

WATER MARGIN

WRITTEN BY SHIH NAI-AN

TRANSLATED BY J.H.JACKSON

VOLUME ONE



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"Translation is a condition of order between nations, and therefore of places. In a still wider field it is the condition without which a common culture cannot exist."—J. Hilaire Belloc.

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WATER MARGIN

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE AUTHOR SHIH NAI-AN

(THIRTEENTH CENTURY A.D.?)

A man should not marry after thirty years of age; should not enter the government service after the age of forty; should not have any more children after the age of fifty; and should not travel after the age of sixty. This is because the proper time for those things has passed. At sunrise the country is bright and fresh, and you dress, wash, and eat your breakfast, but before long it is noon. Then you realize how quickly time passes. I am always surprised when people talk about other people's ages, because what is a lifetime is but a small part of a much greater period. Why talk about insects when the whole world is before you? How can you count time by years? All that is clear is that time passes, and all the time there is a continual change going on. Some change has taken place ever since I began to write this. This continual change and decay fills me with sadness.

What excites pleasure in me is the meeting and conversing with old friends. But it is very galling when my friends do not visit me because there is a biting wind, or the roads are muddy through the rain, or perhaps because they are sick. Then I feel isolated. Although I myself do not drink, yet I provide spirits for my friends, as my family has a few fields in which we grow millet. In front of my house runs a great river, and there I can sit with my friends in the shadow of the lovely trees.

I have four old women to do the cooking and household affairs, and also ten small boys who act as messengers. And when they have nothing to do they fill up their spare time in making brooms and mats.

If all my friends came there would be sixteen, but because of the weather there are seldom more than six or seven here. When they come they drink and chat, just as they please, but our pleasure is in the conversation and not

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in the liquor. We do not discuss politics because we are so isolated here that our news is simply composed of rumors, and it would only be a waste of time to talk with untrustworthy information. We also never talk about other people's faults, because in this world nobody is wrong, and we should beware of backbiting. We do not wish to injure anyone, and therefore our conversation is of no consequence to anyone. We discuss human nature about which people know so little because they are too busy to study it.

My friends are all broad-minded, and well educated, but we do not keep a record of our conversations. The reason for this is (1) we are too lazy, and do not aspire to fame; (2) to talk gives us pleasure, but to write would give trouble; (3) none of us would be able to read it again after our deaths, so why worry; (4) if we wrote something this year we should probably find it all wrong the next year.

I have written these seventy chapters of the Shui Hu just for my own pleasure after my friends had left, or when they had not turned up owing to the weather. I have had no preconceived plan, but have jotted these items down just as they occurred to me, sometimes when sitting outside near the bamboo fence, or at early dawn when lying on my couch in pensive mood. But someone may ask, "As you did not write down your friends' conversations why have you written this book?" To which I reply (1) because it is just a hotchpotch, and cannot make me famous or even discredit me; (2) I have only done this to fill up my spare time, and give pleasure to myself; (3) I have written it so that the uneducated can read it as well as the educated; (4) I have used this style of composition because it is such a trifle.

Alas! Life is so short that I shall not even know what the reader thinks about it, but still I shall be satisfied if a few of my friends will read it and be interested. Also I do not know what I may think of it in my future life after death, because then I may not be able to even read it. So why think anything further about it?

PROLOGUE

HEAD TAOIST CHANG PRAYS FOR CESSATION OF A PESTILENCE; ENVOY HUNG MAKES A BLUNDER IN RELEASING FIENDS

*Amid chaos of dynasties five,
Peaceful days at last revive;
Mountains and rivers are of yore,
Benevolence of hundred years and more.*

*Orioles sang in forest trees,
Entrancing music filled the air;
The people dressed in gorgeous silks,
Contentment reigned everywhere.*

This poetry was written in the reign of Emperor Shen Tsung of the Sung dynasty by a famous scholar named Shao Yao-fu. At the close of the T'ang dynasty, and during the succeeding Five Dynasties there was continual civil warfare. In the morning one general would be supreme, but by evening another general would be in power. Generals Chu Chuan-chung, Li Tsun-hsü, Shih Ching-tang, Liu Chih-yuan, and Kuo Wei established respectively the Five Dynasties of Posterior, Liang, T'ang, Tsin, Han, and Chou (A.D. 907-960). There were fifteen emperors within fifty years. These frequent changes followed one after another until Chao Kwang-yin founded the Sung dynasty, and ascended the throne as Emperor Wu Tê. When this great man was born the sky was all red, and in the bedroom there was a fragrant smell. This was because the God of Thunder descended among the mortals.

