

accumulate my own blessings," so that I may be able to have children. If I could have either a son or a daughter, then the Kuo family would be able to continue with their incense-burning. Today I'll open my shop and have the tea warmed. Yesterday I drank too much wine. I feel a hang-over. (to his wife) Wife, since no one comes yet, I think I'll take a nap in the back room. If anyone comes, let me know.

WIFE: Of course. (Kuo falls asleep) (Lü Tung-pin enters with Hsü Shen-weng)

LÜ: (to Hsü) Hsü Shen-weng, please hold the boat and wait for me here. We shall return together as soon as I have delivered Kuo Ma-erh. (to the audience) In the past, I delivered a willow spirit at the Yüeh-yang Tower. Because he was a creature of earth and wood, he could not achieve the Tao. So I had him to be born as a man. He is now Kuo Ma-erh, the teahouse proprietor under the Yüeh-yang Tower. I had the spirit of the plum tree transformed into a human form; to be born in the Ho family as their daughter to become Kuo's wife. Thirty years have passed now. This man licks up tea left by the people passing by. Nevertheless, as a man of common stock, he needs someone to deliver him. It is said, "Jade, uncarved, cannot become a useful instrument; man, untaught, cannot achieve the Tao." Not to mention about him, even I, once a mere frustrated scholar, went to the Capital to seek an official position and at the Wang-hua Inn in the Han-tan district, I met my teacher, Chung-li, who helped me achieve the Tao, and become an immortal. Had I not met my teacher, Chung-li... (sings-tune of *I-chih-hua*, in the mode of *Nan-lié*)

I would still be riding a bag-bellied mule, and eating several meals of yellow millet.

But today, I have the honor of visiting Lang-yüan,³⁴ and no longer dream of Han-tan.

(speaks) Someone asked, "How could you ever achieve the great Tao of Immortality, while living in drunkenness and dreams?"

(again sings)

Laugh not at my staggering gait, my hypochondria . . .

Now I have come to the Yüeh-yang Tower twice.

I have heard in vain the frightening crash of waves,

(speaks) Oh, you fools!

(sings again)

For they would not wash clean your foolishness and dumbness.

(speaks) Though I stumble and stagger . . .

(sings again)

Why don't I pretend to be drunk, under the influence of wine?

(speaks) People ask me about human world . . .

(sings again)

Did I ever nod my head acknowledging my understanding of the human world?

Do not laugh at me of my filthy body of wood and earth.

It is far better than the purple robe or the white gown.³⁵

With my sword hidden in my sleeve, the Golden Pill³⁶ in my stomach,

I could revel with all those black temples and rouge faces.³⁷

I have just left the cloudy banners and starry altar.

(speaks) You mortals, do not laugh at us immortals for wandering around . . . (sings again)

I have arrived at the green P'eng-lai where Hsü Fu gathered the divine fungus.³⁸

I just passed over the lofty Wo-hsien-t'ai on Mount Hua where Ch'en T'uan slept,³⁹

And over the magnificent Han-ku Pass of Lao Tzu where the majestic lustre comes from.⁴⁰

Docking my boat, here the tea time on the river tower was just over and the people dispersed.

You, Kuo Shang-tSao,⁴¹ love flattery.

While I, as a beggar, am in a dilemma,

For I come to look for you, a Ch'en Fan who lowered a bed for a friend.⁴²

(looks around for Kuo; speaks) He is not in this room, nor in that room. (sees Kuo) The guy is here. (to Kuo) Hey, Ma-erh, the peach blossoms have faded, yet your willowy eyes are still closed. (strikes Kuo)

KUO: (surprised) You've scared me. You did not hit my ears, I hope.

LÜ: I hit your ears, all right, but I did not hurt your head. Ma-erh take a look.

KUO: What do you want me to see?

LÜ: Isn't this the bank of the Wu River?

KUO: Where is River Wu?