

Folk Stories Database

Title/Author/Book	Synopsis	Themes	Comments/Quotes
<p>The Clever Daughter in Law Chinese folktales AnthologyT</p>	<p>There is an old man with 3 sons who all have an undesirable trait (lazy, aggressive etc) which makes them unsuitable to take over the family business (a tea shop). The old man sets his 2 daughter in-laws a test to see if any of them are suitable, which is solved by a woman they meet - the butchers daughter. He then arranges a marriage between the butchers daughter and his 3rd son, she is brilliant, sorts out the sons and expands the family business. The Old man brags of his wealth and fortune and is berated by a local magistrate because of this. The magistrate sets the Old Man impossible tasks as punishment which are then resolved for him by his clever daughter in law.</p>	<p>Business, family, Intelligence, humbleness, work ethic</p>	<p>Really like the use of riddles in this and also goes against the very male dominated view of China.</p>
<p>Finding a Wife for the River God Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>A new prefect is sent to the village of Ye, to uphold law and improve the lives of the people. On his arrival he saw most of the villagers living in poverty but the magistrates living in luxury. The prefect finds out that the poverty in the village is down to extortionate taxes levied by the magistrate; the taxes are used as expenses to find a wife for the river god each year and any surplus is shared with the village sorceress who arranges the marriages and also charges for communication with the dead. The sorceress has told the villagers that unless they find a new bride for the river god each year then the river will flood the land and the villagers will drown. The prefect attends the next river god ceremony, just before the girl is sent into the water he stops proceedings. He claims the selected bride is not beautiful enough for the river god and suggests that the sorceress should enter the water to tell the river god and promptly pushes her into the water. When she does not return he begins to push her disciples in to find her. Then the officer in charge of the ceremony. When none return he suggests they send the magistrate at which point there are protests and never again do they carry out the ceremony. To prevent the people returning to correct the prefect creates an irrigation system for the river to ensure against flooding and the village prospers.</p>	<p>Religion, Blind Faith, Intelligence/wisdom, honour, duty, work ethic, equality, superstition.</p>	<p>The fact that the villagers are willing to pay the sorceress for communication with the dead points to the importance of dead family members, and the shrines that Chinese people keep in their homes for those people. The story Features Syimen Bau who is a common figure of Wisdom in Chinese stories.</p>

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<p>The White Snake Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>Two snakes lived on a mountain, a white snake and her servant green snake. They decide to embark on an adventure and so transform themselves into human form and leave the mountain for a nearby village. They enter the village and go on a boat ride, here white snake now named Pure Virtue meets a man, Syu Syan, with whom she falls in love, and then marries. They open a chemists shop at the front of their house and Pure Virtue uses her ancient knowledge to cure people, the business does very well. Little Green forebodes that this will come to a terrible end if they are discovered to be spirt snakes. A monk visits the town and sees a dark cloud hanging over the house of Pure Virtue and Syu Syan. He deducts this must be because of evil - he visits the house and suggests there must be a spirit living there. He gives Syu Syan a potion to test if Pure Virtue is really a spirit - he uses this and she turns back into snake which causes Syu Syan to collapse and loose consciousness. Pure Virtue sets off on a journey to find a special herb to cure him from the Fairy Queen, who predicts her son will be very important. Syu Syan is cured but he now lives with the terrible burden of knowing his wife is a snake, which he keeps a secret. His mood only improves when Pure Virtue has a baby boy. The monk returns and again gives a warning to Syu - saying his house will forever be in calamity while a spirit lives there. He convinces Syu to come and live in the temple with him to escape the spirit. Pure virtue is devastated at her husbands disappearance and eventually tracks him to the monastery, here she incites revenge on the monk using sorcery, but it doesn't work, she sees her husband and begs him to return to her but he doesn't respond. The monk uses sorcery of his own to return Pure Virtue to snake form, he then traps her in a box and berries it beneath the Leiffeng Pagoda, imprisoning her for life. Syu returns home and brings up their son who becomes an important person as the Fairy Queen predicted. Each year they go to the Leifeng Pagoda and prey for the soul of pure virtue.</p>	<p>Love, sorcery, religion, devotion, appearance and reality.</p>	<p>This is an extremely famous story in China, one of the most well known. Not really sure what the message is of this story - it seems so unjust the punishment that Pure Virtue receives when all she does is love and heal people. Very odd! Is it suggesting that you should not break with traditions, marry only those who are a proper fit for you?</p>

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<p>The Golden Carp Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>There was a chieftain who had two wives, his first wife gave birth to a daughter Ye Syan but died shortly after. The chieftan himself then became ill and so the young girl was left with his second wife a mean, jealous woman. Ye Syan was treated very poorly by the step mother who sent her out to collect wood and water alone in terrible conditions. On one journey Ye stopped at a lake for water and came across a tiny golden carp. She was so lonely that she decided to take it with her as a pet. Each day she fed the fish until it was so large she had to transfer it to a near by pond. When she visited the fish it would jump out of the water to greet her, one day her step mother saw and was cross that Ye was wasting her time. She dressed herself in Ye's rags and went to the pond, when the fish jumped out of the water to see her (thinking it was Ye) she caught and killed it. The Stepmother and her daughter ate the fish and then buried its bones in the dunghill. When Ye realised her fish was missing she sat crying and old stranger appeared, instructing Ye to seek out the fish's bones and keep them, advising that they would grant her good fortune. It was the day of the great festival and the stepmother told Ye to stay at home and work, upset at being unable to go she took out the bones and made a wish. On her bed appeared a beautiful skirt, blouse and slippers. She put on the clothes and set off to the festival, causing quite a stir. The stepmother and her daughter saw Ye and terrified she might be recognised she fled through the crowds loosing one of her slippers. The following day the slipper was found and sold to an official of the Tuo Huan Kingdom, who took it to the king to gain favour. The King demanded to know where the maiden who owned the shoe was, thinking it must be a wealthy and beautiful girl. He set about to make all women in the land try on the slipper until he eventually found Ye. Ye told the king of the power of the fishbones and he made her wish for jewels to prove their power. He married Ye but soon became greedy demanding more and more wealth from the bones. After some time the bones became weary and would not grant more wishes, Ye then took them far away and buried them on a beach.</p>	<p>Cruelty, Greed, loneliness, friendship</p>	<p>This is a version of Cinderella</p>

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<p>Liang Shanbo and Ju Yingtai Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>Yingtai is the youngest of nine children, all except her are boys. Each boy is sent to boarding school, but she, despite being desperate to attend, is not allowed to attend because she is a girl. In protest she begins to starve herself. Her parents are beside themselves with worry when a young doctor appears at their door. The young doctor states he can cure Yingtai with an elixir and gives the parents an impossible list of items to gather for it. Yingtai's parents think it must be a joke when suddenly the doctor pulls off their disguise revealing himself to be Yingtai. She says that if they could not recognise her then nor would the boarding school and she could easily pass for a boy. Her father finally agrees to let her go but demands that she return on her 16th birthday to be married. On the way to school she meets Liang Shanbo with whom she begins a wonderful friendship, this grows as the years pass. As her 16th birthday approaches she becomes more and more anxious until finally she confesses to Mrs Wang, the headmasters wife that is was really a girl and has fallen in love with Liang Shanbo. She asks Mrs Wang to tell Liang for her as she has to leave for home and cannot bare to face him herself. Upon arriving home Yingtai's father advises that he has arranged a marriage for her. At the school Liang receives a message to see Mrs Wang but fears going as he has fallen behind in his work. Eventually he goes days later and the truth is revealed to him, he is overjoyed and sets off to her village to seek permission to marry Yingtai. Upon arrival Yingtai's father advises that it is too late, she is in a binding contract to marry another. Jiang returns home where he dies of a broken heart. News of his death reaches Yingtai who pleads with her father to allow her to visit the tomb before the wedding. He agrees and when she reached the tomb she flings herself into his grave and the earth closed above her.</p>	<p>Forbidden love, gender inequality, education, obedience, family, honour</p>	<p>Lots in here about hovering the request of your parents.</p>

