Recollecting a Dream of the Temple of Gracious Clouds.

When I was fourteen years of age, I dreamed that I came to a Temple with the inscription "Gracious Clouds." Before the Temple gate there ran a blue stream, in the distance stretched a range of emerald hills, while an old fisherman sailed his boat down a reedy bend of the water. Some lines of verse sprang into my head:

Blooming rushes, misty trees,
Riverside hamlets, fish-marts close at hand;
Fishermen in green coats and blue capes
Sailing home at dusk—

Truly a picture of the southern river-world!

Having composed the poem, I entered the Temple, turned west and followed the path into a garden. Here I found a pond with water-plants growing profusely over its surface and sprays of crab-blossom mirrored in its water, a riot of contrasting red and green. By the pond stood a small building, bearing the inscription "Retreat for Meditation." On the pillars were two columns of characters:

Success will spring from the Horns of the Dragon,[53]
Pomp will breathe on the Ears of a Horse.[54]

I went inside to rest a little, and then proceeded into the Hall where I saw seven seats. There were three judges seated facing south, and four facing east and west. The first judge facing west rose to vacate his seat for me. Then a clerk presented me with a document for me to give a judgement on, the cover stamped with the two gilt characters "Predestined Affinity."[55] Taking up the pen to write I suddenly saw my own name on the page before me, and on the following page a picture of a pig.[56] I left the Hall and walking south came out of the Temple by another gate. There a boat was waiting for me, and I embarked upon it. The wind blew the sails and joy filled my heart. By the riverside I saw a man watering a rusty-coloured horse. Suddenly the bank subsided and the horse fell into the water. I woke up in a great fright. What happened afterwards I have forgotten.

This all happened in the winter of a *chia-tzu* year [1804], and sure enough, in a *wu-chen* year [1808] I became a Master of Arts. I was later promoted to be a Prefect in Anhui Province, in a *jen-wu* year [1822]. Both of these events tallied exactly with the predictions contained in those two cryptic lines on the pillars of the Temple.

My first wife was a young lady of the Gualgiya clan of the Plain White Manchu Banner; then, after a period as a widower, I took as my second wife a young lady of the Shushugioro 書書學羅 clan of the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. Neither of these two ladies however, was born in the Year of the Pig. Then I became a widower again, and in the year *ping-tzu* [1816], when I went to pay my filial respects to my parents in T'ai-an where my father was Prefect, many relatives and friends volunteered to suggest desirable

[53] (YTH) A cryptic reference to the year *chen*, popularly called the Year of the Dragon. The author of this book became a Master of Arts in such a year, and thus inaugurated his life as an official.

[54] (YTH) Another cryptic reference, to the year *wu*, popularly called the Year of the Horse, when the author was promoted to Prefect, thus launching his official career proper.

[55] (Ed) Implying marriage.

[56] (Ed) Symbolic animal of the 12th Branch, *hai*.

慈雲尋夢

persons for my third marriage, and even to perform the good office of go-between. My parents were undecided, and they bade me go to the Temple of Patriarch Lü[57] at the Leaping Spring[58] in Tsinan, the capital of Shantung Province, to pray for enlightenment. There I obtained an oracular sortilege, saying: "The pledge revealed in the former dream." Just then the *ssu-ma* Wang Ku-yu 王古愚[59] came to discuss a marriage proposal from the young lady Ch'eng Chia 程佳of the Plain White Chinese Banner. Her year of birth tallied with the prediction in the "dream document,"[60] and so the decision was taken, a proposal of marriage was offered and accepted, and a formal engagement, a 'presentation of fowl', was made and announced.[61] Since our marriage, the lady has been dutiful in her attendance and service to the elders and has educated our sons and daughters with wisdom. Consequently during all my official peregrinations through Anhui, Honan, Kweichow and Huai-an, I have never had the least worry about family matters. This celestially ordained union of ours was thus revealed to me long beforehand in a dream.

All the illustrations in this book of mine represent real scenes and actual experiences, except for this dream and the "Roaring Waves at the Gate of the Emperor Yu,"[62] which are imaginary scenes included to commemorate propitious omens.

[57] (YTH) Lü Yen 呂嵒, or Lü Tung-pin 呂洞賓, known as Ch'un Yang-tzu 純陽子, a historical person in the T'ang dynasty, who later became in popular Taoist legend one of the Eight Immortals and was referred to as Patriarch Lü.

[58] (Ed) See the photograph on p.19 of Harold Shadick's translation of Liu E's 劉鶚 (1857–1909) *The travels of Lao T's'an* (New York: Morningside, 1990).

[59] Name Shu-wu 殊湜 Master of Arts, native of Chihli. (YTH) Again the detestable and disgusting way of designating a Prefect, using an ancient name which was abrogated and became defunct a thousand years ago.

[60] (YTH) This refers to the Year of the Pig (*hai*), the year of birth of this young lady and also of the author, both having been born in the year *hsin-hai* (1791) in the reign of Ch'ien-lung.

[61] (YTH) A traditional literary expression for the formal pledge and engagement, since a goose was regularly offered in ancient days as a token from the man's family.

[62] (Ed) Series I, no.42.

Paying my Compliments to West Lake[63]

In the first month of the year *ping-yin* [1806], my father was appointed Prefect and assigned to the province of Chekiang. He proceeded there immediately. In the following month my mother and I accompanied my great-grandmother on the river-trip to the South. When we were about to weigh anchor, I received a poem sent to me as a parting gift by Uncle[64] Chü Shan-t'ao 車珊濤.[65] The poem includeded the following lines:

> The year contains so little spring enchantment;
> When you visit West Lake, enjoy it to the full.

When I did reach Hangchow it was already the beginning of the sixth month. Just then Uncle Li K'ang-chieh 李康皆[66] came from Shan-yin[67] and invited me to visit West Lake with him. That very day, accompanied by my brother Chung-wen, we went to the Water Pavilion outside the Yung-chin Gate[68] of the city, and hired a boat to sail downstream. All around us the hills stood like screens of azure and jet, while purple halls and crimson palaces shone to right and left, as if we could pluck them from our very sleeves. Then we paid our respects at the Temple to the Prince of the Water Immortals.

Evening was approaching as we sailed into the thick of the lotus flowers; we smelt the fragrance of the wind on the gentle ripples of the water, and became oblivious of the cruel heat. I cut a lotus stem and used it as a straw with which to sip my wine. The moon was up by the time we left.

[63] (YTH) *Wen* 問 is used here in the ancient classical meaning, to 'pay compliments with a gift', as in "The Ruler of Wei sends his compliments to Tzu-kung (a notable pupil of Confucius) with the gift of a weapon." This did not mean that the Ruler of Wei 'asked some questions' about the bow. See also *Tso Chuan*, 11th year of Duke Ch'eng (576 bc).

[64] (YTH) The term used here, *chang* 丈, is the common Chinese courtesy appellation for a father's close friend or a family close friend of rather advanced age. The word literally means an elder, senior, venerable old man.

[65] Name Wangdorgi 旺多爾濟, a Mongol and a Student in the Imperial Academy, admitted by Special Grant.

[66] Name Pu-ying 步瀛, Academy Student from Shan-yin, later served as Chief County Education Officer.

[67] (Ed) Shao-hsing.

[68] (Ed) Cf. the lines by Chao Ch'ung-chih 晁沖之 (c.1090): "Outside Yung-chin /OVER