

Pak Jiwon: Huan-hsi [1], Magic Entertainment in Jehol*

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One morning I passed by the *Kuang-pi ssu-piao P'ai-lou*¹ where thousands of people had gathered. The marketplace was crowded and heaven and earth resounded with boisterous laughter. Suddenly I saw a man beaten to death and lying in the street. I folded my fan, hastened my pace and wanted to pass by when one of our servants rushed up to me and shouted: "There is something strange to be seen!" I asked him from a distance: "What's the matter?" He said: "Somebody stole peaches from the palace. He was beaten by the guards, he collapsed and fell to the ground." I vented my disgust, ill-at-ease and without any further look I went away.

Next morning when I went to the same place again, a crowd of artists, performers of sleight of hand, of variety shows and theatrical plays had arrived from all over the empire. They used the occasion of the emperor's birthday to receive a request to play at Jehol. At daytime they went to this *P'ai-lou* to compete with one another for best performances. Here I learned for the first time that yesterday our people had seen one of these magical shows.

Such performances are in practice since olden times when small wizards were used to dazzle the eyes of the people. Hence the name *huan*, magic show. During the Hsia dynasty Liu Lei tamed two dragons (given by heaven to the king) to take food and thus fed them on behalf of king K'ung-chia². At the time of king Mu of Chou there was Yen Shih³ and master Mo-ti's disciple (Kung-shu Pan)⁴ who could fly wooden hawks. In later times people like Tso Tz'u⁵, Fei Ch'ang-fang⁶ and others mastered the same techniques and entertained people with them.

Those perverted magicians of Yen and Ch'i (territories) who were talking about immortality, misleading rulers and princes, were all magicians. At this moment I was not yet aware what a magic show was like. These

* The following is taken from the *Jehol jih-chi* [2], ch. 16, written by PAK Jiwon [3] (1737—1805). This diary was written when the author accompanied his cousin, Pak Myongwon [4], on his travel to Peking and Jehol in 1780 to congratulate Ch'ien-lung, in the name of the Korean king, on his 70th birthday.

For an outline of the author's life and an introduction to the *Jehol jih-chi* I refer the reader to Dieter EIKEMEIER: *Elemente im Politischen Denken des Yōn'am Pak Chiwōn*. TP Monograph no. VIII. Brill, Leiden 1970, 256 p.

¹ The name of this *P'ai-lou* is apparently taken from *Shu-ch'ing*, Yao-tien; Legge p. 15.

² Cf. *Shih-chi*, end of ch. 2.

³ GILES BD 2471.

⁴ Cf. Y. P. MEI: *The Works of Mo-tse*, p. 256. — Kung-shu Pan (mentioned in the last ch. of *Mo-tzu*) constructed a bird from bamboo and wood and when it was complete he flew it. It stayed (in the air) for three days.

⁵ Cf. GILES BD 2028.

⁶ Cf. GILES BD 559.

practices came from the Western Regions. Therefore people like Kumārajīva, Fo-t'u-ch'eng⁷ and Daruma were all well skilled in these arts.

Somebody asked me: "These magicians who sell their arts to make a living with them and who live outside the law of our land, why are they not exterminated?" I answered: "The reason why China looks so liberal to us is because she can give a place for everybody to live and a chance to thrive. Therefore she does not regard these magicians as a nuisance for the government. If the emperor would take harsh measures against them, ferret them out and prosecute them, he would drive them into remote, hard-to-find places. At times they would come forth to make a great show of their arts and this would do great harm to the country. Therefore he lets everybody see in broad daylight what performances these magicians have to show. Although the onlookers may be women and small children, they all know that these are magic shows, too insignificant to become frightened and confused. This is the reason why the rulers use such a policy when governing the country."

Hereafter I shall describe some twenty magic entertainments which I saw. I want to make them known to my people at home who have not seen such plays.

1

The actor washed his hands in a basin and wiped them clean. He assumed a professional pose, looked around, clapped his hands, turned them upside down and showed them to his audience. Then he brought the thumb and forefinger of his left hand together, rubbing them as if he had a medicine pill or a louse between his fingers. Suddenly a tiny object appeared, small like a millet grain. He continued to rub it and it became greater by and by until it was as big as a green bean. Then it became as big as a cherry, then as a betel-nut, then as a hen's egg. Now he rubbed it and turned it fast with both palms of his hands and it became still bigger and rounder more and more. It was yellowy and whitish and as big as a goose egg. When it had become still bigger, its size did not grow slowly but suddenly it was as big as a water melon.

