

Thunder Peak Pagoda (Lei Feng T'a 雷峰塔)

THIS unique pagoda was built during the reign of K'ai Pao (968-976), of the Sung dynasty, by Princess Ch'ien, wife of Prince Ch'ien Shu, who was feudal prince of a rather large territory, including the Prefectures of Hangchow and Shaohsing. She named it *Huang Fei Ta*, i.e., "the wife, Huang's Pagoda," her maiden name having been Huang. But in some way—it is not made clear just how it came about—the name of the hill on which the pagoda stands, came also to be the popular name of the pagoda, so that at the present time the pagoda is everywhere spoken of as Lei Feng T'a, the Thunder Peak Pagoda.

It was Princess Ch'ien's original notion to build the pagoda thirteen stories high, but her available funds being inadequate for such an undertaking she decided to make it but seven. However, the family necromancer told her that even seven stories would make a structure altogether too high for the *Feng Shui* of the city; that it would bring political ruin to her family and financial disaster to her native city; and that five stories must be the utmost limit of height for the pagoda. And so it was built but five stories high, of burned brick, at a cost of something like \$60,000. The pagoda, as it stands to-day, is but little more than four stories high, and measures nearly 200 ft. from base to top. It is fast falling into ruin.

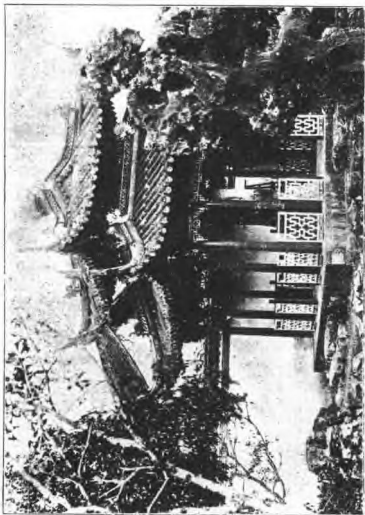
According to ancient folklore there once inhabited this portion of the lake shore two goblins or witches—one a White Snake and the other a Green Fish. It seems that these supernatural beings were not always amicably disposed, so that the people came to fear them with a deadly fear; but that after this pagoda was built the two goblins were captured and buried forever beneath the massive foundations of its huge structure!

Another tradition says that once during the reign of Chia Ching (1522) three columns of smoke issued from the top of the pagoda in the *shape of goats' horns* and

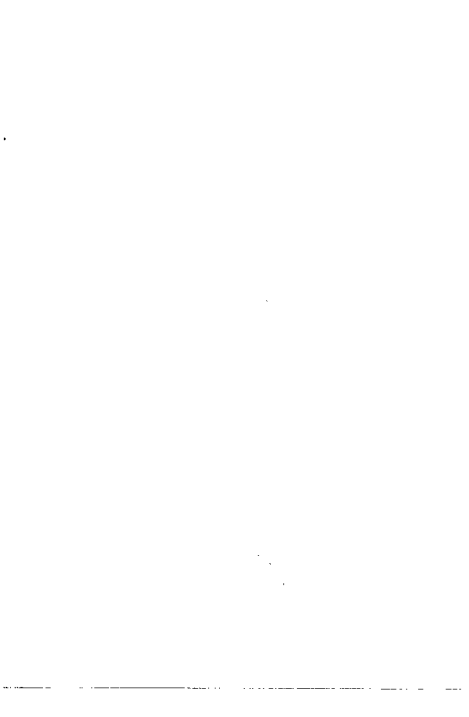
ascended to heaven. This they say was the transfiguration of the White Snake and Fahai to the forms of angels.

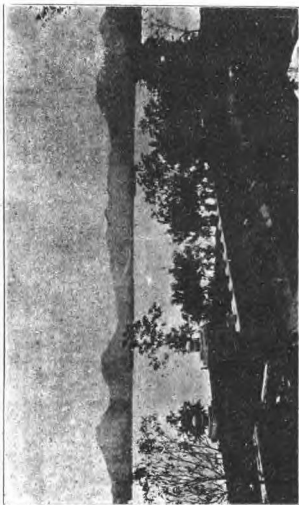
And still another story is recorded to the effect that near the pagoda dwelt two great demons, whose breathing could be heard constantly, and that should their breath strike any living thing it must surely die. But this story, it is said, was somewhat discredited by the fact that great numbers of people were flocking thither daily to see the wonderful demons, but who returned unharmed, having found only numerous small snakes.

Owing to the superstitions surrounding the pagoda, visitors have been wont to carry away bits of brick from its walls until it is only a question of a few decades until the magnificent old structure will tumble in hopeless ruin. These bits of the pagoda, when scattered over a rice paddy, always insure a good crop of rice.



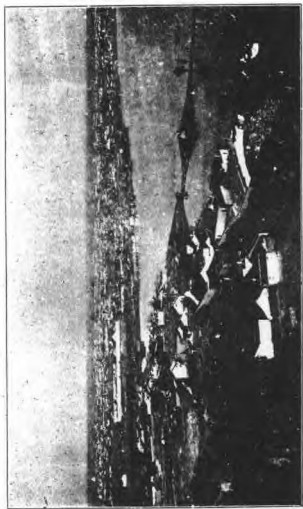
GARDEN IN EMPEROR'S LODGE.





THE LAKE, VIEWED FROM AMERICAN CONSULATE.





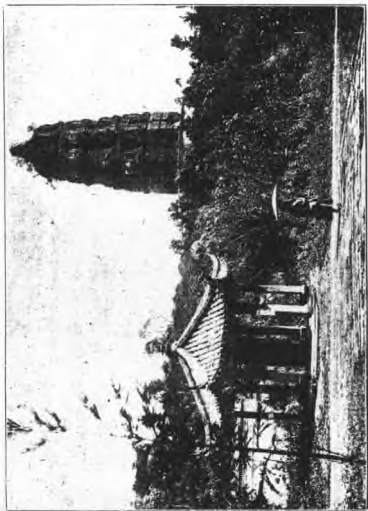
THE CITY--A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.





A LAKE SCENE.





THUNDER PEAK PAGODA.

The Legend of the White Snake *

IN the mountainous region of Szechuan, surrounding the sacred Mt. Omi (E-mei), there are numerous caverns and deep, almost bottomless, pits. Some of these caves are very famous because of the legends of goblins, ghosts and witches connected with them. And perhaps the most famous of them all are the "Heavenly Caves" and the "Grotto of Pure Wind."

It was in this gloomy region, at the "Grotto of Pure Wind," that the White Snake lived. She had made this cave her solitary home for more than a thousand years in an effort to attain "immortality" or "perfection." † One day, as she was revolving the affairs of the world in her mind, she happened to remember that it was the day of the "Peach Festival," ‡ when all the gods of the heavens are wont to assemble at the palace of the "Royal Western Goddess" § to offer incense and receive instruction from the "Old Mother." And as she thought of all the beauties and delightful associations that were to be enjoyed in the palace of the "Royal Mother" on this sacred occasion, she decided to quit the cold, slimy and lonely cavern and attend the festival.

