

Journey to the West

From Chapter 4

The Great White Planet led the Handsome Monkey King to the outside of the Hall of Miraculous Mist. He went straight in to the imperial presence without waiting to be summoned, and did obeisance to the throne. Sun Wukong stood bolt upright beside him, not bothering with any court etiquette, but just concentrating on listening to the Great White Planet make his report to the Jade Emperor: "In obedience to the Divine Edict, your subject has brought the demon Immortal here."

The Jade Emperor lowered his curtain and asked, "And which of you is the demon Immortal?"

"Me," replied Sun Wukong, only now making a slight bow.

The faces of the officials went white with horror as they exclaimed, "What a savage monkey! He has the impudence to answer 'Me,' and without even prostrating himself first! He must die!"

In reply to this the Jade Emperor announced, "Sun Wukong is a demon Immortal of the lower world who has only just obtained human form, so he is not acquainted with court procedure. We shall forgive him this time."

"We thank you for your mercy," said the immortal ministers. Only then did Sun Wukong express his respect by bowing low and chanting "na-a-aw" at the top of his voice. The Jade Emperor ordered his immortal civil and military officials to find a vacancy in some department for Sun Wukong.

The Star Lord Wuqu stepped forward from the side and reported, "There are no vacancies in any of the palaces, halls, and departments of Heaven except for a superintendent in the Imperial Stables."

"Then make him Protector of the Horses," ordered the Jade Emperor. All the ministers thanked him for his mercy, apart from Sun Wukong, who just expressed his respect with a loud "na-a-aw." The Jade Emperor then told the Wood Planet to take him to the Imperial Stables.

The Wood Planet accompanied the delighted Monkey King to his post and then went back to the palace. The Monkey King then called together the deputy and the assistant superintendent, the book-keeper, the grooms, and all the other officials, high and low, to find out about the duties of his department. He found that he had to look after a thousand heavenly horses. The Monkey King looked through the register and counted the horses. In the stables the book-keeper was responsible for ordering the fodder, the head groom was in charge of currying the horses, chopping up and cooking the fodder, and giving them water; the deputy superintendent and his assistant helped to oversee the work. The Protector of the Horses looked after his charges, sleeping neither by day nor by night. It is true that he fooled around by day, but at night he looked after the animals with great diligence, waking them up and making them eat whenever they fell asleep, and leading those still on their feet to the trough. At the sight of him the heavenly horses would prick up their ears and paw the ground, and they became fat and plump. Thus more than half a month slipped by.

On one morning that was a holiday all the officials of the stables held a feast both to welcome and congratulate the Protector of the Horses.

In the middle of the party the Monkey King suddenly put down his cup and asked, "What sort of office is this 'Protector of the Horses?'"

"What the name suggests, that's all."

"Which official grading does it carry?"

"Unclassified."

"What does 'unclassified' mean?"

"Bottom grade," the others replied, going on to explain, "It is a very low and unimportant office, and all you can do in it is look after the horses. Even someone who works as conscientiously as Your Honour and gets the horses so fat will get no more reward than someone saying 'good'; and if anything goes at all wrong you will be held responsible, and if the losses are

serious you will be fined and punished."

The Monkey King flared up on hearing this, gnashed his teeth, and said in a great rage, "How dare they treat me with such contempt? On the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit I am a king and a patriarch. How dare he trick me into coming here to feed his horses for him? It's a low job for youngsters, not for me. I won't do it, I won't. I'm going back." He pushed the table over with a crash, took his treasure out of his ear, and shook it. It became as thick as a rice bowl, and he brandished it as he charged out of the Imperial Stables to the Southern Gate of Heaven. As the celestial guards knew that his name was on the register of immortal officials they did not dare to block his path, but let him out through the gate.

He descended by cloud and was back on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in an instant. Seeing the four Stalwart Generals and all the kings of the monsters drilling their troops there he shouted in a shrill voice, "Children, I'm back." The monkeys all bowed to him, took him into the heart of the cave, and asked him to sit on his throne, while they prepared a banquet to welcome him back.

"Congratulations, Your Majesty," they all said. "After over a dozen years up there you must be coming back

in glory and triumph."

"What do you mean, over a dozen years?" asked the Monkey King. "I've only been away for a fortnight or

so."

"Your Majesty can't have noticed the time passing in heaven. A day in heaven lasts as long as a year on earth. May we ask what office you held?"

"It hurts me to tell you," replied the Monkey King with a wave of his hand. "I feel thoroughly humiliated. That Jade Emperor doesn't know how to use a good man. A man like me--'Protector of the Horses'. That meant I had to feed his animals for him and wasn't even given an official grading. I didn't know this at first, so I fooled around in the Imperial Stables until today, when I found out from my colleagues how low the job was. I was so angry that I pushed the table over and quit the job. That's why I've come back."

"Quite right too," the other monkeys said. "Your Majesty can be king in our cave paradise and enjoy as much honour and pleasure as you like, so why go and be his groom?" Then they gave orders for wine to be brought at once to cheer their king up.

As they were drinking someone came in to report, "Your Majesty, there are two Single-horned Devil Kings outside who want to see you."

"Ask them in," said the Monkey King, and the two formally-dressed devil kings hurried into the cave and

prostrated themselves.

"Why have you come to see me?" asked the Handsome Monkey King; and they replied, "We have long heard that Your Majesty is looking for men of talent, but we were unable to see you before. Now that Your Majesty has been given heavenly office and come back in triumph, we would like to offer you this yellow robe as a token of our congratulations. We also hope that you will not reject us although we are low and worthless, but will accept our humble services." An exultant Monkey King put on the yellow robe and his happy subjects bowed to him in order of precedence. The two devil kings were appointed Commanders of the Van, and when they had thanked the Monkey King for this they asked, "What office did Your Majesty hold while you were all that time in Heaven?"

"The Jade Emperor has no respect for talent," replied the Monkey King. "He made me something called 'Protector of the Horses.'"

"Your Majesty has such miraculous powers: you should never have been feeding his horses for him. You should have been made a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' shouldn't you?" The Monkey King was beside himself with delight at this suggestion, and he kept saying how splendid it was.

"Get me a banner made at once with the words 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven' in big letters

on it, and put up a pole to hang it from," he ordered his four Stalwart Generals. "From now on I am to be called 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' not 'Your Majesty' or 'King'. Pass this order on to all the other kings of the monsters." We will leave him at this point.