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<p>The Palace Plot Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>The king has two concubines, he decrees he shall marry the first one who bears him a male child. Very soon one becomes pregnant (Lady Li) and the other (Lady Lui) is so jealous that she plots with her friend Guo Huai to kill the baby and swap it with a shaved cat. The king is so disgusted at the monstrous baby that he banishes Lady Li. Pearl, Lady Lui's servant takes the baby and is instructed to kill it, but she cant and instead leaves it with the kings cousin Duke Jau and his wife. Lady Lui soon becomes pregnant and has a baby boy who dies, the king is now certain he shall have no heir. The king visits his cousin and becomes enchanted with the boy, he asks if he can raise him as an heir to the throne. Knowing the palace plot Duke Jau agrees and the boy returns with the king. Queen Lui quickly realises the boys resemblance to Lady Li, she sends for Pearl and Gua Huai beat s her to death to try to find out what happened to the baby. Chen Lin witnesses this and goes to warn lady Li who is now working in the kitchens to flee for her life, as he thinks they will kill her also. 10 years pass and the king dies, bringing the new young king to the throne. One day a righteous judge is travelling outside the palace when a woman (Lady Li) approaches him shouting 'injustice, the kings mother is an imposter' she produces a beautiful broach which persuades the judge she is telling the truth. He e approaches Guo Huai who denies everything. The wise judge devises a plan, he has his courtroom rearranged to resemble hell. Food and wine is sent to Guo Huai who devours it and then falls asleep. When he wakes he hears drumming and shrieks, two horned masked attendants arrive to take him to the court room . Here a woman impersonates the dead Pearl and accuses him of betrayal and murder. He confesses and is sentenced to death for his actions. Tormented by remorse Lady Lui falls ill, starving herself to death. The new king restores the title of queen to his mother Lady Li and the rules with compassion and prudence for many years.</p>	<p>Love, Jealousy, Betrayal, continuation of bloodline, justice, wisdom</p>	<p>Poem at the end; A Palace plot has come undone, A mighty judge the truth has won, An inglorious end the wicket met, A dynasty, its course is set. The rightful king all subjects hail, Evil deeds will not prevail.</p> <p>The judge in this is said to be the same character as the prefect in the River God story.</p>

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<p>Monkey Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>A mischievous and brave monkey hatches from an egg buried deep within the mountain. The monkey ascends to heaven with his friends where he declares himself the king, as the years pass the friends all die and monkey king is left alone. He becomes sad and ponders his immortality, he learns of the sages ability for eternal life and decides to become a holy man so he too can achieve this. He travelled until he found a teacher, he was devoted to study and learned great skills but could not control his mischievousness. To rid the monkeys disruptiveness from the school the teacher awarded him the title of sage so that he was now immortal. On returning home the Monkey soon became bored and so the Jade emperor appointed him to be guardian of the peach garden to keep him occupied. But when the queen of heaven did not invite monkey to her banquet he ran amok, smashing and destroying things in heaven. He was severely punished for his actions and was wedged between two rocks on the mountain, only when the the monkey was truly repentant would he be set free. 500 years passed before a monk Tang Seng happened across Monkey, he prayed for him and soon he was free. Monkey was very grateful and became Tang's companion. They travelled to a farm where they learned of a daemon who had locked up the farmers daughter. The farmer tells them how a young man had shown up and was willing to marry his daughter in exchange for acceptance into the family. For three years all was well and the boy worked hard then he slowly began to turn into a pig which they named Pigsy. Pigsy's appetite was enormous he also caused calamity amongst the village. Then one day with no warning he locked his wife, the farmers daughter, in a shed. Tang and Monkey agree to help the farmer and release the daughter from the shed. The daughter tells of how pigsy leaves each morning and returns at night. Monkey transforms into the girl and waits for pigsy in the shed. Monkey attacks and chases Pigsy to a cave, here he binds him and takes him back to the farm, on the way monkey mentions that he has traveled with Tan Seng, Pigsy is astonished for he has been told that he will one day meet a monk named Tang Seng and accompany him on his journey west. So Pigsy joins monkey and Tang Seng on their journey and the farm is free of the daemon.</p>	<p>Mischief, reputation, daemons,</p>	<p>This is part of a much longer set of stories I think about the monkey king. Particularly highlighted is the monkeys mischievous nature. This is an extremely well known character in China, and is used as a character within Beijing opera as well. Not sure if this links to the year of the monkey or not? Possibly....</p>

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<p>The Tragedy of the Yin Family Chinese Folk-Lore Tales J.Macgowan</p>	<p>Mr Yin one day realises that despite having a huge amount of wealth earned through trade, he wanted more for his family in the way of aristocratic status. He had little 'honour' via education but wanted sons and grandsons to gain that honour so that their success would be 'reflected upon him, and men would talk of him as the head of a family which had become distinguished for scholarship and high dignities of the state. He came to the conclusion that the easiest way to accomplish this was to 'secure a lucky burying-ground for the bodies of his passed father and Grandfather. (universal belief: the dead have power of showering wealth and honours upon surviving members of families and certain spots where 'unseen forces' gives power to those lain to rest who can then dispense riches and dignities upon relatives). Mr yin, therefore, spent all his time searching for the right burial spot with help from a professor. After months searching Mr Yin found his spot in the centre of an old amphitheatre), with the magic influence of the dragon. The professor urges Mr Yin not to let the spot go and finds out that is owned by a man named Lin, his wife and daughter, Pearl, who are very poor and the only property they own. Lin first says no because he has plans for Pearl and his future son in law, but Mr Yin doesn't give up and Lin finally agrees after Mr Yin proposes that Lin's daughter marry his oldest son, Shung and Lin and his wife move into his family mansion where they would be 'maintained with ease and comfort.' Lin and his family sell everything and move in with Mr Yin and his family. But after the wedding, Pearl is treated cruelly and mostly ignored and Lin and his wife live a miserable life in the mansion. Lin and his wife decide to go back to live in the empty cottage. Both soon fall ill and later die, which only pleases Mr Yin because he was no longer obligated to them. Shung, at this point, brought in a concubin and Pera, soon after, committed suicide, hanging herself. Mr Yin and Shung gave a 'cry of delight' at this news. Revenge begins and the heavens toss Yin's grandfather's coffin upon a hillside a mile away. Pearl's parents then rise in spirit and terrify Mr Yin who dies from the terrible vision and fear. Shung becomes master of his father's wealth but no lesson is learned by him. Pearl then rises and haunts the mansion. One night, perplexed by fear that the haunting had created, Shung</p>	<p>Honour, afterlife, symbol of the dragon, retribution</p>	<p>Description of burial ground are interesting in this story.</p> <p>"Though she was a thoroughly good girl, with the high ideals that the commonest people in China everywhere have, her proper position was, after all, amongst the kind of people with whom she had lived with all her life."</p> <p>"exceedingly poor"</p> <p>"Heaven moves slowly in the punishment of the wicked, but it's footprints are sure and they travel irresistibly along the road that leads to vengeance on the wrongdoer."</p> <p>"This tragic extinction of a family, which only a short year before was in the highest state of prosperity, was accepted by every one who heard the story as a just and righteous punishment from Heaven. For Heaven is so careful of human life that any one who destroys it comes under the inevitable law that he too shall in his turn be crushed under the wheels of avenging justice."</p>

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The Tragedy of the Yin Family continued....	felt a tight grip by Pearl's spirit and went to strike it with his sword but instead struck his concubine, repeatedly stabbing the woman. Shung was arrested and put on trial. Magistrates did not believe his story and although Shung used all his money to bribe his freedom he was still told he would serve life in prison. His mother dies penniless of a broken heart and Shung commits suicide.		

