

Manly Palmer Hall

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

*The way of heaven, and other fantasies told in the
manner of the Chinese*

(1946)

TO THE VERY HONORABLE READER

This short collection of stories presents a delicate literary problem. Given the genre offered here, it is first necessary to determine the exact nature of the narratives.

Reflection reveals certain facts that require careful attention.

The following stories are not fables because they often relate to animals humanized in their moral or intellectual qualities. It would be equally untrue to connect these writings with myths, since mythology refers to divine beings and the behavior of these beings as preserved in the religious histories of antiquity. It would also be inappropriate to refer to these works as legends, since they record events involving legendary heroes, or folklore that, by tradition, is associated with unusual places and circumstances.

Therefore, the cause of complete honesty demands the selection of a term that in no way violates literary ethics. It would seem that the word "fantasy" fits the requirements of this situation. A fantasy is a story in which natural and fantastic elements are combined to support the narrative, without strict rules of form or structure. The natural and the supernatural can be mixed according to the author's taste. Fantasy admits no restrictions of time or place, nor does it require integrity beyond its cultural content.

These stories are not translations from Chinese, nor are they merely retellings of ancient tradition. Their purpose is to create an acceptable atmosphere that serves as a stage for the manifestation of spiritual, mystical, and philosophical truths in the Eastern manner.

The people implied in these fantasies are entirely imaginary, and their names were chosen for their euphony. The places described may or may not have existed. This is of no importance. The incidents and circumstances narrated are entirely symbolic, and the times are suitably remote for the purposes of fiction. The China of these fantasies is a magical land to which the mind flees when it is tired of commonplaces.

Yet, for the sake of verisimilitude, it must be noted that in the vaster dimensions where heart and mind are not bound by the prosaic, all these fantasies are strange but

profoundly true: they are the faithful and appropriate record of the history of spiritual dispositions and impulses far more exact in their proportions and more significant in their consequences than the sober records of physical events. Can anything be more entirely authentic than the inner adventures of the soul in search of reality?

MANLY PALMER HALL

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

The Three Dukes of Gobi

In the year of the Iron Bull, the three Dukes of Gobi swore an oath on the yellow sands of their ancestors. The Duke of Loo was ambitious and had ten thousand archers with bamboo bows. Duke Woo was proud and had ten thousand spearmen with red tassels on their pikes. And the Duke of Koo was cruel and had ten thousand cavalry with iron maces.

And the three Dukes made a solemn pact to invade the Middle Kingdom through the North Gate called Foo Chow.

At the Eighth Moon the armies reached the Great Wall and made their proclamations to the Five Provinces and the Emperor of the Middle Kingdom.

It was the forty-seventh year of the Era of Proper Conduct. And the Emperor of China was weak and advanced in years, and had no desire to wage war.

He beat the great drums upon the walls of the Vermillion City to summon the Princes of Great Cathay. And he appeared before them in the Court of the Lions, and the seventy-two Princes covered their faces with their sleeves.

The Emperor of Proper Conduct placed his left foot on the yellow sand and addressed the nobles with these words:

- My Lords of the Middle Kingdom: The three Dukes of the Great Arena have drawn up their armies before the walls, challenging us to come out and fight. What is China's will? The Marquis of Kong, who was the commander of all the armies of the Five Provinces, advanced across the arena. He wore high boots and a large sash, and carried a long sword in his hand. He climbed the steps of the Dragon Pavilion, knelt heavily, and touched the sand with his forehead three times.

- Sovereign Excellency of the Universe, Lord of Lords, King of Kings: I have grown old in the service of the State. For fifty years there was peace in the Middle Kingdom. The armies have returned to their rice fields and harvests. There is no one to defend China. The Lords of Grand Cathay followed the example of the Son of Heaven, returning to a life of peace and study. O mighty Emperor, you rule a kingdom of historians, priests, and painters with long brushes. There is no army.

The Emperor of Proper Conduct remained silent, and the Princes, Marquises, Earls, and Mandarins of the Five Orders did the same, covering their faces with the beaded rims of their bonnets.

Finally, the Emperor spoke: "Today we will go to our Father's House. There we will ask Heaven to guide us in this hour. The seventy-two Lords will bring offerings to the gravestones of their fathers so that we may know the Way of Heaven."

And it came to pass on that night of the Full Moon that the Road of Heaven was strewn with yellow sand, and all the gates along the path were opened so that the Emperor could approach his Father's House.

The Emperor of Proper Conduct removed his robe with its jade bell trim, bathed, and put on a simple white garment, such as a peasant wears. And because he was old, he leaned on a knobby staff, left the Palace by the North Gate, and walked slowly and with great effort along the silent Road of Heaven.

The seventy-two Princes of the Middle Kingdom remained in their homes, each kneeling before the tombstone of his ancestor. The Emperor was alone.

At last, the weary old man reached the steps of the Temple of Heaven. There he knelt before the altars of the Great Bear Constellation and the Five Planetary Emperors.

Then, illuminated only by the silvery ray of the full moon, he entered the inky shadows of the House of Shang-ti, the Emperor of Heaven.

Standing in the middle of the Temple on the Dragon Stone, he raised his eyes to the opaque heights of the varnished house. Before him was the great tablet inscribed with the classic characters Shang-ti, Imperial Heaven.

The Emperor addressed the inscription with these words:

- Eternal Father of the Middle Kingdom, hear my words, which I speak with the voice of the Five Provinces. Three proud and wicked men made a pact to destroy the Middle Kingdom. We have followed the path of righteousness. We have lived in peace. We have studied the classics. How shall we defend ourselves against archers with bamboo bows, and against spearmen with long pikes, and against knights with their iron maces? O Emperor of Heaven, reveal to us the Way of Heaven!

As the old Emperor humbly knelt upon the Dragon Stone, the Imperial Heaven bowed to his words and descended upon the Star Bridge.

When the Emperor of Proper Conduct raised his face toward the Shang-ti inscription, he beheld a throne of clouds supported on the back of a great tortoise.

Red-crested cranes flapped their wings in the air, and the five-clawed dragon wound its way through the mist.

The Five Emperors of the Five Planets guarded the directions.

In the midst of this celestial company, in blue and gold robes, stood Shang-ti with the Phoenix on one shoulder.

The Lord of the Golden Pavilion extended his hand blessing the bowed head of the old Emperor, and said:

The silent path of heaven

"It is written in the hand of Fuhi, Patriarch of the Earthly Emperors, that Heaven is the Fortress of the good man. Hear my words, may the Middle Kingdom not fail. Send for the Governor of the Researchers. He must walk the road that leads to the Dragon Mines. He will find a Scholar with an ancient book. And a painter with a long brush. And he will find a Priest with a rosary of amber beads. These three will be the army of China. And they will go out to fight against the Dukes of Shamo. This is the Way of Heaven." Then the Lord of the Yellow Pavilion gently embraced his son, the Emperor of Proper Conduct, and slowly walked back across the Star Bridge.

He turned around once: "Be strong for a little longer. Obey Heaven. You will return to me very soon through the Phoenix Gate."

On the day of the New Moon, the Dukes of Gobi readied their armies in the Field of Red Poppies. The generals rode shaggy ponies, and the rising sun shone in their golden plumes. The war drums were ready, and musicians with great trumpets waited to make their battle sounds heard.

