



Fabled Flora and Fauna

Mythic nature manifests itself as a god-haunted world under the sway of supernatural beings. Nature is subordinated to the gods, who are immanent in sacred mountains, streams, rocks, and trees. Nature reveals the potency of the gods; they are elemental, controlling light, heat, wind, and rain; they are generative, producing irrigated fields, fertile soil, and abundant crops. And the gods can be jealous and punitive, withholding life and creative energy. Humans are in and of nature, and the gods belong to the world of nature and of humans. The two spheres of the human and the divine interact in terms of form and function. When the gods manifest themselves, they appear as half-human, half-animal beings, or as hybrid creatures. Nü Kua and Fu Hsi took on half-human, half-serpentine form. Many deities are described as having a bird's body and a human face. And the metamorphoses of gods and demigods demonstrate the easy transference from one state to another. The epitome of this interaction is the myth of the dying god P'an Ku. This interconnectedness between the gods, nature, and humans has a negative and a positive dimension. Its negative dimension is visible in its congeries of hybrid monsters and beasts such as Hsiang Liu or the Wu-chih-ch'i, who wreak havoc on the human world. Conversely, the concept of perfect harmony among the three worlds is visible in the earthly paradises of K'un-lun or the Isles of the Immortals in the east-

ern sea. The sky-ladder of Chien-mu or the Tree of Life, Leaning Mulberry in the east, appear at these points of perfect equilibrium, allowing a communion between gods and humans within nature.

Within mythic nature are the mythical bestiary and vegetal myths. They include divine creatures and plants that express concepts of primitive allegory. Moral significance is attached to real or imagined characteristics of animals, or plants. For example, the ram of the mythical judge Kao Yao is endowed with the power of discerning guilt in humans. The Beast of White Marsh knows the mysterious workings of the universe. A plant in the courtyard of Yao had divine knowledge of the human heart and could point out flatterers at court.

A few birds and beasts came to be emblematic of deities, such as the bluebirds and hybrid panthers of the Queen Mother of the West, or the nightjar with Tu Yü, the ram with Kao Yao, the bear with Yü, and the toad with Ch'ang O. Similarly, plants came to be connected with certain deities, such as millet with Hou Chi, maple with Ch'ih Yu, and, later in the tradition, peaches with the Queen Mother of the West. This emblematic concept, however, is not a well-developed aspect of Chinese mythology, as it was in the Greco-Roman tradition, with most of the gods having their emblem or attribute drawn from nature. In general, creatures in classical Chinese mythology such as dragons, serpents, the tortoise, or bird of paradise were connected with a number of different deities and carried no specific symbolic meaning in their relationship to individual deities.

The sources for these bestial and vegetal myths constitute an early form of "unnatural natural history." The material is for the most part fragmentary. The source par excellence is *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*; other early texts, such as *Chuang Tzu*, *Hsun Tzu*, and *Huai-nan Tzu*, also contain a great deal of scattered narratives relating to nature myths. In the Han and post-Han periods the material proliferated. The prime examples of this valuable literature are the lexicon of Hsu Shen (ca. A.D. 100), *An Explication of Written Characters*; the miscellany of Wang Ch'ung (A.D. 27-100), *Disquisitions*; and *The Treatise on Research into Nature* of the third to fifth century. Of course, these fragmentary sources of bestial and vegetal myths are rudimentary when they are compared with the fully developed didactic genre of the European bestiary, such as Philippe de Thaon's *Bestiary* (ca. A.D. 1125) or Richard de Fournial's *Bestiary of Love* (ca. A.D. 1250) (Preminger 1965, 77). Nevertheless, the small sample of Chinese myths in this chapter should suffice to reveal the imaginative and colorful nature of this genre at an early stage in its evolution.

The Divine Light of Torch Dragon

The mythic features of the god of light, Torch Dragon, were examined in chapter 3. The god's appearance is hybrid: part-human, part-serpent; and the color motif of scarlet is emblematic of his function of bringing light to the darkened world. The reading is from a chapter of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* dating circa the first century A.D.

