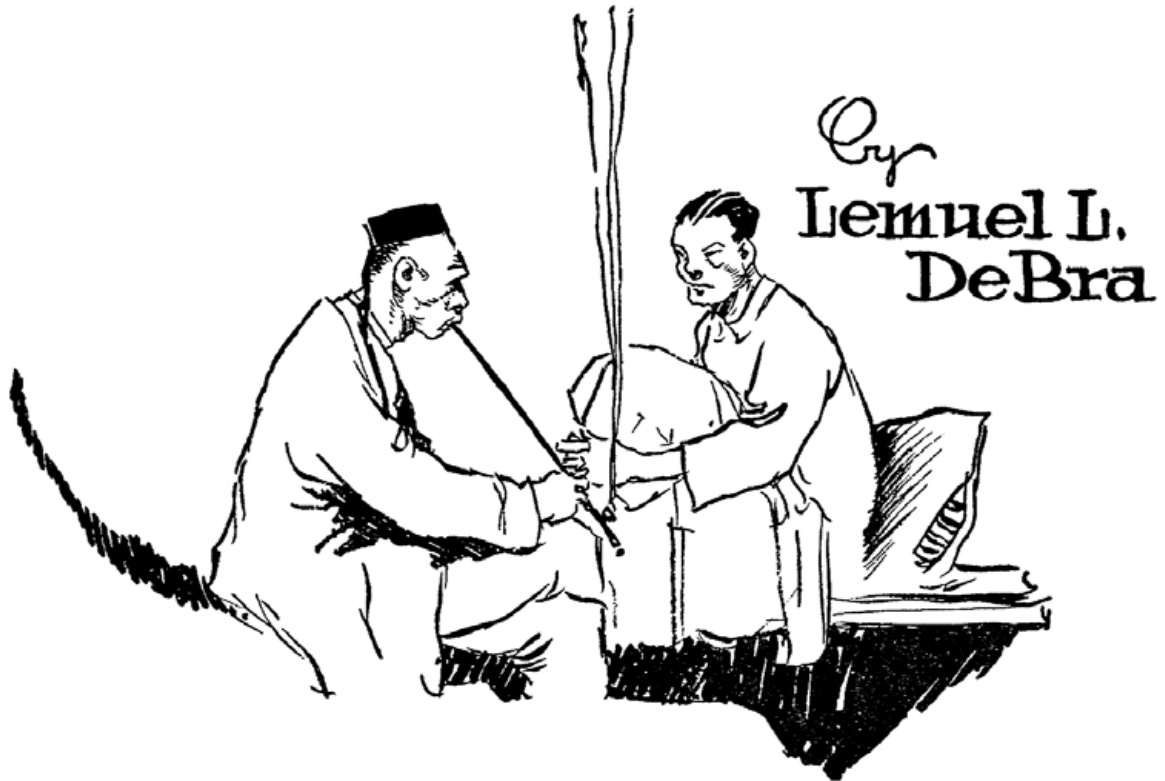


Coin of the Dead



WE sat in a booth of the *Hang Far Low*, my good friend Chan Yin Do and I, munching Shensi almonds and rice cakes and sipping a most fragrant Dragonbeard tea. From the street below, the main avenue of San Francisco's Chinatown, came the weird strains of a Chinese orchestra; and I knew that the funeral procession, the services of which we had witnessed, was passing. When we could no longer hear the discordant wail of the flageolets nor the jarring clang of cymbals, Chan Yin Do put his tiny bowl aside, smacked his lips with satisfaction and answered the question I had put to him.

"Yes, it is quite true that in some parts of China it was once the custom to bury sums of money with the dead; and although many of those tombs have been looted by you foreigners, there yet remains much treasure in the old graves of the Middle Kingdom."

I refilled our bowls with the steaming Dragonbeard, and passed the cigarettes to Chan Yin Do.

"Why do you say all the looting was done by foreigners?" I inquired politely. "You know many

of the younger Chinese have abandoned the superstitions of the older generation. I believe I read once that in a certain province, I have forgotten just where, revolutionists planned to finance their movement by robbing the graves of that 'coin of the dead.'"

Chan Yin Do nodded, and an odd look came into his slant, black eyes. With a long, polished nail he flicked the ash from his cigarette, and as he raised his arm the flowing sleeve of his satin blouse fell back and disclosed a bracelet of finest Yunnan jade.