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<p>The Fairy Bonze Chinese Folk-Lore Tales J.Macgowan</p>	<p>A man named Meng started life as poor man, but 'through great strength of purpose and positive genius for business' became very rich. Because of his 'artless, open hearted disposition' and generosity he became known throughout his region in China. His 'goodwill' had 'given him an honourable place in society'. He helped everyone who needed help. Meng's fame travelled widely and one day he received a letter from the head of an aristocratic family begging that he would agree to a marriage alliance between his daughter and Meng's only son. The betrothal was drawn up and so the young couple were bound to one another by legal ties "which no court in the Empire would ever dream of unloosing." A few days later a bonze appeared at Meng's house and asked to stay for a few days on his way to pilgrimage. Meng welcomed the priest, giving him the best room and treated him with kind hospitality. The priest captured the hearts of the house and Meng insisted he stayed longer and days turned into months. Meng's son, Chin, especially warmed to the Bonze and they would wander the hillside together. They also visited the outhouse every morning where the Bonze made Chin collect broken tiles and bury them in the ground of the used buildings. Although strange, Chin accepted this childish endeavour because he adored his companion. The Bonze finally left the family and Meng never knew that he was in fact a fairy in disguise. Soon after Meng suffered many disasters: the money he was owed by different firms failed and so Meng was left in considerable debt. Meng was left penniless, became seriously ill and later died leaving Chin and his mother 'desolate and bereaved.' After some time, Chin set out to find his wealthy father in law who had promised his daughter to him. When he arrived at the gates he was told that he was no longer welcome because of the news about Meng's failings. The daughter of the aristocratic family named, Water Lily, soon heard about the way Chin was treated and confronted her father who dismissed her and planned for her to be married to another wealthy man. Water Lily, however, changed her appearance to appear as an ugly beggar woman and left her mansion in search of Chin. For months she travelled on, living the life of a beggar woman. One day she appeared at Chin's front door where Chin's mother saw her and took pity on her. Water Lily was so taken a back by the</p>	<p>Trade, generosity, wealth, human kindness</p>	<p>Description of Meng and his attributes are interesting: heart of, gold, intense sympathy for others etc "He was moved solely by a sincere desire to alleviate human suffering." "Heaven knows how you have been wronged, and in time you will be avenged for all the injury you have suffered." "All the rites and ceremonies have been gone through which bind me to him as long as I live, and to cast him off now because calamity has fallen upon his home is but to invite the vengeance of the Gods, who will surely visit us with some great sorrow if we endeavour to act in a way contrary to their laws."</p>

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The Fairy Bonze continued...	<p>woman's kindness that she started to cry until she was wracked with sobs. The tears started to alter her appearance until she was revealed, again, as the beautiful Water Lily. Their conversation led to happiness again in the house and the only question remained was what the new family were going to live on. It was decided that the outhouses would be sold to gain some money for the young couple. Chin was weary because he was unsure that the property would sell in their dilapidated condition. But when Chin went to check the outhouses he discovered a piece of silver in the ground and realised that it was where the Bonze had told him to bury the tiles. Chin kept digging to find that every piece of tile had turned to silver. He was now a millionaire.</p>		<p>"Thus did the Gods show their appreciation of the noble life of Mr. Meng, and of his loving sympathy for the poor and the distressed, by raising his fallen house to a higher pinnacle of prosperity than it had ever attained even during his lifetime."</p>

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<p>Bamboo and the Turtle The Chinese Wonder Book</p>	<p>Based at the sights of Hsi Ling. Twelve year old Bamboo was a son of a keeper and one day, for the first time, he saw parades of Mandarins (rich tourists) go by who were there to sightsee. Bamboo was sad after they passed because his father told him that he could not follow the tourists from tomb to tomb because it made him look like a beggar. "So bamboo had never known the pleasure of pursuing the rich."</p> <p>This particular day, as the last horseman had passed, Bamboo happened to look up and notice that once of the smaller temple building the tourists had just been shown, and a temple to which his father was keeper, had been left wide open. The temple contained a high stone shaft, or tablet, covered with Chinese writing that stood in the centre of the room almost reaching the roof. But the boy was more interested in what was a holding it up: a stone turtle/tortoise was resting the heavy tablet on its back. The boy was eager to understand the turtle custom and so ran inside. Scared that someone would seem him, Bamboo decided to crawl under the turtle to hide for a while. The turtle then started to speak to him, Bamboo a little fearful at first started to speak back: "I meant no harm in coming." The turtle explained how everyone always came to look at the writing but never at him whose Grandfather was one of the great four who made the world. The turtle told Bamboo to close the doors before explaining further to Bamboo about how he had held the tablet for one hundred years but how much he loves to travel and so had been thinking of ideas to leave his position. The turtle and the boy hatch a plan to allow the turtle to escape. Once the turtle was free, the boy found out that the turtle planned to return to the spot where "the great God, P'anku, and his three helpers hewed out the world."The turtle told the boy that they had to travel across China and Tibet so asked him to climb onto his back. The turtle started to fly up and up, flying with lightening speed. Bamboo fell a asleep and woke in a wild rocky region-"the land of the beginning". The phoenix and the dragon who were the turtle's friends also joined them. The four of them laughed and feasted together where they had lived while</p>	<p>Adventure, fantasy, friendship, imagination, immortality</p>	<p>The symbol of the turtle/tortoise?</p> <p>"this phoenix looked somewhat like a wild swan, but it had the bill of a cock, the neck of a snake, the tail of a fish and the stripes of a dragon. Its feathers were of five colours."</p> <p>"You are not half so mean-looking and so fierce as they paint you on the flags," said Bamboo to the dragon</p>

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	<p>P'anku was cutting out the world. The group showed Bamboo many wonderful things. They decided to end their meeting because the turtle was fearful that Bamboo's father may start to worry. They flew back and Bamboo thought if "he never were to see anything else in his life, he would always be happy." Suddenly the turtle stopped mid air and Bamboo slipped of his back, flying through the air, falling through tress until he hit the ground but woke to find himself still hiding under the stone turtle. He woke to his father's commands and asked; "but didn't he kill me?"</p>		

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<p>The Golden Beetle or Why the Dog Hates the Cat The Chinese Wonder Book</p>	<p>Story of Widow Wang and her son, Ming-li. A deeply cold winter had left Ming-li very ill with pneumonia and meant all their extra money had been spent on medicine. The shop where Ming-li worked had given his position to someone else and the illness had left him very weak so work became very limited to him. Despite Ming-li's positive thoughts he was also full of sorrow seeing his mother suffering without clothing and food, even the dog and cat were becoming just skin and bone. One day a priest appeared at the doorstep who stated that the gods had listened to the prayers of her devoted son and how he had served his mother and they wanted to reward his virtue. He handed the mother a small golden beetle and told her it "has the power to fill your stomachs as long as you live". She only had to place the beetle in a kettle of boiling water saying over and over the names of the foods she wanted and in three minutes the food would appear. The priest then left and Mrs Wang did exactly what he had said. After wishing for pork dumplings they appeared in the pot 3 minutes later, just as the priest had told her. As soon as a son came home she explained what the priest had said and showed him the power of the beetle. The son was in complete shock after seeing what his mother had showed him. That night they all feasted including the animals, Blackfoot and Whitehead. Ming-li regained all his strength but grew somewhat lazy because he no longer needed to work. The animals became fat and sleek and their hair grew long and glossy. The Wang family decided to invite friends over and one day Mr and Mrs Chu visited from a distant village and experienced the best meal they had ever tasted. Mrs Chu explained to her husband that she saw Mrs Wang use the Golden beetle and they made a plan to take the beetle whilst the family were at the Temple fair. No one had seen Mrs Chu enter the Wang house, the dog made no noise and the cat merely blinked at the stranger and fell back to sleep again. In finding out that the beetle was missing the Wang family, again, suffered days of hunger and despair. The two pets "were reduced to beggary and had to go forth daily upon the streets in search of stray bones". One day the cat, Whitehead, suddenly related the reason for all their troubles and told the dog, Blackfoot, and they soon formed a plan to get the beetle back. They both set off on the adventure that night and crossed the river</p>	<p>Wealth/good fortune: losing and gaining</p> <p>Cat vs dog</p> <p>Betrayal</p>	<p>"Now began a long period of happiness. Mother, son, dog and cat-all enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content."</p> <p>Chinese proverb: "Pride invites sorrow"- "the little family became so proud of their good fortune that they began to ask friends and relatives to dinner that they might show off their good meals."</p>