The Duke of Loo, the Duke of Woo, and the Duke of Koo rode on horseback at the head of their khans. And the Lords of the armies of the Great Arena showed loyalty to the Dukes.

At the second hour of the morning, the Great Gate of the wall slowly opened. And the armies of the three Dukes fell silent, awaiting the legions of the Middle Kingdom.

There was a small road that led from the Gate to Red Poppy Lane. From the shadow of the Great Gate came a peasant's cart, with two enormous wooden wheels. The cart was pulled by a slow, patient ox. And three old men sat on the cart.

After a while the cart stopped in the middle of the Field of Red Poppies, and one of the three old men advanced on foot towards the armies of the Dukes of Gobi.

The ten thousand archers stood still. The ten thousand lancers leaned on their pikes. And the ten thousand knights lowered their maces and waited.

The eldest of the three elders advanced, carrying a book wrapped in yellow silk. He greeted the three dukes according to the most correct tradition.

The Duke of Loo was ambitious and spoke loudly and harshly: "What do you have here, old men, and where are the armies of the Five Provinces? We hope to destroy them."

The Scholar replied, "We are here by the Will of Heaven. We are the army of China: three elders and an ox."

The Duke of Loo laughed long and hard: - What weapons do you have to oppose my ten thousand archers?

The Scholar took out the book wrapped in silk.

- Ka Khan, this is the Book of the Properties of Men compiled by the first Emperor of the Middle Kingdom. It is written in ten thousand characters, each of which corresponds to one of your archers. Fifty centuries ago, this book conquered the Middle Kingdom with an army of good words. Long after you have returned to the dust of the Gobi, this book will govern the Five Provinces.

The old Scholar unwrapped the volume and opened its accordion-like folds.

- This book is a wall around Great Cathay, and against this wall of words the ambitions of small men break like raging waves against a rock.

The Duke of Loo took out his short bow and a bamboo arrow with a heron feather: - Old man, may your ten thousand words save you now!

¡Escóndete detrás de la muralla de tu libro!

The arrow flashed through the air and old Etudito collapsed: his life's blood stained the Book of the Properties of Men red.

The Duke of Loo drew his short bow

The armies of the three Dukes fell silent, and the Lords of the Yellow Sand waited for the second elder to descend from his seat in the cart.

The Duke of Woo was proud and rode out in search of the poet.

- Old man, you have seen the fate of the Scholar. Is there barely any life in your veins that you no longer value the years you have left, or do you think of defeating ten thousand lancers with a paintbrush?

The Poet made the bow prescribed in the Code of Conduct, and then replied to the Duke of Woo:

- A brush, my Lord of Gobi, is a small and fragile instrument, but through it Heaven flows into the earth. Thoughts are like a wild phoenix projecting across the sky of the mind. Poets, not generals, are the conquerors of the world. The Will of Heaven is known through the brush, and the Will of Heaven conquers all things.

The Duke of Woo became angry and shook his plumed lance: - This is the brush that writes history, fool.

The Poet bowed his head slightly and replied: - It is written that in the years of the third Emperor, my Lord of the Falcon fell on his spear and died.

With a great oath, the Duke of Woo hurled his spear at the Poet, and the old man fell dead, the broken brush clutched to his chest.

The armies of the three Dukes and the Generals of the armies watched in silence.

The third elder was a shaven-headed priest, dressed in a coarse saffron-colored woolen cloak. In his hand was a rosary of amber beads with a green silk tassel.

The Duke of Koo was cruel, and he rode forward to meet the Priest.

The venerable man greeted the Duke of Koo respectfully, but since he was a priest, he didn't bow. The Duke of Koo was heavily bearded, and his voice resounded like old drums.

- And what weapon do you bring to defend the Middle Kingdom against my ten thousand knights?

The Priest took out his rosary: "Your Excellency of Koo, look at the symbol of the Good Law. Before the mountains were formed, before the waters accumulated, before the Gobi Ocean was swallowed up by the yellow sand, the Law was established. After the Dukes of Gobi have gone to sleep in their tombs, with their clay horses behind them; after all the kingdoms have descended into the great silence, the Law will remain. You have arrived too late, my Generals. The Eight Great Truths have already defeated men." And the Duke of Koo thundered through his beard: "I will never pay homage to a string of beads. We will write the laws of the Middle Kingdom. The old laws will be no more."

The Priest placed his rosary in his joined hands and repeated the mantra:

I take refuge in the Law;

I take refuge in the Holy Order;

I take refuge in example

of the Perfect Life:

About!

The Duke of Koo spurred his shaggy horse and, charging at the Priest, split his shaved head with the iron mace, and roared angrily: - This is for holy orders, may your Law now protect you!

The armies of the three Dukes fell silent and the Lords of the armies leaned on their swords.

And the three Dukes of Gobi rode toward the Great Gate of the wall. War trumpets sounded, drums beat, and the Generals stood before their commands. But the armies did not follow them.

The ten thousand archers leaned on their bows. The ten thousand lancers leaned on their pikes. And the ten thousand cavalry remained like stone images.

The three Dukes turned to their armies and gave orders loudly and powerfully, but the Generals leaned on their swords and remained silent.

And it came to pass that a rebellion broke out in the armies of the Dukes of Gobi over the death of the three elders. Finally, the Commander-in-Chief of the armies marched to confront the Dukes of Gobi at the Field of Red Poppies.

- My Lords of Gobi, the armies will follow you no more. The men of the Great Arena respect the Book of the Properties of Men that you stained with the blood of learning. It conquered their minds, and they obey it. The men of the Great Arena respect the brush of the Poet that you broke with the spear of violence. It conquered their hearts, and they obey it. The men of the Great Arena respect the rosary that you desecrated by killing the Priest of Shakamuni. It conquered their souls, and they obey it. You are the Lords of their bodies and you may kill them as you please, but their hearts, their minds, their souls pay homage to the three elders you killed. The armies will follow you no more. So it was that, at last, the armies turned against the Dukes of Gobi, locked them in an iron cage and took them back, dragging them towards the desert in the cart that carried the three old men.

And China was preserved.

On the Twelfth Day of the Moon, at the hour of deepest night, the Emperor of the Age of Proper Conduct once again walked across the yellow sand and entered the House of his Father, Shang-ti, Imperial Heaven.

And he bowed before his Father's inscription and lifted up the book, the brush, and the string of beads: - Eternal Father of the Golden Pavilion of the Sun, we give you thanks for the people of the Five Provinces, because we have had the privilege of contemplating the Path of Heaven on this day.

THE HO BIRD

The turtle of the world

On the night the Dragon devoured the Moon, the Lord of Tuan, who was a Prince of the Second Class, climbed the five hundred steps of the Black Hat to consult the oracle of Dem Ling.

The Abbess of Dem Ling was of very honorable age and practiced the Black Arts, and because she was the Rebirth of the Red Dakina, she sat on three cushions, and received the Prince of Tuan in the Chamber of Twelve Horrors.

The Lord of Tuan prostrated himself before the Three-Cushion Throne, and offered two saffron silk scarves because the Abbess of Dem Ling was the Rebirth of the Red Dakina.