Beyond the northwestern sea, north of Scarlet River, is Pied-Tail Mountain. It has a god with a human face and a snake's body, and it is scarlet. His vertical eyes are straight slits. When he closes his eyes it grows dark. When he looks out it grows bright. He neither eats nor sleeps nor rests. Wind and rain visit him. This god shines on the nine darknesses. He is called Torch Dragon [Chu Lung]. (*Shan hai ching*, *Ta huang pei ching*, SPPY 17.7a-b)

The Chien-mu Sky-Ladder

The name *Chien-mu* literally means 'the Building-Tree'. This myth conforms in every respect with Eliade's paradigm of archaic cosmological beliefs that are "invested with the prestige of the Center" (1971, 12). The Chien-mu or Building-Tree is situated at the center of the world. It is an *axis mundi* where Heaven and earth meet. The first reading accentuates this belief in the idea of a perfect center, which casts no shadow and releases no echo. The text comes from *Huai-nan Tzu*. The second reading describes the holy site of the tree and its marvelous appearance. The number motif of nine appears frequently in mythic narratives and denotes the celestial sphere or aspects of the divine. The double motif of the "nine tanglewoods" and the "nine root twinings" is perhaps best explicated by a comparison with the Hungarian myth of the sky-high tree. This tree is said to have grown up to the sky and then "curved thirteen times under the firmament because it should have grown more" (Erdész, citing Lajos Ámi, 1984, 319). In the same way, the Building-Tree, or sky-ladder, continues to grow, but after reaching the sky, which it cannot penetrate, it is forced to spread under the barrier of the sky and likewise above the barrier of the ends of the earth, creating gigantic coils in the sky and huge root tangles in the earth. The text is from a late chapter of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (ca. first century A.D.).

The Chien-mu is in Tu-kuang. All the gods ascended and descended by it. It cast no shadow in the sun and it made no echo when someone shouted. No doubt this is because it is the center of Heaven and earth. (*Huai-nan Tzu, Chui hsing*, SPPY 4.3a-b)

Beyond the South Sea, between Black River and Green River . . . there are nine hills bounded by rivers. Their names are T'ao-t'ang Hill, She-te Hill, Meng-ying Hill, K'un-wu Hill, Black-and-White Hill, Red Gaze Hill, Ts'an-wei Hill, Wu-fu Hill, and Holy People Hill. There is a tree with green leaves, a purple trunk, black blossoms, and yellow fruit called the Chien-mu tree. For one thousand feet upward it bears no branches, and there are nine tanglewoods, while underneath there are nine root twinings. Its fruit is like hemp seed; its leaves resemble bearded grass. T'ai Hao used to pass up and down by it. The Yellow Emperor created it. (*Shan hai ching, Hai nei ching*, SPPY 18.3a-4a)

The Giant Peach Tree

Several other world-trees appear in Chinese mythology besides the Chien-mu. They are Trinity Mulberry (San-sang), Search Tree (Hsun-mu), Accord Tree (Jo-mu), and, most important, Leaning Mulberry (Fu-sang). They all form an *axis mundi*. There is also the giant peach tree, which, like the Chien-mu, grows in a convoluted tangle against the sky barrier it cannot pierce. In common with other world-tree myths, the peach tree creates a passage to the sky beyond the human world, and it carries at its crest celestial gates presided over by two punitive gods, Holy Shu (Shen Shu) and Yü Lü. The narrative is linked to the Yellow Emperor cycle of myths. The account ends with a description of a ritual derived from the myth of the guardian gods of the gates to Heaven. The ritual enacts the punitive role of the gods in order to exorcize evil from the home.

The author of the reading is Wang Ch'ung, of the first century A.D., who states in his text that he is citing *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. In fact, this citation does not appear in extant editions of the *Classic*, but it reveals how valuable Wang Ch'ung's eclectic essays are for their preservation of otherwise lost material.

In Ts'ang Sça there is the Tu-shuo Mountain. On its summit is a huge peach tree. It twists and turns over three thousand leagues. Among its branches on the northeast side are what is called Goblin Gates

through which a myriad goblins pass. On top there are two gods. One is called Holy Shu; the other is called Yü Lü. These lords supervise and control the myriad goblins. Whenever a goblin does evil, they bind him with a reed rope and feed him to tigers. Then the Yellow Emperor devised a ritual ceremony so that they could expel the evildoer in due season. They set up large peach wood figurines and painted images of Holy Shu and Yü Lü and a tiger on gates and doors and hung reed ropes from them so as to harness the evil. (*Lun heng, Ting kuei*, citing a non-extant passage from *Shan hai ching*, SPTK 22.15b-16a)

Leaning Mulberry

The solar myths attached to this world-tree were discussed in chapters 1 and 5, with the motifs of sunrise, the crow of the sun, Yi the Archer, and Ti Chün and his wife, Hsi-Ho, mother of the ten suns. The two readings are from *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, the first from a first-century B.C. chapter, the second from a first-century A.D. chapter.