Wu Tê was a brave hero, and very intelligent. No emperor from ancient times to the present can be compared to him. He was a well-made man, and conquered four hundred divisions. He swept the floor of the whole empire, and left it clean. He established his capital at Pien Liang (modern

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Kaifeng), and laid the foundations for the succeeding eight emperors of the Sung dynasty which lasted for three hundred years. Because of this illustrious feat of arms the scholar states that "the clouds were dispersed, and heaven seen again."

At that time there was a very virtuous and learned man named Chen Tuan living on the Western Sacred Mountain, Hwa Shan, and he could foreknow the weather. One day as he was riding on his donkey down the mountain he heard a rumor that Ch'ai Shih-tsung had withdrawn in favor of General Chao Kwang-yin who had ascended the throne. When he heard this he laughed so much that he rolled off the donkey. When his informer asked for an explanation he replied, "The empire will now be settled, and heaven, earth and mankind will all be in harmony."

The Emperor Wu Tê ascended the throne A. D. 960, and for the following seventeen years there was general peace. He was succeeded by his descendant Emperors T'ai Tsung, Chen Tsung, and Jen Tsung. Now Jen Tsung was the incarnation of the Heavenly Genii Chih Chiao (Bare-Footed Genii), and when he was born he cried continuously, day and night. His father, Emperor Chen Tsung issued a proclamation offering a reward to anyone who could cure the crying infant. When this became known in Heaven, the Genii T'ai Pai (Great Whiteness) was sent down to earth, and metamorphosed into an old man. He tore down the imperial proclamation, and said that he could effect a cure. An official took him to the court, where the emperor gave him permission to see the sick baby. Upon entering the palace he picked up the royal infant in his arms, and whispered eight words into his ear. Immediately the royal infant stopped crying and the old man vanished in a gust of wind. The words he whispered were:

For civil affairs there is a civil star,
For military affairs a military star.

As a matter of fact the Pearly Emperor (the great Taoist god) had already sent two stars (or spirits) to assist this new-born infant in those affairs when he became emperor.

The Civilian Spirit was incarnated in Pao Chen who later became grand secretary of the imperial council, and also

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governor of Kaifeng. The Military Spirit was incarnated in Ti Ching who became commander in chief of the expedition to Hsi Hsia Kwo (modern Kansu). These two worthy ministers assisted the Emperor Jen Tsung for forty-two years. During the first twenty-seven years the crops were abundant, and there was general peace and prosperity. Robbery was rare, and the people could always leave their doors open even at night. In fact the people enjoyed abundant happiness in those years. But who could know that great happiness would be culminated in sorrow? In the 28th year a grave pestilence afflicted the Empire, and a flood of petitions inundated the capital like a heavy snowstorm.

In the Eastern Capital half of the people died. The Governor Pao Chen offered a special medicine free, but with no effect. The pestilence spread, and increased its virility. The officials discussed the situation in the Council Chamber and when the Emperor gave audience they all entered the Grand Audience Hall where they all kotowed together. The appointed minister asked what business there was to bring before the Emperor, and the Prime Minister Chao Chê, and the State Chancellor Wen Yen-po stepped forward. The former spoke, "Just now there is a serious pestilence in this Capital, and a great many people have died. I request that in your benevolence an edict be issued pardoning all criminals, reducing all sentences for future crimes, and lessening all taxes. We also beg Your Majesty to offer prayers to Heaven to save the lives of your people."