And the Holy Mother of Dem Ling spoke, and because she was very old, her voice resembled the cry of a flamingo on the Lake of Ho: - Why has the Prince of Tuan come before the Abbess of the Black Hat at the hour when the Dragon devoured the Moon? - Sorceress of Dem-Ling, - replied the Prince of the Second Class - I have come to question the Holy Oracle of the Great Turtle who holds the Eight Parts of the World in his Shell.

The Prince of Tuan had a long, fine beard, and he cast the three omen bones upon the Tongka of the World Turtle. And the Sorceress of the Black Hat, who was the Rebirth of the Red Dakina, danced upon the back of the Great Turtle and uttered the Magic Words of the Dugpa.

Then the Witch of Dem Ling pointed her Demon Scepter at the heart of the Lord of Tuan: "O Prince of the Second Class, it is written in the Book of Iron that, in the Days of History, mighty warriors will rise to conquer the Land, but in the end, the Land will prevail and vanquish them all. Is this not the trouble that troubles you?"

"Holy Witch of Dem Ling," replied the Prince of Tuan, "you have seen the matter clearly. I am the Master of Yunnan, and twenty cities pay tribute to my banner. I am rich and powerful, and fifty Mandarins pay homage at my feet. Yet there is no contentment in my heart, for I know that the weight of years will bear down upon me, sapping my strength. What good are power and wealth if old age will rob me of my life? Reveal to me, O Holy Abbess, the secret of longevity."

The Black Hat Enchantress then spoke thus: "My Lord of Tuan, mark my words well. Seven days' journey to the East is the Enchanted Forest of Feng. In the midst of this forest is the Lake of Ho, and by the shores of this lake the White Phoenix of Tao built its nest. In the plumage on the head of the Great White Bird of Ho is the Gem of Longevity. If the Prince of Tuan can take this gem from the head of the White Phoenix, he will be able to live for thousands of years."

The Lord of Tuan stroked his fine beard for a long time: - Reveal to me the mystic arts by which I may secure this gem, and I will bestow upon the House of the Black Hat five cities and their tributes.

The Abbess of Dem Ling replied, "I cannot do this, My Lord Prince of the Second Class, for the secret of the Longevity Gem belongs to the Yellow Emperor of Heaven. Every man who attempts to gain this gem must do so on his own. This is the edict of Heaven."

Then the Abbess took a roll of yellow silk from her sleeve and, taking a long brush, inscribed many characters in the Northern script on the silk. She then sealed the writing with the Great Seals of the House of Dem Ling. Once this was done, she placed the roll of silk in the hands of the Prince of Tuan with these words:

"This passport, My Lord Prince, will take you safely to Feng Forest. Present my safe conduct to the Guardian of the Forest, and he will take you to Ho Lake. I can do no more."

Thus it happened that on the fifth day after the Dragon devoured the Moon, the Prince of Tuan and his twelve Knights and squires rode on their white nags to hunt the Magic Bird of Tao in the Black Forest of Feng.

The Black Forest of Feng was a place of enchantments and mysteries, and the dwelling place of spirits, ghosts and demons with bull heads.

The Prince of Tuan was a bold man and had no fear of the creatures of the Feng. But the twelve Knights and their Squires did not share his courage, and they lacked the heart for such an undertaking.

When they reached the Great Gate of the Forest, the twelve Knights begged the Prince of Tuan to let them abandon their adventure. But the Lord of Tuan reviled the twelve Knights with an oath, and struck the Bronze Bell of the Gate with his spear, defying the demons who guarded the place.

The old gate opened on its ancient hinges with many thuds and creaks, the webs of the spider-spirits snapping. Inside the forest, the path divided to the right and left, and in the middle of the crossroads stood a large gray tombstone, dilapidated by time.

On this tablet, carved with the classic script of the Divine Dynasty, were the words: "This is the Forest of Feng. Depart, profane, while there is still time. This is the entrance to the Land of Legend where only the Poet is welcome."

When the twelve Knights read the inscription, the eldest of them begged the Lord of Tuan with these words: "O mighty Prince, let us abandon this place or we will perish. Together we have conquered many provinces, killing twenty generals and their vassals. We are Warriors, not Poets, and how shall we find our way in the Forest of Dreams?"

The Prince of Tuan stroked his beard for a long time and replied: "I came to this forest to hunt the White Phoenix of Heaven. I will kill the Bird of Tao, and cut from its plume the Gem of Immortality. My Lords Knights, I am resolved on this feat."

As the Prince concluded his words, the atmosphere stirred strangely, and a strong wind blew through the forest. In the midst of this wind, a little old man was flying through the air on a huge satchel, secured with long silk ribbons. The genie—for that was what it was—laughed joyfully as he shot through space. Seven times, with the speed of the wind, the little old man circled the small tombstone and then, as gently as a dragonfly, landed on the ground where the paths forked.

The genie was excessively fat, and had large earlobes. His body was as high as a man's knee, and his little eyes winked humorously. He wore a very long cloak of black brocade, embroidered with golden flowers, and the brim of his varnished hat was so wide that it covered a large part of his body. The genie sat down on his knapsack and, pointing with his stubby forefinger at the Prince of Tuan, laughed until he rocked back and forth on his back.

The Twelve Knights and their Squires drew back in great fear, but the Lord of Tuan rode out to meet the genie, and spoke to him in a firm voice: "Who are you, little man, and how dare you laugh before the Prince of Tuan?"

The genie assumed an attitude of importance and then replied: "My Lord Prince, I am the Guardian of the Enchanted Forest of Feng. I have come to see the measure of the man who will kill the White Phoenix of Ho and steal the Red Ruby from its plumage. "I am that man!" roared the Prince of Tuan, tugging violently at his fine beard. And the genie laughed merrily, jumping up and down on his satchel.

The Lord of Tuan reached into his high boot and took out the silk passport given to him by the Abbess of the Black Hat. Untying the laces, he opened the banner and presented it to the Guardian of the Forest: "Look, old man, the characters and seals of the Sorceress Abbess of Dem Ling. Even the genie must obey the instruction written on this cloth."

The Guardian of the Feng Forest examined the passport with great care, then bowed to the Vermillion Seals.

- Who can disobey the Black Hat Sorceress? Come, my lord Prince, I will lead you to Lake Ho.

The genie leaped into the air in his flying satchel of long silk ribbons and, carrying Dem Ling's Tangka open before him, flew into the Black Forest along the path that led to the left. The Prince of Tuan and his Twelve Knights and Squires followed him as best they could.

The road was long and winding, and demons with bull heads roared horribly among the rocks. White-faced phantoms floated around the Prince of Tuan, and there were spirits everywhere. But the creatures of the Enchanted Wood refrained from committing evil deeds because of the Vermillion Seals of the magic passport.

At last the forest genie pointed with his chubby finger to a deep ravine where the path seemed to disappear: - Beyond, my Lord Prince, is the Lake of Ho.

Then, with his laughter echoing throughout Feng Forest, the little old man shot straight through the sky in his flying satchel and disappeared.

The Prince of Tuan dismounted from his white nag and walked across the diamond sands, and carrying his spear before him, he approached the opaque darkness where the rocks were divided. He had scarcely advanced three steps when a soft light shone on the walls of the ravine, and the Great White Bird of Ho stood before him.