Now the abode of Chin Mu, the "Old Mother," is in the Western Heaven, on Mt. K'un-lun, far over the snow-capped mountains into Tibet. But the White Snake possessed the power of transformation, and so, calling upon the name of the Western Goddess, she sprang upon a passing cloud and soon arrived at Chin Mu's palace. And when she had eaten of the sacred peach that had been growing and maturing for 9,000 years, paid obeisance and

* This legend forms the basis of a number of China's greatest plays. It is played at least once a year by Imperial troops before the Court in the palace, and is held in high esteem by all theatre-goers. There are many versions, the one here given being the story as known in Hangchow, and as told me and supplemented from an edition entitled *Hsin-hsiang-i-yao-ch'uan-chuan* (續像義妖全傳). No attempt has been made to give a translation of the Chinese text.

† This state is reached through a process of mental and physical refinement that is best obtained in solitude.

‡ The "Peach Festival," or "Feast of the Gods," falls on the third day of the third moon (about the first week in April), and is also known as the "Pun-t'ao-hui" (蟠桃會).

§ Also known as Chin Mu (金母), the Eve, as Chin Kung (金童) is the Adam of Chinese mysticism. Chin Mu is also known as Hsi Wang Mu (西王母), i. e., "the Royal Western Empress."

burned incense to the "Old Mother," she was assigned to duty in the palace gardens. Thus it was that she became keeper of the "Flat-Peach Orchard"* in the Western Heaven. In this position she remained 300 years.

There lived in the city of Hangchow a youth whose name was Hsü Han-wen. The Hsü family was one of the oldest and most respected families of the capital city, but which, owing to heavy financial losses, had been reduced to straightened circumstances, compelling each member of the family to shift for himself. And Hanwen's father and mother dying when he was quite young, the lad was apprenticed by his sister's husband to an old friend of the family, a medicine vender, named Wang.

The lad, although very young, made such rapid progress that his relatives were amazed and old Doctor Wang delighted. Indeed, so diligently and so earnestly did he strive to enlarge the business of the shop that he had never asked for a single holiday, although he had now been with Dr. Wang for several years. But as the Spring festival † for mourning the dead approached, Hanwen resolved that he would pay a visit to his ancestral tombs, which were near T'ien Chu (the Buddhist Incense Market), and which he had so long neglected. Dr. Wang gladly granted him permission to go, and when the day came, taking incense paper money ‡ and flowers, Hanwen repaired to the tombs of his ancestors.

One beautiful Spring morning the "Old Mother" called the White Snake to her and said: "To-day have you completed the days of your service. You must return to earth at once, for you are fated to become the mother of

* These "flat" peaches are said to require 3,000 years to blossom, 3,000 years for the fruit to grow, and another 3,000 years for it to ripen. They are said to be plentiful—for "high cast" Chinese gods.

† This festival occurs on the Ch'ing Ming (清明) of each spring, *i. e.*, about the 5th of April. On this occasion the Chinese worship at the tombs of their ancestors and repair the graves and grounds. Flowers are often strewn upon the graves, even as we do on the 30th day of May.

‡ This paper money, Chih-ch'ien (紙錢), is made by pasting very thin tinfoil upon a light paste-board made into the shape of silver dollars or ingots. If gold dollars, or "shoes" are wanted the tinfoil is painted over with a yellowish paint. It is offered by burning, to the spirit of deceased parents, or grand-parents, for their use in the other world. Properly speaking a child should offer "money" every day for the first 100 days following a parent's death, and then at least once a month for the next three years, after which he should continue to burn "paper money" at least four times in every year as long as he lives.

the God of Literature on earth. In 'beautiful Hangchow' there lives a youth whose ancestor, more than 500 years ago, saved your life. You must become his wife as a recompense for the kindness of his ancestor to you. A vile beggar had caught you one day as you were gliding peacefully among the rocks in front of your cave and would have killed you had not the timely appearance of a gentleman prevented him. This gentleman, out of the kindness of his heart, paid the beggar two *tiao* (about \$2 Mex.) for the snake and then set it free. Go, therefore, to Hangchow and you will find this youth, whose name is Hanwen. This very day he goes to burn incense upon the tomb of the man who saved your life. You shall know him by his great stature. Get you gone!"

Forthwith the White Snake sprang upon a passing cloud and sped rapidly over the snowy mountains. As she pondered over her mission she suddenly remembered, from a former visit when a mere child,* the surpassing beauties of Hangchow with its beautiful West Lake, green hills, the lofty pagodas, fragrant gardens and holy temples. The thought of returning to all this beauty filled her soul with great and surpassing joy.

The borders of delightful Chekiang were already in view, and the broad stretches of fertile plain and ranges of lofty hills were at hand. A shadow appeared just in front of her, and suddenly from out the mist-cloud passing by, she beheld the North Star god, who was on his way home from heaven, where he had been to report to the Jade Emperor.† The god, peering out from his cloud-chariot, recognised the White Snake at a glance.

"You bastard brute," said he, "why do you travel this way to-day when your superiors are passing? Whither also are you going?" demanded he in great anger.

Upon hearing his angry voice, White Snake became greatly frightened, and kneeling before his chariot implored his forgiveness. She told him that she was on her way to the Southern Ocean to worship Kuan Yin (Goddess of Mercy), and to ask her advice upon some personal matters.

* The White Snake was born near Hangchow, her mother being the Great White Dragon of the mountains and her father a General Pai, of the Imperial Army.

† The Jade Emperor (玉皇) is the Supreme Ruler of the unseen world of the Taoist religion. In Taoist literature he is styled "God the Father." (Giles.)

But the god, suspecting her of telling a lie, compelled her to take an oath that what she spake was the truth, and that should she not go to the Southern Seas as she had said, *her body should be crushed under Thunder Peak Pagoda.* Whereupon the North Star god disappeared and White Snake pursued her journey.

She had gone but a little distance when "beautiful Hang" came into view. This is indeed the fairest of cities upon the earth. Proceeding to West Lake she found an old palace moss-grown, neglected and falling into ruins, but which had in by-gone ages been the home of the "Son of Heaven." It was near the "Flowing Gold" gate of the city and close upon the water's edge. And it was here that she purposed making her home. But in wandering about its spacious halls, beautiful gardens and winding promenades, she came upon a Green Snake,* who informed the visitor that she was trespassing and that the palace belonged to her. A sharp, brief conflict ensued, in which White Snake was victorious. And on condition that her life be spared, the Green Snake agreed to become handmaid to White Snake and to serve her faithfully through all time to come.

They then began to prepare a home for themselves in the main hall of the palace. After a few details had been attended to tea was ordered. And when they had drunk of the delicious beverage brought from the confines of the Western Heaven, they went out for a stroll along the lakeshore in the direction of Thunder Peak and along the road on which returning mourners from ancestral tombs were passing.

Presently Greenette, plucking her mistress' sleeve, said: "See! who is the young man yonder? Is it not he? See how tall he is."

"Yes," replied Miss White,† whose "little" name was Suchen, "it is he. Come, let us turn and walk slowly in front of him."

"But there is no one to introduce us," complained Greenette, "and ladies are forbidden to speak to men before an introduction."

* In the history or topography of the lake (Hsi Hu Chih 西湖志) reference is made to this legend as the "White Snake and Green Fish." But in the story commonly told the "green fish" becomes a "green snake" and is called "the little green" (小青).

