

THE SELECTED CASES OF JUDGE BAO

Wang Fu



LEOMAN PUBLISHING CO., LTD

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53 Whateleys Drive, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2GY,
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Introduction

About *The Cases of Judge Bao*:

The Cases of Judge Bao is a detective story collection in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the earliest of all Chinese detective fictions as well as the earliest in the world, which can be called the originator of the world detective fiction. There is no record about the life story of its author An Yushek. This collection was originated from the wide spread folktales during the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties. The scripts for story-telling in the Song and Yuan folk literature, were collected into a book in the Ming Dynasty, being the earliest popular short story collection. This collection comprises of a series of types of cases, such as “murder”, “adultery”, “theft”, “scramble” and so on. The stories cover an extensive content, ranging from the conspiracy and usurping of the treacherous ministers and traitors, to the small household affairs of the ordinary people, some about punishing the members of the royal family, others about exposing local tyrants and evil gentry, still others about attacking the imperial examination system, etc...

The Cases of Judge Bao is made up of three volumes, namely *Leungtu Cases* containing 100 cases, *Baichia Cases* another 100 cases and *Five Rats Creating a Havoc in Dongking* still another seven cases, altogether 208 stories (including one introduction of Judge Bao’s life story) with over 370,000 words in Chinese. It is worth noting that the first two volumes overlap a lot, with 43 cases reappearing in the second volume. As far as translation is concerned, it should be more difficult to deal with the

second volume for there are two or more traditional Chinese poems inserted in each of the 100 cases. This present English version of *The Selected Cases of Judge Bao* (including 100 cases with 200,000 words approximately) is from the first volume.

As a whole, detective fiction is the most popular literary genre. It is reported that it keeps taking up about 15% of the total number of books in Europe and America. There is no exception for China. According to incomplete statistics, *The Cases of Judge Bao* has been published dozens of times since the reform and opening up, which is proof enough of its popularity. Up to now, the translator has not found out any English version of it, and the present version will be helpful to convey to the world the charm of traditional Chinese detective fiction.

Bao Cheng (999-1062), born in Hofei, An Hui Province, was a well-known statesman in the Northern Song Dynasty, also honoured with “Lord Bao”. Bao Cheng left few materials of solving cases, but still got trust and recognition from Emperor Rentsong (1010-1063). For nearly one thousand years, he, as an honest and upright official, has been highly esteemed home and abroad.

About the translation strategy and methods:

In the process of translation, the translator tried every possible means to adopt the adapted translation strategy to achieve a better readability and facilitate the reading for the target readers. Firstly, he tried to take advantage of the idiomatic usages of English words, phrases and sentence patterns to avoid Chinglish and any other fabrications. Any collocation or sentence structure without being verified in dictionaries or other authoritative sources should be given up in the translation. Secondly, the translator strived for the lexical diversity. For example, in face of the overuse of “道” (say) leading in the direct quotations in the original, the translator collected over 90 different words to correspond with it. To offer conveniences to the readers, these words are listed as follows: “advise, ask, announce, add, answer, assert, admonish, bawl, beg, beam, bellow, breathe, cry, call, chime in, cut in, conclude, chorus, complain, continue, chuckle, cajole, concede grudgingly, declare, explain, exclaim, echo, entreat, exhort, greet, giggle, groan, growl, guess wildly, implore, inquire, instruct, insist, interject,

laugh, lecture, lash, mutter, murmur, moan, muse, order, protest, ponder, pray, proclaim, prompt, put in, query, repeat, reply, read, report, remark, return, retort, roar, rant, rejoin, say, scream, sigh, shout, shriek, state, sneer, scold, snap, spit, swear, squawk, squeak, screech, shrill, think, tell, thunder, trill, urge, venture, warn, wail, whisper, write, wonder, whimper, yell”. It is believed that there are more similar expressions to be collected. Thirdly, to adapt to the target readers, it was very cautious of the translator in employing the transliteration. There are numerous proper nouns in the original. It would cause difficulty for the readers if Chinese Phonetic Alphabet is adopted inflexibly. For instance, if the surname “许” is rendered into “Xu”, it will be hard for the target readers to have a similar pronunciation with the original. Thus it is translated into “Hsu”. Similar instances are listed as follows: 张-Cheunng, 王-Wong, 李-Lee, 赵-Chao, 周-Chou, 刘-Lau, 浙江-Chechiang, 苏州-Soochou, ect... If there were no universally accepted equivalent, the translator had to use coinages. For instance, “秀才” was translated into Shiutsai instead of Xiucui. But when this proper noun occurred in the collection for the first time, paraphrase was put in, “one who passed the imperial examination at the county level”.

All in all, despite the great efforts the translator has made, there must be numerous mistakes and errors in the translation owing to the shortage of experience and his poor ability. The translator will never refuse the readers’ kind advice.

About the translator:

Wang Fu, associate professor in Polytechnic Normal University, got his master’s degree majoring in Translation and Interpretation of Advanced English, doctor’s degree in comparative literature and world literature. He finished his postdoctoral research in translation studies. In scientific research, he published over twenty papers and two monographs. In literary translation, he published the Chinese version of *A Complete Story of Sherwood Anderson* (including five short story collections, with 689,000 words in total), with the Chinese version of *A Complete Story of Eudora Welty* (including four short story collections, with 500,000 words approximately) to be published.

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Case 1

Chanting Amitabha to Beg for Forgiveness

In Shiaogan county, Dur-an Prefecture, lived a scholar with the name Hsu Shianchong, who was only eighteen years old with delicate features, plump and elegant. Opposite his door was a butcher named Shiao Fuhan, who had a daughter named Shiao Shuyu, a beautiful seventeen-year-old girl. The girl seldom went outdoors, but just buried herself in embroidering upstairs.

Her house was next to the street so that she often saw Hsu Shianchong pass by. Their eyes meeting across the street, soon they fell in love with each other.

Over time, they began chatting secretly. When Hsu hit on her, she responded with a pleasant smile. One night, he sneaked up the stairs, and coming into her room had a good night with Shuyu. He did not leave until the roosters crowed at dawn, and they made a secret appointment for the next night. "I'm afraid someone who passes by at night will see you climbing the stairs to my room," Shuyu said, "I will prepare a log tying a piece of white cloth on its end, and hang the cloth halfway down the stairs. All you need to do is hold onto the cloth tightly, and I'll pull you upstairs. Isn't it more convenient?" Hsu Shianchong was overwhelmed with joy, and just took a share in the scheme at night. They had such intercourse with each other lasting for half a year and their neighbors all knew about it except Shiao Fuhan and his wife.

One night, his friends invited him to drink, so Hsu didn't come to meet Shuyu. At that moment, a bonze called Mingshiu saw the white cloth hanging from upstairs to the ground while begging along the street. He just guessed that the household had not taken away the dried cloth, so he thought of stealing it. Then he stopped beating the wooden fish and went to pull the cloth off. Suddenly someone hoisted up the cloth and the bonze realized at once that it must be an adulterous woman hanging this cloth to hoist her lover, so he let her pull it up. As expected, he saw a woman upstairs. The monk was overjoyed and said, "It must be Buddha's will to meet you, lady. If you are willing to spend a good night with me, Buddha will bless you." "Only the gentleman can match with me. How can I be willing to lose my virginity to you? I would rather hand out a silver hairpin to you and you should go downstairs as soon as possible." Shuyu said in panic. The monk said, "It was you who lured me upstairs, no way back." Then he embraced her forcefully and attempted at a sexual assault. Shuyu was so angry that she shouted for help, "Here is a thief!" At that time, her parents were already asleep and couldn't hear her voice. The monk, afraid of being perceived, killed the woman with his sword, going downstairs with her hairpins, earrings and rings.

After breakfast the next morning, feeling weird that her daughter hadn't waked up yet, her mother came to see what happened to her. It was at that time that she saw her dead daughter upstairs, with no idea who the murderer was. Some neighbors who had disapproval of the affair told Shiao Fuhan, "Your daughter has been dating with Hsu Shianchong for more than half a year, and last night Hsu knocked over a drink in his friends' house, so it must be he who murdered your daughter by means of Dutch courage." Hearing of the wisdom of Judge Bao, Shiao Fuhan lodged a petition to him, which read, "This is a crime of rape and murder: A rascal scholar named Hsu Shianchong had an evil mind and whipped up scandal. He coveted my daughter for her beauty and insulted her by hook or crook. Yesterevening the drunken Shiutsai, a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the county level, sneaked into my daughter's bedroom and attempting to rape my daughter stabbed her to death with his sword due to her defiance. He took the opportunity to steal all her hairpins, earrings and rings, which my neighbors can testify. He changed from a Shiutsai in the academy to an evil man, from a little villain to a huge monster. The laws seemed not really important to those bad people, and things went worse. So I am grieved to lodge an

urgent complaint for a life for a life.”

Clean and upright in office with excellent insight, Judge Bao accepted this case immediately and summoned the plaintiff, the defendant and the witnesses for the hearing.

The witnesses interrogated first, both the neighbors Shiao May and Wu Fan asserted, “Shiao Shuyu’s accommodation is upstairs along the street and she has been having affairs with Hsu Shianchong for half a year, with only her parents kept in the dark. There was an amour indeed but no rape. As for the reason why she died suddenly, honestly, we have no idea at all.” Shiutsai Hsu said, “The fact of adultery cannot be concealed from the public, and I will admit it without dispute. If this is my crime, I am willing to be condemned to death, but I never killed her.” Shiao Fuhan argued, “It is clear that he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor rather than a felony. He is the only one who has gone into my daughter’s room, so who else can kill her except him? It must be that my daughter refused his attempt to rape and he killed her in anger. As a frivolous young guy, how could he have scruple about my daughter’s relationship with him? My lord, he will not admit it without torture.” Seeing that Hsu was handsome and gentle but not ferocious looking, Bao asked, “Have you ever noticed anyone passing by when you stayed with Shuyu?”

Hsu answered, “There was no one before, but only this month there was a bonze begging for food and beating the wooden fish passed by.” Hearing that, Bao rebuked indignantly, “Shuyu must be murdered by you! Are you convinced to be condemned?” Shianchong was panicked and replied, “Yes.” Then he was beaten for forty times and imprisoned. Bao summoned the guards Wong Chong and Lee Yee secretly and instructed, “Where does the begging monk live now?” Wong Chong replied, “He is living in front of the Guanyin seat on the Moon Bridge.” Judge Bao then set up a scheme and ordered the two of them to do as planned.

That night, the monk Mingshiu beat his wooden fish and begged as usual. Around midnight, he was going back to the bridge for a rest when he heard three ghosts under the bridge screaming and sobbing, which sounded miserable and terrifying.

The monk sat in meditation on the bridge, chanting Amitabha, the Buddhist mantra.

And a ghost who sounded like a woman, cried, “Mingshiu, Mingshiu, I just rejected you when you were attempting to rape me. My lifetime should have been longer and you have no justification to kill me. You killed me for no reason and robbed me of my hairpins and earrings. I have complained to King Yama, and he is dispatching two ghost officials to help me take your life. But now, you are chanting Amitabha to ask for forgiveness. I will not quit until you give me money and send the ghosts away. Otherwise, I will report to King Yama once more, and we will definitely come and take your life. At that time no Buddha can save you.”

Mingshiu held his Buddha beads in hand, answering, “I had a sexual desire to rape you but when seeing you resist and scream for help, I was frightened of being caught so I mistakenly killed you for a moment. Here are your hairpins, earrings and rings. Tomorrow I will buy ghost money and chant scriptures to free your soul from suffering. Please do not report to Yama.” The female ghost cried again along with the other two ghosts’ screaming, sounding even more miserable and terrifying. The monk chanted the scriptures again and promised to release her soul from purgatory the next day. Suddenly, the two constables walked out from under the bridge, tying up Mingshiu with an iron chain. The monk shouted in panic, “Are you ghosts?” Wong Chong answered, “I’m not a ghost but to arrest you under Judge Bao’s order.” The monk was too frightened to stand up, just like a lump of mud. He could only beg for forgiveness for the sake of the Buddha.

Wong Chong said sarcastically, “What a scheming Buddha, raping Buddha!” So he took the chained monk away. Lee Yee collected the monk’s Zen baskets, rush cushions and other items to go along with him. It turned out that Judge Bao had ordered the two constables to hire a prostitute, who made a ghostly sound under the bridge to scare the monk into telling the truth.

The next day, they came back to report to Bao, narrating the whole story that Mingshiu was scared by the fake ghosts into admitting his murder and attempted rape of Shuyu. Bao then ordered to take some silver from the treasury to award the prostitute and the two constables. Besides, in the tattered cassock of Mingshiu, the hairpins, earrings, and rings were found belonging to the deceased woman, which was confirmed by Shiao Fuhan. Mingshiu had no excuse to hide the truth and could only admit all the

crimes, accepting the death sentence.

Then, Bao said to Hsu Shianchong, “This bald evildoer ought to be killed for the crime of killing Shuyu. But as a Shiutsai, you committed adultery with a maiden, for which you should be deprived of your status of scholarship. But now, neither you nor Shuyu has been married. Although it was adultery, you should still be considered as a married couple. Shuyu hung down cloth for you, which incurred the monk. What’s more, she safeguarded her chastity, which resulted in her death. How can we say she didn’t abide by the female virtues?” Now if you are willing to remarry, you must remove your status as a Shiutsai. If you want to hang on your prospect, you must marry Shuyu as your legitimate wife, bury and worship her, and never marry again. Which choice will you make?” Shianchong answered, “I am well aware that Shuyu has always been virtuous and kind. She was in deep love with me so that we had affairs. And I am also devoted to her. When we were dating, Shuyu once asked me to marry her, and I promised that I certainly would when I passed the next imperial exam. Unexpectedly, Shuyu met this despicable monk and sacrificed her life to preserve her chastity for me. How could I bear to marry again? Now all I want to do is bury Shuyu and take her as my legitimate wife to live up to her chastity. I vow never to remarry. As for my official career, it’s all up to Your Honor and I dare not engage in deception.”

Judge Bao said in delight, “Your mind is justifiable, and I’ll try to protect your projects.” Immediately, he wrote an official document and elaborated on the case to the Department of Education: “Through interrogation, it was learned that the student Hsu Shianchong as a young man is not married and his neighbor’s daughter Shuyu is not betrothed either. They found each other congenial and had a lovers’ rendezvous in Shuyu’s boudoir at night, which lasted for half a year. They hoped that they would have an everlasting harmonious union, but an accident happened. The evil monk Mingshiu, prone to outside attractions, went upstairs to Shuyu’s boudoir in the dead of night. The monk was greedy and immoral and attempted to rape Shuyu. Unable to obtain what he had planned, Mingshiu drew a steel sword from his sleeve. Shuyu was killed innocently with her the hairpins, earrings and rings taken away. What a miserable lady murdered by the monk! What a faithful scholar vowing never to marry again! Now the monk is supposed to pay with his life for the grievances of this chaste woman. And a promising future shall be granted to this scholar for his devotion as a virtual husband. I

dare not act without authorization, only waiting for the final decision from the authority.”

The official in charge of education therewith approved of Bao’s proposals. Later on, Shianchong passed the imperial exam of the provincial level and came back to thank Judge Bao, saying, “Without your help, I would have been wronged to death and there would not be what I am today.” Bao asked, “Do you want to marry now?” Hsu swore, “I don’t dare until I die.” Bao continued, “Of the three unfilial acts, the worst is to have no male descendant.” Hsu replied, “Now I would rather be righteous to my wife than filial to my parents.” Bao said, “Now that you have attained an academic title, your wife Shuyu must be overjoyed in the heaven. Besides, she would approve of your taking a concubine if she were still alive. Now as long as you appoint Shuyu as the legitimate wife, it is alright to take a concubine.” Shianchong persistently refused the suggestion. Bao asked Tian Tsaimao, a peer of Shianchong’s, who passed the imperial examination at the provincial level in the same year, to act as a matchmaker and force Shianchong to take Huo’s daughter as his concubine. Then Shianchong got married according to the concubine etiquette. In public places, he only acknowledged Shuyu as his wife, and never mentioned Lady Huo, which is a perfect example of the reservation of men’s morality and women’s chastity. And Judge Bao will have boundless beneficence in redressing Shuyu’s grievances, and bringing descendants to Shianchong.

Case 2

Guanyin Bodhisattva Coming to the Dream

There was a Shiutsai named Ding Richong in Chengfan Prefecture Guichou Province. Learning in Anfu Temple from time to time, he was well acquainted with a monk, Shinghui. One day, the monk called at Ding's house when Ding happened to be out. Ding's wife Deng had often heard her husband's mentioning that he was treated with food many a time by Shinghui when studying in the temple. So she came out and asked the monk to stay for a meal. Shinghui had a crush on Deng for her gorgeous appearance and elegant speech. Informed of Ding's absence for a month, Shinghui then came up with an idea. He hired two Taoists to dress up as bearers, who went to Deng's house shortly before noon, and cajoled, "Your husband suffered a sudden stroke for overload while studying in the temple. Thanks to the monk Shinghui, he recovered consciousness and now is lying on bed at the last gasp. And now he asks us to pick you up to see him." Deng asked, "Why not use the sleeping sedan to bring him back?" The two bearers answered, "We should have done so, but with such a long distance of over ten miles, which, once he gets a cold, will exacerbate his symptom, so we changed our mind. You can go for a look, and decide whether he should stay there for treatment or come back. It would be nice to have his relative around to take care of him." Deng then approved of their advice and boarded the sedan chair.

Not until it was late into night did she arrive at the temple. Then she was carried into

the depth of the monk's house, where dishes had been served and Shinghui was waiting to dine with her. She asked, "Where is my husband? Take me to him." Shinghui answered, "Your husband visited a new temple outside the city at his friends' invitation and was reported to have got a stroke. I have checked him and he is in a stable and safe condition now. It is five miles from here. It's getting late, so you can stay here for one night and set off tomorrow morning. If you insist on going now, you might as well leave some time to the bearers to dinner. You can eat some snacks as well, and then ask for a torch for lighting."

Suspicion grew in her mind, but no choice was left to her. After several drinks, Deng urged the bearers to go. The monk replied, "The bearers don't want to go at night and have already left. You can have more drinks, and just take it easy."

The monk ordered the servant to persuade her into drinking and Deng got slightly drunk and was ushered into an enclosed meditation abode for sleep. Seeing the splendid bed with flowery pillows, dainty sheets and opulent fabrics, Deng became suspicious and went to bed with the lamp on and her clothes untied. After the bell rang, Shinghui piled in from behind, and approaching the bed hugged Deng. "Thief!" shouted Deng. Shinghui replied, "Even if you shout till tomorrow, no one will come. I've spent a lot of scheming for you and finally get you now, which is also a long-cherished destiny. There is no way for you to refuse." She scolded, "How shameless, coarse monk! I'd rather die than be defiled." Shinghui said, "Well, may you be so nice as to allow me to stay by your side for just one night? And tomorrow you will be sent to your husband. But if you spare me no mercy for this, you are sure to die." Keeping yelling and cursing until midnight, Deng was forcibly stripped off her clothes, and with her hands and feet tied, raped at will.

Not until the next noon did Shinghui get up. He said, "You have been tricked and trapped here. Now you can have your hair cut and disguised as a monk hide in the temple. You'll be supplied with food and clothing, and you'll have your husband around. If you lose your temper as you did yesterday, there's a string, razor and poison, any of which can end your life!" Deng thought to herself that she had been insulted and humiliated, and if she died, the truth would be covered up forever and she would have no way to revenge. She would rather pocket an insult than kill herself in order that one

day she could meet her husband and punish the evil man. After that, she would choose to kill herself. Thus, she followed Shinghui's instruction and cut her hair.

More than a month later, Ding Richong came to the temple to visit Shinghui. Deng recognized her husband's voice and instantly rushed out, closely followed by Shinghui. Richong greeted Deng as he saw her. Deng cried, "Don't you recognize me, husband? I was abducted by Shinghui here, looking forward to your rescue day and night."

Flying into fury, Richong grabbed and hit Shinghui. Shinghui rounded up the monks to bind Richong, taking his broadsword and ready to kill him.

Deng seized the broadsword and said, "Kill me first!" Putting down the weapon, Shinghui pulled Deng into the house and tying her with a rope, came out to kill Richong.

Richong said, "Abducting my wife and killing me, you will be haunted by my ghost forever. If you kill, just kill us together, and let me and my wife accompany each other to the other world."

"Deng can rely on nobody if you die, and she will be my wife for life. How can she die with you?" said Shinghui.

"Then just let me kill myself and keep my body intact." advised Richong. Shinghui replied, "I will accumulate some hidden virtues. There is a big bell behind the abbot. I will put you under the bell and let you die." Thus, Richong was trapped under the big bell, Deng praying in tears to Bodhisattva day and night for someone to rescue her husband.

Three days later, Judge Bao happened to make an inspection tour in Chengfan Prefecture. He dreamed that Bodhisattva led him to the Anfu temple, where he saw a black dragon suppressed under a big bell behind the abbot. At the very beginning, Bao did not take it seriously until he dreamed the same in the next days. Then he began to wonder about the dream. So Bao ordered his followers to leave for the Anfu temple and to see what was the matter.

At arrival, Bao did see a big bell. The bell lifted up, he saw a man starving to death.

Bao knew that the man was trapped by others, and gave him water and porridge right now. Once waking up and regaining his consciousness after the meal, Richong said, "It was the monk Shinghui who abducted my wife, cutting her hair and disguising her as a monk, and trapped me under the bell." Thus, Bao ordered the followers to arrest Shinghui, but no woman was found. Then Bao ordered a close search, and found the compound wall, which was covered with flooring boards. The flooring boards lifted up, they found a ladder leading to a basement, where a young monk sitting in meditation with a lantern on. The monk was brought to Bao.

This young monk turned out to be Deng. Seeing her husband released, and Shinghui arrested, she recounted the whole story. Having no way of defending himself, Shinghui kowtowed and conceded, "I am willing to accept the death penalty." Bao immediately remarked, "The lewd monk Shinghui, full of evil, made association with Ding Richong by means of wine and food. He was fascinated by the beauty of Ding's wife Deng, so a ruse hit on his mind. Then she was tricked into the temple and raped. At the same time, she was forced to cut her hair and disguised as a monk. Although depressed, Deng still decided to find a chance to take revenge on him. Ding came to the temple by chance. Fortunately, Deng heard the sound. After the couple met, they cried. Before they finished their intimate words, a group of monks caught him and wanted to kill him. After pleading to keep his body intact, he was finally trapped under the bell. I dreamed that a black dragon was covered under the bell, so I went to the abbot and lifted the bell. Richong was saved after being starved for five days. Ding Richong survived the disaster and was bound to prosper in the future. Deng desired to die but survived, and finally she should get a reunion with her husband. Shinghui abducted the married woman and entrapped the man. There was no doubt that he deserved beheading. The other monks committed evil deeds and shall be sent into exile."

After the trial, Shinghui was beheaded for public display, and other monks who had helped him were banished. Bao reproached Deng and said, "You should have chosen to die when you were abducted, and you could have had good reputation for chastity, and your husband would not have been trapped under the bell. Had it not been the dream from Guanyin Bodhisattva, your husband would have starved to death because of you." Deng explained, "I didn't choose to die at first because I hadn't seen my husband and avenged on that evil monk. Now that my husband has been rescued and the evil monk

punished, as a defiled woman, I am determined to die!” She then banged her head against the post, spilling blood all over the floor. Bao commanded his men to support her. Although fainting due to excessive bleeding, she recovered after being cured with medicine. Bao said to Ding Richong, “As far as Deng was concerned, she had no choice but to submit to the evil monk at first, and she chose to live for revenge. Now that she’s willing to bang her head against a pole to show her determination, would you still accept her?” Ding answered, “I always hated her for being mortally afraid of death, thinking she was lying about living for revenge; seeing her bang against a column to show her loyalty, I know that she was not humbly dragging out an ignoble existence. Now that she is lucky enough to survive, I would like to treat her as if we met again in the next life.”

After expressing their gratitude to Lord Bao and returning home, the Dings carved a portrait of Bao with wood, enshrined and worshipped it unremittingly every day. Later, Ding Richong passed the imperial examination and became a deputy magistrate.

Case 3

Chewing Tongue and Spitting Blood

In Shee'an Prefecture lived Nie Chonggui, a man with a great fortune, who married Tang and had four sons, the eldest named Kershiao, the second Kertee, the third Kerchung and the fourth Kersin. Kershiao was in charge of the family, while Kertee was out in business. Kerchung studied hard and became famous for his literary talent when he was young. So talented that he often got top awards in exams. He taught his younger brother Kersin patiently, who was attentive and lovable and following him respectfully in and out. Unfortunately, failing in the exam and catching an illness, Kerchung was bedridden, and Kersin visited him from time to time. When Kersin saw his sister-in-law, Shuchen, a beautiful woman, he was worried that his sick brother would be greedy for her beauty to hinder his recovery, so he wanted to move his brother to his study to recuperate his body and mind, which might save his life. However, Shuchen loved her husband so much that she refused to let him leave the room and said, "Kerchung cannot be moved because no one takes care of him in the study. It's in the room that I can help him take medicine at any time." As a matter of fact, they were genuinely in love with each other, not for their own sexual desires. But the younger brother Kersin felt very unhappy. Some of Kerchung's friends and relatives came to visit him, and everyone felt sorry for him because he was exhausted by his studies. Kersin sighed, "My brother is not sick because of his hard work. Many heroes have died at the hands of women since ancient times, and my brother is no

exception!” With that, the tears began to flow. His friends and relatives were shocked at that and soon left. When Kerchung got critical, Chiang Shuchen urgently called Kersin to come. Kersin was furious and shouted, “The day before yesterday, you did not accept my suggestion. But what is the point of asking me to come here now?” Shuchen was stunned and melancholic. When Kersin approached the bed, Kerchung sobbed, “I am seriously ill and cannot be cured. You must study hard to stand out in the imperial examinations and don’t let me down. Your sister-in-law is virtuous and young. I hope you can treat her well.” With that, he breathed his last. Kersin was extremely distraught. Afterwards, he performed the funeral rites orderly and served his widowed sister-in-law with the utmost respect.

After Kerchung died, all the young and old in the family took great pity on the widow. On the forty-ninth day after Kerchung’s death, a Taoist priest was invited to worship him. Wailing and mourning, Shuchen had not eaten for half a month, so she became emaciated and haggard. One hundred days later, with comfort from her parents, as well as from the elders and the sisters-in-law, Shuchen began to eat normally and her looks recovered gradually. Although she did not wear jewelry or makeup, the natural beauty was still very attractive and dignified. However, she had a strong character, strict in her morals, speaking quietly and acting justly, without anything unimpeachable.

As the one-year anniversary of Kerchung’s death approached, Shuchen’s father Chiang Kwang-guk arranged a memorial ceremony, personally offering incense to his son-in-law. With the guidance of his nephew, the Daoist priest Chiang Chiayan, who had taken religious vows, he brought his disciples Chiang Darheng, Chiang Shekhwua, and Yan Hwayuan to participate in the ceremony. Kersin was not very happy, and then said to Kwang-guk, “Thank you for your kindness, but it’s not really necessary.” Angry and displeased, Kwang-guk said to Shuchen, “I came to offer sacrifices to your husband out of goodwill, but your younger brother-in-law does not appreciate it. If he treats your husband like this, isn’t he treating you even worse?” Shuchen replied, “He had wanted to move my husband to the study when he was ill, but I refused and kept him in the room to serve. When my husband died, he blamed me for not obeying. We haven’t seen each other for a year since then, and he has been so indifferent to me.” Hearing these words, Kwang-guk felt more disappointed with Kersin. When the ceremony was about to end, during the blessings for the deceased, Kwang-guk asked

Shuchen to pay respects to her husband, saying, "The people performing the ceremony are all our relatives; you may as well come out and worship your husband." Shuchen was so sad that she could not control herself. She wept and worshipped in front of Kerchung's funeral place. The whole scene was so touching that all the onlookers felt sorry for her.

Only the lecherous Taoist priest Yan Hwayuan was an exception, who thought to himself, "It is often said that Shuchen is a beautiful woman, and now that she looks so good in her mourning clothes, she must be even better if she has no worries. What great fun to have her around then! As a result, he had an illicit desire for her. When it was late at night and the sermon was complete, the Taoists all paid their respects and left. Kwang-guk said, "Chiayan, Darheng, and Shekhwua are all our relatives, so they can forgive a meager commission, but Mr. Yan is a person with a different surname and should be rewarded with a generous commission." Shuchen then increased the commission. Who would have thought that Hwayuan had bad intentions? On the surface, he bade farewell and left, but in reality, he hid on the roof of the attic and pretended to be a mouse making a sound in the dead of night. Shuchen held a candle to see what was happening, and Hwayuan immediately sprinkled aphrodisiac on her. As soon as Shuchen was infected with this evil medicine, she became sexually promiscuous and made love to Hwayuan in a delirious way. By the time dawn came, the effect of the drug had worn off, and Shuchen began to know that she had been raped with the drug. She thought that this would tarnish her reputation and integrity, so she ended her life by chewing her tongue and spitting blood. When Hwayuan's lascivious idea came to fruition, he absconded and left the bag of the commission to Shuchen, which he placed in her arms as an apology in the hope that she would be reborn.

When breakfast was ready in the morning, the maidservant, Chyushiang, entered the room with water and called Shuchen to freshen up, but she couldn't find her, so she went up to the attic, only to see Shuchen was dead on the mattress. Chyushiang was shocked and immediately reported to Kershiao and Kersin, "My mistress died in the attic." They hurried upstairs and found Shuchen was indeed breathless. Everyone was panicked, so they asked the maidservants to carry Shuchen's body to the hall and put it in the coffin. When carried down from the attic, the silver bag on Shuchen's chest fell

off, and Chyushiang immediately picked it up and hid it.

At that time, Gwang-guk was sleeping in his son-in-law's study. When he heard that Shuchen had died, he immediately swore, "Kersin must be the murderer." He quickly rushed into the back hall to mourn. Feeling very sad and resentful, he said in a stern voice, "My daughter was born with a strong personality and remained healthy. But she died suddenly at night. There must be a reason for this. Not only did you hate my daughter for refusing her husband to stay in the study to recuperate, which you thought caused his death, but you also hated me for leading the Taoist priests to pay his respects. You must have seized the opportunity to do evil and raped my daughter, who, bearing a grudge, died by chewing her tongue and spitting blood." So he filed a lawsuit to Judge Bao. The complaint read, "The accusation is about Kersin killing his sister-in-law in disregard of ethics: Customs should begin with indoctrination, and ethics and morality should be given the utmost importance in life. It is improper for a man and a woman to touch each other's hand in passing objects. If his sister-in-law is drowning, he should not use his hands to rescue her. My daughter married the scholar Nie Kerchung. Although unfortunately her husband died, she was willing to remain a widow for him. And the beast Kersin, usually greedy for his sister-in-law's beauty, had no chance to take action. But then, he took advantage of the opportunity of completing the Taoist sacrificial rites. Thinking that his sister-in-law was tired and sleeping in the bedroom, he suddenly burst in and raped her. My daughter was humiliated and resentful, so she suffocated by biting her tongue and spitting blood. Even the fox and the dog utterly detest this dehumanising act. Even the quail and the magpie cannot stand such a despicable scandal. Occasionally talk at home, and there will be gossips. When people outside gather to talk, won't there be lewd words? For my daughter, there is no way to redress her wrongs, so she committed suicide to prove her innocence and chastity. There is evidence for the evil rape and murder. Her grievance cannot be redressed if the murderer doesn't pay his life. I earnestly beg Your Excellency to bring the villain to justice as soon as possible. This is my appeal."

At this moment, Kersin was ashamed to hear that Kwang-guk had accused him of raping his sister-in-law. Fondling his elder brother's spiritual position, he wept so bitterly that he died instantly after vomiting up several litres of blood. After his death, his spirit went to the netherworld and met Kerchung. He kowtowed and recounted the

story. Kerchung said in tears, “The real murderer was the Taoist priest Yan Hwayuan. There is a bag of silver in Chyushiang’s hand, which has been registered in the accountbook by your sister-in-law. You can hand Chyushiang and the bag over to the magistrate as evidence to prove that you have nothing to do with this incident. My ghost is going to assist you in the Yamen, and you should return to life as soon as possible. Please try to release Shuchen’s souls from suffering in future. Do remember these.” When Kersin came back from death, a day had passed.

Judge Bao lost no time to detain Kersin for questioning. Therefore, Kersin had to lodge a suit hastily: “My complaint is about my sister-in-law’s sudden death for unknown reason and my return to life with grievances. My sister-in-law was raped and had to die but not at the right time, and for her death, her father had to sue, but sued the wrong person. Why was it not at the right time? It is because she should have reported the real murderer and should not have died so early; her father should have found out the real raper before suing me. I treated my elder brother as my teacher, and my sister-in-law as my mother. Because I was not good at communicating with her, I showed inhibited etiquette. I even didn’t dare to show disrespect, so how dare I rape her? The real culprit is the Taoist priest Yan Hwayuan. My sister-in-law’s father didn’t know the truth, but falsely accused me instead. The scheme of the evil person has been successful, leaving me wronged. Justice has long arms, and I am not convinced of the grievances. So I appeal in tears.”

Bao also accepted Kersin’s petition, and summoned Chiang Kuang-guk for confrontation. Kuang-guk said, “When my son-in-law was ill, Kersin wanted to move him into the study for recovery. But my daughter refused and kept him in the room instead. And later the son-in-law died unfortunately. Kersin deeply blamed my daughter for the death of his brother, so he raped my daughter to vent his anger, which led to my daughter’s death.” Kersin replied, “The real raper who caused my sister-in-law’s death is the Taoist priest Yan Hwayuan.” Kuang-guk argued, “Yan only did a day of work to placate the soul of your brother, so how dare he have the intention to rape my daughter in her room and force her to climb up the attic? Besides, when the work was finished, Yan went out with us together, and the public were all the witnesses. So what Kersin said was all nonsense.” Lord Bao said, “Do you have any evidence if you want to accuse him, since there are so many taoists?” Kersin said in tears, “A few

days ago, when Kuang-guk slandered me, I felt unbearable with his baseless accusations, so immediately I cried sadly in front of the spirit tablet of my elder brother, and vomiting blood on the ground suffocated to death. When I came across my elder brother in the underworld, I kowtowed in sorrow at once, but my elder brother comforted me and told me the fact that it was Taoist Yan that caused my sister-in-law's death, with the bag of silver in the Chyushiang's hand as evidence, which my sister-in-law had registered in the account book. I beg Your Honor for a detailed investigation."

Bao said angrily, "This is sheer nonsense. How dare you say this to me?" So he had Kersin bludgeoned thirty times. After receiving the punishment, Kersin was in great pain and cried out, "The ghost of my deceased brother has promised to assist me, so how dare I talk nonsense!" Bao loudly retorted, "In that case, why didn't your brother directly tell me?" Suddenly Bao felt drowsy, so he fell asleep on the desk, dreaming of Kerchung, the deceased scholar, crying, "Lord Bao has always been called a god. Why are you deceived today? The one who raped my wife causing her death was Yan Hwayuan, and the case had nothing to do with my younger brother. Chyushiang got a bag of silver, which your honor once rewarded me after the exam and was given to Taoist Yan as a commission, which my wife registered in the accountbook, and the handwriting and signature was clearly hers. I earnestly hope your honor can give a detailed trial, bring the culprit to justice quickly, and release my brother." Bao woke up from his sleep and exclaimed, "It is really such a thing! The ghost of Kerchung has come to me." Bao then said to Kersin, "What you said is not nonsense, for your brother has already told me the truth. I will help you redress this injustice." Then he instantly ordered to arrest Chyushiang, torturing her by squeezing her fingers, and getting a bag of silver, which was indeed that reward silver. Bao asked her, "Where did you get the silver?"

"The money was on the mistress' body. I picked it up when she was carried down from the attic." answered Chyushiang. Then Bao sent his men to Shuchen's room together with Chyushiang for the accountbook. Sure enough, there was a record on it in Shuchen's handwriting, "Five taels of silver for Yan Hwayuan's commission". Bao instantly ordered to arrest Yan, who, once bludgeoned, confessed all things: He used evil drugs to rape Shuchen, leading to her death and put the reward silver in Shuchen's

clothes. He was willing to admit the crime, which had nothing to do with Kersin. Bao made the following judgment: “Yan Hwayuan, a member of Taoism, did not behave properly to improve his mind. He was lustful and coveted the beauty of women. Ostensibly he bade farewell and left after being rewarded. However, his lust led him to sneak in Shuchen’s attic and engaged in despicable behaviors. With evil medicine to desecrate the chaste woman, where is his morality? He was lustful and killed a woman in mourning. He completely forgot the rules of Taoism. His obscene affairs couldn’t be forgiven by God of Taoism and the hell would be his last resting place because of his crime. Shuchen had grievances, losing her life; Kerchung appeared in my dream to take revenge in this world. A bag of silver is enough as evidence, and several lines of words are available. Taoism does not permit such a lecher, and how can the criminal law tolerate his crime of rape? According to the law, Yan, who killed Shuchen, could not escape the punishment of beheading. This matter had nothing to do with Kersin, so he is acquitted of the charge. Chiang Kuang-guk deserved punishment for he attempted to kill Kersin by means of malicious accusation.”

Case 4

Biting His Tongue and Strangled to Death

There lived a man named Lyu Yuren in Chyufu County, Yanchou Prefecture, Shandong Province. He had a son named Lyu Rufang, who started school at the age of ten and showed extraordinary intelligence. At that time, Chen Bangmo, Deputy Commissioner of the same county, heard of this and intended to marry his daughter, Yueying, to Rufang through the matchmaker Fu Wenshue, who was both the teacher of his son and Lyu Yuren's cousin. After both sides had come to an agreement, they completed all the rites of marriage in accordance with traditional customs.

After several years, Lyu Yuren respectfully invited his cousin Fu Wenshue to set a date for the wedding. Subsequently, Chen Bangmo prepared a generous dowry and sent his daughter Yueying to Yuren's home. Yueying was exceptionally beautiful, with a charm that surpassed that of ordinary people, leaving everyone in admiration. Friends from the county academy all came to celebrate the wedding, among them being the son of the Minister of Personnel Affairs, named Chu Hongshi, who was a frivolous and unscrupulous guy. After tying the knot, Chen Yueying displayed profound filial piety towards her parents-in-law and obedient to her husband without incomppliance. What a sudden tragedy! Just as the joyous occasion had barely taken shape, disaster struck unexpectedly. Both Yuren and his wife passed away, leaving Rufang overwhelmed with grief. After three years of mourning for his parents, Rufang successfully entered a

prestigious educational institution and became a candidate for the subsequent provincial examination. In the meantime, Yueying gave birth to a son, therefore she looked after her child at home. Driven by his aspiration for academic achievements, Rufang ultimately decided to leave his wife and embark on the journey to take the examination. Rufang encountered Japanese pirates on his journey and was captured, leaving only the servant Cheng Er to escape and inform Yueying of the news. Upon hearing that, Chen Yueying was overcome with grief and nearly lost consciousness, but with the comfort of her father and brothers, she gradually calmed down. Her father advised, "I am leaving urgently for my appointment, and I'm worried about your safety if you stay alone at home. It would be better if you come with me, along with your son." Yueying answered, "I shouldn't disobey your orders, Father. But your son-in-law has been kidnapped, and his life and death is unknown. We only have this offspring now, and if there were an accident on the road, it would mean the end of the Lyu family's lineage. Moreover, there is no one in charge at home, so it's not convenient for me to travel far away." The deputy commissioner said, "You also have a point. Now that we are all gone except your two sisters-in-law. You can visit them as often as you like and don't get sick from worrying too much at home."

After the deputy left, Chen Yueying entrusted all the affairs of the family to Cheng Er and his wife. She had only a seven-year-old maid named Chiugui around her. Chen Yueying lived a secluded life, and the internal and external affairs of the family were all handled in an orderly manner. Unexpectedly, Chunheung, the wife of Cheng Er, had an affair with their neighbor Cheunng Maochi, secretly meeting each other day and night. Maochi prompted to Chunheung, "Your mistress is still young and in the throes of lust. You could help introduce me to her for a romance." Chunheung replied, "My mistress has always been virtuous and proper, and I would never dare to transgress. Besides, she rarely leaves the house, so this is surely unattainable." Maochi said teasingly, "You're just being selfish, afraid that I'll neglect you if this happens, and that's why you refuse to help." Chunheung insisted, "This is indeed difficult." From then on, both of them dropped the matter and never mentioned it again.

Chu Hongshi, due to celebrating Lyu Rufang's wedding, developed affection for Yueying, but was troubled by the lack of opportunities to approach her. Upon hearing the news that Rufang had been abducted, he chose to stay at an inn near the Lyu's

residence, widely making friends with the neighbors, and often inquired about matters of the Lyu's household in casual conversations, appearing to genuinely sympathize with Rufang's plight. A man inadvertently told him, "The Lyu family has been doing good deeds for generations, but now, Rufang is captured by robbers. It's really unjust. His wife, Chen Yueying, adheres strictly to the virtues of a woman, going out without being accompanied by grown-up servants, but only by a seven-year-old maid. She entrusts all the household affairs to Cheng Er and his wife. Cheng Er is truly selfless and admirable." Upon hearing the person praise Cheng Er exclusively, Chu Hongshi suspected that there must be something wrong with his wife. Therefore, he ventured, "I've heard that Cheng Er's wife has an affair with someone, which may ultimately tarnish the good reputation of Lady Chen." The man replied, "How do you come to know this? There is a man named Cheunng Maochi, who has a great appetite for romantic entanglements. He has been secretly meeting Cheng Er's wife, Chunheung day and night. Their houses are adjacent to the Lyus', so either Chunheung goes to spend the night at his place, or Cheunng Maochi comes to hers. They do this whenever Cheng Er is not at home." After hearing this, Chu Hongshi silently came up with a plan in his mind. "When I attended the wedding at his house years ago, I remember that their house had inner and outer rooms, with a passage at the back leading to the middle room. Once I ascertain that Cheng Er is not at home, I'll seize the opportunity to hide in the inner room, forcibly rape Chen, and spend the night with her. What a delightful prospect indeed!" Having made up his mind, the next evening, after learning that Cheng Er had gone out, Chu Hongshi quietly sneaked into the Lyu family's house through the back door and hid himself. Meanwhile, Chen instructed Chiugui to take care of the child and returned to her room, closing the door to prepare for her bath. Suddenly, she remembered that the door from the back room to the middle one was still open, so she went in naked and closed the door before taking a bath.

At that moment, Chu Hongshi could no longer contain himself upon seeing the snow-white body of Chen. When she returned to her room after finishing her bath, he suddenly hugged her tightly from behind and covered her mouth. Chu Hongshi even tried to stick his tongue into Chen's mouth to silence her. Chen was suddenly confronted with such an accident that she was at a loss, thinking to herself, "Now that my body has been defiled, it's not late to bite off his tongue and then die." So she

firmly bit down on Chu Hongshi's tongue and refused to let go. Unable to free his tongue from Chen's bite, Hongshi resorted to choking her throat with his hands. Chen suffocated to death, while Chu Hongshi quietly fled the scene, leaving no one aware of the incident.

After a while, the child started crying, but when Chiugui called out to Chen, there was no response, and the door wouldn't open. She had no choice but to call Chunheung and they entered the room together with lanterns. Finding the outer door locked, they entered through the middle door only to discover Chen lying dead, blood oozing from her mouth, with obvious bruises on her throat, and her body completely naked. They had no idea what had caused her death and were terrified into screams. Upon witnessing the horrific scene of Chen, the clan members had no clue about what had transpired. Among them, Wu Shisi and Wu Chaosheng said, "Chen has always been virtuous. This must be an attempted rape. When she shouted, the murderer strangled her. I believe the murderer is none other than Chunheung and Cheunng Maochi, who are having an affair and must have conspired to rape and kill Chen." As a result, they detained Chunheung and sent Chen's infant son to his grandmother's house for nursing. The following day, Cheng Er returned from the estate and was shocked by the great change. Inquiring about the reason, he was told about Chunheung's affair and conspiracy. Cheng Er promptly drafted a formal complaint and submitted it to the county magistrate: "It is a crime of rape and murder: The extremely wicked villain, Cheunng Maochi, who befriended me with deceit and took pleasure as the pursuit of life. Cheunng Maochi coveted the beauty of my wife Chunheung, and taking advantage of my absence from home, seduced her to commit adultery, acting recklessly and without restraint. One day this month, he sneaked into the bedroom, and forcefully embracing my mistress attempted to rape her. The mistress screamed, and Cheunng choked her to death. My wife's cries alarmed the neighbors, who all testified to this. With her mouth full of blood, not even the Heavenly River could wash it clean; with her lying naked on the bed, how could one bear to look at the defiled corpse? I deeply resented him raping my wife firstly, and then my mistress. Raping my wife is a minor offence, but murdering my mistress is a grave one. I earnestly request that the law be enforced to avenge the victim and eliminate the evil, thereby redressing the grievances. That is the end of my accusation."

The county magistrate immediately went to the scene for investigation and autopsy after receiving the case. Upon seeing the woman's body with blood marks on her throat and blood come out of her mouth, he instructed his followers to place her in a coffin. He brought in Chunheung, Maochi, and other suspects for interrogation. He asked Cheng Er, "Your mistress was raped and killed. Your wife committed adultery with Maochi and conspired with him. Weren't you aware of this misconduct?"

Cheng Er stated, "I had been away at the estate for several days to oversee the harvest and returned yesterday only to discover this shocking incident. Upon inquiry with neighbors Wu Shisi and Wu Chaosheng, they informed me that my wife was engaged in an adulterous affair with Cheunng Maochi, and that together they conspired to rape my mistress, who cried out and was strangled to death. I immediately came to your excellency to report the matter. I am unaware of the details and hope your honor will interrogate my wife to get a clear understanding." The magistrate interrogated Chunheung, saying, "You conspired with Cheunng Maochi to rape and fatally assault your mistress. Confess the truth now." Chunheung said, "It is true that I have committed adultery with Maochi, but I have never conspired with him to rape the mistress." The county magistrate asked, "Why did your mistress die then?" Chunheung said, "I don't know." The county magistrate ordered the use of torture.

Unable to withstand the torture, Chunheung said, "Your honor, there was indeed no conspiracy. Cheunng Maochi only mentioned that my mistress was young and beautiful and asked me to help him. I told him that my mistress was always upright and would never agree to such a thing. So it must have been Cheunng Maochi who acted on his own." The magistrate called Maochi to the front and asked, "You tell me the truth, so that you can avoid the pain of punishment." Cheunng Maochi replied, "I didn't do it."

The magistrate further questioned, "It must have been you who intentionally instructed Chunheung to facilitate this. How can you claim there is no such thing?" At that moment, Wu Shisi and Wu Chaosheng said, "Your honor is a fair and upright magistrate; if one offense is true, the other will be true too."

Maochi argued, "This is a conspiracy. Your honor, it is clear that Shisi and Chaosheng committed the rape and shifted the blame onto me and Chunheung by framing me up." The county magistrate imposed punishment on Shisi and Chaosheng, who insisted on

their own versions of the story and argued for themselves. The magistrate inquired Chunheung again, "Since you did not participate in their plot, where were you when your mistress passed away?" Chunheung explained, "I was working in the kitchen at that time. Chiugui came and told me that the young master was crying. I called out to my mistress several times but got no response, and the door was locked. When I went in with a lamp, I found the mistress dead and shouted for the neighbors' help. Subsequently, Wu Shisi and Wu Chaosheng chained me up, accusing me of the crime. I suspect that they must have raped and killed the mistress and then came back deliberately to frame me up." The magistrate ordered that everyone be taken into custody for further interrogation the following day. The next day, Chiugui was brought to the back room, and the magistrate coaxed her gently, saying, "How did your mistress die?" Chiugui answered, "I don't know the exact details. That evening, she asked me to fetch water for her bath and look after the child. After she went in, she closed the front and back doors. Later, I heard a commotion of footsteps and it seemed that she was trying to say something but couldn't. After a moment, the sounds stopped. The child started crying, and when I went to call her, she didn't respond, and the door was closed. So I went to ask Sister Chunheung to bring a lantern. When we saw her, she was already dead with no clothes on." The county magistrate continued, "Do Wu Shisi and Wu Chaosheng often visit your home?" Chiugui replied, "No, never." The magistrate added, "What about Maochi?" Chiugui said, "He often comes to my home and jokes with Sister Chunheung." After a thorough interrogation, the magistrate summoned the suspects to the courtroom and said, "It is clear that Wu Shisi and Wu Chaosheng are not involved in this matter. Maochi, I know you tried to get Chunheung to help you in the past but she refused. Later, you became familiar with the house as you often visited. You knew that the mistress was bathing in the outer room, so you hid in the inner room. When the mistress came in, you raped her. She would have screamed, but you feared someone would come and choked her to death. Otherwise, there being no strangers in her house, who else could be so familiar with the situation? Later, Chunheung, realizing that she couldn't avoid responsibility, shouted to divert attention. This was a futile attempt to cover up the crime. Your guilt in this matter is now confirmed, and your sentence of death is hereby passed." The magistrate then ordered Cheng Er to bury the body and released the neighbors, and immediately submitted an official

document to report the matter to his superiors. Cheng Er remained loyal to the young master and continued to take care of him.

Three years later, when Judge Bao inspected Chyufu County in Shandong Province, Maochi's father Shuelau submitted a petition: "A plea for justice in this unprecedentedly bizarre injustice. When the people are wrongly accused, a just official shall argue on their behalf; if a son is wrongly accused, his father can step in to appeal on his behalf. The villain Cheng Er, after the death of his mistress, framed Maochi for the crime of rape and murder. He was tortured in the county court and forced to confess falsely. The accusation of rape was unfounded, and the only evidence was the wicked wife's word. The murder was not committed openly, but Cheng Er used his usual tactics to shift the blame. His wife Chunheung can have an affair with anyone, so who knows with whom she was fooling around that night! Since there was no conclusive evidence of the mistress' death, why didn't Cheng Er capture the real killer on the spot at that time? He sentenced the case in bad faith, calling black white. How can the law allow a man to be sentenced in place of another? I begged your honor, with your impartial and discerning power, to shine a light on the injustices that lurk in the shadows as cold as flying frost. When the truth remains hidden like a drought, I endure in silence, but if your honor could help me uncover the truth, I would be immensely grateful. So I sorrowfully appeal this case."

Judge Bao took on this case. The following night, while reviewing various criminal cases, he stumbled upon this case of rape and murder and fell into a drowsy state. Suddenly, he had a dream of a woman seemingly cherishing grievance and bearing injustice. Judge Bao said, "Speak up if you have grievances." The woman said nothing but recited a few lines of poetry before leaving: "The Chinese characters '一' plus '史'; '立' plus '口' and 'β'; '八' plus '厶'; '一' plus '了'. The tip of the tongue left in my mouth implies my grievances, and my resentment can only be dispelled by the violent death of the spider." Bao woke up, deeply puzzled, and suddenly noticed a large spider with its mouth open and tongue severed, dead on the scroll. Unable to comprehend it, Bao murmured to himself, "The murderer of Chen must be either surnamed Shi ('史' is pronounced to be Shi in Chinese) or Chu ('Spider', 'Chu')." The next day, Judge Bao reviewed each criminal case thoroughly. However, when he came to this case, he put forward a question again, "I have reviewed Chiugui's testimony, and there were no

strangers visiting her home. Yet you are familiar with her home and have conspired with Chunheung to commit rape. Why instead are you now crying out injustice?" Maochi returned, "I did not commit this crime. I was forced into a confession under the magistrate's torture. Now thankfully, Honorable Judge, you are here. I hope you can put an end to this injustice." Judge Bao then questioned Chunheung, who also said, "There is indeed no such thing, but since the mistress has passed away, I should follow her into death." Judge Bao then ordered Chunheung to be taken out and wait, and questioned Cheunng Maochi alone, "When you knew that Chen was bathing, you hid in the room. Now list all the items in the room." Maochi said, "Since I did not do this thing at all, how can I possibly list them?"

Judge Bao said, "Your death sentence is certain. Why not report it!" Maochi thought to himself, "This must be a debt from a past life. I can only falsely report a few items." So he reported to Judge Bao, "There were silk quilts, gauze curtains, and trunks, all placed at the head of the bed." Bao then ordered Chunheung to be brought in and asked, "Report the items in the mistress' room one by one."

Chunheung, unaware of Judge Bao's intention, replied, "Although my mistress was born in a wealthy and official family, she has always preferred a simple life. She used cloth curtains and cloth quilts, and the trunks were all upstairs. There were no other items in the inner room." Judge Bao inquired further, "Among your family and your master's acquaintances, is there anyone named Chu Shi?" Chunheung replied, "When my master was at home, he had a friend, who was the son of Minister Chu from the Ministry of Personnel. But since my master was captured, Minister Chu's son hasn't been here but instead studied with Mr. Huang Guotsai nearby all year round." Then Judge Bao had both of them imprisoned.

The following day, during the examination, Chu Hongshi was chosen as the top candidate, and Huang Guocai was the runner-up.

That night, after reviewing their essays, Judge Bao had a dream of the same poem and suddenly realized its implication. "一史立口卩 人士" could be interpreted as "一史" forming the character "吏" (meaning official), "立口卩" forming the character "部" (meaning "ministry"), and "人士" being a mere filler word." By combing "八" and "厶", we get the character "公" for "elder man". And by combining "一" and "了", we

form the character “子” for “son”. This clearly referred to the son of the official from the Ministry of Personnel. The line “The tip of the tongue left in my mouth indicates my grievances.” doesn’t make sense to Bao. “My resentment can only be dispelled by the violent death of the spider.” indicates that the surname is Chu (“spider” is pronounced to be Chu in Chinese). His scholarly name is Hongshi, which sounds similar to the word for ‘violent death’ in Chinese. The whole line implies that the hatred can only be extinguished by taking his life, thus appeasing the woman’s deep-seated resentment.

On the following day, Chu Hongshi came to express his gratitude to Judge Bao. “Your literary talent is commendable.” said Judge Bao. Chu’s speech was unclear as his tongue did not pronounce the words accurately. Bao was puzzled and sent him away. Subsequently, Huang Guotsai and several other excellent students also came to express their gratitude to Judge Bao. Judge Bao said to them, “You all have excellent writing.” The group chorused, “We are not worthy of such praise.”

Taking advantage of the chance, Bao asked, “Chu Hongshi is a handsome man with excellent literary talent, but only speaks out of tune. I feel sorry for him. Is it a congenital condition or a disease he developed later in life?” Guotsai replied, “That friend and I have been studying together in Chongfeng for four years, but suddenly, on the night of June 8th, the tip of his tongue went away. That’s why he is unable to speak fluently.” Afterwards, all the students left. Bao thought, “According to the case file, the rape and murder occurred, and Hongshi also lost his tongue on the same day. Additionally, the case record mentioned that there was only bleeding from the mouth. This must be because Hongshi discovered the residence of Chen, and then he hid in the inner room in advance. After Chen finished bathing, Hongshi raped her to satisfy his desires and inserted his tongue into Chen’s mouth to prevent her from shouting. With a resolute character, Chen bit down on her assailant’s tongue, preventing Hongshi from escaping. In desperation, Hongshi strangled Chen to death and then fled the scene. Considering that the date of this man’s loss of the tongue coincided with the date of Chen’s rape and murder, it confirms the line “The tip of the tongue left in my mouth indicates my grievances.” There is no doubt that Hongshi raped and killed her.

Hongshi was immediately summoned to the court. Upon his arrival, he was subjected

to severe torture and interrogation, and confessed to all the charges. Subsequently, the verdict was issued, “It is adjudged that Chu Hongshi, a disgrace to his aristocratic family and a depraved student, was once on good terms with Rufang. Taking advantage of Rufang’s abduction on the night of June 8 four years ago, he hid in his wife Chen’s bedroom, waited for her to finish bathing, and then raped her with impunity, ultimately strangling her in his fear that she might cry out for assistance. She appeared in my dream to seek justice with his tongue in her mouth while implying her grievances before my table. The dates of the rape and the loss of his tongue coincided with each other, and the testimonies are consistent. According to the law, he should be sentenced to death, and it is difficult for him to get out of the punishment of being beheaded in public. As for Maochi and Chunheung, although they did not directly participate in the murder, they conspired in secret, which ultimately led to this disaster; they too should be exiled to uphold social morals.”

Case 5

The Keys

In Chaozhou Prefecture lived Zou Shilong, Lau Bolian, and Wong Chichen, who formed a close bond, their friendship akin to that of Guan Chong and Bao Shuya in the ancient times, and their loyalty as steadfast as gold. Later, Wong Chichen and Zou Shilong both passed the local imperial examination and boarded together to the capital to take the national examination. As Shilong boarded the ship, he felt a sense of unease. Chichen, in an attempt to comfort him, said, “A man of great aspirations for success and recognition need not lament parting.” Shilong replied, “It is not for this reason. My wife is pregnant for seven months, and she is due to give birth in January. Hence, my heart is unsettled.” Chichen said, “My wife is in the same situation. I think God will bless good people, and everything will be OK. There is no need for worry.” Shilong advised, “You and I have been classmates and colleagues since childhood. We studied together, and we recently passed the examination together. Now, both of us have pregnant wives. This cannot be mere chance. If you don’t mind, let’s make a promise. If both of our children are boys, they shall be brothers. If both are girls, they shall be sisters. And if one is a boy and the other is a girl, they shall be husband and wife. What do you think?” Chichen replied, “That’s exactly what I am talking about.” He then instructed a servant to bring wine, and they drank to their hearts’ content. After that, their friendship grew even stronger. When they reached the capital, Shilong passed the national examination with high honors, while Chichen failed miserably. Chichen bid

farewell to return home, and as he departed, Shilong escorted him to the outskirts, entreating, "Here is a letter. Will you please take it to my family and keep an eye on them in your spare time?" Chichen answered, "I will naturally do my best to help with the affairs at your home. You don't have to worry. You just need to focus on preparing for the palace examination and strive to outperform the other two opponents."

Then, with tears in the eyes, they parted their ways. When Chichen arrived home, he found that his wife Wei had given birth to a son named Chaodong. Inquired about the date, Wei said, "At 8 a.m. on January 15. At 6 p.m. on the same day, the wife of Mr. Zou Shilong gave birth to a daughter named Chiongyu." Chichen was overjoyed, and immediately sent the letter to Shilong's home. Shilong's wife Lee had already received the good news of her husband's success in the national examination. Now she got the letter of his peace, which detailed the agreement they had made on board about their child's future. Thus, Lee instructed her servant to prepare a banquet for Chichen, who returned home in an inebriated state. From then on, Chichen took charge of many affairs at Shilong's home, without any personal agenda. Several months later, Shilong returned as an appointed county magistrate and a date was set to invite Lau Bolian to serve as a witness for the betrothal between the two children. Chichen offered a gold-inlaid jade Ruyi as a betrothal gift, and Shilong reciprocated with a jade hairpin adorned with a phoenix. After Shilong assumed his post, they kept in touch with letters, without fail every month. Although Wong Chichen failed to pass the imperial examination multiple times, he still held a position and served as the vice-prefect of Songchiang Prefecture. When he fell seriously ill, he wrote a letter to Zou Shilong, with nothing else mentioned, only earnestly entrusting him to support and guide his young son. Shortly thereafter, Chichen passed away in office. Zou Shilong, who was on an inspection tour in Nanching, was deeply saddened upon hearing the news and went personally to offer his condolences. Wong Chichen, known for his integrity, left no savings, so Zou Shilong sent ten thousand taels of silver and applied to his superiors for boats and horses to carry Chichen's remains back to his hometown for burial. After the funeral, Shilong wanted to take Chaodong to his place to continue his studies, but Chaodong declined, saying, "My father has just passed away, and my mother is now a widow in poverty. How can I, as a son, travel far away?" Shilong was quite pleased to hear this and thought highly of his filial piety, often providing financial support and

encouraging him to study diligently, but the economic situation of Chaodong's family continued to deteriorate. At the age of fourteen, Chaodong was admitted to the county academy, and Shilong was very happy to hear this news and sent special congratulations.

From then on, Chaodong devoted himself entirely to his studies, living off the family's dwindling resources. Eventually, the family fell into destitution. Meanwhile, Shilong, a vice prime minister now, due to having no sons, resigned from office and returned home. Chaodong, dressed in ragged clothes, also went to congratulate him together with Lau Bolian. They encountered local officials who had all come to visit. Zou Shilong felt ashamed and displeased to see him. Chaodong was already sixteen and entrusted Lau Bolian to propose marriage and set a date for the wedding. However, Shilong said, "Although his father had once proposed a marriage alliance during his lifetime, it was never formally agreed upon. Neither family is from a humble background. If they are to marry, it must be done according to the six traditional rites." Upon hearing this, Chaodong said, "Since he knows that my family is poor and cannot afford it, why is he still making it so difficult?" I should strive harder, and consider this matter only when I am fortunate enough to succeed." After that, he did not mention it any more.

One day, Shilong said to his wife, "Our daughter has grown up; it's time for her to get married." His wife replied, "Wong's son had proposed marriage before. Since we only have this one daughter, why not let him marry into our family? Wouldn't that be the best for both sides? Why insist on the betrothal gifts since he is so poor?" Zou Shilong said, "I am afraid that Chaodong may only end up being a poor scholar in the future. With my position, how can I allow a poor scholar to be my son-in-law? I guess he has no money for the bride price, so I deliberately made it difficult for him. And he speaks boldly without shame. In another year, I will ask brother Lau to talk to him. If he still cannot offer a betrothal gift to propose marriage, I will give him a hundred tales of silver to ask him to marry someone else. I will find another prestigious family for my daughter to marry into, so as not to ruin her prospects." The wife said, "Although he is poor now, he enjoys reading and will surely not lag behind in the future. Although his father has passed away, his words still remain. How can we change our original engagement just because of this?" The minister insisted, "You don't understand. I have

my own plan.” Unexpectedly, Chiongyu overheard it from behind the screen. The next day, Chiongyu and her maidservant Dangui were enjoying the sight of the flowers in the backyard. When they saw Chaodong passing by the wall, the maidservant pointed and said, “This is Young Master Wong.” They two exchanged a glance before parting ways. Chiongyu, seeing Chaodong’s elegant demeanor, felt a secret joy in her heart despite his shabby clothes. The following day, she went to the garden again with Dangui. Chaodong, seeing the girl shining with radiance with a moon-like face and sparkling eyes, admiring flowers with the maid, guessed that she must be Chiongyu. Therefore, the next day he deliberately passed by outside the garden. Chiongyu instructed Dangui to call out, “Young Master Wong!” Chaodong, afraid of being seen, did not dare to come forward. The maid continuing to call out, Chaodong, sensing urgency in her voice, figured there must be something important to say, so he approached the wall. Chiongyu had Dangui open a small door and relayed her father’s words to Chaodong. Chaodong said, “My late father arranged this engagement originally. I will neither accept money nor back out of this engagement although I am poor now. If your esteemed father wants to remarry you to someone else, let him do as he wishes.” Chiongyu said, “Although my father has this intention, I will never comply. You should focus on your studies, and we will eventually be reunited. You can come here at night because I have something to ask you. I am worried that someone might come now, so you had better leave for the time being.” Chaodong returned home and waited until it was quiet and late into the night. He went straight to the door and saw Dangui standing there waiting. She said, “The young lady invites you to come in and have a talk.” Chaodong replied, “If your master knows, it may be indecent.” Dangui said, “The master and mistress are already asleep, and it’s okay to go in.” Despite his hesitation, Chaodong was urged by Dangui and entered. Inside, he found that wine and food had been prepared, and the young lady invited him to sit opposite her and drink together. Chaodong could barely control himself and was actually considering having sex with the young lady. Chiongyu resolutely disagreed, and then said, “Our meeting today is out of sympathy for your poverty, not due to any personal desire. If I were to give in now, what guarantee would there be for our future wedding ceremony?” Chaodong conceded, “I certainly wouldn’t dare to force you. But if your father intends to remarry you off to someone else, what will you do?” Yu replied resolutely, “Even if my father were to choose another suitor for me, I would never agree. As the ancients

say, 'Once a thread is tied, it cannot be easily untied.'" Chaodong said, "Although you can be so determined, I'm afraid your father will force you into a difficult situation." "If my father were to force me, I would rather die." declared Chiongyu. Then she took his hand and made an oath to the heavens. After that, they continued to drink. It being late at night, the girl was still young, and after drinking without restraint, became drunk and tired, forgetting to bid farewell to Chaodong and falling asleep in her clothes. Chaodong wanted to leave, but Danguì advised, "The young lady hasn't bid you farewell yet, she might have something more to say. Please wait for a moment until the young lady wakes up." Chaodong went over and saw that the girl's sleeping appearance was like that of a begonia that had not fully bloomed, charming and captivating. Unable to control his feelings, he held her and slept with her. Chiongyu regained some consciousness and muttered, "I was momentarily intoxicated and tired, and failed to take proper care of myself." Chaodong sought intimacy, Chiongyu felt affectionate and could not bring herself to refuse, so they ended up sharing the bed. At the crowing of the rooster, the two of them got up together. Chiongyu gifted Chaodong with three bolts of silk, a pair of gold bracelets, and several pairs of silver hairpins as a parting gift, and told him to come again the following night. From then on, he came every night and left at dawn, and this lasted for more than two months.

One night, Chaodong didn't go because of his mother's disease. Danguì waited for a long time and didn't see Chaodong's arrival. Suddenly, upon hearing footsteps, Danguì hastily exclaimed, "Here comes the child." Unexpectedly, Chu Shengbar, often involved in some petty thefts, saw her and burst in. Seeing that it was a thief, Danguì hurried in. Shengbar then followed her into the house. Danguì wanted to shout for help but was killed by Shengbar with a sword. Chiongyu saw the thief coming in suddenly by the light so she opened the door leading to the hall and hid herself in a poorly lit area. Chu Shengbar entered the room and plundered all the items before leaving. Chiongyu, when it was at dawn, called out to her mother, "There was a theft in my room." Her father asked, "Why didn't you shout for help?" Chiongyu answered, "After seeing Danguì killed, I had no choice but to open the door and flee, hiding in a dark place, which was why I dared not shout out." The minister went to the scene and discovered that Danguì had been killed at the back door. He asked, "Why was Danguì killed here?" The girl was rendered speechless. Her father was very suspicious.

Due to this, she was so frightened that she became seriously ill and bedridden.

The minister, without solid evidence to report the matter, instructed his servant, May Wong, to gather information everywhere. Chaodong, because his mother was ill and he had no money for medicine, asked the silversmith Rao Gui to exchange a gold bracelet for silver. Gui agreed but didn't put away the gold bracelet. May Wong happened to pass by the shop and saw a gold bracelet on the silversmith's table, so he walked in and asked, "Whose item is this?" The silversmith answered, "Just now, Mr. Wong Chaodong brought it for me to exchange for silver." May Wong said, "Since he wants to exchange it for silver, I will take it to the master for an exchange. The silversmith said, "He doesn't want anyone to know who the owner was, so don't mention it, so as not to make him blame me." Then he handed it over to May Wong. May Wong went home and reported to the master, "This thing seems to be from our family, and we can ask the mistress and young lady to identify it." Madame Zou came out and recognized it, saying, "This is my daughter's. Where did you get it?" May Wong replied, "I got it from the silversmith, Rao Gui, who said it was brought by Wong Chaodong to exchange for silver." The minister remarked, "It looks like that this kid changed his ways due to poverty and ended up in this mess." So he immediately wrote a petition, letting May Wong go to the circuit court to file a complaint: "The accusation is about murder and robbery committed by Wong Chaodong. The good-for-nothing son of the former vice-prefect Wong Chichen, who does not follow the rules and squandered all the family wealth. He was hungry with no food to eat, and was dizzy from hunger. He had no clothing to cover himself, and his body trembled with the cold. Because his father and I were old acquaintances, he often comes to our house. Around one o'clock one night this month, he sneaked into my house and hugged the servant Danguì. He attempted to rape her but failed, so he killed her and took away all the money in the house. The next day, the original stolen gold bracelet was recovered, and the silversmith, Rao Gui, was present to testify. He committed robbery and murder, disregarding the law and order. I implore you to recover the stolen goods and make him pay with his life, to eliminate the evil and give peace to the good people. Above is my appeal."

At that time, the circuit judge Bao Cheng was very clean, and immediately dispatched the soldiers Chao Sheng and Sun Yong to arrest Wong Chaodong. Chaodong also wrote

a petition the next morning, stating his grievances: “The petition is about a false charge against rape: The east house lost some silk, but they shouldn’t wrongly accuse the west house of stealing; Why should a person from Yue buy wine but demand payment from a person from Chin? My father passed down the family tradition to me, and taught me to follow the teachings of etiquette. My father was fortunate enough to be recommended for the provincial examination and served as a vice-prefect of Songchiang Prefecture. He held his position with integrity, leaving behind only empty pockets. I am a mediocre scholar, but listed in the county academy. My father-in-law Zou Shilong once made a marriage agreement with my father, and promised to marry his daughter Zou Chiongyu to me. My father presented a gold-inlaid jade gift as a betrothal gift, and Mr. Zou responded with a green jade phoenix hairpin. Unexpectedly, our family’s finances gradually declined, making it difficult to fulfill the six rites of marriage. Chiongyu was righteous and generous, secretly giving me bracelets, hairpins, and silk fabrics; however, her father preferred wealth to poverty and repeatedly demanded that the engagement be broken and that she be remarried. He has long set a trap, but I have no chance to fall into it. Coincidentally, due to a robbery, the disaster was shifted to me. He wanted to sever the old relationship and seek a new one, so he falsely accused me of the murder when the robbers killed the maid. Therefore, I beseech your honor to investigate the matter and capture the culprits, get me out of this predicament, and allow me to marry Chiongyu and live in peace. That is why I am here with sorrow to appeal.” Judge Bao asked, “Since you didn’t kill Danguì, where did you get this gold bracelet?” Chaidong replied, “This gold bracelet was given to me by Miss Zou.”

Judge Bao said, “The matter is not necessarily as it seems.” Chaodong replied, “You can summon her for cross-examination.” After a moment of contemplation, Judge Bao asked, “Do you have any illicit relations with Chiongyu?” Chaodong returned, “I do not dare to do it.”

It seemed that he wanted to say something but was ashamed in public. Understanding his meaning subtly, Judge Bao retreated to the inner chamber, bringing Chaodong in and dismissing all the attendants. He continued, “If there were no affairs, how could she willingly give you so many things?” Chaodong said, “Were it not for this great injustice today, I would never dare to speak it out to damage her reputation. Faced with

this situation, I can not but tell the truth.” He then detailed the whole incident. Judge Bao remarked, “I’m just afraid this matter is not true. If true, you shall elaborate on this matter at the confrontation tomorrow, and observe how her father will deal with it. I will certainly bring his daughter in to confront you and definitely rule in your favor for marriage; if false, you shall surely pay with your life.”

Chaodong kowtowed repeatedly and begged, “I hope your honor can do me this favor.”

Judge Bao held the trial the next day, and Shilong personally appeared for the cross-examination. He said to Judge Bao, “This youth is wicked. I beg Your Honor, considering the sake of our collegueship, to enforce the law and mete out severe punishment.” Judge Bao replied, “If there is evidence of crime, the law must be enforced; how can personal feelings be considered when the law is present? Chaodong is also the son of an official and a promising student of the academy. Why should there be any partiality?” Thereupon, he yelled to Chaodong, “Your father is a cleanhanded official while you are a thief. How can you bear to tarnish your family’s reputation?” Chaodong returned, “I have always abided by the rituals, living by benevolence and righteousness. How could I possibly do such a thing!” Judge Bao asked, “Since you did not commit the crime, where did the stolen goods come from?” Chaodong answered, “They were given to me by his daughter; how could I have taken them by force?” Zou Shilong argued, “It is clear that he is in the wrong, with no words to defend himself, so he tries to shift the blame to my daughter.” Judge Bao continued, “How could his daughter, confined to her inner chamber, have given the goods to you?” Chaodong replied, “There is a reason for it.” Judge Bao urged, “What reason? You can explain it in detail.” Chaodong said, “In the spring of March, I passed by his garden. The young lady happened to be admiring flowers with her maid, Dangui, and we looked at each other for a long time before parting. The next day, I passed by the garden again, and the young lady was already there. She asked Dangui to usher me to the garden and told me in detail that her father and mother had discussed to break the engagement. He had wanted to ask Lau Bolian to intercede and compensate me 100 taels of silver, but Madame Zou refused. Miss Zou saw my shabby clothes and invited me for a talk at night. I went as scheduled and Dangui was waiting by the door. I was invited in for a drink. Then I was given a pair of gold bracelets, several pairs of silver hairpins, and three bolts of silk. Faced with financial difficulties, I couldn’t afford to buy medicine

for my elderly mother. So I took the gold bracelet and entrusted it to Silversmith Rao to exchange for silver. However, it was coaxed away by the servant May Wong. I was completely unaware of the killing of Danguì. I hope that your honor, the great, will show mercy and consider the virtue of sparing life. My late father left me as the only child to take care of my mother, who is ill now. I implore you to consider the marriage engagement with leniency, to investigate and find out the true culprit, and administer justice according to the law. I will repay your kindness in the future.” Judge Bao turned to Shilong and said, “In that case, you should also take responsibility for not disciplining your daughter properly. How can you only blame this young man?” Shilong said, “These are all idle rumors. My young daughter behaves with propriety. How could such a thing happen?” Judge Bao said, “If there is no such thing, it is necessary for your beloved daughter to testify and the truth will naturally come out.”

Chaodong said, “If the young lady is willing to come forward, I will gladly accept death if I tell lies.” Shilong was very puzzled in his heart: If this matter is false, how could he know what I said to my wife? If it is true, firstly it was difficult to defend myself, and secondly it would make me shameful. So he was hesitant to make a decision. Judge Bao then provoked him, saying, “As a high-ranking official, why don’t you conduct a thorough investigation?” Shilong was provoked and said, “No one knows a child better than her father. How could I know nothing about it if such a thing occurred in my family?” Judge Bao said, “I’m afraid you might find it indecent if this indeed happens. Since you think it never happened, why not let your beloved daughter testify?” Shilong was unable to answer for a moment, and then he instructed May Wong to prepare a sedan chair to bring the young lady over. May Wong hurried home and told Madame Zou what had happened, who then went into the inner chamber and explained the situation to her daughter in detail. The young lady thought to herself, “If I don’t come out to testify, Chaodong’s grievance will never be redressed.” May Wong urged again, “Judge Bao was specially waiting for you to attend the court hearing.” The young lady had no choice but to go there by sedan chair. Upon arriving at the government office, she got out of the sedan chair and was brought before Judge Bao. Judge Bao said, “This scholar claims that the gold bracelet was a gift from you to him; your father, however, asserts that it is stolen property taken by the scholar. The truth lies in your words, so please speak impartially.”

The young lady, feeling shy, was unwilling to answer. Seeing this, Chaodong anxiously said, "Since it is a gift from you to me, what harm is there in speaking the truth now? How can you bear to see me sentenced to death because of this?" Chiongyu, being young, still didn't dare to speak up. Bao repeatedly struck his gavel wooden block and scolded sternly, "The man is despicable! Preaching the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius but acting like a thief, why are you deceiving me with so many lies? You will be bludgeoned forty times before beheading!" Chaodong, with a childlike expression, fell to the ground and burst into tears, saying, "Young lady, since you once had affection for me, why refuse to speak the truth now? What happened to the vows we made that night? I'm suffering this punishment because of you. My death is of no consequence, but my elderly mother needs care. What will happen to her?" Hearing this, the young lady lowered her head, tears streaming down her face, and finally said, "The gold bracelet was indeed a gift from me to this scholar, but he did not kill Danguì. That night, when the thief entered the room, I vaguely saw in the lamplight that he was an older man with a beard." Judge Bao nodded and said, "This statement is fair. Spare this scholar; no need for further punishment." Relieved, Chaodong stood up and knelt beside the young lady. Seeing his disheveled hair, Chiongyu knelt closer and began to carefully tidy his hair.

Seeing this, Shilong was filled with anger and said, "This young girl must be so frightened that her vision is blurred, causing her to talk such nonsense." The young lady had already made it clear. Seeing her father's anger, she was even more afraid to speak. Bao said, "Since your daughter is frightened to the point of being dazed and unable to see clearly, surely, you, sir, saw more clearly. Why don't you just convict this young man yourself, instead of waiting for me to say thousands of words? Furthermore, since Danguì was acting as the matchmaker for him, how could he have the heart to kill her?" The minister replied, "My daughter is still young, and surely she couldn't have been involved in a romance like the one in the play *Romance of the Western Chamber*." Judge Bao returned, "The truth has already been revealed when your daughter was tidying his hair; why argue so stubbornly?" The counselor finally conceded, "I admit my fault, sir. I defer to your judgment." Judge Bao said, "If I were to decide, as you had a friendship with his father, as well as a prenatal engagement, and both of them had affection for each other, why not expedite their wedding ceremony?" The deputy prime

minister said, “According to what he said, although Dangui’s death was not directly caused by him, he was indeed responsible for it. He must find out the culprit to clear his name.”

Judge Bao said, “The thief will be easily identified. I am sure we will catch him in seven days. Then we can choose a good day for their wedding.”

The counselor departed, still angry, and Judge Bao instructed the young man and woman to go back home separately.

That night, upon returning home, Chaodong lit incense and prayed to his father, “I have unfortunately fallen into this trouble and suffered an unjust reputation. We have yet to find out the real culprit. Please guide me with your spirit.”

After praying, Chaodong went to bed and had a dream, where he saw his father sitting above him; Chaodong approached and bowed, and his father then threw a pair of bamboo fortune-telling sticks onto the ground. The sticks landed in the shape of the Chinese character “eight”. Chaodong hurriedly picked them up before his father vanished. He then woke up from his dream.

After the court session ended, Judge Bao was deep in thought about how to identify the thief. That night, he dreamed of a man wearing an official attire and high hat, who approached to him and bowed gratefully, saying, “My son is too young and ignorant, but I am deeply grateful to you for your guidance.” The man then threw bamboo fortune sticks and disappeared. When Bao looked at it, he found that it was a holy lot in the shape of the Chinese character “eight”. Upon awakening, he pondered, “The thief must be named Chu (‘Bamboo’ is pronounced to be ‘Chu’ in Chinese) Sheng (‘Holy’, ‘Sheng’), or Chu Chian (‘Sticks’, ‘Chian’), or perhaps his surname is Chu and his given name contains the Chinese character ‘eight’ or he ranks eighth among his siblings.” The next morning, Judge Bao summoned Wong Chaodong to the Yamen to discuss some matters. Upon hearing the summon, Chaodong immediately dressed himself and went to see Bao. Bao told Chaodong about his dream of throwing the bamboo fortune sticks. Chaodong said, “This must be my late father expressing his gratitude to Your Honor. That night, I also burned incense and prayed to my father to reveal the thief’s name. I dreamt of my father in a similar manner. Since our dreams

match each other, I believe the thief's name must be implied within the lot." Judge Bao said, "After careful consideration at midnight, I think the thief's surname might be Chu, and his given name might be Sheng or Chian. Or maybe he's the eighth (its Chinese pronunciation is 'bar') child in his family. Think about it, my dear disciple. Do you know of anyone with such a name?" At that moment, a court attendant nearby overheard and reported, "The former Judge Lau, once arrested a petty thief named Chu Shengbar but later released him after branding his arm as a first-time offender." Judge Bao concluded, "Then it must be that person." He immediately convened the court, and signing an arrest warrant with vermilion ink, dispatched two bailiffs to apprehend him. When the bailiffs arrived at Chu Shengba's home, they saw him just stepping out. They promptly grabbed him, and shackling him with iron chains, brought him back to the yamen. Bao roared, "You beast, how dare you kill and rob in the dead of night!" Chu Shengbar retorted, "I have always abided by the law and never committed such a crime."

Bao said, "If you have always abided by the law, how did the former judge Lau arrest you and brand your arm?" Chu Shengbar argued, "Judge Lau captured me by mistake and released me after a thorough investigation." Judge Bao thundered, "You were branded on your arm and released for being a first-time offender. Now, you have not changed your ways and killed a servant and plundered. Accept forty lashes, and confess the truth!" Shengbar refused to confess and was subjected to torture, but he still refused to admit his guilt. Bao noticed two keys on Shengbar's waist and ordered his attendants to take them off. He then dispatched two bailiffs to Chu Shengbar's home with instructions. "You must do as I have planned. If anything leaks out, either of you will be punished with forty lashes and expelled from your posts." The two men, holding the keys, went to Chu's home and said to his wife, "Your husband has gone to the court today and confessed to stealing Zou's property. He has sent these keys for you to open the chest and retrieve the original stolen goods according to the list." Believing this to be true, she opened the chest, taking out the items accordingly. The bailiffs carried the items to the court, where Shengbar was left speechless and unable to argue for himself, thus confessing, "I passed by the small gate of their garden at night and overheard Danguai saying, 'Here comes the childe.' Then, I rushed in, killing her because she tried to shout for help, and the looting of the property is indeed true." Bao immediately sent

for Shilong to the court, identifying forty bright colored dresses, thirty colored skirts, a pair of gold jewelry, a silver dressing box, and an ivory comb, a bronze mirror, with every item being clearly claimed. Then Judge Bao concluded, “After the trial, Chu Shengbar has been found to be a habitual thief and a scourge to the people, committing theft and murder for personal gains, falsely implicating Chaodong and causing him to be nearly imprisoned and divorced. With all the original stolen goods recovered, it is appropriate to sentence him to death. Zou Shilong is unworthy to be an official. He disregards righteousness and is unfaithful to his deceased friend, intending to go back on the previous engagement. Due to lax restraint, it has led to private contact between the discontented young woman and man. The lack of strict vigilance has allowed them to secretly meet under the cover of moonlight and stars, resulting in the tragic death of a servant girl and nearly causing the son-in-law to face the severest punishment. He should have been punished according to the law, but in consideration of his years of service and declining health, he is given a lenient punishment. Wong Chaodong has committed no crime, but he has been unjustly implicated, so he should be exonerated of these unfair charges. Zou Chiongyu, whose previous engagement was broken, shall be allowed to fulfill her original betrothal. Let them live together in harmony and grow old together so that their love may be as steadfast as the mountains and seas.”

The wedding ceremony was held for Wong Chaodong and Zou Chiongyu on an auspicious day, and the couple lived in harmony, showing utmost filial piety to their parents. The following year, in the imperial examination, Chaodong was highly recommended, then going to the capital for the metropolitan examination, where he was listed on the honor roll and appointed a member of the Imperial Academy.

Case 6

A Cloth-wrapper

In Dinghoi county, Ningbo Prefecture lived two officials, Ko Kur and Har Cheng, getting well with each other from the same hometown. Their wives were pregnant simultaneously by coincidence. So they had a promise that there would be an engagement between these two unborn children if they were a boy and a girl. Later, as expected, Har Cheng had a son named Changshek, Ko Kur a daughter Kwaiyuk. Thereupon, Har Cheng invited a matchmaker to propose the marriage for them, with two golden hairpins as the betrothal gifts. Ko Kur accepted it gladly and took a pair of jade hairpins as a present in return. Har Cheng was a pure and upright official so that his family was poor. One day he died in the capital, and Ko Kur gave his family a hand with money so that the corpse could be brought back and buried in his hometown. Ko Kur also resigned from his official position, returning to his hometown with massive wealth. The Hars were in utter destitution, while Changshek had a great academic performance. When at the age of sixteen, he got the first place and enrolled in the academy entrusted someone to propose to the Kos. Ko despised Changshek's poverty and wanted to call off the engagement, deliberately making things difficult for him: "Only when all the six rites are complete can one get married. Now that you want to facilitate this marriage solely through your tongue, I cannot agree. If you could not fulfill all the rites, you had better cancel the engagement. And I will give you some silver to marry another girl." After another three years, Ko's daughter often tried to

persuade her parents against punic faith. Her father retorted, “As long as he has a hundred taels of betrothal present, I will consent to your sponsalia. Or else, don’t even think about it!” Then Kwaiyuk stole some money from her father, and coupled with her own bracelets, hairpins and boxes with golden powder, added up to over a hundred taels of silvers. She secretly asked her maid Chauheung to meet Changshek. Chauheung said, “My young lady ordered me to come and visit you, young master. My master dislikes your poor family and wants to cancel this engagement. But she firmly disagrees and argues with her parents every day. Now my master says that if you have a dowry of 100 taels, you can marry my young lady, who has packed up the silver and jewelry worth over a hundred taels and asks you to go to her backyard tomorrow night. Don’t forget it, please!” Knowing that, Changshek was beaming with pleasure, telling Lee Shanfu—his best friend about that thing. The avarice of Lee’s rising, a trick came to his mind. “Congratulations, bro! I prepare a jug of wine to celebrate it.” By the evening time, he put the knockout drops in the wine, making Changshek slip into a coma. Taking advantage of this period, Shanfu directly bounded for Ko’s back garden. The back door ajar, he walked into the pavilion. There was really a maid holding a cloth-wrapper in her hand. He took over the bundle and said, “Give me the money.”

The maid acknowledged under the moon, “You are not childe Har.” “I am. It was Chauheung who secretly arranged for me to come.” said Shanfu. The maid acknowledged in detail once again, “You are not childe Har but a thief.”

Shanfu picked up a stone, chopped the maid to death, and hurried back with the baggage. Changshek not waking up yet, Shanfu pretended to sleep next to him. After a short while, Changshek woke up and said to Shanfu, “I’m going to pick up the money tonight.” “You are really a bad drinker. I’ve been waiting for you to wake up but in vain. Hence I fell asleep unconsciously. It is in the still of night and you can go now.” said Shanfu. Changshek went directly to Ko’s garden. He looked around and everything was still. He went to the flower pavilion, only to find the maid lying on the ground. “Can she be asleep?” Changshek said to himself. He lifted the maid with his hands, finding her hands and feet cold; he called to her but she didn’t give any response. Upon closer inspection, he found no bundle nearby. He took aback and then fled back home.

The next day, Ko's family didn't see the maid. They looked around and saw that the maid was killed in the back garden pavilion. No one knew the reason why she was killed. All of them were scared of it. Kwaiyuk confessed, "When I ordered Chauheung to give Changshek two silver hairpins and pearl jewelry, I asked him to prepare a gift to propose marriage. Unexpectedly, he killed her cruelly, and surely he had no intention of marrying me." Ko Kur hit the roof after hearing that. Consequently, he ordered the servant to sue to the Yamen: "The charge is about thuggee: The thief and murderer should be beheaded, for he has stolen my money and murdered my maid; even if he washed off the blood on the clothes, he couldn't hide the fact. Although Changshek is vicious, he is the son of Har Cheng, my close friend, who has passed away. Because of our deep friendship, we decided that my daughter and his son would get married when they were adults. Since his father died, he can't afford the dowry, so the wedding ceremony has never been held. Who knows that this wicked man conspired with the maid and conceived of stealing the money. When he got the money, he killed the maid and tried to destroy the evidence. Money is trifle, but life and friendship are important, so I came to appeal."

Changshek also immediately wrote a lawsuit: "I am falsely accused of murder: As a scholar, I am well versed in poetry and books. My father's reputation for integrity has always been passed down. My late father was an incorruptible official and was known for his quality of incorruption and honesty. My father-in-law, Ko Kur, was on good terms with my father and decided to marry her daughter Kwaiyuk to me. My father gave Kur a golden hairpin as a betrothal gift, and Kur gave a jade hairpin in return. I didn't expect that my family would go into decline after that, and it is difficult to make up for the dowry gift, so I am retaliated by my father-in-law in various ways. First, he ordered his maid to tell me to give me a huge sum of money, and then he beat Chauheung to death in an attempt to frame me up. Thus, I lodge an appeal for redressing the injustice."