"That would be very wicked and foolish," he said. "The money could not be recovered without disturbing the bones of the buried; and, as anyone knows, great misfortune would befall the one who did such a sacrilegious act; and, what is still worse, evil spirits would pursue and bring ill luck to the family of the one whose bones were disturbed, even though many generations had intervened. Only when the bones of one's ancestors lie in peace can one have a propitious *fung shui*."

To this, I made no reply. We sat a moment in silence.

“Still, it has been done,” Chan Yin Do admitted, finally. “Once there was in San Francisco a young man of the family of Lee, named Wah Sin, who, because he had gone to an American school, thought he was very smart and that the older Chinese were very foolish. One time he read in your books about the ancient custom of burying money with the dead in China; and, remembering how he had seen such things in his childhood, he went back to the Middle Kingdom to rob the graves. He thought he would very easily become a wealthy man. And he—he found—”

Chan Yin Do hesitated. I summoned a waiter and directed him to fetch more tea and cigarettes; and while Chan Yin Do, with noisy relish, sipped at the steaming tea, I waited in silence. I wanted to hear what happened to Lee Wah Sin when he defied the religious beliefs of his people and went back to his native land to steal that “coin of the dead.”

Presently Chan Yin Do lighted another cigarette. Then he began:

LEE WAH SIN was the son of a fishmonger whose stall was on Clay Street and who was a very honest and industrious merchant. Old Lee wanted his son to learn the fish and shrimp business, which is quite profitable when one knows how to evade the foolish laws of the foreign devils; but the boy was very unfilial and disobedient, as are so many of the younger generation.

“My stomach rebels at the sight of your filthy shop!” he told his father one day. “When I see you coming home for evening rice with a noisome gunnysack about your middle and fish-scales on your slippers and a basket of fish-heads on your arm, I am ashamed to admit to my fine friends that that smelly old man is my honorable father.”

“But one must do something,” spoke up his mother who hoped in her heart that the boy would become almost anything save a cleaner of fish and a sheller of shrimps.

“Yes,” agreed Lee Wah Sin, “that is quite true. So I shall go to an American school and learn the wisdom of the *fan quai*; and then I shall earn money easily like old Soo Hoo Nam Art who, because his stomach is big with wisdom, does nothing but cut pieces from the *fan quai* newspapers and then write them in our language for the *Chinese Daily World*.”

Old Lee was very angry because of his son’s

perverseness; and he would have given the boy a sound beating with bamboo, which he richly deserved. But the boy was very strong and willful, and the old father had lost his strength from much opium-smoking, and a strange disease which many fish-cleaners get had attacked his eyes and made him almost blind. So while old Lee sputtered angrily, Wah Sin left the house and went whistling down the street to play billiards.

One day when Lee Wah Sin had learned so much from the American books that he had almost forgotten his “Thousand-Word Classics” and the other things his old Chinese tutor had taught him, he picked up a foreign-devil book that told about Chinese customs. The writers of those foolish books think our customs very strange; but, as anyone should know, they are not strange at all. Lee Wah Sin thought the book very amusing indeed; for he had come to think that he was very smart and he laughed at the things the old Chinese do.

In the book, he read how the old Chinese always have a geomancer select the burial ground so that the evil spirits will not molest the dead; how we do not build houses or go on journeys unless the geomancers agree that the time is propitious; how we worship our ancestors who have gone, instead of giving all to the new generation which is here; and he read about many other customs which my people in the Middle Kingdom have followed faithfully for four thousand years and more, but which you white foreign devils, because you are so young, and hence very ignorant, think quite foolish.

And among those customs which Lee Wah Sin read about in the book was the one of burying money with our dead. It reminded him, as I have told you, of how, when he was a child in the Middle Kingdom, he had often seen sums of money placed on the altar with the ceremonial meats and buried with the dead.

“Now, instead of burying that money with those who are dead and, therefore, know nothing, how much better if it were given to the young men and young women for fine clothes,” reasoned Lee Wah Sin. “*Haie*, I wish I had some of it! There must be quite a fortune in those old burial grounds! There are many, many millions of people in the Middle Kingdom; but the number that walk the earth is but a handful compared with the number of those who lie in the ground. If I could get even a part of that ‘spirit money’ that lies with those crumbling bones,

I would be very rich.”

