

# The Yueh-yang Tower

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by

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- Wineshop Operator . . . . .  
 The owner of a wine shop in the Yüeh-yang Tower
- Lü Tung-pin (the main role) . . . . .  
 A Taoist immortal, whose Taoist title is Ch'un-yang-tzu, and his given name was Yen.
- The Willow Spirit (Kuo Ma-erh) . . . . .  
 The spirit of a willow tree; later takes human form as Kuo-Ma-erh, owner of the tea house in the Yüeh-yang Tower
- Hó La-méi (the plum spirit) . . . . .  
 The spirit of a plum tree; later takes form as a woman and wife of Kuo Ma-erh
- Head of Street . . . . .  
 A city official
- An Official . . . . .  
 An official in Yüeh-yang Tower area
- Chung-li of Han, Li, Lan Ts'ai-ho, Chang-kuo-lao, Hsü Shen-weng, Han Hsiang-tzu, and Ts'ao Kuo-chiu . . . . .  
 A group of immortals in disguise—assistants to Lü Tung-pin in the transformation of the willow spirit
- Clerks and attendants

The scene is a wine shop in the Yüeh-yang Tower overlooking the Yangtze River in the Yüeh-chou district (of Hunan Province). It is early morning.

WINE CLERK: (enters, reciting a jingle)

*My wine is pure clear.*

*A string of cash can buy two bottles.*

*It may fill up one's stomach.*

*It makes one's penis urinate painfully.*

(speaks) I am a wine shop operator. My shop is located in the Yüeh-yang Tower. Everyone, whether from the north or south, merchant or traveler, seller or buyer, would stop at the tower to drink. This morning, I got the wine warmed up, and the shop sign hanged up. (calls out) Customers, wine is ready—ready.

LÜ TUNG-PIN: (enters, carrying a basket of ink sticks) Your humble Taoist is Lu Yen. Another name is Tung-pin, with a Taoist title—Ch'un yang-tzu. I was a Confucian scholar of the T'ang Dynasty. Later, I met my teacher, Chung-<sup>1</sup>, through whose help and enlightened persuasion, I was able to achieve the Tao of immortality. While feasting at the P'an T'ao Festival,<sup>1</sup> suddenly I noticed a streak of blue air coming up from the world underneath. It means that an immortal has emerged. When I took another look, it is located in the Yüeh-yang district of Yüeh-chou. I'll ride the clouds and descend there, disguised as a scholar selling ink-sticks. (calls out) You people on the street come and buy my good ink-sticks. (sings—tune of *Tien-chiang-ch'un*, in the mode of *Hsien-lü*)

*The lustre of this ink shines in a study room.*

*Its soot was gathered on the T'ai-hua Mountain, on the Fairy's Palm.<sup>2</sup>*

*Further, made by the five Lis and three Changs,<sup>3</sup>*

*When it enters an ink-slab,*

*It makes sounds like wind in pines.*

(in the tune of *Hun-chiang-lung*)

*Shaped like a shuttle's head or a lute, it could aid a poetic brush,*

*By the window, bright and clear, for studying books.*

*I just passed through a Taoist temple, several fasting halls . . .*

*The bamboo desks, have secretly taken on the lustre of the*

*Dragon's Tail.*<sup>4</sup>

*A plain cloth robe often brings forth the fragrance of musk.  
Now I have come to the shore of the Tung-t'ing Lake,  
The side of the hundred-foot tall tower.*

(goes up the tower; speaks) What a fine tall tower this is!  
(sings again)

*It leans against cloud and sky,  
Reflects on the rivers Hsiao and Hsiang.  
Here I climb up the flying ladder,  
Gaze my eyes.*

*It seems thirty thousand feet from the mortal world,  
Good for Kao Huan to keep himself cool from heat,<sup>5</sup>  
And for Wang Ts'an's thinking of home.<sup>6</sup>*

CLERK: I will stand at the door and see who comes here.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Yü-hu-lu*)

*I can see twelve balustrades linking with the sky.*

CLERK: (calls out) Customers, come and taste my wine.

LÜ: Don't shout!

CLERK: Why do you tell me to stop shouting?

LÜ: (again singing)

*I feel you may frighten the Jade Emperor.<sup>7</sup>  
Who would then permit you to build a brewery near the Big  
Dipper?*

CLERK: Can't you see the sign hanging on the tower and the characters written on the sign? It reads, "In the world there is no other wine; under the sky there is this famous tower."

LÜ: (continues singing)

*It is written: the Yüeh-yang Tower is strategically important  
and majestically beautiful.  
In addition, the Spring of Tung-t'ing<sup>8</sup>, a good wine is newly  
warmed.*

CLERK: Sir, take a look at the magnificent scenery on this side.

LU: (sings)

*With waves rolling below, it overlooks the River Han.*

CLERK: Not only the Han River, even the Tung-t'ing lake, the Po-yang lake, and the Ch'ing-ts'ao lake can also be seen.

LÜ: It is just the season when chickens are fat and crabs strong.<sup>9</sup>  
(sings again)

*It is the chrysanthemums of autumn, it would not intoxicate*

*T'ao Yuan-liang.*<sup>10</sup>

CLERK: Sir, you have come too late, I have sold all my wine. No more is left.

LÜ: Did you say there is no more wine?  
(sings again)

*What can I do with those round-naveled, pregnant crabs?<sup>11</sup>*

CLERK: I have some wine here. What can you pay me with?

LÜ: I have no money, but . . .  
(sings—tune of *T'ien-hsia-lo*)

*I could pawn my jade belt for a drink.*

CLERK: In that case, I really have no more wine.

LÜ: You said no more wine. Can't you smell it?  
(sings again)

*What is that so pure, sweet, smooth, hot and fragrant?*

CLERK: All right, there is wine. But if you get drunk, you won't be able to get down the stairs.

LÜ: (sings)

*Even you could make you old master drunk to death, he  
won't ask you to pay for his life.*

CLERK: Sir, it is very chilly on this tower.

LÜ: It is still early. (sings)

*How could you know that the days and months of us immortals  
are long?*

(speaks) Waiter, what deity do you worship?

CLERK: This is the first wine maker, Tu K'ang. Because I worship him, customers fill my shop everyday.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *No-cha-ling*)

*I'll get for you, Po-yang, the immortalized,<sup>12</sup>  
And the pot-hanging Ch'ang-fang,<sup>13</sup>*

*For they are much better than the profit-making Tu K'ang  
whom you worship.*

CLERK: Sir, I buy fresh fish as an appetizer.

LÜ: (sings)

*Don't talk about the golden scaled fish and new brewed wine,  
To lure those passing merchants or travelers.*

(in tune of *Ch'üeh-t'a-chih*)

*Since the Sui and the T'ang, there have been several rises and  
falls.*

*Think about this black banner. . . .*

*How many days can it have in the autumn?*

*Facing these majestic mountains and rivers in all directions,  
Could they last longer than the lives of my drunken words?*

CLERK: Sir, my wine is better than both nectar and Jade Liquid.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Chi-sheng-ts'ao*)

*Say nothing of the nectar or jade liquid.*

*I think phoenixes and cranes fly over the autumn river.*

*Like whales I would drink up the waves of the Silver River.<sup>14</sup>*

*Drinking the lamb wine I would get drunk in the golden-lined  
curtains.<sup>15</sup>*

*It is like Monk Fo-yin who roasted a pig to entertain Tung-p'o.<sup>16</sup>*

*It is better than Wei Yeh's riding on a mule to meet P'an Lang.<sup>17</sup>*

CLERK: I have heard many stories—of Wang Hung's giving a gift, of Liu Ling's bringing his shovel, of Li Po's fishing of the moon—but none of them was as fond of wine as you.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Yao-p'ien*)

*For those mortal ones were like walls made of mud and manure.*

*Wang Hung visited a friend, peering through the edge,<sup>18</sup>*

*Li Po fished for the moon and drowned in a river.<sup>19</sup>*

*Liu Ling carried his shovel behind for digging a grave with.<sup>20</sup>*

*But I will sing aloud, flying over the Tung-t'ing Lake. . .*

*And would not crack my whip entering P'ing-K'ang Lanc by  
mistake<sup>21</sup>*

(speaks) Waiter, bring me two hundred coins worth of wine.

CLERK: You give me the money first. Then you can have your wine.

LÜ: You are right. I will give you this ink-stick for two hundred coins worth of wine.

CLERK: You're not kidding me. This ink-stick? What so good about it? How can it be worth two hundred coins?

LÜ: This ink is no ordinary ink-stick. It is worth more than two hundred coins. (sings—tune of *Hou-t'ing-hua*)

*This thin ink-stick weighs no more than four ounces,*

*Yet, how many times can you grind it?*

*All things are like this.*

(speaks) Oh, wine clerk. . . (again sings)

*Throughout your drifting life, you will busy yourself in vain,*

*But its black heart dwells on merit and fame.<sup>21a</sup>*

CLERK: I do not want this ink. Give me money.