Prefect Koo detained them for interrogation preceded by reading their written complaint. Ko Kur argued, "Chauheung stole more than 100 taels of silver for him, and my daughter Kwaiyuk can testify. If he hadn't beaten Chauheung to death, how could I bear to put my own daughter on the stand? And although he is not my son-in-law, he is not my enemy either. Even if I want to cancel the engagement with him, there is no

need to kill to frame him up.” Changshek refuted him, “The day before yesterday, you ordered Chauheung to go to my house and lie to me that Kwaiyuk wanted to marry me, so she collected some jewelry, adding up to over a hundred taels of silver, and asked me to go to the garden to get it at night. I foolishly believed her words. When I got to the garden, I saw that Chauheung had been beaten to death on the ground, and there was no silver in there. It must be that this maid has committed a crime so that you want to beat her to death. Hence you ordered her to deceive me first, and then killed her so that you can falsely accuse me of beating her to death. If I got the money so that I could marry Kwaiyuk, how could I have the heart to kill her?” Koo summoned Kwaiyuk for inquiry, “One is your father and the other is your betrothed husband. As a relevant witness for both sides of the lawsuit, you’d better confess truthfully to avoid receiving a penalty.” Kwaiyuk said, “My father and Changshek’s father used to be colleagues, and before I was born I was betrothed to Changshek. My father accepted a pair of golden hairpins from him as a bride-price, and gave him a pair of jade hairpins in return. However, the Hars declined later. Therefore, my father wanted to terminate the engagement. I was unwilling, so I packed a large amount of treasures worth over one hundred taels, secretly demanding Chauheung to send for Changshek to get it in our garden at night. Unexpectedly, Chauheung was killed for some reason, and all the money had been taken away. Perhaps Changshek wanted to rape Chauheung but failed, so he killed her. Or perhaps he was dissatisfied with my father’s desire to terminate the engagement, so he killed my servant girl to vent his anger. My lord, I beg for detailed investigations.” Leaning back on the chair, Koo laughed, “You seem to make perfect sense.” Changshek said, “The former part of her words are exactly correct so I have no grudge to die. But if she said that I stole the silver and killed Chauheung, I would not be convinced even I were dead. Perhaps it was a sin left over from the previous life, but now I am to compensate for it. It’s beyond dispute.” Then he falsely pleaded guilty. The magistrate immediately made the following judgment: “Har Changshek, an arrogant thug, failed to learn any skills in school. Depleting his family’s wealth, he even tarnished its reputation. Therefore, his father-in-law Ko Kur broke his promise and explicitly refused the marriage contract. But Kwaiyuk kept their promise and secretly sent him gold and silver as betrothal gifts. He not only coveted Kwaiyuk’s money, but also brutally killed her maid. If this is not a fear of rape being leaked, it must be his insatiable greed. He was the only one to have gone to the appointment, so

who else could there have been in the garden? Is it possible to conceal his crime of rape from everyone? Although Ko Kur broke covenant, he was wise enough to have clearly perceived Changshek's innate evil. Even though Kwaiyuk went against her father's wishes, she was righteous enough to have cherished her fiancée and repented her error. Hence, Kwaiyuk shall marry someone else, and Changshek should be sentenced to death."

Changshek had been in prison for three years when Judge Bao came to inspect Chechiang Province on imperial orders. Before assuming his post, he made a tour in disguise to the yamen of Dinghoi county. Magistrate Hu suspected he was the one who sent the money for favors, so he put Judge Bao in prison.

When Lord Bao was in prison, he told other prisoners, "I can write petitions. If you have any grievances, I can help you." When the imprisoned Changshek claimed himself to be wrongly accused, Judge Bao listened attentively and keeping it in mind instructed the prison guards to dispatch his official seal to Magistrate Hu. Upon realizing that Judge Bao was the high-ranking official, Hu immediately invited him to attend the hearing and respectfully requested him to preside over the case. During the trial, Judge Bao read the case file of Changshek and interrogated Kwaiyuk, who maintained that no one but Changshek had killed her maidservant. Judge Bao was unable to make a decision, so he asked Changshek, "Have you ever disclosed this matter to anyone else?"

Changshek replied, "I only told my friend Lee Shanfu about it. I was drinking at his house that night, and when I woke up, I only found him motionless by my side." Judge Bao pondered, "In that case, the truth has already been revealed. There's no need to ask further." Subsequently, Bao examined the students in Ningbo Prefecture and chose Lee Shanfu as the first place. And their relationship became intimate day by day. Whatever Bao said, Lee followed. Even after he had gone to the capital city, Judge Bao summoned Lee several times, which continued for nearly six months. One day, Judge Bao said to Lee, "As an official, I am not very wealthy. My daughter is getting married soon, but I don't have enough money for her dowry. Can you help me find some good gold jewelry? If there are any good opportunity of promotion, I shall offer it to you. As my favorite student, you should be cautious and meticulous when working for me

outside.” Lee Shanfu believed Judge Bao without any doubt and a few days later, he brought a pair of ancient gold hairpins, a pair of jade hairpins, a gold powder box, and a gold mirror bag to Judge Bao, who pretended to be overjoyed. And then he summoned Changshek and other people concerned for further inquiry.

All the items taken out and put on the table, Kwaiyuk recognized them and said, “These are what I gave to Changshek before.” Judge Bao summoned Lee Shanfu to confront, who was scared out of his wits and lied that he had bought the items from some passer-by when he discovered that Miss Ko recognized them as her own. Only at that moment did Changshek realize that he had previously fallen under the spell of poisonous wine and shouted, “Friend! Framed me to death!” Shanfu could not deny it and confessed to the crime. Judge Bao commented, “The criminal in this case, Lee Shanfu, is greedy and cruel. He trapped Changshek in the middle of the feast with poison wine, and then killed the maid with a stone in the pavilion. The benefit went to himself and the harm to his friend, rather similar to Lee Chek, one notorious minister, in betraying his friend; he killed the maid but framed Changshek, which is more vicious than Kuan Tong, one bombastic debater, in misleading his colleague. The stolen goods are here, and with ironclad proof, the death penalty is inevitable. Ko Kur despised the poor and curried favour with the rich, desiring to abandon the marriage agreement of his old friend and cover up the fact, almost leading to his son-in-law to death. If the ethics is upheld, the punishment should be increased. Considering that he has an official position, the penalty should not be reduced. Although Changshek was imprisoned, he was not guilty. Kwaiyuk still cared about the previous affection, and clinged to the engagement with Changshek. Their hearts once beat as one, with solemn pledge of love, despite there being no wedding ceremony. So they deserved a harmonious marriage.”

As a result, Changshek was acquitted and married, and the couple were deep in love. Simultaneously, they drew up the image of Lord Bao, worshipping day and night. Later, Har Changshek got the first place in the imperial examination, and became an assistant minister.

Case 7

Kudzu Leaf Flying in

There was a scholar named Luo Youwen from Yunhur County, Chuchou Prefecture, who had served as the magistrate of Nanfeng County for many years. Chyu Gong, a scholar from Longchuan County, was a relative of Luo Youwen. Accompanied by three servants, Gui Shibar, Cheunng San, and Fu Shi, Chyu Gong visited Luo Youwen with a hundred taels of silver. He purchased fifty taels worth of copper-gilt trinkets and gold-plated combs from Nanfeng, storing them in several leather trunks secured by white bronze locks. At that time, Lord Bao was on a tour of Nanking, and Chyu Gong, being acquainted with him, planned to visit him. After packing up all his goods, Chyu Gong bid farewell to Luo Youwen and set off. After a few days, he arrived in Ruihong and instructed Cheunng San and Fu Shi to depart early for Nanking to inquire about Bao's whereabouts. They agreed to meet at Wuhu.

The next day, they changed boats, and the sailor Gur Tsai transferred their luggage onto the new vessel. Upon noticing the weight of the leather trunks, he suspected they contained gold or silver and informed his master Ai Hu, "These trunks are exceptionally heavy and supposed to contain gold or silver, nothing else." Then the two hatched a sinister plot, saying, "We should not take on any other passengers so that we can take actions without interference midway."

With their plan in place, they feigned concern to Chyu Gong, saying, "I believe that as a scholar, you prefer peace and quiet. We fear that other passengers might disturb you if they board the same boat. Therefore, we won't take on any other passengers, but we humbly request that you reward us generously for the boat fare." Chyu Gong replied, "If you can do that, so much the better; I'll give you more money when we reach Wuhu." Hearing this, the two men grew even more certain about the big amount of silver Chyu Gong had. They set sail that day and passed through Chiuchiang.

On the following evening, the sailor anchored the boat in a secluded area and waited until midnight. Ai Hu then slashed Chyu Gong's head with a knife, while Gur Tsai did the same to Gui Shibar. Both the master and the servant met their end, thrown into the river. The sailors retrieved the keys and opened the trunks, only to find them filled with gold-plated combs and bronze utensils, such as censers, vases, kettles, penholders, and exquisite ornaments. Inside was only thirty taels of silver. Gur Tsai complained, "I thought it was all silver and we could have struck it rich, but it turns out to be just these things." Ai Hu responded, "With such fine goods, we don't need to worry about finding buyers. Let's proceed to Wuhu and sell them along the way to turn it into silver." And then they did as planned.

Meanwhile, Cheunng San and Fu Shi learned that Lord Bao was on an inspection tour in Soochou. They traveled straight to Wuhu and waited for half a month, but their master never arrived. They hired a boat to search for him along the route but found no trace. Then they returned to Ruihong in Chiuchiang, where they questioned the innkeeper, who told them, "They changed boats the next day and left. How could they stay until now?"

Greatly stunned, Cheunng San and Fu Shi went back to Nanking. Their savings used up, they had to pawn clothes to pay for their journey and went to Soochou for some information. But when they arrived in Soochou, they did not find out any news. They didn't expect that Bao had already gone to Songchiang for inspection, so they subsequently made their way to Songchiang, but there was still no news. The government office was so august that their dream to make acquaintance with Judge Bao was shattered. They conferred in pretending to be complainants in order to enter at the designated time and inquire the trail of their master. They believed that this would

be seamless, so they did it.

After seeing them, Bao was greatly shocked and asked, "How did you separate from your master on the road?" Cheunng San replied, "We servants and he went to Nanfeng to visit Lord Luo and bought some gold-plated combs and copper utensils, and then got to Ruihong. After that, Fu Shi and I went to Nanking early to inquire about your whereabouts so that we could meet him in Wuhu. We arrived in Nanking and learned that you were in Soochou, so we turned back and waited for my master. But after half a month, the master did not show up. The two of us headed straight up to Chiuchiang and searched along the way, but couldn't find any trace. With doubts in our hearts, we came to Soochou. Our savings had been used up, so we pawned clothes to pay our way to Soochou, where we learned that your honor had left for somewhere else, and got no news about our master. It has been several days since we arrived here. But your yamen is so dignified and serious that the two of us with humble identities dare not come in to see you. Therefore, we have to resort to an excuse of filing a complaint so that the doorkeeper let us in. We sincerely hope your honor can investigate this matter for us." Bao asked, "Is it possible that your master went home after you parted ways halfway?" Fu Shi replied, "Our intention is resolute. How could our master go home?" Lord Bao asked, "How much money did your master get in Nanfeng?" They replied, "He only received one hundred taels of silver." Bao continued, "How much copperware did he buy?" They replied, "He spent fifty taels of silver on copperware and combs." Bao declared, "Your master has an open-minded personality. If he didn't return home, he might have been robbed on boat or caught in the storm in the river. I'll give a permit and two taels of silver as travel expenses for you to investigate along the way. If it's really a robbery, then there will definitely be goods sold. If you encounter any copper utensils or combs that come from unknown sources, immediately hand them over to the government and tell me, and I will naturally find out the truth." The two men received the permit and left, but they failed to find any clues.

When Cheunng San and Fu Shi were almost out of money, they arrived in Nanking and saw a pair of censers in a shop. After a careful examination, they confirmed that they were genuine. "Are these for sale?" they asked the shopkeeper. "Of course," replied the shopkeeper. "Do you have any other curiosities?" Cheunng San asked further. "Yes, we do," said the shopkeeper. "If so, may we see them?" requested Cheunng San. The

shopkeeper then brought out a trunk of curiosities for them to choose from. After examining the goods thoroughly, Cheunng San asked, "Where did you get these?" The shopkeeper replied, "From Wuhu." Without hesitation, Fu Shi grabbed the shopkeeper's arm, who was puzzled and asked, "Why are you grabbing me without any reason?" A scuffle ensued.

Just then, Commander Chu Tianlun of the Military Police passed by and asked, "Who's making a commotion here?" After Cheunng San twisted the shopkeeper's hand and brought him out, Fu Shi took out the permit, and they were taken to Chu's office for further inquiry. There, Cheunng San provided a detailed explanation. Then, Commander Chu asked the shopkeeper, "What is your name?" The shopkeeper replied, "My name is King Liang. These goods were brought here by my wife's brother from Wuhu." However, Chu said, "These goods are not produced in Wuhu. How could they be bought there? There must be some hidden information in between." King Liang answered, "To know the specific origin, you can summon my wife's brother Wu Cheng for questioning." Chu Tianlun then had them all imprisoned. The next day, Wu Cheng was brought to the office. Chu questioned, "Where did you buy the copperware?" Wu Cheng replied, "These goods were produced in Nanfeng, Chiangsi and happened to be brought by a travelling merchant to Wuhu. I, the humble, bought them with the help of a broker at the price of forty taels of silver." Lord Chu then asked, "Do you know where that traveler came from?" Wu Cheng said, "We met by chance; how can I know him?"

Upon hearing this, Chu dared not act on his own and could only escort these four men to Judge Bao.

Judge Bao was on a tour in Taiping Prefecture and reviewing cases at that time, so he did not have free time to interrogate these four people, and then he entrusted Judge Dong to deal with it. By the time Dong began the trial, Fu Shi and Cheunng San handed over their pleading. "The complaint is about a murder for profit: As the saying goes, 'Heaven's vengeance is slow but sure, and the grievances of the innocent will eventually be redressed.' My master Chyu Gong, went to Nanking to visit his relatives, and bought copper trinkets and many combs, and ordered us to go to Nanking to explore where Judge Bao had patrolled. We parted ways with our master midway, but

we never heard from him again. Unexpectedly, the ferocious King Liang and Wu Cheng conspired for wealth and killed our master. Now that the stolen goods have been retrieved, we sincerely hope they shall be brought to justice. Please consider the miserable souls of the victims and find out where their bones are buried. Above is what we sue in tears.”

Wu Cheng also complained, “I’m appealing against the groundless accusation. Every injustice has its perpetrator and every debt its debtor, and a reason for each. Just like the trees that grow in the forest and the fish that live in the pond, they are not implicated without reason. As for myself, I am just a law-abiding businessman in Wuhu. I happened to buy some copperware from a travelling merchant at a low price, which was witnessed by the broker Duan Kerchi. However, these evil people falsely claimed the goods as their own and framed me up. How dare I sell the goods publicly if they were obtained through thuggee? Even if the origin is unknown, it is necessary to investigate in detail for the truth. That is why I am appealing.”

At that time, Judge Dong received the case, and carefully reviewing it, put the suspects in prison. The next day, the judge ordered the arrest of Duan Kerchi and brought in other suspects for trial. Dong asked Duan Kerchi, “As a middleman, you claimed that Wu Cheng bought the goods through you. Do you know the name of the former owner?” Duan Kerchi replied, “There are many merchants coming and going; how can I remember all their names?” The judge said, “This case was entrusted by Judge Bao, and it involves a serious murder. If you withhold the information you know, you will be regarded as an accomplice. Wu Cheng, confess to avoid severe torture!” Wu Cheng retorted, “As the old saying goes, ‘The broker knows the business insider but customers don’t.’ At that time, the goods were really sold to him.” Kerchi said, “At that time you only bought his goods just for the low price. How can I be your accomplice for I am only a middleman to facilitate the transaction and make the price fair?” “It is human nature to take advantage of profitable opportunities. If you didn’t want to make a profit, why would you take risks and travel far and wide? Since the goods were abnormally cheap, you, Wu Cheng, must know they were stolen. Duan Kerchi, you serve as a broker and attract people from all directions. Don’t you know about this matter? The two of you are pushing blame onto each other. There must be some story behind it. Come clean now! If the goods were bought from someone else, report his

name; if it was thuggie, admit it to avoid torture.” said Dong. The two refused to confess, and were bludgeoned 30 times respectively, followed by three hundred more. However, they still refused to plead guilty. The judge pondered, “Even under such harsh punishment, they won’t confess. They must be detained for now, awaiting a breakthrough. Anyhow, a kudzu leaf suddenly flew in with the wind and took down the red streamer hanging on the door, falling onto Duan Kerchi’s body. When retreating to his chamber, he pondered, “With no kudzu planted in the yard, how could a kudzu leaf fly here? It is very wierd, and hard to figure out.”

The next day, they were interrogated again, but even under torture they did not confess. Therefore, the case was officially suspected, and a detailed report was submitted to Judge Bao, who appointed personnel to Yicheng and other counties for further investigation. Judge Dong decided to hire a boat to set out for Wuhu. Official vessels complying with the orders from the superior, Dong instructed the constables to hire a boat on the spot and happened to meet Ai Hu. Upon boarding, the judge asked, “What is your name?” Ai Hu replied, “I am Ai Hu.” The judge continued, “What about his?” Ai Hu answered, “He is a sailor named Gur Tsai.” (“Gur” in Chinese means kudzu leaf, and “Tsai” red streamer, which implied Gur Tsai was the culprit.) The judge then did not board the boat and ordered his followers to arrest the two men, who were taken back to the judge’s office for interrogation, frightened out of their wits. The judge said, “You conspired to murder a scholar. The broker Duan Kerchi has reported that to me. We’ve been searching for you for a long time. Now, since you’ve been caught, confess and accept the punishment. There’s no need for further explanations.” Ai Hu argued, “I am just a boatman, having nothing to do with Duan Kerchi. He plotted on his own, but why is he falsely accusing us?” Infuriated by their denial, the judge immediately ordered a harsher punishment—bludgeoned forty times each—then detained in the jail of Wuhu County.

Then he went to various counties for inspection and returned to his own office. Immediately, a warrant was issued to bring out the two prisoners for interrogation. The county magistrate of Wuhu immediately escorted the two criminals to Dong’s court. Instantly, the magistrate ordered them each to be beaten forty times with a heavy bludgen at once, but neither of them confessed.

The judge then summoned Wu Cheng and other suspects for confrontation. Wu Cheng said, "You thieves plotted to murder someone for their goods and sold them for silver, dragging us innocent people into this misery. Fortunately, God know the truth and give you the punishment you deserve." Gur Tsai retorted, "How could you lie without conscience? I never met you before, but why do you falsely accuse me?" "The copperware and the combs I bought from you cost me forty-two taels of silver, and Kerchi can testify," retorted Wu Cheng. Ai Hu and Gur Tsai persisted in their denial, and were subjected to another hundred times of bludgeoning.

Ai Hu eventually confessed, "It was all initiated by Gur Tsai. When Chyu Gong, the scholar, boarded, Gur Tsai helped carry three trunks onto my boat. The trunks were so heavy that he suspected they were filled with gold or silver. So we hatched this plan. We refused to take on other passengers and waited until we passed Hukou. Then we killed them with knives and threw their bodies into the center of the river. Later, we opened the suitcases only to see copperware, getting over 30 taels of silver, and we were too late for repentance. After that, we sold the goods in Wuhu and obtained 40 taels of silver from Wu Cheng. At that time, we just wanted to unload the goods, so we sold them so cheaply. Duan Kerchi noticed this and took 15 taels of silver from us for himself." Duan Kerchi lowered his head in silence. The judge ordered each of them to confess. Fu Shi and Cheunng San kowtowed and said, "What a righteous master you are! My patron's grievance has finally been redressed." The judge wrote a report and submitted it to Judge Bao.

Judge Bao personally reviewed the case and found no discrepancies. He immediately wrote down a judgment: "According to the confessions: Gur Tsai first tested the weight of the trunks and conceived greedy desires; Ai Hu later heard of the potential profits and plotted to murder for them. They asked for extra boat fare to ascertain if Mr. Chyu is a rich man. They refused to take on other passengers to avoid suspicion and prepared their scheme. They docked the boat in a remote place to avoid being seen. In the dead of night, they viciously killed the master and the servant, dumping the bodies into the river to cover up the crime. They rejoiced at the prospect of riches, believing that poverty would be transformed into sudden wealth, only to discover that the trunks were filled with copperware, which was difficult to dispose of overnight. When they arrived in Wuhu, the broker learned of their deceit and took a share of the profits. They sold

the goods in Nanking, where the two servants recognized them and recovered the stolen goods. The ruffians remained anonymous, but their evil deeds were revealed through a kudzu leaf blown by the wind. The criminals were difficult to capture promptly, and only blurted out their true names when encountered on the official ship. To figure out the implication, the wind blowing away dead leaf is not enough. After apprehending the suspects and conducting interrogation, it was confirmed that they were the real perpetrators. Gur Tsai and Ai Hu, the two criminals, who killed people for money, deserved to be beheaded publicly; Wu Cheng and Duan Kerchi, the two wicked men, who cheated money together, should be exiled to remote places. King Liang, who was innocent, should be released. Each punishment shall be carried out on the basis of the verdict.”

Accordingly, Gur Tsai and Ai Hu were executed in the autumn, and Wu Cheng and Duan Kerchi were immediately banished.

Case 8

Collecting the Posters

In Guangdong Province lived a merchant Yo Tsihwa, whose ancestral home was in Chechiang Province. Since his grandfather's time, his family had been running a machine cloth business in Guangdong, and he had accumulated a small fortune, so he took Wong as a concubine there. With the pernicious habit of alcoholism, Tsihwa was so brutal that his concubine would get badly beaten if anything went against his will in the slightest. Unable to bear the pain, Wong ran away one night while Tsihwa was in a deep sleep, and committed suicide by throwing herself into a well. The next day, having no idea that his concubine had already died, Tsihwa put up posters to look for her everywhere. However, several months passing, he received no response. After receiving the payment for goods, Tsihwa just packed up and returned to Chechiang.

In Guangdong, there lived another man named Lin Fu, who ran a wine and meat shop and saved up some wealth. He married a woman Fang Chunlian without knowing the fact that Chunlian was unchaste and had had extramarital affairs. Hearing of the matter, Lin Fu's parents told him in detail. In anger, Fu abused and beat his wife every day, leaving her in disgrace. "Why didn't you just drown me when I was born so ugly? Now I have married this cruel and lascivious man, who dislikes my appearance, swearing and even beating me. I think I'm gonna die in his hands eventually." Chunlian complained to her biological parents pretendedly. Her parents advised, "Now that you

are married to him, the only thing you can do is bear and live a good life. Never quarrel with him.” Though her parents comforted her with soft words, Chunlian still thought Lin Fu was a fickle man. One day when Chunlian got up early to make a fire before the door, there was a rascal Hsu Dar passing by after drawing water. Seeing her alone, he flirted with her, “Chunlian, you woke up so early while your husband is still in bed. Why don’t you come to my home and have a cup of morning soup?”

“Is there anyone in your home?” asked Chunlian. Hsu Dar replied, “No one but me.” Hearing that, Chunlian, lewd in nature, recalled Fu’s everyday wrangle and followed Hsu Dar to his house. Filled with rapture, Hsu Dar took out some fruits for Chunlian from the cupboard, and gave her two silver hairpins. Then, they closed the wooden door and went to bed. After they finished sexual intercourse, all the neighbours got up, making it impossible for her to go home. So Hsu hid her in his home, and locking the door, went out to do business on the street. When the dark night fell, he returned and continued to flirt with her. By the time Lin Fu got up and found his wife gone, he pondered, “Every time this woman gets beaten, she will definitely run away, so this time is no exception.”

Then he searched here and there but found no trace of her. Then, he made posters and posted them everywhere to find her. He also reported the situation to Fang Lee, his father-in-law.

Anger beginning to build in the pit of Lee’s stomach, he complained, “My daughter has never ever been truly loved by you. She once told me that you beat her so many times, which overwhelmed her and made her hate you bitterly. Every time she wanted to suicide, her mother and I gave her much comfort to prevent her death. “Now it must be you who beat her to death and hid her corpse, deceiving me with the lie that she escaped. I will report this to the authorities and seek justice for my daughter. Only then can my resentment be alleviated!” So Lee filed a lawsuit to Judge Tang of the local county. It read, “The complaint is a matter of ethical change. Deciding on marriage according to the amount of money is the way of barbarians. The husband, who thought his wife was ugly and detested her, is no better than a beast. My daughter, Chunlian, married Lin Fu legally. No one would have expected Fu to be so salacious. Despising my daughter’s appearance, he insulted and beat her day and night, making her feel

humiliated. Now he was still vicious so that my daughter was even beaten to death by him. Being afraid that his crime would be discovered, he hid the corpse. He claimed that my daughter escaped on her own, but who can testify to that? With many people around, how could she have left without a trace if she had eloped? My daughter couldn't have walked a long way, but why is there no news about her these days? It was obvious that he killed her and hid her corpse maliciously. Now my daughter has been brutally murdered, whereas I could only sigh and do nothing. Therefore, please help bring justice to my daughter and have Lin Fu pay with his life. That is what I appealed in great bitterness."

The country magistrste accepted the suit. Subsequently, the yamen runners were dispatched to arrest Lin immediately, who also drew up an indictment.

When Hsu Dar heard of the allegations of Fang Lee and Lin Fu, he said to Chunlian, "I have never expected that your stay at my home for a few days will cause your parents bringing suit against your husband. It's not convenient for you to stay here anymore. What if they find you? How about fleeing away with me to somewhere else and then figure out a way out?" "Without further ado, let's leave here as soon as possible", replied Chunlian. Thereupon, they packed the luggages, fleeing that very night. Upon arrival at the capital of Yunnan Province, they had used up the travelling expenses. Hsu Dar said, "Now here we are, being strangers in a strange land with no food and supplies; what shall we do then?" Chunlian, who was an adulterous woman by nature, replied, "You don't need to worry about the food or clothing. If I go into prostitution, the money will be enough." Hsu had no alternative but to comply with her proposal. Changing her name to Sue, Chunlian put on makeup as a prostitute to earn their living. Upon hearing that there was a gorgeous prostitute, all the playboys started to visit her, as a result of which Sue was able to make some money and no longer need to worry about the basic needs.

After Chunlian made her escape, an old man reported that there was a corpse in the well of the village. The county magistrate demanded an autopsy immediately. Actually, it was the corpse of the concubine of Yo Tsihwa. Deciding it was his daughter, Fang Lee hugged the corpse and cried, "This is my daughter's body. Sure enough, she was beaten to death by her wicked husband Lin Fu, and thrown into this well." Then he

beseached the county magistrate to interrogate Lin Fu with torture. The county magistrate inquired Lin Fu, "Is it true that you beat your wife to death and hid her body in the well?" Lin Fu argued, "Although this is a female corpse, its clothes and appearance are different from my wife's. My wife is older and taller than this woman, having more and longer hair than her. How could he accuse me by these groundless remarks? I earnestly beg a scrutiny, your honor." Fang Lee stepped forward and supplicated, "This is just his excuse. I hope your excellency can have a medical exam of the corpse and find out the cause of the death." The county magistrate extracted confession by torturing. Lin Fu couldn't bear the punishment, so he had to surrender. But before the judicial review arrived, Lin was in temporary imprisonment.

At the end of the year, Judge Bao paraded through the country under orders and arrived at this county. After questioning Lin Fu's case, he knew that Lin had been framed. "I was ordered to investigate unjust cases. How can I not redress his grievances since I find the case of Lin Fu rather suspicious?" Then he told the local officials, "Fang Chunlian is a chippie, who must be unwilling to die. Although she suffered from beating and scolding, she must have hidden or escaped or been abducted." Hence, he demanded his subordinates to collect all the posters here and there and check them one by one. Among them was the one by the Guangdong merchant Yo Tsihwa, who was looking for his missing concubine, whose appearance and clothing were identical with those of the female corpse. They then tried to detain Yo Tsihwa for interrogation, but he had already left Guangdong. Bao pondered day and night over the injustice suffered by Lin Fu, "How can I stand by without redressing his grievances?" So he burned incense and prayed to the God of the Magistrates, "I am puzzled about the escape of Fang Chunlian, and I implore the gods to reveal the truth." After making his plea, he dispatched an official named Tang Guan to Yunnan on official business the next day. Upon arrival at the provincial capital, he submitted his documents, stayed at the official mansion, and waited for a response. Several days passing with no reply, he went to visit the new prostitute named Sue, who was said to be exceptionally beautiful and charming. "Where are you from and why are you working as a prostitute here?" The woman replied, "I used to be a fine woman, but my husband kept beating and scolding me. I couldn't stand it anymore so I ran away. Without any means to support myself, I had to resort to this." Tang said, "Your voice sounds like my fellow-villager, and your appearance looks like Lin Fu's wife." The woman was startled and blushed all over her

face. She dared not conceal it and had to tell about all her story, "It is my neighbor Hsu Dar who brought me here. I hope that you can keep it a secret when you return home. I will serve you wholeheartedly, not charging one penny." Tang pretended to agree and said, "Don't worry, and continue your business. Tomorrow I will also come here for fun. If I go back, I won't say anything about you." After parting with her, he returned to the official mansion and sighed, "Such a grievance! Lin Fu is my close neighbor, and now he's fallen into serious trouble." He couldn't wait to go home and report the incident.

The next day, Tang received the reply and hurried home. He told Lin Fu the fact that Chunlian was abducted by Hsu Dar to work as a prostitute in the capital of Yunnan Province. Lin reported the incident to Judge Bao. Bao immediately dispatched his subordinates together with Tang to Yunnan Province to arrest Chunlian and Hsu Dar. After a careful trial, Chunlian was sold to accept state-mandated indentured servitude. All the money was given to Lin Fu as a compensation; Hsu Dar was sentenced to penal servitude; Fang Lee was convicted of making false accusation; and Tang Guan was rewarded with three taels of silver. The final verdict read, "Fang Chunlian is promiscuous, lascivious and often went to the mulberry fields to have sex with many men. It is only natural that her husband repeatedly beat and scolded her when he heard about her dirty deeds. How could she run away without taking into account of her husband? Chunlian opened the door early in the morning and came across Hsu Dar, so she hid in his house and had an affair with him. Hsu Dar, a servant and a trafficker, lured her with flattery and made her his mistress. He swore that he had found a beloved beauty and did not want any longer to be honored with a noble title. But how could he exempt from the penal servitude when he abducted a married woman? Fang Lee didn't blame his daughter but scolded his son-in-law for her ill behaviors. He falsely accused Lin Fu of beating Chunlian to death and hiding the corpse, claiming that the remains in the well belonged to Chunlian. He falsely accused Lin of murder, however her daughter is still alive. He can cheat the world with lies but can not escape from penalty. Lin Fu shall get the money and marry another woman. Tang Guan shall be rewarded with money for performing his official duties. The case shall be recorded for future reference."

Bao's verdict was widely known among the people, who were all sincerely convinced.

Case 9

A Double-decker Boat

In Wushian County Soochou Prefecture lived a boatman named Shan Gui, and his sailor and brother-in-law Ye Shin, who were dedicated to robbing merchants. Ning Long, a merchant from Huichou, came with Kee Shing, his servant, to buy silk satin with more than 1,000 taels of gold. He hired Shan Gui's boat and loaded it. The next day, they went aboard, sailed toward Chiangsi Province and arrived at Changwan ferry 5 days later. That night, Shan bought some meat and wine and invited Ning and Kee to dinner, who were persuaded into getting drunk. In the dead of night with moon and stars shining faintly, Shan Gui drove the boat far away the shore and threw them into the river with the assistance of Ye. So dazed and drunk that Kee Shing was drowned. Due to having learned to swim when he was young, Ning went down with the momentum, and suddenly grabbing a large piece of wood swam on. Seeing a big boat sailing upstream, he shouted for help. There was a man on board named Cheunng King, who was Ning Long's cousin. Hearing that Ning's accent was similar to his own, Cheunng quickly commanded him to be rescued and could not help but greet him. Cheunng took out clean clothes for him and asked the reason of falling into river.

Hearing what had happened to Ning Long, King offered him some wine to help him get over the shock. After dawn, they rented another boat and informed that Lord Bao was patrolling in Wushian County immediately wrote Bao a complaint about thuggee: "The

boatmen Shan and Ye wantonly harmed people and dominated the boat's transportation business in the local area, while we merchants left far away from our hometown as vulnerable as fish out of water. I took a thousand taels of silver and came to Soochou with a servant to buy silks and satins. Then I hired a boat to carry us to Chiangsi for sale. However, we never expected that when we stopped for a rest in Changwan ferry with my goods, the boatman Shan Gui and the sailor Ye Shin managed to get us drunk and even threw us into the river. We strangers sailed with the moon shining in the late night, steered into the middle of the river; all around being quiet, we were pushed into the river. My servant became food for fishes. Back to the ferry, the murderers took away my property. With my servant drowned, I was fortunate to be rescued by Cheunng King. Those two wicked men thought that no one would know what bad things they had done in the dark. But they did not know that justice is still there. I beg to punish the murderers and take back my goods. Above is my accusation."

Receiving the complaint, Bao tried the case carefully. Then he ordered the capture of the two murderers but found that Shan and Ye had not yet returned home.

Bao ordered to put Shan's wife and children in jail together with Ning Long. Hsieh Neng and Lee Chun, the captors, immediately received the approval to patrol the waterway for investigation. Who would have expected that Shan and Ye had transferred the goods to another boat, declaring to have been robbed? Having berthed the boat in Changwan ferry, they took the goods to Nanking for sale. When they arrived in Nanking, they sold all the goods wholesale, and gaining one thousand and three hundred taels of silver, set off for home. Picking up their boat in Changwan ferry, they met the two captors Hsieh and Lee, who advised, "Since you are going home, why not take our boat?" Without any suspicion, Hsieh and Lee sailed straight back to Soochou. However, upon arrival, they were immediately put on handcuffs. Terrified out of their wits and wondering what had given them away, they argued, "How can you handcuff us for no reason?" Hsieh and Lee said, "You will figure it out in front of Judge Bao." When arriving at the court, they reported to Bao, who happened to be working there, "Your Honor, we are back to report for the duty, with the suspects brought in." Having sent four men to Shan Gui's boat and carried all the contents to the court, Bao asked, "Shan Gui and Ye Xin, how much money did you get for the murder of Ning Long and his servant?" Shan Gui replied, "We never plotted against anyone, so why do you say I

did it to Ning Long?” Bao answered, “Someone bore witness that Ning Long sailed to Chiangsi in your boat and was murdered during the journey. Why are you still arguing?” Shan Gui retorted, “Ning Long hired my boat but was robbed halfway. How can I give consideration to him when my own life is on the line?” Bao snapped, “Having got them drunk and thrown them into the river, you are talking out of your ass. Now you deserve fifty floggings each.” Ye Shin put in, “Even if we feel shameful for not saving them, now there is no evidence to prove us guilty. Why do you only speak on hearsay evidence? How can we be reconciled to the severe torture?” Bao said, “Now, I’m not worried about your irreconciliation. Confess your crime, otherwise you will be subjected to severe caning.”

Despite the torture, they still insisted that they were not guilty. Soon the soldiers brought the items from the boat and put them on the platform of the court. Ning Long said that the items from the boat were not his. There was no silver or satin. No one could have imagined that the silver and goods were hidden in a compartment in the bottom of the boat. Seeing that none of the goods on display were Ning Long’s, Shan said, “Ning Long, you are so heartless. That night you were robbed by bandits, and thrown into the river. Why don’t you sue them but me? It is not reasonable.” Ning Long said, “I was never robbed by the bandits that night. It was you two who got me drunk with wine, and rowing the boat into the middle of the river threw my servant and me into the river. And then you hid the goods somewhere else. How dare you still quibble here?” Bao was puzzled by their arguments and thought to himself, “If it had been thuggee, why would there be nothing on board now? Where were so many items and taels hidden? Thus, Bao ordered the punishment to be stopped and put all of them in prison.

The next morning, Lord Bao had Shan Gui and Ye Shin taken out to continue the trial. He commanded Gui to stand on the east corridor, while Shin the west. Bao interrogated Shin firstly, “How many thieves came to rob your boat that night? What clothes did they wear? What did they look like?” Ye replied, “At midnight, four of us were sleeping on the boat when a gang of robbers dragged the boat to the center of the river. A tall man dressed in cyan clothes with paint on his face got on the boat first. Suddenly three small boats surrounded us. Ning Long and his servant saw the robbers aboard, and running to the stern in panic jumped into the water. When the robber was going to

hit me, I kept begging him for mercy, 'I'm just a boatman.' So he let me go and took all the goods away. Now, Ning Long is falsely accusing us in court, which is against his conscience." Bao said, "Back to the western corridor." When asked the same questions, Gui answered, "At midnight, the robbers dragged the boat to the center of the river. Then, my boat was surrounded by seven or eight small boats on all sides, and a young man in red jumped over the boat to throw Ning Long and his servant into the water. He wanted to throw me away, too. Then I begged, 'I am not a merchant, but a boatman.' Then he let me go, otherwise I would have been drowned in the river, too." Getting different confessions, Bao had them put on the instruments of torture. Both of them refused to plead guilty, "Since I am accused of having conspired his property, where are those properties hidden when I haven't returned home?" With no way to continue the progress, Bao put them in prison again. Then Bao took the palanquin to check Gui's boat in person, only to find it empty. Looking carefully at its structure, he found gaps in the bottom of the boat, which had no edges and corners, so he ordered to open it. There was a hidden bolt inside so that it wouldn't open, so Bao ordered his men to take a knife and axe to pry it open. Inside were many goods, including clothes, utensils, and two leather suitcases full of silver, which were sent back to Ning Long for recognition.

Ning said, "The things brought here several days ago are not mine, so I dare not claim them. But all the items now are mine except the new suitcases."

Having taken Shan Gui and Ye Xin out, Bao thundered, "You damned diehards, tell me who is the owner of the property?" Gui replied, "These things are deposited by passengers. How can they be his?" Long said, "You wiped out the account books in the suitcase, but there is a tripod on the left side of the lining of this old suitcase, isn't there?" Bao ordered to open it, there was one tripod as expected. Flogged for 60 times each, Shan Gui and Ye Xin couldn't stand the punishment, so they confessed that the goods were sold in Nanking at the price of 1300 taels. They divided the taels equally and put them in two suitcases.

Judge Bao concluded, "After the interrogation, it is learned that Shan Gui and Ye Xin ostensibly sail a boat to transport goods, but in fact, they are greedy for money and make a living by thuggee. Their passenger Ning Long mistakenly boarded their boat,

without knowing their real face. After several days' voyage, they offered the wine and persuaded Ning and his servant to drink in succession. They used wine as bait to hide their murderous intentions. They took advantage of the drunkenness and sleepiness of Ning Long and the servant, quietly pushed the boat off the shore with the boat pole; in the dead of night, they pushed the passengers into the river. Thinking Ning Long and his servant died in the river and their body would be eaten by fishes, Gui and Shin were glad to put the property in their own pocket. Fortunately, God is fair. Although the servant was drowned, the master was rescued. Then he came here to sue them, saying he was trapped in the river. It was not until I found the stolen goods at the bottom of the boat that Gui and Shin stopped arguing and admitted their crime. They should be sentenced to death to pay for Kee Shing's unjust death. The property should be returned to the owner, Ning Long."

According to the judgment, the two murderers were beheaded in autumn as a warning to the world. It can be said that the wicked can't escape punishment in the end, and the dignity of the law is maintained.

Case 10

Murder on the Ferry

In Chianchou County lived a destitute man Hsu Leung, whose father had been dead. He was loafing around all day long, with his younger brother Hsu Ching earning a living to support their mother. On account of his incompetence, he usually got sharply scolded by his mother, which made him ashamed. One day, he was determined to go to Yunnan Province with his bosom friend Feng Ren to do business. After a dozen years, he made a lot of money there and returned with fruitful results. It was late when he arrived at the local ferry, where he saw an acquaintance, ferryman Cheunng Jay, rowing over to pick him up. After they made an obeisance, greeting each other with a smile, Jay asked, "Sir, you've been away for a long time. Must have earned a small fortune." Carrying the heavy tael and walking for a long way, Leung felt exhausted and responded in a faint voice, "Some, not that much." Thereupon, he threw his umbrella and baggage into the cabin, letting out a big sound. Knowing that he was right back from Yunnan, Cheunng reckoned there must be tael in his baggage. Suddenly, a vicious idea came into his mind. He knocked Long off into the river with a bamboo stick, drowning him to death. Deep into the night, there was no witness around.

Jay hid the cloth-wrapper by stealth and then went back home. Becoming wealthy overnight, he gradually purchased land and erected houses. Jay had a son called Cheunng Yo, a seven-year-old boy, to whom he hired a tutor to teach archaism. The tutor always complimented Yo in the presence of him, "Your son excels at poems and

couplets.” Doubtful of that, Jay invited the tutor to the house for celebrating the Dragon Boat Festival. In the middle of the feast, Jay talked to the tutor, “I’m grateful you always give your praise to my boy. Since today is the Dragon Boat Festival, what about giving him a little test based on this good occasion?” The tutor said, “Your son is pulsing with genius. No difficulty could bring him down.” And then, he blurted out the first line of a couplet, “With yellow ribbons tying zongzi, the people mourned the loyal soul upon the Meelo River.” Meditating for quite a while, however, Yo still couldn’t finish it. Not only was Jay dissatisfied, but the tutor felt disgraced.

So ashamed was Yo that he pretended to go to the toilet, beside which the wronged soul of Hsu Leung transformed into an old man. “Why are you so vexed on the good festival?” said the old man. Yo replied, “My father asked my tutor to test me with a difficult couplet at the feast, and that’s why I am so gloomy.” “What is the former line?” asked the old man. Yo repeating it, the old man laughed, “Easy! Let me help you out.” “That’ll be great!” shouted Yo. The old man read, “By purple pole stealing silver, the boatman killed a solitary tourist on a local ferry.” Excited, Yo hurried back to tell his tutor, “Now, I can complete the couplet.” The tutor said happily, “If so, go ahead.” Then the boy recited the latter line. At that, Jay was shocked with a pale face, and the tutor said, “Your answer is O.K., but still not perfect.”

Jay scolded, “You must have asked someone for help. Tell the truth, or accept the flogging.” Yo had no choice but to tell the truth. His father urged, “Is that old man still in the toilet?” Yo answered, “No idea.” Jay ran to the toilet in a flurry only to find nobody. He thought it must be the soul of Hsu Leung coming for a revenge. So scared that he rambled in his speech, revealing his crime to the tutor without reservation. Unexpectedly, all those were overheard by his nephew Cheunng Ben. Ben was once at deep enmity with Jay for the possession of land, so he wrote down what he had heard to prosecute Jay. Magistrate Dong received his prosecution and then sent five elite soldiers to catch the suspect secretly. Jay was sent to the law court, ashen-faced and disconcerted. Aware of the fact, Dong tortured Jay in every conceivable means. The pain was too hard to bear, so he owned up to the crime and got jailed with fetters. The next day, Dong reported this case to his senior, Judge Bao, who returned a verdict that Jay should pay the forfeit of his life along with all his possession. Although having fled away, his wife and son were spared punishment.

Case 11

Yellow Cabbage Leaves

Five miles away from the downtown in Luoyang, Honan Province, there was a rich family surnamed Shee with two brothers. The older one was named Guanshou, while the younger one Mardu. Both of them had great aspirations. Mardu was working as a weaver in Yangchou Prefecture. Guanshou was married to Lau Dusai, who was beautiful and delivered of a son named Chinbao, who was five years old. On the Lantern Festival that year, there was a grand festive lantern show in Luoyang; Dusai was dressed up beautifully, and reporting to her mother-in-law went downtown together with her maid Mayheung and the butler Cheunng to watch the show. When they arrived at the Aoshan Temple, the audience was so crowded that Lau Dusai was separated from her maid and butler.

Lau was watching the lanterns when she suddenly turned around and found that her companions missing, feeling very anxious. Suddenly, a strong wind blew down the lantern, and the audience scattered in all directions, only leaving Lau getting lost and staying where she was. In the midst of panic, she suddenly heard a shout, and dozens of soldiers following a noble official on a horse arrived with numerous lanterns. It turned out to be Prince Chao, the younger brother of the emperor. Seeing that Lau was such a beauty, he was secretly delighted. Therefore, he asked, “Where are you from and why are you here in the middle of the night?” The lady said fraudulently, “I am here from

Dongking with my husband to watch the lanterns, but just now the wind blew off the lanterns, and I don't know where my husband went. So I wait for him here. Prince Chao said, "It's already late now. You can follow me to my mansion, and come back tomorrow to find your husband." Lau had no choice but to follow the prince to his mansion. The prince ordered the maid to take Lau to the bedroom, and going in said to her with a triumphant smile, "I am a person of high status, if you are willing to be my concubine, you will have endless glory and wealth." Lau Dusai was so scared that she lowered her head and dared not to speak. She wanted to die but found no way to do it. How could she resist the tyrannical posture of Prince Chao? She had to comply and slept with him all night. The prince gave a banquet the next day and naturally took her as his own. When Cheunng and Mayheung came back home, they told the mother-in-law that Lau was lost in watching the lantern show. Her mother-in-law and husband were both very worried and immediately sent their family members out to find her. There was a rumor that she might be in Prince Chao's mansion, but no one knew whether it was true or not.

Time passed, and it was a month later. Although Lau was enjoying a luxurious life in the prince's mansion, she missed her mother-in-law, husband and son day and night. One day, she saw rats chew her favorite brocade dress to pieces, and she was so sad that she wore an anxious look. Seeing this, the prince asked, "What is eating you, my lady?" At Lau's explanation, the prince laughed, "What's so difficult about it! I can ask the weavers in the city to make a new one for you." The next day, the prince put on a notice to summon the weavers. Of course, Shee Guanshou was able to weave this kind of brocade. He was inquiring about his wife's news, so upon hearing this notice, he immediately bid farewell to his mother and came to see the prince, who instructed, "Since you know how to make this dress, you shall weave it in my residence just according to this pattern." Shee Guanshou went to start his work as instructed. The servant girls told Lady Lau that the prince had found five tailors to weave the dress in the East Gallery. Lau thought to herself, "In Luoyang, only the Shee family have the ability to weave this kind of brocade, and my younger brother-in-law is now in Yangchou, so it must be my husband who is here." Thinking of this, Lau immediately got up and went to check it out. Guanshou recognized his wife at once, and the couple hugged each other with tears. The weavers next to them were so shocked by the scene

before them that they looked at each other with no knowledge of what had happened.

When Prince Chao sobered up, he couldn't find Lau. Then his maidservant told that Lau was watching the brocade weaving in the east gallery. Prince Chao rushed there, only to see Lau and that man hugging affectionately. So angry that he ordered his soldiers to take the five craftsmen to be executed. It was pitiful that the innocent weavers died a violent death. The prince, who was afraid of leaving himself in trouble, ordered 500 assassins to surround the Shee family and brutally killed them all, burning down their house and taking away all their belongings.

Now, only Butler Cheunng happened to take the young master Shee Chinbao out of the neighborhood to buy cakes. When he returned, he saw countless people killed and blood flowing all over the ground, with the house still on fire. Cheunng went to ask the neighbors in shock, only to find out that they had been killed by Prince Chao. Helpless, Cheunng ran away overnight to Yangchou, holding onto the five-year-old master, to report it to Shee Mardu.

Prince Chao pondered as he returned to his residence, "I killed the Shee Family and left Shee Mardu working as a craftsman in Yangchou. If he knows about this, he will definitely go to the emperor to sue me." A plan coming into his mind, he wrote a letter and sent his subordinate to Dongking to see the superintendent Sun Wenye, saying that he wanted to kill Shee Mardu. Sun Wenye, eager to flatter Prince Chao, immediately dispatched his men to Yangchou to arrest Shee Mardu.

That night, Shee Mardu had a dream of his family covered in blood, which made him alarmed. He consulted a fortune-teller, who predicted a great disaster, indicating that his family was in danger. Shee Mardu was so worried that he immediately hired a fast horse and left for Luoyang. When arriving at Marling village, Shee Mardu encountered Butler Cheunng holding the young master. When seeing Mardu, he explained the reason. After hearing this, Mardu fell to the ground and fainted. It took some time for him to regain consciousness, and then they immediately went to Kaifeng to file a complaint.

At that time, it happened that Sun Wenye was passing by. And his men recognized Shee Mardu and reported to Sun Wenye, who immediately ordered to arrest him for the crime of offending the senior official and beat him to death once he was caught.

Wenye had his body searched and found a written complaint against Prince Chao, thinking, “If I hadn’t met him today, I almost wouldn’t have been able to complete the prince’s mission.” Sun Wenye also considered that Judge Bao was very alert, so he secretly ordered four of his men to put the dead body in the bottom of the basket and covering it with yellow cabbage leaves throw it into the river.

It just so happened that Lord Bao left the yamen and when he reached the memorial archway of the West Gate, his horse refused to move in.

Lord Bao said to the guards on both sides, “As the saying goes, when it comes to three situations, the horse won’t go forward, that is, the emperor being on the street, the empress and the crown prince being on the street, and there being wronged souls.”

So he sent Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu to inquire about it in the tea stores and hotels, and the two took orders. When they came back, they reported that there were four men carrying a basket of yellow cabbage leaves in the alley, where they were hiding from others.

Judge Bao had the four men caught for interrogation, who replied, “Just now Lord Sun Wenye scolded that we should not have piled the yellow cabbage leaves on the street. We were each bludgeoned ten times and commanded to dump them into the river.”

Judge Bao suspected that there was something fishy, so he cajoled, “My wife is sick and wants to eat yellow cabbage leaves. You can carry them into my house.”

The four soldiers, though terrified, had to carry the basket into the house. Lord Bao rewarded them and instructed, “You should not let others know this, lest I should be made fun of.”

The four soldiers expressed their thanks and left. Judge Bao had the subordinate uncover the vegetable leaves and saw a corpse inside. Deciding that this man must have been killed by Sun Wenye, he had the jailer put the body in the west prison.

The servant Cheunng, waited for Shee Mardu for a long time but in vain, so he went directly to Kaifeng yamen with the young master Shee Chinbao to look for him. Seeing the drum of justice beside the gate, Butler Cheunng stepped up to beat it three times. The guard heard it and reported it to Lord Bao.

“Don’t scare him,” instructed Lord Bao, “Lead him in.” The guard took the order and ushered servant Cheunng into the hall. Lord Bao asked, “What’s your appeal?” Cheunng stated clearly all of the grievances that the Shee family had suffered. Lord Bao continued, “How did the 5-year-old child escape from the massacre?” Cheunng replied, “He cried for missing his mother, so I took him out to buy pastries. That’s why he’s so lucky to survive.” Lord Bao added, “Where’s Shee Mardu?” “He came here to file a complaint this morning, but now still no news from him.” replied Cheunng.

Lord Bao figured out the case and then led the servant to recognise the corpse in the west gaol, who saw Shee Mardu’s corpse and burst into loud sobbing. Lord Bao meditated for a long time and then ordered to prepare the horse to head for the City-god Temple. Upon arrival there, Lord Bao prayed, “Return the soul of Shee Mardu before midnight.” Then he went back. Maybe Shee Mardu didn’t deserve to die, and he did revive after death at midnight. The next day, the jailer reported the news of Shee Mardu’s resurrection to Bao, who immediately summoned Shee Mardu to the court, where Mardu cried and told the story of how he was killed by Sun Wenye. Bao instructed to wait in his mansion, trying to figure out how to trick Prince Chao into coming to the Kaifeng yamen. Suddenly getting an idea, he pretended to be bedridden and didn’t hold a court a few days.

One day, Emperor Rentsong heard that Bao was seriously ill and sent the best doctor of the imperial hospital to see him. Bao’s wife said, “So sick and lethargic that he is afraid of seeing strangers, so it is better not to see him.” The doctor said, “You can put a gold needle in his arm, and I diagnose him outside, and then I will know his disease.” Mrs. Bao inserted the needle on the screen, and the doctor diagnosed it, but the pulse did not move at all, so he left in a hurry to report it to the emperor. Bao said to his wife, “I am now pretending to be dead, and if the emperor asks what I have to say before dying, tell him, ‘Because Prince Chao of Sheeking Luoyang is an impartial official, I recommend him for my position.’” The next day, Madame Bao carried the seal and ribbon to the

Imperial Court and cried about the death of Bao, and all the civil and military officials sighed in grief. Emperor Rentsong said, "Since Judge Bao recommended that my younger brother be appointed Prefect of Kaifeng, I shall send envoys to invite Prince Chao." Rentsong issued an edict for two ministers, Han and Wong, to pay tribute to Bao, and at the same time sent envoys to Sheeking to announce the imperial decree. When the envoys entered the mansion of Prince Chao and read out the imperial edict, the prince was overjoyed and immediately appointing a ship packed up his luggage to take office. A few days later, Prince Chao got to Dongking to see the emperor, who said, "Judge Bao recommended you when he was dying, so now I officially ordered you to take over Bao's position." The prince expressed his gratitude and left. The next day, Prince Chao, along with Sun Wenyeerode on luxury Imperial carriages, very neat and grand, to the Kaifeng yamen to take office. When they went through the South Street, the people were very fearful and closed their doors tightly. Sitting on his horse, Prince Chao said angrily, "You are really unreasonable people. The soliders following me have been on the road for a long time, and they are short of money, so every family needs to offer a piece of silk brocade." Then every household was looted. Prince Chao arrived at Lord Bao's mansion and saw a long banner standing in the hall, and his subordinates reported, "This is Lord Bao's coffin, which hasn't been buried yet." The prince roared, "I chose an auspicious day to take office, but why hasn't his coffin been carried out?"

Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu reported it to Lord Bao, who ordered them to prepare instruments of torture, and let his wife out to tell Prince Chao that there was still half a month before the funeral. After hearing this, the prince hurled all kinds of abuse to Mrs. Bao for not taking a hint. Coming in from the side, Judge Bao shouted, "Do you recognize the indifferent Judge Bao?" Prince Chao was extremely shocked at that. Lord Bao then asked Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu to close the gate and arrest the prince and his attendents, putting him in the west prison and Sun Wenyeer in the east prison. The next day, the court was held. Summoned from prison, the prince and Sun Wenyeer were made to kneel down on the steps, seeing the coffin burned. 24 strong men were lined up on both sides with 36 torture devices and the imperial decree taken out and Shee Mardu being the witness. Hearing the complaint, the prince refused to plead guilty until severely tortured. He confessed to the fact that he dispossessed Lau Dusai

and murdered her entire family.

Then came Sun Wenye, who had the difficulty of concealing his crime, admitting having killed Shee Mardu. The case file finished, the prince and Sun Wenye were sentenced to death and escorted to the execution ground for beheading. The next day, Lord Bao went to inform the emperor of the case. Rentsong soothed him and said, “When I heard you died, I was driven depressed for many days. I now know that you pretended to die for this matter. The crimes committed by my brother and Sun Wenye have been proven, so I have no doubt about it.”

As a part of Bao’s verdict, Shee Mardu was set free and Lau Dusai was allowed to return to the Shee family. Prince Chao’s family members becoming commoners, his property was confiscated, half of it going to the Treasury and half of it going to the servant Cheunng as a reward, who was righteous and helpful to redress the grievances of his masters.

Case 12

The Stone Lion

In the region under the jurisdiction of Dengchou Prefecture, there was a place called Shitou Town, densely populated with residents, who built their homes along the riverbanks. The town was plagued with many evildoers with few practitioners of virtue. Among them, only Elder Choi from the east of the town was kind-hearted and charitable, not engaging in disputes with others. He married a gentle woman surnamed Cheunng, who could manage the family diligently and frugally. And they had a son named Choi Kyung, an eighteen-year-old boy of exceptional intelligence and wit, cherished by his parents like a precious gem. One day, an old monk came to their door to seek alms. "I am a wandering monk from Wutai Mountain," he said. "Having heard of your good deeds, I am here to beg for a meal." Elder Choi immediately dressed himself formally and invited the monk to sit into the main hall. He bowed deeply to the monk and said apologetically, "Please don't blame me for being rude not to go out to meet you." The monk hastily lifted him up and said, "I apologize for my sudden visit, but I have been eager to meet you, sir." Greatly delighted, Elder Choi ordered a sumptuous vegetarian feast to entertain the monk. During the feast, Choi inquired about the monk's journey. The monk explained, "I have come here from afar to report something to you." Elder Choi gestured and said, "If you wish to solicit donations or alms, I would not dare to refuse." The monk said, "This is enough to show your goodness. But I'm not here to beg. There will be a flood disaster here very soon. You

can prepare boats for escape. I have nothing more to say than to tell you this.” Elder Choi listened and nodded repeatedly, asking, “When will the flood disaster occur?” The monk replied, “When you see the stone lion beneath the Baochi Archway on the east street with blood flowing from its eyes, it will be time for your departure.” The elder said, “Since there is such a great disaster, I must tell the people in the town.” But the monk warned, “Your fellow villagers are mostly wicked and would not believe you. Even if you, sir, escape this calamity by believing me, you may still face hardships and tribulations.” The elder asked, “Will this suffering lead me to death?” The monk replied, “It doesn’t matter. Bring me a pen and paper, and I will write a few words for you to remember.” He then inscribed the following lines: “As floods rage across the land, help the animals in need, and you shall be repaid in kind. But if you aid humans, don’t poke your nose into their business too much, for gratitude may turn into enmity, leading to bitter imprisonment.” Elder Choi read it but did not understand its meaning. But the monk just said, “You will understand later.” After the meal, he took his leave, and Elder Choi offered ten taels of silver as a gift. The monk refused it, saying, “As a wandering monk, even if I have silver, it is useless to me.” In the end he left without accepting the money.

After conferring with Cheunng, the elder immediately had carpenters build a dozen large boats along the riverbank. When asked about his purpose by the townspeople, he mentioned the impending flood and told them to build boats to avoid the disaster, which only elicited laughter from the townspeople. Undeterred by the ridicule of the crowd, the elder kept instructing an old woman daily to go to the East Street and check if there was any blood flowing from the stone lion. As the old woman continued her daily inspections, frequenting the area, two butchers under the archway asked her the reason, and the old woman told them about the elder’s prediction of a flood disaster and the need to monitor the stone lion for signs of blood. After the old woman left, the two butchers chuckled among themselves, “There are such foolish people in the world! With this drought, how could there possibly be a flood disaster? Besides, how would blood come out of the eye sockets of that stone lion?” One of the butchers made a prank, saying that he would slaughter a pig and sprinkle the blood into the stone lion’s eyes the next day. That day, when the old woman saw the blood, she hurried back to report, and the elder immediately ordered his family to pack

up their belongings and move them all onto the boats. At that moment, the sun was blazing fiercely, and the heat was oppressive and suffocating.

By the time the elder and his entire family, including the elderly and young children, had boarded the boats, it was already dusk. Suddenly, dark clouds gathered on the left side of the sky, and a deluge began to pour down, lasting for three days and nights without cessation. The river water surged into the town, and for a moment, the residents' houses were swept away, leaving nothing but destruction. Over twenty thousand people drowned in the disaster. It was precisely because the villagers had committed too many sins that heaven annihilated them with this disaster, leaving only the virtuous couple, Elder Choi and his wife, who were saved by divine intervention.

As the elder's fleet of dozens of boats were carried away by the floodwaters towards the river mouth, they suddenly saw a mountain cliff collapse. Among the debris, a young black monkey was struggling and drowning. Without hesitation, the elder ordered his servant to grab a bamboo pole and extend it to the monkey. The monkey was able to grasp the pole and make its way to safety on shore, where it quickly scurried away. As the boats continued their journey, they encountered a floating tree with a crow's nest on top. Inside the nest were several newborn crow chicks that were unable to fly. The elder once again instructed his servant to use a boat plank to support the nest and its occupants. Once they were safely on the plank, the crows flew away.

Just as they reached a bend in the river, they spotted a person being swept away by the fierce currents, crying out for help. The elder immediately ordered his men to rescue the person. However, his wife Cheunng, reminded him, saying, "Don't you remember the monk's warning to avoid helping any person we encounter?" The elder replied, "If we can save even animals, how can we neglect to help a fellow human being?" Ignoring his wife's reminder, he then instructed his servants to use a bamboo pole to pull the person up onto the boat. Once the man was safe, the elder gave him clothes to replace his wet ones.

The next day, the rain finally stopped. The elder sent his servants back to their hometown to check on the situation. When they arrived, they found that the floodwaters had subsided, leaving behind vast sand dunes. To their amazement, the

elder's house, although damaged by the flood, had remained standing and had not been swept away. Upon hearing this news from his servants, the elderly man ordered his workers to repair and restore his house to its former condition. Soon, he returned home with his family, both young and old, grateful to have survived the disaster. As time passed, some of the villagers who had fled during the flood gradually returned, but only a fraction of the original population remained. The elder asked the person he had saved if he wished to go back. The rescued person, tears streaming down his face, replied, "I am Lau Ying, the son of Butcher Lau from Baochi Archway. My house was swept away by the flood, with my parents missing and my possessions all gone. I would like to stay with you, sir, and serve you as a humble servant, to repay your kindness in saving my life."

The elder said, "Since you are willing to stay in my house, I will treat you as my adopted son." Lau Ying saluted his gratitude.

Time flew, and in the blink of an eye, half a year had passed after the elder returned home. Meanwhile, in the capital city of Dongking, Empress Cheunng had lost a jade seal, and no one knew where it was. Emperor Rentsong issued a proclamation, which was posted all over the country, promising to offer a high-ranking position to anyone who could provide information about the whereabouts of the jade seal. Suddenly one night, Elder Choi dreamed that a god said to him, "The jade seal Empress Cheunng has lost is in the octagonal glass well in the imperial harem. God, seeing your hidden virtues, has sent me to tell you this news. So you may send your own son to report it to the emperor to gain a high-ranking position." Elder Choi woke up and told his wife about the dream. Suddenly, a servant came to report that a proclamation had been posted outside the Yamen of Dengchou Prefecture, which contained the same information as what the elder had dreamed of. Overjoyed, he decided to send his son, Choi Kyung, to report this to the emperor and claim the reward. However, his wife Cheunng, objected, saying, "We only have one son. How can we bear to be separated from him? Riches and honor are predetermined by fate. Don't hold onto this hope, my dear husband." Lau Ying stepped forward and said to his adopted parents, "I have yet to repay your kindness, and since the divine being has revealed this information, I would like to go in place of my brother to the capital and report it. If I am granted a position, I will return and transfer it to him." The elderly man was overjoyed and began

preparing silver and other necessities for Lau Ying's journey. The next day, Lau Ying bid farewell, and Elder Choi repeated his instructions, "If something good happens, do not betray our kindness." Lau Ying nodded solemnly and set off on his journey to the capital, determined to fulfill his promise. In no time, Lau Ying arrived in the capital and, without hesitation, tore down the proclamation outside the palace gate. The guards promptly brought him to the presence of Prime Minister Wong. Lau Ying first introduced himself, and then revealed the location of the jade seal. The Prime Minister immediately ordered a soldier to escort Lau to the guesthouse to wait. The following day, the prime minister reported this to Emperor Rentsong. The emperor summoned the imperial concubines and inquired about it. The Empress then recalled that while admiring the full moon late at night during the Mid-Autumn Festival, she had accidentally dropped the jade seal into the octagonal glass well while reaching for water with her attendants. The emperor immediately ordered officials to retrieve it from the well, and indeed, they found it there. Emperor Rentsong summoned Lau Ying to the throne and asked him how he came to know about the jade seal. Lau Ying did not hide the truth, telling the emperor that a divine being had revealed the information to him in a dream. The emperor remarked, "It must be that your family has built sufficient hidden virtue." As a reward, he decreed Lau Ying as the son-in-law of the Western Palace, and the second princess of Empress Huang was betrothed to him. Overjoyed, Lau Ying expressed his gratitude.

After a few days, the emperor established a residence for the new son-in-law, who had become very prominent with unparalleled power and influence, and no longer thought of his old benefactor.

However, after Lau Ying left, Elder Choi had been thinking about the news for nearly two months. Suddenly, someone came from Dongking and sent word that Lau Ying had been admitted as the emperor's son-in-law, extremely noble and prominent. Elder Choi then instructed his servant to go to the capital with Choi Kyung. Choi Kyung bid farewell to his parents and set off for Dongking. After a few days, he arrived in the capital and found an inn to settle down. The next day, they were looking for the son-in-law's residence when they heard someone shouting, "The Emperor's son-in-law is coming." Choi Kyung stood aside to wait, only to see Lau Ying sitting on the horse with a proud air. Choi Kyung deliberately approached to recognize Lau Ying, who saw

Choi and shouted, "Who dares to offend my horse?" Then he ordered the soldiers to arrest him. Choi Kyung asked in surprise, "Why are you suddenly so distant to me, brother?" Lau Ying replied in anger, "What brother do I have?" Without further ado, he brought Choi Kyung into the mansion and bludgeoned him thirty times as a punishment. Poor Choi Kyung was beaten to a pulp with his legs bleeding, and was imprisoned. At that time, Shiaoer the servant in the hotel learned that the master was in trouble and wanted to see him, but he couldn't get in. Choi Kyung told the truth to the jailer, who took pity on him and relieved him. Choi Kyung, originally from a wealthy family, used to eat meat every day without interruption but now was suffering. Suddenly, a monkey climbed in through the tree outside the wall, holding a piece of cooked mutton as a gift. Choi Kyung suddenly remembered that this monkey seemed to be the one saved by his father during the flood. So he then accepted the cooked mutton and ate it. The monkey left, and after a few days, it brought food in again, and this continued. The jailer saw this and understood the reason behind it, sighing, "Even animals have a sense of gratitude and righteousness, but humans sometimes fall short." From then on, he allowed the monkey to come and go freely. Another day, a dozen crows gathered in the prison, wailing incessantly. Choi Kyung also wondered if they were among those saved by his father. He then said to one of the crows, "If you pity me, please help me send a letter to my father."

The crow seemed to understand his intention and flew closer to him. Choi Kyung then borrowed a pen and paper from the jailer, wrote a letter, tying it to its foot, and it flew away. A few days later, it flew to his home. Just as Elder Choi and Cheunng were talking about their son's lack of news, the crow flew down and stood by their side. Elder Choi was surprised and puzzled. He saw a letter tied to the crow's feet. He opened the letter and found that it was in the handwriting of Choi Kyung. The letter detailed Lau Ying's betrayal and the hardships he suffered in prison. After reading the letter, the elder wept bitterly. Cheunng inquired about the reason and then also burst into tears, saying, "I told you not to take in others and now it has turned out just as I feared. Our kindness has been repaid with enmity. And our son is trapped in prison. How can he be freed?" Elder Choi replied, "Even birds and beasts know the principles of benevolence and righteousness. How could he with a human heart be so ungrateful? I must go to Dongking to find out the truth." Cheunng urged, "Our son is suffering.

You must hurry up.”

The next day, Elder Choi prepared his luggage and bid farewell to his wife before setting off for Dongking. After several days of travel, he arrived in Dongking and found an inn to stay at. Early in the morning, as he was out in the streets inquiring about news, he suddenly saw his servant Shiaoer, dressed in rags and begging for food under the eaves. Upon seeing Elder Choi, Shiaoer embraced him and cried. And the elder also felt sorrowful, asking for a detailed account. The servant recounted what had happened before, but Elder Choi didn't believe it and wanted to personally go into the mansion to meet Lau Ying. However, Shiaoer tightly hugged him and wouldn't let him go, fearing that he might fall into Lau Ying's trap. Suddenly, there was an announcement that the son-in-law was coming and everyone made way for him. The elder stood under the eaves waiting. When Lau Ying approached, Elder Choi called out, "Lau Ying, my son, now that you are wealthy and powerful, do you not remember me?" Lau Ying looked up and recognized him, but he pretended not to see him and ignored him completely. Elder Choi refused to give up, persistently following the horse, only to find the mansion's door had been shut, denying him entry. Overwhelmed with resentment, Elder Choi exclaimed, "If you do not acknowledge me as a father, that may be acceptable, but to imprison my son and subject him to suffering in jail is intolerable." He promptly lodged a complaint to the Kaifeng yamen. Coincidentally, Judge Bao was returning from a ceremonial incense offering, and Elder Choi knelt at the horse's head to present his grievance. Judge Bao brought the elder into the court for an inquiry, who narrated his sorrowful tale with deep distress. Judge Bao instructed the elder to wait in the corridor and immediately dispatched a constable to summon the prison guard, inquiring, "Is there a person named Choi Kyung?" The jailer replied, "He was incarcerated on a certain date, and the prison provided no sustenance, leaving him in a deplorable state."

Upon hearing this, Judge Bao ordered the immediate release of Choi Kyung from the torture devices.

The following day, an attendant was sent to invite Lau Ying to Judge Bao's mansion for a drink. Upon hearing of the invitation, Lau came to attend the banquet. Judge Bao ushered him into the rear hall for a private reception and ordered the guards to secure

the main entrance, keeping out any unauthorized individuals. The guards did as told and closed the mansion's doors before the feast. As the drinking reached its midpoint, Judge Bao feigned irritation, lecturing, "Why is no more wine being served?" The kitchen staff reported, "The wine has run out." With a chuckle, Judge Bao advised, "Since we've run dry, why not serve water in its place?" The attendants complied, bringing a barrel of water. Judge Bao ordered a large cup to be filled with water and offered it to Lau, saying, "Your Highness, please drink this cup for now." Lau, thinking that Judge Bao was belittling him, bawled, "Judge Bao, are you mocking me? I am the Emperor's son-in-law. Who dares to show me such disrespect? How can you offer water instead of wine?" Judge Bao calmly replied, "No offense intended. While others may pay you homage, I, Judge Bao, do not. If you could once drink from an entire river in June, surely you can stomach a cup of water now." These words struck Lau with a jolt of realization. Suddenly, Elder Choi stepped forward, pointing an accusing finger at Lau, "You ungrateful wretch! If you betray me today, you will surely betray the court in time. I implore you, Your Honor, to take action." Judge Bao then commanded Lau to be seized, with his regalia stripped, dragged down the steps, and soundly whipped forty times, demanding a full confession. Overwhelmed by guilt, Lau confessed everything. Judge Bao commanded that he be put in heavy shackles and imprisoned. The next day, Judge Bao submitted a detailed report to the Emperor. Emperor Rentsong summoned Elder Choi to the throne for questioning, who detailed the whole story. Emperor Rentsong said with great admiration, "You are a true gentleman valuing righteousness so highly. And your son deserves a noble title and stipend. I will issue an edict tomorrow." Grateful, Elder Choi took his leave. The edict came down the next day: "Lau Ying, for falsely claiming credit and showing ingratitude, for his cruelty and lack of compassion, shall be sentenced to death; Choi Kyung shall be appointed as the county magistrate of Wucheng and take up his post soon; For Elder Choi, known for his consistent kindness, a memorial archway shall be erected." In accordance with the imperial decree, Judge Bao carried out the judgement, releasing Choi Kyung, who, dressed in his official attire with the Appointment Letter, went to his post accompanied by his father. That winter, Lau Ying was executed.

Case 13

Shoes Stolen

Wu Yuancheng, living in Shuining Temple, East Chiangchou county, was a lecherous monk. There was a couple, Cheunng Durhwa the benefactor, and Lanying the daughter of Han Yingsu from the south of the county. Childless for many years, the couple were so anxious for a son that they built up temples and worshiped gods sincerely every festival. They invited Yuancheng the monk to pray on the first and fifteenth day of every month. Yuancheng was extremely attracted by Lanying's beauty, and always dreamed of having sex with her. One night, when he was taking a stroll in the temple, a scheme came to his mind. The next day, coincidentally, Durhwa going out, Yuancheng went to Durhwa's house and pretended to collect alms. He bribed the handmaid, Shiaomay, to steal a pair of sleeping shoes from Lanying. Yuancheng got the shoes with overjoy. Back to the temple, he held them in his hand day and night with sighs of helplessness. It happened that Durhwa came to the temple the next day for the rite of blessing. Picking up the shoe at the gate, which had been left by Yuancheng deliberately, Durhwa was startled and bewildered. After talking to Yuancheng, Durhwa returned home and erupted in fury. He made lots of inquiries to trace why the shoe was there. With an official approval, he divorced Lanying and drove her back to her biological mother's home. Getting the message, Yuancheng fled to Taipingyuan town in the west, and renamed himself Feng Ren, without cutting his hair for two years. Timely, Yingsu was going to remarry his daughter. So Ren employed Wong Chin, the neighbor,

to make a proposal. Being friendly with Chin, Yingsu consented to the proposal. He asked Ren to choose a lucky day for a wedding. Feng paid a dowry and married Lanying as soon as Chin replied to him.

Time flying, it was right on the Mid-Autumn Festival, the moonlight gleaming and the music overwhelming.

The couple were drinking in the pavilion, saying honeyed words to each other. Drunken by the drink with the music, Ren embraced his wife, delightedly declaring, “Without Shiaomay, today’s happiness would never come.” Lanying became suspicious and asked the reasons. Ren then elaborated what he previously did. Knowing that, Lanying got furious but dared to say nothing. It was water under the bridge though Lanying was burning with inveterate hatred against Ren. After Ren fell asleep, she hanged herself around midnight. The second day, Yingsu was informed and about to appeal. While on his way to the court, Yingsu happened to meet Judge Bao, who was patrolling around Chiangchou. He immediately wrote a complaint: “It is a crime of ruining chastity and murder: My poor daughter Lanying had been Cheunng Durhwa’s wife, always there for him in harmony without any complaint. Yuancheng the monk, with his current name being Feng Ren, was so obsessed in my daughter’s beauty that he bribed the maidservant, asking her to steal Lanying’s shoes. With the shoes, he framed Lanying up, making Durhwa misunderstand that his wife was adulterate. Therefore, sticking to *Seven Grounds for Divorcing a Wife*, Durhwa decided to divorce my daughter. Considering my daughter had no means of livelihood and stuck to chastity consistently, I decided to take her back. As long as there is no evidence, I doubt this matter. Unexpectedly, the monk changed his name and wore long hair. With that, he asked my neighbor to propose to my daughter on behalf of him. Knowing nothing about this, I married my daughter to him. But last light, my daughter was hounded to death with grievance. It is believed that the Heaven’s vengeance is slow but sure and the evil is doomed to death. Therefore, I appeal for justice. That is all my melancholy complaint.”

At that time, Ren also came and pretended to be treated unjustly. Bao temporally jailed them both. In the living room sitting Bao that night, a blast of dark wind intruded all of a sudden. Bao asked, “What grievance is there?” Soon afterwards, a woman appeared

and knelt down in the hall. “Where are you from? Who are you? What’s your grievance? Talk to me.” said Bao. Subsequently, the woman told what had happened to her and then disappeared. The next day, Bao dispatched the guards Cheunng Leung and Shue Bar to bring Yingsu and Ren for an interrogation. To find out the truth of the case, Bao ordered Ren to be tied up and flogged. Frightened and dumbfounded, head-bowed but tallow-faced, Ren had to make a full confession. Accordingly, Bao confiscated Ren’s property and sentenced him to death. With the wrongs redressed, people far and near were all glad of it.

Case 14

Drying Clothes

In Shinchiao Village 20 miles away from Dongking, lived a rich man, Chin Tur, who married Shiuniang at her age of 19, the good-tempered and well-educated daughter of Song Hsieh in Nancun Village. He was satisfied with her excellent ability to treat the people and keep the house.

Invited to attend his cousin's wedding one day, Chin left home after informing his wife. However, his several days' absence worried her so that she approached the window to look out. Suddenly, a monk passed by Chin's house and noticed her standing near the portiere. Negligent of the slithery road and absorbed in Shiuniang, he dropped into the pond. Picking himself up and getting soaked, he shivered with cold in the bitter winter. With much mercy, she invited the monk to the house for a brazier, who dried his clothes with great gratitude. Offered a bowl of boiled water and asked where he was from, he replied, "A monk from Sheeling Temple, I was commanded to pick my master up, who left for Dongyuan Park several days ago. Passing by your house, I fell into the pond for neglecting the slippery road. Had it not been for your help today, I should have lost my life."

However, Shiuniang urged, "Your clothes are dry, so you can go now. Otherwise, I will

get into trouble if my husband runs into me staying with you.”

The monk was about to leave when Chin came back. Seeing a monk sitting beside a brazier with his wife, he felt annoyed. In fear, the monk hurried away without any word. Entering the house, Chin queried, “Where does the monk come from?” Shiuniang confessing everything, he rebuked, “Women can’t go outside. If neighbors know what you did for the monk, they will not stop gossiping. As a clean man, I can never stand such an improper wife! Go back to your biological parents’ home and never come back!” Looking down in silence and realizing her husband’s determination to dislodge her, she could do nothing but return to the Songs. Aware of why she was abandoned, her mother reproached her for the incautious acts with contempt. Even if the neighbors and relatives suspected the truth, Shiuniang couldn’t prove her innocence. Extremely regretful and depressed, she kept to her room all day.

Time flying, she had lived in her parents’ home for over a year. Hearing that Shiuniang had been driven out by her husband, the monk left Sheeling Temple and grew hair after resuming secular life. Moreover, he was renamed Lau Yee with the intention of marrying her. When his hair was long enough, he required a woman matchmaker to reach the Songs for a proposal. Meeting Shiuniang’s father first, the matchmaker advised, “In the name of scandal, Chin dislodged your daughter virtually owing to their disharmony. Even worse, he remarried a Miss Lau just two months later. There is no need to hang up on that ungrateful man. So I’m here to make a good match for your daughter. What do you think?”

The father said with a smile, “My girl didn’t keep her honor and got abandoned. Now she stays quietly in my house. To marry or not is up to her. I won’t make any decision.” Then, the matchmaker visited Shiuniang’s mother, who answered with delight, “My daughter has lingered at home for more than one year, but the suspicion hasn’t stopped in spite of her ex-husband’s remarriage. Now that you’re here, why not persuade her into marriage so as to stop gossip?” Informed of that good news, Yee was too eager to go to the Songs with luxurious betrothal gifts the next day. At that, Shiuniang lost all her desire for food and drink, drowned into sadness and forced into marriage. At the wedding night, receiving his relatives’ blessings, Yee was overwhelmed with joy and treated them warmly for days, giving the matchmaker a tremendous reward.

Although abandoned by her ex-husband, Shiuniang still missed him and always hoped to be reconciled regardless of Yee's deep affection because she thought she did nothing wrong. One day after half a year, Yee was invited to drink with his best friend and got totally drunken. When back home, he saw Shiuniang sitting opposite the mirror under the window. As a one-time erotic monk, he embraced her, flirting, "Can you recognize who I was?" Shiuniang answered: "No, I can't."

Yee continued, "Don't you remember the monk, falling into the pond, whom you've lent a helping hand?" Shiuniang asked in surprise, "Was it you?" "Smart as you are, you fail to see through my trick. Hearing you were abandoned, I started to wear my hair long, and sent a matchmaker to propose a marriage to you. Unexpectedly, you are now around by my side," bragged Yee. At his words, Shiuniang held a grudge against him. Several days later, she escaped back and told the truth to her father, who rebuked Yee seriously, "My daughter did you a favor but you betrayed her kindness." Then he filed a petition to the court of Kaifeng Prefecture. Lord Bao gave an order to summon the couple for interrogation, but Yee refused to confess. Bao had the monks of Sheeling Temple detained for further questioning, which confirmed that Yee was indeed a fugitive from the temple and that his secularization was a fact. Bao ordered to put him in prison in a long shackle, saying, "Yee had an evil mind when falling into the pond; what was worse, he wore hair for proposing a marriage, which was a sin indeed." As a consequence, Yee was exiled thousands of miles away preceded by flogging, Shiuniang cutting off her marriage with Yee and returning to the Songs. Despite Chin Tur's attempt to be reconciled, Shiuniang refused him and saved her honour at length.

Case 15

Tortoise in Well

In western Chechiang Province lived a man called Gur Hong, who was wealthy and fond of casting his bread upon the water.

One day, there came an old man with a live tortoise in a basket for sale. Gur Hong asked, "Where did you get it?" "I passed by the grotto in front of the Dragon King Temple today and saw the tortoise drinking water there, so I caught it for you." replied the old man. "Thanks for carrying it for me." said Gur.

Gur paid off the farmer and let the houseboy keep the tortoise in the kitchen to treat the guests the next day. That night, Gur went to the kitchen with a lamp but suddenly heard some noises. Gur wondered, "All the servants have gone to sleep, but how can there be continuous noises?" So he went to the water tank, and found the noise was from inside. Opening the tank, he saw the tortoise within making noise.

Gur Hong didn't have the heart to cook it, so he let the houseboy to release it in the pond of the Dragon King Temple the next morning.

In the east of the city lived Tao Shing, who was cruel and treacherous. Knowing how to flatter Gur Hong, he was regarded as Gur's friend. One day, Gur Hong invited Tao Shing to his home. Half drunk in the banquet, Gur said to Tao, "Inheriting my ancestors' business and having a lot of surplus money, I want to collect some goods

and set off for Sheeking. Considering the hardships and dangers in the journey, I would like you to accompany me.” Hearing what he said, Tao hit upon an evil idea and cajoled with a smile, “No matter how difficult it is, I will be with you, bro.” Gur answered, “That’s great. But it will take me seven days to reach Luchia ferry by land. Wait for me at Luchia ferry until I am ready for loading. Then we’ll continue the journey by water.” Tao agreed with that and went away. When Gur’s wife Sun knew about it, she wanted to stop him, but the goods had been transported. Before leaving, Sun tried to persuade him for a second time by saying that the child was still young. Gur said, “I have made up my mind. I’ll be back in half a year if things go well. No more than one year, anyway. All you have to do is take care of housework and our son. That’s all.” With that, he set out on his journey.

Tao Shing had waited at Luchia ferry for seven days before Gur Hong arrived. More than delighted to see Gur Hong coming and having loaded the goods on the ship, he said to Gur, “It’s getting late. I accompany you to the village ahead for a few drinks, and then back to the ferry for the night. Tomorrow morning, we will set sail for Sheeking.” Following Tao Shing’s suggestion, he went to the Huangchia store in the village ahead for wine. Shing kept urging him to drink, and Hong got drunk unconsciously. It was almost around dusk and Shing urged Hong to return to the ship for a rest. Gur Hong got more drunk and decided to go back to Shinshing courier station with Tao Shing.

There was an old well by the road, so deep that one could not see the bottom. Tao Shing looked around and found no one there, so he pushed Gur Hong into the well. It was pitiful that Gur Hong was very benevolent but now died an unnatural death. Then Tao Shing hurried back to the boat and asked the boatman to set sail early the next morning.

When arriving in Sheeking, he sold Gur’s goods, and with the price surging, got twice the profit. Half of the money went into his pocket, and the other half was sent to Gur Hong’s wife. No sooner had Tao came back than Sun asked, “Bro, why didn’t my husband come back together with you?” Tao Shing explained, “My bro is warmhearted. He drank wine every time he went to a restaurant. When hearing of the beautiful scenery, he immediately decided to visit it. I have gone with him to the Bianhur River,

where he met a bosom friend. Then he went with that friend to a temple.” I became impatient, so he ordered me to bring the silver to you, and he will come back in a few days.” Sun believed him and prepared wine for him before he left. After two days, Tao Shing decided to cover the murder up and hit upon with an idea. So he secretly asked someone to choose a man in charge of funeral to pick up a dead body from the cemetery and tying Gur’s silk bag on its waist and threw it on the estuary of Bianhur river. Then, he went to Gur’s house and said to Sun, “Several days passed, but my bro hasn’t returned. Yesterday I got the news from a passenger that there was a man drowned in Bianhur river and exposed in the beach. Is it my bro? You had better have it checked.” Shocked at the news, Sun immediately ordered a servant to recognize the body, who thought that the appearance was not like his master’s but found a silk bag attached to the waist. The servant reported it to Sun, “Hardly can the appearance of the body be recognized, only with a silk bag in the waist. So I bring it back for you.” At the sight of the silk bag, Sun sobbed, “It is made by my mother and my husband always wears it wherever he goes. There is no doubt that the deceased is my husband.” The whole family were in grief, so Sun had to ask the relatives to bring the body back and held a funeral ceremony. After the funeral, Tao Shing came directly to Sun, showing his pity and consolation, “Wish my bro could rest in peace and that you could be brave enough to bring up your son.” Sun was very grateful to him. Almost one year later, Tao Shing made a fortune with Gur Hong’s capital, thinking that no one would find out his crime.

It was by chance that Judge Bao passed through western Chechiang on his inspection tour and rested at a courier station Shinshing. When sitting in the Yamen, he saw a tortoise staring at him as if it wanted to lodge a complaint.

Feeling strange and puzzled, Judge Bao asked his subordinate to follow the tortoise. A mile away from the court, the tortoise jumped into the well. The subordinate reported to Lord Bao what had happened. Bao declared, “There must be something fishy in the well.” Lord Bao commanded two villagers to search the well, who found a dead body with a discernible face and lifted it up for check. When asked if the people in the villages nearby could identify where the body came from, none of them could. Considering that he was killed wrongly, Judge Bao immediately had the body frisked and found a note with his native place and name, which provided a new clue. Bao kept

it in mind and ordered Lee Chao and Cheunng Chao to go straight to his native place and detained the relatives for inquiry, who replied that he had been drowned in the Bianhur River. Bao wondered, "If he drowned in the river, then how can we find his body down in the well, which is really ridiculous!" Then the wife, Sun was interrogated and gave the same answer. Bao asked her to recognize the body. At the sight of it, Sun hugged it and cried bitterly, "It is my husband." Bao asked, "Who told you your husband had been drowned?" Sun replied, "I got my husband's silk bag, so I didn't doubt it." Bao asked her to check whether there was any silk bag on the body.

Then Sun searched his body, but found nothing. Required more information about the silk bag, Sun told him about her husband and Tao Shing's trip to Sheeking. Judge Bao concluded, "Tao Shing must be the murderer, who undid the silk bag and tied it on another body to obtain your trust and concealed the truth." Then he commanded Lee and Cheunng again to arrest Tao Shing for investigation. Tao first denied the charge, but seeing Gur's body was too shocked to cover up his crime. The case file finished, Tao Shing was sentenced to death, with all his property returned to Sun.

Hearing that the tortoise had redressed an injustice for her husband, Sun told Bao the detail of her husband's decision to free the captive tortoise. Bao sighed, "One good turn deserves another." Then Lord Bao asked Sun to bury her husband's bones. Later, Gur Hong's son passed the imperial examination, and became a military governor.