† The White Snake's book name is "Pai Su-chen" (白素貞).

"Just wait a moment," said Suchen, as she waived her silken fan toward the west.

Instantly great banks of clouds appeared in the blue skies, the sun was hidden, it grew dark and began to rain.

Now Hanwen, instead of returning home after completing his filial duties at the ancestral tombs, had been so attracted and fascinated by the matchless beauties of the lake at this seductive season of budding flowers and warbling birds, that he had spent the whole afternoon in rambling about its shores, filling his soul with its heavenly melodies and sweet fragrances. And when he beheld the two young girls dressed in such exquisite garments, he thought them the most divine creatures he had ever seen. But custom forbade him speaking to them, which sorely perplexed and annoyed him.

Just when he thought of turning homeward, however, it began to rain. Now the two beautiful young creatures were without umbrellas, and when he saw their dainty garments were being ruined by the downpour, he hastily joined them and offered his umbrella. After some hesitation they timidly accepted, saying they would soon take a covered boat and cross the lake. A boat was secured at the first landing, and when on the point of putting off, Suchen asked if he would not join them, since it was pouring in such torrents and they were bound for the same side of the lake. By this time Hanwen was completely captivated and accepted most cordially.

By the time their home was reached darkness had fallen, and the city gates being closed for the night, her father pressed Hanwen to remain with them till the morning. This invitation he also accepted.

Upon leaving the next morning, the aged father, a retired army general, presented Hanwen with large quantities of silver, and moreover offered to give his eldest daughter, Suchen, to him in marriage. And so with the thought of lovely Suchen, his bride-to-be (for he had accepted her), in mind, and the heavy weight of silver in his hand, Hanwen hastened home to pour out the fullness of his heart to his sister and her husband.

Hanwen's brother-in-law was employed in the Ch'ien-t'ang magistrate's office and charged with the care of the yamên's treasure. And only that very night had thieves broken into the yamên and carried off a great quantity of silver ingots. Moreover, as Hanwen's brother was held responsible for the silver, he was that very morning beaten and dismissed from the yamên because the silver had been taken without his even knowing of it. So that when Hanwen reached home with his heart overflowing with joy of his Suchen, and his hands full of silver, he found his sister in tears and the home very desolate.

Upon hearing what had happened, Hanwen enquired what amount of money had been stolen. And when informed that 1,000 taels had been taken he fairly gasped, but replied that he had brought a few taels that might be used toward making up the amount if it would help to restore his brother to his position in the yamên. Whereupon he related his experiences of the previous day, ending up by saying that the beautiful Miss White had promised to become his wife, and that the money was a wedding present from her father.

By this time his brother had opened the package of silver and was delighted and horrified at the same moment to find that the two ingots bore the seal and stamp of the Emperor, thus showing that they were part of the 1,000 taels stolen from the magistrate's yamên. And taking the ingots he hastened off to the yamên and reported how he came by them.

Hanwen was arrested, beaten and compelled to tell where he had obtained the silver. Officers of the law were quickly dispatched to the place indicated by Hanwen as the "great palace" of the famous general. But lo, when the officers reached the spot indicated, the palace could not be found, but only empty, swampy ground.

However, hard by stood an old, dilapidated temple, weed-grown and moss-covered. This was searched, and within an inner court stood a once beautiful hall, all decorated with gold and silver. Pushing open the door, an officer was astounded to find lying on a table the remaining 900 taels of silver, for which they were searching. The room gave evidence of having been recently

inhabited, but beyond a breath of perfume and a whisking sound as of the flight of a bird, no inhabitant of the temple could be found.

The magistrate, upon hearing that the full amount of stolen silver had been recovered, commuted the sentence of death he had passed upon Hanwen, and said that on account of the young man's extreme youth and his previous good behavior, he would only sentence him to banishment to Soochow. He also expressed it as his opinion that the youth had been in the hands of witches and cautioned him to be more careful in the future. With this he dismissed the case, and the guards led Hanwen off to jail until it should be convenient to escort him away to Soochow.

When Suchen had found herself desperately in love with Hanwen, she wanted to marry him at once. But she knew that he was only a mere youth and had nothing on which to support a family. Yet, woman like, she was determined to have him *at once*. So by using the magical powers she had learned while in her cavernous home in the far west, she not only transformed an old priest into the general whom she had called her father, but had called five demons of darkness and bade them procure for her a thousand taels of silver. Proceeding to the magistrate's yamên in the dead hours of the night, they caused a deep sleep to fall upon Hanwen's brother, who chanced to be on guard that night, and while he slept they made off with the silver.

Now when she saw what great trouble and disgrace she had brought upon Hanwen, and that instead of hastening their marriage by her gift to him, she had caused him to be disgraced and beaten, Suchen was filled with bitter remorse and deep sorrow. But Greenette, who had been keeping watch over Hanwen, consoled Suchen by telling her that his life was to be spared and that he was only banished to Soochow.

So Suchen and Greenette left "beautiful Hang" and went to dwell in "beautiful Soo."

At the thought of leaving home and his faithful old friend, Dr. Wang, Hanwen's heart grew very heavy.

However, the old doctor reassured him somewhat by telling him of an old friend, also a doctor, who lived in Soochow, and to whom he would give Hanwen a note of introduction.

Accordingly soon after his arrival in that city, Hanwen hunted up the old doctor and presented the letter of recommendation. The old gentleman's name was Wei, and whom Hanwen was delighted to discover was also an old friend to his late father. The two soon became fast friends and their business prospered greatly.

One day, as the two stood talking in the street just in front of their own shop door, they became aware of the approach of two beautiful and elegantly dressed young ladies. The elder of the two came forward and Hanwen at once recognised them as Suchen and Greenette. Hanwen grew very angry and wanted to know why she, a witch, was following him over the earth to torment him and to get him into trouble. Said he: "You witch, you deceived me once, so don't bother me again."

In short, the young man was so rude and cruel to such beautiful creatures as the two young ladies were, that old Dr. Wei lost his patience with the young man and severely rebuked him. The old gentleman also invited the young ladies into his home. It was not long, however, until the two lovers had made up again, and the generous old gentleman himself arranged for the wedding.

After the marriage the young people went to live by themselves, and Hanwen opened a shop of his own with money that Dr. Wei had given him as a wedding present. The days and months passed by, but Hanwen's business did not prosper. The people seemed to have no confidence in the remedies of the new shop. Finally, when his money was all gone, and there was nothing in the house to eat, Hanwen gave way to his feelings of despair, saying that they would have to give up, as the people would not buy his drugs.

Whereupon Suchen asked her dear husband why he didn't hang out a doctor's shingle and *practice* medicine instead of trying to *sell* it. Said she: "I have a few medicines myself, given me by the Old Mother, out of

which I'm sure we can make something." So the following day a new sign was seen over the shop door, viz :

DR. HANWEN.

CURES GUARANTEED FOR ALL KINDS OF AILMENTS.
CONSULTATION FREE.

Now the medicinal herbs given Suchen by the old fairy were very powerful, and when made into pills was a specific for curing "the plague." All that night Hanwen and his wife worked away making the herbs into pills. And, unbeknown to him, Suchen had commanded Greenette to take a certain great package of poison of the deadliest sort, and go about over the city filling all the springs and wells with it. And Greenette did as her mistress had told her.

