Chapter 23. “Lines on the Flying Dragon”

First, this bit from the Historical Records of Sima Qian (ca. 100 BCE):

The Yellow Emperor extracted copper from Mount Head and with it cast a caldron at the base of Thorn Mountain. As soon as the caldron was completed, a dragon with pendulous chin whiskers descended to greet the Emperor. The Emperor mounted it, and some seventy of his officials and palace ladies mounted after him. Then the dragon ascended. The remaining lesser officials, who had not been able to mount the dragon, grabbed its whiskers, but the whiskers gave way and they fell, dragging down with them the Yellow Emperor’s bow.\(^{143}\)

Then Li Bo:

Lines on the flying dragon, poem one

The Yellow Emperor cast a caldron at Thorn Mountain, distilled the elixir, and the elixir became yellow gold. He mounted a flying dragon and ascended to the realm of Great Purity. But the sadness of clouds like thoughts of the sea bring men to lamentation, and the colored faces of the palace women are like flowers as they wave their hands like a whirlwind, as they rise into evening’s purple glow, following the wind, indulging their bodies, boarding the phoenix cart, boarding the phoenix cart to go serve the Yellow Emperor. Rambling and roaming the blue-green Heaven, this unspeakable pleasure.\(^{144}\)
飛龍引 二首

黃帝鑄鼎於楚山
煉丹砂
丹砂成黃金
騎龍飛上太清家
雲愁海思令人嗟
宮中彩女顏如花
飄然揮手凌紫霞
從風縱體登鸞車
登鸞車，侍軒轅
遨遊青天中
其樂不可

Lines on the Flying Dragon, poem two

The waters of Caldron Lake flow leisurely and pure,
when the Yellow Emperor left, his bow and sword remained,
the ancient stories say he left them in this place.
Among the palace women are many flowered faces.
They ride phoenixes through flying smoke, never returning,
mounting dragons, climbing up to Heaven to repair Heaven's Boundary,
repairing Heaven's Boundary, hearing Heaven's speech,
resplendent cloud-river carriages bear the Jade Women,
bear the Jade Women up to the Purple Emperor,
and then the Purple Emperor bestows upon them the moon rabbit elixir of eternal life.
They live longer than Heaven, exhausting the light of sun, moon and stars,
below they see the Queen Mother of the West and her deathless pool.
My eyebrows are already white, like the sound of wind through autumn fog.
其二

鼎湖流水清且閑
軒轅去時有弓劍
古人傳道留其間
後宮嬋娟多花顏
乘鸞飛煙亦不還
騎龍攀天造天關
造天關，聞天語
長雲河車載玉女
載玉女，過紫皇
紫皇乃賜白兔所搗之藥方
後天而老凋三光
下視瑤池見王母
蛾眉蕭颯如秋霜