Case 16

Bird Crying for Justice

There was a draper named Hsieh Sichuan, who was on his way to Chiangyin city his hometown after his business in Barchou County. He took a shortcut in the castanopsis sclerophylla forest, which was bumpy, desolate and mountainous. In the valley lived two brothers surnamed Tan, who were woodmen by trade. The elder being Guiyee and the younger Guier, they were both brutes under human masks, often robbing unaccompanied passers-by. Hsieh was about to ask the way when he saw the two brothers coming towards him from afar, so he approached and greeted them with a bow, "Excuse me, bro, but how long will it take to get to Chiangyin city?" Guiyee answered, "Three days only." Guier asked, "Where are you from, sir?" Hsieh replied, "I'm just coming back from Barchou County where I sold cloth, but I get lost here. Would you please show me the way?" The Tan brothers directed the way, "You can go along that track in the col." Regarding them as woodmen, Hsieh didn't have any doubt. Again, the way ahead too precipitous to climb, he had to wait for someone to give directions. Unexpectedly, the brothers caught up and chopped at the back of his head with a broadsword, sending Hsieh dripping with blood, dead. Burying the body in the side of the mountain, they took away Hsieh's 1000 taels of silver and divided it equally after getting home. They didn't appear in public for half a year.

Judge Bao, when inspecting Barchou County and going through the sclerophylla forest,

suddenly heard a bird chirping, “Loner, Loner, killed in the forest!” Then Bao went to the court seat to have a rest, and dispatched his subordinates Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu to find out what wrongs might have occurred where the bird sang. Upon their arrival, Cheunng and Chao heard the bird chirping as before. Carefully and thoroughly checking that place out, they found a corpse exposed in a cave. They returned and reported to Bao, who was shocked a lot. That night, Bao leaned on the table, dreaming of a person sobbing before the table with disheveled hair, “I am Hsieh Sichuan, born in Chiangyin City. When drifting alone on my way home from Barchou County, I met with the Tan brothers, who later lured me to the valley, and looting my money killed me. My Lord, the Star of Wisdom, without your arrival, how could I recount my grievances to you and bring the criminals to justice?”

After that, he continued, “All my taels were numbered in sequence with characters in *The Thousand Character Classic*. If you ask your subordinates to search under his bed, you will find out the truth.” With these words, he went away in tears. Readily taking a hint, the next morning Bao ordered Cheunng and Chao to bring the two defendants to the court for interrogation. “You always pretend to be woodmen to plot and murder. Confess in detail, or you will be put to severe punishment,” he snapped. The Tan brothers disowned it stubbornly. Bao demanded Chao Hu and Lee Wan to rummage the Tans and found many pieces of silver. After careful observation, Bao found them numbered as expected and scolded, “The booty is in my hand. What else do you want to defend?” And then he asked the subordinates to truss them up and give them a good beating. Under the heavy punishment, the two brothers confessed. Then, escorted under guard to the execution ground, they were beheaded, their heads hung above Barchou County gate as a public warning, and all their family property confiscated.

Case 17

Pavilion by the River

In Kaifeng lived a rich man named Wu Sheer, who liked keeping company with people of virtue and fame. His wife, Hsieh, was a beautiful but coquettish woman. His confidant named Han Man, was a handsome and dignified man, who often called at his house. Hsieh often molested Han with words, who, bearing in mind his friendship with Wu, always showed respect to her, without being disturbed.

On a late winter day, snowflakes fluttering in the sky, Han came to enjoy the view of snow together with Wu, only to find Wu hadn't come back from the manor. On his arrival, Hsieh walked out and greeted him with a big smile. Leading him in, she prepared dishes and spirits and offered to drink with him. Half drunk, Hsieh asked, "Bro, how cold it is today! Is your wife also waiting for you at home for a drink?" Han replied, "I'm from a poor family with a potluck and wine, certainly not so sumptuous." Hsieh tried to persuade him of more wine. After a few drinks, sexual desire coming up, Hsieh poured a cup of spirits and approaching to Han with it ventured, "Bro, would you like to have a taste?" Han warned in astonishment, "Sister-in-law, you shouldn't do this. If Bro Wu knows this, our friendship will end up. Don't do this anymore." With that, he left the table. Hardly had he stepped out of the door when he ran into Wu, who had just returned in the snow. Wu intending to keep him, Han answered, "I have some business to deal with now, so I can't chat with you, my bro."

Han excused himself and left straightly. Going inside, Wu asked Hsieh, "My friend Han has visited us, but why didn't you invite him for a stay?"

Hsieh said angrily, "Look at your good friend. He came to meet you when he knew you were absent. I prepared wine for him because of our past friendship, but he molested me instead. Scolded and ashamed, he then left. Why do you ask about him?" Uncertain about what Hsieh said, Wu dared not go out. A few days later, the snow melting and the weather turning fine, Han Man went to town and happened to meet Wu on the street. Inviting Wu to drink together in a tavern, Han proclaimed, "My bro, your wife is not a virtuous woman. We can't meet at your house anymore, or I might be suspected." Wu inquired, "Dude, why do you say that? If she said anything improper, don't be irritated for the sake of our friendship." Han replied, "Bro, it will be better to beware of the people around you. I only hope to remind you of this." After drinking, they went their separate ways. The next spring, Han Man's uncle Wu Lan, who was doing business in Soochou, wrote to summon him. Deciding to go, Han wanted to bid farewell to Wu Sheer, but failed to meet him. When Wu Sheer knew about it, Han had already been away for four days.

Wu Sheer's servant named Wong Jee, had an extraordinary ability and a silver tongue, committing adultery with Hsieh. One day, when asked to go to the estuary to collect accounts together with his master, Wong declined because he wanted to stay with Hsieh, which made him seriously blamed by Sheer. Wong had no choice but to prepare his luggage. As it was nearly time to set off, Wong went to Hsieh's room and conferred with her. "If you can manage to kill him, I will deal with the rest of things," prompted Hsieh. Wong Jee accepted her promise gladly, and left the house with his master. A few days later, upon their arrival at Chiuchiang Town, Wu Sheer borrowed a boat from his old acquaintance Lee. After crossing the Heilong pond, they stopped the boat in front of the Leungwong Temple for the night. For praying, they bought some incense and ghost money there. On the boat, Sheer got very drunk while Wong Jee was serving carefully beside and Lee going to rest. At midnight, Wong Jee helped Sheer go to pee. Getting on the deck, Wong pushed Sheer into the river while he was still drunk. After that, Wong yelled with fake terror, "My master fell into the water!" Lee got up but only found that it was too dark and deep to rescue him. Staying up until dawn, Wong told Lee, "I have no choice but to go back and report it." Lee was doubtful about Wu's

death, but he still went back with his boat. Wong hurried home and told Hsieh what he had done. So overjoyed that Hsieh privately drank with Wong Jee for celebration day and night after hypocritically setting up a table of sacrifice for her husband. Though a few neighbors knew the affair, they chose to ignore it.

Han, due to the late spring scenery, went out of town for a walk, and arrived at the pavilion by the river when he saw Sheer coming in the distance. Recognizing him, Han went forward immediately to hold his hands and greeted, "What brought you here, bro?" Sheer looked haggard, and with his eyebrows wrinkled said to Han, "I have been longing for you since you left me. Today I'm here to entrust you with something. I hope you can promise me." Han replied, "Let's move forward to the pavilion and have a seat." After settling themselves, Han asked, "A few days ago, I was sent a letter to meet my mother's brother. I had intended to bid farewell to you but in vain. Now we have a chance to meet each other fortunately, but why are you so upset?" Sheer cried, "Had I listened to your advice, I would not have suffered so severe a disaster. It's a long story." Unaware of his death, Han exclaimed, "You are such a righteous man. Why do you say so?" Wu explained, "Pardon me. Let me tell you the whole thing." Hearing the story, Han felt scared, then hugged him and swore, "Are you in the dream? But if it is true, I will definitely help you. By the way, is there anyone knows the fact when you fell into water?" Sheer answered, "The boatman Lee in the town's estuary knows a lot. I will go to another world and it may be hard to meet you again. Farewell, my brother." With that, Han fell down suddenly and remained unconscious for a while. After waking up, Han couldn't find Sheer anymore. Han went to meet his uncle in the shop instantly and explained, "There is an emergency in my hometown, so I came specially to take my leave. I will come back after dealing with it." Wu Lan failed to keep him. By the time Han Man returned to the hometown and paid a visit, Wu Sheer had been dead for over sixty days. Han prepared the incense and ghost money to pay respects to Wu. Hsieh hated him and refused to receive him.

After going back home, Han Man thought about filing a suit, but got no clue. He returned to Soochou and told his uncle about his wrongfully killed friend. Wu Lan said, "It's none of your business, and you have no evidence. So, don't get yourself into trouble." Han said with a smile, "As Sheer's confidant, I was estranged with him just because of his bad wife. His specter has entrusted me recently, so how could I let him

down?" "In that case, go ahead. Lord Bao recently went to the frontier fortress to reward the soldiers. He has just returned to Dongking. You may be able to right a wrong for Sheer if you carry an indictment to visit him. Following his uncle's advice, Han rushed to Kaifeng overnight and met Judge Bao the next morning. Bao interrogated carefully and commanded to summon Wong Jee and Hsieh to the court, who refused to confess. After several days of inquiry, he failed to reach a decision. Bao thought that they did commit adultery and murder Wu, but without proof, how could he make them confess? So he secretly summoned Han Man and asked, "When Wu entrusted you, did he say who helmed for him that day?" Han answered, "The helmsman was Lee in Chiuchiang Town."

The next day, Bao sent his subordinate Huang Shing to Chiuchiang Town to detain Boatman Lee for inquiry. Lee answered, "One late night, after Sheer fell into the water, his servant was shouting, but when I got up, it was too late to save him."

Then Wong Jee was taken to the court again. Seeing Lee nearby, he was panicked and confessed everything without severe torture. The truth coming out and the case file finished, Wong Jee and Hsieh were taken to the execution ground for beheading. Lee was rewarded with some money. Han Man was righteous and helpful to redress the injustice on behalf of Sheer. Han Man's son was allowed to marry Wu Sheer's 14-year-old daughter, who inherited all the property of Sheer's, living up to Han Man's righteousness.

Case 18

Cry from Baitar Alley

Under Lord Bao's administration, Dongking the capital was peaceful with a low crime rate. Thanks for his dedication, no cases were put on the back burner.

On January 15, 1049, Bao went to the City-God's Temple to burn incense with petty officials. Passing Baitar Alley on the way back, they heard a woman crying for her husband. Impressed by the cries mingling sorrow with joy, Judge Bao, upon his arrival back at Yamen, asked Cheng Keung, the errand on duty, "Was there a woman crying for someone in the lane?" "It was Lau Sheer living in the alley of Hsieh, who died a few days ago and his wife Wu cried for that at home," answered Keung. Bao pondered, "This man must have died in his boots. Maybe it was his wife who murdered him. Otherwise, how could her cry mix sorrow with joy?" Then Wu was summoned for the cause of her husband's death, who replied, "My husband, Lau Sheer, sold vegetables for a living. He died of respiratory diseases last month and was buried behind Wuli Memorial Archway outside the South Gate. I'm sad because my little son has no father to rely on." At the sight of her cheeks seemingly rouged, Bao wondered why she made up in mourning. Then he dispatched the coroner Chen Shang to take Wu to the grave and opening the coffin check whether her husband had any scars. Chen returned to report, "Lau has no scar and indeed died of diseases." Bao thumped the table and thundered, "You conceal the fact and try to disguise before me. Now I give you three

days! If still not finding out, you will definitely not be pardoned.” Chen went home, wearing a face with distress and frown. When his wife, Yang, asked him what was bothering him, Shang told her the case. Yang inquired, “Have you ever checked the nasal septum?” Shang replied, “I postmortemed that person but never checked his nasal septum.” Yang advised, “I heard somebody was killed by being inserted nails into the nose forcefully. Why not check his nose?” Half suspicious, Shang went to check the body again, and it turned out as his wife said. The nails taken back to the court, the widow was summoned for trial. Only when punished by cruel devices did she admit conspiring with her lover, Butcher Cheunng to murder her husband, because she was afraid of her affairs being disclosed. The case file finished, Wu was put to death for murder. Butcher Cheunng had affairs with a married woman, and contributing to Lau’s death was sent into exile. The piety officials carried out the punishment according to Judge Bao’s verdict.

Then Bao asked Chen Shang again, “Who taught you to examine the body like that?” Shang answered, “That day, I accepted your order but examining Lau’s body found no wounds. I came back home with gloom for I must be held accountable if unable to find out the truth. To my surprise, my wife taught me how to examine and it worked.” Bao stated, “A woman of deep insight! She is something and deserves rewards.” Summoned to the court before long, Yang received 5 strings of cash and one bottle of wine, respectfully and delightedly. She was about to leave when Bao stopped her, “Is Chen Shang your first husband or second one?” “I lost my ex-husband long ago and later remarried Chen Shang,” replied Yang. Bao continued, “What’s your ex-husband’s name?” She answered, “May Shiaochiu.” “What illness did he die of?” Facing more and more questions, Yang turned pale with fear and responded reluctantly, “He died of insanity and was buried in the mass graveyard outside the South Gate.” Bao declared, “The cause of your ex-husband’s death is also puzzling.” So Wong Liang the guard was ordered to escort Yang to the mass graveyard for autopsy.

Yang thought to herself, “There are many graves here, and everyone doesn’t have nails in his nose.” Then she casually pointed to a grave. After seeing it, Liang didn’t find any scars or anything wrong in the nose. Yang complained, “Everyone says Lord Bao is as wise as a god, but now he is hounding me to death.” The moment Wong Liang was at a loss, an old man, more than seventy years old, walked with a crutch and asked what he

was doing. Liang told the old man about it in detail. At that, the old man rebuked Yang, “How dare you point at someone else’s grave, making him no rest! You shall be damned.” Pointing to a place, he declared, “Here is May Shiao-chiu’s tomb.” With these words, the old man turned into a breeze and disappeared.

Digging up the grave and opening the coffin, Liang examined the bones. Sure enough, two nails were inserted in the nose. Yang was handcuffed back to Judge Bao.

After the reexamination, Bao confirmed Yang’s crime and had her beheaded in public. At this, everyone acclaimed it an amazing case.

Case 19

Trapping Brigands with Bloody Blouse

In Baoshek Village thirty miles away from the town, Chaoching Prefecture, Guangdong Province, lived a Mr. Hwang, together with his two sons Shan and Tsz, who had a rather rich family farming for generations. Shan's wife Chiongniang, the gentle daughter of Chen Hsu, attended upon her parents-in-law with exceeding piety. Less than one year later, Chen Hsu's servant Chin-an came to impart, "Mr. Chen suffered from critical disease by accident when returning from the farm. He hopes you can be back to see him for several days."

At that, Chiongniang felt worried and inviting Chin-an for food in the kitchen informed Shan immediately, "My father was ill and asked me to visit him. Please tell my parents-in-law that I'm ready to go." "They are not available in this harvest time. It won't be too late to go in a few days," advised Shan. Chiongniang insisted, "My father is ill in bed, anxious to see me. His one day is as precious as a year. How can I wait?" However, Shan's stubbornness depressed Chiongniang, who pondered at midnight, "I'm the only child of my father, who has no sons to rely on. If there were any mishap, I should be regretful. Why not go back with Chin-an quietly?"

Early the next morning, after Shan set out to urge servants for rice reaping, Chiongniang, getting up and dressing up, had Chin-an follow her out via the back door. Still early at that time, they walked for miles to Chilin forest, where the fog was so

heavy that it was difficult to identify the pedestrians in front. Chin-an then advised, "The sun hasn't risen yet, and it's too foggy. How about waiting in a village for fog dispersing?"

Chiongniang, an alert lady, proposed, "This place is out of way, very dangerous, so we'd better rest in the pavilion ahead," Chin-an yessing her. At the same time, three butchers going to purchase pigs happened to pass, noticing many gold ornaments on her head. Of them, Cheunng, the fiercest, murmured to the other two, "This woman may come up to town for family reunion, accompanied by just one page. Why not rob her of the jewelry for equal division? Better than to do business for a few days." Butcher Lau chimed in with him, "I can't agree more. I shall hold the page, Brother Cheunng blindfold the woman's eyes and mouth, and Brother Wu grab the jewelry." Aware of their evil intention, Chiongniang was about to hide her jewelry in the sleeve when Wu grabbed it quickly. Meanwhile, she held it tightly and would not let it go. In fear of running into witnesses, Cheunng pulled out a butcher's knife, chopping at Chiongniang's left hand. The woman fell to the ground in pain, all her jewelry snatched away. Chin-an came close, only to find her unconscious and covered with blood. Then he hurried back to inform the Hwangs. Shan was having breakfast with two servants when he heard the news and said with great alarm, "Had she followed my suggestion, how could this have happened!" Instantly, Shan asked several servants to take a sedan-chair to Chilin forest. Chiongniang was hypnopompic and carried into the sedan. Having got home and seen her left hand cut, Shan had a doctor sent for and together with Chin-an, filed a lawsuit to Judge Bao, Magistrate of Chaoching Prefecture.

Noticing no name of the accused, Lord Bao inquired Chin-an, "Can you recognize those robbers?" Chin-an replied, "Out of the ordinary in appearance, they looked like butchers purchasing pigs." Then Lord Bao reckoned, "I suppose those robbers are not far from here. Maybe they haven't arrived downtown yet." Then he secretly demanded Shan to fetch the short bloody garment. Lord Bao instructed Hwang Sheng, the guard on duty, to dress a stranger in the bloody blouse and take him to the streets of the city; the stranger was to cry out that he met three butchers robbed by raiders in Chilin forest, one of the butchers killed and the other two running away. Sheng followed Judge Bao's instruction, taking a stranger in the bloody blouse and yelling through the streets.

When Sheng and the stranger walked to Cheunng Man's house, located at the eastern alley, Cheunng's wife hurried out and asked, "My husband went out to buy pigs this early morning. I have no idea who went with him or who can tell me the truth."

At that, Sheng kept waiting at a tavern opposite to Cheunng Man's house. At his arrival back, Butcher Cheunng was caught and taken to the Yamen, several pieces of jewelry searched from him. Bao thundered, "Bring out the accomplices, and you'll be free from punishment." Cheunng Man had no alternative but to confess. Very soon, Hwang Sheng and Lee Bao arrested Wu and Lau respectively, who, was in complete ignorance of why being caught at the very beginning but rendered panic-stricken and dumbfounded when seeing Cheunng Man keeling in the hall. Also, many pieces of jewelry were found from them. The three robbers couldn't deny their crime but pleaded guilty. The case file finished, the butchers were sentenced to death and the jewelry was returned to Shan. Later, cured by a famous doctor, Chiongniag got reunion with her husband.

Case 20

Indigos in Grains

In Hsuchou County lived two rascals, named Wong Shiuyee and Lau Hwa'er, both of whom had learned a kind of trick that could transfer things from one place to another. One day, they were informed that Chiang Chin, a rich man in the south of the county, had thousands of barns of grains. With an idea occurring to them, they set off for Chiang's home immediately with 10 taels of silver to buy some grains. At arrival, they said, "We are here for grains, sir." Chiang answered, "Please show me your money." Then Wong gave him taels. After receiving the money, Chiang ordered his servant, Laibao, to take out 20 loads of grains from the barns to them.

Chuckling to themselves, Wong and Lau transferred the grains with their black art. After pretending to go forward half a mile, they returned to Chiang, claiming that it didn't deserve that much and demanding to take back the money. Grains sent into the barn, Chiang gave them a full refund. Later on, the two men transferred all Chiang's grains in his barns. On the way of transporting the grains, a tenant farmer, Cheunng Shiaoyee, encountered them. When visiting Chiang Chin, Cheunng Shiaoyee greeted, "Congratulations, my lord, you've just done a big deal and made a small fortune." Chiang returned, "No idea what you're talking about." Cheunng said, "Just now I noticed many carts transporting grains, but why do you say no? Oh, wait! I've heard about a form of sorcery to steal things soundlessly, so you'd better be careful."

Getting suspicious, Chiang asked Laibao to open his barns instantly. No grains at all! Shocked by the scene ahead of him, Chiang lodged an appeal and elaborated on this issue to Judge Bao. Having accepted the case, Bao let Chiang back home first.

The next day, Bao borrowed 200 loads of grains from the public welfare granary which had been mixed with indigos, and pretended to come to Hsuchou from Huguang Province for business. At the news, Wong and Lau came to Bao's ship right away. They asked Bao where he came from. Judge Bao replied, "I am Yo Shee from Huguang Province. Can I have your names?" "We are Wong Shiuyee and Lau Hwa'er, here for grains." they answered together. "Please show me your money first," said Bao.

At once, Wong passed the silver to Bao for a check. After a bargain, twenty-odd barrows were used to deliver the grains to the shore. The grains unloaded on the shore, Wong and Lau transferred them. After a while, the two pretended to complain to each other that they had been overcharged. They gave back the grains to Yo and retreated the money. Seeing the grains moved back into the ship, Bao opened the door of the cabin as soon as Wong and Lau left, only to find nothing inside.

When Judge Bao returned to the office, an idea came to his mind. He posted up an official notice that anyone who donated 100 loads of grains to build the Shingshian Temple would be rewarded with a ceremonial crown and belt symbolizing an honorable status, and who donated 300 loads would receive an official proclamation exempting his family from corvee labor. The news was then spread all over the county. Now the grains Wong and Lau had gathered accounted for over 1000 loads. Noting such a large amount of goods they owned, some old man got discontented and appealed to Bao. Though sued, Wong and Lau were delighted in order to get the exemption certificates. Finding their names listed in the roll, Judge Bao immediately ordered Shue Bar to summon them for the certificates. At the sight of the guards, they convened some people to send the grains to the office as a return. Bao found the grains mixed with indigos, sure enough that it was the grains stolen. Bao then snapped, "You two have long been known as poor villains, but how could you get such plenty of grains?"

Wong and Lau refused to admit at first, saying, "Your Excellency, the grains were collected as rents." Bao scolded, "Bold thieves! You have stolen grains of Chiang Chin's, again of mine. Everything is so clear, but why are you still quibbling? I've

mixed the grains with indigos. Come see if it's true!" They were then tied up and flogged one hundred times. Unable to tolerate the corporal punishment, the two swindlers confessed all their crimes. As a consequence, Bao imprisoned them and retrieved the grains both for Chiang and the public welfare granary. At this, all people exuded their gratification.

Case 21

Tailor Elected Official

In Shandong Province, there was a student of the Imperial Academy, named Peng Yingfeng, who went to the capital city to wait for the election result together with his wife Hsu. When they came to Sheehwa Gate, they sojourned in Granny Wong's inn. However, the election period was still half a year away. Peng had wanted to go home, but the long distance and the lack of money made him wait there. Hsu embroidered pillows and flowered shoes upstairs all day and sold them for food. Yau Hongyu, a native Churen (a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level) of Chechiang Province, lodged in Chu's inn, opposite to Granny Wong's. Seeing Hsu's beautiful appearance, Yau asked Wong, "Where is that lady from?"

Granny Wong replied, "It's PengYingfeng's wife." Yau said, "I'd like to chat with her, so would you please provide some convenience to me?" Knowing what was on Yau's mind, Granny Wong came up with a plan and replied, "Not only can I bend the rules, but also Peng is willing to sell his wife owing to lack of money." Yau said, "If so, I will be at your beck and call." With that, he said goodbye. Granny Wong thought that Peng now had no money and owed the rental fee, so she went upstairs to see Hsu, who was sitting side by side with her husband. Granny Wong advised, "Mr. Peng, you should also go outside Meridian Gate to write some words and find some part-time job." Hsu echoed, "What Granny Wong said is reasonable. You can have a try." Then Yingfeng

took a brush and went to ask for some odd job of writing. Out of the Imperial Board of Astronomy came a military officer, who said to Yingfeng, "Can you write?" Then Yingfeng was led into the Board of Astronomy to see Duke Lee, who asked him to copy the memorial to the emperor in the east corridor. In the evening, Yingfeng went back to the inn and said to Granny Wong and Hsu, "Thanks to Granny Wong's instruction, I really got the job of writing in the Yamen of Duke Lee from the Board of Astronomy." Hsu said, "In that case, you should work attentively." After hearing this, Granny Wong was overjoyed and said, "Mr. Peng, Duke Lee cherishes diligent people. You should write at his house tomorrow and stay there for a month. You will win his respect and support in the official election in the future. Don't worry about your wife in my house." Yingfeng followed her advice, and with his son kept working there. Granny Wong then went to Yau and told him about the sale of marriage. Yau was greatly pleased and asked her how much the betrothal gift was. "One hundred taels," said Wong. Yau then offered seventy taels as part of the betrothal gift and another ten taels as reward for Granny Wong. She accepted the money and said, "Where are you working, Mr. Yau?" Yau answered, "I am elected the magistrate of Chenlau county." Granny Wong continued, "Mr. Peng said that he would send a sedan chair to carry his wife to the boat at the time of your departure." Yau said, "I'll set off to wait on the boat in Cheunngchia Bay." Wong hired a sedan chair to see Hsu, cajoling, "Lady Hsu, Mr. Peng has settled on Lee's Yamen and a palanquin came here to get you there." Hsu packed up and getting into the sedan chair was sent to Cheunngchia Bay.

When Hsu got off the sedan chair and saw the boat, she said to Wong, "My husband would have me taken to the Imperial Board of Astronomy, but why am I brought here?" Wang replied, "Mr. Peng reckons that he is so poor that it's unfair to you. Therefore, he marries you to Mr. Yau, who, without a wife, was appointed the magistrate of Chenlau county. You should be satisfied to be his wife. Here is the marriage contract with eighty taels." At that, Hsu, lowering her head and keeping silent, embarked the boat, following Yau to his post.

After a month, Peng Yingfeng came back, only to find Hsu wasn't there. So he queried Wong, who cried, "That day, you employed a palanquin to pick her up. But now you want to cheat me out of my money by falsely claiming your wife is lost." She even shouted to go to the government to complain. Because of poverty, Peng Yingfeng had

to turn around carefully and left with tears in his eyes. After another six months, with nothing to lean on, he learned to be a tailor. One day, Lord Deng of the Ministry of Personnel was looking for a tailor to make clothes. His servant happened to meet Peng Yingfeng, who was brought into the yamen and made clothes for half a day. It happened that Chintsai, a servant, brought two steamed buns to the tailor as refreshments. As his son was sleeping soundly, Yingfeng kept the buns for him. Chintsai inquired, "Why don't you eat buns, sir?" Yingfeng told him all his misfortunes in the past and said in tears, "I'll leave the buns to my hungry son."

Later, Chintsai reported it to Mrs. Deng, who was also from Shandong Province. Wondering the details, she immediately asked Chintsai to bring Peng into the house. Out of the screen, Peng recounted what had happened in detail again with grief. Mrs. Deng said, "You don't have to make clothes. Just live in the yamen. When my husband returns, I will tell him about you and advise him to propose you as an official." Soon, Lord Deng came back. His wife explained, "My dear husband, today a tailor is here to serve, who is not an ordinary person but a student of the Imperial Academy from Shandong Province. His wife was abducted, and without money he learnt tailoring for a living. For the sake of fellow villagers, could you give him a hand?" Deng summoned Yingfeng, asking, "If you are a student of the Imperial Academy, can you show me your identity document?" Yingfeng took out the document from his chest bag. Deng read it and found it was true. He said, "Your election doesn't come until next April. Write a report tomorrow, and I will recommend you." Being exultant, Yingfeng wrote a report to the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs as Deng had instructed and then was designated as the magistrate's assistant of Chenlau county. Then he took the certificate and bid a farewell to Granny Wong. Wong said, "Congratulations, Mr. Peng! What position will you assume?" Yingfeng answered, "The magistrate's assistant of Chenlau county." She suddenly fell into panic, saying, "I'm so sorry I haven't treated your son well these years. I have a new green garment for him and have braided his hair with five-color silk. When will you leave?" "Tomorrow." He replied and left.

Wong called her brother Wong Mingyee in and prompted, "Peng was appointed an official and Lord Deng ordered him to send five hundred taels of gold home. Kill him and you will get two-third of the gold." Mingyee hurried to Linching city and chopped at the sight of Peng, thundering, "Wait, man!" But the chopper did not follow his

movement but turned backward. Mingyee asked, "Are you wronged? Did you offend anyone in the capital city?" Peng told him about Granny Wong in tears and Mingyee also gave an account of her conspiracy, thus cutting a lock of hair of Peng's and taking away the garment Wong had given. Back to Granny Wang, Mingyee said, "I have killed him. Here are the hair and the garment." Seeing these, Granny Wong was rapturous and said, "The curse has been eradicated!"

Yingfeng had taken office for several months when his wife happened to see her son playing in Yau's Yamen and thought to herself, "That's my son! Why is he here?" As Yau was holding a banquet for the officials, Hsu hid behind the screen to see if Peng was there. Having identified Peng, Hsu excitedly rushed out.

When Yingfeng saw that it was Hsu, they hugged each other and had a good cry, each telling the by-gones. The magistrate was driven dumbfounded. The couple went back home together for family reunion. Yingfeng appealing to Kaifeng court, Judge Bao flew into a rage, and then he reported the matter to the emperor, who had Yau sent into exile with penal servitude; Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu were dispatched to Sheehwa Gate to arrest Granny Wong, who confessed all her crime after interrogation with torture. Finally, she was beheaded in public, which cheered the people greatly.

Case 22

Cook Concocting Poisoned Wine

After Lord Bao finished the famine relief in Chenchou County, the doorkeeper suddenly reported that there was a woman outside the yamen, with a baby in the left hand and a written complaint in the right, crying out her grievance. At this, Bao said, “I am here not only for the relief work, but to know the conditions of the people. Don’t stop her and let her in.” The servant immediately went out and led the woman to kneel down. Then Judge Bao stepped out from behind the desk to examine the woman, who, though pale, was a great beauty. He asked, “What brought you here?” The woman answered, “I live in Liantang, a village five miles away from the city. My surname is Wu and I married Cheunng Hsu, who was well acquainted with literature. Recently my husband associated with Superintendent Sun’s son Sun Yang, who lived in the city center and was regarded as our bosom friend. One day, Sun Yang came to my house while my husband was visiting relatives far away. Grateful to him for his patronage to my husband, I went out to entertain him. Unexpectedly, with a bad idea, that ruffian molested me and went away only after being rebuked. One day or two later, when my husband returned, I informed him of Yang’s misconduct and advised him to sever ties with that ruffian. After hearing what I said, so angry that he wanted to argue with that ruffian. Considering Sun’s status and power and that we could do nothing about him, I simply advised my husband to ignore and cut him off. Almost a month later, Sun sent servants to invite my husband to the Kaiyuan Temple for a drink on the Double Ninth

Festival, on the excuse of something to discuss. My husband didn't come home until that evening. As soon as he walked in, he complained about abdominal pain. I led him into the room, with his face paling and his nostrils bleeding. Then he explained to me, 'Sun bought me a drink today, but it must be toxic.' Thus he died at midnight. Less than a month later, Sun had my uncle bribed to marry me by force. I had wanted to report it to the local magistrate, but he had me intercepted and told me I would die a terrible death if I did not marry him. Yesterday I heard Your Excellency came for famine relief, so I am here for help." At this, Bao asked, "Who else are there in your family?" Wu replied, "I have a 72-year-old mother-in-law and a 2-year-old child." Bao received the complaint and let Wu wait outside. He secretly summoned a local official and inquired, "What kind of person is Superintendent Sun?" The official replied, "If Your Excellency do not ask, I dare not speak of it. Sun is always hurting people. He takes away anything he wants, and even the local officials give him a wide berth." Bao continued, "What about his son?" The official replied, "Sun Yang, with his father's power, has encroached a hectare of fertile farmland of the Kaiyuan Temple recently. What's worse, he even takes whores and have feasts for fun from time to time in the temple. He also tyrannizes in the countryside and rapes women. Who dares to defy him? The monks in the temple hate his guts, but there is nothing they can do about him."

With a sigh, Bao returned to the chamber, an idea popping into his head. The next day, disguised as a public errand, he went out through his back door and secretly visited the Kaiyuan Temple. Just as he was walking to the abbot, it was suddenly reported that Sun Yang was coming for a drink and demanded everyone to stay away. Bao was overjoyed and thought to himself, "When I am about to investigate Sun Yang, he came here by himself." Bao immediately hid behind the Buddha hall and peeped through the window. He saw Yang riding on a white horse, accompanied by several servants, soldiers, two famous prostitutes in the city, and a confidant chef. Arriving at the porch and dismounting from his horse, Yang entered with the others the abbot and sat down on a round chair. Several senior monks of the temple came to pay respects. In an instant, the soldiers carried a table with lavish dishes and wine. The two prostitutes sang and served on the side. And Yang tread on air, thinking that he was the most powerful person in Sheeking. Seeing such a scene, how could the quick-tempered judge bear it? Suddenly an old monk passed through the porch, and at the sight of Bao hiding in the

Buddhist hall asked, "Who are you, sir?" Bao cajoled, "I am a servant of the local government. The government will entertain Judge Bao tomorrow, so I'm here to ask the cook to prepare a banquet. But I don't know the cook's name or address." The monk said, "The cook's surname is Hsieh and he lives beside the gate of Superintendent Sun's. It would be inappropriate for the government to hire him as a cook." Bao inquired, "What's wrong with the cook?" The old monk replied, "How can you know if I don't tell you? The other day Sun Yang and Scholar Cheunng drank in this temple, served by this cook. I heard Cheunng went back and died the next day. Judge Bao was a good officer. If you ask the cook to serve him, what would our government do in case he doesn't serve well and makes a mistake like that?" Hearing this, Bao left the Kaiyuan Temple and returned to the Yamen.

The next day, Lord Bao had Cook Hsieh taken to the Yamen for interrogation. "You have been accused of murdering Cheunng Hsu with poison. Tell the truth, and you shall be exonerated." thundered Bao. The cook did not confess until he was put on a long cangue and put in prison. Under the severe interrogation of the jailer, in order to be exonerated from his crime, he told the details of how he poisoned Cheunng and that everything was planned by Sun Yang. After hearing this, Lord Bao sent his attendants to invite Sun Yang to the banquet with an invitation card. Soon after, Sun Yang arrived. Bao came out and ushered him into the back hall, where the guest and host sat apart and had their dishes served. Sun Yang said, "It's rare for Your Excellency to come here. My father hasn't paid a courtesy call to you yet. You prepared the banquet first instead. It's my honor to attend your feast." Lord Bao said with a smile, "This banquet is not for courtesy, but to seek the truth of one thing." After a few drinks, Bao took out a written complaint from his sleeve and handing it to Sun said, "I just got here. I don't know whether you are involved in this matter or not." When Sun Yang saw the suit filed by Wu accusing him of poisoning her husband, he turned pale and argued, "How can she accuse me without evidence?"

Bao replied, "Here is the evidence." He immediately had the cook taken from prison and kneel down, which left Yang dumbfounded and sweating like a pig. Bao asked his man to read Hsieh's confession to Sun Yang. Yang said, "I am guilty, but I hope I can be spared for my father's sake. Bao roared, "You and your father are the huge hidden danger to the society. I will never spare you according to the law." Immediately, he

called out twenty-four strong men, who stripped Sun Yang of his hat and clothes and promptly caned him fifty times. Sun could not bear the pain and died on the spot. Bao ordered the corpse to be dragged out of the yamen, and finishing the case file reported it to Emperor Rentsong. The imperial edict was proclaimed afterwards: "Superintendent Sun is cruel and disobedient so that he should be deposed and made a commoner. Hsieh is accused of murder with poison and to be banished to the worst place. Wu avenges her husband's death, and the officials concerned shall give her some money to support her family. Judge Bao's verdict is fair and reasonable, which is the honor of the country, so Bao shall be promoted to be Prefect of Sheeking in Honan province."

When the imperial edict arrived, Bao carried out the execution accordingly. As a result, all the officials who were inclined to the Suns felt cold shivers of fear.

Case 23

Decapitation of Fake Monk

Near the horse station 30 miles away from Dongking City lived a Senior Dong, who built an inn to treat businessmen from all quarters. Gradually, he made a small fortune and became a moneybags. Owing to the abundant wealth, his son Shun married Yang, the charming and beautiful daughter of a tea-house owner in the east of the city. Despite Yang's great respect in daily life, the two parents-in-law disliked her excessive coquetry. Shun often went out for business and came back home only once or twice a month. Ten miles east of the city, there was a boatman named Sun Kuan, who developed an intimate relationship with Yang after frequent contact with Dong's inn. It was like dry wood meeting fire that they two soon got tangled up as a couple.

During Shun's business trip, Kuan made an appointment with Yang, "It is long for us to be in love. I can't help missing you but our pleasure is so limited. Oh dear, why not pack up all your property, elope and tie the knot with me?" Yang yessed him. Thus, they decided to leave on November 21. That day, Young picked up all the belongings, waiting for Kuan.

At dusk, from Darbay Temple of Mount Tsuiyu in Luochou County came a monk Taolong for alms. It was getting late so he implored a stay in Dong's inn. Amiable and warm-hearted, Dong arranged a bedroom for him. Owing to the cold weather and forthcoming snow, the monk retired to bed after supper, so did the Dongs. Hearing

Kuan's knock at the door at midnight, Yang took all her belongings out. However, it was raining outside and the roads were slippery. Yang thought it would be hard for them to go. Therefore, she advised, "We had better leave another night for the slippery roads." Kuan pondered, "In case of delay, the matter might leak out." Coveting Yang's property, he killed her and snatched all her belongings, dropping her corpse into an old well. After a while, the monk got up for the toilet, suddenly stumbling into the well, which was several meters deep with no way to climb up. Finding the monk missing at daybreak, the monk's pageboy asked the shopkeeper about his master's whereabouts. Dong also helped to look for the monk till the meal time, and going to Yang's bedroom found Yang and all her valuables gone. Deciding that Yang must have gone with the monk, he continued searching for them from the hill to the old well beside the toilet, only to see thick beds of reeds covered with some blood. A voice coming out of the well, he asked his neighbor Wong Er to climb down with a ladder and rope into the well, only to find a moaning monk and Yang's corpse. Wong Er roped the monk and hoisted him out of the well. The monk having been beaten and attacked in a mess, the neighbors wrote a petition and sent him to the county government without giving a chance to his explanation. The county magistrate tried to make the monk confess his crime through interrogation and cruel torture. Unable to tolerate the corporal punishment, the monk had to avow the fabricated crime. The magistrate thus had him sent to the court of Judge Bao.

Bao inquired the monk for the reason, who sighed, "I may have come to pay the death debt owed to Yang in my previous life." The monk having told his story in detail, Bao thought it over: "How could a monk 700 miles away set a date for their elopement upon his arrival at the inn? There must be something wrong in it." Thus the monk was put in prison without shackles. Although probing deeply into the matter day and night, Bao still could not figure out the truth. Then Bao hit upon an idea and asked the warden to choose one of the prisoners on death row and escort him to the public for beheading after shaving his head secretly, declaring that he was the monk from Darbay Temple in Luochou. And then an official notice posted up that the man who killed Yang, Dong's daughter-in-law, had been executed. Bao demanded that several guards go to the outskirts of the town secretly; if anyone discussed the justice of this case, the guards should come and report it immediately. Thirty miles away from the city, the guards

went into a shop for some tea when an old woman, Wong, asked, "The day before yesterday, Dong's daughter-in-law Yang was killed. Is this case closed?" The guards replied, "The monk has paid the forfeit of his life." At their words, the old woman, beating her breast, moaned, "It is a pity that the monk lost his life; he is being wronged." The guards asked for the reason.

The old woman replied, "There is a boatman Kuan ten miles away from here, who is most familiar with the Dongs. What's more, he had an affair with Yang but killed her for her belongings. It has nothing to do with the monk." At that, the guards went back to inform Bao immediately.

Thus, Kuan got arrested to prison for a thorough investigation but refused to confess.

Ordering Kuan to be brought to the court, Bao said with a smile, "A life for a life. Now that the monk has paid the forfeit of his life, there is no need to kill you for murder. However, Dong reported that he lost more than four hundred tales of gold and silver. If you happened to pick it up, why not give it back? In that way, you will be exempt from punishment." So overjoyed that Kuan confessed, "Dong deposited a bag of gold and silver in my house and I kept it in my wardrobe." Then Kuan were sent home under armed guard for the loot. That night, coming to the court for confirmation and recognizing it immediately, Dong declared, "It's mine for sure." When asked if he had deposited any gold or silver with Kuan, Dong gave a negative response. But Kuan still disowned the charge despite Old Lady Wong's testimony for the case. Bao scolded, "During Shun's absence, you had affairs with Yang but killed her for her property. Now, we have all the evidence against you, but how can you still deny it?"

Able to do nothing but confess his crime, Kuan was beheaded in public. Finally, the monk got released rather than a violent death.

Case 24

Black Boot on Sale

As the magistrate of Kaifeng Prefecture, not only did Judge Bao safeguard the social order, but improve people's livelihood. Once on the tour in Chee-nan Prefecture, he received case files from Yamen officials for examination. Some of the criminals causing little damage to society were released on the spot and restored their normal life. While Bao was dealing with the files, a gust of whirlwind blew suddenly on the front stairs, with dust rising and the sun turning pale yellow. The officials present could not open their eyes for a moment. After the strange wind, everything became quiet again. Only a leaf, as big as one person's palm, fell on Bao's desk. Bao picked it up and watched for a long time, unable to distinguish it. Looking around, he asked, "Does this leaf have its own name?" A man named Lew Shin in court, knew about the leaf, and approaching said, "There is no such tree within the city, and I don't know its name. But twenty-five miles away from the city, is the Baihur Temple. There stand two trees behind the gate, tall and big with luxuriant branches. So the leaf was blown from the Temple." Bao added, "Are you sure?" Lew Shin responded with confidence, "As a neighbor of the temple and the witness of the daily growth of the trees, I won't be wrong."

Realizing there might be grievance, Judge Bao ordered a sedan-chair for him to head for the Baihur Temple for prayers. Monks there hurried out to welcome him and had

him seated in the abbot. After a few cups of tea, Bao felt a wind coming under from the chair, reminding him of the wind the day before. So he demanded Lew Shin to follow it. Lew did as told and out of the abbot stopped under a tree. He reported this to Bao, who observed, "There must be some reasons."

Thus Bao required Lew to hoe the ground, only to spot a corpse. It was a girl, about 18 years old, wrapped up in a shabby mat, eyelids and lip split, eyes slightly open, but no scars on. Prying her mouth open, he found a bamboo stick stabbing straight into her throat. The body buried, all monks in the temple were gathered for inquiry, who answered with one voice, "I don't know." Unable to get to the bottom of it immediately, Bao, together with other officials, firstly went back to the office and then to the house. That night, he sat in silence, wondering why a female corpse could be found in a temple. Normally, it should be buried somewhere else. So there must be some monk who murdered her and buried her body under the tree as there was nowhere to hide it. It was almost 9 o'clock when Bao felt weary and fell asleep. Suddenly, he dreamed about a young lady, who knelt down on the stairs and cried, "I am Yunnian from Wuli Village outside the town and My father Suo Leung used to be a prison cop of Chee-nan Prefecture. On the night of the Lantern Festival this year, my family and I went into the city to watch the lantern show. But I lost my way by late night and crossing the West Bridge met a young man, who claimed to be my fellow countryman and suggested taking me back to our village. Halfway back home, there came another man, who was a monk.

Encountering him in the moonlight, I tried to turn back to the city, but unexpectedly, the young man took poison out of his sleeve and stuffed it into my mouth. I was immediately unable to speak, and then dragged into the temple. In consciousness of their attempt to insult me and ignorance of countermeasures, I noticed a bamboo stick on the mud, and pulling it out committed suicide by inserting it into my throat. They robbed me of all my jewelry, burying my body under a tree. I plead you to help me uphold the justice, or my soul can never take a rest."

Lord Bao woke up unconsciously when he was to have a further questioning. As the remaining candles gleamed, Bao saw a new boot left by the window and then an idea came to his mind. At the trial held the next day, Lord Bao didn't tell anyone about his

dream but dispatched the trustworthy attendant Hwang Sheng, “You can disguise yourself as a cobbler and carry this boot on your shoulder pole secretly to every monk’s dormitory in the Baihur Temple for sale. If someone claims it, inform me right away.” With Bao’s plan, Hwang Sheng came to the temple and shouted for selling Monk’s boots. It happened that the monks were idle in the room, so they all ran out for a look. A young faquir picked up the new boot and staring at it for a quite while questioned, “This boot is mine. I had it made a few days ago and put it in my room. How did you get it?” At first, Hwang argued with him incessantly, till the faquir went back for the other shoe for comparison, which was exactly the same as Hwang’s. Hwang deliberately making a scene, the boot was grabbed by the monks. Hwang hurried back to Bao, who immediately sent his men to surround the temple and arrest the monks, with no one escaping and all taken into the Yamen. Bao first interrogated the claimer, who was so scared that he came clean about his crime without being tortured. The monks’ confession collated into a case file, the two criminals were beheaded in public. The other monks in the temple concealing murder were sent to a distant exile. Later, Lord Bao returned to the capital to inform Emperor Rentsong, who highly praised him and ordered to erect a chastity archway in honor of Lady Suo.

Case 25

Loyalty and Chastity Not Exalted

As the saying goes, a friend in court makes the process short. While it is more convincing that you'd better not go into politics if you have no money. Why is it so? Nowadays in this nasty world, being a good functionary only means taking more bribes. Without any backer or money, you are unable to convince others of your loyalty and ability. Just like a chaste lady, if she was not born in an aristocratic family, or does not bribe the placeman, she can't ever gain her honor of chastity.

There was an assistant of the county magistrate in Honan province, named Pan Bin. Not only did he refuse to accept bribes, but also guarded the frontiers with notable exploits. It is uncommon to find such a virtuous official although his position was very dinky. His superior should have reported it to the imperial court, for which Pan could get promoted. However, he was asked for thousands of taels, or he wouldn't be recommended. Pan was upright, so how could he get the taels to commit bribery? How annoying that he died with rage! One day, Bao was dealing with cases in the underworld when he received the indictment of Pan Bin, who charged that his superior didn't commend his loyalty. "Was a functionary really not worth a cent if he didn't take a cent of bribe? Were the frontier walls really meaningless if I guarded them alone? The administrators pretended to know nothing about me. Instead, they asked me only for bribery. There was no chance to appeal when I was alive so I made a complaint in

the underworld. That is my appeal, Your Excellency.”

After reading, Bao said, “How pathetic! If you are really an incorruptible official with the merit of guarding the border, then there is no one in the court can match up to you. But why didn’t you appeal for yourself when you were alive but tell me after death?” Pan replied, “When I was alive, I had no way to appeal for my misery, because I had no money to bribe him. It was just like a dumb man eating the herb, unable to utter its bitterness. No matter what I had said, no one cared about my situation. I’ve never won a good name for my good deeds, so how can I be convinced?” Bao proclaimed, “When back to the living world I’ll report to the court, and grant you an undying fame. Wouldn’t it be glorious?” Pan stated, “It is always meaningless to be glorious during lifetime and famous after death. But I hate the officer who asked for silver, refusing to recommend me when I was alive, which made me nowhere to vent my anger.” Bao swore, “Here I am! No matter who he is, alive or dead, I can uphold justice. You just write down the name of that unruly officer to me. I’ll get around all right.” Then Pan wrote down the name, about to submit it to Bao, when a guard reported that a woman outside claimed to have been treated unjustly. Bao beckoned her in. The lady knelt down, presenting her complaint about her hidden chastity. “My fiancé died in the battlefield before getting married and never had a wedding night with me; but my soul had gone with his death and kept chaste to him all my life. Then in my forties, I killed myself with a sword. Nevertheless, the officer didn’t introduce my loyalty so that there was no chastity arch for me. Where could my humble soul rest? It is hard for a beautiful lady to reconcile to an unfortunate life. Those malfeasants should be brought to justice. Thus, I submit the pleading personally despite my humbleness.”

After reading, Bao wondered, “What a principled woman she is! Why didn’t the local authority honor her?” The woman answered, “My surname is Fang, and my fiancé died on the frontier. I was unwilling to get remarried. Until 42, I could not support myself so that I committed suicide with a sword. Unfortunately, the greedy placeman demanded bribery. But my family was too poor to pay. Thus, he refused to award me with a good fame. And that is what I complain about.” Bao said, “Tell me the name of that official, and I’ll bring justice to you.” The woman told Bao about the placeman’s name. And then Bao wrote down the comments: “Loyalty and chastity are the crucial ethics in one’s life. And exalting such virtues is an important thing for the government. So it is

the duty for the functionaries in charge to extol these qualities. But one hid Pan's loyalty, and how could this poor soul bear such wrongs! The other concealed Fang's chastity, and how might she endure so unfortunate a life! The soft wind seems to whine, and the bright moon to tell the unfairness. Loyal and chaste people deserve awards and corrupt officials should inflict punishments."

With the comments, Bao instructed, "You just stand down now and wait for my good news. I will present your stories to the emperors of the living world and the underworld. Believe good times are ahead for you loyal official and chaste wife. As for those malfeasants, they will answer for it one day!"

Case 26

A Smart Wife with a Clumsy Husband

One day, Judge Bao came to the nether world to handle cases, in one of which a smart woman complained that she had wedded a clumsy man. The written complaint went like this: “Marriages are not groundless, and a good one shows that God is sagacious. However, I, an ingenious woman, was married to a dull man. Embroidered mandarin ducks merely brought me loneliness, and cosmetics hatred. Wasn’t there any ugly woman in the world to be paired with my husband? If so, they wouldn’t have disgusted each other. But how topsy-turvy! Why did I have to wed such a toad? That’s the reason why I appeal.”

After reading, Bao laughed, “It is ridiculous to be so greedy, causing disharmony in the marriage. Smartness and clumsiness are slaves to each other and never in disorder.” With that, he wrote the comment in the file and posted it on the door. Soon, the plaintiff saw it, and bursting into complaint kept asking to see Bao.

Bao said, “How unreasonable to complain continually!” The woman replied, “Not me being unreasonable but the nether world.” Bao said, “Why do you say that?”

The wife answered, “Nothing in the world is more genuine than love, while wealth, rank and fame are all false. Men can be gorgeous or dull, and it is also true for women. Isn’t it perfect if a good woman matches with a good man? It is common to see an ugly

mulberry-picking wife with a romantic husband. Why did I, more beautiful and talented, marry such a worthless wretch? Why can't God of marriage be a little reasonable or fair?"

Bao said, "Nothing is perfect in the world. People have beauty and ugliness just as a nation has rises and falls. If everyone wants to choose a good husband as you do, the ugly men will have no wives. You have to accept it if you are doomed." Then Bao wrote down more comments: "Marriage comes by destiny, and can never be changed by human factors. The smart and the clumsy are in mutual promotion, and can never be muddled by personal feelings. If all ingenious women should choose romantic husbands, there would be no wives for dull men. A husband can enjoy a comfortable life if his wife is devoted at home. Here is the magic of a good marriage. You noisy woman, stop complaining."

After that, he added, "Now that you couldn't have a good husband despite your talent and beauty, there must be a happy afterlife for you. Just go and wait."

Case 27

Making Believe

In Lin-an county lived an extremely suspicious man Chee Hongdu, whose wife, Ching Chenggu, a fortitude woman, was ready to die for preserving her chastity.

One day, Hongdu asked his wife, “Based on your character, what would you do if there were someone molesting you?”

His wife answered, “I would scold him without hesitation. In that case, who dares to approach me?” Then he asked, “What if the person came with a knife and wanted to rape? If to resist, you would lose your life.” Ching replied, “I would rather be killed than humiliated.” Hongdu went on with his question, “What if several men caught you to rape and you were unable to refuse?” His wife replied, “If I were in that situation, the best way would be to suicide to maintain my virginity. Or if I were raped, I would be too ashamed to see you, and then I would also commit suicide.” But Hongdu was too suspicious to believe her. Therefore, in order to confirm her statement, a few days later, he arranged for a man to flirt with his wife. Not surprisingly, the man was scolded. When Hongdu returned home, Chenggu told him about this thing. After over a month, Hongdu arranged his friends Yu Mo, Ying Shin and Mo Yu to test his wife again. At his words, his friends, who were frivolous, went into the room immediately. Yu Mo and Ying Shin caught Chenggu by the hand, who was wrathful but unable to resist. Extremely frivolous, Mo Yu took off Chenggu’s skirt below. Considering it too obscene,

Yu Mo and Ying Shin let go of Chenggu's hands and stood away. Hands released, she brandished a knife and killed Mo Yu, scaring Yu Mo and Ying Shin away. Chenggu, a woman without resourcefulness, feared she would have trouble because of homicide. Besides, she was so fortitude that she couldn't bear the humiliation. Therefore, she committed suicide.

Not until Yu Mo rushed to tell about what had happened did Hongdu realize he was wrong. He was afraid it would bring trouble to him if his parents-in-law and Mo Yu's parents knew about the ins and outs of the matter. Thus, he went to the Yamen and accused Mo Yu of raping his wife, of which Yu Mo and Ying Shin were the witnesses. Bao ordered his assistants to fetch those two witnesses, and asked Yu Mo, "How do you know Mo Yu raped his wife?" Yu Mo replied, "I went to visit Hongdu along with Ying Shin. When we arrived there, we heard his wife scolding in her room." Bao asked again, "Did he succeed in raping her?" Ying Shin replied, "No. Mo Yu was scolded on entering the room and killed with a knife by Chenggu." Then Bao said to Hongdu, "Your wife was not raped, and Mo Yu was dead, so the two things cancel out." Hongdu replied, "There is a big difference between their death, though. Mo Yu had done a thing deserving death, but it was a great grievance for my wife. So I beg for some compensation."

Bao said, "It also makes sense. Mo Yu's family shall compensate a coffin for you. But two lives is no small matter, so I must autopsy in person." Then Bao went to the crime scene and found that Chenggu was lying in the room and had no clothes on her lower body; but Mo Yu was wearing his clothes and lying in front of the bed. Bao asked the witnesses, "You said Mo Yu was killed when he just came in, but why his dead body was here? And you said he didn't succeed in raping, but why didn't Chenggu have clothes on her lower body? I'm sure three of you violated her and then Chenggu killed Mo Yu and committed suicide for feeling ashamed." They put in cangue to confess the crime but in vain, Bao wrote on document that they were on penalty of death for raping. Until then, Yu Mo admitted, "We didn't violate her, nor did Mo Yu. The truth is that Hongdu let us test his wife for she said she was ready to die to preserve her chastity. Ying Shin and I both stood at the door of the room, while Mo Yu went to hug her and took off her clothes. But Chenggu stayed away, and then killed him with a knife. Then Ying Shin and I ran away. Chenggu was staunch with moral integrity without question.

She was so angry that she committed suicide. Hongdu was afraid that Chenggu's and Mo Yu's family knew this, so he sued Mo Yu first. He didn't mean to ask for money." Hongdu was rendered speechless and flogged thirty times immediately. And then Bao said to the witnesses, "How could Mo take off Chenggu's clothes by himself? You two must have helped him before standing away with the knowledge of his real intention. And after killing Mo Yu, Chenggu was afraid you two would approach her again, so she killed herself. Chenggu should be rewarded but you two shall be punished." Yu Mo and Ying Shin dared to say nothing for they saw Bao judging the case like a god, very decisive and accurate. Bao wrote on the document: "Hongdu shall be sentenced to death after autumn while Chenggu awarded a plaque for commending her chastity."

Case 28

Dying of Sex Rather Than Drowning in Wine Vat

When Cheunng Ying assumed an official post, his wife Mo was left at home and together with her maid Ailian visited Hwayan Temple frequently. A pearl merchant from Guangdong Province, Chiu Cheeshiu, happened to sojourn in the temple and was attracted by Mo's beauty. Thus, disguised as an old woman one day, he took fine pearls to Cheunng's house for sale. After Mo bought some, Chiu seized the chance and started chatting, having no intention to leave. As night was drawing near, Mo said, "It's getting late, so I'm sorry that you have to go now." Going out to the door and coming back, Chiu begged, "It's still a long way from my accommodation. As a poor woman alone and with so many pearls on hand, I fear being robbed. Could I put up for one night here, and leave early tomorrow morning?" Mo agreed and let him share a bed with Ailian. After nine o'clock, Chiu crept into Mo's bed and murmured, "I am actually a pearl-seller and completely fascinated by your beauty, so I disguised to be an old woman and asked for a night's lodging. It is God's will that we met, isn't it?" With the long absence of her husband, Mo was secretly delighted at what Chiu said. From then on, they led a double life by staying overnight at Cheunng's house, which was only known to Ailian.

Half a year later, Cheunng Ying was to be promoted and went back home. One day, while taking a nap, he noticed a dried saliva stain on the canopy of the bed. He asked his wife, "Has anyone else ever slept in this bed?" "How could someone else have ever

slept in my bed?” replied Mo. “Why is there a stain above the bed?” continued Cheunng. “I spat it,” returned Mo. Cheunng Ying proclaimed, “Only a man can spit so high, not a woman. Let’s lie down together and have a try.” Cheunng Ying did it, but Mo failed. Despite Cheunng’s repeated query, Mo refused to tell the truth. So Cheunng went to the fish pond and called Ailian for questioning. Ailian, having been instructed by Mo, replied, “There is no such thing.” “All right. Here is the sword. If you speak the truth, the blame will fall on your mistress; if you don’t, you will be killed and thrown into the fishpond.” snapped Cheunng.

So shocked and scared that Ailian told the truth. After knowing the truth, Cheunng intended to kill his wife. Fearing Ailian would divulge the secret, he pushed her into the pool and drowned her.

That night, Cheunng Ying slept until eleven o’clock. He said to his wife, “I can’t fall asleep and want some wine.”

Mo said, “Well, I’ll ask the maid to warm some and bring it over.” Cheunng cajoled, “If you ask the maid to do it at midnight, we’ll be grumbled. Go to the altar and get some newly brewed wine yourself. I only like that.” Without any suspicion, she got up. Cheunng Ying followed her stealthily. At the sight of her stepping on the footstool to get the wine, he lifted her feet from behind and pushed her into the wine jar. Then he went back to his room for sleep.

After a while, presuming that Mo had been drowned, he called out her name on purpose but got no response. Then he called in the maidservants and instructed, “My dame wanted wine and went to fetch some, but it’s wired that she’s been absent long. So go check out now.” All the maids went to look for Mo, but in vain until a maid exclaimed, “Madam was drowned in the jar!” With pretended anxiety, Cheunng dressed himself hurriedly, mourning in a surprised expression.

The next day, Mo’s brothers were invited to the coffining ceremony. The coffin filling with gold, silver, jewelry and beautiful clothes was sent to the Hwayan Temple. However, at night, Cheunng ordered two cronies to take away all the jewelry and clothes from the coffin. The next day, the monks of the temple reported that Mo’s coffin was opened and the jewelry and clothes were stolen. Cheunng pretended to burst

into anger, and went for a look together with Mo's brothers. Without doubt, the coffin was really pried open and all the belongings inside disappeared. Hypocritically, he burst into tears over the coffin, and taking some bronze decorations and common clothes put them in the coffin. Thus Cheunng ordered a thorough investigation of the temple, suspecting that there were outsiders hiding within who had opened the coffin and stolen the valuables. Fazed by the situation, the monks all came to kowtow and said, "We monks do not dare to break the law." Cheunng queried, "Is there anyone else in your temple?"

A monk replied, "Only a jeweller from Guangdong is sojourning here." "This man is most likely to be a thief." asserted Cheunng.

Instantly Chiu Cheeshiu was detained and sent to the county government with a complaint accusing him of theft. The county magistrate subjected Chiu to severe torture in an attempt to force a confession. Chiu retorted, "It's none of my business but my prelife debt that I have to pay off by death." Therefore, he confessed the crime.

At that time, Judge Bao was on an inspection tour, so Cheunng went to complain about his situation to Bao and begged an immediate execution of Chiu so that he could go to his post at ease. In the evening, when Judge Bao read the case file, a wind blew, making him shiver with cold. Bao thought, "Is there any grievance in this case?" After reading the case file many times, Judge Bao unconsciously dozed off. Then he dreamed of a girl, who said, "I was innocent but killed when I was pushed off the fish pond in broad daylight. My mistress had an affair, and was pushed into the wine jar and drowned." Bao woke up, and finding it a dream thought to himself, "How weird, but the maidservant and her mistress had nothing to do with the pry of Mo's coffin. Wait and see what's going on tomorrow."

The next day, Bao queried Chiu, "You must have a partner to open the coffin. Tell me who he is." Chiu said, "I didn't open the coffin, but this disaster was left over from my prelife, so I'm willing to die." Bao recalled the dream in which the madam was drowned in the wine jar, so he asked, "Then what is accountable for Mo's death?" Chiu answered, "She fell into a wine jar and drowned at night." Lord Bao was surprised and found it consistent with what the servant girl said in his dream. Nevertheless, whether Mo had a double life or not was unclear, so Bao inquired, "I have been informed that

Mo was drowned by her husband for finding out her fornication with somebody. Now Cheunng Ying is so anxious to kill you. Are you that adulter?" Then Chiu said, "No one knows this except the maid Ailian. I hear that Ailian was drowned in the fish pond and Mrs. Mo was also dead. So I thought that nobody else would know the affair, and I covered it up for Mrs. Mo's reputation. But I never imagined that Mrs. Mo would have died in consequence of it. It must be Ailian who exposed the secret to Cheunng Ying. Then he killed Ailian to silence her. Bao heard Chiu's words, which were all consistent with what happened in his dream. He knew that the maid had died unjustly, and her ghost came to tell him the truth. After a while, Cheunng came to say goodbye and would go to take office. Bao wrote down what the maidservant said in his dream and handed it to Cheunng, who became panicked immediately. Judge Bao said, "You failed to discipline your household, which is the first reason you should be dismissed from your post; you killed the maid gratuitously, the second; you falsely accused Chiu of coffin robbery, the third. How can you go to your post now?" Kneeling down, Cheunng begged, "There is no one knows this matter. I implore you to cover it up for me." Bao said, "What is done by night appears by day. Heaven knows, Earth knows, you know, and the ghost knows. And now the ghost lets me know. Your wife should have been put to death for she was not chaste. So was Chiu Cheeshiu for he seduced a married woman, but Ailian did not deserve death. Had you not drowned Ailian, her ghost would not have accused you. You could continue to be an official without revealing your crime. Isn't that perfect?" At this, Cheunng was rendered ashamed and speechless. That autumn, Chiu Cheeshiu was beheaded.

The case reported to the Emperor, Cheunng Ying was eventually dismissed from his official post and would never be employed for his failure to discipline his family and brutality of killing his maid.

Case 29

Felt Jacket Merchant

In Nanchang Prefecture, Chiangsi Province, lived Song Joe, who headed for Kaifeng Prefecture, Honan Province with more than ten thousand taels of silver to sell safflowers. It was dark when he got to Shenchiu County, so he lodged in Tsao Dirk's house. Drunken in Dirk's banquet, Song walked into his room, and taking off his money bag paid accommodation fee so that he could leave early the next day. Unexpectedly, Chao Guochen and Sun Yuanchee in the next room, had witnessed that and harbored an evil intention. They set a trick, claiming that they were going to do business somewhere. Tailing after Joe to Kaifeng the next day, they watched him move into Kung Sheng's house and then go into the city alone. Whereupon, Guochen and Yuanchee knocked at Sheng's door, shouting, "It's Song Joe. I'm back!"

Sheng opened the door immediately, only to find the two men pulling out a sharp knife to kill him. Sheng hurried to the back hall, and yelling out "Robbers" escaped from the back door. Guochen and Yuanchee took all Joe's money away, and with it hidden somewhere in the city lived in the east of the city gate. Back to Sheng's house with the knowledge of what had happened, Song Joe was very angry, and suspecting Sheng's connection with the theft sued him to Kaifeng Yamen.

Judge Bao demanded Cheunng Chian and Lee Wan to summon Sheng for interrogation. "You thief, how dare you conspire with others to steal money! You deserve beheading."

roared Bao. Sheng entreated, "As a devout Buddhist, I dare not run amok. Shortly after Song moved in, his silver was looted. God can prove my innocence. Had I conspired with them, I would accept any punishment." After that, Sheng was put into prison. Having spied into the news of the thieves for a year but in vain, Bao muttered to himself, "What a difficult case!" Then he walked into the prison quietly to detect what Sheng was doing there.

Sheng was burning incense and chanting Buddhist scripture, praying, "Firstly, I wish that Lord Bao would know black from white and prove my innocence. Secondly, my son would succeed in schooling. Finally, I could be blessed to get out of prison so that I could grow old together with my wife." At that, Bao pondered that there might be wrongs as expected.

Bao ordered to bring Joe in for inquiry, "Have you ever stayed somewhere else along the way?"

"I only put up one night at Tsao Dirk's house in Shenchiu County", replied Joe. At this, Bao adjourned the court.

The next day, in the guise of a felt jacket buyer, Bao directly headed for Tsao Dirk's house for accommodation. During his stay there, Bao never passed a tavern without going for a drink. One day after a few months, Bao went to Chingning Bridge with Dirk and encountered two drinkers in a drunkery, who greeted Dirk, "Where is this gentleman from?" "He's from Nanking," replied Dirk. "Chao Guochen and Sun Yuanchee became moneybags." "Did they get a windfall?" asked Dirk. "They went to Kaifeng for business and earned big money in half a month. It's a small fortune to set up houses in the provincial capital and purchase hectares of farmland."

Hearing that, Bao thought, "It must be those two men that stole from Song Joe." And then he came back along with Dirk.

When asked the names of the two drinkers, Dirk answered, "One is called Chao Cheetao, the other Lu Tarlang." Bao noted down the names. Preparing the luggage for a return trip the next day, Bao sent Chao Hu to the provincial capital to sell silk to Chao Guochen. Upon Chao Hu's arrival, Guochen asked, "Where are you from?" "I'm Tsong Zoe from Hangchou."

Having picked up five bolts of satin, Guochen inquired, "How much does it cost?" "18 taels," beamed Tsong Joe. Guochen then paid three pieces of silver, 12 taels in total to him. Subsequently, Sun Yuanchee also took Tsong Joe to his home and bought five bolts of satin with six silver ingots, twelve taels of silver in total. Taking the money he got, Chao Hu immediately went back to Judge Bao. Bao soon had the silver hidden into a box together with other silver ingots, and summoned Song Joe for recognition. In the office knelt down Joe, who was shown the silver in the box and declared, "To be honest, the silver produced in Chiangsi Province has cyan-threadlike lines after being forged, and only a little silver in this box is mine. If Your Honor can uphold justice, I will never forget your favor." Having had Joe taken back into jail, Bao commanded to arrest Chao Guochen and Sun Yuanchee. Additionally, Chao Hu was dispatched to Shenchiu County to capture Chao Cheedao and Lu Darlang. Not until the third day were all the four men detained to the office. Judge Bao ranted, "Guochen and Yuanchee, audacious thieves! How dare you plunder others' belongings at night and frame Kung Sheng! Deserving death, you'd better tell the truth!" Guochen and Yuanchee refusing to admit it, Bao said, "Chao Cheedao and Lu Darlang, you told us about the money they gained illegally half a month ago. Speak it out again!" So they did.

Without words to defend themselves, Guochen and Yuanchee had no choice but to make a confession. Then, Song Joe was summoned and retrieved his money. Kung Sheng was compensated with some silver to run his business, while Chao Cheedao and Lu Tarlang released. Flailed forty times without mercy, Yuanchee and Guochen were detained to the public execution ground for beheading. From then on, people lived in peace and contentment.

Case 30

Theft in Sewer

In Yangwu County, Kaifeng Prefecture, Honan Province, lived a man Yeh Kuang, who made a living by weaving mats together with his wife Chuan, a clever and lovable woman with extraordinary beauty.

Only with Chuan's hard work could they make ends meet. There being few taels left to be counted, Yeh Kuang, one day, left 1.5 taels to his wife for food and spinning, and went to Sheeking for business with 2.5.

The next year, a handsome bachelor of about sixteen called Wu Ying in a neighboring village, passed by Chuan's house and fell in love with her at the first glance. He then asked her neighbors about her background. A trick occurred in his mind suddenly. With a forged letter, he entered Chuan's house and greeted politely, "My name is Wu Ying. I met your husband in Sheeking last year and made good friends with him. It was on my way home yesterday that your husband asked me to bring you a letter, and to offer any help if you need. When back home, he will reward me so that you don't have to worry about it."

Noticing Wu Ying handsome and honest, and hearing her husband had asked him for help, Chuan filled with delight and grinned from ear to ear. They exchanged amorous glances with each other and could not control their emotional outpouring. Thus, they

walked towards each other and with an embrace slept in one bed with the door closed. From then on, as a result of the remote location of her house with no neighbors around, they got along like husband and wife without any disturbance.

How time flew! Yeh Kuang had been doing business in Sheeking for 9 years, missing his wife and young son so much that he packed up and headed home with 16 taels. He traveled by day and slept by night. Several days later, he got home at midnight. He was afraid of being robbed for his door and walls were delicate. Hence, he hid his silver in the sewer beside the house before knocking at the door. At that moment, his wife was sleeping with Wu Ying, and at the knock, she sprang up to open the door. Frightened out of his wits, Wu Ying hid behind the door and dodged out when the door opened. Chuan made dinner for her husband, chanting with a missing heart. After dinner, they went to bed. Chuan asked, "Dear, you have been out for business for nine years, but did you get some silver back?" Yeh Kuang replied, "16 taels in total. But for the sake of safety, I didn't bring it home but hid it in the sewer nearby." Chuan said in surprise, "Since you have brought back so much money, it's better to hide it inside our house instead of other places for fear that other people should know it." Yeh hurried to take the taels, only to find it gone. It turned out that Wu Ying had overheard the dialogue and stolen the silver. So angry that Yeh had a row with Chuan and went suing to Judge Bao.

After reading the petition, Bao interrogated Chuan, firmly believing that she must have had an affair with some man; however, she refused to confess. Then Bao let Yeh Kuang out and Cheunng Chian and Lee Wan in, instructing, "Now, put up the notice in front of the Yamen, and escort this woman with a cangue to the public on sale. Whoever wants to buy the woman should be brought to me. I have my ways to deal with it." Cheunng and Lee did all as told. The woman detained in the street for half a day, Wu Ying heard that and came for a whisper. At the sight of Wu Ying, Cheunng and Lee brought him to Bao, who inquired, "Who are you and why are you here?" Wu explained, "I'm one relative of this woman, so I'm here to visit her."

Bao asked, "Have you ever taken a wife?" Wu answered, "I am so poor that I haven't." Bao advised, "If so, I can marry this woman to you. As long as you have twenty taels of silver, you shall have her." Wu cajoled, "My family is poor, so it's difficult to make

it.” Bao continued, “Since you cannot bring out twenty taels, then fifteen instead.” Wu repeated that he could not afford it. Bao queried, “Who asked you to see her? If you do not have 15, 12 will do. What do you think?” Seeing it’s impossible to bargain, Wu had the stolen silver melted and got twelve taels for Bao. Bao let Wu out and Yeh in for inquiry, “Look, is this your silver?” Yeh watched it closely, and declared, “It is not my silver, so I dare not claim it at random.”

Bao let him out and Wu in. “I just asked her husband to come here and gave him the money. But he said his wife was very good-looking and demanded to have fifteen taels. You have to borrow 3. Go now.” Wu had to go home. Bao instructed Cheunng and Lee privately, “Follow Wu closely, and if you see him take the original silver to melt, tell him it is my command that the original silver, regardless of the color, should do and need no melting, and directly bring the silver to me.”

Taking the order, Cheunng followed Wu all the way. Wu was going to melt the original silver when Cheunng stopped him and told him what Bao had said. Then he had nothing to do but hand the three taels in. Bao let Wu out and Yeh in, who cried, “This silver is exactly mine, but where do you get it?”

Bao warned Yeh not to falsely accuse Wu, “This silver is taken from my warehouse, but how can you claim it?” Yeh insisted, “I am quite familiar with these taels. If you don’t believe me, I can tell its weight.” Bao immediately had it weighed, and it was exactly the same as Yeh said. So he took Wu in for interrogation, who had to confess his crime. Thus, the woman took off her clothes and received the flogging; flogged 100 times, Wu was sentenced to 3 years’ imprisonment for fornication and theft. With all the taels retrieved, the couple went back home and made up as before.

Case 31

The Sanbao Buddhist Hall

There was a man named Cheunng Darder in Fu'an County, Funing Prefecture, Fuchian Province, who lived in poverty. He married Hwang Huiniang and had a daughter named Yuchi, who was very filial and dutiful by nature. Darder's younger brother named Dardao, was very rich and married Chen Shueer, who was demure and quiet, temperate and chaste. Later, Dardao bought a concubine named Hsu Miaolan. His wife and concubine were both beautiful, but neither of them gave birth to children. The younger brother died at the age of twenty-five. Darder had the intention of dispossessing Dardao's family property, so he asked Chen Darfong, Shueer's brother, to convince her to remarry on the grounds that she was young and childless. However, Shueer swore she would never remarry and would like to adopt Darfong's son Yuanching to continue her late husband's lineage. Darder tried his best to prevent this on the pretext that someone with a different surname should not be added to the family tree, and Chan Darfong held a strong grudge against Darder for this.

On the first, and the fifteenth days of each month in the lunar calendar, as well as the anniversary of her husband's death, Shueer often invited a monk Yeeching from Longbao Temple to her home to chant sutras for her late husband. Sometimes, she would have a chat with Yeeching. Yeeching thought that Shueer got a crush on him, so all he wanted was to flirt with her. One day, as usual, Shueer sent for the monk to chant

the scriptures, so that it could release the soul of the deceased husband from purgatory. Yeeching ordered someone to carry a basket of scriptures to set out first and he followed behind. Seeing that there was no one outside the room, he sneaked into Shueer's room and whispered to her, "You often call me to chant the sutra, so do you have a crush on me? Could you be kind enough to stay with me tonight?"

Shueer was afraid of being discovered by the concubine, which would make her embarrassed and cause misunderstanding, so she replied in a low voice, "I just ask you to chant the sutra, which doesn't mean anything else. Get out quickly!" Yeeching added, "You have no husband, and I have no wife. Wouldn't it be a perfect match if we get married?" Shueer said, "I had thought you were a good person, but I didn't expect you to say such nonsense. I will ask my brother-in-law to punish and put you to death." Yeeching said, "Are you really unwilling? I have a sword here."

"Kill as you like! How dare you be so rude! I am not the one you can provoke." said Shueer. When she was about to walk out of the room, Yeeching took out the knife and cut off her head. Then he wrapped it with a piece of clothing and put it into the basket with scriptures. Then he walked out of the room, shouting, "Mrs. Cheunng!" Without any response, he shouted a few more times when Hsu Miaolan came out and said, "Sutras will be chanted today. I will call her." She went into the room, only to see Shueer had been killed, blood all over the ground. "Oh my god! Mistress was killed!" Darder and his wife living next door heard the shout and came over to see what was going on. They were very shocked to find Shueer's head missing and wondered who had done the murderous deed. Only the sutra basket was placed in the hall, Yeeching alone outside with nothing in his hand. Who would have thought that the head was hidden inside the basket? People generally searched for things at a distance and ignore the near. Darder told Yeeching to go back, "No more sutra chanting today." Yeeching picked the burden back to the temple and hid the head behind the Sanbao Hall, making it more difficult to be found.

Miaolan sent for Darfong, and it was generally suspected that Shueer was killed by Darder. So Darfong went to Judge Bao, who was on an inspection tour, to lodge a suit.

Bao entrusted the case to the local prefect for investigation, who detained Darfong and asked, "When was Shueer killed?"

Darfong returned, "After breakfast. Who dared to kill during the day? Only Darder lives next door and has a connecting way, so that he can kill my sister and take the head away. If it were done by an outsider, how could there be no witnesses?" The prefect continued, "Does your sister have any servants?" Darfong replied, "My sister is upright and virtuous, and always keeps a distance from others to avoid suspicion. Therefore, she has no servants, only a concubine named Miaolan. If she had killed my sister, she wouldn't be able to hide the head."

Thinking Darfong was reasonable, the prefect immediately ordered to arrest Darder and extract a confession, but Darder refused to admit the trumped-up charge. After the trial, it was reported to Judge Bao, who ordered Magistrate Yin of the local county to investigate the whereabouts of Chen Shueer's head. But Yin was a greedy and incompetent person, only bent on torturing Darder to find Shueer's head within the time limit, cajoling, "Offer her head and bury it together with her body, and I will apply for the release of you." Over a year having passed, Darder's family soon became as poor as a church mouse and his wife, Huiniang, and daughter, Yuchi, had to rely on embroidery and help from neighbors for survival. His daughter Yuchi was very filial. She personally went to the prison every day to deliver meals to Darder because they had no servants. Every time she saw her father, she would burst into tears and ask, "When will you get free, father?" Darder said, "Master Yin has promised that he will release me as soon as I find Shueer's head." Yuchi went back to her mother and said, "Master Yin said that as long as my aunt's head is found, he will release my father. It has been more than a year since we began to search, and there is no trace at all. Can we still find it now? My father is suffering in prison, and it is hard for us two to make ends meet every day. Why don't you cut my head off and give it to the magistrate as my aunt's when I'm asleep, so that my father can be released?" The mother was shocked and said, "Are you kidding me, dear? You are already sixteen years old. I want you to marry a rich man, either as a wife or a concubine, to get more bride price, so that you and I can live on this in the future. How can you say these stupid words?"

Yuchi replied, "My father is suffering behind bars, and you are living a starving and lonely life at home. How can I have the heart to marry a rich man to keep myself full and warm? Besides, if the bride price has been used up, where can I find more? At that time, I would be someone's wife, so how can he allow me to die for my father? If I die

now, on the one hand, my father can be released, and on the other, you can be saved. That is to say, I save both of you with my own life. Otherwise, my father will die in jail, and you and I will die at home for starvation. I have already made up my mind. If you don't bear to kill me, I will hang myself. Hope you can cut off my head and save my father, so that I can die without any regrets." The mother said, "My child, although you say that you are attempting to suicide for your father, I can not let you do so. Besides, your father did not kill your aunt. The truth will come out one day. For the moment, we should be patient to face it. Never say those ominous words again!" The mother thereupon kept watching over her for several days and Yuchi didn't have any chance to suicide by strangulation. Hence, she cajoled to her mother, "From now on, I will listen to you. You don't have to guard me anymore."

Her mother relaxed her vigilance when she heard that. It was just few days before Yuchi was found to hang herself to death. The mother untied her body, hugging her and crying bitterly. Every time she held up the sword, she was too heartbroken and unbearable to sever, lifting the sword and putting it down again. The mother thought to herself, "If I don't have the heart to cut off my daughter's head, I won't be able to save her father, and my daughter will die in vain and turn in her grave." Therefore, the mother burned incense and prayed for her daughter, preparing to pick up a sword to chop off Yuchi's head. However, she was extremely in grief so that her hands were limp and her body was weak and cold. She had to hack at it several times before successfully cutting it off.

The mother picked up her daughter's head and watched it, and then she fell to the ground in a coma. After a while she came to herself and took off her clothes to wrap the head. The next day, the mother sent the head to the cell and handed it over to her husband. The husband asked her how she got the head, and the wife replied that someone had brought it in at night. It must have been the person, who pitied him for suffering too long and sent it out. Darder handed the head over to the magistrate Yin, who was happy because he had got the evidence to convict Darder of the murder of Shueer. So Darder was escorted under guard to Judge Bao.

Judge Bao examined the head and finding that it was newly cut, thundered, "You deserve to die for killing a person, and now where do you get this head? Shueer has

been dead for more than a year, so her head must be rotten and smelly. But this head was chopped off recently, so you killed another person, didn't you? Darder admitted that he got it from Hwang. Then Bao interrogated Hwang, who wept, trying to explain several times but in vain. Finding it weird, Lord Bao interrogated Hsu Miaolan, who told him about Yuchi hanging herself to save her father. Upon hearing that, Darder and his wife cried together. Bao examined the head again and found that it was indeed cut after death, with no bloodstains on the knife. Seeing this, all the officials and guards present shed tears. Judge Bao sighed, "How can a father committed murder when he has such a filial daughter?"

Bao questioned Miaolan again, "Did anyone go to your house that morning?" Miaolan replied, "No one came early in the morning. After breakfast, the monk came to chant sutras. He called outside the door. When I came out to answer the door, only to find that the hostess was dead and her head was gone." Bao then had Darder monitored and instructed Hwang to make a wish at the temple. If any monk had verbal molestation, she could demand Shueer's head from him.

After Hwang returned home, she often went to the Sanbao Temple to pray for divination sticks, or to worship Buddha, weeping and wishing to find Shueer's head. Hwang was soon familiar with the monk Yeeching, often talking to him. One day, Yeeching invited Hwang for lunch, prompting, "Why should you worry about having no husband? You can find another good husband and have a better life."

Hwang deliberately said, "No one dares to marry the wife of a murderer. I'm also very helpless." Yeeching said, "If you don't marry someone else and are willing to be my lover, I can also help you with food and clothing." Hwang said with a smile, "That will be good. If the gods bless me to get Shueer's head, I will be your lover." Yeeching grabbed her with his hand and said, "Just have sex with me. I will burn the buddhist writ and the head will surely be found." Half-loath and half-consenting, Hwang said, "You burn the writ today and I will have sex with you tomorrow. If you can find the head by burning the buddhist writ, I swear to have affairs with you all my life."

Out of control because of his sexual desire, Yeeching hugged Hwang to rape her. Hwang said, "You're just fooling me! I don't believe you. If you had methods and found out the head, I would be in your arms tamely. Otherwise, I will not make love

with you!” Strong lust enveloping him, he said, “If you meet my need, even though there are no head, I will create one for you.” Hwang said, “You can have me immediately only if you brought out a head. If I let you achieve your wish, will you give me your own head then? I do not believe you.”

Yeeching had no choice but to say, “There was a woman who came to the temple in the past. I molested her but she refused and I killed her, and her head was hidden behind the Sanbao Hall. If you don’t comply, I also kill you to make a pair. If you do, I’ll give you the head.” Hwang said, “You are scaring me. Show me the head first, and then we can proceed.” Then Yeeching took out the head to her. Hwang said, “As a monk, why are you so heartless?” When Yeeching asked for intercourse once again, Hwang refused, “Engaging in chitchat with you before, I was willing to accept you. After seeing the decomposed head, I am scared out of wits and not in the mood. Maybe tomorrow.” He killed that person with his own hands, so how could he not feel guilty? Then he conceded, “I am also scared and totally out of the mood. Do remember to come tomorrow.” “If I don’t come, you may as well go to my house and let me serve you, and then you will give me the head.” replied Hwang. When Hwang returned home, she gathered a few members of the Chuenng family and asked them to go to the back of the Sanbao Hall to take out the head. And Yeeching was tied up and turned over to Judge Bao. He revealed all the truth once tortured and was immediately escorted under guard for beheading. Bao ordered that the county authorities should erect a memorial archway and awarded two plaques to Chen Shueer and Cheunng Yuchi. One plaque read, “Sacrificing the Life to Preserve Chastity”; the other, “Exemplary Filial Piety with Composure.” He also demolished Cheunng Dardao’s house and turned it into a shrine of chastity and filial piety. A half of Cheunng Dardao’s property was used for the rituals all year round. The rest of the family estate remained in the hands of Darder.

Case 32

Negative Sign Repeated

Fang Ruiluan, a country woman in Tangchou Prefecture, Shandong Province, married Chou Darshou at the age of 16. When she was twenty-two, her husband died, leaving her a one-year-old son named Chou Kerlee. From then on, she was widowed and worked hard to raise her son. Kerlee was already eighteen years old and could support himself and his mother by working in the fields. He was widely known for his filial piety in his hometown, receiving much public praise. Fang thought to herself, “My son has become an adult but he can’t get a wife because of poverty, his salary only enough to support me. If I live like this for a lifetime, despite my chastity, my husband will not carry on the family lineage, which is the worst form of unfilial conduct. So she burned incense and told her husband, “As a widow, I have remained faithful to you for 17 years and my heart has not changed. If you want me to remain faithful to you for life, please give me two positive signs; and if you allow me to remarry and with my bride price get our son a wife to keep the family line alive for you, please give me a negative sign. She threw it down, and it was a negative sign as expected. She prayed again, “The sign is either negative or positive so that I can’t readily believe it. If you still think it’s important to carry on the family lineage and allow me to remarry, please give me another negative sign.” Two more negative signs were thrown in a row. Then Fang found some matchmaker, but Kerlee stopped and whimpered, “If you want to remarry, it should be in the early years, not until today when I grow up. It wastes your previous

time and fame. It must be my unfilial piety that leads to your decision. Punish me as you want, and I will correct my mistakes.” Fang argued, “I am determined, and you can’t change my mind.”

In Shangcun village lived a rich farmer Wei Sishian, who lost his wife at the age of fifty. When he heard that Fang was virtuous and going to remarry, he immediately sent someone to propose marriage with 30 taels of silver. Fang said to his son, “Lock the money in a wooden box. Here are the keys and I will come back for it in 60 days. Kerlee said, “I don’t have ability to prepare dowry for you. How dare I keep your silver? Please hold it yourself, mother. I cannot accept the key.” Mother and son said goodbye in tears to each other. Two months after Fang married Wei, she said to her new husband, “I hadn’t intended to have another marriage. But my family was poor, so I wanted to use my bride price to get a wife for my son, which eventually led to my breach of integrity. Today I’m going to give the silver to my son and come back after he gets married.” Sishian said, “Now that you have this idea, coincidentally from the village ahead there is a simple tenant Lyu Chinlu. His daughter Yue-er, is 18 years old, the same age as your son. She is solemn and blessed. I am going to propose marriage for your son.”

Fang went back and said to his son, “I took away the silver for fear that you might waste it. I hear that Lyu Chinlu’s daughter is as old as you. You can take the silver and marry her.” Kerlee agreed and married Yue-er. Sure enough, she was a solemn woman. Fang was very pleased with this and went back to Wei Sishian. Unexpectedly, Chou Kerlee, as a filial son, had no sex with his wife and slept with clothes on at night although he loved and got along well with her.

Yue-er was old enough to know about sex, and seeing this continued for a year had to complain to Kerlee, “I can feel you love me. I had thought you were young and ignorant, but you are mature enough to know a lot. We’ve been married almost a year since last April, but why can’t we be a real couple? Since you are unwilling to have sex with me, I will have to do this tonight. It’s not up to you.” Kerlee explained, “Do I not know young couples in the thick of love? But the money with which I married you came from my mother’s remarriage. I really don’t want to have sex with a wife who was exchanged by the money of selling my mother. I need to save up thirty taels of

silver to pay my mother back, and only at that time can I do what you want.” Lyu said, “We all start from scratch and all we earn is just enough to keep our heads above water. How can we save so much money? Wouldn’t we be widower and widow all the life?” Kerlee argued, “If I never pay it back, I will never have sex with you. And if you are afraid of wasting your time, you may as well remarry for your own happiness.” Yue-er said, “If I remarry because of disharmony between you and me, it is a compelling choice. If I do this out of lust, it is an act of shame. How can I bear it? How about me going back to my natal house, and you working hard to repay the debts? And then you pick me back. It is hard to save money if I am here.” advised Yue-er. Kerlee agreed and sent Yue-er back.

Winter coming, Lyu Chinlu wanted to send his daughter to her husband’s home. However, Yue-er denied for several times, which irritated him. Then Yue-er told her mother the reasons. Chinlu was skeptical and told his elder brother Chinshou about it. Chinshou said, “This is true. A few days ago, I took silver from Wong Wen’s house next to Kerlee’s, and I asked Wong what kind of person Kerlee was. He replied, “That man is a filial son. It’s true that he dares not sleep with his wife without returning her mother’s money.”” Lyu Chinlu said, “Were I a rich man, I would offer some help. However, I don’t have much money, and my daughter refuses to remarry, and keeping her at home isn’t the solution either.” Chinshou advised, “Since Yue-er is virtuous and Kerlee filial, God certainly won’t give them a hard time for long. I’ve got twenty taels of silver for this, and pawned the land for ten taels, thirty taels in total. It would be nice if he could pay back the money to me, but if he couldn’t, I would see it as a gift to a dutiful son. What’s the use of silver if it’s not used here?”

