

# The Stolen Eyes

By P'u Sung-ling

When His Excellency Mr. T'ang, of our village, was quite a child, a relative of his took him to a temple to see the usual theatrical performances. He was a clever little fellow, afraid of nothing and nobody; and when he saw one of the clay images in the vestibule staring at him with its great glass<sup>1</sup> eyes, the temptation was irresistible; and, secretly gouging them out with his finger, he carried them off with him. When they reached home, his relative was taken suddenly ill, and remained for a long time speechless; at length, jumping up, he cried out several times in a voice of thunder, "Why did you gouge out my eyes?" His family did not know what to make of this, until little T'ang told them what he had done; they then immediately began to pray to the possessed man, saying, "A mere child, unconscious of the wickedness of his act, took away in his fun thy sacred eyes. They shall be reverently replaced." Thereupon the voice exclaimed, "In that case, I shall go away;" and he had hardly spoken before T'ang's relative fell flat upon the ground and lay there in a state of insensibility for some time. When he recovered, they asked him concerning what he had said; but he remembered nothing of it. The eyes were then forthwith restored to their original sockets.

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<sup>1</sup> The term here used stands for a vitreous composition that has long been prepared by the Chinese.