LÜ: You refuse to exchange wine for this ink-stick?

(sings again)

*Then you have muddled on half a sheet of paper.<sup>22</sup>*

CLERK: (aside) He is a man of a different world. Why can't I do some good? I'll take his ink, and I can use it for keeping my records. Well, I might as well give him two hundred coins worth of wine. (to LÜ) Sir, I will give you the wine. If you can't drink it yourself, you should invite a few Taoist friends to drink with you.

LÜ: You are right, waiter. Watch, I will invite some friends for a drink.

(making a magic gesture) Quickly, come! Come here!

CLERK: Where?

LÜ: Quickly! You too. . . and you!

CLERK: (aside) You see, this man must be mad.

LÜ: One dances, one sings, one pours. I will not return until I get drunk

CLERK: (aside) I said the man is crazy—surely he is. He swings his sleeves to the east, saying, "come here!" Then he swings his sleeves to the west saying, "You too!" Then he said, "One dances, one sings, and one pours."

Where are these people?

LÜ: I don't think you can see them.

(sings—tune of *Chin-chan-erh*)

*Here I lean on the couch gazing at the three Hsiangs.<sup>23</sup>*

*There are yellow cranes dancing in pairs; and fairies singing.*

*The host is generous. Drunkenness is no matter.*

*I shall drink until the furled screen summons the bright moon.*

*And a feast is offered with red-dressed girls in company.*

*A jug (of wine) would detain an ink-seller.*

(speaks) I am sleepy. (again singing)

*I'll dream of the yellow millet.<sup>24</sup>*

(falls asleep)

CLERK: Well, I knew you couldn't drink up two hundred coins worth of wine yourself. When I suggested you invite a few Taoist friends to drink with you, you did not listen. Now you are indeed drunk (murmurs) He is asleep. What shall I do? There are many ghosts on this tower at night. What if they should harm him? What shall I do? I'd better wake him up.

(calling Lü) Sir, wake up! There are many spirits and ghosts on

this tower. They might harm your life. (Lü does not wake) He is fast asleep. . . I can't awaken him. What shall I do? I think I'll go downstairs, put away the heating pot, pull down the sign and put up the shutters. Then I'll go back up again and wake him up. (to Lü) Hey, you! If you do not wake up, the evil spirits will come here and devour you up. I cannot be responsible. I'm leaving. (exits)

WILLOW SPIRIT: (enters, reciting a poem)

*My roots and my trunk are grown in full maturity.  
Green leaves and soft twigs fill the branches.  
Since I have gathered an abundance of virtuous merits,  
The Supreme Ruler has entitled me the River Guardian.*

(speaks) I am an old willow tree. I have lived beside the Yüeh-yang Tower for hundreds of years. The white plum tree spirit in front of the Tu K'ang Temple haunts this place. I think I should go upstairs to patrol around. Do you know why? I fear she might harm people. It is getting late now. I had better go up and look around. (going up the tower) Strange! Usually, when I come up here I felt peace in my heart. Why do I feel so apprehensive today? Since I have come this far, should I go back? I might as well go up and see. (seeing Lü) Ah! No wonder, a Superior Immortal is here. I should avoid him. (starts away)

LÜ: (shouts, and stops the willow spirit) Hey, you! Where are you going? Come back!

WILLOW SPIRIT: Had I know that your worship was here, I would have welcomed you. Now I have failed in welcoming you, I can only beg your forgiveness.

LÜ: Oh! What a pity!

(sings—tune of *Tsui-chung-t'ien*)

*I see he supports himself with a long cane,  
He looks just like the Old Dragon-King.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Had I known earlier that your worship was here, I would have bowed to you.

LÜ (sings)

*With your crooked back, and a camel-like waist,  
What do you come here for?*

(speaks) Let me see your original form.

(sings again) *Here, I lean on the railing to see.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Your Worship, what are you looking for?

(sings again)

*Actually you are the old willow where the sign hangs in front  
of the door.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Your servant has been here for hundreds of years.

LÜ: Shut up! (sings again)

*Don't you say your roots are buried ten thousand feet deep.  
Now your catkins have touched mud.*

*I fear you have betrayed the presence of spring.*

(speaks) Willow, you have several shortcomings.

WILLOW SPIRIT: Your Worship, what do you mean?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *I-wang-sun*)

*The evening breeze was chilly in the camp of Ya-fu,<sup>25</sup>  
The spring days were long in the palace of Emperor Yang,<sup>26</sup>  
After the dance, the persons on the Ch'u Terrace suffered  
hunger.<sup>27</sup>*

*You busy yourself only for spring.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Any other bad points?

LÜ: (sings)

*You had starved the palace maids of the Ch'u so much that  
their waists were as thin as an incense stick.<sup>28</sup>*

(speaks) Old willow, the one who haunts the Yüeh-yang Tower is actually you.

WILLOW SPIRIT: It has nothing to do with me. The white plum tree in front of the Tu K'ang Temple is one that causes all the trouble here.

LÜ: Let me see. Indeed, it is the white plum tree that haunts this place. Very well, old Willow, you follow me. And I will take you out of this world.

WILLOW SPIRIT: Your Worship, I cannot go.

LÜ: Why can't you go?

WILLOW SPIRIT: My trunk and roots are firm and strong; my branches and leaves thick and luxuriant. I cannot leave.

LÜ: Though he is a creature of earth and wood, he speaks good words.

(sings—tune of *Chin-chan-erh*)

*I, Lü Ch'un-yang, can deliver you, a green willow.  
But you would want to accompany smoke and rain over the  
river bridge,  
Dancing in the east wind, floating frivolously around.  
Nowadays, people plant their trees in the morning,*

*And wish to enjoy shade during the evening.  
I fear you may spawn many small devils  
Who, years later, would leave you an old withered trunk-  
behind.*

(speaks) Old Willow, follow me. Leave this world.

WILLOW SPIRIT: I am grateful for your inspired teaching. I am willing to leave this world. But I am a creature of earth and wood. I have not acquired a human form. How can I achieve the Tao of immortality?

LÜ: What you have said is right. You are indeed a creature of earth and wood and have not acquired a human body. Therefore, it would be difficult for you to achieve the Tao. Listen, old willow. You shall go to the Kuo family, the owner of a tea house beneath this tower, and will be born as a boy named Kuo Ma-erh. I shall make the white plum spirit to be born to the Ho family as a girl. Then you two shall become husband and wife. Thirty years from now, I shall return to deliver you. (hands his ink basket to the willow) Carry this for me.

WILLOW SPIRIT: (puts the basket on his head) Is this the way to carry this, Master?

LÜ: No, try again. (the willow tries a second time) Not like that. (to the audience) He is a creature of earth and wood and has not acquired a human body. How could he know? (to the willow) Watch! (Lü takes the basket into his arms and sings again)

*Hold fast to this ink basket as I do.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: (holding the basket in his arms) Is this all right? Is this the way?

LÜ: (sings) *Indeed he looks like a human being now.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Master, how did you recognize me?

LÜ: (sings) *From the very beginning, I have watched you grow and mature.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Master, where is your home?

LÜ: (sings) *My home is where the white clouds linger.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Is it quiet there?

LÜ: (sings) *There no noisy cicadas bothering the setting sun.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: I will follow you and leave this world. But I can't leave this beautiful water behind.

LÜ: (sings) *This lake scenery is hardly as big as half an acre of a fragrant pond.*

WILLOW SPIRIT: Master, I think I understand now.

LÜ: (sings) *You almost became a hitching post at the long pavilion.*<sup>29</sup>

WILLOW SPIRIT: Master, may I dare to ask some questions? What do you mean by conforming to the Tao, or not conforming with the Tao?

LÜ: Ask your questions one at a time.

WILLOW SPIRIT: Master, then what is not conforming to the Tao?

LÜ: (sings) *Not conforming to the Tao is to stand on the Pa-ling Bridge.*<sup>30</sup>

WILLOW SPIRIT: Master, what do you mean by conforming to the Tao?

LÜ: (sings) *Conforming to the Tao means you should be at the roadside of Chang-t'ai.*<sup>31</sup>

(speaks) If you are willing to leave this world with me. I can teach you the one way.

WILLOW SPIRIT: Which one?

LÜ: (sings)

*I will let you learn from the pines and cypresses on the Lü cliff—to withstand the wind and frost.*<sup>32</sup>

(both exit)

## ACT II

[Thirty years later. The willow spirit has become Kuo Ma-erh and married the spirit of the plum tree, who became the daughter of the Ho family.]