Now the Phoenix of Ho is the Lord of all Birds, and his splendor is greater than any creature on earth. His feet shine like the purest gold, and his feathers are like ivory and fine silver. His eyes are blue like the Magic Waters of the Lake of Ho, and amidst the snowy plumage of his head gleams the Blood Ruby of Longevity.

The Great Ruler of the Birds spoke, and his voice was soft and clear like the sound of old jade bells: - In the name of Heaven we greet you, My Lord Prince of Tuan.

But the Prince of Tuan, because he had no poetry in his heart, could not understand the majesty of the Bird of Heaven. The Prince had eyes only for the Blood-Red Stone that glittered on the Phoenix's forehead. So he replied in a loud voice: "I have come to remove the Stone of Longevity from your head. Defend yourself, Great White Bird, if you wish to keep your Treasure."

The Ho Bird bowed his head and replied very gently: "It is written that Heaven will not declare war against mortals. Take my Gem if you can."

"Bring me my net!" roared the Prince of Tuan. "I will capture this docile creature alive and take it to my city, where it will live in a golden box. Even the Emperor will be astonished, for not even the Son of Heaven has a treasure like the Bird of Ho."

"And what kind of net have you procured for yourself, my Lord Prince," asked the Phoenix in a soft voice, "to hold back the White Bird of Heaven?"

The Prince of Tuan stroked his fine beard for a long time and then replied: "My net is strong, Lord of the Birds, for its meshes are made from the hairs of twenty generals I killed in battle. Not even the Five-Clawed Dragon could break this net."

"Then cast your net, my lord Prince," said the noble Bird. "Look, I'll come closer so your catch will be less difficult."

With a loud oath, the Prince of Tuan cast his net over the Phoenix of Ho. But wherever the meshes of the net touched the White Bird's feathers, the strands of hair caught fire, and the net was entirely consumed.

"If your net had been woven with strands of song, you would have caught me," said the Ruler of the Birds in a sad voice.

"Bring me my stout bow and my iron arrow," roared the Prince of Tuan, "for I perceive that I must kill this cursed Bird if I am to accomplish my purpose."

The Lord of Tuan placed the iron arrow on the silk string of his bow and said to the Phoenix: - This arrow is loaded with the Iron Keys to the Gates of the Twenty Cities. And he aimed the arrow at the heart of the Great White Bird.

When the iron arrow struck the Ho Phoenix's chest, it seemed as if the shining feathers had turned into burnished steel. There was a sound like a terrible burning, and the shattered iron arrow fell at the Great White Bird's feet.

The Phoenix spoke again with great gentleness: "My Lord of Tuan, once, in ancient times, there was a mighty Duke, who shot an arrow at the Midday Sun to kill the Emperor of Heaven. But the arrow bounced off and pierced the mighty Duke's head, and he died.

"Bring me my hunting falcon," roared the Prince of Tuan, "and we shall see who is the King of the Birds."

The Lord of Tuan received the falcon in his gauntlet: - Beware, Great White Bird, for my falcon grew vigorous with the livers of Earls whom I killed in single combat.

He removed the falcon's hood and shouted loudly: - Destroy that Bird with your beak and claws.

At the battle cry, the hunting falcon flew toward the neck of Ho's Phoenix, but every time the balcony approached the Great White Bird, tiny rays of light burst from the Phoenix's body, and the falcon could not fight against those rays. Finally, after many attempts, the falcon fell to the ground exhausted, its wings half-open, screeching pitifully.

The Prince of Tuan leaned on his spear and was very worried because his weapons had not prevailed against the Tao Phoenix. He was still determined to take the Longevity Gem.

Because the Great Bird knew the Lord of Tuan's thoughts, he spoke once more: "O Prince of the Second Class, you are still not convinced that your weapons are useless in the Enchanted Forest of Poets. If you want long life, you must necessarily have beauty in your heart. If you want the Feathery Gem from my head, it is the Will of the Tao that you come in Peace and that you do not wage war by the Lake of Ho."

"Strong men make war; weak men speak of peace," roared the Prince of Tuan, and he stroked his fine beard for a long time. "It is true, O Great White Bird, that my weapons were not equal to your magic. But I am strong, and my right arm is strong. I am master of twenty cities, and my right arm made me Lord of all Yunnan. With my own hand I will pluck from your crest the Red Stone of Longevity, for I do not fear the power of your magic, and he who is fearless is Master of the World."

The Prince of Tuan strode over to the White Bird, which was waiting patiently for him. When he reached the Ho Bird, he stretched out his hand to grasp the Flaming Stone from the Phoenix's plumage. When the tiny lights flickering around the Red Gem touched his fingers, the Lord of Tuan recoiled in pain, for his hand was as cold as death. And when the Prince of Tuan looked at his right hand, he saw it white, with the whiteness of new marble from the Valley of Tszin. And terror seized the Lord of Tuan, and he knew what fear was, and he fell to his knees upon the diamond sands. And he stretched out his right hand, which was all white, and begged the Great Phoenix of Ho: "O Great Bird of Heaven, take away the White Sickness that kills a man while he is still alive."

The Phoenix of Ho was silent for a brief moment, then spoke these words to the Prince of Tuan: "My Prince of the Second Class, no man is strong before Heaven, for the joy of

the Tao consists in overthrowing the strong and raising the meek. All the Earth and its Princes must obey Heaven, and the hand that raises against Heaven will surely die." The Lord of Tuan struck his head three times against the diamond sands and pleaded before the Ho Bird: "Great Ruler of Birds, I have come to the Feng Wood in search of Longevity, and have found only the White Death. My sin was great, but the punishment is greater than I can bear. I am a soldier, and I lived as a soldier. It is a soldier's custom to fight with the strength of his arm and defend what has been taken in the same way. Do not punish me, for I live the life of my time, just as I was taught." "My Lord Prince," replied the Great Ruler of the Birds, "those who conquer cities may rule them for a short time, and then they must lie down on Earth and sleep. The noble Dukes, and the Earls, and the Mandarins of the Nine Classes, even the Emperors themselves, dwell for a time and then vanish into Eternal Darkness.

Then the Phoenixde Ho continued speaking thus: "Great Prince of the Second Class, pay attention to my words and I will inform you of the Mystery of the Red Stone of Longevity that is in my plumage." When the Yellow Emperor resolved to create the World with the Two Principles, He caused His strength to go forth from Him in the form of the Great Dragon that has five claws. And the Great Dragon that dwells in Space lifted the Earth with its body, and with its claws it held the world in its most central place. And the Yellow Emperor said: "With My strength I brought the World out of the Abyss, and with My Beauty I will now adorn it in all its parts." So He caused His Beauty to go forth from Him in the form of the White Phoenix. And the Lord of Birds opened His wings over the Earth, and under the shadow of his wing were generated the orders of Beauty that are in the world. And the Great Dragon was the Father of the generations of the Kings, Statesmen, Warriors, Builders of Cities and Conquerors of the Earth; and all who are strong are the Children of the Dragon. And the White Phoenix created the generations of Scholars, Poets, Artists, and Sculptors, and of those who sing, dance, and weave fine fabrics, and all who love Beauty are the children of the Phoenix. After the world was established upon its foundations, and Strength and Beauty produced their progeny, the Yellow Emperor caused the Great Dragon and the White Phoenix to appear before him in the Palace of Heaven. Then the Yellow Emperor addressed them with these words:

- Look at the Great Red Stone of Longevity that I hold in My Hand today. To which of you shall I give custody of this Treasure? Shall I give it to you, My Lord Dragon, who were born from My Right Hand?