When the Jade Emperor held his morning court the next day the Heavenly Teacher Zhang led the deputy and assistant superintendents of the Imperial Stables to the vermilion steps, bowed low, and reported, "Your Majesty, Sun Wukong, the new Protector of the Horses, left Heaven yesterday because he thought his office was too humble."

Just as he was speaking the Heavenly Guardian Virudhaka came from the Southern Gate of Heaven with his heavenly soldiers and reported, "The Protector of the Horses has gone out through the gate. We do not know why."

On hearing this the Jade Emperor commanded, "Let the two divine officials return to their posts; we shall send heavenly soldiers to capture this devil."

The pagoda-bearing Heavenly King Li Jing and Prince Nezha stepped forward from the ranks of those attending the audience, and they memorialized, "Your Imperial Majesty, we beg you to command us, your incompetent servants, to subdue this fiend." The Emperor was delighted with this suggestion, and he appointed the Pagoda-bearing Heavenly King as Demon quelling High Marshal, and Prince Nezha as Great God of the Seas. He told them to take their forces down to the lower world at once.

Heavenly King Li and Nezha kowtowed, took their leave, went straight back to their own palace, and assembled their troops, commanders and officers. They put the Mighty Miracle God in charge of the vanguard, and General Fishbelly in command of the rear, while General Yaksa was made adjutant. Within an instant they were outside the Southern Gate of Heaven, and they went straight to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. They chose a piece of level and open ground on which to construct a fortified camp, and ordered the Mighty Miracle God to issue the challenge to battle. On receiving this order the Mighty Miracle God tied on his armour firmly and went to the Water Curtain Cave, holding his flower-spreading battle-axe. When he got there he saw huge numbers of devils--wolves, tigers and leopards--wielding spears, brandishing swords, leaping around, fighting each other, and making a great noise outside the little entrance to the cave.

"Accursed beasts," shouted the Mighty Miracle God, "tell the Protector of the Horses at once that I am a heavenly general come on the orders of the Jade Emperor to subdue him. If you make him come out and surrender immediately it will save the lot of you from being wiped out."

The devils went rushing into the cave and reported, "Disaster, disaster."

"What disaster?" the Monkey King asked.

"There's a heavenly general outside who says he's come on the orders of the Jade Emperor to subdue you. If you go out and surrender immediately, he says he'll spare our lives."

"Fetch me my armour," said the Monkey King. He then donned his golden helmet, tied on his golden armour, put on his cloud-walking shoes, and took his As-You-Will gold-banded cudgel in his hand. He led his troops out of the cave and drew them up in battle array. The Mighty Miracle God gazed wide-eyed at the excellent Monkey King:

On his body was gleaming golden armour,
On his head a dazzling golden helmet,
In his hand a gold-banded club,
On his feet a pair of cloud-walking shoes to match.
His devil eyes shone like stars,
His ears were long and hard.
His sturdy frame could be transformed at will,
His voice rang clearly as a bell.

The sharp-mouthed Horse Protector with protruding teeth Wanted to become a Sage Equaling Heaven.

The Mighty Miracle God shouted in a harsh voice, "Insolent ape! Don't you recognize me?"

The Great Sage Sun Wukong replied at once, "I've never met you before. How should I know which wretched little deity you are? Tell me your name at once."

"I'll get you, you conceited baboon. So you don't know who I am? I am the Heavenly General Mighty Miracle, the commander of the vanguard for Heavenly King Li, the Pagoda-bearer. I have come here on the orders of the Jade Emperor to accept your surrender. Take off your armour at once and submit to the mercy of Heaven, or I'll wipe out every animal on the mountain. And if you so much as hint at a refusal, I'll smash you to powder."

"Stop talking so big, you lousy god," retorted the furious Monkey King, "and give that long tongue of yours a rest. I'd just love to kill you with this cudgel of mine, but if I did there'd be no one to deliver my message for me, so I'll spare your life. Hurry back to Heaven and tell that Jade Emperor that he doesn't know how to use a good man. Why did he make me waste my infinite powers on feeding his horses for him? Take a look at what's written on my standard. If he's willing to give me this title officially, I'll call off my troops and let Heaven and Earth continue in peace; but if he refuses I'm coming up to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to knock him off his dragon throne." When the Mighty Miracle God heard this he looked hard and saw that a tall pole had been planted outside the entrance to the cave, on which hung a banner reading GREAT SAGE EQUALING HEAVEN.

"Heh, heh, heh," he mocked, "you ignorant ape. What shameless effrontery, to want to be a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven!' Take that!" He swung with his battle-axe at the Monkey King who, quite unflustered, parried with his gold banded cudgel. It was a fine battle. The Mighty Miracle God was no match for his opponent. He hastened to block the Monkey King's first blow with his axe, which broke in two with a crunch. He fled for his life as fast as he could, and the Monkey King said mockingly, "You bag of pus, I'll spare you this time. Hurry back with my message, and look sharp about it."

The Mighty Miracle God returned to his camp, went straight to the Pagoda-bearing Heavenly King Li Jing, knelt before him, and said with an awkward laugh, "The Protector of the Horses has really tremendous magic powers. I was no match for him. He beat me, and now I have come to take my punishment."

"This fool has ruined our morale," exploded the Heavenly King Li in a fury. "Take him away, and off with his head."

Prince Nezha, who was standing to one side, stepped forward, bowed, and said, "Do not be angry, Your Majesty. Forgive the Mighty Miracle God, and let me go and do battle; then we'll see who's boss." The heavenly king accepted his advice, and told Mighty Miracle God to go back and look after the camp while he awaited his punishment.

When he had put on his armour and helmet, Prince Nezha charged straight out of the camp to the Water Curtain Cave. Sun Wukong, who was just going to pull back his troops, saw the ferocity of his onslaught. Sun Wukong went up to him and asked, "Whose little boy are you then? What do you mean, charging up to my door?"

"Stinking monkey fiend," shouted Prince Nezha, "don't you know who I am? I am Nezha, the third son of the pagoda-bearing Heavenly King, and I have been commanded by the Jade Emperor to come here and arrest you."