Getting the money from her uncle, Yue-er was more than happy and grateful. Her father enjoined Bocheng, the second son, to escort his sister to her husband’s house. Upon arrival, Bocheng returned. Yue-er entered the room and put the silver on the table, checking it and counting the number. After that, she put the silver in the cabinet and went to the kitchen for cooking, not realizing that the neighbor Chiao Hei was peeking through the crack on the wall. So Chiao Hei sneaked into the door and stole the silver. Though Yue-er could heard the creak of the door, she thought it was her husband entering the room so she didn’t go out for check. After a while, Chou Kerlee went home and saw his wife in the kitchen. Both of them beamed with joy. They had their

lunch and entered the bedroom, only to find that the money had been gone. Yue-er asked her husband, "Where did you put the silver?" Kerlee was confused and asked, "What are you talking about?" The wife said, "Don't deceive me. I borrowed thirty silver from my uncle to repay my mother-in-law. I have counted that there were twenty-five pieces and I have put them in the cabinet. Just now I heard the noise you made when you entered the house. It was you who took away the silver. But why do you annoy me on purpose?" The husband replied, "I did go into the kitchen, but not into the bedroom. Is your uncle very rich? Are you seriously sure that he has thirty taels to lend you? You tricked me into marrying you. Okay, I see, I will divorce you and never, never fall into your trap!" Yue-er said, "It turned out that you lead a double life, so you don't want to marry me. You are so anxious to divorce me after getting my money, but now how can I get the silver to pay my uncle back?" No matter what his wife said, Kerlee never believed her. Yue-er had expected to be reconciled with her husband, but who could imagine she met with this change? She was so angry that she went to hang herself. Fortunately, a neighbour saved her when the rope was broken. Then she went to the Yamen to report the incident but Judge Bao found no clue to this case.

Bao prayed every night for the truth. At this time, a man was struck dead by lightning. People gathered around and found that the dead covered with charcoal was Chiao Hei whose clothes were burned except a green silk handkerchief on the top of the trousers. Some of them were bold enough to open it and found it was silver, and there was twenty-five pieces altogether. They all said, "Kerlee and his wife are fighting for thirty taels of silver, and they say there is twenty-five pieces in all. Could it be theirs?" They weighed it and found that it was exactly thirty taels, and sent it to Yue-er for recognition. Yue-er said, "Exactly, it is mine." So everyone came to know that Chiao Hei had been struck dead by lightning for stealing silver. When Chinlu, Chinshou, Wei Sishian and Lady Fang appeared on the spot of the accident, people all knew their story. Kerlee's filial piety, Yue-er's chastity and Chinshou's generosity were widely acknowledged. Deeply moved, Wei Sishian said to his wife, "With one hundred taels of gold, Lyu Chinshou is willing to give 30 of them to his niece in order to fulfill her chastity. With ten thousand taels of gold, I am only kind to my two sons. It is not too much even if to donate three hundred taels to your son Kerlee." Then he wrote down a

letter of commitment: “Three hundred taels of gold is to be set up in Kerlee’s name.” Kerlee resolutely refused to accept and replied, “I would rather have my mother back than your money.” Sishian said, “It’s up to your mother.” Fang said, “I’ve had this intention for a long time. I would serve you for the rest of your life. If I were able to survive, I would return to the Chou family. But now I am in a dilemma for I am pregnant for three months.” Sishian said, “If you give birth to a boy or a girl, you can raise him or her for me. When the child grows up, you will return him or her to me. The child will take my ex-wife as the mother. In that way, your son will have his mother, I shall also have my ex-wife. If I force you to come back to my house, your son will lose his mother, and your ex-husband his wife, which will destroy the anchors of the two people. Since your son doesn’t accept the three-hundred taels of gold, it will go to you to show our two-year-old companionship.” This result presented to Bao, he was greatly moved and praised them for their loyalty, filial piety, chastity and righteousness. The next year, Fang gave birth to a son named Shu, who was raised until he was ten years old and returned to the Wei family. Later Shu got the first place in the provincial examination.

Case 33

A Brat

In the south of Luchou City, there was a wealthy man named Han Ding, who was the childhood friend of Hsu Er. Born in a poor family, Hsu Er served as a petty dealer selling salt together with his younger brother Hsu San, and they often went to the estuary for business to make a living. One day, Hsu Er said to his brother, “We are good hands at business, but shortage of capital limits our ability. How can we get rich if we keep doing small business?” Hsu San advised, “I hear you have an intimate friendship with Han Ding. Why don’t you borrow some money from him to make a capital and after some time pay back the principal and interest? Isn’t that great?” “That sounds good, but I’m afraid he won’t help.” answered Er. Hsu San continued, “If he won’t, we can find other ways.” Hsu Er followed his suggestion and came to Han’s home to ask for help the next day. Han Ding warmly went out to greet Hsu Er and said, “It’s been a long time since we met, my bro. Please sit inside.” Hsu Er entered the back hall and sat down. Han Ding ordered his servants to prepare a banquet, and they had a drink together. When comfortably drunk, Hsu Er ventured, “I have always longed to deliberate with you over one thing, but I am ashamed to say it for fear that you would disallow it.” Han Ding replied, “Bro, we’ve known each other since childhood. If you have anything to say, don’t hesitate.” Hsu Er said, “I’m going to buy some goods but I’m short of silver. So I wonder whether you could lend me some money.” Han Ding asked, “Will you do it by yourself or with any partner?” Hsu Er confessed that his

younger brother Hsu San cooperated with him. Han had wanted to lend him money at first. When he heard that he worked with Hsu San, he refused and explained, "I am so sorry. At present, I have to pay taxes in grain. There is no money left, so I am afraid I can't grant your request." Hsu Er knew it was an excuse, so he didn't speak more and bid farewell on the pretext of being drunk.

Han didn't persuade him to stay either. Then Hsu Er went home in a gloomy mood. Seeing that his brother was unhappy, Hsu San asked, "You must have borrowed money from Han, but why are you so depressed?" Hsu Er told him about Han Ding's refusal. After hearing this, Hsu San said in anger, "That's going too far. Can't we achieve our deal without his money? We need to think over again." Then they went to the estuary to seek business opportunity.

Han Ding had an adopted son named Han Shun, who, smart and handsome, was the apple of Han Ding's eye. One day, during the Tomb-Sweeping Day in March, Shun and his friends went out to the countryside with a few taels of silver to pay for a drink in the tavern. When it was late in the evening, all the friends dispersed, except Han Shun, who drank a few more glasses of wine and fell asleep in the hillside pavilion beside the Shingtian courier station. When the Hsu brothers passed by the pavilion, Er recognized that the man sleeping in the pavilion was Han Ding's adopted son and he told San about it. San hated Shun's father for not lending them the money, and with a blast of rage coming out of him abruptly, said to his brother, "Don't blame me for being cruel. Han Ding is so rude that I decide to kill his son to vent my hatred while there is no one around."

Hsu Er replied, "You can do it but must be discreet." Taking a shining ax, Hsu San chopped off Shun's head, ending his life immediately. Then he searched the dead body and found some taels of silver, so he rummaged it and left, dumping the corpse on the way. At the foot of the ridge, there was a village and a person called Cheunng Yee, a carpenter. The Shingtian courier station was behind his house. Carpenter Cheunng set out early for his work in the city. At around four in the morning, he arrived at the hillside and with small tools suddenly saw a dead body lying in blood on the way. In great shock, he murmured, "It is ominous to go out this morning. Return home now and set out again tomorrow." Then he turned back. After the noon, Han Ding got the

bad news and went there to recognize it. It was Han Shun indeed. He couldn't bear it and wailed with sorrow. Then, he summoned the neighbors to have a check up, finding that the fatal wound was an axe cut. Following the blood stain, they went to Cheunng Yee's house, the neighbors all proclaiming that Carpenter Cheunng was the murderer. Also convinced, Han Ding grabbed Cheunng and his wife and took them to the court. The officer-in-charge inquired the neighbors, who all said that Cheunng had murdered Shun. Unable to defend themselves, the carpenter and his wife claimed that they were wrongly accused, and refused to plead guilty. Han Ding asked for the cruel torture during the interrogation, and the couple confessed to false charges under torture. But that official suspected it because the couple contended for admission, thus he just put them in prison for supervision, but didn't come to a conclusion for successive years.

At that time, Lord Bao was ordered to handle the cases of Sheeking. When he passed by Luchou, he was greeted by the local officials. Lord Bao sat in the yamen and asked the government officials whether there were any disputed cases. The officials came up and reported, "There is no disputed cases except that Han Ding accused Carpenter Cheunng of murdering his son. The couple emulatively pled guilty, which is dubious. They are still held in jail until now." After hearing that, Bao said, "No matter how serious the cases are, the prisoners should not be detained for a year, even half a year. Otherwise, how can the people bear it? The guilty should be executed right away while the innocent should be released soon enough. How many criminals in the world could we catch if all the cases were delayed like Han's?" The official was rendered speechless and withdrew in shame. The next day, Bao changed his hat into a small one, and leading two officials into the prison, asked the Cheunngs about the detail of the case.

Weeping sorrowfully, Carpenter Cheunng told them what had happened. Lord Bao thought, "The murdered person just had an axe mark on his head, and the bloodstain appeared in Cheunng's house, but why didn't he plead guilty? There must be a reason for this, which needs further interrogation. The next day, Lord Bao interrogated them again, but Carpenter Cheunng remained the same although asked many times. While wondering, Bao saw a child carrying a bowl of rice to the prison. He kept whispering and the prison officer nodded his head in response. Lord Bao immediately asked the jailer, "What did that boy say to you just now?" Afraid to confront him directly, the

jailer said, "The boy has told me that my relative has come and asked me to return home early this evening." Lord Bao, aware of the fraud, went directly to the court, and ordering his attendants to retreat to the corridors, summoned the boy into the rear hall. Having demanded the doorkeeper Lee Sheebar to give the boy forty coins, he asked, "What did you say to the prison officer just now?" The child, who was still wet behind the ears, said bluntly, "This afternoon I was out on the East Street when two men sitting in a teahouse beckoned me in and took out fifty copper coins to buy me some fruits. They taught me to pay a visit to the prison to see which one will plead guilty when Lord Bao interrogates Carpenter Cheunng and his wife. That's it. Nothing else." Lord Bao immediately said to his attendants Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu, "Follow this boy to the tea shop on the East street and bring those two men to me." The attendants received the order and followed the child to the tea shop to catch the two men, while the two brothers were there waiting for the information. They rushed in, caught the brothers at once and led them into the yamen. Lord Bao yelled, "Why do you want the carpenter to pay for your murder?" At the beginning, the Hsu brothers did not admit it, so Lord Bao asked the boy to prove what they had said before. They were too horrified to conceal the truth and confessed the detail about the murder. Bao then detained Han Ding for inquiry, who just realized that his refusal to lend Hsu Er money resulted in their hatred and revenge. Thus, Lord Bao successfully dealt with the case, with the brothers beheaded and the couple released. Until then, the grievances of the carpenter got redressed.

Case 34

Street-girl in Same Suit

In Chee-an Town, five miles away from Yangchou County, lived a rather rich man Hsieh Ching, whose son Hsieh Yo-an married the daughter of Su Ming from the county. So virtuous was Lady Su that her mother-in-law was very satisfied.

One day, Lady Su's nephew Su Yee, a rogue in Yo-an's eyes, came for a visit but returned full of grudge because of Yo-an's slight. Half a month later, Yo-an went eastward to a town to keep guard on farming, it being too far to come back at night. Informed of Yo-an's absence, a thief, Lee Chiang, lurked into Lady Su's room at dusk and waited until midnight for jewelry theft. When opening the door to leave, he was encountered by Su, who was frightened into a shout. Out of fear to be caught, he took out a sharp knife, stabbing Lady Su to death. Waking up at dawn, Hsieh Ching and his wife found Su's door open and asked why. Without any response, the mother-in-law came into the bedchamber, only to find Su lying on the ground, dead in a pool of blood. She screamed, "What a mishap! Who's murdered my dear daughter-in-law and stolen her jewelry?" In a flurry, Ching had no idea who the killer would be.

Back home, Yo-an was far beyond sadness. He and his father made a deep investigation for over ten weeks but in vain, other people in the town also suspicious. The Sus had no idea, just deciding the Hsiehs told a lie that Lady Su was killed by a thief. Bearing a deep grudge against Yo-an's previous bad treatment, Su Yee went to Judge Lau, suing

Hsieh Ching for murdering his daughter-in-law owing to his unsuccessful attempt to rape her. Lau had Ching detained to the court, who insisted that it was a murder case for treasure. Then Lau asked the neighbors, who thought that might not be so. "How could it be possible that a woman was robbed and killed without any shouts or witnesses? You must have set her up! I suggest you admit to avoid tortures," Lau questioned Ching, who did not know how to justify for himself, only loudly complaining of being wronged. Unable to bear the cruel torture in prison, Ching had to sign the confession, which was the conviction but remained an unsolved case.

One year later, Lord Bao patrolled in Yangchou County to judge jailbirds. Yo-an appealed to Bao for justice, who ordered a retrial and found Ching's words the same as before. Aware of Ching's innocence, Bao released him and promised to find out the real murderer.

Back to Lee Chiang. Having killed Lady Su and hidden the jewelry, he was not satisfied.

In the county, there was a wealthy man, Chiang Zoe, whose son just got married. Lee Chiang slipped into the bride's bedroom and hid under the bed, waiting for pilfering at night. Out of expectation, the room kept alight for three nights. So starved and sleepy that Lee had to run out and when captured got a good beating from Chiang Zoe's servants, who decided to take him to the court the next day. Lee lashed, "I did not steal anything of yours but received a violent beating. If you let me go, everything is OK; otherwise I'll have my own way." In fear of Lee's trick, Chiang Joe took him under escort to Lord Bao instead of the local judge.

Being interrogated, Lee declared, "It is a false accusation. I am a doctor rather than a thief." Bao wondered, "If not a thief, why were you in their house?" Lee argued, "The bride has some kind of wired illness and asked for my company to apply medicine." After the inquest, Bao thought to himself, "As a bride, even if really ill, she should cure it later. There was no reason for her to ask such a thievish-looking man for help." Bao tried to inquire more about the family but it turned out what Lee said was the same as his personal confirmation from the Chiangs. "If Lee just arrived, why did he know so well; but if not, why didn't he steal anything yet?" Confused, Bao demanded to put Lee into prison. Deeply considering, the judge figured out a possibility that the man had

been in there for a long time, long enough for him to overhear everything from the mouths of the couple. So he came up with an idea, secretly sending a subordinate to find a beautiful street-girl in the county. She was demanded to dress up and wear the same suit as Chiang Joe's daughter-in-law.

In the next day's trial, Lee just decided the girl was Joe's daughter-in-law and calling her infant name said, "You invited me to treat your disease but now I'm regarded as a thief. How unfair!" The prostitute had no response and all the officials present put their hands over their mouths to hide laughter. Judge Bao said with a smile, "What a thief! Since you are acquainted with each other for long, why do you mistake the street girl for that bride? Moreover, it must be you who killed Hsieh Ching's daughter-in-law last year." Then Bao ordered Yamen runners to rummage Lee's house, who found fresh soil under the bed and digging out a box of jewelry took it to the court.

Yo-an summoned for a confirmation, there was indeed something belonging to Lady Su. Sincerely convinced and unable to deny any longer, Lee confessed all his crime. Then came a final judgement: "Lee is to be put into prison and then sentenced to death, Su Yee caned for bringing the false charge, and Ching acquitted." At this, all the people acclaimed it an amazing case.

Case 35

Liaodong Guard

The most prosperous families in Chaoching Prefecture, Guangdong Province were the Chens and the Shaos. Elder Chen had a son named Leung, while Shao Shiu had a son named Hou. Chen Leung was smart and handsome but poor, while Shao Hou was wealthy but fraudulent and cunning. The two of them studied together when they were young and were still unmarried. Lau Sheng, living in the east of the town, belonged to an official clan. His daughter Dunnian was intelligent and agile. She was so expert in verses, ditties, odes and songs when she was only fifteen that many people from all directions desired to marry her. One day, Dunnian's father was conferring with his brother, saying, "My daughter is already fifteen, and there are countless people who come to propose marriage. I want to choose a good son-in-law from them, regardless of the family background. I don't know which one is suitable." The brother replied, "Ancient people chose sons-in-law based on virtue instead of wealth. Living in the town, Elder Chen has a son named Leung, a noble and diligent young man. Although his family is poor now, it can be believed that Leung will succeed in the future. I could be the matchmaker to contribute to this marriage if you don't mind." Lau Sheng said, "I have also heard of this person for a long time. Let me go back and discuss with my wife." He immediately bade farewell to his brother and returned home, telling his wife, Cheunng, about marrying Dunnian to Chen. Cheunng replied, "This matter is up to you. Don't need to ask me." Lau Sheng said, "You have to inform our daughter of this

matter and try to know her attitude.” The parents then told Dunnianang about her marriage to the Chan family, and Dunnianang had also heard of Chen Leung. Although she didn’t say anything, she had long admired him in her heart. Less than a month later, Shao dispatched an old woman to Lau’s home to propose marriage. But Lau only wanted Chen so he refused her offer on the pretext that his daughter was too young and needed to wait one more year. After the matchmaker left, Lau Sheng sent his brother to inform Elder Chen of the proposal, who was too poor and diffident to accept it. Sheng’s brother said, “My younger brother is willing to marry his daughter to your son because of his talent and dignity. Whether you are rich or poor, as long as you agree, we will choose a date for their wedding ceremony.” Elder Chen then accepted the proposal. Lau brought the good news to his younger brother, Sheng, who was so pleased that he ordered the tailor to make some new clothes for Chen Leung at once, just waiting for an auspicious day for the wedding ceremony.

When Shao Shiu got the news, he held a deep grudge and said, “It was I that first proposed marriage to Sheng, but he refused me on the grounds that his daughter was too young for marriage. But now he should agree to Chen’s proposal.” Shao thought it a shame, and planned to find one opportunity to frame him. The next day, he pondered, “Elder Chen was a member of the Liaodong Guards, and it had been a long time since he left the army. Now if he were sent into exile, it would be Elder Chen’s son who should go; if this is the case, it can make Chen Leung unable to marry. So he sent a plaint to the judicial authorities, accusing Elder Chen of evading military service. The authorities reviewed what he submitted and found that Elder Chen was not on the list of military service anymore. And the lawsuit would be suspended. But Shao gave a lot of money to bribe the officials, who thus detained Elder Chen for trial. Elder Chen didn’t know how to defend himself, and with the military order issued, Chen Leung was to be transported to Liaodong for penal servitude. The father and son hugged each other and cried. Leung said, “Facing this misfortune, with a poor family and old parents, how can I feel at ease with this distant military service today?” The father said, “Although I am old, yet I have relatives and they will look after me every day. But you are so unfortunate that you haven’t married Lau yet. Are there any chances for you to meet each other after your leave?” Leung said, “It is precisely because of this marriage that I have earned the hatred of our foes. Now, facing this great calamity, how can I still

hope for the marriage?" The father and son sighed all night. The next day, Chen Leung's relatives all came to see him off, he entrusted them to take care of his old parents and bade farewell.

When the Laus knew what happened to Chen Leung, they were overwhelmed with sorrow. Dunnianang felt heart-broken as if a knife were being twisted in her heart and regretted that she hadn't seen Chen Leung for the last time. Every time facing the mirror, she was filled with exquisite feelings and couldn't put up with the grief of separation which was hard to share with others. The following spring, a deadly epidemic broke out in the city, and Dunnianang's parents both passed away. Their funds were exhausted, their family business declined, and their houses were sold to others. Dunnianang was left alone and helpless, seeking refuge at her aunt's house, and her aunt took pity on her and treated her as her own daughter. From time to time, someone would visit her aunt for a marriage proposal. Her aunt, unsure of Dunnianang's attitude, ventured, "You know your parents have passed away, and now you have nothing to rely on. You were once engaged to Chen Leung, but he is now on an expedition and has no news of life or death. Now that a handsome young man wants to propose to you, why don't you take this opportunity to marry him with my help, for the sake of your lifelong happiness?" Upon hearing this, Dunnianang replied in tears, "I hear that Chen Leung suffered the misfortune just because of me, and it is unrighteous for me to marry someone else. If you take pity on me, I would rather stay at your home, waiting for Leung to come back; If he dies, I'll marry him in my next life. If I were to marry anyone else, I would rather die than submit." Seeing she was so resolute in this thing, her aunt decided not to mention it anymore.

After that, Dunnianang just kept indoors all day, never going out without the demand of her aunt so that few people saw her.

In October of that year, overrun by pirates with troops approaching the city, every household fled to seek refuge in the distance, so did Dunnianang and her aunt. The following year, the pirates were defeated, and the people resumed business. By the time Dunnianang and her aunt returned, the house, having been burned down by pirates, was so dilapidated that it was uninhabitable. So they had to rent a house next to the Pingyang courier station. A month later, while Dunnianang was cooking in the kitchen,

Hwang Kuan, a man from an official family, arrived at the courier station on a horse. Seeing that she was beautiful, he asked the neighbors whose daughter she was. Someone, who knew her, came up and told him that she was the daughter of the Lau family in the city, who was living next to the station after the riots. The next day, Kuan commanded someone to propose marriage but was turned down. Kuan showed his official influence and insisted on forcing a marriage. Her aunt was very scared and said to Dunnian, “If he wants to force the marriage, I am afraid that you will have no choice but to die. Allow me to respond to him that he had to wait sixty days of the mourning for your parents, and then we would discuss marriage. We have to deal with him step by step.” Dunnian complied with her aunt, who told their opinion to the matchmaker, who reported it to Kuan. Kuan said with joy, “All right. I will marry her in sixty days.” Then he stopped the harassment.

One day, three soldiers came to the courier station for a rest. Two soldiers were cooking, while the third one leaned against the station’s railing. Just then, Dunnian saw them and told her aunt, “There are soldiers at the station. Aunt, please ask them where they are from. If they are from where Chen Leung is, we can inquire about some news.” The aunt came to the soldiers and asked, “Where are you from, sirs?” One soldier replied, “We are the Liaodong Guards and heading to Sinchou to deliver official documents.” Upon hearing this, the aunt asked, “Since you are from Liaodong, do you happen to know a soldier named Chen Leung?” The soldier, upon hearing this, immediately bowed and said politely, “Madam, why do you know Chen Leung?”

The aunt replied, “Chen Leung is my niece’s fiancé, and he accidentally separated before the wedding. That’s why I am asking about him.” The soldier asked, “Is your niece available now?” Her aunt said, “She has been waiting for Chen Leung to come back and refusing to marry anyone else.” The soldier suddenly burst into tears and said, “I am the Chen Leung you are looking for.”

The aunt was shocked. She went inside and informed Dunnian, who couldn’t believe it. She went to see Chen Leung and asking about the past events, got fluent replies. Only then did she believe it to be true. Then they embraced each other and wept. The other two soldiers, upon hearing the truth, joyfully shouted, “This is a destined marriage that spans a thousand miles. It is not a coincidence! We have brought some

money with us, so let's hold the wedding ceremony for Chen Leung tonight." Having prepared a feast, the two soldiers stayed outside, and the couple drank together with the aunt inside the house. After the feast, when everyone dispersed, Chen Leung and his wife entered the bedroom, and undressed lay down, pouring out their heartfelt emotions, overwhelmed with sorrow. The next day, the other soldiers said to Chen Leung, "As a newlywed, it is unwise to leave hastily. We will go and present the documents, and when we return, we will invite you and your wife to go to Liaodong together, where you can live in eternal happiness." After saying that, they left while Chen Leung stayed.

Only 20 days after the marriage, Hwang Kuan realized that Leung had returned, fearing he would fail in his marriage proposal, so he sent servants to lure Leung into his home, killing him as a run-away guard, and hid the corpse in the tile kiln secretly. The next day, he ordered his servants to force Dunnian to marry him. Dunnian was depressed and helpless, and hearing that her husband had been killed by Kuan, hanged herself in the room. Encountering and rescuing her, the aunt advised, "Think about the fact that you and Chen Leung were only married for a few days, and now that he is dead, it is better for you to forget him and marry Hwang Kuan than suffer like this." Dunnian swore, "I must avenge my husband and perish with Hwang Kuan. How can I marry my foe?" Her aunt failed to persuade her. When she was at a loss, suddenly a courier reported, "Judge Bao from Kaifeng Prefecture was appointed the magistrate of Chaoching Prefecture and would come to his post tonight, so everyone should get ready to welcome him." Upon hearing this, Dunnian, thanking her lucky stars, immediately wrote a complaint and presented to Bao when welcoming him.

Bao went into the yamen with her and verified her statement. Dunnian cried in sorrow telling Bao every detail of what had happened. Lord Bao immediately sent subordinates to arrest Hwang Kuan for inquiry, who refused to admit it. Bao thought to himself, "Since he killed a man, there must be a corpse as evidence for his crime. Without that, how can I declare him guilty?" A sudden gust of wild wind passed by Judge Bao's desk while he was thinking. Judge Bao decided that the wind was weird, so he shouted, "If you have grievances, you can lead my subordinates to the evidence." As soon as he stopped, the wind circled three times around Judge Bao's seat. Cheung Leung and Chao Hu, who were on duty, immediately followed the wind, which went

out of the town and marched forward for several miles before it went into the tile kiln and disappeared. When Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu entered the kiln, they saw a male corpse, whose face remained unchanged. Then they returned to report it to Bao. Lord Bao ordered the corpse to be carried into the yamen for Dunnian to identify. At her first glance, she knew it was her husband and cried her eyes out. Examination of the wounds on the body revealed that her husband had been captured and beaten to death by Hwang Kuan. When seriously interrogated again, Kuan knew he couldn't conceal it anymore, so he confessed his crime. Bao wrote down Huang Kuan's crime on the case file, sentenced Hwang to death and made him pay Chen Leung's funeral expense. The money would be kept by Dunnian. Upon further investigation, Shao Shiu was found to have bribed officials to frame Chen Leung, and was sent into exile. In addition, the government asked Dunnian's relatives to adopt her. The government would also provide her with some money every month to support her life. That was to preserve her will to be loyal to her husband.

Case 36

Murder in Yochow

In Pingchiang, a village 20 miles away from Yochow city, lived two butchers Cheunng Wan and Hwang Gui, who were on good terms with each other. Wan was poor but bestowed with a wife Lee, whose beauty would put flowers to shame. Gui was rich but still single. On Wan's birthday, Gui brought fruits and wine for celebration. Wan was so happy that he entertained Gui and asked Lee to serve them. Gui's eyes attached to Lee, unwittingly, a trace of affection aroused in his heart. However, the address "sister-in-law" plugged all his words, so he could do nothing but leave for home when it grew dark. So solicitous of Lee that Gui could not fall asleep. Until 5 a.m., a plot came to his mind. Preparing some silver, he went knocking at Wan's door. Hearing the knock, Wan got up, and opening the door to let him in asked, "Bro, what brings you here so early?" Gui replied with a smile, "A relative of mine has several pigs and promises to sell them to me. I'm afraid he will not keep his promise. So I'm here to invite you to go together. If there is any profit, of course, it will be in sharing." Wan was delighted and urged his wife to get up for breakfast. Heating a bottle of wine and some snacks, Lee came out to meet Gui, "It's rare for you to come to our humble home. Have a drink to make you feel better for the trip." Gui muttered, "Please forgive me for disturbing you so early, my dear sister-in-law." Then, he left with Wan after a few drinks. It was still early in the morning when they set off, but already noon when they reached Longchiang River. Gui cajoled, "We've walked more than nine miles and I

guess you are also hungry. How about going to the ferry for a rest? I'll come over after buying a bottle of wine in the village ahead." With a yes, Wan went to the ferry first. After a moment, Gui got back and plotted against Wan with the wine. He inveigled Wan into several drinks in succession. Without dishes to go with wine and after such a long tiring walk, Wan drank himself unconscious soon. Seeing nobody around, Gui pulled a sharp knife from his waist and plunged it into Wan's ribs. And Wan died with his blood gushing out. Having thrown the dead body into the river, Gui hurried back and reported to Lee, "Bro Cheunng and I went to my relative's house for pigs. But no one was in, so we came back." Lee inquired, "But why doesn't my husband come back with you?" Gui explained, "Bro Cheunng and I parted at the mouth of the Longchiang River. He went to the west village for a message, so I guess he will be back soon." With these words, he left. Lee was waiting for her husband at home till dusk but in vain, which made her anxious. Her husband's absence for several days made Lee more terrified. She was to call Gui for inquiry when he came in a fluster and yelled, "Dear sister, bad news!" "What happened?" exclaimed Lee. Gui continued, "I just went out of the village, and met a troop of businessmen talking about a man drowning to death in the Longchiang River. I rushed there immediately and met Cheunng Shiaoyee, one of your husband's clansmen. It was really a corpse floating, which was recognized as Cheunng Wan. There was a hole beneath his armpit. And I moved the corpse to shore with Shiaoyee and bought a coffin for him." At that, Lee cried her heart out. With a few comforting words, Gui took his leave. Bringing some silver to Lee several days later, Gui greeted, "I'm afraid you're needy now. This may be helpful." She was grateful for Gui's help to bury her husband and send her money.

Just half a year later, Gui bribed a matchmaker to persuade Lee, "Man has but one life, and grass sees only one spring. You are still young but keep an empty room all day long. Now that Hwang Gui is wealthy and outstanding, why not marry him? It's a better choice, isn't it?" Lee whimpered, "Marrying Mr. Hwang is a good way to repay his financial assistance to me. However, since he was a good friend of my husband's, I'm afraid there will be gossips." The old lady laughed, "It's a proper match and why do others gossip?" Then Lee consented to the proposal. Overjoyed at the good news, Hwang Gui prepared a lot of betrothal presents for Lee. After marriage, Hwang and Lee were very happy, as thick as thieves. Before they knew it, ten years passed, and

they had two children now.

On the Tomb Sweeping Day in March, Hwang and Lee visited the tombs of their ancestors and burned some joss paper. Coming back home, they drank in their room. Getting drunken, he raised a provocative question, “Do you still miss Cheunng Wan?” With tears in her eyes, Lee asked why he said so. Hwang said with a smile, “I shouldn’t have told you about it. But we have been married for ten years with two children around. I don’t think you will hate me for it. That day was also the Tomb-sweeping Day when I murdered Cheunng Wan at the riverside. I didn’t expect you could be my wife now.” Lee beamed, “It is the fate that ties us together, so it’s unnecessary to think about that accident.” In fact, she was determined to avenge for her ex-husband. Drunken and asleep, Hwang forgot what he had said when he waked up the next day. While Hwang was out, Lee packed up her clothes and money and fled to her natal family, telling her elder brother Lee Yuan about the murder.

Yuan immediately wrote a lawsuit, and then took her to Kaifeng Yamen to lodge a complaint. Judge Bao ordered a Yamen runner to arrest Hwang Gui for a thorough investigation. Hwang refusing to admit his crime at the beginning, Bao demanded to examine the corpse of Cheunng Wan. Unable to cover up the crime, Hwang confessed the murder finally. “Murdering Cheunng Wan for coveting his wife, Hwang Gui should be sentenced to the decapitating in public. Hwang’s property shall go to Lee, who will be honored as a loyal lady,” commented Bao.

Afterwards, Hwang’s two children were drowned when racing on the Dragon Boat Festival, which was the retribution from God.

Case 37

A Lifelong Widower

In Dongking city lived Chao Neng, a knowledgeable Shiutsai, who passed the imperial examination at the county level, always sighing, “I want nothing all my life but a virtuous wife with good looks, from a decent and renowned family, who does not judge me by my little wealth. Only after my success as a Chin-shih in the highest imperial examination, can I marry her.” Unluckily, although taking part in the examination time and time again, he never made it. Hence, a constant stream of neighboring girls introduced to him, he never met the right one. Time flying, he was near his thirties and still widowed. With nowhere to grouch, he died from anguish.

After his death, he went to the underworld for an appeal: “There must be something wrong with my marriage and official career. I have a talent for writing, but I always failed in the examination, which, I think, has something to do with the master of official career; as for my marriage, it never seemed clear, which is owing to the master of marriage, I suppose. I have no idea how I displeased both of them, but nothing happened in accord with my wishes although I have nearly approached my thirties. Thus, I appeal to find out the truth and right the wrong.”

After reading, Judge Bao said, “Why are scholars like you always complaining?” Chao protested, “It’s not that I always grumble, but as an old saying goes, where there is injustice, there is an outcry.” In the living world, the majority of the Juren, successful

candidates in the imperial examination at the provincial level, are not expert in Arts and Science while those versed failed the exam repeatedly. Many dull-witted men had beautiful wives and concubines; however, some dignified men were left unattended. How could I not gripe about that?" Bao stated, "There are indeed inequitable officers in the living world but definitely no injustice in the underworld. It is no use complaining about your marriage and official career because they come by destiny." Chao replied, "If no injustice in the underworld, why I came to an end like this? I'm afraid there are corrupted officials abusing their power, so I beg you for justice." Bao said, "What I hate most is government officials abusing their power, so you've got a point here."

Bao immediately ordered the ghost guard to summon the master of marriage, who replied, "There is not Chao Neng's name in the Book of Marriage." Bao said, "How could it happen?" Then the master of official career was taken to the court for interrogation, who answered, "No such name in the record." Bao wondered, "What a thing on earth! With malpractice in the upper world, the situation is getting worse in the underworld." Looking at each other, all officials in the court had no idea how to tackle the case. Bao said, "Bring both the book and the record to me." The two masters handing them in, Bao couldn't find out a flaw after reading. Then Bao asked Chao Neng, "Write down the moment, day, month and year of your birth." Chao Neng wrote all down and handed it in, after which Bao checked carefully.

But in the book and record, there are only the name Chu Neng, who was born at exactly the same date with Chao Neng. Then, Bao came to understand and asked Chao to step aside. After seeing off the masters, he presented a memorial to the Heaven immediately, stating his deduction that Chu Neng may be the original name of Chao Neng. Soon afterwards, the celestial official issued an edict that in his afterlife Chao Neng should change his name to Chu Neng, who would become a Chin-shih and Premier Wong's son-in-law by adoption. Bao accepted the edict and annotated with comments: "The man who has unrecognized talents as Chao Neng will be Chu Neng in his next life, who will pass the highest imperial examination. Because of his unfortunate fate, he became a middlebrow and had to sue for two unsatisfying matters at a time. The word about success is not effective but it will come sooner or later. The official paper does not elaborate it, but the marriage is designed with luck. It is reasonable to get married at his thirties according to the ancient doctrine, and it is not

so late to succeed in passing the highest imperial examination in his forties. Therefore, he should not resent the netherworld giving its officials a name of invidiousness, but return to the living world and witness his talents to their full play. Just change the name to embrace the new life and never grumble about the widower-hood.

Having finished his annotations, Judge Bao discharged Chao Neng to the living world, whose afterlife all turned out as predicted.

Case 38

No Offspring

Inside the capital city Dongking, lived a benevolent man named Cheunng Rou, who had no children throughout his life. Outside the city, however, another man, Shen Ching, having done various evil deeds no less than Tao Chee the infamous robber, got five sons and two daughters, enjoying a large and happy family. Thus Cheunng died with depression and grievance. He went to Yama to present his pleading, “As an old saying goes, the more good deeds you do, the more children you have. And Sutra says, do good deeds, and you won’t be childless. Everything that happens has a cause and an effect. Reverent to the Heaven and aboveboard to the hell, I feel fairly confident to avoid evils, although diffident to claim to be benevolent. Nevertheless, it’s a lifelong pity that I have got no offspring. So, I appeal and beg for reexamining my destiny of the past life to clarify the matter.”

After reading, Bao said, “Unreasonable! How could he be charitable but childless? It must be owing to the evil consequence made by his ancestors. Go check the book of good and evil.” The ghost subordinate presented the result, saying that Cheunng Rou was in the book of evil and had no offspring just because Cheunng Yee, his great-grandfather, had done all kinds of evils. Bao said, “You are a kind man, but still have no reason to complain to God, for your good deeds can’t be a patch on the evils of your ancestor.” Cheunng Rou said with doubt, “Why did the evil Shen Ching have

seven children?” Bao said, “Let me see.” The ghost subordinate reported, “Shen did evil deeds all his life and should have been childless. However, his ancestors of three generations had been sowing virtues so that he still deserved offspring.”

Bao said, “Families accumulating merits would be rewarded with offspring’s good fortune, and vice versa. Doing good for generations can be called accumulating merits, while following evil for generations badness. God come with leaden feet, but strike either you or your offspring with iron hands. You did some good things in your life, thus you would be rewarded with a happy afterlife. As for the evil Shen, he would be a beast to suffer from the pain of being cut up.” Then Bao wrote down the comments, “The ancestor is a root, whose goodness has the impression on the offspring, who is a branch, inheriting the ancestors’ wills. This is why some good families like Yu and Wong have masses of descendents. Therefore, only after accumulating merits for several generations, can you have numerous offsprings. And there is no better filial piety than correcting your ancestor’s deep-seated crimes. How could your several good deeds show you have ever followed the examples of the virtuous? You are in fact daydreaming, if not wrongly charging. There will be rewards to you in the next life instead of this one.

With that, he sent the plaintiff away and ended the case.

Case 39

Whispers in the Ears

In Kaifeng, there was a rich official named Chin Tsongyou, the seventh child of the family, married the daughter of Cheng May, who lived in the east of the city. Sweet and virtuous indeed, Lady Cheng gave birth to a boy called Changru. Over ten years later, she passed away, leaving the husband heartbroken. Time flew and the Mid-Autumn Festival came. Tsongyou was so inconsolable that his eyes brimmed with tears at the thought of his dead wife and had a dream at midnight dating with her, during which they chatted awhile and had sex as though she were still alive. Then, Lady Cheng pushed the pillow and sat up, sobbing, “The reason I came to this tryst is that I can’t forget the debt of gratitude to you. I won’t beg you for anything other than to treat my beloved son with care. Only in that way can I rest in peace.” With that, Lady Cheng left. Hardly had Tsongyou retained her when he woke up suddenly, realizing it was a dream merely. The next year, Tsongyou married another woman surnamed Lau and had a son called Tsiu. Born in an ill-bred family, his second wife was tough and bad-tempered, which scared him. Lau always coddled her own son but abused Changru with envy. Despite awareness of that, Changru did not dare to tell his father, driven utterly forlorn. One day, when Changru was 15, Tsongyou went to visit his relatives, which gave a chance for Lau to beat Changru to death in a dark room. She commanded all the servants to speak with one voice that Changru was sick to death and buried the body outside the south gate. A few days later, as Tsongyou came back home, Lau told him

that Changru had been dead and buried, pretending to cry bitterly. Hearing that and recalling what his ex-wife had said before, Tsongyou realized with sorrow that Changru was murdered but dared not question Lau.

One day in March, while going to outskirts for encouraging farming, Judge Bao came across a small new grave with much joss paper on it. Suddenly he heard someone muttering, "Help me, my lord! Help me, my lord!" Turning round only to see no one, Bao went ahead but heard the whispers again, lingering in his ears all day long. Passing the grave on his way back, and the whispers getting more clear, Bao decided that there must be something wrong, so he asked the village principal, "Whose grave is this?" The principal answered, "It is Chin Tsongyou's son that was buried here recently." Thus, Bao ordered his attendants to borrow a hoe from the principal and dig open the grave for autopsy, sure enough finding some scars. Back to the Yamen, Bao summoned Tsongyou for detailed causes. Tsongyou conceded, "It is my ex-wife's son named Changru. A few days ago, I went out to visit my relatives, but later got the news from my second wife that Changru had died of illness." Bao knew his implication and called Lau for interrogation. "He died of illness," Lau tried to cover up the truth. Bao slapped on the table, scolding, "Why did he have bruises all over if he died of illness? It is certain that you brewed the plot. How dare you deny it!" And then he ordered torture. Lau knew her crime only too well and had to admit it all. Thus, Bao proclaimed, "You deserve death for killing your step-child beyond reason." Hence, he sentenced Lau to death according to the law, Tsongyou acquitted. This case can serve as a warning to those second wives who kill the ex-wives' sons.

Case 40

A Concubine with Two Sons

In Durhwa county Chiangchou city lived a wealthy man named Feng Sou. His wife Chen was beautiful but childless while his concubine Wei gave birth to two sons. Chen thought to herself, “Without any children, I am definitely at risk of falling from grace with my husband once I pass my prime. So jealous that she always wanted to eliminate Wei, but got no chance. One day, Feng was to go to Sichuan for business. Before setting off, he instructed Chen to take care of his two sons. Chen pretended to comply. As time went by, the Middle Autumn Festival came. Chen held a banquet in the South Chamber and invited Wei with her two sons. Beforehand, Chen had secretly put some poison into their cups. Proposing a toast, Chen said to Wei, “It is such a pity that I cannot bear a son, but fortunately you have two. I shall share the family property with you. Hopefully, the family responsibility will be shouldered by you three when I am in my old age. So cheers! For the future.” Wei tactfully said she didn’t deserve it and then quaffed delightedly. That night, the poison worked. With eyes, noses, ears, and mouths bleeding, Wei and her two sons died one after another. At that time, Wei was twenty-five, the elder son five, and the younger three. None of their relatives and neighbors knew the reason of their death. Hence Chen deceived them, saying they died of a sudden disease. Hearing this, all of them were trapped into sadness. Chen pretended to be terribly sad and shed quite a few crocodile tears. Moreover, she gave Wei and her sons a grand funeral in accordance with the rituals and ceremony.

However, as for Feng outside, he had a dream one day, in which his concubine appeared with her two sons, crying the story to him. Having heard this, he couldn't wait to go back home but the unfinished business didn't allow him. With uncertainty, he fell in a blue mood.

Nearly three years later, Judge Bao came to Chiangchou city for an inspection tour. Down from the horse, Bao was to work in the court. Suddenly a gust of black gas rose up into the sky, masking the sun in an instant. Bao suspected there must be grievances. That night, with the candle lit, Bao felt weary and drowsy and then bent over the table, asleep. When the midnight came, a beautiful woman with hair disheveled suddenly occurred in Bao's dream. Taking two sons with her hands, she knelt on the step and burst into crying.

"Young lady, what's your name? Where are you from? What brings you here? Speak it out, and your injustice will be redressed," urged Bao. "My Lord, I am a concubine of Feng Sou from Chiangchou city. I along with my little sons was poisoned by Feng's wife Chen in the Middle Autumn Festival during his trip for business in Sichuan. We were so wronged that our souls could not rest in peace. However, I am so lucky to have you here that I've got the chance to hand in the indictment. I beg for your sympathy and investigation." Then, sobbing ceaselessly, Wei knelt again and drew back. The next day, Bao urgently called out his subordinates to arrest Chen for interrogation, "The concubine's children are also yours. How could you be so jealous and cruel to murder them, thus terminating your clan's offspring? How could you get yourself away from such a felony? What can you defend?" Rendered remorseful and speechless, Chen confessed her crime, and accordingly, was put to death by dismembering the body.

Two years later, Feng Sou came back home and raised a big sow, which gave birth to several litters in a year. Thinking these litters could earn him profits multiply, he wanted to sell them to butcher. Abruptly, the sow said, "I am your wife Chen. It was my envy that drove me to poison your concubine and sons, resulting in no heirs in your family. Despite Judge Bao's verdict, God still refused to release my soul and I became a sow to atone for my sin. Now my debt to you was soon to be paid off, but I still could not be freed from the suffering of thousands of slashing. Please make my advice known to all the married women on earth: 'Be filial to your parents-in-law and be harmonious

to your sisters-in-law. Do not bully your husband's concubines with envy, or else my doom will finally befall you.” When informed of this news, people far and near all gathered at the gate of Feng's house to have a look at the sow.

Case 41

Black Ape Outside the Window

In Yong-an Town five miles away from the city of Sheeking, lived a wealthy man named Cheunng Ray, who had married Lady Yang from the city. So virtuous and adept in housework that Yang won respect from the elder and the young. Ray's daughter, Chaoniang, was sweet, smart, and skilled at needlework so that her parents often swore, "Only when we meet a good man can we marry our daughter." So she was not married even at the age of 15.

Ray had two servants, one surnamed Yuan and the other Yong. Yong was honest, Yuan crafty. One day, Yuan was expelled and suspected that it was Yong who slandered him before his master, so he harbored a grudge in his heart and vowed revenge. Returning home from the manor, Ray got a bad cold and the medicine brought about no recovery within several months, so he exhorted his wife, "We have only one child. If I die, our daughter should get married rather than stay at home. Yong is a careful and diligent man, so you can entrust him with our housework." With that, he breathed his last. Though grieved, Yang asked a matchmaker for help after the funeral. At that, Chaoniang cried, "It hasn't been a year since my father passed away. If I get married now, who can you rely on? I'd rather serve you at home and get married in two years." Yang consented and put this matter on hold.

Time flying, it was another several months after Ray's death. More and more proficient

in Ray's housework, Yong never failed to live up to his master's trust, making Yang free from care. When tax time was coming, Yong told Yang to prepare money. Getting a suitcase of silver from Yang, Yong planned to pay taxes the next day. It happened that Yang's relatives invited her together with her daughter to the banquet. With the knowledge of Yang's absence, Yuan sneaked into her house for burglary. Going directly to the bedroom, he bumped into Yong counting money on the bed, and snapped, "How disgusting! You had me driven out with slander and keep the whole family business under your own control." So he pulled out a sharp knife and thrust at Yong's chest. Caught off guard, Yong was killed. Yuan collected the silver suitcase and left in a hurry with no one knowing it. When Yang came back from the banquet, she called Yong but got no response. She went into the inner room, only to find him dead on the ground. Panicked and grieved, Yang whimpered, "What a misfortune for our family! Yong was killed soon after my husband's death. How can I manage it?" Chaoniang and the neighbors were also sorry and puzzled about the reason of Yong's death.

Then, a tenant farmer Wong, Ray's old foe, went suing about this matter to the county magistrate Hong, who detained Yang along with her daughter and over ten maidservants for interrogation. Yang claimed in tears that she did not know the reason for the killing. Wong falsely accused the mother and daughter of adultery, Yong coming to catch the adulterer but murdered. Hong believed him and made them tell the truth, but Yang refused to admit the ridiculous accusation. This law case dragging on year after year, many innocent people died for it. Tortured and injured, Chaoniang was too vulnerable to suffer, groaning at Yang, "Mom, I may die soon and it is a pity that I can't look after you anymore. The grievances are too difficult to clear up and I would resort to gods. You must not falsely confess, otherwise your reputation might be spoiled." She couldn't stop sobbing after these words and killed herself the next day. Yang wanted suicide but all the people in prison persuaded her against it.

The next year, Hong left and Judge Bao came to Sheeking. With the knowledge of Bao's arrival, Yang bribed the warden with much money and made him tell Bao her case. Bao inquired Yang's neighbors, who all said none of them knew why Yong died and that Yang and her daughter did nothing unethical. Suspicious of the case, Bao went to the City-God's temple for prayers the next day, "Now there is a doubtful case about Yang which dragged on for many years. If there is any grievance, please give me some

clues in my dream and I would bring it to justice.” After praying, he returned to the yamen and sat down in his bedroom lighted by candles. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew till he couldn’t tell if it was a candle or shadow. He stood up to see what was wrong but saw something looking like a black ape (pronounced to be “Yuan” in Chinese) outside the window. He asked, “Who’s there?” The Ape replied, “I’m here to give evidence for Yang’s case.” At once, Bao opened the window but find no trace of that ape. He mused for a while, and then an idea struck him. The next morning, he went to the yamen, and calling Yang and her companions out inquired, “Does anyone in your family associate with a man with the surname Yuan?”

Yang replied, “When my husband was around, he drove away a servant surnamed Yuan many years ago. After that, no one with the surname Yuan ever came to our home.” Bao immediately had Yuan arrested, who refused to admit the crime.

Bao ordered his subordinates to search Yuan’s house, who found a silver suitcase and submitted it to Bao. Before he asked Yuan what it was, Yang recognized the suitcase immediately, which she had entrusted to Yong.

Finally, Bao clarified the matter and queried, “You murderer, how can you deny it?” Yuan was tortured with long flails and put in prison for a thorough investigation. Yuan didn’t dare to deny any longer, spitting the crime out. The case file finished, Wong was banished to the frontier for framing the innocent up, Yuan sentenced to death.

Yang and her companions were released back home. It was all believed that Chaoniang’s appeal to gods was granted.

Case 42

Fisherman at the Estuary

In Yangchou lived a man named Chiang Chee, also called Tianshiu, who was wealthy and willing to help. One day, an old monk came to his house for alms. Tianshiu treated him politely. After dinner, the monk said, "As a native in Shanchee province and a monk from Bao-en temple in Dongking, I hear that you are very warm-hearted and willing to give alms, so I have travelled a long way to ask for your help, for an arhat statue needs to be built in the east hall of the temple." Tianshiu returned, "This is a small thing. I shall never let you down." Then he let the houseboy Chin into the room and told his wife Cheunng to take out fifty taels to the monk. Seeing so much money, the monk said with a smile, "We can get a Buddha statue with half of the money. Why do you give so much?" Tianshiu said, "Master, please don't mind the small amount of silver. If there is surplus after completing the statue, just give it away to help other people." Seeing that he was so generous, the monk took the money, and going out of the house said goodbye to him. He thought to himself, "Just now, there is a dead spirit in the corner of his eyes. There is bound to be a disaster. He is so kind that I should tell him." So he immediately turned back to Tianshiu and said, "I know a little about physiognomy. Judging from your appearance, I think there should be a great misfortune this year. Be careful not to go out. That may be avoided." After repeated instructions, the monk left.

After Tianshiu entered the house, he told his wife, "The monk has nothing more to say but tell me that I will have a big misfortune this year. That is so ridiculous." Cheunng said, "The Buddhist monk is usually well-informed, so you can't be too cautious." It being the flowering period, Tianshiu invited his wife to the back garden to enjoy the flowers. He encountered a servant surnamed Dong playing with Chunheung a maiden on the flower pavilion, and he gave them a good scolding, resulting in Dong's deep hatred of him.

Only one month later, his cousin Hwang May, assistant prefectural magistrate in Dongking, wrote to ask him to go there.

Upon receiving the invitation, Tianshiu said to Cheunng, "I'm keeping the appointment now." Cheunng said, "A few days ago the monk said that you would be in great trouble and could not go out. Besides, your son is too young, so you'd better stay at home." Tianshiu didn't take her advice and told the servant Dong to pack up his luggage. The next day, he told his wife to take care of the family and bid her a fond farewell. Tianshiu, Dong and the boy servant Chin travelled by land for several days until to an estuary. Then they had to go by water, so Tianshiu asked for a boat. It being at dusk, the boat stopped in the narrow bay. The two boatmen, one surnamed Chen and the other Weng, were both bad guys. Dong deeply resented being blamed a few days before and harbored a grudge against Tianshiu. That night, he secretly told the boatmen, "There are a hundred taels of silver in my master's trunk, and clothes and sundries are very expensive; and if you two can manage to murder him, they should be divided equally." Chen and Weng said with a smile, "We had this idea for a long time before you suggested it." That night, Tianshiu and Chin slept in the front cabin, and Dong in the back. It being close to 9 p.m, Dong shouted, "Thief!" Waking up from his dream with a start and looking out of the boat, Tianshiu was cut down by Chen and pushed into the river; Chin was about to leave when he was knocked over by Weng and fell into the water. The three people opened the chest, and taking out the silver divided it equally. Chen and Weng rowed their boat back home, but Dong took his belongings to Soochou. Fortunately, Chin was knocked unconscious but not dead. He swam ashore and kept crying. It getting brighter, suddenly a fishing boat came down from the upper reaches. Hearing someone crying on the shore, a fishman approached and found that it was a boy of 17 or 18 years old who was soaked to the skin. When asked what had happened,

the boy poured out the whole story in tears. The fisherman took him home, and brought him some clothes. Then, he asked, "Are you going back, or will you stay with me for a while?" The houseboy answered, "How could I go back, when my master was murdered and I have no knowledge of his whereabouts? I would rather stay here and live with you, grandpa." The fisherman said, "I'll find out privately the bandits for you, and then you can make further plans." The houseboy expressed great gratitude to the fisherman.

That night the corpse of Tianshiu floated in the reed beds, across the bank of which was Ching-ho County, with Tsihui Temple located in the west gate of it. It being March 15th in the lunar calendar, many monks gathered in the port to release water lanterns, chanting and praying. The corpse, with blood all over the face and trousers still on, floated towards the temple. Seeing the dead body, the monks remarked, "It must be a travelling merchant who was dumped into the river after robbery and murder." An old monk advised, "We should be merciful and bury this corpse on the shore. It's a good deed." Deferring to his opinion, the monks salvaged the dead body from the water, buried it, and went back after releasing other water lanterns.

At that time Lord Bao had just finished relieving refugees in Haozhou County and passed Ching-ho County on his way back to Dongking. Scarcely were they moving forward when before the horses appeared a whirlwind with dreadful continuous wailing. Suspecting and feeling odd, Lord Bao ordered Cheunng Leung to figure out where the whirlwind came from. Cheunng Leung followed the whirlwind till the shore, and reported to Lord Bao the situation, who decided to stay in Ching-ho County for further investigation. The next day, Lord Bao appointed the county magistrate to investigate the case. The magistrate went to the shore and digging it up found a dead body with a slash on its neck. When the county magistrate finished the autopsy, he pointed ahead and asked, "Where is it?" A guard replied, "It is Tsihui Temple." When detained for questioning, the monks all said, "A few days ago, we released water lamps together and saw a dead body floating in the harbor, so we salvaged it and buried it. We don't know why he died." The county magistrate said, "It is you who murdered him. Why should you deny it?"

Therefore, he ordered the monks to be put in prison and reported to Bao. Bao then took

out the suspects for thorough investigation. The monks all said they were wronged and refused to admit. "If the monks were the killers, they would dump the body in the river. There is no need for them to bury the body on the shore. There's something behind it." Lord Bao thought to himself. So the monks were put in prison with no instruments of torture, and the case remained unsolved for more than twenty days.

It being at the end of April, lotus blossoms were in full bloom, and the women there had the pleasure of boat trips. One day, the houseboy and the fisherman were selling fish at the estuary when they came across Chen and Weng, the two boatmen, who, enjoying the flowers and drinking wine on the boat, came to buy fish. The houseboy recognized them immediately, and secretly told the fisherman. The fisherman said, "Your master's grievance is to be redressed. These days Lord Bao is dealing with an unsettled prison lawsuit in Ching-ho County. You can go there and report immediately." The servant hurried ashore and went straight to the Yamen of Ching-ho County. He cried to Lord Bao about the truth that his master was murdered by the boatmen, and that the culprits were now drinking on the boat. Then Lord Bao sent the guards Lee and Hwang to the estuary together with the houseboy and brought Chen and Weng to the yamen. After identifying the dead body, the houseboy reported in tears, "It is my master murdered by these two culprits." Lord Bao had them severely tortured. When seeing the houseboy, Chen and Weng suspected that it was a ghost, so they confessed. Then they were put in prison with long flails, and the monks were released. The next day, the culprits were escorted to the marketplace for beheading before turning in the robbed money, with Dong still at large. Lord Bao returned the silver to the servant, who put the corpse in a coffin and took it back to their hometown for burial before extending his sincere gratitude to the fisherman. Afterwards, Chiang Shiching, Tianshiu's son, succeeded in the imperial examination and became an official in the Secretariat. Dong gained the fortune and became a great merchant. But later, his fortune was stolen and he himself was killed in the Yangtze River. Good is rewarded with good, and evil with evil. There is never any mistake.

Case 43

Woman in Red

There were two salt dealers in the city of Chiangchou, both of whom had dealings with and received the merchants.

One was named Bao Shun and the other Chiang Yu. Although they had been friends for many years, they each had their own personalities. Yu was cunning and sinister, while Shun honest and sincere. With the help and cooperation of the merchants, Shun became rich. He married Hwang Yee's daughter from the east of the city, who gave birth to a son named Bao Cheunng, who was addicted to hunting despite his parents' objection. One day, Cheunng went out hunting with his servant, Wan An. Seeing a oriole on the tree in Elder Pan's garden, Cheunng shot and it fell down in the garden. At that time, the granddaughters of Elder Pan's were playing in the garden. When asked to enter the garden for the bird, Wan An dared not enter. Cheunng asked, "Why don't you bring it back to me?" Wan An said, "There are a group of ladies in the garden, so how dare I break in? We had better wait until they leave."

So Cheunng sat in the pavilion and rested for a while. When the women in the garden dispersed at noon, Wan An went in, but the bird was nowhere to be found. So angry that Cheunng hit Wan An in the face. Wan An received a punch on the nose, blood flowing. After being scolded, Wan An didn't dare to say anything. He went back with Cheunng and didn't mention it to his master. Seeing the blood stains under the nose of

the boy servant, Hwang asked, "I asked you to go to the villa with your young master today. Have you ever been there?" Wan An did not dare to answer, and repeatedly asked only had to tell her the hunting. Hwang said angrily, "Other people's sons have to study in order to win credit for their parents in the future. I have such an unworthy son, who always likes idling around and hurts his servant." She immediately had the hound killed, the hunting tools destroyed, and her son driven out and forbidden to return home. Cheunng bore a grudge against Wan An and often wanted to take revenge on him, but there was no opportunity, so he kept it in his mind.

As to Chiang Yu, as a salt merchant, his capital and profits depleted, he was unable to make a profit. Seeing that Bao Shun was rich, he wanted to hoax him out of his money. One day, an idea suddenly coming to his mind, he went to Shun's house and shouted, "Is Brother Bao at home?" It happened that Shun just came back from outside. Happy to see Yu, he asked Hwang to prepare wine for them. They were talking about the business when Yu laughed, "I've got a big deal, but I haven't got enough money, so I am here to ask for your support."

"What deal is it?" asked Shun. Yu replied, "A merchant in Soochou has one hundred boxes of damask brocade and will sell them at a low price. It takes 100 taels of gold to buy the goods. Then we can wait for a good price for sale, and will surely get a profit of over one hundred times!" Shun was a lover of money, so he agreed to go with him and meet him at the estuary the next day.

Yu finished his drink and left. Shun told Hwang about that business, but Hwang was very unhappy. But with a firm will, Shun hastily packed a hundred taels of gold and instructed Wan An to run after him with luggage. He set out with the money and got to the estuary the next dawn. Yu, together with his two nephews and the servant Chou Fu, was waiting with wine prepared. Upon arrival, Shun was led into the ferry. Yu advised, "The sun has not risen, and the fog permeates the river. My bro, let's drink a few for ferrying." Shun did as advised and drank more than ten glasses of morning wine in a row, feeling quite drunk. Yu tried to persuade him into drinking more. Shun answered, "It is not good to drink too much in the morning." Yu complained, "Bro, I treat you with the utmost cordiality, but why do you let me down?" Yu immediately took out the hammer from his sleeve and hit Shun squarely on the head. As a result, Shun fainted in

the ferry. The two nephews went in and strangled him with a rope. After getting his gold, they threw the dead body into the river and went back. When carrying the luggage to the estuary, Wan An did not see his master. He didn't leave until noon. He asked people around whether they saw Shun, they all said "No." Wan An had to go back to Hwang and said, "I have no idea which way my master went. I failed to meet him, so I have to come back."

Hwang felt unhappy. After several days, it was suddenly reported that Chiang Yu was back. She immediately appointed someone to ask Chiang, who replied, "I waited for my bro half a day but he didn't show up, so I set sail on my own." Panic-stricken, Hwang sent the servants out to search every day, but in vain. Hearing the news in the villa, Bao Cheunng thought to himself, "It must be Wan An who murdered my father, and his returning home is just to conceal the crime." So he immediately wrote a complaint to Judge Wong, who detained Wan An to the Yamen for interrogation. Wan An refusing to plead guilty, Cheunng argued immediately, "Wan is an unruly servant. There is no doubt that he is the murderer." Wong believed Cheunng and tortured Wan An severely, who, because of unbearable pain, could not help but admit the murder. He was put in prison with long shackles. And then the case file was finished. That winter, Emperor Rentsong ordered Judge Bao to re-examine the capital punishment. Wan An was also on the list and was sent to Dongking. When interrogated, Wan An could not stop weeping, and told Lord Bao the truth. Lord Bao thought to himself, "No one can kill people without being seen in broad daylight. If he really killed his master, he should flee rather than come back." So Lord Bao had Wan An stay in prison with his shackles removed. He then secretly dispatched the constable Lee Kee to Shun's house in Chiangchou for investigation, and enjoined him that if anyone asked about Wan An, he should say that Wan had been sentenced to death. Lee Kee did as told.

As for Chiang Yu, he got Shun's gold and became filthy rich, but on hearing Wan An's death, he often fell into a trance in fear of being denounced. In his dream one night, an immortal told him, "You robbed Bao Shun of his wealth and made his servant your scapegoat. It won't be long before a woman in red will denounce you. You should pay much attention to it. Chiang Yu were roused from sleep and kept it in mind. As expected, after more than a month, a woman in red came to Chiang for salt with fifty thousand taels of silver. Chiang thought of the prophecy in the dream and received the

woman as an honored guest at his house. The woman asked, "I've never seen you before, but why do you treat me with such great respect?" Chiang answered, "It is my honor to have your visit. And if you need, I will immediately send the best salt to you. There's no need to buy it with money." The woman said, "My husband sells fish at the mouth of the river. I am here for some salt to pickle the fish. If you don't charge, I certainly won't buy it." Chiang had to accept her money but gave her a double portion.

The woman was about to leave when the servant Chou Fu came with a basin of dirty water and soiled her red dress. The woman was irritated, so Chiang apologized with caution, "I beg your pardon for my servant's careless behavior and I will compensate you for your clothes."

The woman went away with a grudge. Chiang was so angry that he tied up the servant and beat him with a whip for two days before releasing him. In a frenzy of hate, Chou Fu ran directly to Hwang and told her about the murder of her husband. So irritated that Hwang was about to sue Chiang for the murder, when the constable Lee Kee came in to visit her and declared that he was from Dongking and sorry to beg for money owing to lack of travelling expenses. Hwang asked, "Since you are from the capital city, have you heard about the case of Wan An?" Lee replied, "He has already been executed." Hearing this, Hwang kept choking with grief. When asked the reason, Hwang said, "Now the real murderer of my husband has been found out. Wan An was executed mistakenly." Lee no longer concealed and admitted that he was sent by Judge Bao to investigate the matter. Hwang offered ten taels and ordered Lee to take Chou Fu to Dongking overnight to report Chiang's crime. Having figured out the truth, Judge Bao sent yamen runners to Chiangchou and detained Chiang Yu and the other accessories to the yamen for investigation. Chiang could no longer conceal the truth and confessed his crime. With long cangue bounding them in prison, and the case file finished, Chiang and his two nephews were executed while Wan An was released. One hundred taels of gold taken back, half of it went to Chou Fu as a reward. Thus, Bao Shun's injustice was redressed in the end.

Case 44

A Talking Pot

While Judge Bao was serving in Dingchou County, a millionaire, Lee Hao, came for business from Yangchou. Ten miles away from the county, Lee got too drunk to walk any farther but fell down on the road, dropping asleep. At dusk, two villains, Ding Chian and Ding Wan, walked by, coveting his belongings. Moving him to a corner, they snatched one hundred taels of gold, dividing it equally and hiding it soon after back home. Then they deliberated, "Once waking up and finding his properties missing, he is sure to go to Dingchou to complain. Why not cut the weeds and dig up the roots?" Thus immediately Lee was beaten to death and taken into a kiln for cremation. Deep into night, Lee's bones were pounded into ash and made into an earthen pot.

Afterwards, an old man Mr. Wong in Dingchou County bought this pot as a urinal. One night, when getting up for a pee, he suddenly heard the pot moaning, "I'm Lee Hao from Yangchou, but why are you peeing at my mouth?" Elder Wong was shocked, and lighting a lamp, asked, "You pot, if you are wronged, please tell me in detail, and I will bring justice to you."

The pot answered, "On my way to Dingchou County for business, I was drunken on the roadside. Having robbed me of gold, Ding Chian and Ding Wan burned me to ash and made it into this pot. It is a great grievance so I beg you to take me to see Judge Bao."

At this, Elder Wong got terrified and took it to the yamen to file a suit the next day. Bao having asked the details, Elder Wong repeated what the pot had said at night. Thus, the pot was taken in for a trail. However, it said nothing. Bao was irritated, saying, "How dare you old stick fool us in the court!" Driven out, Elder Wong had no choice but to take it back home, with strong resentment."

At night, the pot cried again, "Do pardon me, my venerable master. Today I wore nothing meeting Judge Bao, so it was difficult to pour out my complaints. Would you please lend me your clothes and take me to him again? I promise I will tell all the truth." Amazed, the old man had to dress the pot and took it to Judge Bao the next day. With Bao's reluctant interrogation, the pot made a clean breast of its grievance. Hearing this, Bao was shocked and demanded to summon Ding Chian and Ding Wan for interrogation. After a long time, the two Dings were escorted to the office. However, they denied the charge, even after a thorough inquiry in prison. Thus, their wives were subpoenaed, who also refused to confess. Bao said, "Your husbands murdered Lee Hao, looting a hundred taels of gold and cremating his body to make an earthen pot. They have admitted the murder, but how dare you deny hiding the gold!" The wives were terrified, admitting, "Hidden in the wall is indeed the gold." Then they were sent home under armed guard, fetching the loot. Bao commanded to take two Dings out, asking, "Your wives have handed in the gold, but how can you still disown your homicide?" Looking at each other, the two avowed their crimes and finally got sentenced to decapitation for robbery and murder. Elder Wong was rewarded with twenty taels of silver for his merits. And Lee Hao's relatives were summoned to take the pot and gold back for burial. What an odd case!

Case 45

Inserting Hairpin into Ground

When Judge Bao was governor of South Cheelee province, there was an old man in his 80s in Chichou city, named Chou Dur, cunning and lascivious. Obsessed by the widow Luo of his own clan, whose peerless beauty even shamed flowers, Dur conceived the idea of committing adultery and went to her house every day to flatter and flirt with her. And readily, the comely young Luo was seduced. One day, while dallying, they decided to date at midnight. Upon Dur's arrival that night, Luo led him to the bed and had sex with him. Thus, over one year passing swiftly, their affairs were spread among the relatives and neighbors. The widow's younger brother-in-law Chou Tsonghoi admonished her euphemistically time and again, but failed. Having no other way out, he incriminated them to Judge Bao. After reading the written complaint, Bao said to himself, "Weak and exhausted in his 80s, how could such an old man roll in fornication? Thus, he dispatched Guard Cheunng Leung to arrest Dur to the court. Dur said, bursting into tears, "I am old enough to death. All I fear is that I did something imprudent and indecent. How dare I commit incest? I beg you to investigate it, Your Excellency." More confused, Bao sent Guard Hwang Sheng to bring Luo to the court after casting Dur into prison.

Luo cried, "As a widow, I never leave my house, not to mention talking with Dur. How can I fornicate with my eldership? Ascertain the truth please, Your Honor." They gave

consistent testimony and would rather bear torture than confess. Bao moped and went back to the living room, losing appetite for food and drinks.

His sister-in-law Mrs. Wong asking him why, Bao replied, “A lawsuit hard to judge today makes me so.” For Mrs. Wong, it was inappropriate to speak out something nasty, so she inserted her hairpin into the ground, implying the defendants’ strong libido. Enlightened suddenly, Bao asked his subordinates to take the accused to the court, shouting at Dur, “Silly old bastard! You corrupted ethics, and deserve more than death.” Then he tongue-lashed Luo, “You slut! So evident is your adultery with Dur. How dare you conceal it?” Then, Bao commanded to take two pairs of barnacles to squeeze their fingers between sticks, each of them getting bludgeoned 200 times.

Under the severe punishments, they have no choice but to confess their sins. Bludgeoning each of them another 100 times, Bao expelled Dur back home, and summoned Tsonghoi to take Luo away to remarry. Thus, the case came to an end, leaving people in more awe of laws and ethics.

Case 46

Embroidered Shoes Buried in the Ground

In Chinchiang, forty-five miles away from Kaifeng Prefecture, lived Wong Sanlang, a rich man who ran around to make money and married a beautiful and virtuous woman, Chu Chuan. The couple treated each other like guests. One day, Wong Sanlang wanted to take some goods to sell in another place, but Chu suggested her husband not go there. Wong took her advice into consideration and started a small business in the local area. Opposite her door was a vicious and lustful man named Lee Bin, who had been dismissed as a government official. When he saw the beautiful appearance of Chu, he wanted to have illicit intercourse with her but failed. Suddenly one day, seeing that Sanlang had gone out early in the morning, Lee Bin dressed up and going straight to Sanlang's house shouted, "Is Brother Wong at home?" At that time, Chu just got up. Hearing someone shouting outside the door, she asked, "Who is calling Sanlang? He's already gone to the field." Lee Bin went straight inside to see Chu, saying, "I'm here specifically to ask for help with something and wonder when he will return home." Seeing that Lee Bin was a neighbor, Chu Chuan was not suspicious, so she said, "He has something to solve, and won't come back until this evening." Seeing Chu's hair half slanted and cherry lips exposed, Lee Bin could not help having a desire for Eros and laid hold upon her, saying, "Please sit down with me. I have something to tell you. And then convey it to Brother Wong when he returns." Seeing Lee have evil intentions, Chu directly scolded, "Six feet tall, you molest another man's wife in broad daylight,

which is no better than beasts.” With these words, she entered the inner room. Lee felt ashamed and went out of the house. After returning to his own home, Lee pondered, “If Sanlang comes back, his wife will tell him the matter, and I will become Sanlang’s foe. Why not just kill her to vent my resentment?” Immediately, he came back to Sanlang’s house with a sharp blade, seeing Chu leaning on the fence with a thoughtful expression, and walking straight, ranted, “Do you recognize me?” Chu looked around and saw that it was Lee Bin, scolding loudly, “Why haven’t you left, beast?” Lee took out a sharp blade from his sleeve to bayonet the throat of Chu, who immediately fell to the ground, blood gushing. It was such a pity that a young beauty breathed her last. Lee took off Chu’s embroidered shoes, and walking out of the door buried her shoes together with his blade by the riverside pavilion.

Nianlau, one of Chu’s younger cousins, always led a vagrant life. His boat berthing at the estuary, he wanted to go ashore to visit Chu. In the evening, he went into Chu’s house. Calling for several times without any response, he entered the room and turned to the railings, where there was a profound silence. Then Nianlau returned to his boat. Feeling his shoes wet, he took them off and baked them near the fire. That night, Wong Sanlang came home and called Chu but with no response. When he lighted candles in the kitchen, he saw that the door was open but not locked. Sanlang walked in doubt by the balustrade with a lantern and saw a dead person who was lying and bleeding all over the ground. A closer inspection confirmed that it was his wife. Sanlang picked up Chu’s body and found that she had been stabbed into the throat, crying, “Who murdered my wife?” The next day, after hearing the news, the neighbors came for a look, but they didn’t know the reason. One neighbor said, “There is a bloodstain outside the door. You can follow the bloodstain to find out where the murderer is.” Sanlang listened to the neighbor and gathered dozens of people from the neighborhood, following the footprints, which eventually led them to the boat of Nianlau.

Sanlang got on board and caught Nianlau, bellowing, “There is no feud between you and me, but why did you kill my wife?”

Greatly shocked and having no idea what had happened, Nianlau was tied up, taken back to Wong’s house for a random beating and then sent to Kaifeng court for trial. Judge Bao interrogated the neighbors for testimony, who all said Nianlau was the

murderer for his boat was indeed the last place where the bloodstain disappeared. Judge Bao interrogated Nianlau in detail, who cried, "Sanlang is my relative, I arrived at his home at dusk, but there was nobody there, and then I came back. I really don't know why there was blood on my feet."

Bao wondered, "If Nianlau had killed the woman, he should not have taken away her shoes." He had Nianlau's boat searched, but no sharp weapon was found, which was unreasonable. So he ordered to put Nianlau in prison for the time being. A stratagem occurring to him, Judge Bao put up a bulletin which read, "Chu was murdered and lost her shoes. Whoever finds her shoes shall be richly rewarded."

One month passed and there was no news.

One day, Lee Bin drank in a cottage. The hostess, a village woman, committed adultery with him by virtue of her beauty. After drinking, Lee said to her, "Since you entertain me with all your heart, I should give you a small fortune." The woman laughed, "Have you ever given me any money since you came to my home? If you have any wealth, just keep it to yourself. Don't coax me." Lee said, "Now I tell you. If you get the money, won't you flatter me when I come to your home for a drink at that time?" Asked the reason, Lee said, "That day, Wong Sanlang's wife was killed, which was reported to Kaifeng government. Chu Nianlau was put in prison to atone for the crime and there is no result till now." Judge Bao posted a notice and said if anyone finds the shoes of the murdered woman and reports it, he will be rewarded with much money. I happen to know the whereabouts of her embroidered shoes. Now I tell you, you can ask your husband to get the reward."

The woman asked, "How do you know it?" Lee answered, "I arrived at the estuary the other day and saw something by the riverside pavilion. And then I spotted a pair of embroidered shoes and a knife covered in mud. I thought the shoes must be Chu's." The woman did not believe him, but after he had left, she told her husband about it secretly. The next day, her husband arrived at the pavilion by the river and dug up the mud seeing a pair of embroidered shoes and a knife. He hurried to take it home to his wife. The woman was overjoyed that Lee's words were confirmed. She demanded her husband to take the shoes and knife to see Judge Bao, who asked, "Who told you to find them there?" The villager couldn't hide the truth, and said directly, "It was my

wife who told me about that.” Judge Bao pondered, “There must be something wrong with his wife.” So he beamed, “The reward money should be yours.” He ordered the treasurer to give 50 taels to the villager. The man got the reward and went home with thanks. Then Judge Bao instructed the yanmen runners Cheunng and Chao in confidence, “Follow this villager secretly to his house and check it out. If you find his wife drink with someone, take him to me.” They took the order and went away.

The villager, having received the reward money, went home with great joy and told his wife about the reward. The woman was overjoyed and said to her husband, “It is Director Lee Bin who has given me this bounty. Invite him to our home and inform him of it. Give him some of the reward money.” The villager consented and went to call for Lee Bin. At the sight of Lee Bin, the woman had a big smile on her face and became all the more flattering. She invited him into the room and treated him with wine. The three of them sat drinking together. The woman said, “Thanks to your instructions, I got the bounty, which should be shared with you.” Lee said with a smile, “Leave it at your house for wine and fun.”

The woman burst into laughter. Rushing into the house, the two runners captured Lee and the woman, and escorted them to the yamen to report what the woman and Lee had said when drinking. Bao asked the woman, “How did you know where the murdered woman’s shoes were buried?” Frightened, the woman confessed that it was Lee Bin who had told her. Judge Bao interrogated Lee, who refused to plead guilty at first but confessed his crime after being severely tortured. Then, Judge Bao interrogated the village woman for the reason why Lee Bin went to her house. The woman could not deny it and confessed their adultery. The case file finished, Lee was sentenced to death, the village woman exiled and Nianlau’s grievances redressed. Informed of the verdict, everyone was gratified.

Case 47

A Leaf with a Hole

In Shincheng County, Kaifeng Prefecture, Honan Province, lived a man Gao Shangching, who was about forty years old and keen on learning. He possessed hectares of farmland, where he tilled and his wife weaved. Caring little about his appearance and often behaving oddly, he wasn't fond of laundry or fussy about his meager diet. Honest and straightforward, he was never saddened by personal losses nor pleased by external gains. He sometimes expressed his feelings by poems and books, sometimes delighted himself by harp and liquor. He lingered over the fine view of four seasons, and enjoyed the beauty of rivers and mountains to his heart's content. He said to his wife, "Life in the world, like the blink of an eye, is hard to go again. If I don't enjoy myself right now, very soon my gray hair will grow and my old age will come." With these words, he asked his wife to fetch the alcohol. During his drinking, an officer came to his home and urged him to pay the tax. Packing up his silver rubbles, Shangching went to the market to have them cast into sycee, from which he got four teals of silver and put it into his sleeve. He thought to himself, "Over the past years, the taxes were collected by the district minister, but this year Judge Bao released a bulletin that everyone should pay the taxes in person." In awe of Bao's rectitude and precognition, Shangching bought some sacrifices to pray in the City-God Temple. Having inadvertently got drunk, he left the money in the Temple before leaving. One of his neighbors Yip Kong witnessed him cast the silver in the market and a wicked idea

occurred. Following Shangching to the Temple, Yip hid himself under the City-God's throne. After Shangching's leave, he picked up the money and brought it home. Not until he arrived home did Shangching realize he had lost his money. He hurried back to the Temple only to find it missing. He could do nothing but present a petition to Lord Bao for help. After reading the indictment, Bao said to Shangching, "It is very difficult to ascertain the truth since you do not know who has picked up your money." Then Bao rejected his appeal and turned him out. Extremely aggrieved, Shangching left in tears.

Later, Bao pondered, "I am a civil servant and I shall solve problems for the citizens." Deeply disturbed, he wrote a prayer and went to the City-God Temple, where he burnt the incense in a censer along with prayers. Having finished his prayers and gone back to the court, Bao ordered his men to light the candles and place his desk to the east on which the incense was burnt. For three days, Bao sat east and prayed till the next morning. At midnight, a sudden gust of wind wafted something to the stairs. Bao had it picked up and found that it was a leaf (pronounced to be "Yip" in Chinese), in which there was a hole (pronounced to be "kong" in Chinese) bitten by a worm. Figuring it out, Bao let his men rest.

The next day, Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu summoned to the court, Bao instructed, "You two now go to the town and shout the name Yip Kong. If anyone answers, bring him to me." Following the instruction, Cheunng and Chao walked around the streets, shouting out the name of Yip Kong. After a while, a man replied, "Yip Kong is my name. What's the matter, sirs?" "You are summoned to the Yamen by Judge Bao," they answered.

Taken to the Yamen, Yip was made to kneel down. Bao inquired, "Several days ago, a man Gao Shangching from Shincheng county lost his four teals of silver in the Temple and came here to accuse you. I know you didn't steal but picked it up. So why not give the money back to him?" Realizing Bao's accurate judgement, Yip then conceded grudgingly, "I was worshiping there at that time and happened to get the money. However, I haven't used it yet. Since Your Excellency have found it out, I dare not conceal the truth any more." Bao having finished the document, Yip Kong was escorted home for the money. And Shangching was detained to the Yamen to confirm the amount of silver, which was exactly the same. Bao said to Gao, "It was Yip Kong who

picked your silver up. Now that I have helped you retrieve the money, you are supposed to pay 3.5 taels as the tax and give Yip 0.5 tael as a financial reward. If to meet again, you should bear no grudge against each other.” Bowing with gratitude, they both retreated out of the court. Having purchased some sacrifices and incense, Gao Shangching went straight to the Temple for praying, deeply grateful to Bao for his virtue.

Case 48

The Mute with a Bar

One day, Judge Bao was working in the court when Guard Lau Hou came in and reported, “A mute surnamed Shek, is outside the door with a bar, begging to see you.” Consenting him in, Bao inquired him, but Shek could not even say a single word. The subordinates told Bao, “This dummy keeps coming with his bar every time a new judge assumed office, never afraid of being flogged. Better to ignore him, my lord.”

“The dumb man must be unjustly treated,” pondered Bao, “or he would not come with the bar insistently and suffer the flogging.” Thus an idea occurred. Shek was smeared with pig blood on the hip and paraded through the streets in a long cangue. Then Bao secretly sent several subordinates to search for some protesters.. “If anyone protests, bring him to me.” Later on, the street was crowded with people, all curious.

Among them, an old man sighed, “It was unfair that he should suffer so much.” Hearing that, the guards called on him to meet Bao. When asked, the elder explained truthfully, “The mute was born in a fabulously wealthy family in the south of the village. He was kicked out of home since his elder brother Shek Chuan wanted to seize all the family property. He has been appealing for several years but none of his wrongs could ever be redressed. Today he got the punishment again, so I felt sorry for him.” Having summoned Shek Chuan to the court, Bao asked, “Is the dumb man your brother by birth?” Chuan retorted willfully, “No. He was just a swineherd as a lad, and lived in

my house. That's it." At this, Bao released the mute from the cage, and Chuan went home joyfully.

Having seen Chuan off, Bao called the mute back and instructed, "You may as well tussle with Chuan next time you see him." The mute left with nods. Coming across Chuan on the street one day, he pushed him over furiously, and messing him up, gave him a savage beating. Disgraced and embarrassed, Chuan complained to Bao about the dummy's misbehavior, asserting that his blood brother observed no proprieties and dared to beat him up. Bao advised, "The mute will be harshly punished for his misbehaving if he is your biological brother, or he will only need to take the responsibility of a common bust-up." Chuan told the truth and Bao snapped, "Now that he is your blood brother, why didn't you share the fortune with him? Did you mean to monopolize it?" Chuan was rendered speechless. Then Bao dispatched guards to take them home and allotted half of the property to the mute. At the news, all people without exception delighted in Bao's fair verdict.

Case 49

Cutting off the Ox's Tongue

This case occurred during Judge Bao's tenure in Kaifeng, the capital city. A farmer with the name Lau Chuan lived in Shiaoyang village in the east of the city. One day, coming back to farm from home, he found his ox huffing and puffing with a bleeding mouth. A close look confirmed that its tongue was cut off. So he sued to Judge Bao: "It is no less than a murder: Farmers live by plough which depends on oxen. Now my ox can not work any more without its tongue. Rage drove me to appeal."

After reading the petition, Bao deliberated and asked, "Have you ever offended anyone in your neighborhood?" Chuan had no idea, but said, "My Lord, would you please uphold the justice?" Then Bao offered him five hundred strings of copperplates, suggesting his going back to slaughter the ox so that he could sell the beef and buy a new one. At first, Chuan dared not receive, but finally went away with the money owing to Bao's insistence. Presently, an official notice was issued: "Whoever catches private oxen killers, will be rewarded with three hundred strings of copperplates." When back home, Chuan had a butcher slaughter the ox and sold the beef to his neighbors. One of his neighbors named Bu An, who lived in his east, grabbed him, saying, "Today, the government has just put up a proclamation to prohibit slaughtering oxen! How dare you openly defy the order?" Instantly, he tied Chuan up and took him to Bao. Let's put it aside and see what happened to Bao.

Deep into the night, Bao had a dream: “A constable held a broadsword with thousands of breaches and led a woman on the saddle of a horse; and then, he disappeared only after saying he was born in the year of ox in Chinese lunar calendar. Bao woke up and pondered, getting no clue to his dream. The next morning, he was working in the court when Bu An came and accused Chuan of killing the ox privately. The constable meant “Bu” (“Constable” was pronounced to be Bu in Chinese), the saddle “an” (“saddle” had the same pronunciation with “an” in Chinese), the broadsword cutting; thousands of breaches the tongue [“tongue” (舌) was made up by “thousand” (千) and “breach” (口) in Chinese character], and the year of “ox” an ox, thus the whole dream implying that “Bu An cut off the tongue of the ox’s”. There must be feud between Chuan and An, who should be the culprit, having cut the ox’s tongue and indicting Chuan now. At once, An was cast into jail for questioning. Fetching out torture devices and placing them before An, the jailer said, “Tell the truth or get the torture.” An was so scared that he had to confess his crime. He bore grudges against Chuan because of the latter’s refusal to lend him firewood. Spotting Chuan’s ox grazing on the hillside on the evening of July 13, he then cut off its tongue atrociously to vent his resentment. Having sifted through the evidence and cleared the matter up, the jailer presented it to Bao the next day. According to the law, An was sentenced to parade through streets in a cangue for a month. Bao commented, “As Chuan’s foe, it is not conscientious of An to hurt an innocent ox, and even more vicious to disable a useful one. I advised Chuan to butcher his ox and then forbade that practice, which is my crafty plan to trap the criminal. As expected, Bu An fell into the trap when coming to tip-off and ask for rewards. How can he apperceive my intention! Cleverness may overreach itself. So, pardon for foolishness but punish with flailing.”

After the case, everybody worshiped Bao’s superhuman insight.

Case 50

Horse Swindling

Fu Ren, a landlord from a rich and influential family in Nanshiang town, Kaifeng Prefecture, owned a fine horse. One day, for collecting rents, Ren went to his farms on his horse. At arrival, he sent his servant Hsingfu to ride it back. On the halfway, Hsingfu got off for a rest. Then, came a man Hwang Hung from Nanshiang, riding a thin mule. Seeing Hsingfu and his gallop, Hung dismounted and approaching greeted, “Where are you from, Buddy?” “On my way home after sending my master to collect rents.” Sitting and chatting on the grass for a while, they lost track of time. With a scheme occurring suddenly, Hung said in a flattering voice, “Buddy, you’ve got a strong steed!” “You know horses, sir?” “I used to sell them.” answered Hung. “Not long ago, my master bought it at a high price.” “If you don’t mind, please allow me to have a try.” cajoled Hung. Without any suspicion of Hung’s intention, Hsingfu gave it to him. Swinging himself into the saddle, Hung rode half a mile away and showed no signal of coming back. Shocked, Hsingfu hastened to catch up. However, Hung spurred the horse toward a shortcut. Thus, a fine gallop was swindled by that scoundrel. In deep astonishment and regret, Hsingfu had no choice but to ride the old mule back to the farm, begging his master for punishment. In rage, Ren berated Hsingfu and commanded him to report the whole event to Judge Bao. Bao was at work as Hsingfu came in. “Who are you?” asked Bao. “Lord, my name is Hsingfu, the servant of Fu Jen from Nanshiang town. I am here to file for a suit that a rascal pretended to test my

master's fine horse, riding as far as half a mile, but then whipped to escape, only leaving his own weak mule with me. I don't know who the cheater is, but this cannot be tolerated in such a peaceful and orderly world, so I beg you for investigation." replied Hsingfu.

Bao asked the name of that rogue. "I don't know, for it's the first time I've met with him." Hsingfu answered with shame. Bao scolded, "You foolish villager! How can you come here even without the name of the defendant?" Hsingfu whined, "Forgive me, my Lord. You are thought very highly of for your justice and detective work even with no need of evidence for trace. You are my only hope, so I submit my complaint boldly." Bao instructed, "I will set a trap, but I can't promise you a good result. You can go back now. Come here in three days, and I'll show you how it works." Hsingfu kowtowed and left. With Bao's command, Chao Hu led the mule into the stable and fed it with nothing for three days. Extremely hungry, the mule brayed loudly.

Three days later, Hsingfu called on Bao again. Bao asked to take the mule outside. As planned, Hsingfu led the mule out of the town along the way in which the horse was lost, followed by Cheunng Leung. At the road junction, the mule was released. Once meeting grassland, the mule was slapped down by the two men so that it ran along the road by itself. Having run 40 miles, they reached a village named Hwanglang. There, only one tile-roofed house and one thatched cottage could be seen. The mule ran directly towards the thatched cottage and brayed. Coming out and seeing his mule back, Hung was beside himself with joy. Inspecting the cottage nearby, Cheunng Leung and Hsingfu saw Hung on his way to herding the gallop haughtily in the hill. At once Cheunng let Hsingfu tell if it was the wanted horse. Seeing the gallop, Hsingfu went up to claim it. The moment Hung tried to get it back, Cheunng clinched him. Controlling Hung and the steed, Cheunng led them winding the way to Bao's court. Bao scolded Hung in rage, "How dare you audacious rascal defraud others of the horse! Haven't you ever heard about my name? What punishment do you think you deserve!"