"Give me the Stone of Longevity," roared the Great Dragon, "and I will build an Empire that will be Eternal in the World. All men will serve the Strong. My Children will live a thousand years in Glory, and their war chariots will conquer all creatures of the Earth. The Stone is my right, for I am the Strength of Heaven."

The Yellow Emperor turned his face towards the White Phoenix: - You have heard the words of the Great Dragon.

You are the Firstborn of my Left Hand. Will you take this Stone into your safekeeping? And the Lord Phoenix replied: "Eternal Heaven, give me the Stone according to Your Wisdom, for Wisdom is the Lord over Strength and Beauty. My Children will not build Cities, nor will they conquer Nations with their swords. Theirs is the power of gentle Song, and they shape Beauty with their fingers. They dwell in quiet places; where they set their feet, flowers grow; and where they build their houses, birds sing. Whether or not You give me the Stone, Great Emperor, they will continue in their present way, beautifying the Earth.

The Yellow Emperor held up the Flaming Gem: "Hear then My decision according to My Wisdom that dwells within Me. I give the Stone of Longevity, in safekeeping, to the Great

Phoenix, who is the Son of My Left Hand, for I perceive by My inner Wisdom that the World I created through My Strength will be perfected by My Beauty. And My Beauty will inherit the Earth. So it shall be."

The Yellow Emperor placed the Red Stone on the head of the Phoenix Lord, and surrounded the Gem with a circle of flames so that no man could steal it.

Then the Dragon became enraged because he did not receive the Stone of Longevity, and he roared loudly, speaking thus to the White Phoenix: "I am Strong, and the Strong shall inherit the Earth. Take care, White Bird, that my children do not take this Stone from you. From my body will be born Great Princes, who will not rest until they are masters of the Stone of Longevity." When the Yellow Emperor heard the Dragon's words, he said: "Let there be no war between My Right Hand and My Left Hand. And let the man who lifts his hand against the Will of Heaven be punished."

"And you, My Lord of Tuan, who are a Son of the Dragon, have raised your hand against the Yellow Emperor's words. Do you now repent of your folly, My Prince of the Second Class?"

"Oh, Most Noble Creature of the Heavens," groaned the Prince of Tuan in great spiritual agony, "I repent completely, for I perceive that the Stone of Longevity is not for me because I do not know the rules of the Tao. But it is written that the Tao is merciful and compassionate, and will show mercy to those who invoke its name."

Oh Great Bird of Tao, take this whiteness from my hand and I will fill my years according to my lot.

The Phoenix of Ho drew closer to the Prince of Tuan and spoke softly: "Heaven is kind to those who repent of their folly. Extend your hand again, My Lord Prince, in complete humility, and touch the Gem in my Plume."

The Lord of Tuan stretched out his hand, and the evil in his heart vanished. He touched the Red Stone of Longevity. Color returned to his fingers, and the White Sickness left him. He gave thanks for his deliverance.

Then the White Bird of Ho, who had sprung from the Yellow Emperor's left hand, spoke for the last time: "Son of the Dragon, depart now from the Wood of Poets. In the name of Heaven, leave this place and return no more. May there be peace between the Phoenix of the Tao and the Prince of the Second Class."

The Great White Bird remained there for a short time while the Lord of Tuan greeted it with His spear, and then, with majestic steps, returned to its flaming nest by the shore of Lake Ho.

And the Prince of Tuan and his Twelve Knights and his Twelve Squires rode out of the Forest of Feng on their white horses, and returned to the Cities of Yunnan and lived to the end of their days according to the Will of Heaven.

And the Enchantress of Dem Ling who lived in the House of the Black Hat had seen all that reflected in the nail of her third finger, and because she was the Rebirth of the Red Dakina, she danced on the World Turtle and paid homage to the Yellow Emperor according to the rites of the Dugpa.

The Great White Phoenix of Ho still lives in the Enchanted Forest of Feng, and the Ruby Red of Longevity shines on his head and he is the Lord of all birds.

The little old man who is the Guardian of the Forest, because he is a genie, still flutters around on his magic satchel tied with silk ribbons, but until today no one has discovered what he carries in his satchel.

LA VIUDA DE WANG

The Emperor of Great Cathay lay on the Golden Phoenix mat. The Privy Council was assembled in solemn tribute. The physician, standing beside the bed, listened with his jeweled finger to the sad, slow heartbeat.

The final hour of the Age of Valorous Conduct had arrived. The Empress's chair lay empty beside her Lord's deathbed. She had preceded him seventeen years ago to the Yellow Land.

Beyond the walls of the Vermillion City, China awaited the dire news that the Son of Heaven had darkened the whole land with his departure.

Suddenly, there was a discreet commotion at the entrance to the Imperial Chambers, and the Captain of the Palace Guards, dressed in crimson quilted silk, passed through the circular doorway. He muttered behind his sleeve to the Lord Secretary, who muttered behind his sleeve to the Lord Chamberlain, who muttered through his thick whiskers to the Steward, who in turn communicated the substance of the matter in a barely audible voice to the Prime Minister, who gravely shook his head.

But in the silent room the old Emperor had perceived the agitation of his Court, and opening his eyes he asked in a low voice the cause of the commotion.

The Prime Minister prostrated himself before the bed of the Golden Phoenix and replied:

- Your Serene Majesty, it is the Captain of the South Gate, a matter of no importance.

Then the Emperor of all China spoke again: "The Timeless One who dwells within the Temple of the Heart tells me otherwise. Let the Captain advance without fear and reveal the matter."

The Captain, in his crimson robes, approached slowly and reverently to the deathbed, and covering his face, fell on his knees.

The low voice from the Phoenix's bed commanded him to rise: "Death waits for no formalities, my Lord Captain. State your mission while there is still time."

- Your Serene Majesty, Beloved of Heaven and Earth, when I opened the South Gate of the Forbidden City this morning, I found on the threshold this small scroll addressed to Your Magnificence. Last night there was a bearded star in the West; flames fell from the sky, the waters of the sea were troubled, and because of the omens of these times, I dared not fail to inform the Court of this strange scroll.

The Captain took a small roll from his sleeve and, with the utmost deference, placed it at the side of the bed, discreetly withdrawing.

The dying Emperor touched the scroll and solemnly shook his head: "You did well, my Lord Captain; we shall hear the words on the scroll."

The Grand Secretary received the scroll, and the Five Secretaries of the Five Provinces gathered around it, each with his brush and inkwell. With delicate fingers, the Grand Secretary unwrapped the large scroll, observing: "Your Most Sovereign Majesty, the paper is poor and cheap, and the writing is rough, the product of someone who has never learned delicate strokes."

The weary voice replied: "We have little time, My Lord Secretary, for paper and features; let the living observe these things; read the words."

Holding the crystal lens before his eyes, the Secretary spoke in appropriate and modulated tones:

Amidst the vapors of dawn

I walked alone through my little garden

And I heard the song of the morning glory
Who opened their hearts to my Lord of the Day.

The Secretary lowered the scroll: "Your Most Sublime Majesty, here are the words.
There is no signature or seal."