"You do talk big, don't you, little prince," said Sun Wukong, laughing at him. "But as you've still got all your milk teeth and are still wet behind the ears I'll spare your life and I won't hit you. Do you see what it says on my standard? Go and tell the Jade Emperor that if he gives me that title I'll call off my armies and submit to him once more. But if he doesn't do what I want him to, I'll surely attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist." Nezha looked up and saw the words "Great Sage Equaling Heaven."

"You wicked monkey! How dare you give yourself a title like that, whatever your magic powers may be!

Don't worry, all you're getting is my sword."

"Give me a few swipes, then," replied Sun Wukong, "I won't move."

"Change," yelled Nezha in a passion, and at once he had three heads and six arms, which made him look most ferocious. In his hands he held six weapons, a demon-beheading sword, a demon-hacking cutlass, a demon-binding rope, a demon-quelling pestle, an embroidered ball,

and a fire-wheel--and wielding all
these he rushed straight at Sun Wukong.

At the sight of him Sun Wukong exclaimed with astonishment, "Well, my boy, you certainly know a trick or two. But just behave yourself and watch what I can do." Our dear Great Sage shouted "Change," and he too had three heads and six arms. He shook his gold-banded cudgel, and it turned into three cudgels, which he gripped with his six hands to ward off Nezha's blows. It was a great fight, and it made the earth shake and the mountains tremble. Prince Nezha and Sun Wukong both used their divine powers to the full as they fought thirty rounds. When the six weapons of the prince turned into thousands and tens of thousands, so did Sun Wukong's gold-banded cudgel. The air was filled as if with drops of rain or shooting stars, and there was no way of telling who was winning. As Sun Wukong was deft of hand and quick of eye, he plucked one of the hairs from his body in the midst of the fray and shouted "Change!" It changed into his own double to mislead Nezha while his real self leapt round till he was behind Nezha and struck at his left shoulder. Nezha was in the middle of performing a spell when he heard the whistle of the cudgel through the air and twisted away as fast as he could. But he was unable to avoid the blow and had to flee wounded. He brought his magic to an end, put his six weapons away, reverted to his true appearance, and abandoned the field of battle in defeat.

This had all been observed by Heavenly King Li, who was on the point of sending reinforcements when his son appeared before him and reported in fear and trembling, "Father, the Protector of the Horses is very powerful. My magic was outclassed and he has wounded me in the shoulder."

The color drained from the face of the horror-struck Heavenly King as he said, "If the creature has magic powers like that, how are we going to defeat him?"

"Outside the gates of the cave," the prince went on to report, "there is a banner on a pole that reads 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. He bragged that if the Jade Emperor gave him this title he would call everything off; otherwise he said he would attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist."

"In that case," said the Heavenly King, "we'll disengage now, go back to Heaven, and request that more heavenly troops be sent to capture this wretch. There is plenty of time." The prince, in pain and unable to go on fighting, went back to Heaven with the Heavenly King and put in this request, but of that no more for the moment.

Watch as the Monkey King returns to the mountain in triumph to receive the congratulations of the seventy-two kings of the monsters and his six sworn brothers. There was great drinking and singing in the cave paradise. Sun Wukong said to his six sworn brothers, "As I've called myself Great Sage Equaling Heaven, you can all call yourselves great sages too."

"Honorable brother, you're right," roared the Bull Demon King. "I shall call myself the Great Sage Matching Heaven."

"I'll be the Great Sage Overturning the Sea," said the Salamander Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Throwing Heaven into Confusion," said the Roc Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Who Moves Mountains," said the Camel Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Who Travels with the Wind," said the Macaque King.

"And I'll be the Great Sage Who Drives Away Gods," said the Lion King. The seven great sages then did just as they pleased and gave themselves the titles they chose, and after enjoying themselves all day they went home.

Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha led their forces straight to the Palace of Miraculous Mist and made this request: "We, your subjects, took our forces down to the lower world, under your Divine Edict, to subdue the immortal fiend Sun Wukong. But to our surprise we found that his magical powers were too far-reaching for us to be able to defeat him. We therefore hope that Your Imperial Majesty will send more troops to exterminate him."

"How could a mere monkey goblin have such great powers that you actually need more troops?" asked the Jade Emperor.

Prince Nezha then came forward and memorialized, "We beg Your Majesty to spare us the deaths we deserve."

That monkey fiend has an iron cudgel that he used to defeat the Mighty Miracle God and wounded me on the shoulder. He has set a banner up outside the entrance to his cave that reads 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' and he says that if you give him this office he will stop fighting and submit; otherwise he will attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist."

When the Jade Emperor heard this he asked in horror, "How dare that monkey fiend talk so wildly? Send all the generals to execute him at once."

As he spoke the Great White Planet stepped forward from the ranks of officials. "That monkey fiend knows how to talk," he suggested, "but he has no idea about real power. If more soldiers were sent to fight him, they might not be able to overcome him at once and their energies would be wasted. But if Your Imperial Majesty were to show your great mercy, you could send down a pacificatory amnesty and let him be a Great Sage Equaling Heaven. It would only be an empty title that he was given, just an honorary appointment."

"What do you mean by an honorary appointment?" asked the Jade Emperor.

"He would be called a Great Sage Equaling Heaven, but he would not be given any responsibility or paid any salary. He would be kept between Heaven and Earth, where his evil nature would be under control and he would be kept from wickedness. Thus Heaven and Earth can be at peace, while sea and sky enjoy tranquillity." The Jade Emperor approved this suggestion and ordered that a new edict should be issued for the Great White Planet to deliver.

The Great White Planet left once more through the Southern Gate of Heaven and went straight to have a look at the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. It was quite different from before. There was an awe-inspiring and spine-chilling atmosphere, and every kind of fiend was present. They were roaring and leaping around with their swords, spears, cutlasses and staves. As soon as they saw the Great White Planet they all went for him.

"Will your commander please come forward," said the Planet. "I would trouble you to inform your Great Sage that I am a heavenly envoy sent by the Jade Emperor, and I am carrying a divine edict with an invitation for him."

The fiends rushed in to report, "There's an old man outside who says he's come from Heaven with an edict of invitation for you."

When Sun Wukong heard this he said, "I'm glad he's come. I expect he's that Great White Planet who came before. Although I wasn't given a decent job last time I went to Heaven, I did get up there and learn my way around. If it's him again, his intentions must be good." He told his commanders to put on a big display of banners and drums and to turn out a guard of honour to welcome him.

