fortune!

It is a truism that scholars who flaunt their talent lack moral character, and women who flaunt their charms overflow with passion. If they knew how to behave themselves and exercise caution, they could all qualify as gentlemen and ladies of class. Wouldn't that be nice? May all husbands and wives throughout the land remain devoted to each other! Those who have erred should mend their ways; those who have not should be on their guard. It is never too late to observe propriety and decorum. Dear audience, to bring to a conclusion this story about death in fulfillment of a love bird prophecy, let me beg my partner to accompany me in the following song:

The deadly intent of the bricks was all too clear;

The man's entry frightened them even more.

With the sword went all tender feelings of the past

For the one who was unrepentant even to this hour.

With three men dead and gone,

Truly it was retribution divine.

There is also a lyric poem to the tune of "Song of the Southern Country" :

Cuckoos lament the aging of the spring;

惆怅劳魂赴九泉。 抵死苦留连，想是前生有业缘。景色
依然人已散，天天，千古多情月自圆。



*How sad that the beauty is gone for good.
The lovers perished by the flashing knife;
To the Nine Springs the aggrieved ghosts wafted their way.*

*The struggle on the verge of death was long and hard,
A result of the karma of previous years.
The scenery the same, the people gone,
The moon waxes and wanes in loving eternity.*

¹ This quotation is attributed to Wang Yen in "Biography of Wang Yen," in *Jin shu* (History of the Jin Dynasty).

² Monk Huiyuan (334–416) spent more than thirty years of his life in Donglin Temple on the Lu Mountains in Jiangxi Province. He was honored as the patriarch by the Pure Land School.

³ The prologue story has been translated by Jeanne Kelly in its unabridged form as "The Tragedy of Pu Fei-yen" in *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, ed. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

⁴ Hong'er was a famous courtesan in the Tang dynasty.

⁵ The term "clouds and rain" is a metaphor for sexual encounters.

⁶ The Lantern Festival falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month of the year.

⁷ Wine seasoned with *xionghuang* (realgar) is usually drunk at the Dragon Boat Festival to detoxify the body.





第三十九卷

福禄寿三星度世

欲学为仙说与贤，长生不死是虚传。
少贪色欲身康健，心不瞞人便是仙。

说这四句诗，单说一个官人，二十年灯窗用心，苦志勤学，谁知时也，运也，命也，连举不第，没分做官，有分做仙去。这大宋第三帝主，乃是真宗皇帝。景德四年秋八月中，这个官人水乡为活，捕鱼为生。捕鱼有四般：

攀缙者仰，鸣榔者闹，垂钓者静，撒网者舞。

这个官人在一座州，谓之江州，军号定江军。去这江州东门，谓之九江门；外一条江，随地呼为浔阳江。

万里长江水似倾，东连大海若雷鸣。

一江护国清泠水，不请衣粮百万兵。

这官人于八月十四夜，解放渔船，用棹竿掉开，至江中，水光月色，上下相照。这官人用手拿起网来，就江心一撒，连撒三网，



Story 39

The Stars of Fortune, Rank, and Longevity Return to Heaven

*Those wishing to be immortal, be advised:
Eternal life is nothing but a lie.
Stay away from lust, maintain your good health,
Deceive none, and an immortal you will become.*

I cite the above quatrain because this story is about a man who, in spite of twenty years of assiduous study by his window day and night, failed repeatedly at the imperial civil service examinations and, since he thought he was not meant for an official career, accepted his fate and set his heart on becoming an immortal. It was a matter of time, fortune, and fate. This happened in the autumnal eighth month of the fourth year in the Jingde reign period [1004-8] under Emperor Zhenzong, the third emperor of the Great Song dynasty. The gentleman of our story was, by now, making a living as a fisherman on the river. There are four things to be said about a fisherman:

*He leans backward to pull up the net;
He beats the boat's side to drive in the fish.
He angles peacefully by the shore;
He dances when he casts his net.*

Our gentleman lived in Jiangzhou, of Dingjiang District, by the Xunyang River outside of Jiujiang Gate, which was the east gate of Jiangzhou.

*The ten-thousand li Yangzi River sweeps along,
And roars like thunder as it flows east to the sea.
With the cold waters defending the city,
There is no need to feed a mighty army.*

On the fourteenth night of the eighth month, our gentleman released his fishing boat from its mooring, punted away from the shore, and rowed to the middle of the river, which was brightly lit by the moon. He picked up the net and cast it three times in a row



一鳞不获。只听得有人叫道：“刘本道，刘本道，大丈夫不进取光显，何故捕鱼而堕志？”那官人吃一惊，连名道姓，叫得好亲。收了网，四下看时，不见一人。再将网起来撒，又有人叫。四顾又不见人。似此三番，当夜不曾捕鱼，使船傍岸。到明日十五夜，再使船到江心，又有人连名道姓，叫刘本道。本道焦躁，放下网听时，是后面有人叫。使船到后看时，其声从芦苇中出。及至寻入芦苇之中，并无一人。却不作怪！使出江心举网再撒，约莫网重，收网起来看时，本道又惊又喜，打得一尾赤梢金色鲤鱼，约长五尺。本道道谢天地，来日将入城去卖，有三五日粮食。将船傍岸缆住，鲤鱼放在船板底下，活水养着。待欲将身入舱内解衣睡，觉肚中又饥又渴。看船中时，别无止饥止渴的物。怎的好？番来覆去，思量去那江岸上，有个开村酒店张大公家，买些酒吃才好。就船中取一个盛酒的葫芦上岸来，左肋下挟着棹竿，右手提着葫芦，乘着月色，沿江而走。肚里思量：知他张大公睡也未睡？未睡时，叫开门，沽些酒吃。睡了时，只得忍饥渴睡一夜。迤迳行来，约离船边半里多路，见一簇人家，这里便是张大公家。



without catching so much as a fish scale. Suddenly, he heard a voice crying, "Liu Bendao, Liu Bendao, why does a worthy man like you not pursue honor and glory but resign himself to fishing?"

Astonished that he was being addressed in such a familiar way, by his surname plus his given name, he hauled in his net and looked around. Failing to see anyone around, he cast the net one more time, and again the voice called out. As before, there was no one in sight. This happened three times. He gave up and rowed his boat back to shore.

The following night, the fifteenth night of the month, when he again rowed the boat to the middle of the river, he heard his name called out as before. Growing impatient, he put down his net and listened intently. The voice came from behind him. He rowed in that direction and traced the voice to the reeds, but when he entered the reeds, he found no one. How very strange! He rowed out of the reeds into the middle of the river again and cast his net. Feeling the net grow heavy in his hands, he pulled it out of the water, and to his surprise and joy, he saw in the net a five-foot-long golden carp with a red tail.

"Heaven and earth be praised!" said Bendao. "If I sell it in the market tomorrow, I'll get enough food to last me three to five days." He secured the boat to the shore with a rope and put the carp in the water-filled compartment below the deck so as to keep it alive. He then went into the cabin, took off his clothes, and got into bed, but feeling hungry and thirsty, he looked around the boat for something in the way of food and drink, of which there was none. What was to be done? He turned and tossed and thought of buying some wine at the village wineshop of a Mr. Zhang. He picked up a gourd used for holding wine and went ashore, the punt pole under his left arm and the gourd in his right hand.

As he walked along the river in the moonlight, he said to himself, "I wonder if Mr. Zhang has gone to bed or not. If not, I'll knock at his door and go in to buy wine. But if he has gone to sleep, I'll have to spend the night hungry and thirsty." After following the many twists and turns of the road for more than half a *li*, he saw a



到他门前，打一望，里面有灯也无，但见张大公家有灯。怎见得，有只词名《西江月》，单咏着这灯花：

零落不因春雨，吹残岂藉东风。结成一朵自然红，费尽工夫怎种。 （内）有焰难藏粉蝶，生花不惹游蜂。更阑人静画堂中，曾伴玉人春梦。

本道见张大公家有灯，叫道：“我来问公公沽些酒吃，公公睡了便休，未睡时，可沽些与我。”张大公道：“老汉未睡。”开了门，问刘官人讨了葫芦，问了升数，人去盛将出来道：“酒便有，却是冷酒。”本道说与公公：“今夜无钱，来日卖了鱼，却把钱来还。”张大公道：“妨甚事。”

张大公关了门，本道挟着棹竿，提着葫芦，一面行，肚中又饥，顾不得冷酒，一面吃，就路上也吃了二停。到得船边，月明下，见一个人球头光纱帽，宽袖绿罗袍，身材不满三尺，觑着本道掩面大哭道：“吾之子孙，被汝获尽！”本道见了大惊，江边无



house looming ahead. It was Mr. Zhang's house. Upon reaching the door, he peeked inside to see if the house was still lit. And indeed he saw that it was. There is a lyric poem to the tune of "Moon over the West River" in praise of the snuff of the candlewick:

*It is not the spring rain that makes it fall,
Nor the east wind that blows it out.
A natural red blossom, it is lovelier
Than those that take hard work to grow.*

*No butterfly can land on its flame;
No wandering bee will draw near its petals.
In the boudoir, in the quiet of the night,
It keeps the lady company in her dreams of spring.*

Finding Mr. Zhang's house with candles still lit, Bendao called out, "Mr. Zhang, would you still happen to have wine for sale? If you've gone to bed, I won't bother you, but if you haven't, please sell me some."

"This old man is still up," replied Mr. Zhang. So saying, he opened the door, took Mr. Liu's gourd, asked him how much he wanted, and went inside. When he reemerged with the gourd, now filled with wine, he said, "I do still have wine all right, but it's cold."

Bendao said, "I have no money with me now. Tomorrow, after I sell the fish, I'll come back to pay you."

"That's all right," said Mr. Zhang as he closed the door.

Carrying the punt pole under one arm and the gourd in the other hand, Bendao started back to the boat. Hunger got the better of him, and he began drinking the wine even though it was cold. By the time he reached his boat, he had already consumed one fifth of the gourd's contents.

In the bright moonlight, he saw a man not yet three feet tall wearing a ball-shaped gauze hat and a wide-sleeved green silk robe. As soon as he saw Bendao, the man burst out in loud sobs. Covering his face with his sleeves, he said, "You captured all my children and grandchildren!"

Bendao was flabbergasted at the sight of this man who looked



这般人，莫非是鬼！放下葫芦，将手中棹竿去打。叫声：“着！”打一看时，火光迸散，豁刺刺地一声响。本道凝睛看时，不是有分为仙，险些做个江边失路鬼，波内横亡人。有诗为证：

高人多慕神仙好，几时身在蓬莱岛。
由来仙境在人心，清歌试听《渔家傲》。
此理渔人知得少，不经指示谁能晓。
君欲求鱼何处非，鹊桥有路通仙道。

当下本道看时，不见了球头光纱帽，宽袖绿罗袍，身不满三尺的人。却不作怪！到这缆船岸边，却待下船去，本道叫声苦，不知高低，去江岸边不见了船。“不知甚人偷了我的船去？”看那江对岸，万籁无声，下江一带，又无甚船只。今夜却是那里去歇息？思量：“这船无人偷我的，多时捕鱼不曾失了船，今日却不见了，这船不是下江人偷去，还是上江人偷我的！”

本道不来下江寻船，将葫芦中酒吃完了，葫芦撇在江岸，沿那岸走。从二更走至三更，那里见有船。思量：“今夜何处去好？”走来走去，不知路径。走到一座庄院前，放下棹竿，打一



more like a ghost than any person he had ever seen in these parts. He put down his gourd and swung his pole at the man, crying out, "Take this!" As he did, sparks flew about, accompanied by a splashing sound.

Bendao peered intently around. If he had not been predestined to be an immortal, he would have ended up a stray ghost by the river and a corpse in the waves at this time. There is a poem in testimony:

*Many men of worth admire the immortals;
 When will they, too, land on Penglai Island? ¹
 But immortality lies in the human heart;
 Just listen to the song "Fishermen's Pride."
 Few fishermen ever learn this truth;
 But who ever will if not shown the way?
 Those who seek the fish, look no farther;
 The magpie bridge leads to immortality.*

Bendao could see no trace of the man under three feet tall wearing a ball-shaped gauze hat and wide-sleeved green silk robe. How extraordinary!

Drawing near the spot where he had moored his boat, he gave a mournful shriek. It had disappeared. "Who could have stolen my boat?" he wondered. He looked across the river but there was no sign of life in the dead silence, nor was there a single boat to be seen anywhere. Where was he to spend the rest of the night? He said to himself, "Who could have stolen my boat? I never lost it before in all these years as a fisherman. How strange that it should have disappeared today! This must be the work of someone from other parts along the river."

Instead of going downstream to look for his boat, he drank up the wine in the gourd, tossed the empty gourd aside, and began to walk along the shore. He walked from the second watch until the third watch of the night but saw not the slightest trace of the boat. "Now, where am I going to spend the rest of the night?" he asked himself. He walked blindly ahead without the least idea where he was going in these unfamiliar parts.

A country house came into view, and he went toward it. When



望，只见庄里停着灯。本道进退无门，欲待叫，这庄上素不相识，欲待不叫，又无栖止处。只得叫道：“有人么？念本道是打鱼的，因失了船，寻来到此。夜深无住宿处，万望庄主暂借庄上告宿一宵。”只听得庄内有人应道：“来也！官人少待。”却是女人声息。那女娘开放庄门，本道低头作揖，女娘答礼相邀道：“官人请进，且过一宵了去。”本道谢了，挟着棹竿，随那女娘入去。女娘把庄门掩上，引至草堂坐地，问过了姓名，殷勤启齿道：“敢怕官人肚饥，安排些酒食与官人充饥，未知何如？”本道道：“谢娘子，胡乱安顿一个去处，教过得一夜，深谢相留！”女娘道：“不妨，有歇卧处。”说犹未了，只听得外面有人声唤：“阿耶！阿耶！我不撩拨你，却打了我！这人不到别处去，定走来我庄上借宿。”这人唤开门，本道吃一惊：“告娘子，外面声唤的是何人？”女娘道：“是我哥哥。”本道且走入一壁厢黑地里立着看时，女娘移身去开门，与哥哥叫声万福。那人叫唤：“阿耶！阿耶！妹妹关上门，随我入来。”女娘将庄门掩了，请哥哥到草堂坐地。本道看那草堂上的人，叫声苦：“我这性命须休！”正是猪羊人屠宰之家，一脚脚来寻死路。有诗为证：

撇了先妻娶晚妻，晚妻终不恋前儿。

he reached the door, he put down his pole, tried to look in, and saw candlelight inside. Since he didn't know how to gain admission to the house, he thought of crying out but hesitated because he did not know who lived in the house. But then again, if he did not cry out, he would have no place to stay for the night. So in the end, he called out, "Is anybody home? I am Bendao, a fisherman searching for my lost boat. I have no place to stay for the rest of the night. Would you please let me stay here until tomorrow morning?"

"Coming! Just a moment please!" came a woman's voice from inside the house. She opened the door. Bendao lowered his head, folded his hands, and bowed deeply. The woman returned the greeting, saying, "Please come in, sir. You can stay for the night."

Bendao followed her in with words of thanks, his pole under his arm. After closing the door, the woman led him into the main hall, where she offered him a seat and asked his name. "I'm afraid you might be hungry, sir," said she kindly. "Shall I serve you some wine and food?"

"Thank you. If you could manage to put me up somewhere for the night, I'll be ever so grateful."

"That can be easily done." Before she had quite finished speaking, a voice was heard from the outside, "Aya! Aya! I didn't do anything to him, but he had to whack at me like that! That man will surely come to this house of mine and ask to be put up for the night."

Alarmed at these words, Bendao said, "Madam, who is it outside?"

"It's my older brother."

Bendao ducked into a shadowed spot to observe, and the woman went to open the door. As she called out a greeting to her older brother, he exclaimed, "Aya! Aya! Close the door, Sister, and follow me in." The woman closed the door and offered her brother a seat in the main hall. Upon seeing the man in the main hall, Bendao let out a groan, "My time is up!" It was truly a case of "Like pigs and sheep on their way to the slaughter house / With each step he draws nearer to his death," as evidenced by the following poem:

He jilted his wife and married another,



先妻却在晚妻丧，盖为冤家没尽期。

本道看草堂上那个人，便是球头光纱帽，宽袖绿罗袍，身子不满三尺的人。“我曾打他一棹竿，去那江里死了，我却如何到他庄上借宿？”本道顾不得那女子，挟着棹竿，偷出庄门，奔下江而走。

却说庄上那个人声唤，看着女子道：“妹妹安排乳香一块，暖一碗热酒来与我吃，且定我脊背上疼。”即时，女子安排与哥哥吃。问道：“哥哥做甚么唤？”哥哥道：“好教你得知，我又不撩拨他。我在江边立地，见那厮沽酒回来，我掩面大哭道：‘吾之子孙，尽被汝获之。’那厮将手中棹竿打一下，被我变一道火光走入水里去。那厮上岸去了，我却把他的打鱼船摄过。那厮四下里没寻处，迤迳沿江岸走来。我想他不走别处去，只好来我庄上借宿。妹妹，他曾来借宿也不？”妹妹道：“却是兀谁？”哥哥说：“是刘本道，他是打鱼人。”女娘心中暗想：“原来这位官人，是打我哥哥的，不免与他遮饰则个。”遂答应道：“他曾来庄上借宿，我不曾留他，他自去了。哥哥辛苦了，且安排哥哥睡。”

却说刘本道沿着江岸，荒荒走去，从三更起仿佛至五更，走得腿脚酸疼。明月下，见一块大石头，放下棹竿，方才歇不多时，只听得有人走得荒速，高声大叫：“刘本道休走，我来赶你！”本



*One who loved not the son who wasn't her own.
But the first wife survived the second one;
Once an enemy, always an enemy.*

Bendao saw that the man in the main hall was none other than the one less than three feet tall wearing a ball-shaped gauze hat and a wide-sleeved green silk robe. "Didn't my blow with the punt pole send him tumbling into the river? Didn't he die? How can I stay in his house for the night?" Without bothering to say anything to the woman, Bendao sneaked out the door, the pole under his arm, and ran downriver.

In the meantime, the man in the house said to his sister, "Give me a piece of resin and a bowl of warm wine to ease the pain in my back."

In a little while, the woman brought what he wanted, and asked, "What happened to you?"

"Let me tell you. I didn't do anything to that man. I was standing by the river when I saw that fellow coming back with wine. I covered my face and burst into loud sobs, saying, 'You captured all my children and grandchildren.' That brute then hit me with his pole, but I changed into a beam of fire and dived into the water. After he went up the shore, I hid his fishing boat. Unable to find his boat anywhere, he walked along the shore all the way upriver. I don't think he has anywhere to spend the night unless it's in this house. Has he shown up yet, Sister?"

"What kind of man is he?"

"He's a fisherman called Liu Bendao."

The woman thought, "So, that gentleman is the one who hit my brother. Well, why don't I cover up for him?" Out loud, she said, "Yes, he did come here, asking to be put up for the night, but I didn't let him stay. He went away. Now, you've had a hard day, Brother. Let me get the bed ready for you."

Along the shore, Liu Bendao forged ahead in great haste from the third watch of the night until what he thought was the fifth watch. His feet sore, his legs aching, he saw a big rock in the moonlight and put his pole down to take a rest. Before long, he heard hurried



道叫声苦，不知高低！“莫是那汉赶来，报那一棹竿的冤仇？”把起棹竿立地，等候他来，无移时渐近看时，见那女娘身穿白衣，手捧着一个包裹走至面前道：“官人，你却走了。后面寻不见你，我安排哥哥睡了，随后赶来。你不得疑惑，我即非鬼，亦非魅，我乃是人，你看我衣裳有缝，月下有影，一声高似一声。我特地赶你来。”本道见了，放下棹竿，问：“娘子连夜赶来，不知有何事？”女娘问：“官人有妻也无？有妻为妾，无妻嫁你。包裹中尽有馀资，勾你受用。官人是肯也不？”本道思量，恁般一个好女娘，又提着一包衣饰金珠，这也是求之不得的，觑着女娘道：“多谢，本道自来未有妻子。”将那棹竿撇下江中，同女娘行至天晓，入江州来。本道叫女娘做妻，女娘问道：“丈夫，我两个何处安身是好？”本道应道：“放心，我自寻个去处。”走入城中，见一人家门首，挂着一面牌，看时，写着“顾一郎店”。本道向前问道：“那个是顾一郎？”那人道：“我便是。”本道道：“小生和家间爹爹说不上，赶我夫妻两口出来，无处安歇。问一郎讨间小房，权住三五日。亲戚相劝，回心转意时，便归去，却得相谢。”顾一郎道：“小娘子在那里？”本道叫：“妻子来相见则



steps and a voice calling out, "Liu Bendao! Stop! Wait for me!"

Bendao groaned. "Could it be that man, here to seek revenge for the blow I gave him?" He stood up, his pole at the ready.

Soon, as the figure came nearer, he saw that it was the woman from the country house, wearing white clothes. She walked up to him, carrying a parcel, and said, "Why did you go like that? I couldn't find you, so I put my brother to bed and then came to be with you. Don't be afraid. I'm not a ghost or an evil spirit. I'm a regular human being. Look at the seams in my clothes and the shadow I cast under the moon, and listen to my voice! I came all the way to catch up with you."

Bendao put down his pole and asked, "Is there something you came such a distance in the night to tell me?"

"Are you married? If you are, I'll serve you as a concubine. If not, I'll be your wife. I have enough money in the parcel for you to live a good life. What do you say?"

Bendao thought that such a pretty woman plus a parcel filled with valuables were all he could ever wish for. Looking at her, he said, "Thank you. I'm not married."

So saying, he tossed his pole into the river and walked with her until daybreak all the way to Jiangzhou.

Since she was now his wife, the woman said, "Husband, where are we going to settle down?"

"Don't worry. I'll find a place."

While they were walking around in the city, they saw a shop with a sign that said "Gu Yilang's Inn." Bendao walked up and asked, "Who is Gu Yilang?"

The man he had addressed replied, "I am."

"I quarreled with my father, who then drove me and my wife out. We have no place to go and would like to rent a small room from you for a stay of about three to five days. Our relatives will be mediating on our behalf. So when we're reconciled with my father, we'll pay you and go back."

"But where is your wife?" asked Gu Yilang.

"Wife!" Bendao called out. "Come here and meet Mr. Gu."



个。”顾一郎见他夫妻两个，引来店中，去南首第三间房，开放房门，讨了钥匙。本道看时，好喜欢。当日打火做饭吃了，将些金珠变卖来，买些箱笼被卧衣服。在这店中约过半年，本道看着妻子道：“今日使，明日使，金山也有使尽时。”女娘大笑道：“休忧！”去箱子内取出一物，教丈夫看：“我两个尽过得一世。”正是：

休道男儿无志气，妇人犹且辨贤愚。

当下女娘却取出一个天圆地方卦盘来。本道见了，问妻子缘何会他。女娘道：“我爹爹在日，曾任江州刺史，姓齐名文叔。奴小字寿奴。不幸去任时，一行人在江中遭遇风浪，爹妈从人俱亡。奴被官人打的那球头光纱帽，宽袖绿罗袍，身材不满三尺的人，救我在庄上，因此拜他做哥哥。如何官人不见了船，却是被他摄了。你来庄上借宿，他问我时，被我瞒过了，有心要与你做夫妻。你道我如何有这卦盘？我幼年曾在爹行学三件事：第一写字读书，第二书符咒水，第三算命起课。我今日却用着这卦盘，可同顾一郎出去寻个浮铺，算命起课，尽可度日。”本道谢道：“全仗我妻贤达。”当下把些钱，同顾一郎去南瓦子内，寻得卦铺，



Gu Yilang led Bendaο and his wife to the third room in the south wing of his inn, opened the door, and gave them the key. Bendaο was delighted with the room. After lighting a fire and eating their meal, they sold some of the woman's jewelry and bought trunks, bedding, and clothes.

They had stayed for about half a year at the inn, when Bendaο said to his wife, "The way we spend money, even a mountain of gold could have disappeared."

"Don't worry!" the woman burst out laughing. She took out an object from a trunk and showed it to her husband, saying, "This will last us for the rest of our lives." Indeed,

*Don't accuse men of not knowing better,
Women, in fact, are truly smarter.*

The woman had taken out a divination tray. When he saw it, Bendaο asked his wife what predestined bond between them had brought them together.

The woman launched into this explanation: "My father, when alive, was the prefect of Jiangzhou, named Qi Wenshu. My pet name is Shounu. When my father's term of office expired, we left and were unfortunately caught in a storm while traveling by water. Both my parents died, and so did the servants. The man you beat—the one less than three feet tall wearing a ball-shaped gauze hat and a wide-sleeved green gauze robe—rescued me and took me to his house. That's how I came to honor him as my older brother. Your boat, which you couldn't find, was hidden by him. When he asked me if you had come to the house to stay for the night, I told him a lie because I wanted to marry you.

"You wonder how I've come by this divination tray. Well, in my childhood, I learned three things from my father: First, reading and writing. Second, drawing magic figures and making holy water. Third, telling fortunes and doing divinations. Now, this divination tray will come in handy. Let's go out with Gu Yilang and find a busy marketplace where I can open a fortune-telling shop and make a decent living."

Bendaο said thankfully, "I owe everything to you, my good and



买些纸墨笔砚，挂了牌儿，拣个吉日，去开卦肆，取名为“白衣女士”。顾一郎相伴他夫妻两人坐地，半日先回。当日不发市，明日也不发市，到后日午后，又不发市。女娘觑着丈夫道：“一连三日不发市，你理会得么？必有人冲撞我。你去看有甚事，来对我说。”

本道起身，去瓦左、瓦右都看过，无甚事。走出瓦子来，大街上但一伙人围着。本道走来人丛外打一看时，只见一个先生，把着一个药瓢在手，开科道：

“五里亭亭一小峰，自知南北与西东。

世间多少迷途客，不指还归大道中。

看官听说：贫道乃是皖公山修行人。贫道有三件事，离了皖公山，走来江州。在席一呵好事君子，听贫道说：第一件，贫道在山修行一十三年，炼得一炉好丹，将来救人；第二件，来寻一物；第三件，贫道救你江州一城人。”众人听说皆惊。先生正说未了，大笑道：“众多君子未曾买我的药，却先见了这一物。你道在何处？”[眉批]口生也。觑着人丛外头用手一招道：“后生，你且入来。”本道看那先生，先生道：“你来！我和你说。”唬得



able wife!”

Right away, they took some money and went with Gu Yilang to South Marketplace. There, they found a spot where they could set up their fortune-telling shop. They bought paper, ink sticks, brush-pens and ink slabs, hung up a shop sign, and chose an auspicious day on which to open the business. Gu Yilang sat in the shop for a considerable while with Bendao and his wife, who now called herself the Lady in White, before leaving. No clients came that day, nor were they any more successful the next day. By the afternoon of the third day, still with no patrons, Bendao's wife remarked, “I wonder why there's been no business for three days in a row. Someone must be working against me. Go out and see what's going on, and then come back to tell me.”

Bendao rose and checked out the neighboring shops but found nothing suspicious. Afterward, he left the marketplace and proceeded to the street, where he saw a crowd. He approached and peered over the onlookers' shoulders. A man with a medicine soup ladle in his hand was intoning a poem by way of starting his speech:

*A small hill that stands five-li high
Has paths that lead north, south, east, and west.
Many of those losing their bearings
Have regained the right path following my finger.*

“Dear audience,” he went on to say, “I am a Daoist priest from Mount Wangong. There are three reasons why I left the mountain for Jiangzhou. Now, let this poor priest tell you, gentlemen of inquisitive minds, what the three reasons are: First, having attained proficiency in the skill of alchemy after thirteen years of spiritual cultivation in the mountains, I am here to save people. Second, to find an object. Third, to save everyone in the city of Jiangzhou.”

The audience was astounded. The priest went on, laughing, “Before you've bought any of my medicine, all of you are already seeing the thing I'm looking for. Do you want to know where it is?” (*In the very person of Bendao.*) Waving above the throng at Bendao, the priest called out, “Come here, young man!”

As Bendao stared at the priest, the latter repeated, “Come here! I have something to tell you.” Fearfully, Bendao made his way



本道慌随先生入来。先生拍着手：“你来救得江州一城人！贫道见那一物了。在那里？这后生便是。”众人吃惊，如何这后生却是一物？先生道：“且听我说。那后生，你眉中生黑气，有阴祟缠扰。你实对我说。”本道将前项见女娘的话，都一一说知。先生道：“众人在此，这一物，便是那女子。贫道救你！”去地上黄袱里，取出一道符，把与本道：“你如今回去，先到房中，推醉了去睡。女娘到晚归来，睡至三更，将这符安在他身上，便见他本来面目。”本道听那先生说了，也不去卦肆里，归到店中，开房门，推醉去睡。

却说女娘不见本道来，到晚，自收了卦铺。归来焦躁，问顾一郎道：“丈夫归也未？”顾一郎道：“官人及早的醉了，入房里睡。”女娘呵呵大笑道：“原来如此。”入房来，见了本道，大喝一声。本道吃了一惊。女娘发话道：“好没道理！日多时夫妻，有甚亏负你，却信人斗叠我两人不和！我教你去看有甚人冲撞卦铺，教我三日不发市。你却信乞道人言语，推醉睡了，把一道符教安在我身上，看我本来面目。我是齐刺史女儿，难道是鬼祟？却信恁般没来头的话，要来害我！你好好把出这符来，和你做夫妻。不把出来时，目前相别！”本道怀中取出符来付与女娘，安排



through the crowd. Clapping his hands, the priest said, "Come and save everyone in the city of Jiangzhou! This poor priest has seen that thing. You may well ask, where is it? It's right here, in the form of this young man."

Everyone was aghast. How could this young man be a thing? The priest continued, "Now, listen up. Young man, there's something dark hidden in your brow, a sign that some evil spirit is haunting you. Tell me the truth."

After Bendao gave an account of how he had met his wife, the priest said, "Listen, everyone! The thing I told you about is none other than that woman! Let me save this man." He took a magic figure out of the yellow parcel on the ground and gave it to Bendao, saying, "Now, go back to the inn, and when you get there, pretend to be drunk and go immediately to your room and to bed. The woman will come back at night. At the third watch of the night, press this figure onto her body, and she'll change into her true form." Thus instructed, Bendao returned to the inn instead of the shop and, pleading drunkenness, went to his own room to sleep.

After waiting in vain for Bendao, the woman closed up shop when evening came. Back at the inn, she asked Gu Yilang in an irritated tone, "Has my husband come back?"

"Your husband got himself drunk and has been sleeping in your room for quite some time now."

The woman burst out laughing, "So that's what it is." As soon as she laid eyes on Bendao, she gave a shout, startling Bendao. "What a thing you did!" she said. "In all the time we've been married, have I ever done anything to hurt you? Why did you have to believe someone who's determined to turn us against each other? I told you to find out if anyone had been doing anything against my shop in the last three days, and you had to believe a cursed priest and go to bed pretending to be drunk, meaning to press some magic figure on me so as to see me in my true form. I am Prefect Qi's daughter, not an evil spirit! How could you believe such lies and help him destroy me! Now, give me that magic figure, and I'll still be your wife. If not, I'll leave you right now."



晚饭吃了。睡一夜，明早起来吃了早饭，却待出门，女娘道：“且住，我今日不开卦铺，和你寻那乞道人，问他是何道理，却把符来，唆我夫妻不和；二则去看我与他斗法！”两个行到大街上，本道引至南瓦子前，见一伙人围住先生。先生正说得高兴，被女娘分开人丛，喝声：“乞道人，你自是野外乞丐，却把一道符斗叠我夫妻不和。你教安在我身上，见我本来面目。”女娘拍着手道：“我乃前任刺史齐安抚女儿，你们都是认得我爹爹的，辄敢道我是鬼祟！你有法，就众人面前赢了我；我有法，赢了你。”先生见了，大怒，提起剑来，觑着女子头便斫，看的人只道先生坏了女娘。只见先生一剑斫去，女娘把手一指，众人都发声喊，皆惊呆了。有诗为证：

昨夜东风起太虚，丹炉无火酒杯疏。

男儿未遂平生志，时复挑灯玩古书。

女娘把手一指，叫声：“着！”只见先生剑不能下，手不能举。女娘道：“我夫妻两个无事，把一道符与他奈何我，却奈何我不得！今日有何理说？”先生但言：“告娘子，恕贫道！贫道一时见不到，激恼娘子，望乞恕饶！”众人都笑，齐来劝女娘，女娘道：“看众



Bendao took the magic figure from his bosom and gave it to her. After dinner, they went to bed and slept through the night.

The next morning, they rose and ate breakfast. Before leaving the house, the woman said, "Wait! Instead of tending to the shop today, I'll go with you to seek out that beggar of a priest and ask him why he has to use a magic figure to turn husband and wife against each other. Also, I want you to watch me beat him at his own game."

Bendao led the way to South Marketplace, where they saw a crowd gathered around the priest. While the priest was in the middle of an excited speech, the woman parted the crowd with her hands and cried, "You beggar of a priest! Why don't you do your begging somewhere else instead of using some magic figure to try to turn my husband against me? You also told him to put it on me and see me in my true form." Clapping her hands, she continued, "I am the daughter of Commissioner Qi, the former prefect. You all know who my father was. How can I be some evil spirit? Hey, priest! If you play tricks well, fight it out with me in front of everybody here, and claim victory. If I'm better than you are, then I'll be the winner."

In a rage, the priest picked up his sword and swung it right at the woman's head. The onlookers thought she had been cut down by the sword, but she stood unscathed and raised a finger. The crowd cried out in shock. There is a poem that bears witness:

*An evening wind from the east sprang up in the universe;
The alchemist's stove fireless, the wine cups few,
Worthy men failing at their lives' ambitions
Read ancient books by the lamp from time to time.*

With her finger raised, the woman cried out, "Stop!" Lo and behold, the priest froze, unable to bring down the sword or raise his hand. The woman said, "My husband and I were happily going about our lives when you gave him a magic figure to destroy me, and now that you can't do anything to me, what do you have to say?"

The priest pleaded, "Madam, please forgive this poor priest! I gave you offense in a moment of foolishness. Please forgive me!" The onlookers burst out laughing. They all turned to the woman with



人面，饶了你这乞道人。”女娘念念有词，那剑即时下地，众皆大笑。先生分开人丛走了，一呵人尚未散。先生复回来，莫是奈何那女娘？却是来取剑，先生去了。

自后女子在卦铺里，从早至晚，挨挤不开，算命发课，书符咒水，没工夫得吃点心，因此出名。忽一日，见一个人，引着一乘轿子，来请小娘子道：“小人是江州赵安抚老爷的家人，今有小衙内患病，日久不痊。奉台旨，请教小娘子乘轿就行。”女娘分付了丈夫，教回店里去。女子上轿来，见赵安抚，引入花园，见小衙内在亭子上，自言自语，口里酒香喷鼻。一行人在花园角门边，看白衣女士作法，念咒毕，起一阵大风。

来无形影去不知，吹开吹谢总由伊。

无端暗度花枝上，偷得清香送与谁。

风过处，见一黄衣女子，怒容可掬，叱喝：“何人敢来奈何我！”见了白衣女士，深深下拜道：“原来是妹妹！”白衣女士道：“甚的姐姐从空而下？”那女子道：“妹妹，你如何来这里？”白衣女士道：“奉赵安抚请来救小衙内，坏那邪祟。”女子不听得，万事



placating words, and she said, "Out of respect for all of you, I'll let that beggar of a priest go." She murmured an incantation, and the sword fell to the ground, to the merriment of the spectators. The priest threaded his way through the throng and was gone. But before the crowd had quite dispersed, the priest reappeared. Could he be coming back to attack the woman? No, he had come to pick up his sword. That done, he left.

After that, the woman's shop was packed with clients from morning to night. She was so busy telling fortunes, performing divinations, drawing magic figures, and giving out holy water that she had no time to spare even for refreshments. Her fame began to spread.

One day, a man leading a sedan-chair came to issue an invitation. "I am a servant of Commissioner Zhao of Jiangzhou. Mr. Zhao Junior has been ill for quite some time. I've been instructed to invite you to see him. This sedan-chair is at your service."

The woman gave her husband a few words of instructions and told him to go back to the inn. She then mounted the sedan-chair and set off for Mr. Zhao's house. She arrived and was shown into the garden, where she saw the young master in a pavilion, talking to himself and smelling of wine. A crowd gathered by the garden gate to watch the Lady in White perform her magic. After her incantations, a strong wind sprang up.

It comes and goes without a shape or form;

At its will, flowers bloom and wither.

It sneaks its way up the flower stems;

To whom does it give the stolen fragrance? I wonder.

When the wind died down, a woman in yellow was seen, saying angrily, "Who is trying to make things difficult for me? The temerity!" At the sight of the Lady in White, she bowed deeply and said, "So it's you, my younger sister."

"Why has my older sister come down from the sky?" asked the Lady in White.

"But why are you here?"

"I'm here at the invitation of Commissioner Zhao to cure his son and drive away the evil spirit."



俱休，听了时，睁目切齿道：“你丈夫不能救，何况救外人！”一阵风不见了黄衣女子。白衣女士就花园内救了小衙内，赵安抚礼物相酬谢了，教人送来顾一郎店中。

到得店里，把些钱赏与来人，发落他去。问顾一郎，丈夫可在房里，顾一郎道：“好教小娘子得知，走一个黄衣女子入房，挟了官人，托起天窗，望西南上去了！”白衣女士道：“不妨！”即喝声：“起！”就地上踏一片云，起去赶那黄衣女子，仿佛赶上，大叫：“还我丈夫来！”黄衣女子看见赶来，叫声：“落！”放下刘本道，却与白衣女士斗法，本道顾不得妻子，只顾自走。走至一寺前，力乏了，见一僧在门首立地。本道问：“吾师，借上房歇脚片时则个。”僧言：“今日好忙哩！有一施主来寺中斋僧。”正说间，只见数担柴，数桶酱，数担米，更有香烛纸札，并斋衬钱，远望凉伞下一人，便见那球头光纱帽，宽袖绿罗袍，身材不满三尺的人。本道见了，落荒便走。被那施主赶上，一把捉住道：“你便是打我一棹竿的人！今番落于吾手，我正要取你的心肝，来做下酒！”本道正在危急，却得白衣女士赶来寺前。见了



Everything would have been all right if the woman had not heard this, but as she did, she said, her eyes opening wide, her jaw firmly set, "You can't even save your husband, let alone other people."

With a gust of wind, the woman in yellow was gone. The Lady in White cured the young master right there in the garden. Commissioner Zhao thanked her with some gifts and had a messenger take them over to Gu Yilang's inn. Upon arriving at the inn, the woman tipped the messenger and dismissed him before she asked Gu Yilang, "Is my husband in the room?"

"Let me tell you something," said Gu Yilang. "A woman in yellow came in, picked him up, opened the skylight, and departed in a southwesterly direction."

"That's all right," said the Lady in White. She shouted, "Rise!" A cloud appeared under her feet. She then rose into the air and began to chase the woman in yellow. When she caught up with her, she cried, "Give me back my husband!"

The one in yellow saw her and shouted, "Down!" She let Liu Bendao down and turned to do battle with the Lady in White.

Bendao did not bother to be concerned about his wife but kept walking until he came to a temple. Seeing a monk standing at the door, an exhausted Bendao asked, "Your Reverence, may I take a rest in the temple?"

The monk replied, "We're busy today! A benefactor is coming to offer us donations." While he spoke, several loads of firewood, several buckets of sauce, and several baskets of rice came into view. There were also fragrant candles, paper utensils for the dead, and money for the prayer services. Under an umbrella, still some distance away, was the same man less than three feet tall wearing a ball-shaped gauze hat and a wide-sleeved green silk robe whom Bendao had encountered before.

As soon as Bendao set eyes on the man, he took to his heels, but the man caught up with him. Holding Bendao tightly, "You are the very person who hit me with a pole! Now that you're in my hands, I'm going to gouge out your heart and liver and eat them with wine."

At this critical moment, the Lady in White appeared. She called



那人，叫道：“哥哥莫怪！他是我丈夫。”说犹未毕，黄衣女子也来了，对那人高叫道：“哥哥，莫听他，那里是他真丈夫？既是打哥哥的，姊妹们都是仇人了。”一扯一拽，四个搅做一团，正争不开。只见寺中走出一个老人来，大喝一声：“畜生不得无礼！”叫：“变！”黄衣女子变做一只黄鹿；绿袍的人，变做绿毛灵龟；白衣女子，变做一只白鹤。老人乃是寿星，骑白鹤上升，本道也跨上黄鹿，跟随寿星，灵龟导引，上升霄汉。[眉批]刘本道以仙吏滴为贫儒，故鹤鹿群之而不骇，其与之警拗者，惟绿毛龟耳。

那刘本道原是延寿司掌书记的一位仙官，因好与鹤鹿龟三物玩耍，懒惰正事，故此滴下凡世为贫儒。滴限完满，南极寿星引归天上。那一座寺，唤做寿星寺，见在江州浔阳江上，古迹犹存。诗云：

原是仙官不染尘，飘然鹤鹿可为邻。
神仙不肯分明说，误了阎浮多少人。



out to the man, "Older brother! Don't be angry! He's my husband."

Before she had quite finished, the woman in yellow also arrived, crying, "Older brother! Don't listen to her. He's by no means a real husband. Since he hit you, both of them are our enemies!"

While the four were tugging and pulling at one another, all tangled up in one heap, an old man walked out of the temple and exclaimed sharply, "Where are your manners? You beasts! Change!"

Immediately the woman in yellow changed into a yellow deer, the man in green changed into a green turtle, and the woman in white became a white crane. The old man, the god of longevity, mounted the white crane and rose into the air. Bendaο mounted the yellow deer and followed the god of longevity. With the turtle leading the way, they rose all the way to the sky. (*Liu Bendaο had been demoted from his position as an official in the realm of the immortals and was made a poor scholar. That's why the crane and the deer were not afraid of him. The only one with whom he did not get along was the green turtle.*)

Liu Bendaο had been an official in the division of longevity in the realm of the immortals. Because he liked playing with the crane, the deer, and the turtle, and neglected his duties, he had been banished to the mortal world, where he became a poverty-stricken scholar. Now that his term of banishment had expired, the god of longevity led him back to heaven. That temple, called the Temple to the God of Longevity, still stands to this day by Xunyang River of Jiangzhou. The poem says,

*An immortal untainted by the dust of this world,
 He lived with a crane and a deer in the fairyland.
 By failing to reveal his true identity,
 He misled goodness knows how many mortals.*

¹ Penglai Island is believed to be an abode of the immortals.



