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How the eagle carried the man out of Dragon-land.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

People tell a story that, once upon a time, there was a man who went hunting and fell down a hole. He fell right through into Dragon-land. From here there was no means of climbing out. Looking up, all he could see was an eagle, so he called to it to come and carry him out. As the eagle was carrying him and had got half way up through the hole, it grew hungry and could not carry him out. There was nothing for it but for the man to tear some flesh from the back of his knee for the eagle to eat. Then the eagle carried him out.

When the eagle came out, he set the man down and let him go, but the man returned to look at the hole. There came a gust of wind which blew the man back into the hole, and there was nothing he could do but to call again and get the eagle to carry him out. As the eagle was carrying him and had got half way up through the hole, it said, "I cannot go on". So the man tore some flesh from his arm pit for the eagle to eat, and presently the eagle carried him out.

This time the eagle said to the man, "Do not go back looking at the hole, now!" The man said to the eagle, "I have nothing with which to thank you, but in future when I am rearing flocks or pigs, then you may come and take away some to eat". So when an eagle takes people's flocks or pigs it is because of the man's promise when he fell down the pit and an eagle carried him out.