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<p>The Golden Beetle continued.....</p>	<p>to the Chu house. They agreed that Blackfoot was to carry Whitehead on his back when crossing the river and provide protection from strange animals. Whitehead would then scale the wall of the house as the gates would be locked. Once the cat had reached the top of the wall he met a rat who asked that if the cat spared his life, he would obey Whitehead for life. The cat agreed and started to ask questions about the changes in the household and the rat recalled to the cat how Mrs Chu had obtained the fairy's charm. The cat told the rat if he were to go and get the golden trinket for him, the rat would be free of any future obligations. The rat kept his word and brought the beetle back to whitehead. The dog and cat on returned and before crossing the river Blackfoot cautioned Whitehead to keep its mouth closed when holding the trinket across the water. The cat replied: "thanks,but I don't need your advice." However, as they were nearly over to the other side the cat, after seeing a fish leap out of the water, couldn't resist but to seize the fish in her mouth and the beetle sank to the bottom of the river. After a moment of "bitter dispute" a frog offered to fetch the beetle for them. They returned home and the cat went in through a hole in the broken paper window to return the beetle to Mrs Wang, but the poor dog couldn't get in. The cat cried out to its mistress: "here is the treasure you are weeping for. I have rescued it and brought it back to you." After eating a delicious, hot meal the cat went out to see poor Blackfoot left outside only able to smell the fragrant odours. The cat had not mentioned once about Blackfoot's part in the rescue of the beetle and took all the glory for herself. The cat began to tease the dog about all the food he missed out on : "too bad, old fellow, that you are hungry." The dog became so enraged that he leapt on the cat and shook her to death. The dog then rushed out onto the street and told all of Whitehead's treachery to members of his tribe and advised that "all self-respecting dogs should, from that time onwards, make war upon the feline race."</p>		<p>"so dies the one who forgets a friend and who loses honour", the dog cried sadly.</p> <p>"This is the reason why the descendants of old Blackfoot, whether in China or in the great countries of the West , have waged continual war upon the children and grandchildren of Whitehead, for a thousand generations of dogs have fought them and hated them with a great and lasting hatred."</p>

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<p>The Great Bell The Chinese Wonder Book</p>	<p>Emperor, Yung-lo, was in despair realising that there was nothing more he could do for his people at the end of his days as ruler of the Middle kingdom when one of his faithful courtiers, Ming-lin, in apprehension, suggested that one great gift Yung-lo could give to his people. There was a an empty bell tower that needed a bell “to sound out the fleeting hours of the day.” The Emperor agreed but was unsure who would have the skill to create such bell. Ming-li suggested Kwan-yu who had moulded the imperial cannon and said that he had the skills needed for the mighty job. In saying this Ming-lin had two objectives: to make the emperor happy, and raise Kwan-yu to high rank who’s daughter was betrothed to Ming-lin’s son. Ming-lin reassured the emperor that Kwan-yu could do the job “better than any other man within the length and breadth of [the] empire.” When Kwan-yu heard of the news he was very reluctant, and his daughter, Ko-ai, was filled with great fear. However, the wife of Kwan Yu told Ko-ai that it was “unseemly for a girl to meddle in her father’s affairs.” The father was later summoned to the the Forbidden City to receive his instructions from the Son of Heaven. The Emperor advised that the “bell had to be so great that the sound of it will ring out to a distance of thirty three miles on every hand” and the bell should contain the right proportions of gold to brass “for they give depth and strength to everything with which they mingle.” He also advised that silver also needed to be added for a sweet quality. Kwan-yu found as many labourers that any experience in this work and researched the best methods to use. Kwan-yo would be stopped at every turn to answer questions about is work and the Emperor checked in every few days to find out when the metals would be ready to mix. Kwan-yu was eventually able to give a date for the casting and the Emperor insisted in being present. Kwan-yu was extremely worried, despite all his work and research, he was still unsure whether the metals would mix how they should. Ko-ai was also worried for her father. On the day of casting the metals failed to mix but Yung-lo, instead of dishing out the heaviest of punishments, gave a mighty speech about divided China and how the metals represented this. He therefore gave Kwan-yu a second chance to unite the metals</p>	<p>Filial love Honour Disgrace Sacrifice Deed of virtue</p>	<p>“unseemly for a girl to meddle in her father’s affairs.”</p>

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	<p>and thus represent united China. On the second trial, Kwan-yu, again, failed to mix the metals. Yung-lo accused Kwan-yu of betraying his trust twice, but gave him one final attempt and if he failed he and Ming-lin would pay the price. Kwan-yu was on the brink of death from the stress of his predicament. Ko-ai was deeply scared for her father. She racked her brains night and day for a solution when, one day, a small bird flew into her window and perched upon her head. It whispered: "Do not hesitate. you must go and consult the famous juggler who even now is visiting the city. Sell your jade stones and other jewels, for this man of wisdom will not listen unless his attention is attracted by huge sums of money." The bird then left. Ko-ai did as the bird asked and visited the magician who told her: "nothing could be plainer than the reason of your father's failure, for when a man seeks to do the impossible, he can expect Fate to give him no other answer. Gold cannot unite with silver, nor brass with iron, unless the blood of a maiden is mingled with the molten metals, but the girl who gives up her life to bring about the the fusion must be pure and good." Despite her sadness, Ko-ai knew she had to sacrifice her life for her father. On the day of the third trail, Kwan-yu knew he had done nothing more to enable successful and instead made sure he had arranged all his affairs for his family's sake. Ko-ai placed herself directly opposite the huge tank and awaited for the signal. When the Emperor gave his signal the girl leaped into the boiling liquid, crying: "For thee, dear father! It is the only way!" In his grief the father went to follow her to her death, but was restrained.</p> <p>**</p> <p>The silver, gold, iron and brass blended together perfectly and the clear voice of the bell gave a richer, deeper melody than any other bell of the Middle Kingdom or even the world. "The deep-voiced colossus seems to ring out the name of the maiden who gave herself a living sacrifice, "Ko-ai! Ko-ai! Ko-ai! so that all the people lay remember her deed of virtue ten thousand years ago."</p>		<p>"a raven must have flown over his head. he is like the proverb of the blind horse coming at midnight to a deep ditch. Oh, how can he cross over?"</p> <p>"nothing could be plainer than the reason of your father's failure, for when a man seeks to do the impossible, he can expect Fate to give him no other answer.</p> <p>** "This, then, my children, is the time-worn legend of the great bell of Peking, a tale that has been repeated a million times by poets, story-tellers and devoted mothers, for you must know that on this third casting, when the earthen mould was removed, there stood revealed the most beautiful bell that yes had ever looked upon".</p> <p>Yung-lo to Kwan-yu: "There is none that can teach to my children so sweet a lesson of filial love and devotion as that one last act of you devoted daughter."</p>

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<p>Cowherd and the Weaving Maid Chinese Folktales Anthology</p>	<p>Cowherd is an orphan who lives with his sister and brother in law they treat him every unkindly, almost as a slave, his most important job is tending to the cow. He loved the cow dearly, looking after and caring for it very well. One day the sister in law says he must leave but allows him to take the cow with him. They go to the forrest where they set up a shelter. One night Cowherd hears a voice speaking to him and realises that is the cow talking. The cow says that a fairy 'the weaving maid' and her sisters will come and bathe in the stream and that Cowherd should steel her gown. The cow goes on to explain that The Weaving Maid will be unable to return to heaven without her gown and that Cowherd should only agree to return it if she will be his wife. The next day Cowherd does as the Cow has instructed. The Weaving Maid's sisters left for heaven without her and she was left unclothed and distraught unable to return to heaven. The Weaving Maid promised to listen to Cowherd if he returned the gown, at which point he explained to her what the Cow had said, adding that he couldn't bear to leave her cold and unclothed so had returned the gown before she had made any promise. He then asked her to be his wife and she, already smitten, agreed. The Weaving Maid lived with Cowherd at his shelter, to which he made improvements. The Weaving Maid created exquisite tapestries which fetched great prices and soon they built a wonderful home and had two children together. The Weaving Maid soon felt guilty about leaving heaven and told her children of her former life. The cow grew old, frail and ill and one day, as it had done before, it spoke to Cowherd. This time the cow said that once dead Cowherd should skin the cow and keep it in a safe place. That if Cowherd was ever in danger to wrap himself in the skin and the cow would try to help. when the cow died, Cowherd did exactly this.</p> <p>The timescale in heaven was very different to that on earth and so the Fairy Mother Goddess had not noticed the disappearance of her grand daughter until now. When she realised that The Weaving Maid was missing, she immediately went to earth to look for her. Whilst Cowherd was away the Fairy Mother Goddess entered Cowherds home and took away the Weaving Maid, when Cowherd returned he found only his frightened children. The children explained that their mother had been taken by fairies.</p>	<p>Hardwork reaping reward. Gods/Fairies. Love/Marriage. Magic. Duty. Separation.</p>	<p>About two worlds - fairy world/ kingdom of heaven and real world colliding through love. Very much a sense that your duty (to your world and elders) is more important than love and your new family.</p>