Beside T'ang Valley there is the Leaning Mulberry, where the ten suns are bathed—it is north of the land of Black-Teeth—and where they stay in the river. There is a large tree, and nine suns stay on its lower branches while one sun stays on its top branch. (*Shan hai ching, Hai wai tung ching*, SPPY 9.3a-b)

In the middle of the great wasteland, there is a mountain called Nieh-yao Chün-ti. On its summit there is a leaning tree. Its trunk is three hundred leagues tall; its leaves are like the mustard plant. There is a valley called Warm Springs Valley. Beside Yang Valley there is Leaning Mulberry. As soon as one sun arrives, another sun rises. They are all borne by a crow. (*Shan hai ching, Ta huang tung ching*, SPPY 14.5a-b)

The Vastness of K'un-lun Mountains

The motifs in this narrative were discussed in chapter 10. The reading is from a first-century B.C. chapter of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*.

Within the seas the K'un-lun wastes are in the northwest, and this is God's capital city on earth below. The K'un-lun wastes are eight hundred leagues square and eighty thousand feet high. On top there is the Tree Grain; it is forty feet tall and five spans wide. On all sides

there are nine wells with well-sills made of jade. On all sides there are nine gates, and at the gates there is the K'ai-ming beast on guard. The dwelling place of the gods is on a cliff with eight nooks. The boundary of the Scarlet River has a cliff on the ridge which no one could ascend unless he were the Good Archer. . . . The gulf south of K'un-lun is two thousand, four hundred feet deep. The body of the K'ai-ming beast is mostly that of a tiger, and it has nine heads, all of which have human faces that look eastward. It stands on top of K'un-lun. To the west of the K'ai-ming are the male and female phoenix and the *luan*-bird. They all carry a serpent on their head and tread a serpent underfoot, and there is a scarlet snake on their breast. North of the K'ai-ming there is the Shih-jou creature, the pearl tree, the patterned-jade tree, the *yü-ch'i* tree, and the Never Die tree. The male and female phoenix and *luan*-bird all wear armor plate on their heads. And there are the Li-chu bird, the giant Grain Tree, the cypress, the Sweet Water, and the Wise Man tree, the Man-tui, also called the T'ing-tree-cross-fanged. To the east of the K'ai-ming there are Shaman P'eng, Shaman Ti, Shaman Yang, Shaman Li, Shaman Fan, and Shaman Hsiang, who bear the corpse of Cha Yü, each holding the drug of immortality to protect him. Cha Yü has a serpent's body and a human head. He was killed by Double Load and his officer. There is also the Fu-ch'ang tree. On its crown there is a three-headed man who watches over the red *lang-gan* jade tree. To the south of the K'ai-ming beast there is the Tree Bird with its six heads, and the scaly dragon, the cobra, the serpent, the long-tailed ape, the panther, the *niao-chih* tree, Splendid Pool tree, the hummingbird, the *shun*-hawk, and the Shih-jou creature. (*Shan hai ching*, *Hai nei hsi ching*, SPPY II.2b-5b)

The Beast of White Marsh

This account belongs to the didactic category of bestial myths. It is taken from the *Basic Annals of Hsien-yuan*, a fanciful biography of the Yellow Emperor, compiled by the T'ang author Wang Ch'üan, who was of the Taoist persuasion. It will be recalled that the Yellow Emperor was adopted as the supreme deity of the Taoist pantheon in the Latter Han era. In this narrative he is known by the name Hsien-yuan, which originally belonged to a shadowy primeval god but later became attached to the more illustrious god, the Yellow Emperor. The format of Wang's account is modeled on the official biography of emperors and kings to

be found in traditional histories since the Han period. Like earthly rulers, the Yellow Emperor conducts a royal tour of his realm in this episode from the biography, and in the manner of sage-rulers, he seeks wisdom from others, in this case, from a god known as the Beast of White Marsh. This god in bestial form knows the infinitesimal number of metamorphosed beings and the mystery of the cosmos. The quest of the Yellow Emperor for divine knowledge is cast in the heroic mold, and his success is crowned with the reward of the chart of the cosmos, for knowledge is power. His portrayal as a god who prays to a lesser god in the traditional pantheon exemplifies the desacralization of deities in later mythography.