KUO MA-ERH: (enters with his wife, Ho La-mei; reciting a poem)

*The Lung-t'uan and Feng-ping teas are not ordinary,*

*They are the forerunners of all flowering plants.*

*Gathered at the summit where snow was still there.*

*When brewed; they have the fragrance of Chien-hsi.*<sup>33</sup>

(speaks) I am Kuo Ma-erh. This is my wife, Ho La-mei. We operate a tea house under the Yüeh-yang Tower. Merchants and travelers coming from all directions would stop at my shop for tea. I have heard from my old man that thirty years ago this was a wine shop. But now we sell tea. We have been married for several years, but so far have no children. So, I drink all the tea left by the customers. Why? This is called "stealing secret merits to

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,<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>*

*With my sword hidden in my sleeve, the Golden Pill<sup>36</sup> in my stomach,*

*I could revel with all those black temples and rouge faces.<sup>37</sup>*

*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.<sup>38</sup>*

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

*And over the magnificent Han-ku Pass of Lao Tzu where the majestic lustre comes from.<sup>40</sup>*

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

*You, Kuo Shang-tSao,<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>*

(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?



LÜ: Isn't this the Hua-jung Path?

KUO: Where is the Hua-jung Path?

(Lü weeps, and then laughs)

KUO: (to the audience) This Taoist priest must be a mad man. He asked me, "Isn't this the Wu River? Isn't this the Hua-jung Path?" Then he weeps and laughs, laughs and weeps. He is really crazy.

LÜ: Where are the heroes of the past now? This side of the Hua-jung Path is the relics of Ts'ao Ts'ao.<sup>43</sup> On the bank of the Wu River is King Pa's<sup>44</sup> old site. Ts'ao Ts'ao, a champion scoundrel, slept on a round pillow by night and gave poisoned wine to others by day.<sup>45</sup> King Pa, who divided the country into three, possessed earth-shattering bravery and mountain-moving strength. Where they are now? (Sings -- tune of *Huo-hsin-lang*)

*Look! The dragons and tigers were fighting for the old land.*

KUO: Whom are you laughing at?

LÜ: (sings)

*I am laughing at the scoundrel hero, Ts'ao Ts'ao.*

KUO: Then who are you crying for?

LÜ: (sings)

*I am crying for the heroic King Pa!*

KUO: Sir, why do you cry after you laugh, and laugh after you cry?

LÜ: (sings)

*For rise and fall, I laugh, then I cry!*

*Suddenly the sun is again getting late.*

*The hundred years of a man are really within a snap of fingers.*

KUO: I don't mind you enjoying yourself on the tower, but don't disturb my customers.

LÜ: (sings)

*I hear the noise of the customers in front of the tower.*

*How can they compare with the leisure of wild gulls on a river.*

*Man of a hundred years is but an illusion...*

(looks around)

KUO: (also looking around) I'll take a look as you do.

LÜ: (sings)

*I see that you are a golden-threaded willow.*

*You still lean leisurely against twelve jade bannisters.*

KUO: Sir, what do you come here for?

LÜ: I come here to beg a cup of tea from you.

KUO: To beg for a cup of tea you surely used nice sweet words. Well, for a man out of this world, I can always do some service. (to his wife) Wife, make some tea for this priest.

LÜ: I will not drink tea that way. You must follow my instructions. Come, make me a deep bow and say, "May I ask you, my dear sir, what kind of tea you desire?" Then I will tell you the name of the tea.

KUO: (to the audience) Did you see that? I see that he is not a man of this world, so I was nice to him and gave him some tea. But I never expected he is so fussy. Well, all right, I'll follow his instructions. Anyway, there aren't many customers now. He is crazy, and I am silly. We might as well play a little game. I will obey him, and make a deep bow. (to Lü) May I ask you, sir, what kind of tea do you desire?

LÜ: I'd like a quince tea.

KUO: Good Heavens! What a big mouth! Open your mouth a little wider, and you might dislocate your jaw! I asked, "What kind of tea do you desire?" He says, "I'd like a quince."

LÜ: Whom are you imitating, Kuo Ma-erh?

KUO: I'm imitating you.

LÜ: You would be doing all right if you could imitate me.

KUO: If I imitated you, I would have a dumb head the rest of my life. (to his wife) Wife, make some quince. (Lü drinks the tea) Give me the cup.

LÜ: I will not give you the cup.

KUO: Why don't you give me the cup?

LÜ: You must follow my instructions again. Make a deep bow and say, "May I ask you, my dear sir, how is the taste of the tea?" Then I will give you the cup.

KUO: All right, all right. I will obey. Say no more. My dear sir, I bow to you. How is the taste of the tea?

LÜ: The tea is no good.

KUO: That's just fine! You make a fine advertisement.

LÜ: For that you should be punished.

KUO: Why punish me?

LÜ: Ask me the proper way.

KUO: O.K. I bow to you. My dear sir, what kind of tea do you desire?

LÜ: I'd like a cream tea.

KUO: What a tight lip. I asked him, "My dear sir, what kind of tea do you desire?" And he says, "I'd like a cream tea." First he drank a quince. Second, he asks for a cream tea. The guy has a small mouth, and then a big mouth.<sup>46</sup>

LÜ: Kuo Ma-erh, I do have a small mouth and a big mouth.

KUO: A big mouth and a small mouth makes the character *Lü*. Add another mouth and the character is *p'in*, which means my tea is of excellent quality.<sup>47</sup> (to his wife) In that case, wife, make a cream tea for the priest.

LÜ: (takes the tea) Kuo Ma-erh, is this real cream in the tea?

KUO: What else could it be but real cream in the tea?

LÜ: It's goat's fat.

KUO: Goats' fat is used for candles. Where could I get goats' fat?

LÜ: If you would light like a candle, there would be plenty of goats' fat.<sup>48</sup>

KUO: The way you talk, I must be a willow tree. (Lü drinks) Give me your cup.

LU: I will not give you the cup. You must ask me in the proper manner.

KUO: O.K. O.K. Sir, how is the taste of the tea?

LÜ: It is still no good.

KUO: This is the second time!

LU: You should be punished again. Come on! Ask me the same way as before.

KUO: O.K. Sir, what kind of a tea do you desire to drink?

LÜ: I will have an almond tea.

KUO: This guy really has taste. First he drank quince; then he drank cream tea. Now he wants almond tea. With some dry food given him, and he will be full for half a day.

LU: If it hadn't been for me, Ma-erh, you would have become a dry beam.<sup>49</sup>

KUO: It seems I am just a block of wood. All right, all right. (to his wife) My dear, make an almond tea for the priest.

WIFE: I have almonds, but no boards.

KUO: (to Lü) Sir, we have almonds, but no boards.

LÜ: Did you say you have almonds but no boards? Thirty years ago, if you were cup up, there would have been plenty of boards.<sup>50</sup>

KUO: Sir, I can't stand your saying one sentence after another. Wife, make an almond tea. (Lü drinks the tea) Give me the cup.

LÜ: I will not give you the cup. You should ask for it the same way as

before.

KUO: O.K. Sir, how is the taste of the tea?

LÜ: Kuo Ma-erh, this tea of yours . . .

KUO: Still no good, right?

LÜ: How did you guess?

KUO: I am learning your ways.

LÜ: I want you to learn my way.<sup>51</sup> (Kuo licks the tea cup) Kuo Ma-erh, I have seen you lick it.

KUO: Lick what?

LÜ: Lick the bottom of the cup. Why?

KUO: Sir, you wouldn't know. My wife, Ho La-mei, and I have been married for several years. But we have no children. All merchants and travelers, whether from the north or south, buying or selling would come up my tower for tea. I drink the left-over tea. Do you know why? This is called stealing secret merits to accumulate my own blessings. Should we have a boy or girl, the Kuo family would have someone to continue burning the incense.

LÜ: Oh, I see. What would you say if I help you accumulate more secret merits?

KUO: That will be better.

LÜ: Get me a cup, Kuo Ma-erh. Drink up the tea I throw out. It will make you have a son. (Lü throws out the tea from his mouth)

KUO: (does not drink the tea; to the audience) When I take a look at his dirty face, I would rather be without heirs than drink his tea. Let me play his game and see what he has to say. (to Lü) Sir, if you eat the food I have left over, I will drink your tea.

LÜ: Then bring me your left-over food.

(Sings -- tune of *Wu-T'ung-shu*)

*You said two cups of tea would make one perspire all over.*

*Have you not heard that one grain of rice can pass through the bowel three times?*

*Who cares about won-ton skin, bun stuffings or leftover rice . . .*

*Whenever there's food or wine, the teacher would eat.*

(vomits again)

KUO: Oh, it's so dirty!

LÜ: If you drink my leftover tea, I'll eat your leftover food.

KUO: I'll tell you. I won't drink your tea and you need not eat my food. Wearing that half-piece of goatskin, you look as foul as a beggar.