第四十卷

旌阳宫铁树镇妖

春到人间景色新，桃红李白柳条青。香车宝马闲来往，
引却东风入禁城。 酹剩酒，豁吟情，顿教忘却利和名。
豪来试说当年事，犹记旌阳伏水精。

粤自混沌初辟，民物始生，中间有三个大圣人，为三教之祖。三教是甚么教？一是儒家：乃孔夫子，删述《六经》，垂宪万世，为历代帝王之师，万世文章之祖，这是一教。一是释家：是西方释迦牟尼佛祖，当时生在舍卫国刹利王家，放大智光明，照十方世界，地涌金莲华，丈六金身，能变能化，无大无不大，无通无不通，普度众生，号作天人师，这又是一教。一是道家：是太上老君，乃元气之祖，生天生地，生佛生仙，号铁师元炁上帝。他化身周历尘沙，也不可计数。至商汤王四十八年，又来出世，乘

Story 40

An Iron Tree at Jingyang Palace Subdues Demons

*Spring ushers in a riot of colors;
Peach blossoms pink, plums white, and willows green.
Horse carriages come and go at leisure,
Bringing the east wind to the forbidden city.*

*Finish the wine, intone poems to our heart's content,
And forget all about fame and fortune.
In reminiscing about past events,
We recall Jingyang's conquest of the water demon.¹*

When the primeval chaos had cleared away and humans and all other living beings on earth began to multiply, there emerged three leading sages who founded three religions. What are the three religions?

One is Confucianism, founded by Confucius, who edited the *Six Classics*² and laid down rules that were to last till the end of time. He is the teacher of all the emperors and kings and the patriarch of all literary writings. This is one.

There is also Buddhism. The Buddha Sakyamuni of the west, born in the kingdom of Sravasti [in present-day Nepal] of King Suddhodana of the Kshatriya caste, illuminated the entire world with his wisdom. His six-foot-tall gilded body was poised upon golden lotus flowers that rose out of the ground, and he could transform himself into whatever shape and size he wanted. For his work redeeming all living creatures, he was given the epithet Teacher of Heaven and Humans. This is another religion.

Then, there is Daoism. It was founded by Laozi, progenitor of the vital force that gave birth to the sky and the earth, the buddhas and the immortals. Called the Supreme God of Masters of Iron and the Primeval Yang, he metamorphosed into innumerable grains of sand of the mortal world. In the forty-eighth year of the reign of King Tang of the Shang dynasty, he presented himself to the mortal world again,



太阳日精，化为弹丸，流入玉女口中，玉女吞之，遂觉有孕。怀胎八十一年，直到武丁九年，破胁而生，生下地时，须发就白，人呼为老子。老子生在李树下，因指李为姓，名耳，字伯阳。后骑着青牛出函谷关，把关吏尹喜望见紫气，知是异人，求得《道德真经》共五千言，传留于世。老子入流沙修炼成仙，今居太清仙境，称为道德天尊，这又是一教。

那三教之中，惟老君为道祖，居于太清仙境，彩云缭绕，瑞气氤氲。一日是寿诞之辰，群三十三天天宫，并终南山、蓬莱山、阆苑山等处，三十六洞天，七十二福地，列位神仙，千千万万，或跨彩鸾，或骑白鹤，或驭赤龙，或驾丹凤，皆飘飘然乘云而至。次第朝贺，献上寿词，稽首作礼。词名《水龙吟》：

红云紫盖葳蕤，仙官浑是阳春候。玄鹤来时，青牛过处，彩云依旧。寿诞宏开，喜《道德》五千言，流传万古不



transforming himself into a pill, which, filled with the essence of the sun, maneuvered itself into the mouth of the Jade Maiden. Soon after she swallowed it, the Jade Maiden knew she was pregnant. In the ninth year of King Wuding's reign, after an eighty-one-year pregnancy, she gave birth through her ribcage to a baby who came to be called Laozi [Old Child] because his hair was white at birth. Having been born under a plum tree, he assumed the surname Li and the given name Er, courtesy name Boyang. Later, when he rode on a black buffalo out of the Hangu Pass, Officer Yin Xi, who guarded the pass, knew from the purple aura over him that he was no ordinary man. He sought from Laozi the five-thousand-character *Daodejing* [Tao te ching], which has been handed down from generation to generation. Laozi then went to the desert, where he attained immortality through spiritual cultivation. He now resides in the Grand Pure Fairyland under the title The Daode Heavenly Venerable One. So, that is another religion.

Of the founders of the three religions, only Laozi, the patriarch of Daoism, lives in the Grand Pure Fairyland, where wispy, curling, colorful clouds emit an auspicious air. Once, on the occasion of his birthday, a grand gathering of immortals took place in the palace on the thirty-third layer of heaven. Thousands upon thousands of immortals from the Zhongnan Mountains, the Penglai Mountains, the Langyuan Mountains, the thirty-six caves, and the seventy-two blessed lands descended on the scene of festivities, borne by wafting clouds and riding on colorful divine birds, white cranes, red dragons, and red phoenixes. One after another, they offered their congratulations along with poems written for the occasion, and they kowtowed, prostrating themselves on the ground in ritualistic tribute. There is in evidence a lyric poem "Song of the Water Dragon" :

*Thronging with red clouds and purple canopies,
The palace is filled with dignitaries.
Black cranes and green buffaloes come and go,
Amid clouds of never-fading colors.
A grand birthday banquet it is,
To honor the Daodejing of eternal fame.*



朽。 况是天上仙筵，献珍果人间未有；巨枣如瓜，与着万岁冰桃，千年碧藕。比乾坤永劫无休，举沧海为真仙寿。

彼时老君见群臣赞贺，大展仙颜，即设宴相待。酒至半酣，忽太白金星越席言曰：“众仙长知南贍部洲江西省之事乎？江西分野，旧属豫章。其地四百年后，当有蛟蜃为妖，无人降伏，千百里之地，必化成中洋之海也。”老君曰：“吾已知之。江西四百年后，有地名曰西山，龙盘虎踞，水绕山环，当出异人，姓许名逊，可为群仙领袖，殄灭妖邪。今必须一仙下凡，择世人德行浑全者，传以道法，使他日许逊降生，有传授渊源耳。”斗中一仙，乃孝悌王，姓卫名弘康，字伯冲，出曰：“某观下凡有兰期者，素行不疚，兼有仙风道骨，可传以妙道。更令付此道与女真谶母，谶母付此道于许逊。口口相承，心心相契，使他日真仙有所传授，江西不至沉没，诸仙以为何如？”老君曰：“善哉，善哉！”众仙



*The banquet for the divine immortals
 Offers fruits never seen in the world below:
 Dates large as melons, peaches of ten thousand years,
 And lotus roots ripened over one thousand years.
 His age equals that of the universe,
 As eternal as the deep, vast oceans.*

Delighted by this grand assembly of immortals, present to offer him congratulations, the Venerable Laozi had a banquet set out in their honor. When the company was well warmed with wine, the god of the Gold Star left his seat and said, "Has anyone here heard about what is happening in Jiangxi in the South Jambudvipa Continent? Jiangxi used to be under the jurisdiction of Yuzhang. Four hundred years from now, the region will be dominated by a demon flood-dragon that no one will be able to subdue. By that time, thousands of *li* of land will be submerged in water."

The Venerable Laozi said, "Yes, I've heard about this. Four hundred years from now, a wizard named Xu Xun will make a name for himself in West Hill in Jiangxi, a hill that is surrounded by water on all sides and is shaped like a coiling dragon and a crouching tiger. He will lead the immortals in wiping out the demons. Now, we must send someone down to the mortal world to choose human beings of impeccable moral integrity and teach them the Daoist arts, so that by the time Xu Xun appears, he will inherit a well-grounded tradition."

Among the guests was an immortal called Wei Hongkang, courtesy name Bochong, King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love. He stood up and announced, "I have observed in the world down below, a man named Lan Qi, who is a perfect paragon of virtue. Moreover, he has the essence of an immortal within him and will therefore be highly receptive to Daoist arts. He can then transmit the arts to the immortal Reverend Mother, who will, in her turn, teach Xu Xun. Through this chain of person-to-person transmission, Jiangxi will be saved from sinking into the sea. What do you think, everyone?"

"A good idea! A good idea!" said Laozi.

Thereupon, the company of immortals escorted the King of Fil-



即送孝悌王至焰摩天中通明殿下，将此事奏闻玉帝。玉帝允奏，即命直殿仙官，将神书玉旨付与孝悌王领讫。孝悌王辞别众仙，蹶起祥云，顷刻之间，到阎浮世界来了。

却说前汉有一人姓兰名期，字子约，本贯兖州曲阜县高平乡九原里人氏。历年二百，鹤发童颜，率其家百馀口，精修孝行，以善化人，与物无忤。时人不敢呼其名，尽称为兰公。彼时儿童谣云：“兰公兰公，上与天通。赤龙下迎，名列斗中。”人知其必仙也。一日，兰公凭几而坐，忽有一人，头戴逍遥巾，身披道袍，脚穿云履，手中拿一个鱼鼓筒板儿，潇潇洒洒，徐步而来。兰公观其有仙家道气，慌忙下阶迎接，分宾坐定。茶毕，遂问：“仙翁高姓贵名？”答曰：“吾乃斗中之仙，孝悌王是也。自上清下降，遨游人间，久闻先生精修孝行，故此相访。”兰公闻言，即低头拜曰：“贫老凡骨，勉修孝行，止可淑一身，不能率四海，有何功德，感动仙灵！”孝悌王遂以手扶起兰公，曰：“居！吾语汝



ial Piety and Brotherly Love to the Jade Emperor's palace in the third layer of heaven. They reported the matter to the Jade Emperor, who approved the request and ordered that officials of the palace give the necessary divine imperial edict to the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love. Bidding farewell to the immortals, the king rose on an auspicious cloud. In a trice, he found himself in the world of mortals.

During the Western Han dynasty, there lived a man called Lan Qi, courtesy name Ziyue, in Jiuyuanli of Gaoping, Qufu County, Yanzhou Prefecture. At the time of which we speak, he was already two hundred years old, with white hair and a ruddy complexion, guiding the more than one hundred members of his family in their spiritual cultivation. They treated all people with kindness and bore no malice toward any living being. To all and sundry, he was known as Mr. Lan, for no one was presumptuous enough to call him by his given and courtesy names. There was a children's song that said, "Mr. Lan, Mr. Lan, he's connected to heaven, he's saluted by red dragons, he's listed among the stars." That he was an immortal was taken for granted.

One day, Mr. Lan was sitting at a table when a man wearing a casual head-wrap, a Daoist robe, and a pair of cloud-patterned shoes and carrying in his hands a bamboo drum and clappers walked up to him with graceful, unhurried steps. Impressed by the man's air of a Daoist immortal, Mr. Lan rushed down the steps to greet him. After they had seated themselves in their respective places as host and guest and tea was served, Mr. Lan asked, "May I ask your honorable name?"

The man replied, "I am King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love, an immortal from the stars, and I am touring the mortal world from the Heaven of Exalted Purity. I'm visiting you, sir, because I have long heard about your devotion to spiritual cultivation and filial piety."

At these words, Mr. Lan bowed deeply and said, "This poor old man is but a lowly mortal being. My devotion to spiritual cultivation and filial piety is limited only to myself. Having done nothing to inspire people throughout the four seas, I hardly deserve the honor of this visit."



孝悌之旨。”兰公欠身起，曰：“愿听指教！”孝悌王曰：“始炁为大道于日中，是为‘孝仙王’。元炁为至道于月中，是为‘孝道明王’。玄炁为孝道于斗中，是为‘孝悌王’。夫孝至于天，日月为之明；孝至于地，万物为之生；孝至于民，王道为之成。是故舜文至孝，凤凰来翔。姜诗王祥，得鱼奉母。即此论之，上自天子，下至庶人，孝道所至，异类皆应。先生修养三世，行满功成，当得元炁于月中，而为孝道明王。四百年后，晋代有一真仙许逊出世，传吾孝道之宗，是为众仙之长，得始炁于日中，而为孝仙王也。”自是孝悌王，悉将仙家妙诀，及金丹宝鉴、铜符铁券，[眉批] 铜符铁券，乃修炼文书。并上清灵章、飞步斩邪之法，一一传授与兰公。又嘱道：“此道不可轻传，惟丹阳黄堂者，有一女真湛母，德性纯全，汝可传之，可令湛母传授与晋代学仙童子许逊，



Raising Mr. Lan, the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love said, "Please sit! Let me tell you about the essence of filial piety and brotherly love."

Mr. Lan half rose from his seat and said, "I beg to be enlightened."

The King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love launched into the following speech: "The Primordial Vital Force being the Great Way based in the sun, it is the King of Filial Immortals. The First Vital Force being the Profound Way based in the moon, it is the King of Filial Sagaciousness. The Cosmic Vital Force, being the Filial Piety Way based in the stars, is the King of Filial Piety. When filial piety reaches the heavens, it lends brightness to the sun and the moon. When filial piety reaches the earth, all things on earth grow and thrive. When filial piety reaches the people, benevolence becomes the rule of the land. That is why phoenixes descended to salute the sage-king Shun and Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty, both paragons of filial piety.³ That is why Jiang Shi and Wang Xiang were blessed with fish to present to their mothers.⁴ These examples go to show that filial piety applies to all categories of people, from the emperor down to the lowliest commoner.

"You, sir, having devoted three lifetimes to spiritual cultivation, have achieved perfection and earned yourself a place in the moon with the First Vital Force and the title King of Filial Sagaciousness. Four hundred years from now, in the Jin dynasty, a true immortal named Xu Xun will be born, who will propagate the Way of Filial Piety as the head of all immortals. He will find his place in the sun with the Primordial Vital Force and become King of Filial Immortals."

Thereupon, the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love gave Mr. Lan the secrets of immortality, some alchemists' gold pills, magic mirrors, copper and iron tablets (*Copper and iron tablets are instruments for spiritual cultivation*), and incantations originating from the Realm of Exalted Purity that could be used for swift subjugation of demons. He added, "This method is not to be shared lightly with others. You may pass it on only to the morally impeccable Reverend Mother of Huangtang, in Danyang. You may tell her to instruct in her



许逊复传吴猛诸徒，则渊源有自，超凡入圣者，不患无门矣！”孝悌王言罢，足起祥云，冲霄而去！兰公拜而送之。自此以后，将金符铁券秘诀逐一参悟，遂择地修炼仙丹。其法云：

黑铅天之精，白金地之髓。黑隐水中阳，白有火之炁。黑白往来蟠，阴阳归正位。二物俱含性，丹经号同类。黑以白为天，白以黑为地。阴阳混沌时，朵朵金莲翠。宝月满丹田，霞光照灵慧。休闲通天窍，莫泄混元气。精奇口诀功，火候文武意。凡中养圣孙，万般只此贵。一日生一男，男男各有配。

兰公炼丹已成，举家服之，老者发白反黑，少者辟谷无饥，远近闻之，皆知其必飞升上清也。时有火龙者，系洋子江中孽畜，神通广大，知得兰公成道，法教流传，后来子孙必遭歼灭。乃率领鼉帅、虾兵、蟹将，统领党类，一齐奔出潮头，将兰公宅上团



turn young Xu Xun of the Jin dynasty, who, in his eagerness to learn to achieve immortality, will then impart it to Wu Meng and others. With such a sequence, those wishing to transcend the mortal world will find no lack of guidance.”

That said, the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love rose into the sky on an auspicious cloud as Mr. Lan bowed farewell. Henceforth, Mr. Lan delved into the secrets of the copper and iron tablets and began his alchemic experiments in a chosen spot. The following passage is a description of the alchemic process:

Black lead is the essence of the sky; white gold the pith of the earth. The black contains the yang of water; the white the vital force of fire. The black and the white shoot back and forth, to push yin and yang to their rightful places. The two elements share the same nature and belong to the same category according to The Book of Alchemy. The black takes the white as its sky; the white takes the black as its earth. When the yin and the yang become a swirl of chaos, bright golden lotus flowers emerge. The wondrous moonlight fills the cinnabar field,⁵ the glow of the rosy clouds brightens the mind. Do not block the aperture to the sky; do not allow the vital force to leak and lose its purity. Practice well the incantations; carefully tend to the temperature. To produce the divine out of the common is the very noblest of all callings. There will be one male product a day, each with a matching partner.

Every member of Mr. Lan's family took his alchemic pills. As a result, those hoary with age regained black hair, and the tender young abstained from the five grains without feeling hungry. When the news spread, all and sundry knew that the Lans were ready to ascend to the Heaven of Exalted Purity.

There lived, at the time, a fire dragon, the terror of the Yangzi River, that possessed great magical powers. It also heard that Mr. Lan had attained the Way, that Mr. Lan was to pass on his knowledge, and that all its descendants were to be wiped out. With the fire dragon in the lead, an army of turtle generals, shrimp soldiers, crab commanders, and other like creatures sallied forth with the rising tide and



团围住，喊杀连天。兰公听得，不知灾从何来，开门一看，好惊人哩！但见：

一片黑烟，万团烈火。却是红孩儿身中四十八万毛孔，一齐迸出；又是华光将手里三十六块金砖，一并烧挥。咸阳遇之，烽焰三月不绝；昆山遇之，玉石一旦俱焚。疑年少周郎赤壁鏖战，似智谋诸葛博望烧屯。

那火，也不是天火，也不是地火，也不是人火，也不是鬼火，也不是雷公霹雳火，却是那洋子江中一个火龙吐出来的。惊得兰公家人，叫苦不迭。兰公知是火龙为害，问曰：“你这孽畜无故火攻我家，却待怎的？”孽龙道：“我只问你取金丹宝鉴、铜符铁券并灵章等事。你若献我，万事皆休，不然，烧得你一门尽绝！”兰公曰：“金丹宝鉴等乃斗中孝悌王所授，我怎肯胡乱与你？”只是那火光中，闪出一员鼉帅，形容古怪，背负团牌，扬威耀武。兰公睁仙眼一看，原来是个鼉鼉，却不在意下。又有那虾兵乱跳，蟹将横行，一个个身披甲冑，手执钢叉。兰公又举仙眼一看，原来都是虾蟹之属，转不着意了。遂剪下一个中指甲来，约有三寸多长，呵了一口仙气，念动真言，化作个三尺宝剑。有歌为证：

非钢非铁体质坚，化成宝剑光凛然。



laid siege to Mr. Lan's house. When the deafening battle cries assailed Mr. Lan's ears, he wondered what the pandemonium could be all about. He opened the door to see and was shocked at what met his eyes.

Clouds of black smoke and raging fires swirled out of the 480,000 pores in the body of the Red Boy,⁶ burning like the thirty-six gold bricks in the hands of General Radiance. If in Xianyang, they would have lasted for more than three months;⁷ if in Mount Kun, they would have destroyed all the jade and rocks. Could this be a scene from Zhou Yu's Battle of the Red Cliffs?⁸ Or a scene from the wise Zhuge Liang's burning of the grain storage at Bowang?⁹

The fire came not from heaven or earth, or humans or ghosts, or the God of Thunder. It came from the mouth of a fire dragon of the Yangzi River. While Mr. Lan's frightened family members shrieked mournfully, Mr. Lan said, knowing this to be the work of a fire dragon, "You accursed beast! Why are you doing this to my family? I have certainly given you no reason for it!"

"Give me your gold pills, magic mirrors, copper and iron tablets, and scriptures," replied the accursed dragon. "If you do, I'll stop. If not, I'll burn up your entire clan."

"The gold pills, magic mirrors, and other things were given to me by the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love. How can I hand them to you just like that?"

Against the leaping flames of the fire, a turtle general stepped forward. A most grotesque creature it was, carrying its shield on its back and gesticulating wildly in an exaggerated show of force. Opening wide his immortal eyes, Mr. Lan saw that it was but a miserable turtle, nothing to be taken seriously. The shrimp soldiers jumped up and down, and the crab commanders crawled sideways, all wearing armor and brandishing steel forks. With his immortal eyes, Mr. Lan saw that they were nothing but a bunch of worthless shrimp and crabs. Dismissing them out of hand, he trimmed his long fingernail on a middle finger, blew his immortal breath on this three-inch nail clipping, and chanted an incantation, thereby changing the clipping into a three-foot-long sword. There is a poem in testimony:

Hard and solid though made of neither steel nor iron,



不须锻炼洪炉烟，棱棱杀气欺龙泉。
光芒颜色如霜雪，见者咨嗟叹奇绝。
琉璃宝匣吐莲花，查镂金环生明月。
此剑神仙流金精，干将莫邪难比伦。
闪闪烁烁青蛇子，重重片片绿龟鳞。
腾出寒光逼星斗，响声一似苍龙吼。
今朝挥向烈炎中，不识蛟螭敢当否？

兰公将所化宝剑望空掷起，那剑刮喇喇，就似翻身鹞子一般，飞入火焰之中，左一冲右一击，左一挑右一剔，左一砍右一劈，那些孽怪如何当抵得住！只见鼋帅遇着缩头缩脑，负一面团牌急走，他却走在那里？直走在峡江口深岩里躲避，至今尚不敢出头哩。
[眉批] 行文多酷似《西游》。那虾兵遇着，拖着两个钢叉连跳连跳，他却走在那里？直走在洛阳桥下石缝子里面藏身，至今腰也不敢伸哩。那蟹将遇着，虽有全身坚甲，不能济事，也拖着两个钢叉横走直走，他须有八只脚儿更走不动，却被“扑簌松”宝剑一劈，分为两半。你看他腹中不红不白不黄不黑，似脓却不是脓，似血却不是血，遍地上滚将出来，真个是：

但将冷眼观螃蟹，看你横行得几时？



*The precious sword shines with bone-chilling light,
Never smelted or tempered,
It yet has an aura unmatched by Dragon Spring.¹⁰
It glitters with the color of frost and snow,
An amazing sight that awes every beholder.
Named Lotus, it lies in a colored glazed case,
Its carved handle aglow with gold rings.
Blessed with the essence of gold by the immortals,
It outshines even Ganjiang and Moye.¹¹
Glistening like the bright scales of a green snake,
The handle looks like layers of green turtle scales.
Its cold rays of light ascend to the stars,
Its resounding boom sounds like a dragon's roar.
Through the air and into the fire it flies;
Will the demon be able to fend it off?*

Mr. Lan tossed the sword that he had conjured into the air, and, with a swishing sound, it somersaulted right into the flames. As it lunged left and right and swung up and down, chopping and cleaving, the monsters ran pell-mell for their lives. The turtle general drew its head back under its shell and scurried away. Where did it go? All the way to the rocks at the mouth of Xiajiang River, where it is still hiding today, never daring to stick its head out again. (*The writing style resembles that of The Journey to the West.*) A shrimp soldier hopped along, dragging its two iron forks behind it. Where did it go? All the way to the cracks in the rocks under Luoyang Bridge, where it is still hiding, never daring to straighten its back. A crab general, its impregnable armor notwithstanding, crawled this way and that in panic, dragging its two iron forks behind it. Although it had eight legs, it could not move faster and was caught by the sword. With a crackling sound, the sword cut it in half. Out of its belly onto the ground flowed something neither red nor white, neither yellow nor black, something that looked like pus but was not pus, something that resembled blood but was not blood. Truly,

*To a crab's antics we turn a scornful eye;
For how much longer can it run amok?*



那火龙自知兰公法大，难以当抵，叹曰：“‘儿孙自有儿孙福。’我后来子孙，福来由他去享，祸来由他去当，我管他则甚？”遂奔入洋子江中万丈深潭底藏身去了。自是兰公举家数十口拔宅升天，玉帝封兰公为孝明王，不在话下。

却说金陵丹阳郡，地名黄堂，有一女真字曰婴。潜通至道，忘其甲子，不知几百年岁。乡人累世见之，齿发不衰，皆以谶母呼之。一日偶过市上，见一小儿伏地悲哭，问其来历，说：“父母避乱而来，弃之于此。”谶母怜其孤苦，遂收归抚育。渐已长成，教他读书，聪明出众，天文地理，无所不通。有东邻耆老，欲以女娶之，谶母问儿允否？儿告曰：“儿非浮世之人，乃月中孝道明王，领斗中孝悌王仙旨，教我传道与母。今此化身为儿，度脱我母，何必更议婚姻。但可高建仙坛，传付此道，使我母飞升上清也。”谶母闻得此言，且惊且喜，遂于黄堂建立坛宇，大阐



Now realizing that Mr. Lan had more magic power than it could ever hope to match, the fire dragon said to itself with a sigh, "As they say, 'The children will have their share of heaven's blessings, whatever the parents' plans.' Let my children and grandchildren enjoy whatever good fortune comes their way and cope with whatever misfortune befalls them. Why should I worry so much?" So, it raced back to the Yangzi River and hid itself in the depth of the water. Mr. Lan and his family, several tens of them, ascended to heaven, where the Jade Emperor granted Mr. Lan the title King of Filial Sagacity, and there we shall leave them.

Now, in a place called Huangtang, in Danyang Prefecture, Jinling, there was a female immortal with the courtesy name Yueying. Through assiduous spiritual cultivation, she attained the Dao and lived so long that she forgot how old she was. Throughout the hundreds of years that the generations of her neighbors had known her, her teeth were as firm and her hair as black as ever. All the neighbors called her Reverend Mother.

One day, she was passing by the marketplace when she saw a child crouched on the ground, crying bitterly. To her questions, the child replied, "My parents abandoned me here when we were fleeing from a war." Out of compassion for the poor orphan, Reverend Mother took the boy under her care.

As he grew older, she began to teach him to read. He turned out to be of extraordinary intelligence and soon learned all there was to know under the sun. An elderly gentleman who lived in the neighborhood offered his daughter for marriage. When Reverend Mother asked the boy for his opinion, he said, "I am not some mortal being of this world. I am the King of Filial Sagacity, who lives in the moon, here to impart the Way to you, Mother, by order of the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love of the stars. I am here in the shape of a boy to redeem my mother. So, please don't bring up the subject of marriage again. You may erect a high altar for me by which I may transmit the knowledge to you, so that you can ascend to the Heaven of Exalted Purity."

Pleasantly surprised by these words, Reverend Mother had an altar



孝悌王之教。湛母已得修真之诀，于是孝明王仍以孝悌王所授金丹宝鉴、铜符铁券灵章，及正一斩邪三五飞步之术，悉传与湛母。湛母乃谓孝明王曰：“论昔日恩情，我为母，君为子。论今日传授，君为师，我为徒。”遂欲下拜。孝明王曰：“只论子母，莫论师徒。”乃不受其拜，惟嘱之曰：“此道宜深秘，不可轻泄！后世晋代有二人学仙，一名许逊，一名吴猛，二人皆名登仙籍，惟许逊得传此道。按《玉皇玄谱》仙籍品秩，吴猛位居元郡御史，许逊位居都仙大使，兼高明太史，总领仙部，是为众仙之长。老母可将此道传与许逊，又着许逊传与吴猛，庶品秩不紊矣！”明王言罢，拜辞老母，飞腾太空而去。有诗为证：

出入无车只驾云，尘凡自是不同群。

明王恐绝仙家术，告戒叮咛度后人。

却说汉灵帝时，十常侍用事，忠良党锢，谗谄横行，毒流四海，万民嗟怨。那怨气感动了上苍，降下两场大灾，久雨之后，



built in Huangtang, where the boy imparted to her what he had learned from the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love. When Reverend Mother had acquired the Way, the King of Filial Sagacity transferred to her all that he had obtained from the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love, including the gold pills, magic mirrors, copper and iron tablets, and the orthodox method of killing demons in three to five steps.

To the boy, Reverend Mother said, "In terms of family relationship, I am the mother, and you are the son, but today, you are the teacher, and I am the student."

She was about to sink to her knees in a deep bow when the King of Filial Sagacity said, "Let's stay mother and son, instead of teacher and student." So he refused to accept any bows but added, "What I have passed on to you must be kept an absolute secret and is not to be divulged to anyone. In the future, during the Jin dynasty, there will be two men, a Xu Xun and a Wu Meng, who will devote themselves to spiritual devotion in their aspiration to become immortals. Their names will be in the immortals' registry book, but Xu Xun will be the one to acquire the Way first. According to the ranks assigned to immortals as recorded in *The Jade Emperor's Registry Book*, Wu Meng will be a royal inspector, and Xu Xun will be a first emissary, concurrently the grand historian, and the supervisor of all immortals. You, Mother, may pass on the Way to Xu Xun and have him impart it to Wu Meng. In that way, the order of seniority will not be disrupted." That said, the King of Filial Sagacity bade farewell to his mother, rose into the air, and was gone. There is a poem in evidence:

*He comes and goes on clouds rather than carriages;
 He stands aloof from beings of this mortal world.
 Afraid that the immortal arts might be lost,
 He tries to keep intact the line of succession.*

Now, during the reign of Emperor Ling [r.168-90] of the Han dynasty, with ten eunuchs wielding power in the court, the good and the loyal were thrown into prison, and slander and flattery became the order of the day. The scourge spread across the four seas, bringing untold misery to the people. The discontent of the people moved



又是久旱。那雨整整的下了五个月，直落得江湖满目，厨灶无烟。及至水退了，又经年不雨。莫说是禾苗槁死，就是草木也干枯了。可怜那一时的百姓，吃早膳先愁晚膳，缝夏衣便作冬衣。正是朝有奸臣野有贼，地无荒草树无皮。壮者散于四方，老者死于沟壑。时许都有一人，姓许名琰，字汝玉，乃颍阳许田之后。为人慈仁，深明医道，擢太医院医官。感饥荒之岁，乃罄其家资，置丸药数百斛，名曰“救饥丹”，散与四方食之，每食一丸，可饱四十馀日。饥民赖以不死者甚众。至献帝初平年间，黄巾贼起，天下大乱。许都又遭大荒，斗米千钱，人人菜色，个个鹄形。时许琰已故，其子许肃，家尚丰盈，将自己仓谷尽数周给各乡，遂挈家避乱江南，择居豫章之南昌。有监察神将许氏世代积善，奏知玉帝：“若不厚报，无以劝善！”玉帝准奏，即仰殿前掌判仙官，将《玄谱》仙籍品秩，逐一查检，看有何仙轮当下世？仙官检看毕，奏



the gods, who brought about two disasters, a prolonged rain followed by a prolonged drought. The rain lasted for a good five months until the eyes saw nothing but water everywhere and no smoke rose from the kitchen chimneys. After the flood subsided, drought followed. For years, not a drop of rain fell. Crop seedlings died, grass and trees withered. How tragic that the people had to worry about where their next meal would come from and had nothing except their summer clothes to fend off the cold of winter. Truly, if there are treacherous officials at the imperial court, thieves will run amok in the villages, nothing will grow in the fields, and trees will be stripped of bark. The young will flee in all directions, and the old will die in the gutters.

In Xudu at the time, there lived a man called Xu Yan, courtesy name Ruyu. A descendant of Xu You of Yingyang,¹² he was a most kindly man and a good physician who had been made a member of the Imperial College of Physicians. In those lean years, he spent all of his family's funds on the preparation of thousands of what he called "hunger staying pills" and gave them out freely to all those in need. Each pill was enough to ward off hunger for more than forty days. A remarkable number of people were thus able to survive the famine.

In the Chuping reign period under Emperor Xian of the Han dynasty, with the Yellow Turbans rising in rebellion, Xudu again found itself suffering through a lean year. With one peck of rice selling for a thousand in cash, everyone had the sallow and emaciated look of starvation. By this time, Xu Yan had died. His son, Xu Su, who had a sizable family fortune, donated all the grain in his barn to the local inhabitants and led the entire family to take refuge in his chosen place, Nanchang of Yuzhang, south of the Yangzi River. The god responsible for investigations informed the Jade Emperor about the good deeds performed by the two generations of the Xu family, adding, "If the Xus are not richly rewarded, people will see no point in doing good deeds!"

The Jade Emperor agreed and had the immortal judge check the registry book to see which immortal was due for reincarnation into the mortal world. The judge did as ordered, and reported, "In the Jin dy-



曰：“晋代江南，当出一孽龙精，扰害良民，生养蛟党繁盛。今轮系玉洞天仙降世，传受女真谶母飞步斩邪之法，斩灭蛟党以除民害。”玉帝闻奏，即降旨，宣取玉洞天仙，令他身变金凤，口衔宝珠，下降许肃家投胎。有诗为证：

御殿亲传玉帝书，祥云蔼蔼凤衔珠。

试看凡子生仙种，积善之家庆有馀。

却说吴赤乌二年三月，许肃妻何氏，夜得一梦。梦见一只金凤飞降庭前，口内衔珠，坠在何氏掌中。何氏喜而玩之，含于口中，不觉溜下肚子去了，因而有孕。许肃一则以喜，一则以惧。喜的是年过三十无嗣，今幸有孕；惧的是何氏自来不曾生育，恐临产艰难。那广润门有个占卦先生，混名“鬼推”，决断如神，不免去问他个吉凶，或男或女，看他如何？许肃整顿衣帽，竟望广润门来。只见那先生忙忙的，占了又断，断了又占，拨不开的人头，移不动脚步。许员外站得个腿儿酸麻，还轮他不上，只得叫上一声：“鬼推先生！”那先生听知叫了他的混名，只说是个旧相



nasty, there will be a demon dragon spirit south of the Yangzi River who will wreak havoc among the populace and breed in great numbers. It's the turn of the Immortal of the Jade Cave to descend to the mortal world to pass on to the female immortal Reverend Mother the Demon Subjugation Method that will exterminate the demon dragon and its clan for the benefit of the people."

Upon hearing this, the Jade Emperor summoned the Immortal of the Jade Cave and ordered that he change into a golden phoenix holding a precious pearl in its beak and descend to the mortal world for reincarnation into Xu Su's family. There is a poem in evidence:

*The Jade Emperor himself issued the order;
 Divine clouds bore the phoenix, the pearl in its beak.
 An immortal was born into an earthly home,
 A joyous occasion for the good and kind Xus.*

In the third month of the second year of the Chiwu reign period [238-51] under Sun Quan of the state of Wu, Xu Su's wife, He-shi, had a dream one night, in which a golden phoenix descended into the yard and dropped the pearl it held in its beak onto He-shi's palm. In delight, He-shi played with the pearl and put it in her mouth. Before she knew it, the pearl slid all the way down into her belly, and she became pregnant. Xu Su was both overjoyed and worried, overjoyed because they were more than thirty years old and still without children and worried because He-shi had never had a child before and might have difficulties with childbirth.

There was a fortune-teller by Guangrun Gate with the nickname Never-erring Diviner, whose prophecies were miraculously accurate. "Why not listen to his predictions about the pregnancy, whatever they might turn out to be?" said Xu Su to himself. So, he straightened his clothes and his hat and headed straight for Guangrun Gate.

The fortune-teller was so busy, with one patron after another, that Squire Xu found it impossible to thread his way through the packed crowd. He remained standing until his legs felt numb, but still, his turn did not come. He saw nothing for it but to cry out, "Mr. Never-erring Diviner!" Hearing someone call him by his nickname, the fortune-teller thought that it must be an old friend of his,



识，连忙的说道：“请进，请进！”许员外把两只手排开了众人，方才挨得进去。相见礼毕，许员外道：“小人许肃敬来问个六甲，生男生女，或吉或凶，请先生指教。”那先生就添上一炷香，唱上一个喏，口念四句：

虔叩六丁神，文王卦有灵；

吉凶含万象，切莫顺人情！

通陈了姓名意旨，把铜钱掷了六掷占得个“地天泰”卦。先生道：“恭喜，好一个男喜！”遂批上几句云：

福德临身旺，青龙把世持；

秋风生桂子，坐草却无虞。

许员外闻言甚喜，收了卦书，遂将几十文钱谢了先生，回去对浑家说了，何氏心亦少稳。

光阴似箭，忽到八月十五中秋，其夜天朗气清，现出一轮明月，皎洁无翳。许员外与何氏玩赏，贪看了一会，不觉二更将尽，三鼓初传，忽然月华散彩，半空中仙音嘹亮，何氏只一阵腹痛，产下个孩儿，异香满室，红光照人。真个是：

五色云中呈鸞，九重天上送麒麟。

次早邻居都来贺喜，所生即真君也。形端骨秀，颖悟过人，年甫



and said eagerly, "Please come in! Come in!"

Squire Xu pushed his way through the crowd. After an exchange of greetings, Squire Xu said, "I am Xu Su, here to ask for a prophecy about my wife's pregnancy. Please tell me whether the child will be a boy or a girl, and whether or not the pregnancy portends well."

The fortune-teller lit joss sticks, chanted a signal to begin, and intoned the following quatrain:

*"To the Six-ding goddesses I devoutly appeal,¹³
 To King Wen's wondrous trigrams I resort.¹⁴
 Omens good or bad, please tell everything;
 Be sure not to yield to human will."*

After stating the name and the purpose of the divination, the fortune-teller tossed a copper coin six times. Finally, a divinatory symbol that read "Peace in heaven and on earth" came up. The fortune-teller said, "Congratulations! You'll have a boy, one that will bring you great joy." He wrote the following quatrain in explanation:

*With rich blessings upon your wife
 And the green dragon in dominance,
 In autumn, a son destined for greatness will be born;
 And the mother's recovery will be worry-free.*

Greatly delighted at this prophecy, Squire Xu took the paper and thanked the fortune-teller with several tens of cash. Upon hearing his account, the squire's wife, He-shi, felt a little relieved.

Time flew by like an arrow. Soon, the Mid-autumn Festival rolled around. That night, the clear sky was lit by a lambent moon. Squire Xu and his wife were so fascinated by the view that they stayed up later than was their wont. Before they knew it, the second watch of the night came to an end. As the drum began to strike, announcing the third watch, the moon suddenly emitted rays of unusual brilliance, and celestial music arose from the sky. With a spasm of her belly, He-shi gave birth to a baby amid a shining red light and an extraordinary fragrance that permeated the chamber. Truly,

*Amid five-colored clouds appeared a phoenix;
 From the ninth heaven came a unicorn.*

The next morning, the neighbors all came to offer their congrat-



三岁，即知礼让。父母乃取名逊，字敬之。年十岁，从师读书，一目十行俱下，作文写字，不教自会，世俗无有能为之师者。真君遂弃书不读，慕修养学仙之法，却没有师传，心常切切。[眉批]世上无情口仙人。忽一日，有一人姓胡名云，字子元，自幼与真君同窗，情好甚密，别真君日久，特来相访。真君倒屣趋迎，握手话旧。子元见真君谈吐间有驰慕神仙之意，乃曰：“老兄少年高才，乃欲为云外客乎？”真君曰：“惶愧，自思百年旦暮，欲求出世之方，恨未得明师指示！”子元曰：“兄言正合我意，往者因访道友云阳詹晔先生，言及西宁州有一人，姓吴名猛，字世云，曾举孝廉，仕吴为洛阳令。后弃职而归，得传异人丁义神方，日以修炼为事。又闻南海太守鲍靓有道德，往师事之，得其秘法。回至豫章，江中风涛大作，乃取所执白羽扇画水成路，徐行而渡，渡毕，



ulations. The baby was none other than the Sage of our story, and a well-shaped baby he was.

The boy possessed an extraordinary intelligence and showed an understanding of proper decorum when he was only three years old. His parents named him Xun, courtesy name Jingzhi. When he began his studies under a tutor at ten years of age, he was able to read ten lines at a glance and write characters and compose essays without even being taught. No mortal being was competent enough to teach him. ([Illegible.]) Consequently, the Sage abandoned his studies and turned his attention to the cultivation of the spirit required to achieve immortality, although he was frustrated that he could find no teacher.

One day, a man named Hu Yun, courtesy name Ziyuan, came to visit him. Hu Yun had been a childhood schoolmate of his and was a close friend, whom he had not seen in a long time. The Sage rushed out to greet him with extended hands. As they reminisced about the old days, Ziyuan noticed that the Sage revealed an admiration for immortals. "My brother," observed Ziyuan, "am I to understand that a talented young man like you wishes to be a man beyond the clouds?"

"I'm ashamed to say that I have indeed been thinking about the transience of mortal life and would like to search for a way to achieve immortality. Too bad there isn't anyone to enlighten me!"

"I happen to have been thinking along the same lines. I once visited a Daoist friend, Mr. Zhan Wei, of Yunyang. He said that in Xining Prefecture there is a Wu Meng, courtesy name Shiyun, who had been recommended, on the strength of his filial piety and moral integrity, to a post in the Wu state. He later became magistrate of Luoyang but has since resigned and returned to his hometown, where he obtained a magic formula from Ding Yi, an immortal, and set about smelting immortality pills every day. He then heard that Bao Jing, prefect of Nanhai, was a man well versed in the arts of Daoism, and so, he went to Bao Jing and obtained a secret formula. On his way back to Yuzhang, a raging storm sprung up in midstream. He drew a line in the water with a white-feather fan, and a road appeared. As soon as he reached the end of the road, taking leisurely steps, it changed



路复为水。观者大骇，于是道术盛行，弟子相从者甚众。区区每欲拜投，奈母老不敢远离。兄若不惜劳苦，可往师之。”真君闻言，大喜曰：“多谢指教！”真君待子元别去，即拜辞父母，收拾行李，竟投西宁，寻访吴君。有诗赞曰：

无影无形仙路难，未经师授莫跻攀；
胡君幸赐吹嘘力，打破玄元第一关。

话说真君一念投师，辞不得路途辛苦，不一日得到吴君之门，写一个门生拜帖，央道童通报。吴君看是“豫章门生许逊”，大惊曰：“此人乃有道之士！”即出门迎接。此时吴君年九十一岁，真君年四十一岁，真君不敢当客礼，口称：“仙丈，愿受业于门下。”吴君曰：“小老粗通道术，焉能为人之师？但先生此来，当尽剖露，岂敢自私，亦不敢以先生在弟子列也。”自此每称真君为“许先生”，敬如宾友，真君亦尊吴君而不敢自居。一日二人坐清虚堂，共谈神仙之事。真君问曰：“人之有生必有死，乃古今定理。吾见有壮而不老、生而不死者，不知何道可致？”吴君曰：“人之有生，自父母交媾，二气相合，阴承阳生，气随胎化。三



back into water. Witnesses were astounded at the sight. Henceforth, the Daoist arts began to gain popularity, and his disciples multiplied. I've long wished to join them, but I can't leave my aging mother alone. If you don't mind the hardships of the journey, why don't you go and learn from him?"

The Sage was delighted beyond measure. "Much obliged for the advice!" he said. As soon as Ziyuan left, the Sage bade farewell to his parents, packed up his belongings, and set off for Xining in search of Mr. Wu. There is a poem in praise of him:

*The road to immortality is beyond reach;
 Make no attempt without proper guidance.
 Thanks to Mr. Hu's kind advice,
 He took the first step toward achieving the Way.*

Now, back to the story. Determined to seek out the teacher, the Sage withstood the tribulations of the journey and arrived at Mr. Wu's residence in a matter of days. He wrote a visiting card presenting himself as a disciple and asked the doorkeeper to announce him. At the sight of the visiting card, which read "Xu Xun, a disciple from Yuzhang," Mr. Wu exclaimed in astonishment, "This is a man who knows the Way!" Right away, he went out to greet the sage.

Thinking it too much of an honor to be greeted thus by a ninety-one-year old man, the forty-one year old Sage said, "Your Reverence, I beg to be taken on as a disciple of yours."

"I have only a rudimentary knowledge of the Way myself and can hardly claim to be a teacher. But since you've already made the trip, I should, by rights, impart to you everything I know. I'd hardly dare keep anything for myself, nor would I be so presumptuous as to list you among my students." Henceforth, he addressed the Sage as "Mr. Xu," and honored him as a distinguished guest. The Sage also showed Mr. Wu great respect and never put on any airs.

One day in the main hall, in the course of their conversation about issues relating to immortality, the Sage asked, "Where there is life, there is death. This is an eternal truth. But I see people who do not age and people who do not die. I wonder what makes that possible?"

