



中译经典文库·中华传统文化精粹(汉英对照)

# 中国古代寓言选

Ancient Chinese Fables

乔车洁玲 编选、英译

Compiled and translated by K. L. Kiu



中国出版集团  
中国对外翻译出版公司

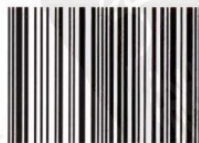


本书收入一百篇寓言，选自我国先秦两汉的多种文史名著，按年代编排，其中包括具有神话色彩的《愚公移山》、《夸父追日》；具有成语内涵的《自相矛盾》、《狐假虎威》；充满幽默趣味的《野人献曝》、《郑人买履》；蕴涵深刻哲理的《鲁侯养马》、《宥坐之器》等。每篇均加中文注释、生僻字注音以及全篇英译、白话文翻译。

This book selects 100 fables from many a literary and historical classics during the pre-Qin and the Han Dynasty. Chronologically arranged, they include the myths like "The Stubborn Fellow Removing the Mountain", "Kua Fu Chasing the Sun", the idiomatic stories like "Self-contradiction", "Fox and Tiger", and the humors such as "Joke by a Countryman", "A Zheng Person Buying the Shoes", and the philosophical writings like "The Lu Duke Raising a Horse", "The Utensil on the Right Side", etc. The book consists of the original, annotations, modern Chinese pronunciation and rendition, and English translation.

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乔车洁玲 编选、英译 冷林蔚 白话文翻译



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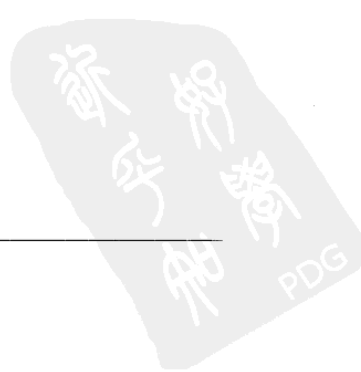
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## 出版说明

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书脱胎于我公司出版的 20 世纪八九十年代中国最富盛名的双语读物“英汉汉英对照一百丛书”。这套丛书曾经影响了几代英语和中华文化学习者、爱好者，深受读者的喜爱，以至今天还有许多翻译界、外交界、教育界等各界取得卓越成就的人士，对这套书籍仍怀有浓重的情结。这套书不仅仅是当初他们学习英语的课外启蒙读本，亦是他们的良师益友，是他们追求知识、拼搏向上的青春记忆。

这套丛书最初由中国对外翻译出版公司于 20 世纪八九十年代同香港商务印书馆合作陆续推出，丛书的编者和译者都是在各自领域做出贡献的学者、教授，使得该套丛书在读者中获得了很好的口碑，创造了良好的社会效益和经济效益。

为了将这一品牌发扬光大，我公司对“英汉汉英对照一百丛书”进行了修订、重组，聘请了享誉海内外的中国翻译界专家组成阵容强大的顾问团，在题材、选篇、译文、栏目设置等方面进行了严谨的论证、精心的编辑，打造出适应新时代读者需求以及提升中国文化新形象的精品图书——“中华传统文化精粹”。

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书内容丰富。秉承以中外读者为本的宗旨，我们增加了白话翻译、中文注释、汉语拼音、经典名句等栏目，删除了晦涩、冗长的篇目，使丛书更加通俗、实用。

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书整体性强、版式精致且与内容和谐统一，相信必将受到中外读者的喜爱。

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The series gradually came into being through the cooperation between China Translation and Publication Corporation (CTPC) and Hong Kong Commercial Press in 1980s and 1990s. The series was compiled and translated together by a group of outstanding scholars and professors.

To bring the superb quality of the previous series into full play, CTPC has put enormous effort in revising and reorganizing it, drawing from the contributions by renowned translation scholars and experts in China. Their critical assessment and compilation with regards to topics, original selections, English translations, and overall layouts will surely stand to the reader's demand and create a new image of Chinese culture, that is, in "The Traditional Chinese Culture Classical Series".

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# 致选译者



“中华传统文化精粹”丛书,是根据我公司 20 世纪 90 年代出版的“一百丛书”重新编选、修订的。与本丛书有关的各项版权事宜,包括选译者的稿酬等,我公司已委托中华版权代理总公司代为办理。

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# 前言

PREFACE



根据《辞海》，寓言是“文学作品的一种体裁，是带有劝喻或讽刺的故事”。（第357页，上海辞书出版社，1979年版。）这定义指出了寓言的两个特点：它不但具备劝喻、讽刺的功能，而且是一种有故事情节的文学作品。格言和箴言也有喻世的作用，但没有故事情节，所以不能算是寓言。

谈到寓言，一般人很自然会联想起希腊的《伊索寓言》。我国在这方面虽然没有那么闻名，但在几千年的文学宝库里，其实存在着不少精彩的寓言。这些寓言是文学家、史学家、哲学家的心血结晶。他们阐述论点时，为了加强说服力，都喜欢利用一些小故事来作例证，于是陆续形成了许许多多颇堪玩味的寓言。可惜，我国的寓言散见于各类的书籍，要一一找来细细欣赏，实在不容易。幸好最近几十年有一些寓言选集面世，才填补了这个缺陷。譬如茅盾先生在1917年编选的《中国寓言初编》，就曾经满足了爱好寓言者的需求。近期出版的寓言集不但有详尽的注释，还附有白话文的翻译，更给予读者不少方便。

寓言集的范围有的很宽，从先秦到清代的寓言都包罗在内；有的较窄，只收集某一个时期的寓言。这本译集名为《中国古代寓言选》，所收录的是先秦至两汉的寓言，也就是我国最早期的寓





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言。先秦(特别是战国)时代在中国寓言发展史上占有光辉的一页,这时期的寓言对后代作品有很深远的影响。要把中国寓言介绍给西方读者,从先秦时期开始是最适当不过的了。这些寓言最接近伊索的年代,所以对熟识《伊索寓言》而从事中西方寓言比较的人来说,也是饶有意义的。

先秦的寓言是时代的产物。战国时期,寓言的数量特丰,主要是当时百家争鸣的局面造成。诸子周游列国,宣扬自己的学说,为了得到各国君主的支持,必须想尽办法去说服他们。寓言就成为游说的一种有力武器。用故事的形式来说明自己的论点,总比直接的陈述有效得多,同时也是一种安全的做法。诸子面对的是喜怒无常的君主,如果随便进言,很容易招惹祸患,所以需要极高的语言技巧,才能够达到游说的目的。因此,运用言简意赅的寓言,是十分自然的事。

到了秦汉,政治局势跟先秦时代截然不同。这时期的寓言也就相应地减少了。秦始皇焚书坑儒和汉朝崇尚儒术的政策都侧重限制人民的言论自由。在种种客观情况限制下,我国寓言缺乏有利的发展条件。这时期的作品,不过是依据先秦寓言的模式写定下来罢了。

一般人常有一种错觉,以为寓言里的主角大多数是动物,其实并不尽然。就中国的寓言来说,当然有用动物作主角的,但也有不少和人世间的事情有关;有时更借用历史人物来增添故事的趣味,使整段叙述看来更具真实感。此外,我国的寓言也包含神话色彩,《愚公移山》就是一个著名的例子。

寓言丰富了我国的语言。其简洁、精练的语言形式成为了汉

语不可分割的一部分。学校的课本也选录了不少寓言，例如《守株待兔》、《杞人忧天》、《画蛇添足》等等，都是流传极广的故事。

挑选这本译集的一百则寓言，其中最重要的一个原则就是翻成英文后，那些只懂得英文的人，也能够容易接受。如果故事的重点涉及棘手的翻译问题，那就只好割爱了。例如，《战国策》有一个叫《周人卖朴》的寓言，整个故事最精彩的地方，就是“璞”与“朴”这两个字因为音近而引起误会的那一部分。如果把这两个字音译，就难免失掉原文的意味。外国读者面对两个没有意义的注音字，也必定会感到莫名其妙。诸如此类的寓言，就不会收录在译集里。

除了语言的问题外，文化差异对读者的理解也购成了障碍——《庄子》里的《儒以诗礼发冢》叙述两个儒生掘坟盗宝的情形。那些对传统儒家没有认识的人，就很难体会到故事中深刻的讽刺，所以这个寓言也没有收在译集里。

有些寓言很相似。译者尽量避免集录和翻译带有相同教训的故事，例如《战国策》的“曾参杀人”，指出荒谬的谣言经过几个人复述后就会变成可信的消息。《韩非子》里“三人成虎”说的也是同样的事，所以译集只选了其中一则。

译集尽可能选收今天仍为一般人熟识的寓言，特别是那些已经成为汉语成语内涵的故事。除了上文提过的数则外，这些寓言还包括“鹬蚌相争”、“掩耳盗钟”、“自相矛盾”等等。

在翻译的过程中，译者有一个原则，那就是务求译文易读易明，使读者在领会故事主旨方面不会有什么困难。

在用注方面，译者完全不用脚注，以免分散读者的注意力。如

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果某字某句的注释对理解故事真的非常重要,那么译者就用短句的形式把注解纳入正文里面。譬如一些和人物或风俗习惯有关的资料是原文没有的,但对理解故事非常重要,译者便一一列举出来——在《韩非子》的“伯乐教人”里,译者交代了以相马知名的伯乐的长处;在《晏子春秋》的“二桃杀三士”里,作者用了个“趋”字来表示晏子对三个勇士很有礼貌,但外国人不易明白这个字的含义,所以译文便直接把这一点加以说明。

如果某些特别名词需要音译,在这些注音字首次出现的故事里必定有注释。若这些注释对理解起重要作用就放在正文,否则放在篇末。举例来说,“子”这个后缀放在姓氏之后是男子的美称,由于读者即使不知道“子”字的用法也能够理解故事的内容,正文里就不解释了。但是,篇末的注释则交代人物的全名和“子”字的用法,作为提高读者兴趣的附加资料。度量衡方面的名词需要音译的也用同一办法来处理。

翻译对话时,译者依据英语的习惯,在适当的地方稍作增减。很多时原文的一句话会分成两截,说话人的名字则从句首改置在两截说话的中间。此外,每逢对话必开新段;原文的“曰”字也往往省略,因为上下文和标点符号已经把“曰”字的意思交代清楚了。

中西文化差异也引起不少翻译问题。译者解决这些问题时,以迁就读者为主。举个例子说,我国古代大臣向君主说话时照例自称“臣”,但把这自称直译成英文就会非常突兀。为了使译文通顺而又保留原文中大臣对君主的尊敬语调,译者删去大臣的自称,代之以大臣向君主的尊称。

这个选集所收的寓言,原都没有正式的篇名。原因很简单:不



少故事只不过是作者所举的例子，本非独立成篇。因此同一故事，在不同的选本里，会被编者冠以不同的篇名。译者尽量选用多数人熟悉的中文篇名，同时也为每篇译文加上英文篇名。选集里的一百则寓言，按照年代编排，以便读者对中国寓言早期的发展过程有一点认识。

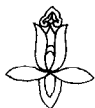
这本译集是译者近年来的一个小小习作，不敢奢言对沟通中西文化有什么贡献，只不过想把我国寓言这种文学作品介绍给西方读者而已。如果译文有任何错漏，敬请不吝指正。

乔车洁玲



# PREFACE

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A fable is “a short story devised to convey some useful lesson, an *apologue*” (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*). In A.F. Scott’s *Current Literary Terms*, “fable” is defined as “a short narrative illustrating some moral truth.” Thus a distinctive feature of the fable is that it contains “a moral truth.” It is unlike proverbs or maxims because the moral truth is presented not in the form of a saying but a narrative.

Whenever one speaks of fables, the ancient Greek fables of Aesop immediately come to mind. Chinese fables as a literary variety enjoy less international attention. Chinese literature is, in fact, rich in narratives that would qualify as fables. These stories were written by philosophers, historians, prose writers, etc., and many of them, especially the early ones, were used to illustrate the writer’s arguments. Since Chinese fables are found in different kinds of writings the reader is unlikely to come across a large number of them unless they are collected into a separate volume. This task has been accomplished by diligent scholars, a notable example being Mao Dun who edited a selection of Chinese fables: *Zhongguo yuyan chubian* 中国寓言初编 in 1917. In recent years a number of such selections have become available and, as a





result of the labour of the editors, modern Chinese translations are often provided along with useful notes to aid the readers.

Some selections concentrate on a certain period in the development of Chinese fables while others cover almost the entire history of Chinese literature up to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The present selection is concerned with ancient Chinese fables and therefore confines itself to the Pre-Qin and Qin-Han periods (roughly from the fourth century BC to the third century AD) which constitute the earliest stages in the history of fables in China. The Pre-Qin period, especially the Era of the Warring States (475–221 BC), was a flowering age for the Chinese fable and exerted a definite influence on works of later centuries. Any attempt to introduce Chinese fables to western readers should start with this period. To those familiar with Aesop's tales, the earliest stories would be of special interest because they are nearest to Aesop's fables in terms of time.

Pre-Qin fables are very much a product of the times. In the Era of the Warring States which produced the richest yield of Chinese fables in the pre-Christian age, different schools of thought vie for precedence in a political scene that was far from stable. Exponents of various schools strove to win the support of kings to carry out their ideas of government or reform. Fables were often used as a tool in presenting their arguments. A short story illustrating a point one wants to make is a far more effective and safer means than putting forth one's opinions in a direct manner. Easily incensed monarchs do not take kindly to

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criticisms or suggestions that do not correspond with their own views. In this selection the reader will come across fables that have been used to change the minds of rulers who wanted to start wars, execute ministers or embark on various acts of folly.

Due to the change in the political climate the Qin-Han period did not produce many notable fables. Government oppression of scholar-gentle men in the Qin period and the predominance of Confucian doctrines over all other schools of thought in the Han dynasty discouraged the free expression of ideas and did not felicitate the development of fables. Many Qin-Han fables take pre-Qin stories as their model.

Fables are often associated with stories with animal characters. Chinese fables do include such tales but we also find a large number of narratives with human protagonists. In some instances, fictitious inventions are attributed to historical figures in order to lend credibility to the tale or to increase the story interest. We also find myths among Chinese fables, a famous example being *Yugong yishan* 愚公移山 (To Move Mountains), in which the gods took part in the action by giving an old man a helping hand.

Fables have served to enrich the Chinese language. Many popular stories are included in school text books and the morals of these tales have found their way into the language and are still in use up to this day. Some examples are *Shouzhu daitu* 守株待兔 (The Vigil by the Tree Stump), *Qiren youtian* 杞人忧天 (The Worrier of Qi) and *Huashe*



*tianzu* 画蛇添足 (The “Finishing” Touch).

The one hundred tales in the present volume are selected according to several principles. One important consideration in choosing Chinese fables for translation is that the end product must be easily comprehensible to readers who only have access to the story through the English translation. If the point of the story hinges on an almost untranslatable literary device such as a pun, the tale would not be a good choice. One example is a fable called *Zhouren maipu* 周人卖朴 found in *Zhanguoce* 战国策. A pun has a very important place in the story: *pú* 璞 (uncut jade) and *pǔ* 朴 (rat meat that has not been cured). Using romanisation to explain the pun detracts greatly from its effect. Presenting the reader with two meaningless sounds can only alienate him.

Apart from such linguistic considerations, difference in cultural background is another obstacle to the western reader. A story from *Zhuangzi* 庄子 called *Ru yi shili fazhong* 儒以诗礼发塚 tells about two *rushen* 儒生 (commonly translated as “Confucian disciples”) digging up a tomb in order to steal the buried valuables. Anyone not familiar with the values and conventions of Confucianism would probably find the story dull and miss the irony that is immediately obvious to the Chinese reader.

When two or more fables serve to bring out a similar moral, only one is chosen. *Zeng Shen sharen* 曾参杀人 (One time too many) from *Zhanguoce* 战国策 shows that even an incredible rumour gains



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credibility when it is repeated several times. *Sanren cheng hu* 三人成虎 from *Hanfeizi* 韩非子 conveys a similar lesson. Thus only one is included in the selection.

Fables whose morals are still current today and have become part of the Chinese language are chosen as much as possible. Besides those mentioned above, a few other examples are *Yubang xiangzheng* 鹬蚌相争 (The Snipe and the Clam), *Yaner daozhong* 掩耳盗钟 (Ostrich Logic) and *Zixiang maodun* 自相矛盾 (His Spear against his Shield).

In rendering fables into English readability is an important principle. Every effort is made to spare the reader from distraction by unnecessary details that would detract from the effect made by the point of the simple story.

I have chosen not to use footnotes so as not to divert the reader's attention from the story itself. Where explanations are absolutely necessary to the understanding of a story they are incorporated into the text of the tale in the form of short phrases. Additional background information concerning certain characters or ancient social conventions is often included in the story. An example of the former is the fame of BO Le 伯乐 as a judge of horses, while an instance of the latter can be found in *Er tao sha sanshi* 二桃杀三士 (Two Peaches for Three). In this story the word *qu* 趋 (quickenning one's steps) is used without any explanation that this is a sign of respect. In the translation the word 'politely' is added to enlighten the reader.

When romanisation is necessary for special terms a note of



explanation is given at the end of the story at the first occurrence of the term. One example is the *zi* 子 suffix used to denote a polite form of address. Even without knowing the meaning of this suffix the reader is able to understand the story so no explanation is added in the text itself. The meaning of the suffix and the full name of the person referred to are given at the end of a story as points of interest. The same applies to measurements such as *li* 里, *chi* 尺 and *ren* 仞.

In dealing with dialogue, the translation follows the convention of English writings and makes adjustments or allows omissions where necessary. The utterance is often broken up into two parts and the speaker is mentioned after the first part instead of at the very beginning as in the original text. A new paragraph is used for conversation and sometimes *yue* 曰 (say) is omitted when its sense is obvious from the context and the punctuation.

Problems in translation caused by cultural differences are handled also with readability in mind. One example is the Chinese practice of a minister referring to himself as *chen* 臣 when addressing his sovereign. This is a sign of respect but when translated literally the rendition would seem extremely odd to western readers while there is no oddity whatsoever in the original version. In the present translation a polite form of addressing the king is substituted for this mode of self address. "My lord" or "sire" is used to show the minister's respect and at the same time avoid awkwardness in the English version.

The fables in the present selection do not have proper titles. One

# PREFACE

前言

obvious reason is that many were used as illustrations by the writer and merely form part of a larger text. Thus the same story might acquire, various titles from the hands of different editors. The titles used in the Chinese text are usually well known ones and English titles are supplied for every tale by the translator. The one hundred fables in the selection are arranged chronologically in the hope of presenting the earliest stages in the development of Chinese fables.

*K.L. Kiu*

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ANCIENT CHINESE FABLES



wǔ  
shí  
bù  
xiào  
bǎi  
bù

五  
十  
步  
笑  
百  
步

liáng huì wáng yuē guǎ rén zhī yú guó yě jìn xīn yān  
梁惠王曰：“寡人之于国也，尽心焉

ěr yī hé nèi xiōng zé yí qí mǐn yú hé dōng yí qí  
耳矣。河内凶<sup>①</sup>，则移其民于河东，移其

sù yú hé nèi hé dōng xiōng yì rán chá lín guó zhī zhèng  
粟于河内；河东凶亦然。察邻国之政，

wú rú guǎ rén zhī yòng xīn zhě lín guó zhī mǐn bù jiā shǎo  
无如寡人之用心者。邻国之民不加少，

guǎ rén zhī mǐn bù jiā duō hé yě  
寡人之民不加多，何也？”

mèng zǐ duì yuē wáng hào zhàn qǐng yǐ zhàn yù tián  
孟子对曰：“王好战，请以战喻。填

rán gǔ zhī bīng rèn jì jiē qì jiǎ yè bīng ér zǒu huò bǎi  
然<sup>②</sup>鼓之，兵刃既接，弃甲曳兵而走。或百

bù ér hòu zhǐ huò wǔ shí bù ér hòu zhǐ yǐ wǔ shí bù xiào  
步而后止，或五十步而后止。以五十步笑

bǎi bù zé hé rú  
百步，则何如？”

yuē bù kě zhí bù bǎi bù ěr shì yì zǒu yě  
曰：“不可，直不百步耳，是亦走也。”

yuē yú rú zhī cǐ zé wú wàng mǐn zhī duō yú lín  
曰：“于如知此，则无望民之多于邻

guó yě  
国也。”

mèng zǐ liáng huì wáng shàng  
《孟子·梁惠王上》

## The Pot Calling the Kettle Black



“I have spent a lot of time and effort,” stated King Hui of the state of Liang, “on governing my country. When there is a bad harvest in Henei, north of the Yellow River, I evacuate the people to Hedong, east of the Yellow River and move the grain of Hedong to Henei. When the harvest is bad in Hedong I would do the same for them. As far as I could see, none of the rulers of the neighbouring states are as diligent as I. But the number of people in neighbouring states does not decrease and the number of my subjects does not increase. Why is this so?”

“My lord likes fighting battles,” replied Mencius, “so I will use an analogy from war: imagine battledrums thundering and weapons clashing. At this time some soldiers abandon their armour and run away, dragging their weapons behind them. Some stop after going one hundred paces. Others halt after fifty paces. Those who ran only fifty paces laughed at those who ran a hundred. What do you think?”

“That’s not right. It’s just that they didn’t go a hundred paces, but they did run away all the same.”



白话  
翻译



梁惠王说：“我对于管理国家也算是尽心尽力了。河内地区发生饥荒，我就把百姓迁移到河东地区，把河东的粮食运到河内；河东地区发生饥荒时也这样处理。了解一下邻国的政策，没有像我这样尽心的。可是邻国的百姓没有减少，我国的百姓也没有增加，这是为什么呢？”

孟子回答说：“大王喜好打仗，请让我用打仗来作比喻吧。战鼓声声，兵器相接，交战开始了，战败的士兵丢盔弃甲、拖着兵器逃跑。有的人跑了一百步才停下来，有的跑了五十步就停下了。跑了五十步的人因此而嘲笑跑了一百步的人，这样可以吗？”

梁惠王说：“不行！他只不过没有跑到一百步，这仍然是逃跑。”

孟子：“大王如果知道这个道理，就不要希望你的百姓比邻国的多了。”



注释

- ① 凶：荒年。
- ② 填然：形容敲鼓的声音。



## Ancient Chinese Fables

“My lord, if you understand this, then you should not cherish hopes of having more subjects than your neighbours.”

*Mencius*

yà  
揠①  
miáo

苗

zhù

助

zhǎng

长

sòng rén yǒu mǐn qī miáo zhī bù zhǎng ér yà zhī zhě ,  
宋人有悯<sup>②</sup>其苗之不长而揠之者，

máng máng rán guī wèi qí rén yuē jīn rì bìng yī yǔ  
茫茫然<sup>③</sup>归，谓其人曰：“今日病<sup>④</sup>矣！予

zhù miáo zhǎng yī qí zǐ qū ér wǎng shì zhī miáo zé  
助苗长矣！”其子趋而往视之，苗则

gāo yǐ  
槁<sup>⑤</sup>矣。

mèng zǐ gōng sūn chǒu shàng  
《孟子·公孙丑上》

白话  
翻译

有个宋国人担心禾苗不长，就自己去拔高它。弄得很疲倦地回到家里，告诉家人说：“今天累坏了，我帮助禾苗生长了！”他的儿子跑去一看，禾苗都枯萎了。



注释

- ① 揠(yà): 拔。
- ② 悯: 担心。
- ③ 茫茫然: 疲倦的样子。
- ④ 病: 疲惫。
- ⑤ 槁: 干枯。

## Giving the Seedlings a Hand



A man of the state of Song was worried about his seedlings growing too slowly. He pulled up the seedlings one by one and came home exhausted.

“I am tired out today. I helped the seedlings to grow,” he said to his family.

His son hurried to the fields to have a look and found that all the seedlings had shrivelled up.

*Meacius*



yuè  
月  
rǎng  
攘  
lín  
邻  
jī  
鸡

jīn yǒu rén rì rǎng qí lín zhī jī zhě huò gào zhī  
今有人日攘<sup>①</sup>其邻之鸡者，或告之

yuē shì fēi jūn zǐ zhī dào yuē qǐng sǔn zhī yuē  
曰：“是非君子之道。”曰：“请损<sup>②</sup>之，月

rǎng yī jī yǐ dài lái nián rán hòu yǐ  
攘一鸡，以待来年然后已。”

rú zhī qí fēi yì sī sù yǐ yǐ hé dài lái nián  
如其非义，斯速已矣，何待来年？

mèng zǐ téng wén gōng xià  
《孟子·滕文公下》

白话  
翻译

有个人每天偷他邻居的鸡，有人对他说：“这不是君子的行为。”那个人说：“我先少偷一点，每月偷一只，等到明年再完全改正。”

如果知道这样做不符合道义，就要赶快改正，为什么要等到明年呢？

注释

① 攘(rǎng):偷窃。

② 损:减少。



## Once a Month



Now there was a man who stole a chicken from his neighbour every day.

“This is not the way a man of moral principles should behave,” he was told.

“Well, then I’ll reduce the number,” he replied, “I’ll steal one every month and next year I won’t steal any more.”

Since he knew he was doing something wrong, he ought to stop at once. Why wait till next year?

*Mencius*

qí  
齐  
rén  
人  
qī  
妻  
qiè  
妾

qí rén yǒu yī qī yī qiè ér chù shì zhě qí liáng rén<sup>①</sup>  
齐人有一妻一妾而处室者。其良人<sup>①</sup>

chū zé bì yàn jiǔ ròu ér hòu fǎn qí qī wèn suǒ yǔ yǐn  
出，则必饜<sup>②</sup>酒肉而后反。其妻问所与饮

shí zhě zé jìn fù guì yě qí qī gào qí qiè yuē liáng  
食者，则尽富贵也。其妻告其妾曰：“良

rén chū zé bì yàn jiǔ ròu ér hòu fǎn wèn qí yǔ yǐn shí  
人出，则必饜酒肉而后反；问其与饮食

zhě jìn fù guì yě ér wèi cháng yǒu xiǎn zhě lái wú jiāng  
者，尽富贵也，而未尝有显者来，吾将

jiàn liáng rén zhī suǒ zhī yě  
矚<sup>③</sup>良人之所之也。”

zǎo qǐ shī cóng liáng rén zhī suǒ zhī piān guó zhōng  
蚤<sup>④</sup>起，施<sup>⑤</sup>从良人之所之，偏国中

wú yǔ lì tán zhě zú zhī dōng guō fán jiān zhī jì zhě qī  
无与立谈者。卒之东郭墦<sup>⑥</sup>间，之祭者乞

qí yú bù zú yòu gù ér zhī tā cǐ qí wèi yàn zú zhī  
其余；不足，又顾而之他。此其为饜足之

dào yě  
道也。

qí qī guī gào qí qiè yuē liáng rén zhě suǒ yǎng  
其妻归告其妾，曰：“良人者，所仰

wàng ér zhōng shēn yě jīn ruò cǐ yǔ qí qiè shàn qí  
望而终身也，今若此！”与其妾讪<sup>⑦</sup>其

liáng rén ér xiāng qī yú zhōng tíng ér liáng rén wèi zhī zhī  
良人，而相泣于中庭，而良人未知之

yě shī shī cóng wài lái jiāo qí qī qiè  
也，施施<sup>⑧</sup>从外来，骄其妻妾。

yóu jūn zǐ guān zhī zé rén zhī suǒ yǐ qiú fù guì lì dá  
由君子观之，则人之所以求富贵利达



## A Shameless Husband



A man of the state of Qi had a wife and a concubine, and the three of them lived together in the same house. Whenever the husband went out, he would come back satiated with food and wine. Being asked by his wife about the people he ate and drank with, he told her that they were all wealthy men.

His wife said to his concubine, "Whenever our husband goes out, he would come back satiated with food and wine. I asked him about the people he ate and drank with and he said they were all wealthy men. But no distinguished visitor has ever come to our house. I am going to follow him secretly and find out where he goes."

She got up early one morning and followed her husband stealthily. In the whole capital city no one stopped to talk to him. Eventually he went to the cemetery in the eastern suburbs and begged for leftovers from those who offered food as sacrifices to ancestors in front of their graves. When he did not have enough he would look around for other people offering sacrifices. This was how he became satiated with food and wine.

His wife returned home and told the concubine everything.



zhè qī qī qiè bù xiū yě ér bù xiāng qì zhě jǐ xī yī  
者，其妻妾不羞也而不相泣者，几希矣。

mèng zǐ lí lóu xià  
《孟子·离娄下》

白话  
翻译



有个齐国人，他有一个妻子和一个小妾。丈夫每次出门都必定吃饱了酒肉才回来，他的妻子询问与他一起吃饭的人是谁，则都是些有钱有势的人。妻子告诉小妾说：“我们的丈夫每次出门都必定吃饱了酒肉才回来，询问与他一起吃饭的人，都是有钱有势的，但是从来没有地位显赫的人到我们家来，我要暗中看看丈夫到底去了哪里。”

早晨起来，妻子悄悄地跟着丈夫出去。满城中都没有站下来与他交谈的人，最后他去了东郊的墓地，向上坟祭奠的人乞讨剩余的贡品，不够，又张望着向其他人乞讨，原来这就是他吃饱喝足的办法。

妻子回来告诉妾说：“丈夫是我们依靠着过一辈子的人，现在他却做出这样的事情来！”两个人咒骂着她们的丈夫，在厅堂里面对面哭泣。她们的丈夫还不知道这些，洋洋得意地从外面回来，向自己的妻妾炫耀。

在君子看来，人们用来求取富贵腾达的手段，能使他们的妻妾不感到羞耻、不相对哭泣的，是很少见的。

注释

- ① 良人：即丈夫。
- ② 饫(yàn)：饱。
- ③ 睨(jiàn)：窥探。
- ④ 蚤：同“早”。
- ⑤ 施：悄悄地。
- ⑥ 播(fán)：坟墓。
- ⑦ 讪：怨恨咒骂。
- ⑧ 施施：喜悦自得的样子。



“Our husband is the support and stay of our lives, and now he has degraded himself to this.”

The two of them abused him and wept together in the courtyard. Their husband, knowing nothing of what had happened, sauntered in and put on airs in front of his wife and concubine.

In the view of men with a sense of decency and honour, of all the means people employ to gain wealth and riches, few would not cause their wives and concubines to weep together in shame.

*Mencius*

chǒu  
丑  
nǚ  
女  
xiào  
效  
pín  
颦

xī shī bìng xīn ér pín qí lǐ qí lǐ zhī chǒu rén jiàn ér  
西施病心而颦其里。其里之丑人见而

měi zhī guī yì pěng xīn ér pín qí lǐ qí lǐ zhī fù rén  
美之，归亦捧心而颦<sup>①</sup>其里。其里之富人

jiàn zhī jǐn bì mén ér bù chū pín rén jiàn zhī qiè qī zī  
见之，紧闭门而不出；贫人见之，挈<sup>②</sup>妻子

ér qù zhī zǒu  
而去之走。

bǐ zhī pín měi ér bù zhī pín zhī suǒ yī měi  
彼知颦美，而不知颦之所以美。

zhuāng zǐ wài piān tiān yùn  
《庄子外篇·天运》

白话  
翻译



西施有心口疼的毛病，她在村子里经常是皱着眉头的。她村里的一个丑姑娘看到西施这样，觉得很美，于是回到村里的时候，也学西施的样子捧着胸口、皱着眉头。村里的富人看见她，就紧紧地闭上门不出来；穷人看见她，就赶紧带着妻子孩子离开。

这个丑姑娘只知道皱眉是美的，却不知道皱眉为什么美啊！

注释

① 颦(pín):皱眉。

② 挈(qiè):带领。

## Aping a Beauty



Xi Shi, a famous beauty, had a pain in her bosom, so she had a frown on her face when she went out. An ugly girl who lived nearby saw her and thought she looked very beautiful. Therefore when she went home, she also put her hands on her bosom and had a frown on her face.

When a rich man in the neighbourhood saw her, he shut his doors tightly and did not go out. When a poor man saw her, he took his wife and children and gave her a wide berth.

She only knew Xi Shi's frown looked beautiful but she did not know the reason for its beauty.