So in the days that followed, Lee Wah Sin thought much about the money that lay in the moldy graves of his ancestors; but he said nothing about the plan that was taking shape in his scheming heart.

It was several moons later that the great opportunity came to Lee Wah Sin. An American importing company wanted a Chinese youth with an English education to go to Canton for them to act as buyer. Lee Wah Sin lacked much of having completed his education, but he could speak English with a very glib tongue. He obtained the position, and sailed on the first steamer.

He had been in Canton only a month when he asked permission to visit his father's people who lived in the interior on the Si-kiang to the west of Canton. His employers did not like to let him go; but Lee Wah Sin was very obstinate, and on that same day he obtained passage on a *ho-tau* that was leaving for the upriver villages.

Since he thought he was a very shrewd fellow, Lee Wah Sin dressed now like his own people; and he pretended to be one of them, although all the time he was laughing at them and at their customs.

IN the months that had passed since Lee Wah Sin first thought of going to China to steal the money that had been buried with the dead, he had made a definite plan. He remembered that, many years before, he had seen his father's elder brother laid away with the ceremonial meats and quite a sum of money. So Wah Sin had planned to go first to their native village and steal the money from his uncle's tomb. If this venture proved successful, it would give him capital and confidence to continue his undertaking.

“If I find only a few strings of copper *cash* in each grave, I shall soon become a rich man as riches go in China,” thought Lee Wah Sin to himself as he sat on the deck of the *ho-tau*, listening to the chanting song of the boatmen.

Thus it was that when Lee Wah Sin arrived at the village of the Lees, he sought someone who could tell him of the family of Lee; and so he came that morning to my father's house, for the villagers told him that at the house of Chan he could obtain food and lodging and could learn about his own people. My father was a very old man, and he remembered the father of Wah Sin very well. When he learned that old Lee had prospered in the land of

the white foreign devils and that the son had a well-filled purse, my father took him in and charged him only a trifle more than was the custom.

So Lee Wah Sin stayed with us, spending his time wandering around the village and into the fields. He visited many of the family of Lee; but he soon learned that they were much more interested in the money in his purse than in him.

Then one day Lee Wah Sin said to one of the family of Lee:

“On the morrow I must begin my journey back to Canton. I have already told you how I promised my honorable father that I would visit the burial ground of the Lees and make sure that the sepulcher of my father's father and of my father's elder brother has not been disturbed by marauding hands. So today I ask that you go with me and point out the place where lie the bones of my honorable uncle and grandfather, that I may keep the promise I have given.”

Now the Lees thought this a very generous and filial thing; so, for a small sum, one of them guided Lee Wah Sin through the pulse fields to the low, rocky hills where, for many generations, those of the family of Lee had been interred. It was a very propitious spot, high, and free from dampness. The graves were dug in the sides of the soft rock; and, after the coffin, with the ceremonial meats and the “spirit money” had been placed therein, the opening had been closed with rocks and sealed with clay from the river. Lee Wah Sin was very loud in his praises of the Lees for the way they had cared for the burial ground of their ancestors; but, secretly, he was thinking how easy it would be to find the place at night and to break into the sepulcher of his uncle.

We thought nothing of it that evening, my father and I, when Lee Wah Sin, as was his custom, went out shortly after dark, saying he would walk by the river; nor did we suspect anything unusual when he returned somewhat late and went directly to bed without speaking to anyone. It was not until morning rice that we knew something was wrong. Lee Wah Sin did not arise and eat with us. When my father went to call him, he found Lee Wah Sin still in bed, very green in his face, and moaning with pain. Seeing that one of Lee Wah Sin's arms was badly swollen, my father examined it. The arm was broken.

“How did this happen, Lee Wah Sin?” demanded my father. “Why did you not tell me last

night?"

"I—I fell over the riverbank onto the rocks," Lee Wah Sin replied. "I did not tell you because I was not sure it was broken."

"That was very foolish," my father scolded him. "Surely you must have known it was broken. Now the arm is badly swollen; and it will be much more difficult to mend."