Mr. Wu replied, "Life comes from an act of sexual inter-



百日形圆，灵光入体，与母分离。五千日气足，是为十五童男，此时阴中阳半，可以比东日之光。过此以往，不知修养，则走失元阳，耗散真气。气弱则有病老死苦之患。”真君曰：“病老死苦，将何却之？”吴君曰：“人生所免病老死苦，在人中修仙，仙中升天耳。”真君曰：“人死为鬼，道成为仙，仙中升天者，何也？”吴君曰：“纯阴而无阳者，鬼也；纯阳而无阴者，仙也；阴阳相离者，人也。惟人可以成为仙，可以为鬼。仙有五等，法有三成，持修在人而已。”真君曰：“何谓法有三成，仙有五等？”吴君曰：“法有三成者，小成、中成、大成；仙有五等者，鬼仙、人仙、地仙、神仙、天仙。所谓鬼仙者，少年不修，恣情纵欲，形如枯木，心若死灰，以致病死，阴灵不散，成精作怪，故曰鬼仙。鬼仙不离于鬼也。所谓人仙者，修真之士，不悟大道，



course, when the yin and the yang merge. The vital force grows in the fetus until, after three hundred days, a divine light enters the full-size fetus, which then leaves the mother's body. After five thousand days, at fifteen years of age, the yin and the yang arrive at a balance, much like the light of the morning sun. After that, if no attention is paid to the cultivation of the spirit, the yang will be lost. With the vital force gone, illnesses, old age, death, and suffering set in."

"But what can be done to prevent the onset of illnesses, old age, death, and suffering?" asked the Sage.

"One needs to cultivate the spirit so as to stave them off and achieve immortality, and once that is accomplished, to ascend to heaven."

"I know that to die is to become a ghost and to achieve the Way is to become an immortal. But how do immortals manage to ascend to heaven?"

"Those who have only yin but no yang become ghosts. Those who have only yang but no yin become immortals. Those in whom yin and yang stay juxtaposed are mortal beings. So, mortal beings can become either immortals or ghosts. There are five categories of immortals and three methods by which to achieve immortality. The choice is up to the mortal being."

"What are the three methods and the five categories?"

"The three methods are the minor one, the middle one, and the superior one. The five categories of immortals are ghost immortals, human immortals, earth immortals, divine immortals, and heavenly immortals.

"Ghost immortals are those who indulge their passions in youth instead of devoting themselves to the cultivation of the spirit. They do this to such an extent that their shape is reduced to that of a dead tree, and with hearts that are nothing but heaps of burned-out ashes, they die of illnesses, although their souls linger and become evil spirits that wreak havoc on people. They are called ghost immortals because they essentially remain ghosts.

"Human immortals are those who, in cultivating the spirit, con-



惟小用其功。绝五味者，岂知有六气？忘七情者，岂知有十戒？行嗽咽者，哂吐纳之为错；著采补者，笑清静以为愚。采阴取妇人之气者，与缩金龟者不同。盖阳食女子之乳者，与炼金丹不同。此等之流，止是于大道中得一法一术成功，但能安乐延寿而已，故曰人仙。人仙不离于人也。所谓地仙者，天仙之半，神仙之中，亦止小成之法，识坎离之交配，悟龙虎之飞腾，炼成丹药得以长生住世，故曰地仙。地仙不离于地也。所谓神仙者，以地仙厌居尘世，得中成之法，抽铅添汞，金精炼顶，玉液还丹，五气朝元，三阳聚顶，功满忘形，胎生自化，阴尽阳纯，身外有身，脱质升仙，超凡入圣，谢绝尘世，以归三岛，故曰神仙。神仙不离于神也。所谓天仙者，以神仙厌居三岛，得大成之法，内外丹成，道上有功，人间有行，功行满足，授天书以返洞天，是



concentrate on minor things and neglect major goals. While abstaining from the five flavors of food, they remain ignorant of the six cosmic essences.¹⁵ While freeing themselves from the seven human emotions, they fail to observe the ten commandments.¹⁶ While practicing the art of generating saliva, they sneer at the method of breathing out the stale air and taking in the fresh. While fortifying themselves with tonics, they laugh at those who keep a light diet. To benefit from women's yin force is not the same as abstention from sexual intercourse. To seek nourishment from women's milk is different from engaging in alchemy. Those who belong to this category acquire only a few tricks out of the vastness of Daoist arts, just enough to live in contentment and prolong their lives. They are called human immortals because they essentially remain humans.

"As for earth immortals, they are not quite heavenly immortals or divine immortals. They also confine themselves to the minor method I mentioned above. They understand the union of water and fire and the role of dragon and tiger¹⁷ in the art of alchemy and manufacture immortality pills that enable them to live forever on earth. They are called earth immortals because they are earthbound.

"As for divine immortals, they loathe the earth immortals' earthbound way of living and acquire the middle method, by which they take away the lead, add mercury, and apply the essence of gold to the top and jade liquid to the middle, until, with the five vital forces having merged and the three yang elements having come together, they complete the process and change their bodies so that all the yin departs and nothing but the yang remains. By then, they can assume multiple bodily forms and become immortals who transcend the mortal world and attain divinity. Graciously, they bid farewell to the mundane world and take up residence on the three fairy islands. They are called divine immortals because of their divine nature.

"Now, heavenly immortals are those who, tired of living on the three islands as the divine immortals do, acquire the superior method by which they successfully perform alchemical transmutations inside as well as outside the body. Having achieved the Way and performed good deeds in the mortal world, they are now well qualified to re-



曰天仙。天仙不离于天也。然修仙之要，炼丹为急。吾有《洞仙歌》二十二首，君宜谨记之：

丹之始，无上元君授圣主。法出先天五太初，遇元修炼身冲举。

丹之祖，生育三才运今古。隐在鄱湖山泽间，志士采来作丹母。

丹之父，晓来飞上扶桑树。万道霞光照太虚，调和兔髓可烹煮。

丹之母，金晶莹洁夜三五。乌兔搏掬不终朝，炼成大药世无比。

丹之胎，乌肝兔髓毓真胚。一水三汞三砂质，四五三成明自来。

丹之兆，三日结胎方入妙。万丈红光贯斗牛，五音六律随时奏。



ceive celestial mandates so they may take up residence in heaven. They are called heavenly immortals because they reside in heaven. Of everything that needs to be done to achieve immortality, alchemy is of the first importance. I have here twenty-two songs of the immortals. Remember them well.

“Before the beginning of immortality pills:

*When the universe was still in primeval gloom,
The Venerable Mother of Laozi
Gave instructions to the saintly master,
To cultivate his spirit and achieve immortality.*

How immortality pills began:

*The essence of immortality pills,
Born of heaven, earth, and humans in high antiquity,
Hiding in lakes, ponds, and mountains,
Was picked by the wise to make the pills.*

The father of immortality pills:

*It flew up the mulberry tree in the morning
When a myriad of sunbeams brightened the universe.
When blended with the essence of the moon,
It was ready for brewing in the cauldron.*

The mother of immortality pills:

*In the sparkling, crystal-clear starry night,
The sun and the moon fought until morning,
And produced an elixir of eternal life
That had no equal in the universe.*

The embryo of immortality pills:

*Fostered by the essence of the sun and moon,
The embryos are fed by water, mercury, and sand,
At the ratio of one to three to three;
And the right proportion follows all the way.*

The omens of immortality pills:

*Three days after the embryos are formed,
Good omens begin to assert themselves:
A red glow rises high into the skies
Amid music of five tones and six tempos.*



丹之质，红紫光明人莫识。元自虚无黍米珠，色即是空空即色。

丹之灵，十月脱胎丹始成。一粒一服百日足，改换形骨身长生。

丹之圣，九年炼就五霞鼎。药力加添水火功，枯骨立起孤魂醒。

丹之室，上弦七兮下弦八。中虚一寸号明堂，产出灵苗成金液。

丹之釜，垣廓坛炉须坚固。内外护持水火金，日丁金胎产盘古。

丹之灶，鼎曲相通似蓬岛。上安垣廓护金炉，立炼龙膏并虎脑。

丹之火，一日时辰十二个。文兮武兮要合宜，抽添进退莫太过。



The substance of immortality pills:

*Almost unrecognizable in their purple light,
They're shaped like pearls the size of millet grains.
Form is indeed emptiness;
Emptiness is indeed form.*

The efficacy of immortality pills:

*The pills mature after ten months in the fetuses,
Take one pill a day after a hundred days, and
You will transmute shape and bones,
And attain eternal life.*

The sanctity of immortality pills:

*The rosy-cloud patterned tripod took nine years to build;
When water and fire are added to the chemicals,
Dried dead bones will rise to life,
And forlorn souls will awake to the world.*

The chamber of the cauldron:

*Right in the middle of the cauldron
Is the void called the chamber,
Where the magic substance that is produced
Changes into precious gold liquid.*

The cauldron of immortality pills:

*With a strong wall surrounding the cauldron,
Water, fire and gold are protected within and without.
At the right time, out of the gold fetus,
Was born Pangu, creator of the universe.*

The hearth for the immortality pills:

*With bending pipes shaped like the fairy islands;
With fences and shields installed for protection,
The golden hearth smelts lead and mercury,
One from the tiger, the other from the dragon.*

The fire of the furnace:

*The heat must vary in degree.
To match the twelve time periods of the day,
In reducing the lead and adding mercury,
Remember not to go to excess.*



丹之水，器凭胜负斯为美。不潮不滥致中和，滋产灵苗吐金蕊。

丹之威，红光耿耿冲紫薇。七星灿灿三台烂，天丁地甲皆皈依。

丹之窍，天地人兮各有奥。紫薇岳渎及明君，三界精灵皈至道。

丹之彩，依方逐位安排派。青红赤白黄居中，摄瑞招祥神自在。

丹之用，真土真铅与真汞。黑中取白赤中青，全凭水火静中动。

丹之融，阴阳配合在雌雄。龙精虎髓鼎中烹，造化抽添火候功。

丹之理，龙膏虎髓灵无比。二家交姤仗黄精，屯蒙进退全终始。



The water in immortality pills:

*All containers are equally good,
Neither too much nor too little,
The water must be neutral and mild,
In order to produce the magic golden substance.*

The awe-inspiring quality of immortality pills:

*Their red glow rises high into the sky,
Lightening up the Big Dipper's seven stars.
All the deities of heaven and earth
Bow to them in humble submission.*

The key to immortality pills:

*Heaven, earth, and humans, all have their secrets;
The stars, mountains, rivers, sovereigns,
And all the spirits of the three realms
Are converted to the truth of the Way.*

The colors of the immortality pills:

*The colors are arranged in neat order;
Green, red, white and yellow in the middle,
They attract nothing but the auspicious
In their divine serenity.*

The uses of immortality pills:

*Real earth, real lead, and real mercury;
White is extracted from black, blue from red.
All is done by the water and the fire
That move about in tranquility.*

The mixing process for immortality pills:

*The yin and the yang, the male and the female,
Merge and mix as the cauldron brews
The marrow of dragons and tigers,
Over fire tended by the cosmos.*

The nature of immortality pills:

*The marrow of dragons and tigers
Works with a magic second to none.
Merging the essence of the two
Completes the smelting process.*



丹之瑞，小无其内大无外。放弥六合退藏密，三界收来黍珠内。

丹之完，玉皇捧禄要天缘。等闲岂许凡人泄，万劫之中始一传。”

真君曰：“多谢指迷。敢问仙丈，五仙之中，已造到何仙地位？”吴君曰：“小老山野愚蒙，功行殊欠，不过得小成之功，而为地仙耳。若于神仙天仙，虽知门路，无力可攀。”遂将烧炼秘诀并白云符书悉传与真君。

真君顿首拜谢，相辞而归，回至家中，厌居闹市，欲寻名山胜地，以为栖身之所。闻知汝南有一人，姓郭名璞，字景纯，明阴阳风水之道，遨游江湖。真君敬访之。璞一日早起，见鸦从东南而鸣，遂占一课，断曰：“今日午时，当有一仙客许姓者到我家中，欲问择居之事。”至日中，家童果报客至。璞慌忙出迎，礼罢，分宾而坐。璞问曰：“先生非许姓，为卜居而来乎？”真君



The auspice of immortality pills:

*Infinitely small and large at the same time,
It contains the sky and earth, east, south, north and west;
All the three realms of the universe
Are embraced in pearls the size of millet grains.*

The completion of immortality pills:

*The Jade Emperor asks for the one
Destined to impart the right method.
No mundane being is to be given
This one chance in ten thousand karmas."*

The Sage said, "Thank you so much for pointing out the way for me! May I ask, of the five categories of immortals, to which category do you belong?"

Mr. Wu replied, "Being but a benighted country boor, I have learned only the minor method and am therefore an earth immortal. Though I know what needs to be done to become both a divine immortal and a heavenly one, I lack the wherewithal to get there."

Thereupon he imparted the secret alchemic formula and the White Cloud magic symbols to the Sage. With a grateful kowtow, the Sage took leave of Mr. Wu and went back home.

Loathing the hustle and bustle of the town in which he lived, the Sage wanted to find a scenic mountain area to serve as his residence. He heard of a Guo Pu, courtesy name Jingchun, in Runan [in present-day Henan Province], who was most knowledgeable on matters relating to yin, yang and feng shui and was in the habit of touring rivers and lakes. Out of respect for him, the Sage decided to pay him a visit.

One day, Guo Pu rose bright and early and, upon hearing the cries of a crow coming from a southeasterly direction, performed a divination. "At noontime today," he concluded, "an immortal with the surname Xu will visit me and ask about choosing a place of residence."

Sure enough, at noontime, a page boy announced the arrival of a visitor. Guo Pu hastened out to meet the man. After an exchange of greetings, they took seats as host and guest, respectively. Guo Pu asked, "Aren't you Mr. Xu, here to ask me for a divination as to your



曰：“公何以知之？”璞曰：“某今早卜卦如此，未知然否？”真君曰：“诚然。”因自叙姓名，并道卜居之意。璞曰：“先生仪容秀伟，骨骼清奇，非尘中人物，富贵之地，不足居先生，居先生者，其神仙之地乎？”真君曰：“昔吕洞宾居庐山而成仙，鬼谷子居云梦而得道，今或无此吉地么？”璞曰：“有！但当遍历耳。”于是命童仆收拾行囊，与真君同游江南诸郡，采访名山。一日行至庐山，璞曰：“此山嵯峨雄壮，湖水还东，紫云盖顶，累代产升仙之士。但山形属土，先生姓许，羽音属水，水土相克，不宜居也，但作往来游寓之所则可矣。”又行至饶州鄱阳，地名傍湖，璞曰：“此傍湖富贵大地，但非先生所居。”真君曰：“此地气乘风散，安得拟大富贵耶？”璞曰：“相地之法，道眼为上，法眼次



future place of residence?”

“How did you know, sir?”

“That’s what I learned from my divination this morning. Am I correct?”

“Yes,” replied the Sage, whereupon he introduced himself and stated the purpose of his visit.

Guo Pu said, “With your refined and unearthly look, you are clearly not a person bound to this mortal world. Even the most opulent place is not good enough for you. Could it be the land of the immortals that interests you?”

“Well, in the olden times, Lü Dongbin took up residence in the Lu Mountains and achieved immortality, and Guigu lived in the Yunmeng Marshes before he attained the Way. Are there no such blessed places any more?”

Guo Pu replied, “Yes, there are, but first, you need to see all such places that are available.”

Accordingly, Guo Pu had his servants pack for him, and set off with the Sage to tour the counties south of the Yangzi River in search of famous mountains.

One day, when approaching Mount Lu, Guo Pu remarked, “This mountain certainly is high and majestic. Its lake runs east, its crest is topped by purple clouds, and for generations, it has produced immortals who ascended to heaven. But this mountain, by its shape, belongs to the earth phase of the five phases,¹⁸ and your surname Xu, which is of the tone *yu* in the five tones of music,¹⁹ belongs to the phase of water. Water and earth being conflicting elements, that mountain is not for you, except as a place to rest temporarily on your travels.”

When they arrived at Banghu, in Poyang, Raozhou Prefecture, Guo Pu said, “This is a place destined for greatness, but it’s not for you either.”

“This is a place where the wind seems to blow away all vital force. How can it be destined for greatness?”

Guo Pu answered, “When assessing feng shui, there is the overall, intuitive view and the specific, guided view. In the first view,



之。道眼者，凭目力之巧，以察山河形势；法眼者，执天星河图紫薇等法，以定山川。吉凶富贵之地，天地所秘，神物所护，苟非其人，见而不见。俗云：‘福地留与福人来。’正谓此也。”真君曰：“今有此等好地，先生何不留一记，以为他日之验？”郭璞乃题诗一首为记，云：

行尽江南数百州，惟有傍湖出石牛。
雁鹄夜夜鸣更鼓，鱼鳖朝朝拜冕旒。
离龙隐隐居乾位，巽水滔滔入艮流。
后代福人来遇此，富贵绵绵八百秋。

许、郭二人离了鄱阳，又行至宜春栖梧山下，有一人姓王名朔，亦善通五行历数之书。见许、郭二人登山采地，料必异人，遂迎至其家。询姓名已毕，朔留二人宿于西亭，相待甚厚。真君感其殷勤，乃告之曰：“子相貌非凡，可传吾术。”遂密授修炼仙方。郭璞曰：“此居山水秀丽，宜为道院，以作养真之地。”王朔从其言，遂盖起道院，真君援笔大书“迎仙院”三字，以作牌额。



one observes the overall picture of the mountains and rivers with one's own eyes. In the second view, one goes by the eight trigrams and the positions of the stars. A place destined for greatness is secretly blessed by heaven and earth and protected by divine beings. One not meant to enjoy the blessings of the land will not see what lies beneath the surface. This is exactly what's meant by the proverb "Blessed lands are reserved for blessed people."

"Why don't you leave something behind in this blessed place as a future proof of your prophecy?"

At this suggestion, Guo Pu wrote a poem to serve as a proof in times to come. The poem says,

*While touring south of the Yangzi River,
 Divine signs are seen only in Banghu.
 Wild geese announce the nightly watches;
 Fish and turtles bow daily to the king.
 The fire dragon sits in his throne, hidden from view.
 Water from the southeast flows into Lake Poyang.
 Those blessed ones who come here after me
 Will enjoy blissful lives for hundreds of years.*

After leaving Lake Poyang, Mr. Xu and Guo Pu made their way to Mount Qiwu in Yichun, where lived a man named Wang Shuo, who was well-read in astrology and the theory of the five phases. At the sight of Xu and Guo climbing up the mountain, he recognized in them the makings of extraordinary men and invited them into his house. After obtaining their names, he put them up for the night in his western pavilion and treated them with the utmost hospitality.

Out of gratitude, the Sage said to him, "You have such an air of distinction that I'll impart my formula to you," whereupon he told Wang Shuo his formula for achieving immortality.

Guo Pu suggested, "This area being so scenic with its hills and waters, why don't you build a monastery in which to pursue your spiritual cultivation?"

Wang Shuo followed this advice and had a monastery built. The Sage wrote "Monastery for Immortals" as an inscription for the horizontal board over the door frame. Wang Shuo was grateful beyond



1900

王朔感戴不胜，二人相辞而去。遂行至洪都西山，地名金田，则见：

嗟嗟峨峨的山势，突突兀兀的峰峦，活活泼泼的青龙，端端正正的白虎，圆圆净净的护沙，湾湾环环的朝水。山上有苍苍郁郁的虬髯美松，山下有翠翠青青的凤尾修竹，山前有软软柔柔的龙须嫩草，山后有古古怪怪的鹿角枯樟。也曾闻华华彩彩的鸾吟，也曾闻昂昂藏藏的鹤唳，也曾闻咆咆哮哮的虎啸，也曾闻呦呦洗洗的鹿鸣。这山呵！比浙之天台更生得奇奇绝绝，比闽之武夷更生得岌岌峣峣，比池之九华更生得迤迤邐邐，比蜀之峨眉更生得秀秀丽丽，比楚之武当更生得尖尖圆圆，比陕之终南更生得巧巧妙妙，比鲁之泰山更生得蜿蜿蜒蜒，比广之罗浮更生得苍苍奕奕。真个是天下无双胜境，江西第一名山。万古精英此处藏，分明是个神仙宅。

却说郭璞先生行到山麓之下，前观后察，左顾右盼，遂将罗经下针，审了方向，抚掌大笑曰：“璞相地多矣，未有如此之妙！若求富贵，则有起歇；如欲栖隐，大合仙格。观其冈阜厚圆，位坐深邃，三峰壁立，四环云拱，内外勾锁，无不合宜。大凡相地兼相其人，观君表里正与地符。[眉批]相地不相人，此地之所以多不验也。且西山属金，以五音论之，先生之姓，羽音属水，金能生水，合



measure. Mr. Xu and Guo Pu took their leave of him and continued on with their journey.

Upon reaching a place called Golden Fields at West Hill, Hongdu, they saw a towering mountain, jutting peaks, lively green dragons, majestic white tigers, and clean sand along curving riverbanks. At the top of the mountain soared dark green pine trees, and at its foot stood verdant bamboo grooves. In the foreground stretched soft grass in the shape of dragon's whiskers, and in the back were withered camphor trees in the form of antlers. There came to one's ears the graceful cries of phoenixes, the intermittent chirps of cranes, the ferocious roar of tigers, and the timid calls of deer. The mountain was craggier than Mount Tiantai of Zhejiang, more jagged than Mount Wuyi of Fujian, more intriguing than Mount Jiuhua of Anhui, more picturesque than Mount Emei of Sichuan, sharper in contour than Mount Wudang of Chu, shapelier than Mount Zhongnan of Shanxi, more tortuous than Mount Tai of Shandong, and more verdant than Mount Luofu of Guangdong. It was indeed a scenic spot without peer and the most famous mountain west of the Yangzi River. Harboring the cosmic essence of the ages, it was truly a residence fit for the immortals.

Now, back to the story. Upon reaching the foot of the mountain, Mr. Guo Pu looked around in all directions. After setting his compass and examining it, he laughed out loud, rubbing his palms, and launched into the following speech: "Of all the places whose feng shui I have studied, I have never come across one so wonderful. If seeking riches and honor, one will experience rises and falls here. If looking for a hermitage, then this is the very place. The mounds are thick and round, and sit on deep foundations. With three peaks standing like a wall and clouds surrounding all four sides like a lock, it could not serve a hermit's purposes better. In most cases, when assessing feng shui, one must also examine the physiognomy of those who live in the place, to see if their physical features conform with the topographical features. (*In my part of the country, it is precisely because the feng shui masters ignore human features that their prophecies mostly fall flat.*) Moreover, the west mountain belongs to

得长生之局，舍此无他往也。但不知此地谁人为主？”傍有一樵夫指曰：“此地乃金长者之业。”真君曰：“既称长者，必是善人。”二人径造其家。金公欣然出迎，欢若平生。金公问曰：“二位仙客，从何而至？”郭璞曰：“小子姓郭名璞，略晓阴阳之术。因此位道友姓许名逊，欲求栖隐之地，偶采宝庄，正合仙格，欲置一舍，以为修炼之所，不知尊翁肯慨诺否？”金公曰：“第恐此地褊小，不足以处许君，如不弃，并寒庄薄地数亩悉当相赠。”真君曰：“愿订价多少？惟命是从。”金公曰：“大丈夫一言，万金不易，愚老拙直，平生不立文券。”乃与真君索大钱一文，中破之，自收其半，一半付还真君。真君叩头拜谢。三人分别而去。于是真君辞了郭璞，择取吉日，挈家父母妻子，凡数十口，徙于西山，筑室而居焉。金公后封为地主真官。金氏之宅，即今玉隆万寿宫是也。





1903

the phase of metal, but your surname Xu, being of the tone *yu* in the five tones of music, belongs to the phase of water. Metal is a phase that fosters water, which makes this mountain an ideal habitat, better than anywhere else, for those destined to have eternal life. I wonder who owns this place?"

A woodcutter nearby said, pointing, "This is all the property of the venerable Mr. Jin."

"Judging by the way you refer to him as 'the venerable Mr. Jin'," said the Sage, "he must be a good man."

Mr. Xu and Guo Pu went to visit Mr. Jin, who came out joyfully to meet them, greeting them as cordially as if they were old friends.

"May I ask where you've come from, my venerable guests?"

Guo Pu replied, "I am Guo Pu, and I have a rudimentary knowledge of the theory of yin and yang. This is my friend Xu Xun, who is equally interested in Daoist pursuits. We are traveling past your estate in our search for a hermitage for Mr. Xu. Impressed by the divine scenery of this place, he would like to buy a house here for purposes of spiritual cultivation. Would you, sir, be so kind as to give your consent?"

"I'm only afraid that what I have is too small for Mr. Xu's purposes. If you would not be disdainful, I'd be happy to give you several *mu* of the poor land around this humble cottage."

The Sage said, "Please give me a price. I'll accept whatever you say."

"A true gentleman's word is worth ten thousand taels of gold. Being a straightforward man, I've never had a need to draw up a document." Thereupon, he obtained from the Sage a coin of a large denomination, broke it in half, kept one half for himself, and gave the other half back to the Sage, who thanked him with a kowtow. The guests and the host then took leave of each other.

Thereafter, the Sage bade farewell to Guo Pu, and on a chosen auspicious day, he took his parents, his wife, and several tens of other members of the clan all the way to the west mountain, had houses built, and took up residence there. Later, Mr. Jin gained the title Lord of Lands. His house is today's Yulong Longevity Palace.



却说真君日以修炼为事，炼就金丹，用之可以点石为金，服之可以却老延年。于是周济贫乏，德义彰播。时晋武帝西平蜀，东取吴，天下一统，建元太康。从吏部尚书山涛之奏，诏各郡保举孝廉贤能之士。豫章郡太守范宁，见真君孝养二亲，雍睦乡里，轻财利物，即保举真君为孝廉。武帝遣使臣束帛赍诏，取真君为蜀郡旌阳县令。真君以父母年老，不忍远离，上表辞职。武帝不允，命本郡守催迫上任。捱至次年，真君不得已辞别父母妻子，只得起程。真君有二姊，长姊事南昌盱君，夫早丧，遗下一子盱烈，字道微，事母至孝。真君虑其姊孀居无倚，遂筑室于宅之西，奉姊居之，于是母子得闻妙道。真君临行，谓姊曰：“吾父母年迈，妻子尚不知世务，贤姊当代弟掌治家事。如有仙翁隐客相过者，可以礼貌相待。汝子盱烈，吾嘉其有仁孝之风，使与我同往任所。”盱母曰：“贤弟好去为官，家下一应事体为姊的担当，不



1905

Every day, the Sage engaged in his alchemical experiments. In due course, he produced gold pills that could change stones into gold and, when taken orally, could halt the aging process and extend life expectancy. By using the pills in his charitable work, he became known far and near as a virtuous and just man.

After Emperor Wu of the Jin dynasty brought peace to the Shu region in the west and the Wu region in the east, the reunified empire was given the new reign title Taikang [280–90]. Acting on a memorial submitted by Shan Tao, secretary of the Ministry of Personnel, the emperor issued a decree, soliciting nominations for official posts on the basis of virtue, filial piety, and competence. Fan Ning, prefect of Yuzhang, impressed by the Sage's filial devotion to his parents, his friendliness with his neighbors, and his disdain for material wealth, recommended him as a candidate. Emperor Wu sent a messenger with an imperial decree granting the Sage the post of magistrate of Jingyang County, in Shu. The Sage wrote a memorial in reply, declining the assignment because he could not bring himself to leave his aged parents. The emperor turned down his request and ordered the prefect to urge the Sage to take up his post. The Sage dragged his feet but finally, the following year, resignedly bade farewell to his parents and his wife and set off on the journey.

The Sage had two older sisters. The older of the two was a widow, her husband, Mr. Xu of Nanchang, having died early, leaving behind a son Xu Lie, courtesy name Daowei, who served his mother with great devotion. Wishing to provide his widowed sister with better living quarters, the Sage had arranged to have a house built for her to the west of his own house. Accordingly, the mother and son were able to hear the Sage's explanations of the Way. Just before he departed, the Sage said to his sister, "Our parents being advanced in age and my wife knowing very little about affairs of the world, could you, my good sister, please take charge of the household on my behalf? If hermits pass by, treat them courteously. As for your son Xu Lie, I would like to reward him for his kindness and filial piety by taking him with me."

"My good brother," replied his sister, "you go along to your



劳远念！”言未毕，忽有一少年上堂，长揖言曰：“吾与盱烈哥哥，皆外甥也，何独与盱兄同行，而不及我？”真君视其人，乃次姊之子，复姓钟离，名嘉，字公阳，新建县象牙山西里人也。父母俱早丧，自幼依于真君。为人气象恢弘，德性温雅，至是欲与真君同行，真君许之。于是二甥得薰陶之力，神仙器量，从此以立。真君又呼其妻周夫人告之曰：“我本无心功名，奈朝廷屡聘，若不奉行，恐抗君命。自古忠孝不能两全，二亲老迈，汝当朝夕侍奉，调护寒暑，克尽汝子妇之道！且儿女少幼，须不时教训，勤以治家，俭以节用，此是汝当然事也。”周夫人答曰：“谨领教！”言毕，拜别而行，不在话下。

话说真君未到任之初，蜀中饥荒，民贫不能纳租。真君到任，上官督责甚严，真君乃以灵丹点瓦石为金，暗使人埋于县衙后圃。[眉批] 今日愈思仙吏矣。一旦拘集贫民未纳租者，尽至阶下，真君问曰：“朝廷粮税，汝等缘何不纳？”贫民告曰：“输纳国税，乃理之常，岂敢不遵。奈因饥荒，不能纳尔。”真君曰：“既如此，吾

post! I'll take care of the household. Don't worry!"

Before she had finished, a young boy walked up and, with a deep bow, addressed the Sage. "Brother Xu Lie and I are both your nephews. Why are you taking only him and not me?"

The Sage saw that it was his second sister's son, surname Zhongli, given name Jia, courtesy name Gongyang. A native of Xili, Ivory Mountain, Xinjian County, he had lost his parents early in his childhood and had been living with the Sage all these years. He had a magnanimous mind and a gentle, kind nature. The Sage agreed to take him on the trip. The two cousins thus came under the Sage's edifying influence, which stood them in good stead later in their endeavor to acquire the qualities of immortals.

The Sage then called for his wife, Lady Zhou, and said to her, "I have no interest in rank and honor, but if I continue to reject the emperor's repeated appointments, I'll be accused of defying him. It's always been said that you can't be loyal to the emperor and to your parents at the same time. As my parents are advanced in age, you should serve them day and night, protect them from the severities of the weather, and perform the duties of a filial daughter-in-law. In addition, our children are still young and need to be taught well. There's also your duty to be frugal and hard-working around the house."

"As you say!" replied his wife.

With that, he bowed his farewell and set off on his journey. Of this, no more need be said.

Earlier, before the Sage assumed his post, there was a famine in the Shu [Sichuan] region, and the people were too poor to pay taxes. After assuming his post, the Sage came under such pressure from his superiors that he used his pills to change rocks into gold and had the gold buried quietly in the backyard of the county yamen. (*This makes me wish even more that immortals could be officials!*) All those apprehended for failing to pay taxes were brought to the Sage, who asked them, "Why don't you pay the taxes that you owe the imperial court?"

The poor villagers replied, "Paying taxes is the right thing to do. We would never dream of evading our tax duties to the state. But owing



罚汝等在于县衙后圃，开凿池塘，以作工数，倘有所得，即来完纳。”民皆大喜，即往后圃开凿池塘，遂皆拾得黄金，都来完纳。百姓遂免流移之苦。邻郡闻风者，皆来依附，遂至户口增益。按《一统志》旌阳县属汉州，真君飞升后，改为德阳，以表真君之德及民也。其地赖真君点金，故至今尚富，这话休题。那时民间又患瘟疫，死者无数，真君符咒所及，即时痊愈。又怜他郡病民，乃插竹为标，置于四境溪上，焚符其中，使病者就而饮之，无不痊愈。其老幼妇女尪羸不能自至者，令人汲水归家饮之，亦复安痊。郡人有诗赞曰：

百里桑麻知善政，万家烟井沐仁风。
明悬藻鉴秋阳暴，清逼冰壶夜月溶。
符置江滨驱痼病，金埋县圃起民穷。
真君德泽于今在，庙祀巍巍报厥功。

却说成都府有一人，姓陈名勋，字孝举。因举孝廉，官居益州别驾。闻真君传授吴猛道法，今治旌阳，恩及百姓，遂来拜谒，



to the famine, we have nothing with which to pay the taxes.”

“In this case,” said the Sage, “my judgment is that you perform corvée by digging a pond in the backyard of the county yamen. If you dig up anything of worth, surrender it to me as payment of your taxes.”

Greatly relieved, the villagers proceeded to the backyard to dig a pond. As they dug, they all came upon pieces of gold and were able to pay their taxes. Thus, they were spared the misery of migration. As word got around, people from neighboring counties swarmed to the Sage’s county, expanding the local population. According to the local chronicles, Jingyang [flag, sun] County, in Hanzhou, was renamed Deyang [virtue, sun] County after the Sage ascended to heaven, in commemoration of the kind deeds he had done for the people. Thanks to his golden touch, the area remains rich to this day, but let us not digress.

At the time, a plague broke out in the area, taking a heavy toll on human lives, but, wherever the Sage delivered his magic figures, the sick immediately regained their health. Out of compassion for the sick in other counties, the Sage had bamboo poles erected by the streams along the borders and burned his magic figures there. After the sick drank the water, all recovered. The elderly, children, and women who were too weak to make the trip had the water brought back to them, and they were all cured. A poet in the Sage’s county had this to say in praise of him:

*The hundred-li fields were under good governance;
 The ten thousand houses lay under a gentle breeze.
 He ruled with scrupulous justice and fairness;
 His reputation was as spotless as pure ice.
 His magic expelled illness from the counties;
 His buried gold rid the land of poverty.
 The Sage’s good deeds are felt to this day,
 As attested by the temples to his name.*

Now, in Chengdu prefecture, there lived a man called Chen Xun, courtesy name Xiaoju. Through recommendations for his filial piety and moral integrity, he was assigned to the post of assistant prefect of Yizhou. Having heard that the Sage who had been passing on



愿投案下，充为书吏，使朝夕得领玄教。真君见其人，气清色润，遂付以吏职。既而见勋有道骨，乃引勋居门下为弟子，看守药炉。又有一人，姓周名广，字惠常，庐陵人也。乃吴都督周瑜之后，游巴蜀云台山，粗得汉天师驱精斩邪之法。至是闻真君深得仙道，特至旌阳县投拜真君为师，愿垂教训。真君纳之，职掌雷坛。二人自是得闻仙道之妙。真君任旌阳既久，弟子渐众，每因公馀无事，与众弟子讲论道法。

却说晋朝承平既久，外有五胡强横，浊乱中原。那五胡？

匈奴刘渊居晋阳，羯戎石勒居上党，羌人姚弋仲居扶风，氐人符洪居临渭，鲜卑慕容廆居昌黎。

先是汉魏以来，收服夷狄，诸胡多居塞内。太子洗马江统劝武帝徙于边地，免后日夷狄乱华之祸。武帝不听。至是果然侵乱晋朝。太子惠帝愚蠢，贾后横恣，杀戮大臣。真君乃谓弟子曰：“吾闻



Wu Meng's Daoist formula was now the magistrate of Jingyang County, doing kind deeds for the people, he offered the Sage his services as a clerk. In this way, he would benefit from daily contact with the Sage and from his teachings. Impressed by Chen Xun's refined manners and his rosy complexion, the Sage granted his request. Later, as he observed Chen's distinct air of a Daoist destined for immortality, the Sage took him on as a disciple and had him attend to the alchemical cauldron. Then another man came along, named Zhou Guang, courtesy name Huichang. He was a native of Luling, a descendant of General Zhou Yu of the state of Wu.²⁰ On his tour of Mount Yuntai in Sichuan, he learned the basics of Celestial Master Zhang's²¹ method of demon subjugation and, having heard about the Sage's mastery of the Daoist arts, made his way to Jingyang County to honor the Sage as his master and submit himself to the latter's teachings. The Sage accepted him and put him in charge of the thunder platform. Henceforth, the two disciples learned the wonderful secrets of immortality.

As the days went by, the Sage began to have more disciples at his post at Jingyang. He spent his leisure hours mostly in explaining the Way to his group of disciples.

After the Jin dynasty had enjoyed many years of peace, five foreign tribes began to make forceful incursions into the central plains of China. Which five?

Liu Yuan [d.310], the Hun who occupied Jinyang; Shi Le [274-333], of the Jie tribe, who took Shangdang; Yao Yizhong, a Qiang who was based in Fufeng; Fu Hong, of the Di tribe in Linwei; and Murong Wei [269-333], of the Xianbei tribe in Changli.²²

Since the days of the Han and Wei dynasties [220-80], vanquished tribes had been settled in areas well within the Great Wall. Jiang Tong, attendant to the crown prince, had advised Emperor Wu to relocate them to the borders so as to forestall future trouble, but Emperor Wu had turned a deaf ear. And now, the tribes were indeed wreaking havoc on the Jin dynasty. The crown prince, now Emperor Hui, was a stupid man, and his mother, the empress dowager, ruled the court with an iron hand, killing court ministers at will. The Sage said to his disciples, "As they say, 'Serve only when the



君子有道则见，无道则隐。”遂解官东归，百姓闻知，扳辕卧辙而留，泣声震地。真君亦泣下，谓其民曰：“吾非肯舍汝而去，奈今天下不久大乱，吾是以为保身之计。尔等子民，各务生业！”百姓不忍，送至百里之外，或数百里，又有送至家中不肯回者。真君至家，拜见父母妻子，合家相庆，喜不自胜。即于宅东空地结茅为屋，状如营垒，令蜀民居之。蜀民多改其氏族，从真君之姓，故号许氏营。

却说真君之妻周夫人对真君言：“女姑年长，当择佳配。”真君曰：“吾久思在心矣。”遍观众弟子中，有一人姓黄名仁览，字紫庭，建城人也，乃御史中丞黄辅之子。其人忠信纯笃，有受道之器。真君遂令弟子周广作媒，仁览稟于父母，择吉备礼，在真君宅上成婚。满月后，稟于真君同仙姑归家省亲。仙姑克尽妇道，仁览分付其妻在家事奉公姑，复拜辞父母，敬从真君求仙学道。

却说吴真君猛时年一百二十馀岁矣，闻知真君解绶归家，自



sovereign is wise. Otherwise, retire and live in seclusion.’ ” So he resigned from his post and returned to the east.

As the news spread, the populace turned out onto the streets and held the wheels of his carriage, begging him to stay. Amid the earth-shaking wails of grief, the Sage also broke down in tears. To the gathered masses, he said, “It’s not that I want to abandon you, but the land will soon be engulfed in chaos. I have to protect myself. Please take good care of yourselves!”

Sadly, the throng escorted him on his journey, some for about a hundred *li*, and some for several hundred *li*. Some even escorted him all the way to his home and refused to leave.

Upon seeing one another, the Sage, his parents, his wife, his children, and the whole family rejoiced at the happy reunion. Right away, they put together some hay on an empty lot east of the house and built a camp of cottages for the people from Sichuan who had followed the Sage. Those who stayed took on the Sage’s surname and came to be known as people of the “Xu Camp.”

Lady Zhou, the Sage’s wife, said to him, “Our daughter is of a marriageable age now. It’s time to pick a good husband for her.”

The Sage replied, “Yes, this has been on my mind for quite some time now.”

Among his disciples, there was a Huang Renlan, courtesy name Ziting, a native of Jiancheng, who was the son of Chief Imperial Inspector Huang Fu. A loyal, trustworthy, pure-hearted, and earnest man, he had the makings of an immortal worthy of the knowledge of the Way. The Sage had another disciple, Zhou Guang, serve as matchmaker. After Renlan had reported the matter to his parents, an auspicious day was chosen and gifts were prepared for the wedding ceremony, which was to take place in the Sage’s house.

A month after the wedding, Renlan asked the Sage for permission to go with his wife to visit his parents. His wife being a paragon of wifely virtues, Renlan told her to stay with his parents and serve them, whereas he returned reverently to the Sage to continue his pursuit of immortality.

Having heard that the Sage had resigned from his post and gone

西安来相访。真君整衣出迎，坐定叙阔，命筑室于宅西以居之。一日忽大风暴作，吴君即书一符，掷于屋上，须臾见有一青鸟衔去，其风顿息。真君问曰：“此风主何吉凶？”吴君曰：“南湖有一舟经过，忽遇此风，舟中有一道人呼天求救，吾以此止之。”不数日，有一人深衣大带，头戴幅巾，进门与二君施礼曰：“姓彭名抗，字武阳，兰陵人也。自少举孝廉，官至晋朝尚书左丞。因见天下将乱，托疾辞职，闻许先生施行德惠，参悟仙机，特来拜投为师。昨过南湖，偶遇狂风大作，舟几覆，吾乃呼天号救，俄有一青鸟飞来，其风顿息。今日得拜仙颜，实乃万幸！”真君即以吴君书符之事告之，彭抗拜谢不胜，遂挈家居豫章城中。既而见真君一子未婚，愿将女胜娘为配，真君从之。自后待彭抗以宾礼，尽以神仙秘术付之。东明子有诗云：

二品高官职匪轻，一朝抛却拜仙庭；



back home, Wu Meng, who was more than one hundred and twenty years of age, traveled all the way from Xi'an to see him. The Sage straightened his clothes and went out to greet him. After they had sat down and reminisced about the old days, the Sage ordered a house built to the west of his house for Mr. Wu.

One day, in a sudden strong gust of wind, Mr. Wu drew a magic figure and tossed it onto the roof. In a trice, a blue bird was seen picking the magic figure up in its beak and flying away. The wind died down instantly. The Sage asked, "What omens did the wind bring?"

Mr. Wu replied, "A boat was crossing South Lake when the wind sprang up. A man in the boat appealed to heaven for help. That was why I put a stop to it."

In a few days, a man wearing a thick robe, a large belt, and a hat entered the Sage's house and, with a bow, addressed the two sages as follows: "I am Peng Kang, courtesy name Wuyang, a native of Lanling. Through recommendations, I attained an official post early in my youth and rose to be counselor of the Grand Secretariat of the Jin court. I had a premonition that the land was going to be ravaged by chaos and resigned, pleading ill health. Having heard about Mr. Xu's kind deeds and mastery of the Daoist arts, I came to ask Mr. Xu to accept me as a disciple. Yesterday, when I was crossing South Lake, my boat almost capsized in a gust of wind. As soon as I cried out to heaven for help, a blue bird flew over, and the wind died down. How fortunate I am to be able to see you today!"