Then the Great Sage, wearing his helmet, his yellow robe over his armour, and his cloud-walking shoes, hurried out of the cave at the head of his monkey host, bowed in greeting, and shouted in a loud voice, "Please come in, venerable Planet. Forgive me for not being here to welcome you."

The Planet walked straight into the cave, stood facing the South and said, "Great Sage, when you left the Imperial Stables because you found the post too humble, the officials of that department naturally reported the matter to the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor decreed that all officials have to work their way up from the bottom, and asked why you objected to its being humble. After this Heavenly King Li took Nezha down to the lower world to do battle with you. Your divine powers, Great Sage, were more than they expected, and they suffered defeat. On their return to Heaven they reported that you had set up a banner and wanted to be a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. All the generals wanted to punish you; but I, Great Sage, ran the risk of punishment by suggesting that the armies should not be called out, and that Your Majesty should be given a post instead.

The Jade Emperor approved my memorial, and that is why I have come here to invite you."

"I am most grateful for this honour after the trouble I caused you earlier," replied Sun Wukong, "but I am not sure whether there is such a title as 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven' in the upper world."

"After obtaining imperial approval for this title," said the Planet, "I came down bearing a decree. If anything goes wrong, I'll bear the responsibility."

A highly delighted Sun Wukong tried his hardest to persuade the Planet to stay to a banquet, but without success, so he went with him by propitious cloud to the Southern Gate of Heaven. The heavenly generals and soldiers all greeted them with respectfully folded arms, and they went straight to the Hall of Miraculous Mist. The Great White Planet did obeisance and said, "In obedience to the imperial edict your subject has summoned Sun Wukong, the Protector of the Horses, and he is present."

"Let Sun Wukong come forward," said the Jade Emperor. "We do now proclaim you Great Sage Equaling Heaven. Your rank is now very high. Let there be no more mischief from you." The monkey simply chanted "na-a-aw" to express his thanks to the Emperor. The Jade Emperor then ordered the two officials in charge of public works, Zhang and Lu, to build a residence for the Great Sage Equaling Heaven to the left of the Peach Orchard. In the residence there were to be two offices: a Tranquillity Office and a Calm Divinity Office. Both these offices were to have immortal clerks and senior and junior assistants. He then told the Star Lords of the Constellation Five to escort Sun Wukong to his post, and in addition gave him two bottles of imperial wine and ten golden flowers, and admonished him to settle down and keep out of mischief. The Monkey King accepted the order and went that same day with the Star Lords of the Constellation Five to his residence, where he opened the bottles of wine and drained them dry with the help of all present. He then saw the star officials off and returned to his own palace. From then on he lived in happiness and content, and enjoyed untrammelled pleasure in the Palace. Truly,

His immortal name was for ever inscribed in the register of eternal life,
To be transmitted for ten thousand ages, free of the wheel of rebirth.

Chapter 5

After Chaos Among the Peaches the Great Sage Steals the Pills
In the Revolt Against Heaven the Gods Capture the Demons

The story goes on to relate that the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, a mere monkey devil after all, was quite satisfied that his name was on the register of office without caring about the grading of his job and his own rank, or the size of his salary. The immortal clerks in the two offices in his residence were in constant attendance on him, he had three meals a day and a bed to sleep on at night, and he lived a free and easy life without worries. In his spare time he would visit the other palaces, get together with his old friends, and make new ones. When he saw the Three Pure Ones, he would address them as "venerable," and when he met the Four Emperors he called them "Your Majesty." He was on fraternal terms with the Nine Bright Shiners, the Generals of the Five Regions, the Twenty-Eight Constellations, the Four Great Heavenly Kings, the Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Five Ancients of the Five Regions, the star ministers of the whole sky, and the countless gods of the Milky Way. Today he would wander East, and tomorrow he would go West, coming and going by cloud, and never staying anywhere for long.

When the Jade Emperor was holding his morning court one day the Immortal Xu of Jingyang came forward from the body of officials, kowtowed, and suggested, "The Great Sage Equaling Heaven is spending his time in idle travel, and is making the acquaintance of all the stars in the sky, calling them all his friends irrespective of their rank. It would be as well to give him some responsibility, and prevent his idleness leading to trouble later on."

The Jade Emperor's response to this suggestion was to send for the Monkey King at once. He came in a cheerful mood and asked, "What promotion and reward have you summoned me here to receive, Your Majesty?" "Seeing that you are idle and have nothing to do," replied the Jade Emperor, "we are giving you a job. You are to administer the Peach Orchard, and you will give it your attention day and night." The Great Sage was overjoyed, and after expressing his thanks and chanting "na-a-aw" he withdrew. In his eagerness to be at work he went straight to the Peach Orchard to have a look round. When he got there he was stopped by a local tutelary god who

asked him, "Where are you going, Great Sage?" "I've been put in charge of the Peach Orchard by the Jade Emperor, and I've come to inspect it." The local god hastened to greet him formally, and he called the men who weeded, brought water, looked after the trees, and swept the grounds to come and kowtow to the Great Sage. When Sun Wukong was taken inside this is what he saw:

Charming Every tree.

Charming and luxuriant the full blossom;

Every tree weighed down with fruit.

The fruit-laden branches bend like carding-bows;

The blossoming trees are covered with powder and rouge.

Always blossoming, always in fruit, they are ripe for a thousand years;

They know no summer or winter, but linger for ever.

The early ripeners

Look red-faced and tipsy;

The ones still growing

Are green in stalk and skin.

When the dew forms, their flesh has a touch of blue,

While the sun picks out their vermilion beauty.

Below the trees exotic flowers grow,

Bright and unfading throughout the year.

On either side stand towers and pavilions,

And a rainbow always arches the sky.

These are not the common breeds of the Dark Earth Capital,

But are tended by the Queen Mother of the Jade Pool.

After taking a good look at this the Great Sage asked the local god, "How many of these trees are there?" "Three thousand six hundred all together," the local god replied. "The ones growing at the front have tiny blossoms and small fruits, and they ripen every three thousand years. Anyone who eats them becomes an Immortal and understands the Way, and his body becomes both light and strong. The twelve hundred in the middle have multiple blossoms and sweet fruits, and ripen every six thousand years; whoever eats them can fly and enjoy eternal youth. The back twelve hundred are streaked with purple and have pale yellow stones. They ripen once every nine thousand years, and anyone who eats them becomes as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as long-lived as the Sun and Moon." The Great Sage was beside himself with joy on learning this, and that day he checked the number of the trees and looked over the buildings in the orchard before going back to his residence. From then on he went to admire them every three or four days. He dropped his friends, and made no more pleasure jaunts.