LU: (sings—tune of *Ke-wei*)  
*Don't you laugh at this beggar wearing a goatskin,  
 You, the leader of beggars, don't mistake it as a bedding sheet.*  
 (speaks) Ma-erh, I have drank three cups of tea. Not one was real.  
 KUO: How come "not one was real?"  
 LÜ: (sings—tune of *Ke-wei*)  
*I'll throw up the date in the quince, the fat in the cream, the  
 pit in the almond.*  
 (speaks) Ma-erh, you eat them.  
 KUO: I can't eat.  
 LÜ: (sings)  
*It seems so difficult for him.*  
 (speaks) Ma-erh, eat!  
 KUO: Really, I can't eat.  
 LÜ: If you don't eat, then take the cup. (Lü teases Kuo by pretending  
 to drop the cup) Alas, I almost broke the cup!  
 KUO: You scared me to death!  
 LÜ: (sings again)  
*I'll see how you dispose of this pine-wind-rabbit-hair cup.*  
 (speaks) Ma-erh, Look! What a vomit I have made . . .  
 (Sings—tune of *Mu-yang-kuan*)  
*This vomit, unlike a bamboo-leaf floating on cloud waves;  
 Nor like a stone-block churning up snow-like waves.  
 This vomit, with my mouth opened, has dispersed the fragrance  
 inside the screen.  
 With its sacred wine, it would lengthen life,  
 And it keeps a peach-like face youthful.  
 One does not need to gather snow on Meng's Peak;  
 Or to make tea in a cuckoo-bird cup.<sup>52</sup>  
 It is like the water one draws from the Yang-tze River.*  
 (speaks) Oh, Ma-erh . . .  
 (sings again)  
*It is better than boiled water producing crab eyes.*  
 (speaks) Ma-erh, eat.  
 KUO: I cannot eat.  
 LÜ: (to Kuo's wife) Ho La-mei, you eat.  
 HO: (eats; then to Lü) I bow to you, master. Your disciple has awaken-  
 ed.

LÜ: (to Ho) I am afraid you may not awaken. But Kuo Ma-erh has not  
 yet awakened (to Kuo) Give me the cup. (with his fingers, Lü  
 scoops up the remaining from the bottom of the cup and smears it  
 on Kuo's mouth)  
 KUO: Oh, this is wonderful stuff. Like milk anointing the head, sweet  
 dew cleansing the heart, it is truly good stuff. (to Lü) Sir, the stuff  
 you just smeared on my mouth—what is it?  
 LÜ: The stuff I just smeared on your mouth was the leftover tea.  
 KUO: Where is the rest of it? Give me some more.  
 LÜ: There is no more.  
 KUO: Where could it have gone to?  
 LÜ: Ho La-mei ate it.  
 KUO: She ate it? What does it mean?  
 LÜ: It means that she obtained the *Tao* first.  
 KUO: What about me?  
 LÜ: You remain by the roadside.<sup>53</sup>  
 KUO: It sounds that I am a willow tree.  
 LÜ: Who said that you are an elm tree?  
 KUO: I drank your leftover tea, what would you say? My wife drank  
 your leftover tea, what would you say?  
 LÜ: You have drank my tea, you are my Taoist companion; your  
 wife drank my tea, she is my immortal friend.  
 KUO: Just a minute. (to the audience) I drank his tea; I become his  
 Taoist companion. My wife drank his tea, she becomes an immortal  
 friend of his. Taoist companion sounds innocuous enough, but  
 immortal friend sounds suspicious. (to Lü) You are making me a  
 cuckold, are you not? (angry, Kuo beats Lü)  
 LÜ: (sings—tune of *Hung-shao-yao*)  
*A year-end cold has turned into a volcano.  
 As my disciple, you are so cross-grained.*  
 (Kuo tears Lü's gown; Lü continues to sing)  
*He grabbed this plain cloth, and won't let it go.  
 Ripping it to shreds, it looks like funeral banners.*  
 (Kuo continues the beating and Lü the singing)  
*He beat me like a spring-cow without a piece of board.  
 I should not persuade him to nurture his virtues, and open my  
 heart to him.*  
 (speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, don't make me angry.  
 KUO: If I made you angry, what would you do?

LÜ: (sings)

*I could turn the Yüeh-yang Tower into hell,  
So don't show off your boxing skill.*

(Kuo continues to beat Lü)

LÜ: (sings—tune of P'u-sa-liang-chou)

*He beats me like a dog, dead,  
Thrown into the mud to rot.  
My hair's askew and falling loose;  
Even the magic pills in my gourd are spilled.*

KUO: What pills? They are goat manure.

LÜ: (sings)

*Turning my head, I can see the Pei-mang Mountain in the distance.*

KUO: He is crazy Taoist monk.

LÜ: (sings)

*He is a fool. I'm a crazy man.*

KUO: (to his wife) Put some more charcoal into the stove.

WIFE: I will.

LÜ: (sings)

*With fire in the stove, do not add any charcoal,  
How many more years can it burn?  
Beat, beat, beat, you beat me motionless.  
Are you afraid that sacred hands might block?*

(Lü blocks Kuo, gets up and speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, follow me, and we will leave this world.

KUO: This priest will not change his mind no matter how I beat him.

LÜ: (sings—tune of K'u-huang-t'ien)

*I'll let you find a new sacrificial table.  
It's better than your fall in the dust by the roadside.  
Because you are thin and forlorn, no one looks after you.  
As soon as you grow up, people would pluck or climb on you  
Had I not held your long limbs.  
Then, over the Tung-t'ing lake, or by the Yang-tze river.  
You would have suffered the blowing of the wind, the scorch  
of the sun, the pressure of snows, the freezing of frost.  
You almost became the wine signpost of the Yüeh-yang Tower.*

KUO: If I were to follow you and leave this human world, what good would it do me?

LÜ: (sings)

*It would make you free and relaxed.*

*But you cuddle yourself with laziness and stupidity.*

(in the tune of Wu-yeh-t'i)

*Worry no more of the palace of Ch'u, home of T'ao and banks  
of the Sui.*

*For I have prepared for you the jade terrace with carved railings.*

*I want you to repent; meditate and work on your merits.*

*Understand the secret of mysteries,*

*Give up the common world,*

*Learn from Yen Tzu-ling, who retired to the fishing beach.*

*Do not bother Chang Tzu-fang<sup>54</sup> burning the Lien-yun Path.*

*Struggle for profit and fame, to become government officials,  
Are only for half a sheet of paper.*

*All would be nothing but a dream.*

(in the tune of San-sha)

*I think if a man can control himself he would suffer no trouble.*

*If his conscience is clear, he could sleep in peace.*

*Even in one hundred years how much leisure can one get?*

*Can one do more than wring his hands?*

*Before the spark's flare dies?*

*Turn back to take a look.*

*By the time the sun sets in the mulberries and elms and the evening scenery fades.*

*Then one would say, "a tired bird knows to return home."*

(in the tune Erh-sha)

*Who could, like me, build a hut by a quiet ravine?*

*Wrapped in a piece of hemp cloth, I sit at the sacred altar.*

*In the end I have avoided the right and wrong, forget honor  
and insult, without getting involved.*

*Unlike you, getting involved in the human battle field,*

*As a tea clerk, toil and work all day long.*

(laughs, then speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, awaken now, before it is too late. (continues to sing)

*I laugh—you're foolish and stubborn.*

*You have wasted my effort—trying to deliver you two or  
three times.*

*Can't you ever awaken, either in Heaven or on earth?*

(speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, follow me, leave this world.

KUO: If I were to follow you, to leave this world, what Taoist companions do you have over there?

LÜ: If you follow me and leave this world, I will show you two of my Taoist companions.

KUO: Which two?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Huang-chung-wei*)  
*I will let you see Lan Ts'ai-ho, who dances in the spring wind  
 with his six Yün-yang boards.*

KUO: And the other one?

Lü: *I will let you see Han Hsiang-tzu, who could make peonies bloom  
 through the winter snow.*<sup>55</sup>  
*Hurry, turn back now, without delay.*

KUO: Sir, I will see you off down the stairs.

LÜ: (continues singing)  
*Coming down the river tower, near the waterfront.*  
 (speaks) Alas! Hsü Shen-weng could not wait. He has left.

KUO: Where?

LÜ: (sings)  
*Start the boat. Hoist the sail.*  
 (Speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, come aboard.

KUO: You go first.

LÜ: I'll go first.

KUO: (pushes Lü) I will push this goddamn man into the water.

LÜ: (speaks) This fool almost pushed me into the water. (sings)  
*I'll go to the P'eng-lai Palace and Fang-chang Mountain,*<sup>56</sup>  
*Those who would see me off don't have to go west to Yang-  
 kuan.*<sup>57</sup>  
*And I don't have to stare at Wei-ch'eng with tears in his eyes.*<sup>58</sup>  
 (Lü exits)

KUO: He has gone. I have been bothered by him the whole day. I haven't sold any tea. It's getting late. I'd better put the boiler away and close my shop. (to his wife) Let's go home.  
 (both exit)

INTERLUDE

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KUO MA-ERH: (enters) Ever since I met that Taoist, whenever I close my eyes I would hear him say, "Kuo Ma-erh, follow me, leave this world." How can I leave this world. I no longer sell tea, now I sell

wine under the Yueh-yang Tower. I have to buy some appetizers. I'd better not go down the main street. I'm afraid I'll meet that crazy Taoist again. I'll take this alley.