Hung knew his fault and had no word to retort. Then Bao ordered Cheunng Leung to mete out corporal punishment to him and presented him with chains before the public. Hung was given seventy floggings and driven out, his mule confiscated. As for Hsingfu, Bao thought that he should not have given a chance to Hung, so he deserved certain

punishment too and then got his horse back home. Bao noted down, “Hwang Hung, shameless and self-conceited, failed to uphold his fame of knowing horses and resorted to low cunning. Hsingfu, ignorant and dull, didn’t penetrate the villain’s intention before lending the horse, only left a mule in return. Besides, he didn’t catch the cheater on time, nor did he have any idea of his dwelling place. Fortunately, the mule was very intelligent and could find the way home. Crime deserves punishment and no criminal can escape. Thus Hung got corporal punishment, as a warning to the public against horse swindling.”

Case 51

The Golden Carp

There was a well-educated Confucian scholar named Lau Chen in the east gate of Yangchou City, with the style name Tianran, who was unmarried, gifted with intelligence and glorying in honest poverty, devoted to reading and determined on study. In 1051, with Emperor Rentsong conducting imperial examinations, Lau immediately prepared his luggage and went to attend his examination in Kaifeng, the capital city. However, short of money for the journey, he was delayed for days on his way. When arriving in Kaifeng, he only found that the examination had been over. Lau signed, “So unlucky that I missed this exam.” After tidying up the remaining assets, he rented the monk’s room at Kaiyuan Temple to study.

Time flying, the Lantern Festival arrived, and the capital city was decorated with all kinds of colorful lanterns.

At that time, there was a millennial golden carp demon in Biyo Pool, with water tens of thousands of feet deep, in the official wharf for water transportation, thirty miles away from the city. It had ever changed itself into a woman to deceive merchants. That evening, when informed that the city was decorated with lanterns, it spat out a small bead and turned into a maid of seventeen or eighteen years old. Then she entered the city on foot slowly, carrying a lantern, with nobody not attracted on sight by her. As it was almost 3 a.m., the demon was afraid of revealing its true form when it saw some

lanterns were still on, so it walked into the large pool in the backyard of Prime Minister Kim's and became invisible. The festival had been gone, but the demon fish was reluctant to leave. Exactly at this moment Kim Shian, the Prime Minister's daughter, came into the garden admiring the flowers followed by her servant. She noticed a cluster of beautiful red-and-white peony on the tile basin on the east shelf and thought it lovely. Leaning against the railing of the pool pavilion and sampling the wine, she ordered her servant to pluck it for fun. Suddenly noticing the golden carp was swimming happily on the water surface with its whisker waving and mouth bulging, she dropped the residual wine into the pool, swallowed at once by the carp. Watching and amusing for a long time, she turned back to her boudoir. The demon fish, knowing that the young lady loved peonies, would spray water on them every night, enhancing their colors and enticing the young lady to come and play with them every day.

As spring approached its end and early summer arrived, Lau Chen, the scholar, had been staying in the monastery for a long time, having few savings left as well as a sense of solitude as his close friends returned home. Pondering over his predicament, Lau wrote several calligraphic pieces and went to the homes of officials and wealthy families in the city for sale. One day, when he arrived at the front of Prime Minister Kim's residence, the Prime Minister happened to have returned from visiting his fellow townsman. Seeing Lau holding the calligraphic pieces, he took a look, praising them repeatedly. Consequently, he brought Lau into the residence, and inquiring about his background and recognizing his exceptional talent, decided to accommodate him in the residence, teaching the Prime Minister's children. He then instructed his servants to go to the monastery to fetch Lau's belongings and settle him in a place close to the eastern pavilion of the backyard. Lau Chen, fortunate to receive the Prime Minister's guidance, enjoyed an abundance of food and clothing. He devoted himself even more to the study. Moreover, all the official correspondences in the residence were handled by him, and the Prime Minister valued him very much. One evening, as Lau happened to stroll into the garden, he came across the young lady together with several maids playing among the flower stands. Startled by her beauty, Lau exclaimed, "I have long heard of the Prime Minister's beautiful daughter, and she truly lives up to her reputation. If I were to achieve success in the future, she would be the perfect companion for me." Having said that and fearing someone might overhear, he quickly turned to the pavilion and

sang several poems by Du Fu to express his aspirations.

As the saying goes, when desire arises, temptation follows. The enchanting fish, wanting to deceive this good-hearted young man, seized the opportunity. That night, it discovered Lau was still awake and transformed into the likeness of the young lady. It went to the study where Lau was and knocked on the door. Lau opened the door and was astonished to see the young lady he had seen during the day. The seductress said softly, "Please don't be afraid. Noticing my parents asleep, I am here specially to see you for your instructions after I hear your clear voice." Then Lau Chen sat opposite her on the couch with ease. And then the two undressed and went to bed after a long-time talk.

The seductress got up just before the dawn and said to Lau Chen, "I will be here early tonight." With that, it left. From then on, the carp would come at night and leave at dawn getting more and more intimate with Lau. Preparing meals and drinks, she said one night, "Although delighted that you are here with me, I am worried that our secret love story will be perceived by my servant, and then my parents. Both of us will lose our face. How about arranging my luggage and following you back to your home? We can be a real couple ever after." Lau Chen replied, "What if the prime minister discovered? I can't get away with punishment." The seductress explained, "My mother loves me very much. And neither you nor I have ever been engaged with anyone else. Even if we are held accountable, we will not be implicated." Lau followed her suggestion, and decided to leave the next night. After the ship was prepared, the seductress, packing her money up, left for Yangchou city with Lau directly. Prime Minister Kim didn't blame Lau for his leaving by the time he knew it.

After the seductress left, the peonies withered, resulting in Miss Kim's over-anxiety and serious illness, which even a medical specialist could not treat. Inquired about the reasons by her mother, Miss Kim attributed the illness to the peonies. After her mother told the prime minister, he said, "This kind of flowers are only found in Yangchou city." So he immediately sent a servant to Yangchou to buy the flower, despite its price and owner. Receiving the assignment, the servant came to Yangchou rapidly, but didn't find any peony until he came to Lau Chen's house in the east of the city, where several clusters of peonies grew. It happened that Lau Chen was out at that time, and the

servant saw a woman standing under the curtain, who asked, "Who is that?" The servant thought curiously, "That sounds like my young lady's voice." He went up only to see that it was really Miss Kim. Coincidentally, Lau Chen came back and recognized the servant, who also recognized Lau, and they both froze, not knowing what to do. Lau asked reasons of his arrival, and was told that Miss Kim was sick because of missing the withered peonies, so he was sent to buy new ones on purpose. Thinking it absurd, Lau smiled, "Miss Kim has been staying with me here for almost half a year. How can there be another Miss Kim?"

Too hard to accept that, the servant returned to Kaifeng overnight to tell the minister what he had seen in Lau's house. Unconvinced, the Prime Minister ordered officials to go to Yangchou and bring the young lady back. Unexpectedly, the seductress didn't refuse, but instead she followed the officials back together with Lau Chen and met the prime minister at his residence. When the prime minister saw that she looked exactly like his daughter, he was surprised, confused and uneasy. Mrs. Kim said, "My daughter is not awake in her room. Why is she here now?" Prime Minister Kim asked Lau for the causes and effects, and the latter told the whole process of their love story in the past, without any concealing. After hearing it, The Prime Minister declared, "You must have been deceived by demons."

Immediately, by sedan chair, the Prime Minister arrived at Kaifeng Prefecture, meeting with Judge Bao and informing him of what had happened. Bao ordered Cheunng Leung to bring two Miss Kims to the court, and scrutinizing their features, found they were exactly the same. Consequently, he asked his men to bring the monster-revealing mirror, which was made by the Yellow Emperor, the legendary ruler, to distinguish them. When the mirror was hung in the hall, the fake exhaled black breath abruptly, making the hall in pitch darkness. With a bang, the chaos was split, and two Miss Kims vanished without trace. The Prime Minister and Judge Bao were stunned at it, and everybody in the court turned pale with fright. "Premier Kim, please go back to your mansion and wait a few days. We will definitely find Miss Kim," said Judge Bao. The Prime Minister left with gratitude. Judge Bao ordered Lau to stay outside and put up an official notice: Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the demon and Miss Kim will be rewarded with 5000 taels of silver. The next morning, an official document was brought to the City-God Temple and burned. The City God immediately dispatched

ghost soldiers to search everywhere for the demon. In an instant, the ghost guards returned and reported that the demon was the millennial gold carp living in the Biyo Pool. The City God notified the Dragon Kings around the world about the wanted demon carp. The Dragon Kings all dispatched chosen troops to catch the carp along the rivers and lakes. However, the carp was so powerful that it defeated all the chosen troops. The Dragon Kings reported this case to the Jade Emperor, who ordered divine troops from Heaven to arrest the seductress. Nevertheless, how could they succeed since the monster shuttled back and forth in the wilderness? With the request from Judge Bao day and night, however, the City God had to urge the Dragon Kings again, who decided to close each entrance of the seas in all directions, making the carp have no way to escape. Finally, it had no choice but to rush into the South Sea.

At that time, there was a man surnamed Cheng in Kaifeng who was always philanthropic. In his house hung a painting of the Guanyin Bodhisattva, simple but elegant, which was piously worshiped by Cheng every day. One night, Cheng dreamed of a woman without makeup saying to him, “Come to the river bank tomorrow, and bring me to Judge Bao. You will secure a prosperous future.” The next morning, Cheng came to the river bank after waking up and indeed saw a middle-aged woman standing under a willow tree, and holding a bamboo basket in which there was a small gold carp. When Cheng arrived, the woman said, “Yesterday, chased by the Dragon Kings and driven into a corner, the gold carp living in the Biyo Pool had to dive into the South Sea, hiding itself under the white lotus flower. I have coaxed it into my basket and captured it now. Judge Bao posted up an official notice the day before yesterday, saying that anyone who knows the whereabouts of the gold carp will be rewarded. You can take me to the court, helping Bao trial this case. As a gift, all the reward will be presented to you.” Overjoyed, Cheng led the woman to Judge Bao’s office without delay, coinciding with the time when Judge Bao and Prime Minister Kim were talking about this case. An official reported it to Judge Bao, who let Cheng in, asking his purpose. Cheng informed Bao of what the woman had said. “It is just that goblin.” said Bao. He then ordered the fish basket to be placed in front of him and questioned the demon inside. Subdued by the power of Buddha, the fish had to confess its seduction of Lau and that it had hidden Miss Kim in the cave on the mountainside of the Biyo Pool. Judge Bao intended to cook the fish, but the woman said. “Having been tested in the

crucible over one thousand years,” the woman commented, “this carp won’t die from the cooking. Please let me deal with it.” Bao consented to her advice and asked the treasurer to award five thousand taels of silver to the woman. As soon as the woman went outside, she gave all the bounty to Cheng, saying, “This is to repay your loyalty to me for two years. Spread this story to the world.” With that, the lady disappeared. It suddenly dawned on Cheng that the lady was the Guanyin Bodhisattva he enshrined at home. Taking the reward home, Cheng asked a professional painter to paint a watercolor image of the Guanyin Bodhisattva with a bamboo basket in her hands. Everybody in Kaifeng followed the example to draw a picture of the Guanyin Bodhisattva, which is nowadays known as Fish Basket Guanyin.

When Judge Bao sent his men to the cave to find Miss Kim and bring her back, she was already dead, with only slight warmth in her chest. Physicians were called in to diagnose the precise cause, and all proposed that someone who was destined to give Miss Kim respiration could save her. Suddenly inspired, Bao said to the prime minister, “Is it possible that Lau Chen is the pre-destined man for Miss Kim? Today I try to play matchmaker and have Lau and Miss Kim get married.” So Bao summoned Lau and let him give Miss Kim respiration. Just as expected, Miss Kim revived and anyone witnessing this commented that it was not a coincidence. With delight, Judge Bao ordered his men to send this couple back to the prime minister’s mansion. That night, Miss Kim was married to Lau. And the next year, Lau succeeded in passing the highest imperial examination and became a Chin-shih. Years later, Lau became Head of The Secretariat, and both of his two sons became officials, too.

Case 52

Jade-faced Cat

In Chingho County, lived Shek Chun, who was of both integrity and talent. His wife, Ho Saihwa, whose beauty would put flowers to shame, was well up in needlework. Hearing that there was an imperial examination to select officials in Dongking, he bid farewell to his wife and set off. Accompanied by a boy servant Shiaoer, he walked during the day and rested at night, eating when hungry and drinking when thirsty. After several days of travel, they finally arrived at the foot of the mountain as the sun was setting. They sought lodging in a nearby inn for the night. That mountain originally stretched for more than six hundred miles, reaching the border of Sheeking. It was surrounded by secluded forests and deep valleys, with towering cliffs and jagged rocks. Rarely trodden by human feet, it was a place where many spirits and strange creatures dwelled. There were five rat monsters that descended from the Western Heavens, possessing divine abilities and transfiguration, their comings and goings unpredictable. Sometimes, they would transfigure into old men to deceive travelers and businessmen and steal their belongings; or women to charm and ensnare young men; or men to seduce beautiful women from wealthy families.

These monsters were named according to their age, like “Rat One”, “Rat Two”, and so on. They gathered in their lair beneath a cliff overlooking the sea. One day, Rat Five was planning to scam someone by transfiguring itself as an innkeeper, waiting at the

foot of the mountain to greet travelers. Just then, it encountered Shek Chun, the handsome young man. Rat Five inquired about his place of origin and the purpose of his journey, and Shek Chun honestly expressed his aspiration to travel to Dongking for the imperial examination. The monster rejoiced secretly. That evening, Rat Five prepared wine to entertain Shek Chun. They sat opposite each other and drank while discussing matters of the past and present. The rat answered Shek Chun's queries without any hitch. Greatly shocked, Shek Chun thought to himself, "How can an innkeeper be so erudite?" So he asked, "Are you a scholar too?" The monster laughed, "To be honest, I took part in the exam about three years ago, however, unfortunately I failed. So I gave up studying and ran this inn to earn my living." As Shek Chun continued drinking with the monster late into the night, it hatched a plan, breathing a toxic breath into the wine and offering it to Shek Chun. Had he not drunk the wine, all would have been well. No sooner had he swallowed it, a sense of dizziness tumbled him down to the seat. Suffering unbearable pain from his stomach, Shek Chun was immediately held up by his servant, led to the guest room for rest. The servant was in a panic, with nowhere to find a doctor. By dawn, the innkeeper had disappeared. He barely managed to support his master and journey a few more miles for another inn, only to realize that he had been poisoned by a demon.

Meanwhile, the monster transfigured into Shek Chun's likeness, returning home. Ho Saihwa was in the midst of dressing in her chamber when the sound of her husband's return reached her ears. She rushed out to greet him, and to her relief, she was met with a beaming smile.

She asked, "Why did you come back after only being away from home for over twenty days?" The monster replied, "As I was about to arrive in Kaifeng, I met some scholars, who told that the exam had ended and the examinees had already left. Upon hearing this news, I decided not to enter the city and turn back directly." Ho added, "Why doesn't Shiaoer come back with you?" The monster said, "Shiaoer can't walk anymore. I entrusted my luggage to my friend to bring back and let Shiaoer follow him later." Believing it, she prepared breakfast for the monster, relatives and friends also putting the monster as the real Shek Chun. From then on, as the monster sought pleasure with Ho, how could she know that her true husband was still suffering in the inn? After half a month, Shek Chun was lucky to get Immortal Dong's medicine in the inn. Turning it

into a decoction and taking it, he finally regained his health. When he was ready to go to Dongking again, he learned that the exam had ended, so he returned home with Shiaoer, which took more than twenty days. The servant entered a bit ahead, just in time to see Ho and the monster indulging in wine and merriment at the rear of the hall. Ho heard the sound of the boy's return, and getting up asked, "Why did you come so late?" He replied anxiously, "Skip it! Master almost lost his life." Ho asked, "Which master?" The boy said, "The one who went to the capital with me. Who else could it be?" Hearing the servant's words, she replied with a smile, "Have you been lazy on your way? The master has been back for over twenty days." Feeling shocked, the boy said, "What are you talking about! The master and I walked together every day and rested every night, never separated. How can he return first?" Upon hearing this, Ho was filled with confusion and uncertainty. Just then, the real Shek Chun walked into the house, and saw Ho. The couple immediately hugged each other tightly, tears streaming down their faces. When the monster heard this, he went out of the hall and exclaimed, "Who dares to molest my wife?" Being furious, Shek Chun came forward to fight with the monster but was driven out. Knowing that, the neighbors all were very surprised and shocked. Shek Chun had reached the end of his tether. So he had to seek help from his father-in-law and tell him exactly what had happened. Shek Chun's father-in-law was very worried and immediately asked him to prepare a lawsuit, intending to report this matter to Prime Minister Wong.

After reading the complaint, Prime Minister Wong felt that the matter was very weird, so he immediately sent soliders to arrest the monster and Ho for interrogation. When Prime Minister Wong saw two identical Shek Chuns, he was also astonished. The people present said that unless Judge Bao returned, no one could solve the case. But it was a pity that Bao was still at the border. Wong summoned Ho for detailed information, who then told everything she knew. The Prime Minister asked, "Do you know any special marks on your true husband that can serve as proof?" Ho replied, "My husband has a mole on his right arm." Wong first let the fake Shek Chun take off his shirt to check his right arm, and sure enough, no mole was found. He thought, "This must be a monster."

He summoned the real one and checked him, and he indeed had a mole on his arm as expected. The prime minister commanded the real Shek Chun to kneel on the left, and

the monster on the right. He ordered the soldiers to take the flail, asking them to come forward, “The person who has a black mole on his right arm is the real Shek Chun; If not, it is a monster, who you must immediately shackle and imprison.” When the soldiers went up for an examination, it was found that both the men had dark moles on their arms, so it was impossible to tell who was the real and who was the fake. So, Prime Minister Wong could only order them to be temporarily imprisoned for a second review the following day.

The rat monster was very angry in prison, then lit incense to summon his companions, and the other monsters discussed sending Rat Four to rescue it after receiving the news. Rat Four transformed into the form of Prime Minister Wong, sitting in court the next morning, summoning Shek Chun and others, interrogating and severely punishing him. Shek Chun suffered the wrong, and complained incessantly. Suddenly, the real Prime Minister Wong entered the hall, amazed at seeing a fake prime minister sitting above and immediately ordered the guards to capture the fake prime minister; The fake one got furious, ordering guards to capture the real one. The scene became chaotic in an instant, and the guards could not tell which was the real one, so no one dared to take action. Now, the two prime ministers were arguing in the courtroom, leaving all the spectators dumbfounded. An old official with keen insight approached, advising, “We don’t know which one of them is real and which one is fake, so it is no use even debating for days, unless we present them to Emperor Rentsong.” Therefore, Emperor Rentsong decreed that the two prime ministers be summoned to the palace. When the two ministers appeared before the emperor, the monster exerted his black magic, exhaling a breath that caused Emperor Rentsong’s eyes to become blurry and unable to see clearly. So, the emperor had no choice but to order them to be put in prison, and promised to determine the truth during the appearance of the Big Dipper that night. This was because the emperor was reincarnated as Barefoot Immortal. At midnight, he could even see the Heavenly Palace, let alone tell right from wrong.

After the two prime ministers were trapped in prison, the monster feared being exposed, so he quickly lit the incense for help. The scent was smelled by the three rat demons beneath the cliff, and Rat Three was sent to rescue them. It also showed its black magic and transformed into the appearance of Emperor Rentsong. Before dawn, it had already occupied the throne and convened officials to investigate that matter. When the real

Emperor Rentsong walked into the palace at daybreak, the officials were startled to see two emperors, causing them to panic. So, they gathered to report the matter to the empress dowager about this matter. Greatly alarmed, the empress dowager took out the jade seal, accompanying the officials out of the palace to carefully examine the situation. She said, “Don’t panic. The true emperor has a pattern of ‘state’ on the left of his palms and ‘country’ on the right. If not, it’s fake.” After examination, the officials found that only the real Emperor Rentsong had such a pattern. The Empress Dowager issued an order to imprison the fake Emperor Rentsong in a dungeon for further investigation.

After hearing this news, the fake Emperor Rentsong was very panicked and lit the incense for help. Upon learning of this, Rat One and Rat Two were deeply distressed and complained, “Rat Five was truly reckless, causing such a colossal mess that even involves the imperial court. How can we possibly escape the crimes?” Rat Two continued, “The only thing we can do is rescue them.” So, Rat Two employed its divine powers, transforming into a fake Empress Dowager and ascending the throne with the intention of releasing all prisoners from the dungeon. However, an edict from the genuine Empress Dowager suddenly arrived from the palace, ordering the jailers not to release any monsters. Now, the officials received two conflicting orders: one demanding the release of prisoners, and the other mandating continued imprisonment. No one knew which edict was genuine. Consequently, Emperor Rentsong’s mood soured, and he was consumed by worry for several days, finding it difficult to sleep or eat. The courtiers petitioned one after another, saying, “Your Majesty can send envoys to the border to summon Judge Bao back to court so that the truth can be revealed.” The emperor accepted the advice, wrote the edict in person, and sent envoys to the border to read out the imperial decree. Upon receiving the decree, Judge Bao promptly returned to the capital to pay homage to the Emperor. After the audience, he returned to the Kaifeng Yamen, and summoned twenty-four resolute assistants, taking out thirty-six types of torture tools and placing them in the hall. He then summoned a group of criminals from prison for interrogation. Sure enough, among them were two Prime Minister Wongs, two Scholar Sheks, a fake Empress Dowager, and a fake Emperor Rentsong. Judge Bao chuckled, “While the authenticity of the prime ministers and Scholar Sheks remains to be determined, the Empress Dowager and the Emperor

are undoubtedly imposters.” He immediately imprisoned them, intending to send a written notice to the City God the next day before proceeding with further interrogation.

The four rat monsters were imprisoned in the jail, and staring at each other, whispered in private, “Judge Bao has already submitted a document to the City God, and he will surely uncover our true identities. Although he cannot do anything bad to us for the time being, this has angered the heavens. How can we hide for a long time? It’s better to invite Rat One to come and discuss countermeasures.” Thus, the monsters lit the incense for help. At this very moment, Rat One was heading to Kaifeng Prefecture to gather information, and upon learning that Judge Bao was interrogating the matter, it chuckled, “Let’s see how you judge me when I become you.” Rat One immediately exerted its supernatural powers and turned into a fake Judge Bao, sitting upright on the hall, and hearing the case. Meanwhile, the real Judge Bao was sending official documents to the City God and about to return to the government office. Suddenly, a report came that there was already a Judge Bao seated in the hall. Judge Bao flew into a rage upon hearing this, saying, “How dare this monster be so bold and deceitful!” He strode straight into the hall and ordered the soldiers to apprehend the fake Judge Bao. Seeing this, the monster immediately descended from the hall and blended into the crowd, leaving the soldiers unable to discern which Bao was the real one and thus hesitant to take action. Under the hall, blazing anger was burning in the real Judge Bao’s heart. He pondered to himself and immediately instructed the subordinates, “All of you must strictly guard the Yamen and do not leak any information. Wait for me to leave before returning to your duties.” The soldiers acknowledged the order. Subsequently, the real Judge Bao retreated into the back hall, while the fake one was still handling affairs in the hall. However, the subordinates were skeptical and hesitant to follow his calls and instructions.

Then the real Judge Bao met his wife Lee, instructing, “It is hard to explain this strange matter. I will appeal to the Jade Emperor to eliminate the monsters. Cover my body tightly with a quilt on the bed and don’t move it. I will come back in two days at most.” Taking the peacock blood smeared on the collar, he chewed it before lying down on the magical bed and journeyed to the heaven.

An angel led him to the Jade Emperor and reported the matter. Upon hearing this, the Jade Emperor ordered Inspectorate of Heavenly Affairs to investigate the source of the calamity.

The Inspectorate reported, "It is the five rat spirits from the Leiyin Temple in the west who have descended to the mortal world and caused disasters." Upon hearing this, the Jade Emperor intended to summon the heavenly troops to capture them. But the Inspectorate advised, "The heavenly troops cannot subdue them. If pressed too hard, these monsters will flee into the sea, causing even greater harm. Only the Jade-Faced Cat within the precious cage in front of the Leiyin Temple's main hall can subdue them. If we can obtain it, it will be more effective than ten thousand heavenly soldiers for eradicating them." The Jade Emperor immediately dispatched an angel to Leiyin Temple to request the Jade-Faced Cat. Arriving at the destination, the angel met the Buddha and present the imperial decree. The Buddha read it, discussing with other Buddhist disciples. One of the senior masters spoke up, "The cat must stay in the hall. There are many scriptures here, and we fear that without the cat, they might be damaged by mice. If we were to lend the cat, it might put the scriptures at risk." The Buddha replied with reverence, "How could we possibly disobey the Jade Emperor's decree?" The master advised, "We can lend out the Golden-Eyed Lion instead. Should the emperor inquire, we could explain that we need to keep the cat to protect scriptures, and surely he will not blame us."

The Buddha followed his advice and gave the Golden-Eyed Lion to the angel, who took it back to the emperor. The Inspectorate, upon seeing the lion, said, "Judge Bao, the Scholar of Literary Merit, is here for the great calamity in Dongking. Without the Jade-Faced Cat, our efforts will be in vain. May Your Majesty have mercy and send for the real one." Afterwards, the Jade Emperor dispatched the angel and Judge Bao to the Leiyin Temple, where they earnestly begged for an audience with the Buddha. However, the Buddha declined. At this time, a Mahayana Arhat spoke up, "The Scholar of Literary Merits has undertaken this journey for the sake of the people's welfare, enduring countless hardships. Revered Buddha, prioritizing salvation, it is fitting to lend him what he seeks." The Buddha granted the request, and ordered a disciple to retrieve the divine cat from the precious cage. A mantra chanted, the cat shrank in size and hid in Judge Bao's sleeve after being taught how to catch the rats. Bidding farewell

to the Buddha and returning with the angel, Bao reported to the Jade Emperor that he had borrowed the cat.

The Jade Emperor was overjoyed and ordered the Great Sage of Purity to give Judge Bao a drink of willow leaf water, which dispelled his poison.

When the angel escorted Bao out of the Gate of Heaven, Bao woke up in the magic bed and found that five days had passed. Lady Lee was overjoyed and immediately prepared some warm water for him to drink. Judge Bao revealed to his wife that he had borrowed a divine artifact from the Buddha in the Western Heaven to exorcise the rat demons, and urged her not to divulge this secret. Lady Lee asked, "What should we do now?" Judge Bao whispered, "You should go to the imperial palace tomorrow and inform the empress dowager that we need to select a date to build a high platform in the southern suburb to resolve this matter." Lee did as she was told. The next day, riding in a sedan chair to the palace, she reported to the Empress Dowager, who approved of her request and immediately summoned Commander Dee Ching and instructed him to build a platform in the southern suburb. Upon receiving the imperial edict, Dee Ching immediately led his troops to the southern suburb and quickly completed the construction of the platform. In the official residence, Judge Bao ordered 24 strong men to go to the platform for interrogation on the appointed day. This news caused a great sensation among the military and civilians in Dongking City, and everyone wanted to come and watch. On that day, the true and the false Emperors, the True and the false Empress Dowagers, the two prime ministers, and the two Shek Chuns stood below the platform, while the civil and military officials lined up on both sides. Only the true Judge Bao sat on the platform, while the false Judge Bao argued incessantly below. As noon approached, the real Judge Bao took out the Buddhist scriptures from his sleeve and recited them at once. At that moment, the Jade-Faced Cat extended one paw, fierce as a tiger, with two golden beams shooting from its eyes, and leaped down from the platform. It first knocked down the third rat, which turned out to be the False Emperor. The second rat tried to escape, but the Jade-Faced Cat caught it with its left paw; then, it extended its right paw to seize the first rat and knocked them down one after another. The civilians and soldiers below cheered loudly upon witnessing this. Seeing this, the false prime minister and the false Shek Chun attempted to transform and flee, but the Jade-Faced Cat swiftly soared into the sky and bit off the

fifth rat, leaving only the fourth rat escaping. The Jade-Faced Cat relentlessly followed a flash of golden light to catch the rat. The civil and military officials below, seeing the demons vanquished, could not help but applaud. Judge Bao descended from the platform and saw the four enormous rats, each about ten feet long, with white paste oozing from their wounded areas. Judge Bao reported to Emperor Rentsong, "These are monsters that suck human essence and blood. They can be slaughtered by soldiers and guards, boiled and eaten, which can enhance their physical strength." Emperor Rentsong approved Judge Bao's request and ordered the soldiers to carry the monsters away for disposal. The emperor then returned to the palace, where the civil and military officials offered their congratulations. Delighted, Emperor Rentsong summoned Judge Bao to the throne for a personal consolation and hosted a banquet in honor of the civil and military officials, while also instructing the historians to record this extraordinary event. After the banquet, Judge Bao returned to his yamen and allowed Shek Chun to take Ho home for a reunion. Afterwards, Ho suffered from deeper toxicity and abdominal pain due to having sex with the monster. Shek Chun administered to Ho the pills obtained from Immortal Dong, and after vomiting the poison, she finally recovered. Later, Shek Chun passed the imperial examination and became an official in the Ministry of Personnel, and their two sons also achieved great success.

Case 53

Moving a Chair against a Tung Tree to Appreciate the Moon Together

In Linying County, under the administration of Hsuehou Prefecture, Honan Province, lived Char Yee, who went to school at a young age and later married Yin Chenniang from a village nearby. On the wedding night, Char was ready for bed when Chenniang stopped him, declaring, “You read Confucian classics since childhood and should strive for scholarly honour. How can you go to bed without a word? I’ll give a line of a couplet. If you know the second line, we’ll have a wonderful night. Otherwise, you’ll have to go for further study in disappointment.” Char consented to her proposal. Chenniang read, “Climbing the attic with a lighted lamp to read the books respectively.” Char mused for a long time but failed to respond. So shameful that he said goodbye to his wife and walked to the academy, lantern in hand. At that time, his friends in the academy saw him back and wondered, “My bro! Tonight is your nuptial night. You should be with your bride but why do you leave her alone and come here?” Char then told them about the line his wife mentioned. None of them could reply to it. Among them was Cheng Cheng, who was flirtatious and dissolute. At Char’s words, Cheng went to Char’s home instantly. Chenniang was regretful for setting such an obscure question for her husband, whom she didn’t mean to embarrass. Out of her expectations, her husband went away in shame. When Cheng Cheng came to the room,

Chenniang thought it was Char Yee and never expected otherwise. So she inquired, "Dear, you just left without an answer, and now, have you figured out a beautiful line?" Cheng Cheng kept silent. Chenniang pondered her husband was in anger, so she didn't ask any more. Then Cheng Cheng fully enjoyed the sexual intercourse with Chenniang and left at dawn. After dawn, Char Yee came home and apologized politely to Chenniang, "I was lucky to get your good line last night, but it's a pity that I am not knowledgeable enough for the next line. And I felt very ashamed that I didn't accompany you last night." Chenniang queried, "You did come back last night, but how can you lie in such a way!" Asked over and over again, Char insisted that he didn't. Chenniang considered carefully about what Char said and realized she had been offended. So she said to Char, "If so, I wish you a bright future. You should study hard and never miss me anymore." With that, she went into the room, hanging herself. After a while, Char went to the room together with his parents, but it was too late to save her. Ignorant of the reason of her death, Char Yee passed out with great grief. Only after his parents gave him first aid did he come back to life. They could do nothing but prepare for a funeral.

Time flying, the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1043 came when Judge Bao made a patrol inspection to Linying County. Arriving at the yamen and sitting down, he noticed a tung tree in the courtyard and a cool and cute shade under the tree. Asking his retinue to move the chair to the tree, he began to appreciate the full moon. A line of verse suddenly came to his mind, "Moving a Chair against a Tung Tree to Appreciate the Moon Together." He pondered on the next line but failed, so he lay in the chair to rest. While half asleep and half awake, Bao dimly saw an extremely beautiful lady, who was about 16 years old. She approached and knelt down, "Don't bother with the next line of the verse, my Lord, but how about 'Climbing the attic with a lighted lamp to read the books respectively'? Seeing it neat and antithetical, Bao greeted, "Where do you live? Could you tell me your name?" That lady advised, "If Your Excellency want to know about me, please go ask the scholars in Linying County." Then, she turned into a breeze and disappeared.

When Bao woke up, he thought it weird. The next day he sent servants to summon scholars of Linying, who were requested to take a test, with the topic "staying at a respectful distance from ghosts and gods" from *The Analects of Confucius*. "Moving a

chair against a tung tree to appreciate the moon together” was set at the end of the test paper. Among the scholars was Char Yee. Noticing it rhymed with the line his wife once made, he wrote the next line “Climbing the attic with a lighted lamp to read the books respectively.” With all compositions finished, Bao commanded examinees to wait outside. While reading the compositions, Bao happened to find Char’s verse well matched with what he had heard in the dream. So he let Char in for inquiry, “I perceive your composition is ordinary, but the verse good. You must have asked someone to make it rather than by yourself. Spit out the truth!” After hearing this, Char explained it in detail. Bao concluded, “I guess there must be a lecher in your academy, who knew your absence from home and disguising to be you slept with your wife. Knowing the truth, your wife couldn’t endure humiliation and committed suicide. But don’t worry, tell me all you know, and I’ll redress the injustice for you.” Char said, “Among my classmates, only Cheng Cheng was flirtatious and dissolute.” At that, Bao immediately sent subordinates to summon Cheng Cheng for interrogation, who denied it at first but had to confess after an extreme penalty: “As Char Yee couldn’t match Chenniang’s couplet, he came to school and talked about it. An evil thought occupied my mind. I disguised to be Char and raped Chenniang, which caused her death at last. I plead guilty.” The case file finished, Cheng Cheng was sentenced to death and taken to the execution ground immediately. Of it, all the scholars without exception were completely convinced.

Case 54

Dragon Leaning on its Back Destroying Plum Blossom

In Renshian County, Shuntian Prefecture, lived Hsu Ching and Cheng Shian, who had been schoolmates for several years. Ching only had one daughter named Shuyun, and Shian one son Guotsai. Having passed the imperial examination, both of them obtained official positions and decided to hold the marriage between two families. Without the introduction of the matchmaker, they tied their clothes in knots as a mark, vowing never to change their minds. Time flying and things changing, Guotsai had become 18 years old, bestowed with remarkable intelligence and knowledge.

Unfortunately, his parents both died, leaving the family impoverished day by day. Aware of his poverty, Hsu Ching changed the engagement of Shuyun. Without courage to reject this blip, Guotsai had to write down the divorce paper. Shuyun, the well-behaved and well-educated girl, felt uncomfortable and inappetent as she knew that her parents had broken the engagement.

Another year later, Guotsai passed the entrance examination and was lucky enough to enter a Confucianist institution of higher learning. He lived in the western study of the institution. Informed of that, Shuyun had her maid Shuemay secretly send Guotsai ten tales of silver and a pair of gold hairpin. Shuemay went straight to Guotsai's home and

asked where he was. Guotsai's uncle Cheng Ren said, "You can go to the western study of the Confucianist institution to find him." Shuemay hurried to the study and found Guotsai as expected. "So all hail! Miss Hsu asked me to bring the gifts to you for congratulations." Having received the gifts, Guotsai said, "It is my great honor, but how can I deserve the kindness from Miss Hsu? Since I have written down the divorce paper, I dare not ask for too much. Don't come any more please. I am afraid it might bring humiliation to Miss Hsu if it became known." With that, he sent Shuemay away. After getting home, Shuemay told all that Guotsai said. "Just as a loyal minister never serves two kings, a faithful woman never gets married twice. I would rather die if my father forces me to marry someone else," swore Shuyun. The next day, Shuemay was sent to the Confucianist Institute again and told Guotsai to go to Hsu's backyard garden after nine o'clock at night. Shuemay would then give him gold and silver in order to marry Shuyun. Guotsai promised to do as told. Unexpectedly, what they said had been overheard by Pang Leung, an educator, an evil idea coming to his mind. And then it happened that at night Guotsai got drunk with his classmates and fell asleep. And at the same time, Pang Leung slipped into the garden and shook the locust tree. "Here comes Mr. Cheng, right?" exclaimed Shuemay. With some silver, several pairs of gold hairpin and a love letter in her hand, Shuemay walked out only to find it wasn't Guotsai. When she turned around to leave, Pang Leung took out his sharp sword suddenly and killed her. After getting the money and jewelry, he thrust the body into the pool and then ran away. Shuyun waited until dawn but in vain, which confused her. And when Guotsai woke up, it had been daybreak. It suddenly occurred to him that he had missed the very important appointment he had made the day before, which made him fall in the blues.

Without seeing Shuemay the next day, Hsu Ching assigned his servants to look for her only to see the blood around the pool. After being salvaged, Shuemay was found to be killed. Around the pool was a paper bag, in which was a love letter. The letter read, "From your wife Shuyun: Although my father broke his promise, my love for you remains unchanged. Now that you are working in the academy, how can I break my promise! I have prepared a hundred taels of silver and two pieces of jewelry to fund our wedding. I hope we can get married soon and become a happy and harmonious couple. I had wanted to meet you, but I couldn't because of my family's strict rules. Therefore, I entrust Shuemay to help me convey my heart, and I hope you can accept." After

reading the letter, Hsu Ching flew into a rage and reported it to the county magistrate. Shue Tang, the county magistrate, immediately demanded to take Cheng Guotsai to the court for interrogation, who did not plead guilty. Hsu Ching presented Shuyun's letter as evidence, and at the sight of her handwriting, he was rendered speechless. Shue Tang had him tortured and prisoned awaiting trial. That night Hsu secretly sent Shue several score taels of gold as a bribe to have Cheng executed. Shue accepted the bribery, and despite Cheng's denial had him handcuffed and escorted to the higher authority Shuntian Prefecture.

At that time, the head of Shuntian Prefecture was Lord Bao. Guotsai told Bao the whole story. Then Bao put him in prison for further inquiry. Guotsai was never seen without a book in his hand after he entered his cell, earning the admiration of the other inmates, especially those of learning. Just then Bao came to make an inspection and overheard the sound of Cheng's reading. He thought to himself, "This man is pure in character and will not murder anyone for money. He will certainly be a useful asset in the future." That night he prayed to the gods and fell asleep, dreaming of a poem on the wall, which read: Snow pressed on the plum blossom (Snow was pronounced to be "Shue" in Chinese, plum "may", which implied the name of Shuemay) reflecting the white wall, a dragon leaning on its back (Dragon's pronunciation was Leung in Chinese, leaning on its back implying Pang) destroyed the plum blossom; if the world figured out the implication, the ghost of the wronged in the pool would help redress the grievance of Guotsai.

Bao woke up and thought for a long time before he figured out the implication of the poem. The next day Pang Leung was summoned to the court for questioning, and complained, "I am a petty official and did not take bribes. What crime do I have so that Your Honor should send someone to arrest me?" Bao roared, "How dare you condemned man! You sneaked into Hsu's garden, and killing Shuemay took away a lot of gold and silver. But now you are still quibbling!" Then Pang Leung was flogged and put into a long cangue. Greatly alarmed, Pang Leung thought to himself, "How did he know about this secret? What a man of God!" So he had to tell the truth. Judge Bao asked, "You took away two pairs of gold jewelry and one hundred taels of silver. How much is left now?" Pang replied, "The money has been used up, only the jewelry left." Then Pang Leung was accompanied back to retrieve the jewelry and put in prison after

being bludgeoned 100 times. Afterwards, Hsu Ching and Shuyun were summoned to the court. Bao ranted to Ching, “You break your promise, despise the poor and curry favor with the rich. How dare you!” And Cheng Guotsai was taken into the hall, unshackled and dressed decently. Bao ordered the guards to decorate the table with candles for a wedding ceremony for Shuyun and Guotsai in the yamen. Bao also allotted twenty taels from the Treasury to Guotsai for his family needs. The gold jewelry was retrieved to Shuyun and Pang Leung’s property was sold up to repay the new couple. Hsu Ching was driven out. The newlyweds kowtowed to Bao in token of their gratitude before leaving. Pang Leung was escorted to the execution ground and beheaded for public display. This case reported to the emperor, Shue Tang the county magistrate, was exiled to a faraway place. Later, Cheng Guotsai passed the imperial exam of all levels.

Case 55

Snatching and Splitting the Umbrella

It was raining heavily on February 12th. A man named Luo Chinchian held an umbrella to visit his friend. When he got to the pavilion in the back alley, a young man begged him to share the umbrella. Luo refused and complained, "Why don't you prepare one for such heavy rain? How can mine shelter us two!" The young man was a local rogue named Chiu Yisuo, known for blandishing and cheating. Chiu said deceitfully, "I do have an umbrella but lent it to my friend just now. He asked me to wait here for a moment, while now I'm anxious to return home, so I beg your help. Why can't you be more generous?" Hearing that, Luo decided to help him. Reaching a fork at the end of the South Street, Chiu snatched the umbrella and said, "You can go that way!" Luo urged, "Give it back to me." Laughing, Chiu sneered, "I'll return it tomorrow, and bye now." Luo ran to him and swore, "You rascal! I have helped you first, but now you grab my umbrella. How could that happen!" Luo couldn't stand it, scuffling with him to the court. Judge Bao inquired them, "Are there any marks on the umbrella?"

They both replied, "No. Such a trivial stuff needs no marks." Judge Bao continued, "Any witnesses?" Luo said, "It happened to be in the back alley, so there was no witness." Chiu declared, "There were two witnesses when I helped him, but I don't know their names." Bao queried again, "How much is it worth?"

Luo answered, "A new one is worth 5 cents." Bao roared, "How can you bother me

with a five-cent stuff!” Then Bao ordered to split the umbrella between them, and kicked them out. He enjoined a guard secretly, “Go to eavesdrop on what they say and report to me truthfully.” The guard came back and replied, “One complains that you’re so muddleheaded. The other says to Luo, ‘You are unreasonable to wrest my umbrella and come to no good end.’” Thus Bao commanded to take them back, and asked, “Who called me names?” The guard pointed at Luo, “It’s him.” Bao roared, “What punishment should you deserve for scolding the local official?” Luo, about to take 20 floggings as punishment, entreated, “It’s unfair for I never did that.”

Chiu proclaimed, “It’s he that scolds you, my Lord. Now he tries to deny it. And also, he wanted to seize my umbrella.”

Bao said, “If you don’t mention snatching the umbrella, I am likely to punish him wrongly. Obviously, it is you that grabbed the umbrella, while I purposefully misjudged the case and split it. So Luo complains about what I did and swears at me. Chiu retorted, “Not awarded the umbrella, this greedy man nurses hatred and calls you names. How should it be his?”

Bao thundered, “You rogue, how dare you cheat me! I framed such a scheme just to verify your claims. Otherwise, how can I take great pains to summon the witnesses to inquire this petty case! Then Chiu was flogged 10 times and demanded to compensate Luo 10 cents. There happened to be two testifiers in the back alley, one of them Sun Fu the farmer. Knowing the truth of this case had come out, Sun couldn’t help applauding, “Judge Bao is City-God alive, who ascertains the case without any witnesses.” Bao asked him why he said that. Sun told all he witnessed to Bao, whose witty judgment had made him gasp in admiration. And then, Bao was more certain of his verdict.

Case 56

The Hidden Chopper Returned

There was a man named Tsou Ching who earned his living by chopping firewood. One day, after gathering a bundle of sticks in the hill, he headed for the town and sold it to Scholar Lu Richian for 2 cents. Then he went back home without pulling out his chopper from the sticks. Not until he went to cut again in the afternoon did he realize that he had left it in the woodpile. So he hurried to Lu to retrieve his tool.

However, Lu was a mean person and refused to give it back. So anxious was Tsou that he swore at him with dirty words. Being Judge Bao's favored disciple and taking advantage of this, Lu wrote an indictment and asked his attendant to send it to the court. After the inquiry about the cause, Bao found it nothing but a trifle. For the sake of his disciple, he punished Tsou with 5 floggings and drove him away.

Nevertheless, not submitting, Tsou went to Lu again and kept heaping abuse on him. Hence, well-dressed, Scholar Lu, visited Bao himself. "How stubborn Tsou is! Without bearing in mind the punishment, instead, he made a scene and hurled a curse on the streets once again. I beg for tougher penalty in case of his obstinacy." Bao thought to himself, "Commoner as Tsou is, he still dares to blackguard the scholar, which might prove the hatchet was really in the woodpile but Lu told a lie and had him flogged. And that's the reason why Tsou felt resentful." Tsou chained to the court, Bao enjoined Guard Lee Jay secretly, "Do so and so." Taking the order, Lee went to Lu's wife.

“Madame, now that the villager’s already got five floggings before and ten more in court today, your husband’s sending me to take the hacking knife back to Tsou.” “Why doesn’t my husband come back by himself?” the hostess was confused. “Your husband’s serving tea to my Lord after retiring from the courtroom. How could he move away?” answered Lee.

Falling for that, she gave the knife to Lee.

Lee brought it back to the court and said, “Here is the axe, my Lord.”

At that Tsou said, “It’s exactly mine.” Immediately Lu’s face turned pale with fear. Judge Bao shouted deliberately, “I didn’t mean to penalize you, but you should be polite if you want your hatchet back. How could he even know it was in the woodpile without checking out?” You went so far as to abuse a scholar recklessly. What penalty should you deserve? At that time I just slightly amerced you of five canings and pardoned you. Actually, the scholar has already sent me a letter saying he will return your hatchet, but you railed at him once again. Though the tool may be back to you, you deserve another twenty floggings.” Tsou got down on his knees for mercy.” Bao continued, “Only if you apologize to Scholar Lu for forgiveness.” Shocked, he kowtowed to the scholar repeatedly and went away in a hurry. Bao turned to blaming Lu, “It is rather hard to make a living by selling firewood. Won’t you be guilty to hide his lifeline? If I show partiality to you without digging out the truth, and punish him further, it will be I that feel apologetic to this villager.” I told everyone you were willing to return his tool and made him indebted to you, which was just to reclaim your dignity.” Ashamed with a blushing face, Lu went away speechlessly. Sending someone to win back the chopper, showed Bao’s wit; saving Lu’s face before the public by covering up his faults kindness; exhorting him to correct his misdeeds behind the public enlightenment. Thus, three virtues—cleverness, compassion, and civilization—converged in a single act.

Case 57

Red Ivory Balls

In Dongking lived a rich man with the name Pan Yuanlau, who, known as the elder, was originally from an official's family. His eighth son, Pan Shiu, was twenty years old, with a charming appearance and graceful bearing. On the Tomb-sweeping Day, the elder was preparing some ghost money for the sacrificial ceremony and sweeping tombs. In his home, there was two red ivory balls, the ornaments to hang around the waist, which was precious treasure in the country and was awarded to Pan Shiu's grandfather by the late Emperor Chentsong. After his father went out, Shiu took the ball out to play for a while. Walking for a few steps, he suddenly noticed his neighbor Elder Lau's door was widely open. Behind the half-hung curtain, a red dress hid, and a pair of small shoes were revealed. Infatuated and intrigued, Pan Shiu had a desire to meet the woman behind but did not know how. All of a sudden, Wong Gui, an idle hang-on of an aristocrat, said to him, "What are you waiting for, sir?" Pan Shiu told his desire. Wong Gui said, "No difficulty for you to see this woman." A trick coming to his mind, he advised, "Throw the ball into the curtain, and pretend to catch up with it. Go open the curtain, and you will be able to see her." Shiu did as instructed, and met a young and dazzling beauty, about 16 years old, who had big eyes and lovely pink cheeks. He made a slight bow with his hands folded in front to her. The girl named Hwasui asked, "What brought you here, sir?" Shiu replied, "I accidentally threw my ball into your house, so I am here for it. I sincerely beg your pardon if I offend you."

Hwasiu was fascinated by this handsome boy, so she said with a smile, “My parents went out for sightseeing today. It’s my fortune to see you here and I would like to invite you for a drink since our encounter must be a destiny.” Hearing that, suspicious and scared, Shiu did not dare to say a word. The girl immediately grabbed his clothes and said, “If you don’t agree, I will lodge an appeal at once.” He had no alternative but to comply with her request.

The two then drank together in the boudoir. After several cups of drink, they were craving for each other. The lady asked, “How old are you?” Shiu replied, “I am 19.” She continued, “Are you married?” Shiu replied, “Not yet.” She ventured, “Me neither. If you do not mind my boldness, I would like to be your wife.” “I have been blessed with your wine which can show your kindness enough. I cannot escape from this accusation if your father knows that you make such a request.” The lady said, “The boudoir is a private place. My parents will never know, so don’t be afraid.” Sensing her persistency, Shiu, with his desire arising, then had sex with the beauty. When finishing, Shiu got up and dressed himself to leave. She then said, “I have some innermost thoughts to tell you. I am lucky to be with you. Since both of us are single, why don’t we get married with the help of the matchmakers?” Shiu agreed, and they swore to each other that they would never break their vows. Shiu returned home, besotted by her beauty and growing haggard day by day. Repeatedly asked what was wrong with him, Shiu had no choice but to tell his parents about his love affair with Elder Lau’s daughter. His parents sympathized with him and sent a matchmaker to propose marriage to Elder Lau.

Elder Lau told the matchmaker, “I have no son, only one daughter who is too precious to marry off. I will have to bring a son-in-law into my family instead.” The matchmaker relayed this message back to Elder Pan, who thought to himself, “I have only this son, so how can I allow him to marry into the bride’s family? It must be an excuse for refusal.”

So Elder Pan said to his son, “Since the Laus don’t approve of this marriage proposal, there are many wealthy families in the capital willing to offer a hand in marriage. We will find another suitable candidate.” Pan Shiu remained silent, and thus the marriage arrangement was postponed. Later, the Pan family actually discussed the idea of

marrying Chao's daughter into their family, which led to the severing of ties between Pan Shiu and Hwasiu. On the wedding day, the Pan Mansion was flocked by people and luggage, the sound of music deafening and the house suffused in a boisterous atmosphere. Looking outside the door, Hwasiu asked the maidservant, "What makes the Pans so boisterous?"

The servant girl replied, "Pan Shiu is marrying Chao's daughter today." Upon hearing this news, Hwasiu was overwhelmed by memories with rain-like tears pouring down. Filled with regret and bitterness, she was unable to speak due to the depth of her longing and ultimately died of suffocation. Her parents wept bitterly, unaware of the cause of her death. Then they ordered servants Wong Wen and Lee Shin to bury her outside the south gate.

When Lee Shin returned home, it was already late. He thought of the adorable face of Hwasiu, and could not bear to leave her, so he told his parents, "I have to go out for something urgent tonight." His parents granted his request. Around 9 p.m., with the moonlight shimmering, he went to dig out Hwasiu's grave and riving her coffin found her beautiful face as if alive. He thought to himself, "What a pity for this woman! If I can sleep with her corpse for one night, I would even be reconciled to death." Then, he took off the clothing and slept with her. After a long while, Hwasiu moved slightly, with eyes gradually opening. Soon she asked under her breath, "Who is so audacious to sleep with me?" Lee Shin said in astonishment, "I am your servant, Lee Shin. Your parents asked me to bury you here, but I couldn't bear to leave you alone, so I dug open the coffin to see you, but I didn't expect you to wake up. What a miracle!"

Hwasiu regained consciousness and suddenly recalled what had happened at home the day before. Then she told the truth to Lee Shin, "It's Pan Shiu's breaking our pledge that led to my death. It's lucky for me to revive after death with your digging up the grave. I am not willing to go home, and I have nothing to requite your favors but to marry you." All the clothes and accessories in the coffin belong to you now." Lee Shin was overjoyed and reburying the grave returned home with Hwasiu. It was not yet dawn when they knocked at the door. Opening the door, Lee's mother was surprised to see him bringing a girl back and asked about the reason. Lee Shin told his mother, "This woman used to be a prostitute. We have known each other for many years. Now

she is willing to give up her profession and marry me. So I bring her back today to meet you and dad.” The mother believed his words, and then they got married. They were deeply in love with each other, with no one knowing that his wife was Hwasiu. Lee Shin sold out all her clothes and jewelry to somewhere else, which made him affluent.

After around half a year, a neighboring house caught on fire on a winter night, which spread to Lee Shin’s. In panic and fear, Hwasiu could do nothing but escape in thin clothes. Separate from her husband, she wandered aimlessly through several streets and alleys, friendless and helpless. Suddenly, she recognized her own house, so she knocked on her parents’ door. The doorman asked, “Who’s there?” She answered, “It is Hwasiu, back to see my parents.” Surprised and shocked, the gatekeeper wondered, “Hwasiu has already been dead for half a year. How can she be knocking at the door? It must be a ghost. Tomorrow I will inform your parents of incinerating more ghost money and clothes to you. Please just leave.”

The doorman did not dare to open the door. Caught in a dilemma, she had to stand in the freezing wind in her thin clothes, with tears streaming down her cheeks. Suddenly she saw the light shining brightly in Pan’s house, with the feast not over, so she went to knock at Pan’s door. “Who is knocking at the door?” asked the doorman in surprise. Hwasiu replied, “Please tell Mr. Pan Shiu that I’m Hwasiu, the daughter of Elder Lau’s and ask him whether he remembers that we once met each other because of playing the ivory ball. I encountered some problems tonight, which is the reason why I am here for a shelter.” After hearing the words, the doorkeeper went to relay the message to Pan Shiu. Shiu pondered over it and found it weird. He thought that Elder Lau’s daughter, who lived across from him, had been dead for half a year, so it must be her wandering ghost. Thus, he commanded Lee Chee to make a light and burn some ghost money and clothes to her. With a sword, Shiu came to open the door and saw Hwasiu crying and begging for pity.” Shiu told Hwasiu, “Your parents are so rich that you can ask them for ghost incense and money. Why are you bothering and pestering me?” After that, he burned some ghost money and urged Lee Chee to close the door as soon as possible. Hwasiu voiced her grievance and refused to leave, complaining, “You are such a heartless man!” Outraged by it, Shiu went out of the door, and with the sword in his hand chopped her head off. Subsequently, he closed the door and went to bed. It was

around 5:00 in the morning when a military patrol screamed outside the door, “There is a headless woman outside, covered with blood.” Then they reported it to the government.

The news stirred a sensation among the neighborhood. When Elder Lau heard about this, he felt doubtful. At night, he dreamed that Hwasiu came and made an accusation, “I was killed by Pun Shiu. My body is outside his house. I beg you my beloved father to redress the grievance for me.” With that, she left with tears. After Elder Lau woke up, he told his dream to his wife and said, “Presumably Hwasiu revived after death. There must be someone dug the grave.” The next day, when he dug up the tomb, sure enough he found no remains, so he reported it to Judge Bao. Bao commanded guards to summon Pan Shiu. Upon arrival, he was questioned about the dug grave and the murder of Hwasiu. Having no idea about the truth, Shiu was rendered speechless. Investigated further for the case, Shiu confessed to the whole story that he had decapitated the ghost with a sword.

Holding a skeptical attitude, Judge Bao could not make a judgment, so he put Pan Shiu in prison temporarily. Then, he instantly prepared some bulletins and posted them everywhere, which read, “Pan Shiu was arrested for murdering Lau Hwasiu but he didn’t admit his guilt. The one who opened the tomb and helped Hwasiu revive can be rewarded with 1,000 taels of silver if he comes to inform the government.” Seeing this notice, Lee Shin came to the court and reported everything in order to get the reward money. Thus, Bao judged that Lee Shin dug out the grave illegally resulting in the manslaughter of Hwasiu. Lee Shin was sentenced to beheading while Pan Shiu exonerated. Later, Pan Shiu recollected the manslaughter of Hwasiu and feeling extremely guilty died of illness eventually, which was believed to be the revenge from the resentful Hwasiu.

Case 58

A Deserted Garden

There was an honest man named Ho Dar in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, who was forty but childless. One day, he had a dispute with his uncle's son Ho Leung over undivided inheritance. Ho Leung was a treacherous man who refused to give in, so he appealed the matter to the government, but the matter remained unsettled for years, leading to hatred between the two cousins. Ho Dar visited his aunt's son Shek Guifang to discuss the idea of getting out of the matter. Guifang came from an official family and read a lot of books since childhood. He was clever but still single. Seeing his cousin, Guifang invited him to sit down and asked the reason of coming. Ho Dar replied, "I have come to consult with you, for the litigation has caused me trouble for years, wasting my money and affecting the people. I am regretful and want to find a way out." Guifang advised, "Even if you don't tell me, I'd like to inform you that my old friend Military Governor Han, who is in charge of Kaifeng, has sent a person to invite me for a visit. Why not pack up your luggage and go with me? You can enjoy the scenery of the capital and avoid this trouble then?" Overjoyed, he left Guifang and went back home immediately. After telling his wife the matter and packing up clothes, he left Chengdu for Kaifeng together with Guifang and his servant Hsu Yee on an appointed day. After a journey of more than twenty days, the city of Kaifeng was within sight. It being late, they rested at the East Hill Hotel.

Entering the city the next morning, they inquired about the news of Governor Han but was told, "Governor Han is on a tour of inspection and hasn't come back." Therefore, Guifang and Ho Dar stayed on at the East Hill Hotel, waiting for his coming back.

Free and at leisure, they just made good cheer and looked for beautiful scenery every day.

One day, Ho and Shek visited a place where they could see a pavilion faintly from a distance and hear the bell ringing out by the wind. Ho advised, "Is it possible that that's a pleasant place in the front? Let's go for a look." Guifang followed Ho, finding it was an ancient temple. They entered the temple and saw two old monks preaching on the altar. The old monks stood up and bowed when the cousins approached. The hosts guided the guests inside and took their respective seats. The monks asked, "Where are you from, gentlemen?" Guifang replied, "We had intended to visit my old friend but failed to meet him, so we decided to visit your temple." The monks ordered the pupil to serve tea and guide them to every place to appreciate the scenery. Ho and Shek mounted the Arhat pavilion to have a look, only to find a forest in front of the temple which was weird and wooded. So they asked, "What is that forest for?"

The pupil replied, "The garden was built by Satrap Lau. Since he left, it has been deserted for a long time and now is a forest." At this, Guifang said to Ho, "Let's go there and have some fun."

They wandered around only to see the collapsed garden walls, the tilted stones, foxes and rabbits and the wild grass.

Guifang sighed, "When people set up this garden in the beginning, they never expected it would look like this." Suddenly Ho exclaimed, "Just now I have lost a handkerchief which contains some pieces of silver. Is it in the Buddha's pavilion? Stay here for a while, bro, and I will return as soon as I get it." Then he went away. Guifang walked slowly into the bamboo forest, and waited for Ho for a long time but in vain.

Abruptly, two female servants came from outside the forest. Seeing Guifang, they said with a smile, "The satrap invites you to discuss the matter." Guifang asked, "Who is the satrap?" The females instructed, "Go there and you will know." Guifang forgot to wait for Ho and went with the females. Later, Ho came to look for Guifang. He

searched around but in vain. The sun going down, Ho thought, "Maybe he went back to the hotel because of my absence." So he turned to the hotel.

At that moment, Guifang was led by the maids to a sumptuous official residence. An official sitting in the hall saw Guifang, and down the steps welcomed him to the hall with great courtesy. Guifang was fairly modest. And the official advised, "Since you came from far away, there is no need to insist declining. I've lived here in seclusion for ten years without anyone coming. It is no accident that we meet. I have been looking for a good husband for my elder daughter. Now I would like to marry her to you, hoping not to be refused." Guifang not knowing how to respond, the official ordered the maids to prepare the banquet to hold the wedding ceremony instantly. Thrown into confusion, Guifang tried to decline. A group of women brought him into the splendid house with gorgeous curtains. And then a beautiful woman came out and bowed to him. Then they tied the knot. Guifang was delighted to have this lovely wife, which was really a strange encounter. Henceafter, he never met with the satrap again but played with the group of women all day long.

Walking back to the hotel, Ho Dar asked his servant Hsu Yee, "Has Guifang come back?" Hsu replied, "No. Mr. Shek went out of town together with you and never came back." Surprised, Ho Dar was afraid that Guifang was hurt by tigers in the forest. After a night, he went to the temple again to ask for the whereabouts of Guifang but in vain. Ho Dar returned to the hotel, depressed. He waited for more than ten days. Nonetheless, there was still no news. Thus, after consulting with his servant, he decided to pack up and go home.

With the past lawsuit still pending, when knowing that Ho Dar returned but Shek Guifang was missing, Ho Leung went to accuse Ho Dar of murdering Guifang. The judicial department detained Ho Dar on account of this. Unable to argue, Ho Dar was put in prison. With great hatred, Ho Leung wanted to take this opportunity to kill Ho Dar, thus bribing the official in the yamen to investigate the case. Unable to bear the torture, Ho Dar was forced to confess the murder. The official finished the case file, judging that he should be sentenced to death. Eventually, Ho Dar was escorted to Sheeking for final judgement.

It happened that Bao went to offer incense in the Jade Imperial Concubine Temple in

Sheeking to protect Empress Cheunng. Passing through the street, he saw a soaring grievance in front of him and asked the yamen runners, "There are so many people in front. What happened?" The runners reported, "A sergeant is to execute a sinner on the court today." Bao thought to himself, "There must be a person who is wronged." Immediately Bao sent a runner to report that the sinner would be retried and confirmed before execution. The runner did quickly as told and the official at the execution ground didn't dare to execute. So he immediately brought Ho Dar to Judge Bao. Investigating the reason of this thing, Ho Dar was sorrowful and reported the incident fully. After that, Bao summoned Dar's servant for inquiry and the servant also explained that there was no murder at all. However, it was difficult to defend themselves because Guifang was nowhere to be found. Bao felt it weird and without any instruments of torture had Dar put in prison for further trial.

The next day, Bao ordered to close the door of the yamen, and disguised as a lower-ranking official, visited the ancient temple with the runner Shue Bar and Ho Dar's servant Hsu Yee. The two monks happened to be sitting in the abbot. Seeing the three men's arrival, they got up to lead them in, taking their respective seats. The monks asked, "Where are you from, gentlemen?" Bao replied, "Sorry to bother you. We're here after a long tiresome journey from Sichuan. Could we stay at your temple overnight and leave tomorrow?" The monks replied, "We're afraid our conditions are poor but you may as well board here." Then, Bao walked alone in the corridor, and at the sight of a boy coming out beamed, "If you show me around, I would give you some copper cash to buy fruits." Seeing that Bao's look was strange, the boy said with a smile, "This spring, two scholars came to visit the temple and one of them was lost. How many people are there coming with you today?" Bao was about to investigate the matter deeply when the boy proactively addressed it. Then he inquired the boy with care. The boy talked about the reason, leading him to the mountain gate and pointing with his fingers, "Monsters often appear in the lush forest ahead and bewitch people. One day, a scholar went sightseeing in the forest and remained missing until now." Bearing it in mind, Bao stayed at the temple for a night. The next day, together with Hsu, Bao entered the forest, which was quiet and cold around. They were wondering when a laughter burst out. Bao fought his way through thistles and thorns, only to find a group of women surrounding a man who was making good cheer on the stone. Then

Bao walked up to them and shouted angrily, making all the women disappear and leaving only Shek Guifang still sitting on the stone, fainted and unconscious. Bao had Shue and Hsu support Guifang to go back.

After a few days, Guifang vomitted a lot and became conscious as if waking from a dream. Bao ordered Shue to detain Ho Leung to the court. Having told what had happened, Guifang couldn't help making mournful sounds. Bao wondered, "Without the on-the-spot investigaion, how could I know this weird thing?" Then he snapped, "Ho Leung, knowing nothing about Guifang's life and death, why should you falsely accuse Ho Dar of murdering Guifang?" Ho Dar complained tearfully, "Because the appeal about family property has no result for many years, Ho Leung bore a grudge against me and wanted to kill me." Bao nodded and had Leung tortured. Knowing his own crime of false charge, Leung confessed everything. The new case file finished, Leung was caned 100 times before being sent to Tsangchou in exile for a lifetime; the official, who was bribed by Leung and did Dar an injustice, was removed from the office; Guifang and Dar were innocent and released back home.

Case 59

A Misleading Tutor

It is universally acknowledged that selecting the right educator is of first importance to school a child. Thus, it is detestable of educators to mislead young generations. A tutor, Cheunng Darchee, living in the capital city, Kaifeng, was illiterate except *The Book of Family Names*. He was cunning at taking money from the rich family, working for several years and earning a large amount of money. However, he could not impart even one Chinese character to his students, which hindered their development. A man named Yang Liang appealed against him to Lord Bao after death for the reason that his child's studies had been delayed.

“Parents entrust their children to teachers, hoping the children can be knowledgeable. But the teachers are unqualified. Here is one such guy, Cheunng Darchee, who is of illiteracy. He insisted on teaching in private schools, charging a great sum of tuition fee but imparting nothing at all. Impeding students' development is no less than killing them. So I appeal to reconstruct the reputation of teachers.”

Having read the complaint, Lord Bao got furious, “It is a big fault for tutors to mislead their pupils.” Then he dispatched the ghost subordinate to bring Cheunng to the court. Darchee soon arrived, and Bao asked, “How can you miseducate the pupils?” Darchee replied, “My Lord, poorly educated as I am, I do master teaching methods, which vary from pupil to pupil. Yet, if pupils were born stupid, I could do nothing to improve them.

Even Confucius could not make all his three thousand disciples sages! In addition, like parents, what teachers do is all for their pupils. Still another, Confucius stated, ‘I have put my heart and soul into teaching since students paid me fees.’ Likewise, Mencius said, ‘Parents are supposed to honor and respect their children’s teachers.’ However, my employer seems to lack such respect. His child is not only slow-witted, but discourteous, so he will never become a solon.” Bao queried, “Young Liang, how can you affront the tutor?” Liang replied, “Seeing he is not good at teaching, we may neglect him.” Darchee said, “Why didn’t you dismiss me to employ another tutor if you think I’m incompetent?” Liang argued, “Why didn’t you leave for another family if you know I snubbed you?” They debated a long time, but Bao snapped, “Stop! Both of you erred.” Then, Darchee submitted his own pleading suing Liang for slander, “As Confucius stated, ‘God choose right materials to make right things, and saints teach students in accordance with their aptitude.’ When students come to me, am I surely to earn a lot of money from them? Since they paid me tuition fees, I have been devoting all myself to teaching, totally forgetting food and sleep. Thank you, my Lord, for giving me a chance to complain. By gosh, what I said is true.”

After reading, Bao laughed, “Let me give you a test, which is the requirement from your employer.”

Then he set a question and Darchee did it only to show his sheer illiteracy. Bao said, “Sure enough, no wonder the employer affronted you, for delaying students is no less than murder.” However, despite the teacher’s illiteracy, the employer should treat him with courtesy rather than violate the decencies. Therefore, the teacher is punished to be an ox, plowing for the employer as compensation, and the employer to be a pig, whose meat will be sliced as people’s food for his disrespect to the teacher. Teachers, students, and employers have their respective rules, without which teachers can’t enlighten a child with their ignorance, students won’t have bright futures with their slow wits, and employers shan’t go on with their extreme meanness. Many students are delayed by the incapable teacher and it is not excessive to punish him to be an ox. Likewise, it is reasonable for the employer to be a pig as he did not obey the rules. Henceforth, teachers shall not be oxen and employers not be pigs the next life.

After that, both of them were caned and driven out.

Case 60

Bestial Father to Fornicate with Daughter-in-law

In Sheewu County, there lived a man named Shek Shingching. He wanted to commit fornication with his son's wife whose family name was Song. Learning of that, his son felt ashamed and hanged himself to death. At it, Shingching was overjoyed, but Song was so sorrowful that she refused to submit to him even more resolutely. Only a pretty concubine of his son's had sex with him day and night. People in the county all knew about that and nicknamed him Huichi, a man sleeping with his daughter-in-law. Both of his grandsons were still too young to get married, but he paid a high bride-price choosing a wife for the older one. The grandson was less than ten years old while his wife was sixteen. Actually, Shingching took this granddaughter-in-law as a sex slave for himself.

His disrepute wildly spread, Song died with great anger and disgrace. And soon, Shingching also died, taken away by the devil. In the hell, however, Shingching accused Song of neglecting her filial duties: "A virtuous daughter-in-law should put her parents-in-law in the first place and comply with what they wish. But Song is rather arrogant and termagant. My demand unmet, my worries suspended, I was even given a bad name and wronged to death. My close kin Song Tsun can serve as a witness. Without fealty and virtue, she should be punished severely. Thus I appeal."

After reading the written complaint, Judge Bao said furiously, "Such a daughter-in-law,

what punishment should she deserve!" And then Lady Song was summoned for interrogation. Escorted by the ghost pawn, Song also had a complaint, "I can't deny his allegations, but why did people call him Huichi? I would rather bear his charge than have an affair with him. So I appeal."

Having read that, Bao raged and said, "How could it happen! Human is no beast. How can you be so evil and indict her for impiety when you have had such shameful affairs?" Shingching denied them repeatedly.

Bao said, "I also hear about your bad name and the facts brook no denial." Lady Song told the family scandal once again. "Who is Song Tsun?" Bao asked. Lady Song replied, "Shingching's friend."

Then Tsun was taken to the court. Bao roared, "Tsun, at a glance of you, I feel disgusted. How dare you perjure yourself? So detestable! Cut off Tsun's tongue to stop his sheer nonsense." And then, Bao ordered the ghost pawn to cut off Shingching's penis and put the burning balls into their mouths. Immediately, their flesh became rotten. However, they recovered their human bodies again after a gust of magic wind.

Bao remarked, "A case of Huichi, an old story reoccurred! How dare Shingching do it regardless of the proprieties? What a shame! Worse than a beast! How can he accuse Song of impiety? If she is not filial, then who else can be? Even more ridiculous, Tsun should come to testify! What thing is this? What man is this? What does he think my court is? How dare he commit perjury? He shall deserve extraordinarily severe penalties as a warning."

Then Bao added, "Shingching and Tsun shall be tortoises in the afterlife. As dying from preserving chastity, Lady Song will make her living by tortoise divination in the next life so that she can take revenge by burning tortoise shells day and night." After that, all parties went away.

Case 61

The Lion Lane

In Tiechiu Village, Shiaolian Town, Chaoshui County, Chaochou Prefecture, lived a scholar named Yuan Wencheng, who had learnt Confucianism from an early age. His wife, Cheunng, beautiful and virtuous, gave birth to a son, who had been three years old. Upon hearing that the imperial examination for the southern provinces would be held in Dongking City, Shiutsai Yuan discussed with his wife and decided to participate in the examination. Cheunng said, “Our family is poor and our son is still young. If you leave, who am I supposed to rely on?” Yuan replied, “After enduring the hardships of studying for ten years, I am hoping to achieve fame in one fell swoop. Since you, my beloved wife, have no one to rely on, we might as well pack up and go together.”

They hurried along on the road, and in a few days they reached the city of Dongking, where they lodged in the store of Granny Wong.

The next day, having got dressed and finished his meal, Yuan went into the city with his wife to stroll about. Suddenly, a loud voice was heard approaching, so the couple quickly retreated to the side. Looking ahead, they saw a noble figure seated on a horse. It was none other than Tsao, the younger brother-in-law of the emperor. Tsao from atop the horse found Cheunng strikingly beautiful and was deeply attracted. So he instructed his military attendant to invite the scholar to his mansion for a conversation. Upon hearing that the person was the imperial brother-in-law, Yuan did not dare to decline

the invitation and entered Tsao's Mansion with his wife and child. Younger Brother Tsao came out to greet them personally, and with exchange of pleasantries seated them. He then inquired about their origin and background. Yuan informed Tsao of his intention to participate in the imperial examination. Delighted by this news, Tsao first ordered his maid to guide Cheunng to the back chamber for entertainment. However, he then ordered his attendants to bring out a sumptuous banquet and persuaded Yuan personally to drink until he got drunk. Secretly, he instructed his attendants to take Yuan to a secluded place and strangle him with a hemp rope, killing the three-year-old child as well. It was tragic that Yuan, with all his erudition and knowledge, had not got the chance to showcase his talents, but his life had already ended like a fleeting dream. When Lady Cheunng emerged and wanted to accompany her husband back to their inn, Tsao said, "Scholar Yuan drank too much and has been taken to a room to sleep it off."

Lady Cheunng was very scared and refused to leave the Mansion, wanting to wait for her husband to wake up. As dusk approached, Tsao instructed his maid to inform Cheunng that her husband had passed away and persuade her to remarry him. The maid told Cheunng about this, and Cheunng bawled her eyes out and tried to suicide. Seeing her refusal, Tsao ordered her to be confined in a secluded room and ordered the maid to continue persuading her.

After rewarding the troops at the border and returning to the capital to report back on his mission, Judge Bao then immediately went to his residence. As he walked by a stone bridge, a sudden gust of wind arose in front of his horse and lingered for a long while. Judge Bao thought to himself, "There must be some injustice involved here."

He gave order to his men Wong Shing and Lee Chee to follow the wind to see what was wrong. Wong and Lee took their orders and came along with the wind, which stopped right in the Tsao's residence. When the two subordinates looked up, they saw tall walls all around and big words written on the door in the middle, saying, "Anyone who dares to look will be blinded. Anyone who dares to point with fingers will be dismembered of one hand." The two men were startled and rushed back to report to Bao.

Bao roared, "That is not the emperor's palace. How dare they be so presumptuous!" So he came to see it in person. Sure enough, it was a tall mansion, and he wondered whose

luxury house it was. Then he ordered a constable to ask an old man.

The old man replied, "It belongs to Tsao, the brother-in-law of the Emperor." Bao said, "Even the emperor doesn't have such a grand place. He's just the brother-in-law. Why would he need such a mansion?" The old man sighed, "If your excellency do not ask, how dare I say it? His power is even greater than that of the current emperor; those who offended him would just be trapped in an iron shackle. He forcibly raped those women who were beautiful, and killed those who refused to obey. I don't know how many people died in his hands. Because there are too many people died in his house recently, strange things come out in the day. Tsao can't live here any longer and has moved to somewhere else." Hearing this, Bao rewarded the old man and left. Returning to the yamen, he immediately dispatched Wong Shing and Lee Chee to bring the whirlwind ghost for questioning. The two went out and thought for a long time without coming up with a solution. When night fell, they came to the gate of Tsao's mansion and shouted, "The wronged ghosts, you can go to Judge Bao's yamen for help!" Suddenly, a gust of wind blew and a wronged ghost holding a three-year-old child followed them to Bao. The grieved ghost, covered in blood with disheveled hair, recounted from the beginning the story of how he was killed by Tsao while he was on his way to the imperial examination and his body was dumped in the well in the back garden. Bao asked, "Since your wife is alive, why don't you ask her to come and lodge a complaint?" Wencheng replied, "She has been taken to Chengchou and confined there for three months, so how could she possibly see Your Excellency?" Bao said, "You can go now, and I will bring justice to you." After hearing that, Wencheng once again transformed into a gust of wind and disappeared.

The next day, when holding a court trial, Judge Bao gathered his subordinates and instructed, "The vengeful spirit said last night that there were one thousand taels of gold hidden in the well of the back garden in Tsao's residence. Whoever is willing to go down and retrieve it will be rewarded with half of it. Wong Shing and Lee Chee volunteered to go. After being lowered into the well, they touched a corpse and were terrified, so they reported back to Judge Bao. Judge Bao said, "I don't believe it. Even if it's a corpse, bring it to me." The two men lowered themselves into the well again, retrieved the corpse, and carried it back to the Kaifeng yamen. Judge Bao ordered the corpse to be placed in the east corridor and inquired the constables where Tsao had

moved. The constables replied, "He has moved to the Lion Lane."

He immediately ordered Cheunng Chian and Lee Wan to prepare a gift of mutton and wine, and went to pay a visit to Tsao's new residence. When Judge Bao arrived there, he learned that the elder brother-in-law had not returned from the imperial palace. And his mother, the Lady Dowager, was greatly annoyed and scolded Bao for the inappropriate congratulatory gift. As Judge Bao was reproached and insulted by the Lady Dowager and was about to leave, he happened to encounter the elder brother-in-law. Immediately, he dismounted and engaged in a long conversation with Bao, during which he learned that Bao had come to convey congratulations but was insulted by his mother. He apologized and said, "Don't blame her, please." Then the two bid farewell to each other. The Elder Brother-in-law felt disturbed after returning to the mansion and complained to the Lady Dowager, "Just now, Judge Bao encountered me and told me that he came to congratulate you, Mother, but you insulted him and drove him away. At present, my younger brother has committed such a crime against ethics and morality. If Judge Bao were to find out about this, I fear he might not survive." The Lady Dowager laughed, "My daughter is now the Empress. Why should we be afraid of him?" The elder son said, "Even if the Emperor commits any wrongdoings, Judge Bao is not afraid of him, let alone the Empress. So it's better to write a letter to my younger brother and ask him to kill the scholar's wife so that we can eliminate any troubles in the future." Then the Lady Dowager followed his advice and wrote a letter, having it delivered to Chengchou. After reading the letter, the younger brother-in-law had no choice but to get Lady Cheunng drunk with wine. When he was about to kill her with a knife in his hand, he saw her beautiful appearance and was reluctant to take her life. So he stepped out of the room and encountered the guarder Cheunng in the courtyard, explaining what had just happened to him. Cheunng advised, "If you kill her here, her vengeful spirit will linger and haunt us. There is an ancient well in my backyard. So deep that its bottom cannot be seen. Wouldn't it be better if we pushed her into the well?" Overjoyed, he rewarded the gardener with ten taels of silver and ordered him to tie up Lady Cheunng and take her to the garden. However, the gardener intended to save Lady Cheunng and was only waiting for her to wake up.

After a while, Lady Cheunng woke up and tearfully recounted her plight. Gardener

Cheunng felt pity for her and secretly opened the back door, giving her the ten taels of silver as travel expenses and instructing her to go straight to Judge Bao in Dongking to lodge a complaint.

Lady Cheunng expressed her gratitude and left. Being a woman confined to her home, how could she travel alone to Kaifeng? God of Venus, touched by her sadness and grievance, transformed into an old man and guided her all the way to Dongking, before disappearing into a gust of wind. Lady Cheunng was startled and looked up only to find herself standing in front of Granny Wong's inn. She went in for a lodging. Wong recognized her and, upon hearing her story, shed tears as well. She advised, "Before dawn, Judge Bao will go on his pilgrimage. When he comes back, you can stop the horse and lodge your complaint." Cheunng had someone write a detailed complaint and ventured out into the street. There, she met an official and intercept his horse to complain. Unexpectedly, this official was not Bao, but the elder brother of the empress, who, upon seeing the complaint, was shocked. He accused her of assaulting the horse and promptly had her bludgeoned to unconsciousness, taking the ten taels of silver from her and leaving her body in a secluded alley. When Wong heard this news, she rushed over and found that Cheunng was still alive. She immediately carried her back to the inn to save her. After a couple of days, when she learned that Bao was passing by, Cheunng knelt down and stopped his horse to cry out her grievance. Bao accepted the lawsuit and ordered his men to lead Cheunng into the corridor of the yamen to identify the corpse, and it turned out to be her husband's. Wong was also summoned and, after an investigation, was cleared of suspicion. Cheunng was then sent to the rear hall, and Wong was allowed to return to her inn. Judge Bao pondered, "I shall capture the elder brother of the empress before deciding on further action." He then pretended to be sick and stayed in bed. Upon hearing of Judge Bao's illness, the emperor discussed with his ministers about visiting him. The elder brother-in-law advised, "Allow me to go first, Your Majesty. It will not be too late for Your Majesty to visit later." The emperor consented. The next day, the news was reported to Judge Bao, who made preparations and, when the elder Tsao arrived and alighted from his carriage, greeted him and ushered him to the back chamber. After some pleasantries, wine was served. When they were half-drunk, Judge Bao said, "Your Excellency, I received a petition recently from a woman claiming that her husband and son were killed, and she herself was assaulted.

She managed to escape to the capital but was attacked again by her foes. Fortunately, she was saved by Granny Wong and came to me with the petition. I have approved her petition and would like to discuss it with you. Do you know the names of the victims?" Judge Bao's words made Tsao's hair stand on end.

Cheunng walked out from behind the screen, crying, "It's this man who attempted to kill me." The elder brother-in-law shouted, "What crime should you deserve for falsely accusing me?" Judge Bao was so furious that he ordered the constables to arrest him, and stripping him of his official clothes, imprisoned him in a cangue. Fearing that the news would leak out, Bao had all the doors closed and all Tsao's followers arrested. Contemplating a plan to capture the younger brother-in-law, he wrote a fake family letter, stamped it with the elder brother's seal he had confiscated, and sent a messenger overnight to Chengchou, falsely informing that his mother was seriously ill and urged the younger brother to return. Recognizing his brother's seal and believing the letter to be genuine, he immediately hurried back to the capital. Before reaching his mansion, he encountered Judge Bao and was invited inside for a conversation. After three cups of wine, the younger brother-in-law got up and said, "My brother has written to me, saying that my mother is seriously ill. So I must excuse myself for now." Suddenly, Lady Cheunng came out from behind the hall, and kneeling down tearfully told the previous story. The younger brother-in-law turned pale upon seeing her. Judge Bao immediately ordered him to be arrested and shackled in prison.

The attendants reported it to the Lady Dowager, who was greatly shocked and hurried to inform Empress Tsao of the matter. Empress Tsao reported it to Emperor Rentsong, but he refused to intervene. The empress was panicked and went out of the palace without permission to Kaifeng yamen for the sake of her brothers. Judge Bao said, "Your brothers have committed serious crimes, and you have left the palace privately. Tomorrow, I will report this to the emperor." The empress was rendered speechless and could only return to the palace. The next day, the Lady Dowager reported to Emperor Rentsong, who had no choice but to send a group of senior officials to the Kaifeng yamen for mediation. Judge Bao anticipated their arrival and instructed his subordinates to put on a notice: Anyone who dares to enter my yamen today will be punished with the same way as the Tsao brothers. Upon hearing this, which minister dared to enter? Knowing that Judge Bao would show no mercy, the emperor had no

alternative but to come to the Kaifeng yamen in person because the Lady Dowager pleaded pitifully in his palace. Judge Bao came forward to greet the emperor, and bit the jade belt three times, saying, "Today is neither a day for worshipping heaven and earth nor for encouraging agriculture. Your Majesty's casual leave from the palace will cause a drought of three years upon the realm." Emperor Rentsong explained, "I am here today specifically for my two brothers-in-law. Please spare them for my own sake." Judge Bao retorted, "If Your Majesty are determined to save them, a written pardon would suffice. There is no need for a personal visit. Now your younger brother-in-law's crimes are overwhelming. If you do not follow my verdict, I would rather resign my official position and return to farming."

Then Emperor Rentsong had to return to his palace. Judge Bao ordered his men to escort the younger brother from prison to the execution ground for execution. Upon learning of this, the Lady Dowager once again pleaded with the emperor to issue a pardon to save the two brothers. The emperor granted her request, and issuing the pardon sent an envoy to the execution ground. Judge Bao knelt and listened as the decree was read, which only pardoned the criminals in the capital and the two imperial relatives. Judge Bao remarked, "All those that commit crimes are the subjects of the emperor, yet he pardons only those in the capital but not in the entire empire! Execute the younger brother first, while the elder brother shall be beheaded at noon." Upon hearing that her younger son had been executed, the Lady Dowager hurried to plead with the emperor. Prime Minister Wong advised, "Your Majesty must issue a general pardon throughout the country in order to save your elder brother-in-law." The emperor consented and immediately drafted a decree to be issued throughout the country, pardoning all criminals regardless of their crimes. Upon hearing of the pardon, Judge Bao removed the heavy chains from the elder brother on the spot, and sent him back to his residence, where he and his mother embraced and wept together. He repented and said, "I have brought shame upon my ancestors and been reborn from death. Now I am to resign my official position and go live a peaceful life in the mountains." Despite his mother's efforts to persuade him otherwise, he was determined. Later, he received guidance from a master and entered the realm of immortals, a tale not to be further expounded.

Judge Bao settled this lawsuit and ordered Yuan Wencheng's body to be buried on the

sunny side of the Nanshan Mountain.

From the treasury, he bestowed thirty taels of silver upon Lady Cheunng and sent her back to her hometown. At that time, all the families who received amnesty praised Judge Bao for his benevolence and virtue. By executing one brother-in-law, he avenged Yuan Wencheng; by pardoning the other, he freed all prisoners throughout the country. Truly, his actions were as refreshing as a sudden downpour on parched earth.

Case 62

Sanglin Town

After relieving the famine victims, Judge Bao left for the capital city. When he passed Sanglin Town, he stayed there for a rest. He told his subordinates, "I am staying in the Dongyue Temple for three days. If the locals have grievances, they can come to me for help." Suddenly, an old lady who lived in a dilapidated cave heard of this and came forward to complain. Seeing that the old lady had poor eyesight and was dressed in rags, Bao asked, "Who are you and what are you suing for?" "It was a capital offence to mention my name," the old lady kept complaining. Bao smiled and asked why. The old lady replied, "Only the true Judge Bao can redress my injustice. I am afraid you are not the true one." Judge Bao asked, "How can you tell the real Bao from the fake one?" "I can't see with my eyes, but I know the one with a sarcoma on the back of his neck is the real Bao, and only to the real Bao can I express my grievances." Bao beamed, "Feel free to touch it." The old lady approached to Bao, and hugging his head reached out to touch it. Sure enough, there was a mole. Knowing that he was real, she slapped Bao in the face twice, which scared the nearby staff. Bao did not blame her and asked her what her grievances were. The old lady muttered, "It would be better if we kept this between you and me. We can talk about it only when the staff beside us are away." So Bao asked his men there to leave. When she knew no one was around, the old lady cried loudly, "I am from Haoshui Town, Haochou Prefecture. My father is Lee Tsonghwa, who used to be a military commissioner. I have no brothers because my father only has

one daughter. Due to my poor health, I came to the Taiching Temple to practice Taoism at the age of 13 and was called the Kinguan Taoist Nun. One day, Emperor Chentsong went to the Temple for worship. Attracted by my beauty, the emperor took me as his concubine. On the third day of March in the following year, I gave birth to the crown prince. At the same time the imperial concubine Lau who lived in South Palace bore a daughter. Owing to the minister of the imperial harem whose name is Guo Huai, who used a dirty trick to exchange my crown prince with Lau's daughter, I fell into a faint and accidentally made mistakes resulting in the daughter's death. So I was banished to the cold palace, and only Gardener Cheunng knew that I was wronged. On the third day of June, Gardener Cheunng saw the Crown Prince visiting the Inner Garden and tried to roughly explain to him the incident. Then Minister Guo reported it to Empress Lau, who had Cheunng hanged with a piece of silk and killed eighteen members of his whole family. Only until Emperor Chentsong passed away, and my son took over the throne, absolving the criminals in the cold palace, was I released and came to Sanglin Town to earn my living. I earnestly hope that Your Excellency can plead with the emperor and avenge my grievances, so that I can get a reunion with my son." Judge Bao asked, "When you gave birth to the crown prince, was there any birthmark?" The old lady said, "He was born without stretched hands. And a maid checked and found the word 'state' in the left hand and 'country' in the right." Hearing this, Judge Bao immediately helped the old lady up and sit on a chair. He knelt down and kowtowed, "I am as blind as a bat. Please forgive me, my empress dowager." Then she was presented brocade clothes to change and brought back to the capital city.