So my father sent me quickly to Lung Nim's to buy some *Leung-Tsoy-Suen Tit-Dar Yeuk Tsau*, which, as anyone knows, is a very wonderful remedy when one's bones are broken; and he called in old Doctor Ng Poon Gee who, since it was seven o'clock when he arrived, gave Lee Wah Sin seven large pills and put seven healing plasters on his broken arm. I heard my father and Doctor Ng Poon Gee talking in low voices where Lee Wah Sin could not hear them. They said something I could not quite understand; but it was about the length of Lee Wah Sin's purse and the length of time he would probably be ill.

INSTEAD of being well the next day, Lee Wah Sin was much worse. He had a very bad fever, and he talked foolish words and would not eat. My father shook his head, and Doctor Ng Poon Gee shook his head; and they agreed that Lee Wah Sin must have done something very wicked indeed.

Then one day, when Lee Wah Sin had been sick a long time, although his fever had been cured with a medicine my father made of two kinds of serpents, a buffalo's foot, ginseng and rice spirits, a Lee man came to our door and asked for my father. I remember the Lee man spoke very angrily:

"*Aih-yah*, bad luck has fallen upon the family of Lee. The riverbank on which we have had our hoghouse for many seasons has caved in, and we have lost three hogs. A strange disease has attacked our ducks, and nine have already died. At the same time, a son was born to one of the wives of Lee Gow; but, although the child was taken quickly to the river and washed, an evil spirit stopped its nostrils, and the child died."

"Ts, ts! What misfortune!" sympathized my father. "Have you made the propitiatory offerings?"

"We have," replied the Lee man; "but, as you very well know, such misfortunes could come only from a bad *fung shui*. So we sent one of the family of Lee to our burial ground to see if, perchance, water which mildews the bones had seeped into the graves; or, what would be much worse, to learn if

any enemy had disturbed the bones of our ancestors."

"*Haie*, that would be a terrible thing!" exclaimed my father, drawing away from the Lee man, and looking about him fearfully. "What did you find?"

"We found," cried the Lee man, fiercely, "that someone has broken into a sepulcher of the Lees and scattered the bones. It must have been done at night, for the opening had been very poorly closed, as though the one who did it worked in darkness. Now, as you very well know, distinguished and venerable Chan, there is no one in the village who would do such a wicked thing. We believe it was done by our cousin, Lee Wah Sin, who has forgotten the good his father taught him and remembers only the evil he has learned in the land of the white foreign devils. Only a few days ago, Lee Wah Sin had Lee Gum's boy show him the way to the very grave that has been disturbed. We know that Lee Wah Sin was staying under your roof, but we have heard that he has not been seen for several days. Is not his flight sufficient proof of his guilt? So I have come to you, honorable Chan, to ask if you know whence Lee Wah Sin has fled."

When the Lee man had finished speaking, my father, as was his custom, smoked a pipe in silence. Then, blowing the ashes from the bowl, he shook his head sadly, and clicked his tongue.

"Ts, ts! What misfortune!" he exclaimed. "I am very sorry for you; but I do not know if I can help you. Perhaps by tomorrow this time I may have news for you. Yes, on reflection, I am sure that if I had a few handfuls of *cash* to hire errand boys, I could have some very good gossip for you tomorrow."

So the Lee man gave my father the money. And when the Lee man had gone, I said:

"Honorable father, I wish you would permit me to earn a few of those *cash*. And if you need another errand boy, I could get Wong Sam for you."

My father frowned at me. "You are very stupid, Yin Do," he said.

Then he put the whole of the *cash* into his own purse, and went into the room where lay Lee Wah Sin. Wondering why my father had thought me stupid, I sat down close by the door and listened. And almost at once I heard Lee Wah Sin exclaim:

"Oh, distinguished and excellent Chan, surely your liver is large with benevolence! I heard what

the Lee man said; and I know how you have protected me. But, sir, it is true, all true, what the Lee man said. I have had much time to meditate while lying here; and I know now that I have been very foolish and wicked. What can I do, sir? How can I escape the righteous wrath of the Lees?"

My father was silent a long time. I could hear the sputtering of his long pipe, and I could hear him blowing the ashes from the bowl.

"It is a very difficult matter," he said at length. "Perhaps I can help you; but first tell me: Why did you do this terrible thing?"