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<p>Cowherd and the Weaving Maid <i>continued</i> <i>Chinese Folktales Anthology</i></p>	<p>Cowherd immediately fetched his cow skin and wrapped it around himself. A strange sensation came over him and he began to leave the ground. He removed the skin for a moment, gathered the children in baskets then again placed the cow skin around him and begun to fly to heaven. The Fairy Mother Goddess knew by her magic that Cowherd was approaching. When he arrived, she called to her strongest soldiers who formed a line to block Cowherds way, two of them held on to The Weaving Maid. The fairy Goddess used one of her silver hair pins to create a river between Cowherd and heaven. A flock of magpies saw what was happening and took pity joining together to form a bridge across the river. When Cowherd and the children stepped onto the bridge the Weaving Maid managed to pul away from the soldiers and ran to meet them. Even the Fairy Mother Goddess was moved by their affection for each other. Her heart softened and she granted permission for the earth family to remain in heaven, but they were not allowed to into the fairy kingdom and were only granted permission to see the weaving maid once a year, on the 7th day of the 7th month. If you look at the sky you will see two bright stars on opposite sides of the milky way, that slowly move together on the 7th day on the 7th month.</p>		

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<p>Meng Jiang Nyu Chinese Folktales</p>	<p>Neighbours Meng and Jiang lived at the edge of a small village, with only a crude, latticed fence to separate them. One day Meng dropped a watermelon seed behind his cottage, it produced a healthy vine which climbed the fence and ended up outside Jiang's door. Disappointingly it only produced one melon, but it was a perfect large one. The two men decided to share it. As they cut into the melon it opened to reveal a tiny baby girl inside. They named her Meng Jiang Nyu and decided to raise between the two families, as neither had children of their own. The girl grew up very happy and loved and on her 18th birthday was set to marry Wan Chi-liang. The marriage was a wonderful one until one day it was shattered by the arrival of officials at the door. Wan Chi-liang was seized by the soldiers as were other young men from neighbouring cottages. The official advised that the emperor had ordered a huge conscription to build a great wall that would protect the country from invading barbarians in the north. The men were marched away to the horror of Meng Jiang Nyu. Many days passed and she prayed for the safety of her husband. She worried about the onset of the winter and how her husband would survive. Men Jiang Nyu swore an oath - her husband would not do without winter clothes. She set about sewing him a warm jacket and shoes to keep him warm. No matter how perilous the journey she would take these to him and protect him. The next morning she set out with the clothes and very little else. She had heard that the wall was a great distance, and as the days passed (her journey everlasting) she resorted to begging for food to survive. People praised her devotion to her husband and were happy to help her, she heard tales of many that had died at the great wall and shuddered at the thought. She grew very frail on her journey and one day reached the yellow river. It was very deep and wide and she had no clue how to cross it but would not give in and waded into the water. She was swept away in the current and was only saved by a river god who carried to her the other side.</p>	<p>Love, family, magic, spirit world, epic journey, devotion, determinism.</p>	<p>This is massively sad - based on the many people who dies building the great wall of china. A wife (who was incidentally conceived in a watermelon?!) arrives to late to save her husband. Searching to find his remains amongst the mass graves.</p> <p>Contains an epic journey through China which is nice.</p> <p>How important is it that people receive a proper burial in China? This is how the story ends but it seems very sad. Just wondering whether Chinese people would get some relief from this ending?</p> <p>"...when love is sincere and true, two people become as one. They share their thoughts, hopes, feelings. Their blood, their bones, their very tissues mingle.</p>

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<p>Meng Jiang Nyu <i>Continued</i> Chinese Folktales</p>	<p>The river god thought she was very brave and said he would ensure spirits along her journey would help her. The clothes and shoes were wet, so she needed to dry them before continuing. As she laid them out the shoes turned into two blackbirds, who immediately began to lead her in a northerly direction. Days passed and one day the blackbirds changed back into shoes having done their job of leading her to her destination. She climbed a hill and saw figures of men near by. She approached and asked for her husband but no one knew him. Further weeks went by as she trudged along the wall in freezing conditions, becoming very weak. No one had heard of her husband until at last she met a stranger who had met him. To her horror he advised that he had died and was buried under the wall with many others. She could not control her tears, angry that she had arrived too late, she cried out to heaven. At this a violent storm began and with a deafening clap of thunder a section of the wall collapsed spilling out bricks and stones together with human bones. A voice from heaven told her not to fear and that she would be able to find her husbands bones if her love was sincere. She bite down on her thumb in her angst and it began to bleed. She dripped her blood over the bones of the dead men until she found the bones that soaked up her blood. Knowing that to be her husbands remains she gathered them together and began her sad journey home to the south to ensure he received a proper burial.</p>		

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<p>The Talking Fish The Chinese Wonder Book</p>	<p>In the village of Everlasting Happiness lived two men called Li and Sing who were close friends living together in the same house. Before they moved to the village they had ruled as high officials for more than 20 years and often treated people very harshly so that everybody hated them. The two friends became rich by robbing wealthy merchants and cheating the poor. They went to the EV to spend their money and pursue idle amusements. They owned a big house and always invited the rich over to dine. They even owned a flat-bottomed boat made by the village carpenter. One day, on the boat in the middle of the lake, Li gained a feeling of giddiness that became a burning fever. The doctor prescribed "snake's blood mixed with powdered deer horn and not to be left alone because he had the danger of going mad. Li fell into a feverish sleep and his faithful servant, half famished rushed out for a midday meal. Mr Li woke ten minutes later needing water and starving for air, but his attendant (Wang) wasn't there. Li went out into the courtyard towards the garden until he reached the huge pond and bathed his hands and wrists in a little stream.</p> <p>He then went in search for deeper water. The fever suddenly took hold of him again and he threw himself into the water. He was a skilful swimmer and loved to swim. He said: 'I'd love to live in the water all the time'</p> <p>To is amazement he heard a chuckled reply: 'You would, eh?' The voice came from a giant fish and Li immediately asked why the fish had laughed at this notion, to which he replied: 'Because you awkward creatures, who call yourselves men, the most highly civilised beings in the world, always think you understand everything fully when you have only found out how to do it.'</p> <p>The fish continued: 'You're not even provided with the proper equipment for swimming. What would you do if you really lived here always?' After a long line of insults, Li had become speechless with rage but the fish continued to point out man's disadvantages being in the water, such as the lack of scales.</p>	<p>Dreams, death, reincarnation?</p>	

