

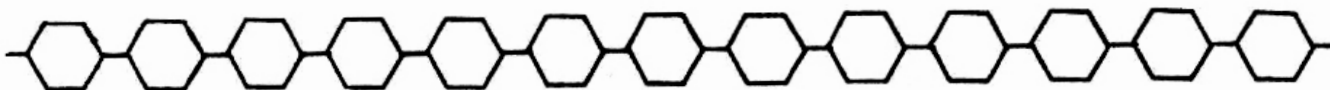
on the heavily-laden plastic handbag were cutting into my hand. My arm and shoulder were sore from having to lug the bag up and down the airport stairs. In a minute, I would be leaving Taiwan.

Relatives crowded around me, hugging and crying, saying their final good-byes. I smiled at them all -- a bit sadly perhaps. I was sorry to be leaving.

I turned toward the gangway and headed down toward the plane. As I reached a turn in the path, I looked over my shoulder and waved one more time. Aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins waved back. Slowly, I rounded the turn and disappeared aboard the plane.

* * * * *

With a roar, the shiny metallic bird left the ground and climbed upwards through the gray clouds. Soon the airport was lost under the swirling overcast. Still higher we rose, up and up, until we emerged in a brilliant world of clear blue skies, white fleecy clouds, and glorious sunlight. I'm going home, I sighed to myself.



Why the Rose Plant has Thorns
Paul Yu-Yang

A long time ago the rose plant had no thorns. The rose plant was very pretty without thorns.

As a matter of fact, to make matters worse the rose plant was haughty. She loved to brag about how beautiful she was. Everyday and night she would say how beautiful she was.

This angered the God Botanic. Botanic was a flower plant god. He was one of many plant gods. Botanic was one of the fairest gods.

One day the rose plant started to talk. This was unusual because it was talking faster and louder. So loud was this that Botanic became so angry he cast a spell on the rose plant. The spell's effect were thorns. Her face and body were covered with them. All the plants laughed at her.

Botanic did not like everybody laughing at the rose plant. He was a fair god so he took the thorns off her face. The rose plant looked half good and half bad. No one laughed and she never bragged again. That is why the rose plant has thorns.