

M491
Nbao-chao.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

They tell a story that once upon a time, Nbao-chao having neither mother nor father was very poor. One day, at the beginning of the rains, as Nbao-chao was going along he came to the stump of a tree which had been cut down for firewood. Here he sat down and dropped off to sleep. He dreamt that there was woman, a visitor, who said,

“My liver is very painful,
Whoever will cure the pain in my liver
Has only to clean out the store where he keeps silver,
And clean out the store where he keeps corn,
And silver and corn he shall surely have!”

Nbao-chao awoke, but saw only a mushroom there in the place where he had been asleep. The mushroom had a sprout of bamboo which had penetrated its underside, and emerged at the top. Nbao-chao broke off the bamboo with his hand and said,

“As I have just been dreaming,
Now I will perform it and see!”

So Nbao-chao went and swept out his store and later went to look. His corn store and his silver store were both full to capacity.

One day a maker of silver clothes arrived in their village and asked his grandfather, “Do you want any silver clothes made?” His grandfather said, “I want none made”. So he said to Nbao-chao, “Do you want some made?” Nbao-chao replied, “Yes, I will have some made”. His grandfather said, “You, Nbao-chao, there! What sort of silver clothes are you having made?” Nbao-chao waited until his grandfather was no longer there, then he took the silver clothes maker along to make some silver clothes. He made two suits of silver trousers and gowns, together with a silver hat.

One day the Yeu-rang family was going to hold an ancestral festival. Nbao-chao made as though he would borrow trousers and a gown to wear from his two girl cousins. At that time only his aunt was at home. When his two cousins came in his aunt said to them, “Nbao-chao will come to borrow trousers and a gown to wear from you two. Give him your faded things to wear”. The older one said, “This Nbao-chao, who is going to give to him?” The younger one came and saw him. She spat at Nbao-chao and said, “You Nbao-chao here! Who has anything to lend to you to wear? We have not enough to wear ourselves!” So when they had all gone, Nbao-chao returned. He went and washed off his dust, took his silver clothes and put them on. He took his silver hat to wear and his silver pipes to play, and went on his way following his grandfather and his male cousins. His grandfather and his cousins said, “There is a guest following behind us, let us stay here and see him”. When Nbao-chao arrived, he gave them wine to drink from his silver flask, and went on with them to the gathering place for guests, but his grandfather and cousins all failed to recognise him. That day, in Yeu-rang’s gathering place for guests, Nbao-chao alone was outstanding. Now his two girl cousins saw this and were going to follow him. So they left first and went on ahead to wait for him. They were going to catch and hold him, but with one shake he shook them both off on

to the ground, and Nbao-chao returned, took off his suit, scraped up some dust and shook it over his body and sat down in his house. His two girl cousins came and arrived at his door and asked him, "Nbao-chao, while you have been at home, have you seen a guest pass by here?" Nbao-chao said, "I, this Nbao-chao here, sit at home every day, and I never see anybody!"

After a long time the Yeu-rang family were going to hold an ancestral festival again, and again Nbao-chao went to borrow a suit from his two girl cousins. This time again only his aunt was at home. When his two girl cousins came in, his aunt said, "Nbao-chao wants to borrow clothes again from you two to wear to the festival, well, you lend him faded ones". The older one said, "We haven't got any!" The younger one said, "That Nbao-chao who is going to give him anything?" So Nbao-chao could borrow nothing. When his two girl cousins with his grandfather and the others, had all left, Nbao-chao returned home, bathed himself, took his silver gown, his silver suit, and put them on. Taking his silver pipes to play he followed them and reached the gathering place for guests. He took his silver pipes and played, and this day also, only Nbao-chao was outstanding. His two girl cousins saw it and said, "Last time we let him go. This time let us hold him carefully". This time Nbao-chao's two girl cousins went ahead and hid, waiting for Nbao-chao to arrive where they were. The two together caught Nbao-chao. The elder sister held on and went along with Nbao-chao, but the younger sister fell down to the ground. Only when the elder sister reached Nbao-chao's house did she realise it was Nbao-chao.