The Emperor went on a tour of inspection. In the east he came to the sea. He went up Mount Huan. On the seashore he found the Holy Beast of White Marsh which could speak and understand the natures of all living creatures. There were a total of 11,520 kinds of wandering souls that had undergone a metamorphosis. While White Marsh was talking about them, the Emperor ordered someone to write them down on a chart to show them to the whole world. Then the Emperor ordered someone to compose a written prayer to pray to him. (*Yun chi ch'i ch'ien, Hsien-yuan pen chi*, SPTK 100.23a-b)

King Mu of Chou's Fabled Horses

The myth of King Mu of Chou's visit to the Queen Mother of the West was presented and discussed in chapter 9, and the motif of the fabled horse in chapter 11. An inscription on an early Chou bronze wine vessel in the shape of a foal reveals the Chou king's interest in horse breeding; it says that King Mu handled a foal and gave its owner two colts (Hsu Cho-yun and Linduff 1988, 139, frontispiece). His legendary association with horses is confirmed by the fourth-century B.C. text "Questions of Heaven," which relates the brief mythic narrative: "King Mu was a breeder of horses" (*Ch'u Tz'u, T'ien wen*, SPTK 3.27a). The following reading is from *Researches into Lost Records*, from the fourth to sixth century (attributed to Wang Chia).

When King Mu had been on the throne for thirty-two years, he went on a royal tour of the empire. . . . The king drove a fleet of eight horses swift as dragons. One horse was called Beyond Earth, whose hooves did not touch the ground. The second was called Windswept Plumes, which went faster than any winged bird. The third was

called Rush-by-Night, which covered ten thousand leagues in the night. The fourth was called Faster-than-Shadow, which could keep up with the journeying sun. The fifth was called Finer-than-Flashing-Light, whose coat was the sheen of dazzling light. The sixth was called Faster-than-Light, whose single bound cast ten shadows. The seventh was called Rising Mist, which rushed along on the crest of the clouds. The eighth was called Wing Bearer, whose body had fleshy plumes. (*Shih yi chi*, HWTS 3.12-b)

The Many-Splendored Bird

The account of the Many-Splendored Bird, a mythical bird of evil omen, is from the same classical source attributed to Wang Chia (fourth century A.D.) and edited by Hsiao Ch'i, of the sixth century. Like Wang Ch'ung's account of Holy Shu and Yü Lü on the giant peach tree, this passage provides an explanation of the popular custom of exorcism through mimetic ritual. In this case it is the post-Han custom of exposing images of the ill-omened bird, the Many-Splendored Bird, outside homes in the New Year to ward off evil. Again the ritual is derived from a myth. The myth narrative purports to date from the era of Yao, but it does not even occur in any pre-Han source, and it probably belongs to the oral myth tradition of a minority tribe which became incorporated into the canon of mythological writings. The bird's features include double pupils, signifying great wisdom, as with the demigod Shun. The bird is a hybrid, combining the characteristics of aggressive birds, such as the eagle and rooster, and the bird of Heaven, the phoenix. It should be noted that although the Chinese mythical bird *feng* is rendered as 'phoenix', it does not possess the phoenix's symbolic meaning of resurrection. The *ch'i-lin* mentioned in the reading is a hybrid mythical creature that resembles a deer; it was believed to appear on earth when the ruler was a sage and governed well. *Ch'i-lin* is usually, but erroneously, translated as 'the unicorn'.

While Yao was on the throne for seventy years, every year young male phoenix flocked to him, the *ch'i-lin* roamed through the lush marshes, and eagle-owls fled to the farthest desert. There was a country called Chih-chih, which brought the Many-Splendored Bird to him in tribute. It was also known as the Double-Pupil Bird, which means that its eyes had double pupils. In appearance it was like a rooster, and its call was like that of the phoenix. It would often shed

its down and feathers, flap its fleshy wings, and fly off. It could swoop down on wild beasts like a tiger or wolf and could cause unnatural disasters and all kinds of evil, but it could not be harmed itself. Sometimes, if it was offered the essence of rare red jade, it might appear several times in one year, but otherwise it would fail to appear for several years. All the people in the land swept and sprinkled their gateways and doorways hoping to make the Many-Splendored Bird come to roost. When it did not appear, the people in the land carved the likeness of the bird in wood or cast its image in metal and fixed it between their gates and doors, so that if there were any goblins or trolls, they would be repelled or vanquished. Nowadays, every New Year's morning, when people make an image of the bird carved out of wood, or cast in metal, or else painted in a picture, and then place it over the window, this is a vestige of the custom in olden days of making the bird's image. (*Shih yi chi*, HWTS I.10b-11a)