LÜ: (enters, dashing toward Kuo) Kuo Ma-erh, where are you going?

KUO: (to the audience) I tried to avoid him, but I bumped right into him. (to Lü) Sir, I no longer sell tea under the Yueh-yang Tower. I now sell wine. I would like to invite you to drink three cups of wine in my shop.

LÜ: So you invite me to drink three cups of wine. I've gotten drunk twice before on that tower. Now you invite me again—to get drunk once more.  
 (they walk together toward Kuo's shop)

KUO: Come up the stairs. Sir, have a bowl of wine.

LÜ: You have one too.

KUO: Sir, have another bowl.

LÜ: You, too.

KUO: I'll take you downstairs.

LÜ: Kuo Ma-erh, follow me. Leave this world.

KUO: How can I leave this world? If I were to leave, what shall I do with my wife?

LÜ: Kill your wife.

KUO: Kill my wife? But, then, who would pay for her life?

LÜ: Why, you would pay for her life.

KUO: That is just fine! But, even if I wished to kill my wife, I couldn't. I have no weapon.

LÜ: Isn't this a fine sword? (shows Kuo his sword)

KUO: Sir, this is a fine sword.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Shang-hua-shih*, in the mode of *Hsien-lü*)  
*This sword had accompanied me thirty years wandering on the  
 sea.*  
*Each night its brilliance shone upon the north star.*  
 (speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, I will give you this sword, but I want a gift in return.

KUO: What sort of gift do you want?

LÜ: (continues singing)  
*I want a woman's bloody head.*

KUO: That sounds easy for you!

LÜ: (still singing)  
*For you—a flower by the wall, a willow by the roadside.*

(speaks) If it weren't for you two . . . (sings again)

*Who would be willing to get drunk three times on the Yueh-yang Tower?*

(exits)

KUO: This man must be a crazy Taoist monk. For no reason at all, he gave me a sword and told me to kill my wife. How could I ever do it? Well, I might as well take this sword home. It'll be very useful for cutting vegetables. Again I've wasted a whole day on account of him. I might as well go home.

(exits)

### ACT III

KUO: (enters) The Taoist priest has given me a sword, and I took it home. By midnight, someone had killed my wife. I don't know who did it. On the sword is written . . .

*Visiting North Sea in the morning, rest at the Ts'ang-wu at night.<sup>59</sup>*

*With my sword sheathed in my sleeve, my courage surges high. I was drunk three times at Yueh-yang Tower, yet no one recognized me.*

*Chanting aloud, I soar above the Tung-t'ing Lake.*

And on the back of the sword is written, "by Tung-pin." I'm going to report this to the head of the street before I report to the officials. (walks a few steps) Here is the home of the head of the street. Let me try to rouse him. (calls) Is the head of the street home?

HEAD OF STREET: (enters) Who is at the door? I'd better open the door and look. (looks around)

KUO: Head of the street, greetings. Yesterday a crazy Taoist, whose name is not known, gave me a sword, and I took it home. By midnight someone killed my wife. Inscribed on the sword are those lines:

*I visit the North Sea in the morning, rest at the Ts'ang-wu at night.*

*With my sword sheathed in my sleeve, my courage soars high.*

*I was drunk three times at Yueh-yang, yet no one recognized me.*

*Chanting aloud, I soar above the Tung-t'ing Lake.*

And on the back of the sword is written, "by Tung-pin."

HEAD OF STREET: Was your wife murdered?

KUO: Yes, she was murdered.

HEAD OF STREET: So she was murdered. What damn business has it got to do with me?

KUO: You are in charge of this street. If I don't report to you, to whom should I speak?

HEAD OF STREET: Ma-erh, let me see. You said that "by Tung-pin" was inscribed on the sword. Therefore, this sword is made of *pin* iron from some cave.<sup>60</sup> That's the guy who killed your wife.

KUO: I don't think so.

HEAD OF STREET: If not, then what would you say?

KUO: I think you and I should report this to the local official and ask him for a warrant authorizing us to search the street for that Taoist monk. Whoever chants those lines would be the one who murdered my wife.

HEAD OF STREET: You're right.

KUO: (reciting a doggerel)

*I will ferret him out,*

*Before the officials can arrest him.*

HEAD OF STREET: (also reciting a doggerel)

*Even if we find that Taoist,*

*He can't replace your ugly wife. (both exit)*

LU: (enters with drum and drumsticks; recites a verse)

*Arrayed in a straw raincoat and wearing a bamboo-leaf hat,*

*I am afraid to search for my Taoist friend.*

*With my sticks and the drum in hand.*

*Leisurely I look at the Central Plain.*

*Beat a while, rest a while,*

*I'll refresh people's ears and eyes.*

*Read a while, sing a while,*

*I'll moisten my own throat.*

*Enter wine shops and visit tea houses.*

*I have to tie firmly the horse of ideas.<sup>61</sup>*

*Trampling over the red dust, climbing the Purple Terrace,*

*I fasten tightly my monkey's mind.<sup>62</sup>*

*Riding a colorful crane, I'll fly to the west of the Western Heaven;*

*Harnessing a black ox, I'll travel to the east of the Eastern Sea.  
 The divine fungus, the longevity grass both promise twenty or  
 thirty years of life;  
 The Po-lo trees and the Fu-sang trees can live eight or nien  
 thousand years.  
 Over the white jade towers and golden palaces, linger the clouds  
 and smokes.  
 In the Tzu-wei Palace, Ch'ing-hsiao Palace, the jade ornamented  
 girls swing gracefully.  
 The parrot and phoenix cup are filled with the Jade Liquid.  
 The dragon and lion burners spill fragrant smokes.  
 Some blow, some sing, the fairy lads clap their hands,  
 The players play the dancers dance, Liu Kun takes the lead.<sup>63</sup>  
 To be a boy or to be a girl, one would suffer like being boiled  
 or fried.  
 For chickens or ducks, they are either fried or roasted.  
 At the time of coming, a person has peaceful eyebrows and  
 expectant eyes;  
 At the time of leaving one ends up with only empty hands and  
 fists.  
 I would advise both the wise and the dumb to return to the  
 great Tao.  
 The young and the old could jointly tie up thier good Karma.  
 On the human body, there are obviously four hundred and  
 four deseases,  
 But in my heart there are thirty-three hidden heavens.  
 Neither the wind nor the rain bothers me; how could I know  
 the hot and cold seasons?  
 East, I don't worry about, west, I don't worry about, I'd  
 become an immortal.  
 When a boat reaches the heart of a river, hold the rudders firm;  
 When an arrow is mounted on a bow, release it with care.  
 If in this life I don't give others conveniences,  
 Then a mere chanting of "Amida Buddha" will be in vain.  
 (sings—tune of Tuan-cheng-hao, in the mode of Cheng-kung)  
 I advise you, mortals, do not strive with temper.  
 Return while there is time,  
 Heaven and earth are to be used as a huge quilt.  
 Just sleep as Ch'en T'uan did.*

(in the tune of Kun-hsiu-ch'iu)  
*I wear a piece of plain clothes,  
 Eat no cooked food;  
 Though plain, there is taste in plainness.  
 I am not sitting at the edge of a cliff to contemplate.  
 If people ask me my name or where my home is,  
 It is very easy for them to find me.  
 Just prepare a wine feast, with Chung-li facing me.  
 I'm afraid that you like a dumb deer, have been trapped by a  
 pack of tigers and wolves.  
 A sea of right and wrong has drowned Ma-erh dead.  
 I'd treat you—a tree felled by wind.*  
 KUO: (enters with Head of Street) Isn't that the Taoist coming?  
 Let's listen to what he is citing.  
 LÜ: (chants)  
*Visit North Sea in the morning, rest at Ts'ang-wu at night.  
 With sword sheathed in sleeve, my courage surges high.  
 I was drunk three times at Yüeh-yang, yet no one recognized  
 me.  
 Chanting aloud, I soar above the Tung-t'ing Lake.*  
 KUO: That is enough! You murdered my wife. Where are you going?  
 (pulls Lü)  
 LÜ: (sings—tune of T'ang-hsiu-ts'ai)  
*You pull your master on the street,  
 This is the strength I advise my disciples to cultivate.*  
 KUO: (beating Lü) I will beat you like a disciple.  
 LÜ: You cannot beat me.  
 (sings again)  
*Beat, beat, beat.  
 To forgive people in this life is not foolish;  
 Heaven has given birth to the naughty fellow.  
 Who eats so strong.*  
 (He frees himself from Kuo's hands; sings—tune of Kun-hsiu-ch'iu)  
*Let me go in peace.  
 Why did I not annoy you?  
 My drum beaters are called "temper saver."  
 Wherever I go, this dumb drum always follows me.  
 "Dumb" means unawakened.  
 You willow! Today you are as crisp as onion,*

*Once your breath does not come back,  
You would be like fallen catkins stuck to mud.  
While in my cavern, the cranes arrive early before the guest.  
When autumn is over, leaves fall late, without frost.  
Which is more advantageous?*

(speaks) Ma-erh, why do you stop me right in the middle of the street?