When the Sage recounted what Mr. Wu had done with his magic figure, Peng Kang was grateful beyond measure. He brought his whole family to the city of Yuzhang. Noticing that the Sage had a son who was still unbetrothed, he offered his daughter as a candidate. The Sage gave his consent. Henceforth, Peng Kang was treated with much respect and was taught all the secret formulas of immortality that the Sage possessed. There is a poem by Master Dongming that says:

*A high post in the imperial court
 Was abandoned in favor of the Way.*



不因懿戚情相厚，彭老安能得上升？

此时真君传得吴猛道术，犹未传谶母飞步斩邪之法。有太白金星奏闻玉帝：“南昌郡孽龙将为民害，今有许逊原系玉洞真仙降世，应在此人收伏，望差天使赍赐斩妖神剑，付与许逊，助斩妖精，免使黎民遭害。”玉帝闻奏，即宣女童二人将神剑二口，赍至地名柏林，献于许逊，宣上帝之命，教他斩魅除妖，济民救世。真君拜而受之，回顾女童，已飞升云端矣。后人诗叹曰：

坚金烈火炼将成，削铁吹毛耀日明。

玉女捧来离紫府，江湖从此水流腥。

且说江南有一妖物，号曰“孽龙”。初生人世，为聪明才子，姓张名酷。因乘船渡江，偶值大风，其船遂覆。张酷溺于水中，彼时得附一木板，随水漂流，泊于沙滩之上。肚中正饿，忽见明珠一颗，取而吞之。那珠不是别的珠，乃是那火龙生下的卵。吞了这珠却不饿了，就在水中能游能泳，过了一月有馀，脱胎换骨，遍身尽生鳞甲，止有一个头，还是人头。其后这个畜生，只好在水中戏耍，或跳入三级巨浪，看鱼龙变化；或撞在万丈深潭，看



*If not for feelings of kinship,
 How would Peng ever have ascended to heaven?*

By now, the Sage had learned Wu Meng's arts but not yet the Reverend Mother's method of demon subjugation. The god of the Gold Star offered the Jade Emperor this advice: "In Nanchang County, a demon dragon will wreak havoc on the people. Now there is a Xu Xun, a reincarnation of Jade Cave Sage, who is destined to subdue the demon dragon. Please send a celestial messenger to award him a divine demon-subjugation sword that will help him eliminate the demon and save the people from the scourge."

Upon hearing these words, the Jade Emperor summoned two girls and gave each a divine sword. He then told them to go to a place called Bailin, where they were to present the swords to Xu Xun and relay to him the Jade Emperor's order that he subdue the demon for the well-being of the people.

The Sage took the swords with a deep bow. By the time he looked up again, the girls were already high up in the sky on a cloud. A later poet had this to say:

*Tempered in the furnace by raging fire,
 The shining swords could cut through the hardest steel.
 The Jade Maidens gave them to the immortal;
 Henceforth the rivers would reek of stench.*

South of the Yangzi River, there was a monster called the Demon Dragon, who began life in human form as a talented scholar named Zhang Ku. He was crossing the river in a boat when he was caught in a strong gust of wind. His boat capsized and he fell into the water. He hung onto a plank of wood and drifted to a sand beach. To allay his hunger, he swallowed a bright bead that he happened to see. It was by no means an ordinary bead but an egg produced by a fire dragon. Zhang Ku's hunger vanished after he swallowed the bead, and he found himself able to swim.

More than a month later, he underwent a transformation. Scales appeared all over his body, and only his head remained human. This monster could do nothing but play in the water, jumping into giant waves to watch the fish and dragons or diving down into deep pools



虾鳖潜游。不想火龙见了，就认得是他儿子，嘘了一口气，教以神通。那畜生走上岸来，即能千变万化，于是呼风作雨，握雾撩云。喜则化人形而淫人间之女子，怒则变精怪而兴陆地之波涛。或坏人屋舍，或食人精血，或覆人舟船，取人金珠，为人间大患。诞有六子，数十年间，生息蕃盛，约有千馀。兼之族类蛟党甚多，常欲把江西数郡滚出一个大中海。

一日，真君炼丹于艾城之山，有蛟党辄兴洪水，欲漂流其丹室。真君大怒，即遣神兵擒之，钉于石壁，今钉蛟石犹在。又挥起宝剑，将一蛟斩讫。不想那孽龙知道杀了他的党类，一呼百集，老老少少，大大小小，都打做一团儿。孽龙道：“许逊恁般可恶，欲诛吾党，不报此仇，生亦枉然！”内有一班孽畜，有叫孽龙做公公的，有叫做伯伯的，有叫做叔叔的，有叫做哥哥的，说道：“不消费心，等我们去，把那许逊抓将来，碎尸万段，以泄其恨。”孽龙道：“闻得许逊传授了吴猛的法术，甚有本事，还要个有力量的去才好。”内有一长蛇精说道：“哥哥，等我去来。”孽龙道：“贤弟到去得。”于是长蛇精带了百十个蛟党，一齐冲奔许氏之宅，



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to watch the shrimp and turtles swim about. Then, the fire dragon spotted him and thought the young monster was its son. The fire dragon blew its breath on the young monster and taught him magic power.

Once the young monster was back on shore, he found he was able to change into any shape he wanted, summon wind and rain, hold the mist, and move the clouds. When he was in a cheerful frame of mind, he would take on human form and debauch women of the mortal world, and when in a foul mood, into evil spirits that flooded the land and destroyed houses, drank human blood, capsized boats, and snatched valuables. A truly major scourge he became. He went on to have six sons and, in several tens of years, they had multiplied into a clan one thousand strong. As there were many flood dragons in the clan, they often thought of turning several counties in Jiangxi into a sea.

One day, the Sage was making pills of immortality on a mountain in Aicheng when one of the flood dragons caused a flood, intending to wash away his furnace room. In a rage, the Sage summoned celestial warriors, who captured the flood dragon. The Sage then impaled it on a rock — which still exists to this day — and killed it with his sword. Now, after hearing about the death of a member of his clan, the demon dragon rallied his kith and kin, both old and young, big and small, who rushed forth at his first call for support. The Demon Dragon said, “That abominable Xu Xun means to destroy us. If this offense goes unavenged, I will have lived this life in vain!”

Members of his clan, who called him either Grandpa or Uncle or Older Brother, said, “Don’t worry. We’ll go and bring that Xu Xun to you. We’ll cut his corpse into ten thousand pieces in revenge.”

The Demon Dragon said, “I heard that Xu Xun has gained considerable magic power through Wu Meng. We need someone really good.”

A long snake spirit said, “Older Brother, let me go!”

“Yes, you are the right one,” said the Demon Dragon, giving his approval.

With the long snake spirit leading the way, about a hundred flood dragons burst onto Xu Xun’s estate and, spreading themselves



一字阵儿摆开，叫道：“许逊敢与我比势么？”真君见是一伙蛟党，仗剑在手，问云：“你这些孽畜，有甚本事，敢与我相比？”长蛇精道：“你听我说：

鳞甲棱层气势雄，神通会上显神通。
开喉一旦能吞象，伏气三年便化龙。
巨口张时偏作雾，高头昂处便呼风。
身長九万人知否，绕遍昆仑第一峰。”

长蛇精恃了本事，耀武扬威，众蛟党一齐踊跃，声声口口说道：“你不该杀了我家人，定不与你干休！”真君曰：“只怕你这些孽畜逃不过我手中宝剑。”那长蛇精就弄他本事，放出一阵大风，又只见：

视之无影，听之有声，噫大块之怒号，传万窍之跳叫。一任他砢砢磅磅，栗栗烈烈，撼天阙，摇地轴，九天仙子也愁眉；那管他青青白白，红红黄黄，翻大海，搅长江，四海龙王同缩颈。雷轰轰，电闪闪，飞的是沙，走的是石，直恁的满眼尘霾春起早；云惨惨，雾腾腾，折也乔林，不也古木，说甚么前村灯火夜眠迟。忽喇喇前呼后叫，左奔右突，就是九重龙楼凤阁，也教他万瓦齐飞；吉都都横冲直撞，乱卷斜

out in a single straight row, cried out, "Xu Xun, do you dare battle us?"

At the sight of the bunch of flood dragons, the Sage said, swords in hand, "You cursed beasts! How dare you fight me with what little power you have!"

The long snake spirit replied, "Listen!

*"With an awe-inspiring scaled coat of mail,
I display my magic in tournaments.
With my open jaws, I can swallow an elephant;
Three years of breathing exercise will make me a dragon.
I need only open my mouth to make a fog,
I need only raise my head to stir up a wind.
I can stretch out as long as ninety thousand li
And coil my way up the tallest peak of Kunlun."*

While the long snake spirit boasted of his prowess, the flood dragons hopped up and down, shrieking, "You shouldn't have killed a member of our clan. We're not through with you yet!"

The Sage said, "I'm afraid my swords won't spare you, you foul beasts!"

Working one of his magic tricks, the long snake spirit conjured up a strong gust of wind. Lo and behold:

It comes without form and shape, but the howl is deafening.

*With a crash here and a clatter there,
It shakes the gate of heaven and the axis of earth,
And vexes even the fairies in the ninth layer of heaven.
As it churns seas and rivers in a riot of colors,
The dragon kings of the four seas huddle in terror.
As thunder growls, as lightning flashes,
Grits of sand whirl, stones and pebbles fly,
Till all is as dark as the dawn of a spring day.
Under the dismal clouds and fog,
Ancient trees are blown to the ground
In darkness hardly relieved by the villagers' lamps.
As it screams its way back and forth, left and right,
Ten thousand tiles fly off the roofs of grand palaces.*





拖，即如千丈虎狼穴，难道是一毛不拔。纵宗生之大志，不敢谓其乘之而浪破千层；虽列子之冷然，吾未见其御之而旬有五。正是：万里尘沙阴晦暝，几家门户响敲推！多情折尽章台柳，底事掀开社屋茅？

真个好一阵大风也！真君按剑在手，叱曰：“风伯等神，好将此风息了！”须臾之间，那风寂然不动。谁知那些孽怪，又弄出一番大雨来，则见：

石燕飞翔，商羊鼓舞。滂沱的云中泻下，就似倾盆；忽喇的空里注来，岂因救旱。逼逼剥剥，打过那园林焦叶，东一片，西一片，翠色阑珊；淋淋筛筛，滴得那池沼荷花，上一瓣，下一瓣，红妆零乱。沟面洪盈，倏忽间漂去高凤庭前麦；檐头长溜，须臾里洗却周武郊外兵。这不是鞭将蜥蜴，碧天上祈祷下的甘霖。这却是驱起鲸鲵，沧海中喷将来的唾沫。正是：茅屋人家烟火冷，梨花庭院梦魂惊；渠添浊水通鱼入，地秀苍苔滞鹤行。

真个好一阵大雨也！真君又按剑叱曰：“雨师等神，好将此雨止



1923

*As it sweeps away everything in its path,
Not a hair is left in the tiger and wolf dens.
For all Zong Que's ambitions,²³
He would not dare ride this wind and cleave these waves.
For all Lie Yukou's agility,²⁴
He would not dare challenge this wind for days on end.
Truly, dust and sand darken the land,
Few would answer a knock at the door.
With willows and other trees all gone,
Why go on to tear away the roofs?*

What a strong wind it was! Swords in hand, the Sage said sharply, "God of Wind, it's time you stopped this wind!" In a trice, the wind died down, but the demons conjured up a rainstorm.

*Stones in the shape of swallows and birds flew about,
Rain poured from the clouds and the sky,
Though it was not to relieve the drought.
Pitter-patter, the rain beat on the withered leaves
And scattered them about.
Drip-drip, it fell on the lotus flowers in the pond,
And ruffled their pink petals.
The ditches overflowed with water,
Which quickly bore away Gao Feng's wheat crop;²⁵
The eave gutters spilled enough water
To wash clean the weapons of Zhou Wu's soldiers.²⁶
This was not the much-needed rain prayed for through
lizards,²⁷
But the saliva of whales and salamanders.
Truly, kitchen fires died down in thatched cottages.
In courtyards aglow with pear blossoms,
Dreams ended in panic.
The canals were swollen with muddy water and swimming
fish,
Cranes could not walk on ground too slippery with moss.*

A raging storm it was indeed! Swords in hand, the Sage again ordered sharply, "God of Rain, it's time you stopped this rainstorm!"



了！”那雨一霎时间半点儿也没了。真君乃大显法力，奔往长蛇精阵中，将两口宝剑挥起，把长蛇精挥为两段。那伙蛟党，见斩了蛇精，各自逃生，真君赶上，一概诛灭。径往群蛟之所，寻取孽龙。那孽龙闻得斩了蛇精，伤了许多党类，心里那肯干休，就呼集一党蛟精，约有千百之众，人多口多，骂着真君：“骚道，野道，你不合这等上门欺负人！”于是呼风的呼风，唤雨的唤雨，作雾的作雾，兴云的兴云，攫烟的攫烟，弄火的弄火，一齐奔向前来。真君将两口宝剑，左砍右斫，那蛟党多了，怎生收伏得尽。况真君此时未传得谶母飞腾之法，只是个陆地神仙。那孽龙到会变化，冲上云霄，就变成一个大鹰儿。真个：

爪似铜钉快利，嘴似铁钻坚刚。展开双翅欲飞扬，好似大鹏模样。云里叫时声大，林端立处头昂。纷纷鸟雀尽潜藏，那个飞禽敢挡！

只见那鹰儿在半空展翅，忽喇地扑将下来，到把真君脸上挝了一下，挝得血流满面。真君忙挥剑斩时，那鹰又飞在半空中去了。真君没奈何，只得转回家中。那些蛟党见伤得性命多了，亦各自收阵回去。

却说真君见孽龙神通广大，敬来吴君处相访，求其破蛟之策。



1925

In an instant, the rain stopped. Not even half a drop could be seen anymore. In a mighty show of his magic power, the Sage charged into the long snake spirit's ranks, and as his two swords swung high, he cut it in half. Terrified at the death of the long snake spirit, the flood dragons ran pell-mell for their lives. The Sage caught up with them and did away with all of them. He then headed straight for the flood dragon's abode to seek out the Demon Dragon.

Having heard about the long snake spirit's death and the heavy casualties among its underlings, the Demon Dragon was determined not to give up. With everybody talking at once, a crowd of a thousand flood dragons rallied by the Demon Dragon cursed the Sage, saying, "That cursed Daoist, bullying us in our home like that!" With some calling up the winds, some summoning rain, some conjuring up a fog, some bringing on clouds, some generating smoke, and some lighting fires, they charged en masse at the Sage. The Sage swung his two swords left and right, but how much could he do when there were so many of them? Moreover, not yet having learned the Reverend Mother's method of flying, he was still an earthbound immortal. The Demon Dragon, which was capable of bodily transformations, shot all the way up to the sky and changed into an eagle. Truly,

*Its talons as sharp as copper nails,
Its beak as hard as an iron drill,
It unfurled its wings like a roc, ready to soar.
From the clouds, it cried at the top of its voice;
It stood on the treetops, raising its head high.
The birds and sparrows scurried to hide;
No bird dared stand in its way.*

Its wings spread wide against the sky, the eagle dived down and slapped a wing across the Sage's face. His face covered with blood, the Sage was about to cut it down with his swords when it rose again into the sky. The Sage saw no alternative but to return home. The flood dragons, which had suffered heavy casualties, also withdrew and returned home.

Having witnessed the Demon Dragon's immense magical powers, the Sage paid Mr. Wu a respectful visit, to ask for a way of subduing



吴君曰：“孽龙久为民害，小老素有翦除之心。但恨道法未高，莫能取胜。汝今既擒蛟党，孽龙必然忿怒，愈加残害，江南休矣。”真君曰：“如此奈何？”吴君曰：“我近日闻得镇江府丹阳县，地名黄堂，有一女真谶母，深通道术，吾与汝同往师之，叩其妙道，然后除此妖物，未为晚也。”真君闻言大喜，遂整行囊与吴君共往黄堂，谒见谶母。谶母曰：“二公何人？到此有何见谕？”真君曰：“弟子许逊、吴猛，今因江南有一孽龙精，大为民害，吾二人有心殄灭，奈法术殊欠。久闻尊母道传无极，法演先天，径来恳求，望指示仙诀，实乃平生之至愿也！”言讫，拜伏于地。谶母曰：“二公请起，听吾言之。君等乃夙稟奇骨，名在天府。昔者孝悌王自上清下降山东曲阜县兰公之家，谓兰公曰：‘后世晋代当出一神仙，姓许名逊，传吾至道，是为众仙之长。’遂留下金丹宝鉴、铜符铁券，并飞步斩邪之法，传与兰公。复令兰公传我，兰公又使我收掌，以待汝等，积有四百馀年矣。子今

the demon. Mr. Wu said, "The Demon Dragon has been a scourge of the people for so long that I, too, have been meaning to get rid of him, but he's too powerful for me. Now that you've beaten the flood dragons, the Demon Dragon will surely be mad with anger and seek to do greater evil. That will be the end of the Jiangnan region south of the Yangzi River."

"What's to be done?"

"I recently heard that in a place called Huangtang, in Danyang County, Zhenjiang Prefecture, there is a female immortal known as the Reverend Mother who is a master of the Daoist arts. Let's go to see her, honor her as our teacher, learn her arts, and then come back and wipe out that demon. We should have enough time."

Delighted by this suggestion, the Sage packed and followed Mr. Wu to Huangtang, where they saw the Reverend Mother.

"Who are you two gentlemen? How can I help you?" asked the Reverend Mother.

The Sage replied, "I am Xu Xun, and this gentleman is Wu Meng. We are here because we wish to eliminate the Demon Dragon who is a scourge of the people in the Jiangnan region south of the Yangzi River, but he has greater magic power than we do. We have long heard that you, Reverend Mother, have limitless power, so we came here to beg you to teach us your secret formula, to fulfill the greatest wish of our lives." With that, the two men prostrated themselves on the floor.

"Please rise," said the Reverend Mother. "Listen, you are by no means ordinary people. Both your names are listed in the heavenly registry. A long time ago, the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love descended from the Heaven of Exalted Purity to Mr. Lan's house in Qufu County, in Shandong, and told Mr. Lan that in a future Jin dynasty, an immortal called Xu Xun was to inherit his method. This Xu Xun would be the head of all immortals. With these words, he gave Mr. Lan gold pills, magic mirrors, and copper and iron tablets and taught him the method of subduing demons while flying. He then ordered Mr. Lan to teach it to me, and I was supposed to wait for you. This all happened four hundred years ago. Now that you are



既来，吾当传授于汝。”于是选择吉日，依科设仪付出铜符铁券、金丹宝鉴，并正一斩邪之法、三五飞腾之术，及诸灵章秘诀，并各样符篆，悉以传诸许君。今净明法五雷法之类，皆谶母所传也。谶母又谓吴君曰：“君昔者以神方为许君之师，今孝悌王之道，唯许君得传，汝当退而反师之也。”真君传道已毕，将欲辞归，心中暗想：“今幸得闻谶母之教，每岁必当谒拜，以尽弟子之礼。”此意未形于言，谶母已先知矣，乃对真君曰：“我今还帝乡，子不必再来谒也。”乃取香茅一根，望南而掷，其茅随风飘然。谶母谓真君曰：“子于所居之南数十里，看香茆落于何处，其处立吾庙宇，每岁逢秋，一至吾庙足矣！”谶母言罢，空中忽有龙车凤辇来迎，谶母即凌空而去。其时吴、许二君望空拜送，即还本部。遂往寻飞茆之迹，行至西山之南四十里，觅得香茆，已丛生茂盛，二君遂于此地建立祠宇，亦以黄堂名之。令匠人塑谶母宝像，严奉香火，期以八月初三日必往朝谒。即今崇真观是也，朝谒之礼



here, I will of course pass it on to you.”

On a chosen auspicious day, in a solemn ritual proper for the occasion, she gave Mr. Xu the copper and iron tablets, the golden pills, the magic mirrors, taught him the method of demon subjugation and the art of flying, and passed on to him secret formulae and magic figures of all descriptions. The Clear and Bright method and the Five Thunders method still in existence today were both imparted to Mr. Xu by the Reverend Mother. The Reverend Mother then turned to Mr. Wu and said, “You used to be Mr. Xu’s mentor, but now, with Mr. Xu destined to inherit the formulae of the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love, you will have to take a step back and honor him as your teacher.”

Having learned all that he had come to learn, the Sage was about to return when he thought, “Since I have had the fortune to be taught by the Reverend Mother, I will pay her yearly visits in the future to show my respect as a disciple.”

Before he was able to express this thought in words, the Reverend Mother knew what he was going to say. “I am returning to the place where the Jade Emperor resides,” she said. “You don’t have to pay me visits.” So saying, she picked up a blade of lemongrass and tossed it in a southerly direction. As the windborne blade of grass wafted through the air, the Reverend Mother said to the Sage, “Go tens of *li* south of where you live and see where that blade of lemongrass has landed. You may build a temple to me on that very spot. One visit to the temple every autumn will suffice.” No sooner had she finished speaking than a celestial carriage appeared in midair. Immediately, she rose into the air and was gone.

Mr. Wu and Mr. Xu bowed their farewells skyward before returning to their abode. They then set off in search of the lemongrass. It was not until they had traveled forty *li* south of West Hill that they found it in the form of a thriving thicket that had grown from the single blade of grass. The two had a temple erected right there on the spot, named it the Yellow Hall, and engaged craftsmen to build a statue of the Reverend Mother. They maintained a strict schedule of worship services and made a commitment to visit the temple every year on the



犹在。真君亦于黄堂立坛，悉依谶母之言，将此道法传授吴君。吴君反拜真君为师。自此二人始有飞腾变化之术。回至小江，寓客店，主人宋氏见方外高人，不索酒钱，厚具相待，二君感其恭敬，遂求笔墨画一松树于其壁上而去。自二君去后，其松青郁如生，风动则其枝摇摇，月来则其彩淡淡，露下则其色湿湿，往来观者，日以千计。去则皆留钱谢之，宋氏遂至巨富。后江涨堤溃，店屋俱漂，惟松壁不坏。

却说孽龙精被真君斩其族类，心甚怒。又闻吴君同真君往黄堂学法，于是命蛟党先入吴君所居地方，残害生民，为灾降祸。真君回至西宁，闻蛟孽腥风袭人，责备社伯：“汝为一县鬼神之主，如何纵容他为害？”社伯答曰：“妖物神通广大，非小神能制。”再三谢罪。忽孽龙精见真君至，统集蛟党，涌起十数丈水头。那水波涛泛涨，怎见得好狠？

只听得潺潺声振谷，又见那滔滔势漫天！雄威响若雷奔



third day of the eighth month to pay homage. This is the very temple that is known today as Chongzhen Temple, and the ritual of annual homage is still being observed.

In the Yellow Hall, the Sage had an altar built, where, as instructed by the Reverend Mother, he imparted the secrets to Mr. Wu, who now reversed his role and honored the Sage as his mentor.

After they had both mastered the arts of flying and bodily transformation, they returned to Xiaojiang, where they found lodging at an inn. Impressed by their otherworldly appearance, the innkeeper, Madam Song, treated them with the utmost hospitality and did not charge them for their room and board. Out of gratitude for her deference, the two gentlemen asked her for brush-pens and ink and painted a pine tree on the wall before they departed. After they left, the pine tree turned green, as if fully alive. When the wind blew, its branches swayed to and fro. When lit by the moon, its needles turned a paler green. On damp days, it glittered as if with dew. Curious spectators numbered in the thousands daily. With all of them leaving a tip before departing, Madam Song became fabulously rich. Later, when the river rose and destroyed the embankment, the inn was washed away, but that wall remained intact.

Now, back to the Demon Dragon, who was filled with wrath over the casualties that the Sage had inflicted on members of his clan. Having heard that Mr. Wu and the Sage were in the Yellow Hall pursuing their studies, he ordered the flood dragons to wreak havoc in Mr. Wu's hometown. Upon returning to Xining, the Sage found his nostrils assailed by the flood dragons' foul odor. Pointing an accusing finger at the local god, he said, "Being the chief of all the deities of this county, how can you condone their wanton behavior?"

The local god said, "Those monsters are too powerful for this humble deity." While the god was offering profuse apologies, the Demon Dragon saw that the Sage had returned. Immediately, he rallied the flood dragons and roused waves several tens of feet high. How intimidating were the surging and spouting sheets of waves?

*First came the rumbles that shook the valleys,
 Then a set of waves that burst sky-high.*



走，猛涌波如雪卷颠。千丈波高漫道路，万层涛激泛山岩。泠泠如漱玉，滚滚似鸣弦。触石沧沧喷碎玉，回湍渺渺漩涡圆。低低凸凸随流荡，大势弥漫上下连。

真君见了这等大水，恐损坏了居民屋宇田禾，急将手中宝剑，望空书符一道，叫道：“水伯，急急收水！”水伯收得水迟，真君大怒。水伯道：“常言泼水难收，且从容些！”真君欲责水伯，水伯大惧，须臾间将水收了，依旧是平洋陆地。真君提着宝剑径斩孽龙，那孽龙变作一个巡海夜叉，持枪相迎，这一场好杀：

真君剑砍，妖怪枪迎，剑砍霜光喷烈火，枪迎锐气迸愁云。一个是洋子江生成的恶怪，一个是灵霄殿差下的仙真。那一个扬威耀武欺天律，这一个御暴除灾转法轮。真仙使法身驱雾，魔怪争强浪滚尘。两家努力争功绩，皆为洪都百万



1933

*They roared like awe-inspiring thunder
And churned like furious wind-blown snowstorms.
The soaring waves swallowed up the roads;
The raging waters spouted high against cliff rocks.
The frothy foam was as delicate as jade;
The rolling sound was as musical as plucked chords.
Like pieces of jade splashed against the crags,
Eddies spun around down below.
As the currents ran their tortuous course,
The surging waves rose all the way to the sky.*

Fearing that the ferocious waters would do damage to the local people and their houses and crops, the Sage drew a magic figure in the air with his sword and called out, "God of Water, let the water subside!"

To the Sage's seething indignation, the God of Water failed to make the water die down as quickly as was expected. "Isn't it often said that it's impossible to take back spilled water? Be easy on me!" the God of Water said in his own defense.

The Sage looked as if he was on the point of chastising the God of Water, so the god took fright, and in a trice, the river sank to its previous level along the banks.

Swords in hand, the Sage charged at the Demon Dragon, who stepped forward in the shape of a lance-wielding yaksha²⁸ whose job it was to safeguard the seas. A ferocious fight it was:

The Sage swung his swords; the demon parried with his lance.

*The frosty light of the swords shone with sparks of fire;
The aura of the sharp lance rose to the gloomy clouds.
One was a demon born in the Yangzi River;
The other was an immortal sent by heaven.
One violated the divine laws, flaunting his prowess;
The other fought evil and disasters, wielding Daoist power.
The immortal pushed back the evil mist;
The demon conjured up waves of dust.
Both strove hard to win the battle,*



1934

民。

那些蛟党见孽龙与真君正杀得英雄，一齐前来助战。[眉批]一次斩蛟。忽然弄出一阵怪砂来，要把真君眼目蒙蔽，只见：

似雾如烟初散漫，纷纷蔼蔼下天涯。白茫茫到处难开眼，昏暗暗飞时找路差。打柴的樵子失了伴，采药的仙童不见家。细细轻飘如麦面，粗粗翻覆似芝麻。世间朦胧山顶暗，长空迷没太阳遮。不比尘嚣随骏马，难言轻软衬香车。此沙本是无情物，登时刮得眼生花。

此时飞沙大作，那蛟党一齐呐喊，真君呵了仙气一口，化作一阵雄风，将沙刮转。吴君在高阜之上，观看妖孽，更有许大神通，于是运取掌心蛮雷，望空打去。虽风云雷雨，乃蛟龙所喜的，但此系吴君法雷，专打妖怪，则见：

运之掌上，震之云间，虺虺嘍嘍可畏，轰轰划划初闻。



1935

For the millions of Nanchang people.

Witnessing the fierce fight between the Demon Dragon and the Sage, the flood dragons stepped forward in unison to help the Demon Dragon. (*The first major victory against the flood dragons.*) All of a sudden, an eerie sandstorm came on, called up to blur the Sage's vision. Behold:

*Like fog or smoke, the sand grains swirled through the air
Before spinning down to the ground.*

*In the vast expanse of whiteness,
The eyes could hardly stay open;*

*In the wide-spreading darkness,
Finding one's way was too great a challenge.*

Woodchoppers couldn't see their companions;

*Fairies picking medicinal herbs couldn't find their way
home.*

The sand grains wafted gently through the air,

*Some like finely ground wheat, some like coarser sesame
seeds.*

The world misted over, the hilltops lost to view;

The sky became blurry, the sun blocked.

By no means the kind of dust kicked up by horses,

Nor the kind of fine sand that pads fancy carriages.

This was sand that showed no mercy,

And whipped at the eyes till one saw stars.

As the flood dragons gave a battle cry in the swirling sandstorm, the Sage blew a puff of his immortal's breath. The puff turned into a powerful gust of wind that blew the sand the other way.

From his high vantage point, Mr. Wu saw that the demons were indeed in possession of remarkable magic power. He worked up a thunder in the palm of his hand and threw it toward the sky. Though wind, clouds, thunder and rain are things that give flood dragons delight, Mr. Wu's thunder was a magic one designed to subjugate demons. Behold:

Generated from a palm, it shook the clouds.

As it rolled, inspiring awe, it lit up the fire god's flames



烧起谢仙之火烈，推转阿香之车轮。音赫赫，就似撞八荒之鼓，音闻天地；声惶惶，又如放九边之炮，响振军屯。使刘先主失了双箸，教蔡元中绕遍孤坟。闻之不及掩耳，当之谁不销魂！真个天仙手上威灵振，蛟魅胸中心胆倾。

那些群孽，闻得这个法雷，惊天动地之声，倒海震山之怒，唬得魂不附体。更见那真君两口宝剑，寒光闪闪，杀气腾腾，孽龙当抵不住，就收了夜叉之形，不知变了个甚么物件，潜踪遁走。真君乃舍了孽龙，追杀蛟党，蛟党四散逃去。真君追二蛟至鄂渚，忽然不见。路逢三老人侍立，真君问曰：“吾追蛟孽至此，失其踪迹，汝三老曾见否？”老人指曰：“敢伏在前桥之下？”真君闻言，遂至桥侧，仗剑叱之，蛟党大惊，奔入大江，藏于深渊。真君乃即书符数道，敕遣符使驱之。蛟孽不能藏隐，乃从上流奔出，真君挥剑斩之，江水俱红，此二蛟皆孽龙子也。[眉批] 斩二子。今鄂渚有三圣王庙，桥名伏龙桥，渊名龙窝，斩蛟处名上龙口。



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And pushed along the thunder god's chariot wheels.

Its rumbling sounded like drumbeats that shook the sky and earth.

Its roar sounded like cannons that echoed through the army barracks.

It made Liu Bei drop his chopsticks;²⁹

It made Cai Yuanzhong circle his mother's tomb.³⁰

*With no time to cover their ears before it comes,
All are transfixed with fear.*

*Truly, the immortal's hand emanated magic power;
The demons' hearts trembled in terror.*

As the thunder burst upon their ears — loud enough to shake the sky, the earth, the seas and the mountains — the demons were so frightened that their souls took flight. Failing to parry the Sage's glistening swords, chilly with the air of death, the Demon Dragon changed again from yaksha into goodness knows what and disappeared.

With the Demon Dragon gone, the Sage chased after the flood dragons, which ran helter-skelter in all directions. The Sage followed two of them all the way to Ezhu, where they suddenly vanished. Seeing three old men standing by the road, the Sage asked, "Have you three gentlemen seen the evil flood dragons that I have been chasing? When they got here, they suddenly disappeared."

The old men said, pointing, "Could they be hiding under the bridge over there?"

The Sage betook himself accordingly to the bridge, where he shouted angry words at the flood dragons, his swords at the ready. Terrified, the flood dragons scurried into the river and hid themselves at the bottom of an abyss. The Sage drew several magic figures to drive them out. Unable to remain in their hiding place, the flood dragons emerged, only to be cut down by the Sage. The river was dyed red. These two flood dragons were the Demon Dragon's sons. (*So, two sons are gone.*) Even to this day, there are in Ezhu a temple to the Three Sage Kings, a bridge called Dragon Subjugation Bridge, and an abyss named The Dragon's Nest. And the place where

真君复回至西宁，怒社伯不能称职，乃以铜锁贯其祠门，禁止民间不许祭享。今分宁县城隍庙正门常闭，居民祭祀者亦少。乃令百姓崇祀小神，其人姓毛，兄弟三人，即指引真君桥下斩蛟者。今封叶佑侯，血食甚盛。真君见吴君曰：“孽龙潜逃，蛟党奔散，吾欲遍寻踪迹，一并诛之。”吴君曰：“君自金陵远回，令椿萱大人，且须问省。吾谅此蛟孽，有师尊在，岂能复恣猖狂，待徐徐除之！”于是二君回过丰城县杪针洞。真君曰：“后此洞必有蛟螭出入，吾当镇之。”遂取大杉木一根，书符其上以为楔，至今其楔不朽。又过奉新县，地名藏溪，又名蛟穴，其中积水不竭。真君曰：“此溪乃蛟龙所藏之处。”遂举神剑劈破溪傍巨石，书符镇之，今镇蛟石犹在。又过新建县，地名叹早湖，湖中水蛭甚多，皆是蛟党奴隶，散入田中，啗人之血。真君恶之，遂将药一粒，投于湖中，其蛭永绝。今名药湖。复归郡城，转西山之宅，回见



the flood dragons were killed is called Dragon Source.

Upon returning to Xining, the Sage locked the door of the local god's temple with a brass padlock, angry at the latter's incompetence, and forbade the local people to make sacrificial offerings there. To this day, the front door of the local god's temple in Fenning County is still more often closed than open, and few sacrificial items are offered by the local populace. The Sage then ordered that the people worship the Mao brothers as minor deities. These were the very three men who had pointed out to the Sage the flood dragons' hiding place under the bridge. Later, they were granted titles as dukes of Yeyou. Their temple has never been short of worshipers making offerings.

To Mr. Wu, the sage said, "The Demon Dragon is at large, and the flood dragons have scattered. I am determined to seek them all out and exterminate them."

"Having just returned from Jinling, you must first of all pay respects to your parents," said Mr. Wu. "As for the demons, with you here, they won't dare be as rampant as before. You can get rid of them in good time."

As they came to Miaozen Cave in Fengcheng County, the Sage said, "Let me block this cave because the flood dragons will surely make it one of their haunts." He picked up the branch of a big fir tree, drew a magic figure on it, and used it as a padlock. The branch remains to this day, free from decay.

They passed Fengxin County and came upon a creek that never ran dry. It was called Hidden Creek and was also known as Flood Dragon Hole. The Sage commented, "This must be another hiding place for the flood dragons." He split open the huge rock by the side of the creek with his divine swords and drew a magic figure to block the creek. The rock, henceforth known as Flood Dragon Subjugation Rock, stands to this day.

They then went through Xinjian County, where there was a Tazao Lake, which was full of leeches. The creatures were slaves of the flood dragons and would wriggle into the fields to suck human blood. In disgust, the Sage tossed a pill into the lake, and all the leeches were annihilated once and for all. The lake is now called Leech Pill



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父母，一家具庆，不在话下。

却说真君屡败孽龙，仙法愈显，德著人间，名传海内。时天下求为弟子者不下千数，真君却之不可得，乃削炭化为美妇数百人，夜散群弟子寝处。次早验之，未被炭妇污染者得十人而已。

[眉批] 凡女色皆炭也，被染者自不觉耳。先受业者六人：

陈勋，字孝举，成都人。

周广，字惠常，庐陵人。

黄仁览，字紫庭，建城人，真君之婿。

彭抗，字武阳，兰陵人，其女配真君之子。

盱烈，字道微，南昌人，真君外甥。

钟离嘉，字公阳，新建人，真君外甥。

后相从者四人：

曾亨，字典国，泗水人。骨秀神慧，孙登见而异之，乃潜心学道，游于江南，居豫章之丰城真阳观。闻真君道法，投于门下。

时荷，字道阳，巨鹿人。少出家，居东海沐阳院奉仙观，修老子之教。因入四明山遇神人授以胎息导引之术，颇能辟谷，亦能役使鬼神。慕真君之名，徒步踵门，愿充弟子。



Lake.

The Sage then returned to his home in West Hill and saw his parents, to the joy of the whole family, but this is no part of our story.

Now that the Sage had defeated the Demon Dragon time and again, his fame for his magic powers and his good deeds spread far and wide. Those who sought to be his disciples numbered in the thousands. Unable to accept them all, the Sage made hundreds of beautiful women out of charcoal and placed them at night in the applicants' rooms. The following morning, only ten men were untainted with charcoal. (*So, feminine beauty is nothing but charcoal. Those tainted with it are unaware of being victims.*) What follows is a list of the first six disciples:

Chen Xun, courtesy name Xiaoju, a native of Chengdu.

Zhou Guang, courtesy name Huichang, a native of Luling.

Huang Renlan, courtesy name Ziting, a native of Jiancheng and the Sage's son-in-law.

Peng Kang, courtesy name Wuyang, a native of Lanling, whose daughter married the Sage's son.

Xu Lie, courtesy name Daowei, a native of Nanchang and the Sage's nephew.

Zhong Lijia, courtesy name Gongyang, a native of Xinjian and the Sage's nephew.

They were joined later by four disciples:

Zeng Heng, courtesy name Dianguo, a native of Sishui, whose refined looks and sharp intelligence deeply impressed Sun Deng.³¹ He had been diligently applying himself to the study of Daoism, making trips south of the Yangzi river while maintaining his residence at Zhenyang Temple in Fengcheng, Yuzhang. After hearing of the Sage's fame, he came to be his disciple.

Shi He, courtesy name Daoyang, a native of Julu, who became a Daoist acolyte early in his youth and was studying Laozi's school of Daoism at Fengxian Temple, Muiyangyuan of the Eastern Sea. After he had learned the breathing method from an immortal during an excursion to the Siming Mountains, he was able to abstain from consuming grains and could engage the services of ghosts and deities. In admiration



甘战，字伯武，丰城人。性喜修真，不求闻达，径从真君学道。

施岑，字太玉，沛郡人。其父施朔仕吴，因移居于九江赤乌县。岑状貌雄杰，勇健多力，时闻真君斩蛟立功，喜而从之。真君使与甘战各持神剑，常侍左右。

这弟子十人，不被炭妇染污。真君嘉之，凡周游江湖，诛蛟斩蛇，时刻相从，即异时上升诸徒也。其馀被炭妇所污者，往往自愧而去。今炭妇市犹在。真君谓施岑、盱烈曰：“目今妖孽为害，变化百端，无所定向。汝二人可向鄱阳湖中追而寻之。”施、盱欣然领命，仗剑而去。夜至鄱阳湖中，登石台之上望之，今饶河口有眺台，俗呼为钓台，非也，此盖施、盱眺望妖蜃出没之所耳。其时但见一物隐隐如蛇，昂头摆尾，横亘数十里。施岑曰：“妖物今在此乎？”即拔剑挥之，斩其腰。至次日天明视之，乃蜈蚣山也。至今其山断腰，仙迹犹在。施岑谓盱烈曰：“黑夜吾认此山，以为妖物，今误矣，与汝尚当尽力追寻！”

却说孽龙精被真君杀败，更伤了二子，并许多族类，咬牙嚼



of the Sage's fame, he journeyed on foot to the Sage's abode to be a disciple.

Gan Zhan, courtesy name Bowu, a native of Fengcheng, who was disposed to cultivate the inner spirit rather than pursue official posts, was determined to learn the Daoist arts from the Sage.

Shi Cen, courtesy name Taiyu, a native of Pei County, whose father, Shi Shuo, had served as an official in the Wu region and was therefore living in Chihu County, Jiujiang. He was a man of powerful physique, courage, and strength. Having heard about the Sage's meritorious deeds in killing the flood dragons, he joyfully came to follow the Sage. The Sage entrusted him and Gan Zhan with the care of the divine swords and made both men his personal attendants.

The Sage praised these ten men for staying away from the charcoal women and took them with him in his travels across the country, subjugating flood dragons and snakes. They were the ones who would rise to heaven later in the story. Those who had been tainted by charcoal were so ashamed of themselves that they took themselves off. The Charcoal Women marketplace exists to this day.

To Shi Cen and Xu Lie, the Sage said, "The demons wreaking havoc even as I speak can transform themselves in unpredictable ways. The two of you may go to Boyang Lake and trace them down."

They gladly accepted the order and departed, their swords drawn. It was night when they arrived at Boyang Lake, where they ascended a stone platform and looked around for demons. This is the very Overlook Platform, mistakenly called Fishing Platform, that remains to this day at the mouth of the Yao River. At the sight of an object that resembled a snake, its head raised high, its tail stretching several tens of *li*, Shi Cen said, "Could this be a demon?" With that, he brought his sword down and cut it in half. The next morning, they saw that it was a mountain called Mount Centipede, now cut in half. The mountain, which bears witness to the deed of the immortal, stands to this day. Shi Cen said to Xu Lie, "In the darkness of the night, I thought this mountain was a demon, but I've been proved wrong. Let's move on and search elsewhere."

Having suffered defeat at the Sage's hands and lost two sons and



齿，以恨真君。聚集众族类商议，欲往小姑潭求老龙报仇。众蛟党曰：“如此甚好！”孽龙乃奔入小姑潭深底。那潭不知有几许深，谚云：“大姑阔万丈，小姑深万丈。”所以叫做小姑潭。那孽龙到万丈潭底，只见：

水泛泛漫天，浪层层拍岸。江中心有一座小姑山，虽是个中流砥柱，江下面有一所老龙潭，却似个不朽龙宫。那龙宫盖的碧磷磷鸳鸯瓦，围的光闪闪孔雀屏，垂的疏朗朗翡翠帘，摆的弯环环虎皮椅。只见老龙坐在虎椅之上，龙女侍在堂下，龙兵绕在官前，夜叉立在门边，龙子龙孙列在阶上。真个是江心渺渺无双景，水府茫茫第一家。

说那老龙出处，他原是黄帝荆山铸鼎之时，骑他上天。他在天上贪毒，九天玄女拿着他送与罗堕阁尊者。尊者养他在钵盂里，养了千百年，他贪毒的性子不改，走下世来，就吃了张果老的驴，伤了周穆王的八骏。朱漫浮心怀不忿，学就个屠龙之法，要下手

many other members of his clan, the Demon Dragon burned with hatred for the Sage. Gnashing his teeth in rage, he called a clan meeting, at which he expressed the wish to go to Little Sister-in-law Pond to ask the Old Dragon to help him take revenge. The flood dragons said, "That's a good idea." Thereupon the Demon Dragon dived straight into Little Sister-in-law Pond, and a deep pond it was. As a popular saying goes, "Big Sister-in-law is ten thousand feet wide; Little Sister-in-law is ten thousand feet deep." Hence the name Little Sister-in-law Pond. The Demon Dragon plunged to the very bottom of the pond. Behold:

The water rises to the sky; the waves lap against the shore.

In midstream stands Little Sister-in-law Rock,

The mainstay of the river;

Underneath lies a pond that holds an eternal palace,

The abode of the Old Dragon.

The roof is covered with paired green tiles,

Surrounded by glistening fan-shaped peacock tails.

The hall is adorned with green jade curtains;

In the middle is a round-armed chair covered with tiger skin.

On the chair sits the Old Dragon,

With dragon maids in attendance at the foot of the steps,

Dragon soldiers at their posts throughout the palace,

Yakshas guarding the doorways,

And dragon sons and grandsons standing in line on the dais.

Truly, it is a sight second to none in the heart of the river,

A palace without equal in the world of water.