The next day a few people, complaining of pains in the stomach, came to the new doctor for medicine. Hanwen sold them his pills, and who, as soon as they had swallowed the pills, were instantly cured of their malady. Word of the wonderful pills was passed about the city, and soon the shop, the street and all that portion of the town was crowded with people, bent on having some of the magic pills. The whole city was stricken with the plague, and all who could not get one of Dr. Hanwen's pills were fated to die. Soon, however, the young doctor had stopped the plague, and the people were showering him with silver and gold.

It is needless to relate that Hanwen became very famous throughout the land, and that in a very few months he had acquired a great fortune.

Now the feast of the God of Medicine was at hand, and Hanwen, who had prospered far beyond his most extravagant dreams, repaired to the Medicine God's Temple to offer grateful thanksgiving. At the temple he met the famous Taoist magician Maoshan. At sight of Hanwen, Maoshan said: "Ah, I perceive that you are under the spell of witches. But I am the great Maoshan, and have come to help mankind. I can rid you of them."

Hanwen begged for relief, and offered the old priest gold, saying that he was a rich man now, and did not wish to accept any service without paying for it.

The old magician wrote three charms, which he gave Hanwen with the following directions. Said he: "Take these; wear one of them next to your body; put one over your entrance door; but the third you must burn over a cup of water, then take the water and throw into the face of the one suspected of witchery. If she be a witch indeed she will immediately turn back into the original form of her being." Whereupon Hanwen paid the magician and returned home.

But as he entered the door Suchen divined what had been done and commanded Greenette to lose no time in calling the Black Tiger god to their assistance. Greenette obeyed, and the witches instantly felt a renewal of power.

In the meantime Hanwen had proceeded to follow out the magician's instructions. One charm was over the door, one next to his flesh, while the third was burned in the cup of water. And now turning to his wife he threw the water full in her face. Whereupon the voice of the Black Tiger god was heard to say: "Break; charm, break." The astonished Suchen said: "Why, husband, dear, what *are* you trying to do? Oh, I see. That old rake from Maoshan has been giving you charms against witches. You have been gulled indeed."

Thus it was that the great magician's charms had been broken and his powers destroyed.

But Suchen was very angry over the affair. On the morrow, therefore, accompanied by Hanwen and Greenette, she proceeded to the temple and demanded of the magician the money he had taken from her husband for the charms. The magician became very angry, and sought to destroy the witches then and there. He first took a pitcher of water and drank the contents; then lifting his face toward the heavens he spurted it into the air.

Suddenly great storm-clouds appeared, the heavens shook with mighty thunder peals, and great oceans of water fell upon the earth.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Suchen, derisively. "You would, would you?" And waiving her fan toward the west she cried, "Break, charm, break."

Instantly the floods ceased, the thunders rolled away in the distance, the clouds disappeared, and the earth was gladdened by the beautiful sunshine.

Maoshan was beside himself with rage. Shrieked he, "You vile bastard demon, I've got you now," and grabbed for his two-eyed sword. When lo! he could not unsheathe the glittering blade. The Black Tiger god, all unseen to the mighty magician, held the sword fast, and try as Maoshan would he could not unsheathe it. He then reached for his magic pen, thinking to write the infallible charm against witches and demons, but the magic pen instantly became so heavy that Maoshan with all his strength was unable to lift it. Failing in that he next snatched at his wooden tablet,* which through all the ages had been the weapon most dreaded by devils and witches. Yet even the sacred tablet clung so tightly to the table that the great Maoshan could not raise it so much as the breadth of a hair. Foiled and beaten on every hand the magician fell back in his chair exhausted, the while muttering threats and curses against the witches.

Suchen then commanded him to fetch the silver her husband had paid him the day before. And when he had brought it and laid it at her feet, she muttered a few words of enchantment, when instantly five horrible demons snatched Maoshan up into the air and gave him such a beating that he howled and shrieked with rage and pain, and begged them to spare his life. At a waive of her fan the flogging stopped and the demons disappeared.

"Now, Maoshan," said Suchen, "get you gone; for if you are here by nightfall it will go even harder with you than it has this morning."

Needless to say Maoshan left Soochow very suddenly.

The morning dawned bright and warm. It was the day of the Dragon Festival, † so dreaded by evil demons and so dangerous to all reptile kind. Greenette went to bed in a dark room and asked not to be bothered until after 12 o'clock, which hour marked the end of the feast.

* This is called the Ling-p'ai (令牌), and used by Taoist priests in conjuring. With it they claim to be able to "cast out devils." It is an emblem of authority.

† The "Dragon Festival," Tsun-yang (端午), falls on the fifth day of the fifth moon, about the first week in June. On this day the leaves of calamus, made into the shape of swords, and the "plant of long life" (壽芝草) are hung over the door lintels as a protection against the evil influences of demons and reptiles.

On this occasion, also, "flowers of sulphur," mixed with rice wine, is drunk for a similar reason.

But Suchen said she was not afraid of the noxious weeds, and so went about her household duties.

Presently, however, she was taken with a violent headache and was compelled to go to bed. Hanwen, not knowing the cause of this sudden illness, rushed out to the shop and soon returned with a cup of the sulphurated wine, thinking his wife had been bitten, perhaps, by some poisonous insect or reptile. But Suchen, knowing the deadly effect of the wine upon her kind, refused to take it. Hanwen, as many good husbands do, insisted on her taking the wine, and finally compelled her to drink the contents of the cup. And conscious of having done his duty toward his household, he went out on the street among the people and wandered about the water's edge to enjoy the festivities of the day.

He did not return home until about the noon hour. As he entered the house he suddenly remembered that his wife had been ill that morning, and going up stairs he called to her, but received no reply. Proceeding to her chamber he opened the door, but Suchen was nowhere in sight. So he stepped over to the bed, thinking she was asleep, and opened the curtains, when horror of horrors! he found only a large snake with a great head and eyes that flashed fire and sulphur, and which was slowly moving toward him, with mouth and fangs dripping with blood and slime.

The husband, terror-stricken, gazed a moment, and then with a piercing scream fell dead, tumbling headlong down the stairway.

Greenette, upon hearing the scream, jumped out of bed and came running to see what the trouble was. She saw it all in an instant, and began soothing the White Snake in order to get her quieted again. Finally White Snake dropped off into a quiet sleep, and Greenette, speaking gently to her, told all that had happened.

Instantly the White Snake vanished, and in her stead was the beautiful Suchen!

She straightened up and enquired for Hanwen, saying that the wine had caused it all. And when she learned that he was dead, she burst into heart-breaking sobs of grief over the loss of her husband.

However, Greenette reassured her and reminded her of the "Old Man" whose palace is not far from the Old Mother's home in K'un-lun, who has in one of his gardens the wonderful "tree of life." At this Suchen became happy again, and began preparations for the journey to the palace of Shoushing, where she hoped to procure a branch of the "tree of life"* and restore her husband to life. And causing a fresh wind to spring up from the eastern quarter, she sprang upon a swift-flying cloud and sped away toward the home of Shoushing.