*Zhuangzi*



kǎn  
坎  
jǐng  
井  
zhī  
之  
wā  
蛙

zǐ dú bù wén fū kǎn jǐng zhī wā hū wèi dōng hǎi zhī  
子独不闻夫坎井<sup>①</sup>之蛙乎？谓东海之

biē yuē wú lè yǔ chū tiào liáng hū jǐng gān zhī shàng  
鳖曰：“吾乐与！出，跳梁乎井干<sup>②</sup>之上；

rù xiū hū quē zhòu zhī yá fù shuǐ zé jiē yè chí yí jué<sup>④</sup>  
入，休乎缺瓮之崖。赴水则接腋持颐<sup>③</sup>，蹶<sup>④</sup>

ní zé mò zú miè fū hái gān xiè yǔ kē dòu mò wú  
泥则没足灭附<sup>⑤</sup>。还<sup>⑥</sup>蚪<sup>⑦</sup>，蟹与蝌蚪，莫吾

néng ruò yě qiè fū shàn yī hē zhī shuǐ ér kuà zhì kǎn jǐng  
能若也。且夫擅一壑之水而跨峙<sup>⑧</sup>，坎井

zhī lè cǐ yì zhì yí fū zǐ bù shí lái rù guān hū  
之乐，此亦至矣！夫子不时来入观乎？”

dōng hǎi zhī biē zuǒ zú wèi rù ér yòu xī yǐ zhī yí  
东海之鳖左足未入而右膝已繁<sup>⑨</sup>矣。

yú shì qūn xún ér què gào zhī hǎi yuē fū qiān lǐ zhī  
于是逡巡而却。告之海，曰：“夫千里之

yuǎn bù zú yǐ jǔ qí dà qiān rèn zhī gāo bù zú yǐ jí  
远，不足以举其大；千仞之高，不足以极

qí shēn yǔ zhī shí shí nián jiǔ liǎo ér shuǐ fú wèi jiā  
其深。禹之时，十年九潦，而水弗为加

yì tāng zhī shí bā nián qī hàn ér yá bù wèi jiā sǔn  
益；汤之时，八年七旱，而崖不为加损。

fū bù wèi qǐng jiǔ tuī yí bù yǐ duō shǎo jìn tuì zhě cǐ  
夫不为顷久推移，不以多少进退者，此

yì dōng hǎi zhī dà lè yě  
亦东海之大乐也。”

yú shì kǎn jǐng zhī wā wén zhī zhé zhé rán jīng guī guī  
于是坎井之蛙闻之，適適然<sup>⑩</sup>惊，规规

rán zì shī yě  
然<sup>⑩</sup>自失也。

## The Frog in the Shallow Well



Have you not heard of the frog that lived in a shallow well? It said to a turtle that lived in the East Sea, “I am so happy! When I go out, I jump about on the railing beside the mouth of the well. When I come home, I rest in the holes on the broken wall of the well. If I jump into the water, it comes up to my armpits and holds up my cheeks. If I walk in the mud, it covers up my feet. I look around at the wriggly worms, crabs and tadpoles, and none of them can compare with me. Moreover, I am lord of this trough of water and I stand up tall in this shallow well. My happiness is full. My dear sir, why don’t you come often and look around my place?”

Before the turtle from the East Sea could get its left foot in the well, its right knee got stuck. It hesitated and retreated. The turtle told the frog about the East Sea.

“Even a distance of a thousand *li*<sup>①</sup> cannot give you an idea of the sea’s width; even a height of a thousand *ren*<sup>②</sup> cannot give you an idea of its depth. In the time of King Yu of the Xia dynasty, there were floods nine years out of ten, but the waters in the sea did not increase. In the time of King Tang of the Shang dynasty there were droughts seven years out of



白话  
翻译



你难道没有听说过破井里的青蛙的故事吗？他对东海里的老鳖说：“我真是过得高兴啊！出来时在井栏上跳跳跳跳；进去时就在缺砖少瓦的井口边休息休息。跳到水里，水刚好齐着我的两腋和两腮；跳到泥里，泥刚好没到我的脚脖和脚面。回头看看那些虾虫、螃蟹和蝌蚪，他们都赶不上我。况且，我独霸着这一汪水，享受着破井之乐，这真是美极了！你为什么不经常来参观一下呢？”

东海的老鳖听了他的话，左脚还没有迈进井里，右腿就已经被绊住了。于是退转回来，把大海的情况告诉青蛙说：“一千里远，不足以形容大海的宽度；一千丈深，不足以形容大海的深度。在夏禹的时代，十年发了九次大水，可海水并没有因此而增多；在殷汤的时代，八年闹了七次大旱，可海岸并没有因此而缩短。这不因为时间的长短而变更、不是因为水量多少而进退的所在，就是住在东海的大快乐啊！”

破井里的青蛙听到了这番话，十分惊诧，不禁茫然失神了。

注释

- ① 坎(kǎn)井：破井，废井。
- ② 井干：井栏。
- ③ 颐：腮。
- ④ 蹶(jué)：跳。
- ⑤ 跗(fū)：脚面。
- ⑥ 还：回头看。
- ⑦ 虾(gān)：水中的小虫。
- ⑧ 跨跄(zhì)：占据。
- ⑨ 繫(zhí)：绊。
- ⑩ 遭遭然：惊诧的样子。
- ⑪ 规规然：失神的样子。



eight, but the waters in the sea did not decrease. The sea does not change along with the passage of time and its level does not rise or fall according to the amount of rain that falls. The greatest happiness is to live in the East Sea.”

After listening to these words, the frog of the shallow well was shocked into realization of his own insignificance and became very ill at ease.

*Zhuangzi*



### Notes

- ① li: a Chinese unit of length equal to half a kilometre.
- ② ren: a Chinese unit of length, approximately equal to  $2\frac{1}{3}$  metres.

yuān

鵯

chú

鵯

fū

腐

shǔ

鼠

huì zǐ xiàng liáng zhuāng zǐ wǎng jiàn zhī huò wèi huì  
惠子相梁，庄子往见之。或谓惠

zǐ yuē zhuāng zǐ lái yù dài zǐ xiàng yú shì huì zǐ  
子曰：“庄子来，欲代子相。”于是惠子

kǒng sōu yú guó zhōng sān rì sān yè zhuāng zǐ wǎng jiàn  
恐，搜于国中三日三夜。庄子往见

zhī yuē nán fāng yǒu niǎo qí míng wéi yuān chú zǐ  
之，曰：“南方有鸟，其名为鵯鵯<sup>①</sup>，子

zhī zhī hū fū yuān chú fā yú nán hǎi ér fēi yú běi hǎi  
知之乎？夫鵯鵯发于南海，而飞于北海，

fēi wú tóng bù zhǐ fēi liàn shí bù shí fēi lǐ quán bù  
非梧桐不止，非练实<sup>②</sup>不食，非醴<sup>③</sup>泉不

yǐn yú shì chī dé fū shǔ yuān chú guò zhī yǎng ér  
饮。于是，鸱<sup>④</sup>得腐鼠，鵯鵯过之，仰而

shì zhī yuē hē jīn zǐ yù yǐ zǐ zhī liáng guó ér xià  
视之，曰：‘吓！’今子欲以子之梁国而吓

wǒ xié  
我邪？”

zhuāng zǐ wài piān qiū shuǐ  
《庄子外篇·秋水》



## The Phoenix and the Owl



Weizi<sup>①</sup> became the prime minister of the state of Liang. Zhuangzi<sup>②</sup> went to visit him.

“Zhuangzi is here because he wants to be prime minister in your place,” someone told Weizi.

Weizi was afraid and searched for Zhuangzi in the capital city for three days and three nights.

Zhuangzi went to see him.

“In the south is a bird called phoenix,” said Zhuangzi. “Have you heard of it? The phoenix starts off from the South Sea and flies to the North Sea. It does not alight on anything except the noble parasol tree; it does not eat anything except the fruit of bamboos; it does not drink except from sweet springs. At this time an owl got a decaying rat. The phoenix flew past the owl who lifted its head and screeched, ‘Shoo!’”

“Are you now using your position as prime minister of Liang to ‘shoo’ me off?”

*Zhuangzi*

白话  
翻译



惠子在梁国做宰相，庄子去见他。有人对惠子说：“庄子来是想要接替你的相位。”于是惠子很害怕，在全国搜捕了三天三夜。庄子前去见惠子，说：“南方有一种鸟，名字叫鹓鶵，您知道吗？它从南海出发，向北海飞去，一路上不是梧桐树不落下休息，不是竹子的种子就不吃，不是甘甜的泉水就不喝。在这里有一只猫头鹰得到了一只腐烂的老鼠，鹓鶵正好从它的上方飞过，猫头鹰就仰起头瞪着它发出恐吓的声音‘吓’。现在您也恐怕我来抢夺您的梁国相位吗？”



注释

- ① 鹓(yuān)鶵(chú):属于凤凰一类的鸟。
- ② 练实:竹实,形容稀少。
- ③ 醴(lǐ):甜酒。
- ④ 鸱(chī):猫头鹰。



## Notes

- ① Weizi: i.e. Wei Shi. The -zi suffix is attached to the last name of a person to form a polite mode of address.
- ② Zhuangzi: i.e. Zhuang Zhou.





鲁侯养鸟

xī zhě hǎi niǎo zhǐ yú lǔ jiāo lǔ hóu yù ér shāng ① 而觴 ②

zhī yú miào zòu jiǔ shào yǐ wéi lè jù tài láo ③ yǐ wéi 之于庙，奏《九韶》以为乐，具太牢 ③ 以为

shàn 膳。

niǎo nǎi xuàn shì yōu bēi bù gǎn shí yì luán ④ bù gǎn 鸟乃眩视忧悲，不敢食一脔 ④，不敢

yǐn yì bēi sān rì ér sǐ cǐ yǐ jǐ yǎng yǎng niǎo yě 饮一杯，三日而死。此，以己养养鸟也，

fēi yǐ niǎo yǎng yǎng niǎo yě 非以鸟养养鸟也。

zhuāng zǐ wài piān zhì lè 《庄子外篇·至乐》

白话翻译



从前，有一只海鸟飞落在鲁国的郊外，鲁国的国王把它迎进太庙，给它喝酒，演奏《九韶》作为它的娱乐，准备了祭祀用的牛羊作为它的食物。

这只鸟面对这些，觉得头晕目眩、忧郁悲伤，不敢吃一块肉，不敢喝一杯酒，三天之后就死了。

这是用招待人的方法来养鸟，不是用养鸟的办法来养鸟啊！



注释

- ① 御：迎接。
- ② 觴：饮酒。
- ③ 太牢：用于祭祀的一牛一羊称作太牢。
- ④ 脔(luán)：切成块状的肉。



## Man's Meat— Bird's Poison



Once upon a time, a yuanju, a fabulous bird from the sea, rested in the suburbs of the state of Lu. With great pomp and ceremony the Marquis of Lu escorted the bird to his ancestral temple where a toast was respectfully drunk to it. The ancient music of *jiushao* usually reserved for grand occasions was played. Beef, pork and lamb which were used as sacrificial offerings for important events were spread before the bird.

The bird became dizzy and pined away, not daring to touch a morsel of meat or a cup of wine. After three days it was dead.

The Marquis treated the bird in the way he himself would want to be treated, not in the way the bird would like to be treated.

*Zhuangzi*

yǎng  
养  
dòu  
斗  
jī  
鸡

jì shǔng zǐ wèi wáng yǎng dòu jī shí rì ér wèn  
纪渚子为王养斗鸡。十日而问：“

jī yǐ hū yuē wèi yě fāng xū jiāo ér shì qì shí  
鸡已乎？”曰：“未也。方虚骄而恃气。”十

rì yòu wèn yuē wèi yě yóu yīng xiǎng jǐng ① shí rì yòu  
日又问。曰：“未也。犹应响景①。”十日又

wèn yuē wèi yě yóu jí shì ér shèng qì shí rì yòu  
问。曰：“未也。犹疾视而盛气。”十日又

wèn yuē jī yǐ jī suī yǒu míng zhě yǐ wú biàn yǐ  
问。曰：“几矣。鸡虽有鸣者，已无变矣。

wàng zhī sì mù jī yǐ qí dé quán yǐ yì jī wú gǎn  
望之似木鸡矣，其德全矣②。异鸡无敢

yīng zhě fǎn zǒu yǐ  
应者，反走矣。”

zhuāng zǐ wài piān dá shēng  
《庄子外篇·达生》

白话  
翻译



纪渚子为国王培养斗鸡。十天后，国王问他：“斗鸡培养好了吗？”他回答说：“还没有。现在还虚浮骄傲、恃气而动。”过了十天，国王又问他。他回答说：“没有。现在它对声音和影像还有回应。”过了十天又问，回答说：“还没有。还是目光怒视、盛气凌人。”又过了十天之后再问，纪渚子说：“差不多了。即使听到其他斗鸡的鸣叫，也已经无动于衷。看上去好像一只木鸡一样，精神凝寂。其他斗鸡看到它，没有敢应战的，转身就跑了。”



注释

① 响(xiǎng)景：声音和影像。

② 其德全矣：指达到了精神凝寂的境界。



# The Fighter



Ji Shengzi raised fighter cocks for the king.

After ten days the king asked, "Is the cock ready?"

"Not yet. It is still puffed up with arrogance and puts on airs."

After another ten days the king asked about the cock again.

"Not yet," was the reply. "It still reacts violently to the merest sound or shadow."

Another ten days passed and the king pressed his question a third time.

"Not yet," said Ji. "It still glowers and looks down on everyone."

Ten days passed. The king again asked about the cock.

"It is almost ready," replied Ji. "Even though other cocks make a noise, it shows no reaction. The bird looks like a wooden cock but it is fully equipped to win in a fight. No cock dares to fight with it. They all turn and flee."

*Zhuangzi*

měi  
美  
yǔ  
与  
chǒu  
丑

yáng zǐ zhī sòng sù yú nì lǚ nì lǚ yǒu qiè èr  
阳子之宋，宿于逆旅<sup>①</sup>。逆旅有妾二  
rén qí yī rén měi qí yī rén wù wù zhě guì ér měi zhě  
人，其一人美，其一人恶<sup>②</sup>。恶者贵而美者  
jiàn  
贱。

yáng zǐ wèn qí gù nì lǚ xiǎo zǐ duì yuē qí měi  
阳子问其故。逆旅小子对曰：“其美  
zhě zì měi wú bù zhī qí měi yě qí wùzhě zì wù wú bù  
者自美，吾不知其美也，其恶者自恶，吾不  
zhī qí wù yě  
知其恶也。”

yáng zǐ yuē dì zǐ jì zhī xíng xián ér qù zì xián  
阳子曰：“弟子记之。行贤而去自贤  
zhī xíng ān wǎng ér bù ài zāi  
之行，安往而不爱哉？”

zhuāng zǐ wài piān shān mù  
《庄子外篇·山木》

白话  
翻译

阳子到宋国去，住在一个旅店里。旅店老板有两个小妾，其中一个漂亮，一个丑陋。但是丑陋的那个比较得宠，而漂亮的那个却受冷落。

阳子询问其中的原因。旅店老板回答说：“长得漂亮的那个自以为美，我却不觉得她美；丑的那个认识到自己长得难看，我却不觉得她丑陋。”

阳子说：“弟子们你们要记住啊！行为贤德良善，而去除夸耀自己的行为，去哪里会不受到人们的爱戴呢？”



注释

① 逆旅：旅店。

② 恶：容貌丑陋。

## Beauty and Plainness



On his way to the state of Song Yangzi<sup>①</sup> stayed at an inn. The innkeeper had two concubines. One was pretty and attractive while the other was homely and plain. The plain one was made much of by her husband but the pretty one was slighted.

Yangzi asked the innkeeper why he treated his concubines differently.

“The pretty one,” said the young husband, “is very conscious of her good looks. That is why I do not find her beautiful. The plain one is very conscious of her homeliness. That is why I do not find her unattractive.”

Yangzi said to his disciples, “You must remember this lesson. If you are virtuous in your conduct without being constantly conscious of your own worth, you will find favour with people wherever you go.”

*Zhuangzi*



**Note**

① Yangzi: i.e. Yang Zhu.

jiàng

匠

shí

石

yùn

运

jīn

斤

zhuāng zǐ sòng zàng guò huì zǐ zhī mù gù wèi cóng  
庄子送葬，过惠子之墓。顾谓从

zhě yuē  
者曰：

yǐng rén è mǎn qí bí duān ruò yíng yì shǐ jiàng  
郢<sup>①</sup>人垩<sup>②</sup>慢其鼻端，若蝇翼。使匠

shí zhuó zhī jiàng shí yùn jīn chéng fēng tīng ér zhuó  
石斫<sup>③</sup>之。匠石运斤<sup>④</sup>成风，听<sup>⑤</sup>而斫

zhī jīn è ér bí bù shāng yǐng rén lì bù shī róng sòng  
之，尽垩而鼻不伤，郢人立不失容。宋

yuán jūn wén zhī zhào jiàng shí yuē cháng shì wèi guǎ rén wéi  
元君闻之，召匠石曰：“尝试为寡人为

zhī jiàng shí yuē chén zé cháng néng zhuó zhī suī rán  
之。”匠石曰：“臣则尝能斫之。虽然，

chén zhī zhì sǐ jiǔ yǐ  
臣之质<sup>⑥</sup>死久矣。”

zì fū zǐ zhī sǐ yě wú wú yǐ wéi zhì yǐ wú wú  
自夫子之死也，吾无以为质矣，吾无

yǔ yán zhī yǐ  
与言之矣。

zhuāng zǐ jī piān xú wú guǐ  
《庄子鸡篇·徐无鬼》



## The Carpenter and His Axe



Zhuangzi passed the grave of Weizi while he was taking part in the funeral procession of a friend.

He turned and said to those following him, "In Ying, the capital city, a man had a bit of chalk as tiny as the wings of a fly smeared on the tip of his nose. He asked a carpenter named Shi to chop it off. Shi brandished his axe, quick as wind, and with great ease chopped off all the chalk without hurting the nose, while the man stood there calmly with no change of expression on his face."

This came to the ears of King Yuan of the state of Song. He had the carpenter brought to him.

"Do it again for me," said the king.

"It is true that I was able to do it once," replied the carpenter. "But not any more. The other partner has been dead for a long time."

"Ever since the death of my friend Weizi, I too have lost a partner. I have no one to hold discussions with."

*Zhuangzi*



白话  
翻译



庄子去送葬，经过惠子的坟墓。回过头来对跟随的人说：

那个地方有个人，他把一滴白土泥浆溅到鼻尖上，像苍蝇的翅膀一样薄。他让匠石为他砍掉，匠石把斧头舞动得像风一样快，随手劈下去，小泥点砍掉了却没有伤到鼻子。郢地的这个人站在那里，脸色都没有变一下。宋元君听说了这件事，召见匠石，对他说：“替我试一下吧。”回答说：“我曾经是能够做到的。但是，我的搭档已经死去很久了。”

庄子在惠子的墓前感慨地说：“自从你死了之后，我就没有了搭档和对手，没有了能够跟我交流的人了。”

注释

- ① 郢(yǐng):地名,春秋时楚国的都城。
- ② 垩(è):用来刷墙的白土。
- ③ 斲(zhuó):砍。
- ④ 斤:斧头。
- ⑤ 听:随手。
- ⑥ 质:对象,对手。



zhuāng  
庄  
zhōu  
周  
dài  
贷  
sù  
粟

zhuāng zhōu jiā pín gù wǎng dài sù yú jiān hé hóu  
庄周家贫，故往贷<sup>①</sup>粟于监河侯。

jiān hé hóu yuē nuò wǒ jiāng dé yì jīn jiāng dài zǐ  
监河侯曰：“诺！我将得邑金<sup>②</sup>，将贷子

sān bǎi jīn kě hū  
三百金，可乎？”

zhuāng zhōu fèn rán zuò sè yuē zhōu zuó lái yǒu zhōng  
庄周忿然<sup>③</sup>作色曰：“周昨来，有中

dào ér hū zhě zhōu gù shì chē zhé zhōng yǒu fú yú  
道<sup>④</sup>而呼者。周顾视车辙中，有鲋<sup>⑤</sup>鱼

yān zhōu wèn zhī yuē fú yú lái zǐ hé wéi zhě xié  
焉。周问之曰：“鲋鱼来，子何为者邪？”

duì yuē wǒ dōng hǎi zhī bō chén yě jūn qǐ yǒu dòu shēng  
对曰：“我，东海之波臣也。君岂有斗升

zhī shuǐ ér huó wǒ zāi zhōu yuē nuò wǒ qiè nán yóu wú  
之水而活我哉？”周曰：“诺！我且南游吴

yuè zhī wáng jī xī jiāng zhī shuǐ ér yíng zǐ kě hū fú  
越之王，激西江之水而迎子，可乎？”鲋

yú fèn rán zuò sè yuē wú shī wǒ cháng yǔ wǒ wú suǒ  
鱼忿然作色曰：“吾失我常与，我无所

chù wú dé dòu shēng zhī shuǐ rán huó ěr jūn nǎi yán cǐ  
处，吾得斗升之水然活耳。君乃言此，

céng bù rú zǎo suǒ wǒ yú kū yú zhī sì  
曾不如早索我于枯鱼之肆！”

zhuāng zǐ zá piān wài wù  
《庄子杂篇·外物》



## A Fish in Straits



Zhuang Zhou's family was poor so he went to the Marquis of Jianhe<sup>①</sup> to ask for a loan of grain.

"Sure," said the marquis. "I will soon get the taxes from my fief. Then I will lend you three hundred pieces of gold. Will that be all right?"

Zhuang Zhou was pale with anger. "On my way here yesterday, I heard cries coming from the middle of the road. I turned round to take a look and found a crucian carp lying in a rut."

"'Crucian carp,' I said, 'what are you doing here?'"

"'I am a minister serving the king of the East Sea,' it replied. 'Sir, do you have a little water to save my life?'"

"'Sure,' I said. 'I am about to go to the south where I will persuade the kings of the states of Wu and Yue to channel the waters of the Xijiang River here to escort you back to the sea. Will that be all right?'"

"The crucian carp was pale with anger. 'I am out of my proper element and have no place of refuge. A little water will save my life, but you have the effrontery to say such things. You would have done better to hurry along to the dried fish

白话  
翻译



庄周的家里很贫穷，所以去找监河侯借贷粮食。

监河侯说：“好的。等我收到封地的税金，到时候就借给你三百金，可以吗？”

庄周十分生气地说：“我昨天来的时候，在路上听到呼叫我的声音。我回过头看见车轮辗注的地方有一条鲋鱼。我问他：‘鲋鱼啊，你在这里干什么啊？’它回答说：‘我是东海的水官，您有一升水来救活我的命吗？’我说：‘好啊！等我到南方游说吴国和越国的国王，引西江的水来救你，可以吗？’鲋鱼生气地说：‘我离开了平常生活的水中，没有容身之地，只需要一升水就可以活命。你如果这样说，还不如趁早到干鱼店里去找我呢！’”

注释

- ① 贷：借。
- ② 邑金：封地的税金。
- ③ 忿然：愤怒的样子。
- ④ 中道：途中。
- ⑤ 鲋(fú)鱼：鲫鱼。



shop and look for me there.”

*Zhuangzi*



**Note**

- ① Jianhe: literally means overlooking the dyer. Some sources say this refers to the Marquis Wen of the state of Wei while others speculate that this person is merely a magistrate.

杞  
人  
忧  
天

qǐ guó yǒu rén yōu tiān dì bēng zhuì shēn wáng suǒ  
杞国有人，忧天地崩坠，身亡所

jì fèi qǐn shí zhě  
寄，废寝食者。

yòu yǒu yōu bǐ zhī suǒ yōu zhě yīn wǎng xiǎo zhī yuē  
又有忧彼之所忧者，因往晓之，曰：

tiān jī qì ěr wáng chù wáng qì ruò qū shēn hū xī  
“天，积气耳，亡处亡气。若屈伸呼吸，

zhōng rì zài tiān zhōng xíng zhǐ nài hé yōu bēng zhuì hū  
终日在天中行止，奈何忧崩坠乎？”

qí rén yuē tiān guǒ jī qì rì yuè xīng xiù bù dāng  
其人曰：“天果积气，日月星宿不当

zhuì xié  
坠邪？”

xiǎo zhī zhě yuē rì yuè xīng xiù yì jī qì zhōng zhī  
晓之者曰：“日月星宿，亦积气中之

yǒu guāng yào zhě zhǐ shǐ zhuì yì bù néng yǒu suǒ zhōng  
有光耀者。只使坠亦不能有所中

shāng  
伤。”

qí rén yuē nài dì huài hé  
其人曰：“奈地坏何？”

xiǎo zhě yuē dì jī kuài ěr chōng sè sì xū wáng  
晓者曰：“地，积块耳。充塞四虚，亡

chù wáng kuài ruò chù bù cǐ dǎo zhōng rì zài dì shàng  
处亡块。若躇步趾蹈<sup>①</sup>，终日在地上

xíng zhǐ nài hé yōu qí huài  
行止，奈何忧其坏？”

qí rén shě rán dà xǐ xiǎo zhī zhě yì shě rán dà xǐ  
其人舍然大喜，晓之者亦舍然<sup>②</sup>大喜。



## The Worrier of Qi



A man of the state of Qi was afraid that the sky will fall down and the earth will cave in. The thought that he would not be able to find shelter when that happened worried him so much that he had no appetite for food and slept very badly.

Another man was very concerned about his worried frame of mind so he went to see him with the intention of straightening him out.

“The sky is merely a mass of vapour. No place is without vapour. When you breathe, walk or rest, you are moving about in this vapour all day long. Why are you afraid that the sky will fall down?”

“If the sky is really a mass of vapour. Won’t the sun, moon and stars fall down?”

“The sun, moon and stars are also made of vapour. The only difference is that they shine. Even if they fall down, they will not hurt anyone.”

“Then what about the earth caving in?”

“The earth is a big mass of soil and rocks. There are rocks and soil everywhere; no place is without them. When you walk or jump, you are moving about on them all day long. Why are



白话  
翻译



杞国有个人担忧天会崩塌、地会陷落，自己无处存身，便整天睡不好觉，吃不下饭。

另外有个人为这个杞国人的忧愁而担心，就去开导他，说：“天不过是积聚的气体罢了，没有哪个地方没有空气。你一举一动，一呼一吸，整天都在天里活动，怎么还担心天会崩塌下来呢？”

杞国人说：“天果真是气体，那日月星辰不就会掉下来吗？”

开导他的人说：“日月星辰也是空气中发光的东西，即使掉下来，也不会伤害什么。”

杞国人又说：“如果地陷下去怎么办？”

开导他的人说：“地不过是堆积的土块罢了，填满了四处，没有什么地方是没有土块的，你站立行走，整天都在地上活动，怎么还担心地会陷下去呢？”

那个杞国人放下心来，非常高兴；开导他的人也放了心，也觉得很高兴。

注释

① 躇(chú)步趾(cǐ)蹈：均为踩踏之意。

② 舍然：即释然，形容疑虑消除，放心的样子。



you worried that it will cave in?”

The poor worried man, immensely relieved, was delighted and so was the one who enlightened him.

*Liezi*

guó  
国  
shì  
氏  
shàn  
善  
dào  
盗

qí zhī guó shì dà fù sòng zhī xiàng shì dà pín zì  
齐之国氏大富，宋之向氏大贫。自  
sòng zhī qí qǐng qí shù guó shì gào zhī yuē wú shàn wéi  
宋之齐请其术。国氏告之曰：“吾善为  
dào shǐ wú wéi dào yě yī nián ér jǐ èr nián ér zú  
盗。始吾为盗也，一年而给，二年而足，  
sān nián dà rǎng zì cǐ yǐ wǎng shī jí zhōu lú xiàng  
三年大壤。自此以往，施及州闾。”向  
shì dà xǐ yú qí wéi dào zhī yán ér bù yù qí wéi dào zhī  
氏大喜，喻其为盗之言，而不喻其为盗之  
dào suī yú yuán záo shì shǒu mù suǒ jí wú bù tàn  
道。遂踰<sup>①</sup>垣<sup>②</sup>凿室，手目所及，亡不探  
yě wèi jí shí yǐ zāng huò zuì mò qí xiān jū zhī cái  
也。未及时，以赃获罪，没其先居之财。

xiàng shì yǐ guó shì zhī miù<sup>③</sup> jǐ yě wǎng ér yuàn  
向氏以国氏之谬<sup>③</sup>己也，往而怨  
zhī guó shì yuē ruò wéi dào ruò hé xiàng shì yán qí  
之。国氏曰：“若为盗若何？”向氏言其  
zhuàng guó shì yuē xǐ ruò shī wéi dào zhī dào zhì cǐ  
状。国氏曰：“嘻！若失为盗之道至此  
hū jīn jiāng gào yuē yǐ wú wén tiān yǒu shí dì yǒu lì  
乎？今将告曰矣。吾闻天有时，地有利。  
wú dào tiān dì zhī shí lì yún yǔ zhī pǎng rùn shān zé zhī  
吾盗天地之时利：云雨之滂润，山泽之  
chǎn yù yǐ shēng wú hé zhí wú jià zhù wú yuán jiàn  
产育，以生吾禾，殖吾稼，筑吾垣，建  
wú shě lù dào qín shòu shuǐ dào yú biē wáng fēi dào  
吾舍，陆盗禽兽，水盗鱼鳖，亡非盗  
yě fū hé jià tǔ mù qín shòu yú biē jiē tiān zhī suǒ  
也。夫禾稼、土木、禽兽、鱼鳖，皆天之所  
shēng qǐ wú zhī suǒ yǒu rán wú dào tiān ér wáng yāng fū  
生，岂吾之所有？然吾盗天而亡殃；夫  
jīn yù zhēn bǎo gǔ bó cái huò rén zhī suǒ jù qǐ tiān  
金玉、珍宝、谷帛、财货，人之所聚，岂天



## The Art of Stealing



The Guo family in the state of Qi was very rich while the Xiang family in the state of Song was very poor. Mr Xiang went to Qi from Song to learn from Mr Guo how to become wealthy.

“I am very good at stealing,” said Mr Guo. “After I became a thief, I managed to support myself after one year. In two years’ time I was comfortably off. After three years I owned lots of land and my barns were all full. From then onwards I could afford to give to the needy and I helped many friends and neighbours.”

Mr Xiang was delighted. He took in Mr Guo’s remark about stealing without understanding how one should go about it. Therefore, he scaled walls and bore holes to get into houses. He took everything his eyes could see or his hands could reach. After a little while, he was convicted of theft and the inheritance left by his ancestors was confiscated.

Mr Xiang was of the opinion that Mr Guo had deceived him so he went to see Mr Guo in order to put the blame on him.

“How did you steal?” asked Mr Guo.

Mr Xiang gave him an account of what he did.

zhī suǒ yǔ ruò dào zhī ér huò zuì shú yuàn zāi  
之所与？若盗之而获罪，孰怨哉？”

liè zǐ tiān rù  
《列子·天瑞》

白话  
翻译



齐国有个姓国的人非常富有，宋国有个姓向的人极为贫穷。于是姓向的人从宋国到齐国去，向姓国的人请教致富的方法，姓国的告诉他说：“我善于盗窃。我开始做贼的时候，一年就自给，两年就自足，三年就大丰收。从此往后，施舍遍及州县和弄巷。”

姓向的听了大喜，明白了他做盗贼，却不知道他做盗贼的办法。于是穿墙破室，只要是眼睛看见的、手所碰到的东西，没有不偷的。没多久，就因盗窃而被判罪，连他祖辈的财产都被没收了。

姓向的人认为姓国的在骗自己，就去埋怨他。姓国的说：“你是怎么做盗贼的？”姓向的就将自己偷盗的情况说了。姓国的说道：“哈哈！你偏离做盗贼的方法也太远了吧？现在我告诉你吧！我听说天有时，地有利。我偷盗天地的时利：云雨的滋润、山川的孕育，以使我的禾苗发芽、庄稼生长，筑我的墙，建我的房屋；在陆地上我盗得禽兽，在水里我盗得鱼鳖，没有一样不是盗来的啊。所有庄稼、土地树木、禽兽、鱼鳖都是天地所生，哪是我所有的啊？但是我偷盗天的就没有祸殃；而金玉珍宝、谷物锦缎、金钱财物，是别人聚集的，哪是天所拥有的啊？你偷盗那些东西被判罪，怎么能怨恨我呢？”



- ① 踰(yú):越过,跨过。
- ② 垣(yuán):围墙。
- ③ 谬:有意欺骗。



“Oh dear! ” said Mr Guo, “You have totally missed the point of what I meant by stealing. I’ll explain, what I mean. I heard that Nature has seasonal changes and Earth produce, fair crops. I steal from Nature’s seasons and Earth’s produce: clouds and rain give abundant moisture while hills and ponds supply other rich yields. With these I nurture my grain, plant my crops, put up my walls and build my houses. On land I steal birds and animals and at sea I steal fish and turtles. Everything is stolen, for grain, crops, earth, trees, birds, animals, fish and turtles are all products of Nature. Which of these belong to me? But when I steal from Nature, I do not get into trouble. Now precious stones, treasures, provisions, silks, money and goods are things that are amassed by men. They are not the gifts of Nature. If you steal such things and get convicted who can you blame?”

