

## The Carp

by Yun Wang

My father was the school principal. The day I was born, he caught a twenty-pound carp. He gave it to the school kitchen. All the teachers and boarding students tasted it.

Waves of mountains surrounded us. I grew up yearning for the ocean. Smoke arose from green mountains to form clouds each morning. My father named me Cloud.

When a son was born to Confucius, the king of Lu sent over a carp as present. Confucius named his son Carp.

The wise say a carp leaping over the dragon gate is a very lucky sign. My father says he named me Cloud because I was born in the year of the dragon: there are always clouds following a dragon. Confucius' son died an early death. My father has only three daughters.

When I was three, I wandered all over the campus. A stray cat in a haunted town. My mother says I passed the room where my father was imprisoned. He whispered to me, hid a message in my little pocket. It was his will that I should grow up a strong woman, and find justice for him.

They caught me. My father was beaten to near death. Some of them were students, whose parents were peasants. Some of them were teachers, who used to be his best friends. They had tasted the carp.

It has been recorded that Confucius could not tell the difference between millet and wheat, and was thus mocked by a peasant. This peasant became a big hero, representing the wisdom of the people, thousands of years after Confucius' death.

My father still goes fishing, the only thing that seems to calm him. The mountains are sleeping waves. My father catches very small fish. My mother eats them. My friends laugh at me, when I tell them that once upon a time, my father caught a carp weighing twenty pounds.