One day he noticed that the peaches near the end of the branches of one old tree were all but ripe, and he felt like trying one; but as the local god, the workmen, and the immortal clerks from his residence were close on his heels it was impossible. Suddenly he had an idea, and he said, "Go and wait for me outside the gates while I take a nap in this summer-house."

All the Immortals thereupon withdrew, and the Monkey King took off his official hat and clothes, climbed one of the bigger trees, and chose some large, ripe peaches. When he had picked a good number he sat at his ease in the branches and ate his fill of them, then jumped down from the tree, pinned on his hat, put on his clothes, and shouted for all his attendants to go back to his residence with him. Two or three days later he thought of another trick to steal some more peaches, and he ate his fill of them.

One day the Queen Mother arranged a banquet, opening many precious pavilions for a feast of peaches by the Jade Pool. She sent the Red Fairy, the Blue Fairy, the White Fairy, the Black Fairy, the Purple Fairy, the Yellow Fairy, and the Green Fairy to the Peach Orchard with their baskets to pick peaches for the feast. The seven fairies went straight to the orchard gates, the workmen of the orchard and the immortal superintendents of the two offices of the Equaling Heaven Residence were guarding the gate.

The fairies went up to them and said, "We have come on the orders of the Queen Mother to

pick peaches for a feast." "Wait a moment please, Immortal Beauties," said the local god. "Things are different this year. The Jade Emperor has appointed the Great Sage Equaling Heaven to be the guardian of this orchard, and we must ask him before we can open the orchard to you." "Where is the Great Sage?" the fairies asked, and the local god replied, "Inside the orchard. As he was feeling tired he is having a nap by himself in a summerhouse." "In that case, please find him without delay," requested the fairies, and the local god took them into the orchard. But all they could find of him in the summerhouse were his hat and clothes. They had no idea where he could have gone, and looked everywhere without success. The Great Sage had in fact made himself only two inches long after eating some of the peaches for fun, and he was sleeping under a large leaf at the top of one of the big trees.

"We have come by decree, and we can't go back empty-handed, although the Great Sage is nowhere to be found," said the fairies. One of the immortal superintendents who was standing nearby replied, "As you Immortal Beauties have come by order of the Queen Mother, we must not delay you. Our Great Sage is always wandering off, so I expect that he has gone away to visit some of his friends. You had better pick the peaches; it will be all right if we inform him."

The fairies did as he suggested and went into the orchard to pick peaches. First they filled two baskets from the trees in front, and then they picked three basketfuls from the trees in the middle; but when they came to the trees at the back, they saw that peaches and blossoms were few and far between. Only a few unripe fruits with furry stalks and green skins were left. All the ripe ones had been eaten up by the Monkey King. The seven fairies looked everywhere, but all they could see was a single red and white peach on a Southern branch. The Blue Fairy pulled the branch down, the Red Fairy picked the peach, and then they let the branch go again. This woke up the Great Sage, who had changed himself into this peach to take a nap on this branch. He resumed his own form, took his gold-banded cudgel from his ear, shook it till it was as thick as a ricebowl, and shouted at them, "Where are you from, you thieving fiends?" The seven fairies fell on their knees in confusion.

"Please don't be angry with us, Great Sage. We're not fiends but seven fairies sent by Her Majesty the Queen Mother of the West to pick peaches of immortality and open the precious halls here for a Feast of Peaches. When we arrived here we saw the local god and other deities of the place, but we could not find you, Great Sage. We could not delay carrying out the Queen Mother's orders, so we went ahead and picked the peaches without waiting for you, Great Sage. We very much hope that you will forgive us."

These words turned the Great Sage's bad mood into a good one, and he said, "Please rise, Fairy Beauties. Who is the Queen Mother inviting to this feast?" "There are old rules about who attends: The Buddha of the Western Heaven, Bodhisattvas, holy monks, Arhats, the Guanyin of the South Pole, the Merciful and Sage Emperor of the East, the Venerable Immortals of the Ten Continents and the Three Islands, the Mystic Divinity of the North Pole, and the Great Yellow-horned Immortal of the Yellow Pole at the Centre. These make up the Five Venerable Ones of the Five Regions. There will also be the Star Lords of the Five Constellation; the Three Pure Ones, the Four Emperors and the Heavenly Immortal of the Great Monad from the Eight High Caves; the Jade Emperor, the immortals of the Nine Mounds, and the gods of the Seas and Mountains and the Ruler of the Nether World from the Eight Lower Caves; and the terrestrial deities. All the major and minor gods of all the halls and palaces will come to the Feast of Peaches."

"Will I be invited?" asked the Great Sage with an ingratiating smile.

"Not as far as we've heard," the fairies replied.

"I'm the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, so why shouldn't I be asked?" said the Great Sage.

"That was what happened before: we don't know about this time," the fairies replied.

"You're right," he said. "Just wait here while I go and find out whether I'm invited."

Splendid Great Sage. Making a magic with his hands as he spoke the words of the spell, he said to the fairies, "Stay where you are! Stay where you are!" As this was an immobilizing spell, the seven fairies were left standing in a daze under the peach tree with their eyes wide open as the

Great Sage leapt out of the orchard on a somersault cloud and headed for the Jade Pool. As he traveled he saw that

The sky shimmered with auspicious light
As clouds of many colours streamed across it.
The white stork's cry made the heavens shake;
A thousand leaves grew on the purple asphodel.
Amid it all an Immortal appeared,
Carrying himself with heaven-sent elegance,
As he danced on the rainbow, cloaked by the Milky Way,
With a talisman at his waist to ward off birth and death.
His name was Bare-Foot Immortal,
And he was going to the feast of longevity-giving peaches.

As the Bare-foot Immortal saw him, the Great Sage lowered his head and thought of a plan by which to trick the Immortal and get to the banquet himself.

"Where are you going, reverend sir?" he asked; and the Immortal replied, "I'm going to the Peach Banquet by the invitation of the Queen Mother."

"There is something you do not know, venerable sir," said the Great Sage. "As my somersault cloud is so fast, the Jade Emperor has sent me everywhere to tell all you gentlemen to go to the Hall of Universal Brightness for a ceremony before going on to the banquet."