The Emperor at once agreed to this, and added to the edict that in all temples there should be special prayers to Heaven to stop this great calamity. Although this was done the pestilence still increased its ravages. When the Emperor was informed of this he summoned all ministers to discuss the matter, and during the meeting of the Grand Council Fan Chung-yen spoke, "This great calamity is inflicting the people who are on the verge of despair. I suggest that we send for the Head Taoist Chang at Lung Hu Shan (Dragon and Tiger Mountain), Kiangsi province, to offer special prayers here for the cessation of the pestilence."

The Emperor Jen Tsung agreed, and ordered a Hanlin scholar to write the edict. He signed it with the vermilion

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brush, and handed it to an attendant Hung Hsin to deliver it as the Imperial envoy. Hung Hsin fastened the edict on his back, held the Imperial incense in his hand, took about ten assistants, traveled by relays of horses, and soon reached Kwei Hsi Hsien in Kiangsi province. He was met and welcomed outside the various towns he passed through by the local officials. A messenger had been sent in advance to advise Head Taoist Chang of the approaching envoy.

Upon reaching Lung Hu Shan he was received by a big crowd of Taoist priests, with much beating of drums and gongs, much burning of incense, fluttering banners and music. The temple superintendent conducted the envoy into the Three Purities Hall where the Imperial edict was respectfully received. When the envoy, Hung Hsin, asked for Head Taoist Chang the superintendent replied, "The present Head Taoist is Hsü Ching who has a pure and lofty nature. He is averse to soliciting favor, and has retired to a straw hut on the summit of the mountain where he cultivates Nirvana."

"Then how can I see him about this important matter?" asked Hung Hsin.

"We can leave the Imperial edict here unopened while we discuss that matter in another room," replied the superintendent.

This was done, and the envoy took the seat of honor while attendants brought in tea and vegetarian food for all. After the meal the superintendent explained that the Head Taoist had acquired the art of aviation by traveling on clouds so that they never knew where he might be. They very seldom saw him at the temple so they thought it hardly worth while to advise him of the approach of the Imperial envoy.

Hung Hsin explained what the edict was about, and asked how he could meet the Head Taoist.

The superintendent replied, "As the Emperor wishes to save the people you must carry out his orders. You must therefore purify yourself by fasting, dress in plain rough clothes, then go by yourself (with the Imperial edict on your back) step by step up the mountain, and then you may have the chance of seeing the Head Taoist. But if your heart is not truly sincere, that may spoil your chance of meeting him."

"Since I left the capital," said Hung Hsin, "I have been a strict vegetarian so how could my intentions be other

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than absolutely sincere? Such being the case I will follow your advice and go up the mountain to-morrow."

The following morning about 4 a. m. the priests prepared the fragrant water and invited the envoy to bathe. After bathing he put on new rough clothes and straw sandals; wrapped the Imperial edict in yellow silk and fastened it on his back; took a silver bowl with burning incense in his hands. He took leave of the priests and set off saying prayers as he walked. After some time the path became steeper, and he had to take hold of bushes and trees to pull himself up. He had traversed several summits, and began to feel extremely fatigued. It was now very hard walking, and he became hesitant as to whether to go forward or not. He thought of the pleasant, easy times he used to have in the Capital with rich varied food and comfortable beds. There he never wore rough clothes, and straw sandals, and was never tired like this. Why did they send him to experience such bitterness of soul? How could he find the Head Taoist?

He struggled on for about fifty paces more, but was now panting for breath. A strong gust of wind blew down the ravine, and roared through the pines. Just then he saw a tiger rush out from the trees, and was so afraid and startled that he fell down. The tiger examined the envoy, walked round him, but after roaring returned to the forest. Hung Hsin lay there, his teeth grinding and his heart beating like "a chain of buckets raising water from a well." His sensation became numb, and he seemed paralyzed. His legs could not move, and seemed like a defeated cock after a fight. He began to whine about his fate.

But after a short time his spirits gradually revived, and he continued his walk. He was, however, still short of breath, and began again to complain of the hardness of the way. He muttered, "The Emperor gave me a very hard task," but before he had finished this a very noxious wind burst forth. He stared round, and saw an enormous speckled snake rattling among some bamboos. He was startled and throwing away his bowl, fell down near a large stone, exclaiming, "I shall certainly die this time!" The snake glided towards him, and coiled up at his side. It showed a yellow light in its eyes, opened wide its mouth, and blew a poisonous vapor

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in his face. This so frightened him that he fainted, but the snake soon left him.