Then Lee Wah Sin told my father the whole story, as I have told it to you. He told my father how he had read in the book of the "spirit money" that lay in the graves of China, and how he had planned to rob those graves.

"SO I went back that night to the grave of my father's elder brother," said Lee Wah Sin, "and with a stout spade I opened the sepulcher. With my flashlight, which I brought with me from San Francisco, I searched around the coffin on the rocky floor; but I could not find the money I sought. Then, finally, I turned the coffin over, and there I saw many coins.

"I gathered the coins and put them in a bag I had brought for the purpose; and, as I gathered them, I thought what a foolish custom it is to bury money with the dead, and what a foolish belief it is that any harm will come of taking that 'spirit money.'

"I was still picking up coins when a strange thing happened. My flashlight, for no reason that I knew, went out.

"And then, while I knelt there in the darkness, I heard the rattle of a stone outside the grave. Thinking that someone had discovered me, I hastened out. It was very bright with starlight. There was no sound. There was nothing that I could see that could have caused that stone to move.

"But that was not all. As I looked down at the willows by the riverbank I saw a most terrible sight, and I heard a fearful sound. Those willows, honorable Chan, were tossing and swaying; and I heard a noise like the sobbing and moaning of winter winds through dead branches. Yet there was no wind!

"I began to feel very strange; and my stomach grew cold. It seemed that the air all about me was moving with the angry spirits of the Lees. I looked back into that dark grave; and a great fear took hold

of me. I dared not enter that sepulcher again.

"So I hastily covered the opening; then, with the spade in one hand and the sack of 'spirit money' in the other. I walked my way in great haste and in fear. There were noises all about me; yet I could see no one. The tall grass of the foothills billowed like an angry sea; yet there was no wind.

"I started to run; and it was then I fell. I stumbled; yet the path was smooth and there was no reason why I should have stumbled; and I fell over the riverbank to the rocks below. I knew my arm was broken, but I was afraid to tell you.

"Yes, I have been very foolish and wicked," concluded Lee Wah Sin. "While the fever was on me, I had visions of the wrong I have done. The old Chinese are right: The bones of one's ancestors must not be disturbed. It is because I have done this wicked thing that misfortune has fallen upon the Lees. It is because of my evil deed that I have been lying here ill. I have been punished; and it is proper that I should have been punished. So I ask you, venerable Chan, what can I do? If the Lee men find me here, they will surely slay me."

I was very glad when Lee Wah Sin finished his story, for it seemed that the room had become very cold and dark, and I was trembling with fear. While I debated whether to run from the house into the sunshine, my father spoke:

"Ts, ts! What a wicked thing you have done! Yes, the Lee men will surely slay you. That is the law. And it is right."

There was silence then, for about the time it takes to drink a cup of tea; then my father said:

"It would help some, perhaps, if the 'spirit money' could be restored to the grave of the Lee man."

"Ah, I have it all here," spoke up Lee Wah Sin, eagerly. "It is all here in this bag by the grass-seed pillow. I have not touched it. I have not even dared to look at it. Could you, sir scholar, take it back for me?"

"It would be very dangerous," my father objected. "A Lee man might observe me and think that I was the one who had stolen the money. Besides, the spirits would be angry with me if I even so much as touched the string that binds the sack."

"Yes, that is true. But I will pay you well. I will pay you anything you ask."

"Haie, I could not accept money for such a thing!" exclaimed my father, haughtily. "It would

be sacrilegious. Still, on reflection, I think there would be no harm in giving me a sum of money to buy offerings, for I shall have to propitiate the spirits."

"I will do that, gladly."

"Then it would be well to give the Lees a good present of money so they can rebuild the hoghouse that has fallen, buy more hogs and ducks, and pay the expenses of burying the child that died."

"I will do that, too, sir," agreed Lee Wah Sin. "How much would you suggest?"

My father meditated a moment.

"Count what money you have," he said, finally. "First, pay me what is owing for your keep. Then set aside enough for your passage back to Canton. Divide the remainder into two parts: one-half for the Lees; and the other half to be used by me in making sacrifices."

FOR a time, Lee Wah Sin did not answer. Then he spoke very quietly:

"But, honorable Chan, that will leave me nothing."

"You will need nothing. You will be in Canton where you have a good position."