When Bao had an audience with Emperor Rentsong with many achievements, he reported, "When I received the imperial decree for coming back, I encountered with a Taoist priest who cried for three days and three nights. When asked why, the Taoist priest replied, 'The state has collapsed.' Further inquired, he explained, 'Today there is no real emperor, so the state has collapsed.'" When Rentsong heard this, he said with a smile, "The Taoist priest is crazy. I have the word 'state' in the left hand and 'country' in the right. How can I not be the real emperor?" Bao said, "I sincerely hope that your majesty can show me your hands to continue my words." Then Rentsong opened his hands and showed them to Judge Bao and other ministers, there being indeed those marks on his palms. Bao kowtowed and said, "You are the favored son of heaven, but it

is a pity that you have become a bandit chief.” All officials present turned pale after hearing this. The emperor questioned with a hint of anger, “Emperor Taitsu, my forefather, won the world with his benevolence and righteousness, and since the throne was passed down to me, I have never done anything wrong. Why am I a bandit chief?” Bao said, “Since Your Majesty is the legitimate emperor, how can you not know who your biological mother is?” “Empress Dowager Lau of Chaoyang Hall is my biological mother.” said Emperor Rentsong. Bao added, “I know from my visit that your real mother is earning a hard living in Sanglin Town. If you don’t believe me, ask the civil and military officials. Some of them know.” Rentsong asked the ministers, “What Bao said is somewhat suspicious. Is it true?” Prime Minister Wong answered, “This is your family affair, Your Majesty. You can know the result only if you ask Guo Huai, the minister in charge of the affairs of the imperial harem.” Rentsong then summoned Guo for inquiry. Guo returned, “Empress Dowager Lau is Your Majesty’s legitimate mother. Why ask? Bao is lying to deceive Your Majesty.” Emperor Rentsong was so angry that he would have Bao escorted downtown and beheaded. Prime Minister Wong chimed in, “There must be something reasonable about Bao’s words. I hope Your Majesty can send Guo to the Censorate for investigation.” The emperor followed the advice and made Imperial Censor Wong Tsai trace the truth of the matter.

At that time, Lau was afraid that the affair would be exposed, so she secretly consulted with Eunuch Hsu and decided to bribe Censor Wong with gold and silver. It turned out that Censor Wong was a corrupt official. When he saw that Hsu had brought a lot of treasure, he readily accepted it and releasing Guo entertained Hsu with rich food and wine. They were drinking when suddenly a big man with a black face burst in. Wong asking who he was, the black-faced man replied, “I’m the official in charge of ceremonies. Today is the Spring Festival, so I’m here to ask for some festive gifts.”

Therefore, Wong asked his subordinates to give him ten taels and three bowls of wine. Having drunk two bowls of wine, the black-faced man threw himself down on the steps, shouting grievances. When asked why, the drunken man answered, “It’s a big grievance that the emperor disowned his mother, and it’s a small one that officials take bribes.” Hearing this, Wong snapped, “What business is it of yours that the emperor disowned his mother?” So, Wong asked his men to hang up the black-faced man in the court. When they were hanging, someone reported the arrival of Prime Minister Bao. After

hurriedly ordering to put Guo back in prison, Wong came out to meet, only to see the servants outside but not Bao. So Wong asked, "Where is Judge Bao?" Dong Chao, Bao's subordinate, replied, "Lord Bao said he was discussing things with you, so we are here to help." Wong was shocked and confused. Dong Chao and the other subordinates entered together, seeing that the person hung up was none other than Judge Bao. They all came forward to relieve him. Judge Bao was furious and ordered Wong to kneel down, three buckets of pearl, ten ingots of gold and ten ingots of silver searched out. Bao proclaimed, "As a corrupt official breaking the law, you should be executed." Then, Bao ordered him to be beheaded and displayed in public.

At the same time, Eunuch Hsu sneaked back to the palace through the back door. Judge Bao submitted the bribery goods. Rentsong looked at it and hesitating to make the decision inquired, "Whom does the treasure belong to?"

Judge Bao reported, "I found out that it was from Empress Dowager Lau, who required the eunuch Hsu to deliver it to Censor Wong." Emperor Rentsong summoned Eunuch Hsu for interrogation. Hsu found it hard to hide the truth, so he had to admit on the spot that he was instigated by Empress Dowager Lau.

When Emperor Rentsong heard this, he was very angry and wondered, "If Empress Dowager Lau is my biological mother, why would she secretly bribe others? There must be some reason!" Then he banished Eunuch Hsu to the border area, and asked Judge Bao to interrogate Guo about the truth of the matter. Judge Bao took the order and returning to the yamen tortured Guo for the truth and even put him into prison after his refusal to confess. Then he instructed to Dong Chao and Shue Bar, "Do as I tell. If you find out the truth of Guo Huai's case, you will be richly rewarded." The two men went straight to the prison and unlocked Guo's chains privately. They took out a bottle of wine, drank with Guo and warned, "Empress Dowager Lau required you to keep the secret, and you will be richly rewarded after the matter is resolved." Guo didn't know it was a trick, so he drank until he got drunk and swore, "You two treat me well. When I return to the palace and meet Empress Dowager Lau telling her of your merits, you will be repaid." Dong thought it a perfect chance, took him into the inner cell and tortured him, "Guo, now that you know the truth, you had better tell us and avoid suffering." Guo Huai could not bear the pain, so he had to confess the truth.

The next day, Dong and Shue reported to Bao, who was overjoyed and presented the confessions to Emperor Rentsong. After reading the confession, he summoned Guo for interrogation. Guo then retorted, "I couldn't bear the torture so I had to confess. I can't believe there is a thing like that!" Emperor Rentsong said to Bao, "It is very difficult to deal with." Judge Bao proclaimed, "If Your Majesty hangs up Guo Huai in the garden of the Cheunng's family, the case will be solved."

The emperor consented to Judge Bao's proposal, and ordered to escort Guo Huai to Cheunng's garden. Judge Bao pre-installed secret devices, and sending Dong Chao and Shue Bar to Cheunng's garden in advance hung up Guo Huai for interrogation. At midnight, Bao praying to heaven and earth, suddenly the sky became dark, the stars and the moon dim. A fierce gale sprang up and took Guo away.

Guo Huai opened his eyes and saw ghost soldiers lined up on both sides, with the King of Hell sitting on top. The King of Hell asked, "Should the eighteen members of the Cheunng family be destroyed?" A judge approached and answered, "The Cheunngs should be destroyed." The king continued, "Should Guo Huai be destroyed?" The judge replied, "Minister Guo has six more years to go." When Guo Huai heard this, he begged, "Your Majesty, if you can solve this event, I will tell Empress Dowager Lau and conduct a grand rite in acknowledgment of your valuable help." "If you tell me what happened to Empress Dowager Lau in the past, I will forgive your sin." remarked the king. Guo Huai retold the previous events in detail. The registrar recorded it clearly. Upon hearing this personally, the emperor exclaimed, "Traitor! Can you still deny it now? I am the true emperor, not the King of Hell, and the judge is Prime Minister Bao." Guo Huai was so frightened that he was driven speechless, lowering his head and only asking for a quick death.

The emperor ordered to come back to the palace. When it was getting dawn, the civil and military officials gathered together, and the emperor ordered to welcome Empress Dowager Lee at the palace. The emperor and his mother were bittersweet to get their reunion, and the civil and military officials held a grand celebration for them. And then Empress Dowager Lee was led by the maids to the Pension palace for retirement. Emperor Rentsong wanted to put Empress Dowager Lau into a frying pan to vent his anger.

Bao admonished, “The law has no sword to slay the emperor, nor the pot to fry the empress dowager. If Your Majesty wants her to die, she will be hanged with white silk fabric of three meters long and sent to the back garden; and Guo Huai should receive the punishment of being boiled to death in the cauldron.” The emperor agreed to the proposal, and the criminals were punished accordingly. What a great strange case in history!

Case 63

3 Liters of Seeds in 10 Those of Foxtail Millet

In Shangshui County, under the administration of Chenchou, Kaifeng Prefecture, Honan Province, lived a man named May Ching, who received education at an early age and had a solid family background. Later, his parents, who had once been in good health, passing away, he left for the imperial examination after three-year's mourning. Unluckily, although taking part in the examination time and time again, he never made it. So, he said to his wife Chiang, "As an only son, I studied the Confucian classics from childhood to bring glory on my family and to be a great man in the world. But nothing worked out as planned. Father and Mother had passed away before witnessing my success. What an unfilial son I am! Nowadays, I often think it over. As the saying goes, to make a fortune, you have to do business all over the world. So I want to forsake Confucianism for business to realize my ambition. How could I idle about all my life in the countryside! What's your opinion, dear? " Chiang, from a neighboring county Seehwa, replied, "I have heard the saying that girls obey fathers before marriage, then husbands after. Since you are determined to engage in commerce, I am certainly with you. Hope you can take good care of yourself, and keep away from bad women. Suppose you earn some money, come back quickly." Considering it reasonable, May packed up goods and left for Chengdu Prefecture, Sichuan Province after bidding farewell to Chiang.

One day after six years, the thought of going back home suddenly came to his mind, so he packed his belongings and went to Chugerwuho Temple to draw lots. The lot read, “On your way home, never make a stop under the cliff, nor take a bath in the hot water. 3 liters of seeds in 10 those of foxtail millet, can redress the grievance for you.”

Having no idea about this sign, May Ching set off for home. On that day, the boat berthed under the cliff. Suddenly, what the sign suggested popped into May’s mind, so he asked the boatman to move it away. No sooner was the boat moved than the cliff collapsed all of a sudden and fell into the deep of the river. Extremely shocked, May came to believe the divination. Cautious all the way thereafter, he arrived home safely and was picked up by his wife to the living room. They exchanged pleasantries with nostalgia. It being late at that time and the night being dark, Chiang boiled a basin of water, saying, “Dear, you must have had a hard journey, so please take a bath for a good rest.” At this, May Ching suddenly recalled the divination, “You can’t take a bath in the hot water.” Then he made an excuse, “I want no bath today, so don’t bother yourself about me.” Hearing that, she did not urge him anymore but went for a bath herself. Unexpectedly, someone hid in the bathroom beforehand and poked a sharp spear into her belly. Poor Chiang, this beautiful and graceful lady, breathed her last. And the murderer sneaked out of the room. After a long wait outside but not seeing Chiang come out, May Ching had to light up the hand-lamp and carrying it entered the bathroom, only to find her corpse on the floor. Mourning made him slip into coma several times. Wishing to appeal to the court the next day, he had no idea who the killer was. However, some neighbour hurried to the court after hearing about this event, charging May Ching for murdering Chiang without any reason.

After reading the complaint, Lord Bao instantly detained May Ching for further questioning. Hence, May told him about the divination.

At that, Bao thought to himself, “May has just come back, so it’s unreasonable to kill his own wife.” Then he told May Ching, “With your six-year absence and your wife’s good looks, I think there must be a paramour who schemed to murder you, while you had a narrow escape since you comprehended the sign. With the last part of the lot, I think you can only get three liters of seeds from 10 those of foxtail millet. So there is no doubt that the other seven (pronounced to be ‘Chee’ in Chinese) liters are chaff

(pronounced to be 'Kang' in Chinese). Is this adulterer Kang Chee?" May Ching returned, "Kang Chee is my neighbor, sure enough." Lord Bao ordered his entourage to summon Kang Chee for trial. Kang without denying kowtowed and recounted his misdeed, "Fascinated by Chiang's beauty but unable to get her, I came across an evil design of murdering May Ching but killed Chiang by mistake. Your Excellency are so perspicacious that I voluntarily plead guilty." Judge Bao signed the confessions, and the penalty on the murderer was a life for a life. At this, people near and far gasped in admiration.

Case 64

The Surname “Yu” on the East Side

In Yuanchou, Dongking lived Cheunng Chee and his younger brother Cheunng Han. Chee married Miss Chou and had a one-year-old son. Once Chou’s biological mother fell ill, so she sent a servant to tell her daughter about the illness.

When Chou was told, she discussed with her husband about going home to visit her mother. Several days later, she prepared and went back. Fortunately, the mother was healed when she arrived. She stayed there for more than a month. Later, Cheunng Chee’s old friend Pan became a county officer in Lin-an and he sent a servant to invite Chee. Receiving the letter, Chee told the servant to send back the message and promised to attend the meeting. After Pan’s servant was back, Chee told his brother, “I have promised to go to Lin-an county at Pan’s invitation. The home needs to be guarded. Please go to inform the Chou’s family on behalf of me and bring your sister-in-law back. The younger brother agreed.

The next day, Cheunng Han arrived at Chou’s home and told his sister-in-law, “My elder brother will go on a long journey, and he told me to bring you back home.” As a virtuous woman, Chou respected her brother-in-law a lot and asked servants to prepare some good wine. After drinking several cups, he said, “There is still a long way to go, so we’d better set out early.”

Then Chou bid farewell to her parents and came back on foot. In sizzling May, it was extremely hard for Chou to hold a baby and climb on a high ridge, so she said to Han, "It's quite hot at noon. Since it's not far from home, how about having a rest in the forest and then resuming the journey?" Han replied, "In case you are tired, it's a good idea to sit for a short time. Maybe I can hold the nephew to go back first, and then order bearers to pick you up." Chou said, "It couldn't be better." When Han and his nephew arrived, Chee was waiting for them at the gate. Han said, "Sister-in-law is tired and waiting to be picked up." Immediately Chee hired sedan bearers to deliver her but failed to find her. The bearers came back and reported what had happened. Han was freaked out, and together with his brother went back to the place where they had taken a break. Chou was still missing. Han suspected that maybe she had gone back home for something left and suggested that they return to the Chous to figure it out. Chee did as told, but Chou's family responded that she had been gone for nearly half a day and never returned. Being ever-flustered, they came back again to the forest to search for Chou. Finally, it turned out that she was killed in a secluded corner with the head missing. Crying his heart out, Chee together with his brother immediately paid men to put Chou's body in a good coffin. The next day, Chou's family learned about her death. Chou Lee, Lady Chou's elder brother, who was wild about lawsuits, snatched Han to the court of Censor Tsao, complaining that Han had intended to rape his sister but failed. And he claimed that for fear of being exposed, Han committed the murder.

Believing his words, Tsao tortured Han to plead guilty, but Han refused to give in. Thus Tsao demanded his judge to search for the head of Lady Chou in the ridge but in vain. Consequently, the judge secretly had a woman's grave untombed, taking out the corpse and cutting off the head for their mission. Tsao reexamining the case, how could Han confess the nonexistent crime? However, he surrendered himself beyond tolerance at last. He was charged with murder, and put in prison, awaiting sentence.

Nearly half a year later, it happened that Judge Bao patrolled in Dongking city. The case of Cheunng Han caught Bao's attention so he summoned Han to the court for details. Judge Bao wondered why Han couldn't find the head but Tsao's judge got it. There must be something fishy. Then Bao had Han put in prison with no instruments of torture. Afterwards, he demanded Cheunng Leung and Shue Bar, two guards, to fetch a fortune-teller in the south street. After a while, Wizard Cheunng was found. Judge Bao

said, "Please begin your divination with most piousness." The wizard felt confused and asked, "Could you please tell me what you want to know, Your Excellency?" "Leave me alone. You only need to practise the divination", said Judge Bao. As a result, there showed an image of "seclusion and retreat". The wizard immediately explained to Judge Bao, "It means the criminal has not yet been brought to justice, related to the underworld." "What did the words read?" asked Judge Bao. The wizard answered, "So complex is it that it needs your pondering, Your Excellency. The divination read: 'Where there is the image of seclusion and retreat, there is a deep thinking by yourself. The surname Yu (聿) goes on the east side; without doubt, it is Kangkou (糠口) rich in rice.'"

Judge Bao read and muttered for a while. Without any idea, he rewarded the wizard with a hodful of rice. Judge Bao inquired, "Is there any place named Kangkou?" "No", replied his subordinates.

Judge Bao retreated to his back hall, sitting with a candle in his hand and mediating on the matter, suddenly an epiphany occurring. The next day, he had Cheunng Leung and Shue Bar detained Chee's neighbor Shiao and instructed, "You take the two guards to the hotels in Chiankang, and figure out what had happened to Cheunng Chee's family. Come back in three days." Shiao tried to refuse since it was so complicated that he might be unable to accomplish it on time, but then he compromised when seeing Bao's angry look. Then he followed the two guards to find out Chou's death along the way, but unfortunately in vain. When they arrived at a hotel in Chiankang, it was lunchtime. In the hotel sat two businessmen with a young woman cooking lunch. Because of tiredness, the businessmen naturally lay in bed. Shiao silently stared at the woman with a surprising sense of déjà vu, and so did the woman. Thus, they looked at each other for a long time. The woman approached to Shiao and greeted gloomily, "Excuse me, grandpa, but where are you from?" Mr. Shiao answered, "I come from Pingshiang and my family name is Shiao." Hearing that his hometown was the same as her husband's, she inquired, "Have you ever heard about Cheunng Chee?" Mr. Shiao screamed, "You sound like Lady Chou!" Chou whimpered, "I'm definitely Cheunng Chee's wife." And Mr. Shiao explained the reason why Cheunng Han was put in prison. Chou said, "He is wronged! At that time, he took my child back home while I sat in the forest waiting alone for him. Suddenly, two businessmen came up, and pulling out their knives forced

me to take off my clothes and shoes. I was scared and did as told. They put my clothes and shoes on a woman from a cage. She was dismembered, her head put in the cage but her body thrown in the forest. Then I was put in the cage, suffering a lot throughout the journey. It is my great blessing to come across you here! Could you please tell my husband to save me?"

With that, she burst into tears. Mr. Shiao continued, "Cheunng Han's case remains unsettled, so Lord Bao sent me here for investigation. It is out of expectation that we meet here. I will bring you back after informing the yamen runners." Chou stopped sobbing, and went back to pacify the two businessmen. Lunch prepared, Mr. Shiao notified the runners of what Chou had experienced. After finishing their lunch, Cheunng and Shue entered the hotel while Lady Chou was eating with the two businessmen. The two guards stated, "Lord Bao had issued a warrant for your arrest. Please go with us." Hearing the name "Lord Bao", the two merchants were driven too dumbfounded to move. They were tied up and brought back to Bao's office along with Lady Chou. With exultation, Lord Bao summoned Cheunng Chee for inquiry. In the office, the couple wept in each other's arms. Then, Lady Chou reported all the details. The two merchants could do nothing but admit their crime. Lord Bao had them put in prison with long flails after finishing the case file. Having redressed Cheunng Han's wrongs, he questioned Tsao's judge for the head of the female corpse. The judge couldn't hush it up and confessed his crime. All the criminals concerned convicted, Bao reported the case to the emperor for review. Several days later, the emperor decreed to execute the two merchants immediately, who committed murder cruelly. Because Censor Tsao and his judge delivered a wrong verdict after falsely charging Cheunng Han under torture, they were dismissed from office. The merchants' properties were awarded to Mr. Shiao. Cheunng Han was released and Lady Chou went back to her husband's home. Chou Lee was sent into exile owing to his crime of false charge. Tsao's judge was sentenced to death because he opened the coffin and cut off the head of the female corpse. Then the case was finished. The subordinates inquired Lord Bao for the reason of figuring out the case by divination. Lord Bao explained, "Yin and Yang can almost reflect the retribution. In the divination, the first two lines are auxiliary. The third one is 'The surname Yu goes on the east side'. But there is no family name Yu (聿) in the world. If you put '去' (it means 'goes') before Yu (聿), you

will get the word Chian (the Chinese pronunciation of ‘建’). As to the following line, ‘Without doubt, it is Kangkou (糠口) rich in rice.’ I thought ‘Kangkou’ was the name of a place. But there is no such place after I made an inquisition about it. If you remove ‘米’(its meaning is rice) from ‘糠’, you will get the word ‘康’(its Chinese pronunciation is Kang). So the name of the place is Chiankang. There is a courier station called Chiankang forty-five kilometers away from the city. It’s an important transportation junction where merchants come together in crowds. I also suspect Lady Chou was taken there, so I sent the neighbor who knows her for a visit. There should be her whereabouts. It’s in accordance with my expectation.” Thus, the subordinates all gasped in admiration at Lord Bao’s outstanding inference.

Case 65

The Cellar

In Shangtsai County, Ru-ning Prefecture, Honan Province, lived a rich man Kim Yanlong. He and his wife, Chou, had a son named Benrong. When Benrong was twenty-five years old, he married Chiang Yumay, a pretty twenty-year-old girl. One day, Kim Benrong met a fortune-teller in the street and was told that there would be a disaster of bloodshed within a hundred days. The disaster would disappear only if he went out to avoid it for a hundred days. Benrong pondered, "There is an adoptive brother named Yuan Shekfu doing business in Luoyang. It would be better if I went over to him so that I could not only avoid disaster, but also do business there."

Benrong talked to his parents and wife about it. Kim Yanlong said, "If so, I have a pair of jade earrings and one hundred pearls, which is worth 100,000 taels in total. You can take them away to do some business." Kim Benrong agreed and promised to do as his father instructed. When they were talking, Chiang Yumay came up and advised, "Dear Father and Mother, my husband usually likes to drink. If he goes to Luoyang with so much money, I am afraid something might go wrong. How could he go by himself? Since it's peaceful outside now, please allow me to go with him." Kim Yanlong conceded, "I'm also worried his bibulosity would cause trouble, and it would be better if you could go with him. Today is an auspicious day. You can pack your things and set off." And then Yanlong gave the earrings and pearls to Benrong and demanded that he

return home after one hundred days and not go too far in case they should worry. Benrong agreed, and saying goodbye to his parents left with his wife. On the evening, they checked in an inn and drank a little. While they were drinking, a Taoist priest came into the inn. The priest looked at the couple and said, "I'm here to ask for a bowl of vegetarian food." Benrong was used to admiring and worshiping metaphysics and was devoted to studying Taoism, so he beamed, "Please sit down and drink with me, sir." The Taoist priest inquired, "Kim Benrong, where are you and your wife going?" Benrong asked in surprise, "Sir, why do you know my name even though we never met before?" "I have been instructed by a great master, so that I can predicate all the fortunes and misfortunes. Now, from your countenance, it can be seen that there will be disasters in your future, so you must be cautious."

Benrong begged him for help, "As an ordinary man, I don't know the expedient. Additionally, my parents at home needs some care from me. So, I entreat your excellency to save me since you can forecast the danger." The Taoist priest continued, "I know you and your wife have beneficent hearts for long. How can I do nothing but witness the misadventure happen? Now I would give you two panaceas, either of you take one, and you will naturally be saved from this disaster; during this period of time you should take your treasures with yourself firmly. If you encounter difficulties, you could go to the mountain to look for Master Shuechian." With these words he left.

Benrong traveled during the day and rested at night. In less than a day, he was almost in Luoyang County when he suddenly heard passers saying that King Chao Yuanhao of the Western Har Dynasty had invaded the border area, and that the residents in Luoyang had escaped. Hearing the rumors, Benrong thought for a while and told his wife Chiang Yumay, "I once made a friend named Lee Chonglee in our hometown. He lived in Sishui County, under the jurisdiction of Chengchou, Kaifeng Prefecture. He went to our hometown to do business the year before last, and I have helped him multiple times. Why don't we ask for his help in this situation?" Yumay concurred his proposal. Then Benrong asked the local for the route to Lee Chonglee's house. He applied for admission when they reached in front of Lee's house gate. Upon hearing this news, Lee Chonglee immediately went out to welcome them.

After greeting and drinking tea, Chonglee inquired about the reason for their visit.

Benrong immediately told him the whole story: "The fortune teller warned me to avoid disasters and seek shelter. At first, I had intended to go to Luoyang for business by selling the pearls and jade that my father had given me. However, on the way, I heard about the invasion of the Western Har, so I came to you for help." Hearing that and attracted by the beauty of Benrong's wife, Chonglee said to Benrong, with a scheme coming to his mind, "Both Luoyang and Sishui are under the jurisdiction of Dongking Prefecture. If there are troops of Western Har invading our territory, we cannot be spared here. Whereas, I have a cellar. If there are invaders, we can go into the cellar. I am sure it is safe and sound. Take it easy and stay here for a while, my bro." Chonglee then entertained Benrong with wine, and also asked his servant Lee Tsi to send for his neighbor Granny Wong to help entertain the guests of honor. Lee Tsi took the order and soon brought Granny Wong to meet Yumay in the back hall. After dinner, they prepared a room for the Kims.

A few days later, intrigued by a multitude of money and the beauty of Benrong's wife, Lee Chonglee hatched a sinister plot. Lee Chonglee summoned Lee Tsi secretly and instructed, "When I went to Shangtsai County to do business, my capital was unjustly taken away by Kim Benrong. Now he is in my house, with hundreds of pearls and a pair of jade earrings. You take vengeance for me, lead him to a deserted place, and kill him. Make sure there is blood on the dagger, and bring his treasure and headscarf as evidence. I promise to keep you in comfort for a lifetime." After hearing about it, Lee Tsi experienced a burst of exaltation and they came to an agreement. The next day, Chonglee said to Kim Benrong, "I have a small villa with a cellar inside. You can go and take a look." Unaware of the plot, Benrong replied, "Since you have the villa, I will go for a visit with Lee Tsi." Immediately, Kim Benrong went to the villa with the servant. Sure enough, Kim Benrong carried his treasure with him day and night. When they two walked up to a desolate place, Lee Tsi took a sharp dagger out of his wrist and said, "I was told that when you were in Shangtsai County, you had cheated on my master. Today, I was ordered to kill you. And it is none of my business, thus you should not blame on me." Whereupon Lee Tsi waved his dagger and moved forward to kill him. Upon seeing this, Benrong was so scared that he quickly knelt on the ground and begged, "Brother Lee Tsi, please allow me to explain. I helped Lee Chonglee times when he was in Shangtsai County. Now, after seeing my beautiful wife, he became

ungrateful to me and schemed to murder me for my property and my wife, so I am really wronged! And I have old parents to support, so please pity me and spare my life, which will be a great merit.”

Hearing Kim’s words, Lee Tsi said perplexedly, “But I was asked to take the treasure back. So where is it now?” Benrong replied, “Here it is. Take it now and let me go please.”

When Lee Tsi saw the treasure, he continued, “I have heard that people who rob others, will not kill the victims. Now that I have got the treasure, I will take your turban as a proof. And I will report on my mission only if there is blood on my sword. Otherwise, it will be hard to report on my mission.” “That’s easy,” remarked Benrong. Then he took off his turban, and biting the tip of his tongue sprayed blood on the sword. Lee Tsi announced, “You are free now and had better hide yourself as soon as possible.” Benrong echoed, “Thank you for your mercy. I will do everything as you order.” Then he bid farewell and left.

That day, Lee Tsi went back home and reported on his mission. Chonglee was on cloud nine, demanding to give a banquet to Chiang Yumay. Seeing that it was late, Yumay said to Chonglee, “My husband went to check the grange, but why hasn’t he come back now?” “I am rich enough to support you for the rest of your life if you marry me, so why should you miss your husband?” remarked Chonglee. Yumay snapped, “My husband is still alive. How can you say such a bloody thing? Shame on you!” Attracted by her beauty, Chonglee headed forward to hug and kiss her. Enraged by his behaviors, Yumay pushed him away and lashed out at him, “I have learned that a woman should follow her father’s instructions before marriage and her husband’s after. Moreover, my husband has no intention of abandoning me. How could I tarnish my reputation by breaching morality!” Lee Chonglee proclaimed, “Your husband has been killed by me. If you do not believe it, I will show you the material evidence to stop your illusion.”

After that, he threw several things on the ground, and warned, “Darling, watch this kerchief and the dagger with blood. No one could survive when disobeying my will.” Seeing these objects, Yumay cried and fell to the ground. Chonglee moved forward to pick her up and prompted, “No need for you to be vexed. Now that your husband is dead, let me marry you, which is not a shame for your chastity. Why should you be so

stubborn?" After that, he could not suppress his sexual desire, trying to coerce Yumay into obedience. Yumei thought to herself, "This bastard not only robbed my husband of his property, but also murdered his life. Now he plans to take me as his concubine. If I don't obey, I will definitely die in his hands." So she cajoled to him, "I have been pregnant for half year. If you want to marry me, you should wait after the delivery. Otherwise I would rather die than be with you." Lee Chonglee thought to himself, "She would have no chance to run away after delivery." So he complied with her proposal. Then Chonglee instructed Granny Wong, "You go with this lady to the deep village near the mountain temple. I have an empty cottage there. You can hide her there until she gives birth. Regardless of gender, immediately throw away the baby. Let me know one month after that." Then, Granny Wong led Chiang Yumay over there as instructed.

Now back to Kim Benrong's father, Kim Yanlong. He was at home worrying about his son and daughter-in-law for he hadn't received any news about them for long. Then Kim Yanlong and his wife locked the door of their house, and packing their belongings came along the road to look for their son and daughter-in-law. Time flying, Yumay had been living in the cottage next to the mountain temple for several months. One day, she suddenly got a bellyache and then gave birth to a boy. Granny Wong came up to her and proclaimed, "This child can only be thrown into the water, otherwise I am afraid it will bring me trouble if Master Lee learns of it." Yumay pleaded again and again, "Granny Wong, considering his miserable father suffered from the misfortune, and that the baby was born with luck, I sincerely hope you can discard him with sympathy in a month." Granny Wong, observing Yumay's pathetic expression, sympathized with her experience and complied with Yumay's suggestion. Unconsciously another month going by, Yumay together with Granny Wong wrote down the birth date in a piece of paper, and putting it in the swaddling clothes, placed the baby in the mountain temple in the hope of that someone beneficent could take him away and raise him, so as to save his life. Unexpectedly, Kim Yanlong and his wife happened to come to this mountain temple to inquire about their fortune. They had just entered the temple when they bumped into Chiang Yumay. They were very surprised and asked where her husband was. Yumay whispered what had happened. Kim Yanlong was very sad and angry upon hearing this, so he quickly filed a suit to the government.

At that time, Judge Bao was on an inspection tour, and heard about this matter. The

next day, he dispatched his subordinates to Sishui County to capture Lee Chonglee and bring him to the court. Bao had Chonglee bludgeoned a hundred times and imprisoned before he could conduct a thorough investigation and interrogation. Granny Wong desired to be a witness and Yumay acknowledged to her. Bao ordered Kim Yanlong and others to wait outside. As for Kim Benrong, after he left Sishui County, he had nowhere to settle down, so he went straight to the mountains and ran into Master Shuechian. He stayed in the temple to become a monk, but he was quite glum for he didn't know the whereabouts of his parents and wife. Suddenly one day, the master said to Kim Benrong, "I'm dispatching you to Kaifeng Prefecture to beg alms. Your relatives are there, so be careful and remember to tell me what happened when you come back." Kim Benrong bid farewell to his master and went straight to Kaifeng Prefecture. He met his parents and wife, and together they went to the yamen of Kaifeng Prefecture. At that time, Bao was holding a court trial, so the father and son retold the story in detail. Bao immediately had Lee Chonglee brought out of prison for questioning. Chonglee dared not deny it and admitted everything: "My greed for money and murder was a fact, and my forced possession of Benrong's wife was also a fact." Lord Bao ordered to put long shackles and elbow locks on Lee Chonglee and escort him to death row. As rewards, half of Chonglee's property was given to Lee Tsi and the other half to Granny Wong. The robbed treasure was retrieved to Benrong. Lee Chonglee's wife and children were sent to remote areas for military exile.

All those who heard of the verdict felt very pleased.

Case 66

Dragon Cave

In Shiangtan village five miles away from the city center of Dongking lived a wealthy man Chyu Dun, who married Chen Wong's daughter in the same village. Though having delicate appearance, Chen was a woman of easy virtue. So honest a person was her husband that she was prone to detest him. At the western part of the town, a middleman named Wong Chee had delicate features. As a rake, he usually came to Chyu's home. And Chyu always treated him as a sworn brother.

Gradually, Wong was familiar with Chen and often communicated with her. One day, Chen was delighted beyond description at Wong's visit. She led him into the house and said, "My husband went to the tenant field and would not come back for the time being. This is a rare opportunity, and I have something to tell you. Please wait me here, and I will prepare the meal." Not knowing the reason, Wong could only nod and waited in silence. Soon, Chen prepared a table of wine and delicacies and drank with him. Half drunk, Chen had an ulterior motive and said to Wong, "I hear that you haven't married yet. Aren't you lonely when you sleep alone at night?" Wong answered, "I do not have that much luck to have a wife. But I am satisfied with my situation although I sleep alone with my pillow." Chen laughed, "Don't lie to me. The days the bachelor lives wear on like years. You say you are content just for some reasons. I believe that is not your true mind." Wong firstly took his friend as his priority and did not dare to speak

impudently to Chyu's wife. But now molested by Chen's words, Wong hovered and had a crash, saying, "Since you know I am lonely, will you take pity on me today?" Chen replied, "I do pity you, only afraid you would not love me." After flirting for a long while, they had sex while in high spirits and began their double life. It was the erotic audacity and eroticism that drove Wong to lodge in Chen's room from then on. Absent from home, Chyu was unconscious of the whole affair.

The servant of Chyu knew quite a lot of this scandal. He wanted to report it to his master, but feared that his master would be angry; but if he said nothing, he would feel very indignant. One day, Chyu Dun, having settled accounts with a tenant in the manor, lodged at the tenant's house. At midnight, Chyu said to his servant, "Now it is in the late autumn, and the quilt is not enough to keep out the cold. I don't know whether my wife would feel cold too." "Master, you are alone and cold outside, but your wife is warm at home every day," replied the servant. Chyu felt strange and suspicious, so he asked, "Why do you say so?" At first, the servant was not willing to speak out the truth. Asked urgently, he confided that Chen had affairs with Wong. At that, Chyu itched to see the dawn at once to return home. The next day when he was back home noticing Chen wore a radiant face, he became more sure of the affairs. That night, when Chyu queried the affairs between her and Wong, Chen pretended nothing had happened and argued, "The doors were never open when you were not at home, so who has ever come to our house? Don't slander me for this!" Chyu said, "Take it easy! Time will be the witness." Chen was too afraid to respond.

Early the next morning, Chyu went back to the manor. Wong came and noticing Chen's anxiety asked what was wrong. Chen didn't conceal and told him that their affairs had been exposed. Wong remarked, "Such being the case, you don't have to be anxious. I will no longer come to meet you from now on and everything will be fine." Chen said with a sarcastic smile, "I thought you were such a stand-out man that I made up my mind to follow you. But you turn out to be a man of no ambition. Why are you talking about splitting up when I have become intimately attached to you? We have to devise a plan for good?" "But what else can we do?" queried Wong. Chen prompted, "My husband must be killed, which can bring permanent benefit." Wong hesitated for a while and there was nothing he could think of. But suddenly, he was struck by a plan and declared, "You have a real wish, and I just think of a plan to kill him." "What is

it?" asked Chen. Wong explained, "There is a dragon cave on the top of a very high mountain. Whenever smog rises from the cave, rain is sure to fall. If it doesn't rain, there will be a drought. Now the villagers are going to pray there, and your husband will attend it as well. Upon his arrival, I can start my plan."

Chen said with excitement, "After the success of this plan, I have my own way to deal with other things." Wong spent a night with Chen and left.

The next day, as expected, the villagers went to the mountain for praying with drums beating and gongs clanging along the way. Chyu was among them and Wong just waited in front of the cave. Imperceptibly it was getting late and other villagers all left after praying, only Wong and Chyu left behind. Passing the dragon cave, Wong cajoled, "There is a dragon in front showing its claws."

Dun was surprised and bewildered with his neck craned to peer, of which Wong took advantage to push him. Not standing steadily, Chyu fell down into the cave. Wong immediately ran back to Chen and told her what had happened. Chen rejoiced and chuckled, "I think I am destined to be with you. From then on, Wong went in and out of her house without scruple in spite of being known to all. There were some relatives asking the reason for Chyu's long absence. Chen was trying to cover up and only told them that Chyu hadn't returned from his last trip. However, Chyu's servant was quite doubtful for his whereabouts. Seeing that Chen and Wong lived like a couple, he wanted to reported it to the government. Chen heard of this secretly and then drove the servant out.

Nearly one month later, Chyu returned home. At that time, Chen and Wong were drinking around the stove. Seeing Chyu coming in from outside, Wong was surprised and suspected that he was a ghost. So Wong stepped into the room, and taking out a sharp knife drove him out. Chyu, lamenting that he had nowhere to go, wandered in the street and met the servant, who hugged his master and asked him what had happened. Chyu told the story of his being pushed into the cave by Wong that day. The servant cried, "You haven't been home for a long time, so I began to suspect. Seeing Wong and my mistress getting close, I thought they must have murdered you. I had wanted to sue it to the court, but my mistress drove me out of the house. I didn't expect that I can see you again today. You should sue this to Kaifeng Yamen and redress your wrongs."

Following his advice, Dun immediately went to the government office of Kaifeng with a written complaint. Lord Bao inquired, "Since you were pushed into the dragon cave that day, how can you survive and go back?" Chyu cried, "I just don't know why. When I was pushed down, there were thatched reeds beside the cave. With the reeds supporting me, I was not hurt. The cave was very dark. After a long time, it gradually lit up. I saw a small snake lurking motionlessly in the middle. The cave was dry, but there was a spoonful of clear water. Holding and drinking it, I was no longer hungry and thirsty. Thinking that the snake must be a dragon, I often prayed to it for protection, and it didn't hurt me. Every time it moves around the cave, the snake would grow bigger and reveal its talent and ability; when it came out of the cave, it would soon rain, which lasted six or seven days. One day, I climbed upon the tail of the dragon. After going out of the cave, I was flung by the dragon's tail into the thatch near the cave. I went home immediately after that, only to see my wife drinking with Wong Chee. And then I was driven out by Wong with a sharp knife. So I am here to sue them." Chyu Dun couldn't stop crying when he finished his words.

After the inquiry, Bao immediately sent Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu to arrest Chen and Wong, who, at this time, was wondering about this matter and didn't expect that Chyu had returned home and gone to Kaifeng yamen to sue him. When interrogated, Wong argued, "At that time, villagers prayed and then went home early. Chyu fell into the cave by mistake at dusk. How could I have planned any harm? Besides, we had a good relationship and many contacts. How could there be adultery?" Wong keeping arguing, Bao ordered his subordinates to get the bed mat from Chen's room. Seeing the new sleeping traces of the two people, Bao thundered, "It's clear that you murdered him. Fortunately, Chyu survives. How dare you still deny it?" Under torture, Wong had to confess his crime and was sentenced to death together with Chen. Finally, Chyu Dun returned home, and everyone was delighted to see him.

Case 67

Good and Evil Not Rewarded

As the proverb goes, “Good is rewarded with good, and evil with evil. Whatever you put out there comes back to you sooner or later.” It is not only the decree of Hades, but a platitude. However, sometimes it is worth questioning.

In Dongking lived Yao Tang, whose family had been showing mercy as long as three generations, such as helping those in need, giving alms to monks, repairing bridges and roads and so on. Therefore, it was all believed that the descendants of the Yao family would be blessed. In Sheeking, there was a Song imperial clan member named Chao Boren, who did innumerable evils, like lusting for others’ fields and wives by virtue of his noble birth. By all accounts, he had been getting away with his crimes, relying on the wealthy clan; although unpunished in the upper world, he was doomed to penalty in the underworld. However, the Chao family had raised filial and virtuous offspring, many of whom passed the imperial examination and got good places, bringing glories to the family; the Yao family had brought up unworthy descendants, who divided up family property and lived apart, causing shame to the family. Consequently, so unconvinced was Yao Tang that he, after death, went to Hades for a suit.

“Due to the obvious bounds of good and evil, the retribution should be different. Wickedness goes unpunished in the upper world until it comes to the underworld. But now the time of retribution is disproportionate, so how can I endure that? I have always

had a clear conscience, but suffered the downfall of our big family by unworthy descendants. I have no idea why I am punished like this and beg for a full investigation. ”

After reading the indictment, Judge Bao inquired, “Yao Tang, what good deeds have you done that makes you feel wronged?” Yao replied, “I helped those in danger and repaired bridges and roads.”

Bao asked, “Anything else?” Yao continued, “More than that, but there are only such few things in my mind. However, Chao Boren did a lot of evil things. Why are his descendants so excellent and prosperous?” Bao returned, “I got it, please stay aside.” After a while, Chao Boren was summoned to the court. Bao queried, “Chao Boren, you had done cruel things in the upper world. How dare you come to see me?” Chao retorted, “Although I led an ordinary life in the upper world, without doing any good, I’ve never done any evil!” Bao bellowed, “With witnesses, how can you deny it! Bring Yao Tang here.” Yao Tang cried, “Chao Boren, you forcibly occupy others’ land, and lust for their wives and daughters. Confess it now!” Chao Boren explained, “There is no such thing, unless it’s done by the servant Lee.” Bao stated, “It must be so. If the master is Chin-shih, a common scholar, the servant will act as Chuangyuang, a super scholar; if the master is a lesser official, the servant will look like a prime minister. Such an ass in the lion’s skin! Bring Lee here at once!” Upon the servant’s arrival, Bao thundered, “How could you do evil to implicate your master?” With Chao’s presence and his own guilty conscience, Lee didn’t dare to speak. Bao declared, “There is no need for investigation. He must be the evildoer.” Chao Boren entreated, “I beg Your Excellency to punish this servant severely for bringing shame to his master.” Bao insisted, “I have my own way to deal with it.” He turned to Yao Tang, querying, “You say you’ve done good deeds in your life, but you’ve never had good intentions. You did such good works just for the purpose of earning yourself a good reputation as well as a few coins. In fact, you were reluctant to spend money on it, so you secretly plotted against others to fill in the money and grain that had been paid for. As the saying goes, ‘If you have an ill intention, God will know it.’ In most cases, the criterion of kindness lies in a good heart. If it is measured only with money and silk, there will be no place for the poor to accumulate merits. With a good heart, even if one doesn’t give up a cent, he is still kind; with an evil heart, even if he donates ten thousand taels every day, his

crime can not be covered up. With a black heart, how can you teach your descendants to be kind-hearted? Chao Boren, it is the vicious servant that has tied your reputation down. Therefore, with a bad reputation and good intention, you deserve prosperity and your descendants good results. What comes around goes around. The retribution may come early or late, but we never fail to receive the blessings or calamities we deserve.” Then Bao had Lee thrown into the boiling oil, the other two men taking their leave. With deep insight into this case, Bao indeed made an entirely new comment.

Case 68

Maldistribution of Lifetime

There was an official in the nether world, whose job was to determine when people should die, and to bring them back to life when they didn't deserve death. If someone did good deeds, his lifetime would be prolonged, and vice versa. Therefore, it was usually believed that our life spans depended on our virtues, which was worth questioning sometimes anyway.

In Shandong Province lived a man named Ran Dao, who followed a vegetarian diet and did all kinds of good works, thus hailed as a Buddha. Another man with the name Chen Yuan, did all evils in his whole life, looting people's property, eating their livers and so on and so forth, everyone calling him a yaksha. According to the lifetime hypothesis, the earlier the yaksha died, the longer the Buddha lived, the happier people would get. Unexpectedly, the "Buddha" died young, while the yaksha lived a long life ending in his nineties with no pain and illness. Naturally, it was not convincing. As a result, Ran went to the hell to file a suit, "Beneficence expands the life span, while evil-doing shortens it, which Hades has the right to determine, and we ordinary people only wish it were. Now, after accumulating merits for so long, I die younger than the evil-doer. If so, people will certainly flee from Buddhist doctrines and follow the examples of malefactors. Premature death is not a merciful release. A living dog is better than a dead lion. That's why I'm here for an appeal."

Reading the indictment, Lord Bao inquired, “Ran, why are you complaining about the maldistribution of lifetime?” Ran denied it as a grudge, retorting, “As a beneficent vegetarian, I deserved a life span of several years longer, which, I reckon, is incorrectly recorded by the lifetime book.” Lord Bao explained, “As a matter of life and death, it’s not easy to misjudge in hell. Just bring the officials concerned for investigation.” In a while, an official came to report, “Ran was kind outside but not inside.” Bao declared, “Without a good heart, it’s no use having a vegetarian diet. What’s worse, it is some of you vegetarians that have more vicious hearts, hogging things in the name of vegetarianism. As the saying goes, Buddha’s mouth but a viper’s heart. A man like you, with greater sins than those carnivores, can just fool ordinary people in the upper world but never escapes punishment in the underworld. How dare you feel unconvinced!” So convinced was Ran that he had to admit his guilt, still complaining, “But how could Chen Yuan, a villain, live a long life?” Then Chen was summoned to the court.

Upon Chen’s arrival, Bao instructed, “Don’t ask him, just go to the book of good and evil and figure it out.” Instantly, a guard reported, “Fair enough!” “How?” “His family has accumulated merits for three generations.” “O, I see. If a man did good in his life, his descendants of 10 generations would be blessed, not to mention a family accumulating merits as long as three generations. Even though the evildoers could survive for several years longer in the upper world, he would definitely suffer in hell.” Then he made a comment, saying, “Ran Dao argued that he died early with all his benefactions while Chen Yuan lived a long life despite his evildoing. But kindness should be judged internally and evil in the long run. Why should a vegetarian live longer while a carnivore dies young? If a man showed mercy in his life, his descendants of many generations would be blessed, with small faults forgiven. Nice words with an evil heart is a worse crime. Doing evil but living longer will make one suffer more in hell. Don’t get confused and go back now.”

At the judgement, the two men felt convinced and left with a kowtow.

Case 69

Sanniangtsi

In Chieyang County, Chaozhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, lived a man named Chao Shin, who made an appointment with his friend Chou Yee to go to Kaifeng for cloth. Booking Cheunng Chao's boat, he agreed to meet Chou on board at dawn the next day.

When Shin boarded the boat at about 1 a.m., Cheunng noticed no one around, and rowing deep into the river pushed Shin into water. Back to the shore, he pretended to sleep. Only when Chou called his name at arrival the next morning did Cheunng get up. After breakfast, Shin still didn't show up, so Chou asked the boatman to urge him. In front of Shin's house, Cheunng shouted several times, Shin's wife, Lady Sun with the name of Sanniangtsi, opened the door, who had had to get up early to prepare breakfast for her husband and slept again after his leave. Cheunng asked, "Your husband agreed to meet Chou Yee on the boat yesterday. Now Chou has been waiting long. Why doesn't your husband go?" Sanniangtsi replied in surprise, "My husband did leave home early, but how come he hasn't arrived yet?" Cheunng went back to Chou, who returned to Lady Sun for Shin, but three days later still no news of him. Chou thought, "It's known that I made an appointment with Shin to do business together. I'm afraid people will place the blame on me for his disappearance." Hence he went to the county government to explain the situation together with a few witnesses the boatman

Cheunng, the neighbors Chao Chee, Chao Hsieh and Lady Sun.

Chu Yeeming, the county magistrate, accepted the case and arrested the suspects to the yamen. Chu first interrogated Lady Sun, who said, "My husband took the silver and went out after breakfast. I've no idea what happened later." When inquired, Cheunng Chao answered, "The day before yesterday, Chou and Shin came ask me to steer. It being still dark yesterday, Chou arrived, but Shin did not, which dozens of boatmen nearby can testify. Then Chou asked me to urge him. Only after I reached his home calling 'Sanniangtsi', did she get up to open the door. Then Chu turned to the neighbors Chao Chee and Chao Hsieh, who returned, "Before Shin left home for business, his wife had quarreled with him, and no one noticed him leave early."

Then the magistrate rebuked the accuser, "You must have wanted the money from him. That is why you sued first after killing." Chou retorted, "How can I kill him alone and where can I bury him? As a friend richer than him, I'm redressing the injustice for him but now you say I'm the killer. How unfair!" Sun interjected, "As an old friend of my husband, he is definitely not the murderer. It's likely that the ship-owner killed my husband at his early arrival." Cheunng argued, "There were so many boats around. How could I outwit people if I killed him? And it was still dark when Chou waked me up, which proved my innocence. She said Chao went out home early but her neighbors were in complete ignorance. She was fast asleep with the door closed until I called her. It's clear she's the killer." Treated with cruel torture and too weak to stand it, Lady Sun moaned, "Since my husband is gone, my only choice is to follow him. It was me causing his death. I should have stopped him from going out." When asked for the location of the corpse, Sun replied, "I'm the murderer. If you want his corpse, you can take mine as a return. Why do you have to investigate?" No matter how many times she was questioned, that was her only reply.

In the next autumn trial, the case would be concluded. Chief judge of central judicial office, Yang Ching, perspicacious and perceptive, commented while reading the case file of Lady Sun: "The man who knocked at the door calling 'Sanniangtsi' had already known her husband's absence from the house. Therefore, he decided that the helmsman was the murderer and asked for retrial. On a tour in Chaochou Prefecture at that time, Judge Bao took Cheunng Chao into custody individually for inquiry, "Chou asked you

to urge Shin, and you should have called Shin's name, but why did you call his wife's name first? You must have known Shin had been dead, so you only called his wife's name!" At that Cheunng was rendered dumbfounded. Lord Bao declared, "It was you that killed Shin and framed his wife instead." Refusing to confess even after being flogged thirty times plus another hundred, Cheunng was put in prison. After that, one sailor was summoned and beaten forty floggings before enquiry. "You murdered Chao Shin last year, and Boatman Cheunng Chao serves as a witness, so you must answer for your crime." cajoled Bao.

In a flurry, the sailor conceded, "It was about 1 a.m without anybody or boat around when I saw Chao Shin get on the boat. Then Cheunng Chao rowed the boat farther and pushed Shin into water. And Cheunng punted near the shore, pretending to sleep with clothes off until Chou Yee's arrival in the morning. As a murderer, how can Cheunng frame me?" Then Lord Bao ordered the sailor to confront Cheunng Chao, who was rendered speechless. Finally, Cheunng Chao was sentenced to death, Lady Sun released, and Magistrate Chu demoted as a civilian.

Indeed, there is no injustice in jail or fatuity in officialdom.

Case 70

The Ringleaders

There was a warlock in Pingliang Prefecture, who was practising physiognomy, attracting a group of rubbernecks before the prefecture government. Among them was a silk merchant named Bee Mao, who had over ten taels wrapped by a handkerchief hidden in his sleeve. At this time, his silver was lifted up by a ruffian and then fell off from his sleeve to the ground. Mao realized it immediately and bent over to pick it up when the ruffian came to scramble for it. Mao asked, “The silver is off from my sleeve. What does it have to do with you?”

The ruffian replied brazenly, “We don’t know who dropped the silver. But none other than I saw it first and was ready to pick it up. How could you take it as yours? So why don’t we just divide it equally among all of us?” Everyone came to his defense when hearing of the share of money. Mao, of course, refused to share. Thus, with a tussle, they went to see Lord Bao. The ruffian pre-empted Mao, “I’m Luo Chin. It’s I that picked the lost silver up first while watching the fortune teller’s play. But this guy insists on snatching it!” Mao argued, “I also enjoyed the play there. Suddenly, my silver fell to the ground. Then I picked it up. Luo Chin, however, wanted to have half of it. Judging from his words, I think it’s highly likely that he was a ruffian and stole the silver. It must be he that cut off my sleeve. If not, how could my silver drop when I hold it firmly with both of my hands?” Chin rejoined, “If I had done this, your sleeve

would have a cut. Just check it. Besides, I sell tin with my servant Kingui. We have enough money and live in the Lee's store in the south street. How could I be a ruffian?" Also proficient in physiognomy, Bao did not think Luo Chin looked like a good man. So he immediately sent his men to the South Street to take his servant and accounts to check. Luo did keep an account of the sale of tin, so Bao didn't suspect him anymore. Then Bao asked Mao, "You said that the money is yours. Do you remember how much it is?" Mao answered, "This silver is for daily use. I can't remember the amount of it."

Bao sent retainers to bring two onlookers randomly for inquiry. Both of them pointed at Luo Chin and said, "He saw the silver first." And then they pointed to Mao and said, "This man picked it up first." Bao asked, "Chin saw it first. Did he say he wanted to pick it up?" The two men answered, "Exactly. When he heard Luo Chin say there was a bag, Bee Mao picked it up first. Finding it was money, they began to scramble for it." Bao concluded, "Mao, since you don't know how much the money is, it must be the lost money from someone else. You should split it with Chin." So they divided the money in the court and departed with eight taels each.

Bao instructed Yu Chee, one of his yamen runners, "Stalk them two and see what they would say." Yu Chee came back and reported, "Mao went back to his shop and complained about your lordship. He said he was cheated by that scoundrel. Luo Chin went out and those two witnesses asked him for silver. They followed Luo to the store, and then I don't know what happened next." Bao then instructed a young informal employee Ren Wen, "You and Chee go to exchange for 5 taels of fake silver and mix several of real silver in it. Expose yourself to Chin on purpose and then go to somewhere crowded. There must be cutpurses. Bring the thief to me, and you shall get a reward." So Ren Wen walked with Yu Chee to the South Street, where they met Luo Chin. Ren Wen deliberately unwrapped the silver bag to buy cherries. Yu Chee also took out money, saying, "I buy some to treat you." Having bought the cherries and eaten them, the two men directly headed to the Dongyue temple to watch opera. Yu Chee was too young and inexperienced to find out when the money in his sleeves was stolen. Even though watching the play, Ren Wen kept an eye on his money so that he could catch the thief. After a short while, with the crowd tightly around him, there was one person in the back, put his hand on Wen's sleeve. Then his silver bag came out of his cuff. Wen therefore knew that it was the thief. So he reached his hand back and

grabbing yelled, "Thief!"

Unfortunately, the thief successfully slipped away when Ren was sandwiched in between two people, who huddled more closely around him. Then Ren grabbed the two people and declared, "Here we are to catch the thief on Lord Bao's demand. Now that he has fled stealthily, both of you shall go with me to testify." The two challenged, "We were about to stop the thief when hearing your exclamation! But it's not our fault to let him run away! It was too crowded to catch him. And what does that have to do with us?" Ren explained, "Well, I just need you to vouch for me. It was not my willful dereliction of duty but the hustle and bustle that resulted in the perpetrator's escape."

The locals came to help when they recognized Ren and Yu. Then the two men were sent to Lord Bao reporting what they knew.

Bao asked their names, one being Cheunng Shan, the other Lee Liang. Bao lashed out at them, "How dare you deliberately let the thief out? Now both of you shall take the fall." Cheunng Shan cried out his grievances, "Alas, who would have expected that his money would be stolen during a play packed with people? It's unfair to dump the blame on me. I hope that Your Excellency could discern the truth." Bao sneered, "What a satire! Your names Shan and Liang (meaning 'kind' and 'good' respectively in Chinese) are obviously pseudonyms for the thieves. So it is right for my assistant to bring you to justice." Then they each were punished to serve as couriers for two years after being caned twenty times. Bao commanded his men to escort them to the courier station and privately contacted the Head there, "I'm hereby writing to you for the two criminals, Lee Liang and Cheunng Shan. Please extort them heavily and send the money intactly to me."

The superintendent Chyu got this letter and knew what to do. He displayed instruments of torture when the two arrived, intimidating them, "Club each of them forty times!" Cheunng and Lee begged hurriedly, "Please! Have mercy on us! The thief made all the blame fall on us! We knew the law, but felt totally exhausted after arrival. We beg you for our little lives!" Then they offered four taels to Chyu through his men in the hope that they would be set free after three days.

Chyu then transferred the sliver to the yamen personally. Bao ordered Yu Chee to

recognize them. Yu said, "These are exactly what had been stolen in the temple the day before yesterday." So, after seeing Chyu off, Judge Bao had Cheunng Shan and Lee Liang sent under guard to him. Bao queried, "Who is the thief the day before yesterday? I would exonerate you if you are honest about it." Cheunng replied, "I would have blurted it out if I had known. How could I possibly take the rap for others to suffer the torture?" Bao said, "Since Ren's sliver hadn't been stolen, I wouldn't blame you. But Yu's sliver had! How could we let it go when the money of the yamen's people went missing? If you could confess to me, I would take the incident no further."

Lee Liang argued, "How could we know the thief's name? We are not the ringleaders." Judge Bao explained, "The silver has been recovered. All you have to do is tell me the name of the thief." "Since you've got the sliver, you must have caught the thief. How could one person steal the money but the other uses it?" retorted Lee Liang. Then Bao threw the four fake taels to the ground, "Those are what you presented to Chyu this morning. And Yu Chee recognized them as his, so there is no doubt that you two are thieves. Meanwhile, you two have let the thief who stole Ren's sliver away. Now, just tell the truth quickly." Seeing that the truth was brought to light, Cheunng Shan and Lee Liang gave in, "We are a group of thieves, around 20. The thief who got away yesterday is Lin Tai, and Bee Mao's taels were stolen by Luo Chin, who is the first trouble-maker. There are still many people who haven't violated the law. And according to our prohibited items, we can't betray them till death." Then Bao ordered to take Lin Tai, Luo Chin and Kingui to the yamen. And he made Luo return the eight taels to Bee Mao to settle the matter. The three thieves were each sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Cheunng and Lee were regarded as the ringleaders. Those who had been stolen could ask them for compensation. Everyone was sincerely convinced of Bao's verdict.

Case 71

Black Dragon in the River

In Sheeking lived Cheng Yong, who worked as an intermediary and with the help of his servant Cheunng Wan ran an inn dedicated to entertaining transient merchants. If getting brokerage fees, Cheunng Wan should record it all in the account.

That day, Chiang Leung, a young monk from Chengdu, was on his way to Kaifeng to shave his hair and receive the monk's identity certificate. He happened to pass by Darkaipo and took a break in Cheng Yong's inn. At night, Chiang Leung packed his clothes in his room alone and laid the silver on his bed. As it happened, Cheng Yong came back from his relative's house after drinking and noticed the light in Chiang Leung's room. Looking up close, he saw the silver and thought to himself, "Where does the monk come from? He's brought so much money." It is money that is most likely to cause bad thoughts, so an evil idea came to Cheng Yong's mind. Late at night, he took out a sharp knife, and pushing open the door of the monk's room shouted, "You have stolen a lot of money. Why not share it with me?" Greatly shocked and caught off guard, the monk was stabbed to death. Having dug up the soil under the bed and buried the body, Cheng took away the money and went to bed. Early the next morning, he took Chiang Leung's money to do business. A few years later, Cheng Yong became a moneybags and married Hsu Er's daughter, who gave birth to a son called Cheng Shee, a handsome apple in Cheng Yong's eyes. As Cheng Shee grew older, he didn't read

poems or books but kept loitering all time. Cheng Yong thought that he was his only son, so he didn't discipline him too much. Sometimes he persuaded him with kind words, but his son hated him instead.

One day, Cheng Shee asked a craftsman to make a rat-tailed knife. And unexpectedly he went to his father's best friend Yan Cheng's house. Seeing Shee, Yan felt quite delighted and asked his wife Hwang to prepare for food and drinks. Then he guided Shee to the side room for entertainment, asking, "How is your father?"

Hearing about his father, Shee looked back at Yan angrily, wanting to say something but finding it difficult to do so. Yan wondered, "What is the matter? Tell me." Shee replied, "My father is a wicked man. I am ready to kill him with a knife. I'll do it tomorrow."

Hearing this, Yan was scared out of wits, admonishing, "Dear nephew, blood is thicker than water. Please don't say such an outrageous thing. If outsiders know, it will not be a trivial matter." Cheng Shee declared, "Uncle, it has nothing to do with you, and I will dig a hole in his body." With that, he walked away.

Seriously panicked, Yan told his wife about it. Hwang advised, "It is no trivial matter. He hasn't told his father about that, so it is most likely that he will succeed in his action. Since we are informed, how can we explain clearly in future?" Yan muttered, "What should we do now?" His wife ventured, "The matter has developed to the present point, so it is better to report it to the government first, so as not to be implicated in the future." Following his wife's advice, he appealed to Lord Bao the next day.

Examining the case, Lord Bao felt quite angry and complained, "How can there be such an unfinifal son!" Thus his parents were summoned for inquiry. Cheng Yong complained that his son did have the intention of killing him. The mother echoed, "The unfilial son always swore to me that he wanted to kill his father. He refused to give up even though I repeatedly blamed him."

When brought in for interrogation, Cheng Shee bowed his head and did not answer. Bao then summoned several of Cheng's neighbours and interrogated them one by one, all of whom replied that his son had the intention of killing his father and always carried a sharp knife. Lord Bao demanded to search his body but no knife was found.

His father added, "The knife must be hidden in his bedroom." Lord Bao ordered Cheunng Leung to search Cheng Shee's bedroom. As expected, a sharp rat-tail knife was found under the mat and presented to Lord Bao. Showing the knife, Bao interrogated Shee again, who remained silent. Unable to reach a judgement, Bao put the people concerned in prison and adjourning withdrew into the back hall. He thought to himself, "As a biological son, why did he have such an abnormal intention? There must be something fishy in it." Trying to figure it out for a long time, he was lost in thought. At midnight, Bao had a dream, in which a black dragon suddenly appeared in a river just when he was about to ask for help from a boatman to cross it. On the back of the dragon sat a god dressed in red, holding a container and explaining, "Please do not blame Shee for his misdeeds. All this can be traced back to an incident 20 years ago." After that, he disappeared with the dragon. Suddenly waking up, Bao thought about the things in his dream and quite figured out the implication.

The next day the trial resumed, Bao summoned the suspects for interrogation. He asked Cheng Yong, "Is your family property left by your ancestors or earned by yourself?" Cheng Yong conceded grudgingly, "I used to be a broker, earning money by entertaining merchants. Therefore, I made a fortune." Bao continued, "Did you record the transaction yourself?" Cheng Yong returned, "No, my servant Cheunng Wan did that."

Bao immediately summoned Cheunng Wan and read the account book from head to end. In the middle of it, a monk named Chiang (Its Chinese meaning is river) Leung (Its Chinese meaning is dragon) and his date to stay at Cheng Yong's inn were recorded clearly.

Bao recalled the dream of a dragon crossing the river, and came to figure out the truth. So he ordered Cheng Yong to enter the screen door and lashed out at him, "Your rebellious son deserves death according to the law, but your crime can not be escaped either. You should be honest about what you have done in case of harming other people."

Cheng Yong retorted, "My unfilial son is to be sentenced to death, which I can accept. But I don't have anything to confess." Bao roared, "How dare you conceal it? I've been informed of it already. Do you still remember the young monk Chiang Lenng twenty

years ago? He has sued you for that incident.”

Hearing “the young monk Chiang Long twenty years ago”, so scared that Chiang Yong could no longer hide the truth and had to make a full confession.

Verifying the result, Bao went back to the court and dispatched soldiers to search Cheng’s inn. Sure enough, a monk’s body was exhumed under the bed, with the bones decayed and a little facial flesh left. Thus, Cheng Yong was put in prison and the neighbors were released. Guessing that Cheng Shee was the reincarnation of the young monk for revenge, Bao called him out again, “He is your father, but why do you want to kill him?” Shee remained silent. Bao continued, “I pardon you for your misdeed. However, you have to do some kind of business for a living rather than live with your father. How about that?” Shee replied, “I don’t know how to do business.” Bao added, “Whatever you want to do, I would give you about one thousand taels.” “Were I to get that much money, I would buy a certificate and become a monk,” ventured Shee. Having verified Shee was the reincarnation of Chiang Leung, Bao stated, “You can leave now and I will settle things down.” The next day, an official was entrusted to sell Cheng Yong’s property and gave the money to Cheng Shee. The father was sent into exile for penal servitude, and the son became a monk. So it is clear that God hath leaden feet, but iron hands.

Case 72

Local God under the Tablet

Two brothers in Wongchia village fifteen miles away from Chengchou city, often went out for business. Arriving at Wulee Tablet in Shiaocheunng village, Chongchou city, they encountered Cheng Tsai, a native of Hunan Province. Seeing him carrying a large sum of money, the brothers secretly stalked him until night, and then murdered him in cold blood. They got ten catties of silver and buried the body under a pine tree. But it was hard to take the sliver with them. Having realized that and found nobody around, the brothers came up with a deal to cover up the money under the tablet and to divide it after finishing their business. And then, they buried the silver and left. Six years later, they returned to stay again at the Lee's inn under Wulee Tablet by chance. The next dawn, they dug the soil under Wulee Tablet, only to find the silver gone. They felt confused, "How could the sliver disappear with nobody ever seeing their burial?" Upset for awhile, they decided that they go to Dongking to file a lawsuit to prophetic Lord Bao. After reading the complaint paper, Bao considered it nonsense and the brothers profligates, thus dismissing their testimony as invalid. However, the brothers cried and did not leave until Bao promised to find the money within a month.

A month passing, they came to complain again one dawn. Lord Bao told Chen Ching, "I want you to investigate a suspect tomorrow. Here is a bottle of wine and a strip of coppers, and you'll get the document tomorrow." At that, Chen Ching came back home

happily with the wine and money. Then he finished the wine and kept the money well. The next day he received the official document that he should go to Shiaocheunng village in Chengchou city to catch Wulee Tablet. Chen reported to Bao, "Your Excellency, would you mind delivering this assignment to others? I could arrest anyone, but how could I catch a tablet? It can't even walk or talk." Lord Bao was infuriated by those words and said, "This is an order! Refute it, and you'll be on a charge as delaying duty." Having nothing changed, Chen set off to Shiaocheunng village and lodged in the Lee's inn. That night, he sat under Wulee Tablet for a while but there was nothing wrong. Without any idea, the second night he bought some incense and joss paper to burn for the local god and kowtowing begged, "On official duty, I'm here to help the Wong brothers find the missing tael. Local god, please show me some clue by dream." And then Chen fell asleep beside the tablet.

At about 11 o'clock, he dreamed about an old man coming and introducing himself as the local god under the tablet. The old man said, "How conscienceless the Wong brothers are! They have no sliver here at all. It is Cheng Tsai from Hunan province who owned that money but he was stalked and killed by the Wong brothers. His body was buried under the pine tree. Please at once take his bones and money to Lord Bao and redress the grievance for him." With these words, the old man went away.

Chen woke up from the dream remembering everything the old man had told him. The next day, he borrowed a hoe from the innkeeper to dig under the pine tree. There was the skeleton and silver as expected. Thus, he took the skeleton and money to Lord Bao.

Bao summoned the brothers for inquiry, but they refused to confess. The skeleton and silver put in the front of them, the sobs of the ghost floated in the sky, "Give back my life, you Wong brothers!" All the guards turned pale with fear at the sound. Suddenly the bones jumped up as if alive. Through thorough inquest, the Wong brothers were unable to deny and had to admit everything. After a case file was completed, the brothers were accused of thuggee and beheaded at the marketplace. The victim Cheng Tsai having no relatives, the rest of his money was forfeited after a burial ceremony. What a miracle for the local god transferring the silver and reporting the crime for justice!

Case 73

Wooden Seal

One day, Lord Bao went on a tour, along with his companions, in Honan Province. Getting to a place called Hengkeng, he found the twenty-mile journey was a remote path with no human habitation. At noon, suddenly a swarm of flies came along with the wind, surrounding the head of the horse three rounds. Driven away by the whip, they scattered and gathered time and time again. He pondered, "Flies yearn for dead bodies, but now they come gather around the horse. Is there something unfair here?" Immediately summoning Lee Bao, he said loudly, "The flies gather about the head of my horse and won't go away. Is there something wrong? Go probe and report it to me." At that, the flies flew away together, leading Lee Bao to the destination. Within one mile, at their arrival at under the pine trees on the edge of a ridge, they burrowed into it. Informed of the ins and outs, Lee immediately reported to Bao, who, together with others, hurried to the place and watching Lee dig to the depth of two feet spotted a corpse, whose complexion was unchanged, as if it were a new death. A close examination of his body revealed no injury except the swelling and fragmentation of his scrotum. Aware of a murder, Bao suddenly noticed a small wooden seal on the clothes belt, which was a stamp of cloth selling. Bao ordered to take it down and hid it in his sleeve, the corpse reburied. In the evening, a group of old people and officials greeted them in the pavilion. Bao asked, "Where do you come from?" The officials replied, "At the news that Your Excellency are passing through here, Magistrate of

Chenlau County sent us to welcome you.” Bao demanded, “Come to me tomorrow and I will stay here two or three days, issuing some cases.” The officials yessed him and came into the county seat together, where the magistrate received them in the courier hostel for a rest.

The next day, the Yamen staff held court trial with Judge Bao, who thought to himself, “The corpse near, the murder new, it is likely that the murderers are still around.” Then he summoned a county official, “Bring the man who sells good cloth here, and I’ll buy some.”

The official immediately sought out Cheunng Kai, a big seller in South Street, and brought him to Bao, who inquired, “Where does the cloth you sell come from?” Cheunng Kai replied, “There are many places in Honan that produce good cloth. As a middleman, I sell whatever cloth I can get, no matter what place it’s from.” Bao instructed, “Please pick the samples from all kinds of cloth, and I will take them if I like.” Cheunng Kai came out in response, choosing good samples to hand in. In complete ignorance of Bao’s intention, the officials in court all thought he really wanted cloth. Bao checked the samples one by one until he saw one, which coincided with the small stamp of the deceased.

Then Bao trilled, “I want nothing else but twenty bolts of this kind.” Cheunng answered, “This cloth was brought by Lee San, a client from Taikang County, still available now. If you want, I can offer you.” Bao added, “Bring the cloth along with Lee San.”

With the order, Cheunng brought twenty bolts of elaborate cloth to the court together with Lee San. A repeated comparison bringing no difference between its seals and that of the deceased, Bao queried, “Now collect the cloth first. Do you have any partners?” Lee San returned, “Three.” “Are they all in the store?” “Today we had planned to go sell the cloth. Since Your Lord need it, we all wait in the inn.” Instantly summoned, the three partners kneeled in the court. Stroking his mustache, Bao said with a smile, “You robbers, someone is here to sue that several days ago you murdered a blogger and buried him under a pine tree near the mountain in Hengkeng. Confess it now!” Appearing to be flurried, Lee San still denied, “I bought the cloth myself. Why did you accuse me instead?” Taking out the stamp to the officials, he commanded to make a

comparison, finding no difference between them.

Still in denial, the four men were tortured with long flails and put in prison for a thorough investigation. So panicked that they didn't dare to deny any longer, spitting the crime out. The case file finished, Lee San, the chief conspirator, was sentenced to death, the other three accomplices banished to the frontier, and the broker acquitted. After the trial, the victim's son came to appeal for the redress of the wrong. Having retrieved the cloth, the son took the corpse home in grateful tears. Great grace to both the deceased and his son!

Case 74

Stone Tablet

In Renho County, Hangchou Prefecture, Chechiang Province, lived a man named Chai Sheng, who, born in a wealthy family, had learnt Confucianism from an early age and married Miss Liang, who was filial to his parents. Chai Tsu, Sheng's sixteen-year-old younger brother, was also married. One day, Sheng's father lectured, "Although we're a little rich, it's as difficult to rise as going up to heaven and as easy to decline as burning a feather. The thought of it makes me too anxious to sleep. Nowadays, the children of the ministers and scholar-bureaucrats cling to gorgeous clothes and delicious food, fawning over the senior, priding their possession, inviting banquets, and playing with fair-weather friends. They don't attach importance to their property and squander the money, unaware their well-off families are all the fruits of their older generations' hard work. As for you, don't hope for gains without pains. I want your brother Tsu to stay at home and you to go outside for business to support the family. How do you think of it?" Sheng replied, "I am indebted to you for your instruction, Father. I am at your beck and call. But where shall I go?" "I'm informed that cloth sells very well in Kaifeng Prefecture. Why not buy some cloth in Hangchou and transfer to Kaifeng for sale? In a year or so, you may return home," instructed his father. On his father's advice, Sheng left home before buying three loads of cloth. Taking a break in the evening and hurrying along in the daytime, he arrived in Kaifeng Prefecture after a few days. Then he settled in Wu Tsichen's shop in the east of the city for clothselling. A

few days later, Sheng had his servant buy wine to relieve his boredom. After drinking a few cups, both of them went drunk. However, Wu Tsichen's neighbor named Har Riku stole all the cloth at midnight. Waking up and finding the cloth gone the next morning, Sheng turned pale with fright.

Then he went to Wu Tsichen, complaining, "You are the host here, but I'm just a stranger. As the saying goes, a man depends upon his parents at home and upon his friends outside. But how can you take the advantage of my drunkenness to steal my cloths together with thieves? If you don't give me back my cloths, I shall surely sue you to the end." Wu argued, "As the host here, I always take customers as the foundation of my survival. How could I conspire for theft?"

Not convinced, Sheng went to complain about it to Judge Bao straightly. Judge Bao asked, "You need evidence to catch a thief. Without evidence, how can I judge?" So the charge was dismissed. At Sheng's repeated beg, Judge Bao summoned Wu to the court for questioning, but Wu defended himself as before. Bao then had them put in prison. The next day, together with his attendants, he went to worship at the City-God Temple for this case.

As for Har Riku, he had hidden the cloth in the remote part of the village, replacing the old mark with his own one, making it difficult to distinguish. Then in batches, the cloth was mostly sold to the shop of Wong Cheng, a merchant from Huichou, no one conscious Har got eighty taels as reward. Judge Bao prayed in the City-God Temple for three days but in vain. Suddenly, an idea came to his mind just when he was at his wit's end. He commanded Cheunng Leung and Chao Hu to bring in a stone tablet from the gate of the court and demanded the tablet to return the cloth. At that time, people were informed and gathered together to figure out what had happened. Seeing the crowds, Judge Bao shouted, "How hateful this stone tablet is!" Then he ordered the attendants to beat it twenty times.

After the scolding and beating, there was no further questioning. Some time later, the stone tablet was beaten again and again, until it fell down the steps. When more and more people gathered around, Bao immediately had the gate of the yamen closed and the four leading people snatched, none of the bystanders knowing why. Bao pretended to snap, "I am here to judge and do not want to be bothered. Why do you disobey the

law and trespass onto the courtroom without authorization? It's hard to forgive! Now, the four of you shall report all the bystanders' names to me. The rice trader will be punished with his rice, the butcher his meat, and the mercer his cloth. Everyone will be punished with their goods. In a limited time, the four of you shall collect all the forfeits." Then the four men did as demanded and handed the forfeits in. Judge Bao noticed a load of cloth in them and instructed, "Leave the cloth here until tomorrow, and take the rest back to their owners. Do not let it go wrong." The four men led the way out.

Then Bao summoned Chai Sheng and Wu Tsichen to the court. In case Sheng would not be honest, Bao took a bolt of cloth made by his wife and asked Sheng intentionally, "Is this your cloth?" After checking, Sheng replied, "Not mine, so I dare not claim it." Having confirmed his honesty, Bao selected two pieces of cloth from the forfeits to Sheng. Immediately, Sheng recognized it and reported with a kowtow, "It's mine. Where did you get it, my lord?" Judge Bao wondered, "The marks of this cloth are not the same on the top and the bottom, but how can you recognize it?" Sheng answered, "Although the marks had been changed, I have another invisible mark which can be measured by the ruler. If you don't trust me, you may measure it. And I am willing to plea guilty if it doesn't match." Judge Bao did as told. And it turned out perfectly matched! Then he summoned the four men to tell who was the owner of the cloth. Then the four persons went out of the yamen and found out that it was sold by Wong Cheng the Huichou merchant. Judge Bao interrogated Wong, who said it was sold by Har Riku. Brought in soon, Har was badly beaten and became black and blue. The scoundrel admitted his crime, confessing that he had stolen three loads of cloth, one having been sold, the other two hidden in a remote countryside. Then the guards escorted him for the residual cloth. Chai Sheng and Wu Tsichen left with thanks. Then the neighbors all came to complain that they had suffered a lot from Har Riku. Judge Bao immediately sent Har into exile for penal servitude, thus ridding the people of a scourge.

Case 75

An Aggrieved Genius

In Sheeking lived a knowledgeable scholar called Sun Chie, who was born with a brilliant mind. Having studied very hard and mastered all kinds of scriptures, he could compose articles and poems with ease, which made him well-known as a genius. There was no doubt that such a talented person must be able to stand out in the imperial examination and become the top scholar. However, in the recent years, the selection of talents was not based on the quality of their essays. Some examinees were admitted even if their articles were not good at all while others were not chosen even if they were proficient in all examinations. Just as the saying goes, “Instead of writing the best essay to convince all the people, one’s only thought is to please the examiners.” As long as the article is in line with the examiners’ will, even a bad one is good. If not, it is useless even if it is excellent. Having become Chin-shih, successful candidates in the highest imperial examinations, those examiners were blinded by gold and silver. Not as rational as they used to be as poor scholars, how could they distinguish who had good literary talent? When in charge of the examination, they unconsciously called black white, leaving other people sink or swim. Therefore, though profoundly learned and talented, Sun Chie was turned down one time after another.

Ding Tan, who was in collusion with the treacherous minister, Ding Wei, was the interviewer of the imperial examination. This examination was quite different from

others. Even if the test papers were sealed and the names covered to ensure justice, they only valued the candidates' social estates rather than essays, money rather than literary talents. Sons of the rich families secretly bribed the officials, who admitted the bribers and selecting a few other candidates to fill the list at random, ended the exam. It was pathetic that Sun Chie failed in the examination again. What annoyed Sun Chie and made him die of depression was that a classmate of his, Wong Nian, who was not knowledgeable at all but admitted with a high rank. So he came to inform Yama of the unfair treatment.

He wrote a complaint about killing a talented person: "There is unfairness in the upper world because I can't show my talent. The examiner works hand in glove with others so that my seven articles are ignored. I don't care scholarly honour or official rank but articles. The mediocre are at the top of the list while the talented are overlooked. I would rather die than live like this. But how can I be convinced if I die like this? That is why I come to Your Majesty for justice."

Yama read the indictment and thundered, "What abilities do you have? Why do you think the examiner ignores you?" Sun Chie replied, "Although I can not be regarded as a literary giant, people who pass the exam often have no talent. If the examiner was willing to mark the paper fairly and seriously, my ranking should not have been lower than that of Wong Nian. Here is my paper, and please read it." Yama wondered, "Maybe your essay is too recondite to read. I was promoted to Yama not by passing exams, so I can't judge your articles at random. Provided that Judge Bao is around, he will surely be qualified to evaluate your articles for he is the star of wisdom and adept at literature."

Instantly, Bao was called for settling the lawsuit. Looking through the complaint paper, Bao said with a sigh, "Great grievances." Sun Chie sent up his paper. Reading in details, Bao exclaimed, "You are definitely a talent! Why don't you get chosen? Who is the examiner?" "It is Ding Tan," answered Chie. "How could this unlearned dude become an examiner?" Bao said in surprise. Sun echoed, "It could be seen by his admission of Wong Nian, so how can I be convinced?"

"Bring Wong Nian and Ding Tan for the trial!" Bao commanded Yama's assistants. The assistants replied, "Both of them are dignitaries in the present world. How can we

arrest them at will?" Bao urged, "They won't be dignitaries any longer because of this. Arrest them now!"

Wong and Ding brought soon, Bao began to interrogate Ding Tan, "As an examiner, why did you ignore Sun Chie's talent unjustly?"

Ding Tan answered, "Sun's articles are not always good. His article for this exam is not suitable. That's why I didn't choose him."

"Here is his original paper, come read it again." Bao flung the paper to him. Ding read it, his face blushing. He said slowly, "I must have got a giddiness that day, not reading carefully enough by accident." Bao said in anger, "If you don't read the papers, how can you choose candidates? Wong Nian is illiterate but chosen, while Sun Chie is proficient but turned down. Do you know what you have done? It is found out that there is still twelve years left for your life expectancy in the upper world. Now, owing to your crime to commit murder, you shall be punished by shortening your lifespan of twelve years. Since you mistake words because of poor eyesight, you shall become a blind fortune teller in the next life. You take bribes and treat candidates unfairly, so you shall be a blind beggar to experience the huge change and difference by yourself. Wong Nian passed the imperial examination with poor writing, so he shall become an ox living on grass in the next life, which is nemesis. Sun Chie, since you didn't get any benefit from studying in this life, you shall be admitted to the imperial examinations early in your next life, and get the first place at all levels of the examinations in a row." Hearing that, everyone except Wong Nian nodded without any objection.

Wong Nian retorted, "Although I'm not good at writing, I still can write some sentences. Now I'm punished by becoming an ox and eating grass. Still, some chosen candidates can even write nothing. Aren't there many people who need to eat grass in the upper world?" Bao replied, "I plan to take you as an example." Bao annotated instantly, "Ding Tan makes a distinction among candidates by the amount of money. Due to money and personal affairs he treats candidates in an unfair way, and kills talents indirectly. If he repents of what he has done, his dignity of the official position can be preserved. However, no one can practice favoritism in the hell, so he shall be punished by becoming a blind fortune teller. It is not unjust for Wong Nian to become an ox in the countryside while Sun Chie deserves a high rank in the imperial

examination in the afterlife.”

The comment turned into a case file, Sun Chie’s original papers were stuck to it. Together with the file, the three men were sent to the different departments of the Hell for double-check.

Case 76

Great Feats Infringed Upon

Once, Lord Bao was sent by the emperor to reward the troops of Yang Wenguang for they marched to protect the frontier. Where his horse passed, a whirlwind with wails made his hair stand on end. Bao pondered, "There must be some injustice around." Then he demanded the retainers to drag the horse's head, lodging in an inn and going to the underworld. Suddenly, Bao ran into a cluster of privates, nine altogether, who sued to him one after another and whose resentment mounted to the sky.

"It is about our great feats infringed upon. Wars have been dangerous since ancient times. Generals devoted their lives for the country, and soldiers put up a fearless fight against enemies. If we survived in the battlefield, we could be rewarded promotion, so we weren't afraid of death; if we died, we could be buried with honor, so we were never greedy for survival. But now, Commander-in-chief Yo took our credits, murdered us all and covered up the truth. How could he talk about defeating the enemy while only sitting in the camp tent and doing nothing! We fought tooth and nail but it was Commander Yo who reaped the benefits. Our necks keep bleeding, so we hope Yo's soul and body shall never stop being tortured in hell. That is why we made our best endeavors to come to Your Excellency for help."

Bao finished reading and queried, "How could you nine privates kill three thousand tartars?" The privates replied, "Even a fair and wise judge like Your Honor cannot

believe what we said, so Commander-in-chief Yo dared to claim our exploits for himself.” Lord Bao said with a smile, “Tell me the truth.” The privates continued, “So ferocious were the tartars at first that Commander Yo together with 500 privates was defeated in the battlefield. So disaffected that we privates planned to attack the enemy’s camp at night. Nine of us snuck there at 9 p.m. and set the fire around, killing all the three thousand tartars. We returned to our camp in the hope of getting a reward for our efforts. It was okay not to be promoted, but to keep our lives. How could we know that Yo put all the merits in his own and killed all of us? How pathetic! We privates were always bearing hardships, while Commander Yo was always taking the credit. Regardless of our merits and contributions, we cannot escape the destiny of being beheaded.” After hearing that, Lord Bao said to the privates, “How can such a thing happen?” He instructed the imps to bring Commander Yo for interrogation.

Commander Yo detained after a short while, Lord Bao roared, “What a meritorious commander! How dare you take the contributions of nine privates as yours! Since you have taken their merits, you should have spared their lives, but how can you murder them? You murdered them just to prevent divulgence of your secrets, but you can never imagine that they are here to accuse you even if beheaded.” Then Lord Bao had Yo tortured for a thorough investigation. Commander Yo confessed all his crime: “It was I who made mistakes at that time, and I shouldn’t have taken their feats and killed them. I beg you for releasing me from the hell, and commend nine of them.”

Lord Bao thundered, “No chance to go back to the upper world, and you shall surely suffer in the abyss of bitterness. Instantly, one imp put a pill into the commander’s mouth, and then Yo was covered in flames, and with his muscles rotten out of human shape. Subsequently, the imp blew an wicked wind to him and he restored to human shape. Commander Yo begged, “I would be very willing to abdicate from this position to the privates if I knew how the suffering today is. The privates exclaimed, “Relief! Such a big relief! We have a day of revenge!” At that moment, the shouts outside broke out suddenly, and no one could stop crying, making the clouds dim and the sky dark. The imp reported, “Outdoors, some shouting, some wailing, thousands of people are nearby to report their grievances.” Lord Bao instructed, “Just let several of them in, and the rest wait outside.” Then two frontier people were guided in to kneel down in the hall. Lord Bao said, “Please go straight to the point.” The frontier people answered,

“We heard that today Your Honor is investigating Commander Yo’ affairs, so we’re here intentionally just for explaining our grievances. We are frontier people, always looted by the northern tribes. What was worse, when the invading northern tribes were defeated one day, Commander Yo’s soldiers pushed on in the flush of victory, but instead killed thousands of us frontier people and cut down our heads for the sake of promotion and award. How miserable we are! If such an affliction is not reported to Your Honor, where should we go for justice?” “Such a weird thing! Commander Yo shall never have the chance to be human!” lectured Bao. The imp took another pill and put it in Yo’s mouth. For a moment, Yo’s blood was all over the ground, and his flesh and bones were like mud. Another wicked wind turned him into human again. “Relief! Such a big relief! But no matter how many times Yo was killed, he could not offset the thousands of innocent lives,” the border people praised. “Tell the other victims, since your grievances are also caused by the enemy, don’t put all the wrongs on Yo. All of you can be fierce ghosts to kill the enemy, and the nine privates will be the leaders. If enemies are killed, I’ll definitely reward you with merits. Yo shall go to the deepest layer of the hell and never be reborn,” Bao proclaimed. Then he picked up the brush-pen and commented: “Commonly, the credential of a general is to make great merits and kill enemies. As a general, however, Yo had no merits for himself, nor did he fight or kill the enemy exactly. Infringing upon others’ exploits, he murdered the heroes and slaughtered the frontier people as the enemy. How could a man with a kind heart do such a thing? Killing him is not enough to pay for the lives of nine, let alone the lives of thousands! In a nutshell, he deserves more than death and shall stay at Acheron forever. If there is any unfinished nemesis, it should go to his descendants.”

Finally, comforted and encouraged to kill the enemy, all the privates and frontier people went away with joy, Yo cast deep into the hell.

Case 77

Scroll Ripped Apart

In Heungshian County, Shuntian Prefecture, lived a township official named Nee Shouchian, who rolled in riches and whose legal wife gave birth to his eldest son called Shanchee. When old, he took a concubine, May Shianchun, who was delivered of his second son Shanshu. Mean and avaricious, Shanchee disliked his father having another son. In order to monopolize the family property, he had an intention of murdering his younger brother. Aware of his intention, Shouqian, when seriously ill, summoned Shanchee and exhorted, “As my legitimate and also the eldest son, you are able to take care of the family affairs. Now I have written the inheritance document and entrusted all the property to you. I don’t know if Shanshu will grow up to be a man. If so, you can help him get married and give him a hut and dozens of acres of farmland just to make sure he has enough to eat and wear. As for Shianchun, whether to remarry or not depends on herself. Don’t abuse her.” Seeing all the family possessions would be given to him, and that the property settlement agreement noted his brother could not share the property, Shanchee was so glad that he decided not to murder his younger brother anymore. Shianchun held the baby in her arms and whimpered, “You are 80 years old but I’m only 22. And this poor boy is only 1 year old. Now that you entrust all the property to the eldst son, how can Shanshu make a living when he grows up?”