As the Immortal was an open and upright man, he took this lie for the truth, but wondered, "The thanksgiving ceremony is usually held by the Jade Pool, so why are we having the ceremony in the Hall of Universal Brightness before going to the Jade Pool for the banquet?" Nevertheless, he turned his propitious cloud around and went to the Hall of Universal Brightness.

As the Great Sage rode his cloud he said a spell, shook himself, took the form of the Bare-foot Immortal, and hurried to the Jade Pool. He reached the pavilion there a moment later, stopped his cloud, and went quietly inside. He saw

Fabulous perfumes coiling,
A confusion of auspicious clouds;
The jade tower set with color,
The precious pavilions scattering mists;
The phoenix soars till almost lost to view,
And jeweled flowers seem to rise and fall.
Above a nine-phoenix screen
A rainbow stool of the eight precious things,
A coloured golden table,
Green jade bowls with a thousand flowers.
On the table were dragon livers and marrow of phoenix bone,
Bears' paws and apes' lips--
A hundred different dishes, and all of them good;
Rare fruits and fine delicacies, every one unique.

Everything was neatly set out, but no Immortals had yet arrived. The Great Sage had not finished looking when he smelt wine; and as he whirled round he saw under a portico to the right several immortal officials in charge of brewing liquor with some workmen who stirred the lees, a number of novices who carried water and some boys who looked after the fires. They were washing the vats and scrubbing the pots, having made jade liquor and a fragrant fermentation of the lees. The Great Sage could not stop himself from drooling, and he longed to drink some, but unfortunately all those people were there. So he performed a spell by pulling several hairs from his body, chewing them up, spitting them up, saying the magic words, and shouting "Change"; whereupon the hairs turned into sleep insects, which flew into the faces of all the liquor-makers. Watch them as their hands go limp, their heads droop, their eyes close, and they drop their symbols of office and all fall asleep. Whereupon the Great Sage grabbed the rare delicacies and exotic foods, then went under the portico and drank from the vats and pots until he was completely

drunk.

Only then did he think, "This won't do at all. When the guests come for the banquet they'll be furious with me, and I'll be for it if I'm caught. I'd better get back to the Residence as soon as I can and sleep it off." Our dear Great Sage staggered and swayed, charging about all over the place under the influence of the liquor, and going the wrong way. He arrived not at the Equaling Heaven Residence but at the Tushita Heavenly Palace. As soon as he saw this he sobered up and said to himself, "The Tushita Palace is the highest of the thirty-three heavens, where Lord Lao Zi of the Great Monad reigns. However did I get here? Never mind, I've always wanted to see that old chap, and I've never managed to come here before. I might as well go and have a look at him now that I'm passing this way."

He straightened his clothes and rushed in, but did not see Lord Lao Zi. There was no sign of anyone. This was because Lao Zi and the Ancient Buddha Dipamkara were expounding the Way from a red dais in a triple-storied pavilion, and all the immortal boys, generals, officials and petty functionaries were standing to right and left listening to the lecture. The Great Sage went straight to the room in which the elixir was kept, and although he could not find Lao Zi there he saw that there was a small fire in the stove beside the range over which pills were made. On either side of the stove were five gourds, full of golden pills of refined elixir.

"This is the Immortals' greatest treasure," he exclaimed in delight. "I've wanted to refine some of these golden pills to save people with ever since I understood the Way and mastered the principle of the correspondence of the Esoteric and Exoteric, but I've never had time to come here. Today I'm in luck--I've found them. As Lao Zi isn't here I'll try a few." He emptied the gourds of their contents and ate up all the pills as if he were eating fried beans.

Before long he was full of pills and quite sober. "This is terrible," he thought, "this is a colossal disaster. If the Jade Emperor is shocked by this, I'm done for. I must get out of here. I'd be much better off as a king in the lower world."

He rushed out of the Tushita Palace, avoiding his usual route. Using a spell to make himself invisible, he left by the West Gate of Heaven, and went straight down to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit by cloud. When he got there he saw flags, banners, spears and halberds gleaming in the sun: the four Stalwart Generals and the seventy-two kings of the monsters were holding military exercises.

"Children, I'm back," shouted the Great Sage in a loud voice, and all the fiends dropped their weapons and fell to their knees.

"You don't care, do you, Great Sage?" they said. "It's been so long since you left us, and you never came back to see us."

"I haven't been long, I haven't been long," protested the Great Sage, and as they talked they walked into the innermost part of the cave. When the four Stalwart General's had tidied the place up and made him sit down, they kowtowed to him and asked, "What office did you hold, Great Sage, during your century and more in Heaven?"

The Great Sage laughed and said, "As far as I can remember it was only six months, so why do you say it was over a century?"

"A day in Heaven is the same as a year on earth," the Stalwart Generals replied.

"I was lucky this time," said the Great Sage. "The Jade Emperor took a liking to me and ennobled me as the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He had an Equaling Heaven Residence built for me, complete with a Tranquillity Office and a Calm Divinity Office with Immortal functionaries, attendants and guards. Later on, when he saw that I had nothing to do, he put me in charge of the Peach Orchard. Recently the Queen Mother Goddess gave a Peach Banquet, but she didn't invite me. Instead of waiting for an invitation, I went to the Jade Pool and stole all the immortal food and drink. I staggered away from the Jade Pool and blundered into Lord Lao Zi's palace, and there I ate up his five gourds of pills of immortality. Then I got out through the heavenly gates and came here because I was scared that the Jade Emperor was going to punish me."

All the fiends were delighted with what they heard, and they laid on liquor and fruit with which to welcome him back.

They filled a stone bowl with coconut toddy and handed it to him, but when he tasted it the Great Sage grimaced and said, "It's awful, it's awful."

Two of his Stalwart Generals, Beng and Ba, explained, "You don't find coconut toddy very tasty because you have drunk immortal liquor and eaten immortal food in the heavenly palace, Great Sage. But as the saying goes, 'Sweet or not, it's water from home.'"