*Liezi*

hǎi  
海  
shàng  
上  
ōu  
鸥  
niǎo  
鸟

hǎi shàng zhī rén yǒu hào ǒu niǎo zhě měi dàn zhī hǎi  
海 上 之 人 有 好 鸥 鸟 者 。 每 旦 之 海  
shàng cóng ǒu niǎo yóu ǒu niǎo zhī zhì zhě bǎi zhù ér bù  
上 ， 从 鸥 鸟 游 。 鸥 鸟 之 至 者 ， 百 住 而 不  
zhǐ qí fù yuē wú wén ǒu niǎo jiē cóng rǔ yóu rǔ qǔ  
止 。 其 父 曰 ： “ 吾 闻 鸥 鸟 皆 从 汝 游 ， 汝 取  
lái wú wán zhī míng rì zhì hǎi shàng ǒu niǎo wǔ ér bù  
来 吾 玩 之 。” 明 日 至 海 上 ， 鸥 鸟 舞 而 不  
xià yě  
下 也 。

liè zǐ huáng dì  
《 列 子 · 黄 帝 》

白话  
翻译



海边住着一个很喜欢海鸥的人。他每天早晨都到海边与海鸥们一起玩耍，过来跟他玩的海鸥都不止一百只。有一天他的父亲说：“我听说海鸥都与你一起玩耍，你抓几只给我玩一下吧！”第二天这个人再到海边，海鸥就只在半空中飞舞，不再落下来了。



# Seagulls



A man who lived by the sea loved seagulls. Every morning at daybreak he would go to the seaside and play with the gulls. Hundreds of gulls would come to him and not fly away.

His father said, "I heard that seagulls like to play with you. Catch a few for me so that I can play with them too."

The next morning when he went to the seaside the seagulls swooped about in the skies but none came down to him.

*Liezi*



zhāo  
朝  
sān  
三  
mù  
暮  
sì  
四

sòng yǒu jū gōng zhě ài jū yǎng zhī chéng qún ,  
宋有狙公者，爱狙<sup>①</sup>，养之成群，  
néng jiě jū zhī yì jū yì dé gōng zhī xīn sǔn qí jiā kǒu ,  
能解狙之意，狙亦得公之心。损其家口，  
chōng jū zhī yù é ér kuī yān jiāng xiàn qí shí kǒng  
充狙之欲。俄而匱<sup>②</sup>焉，将限其食，恐  
zhòng jū zhī bù xún yú jǐ yě xiān kuáng zhī yuē yǔ ruò  
众狙之不驯于己也，先诳<sup>③</sup>之曰：“与若  
xù zhāo sān ér mù sì zú hū zhòng jū jiē qǐ ér nù  
芋朝三而暮四，足乎？”众狙皆起而怒。  
é ér yuē yǔ ruò xù zhāo sì ér mù sān zú hū ?  
俄而曰：“与若芋<sup>④</sup>朝四而暮三，足乎？”  
zhòng jū jiē fú ér xǐ  
众狙皆伏而喜。

liè zǐ huáng dì  
《列子·黄帝》

白话翻译



宋朝有个叫狙公的人，喜欢猴子，他养了成群的猴子。他能理解猴子的意思，猴子也知道他的意思。狙公减少家里的口粮，以此来满足猴子的食欲。不久粮食不够了，他打算限制猴子的食量，担心猴子们不听从自己，就先骗它们说：“给你们橡果吃，早上三颗晚上四颗，够了吗？”猴子们都生气地跳起来了。过一会儿又说：“给你们橡果吃，早上四颗晚上三颗，够了吗？”猴子们都高兴地拜倒在地上。

注释

- ① 狙(jū): 猕猴。
- ② 匱(kuī): 缺乏。
- ③ 诳(kuáng): 欺骗。
- ④ 芋(xù): 橡果。



## Three at Dawn and Four at Dusk



In the state of Song there was a man who kept monkeys. He was very fond of monkeys and kept a large number of them. He could understand the monkeys and they could also understand him. He reduced the amount of food for his own family in order to satisfy the monkeys' demands.

After a while his family did not have enough to eat, so he wanted to limit the food for the monkeys. But he was afraid that the monkeys would not submit to him. Before doing that he first played a trick on them.

"If I give you three chestnuts in the morning and four in the evening, would that be enough?" he asked the monkeys.

All the monkeys rose up in a fury.

After a short time he said, "If I give you four chestnuts in the morning and three in the evening, would that be enough?"

All the monkeys lay on the floor, very happy with this proposal.

*Liezi*

yīn  
尹  
shì  
氏  
zhì  
治  
chǎn  
产

zhōu zhī yīn shì dà zhì chǎn qí xià qù yì zhě qīn  
周之尹氏，大治产。其下趣役者，侵

chén hūn ér fú xī  
晨昏而弗息。

yǒu lǎo yì fū jīn lì jié yǐ ér shǐ zhī mí qín zhòu  
有老役夫，筋力竭矣，而使之弥勤。昼

zé shēn hū ér jí shì yè zé hūn bèi ér shóu mèi jīng shén  
则呻呼而即事，夜则昏惫而熟寐。精神

huāng sǎn xī xī mèng wéi guó jūn jū rén mín zhī shàng  
荒散，昔昔梦为国君，居人民之上，

zǒng yì guó zhī shì yóu yān gōng guān zì yì suǒ yù qí  
总一国之事，游燕宫观，恣意所欲，其

lè wú bǐ jiào zé fù yì rén yǒu wèi yù qí qín zhé yì  
乐无比。觉则复役。人有慰喻其慙者，役

fū yuē rén shēng bǎi nián zhòu yè gè fēn wú zhòu wéi pú  
夫曰：“人生百年，昼夜各分。吾昼为仆

lǚ kǔ zé kǔ yǐ yè wéi rén jūn qí lè wú bǐ hé suǒ  
虏，苦则苦矣。夜为人君，其乐无比，何所

yuàn zāi  
怨哉？”

yīn shì xīn yíng shì shì lǜ zhōng jiā yè xīn xíng jù  
尹氏心营世事，虑钟家业，心形俱

pí yè yì hūn bèi ér mèi xī xī mèng wéi rén pú qū zǒu  
疲。夜亦昏惫而寐。昔昔梦为人仆，趋走

zuò yì wú bù wéi yě shù mà zhàng tà wú bù zhì yě  
作役，无不为也；数骂杖挞，无不至也。

mián zhōng ān yì shēn hū chè dàn xī yān yīn shì bìng  
眠中噉吃<sup>①</sup>呻呼，彻旦息焉。尹氏病

zhī yǐ fǎng qí yǒu yǒu yuē ruò wèi zú róng shēn zī  
之，以访其友。友曰：“若位足荣身，资

cái yǒu yú shèng rén yuǎn yī yè mèng wéi pú kǔ yì zhī  
财有余，胜人远矣。夜梦为仆，苦逸之



## The Master and the Servant



In the Zhou region (around present day Loyang City) lived a Mr Yin who strove to amass riches. The servants who worked for him were often up half the night and had to start slaving for him before daybreak, seldom getting any rest.

An old servant was totally exhausted but the tasks that fell upon him increased even more. During daytime he would do his work with many a groan. At night, tired out, he would fall into a deep slumber. In his sleep his imagination roamed freely and every night he dreamed that he was a king, high above his subjects, handling all the affairs of state, enjoying himself in the royal palaces, getting everything he desired and his cup was full. Upon waking he would revert to his lowly station as a servant.

When someone, noticing how hard he had to work, attempted to comfort him, he said, "Man's life on earth is but a hundred years. Half of that is daytime while the other half is night. During daytime I am a humble servant and my lot is hard indeed, but at night I am a king and my joy is complete. What more can I ask?"

Mr Yin, his heart weighed down by the many things he



fù shù zhī cháng yě ruò yù jiào mèng jiān zhī qǐ kě dé  
复，数之常也。若欲觉梦兼之，岂可得

xié yīn shì wén qí yǒu yán kuān qí yì fū zhī chéng  
邪？”尹氏闻其友言，宽其役夫之程，

jiǎn jǐ sī lǜ zhī shì jí bìng shǎo jiàn  
减己思虑之事，疾并少间。

liè zǐ zhōu mù wáng  
《列子·周穆王》



had to attend to, his whole attention focussed on promoting his family fortunes, was utterly exhausted mentally and physically. At night he fell asleep, also tired out. Every night he dreamed that he was a servant, sent to run errands, sweating and toiling at all kinds of menial tasks. He was scolded, beaten and had to endure all sorts of ill treatment. He would mumble, groan and cry out in his sleep. It was only towards daybreak that he would quiet down.

Mr Yin was very worried about this and went to seek out his friend for advice.

“You occupy a high and honoured position,” pointed out his friend, “and you have riches beyond measure. All this puts you far above your fellowmen. At night you dream of being a servant because sorrow and happiness coming after each other is part of the natural scheme of things. How can you hope to enjoy life both awake and asleep?”

On hearing his friend’s words, Mr Yin relaxed his tight control over his servants and lightened his own load of cares and worries. As a result, his condition saw some improvement.

*Liezi*

白话  
翻译



周朝有个姓尹的人，竭力管理他众多的家产。他手下的奴仆，从早干到晚不能休息。

有个老仆，体力都快消耗光了，主人却对他使唤得更勤了。老仆白天唉声叹气地干活，晚上则因劳累过度睡得极香。精神恍惚散漫，夜夜梦到当国王，在万人之上，管一国之事，在皇宫中游览宴饮，心里想干什么就干什么，快活得无以伦比。醒来之后仍然辛苦劳作。

有人对他的辛苦表示安慰，老仆人却说：“人生不过百年，白天黑夜各占一半。我白天做奴仆，说辛苦是够辛苦的；不过晚上却当皇帝，快乐得谁也比不上，还有什么可埋怨的呢？”

姓尹的富翁一心经营俗事，忧虑于家产，心身都无比劳累疲乏。夜晚因心力交瘁而熟睡，却天天梦见做别人的奴仆，奔走伺候别人，什么都得干；挨打挨骂，受尽折磨。说梦话都在呻吟叹息，一直到天亮才结束。

尹氏对此十分苦恼，就去向朋友询问缘由。朋友说：“你地位高贵、财富有余，既有钱又有势，比一般人不知强出多少倍。晚上梦到做奴仆，是因为快乐到了极点而必然转向痛苦，这是自然规律，是很正常的事。你要想醒时梦时都快活，又怎么可能呢？”

尹氏听了朋友的话，对奴仆要求宽松了些，同时减少自己的思虑，那些苦不堪言的梦才稍微好点。



注释

① 噫(ān)吃(yì):说梦话。







yān  
燕  
rén  
人  
huán  
还  
guó  
国

yān rén shēng yú yān zhǎng yú chǔ jí lǎo ér huán  
燕人生于燕，长于楚，及老而还

běn guó  
本国。

guò jìn guó tóng xíng zhě kuáng zhī zhǐ chéng yuē  
过晋国，同行者诳之，指城曰：“

cǐ yān guó zhī chéng qí rén qiǎo rán biàn róng zhǐ shè  
此燕国之城。”其人愀然<sup>①</sup>变容。指社

yuē cǐ ruò lǐ zhī shè nǎi kuì rán ér tàn zhǐ shè yuē  
曰：“此若里之社。”乃喟然而叹。指舍曰：

cǐ ruò xiān rén zhī lú nǎi xuàn rán ér qì zhǐ lǒng  
“此若先人之庐。”乃涓然<sup>②</sup>而泣。指垄

yuē cǐ ruò xiān rén zhī zhǒng qí rén kū bù zì jīn  
曰：“此若先人之冢。”其人哭不自禁。

tóng xíng zhě yǎ rán dà xiào yuē yú xī dà ruò cǐ jìn  
同行者哑然大笑曰：“予昔给<sup>③</sup>若，此晋

guó ěr qí rén dà cán  
国耳。”其人大惭<sup>④</sup>。

jí zhì yān zhēn jiàn yān guó zhī chéng shè zhēn jiàn  
及至燕，真见燕国之城社，真见

xiān rén zhī lú zhǒng bēi xīn gèng wēi  
先人之庐冢，悲心更微。

liè zǐ zhōu mù wáng  
《列子·周穆王》



## Return of the Native



A man who was born in the state of Yan grew up in the state of Chu. In his old age he returned to Yan.

On his way he passed the state of Jin. His fellow travellers played a trick on him. They pointed at a city of Jin.

“This is a city of Yan,” they said. His face saddened.

They pointed at a tiny temple housing a village god.

“This is the temple of your native village,” said they. He heaved a big sigh.

They pointed at a house.

“This is the house of your ancestors,” they said. Tears flowed down his cheeks.

They pointed at a mound of earth.

“This is your ancestor’s grave,” said they. He could not restrain his sobs.

His fellow travellers burst into laughter.

“We were just putting you on. This is still the territory of Jin.” He was mortified.

As it turned out, when he reached Yan and really saw the city and village temple as well as his ancestor’s house and grave, he was even less sentimental than before.



白话  
翻译



有个燕国人，生在燕国，长在楚地，到白发苍苍时才重返故国。

途中路过晋国的时候，同行的人有意戏弄他，指着晋国的城池说：“这就是你离别多年的燕国城池啊。”这个燕人一听，立刻变了脸色，现出凄怆的样子。那人又指着一个土地庙骗他说：“这就是你家乡的那座土地庙呀！”燕人马上感慨万分，长叹一声。同行的人又指着一幢房子说：“这就是你祖先居住过的宅院。”燕人不胜悲伤，止不住落下泪来。那人又指着一座坟墓说：“这就是你家的祖坟。”这个燕人听了，不禁放声痛哭起来。同行的人见他如此模样，失声大笑，说：“先前是我骗你呢，这里是晋国啊。”燕人觉得万分羞愧。

后来，等他们来到燕国，真的看见燕国的城池和土地庙，亲眼看见了他祖先的故居和坟墓，这个燕人的悲凄心情反而淡薄了。



注释

- ① 愀(qiǎo)然：形容脸色改变。
- ② 涓(xuān)然：同“泫然”，流泪的样子。
- ③ 给(dà)：欺骗。
- ④ 惭(cán)：羞愧。



yú  
愚  
gōng  
公  
yí  
移  
shān  
山

tài xíng wáng wū èr shān fāng qī bǎi lǐ gāo wàn  
太行王屋二山，方七百里，高万

rèn běn zài jì zhōu zhī nán hé yáng zhī běi  
仞。本在冀州之南，河阳之北。

běi shān yú gōng zhě nián qiè jiǔ shí miàn shān ér  
北山愚公者，年且九十，面山而

jū chéng shān běi zhī sāi chū rù zhī yǔ yē jù shì ér  
居。惩<sup>①</sup>山北之塞，出入之迂也。聚室而

móu yuē wú yǔ nǚ bì lì píng xiǎn zhǐ tōng yù nán dá  
谋曰：“吾与汝毕力平险，指通豫南，达

yú hàn yīn kě hū zá rán xiāng xǔ qí qī xiàn yí  
于汉阴，可乎？”杂然<sup>②</sup>相许。其妻献疑

yuē yǐ jūn zhī lì céng bù néng sǔn kuí fù zhī qiū rú tài  
曰：“以君之力，曾不能损魁父之丘，如太

xíng wáng wū hé qiè yān zhì tǔ shí zá yuē tóu zhū bó  
形王屋何？且焉置土石？”杂曰：“投诸渤

hǎi zhī wěi yīn tǔ zhī běi suì shuài zǐ sūn hè dàn zhě sān  
海之尾，隐土之北。”遂率子孙荷担者三

fū kòu shí kěn fén jī běn yùn yú bó hǎi zhī wěi lín rén  
夫，叩石垦坟，箕畚运于渤海之尾。邻人

jīng chéng shì zhī shuāng qī yǒu yí nán shǐ chèn tiào  
京城氏之霜妻，有遗男，始龀<sup>③</sup>，跳

wǎng zhù zhī hán shǔ yì jié shǐ yī fǎn yān  
往助之。寒暑易节，始一反焉。

hé qū zhì sǒu xiào ér zhǐ zhǐ yuē shèn yǐ nǚ zhī bú  
河曲智叟笑而止之曰：“甚矣，汝之不

huì yǐ cán nián yú lì céng bù néng huǐ shān zhī yī máo  
惠！以残年余力，曾不能毁山之一毛，

qí rú tǔ shí hé běi shān yú gōng cháng xī yuē rú xīn  
其如土石何？”北山愚公长息曰：“汝心

zhī gù gù bù kě chè céng bù ruò shuāng qī ruò zǐ suī  
之固，固不可彻，曾不若霜妻弱子！虽



# To Move Mountains



Taixing and Wangwu are two mountains with an area of seven hundred *li* square and rise to a great height of thousands of *ren*. They were originally situated south of Jizhou and north of Heyang.

North of the mountains lived an old man called Yugong (literally “foolish old man”) who was nearly ninety years old. Since his home faced the two mountains, he was troubled by the fact that they blocked the way of the inhabitants who had to take a roundabout route whenever they went out. He gathered his family together to discuss the matter.

“Let us do everything in our power to flatten these forbidding mountains so that there is a direct route to the south of Yuzhou reaching the southern bank of the Han River. What do you say?”

Everyone applauded his suggestion. His wife voiced her doubts.

“You are not strong enough even to remove a small hillock like Kuifu. How can you tackle Taixing and Wangwu? And where would you dump the earth and rocks?”

“We can dump it into the edge of the Bo Sea and north of



wǒ zhī sǐ yǒu zǐ cún yān zǐ yòu shēng sūn sūn yòu shēng  
我之死，有子存焉，子又生孙，孙又生

zǐ zǐ yòu yǒu zǐ zǐ yòu yǒu sūn zǐ zǐ sūn sūn wú  
子，子又有子，子又有孙，子子孙孙，无

qióng kuì yě ér shān bù jiā zēng hé kǔ ér bù píng  
穷匮<sup>④</sup>也，而山不加增，何苦而不平？”

hé qū zhì sǒu wáng yǐ yīng  
河曲智叟亡以应。

cāo shé zhī shén wén zhī jù qí bù yǐ yě gào zhī yú  
操蛇之神闻之，惧其不已也，告之于

dì dì gǎn qí chéng mìng kuā é shì èr zǐ fù èr shān  
帝。帝感其诚，命夸蛾氏二子负二山，

yī cuò shuò dōng yī cuò yōng nán zì cǐ jì zhī nán hàn  
一厝朔东，一厝雍南，自此冀之南，汉

zhī yīn wú lǒng duàn yān  
之阴，无垄断焉。

liè zǐ tāng wèn  
《列子·汤问》

白话  
翻译



太行、王屋两座山，方圆达七百里，高达七八千丈。它们原来位于冀州的南部、黄河北岸。

山北面有一位叫愚公的老人，年近九十岁了，面向着大山居住。苦于大山的阻塞，出入要绕远路，于是他召集全家人商量说：“我和你们竭尽全力铲平这两座大山，使道路直通豫州南部，达到汉水南岸，好吗？”大家纷纷表示赞同。他的妻子提出疑问说：“凭您的力气，像魁父这样的小山丘也不能铲平，能把太行、王屋怎样呢？再说把石头和泥土往哪儿放呢？”大伙纷纷说：“把土石投到渤海边上、隐土的北面。”

于是愚公率领子孙当中能挑担的三个人上了山，凿



Yintu," said everyone.

Therefore Yugong took with him three sons and grandsons who could carry a load on their shoulders. They broke up rocks and dug up mounds of earth which were transported to the edge of the Bo Sea in baskets. His neighbour, a widow by the name of Jingcheng, had a posthumous son who was just at the age of discarding his silk teeth. This vivacious boy jumped at the chance of giving them a hand. From winter through summer the workers only returned home once.

An old man called Zhisou (literally "wise old man") who lived in Hequ, near a bend of the Yellow River, was amused and dissuaded Yugong.

"How can you be so foolish? With your advanced years and the little strength that you have left, you cannot even destroy a blade of grass on the mountain, not to speak of its earth and stone."

Yugong from north of the mountains heaved a long sigh. "You are so obstinate that you do not use your reason. Even the widow and her little son do better than you. Though I die, my son lives on. My son produces a grandson and in turn the grandson has a son of his own. Sons follow sons and grandsons follow sons. My sons and grandsons go on and on without end but the mountains will not grow in size. Then why worry about not being able to flatten them?"

Zhisou of Hequ was bereft of speech.

The god of the mountains who held a snake in his hand





石掘土,用箕畚把土石运到渤海边上。邻居的寡妇有个孤儿,才七八岁,也蹦蹦跳跳前来帮忙。夏去冬来,才能往返一次。

河曲有个叫智叟的老头嘲笑并阻止愚公说:“你太不聪明了!就凭你在世上这最后的几年,剩下的这么点力气,还不能毁掉山上的一根草木,又能把这大山的土石怎么样?”北山愚公长叹了一口气说:“你思想太顽固,顽固得不开窍,连个寡妇、孤儿都比不上。即使我死了,还有我儿子在呀;儿子又生孙子,孙子又生儿子;儿子又有儿子,儿子又有孙子;子子孙孙无穷尽,可是这两座山却不会再增高加大,还愁什么挖不平呢?”河曲智叟无话可说了。

山神知道了这件事,害怕愚公挖山不止,就把这件事禀报天帝。天帝被愚公的诚心感动了,就命令大力神夸娥氏的两个儿子背起两座大山,一座放置在朔州东部,一座放置在雍州南部。从此,冀州的南部,直到汉水的南岸,再也没有高山阻隔交通了。



注释

- ① 愆:苦于,为……所苦。
- ② 杂然:纷纷的样子。
- ③ 始龀:刚刚换牙,指七八岁。
- ④ 穷匮(kuì):穷尽。



heard about this and was afraid that Yugong would not stop digging at the mountains. He reported the matter to the king of the gods who was moved by Yugong's sincerity. The king commanded the two sons of Kua'eshi, a god with great strength, to carry away the two mountains on their backs: one was put east of Shuozhou and the other south of Yongzhou. From that time onwards no mountain stood between the south of Jizhou and the southern bank of the Han River.

*Liezi*

kuā  
夸  
fù  
父  
zhuī  
追  
rì  
日

kuā fù bù liàng lì yù zhuī rì yǐng zhú zhī yú yú gǔ  
夸父不自量力，欲追日影，逐之于隅谷

zhī jì kě yù dé yǐn fù yǐn hé wèi hé wèi bù zú  
之际。渴欲得饮，赴饮河、渭；河、渭不足，

jiāng zǒu běi yǐn dà zé wèi zhì dào kě ér sǐ  
将走北饮大泽。未至，道渴而死。

liè zǐ tāng wèn  
《列子·汤问》

白话  
翻译



夸父不自量力，想要追上太阳的影子，一直追赶到太阳落下的地方。他感到口渴，想要喝水，就到黄河、渭水去喝水。黄河、渭水的水不够，就想去北方的大湖喝水。还没赶到那里，半路就渴死了。



## In Pursuit of the Sun



A legendary giant Kua Fu, overrating his own abilities, wanted to catch up with the sun. He followed the sun to its setting place at a valley far away and became very thirsty. Badly needing a drink of water, he went to the Yellow River and the River Wei to quench his thirst, but the waters from these two rivers were not sufficient to satisfy him. He decided to go to the great lake in the north to drink its waters. Before he got there he died of thirst on the way.

*Liezi*

liǎng

两

xiǎo

小

ér

儿

biàn

辩

rì

日

kǒng zǐ dōng yóu jiàn liǎng xiǎo ér biàn dòu wèn qí  
孔子东游，见两小儿辩斗。问其

gù  
故。

yī ér yuē wǒ yǐ rì shǐ chū shí qù rén jìn ér rì  
一儿曰：“我以日始出时去人近，而日

zhōng shí yuǎn yě yī ér yǐ rì chū chū yuǎn ér rì  
中时远也。”一儿以日初出远，而日

zhōng shí jìn yě  
中时近也。

yī ér yuē rì chū chū dà rú chē gài jí rì zhōng  
一儿曰：“日初出大如车盖，及日中

zé rú pán yú cǐ bù wéi yuǎn zhě xiǎo ér jìn zhě dà hū  
则如盘盂。此不为远者小而近者大乎？”

yī ér yuē rì chū chū cāng cāng liáng liáng jí qí rì  
一儿曰：“日初出沧沧凉凉，及其日

zhōng rú tàn tāng cǐ bù wéi jìn zhě rè ér yuǎn zhě liáng  
中，如探汤。此不为近者热而远者凉

hū  
乎？”

kǒng zǐ bù néng jué yě liǎng xiǎo ér xiào yuē shú wéi  
孔子不能决也。两小儿笑曰：“孰为

rǔ duō zhī hū  
汝多知乎？”

liè zǐ tāng wèn  
《列子·汤问》



## An Argument about the Sun



When Confucius was travelling in the eastern part of the country, he came upon two children hot in argument, so he asked them to tell him what it was all about.

“I think,” said one child, “that the sun is near to us at day-break and far away from us at noon.”

The other contended that the sun was far away at dawn and nearby at midday.

“When the sun first appears,” said one child, “it is as big as the canopy of a carriage, but at noon it is only the size of a plate or a bowl. Well, isn’t it true that objects far away seem smaller while those nearby seem bigger?”

“When the sun comes out,” pointed out the other, “it is very cool, but at midday it is as hot as putting your hand in boiling water. Well, isn’t it true that what is nearer to us is hotter and what is farther off is cooler?”

Confucius was unable to settle the matter for them.

The two children laughed at him, “Who says you are a learned man?”

白话  
翻译



孔子往东方游学时，看到两个小孩在争论，孔子问他们争论的原因。

一个小孩说：“我认为太阳刚出来时距离人近，而正午时距离人远。”另一个小孩则认为太阳刚出来时离人远，而正午时离人近。

一个小孩说：“太阳刚出来时像个大圆车篷，等到正午时就像个盘子或盂，这不是远处的小而近处的大吗？”

另一个小孩说：“太阳刚出来清凉寒冷，等到了正午，热得像把手伸向热水里。这不正是距离近的就觉得热距离远就觉得凉吗？”

孔子不能够断定谁是谁非。两个小孩笑着说：“谁说你是知识丰富的人啊？”





zhān  
詹  
hé  
何  
diào  
钓  
yú  
鱼

zhān hé yī dú jiǎn sī wéi lún máng zhēn wéi gōu jīng  
詹何以独茧丝为纶，芒针为钩，荆

筱<sup>①</sup>为竿，剖粒为饵，引盈车之鱼，于百

仞之渊。汨流之中，纶不绝，钩不伸，

竿不挠<sup>②</sup>。

chǔ wáng wén ér yì zhī zhào wèn qí gù zhān hé  
楚王闻而异之，召问其故。詹何

yuē chén wén xiān dà fū zhī yán pú qiè zǐ zhī yì yě ruò  
曰：“臣闻先大夫之言，蒲且子之弋也，弱

gōng xiǎn jiǎo chéng fēng zhèn zhī lián shuāng gē yú qīng yún  
弓纤缴，乘风振之，连双鸽于青云

zhī jì yòng xīn zhuān dòng shǒu jūn yě chén yīn qí shì  
之际，用心专，动手均也。臣因其事，

fàng ér xué diào wǔ nián shǐ jìn qí dào dāng chén zhī lín  
放而学钓，五年始尽其道。当臣之临

hé chí gān xīn wú zá lǜ wéi yú zhī niàn tóu lún chén  
河持竿，心无杂虑，唯鱼之念。投纶沉

gōu shǒu wú qīng zhòng wù mò néng luàn yú jiàn chén zhī  
钩，手无轻重，物莫能乱。鱼见臣之

gōu ěr yóu chén āi jù mò tūn zhī bù yí suǒ yī néng  
钩饵，犹沉埃聚沫，吞之不疑，所以能

yǐ ruò zhì qiáng yǐ qīng zhì zhòng yě  
以弱制强，以轻致重也。”

liè zǐ tāng wèn  
《列子·汤问》



## Zhan He the Angler



Zhan He used a single strand of silken thread for a line, a sharp pointed needle for a hook, a slender bamboo grown in the Chu region for a rod and split grains of rice for bait. He managed to catch a cartload of fish from bottomless abysses and rushing rapids, without breaking his line, stretching his hook or bending his rod.

The king of the state of Chu heard about this and thought it was extraordinary. He sent for Zhan He to ask him how he did it.

“Sire,” said Zhan He, “I heard my late father say that when the skilled archer Pu Qiezi shot at birds, he had a rather flimsy bow and used a slender string to attach to his retrievable arrow which was shot along the direction of the wind. He hit two orioles in the clouds with one arrow because of his total concentration and the exquisite evenness of his touch. Sire, I used him as an example and learned to fish. It took me five years to perfect my technique. When I come to the river bank with a rod in my hand, I have no other thoughts in my mind except fishing. When I cast the line and let the hook sink into the water, my touch is neither too heavy nor too light and

白话翻译



詹何用单股的蚕丝做钓线，如芒的细针做钩，用细小的竹子做钓竿，将一粒饭剖为两半来做钓饵，在百仞深渊之中钓到可以装满一辆车的鱼。在湍急的流水中，钓丝不断，钓钩没有被扯直，钓竿也没有被拉弯。

楚国的国王听说了觉得很惊异，就召见他询问原因。詹何说：“我听已去世的大夫说，蒲且子射箭，用很弱的弓、很纤细的丝绳，顺着风一射，一箭在云端射到两只鸪鹑，这都是用心专一、用力均匀的缘故啊。我按照他的这种做法，模仿着学习钓鱼，五年才完全弄懂其中的道理。现在我在河边持竿钓鱼时，心中不思虑杂事，只想着钓鱼这件事，丢线沉钩，手上用力均匀，外物没有能扰乱我的心神的。鱼看见我的钓饵，就好像是掉到水里的尘埃或聚集的泡沫，毫不怀疑地吞食它。所以我能以弱制强，以轻御重啊。”



注释

- ① 筱(xiǎo):细竹子。
- ② 挠(náo):弯曲。



nothing can distract me. To the fishes, my hook and bait seem like bits of mud and froth in the water, so they swallow them without suspecting anything. This is how strength can be overcome by weakness and what is heavy can be got by what is light.”

*Liezi*

xuē  
薛  
tán  
谭  
xué  
学  
òu  
讴

xuē tán xué òu yú qín qīng wèi qióng qīng zhī jì zì  
薛谭学讴<sup>①</sup>于秦青，未穷青之技，自

wèi jìn zhī suì cí guī  
谓尽之，遂辞归。

qín qīng fú zhǐ jiàn yú jiāo qú fǔ jié bēi gē shēng  
秦青弗止，饯于郊衢<sup>②</sup>，抚节悲歌，声

zhèn lín mù xiǎng è xíng yún xuē tán nǎi xiè qiú fǎn zhōng  
振林木，响遏行云。薛谭乃谢求反，终

shēn bù gǎn yán guī  
身不敢言归。

liè zǐ tāng wèn  
《列子·汤问》

白话  
翻译



薛谭向秦青学习唱歌，还没有学完秦青的技艺，就以为学尽了，于是就告辞回家。

秦青没有劝阻他，在城外大道旁给他饯行，秦青打着节拍，高唱悲歌。歌声振动了林木，音响止住了行云。于是薛谭向秦青道歉，要求回去继续学习。从此以后，他一辈子也不敢再说要回家。

注释

① 讴：唱歌。

② 衢(qú)：大路。



## A Subtle Hint



Xue Tan took singing lessons from Qin Qing, a famous singer in the state of Qin. Before learning all that Qin had to teach him Xue claimed that he had mastered all of Qin's skills and asked to leave.

Qin did not try to stop him but gave a farewell dinner for him by a main road in the suburbs. There Qin sang a moving song, beating time all the while. The song seemed to shake the trees of the forest and check the drifting clouds in their tracks.

Xue immediately apologised to his teacher and asked that he be taken back as a pupil. After this, Xue dared not mention going home again throughout his life.