When he regained consciousness he saw that his body was as chilly as having been thrown into an ice river. He soliloquized, "I was almost frightened to death! I never suspected that priest of deceiving me. What a shock I had! If I don't find the Head Taoist, I shall have something to say to that priest when I get back." He, however, picked up his incense bowl, put on his headdress, straightened his garments, and prepared to try again. He had taken only a few steps when he heard the sound of a flute which was being played somewhere among the trees. Looking round he saw an acolyte riding on a yellow cow playing a flute, with a smiling countenance.

Hung spoke to him, "Where do you come from? Do you recognize me?"

The boy did not reply, but continued playing the flute.

Hung asked the same questions several times, and at last the boy laughed and pointing his flute at him replied, "Have you come here to see the Head Taoist?"

"As you are only a cowherd how is it that you know my affairs?"

"Early this morning I waited upon the Head Taoist, and he told me that you had been commissioned by the Emperor to bring an edict here inviting him to go to the Capital to offer prayers to Heaven to stop the pestilence. He said that he was going to mount his stork, and fly off to the Capital at once. So I think he may have gone, and may not be at the temple. You need not go up the mountain as there are many poisonous reptiles and fierce beasts on this mountain, which might endanger your life."

"You cannot lie to me," said Hung, but the acolyte did not reply to this, and went on his way playing his flute.

The envoy thought, "How can the boy know as much as he says, it may be that the Head Taoist has told him to say this so as to test my perseverance. But as I have already met so many frightful things perhaps it would be better if I now get back." So he retraced his steps.

Upon reaching the temple at the foot of the mountain he was asked by the priests whether he had seen the Head Taoist. He told them what frightful experiences he had had, and said

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he suspected them of merely trifling with an Imperial envoy.

"How dare we poor Taoists treat you disrespectfully," replied the superintendent. "These trials might have been arranged by the Head Taoist to test your perseverance. The snakes and tigers on this mountain do not injure people."

"As I was going to struggle up the mountain, I saw a cowherd coming out of a pine forest on a yellow cow, playing a flute who told me that the Head Taoist had flown away on a crane this morning to the Eastern Capital, and so I returned."

"What a pity that you missed such a fine opportunity! That cowherd was the Head Taoist himself!"

"In that case why did he appear in such a strange way?"

"Because he is not an ordinary man. He is only young, but his supernatural power is unbounded. He is not a common person. His power is omnipotent. The people all praise him as the Patron Saint of Absolute Perception."

"I am so ignorant that I have failed to deliver the edict."

"Never mind! As the Head Taoist meant to go, I think the prayers may have been over and the pestilence already vanished when you get back to the Eastern capital."

The Imperial edict was replaced in the cover, and put in the Superior Purity Hall. A feast was then prepared for the envoy.

After breakfast the following morning the superintendent suggested that they should stroll round the monastery for a sight-seeing. They did so, and spent some time going round all the temple buildings. One of these attracted Hung's attention. It was surrounded by a red mud wall; the entrance had a large red door with two leaves which were fastened by a very big lock. There were about ten strips of paper sealing the door, and these were all stamped with red seals; above the door was a board with four gilt characters, "The Subdued Fiends Hall." The envoy asked what the Hall was used for, and was informed that a previous Head Taoist had subdued many fiends, and imprisoned them there.

"But why are there so many seals on the door?"

"During the T'ang dynasty the Head Taoist Tung Hsuan subdued the king of the devils, and locked him up inside

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this Hall. The succeeding generations have each added another seal so that it may never be opened. If those devils ever got out there would be a great calamity. Now about nine generations have passed, and no one ever attempted to tamper with this arrangement. Molten copper has been poured into the lock so that it is impossible to unlock the door. I have lived here for thirty years, and this is all that I have heard of but nobody knows what is inside.