There was silence in the Peony Hall. The Privy Council waited to hear the Emperor's words. At last, the voice spoke again from the veils of the Phoenix couch: "My Lords of the Middle Kingdom, let us give thanks to the Yellow Emperor of heaven that in our final hours we have been privileged to receive this happy omen of our transition. Before we depart in fitting fashion to our Lord of the Day, hear now our joy, and let a law and edict be drafted in the five languages, dispatching it to all the regions of our Empire."

The Five Secretaries prepared their ivory tablets and the Court fell silent with utmost expectation.

The old man's weary voice continued: "It is our wish that the author of this poem be discovered without restriction of cost or time, and brought to the Vermillion City, and decorated with the Order of the Two Dragons, and titled The Honorable Listener of Morning Glory, and this name and title inscribed in the annals, and beatified as worthy of veneration. May this edict receive the Imperial Seal."

There was a moment of silence, and then the voice continued: "And now, my Lords of the Middle Kingdom, my time has come. The Transcendent Being commands me to take leave of the body. Amidst the vapors of dawn, I walk alone through my small garden.

The Physician turned gravely from the bedside: "Great Mandarins of China, the Son of Heaven has returned to his Father. He has ascended the Ladder of the Seven Dragons. The Emperor is dead."

A few moments later, the great drums on the walls of the Forbidden City proclaimed the news. The Age of Brave Conduct was complete.

The Morning Glory Listener's edict was woven from strands of black silk and twisted gold brocade, and when the weavers finished their work it was sealed with the Great Jade Seals and taken to the Duke of Ku.

My Lord of Ku was the chief of the men who seek and find, and he dispatched his agents throughout the Empire ordering them to discover the author of the poem.

For eleven years, without ceasing, they searched among the high and the low, the great and the humble; the rich and the poor; and at last the Duke of Ku approached the Imperial Throne and announced that the Honorable Morning Glory Listener had been discovered.

In the Eighth Moon of the Year of the Iron Horse it was proclaimed that the Emperor ordered the seventy Dukes to meet with their Lords and Knights in the City called The Forbidden City.

And the seventy Dukes, with their Marquises and Counts and their Knights and their Grand Ministers, entered the Vermillion City through the South Gate, and crossing the Bridge of Arches they prostrated themselves towards the throne and proclaimed their fidelity to the Son of Heaven.

Thus it came to pass that the Princes of the Five Provinces assembled in the Great Court of the Lions, treading the yellow sand of Gobi, according to their station and honors, and covered their hands with their sleeves, and wore the beaded fringes before their eyes.

And because this was the Eleventh Year of the Realm of Consummate Culture, the Scholars were there dressed in black coats, and the Historians in green tassels, and the Poets in amber buttons.

The great doors of the Throne Room were open, and the Lord Chamberlain waited at the foot of the steps for the Sovereign's Voice from the Dragon Throne.

At noon the great gongs of the arcades proclaimed the arrival of the Duke of Ku.

There was a burst of silver trumpets and a solemn procession entered the Court of the Lions, and approached the Throne of Heaven across the yellow sand.

The Honor Guards with banners of green and crimson stopped at a respectful distance, and with great majesty the Duke of Ku advanced to the foot of the Dragon Seat.

My Lord of Ku was dressed in loose yellow silk, his cap topped with a crimson plume. He was a man of great stature, and in his strong arms he carried the tiny form of a very old woman dressed in a simple black cloak.

Stretching his arms and his fragile burden upward into the misty depths of the Throne Pavilion, the Duke of Ku spoke: "O Feudal Sovereign, Master of the World, Beloved of Heaven, I have completed the task assigned to me by your late Father, the Emperor of Valiant Conduct. This is the Widow of Wang the Fisherman. Eleven years ago she crept by night to the South Gate of the Forbidden City and placed her poem on the threshold as a tribute to His Illustrious Majesty, your Father in Eternal Glory."

The voice of a strong young man spoke from behind the diaphanous veils of the Throne: "Our beloved cousin fulfilled his duties well. We are pleased with him. Bring a chair for the Venerable Mother."

At the foot of the Throne stood a red and black lacquer chair on the yellow Gobi sand, and the Duke of Ku gently placed the old woman on the chair and stood at a distance with his hands in his sleeves.

The veils of the throne slowly parted. The Princes of Grand Cathay hid their faces behind the hem of their bonnets. Their heir descended to Earth from the Dragon Throne, dressed in golden robes, with jade bells on the tassel of his attire. He advanced toward the small old woman sitting on the varnished chair. Upon reaching her, he knelt and touched the yellow Gobi sand with his forehead.

- Honorable Mother, it is written in the Code of Conduct that we will honor the elderly, who are the parents of our glory; accept now the veneration that youth offers to the fullness of years.

The old woman displayed a strange, white smile and extended her hand toward the voice. The Duke of Ku stepped forward. "Your Majesty," he whispered, "the woman has been blind for many years."

The Emperor raised his hand: "Let the Five Secretaries come and record the words of the Venerable Mother, for she is about to speak. Let not a syllable be lost, let all of China know her words."

The widow of Wang the fisherman put on a kind, tired smile and in a very weak voice replied to the Emperor: "May heaven bless you, my son, for your kind thought. I am very old and far from home. I don't know where I am or who you are, but you have a warm voice and are a good son. Somewhere there is a mother proud of you."

The Secretaries had recorded every word, and now waited with their brushes resting on the rolls of silk. The Emperor turned to the Lord Chamberlain, who advanced carrying the Royal Edict in his hand.

- Let the Mother be informed of the reason for which she has been brought here and of the honor that will be conferred upon her according to the will of our late Father, the Illustrious Emperor of Valiant Conduct.

The Lord Chamberlain issued the Edict, and in a loud voice proclaimed the occasion to the assembled Lords, each of whom prostrated himself before the chair on which the Widow Wang was sitting.

Then the Prime Minister approached and placed the large gold breastplate of the Order of the Two Dragons in the Emperor's hands. The Emperor placed the chain around the old woman's neck and placed her left hand on the jeweled pendant.

- We, Emperor of China, Son of the Sun, in compliance with the Edict of our Illustrious Father, by it confer upon you the Order of the Two Dragons, and declare that, from now

on, you shall have the title of The Illustrious and Honorable Lady Listener of the Morning Glory.

The old woman showed her strange, simple, childlike smile and touched the Golden Decoration.

"I don't know the dress of princes; I am a peasant. I don't know the formalities; I am a simple and ignorant woman. I am already so burdened with years that my time here is not long. I don't know how to thank you, or how this honor came to me."

The Emperor looked at the old woman's wrinkled face for a few moments and then asked: - Most Illustrious and Most Honorable Lady Listener of the Morning Glory, is it true that you could really hear the voices of the flowers?

She shook her head. "My husband was a fisherman, and for many years he was away on his boat, leaving me alone. We had a small garden where I planted morning glory flowers. Very early in the morning, I used to go into the garden and sit quietly, and if I remained very still, I could hear small voices speaking soft words as the flowers opened."

The Emperor leaned forward eagerly: - Illustrious Lady, what did the morning glory say when they spoke?

The old woman shook her head sadly. "Oh, my son, they spoke a strange language that the Scholars would not understand, much less a simple peasant woman who could not read the classics. But I could sense in their words a strange ecstasy, as if each of the tiny flowers gave up its life with mysterious passion when the first ray of sunlight touched its petals."