*Liezi*

yě  
野  
rén  
人  
xiàn  
献  
pù  
曝

xī zhě sòng guó yǒu tián fū cháng yī yùn fén jīn  
昔者宋国有田夫，常衣缊<sup>①</sup>，仅

yǐ guò dōng jì chūn dōng zuò zì pù yú rì bù zhī tiān  
以过冬。暨春东作，自曝于日，不知天

xià zhī yǒu guǎng shà yù shì mián kuàng hú hé gù  
下之有广厦、隩<sup>②</sup>室，绵纩<sup>③</sup>、狐貉。顾

wèi qī qī yuē fù rì zhī xuān rén mò zhī zhě yǐ xiàn  
谓其妻曰：“负日之暄，人莫知者，以献

wú jūn jiāng yǒu chóng shǎng  
吾君，将有重赏。”

liè zǐ yáng zhū  
《列子·杨朱》

白话  
翻译

从前宋国有一个农夫，经常穿乱麻破絮，勉强地挨过寒冬。到春天耕种时，在太阳下曝晒，不晓得天下还有高屋暖房、丝棉绸缎、狐皮貉裘。回头对妻子说：“背对太阳，暖和极了，别人都不知道，我去把这个办法献给君主，一定得到厚重的奖赏。”

注释

① 缊(yùn):旧絮乱麻。

② 隩(yù):取暖。

③ 纩(kuàng):新丝棉。



## Make a Present of Sunshine



In olden times there was a peasant in the state of Song who wore clothes woven with tangled hemp and barely made it through the cold winter. When spring came he enjoyed the warmth of the sun while working in the fields. He did not know that in this world there are tall buildings and cosy, warm houses, and he knew nothing about clothes with silk wadding or furs made from the skins of foxes and racoon dogs.

The peasant turned to his wife and said, "It is so warm under the sun. I don't think other people know about this. If we present this to our king we are sure to get a rich reward."

*Liezi*



dào  
道  
jiàn  
见  
sàng  
桑  
fù  
妇

jìn wén gōng chū huì yù fá wèi gōng zǐ chú yǎng tiān  
晋文公出，会欲伐卫。公子锄仰天  
ér xiào gōng wèn hé xiào yuē chén xiào lín zhī rén  
而笑。公问：“何笑？”曰：“臣笑邻之人  
yǒu sòng qī qī shì sī jiā zhě dào jiàn sāng fù yuè ér yǔ  
有送其妻适私家者，道见桑妇，悦而与  
yán rán gù shì qī qī yì yǒu zhāo zhī zhě yī chén qiè  
言。然顾视其妻，亦有招之者矣。臣窃  
xiào cǐ yě  
笑此也。”

gōng wù qí yán nǎi zhǐ yīn shī ér hái wèi zhì ér  
公悟其言，乃止，引师而还。未至，而  
yǒu fá qí běi bǐ zhě yī  
有伐其北鄙者矣。

liè zǐ yuè fú  
《列子·说符》

白话  
翻译



晋文公领兵出发准备攻打卫国，公子锄这时仰天大笑，晋文公问他：“为何大笑？”他说：“我是笑我的邻居啊！当他送妻子回娘家时，在路上碰到一个采桑的妇女，便高兴地与她搭讪。可是当他回头看自己的妻子时，发现竟然也有人正勾引着她。我正是为这件事儿偷偷发笑呀！”

晋文公听后领悟了他所说的话，就打消了进攻卫国的念头，班师回国。还没回到晋国，就听说有敌人入侵晋国的北方了。



## Served with the Same Sauce



Duke Wen of the state of Jin led his army out of Jin with the intention of attacking the state of Wei. On seeing this, his son Prince Chu threw back his head and laughed.

“Why are you laughing?” asked the duke.

“I am laughing at my neighbour,” replied his son. “He was escorting his wife to her father’s house. On the way, he saw a woman picking mulberry leaves and he boldly struck up a friendly conversation with her. But when he turned to look for his wife, he saw that someone was trying to flirt with her too. I just find this incident very diverting.”

The duke understood his son’s meaning. He gave up the idea of attacking Wei and brought his troops home. Before he got there the northern border of his state came under attack.

*Liezi*

pin  
北  
mǔ  
牡  
lí  
骊  
huáng  
黄

qín mù gōng wèi bó lè yuē zǐ zhī nián zhǎng yǐ zǐ  
秦穆公谓伯乐曰：“子之年长矣，子

xìng yǒu kě shǐ qiú mǎ zhě hū bó lè duì yuē liáng mǎ  
姓有可使求马者乎？”伯乐对曰：“良马，

kě xíng róng jīn gǔ xiàng yě tiān xià zhī mǎ zhě ruò jiǎn  
可形容筋骨相<sup>①</sup>也；天下之马者，若减

ruò méi ruò wáng ruò shī ruò cǐ zhě jué chén mǐ zhé chén  
若没，若亡若失，若此者绝尘弭轍。臣

zhī zǐ jiē xià cái yě kě gào yǐ liáng mǎ bù kě gào yǐ tiān  
之子皆下才也，可告以良马，不可告以天

xià zhī mǎ yě chén yǒu suǒ yǔ gòng dān mǐ xīn cài zhě  
下之马也。臣有所与共担纆<sup>②</sup>薪菜<sup>③</sup>者，

yǒu jiǔ fāng gāo cǐ qí yú mǎ fēi chén zhī xià yě qǐng  
有九方皋。此其于马，非臣之下也。请

jiàn zhī mù gōng jiàn zhī shǐ xíng qiú mǎ  
见之。”穆公见之，使行求马。

sān yuè ér fǎn bào yuē yǐ dé zhī yǐ zài shā  
三月而反，报曰：“已得之矣，在沙

qiū mù gōng yuē hé mǎ yě duì yuē pīn ér  
丘。”穆公曰：“何马也？”对曰：“牝<sup>④</sup>而

huáng shǐ rén wǎng qǔ zhī mǔ ér lí mù gōng bù yuē  
黄。”使人往取之，牡<sup>⑤</sup>而骊。穆公不说，

zhào bó lè ér wèi zhī yuē bài yǐ yú suǒ shǐ qiú mǎ  
召伯乐而谓之曰：“败<sup>⑥</sup>矣，于所使求马

zhě sè wù pīn mǔ shàng fú néng zhī yòu hé mǎ zhī néng zhī  
者，色物牝牡尚弗能知，又何马之能知

yě bó lè kuī rán tài xī yuē yī zhì yú cǐ hū shì nǎi  
也？”伯乐喟然太息曰：“一至于此乎？是乃

qí suǒ yǐ qiān wàn chén ér wú shù zhě yě ruò gāo zhī suǒ  
其所以千万臣而无数者也。若皋之所

guān tiān jī yě dé qí jīng ér wàng qí cū zài qí nèi  
观，天机也。得其精而忘其粗，在其内



## True Discernment



Duke Mu of the state of Qin said to Bo Le who was famous for his ability to judge horses, "Sir, you are advanced in years. Is there anyone in your family I could send to look for fine steed?"

"Good horses can be judged by observing their appearance, by looking at the bones and muscles," replied Bo Le. "But for a rare horse that has no equal, its characteristics are elusive, almost impossible to pin down. It is so swift and its tread so light that when it gallops, its hoofs do not stir the dust and no prints are left behind. My sons have little ability. They could tell you what good horses are like, but they could say nothing about an incomparable steed. I have a friend who used to chop and carry firewood with me, Jiufang Gao. He is, to say the least, as good a judge of horses as I am. Please send for him."

The duke summoned Jiufang Gao and commissioned him to find an unequalled horse. After three months he reported back to the duke.

"I have found it, in a place called Shaqiu."

"What sort of a horse is it?" asked the duke.



ér wàng qí wài jiàn qí suǒ jiàn bù jiàn qí suǒ bù jiàn shì  
而忘其外。见其所见，不见其所不见，视  
qí suǒ shì ér yí qí suǒ bù shì ruò gāo zhī xiàng mǎ nǎi  
其所视而遗其所不视。若皋之相马，乃  
yǒu guì hū mǎ zhě yě mǎ zhì guǒ tiān xià zhī mǎ yě  
有贵乎马者也！”马至，果天下之马也。

liè zǐ yuè fú  
《列子·说符》

白话  
翻译



秦穆公对伯乐说：“您的年纪大了，您的子孙中有可以派去寻求天下好马的人吗？”伯乐答道：“一般的好马可以根据外形、外貌、筋骨来辨识，天下少有的千里马，它的体态特征恍惚迷离，很不容易识别。像这样的马奔跑时不会扬起尘土，也不会留下足迹。我的儿子们都是才能一般的人，能够教会他们识别一般的好马，无法教他们识别千里马。我有一个曾在一起扛过东西打过柴草的朋友，叫九方皋，这个人对于马的识别本领不在我之下，请让他来谒见您吧。”穆公召见了，派他外出寻找千里马。

三个月后九方皋返回报告说：“千里马已经找到了，在沙丘这个地方。”穆公问：“是匹什么样的马？”答道：“是一匹黄色母马。”派人前去取得它，却是一匹黑色公马。穆公很不高兴，召见伯乐对他说：“你所派遣的找马人真是糟糕啊！毛色雌雄尚且不能知道，又能知道什么好马劣马呢？”伯乐长长地叹息道：“竟然到了这种地步吗？这正是他所以比我强千万倍还不止的原因啊！像九方皋所观察的，是事物的天机精妙之处。得到了它的精微，而放弃了它的粗略；省察其内部，而忘却其表象。看见了他所应当看见的地方，而没有看见他不必看见的地方，考察了他所应当考察的地方，抛弃了他所不必考察的地方。像九方皋这种善于识别千里马的人，实在有比千里马更可宝贵的地方啊！”马到达后一看，果然是天下少有的千里马呀！



“It is a bay mare,” replied Jiufang Gao.

The duke sent some men to bring the horse back. It turned out to be a male horse black in colour. The duke was displeased. He summoned Bo Le.

“It is too bad,” said the duke, “the man you recommended to send on a search for fine horses cannot even distinguish between horses and mares or the different colours of their coats. What can he know about horses?”

Bo Le heaved a sigh. “Has it come to this? This is exactly where his expertise is a thousand times better than mine and is too deep to fathom. What he sees is the mystery of Nature. He captures the essence and forgets the dross. He gets the content and forgets the form. He only sees what he is looking for and does not see what he considers unimportant. He only observes what is worthy of observation and leaves out what he deems not deserving attention. In fact, Jiufang Gao’s ability is much more valuable than the mere competence to judge the merit of a horse.”

When the horse arrived, it really turned out to be an incomparable steed.

*Liezi*



注释

- ① 相:查看,辨识。
- ② 担纆:用绳索背负东西。纆:绳索。
- ③ 薪菜:打柴草。菜,通“采”。
- ④ 牝:雌性。
- ⑤ 牡:雄性。
- ⑥ 败:坏,糟糕。





yáng  
杨  
bù  
布  
dǎ  
打  
gǒu  
狗

yáng zhū zhī dì yuē bù yī sù yī ér chū tiān yǔ  
杨朱之弟曰布，衣素衣<sup>①</sup>而出，天雨，  
jiě sù yī yī zī yī ér fǎn qí gǒu bù zhī yíng ér fèi  
解素衣，衣缁衣<sup>②</sup>而反。其狗不知，迎而吠  
zhī yáng bù nù jiāng pū zhī yáng zhū yuē zǐ wú pū  
之。杨布怒，将扑之。杨朱曰：“子无扑  
yǐ zǐ yì yóu shì yě xiàng zhě shǐ rǔ gǒu bái ér wǎng  
矣！子亦犹是也。向者使汝狗白而往，  
hēi ér lái qǐ néng wú guài zāi  
黑而来，岂能无怪哉？”

liè zǐ yuē fú  
《列子·说符》

白话  
翻译

杨朱的弟弟叫杨布，有一天杨布穿了件白色的衣服出门去，因为下雨，他把白色衣服脱下，穿着一套黑色的衣服回家来。他家的狗认不出杨布，就迎上去对着他汪汪大叫。杨布非常恼火，就要去打狗。杨朱说：“你快不要打狗了，你自己也会是这个样子的。假如你的狗出去的时候是白的，回来的时候变成黑的了，难道你不觉得奇怪吗？”

注释

- ① 素衣：白色的衣服。  
② 缁(zī)衣：黑色的衣服。



## A Change of Colour



Yang Zhu, the famous philosopher, had a younger brother named Yang Bu who, once, went out dressed in white. It began to rain so Yang Bu took off his white clothes and returned home dressed in black. His dog, failing to recognize him, rushed forward to bark at him. Yang Bu was angry and wanted to beat the animal.

“Don’t beat the dog,” said Yang Zhu, “you would have acted in the same way. If your dog had gone out a white dog and then came home black all over, wouldn’t you have thought it very strange?”

*Liezi*

bù  
不  
sǐ  
死  
zhī  
之  
dào  
道

xī rén yán yǒu zhī bù sǐ zhī dào zhě yān jūn shǐ rén  
昔人言有知不死之道者。燕君使人  
shòu zhī bù jié ér yán zhě sǐ yān jūn shèn nù qí shǐ  
受之，不捷，而言者死。燕君甚怒其使  
zhě jiāng jiā zhū yān xìng chén jiàn yuē rén suǒ yōu zhě mò  
者，将加诛焉。幸臣谏曰：“人所忧者莫  
jí hū sǐ jǐ suǒ zhòng zhě mò guò hū shēng bǐ zì sàng  
急于死，己所重者莫过于生。彼自丧  
qí shēng ān néng mìng jūn bù sǐ yě nǎi bù zhū  
其生，安能命君不死也？”乃不诛。

liè zǐ yuè fú  
《列子·说符》

白话  
翻译



从前，有个人说自己知道长生不死的方法，燕国国君派人去迎接他，没有接到，而说自己知道长生不死方法的人却死了。燕国国君很恼火，要把那个去迎接的人杀掉。一个受燕君宠幸的人劝谏道：“人们所忧虑的没有比死亡更着急的了，自己所重视的没有比生存更重要的了。他自己都丧失了生命，怎么能叫您长生不死呢？”于是国君就不杀那个使者了。



## Physician, Heal Thyself



Once upon a time, a man claimed that he knew the secret of everlasting life. The king of the state of Yan sent a messenger to learn this secret from him. Before the messenger succeeded, the man who made the claim died.

The king was very vexed with his messenger and intended to put him to death.

One of the king's ministers who enjoyed his trust dissuaded him. "Of man's worries nothing is more pressing than death. Of all the things that are valued by man, nothing is more precious than life. This man lost his own life. Then how could he have taught you not to lose yours?"

The king did not put the messenger to death.

*Liezi*

wáng

亡

fú

斧

yí

疑

lín

邻

rén yǒu wáng fú zhě yì qí lín zhī zǐ shì qí xíng  
人有亡斧者，意其邻之子。视其行

bù qiè fú yě yán sè qiè fú yě yán yǔ qiè fú yě  
步，窃斧也；颜色，窃斧也，言语，窃斧也；

zuò dòng tài dù wú wéi ér bù qiè fú yě  
作动、态度，无为而不窃斧也。

é ér hú qí gǔ ér dé qí fú tā rì fù jiàn qí lín  
俄而扞其谷而得其斧。他日复见其邻

rén zhī zǐ dòng zuò tài dù wú sì qiè fú zhě  
人之子，动作、态度，无似窃斧者。

liè zǐ yuè fú  
《列子·说符》

白话  
翻译



有一个人丢失了斧子，怀疑是邻居家的儿子偷的。他看那孩子走路的样子，像是偷斧子的样子；看他的面部表情，像是偷斧子的样子；看他的言谈话语，像是偷斧子的样子；看他的动作态度，没有一样不像是偷了斧子的。

不久之后，他在挖掘山沟里的土地时，找到了他丢失的斧头。后来他再看到邻居的儿子，觉得那孩子的动作态度，没有一点像是偷斧子的人。



## In the Eyes of the Beholder



A man who lost his axe suspected his neighbour's son of stealing it. To him, as he observed the boy, the way the lad walked, the expression on his face, the manner of his speech — in fact everything about his appearance and behaviour betrayed that he had stolen the axe.

Not long afterwards the man found his axe while digging in his cellar. When he saw his neighbour's son again, nothing about the boy's behaviour nor appearance seemed to suggest that he had stolen the axe.

*Liezi*

kāng  
康  
qú  
衢  
zhǎng  
长者  
zhě  
者

kāng qú zhǎng zhě zì tóng yuē shàn bó zì quǎn  
康衢长者，字童曰“善搏”，字犬

yuē shàn shì bīn kè bù guò qí mén zhě sān nián zhǎng  
曰“善噬”。宾客不过其门者三年。长

zhě guài ér wèn zhī nǎi shí duì yú shì gǎi zhī bīn kè  
者怪而问之，乃实对。于是改之，宾客

wǎng fù  
往复。

yīn wén zǐ dà dào xià  
《尹文子·大道下》

白话  
翻译



有个住在大路边的老人，给他的家童取名叫作“善搏”（擅长搏斗），给他的狗取名叫作“善噬”（善于咬人），因此宾客们三年来都不登他的门。老人很奇怪地问他们原因，大家就实话实说了。老人于是把家童和狗的名字都改了，宾客们就又开始与他来往了。



## Name Versus Fact



An old man who lived beside a thoroughfare named his servant boy “fighter” and his dog “biter”. For three years no one came to his house to visit him.

The old man was puzzled. He made enquiries and was told the truth. Therefore he changed the names of his servant boy and his dog, and he had a stream of visitors.

*Yinwenzi*





yòu  
宥  
zuò  
坐  
zhī  
之  
qì  
器

kǒng zǐ guān yú lǔ huán gōng zhī miào yǒu qī qì  
孔子观于鲁桓公之庙，有欹器

yān kǒng zǐ wèn yú shǒu miào zhě yuē cǐ wéi hé qì  
焉。孔子问于守庙者曰：“此为何器？”

shǒu miào zhě yuē cǐ gài wéi yòu zuò zhī qì kǒng zǐ yuē  
守庙者曰：“此盖为宥坐之器。”孔子曰：

wú wén yòu zuò zhī qì zhě xū zé qī zhōng zé zhèng  
“吾闻宥坐之器者，虚则欹<sup>①</sup>，中则正，

mǎn zé fù kǒng zǐ gù wèi dì zǐ yuē zhù shuǐ yān  
满则覆。”孔子顾谓弟子曰：“注水焉！”

dì zǐ yì shuǐ ér zhù zhī zhōng ér zhèng mǎn ér fù  
弟子挹<sup>②</sup>水而注之，中而正，满而覆，

xū ér qī  
虚而欹。

kǒng zǐ kuī rán ér tàn yuē yū ě yǒu mǎn ér bù fù  
孔子喟然而叹曰：“吁！恶有满而不覆

zhě zāi  
者哉！”

xún zǐ yòu shēng  
《荀子·宥生》



## An Admonitory Vessel



On a visit to the temple of Duke Huan of the state of Lu Confucius came upon a “leaning vessel”. He asked the keeper of the temple about it.

“What vessel is this?”

“This vessel,” replied the keeper, “is put on the right hand side of one’s seat to serve an admonitory purpose.”

“I have heard,” said Confucius, “that such an admonitory vessel would lean to one side when it is empty, stand upright when its contents are just the right amount, and fall down when it is full.”

He turned to his disciples. “Pour water into it.”

His disciples ladled water into the vessel. When the amount was neither too little nor too much the vessel stood upright; when the vessel was full it fell down; when it was empty it leaned to one side.

Confucius heaved a sigh. “Alas! A fall is inevitable for one who is full of his own worth.”

*Xunzi*

白话  
翻译



孔子在鲁桓公的庙里参观，看到那里有一只倾斜的器皿。孔子问守庙的人说：“这是什么器皿？”守庙的人说：“这大概是君主放在座位右边来警戒自己的器皿。”孔子说：“我听说君主座位右边的器皿，空着就会倾斜，灌入一半水就会端正，灌满水就会翻倒。”孔子回头对学生说：“向里面灌水吧！”学生舀了水往它里面灌，水灌了一半器皿就端正了，灌满后就翻倒了，空的时候就倾斜着。

孔子感慨地叹息说：“唉！哪有骄傲自满却不翻倒倾覆的呢？”



注释

- ① 欹(qī):同“敝”，倾斜。  
② 挹(yì):舀取。



xìn  
信  
zǐ  
子  
ér  
而  
yí  
疑  
lín  
邻

sòng yǒu fù rén tiān yǔ qiáng huài qí zǐ yuē bú  
宋有富人，天雨墙坏。其子曰：“不  
zhù bì jiāng yǒu dào qí lín rén zhī fù yì yún mù ér  
筑，必将有盗。”其邻人之父亦云。暮而  
guǒ dà wáng qí cái qí jiā shèn zhì qí zǐ ér yí lín rén  
果大亡其财。其家甚智其子，而疑邻人  
zhī fù  
之父。

hán fēi zǐ shuō nǎn  
《韩非子·说难》

白话  
翻译



宋国有一个富人，天下大雨，他家的墙塌了。富人的儿子说：“要是不修筑，一定会有盗贼来偷东西。”邻居家的老公公也这样说。晚上富人家果然丢失了很多东西。结果，那个富人认为自己的儿子聪明，却怀疑是邻居家的老公公偷了他家的东西。



## The Son and the Neighbour



In the state of Song lived a rich man. A heavy downpour caused the wall of his house to crumble.

“If the wall is not mended,” pointed out his son, “we’ll have thieves coming in.” The old man next door said the same thing.

At night, his house was really burgled and he lost many of his valuables. The whole family of the rich man praised the cleverness of their boy but was suspicious about the old man next door.

*Hanfeizi*

和  
氏  
璧

chū rén hé shì dé yù pú chǔ shān zhōng fèng ér xiàn  
楚人和氏得玉璞<sup>①</sup>楚山中，奉而献

zhī lì wáng lì wáng shǐ yù rén xiàng zhī yù rén yuē  
之厉王。厉王使玉人相之，玉人曰：“

shí yě wáng yǐ hé wéi kuáng zé yuè qí zuǒ zú  
石也。”王以和为诳，则刖<sup>②</sup>其左足。

jì lì wáng hōng wǔ wáng jí wèi hé yòu fèng qí pú  
及厉王薨，武王即位。和又奉其璞

ér xiàn zhī wǔ wáng wǔ wáng shǐ yù rén xiàng zhī yòu yuē  
而献之武王。武王使玉人相之。又曰：

shí yě wáng yòu yǐ hé wéi kuáng ér yuè qí yòu zú  
“石也。”王又以和为诳，而刖其右足。

wǔ wáng hōng wén wáng jí wèi hé nǎi bào qí pú ér  
武王薨，文王即位。和乃抱其璞而

kū yú chǔ shān zhī xià sān rì sān yè qì jìn ér jì zhī yǐ  
哭于楚山之下，三日三夜，泣尽而继之以  
xuè  
血。

wáng wén zhī shǐ rén jiàn qí gù yuē tiān xià zhī yù  
王闻之，使人问其故，曰：“天下之刖

zhě duō yǐ zǐ xī kū zhī bēi yě hé yuē wú fēi bēi yuē  
者多矣，子奚哭之悲也？”和曰：“吾非悲刖

yě bēi fū bǎo yù ér tí zhī yǐ shí zhēn shì ér míng zhī  
也。悲夫宝玉而题之以石，贞士而名之

yǐ kuáng cǐ wú suǒ yǐ bēi yě  
以诳。此吾所以悲也。”

wáng nǎi shǐ yù rén lǐ qí pú ér dé bǎo yān suì mìng  
王乃使玉人理其璞而得宝焉，遂命

yuē hé shì zhī bì  
曰“和氏之璧”。



## The Jade of He



A man of the state of Chu named Bian He found a piece of uncut jade in the Chu mountain. Holding the jade with both hands he respectfully presented it to King Li. The king ordered a jade craftsman to examine it.

“This is stone,” said the craftsman.

The king thought that Bian He was trying to deceive him so he gave orders to cut off his left foot.

After the death of King Li, King Wu ascended the throne. Again Bian He came with the jade in his hands to present it to King Wu. King Wu ordered a jade craftsman to examine it.

“This is stone,” said the craftsman again.

The king also thought Bian He was trying to deceive him, so he gave orders to cut off his right foot.

After the death of King Wu, King Wen came to the throne. Bian He took the piece of uncut jade in his arms and wept at the foot of the Chu mountain. He wept for three days and three nights. When he had no more tears he wept blood.

This came to the ears of the king and he sent some one to ask Bian He the reason for his grief.

“There are many men who had their feet cut off as pun-



白话  
翻译

楚国一个姓和的人在楚山中得到一块未加工的玉石，捧着进献给厉王。厉王叫玉工鉴定，玉工说：“这是石头。”厉王认为和氏是故意欺骗他，因而砍了他的左脚。

等到厉王死了，武王即位，和氏又捧着他的玉石献给武王。武王叫玉工鉴定，玉工又说：“是石头。”武王又认为和氏是欺骗就砍了他的右脚。

武王死，文王即位，和氏就抱着他的玉石在楚山之下大哭，一直哭了三天三夜，眼泪流干就继续流着血。

文王听到后，派人问他哭的原因，说：“天下被砍脚的人多啦，你为什么哭得这样悲痛？”和氏说：“我不是悲痛自己的脚被砍，我悲痛的是宝玉被说成是石头，真诚的人被说成是骗子。这才是我悲痛的原因。”

文王就让玉工加工这块石头，从中得到了宝玉，就把它命名为“和氏之璧。”



注释

- ① 璞：未经加工雕琢的玉。  
② 刖：古代一种砍脚的刑罚。



ishment,” said the king’s messenger, “why do you weep so bitterly?”

“I am not sad because my feet were cut off,” replied Bian He, “I grieve because a precious stone is considered a common rock and an upright and loyal man is branded a liar. This is the cause of my sorrow.”

The king ordered jade craftsmen to cut open the stone. They discovered a piece of precious jade which was thereupon named the Jade of He.

*Hanfeizi*

zhòu  
纣  
wéi  
为  
xiàng  
象  
zhù  
箸

xī zhě zhòu wéi xiàng zhù ér jī zǐ bù yǐ wéi xiàng  
昔者纣为象箸而箕子怖。以为：“象

zhù bì bù jiā yú tǔ xíng bì jiāng xī yù zhī bēi xiàng zhù  
箸必不加于土刑<sup>①</sup>，必将犀玉之杯。象箸

yù bēi bì bù gēng shū huò zé bì máo xiàng bào tāi  
玉杯，必不羹菽<sup>②</sup>藿<sup>③</sup>，则必旄象豹胎。

máo xiàng bào tāi bì bù yī duǎn hè ér shí yú máo wū zhī  
旄象豹胎，必不衣短褐而食于茅屋之

xià zé jīn yī jiǔ chóng guǎng shì gāo tái wú wèi qí  
下，则锦衣九重，广室高台。吾畏其

zú gù bù qí shǐ  
卒，故怖其始。”

jū wǔ nián zhòu wéi ròu pǔ shè pào lào dēng zāo  
居五年，纣为肉圃，设炮烙，登糟

qiū lín jiǔ chí zhòu suì yǐ wáng  
邱，临酒池。纣遂以亡。

hán fēi zǐ yù lǎo  
《韩非子·喻老》



## Ivory Chopsticks for a Start



In the ancient times Emperor Zhou of the Shang dynasty used chopsticks made of ivory. On observing this, Jizi<sup>①</sup>, a respected minister, was filled with anxiety.

He reasoned thus: “Ivory chopsticks would not be used with earthenware dishes. There would surely be wine cups made from rhinoceros’ horns and jade. Ivory chopsticks and jade cups would not go with simple fare. There would surely be delicacies such as the embryos of the yak, elephant and panther. One who tastes such delicacies would not wear clothes made of rough material or dwell in a thatched cottage. He would be clothed in layers of beautiful brocade and live in a mansion, big and imposing. I am afraid for his end. That is why the beginnings of luxurious living fill me with anxiety.”

After five years, the emperor built a garden where he hung slabs of meat, and set up copper grills. Grains from distilleries piled up like hillocks and there was enough wine to fill pools. As a result of such extravagances, Emperor Zhou was overthrown.

*Henfeizi*

白话  
翻译

从前，纣王做了一双象牙筷子，箕子就感到恐惧不安，他认为：“象牙筷子必定不能放到泥土烧成的碗里去，必然要使用犀牛角、玉石做成的杯。用着象牙筷子、玉石杯子，就必定不会吃豆子和豆叶汤，则必然要吃牦牛、大象和豹的幼胎；吃牦牛、大象和豹的幼胎，就一定不会穿着短小的粗布衣服，坐在茅草屋底下吃，必定要穿多层华美的锦衣，铸造高大壮观的宫室。我害怕如此的结局，所以恐惧这样的开始。”

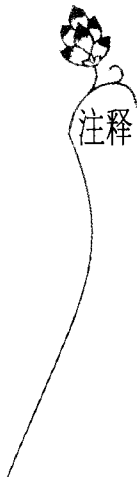
过了五年，纣王建造了满是肉食的园子，设置了炮烙之刑，登上酒糟堆成的山丘，面对注满美酒的池子，于是纣因此而灭亡了。

注释

① 钶(xíng):盛羹的器皿。

② 菽(shū):豆类的总称。

③ 藿(huò):豆叶。





**Note**

① Jizi: i.e. Ji Xu Yu, the uncle of Emperor Zhou.

sòng  
宋  
rén  
人  
kè  
刻  
chǔ  
楮

sòng rén yǒu wèi qí jūn yǐ xiàng wéi chǔ yè zhě sān nián  
宋人有为其君以象为楮叶者，三年

ér chéng fēng shā jīng kē háo máng fán zé luàn zhī chǔ  
而成。丰杀茎柯，毫芒繁泽，乱之楮

yè zhī zhōng ér bù kě bié yě cǐ rén suì yǐ gōng shí lù yú  
叶之中而不可别也。此人遂以功食禄于

sòng bāng  
宋邦。

liè zǐ wén zhī yuē shǐ tiān dì sān nián ér chéng yī  
列子闻之曰：“使天地三年而成一

yè zé wù zhī yǒu yè zhě guǎ yī  
叶，则物之有叶者寡矣。”

hán fēi zǐ yù lǎo  
《韩非子·喻老》

白话  
翻译



宋国有个人为君主用象牙雕刻楮树的叶子，三年才完成。雕刻的叶子上那粗大的主脉和细小的支脉，毫毛细芒繁多而清晰，把它混杂在真的楮树叶子当中也辨别不出来。这个人于是就靠了这一功劳在宋国做官吃俸禄。

列子听说了这件事，说：“假如天地自然之间也是三年才长成一片叶子，那么植物中有叶子的就很少了。”



## A Leaf in Three Years



In the state of Song a man carved a mulberry leaf out of ivory for his king. It took him three years to finish the job. With its pleasing shape, delicate veins, fine hairs and lustrous colour, the ivory leaf, when put among real mulberry ones, was not distinguishable from the rest. Therefore, this man received a salary from the Song government because of his merit.

Liezi<sup>①</sup> heard of this. “If it takes three years for Mother Nature to produce a leaf,” he pointed out, “then anything that has leaves would become a rarity.”

*Hanfeizi*



**Note**

① Liezi: i.e., Lie Yukou.



zhào  
赵  
xiāng  
襄  
zhǔ  
主  
xué  
学  
yù  
御

zhào xiāng zhǔ xué yù yú wáng zǐ qī é ér yǔ zǐ qī  
赵襄主学御于王子期，俄而与子期

zhú sān yì mǎ ér sān hòu xiāng zhǔ yuē zǐ zhī jiào wǒ  
逐，三易马而三后。襄主曰：“子之教我

yù shù wèi jìn yě duì yuē shù yǐ jìn yòng zhī zé  
御，术未尽也。”对曰：“术已尽，用之则

guò yě fán yù zhī suǒ guì mǎ tǐ ān yú chē rén xīn tiáo  
过也。凡御之所贵，马体安于车，人心调

yú mǎ ér hòu kě yǐ jìn sù zhì yuǎn jīn jūn hòu zé yù dǎi  
于马，而后可以进速致远。今君后则欲速

chén xiān zé kǒng dǎi yú chén fū yòu dào zhēng yuǎn fēi  
臣，先则恐逮于臣。夫诱道争远，非

xiān zé hòu yě ér xiān hòu xīn zài yú chén shàng hé yǐ  
先则后也。而先后心在于臣，上何以

diào yú mǎ cǐ jūn zhī suǒ yǐ hòu yě  
调于马？此君之所以后也。”

hán fēi zǐ yù lǎo  
《韩非子·喻老》

白话  
翻译



赵襄子向王子期学习驾车的本领，不久，他和王子期比赛驾车，换了三次马，都落在王子期的后面。赵襄子对王子期说：“您教我驾车，没把本领全教给我。”王子期解释说：“我已经毫无保留地全教给您了，只是大王运用时有所偏差。驾车最关键的是，要把马与车安排合适，人要专心致志地调理马匹，然后才能谈得上纵马飞腾，奔驰千里。而您驾车时，落后时急切地想追上我；争先了，又唯恐被我赶上。本来比赛就有前后之分，而您争先恐后的注意力全放在我的身上，哪里还有心思驾驭车马呢？这才是您落后的原因。”



## A Matter of the Mind



King Xiang of the state of Zhao learned the skill of driving a carriage from Wang Ziqi. After sometime the king raced with Wang. He changed horses three times but every time he trailed behind Wang.