Now the actor knelt down with both knees. He slightly raised his breast and patting the ball-like object he turned it faster and faster as if he would hold a waist-drum. When his arms got tired, he stopped and placed the object on the table. Its shape was perfectly round, its colour pure yellow, its size like a basin in which five pecks could be poured. It was so heavy that it could not be lifted and so hard that it could not be broken. It was neither a stone nor iron, neither leather nor wood nor clay. Its compactness cannot be described. It had no bad nor any fragrant smell. It was something defying description like *Ti-chiang* [5]⁸.

⁷ A monk from India, famous for his magic skill. Cf. GILES *BD* 574; SOOTHILL-HOPKINS: *Dictionary* . . . p. 226b; also *HJAS* 11 (1948), p. 321—371.

⁸ For *Ti-chiang* see the picture in *Mo*, 4, 424.1. It has no head nor eyes; it has six short feet and four wings.

The actor rose slowly, clapped his hands and looked around. Then he placed again his hand on the object, turning it softly and rubbing it gently: the object became soft. Under his tenderly caressing hands it became like foam. Gradually it decreased in size and shrank so that first it could go between his fingers, then between the palm of his hand and finally when he rubbed it again with two fingers into a pill it disappeared completely.

2

The actor requested people to tear into strips several rolls of paper. Then he poured water into a large tub into which he put the paper strips, stirring them with his hands as if he would soak clothings in water. The paper dissolved and became a confused mass looking like mud put in water. He invited all his onlookers and showed them how in the tub the paper had become a muddy substance. It was a thick, muddy mass, too ugly to look at. Now the actor clapped his hands and laughed. He rolled up both his sleeves and whilst leaning over the tub he retrieved the paper, pulling it out with both hands as if he would pull out silk from a cocoon. He got the paper back as it had been before it was torn into strips. There were no traces of seams or joined ends on it. Who could have pasted the strips together! The paper had the width of a girdle and was hundreds of feet long. It lay on the ground, coiled up. When the wind blew, it flattened out. When I saw the inside of the tub again, the water was clear and no dregs remained. It looked as if fresh water had been poured in.

3

The actor stood with his back toward a pole. He asked people to join his hands on his back and tie his thumbs together. With the pole between his arms his thumbs became blue-black. It must have been terribly painful. The crowd stood in a circle and there was nobody who did not feel some compassion. After a while the actor disengaged himself from the pole and stood with his hands on his breast but still tied with the rope. His fingers swelled up, their color became more and more purple and black. People could not stand to see such suffering. When the crowd loosened the rope, the blood began to flow slowly but the trace of the rope was still red. One of our servants had kept a close and scrutinizing eye on this performance. He got angry and his offended sense of righteousness became visible in the color of his face. He grasped his bag, took money out and with a loud voice called the actor. He first gave him money and then requested to have a close look again at his performance. The actor called it an injustice: "I am not fooling you. If you don't believe me, let yourself be tied to the pole." Our servant became furious and threw the rope away. Then he untied the strings of his whip, put them in his mouth and made them soft and pliable. Then he grasped the actor, made him stand with his back to the pole, turned his hands on his back and bound them together. It was a very rough treatment, compared with the first performance. The actor moaned when acute pain struck his bones. His tears fell like peas. Our servant laughed loud. The onlookers became more numerous. But before one could see that he had untied the rope, he had already freed himself from the pole without loosening the knot,

thus showing his magical power. He did it three times and there was no way left to have any doubt about it.

4

The actor took two round crystal pearls and put them on a table. The pearls were slightly smaller than a chicken egg. Then he took one pearl, opened his mouth and put the pearl in it. Since his throat was narrow and the pearl big, he could not swallow it. He spat the pearl out and placed it again on the table. Then he took two chicken eggs out from a basket and with an angry look and stretching his neck he swallowed one egg like a chicken swallowing a worm, or like a snake devouring a toad. The egg stuck in his throat and looked like a big goiter. He swallowed the other egg too which finally remained stuck in his throat. He could barely breathe nor could he spit them out. His neck turned red, his muscles bulged. The actor showed a look of deep remorse as if he would have to breathe his last. Then he took bamboo chopsticks and with them poked in his throat. The chopsticks broke and fell to the ground. The situation seemed out of control. He opened his mouth and showed it to the people: in his throat a small white object could be seen. He beat his breast and pounded his neck, groaning and moaning. Just to boast about a small trick, he was now moaning as if he were dying.