The Emperor was silent, and Widow Wang continued: "You are a great personage. If you would remain silent in your heart and listen to the voice of the morning glory, you would understand what they are saying."

There was a silence and the Secretaries leaned forward, and the Princes and Dukes did not even breathe, for they perceived that the Emperor was about to utter immortal words.

The Son of Heaven bowed and reverently kissed the wrinkled forehead of the Widow of Wang, the fisherman.

- Illustrious Lady Mother, you, whose gentle soul could hear the voice of the morning glory, could not understand their words, and I, learned in the five languages, the classics, the annals, and the analects, who could understand their words, will never hear their voices, for I have no silence in my heart. This is the Way of Heaven.

THE PRINCE OF CATS

The Khan of Shamo was a great hunter, and he went out with his Knights and Lords to hunt the Prince of Cats in the Forest of Go-Lun.

When he reached the Place of the Black Rocks his horse would go no further, so the hunter dismounted and rode on alone, carrying his arrows and a short bow.

The Great Khan walked for many hours among the Black Rocks, searching for the Prince of Cats. And night fell upon him, and there were many paths, and the Lord Khan could not find his way from where he stood.

But at last he saw a little light and hurried toward the cave of the Holy Hermit of Go-Lun. He greeted the venerable man, asking for shelter for the night.

The Hermit of Go-Lun was one of the Five Hundred Lohans of our Lord Buddha, and very old; his head was shaved, and he wore a saffron-colored woolen cloak. He received the Khan of Shamo, giving him rice and tea.

And the Holy Lohan spoke thus: - Kha Khan, I greet you in the name of Shakamuni, the Blessed Buddha, and I share with you my rice and my tea.

- Venerable Father, - replied the Great Khan - I have come to the place of the Black Rocks to hunt the Prince of Cats, but night fell on me and I could not find my way.

The Holy Hermit then raised his hand, saying: - Khan of Shamo, you are forbidden to hunt the Lord of the Cats in the Forest of Go-Lun.

The Kha Khan was disgusted with himself but did not dare reveal his anger to the Holy Hermit of the Black Rocks: - Explain to me the reason why I cannot kill the Prince of Cats with my short bow.

Then the Lohan of Go-Lun perceived the anger of the Great Khan, and answered with these words: - If my Lord the Khan takes a solemn oath on his right hand that he will not draw his bow at the Place of the Black Rocks, I will reveal to him the Mystery of the Prince of Cats.

And because it was the Holy Lohan's wish, which could not be denied, the Khan of Shamo swore a solemn oath on his right hand that he would not draw his bow in the Forest of Go-Lun. And the Holy Hermit was satisfied and touched the Kha Khan's right hand with his beads.

- Now that My Lord the Khan has bound himself with an oath, I will ask the Prince of Cats to come and reveal himself to the Khan of Shamo.

Then the Great Lohan took from his cloak a small piece of paper on which was drawn the image of a horse. He wrote the name of the Lord of Cats on the horse's body, and then burned the paper in the fire. When the paper was completely consumed, he took the ashes and blew them into the air, saying: "The Wind Horse will carry my message to the Prince of Cats."

After a while, sounds came from a creature among the Black Rocks. When the Holy Hermit, who had been listening, heard the sounds, he stood up and asked Lord Khan to do the same.

- We'll go together to pay homage to the Lord of the Cats.

And they came out of the cave, and a great beast stood before them in the moonlight; and the Khan of Shamo saw that the great beast was a tiger.

But the Great Khan had never before seen an animal as majestic as the Tiger Lord of Go-Lun. With slow, noble steps, the Prince of Cats approached the Holy Hermit, his

eyes like deep fountains of green fire. The Holy Lohan extended his rosary, and the tiger touched the beads with his face.

Then the Khan of Shamo knelt in admiration and greeted the Tiger Lord with these words: - Great Prince of Cats, the Kha Khan greets you in the name of Our Lord the Buddha.

And the three returned to the interior of the cave: the Holy Hermit, the Great Khan, and the Tiger Lord of Go-Lun. And the Prince of Cats sat beside the Holy Lohan and stared into the fire.

It was then that the Kha Khan had the privilege of hearing the blessed story of the Prince of Cats, in the cave among the Black Rocks, as told to him by the Holy Lohan of the Shaven Head. And these are the words of that tale:

- At the dawn of the Great Day, My Lord Khan, the Compassionate One, who is the Adamantine Soul of the World, came to the Gate of Great Decision, and laid his hand upon it to open it and pass through. Now the gate was old, and beside it a swallow had built its nest, and in it was a little bird that was hungry and too young to fly. And the bird twittered with a very faint voice. The Compassionate One looked at the bird and spoke thus: - How shall I enter into Great Peace if I know that beside the Gate of Nirvana is this hungry little bird?

- So the Compassionate One entered into meditation that enabled Him to experience the life of all creatures. And He knew within Himself the affliction of all living creatures. And the Lord of Compassion wept, for He felt in His heart the sorrow that is in the world. The Compassionate One cast His soul into the grains of sand, the rocks, and the depths of the sea; and in all these places there was sorrow. And He projected His soul into the forests, the deserts, and the high mountains; and in these places too there was sorrow. And He sent His soul into the air, the fire, and the hearts of things that breathe; and He always found sorrow. And the Blessed Lord said: - I find sorrow everywhere because the creatures of the earth lack the Good Law. But how shall I reveal to them the Eight Parts of the Wheel and the Three Gems? How shall I reveal to all living things the Eternal Doctrine that will take away their sorrow?

- So the Compassionate One resolved to make the Great Sacrifice. He entered into meditation and accepted the Illusion of the World upon Himself. And He multiplied His own consciousness, and caused a part of His own Perfected Being to come forth and take up residence in each of the orders of life, from the highest to the lowest, belonging to them, knowing their pain, and working with them for their own perfection. And this was the vow of the Lord of Compassion: - I will not enter Nirvana until the last of the creatures that exist in the Seven Worlds has received the Doctrine and stands beside me at the Gate where the swallow built its nest.

- And in each of the orders of living things, the Blessed Lord took upon himself the laws of his kind, and obeyed these laws, even unto death. This was the Great Renunciation. The Compassionate One also entered the abode of the dead, and the places of spirits and demons. And he took upon himself all the conditions and all the forms so that every created thing might receive the Doctrine. And the part of the Blessed One who came to be among men is Our Lord the Buddha. He was born six hundred times as a man, and died six hundred times as a man so that all men might receive the Three Precious Jewels: the Life, the Doctrine, and the Holy Order. Now the Great Disciples of the Buddha are the Lohans and the Arhats, for these know the Mystery of the Great Sacrifice, and they will not rest until they free the Blessed Lord from his vow by their own perfection, and the Disciples will have reached every corner of the earth to teach the Perfect Life and the Harmless Path. Through this mystery, the Lord of Compassion will finally be free to enter Nirvana. This is the Great Liberation.