“In teaching me to drive a carriage you have held something back.” said the king.

“I have taught you all I know,” Wang replied. “But you have not used my skill in the proper way. The important thing about driving a carriage is that the horses’ bodies should feel comfortable with the carriage and the driver’s mind should be in harmony with the horses. Then you can achieve great speed and go long distances. Now when you are behind me, sire, you want to catch up with me, and when you are in front of me you are afraid I would catch up with you. When driving carriages in long distance races one is either in front or behind. And no matter whether you are leading or trailing your mind is set on me. Then how can it be in harmony with the horses? This is why you could not catch up with me.”

*Hanfeizi*

yuǎn  
远  
shuǐ  
水  
bù  
不  
jiù  
救  
jìn  
近  
huǒ  
火

lǔ mù gōng shǐ zhòng gōng zǐ huò huàn yú jìn huò  
鲁穆公使众公子，或宦于晋，或  
huàn yú jīng lí chū yuē jiǎ rén yú yuè ér jiù nǐ zǐ yuè  
宦于荆。犁铍曰：“假人于越而救溺子，越  
rén suī shàn yóu zǐ bì bù shēng yǐ shī huǒ ér qǔ shuǐ yú  
人虽善游，子必不生矣。失火而取水于  
hǎi hǎi shuǐ suī duō huǒ bì bù miè yǐ yuǎn shuǐ bù jiù  
海，海水虽多，火必不灭矣。远水不救  
jìn huǒ yě jīn jìn yǔ jīng suī qiáng ér jì jìn lǔ huàn  
近火也。今晋与荆虽强，而齐近鲁，患  
qí bù jiù hū  
其不救乎？”

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín shàng  
《韩非子·说林上》

白话  
翻译



鲁穆公让自己的儿子们有的到晋国做官，有的到楚国做官。犁铍说：“到越国去借人来救掉进水里的孩子，越国人虽然善于游泳，这孩子肯定也活不了。失火了而到大海里去打水，海水虽然多，火肯定扑不灭，是因为远处的水是救不了近处的火的。现在晋国与楚国虽然强大，但是齐国离我们更近，鲁国的祸患靠晋、楚两国恐怕救不了吧！”



## Ineffectual Aid



Duke Mu of the state of Lu sent his sons to the states of Jin and Chu to occupy high positions in their governments.

His minister Li Chu said, “If your son is drowning and you send for a man from the state of Yue so far away to come and save the child, then your son cannot be saved even though the men of Yue are good swimmers. If a fire breaks out and you fetch water from the sea to put it out, then even though the water from the sea is abundant, the fire will not be put out. Water far away is useless to the fire at hand. The states of Jin and Chu are indeed strong and powerful, but the state of Qi is near to Lu. If we are imperilled, how can Jin and Chu come to our aid in time?”

*Hanfeizi*

鲁  
人  
之  
越

lǔ rén shēn shàn zhī jù qī shàn zhī gāo ér yù xī  
鲁人身善织屨，妻善织缟，而欲徙

yú yuè huò wèi zhī yuē zǐ bì qióng yǐ lǔ rén yuē  
于越。或谓之曰：“子必穷矣。”鲁人曰：

hé yé yuē jù wèi lǚ zhī yě ér yuè rén xiǎn xíng  
“何也？”曰：“屨为履之也，而越人跣行。

gāo wèi guàn zhī yě ér yuè rén bèi fā yǐ zǐ zhī suǒ  
缟为冠之也，而越人被发。以子之所

cháng yóu yú bù yòng zhī guó yù shǐ wú qióng qí kě dé  
长，游于不用之国，欲使无穷，其可得

hū  
乎？”

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín shàng  
《韩非子·说林上》

白话  
翻译



鲁国有个人善于编织草鞋，他的妻子善于纺纱，他们想一起迁徙到越国。于是就有人告诫他说：“你一定会受穷的。”鲁国人就问：“为什么？”那人说：“草鞋是用来穿的，但越国人却赤脚走路；纱是用来做帽子的，但越国人却披头散发不戴帽子。凭着你们的专长，但迁徙到没有用途的国度，想不受穷，这可能吗？”



## Hardly a Wise Move



A man of the state of Lu was skilled in weaving hemp sandals while his wife was good at weaving fine white silk. The couple thought of moving to the state of Yue in the south.

“You will be in dire straits,” he was told.

“Why?” asked the man of Lu.

“Hemp sandals are for walking but the people of Yue walk barefoot. White silk is for making hats but the people of Yue go about bare-headed. If you go to a place where your skills are utterly useless, how can you hope to do well?”

*Hanfeizi*



bó  
伯  
lè  
乐  
jiāo  
教  
rén  
人

bó lè jiāo qí suǒ zēng zhě xiāng qiān lǐ zhī mǎ jiāo qí  
伯乐教其所憎者相千里之马，教其  
suǒ ài zhě xiāng nú mǎ yǐ qiān lǐ zhī mǎ shí yī yǒu qí  
所爱者相驽马。以千里之马时一有，其  
lì huǎn nú mǎ rì shòu qí lì jí  
利缓；驽马日售，其利急。

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín xià  
《韩非子·说林下》

白话  
翻译



伯乐教自己所憎恶的人去鉴定千里马，教自己喜欢的人去鉴定普通的劣马。千里马偶尔才碰上一匹，所以获得利益比较慢；而普通的劣马每天都有人买卖，所以获利很快。



## A Matter of Discrimination



Bo Le, famous for his ability to judge horses, taught those whom he disliked how to spot fine horses that could cover a thousand *li* in one day. As to people he liked, he taught them to be a good judge of ordinary horses, not particularly fleet of foot. It is very seldom that one discovers a fine steed and such prof its are slow in coming. Ordinary horses are sold every day and one could make money in a very short time.

*Hanfeizi*



jiù  
就

chóng

虫

zì  
自

shā

杀

chóng yǒu huǐ zhě yī shēn liǎng kǒu zhēng shí xiāng  
虫有虺<sup>①</sup>者，一身两口，争食相

hé suì xiāng shā yě  
齧<sup>②</sup>，遂相杀也。

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín xià  
《韩非子·说林下》

白话  
翻译



动物中有种叫“虺”的，一个身体上长着两张嘴，因为争夺食物而互相咬，于是就互相把对方咬死了。

注释

① 虺(huǐ):传说中一种生有多个头的毒蛇。

② 齧(hé):咬。



## A Snake with Two Mouths



A certain venomous snake had two mouths which bit at each other, fighting over food. The struggle ended in death for both.

*Hanfeizi*



bù  
不  
dài  
待  
mǎn  
满  
guàn  
贯  
ér  
而  
qù  
去

yǒu yǔ hàn zhě lín yù mài zhái ér bì zhī rén yuē  
有与悍者邻，欲卖宅而避之。人曰：

shì qí guàn jiāng mǎn yī zǐ gū dài zhī dá yuē wú  
“是其贯将满矣，子姑待之。”答曰：“吾

kǒng qí yǐ wǒ mǎn guàn yě suì qù zhī  
恐其以我满贯也。”遂去之。

hàn fēi zǐ shuō lín zǐ  
《韩非子·说林子》

白话  
翻译



有一个人和凶暴的人做邻居，想卖掉自己的房子来避开他。有人说：“这个凶暴的人就要恶贯满盈了，你姑且等待一下吧！”这个人回答说：“我害怕他拿害我来铸成他的恶贯满盈啊！”于是就卖掉房子离开了。



## Unwise to Wait



A man had a neighbour who was a malicious brute. He wanted to sell his house and get away from the fellow.

“His sins will soon come to a head and he will have his just deserts,” he was told, “why not wait a little while?”

“I am afraid,” he replied, “that his sins will come to a head through me.” So he moved.

*Hanfeizi*

zhōng  
中  
háng  
行  
wén  
文  
zǐ  
子  
chū  
出  
wáng  
亡

jìn zhōng háng wén zǐ chū wáng guò yú xiàn yì cóng  
晋中行文子出亡，过于县邑。从

zhě yuē cǐ sè fū gōng zhī gù rén gōng xǐ bù xiū shè  
者曰：“此嗇夫<sup>①</sup>，公之故人，公奚不休舍？

qiě dài hòu chē wén zǐ yuē wú cháng hào xī cǐ rén  
且待后车。”文子曰：“吾尝好昔，此人

yí wǒ míng qín wú hào pèi cǐ rén yí wǒ yù huán shì  
遗我鸣琴。吾好佩，此人遗我玉环。是

zhèn wǒ guò zhě yě yǐ qiú róng yú wǒ zhě wú kǒng qí yǐ  
振我过者也。以求容于我者，吾恐其以

wǒ qiú róng yú rén yě nǎi qù zhī guǒ shōu wén zǐ hòu  
我求容于人也。”乃去之，果收文子后

chē èr shèng ér xiàn zhī qí jūn yǐ  
车二乘，而献之其君矣。

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín xià  
《韩非子·说林下》

白话  
翻译



晋国的中行文子出境逃亡，经过一个县城。侍从说：“这个县里的嗇夫，是您的老朋友，为什么不在这里留宿休息一下，等待后面的车子呢？”

文子说：“我曾经爱好音乐，这个人就送我名琴；我喜爱美玉，这个人就送我玉环。这是个助长我的过错的人。用助长我的过错来求取我的好感的这种人，我怕他会拿我去向别人求取好感。”于是迅速离开了。后来这个人果然扣下文子后面随行的两部车子，献给了他的新主子。



注释

① 嗇夫：官名。



## Friend or Foe?



When Zhonghang Wenzhi of the state of Jin became a fugitive he passed a certain county.

“The magistrate of this place is an old friend of yours,” said his attendants. “Why don’t you stay here and rest a bit while waiting for the carriages that are coming behind us?”

“At one time when I was fond of music,” replied Wenzhi, “this man gave me a beautifully tuned qin (a stringed instrument). There was another time when I became fond of jade ornaments, then he gave me jade rings. He was ready to abet me in my wrongdoings. Since he put himself out to win my favour, I am afraid that he will use me to win someone else’s favour.”

Thus Wenzhi departed. It turned out that the magistrate did stop two carriages that came after Wenzhi and offered them as a gift to his new master.

*Hanfeizi*

zhū  
侏  
rú  
儒  
mèng  
梦  
zào  
灶

wèi líng gōng zhī shí mí zǐ xiá yǒu chǒng zhuān yú wèi  
卫灵公之时，弥子瑕有宠，专于卫

guó zhū rú yǒu jiàn gōng zhě yuē chén zhī mèng jiàn yí  
国。侏儒有见公者，曰：“臣之梦践矣。”

gōng yuē hé mèng duì yuē mèng jiàn zào wèi jiàn gōng  
公曰：“何梦？”对曰：“梦见灶，为见公

yě gōng nù yuē wú wén jiàn rén zhǔ zhě mèng jiàn rì  
也。”公怒曰：“吾闻见人主者梦见日，

xī wèi jiàn guǎ rén ér mèng jiàn zào duì yuē fū rì jiān  
奚为见寡人而梦见灶？”对曰：“夫日兼

zhú tiān xià yī wù bù néng dāng yě rén jūn jiān zhú yī  
烛<sup>①</sup>天下，一物不能当也。人君兼烛一

guó yī rén bù néng yōng yě gù jiāng jiàn rén zhǔ zhě mèng  
国，一人不能拥也，故将见人主者梦

jiàn rì fū zào yī rén yáng yān zé hòu rén wú cóng jiàn  
见日。夫灶，一人炀<sup>②</sup>焉，则后人无从见

yī jīn huò zhě yī rén yǒu yáng jūn zhě hū zé chén suī  
矣。今或者一人有炀君者乎？则臣虽

mèng jiàn zào bù yì kě hū  
梦见灶，不亦可乎？”

hán fēi zǐ nèi chǔ shuō shàng  
《韩非子·内储说上》



## A Dream Come True



When Duke Ling was ruling over the state of Wei, Mi Zixia, the duke's favourite minister, wielded absolute power in the state.

A dwarf came to see the duke.

"My lord," said the dwarf, "my dream has come true."

"What dream did you have?" asked the duke.

"In my dream I saw a kitchen stove, which means I will see my lord," replied the dwarf.

The duke was enraged. "I have heard that those who get to see their sovereign will dream of the sun. Why do you say that dreaming of a kitchen stove meant you will get to see me?"

"The sun," the dwarf replied, "shines over all the earth and no single object can block its light. The sovereign of a state sees all that goes on in his country and no single man can block his view. That is why seeing the sun in a dream means one gets to see the sovereign. As for a kitchen stove, when one person stands in front of it warming himself, no one behind him gets to see the light. Now perhaps there is someone who is doing just that to you, my lord. Then is it not understandable



白话  
翻译



卫灵公的时候，弥子瑕得宠，在卫国独断专权。有一个侏儒见到了卫灵公，对他说：“我做的梦应验了。”卫灵公说：“你做的什么梦？”侏儒回答：“我梦见了灶头，那是进见主君的预兆。”卫灵公非常愤怒地说：“我听说将要见到君王的人，会梦见太阳；哪里会因为要见到寡人而梦见灶头呢？”侏儒回答说：“太阳普照天下，一样东西也遮挡不住它的光芒。君王洞察全国的情形，一个人也蒙蔽不了他，所以将要见到君主的人会梦见太阳。灶头这个东西，一个人在灶门那里烤火，后面的人就看不见火光了。现在大概就有人在您这里烤火而把您的光芒挡住了吧！既然如此，我即使梦见灶头，不也是可以的吗？”



注释

- ① 烛：照，引申为洞察。
- ② 炆：烘烤。



that I dreamed of a kitchen stove?"

*Hanfeizi*



nán  
南  
guō  
郭  
chuí  
吹  
yú  
竽

qí xuān wáng shǐ rén chuī yú bì sān bǎi rén nán guō  
齐宣王使人吹竽，必三百人。南郭

chǔ shì qǐng wéi wáng chuī yú xuān wáng yuè zhī lǐn shí yì  
处士请为王吹竽，宣王说之，廩食以

shù bǎi rén  
数百人。

xuān wáng sǐ mǐn wáng lì hào yī yī tīng zhī chǔ  
宣王死，湣王立，好一一听之，处

shì táo  
士逃。

hán fēi zǐ nèi chǔ shuō shàng  
《韩非子·内储说上》

白话  
翻译



齐宣王让人吹竽，一定要三百人一齐吹。南郭先生请求加入乐队为齐宣王吹竽，宣王很高兴，由官仓供给他的粮食和其他吹竽的人一样多。宣王死后，他的儿子湣王继位，他喜欢一个一个地听人吹竽。南郭先生就逃跑了。



## Safety in Numbers



Whenever King Xuan of the state of Qi ordered musicians to play the *yu*, an ancient wind instrument consisting of reed pipes, he insisted on three hundred musicians playing together. Nanguo, an educated man in retirement, asked permission to play the *yu* for the king. The king graciously gave his consent and Nanguo received the same salary as the other several hundred musicians.

After the death of King Xuan, King Min became the ruler of Qi. He liked to listen to the musicians one by one. Nanguo fled.

*Hanfeizi*

fū  
夫  
qī  
妻  
zhù  
祝  
dǎo  
祷

wèi rén yǒu fū qī dǎo zhē ér zhù yuē shǐ wǒ wú gù  
卫人有夫妻祷者，而祝曰：“使我无故

dé bǎi shù bù qí fū yuē hé shǎo yě duì yuē yì  
得百束布。”其夫曰：“何少也？”对曰：“益

shì zǐ jiāng yǐ mǎi qiè  
是，子将以买妾。”

hán fēi zǐ nèi chū shuō xià  
《韩非子·内储说下》

白话  
翻译



卫国有一对夫妻在做祈祷。妻子许愿说：“让我平安无事，得到一百束布。”她的丈夫说：“为什么要得这么少？”妻子回答说：“超过了这个数量，你就会用它去买小老婆了。”



## Earnest Prayers



In the state of Wei a couple was praying to the gods.

“Please, let me have one hundred strings of cash without having to work for it,” prayed the wife.

“Why so little?” asked her husband.

“If we have more,” came her reply, “you’d go and get a concubine.”

*Hanteizi*

mǎi  
买  
dù  
楛  
huán  
还  
zhū  
珠

chǔ rén yǒu mài qí zhū yú zhèng zhě wéi mù lán zhī  
楚人有卖其珠于郑者，为木兰之

guì xūn yǐ guì jiāo zhuì yǐ zhū yù shì yǐ méi guī jí  
柜，熏以桂椒，缀以珠玉，饰以玫瑰，辑

yǐ yǔ cuì zhèng rén mǎi qí dù ér huán qí zhū  
以翡翠。郑人买其楛而还其珠。

cǐ kě wèi shàn mài dù yī wèi kě wèi shàn yù zhū yě  
此可谓善卖楛矣，未可谓善鬻珠也。

hán fēi zǐ wài chū shuō zuǒ shàng  
《韩非子·外储说左上》

白话  
翻译



有个楚国人在郑国出售宝珠。他为珍珠做了个木兰木的匣子，用肉桂、花椒等香料把匣子熏香，还用珍珠、宝石、玫瑰玉石、翡翠来加以装饰和点缀。一个郑国人买走了这个匣子，却把宝珠还给了他。

这可以说是善于卖匣子，不能说是善于卖珍珠啊！



## The Casket and the Pearl



A man from the state of Chu wanted to sell a precious pearl in the state of Zheng. He made a casket for the pearl out of the wood from a magnolia tree, which he fumigated with fragrant osmanthus and spices. He studded the casket with pearls and jade, ornamented it with red gems and decorated it with kingfisher feathers. A man of the state of Zheng bought the casket and gave him back the pearl.

This man from Chu certainly knew how to sell a casket but he was no good at selling his pearl.

*Hanfeizi*



huà  
画  
shú  
孰  
zuì  
最  
nán  
难

kè yǒu wèi qí wáng huà zhě qí wáng wèn yuē huà  
客有为齐王画者。齐王问曰：“画

shú zuì nán zhě yuē quǎn mǎ zuì nán shú yì zhě  
孰最难者？”曰：“犬马最难。”“孰易者？”

yuē guǐ mèi zuì yì fū quǎn mǎ rén suǒ zhī yě dàn mù  
曰：“鬼魅最易。夫犬马，人所知也，旦暮

qìng yú qián bù kě lèi zhī gù nán guǐ mèi wú xíng  
罄<sup>①</sup>于前，不可类之，故难；鬼魅，无形

zhě bù qìng yú qián gù yì zhī yě  
者，不罄于前，故易之也。”

hán fēi zǐ wài chū shuō zuǒ shàng  
《韩非子·外储说左上》

白话  
翻译



客人中有个为齐王作画的人，齐王问他：“画什么最难？”他说：“狗和马最难画。”齐王又问：“画什么最容易？”他说：“画鬼怪最容易。狗和马是人们所知道、熟悉的东西，白天晚上都出现在人们面前，不可能画得完全相似，所以难画；而鬼怪神仙是没有固定形体的，不会出现在人们面前，所以容易画。”

注释

① 罄(qìng):显现。



## Ghost Drawing



The king of the state of Qi asked his guest who was drawing a picture for him, "What is most difficult to draw?"

"Dogs and horses are the most difficult."

"What is the easiest?"

"Ghosts are the easiest. Dogs and horses are familiar sights that we behold from morning till evening and it is not easy to capture the likeness. That is why they are so difficult to draw. As for ghosts, they have no shape and they do not appear before us. That is why it's so easy to draw them."

*Hanfeizi*



bǔ  
卜  
qī  
妻  
féng  
缝  
kù  
裤

zhèng xiàn rén bǔ zǐ shǐ qī qī wéi kù qī qī wèn  
郑县人卜子，使其妻为袴<sup>①</sup>。其妻问

yuē jīn kù hé rú fū yuē xiàng wú gù kù qī  
曰：“今袴何如？”夫曰：“象吾故袴。”妻

yīn huī xīn lìng rú gù kù  
因毁新令如故袴。

hán fēi zǐ wài chū shuō zuǒ shàng  
《韩非子·外储说左上》

白话  
翻译



郑县有个叫卜子的人，让妻子给他做条裤子。妻子问：“现在要把新裤子做成什么样子啊？”丈夫说：“像我的旧裤子一样就可以了。”他的妻子于是就把新裤子撕烂，使它看上去像旧裤子一样。



注释

① 袴(kù):裤子。

## Good as Old



Buzi, a man of the county of Zheng, told his wife to make him a new pair of trousers.

“What do you want the new pair to be like?” asked his wife.

“Same as my old pair,” he replied.

As a result, his wife ruined the new trousers to make them look exactly like the old pair.

*Hanfeizi*

zhèng

郑

rén

人

mǎi

买

lǚ

履

zhèng rén yǒu yù mǎi lǚ zhě xiān zì duó qí zú ér zhì  
郑人有欲买履者，先自度其足而置

zhī qí zuò zhì zhī shì ér wàng cǎo zhī yǐ dé lǚ nǎi  
之其坐。至之市而忘操之。已得履，乃

yuē wú wàng chí dù fǎn guī qǔ zhī jí fǎn shì  
曰：“吾忘持度。”反归取之，及反，市

bù suí bù dé lǚ rén yuē hé bù shì zhī yǐ zú  
罢，遂不得履。人曰：“何不试之以足？”

yuē zhǎng xìn dù wú zì xìn yé  
曰：“掌信度，无自信也。”

hán fēi zǐ wài chū shuō zuǒ shàng  
《韩非子·外储说左上》

白话  
翻译



郑国有个人想去买双鞋，先自己量好了脚的大小，并把量好的尺码放在座位上，等到去集市时却忘了带那尺码。他已经挑到了鞋子，说：“我忘记带尺码来了。”就回家去取。等到他赶回来时，集市已经散了，于是就没有买到鞋。有人问他说：“你为什么不用自己的脚来试试鞋子的大小呢？”他回答说：“我宁可相信尺码，也不相信自己的脚！”



## Buying Shoes



A man of the state of Zheng wanted to buy a pair of shoes. He measured his foot and put the measurement on a chair. When he set out for the market he forgot to bring it along. It was after he had found the pair he wanted that this occurred to him.

“I forgot the measurement,” said he.

He went home to get it but when he returned the market had broken up and he did not get his shoes after all, “Why didn’t you try on the shoes with your feet?” he was asked.

“I’d rather trust the measurement than trust myself.”

*Hanfeizi*

zēng  
曾  
zǐ  
子  
shū  
杀  
zhū  
猪

zēng zǐ zhī qī zhī shì qí zǐ suí zhī ér qì qí mǔ  
曾子之妻之市，其子随之而泣。其母

yuē nǚ hái gù fǎn wéi nǚ shā shā  
曰：“女还，顾反为女杀彘。”

qī shì shì lái zēng zǐ yù bǔ zhì shā zhī qī zhǐ zhī  
妻适市来，曾子欲捕彘杀之，妻止之

yuē tè yú yīng ér xì ěr zēng zǐ yuē yīng ér fēi  
曰：“特与婴儿戏耳。”曾子曰：“婴儿非

yǔ xì yě yīng ér fēi yǒu zhī yě dài fù mǔ ér xué zhě  
与戏也。婴儿非有知也，待父母而学者

yě tīng fù mǔ zhī jiào jīn zǐ qī zhī shì jiào zǐ qī yé  
也，听父母之教。今子欺之，是教子欺也。

mǔ qī zǐ zǐ ér bù xìn qí mǔ fēi yǐ chéng jiào yé  
母欺子，子而不信其母，非以成教也。”

sù pēng zhì yě  
遂烹彘也。

hàn fēi zǐ wài chū shuō zuǒ shàng  
《韩非子·外储说左上》

白话  
翻译



曾子的妻子要到集市上去，她的儿子跟在后面哭着要去。母亲没有办法，就对儿子说：“你先回家去吧，我从街上回来了杀猪给你吃。”

曾子的妻子刚从集市回来，曾子便准备把猪抓来杀了，他的妻子劝阻他说：“我只是和小孩开玩笑罢了。”曾子说：“小孩是不可以随便与他开玩笑的。小孩子并不懂事，是依靠父母来学习的，一切都听从父母的教导。现在你如果哄骗他，就是在教导小孩骗人啊。母亲哄骗了孩子，孩子就不再相信他的母亲，不能这样来教育孩子啊。”于是曾子便把猪杀了煮给孩子吃。

## An Example to Follow



As Zengzi's wife set off for the market, her little son followed her, crying.

"Go home," she said to the boy, "when I come back, I'll kill the pig for you to eat."

When she got back from the market Zengzi wanted to catch the pig and kill it.

His wife stopped him. "I was just humouring the child."

"Children cannot be humoured in this way," he replied. "They have little understanding. They learn from their parents and listen to what their parents teach them. By deceiving him now you are teaching him to deceive. If a mother deceives her son, her son would not believe his mother any more. This is not the way to teach a child." So he killed the pig and cooked it.

*Hanfeizi*



**Note**

Zengzi: i.e. Zeng Shen.





zì  
自  
xiāng  
相  
máo  
矛  
dùn  
盾

chǔ rén yǒu yù dùn yǔ máo zhě yù zhī yuē wú dùn  
楚人有鬻<sup>①</sup>盾与矛者，誉之曰：“吾盾

zhī jiān wù mò néng xiàn yě yòu yù qí máo yuē wú  
之坚，物莫能陷<sup>②</sup>也。”又誉其矛曰：“吾

máo zhī lì yú wù wú bù xiàn yě huò yuē yǐ zǐ zhī  
矛之利，于物无不陷也。”或曰：“以子之

máo xiàn zǐ zhī dùn hé rú qí rén fú néng yīng yě  
矛，陷子之盾，何如？”其人弗能应也。

fū bù kě xiàn zhī dùn yǔ wú bù xiàn zhī máo bù kě tóng shì  
夫不可陷之盾与无不陷之矛，不可同世

ér lì  
而立。

hán fēi zǐ nǎn yī  
《韩非子·难一》

白话  
翻译



楚国有个卖矛和盾的人，夸耀他的盾说：“我的盾很坚固，任何武器都刺不穿它。”又夸他的矛说：“我的矛很锐利，没有什么东西穿不透的。”有人质问他：“拿你的矛去刺你的盾，结果会怎样？”那人便答不上话来了。坚不可破的盾和无坚不穿的矛，是不能同时并存的。



注释

① 鬻(yù): 卖。

② 陷: 攻破, 这里是刺穿的意思。



## His Spear Against His Shield



A man of the state of Chu had a spear and a shield for sale. He was loud in praises of his shield.

“My shield is so strong that nothing can pierce it through.”

He also sang praises of his spear.

“My spear is so strong that it can pierce through anything.”

“What would happen,” he was asked, “if your spear is used to pierce your shield?”

He was unable to give an answer.

It is impossible for an impenetrable shield to coexist with a spear that finds nothing impenetrable.

*Hanfeizi*

shǒu  
守  
zhū  
株  
dài  
待  
tù  
兔

sòng rén yǒu gēng zhě tián zhōng yǒu zhū tù zǒu chù  
宋人有耕者，田中有株，兔走触

zhū zhé jǐng ér sǐ yīn shì qí lěi ér shǒu zhū jì fù dé  
株，折颈而死。因释其耒而守株，冀复得

tù tù bù kě fù dé ér shēn wèi sòng guó xiào  
兔。兔不可复得，而身为宋国笑。

hán fēi zǐ wú dù  
《韩非子·五蠹》

白话  
翻译



宋国有个农夫，田地里有棵树，有一天一只奔跑的兔子撞在树上，折断脖子而死了。这个人因此而放下农具专门守在树旁，希望再次得到撞死的兔子。没有再得到兔子，自己却被整个宋国耻笑。



## The Vigil by the Tree Stump



In the state of Song there was a farmer in whose fields stood a tree stump. A hare which was running very fast dashed against the stump and died, having broken its neck. So the farmer abandoned his plough and waited by the tree stump, hoping to get another hare. He did not get his hare but became a laughingstock in the state of Song.

*Hanfeizi*

qí  
祁  
huáng  
黄  
yáng  
羊  
jǔ  
举  
xián  
贤

jìn píng gōng wèn yú qí huáng yáng yuē nán yáng wú  
晋平公问于祁黄羊曰：“南阳无

lìng qí shéi kě ér wéi zhī qí huáng yáng duì yuē xiè  
令，其谁可而为之？”祁黄羊对曰：“解

hú kě píng gōng yuē xiè hú fēi zǐ zhī chóu xié duì  
狐可。”平公曰：“解狐非子之仇邪？”对

yuē jūn wèn kě fēi wèn chén zhī chóu yě píng gōng  
曰：“君问可，非问臣之仇也。”平公

yuē shàn suì yòng zhī guó rén chēng shàn yān  
曰：“善。”遂用之，国人称善焉。

jū yǒu jiān píng gōng yòu wèn qí huáng yáng yuē guó  
居有间，平公又问祁黄羊曰：“国

wú wèi qí shéi kě ér wéi zhī duì yuē wǔ kě  
无尉，其谁可而为之？”对曰：“午可。”

píng gōng yuē wǔ fēi zǐ zhī zǐ xié duì yuē jūn wèn  
平公曰：“午非子之子邪？”对曰：“君问

kě fēi wèn chén zhī zǐ yě píng gōng yuē shàn yòu  
可，非问臣之子也。”平公曰：“善。”又

suì yòng zhī guó rén chēng shàn yān  
遂用之，国人称善焉。

kǒng zǐ wén zhī yuē shàn zāi qí huáng yáng zhī lùn  
孔子闻之曰：“善哉祁黄羊之论

yě wài jǔ bù bì chóu nèi jǔ bù bì zǐ qí huáng yáng  
也。外举不避仇，内举不避子。祁黄羊

kě wèi gōng yī  
可谓公矣。”

lǚ shì chūn qiū qù sī  
《吕氏春秋·去私》



## Recommendations



Duke Ping of the state of Jin asked Qi Huangyang, "There is a vacancy for a county magistrate in Nanyang. Who do you think is suitable for the post?"

"Xie Hu is a suitable candidate," replied Qi.

"Isn't Xie Hu your enemy?" asked the duke.

"My lord, you asked me who would be suitable for the post, not who my enemy was," came the reply.

"Good," said the duke.

Xie Hu was given the job and everyone in the state applauded the appointment.

After a short time, the duke asked Qi again, "The capital city needs a military official. Who do you think is suitable for the post?"

"Qi Wu is a suitable candidate," replied Qi.

"Isn't Qi Wu your son?" asked the duke.

"My lord, you asked me who would be suitable for the post, not who my son was," came the reply.

"Good," said the duke.

Qi Wu was also given the post and everyone in the state approved the appointment.



白话  
翻译



晋平公问祁黄羊：“南阳没有县令，谁适合去做这个官？”祁黄羊回答：“解狐适合。”平公说：“解狐不是你的仇人吗？”他回答说：“您问的是谁合适，并不是问谁是我的仇人呀。”平公说：“很好。”于是任用了解狐。大家都称赞任命得对。

隔了一些日子，平公又问祁黄羊：“国家少了个军事将领，谁适宜担任这个工作？”他回答：“祁午适宜。”平公说：“祁午不是你的儿子吗？”祁黄羊回答：“您问的是谁适宜，并不是问谁是我的儿子呀。”平公说：“很对。”于是又任命了祁午。大家都称赞任命得好。

孔子听到了这些事，说：“祁黄羊提的建议真好啊！推荐外人不排除仇人，推荐自己人不回避儿子，祁黄羊可以说是大公无私了。”



When Confucius got to know of this, he said, “Qi Huangyang’s judgment is commendable indeed. When recommending one outside his family he did not discriminate against his enemy. When recommending a member of his family he had no scruples about choosing his own son. This is indeed a just and impartial man.”

