

## **NARRATOR**

**Believe me.**

**Once, long ago, in the middle of a great country**

**Or, toward the southwest end**

**There rose from the plains, and reaching to the clouds: a single,  
lonely mountain.**

**Not much grew there: some tree ferns, fir trees, cypresses, and  
pines.**

**The winters were long up there,  
Adorned with icicles.**

**And in this mountain, near the top,  
There was a cave.**

**And in this cave  
There lay coiled  
A white snake.**

**She could have gone on there, sleeping her whole life through, as  
many of us do –**

**But, as many of us do, she sometimes felt there was another life for  
her.**

**She glimpsed it sometimes, in the evening,  
Returning home with her mouse or her rat.  
Before settling down to sleep she glimpsed it,  
Or felt it, just there, over her shoulder.**

**Or rather, spine. Her little snake spine.  
And so, she decided she should study.**

**Study the way of the Tao,  
To find enlightenment.**

**She studied. And she studied, and she studied, And she studied,  
And she studied, And she studied.**

**For one thousand seven hundred years.**

**At last**

**She became so enlightened she could command the weather,**

**Travel on the clouds,**

**Defeat demons in battle,**

**And most importantly, change her shape...**

**Into that of a beautiful young maiden.**