Now when she arrived at the cave of the "tree of life" she found the guard, Hotung, standing with drawn sword, and on the point of striking her a fatal blow. Quick as a flash she threw a pearl, struck the guard square on the nose and thus diverted his attention for a moment. Enraged at this the guard called out to the Old Father to come quickly, that a witch, a wicked thief, was about to steal something.

The Old Father, aroused by the frightened cries of Hotung, came to the mouth of the cave, but only saw the witch as she rounded the point of a snow-capped mountain. He, too, was now angry because his faithful guard had been wounded, and immediately gave chase. He soon overtook the weary Suchen, and having caught her in his great net, was about to slay her, when the Goddess of Mercy, who chanced to be passing, called out, "Injure not the White Snake."

Whereupon old Shoushing became more civil and enquired of Suchen what she wished. Suchen stated her errand, to which the Goddess of Mercy replied, "Go, ill-fated one, you will find the 'tree of life' beyond yonder mountain. Pluck a branch of it and take it with you, for it will bring your husband back to life."

Proceeding to the mountain indicated, Suchen procured the precious twig. Then, leaping and bounding through the skies for inexpressible joy over the prospect of restoring Hanwen to life, she started on the homeward journey.

She had not gone far, however, when she was discovered by the Great Rukh, who was soaring along through

* This is the *ling-chia-tao* above mentioned.

the vaulted blue, and who immediately turned and gave chase. At sight of the powerful bird, Suchen became terror-stricken, lost her balance and fell headlong to earth. The Great Rukh darted down and was just opening his great beak to swallow her, when the White Eagle called out, "Touch not the White Snake, for she is fated to become the mother of the God of Literature. If you do her harm Great Buddha will be angry."

Then the White Eagle muttered a few words of enchantment, waived her magical wand and bade Suchen to arise. And helping her to her cloud-chariot again, White Eagle commanded her to hasten homeward.

She was soon in her own home again, but very weak and faint from loss of blood. Greenette, who was waiting for her return, took the life-giving branch and soon had prepared some tea of it for Hanwen.

"But," said Greenette, your husband will no longer love you, because when last he saw you, you were a snake. How can he have confidence in us any more?"

"Alas," replied Suchen, "it is true. He will hate me. But after a moment's thought she said: "I have it. Bring me a white handkerchief from my room."

And taking the handkerchief, Suchen mumbled a few words of magic, blew her breath upon it, and threw it upon the floor. Instantly it became a great white snake, and crawled hissing about the room.

"Now kill it and throw it in the garden," said she.

Greenette obeyed and then fetched the herb tea, which they proceeded to pour into the cold lips of Hanwen. In a moment the body began to grow warm, and presently he awoke as from a heavy sleep, rubbed his eyes and sat up.

Upon sight of Suchen and Greenette he remembered the dreadful sight of the White Snake and began to denounce them as goblins, who had brought him so much trouble and suffering. Whereupon Suchen burst into tears, saying that it was not she at all whom he had seen on that fatal day but a real white snake which Greenette had killed, and which was even then in the back yard for him to see, if he didn't believe her. Hanwen, upon seeing the dead snake, and touched by the tenderness of his beautiful wife, repented of his hasty words and im-

pled her forgiveness. After this their married life was very happy for a long time.

One day, however, an event occurred that caused Hanwen's downfall. His great fame and skill as a physician had also made him a very rich man. Only recently a high official of the empire had presented him with Taels 5,000 of silver for having restored his wife to health when everyone thought she was dead. But his success had also gained for Hanwen the jealousy and enmity of all the other doctors of the city, who began to plan to bring about his downfall. But this was made the more difficult, because in his daily life among the people Hanwen was the most upright man of the city.

But on the day mentioned, as a number of his enemies were talking together, the following happy scheme, as they thought, was determined on:—Said they: "To-morrow is the day for making an offering of heirlooms and curios to the tutelar god of our city. Now we shall inform this young upstart that it is his turn to make the offering. Of course he has no heirlooms with him, as he comes from another city; and when he refuses to make the offering we shall run him out of town."

The plan, in the form of an invitation, was made known to Hanwen, who in despair asked his wife what he should do. She told him not to worry about a small thing like that, for she had some fine old curios that belonged to her ancestors, and that he should offer these in the temple. With this good advice Hanwen went to bed.

The morning came. Suchen produced the curios and Hanwen made the offering in the temple to the utter amazement and chagrin of all the other doctors. Moreover, the curios were of such transcendent beauty and value that the people of the entire city flocked to the temple to get a view of them.

Soon after this event Hanwen and his wife made a feast in honor of their dear old friend Dr. Wang, and invited many neighbors and friends to see the beautiful curios. And while they were gathered about the precious relics, commenting upon their priceless values and their great rarity, an officer of the magistrate's yamèn walked in

upon them. And pausing a moment he said: "I'm sorry to trouble you, but we have orders to seize these relics and to arrest you in the name of the Emperor."

To say that Hanwen was surprised and confounded can but mildly express his feelings at that moment. The officer explained that these were relics that had only recently been stolen from the Emperor's palace in the capital, and that they must obey the law and return them to His Imperial Majesty.

A trial was held by the Prefect, at which Hanwen declared the relics were heirlooms of his wife's family. Whereupon the Prefect summoned Suchen to appear before the Court and give testimony concerning the curios. But after searching all day throughout the city the officers returned, saying that neither Suchen nor her maid could be found anywhere.

Hanwen, therefore, was found guilty of stealing the relics from the Imperial Palace and was sentenced to death. Upon reflection, however, the Prefect remembered that he was the young doctor who had saved his wife from death, as well as the lives of many people in the city, and being a man of compassion he commuted the death sentence to banishment to Chenkiang. And later, upon investigation, the Prefect learned that Hanwen had a witch wife, who by her powers of magic had stolen the curios from the Emperor's palace.

In due course of time Hanwen was taken to Chenkiang, where he was received by an old gentleman of the profession whose name was Chen Pu-jen. The fatigues of the long journey, coupled with the humiliation and imprisonment he had just experienced, had told severely on Hanwen, and after a few days he fell ill of the fever. He grew worse day by day until in despair old Dr. Chen called, one afternoon, upon the two women doctors who had but recently opened a medicine shop in the city. Securing some of their medicines he hastened home and administered them to the dying Hanwen.

Next morning Hanwen was able to sit up, and by noon ate a hearty meal of fish and boiled rice. And in two days' time he was entirely well again.

Upon enquiry Hanwen learned that the two women were no other than Suchen and Greenette, who had followed him to Chenkiang, and who had established a business of their own. At first he was very bitter against them, and would have nothing to do with his wife. But through the kindly offices of Dr. Chen, who more than once had upbraided Hanwen for his incivility to such a fair creature as Suchen was, he finally forgave his beautiful wife, and the two began life anew.

Opposite Chenkiang, in the midst of the Great River, was the island of Chinshan, on which there was a famous monastery, the home of Fahai, the priest. Now Fahai had been sent by Great Buddha as a special emissary to deal with and to punish the White Snake for her many misdemeanors. And one day, as Dr. Chen and Hanwen were sightseeing on "Golden Island," they met Fahai face to face.

No sooner had Fahai seen Hanwen than he said: "Ah, my young friend, I perceive by the flush of your face that you are troubled and tormented by witches. The White Snake of the Grotto of Pure Winds is your wife. She will surely destroy you unless you get rid of her."