"Alas," cried Lee Wah Sin, "I no longer have even a position. I told my employers that I might engage in other business, and that if I did not return at a specified time, they could secure someone in my place. The appointed time for my return has passed while I lay here ill."

"Well, you will at least have your life, and that is more than you will have if the Lees discover you. On reflection, I am half a mind to turn you over to the Lees, for by helping you I am incurring the anger of the gods, and there is no profit in it for me."

"Oh, I will pay, I will pay!" cried Lee Wah Sin. "Do not turn me over to the Lee men!"

"Then it is settled," said my father. "A *ho-tau* leaves at sunrise for Canton. I will hide you in the rice fields below the village; and when the *ho-tau* passes, you can swim out and go aboard. Now count out the money as I have directed; for the longer you wait, the angrier the spirits will be."

So Lee Wah Sin took his purse and divided the money as my father had told him. Then my father said:

"Now give me what is owing me for your keep." And Lee Wah Sin gave it to him. Then my father said:

"Now, of the remainder, give me the half that I am to use in making propitiatory offerings for the sin you have done." And this, also, was given to my father. Then my father said:

"Now give me the other half that I may send it at once to the Lees before they learn you are here and take both your life and your money." And this, Lee Wah Sin did also, thanking my father for his generous help and wise counsel.

"Now," said my father, "since I have the money in hand with which to buy the sacrificial offerings, the spirits know of my good intentions; therefore, you may now give me the bag of money you took from the grave of your father's elder brother."

Lee Wah Sin lost no time in taking the bag from beneath the grass-seed pillow and handing it to my father.

For a time, neither made speech; and I heard only the sputtering of my father's pipe, and the hissing of his breath as he blew the ashes from the bowl. Then at length he spoke; and I thought his talk was very strange and startling.

"*Haie!*" he chuckled. "You are indeed a fool, Lee Wah Sin. Your head is as empty as your purse. You have a little learning; but you have not learned enough. You were right about the money buried in our graves; and yet you were wrong. What do you think is the value of this money you found beneath the bones of your uncle?"

"Why, I did not take time to count it," replied Lee Wah Sin; "but there are several silver coins in addition to many copper *cash*. I would say the value is at least five thousand *cash*."

My father laughed uproariously. He shook the bag of jingling coins.

"It is worth about two hundred *cash!*"

Lee Wah Sin uttered a great cry, and he spoke words that were very strange to me although I have since heard foreign devil teamsters use the same words in speaking to their lazy horses.

"Let me explain," said my father. "It is true that we used to bury sums of good money with the bodies of our dead. But one time the word went about from village to village that there was to be a revolution, and that the revolution was to be financed by opening the graves and recovering this 'spirit money.' Whereupon the people reasoned that to have the graves of their ancestors profaned and to be robbed at the same time was too much; so they went quickly to all the graves and recovered the money themselves. Then they went to the gold

and silver merchants and had worthless pieces of metal struck off in imitation of the real money; and they put these worthless counterfeits in the graves. Since then they use these imitations, a whole sack of which costs no more than two hundred copper *cash*; in some places they use merely little round pieces of paper. It is all the same to the spirits of the dead.

"So, Lee Wah Sin, you see now why you are a fool. The money that was buried with your uncle was long ago recovered by the Lees. All you got is this bag of worthless metal." And again my father laughed and shook the jingling sack.

AFTERWARD I learned that when my father finished speaking, Lee Wah Sin looked at him a long time; then, with a groan like that of one who is dying, or wishes to die, Lee Wah Sin turned his face to the wall.

Presently my father came out. I remember he carried in one hand the good money Lee Wah Sin had given him; and in the other hand he had the sack of "spirit money" which Lee Wah Sin had stolen. I saw him put the good money into a bag and hide it in his blouse. Then he looked long and thoughtfully at the sack of "spirit money" which he had placed on the table.

I saw my father reach out a hand to take hold of the string that was around the neck of the sack; I saw him suddenly draw back his hand, and I heard his breath hiss between his lips. Then, after awhile, he seized the cords in his trembling hands and untied the bag; and as he peered into the sack, a startled look came over his face and his hands shook so that the sack slipped from his fingers and fell, jingling, to the table.