To this the Great Sage replied, "And all of you, whether related to me or not, are from my home. When I was enjoying myself beside the Jade Pool today I saw jars and jars of jade liquor under a portico there. As none of you have ever tasted it I'll go and pinch you a few jars; then you can each have a little drink, and live for ever." All the monkeys were beside themselves with glee. The Great Sage then went out of the cave, turned a somersault, made himself invisible, and went straight to the Peach Banquet. As he went through the gates of the Jade Pool he saw that the men who made the wine, stirred the lees, carried the water, and looked after the fire were still snoring away. He tucked two big jars of wine under his arms, took two more in his hands, then turned his cloud round and went back to have a feast of immortal wine with the monkey masses in the cave.

They all drank several cups and were very happy, but we will not go into this.

The story returns to the seven fairies, who were only able to free themselves a whole day after Sun Wukong had immobilized them with his magic. They picked up their baskets and went back to report to the Queen Mother that they were late because the Great Sage Equaling Heaven had held them there by magic. "How many peaches did you pick?" the Queen Mother asked.

"Two baskets of little ones and three baskets of medium ones. But when we got to the back we could not find a single big one; we think that they were all eaten by the Great Sage. While we were looking for some the Great Sage suddenly appeared, and he beat and tortured us to make us tell him who had been invited to the banquet. After we had told him he immobilized us there, and we don't know where he went. We only came round and freed ourselves a moment ago."

On hearing this the Queen Mother went to see the Jade Emperor and gave him a full account of what had happened. Before she had finished, the liquor-makers arrived with their immortal officials to report that an unknown person had thrown the Grand Peach Banquet into confusion and stolen the jade liquor as well as the precious delicacies of a hundred flavors. Then came Four Heavenly Teachers to announce that the Supreme Patriarch of the Way, Lao Zi, had arrived.

The Jade Emperor went out with the Queen Mother to meet him, and after doing obeisance Lao Zi said, "I had refined some Golden Pills of the Nine Transformations in my palace for a Feast of Elixir Pills with Your Majesty, but a thief has stolen them. This is what I have come to report to Your Majesty." This news made the Jade Emperor tremble with fear.

Not long afterwards the immortal administrators from the Equaling Heaven Residence came to kowtow and report: "The Great Sage Sun Wukong abandoned his post and went wandering off yesterday. He has not come back yet and we do not know where he has gone." The Jade Emperor, now more suspicious than ever, then saw the Bare-Foot Immortal bow his head to the ground.

"Your subject was going to the banquet on a summons from the Queen Mother," he reported, "when I

happened to meet the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He told me, O Lord of Ten Thousand Years, that you had issued a decree ordering him to tell all the rest of us to go to the Hall of Universal Brightness for a ceremony before going to the banquet. Your subject went back to the Hall of Universal Brightness as he had told me to, but as I did not see the Imperial Dragon and Phoenix Chariot outside I hurried here to await orders."

"This wretch has the impudence to invent fraudulent decrees and deceive eminent ministers," exclaimed the Jade Emperor with anger and astonishment. "The Miraculous Investigator is to find out at once what he has been up to."

The Miraculous Investigator left the palace in obedience to the edict, and by making thorough enquiries he found out all the details of what had happened.

"The wrecker of the Heavenly Palace was Sun Wukong," he reported, and he went on to give a full account. The Jade Emperor was furiously angry, and he ordered the Four Great Heavenly Kings along with Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha to mobilize the Twenty-eight Constellations,

the Nine Bright Shiners, the Twelve Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions, the Four Duty Gods, the Constellations of the East and West, the Gods of the North and South, the Deities of the Five Mountains and the Four Rivers, the star ministers of all Heaven, and a total of a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers. They were to descend to the lower world with eighteen heaven-and-earth nets, surround the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, and capture that wretch for punishment. The gods called out their troops at once, and left the heavenly palace.

A gusty sandstorm blotted out the heavens,
Purple fog threw the earth into darkness.
Just because the monkey fiend offended the Supreme Emperor
Heavenly hosts were sent down to the mortal dust.
The Four Great Heavenly Kings,
The Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions.
The Four Great Heavenly Kings held the supreme command,
And the Revealers controlled the soldiers' movements.
Li the Pagoda Carrier commanded the central corps,
Nezha the deadly led the van.
The star Rahu ordered the leading rands,
And the star Ketu towered behind.
The Sun revealed his divinity,
And radiance shone from the Moon.
The stars of the Five Elements were mighty in valour,
And the Nine Bright Shiners were fond of battle.
The stars of the Branches Zi, Wu, Mao and You,
Were all great heavenly warriors.
The Five Plagues and the Five Mountains were drawn up on the East and West,
While the Six Ding and Six Jia marched to right and left.
The Dragon Gods of the Four Rivers stood above and below,
And the Twenty-eight Constellations were drawn up in serried ranks:
Horn, Gullet, Base, and Chamber were the officers commanding,
Strider, Harvester, Stomach, and Mane wheeled and soared;
Dipper, Ox, Woman, Barrens, Roof, House, and Wall, Heart, Tail, and
Winnower--all able stars--
Well, Ghost, Willow, Spread, Whig and Axletree
Wielded their swords and spears, showed forth their power,
Halted their clouds and descended in mists to the mortal world,
Pitching camp before the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.
There is a poem that runs:
Many the transformations of the heaven-born Monkey King
Happy in his lair after stealing the pills and wine.
Just because he wrecked the banquet of peaches,
A hundred thousand heavenly troops now spread their nets.

Heavenly King Li gave the order for the heavenly soldiers to pitch camp and throw a watertight cordon round the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Above and below they spread eighteen heaven-and-earth nets, and the Nine Bright Shiners were sent out to start the battle. They took their soldiers to the outside of the cave, where they saw the monkeys, big and small, leaping and fooling around.

The star officers shouted in harsh voices, "Little goblins, where's that Great Sage of yours? We are gods, sent from the upper world to subdue your mutinous Great Sage. Tell him to surrender at once---and if there's so much as a hint of a 'no' from him, we will exterminate every last one of you."

The little monkeys went rushing in to report, "Great Sage, a disaster, a disaster. There are

nine evil gods outside who say they've been sent from the upper world to subdue you."

The Great Sage, who was just then sharing the immortal liquor with the seventy-two kings of the monsters and his four Stalwart Generals, paid no attention to the report, saying:

"Today we have wine so today we celebrate:

To hell with what's happening outside the gate."

But before the words were out of his mouth another group of little devils came in. "Those nine evil gods are using foul and provocative language to challenge us to fight," they announced.