Vegetal Myths: *Ming-chia*, *Sha-fu*, and *Chih-ning*

Yao was the first of the demigods in the Golden Age. In the early Confucian tradition, he became the exemplar of the wise and benign ruler who embodied humanitarian principles advocated by that philosophical school, and especially the sociopolitical principle of meritocracy. There are very few myths of Yao compared with the two other Golden Age demigods Shun and Yü. Nevertheless, his name appears in numerous accounts, even if a mythic story is not attached to it in every case. The main body of myths about Yao is contained in *The Classic of History*, a work edited in the Han period consisting of passages dating from the late Chou and the Han eras. The text combines reconstructed history from the beginning of time, which, for this *Classic*, means from the time of Yao; mythological material that has been largely rewritten and reinterpreted compared with other late Chou mythic narratives; and also political theory.

Other texts, however, have preserved fragments of myth about Yao, which, unlike *The Classic of History*, are not politicized and historicized but are recognizable as the true stuff of mythology. The first reading below is a citation by Ma Su, of the seventeenth century, of a fragment from a work dating from the late Chou era (ca. fourth to third century B.C.) entitled *Master T'ien-ch'iu*. It relates that a miraculous plant, the *ming-chia*, grew in Yao's garden, serving him as a natural calendar: it grows one petal a day from the beginning of each month until the



Figure 11. The ming-chia plant; inscription reads, "The ming-chia plant grew [lacuna] in the era of Yao." Funerary stone bas-relief, Wu Liang Shrine, Chia-hsiang county, Shantung province, A.D. 151. From Feng and Feng, *Research on Stone Carving* (1821) 1934, chap. 4.

fifteenth day, and then it sheds one petal a day until the end of the month, when it is bare again. It is also known as the Calendar Petal and the Portent Plant. The second reading is a dictionary definition of the *sha-fu* plant from Hsu Shen's lexicon of the first century A.D. According to this account, the roots of the *sha-fu* are as fine as silk thread, but its leaves are large and prolific. It can whirl about like the wind so that it drives away insects and cools food and drink in hot kitchens. Again the plant is associated with Yao. The third reading tells of the plant of omen which grew in Yao's garden. This vegetal myth fits the paradigm of the didactic mythologem. The fragment is from *The Treatise on Research into Nature* of the third to fifth century. The monograph by Hino Iwao entitled *A New Appraisal of Legendary Plants* is an important resource for the study of this group of mythic motifs (1978, 57-59).

When Yao became the Son of Heaven, a *ming-chia* plant grew in his garden and served the emperor as a calendar. (*Yi shih*, citing *T'ien-ch'iu Tzu*, PCTP 9.5b)

The *sha-fu* is a plant that foretells an omen. In the time of Yao it grew in his kitchen, and it fanned the hot atmosphere and made things cooler. (*Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, 2, SPTK 1.1b)

In the time of Yao there was a *ch'ü-yi* plant growing in the garden. Whenever a flatterer came to court, it bent forward and pointed him out. It is also called the *chih-ning*, Point the Flatterer plant. (*Po wu chih*, *Yi ts'ao mu*, SPPY 4.2a)

Kao Yao Honors His Ram

Mythological material relating to the figure of Kao Yao is similar to the case of myths about Yao, in the sense that much of it is to be found in *The Classic of History*. The earliest reference to Kao Yao occurs in poem 299 of *The Classic of Poetry*, where he is a judge commended for his treatment of prisoners of war. In the chapter of *The Classic of History* entitled "Canon of Yao," Kao Yao is presented as the supreme judge who is responsible for administering punishment as a minister in the government of Yao. In another chapter of *The Classic of History*, "The Speeches of Kao Yao," the wisdom of the judge is related in formal discourse (Karlgren 1950, 7, 8-12).