Shouchian answered, “I did not tell you the truth about the division of the family

fortune precisely because you are still young and I don't know whether you would keep your chastity for me after my death. I'm afraid you'll remarry and my youngest son's inheritance will be held up." May Shianchun swore, "I'll always remain chaste throughout my life, or I'll be smashed into pieces and doomed to a tragic ending." Shoushian then proclaimed, "In that case, I have already prepared something for you. Here is a stroll of painting. Please preserve it. If Shanchee shared no family property with Shanshu in the future, you can hold this stroll of painting to accuse him when an honest official comes. Even with no appeal document, our son Shanshu, will naturally be rich." Shouchian died of illness after several months.

Time flying, Shanshu became eighteen years old and asked for the division of the family property. Shanchee was overbearing and refused to give Shanshu anything. He said, "At the age of 80, how could my father have had a son like you? So the property settlement agreement clearly stipulates that you have no right of inheritance. How can you scramble?" Extremely angry at this, Shianchun remembered her husband's will. It was generally considered that Judge Bao was as able as honest and upright. Therefore, she came to Bao's office with the stroll of painting, "I married Nee Shouchian, a former magistrate, when I was young and gave birth to a son named Shanshu. When Shanshu was just one year old, my husband passed away. He made a will that if Shanchee, his eldest son, refused to divide the family property, I could find an honest official to make an accusation with the painting, which could make my son rich. I have heard that you are an upright official, so I come here today to appeal and hope Your Excellency can help me." Bao unfolded the scroll, only to see a portrait of Nee Shouchian, who was sitting on the chair, with one finger pointing to the ground. With no clue to follow, Bao stopped hearing the case, hung the picture in his study and pondered, "Pointing to the sky means that I should judge for the sake of heaven, and the heart his heart, so the ground the dead man under the ground? It can't be so. But how can I help him divide his property and make his younger son rich?" Bao studied again and again, "Could there be a message hidden in this scroll?" Taking it apart, he found a piece of paper as expected, which read, "My elder son Shanchee is mercenary without conscience; My concubine May Chianchun gave birth to a younger son Shanshu who is only one year old. For fear that Shanchee was not willing to share the wealth and intended to murder his brother, I wrote this property settlement agreement,

leaving the family property and the two new houses to Shanchee, but the right old hut to Shanshu. On the left side of the hut is buried five thousand taels, contained in five jars; and on the right another five thousand taels of silver and one thousand taels of gold, contained in six jars. The silver is all to be left to Shanshu for expanding the field. As for the 1000 taels of gold, it is a reward for the upright official who has figured out the scroll."

Thus, Bao summoned May and said, "If you have to divide the family property, I have to go to your house for inspection." Then he took a sedan chair and stopping at Shanchee's door, deliberately made a bow to Shouchian before entering the door. He continued to pretend the humility gesture with Shouchian and finally sat down on a chair. Bao scraped a bow and said, "Now your concubine has filed a petition for the division of the family property. What is your position on this matter?" Then he muttered again, "So the truth is that the eldest son was greedy for money and probably wanted to sabotage the younger brother. That's why you gave him the property to prevent him from doing anything harmful. However, what can your younger son live on?" After a short while, he added, "The cottage on the right is for the younger son; then how to deal with the property inside the cottage?" "Also to the younger son." And humbly he continued, "How dare I take it? I have my own way to deal." Standing up and looking around, Bao pretended to be surprised and said, "It was clear that Old Mr. Nee and I talked with each other, but why did he suddenly disappear? Is it his ghost?" At this, Shanchee, Shanshu and the other people around were all amazed. They all thought Bao had really seen old Mr. Nee. So together they went to see the cottage. Bao sat in the middle of the cottage and said to Shanchee, "Your father's spirit is still alive on earth, and it manifests itself at the right time. He has told me all about your family affairs, and asked you to give the cottage to your brother. What do you think?" Shanchee replied, "It's up to your honor to judge." Bao said, "Everything in this cottage will be handed over to your brother, and everything else will remain yours." "There is nothing of value in this cottage, and I am willing to give it to my brother," said Shanchee. "Just now Old Mr. Nee told me there are five thousand taels of silver contained in five jars buried on the left side of this hut and that it is for your brother," said Bao. Shanchee, of course, did not believe such a thing. "Even if there is ten thousand taels of silver," he said, "it is what my father left to my brother and I would

never dream of sharing it.” Bao said, “It won’t allow you to share.” Then he ordered two of his servants to dig in the hut together with Shanchee, Shan Shu and May Shianchun. As expected, five large jars of silver were found. And he weighed them on the scales, and there was indeed a thousand taels of silver in each. Shanchee now became more convinced that it was his father’s spirit that informed Bao. Bao continued, “There is also 5,000 taels of silver buried on the right side of the cottage, which is also given to Shanshu. There is one thousand taels of gold, which, Mr. Nee said, is for me as a reward, but I am determined not to accept. It will go to Lady May as a pension.” When Shanshu and Shianchun heard that, they were overjoyed and kowtowed to Bao.

Bao said, “Why should you thank me? How could I know all the things? It must be that your father’s spirit informed me just now.” Then they went to the right room and dug, and found five thousand taels of silver and one thousand taels of gold. All the people present looking aghast, Bao secretly handed that piece of paper to Shanshu and his mother. What an incorruptible and intelligent judge!

Case 78

Judgement of Will

In the capital city lived a rich and charitable senior citizen Wong Chian. Always ready to offer help to those around him and solve the conflicts peacefully, he enjoyed an excellent reputation. At the age of 78, he had no son but a daughter called Ruiniang, who had married Yang Ching. Cunning and greedy, Ching coveted his father-in-law's property and used to complain in public, "It's reasonable that one's property goes to the daughter if he has no sons. My father-in-law is too old to have any more children. Wouldn't it be nice to give me the property?" At it, Wong Chian felt angry, but had to endure in view of the fact. And, the town people often said with a sigh, "It would be merciless if God didn't grant a son to Wong." Fortunately, two years later when Wong was already 80, his wife Lin gave birth to a baby boy named Wong Leung. His clansmen and neighbors were all happy to congratulate except Yang Ching, who hid his displeasure with a forced smile. Wong thought, "My son is still in his infancy but I already in my twilight years. Were I to die some day, he would be bullied." Then, an idea occurred to him. "The son-in-law was an outsider in blood anyway. But now he is actually helping me make a profit, so I have to give him my property first if I want to keep it from him. It's a completely safe plan." Three months later, terminally ill and conscious of the impossibility of recovery, Wong let Ching to his bedside, saying with tears, "I only have a son and a daughter, my son is my child, but my daughter is also my child. I had expected to count on my son but it won't work, so I'd better rely on my

daughter, which will be a permanent solution. I shall entrust all my family and property to you.” Then, Wong wrote a will, and giving it to Ching read for him, “I AM 80 YEARS OLD AND HAVE ONE SON WHO PEOPLE DENIED IS MY SON MY PROPERTY WILL BE ALL GIVEN TO MY SON-IN-LAW AND OUTSIDERS CAN NOT SCRAMBLE” Ching was overjoyed at it. Then he hid the will in the box. Several days later, Wong died and Ching got the property.

Over twenty years later, Wong Leung became a grown-up and knew what had happened. He often thought to himself, “My father’s property can be controlled by an outsider, but why not I?” So, he requested his relatives to inform his brother-in-law that he would take the family estate back. Ching thundered, “The family estate was given by my father-in-law. What’s more, my father-in-law declared that guy is not his son, so how can he vie with me?” The matter dragging on, Wong Leung decided to solve it by law. However, all the judges claimed that the property should belong to Yang Ching according to Wong Chian’s will. Of the results, Wong Leung was not convinced. So Leung secretly took a written complaint to Judge Bao, who happened to be in the capital city at that time. With a knowledge of the situation, Bao summoned Yang Ching for interrogation. “Why haven’t you given it back to Wong Leung after hogging his property for so long?” Yang retorted, “These possessions are entrusted to me by my father-in-law and have nothing to do with Wong Leung.” Bao wondered, “Weng Leung is the natural son. Even if Wong Chian hadn’t had his own son, what would the property have to do with you, a son-in-law?” Yang Ching defended himself, saying, “My father-in-law clearly stated that Wong Leung is not allowed to fight for the property. I have his will as my evidence.” Then the will was presented. After reading it, Bao said with a smile, “You missed the point. Obviously, what he wanted to express is, ‘I HAVE ONE SON MY PROPERTY WILL BE ALL GIVEN TO’, which indicates that he gave the property to his son.” Ching argued, “That makes sense, however, my father-in-law admitted Leung is not his son, which was written in the will.” Bao explained, “He kept it secret from you. What he stated is, ‘I HAVE ONE SON WHO, PEOPLE DENIED, IS MY SON.’” Ching insisted, “My father-in-law entrusted the family estate to me, and he said, ‘OUTSIDERS CAN NOT SCRAMBLE’. According to this article, everyone is outsiders except me.” Bao queried, “Just look at your own son. Would you regard him as an outsider? The word ‘outsider’ obviously referred to

‘son-in-law’. Therefore, he said ‘MY SON-IN-LAW AND OUTSIDERS CAN NOT SCRAMBLE. It’s the true meaning that your father-in-law hid in the will, which you didn’t figure out.” Hearing such a reasonable explanation, Yang Ching was driven speechless and could do nothing but return the legacy to Wong Leung. What a wise well-known judgement!

Case 79

Broom and Dustpan Taken in

In Harchao County, Dengchou Prefecture, Honan Province lived Hwang Shekliang, whose wife Lee Shiujay, was suspicious and jealous, while whose brother, Shekmay, married Cheunng Yueying, a virtuous and moral lady. The two couples living together, the two sisters-in-law took turns to sweep the house, with the broom and dustpan exchanged day by day. When Hwang Shekmay was taking the seedlings from the field at the Double Ninth Festival, Lee went to her aunt's house for a drink, only leaving Shekliang and Cheunng at home. It was Cheunng's turn to sweep the floor that day. After sweeping the floor, she put the dustpan and the broom in Lee's room in case there was a rush of time to hand them over the next day. At that time, Shekliang had gone outside so that it was impossible for him to know what Cheunng did. In the evening, seeing the dustpan and the broom in her room, Lee thought to herself, "It's Cheunng's turn to be on duty today, so the tools should be in her room. How can they be in my room?"

Wondering that her husband must have committed adultery with Cheunng so that they brought the tools into the room, forgetting to take them away afterwards, Lee asked her husband, "What have you been doing today?" "I didn't do anything," answered Shekliang. "You had sex with Cheunng today, but why are you lying to me?" scolded Lee. "Nonsense! You're drunk today, but are you throwing a drunken fit?" roared

Shekliang. "Me not. You're too sultry! Tomorrow I'll report your indecency, or all the blame will fall on me." declared Lee. Shekliang didn't do anything against his conscience, so he scolded, "Bitch, you say silly things! Bring forward proof! If not, I'll beat you to death for your false accusations." "You did such a shameless thing! How dare you plan to abuse me? Fine, I'll show you the evidence. It's Cheunng's turn to be on duty today, so the tools should be in her room. How can they be in my room? Isn't it because you committed adultery with her, so she brought it in?!" Shekliang explained, "I was out when she took the dustpan and broom into my room. I don't know when she brought them in. How could you judge by this? Don't say such shameless things that will be teased by others." Hearing her husband's softening tone, and deciding it was true, Lee ranted and raved. Being on his ear, Shekliang detrudded and smashed things. Then Lee gave Cheunng a rap on the knuckle. Having heard them quarreling all night, Cheunng went furtively to listen to what was wrong, only to find Lee accusing her of having an affair with Shekliang. She had intended to justify herself, but it suddenly occurred to her that they two were being furious and if she joined in, it must provoke them to fight again. But when she went back to her room, another thought struck her, "Lee must have heard the door creaky but I left without refuting. She would think I did have an adulterous relationship with her husband so that I didn't dare to defend myself." Once again, Cheunng intended to defend herself, but pondered, "If I go back to explain, I will surely cause her anger and be spurned by her for life. And it is my own fault that I should never have left the tools in her room. It's difficult to get me off, and my reputation will be tarnished. It would be better to prove my innocence by death." Hence, she hanged herself.

When the meal was ready the next day, Cheunng hadn't got up yet. Pushing the door open, they saw her hanging on the beams. Shekliang didn't know what to do. "Had it not been for the adultery, she would not have died of shame." scolded Lee. Difficult to argue about it, Shekliang went to the field and told his brother about Cheunng's death. When Shekmay asked the reason of his wife's death, the couple replied that Cheunng had hanged herself at night for unknown reasons. Out of doubt, Shekmay reported his wife's death for unknown reasons to the county government. Shekliang was detained by Lord Chen for questioning, "Why did Cheunng hang herself?" "My sister-in-law had a heartache by accident, which brought her much pain and resulted in a

self-inflicted death.” answered Shekliang. “My wife has never had this disease. Why didn’t she see a doctor if she had a headache? What you said is absolutely absurd.” retorted Shekmay.

Lee said, “Her husband was away at that time. As an impetuous person, she refused to call for medical help. So she committed suicide.” Shekmay retorted, “My wife is a gentle person, and what you said can not convince me.” Lord Chen had Shekliang and Lee tied up. Shekliang refused to confess, but Lee couldn’t bear the torture, and then confessed that because of her suspicion of the adultery between her husband and Cheunng, she quarreled and fought with him, which resulted in the unreasonable death of Cheunng. Shekmay said, “I see.” Chen shouted at Shekliang, “If you hadn’t had an affair with Cheunng, she would not have hanged herself. You deserve death for committing adultery with your brother’s wife.” Then Chen wrung a confession from him and condemned him.

At the time when Lord Bao was patrolling the prisons for felons, and read the file about the rape of his younger brother’s wife, Hwang Shekliang appealed, “I will be very wronged if I die this year. Even kings and nobles will die, so death is not a thing to be regretted. But to die of infamy is unacceptable! I was not reconciled!” Bao asked, “You’ve been through so many trials. Why do you still feel wronged today?” Shekliang replied, “I didn’t have an affair with my younger brother’s wife, so I’d like to die to prove my innocence. Now I’m notorious for being involved; my younger brother’s wife is considered not chaste any longer and my brother suspects me and his wife. There were three grievances in one case. How could you say that there are no wrongs?” Reading the document over and over again, Bao said to Lee, “You attempted to prove adultery with a broom. I think you have known something behind that. First of all, please recall if the floor was cleaned that day.” Lee answered, “The floor was fully cleaned.” Then Bao continued, “Is there any rubbish in the dustpan?” Lee replied, “No, it was emptied and there was no residue.” Lord Bao added, “The ground had been swept, and the rubbish taken out. From this we can see that it is Cheunng herself that put it in your room. She did this to avoid handing these things to you in haste the next day, not because Shekliang dragged her into the room to commit adultery. If Shekliang had committed adultery with her before she finished cleaning, there must have been rubbish on the dustpan. If he committed adultery after she finished cleaning, she didn’t

need to take the dustpan into the room. Therefore, it can prove that no adultery happened. In terms of the reason why Cheunng hanged herself, here are the details: Cheunng regretted that she shouldn't have sent the dustpan and broom into her sister-in-law's room to make her sister-in-law suspect her. She was willing to die to prove her innocence because she was timid with a sense of shame instead of being ashamed of adultery. Lee framed her sister-in-law up and leading her husband to an unpardonable crime, made her brother-in-law's suspicion hard to be dispelled. Because of her having no conscience, Cheunng died innocently. After our deliberation, Lee should be hanged and Shekliang reflect on himself." Shekmay kowtowed and said, "My brother is a simple man, and my sister-in-law is a jealous one. My dead wife had a sense of shame. I appealed because I suspected my wife died in the argument with my sister-in-law, and I had doubts that my brother had an adultery with my wife. What a City-God you are to give us an extremely brilliant analysis! Not only does this clear up my doubt, and redress my brother's wrongs, but proves my wife's virtue and punishes my sister-in-law's jealousy. Wish Your Honor a successful official career forever." Lee said, "My husband did not argue with me that day, as your honor did, so I suspected that he committed adultery. If he had defended himself to me earlier, I would not have scolded or beaten him. Now that you have absolved my husband, I sincerely beg you to spare my life, too." Shekmay said, "The dead could not be brought back to life. Now that my dead wife has been proven to be innocent, I have no hatred for Lee now. What good would it do to sentence her to death?" Bao concluded, "How can I turn a blind eye to the law when she should be put to death?" This is a warning to jealous women.

Case 80

Who Unbolted the Door?

A person named Yan Shuibin was obscene and shameless. He had a son, Tsongyee, who married a woman surnamed Shu.

Shuibin molested Shu time and again. At first, she refused, but under long-term oppression submitted finally. As long as Tsongyee went out, Shuibin would surely slip into her room and force her to have sex at night. One day, Tsongyee went to celebrate his father-in-law's birthday. Nursing hatred in her heart and knowing Shuibin would come to her room at night, Shu coaxed Kimniang, the daughter of Shuibin, "Your brother went out today and I am too scared to sleep alone in my room. Would you please come and stay with me tonight?" Kimniang consented. Night came and Shuibin pushed the door just as expected. Shu got up on tiptoe, and opening the door, hid herself in the dark. Then Shuibin climbed into bed for love-making. Kimniang screamed, "Father, it's me, not my sister-in-law." Suddenly realizing he had got the wrong prey, Shuibin sprang out of bed and ran away with remorse.

The next morning, Kimniang refused to show up to have breakfast with her family. Her mother had no idea about the reason. Well aware of it, however, the father hurried out as soon as he finished breakfast. The mother called Kimniang once again, only to find her hang herself in Shu's room. Full of fear, Shu went back to her natal home and imparted the truth. "We should accuse them of violating ethics and terminate your

marriage. In this way, you can remarry and avoid being encroached by the Yans.” advised her brother Shu Tang. Hence they went to the county and submitted an indictment.

Judge Bao ordered the subordinates to arrest the defendant. Knowing his behavior was intolerable, Shuibin hanged himself.

All the witnesses summoned to the court, Shu Tang reported, “Shuibin killed himself just because he knew he could not beat the rap for his detestable behavior. We are afraid of maintaining relationships with Tsongyee, the son of the sinner. So I would rather have my sister divorce and remarry. Everyone ought to pay for his crimes respectively according to the law, and Tsongyee is no exception. The others are all witnesses and have nothing to do with this case. With all the truth told, I beg you to release them and we’ll all be grateful for your fair judgment, my Lord.”

Considering the matter serious and abominable, Bao asked, “Has your sister ever committed adultery with her father-in-law?” Tang answered, “No.” Bao continued, “Now that she’s clean in this and Shuibin has died, why does she have to divorce and remarry?” Tang said, “Like father, like son. Both of them are evil beasts. We are not willing to have any connections with such a family, so we beg for a new marriage.” “Kimniang slept in Shu’s room and the door must be bolted tightly. Then who unbolted the door?” asked Bao. “That old bastard had hidden himself in the room beforehand,” returned Tang. “Who was his target?” Bao posed another question. Tang shook his head. Shu replied, “It was me, but he mistook his daughter for me.” Bao wondered, “You stayed together with her, but why didn’t you shout?” Shu argued, “I was too bashful. Besides, it was not my business, so why should I have to shout?” Not convinced at all, Bao had her trussed up, saying, “You must have had an affair with your father-in-law before. He was caught in your trap, for you slept on Kimniang’s bed while she was on yours that night.” Under the severe punishment, Shu made a confession. Bao roared, “You deserve death for fornication. You cajoled Kimniang into sleeping in your bed whereas you eluded. It was your trap that misled Shuibin, costing Kimniang’s life. So, you deserve more than death.” As a result, Shu was condemned to death in the autumn while Shuibin’s house was torn down and turned into a cesspit, implying that even the beasts disdained his flesh.

Case 81

Rabbit in a Hat

In Chianghar County, Wuchang Prefecture lived a man named Cheng Risin, who had a close friendship with his cousin Mar Tai since childhood. Risin frequently traveled to Shiaogan for cloth trading, and later Mar Tai went with him once and made a lot of money. On January 20 of the following year, they each took more than two hundred taels of silver and left their homes for Shiaogan. Three days later, they arrived at the Yangluo Post. Risin advised, "If we go to Shiaogan together, it may be hard to get enough goods in time. Wouldn't it be better if we split up? You go to Sinlee, and I go to Shiaogan. What do you think?" Tai replied, "That's exactly what I was thinking about." They entered an inn to buy wine, where the familiar shopkeeper, Lee Chao, greeted them warmly, offering them wine to celebrate the New Year, saying, "Drink more cups of wine for this rare occasion." The two cousins were drunk and Lee Chao did not stop toasting until they firmly declined. They gave money to Chao, who repeatedly refused, but finally reluctantly accepted. After bidding farewell, Risin went to Shiaogan. At the time of parting, Risin told Tai, "Collect the cloth, and send it to Shiaogan bit by bit." Tai nodded his approval and left. Walking for less than five miles, Tai felt weak in feet because he was drunk. So he sat down for a rest but fell asleep accidentally. As the saying goes, "In drunken dreams, one knows not the time of day; when waking up, one finds the sun set in the west." He hurriedly continued his journey for another five miles to a place called Nanchee. With no village and shop in sight, he felt very flustered. In

this place lived a man named Wu Yu, who often killed people for money under the guise of herding cattle. Tai encountered him by chance. Yu asked, "It's getting dark, sir. Don't you find lodging? This place is not as safe as it used to be. If you go ten miles farther, it's a desolate area, and there might be villains." Tai, already anxious, was further deterred by Yu's words and dared not continue. He asked Yu, "Where do you live?" Yu replied, "Just ahead in Yuankou." Tai said, "Since it's not far, may I stay at your home for the night, and I will pay you generously tomorrow." Yu pretended to refuse, "My home is not an inn. How could I let someone stay over? My bed is not convenient; go forward or turn back, but my home is definitely not suitable for you." Tai entreated, "I know your home is not an inn, but considering my hardships while traveling, it would be a kind deed for you." After much pleading, Yu, pretending to change his mind, said, "I see you are an honest man, so I will take you back with me after I gather my cattle." After they returned home, Yu told his wife Gong, "Here is a traveler and he wants to spend the night at our home. Prepare some wine."

Yu's mother and Gong have long been disgusted with Yu's schemes and were very displeased to see Tai. Tai, unaware of the real reason for their displeasure, thought they were angry with him and tried to comfort them in a gentle tone, "Mistress, do not be annoyed, and I will surely give you a generous reward." Gong cast a glance at him and slammed the door shut, leaving Tai puzzled about the reason. Shortly afterwards, Yu's wife went out and Tai was summoned in. His wife had no choice but to prepare a grand feast. Yu repeatedly urged Tai to drink. Tai had just sobered up from his previous drinking, but he could not refuse Yu's kindness and drank several more cups until he was very drunk. Yu then forcibly urged him to drink two more big cups. Tai did not know that the wine contained a narcotic drug, and after drinking, he fell into a deep coma, unconscious. Yu escorted Tai to a room in the back mountain and settled him in. In the dead of night, Yu carried Tai to the mouth of a nearby stream. He put a large stone into Tai's clothes and pushed him into a hidden pond. In this way, Yu obtained all of Tai's money. He had murdered more than one person and committed such crimes more than once.

Two or three days after arriving in Shiaogan, Risin had received 20% of the goods, but had not yet seen the arrival of the goods from Tai. After another ten days, Risin went to Sinlee Street to see Tai. Upon his arrival at the broker Yang Ching's store, Ching asked,

“Why are you so late this year?” Risin said in surprise, “My cousin came to your house a long time ago to collect the cloth. I’ve been waiting for him in the city, but why hasn’t he sent the cloth back yet after so long?” Ching asserted, “Your cousin did not come to me.” “My cousin is Mar Tai. He was here with you last year. How could you not know?” protested Risin. “When did he come?” inquired Ching. “We arrived at the Yangluo Post together on January 22 and split up,” answered Risin. Everyone in the store returned they had not seen Mar Tai. Risin felt puzzled and went to ask other brokers, but no one had seen his cousin. That night, Ching prepared a banquet to welcome Risin, and everyone was enjoying themselves and drinking happily except Risin. They guessed wildly, “Perhaps he has gone somewhere else to buy goods. Otherwise, how could he have disappeared like this?” Risin thought to himself, “He is unfamiliar with other places, so where could he have gone?”

After spending only one night, Risin went to Lee Chao’s inn in Yangluo Post the next morning and was told that his cousin had not returned since they parted on January 22. He then thought to himself, “Could he have been robbed or attacked on the way?” As he continued to inquire along the way, everyone replied that there had been no reports of anyone being killed during the New Year celebrations. He then went back to Sinlee Street and asked the customers in the shops when they arrived, and they all said it was in February. Risin then thought to himself, “It must be the broker who murdered him for his money because he knew Tai was alone with a lot of silver.” Risin said to Ching, “With two hundred taels of silver, my cousin arrived here to collect the cloth, and you must have killed him for his money. I asked everyone on the way and no one saw any robbery. If he was killed on the way, there must be a corpse. How could a living person disappear?” Ching argued, “How could I possibly have done such a thing when there was full of customers in my store?” Risin said, “It was February when your customers got here, but my cousin arrived in January, so he was alone when murdered by you.” “If a customer arrived, didn’t the neighbors see him? If I murdered your cousin in the street center, how could nobody witness it? It is nasty of you to falsely accuse me.” retorted Ching. The two argued, leading to a fight. Risin wrote a letter and hired someone to ride fast and report the incident to his family. The next day, he filed a complaint to the county magistrate.

The magistrate of Shiaogan County, Cheunng Shektai, granted the complaint and

issued a warrant. The next day, Yang Ching also filed a lawsuit. The magistrate then detained all the suspects and brought them to the court for trial. The magistrate asked, "Risin, you accused Yang Ching of murdering Mar Tai. What evidence do you have?" Risin replied, "He is cunning and meticulous in his schemes, leaving no trace behind. I beg Your Honor to investigate thoroughly and uncover the truth." Ching said, "Risin's words are absurd and misleading. Mar Tai never came to my house. If I had seen him, I would gladly accept my punishment. This must be Risin's plot to murder Mar Tai and falsely accuse me to cover up his own crime." Risin said, "After drinking at Lee Chao's inn, my cousin and I split up and went in different directions." The magistrate then asked Lee Chao, who answered, "Yes, they came to the inn that day. I served them wine as usual because they had just arrived for the New Year. After drinking, they bid farewell and went their separate ways, one to the east and the other to the west. How dare I speak nonsense?" Ching said, "With so many customers in my house, if he had been to my house, someone would have seen him. You can inquire my customers and neighbors so as to verify what I say." The magistrate then detained them for inquiry, "Did any of you see Mar Tai at Yang Ching's shop?" Those people all said no. Risin insisted, "All the neighbors know him well, and even if they knew, they wouldn't speak up. The customers all arrived in February, but Mar Tai came to his house in January. How could they know? It is most likely that Mar Tai's earlier arrival aroused Yang Ching's evil intention. I implore your honor to make a thorough investigation and bring him to justice." The magistrate saw that both the neighbors and the clients were all evasive, so he pressured Ching to confess. Ching was innocent; how would he confess? The magistrate ordered Ching to be severely flogged 30 times. Ching refused to confess, and then Cheunng put pilliwinks to him. Under duress, Ching falsely confessed. The county magistrate said, "Since you've confessed to the murder, where is the corpse? Is the stolen silver still intact?"

Ching replied, "In fact, I didn't murder him, but I had to falsely confess my crime for the unbearable torture." The magistrate flared into a rage, ordering to put pilliwinks to Ching again, who slipped into a coma immediately and only woke up after a long while. Ching thought to himself, "Not admitting guilt will lead to nothing but death. I would rather confess temporarily to skip the torture. Perhaps in the future I can be proven innocent of any crime." He then conceded grudgingly, "The body was thrown into the

Yangtze River, and the silver has been used up.” Hearing that, the magistrate immediately put him in a long shackle and decided to sentence him to death.

Less than half a year later, Judge Bao was ordered to tour the country, arriving at Wuchang Prefecture in Hubei Province.

That night, he meticulously examined the case files. No sooner had he reviewed Yang Ching’s case than a wave of tiredness swept over him. Then he fell asleep leaning over the table, a rabbit with a hat on its head, running around before the table. Upon waking up, he pondered to himself, “A rabbit (its Chinese version is ‘兔’) wearing a hat (its Chinese counterpart is ‘𠂔’) would form a new Chinese character ‘冤’, which means injustice. So, there must be a wrongful accusation involved here.” The next day, he summoned Yang Ching and others concerned for an investigation and trial. When asked, Lee Chao proclaimed, “We did drink together and then spilt up. Yang Ching and his neighbors all replied, “We didn’t see Mar Tai.”

Bao thought to himself, “There must have been an accident on the way.” The next day, he pretended to be ill and did not appear in court. Instead, he dressed in plain clothes and took two servants to investigate along the road to Yangluo Post. As they traveled to Nanchee, they found the place very secluded. After carefully observing and looking up, they saw a flock of crows gathered on the shady bank of a pond ahead. The three of them approached, only to find a dead body floating on the water surface, not yet too decomposed. As soon as Bao saw it, he ordered his servant to go directly to the Yangluo Posthouse and call for twenty postmen and a sedan chair. Knowing that it was the order from Lord Bao, the postmaster immediately came to pay homage to him, along with the sedan chair bearers and postmen. After the greetings, Lord Bao ordered the postmen to go down into the pond to retrieve the body. The pond was unfathomable. One of the postmen, Chao Chong, reported, “I know a bit about swimming and I am willing to go down to retrieve the body.” Bao was greatly pleased and immediately ordered Chao Chong to dive into the pond. He swam to the middle and dragged the body ashore. “Carefully search everywhere and check out if there is something else.” instructed Bao. Chao Chong went straight down and found several corpses inside, all of which had been decomposed and could not be retrieved. He then came back ashore and reported to Bao. Immediately, Bao ordered the postmen to arrest a dozen or so families

in the neighborhood and asked, "Whose pond is this?" "This is a source of irrigation water for us, but not just belongs to a person or a family," explained the crowd. Bao continued, "Where did this corpse come from?" But none of them could identify it.

Bao took the dozen or so families to the posthouse and pondered on the way, "How can I interrogate all these people? Who should I start with? How can I punish everyone?" He came up with a plan and returned to the posthouse to settle down. The postmen brought in the group of people. Bao ordered them to kneel down and report their names one by one. He then instructed the postmen to carefully record their names and present them to him. After reviewing the names, Bao said, "Previously, while I was in the mansion, I had a dream that several people came to my desk to file a complaint, saying they were murdered and dumped into this pond. Today, when I went to see it myself, I indeed found several corpses, which corresponds to my dream. And now, I also have the murderer's name here." Pretending to randomly mark the name with a red brush, Bao pointed to the name on the paper and shouted, "Those who are innocent, stand up and leave. The murderer, keep on your knees and listen to the trial." At that, everyone innocent stood up, except for Wu Yu, who was trembling with fear. He didn't know whether to stand up or not. Just as Wu tried to stand up, Bao suddenly struck heavily with his attention-catching block and scolded sternly, "You are the murderer. How dare you stand up!" Wu Yu lowered his head and remained silent. Bao had Wu Yu bludgeoned forty times and queried, "Who are the people you murdered? Confess the truth and avoid further torture." Wu Yu refused to confess. Lord Bao ordered the use of the torture rack, upon which the criminal conceded, "They were lone travelers from afar. I used the pretext of herding cattle and, seeing that it was getting late, I employed sweet talk to deceive them into staying the night at my house. There, I drugged them with mickey finn, and dumped them into the pond. I do not know their names." Lord Bao asked, "When was this undecayed body killed this year?" Wu Yu replied, "It was on the evening of January 22." Lord Bao pondered, "The date this person died coincided with the day when Cheng Risin parted ways with his cousin, so it must be the cousin." He immediately summoned Lee Chao for interrogation. The courier reported, "He went to the court to attend the trial the other day and has not returned." Lord Bao had everyone innocent return and Wu Yu locked up.

The next day, Judge Bao rode back to the government office. The officials and servants,

unaware of what happened, went out to the suburbs to greet him and asked about the reason. Lord Bao explained everything to them. They all gasped in admiration. On the day following that, Lord Bao had Yang Ching and others brought out for a brief trial. He immediately ordered Cheng Risin to go to Nanchee to identify the corpse and come back to report clearly. Then, he had Wu Yu taken out of custody for further interrogation and trial.

Judge Bao asked Yang Ching, "You didn't murder anyone at that time, but why did you confess to the crime?" Yang Ching explained, "I repeatedly protested and declared that I am innocent. Because all the clients at my inn said they arrived in February, and the neighbors were all afraid of being implicated, claiming not to know anything about it. Therefore, Lord Cheunng became suspicious and subjected me to torture and interrogation, making me almost faint to death." Yang Ching continued, "I thought to myself that if I didn't confess, I would die, so I might as well confess temporarily and perhaps there will be a day when the truth comes out. Today, I am fortunate enough to encounter a just and wise judge who has investigated and found out the real culprit. Firstly, I have been cleared of the false charge due to your honor discerning investigation, and secondly, it shows that heaven does not let the innocent suffer in vain." Lord Bao ordered that the shackles on Yang Ching be removed. He turned to query Cheng Risin, "Why did you make baseless accusations at that time?" Risin replied, "I asked around everywhere, but I had no idea the murderer had covered his tracks so meticulously. I accused Ching out of desperation." Lord Bao asked, "How much silver did Mar Tai have with him at the time?" Risin answered, "Two hundred taels." He then asked Wu Yu, "How much silver did you gain from Mar Tai?" Yu replied, "I only spent thirty taels, and the rest of the silver is still there."

Lord Bao immediately dispatched several constables to retrieve the original stolen property. When Wu Yu's mother saw them coming, she thought they were there to arrest her for punishment, so she drowned herself. Lady Gong saw her mother-in-law jump into the water, she also jumped in but was rescued by the constables. The original silver was searched, Wu Yu's property sealed, and the neighbors ordered to take charge of it, and Lady Gong taken to Lord Bao. Gong reported, "My husband is vicious, and his mother became his foe because of her admonition to him, not to mention me. My mother-in-law has died now, and I am willing to follow her." Lord Bao stated, "Since

you tried to advise him but he didn't listen, it's not your fault. Risin, you should be held accountable for falsely accusing Yang Ching, but you are required to retrieve and bury the corpse. And then you will be exempted from punishment." Risin kowtowed in gratitude, while Wu Yu was beheaded in public.

Case 82

Surrounded by Roe Ahead and Deer Behind

There was a precipitous ridge in Gaopo village Dartian County, named Kootee, which linked Dartian in the north to Chiushee County in the south. In its corrie lived two brothers Cheunng Lusan and Cheunng Lusi, who, in the name of chopping woods, were actually looters, countering strangers with an evil intention. A mercer passed the ridge while collecting debts. Seeing the two men at distance, he asked, making an obeisance, "How far is it to the 29th county?" Lusan answered, "Only half a day's journey. Where are you from?" The traveler replied, "I just collected accounts from counties, but hearing there's a shortcut around, got lost. Hope you can show me the way." Lusi answered, "Cross the hill, walk ten miles, and you'll see the main road." Regarding them as woodmen, the merchant followed their direction. Marching forward and finding it a dead end, he had to sit on a stone, awaiting passers-by for help. Suddenly he saw the two coming along the hill and wielding with large cutters. Without any precautions, he was knifed four times and killed. A body search brought the villains several taels and two silver hairpins. Having buried the corpse by the hillside, they divided the loot into half. More than half a year passed and nobody knew about their crime.

It happened that Chian Wushiu and Fan Teechong fought over the scope of jurisdiction of the ridge. Knowing Lord Bao patrolled nearby, Chian filed a suit. Having

investigated in person, Lord Bao thought Chian was right and decided to let him in charge of the hill. Fan was found guilty and got punishment. When he went past the side of the ridge on his way back to the yamen, a fierce wind suddenly blew. Bao thought for a while and wondered if there were grievances around. Then he asked two subordinates to look round, who replied that there was a dead body exposed outside, for some beast had dug it out.

Bao ordered the subordinates to do the digging and checked it in person. Seeing the four cuts on the neck and considering it a murder, he instructed to bury the corpse. Back to the yamen and with no idea about the murderer, Judge Bao was at a loss as to what to do. He stated, "I'm the judge of the living world during day and the nether world at night. Now that I have no clue in this world, it's time to ask for some true information from the ghosts." Thus, he went to his magical bed and instructed his subordinates, "Someone was murdered beside the Kootee Mount, whose body had been found. The criminals are still at large, so his ghost will surely come to make an accusation. You just wait here and lead him in." With that, a chilly wind made the candlelight faint and him drowsy, like a dream yet not a dream. In a while, one man fled in panic with blood all over the body. Before him stood a roe which was pronounced as "Cheunng" in Chinese, and after him a deer "Lu". Bao was shocked and could not see the subordinates around, as if in a dream. Bao guessed that there should be a man called Cheunng Lu beside the Kootee Mount. At dawn, he held court trial and dispatched two guards to pay a secret visit there. If there were a man named Cheunng Lu, they should take him to the court. The two guards consented and arrived at Kootee. As expected, there were brothers named Cheunng Lusan and Cheunng Lusi. However, they didn't dare to arrest them but reported it to Lord Bao when back. Bao said, "Since there're such men, the secretary should make a warrant and take them to me." Then the guards fetched the two brothers to the court. Bao snapped, "You'd better confess your robbery to avoid severe punishment." However, they denied flatly. Then Bao had them each caned sixty times. Unable to bear it anymore, they had to admit, "A traveler who collected debts got lost on the way home. We pretended to tell him the way but killed him in a corner. Now, your inquisition shows that his ghost sure has never taken a rest." Hearing their confession, Lord Bao made an execution immediately.

Case 83

Handkerchief Left Over

In Chingyang County, Cheechou Prefecture lived a millionaire, whose son Chiabin was very indulgent, doing whatever he wanted like raping, gambling and singing for whole nights. One day, ordering his servant to follow, Chiabin walked to Southern Village. While wandering, he came across two young women with light makeup and plain clothes, who were only sixteen years old. Fascinated by their natural and graceful behavior, he feasted his eyes on these two women. He asked his servant, "Who are they?" The servant replied, "They are the wife and sister of Chyu Tsi behind the hill, who went out for business but hasn't been back for several years, and they often pray and draw divination sticks at the nunnery." Chiabin continued, "Go and ask her if she is short of money or food. No matter how much, I will lend her." The servant answered, "Their parents are rich, and if they lack anything, they would help them." Thinking about their beauty, Chiabin couldn't fall asleep that night. After the meal the next day, he went to their house with ten taels of silver for adultery. However, these two women preserved their chastity and scolding him angrily called the neighbors for help. Seeing it impossible, Chiabin stormed out in a huff. Unable to think of a solution, he ordered his servant to invite his friends Lee Hwaleung and Sun Beebao to his manor, and prepared wine for them. When comfortably drunk, Lee and Sun queried, "What do you want us to do for inviting us today?" Chiabin complained, "I'd like to ask you both to come up with a plan for today's disappointing event." Two men queried, "What

happened? Tell us quickly.” Chiabin explained, “Yesterday I ran into Chyu Tsi’s wife and sister, who are pulchritudinous, so I took ten taels of silver to her house, hoping to have sex with them. They not only disapproved, but also swore me badly, so it’s very disagreeable to me.” Lee and Sun chuckled, “It’s a piece of cake.” Bin wondered, “Do you have a brilliant scheme? Tell me now.” They breathed, “In the middle of the night, one of us keeps shouting on the hind hill, and two of us grab the two women in chaos through the front door. Take them into the remote hill, and you will have them at your mercy. What’s so hard about that?” “What a wonderful plan!” exclaimed Chiabin. Then, the three went on drinking until midnight, and snuck out. One of them shouted from the hill, and the other two rushed into Chyu’s house. They tied up the servant who got up to check on the situation and threw him on the ground so that he could not go out to call for help. When into the room, they only caught Chyu Tsi’s wife, Zeng. Unexpectedly, Chyu’s sister was taken back to her husband’s home at dusk because of family affairs. The three took Zeng into a flat cave in the hill and raped her. Before daybreak, the three left, but Chiabin accidentally dropped a handchief beside her. The next morning, the neighbors knew that Zeng’s house had been robbed. They came in and liberating the servant reported it to Chyu Tsi’s sister. Chyu’s sister and her husband, Hsu Tsao went out looking for Zeng, but they could not find her. They searched until reaching a cave in the hill, where they heard someone moaning. Taking a closer look, they found Zeng lying there nakedly, unable to move. Hsu Tsao carried her back, and her sister-in-law fed her warm water. It was a long time before she was sufficiently awake to speak. Her sister-in-law asked, “How did that happen?” Zeng felt ashamed and was unwilling to tell the truth. After repeated inquiry, she had to reply, “Last midnight, there were two men breaking in. Upon seeing this, I considered them to be thieves and was about to escape. However, it was too late to put on my clothes. Unfortunately, I was forcibly taken to the hill, where three men raped me.” Her sister-in-law asked, “Could you recognize them?” Zeng answered, “It was hard to recognize them under the dim moonlight.” Having picked up the white silk handkerchief, Hsu Tsao unfolded it, only to find a name “Chiabin” on it, which had been a gift from a prostitute. Hsu’s wife knew the fact, so she told him, “Yesterday morning, Chiabin took ten taels and wanted to commit adultery with us two, but was scolded by me. He must have not been reconciled to our refusal, so he ganged up with

ruffians to catch us to rape. Fortunately, I was not here, otherwise it would be hard to escape.” Hearing that, Hsu brought a lawsuit to Judge Bao.

“This indictment is to prosecute Chiabin for rape: If fierce birds like eagles and harriers fight, it is difficult for doves and birds to survive. If tigers and leopards are everywhere, it is difficult for dogs and sheep to survive. The lecherous villain Chao Chiabin took advantage of his wealth for local misdeeds. About twenty or thirty acres of wheat has been wasted, which is only enough for his horses to have half a meal. A pig of one hundred kilograms by compulsory collection from the tenants is not enough for a meal for that monster-like person. Innocent villagers were often whipped and looked tearful. Beautiful young women frowned, unable to wash away the traces of rape left on their bodies. He has the audacity to do what he wants with money, like fornication with women and collusion with gangsters. Finding my wife’s brother absent from home, he came and tried to fornicate with my wife and my sister-in-law Zeng by money. Zeng would rather die than submit to rape, yelling out to the neighbors for help. Soon armed with knives and axes, the rapist colluded with some parters, broke into Zeng’s room and took her to the den, where she was tortured and raped in turn, nearly to death. When I found her, she was dying. A handkerchief left over evidenced their criminal deeds, which made neighbors felt horrified and hateful. All people became terror-stricken at the news of breaking in at night and raping women in a hill. The scandal was so terrifying that people closed their doors before the sun set down, and that the babies dared not cry. The bright moon shone all over the village and the dogs protecting homes barked timidly. Those who witnessed that would sleep without sedation as the king Gouchian, who once endured hardships to plan retaliation. Those who heard that would not have a deep sleep as Sima Wen, who had used a log to make himself awake. With dust swirling in the air, all the villagers were talking about it. I beseech Your Excellency to verify the handkerchief and wipe out the wicked, to discern their plot and bring them to justice. This handkerchief is not just about a common ambisexual party, and the crime in the darkroom was not crueler than that in the cave. Everyone is talking about the crime, and the law won’t allow the murder to get away. Above is my appeal.”

Having arrested all of the criminals, Bao asked Shiao Shing, the neighbor on the right side, “You are the neighbor, do you know the details of this crime?” Shing replied, “I

don't know anything about what had happened last night. I heard the servant yelling when I got up the next morning. We neighbors dashed into the room, only to find the servant bound. Soon we untied the rope and informed Hsu Tsao and his wife. With lots of efforts, we, together with the Hsus, searched for Zeng until we found her in the cave. At that time, Zeng couldn't even walk. There was indeed a handkerchief left beside her. That's all. I do not dare to tell anything else that I don't know." "There was a lost handkerchief beside her, with Chiabin's name on it, so there is no doubt that it belongs to him." asserted Bao. Chiabin argued, "Three days ago, I left the handkerchief on the road not in the hill. Besides, how can I catch and bind a living person on my own? This is simply a frame-up!" Hsu protested, "It was he that molested them by using money in the daytime and didn't leave until being scolded. After that, Zeng was bound at night without losing money. Furthermore, there is a handkerchief as evidence for his crime. If it was a robbery, why was Zeng raped rather than being plundered? To redress the injustice, I beg for subjecting him to severe torture to find his accomplices." He said to Bao. In order to make him admit his guilt, Bao then had Chiabin flogged twenty times. However, Chiabin still quibbled. The plaintiff and the defendant were both taken into custody and the witnesses were all released. Bao instructed a turnkey in private, "Guard the prison door carefully. If anyone comes to visit Chiabin, stop it and bring him to me. I will reward you tomorrow. But if you divulge any information, you will be flogged sixty times and dismissed!" "Yes, sir." replied the jailor. Then Bao adjourned the court session, and the turnkey watched over the jail.

Before long, there came two men to the gate to visit Chiabin. The jailor opened the outside door, and calling in all the soldiers took the two men into the court. Then with the drum beaten, Bao held the court trial. The turnkey reported, "My lord, here are two men coming here to visit Chiabin." After asking their names, Bao scolded, "Chiabin has come clean, saying that Zeng was raped by you two. We are about to arrest you, however you come here by yourselves." The two men both paled their faces and couldn't believe it. Hwaleung argued, "It has nothing to do with us two. Why does he slander us?" "Chiabin said he wasn't able to do that without your help." Bao shouted, "Tell the truth!" Hwaleung retorted, "He has done such a thing on his own and tried to defame us." Finding no more excuses, they were both bludgeoned 20 times but still refused to admit their guilt. Then they were put in the corridor, cuffed and shackled.

Chiabin was taken to the court and at the sight of the two men became very flustered. Bao shouted, "After the trial, I found out that it was you who raped Zeng. Those two men admit that you are the prime culprit, and as your accomplices, they are cuffed and shackled." Chiabin kept arguing. Put in cangue, Chiabin was so scared of the torture that he conceded grudgingly, "That day, I took money to her home for sex but was driven away. Then I asked Hwaleung and Beebao to make a discussion and the plan was put forward by Hwaleung. I beg Your Honor to have mercy on me." "At first, you two said you were slandered. But Chiabin told the truth." Bao roared to the accomplices, "Make a confession of your crime and sign a written confession!" The three looked at each other in speechless despair, having no choice but to confess.

The final trial is as follows: "Chao Chiabin, haughty and dissolute, led a luxurious and wealthy life, having broken the law deliberately. Taking advantage of his henchmen, he caught and raped a lady with great ease. Instead of giving him advice to do good, Hwaleung and Beebao helped him to do evil. They couldn't expostulate him, but on the contrary, they came up with ideas to indulge his desire. They intruded the woman's house and conducted evil activities openly, binding the servant on the ground and caught and raped Zeng in the mountain. What they had done corrupted legal institutions and the rapists should not be condoned. He who commits a crime of rape shall be punished by death, whether he is the principal criminal or the accessory."

Case 84

Borrowing Clothes

There was a scholar named Shen Liangmo in Shiangfu County, Kaifeng Prefecture, who had a son named Shen Yo. Chao Shekchun, a Chin-shih in the highest imperial examination from Chaochia village, had a wife surnamed Tian. The couple were almost fifty years old and did not have a son. Later, they finally gave birth to a daughter named Ahchiao, whose beauty would cause fish to sink out of sight and the flying crane to drop low, put the flowers to shame and outshine the moon. Later, Ahchiao had a marriage engagement with Shen Yo. But less than a year later, Liangmo's family was flooded and began to decline. Seeing the comedown of Shen, Chao Shekchun considered ending the engagement. But his daughter, a virtuous girl, said to her mother, "Daddy has already betrothed me to Shen Yo. How can I marry anyone else?" Lady Tian was also anxious to prompt their marriage, but Shen Yo lacked money to send betrothal gifts. One day, Chao Shekchun went to Nanchuang village for official business. Unexpectedly, Lady Tian should send servants to Shen Yo's house, to invite him to visit her and give him money as betrothal gifts. Overjoyed but helpless to find himself dressed in rags, Yo went to his aunt's home for decent clothes. When the aunt saw her nephew arrive, she asked him what was going on. Shen Yo replied, "My mother-in-law saw that my family was poor, so she sent for me yesterday and promised to give me silver as a betrothal gift. But I have no decent clothes, so I am here to borrow a set of clothes from my cousin. And I will return it tomorrow morning." His

aunt was also very pleased to hear this, and kept him at home for lunch, and then ordered her son Wong Bay to fetch a new suit of clothes for him. Hearing that, Wong Bay, a rascal, didn't lend the clothing, cajoling, "You rarely come to my house, so you must take a rest for a day. I am going to visit my friend now, but I will be back tomorrow." So Yo had to wait at his aunt's house. Bay came to Chao's house, claiming to be Shen Yo. Lady Tian and Ahchiao entertained him in person, but they were very shocked to see Wong Bay's bad manners. Tian inquired, "My good son-in-law, you are a scholar, but why are you so rude?" Wong Bay returned, "The fortune can boost one's courage and the clothes can reflect one's morale. I am poor now and living in a thatched cottage, so the magnificent mansion makes me uneasy, so I acted like this." Not blaming him, Tian asked him to stay for the night and deliberately left Ahchiao unchecked, allowing her to have sex with Wong Bay. The next day, Tian packed over 80 taels of silver, along with some gold and silver jewelry worth about 100 taels, and handing them over to Wong Bay sent him away. Deciding he was the real son-in-law, how could she be wary of him? Bay got the fortune and went back to see Shen Yo, on the pretext of that he was just back from his friend. Then he pestered Shen Yo to stay one more day. On the third day, Yo insisted on leaving, so Bay had to lend him the clothes.

Upon arrival at his father-in-law's home, Yo sent someone to report to his mother-in-law. Tian was surprised and came out to see him, deliberately asking, "Since you say you are my son-in-law, can you tell me something about your family?" Then Yo told in detail. Totally, everything that Yo said was well founded. After seeing Shen Yo's elegant speech, extraordinary temperament, exceptional demeanor, and unique aura from a noble family, Tian thought to herself that this person was her true son-in-law, and that the previous person was a fraud. Extremely regretful, Tian entered the room and said to his daughter, "Come out and see him." Ahchiao refused to go out, but only through the curtain asked, "We asked you to come here the day before yesterday, but why did you drag it out until now?" Shen Yo replied, "I didn't feel well the last two days, so I put it off until today." Ahchiao said, "If you had come three days earlier, I would be your wife, and I would give you gold and silver. But now you are too late; it's your fate." Shen Yo protested, "It was your mother who said she would give me gold and silver, and that's why I am here now. It doesn't matter if you don't

have money to give me. But why do you use the date as an excuse? If I don't write a letter of divorce, you will be my wife even in 30 years. Although your father has money and power, he cannot marry you to anyone else."

After saying that, he was going to stand up and leave. Ahchiao whimpered, "Please wait a minute. We have no luck to get married. You will meet a better wife in the future. Here are a pair of gold jewelry and two sets of gold hairpins to support your study. I hope we can get married in the afterlife." Shen Yo insisted, "How can you say such a ruthless thing? How can that be a reward for breaking off an engagement? No matter how your father treats me, I won't retreat." Ahchiao explained, "I don't mean to break off this marital engagement. You will realize the reason tomorrow. Please receive the gold and leave quickly, otherwise it might drag you down." Shen Yo didn't understand what Ahchiao meant, just keeping sitting straight in the hall. After a while, a message came from the room that Ahchiao had committed suicide by hanging herself. Shen Yo couldn't believe it. He ran into the inner room and saw an untied rope and Lady Tian crying bitterly with Ahchiao in her arms. Tears pouring down his face, Yo also felt grieved. Tian urged, "You must leave immediately. Don't stay here." Shen Yo hurried back to his aunt's house to return the clothes and told her what had happened." Then the aunt learned that it was her son who was the culprit for cheating the money and raping the girl, who was a rigorously chaste woman and chose to commit suicide. Fearful and astonished, the aunt died soon after. Yau, Wong Bay's wife, also a beautiful and virtuous woman, just married one month before. Knowing Wong did such a despicable thing, Yau scolded, "You had got the money, but why did you have sex with her to ruin her reputation? How can God tolerate a man like you! I can not bear you any more. I want a divorce and return my biological mother's home." Bay said, "With so much money, should I be afraid of being wifeless?" Then he drew up the divorce papers.

A few days later, Chao Shekchun returned home and asked about his daughter's death. Tian said, "Our daughter used to be very spoiled and often bullied and insulted maidservants. Two days ago, Shen Yo came to propose marriage. Our daughter saw the rags he was wearing, so she was embarrassed to meet him. She even felt ashamed and hanged herself, which is her impulsiveness and has nothing to do with Shen Yo." Shekchun said with fury, "I have decided to break off the engagement with him, but

you and our daughter are so stubborn. Now he caused the death of our daughter, and tarnished my family's reputation. How can it have nothing to do with him! I insist on a life for a life." So he wrote a complaint and went to file a lawsuit with his servant.

"The complaint is about the rape and murder of my daughter: Nothing is sincerer than the feelings between father and son; nothing is more important than life and death. My daughter Ahchiao, only 15 years old, was betrothed to Shen Yo, who is worse than a beast. When I was out, Yo sneaked into my daughter's bedroom and raped her. Ahchiao stuck to the doctrine of women consistently and felt rather ashamed so that she committed suicide. I think that we still should abide by social morality in the family, which means that men and women still should keep a distance. She will be his wife sooner or later, but why is he so anxious? It's unreasonable to ask for tomorrow's meal in advance. Now my daughter has been dead, and their marriage has come to an end. The dead person can not revive, but the criminal must be punished by law and pay with his life. Human's life is most precious, and I am so sad for losing my daughter. That is my appeal."

Rich and mighty, Chin-shih Chao bribed officials of the court. Magistrate Ye arrested Shen Yo and summoned the plaintiff and the witnesses for questioning. In the process of interrogation, Ye kept allowing the plaintiff casually blame Shen Yo. Yo was condemned to death, not allowing him to defend himself at all.

Autumn approaching, Shekchun wrote a letter to Lord Bao, who was on patrol, urging him to put Shen Yo to death to avoid future trouble. When Lady Tian learned about this matter, she secretly sent servants to entreated Bao not to kill Yo. Bao was puzzled and thought to himself, "Yo is their son-in-law, but it is eccentric that the husband insists on death penalty, while the wife contends no killing. There must be something amiss." Bao called Shen Yo out alone and asked him what had happened. Shen Yo told Bao in full detail. "Ahchiao complained about your late coming. Why did you delay your arrival for three days?" questioned Bao. Shen Yo replied, "Because there were no decent clothes at home, I went to my cousin Wong Bay's house to borrow some. I was pestered by my cousin for two days, so I set out on the third day." Hearing that, Bao got some hints of the case.

He so disguised himself as a mercer and went to Wong Bay's house for sale. Wong

Bay wanted to buy two pieces of cloth, but the mercer raised the price purposely, which irritated Bay to scold, "You are so disgusting!" The peddler retorted, "You're not a real cloth buyer. I have cloth worth 200 taels. If you can buy it, I'll reduce the price by 50 taels for you. Don't bully me for my small business." Wong Bay roared, "I am not a businessman. What do I need so much cloth for?" The cloth seller sneered, "I bet you're not as rich as me!" Wong Bay thought to himself, "I have seventy or eighty taels of silver at home, and if I add jewelry to it, it will be more than one hundred and fifty taels." So he said, "Most of my money are deposited at the bank. I only have less than two hundred taels now. If you allow me to pay the residual balance with jewelry, I would buy it all." The cloth peddler beamed, "Jewelry is acceptable as long as you really want to buy." Wong Bay then gave him 60 taels of silver plus jewelry worth 90 taels for a total of 150 taels, and took 20 loads of good cloth. Having swindled the stolen goods, Judge Bao summoned Chin-shih Chao and handed him the jewelry for recognition. Chao recognized a few pieces and said, "This hairpin is from my family. How does it end up here?" Judge Bao then summoned Wong Bay and asked, "After you swindled Miss Chao's jewelry that day, did you commit adultery?" Recognizing Bao, who was the simulated cloth peddler two days before, Wong Bay realized that it was impossible to escape punishment, so he confessed and said, "My cousin came to borrow the clothes. I thought of a trick that I came to Chao's home pretending to be Yo and lured Ahchiao to have sex with me at night. Now that Miss Chao has committed suicide and my cousin is in jail, I'll accept the death penalty willingly." Bao thought the crime was so serious that he had Wong Bay flogged 60 times, who couldn't bear the severe torture and died on the spot.

After getting the news, Chin-shih Chao exclaimed in a rage, "We can forgive the theft, but my daughter had been raped and humiliated to death. This anger cannot be relieved. What's more, I falsely convict my son-in-law of murder, which will damage my moral integrity. I will take all jewelry back and take revenge on his wife, making her die in prison. Only by doing that can my fury be appeased."

After Wong Bay's ex-wife Yau learned about this, she personally went to Chao's house and said to Lady Tian, "I had not been married to Wong for a month before my husband stole your gold and silver. I was disgusted with his unrighteous behaviour and asked for a divorce immediately. Up to now, I have satyed at my biological mother's

home for a whole year. Here is the divorce paper to prove what I said. Now I hear that your husband is to recover the stolen goods, but I never got it. Please have mercy on me, Madame.” Chin-shih Chao carefully read her divorce documents and learned that she indeed took the initiative to ask for a divorce because of her husband’s theft of property. And then he sighed, “With a high standard of morality, this woman is neither greedy for spoils, nor lives with evil people. This is what a lady from a noble family looks like.” At what her husband said, Lady Tian, who missed her deceased daughter very much, ventured, “My beloved daughter died tragically, and now I, an old and pathetic woman, want to take you as my daughter to comfort me. What do you think?”

Yau bowed in gratitude and replied, “Thank you for your consideration and courtesy, my great benefactor.” Chin-shih Chao advised, “As our daughter, you don’t have a husband, and Yo doesn’t have a wife. How about you two getting married? Then I can treat Yo as my true son-in-law.” Lady Tian said, “That sounds great, and you are more thoughtful than me.” With great joy in her heart, Yau immediately answered, “As you command, my dear father and mother.” They immediately sent for Shen Yo, who married Yau and became Chao’s son-in-law by adoption. People were all relieved at this end.

The fortune got by Wong Bay by a dirty means was finally returned to its original owner; he tarnished Yo’s wife, but his own wife should leave him and marry Yo. What an irony it is! This is proof enough that justice has long arms.

Case 85

Peeping Through the Wall Crack for Light

In the South Village of Huoshan County, Luchou Prefecture, there was a man named Cheunng Shin, about 50 years old, who made clothes for a living. His wife, Wong, was young and beautiful, but dissolute and childless. So Cheunng adopted their brother's son Cheetsu to take care of them when they were old, and meanwhile, Cheetsu married Lau, an enchanting lady. There were two men from Tongcheng County came to Huoshan county to do painting work, one called Yang Yun and the other Cheunng Shiu, both of them being friends with Cheunng Shin, so they boarded at Shin's house. As time went by, their relationship deepened, so the two worshipped Shin as their father and regarded him as their immediate relative. Yun first committed adultery with Wong, and later so did Shiu. One day, Cheunng Shin and his nephew went out to the countryside to sell clothes. Yun and Wong were making love, which was bumped into by Lau. Wong prompted, "Today Lau witnessed us, so it is better to rape her to prevent her from informing on us." Shin and Cheetsu did not return at night, and Lau slept alone. Yang Yun broke into Lau's room while Lau was sleeping. Yun climbed into her bed to rape her, and Lau was at a loss and shouted. Wong entered the room with her hand put over Lau's mouth, and Lau had no choice but to yield. Cheunng Shiu later then slept with Wong. From then on, they took turns to sleep with the two women, Yun with Wong, Shiu with Lau, or Yun with Lau, Shiu with Wong. Cheunng Shin and Cheetsu were out very often and spent little time at home, and this situation lasted for

more than a year. The four were deeply attached. However, their love affairs were detected by Shin, who tried to catch them but in vain. Yang Yun and Cheunng Shiu prompted to Wong, "Cheunng Shin has already known our affairs. Why don't we murder him with a scheme to eliminate future trouble?" Wong said, "No, it won't work. As long as we are careful enough not to get caught, he can do nothing to us."

The uncle and nephew had been back for several days, and Shin said to Cheetsu, "It's August now, and everyone needs new grain. Today is the first day of the month in the lunar calendar, which is not proper to go out. Tomorrow we need to get up early to buy rice."

Early the next morning, Cheunng Shin and Cheetsu set out together but took separate routes. Cheunng Shin went to the nearby Wongchiang Bay, while Cheetsu went to Chiugong Bay, which was slightly farther away. Cheunng Shin finished his errands first and returned the next afternoon. On his way back, Shin suddenly met Cheunng Shiu and Yang Yun, who had finished painting work and went home together. Seeing Cheunng Shin approaching, they exchanged glances and whispered to each other, confirming that their previous plan was feasible. They greeted, "Good afternoon, Godfather. Let me help you with your backpack and umbrella." Continuing their journey until dusk, they reached a secluded spot in the mountain. Suddenly, the two men misled Cheunng Shin into a deep ravine. Cheunng Shin became frightened and shouted for help, but no one came. Cheunng Shiu grabbing Shin with one hand, Yang Yun took out a small axe from his waist and slashed at Shin's head, killing him on the spot. However, the axe was stuck by the skull, and when Yang Yun wanted to take out the axe, he failed. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew and the clash of bamboo was heard. Suspecting that someone was coming, they hurriedly threw the body into the lotus pond along with the axe. Afraid that the corpse would surface, they toppled over a stone on it. Intoxicated by what they had done, they told it to Wong when they were back. After hearing it, Wong was scared and said, "You made it, but we can't let Lau know it. I'm afraid that you will get the punishment if she reveals it." Wong continued, "What if Cheetsu comes back to look for Shin?" Cheunng Shiu advised, "When Cheetsu comes back, you may ask him where Shin is. If he says that he doesn't know, you can send him to the yamen and frame him up for murdering Shin. It would be the best if he is sentenced to death."

Both Wong and Yang Yun agreed, saying, "This plan is ingenious. Let's proceed with it." On the 6th day of the month, when Cheetsu returned home, Wong asked him, "Why didn't your uncle come back with you?" Cheetsu was startled and replied, "I stayed at Wongchiang Bay yesterday, expecting Uncle to return with me. But everyone said he had already come back on the afternoon of the third day." Wong changed her face and yelled, "You must have plotted to murder him!" Wong together with the neighbors grabbed and tied up Cheetsu while beating a drum for attention.

Lord Bao happened to be inspecting Chiangbay County, and the county magistrate Ho Shian came out to welcome him. Wong complained to Lord Bao about the murder in detail. Judge Bao received the case and knew that Magistrate Ho was known for his upright administration and strict adherence to justice. So he transferred the case to Ho. The attendants Wong Sheng and Lee Biao were assigned the task and promptly apprehended Cheetsu along with their neighbor Shiao Hwa and the village leader Hsu Fu for inquiry. The county magistrate scolded, "Your uncle has been raising you since your childhood. How dare you murder him? Where is the corpse? Tell the truth!" Cheetsu replied, "That day I went out with my uncle, and we split up halfway. I went to Chiugong Bay, and my uncle went to Wongchiang Bay. Yesterday, I went to Wongchiang Bay to invite my uncle to come back with me, and everyone said that my uncle had been back for three days. They can serve as witnesses. Since my childhood, I have received great kindness from my uncle and aunt, who raised me and arranged my marriage. I regarded them as my own parents and always wished to repay their kindness. How could I bear to kill him? I beg Your Honor to conduct a thorough investigation." Wong said, "This unfilial man squandered the family's assets and resented his uncle's admonishment. That's why he committed the murder. I beg your honor to torture him severely, to pursue the corpse for a decent burial, and make him pay with his life." The county magistrate summoned Shiao Hwa for inquiry, "What kind of a person is Cheetsu?" Shiao Hwa answered, "Cheetsu has always been a virtuous man. He has never done anything immoral. He treats his uncle like his own father. I dare not tell lies." The magistrate ordered Shiao Hwa to step down. He then asked Hsu Fu, "Does Cheetsu conduct himself?" Hsu Fu's answer was consistent with what Shiao Hwa had said. The county magistrate pretended to be angry and scolded, "You two were bribed by Cheetsu and should have been bludgeoned twenty times each."

Since you are old, I show you mercy.”

The county magistrate, realizing that Cheetsu was not guilty, pondered for a while and devised a plan. He angrily ordered Cheetsu to be severely lashed twenty times, and then nailed to the pillory. The magistrate declared, “Within three days, the corpse must be found for a proper burial.” He then ordered that Cheetsu be taken into custody and that Wong return home. Wong kowtowed in gratitude, saying, “Oh, super judge, your wisdom is truly divine. May your noble name be revered for generations to come.” Overwhelmed with joy, she could hardly contain her happiness.

The county magistrate then asked a guard, “Where does Cheetsu live?” The guard replied, “He lives in the village ahead.” Then the two of them walked straight to Cheetsu’s house, finding everyone was asleep and quiet, except Wong’s house, where the light was still on. The county magistrate peered through a crack in the wall and saw two men and two women sitting together, drinking. Yang Yun laughed, “If it hadn’t been for my ingenious plan, how could we have fun today?” Everyone laughed except Lau, who said unhappily, “Well, well, you are so happy, but how can you be at ease when my husband is condemned for nothing?” Yang Yun replied, “As long as the four of us can continue to enjoy this happiness, what does it matter to us? Let’s drink a toast and go on to do something happy before it’s too late.” Wong said, “Everyone says Magistrate Ho’s smart, but I don’t think so. It is easy to trick him by a few words.” Yang Yun said, “All right, let’s get to the point.” He then embraced Lau, who, remaining silent, grew angry in her heart and turned her head away, ignoring him.

Wong asked, “The magistrate set a three-day limit for the retrieval of the body for a burial. Did you put it properly?” The two men returned, “We threw the body into the deep part of the lotus pond and placed a large stone on top of it. It will decay soon.” Wong said, “That’s good then.” The county magistrate, in great anger, went back to the yamen and ordered the guards to beat the drums and gather the troops, without revealing the reason to the public. Followed by the troops, the magistrate personally arrived at Cheetsu’s house in a sedan chair. They surrounded the house from front to back, broke open the front door, and Yang Yun and Cheunng Shiu, taken by surprise, tried to escape to the back but were captured by the soldiers who had come from behind. The four men and women were brought back to the yamen, where each of them

was lashed thirty times and cast into prison.

The next day when court session opened, the magistrate ordered Cheetsu to be brought out of prison and asked, "Is there a lotus pond on your way to Wongchiang Bay?" After pondering for a while, Cheetsu replied, "There is only one lotus pond in the mountains, in a deep ravine at the foot of the mountain." The magistrate then released Cheetsu from his restraints and instructed him to lead the way. He dispatched more than twenty soldiers and personally rode in a sedan chair to the designated location. As expected, the pond was seldom visited by people. Cheetsu reported, "Here is the lotus pond." The magistrate announced, "Your uncle's corpse is in this pond." Upon hearing this, Cheetsu burst into tears and jumped into the pond. Several strong men joined in the search under orders until they reached the middle of the pond and found a large stone under which the body was indeed buried. They lifted the corpse onto the shore and found a small axe hanging from the skull. After cleaning it, they found out that the axe was engraved with the characters "Yang Yun", which was presented to the magistrate. The magistrate asked, "Whose name is this?" Cheetsu replied, "It's the person that your honor caught last night." The magistrate further inquired, "What relationship do these two people have with your family?" Cheetsu answered, "They are my uncle's sworn sons." After examining the wounds on the corpse, the magistrate went back to the county seat to interrogate the four persons and ordered Yang Yun and Cheunng Shiu to be bludgeoned forty times respectively, demanding that they confess. When they refused to admit their guilt, the magistrate dropped the axe and asked, "Whose is this?"

After seeing it, the two of them became panicked and rendered speechless. Put in pilliwinks, the two looked at each other, and unable to endure the torture confessed, "We had affairs with Wong, and after being discovered, we were afraid of future troubles, so we killed her husband." The magistrate roared, "If you were aware that being discovered in an illicit affair would bring trouble, how could you not know that murder would bring even greater consequences?"

Bludgeoned another 40 times each, they were cast into prison in shackles. Then the magistrate asked Wong, "How could you bear to murder your husband and treat others well?" Wong answered, "It's none of my business. The two planned the murder. I didn't know anything until they killed my husband." The county magistrate retorted,

“Since you were informed, you should have reported it to the government, but why did you frame Cheetsu up? You said I am unwise, and it is easy to trick me just by a few words. How nasty you are! Receive flogging 30 times!” Then he turned to Lau and asked, “How can you bear to frame your own husband up together with them? Lau said, “I actually did not conspire with them. At the beginning, my mother-in-law have affairs with them. They forcibly silenced me, and I had no choice but to comply. Later on, they planned the murder, and I had no knowledge of it. I beg for your mercy and forgiveness.” The magistrate insisted, “Although you were initially coerced by your mother-in-law, you should have informed your husband afterwards. Even though you were not directly involved in the conspiracy, you should not have blindly obeyed them.” Then Lau was to be condemned to hanging, Yang Yun, Cheunng Shiu to beheading, and Wong to death by dismembering the body, with Cheetsu released back home. The case was reported to Judge Bao, who immediately upheld the verdict. It can be said that laws were enforced fairly and the grievances redressed.

Case 86

A Hole in the Rafter

In Yangchu County, Taiyuan Prefecture, Shanshee Province, lived Hu Chyuking, an eighteen-year-old student born in a poor family, who lost his parents, with no brothers and wife. Not having studied hard enough, he was reprimanded to return home when he occasionally failed in the imperial exam. So he made a firm resolution to sell his family property to get 60 taels, heading for Nanking to learn from a famous educator. When the boat was overturned by the wind in the river, all the people in the boat drowned, but Chyuking was lucky enough to hold a board in his hand and followed the stream to a shallow place, where he was saved by a fisherman, An Tsi, who gave him clean clothes and travelling expenses. Chyuking expressed his thanks to him and left after getting his name and address. He thought that if he went home, he would be more poverty-stricken and helpless; informed of the beauty of Nanking, he thought he might as well find food along the way and make a plan for the next stage after getting there. When he arrived in Nanking, he visited all the wealthy families, but none of them were willing to give him any help. He was in rags and lived a hard living every day. Whereupon he entered the Bao-en Temple and asked to become a monk, but he did not know how to sweep the floor or burn incense, so the monks were about to expel him, but an old monk named Shuai Chen asked, "What can you do?" He replied, "A student from Shanshee, I had wanted to go to Nanking to learn from a teacher, but my boat was overturned on the way and I was stranded here. I can not do anything, but if

you had mercy on me and gave me travelling expenses back home, I would never forget your kindness.” The monk said, “You had a long journey to make, so how could I give you so much money? Besides, you intended to go to the capital to study, so if you return now, you will have made a vain journey. Why don’t I provide you with food while you study in the temple? There are also some people here who are studying these days, and if you do well, wouldn’t it be convenient for you to go to take the examination?” He thought, “If I stay at the temple for a long time, I am afraid that the monks will be disgusted with me.” Thus he adopted Shuaichen for a father, and the monks for brothers. He then devoted all himself to studying day and night.

After three years, he took the examination and was awarded the highest rank. Shuaichen was also pleased to have made meritorious contributions to his success.

Although Chyuking had stayed in the temple for three years, he seldom went out for leisure. After his success, he was invited by many of his brothers to visit all the rooms. One day, he strolled up to Monk Wukong’s house, and with the sound of chess coming from the kitchen spotted a staircase in a hidden place. Going straight upstairs, he saw two women playing chess, who were surprised to see him. A woman asked, “Who brought you here?” Chyuking said, “I walked here alone. Who are you? Why are you here?” The woman replied, “I am Mi-Koo, the daughter of An Tsi the fisherman, abducted by the monk.” Chyuking said, “So you are the daughter of my benefactor.” Mi-koo wondered, “Who are you, sir? To what do you owe my father?” “I am the one from the temple who just passed the imperial examination at the provincial level. I was once saved by your father when I met with misfortune, and I have not yet repaid your father’s kindness. It is out of expectation to see you today, so I shall save you.” “It’s not the right time to requite my father now. Get out of here quickly. A gentleman came here by accident this year and has been strangled to death by the monk. If you are run into by him, it will be hard to save your own life.” Chyuking said, “Wookong is my senior fellow apprentice and we are both from the same temple, so it doesn’t hurt to see him.” He asked again, “Who is that lady?” Mi-koo answered, “This is Pan Shiaoyu, the wife of Yang Fang outside the city. On the way to her mother’s house, she was forced to eat the fruit mixed with anesthesia and brought here after she passed out.” At that moment, Wookong came upstairs and asked with smirk, “Brother, what brought you here?” “I came here by accident, but did not expect that you have such a hobby.” replied

Chyuking.

Immediately Wookong went downstairs and locked the door, and called Wooking over and together they invited Chyuking to a room with high walls all around; Wookong put a rope, a razor and a packet of arsenic before Chyuking and ordered, "Please choose for yourself which way you want to end your life, before we two do it for you!" Chyuking exclaimed, "I'm your brother! How can I be treated as an outsider?" Wookong said, "We have secret pledge that only those who shaved their hair are my kind. Even if they have blood ties with me, those who know my secret should be disowned, let you alone as a sworn brother." Chyuking begged, "In that case, I would also like to have my hair cut." Wooking sneered, "Such a lie! You have endeavored in the imperial examination for many years, so how can you become a monk while you're enjoying your success? Don't fool me around! If I don't kill you now, you will surely kill me in the future!" Chyuking swore, "If I take revenge on you, I'm gonna die a horrible death."

Wookong repeated, "You may spread rumors to do harm to my denomination even if you don't take action against me. It is no use talking to me so much. I will kill you now if you continue to beg for mercy." Chyuking sobbed, "I am obliged to Master Shuaichen for his kindness, so I want to extend my gratitude to him in person before I die." "It's no use expecting him to save you." rejoined Wookong. After a while, Shuaichen summoned, Chyuking kowtowed and begged, "I am one member of the temple and it doesn't hurt for me to bump into his personal affairs. But now my senior brother is forcing me to die, so please save me, Master." Before Shuaichen could say a word, Wookong said, "Since ancient times, people who became monks have forgone everything in this world, and never care about any personal favors. Now that you are asking for help, is he gonna save you?" Shuaichen breathed, "Dear son, it is your destiny that determines all this. Don't worry, and I will bury you in the best place and pray for you to live a good life in your next life. If you had drowned in the river, your body would not have been able to return to the soil, and you would not have been able to enjoy this few years' lifespan. I'll just have one word to tell you that I cannot save you." Facing with his tough attitude, Chyuking sighed in tears, "Then can you postpone my time?" The three monks declared, "If it were for anyone else, this would be impossible. But to you, we'll grant it. From this noon on, you shall have to end your life by next noon." With that, the three monks went out and locked the door.

Chyuking stood alone in the empty room, only a rope hung from the girder and a stool to support his feet when he was to hang himself. And there was also a knife and a bag of arsenic, with nothing else around him. The building was tall with walls on all sides. Chyuking looked around carefully, hitting upon an idea to escape. When the nightfall came, he knocked holes in the wall with the stool, took a straight stick from the stool and tied it with the rope. And he made nails out of the wall with the knife. Standing on the stool with one foot, he put the other on the nails, he held the pillar with his hands to lift his feet. With the rope tied around his waist, he climbed up to the girder. Then he picked up the stick with the rope and struck the rafters with the stick, one rafter being removed and a hole appearing. Finally, he went out of the hole.

Chyuking thought to himself, "How can this injustice not be repaid? Moreover, I just won the imperial examination. If I swallow my anger and get known by my colleagues who have just passed the imperial examination with me, wouldn't I be discredited?" So he told his colleagues all the details of the matter. Everyone who heard about it felt angry and disgusted. Some donating money, others making suggestions, they planned to submit a lawsuit to Judge Bao. Three days later, the three monks thought with anxiety and joy that Chyuking must have been dead. They came together, opened the door and saw no trace of him. They looked at each other, and said with pale faces, "How could this happen? This house is like an iron barrel, but how could he have fled away?" The three men looked around closely and found that there was a hole. They said to each other, "It didn't matter if he were a common person, but he just won the imperial examination, and all his colleagues knew that he was in our temple. If he was absent from the next exam, they must come to find him. How could we answer properly? If Chyuking escaped alive, he would come for revenge. He is an officer, while we are monks, just like throwing straws against the wind, so why not strike first to gain the advantage?" "So, what should we do?" asked Shuaichen. Wookong advised, "Why not write a lawsuit by your name and hand it to Judge Bao first, 'We find that Chyuking married two women in our temple, singing and dancing day and night, which is not in line with the identity of a scholar, and corrupts the atmosphere of the temple. One day this month he went out for fun and didn't come back until early in the morning. I am afraid that he will get our temple into trouble, so I have to make a complaint against him.'" Following the advice, Shuaichen went to file the lawsuit. Bao

was about to take some measures when Chyuking also came to bring a lawsuit against them. After reading the petition, Bao went to the temple and punishing the three monks severely rescued the two women.

The next year, Chyuking earned several promotions in quick succession, and became an official in Kingchou Prefecture. When traveling in the Harkou River, he saw Wookung, Wooking and Shuaichen in a ship beside his. Chyuking stood in the bow and ordered his subordinates to arrest them. The two monks felt guilty and knew there was no way to survive, throwing themselves into the water and getting drowned. Shuaichen kneeled down for forgiveness. Chyuking said, “You have offered help to me for three years, but it’s ruthless not to save in the face of danger. If I had been forced to die that day, how could I be an official today? Making amends for your fault by good deeds today, you could go away but I never want to see you again in the future.”

Case 87

Black Nevus

In Kimhwa Prefecture lived Pan Gui, who, together with his wife Cheng Yuegui and eight-month-old son, was going to celebrate his father-in-law Cheng Tai's birthday. At arrival at the Chingshee ferry, they crossed the river by boat along with other passengers. Yuegui was giving suck to her hungry baby when an evil villain Hong Ang noticed a black mole under her left breast. As they went ashore, Pan Gui led Yuegui toward the east, while Hong Ang pulled her toward the west. Pan scolded, "Shame on you! How dare you pull my wife?" "What a loathsome villain! How dare you say my wife is yours?" No sooner had the words fallen than they began to fight, with Pan beaten to vomiting blood. Finally, the two men scuffled to the yamen, where the magistrate Chyu Shekchue held court trial and queried, "What's the reason of your fight?"

Pan replied, "We were going to congratulate my father-in-law on his birthday. After getting to Chingshee ferry, we crossed the river with other passengers including this man. When we went ashore, he pulled and pushed my wife, saying my wife was his. The subsequent fight brought my blood vomit." Hong retorted, "It was I that to celebrate my father-in-law's birthday with my wife. Once ashore, Pan Gui robbed me of my wife. Hope you can give a fair verdict and stop this unruly conduct." "Who is your husband on earth?" Chyu asked Cheng, whose answer was Pan Gui. "My wife has no sense of shame, and once had adultery with Pan, who now set this trap. Please

investigate it in detail.” begged Hong. The officer inquired again, “Are there any marks on your wife’s body?” Hong replied, “There is a black mole under her left breast.” The woman was ordered to undress herself, a black nevus exposed. Then Pan was flogged 20 times and expelled out of the court, Pan’s wife taken away by Hong Ang.

While entrusted on patrol, Judge Bao passed Kimhwa Prefecture by chance, and paid a formal visit to Chyu Shekchue. Arriving at the front of the court, Bao encountered three people getting out: A woman and a man were crying on each other’s shoulder; the other man was pulling the woman. Judge Bao stopped them, “Why are you crying?” Pan Gui explained it in detail.

Judge Bao proclaimed, “Take them aside and don’t let them go.” Then he entered the official residence and greeted Chyu.

Then Bao advised, “Just now I heard about the event between Pan and Hong, which you had judged. The couple were so reluctant to depart that I’m afraid there was grievance.” Chyu chimed in, “Your Honor is surely able to figure out the truth. I will send them to your court for a thorough investigation.” Bao responding reverently and getting out, Chyu commanded the suspects to wait outside Bao’s yamen.

Bao began the trial and asked Yuegui first,

“Which is your real husband?”

“Pan Gui is.”

“Were you acquainted with Hong Ang?”

“I don’t know him at all. While I was feeding my hungry son yesterday, the ruffian noticed my black nevus under my breast and nursed an evil intent. When we went ashore, planning to go home on the east, he pulled me backward and fighting with my husband scuffled to the government office. When asked if there were any marks as proof, Hong Ang said a mole was on my breast. The officer didn’t find out the truth, and believing what he said awarded me to Hong Ang. I beg Your Honor for a thorough investigation, and let me home with my real husband. I’ll sincerely appreciate it all my life.”

“You say Pan Gui is your husband, but how old are you and your husband?”

"I am 23 and my husband is 25. We have been married for three years and our son is only 8 months old."

"Do you have parents-in-law?"

"Yes, my father-in-law passed away and my mother-in-law is 49."

"What about your parents' names and ages? Do you have any brothers or sisters?"

"My father Cheng Tai is 50 years old when it comes to 13th August. My mother, with the surname Cheunng, is 45. I have two elder brothers."

"Take her to the west side of the corridor."

And Pan Gui was summoned for interrogation.

"About your wife, what are her family name, given name and age?"

"My wife Zheng Yuegui is 23."

The rest of his answer was consistent with ZhengYuegui's words. Bao demanded that he wait at the west side of the corridor. Then, it was Hong Ang's turn.

"You claim the woman is your wife but Pan Gui insists she is his. What is your evidence?"

"My wife has a black nevus on her left breast."

"The black nevus is under the breast. When she fed the son with the breast, everyone could see it. How can a nevus be the evidence? Can you speak out her name and age?"

At a loss for a while, he answered,

"Chiugui is her name and she is 22 years old. My father-in-law's surname is Cheng and he will be 50 years old tomorrow."

"How dare you commandeer a married woman and indulge in sophistry! You deserve an exile to the frontier preceded by 40 floggings. "

Had it been Chyu Shekchue's judgment, the couple would have been forced into separation!

Case 88

Green Feces

Gong Kun was a wealthy but pinchpenny man in Tong-an county. On his father-in-law Old Mr. Lee's birthday, Kun had the servant Changtsai go for celebration with presents, warning, "You can give him other gifts except this goose." With a nod, Changtsai arrived at Mr. Lee's home. Seeing the presents, Lee felt happy and asked, "Why doesn't my son-in-law come himself?" The servant replied, "happens to be tied up with mundane chores." Under the instruction of Lee, the cook accepted some items of more value, including the goose.

Changtsai was unhappy for fearing scolds from his master. After a few drinks, he went back with his cage. One mile away from the county, Changtsai saw a flock of white geese in the field and nobody around. Having caught a big one, he wetted its feather and put it into his cage. Passing the hillside on his way home, Chaolu, a gooseherd, encountered Changtsai and noticed no goose in his cage. But when coming back to the field, he found Changtsai catch his goose and putting it into the cage, go away. The gooseherd shouted while chasing, but Changtsai ignored him, just going ahead. After a long while, the gooseherd ran into his master, who was just back from the county, shouting, "Lord! The man with a coop, he's stolen our goose. Seize him! Now!" At this, the master held Changtsai. The latter put his belongs aside and protested, "So rude! Why you guys grasp me groundlessly?" The former ranted, "You stole my goose and

say ‘groundlessly’?” Then a quarrel and scuffle arose. Later, several passers-by tried to reconcile and came up with an idea, “Lord, you can put the goose into the gaggle. If the goose gets along with others, it’s yours. If not, it belongs to him.” Changtsai replied, “It’s a good idea and worth a try.” And then he released the goose from the cage into the gaggle. Seeing its wet feather, which was different from its original appearance, other geese began to chase and deport it. It seemed obvious that this goose was not gregarious. The crowd said, “It must be Changtsai’s. Why you two impose on him?” Scolded by the humiliated master, Chaolu wondered, “I saw with my own eyes no goose in his cage before him arriving at our field. And I also witnessed the whole process of him catching our goose. But why didn’t the goose get along with others?” Bitter about the result and anxious to figure it out, he came to grapple with Changtsai.

Coincidentally, Judge Bao passed by, and at the sight of the disturbance in the crowd, inquired what had happened. Hearing the inquiry, both of them explained in their own favor. Bao took a close look at the goose and mused, “If this goose belongs to Chaolu, why can’t it group with others? But if it is Changtsai’s, how dare Chaolu frame him? Deciding that there was a reason for it, he took the goose to the court and let them return home and retrieve it the next morning.

The next day, Bao beckoned them to the court for the goose. After observation, he said, “It’s Chaolu’s goose.” Changtsai complained, “Your Excellency, it was yesterday that everyone stood on my side. But why are you on the other side today?” Bao stated, “You live downtown and must feed your geese with grain, while on the outskirts, his geese are scattered in the fields, so what they eat must be grass. Geese eat grain, and their feces must be yellow; but if geese eat grass, their feces are green. Now the feces of this goose are all green, so how can you confuse the public and debate?” Changtsai argued, “If his, why the goose didn’t group yesterday? It was chased instead.” Bao roared, “You lackey still dare to quibble! You wetted the goose with water, and other geese saw its feather different from their own; how could they not run after it?” After that, Chaolu took back the goose, and Changtsai was bludgeoned twenty times before being kicked out. At the news, people all over the county praised Bao as a god.

Case 89

A Monk with a Frown

Lord Bao, as a county sheriff, dreamed one night that City God sent him four monks, all of whom opened opening the door happily, except one with a frown. Waking up, he thought it weird. The next day was lunar July 15th, so he went to the City God Temple for prayers, and encountering four monks in the left hallway recalled his dream the night before. Then he stopped them, saying, “As monks, why don’t you greet me?” One of them replied, “The ones who live here for a long time should greet you, but we are wandering far and wide. Last night we asked for one-night stay here and shall set off for another temple today. Indifferent to fame and wealth, we are carefree hermits. That’s why we don’t greet you.” But a doubt niggled at Bao when he noticed a monk with delicate skin, who didn’t really look like a man, so he asked, “What are your names?”

One of them answered, “My name is Chen Shou, and they are my apprentices, Ru Chen, Ru Hoi and Ru Ker.” Bao inquired, “Are you able to chant scriptures?” Chen Shou replied, “We have a smattering of it.” Bao cajoled, “Today is the Ghost Festival, and I used to invite monks to chant scriptures in my house. Now it’s my great honor to meet you. Would you please go to my yamen for chant, praying for auspicious government in the future?”

Then the monks were brought to the court and offered four bathtubs for a bath, with some flowers and candles displayed in the courtyard. The three strong monks having already taken a bath, only Ru Ker insisted, "I was commanded by my master that I never take a bath." Offering him a new suit, Bao declared, "Purenness really matters in Buddhism. There is no such thing as giving up bathing. If there were such a percept, I should discard it for you from now on." Bao ordered his servants to strip him off, only to find that was a woman, with two breasts popping out.