KUO: Why did you murder my wife? Now I have found you, what do you have to say?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Tao-tao-ling*)

*Because of that old thing,  
In the mirror you have added white hair.  
Being boiled like an iron pot, you have a bellyful of steamy sighs.  
You could push your old master into a barren countryside.  
But that lewd woman of yours slept in other's arms.  
If we don't kill her, what then?  
If we don't kill her, what then?  
How can anyone be like me, dream of Duke Chou, and sleep  
'til the sun is high?*

KUO: You can't deny it. I'm going to sue you.

LÜ: With what are you going to arrest me?

KUO: With this warrant.

LÜ: Where is your warrant? (Kuo shows him the document) Read it to me.

KUO: (reads) "By the order of the officials of the district: arrest immediately a *murderer*, a certain Taoist monk." Isn't that you?

LÜ: Let me see it. (Kuo gives him the document)

LÜ: (making magic gestures) Quick, (the document changes) Read it again. Then you can arrest whoever is named there.

KUO: All right. Whoever it is should be arrested. (reads) "By the order of the officials of the district: arrest a murderer named Kuo Ma-erh." (frightened) How come my name is written on this document?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *T'ang-hsiu-t s'ai*)

*I don't believe the judge dares to convict anyone.  
Because you are so foolish; I am here to get you.  
I have a hundred-word monument to control my mind;  
But you, a stupid, stubborn thing; how could you get there?*  
(in the tune of *Kun-hsiu-ch'iu*)  
*At my place the white clouds float at will.*

*Divine cranes follow me around.*

*My cavern door is never closed.*

KUO: Sir, I am afraid my wife is there?

LÜ: (sings)

*Don't you every mention that you have a virtuous wife at home.*

KUO: Teacher, what is that place?

LÜ: (speaks) Ma-erh, take a look. (again sings)

*On this side stands the loom of the Weaving Girl.<sup>64</sup>*

*On the other side is the cave of the Jade Maiden.<sup>65</sup>*

*How can you dispose of wine, sex, money and temper?*

*Did those who seen you off say that you should feel peace at heart?*

*You are a thousand-year-old willow tree by the road of the Red Dust,<sup>66</sup>*

*You saw a plum tree in front of the White Jade Hall.*

HO: (enters)

KUO: (sees her) Isn't that my wife?

LÜ: (making magic gestures) Quickly! (Ho exits)

KUO: Sir, where did my wife go? She was here just a moment ago. How come she disappeared?

LÜ: (sings)

*How could you understand the mystery of this?*

KUO: I was not so sure that you would kill my beautiful wife. Call her out and return her to me.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Pan-tu-shu*)

*You say your wife is pretty, with natural beauty.*

*You also say that you are a couple as young as bamboo shoots.*

*Indeed, who sent you two to match as a couple?*

*Today who separates your fragrant joint-roots?*

*Why can't you understand the mystery of this?*

*You still believe you are a young husband and wife.*

KUO: You have hidden my wife. How can I let you go free? (to Head of Street) Head of Street, help me arrest him to see the officials.

HEAD OF STREET: The warrant indeed orders me to help you arrest the Taoist monk, I'll help, I'll help you.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Hsiao-ho-shang*)

*I, I, I, I want your wife? What for?*

*You, you, you arrest me? What for?*

*How dare, how dare, how dare you rely on the authority of*



*this document?*

*Look, look, look where your wife is?*

*Who, who, who is the murderer?*

*Come, come, come with me to see the officials.*

KUO: Head of Street, a moment ago you also saw my wife. You can be my witness when we see the officials.

HEAD OF STREET: You don't have to wait for him to finish singing another song. Just arrest him to see the officials.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Sha-wei*)

*Don't you ever wish that your branch would betray the presence of spring.*

*I want you to follow me to the Three Islands, without getting lost.*

*Saying farewell to the waters of Hsiao, Hsiang and the Tung-r'ing Lake.*

*I'll return to attend the divine festival of P'an-t'ao.*

*The wine bubbles with heavenly fragrance, its taste is beautiful.*

*The music plays in the clouds; its tune is exotic.*

*Chiang-shu and Ch'ing-ch'in<sup>67</sup> stand there side by side.*

*Each is lovely and beautiful, has no match in the human world.*

*I advise you, pack up your worldly desires . . . .*

*You should not be bound by your charming wife.*

KUO: You've kidnapped my wife. I can't let you go free. (to Head of Street) Head of street, help me to take this man to see the officials. Somehow I want my wife returned to me.

LÜ: This dumb man is stupid and muddled, he can't wake up. I have wasted my three visits to the Yüeh-yang Tower. (again sings)

*This man, with a dumb brain and a stupid head cannot be convinced to repent.*

*I've traveled nine thousand miles in the Red Dust in vain!*

(frees himself from Kuo and exits)

KUO: Fine! Two strong young men could not get hold of a Taoist monk. Well, I don't care where he went . . . I will chase him.

HEAD OF STREET: There are two roads here. You go that way and I'll go this way. We'll trap him from both directions. I don't think he can fly to Heaven.

KUO: You're right. Let's chase him.

(both exit.)

ACT IV

LÜ: (enters, beating on his drum; recites a poem)

*Who could rank with the Taoist Lo-fu?*

*He wore grass clothes, ate vegetables, and despised kings and dukes.*

*The time of the human world, he cares not.*

*In the universe of his wine pot, he is free.*

*While checking a chess game, the river moon dawns.*

*With a long roar, Hai-men changes to autumn.*

*Finishing drinking, he turns his head and chats on his way home.*

*With a smile, he points at the edge of the sky.*

KUO: (enters and grabs Lü) I've caught you! This time I will not let you get away. We will go to the officials together.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Hsin-shui-ling*, in the mode of *Shuang-tiao*)

*This murderer must be a sacred charm to protect you.*

*He asked you to be an immortal, yet you don't wake up.*

*You regard me as a cloth wine bag.*

*Please look into this drug gourd . . .*

*I am not a country bum.*

*I also have three volumes of heavenly books.*

KUO: What heavenly books? Could they be your alms ledger?

LÜ: (sings again)

*Don't mistake them for alms ledger.*

KUO: (again dragging Lü) Let's go see the officials.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Chu-ma-t'ing*)

*You have torn my robe sleeves.*

*You might miss the chance of brewing musk-fragrant tea with dew.*

*If you hold my silk belt tight,*

*How could I pawn my lute for wine in the city of phoenix in spring?*

*And do find money cage in the Chien-hsi villa?*

*Go to P'eng-lai, the divine island, instead of home.*

KUO: Where are you going? You have killed someone.

LÜ: (continues singing)

*If I owe someone some debt.*

*Then I could not be found for my place is covered by white clouds.*

KUO: But my wife, where did you take her?

LÜ: She is not your wife.

KUO: Then is she your wife?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Ch'en-tsui-tung-feng*)

*She is my destined companion since childhood.  
And as husband and wife, since we were kids.  
Oh, you fool! She is my wife.  
Can't you understand?*

KUO: You are not a man of this world. How can you have a wife?

LÜ: (continues singing)

*A Taoist monk should be matched with a Taoist nun.  
(speaks) You dumb fellow.  
(sings again)*

*We are a couple—my name is Lü.<sup>68</sup>*

KUO: Don't try to argue with me. I am going to sue you.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Ch'i-ti-hsiang*)

*Go ahead, sue me at the highest authorities.  
"Don't you say, "Even one would wear out one's iron shoes,  
he could not find."  
Come to think of it, it would not take any time at all.  
You have just eaten half a bowl of spittle, in vain.*

(in the tune of *Mei-hua-chiu*)

*I think you are but a vulgar person.  
Who cannot tell the wise from the fool.  
You are a stupid person, a peasant.  
Don't you think I have evil magic tricks?  
I am holding the nose-bar myself.  
You are pulling my cloth robe.  
I am anxious to return.  
But you bother your teacher on the roads.  
Why I don't say anything.  
Think for yourself.*

(sing—tune of *Shou-chiang-nan*)

*I want to chant aloud flying over the Tung-t'ing Lake.  
You talk about honey and cream in your tea shops.*

(an official and his clerks enter)

Lü: (again singing)

*With his beard shaped like a round fan.*

*He is even crueller than the Tao-lu.<sup>69</sup>*

*No wonder the Taoist Ho Hsien-ku' was frightened.*

KUO: (to the officials) This Taoist monk has murdered my wife. Your honor, be my judge.

OFFICIAL: (to Lü) Hey, you Taoist—how dare you kill someone in broad daylight.

LÜ: Kuo Ma-erh accuses me of killing his wife. But his wife did not die.

OFFICIAL: Then where is Ho La-mei? Call her. Let me see her.