The room, it seemed to me, had again become very dark and cold; and I was trembling with fear for I knew my father had done a very profane and dangerous thing. I turned and fled out of the house into the sunshine by the bamboo fence.

I was there by the fence, wondering at the things I had seen and heard, when my father came to me and said:

"Go quickly with these two hundred *cash* to Gow Li. Tell him I desire to purchase 'spirit money' with the whole sum."

So I did as my father told me.

The next day when the Lee man called, my father said:

"I find that what you have told me regarding

Lee Wah Sin is correct. He has gone. He did not go at the time you thought, but that has nothing to do with the matter. He left my house at night and hid in the rice fields below the village until morning, when he swam out and boarded a *ho-tau* for Canton."

"Then, venerable Chan, we can do nothing," cried the Lee man.

"It is a foolish man who is hasty in speech," retorted my father. "Listen well to what I have to tell you: Before he left, Lee Wah Sin gave a bag of money to my keeping. Undoubtedly, he repented of his sin and desired to make amends. Tonight, go to the grave that has been disturbed. Do not take a light, but in darkness cast this 'spirit money' into the sepulcher of the Lee man whose bones have been molested. Then quickly close the grave and seal it. If you do faithfully what I have said, your *fung shui* will become propitious and the evil spirits will no longer pursue the family of Lee."

Then, while the Lee man could not speak for joy, my father took from beneath his blouse a sack of jingling coins; and the Lee man thanked my father in a loud voice, and walked his way in haste.

I spoke up quickly:

"Honorable father, you have made a grievous mistake! You did not give the Lee man the sack of 'spirit money' that Lee Wah Sin took from his uncle's grave; you gave him the one I bought of Gow Li for the two hundred copper *cash*!"

My father jumped. He turned quickly and closed the door.

"*Haie*, you are a fool!" he cried fiercely. "Hold your tongue until you have learned wisdom!" And he scowled at me so horribly that I said no more, knowing that I must be very stupid, indeed; for, of a truth, I was about to tell my father, also, that he had forgotten to give the Lee man the money Lee Wah Sin had left to pay for the hoghouse that fell, the hogs and ducks that were lost, and the expense of burying the child that died because of Lee Wah Sin's wicked deed.

My father went to his great bamboo chair by the table, and sat down. From his stocking he took his long, tasseled pipe; and for a time there was silence save for the sputtering of the pipe and the hissing of my father's breath as he blew the ashes from the bowl. Finally he spoke to me, more kindly:

"My son, I perceive that you are observant. That is an excellent trait. If I had not been observant I would not have noticed that the sack of 'spirit

money' which Lee Wah Sin took from the grave of his uncle was all good money. That was true what I told him about the people recovering the good money that had been buried with the dead; but I recalled afterward that the Lees used to quarrel about that very thing, accusing one of not bringing back all the money they were sure had been put in the grave of a Lee. Lee Wah Sin, being more greedy than religious, searched more carefully, and found a sack of good money worth perhaps five thousand *cash*. Since the Lees have forgotten all about the money, I can keep it without any loss to them.

"Observe then, how it is more profitable to do good than to do evil!" my father concluded. "I could have given Lee Wah Sin over to the Lee family, and they would have slain him and would have divided his money amongst themselves, which would have been of little benefit to them because there are so many Lees. So I chose to do good. I restored the *fung shui* of the Lees. I saved the life of Lee Wah Sin. And, out of it, I have made a nice profit."

AGAIN I refilled our bowls with the steaming Dragonbeard.

"And Lee Wah Sin?" I inquired. "What became of him?"

Chan Yin Do looked at me, and I was sure I saw a smile lurking in the depths of his long, black eyes.

"*Haie!*" he exclaimed softly. "That was a very good lesson for Lee Wah Sin. He fled from China and returned to San Francisco as soon as possible. He found that during his absence his father had died. Since Lee Wah Sin had given up his schooling before it could be of any real use to him, he took over his father's fish market. He is a very old man now, and they speak of him as one who observes faithfully all the old Chinese customs. If you should stand by the Restaurant of the Fragrant Flower near the hour of evening rice you will see an old man come slowly up Clay Street. He wears a noisome gunnysack about his middle; there are fish-scales on his slippers and a basket of smelly fish-heads on his arm. That, my son, is Lee Wah Sin."