By now the actor had become silent and listened as if his earlobe would itch. He inclined his ear and scratched it as if something would be in it. With the tip of his finger he dug in his ear and pulled out something white. It was indeed the egg. He took the egg in his right hand and showed it to the audience. He put it in his left eye and pulled it out from his right ear. He put it in his right eye and pulled it out from his left ear. He put it in his nostrils and pulled it out from his nape. The other egg still stuck all the time in his neck.

5

The actor took a piece of chalk and drew a great white circle on the ground. The audience was seated in a circle outside the white line. The actor took off his headwear, unbuttoned his gown and with sand wiped a sword till it became shining blank. Then he stuck it into the ground. Thereupon he struck his nape with the joint of a bamboo as if he wanted to break the chicken egg still stuck in his throat. He stooped down to the ground and vomited but the egg did not come out. He drew the sword, brandished it to the right and the left and looking up to the sky he threw it up and caught it with the palm of his hand. A second time he threw the sword high up. Then he opened his mouth toward the sky when the tip of the sword came right down and fell into his mouth. The audience turned pale, all stood up startled and speechless for fright. Nobody said a word. The actor turned his face upward and let both hands hang down. For a long time he stood stiff and rigid and did not even twinkle with his eyes. His eyes were looking straight toward the blue sky. After a while he swallowed the sword as if he would drink from a bottle held upside down. His throat and belly made corresponding movements as if a frog would fume in indignation. The sword coiled up but its ring was caught in his teeth; thus only the hilt did not go inside his body.

The actor, supported by his four limbs, struck the ground with the hilt of the sword with teeth and ring striking against one another and making a hacking sound. Again he arose and stood up straight. He raised his fist and with it hit the end of the sword handle. One hand he laid on his belly. With the other hand he grasped the hilt stirring with it in his belly. The sword moved under his skin as if a brush would paint something on paper. Everybody turned his head away, unable to face the spectacle directly. Children became frightened and began to cry. Toppling over, they jumped up and ran away.

The actor now clapped his hands, looked around and with a resolute mien stood straight. Then he slowly pulled out the sword and held it up with both hands. He went right in front of his audience who congratulated him and threw him some coins. From the tip of the sword blood was dripping down: the warm blood was still steaming.

6

The actor used scissors to cut paper in the form of butterfly wings, several tens, rubbed them between his palms and enticed a small child among the crowd to step forward, to close his eyes and open his mouth. Then he covered the child's mouth with the palm of his hand. The child stamped his feet and cried. The actor laughed and withdrew his hand. The child, in turns, cried and vomited: green frogs jumped out from his mouth. He vomited several tens of frogs which were all jumping about on the ground.

7

The actor wiped clean the surface of a table. Then he shook a red carpet and spread it on the table. He looked around and clapped his hands which he showed to his audience. The actor then walked slowly up to the table. With one hand he adjusted the center of the carpet, with the other he lifted up a corner of the carpet when a red bird appeared and twittered like a sparrow and flew away toward the south. When he lifted up the eastern corner of the carpet, a dark colored bird came forth and flew toward the east. When he pushed his hand under the carpet and secretly pulled out something, it was a sparrow with white feathers, a red beak and both feet ended in claws with which the bird tried in vain to catch the beard of the actor. When the actor grasped his beard, the bird picked at his left eye. The actor removed the bird and rubbed his eye. The bird flew away in a western direction. The actor got angry and sighed. Then he pushed his hand again under the carpet and pulled out a black sparrow and when he was just about to give this bird to his audience, he made a false movement with his hand and let it go. The bird fell on the ground and rolled over. Children near the table tried to catch it but the bird rose up again and flew away toward the north. The actor got angry and when he removed the carpet from the table, numberless parrots and pigeons flew away at once, flapping their wings, circling around, flocking together and perching on the eaves of a house.

8

The actor took a small tin vase. With his right hand he took a bowl of water and poured it into the vase. It overflowed over the brim of the vase.