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)



liè  
列  
zǐ  
子  
xué  
学  
shè  
射

zǐ liè zǐ cháng shè zhòng yǐ qǐng zhī yú guān yǐn  
子列子常射中矣，请之于关尹

zǐ guān yǐn zǐ yuē zhī zǐ zhī suǒ yǐ zhòng hū dá  
子。关尹子曰：“知子之所以中乎？”答

yuē fú zhī yě guān yǐn zǐ yuē wèi kě  
曰：“弗知也。”关尹子曰：“未可。”

tuì ér xí zhī sān nián yòu qǐng guān yǐn zǐ yuē zǐ  
退而习之三年，又请。关尹子曰：“子

zhī zǐ zhī suǒ yǐ zhòng hū liè zǐ yuē zhī zhī yǐ  
知子之所以中乎？”列子曰：“知之矣。”

guān yǐn zǐ yuē kě yǐ shǒu ér wù shī  
关尹子曰：“可矣，守而勿失。”

fēi dú shè yě guó zhī cún yě guó zhī wáng yě shēn  
非独射也，国之存也，国之亡也，身

zhī xián yě shēn zhī bù xiào yě yì jiē yǒu yǐ  
之贤也，身之不肖也，亦皆有以。

lǚ shì chūn qiū shěn jǐ  
《吕氏春秋·审己》

白话  
翻译



列子射箭经常能射中靶心，他向关尹子请教射箭的秘诀。关尹子说：“你知道你是怎样射中靶心的吗？”列子回答说：“不知道。”关尹子说：“这样还不行。”

列子回去后练习了三年，又向关尹子请教。关尹子说：“你知道你是怎样射中靶心的吗？”列子说：“知道了！”关尹子说：“很好，好好把握这个技巧，不要让它荒废了。”

不光是射箭，国家的生死存亡，人的贤德与不肖，也是这个道理。



## How and Why



Liezi often managed to hit the bull's eye when shooting with his bow and arrows. Once he asked the advice of Guan Yinzi.

“Do you know why you could hit the bull's eye?” asked Guan Yinzi.

“No, I don't,” replied Liezi.

“Then you still have much to learn.”

Liezi returned home and practised his archery for three years before going once more to ask the advice of Guan Yinzi.

“Do you know why you could hit the bull's eye?” asked Guan Yinzi.

“Yes, I do,” replied Liezi.

“Then you have succeeded. Make sure you do not forget what you have learned.”

This does not only apply to archery. The rise and fall of nations, the virtues and vices of men all have reasons behind them.

*Lüshi Chunqiu (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)*

kǒng  
孔  
zǐ  
子  
mǎ  
马  
yì  
逸

kǒng zǐ xíng dào ér xī mǎ yì shí rén zhī jià yě  
孔子行道而息，马逸。食人之稼，野

rén qǔ qí mǎ zǐ gòng qǐng wǎng shuō zhī bì cí yě rén  
人取其马。子贡请往说之，毕辞，野人

bù tīng  
不听。

yǒu bǐ rén shǐ shì kǒng zǐ zhé yuē qǐng wǎng shuō  
有鄙人始事孔子者，曰：“请往说

zhī yīn wèi yě rén yuē zǐ bù gēng yú dōng hǎi wú bù  
之。”因为野人曰：“子不耕于东海，吾不

gēng yú xī hǎi yě wú mǎ hé dé bù shí zǐ zhī hé qí  
耕于西海也。吾马何得不食子之禾？”其

yě rén dà yuē xiāng wèi yuē shuō yì jiē rú cǐ qí biàn  
野人大说，相谓曰：“说亦皆如此其辩

yě dú rú xiàng zhī rén jiě mǎ ér yǔ zhī  
也，独如向之人！”解马而与之。

lǚ shì chūn qiū bì yǐ  
《吕氏春秋·必已》

白话  
翻译



孔子在赶路的途中休息，马逃脱了束缚，吃了别人的庄稼，农民把马牵走了。子贡请求去说服那农民，什么话都说尽了，但那农民就是不理他。

有个刚刚跟随孔子学习的粗人，说：“请让我去跟他说吧。”他便对那农民说：“您不是在东海种地，我不是在西海种地，我的马正好在你的田地边，怎么可能不吃你的庄稼呢？”那农民很高兴地对他说：“说话都像你这么清楚就好了，怎么能像刚刚那个人那样呢！”解开马的缰绳就给了他。



## Powers of Persuasion



During one of his travels, Confucius was taking a rest when his horse ran away and ate a farmer's crops. The farmer would not let the horse go. Confucius' pupil Zigong<sup>①</sup>, skilled in powers of persuasion, volunteered to go and talk to him. He made a moving speech but the farmer did not heed his words.

A rough fellow who had just followed Confucius for a short time said, "Please let me go and talk to him."

He said to the farmer, "You do not farm near the East Sea and we do not have farms near the West Sea. Here in the west, what do you expect our horse to eat if it can't eat your crops?"

Upon hearing these words the farmer was delighted. He said, "Plain speaking! That's the way to talk. Not like that man just now."

The farmer released the horse and returned it to him.

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)



### Note

① Zigong: i.e. Duanmu Ci.

kè  
刻  
zhōu  
舟  
qiú  
求  
jiàn  
剑

chǔ rén yǒu shè jiāng zhě qí jiàn zì zhōu zhōng zhuì yú  
楚人有涉江者，其剑自舟中坠于

shuǐ jù qí qí zhōu yuē shì wú jiàn zhī suǒ cóng zhuì  
水，遽契其舟，曰：“是吾剑之所从坠。”

zhōu zhǐ cóng qí suǒ qì zhě rù shuǐ qiú zhī  
舟止，从其所契者入水求之。

zhōu yǐ xíng yǐ ér jiàn bù xíng qiú jiàn ruò cǐ bù  
舟已行矣，而剑不行。求剑若此，不

yì huò hū  
亦惑乎？

lǚ shì chūn qiū chá jīn  
《吕氏春秋·察今》

白话  
翻译



有个楚国人乘船过江时，他的剑从船上掉进了水里，他就马上在船帮上刻下一个记号，说：“这是我的剑掉下去的地方。”等船靠岸，他就从刻记号的地方跳进水里去找剑。

船已经行驶了很远，而剑却没走，这样去找剑，不是很糊涂吗？



## Making His Mark



A man from the state of Chu was crossing a river. In the boat, his sword fell into the water. Immediately he made a mark on the boat.

“This is where my sword fell off,” he said.

When the boat stopped moving, he went into the water to look for his sword at the place where he had marked the boat.

The boat had moved but the sword had not. Is this not a very foolish way to look for a sword?

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)



yī  
一  
míng  
鸣  
jīng  
惊  
rén  
人

jīng zhuāng wáng lì sān nián bù tīng ér hào yīn  
荆 妆 王 立 三 年 ， 不 听 而 好 隐 ① 。

chéng gōng gǔ rén jiàn wáng yuē bù gǔ jìn jiàn zhě jīn zǐ  
成 公 贾 人 谏 。 王 曰 ： “ 不 穀 禁 谏 者 ， 今 子

jiàn hé gù duì yuē chén fēi gǎn jiàn yě yuàn yǔ jūn  
谏 何 故 ？” 对 曰 ： “ 臣 非 敢 谏 也 ， 愿 与 君

wáng yīn yě wáng yuē hú bù shè bù gǔ yǐ duì  
王 隐 也 。” 王 曰 ： “ 胡 不 设 不 穀 矣 ？” 对

yuē yǒu niǎo zhǐ yú nán fāng zhī fù sān nián bù dòng bù  
曰 ： “ 有 鸟 止 于 南 方 之 阜 ， 三 年 不 动 、 不

fēi bù míng shì hé niǎo yě wáng shè zhī yuē yǒu  
飞 、 不 鸣 ， 是 何 鸟 也 ？” 王 射 之 曰 ： “ 有

niǎo zhǐ yú nán fāng zhī fù qí sān nián bù dòng jiāng yǐ  
鸟 止 于 南 方 之 阜 ， 其 三 年 不 动 ， 将 以

dìng zhì yì yě qí bù fēi jiāng yǐ zhǎng yǔ yì yě qí  
定 志 意 也 ， 其 不 飞 ， 将 以 长 羽 翼 也 ， 其

bù míng jiāng yǐ lǎn mín zé yě shì niǎo suī wú fēi fēi  
不 鸣 ， 将 以 览 民 则 也 。 是 鸟 虽 无 飞 ， 飞

jiāng chōng tiān suī wú míng míng jiāng hài rén gǔ chū yǐ  
将 冲 天 ； 虽 无 鸣 ， 鸣 将 骇 人 。 贾 出 矣 ，

bù gǔ zhī zhī yǐ míng rì cháo suǒ jìn zhě wǔ rén suǒ  
不 穀 知 之 矣 。” 明 日 朝 ， 所 进 者 五 人 ， 所

tuì zhě shí rén qún chén dà yuē jīng guó zhī zhòng xiāng hè  
退 者 十 人 。 群 臣 大 说 ， 荆 国 之 众 相 贺

yě  
也 。

lǚ shì chūn qiū zhòng yán  
《 吕 氏 春 秋 · 重 言 》



## The Silent Bird



King Zhuang of the state of Chu had ruled the state for three years. He did not like to listen to the advice of his ministers but preferred solving riddles. Cheng Gonggu went to see the king with the intention of admonishing him.

“I do not permit admonitions from ministers,” said the king. “So why are you here to admonish me?”

“Your majesty, I am not so bold as to admonish you for anything,” replied Cheng. “I am here to solve riddles with you.”

“Why not give me a riddle then,” said the king.

“A certain bird rested on a hill in the south. For three years it did not move or fly or cry. What bird is that?”

The king solved the riddle. “This bird rested on a hill in the south. For three years it did not move because it wanted to strengthen its will and determination; it did not fly because it wanted to be fully-fledged; it did not cry because it wanted to observe the behaviour of the people. Though this bird does not fly, it will soar up the skies once it stretches its wings for flight. Though it does not cry, it will startle people once it opens its mouth to utter a sound. You may leave now. I understand what you are trying to say.”



白话  
翻译



楚庄王继王位三年，不喜欢直言进谏而喜欢隐语。成公贾进谏，庄王说：“我禁止进谏，现在你来进谏是什么缘故？”成公贾回答说：“我不敢来进谏，我是来和您说隐语的。”王说：“要跟我猜什么呢？”回答说：“有只鸟栖息在南方的山上，三年不动、不飞也不叫，这是什么鸟？”庄王猜度说：“有只鸟停在南方的山上，它三年不动，是用来确定自己的志向；它三年不飞，是用来增强翅膀的力量；三年不叫，是用来观察治民的法则。这只鸟虽然不飞，但一飞就要冲天；虽然不叫，但一叫就要惊人。你出去吧，我知道你的意思了。”第二天上朝，楚庄王提拔了五个人，贬退了十个人。群臣非常高兴，楚国的百姓都互相庆贺。

注释

① 隐(yǐn):即隐语,藏而不显露的言辞,类似后世的谜语。



The next day when the king held court, he promoted five ministers and demoted ten others. All the ministers were delighted and the people in the state congratulated one another for having such a king.

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)

chè  
掣

mì zǐ jiàn zhì dàn fù kǒng lǔ jūn zhī tīng chán rén ér  
宓子贱治亶父<sup>①</sup>，恐鲁君之听谗人而

lìng jǐ bù dé xíng qí shù yě jiāng cí ér xíng qǐng jìn lì  
令己不得行其术也。将辞而行，请近吏

zhǒu  
肘

èr rén yú lǔ jūn yǔ zhī jù zhì yú dàn fù  
二人于鲁君，与之俱至于亶父。

yì lì jiē cháo mì zǐ jiàn lìng lì èr rén shū lì fāng  
邑吏皆朝，宓子贱令吏二人书。吏方

jiāng shū mì zǐ jiàn cóng páng shí chē yáo qí zhǒu lì shū  
将书，宓子贱从旁时掣摇其肘，吏书

zhī bù shàn zé mì zǐ jiàn wèi zhī nù lì shèn huàn zhī  
之不善，则宓子贱为之怒。吏甚患之，

cí ér qǐng guī mì zǐ jiàn yuē zǐ zhī shū shèn bù shàn  
辞而请归。宓子贱曰：“子之书甚不善，

zǐ miǎn guī yī  
子勉归矣。”

èr lì guī bào yú jūn yuē mì zǐ bù dé wéi shū  
二吏归报于君，曰：“宓子不得为书。”

jūn yuē hé gù lì duì yuē mì zǐ shǐ chén shū ér  
君曰：“何故？”吏对曰：“宓子使臣书，而

shí chē yáo chén zhī zhǒu shū è ér yǒu shèn nù lì jiē  
时掣摇臣之肘，书恶而有甚怒，吏皆

xiào mì zǐ cǐ chén suǒ yī cí ér qù yě  
笑宓子。此臣所以辞而去也。”

lǔ jūn tài xī ér tàn yuē mì zǐ yǐ cǐ jiàn guǒ rén zhī  
鲁君太息而叹曰：“宓子以此谏寡人之

bù xiào yě guǒ rén zhī luàn zǐ ér lìng mì zǐ bù dé xíng qí  
不肖也。寡人之乱子而令宓子不得行其

shù bì shù yǒu zhī yī wēi èr rén guǒ rén jǐ guò suì  
术，必数有之矣。微二人，寡人几过。遂

fā suǒ ài ér mìng zhī dàn fù gào mì zǐ yuē zì jīn yǐ  
发所爱而命之亶父，告宓子曰：“自今以



## A Hand under the Elbow



Mi Zijian was appointed the governor of Danfu, a county in the state of Lu. He was afraid that the king of Lu would listen to malicious talk and hinder him from carrying out his policies. Before he set out to take up the post he asked the king to send two trusted officers to accompany him to Danfu,

All the officials of Danfu came to pay their respects. Mi Zijian told the two officers to make a record. When they were about to write, Mi Zijian time and again went to their side and tugged at their elbows. Consequently the officers did not make a good job of writing and Mi Zijian was angry. The two of them were very annoyed and asked permission to take their leave.

“You are no good at writing,” said Mi Zijian, “you had better hurry home.”

The two officers reported back to the king. “We could not do any writing for Mi Zijian.”

“How come?” asked the king.

“Mi Zijian told us to write but time and again he tugged at our elbows. When we did not write well he became angry. All the officials laughed at him. That is why we asked to leave.”

The king heaved a sigh. “Mi Zijian did this to point out my



lái dàn fù fēi guǎ rén zhī yǒu yě zǐ zhī yǒu yě yǒu biàn  
来，亶父非寡人之有也，子之有也。有便

yú dàn fù zhě zǐ jué wèi zhī yī wǔ suì ér yán qí yào  
于亶父者，子决为之矣，五岁而言其要。”

mì zǐ jìng nuò nǎi dé háng qí shù yú dàn fù  
宓子敬诺，乃得行其术于亶父。

lǚ shì chūn qiū jù bèi  
《吕氏春秋·具备》



error. I must have given him trouble and hindered the carrying out of his policies a number of times. If it was not for you two, I would have made a big mistake.”

As a result, the king dispatched a trusted minister to Danfu and gave Mi Zijian a message: “From now on Danfu does not belong to me, it belongs to you. If anything can benefit Danfu, you make the decision. You only need to give me a concise report in five years.”

Mi Zijian respectfully accepted the king’s trust and he managed to carry out his policies in Danfu.

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)

白话  
翻译



宓子贱治理亶父，担心鲁国国君听信小人而使自己的政治主张得不到推行，将要辞别前往亶父而去时，请求两名与国君平素亲近的官吏，跟自己同去亶父。

到达亶父，城里的官员都来参拜。宓子贱命令两个官员作记录。官员刚刚要写字，宓子贱就在旁时不时地拉扯他们的胳膊肘，官员记录得不好，宓子贱就为此而发火。官员对此很不安，请求辞职回去。宓子贱说：“你们记录得不好，你们赶紧回去吧！”

两位官员回去，禀报国君说：“我们无法替宓子贱做书记工作。”国君问：“什么原因啊？”官员答道：“宓子贱命令我记录，又时常拉扯晃动我的肘部，记录得不好，他就很生气，官员们都因此而取笑宓子。这就是我们二人要辞职而离开的原因。”

鲁国国君长长地叹息道：“宓子是以以此来规劝我的过失啊。我扰乱宓子的工作，而让他不能够推行他的政治主张，必定有很多次了。如果不是你们两人，我几乎又要犯错误了。”于是派心腹之人到亶父去，告诉宓子贱说：“从此以后，亶父不是属于我，而是属于你的。有利于亶父的政策，都由你来决定吧。五年后再告诉我大致的情况。”宓子贱恭敬地答应了，才得以在亶父行使他的政策。



注释

① 亶父：鲁国地名。





chuān

穿

jǐng

井

dé

得

yī

一

rén

人

sòng zhī dīng shì jiā wú jǐng ér chū gài jí cháng yī  
宋之丁氏，家无井，而出溉汲，常一

rén jū wài jí qí jiā chuān jǐng gào rén yuē wú chuān jǐng  
人居外。及其家穿井，告人曰：“吾穿井

dé yī rén  
得一人。”

yǒu wén ér chuán zhī zhě yuē dīng shì chuān jǐng dé yī  
有闻而传之者曰：“丁氏穿井得一

rén guó rén dào zhī wén zhī yú sòng jūn sòng jūn lìng rén  
人。”国人道之，闻之于宋君，宋君令人

wèn zhī yú dīng shì  
问之于丁氏。

dīng shì duì yuē dé yī rén zhī shǐ fēi dé yī rén yú  
丁氏对曰：“得一人之使，非得一人于

jǐng zhōng yě  
井中也。”

lǚ shì chūn qiū chá fù  
《吕氏春秋·察传》

白话  
翻译



宋国有一家姓丁的，家中没有井，因而必须到外面打水浇地，经常得有一人住在外边。等到他家打了一眼井之后，便对别人说：“我家打井得到一个人。”

有人听到这话就传播说：“丁家打井打出了一个人。”都城的人都谈论这件事，一直传到宋国国君那里，国君派人去问姓丁的人家。

丁家的人回答说：“我说的是得到一个的劳力，并不是从井中挖出一个人来呀。”



## Dig a Well and Get a Man



In the state of Song, a man named Ding had no well in his house, so water had to be obtained from outside and one servant was constantly out of the house to do this chore. When a well was dug in his house, Ding remarked, "I dug a well and got a man."

Some who heard this remark spread the news, "Ding dug a well and got a man."

It was talked about in the capital and the king of Song came to hear of it. The king sent someone to the Ding family to make enquiries.

"I meant I got an extra man to do my work," said Ding, "not getting a man out of the well."

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)

yǎn  
掩  
ěr  
耳  
dào  
盗  
zhōng  
钟

fàn shì zhī wáng yě bǎi xìng yǒu dé zhōng zhě yù fù  
范氏之亡也，百姓有得钟者，欲负

ér zǒu zé zhōng dà bù kě fù yǐ zhuī huī zhī zhōng kuàng  
而走，则钟大不可负。以椎毁之，钟况

rán yǒu yīn kǒng rén wén zhī ér duó jǐ yě jù yǎn qí ěr  
然有音。恐人闻之而夺己也，遽掩其耳。

wù rén wén zhī kě yě wù jǐ zì wén zhī bèi yī  
恶人闻之，可也；恶己自闻之，悖矣。

lǚ shì chūn qiū zì zhī  
《吕氏春秋·自知》

白话  
翻译



晋国的大夫范氏灭亡的时候，有个老百姓得到一只钟，想要把它背走，但是钟太大没法背。于是就想用锤把它敲碎，这样钟就轰轰地响起来，那个人怕别人听到响声来跟自己抢这只钟，赶忙把自己的耳朵堵起来。

恐怕别人听见，是可以理解的；恐怕自己听见，而且以为自己听不见，别人也就听不见了，这就很荒唐了。



## Ostrich Logic



At the time when Fan, a nobleman of the state of Jin, became a fugitive, a commoner found a bell and wanted to carry it off on his back. But the bell was too big for him. When he tried to knock it into pieces with a hammer there was a loud clanging sound. He was afraid that someone will hear the noise and take the bell from him, so he immediately stopped his own ears.

To worry about other people hearing the noise is understandable, but to worry about himself hearing the noise (as if stopping his own ears would prevent other people from hearing) is absurd.

*Lüshi Chunqiu* (Historical Writings Compiled by Lü Buwei)

èr  
二  
táo  
桃  
shā  
杀  
sān  
三  
shì  
士

gōng sūn jiē tián kāi jiāng gǔ yè zǐ shì jǐng gōng yǐ  
公孙接、田开疆、古冶子事景公，以

yǒng lì bó hǔ wén  
勇力搏虎闻。

yàn zǐ guò ér qū sān zǐ zhě bù qǐ yàn zǐ rù jiàn  
晏子过而趋，三子者不起。晏子入见

gōng yuē chén wén míng jūn zhī xù yǒng lì zhī shì yé  
公曰：“臣闻明君之蓄勇力之士也，

shàng yǒu jūn chén zhī yì xià yǒu zhǎng shuài zhī lún nèi kě  
上有君臣之义，下有长率之伦，内可

yǐ jìn bào wài kě yǐ wēi dí shàng lì qí gōng xià fú  
以禁暴，外可以威敌，上利其功，下服

qí yǒng gù zūn qí wèi zhòng qí lù jīn jūn zhī xù yǒng  
其勇，故尊其位，重其禄。今君之蓄勇

lì zhī shì yé shàng wú jūn chén zhī yì xià wú zhǎng shuài  
力之士也；上无君臣之义，下无长率

zhī lún nèi bù kě yǐ jìn bào wài bù kě yǐ wēi dí cǐ  
之伦，内不可以禁暴，外不可以威敌。此

wēi guó zhī qì yé bù ruò qù zhī gōng yuē sān zǐ  
危国之器也，不若去之。”公曰：“三子

zhě bó zhī kǒng bù dé cì zhī kǒng bù zhòng yě yàn  
者，搏之恐不得，刺之恐不中也。”晏

zǐ yuē cǐ jiē lì gōng qīng dí zhī rén yě wú zhǎng yòu  
子曰：“此皆力攻勍<sup>①</sup>敌之人也，无长幼

zhī lǐ yīn qǐng gōng shǐ rén shǎo kuì zhī èr táo yuē sān  
之礼。”因请公使人少馈之二桃，曰：“三

zǐ hé bù jì gōng ér shí táo  
子何不计功而食桃。”

gōng sūn jiē yǎng tiān ér tàn yuē yàn zǐ zhì rén yé  
公孙接仰天而叹曰：“晏子，智人也。

fū shǐ gōng zhī jì wú gōng zhě bù shòu táo shì wú yǒng  
夫使公之计吾功者。不受桃，是无勇



## Two Peaches for Three



Gongsun Jie, Tian Kaijiang and Gu Yezi, well known for their strength and courage which could even subdue a tiger, all served under Duke Jing of the state of Qi.

Once when the prime minister Yanzi<sup>①</sup> came near the trio, he politely quickened his steps, but they took no notice of him and did not rise.

Yanzi went to see the duke.

“My lord,” said Yanzi, “I have heard that when wise sovereigns keep brave men in their service, these men understood that to their lord, they must give their full allegiance, while to their elders, they must show due respect; they can suppress riots from within, and overcome enemies that attack from without. Those on high appreciate their achievements and the lowly admire their courage. That is why, they occupy exalted positions and receive large salaries. My lord, the brave men that are now in your service know nothing about giving full allegiance to their lord or showing due respect to their elders. They are unable to suppress riots from within or overcome enemies from without. They are a menace to our state and we should get rid of them.”



yě shì zhòng ér táo guǎ hé bù jì gōng ér shí táo yī  
也。士众而桃寡，何不计功而食桃矣！

jiē yī bó tè jiān zài bó rǔ hǔ ruò jiē zhī gōng kě yǐ  
接一搏特獠，再搏乳虎。若接之功，可以

shí táo ér wú yǔ rén tóng yī yuán táo ér qǐ tián kāi  
食桃，而无与人同矣。”援桃而起。田开

jiāng yuē wú zhàng bīng ér què sān jūn zhě zài ruò kāi jiāng  
疆曰：“吾仗兵而却三军者再。若开疆

zhī gōng yì kě yǐ shí táo ér wú yǔ rén tóng yī yuán  
之功，亦可以食桃，而无与人同矣。”援

táo ér qǐ gǔ yě zǐ yuē wú cháng cóng jūn jì yú hé  
桃而起。古冶子曰：“吾尝从君济于河，

yuán xián zuǒ cān yī rù dǐ zhù zhī zhōng liú dāng shì shí  
鼉衔左骖，以入砥柱之中流。当是时

yě yě shǎo bù néng yóu qián háng nǐ liú bǎi bù shùn  
也，冶少不能游，潜行，逆流百步，顺

liú jiǔ lǐ dé yuán ér shā zhī zuǒ cāo cān wěi yòu qiè  
流九里，得鼉而杀之。左操骖尾，右挈

yuán tóu hè yuè ér chū jīn rén jiē yuē hé bó yě  
鼉头，鹤跃而出。津人皆曰：‘河伯也。’

shì zhī zé dà yuán zhī shǒu yě ruò yě zhī gōng yì kě yǐ  
视之则大鼉之首也。若冶之功，亦可以

shí táo ér wú yǔ rén tóng yī èr rén hé bù fǎn táo  
食桃，而无与人同矣！二人何不反桃？”

chōu jiàn ér qǐ gōng sūn jiē tián kāi jiāng yuē wú yǒng  
抽剑而起。公孙接、田开疆曰：“吾勇

bù zǐ ruò gōng bù zǐ dài qǔ táo bù ràng shì tān yě  
不子若，功不子逮。取桃不让，是贪也；

rán ér bù sǐ wú yǒng yě jiē fǎn qí táo qiè lǐng ér  
然而不死，无勇也。”皆反其桃，挈领而

sǐ gǔ yě zǐ yuē èr zǐ sǐ zhī yě dú shēng zhī bù  
死。古冶子曰：“二子死之，冶独生之，不

rén chǐ rén yǐ yán ér kuā qí shēng bù yì hèn hū suǒ  
仁；耻人以言，而夸其声，不义；恨乎所



“These three men,” said the duke, “cannot be easily overpowered and not even an assassin has a good chance of killing them.”

“They only know how to fight with strong enemies,” pointed out Yanzi. “They know nothing about giving precedence to elders.”

He then asked the duke to send a messenger to the three men presenting them with two peaches and a message: Divide the peaches among yourselves according to your achievements.

Gongsun Jie lifted his head and heaved a sigh. “Yanzi is indeed a clever man. He persuaded the duke to make us measure our own achievements. If we do not accept the peaches, it seems that we do not have courage. But there are so many of us and so few peaches. We have to divide them by weighing our own achievements. I first overcame a three-year-old wild boar, then I fought with a tigress that had just given birth to a litter. On the strength of my merits I am entitled to a peach and need not share it with anyone.” He took a peach and rose.

“Twice with my weapons,” said Tian Kaijiang, “I forced invading armies to retreat. Considering the service I rendered, I think I also deserve one peach and need not share it with anyone.” He took a peach and rose.

“I once crossed the Yellow River with our lord,” said Gu Yezi. “A big turtle gripped the carriage horse on the left with its





xíng bù sǐ wú yǒng · suī rán èr zǐ tóng táo ér jié yě  
行，不死，无勇。虽然二子同桃而节，冶

zhuān táo ér yí yì fǎn qí táo qiè lǐng ér sǐ  
专桃而宜。”亦反其桃，挈领而死。

shǐ zhě fù yuē yǐ sǐ yǐ gōng liàn zhī yǐ fú zàng  
使者复曰：“已死矣。”公殓之以服，葬

zhī yǐ shì lǐ yān  
之以士礼焉。

yàn zǐ chūn qiū nèi piān jiàn xià  
《晏子春秋·内篇谏下》

白话  
翻译



春秋时期，公孙接、田开疆、古冶子三人同为齐景公的大臣，以勇猛有力、能够搏斗猛虎而闻名。

有一天晏子从三人面前快步经过，他们都不站起来行礼。晏子进宫面见齐景公说：“我听说贤明的君主蓄养的勇武之士，对上有君臣之间的道义，对下有尊长表率伦理，对内可以消除暴力，对外可以威慑敌人。上级利用他们的功劳，下级服从他们的勇武，所以给他们尊贵的地位和丰厚的俸禄。现在君主您蓄养的勇士，对上没有君臣之义，对下没有表率之德，对内不能消除暴力，对外不能威慑敌人。这是危害国家的东西啊，不如除去他们吧！”齐景公说：“这三人力大无比，直接捉拿恐怕抓不住，暗中刺杀也恐怕不能得手。”

晏子说：“他们都是靠武力争斗的人，没有长幼的礼节。”于是建议景公派人送给他们三人两个桃子，说：“你们三位为什么不按照功劳大小来决定谁该吃桃呢？”

公孙接仰天长叹说：“晏子是个聪明人，他让君王来评定我们的功劳。如果我们不接受桃子，这就说明我们缺乏勇敢。人多而桃子少，为什么不按照功劳大小来决定谁该吃桃呢？我曾经先打死了一只野猪，又和幼虎搏斗。按照我



teeth and dragged it into the rapid currents in the middle of the river. At that time it was impossible for me to swim so I had to go under the water. I went forward a hundred paces against the current and then went along with the current for nine *li* before I got hold of the turtle and killed it. With the tail of the horse in my left hand and the head of the big turtle in my right, I burst out of the water like a graceful crane. Whereupon all the people on the ferry cried, 'It is the god of the river.' When they took a closer look they saw that it was the head of the big turtle. On the strength of my achievements I also deserve to eat a peach without having to share it with anyone. Why don't the two of you give back the peaches." He rose, drawing his sword out of its sheath.

"We are not as brave as you," said Gongsun Jie and Tian Kaijiang, "and our achievements cannot compare with yours. If we hold on to the peaches and refuse to let you have them, that is greed. But if we do not die, that shows we have no courage."

They surrendered the peaches and killed themselves by cutting their throats.

"If I alone live when they are dead, I am without honour. If I praise myself and hurt others with my words, I am unjust. If I regret what I did but do not die I am a coward-even though it is appropriate that they share a peach and I have one for myself." Gu relinquished his peach and cut his throat.

The messenger returned and said to the duke, "They are

的功劳，应该吃桃，没人能跟我相比。”说完起身拿起一桃。田开疆接着说：“我曾率兵一再阻退来犯的敌军，按照我的功劳，应该吃桃，没人能跟我相比。”说完也起身拿起一桃。古冶子说：“我曾跟随景公渡河，一只巨大的河鳖衔住车驾中左边的那匹马，将马拖入河中央。当时我年纪尚小，不会游泳，只好憋气往上游前行百步，再顺河水漂流九里，找到并且杀了那只河鳖。我左手抓着马尾，右手提着鳖头，像鹤一般跃出水面。当时在河边的人都说“是河神啊”，仔细看原来是大鳖的头。按照我的功劳，才应该吃桃，没人能跟我相比。你们二人还不将桃子放回原处？”说完拔剑站起。公孙接、田开疆说：“我们的勇敢不及你，我们的功劳也比不上你。强行夺桃不让你吃，是贪心的表现；然而不死在你面前，又是缺乏勇气的表现。”于是两人都放回手中的桃子，然后自刎而死。古冶子见他二人自刎，难过地说：“你们二人死了，如果我独活于世，就是我不仁；用言语使你们觉得受屈辱，而夸耀自己的声誉，是我不义；我痛恨自己的行为，如果不死就是无勇。”也放下手中的桃子，自刎而死。

使者回宫向景公复命，说：“三个人都死了。”景公用官服为他们装殓，用对待士人的礼节埋葬了他们。



注释

① 勍(qíng):强。



all dead.”

The duke gave orders that they were to be put into coffins clothed in the proper garments and be given the funeral of a brave warrior.

*Yanzi Chunqiu* (Historical Anecdotes of Yanzi)



**Note**

① Yanzi: i.e. Yan Ying.

yàn  
晏  
zǐ  
子  
chē  
车  
fū  
夫

yàn zǐ wéi qí xiàng chū qí yù zhī qī cóng mén  
晏子为齐相，出，其御<sup>①</sup>之妻，从门

jiān ér kōu qí fū wèi xiàng yù yōng dà gài cè sì mǎ yì  
间而窥其夫为相御，拥大盖，策驷马，意  
qì yáng yáng shèn zì dé yě  
气扬扬，甚自得也。

jì ér guī qí qī qǐng qù fū wèn qí gù qī yuē  
既而归，其妻请去。夫问其故，妻曰：

yàn zǐ cháng bù mǎn liù chǐ shēn xiàng qí guó míng xiǎn  
“晏子长不满六尺，身相齐国，名显

zhū hóu jīn zhě qiè guān qí chū zhì niàn shēn yǐ cháng  
诸侯。今者妾观其出，志念深矣，常

yǒu yǐ zì xià zhě jīn zǐ cháng bā chǐ nǎi wéi rén pú yù  
有以自下者。今子长八尺，乃为人仆御。

rán zǐ zhī yì zì yǐ wéi zú qiè shì yǐ qiú qù yě  
然子之意自以为是。妾是以求去也。”

qí hòu fū zì yì sǔn yàn zǐ guài ér wèn zhī yù  
其后，夫自抑损。晏子怪而问之，御

yǐ shí duì yàn zǐ jiàn yǐ wéi dà fū  
以实对。晏子荐以为大夫。

yàn zǐ chūn qiū nèi piān zá shàng  
《晏子春秋·内篇杂上》



## The Driver of Yanzi's Carriage



Yanzi became the Prime Minister of the state of Qi. As he was going out, the wife of his carriage driver peeped out behind the door which was opened just a crack. She saw her husband drive the Prime Minister's carriage, sitting beneath the big canopy, cracking his whip at the team of four horses in front of him. He had a cocksure expression on his face and seemed very pleased with himself.