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The Talking Fish continued...	<p>Li then asked the fish if it sometimes wanted to be a man, but the fish was extremely insulted by such a questions and told Li that it would be "a disgraceful change". He also said that he was a favourite nephew of the King. Li asked then asked if he could ask the King to change him into a fish. The fish explained that the king is "a loyal descendant of the great water dragon, and, as such, can never die, but lives on and on." To which Li replied, "I would give my fortune to be a follower of your imperial master." The fish told Li to follow him and after a while, they reached a sheltered inlet at the farther side of the pond where they met a fish dressed in royal scarlet. When they met the King, he was a bit suspicious of man who often have fish at the table. Li went down on his knees and begged the Fish King to change him: "I would forever be your ardent admirer and your lowly slave." The king finally agrees and asks that fish skin be brought to him. Li was soon covered in scales with only his arms uncovered. He then experienced sharp pain through every part of his body, his arms then shrivelled up, his hands turned to fins and his legs and feet began to stick together until he couldn't separate them. Li began to thank the king profusely but the king interrupted him to give him some important advice: to never eat a dangling worm and always swim like lightning if you see a net. The king also highlighted that after the royal meal Li would be alone in hunting for food. Li, at first, found it very hard to navigate his new fish tail and fins, it took several hours to get the strokes right. Li then fell very hungry and after hunting for hours found nothing. Just before the hunger became unbearable he saw a delicious red worm dangling above his nose and then the King's advice suddenly came back to him. But his hunger was too much not to eat the fish and the next thing he felt was a sharp hook tugging the inside of his mouth. The more Li struggled the sharper the cruel barb grew and he then found himself dangling in mid-air and placed into a boat directly on top of another fish. Li recognised the man who had caught him; it was old Chang, the fisherman who supplies Li with fish to eat. Li began to explain who he was to Chang but it was no good, Chang had been hard of hearing since Childhood.</p>		

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The Talking Fish continued...	<p>They arrived at the shore and Li along with the other fish were thrown in a basket. At the door of his house, he saw Sing and shouted out but Sing also heard nothing. Sing refused Chang's offering of the day's catch on account of Li's fever. Li began to shout and flap around and this time, Sing heard him: "Shades of Confucius! It sounds as if the carp is talking." But Chang persuaded him otherwise and replied: "I think your ears must have deceived you, but this carp will surely cause talk when I get him into the kitchen." Chang took Li to a chef, hanging him up by his tail. Li tried to escape and cried out: "Save me!" and tried to offer the cook everything he wanted if he obeyed him. The cook did hear something "but such wonders cannot be. Only ignorant old women or foreigners would believe that a fish could talk." So the cook seized the fish and despite Li screaming out the cook said: "You won't talk much longer, I'll show you a trick or two with he blade." The cook then plunged the knife deep into the body of "the trembling victim".</p> <p>Li suddenly woke after a shrill cry of horror. He had been in a deep sleep because of the over but woke to find his fever gone. "Thanks to the Buddha, I am not a fish."</p>		<p>"but such wonders cannot be. Only ignorant old women or foreigners would believe that a fish could talk."</p> <p>"If only the good of our dreams came true, I shouldn't mind dreaming the whole day through."</p>

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<p>Journey to the West Wu Cheng'en Translated/retold by Christine Sun</p>	<p>Written in the 1590s at a time when the Chinese government was not very efficient, unable to protect its citizens against natural disasters and widespread turmoil caused by rebels, bandits and pirates. The book is based on the legends of a monk named Xuanzang who travelled to India in the 7th century and spent 13 years studying Buddhism there. He dedicated his life to translating and teaching the Buddhist scriptures he had brought back. It is written in vernacular Chinese (used by ordinary people in their daily lives) and considered to be one of the most popular Chinese novels of all time. Full of humour, satire, emotional and physical conflicts, and symbols and allegories well known by Chinese people. The book is centred mostly on the character monkey and his transformation from a mischievous magical creature to a supernatural hero. Monkey was born magically out of a rock. His courage to accept and pay for his mistakes, by devoting his life to protecting Xuanzang throughout their journey, is considered worthy of respect. Some Chinese scholars suggest that the many demons and monsters encountered by the characters represent various aspects of the dark side of their personalities. Monkey and his fellow disciples, Piggy and Sandy (these two have committed sins in their previous lives and banished to the human world to redeem their faults) are given the mission to protect the monk, Xuanzang, who agrees to travel to India to bring back precious scriptures for the Buddha "for the world's people to study, so they can learn to coexist in peace." The journey is dangerous and they face demons and monsters along the way. The disciples' loyalty to Xuanzang and their trust for each other is constantly tested.</p>	<p>Loyalty, forgiveness trust</p>	

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Title/Author/Book	Synopsis	Themes	Comments/Quotes
<p>The Nodding Tiger A Chinese Wonder Book</p>	<p>A young woodcutter called T'ang and his 70 year old mother lived together. They were very poor and lived in one room shanty built of mud and grass, which they rented from a neighbour. Although poor, they were very happy and loved each other dearly. One day T'ang went out early to bring back a heavier load of wood for the holiday the next day, but by the afternoon there was still no sign his return. The mother started to become very worried and so went to a neighbour to ask if they could go look for her boy. The neighbour was kind hearted and agreed, but told the woman of his fear that the boy may have been carried off by a wild beast in the mountains. When the neighbour was halfway up the slope he saw torn clothing spattered with blood. The boy's axe was also lying by the side of the path. The neighbour knew there was no mistake: after making a brave fight, the poor youth had ben carried off by a tiger.</p> <p>Gathering the torn garments he went back to the boy's mother and as soon as she saw the garments, with a cry of despair, she fainted away. She did not need to be told what had happened. She could not be comforted no matter how the neighbours tried. "She wept, tore her hair, and beat her chest, until people said she had gone mad. The longer she mourned, the more violent she became." But the next day the women set out for the city, slowly on her crutch, until she reached the public hall. She knelt at the gate weeping and crying out about her ill-fortune. Inside, the city judge heard her cries and bade a servant to let her in. She told the judge of her situation and now that her son was gone she had no way of earning money.</p>		

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<p>The Nodding Tiger continued.</p>	<p>She begged the judge to punish the slayer of her son. The judge laughed at her and asked if she was mad. He said: "Did you not say it was a tiger that killed your son? How can a tiger be brought to justice?" Despite his questioning, the woman would not be turned away until she had gained her purpose. Unable to stand her howling any longer the judge ordered her to go home and return for a court summon to catch the slayer of her son. But the woman doubted the judge and refused to leave until she had seen the signed order for the tiger to be caught and brought into the judgement hall. Although reluctant, the judge decided to humour her and asked to who would go find the tiger. Slightly drunk, half asleep, and unaware what was going on, Li-neng was poked awake by his friends, which caused him to step forward and volunteer for the mission. The Mother then left feeling satisfied with her journey. When Li-neng realised what he had signed up for he assumed it was a joke to get rid of the woman. He told the judge he couldn't find the tiger, but the judge was not joking and demanded it to be found. Li-neng admitted that he was drunk when he gave the promise but if he still wished it, he would go into the hills and hire hunters to help him. The judge agreed and gave him five days. Li-neng set to work and left no stone unturned, alongside the best hunters, they searched night and day, but couldn't find anything. On the fifth day, he had to report his failure and received a thorough beating of fifty blows. During the next 6 weeks he still could not find a single trace of the tiger and at the end of each five days he would receive a further beating. His friends would tease him and tell him to flee, but Li-neng knew he couldn't. One day, after the hunters had had enough and left, Li-neng entered a mountain temple to pray.</p>		

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<p>The Nodding Tiger continued.</p>	<p>Thinking that his life was over he moaned between prayers but suddenly turned to see the tiger at the temple gate. Li-neng was no longer afraid knowing that his life hung in the balance, and started to explain the situation to the tiger. The tiger listen intently and made no effort to escape. The tiger allowed Li-neng to slip a chain around his take and take him to the courtroom. An excited crowd started to build around Li-neng as he made his journey into the city. In the court, when the tiger was asked whether he was guilty of the crime he was accused of, the tiger nodded. The Mother screamed for him to be killed.</p> <p>The judge asked the tiger if it knew the law of the land: a life for a life. The tiger nodded, again. In order to overlook this law, the judge told the tiger that it must take the son's place and look after the woman. To the shock of the crowd, the tiger nodded for the third time. The tiger was then let free on the promise that it would provide for the poor woman, who was dumbfounded by the thought of a tiger taking the place of her son. Back at home the next morning, the woman found a dead deer outside her door, she immediately took it to market and received a high price for it.</p>		
	<p>The woman went home rejoicing as she had enough money to last her many days. A week later, the tiger came to her house with a roll of cloth and some money, which he dropped at her feet and ran away. The woman started to see that the judge had been wise in his decision and she grew to accept the tiger. The tiger also became more attached to his foster mother and often purred contently outside her door. He lost his desire to kill and continued to bring weekly offerings to the old woman. The cause of nature followed and the old woman was laid to rest at the foot of the great mountain and with the money left, a handsome tombstone was placed at the spot. The tiger mourned for his lost mistress and one night he vanished from the mountain and since then no one has ever seen him. Some say he died of grief, others say he was taken to the Western Heaven, there to be rewarded for his deeds of virtue and to live as a fairy for ever afterwards.</p>		