The actor placed the bowl on the table and with bamboo chopsticks struck the bottom of the vase: water began to leak out from the bottom of the vase dripping down for a while like water dripping from the eaves. The actor lifted the vase and blew at its bottom and the water stopped immediately. The actor, facing the sky and looking askance, mumbled a spell. The water gushed forth from the mouth of the vase, several feet high, splashed around and wetted the ground. The actor shouted as if he were surprised, grasped the jet of the water, intercepted it and let it shrink back into the vase. Then he took again the bowl and retrieved from the vase about the same quantity of water as he had poured in before. But the traces of the water on the ground were such as if several earthen jars had been poured out.

9

The actor took out two golden rings and laid them on a table. He invited his audience to come up and inspect them. The rings had a circumference of about two *wei* (spans of hands), they were without a trace of any joint, as if naturally grown round. The actor stretched out both hands, opened them and in each of them he took one ring. He let them spin around and fly up into the air, he caught one ring with the other and let both interlock. When he took these two interlocked rings and showed them to the crowd nobody could find any joint or crack in them. When everybody had seen clearly that they were interlocked, the actor opened both hands, took one ring in each hand, now separating and interlocking them, then taking them apart and joining them again.

10

The actor spread an embroidered woolen cloth on a table. Then he slightly lifted one corner of the cloth and pulled out a purple stone as big as a fist. With the tip of a knife he propped it slightly up and received it into a cup. From the lower side of the stone *shao-chiu* leaked out in a tiny flow and when the cup became full it stopped. The crowd vied with one another to take out money and buy and drink it. If somebody wanted to drink the kind of wine called *Shih-k'uai-kung*, then the stone dispensed *Shih-k'uai-kung*. If somebody wanted *Fo-shou-lu* (dew from Buddha's hand), then the stone yielded *Fo-shou-lu*. If *Chuang-yüan-hung* was requested, then the stone would give *Chuang-yüan-hung*⁹. The stone was not limited to one sort of wine. What kind people asked for, the stone would immediately yield. When one drop of this fragrant wine entered the stomach, the person's cheeks would flush because of dizziness. When several tens of cupfuls had been drained off, the stone suddenly disappeared. The actor showed no sign of fright or uneasiness. He only pointed at a white cloud far away and said: "The stone has returned to heaven."

⁹ Needless to say; these are different kinds of wine.

The actor put his hands under a felt-cover, groped for something and finally pulled out three apples¹⁰. He had also one twig with leaves on it. These he held out toward our man and asked him to buy. Our man shook his head and unwilling to oblige answered: "I have heard that in former days you have always fooled people with horse dung." The actor laughed but did not defend himself. By now people were vying with one another to buy these apples and eat them. So our man too wanted to buy some. The actor at first was quite reluctant for a while to comply but finally he picked out at random one apple which he gave him. When our man bit into it, he spat it out immediately: horse dung filled his mouth. Everybody in the marketplace laughed.

The actor took needles, put them in his mouth and swallowed them. They did not itch nor hurt him. He talked and laughed, he ate rice and sipped tea as usual. Slowly he stood up and put his hand on his belly. Then he twisted a red thread and inserted it into his ear. He stood motionless for a while. Then he made several movements as if he were sipping something. He grasped his nose and mucus came out. He wiped his nose with a handkerchief and put his fingers in his nostrils as if he would jerk out hair from them. After a little while a small piece of red thread appeared in his nostrils. The actor used his fingernails as tweezers, caught the end of the thread and pulled it out more than one foot long. There was suddenly a needle coming out flat from his nostrils with the thread passed through its eye. He gently pulled out the thread, increasing its length more and more and one thread was carrying a thousand needles. There were grains of rice sticking to the ends of some of the needles.

The actor took out a white bowl, turned it upside down and showed it to his audience. Then he put it on the ground. Nothing was in it. He looked around, clapped his hands and showed them to the crowd. He took a (round lacquered) fruit plate and placed it over the opening of the bowl. Then he turned around and chanted a song. After a while he took the plate from the bowl and showed the latter to his audience: there were five pieces (bars) of silver in it, the size of a white apple. The actor again looked around, clapped his hands and showed them to his audience. Then he covered the bowl again with the plate. He faced the blue sky and looking askance uttered a sound as if he wanted to curse. After a while he opened the bowl and showed it around: the silver had changed into money, numbering five pieces.

¹⁰ In a note the author says: *p'ing-kuo* [6], apple, is the same as what we Koreans call *sha-kuo* [7]. What is called *sha-kuo* in China is the same as our *lin-ch'in* [8]. In olden times Korea had no apples. When a prefect of Tung-p'ing received imperial orders he went to get grafts which he brought back to the east, and from that time on apples were widely cultivated. But the tree was, by some mistake, given the wrong name.