When the driver returned, his wife wanted a divorce. He asked for an explanation.

"Yanzi is not even six *chi*<sup>①</sup> tall," she pointed out. "He is the Prime Minister of Qi and enjoys a high reputation among the rulers of the different states. Today I watched him go out. He is a man of great depth but his bearing is so modest and unassuming. Now you are over eight *chi* tall and you are only a carriage driver. But you looked so cocky and puffed up. That is why I want to leave you."

From then onwards the driver restrained himself and learned to be more modest. This surprised Yanzi. He questioned the driver who told him the truth. As a result Yanzi recommended him to the post of a senior officer of the state.

白话  
翻译



晏子担任齐国之相时，有一天出去，车夫的妻子从门缝里偷看。看到她丈夫替相国驾车，坐在巨大的车盖下，用鞭子抽打着车前的四匹马，趾高气昂，十分得意。

车夫回来后，他妻子要求离婚。车夫问她是什么原因，妻子说：“晏子身高不满六尺，身为齐国的相国，闻名于各国诸侯。今天，我看他出门的样子，智谋深远，态度谦虚。现在看看你，身高八尺，却做人家的车夫，可是看你的样子好像还觉得很满足。所以我请求离开你。”

从此之后，她丈夫处处收敛，变得谦卑多了。晏子觉得奇怪，就问他怎么回事，车夫据实相告，晏子就推荐他做了大夫。



注释

① 御：车夫。



**Note**

① Chi: a Chinese unit of length equal to one third of a metre.



yàn  
晏  
zǐ  
子  
shǐ  
使  
chǔ  
楚

yàn zǐ shǐ chǔ chǔ rén yǐ yàn zǐ duǎn wéi xiǎo mén  
晏子使楚。楚人以晏子短，为小门

yú dà mén zhī cè ér yán ① yàn zǐ yàn zǐ bù rù yuē  
于大门之侧而延<sup>①</sup>晏子。晏子不入，曰：

shǐ gǒu guó zhě cóng gǒu mén rù jīn chén shǐ chǔ bù  
“使狗国者，从狗门入。今臣使楚，不

dāng cóng cǐ mén rù bīn zhě gēng dào cóng dà mén rù  
当从此门入。”侯者更道，从大门入。

jiàn chǔ wáng wáng yuē qí wú rén yē shǐ zǐ wéi  
见楚王，王曰：“齐无人耶？使子为

shǐ  
使。”

yàn zǐ duì yuē qí zhī lín zī sān bǎi lú zhāng mèi ②  
晏子对曰：“齐之临淄三百闾，张袂<sup>②</sup>

chéng yīn huī hàn chéng yǔ bǐ jiān jì zhōng ér zài hé  
成阴，挥汗成雨，比肩继踵<sup>③</sup>而在，何

wéi wú rén  
为无人！”

wáng yuē rán zé hé wéi shǐ zǐ  
王曰：“然则何为使子？”

yàn zǐ duì yuē qí mìng shǐ gè yǒu suǒ zhǔ qí xián  
晏子对曰：“齐命使，各有所主。其贤

zhě shǐ shǐ xián zhǔ bù xiào zhě shǐ shǐ bù xiào zhǔ yīng zuì  
者使使贤主，不肖者使使不肖主。婴最

bù xiào gù yí shǐ chǔ yī  
不肖，故宜使楚矣。”

yàn zǐ chūn qiū nèi piān nán xià  
《晏子春秋·内篇难下》



## Each to His Own Kind



Yanzi came to the state of Chu as ambassador. The men of Chu knew him to be a short man so they specially opened a little door next to the main entrance and asked him to enter.

Yanzi refused. "An ambassador to a country of dogs would enter by the dog's door," he pointed out, "I am now ambassador to Chu and it is not right for me to enter by this door."

The men sent to receive him had to take him through the main door, instead of going the way they originally intended.

When Yanzi was in the presence of the king, the king asked him, "Is there no one in the state of Qi? Is that why you are sent to be the ambassador?"

"In Qi's capital city Linzi," replied Yanzi, "there are over seven thousand households. If everyone stretched out his sleeve, the sun would be blotted out. If everyone wiped his drops of perspiration, it would be like rain falling. Men in the streets had to rub shoulders with one another, their toes coming up against another's heels. How could there be no one in Qi?"

"Then why are you sent as ambassador?"

白话  
翻译



晏子出使到楚国。楚国人认为晏子身材矮小,就在大门的旁边开一个小门请晏子进去。晏子不进,说:“出使狗国的人,才从狗洞进去。今天我是出使楚国,不应该从这个门进去。”迎接宾客的人于是改变道路,带晏子从大门进去。

晏子拜见楚王。楚王说:“齐国没有人可派吗?竟派您做使臣。”

晏子回答说:“齐国的都城临淄有七千五百户人家,人们一起张开袖子,天就阴暗下来;一起挥洒汗水,就会汇成大雨;街上行人肩膀靠着肩膀,脚后跟碰脚后跟,怎么能说没有人才呢?”

楚王说:“既然如此,那么为什么会派你当使臣呢?”

晏子回答说:“齐国派遣使臣,要根据不同的对象。贤能的人被派遣出使到贤能的国王那里去,不肖的人被派遣出使到不肖的国王那里去。我晏婴是最不肖的人,所以适合出使楚国啊。”



注释

- ① 延:请。
- ② 袂(mèi):衣袖。
- ③ 踵(zhǒng):脚后跟。



“In appointing ambassadors,” replied Yanzi, “the state of Qi takes into account the sort of country one is sent to. Able men are sent to states with able rulers. Incompetent men are sent to states with incompetent rulers. I am the most incompetent of all, so I am sent to Chu.”

*Yanzi Chunqiu* (Historical Anecdotes of Yanzi)

jú  
橘  
huà  
化  
wéi  
为  
zhǐ  
枳

yàn zǐ jiāng shǐ chū chǔ wáng wén zhī wèi zuǒ yòu  
晏子将使楚。楚王闻之，谓左右

yuē yàn yīng qí zhī xí cí zhě yě jīn fāng lái wú yù  
曰：“晏婴，齐之习辞者也。今方来，吾欲

rǔ zhī hé yǐ yě  
辱之，何以也？”

zuǒ yòu duì yuē wéi qí lái yě chén qǐng fù yī rén  
左右对曰：“为其来也，臣请缚一人，

guò wáng ér xíng wáng yuē hé wéi zhě yě duì yuē  
过王而行。王曰：“何为者也？”对曰：

qí rén yě wáng yuē hé zuò yuē zuò dào  
‘齐人也。’王曰：‘何坐？’曰：‘坐盗。’”

yàn zǐ zhì chǔ wáng cì yàn zǐ jiǔ jiǔ hān lì èr  
晏子至，楚王赐晏子酒。酒酣，吏二

fù yī rén yì wáng wáng yuē fù zhě hé wéi zhě yě  
缚一人诣王，王曰：“缚者曷为者也？”

duì yuē qí rén yě zuò dào  
对曰：“齐人也，坐盗。”

wáng shì yàn zǐ yuē qí rén gù shàn dào hū  
王视晏子曰：“齐人固善盗乎？”

yàn zǐ bì xí duì yuē yīng wén zhī jú shēng huái  
晏子避席对曰：“婴闻之，橘生淮

nán zé wéi jú shēng yú huái běi zé wéi zhǐ yè tú  
南，则为橘，生于淮北，则为枳。叶徒

xiāng sì qí shí wèi bù tóng suǒ yǐ rán zhě hé shuǐ tǔ  
相似，其实味不同。所以然者何？水土

yì yě jīn mǐn shēng zhǎng yú qí bù dào rù chǔ zé dào  
异也。今民生长于齐不盗，入楚则盗。

dé wú chǔ zhī shuǐ tǔ shǐ mǐn shàn dào yē  
得无楚之水土，使民善盗耶？”

wáng xiào yuē shèng rén fēi suǒ yǔ xī yě guǎ rén fǎn  
王笑曰：“圣人非所与熙也，寡人反



## Oranges and Tangerines



Yanzi was soon to come to the state of Chu as ambassador.

When the king of Chu heard the news he said to his ministers, "In the state of Qi, Yan Ying is famed for his quick wit. Now he is coming to our state. I want to humiliate him. How should I do it?"

"When he comes," replied a minister, "please permit me to bind up a man and make him walk past you. Then your majesty will ask, 'What man is this?' And I will reply, 'This is a man from Qi.' Your majesty will ask again, 'What crime has he committed?' I will say, 'He is convicted of theft.'"

Yanzi arrived and the king gave a banquet in his honour. When everyone was merry with drink, two officers took a man in bonds before the king.

"Why is this man bound up?" asked the king.

"This is a man from Qi. He is a thief," came the reply.

The king looked at Yanzi. "Have the people of Qi always been good at stealing?"

Yanzi left his seat and replied respectfully, "I have heard that tangerine trees planted south of the River Huai produce



qǔ bìng yān  
取病焉。”

yàn zǐ chūn qiū nèi piān nán xià  
《晏子春秋·内篇难下》

白话  
翻译



晏子将要出使楚国。楚王听说了这件事，对身边的大臣说：“晏婴是齐国擅长言辞的人，他这次来，我想要羞辱他一下，用什么办法呢？”

大臣回答说：“等到他来的时候，我故意押送一个捆绑着的犯人从大王身边经过。大王问：‘他是什么地方的人啊？’我回答：‘是齐国人。’大王问：‘犯了什么罪啊？’回答说：‘盗窃罪。’”

晏子来到了楚国，楚王请晏子喝酒。喝酒喝得正高兴的时候，两名公差绑着一个人到楚王面前来。楚王问：“绑着的人是干什么的？”公差回答说：“是个齐国人，犯了偷窃罪。”

楚王看着晏子问道：“齐国人本来就善于偷东西的吗？”

晏子离开了席位回答道：“我听说过这样的事：橘树生长在淮河以南的地方就是橘树，生长在淮河以北的地方就是枳树，只是叶相像罢了，果实的味道却不同。为什么会这样呢？是因为水土条件不相同啊。现在这个人生长在齐国不偷东西，一到了楚国就偷起来了，莫非楚国的水土使人们变得善于偷东西了吗？”

楚王笑着说：“圣人是不能同他开玩笑的，我反而自讨没趣了。”



tangerines but those planted north of the river produce oranges. The leaves of the two trees look alike but the fruits taste very different. What is the reason behind this? — the difference in natural environment and climate. Now men born and bred in Qi do not steal but when they come to Chu they become thieves. Could it be that the environment of Chu induces men to steal?”

The king laughed. “It is impossible to make fun of a learned and virtuous man. The joke is now on me.”

*Yanzi Chunqiu* (Historical Anecdotes of Yanzi)



yáng

阳

qiáo

桥

mì zǐ jiàn wéi dān fù zǎi guò yú yáng zhòu yuē zǐ  
宓子贱为单父宰，过于阳昼曰：“子

yì yǒu yǐ sòng pú hū yáng zhòu yuē wú shào yě jiàn  
亦有以送仆乎？”阳昼曰：“吾少也贱，

bù zhī zhì mǐn zhī shù yǒu diào dào èr yān qǐng yǐ sòng  
不知治民之术，有钓道二焉，请以送

zǐ zǐ jiàn yuē diào dào nài hé yáng zhòu yuē fū  
子。”子贱曰：“钓道奈何？”阳昼曰：“夫

jí lún cuò ěr yíng ér xī zhī zhě yáng qiáo yě qí wéi  
极纶错饵，迎而吸之者，阳桥也。其为

yú báo ér bù měi ruò cún ruò wáng ruò shí ruò bù shí  
鱼，薄而不美。若存若亡，若食若不食

zhě fáng yě qí wéi yú bó ér hòu wèi zǐ jiàn yuē  
者，魴也，其为鱼，博而厚味。”子贱曰：

shàn

“善。”

wèi zhì dān fù guān gài yíng zhī zhě jiāo jiē yú dào zǐ  
未至单父，冠盖迎之者交接于道。子

jiàn yuē chē qū zhī chē qū zhī fū yáng zhòu zhī suǒ wèi  
贱曰：“车驱之，车驱之！夫阳昼之所谓

yáng qiáo zhě zhì yǐ yú shì zhì dān fù qǐng qí qí  
‘阳桥’者至矣。”于是至单父，请其耆

lǎo zūn xián zhě ér yǔ zhī gòng zhì dān fù  
老尊贤者而与之共治单父。

mì zǐ

《宓子》



## Fishing Tips



When Mi Zijian was appointed magistrate of the Danfu county he paid Yang Zhou a visit.

“Sir,” said Mi Zijian, “do you have any advice to give me?”

“All my life,” said Yang Zhou, “I have occupied a lowly position and I know little about governing people. But there are two things about fishing I would like you to accept as a present from me.”

“What about fishing?” asked, Mi Zijian.

“When you drop your line with the bait in place and a fish immediately comes forward to swallow it, that fish is sure to be a yangqiao which has very little flesh and is not tasty at all. A fish that seems to be there and then disappears; a fish that seems to swallow the bait and then lets go of it — that is the bream which has a lot of flesh and is extremely tasty.”

“Sir, your advice is excellent,” said Mi Zijian.

Before Mi Zijian reached Danfu he was met on the way by a lot of officials garbed in splendid robes, sitting in canopied carriages.

“Get going, get going,” Mi Zijian urged his servants, “the yangqiao Yang Zhou told me about have shown up.”



白话  
翻译



宓子贱被任命为单父这个地方的长官，他去拜访他的朋友阳昼，对他说：“我将去赴任了，你有什么指教我的吗？”阳昼说：“我年纪轻，才疏学浅，不懂治理百姓的办法。我只有两条钓鱼的经验，请允许我把它送给你吧。”宓子贱问：“钓鱼的道理是什么呢？”阳昼说：“当你刚刚安好鱼饵、放完钓丝的时候，马上一拥而上、吞食上钩的鱼叫阳桥，这种鱼的肉薄，味道也不好吃。另外一种时隐时现、想吃又不吃的鱼叫魴鱼，它的肉很肥厚，而且味道鲜美！”宓子贱说：“这个道理很好啊！”

宓子贱还没到单父，一群达官显贵已经纷纷赶来夹道欢迎。宓子贱说：“快走！快走！阳昼所说的那种阳桥鱼来了。”到了单父，宓子贱请来那些德高望重的贤德之士，和他们共同治理地方。



When he reached Danfu, he respectfully invited wise old men who were highly esteemed to govern the county together with him.

*Mizi*

mì  
子  
jiàn  
贱  
yǔ  
与  
wū  
巫  
mǎ  
马  
qī  
期

mì zǐ jiàn zhì dān fù tán míng qín shēn bù xià táng  
宓子贱治单父，弹鸣琴，身不下堂，

ér dān fù zhì wū mǎ qī yì zhì dān fù yǐ xīng chū yǐ  
而单父治。巫马期亦治单父，以星出，以

xīng rù rì yè bù chù yǐ shēn qīn zhī ér dān fù yì zhì  
星入，日夜不处，以身亲之，而单父亦治。

wū mǎ qī wèn qí gù yú mì zǐ mì zǐ yuē wǒ zhī  
巫马期问其故于宓子。宓子曰：“我之

wèi rèn rén zǐ zhī wèi rèn lì rèn lì zhě gù láo rèn rén  
谓任人，子之谓任力。任力者固劳，任人

zhě gù yì  
者固佚。”

jǐng zǐ  
《景子》

白话  
翻译



宓子贱治理单父时，每天弹琴取乐，悠闲自在，很少走出公堂，却把单父治理得很好。而巫马期也治理单父，每天早晨星星还挂在天上就出去了，直到晚上繁星满天才回来，日夜不得安居，什么事都亲自办理，单父也治理得不错。

巫马期问宓子贱能够治理好的缘故。宓子贱说：“我的办法是凭借众人的智力，你的办法是依靠自己的力量。光靠自己的人当然劳苦，依靠众人的人当然安逸。”



## Leisure and Exhaustion



When Mi Zijian governed the county of Danfu, he often played his *qin*, a stringed instrument, and seldom went out. The whole county benefited from his rule. Wu Maqi also governed Danfu for a period of time. He went out before the stars disappeared from the sky and did not return until the stars came out. He had little rest day or night, taking care of everything himself. The county also benefited under his rule.

Wu Maqi asked Mi Zijian why this was so.

“My way,” said Mi Zijian, “is to make people work for me. Your way is to rely on your own strength. It naturally follows that relying on your own strength results in exhaustion while making others work for you results in leisure.”

*Jingzi*

chǔ  
楚  
rén  
人  
liǎng  
两  
qī  
妻

chǔ rén yǒu liǎng qī zhě rén tiǎo qí zhǎng zhě lì  
楚人有两妻者，人诮<sup>①</sup>其长者，詈<sup>②</sup>

zhī tiǎo qí shǎo zhě shǎo zhě xǔ zhī  
之，诮其少者，少者许之。

jū wú jǐ hé yǒu liǎng qī zhě sǐ kè wèi tiǎo zhě  
居无几何，有两妻者死。客谓诮者

yuē rǔ qǔ zhǎng zhě hū shǎo zhě hū qǔ zhǎng zhě  
曰：“汝取长者乎，少者乎？”“取长者。”

kè yuē zhǎng zhě lì rǔ shǎo zhě hé rǔ rǔ hé wèi qǔ  
客曰：“长者詈汝，少者和汝。汝何为取

zhǎng zhě yuē jū bǐ rén zhī suǒ zé yù qí xǔ wǒ  
长者？”曰：“居彼人之所，则欲其许我

yě jīn wéi wǒ qī zé yù qí wèi wǒ lì rén yě  
也，今为我妻，则欲其为我詈人也。”

zhàn guó cè qín cè yī  
《战国策·秦策一》

白话  
翻译



有个楚国人有两个妻子，有人挑逗那个年长的妻子，被骂了一顿；勾引那个年轻的，年轻的应允了。

过了不久，这个有两个妻子的楚国人死了。别人对那个挑逗者说：“你是娶年长的那个呢？还是娶年轻的呢？”“娶年纪大的那个。”别人又问：“年纪大的叱责过你，年纪小的应允你，你为什么娶年长的呢？”这人回答说：“作为别人的妻子，当然希望她同意和我相好；现在是我的妻子了，就希望她为我而叱责别人了。”



注释

① 诮：挑逗。

② 詈(lì)：责骂。



## A Different Time, a Different Need



A man of the state of Chu had two wives. Someone made a pass at the older wife but was rebuked by her. When he did the same to the younger woman she did not repulse him.

After a short time, this man with the two wives died.

The one who had made passes at the ladies was asked, "Which do you want to marry, the older or the younger?"

"The older," came the reply.

"The older one rebuked you but the younger accepted your advances. Why do you want to marry the older lady?"

"When I was staying in another man's house, of course I liked the one that yielded to me. Now that I want a wife, I want one that would rebuke men who try to get fresh with her."

*Zhanguo Ce (Strategies of the Warring States)*





guǎn

管

zhuāng

庄

cì

刺

hǔ

虎

yǒu liǎng hǔ zhēng rén ér dòu zhě guǎn zhuāng zǐ jiāng  
有两虎争人而斗者，管庄子将

cì zhī  
刺之。

guǎn yǔ zhǐ zhī yuē hǔ zhě lì chóng rén zhě gān  
管与止之曰：“虎者，戾虫；人者，甘

ěr yě jīn liǎng hǔ zhēng rén ér dòu xiǎo zhě bì sǐ dà  
饵也。今两虎争人而斗，小者必死，大

zhě bì shāng zǐ dài shāng hǔ ér cì zhī zé shì yī jǔ ér  
者必伤。子待伤虎而刺之，则是一举而

jiān liǎng hǔ yě wú cì yī hǔ zhī láo ér yǒu cì liǎng hǔ  
兼两虎也。无刺一虎之劳，而有刺两虎

zhī míng  
之名。”

zhàn guó cè qín cè èr  
《战国策·秦策二》

白话  
翻译



有两只老虎因为抢着吃一人而搏斗，管庄子要去刺杀它们。

管与制止他说：“老虎是一种贪婪残暴的动物，人是它最美味的食物。现在两只虎因争吃一人而搏斗，小的那只一定会死掉，大的那只必定要负伤。你只需等待时机去刺杀负伤的老虎，那可是一举而能获得两只老虎了。没有付出刺杀一只老虎的劳力，却获得了杀死两只老虎的美名。”



## It Pays to Wait



Two tigers were fighting over a man. Guan Zhuangzi was about to stab the beasts.

Guan Yu stopped him. “Tigers are greedy and ferocious beasts and man is delicious food for them. Now two tigers are fighting over a man. The smaller tiger is sure to die and the larger will certainly be wounded. Wait till the tiger is wounded before stabbing it. With one blow you will get two tigers. Then you would have been spared the trouble of killing one tiger while getting the credit for putting two tigers to death.”

*Zhanguo Ce (Strategies of the Warring States)*

biǎn  
扁  
què  
鹊  
zhī  
之  
yán  
言

yī biǎn què jiàn qín wǔ wáng wǔ wáng shì zhī bìng biǎn  
医扁鹊见秦武王。武王示之病，扁

què qǐng chú  
鹊请除。

zuǒ yòu yuē jūn zhī bìng zài ěr zhī qián mù zhī xià  
左右曰：“君之病，在耳之前，目之下，

chú zhī wèi bì yǐ yě jiāng shǐ ěr bù cōng mù bù míng  
除之未必已也，将使耳不聪，目不明。”

jūn yǐ gào biǎn què  
君以告扁鹊。

biǎn què nù ér tóu qí shí yuē jūn yǔ zhī zhī zhě móu  
扁鹊怒而投其石，曰：“君与知之者谋

zhī ér yǔ bù zhī zhī zhě bài zhī shǐ cǐ zhī qín guó zhī  
之，而与不知之者败之。使此知秦国之

zhèng yě zé jūn yī jǔ ér wáng guó yǐ  
政也，则君一举而亡国矣！”

zhàn guó cè qín cè èr  
《战国策·秦策二》

白话  
翻译



医生扁鹊去见秦武王，武王把他的病情告诉了扁鹊，扁鹊请求为他医治。

左右大臣说：“君王的病在耳朵的前面，眼睛的下面，医治也未必能治好，弄不好反而会使耳朵听不见，眼睛看不清。”

武王把这些话告诉了扁鹊。

扁鹊听了很生气，把治病的砭石一丢，说：“君王您同聪明的人一起谋划国事，又同愚蠢的人一道来败坏它。要是按照这种方法来管理秦国的内政，那么一个错误就可以导致国家灭亡。”

## Choice of Counsellors



Doctor Bianque<sup>①</sup>, a famous physician, came to see King Wu of the state of Qin. The king told the doctor about his condition and Bianque was ready to give him treatment.

The ministers at the king's side said to him, "Sire, your malady is in front of your ears and below your eyes. Even with treatment it might not be cured and very likely you will lose your hearing and your sight."

The king related these words to Bianque.

Bianque was enraged and threw down the stone needle which he used for giving treatment.

"Sire, you discuss your illness with one who knows how to effect a cure but you allow those who know nothing about medicine to spoil the whole thing. If Qin is governed in this way, then one such mistake on your part is enough to bring down the state."

*Zhanguo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)



### Note

① Bianque: i.e. Qin Yueren.

zēng  
曾  
shēn  
参  
shā  
杀  
rén  
人

xī zhě zēng zǐ chū fèi fèi rén yǒu yǔ zēng zǐ tóng míng  
昔者曾子处费。费人有与曾子同名

zú zhě ér shā rén rén gào zēng zǐ mǔ yuē zēng shēn shā  
族者而杀人。人告曾子母曰：“曾参杀

rén zēng zǐ zhī mǔ yuē wú zǐ bù shā rén zhī zì  
人。”曾子之母曰：“吾子不杀人。”织自

ruò yǒu qǐng yān rén yòu yuē zēng shēn shā rén qí  
若。有顷焉，人又曰：“曾参杀人。”其

mǔ shàng zhī zì ruò yě qǐng zhī yī rén yòu gào zhī yuē  
母尚织自若也。顷之，一人又告之曰：

zēng shēn shā rén qí mǔ jù tóu zhù yú qiáng ér zǒu  
“曾参杀人。”其母惧，投杼踰墙而走。

zhàn guó cè qín cè èr  
《战国策·秦策二》

白话  
翻译



从前曾参在费这个地方。当地有个与曾参同姓同名的人杀了人。有人告诉曾参的母亲说：“曾参杀人了。”曾参的母亲说：“我的儿子不会杀人。”她镇定自若地照样织布。过了一会儿，又一个人说：“曾参杀人了。”曾参的母亲仍然照旧织布。又过了一会，又有人来说：“曾参杀人了。”曾参的母亲便惊恐万状，扔掉梭子，翻过院墙逃跑了。



## One Time Too Many



Zeng Shen once lived in a place called Fei. A man of Fei who had the same first and last names as Zeng Shen killed a man.

Someone told Zeng Shen's mother, "Zeng Shen killed a man."

"My son would not kill anybody," she said and continued weaving as she had always done.

After a while another man said, "Zeng Shen killed a man." She still went on weaving as before.

In a little while a third man came and said to her, "Zeng Shen has killed a man."

Zeng's mother became so frightened that she threw down her shuttle and fled over the wall.

*Zhanguo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)

jiāng  
江  
shàng  
上  
chù  
处  
nǚ  
女

fū jiāng shàng zhī chù nǚ yǒu jiā pín ér wú zhú zhě  
夫江上之处女，有家贫而无烛者。

chù nǚ xiāng yǔ yǔ yù qù zhī  
处女相与语，欲去之。

jiā pín wú zhú zhě jiāng qù yǐ wèi chù nǚ yuē qiè yǐ  
家贫无烛者将去矣，谓处女曰：“妾以

wú zhú gù cháng xiān zhì sǎo shì bù xí hé ài yú míng  
无烛故，常先至，扫室布席。何爱余明

zhī zhào sì bì zhě xìng yǐ cì qiè hé fāng yú chù nǚ qiè  
之照四壁者？幸以赐妾，何妨于处女？妾

zì yǐ yǒu yì yú chù nǚ hé wèi qù wǒ  
自以有益于处女，何为去我？”

chù nǚ xiāng yǔ yǐ wèi rán ér liú zhī  
处女相语，以为然而留之。

zhàn guó cè qín cè èr  
《战国策·秦策二》

白话  
翻译

在江上的众多女子中，有一个家里贫穷没有蜡烛的女子。女子们在一起商量，要把家贫无烛的那个人赶走。

家贫无烛的女子准备离去了，她对女子们说：“我因为没有蜡烛，所以常常先到，一到这里便主动打扫屋子，铺展席子。你们何必爱惜照在四壁上的那一点余光呢？如果赐一点余光给我，对你们又有什么妨碍呢？我自认为对你们还是有用的，为什么一定要赶我走呢？”

女子们商量以后，认为她说得对，就把她留下来来了。



## The Maidens on the River Bank



On the river bank lived a number of maidens. One of them was very poor and could not afford a lamp. The others talked about it among themselves and wanted her to leave.

When the one who could not afford a lamp was about to go, she said to the other girls, "Because I have no lamp I am often here before you, cleaning up the place and getting the mats ready for you to sit on. Why do you grudge the little extra light that shines on these four walls? If you benefit me with a little light, what have you got to lose? I think I am of some use to you all, why do you want me to go?"

The maidens discussed among themselves and admitted the force of her arguments. She was asked to stay.

*Zhanguo Ce (Strategies of the Warring States)*



zōu  
邹

jì  
忌

zōu jì xiū bā chǐ yǒu yú shēn tǐ yī lì zhāo fú yī  
邹忌修八尺有余，身体昳丽。朝服衣  
guān kǔ jìng wèi qí qī yuē wǒ shú yǔ chéng běi xú gōng  
冠，窥镜，谓其妻曰：“我孰与城北徐公  
měi qí qī yuē jūn měi shèn xú gōng hé néng jí gōng  
美？”其妻曰：“君美甚，徐公何能及公  
yě chéng běi xú gōng qí guó zhī měi lì zhě yě jì bù  
也！”城北徐公，齐国之美丽者也。忌不  
zì xìn ér fù wèn qí qiè yuē wú shú yǔ xú gōng měi  
自信，而复问其妾曰：“吾孰与徐公美？”  
qiè yuē xú gōng hé néng jí jūn yě dàn rì kè cóng wài  
妾曰：“徐公何能及君也！”旦日，客从外  
lái yǔ zuò tán wèn zhī kè yuē wú yǔ xú gōng shú  
来，与坐谈，问之客曰：“吾与徐公孰  
měi kè yuē xú gōng bù ruò jūn zhī měi yě míng rì  
美？”客曰：“徐公不若君之美也。”明日，  
xú gōng lái shú shì zhī zì yǐ wèi bù rú kǔ jìng ér zì  
徐公来，孰视之，自以为不如，窥镜而自  
shì yòu fú rú yuǎn shèn mù qǐn ér sī zhī yuē wú qī  
视，又弗如远甚。暮寝而思之，曰：“吾妻  
zhī měi wǒ zhě sī wǒ yě qiè zhī měi wǒ zhě wèi wǒ yě  
之美我者，私我也；妾之美我者，畏我也；  
kè zhī měi wǒ zhě yù yǒu qiú yú wǒ yě  
客之美我者，欲有求于我也。”

zhàn guó cè qí cè yī  
《战国策·齐策一》



## Speaking the Truth



Zou Ji, the prime minister of the state of Qi, was over eight *chi* tall and extremely good looking. One morning after putting on his hat and clothes, he looked at himself in the mirror and asked his wife, "Who is the handsomer, Xu Gong who lives north of the city or I?"

"You are by far the handsomer. How could Xu Gong compare with you?" answered his wife.

Xu Gong, who lived north of the city, was famous in Qi for his good looks. Zou Ji himself was not convinced so he put forward his question again, this time to his concubine.

"Who is handsomer, Xu Gong or I?"

"How could Xu Gong compare with you?" said his concubine.

The following day a man came to visit Zou. Zou sat with his guest and after chatting for a while, he asked, "Who do you think is handsomer, Xu Gong or I?"

"Xu Gong is not as handsome as you," replied his visitor.

Another day passed. Xu Gong came for a visit and Zou, looking at him most carefully, came to the conclusion that he himself was not as good looking. After inspecting his own



白话  
翻译



邹忌身高八尺多，体形容貌美丽。早上他穿好衣服，戴上帽子，照着镜子对他的妻子说：“我跟城北的徐公谁漂亮？”他的妻子说：“您漂亮极了，徐公哪里比得上您呀！”城北的徐公是齐国的美男子。邹忌自己信不过，就又问他的妾说：“我跟徐公谁漂亮？”妾说：“徐公哪里比得上您呢！”第二天，有位客人从外边来，邹忌跟他坐着聊天，问道：“我和徐公谁漂亮？”客人说：“徐公不如你漂亮啊。”又过了一天，徐公来了，邹忌仔细地看他，自己认为不如他漂亮；再照着镜子看自己，更觉得相差太远。晚上躺在床上反复考虑这件事，说：“我的妻子赞美我，是因为偏爱我；妾赞美我，是因为害怕我；客人赞美我，是想要求我办事啊！”



reflection in the mirror, he felt that he could not hold a candle to Xu Gong in looks.

When night came, Zou pondered over the matter in bed, “My wife said I am better looking because she has a partiality for me. My concubine said I am better looking because she is afraid of me. My guest said I am better looking because he had a favour to ask of me.”