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Title/Author/Book	Synopsis	Themes	Comments/Quotes
Bearskin	<p>A man was a soldier, but when war ended, his parents were dead, and his brothers had no place for him.</p> <p>A green-coated man with a cloven hoof appeared to him and offered to make him rich if he would for seven years not cut his hair, clip his nails, bathe, or pray, and wear a coat and cloak that he would give him. At the end, if he survived, he would be rich and free. If he died during the time, the devil would have him. The desperate soldier agreed and the devil gave him the green coat telling him he would find its pockets always full of limitless money and then a bearskin, telling him that he must sleep in it and would be known as Bearskin because of it.</p> <p>Bearskin set out, and gave much money to the poor that they would pray for him, to live out the seven years. After several years, he grew so revolting that he had to pay heavily to get any shelter. In the fourth year, he heard an old man lamenting and persuaded him to tell his tale: he had lost all his money, did not know how to provide for his daughters and could not pay the innkeeper, so he would be sent to jail. Bearskin paid the innkeeper and gave the old man a purse of gold as well.</p> <p>The old man said that he would marry him to one of his daughters in gratitude. The oldest ran away, screaming, from the sight. The middle one said he was worse than a bear that had tried to pass itself off as human. The youngest one agreed to fulfill her father's promise. Bearskin gave her half a ring and promised to return in three years. Her sisters ridiculed her at length.</p>		

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Title/Author/Book	Synopsis	Themes	Comments/Quotes
Bearskin (Continued)	<p>At the end of the seven years, Bearskin found the devil again and demanded he fulfill his promise. The devil then proceeds to bathe Bearskin, clip his nails and cut his hair until he is as good as new. Bearskin then demands that the devil say the Lord's prayer. The devil warns Bearskin not to push his luck as he has already won their bargain and disappears. Clean and with his money, he dressed himself as a fine gentleman and went to the old man's house, where the older sisters served him, and his bride (dressed in black) showed no reaction to him. He told the old man that he would marry one of his daughters. The two older sisters ran off to dress splendidly, and Bearskin dropped his half of the ring into a wine cup and gave it to his bride. She drank it and realized that he was her bridegroom. They married. Upon realizing who he was and what they gave up, one sister hanged herself in rage and the other drowned herself. That night the devil knocked on the door to tell Bearskin that he had gotten two souls for the price of one.</p>		

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<p>The Phantom Vessel The Chinese Wonder Book</p>	<p>A boat was sailing from North China to Shanghai with pleasure seekers on board. Delayed by high winds she was one week from port when a plague of the worst kind broke out attacking both passengers and sailors until only a few remained. Out of the passengers only one boy had survived named, Ying-lo. The remaining sailors who had tried hard to save their ship finally lay themselves on the deck, a prey to the sickness, and also died. Ying-lo was now alone at sea and, unsure to why he had been saved, prayed to the gods to take him away from the ship. After a while he heard a noise and looked up to find a ball of fire running a long a yardarm near the top of the mast. The ball grew brighter and brighter and began to slip down the mast, increasing in size. When it reached the deck the light vanished and a funny little man stood in front of the boy. "Yes, you are the lad I'm looking for," he said. He then walked slowly towards the mast and tapped on it three times with an iron staff he had been using as a cane. Immediately the sails spread and vessel began to glide over the sea at a great speed.</p> <p>The stranger asked the boy, "Do you remember me?". The boy looked puzzled and shook his head, but as he gazed more closely there seemed to be something that he recognised about the stranger's wrinkled face and said, "I think so, but I don't know when."</p>		

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Title/Author/Book	Synopsis	Themes	Comments/Quotes
<p>The Phantom Vessel continued.</p>	<p>The stranger began to explain: “One year ago I passed through your village. I was dressed in rags, and was begging my way along the street, trying to find someone who would feel sorry for me. Alas! no one answered my cry for mercy. Not a crust was thrown into a bowl. All the people were deaf, and fierce dogs drove me from door to door. Finally, when I was almost dying of hunger, I began to feel that here was a village without one good person in it. Just then you saw my suffering, ran into the house, and bought me out food. Your heartless mother saw you doing this and beat you cruelly. Do you remember now, my child?’ Ying-lo answered yes but was instantly made sad to remember his now dead mother lying on the ship. The man made it clear he was not a beggar and introduced himself as Iron Staff (a famous fairy in the Western Heaven). The boy had indeed heard of him and Iron Staff once again thanked the boy for being so kind to him. Iron staff began to recite a poem. (in comments/quotes)</p>		<p>The Poem:</p> <p>“The only love that loves aright Is that which loves in every plight. The beggar in his sad array Is moulded of the selfsame clay. “Who knows a man by what he wears, By what he says or by his prayers? Hidden beneath that wrinkled skin A fairy may reside within. “Then treat with kindness and with love The lowly man, the god above; A friendly nod, a welcome smile- For love is ever worth the while.”</p>
	<p>The boy listened intently and his face was glowing with love but was saddened that his mother and father new nothing of the beautiful words Iron Staff spoke of. The boy explained that his parents were brought up in poverty and learned to beat others who asked for help. But Iron Staff was quick to point out that the boy suffered the same fate but still treated him with kindness. The boy asked if Iron Staff could restore his family, but it was impossible unless the boy could do two things first. Iron Staff explained that he must name at least one good deed done by a family member. The boy suggested something, but it was not classed as a good deed because it was done with selfish intentions. The boy carried on thinking. Ying-lo suggested something else but it still failed as a good deed. Finally, he spoke of something too small which he thought wouldn't count, but Iron Staff encouraged him to speak out. Ying-lo explained how his father had prevented his mother from buying poison to kill birds who were eating in their garden.</p>		

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<p>The Phantom Vessel continued.</p>	<p>Iron Staff revealed that it was indeed a good deed of mercy but reminded the boy that there was a second thing he still needed to do. Once he had awoken the boy's family members he explain to them how it was the boy who had allowed them to live again and he had agreed to the second condition of sacrifice, to stay on earth with them all instead of gaining a place in the Western Heaven. Iron Staff explained that if any of the family treated Ying-lo badly he was free to enter into the fairyland with the magic staff he was given and leave the family to die in there wickedness. Before the fairy departed he told Ying-lo that he could also bring back to life the other passengers and sailors on the ship if he tapped three times upon the mast with the iron staff. The boy then willed the vessel to take him home and just as the ship reached the shore with a lightning speed, and with a parting word with Ying-lo, Iron Staff changed into a flaming ball of fire and floated off into the blue sky. With a cry of thanks-giving Ying-lo flung his arms around his family.</p>		

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<p>The Wooden Tablet A Chinese Book of Wonders</p>	<p>K'ang-Pu, a young boy, lived with his father, Mr Lin, in a small mud hut. They had nothing of value except a wooden tablet which belonged to the boy's Grandfather. Mr Lin explained to the boy that the his Grandfather's spirit lived inside the tablet and told him he must worship his spirit because he was a good man, better than his father who had disobeyed him when he was younger. Mr Lin further explained that they had once lived in a big house with a high stone wall. One day, the father left the boy alone and set off for the city. He was to be gone all day so told the boy to work on the garden. The boy was worried that the soldiers who had burned a neighbouring village the previous day would return to his village. The father knew that the house had no worth but told the boy to guard the tablet if anything happened. The boy worked all day on the garden but as he was getting tired he heard women screaming the soldiers had returned to his village and were burning everything. Although scared, instead of running the boy did his duty and grabbed the tablet, hiding it in a basket of feathers used for the cabbages (if placed at the roots of young plants they could help make it strong and healthy.) the boy began to run when he heard the soldiers get close to his house and heard them scream, "Kill the kid!" The boy was soon out of sight, however, on the winding road among the cornfields. Night soon came and he lay at the foot of a stone monument where he had eventually stopped to rest and look back at the village. The boy fell asleep but was woken by someone calling his name-it was his Grandfather's voice asking to be let out of the basket.</p>		