And Hanwen, knowing all too well that what had already befallen him had been brought about by Suchen, begged Fahai to lose no time but save him from the witches' power.

So it was agreed that Hanwen was to remain on Chinshan under the care of Fahai and away from the influence of the fair Suchen.

Now, when the following morning came, and Hanwen had not yet returned home, his wife began to wonder what had befallen him. Greenette was sent out at once to discover if possible his whereabouts. She soon returned, saying that Hanwen had been kept on Golden Island by the old wretch Fahai, who had told him that his wife was a wicked witch, who was only waiting for an opportunity to destroy her-husband.

"The vile wretch"! exclaimed Suchen, as she stamped the stone floor with her tiny foot. "We must go at once to the Golden Island monastery and bring dear Hanwen home, for that old villain, Fahai, will destroy his

confidence in us." "But Fahai is a powerful magician, so we must be careful." And so saying, Suchen and Greenette started for the monastery.

They were met at the door of the monastery by the keeper of the gate, who withdrew and announced to Fahai that two ladies had come desiring audience with him. Fahai was not long in appearing, when Suchen enquired whether or not he had seen her husband of late. And Fahai perceiving at once who it was that spake, said, in great severity: "Away, you vile brutes! How dare you intrude your vile persons upon the sacred presence of Great Buddha? Do you seek destruction? Hanwen is safe here with me; but he can never live with you again."

And as he finished speaking, he threw his long walking staff high into the air. Instantly changing into a dragon it quickly descended and was just about to devour Suchen, when she suddenly blew a breath of air upon it. The dragon, quick as a flash, became K'ueihsiung, the God of Literature, who said in thundering tones that made even the mighty Fahai tremble and turn pale with fear: "Harm not the White Snake, for she is fated to become the mother of a Senior Wrangler of the Empire." Whereupon Suchen and Greenette vanished in a passing cloud of mist.

Suchen, however, was still determined to get Hanwen away from Golden Island. Calling Greenette she said, "Come, let us summon the Black Fish god, and drown the whole monastery of priests; then shall we be able to get Hanwen away from old Fahai." The words were scarcely uttered when the mighty Black Fish god arrived.

Suchen commanded him to cause a great flood to wash down Chinshan and destroy Fahai and all his acolytes, taking care only that Hanwen should not be injured.

And marshalling the hosts of the deep, Black Fish caused a great storm to rage over the land for many hours. Throughout the heavens the lurid lightnings shot their awful glare, and the deep-toned thunderings were echoed to the uttermost ends of the earth. The vaulted dome was torn asunder and the waters of the seas were hurled into the mighty river. Higher and higher rose the murky

water on the templed islands. A few moments more and the island's inhabitants would be swept away. But just as the foundations of Golden Island Monastery were creaking and groaning under the mighty waters Fahai suddenly appeared at the temple gate, and quickly taking off his priestly cloak spread it over the gateway, at the same instant offering a prayer to the ever-attentive Weitou, patron saint of Buddhist priests, that he cause the waters to recede and save the lives of his devoted disciples.

Weitou heard the prayer, immediately descended and commanded the raging waters to abate. Instantly the waters obeyed, and the monastery, with all its inmates, were saved. But the city on the river bank, with all its thousands of inhabitants, was swept away until not so much as a foundation was left to mark where the once beautiful metropolis stood.

When Suchen and Greenette saw the enormity of the crime they had committed they turned and fled into the mountains. Not so the Black Fish god. Fahai asked that he be captured and executed without trial, and that his body should be thrown out into the Japanese sea. Accordingly he was seized by the dragons of the four seas, executed on the spot, and his headless body thrown into the sea near the coast of Japan.

When quiet and order had been restored on the island, and the waters had fully receded, Fahai explained to Hanwen that the great crime of Suchen had been wrought partly on his account, and that to atone for which he must return to Hangchow and devote the remainder of his life in the worship of Buddha. He further stated that as soon as Suchen should be delivered of her child she also would be punished for her crime.

"But," said Hanwen, "the distance to Hangchow is very great, and I have no horse or money now. How shall I return?"

"Never mind," replied Fahai, "come with me."

They entered numerous halls, passed through a maze of doors and narrow passageways, finally ending up before the mouth of a great cave. Fahai, as he handed Hanwen a candle said, "My friend, proceed into yonder cave,

never looking back, until the light is, of its own accord, extinguished."

Hanwen did at once as Fahai told him. It was a strange cavern, the like of which he had never before seen. On either side were the carved images of all the Buddhist saints, and of the gods both of heaven and earth. And the farther he proceeded the darker and more gloomy did the cave become. At last it grew so dark and damp that the candle itself could no longer shine, but flickered a moment and went out.

Hanwen groped about for a time in utter bewilderment, not being able to find neither top, nor bottom, nor yet the sides of the cavern. And just as he lost all hope of ever again emerging into the light of day, he beheld in the far distance a faint glimmer of light. The light grew rapidly, and presently he was overjoyed to behold the sun, in all his glory and splendor, mounting the heavens beyond the lofty eastern hills, while immediately in front of him lay the crystal water of beautiful West Lake! He had arrived at Hangchow, the "Heavenly City."

Hanwen's joy knew no bounds. He almost ran across Lone Mountain and along the dyke road that is called Pai, until he reached the "Broken-Off" bridge (Tuan Ch'iao) where he was startled and dumfounded at the sight he beheld. There, standing side by side, on the lofty bridge, stood Suchen and Greenette. Nor was the balmy spring morning more fresh and fair than were they.

Suchen's joy at meeting her husband, whom she had mourned as lost, all but overcame her. But when Hanwen bade her begone, saying that he had returned to Hangchow to enter the priesthood and forsake the world forever, her young heart sank as with a great weight, and she burst into pitiful sobs.

"I have never intentionally deceived or injured you, dear husband, and what I have done has always been for your sake. And now you would forsake your wife and child."

And as Hanwen beheld his beautiful young wife, thus broken-hearted and weeping, he perceived that she must indeed soon become the mother of his child. His old love for her came welling up in his heart and, throwing aught

else to the winds, he snatched Suchen up in his arms and carried her away to his old home in the city.

He was not long in finding a new home for her, and with the money she had saved from their prosperous days in Soochow they established a new business on "Great Street."

When Buddha commissioned and sent Fahai to judge and punish the White Snake for her sins, he also presented the priest with a magic bowl. With this bowl Fahai had been able to work many miracles as well as to capture and control the various demons of evil. When, therefore, it was announced to him that the White Snake had been delivered of her child, and that the child was already a month old, Fahai took the magic bowl and proceeded to Hangchow, in pursuance of his master's command.

Arrived in Hangchow he went at once to the home of Hanwen and Suchen, knocked at the outer gate and was admitted. He found the household, together with their friends and neighbors, in the midst of a feast in honor of Dream Dragon's *man-yueh* festival.* Hanwen was greatly astonished at the sudden appearance of Fahai, who stated, simply, that he had come to mete out justice to the White Snake, pointing to the happy young mother as he spoke.

When Fahai thus accused Suchen in her own home, and in the presence of her friends and neighbors, there were angry looks and threatening remarks. And when he further stated it as his purpose to take Suchen and have her body crushed under the great pagoda, they all rose up as one man † and would have done violence to the priest had not Hanwen commanded them, in the name of his own house, to hold their peace. Then one of the guests, an old man, proposed that the matter be tested.