Now, a word about the Old Dragon's background. It was this very dragon that the Yellow Emperor had ridden on his way to heaven after making a brass tripod at Mount Jing. As punishment for the dragon's greed and malice, the Lady of the Nine Heavens had him arrested and sent to the chief arhat, who kept him for a thousand years in an alms bowl, but the dragon remained as greedy and malicious as ever. After descending on earth, he ate Zhang Guolao's³² donkey and wounded the eight precious horses of King Mu of the Zhou dynasty.





着他，他又藏在巴蜀地方一人家后园之中橘子里面。那两个着棋的老儿想他做龙脯，[眉批]想头玄甚。他又走到葛陂中来，撞着费长房打一棒，他就忍着疼奔走华阳洞去。那晓得吴淖的斧子又利害些，当头一劈，受了老大的亏苦，头脑子虽不曾破，却失了项下这一颗明珠，再也上天不得。因此上拜了小姑娘娘，求得这所万丈深潭，盖造个龙宫，恁般齐整。

却说那孽龙奔入龙宫之内，投拜老龙，哭哭啼啼，告诉前情。说道许逊斩了他的儿子，伤了他的族类，苦苦还要擒他。言罢，放声大哭，那龙宫大大小小，那一个不泪下。老龙曰：“兔死狐悲，物伤其类。许逊既这等可恶，待我拿来与你复仇！”孽龙曰：“许逊传了谶母飞步之法，又得了玉女斩邪之剑，神通广大，难以轻敌。”老龙曰：“他纵有飞步之法，飞我老龙不过，他纵有斩邪之剑，斩我老龙不得！”于是即变作个天神模样，三头六臂，黑脸獠牙，则见：

身穿着重重铁甲，手提着利利钢叉。头戴着金盔，闪闪耀红霞，身跨着奔奔腾腾的骏马。雄纠纠英风直奋，威凛凛



An indignant Zhu Manping³³ learned ways of killing dragons and was determined to capture him, but the dragon hid in an orange in the backyard of a house in the Sichuan region. When two old men playing chess talked about making dried dragon meat of him (*What an imagination!*), he betook himself to Gepi, where he ran into Fei Changfang,³⁴ and was given a good whack with Fei's staff. In pain, the dragon scurried off to Huayang Cave, only to be hacked in the head by Wu Chuo's³⁵ merciless ax. What a luckless dragon! Even though his head was none the worse for it, the pearl tied to his neck was gone, which meant that he could never go back to heaven again. So he ingratiated himself with the goddess Little Sister-in-law and was given this ten-thousand-foot-deep pond, where he had a grand palace built for himself.

Now, let's resume our story. The Demon Dragon ran into the palace, flung himself at the Old Dragon's feet, and sobbed out his tale of woe. After delivering this account of Xu Xun killing his sons and other members of his clan and now hot on his trail, he burst into violent wails of grief. There was not a dry eye among the entire audience.

The Old Dragon said, "As they say, 'Just as the fox saddens at the death of the hare, one feels for one's own kind.' Since Xu Xun is such a hateful brute, let me get him, and you may have your revenge."

The Demon Dragon said, "But with the Reverend Mother's flying method plus two demon-subjugation swords from fairy maidens, he has such great magical power that you can't take him lightly."

"Whatever flying method he has, he can't beat me in flying. Whatever demon-subjugation swords he has, he can't touch me!" So saying, the Old Dragon changed himself into a celestial god, with three heads, six arms, a black face, and protruding teeth. Behold:

A heavy suit of mail over his body, a sharp iron fork in his hand.

*The gold helmet on his head shines under the rosy clouds;
 His mighty horse is rearing to go.*

A valiant warrior indeed, an awe-inspiring sight.



杀气横加。一心心要与人报冤家，古古怪怪的好怕。

那老龙打扮得这个模样，巡江夜叉、守宫将卒，人人喝采，个个称奇，道：“好一个妆束！”孽龙亦摇身一变，也变作天神模样，你看他怎生打扮？则见：

面乌乌赵玄坛般黑，身挺挺邓天王般长。手持张翼德丈八长枪，就好似斗口灵官的形状。口吐出葛仙真君的腾腾火焰，头放着华光菩萨的闪闪豪光。威风凛凛貌堂堂，不比前番模样。

那孽龙打扮出来，龙宫之内，可知人人喝采，个个夸奇。两个龙妖一齐打个旋风，奔上岸来。老龙居左，孽龙居右，蛟党列成阵势，准备真君到来迎敌。不在话下。

施岑与盱烈从高阜上一望见那妖气弥天，他两个少年英勇，也不管他势头来得大，也不管他党类来得多，就掣手中宝剑跳下高阜来，与那些妖怪大杀一场。施、盱二人，虽传得真君妙诀，终是寡不敌众，三合之中，当抵不住，败阵而走。老龙与孽龙随后赶杀，施、岑大败，回见真君，具说前事。真君大怒，遂提着两口宝剑，命甘战、时荷二人同去助阵，驾一朵祥云，径奔老龙列阵之所。那孽龙见了，自古“仇人相见，分外眼睁”，就提那



1949

*His heart set on revenge on behalf of others
He strikes terror into all who set eyes on him.*

The Old Dragon's new attire drew enthusiastic applause from the yakshas, commanders, and soldiers, and all present cheered, "Bravo!"

The Demon Dragon followed suit. With a shake of his body, he, too, changed into a celestial god. How did he look? Behold:

*His cheeks as black as that of the God of Money,
In stature, as tall as Marshal Deng.³⁶
Holding Zhang Fei's eight-foot lance,³⁷
He has the posture of no less a god than Marshal Wang.³⁸
Spitting fire from his mouth, as did Sage Ge,
And emanating the aura of Buddha Huaguang from his
head,
He is a goodly sight to see,
For he was not what he used to be.*

Thus transformed, he won applause and cheers from all and sundry throughout the palace.

Together, the two monsters spun themselves around in a whirlwind before heading for the shore. With the Old Dragon at the left and the Demon Dragon on the right, the flood dragons stood in battle array, ready to meet the Sage head-on. Let us leave them there for the moment.

Shi Cen and Xu Lie, while looking out from their vantage point, noticed that the air reeked of evil spirits. Completely indifferent to the enemies' power and overwhelming numbers, they jumped from the high ground, swords in hand, filled with youthful courage and determined to fight it out with the demons. Though they had learned the Sage's secret formulae, they were hopelessly outnumbered. After fighting three rounds, they had difficulty warding off the flood dragons and took flight. The Old Dragon and the Demon Dragon gave chase.

Shi Cen returned to the Sage's abode in defeat. His account of what had happened enraged the Sage, who picked up his two precious swords and, along with Gan Zhan and Shi He, traveled on an auspicious cloud to the battleground. When the Demon Dragon saw



长枪，径来刺着真君，老龙亦举起钢叉径来叉着真君。好一个真君，展开法力，就两口宝剑，左遮右隔，只见：

这一边挥宝剑，对一枝长枪，倍增杀气；那一边挥宝剑，架一管钢叉，顿长精神。这一边砍将去，就似那吕梁泻下的狂澜，如何当抵？那一边斫将去，就似那蜀山崩了的土块，怎样支撑？这一边施高强武艺，杀一个鹞入鸦群；那一边显凛烈威风，杀一个虎奔羊穴。这一边用一个风扫残红的法子，杀得他落花片片坠红泥；那一边使一个浪滚陆地的势儿，杀得他尘土茫茫归大海。真个是拨开覆地翻天手，要斩兴波作浪邪。

二龙与真君混战，未分胜败，忽翻身腾在半空，却要呼风唤雨，飞砂走石，来捉真君。此时真君已会腾云驾雾，遂赶上二龙，又在半空中杀了多时，后落下平地又战。那些蛟党，见真君法大，二龙渐渐当抵不住，一齐掩杀过来。时荷、甘战二人，乃各执利剑，亦杀入阵中。你看那师徒们横冲直撞，那些妖孽怎生抵敌得住？那老龙力气不加，三头中被真君伤了一头，六臂中被真君断了一臂，遂化阵清风去了。孽龙见老龙败阵，心中慌张，恐被真



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the Sage, his feelings could be captured by the saying "When enemies meet face to face, their eyes blaze with anger." Picking up his lance, he charged at the Sage. The Old Dragon also charged, his iron fork at the ready. Exercising his magic power, the great Sage repelled their attacks left and right with his two swords. Behold:

One sword parries the lance in relentless ferocity;

The other sword fearlessly fends off the iron fork.

A blow from one is like the raging Lüliang waterfall;

A cut from the other is like an avalanche in the Sichuan mountains.

In a display of power, one is like a falcon among crows;

In a show of might, the other is like a tiger pouncing on lambs.

One kills like wind blowing away withered flowers,

Until heads roll like petals on the ground;

The other kills like waves sweeping the land,

Until soil, dust, and all end up in the sea.

Truly, with hands that can overturn sky and earth,

He wipes out demons that wreak havoc on the land.

Locked in battle with the Sage, with neither side gaining the upper hand, the two dragons suddenly leaped into the air, ready to call forth a rainstorm to whip up sand and stones so as to disorient and capture the sage. But by this time, the Sage, who already knew the art of mounting the clouds and riding the mist, also rose into the air, caught up with the dragons, and resumed combat.

A good while later, they all descended to earth again and continued to fight. The flood dragons observed that the two dragons were gradually succumbing to the Sage and charged forward. Shi He and Gan Zhan, sharp swords in hand, also plunged into the melee. With the Sage and his two disciples rampaging through the enemy ranks, the dragons could hardly fend them off. As his strength failed him, the Old Dragon found that the Sage had wounded one of his three heads and cut off one of his six arms. Changing himself into a cool breeze, he fled.

Witnessing the Old Dragon's defeat, the Demon Dragon took



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君所捉，亦化作一阵清风望西而去。其馀蛟党，各自逃散。有化作蠡斯，在麦陇上逼逼剥剥跳的；有化作青蝇，在棘树上嘈嘈杂杂闹的；有化作蚯蚓，在水田中扭扭屹屹走的；有化作蜜蜂，在花枝上扰扰嚷嚷采的；有化作蜻蜓，在云霄里轻轻款款飞的；有化作土狗子，不做声，不做气，躲在田傍下的。彼时真君追赶妖孽，走在田傍上经过，忽失了一足，把那田傍踹开，只见一道妖气迸将出来。真君急忙看时，只见一个土狗子躲在那里。真君将剑一挥，砍成两截，原来是孽龙第五子也。[眉批] 剑斩三子。后人

有诗叹曰：

自笑蛟精不见机，苦同仙子两相持；
今朝挥起无情剑，又斩亲生第五儿。

却说真君斩了孽龙第五子，急忙追寻孽龙，不见踪影。遂与二弟子且回豫章。吴君谓真君曰：“目今蛟党还盛，未曾诛灭，孽龙有此等助威添势，岂肯罢休！莫若先除了他的党类，使他势孤力弱，一举可擒，此所谓射人先射马之谓也。”真君曰：“言之有理。”遂即同施岑、甘战、陈勋、盱烈、钟离嘉群弟子随己出外追斩蛟党。犹恐孽龙精溃其郡城，留吴君、彭抗在家镇之。于是真君同群弟子，或登高山，或往穷谷，或经深潭，或指长桥，或

fright. Afraid that the Sage would capture him, he also changed into a cool breeze and fled in a westerly direction. The flood dragons ran for their lives, dispersing themselves every which way. Some changed into grasshoppers, hopping in the wheat fields; some into green flies, buzzing on the date trees; some into earthworms, wriggling through the rice paddies; some into bees, noisily gathering nectar from the flowers; some into dragonflies, flitting about among the clouds; some into crickets, hiding quietly beneath the ridges in plowed fields. The Sage happened to walk past one of those ridges while pursuing the demons. He suddenly lost his footing and inadvertently kicked away part of the ridge. What should he see emanating from the gouged earth but a wisp of vapor signifying the presence of a demon! Alarmed, he looked down and saw a cricket hiding inside. He swung his sword and cut the cricket in half. It turned out to be the Demon Dragon's fifth son. (*Three sons have now perished by the sword.*) A later poet had this to say:

*How laughable that the demons didn't know better
 Than to fight the immortal!
 With his merciless swords drawn high in the air,
 He killed the fifth son of the Demon Dragon.*

After killing the Demon Dragon's fifth son, the Sage hastened to hunt down the Demon Dragon himself but could find no trace of him.

The Sage returned to Yuzhang with his two disciples. Mr. Wu said to him, "The flood dragons are still flourishing. They have not been exterminated. Since he has their support, the Demon Dragon is not going to give up. The best course of action is to eliminate his underlings so that, alone and powerless, he can be easily captured. This is what is meant by the saying, 'When shooting a man, aim at his horse first.'"

"How right you are!" said the Sage. With Shi Cen, Gan Zhan, Chen Xun, Xu Lie, Zhong Lijia, and other disciples, he again went in pursuit of the flood dragons. Afraid that the Demon Dragon would attack his hometown, he left Wu Jun and Peng Kang there for defense. And so, the Sage and his group of disciples went over hill and dale, through deep ponds, and across long bridges and large lakes to





历大湖等处，寻取蛟党灭之。

真君一日至新吴地方，忽见一蛟，变成一水牛，欲起洪水，淹没此处人民。嘘气一口，涨水一尺，嘘气二口，长水二尺。真君大怒，挥剑欲斩之。那蛟孽见了真君，魂不附体，遂奔入潭中而去。真君即立了石碑一片，作镇蛟之文以禁之，其文曰：

奉命太玄，得道真仙。劫终劫始，先地先天。无量法界，玄之又玄。勤修无遗，白日升仙。神剑落地，符法升天。妖邪丧胆，鬼精逃潜。

其潭至今名曰镇龙潭，石碑犹存。

一日，真君又行至海昏之上，闻有巨蛇据山为穴，吐气成云，长有数里，人畜在气中者，即被吞吸。江湖舟船，多遭其覆溺，大为民害。施岑登北岭之高而望之，见其毒气涨天，乃叹曰：“斯民何罪，而久遭其害也？”遂禀真君，欲往诛之。真君曰：“吾闻此畜，妖气最毒，搪突其气者，十人十死，百人百亡，须待时而往。”良久，俄有一赤乌飞过，真君曰：“可矣。”言赤乌报时，天神至，地神临，可以诛妖。后于其地立观，名候时观，又



hunt down the flood dragons.

One day, the Sage came to a place called Xinwu. There, he saw a flood dragon change itself into a water buffalo, preparing to raise a flood that would drown the local residents. It blew out one breath, and the water rose one foot. With two breaths, the water rose two feet. In anger, the Sage drew his swords, but the flood dragon was so terrified by the sight of him that it jumped into a pond. The Sage put up a stone tablet on the spot and wrote an essay that placed a curse on the flood dragon. The essay said:

Having attained immortality by order of the Universe, to live as long as the ever-cycling kalpas and the sky and the earth, I have power that is limitless and most profound. In assiduous cultivation of my spirit, I shall ascend to heaven in broad daylight. With my divine swords descending to the ground and my magic figures rising to the sky, demons are stricken with terror, and evil spirits hide themselves from view.

The pond, henceforth called Dragon Subjugation Pond, exists to this day, as does the stone tablet.

One day, coming upon a place called Haihun during his travels, the Sage heard that a giant python had made a mountain in the vicinity of its home. The breath it blew into the air traveled for several *li* in the shape of a cloud and swallowed all the people and animals caught in it. The python was also much given to capsizing boats in the rivers and lakes, wreaking havoc on the people. Looking out from the top of North Hill, Shi Cen noticed the evil miasma in the air and said with a sigh, "What have the people done to deserve such misery?"

When he asked the Sage for permission to kill the python, the latter cautioned in these words: "From what I've heard, the poison of this beast is most lethal. Everyone who comes into contact with its breath is sure to die. Let's wait for a more opportune moment before doing anything."

A considerable time later, a red crow flew by. The Sage said, "Now is the moment for action." It is said that a red crow heralds the advent of the gods of the sky and earth and is therefore a signal that the moment has come for the subjugation of evil spirits. Later, a temple



号赤乌观。且说那时真君引群弟子前至蛇所，其蛇奋然跃出深穴，举首高数十丈，眼若火炬，口似血盆，鳞似金钱，口中吐出一道妖气，则见：

冥冥濛濛，比蚩尤迷敌的大雾；昏昏暗暗，例元规污人的飞尘。飞去飞来，却似那汉殿宫中结成的黑块；滚上滚下，又似那泰山岩里吐出的顽云。大地之中，遮蔽了峰峦岭岫；长空之上，隐藏了日月星辰。弥弥漫漫，涨将开千有百里；霏霏拂拂，当着了十无一生。正是妖蛇吐气三千丈，千里犹闻一阵腥。

真君呼一口仙风，吹散其气，率弟子各挥宝剑，乡人摩旗擂鼓，呐喊振天相助。妖蛇全无惧色，奔将过来，真君运起法雷，劈头打去，兼用神剑一指，蛇乃却步。施岑、甘战二人，奋勇飞步纵前，施踏其首，甘蹠其尾，真君先以剑劈破其颡，陈勋再引剑当中腰斩之，蛇腹遂尔裂开。忽有一小蛇自腹中走出，长有数丈，施岑欲斩之，真君曰：“彼母腹中之蛇，未曾见天日，犹不曾加害于民，不可诛之。”遂叱曰：“畜生好去，我放汝性命，毋得害人！”小蛇惧怯，奔行六七里，闻鼓噪之声，犹反听而顾其



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was erected on the spot and was given two names—Biding Time and Red Crow.

But, to continue with the story, the Sage led a group of his disciples to the python's cave. Abruptly, the monster leaped out of the depths of its cave and raised its head until its neck was several tens of feet long. Its eyes blazing like torches, its open mouth like a basin filled with blood, its scales like shining coins, it blew an evil breath. Behold:

Opaque as the fog conjured up by Chiyou,³⁹

Murky as the duststorm that reminds one of Yuangui.⁴⁰

*The black particles, like those formed in the Han palace,
Fly back and forth, up and down, like dark clouds over*

Mount Tai.

They block out hills, the sun, the moon, and the stars.

They spread far, killing everyone in their way.

Truly, the evil python's breath travels three thousand li;

Even the air a thousand-li away reeks of its foul smell.

With one exhalation of the Sage's immortal breath, the python's foul breath was gone. The Sage and his disciples held their swords high, and the local residents started waving flags, beating drums, and uttering earth-shaking battle cries to help frighten the python. But the evil python showed no sign of fear and charged at the Sage, who then conjured up a thunder and flung it head-on at the python while pointing his divine swords at it. The python stopped in its tracks. Shi Cen and Gan Zhan dashed forward. With Shi's feet on the python's head and Gan standing on its tail, the Sage slashed its jaws, and Chen Xun cut it right through the middle. Its belly burst open, and a small python several feet long emerged from it. Shi was about to kill it when the Sage stopped him, saying, "This one hasn't yet even seen the light of day from inside the belly of its mother and is not guilty of any crime against humans. Don't kill it." He then said sternly to the small python, "Go now, beast! I'm letting you off, but don't do anything to harm people!"

In terror, the small python ran for six or seven *li*. Only when it heard a great commotion did it turn around to look at its mother. Today,



母。此地今为蛇子港。群弟子再请追而戮之，真君曰：“既放其生而又追戮之，是心无恻隐也。”蛇子遂得入江。今有庙在新建吴城，甚是灵感。宋真宗敕封“灵顺昭应安济惠泽王”，俗呼曰小龙王庙是也。大蛇既死，其骨聚而成洲，今号积骨洲。真君入海昏，经行之处，皆留坛靖，凡有六处。通候时之地为七，一曰进化靖，二曰节奏靖，三曰丹符靖，四曰华表靖，五曰紫阳靖，六曰霍阳靖，七曰列真靖，其势布若星斗之状，盖以镇压其后也。其七靖今皆为宫观，或为寺院。巨蟒既诛，妖血污剑，于是洗磨之，且削石以试其锋，今新建有磨剑池、试剑石犹在。真君谓诸徒曰：“蛟党除之莫尽，更有孽龙精通灵不测，今知我在此，若伺隙溃我郡城，恐吴、彭二人莫能慑服，莫若弃此而归。”施岑是个勇士，谓曰：“此处妖孽甚多，再寻几日，杀几个回去却好！”真君曰：“吾在外日久，恐吾郡蛟党又聚作一处，可速归除之！”于是悉离



that spot is called the Port of the Python's Son. To the disciples' requests to give chase and kill the small python, the Sage said, "If we do that after we have already let it go, where's the mercy in our hearts?"

Thus it was that the small python managed to reach the river. A temple still stands on this spot at Wucheng, Xinjian. Most responsive to prayers, it received the name Temple of Efficacious and Manifest Succor and Benevolence from Emperor Zhenzong [r.998-1023] of the Song dynasty but is better known to all and sundry as the Temple of the Young Dragon King. The bones of the mother python, gathered together, formed an islet, which is called today the Islet of Bones.

In his travels in Haihun, the Sage left behind six altars. These six, plus the one he had before while he was biding his time, were the altar of transformation, the altar of prayer, the altar of magic figures, the altar of ornamental columns, the altar of purple sun, the altar of the crane sun, and the altar of the naming of sages. The seven altars were spread out in the shape of the Big Dipper so as to subjugate future demons. All seven have since been made either temples or monasteries.

With the giant python out of the way, the Sage washed the blood of the monster off his swords, honed their blades, and struck a stone with them to test their sharpness. The pond where he cleaned his swords and the rock on which he tested their sharpness still exist in Xinjian. He said to his disciples, "The flood dragons have not been wiped out. The Demon Dragon, being as smart as he is, surely knows where I am. Should he take advantage of my absence to attack my hometown, I'm afraid that Wu and Peng won't be able to subdue him. Let's leave this place and go back."

The valiant warrior Shi Cen said, "With so many demons around here, let's spend a few more days trying to find them and kill them before we leave. Wouldn't that be better?"

The sage replied, "I've been away for so long that I'm afraid the flood dragons in my town have rallied again. We should be on our way as soon as possible so we can destroy them all." Accordingly,



海昏而行。海昏乡人感真君之德，遂立生祠，四时享祭，不在话下。

且说孽龙精果然深恨真君，乘其远出，欲将豫章郡滚成一海，以报前仇。遂聚集败残蛟党，尚有七八百馀。孽龙曰：“昨夜月离于毕，今夜酉时，主天阴晦暝，风雨大作，我与尔等，趁此机会，把豫章郡一滚而沉，有何不可？”此时正是午牌时分，吴君猛与彭君抗恰从西山高处，举目一望，只见妖气漫天，乃曰：“许师往外诛妖，不想妖气尽聚于此。”言未毕，忽见豫章郡社伯并土地等神，来见吴君说：“孽龙又聚了八百馀蛟党，欲搅翻江西一郡，变作沧海，只待今夜酉牌时分风雨大作之时，就要下手。有等居民，闻得此信，皆来小神庙中，叩头磕脑，叫小神保他。我想江西不沉却好，若沉了时节，正是‘泥菩萨落水，自身难保’，还保得别人？伏望尊仙怎生区处！”吴君听说此事，到吃了一大惊，遂与彭君急忙下了山头。吴君谓彭君曰：“尔且仗剑一口，驱使神兵，先往江前、江后寻逻！”彭君去了，吴君乃上了一座九星的法坛，取过一个五雷的令牌，仗了一口七星的宝剑，注上一碗五龙吐的净水，念了几句“乾罗恒那九龙破秽真君”的神咒，



they all left Haihun. Out of gratitude for the Sage's kind deeds, the local residents erected a temple to him and made seasonal offerings, but of this, no more.

Sure enough, the Demon Dragon hated the Sage with every fiber of his being. He planned to take advantage of the Sage's absence to submerge Yuzhang in the sea in revenge for his defeat. He gathered together the seven to eight hundred flood dragons who had survived the assaults and said to them, "Last night, the moon moved close to the Bi star, heralding a rainstorm. By late afternoon today, the sky will be overcast, and a violent storm will sweep through this region. Why don't we take this opportunity to sink Yuzhang under the sea?" It was the noon hour when he said this.

It so happened that while the Demon Dragon was saying those words, Mr. Wu Meng and Mr. Peng Kang looked out from the height of West Hill and saw the sky overcast with an aura that indicated a massive demonic presence. They commented, "So, the demons have rallied here while Master Xu is away looking for them."

Before the words were quite out of their mouths, the local gods of Yuzhang appeared before Wu, saying, "The Demon Dragon has again rallied about eight hundred flood dragons to sink Jiangxi in the sea. They'll make their move late this afternoon when the rainstorm begins. Residents who heard about this came to our temples to kowtow and ask for protection. As we see it, we can help them if Jiangxi were not swept into the sea, but if this were to happen, it would truly be as the proverb says, 'A clay statue of Buddha crossing a river is hardly able to save itself, let alone everyone else.' Please help us."

Alarmed by this account, Mr. Wu hastened down the hill with Peng and said to him, "Now, you go ahead with your sword and summon the celestial warriors after you first patrol around the river."

After Peng left, Wu mounted a nine-constellation altar, took a five-thunder command tablet, and, holding a seven-constellation precious sword in one hand, filled a bowl with the pure water that came out of the mouths of five dragons. He then intoned an incantation that began "May the cosmos and the nine dragons help the Sage triumph over evil," cited a divine formula, and traced with his feet on the



捏了一个三台的真诀，步了一个八卦的神罡。乃飞符一道，径差年值功曹，送至日宫太阳帝君处投下，叫那太阳帝君把这个日轮儿缓缓的沉下，却将酉时翻作午时，就要如鲁阳挥以长戈，即返三舍，虞公指以短剑，却转几分的日子。又飞符一道，径差月值功曹，送至月宫太阴星君处投下，叫那太阴星君把个月轮儿缓缓的移上，却将亥时翻作酉时，就要如团团离海角，渐渐出云衢，此夜一轮满，清光何处无。[眉批] □□□丽□□小说□能品。又飞符一道，径差日值功曹，送至风伯处投下，叫那风伯今晚将大风息了，一气不要吹嘘，万窍不要怒叫，切不可过江掇起龙头浪，拂地吹开马足尘，就树撮将黄叶落，入山推出白云来。又飞符一道，径差时值功曹，送至雨师处投下，叫那雨师今晚收了雨脚，休得要点点滴滴打破芭蕉，淋淋漓漓洗开苔藓，颓山黑雾倾浓墨，倒海冲风泻急湍，势似阳侯夸溟海，声如项羽战章邯。又飞符一道，差那律令大神，径到雷神处投下，叫那雷神今晚将五雷藏着，休得要驱起那号令，放出那霹雳，轰轰烈烈，使一鸣山岳震，再鼓禹门开，响激天关转，身从地穴来。又飞符一道，差着急脚大神，送至云师处投下，叫他今晚卷起云头，切不可氤氲氤氲，遮掩天



ground the imagined outline of the Big Dipper. Then he tossed a message to the god on yearly duty in the Jade Emperor's palace so that he could transmit it to the God of the Sun in the sun palace. The message requested the God of the Sun to postpone the sinking of the sun by six hours and make the sun reverse its course as it did when Duke Luyang pointed his lance at it and hold its position as it did when the Duke of Yu pointed his dagger at it.⁴¹

He then tossed a message to the god on monthly duty at the Jade Emperor's palace, to be transmitted to the God of the Moon in the moon palace. The message asked the God of the Moon to postpone the rising of the moon that night by four hours and to make the full moon cast its lambent light over all corners of the earth from the moment it rose above the sea and emerged from the clouds. ([Illegible.])

He tossed another message to the god on daily duty at the Jade Emperor's palace, to be transmitted to the God of Wind. This message asked the God of Wind to let the wind rest for the night and not give even one howl or one puff of breath, nor cross the river and whip up dragon-head waves or blow up dust from horses' hooves, scatter withered leaves from tree, and drive white clouds out from the mountains.

Then he tossed a message to the god on hourly duty at the Jade Emperor's palace, to be passed on to the God of Rain. This message requested the God of Rain to hold back the rain for the night and not let the raindrops destroy plantain leaves and wash away mosses, nor let it pour down ink from the black fog on the bald mountains, swell the wind-driven waves that the god of waves could churn up in the sea, and make deafening noises like those heard in the battle between Xiang Yu and Zhang Han.⁴²

Another message went to the fleet-footed God of Running for him to deliver to the God of Thunder, asking the latter to hide the five thunders for the night and not blow his bugle, let out the bolts, or send the rumbles that shake the mountains, nor to drum by the Gate of Yu or make the sky spin and the earth tremble.

The last message went to the Messenger God, to be delivered to the God of Clouds, asking the latter to hold back the clouds for the



地，渺渺漠漠，蒙蔽江山，使那重重翼凤飞层汉，叠叠从龙出远波，太行游子思亲切，巫峡襄王入梦多。吴君遣符已毕，又差那社伯等神，火速报知真君，急回豫章郡，慑伏群妖，毋得迟误。吴君调拨已毕，遂亲自仗剑，镇压群蛟，不在话下。

却说孽龙精只等待日轮下去，月光上来的酉牌时分，就呼风唤雨，驱云使雷，把这豫章一郡滚沉。不想长望短望，日头只在未上照耀，叫他下去，那日头就相似缚下一条绳子，再也不下去。孽龙又招那月轮上来，这月轮就相似有人扯住着他，再也不上来。孽龙怒起，也不管酉时不酉时，就命取蛟党，大家呼着风来。谁知那风伯遵了吴君的符命，半空中叫道：“孽龙！你如今学这等歪，却要放风，我那个听你！”孽龙呼风不得，就去叫雷神打雷。谁知那雷神遵了吴君的符命，半下儿不响。孽龙道：“雷公，雷公！我往日唤你，少可有千百声，今日半点声气不做，敢害哑了？”雷神道：“我到不害哑，只是你今日害颠。”孽龙见雷公不响，无如之奈，只得叫声：“云师快兴云来！”那云师遵了吴君的符命，把那千岩万壑之云，只卷之退藏于密，那肯放之弥于六合。



night and not allow them to cover the vast sky, block out the rivers and mountains, carry the phoenixes and the dragons, or evoke the nostalgia of travelers to the Taihang Mountains and give dreams to King Xiang at Wu Gorge.⁴³

Having sent out all the messages, Mr. Wu told the local gods to report to the Sage with all the speed they could muster so that the Sage could rush back to Yuzhang and subdue the demons without delay. This done, Wu took up his sword to do battle with the flood dragons. More of this later.

In the meantime, the Demon Dragon was waiting for the hour when the sun would yield to the moon so that he could summon the wind, the rain, the clouds, and the thunder to submerge the whole county of Yuzhang in the sea. Yet, however anxiously he waited for the hour to arrive, the sun kept shining brightly from its early afternoon position. When he ordered it to set, it did not budge, as if tied to its place in the sky by a rope. The Demon Dragon then tried to make the moon rise, but it, too, stayed where it was, as if someone were holding it tight. Losing all patience, the Demon Dragon ordered all the flood dragons to summon the wind, whether it was the right hour or not. But the God of Wind, under instructions from Wu, called out from midair, "Demon Dragon! You have become such a monster that I'm not going to follow your order for wind!"

Having failed to call forth the wind, the Demon Dragon turned to the God of Thunder for help, little knowing that this god had also received orders from Wu. As the God of Thunder remained silent, the Demon Dragon exclaimed, "God of Thunder! You have never failed to give me at least a thousand peals of thunder whenever I asked. Why are you so quiet today? Have you lost your voice?"

The God of Thunder replied, "No, I haven't lost my voice, but you have certainly lost your mind!"

The Demon Dragon could do nothing else but call out, "God of Clouds! Give me clouds, and be quick about it!"

Under orders from Wu, the God of Clouds had rolled up all the clouds that were scattered above the hills and valleys and had hidden them in a secret place. Why would he give in and release them now?



只见玉宇无尘，天清气朗，那云师还在半空中唱一个“万里长江收暮云”耍子哩。孽龙见云师不肯兴云，且去问雨师讨雨。谁知那雨师亦遵了吴君的符命，莫说是千点万点洒将下来，就是半点儿也是没有的。

孽龙精望日日不沉，招月月不上，呼风风不至，唤雨雨不来，驱雷雷不响，使云云不兴。直激得怒从心上起，恶向胆边生！遂谓众蛟党曰：“我不要风、云、雷、雨，一小小豫章郡终不然滚不成海？”遂耸开鳞甲，翻身一转，把那江西章江门外，就沉了数十馀丈。吴君看见，即忙飞起手中宝剑，驾起足下祥云，直取孽龙。孽龙与吴君厮战，彭君亦飞剑助敌，在江西城外大杀一场。孽龙招取党类，一涌而至，在上的变成无数的黄蜂，扑头扑脑乱丁；在下的变成滚滚的长蛇，遍足乱绕。孽龙更变作个金刚菩萨，长又长，大又大，手执金戈，与吴君、彭君混战。好一个吴君！又好一个彭君！上杀个雪花盖顶，战住狂蜂；下杀个枯树盘根，战住长蛇；中杀个鹞子翻身，抵住孽龙。自未时杀起，杀近黄昏。忽真君同着诸弟子到来，大喝一声：“许逊在此！孽畜敢肆害



There was not even a streak of cloud across the clear sky, where the God of Clouds was heard merrily singing, "I call back the sunset clouds over the ten-thousand-*li* Yangzi River."

Realizing that the God of Clouds was determined not to oblige him, the Demon Dragon turned to the God of Rain, little knowing that the latter, too, had received orders from Wu. Not even half a drop of rain was going to fall, let alone thousands upon thousands of them.

With the sun refusing to sink, the moon to rise, the wind to blow, the rain to fall, the thunder to rumble, and the clouds to gather, the Demon Dragon burned with rage. He said to the flood dragons, "I don't believe that tiny Yuzhang county can't be sunk beneath the sea without winds, clouds, thunder, and rain." With that, he spread out the scales covering his body, flipped head over tail, and sank the area outside Zhangjiang Gate of Jiangxi tens of feet under the ground. At the sight, Wu quickly raised high his precious sword and, riding an auspicious cloud, charged straight at the Demon Dragon. While the two were thus engaged, Peng rushed over to help, his sword drawn high. The Demon Dragon called for his underlings to join him in the fierce battle outside the city gate, and they came in one great swarm. Some changed into numerous wasps and fiercely attacked Wu and Peng in the face, while others turned into long, wriggling snakes and coiled around the two men's feet. The Demon Dragon transformed himself into the shape of Buddha's giant warrior attendant. Brandishing a gold dagger-ax, he got into a good fight with Wu and Peng. An impressive sight it was, with Wu and Peng holding the frenzied wasps at bay, their swords swishing above their heads like snowflakes; fighting off the long snakes at their feet, their swords swirling about in the pattern of the twisted roots of a withered tree; and fending off the Demon Dragon, their swords flitting about the middle like somersaulting sparrow hawks.

They fought from early afternoon all the way to sundown. Suddenly, the Sage arrived, followed by a group of his disciples. "Xu Xun is here!" he bellowed. "Would you accursed beasts dare do violence to me?"



么？”诸蛟皆有惧色。孽龙见了真君，咬定牙根，要报前仇。〔肩批〕四次斩蛟。乃谓群蛟曰：“今日遭此大难，我与尔等，生死存亡，在此一举！”诸蛟踊跃言曰：“父子兄弟，当拚命一战，胜则同生，败则同死！”遂与孽龙精力战真君，怎见得利害：

愁云蔽日，杀气漫空，地覆天翻，神愁鬼哭。仙子无边法力，妖精许大神通。一个万丈潭中孽怪，舞着金戈；一个九重天上真仙，飞将宝剑。一个棱棱层层甲鳞竦动，一个变化化手段高强。一个呵一口妖气，雾涨云迷；一个吹一口仙风，天清气朗。一个领蛟子蛟孙战真仙，恰好似八十万曹兵鏖赤壁；一个同仙徒仙弟收妖孽，却好似二十八汉将闹昆阳。一个翻江流，搅海水，重重叠叠涌波涛；一个撼乾枢，



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The flood dragons took fright, but the Demon Dragon, his jaw set firmly at the sight of the Sage, was determined to exact his vengeance. (*This will be the fourth major victory over the flood dragons.*)

The Demon Dragon announced to the flood dragons, "At this darkest hour, for you as well as for me, whether we live or die depends on what we do now!"

With zest, the flood dragons replied, "Being members of the same clan, we'll surely fight for our lives and live together if we win or die together if we lose."

And so, they joined the Demon Dragon and fought with all their might against the Sage. How do we know it was a good fight?

*Dark clouds blotted out the sun;
 The air of death permeated the sky.
 Heaven and earth turned upside down;
 The gods grieved, and ghosts wept.
 The immortal had boundless magic power;
 The evil one was equally endowed.
 One was a monster from a pond ten thousand feet deep,
 Brandishing a gold dagger-ax;
 The other was an immortal from the ninth layer of heaven,
 Wielding precious swords.
 One moved with shimmering layers of scales;
 The other made good use of his skills of transfiguration.
 One needed only a puff of his demon breath
 To make fogs and clouds appear.
 The other needed only a puff of his immortal breath
 To make the sky clear again.
 One led his flood dragon offspring in fighting the immortal,
 Like the eight-hundred-thousand-strong Cao army at the
 Red Cliffs;⁴⁴
 The other led his disciples in subjugating evil,
 Like the twenty-eight Han warriors at Kunyang.⁴⁵
 One churned the rivers and seas, stirring up the waves;
 The other shook the pillars and axes of the universe, invok-*



摇坤轴，烈烈轰轰运霹雳。一个要为族类报了冤仇，一个要为生民除将祸害。正是：两边齐角力，一样显神机；到头分胜败，毕竟有雄雌！

却说孽龙精奋死来战真君，真君正要拿住他，以绝祸根。那些蛟党终是心中惧怯，真君的弟子们，各持宝剑，或斩了一两个的，或斩了三四个的，或斩了五六六个的，喷出腥血，一片通红。周广一剑，又将孽龙的第二子斩了。[眉批] 计斩四子。其余蛟党一个个变化走去。只有孽龙与真君独战，回头一看，蛟党无一人在身傍，也只得跳上云端，化一阵黑风而走。真君急追赶时，已失其所在。乃同众弟子回归。真君谓吴猛曰：“此番若非君之法力，数百万生灵，尽葬于波涛中矣！”吴君曰：“全仗尊师杀退蛟孽，不然，弟子亦危也。”

却说孽龙屡败，除杀死族类外，六子之中，已杀去四子。众蛟党恐真君诛己，心怏怏不安，尽皆变去。止有三蛟未变，三蛟者：二蛟系孽龙子，一蛟系孽龙孙，藏于新建洲渚之中。其余各变形为人，散于各郡城市镇中，逃躲灾难。一日，有真君弟子曾亨入于城市，见二少年，状貌殊异，鞠躬长揖，向曾亨问曰：



ing thunder.

One was intent on revenge for members of his clan;

The other was bent on destroying the scourge that plagued the people.

Truly, the two sides fought with all their might,

Using their magic powers;

The stronger will win, the weaker will lose.

Now, the Demon Dragon charged with all his might at the Sage, who was determined to capture him and put an end to this source of trouble once and for all. The flood dragons, however, were horror-stricken. The Sage's disciples, wielding their swords, cut them down, some killing one or two, some killing three or four, some even five or six. The foul-smelling blood spurted out, dyeing everything red. With one blow of Zhou Guang's sword, the second son of the Demon Dragon perished. (*So, four of his sons have died.*) All the surviving flood dragons changed shape and fled, leaving only the Demon Dragon to fight the Sage alone. Turning his head and seeing none of his underlings with him, the Demon Dragon jumped up on a cloud, changed himself into a gust of black wind, and was gone. The Sage quickly gave chase, but the monster was already out of sight.

On the way back with his disciples, the Sage said to Wu Meng, "If it hadn't been for your magic power, millions of human lives would have been lost in the flood!"

Wu replied, "It was you who put the flood dragons to flight. Otherwise, my life would have been in danger as well."

As for the Demon Dragon, after so many defeats and such heavy casualties among his underlings, he was left with only two sons out of six. All the flood dragons, afraid that the Sage would be after them next, changed into human form, except three, of whom two were the Demon Dragon's sons and one his grandson. These three hid in the rivers of Xinjian, but the rest of the flood dragons changed and dispersed into the towns and marketplaces of different counties so as to stay out of danger.

One day, Zeng Heng, one of the Sage's disciples, went into the city, where two young men with extraordinary looks bowed to him



“公非许君高门乎？”曾亨曰：“然。”既而问少年曰：“君是何人也？”少年曰：“仆家居长安，累世崇善。远闻许公深有道术，诛邪斩妖，必仗神剑，愿闻此神剑，有何功用？”曾亨曰：“吾师神剑，功用甚大，指天天开，指地地裂，指星辰则失度，指江河则逆流。万邪不敢当其锋，千妖莫能撻其锐。出匣时，霜寒雪凜，耀光处，鬼哭神愁，乃天赐之至宝也！”少年曰：“世间之物，不知亦有何物可当贤师神剑，而不为其所伤？”曾亨戏谓之曰：“吾师神剑，惟不伤冬瓜、葫芦二物耳，其余他物皆不能当也。”少年闻言，遂告辞而去。曾亨亦不知少年乃是蛟精所变也。蛟精一闻冬瓜、葫芦之言，尽说与党类知悉。真君一日以神剑授弟子施岑、甘战，令其遍寻蛟党诛之。蛟党以甘、施二人寻追甚紧，遂皆化为葫芦、冬瓜，泛满江中。真君登秀峰之巅，运神光一望，乃呼施岑、甘战谓曰：“江中所浮者，非葫芦、冬瓜，乃蛟精馀党也，汝二人可履水内斩之！”于是施岑、甘战飞步水上，举剑望葫芦乱砍。[眉批] 五次斩蛟。那冬瓜、葫芦乃是轻浮之物，一砍即入水中，



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with great respect and asked, "Might you be one of Mr. Xu's disciples?"

"Yes," replied Zeng. "Who might you be?"

"We live in Chang'an. We are from families with a long history of devotion to good works. Though we live far from here, we've heard about Mr. Xu's magic powers and the divine swords that he uses to kill evil spirits. But what exactly do his divine swords do?"

"My master's divine swords can do everything. When pointed at the sky, they rend it asunder. When pointed at the earth, they split it open. When pointed at the stars, they make them fall from their places in the sky. When pointed at the rivers, they reverse the currents. No evil spirit can fend them off, and no monster can defend against them. When drawn from their sheaths, they shine like cold frost and chilly snow. Wherever their glow is seen, ghosts weep and deities are distressed. They're truly a treasure bestowed by heaven."

"Is anything in this mortal world immune to your master's divine swords?"

Zeng said in jest, "The only two things that are immune are winter melon and bottle gourd. Nothing else."

Having heard this, the two young men bade him farewell and departed. Zeng had no idea that they were actually flood dragons in human form. The two hastened to share the news about winter melons and bottle gourds with other flood dragons.

One day, the Sage gave his divine swords to his disciples Shi Cen and Gan Zhan, telling them to search for flood dragons and exterminate them. With Shi and Gan hot on their heels, the flood dragons, in desperation, all changed into bottle gourds and winter melons and floated on the river. The Sage mounted the crest of Peak Xiu, looked around with his divine eyes, and called out to Shi and Gan, "Those things floating on the river are not gourds and melons but flood dragons, the ones we did not kill. You may step onto the surface of the water and get rid of them."