Hung felt very curious at this, and had a desire to investigate so he said to the superintendent, "Please open the door, and I will see what this king of the devils is like."

"We dare not do that. Our former masters enjoined us not to open it and cannot presume to disobey the order."

The imperial envoy laughed, and said, "Nonsense! You only falsely declare there is something strange, in order to deceive the innocent people. You purposely arrange such places and tell people that devils are locked up inside so as to show off your spiritual powers. I have read hundreds of volumes of books, and yet have never read of the king of the devils being imprisoned here. There is no way by which man can know about the supernatural. I do not believe that the king of the devils is inside here. Quickly open the door, and I want see what this devil is."

The superintendent still declined to do this, as he was afraid that somebody would be injured.

The Imperial envoy became angry, and pointing at the taoists, said, "As you will not open the door I shall first report that you refused to obey the imperial orders, and not allow me to see the Head Taoist. Also I will say that you are falsely declaring that the king of the devils is imprisoned here, in order to deceive decent people. Your license will be canceled, and you will all be banished to some distant places."

The priests were all afraid of his great influence, and therefore they summoned servants to tear off the seals, and break the big lock. This was done, and when the door was opened they all went inside, but could not see anything because it was pitch dark there. So Hung ordered the servants to light about ten torches, and with these he made a close examination. There was not a single thing

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except a stone tablet in the center of the hall. It was about six feet in height, and was resting on a stone tortoise which was almost half in the soil. On the tablet were characters of the very ancient style, and they could not make out any of them. But upon examining the other side of the tablet they found four characters which read, "Open when Hung comes." The Imperial Envoy Hung was much pleased at this, and turning to the taoists said, "You tried to obstruct me, but many hundred years ago they wrote my name here, and predicted that I would come here, and open the door. The fiends, I see, are imprisoned under this tortoise. Dig out the stone tortoise for me!"

The taoists were terrified at the order, and said that it was not safe to do such a thing.

Hung was angry at this continuous obstruction, and abused them as ignorant. He insisted upon the excavation being begun immediately. As on the stone tablet it was stated that he would open the place so although the taoists still objected they at last gave way, and told the workmen to dig. The men removed the soil and the tortoise. After digging about three feet down they unearthed a square slab of stone. Hung told them to lift it out, and in spite of objections from the taoists, the stone was raised, and carried out of the hole.

It was evident that the slab was the cover of a very deep well. Now that the cover was removed a loud strange noise was heard far down in the cavity, and instantly a black cloud shot out from below, breaking a corner of the roof of the hall, and escaped through the aperture. The cloud ascended very high in the sky, and then burst forth into more than a hundred rays of light and disappeared in all directions.

All the spectators were astounded and rushed away from the hall. Even Envoy Hung was thunderstruck, and his countenance changed to a pale yellow color. He went out to the veranda where he met the superintendent who lamented the result. Upon his asking what the devil was which had escaped the superintendent replied, "You do not understand. The fact is that our former master Tung Hsuan imprisoned here the thirty-six heavenly spirits, and seventy-two baneful stars which make a total of 108 fiends. The

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names of these fiends are inscribed on the stone in ancient writing. As they have now all been released they will bring calamity to the people. What are you going to do in the matter?"

Upon hearing this Hung was covered with cold perspiration and trembled with fear. Without saying a word he went to pack his baggage and calling together his retinue he quickly departed down the mountain on his way back to the Capital.

On the way Envoy Hung told his suite that they must not mention to anybody what had happened as he was afraid that if the Emperor heard of it he would be punished. They traveled both night and day, and soon reached the Capital, Pien Liang (the modern Kaifeng). There he found that the Taoist Head had arrived, and had held seven days' service against the pestilence and had written magical spells for the sick people and as the pestilence had abated the Head Taoist had flown back on his stork to the mountain.

The following morning Envoy Hung attended the early audience, and addressed the Emperor, "The Taoist Head traveled by crane, and as I could only travel by horse relays he had been here and returned before I could arrive."

The Emperor did not reply, but rewarded him for his work.