LÜ: She is right here. (making magic gestures) Quickly! (Ho enters)

WOMAN: Master, did you call? What can I do for you?

LÜ: Isn't this his wife?

OFFICIAL: (to Kuo) Kuo Ma-erh, you have accused this Taoist monk of killing your wife. Now your wife is here. Since you have wrongly accused an innocent man, you must suffer the same consequences. (to his clerks) Men, take him out and kill him. (the official and his group exit)

KUO: What shall I do?

LÜ: Kuo Ma-erh, you have accused me of killing your wife. Now your wife is here. As one who has wrongly accused an innocent person, you suffer the same consequences. Now they will kill you. Do you want me to save you?

KUO: You know I want you to save me.

(Chung-li and the other immortals enter)

CHUNG-LI: (to Kuo) Kuo Ma-erh, do you know who I am?

KUO: How come the official disappeared and his attendants also disappeared? And here is a group of immortals. Why! I have come to the Five Dragon Altar by mistake?

LÜ: Kuo-Ma-erh, do you recognize these immortals?

KUO: Who is the official with the beard?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Shui-hsien-tzu*)

*This is Chung-li of the Han, who has charge of the register of all immortals.*

KUO: This one holds a cane in his hand. Is he a clerk?

LÜ: (sings)

*This is Li, who uses an iron crutch and whose hair is never combed.*

KUO: Oh, the one wearing a green robe, is he not an official?

LÜ: (again singing)

*This is Lan Ts'ai-ho, whose musical boards are made of Yün-yang wood:*

KUO: Who is this old man?

LÜ: (sings)

*This is Chang-kuo-lao, who rides the donkey backward over the Chao-chou-bridge.*

KUO: Who is this one carrying a gourd on his back?

Lü: (sings)

*This is Hsü-Shen-weng, who carries a drug gourd on his back.*

KUO: Who is this who carries a flower basket?

LÜ: (sings)

*This is Han Hsiang-tzu, Han Yü's nephew.<sup>70</sup>*

KUO: Who is this one wearing a red robe?

LÜ: (sings)

*This is Ts'ao Kuo-chiu, a relative of the Sung Court.*

KUO: May I dare ask you, Sir, who are you?

LÜ: Your humble Taoist has the surname Lü, single name Yen, with a courtesy name, Tung-pin. My Taoist title is Ch'un-yang-tzu.  
(sings again)

*I am Lü Ch'un-yang, who loves to play a dumb drum.*

KUO: Now I see. Thirty years ago I was the old willow tree under the Yüeh-yang Tower. My wife, Ho La-mei, was the white plum tree in front of the Tu-K'ang Temple. We were born to the human world. Later we were married. If you, Master, had not delivered us We would not be able to return to the Way. I bow to you, my teacher. Your disciple has awakened.

CHUNG-LI: Since you are both awakened, listen to my instructions.  
(cites a verse)

*Since you were creatures made on earth and wood of the mortal world,*

*I sent Tung-pin to deliver you.*

*Now your deeds are completed; your merits accomplished.*

*You will ride the divine cranes on the road to immortality.*

(Kuo and the woman bow in gratitude)

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Shou-wei*)

*I have come to the Yüeh-yang Tower three times  
To show you the road to the Purple Dwelling.<sup>71</sup>*

*Now you know the days and the months of the mortals are long.*

*You no longer suffer the miseries of knives and axes of the human world.*

Title: Lü Tung-pin was drunk three times on the Yüeh-yang Tower.

Theme: Kuo Shang-tsao and his wife entered the Ling-hsü Hall.

THE END

## NOTES:

1. The P'an-t'ao Festival, in the Taoist legend, is one honoring the birthday of Queen Mother of the West, the highest and most powerful deity of Taoism.
2. The T'ai-hua Mountain, known as the Hua Mountain, is one of the five holy mountains in China, located in modern Shensi Province. Its highest peak, shaped like palm, is called the Fairy's Palm.
3. The five Lis and three Changs were apparently famous ink makers in old China.
4. The "Dragon's Tail" was the name of a famous ink-slab made in Anhwei Province.
5. Kao Huan was the founder of the Northern Ch'i Dynasty. Once he built a high tower so that he could keep himself cool there in the summer.
6. Wang Ts'an was a famous poet of the Wei Dynasty. Once he went to take up a post in a different district. When he stayed there too long, he became homesick. So he wrote a prose-poem expressing his nostalgia, and its title was "Teng lou fu", or "Climbing up the Tower."
7. The Jade Emperor was regarded the highest deity in the Taoist Belief.
8. The "Spring of Tung-t'ing" was a name of a famous wine.
9. "The season when chickens are fat and crabs are strong" usually refers to the autumn.
10. T'ao Yuan-liang was another name of the famous poet T'ao Ch'ien of 5th century China, who loved wine and chrysanthemums.
11. When crabs are fully grown and pregnant with yellow matter, their navels would become round.
12. Po-yang is another name of Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism.
13. Ch'ang-fang had a family name Fei. He was a man of the Han Dynasty. When he served as a magistrate in a small district, he met an old man who sold wine at the market-place by hanging his wine-pot upside down. When the market was over, the old man jumped into his wine-pot and disappeared. The old man was a Taoist immortal. Fei Ch'ang-fang later gave up his political career, and learned the secret of the Tao and the trick of pot hanging from the old man.
14. The Silver River here refers to the Milky Way, or Heavenly River in Chinese legend.
15. The story related to a certain man named T'ao Ku who once obtained a maid from a Tang household. On a winter day T'ao melted snow and brewed some tea with the fresh snow water. Thinking that he had a rather unusual enjoyment, T'ao asked the maid whether her former master had anything like it. The maid answered, "How could those boorish people have anything like this? Only they lived in their golden-lined curtains, singing songs and drinking lamb wine. That's all." Having heard this, T'ao remained silent for a long time.
16. Tung-p'o is of course another name of Su Shih, the well-known Sung poet. One of his close friends was a monk named Fo-yin. There were so many stories concerning these two men. At times they tried to out-smart the other either in composing poems or in making wise-cracks.

17. Wei Yeh and P'an Lang were two poets of the Sung Dynasty. Wei was a man of Shensi (modern Shensi Province), and near the city of Shen in its suburb he built a grass hut to live in, and thus he gave up all his ambitions of seeking fame and wealth, but spent his time writing poems. When Emperor T'ai-tung of the Sung Court heard of his reputation and offered him a high position in the government, Wei refused. P'an Lang was a native of Taming (in modern Hopei Province). He called himself "the Wanderer". When he lived in a city of Lo-yang (near the Sung Capital, K'ai-feng, in present Honan Province) he made a living by selling herb medicine. He also loved poetry. When Emperor T'ai-tung heard of his reputation, he offered him a high position on his Court, and granted him an honorary degree. But later on, this honorary degree was retracted because of P'an's arrogant and irresponsible conducts. The story of Wei's meeting with P'an on his mule is nowhere recorded.
18. Wang Hung was a man of the Chin Dynasty (ca. 3rd century). He heard about the great poet, Tao Ch'ien, and wished to meet him very much. Finding no way to introduce himself to Tao from a distance. One day Wang heard that T'ao was going to the mountains. He brought food and wine and awaited T'ao by the roadside. When T'ao came by, Wang Hung presented him with wine and food. T'ao drank the wine, ate the food, but didn't even to bother to ask the name of his benefactor.
19. According to one of the legends concerning the great poet T'ang, Li Po (ca. 700-760). He became drunk one day when he was riding in a boat on the river. He saw the bright moon reflected in the river, and decided to fish it. He jumped into the river and got himself drowned.
20. Liu Ling was a man of the Chin Dynasty, and a member of the famed Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove. He was a poet as well as a wine lover. He loved the wine so much that he wrote a piece of poetry praising the virtues of wine. He usually rode in a deer-drawn carriage with a wine pot in hand. He ordered a man to follow him behind with a shovel. He instructed the man, "If I should get drunk and die, then dig a grave and bury me there wherever it may be."
21. P'ing-k'ang Lane was located in the northern region of Ch'ang-an, Capital of the T'ang Court. It was known as the district of sing-song-girls. Since it was located in the northern part, the lane was also known as Pei-li, or North Lane. It was reported that when young scholars passed their palace examinations, they would visit this lane to celebrate.
- 21a. Here the idea behind the sentence suggests the ambitions of Confucian scholars for fame and merit which cannot be achieved unless they could pass the examinations. Thus the ink-stick was a very necessary item used by scholars more than anybody else.
22. The expression "Half a sheet of paper" is probably referring to the paper used by scholars in the examinations.
23. The three Hsiangs here refer to the three districts in Huan (now Hunan Province) all named with the character 'hsiang', which, incidently, was the ancient name for the entire area, the three districts were Hsiang-hsiang, Hsiang-t'an and Hsiang-yin.