The actor put one plate with ginko fruits on the ground. He covered it with a large basin and turning his face toward the sky he recited a spell. After a while when he uncovered the plate and took a look, one could not see any ginko. They had all changed into hawthorn berries. Again he covered the plate with the basin, looked at the sky and recited a spell. After a while he opened it and looked: the haws were all gone. They had become nutmegs. Again he covered the plate and facing the sky recited a spell. After a while he opened the plate and found the nutmegs gone. Instead there were red crab apples. Again he covered the plate with the basin and facing the sky recited a spell. After a while he took off the cover and looked: the crab apples had all disappeared. Instead there were rosary beads carved of sandalwood with painted figures of Pu-tai (jap. Hotei), all smiling and each with a big belly. Hundred eight beads were strung together in such a way that neither the beginning nor the end of the string could be found even if an expert would start from some bead and finger through them one by one.

The actor looked around, clapped his hands and invited everybody to see. Bragging that he is about to show his miraculous skill he again turned the basin upside down and put it this way on the ground: the basin covering the plate underneath. He looked askance and shouted as if he were angry about something. After a while he took off the basin and looked: there was not a single rosary bead left. Instead pure water overflowed, a pair of golden perches lustily splashed the water in the basin, swallowing water and spitting mud whilst jumping and diving up and down.

The actor placed on a table five plates of painted crockery, each with a diameter of eight inches. He also laid several tens of bamboo sticks under the table. They were long and thick like arrows, sharpened to a point at one end. Next he took one bamboo and placed a plate on its tip. He moved the bamboo and let the plate rotate. It did not tilt nor veer off to one side. When its rotation became a little slow, he hit it with his hand to have it turn faster. By now the plate was rotating very fast but he was not afraid lest it may fall down and break. When it veered off a little, he again hit it with a bamboo stick so that finally the plate soared up into the air. It left the bamboo stick more than one foot. Then it came slowly down and settled right on the stick whilst rotating and turning.

The actor now inserted this bamboo stick into the shoe on his right foot and the plate whirled around by itself. Then he took another bamboo stick and had a plate rotate on it the same way. He stuck this bamboo in the shoe on his left foot. Next he took a third stick and let a plate rotate on it. He stuck it into his collar on his right side. With a fourth bamboo he let a plate turn around and stuck this pole into his left collar. Then he took another bamboo and placed a plate on its tip. He swayed it and struck it to spin and whirl. When he hit the plate with his hand, a metallic sound could be heard.

Next the actor stuck one bamboo into another and went on to do this with more and more sticks, and since the plate was heavy and the stick long, the latter bent in the middle. But he was completely unmindful that the plate

would fall down and break. It spun around without stopping. When he had added more than ten sticks, the length of his pole reached the height of a house. At this time the actor slowly took off the bamboos inserted at first (in his shoes and his collar). He handed the plates one by one over to some of the bystanders to place them back on the table.

Now the actor put one bamboo in his mouth holding it like a horizontal fishing rod of bamboo. Then he took that long pole (with the plate on top of it) and placed it on the end of the bamboo which he held in his mouth. He let his two hands hang down. He stood motionless for a while. During this time there was nobody in the audience who was not aghast. Not because we expected to see the plate retrieved but simply because it looked so dangerous. Just then a slight wind moved the pole which finally snapped in the middle. At that moment the whole crowd became terribly frightened.

The actor quickly went over to catch the plate which he again threw high up into the air. The plate soared up some hundred feet. The actor now looked around, casting side glances at his audience to see what they were thinking. Then with perfect ease and poise he retrieved the plate. He was not elated nor boastful. He behaved as if nobody were present.

16

The actor placed four or five pecks of rice husks before him on the ground and in a hasty manner took them with both hands as if he would enjoy them like an animal eating fodder. After a while he had eaten up all and the ground looked as if licked clean. Then the actor stooped down and vomited chaff which he, with his saliva, formed into clumps. When the chaff was completely out, smoke followed covering his lips and teeth. He wiped his beard with his hand, fetched water and rinsed his mouth, but the smoke did not cease. He beat his breast and rubbed his lips. His thirst became unbearable. He drank several cupfuls of water but the smoke became still stronger. He opened his mouth: red fire filled it and almost choked him. With chopsticks he pulled from his mouth a portion of a half-burned charcoal.