* When the present dynasty, the Ta Ch'ing (Great Pure), came into power they inaugurated the custom of wearing the queue, and of shaving the head. But the custom of shaving a child's head when it is one month old, as practiced by the Chinese, is of much earlier origin than the advent of the Ch'ings. This festival is called *Man-yueh* (滿月), and is for both male and female children.

† It is related of the Emperor Chien Lung, that when he was witnessing a performance of the "White Snake Drama," on one of his many visits to Hangchow, and the play had progressed to this point, where the beautiful Suchen was being accused by the priest, the old Emperor being unable to endure it any longer, rose up, walked back on to the stage, caught the man who was playing the part of Fahai, and gave him a sound flogging ending with the remark, "How dare you insult a beautiful girl like that!" It is further related, however, that the Emperor had imbibed a considerable quantity of choice Shaohsing.

"If," said he, "our fair Suchen, whom we all love so much, be the White Snake indeed, let the priest Fahai prove it here and now in the presence of us all."

"Thou, father, art a wise and just man. Buddha will not fail to reward thee richly for this wisdom and just act." So spake the priest to the aged man. Then turning to Hanwen, he continued, "Take this bowl, fill it with fragrant tea and give to your wife to drink. If she be not transformed, then is Fahai mistaken and his mission ended."

With trembling hands and excited mien Hanwen filled the bowl with tea, then turned toward his beloved wife, when lo! the bowl, of its own accord, flew out of his hand and alighted squarely upon Suchen's head. And try as they would they could not loose it or take it away.

And Suchen, knowing that her hour had come, made a complete confession of all her misdeeds; of the theft of silver from the magistrate's yamên, poisoning the waters, the taking of the curios from the Emperor's palace, and of the destruction of Chenkiang by the great flood. "But," continued she, "I did it all because of my love for my husband, and meant no real harm to any mortal. I am indeed the White Snake from the Grotto of Pure Wind, come to recompense him, who is now my husband, by giving birth to his son, even to yonder innocent babe. It is true, also, my dear friends, that I am fated to be crushed under the great pagoda. To you, my sister, I must leave little Dream Dragon to be cared for and comforted; for he is very dear to my husband and me, for he is destined to become the Empire's Senior Wrangler."

Then turning to Fahai, she said simply, "I am ready."

Fahai waived his hand above her head a moment, when the bowl of its accord detached itself and flew back into his hand. A white mist was seen for a moment to surround Suchen, and when it cleared away she had vanished.

"Now look into the bowl," said Fahai.

And as they did so, they beheld only a white snake, very small and beautiful, wriggling about in the bowl in a vain effort to escape.

The grief-stricken husband fell upon his knees and implored Fahai to bring her back to him, but the priest replied that he was only obeying the command of Great Buddha, and that it was the White Snake's destiny to be crushed under the tower. Whereupon he took up the bowl, and bidding them follow passed out of the door and led the way across the lake to Thunder Peak Pagoda.

By the time the procession had reached the pagoda, a great crowd had gathered to witness the strange event. All expressed their sympathy for the young husband, and their indignation toward Fahai, the priest. The latter, however, paid no attention to this, and when all was in readiness he waived his hand toward the west; a white mist descended by the pagoda, and when they looked again the fair Suchen was standing there, smiling affectionately at her husband.

The heart-broken Hanwen seized her in his arms, begged Fahai to allow her to remain with him, and declared that he, too, must be taken if she could not be spared. But the stern Fahai said he must do his duty by obeying Buddha's commands.

"Yet," said he, "there is one condition upon which she may in time be liberated. If you, White Snake, will spend twenty years in meditation, cultivating that purity of mind and body necessary to the attainment of immortality, you shall be permitted to come forth again and return to the western paradise."

Whereupon Fahai raised his great staff, smote the ground three times, calling upon the name of Buddha. Slowly the foundations beneath the great pagoda were drawn asunder, until a bottomless pit, with yawning mouth, was opened.

"White Snake," commanded Fahai, "descend!"

Suchen stepped forward, pale and more beautiful than ever, and, bidding Hanwen a fond farewell, turned and leaped into the chasm.

The young husband made to follow her, but was stayed by the strong hand of Fahai, who again smote the earth with his staff, when the yawning chasm was instantly closed. The massive pagoda trembled a moment, and then stood still and quiet as through all the ages past.

Emerging from the pagoda, Fahai waived his magic bowl aloft. A passing cloud answered his summons, descended to earth, paused a moment, while Fahai seated himself in its midst, and then quickly disappeared over the tops of the lofty western hills.

When Greenette saw that her mistress was undone, and that her own life was in danger, she hastened away to her old home in the mountains. But her thoughts constantly turned upon her poor mistress buried by the cruel Fahai beneath the pagoda, and she could neither eat nor sleep, for such was the bond of affection between them.

One day, after fourteen long years of solitude in the dreary wastes of the rugged mountains, a daring resolve came into her mind;—she would release the White Snake! But in order to do so she must first dispose of Fahai, the priest.

And so, calling to her assistance one of the demons of darkness, she produced eight two-edged swords that possessed the power of flying. Taking these she proceeded to Golden Island, bent on slaying Fahai.

She seated herself on a near-by mountain peak and hurled one of the deadly swords straight at the Golden Island monastery. But Fahai had felt, only that very morning, that some evil was portending, and had accordingly placed the magic bowl close beside him. So that when the dreadful flying-sword entered the room and would have slain him, the magic bowl flew straight at the wicked blade, covered its head and eyes, and brought it down upon the floor.

“Ai ya!” exclaimed Fahai, as he picked up the glittering steel. “It is the Green Snake; we must give chase at once.”

Greenette, seeing that her deadly weapon did not return, knew that Fahai had defeated her again, and immediately fled.

But as she sped over the lofty peaks in terror, lest Fahai should overtake her, she grew more enraged than ever at the crafty old priest's power. All at once, an idea possessed her. She would go at once to Thunder Peak

Pagoda, burn it down and release the White Snake. And turning her course she called upon one of the fire gods who caused a cloud of fire to accompany her to Thunder Peak. Arrived at the pagoda, she blew the fire-cloud directly upon the tower, which at once became a pillar of angry flames that leaped to the heavens' zenith.

Now the Goddess of Mercy, from her southern home, saw what was going on, and taking a large vase of priceless value, flew hastily to Golden Island and summoned Fahai to the rescue of the sacred pagoda.

When Greenette saw the two approaching she was paralysed with fright and could not move so much as a muscle of her body. The goddess commanded Fahai to capture the Green Snake in his bowl, while she extinguished the raging fire. Filling the vase with water, she poured it over the pagoda, whereupon the angry flames were subdued and the fire quenched.

In the meantime Fahai had transformed Greenette into the Green Snake, but which was still wriggling and hissing in his bowl.

"Let her be imprisoned for fourteen years in this vase," commanded the goddess, "as a punishment for her crime."

Whereupon Fahai placed her in the vase, and sealed over the top with magic paper, on which he also wrote a powerful charm.