After this the Emperor reigned for forty-two years, and upon his death as he had no children the son of an illustrious prince succeeded to the throne with the title Ying Tsung. This emperor reigned for four years, and was followed by his son who reigned as Emperor Shen Tsung for eighteen years. Then after this Emperor Che Tsung reigned, and during his reign there was peace in the empire. But if there had been nothing but peace, what this book are going to relate? My good reader, rest assured that this is merely a prelude; and in the following chapters we have:

LIST OF THE 108 HEROES AT LIANG SHAN PO

NAME	NICKNAME	FIRST APPEARS IN CHAPTER
An Tao-ch'uan	Skilled Doctor	64
Ch'ai Chin	Small Whirlwind	8
Chang Ching	Arrow Without Feathers	69
Chang Ch'ing	Vegetable Garden	16
Chang Heng	Ship's Apprentice	36
Chang Shun	White Fish	36
Ch'en Ta	Leaping Tiger	1
Cheng Tien-shou	White Faced Squire	31
Chiang Chin	Marvelous Mathematician	40
Chiao Ting	Disliked One	66
Chin Ming	Thunderer	33
Chin Ya-chien	Precious Jade Engraver	38
Chou Tung	Little Tyrant	4
Chu Fu	Laughing Tiger	43
Chu Kwei	Speedy Courier	10
Chu Tung	Lord of the Beautiful Whiskers	12
Chu Wu	Skillful Strategist	1
Fan Jui	Devil of Disorder	58
Han Tao	Hundred Victories General	54
Hao Ssu-wen	Ching Mu Han	62
Hou Chien	Nimble Monkey	40
Hsiao Jang	Skilled Calligraphist	38
Hsiang Cheng	Eight Arms Jinn	58
Hsu Ning	Spear Expert	55
Hsieh Chen	Double Headed Snake	48
Hsieh Pao	Double Tailed Scorpion	48
Hsuan Tsan	Disgraced Son-in-law	62
Hsueh Yung	Sick Tiger	36
Hu San (Miss)	Pure One	46
Hu Yen-shao	Two Bludgeons General	53
Huang Hsin	Guardian of Three Mountains	32
Huang-Pu Tuan	Purple Bearded Uncle	69

LIST OF THE 108 HEROES AT LIANG SHAN PO

NAME	NICKNAME	FIRST APPEARS IN CHAPTER
Hwa Jung	Small Li Kuang	21
Ku, Mrs.	Tigress	48
Kuan Sheng	Big Sword	62
Kung Liang	Fiery Planet	31
Kung Ming	Restless Star	31
Kung-Sun Sheng	Cloud Dragon	14
Kung Wang	Tiger with Marked Neck	69
Kuo Sheng	Rival of Jen Kwei	34
Lei Heng	Winged Tiger	12
Li Chun	Muddy Water Dragon	35
Li Chung	Tiger Hunter	4
Li K'wei	Black Whirlwind; Iron Ox	37
Li Li	Murderous Angel	35
Li Mien	Flying Monkey	58
Li Ying	Striking Hawk	46
Li Yun	Black Eyed Tiger	43
Lin Ch'ung	Leopard's Head	6
Ling Chen	Roaring Thunder	54
Liu Tang	Red Haired Devil	13
Lu Fang	Little Marquis of Wen	34
Lu Ta	Priest Hwa	2
Lu Tsun-i	Jeweled Chilin	60
Ma Lin	Iron Flute Jinn	40
Meng Kang	Flagstaff	43
Mu Chun	Young Irresistible	36
Mu Heng	Invulnerable One	36
O Peng	Golden Winged Hawk	40
Pai Sheng	Daylight Rat	17
Pao Hsu	Ill-Omened Devil	66
Pei Hsuan	Iron Supervisor	43
Peng Chi	Heavenly Eyes General	54
Shan Ting-kwei	Water Devil General	66
Shih Ch'ien	Flea on the Drum	45
Shih Chin	Tattooed Dragons	1
Shih En	Golden Eyed Tiger's Cub	27
Shih Hsiu	Life Risker	43
Shih Yung	Stone General	34
So Ch'ao	Hasty Scout	12
Sun Hsin	Small Wei Chih	48