Swiftly, they landed on the water and swung their swords vigorously at the bottle gourds. (*The fifth major victory over the flood dragons.*) Being light and buoyant, the melons and gourds just dipped under the water when struck by the swords instead of bursting open. While



不能得破。正懊恼之间，忽有过往大仙在虚空中观看，遂令社伯之神，变为一八哥鸟儿，在施岑、甘战头上叫曰：“下剔上，下剔上。”施岑大悟，即举剑自下剔上，满江蛟党，约有七百馀性命，连根带蔓，悉无噍类。江中碧澄澄流水，变为红滚滚波涛。止有三蛟未及变形者，因而获免。真君见蛟党尽诛，遂封那八哥鸟儿头上一冠，所以至今八哥儿头上，皆有一冠。真君斩尽蛟党，后人诗叹曰：

神剑棱棱辟万邪，碧波江上砍葫瓜。

孽龙党类思翻海，不觉江心杀自家。

且说孽龙精所生六子，已诛其四；蛟党千馀，俱被真君诛灭。止有第三子与第六子，并有一长孙藏于新建县洲渚之中，尚得留命。及闻真君尽诛其蛟类，乃大哭曰：“吾父未知下落，今吾等兄弟六人，传有子孙六七百，并其族类，共计千馀。今皆被许逊剿灭，止留我兄弟二人，并一侄在此。吾知许逊道法高妙，岂肯容我叔侄们性命？不如前往福建等处，逃躲残生，再作区处。”正欲起行，忽见真君同弟子甘战、施岑卒至，三蛟急忙逃去。真君见一道妖气冲天而起，乃指与甘、施二人曰：“此处有蛟党未灭，可追去除之，以绝其根！”真君遂与甘、施二人，飞步而行，蹶踪

Shi and Gan were fretting, an immortal passing by stopped in midair to watch and soon ordered that a local deity change himself into a parrot. With the parrot crying overhead, "Go from the bottom up! From the bottom up!" Shi suddenly understood and drove his sword upward from underneath the melons and gourds. Of about seven hundred flood dragons in the river, none survived, vines and roots and all. The clear green water became turbid red waves. Only three of the flood dragons, those that had not changed their form, were unhurt.

Seeing that the flood dragons had been annihilated, the Sage rewarded the parrot with a crown, which parrots of this day still wear. A later poet had this to say in praise of the Sage's extermination of the flood dragons:

*The divine swords, nemeses of all demons,
Slashed melons and gourds on the green waves.
The demons, bent on flooding the town,
Ended up dead in the heart of the river.*

Of the Demon Dragon's six sons, four were killed. The flood dragons, more than a thousand in all, were exterminated, except for three — the Demon Dragon's third son, his sixth son and his oldest grandson — who survived by hiding in the rivers of Xinjian County. Upon hearing that the Sage had wiped out all their kin, the Demon Dragon's two sons burst into loud sobs. "With our father's whereabouts unknown, we two are the only surviving sons of a total of six. Our children, six to seven hundred in all, plus other kith and kin, added up to more than a thousand. Now that all of them are gone, killed by that Xu Xun, we two and a nephew are all that remain. With his immense magic power, Xu Xun is not going to let us live. Let's hide in places like Fujian before deciding what to do next." They were about to set out on their journey when the Sage and his disciples Gan Zhan and Shi Cen came into view. Frantically, the three flood dragons scurried away.

Noticing a column of vapor rising into the sky, a vapor that signified the presence of demons, the Sage pointed in that direction, saying to Gan and Shi, "There are more flood dragons. Let's pursue them and destroy them all."





追至半路，施岑飞剑斩去一尾，追至福建延平府，地名漆洋九里潭，其一蛟即藏于深潭之中。真君召乡人谓曰：“吾乃豫章许逊，今追一蛟精至此，伏于此潭，吾今将竹一根，插于潭畔石壁之上，以镇压之，不许残害生民。汝等居民，勿得砍去！”言毕，即将竹插之，嘱曰：“此竹若罢，许汝再出，此竹若茂，不许再出！”至今潭畔，其竹母若凋零，则复生一笋，成竹替换复茂，今号为“许真君竹”。至今其竹一根在，往来舟船，有商人见其蛟者，其蛟无尾。更有一蛟被真君与甘、施二人赶至福建建宁府崇安县。有一寺名怀玉寺，其寺有一长老，法名全善禅师。在法堂诵经，忽见一少年走入寺中，哀告曰：“吾乃孽龙之子，今被许逊剿灭全家，追赶至此，望贤师怜悯，救我一命，后当重报！”长老曰：“吾闻豫章许逊道法高妙，慧眼通神，吾此寺中，何处可躲？”少年曰：“长老慈悲为念，若肯救拔小人，小人当化作粟米一粒藏于贤师掌中，待许逊到寺，贤师只合掌诵经，方保无事。”长老允



1977

Quietly, the three sped ahead and caught up with the flood dragons. Swinging his sword, Shi Cen cut the tail off one and kept running after them, as far as Yanping prefecture, Fujian, where one of the three flood dragons dived into a deep pond called Chayang Nine-li Pond.

The Sage called the local residents together and said to them, "I am Xu Xun of Yuzhang, here because we've been chasing an evil flood dragon that has hidden itself in this pond. I shall now plant a bamboo between the rocks at the edge of the pond. The bamboo will keep the evil one in there so that it can't come out to harm the people. Remember, all of you, not to cut down the bamboo." With that, he planted the bamboo and said to the flood dragon, "If the bamboo dies, you may gain a new life, but as long as the bamboo lives, you shall not leave this pond."

To this day, a single bamboo stands on that very spot at the edge of the pond. As soon as it begins to wither, a shoot comes up, and so the cycle continues. Called Sage Xu's Bamboo, it remains a single bamboo.

Merchants traveling back and forth on boats have reported sightings of a tailless flood dragon. As for the second flood dragon, the Sage and his two disciples Gan and Shi chased it all the way to Chong'an County in Jianning Prefecture, Fujian. An abbot called Abbot All Benevolence was reciting the sutra in the hall in Huaiyu Temple when a young man walked up to him and entreated him, saying, "I am the Demon Dragon's son. Xu Xun exterminated my whole family and has chased me all the way here. Please take pity on me and save my life. I will surely repay you handsomely later on."

"As far as I know," said the abbot, "Xu Xun of Yuzhang is a great master of the Daoist arts and has eyes of such divine perception that there's no place in this monastery you can hide."

"Your Reverence, should you be willing to save me out of compassion, I'll change myself into a grain of millet and hide in your palm. When Xu Xun comes into the monastery, if you recite your sutra with your palms joined together, I'm sure nothing will happen to me."



诺，少年即化为粟米一粒，入于长老掌中躲讫。真君与甘战、施岑二人，赶入寺中，谓长老曰：“吾乃豫章许逊，赶一蛟精至此，今在何处？可令他出来见我！”长老也不答应，只管合掌拱手，口念真经。真君不知藏在长老掌中，遍寻不见，遂往寺外前后各处寻之，并不见踪迹。施岑曰：“想蛟精去矣，吾等合往他处寻赶！”

却说蛟精以真君去寺已远，乃复化为少年，拜谢长老曰：“深蒙贤师活命之恩，无可报答，望贤师分付寺中，着令七日七夜不要撞钟擂鼓，容我报答一二。”长老依言，分付师兄师弟、徒子徒孙等讫。及至三日，只见寺中前后狂风顿起，冷气飕飕，土木自动。长老大惊，谓僧众曰：“吾观孽龙之子，本是害人之物，得我救命，教我等‘七日七夜不动钟鼓’。今止三日，风景异常，想必是他把言语哄我，若不打动钟鼓，莫承望他报恩，此寺反遭其害，那时悔之晚矣！”于是即令僧众撞起那东楼上华钟，那钟儿响了一百单八声，荣荣汪汪，正是梵王宫里鲸声吼，商客舟中夜半闻。又打起那西楼上画鼓，那鼓儿响了一个三起三煞，叮叮咚



1979

The abbot agreed. The young man changed himself into a grain of millet hidden in the abbot's palm.

Soon, the Sage led Gan and Shi to the temple. "I am Xu Xun of Yuzhang," said the Sage to the abbot. "I am here in pursuit of an evil flood dragon. Where is he? Please make him come out to see me."

The abbot did not answer but kept reciting the sutra, his hands joined palm to palm. Little knowing that the flood dragon was hiding in the abbot's palm, the Sage searched for it in vain. He went outside to search the neighborhood, also to no avail.

"The evil one must have left," said Shi Cen. "Let's go search elsewhere."

When he believed the Sage to be a safe distance away from the temple, the flood dragon changed back into a young man and said with a thankful bow to the abbot, "I have little with which to repay this enormous debt of gratitude to Your Reverence for saving my life, but could you order that the temple bells and drums not be struck for seven days and nights, so that I can do something by way of thanks?"

The abbot agreed and told his disciples and everyone else in the temple to comply with the young man's wish.

On the third day, a violent gust of bone-chilling wind sprang up around the temple, disturbing the soil and trees. In great alarm, the abbot said to the monks, "I just knew that the Demon Dragon's son was by no means a good sort. After I saved his life, he told us not to strike the bells and drums for seven days and nights, and today, only the third day, things are already beginning to go wrong. He must have lied to me. If we don't strike the bells and drums, he will not only fail to repay the debt of gratitude but also ruin us. By then, regrets will be too late."

With that, he ordered the monks to strike the grand bell on the eastern tower. They struck it one hundred and eight times, filling the air with echoes. Truly, they were like the calls of whales in the Brahma's Palace that could be heard by merchants on their boats in the middle of the night. Then, the monks beat the painted drum on



咚，正是俨若雷鸣云汉上，恍疑鼙吼海涛中。那蛟精闻得钟鼓之声，吃了一惊，即转身又化为少年，回到寺中，来见长老言曰：“吾前日分付寺中，七日勿动钟鼓，意欲将寺门外前后高山峻岭，滚成万亩良田，报答我师活命之恩。今才三日，止将高山上略荡得平些，滚有泉出，未及如数，而吾师即动钟鼓，其故何也？”

[眉批] 长老所行，不使人疑，何不_不明告之？长老以狂风顿起，山动地动为对。那少年不胜叹息。长老乃令人往寺外前后观之，但见高峻之处，皆荡得坦平，滚滚泉流不竭。至今怀玉寺中，不止千顷平坦良田，盖亦蛟精报恩所致。

却说真君离了寺门，遍寻不见蛟精，乃复回高处望之，只见妖气依原还在寺中，乃与甘、施二人又来寺中寻觅。其蛟精知真君复来，即先化为一僧，拜辞长老言曰：“吾族中有众千馀，皆被许逊诛灭，兄弟六人，已亡其四，吾父又未知存亡何如？吾今悔改前非，修行悟道。”言毕垂泪而别。真君果复至寺中，只见妖气出外，遂乃蹑迹追至建阳，地名叶墩。遥见一僧，知是蛟精所变。乃令甘、施二弟子，追赶至近。甘施意欲斩之，真君连忙喝



1981

the western tower three times, rat-a-tat. Truly, it was like thunder booming over the clouds and a giant turtle roaring among the waves of the sea.

Startled at the sounds of the bell and the drum, the flood dragon changed back into a young man. He returned to the temple and said to the abbot, "A couple of days ago, I asked you not to strike the bells and the drums for seven days because I wanted to change the hilly area surrounding the temple into a vast expanse of fertile land. This was to be my way of repaying my debt of gratitude to you for saving my life. In the last three days, I've had only enough time to flatten the hills slightly and make the springs run. But before I can accomplish more, Your Reverence had bells struck and drums beaten. I wonder why." (*Why didn't he tell the abbot the truth in the first place so as not to arouse suspicions as to his motive?*)

The abbot replied that he had done so because of the violent wind that had shaken the earth and hills. The young man heaved sigh upon sigh. The abbot then sent men out to check what had been done. They found that the steep spots had been flattened into cultivable land watered by ever-flowing springs. To this day, Huaiyu Temple is surrounded by a thousand acres of flat fertile land, the work of a grateful flood dragon.

Now, after having left the temple and still not spotting the flood dragon anywhere, the Sage climbed to a high vantage point and saw that the air over the temple was still astir with evil. He turned back to the temple with Gan and Shi. Knowing that the Sage was coming back, the flood dragon changed into a monk and took leave of the abbot, saying, "The thousands of members of our clan have all been exterminated by Xu Xun. Of the six sons, four have died, and I have no idea if my father is alive or not. I'm going to mend my ways and enter the Buddhist order." With that, he took tearful leave of the abbot.

When the Sage came back to the temple and observed that the evil vapor had left the grounds, he followed its trail all the way to a place called Yedun in Jianyang. Far ahead, he saw a monk, who he knew must be the flood dragon. With Gan and Shi following him, he quickened his pace and caught up with the monk. Gan and Shi were



住曰：“不可，此物虽是害人，今化为僧，量必改恶迁善。”遂叱曰：“孽畜，我今赦汝前去，汝务要从善修行，勿害生民！吾有谛语，分付与汝，劳心记着：‘逢湖则止，逢仰则住。’”分付已毕，遂纵之而去。甘战叱曰：“孽畜，我师父饶了你性命，再不要害人。”施岑亦叱曰：“孽畜，你若不遵我师父谛语，再若害人，我擒汝就如反掌之易。”那僧含羞乱窜而去。脱离了叶墩地方，来至一村，前有一山，遇一牧童，其僧乃问曰：“此处是何地方？”牧童答曰：“此处地方贵湖，前面一山，名曰仰山。”僧闻牧童之言，乃大喜曰：“适间承真君分付：‘逢湖则止，逢仰则住。’今到此处，合此二意，可以在此居住矣！”遂憩于路旁水田之间，其中间泉水，四时不竭，此地名龙窟。后乃名离龙窟。龙僧即于仰山修行，法名古梅禅师。遂建一寺，名仰山寺，其寺当时乏水，古梅将指头在石壁上乱指，皆有泉出。其寺田粮亦广，至今犹在。真君即于叶墩立一观，名曰真君观，遥与仰山相对，以镇压之。其观至今犹存。

about to kill him, but the Sage hastened to stop them, saying sharply, "Don't! He may have done evil things before, but in changing himself into a monk, he has most probably determined to mend his ways." Raising his voice, he said sternly, "Accursed beast! I am letting you off, but you must devote yourself to good deeds, cultivate your spirit, and do no harm to people. Remember well this line: 'Stop at the first lake you see and take up residence on Mount Yang.'" Having said that, the Sage let the flood dragon go.

"Accursed beast!" shouted Gan Zhan. "My master has spared you your life, so you must never do harm to people again!"

"Accursed beast!" shouted Shi Cen. "If you don't follow my master's instructions but persist in your evil ways, I'll capture you as easily as I turn over my palm."

In shame, the monk ran helter-skelter all the way from Yedun to a village with a mountain standing in front of it. Seeing a herd-boy, the monk asked, "What is this place called?"

The herd-boy replied, "This is Lake Gui. The mountain ahead is Mount Yang."

The monk was ecstatic. "The Sage said, 'Stop at the first lake you see and take up residence on Mount Yang,'" he said to himself. "Now, this place exactly fits both parts of that line. So, let me take up residence here."

He rested at the side of the road between two rice paddies, and a spring of ever-flowing water rose on that spot. The place came to be called Dragon's Cave, later changed to Encountering Dragon Cave. The dragon monk entered the Buddhist order on Mount Yang and assumed the Buddhist name Abbot Ancient Plum. He then had a monastery built and called it Mount Yang Monastery. There being no water supply around at the time, Ancient Plum pointed randomly at rocks with his fingers, and spring water spouted forth wherever he pointed. The monastery came to be in possession of large tracts of crop-yielding land. The monastery and the land exist to this day. The Sage had a temple built in Yedun and called it the Sage's Temple. It faced Mount Yang and kept Ancient Plum's monastery in submission. The Sage's temple still stands today.





却说真君又追一蛟精，其蛟乃孽龙第一子之子，孽龙之长孙也。此蛟直走至福州南台躲避，潜其踪迹。真君命甘、施二弟子遍处寻索，乃自立于一石上，垂纶把钓，忽觉钓丝若有人扯住一般，真君乃站在石上，用力一扯，石遂裂开。石至今犹在，因名为钓龙石。只见扯起一个大螺，约有二三丈高大，螺中有一女子现出，真君曰：“汝妖精！”那女子双膝跪地，告曰：“妾乃南海水侯第三女。闻尊师传得仙道，欲求指教修真之路。故乘螺舟特来相叩。”真君乃指以高盖山，可为修炼之所，且曰：“此山有苦参甘草，上有一井，汝将其药投于井中，日饮其水，久则自可成仙。”遂命女子复入螺中，用巽风一口，吹螺舟浮于水面，直到高盖山下。女子乘螺于此，其螺化为大石，至今犹在。遂登山采取苦参甘草等药，日于井中投之，饮其井泉，后女子果成仙而去。至今其乡有病者，汲井泉饮之，其病可愈。却说施岑、甘战回见真君，言蛟精无有寻处。真君登高山绝顶以望，见妖气一道，隐隐在福州城开元寺井中喷出，乃谓弟子曰：“蛟精已入在井中



1985

Now, the Sage went in pursuit of the other flood dragon, son of the Demon Dragon's oldest son and therefore the Demon Dragon's oldest grandson. This flood dragon hid himself in Nantai, in Fuzhou, and left no trace of himself anywhere. The Sage ordered Gan and Shi to search for him all around, while he himself stood on a rock and cast a fishing rod into the water. Suddenly, he felt a tug on the rod and pulled it up with such force that the rock on which he stood split open. The rock exists to this day and is called Fishing for Dragon Rock. At the moment the rock split open, there emerged from the water a giant spiral shell twenty to thirty feet in height, from which a woman stepped out.

"You are an evil spirit!" exclaimed the Sage. With both knees on the ground, the woman said, "I am the third daughter of the god of the South Sea. Having heard of your fame as the master of Daoist arts, I came here on the shell boat to ask that you teach me the ways of spiritual cultivation."

The Sage pointed toward Mount Gaogai as a place for spiritual cultivation. He said, "There are bitter ginseng and licorice roots on that mountain. If you throw these herbs into the well at the top of the mountain and drink the water of the well every day, you'll become an immortal in due course."

He ordered the woman back into the spiral shell, and blew the shell across the surface of the water with one gentle puff of breath until it reached the foot of Mount Gaogai. Then the shell changed into a big rock, which still stands today. The woman climbed the mountain to pick bitter ginseng, licorice roots, and other herbs.

She threw them into the well every day and drank the water from the well until she achieved immortality as the Sage had said and departed. To this day, those villagers who become sick need only drink water from this well to regain their good health.

Now, Shi and Gan returned to report to the Sage that they had seen no flood dragons, whereupon the Sage ascended the very crest of the mountain and saw a barely discernible stream of evil vapor rising from the well of Kaiyuan Temple in the city of Fuzhou. He said to his disciples, "The flood dragon is in that well." He made his way to



矣！”遂至其寺中，用铁佛一座，置于井上压之。其铁佛至今犹在。真君收伏三蛟已毕，遂同甘战、施岑复回豫章，再寻孽龙诛之。[眉批]六子一孙俱平。后人有诗叹曰：

迢迢千里到南闽，寻觅蛟精驾雾云。

到处留名留异迹，今人万古仰真君。

却说孽龙既不能滚沉豫章，其族党变为瓜、葫，一概被真君所灭。所生六子，斩了四子，只有二子一孙，犹未知下落。越思越恼，只得又奔往洋子江中，见了火龙父亲，哭诉其事。火龙曰：“四百年前，孝悌明王传法与兰公，却使兰公传法与谌母，谌母传法与许逊。吾知许逊一生，汝等有此难久矣！故我当时就令了鼃帅，统领虾兵蟹将，要问他追了金丹宝鉴、铜符铁券之文。谁知那兰公将我等杀败。我彼时少年精壮，也奈何兰公不得，今日有许多年纪，筋力憔悴，还奈得许逊何！这凭你自去。”孽龙叹曰：“今人有说，父不顾子的世界，果然，果然！”火龙骂曰：“畜生，我满眼的孙子，今日被你不长进，败得一个也没了，还来怨我父亲！”遂打将孽龙出来。



the temple and placed an iron statue of the Buddha on the well to block the exit. The statue remains to this day.

After having thus subjugated the three flood dragons, the Sage returned to Yuzhang with Gan Zhan and Shi Cen to search for the Demon Dragon and exterminate him. (*The six sons and one grandson are now all out of the way.*) A later poet had this to say in praise of the Sage:

*From afar, he went to southern Fujian;
 Riding the mist and clouds, he sought out flood dragons.
 Leaving his name and traces everywhere,
 He is worshiped by all posterity.*

As told above, the Demon Dragon failed to flood Yuzhang County. On the contrary, his kith and kin, by changing themselves into melons and gourds, had been destroyed by the Sage. Of his six sons, four had been killed, and nothing was known about the fate of the remaining two sons and grandson. The more he thought about it, the more he chafed with vexation. He saw no choice but to return to the Yangzi River to his father, the Fire Dragon.

As he sobbed out his tale of woe, the Fire Dragon said, "Four hundred years ago, the King of Filial Piety and Brotherly Love imparted the arts to Mr. Lan, who then passed them on to Reverend Mother, who, in her turn, taught them to Xu Xun. I know all about Xu Xun's background. The trouble you are having dates back many years. This is why I had once led my turtle commander, shrimp soldiers, and crab generals and demanded that Mr. Lan give me the gold pills, magic mirrors, and copper and iron tablets, but Mr. Lan routed me. I was no match for Mr. Lan even when I was young and energetic. How am I to stand up against Xu Xun when I'm so old and rickety! You'll have to do it yourself."

The Demon Dragon said with a sigh, "There are people who say this is a world where fathers abandon their sons, and now I know how true that is!"

The Fire Dragon lashed out, "You beast! I used to have so many grandsons. It was you, good-for-nothing, who lost them all, and now you turn around and blame me!" So saying, he threw his



孽龙见父亲不与他做主，遂在江岸上放声大哭，惊动了南海龙王敖钦第三位太子。彼时太子领龙王钧旨，同巡江夜叉全身披挂，手执钢刀，正在此巡逻长江，认得是火龙的儿子。即忙问曰：“你在此哭甚事？”孽龙道：“吾族党千馀，皆被许逊诛灭，父亲又不与我作主，我今累累然若丧家之狗，怎的由人不哭。”太子曰：“自古道‘家无全犯’。许逊怎么就杀了你家许多人？他敢欺我水府无人么？老兄且宽心，待我显个手段，擒他报取冤仇！”孽龙道：“许逊传了谶母飞步之法，仙女所赐宝剑，其实神通广大，难以轻敌。”太子曰：“我龙宫有一铁杵，叫做如意杵。有一铁棍，叫做如意棍。这个杵这个棍，欲其大，就有屋椽般大，欲其小，只如金针般小，欲其长就有三四丈长，欲其短只是一两寸短，因此名为如意。此皆父王的宝贝，那棍儿被孙行者讨去，不知那猴子打死了千千万万的妖怪。只有这如意杵儿，未曾使用，今带在我的身边。试把来与许逊弄一弄，他若当抵得住，真有些神通。”孽龙问道：“这杵是那一代铸的？”太子道：“这杵是乾坤开辟之时，有一个盘古王，凿了那昆仑山几片棱层石，架了一座的红炉；砍了广寒宫一株娑婆树，烧了许多的黑炭；取了须弥山



1989

son out.

Aggrieved that his father refused to help him, the Demon Dragon burst into loud wails of grief on the riverbank, wails that caught the attention of the third son of Aoqin, Dragon King of the South Sea. The dragon prince, fully armored, sword in hand, was patrolling the Yangzi River by order of his father, along with a yaksha on patrol duty. Recognizing the Fire Dragon's son, the prince hastened to ask, "Why are you crying here?"

The Demon Dragon replied, "All my kith and kin, numbering more than a thousand, have been killed by Xu Xun, and my father refuses to help me. Being as wretched as a stray dog, how can I not help crying?"

"As the ancients said, 'Families should not be exterminated down to the last one.' How could Xu Xun have killed so many of your clan? He believes he has no match in our water palace. Now, don't you worry, brother. Let me put my magic power to work and capture him so as to redress the wrongs he has done to you."

"But Xu Xun is equipped with the Reverend Mother's flying method and precious swords from fairy maidens. His magic power is too great to be taken lightly."

The prince replied, "In the palace, we have an iron pestle called the As-You-Wish Pestle, and we used to have an iron rod called the As-You-Wish Rod. They can grow to be as thick as rafters or shrink to the size of a needle if you so wish. They can be thirty to forty feet or one to two inches in length. That's why they are called 'As-You-Wish.' Both treasures belong to Father, but the Monkey King⁴⁶ took away the rod, and goodness knows how many demons and monsters he killed with it. The pestle has never been put to use. Actually, I have it with me. Let me try it out on that Xu Xun. If it doesn't hurt him, I'll say he's really good."

"When was the pestle made?"

"When the universe first came into being. King Pangu chipped several sheets of rock from Mount Kunlun and made a furnace out of them. He then cut down a big tree in the Moon Palace and burned a lot of black charcoal. With tens of thousands of pieces of pig iron



几万斤的生铁，用了太阳宫三昧的真火，叫了那炼石的女媧，炼了七七四十九个日头；却命着雨师洒雨，风伯煽风，太乙护炉，祝融看火，因此上炼得这个杵儿。要大就大，要小就小，要长就长，要短就短，且此杵有些妙处，抛在半空之中，一变十，十变百，百变千，千变万，更会变化哩！”孽龙问曰：“如今那铁杵放在那里？”太子即从耳朵中拿将出来，向风中幌一幌，就有屋椽般大，幌两幌，就有竹竿般长。孽龙大喜曰：“这样东西，要长就长，要大则大，那许逊有些法力，尚可当抵一二。徒弟们皆是后学之辈，禁得几杵？”夜叉见太子欲与孽龙报仇，乃谏曰：“爷爷没有钧旨，太子怎敢擅用军器？恐爷爷知道，不当稳便。”太子曰：“吾主意已定，你肯辅我，便同去；如不肯辅我，任你先转南海去罢！”夜叉不肯相助自去了。那太子杀奔豫章，要拿许逊，与孽龙报仇。却怎生打扮，则见：

重叠叠“鳖甲”坚固，整齐齐“海带”飞斜。身骑着“海马”号三花，好一似“天门冬”将军披挂。走起了磊磊落落“滑石”，飞将来溟溟漠漠“辰砂”。索儿绞的是“天麻”，要把“威灵仙”拿下。

却说真君同着弟子甘战、施岑等各仗宝剑，正要去寻捉孽龙，



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from Mount Sumeru and the samadhi fire from the Sun Palace, he had Nüwa, the goddess who smelted rocks, tend the furnace for forty-nine days.⁴⁷ He then had the rain god sprinkle rain on it, the wind god fan it, the god of the Gold Star protect it, and the fire god watch the flames. That was how the pestle came into being. It can be as big or small, as long or short, as you wish. Even more wonderful, when it is tossed into midair, it can multiply into ten, and the ten into a hundred, the hundred into a thousand, and the thousand into ten thousand. And it can change its shape, too.”

“Where is it now?”

The prince took it out of his ear. With one shake in the wind, it grew as thick as a rafter. Two shakes, and it grew as long as a bamboo pole. The Demon Dragon was wild with joy. “Xu Xun may be able to dodge a few blows with his magic power, but his disciples won’t be able to do the same!”

Observing that the prince was determined to seek revenge on behalf of the Demon Dragon, the yaksha offered this advice: “Without an order from His Majesty, how can Your Highness use any weapon on your own authority? His Majesty may not like it if he learns about this.”

“My mind is made up,” said the prince. “If you are willing to help me, go with me. If not, you may return to the South Sea.”

Unwilling to help, the yaksha turned back. The prince, grimly determined, headed straight for Yuzhang to capture Xu Xun and seek revenge for the Demon Dragon. How did the prince look? Behold:

Layer upon layer of solid turtle shells,

A neat bandolier of kelp across the chest.

Riding a seahorse, he looked like a guard at the heavenly gate.

He kicked up pebbles as he advanced.

He whipped up swirling grits of sand as he flew.

He swore to capture the powerful immortal.

With a rope made of heavenly hemp.

Swords in hand, the Sage and his disciples Gan and Shi were about to set off in search of the Demon Dragon when the third son of



忽见龙王三太子叫曰：“许逊，许逊！你怎么这等狠心，把孽龙家千百余人一概诛戮！你敢小觑我龙宫么？我今日与你赌赛一阵，才晓得我的本事。”真君慧眼一看，认得是南海龙王的三太子，喝曰：“你父亲掌管南海，素称本分，今日怎的出你们不肖儿子？你好好回去，免致后悔！”太子道：“你杀人之父，人亦杀其父，杀人之兄，人亦杀其兄。孽龙是我水族中一例之人，我岂肯容你这等欺负！”于是举起钢刀，就望真君一砍。真君亦举起宝剑来迎，两个大杀一场。则见：

一个是九天中神仙领袖；一个是四海内龙子班头。一个的道法精通，却会吞云吸雾；一个的武艺惯熟，偏能掣电驱雷。一个呼湛母为了师傅，最大神通；一个叫龙王做了父亲，尽高声价。一个飞宝剑，前挑后剔，光光闪闪，就如那大寒陆地凜严霜；一个抛铁杵，直撞横冲，琤琤琅琅，就如那除夜人家烧爆竹。真个是棋逢敌手，终朝胜负难分；却原来阵遇对头，两下高低未辨。

真君与那太子刀抵剑，剑对刀，自己牌时分战至午时，不分



the Dragon King cried out, "Xu Xun! Xu Xun! How can you be so heartless as to have exterminated a family of more than a thousand? How dare you look down upon the Dragon King? Let me fight it out with you, if only to make you acknowledge my power."

With his all-knowing eyes, the Sage saw that it was the third son of the Dragon King. "Your father does a good job taking care of the South Sea," said the Sage. "Too bad he has you for a son! Now, go back home, so that you won't have any regrets later!"

"One who kills someone else's father will have his own father killed. One who kills someone else's brother will have his own brother killed," retorted the prince. "I will never allow any member of the aquatic clan to be bullied like this by you!"

So saying, he aimed his sword at the Sage. The Sage also raised his swords to meet the prince's. A fierce fight ensued.

*One was a leading immortal from the ninth layer of heaven;
 The other a dragon prince commanding the four seas.*

*One was a master of the Daoist arts,
 Able to swallow clouds and inhale mist;*

*The other was proficient in the martial arts,
 Able to make thunder and lightning.*

*One had the Reverend Mother as his mentor—
 What greater claim to magic power could there be?*

*The other called the Dragon King his father—
 What higher status could be imagined?*

One wielded precious swords

That glistened like winter frost as they swung back and forth;

The other brandished an iron pestle

That clattered like New Year's eve firecrackers as it lunged left and right.

*With both having met their match in each other,
 Victory was hard to predict.*

With both equally skilled,

None was the winner or the loser.

Sword against sword, the Sage and the prince fought for two



胜败。施岑谓众道友曰：“此龙子本事尽高，恐师父不能拿他，可大家一齐掩杀！”那太子见真君弟子一齐助战，遂在耳朵中，取出那根铁杵来，幌了两三幌，望空抛起，好一个铁杵！一变作十，十变作百，百变作千，千变作万，半天之中，就如那纷纷柳絮颠狂舞，滚滚蜻蜓上下飞。满空撞得砵啷响，恰是潘丞相公子打擂槌。你看那真君的弟子们，才把那脑上的杵儿撇开，忽一杵在脑后一打，才把那脑后的杵儿架住，忽一杵在心窝一笃，才把心窝的杵儿一抹，忽一杵在肩膀上一锥。那些弟子们怕了那杵，都败阵而走。好一个真君，果有法术，果有神通，将宝剑望东一指，杵从东落；望西一指，杵从西开；望南一指，杵从南坠；望北一指，杵从北散。真君虽有这等法力，争奈千千万万之杵，一杵去了，一杵又来，却未能取胜。忽观世音菩萨空中闻得此事，乃曰：“敖钦龙王十分仁厚，生出这个不肖儿子，助了蛟精。我若不去收了他如意杵宝贝，许逊纵有法力，无如之何。”于是驾起祥云，在半空之中，解下身上罗带，做成一个圈套儿丢将起来，把那千千万万之杵尽皆套去。那太子见有人套去他的宝贝，心下慌张，败阵而走。孽龙接见，问曰：“太子与许逊征战得大胜否？”太子曰：“我战许逊正在取胜之际，不想有一妇人使一个圈套，把我那宝贝套去了。我今没处讨得！”孽龙曰：“套宝贝者，非是别人，乃是观世音菩萨。”言未毕，真君赶至，孽龙望见，即化一阵



hours, with neither winning or losing. Shi Cen said to his fellow disciples, "The Dragon King's son is so skilled that I'm afraid our master won't be able to subdue him easily. Let's all join him!"

Seeing the Sage's disciples coming at him, the prince took the iron pestle out of his ear, shook it a couple of times, and tossed it into the air. A wondrous pestle it was! It multiplied into ten, then a hundred, then a thousand, and then ten thousand pestles, spinning about in the air like so many willow catkins and flitting up and down like so many dragonflies, banging together like so many sticks at the command of Prime Minister Pan's son [reference unidentified]. Look at the Sage's disciples! Hardly had one fended off a pestle in front of his face than another came knocking against the back of his head. Scarcely had one warded off a pestle at the back of his head than another came thumping at his chest. The moment one had pushed the pestle away from his chest, another came and thwacked his shoulder. In terror, the disciples turned on their heels and fled. But the wondrous Sage was truly a consummate master of magic power. Wherever his precious swords pointed — whether to the east, west, south or north — the pestles came tumbling down. Yet, regardless of his virtuosity, victory was still out of reach because there were just too many pestles.

Up in the sky, the Bodhisattva Guanyin heard about this. She said, "Dragon King Aoqin is so very kind and compassionate, but this wayward son of his is helping an evil spirit. Let me take away his As-You-Wish pestle, because Xu Xun can't do much about it, however great a master he is." So saying, she rose on an auspicious cloud, took off a ribbon from her clothes, made it into a loop, and gathered in all the thousands upon thousands of pestles. With his weapons gone, the prince took fright and fled.

The Demon Dragon greeted him and asked, "So, did you put Xu Xun to rout?"

"I was about to when a woman whisked off my pestle with some kind of loop, and I have no idea where to get it back."

"It was the Bodhisattva Guanyin who did it," said the Demon Dragon. Before the words were quite out of his mouth, the Sage ap-



黑风走了。太子心中不忿，又提着手中钢刀，再来交战。此是败兵之将，英勇不加，两合之中，被真君左手一剑架开钢刀，却将右手一剑来斩太子。忽有人背后叫曰：“不可，不可！”真君举眼一看，见是观音，遂停住宝剑。观音曰：“此子是敖钦龙王的第三子，今无故辅助孽龙，本该死罪。奈他父亲素是仁厚，今我在此，若斩了此子，龙王又说我不救他，体面上不好看。”真君方才罢手。

却说那巡江夜叉回转龙宫，将太子助孽龙之事，一一禀知龙王。龙王顿足骂曰：“这畜生恁的不肖！”彼时东海龙王敖顺、西海龙王敖广、北海龙王敖润同聚彼处。亦曰：“这畜生今日去战许逊，就如那葛伯与汤为仇；辅助孽龙就如那崇侯助纣为虐，容不得他！”敖钦曰：“这样儿子要他则甚！”遂取过一口利剑，敕旨一道，令夜叉将去叫太子自刎而亡。夜叉领了敕旨，赍了宝剑，径来见着三太子。太子闻知其故，唬得魂不着体，遂跪下观音叫道：“善菩萨！没奈何，到我父王处保过这次！”观音道：“只怕你父亲难饶你死罪，你不如到蛇盘谷中鹰愁涧躲避，三百年后，



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peared on the scene. At the sight, the Demon Dragon changed into a column of black wind and disappeared. The prince resentfully picked up his sword and stepped forward for another round of fighting. Having already suffered a defeat, he found his courage failing him.

In the second round, the Sage held off the prince's sword with the sword in his left hand and was about to kill the prince with the sword in his right hand when a voice called out from behind him: "Stop! Stay your hand!" The Sage raised his eyes and saw that it was the Bodhisattva Guanyin. He held back his sword. The bodhisattva said, "This is the third son of Dragon King Aoqin. He should be sentenced to death for having abetted the Demon Dragon King without good reason. However, his father is most kind and compassionate. If the son is killed, and in my presence, too, the Dragon King will blame me for failing to save his son. That would put me in an awkward position." So the Sage gave up the idea.

In the meantime, the yaksha on river duty had returned to the Dragon King's palace and given the king a detailed account of how the prince was aiding the Demon Dragon. The Dragon King stamped his feet and cursed, "What a disobedient son I have!"

Aoshun, Dragon King of the East Sea, Aoguang, Dragon King of the West Sea, and Aorun, Dragon King of the North Sea, were all visiting Aoqing, and they commented, "By fighting Xu Xun, that little beast is acting like the Lord of Ge setting himself against Tang.⁴⁸ By abetting the Demon Dragon, he's doing what the Lord of Chong did in aiding the evil King Zhou in his tyrannical rule.⁴⁹ Such behavior is not to be tolerated."

"I don't need a son like that!" said Aoqin. With that, he picked up a sharp sword and gave it to the yaksha, instructing him to deliver it to the prince along with a written decree demanding the prince's suicide.

Bearing the decree and the sword, the yaksha went to the third son. Upon hearing the purpose of the yaksha's visit, the prince was frightened out of his wits. He fell to his knees and cried out to the Bodhisattva Guanyin, "Oh, Bodhisattva! In your compassion, please persuade my father to let me go this time!"

"I'm afraid your father is not likely to change his mind, "



等唐三藏去西天取经，罚你变做个骡子，径往天竺国驮经过来，那时将功赎罪，我对你父亲说过，或可留你。”太子眼泪汪汪，拜辞观世音，往鹰愁涧而去。观音复将所收铁杵付与夜叉，教夜叉交付与龙王去讫。真君亦辞了观音回转豫章，不在话下。

却说观音菩萨，别了真君，欲回普陀岩去，孽龙在途中投拜，欲求与真君讲和，后当改过前非，不敢为害，言辞甚哀。观音见其言语恳切，乃转豫章，来见真君。真君问曰：“大圣到此，复有何见谕？”观音曰：“吾此一来，别无甚事，孽龙欲与君讲和，今后改恶迁善，不知君允否？”真君曰：“他既要讲和，限他一夜滚百条河，以鸡鸣为止，若有一条不成，吾亦不许！”观音辞真君而去。弟子吴猛谏曰：“孽畜原心不改，不可许之。”真君曰：“吾岂不知，但江西每逢春雨之时，动辄淹浸，吾欲其开成百河，疏通水路耳，非实心与之和也。吾今分付社伯，阻挠其功，勿使



replied the bodhisattva. "I suggest that you hide yourself in Eagle Fear Ravine in Snake Coil Valley. In three hundred years, when Tripitaka of the Tang dynasty is ready to go to the West on a pilgrimage for Buddhist scriptures, I'll change you into a mule as a punishment, so you may follow him to India and carry the scriptures back.⁵⁰ After you thus atone for your crime with a good deed, I will talk with your father. By that time, he may be willing to forgive you."

His eyes brimming over with tears, the prince took leave of the bodhisattva and made his way to Eagle Fear Ravine. The bodhisattva gave the yaksha the iron pestle, which she had recovered, and told him to return it to the Dragon King. The Sage also took leave of the bodhisattva and went back to Yuzhang, and there we shall leave him for now.

After bidding the Sage farewell, the bodhisattva started her journey back to Potala Rock, but on her way, the Demon Dragon threw himself at her feet, stating in the most plaintive tone that he wished to make peace with the Sage, mend his ways, and never harm people again. Moved by the sincerity of his words, the bodhisattva went to Yuzhang to see the Sage.

"What orders does the great bodhisattva have for me?" asked the Sage.

"My only mission is to bring you a message from the Demon Dragon. He wishes to make peace with you and mend his ways. Would you grant his wish?"

"If he wants peace, tell him to make a hundred canals tonight before the roosters crow tomorrow morning. I won't grant his wish if he's short even one canal."

After the bodhisattva had gone, Wu Meng, a disciple of the Sage's, offered this advice: "I don't think that accursed beast has had a real change of heart. You can't say yes to him."

The Sage replied, "I know. But much of Jiangxi is easily flooded in the rainy spring season. I just want him to make a hundred canals that will provide outlets for the water. I don't mean to make peace with him. I'll tell the local god to prevent him from completing the job. If he can't get to a hundred, he won't be forgiven, and I'll still



足百条之数，则其罪难免，亦不失信于观音矣！”[眉批]约亦可准。□□之约，而镇之，如二蛟故事可也，意者如七擒孟获，服其心而后释乎？

却说孽龙接见观音，问其所以。观音将真君所限之事，一一说与。孽龙大喜，是夜用尽神通，连滚连滚，恰至四更，社伯扣计其数，已滚九十九条。社伯心慌，乃假作鸡鸣，引动众鸡皆鸣，孽龙闻得大惊，自知不能免罪，乃化为一少年，未及天明，即遁往湖广躲避去讫。真君至天明，查记河数，止欠一条，鸡声尽鸣，乃知是社伯所假也，遂令弟子计功受赏。真君急寻孽龙之时，已不知其所在。后来遂于河口立县，即今之南康湖口县是焉。

却说孽龙遁在黄州府黄冈县地方，变作个少年的先生求馆。时有一老者，姓史名仁，家颇饶裕，有孙子十余人，正欲延师开馆。孽龙至其家，自称：“豫章曾良，闻君家有馆，特来领教。”史老见其人品清高，礼貌恭敬，心窃喜之，但不知其学问何如？遂谓曰：“敝乡旧俗，但先生初来者，或考之以文，或试之以对，然后启帐。卑老有一对，欲领尊教何如？”孽龙曰：“愿闻。”史



be able to keep my word to the bodhisattva.” (*The Sage could well have granted the Demon Dragon his wish and let him live while keeping him under submission, as with the two flood dragons. But perhaps the Sage means to imitate Zhuge Liang⁵¹ and make the Demon Dragon truly submissive before letting him go?*)

In the meantime, the Demon Dragon greeted the bodhisattva and asked her for the Sage’s reaction. Upon hearing the Sage’s demand, the Demon Dragon was greatly delighted.

That very night, he put all his magic power to work, and by the fourth watch of the night, he had made ninety-nine canals, as counted by the local god. Alarmed, the god faked a rooster’s crows, and all the roosters in the neighborhood echoed him. The Demon Dragon was flabbergasted. Knowing he was not going to be forgiven, he changed himself into a young man and fled to Huguang before the first light of dawn. When the day broke, the Sage counted the canals and found that one was missing and the roosters had already crowed. He knew this was the work of the local god. After making arrangements for the giving of rewards with his disciples, the Sage hastily went in search of the Demon Dragon, but the beast was nowhere to be seen. Later, a new county was established at the mouth of the river and is called today Hukou County, in Nankang.

In the meantime, the Demon Dragon fled to Huanggang County in Huangzhou Prefecture and transformed himself into a young teacher in search of a school. It so happened that a rich old man named Shi Ren was looking for a teacher for his more than ten grandchildren. The Demon Dragon made his way to the old man’s home and announced, “I am Zeng Liang from Yuzhang, here to seek a teaching job in your establishment.”