With the other three monks put in manacles, Bao interrogated Ru Ker, roaring, "A first glance convinced me you are a woman. How could it be possible to invite you, itinerant monks, to chant scriptures? How dare you flee with the three monks, licentious woman! You'd better confess all." Kneeling on the ground and crying for mercy, the woman explained, "I was the wife of Chu Shou from Kootsun Village, Yeechun County, taking care of my mother-in-law, who was in her seventies. The three monks came in our house and begged for one-night accommodation on the 14th night of last lunar July. Declining them politely, my husband explained, "Living in this solitary village, my family is too poor to offer you places to sleep on, not to mention providing you quilts. I'm afraid you can't stay overnight here." One monk entreated, 'It's too late to go somewhere else. What we wish were merely a place for the night rather than a bed and quilt, and we'll leave early tomorrow morning. 'Then they sat down and chanted. Seeing that they were reluctant to leave and sympathizing with them, my husband got vegetarian food and bed ready for them. Who could ever have imagined that my husband would be slayed by these vicious monks! My mother-in-law and I were about to flee but unfortunately caught, my mother-in-law killed and all my hair cut by force. The next day, they set our house on fire and forced me to leave with them. Narcotized by drugs, I couldn't shout for help on the way. A little while of rest would lead to cruel beating. Out of the deep hatred of them for murdering my mother-in-law and husband, I intended to kill them for revenge. However, I was too scared to take actions. Yesterday was the 14th day of July, which was the first anniversary of their death. While the three cold-hearted monks were enjoying their drinks, I stayed sad in silence, praying to City God for redressing my injustice. Today I had thought you really wanted them for chant, so I dared not tell you the truth. Had I known that you tested me with a bath, I would have told you earlier. Now, City God

have brought me to Your Honor and my injustice is finally to be redressed. Even if I were to die at once and meet my mother-in-law and husband in hell, I should have no regrets.” Bao stated, “You have already followed the monks for a year. Had you not told me about your prayers to City God, I would have definitely regarded you as a chippie deserving state-mandated indentured servitude. You confessed that you prayed to City God for justice, which is true because he told me so in my dream yesterday. According to my dream and what happened today, there’s every reason to believe the existence of City God. And the three vicious monks shall be beheaded.” At last, Bao drafted the official document to send the woman back home for a remarriage.

Case 90

Watermelon Abloom

Having sold grain to relieve the famine, Judge Bao passed Wenchou Prefecture by accident on his way back to the capital city. At night he dreamed of four watermelons, one of them abloom. Waking up at midnight, he couldn't figure out what the dream implied. The next day, he went to visit the local official Mr. Wong, coming across three monks preaching on the street. After his visit, the three monks were still there. Noticing their newly-shaved heads looking like the watermelons, he was reminded of his dream. Then he brought them into his office for an inquiry, "What are your names?" "I'm Yunwai, the other two Yunbiao and Yunchee, both my fellow apprentices." answered the elder. "Which temple do you live in?" continued Judge Bao. Yunwai said, "We get used to preaching in different places, with no settled residence. We arrived here yesterday and lodged in Hou Tsicheng's inn located in the east gate. " Bao added, "Why only three of you four come out?" Yunwai replied, "Just three, nobody else." Judge Bao ordered the guard to take Hou Tsicheng to the office and asked, "How many monks in total in your inn yesterday?" Tsicheng answered, "Three." Bao cajoled, "That monk said four, but why did you lie?" Tsicheng immediately explained, "There is indeed another monk called Yunchong, who enjoys peace and sits in meditation only, instead of communicating with others. Therefore, these three monks asked me not to mention him, in case people should pay respect, which will disrupt his meditative mind." After getting the truth, Bao asked subordinates to fetch Yunchong, who had

delicate features like a woman. At arrival, Yunchong knelt before the court desk, crying, “Yunchong is my fake name. My real name is Tsimay. Half a year ago, my father Ben Wen, along with my mother, a servant Chao Bao, and me, went on the way to his post, as a secretary of a county magistrate. When we reached some deserted ridge, my parents and the servant were killed by three monks. The sedan carriers escaping, I was left alone and forced to shave my hair, disguised as a monk. Dragging out an ignoble existence, I had intended to tell the authority about it to take the revenge for my parents. Fortunately, my Lord, you found it out, so the wrong done to my parents could be redressed now.” At that, Judge Bao made the court verdict, saying, “After the trial, it turned out that the monks, Yunwai, Yunbiao and Yunchee, are birds of a feather, committing those crimes. They pretended to be the elegant monks on the trip, traveling here and there. Truly, they are brutes in the world because of their violent behaviors and dirty hearts. Their sordid behaviors didn’t show any awe to the holy scriptures, not to mention the gods. Appointed as a secretary of a magistrate, Ben Wen trudged along the crooked path to the county, with his wife and daughter Tsimay. However, when encountering the three monks, they were robbed of everything. Killed by the monks, they were dumped in the ridge, exposed to the wind and rain. However, Tsimay, the only survivor, was forced to be disguised as a monk, adrift disgracefully and miserably. As for those three monks, their compassion has been completely lost, and there is no hope that their filthy and sinful actions can be eliminated and purified through any means. Were they to meet with the Buddha-to-be, they should be condemned with boiling. If they went to the hell, they should live a brute’s life forever. It would be in the afterlife to get their just deserts by the Buddhist doctrine; however, in the living world by the criminal law. Only by beheading the three evil monks, can the public indignation be quelled.”

The court verdict was then sent to the higher authority, whose person in charge immediately sentenced the monks to beheading and displayed their heads to the public as a warning.

As for Ben Tsimay, she got back under protection to her birthplace for reunion with her relatives. By chance, a rich businessman Ho Sander, whose wife had been dead, met with Tsimay. He appreciated her for her beauty and married her as his second wife. Later, they got a son, named Ho Yeeran, who constantly got the first place in the

imperial civil examinations. When Yeeran was on the way to his post after he had passed the examination, he found three piles of human bones in a ridge. He felt sorry about them and asked his retainers for burial. Meanwhile, Yeeran's mother Lady Ben, happened to come out from her palanquin, intending to have a look at the scenery in the ridge. Seeing the human bones, she cried with sorrow, "It's here that my parents were murdered by the wicked monks." Subsequently, Lady Ben bit her finger and dropped her blood on the skeletons. The blood was all absorbed, which, according to traditional Chinese belief, confirmed the fact that those were her parents' remains. Afterwards, they carried her parents back home for burial.

As to Chao Bao, he was buried beside the pavilion, with a stone monument set up before his tomb.

Case 91

Copper Coin Inserted in Wall

In Leungyang County lived a frivolous man named Luo Chengtsai, who didn't abide by laws and made many friends regardless of their moral qualities. In his spacious house, he ran a casino charging an entrance fee, and often acted as a guarantor to pawn property and make loans. There were corrupt and rampant people in and out of there at different time. Some advised, "You must make friends with those superior rather than inferior to you." Chengtsai retorted, "The world is so vast that bad things can be tolerated. How can we distinguish good from bad when we are in the world? It is better to be open-minded and interact with different people." Others exhorted, "If you make a friend without principle, you will lose yourself at last. A small mistake will lead to a big disaster. As the saying goes, 'A fire knows no moral.' Why aren't you afraid?" Chengtsai insisted, "How can you be blinded by a bit of sky or ground? As long as I behave upright, why should I be afraid?" Therefore, he completely ignored the suggestions. All of a sudden, Wei Dian, a wealthy man in his hometown, was robbed by thieves at night. More than 50 people, armed with knives, guns and torches, broke into his house and plundered his property. After that, the whole family of Wei Dian wept and all his relatives and friends from far and near came to see and comfort him. Passing by and seeing this scene, Chengtsai said with a sigh, "So rich are you that people around all know it and robbery is inevitable. Only the poor can be carefree." Unhappy to hear Luo's words, Wei said to his sons, "Every relative and friend feels sorry for my

misadventure. Only Luo Chengtsai said such words. I think the robber must be a gambler in Luo's casino, who has lost all his money, with no clothes to wear and no food to eat, and then has the idea to rob me. If I don't report it, how can I eliminate this resentment?" So he wrote a petition to Bao's office.

After reading the petition, Bao issued a document to summon Wei Dian, the plaintiff, and Luo Chengtsai, the defendant for interrogation under severe penalty. Luo Chengtsai was tortured and defended himself, "How can he frame me up with no witnesses and evidence?" Wei Dian retorted, "Luo Chengtsai is neither engaged in agriculture nor commerce. He gambles all day long and gathers so many bad guys around. Aren't they thieves? Shouldn't they be eradicated?" Bao snapped, "Reckless and restless, Luo Chengtsai does wrongs and takes risks. Who won't doubt him? As a bondsman, he started gambling, and the money in the gambling has been settled by the gamblers. But the matter of the theft is very serious. Firstly, the thief has to be caught, then the spoils obtained, and lastly the dispute settled. It is difficult to conclude without the three steps. Most of the accusations of Wei Dian were due to suspicion and circumvention. Luo Chengtsai shall be released on bail but punished severely if committing crimes." Exempting from punishment, Luo Chengtsai was joyful and thereafter obeyed the laws strictly and stopped running the casino. Everyone was happy for his turning over a new leaf. However, only Wei Dian said sadly, "I am robbed and lose my possessions. Even though I seek an indictment, it is lost. How unfair!" Wei complained at home all day. With the knowledge of that, Bao thought to himself, "Chengtsai is by no means a thief. But who is the wrongdoer?" So Bao ordered to flog Wei Dian twenty times and scolded, "How could I ever make mistakes? You lost money for your own carelessness. And the robber must have gone away. You should acknowledge your own misfortune instead of resenting me!" Then Wei was put into prison.

Word was wide spread that Wei was condemned and put into prison while the government put the case aside. Informed of the news, the real thieves Tie Muer, Kim Duitsi, etc., were so delighted that they gathered all the accomplices to buy meat and wine, and gave thanks to the City God. Drinking until midnight, each of them said with a smile, "It was all said that Bao was wise like a god, but it turns out that he is nothing more than this. However, I'd rather his descendants were officials for ages so that I

could be at ease, having no alarm and disturbance.” Out of their expectation, Bao paid a personal visit because of the robbery. Dressed in coarse clothes and a small cap, he quietly walked out of the market. When reaching the west of the City-God temple, he overheard the words of the thieves.

Bao thought, “That they prayed my descendants to be rich is good, but it is dubious that they want no alarm and disturbance.”

So he drew three big words MONEY on the wall with a small awl. Passing by the east of Guanyin Pavilion, he again overheard, “City God, you show your presence! Were it not for Lord Bao’s ignorance, we would all have trouble.” Bao pondered, “It is right to consider me good, but his words that they all will be in trouble is more suspicious. These ones and the former ones must be all thieves.” So, he inserted three copper coins into the wall, going back for sleep.

The second dawn, the fifteenth day of the lunar month, Bao went to the temple along with all the errands to burn incense. After the ceremony, he took a ride to the west street of the temple. Seeing three “money” characters on the wall, he commanded the Yamen runners to besiege the house and arrested Tie Muer and other 27 people. Then he turned to the east of Guanyin Pavilion and found the three coins in the wall. He ordered his subordinates to surround the place and arrested Kim Duitsi and the other 21 people to the Yamen for interrogation. Bao first picked up Tiemuer and scolded, “What has Wei got against you? You robbed him of his wealth at night.” Tie Muer denied over and over again. Bao said, “You all wanted me to be an official here so that you can be unrestrained and carefree. But why didn’t you obey the law and chose to be robbers instead!” Hearing those words, Tie Muer was so scared that he confessed the crime, “It’s a fact that we grabbed Wei’s property and divided it equally. We committed such a crime that we would not escape. We pray that you will spare our lives.” And then Bao asked Kim Duitsi, “Why did you loot Wei Dian together with Tie Muer?” Kim Duitsi denying it all, Bao roared, “You said, ‘City God, you show your presence! Were it not for Lord Bao’s ignorance, we would all have trouble.’ ” At these words, they were scared out of their wits, admitting their crime. Finally, Wei Dian was released with all his lost property retrieved, all the criminals concerned condemned to death and waiting for the execution until the autumn.

Case 92

Spider Gnawing off Words of a File

In Chyuye County, Yanchou Prefecture, Shandong Province, lived Cheng Minghwa, a man of ample means, and his son Yeegui, who was remarkably handsome but remained single until 18 because his father was exacting in mate selection. Across from his house was the home of Doo Yushiu, who had a daughter named Cheelan, meek and pretty. Cheelan's stepmother, Mao, wanted to marry Cheelan to her nephew Mao Beeshing, but Yushiu disapproved of it, so that Cheelan remained unmarried until she was eighteen. Seeing her appearance once, Cheng Yeegui left no stone unturned to show affection to her. Old enough to know affection, Cheelan was delighted and opening the pigsty door led Yeegui into her boudoir every night, which lasted for nearly half a year and was well known by their parents. The stepmother Mao made a fuss about the affair and would intervene. But Cheelan was infatuated to Yeegui, so how could it prevent her? One day, Mao went to her biological father's house. Cheelan stood at the door waiting for Yeegui. That night, Yeegui went to her house, as appointed. Cheelan said, "I've been with you for half a year, and I'm already pregnant for two months. You can entreat the matchmaker to make a proposal. I'm sure my father will agree. But if my stepmother were at home, she should prevent it. Today, she went to my grandfather's house. You must be careful when proposing tomorrow. If it is successful, our love will last, otherwise I will die for you. Because I am already your woman now, even if someone else came and offered to marry me, I would never agree."

Cheng Yeegui readily consented. The next dawn, Cheelan sent Yeegui out of the pigsty door as usual.

It happened that Shiao Sheng, a butcher, got up early to slaughter a pig and saw it. He thought, "Yeegui must be having an affair with Yushiu's daughter, so he came out through his pigsty door. Shiao Sheng also came in through the pigsty door. As expected, he saw the woman leaning against the side door. He went up to her and forced her to have sex. Cheelan said, "Who are you? How dare you!" Shiao Sheng said, "Yeegui can make love with you. But why can't I?"

Cheelan cajoled, "He wanted to marry me, so he came to discuss with me privately. If he doesn't marry me, then I will wed you."

After that she stepped into the room and locked the door. Shiao Sheng had no choice but to go out, anxious and musing, "She loves Yeegui with all her heart. How can she accept me? It is better to kill Yeegui tomorrow and make her desperate so that she has to marry me." The next day, Yeegui informed his father that he was going to marry Cheelan. Cheng Minghwa said, "I refused marriage proposals from many girls who were born in noble families. But now, you are going to take the vulgar girl as your wife. It will not only insult our family honor, but also make us laughed at." Seeing that her father refused, Yeegui was depressed and bored. Later on that night, he went to Cheelan's house again. When walking at the door of the pigsty, he was stabbed by Shiao Sheng suddenly, which no one witnessed. The next day, informed that his son was killed, Minghwa felt heartstricken. And he suspected that the murderer was Doo Yushiu, so he went to the county with a written complaint.

The county magistrate named Song, interrogated them. Cheng Minghwa said, "My late son had affairs with Doo's daughter Cheelan, who asked my son to marry her. But I refused to accept, hence Doo revenged for his daughter and killed my son." Doo argued, "I didn't know the relationship between them. Even though the proposal were refused, my daughter could marry another one. And I have no vendetta to kill him. What he said is a lie, so I hope Your Honor can discriminate between right and wrong. Magistrate Chu asked Cheelan, "Did you commit adultery? Only you know who killed him. Tell me honestly." Cheelan said, "First, Yeegui flirted with me frequently and promised to take me as his wife. Later, I was willing to marry him. And we have sworn to God that

we are serious and sincere. It was half a year since we began our relationship. I am totally in ignorance of who killed him.” Magistrate Chu said, “So it is true that your father killed Yeegui because he knew that you have been committing adultery for half a year.” Then he commanded to put a cangue on Doo, who repeatedly refused to admit it, Cheelan to get the same punishment. Cheelan thought to herself, “Yeegui genuinely loved me. If I can give birth to a baby boy, Yeegui will have the next generation. But if I am punished to injure my baby, there will be no hope even if I survive. So Cheelan conceded grudgingly, “I was the murderer.” “Yeegui was your lover, but why did you have the heart to kill him?” Cheelan replied, “That is because he had never married me.” Magistrate Chu thundered, “In view of your true love, although you two didn’t get married, Yeegui was likened to your husband. Starting with adultery but ending in killing your husband, you are so slutty and vicious that you deserve death.” Thus, Cheng Minghwa and Doo Yushiu both regarded what Cheelan said as the truth. After six months, Cheelan was delivered of a baby boy. Cheng took him out of prison and protected him well, not only because he had no son now, but also the baby was his grandson.

Half a year later, Lord Bao came to Chyuye County on a tour. In the evening when reading the Cheelan case, he suddenly saw a big spider fall from the beam, gnawing off a few words of the file, and then ran away. Lord Bao impeached this case and retried it the next day. Cheelan said, “I had an affair with Yeegui and our love was sincere. How could I have the heart to kill him? I confessed it because I was pregnant for three months at that time, and I was afraid of being tortured and hurting my baby. In fact, Yeegui was not killed by me, nor by my father, but some outsider for some reason, and I became a scapegoat.” Judge Bao asked, “Do you have any other lover?” Cheelan answered, “Only Yeegui, no one else.” Lord Bao was suspicious of the spider biting off the words of the file, thinking someone surnamed Chu killed him. Otherwise, Magistrate Chu would have judged this case unjustly. So he asked Minghwa, “Who are the people that live in your neighborhood? Tell me their names.” Minghwa listed dozens of surnames, none of them Chu, with only one person named Shiao Sheng. Judge Bao suspected that the spider (its Chinese pronunciation is “Chee Chu”) had an alias pronounced to be “Shiao Chu”. Is it possible that Shiao Sheng is the murderer? Then he continued, “What does Shiao Sheng do?” Minghwa answered, “Slaughtering

pigs.” Judge Bao was thrilled to hear that, for “pig” had the same pronunciation with “spider” in Chinese. So Shiao Sheng must be the murderer. Then the yamen runners went to Shiao Sheng under order, shouting, “Judge Bao summoned you for Cheng Yeegui’s case.” Shiao Sheng suddenly became panicked and bewildered, muttering, “Well, I was wrong to kill you and now I should pay for it.” The runners snapped, “We are only asking you to be a witness!” Shiao Sheng suddenly came to his senses and sobbed, “I clearly saw that Yeegui was coming to kill me, but it turned out to be the runners. Here comes his ghost, so I’ll go with you to plead guilty.” Only then did Cheng Minghwa know that his son was killed by Shiao Sheng, who was escorted to the court. Shiao Sheng confessed all his crime, “I got up early to kill pigs, seeing Cheelan send Yeegui out. I wanted to rape Cheelan, who insisted that she would marry Yeegui and refused me. The following night, I killed Yeegui in order to hog Cheelan. The truth exposed now, I am willing to pay with my life without any complaint.” Lord Bao judged: “Jilan was Cheng Yeegui’s lover. After having affairs for half a year, she was conceived, so they planned to get married. Their affair was suddenly learned by Shiao Sheng, who wanted to rape Cheelan. Turned down by and in order to dispossess Cheelan, Shiao killed Yeegui. The former judge ignored the fact, and mistakenly declared Cheelan guilty. Today I ascertained the truth and sentenced Shiao Sheng to death.”

The rest were inspired to reflect on themselves, and the culprits were sent to prison. At that time, Cheelan stated, “Thanks for your insight and wise judgment, I am exonerated and willing to repay your kindness in the next life. I have had an agreement to get married to Cheng, but it doesn’t come true. My son is already in his home now. I hope I can be taken in his home serving his parents for the rest of my life to make up for the shame of the affairs.” Cheng Minghwa replied, “My son wanted to marry you before he died. But I disliked your adultery, so I didn’t allow it. Today I know that you have the moral integrity to refuse Shiao Sheng and are willing to keep chaste. So I shall take you in to raise my grandson.” Judge Bao decided that Cheelan should move to Cheng’s home and take care of the Chengs. Later on, Cheng Tsichun, the son of Cheelan, was admitted to the first place of Chin-shih at the age of nineteen, and became an official in charge of shipping in the Huaiho River area. And his mother, Doo Cheelan, was granted the title of “Mother of a Nobility”. Cheng Minghwa was too strict in his choice

of the daughter-in-law, resulting in his son being murdered for adultery; Doo Yushiu was hampered by his second wife, leading to his daughter's adultery and catastrophe. Both of them can serve as a warning for all the parents.

Case 93

Zombies Counting Rafters

Everything in the world is related to intercession, which is called the regard of one's sensibilities in the place Yue, or viewed as the heed of susceptibilities in Wu. Whether in the prefecture or in the county government office, once the person who decides to intercede, enters the guesthouse, he will talk about his sensibilities immediately. Should the official be willing to listen, there would be a long conversation with laughter and happiness. However, with the slightest dissatisfaction, either the speaker or the listener turns his face upward, looking like zombies counting rafters. For example, when a man dies in his bed, he turns his face upward toward the ceiling of the room, waiting day and night, until the coffin is ready for burial, so it is called "Corpses Count Rafters". Those who have spoken and heard turn their faces upward, like zombies counting rafters. Above all, it is an exhortation for officials that there is no need to pay attention to intercession unless someone actually is at the edge of death. Otherwise, it is preferable to count rafters like those corpses.

Now, it is time to get to the point. In Dongking lived a county magistrate, named Ren Shek, trying cases in line with favouritism rather than justice. Regardless of the suffering of people, either letters from a certain superior or from other squires would be viewed as the consideration of sensibilities. Ren, who regarded one's susceptibilities, not only attained fortune but also saved one's face. While those who did not have

personal favour were considered to be damned. Therefore, the number of grievances and wronged people was beyond imagination. One day, obeying what had said in a letter from Chee Tai, a supervisor, Ren sentenced an innocent person Wu May to death, resulting in the exile of his whole family. With no access to vent his grievances in this world, Wu breathed his last. Arriving in the hell, Wu thought to himself, "It was only Lord Bao who accepted no bribe through his life and judged cases in the hell at night. Why not ask for his help to affirm my innocence of any crimes?" That night, it happened that Judge Bao was settling lawsuits in the hell, so he came to accuse Ren Shek of bending the law for personal gains and wrote down an indictment. "Since I suffered gross injustice when I was alive, now I desire to appeal for the redress of a wrong when I died. I was framed to death by a corrupt official Ren Shek, who accepted Chee Tai's intercession, resulting in my whole family in exile. There suddenly appeared my grievances with cruel punishments. Old and young, my family were forced to be refugees. My children were moaning desperately, but even if the famous general Cheunng Liao, whose name, once heard by children, would stop their sob suddenly, could not work this time to my children. The scene that my wife and children were separated even could be inspirations or sources for Cheng Har, a poet as well as a painter to create a picture or a work concerning suffering. The several sentences in the letter from Chee Tai was viewed as imperial order. They used heavy torture to extract a confession with little regard for human lives. For those who had superiors to intercede, offence of murder could earn self-survival. While for those who had no intercession, just like me, was it rational for them to be killed innocently? Hopefully, this indictment could plead for justice."

After reading the indictment, Bao roared, "How hateful it is! What I hate most in my life is this thing. Accepting the intercession, examiners of imperial examinations didn't dare to recruit the genius, and the judges viewed disinformation as truth." Then he asked the ghost pawns to catch Ren Shek. After a while, Ren was arrested and knelt down on the steps. Bao snapped, "What an unscrupulous guy! The number of people killed by your personal favour with grievances is extremely vast!" Ren begged, "It's none of my business, my Lord. Please allow me to express the truth. "

"My written complaint is about a dilemma. After being admitted to the imperial examination and serving as an official, it was impossible to forget being upright and

just. Recently becoming the successful candidate in the highest imperial examination, I just served as a magistrate in humble station there in a county where bad customs and unruly people were rife. In terms of the words from some intercessors, whether to obey or not was a dilemma. And in terms of complaints from common people, whether to inquire or not, was hard to see through. I know that giving in to personal consideration is against the law, but it is difficult to maintain my position without favoritism. If I don't show favoritism to township officials, demotion is still a matter in the future. If I don't show favoritism to high-ranking officials, I will be dismissed immediately. Now accused by those who lost their lives because of me, I regret that I broke the law for personal gains as an official. Above is my appeal."

Ren handed up the appeal and explained, "If I obeyed the intercessors, I would be afraid of doing wrong to the civilians. Otherwise, I would be afraid of losing my official position. Because Chee Tai was my immediate boss, I had to obey him." After hearing this, Bao immediately ordered a pawn to arrest Chee Tai. Chee Tai arriving, Bao asked, "Chee Tai, as an immediate boss, how can you ask favoritism from a magistrate of low rank?"

Chee said, "As the saying goes, flies are always buzzing about cracked eggs. If Ren hadn't listened to me, how would I have dared to demand? For example, Your Honor always keep a close watch. Who dares to write a letter to you in private for intercession? Even if the emperor issued an edict, you would turn it down, let alone a supervisor. So, it's all the fault of Ren, not mine. Please allow me to appeal that Ren shifts his blame onto me."

"Even though the magistrate is in a dilemma, there is a way to govern. If he refused bribery, even if his house was crowded with visitors, he would be quiet inside. If his policies are moderate and powerful, people will express their satisfaction and praise for his government in the form of poems and songs. Ren Shek made many mistakes during his term of office, Wu May not being the only wronged soul. Ren being too corrupted, is it only I who interceded with him? It's up to me whether to intercede or not. It's up to Ren whether to accept or not. If he didn't abuse the law and practise favouritism, who dared to corrupt him? Not until he was given away, did he shift the blame onto me. Every injustice has its perpetrators. When Ren was an official, he took bribes from

others. Even if it was a capital crime, he should have to accept. He shouldn't blame others for this. Above is my appeal."

After reading this, Bao said, "Chee Tai, what you said is very reasonable. But you say if the magistrate hadn't listened to you, you wouldn't have interceded with him. This is called being smart when blaming others but turning a blind eye to your own mistakes. But if you hadn't asked for favoritism, who would have shown it to you? Ren kowtowed and said, "You are very right, my Lord." Bao said, "Both sides are wrong. The listener was credulous, so Ren Shek is punished to be a deaf person. The intercessor had a glib tongue, so Chee Tai a mute." Then Bao concluded, "It's found that Ren Shek was not completely unfair when he was an official. He was unfair after listening to others' pleading. Chee Tai was not completely wrong when he took power, but he didn't act honestly when he interceded for others. Now the briber will be punished to be dumb so that he can't say what he wants to; the bribe-taker deaf so that he can't hear what he wants to. Therefore, these two men are close to death. If the officials, who have not been sentenced to death, write letters instead of spoken words to intercede, read letters instead of listening to, what should we do about it? I naturally have my way. That is to punish the person who intercedes for others with a stroke. Both his hands shrink and can't hold the pen. He will inevitably ask someone to write for him, but he is mute and can't speak to others for help. He who listens to others has a headache and is blind in both his eyes. He is bound to ask someone to read for him, but he is deaf and can't hear what others read. By such superposition of punishment, there seems to be no way left to abuse the law. Hopefully, justice will be upheld, satisfying people with a sense of relief."

After the trial, Bao said, "Wu May, now that you were persecuted to death in this life, you will be rewarded with an official position in the next life." Then each of them left.

Case 94

Money Talks

Money makes the mare go, as the saying goes. But what does it mean? With money, you can do something that you cannot otherwise, which is so-called “money talks.”

It can even make the ghosts do things for us, let alone mortals. There is another saying like “Money can bribe the gods.” Gods are the mightiest, but money can rig them, not to mention ghosts. Therefore, it is obvious that money is the most powerful thing in this world. The rich become high officials, and the poor common people. The rich enjoy a happy life, and the poor suffer a lot. The rich survive, and the poor perish. Anyhow, some people are desperate for money, but they just don’t have it; some don’t really want it, but they just have a lot. It seems that there is a god attached to money; we can not seek it, but it only comes by itself.

In Dongking lived a nerdy government official surnamed Cheunng. Although he was not a worshipper of money, he became richer and richer, for which he was called Millionaire Cheunng. The neighbor, a scholar by the surname of Lee, was born clever, but he splurged without saving out. Seeing that a fool like Cheunng got so much money while a smart guy like him did not, he died of depression and filed to Judge Bao a lawsuit against God of Money.

“I sued God of Money for his being unreasonable. I personally think that great fortune

is decided by gods and little fortune by people. If born with misfortune, you shouldn't have to think about whether the god would give you a hand. If you worked hard, you could only live like a regular guy. Why is it that the rich will never be poor? Even if you've never seen him raising hens or sows, his pan is full of delicious food. And why is it that the poor will never be rich? Even though he sells silk in February and threshes in May, he is neither full nor warm in the harvest year. Even if the cattles plough in the green field after the rain, you cannot see a little increase of the amount of grain. Even if there is no dog guarding in the village at night, those wealthy families never lose anything. How come God of Money doesn't open his eyes and sees such an unfair world? Now that I had been confused when I was alive, I must figure it out after my death. Above is my complaint."

Seeing his accusation, Judge Bao said, "God of Money is the official who is responsible for distributing wealth. Why do you sue him?"

Scholar Lee complained, "I sued for fairness, which is his responsibility." Bao asked, "How to see unfairness?" Lee answered, "Recently, a person who owns much money is better than others, able to get everything he wants. However, a person without money resembles a prisoner, controlled by others. People in the world are all the same but why does he distribute the wealth unevenly?" Bao explained, "It's not the uneven distribution since possession is accumulated by yourself." Lee argued, "There is a person called Millionaire Cheunng, who is thought to be a fool but has great possessions. However, clever as I am, God of Money is unwilling to give me money. If the ownership of possession depends on ourselves, I should earn more money than Cheunng. How can the present situation be so unfair? I beg you to catch Cheunng to find out what goes on behind the scene."

Before long, Cheunng appearing in court, Bao inquired, "How did you change from a civilian to a rich man? Where your money came from? Are they ill-gotten gains?" Cheunng answered, "I neither obtain property by deception, nor run a business. However, I spared my money day and night. A penny saved is a penny earned." Bao didn't think it made sense, so he called in God of Money and inquired, "Why are you so biased, making a wally worth windfalls while a wise man wretched?" The god answered, "This is not partiality, but justice." "Why?" Bao was puzzled. The god said,

“Money has two sides. It can make a man good as well as evil. You see, people without money in the world often can’t do anything good. They are arrogant, duplicitous and even murderous. These are all done by people like Lee. That’s why I won’t make Lee a rich man. On the contrary, people like Cheunng dare not waste money even if they have it. They just hide the money, stare at it and guard it. Cheunng was a thrifty man, so I gave him a big fortune, while Lee was a treacherous man, and I won’t give him a penny. Otherwise, even if Lee has millions of taels, it won’t be enough for him. In that case, would you still think I’m unfair?” Bao said, “Well done. I just hate the people who are greedy and wasteful. I will have Lee’s clothes stripped off and punish him to be a pauper again in the afterlife. But it was just useless if we don’t use our money. Rich people should do some good deeds, giving alms to the poor and supporting the kind-hearted. Money piling up there is in vain and can’t be taken away after death. So why not distribute the money to all people, so that they can use and do not have the sigh of inequality?” Thus the god is advised to reduce the amount of Cheunng’s wealth to make it just enough for his basic life. Bao then commented: “It is a case that heaven balances the world by reducing excess and making up for deficiency, while human nature cuts deficiency to fills abundance. Therefore, the diligent have surplus while the lazy are destitute. That’s how people change their fate; however, the ingenious are poor while the clumsy are rich, which is how the gods play with human fate. After all, although the destiny cannot be determined by man, man still can prevail over the god. Consequently, a decision that punishing Lee to be a pauper and appropriately reducing Cheunng’s wealth was made to be free from the suspicion of the god’s will or human power. Henceforth, common people should always hold the belief that great wealth comes from heaven and small wealth from man. The officials should avoid the reproval like the rich to survive and the poor to die. Only in this way, will nobody have grievance, the condemnation of the gods also eliminated.

After the comment, Lee was taken away. Bao exhorted, “Nevertheless, the person who uses money to do good deeds should be distributed more, while the person who uses money to do wrong should be cut down.” The god replied, “But mortals are all idiots. Wealth is not gained by praying. Money that you don’t deserve will disappear quickly regardless of what kind of methods you take to gain it.”

Case 95

False Accusation

There was a man called Chou Yee in Yongping County, whose wife Liang gave birth to a daughter, Yumay. Being sixteen years old, Yumay was incomparably beautiful, following her mother's instructions and cultivating all-round virtues, thus winning popular acclamation. At the age of six or seven, betrothed to a fellow countryman Yang Yuan, she had planned to observe their wedding ceremony, but it was delayed by her mother's funeral. One day, Wu Ho, a nouveau riche, asked for payment of debt from others, and occasionally passed by Chou Yee's house. He looked around, only to see Yumay leaning on the bar for embroidery. He was infatuate by her beauty. Then he asked his servant, "Who is this girl? She's really cute." The servant answered, "This is Chou Yumay." He asked, "Has she been betrothed?" The servant replied, "I don't know."

Wu kept Yumay in his mind and requested that Wei Liang be their matchmaker. Then Wei Liang advised to Chou Yee, "Wu Ho has a huge and noble family, vast fields, rich from generation to generation. He wants to marry your daughter, and makes me the matchmaker. Hope you could grant his request." Chou replied, "Wu's family is rich and admired by the whole county. And Wu Ho is successful in youth, and widely acclaimed. But my daughter has no chance now for she has already been betrothed to Yang Yuan." Wei Liang reported to Ho, "This thing isn't going well. Yumay has been already

betrothed to Yang Yuan for many years and the Chou family refused to remarry.” Ho said angrily, “My wealth, characters and family status are even under Yang Yuan in their view! Since they turned me down, I’ll set them up, and get what I want.”

Wei Liang admonished, “As the ancients said, it’s better to marry again than breaking others’ marriage. Why are you still mad about her?”

Wu didn’t consent to Wei and inclined to stir up trouble.

When Chou Yee knew that, he asked the original matchmaker to send his daughter to Yang Yuan’s house someday to consummate their marriage in order to avoid disputes.

When he heard of it, Ho was so furious that he asked someone to chop down several fir trees and soak them in the fish pond at the head of Yang Yuan’s gate to initiate a lawsuit for revenge. Then he sued it to the magistrate of Shuiping county, Lord Chin. The plaintiff and the defendant were arrested and questioned one by one together with the neighbor witnesses. The neighbors all said, “The fir trees were produced in Wu Ho’s cemetery and then soaked and placed in the pool before Yuan Yuan’s gate. It is so obvious that we dare not hide the truth.” Yang Yuan argued, “You failed in your marriage proposal and cut down trees to revenge your hatred. It’s so cruel.” Wu Ho insisted, “He stole my trees and disturbed my ancestors, who suffered from disturbance even after their death, which is so miserable.” Chin said to Wu Ho, “You don’t need to quibble. You definitely framed Yang Yuan with the stolen trees for revenge because of your failure to contend Yang’s wife.” So Ho was bludgeoned twenty times and condemned to the crime of framing. Chin remarked, “Wu Ho and Yang Yuan contended for marriage and had enmity for a long time. Wu Ho cut firs himself, and putting them in Yang Yuan’s pond, and framed Yang Yuan up. How malicious it was! He took a lot of efforts to frame while his plan was full of loopholes. The neighbors indicated that they probably knew there were stolen trees in Young’s pool, however, they didn’t know it was Wu who put it in the pool. Yang Yuan is innocent, but Wu Ho should be punished instead. The witnesses just fell into the trap of Wu Ho and were exempted from prosecution.”

After failing in his scheme, Wu Ho was very angry, and hated Yang Yuan even more, swearing, “I never give up until I kill him!” The thought of it would drive him to

murder Yang. One day, he came across a beggar hunting for food. Giving him wine and meat, Wu Ho asked, "You beg for food everywhere, so who is willing to give money and food to help you?" The beggar replied, "There are many rich families ready to do charity. But only the family of Yang Yuan are celebrating to fulfill their wish with wine and opera. Happiness surrounding them makes begging easier. So we beggars often go there and can get more." Wu queried, "Are the opera and the banquet finished?" The beggar answered, "Not yet. And I am going there tomorrow." Wu asked, "There is a well in his east corridor. Do you know its depth? Is it shared with his neighbors?" The beggar said, "It is only available for his own family." Wu said, "I will give you more wine and meat if you can do me a favor. One more tael of silver will be rewarded to you if you can do it well." The beggar trilled, "You as a moneybags believe me and are willing to give me reward. Even if you want me to go down the well to fetch the loess, how dare I refuse?"

"I'm not asking you to go down the well, just play a trick." And then Wu offered more wine and meat to him. When having dined and wine to satiety, the beggar asked, "What can I do for you?" Wu said, "You are drunk now, so stay here tonight. When you sober up and after breakfast tomorrow, I will tell you." The next morning, Wu inquired, "Have you sobered up?" The beggar replied, "Yes, sir." Giving the beggar a package of gold, silver and jewelry, Wu instructed, "Take this to Yang's house, throw it into the well secretly. Do not leak the secret. This is just between you and me." The beggar went out of Wu's house with the package. Walking down the street, he saw a peddler selling make-up and hairpins, a greedy thought flashing through his mind. Sitting in a remote place, he unfolded Wu's package and rejoiced to see a pair of golden pollen cases, two golden hairpins, a pair of silver rings and two silver hairpins. He bought some copper and tin hairpins with three bushels of rice and three cents of silver to replace the gold and silver ones. Rewrapping them as they had been, he squeezed into Yang Yuan's home to watch the opera, and secretly threw the replaced package into Yang's well. He reported it to Wu and received 0.1 tael of silver as a reward the next day. Wu Ho then wrote a complaint, and still referring to the theft, reported it to the patrolling judge, Lord Bao.

After reading the complaint, Lord Bao ordered the county magistrate to arrest Yang Yuan and search for the stolen goods. Wu alleged that the gold and silver jewelry was

hidden in the well. Then a local officer was ordered to climb down the well, and a package of jewelry was found as expected. Unable to defend himself, Yang Yuan was escorted to see Judge Bao. Interrogated repeatedly, Yang Yuan refused to admit it. Then Bao said, "Since the well is in your house, and the stolen goods are in your well, how can you deny it?" Yang Yuan was tortured but refused to admit to the theft. Bao then turned to Wu Ho and said, "Who made this jewellery for you?" Wu replied, "The one who made the gold was Hwang May, and the one who made the silver Wong Shan." Lord Bao immediately summoned Hwang May and Wong Shan for inquiry, "Did you make this jewellery for Wu Ho?" Hwang May replied, "I made the gold for him, but not the copper." Wong Shan returned, "I made the silver for him, but not the tin." As soon as he heard the words "copper" and "tin", Bao realized that there was something wrong with the matter. So he detained Yang Yuan and let Wu Ho out. Bao then required his capable retinue, Deng Shek, to follow Wu secretly and record the people he talked with and then go back to tell him. Deng Shek quietly followed Wu Ho to the downtown and saw Wu lash out at the beggar, "I asked you to do the work the day before yesterday. And I have sent a thank-you gift already. Why did you exchange copper and tin for gold and silver?" The beggar replied, "How dare I do such a thing?" Ho continued, "Lord Bao detained the craftsmen Hwang May and Wong Shan, who have recognized that." The beggar was awe-struck and could say nothing in his defense. Deng Shek immediately escorted the beggar and Wu Ho to Bao.

Putting the beggar in cangue, Bao roared, "Why did you change Wu Ho's gold and silver jewelry?" So scared was the beggar that he had to tell the truth straightly, "Wu asked me to take the jewelry and throw it in the well under Yang Yuan's corridor. But I was tempted to commit crimes at the sight of money. So I exchanged his jewelry, and it is still with me. Now I present it to you to beg for mercy." So furious with Wu that Bao imposed severe punishment on him. Even if having a hundred mouths, Wu couldn't argue.

The judgment went, "Wu Ho was extremely vicious and treacherous. He bribed the beggar to throw jewelries in the well for putting the blame on Yang Yuan and the event was disclosed in the downtown. Previously, he has committed false accusations by using fake fires; now he is falsely litigating with jewelry, which shows his bad intentions. All his clever calculations and intrigues have brought him nothing but his doom. He

went too far in bullying others, and the crime of deception is too obvious. Now, he is to be sentenced to penal servitude as a public warning, and his jewelry expropriated to manifest the justice of the law. Yang Yuan is innocent while the beggar will be punished for his greed and assistance in the crime.”

Case 96

Opera Performance

In Chianchong County, the soil was barren and the local customs were quite frivolous and decadent. The men and women there had always been known for their loose morals. Women often had secret lovers and did not consider it shameful. Men and women engaged in casual sexual encounters without feeling dirty. Those who lived there only wanted to be well-fed and well-dressed with fancy clothes and jewelry, regardless of whether their behaviors were decent or not, humble or not, filthy or not. As the saying goes, “Drink every day until drunk, eat meat until full, which is enough to be claimed to be a romantic and stylish man. A single shout of ‘handsome fellow’, how many fair ladies fight and quarrel.” This refers to the licentiousness of men. There’s another saying, “Put on lots of makeup and rouge, with a high hair bun, nice clothes, a pretty look, and good support from men, and you will be widely praised as a beautiful lady. Everyone you meet is a close friend, and you don’t have to worry about where you go day or night.” This describes the women’s promiscuity.

It was heard that there was a virtuous county magistrate who wanted to eradicate the lewdness and filth to make it a pure place. However, due to those deep-rooted bad customs, it was too difficult to completely reverse them in a short period of time.

There was a rich man named Yang Banchuan, who had three sons. The eldest son was called Mayfu, the second Shanfu, and the youngest Yeefu, all of them dissolute and

unrestrained, always transgressing the etiquette and law. The eastern neighbor was Yu Chingtang's daughter-in-law, Lau Shianying, who was extremely beautiful. She was aware of her inner turmoil and resented the fact that her husband was too young to satisfy her desires. Therefore, she felt sad and frustrated day and night. And, under the stars and the moon, she exchanged amorous glances with her neighbors and had the intention of having an affair, without any scruples. Then the three brothers of the Yang family all flirted with her. Although she did not reject any of them, her heart was inclined towards Shanfu. Chingtang and his wife were aware of this, but as their son was young and ignorant, and their daughter-in-law was older and desired romantic attentions, it was challenging to prevent. In addition, considering that Shanfu was the outstanding figure of their relatives and that the two families lived close to each other, if they caught him on spot, it would be embarrassing for everyone, so they just kept quiet and vague about it. But even though Shanfu was in love with Shianying, she was not completely satisfied. Despite having ample wealth and a well-groomed appearance, Shanfu lacked intellectual depth and possessed closed-mindedness, being entirely unfamiliar with the arts of music, chess, calligraphy, painting, playing instruments, singing, and dancing. Consequently, he fell short of being an ideal husband. Even though Shanfu was good at flirting and pleasing her, Shianying just went along with it. So she never showed her true feelings after they had been having secret affairs for over four years. On the Mid-Autumn Festival, the night was breezy with light clouds and a bright moon. The citizens gathered together and invited young actors from western Chechiang Province to perform traditional operas, celebrating this wonderful evening together. The clear, melodious, and graceful voices and opera singing were loud and resounding, as if piercing through the clouds and echoing in the night sky. Shianying climbed the West Tower alone, and in the dead of night, she suddenly heard the loud and clear voices of the young actors. Leaning against the railing and listening intently, she felt an overwhelming excitement and yearning, wishing she could instantly grow wings and fly into their arms. The next night, when meeting again, Shianying asked Shanfu, "The scenery of the wind and moonlight last night was extremely beautiful. Why did you distance yourself from me and not join me in ascending the tall building to enjoy the festivities and inquire about the fairy Chang-Ngo's joys in the Moon Palace?" Shanfu replied, "I had intended to accompany you, but some performers from Chechiang came to put on a play. My father, brothers, and relatives all invited me to

watch the play. I couldn't come here secretly, so I am guilty of neglecting you." Shianying then asked, "Who was the one whose singing voice echoed through the clouds in the depth of the night?" Shanfu replied, "It's none other than the leading actor, Tang Tsiliang. He's 22 years old, vibrant and graceful, an outstanding talent in every aspect. When I inquired about his background, I learned that he comes from a prestigious official family. He has accomplished his studies but due to his natural love for entertainment, he often goes out with many young people." Upon hearing that Tang Tsiliang was refined and elegant, Shianying became even more intrigued. The next day, she told her mother-in-law, "Father's sixtieth birthday is approaching, and it is a significant occasion. Naturally, relatives and friends from all directions will come to celebrate and offer their congratulations. A feast must be held to entertain the guests, and it would be fitting to invite actors to perform for several days. I have heard that there is a Chechiang opera troupe here that excels in singing and acting. Why not invite them to entertain Father on his birthday and bring joy to all the guests?" Her mother-in-law exclaimed in delight, "The ancients said that a daughter-in-law's filial piety surpasses that of a son. This is indeed true." She then persuaded Chingtang, saying, "Life is meant for enjoyment, especially on such an occasion as your birthday. All our relatives and friends will come to offer their congratulations. We must prepare a feast to entertain our guests. Since there is a talented Chechiang opera troupe here, it would be a pity not to invite them to perform at our home for a few days." At first, Chingtang hesitated, but after hearing his wife's repeated pleas, he agreed to hire the actors for a performance spanning over twenty days.

Shianying, finding Tang Tsiliang, the leading actor, truly charming, secretly made her way to the outer hall and quietly led him into her bedroom, where they had sex to their heart's content. As the performance neared its end, Tsiliang thought to himself, "Once the performance is over, how can I stay long at her house and meet Shianying frequently?" So, he devised a plan and decided to secretly elope with her, but he was unsure of her attitude. That night, Tsiliang whispered to Shianying, "Now that the opera season at your home is coming to an end, I cannot stay here with you any longer. What do you think?" Shianying sighed, "I don't know what to do either." Tsiliang, sensing her dilemma, cunningly prompted, "I have a plan. Why don't we elope together to my home?" Shianying muttered, "But my home has many locked doors. How can

we escape?" Tsiliang asserted, "There's a back garden where we can climb over the wall." Shiangying echoed, "That sounds good." Then they decided to escape by climbing over the wall on a certain night and returned together to Tsiliang's house. At that time, as the feast had been going on for a long time, Chingtang and his wife were exhausted from taking care of the guests day and night and were initially unguarded.

The next day, he called for his daughter-in-law to get up, shouting several times but with no response. He went into the bedroom only to find no trace of her. He then stamped his feet and beat his chest, crying, "My daughter-in-law has definitely been abducted!" After much contemplation, he concluded, "The one who abducted my daughter-in-law must be none other than that scoundrel Yang Shanfu. Having suffered his bullying and humiliation for so many years, I chose to endure helplessly, but now he should abduct her!" With no other choice, he filed a complaint to Judge Bao, which read, "The complaint is about the heinous crime of abduction and rape. Marriage is the eternal foundation of society, and the law is the decree of the emperor. Yang Shanfu, the tyrannical bully, is like a fierce tiger, takes advantage of his immense wealth to indulge in evil deeds. He bullies the weak, rapes the young woman Lau Shiangying, and his lust knows no bounds. One midnight this month, he abducted her and fled to a distant place, plundering the house clean. It is resentful of me to have a daughter-in-law as if I have none, and of my son to have a wife as if he has none. There have been wicked wives here as numerous as trees in a forest and clouds in the sky, and many sudden cases of adultery and abduction. Our local customs are no less libertine than those by the banks of the Chen and Wei rivers in ancient times, and the prevailing morality is no different from the licentiousness of the ancient states of Cheng and Wei. I hereby lodge a complaint."

Judge Bao, renowned for his inherent righteousness and wisdom, possessed remarkable agility in judging matters. He promptly approved Chingtang's complaint and immediately dispatched constables to apprehend the defendant, Yang Shanfu. Shanfu sighed, "Alas, Heavens! I am being wrongly accused and persecuted. Although Lau Shiangying and I have always been affectionate towards each other, she has now been abducted by someone unknown, and her fate, whether alive or dead, remains uncertain. Yet they falsely accuse me of adultery and abduction without any evidence. How can I bear such unjust suffering? I shall surely cry out my grievances and expose the truth to

clear my name of this injustice.” He then wrote a complaint and ran to appeal, “My complaint is about Yu Chingtang’s false and groundless charge of me: The things mentioned in his petition are completely unrelated with each other, just as the people of Chin and Yue could never be connected in any way. It is all a mere fabrication. The vulgar customs are corrupt and extravagant, and the private connections are filled with chaos. Lascivious by nature, Chingtang’s daughter-in-law, Shiangying, indulged in lustful affairs with many men. On a certain night of this month, she was secretly abducted and hidden away by some unknown person, and her whereabouts are now impossible to trace. If Chingtang insists on pursuing vengeance or accusing me, who can serve as a witness or provide evidence to support his claims? I am innocent yet have been falsely implicated in this dispute. I abhor the cunning act of deliberately misrepresenting the truth, akin to calling a stag a horse, and I resent the fabrication of unnecessary details, akin to adding legs to a snake that is already complete. He is teaching a monkey to climb a tree, yet secretly hollows out the trunk, intending for it to fall and suffer harm. That is, he ostensibly offers help and support, but secretly sets a trap to ensnare and harm me. If your honor do not redress my injustice, I will surely fall victim to slander. I hereby appeal.”

Upon carefully reviewing Shanfu’s petition, Judge Bao thought, “Given their years of secret affairs, there must be a reason behind the abduction. How can he evade responsibility for the offence?” Thereupon, Judge Bao summoned Yang Shanfu and scolded, “Since you have been having affairs with Shiangying for many years, you must know her innermost thoughts. Now that Shiangying has been abducted, you must also know the reason behind it.” “Shiangying has many lovers, so how can you falsely accuse me of abducting her?” retorted Shanfu. Bao said, “Since Shiangying has indeed many lovers, you can list them one by one.” Then he enumerated the lovers such as Yang Tingchao, Chen Erchang, Wong Huaiting, Wong Bailu, Cheunng Daryan, Lee Kingyo and others. When hauled into the court one by one for interrogation, all those lovers admitted to having had affairs with Shiangying, but knew nothing about the abduction. Judge Bao then had Shanfu and other adulterers tortured, yet none of them would confess. The crowd shouted in unison, “Lau Shiangying is a woman of loose morals, fickle and lascivious. No one knows with whom she had finally eloped. But now, we are sent here to suffer, and we cannot die in peace.” Yu Chingtang cut in, “The

one who abducted my daughter-in-law is Yang Shanfu, and has nothing to do with others. It's just that Yang Shanfu deliberately involved all the people to make things difficult." Judge Bao interrogated the group again, and their testimonies remained consistent, "It is true that we had affairs with Shiangying, but we certainly dare not falsely accuse Shanfu of the abduction. We sincerely beg your honor to find out the truth and let us go unpunished."

At that, Bao was worried that Yang Shanfu might be wronged, so he put all the suspects in jail temporarily.

In the stillness of the night, Judge Bao burned incense and prayed, "Shiangying has been abducted and is nowhere in sight. Hope that the gods and spirits would swiftly reveal the truth lest the innocent should be wronged." After the prayer, he walked to the west window and faintly heard the sound of someone reading. Listening carefully, he realized that it was the recitation of the "Chou Mau" poem from the "Book of Songs". Oh you, oh you (its Chinese pronunciation is Tsi), what a good man (its Chinese meaning is Liang) you are!" Bao thought, "This poem is from 'Tang Feng', but I do not know who was reading. Getting up in the early morning and grooming himself, he came out of the hall and suddenly heard someone singing behind the yamen, "On the stage is good raw sugar (its Chinese pronunciation is Tang), What is its taste (its Chinese pronunciation is Tsi)? It is clearly cool (its Chinese pronunciation is Liang)." He suddenly realized, "It must be someone from the theater troupe, named Tang Tsiliang." During the court session, after the completion of submitting the documents and signing, Yang Shanfu was summoned for further inquiry, "Has Chingtang ever staged a play?" He answered, "Yes." "Was there anyone with the surname Tang?" Yang Shanfu replied, "Yes, there was someone named Tang Tsiliang." And then Bao continued, "Where is he from?" Shanfu replied, "A native of Leungcheng, Chyuchou Prefecture." So, Judge Bao, under the pretext of pursuing the robber, sent a document to the Chyuchou prefect, Song Cheeren, requesting assistance in investigating the case of Tang Tsiliang, saying, "Recently, a habitual criminal was captured in the battle. He confessed to being a member of a gang led by Tang Tsiliang, who has been involved in robbery for many years. They divided the spoils, which included a beautiful woman and some gold and silver treasures. Please help to apprehend and bring the culprit to me for a lawsuit conclusion." Upon receiving the official document, Song urgently

arrested Tsiliang and sent him to Bao's court.

Upon seeing Bao, Tsiliang proclaimed, "I am originally from an official family and have studied Confucian texts for years. Due to my indifference to worldly matters and inability to bear the burden of livelihood, I partnered to perform plays. Recently, I performed more than twenty celebratory plays at the rich man Yu Chingtang's house, where his daughter-in-law Lau Shiangying fell in love with me and chose to elope with me. How can this be termed as robbery? My fellow actors can attest to this." After learning the truth, Bao took Tsiliang into custody. He then sent for Shiangying for interrogation, "Why did you act without righteousness and run away from your husband?" Shiangying replied, "I cannot deny the crime of fleeing from my husband, but because my young husband was weak and unable to fulfill my desires, I was led to lose my honor and commit this offense. I beg for forgiveness." Judge Bao summoned Yu Chingtang and his son for questioning, "How ignorant you geezer are! Your son is still wet behind the ears, yet he married this licentious woman; no wonder she fled."

Chingtang said, "I had three sons in my old age and loved them too much, so I married them early to support them. I beg Your Honor for mercy." Judge Bao then declared that Lau Shiangying betrayed her husband and should be sold for state-mandated indentured servitude; Tang Tsiliang, for privately harboring a woman who eloped, and Yang Shanfu, for having affairs with a young married woman, and Yang Tingchao as well as other lovers, were all guilty of adultery; and Yu Chingtang, for his false accusation, should be heavily fined as a warning to other people." Everyone was satisfied with the judgment.

The document stated, "Lau Shiangying, with her enchanting beauty, surpasses others in appearance, but her indecent behavior and promiscuity are unparalleled in their vileness. She despises her young and inexperienced husband and harbors shameless lovers. She had affairs with her adulterers without any regard for her reputation and virtue. In her marital chamber, she indulged in illicit relations, accepting disgrace without excuse. With many lovers, this woman has seriously lost her chastity for long. Her crimes of adultery with the actor, and betrayal of her husband are particularly serious. She is extremely greedy for the pleasure of sex, falling into the utmost humiliation of beasts. According to the law, she should be officially sold, and the

money returned to her former husband. Tsiliang accepted a woman who eloped, so how can he be called good? Yang Shanfu indulged in private adultery, which is difficult to be called kindness. Both of them should be sentenced to penal servitude as a warning against promiscuity. Yang Tingchao and others have all committed the crime of adultery, and should not be forgiven according to the law. Yu Chingtang alone should bear the charge of false accusation and severe fines. Only in this way can we sweep away the obscene atmosphere in the whole county and restore the simple and unsophisticated customs of the people.”

Case 97

Earthenware Lamps

In Yongtsong County lived a man Lee Marying, who was so talented and knowledgeable that he passed both the provincial and the national level exams and ranked second in the highest level exam. And he was appointed the prefect of Taichou Prefecture. When he assumed the post, his behavior complied with official regulations and national laws. Those villains who bullied others and did evil, disappeared without a trace. Thus, schools were becoming more and more prosperous, and officials in the government were increasingly showing great respect to Lee Marying. There were no quarrels in the imperial court, and there were peace and tranquility among the people. People all said how lucky Taichou was to have this virtuous official. However, if he encountered relatives, friends and colleagues, he still had to make things convenient for them. Unfortunately, he became ill repeatedly in a short period of time and was unable to get out of bed. So he said to his wife Chao, "I had hoped to spend my whole life happily with you, but now I am dying and there is no more time left for me on earth. Therefore, you should escort my coffin back to our hometown and teach our son to inherit the family tradition of studying, so as not to leave him without a place to live in." With that, he passed away. But Chao Shuren was so distraught that she hanged herself when escorting his coffin home. Upon hearing this news, the officials all paid condolences to him and hurriedly reported it to the emperor, who issued an edict praising Lee Marying as a virtuous official, and Chao Shuren as an upright and chaste

woman. Their coffins were sent to their hometown in a stagecoach, an ancestral hall set up for them to receive the worship.

However, Lee Marying's underage son Luodar had a fierce and arrogant nature, without an academic background. Since his father was an incorruptible and poor official, his legacy quickly ran out. He was extravagant in everyday food and clothing so that his family's wealth continued to decrease. He did not abide by etiquette and laws, becoming a rogue. He relied on his own power to do evil here and there, being a lazy good-for-nothing and mixing with thieves. One day, sitting in the South Bridge, Luodar suddenly saw Shek Chian, a silversmith, sending his relative Shui Chaotsong to the ferry. Considering his drunkenness with six earthenware lamps, Shek Chian instructed, "This item must be cherished and taken good care of." Chaotsong said, "This is something I should worry about myself, and there is no need to exhort." After saying this, he bid farewell and left. Upon hearing these words, Luodar immediately conspired in his heart, "When seeing this person off, the silversmith repeatedly exhorted him to take good care of the package. There must be a lot of silver in it." So he hurried to the front, waiting to grab his package. Next to the Leungchuan Ferry, what caught Luodar's eye was the scene that Chaotsong drunkenly ordered the boatman Ruan Tsichiang to help him cross the river. Tsichiang said, "I can't punt for I am sick. You have to punt on your own." No sooner did Chaotsong jump onto the ferry than Luodar caught up with him and said, "I'll go with you." The first shove of the pole took the ferry off the bank, the second farther, and the third to mid-stream. It being dusky and the night quietly turning dark, there was no one on either side of the river. The air of disaster filling the sky, Luodar pushed Chaotsong immediately into the deep water, and taking his package disembarked, leaving only an umbrella on the boat. The next day, Ruan Tsichiang asked his son to go see the boat. And the son took the umbrella home. That night, Luodar obtained the package from Chaotsong and quietly opened it. There was no silver inside, only six earthenware lamps. His heart was filled with resentment. Thus he wrote on the back door of the Lengwang Temple, saying, "Your luck is too bad and I killed the wrong person. All this is just because of the lamps. If you want to avenge, wait until the horse develops a horn." After the inscription, he broke the tile lamps and returned home.

Two days later, Yoyuan, Chaotsong's son, felt panicked at home and said, "My father

went to the city the day before yesterday to visit our relative Shek Chian but hasn't returned yet. What is the reason for the delay?" So he went to the city for inquiry. Shek said, "I have tried my best to keep your father the day before yesterday. He was in a hurry to go home and happened to be drunk. There were no other items but six lamps and an umbrella. You can go along the road for inquiry." Actively following his instructions, Yoyuan kept inquiring until he arrived at the ferry and met Ruan Tsichiang. Tsichiang said, "Two nights ago, there was a drunken man crossing the river with someone. I don't know who poled the boat, leaving only an umbrella. I packed it up here." Upon seeing the umbrella, Yoyuan immediately burst into tears, "This is my father's umbrella. It's in your house now, so you must have murdered my father." He immediately told his neighbors and submitted a complaint to the court.

"The complaint is about a scandal which was absolutely irreconcilable: If locusts were not caught, there would be few well-grown seedlings in the field. If the beetles were not eradicated, there would be no beautiful trees in the courtyard. If the bandits in the mountains were not exterminated, how could the merchants doing business around find peace? Ruan Tsichiang, the ferocious rogue and boatman, ferried people, habitually murdering them. One evening this month, my father, Chaotsong, was lucky enough to obtain a small fortune. On his way back, he got drunk and took a boat. When he reached the middle of the river, he was knocked down into deep water and immediately losing his life, his body still not found. The next day, I searched Ruan Tsichiang's house and found my father's umbrella as evidence. I looked up at the river in tears, looking for my father, but heartbroken to hear the wailing of the osprey; he took a short rest at the ferry, but stumbled into the hands of the bandit. The cold of a sword can make a man's soul flutter; the boom of a thunderbolt is enough to make a man's heart ache with pain. In the midst of seemingly honorable business dealings, some people are actually conspiring in the dark. He has gone so far as to murder people for money, sweet words becoming swords for killing. I ask for a fair trial to avenge my father's death, so I sue."

At that moment, Feng Shektai, the county magistrate, read the complaint and accepted the case, "Human life is of paramount importance, but not trivial. I will arrest the defendant and try it out, repaying your father's life." He then sent his men to arrest Ruan Tsichiang, who had no choice but to go to the county government to submit a

complaint to safeguard his own interests.

“My complaint is about a frame-up for murder: It is imperative to probe into causes to deal with homicide cases and it is unacceptable to convict me without conclusive evidence. The stolen goods is the key to robbery. I cannot be reconciled if he mixes the false with the genuine. Robbery is not a trivial matter, but murder is a major offense. I had long earned my living by poling boats, and this continued for many years. But due to my illness, I spent half a month in bed and did not go out. The night before yesterday, it was dark and I didn’t know who had boarded the boat and left an umbrella. The next morning, my son retrieved the umbrella when he went to wash the boat. When Yoyuan was looking for his father and saw this umbrella, he falsely accused me of murdering his father. I am at an important juncture on this road, so who has the courage to secretly murder others? If I had murdered him, why hadn’t I hidden the umbrella? Crimes committed by A cannot be transferred to B; C’s goods cannot be said to be D’s, and things done by one person cannot be blamed on the other. It is difficult for Yoyuan to say nothing, but he should find the true murderer for his deceased father with true vengeance; Your honor have your own way to handle cases, and should arrest the real criminals for the people. Above is my appeal.”

Magistrate Feng immediately approved of Tsichiang’s complaint and summoned Yoyuan for a confrontation. Yoyuan cried, “Tsichiang murdered my father and hid his corpse, which is extremely cruel and malicious and is morally and legally unacceptable. If it hadn’t been for his murder, why would the umbrella have been in his house? Everyone from his hometown can testify.” Tsichiang argued in tears, “I have been ill for half a month and never gone out. My son picked up an umbrella. In daylight, many people nearby have seen it. How could there have been conspiracy to kill? Had there been any conspiracy, I would have definitely hidden the umbrella, worrying about being discovered. But how could I have been willing to let others know, let alone wait for you to catch me? I pray to summon my neighbors for questioning, and it will come out in the wash. Magistrate Feng then detained the neighbors Ho Fu and Chiang Bin to the county for interrogation. When arriving at the county government, the two neighbors replied in the same voice, “Tsichiang has been poling the boat for three years and has never committed any wrongdoings. He had been sick for the past half a month and never been out. His son did indeed pick up an umbrella while washing the boat,

which was witnessed by people nearby. Yoyuan's father was murdered, but how can he falsely accuse Tsichiang when the truth is not figured out?"

Yoyuan immediately retorted, "They are the henchmen bribed by Tsichiang to shield each other, and if they are not tortured, they will never tell the truth." Then Feng, the magistrate, had them wear a cangue under torture.

After repeated torture, the two cried and argued, "We are just ordinary neighbors of Tsichiang, not his confidants! Since Tsichiang is from a poor family and has been ill for a long time, how can he has the money to bribe us? Every word we said is fair and square, and how dare we unjustly shield each other? Even if we were tortured to death, or beheaded now, we dare not arbitrarily accuse him of murder." Hearing them unswervingly stick to their words, Feng demanded the subordinates to put the instruments of torture away and imprison Tsichiang; Then he cleared out the witnesses and the accuser, and retreated to his private residence to figure it out in the mind. Early the next morning, he disguised himself and left for the Leungchuan ferry to seek the truth.

On his way, he only heard people lamenting the misfortune of Tsichiang, who was falsely accused and suffered in prison before recovering from illness. They said that it was better for him to die of illness at home. At his arrival, he inquired further, and got the same response. Feng sighed to himself, "If, as people say, Tsichiang was falsely accused, then who is the true murderer of Chaotsong?" So suspicious that he went to the Lengwang Temple, but found nothing. Looking around then, he only noticed a few words written on the back door of the temple, "Your luck is too bad and I killed the wrong person. All this is just because of the lamps. If you want to avenge, wait until the horse develops a horn." Feng read the inscription and pondered that there must be injustice involved, "How could a horse develop a horn in the world?" So he changed his outfit and went to see his superior, Judge Bao for help. Bao said, "A horse (its Chinese version is '马') developing a horn(its Chinese meaning is '角') in Chinese character font is Feng(its Chinese meaning is '冯'), and your surname is Feng. So you must be able to deduce the truth of this unjust case."

After bidding farewell to Judge Bao, Feng returned to the yamen. The next day, the guards were sent to the Lengwang Temple to catch the temple master for questioning,

“Did you see someone who often come in your temple these days?” The temple master said, “There was no one coming, only a city resident I once knew named Luodar, who came to play in the temple a few days ago.”

Feng continued, “Did he borrow something from you?” The temple master replied, “No, he didn’t. I only saw him take a pen from the table, and stepped to the back of the temple, writing a few words.” The magistrate then had Luodar summoned to the yamen and asked, “Do you have a horse with horns?”

Upon hearing Feng’s question, Luodar was shocked with a pale face, “I have no idea.” Feng was furious and interrogated him with severe torture. Luodar couldn’t bear the severe punishment and confessed to his murder of Chaotsong. According to the detailed confession, Bao commented, “Luodar came from a family of officials but behaved wickedly. Unable to bear poverty, he intended to kill and rob. When he has no money, he plundered the passers-by recklessly. Overhearing Shek Chian’s advice for Chaotsong, Luodar arrived at the ferry and killing Chaotsong framed Ruan Tsichiang up heartlessly. Although it was a misunderstanding caused by the lamps, he showed great disrespect to the gods in the temple. The crime of murder cannot escape the eyes of the gods, as well as the just criminal law. The false accusation against Tsichiang was naturally vindicated, and Yoyuan’s anger was relieved. Since the murderer has received the punishment he deserves, the souls of the grave can rest in peace. The culprit will be temporarily imprisoned and put to execution in the fall.”

Case 98

Beddings and Sundries

On the street of Hoyuan county, Huichou Prefecture, Guangdong Province passed by an envoy aged eight or nine, with beautiful eyes and handsome appearance. Cheunng Yee, a scoundrel, said admiringly, "He is such a true beauty at a young age that I will become his sworn brother when he grows up." Lee Tao replied, "This boy is indeed beautiful but the beauty of her mother can put the flower to shame." Cheunng Yee replied, "Now that you know her house, can you take me there? It's only once in a blue moon for me to see that beauty." Lee Tao immediately led him to the woman's house, and saw that she was indeed more beautiful than Chang-Ngo, a goddess in the moon. When the woman saw the two strangers coming, she was surprised and said, "Who are you? How dare you come to my house without permission?" Cheunng Yee answered, "We're here to beg for a drink." The woman, Sun Hoi's wife, queried, "Scoundrels! My house is not a teahouse. How dare you come here for a drink!" Then she went into the rear hall, and paid no attention to them any more. Cheunng and Lee were obsessed by her beauty and caught up with her. The woman shouted, "The thieves are here! Come and get them!" An evil idea occurred to them, so they cornered her and said, "All we want is you!" The woman shouted abuse and her husband heard it from outside and hurried in. Recognizing Cheunng and Lee, he struck them with a stick. Instead of leaving, they kept fighting with Sun Hoi, slandering that Sun Hoi's wife had accepted their money but refused to sleep with them. Sun Hoi then sued to the county court.

“It is a crime of rape. The gangs have no difference with savages. They had no curtains to cover up their indecencies and were the same as the homeless people. Indulging in gambling and whoring, Cheunng Yee and Lee Tao were two scoundrels who were wicked and cruel. Claiming to be immortal with beauty and wine, they were actually rogues. Having peeped and found that I had gone out, they came to my home during the daytime and attempted to rape my wife. In order to keep chastity, my wife shouted and struggled hard. Bumping into the door, I was pushed away and knocked to the ground and ran outside, which was well-known to all my neighbors. This incident happened in broad daylight during which I was wounded and my wife humiliated. One witness can be suppressed, but it’s hard to silence all the people. Detesting evil and fighting against it is the best virtue. The dissemination of it should be as swift and violent as possible. The evil is like a demon, but it is fortunate to have a guardian master of law and order. Above is my urgent indictment.”

Lau, the county magistrate, immediately summoned the plaintiff and the defendant and the neighbors to the hearing. Cheunng and Lee also fabricated false claims that Sun Hoi connived at his wife’s prostitution to defraud money, and submitted a written complaint. Sun Hoi retorted, “I personally caught sight of Cheunng and Lee trying to rape my wife. Then I was pushed outside the door, beat up and scolded in the street. I hope your lordship can purge these two villains.” Lee Tao argued cunningly, “Sun Hoi, you are hooked by your own lies. Don’t frame me for rape. How can I admit it? The truth is that your wife had an affair with me and accepted more than thirty taels of silver from me to support your family. Today, when Cheunng Yee came, you were partial to him, so I fought with you. And then you scolded Cheunng, so he also fought with you. It was unthinkable that you could frame us after accepting the silver. God won’t connive at you to do so.” Cheunng added, “Why should both of us rape together? One person is enough. We can find out the truth by enquiring your wife and neighbors.”

Lau concluded, “If it’s rape, Cheunng and Lee certainly won’t dare to pull him outside the door to beat or scold in the street, and the neighbors certainly won’t stand by. It must be that Sun Hoi connived at his wife to commit adultery, and the two had a dispute with Sun Hoi and then they fought.” Finally, Lau had them bludgeoned 30 times respectively, put in prison, with Sun’s wife being for sale.

Sun Hoi's wife turned to her neighbors and said, "I have always adhered to my chastity. Now those two scoundrels have fabricated my adultery with them. The government will put myself on sale. I hope you can testify for me." Some talented neighbors advised, "Lau can't tell right from wrong. Now Judge Bao is passing here. He is a man of integrity, and he can certainly see through the scoundrels' tricks. You can turn to him." Following the neighbors' advice, Sun's wife stopped Bao when he was passing by in his sedan chair. "I was molested by two scoundrels. After fruitless warning, my husband went to sue them. But the scoundrels said I had committed adultery with them, and the county magistrate will put me on sale, so I am here to ask for your help." Lord Bao ordered his servants to take her back to the Yamen for inquiry, including her name, age, parents' names, beddings and sundries in the bedroom. Then he kept it in mind. He immediately wrote a letter to Lau and said, "I am informed of an adultery case about Sun Hoi. I want to know some details." Lau was in awe of Bao, so he immediately ordered his servants to send the files and prisoners. Lord Bao asked Cheunng Yee, "You said it was adultery. What's the woman's name? Who are her parents? What are the beddings and sundries in the bedroom?" Cheunng returned, "I have just begun adultery with her recently and didn't have time to ask her name and her parents' name. As a prostitute, she was afraid of shaming her parents, so she didn't tell me. In her room are a bucket bed, flowery quilt, wooden comb, wooden powder box, bronze mirror, and lacquered dressing table and so on."

Lord Bao asked Lee Tao, "If you had adultery with her first, you must know her name and sundries." Lee Tao returned, "The prostitute said her name was Shangchuan, and I just called her Lady, so I didn't know her true name. She once told me that her father's name was Chu Dar and her mother's surname was Hwang, and I didn't pay much attention to whether it was true. The beddings were the same as Cheunng Yee said." Bao declared, "I will order my servants to take both of you to the bedroom of the Suns' and we will know the truth." At arrival, they saw the rattan bed, brocade quilt, ivory comb, silver powder box, copper-nickel, and gold dressing table. What Hoi's wife said was true while Cheunng and Lee were lying. Bao then had Cheunng and Lee brought back into the Yamen, snapping, "You claimed that it was adultery, so you must know the things of her bedroom, but you didn't know at all, so it must have been rape." Cheunng retorted, "It was neither adultery nor rape, and the fact is that I paid six taels

of silver to Hoi, but his wife disobeyed.” Bao queried, “You paid Sun Hoi, but why did you go with Lee Tao?” Lee claimed, “I was his helper.” Lord Bao inquired, “Do you know him well? How long have you known each other so that you served as his helper?” Lee Tao couldn’t answer. Bao said, “You two first claimed it to be an adultery, and paid some silver. One said the silver was given to the husband, while the other said acting as a helper. Your testimonies are contradictory to each other. The truth is obvious.” Each of them got bludgeoned twenty times.

Bao commented, “Cheunng Yee and Lee Tao were two shameless criminals violating the etiquette and ignoring the dignity of the law. They were obsessed with beauty and sex and perpetrated such a beast-like activity. They attempted to rape a lady and beat her husband, putting the stigma on her and using adultery as an excuse to escape the punishment. If it were adultery, they would have known about the contents of this lady’s bedroom. But when asked about the woman’s name and the items in the room, they had no idea at all. It can be seen that they were not familiar with Sun’s wife, so they didn’t know what was in her bedroom. Rape can not be tolerated, and only beheading can play a deterrent role. Lau, the county magistrate, wanted to sell the chaste woman without knowing the truth. Regardless of the severity of this event, he punished the husband who told the truth. He should have helped people redress their grievances, but in fact he wronged them while enjoying a government salary for nothing. Hearing a case but judging blindly, how can he be a bright and fair judge? Since he cannot judge fairly, he should forfeit his salary.”

Bao personally reported the case to the superiors. In accordance with law, Cheunng Yee and Lee Tao were beheaded for rape and Lau was deprived of his salary for three months; Sun Hoi’s wife, faithful and unyielding, was rewarded with a piece of white silk in recognition of her noble virtue.

Case 99

Scripture of Jade Pivot

Before a steep mountain and behind a turbulent river, on the outskirts of Yuechou City, stood an ancient temple, surrounded by boundless wild grass and countless towering trees. And a devil serpent, more than thirty meters long, with a bucket waist, a sharp tongue and big round eyes, hid in the dead wood, swallowing innumerable people. Every passer-by was scared and had to sacrifice livestock for it, otherwise a storm would break out, clouds and fogs would blur the sky until he was missing. That lasted for years.

As Cheng Tsung k'ung was dispatched to be the mayor of Yuechou City, local officials went a long way to welcome him. "I am deeply honored by your warm welcome," he remarked. Then they kowtowed and chorused, "Firstly, it's our obligation to do that, and secondly, we need to inform you of a weird thing here." Thus, they told the terrible things the demon serpent had done. At this, Cheng laughed, "How ridiculous!" Two days later, they reached the temple. Without preparation, they passed it hurriedly. However, within one mile away from the temple, they saw that the wind gusted, the sands and stones flew and the black clouds and fogs surrounded from their back. Looking back, they were surprised to see scores of soldiers seemingly charging at them, which made them think that they were about to die. Cheng once recited *The Scripture of the Jade Pivot* before he passed the imperial examination. Then he kept reciting it

and walking ahead at this crucial juncture. However, the clouds and fogs dispersed, the wind stilled, the soldiers disappeared and everything brightened in no time. All of them survived and Cheng managed to arrive in Yuechou City and take office.

Seated after solutation, Cheng Tsung k'ung said to the subordinate magistrates, "There's a giant devil serpent in the dead wood of an ancient temple swallowing countless people. I did not believe it when the local officials reported it several days ago. When we arrived at its den and hadn't gone for a mile, the fierce wind and rain did appear. I want to seek advice from you. This devil is so rampant that the masses live in dire poverty. How can we deal with it?" The magistrates chorused, "With little moral and competence, how can we drive it away? It's fortunate for us to have such a leader like you, honest and upright, august and powerful. The virtue of yours can be comparable with that of Lau Kun the great statesman, and the feat of yours can be listed as one of the ten legends of Yuan Gui another famous statesman. Your leadership will surely put an end to that monster." With that, the officials gave their solutes and left one by one.

The next day, Cheng held a court trail, ordering everyone in the city to solemnly fast, take a shower, and then pay homage to the City-God Temple together with him for three days. City God knew that Cheng, honest and upright, led people fast sincerely so that both ghosts and gods showed their admiration. Then he reported to heaven how the devil serpent harmed the locals. The Jade Emperor in the heaven, having once seen Cheng Tsung k'ung reverently read *The Scripture of the Jade Pivot*, dispatched the heaven soldiers and the five thunder gods to Yuechou to kill the devil serpent. He also instructed, "Judge Bao Cheng, taking charge of cases in the world, can also manage the things in the underworld—he may help to destroy the devil."

The heaven soldiers rode horses with spears and thunder gods waved fire with axes, appearing in Judge Bao's dream together. Judge Bao then went to his infernal bed to accompany the soldiers and gods. For a moment, they got to the temple. In no time, it became dark with pouring rain, howling wind, flashing lightning and roaring thunder, and the ground was flooded. All the people of the prefecture were too frightened to find ways to escape. In a moment, with a heavy sound, the evil serpent was slaughtered. The sky becoming clear before long, all the people trilled that it was Cheng's virtue

that moved the gods to eliminate the evil serpent. Everyone went and saw that the huge serpent was broken in two, and the human bones were gathered together into a pile. Cheng, getting the report, came to see that in person together with all of his subordinate officials. All the people present were shocked. Cheng ordered to burn the evil serpent. It burned all day and night before becoming ashes. People painted Yuechou City all red for celebrations, proclaiming this feat was due to Cheng's supreme virtue and sincerity.

Informed that Cheng was as virtuous as gods, loyal enough to move the heaven and the earth, and rid the people of evils, the superiors decided to reward him in recognition of his virtue. Within a year, he was to be transferred to Chee-nan, a larger city. People in Yuechou couldn't bear to let him leave. And it was coincident that Judge Bao was ordered to inspect Yuechou. So, one after another, people rushed to beg him to make Cheng remain in office: "The petition is to make the excellent mayor remain in office for the sake of the local people. Lying in a corner on the border, Yuechou connects three provinces, poor in natural resources and full of turmoil and chaos of war. We are lucky to have Lord Cheng, who worked hard for governance. Upon his arrival, he eliminated the evil devil, and then cared for the people in every aspect. He paid respect to farmers' harvest, considering the people's famine as his own. He dealt with cases just like his own family affairs. He repaired the public warehouses against bad harvests all the year round, and relieved the people in disaster in case seniors and children went into exile. He dispatched subordinates to urge tax which would be amortized and people all thought it was convenient. He ordered the subordinates to be on good behavior so that the common people were seldom bullied. He reduced hundreds of redundant officials, and the countryside was no longer disturbed. He arrested the thieves and the city was peaceful. He punished the evils and the evils quieted down. He fought against the collusion between officials and criminals and the misconduct of the officials was restrained. He forbade the cattle business and the profit of selling beef was wiped off. He managed the salt business and the disadvantages of selling the salt were avoided. The routine expenses were displayed in detail and the merchants would not get any money from the business. His morality was as pure as jade pot, benefiting the contemporary policy. His virtue was like the dew on the golden stem, succeeding the ancient. Besides, he was willing to cultivate outstanding persons and built up new schools. People were commonly well educated and many schools were full of

cultivated students. Children were lucky to have kind mothers and apprentices celebrated to have good teachers. However, not having enjoyed this nice government for long, we hear that our mayor is going to be transferred to another position and we can't keep him. We are very urgent considering our mayor's leave and feel worried even when sleeping. Nowadays the famine is still frequent and thieves still furious in the border. We don't want to experience the dependence on other people for a living any longer and cherish the peace when sleeping. Lucky to encounter Your Excellency inspecting our prefecture, we plead with you to consider the current situation and our emotions. It is highly expected that Your Lord can help us to convey our request to the emperor and assign another official to that position. We hope to keep our lucky star to ourselves. In this way, not only the ordinary people can have a fresh life, but also the intellectuals are going to celebrate. Above is our petition."

Judge Bao immediately pleads with the emperor to satisfy people's request, letting Mayor Cheng remain in office temporarily and awarding him with the first prize. And he was to be transnormally promoted to a higher position after his term of office in Yuechou. At this, all people felt happy and satisfied.

Case 100

The Sutra on the Three Officials

In Fenghua county, lived a student of the Imperial Academy named Cheng Wenhuan, who was married to Lee and childless until fifty so that he wanted to seek heirs. He heard that the god in Chingyun temple was the most efficacious and if you begged for children, you would make it. So he consulted with his wife, desiring to have a visit to the temple. After fasting, the couple prepared incenses and gifts and set out for the temple to worship. After the worship, the monk asked them to stay for dinner and then visit the temple scenery and the Scripture library. The couple sitting languidly in the abbot's room, Wenhuan suddenly felt out of spirit and slept by the table. Alongside Lee was a monk named Rookong, who was fascinated by Lee's extreme beauty and took liberties with her. Staunch with moral integrity, Lee bawled, "What a conceited and ignorant baldicoot! Do you know who I am? How dare you do that?" With Wenhuan awakened by the sound, Rookong fled away. Asked what had happened, Lee said, "I drove a baldicoot away, who wanted to take liberties with me when you were dozing off." Aflame with indignation, Wenhuan burst into a storm of abuse, "I will go to yamen tomorrow and this bad guy must be arrested to allay my anger." Informed of that and scared, the monks discussed in private, "It was still early when this couple came to the temple and no one saw them. Why don't we kill them for good? Besides, the woman has a malicious tongue. If we imprison her in here, she will be obedient to us sooner or later." After reaching a consensus, they went out and caught the couple.

Rookong wanted to kill Wenhuan with a knife, who saw many monks around and was outnumbered. Several more monks forced Lee into the next room to rape her, but Lee refused to obey. One monk stopped them and advised, "How could she give in now? Lock her in the room and treat her with kindness. She will certainly listen to us in the future." They followed his advice and imprisoned her in a room. Wenhuan felt that the monks wanted to kill him and knew he could not escape, so he entreated, "Now that you've taken away my wife, you're not gonna leave me alone. Would it be all right to allow me to kill myself?" Rookong bellowed, "No, you must be killed to avoid future trouble." One old monks felt sorry for him and advised, "Now that he's trapped in the temple, how can he escape? Lock him up in a room and let him kill himself within three days." The other monks agreed and took him to a sparsely staffed room with high walls on all sides. The monks gave him a bag of arsenic, a string, and a knife and ordered, "Take any one you like to end your life." Then they locked the door and left. Wenhuan thought to himself, "Although not having to die immediately, I can't get out of this room after all." There were no chairs or stools in the room so he could only sit against a pillar. Fond of reading *The Sutra on the Three Officials*, he heard that it could get rid of bad luck, so he kept reading it.

At that time, Judge Bao was ordered to patrol Chechiang, and via Ningbo to Taichou lodged in Baichiaoyee Mountain, dreaming that two envoys came and said, "We are under orders from the three officials to invite you to Chingyun temple." Bao asked, "How far is it from here?" The envoys replied, "More than fifty miles." Along with them, Bao arrived at a mountain gate, and looking up saw a plaque with golden inscription saying "Chingyun Temple Built under Imperial Order." Walking around the temple, he came to a room. There was nothing in the room, but a fierce tiger locked in and squatting against the column. Suddenly waking up with a start, he thought: This dream was so weird that there must be some reason for it. The next day, Bao holding court trial, a posthouse official went to see him. Bao asked, "Is there a Chingyun temple here?" The official replied, "There is a Chingyun temple about 50 miles away from here. The temple is very vast and the monks are rich."

Bao said, "Today I will pay a visit to this temple." Then Bao mounted his horse at once and set off. When he arrived at the mountain gate, the monks came to welcome him. Bao came in the temple and taking a look inside, thought carefully, it being all the same

as in the dream. Walking on, through a scripture library and to the left alley, Bao came to a room named Pure Heart Room. He then came to another locked small room next to it. It seemed to be where the tiger was seen in his dream. Bao commanded to open it.

The monks proclaimed, “Nobody dares to open the room since ancient.” Bao asked, “Why?”

The monks continued, “There are a monster in it.” Bao roared, “How absurd! Even if there’s one monster in there, I shall see it today. If any disaster occurs, I’ll shoulder the responsibility myself.” The monks wouldn’t open it. Bao ordered the soldiers to cut the lock and then came in. Sure enough, he saw a hungry man lying beside a pillar, who was hastily picked up and fed with warm water. He hurriedly sent out orders to surround the temple in all directions. Unexpectedly, when Judge Bao cut off the lock, about fifty or sixty monks who had got the information fled away. The soldiers saw the monks leave hurriedly, and despite no knowledge of the reason arrested about twenty of them. Soon after, they got the order to surround the temple, with another 30 old and children monks captured. Given food and wine, Wenhuan said to Bao when able to speak, “I am a student named Cheng Wenhuan from the imperial academy in Fenghua county and remained childless until fifty. I, together with my wife, came to the temple to pray in the morning. At noon, I dozed off when my wife sat by me. Unexpectedly, a monk called Rookong hit on my wife and the shout of my wife made me wake up with a start. Then I argued with him but offended the monks. They took the cutlery and wanted to kill me. I pleaded repeatedly to commit suicide, so they sent me to this room and leaving me a rope, a knife and a bag of arsenic demanded me to end my life within three days. I am keen on chanting *The Sutra on the Three Officials* all my life. Thus I sat here and chanted the scriptures. Today, I am lucky to have your rescue, and you are my great benefactor.” Bao replied, “Last night I had a dream in which two envoys of the Three Officials invited me to have a trip around the temple; I followed them to this room where you were trapped and saw a fierce tiger squatting. When arriving here today, I saw exactly what I dreamed of last night, and you are saved because what goes around comes around. But where is your wife?” Wenhuan replied, “She was taken away by those monks, and I have no idea where she is now.”

The monks were tortured and returned, “The staunch woman prefers to die for

preserving her chastity rather than obey us. She was taken to an empty room and served with wine and meal. We wanted to induce her but she was unwilling to eat anything. She hanged herself and was buried under a tree in the backyard.” Bao then commanded his followings to dig her up, and Cheng couldn’t help crying bitterly. Bao persuaded him to stop crying and said, “Your wife is so chaste and faithful that she could be conferred honor of chastity.” Among the monks, the old and the children were flogged 80 times and returned to secular life. Whether principal or accessory, those who were strong and plotted this event were given the death penalty. Bao commented, “There are leching monks in Chingyun temple such as Chiekong and Rookong, who implemented vicious schemes and indulged in beauty regardless of Buddhist rites and laws. After Cheng Wenhuan, the student of the Imperial Academy, prayed to god for blessing with his wife Lee, Rookong coveted Lee’s beauty and molested her while Cheng Wenhuan was sleeping. The monks were irritated by his abuse and wanted to kill him. Wenhuan begged for their mercy to spare his life, but the couple were still apart from each other. Lee was detained in a meditation room and served with delicious food while Wenhuan was imprisoned in an unobtrusive and quiet room and given three means of death. Lee was so chaste that she would rather die than eat their food. Wenhuan was so virtuous and unreconciled to death that he recited *The Sutra of the Three Officials*. When I was sleeping at midnight, the envoys came to my dream and invited me to the temple, where I saw a tiger squatting by a pillar. Wenhuan, rescued from the danger, will amount to something. Lee committed suicide for preserving her chastity, which should be awarded. Chiekong, Rookong and other monks, who attempted to commit rape and killed Lee, should be decapitated according to the law. The old and the children monks in the temple, who colluded with them and hid criminals, should be flogged and forced to return to secular life. The temple should be burned down and the property handed to the government.”

After the trial, ten monks including Chiekong and Rookong were publicly beheaded while the old and the children monks were flogged and returned to secular life. Then Judge Bao reproached Wenhuan, saying, “You have a clear mind of the holy scriptures. If you are destined to have a son, you don’t need to pray to the Buddha and your son will come to you naturally. If you are doomed to have no son, even if you pray to the immortals, how could you make it? You and your wife went out early in the morning

and went back home late at night, which does not conform to the decencies of scholar-bureaucrats. From now on, you should rely on yourself instead of other shortcuts.”

Cheng kept on apologizing. Judge Bao asked to bury the corpse, the government providing coffins and quilts. A memorial archway was erected in front of the tomb in recognition of the female martyr Lee, and a temple was set up to offer sacrifices to her. Afterwards, Cheng succeeded in his career and became an assistant minister. He did not seek another official wife but a concubine, who gave birth to two sons. As for the dream of the fierce tiger, it was a reward for him to chant *The Sutra on the Three Officials*.