After Suchen was taken from him, Hanwen lost all interest in the affairs of life. The flourishing business he had established was neglected and soon forgotten. And for three years he wandered listlessly through the city, or more often about the shores of the lake, mourning the loss of his beloved wife.

Upon going into his room one day, his sister was horrified to find that he had gone. Upon his table lay a mass of raven-black hair attached to a bit of paper. The paper was a note from her brother saying that he had left home forever; that he had decided to give up the world and all its disappointments, and that he had gone to the Golden Island monastery to enter the priesthood.

"Thus I hope," said he, "to begin a new life."

Dream Dragon grew to be a very vigorous and intelligent child. He was fond of his books, and did not idle away his time in foolish games and talk as many boys do. Moreover, he stood first in all his classes, and in a few years was far beyond all the other boys of his age in mental attainments. This fact excited the jealousy of his school-mates, who began to circulate unseemly stories about the lad. They said among other things that the lad's mother was a witch, and that she had to be punished by being buried alive under Thunder Peak Pagoda, and that his real father was a Buddhist priest.

These stories greatly incensed Dream Dragon, who picked up his belongings and left the school forever.

When the lad's aunt heard of the trouble she at once told him the whole truth concerning the matter, and secured a private instructor to guide him in his education. The boy was much grieved and saddened to know that his poor mother was held captive by the massive pagoda, and would often be found at its base weeping and praying that she might be released.

The years quickly passed, and Dream Dragon, as they sped, grew physically and mentally, and gave promise of becoming a great scholar and sage. He was twenty years old now, and it was the time of the triennial examination at the Emperor's Palace.* And having passed all of his other examinations at the head of his classes, with "great honors," his old professor and all his companions begged him to write for the highest degree granted in the empire.

He finally did so, and when the results were announced he was overjoyed to discover that he had passed with the highest mark, and was therefore entitled to the rank of "Senior Wrangler of the Empire."*

The Emperor gave a feast to all the successful candidates, at which he enquired of Dream Dragon if there was anything he wished to do before entering upon his duties and responsibilities as a substantive official. Dream Dragon

* These examinations were held once in every three years at the Palace in Peking. They were for the already successful *Chin Shih*, or "Doctors," of the third or highest class; so that the one receiving the highest mark at these examinations is, theoretically, the best scholar for that year of the empire. Such a candidate is given the title of *Chuang-yuan* (狀元), "Senior Wrangler," of the Hanlin.

replied that he would be very grateful indeed, if his Majesty would grant him permission to return home and visit the tomb of his mother and see his aged father.

"Your request is granted," said the Emperor.

So he set out from the capital at once, purposing to call at Golden Island on his way home, to see his father, who was still living there as a Buddhist priest.

Arrived at the Golden Island monastery, he immediately made enquiries for his father, giving the family name. But as priests give up their real names upon entering the priesthood, he was told that there was no priest in the monastery known as Hsu Han-wen. At this juncture a middle-aged man, who had heard the conversation, approached Dream Dragon and enquired what his wishes were.

The two were not long in discovering each other. And while Dream Dragon's joy at finding his father knew no bounds, the father's pride and satisfaction over his accomplished son were none the less marked.

"But," said Dream Dragon, "where is this Fahai you have just told me about? It is now twenty years since my mother was entombed under the tower, and Fahai must come and release her."

A search was then made for Fahai, but he was not to be found. He had left the island that very morning.

"Come, father, let us go home and have mother released," said the son, as he stepped toward the monastery door.

"No," replied the father, "I am now a priest of the Great Buddha, to whom the joys of wedded life are forbidden. Moreover, I am now an old man. You must go alone and secure your mother's freedom."

Dream Dragon was heartbroken at his father's words and wept bitterly. But seeing that his father could not be persuaded to accompany him he set out for Hangchow alone.

In due course of time he reached his native city, and went without delay to the Thunder Peak Pagoda to offer incense to his imprisoned mother.

And just as he reached the top of the long flight of steps leading to the tower the air became charged with a

delicious fragrance. Upon looking up he beheld a great white cloud settling slowly to earth close by the pagoda. In another moment Fahai, the priest, stepped out and *le-towed* before the pagoda shrine.

"Are you Fahai?" demanded Dream Dragon.

"Just so," replied the priest.

"Why have you imprisoned my mother beneath this tower?"

"In order that she might become 'an immortal,'" calmly returned Fahai.

"I have been looking for you for a long time," retorted the young man, whereupon he struck Fahai a terrible blow. Dream Dragon was a very powerful young man, and would have slain the old priest then and there had not his relatives interfered and begged that Fahai be given an opportunity to explain.

"Only to-day," said the breathless Fahai, "are the days of your mother's atonement for her offences fulfilled. To-day she has become immortal and shall shortly ascend to heaven, where she will be beyond the cares and vicissitudes of this transient existence. To-day she passes from the snake, or brute order, and enters the higher order of man."

Saying which, he picked up his great staff and smote the pagoda's foundation three times, calling out, "Open, O earth, open."

The foundations of the massive structure creaked and groaned for a moment, then suddenly drew apart, leaving a great, bottomless fissure.

"White Snake," called Fahai in a loud voice, "come forth!"

A fragrant gust of wind came from out the depths of the yawning chasm, and a sound as of the wings of many birds was heard, when lo! standing there within the pagoda was Suchen, the beautiful!

Dream Dragon gazed a moment at the lovely form of his mother, then sprang forward, and clasping her in his arms wept for joy.

Presently he released her and said, "Come, mother, dear, let us go home. This is indeed the happiest day of my life."

"No, no," smiled the mother, "I cannot do that. To-day have I completed the atonement for my sins, and must therefore return at once to the 'Old Mother' in the Western Heaven; for now have I become an immortal."

Then turning to her kinsmen who had gathered about, she continued, "Dear ones, I thank you with all my heart for the love and care you have bestowed upon my son, who has become 'Senior Wrangler of the Empire.'" But weep not for me, for the years of my peace and happiness have this day only begun. My son, great responsibilities are now upon you. See to it that you acquit yourself with honor and credit to your country. And withal, be ever loyal to your Emperor whom you now are to serve."

To Fahai she then said, "I am ready."

Fahai waived his wand toward the heavens. The air became laden with sweetest fragrance, and presently a myria-colored, billowy cloud descended and paused at the feet of Suchen.

"Ascend," commanded the priest.

Suchen stepped upon the cloud, bowed a tender farewell to her son and her kinsfolk, and then slowly disappeared beyond the western horizon.

Then waiving his wand again, Fahai called a golden-colored cloud, which as it came down, filled the air with the fragrance of burning incense. And taking up his staff and bowl, he stepped lightly upon the radiant mist, called upon the name of Buddha, and vanished in a twinkling.

Dream Dragon returned home with a troubled and sorrowing heart. His father a priest; his mother gone, and with no one to comfort him; what did life further hold for him?

So it was at this critical stage in his experience that his beautiful cousin, who was just his own age, and who had become engaged to him while yet they were infants, made known her desire to have the marriage ceremonies performed without delay. "In order," said the messenger, "that she may comfort and strengthen you in this your time of great sorrow."

This news came as a welcome boon to the broken-spirited Dream Dragon. An auspicious day was chosen, and the two were wedded amid the congratulations and well-wishes of a multitude of friends.