Inwardly delighted by the young man’s refined looks and respectful manners, Mr. Shi decided to test his scholarship, saying, “According to an old custom of this region, before a teaching job is offered, the applicant is usually tested either through writing an essay or through supplying matching lines to given phrases. I have in mind a line for you to match.”

“What is the line?”



老曰：“曾先生腰间加四点，鲁邦贤士。”孽龙曰：“我就把令孙为对。”遂答曰：“史小子头上着一横，吏部天官。”史老见先生对得好，不胜之喜，乃曰：“先生高才邃养，奈寒舍学俸微少，未可轻屈。”孽龙道：“小子借寓读书，何必计利。”史老遂择日启馆，叫诸孙具贽见之仪，行了拜礼，遂就门下受业。孽龙教授那些生徒，辨疑解惑，读书说经，明明白白，诸生大有进益，不在话下。

却说真君以孽龙自滚河以后，遍寻不见，遂同甘战、施岑二人径到湖广地面寻觅踪迹。忽望妖气在黄冈县乡下姓史的人家，乃与二弟子径往其处，至一馆中，知是孽龙在此，变作先生，教训生徒。真君乃问其学生曰：“先生那里去了？”学生答云：“先生洗浴去了。”真君曰：“在那里洗浴？”学生曰：“在涧中。”真君曰：“这样十一月天气，还用冷水洗浴？”学生曰：“先生是个体厚之人，不论寒天热天，常要水中去浸一浸。若浸得久时，还有两三个时辰才回来。”真君乃与弟子坐在馆中，等他回时，就下手拿着。忽举头一看，见柱壁上有对联云：



“Here it goes: Add four dots to the character *zeng* and you become a worthy gentleman from the region of Lu.”

The Demon Dragon countered, “Allow me to cite your grandsons in my matching line: Add one horizontal line to the character *shi* and they become top officials of the Ministry of Personnel.”

Mr. Shi was impressed by the ingenious match. Pleased beyond measure, he went on to say, “With your remarkable talent, I’m afraid you’ll be shortchanged, for I offer but a modest salary for this teaching job.”

“Actually, I will just be pursuing my own studies in your house. Remuneration is not what I seek.”

Thereupon, Mr. Shi chose a day on which to open the school. After the grandsons had made ceremonial bows to the new teacher, school began. With the Demon Dragon answering the pupils’ questions and clearly explicating the texts, the Shi children made great progress in their studies, but this is of no concern to us.

Failing to find the Demon Dragon after the canals had been made, the Sage went to Huguang with Gan Zhan and Shi Cen to look for his traces. Suddenly, the Sage saw a streak of evil vapor rising from an establishment belonging to the Shi family in a village in Huanggang County. With his two disciples, the Sage headed straight to the Shi establishment, where, upon seeing some pupils in the schoolhouse, he realized that the Demon Dragon had changed himself into a teacher.

“Where is your teacher?” the Sage asked the boys.

“He’s gone bathing.”

“Where is he bathing?”

“In the ravine.”

“How can he bathe in cold water in this eleventh month of the year?”

“Since he is so heavily built, he often needs to immerse himself in water, in cold and hot weather alike. Sometimes he’s away for as long as four to six hours.”

The Sage and his disciples sat in the room, waiting to capture the Demon Dragon upon his return. Raising his head, the Sage saw a



赵氏孤儿，切齿不忘屠岸贾；
伍员烈士，鞭尸犹恨楚平王。

又壁上题有诗句云：

自叹年来运不齐，子孙零落却无遗；
心怀东海波澜阔，气压西江草树低。
怨处咬牙思旧恨，豪来挥笔记新诗；
男儿不展风云志，空负天生八尺躯。

真君看诗对已毕，大惊，谓弟子曰：“此诗此对，皆是复仇之诗，若此孽不除，终成大患。汝等务宜勉力擒之。”言未毕，忽史老来馆中，看孙子攻书。时盛冬天气，史老身上披领羊裘，头上戴顶暖帽，徐徐而来。及见真君丰姿异常，连忙施礼，问曰：“先生从何而来？”真君曰：“小生乃豫章人，特来访友。”史老谓孙子曰：“客在此，何不通报？”遂邀真君与二弟子至家下告茶。茶毕，史老问真君姓名，真君曰：“小生姓许名逊，此二徒，一姓施名岑，一姓甘名战。”史老曰：“闻得许君者，法术甚妙，诛灭蛟精，敢是足下否？”真君曰：“然。”史老遂下拜。真君以其年老，连忙答礼。史老问曰：“仙驾临此，欲何为？”真君曰：



couplet on a pillar:

Orphan Zhao did not forgive Tu'an Gu, his hateful nemesis.⁵²

Wu Zixu whipped King Ping's corpse to vent his hatred.⁵³

On the wall, there was another poem that read:

*How woeful my fate over the past year,
With my sons and grandsons dispersed and gone!
My ambition rides the waves of the East Sea,
My rage towers over the trees by West River.
In hatred, I gnash my teeth and nurse old grudges;
In outbursts, I pick up my brush and write new poems.
For a grown man not to achieve his ambition
Is to waste the life bestowed by heaven.*

Alarmed upon reading the lines, the Sage said to his disciples, "The couplet and the poem are both about revenge. If this demon is not gotten rid of, he'll be a major source of trouble. You must do all you can to capture him."

Before the Sage had quite finished speaking, Mr. Shi came into the schoolhouse to watch his grandchildren study. It being the depths of winter, he wore a sheep-skin cape over his shoulders and a warm hat on his head. As he entered, walking in his leisurely manner, he was impressed by the Sage's extraordinarily refined looks. Eagerly, he saluted the Sage and said, "May I ask where you are from?"

"I am a native of Yuzhang, here to visit a friend."

Turning to the children, Mr. Shi said, "Why didn't you announce the arrival of guests?" He then invited the Sage and the two disciples to his house, where tea was served. After tea, Mr. Shi asked the Sage's name.

"My name is Xu Xun. These are my disciples, Shi Cen and Gan Zhan."

"I've heard that there is a Mr. Xu who wiped out the flood dragons with his immense magic power. Might that be you?"

"Yes."

Mr. Shi immediately left his seat and bowed deeply. Out of respect for Shi's seniority in age, the Sage hastened to return the courtesy.



“尊府教令孙者，乃孽龙精也，变形于此，吾寻踪觅迹，特来擒之！”[眉批] □次收孽龙。史老大惊曰：“怪道这个先生无问寒天暑天，日从涧中洗浴。浴水之处，往时浅浅的，今成一潭，深不可量。”真君曰：“老翁有缘，幸遇小生相救。不然，今日是个屋舍，后日是个江河，君家且葬鱼腹矣！”史老曰：“此蛟精怎的拿他？”真君曰：“此孽千变万化，他若提防于我，擒之不易。幸今或未觉，纵要变时，必资水力。可令公家凡水缸水桶洗脸盆及碗盏之类，皆不可注水，使他变化不去，我自然拿了他！”史老分付已毕，孽龙正洗浴回馆，真君见了，大喝一声：“孽畜走那里去？”孽龙大惊，却待寻水而变，遍处无水，惟砚池中有一点馀水未倾，遂从里面变化而去，竟不知其踪迹。[眉批] 教人杜患宜密也。后人诗叹曰：

堪叹蛟精玄上玄，墨池变化至今传。

当时若肯心归正，却有金书取上天。

史老见真君赶去孽龙，甚是感谢，乃留真君住了数日，极其款曲。真君曰：“此处孽龙居久，恐有沉没之患，汝可取杉木一



“What might be the purpose of your visit?” asked Mr. Shi.

“The one who teaches your grandchildren is none other than the Demon Dragon in human form. I’ve been following his tracks and am here to capture him.” (*Another attempt to subdue the Demon Dragon.*)

In consternation, Mr. Shi said, “No wonder the teacher takes daily baths in the ravine in both hot and cold weather. The water used to be shallow where he takes his baths, but it’s an unfathomably deep pond now.”

“You are lucky to have me here. Otherwise, in a matter of days, there will be a river where this house stands, and you’ll perish in the belly of some fish.”

“But how is that demon to be caught?” asked Mr. Shi.

“That demon is capable of any number of physical transformations. If he’s on guard against me, it will be difficult to catch him. Luckily for us, he may not be aware of my presence here at this moment. So if he wants to change, he’ll need water. Now, please make sure there is no water in any of the water jars, buckets, basin, bowls, and plates throughout the house, so as to prevent him from changing. I’ll then capture him easily.”

After Mr. Shi had given the instructions, the Demon Dragon returned from his bathing trip. Upon seeing him, the Sage roared, “Accursed beast! Where do you think you are going?”

The Demon Dragon was aghast. He searched frantically for water but found none throughout the house except for a few drops left in an ink slab, and that was enough. He disappeared into it, leaving no trace of himself behind. (*This is a lesson to be thorough in whatever one does.*) A later poet had this to say:

What a sly demon it was indeed!

The story of the ink slab is told even to this day.

Had it mended its evil ways,

It would have been summoned to heaven.

Grateful to the Sage for driving the Demon Dragon away, Mr. Shi invited him to stay for a few days and showered him with every hospitality. The Sage said, “The Demon Dragon having lived here for so long, I fear that he might submerge this place in water. Please give



片过来，吾书符一道，打入地中，庶可以镇压之！”真君镇符已毕。感史老相待殷勤，更取出灵丹一粒，点石一片，化为黄金，约有三百馀两，相谢史老而去。施岑曰：“孽龙今不知遁在何处，可从此湖广上下，遍处寻觅诛之。”真君曰：“或此孽瞰我等在此，又往豫章，欲沉郡城土地，未可知也。莫若且回家中，觅其踪迹，如果不在，再往外获之未晚。”于是师弟子们一路回归。

却说孽龙精砚池变去，又化为美少男子，逃往长沙府。闻知刺史贾玉家生有一女，极有姿色，怎见得：

眉如翠羽，肌如凝脂，齿如瓠犀，手如柔荑。脸衬桃花瓣，鬟堆金凤丝。秋波湛湛妖娆态，春笋纤纤娇媚姿。说甚么汉苑王嫱，说甚么吴宫西施，说甚么赵家飞燕，说甚么杨家贵妃。柳腰微摆鸣金珮，莲步轻移动玉肢。月里姮娥难比



me a piece of fir. I'll write a magic figure on it and drive it into the ground. That will be enough to keep the Demon Dragon under subjugation."

The Sage put the piece of wood bearing the magic figure in place. Afterward, grateful for Mr. Shi's hospitality, he took out a magic pill and used it to change stones into gold worth more than three hundred taels.

After they had taken thankful leave of their host, Shi Cen remarked, "I wonder where the Demon Dragon is hiding. Let's search Huguang and get rid of him once and for all."

The Sage said, "Having seen us here, he might well have gone to Yuzhang to flood the town. We should go back to Yuzhang and look for traces of him. If he's not there, we can always go elsewhere without losing much time." So the master and two disciples made for home.

In the meantime, after disappearing into the few drops of water in the ink slab, the Demon Dragon changed himself into a handsome young man and fled to Changsha Prefecture, where he heard that Prefect Jia Yu had a most beautiful daughter. How beautiful?

Her eyebrows like kingfisher feathers,

Her skin creamy and delicate.

Her teeth like white gourd seeds,

Her hands shaped like tender new leaves.

Her cheeks rosy as peach blossoms,

Her hair arranged like a bun of gold phoenix filaments.

Her eyes as sparkling as the ripples of autumn water,

Her fingers as delicate as new bamboo shoots.

Speak not of Wang Qiang of the Han palace,

Xishi of the Wu state, Feiyan of the Zhao clan,

And Consort Yang of the Tang house! ⁵⁴

Her gold pendants tinkled to the swaying of her willow waist;

Her jadelike limbs moved to the rhythm of her lotus steps.

The moon goddess hardly measured up to her;

The fairy maidens on ninth heaven were by no means her



此，九天仙子怎如斯！

孽龙遂来结拜刺史贾玉，贾玉问曰：“先生何人也？”答曰：“小人姓慎名郎，金陵人氏。自幼颇通经典，不意名途淹滞，莫能上达，今作南北经商之客耳。因往广南贩货，得明珠数斛，民家无处作用，特来献与使君，伏望笑留！”贾使君曰：“此宝乃先生心力所求，况汝我萍水相逢，岂敢受此厚赐。”再三推拒，慎郎献之甚切，使君不得已而受之。留住数日，使君见慎郎礼貌谦恭，丰姿美丽，琴棋书画，件件皆能，弓矢干戈，般般惯熟，遂欲以女妻之。慎郎鞠躬致谢，复将珍宝厚贿使君亲信之人，悉皆称赞慎郎之德。使君乃择吉日，将其女与慎郎成亲，不在话下。

却说慎郎在贾府成婚以后，岁遇春夏之时，则告禀使君，托言出游江湖，经商买卖。至秋冬之时，则重载船只而归，皆是奇珍异宝。使君大喜曰：“吾得佳婿矣！”盖不知其为蛟精也。所得资财宝货，皆因春夏大水，覆人舟船，抢人财宝，装载而归。慎郎入赘三年，复生三子。一日慎郎寻思起来，不胜忿怒曰：“吾家世居豫章，子孙族类，一千馀众，皆被许逊灭绝，破我巢穴，



match.

So the Demon Dragon sought to make the acquaintance of Prefect Jia Yu.

“Who might you be?” asked the prefect.

“I am Shen Lang, a native of Jinling. I have been well versed in the classics since an early age. However, I was not able to advance my scholarly career and instead ended up being a traveling merchant. During a business trip to South Guangdong, I came upon several precious pearls, which, being of no use to ordinary people, I am now offering to you. Please accept them.”

“You must have had a hard time getting these pearls. Moreover, I don’t know you. How could I dream of accepting such an overwhelming gift?”

And so, the prefect declined the offer time and again. But Shen Lang was so persistent that the prefect had no choice but to accept and invite him to stay on as a houseguest for several days. Much impressed by Shen Lang’s courteous manners, his good looks, and mastery of the arts of music, chess, calligraphy, and painting as well as his skill with bows and arrows and dagger-axes, the prefect offered to marry his daughter to the young man. Shen Lang bowed his thanks and bribed the prefect’s trusted followers liberally with precious jewels until all praised him for his generosity. On a chosen auspicious day, the prefect married his daughter to Shen Lang, but of this, no more need be said.

After being married in the Jia mansion, Shen Lang would, with the prefect’s permission, take a business trip each year when spring was about to give way to summer and return when autumn was yielding to winter, his boat laden with rare treasures.

“What a nice son-in-law I have!” the prefect exulted. Little did he know that his son-in-law was a flood dragon, who was bringing back the possessions of travelers whom he had robbed by capsizing their boats in the spring and summer floods.

In the three years of his marriage, Shen Lang fathered three sons. One day, in the midst of his reflections, Shen Lang was seized with wrath. “My clan had lived in Yuzhang for generations, but



使我无容身之地。虽然潜居此地，其实怨恨难消，今既岁久，谅许逊不复知有我也。我今欲回豫章，大兴洪水，溃没城郡，仍灭取许逊之族，报复前仇，方消此恨！”言罢，来见使君。使君问曰：“贤婿有何话说？”慎郎曰：“方今春风和暖，正宜出外经商，特来拜辞岳父而去。家中妻子，望岳丈看顾。”使君曰：“贤婿放心前去，不必多忧，若得充囊之利，早图返棹。”言罢，分别而去。

时晋永嘉七年，真君与其徒甘战、施岑周览城邑，遍寻蛟孽，三年间，杳无踪迹，已置之度外去了。不想这孽龙自来送死。忽一日，道童来报，有一少年子弟，丰姿美貌，衣冠俊伟，来谒真君。真君命人，问曰：“先生何处人也？”少年曰：“小生姓慎名郎，金陵人氏。久闻贤公有斡旋天地之手，慑伏孽龙之功，海内少二，寰中寡双，小生特来过访，欲遂识荆之愿，别无他意。”真君曰：“孽精未除，徒负虚名，可愧，可愧！”真君言罢，其少年告辞而出。真君送而别之。甘、施二弟子曰：“适间少年，是何人也？”真君曰：“此孽龙也，今来相见，探我虚实耳！”甘施曰：

now, by killing all my children and other members of the clan, more than a thousand in all, Xu Xun has destroyed my base and made me homeless. Hiding here hasn't lessened my frustration. It's been a long time now. Xu Xun should have forgotten me. I'll go back to Yuzhang to flood the town and drown Xu Xun and all his clan. Only such a revenge will restore my peace of mind." Thinking thus, he went to see the prefect.

"What is it you want to say, my good son-in-law?"

"This warm spring weather is the right time for me to go on a business trip, so I'm here to bid you farewell. Please take good care of my wife and children."

"Go ahead, don't worry! Come back early if you make enough profit." And so they took leave of each other.

It was the seventh year of the Yongjia reign period [307-13] of the Jin dynasty, and the Sage and his disciples Gan Zhan and Shi Cen had spent three years searching everywhere for the Demon Dragon. Never finding a trace of him, they put him out of their thoughts, little knowing that the Demon Dragon was coming to them, courting death. One day, a page boy announced a visitor, a handsome and well-dressed young man, who had come to see the Sage.

After inviting the visitor in, the Sage asked, "Which part of the country do you come from?"

"I am Shen Lang, a native of Jinling. I have long heard that, with your hands that can turn around the sky and the earth and your subjugation of the Demon Dragon, you are second to none in the whole wide world. I am here for no other purpose than to make the acquaintance of such a great man."

"In fact, I feel quite ashamed about this undeserved reputation, since I have not been able to subdue the Demon Dragon."

After the Sage had spoken these words, the young man departed. When the Sage's returned after seeing the guest off, Gan and Shi asked, "Who was that young man?"

"None other than the Demon Dragon," replied the Sage. "He came to sound me out."

"How could you tell?"



“何以知之？”真君曰：“吾观其人妖气尚在，腥风袭人，是以知之。”甘施曰：“既如此，即当擒而诛之，何故又纵之使去也？”真君曰：“吾四次擒拿，皆被变化而去，今佯为不知，使彼不甚提防，庶可随便擒之耳！”施岑乃问曰：“此时不知逃躲何处？吾二人愿往杀之！”真君举慧眼一照，乃曰：“今在江浒，化为一黄牛，卧于郡城沙碛之上。我今化为一黑牛，与之相斗，汝二人可提宝剑，潜往窥之。候其力倦，即拔剑而挥之，蛟必可诛也！”

[眉批] 六次收孽龙。言罢，遂化一黑牛，奔跃而去，真个：

四蹄坚固如山虎，两角峥嵘似海龙；
今向沙边相抵触，神仙变化果无穷。

真君化成黑牛，早到沙碛之上，即与黄牛相斗。恰斗有两个时辰，甘、施二人，蹑迹而至，正见二牛相斗，黄牛力倦之际，施岑用剑一挥，正中黄牛左股。甘战亦挥起宝剑斩及一角，黄牛奔入城南井中，其角落地。今马当相对，有黄牛洲，此角日后成精，常变牛出来，害取客商船只，不在话下。

却说真君谓甘、施曰：“孽龙既入井中，凉巢穴在此。吾遣符使吏兵导我前进，汝二人可随我之后，蹑其踪迹，探其巢穴，擒而杀之，以绝后患！”言罢，真君乃跳入井中。施、甘二人，亦



“I detected an evilness about him, and he had quite a foul smell. That’s how I know.”

“In that case, you should have caught him and killed him. Why did you let him go?”

“I have tried four times before, but each time, he changed his form and got away. This time, by pretending not to know the truth, I’ll be able to catch him off guard.”

Shi Cen said, “I wonder where he has gone? We two would be happy to go and get rid of him.”

Looking around with his all-seeing eyes, the Sage said, “He’s now at a riverbank, in the form of a yellow ox lying on the sandy beach of our town. Let me change into a black ox and fight it out with him. You two may take up your swords and watch the fight, but make sure you aren’t seen. When you think his strength is beginning to wear out, draw your swords and cut him down. He’ll surely be finished this time.” (*The sixth attempt at subduing the Demon Dragon.*)

With that, the Sage changed into a black ox and ran off. Truly,

Its four hooves hard as those of a mountain tiger,

Its two horns majestic as those of a sea dragon,

To the sandy beach it went, ready for battle;

Great indeed was the magic power of the Sage.

The Sage went to the sandy beach in the shape of a black ox and engaged the yellow ox in battle. After about four hours, Gan and Shi walked up on tiptoe. Observing that the yellow ox was showing signs of fatigue, Shi Cen drew his sword and hit it in its left hip. Gan also wielded his sword and managed to cut into one of its horns. As it ran into a well south of the city, the horn fell off. To this day, opposite Madang lies a Yellow Ox Islet, where the horn, after becoming an evil spirit, often changed itself into an ox to raid the boats of merchants passing by, but of this, no more.

The Sage said to Gan and Shi, “Since the Demon Dragon jumped into this well, it must be his nest. I’ll have the gods lead the way for me. You two can come after. Let’s follow his tracks all the way into his nest, capture him, and finish him off to forestall all future trouble.” With that, the Sage jumped into the well, followed by Shi and Gan.



跳入井中。符使护引真君前进，只见那个井，其口上虽是狭的，到了下面，别是一个乾坤。这边有一个孔，透着那一个孔，那边有一个洞，透着那一个洞，就似杭州城二十四条花柳巷，巷巷相穿；又似龙窟港三十六条大湾，湾湾相见。常人说道井中之蛙，所见甚小，盖未曾到这个所在，见着许大世界。真君随符使一路而行，忽见有一样物件，不长不短，圆圆的相似个擂槌模样，甘战拾起看时，乃是一车辖。问于真君曰：“此井中怎的有此车辖？”真君道：“昔前汉有一人，姓陈名遵，每大会宾客，辄闭了门，取车辖投于井中，虽有急事，不得去。必饮罢，才捞取车辖还人。后有一车辖，再捞不起，原来水荡在此处来了。”又行数里，忽见有一个四方四角，新新鲜鲜的物件，施岑检将起来一看，原来是个印匣儿。问于真君，真君曰：“昔后汉有宦官张让劫迁天子，北至河上，将传国玉玺投之井中，再无人知觉。后洛阳城南骊宫井有五色气一道直冲上天，孙坚认得是宝贝的瑞气，遂命人浚井，就得了这一颗玉玺。玺便得去，却把这个匣儿遗在这里。”又行数里，忽见有一物件，光闪闪，白净净，嘴湾湾，腹大大的，甘战却拾将起来一看，原来是个银瓶。甘战又问于真君，真君曰：“曾闻有一女子吟云：‘石上磨玉簪，玉簪欲成中央折；



As a god led the Sage forward, they saw that, though narrow at the mouth, the well contained a veritable world of its own. Through a hole here and an aperture there, one could see that all the streets were linked in the same way as the twenty-four streets of the pleasure quarters of the city of Hangzhou, and that all the coves were connected like the thirty-six coves of Dragon Hole Port. It is often said that a frog in a well has a limited view of the world, but that's because frogs have never been to this well from which to see the vastness of this world.

As the Sage followed the god, his eyes happened to rest on a cylindrical object that, neither long nor short, resembled a pestle. Gan Zhan picked it up and saw that it was a linchpin. He asked the Sage, "How did a linchpin for a wheel come to be in a well?"

The Sage replied, "In the Western Han dynasty, there was a man named Chen Zun who, each time he entertained guests, had the habit of closing his door and throwing their carriage linchpins into the well so that none could leave, not even those with urgent matters demanding their attention. The linchpins were not returned to his guests until the feasts were over. But on one occasion, a linchpin could not be found. So, this is where the water has borne it."

After several *li*, they sighted a square object that looked quite intriguing. Shi Cen picked it up and found that it was a box used for keeping seals. When asked, the Sage replied, "In the Eastern Han dynasty, there was a eunuch, Zhang Rang, who took the emperor hostage and brought him up north to the river's edge, where he threw the imperial jade seal into the well, and nothing has been heard of it since. Later, Sun Jian saw a five-colored column of vapor rise to the sky from the Nanli Palace of Luoyang, and recognizing it as indicating the presence of some treasure, he ordered the well to be dredged. When he came upon the jade seal, he kept it but left the box where it was, and this is the very one."⁵⁵

Another few *li* farther on, a bright, white object with a curved mouth and a big belly came into view. Gan picked it up and found it to be a silver vase. He asked the Sage, who responded, "I've heard a woman intone these lines: 'I tried to grind my jade hairpin on a



井底引银瓶，银瓶欲上丝绳绝。’想这个银瓶，是那女子所引的，因断了绳子，故流落在此。”符使禀曰：“孽龙多久遁去，真仙须急忙追赶，途路之上，且不要讲古。”真君于是命弟子趑步而行，只见水族之中，见了的，唬得魂不附体，鲇鱼儿只把口张，团鱼儿只把颈缩，虾子儿只顾拱腰，鲫鱼儿只顾摇尾，真君都置之不问。却说那符使引真君再转一湾抹一角，正是行到山穷水尽处，看看在长沙府贾玉井中而出。真君曰：“今得其巢穴矣！”遂辞了符使回去，自来抓寻。

却说孽龙精既出其井，仍变为慎郎，入于贾使君府中。使君见其身体狼狈，举家大惊，问其缘故。慎郎答曰：“今去颇获大利，不幸回至半途，偶遇贼盗，资财尽劫。又被杀伤左额左股，疼痛难忍！”使君看其刀痕，不胜隐痛，令家僮请求医士疗治。真君乃扮作一医士，命甘、施二人扮作两个徒弟跟随。这医士呵：

道明贤圣，药辨君臣。遇病时，深识着望闻问切；下药



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stone, but the hairpin snapped in the middle. I tried to draw my silver vase from the well, but the thread broke before the vase rose to the top.' So my guess is that this is the very silver vase the woman was pulling up when the thread snapped, and that's how the vase ended up here."

At this point, the god who was guiding them spoke up. "The Demon Dragon has been gone for some time now," he cautioned. "The Sage must make haste. Please do not waste time telling stories from history."

Accordingly, the Sage ordered that his disciples quicken their pace. As they proceeded, aquatic animals that saw them were scared out of their wits. The catfish's jaws dropped, the soft-shell turtles withdrew their heads, the shrimp bent over as far as they could, the silver carp did nothing but wave their tails. Paying them no heed, the Sage followed the god through twists and turns until, just at the moment when he thought they had come to a dead end, the Jia Yu Well of Changsha Prefecture came into view.

"So, this is where the nest is," said the Sage as he bid his guide farewell and approached the well to capture the Demon Dragon.

But that evil spirit had already left the well. Once again taking the form of Shen Lang, he had returned to Prefect Jia's establishment, where the whole family was shocked to see him in such a wretched state. When the prefect asked what had happened to him, Shen Lang gave this story: "I made quite a lot of profit on this trip, but as bad luck would have it, I ran into a group of bandits on the way back. They took all my possessions and wounded my left temple and left hip. The pain is really more than I can bear."

The sight of the sword-inflicted wounds pained the prefect. Immediately, he had a house servant hire a physician.

The Sage disguised himself as a physician, while Gan and Shi posed as his apprentices. Now, this physician:

*Had skills that were nothing less than divine
And knew all there was to know about the various herbs.
When seeing patients, he observed their complexions,
Listened to the sounds they made,*



处，精知个功巧圣神。戴唐巾，披道服，飘飘扬扬；摇羽扇，背葫芦，潇潇洒洒。诊寸关尺三部脉，辨邪审瘤，奚烦三折肱；疗上中下三等人，起死回生，只是一举手。真个是东晋之时，重生了春秋扁鹊；却原来西江之地，再出着上古神农。万古共称医国手，一腔都是活人心。

却说真君扮了医士，贾府僮仆见了，相请而去，进了使君宅上，相见礼毕。使君曰：“吾婿在外经商，被盗贼杀伤左额左股，先生有何妙药，可以治之？容某重谢。”真君曰：“宝剑所伤，吾有妙法，手到即愈。”[眉批] 七次收孽龙。使君大喜，即召慎郎出来医治。当时蛟精卧于房中，问僮仆曰：“医士只一人么？”僮仆曰：“兼有两个徒弟。”蛟精却疑是真君，不敢轻出。其妻贾氏催促之，曰：“医人在堂，你何故不出？”慎郎曰：“你不晓事，医



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*Asked them their symptoms, and felt their pulses.
When writing prescriptions,
He put to use his profound medical knowledge.
A Tang-style cap on his head,
A Daoist's cape over his shoulders,
He radiated an ethereal elegance.
Waving a feather fan,
Carrying a medicine gourd on his back,
He was a picture of grace.
He had only to feel the pulse to diagnose the illness.
He had only to raise a hand
To cure broken limbs and illnesses at all stages
And bring the dead back to life.
Indeed, he was a Bianque of the Spring and Autumn period,⁵⁶
Born again in the Eastern Jin times,
And a Shennong of antiquity⁵⁷
Reappearing in the West River region.
Called the divine physician throughout the ages,
He had a heart that overflowed with compassion.*

Disguise as a physician, the Sage was engaged by the house servant of the Jia establishment. After exchanging greetings with the Sage in the hall, Prefect Jia said, "Bandits wounded my son-in-law on the left temple and the left hip while he was on a business trip. Do you have any effective medicine to cure him? I'll reward you handsomely to show my gratitude."

"If the wounds are inflicted with a sword," said the Sage, "I know a miraculous way to heal them." (*The seventh attempt at subduing the Demon Dragon.*)

Greatly delighted, the prefect sent for Shen Lang. The Demon Dragon was lying in his room at the time and asked the servant, "Is the physician alone?"

"No, he's accompanied by two apprentices."

Suspecting that it was the Sage, the evil one refused to leave his room. His wife Jia-shi urged, "The physician is out there in the hall. Why don't you go?"



得我好也是这个医士，医得不好也是这个医士。”贾氏竟不知所以。使君见慎郎不出，亲自入房召之，真君乃随使君之后，直至房中厉声叱曰：“孽畜再敢走么？”孽龙计穷势迫，遂变出本形，蜿蜒走出堂下。不想真君先设了天罗地网，活活擒之。又以法水喷其三子，悉变为小蛟，真君拔剑并诛之。贾玉之女，此时亦欲变幻，施岑活活擒住。使君大惊！真君曰：“慎郎者，乃孽龙之精，今变作人形，拜尔为岳丈。吾乃豫章许逊，追寻至此擒之。尔女今亦成蛟，合受吾一剑！”贾使君乃与其妻跪于真君之前，哀告曰：“吾女被蛟精所染，非吾女之罪，伏望怜而赦之！”真君遂给取神符与贾女服之，故得不变。真君谓使君曰：“蛟精所居之处，其下即水。今汝舍下深不逾尺，皆是水泉。可速徙居他处，毋自蹈祸。”使君举家惊惶，遂急忙迁居高处。原住其地，不数日果陷为渊潭，深不可测，今长沙府昭潭是也。

施岑却从天罗地网中取出孽龙，欲挥剑斩之，真君曰：“此孽杀之甚易，擒之最难。我想江西系是浮地，下面皆为蛟穴。城



“What do you know?” retorted Shen Lang. “The physician may do me good, but he may also do me harm.”

Jia-shi was at a loss as to what to do. When Shen Lang did not appear, the prefect went to his son-in-law’s room to summon the young man. The Sage followed behind. As soon as he entered Shen Lang’s room, the Sage called out severely, “Accursed beast! Do you dare to evade me again?”

In desperation, the Demon Dragon showed his true shape and wriggled out of his room, little knowing that the Sage had already set the cosmic net around him. He fell into the net and was caught. The Sage then sprayed holy water on Shen Lang’s three sons, who instantly changed into small flood dragons. The Sage then drew his sword and slew all three of them. Jia-shi, the prefect’s daughter, was on the point of attempting a bodily change when Shi Cen captured her, to the horror of the prefect. The Sage said, “Shen Lang is the Demon Dragon. He became your son-in-law by taking on human form. I am Xu Xun of Yuzhang. I have been following his trail. Now that he’s been captured, your daughter, having also become a flood dragon, deserves a blow from my sword.”

Prefect Jia and his wife fell to their knees in front of the Sage and pleaded, “It’s not my daughter’s fault that she was contaminated by the evil flood dragon. Please have pity and forgive her!”

The Sage made the young woman take a magic potion, which stopped her transformation. He said to the prefect, “Wherever flood dragons take up residence, there is water underneath. Your house is now standing on only one foot of soil, beneath which there is nothing but water. You will have to move quickly to some other location to escape danger.”

The prefect’s whole family was flabbergasted. They hastily moved to higher ground. In a matter of days, the mansion they formerly inhabited sank into an unfathomably deep pond, known today as Pond Zhao of Changsha.

Shi Cen picked the Demon Dragon out of the cosmic net and was about to apply his sword when the Sage said, “To slay that accursed one is easy enough. The difficulty was in attempting to capture him. I



南一井其深无底，此井与江水同消长，莫若锁此畜回归，吾以铁树镇之井中，系此孽畜于铁树之上，使后世倘有蛟精见此畜遭厥磨难，或有警惕，不敢为害！”甘战曰：“善！”遂锁了孽龙，径回豫章。于是驱使神兵，铸铁为树，置之郡城南井中。下用铁索钩锁，镇其地脉，牢系孽龙于树，且祝之曰：

铁树开花，其妖若兴，吾当复出。铁树居正，其妖永除，水妖屏迹，城邑无虞。

又留记云：

铁树镇洪州，万年永不休！天下大乱，此处无忧。天下大旱，此处薄收。

又元朝吴全节有诗云：

八索纵横维地脉，一泓消长定江流；
豫章胜地由天造，砥柱中天亿万秋。

真君又铸铁为符，镇于鄱阳湖中。又铸铁盖覆于庐陵元潭，今留一剑在焉。又立府靖于岵峒山顶，皆所以镇压后患也。

真君既擒妖孽，功满乾坤。时晋明帝太宁二年，大将军王敦，



believe that the Jiangxi region is full of flood dragon's nests underneath a thin layer of soil. To the south of the city, there is a bottomless well with water that rises and ebbs with the river. It would be better to deal with him by trussing him up and taking him to that well. I'll put an iron tree in the well and tie that beast to it, so that future flood dragons will take warning from his suffering and refrain from doing evil."

"Good idea!" said Gan Zhan. So they tied up the Demon Dragon and took him back to Yuzhang. There, the Sage summoned celestial soldiers, who made a tree out of iron and put it in the well to the south of the city. With iron chains and locks that kept the feng shui under control, the Sage had the Demon Dragon tightly bound to the tree, and intoned the following incantation:

"Should the iron tree burst into bloom, the demon will break free, and I will come again. As long as the tree stays as it is, the evil spirit will remain in subjugation, the water demons powerless, and the town out of harm's way."

He also wrote the following epigraph:

With the iron tree guarding Hongzhou, peace will reign for ten thousand years. This place will be spared from whatever turmoil may engulf all other places and enjoy modest harvests when drought plagues all other regions.

Wu Quanjie of the Yuan dynasty had a poem that said,

*The eight ropes hold the earth in crisscross fashion;
A well determines the rivers' water level.
Yuzhang, a blessed place made by heaven,
Is the mainstay that holds the sky through the ages.*

The Sage also made iron tablets and placed them in Boyang Lake to subdue any demons that might be present. He also made an iron lid, which he put over Yuan Pond in Luling. To this day, one of his swords still lies by the pond. He then erected an altar at the top of Mount Tiaoyao. All these things he did so as to forestall the rise of future demons.

By subjugating the demon, the Sage performed an immensely laudable service. In the second year of the Taining reign period



字处仲，出守武昌，举兵内向，次洞庭湖。真君与吴君同往说之，盖欲止敦而存晋室也。是时郭景纯亦在王敦幕府，因此三人得以相会。景纯谓真君曰：“公斩馘蛟精，功行圆满，况曩时西山之地，灵气钟完，公不日当上升矣！”真君感谢。一日景纯同真君、吴君来谒王敦，敦见三人同至，大喜，遂令左右设宴款待。酒至半酣，敦问曰：“我昨宵得一梦，梦见一木破天，不知主何吉凶？”真君曰：“木上破天，乃未字也，公未可妄动！”吴君曰：“吾师之言，灼有先见，公谨识之！”王敦闻二君言，心甚不悦。乃令郭璞卜之，璞曰：“此数用克体，将军此行，干事不成也。”王敦不悦曰：“我之寿有几何？”璞曰：“将军若举大事，祸将不久；若遂还武昌，则寿未可量。”王敦怒曰：“汝寿几何？”璞曰：“我寿尽在今日。”王敦大怒，令武士擒璞斩之！真君与吴君举杯掷起，化为白鹤一双，飞绕梁栋之上，王敦举眼看鹤，已失二君



[323-25], under Emperor Ming of the Jin dynasty, General Wang Dun, courtesy name Chuzhong, the garrison commander of Wuchang, rose in rebellion and marched his troops inland. When he was stationed at Lake Dongting, the Sage and Mr. Wu went to see him in an attempt to stop his advances and preserve the Jin house. Guo Pu being an advisor to Wang Dun, the three men enjoyed the reunion.

Guo said to the Sage, "By subjugating the flood dragons, you have achieved the greatest merit possible. Moreover, as signs of the presence of an immortal have been on the wane in the Xishan region, that must mean you will soon be ascending to heaven." The Sage thanked him.

One day, Guo Pu took the Sage and Wu to see Wang Dun, who, greatly delighted at the sight of the three men, ordered that a feast be laid out. When well warmed with wine, Wang Dun asked, "I had a dream last night in which I saw a tree piercing the sky. I wonder what it could portend?"

The Sage replied, "A tree piercing the sky makes up the character *wei*, meaning 'not.' So, you should not be making any ill-considered moves."

Mr. Wu chimed in, "My master's words are always full of prophetic wisdom. Please bear them in mind."

Wang Dun was displeased. At his order, Guo Pu performed a divination for him and said, "This says that function overpowers essence, which means that your endeavor will only end in failure."

"How long am I going to live?" asked Wang Dun in vexation.

Guo Pu replied, "If you do something ambitious, you won't have long to live, but if you return to Wuchang, you will have a long life ahead of you."

Wang Dun flared up. "How long are you going to live?"

"My span of life ends today," rejoined Guo Pu.

In a towering rage, Wang Dun ordered that his armed guards seize Guo Pu and kill him, and so they did. Flinging their wine cups into the air, the Sage and Mr. Wu changed into a pair of white cranes and flew around the rafters. Wang Dun raised his eyes to look at the



所在。且说郭璞既死，家人备办衣衾棺槨，殓毕，越三日，市人见璞衣冠俨然，与亲友相见如故。王敦知之不信，令开棺视之，果无尸骸，始知璞脱质升仙也。[眉批] 五解之中，璞为兵解，亦名金遁。自后王敦行兵果败，遂还武昌而死，卒有支解之刑，盖不听三君之谏，以至于此。

再说吴君邀真君同下金陵，遨游山水。既而欲买舟上豫章，打头风不息，舟中人曰：“当此仲夏，南风浩荡，舟船难进奈何？”真君曰：“我代汝等驾之，汝等但要瞑目安坐，切勿开眼窥视！”吴君乃立于船头，真君亲自把船，遂召黑龙二尾，挟舟而行。经池阳之地，以先天无极都雷府之印，印西崖石壁上以辟水怪，今有印纹。舟渐渐凌空而起，须臾，过庐山之巅，至云霄峰，二君欲观洞府景致，故其船梢刮抹林木之表，戛戛有声。舟人不能忍，皆偷眼窥之，忽然舍舟于层峦之上，折桅于深涧之下，今



cranes, but both of them were gone.

With Guo Pu dead, the Guo family set about making arrangements for the funeral. Three days after the funeral had taken place, Guo Pu was seen in the marketplace, properly dressed and greeting friends and relatives as if nothing had happened. Not believing what he had heard, Wang Dun ordered that the coffin be pried open so he could see for himself. Sure enough, there was no corpse inside. Only then did he realize that Guo Pu had achieved immortality. (*Of the five ways to attain immortality, Guo Pu's was the one called "Release by metal," which means to be released from mortality by means of a weapon.*) Thereafter, Wang Dun did indeed fail in his armed rebellion and died as soon as he returned to Wuchang, where his corpse was dismembered, and all because he had refused to follow the advice of the three masters.

Now, Mr. Wu invited the Sage to follow him to Jinling and take a pleasure trip to view the mountains and waters. They engaged a boat to go back to Yuzhang but came up against a persistent adverse wind. The boatmen said, "With such a strong southerly wind in midsummer weather, the boat can't move an inch. What's to be done?"

The Sage said, "Let me do it for you, but you'll have to sit tight with closed eyes. Do not, on any account, open your eyes to steal a look."

With Mr. Wu standing at the bow, the Sage took over the boatmen's job and summoned two black dragons to help the boat along. As they passed Chiyang, he printed the seal of the Heavenly God of Thunder on the rock cliff of West Hill in order to keep water monsters away. To this day, the cliff still bears traces of the seal. Gradually, the boat began to rise in the air. In a trice, it flew over the crest of the Lushan Mountains to Cloud Peak. Eager to look into the caves, the Sage and Wu kept the boat so close to the mountainside that it scratched the trees, making loud noises. The boatmen, their curiosity getting the better of them, opened their eyes. Instantly, the boat came to a standstill right there on top of the mountain, and its mast fell into the deep valley below. The place where the boat stopped is now called Iron Boat Peak, and the broken rock underneath is part of



号铁船峰，其下有断石，即其桅也。真君谓舟人曰：“汝等不听吾言，以至如此，今将何所归乎？”舟人恳拜，愿求济度之法。真君教以服饵灵药，遂得辟谷不饥，尽隐于紫霄峰下。二君乃各乘一龙，回至豫章，遂就旧时隐居，终日与诸弟子讲究真诠，乃作《思仙之歌》云：

天运循环兮，疾如飞。人生世间兮，欲何为？争名夺利兮，徒丘墟，风月滋味兮，有谁知？不如且进黄金卮，一饮一唱日沉西。丹砂养就玉龙池，小口世界宽无涯；世人莫道是愚痴，酩然一笑天地齐。

又作《八宝垂训》曰：

忠孝廉谨，宽裕容忍。忠则不欺，孝则不悖，廉而罔贪，谨而勿失。修身如此，可以成德。宽则得众，裕然有馀，容而翕受，忍则安舒。接人以礼，怨咎涤除。凡我弟子，动静勤笃，念兹在兹，当守其独！有丧厥心，三官考戮。



its mast. The Sage said to the boatmen, "You didn't do as I said, and now look at what you've gotten yourselves into. How are you going to find your way back home?"