"Never mind them," said the Great Sage with a laugh.

"With verse and wine we're happy today;

Who cares when fame will come our way?"

But before these words were out of his mouth yet another group of devils came rushing in.

"Sir, those nine evil gods have smashed the gates and are charging in."

"The stinking gods!" exploded the Great Sage, "What nerve! I never wanted a fight with them, so why should they come here to push us around?" He thereupon ordered the One-horned Monster King to lead the seventy-two monster kings into battle while he followed them with the four Stalwart Generals. The monster king hastily assembled the devil soldiers and sallied forth to meet the enemy. They were all stopped by a charge by the Nine Bright Shiners, who held the head of the iron bridge so that no one could enter or leave. During the tumult the Great Sage came on the scene, and shouting "Make way!" he raised his iron cudgel, shook it till it was as thick as a bowl and twelve feet long, and struck and parried as he came charging out. The Nine Bright Shiners, who were no match for him, fell back.

"You reckless Protector of the Horses," they shouted when they were back in the safety of their own position.

"You have committed the most terrible crimes. You stole the peaches and the wine, wrecked the Peach Banquet, and pilfered the immortality pills of Lord Lao Zi. On top of all this you brought some of the immortal liquor you stole back here. Don't you realize that you have piled crime upon crime?" The Great Sage laughed.

"It's true, it's true," he said, "but what are you going to do about it?"

"In obedience to a golden edict of the Jade Emperor," the Nine Bright Shiners replied, "we have led out troops here to subdue you. Submit at once, or else all these creatures of yours will have to pay with their lives. If you refuse, we shall trample this mountain flat and turn your cave upside-down."

"You hairy gods," roared the Great Sage in a fury, "what magic powers have you got to let you talk so big? Clear off, or I'll give you a taste of my cudgel." The Nine Bright Shiners did a war-dance together, which did not frighten the Handsome Monkey King in the least. He whirled his gold-banded cudgel, parrying to right and left, and fought the Nine Bright Shiners till their muscles were weak and their strength was gone; then each of them broke ranks and fled, dragging their weapons behind them. They rushed to the command post of the central corps and reported to the Pagoda-Bearing Heavenly King Li that the Monkey King was so ferocious that they had fled from the battlefield, unable to defeat him. Heavenly King Li then sent the Four Heavenly Kings and the Twenty-eight Constellations into battle. The Great Sage, not at all frightened at this, ordered the One-horned Demon King, the seventy-two kings of the monsters, and the four Stalwart Generals to draw up their line of battle outside the gates of the cave. The ensuing melee was really terrifying.

Howling winds,

Dark, sinister clouds.

On one side flags and standards colorfully flying,

On the other side the gleam of spears and halberds.

Round helmets shine,

Layered armour gleams.

The shining round helmets reflect the sun,

Like silver boulders reaching to the sky;

Gleaming layers of armour are built into a wall

Like a mountain of ice weighing down the earth.
Long-handled swords
Flash through the clouds like lightning;
Paper-white spears
Pierce mists and fogs;
Heaven-shaped halberds,
Tiger-eye chains,
Bristling like a field of hemp;
Bronze swords,
And four-brightness spears
Drawn up like a dense forest.
Bows and crossbows, eagle-feathered arrows,
Short clubs and snaky spears to terrify the soul.
Wielding his single As-You-Will cudgel,
The Great Sage fights against the heavenly gods.
Such is the slaughter that no bird flies over it;
And tigers and wolves flee in terror.
The swirling stones and clouds of sand make everything dark,
The dirt and the dust blot out the heavens.
The clash of arms startles the universe
As the battle strikes awe into gods and demons.

The battle started in the morning and went on till the sun set behind the mountains in the West. By then the One-horned Demon King and the seventy-two kings of the monsters had all been captured by the heavenly hosts. Only the four Stalwart Generals and the monkeys had got away, and they were now hiding in the innermost recesses of the Water Curtain Cave. The Great Sage's solitary cudgel had fought off the Four Heavenly Kings, Li the Pagoda-bearer and Prince Nezha, who were all in the sky. After the battle had gone on for a long time the Great Sage saw that night was drawing on, so he plucked out one of his hairs, munched it up, spat out the pieces and shouted, "Change!" They changed into thousands of Great Sages, all with gold-banded cudgels, who forced Prince Nezha and the five Heavenly Kings to withdraw.

After winning this victory the Great Sage put back his hair and hurried back to the cave, where the four Stalwart Generals at once led the monkeys out to kowtow at the head of the iron bridge to welcome him back. They sobbed three times and then laughed three times. "Why are you laughing and crying at the sight of me?" the Great Sage asked. "When we led all the commanders into battle against the heavenly kings this morning," replied the Stalwart Generals, "the seventy-two kings of the monsters and the One-horned Demon King were all captured by the gods, and we had to flee for our lives. That is why we cried. We laughed because you, Great Sage, have come back victorious and unharmed."

To this the Great Sage replied, "Victory and defeat are all the soldier's lot. As the ancients said, 'To kill ten thousand of the enemy you must lose three thousand of your own.' Anyhow, the officers of ours who were captured were all tigers, leopards, wolves, badgers, river-deer, foxes, and raccoon-dogs. Not one of our own kind was even wounded, so there's no need for us to be bothered about it. But although I forced the enemy to withdraw by dividing up my body through magic, they're still encamped at the foot of our mountain, so we'll have to remain on our guard. Meanwhile we must eat a good meal and get a good night's sleep to build up our energy. Tomorrow morning I'll use powerful magic to capture those heavenly generals and avenge our people." After the four Stalwart Generals and the other monkey commanders had drunk several cups of coconut toddy, they went to bed with their worries calmed.

When the four Heavenly Kings had withdrawn their troops and ended the battle, those who had distinguished themselves reported what they had done. Some had captured tigers and leopards, some lions and elephants, and others wolves and raccoon-dogs, but not one single monkey goblin had been taken. Then they built a mighty stockade around their camp.

Commanders who had distinguished themselves were rewarded, and the soldiers who made up the heaven-and-earth nets were ordered to surround the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, holding bells and shouting, ready for a great battle the next day. Every man heard the orders, and they were strictly obeyed. Indeed:

A wicked monkey made chaos, shocking heaven and earth,

So they spread their nets and watched by night and day.

Listen to the next installment to hear how he was dealt with the following morning.