

M417
The lad who looked after goats.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

They tell a story that, once upon a time, there was a lad who went to look after the goats. He looked after them until lunchtime when mother goat grew thirsty. Mother goat said to the lad, "Now lad, take me for a drink of water, and I will tell you a tale". So the lad took mother goat for a drink of water, and when she had finished he said, "Come on, mother goat, tell me a tale". The mother goat said

"Bie-ie-ie!
Mother goat eats green leaves as a relish with yellow leaves,
She eats yellow leaves as a relish with green leaves!"

In the evening when the lad took her home he said, "Father, today mother goat here was able to talk!" The lad's father said, "In that case tomorrow I will go and look after them and see". So the following day the lad's father went to look after them. He looked after them, until midday, lunchtime, when the mother goat said, "Old man, take me for a drink of water and I will tell you a tale". The man took mother goat for a drink of water then he said, "Come on, tell me a tale!" Mother goat said,

"Bie-ie-ie!
Mother goat eats soya beans as a relish with lentils,
She eats lentils as a relish with soya beans!"

In the evening when the man took her home he said, "This goat is possessed, let us take it and kill it to eat". So the man took the goat and slaughtered it. While they were eating it the table said, "Old man spare some for me to eat!" Then the man said, "This table is possessed, take it, chop it up and burn it!" After that the wooden ram said, "Old man, spare me some to eat!" The man said, "The wooden ram is possessed, take it, chop it up and burn it!" After that the cat also said, "Old man spare me some to eat!" The man said, "This cat is possessed, take it and slaughter it to eat!" Now the rats saw it and said, "The man has slaughtered and eaten the cat. Here is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate!" The man, hearing them set to and burnt the house down, but he did not burn the rats, for they stayed safe in their holes.