The boatmen kowtowed to him and implored him to deliver them, whereupon the Sage gave them a magic potion that would protect them from hunger while they lived in seclusion under Purple Cloud Peak. The Sage and Mr. Wu each rose on the back of a dragon and flew back to Yuzhang, where they resumed their lives as hermits and spent their days explicating the Daoist truth to disciples. In their longing for immortality, they wrote this poem:

*The cosmic cycles go round and round as if on wings;
In this mortal world among human beings,
What is there to do?
Don't fights for fame and profit lead one to the grave any-
way?
Whoever knows the true taste of a romantic life?
Better to take shelter in a golden wine vessel
And drink and sing till the sun sinks in the west.
A cinnabar pond for a jade dragon,
And a vast world measured in small ladlefuls.
Take me not for a benighted one;
My drunken laughter fills the sky and earth.*

For their disciples, they wrote the following words of admonition in explanation of the eight virtues:

Loyalty, filial piety, integrity, caution, magnanimity, independence from want, tolerance, and endurance. Loyalty keeps one from cheating, filial piety prevents disobedience, integrity guards against greed, caution obviates loss. Attainment of these virtues will be a major spiritual accomplishment. Magnanimity wins hearts and minds; independence from want ensures a decent living; tolerance enables one to mix readily with others; endurance gives one peace of mind. Treat people with courteousness, and all grievances will be washed away. All of you disciples, bear the above in mind in whatever you do, in stillness or in motion. The least aberration is punishable by court



却说天地水府三元三品三官大帝，及太白金星，因言真君原是玉洞天仙下降，今除荡妖孽，惠及生灵，德厚功高。其弟子吴猛等，扶同真君，共成至道，皆宜推荐，以至天庭。商议具表，奏闻玉帝。玉帝准奏，乃授许逊九天都仙大使，兼高明大使之职，封孝先王。远祖祖父，各有职位。先差九天采访使崔子文、段丘仲捧诏一道，谕知许逊，预示飞升之期，以昭善报。采访二仙捧诏下界，时晋孝武宁康二年，甲戌，真君时年一百三十六岁。八月朔旦，见云仗自天而下，导从者甚众，降于庭中。真君迎接拜讫，二仙曰：“奉玉皇敕命，赐子宝诏，子可备香花灯烛，整顿衣冠，俯伏阶下，以听宣读！”诏曰：

上诏学仙童子许逊：卿在多劫之前，积修至道，勤苦悉备。天经地纬，悉已深通；万法千门，罔不师历。救灾拔难，除害荡妖，功济生灵，名高玉籍。众真推荐，宜有甄升，可授九州都仙大使，兼高明大使、孝先王之职。赐紫彩羽袍琼



trial and death.

The kings of the sky, earth and water and the god of the Gold Star announced that the Sage had been the Immortal of the Jade Cave before descending to earth and recommended him to the Jade Emperor for his highly meritorious deeds in subjugating demons for the benefit of humanity. In their recommendation, they also included the names of some of his disciples, including Wu Meng, for their achievement of the Way by supporting their master. After consulting one another, they presented the memorial to the Jade Emperor, who then approved the request and granted Xu Xun the titles Celestial Envoy and Envoy of Wisdom as well as the title King Xiaoxian. Titles were also conferred upon Xu Xun's ancestors. The celestial messengers Cui Ziwen and Duan Qiuzhong delivered the Jade Emperor's decree to Xu Xun, giving him the date of his ascension to heaven in acknowledgement of his good deeds. It being the second year of the Ningkang reign period [373-76] under Emperor Xiaowu of the Jin dynasty, the Sage was one hundred and thirty-six years old when the two celestial messengers descended to earth with the Jade Emperor's decree.

On the first day of the eighth month, at the sight of a cloud carriage with a large entourage descending from the sky into his courtyard, the Sage went out to pay homage to the visitors. The two celestial messengers said, "By the Jade Emperor's order, we are here to deliver to you His Majesty's decree. You may prepare some fragrant carved candles, adjust your clothes and cap, and kneel down in front of the steps to listen." The decree read as follows:

To Xu Xun, a student aspiring to attain immortality:

Having applied thyself assiduously to the cultivation of thy spirit before the many kalpas to come, thou hast learned all there is to know about the truths of the universe and mastered all the doctrines. By alleviating the suffering of those in disaster areas and eliminating demons and evil spirits for the benefit of the people, thou hast earned thyself a prominent place in the registry of immortals. Upon recommendation, thou art hereby granted the titles of Celestial Envoy, Envoy of Wisdom, and King Xiaoxian and bestowed a robe of purple feathers, a celes-



旌宝节各一事。期以八月十五午时，拔宅上升。诏书到日，信诏奉行。

读罢，真君再拜，遂登阶受诏毕，乃揖二仙上坐，问其姓名。一仙曰：“余乃崔子文、段丘仲，俱授九天采访使之职。”真君曰：“愚蒙有何德能，感动天帝，更劳二仙下降？”二仙曰：“公修己利人，功行已满。昨者群真保奏，升入仙班，相迎在途，先命某等捧诏谕知。”言毕，遂乘龙车而去。真君既得天书之后，门弟子吴猛等，与乡中耆老及诸亲眷，皆知行期已近，朝夕会饮，以叙别情。真君谓众人曰：“欲达神仙之路，在先行其善而后立其功。[眉批]金玉之言。吾去后一千二百四十年间，豫章之境，五陵之内，当出地仙八百余人。其师出于豫章，大阐吾教。以吾坛前松树枝垂覆拂地，郡江心中，忽生沙洲掩过井口者，是其时也。”后人有言：“龙沙会合，真仙必出。”按龙沙在章江西岸畔，与郡城相对，事见《龙沙记》。潘清逸有《望龙沙》五言诗云：

五陵无限人，密视松沙记；



tial banner, and a jade staff. Thou shalt ascend to heaven with thy family at the hour of noon on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. Thou needst only follow the instructions of the decree due on that day.

When the decree had been read, the Sage bowed twice and ascended the steps to receive it. Then he invited the two messengers to take seats of honor and asked them their names. One replied, "I am Cui Ziwen. He is Duan Qiuzhong. We are both celestial messengers."

"What have I done to deserve the honor of having the Jade Emperor send you down to earth?"

"You have achieved sufficient merit through spiritual devotion and good works performed on behalf of humanity. Yesterday, you were recommended by the gods to the Jade Emperor for the attainment of immortality. We are here to greet you and give you advance notice." With that, they mounted their dragon carriage and departed.

Now that the Sage had received notice from heaven, Wu Meng and other disciples as well as the local elders and relatives all knew that his departure was imminent. Every day, they gave him farewell drinking parties. At one of these gatherings, the Sage announced: "To attain immortality, the important thing is to do good deeds before thinking of claiming credit for them. (*Excellent advice.*) One thousand two hundred and forty years after I am gone, more than eight hundred people among the five hills of Yuzhang will attain immortality. Their mentor will be a native of Yuzhang who will assiduously impart my teachings. When branches of the pine tree in front of my altar are brushed against the ground and a sandbar large enough to cover the mouth of a well appears in the middle of the river, that will be the moment."

Later, there arose this saying, "When the dragon meets the sand, immortals shall be made." The spot where the dragon and the sand met is by the west bank of the Zhang River, within view of the city, as is recorded in *The Records of the Dragon and the Sand*. Pan Qingyi wrote this poem titled "Watching the Dragon and the Sand":

Throngs of people of the five hills

Watch for the pine branches and the sandbar.



龙沙虽未合，气象已虚异。
昔时云浪游，半作桑麻地；
地形带江转，山势若连契。

是时八月望日，大营斋会，遍召里人及诸亲友并门弟子，老少毕集。至日中，遥闻音乐之声，祥云缭绕，渐至会所。羽盖龙车，仙童彩女，官将吏兵，前后拥护。前采访使崔子文、段丘仲二仙又至，真君拜迎，二仙复宣诏曰：

上诏学仙童子许逊：功行圆满，已仰潜山司命官，传金丹于下界，返子身于上天。及家口厨宅，一并拔之上升。着令天丁力士与流金火铃，照辟中间，无或散漫。仍封远祖许由，玉虚仆射；又封曾祖许琰，太微兵卫大夫，曾祖母太微夫人；其父许肃，封中岳仙官，母张氏封中岳夫人。钦此钦遵，诏至奉行！

真君再拜受诏毕。崔子文曰：“公门下弟子虽众，惟陈勋、曾亨、周广、时荷等外，黄仁览与其父，盱烈与其母，共四十二口，合当从行。馀者自有升举之日，不得皆往也。”言罢，揖真君上了龙车，仙眷四十二口同时升举。里人及门下弟子，不与上升



*Before the dragon and the sand actually meet,
The terrain has already changed.
Where waves used to swell,
Half has become tilled land.
The land follows the curves of the river
And the unbroken lines of the rolling hills.*

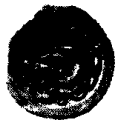
When the fifteenth day of the eighth month came around, the neighbors, relatives, friends, and disciples of the Sage, be they old and young, were called together for a grand gathering. At mid day, there came the distant sound of music accompanying the auspicious clouds that moved slowly toward the gathering. It was the celestial messengers Cui Ziwen and Duan Qiuzhong, this time riding a feather-canopied dragon carriage preceded and followed by an entourage of celestial boys and maidens, officials, generals, clerks, and soldiers. As the Sage bowed in greeting, the two messengers read aloud the Jade Emperor's decree:

To Xu Xun, student aspiring to attain immortality:

Having attained perfection in thy spiritual cultivation, thou art hereby ordered to follow the Qian Shan Stars of Civil Virtue, who have brought gold pills to the lower world, to ascend to heaven, together with thy family and thy house. The heavenly guardians shall light the way with the golden fire bells, with no remission in their duty. Thy great-grandfather Xu You is hereby granted the title Supervisor of the Fairy Palace; thy grandfather Xu Yan, the title Taiwei Commander; thy grandmother, Lady Taiwei; thy father Xu Su, the title Immortal of Zhongyue; thy mother Zhang-shi, the title Lady Zhongyue. This decree is to be executed immediately upon delivery.

The Sage bowed again and received the decree. Cui Ziwen said, "Of your many disciples, only Chen Xun, Zeng Heng, Zhou Guang, Shi He, Huang Renlan and his father, and Xu Lie and his mother, forty-two people in all, can join you. The others will have their own days of ascension. They cannot all follow you this time."

With that, he invited the Sage to mount the dragon carriage. Forty-two people in all rose to heaven with him.



者，不舍真君之德，攀辕卧辙，号泣振天，愿相随而不可得。真君曰：“仙凡有路可通，汝等但能遵行孝道，利物济民，何患无报耶！”真君族孙许简哀告曰：“仙翁拔宅冲升，后世无所考验，可留下一物，以为他日之记。”真君遂留下修行钟一口，并一石函，谓之曰：“世变时迁，此即为陈迹矣！”真君有一仆名许大者，与其妻市米于西岭，闻真君飞升，既奔驰而归。行忙车覆，遗其米于地上，米皆复生，今有覆米冈、生米镇犹在。比至哀泣，求其从行。真君以彼无有仙分，乃授以地仙之术，夫妇皆隐于西山。仙仗既举，屋宇鸡犬皆上升，惟鼠不洁，天兵推下地来。一跌肠出，其鼠遂拖肠不死。后人或有见之者，皆为瑞应。又坠下药臼一口，碾穀一轮，又坠下鸡笼一只，于宅之东南十里。又许氏仙姑，坠下金钗一股，今有许氏坠钗洲犹在。时人以其拔宅上升，有诗叹美云：



Those neighbors and disciples who were not allowed to join him hung on to the axles of the wheels, loath to part with him. Their cries shook the sky, but their wish to follow was not to be granted. The Sage said, "There is no lack of ways to achieve immortality. If you all adhere to filial piety and render good services to the people, you will surely be duly rewarded."

Xu Jian, a grandson of the Sage's, said in a plaintive tone, "There being nothing to remind future generations of you who are ascending to heaven, please leave us some memento to remember you by."

Thereupon, the Sage left behind a bell that he had used in his spiritual cultivation as well as a stone box, saying, "As the world changes, these will become things of the past."

A servant of the Sage's, a certain Xu Da, was buying rice with his wife at West Hill when he heard about his master's rise to heaven. Immediately, he started back, but in his haste, his carriage overturned, spilling the rice. All the grains of rice sprouted and became seedlings. To this day, the hill is called Spilt Rice Hill and the town is called Growing Rice Town.

To Xu Da's sobbing appeal to follow his master, the Sage responded by teaching him ways of becoming an earthbound immortal, believing him to be destined for no more than that. The servant and his wife henceforth took up residence at West Hill as hermits. After the Sage had risen to heaven — along with the whole family and the house, with chickens and dogs and all — the celestial soldiers pushed a rat down because it was unclean. Its intestines fell out as it thumped against the earth, but it remained alive. Those who witnessed the scene attributed the rat's escape from death to the grace of heaven. Next fell a pestle for a medicine mortar, a grain grinder, and a chicken cage, all of which landed about ten *li* southeast of the house. Xu Xun's wife dropped a gold hairpin, and to this day, that place is called Spot Where Lady Xu Dropped Her Hairpin. A contemporary had this to say in praise of the Sage's rise to heaven with his entire family and the house:

Sage Xu's compassion is widely admired;



慈仁共羨许旌阳，惠泽生民耿不忘；
拔宅上升成至道，阳功阴德感苍苍。

仙驾飞空渐远，望之不可见，惟见祥云彩霞，弥漫上谷，百里之内，异香芬馥。忽有红锦帷一幅飞来，旋绕故地之上。却说真君仙驾经过袁州府宜春县栖梧山，真君乃遣二青衣童子下告王朔，具以玉皇诏命，因来相别。王朔举家瞻拜，告曰：“朔蒙尊师所授道法，遵奉已久，乞带从行！”真君曰：“子仙骨未充，止可延年得寿而已，难以带汝同行。”乃取香茆一根掷下，令二童子授与王朔，教之曰：“此茆味异，可栽植于此地，久服长生。甘能养肉，辛能养节，苦能养气，咸能养骨，滑能养肤，酸能养筋，宜调和美酒饮之，必见功效。”言讫而别。王朔依真君之言，即将此茆栽植，取来调和酒味服之，寿三百岁而终。今临江府玉虚观即其地也，仙茆至今犹在。真君飞升之后，里人与其族孙许简，就其地立祠，以所遗诗一百二十首，写于竹简之



*His kind deeds will never be forgotten.
With his family, he rose to the sky;
His meritorious service moved heaven.*

The Sage flew into the distance and gradually passed from sight. Only auspicious rosy clouds were seen floating in the sky, and an extraordinary fragrance permeated the air throughout the area within one hundred *li*. Suddenly, a red brocade curtain wafted into view and hovered over the ground where the Sage had lived.

While he was flying past the Qiwu Mountains of Yichun County, Yuanzhou Prefecture, the Sage sent down two boys dressed in green to tell Wang Shuo about his ascension to heaven by order of the Jade Emperor and to bid him farewell. As he led his whole family in kowtowing, Wang Shuo pleaded, "I have been following the methods that you, my master, have kindly taught me for a long time now. Please take me along!"

The Sage replied, "You are not yet ready for anything more than prolongation of your allotted life span. I cannot take you along." With that, he threw a blade of lemongrass onto the ground and told the two boys to hand it to Wang Shuo, adding, "The lemongrass has an extraordinary fragrance. If you plant it in this spot, let it grow, and use it as an herbal supplement on a long-term basis, you'll be able to live a long life. Its sweetness nourishes the flesh, its pungency nourishes the joints, its bitterness nourishes the vital force, its saltiness strengthens the bones, its smoothness lubricates the skin, its sourness is good for the tendons. If you put it in fine wine and drink the mixture, you will surely notice the effects." With that, he took leave of Wang Shuo.

Wang Shuo followed the Sage's instructions and planted the lemongrass, let it grow, drank the wine mixture, and lived to be three hundred years old. The Yuxu Temple that stands in Linjiang Prefecture is the very place where Wang Shuo's residence used to be, and the wondrous lemongrass is still there.

After the Sage rose to heaven, the neighbors and Xu Jian, his consanguineous grandson, erected an altar on the spot of his ascension. They inscribed the one hundred and twenty poems he had left



上，载之巨筒，令人探取，以决休咎。其修行钟、药毂、药臼、石函等事，并宝藏于祠。后改为观，因空中有红锦帷飞来旋绕，故名曰游帷观。

真君既至天庭，玉帝升殿，崔子文、段丘仲二仙引真君与弟子等听候玉旨。玉帝宣入朝见，真君扬尘拜舞，俯伏金阶上，上表奏曰：“臣许逊庸才劣质，虽有咒水行符馘毒之功，盖亦赖众弟子十一人之力。今弟子之中止有陈勋、曾亨、周广、时荷、黄仁览、盱烈六人，已蒙圣恩超升天界。更有吴猛、施岑、甘战、钟离嘉、彭抗五人，未蒙拔擢，诚为缺典。望乞一视同仁，宣至天庭，同归至道。”玉帝见奏，即传玉旨差周广为使，赍传诏旨，令吴猛等五人同日上升。周广即拜辞玉帝，赍诏下宣，是时乃晋宁康二年九月初一日也。吴猛时年一百八十六岁，见真君上升，已不与从，心曲怏怏。正与施岑、甘战、钟离嘉、彭抗四道友同归西宁，聚义修炼。只见周广赍诏自天而下，众相见毕，动问其下界之故。周广曰：“吾师朝见玉帝，奏上帝，诸位仙友多助仙



behind onto bamboo slips and put the slips inside a giant bamboo tube so that people could pick one when seeking to settle disputes. His bell, his medicine grinder, his pestle, and his stone box were all placed reverentially onto the altar, which later became a temple. Because a red brocade curtain had flown over this spot, it came to be called Flying Curtain Temple.

When the Sage arrived in the celestial palace, the Jade Emperor mounted his throne, while Cui Ziwen and Duan Qiuzhong instructed the Sage and his disciples to wait for the Jade Emperor's order granting them an audience. Upon receiving the order, the Sage went in, bowed according to proper etiquette, and prostrated himself at the foot of the golden steps that led to the throne. He presented a memorial to the Jade Emperor and said, "Your humble subject Xu Xun is of but mediocre ability and inferior nature. All that I have done in the way of spreading holy water, drawing magic figures, and subjugating demons is attributable to the efforts of my eleven disciples, but only Chen Xun, Zeng Heng, Zhou Guang, Shi He, Huang Renlan and Xu Lie have, by Your Majesty's blessing, risen to heaven. Wu Meng, Shi Cen, Gan Zhan, Zhongli Jia, and Peng Kang have not been so blessed. This is indeed a pity. Please give them your blessings as well, Your Majesty, and summon them to the celestial palace in consummation of their quest for the Way."

The Jade Emperor granted his request and dispatched Zhou Guang to deliver the decree that Wu Meng and the four others rise to heaven on the same day. Accordingly, Zhou Guang took respectful leave of the Jade Emperor and went on his mission.

It was the first day of the ninth month in the second year of the Ningkanɡ reign period in the Jin dynasty. Wu Meng was one hundred and eighty-six years old. Displeased that he had not been allowed to rise to heaven with the Sage, he was in the middle of a journey with four fellow disciples — Shi Cen, Gan Zhan, Zhongli Jia and Peng Kang. They were returning to Xining to pursue further spiritual cultivation when Wu Meng saw Zhou Guang descending from the sky, decree in hand. After an exchange of greetings, he asked Zhou what had brought him to the mortal world. Zhou Guang replied, "The Mas-



功，未得上升，恳求玉帝超擢。玉帝即差广贲诏旨令五君上升，同归至道。”五人听言大喜，各乘白鹿车，白昼冲升。今有吴仙村吴仙观，是其飞升之处。然真君所从游者三千余人，其有功有行而得上升者，通吴君十有一人焉耳。真君领弟子朝见玉帝毕，玉帝各授以仙职，遂率群弟子拜谒太师祖孝悌明王卫弘、师祖孝明王兰公、师傅谌母已毕，又谢了三官金星保奏之功。真君又荐举故人许都胡云、云阳詹晔二人，皆有道之士，玉帝皆封真人之号，不在话下。

却说真君自升仙后，屡显神通。隋炀帝无道，烧毁佛祠，乃将游帷观废毁。唐高宗永淳年间，遂命真人胡惠超重新建之。至宋太宗、仁宗皆赐御书，真宗时赐改游帷观曰玉隆宫。至宋代政和二年，徽宗忽得重疾，面生恶疮。昼寝恍然一梦，见东华门有一道士，戴九华冠，披绛章服，左右童子，持剑导前，来至丹墀



ter told the Jade Emperor that he had benefited greatly from the help of friends who had not been allowed to rise to heaven, and he entreated the Jade Emperor to extend his grace to them. And so, the Jade Emperor sent me down with his decree, ordering that all five of you rise to heaven in consummation of your pursuit of the Way.”

Immensely delighted by these words, all five rose to heaven in broad daylight on white deer carriages. The Immortal Wu Village and the Immortal Temple of our day mark the spot where the ascension took place. Of the Sage’s more than three thousand followers, only eleven, including Wu Meng, rose to heaven on the basis of their worthy service and virtue. The Sage took all the disciples to an audience with the Jade Emperor, who conferred titles on them. Afterward, the Sage led them to pay their respects to Patriarch Wei Hongkang, King of Filial Piety, Brotherly Love, and Wisdom; Grand Master Lan, King of Filial Sagacity; and the Sage’s mentor, Reverend Mother. They also thanked the kings of the sky, earth, and water and the god of the Gold Star for their recommendation, after which the Sage recommended his friends Hu Yun of Xudu and Zhan Cui of Yunyang to the Jade Emperor for their devotion to the Dao. The Jade Emperor conferred upon both men the title Sage, but this is of no concern to us.

After his ascension, the Sage had many occasions to put his magic power to use. The evil Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty [r.605–17] had Buddhist temples burned and Flying Curtain Temple destroyed. During the Yongchun reign period [682–83] under Emperor Gaozong of the Tang dynasty, the Sage ordered Sage Hu Huichao to rebuild them. By Song times, Emperors Taizong and Renzong graced Flying Curtain Temple with letters of praise. During Emperor Zhenzong’s reign, the name of the temple was changed to Yulong Palace. In the second year of the Zhenghe reign period [1111–18] in the Song dynasty, Emperor Huizong was afflicted with a vicious boil on his face. While he was napping during the day, he dreamed he saw a Daoist priest wearing a tall crown and a scarlet robe with patterns of the sun, the moon, and the stars. Approaching in the direction of Donghua Gate, the priest drew near the steps at the



稽首。帝疑非人间道士，因问曰：“卿是何人？”道士对曰：“吾为许旌阳，权掌九天司职。上帝诏往西瞿耶国按察，经由故国，知主上患疾，特来顾之。”帝曰：“朕患毒疮，诸药不能愈，卿有药否？”道士即取小瓢子倾药一粒，如绿豆子大，呵气抹于徽宗疮上，遂揖而去。且曰：“吾洪都西山弊舍，久已零落，乞望圣眼一瞻为幸！”帝豁然而寤，觉满面清凉，以手摩之，疮遂愈矣。乃令近臣将图经考之，见洪州西山有许旌阳遗迹，诏造许真君行宫，改修玉隆宫，仍添“万寿”二字。塑真君新像，尊号曰神功妙济真君。许真君所遗之物，皆有神护守，不可触犯。如殿前手植柏树，其荣瘁常兆本宫盛衰，翦叶煮汤，诸病可愈。井中铁树，唐严撰作洪州牧，心内不信，令人掘发，俄然天变，忽有迅雷烈风，江波泛滥，城郭震动。撰惧，叩头悔谢，久之而后止。又强取修



foot of the throne, led by two boys with swords in their hands. Suspecting that he was not a Daoist priest of the mortal world, the emperor asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Xu Xun, in charge of administrative affairs in the nine heavens. I am on my way to the state of Liao at the order of the Lord on High. Passing by my old country, I learned about Your Majesty's illness and came to see for myself."

"This boil of mine is a poisonous one. No prescription has done any good. Do you have anything that will work?"

With a small ladle, the priest dispensed one pill the size of a mungbean, blew a puff of breath on it, and applied it to Emperor Huizong's boil. As he bowed his farewell, he said, "My humble former residence by West Hill in Hongdu has fallen into decay. Please do me the great honor of taking a look at it."

Suddenly, the emperor woke up. Feeling a soothing cool on his face, he stroked his cheek and found that the boil was gone. He ordered a minister to take up a map and inspect the region mentioned by the Sage. As Sage Xu Jingyang's former residence was indeed found by West Hill of Hongzhou, the emperor decreed that Yulong Palace be renovated and made habitable so that Sage Xu could use it during his sojourns on earth. The word "longevity" was added to the name of the palace. A new statue of the Sage was erected, and he was given a new title: Sage with Divine Power. All the objects Sage Xu had left behind were under the protection of celestial guardians and were not to be touched.

The cypress the Sage had planted by hand in front of the palace often portended, by its thriving or withering, the rise or decline of the imperial court. When brewed in a soup, the leaves of the tree could cure all illnesses.

Yan Zhuan of Tang, prefect of Hongzhou, did not believe the story about an iron tree in the well. He ordered that the tree, if it existed, be dug up. As soon as the work started, the weather changed. Thunder rolled, and violent winds swept the waves of the river high and shook the city walls. Only a considerable while after the terrified prefect had kowtowed in repentance did the storm begin to subside.



行钟，置之僧寺，击之声哑如土木。撰坐寐，见神人叱责，醒觉，而送钟还宫。又碾轮、药臼，州牧徐登令取至府观之，犹未及观，遂乃飞去还宫。又石函，唐朝张善安窃据洪州，强凿开其盖，内册朱书数字云：“五百年后强贼张善安开凿之。”善安看毕，恐惧，遂磨洗其字，终不泯灭。因藏其盖，其字尚留函底。宋高宗建炎间，金人寇江左，欲焚毁宫殿。俄而水自楹桷喷出，火不能烧，虏酋大惊，乃彻兵而去。皇明列圣，元加寅奉，敕赐重修宫殿，真君屡出护国行医。正德戊寅年间，宁府阴谋不轨，亲诣其宫，真君降箕笔云：

三三两两两三三，杀尽江南一檐耽；
荷叶败时黄菊绽，大明依旧镇江山。

后来果败。诸灵验不可尽述。后人诗叹云：

金书玉检不能留，八字遗言可力求；



The prefect then had the Sage's bell taken by force and placed in a Buddhist monastery, where it gave only a dull thump when struck, as if it were made of earth or wood. When he dozed off in his seat, the prefect saw a god reproaching him. Upon waking, he had the bell sent back to its place in Yulong Palace.

As for the medicine grinder and the pestle, a later prefect, Xu Deng, ordered that they be brought to his house for his inspection, but, before he had a chance to examine them, they flew back to the palace. As for the stone box, after usurping the post of prefect of Hongzhou, Zhang San'an of the Tang dynasty had its lid pried open, only to see these characters, written in vermilion: "This box will be pried open in five hundred years by Zhang Shan'an the rebel." In fear, Zhang Shan'an rubbed at the characters, trying to obliterate them, but to no avail. He hid the lid, but the same characters remained at the bottom of the box.

During the Jianyan reign period [1127-31], under Emperor Gaozong of Song, the Jurchens wreaked havoc along the lower Yangzi Valley. As they were about to set fire to Yulong Palace, water spouted from the gutters and put out the fire. The Jurchens fled in alarm.

Successive emperors paid their respects to the Sage's palace and kept it in good repair. The Sage, for his part, frequently came to the country to cure illnesses. During the Zhongde reign period [1506-22], Zhu Quan, the prince of Ning, rose in rebellion. When he approached the palace, the Sage sent down from heaven the following lines:

*In threes and twos, and twos and threes,
 He slaughtered people south of the river.
 When the lotus withers, the chrysanthemum blooms;
 The Ming dynasty still lives on.*

Later, the rebellion was indeed suppressed. So many of the Sage's prophecies turned out to be accurate that a later poet had this to say:

*The good book in gold and jade is not to be had;
 Seek, instead, the Sage's eight-character teachings.*

试看真君功行满，三千弱水自通舟。





*Consider how he achieved the highest merits
And sailed through the danger-infested seas.*

¹ Jingyang is Xu Xun (239–374), courtesy name Jingzhi, the main character of this story. A Daoist priest in the Eastern Jin dynasty, he is often referred to as Xu Jingyang because he was a prefect of Jingyang County in present-day Hubei Province, where his efforts to bring the waters under control gave rise to stories about his magic power. The stories later became part of Daoist mythology. During the Song dynasty, he was given the posthumous title Divine and Wondrous Sage.

² The *Six Classics* are: *The Book of Songs*, *The Book of History*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Music*, *The Book of Changes*, and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*.

³ Shun was a legendary king who ruled in antiquity. Emperor Wen was Liu Heng (r. 179–56 B.C.E.).

⁴ Jiang Shi and his wife, of the Eastern Han dynasty, served Jiang's mother, who loved eating fish, with such devotion that heaven rewarded them with a spring right next to their house. Two carp leaped out of this spring every morning.

Wang Xiang of the Jin dynasty was a most filial son to his stepmother. To satisfy her craving for carp when she was ill, he took off his clothes and lay down on the ice in the depths of winter. Heaven was moved. The ice melted, and fish leaped out.

⁵ In Daoist terminology, "the cinnabar field" is the lower part of the abdomen, about three inches below the navel.

⁶ The Red Boy is a character in the famous Ming dynasty novel *The Journey to the West*. Son of the Demon Bull King and Iron-Fan Princess, he walks on fiery wheels and fights the Monkey King with his fire power.

⁷ Xianyang, capital of the Qin dynasty, smoldered for three months after being looted and burned by the rebel Xiang Yu's troops.

⁸ In the Battle of the Red Cliffs (208), Zhou Yu, strategist for Sun Quan (who founded Wu, 220–80), joined Zhuge Liang, strategist for Liu Bei (who founded Shu, 221–63), in defeating Cao Cao (whose son founded Wei, 220–65), by setting fire to Cao Cao's troops.

⁹ Zhuge Liang, courtesy name Kongming (181–234), strategist for Liu Bei (see previous note), had the storage barn for his own troops set on fire in order to lure the enemy, Xiahou Chun. The battle ended in Xiahou's defeat.

¹⁰ Dragon Spring is the name of a legendary sword.

¹¹ Ganjiang and Moye, husband and wife in the ancient state of Wu during the Spring and Autumn period, were such skillful sword makers that their names came to be synonyms for precious swords.

¹² Xu You is the one to whom the sage-king Yao, who ruled in antiquity, wished to pass on the throne, but he repeatedly declined the offer.

¹³ *Ding* is the fourth of the ten Heavenly Stems, which are used in combination with the ten Earthly Branches to designate years, months, days, and hours. "Six-*ding*" here refers to *ding* plus six of the Earthly Branches—*mao*, *si*, *wei*, *you*, *hai*, and *chou* (i.e. *ding mao*, *ding si*, etc).

¹⁴ King Wen of the Zhou dynasty was a tribal leader in the late Shang dynasty. He is said to





be adept in the use of trigrams in performing divinations.

¹⁵ The six cosmic essences are those generated by dawn in spring, sunset in autumn, noon-time in summer, and midnight in winter and by the sky and the earth.

¹⁶ The ten commandments are (1) One must not disobey one's parents and teachers; (2) One must not kill live beings; (3) One must not rebel against the sovereign of the state; (4) One must not take liberties with one's female kith and kin as well as other women; (5) One must not vilify the Dao and the Daoist classics; (6) One must have one's body covered when in the vicinity of the altar; (7) One must not bully the poor and the humble and commit robbery; (8) One must not abandon the elderly and the sick; (9) One must not drink to excess and engage in verbal abuse; (10) One must not commit acts of violence and show off one's power.

¹⁷ In Daoist alchemical terms, the dragon represents mercury and the tiger represents lead. Both are used for mixing immortality elixir.

¹⁸ The five phases are water, fire, wood, metal, and earth.

¹⁹ Chinese musicians in ancient times used a pentatonic scale with only five notes (corresponding to 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, in Western numbered musical notation) and named them GONG, SHANG, JIAO, ZHI, and YU.

²⁰ On Zhou Yu, see note 8 above.

²¹ Celestial Master Zhang is Zhang Daoling (? -156), founder of the "Five-Piculs of Rice" sect of Daoism. For more on Zhang Daoling, see story 13 in Feng Menglong, *Stories Old and New: a Ming Dynasty Collection*, trans. Shuhui Yang & Yunqin Yang (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2007).

²² Liu Yuan, of mixed Han and Hun descent, was the founder of the state of Han; Shi Le founded the state of Zhao; Yao Yizhong's son was the founder of the Later Qin; Fu Hong's son founded the Former Qin; and Murong Wei's son founded the state of Yan.

²³ Zong Que (d. 465), courtesy name Yuangan, a native of Nieyang of Nanyang in present-day Henan Province, is known for his military exploits and for his childhood wish, expressed to his uncle, to "ride the wind and cleave the waves."

²⁴ Lie Yukou, or Liezi, of the Warring States period, was said to have achieved immortality as a Daoist sage and was able to ride on the winds and fly.

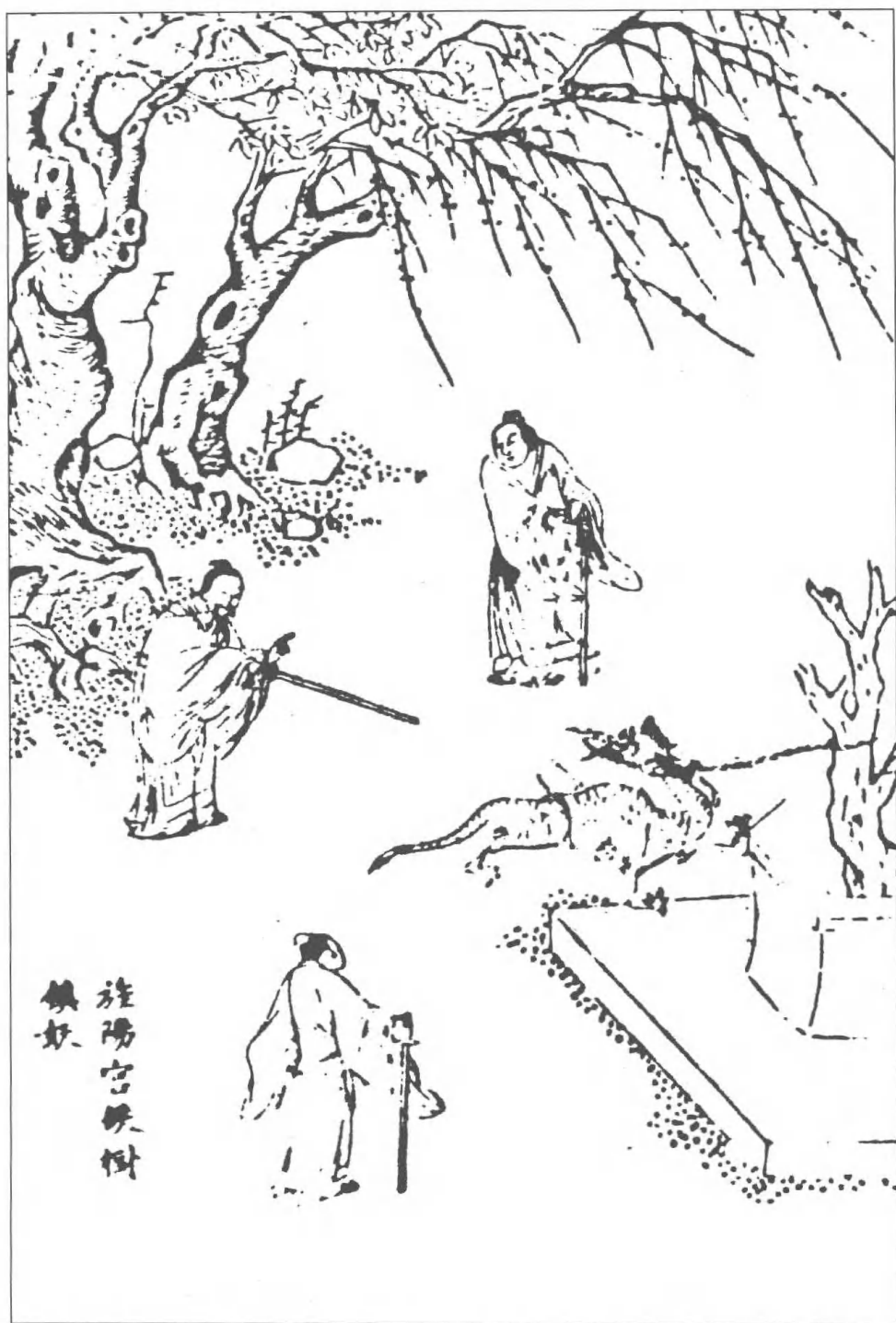
²⁵ Gao Feng of the Eastern Han dynasty was so dedicated to his studies that one day, while trying to keep an eye over the wheat field as his wife told him, he became so absorbed in his reading that all the wheat was washed away by a sudden rainstorm without his ever being aware of it.

²⁶ It is said that on the first day of a military campaign, King Wu, the first king of the Western Zhou dynasty, sought to reassure those who thought the rain a bad omen by saying, "This rain is sent by heaven to wash our weapons clean."

²⁷ In ancient times, lizards were believed to have the power to bring rain. They were often collected and put in jars for rituals in which people prayed for rain.

²⁸ A yaksha is usually an evil spirit in the Buddhist belief.

²⁹ Liu Bei (161-223) founded the Shu Kingdom of the Three Kingdoms period. In Chapter 21 of the Ming dynasty novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (San guo yan yi), Liu Bei was engaged in a conversation with his rival, Cao Cao, when the latter said, "You and I are the greatest heroes of our time." Liu Bei was so alarmed that he dropped his spoon and chopsticks, but he was able to attribute his consternation to a sudden thunderbolt that struck while Cao Cao



鎮妖
旌陽宮候樹



was making that comment.

³⁰ Cai Yuanzhong was Cai Shun, courtesy name Junzhong (not Yuanzhong), of the Later Han dynasty, who was known for his filial devotion to his mother. As his mother had always been afraid of thunder, he made a point of walking around her grave every time a storm came, to comfort her soul.

³¹ Sun Deng was a hermit in the state of Wei toward the end of the Three Kingdoms period (220–80) and the beginning of the Western Jin dynasty (265–317).

³² In the Daoist belief, Zhang Guolao is one of the Eight Immortals. For more on Zhang Guolao, see story 31 in Feng Menglong, *Stories Old and New*.

³³ Zhu Manping was Zhu Pingman, who, according to legend, spent three years and all his money learning how to kill dragons but never put what he had learned into practice.

³⁴ Fei Changfang, a native of Runan during the Later Han dynasty, was a necromancer said to have a staff with which he whacked demons and evil spirits.

³⁵ According to legend, Wu Chuo, a Daoist, was picking medicinal herbs at the mouth of the Huayang Cave when he saw a little boy with three large pearls in his hand playing under a pine tree. When Wu Chuo asked him who his parents were, the boy ran into the cave and changed into a dragon, with the pearls stuck in its left ear. Wu Chuo hacked at it with his ax. The dragon's left ear fell off, but the pearls disappeared.

³⁶ In Daoist belief, Marshal Deng is a thunder god.

³⁷ Zhang Fei (d.221) was a brave warrior in the Three Kingdoms period and a sworn brother of Liu Bei, founder of the Shu Kingdom.

³⁸ Marshal Wang is believed to be a celestial fire god.

³⁹ Chiyou, legendary leader of the Jiuh tribes, is said to have conjured up a thick fog in a fight at Zhuolu (in present-day Hebei Province) against the Yellow Emperor, legendary ancestor of the Chinese, in order to disorient the Yellow Emperor's troops. But with the aid of the compass chariot, the Yellow Emperor chased down Chiyou and won final victory.

⁴⁰ Yuanguai (289–340) is Yu Liang, courtesy name Yuanguai, a powerful official in the court of three consecutive emperors of the Eastern Jin dynasty. Wang Dao (276–339), the prime minister, detested Yuanguai's overbearing ways and often raised a fan to cover his head whenever a wind arose, saying, "Now here comes Yuanguai with all the dust!"

⁴¹ Luyang Wenzhi, better known as Duke Luyang, of the state of Chu in the Spring and Autumn period, was fighting with Han Gou when the sun began to set. As soon as Luyang pointed his lance at it, the sun reversed its course and rose back into the sky.

According to legend, the Duke of Yu in high antiquity was fighting with Xia when the sun began to set. When the duke pointed his sword at it, the sun reversed its course and remained fixed in the sky.

⁴² Xiang Yu (232–02 B.C.E.) led the uprising that overthrew the Qin dynasty. Zhang Han was a general in the Qin army. In a fierce battle fought at Julu, Zhang Han surrendered to Xiang Yu.

⁴³ According to the prose poem "Gao tang fu," attributed to Song Yu (ca.290–ca.223 B.C.E.), King Xiang of Chu dreamed of having a sexual encounter with the goddess of Wu Gorge.

⁴⁴ On the Battle of the Red Cliffs, see note 8 above.

⁴⁵ Liu Xiu (6 B.C.E.–57 C.E.) led twenty-eight generals in a major battle against the troops of Wang Mang (45 B.C.E.–23 C.E.). Liu Xiu later became Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–28) of the



Eastern Han dynasty.

⁴⁶ The Monkey King is a much beloved character in the Ming dynasty novel *The Journey to the West*.

⁴⁷ Nüwa, a principal character in Chinese mythology, is the goddess who smelted stones of five colors with which to patch up the sky after it had been damaged.

⁴⁸ The lord of the state of Ge during the Xia dynasty set himself against Tang and was defeated. Tang later founded the Shang dynasty.

⁴⁹ King Zhou was the last king of the Shang dynasty.

⁵⁰ For the story about Tripitaka's pilgrimage to India, see Cheng'en Wu, *The Journey to the West*, trans. and ed. Anthony Yu (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973-78).

⁵¹ Zhuge Liang (181-234), courtesy name Kongming, was adviser to Liu Bei, who founded the Shu Kingdom in the Three Kingdoms period. He captured Meng Huo, chieftain of the tribes living in what is now Yunnan, seven times but released him each time so that Meng Huo would sincerely acknowledge his defeat rather than simply submit grudgingly.

⁵² In the famous play *Orphan of the Zhao Clan*, set during the reign of Duke Ling of the state of Jin in the Spring and Autumn period, Tu'an Gu killed the entire clan of Prime Minister Zhao Dun except for Zhao Dun's daughter-in-law, who fled and gave birth to a son, Zhao Wu. Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu, retainers of the Zhao family, saved the orphan, who later sought revenge against Tu'an Gu. This play was rewritten in French by Voltaire in 1754 as "L'Orphelin de la Chine." It was performed on stage in Paris in 1775.

⁵³ Wu Zixu (d. 484 B.C.E.), whose father and brother were both killed by King Ping of the state of Chu, later vented his hatred by whipping King Ping's corpse three hundred times.

⁵⁴ Wang Qiang, or Wang Zhaojun, was a lady-in-waiting at the Western Han court. She volunteered to marry a Hun chief in 33 B.C.E. Xishi was a famous beauty in the late Spring and Autumn period. Zhao Feiyan (d.1 B.C.E) was a court lady in the service of Emperor Cheng (r. 32-6 B.C.E.) of the Han dynasty and was later made empress. Consort Yang, or Yang Yuhuan (719-55), was Emperor Xuanzong's favorite concubine. She is featured in story 9 and story 19.

⁵⁵ For more on this story, see Chapter 6 in *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*, trans. Moss Roberts (Berkeley: University of California Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991).

⁵⁶ Bianque (ca.407-ca.310 B.C.E.) was a medical scientist who developed the method of pulse diagnosis.

⁵⁷ Shennong was a legendary ruler of ancient China who is said to have introduced agriculture and herbal medicine to China.