- O Great Khan, look upon the Arhat of Tigers, for the Prince of Cats is none other than the Blessed Lord of Compassion, who dwells in the body of an animal according to the vow he made when he stood by the Gate of Decision. Kha Khan, look upon the paws of the Prince of Cats, and you will see that he hides no claws. Look into the eyes of the Lord Tiger, and within the depths of his eyes you will see his pain; and the pain that shines through his eyes is the one that took away his claws. The Prince of Cats was killed hundreds of times in the forest with the hunter's arrow in his chest. And he died alone, for there was no creature to comfort him or hear the last cry of his body. But the Compassionate One knew his pain, for it was in that body that he died among the rocks. And now the Law of the Compassionate One was fulfilled in the body of the Lord Tiger. For the Prince of Cats is the Bodhisattva of all of his kind. He is the Grand Master of the Forest of Go-Lun. Although he cannot preach the Blessed Doctrine with his lips, the Great Cats understand him, for his words are in his eyes, in the grace of his body, and in all his attitudes, which are full of wisdom. And the Great Cats pay homage to him because Truth has taken their claws.

When the Hermit of Go-Lun finished his words, Lord Khan remained silent, for he knew in his heart that those words were true.

And he prostrated himself before the Prince of Cats, speaking thus to the Lord Tiger: - Oh Most Holy Animal, reveal to me the Law, so that I too may serve the Compassionate One.

Then the Prince of Cats stretched out his paw and placed it upon the short bow of the Khan of Shamo, and the Lord Tiger broke the bow with his paw.

And the Kha Khan understood, and stretched out his right hand, and placed his left hand upon it, saying: - Hear my oath, Great Arhat of the Cats: As long as I live I will not draw my bow against any living creature; I swear this with my right hand.

Then the Holy Hermit, who was very wise, said: - Remember this well, My Lord Khan, for with this oath you will come to know pain, and through this kind of pain you will reach the Lord of the World.

By this time, the Knights and Lords who had ridden off to hunt with the Khan of Shamo in the Forest of Go-Lun had made their camp at the foot of the Black Rocks. And their tents were white and crimson, and yak tails hung from tall poles at the doors of the tents. And in the morning the Great Khan returned to them carrying the broken bow in his hand.

And the Lord Khan and his Knights, and the Lords, went away from the Forest to the City of the Kha Khans, with its blue-tiled roofs. And the Lords of the City were very puzzled about the broken bow and said to one another: "The Khan of Shamo is a mighty warrior, but who broke his short bow?"

The City of the Blue-Tiled Roofs was on the edge of the ancient desert called the Gobi. And the men of the city carried great swords and rejoiced in war.

Because he had sworn an oath to the Prince of Cats, the Kha Khan would not make war against the Desert Dukes. And he forgave his enemies, and made new laws so that men would not kill one another. And he forbade any man to hunt in the Forest of Go-Lun.

And the people of the City of the Blue-Tiled Roofs, and the Lords who were over the people, were angry because of the new laws; for they enjoyed making war against the Great Dukes of the Desert.

So at last the Prime Minister appeared before Mr. Khan and begged him in these words:

- My Lord Khan, the new laws you created are not for the people of the Great Arena.

The people rejoice in war and the slaughter of their enemies, burning cities, taking their women as slaves. If you continue along these current lines, you will destroy the city of

your Fathers and leave nothing but ruin for your children. Take up your short bow, O Khan of Shamo, and lead your armies against the Dukes of the Desert.

The Kha Khan replied: - I swore with my right hand that I will never again draw my short bow against any living creature, and I will not break my oath.

A short time passed. Then the Duke of Lan-O left the desert and marched against the City of the Kha Khan. He encamped his armies before the City walls, challenging the Great Khan to come out to battle.

And again the Prime Minister appeared before the Throne and begged the Kha Khan to lead his soldiers against the Duke of Lan-O, saying:

- O Khan of Shamo, the hour is at hand when you must defend the City of the Blue-Tiled Roofs, or your dynasty is lost. In this world, My Lord, men do not understand the spiritual. To them, your gentleness is weakness, and your kindness, fear. Unless you hate, you cannot be strong, and unless you slay your enemies, your kingdom will fall. This is the law of the Great Arena. In this hour you must decide whether to draw your short bow, as your Fathers did before you; or surrender your city to the armies of the Duke of Lan-O.

But the Kha Khan was not going to break the oath he had sworn with his right hand. He surrendered the city, and the Duke of Lan-O entered through the Eastern Gate and sat on the varnished throne, proclaiming himself the conqueror of the city. But since the people offered no resistance, he ordered that no one should be killed.

And the Duke of Lan-O ordered the Great Khan to be brought before him, and he addressed the Khan of Shamo: "You are a brave man, My Lord Khan, and your short bow was frightened by all the Dukes of the Desert. How is it that your right hand became so weak that you could not defend your city?"

"My right hand is bound by an oath," replied the Khan of Shamo, "and for that reason you took the city. The Holy Hermit of Go-Lun has said that I would know pain, and this day my pain is exceedingly great. But I kept my oath that I would never again bend my bow against any living creature."

The Duke of Lan-O then said: "I will not raise my hand against a man who has sworn an oath. I will keep the city, but the Khan of Shamo may depart in peace, and no harm will come to him, and he may take with him whomever he wishes."

So the Great Khan left the city of his Fathers, with its Blue-Tiled Roofs, and he took nothing with him except the two pieces of his broken bow.

And he traveled to the Forest of Go-Lun, to the Place of the Black Rocks.

And the Venerable Hermit with the shaven head was waiting for the Great Khan at the place where the rocks begin, and the Prince of Cats was also there, beside the Holy Hermit.

And the Khan of Shamo fell on his knees before the Lohan of Go-Lun, and held out the two parts of his broken bow, saying: "Most Holy One, my kingdom is lost, my sons are gone from me, and the people of my city hate me because I did not fight. I knew great sorrow; but I kept the oath I swore with my right hand, and I did not bend my bow against any living creature.

It came to pass then that the Prince of Cats stood before the Great Khan as he knelt upon the ground. And the Lord Tiger looked into the face of the Kha Khan, and stretched forth his paw, which had no claws, and placed it in the right hand of my Lord of Khan.

And the instant the Khan of Shamo looked at the paw of the Lord of the Cats, he received Doctrine in his Heart. And he spoke thus to Lord Tiger:

- At this moment I perceive the Good Law. I know that I too am an embodiment of the Compassionate One. Now I wish to turn the Wheel of the Law, so that I may be at the Gate of Decision at the last hour, when the Blessed Lord enters Nirvana.

And the Great Cat gazed upon the Kha Khan, and the Lord of Compassion shone through the eyes of the Prince of Cats.

Then the Holy Hermit spoke thus: "On this day, the Great Khan set foot upon the Noble Path. I welcome him into the Blessed Order of the Yellow Cloak; and on the Great Day when the Compassionate One is with us, the Great Khan will be with him."

The Holy Lohan took the two pieces of the broken bow and continued speaking:

"This broken bow shall be a sacred relic, for, like the mendicant bowl of our Lord the Buddha, it is a symbol of the Great Renunciation. These broken pieces were your claws, Kha Khan of Shamo, and the pain in your eyes took away your claws."

And the Prince of Cats who had no claws, and the Great Khan who had broken his bow, and the Holy Lohan in whom the Mystery was complete, stood together, as one, on the edge of the Black Rocks in the Forest of Go-Lun. And this is the Brotherhood of the Enlightened One, which will last until the Great Night.

And in the Heart of the Compassionate One, who knows all things, there was now a little less pain.