

The Spirits of the Po-yang Lake

By P'u Sung-ling

An official, named Chai, was appointed to a post at Jao-chou, and on his way thither crossed the Po-yang lake. Happening to visit the shrine of the local spirits, he noticed a carved image of the patriotic Ting P'u-lang, and another of a name sake of his own, the latter occupying a very inferior position. "Come! Come!" said Chai, "my patron saint sha'n't be put in the background like that;" so he moved the image into a more honourable place, and then went back on board his boat again. Soon after, a great wind struck the vessel, and carried away the mast and sails; at which the sailors, in great alarm, set to work to hawl and cry. However, in a few moments they saw a small skiff come cutting through the waves, and before long they were all safely on board. The man who rowed it was strangely like the image in the shrine, the position of which Chai had changed; but they were hardly out of danger when the squall had passed over, and skiff and man had both vanished.