

M409
The wise goat.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

People tell a story that, once upon a time, there was a herd of goats. Every day father goat took the little goats out to graze while mother goat remained at home. One day, mother goat said, "Every day when you take them out you come back so very early". Father goat replied, "The road we have to travel is very long, and when we are on the road we are so afraid that we come back early". Mother goat said, "In that case, today you stay at home and I will take them out".

Mother goat took the children out to graze. Everyone ate with a will, not one played around. When they had eaten their fill, mother goat raised her head and looked up. The moon was already in the middle of the sky. Mother goat said, "We shall not be able to get home, we will go and stay at the foot of the cliff on ahead of us ". So here they went to sleep.

Now there was a fox, which saw them. The fox said, "I would like some goat's flesh to eat, if I can find a way". Then he said, "First I will go and have a look". So the fox went up and barked, "Nghao, nghao, I'm going to eat goat's flesh!" Mother goat struck her horns against the cliff until the sparks flew and bleated, "Bie-ie-ie, let's drink fox broth!" When the fox heard this, he got up and ran away. While he was running he met a tiger. The tiger said to him, "Fox, why are you running?" The fox replied, "I saw a herd of goats over yonder and I was going to eat them. I barked, 'I'm going to eat you!' but they said they were going to drink my broth. So I was frightened and ran away!" The tiger said, "You take me along, and the two of us will go and eat them", but the tiger made the fox go ahead while he followed behind. When they reached the place where the goats were, the tiger roared, "Nggao, I'm going to eat goat's flesh!" The goat bleated, "Bie-ie-ie, let's drink tiger broth!" The tiger said to the fox, "There are ever so many of them, we two cannot possibly eat them. Bring your coat tail and tie it to my coat tail, and we will run away together". So the tiger and the fox knotted their tails together and ran a long way. The tiger looked around at the fox and said, "Fox, it is all very well for you to laugh at me, but I have run till I am tired!" But the fox was not laughing, he had been dragged to his death by the tiger.