The tendentious rationalizing impulse of the anonymous political theorist who wrote *The Classic of History* in the late Chou or Han period did not permit the inclusion of more recognizably mythological material about Kao Yao. Several colorful details have survived in other texts, although they are fragmentary and some are of late provenance. The first of the readings that follow is from *A Garden of Anecdotes*, of the first century B.C. The second is taken from the third-century B.C. Confucian philosopher Hsun Tzu, who refers to Kao Yao in his essay "Against Physiognomy." Another detail is given in the third passage, which draws on physiognomical correlations. It is from *The Debates in White Tiger [Hall]*, attributed to the Han historian Pan Ku (A.D. 32-92). The last reading narrates a bestiary myth about Kao Yao's percipient ram. It appears in an essay by Wang Ch'ung in which he explains the juridical custom in the Han of painting images of Kao Yao and his divine one-horned ram in the courtroom. Another Han custom was for judges to

wear a cap called the *chieh-chai* cap, signifying the myth of Kao Yao's ram (Yuan K'o 1980.2, 135).

In the era of Yao . . . Kao Yao became grand controller. (*Shuo yuan, Chün tao*, SPTK 1.6b-7a)

In appearance Kao Yao's complexion was like a peeled melon. (*Hsun Tzu, Fei hsiang*, SPPY 3.2a)

Kao Yao's horse muzzle means that he was perfectly truthful and the sentences he passed were clear, for he penetrated the mind and heart of humans. (*Pai-hu t'ung-yi, Sheng jen*, TSCC 3A.178-79)

The Hsieh-chih creature has one ram's horn, and it has the ability to know who is a criminal. When Kao Yao was conducting a trial and was in doubt about who the guilty person was, he would order the ram to butt the criminal. It would butt the guilty one, but it would not butt the innocent. Now this is a case of a sage beast born in Heaven who helped provide evidence in a trial. That is why Kao Yao honored his ram, even rising from the bench to look after its needs. (*Lun heng, Shih ying*, SPTK 17.10a-b)

The Dragon and the Tortoise

The earliest version of the myth of the dragon that helped Yü to control the flood was discussed in chapter 8. The Responding Dragon appears in the myths of the deaths of K'ua-fu and Ch'ih Yu as a god in control of the element of water. The first reading below narrates the earliest version, from "Questions of Heaven." The second is from Wang Chia's *Researches into Lost Records*, some seven centuries later. His account seeks to explain a myth that by his time no longer retained mythic relevance. The alterations to the myth in this late version indicate the influence of Taoism: the Responding Dragon has become a yellow dragon, yellow being the emblematic color of Taoism; and a "dark tortoise" has been added, "dark" (*hsuan*) being a mystical epithet in Taoism. The tortoise is a symbol of longevity, which itself constitutes one of the fundamental aspirations of this philosophical and religious creed.

How did he dam the flood waters at their deepest? How did he demarcate the Nine Lands of the Earth? Over the rivers and seas what did the Responding Dragon fully achieve, and where did he

pass? What plan did Kun devise? What did Yü succeed in doing? (*Ch'u Tz'u, T'ien wen*, SPTK 3.6b-7b)

Yü exhausted his strength in cutting dikes and ditches and in conducting the courses of rivers and leveling mounds. The yellow dragon dragged its tail in front of him, while the dark tortoise carried green mud on its back behind him. (*Shih yi chi*, HWTS 2.2b)

Carp Leap over Dragon Gate

The myth of carp turning into dragons at Dragon Gate Mountain, which another narrative relates had been forged open by Yü, has enduring appeal because it illustrates the concepts of equal opportunity for all and success through individual effort. The myth acquired the cachet of social acceptance in the elite establishment of traditional society when the success of candidates in the awesomely difficult civil service examinations became known as the divine feat of carp that had leapt the river heights and turned into dragons.

Dragon Gate Mountain is in the east region of the river. When Yü melted the mountain and hewed a gateway a league or more wide, the Yellow River flowed down the middle and a horse and carriage could not pass between the two sides of the river. Every year at the end of spring, yellow carp fight their way upstream. Those which reach it [Dragon Gate] turn into dragons. Also, Lin Teng says, "Every year below Dragon Gate in late spring, yellow carp fishes leave the sea and come to the rivers and fight to leap over Dragon Gate. In one year the carp that scale Dragon Gate number no more than seventy-two. As soon as they scale Dragon Gate, cloudy rain follows in their wake and heavenly fire ignites their tails and they turn into dragons. (*T'ai-p'ing kuang chi*, citing *San Ch'in chi*, JMWH 466.3839)