17

The actor placed a golden bottle-gourd on the table. Then he took out a goblet (*ku*) with green copper flowers in which he put feathers of a peacock. A moment later and the golden bottle-gourd had disappeared. The actor pointed at a man in the crowd and said: "This gentlemen has stored it away." That man got angry and his face turned pale. What an insult he had to suffer! The actor laughed and said: "I make no mistake: this gentleman took it away. The gourd is in your bosom." The man got very angry and cursed him behind his teeth. But when he shook his garments, it suddenly fell from his bosom to the ground with a hard bang. The whole audience laughed. The man, for a long time, stood speechless at the rear of the people.

18

The actor wiped clean the surface of a table. Then he displayed pictures, calligraphies, small censers for burning incense, a plate of white glass in which he put three peaches as big as a bowl. In front of the table he placed

a chessboard and black and white dice. He placed cushions and spread a mat with fine fish embroideries at the four corners. Next he set up a canopy over the table. When he suddenly removed the canopy, there was a man wearing a crown studded with pearls and a gown with lotus embroidery. Another wore red sleeves and shoes with cloud pattern. One was clad in a gown of leaves and was barfooted. Two were sitting opposite each other and playing chess. Another stood near by with a staff to lean on; another rested his chin in his hands and sat and slept. All had beautiful beards and whiskers. Their appearance was strange and archaic.

The three peaches in the plate suddenly sprouted twigs with leaves on them. At the end of the twigs blossoms began to unfold. The gentleman with the pearl-studded crown plucked one peach twig and gave it to the other who ate the peach. He extracted the kernel and planted it in the ground. They also ate the other peaches. But before they had eaten a half of them, the peach seed in the ground developed already to several feet high. It blossomed and bore fruit. Those sitting at the chessboard shone in variegated colors and suddenly they turned white like snow.

19

The actor put a large glass mirror on a table and set a stand to hold it. Then he summoned the crowd to look into the mirror and see a two storied building with a hall of catalpa wood, delicate in red, green and black colors. A high official was standing in the room, a fly-swatter in his hand. Beauties in groups of three and four were slowly moving along the railing. Some lifted up treasured swords, others presented golden boxes, others played the phoenix mouth-organ, others were kicking an embroidered ball. Their bright pendants and cloud-like hairdo were without peer. In the midst of the hall were all kinds of curios and rare objects which would really suggest a noble man most luxuriously living there. Everybody felt an urge to get hold of some of these things and enjoy them, oblivious of the fact that they were only in the mirror. They really wanted to pierce the mirror and creep into it. But the actor beckoned the crowd and shouted to step back. Then he covered the mirror with its pannels and did not allow them to look at it any longer.

Now the actor walked leisurely up and down in all directions whilst singing a poem. Then he opened the mirror again and called the crowd to come near and have another look. The hall of the building was now completely deserted. The building and the kiosks had fallen into ruins. How many days and months did pass meanwhile? Whither did the bejewelled ladies go? There was a man sleeping whilst lying on his side on a bed. Nothing was nearby. When he twisted his ear, vapor came forth from the top of his head, gracefully undulating and waving like smoke. At first the vapor was fine and delicate, at the end round and full like sagging breasts. Ch'ung K'uei¹¹ then appeared giving in marriage his younger sister. A large horned owl took her for his wife. Liu Kuei led the way. A bat held the pennon

¹¹ Ch'ung K'uei is a *chin-shih* of T'ang times, deified as protector against demons. It is reported that Hsüan-tsung saw him in his dreams.

and riding on top of that vapor ascended into the sky to sport in misty regions.

Suddenly the sleeper stretched his limbs and his body as if he were about to wake up. But he went back to sleep. In no time both his thighs changed into two wheels but the spokes and the axletree were not yet formed. At this moment everybody felt a cold chill run down his spine. The actor covered the mirror and turning his back to the audience walked away.

20

The actor placed a large bowl on a table and with his handkerchief wiped it clean. Then he covered it with a red coarse cloth and did as if he would start with some magic show. Whilst moving about to make preparations a plate slipped from his bosom and with a bang fell to the ground, scattering red jujubes all over. Everybody laughed and so did the actor. He collected his belongings and that was the end of his performance. Not that he could not have continued. But since it was getting dark, he wanted to stop anyhow. Therefore he made this mistake to show his audience that all was but an illusion.