24. According to legend, Lü Tung-pin himself was converted to Taoism when he was made to dream in which he experienced all the experiences in life, including happiness, sorrow, departures, re-unions, success, failure, glories and humiliation. When he finally woke up, the yellow millet in the pot was still not cooked.
25. Ya-fu refers to Chao Ya-fu, a famous general of the Han Dynasty. Once he stationed on the border region known as Hsi-liu, meaning "Thin Willows". Thus he called his garrison Liu-ying, or Willow Garrison. So the willow tree was involved with Ya-fu.
26. Emperor Yang here refers to the infamous play-boy of the Sui Dynasty. He was a man of lust and luxury. During his reign, he ordered the Grand Canal dug out so that he could ride his dragon boat to visit the beautiful south. On the two banks of the canal, willows were planted for providing shade. Thus the willow trees were involved with Emperor Yang.
27. King Ling of the State of Ch'u was a man of lust who was fond of young girls with slender waists. Consequently, the palace maids, in order to gain favor from the king, starved themselves so that they could have slender waists. The young beauties thin waisted thus were traditionally described as having "willow waists." Thus the willow was involved with the Ch'u king.
28. Ibid.
29. The long pavilion was a place where friends and relatives would see their dear ones off. It was usually built outside a city about ten Chinese miles. Therefore, it was also called "Ten Mile Long Pavilion" in the olden days. Willows were usually planted and were used for two purposes; travelers would tie their horses on a tree while say good-by to their kinfolks. Those who see the traveler off could break a willow branch and give it to the traveler as a good-will gesture.
30. Pa-ling Bridge was located outside the city of Chang-an, Capital of T'ang. It was a place where people would say good-by to one another when some one left the Capital. According to custom, people who saw some one off at the bridge he would break a willow branch and give it to the person leaving as a token of good wishes. If the willow branches were thrown on the ground and were trampled by horses and carriages, they were not valuable. Thus the allusion implies bad willows.
31. Chang-t'ai was the name of a street in Chang-an, Capital of T'ang Court. A young scholar by the name of Han Hung met a young sing-song girl there whose family name was Liu, meaning "willow" and who promised to marry Han. However for three years after their departure, Han Hung could not have his promise fulfilled. To express his feelings for the girl. Han wrote a poem with these lines:
 

Oh, the willow of Chang-t'ai, the willow of Chang-t'ai!  
In the old days you were fresh, green and beautiful.  
But are you still there now . . . .

Thus the illusion here implies beautiful young girls.
32. Here the expression "Lü cliff" has a double meaning. The Taoist Lü Tung-pin's name was Lü Yen, and the character "yen" means "cliff" in Chinese.
33. Chien-hsi was a place in Fukien (province) famous for its tea.

34. Lang-yüan was a legendary place where fairies lived.
35. The purple robe and white gown were symbolic of the official class in olden days.
36. Golden Pill, or Golden Elixir, is the magic drug which the Taoists tried to cultivate in order to achieve immortality.
37. Black temples and rouge faces imply men of youth. In Taoism, it is believed that when a man achieves immortality, he would remain a permanent youth.
38. Hsü Fu was a man of the Ch'in Dynasty, the first empire of China. Emperor Shih-huang of Ch'in was obsessed with the desire of attaining immortality. He had heard that a certain fungus, when consumed, would help a man reach immortality. But it could only be found in the Eastern Seas. So he commissioned Hsü Fu to go to Eastern Seas to gather the divine fungus.
39. Ch'en T'uan was a man of the Sung Dynasty. He gave up his ambitions of attaining fame and wealth in governmental service. He went to Mount Hua (Hua Shan), one of the sacred mountains of China, trying to achieve the Tao, and thus became a recluse.
40. Lao-tzu, founder of Taoism as the legend says, went and passed through Han-ku Pass, and disappeared. It was at the Han-ku Pass that Lao-tzu left his famous work, the *Tao-Te Ching*.
41. Kuo Shang-tso is another name of Kuo Ma-erh.
42. Ch'en Fan was a man of the Eastern Han time. He seldom kept his visitors overnight with the exception of one friend, named Hsü Ch'ih. Whenever Hsü came to pay him a visit, Ch'en would lower a couch (bed) specifically reserved for Hsü and kept him overnight. Thus the expression "lower one's bed" has become a synonym of hospitality.
43. Ts'ao Ts'ao was the prime minister of the State of Wei during the Three Kingdoms period in ancient China. Once he fought a war with allied forces of Wu and Shu states. Defeated he had a narrow escape on the Hua-jung Path.
44. King Pa of Western Ch'u, fought with Liu Pang for the empire of the Ch'in Dynasty, though he was a strong man who once raised a tripod of one thousand catties (about a thousand pounds) he lost his fight, and committed suicide on the bank of the River Wu.
45. There are many stories told about the scoundrel and the prime minister of the State of Wei during the Three Kingdoms period (about third century), Ts'ao Ts'ao. The expression that he "slept on a round pillow at night" suggests that it kept him alert, for round pillows would make people alert in their sleep; the expression that he "gave poisoned wine to others" perhaps hints that Ts'ao Ts'ao had murdered many people when he was in power.
46. In the Chinese language, the surname Lü is made of two component parts, all meaning "mouth." On top it is a small-sized "mouth," and at the bottom, it is a large-sized "mouth." Thus the pun is made here.
47. The Chinese character "p'in" means "quality," it is made up with three but similar parts, all meaning "mouth." Thus the pun.
48. In Chinese language the expression for "goat's fat" and that for "willow trees' sap" sound alike, namely, *yang-chih*. Thus the pun is made here.
49. The Chinese expression for "dry food" is *Kan-liang*. The expression for "dry

Beam" is also kan-liang. The two sound alike, though the characters are different. Thus the pun is made here.

50. Since in his previous life Kuo Ma-erh was a willow tree, thus Lü Tung-pin made this remark. For when a willow tree is cut up, it could produce plenty of boards.
51. The Chinese word for "way" is *tao*, which is also the ultimate truth in Taoism, namely, the *Tao*.
52. The cuckoo-bird cup was a kind of tea cup with a cuckoo-bird design.
53. As explained before, the Chinese word *tao* means the Way, the road. Since Kuo Ma-erh was a willow tree in his previous life, he was left to the roadside for he failed to obtain the *tao* (road).
54. Chang Tzu-fang whose given name was Liang, helped Liu Pang, later Emperor Kao-tsu of the Han, to overthrow the Ch'in empire and founded the Han. But when the Han Court was firmly established, Chang Liang retired from the government office and devoted himself to the pursuit of the *TAO*.
55. Both Lan Ts'ai-ho and Han Hsiang-tzu were members of the Eight Immortals.
56. P'eng-lai palace and Fang-chang Mountain were legendary places in Taoist religion.
57. Yang-kuan was considered the furthest point to the west, and therefore, the last outpost where people could bid farewell to those who would go beyond Yang-kuan to the barbarian region.
58. Wei-ch'eng was located in Shensi (modern Shensi Province). It is usually cited in poems, especially poems on departure.
59. T'sang-wu, in Taoism, was a legendary mountain, while North Sea a legendary sea. North Sea was located in the far north. Ts'ang-wu was located in the south. The two form the boundaries of the world. Thus only an immortal could visit North Sea in the morning, and take a rest at Ts'ang-wu by night.
60. Lü's name, Tung-pin, separately means "cave" and "pin iron." Thus the explanation here.
61. In Buddhism as well as in Taoism, human ideas or intentions are usually compared to a horse, always jumping and galloping, difficult to control; and human hearts or desires are compared to monkeys, always moving and changing, very difficult to tame.
62. Ibid.
63. Informatin on Liu Kun is not known. It seems that he was a good dancer.
64. The Weaving Girl, in Chinese legends, is a star in Heaven. She was the daughter of Queen Mother of the West, the highest deity in Taoism. She descended to the human world and married a cowherd. When it was time for her to go back to heaven, she left her husband and two children behind. When the cowherd found out, he chased after her. When he was about to catch up to her, the Queen Mother appeared and interfered, unwilling to let the two lovers meet again, the Queen Mother put a river (the Heavenly River to the Chinese, or the Milky Way to the West) between them. Thus the two stars, the Weaving Girl and the Cowherd, could be seen on either bank of the river.
65. The Jade Maiden and the Golden Lad were usually mentioned together in

Chinese fairy -tales. They were believed to be the pages serving the Jade Emperor in Heaven.

66. Red Dust in Chinese literature always alludes to the human world.
67. Both Chiang-shu (Red Tree) and Ch'ing-ch'in (black Lute) were fairies in Taoism.
68. This is another pun involving Chinese expressions and characters. In Chinese a married couple is usually called "two mouths" literally. The family name Lü, as mentioned before, is made of two component parts meaning "mouth." Thus the character Lü can also be interpreted as "two mouths."
69. Tao-lu was an official appointed by the government to take charge of the Taoist affairs.
70. Han Yü was a great statesman and man of letters of the T'ang Dynasty.
71. Purple Dwelling (or residence) refers to the dwelling place of a fairy and immortal.