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<p>The Wooden Tablet continued...</p>	<p>The boy seized the tablet and saw a tiny man not 6 inches tall, with a grey beard. His Grandfather started to explain that the boyhood saved him and most boys would have just run away. He asked the boy what he was going to do with his village burned and no fun to survive. The boy didn't know but thought his father would be waiting for him and worried. The boy's Grandfather explained to him that if he had not been kind, brave and filial, he would not help him out of his misfortune. Although reluctant to help the boy's father as he had been disobedient and disgraced by being sent away from the family home, the Grandfather knew that he had taught the boy to honour and love his Grandfather and that his on was sorry for his misdeeds. The spirit told the boy that he would give him back the home of his ancestors and agreed that the boy's father could also return. The grandfather told the boy to go back to sleep and wait until morning. The boy awoke to find the basket had disappeared and assumed he had dreamt the whole thing. He started to walk back towards the village to find his father. When the boy reached the village he saw a huge stone wall with the gate wide open. The keeper came rushing out and exclaimed: "Ah! the little master has come!" Bewildered, the boy followed the servant toward the house his grandfather had promised him. K'ang-Pu, felt a little uneasy in his torn clothes but looked down to discover he was now dressed in the handsomest embroidered silk. He then looked up to see his father waiting for him and the boy started to explain that someone had stole the tablet but his father told him he was mistaken and pointed to the tablet on a carved table. The boy and his father then both fell upon their knees before the wooden emblem and bowed reverently nine times to the floor, thanking the spirit for all it had done for them. Their hearts were full of a new happiness.</p>		

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<p>Lu-San, Daughter of Heaven A Chinese Book of Wonders</p>	<p>Young Lu-San lived with her parents and four brothers on a houseboat. Her father was a fisherman and his life had been a long fight against poverty. He was ignorant and wicked and had no love for his wife and five children. He wanted to kill them but fear the new mandarin. His wife did not try to stop him when he beat the children and was also cruel to them and not once in little Lu-San's memory had she escaped this daily torture. One night, the young girl was listening to her father and mother talk about how the mandarin only cares about boys and the great burden the daughter was on the family. The girl understood what would happen to her if she didn't escape. That night, when everyone was sound asleep the girl crept out of the houseboat taking only her tiny soapstone image of the goddess Kwan-yin. She stepped onto the shore and ran along the bank without looking back. her only fear was her thoughts when passing the dark house lining the shore, her darkest childhood memory was the night her father was deciding whether to sell her as a slave to an owner of one of these houses. once passed the house, Lu-San breathed a sigh of relief and fell into a heap upon the sand. She realised how lonely she was looking over to the great city where she didn't have one single friend. After saying a childish prayer to Kwan-yin, the girl soon fell fast asleep. When he girl woke she saw a women dressed in beautiful clothing standing over her. The girl was afraid to get close other for feel that she may dirty the woman, but she reached out to her to give her her tiny soapstone and said, "You are so beautiful! Take this, for it must be you who lost it in the sand."</p>		

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<p>Lu-San, Daughter of Heaven continued...</p>	<p>The graceful, queenly woman then held out her arms to the ragged dirty child and with a cry of joy the girl sprang forward. The woman asked the girl about the image on the stone and the girl explained who she was and said, "the good lady of heaven listened to my prayer and bade me stay wake. She told me to wait until he was sleeping and then arise and leave the houseboat." The girl also answer that she wasn't afraid because Kwan-yin would show her where to go. The woman clasped Lu-San tightly and a tear drop fell from her cheek onto the child's head. The girl had not been it for use had fallen asleep in her arms. Lu-sn woke to find her in the bed of her houseboat but was no longer afraid. She heard her father talk about how he had seen a light around her head and when trying toile her, his arm hung limp as if it had been shot. He then spoke of hearing voices that spoke of the tears of Kwan-yin. The mother had the heard the voice, too. The parents couldn't believe how they had treated a daughter of the gods. Lu-san rose toddles herself, her heart was burning with love for everything around her, she wanted to tell her parents that she had forgiven them. She found beautiful garments at the side of her bed and noticed her hands, once rough and cracked, were now soft and smooth. Everything she touched seemed to change as if by magic and when she reached the deck of her houseboat everything had changed. She found her parents trembling in the corner, they rags had not been changed but their faces were softened. Stretching out her hand, Lu-san touched her father's shoulder and he soon touched his forehead to her feet, the rest of the family did the same. Lu-san told her father to say that he loved his daughter and no longer wanted to kill her, but the father needed to hear that the child forgave him. Lu-san put her left hand upon her father's forehead and held the right above the heads of the others and said: "As the Goddess of Mercy has given me her favour, so I in her name bestow on you the love of heaven.</p>		

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Lu-San, Daughter of Heaven continued...	<p>Live in peace my parents. The family who had lived in poverty could now enjoy peace and happiness. The family slowly grew in wisdom and courage under Lu-san and saw only love must rule. The river's sailors obeyed the wishes of Lu-san and their nets were always full of it. One beautiful day during the second moon, after returning from the temple to honour the birthday of Kwan-yin, they returned to deck and Lu-san's father saw a strange bird in the sky. It was a flight of doves and floating beneath their wings was wonderful chair. A shower of pure white lilies fell about the feet of Lu-san until she was almost buried. With a farewell wave to her parents, Lu-san stepped into the fairy car, and it began to rise the clouds spoke in tone of the softest music: "Thus Kwan-yin, Mother of Mercies, rewards Lu-san, daughter of the earth. Out of the dust spring the flowers; out of the soil comes goodness." Lu-san was to take to take her place into the Western Heaven among the fairies.</p>		
The Strayed Arrow	<p>Poor couple with daughter, couldn't teach her, and girls didn't educate. Dressed her in boys clothes, went to grandmother and went to school</p>		
Five Queer Brothers	<p>Each with a gift. One could swallow the sea, killed local boys when they stole fish and he couldn't keep the water in his mouth, they drowned. He was sentenced for murder and will be decapitated. Goes home and swaps places with brother for each way he could be killed to save his life. Ending in the final brother who can hold his breath for ever and fooled them.</p>		

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Three Talismans	<p>Given to a man - hat to be invisible, cloak to fly, and basket for gems. Gave to sons. Son with basket lost it to King trying to win princess. Borrowed brothers items, lost them. Banished himself into the wood, found 2 bananas. One grew horns, one took them away. Gave them to princess and saved her for marriage.</p>		
Origin of Ants	<p>Man isn't providing for his family, wife sends him away to earn. He comes back and hears her say food, he goes I. And says he can smell amazingly, proves it with the food details. proves it time and time again in various farcical ways. Gets thrown into the air in celebration so high he falls and slats and turns into ants</p>		
The mistake of the apes	<p>Man goes to kill himself because he is not providing for family. Apes see him and declare him their God. He steals all their wealth and goes back. Neighbour asks how, tells him, the neighbour goes to be the God of the apes, but they are so annoyed with humans they rip him to bits.</p>		
Snow queen	<p>Goblin had a mirror which made everything appear awful. He wanted to fly to heaven to mock the angels, as it was high it slipped and dropped and shattered into a million pieces, small big pieces, some as small as sand. Some lodges in people's hearts and small in people's eyes. Boy who had some in his heart/eyes and sees the worst in everyone. Wants to remove it. Shadows of snowflakes haunt Gerda,</p>		
The Golden Key	<p>Sea girl could sing beautifully. The crops, animals etc were all dying.</p>		