

M425

The man's great resourcefulness.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

They say that a man went to see his friend who had good fortune through keeping watch against the monkeys, and he decided to copy him. When his millet was ripe, the monkeys came eating it, and he went to keep watch. He made as though he was heavily asleep. The monkeys came and saw him and said, "Let us take the man and carry him off to be a sacrifice". The monkeys gave the man to a monkey with a deformed hand to carry. He carried him along until they came and reached a very frightening cliff. The man said, "Monkey with a deformed hand, you carry me well". But the monkey threw him off and the man fell down and landed at the bottom breaking his leg so that he could not walk.

There came a bear and saw him. The bear said, "Man, I am going to eat you!" The man said, "I am very thin. If you want to eat me, you first go and find a needle and push it here into my knee. Every day go and find meat for me to eat to make me fatter, then you can eat me!" The bear went and found a needle and pushed it into the man's knee. Every day the bear went in search of meat for the man to eat. Each day he grew fatter than the last, but as he grew fatter he pulled the needle up. Now the bear did not know this, and each day he grew thinner than the last. One day the bear said to the man, "I have grown very thin, so though you may not be fat I am going to eat you!" The man said, "Wait two days, then eat me". The bear said, "No, but tomorrow I will eat you". The man was very troubled.

This day there was a wild cat, which came and saw the man. The man told the wild cat that tomorrow the bear was going to eat him. The wild cat said, "Do not be afraid, I went to a human family and saw that there was an axe there in the doorway. I will go and bring it for you to kill the bear". The wild cat went and brought the axe for the man and said to him, "Tomorrow I will come down there below and call, 'Tub, come forth and smite the basket! Tub, come forth and smite the basket!' then you kill the bear". The next day the wild cat called from the lower side, "Tub, come forth and smite the basket! Tub, come forth and smite the basket!" and the bear said, "Man how is it that you are calling, and what are you calling?" The man said, you stay quiet and I will show you". The man raised the axe up, and the bear said, "Heave it up, but drop it gently!" So the man killed the bear.

The wild cat came running to divide the bear meat with the man. The wild cat said, "Divide out mine first!" Then the wild cat said, "This portion is my grandfather's, this is my grandmother's, this is my father's, this is my mother's, this is my older brother's, this is my sister-in-law's, this is my younger brother's, this is my younger sister's, and this is mine!" When they had finished dividing for all the wild cat's family, for the man, nothing whatever was left. The man was angry and thrust out his stomach. The wild cat saw and said, "What is that for?" The man said, "That is a bag to be filled with wild cat meat!" The wild cat said, "Man, you keep the meat while I run!" The man said, "In that case, I shall eat all this, but in future, if I am keeping livestock, you may come and catch some and go and eat it". Now this is the origin of the wild cat coming and catching people's chicken.

