

Chun Ping

There was once an old woodcutter who found a baby called Chun Ping in a basket at the edge of the woods. He took him home and brought him up as his own. When the boy was old enough, he gave him his old, rusty iron axe and packed him off to the forest to chop wood. Off Chun Ping set...

He walked across the fields, up over the hill and down the valley until he came to a bridge. Crossing the bridge, Chun Ping was soon into the woods where he worked all day chopping wood. When he was done, he put the sack over his back and returned, over the bridge, up through the valley, over the hill and across the fields until he got home.

Chun Ping did this day after day until one day, something happened. He set off as usual across the fields, over the hill and down the valley until he came to the bridge where he accidentally tripped and dropped his iron axe into the river. Chun Ping couldn't swim and without his axe he couldn't work. He put his head in his hands and started to cry.

All of a sudden, as if by magic, a beautiful woman appeared. She stepped into the river and pulled out a golden axe. "Chun Ping," she said, "Is this your axe?" Chun Ping wanted the axe but he couldn't tell a lie. "No," he replied. She tried again and found a silver axe, which Chun Ping could not accept as his own and finally found the old rusty iron axe. Chun Ping thanked her and went to work with the iron axe.

When he got into the woods the axe jumped from his hands and chopped wood all by itself. With his day's work easily done thanks to the now magical iron axe, Chun Ping put his sack of wood over his shoulder and headed home across the fields...

But when he got home and told the old woodcutter what had happened the woodcutter was furious and sent Chun Ping to bed. The next day the woodcutter was still angry and took the iron axe himself and set off for work, across the fields...

When he got to the bridge he pretended to trip and drop his axe into the water. Again, as if by magic, a beautiful woman appeared and offered to help. First she retrieved the rusty iron axe. "Is this your axe?" she asked and the woodcutter said "No!" She then retrieved the silver axe and although the woodcutter was tempted he waited until she found the golden axe. He grabbed it from her and hobbled into the woods to gloat on his good fortune. But as soon as he got there, the axe started to chop at his legs. He tried to let go but he couldn't and the axe chopped and chased him away, over the bridge, through the valley, up over the hill and he was never seen again.

Chun Ping lived happily ever after.