*Zhanguo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)

huà  
画  
shé  
蛇  
tiān  
添  
zú  
足

chǔ yǒu cí zhě cì qí shè rén zhì jiǔ shè rén xiāng wèi  
楚有祠者，赐其舍人卮酒。舍人相谓

yuē shù rén yǐn zhī bù zú yī rén yǐn zhī yǒu yú qǐng huà  
曰：“数人饮之不足，一人饮之有余，请画

dì wéi shé xiān chéng zhě yǐn jiǔ  
地为蛇，先成者饮酒。”

yī rén shé xiān chéng yǐn jiǔ qiě yǐn zhī nǎi zuǒ shǒu  
一人蛇先成，引酒且饮之，乃左手

chí zhì yòu shǒu huà shé yuē wú néng wéi zhī zú wèi  
持卮，右手画蛇，曰：“吾能为之足。”未

chéng yī rén zhī shé chéng duó qí zhì yuē shé gù wú  
成，一人之蛇成，夺其卮曰：“蛇固无

zú zǐ ān néng wéi zhī zú suī yǐn qí jiǔ wéi shé zú  
足，子安能为之足？”遂饮其酒，为蛇足

zhě zhōng wú qí jiǔ  
者，终亡其酒。

zhàn guó cè qí cè èr  
《战国策·齐策二》

白话  
翻译



楚国有个贵族祭过祖宗以后，把一壶祭酒赏给前来帮忙的门客。门客们互相商量说：“这壶酒大家都来喝则不够，一个人喝则有余。让咱们各自在地上比赛画蛇，谁先画好，谁就喝这壶酒。”

有一个人最先把蛇画好了。他端起酒壶正要喝，却得意洋洋地左手拿着酒壶，右手继续画蛇，说：“我还能够再给它添上几只脚呢！”可是没等他把脚画完，另一个人已把蛇画成了。那人把壶抢过去，说：“蛇本来是没有脚的，你怎么能给它添脚呢！”于是就把酒喝了。那个给蛇添脚的人终于失掉了到嘴边的那壶酒。



## The “Finishing” Touch



In the state of Chu, an aristocrat, after offering sacrifices to his ancestors, bestowed a flask of wine on the gentlemen who worked for him. They discussed among themselves.

“The wine is not enough for several and too much for one person. Let us each draw a snake on the floor and the first one that finishes his drawing drinks the wine.”

A man finished his drawing first. He took the wine and was about to drink it when, with the flask in his left hand, he drew with his right hand, saying, “I can even add legs to my snake.”

Before he finished, another man completed his drawing and snatched the flask from him.

“A snake does not have legs. How could you add legs to it?”

With these words he drank the wine. The one who added legs to the snake eventually lost his wine.

*Zhanguo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)

hú  
狐  
jiǎ  
假  
hǔ  
虎  
wēi  
威

hǔ qiú bǎi shòu ér shí zhī dé hú  
虎求百兽而食之，得狐。

hú yuē zǐ wú gǎn shí wǒ yě tiān dì shǐ wǒ zhǎng  
狐曰：“子无敢食我也。天帝使我长

bǎi shòu jīn zǐ shí wǒ shì nì tiān dì mìng yě zǐ yǐ wǒ  
百兽。今子食我，是逆天帝命也。子以我

wèi bù xìn wú wéi zǐ xiān háng zǐ suí wǒ hòu guān bǎi  
为不信，吾为子先行，子随我后，观百

shòu zhī jiàn wǒ ér gǎn bù zǒu hū  
兽之见我而敢不走乎？”

hǔ yǐ wéi rán gù suì yǔ zhī xíng shòu jiàn zhī jiē  
虎以为然，故遂与之行。兽见之皆

zǒu hǔ bù zhī shòu wèi jǐ ér zǒu yě yǐ wèi wèi hú yě  
走。虎不知兽畏己而走也，以为畏狐也。

zhàn guó cè chǔ cè yī  
《战国策·楚策一》

白话  
翻译



老虎捕捉各种野兽来吃，捉到一只狐狸。

狐狸对老虎说：“您不敢吃我。上天派我做群兽的领袖，如果您吃掉我，就违背了上天的命令。您如果不相信我的话，我在前面走，您跟在我的后面，看看群兽见了，有哪一个敢不逃跑的呢？”

老虎信以为真，就和狐狸同行。群兽见了它们，都纷纷逃跑。老虎不明白群兽是害怕自己才逃跑的，却以为是害怕狐狸。



## A Tiger in Tow



A tiger, on the hunt for animals to devour, caught a fox.

“You cannot be so bold as to eat me,” said the fox, “I am sent by the heavenly god to rule over the animal kingdom. If you eat me you will be going against a heavenly mandate. Do you think I am lying? Let me go first and you follow behind. We’ll see whether any animal is so brave as not to flee when they see me.”

The tiger agreed to the plan and accordingly went with the fox. All the animals who saw them fled. The tiger, under the impression that they were afraid of the fox, was unaware that he himself was the cause of their flight.

*Zhanguo Ce (Strategies of the Warring States)*



jīng  
gōng  
弓  
zhī  
之  
niǎo  
鳥

gèng léi yǔ wèi wáng chù jīng tái zhī xià yǎng jiàn fēi  
更 羸 与 魏 王 处 京 台 之 下 ， 仰 见 飞

niǎo gèng léi wèi wèi wáng yuē chén wèi wáng yǐn gōng xū  
鸟 ， 更 羸 谓 魏 王 曰 ： “ 臣 为 王 引 弓 虚

fā ér xià niǎo wèi wáng yuē rán zé shè kě zhì cǐ  
发 而 下 鸟 。” 魏 王 曰 ： “ 然 则 射 可 至 此

hū gèng yíng yuē kě  
乎 ？” 更 羸 曰 ： “ 可 。”

yǒu jiān yàn cóng dōng fāng lái gèng léi yǐ xū fā ér  
有 间 ， 雁 从 东 方 来 ， 更 羸 以 虚 发 而

xià zhī wèi wáng yuē rán zé shè kě zhì cǐ hū gèng léi  
下 之 。 魏 王 曰 ： “ 然 则 射 可 至 此 乎 ？” 更 羸

yuē cǐ niè yě wáng yuē xiān shēng hé yǐ zhī zhī  
曰 ： “ 此 孽 也 。” 王 曰 ： “ 先 生 何 以 知 之 ？”

duì yuē qí fēi xú ér míng bēi fēi xú zhě gù chuāng tòng  
对 曰 ： “ 其 飞 徐 而 鸣 悲 。 飞 徐 者 ， 故 疮 痛

yě míng bēi zhě jiǔ shī qún yě gù chuāng wèi xī ér jīng xīn  
也 ， 鸣 悲 者 ， 久 失 群 也 。 故 疮 未 息 而 惊 心

wèi zhì yě wén xián yīn yǐn ér gāo fēi gù chuāng yǔn yě  
未 至 也 ， 闻 弦 音 引 而 高 飞 ， 故 疮 陨 也 。”

zhàn guó cè chū cè sì  
《 战 国 策 · 楚 策 四 》



## A Frightened Bird



Once upon a time, a skilled archer called Geng Lei and the king of the state of Wei were standing at the foot of a tall tower. Lifting their heads, they saw birds soaring in the sky.

“Sire, I can bring down a bird for you by using a bow with no arrow,” said Geng to the king.

“Can the skills of archery achieve such a marvellous thing?” asked the king.

“Yes, sire,” replied Geng.

After a little while, a wild goose appeared from the east, Geng merely drew his bow and brought down the bird.

“How come your skill can do such a wonderful thing?” asked the king.

“This is a wounded bird,” said Geng.

“Sir, how do you know that?” asked the king.

“It was flying very slowly and crying very sadly,” Geng pointed out. “It flew slowly because its old wound still hurt. It cried sadly because it had lost its flock for quite sometime. Its old wound had not yet healed and it was still very frightened. When it heard the sound of the bow it stretched its wings to

白话  
翻译



射箭能手更羸与魏王在京城的高台下面游猎，抬头看见天上有一群飞鸟。更羸对魏王说：“我可以不用箭，只要把弓拉一下，就能为大王射下一只鸟来。”魏王说：“难道射箭可以达到这种境界吗？”更羸说道：“可以试一试。”

过了一会儿，一只大雁从东边飞过来，只见更羸只拉了一下弓弦，大雁就掉下来了。魏王大吃一惊，说：“难道射箭真的可以达到这种境界啊？”更羸说：“因为这是一只受过箭伤的大雁。”魏王问：“你是怎么知道的呢？”更羸回答说：“这只大雁飞得很慢、鸣叫的声音很悲伤。飞得慢是因为它身上旧的箭伤在作痛，叫的声音很悲伤是因为它离开雁群已很久了。旧的伤口还没有好，心里还很害怕，当听到弓弦声响后，就拼命往高处飞。本来未愈合的伤口又裂开了，所以就从空中掉了下来。”



soar up into the sky. That affected the wound and caused it to fail.”

*Zhanquo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)



nán  
南  
yuán  
辕  
bēi  
北  
zhé  
辙

wèi wáng yù gōng hán dān jì liáng wén zhī zhōng dào  
魏王欲攻邯郸。季梁闻之，中道  
ér fǎn yī jiāo bù shēn tóu chén bù qù wǎng jiàn wáng  
而反，衣焦不申，头尘不去，往见王  
yuē jīn zhě chén lái jiàn rén yú dà xíng fāng běi miàn ér  
曰：“今者臣来，见人于大行，方北面而  
chí qí jià gào chén yuē wǒ yù zhī chǔ chén yuē jūn  
持其驾，告臣曰：‘我欲之楚。’臣曰：‘君  
zhī chǔ jiāng xī wéi běi miàn yuē wú mǎ liáng chén  
之楚，将奚为北面？’曰：‘吾马良。’臣  
yuē mǎ suī liáng cǐ fēi chǔ zhī lù yě yuē wú yòng  
曰：‘马虽良，此非楚之路也。’曰：‘吾用  
duō chén yuē yòng suī duō cǐ fēi chǔ zhī lù yě  
多。’臣曰：‘用虽多，此非楚之路也。’  
yuē wú yù zhě shàn cǐ shù zhě yù shàn ér lí chǔ yù  
曰：‘吾御者善。’此数者愈善而离楚愈  
yuǎn ěr jīn wáng dòng yù chéng bà wáng jǔ yù xìn yú  
远耳。今王动欲成霸王，举欲信于  
tiān xià shì wáng guó zhī dà bīng zhī jīng ruì ér gōng hán  
天下；恃王国之大，兵之精锐，而攻邯  
dān yǐ guǎng dì zūn míng wáng zhī dòng yù shù ér lí  
郸，以广地尊名。王之动愈数，而离  
wáng yù yuǎn ěr yóu zhì chǔ ér běi xíng yě  
王愈远耳。犹至楚而北行也。”

zhàn guó cè wèi cè sì  
《战国策·魏策四》



## In the Opposite Direction



The king of the state of Wei had the intention of attacking Handan, capital of the state of Yue. Ji Liang, a minister of Wei, heard of this and broke off his journey to return to Wei. He went to see the king before even stopping to smooth the creases of his clothes or flick the dust off his head.

“Your majesty,” said Ji Liang, “on my way here I saw a man at a main road driving his carriage which was facing north.

He said to me, ‘I want to go to the state of Chu.’

‘If you want to go to Chu, why are you going north?’ I asked.

‘I have fine horses,’ he said.

‘Even though you have good horses, this is not the road to Chu,’ I pointed out.

‘I have plenty of money for my journey,’ he said.

‘Even though you have a lot of money for your journey, this is not the road to Chu,’ I said.

‘I have an excellent driver for my carriage,’ he said.

The better are the resources he mentioned, the further he was going from Chu.”

Now your majesty seeks to rise above all the kings and



白话  
翻译



魏王准备攻打邯郸，季梁听到这件事，半路上就返回来，来不及舒展衣服的皱褶，顾不得清洗头上的尘土，就忙着去谒见魏王。季梁说：“今天我回来的时候，在大路上遇见一个人，正在向北面赶他的车，他告诉我说：‘我想到楚国去。’我说：‘您既然要到楚国去，为什么往北走呢？’他说：‘我的马好。’我说：‘马虽然不错，但是这不是去楚国的路啊！’他说：‘我的路费多。’我说：‘路费即使多，但这不是去楚国的方向啊。’他又说：‘我的车夫善于赶车。’这几样越好，反而会使他离楚国越远啊！如今大王的每一个行动都想建立霸业，每一个行动都想在天下取得威信；然而依仗国家的强大、军队的精良，而去攻打邯郸，以使土地扩展，名分尊贵，大王这样的行动越多，但是距离建立霸王基业的目标就越远。这就如同想到楚国去却向北走啊！”



win the confidence and support of the common people everywhere. However, you plan to extend your territories and raise your prestige by attacking Handan, relying on the powerful strength of your state and the well-trained soldiers under your command. The more you move in this direction the further you are from your goal of ruling over all the states. This is as effective as going north hoping to reach the state of Chu.”

*Zhanguo Ce (Strategies of the Warring States)*



zhōng

忠

xìn

信

zhì

致

chī

答

yǒu yuǎn wéi lì zhě qí qī sī rén qí fū qiě guī ,  
有远为吏者，其妻私人。其夫且归，

qí sī zhī zhě yōu zhī qí qī yuē gōng wù yōu yě wú yǐ  
其私之者忧之。其妻曰：“公勿忧也。吾已

wèi yào jiǔ yǐ dài zhī yǐ hòu èr rì fū zhì qī shǐ qiè  
为药酒以待之矣。”后二日，夫至。妻使妾

fèng bā jiǔ jìn zhī qiè zhī qí yào jiǔ yě jìn zhī zé shā zhǔ  
奉卮酒进之。妾知其药酒也，进之则杀主

fù yán zhī zé zhú zhǔ mǔ nǎi yáng jiāng qì jiǔ zhǔ fù dà  
父，言之则逐主母。乃阳僵弃酒。主父大

nù ér chī zhī  
怒而答之。

gù qiè yī jiāng ér qì jiǔ shàng yǐ huó zhǔ fù xià  
故妾一僵而弃酒，上以活主父，下

yǐ cún zhǔ mǔ yě zhōng zhì rú cǐ rán bù miǎn yú chī  
以存主母也，忠至如此，然不免于答。

cǐ yǐ zhōng xìn dé zuì zhě yě  
此以忠信得罪者也。

zhàn guó cè yān cè yī  
《战国策·燕策一》

白话  
翻译



有个在远地方做官的人，他的妻子跟别人私通。丈夫快要回来了，和妻子私通的人很忧虑。那妻子对她的情夫说：“你别担心，我已经准备了毒酒等着他呢。”过了两天，丈夫到家了。妻子让妾捧着酒送给她丈夫。妾知道那是毒酒，如果送上去就会毒死男主人，如果说出实情女主人就会被赶走。于是她假装跌倒，泼掉了毒酒。男主人很生气，就用竹板打她。

所以那个妾摔倒洒酒的举动，对上救了男主人，对下保住了女主人，忠心到了这种地步，然而仍然免不了被打。这就是因为忠信反而受到罪责的人啊！



## A Case of Injustice



A man held an official post far away from home. His wife had an affair with another man. When the husband's return drew near, her lover became very worried.

"Don't worry," said the woman, "I have poisoned wine waiting for him."

Two days later, the husband returned. The wife told the concubine to take a cup of wine to him. The concubine knew there was poison in the wine. If she took in the wine her master would be killed; if she revealed the plot, her mistress would be sent away. So she pretended to trip and spilled the wine. Her master flew into a rage and gave her a beating.

In pretending to trip and spilling the wine, the concubine not only saved her master's life but also preserved her mistress's position. But even such loyalty brought on a beating. This is a case of getting punished for being loyal.

*Zhanguo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)

qiú  
求  
qiān  
千  
lǐ  
里  
mǎ  
马

gǔ zhī jūn rén yǒu yǐ qiān jīn qiú qiān lǐ mǎ zhě sān  
古之君人，有以千金求千里马者，三

nián bù néng dé  
年不能得。

juān rén yán yú jūn yuē qǐng qiú zhī jūn qiān zhī  
涓人言于君曰：“请求之。”君遣之。

sān yuè dé qiān lǐ mǎ mǎ yǐ sǐ mǎi qí shǒu wǔ bǎi jīn  
三月得千里马。马已死，买其首五百金，

fǎn yǐ bào jūn jūn dà nù yuē suǒ qiú zhě shēng mǎ ān  
反以报君。君大怒曰：“所求者生马，安

shì sǐ mǎ ér juān wǔ bǎi jīn juān rén duì yuē sǐ mǎ qiě  
事死马而捐五百金？”涓人对曰：“死马且

mǎi zhī wǔ bǎi jīn kuàng shēng mǎ hū tiān xià bì yǐ wáng  
买之五百金，况生马乎？天下必以王

wéi néng shì mǎ mǎ jīn zhì yǐ  
为能市马，马今至矣。”

yú shì bù néng qī nián qiān lǐ zhī mǎ zhì zhě sān  
于是不能期年，千里之马至者三。

zhàn guó cè yān cè yī  
《战国策·燕策一》

白话  
翻译



古时候有一个国君，愿意出一千两黄金来购买一匹千里马，然而三年都没买到。

有个侍臣对国君说：“请让我出去寻求千里马吧。”国君就派他去了。三个月后终于找到了千里马，可到达的时候马已经死了，侍臣拿出了五百两黄金买回了那匹千里马的头骨，回来报告国君。国君非常生气地说：“我所要的是活马，怎么能把死马弄回来而且还花了五百两黄金呢？”侍臣回答说：“连死马都要花五百金买下来，何况活马呢？天下人必定认为大王您是真的要买马，很快就会有人把千里马给你送来。”

果然不到一年时间，就有三匹千里马送到了国君手中。



## An Expensive Head



In the ancient times there was a king who wanted to find a swift horse that could cover a thousand *li* in one day and he was willing to pay one thousand pieces of gold. But for three years he was unsuccessful.

A eunuch said to the king, "Please let me go and find such a horse for you."

The king agreed to send him. After three months the eunuch found a very swift horse but it was dead. He bought the horse's head for five hundred pieces of gold and returned to report to the king.

"I want a living horse," fumed the king. "What is the use of a dead one? And you gave away five hundred gold pieces as well! "

"If a dead horse is worth five hundred gold pieces," answered the eunuch, "what would a live one be worth? People everywhere will know that the king is willing to pay a great deal to buy horses. Good horses will soon appear."

In less than a year, three fine horses very swift of foot were brought to the king.

mài  
卖  
jùn  
骏  
mǎ  
马

rén yǒu mài jùn mǎ zhě bǐ sān dàn lì shì rén mò zhī  
人有卖骏马者，比三旦立市，人莫之

zhī wǎng jiàn bó lè yuē chén yǒu jùn mǎ yù mài zhī  
知。往见伯乐曰：“臣有骏马，欲卖之，

bǐ sān dàn lì yú shì rén mò yǔ yán yuàn zǐ hái ér shì  
比三旦立于市，人莫与言。愿子还而视

zhī qù ér gù zhī chén qǐng xiàn yī zhāo zhī jià  
之，去而顾之。臣请献一朝之贾。”

bó lè nǎi hái ér shì zhī qù ér gù zhī yī dàn ér  
伯乐乃还而视之，去而顾之。一旦而

mǎ jià shí bèi  
马价十倍。

zhàn guó cè yān cè èr  
《战国策·燕策二》

白话  
翻译



有个要卖骏马的人，接连三天呆在集市上，没有人理睬。这人就去见相马专家伯乐，说：“我有匹好马要卖掉，接连三天呆在集市上，没有一个人过来问。希望您去绕着我的马转几个圈儿，临走时再回过头去看它一眼，我愿意奉送给你一天的花费。”

伯乐接受了这个请求，就去绕着马儿看了几圈，走了之后又回过头来再看了一眼。这匹马的价钱立刻暴涨了十倍。

## To Sell a Horse



A man wanted to sell a very fine horse. He stood in the market with his horse for three mornings but no one noticed that his horse was an exceptionally good one. He went to see Bo Le who was well-known for his ability to judge horses.

“Sir, I have a very fine horse for sale,” he said, “but I stood in the market with my horse for three mornings and no one even spoke to me. Could you kindly come and look at my horse, walk all round it and throw a backward glance at it before you leave? I will pay you one day’s wages.”

So Bo Le went to look at the horse, walked all round it and threw a backward glance at it before he left. Immediately the price of the horse increased ten fold.

*Zhanguo Ce (Strategies of the Warring States)*

yù  
蚌  
相  
争

bàng fāng chū pù ér yù zhuó qí ròu bàng hé ér qián  
蚌方出曝，而鹬啄其肉。蚌合而钳

qí huì  
其喙。

yù yuē jīn rì bù yǔ míng rì bù yǔ jí yǒu sǐ  
鹬曰：“今日不雨，明日不雨，即有死

bàng  
蚌。”

bàng yì wèi yù yuē jīn rì bù chū míng rì bù chū  
蚌亦谓鹬曰：“今日不出，明日不出，

jí yǒu sǐ yù  
即有死鹬。”

liǎng zhě bù kěn xiāng shě yú zhě dé ér bìng qín zhī  
两者不肯相舍，渔者得而并擒之。

zhàn guó cè yān cè èr  
《战国策·燕策二》

白话  
翻译



河蚌刚刚爬出来张开壳儿晒太阳，一只鹬鸟扑过来啄它的肉。蚌合拢自己坚硬的壳，紧紧夹住鹬鸟的长嘴。

鹬鸟说：“今天不下雨，明天不下雨，你就会晒死。”

蚌也对鹬鸟说：“你的嘴今天拔不出，明天拔不出，你就要渴死饿死！”

鹬和蚌谁也不肯让谁，结果两个都被渔夫毫不费力地抓住了。



## The Snipe and the Clam



Just as a clam came out to bask in the sun a snipe pecked at its flesh. The clam closed its shell and gripped the snipe's beak.

"If it does not rain today and it does not rain tomorrow, you will be a dead clam," said the snipe.

"If you cannot free yourself today and you cannot free yourself tomorrow, you will be a dead snipe," replied the clam.

Neither one would give way and eventually a fisher man caught both the clam and the snipe.

*Zhanguo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States)





xiàng  
相  
rén  
人  
zhī  
之  
yǒu  
友

chǔ yǒu shàn xiàng rén zhě suǒ yán wú yí měi wén yú  
楚有善相人者，所言无遗，美闻于

guó zhōng zhuāng wáng zhào jiàn ér wèn yān duì yuē chén  
国中。庄王召见而问焉，对曰：“臣

fēi néng xiàng rén yě néng xiàng rén zhī yǒu zhě yě。”  
非能相人也，能相人之友者也。”

hán shī wài zhuàn  
《韩诗外传》

白话  
翻译



楚国有个善于看相的人，所说的毫无遗漏，在全国都美名远扬。楚庄王召见并且询问他，那人回答说：“我不是善于给人看相，只是善于察看人的朋友而已。”



## Telling Company



In the state of Chu was a man skilled in physiognomy. His comments were very accurate and his fame spread through the state. King Zhuang sent for him and asked him the secret of his success.

“Sire,” said the man, “I am not good at judging character or telling fortunes by examining a person’s face. I arrive at my conclusions through observing a person’s friends.”

*Hanshi Waizhuan* (Han Ying’s Illustration of the Didactic Application of the Book of Songs)

tú  
屠  
niú  
牛  
tǔ  
吐  
zhī  
之  
zhì  
智

qí wáng hòu sòng nǚ yù qī tú niú tǔ tú niú tǔ cí  
齐王厚送女，欲妻屠牛吐。屠牛吐辞

zhī yǐ jí qí yǒu yuē zǐ zhōng sǐ xīng chòu zhī sì ér yǐ  
之以疾。其友曰：“子终死腥臭之肆而已

hū hé wéi cí zhī tǔ yīng zhī yuē qí nǚ chǒu qí  
乎，何为辞之？”吐应之曰：“其女丑。”其

yǒu yuē zǐ hé zhī zhī tǔ yuē yǐ wú tú zhī zhī qí  
友曰：“子何知之？”吐曰：“以吾屠知之。”其

yǒu yuē hé wèi yě tǔ yuē wú ròu shàn rú liàng ér  
友曰：“何谓也？”吐曰：“吾肉善，如量而

qù kǔ shǎo ěr wú ròu bù shàn suī yǐ wú fù yì zhī  
去，苦少耳；吾肉不善，虽以吾附益之，

shàng yóu gǔ bù shòu jīn hòu sòng zǐ zǐ chǒu gù ěr  
尚犹贾不售。今厚送子，子丑故耳。”

qí yǒu hòu jiàn zhī guǒ chǒu  
其友后见之，果丑。

hán shī wài zhuàn  
《韩诗外传》

白话  
翻译



齐国国王以丰厚的嫁妆嫁女儿，希望嫁给名字叫“吐”的卖牛肉的屠夫。屠牛吐以自己有病推辞了。他的朋友说：“您愿意终身老死在这腥臭的市场吗？为什么推辞呢？”吐回答他说：“他的女儿长得太丑。”他的朋友说：“您怎么知道的？”吐说：“以我卖肉的经验而知道的。”他的朋友说：“怎么说？”吐说：“我卖的肉好的时候，就如数全部卖出去了，只会嫌肉少；我卖的肉不好的时候，虽然用别的附加好处，还是卖不出去。如今用丰厚的嫁妆陪嫁女儿，是因为女儿太丑的缘故。”他的朋友后来看见了齐王的女儿，果然长得很丑。



## The Shrewdness of Tu the Butcher



The king of the state of Qi prepared a large dowry for his daughter and wanted Tu the butcher to marry her. Tu declined on the grounds that he was ill.

“You will only end your days in that stinking shop,” pointed out his friend. “Why did you turn down the match?”

“The king’s daughter is very plain,” replied Tu.

“How do you know?” asked his friend.

“From my experience as a butcher,” said Tu.

“What do you mean?” asked his friend.

“When the meat I sell is good,” said Tu, “I just give the customer the amount he asks for and I still do not have enough meat to satisfy the demand. When the meat is not good, a lot of it is left on my hands even if I give the customers something extra for every piece they buy. Now the king has prepared a large dowry. The reason must be that his daughter is very homely.”

Tu’s friend did get to see the king’s daughter. She really did turn out to be a very plain girl.

kē  
苛  
zhèng  
政  
bǐ  
比  
hǔ  
虎

kǎng zǐ guò tài shān cè yǒu fù rén kū yú mù zhē ér  
孔子过泰山侧，有妇人哭于墓者而  
āi fū zǐ shì ér tīng zhī shǐ zǐ lù wèn zhī yuē zǐ  
哀。夫子式而听之，使子路问之曰：“子  
zhī kū yě yī sì zhòng yǒu yōu zhě ér yuē rán xī  
之哭也，壹似重有忧者。”而曰：“然。昔  
zhě wú jiù sǐ yú hǔ wú fū yòu sǐ yān jīn wú zǐ yòu  
者，吾舅死于虎，吾夫又死焉，今吾子又  
sǐ yān fū zǐ yuē hé wèi bù qù yě yuē wú  
死焉。”夫子曰：“何为不去也？”曰：“无  
kē zhèng fū zǐ yuē xiǎo zǐ shí zhī kē zhèng měng yú  
苛政。”夫子曰：“小子识之，苛政猛于  
hǔ yě  
虎也。”

lǐ jì tán gōng xià  
《礼记·檀弓下》

白话  
翻译



孔子路过泰山的一边，有个妇人哀痛地在坟墓前哭。孔子立起身来靠在横木上倾听，派遣子路去问那个妇人说：“你哭得好像有很伤心的事。”那个妇人说：“是的。过去，我的公公被老虎吃了，我的丈夫也被老虎吃了，现在我的儿子也被老虎吃了。”孔子问：“那为什么不离开这里呢？”妇人回答说：“因为这里没有苛刻的暴政。”孔子说：“学生们记住，苛刻的暴政比老虎还要凶猛可怕啊！”



## More Threatening than Tigers



As Confucius was passing near Tai Mountain, he saw a woman weeping bitterly in front of a grave. He leaned forward to listen, resting his hand on the wooden bar of his carriage. Zilu<sup>①</sup>, his pupil, was sent to ask the woman what the matter was.

“From your weeping it seems that you have many sorrows.”

“That is true. In the past my father-in-law was killed by a tiger. My husband was also killed by a tiger. Now my son too is killed.”

“Then why don’t you leave this place?” asked Confucius.

“There is no tyrannical government here,” came the reply.

“Take note, all of you,” said Confucius, “a tyrannical government is more threatening than tigers.”

*Liji* (The Book of Rites)



### Note

① Zilu: i.e. Zhong You.

jiē  
嗟  
lái  
来  
zhī  
之  
shí  
食

qí dà jī qián áo wèi shí yú lù yǐ dài è zhě ér  
齐大饥。黔敖为食于路，以待饿者而

shí zhī  
食之。

yǒu è zhě méng mèi jí jù mào mào rán lái qián áo  
有饿者，蒙袂辑屣贸贸然来。黔敖

zuǒ fèng shí yòu zhí yǐn yuē jiē lái shí yáng qí mù ér  
左奉食右执饮曰：“嗟，来食！”扬其目而

shì zhī yuē yǔ wéi bù shí jiē lái shí yǐ zhì yú sī  
视之，曰：“予唯不食嗟来之食，以至于斯

yě cóng ér xiè yān zhōng bù shí ér sǐ  
也。”从而谢焉，终不食而死。

lǐ jì tán gōng xià  
《礼记·檀弓下》

白话  
翻译



齐国出现了严重的饥荒。黔敖在路边准备好饭食，以供饥饿的人来吃。

有个饥民用袖子蒙着脸，无力地拖着脚步走来。黔敖左手端着吃食，右手端着汤，说道：“喂！来吃！”那个饥民抬起眼睛看着他，说：“我就是不愿吃嗟来之食，才落到这个地步！”黔敖追上前去道歉，饥民终究没有吃，最后饿死了。



## A Matter of Dignity



There was a great famine in the state of Qi. Qian Ao, a rich man of Qi, prepared food by the roadside for the hungry to come and eat.

Along came a starving man, his sleeves covering his head, his hempen sandals held together by string, walking as if he did not know where he was going. With food in his left hand and drink in his right, Qian Ao shouted at him.

“Hey you! Come and eat!”

The man lifted his eyes and stared at Qian.

“I am reduced to this state just because I refuse to take anything from loud-mouthed people giving away food,” he said.

Qian immediately begged his pardon but the man still refused to eat and eventually starved to death.

*Liji* (The Book of Rites)



kū  
哭  
mǔ  
母  
kuā  
夸  
xiào  
孝

dōng jiā mǔ sǐ qí zǐ kū zhī bù āi xī jiā zǐ jiàn  
东家母死，其子哭之不衰。西家子见

zhī guī wèi qí mǔ yuē shè hé ài sù sǐ wú bì bēi  
之，归谓其母曰：“社何爱速死？吾必悲

kū shè fū yù qí mǔ zhī sǐ zhě suī sǐ yì bù néng bēi  
哭社。”夫欲其母之死者，虽死亦不能悲

kū yī  
哭矣。

huái nán zǐ shuō shān xùn  
《淮南子·说山训》

白话  
翻译



东边人家的母亲去世了，他的儿子哭得不够哀痛。西边人家的儿子看到了，回去对自己的母亲说：“你为什么不捨得早点死呢？你如果死了我一定会很悲痛地为你哭泣的。”想要让自己的母亲早死的人，即使母亲真的死去了也不会悲伤痛哭的。



## A Better Mourner



A family that lived in the eastern part of town was bereaved of the mother, but the son did not show any deep grief when weeping for her. The son of a family in the western part of town saw this and, on returning home, he said to his mother, "Ma, why are you so stingy about your life and not die sooner? If I were to mourn for you, I will weep most bitterly."

Those who wish for their mother's death would not shed tears of grief even if their mother did pass away.

*Huainanzi*

yù  
鬻  
mǔ  
母  
xíng  
行  
yì  
义

yǐng rén yǒu yù qí mǔ wèi qǐng yú mǎi zhě yuē cǐ  
郢人有鬻其母，为请于买者曰：“此

mǔ lǎo yǐ xìng shàn shí zhī ér wù kǔ cǐ xíng dà bù yì  
母老矣，幸善食之而勿苦。”此行大不义

ér yù wèi xiǎo yì zhě  
而欲为小义者。

huái nán zǐ shuō shān xùn  
《淮南子·说山训》

白话  
翻译



郢这个地方有要卖掉自己母亲的人，为地向买的人请求说：“这位老太太年纪大了，请让她吃得好点，别让她受苦。”这就是做很不道德的事却想要施一点小恩惠的人啊！



## Mother for Sale



A native of Ying, capital of the state of Chu, sold his mother. He made entreaties for his mother to the one who bought her.

“My mother is old. Please see that she has enough food and do not ill-treat her.”

This was an example of one who wanted to do a small good deed while indulging in a heinous act.

*Huainanzi*

sài  
塞  
wēng  
翁  
shī  
失  
mǎ  
马

jìn sài shàng zhī rén yǒu shàn shù zhě mǎ wú gù wáng  
近塞上之人，有善术者。马无故亡

ér rù hú rén jiē diào zhī qí fù yuē cǐ hé jù bù wéi  
而入胡，人皆吊之。其父曰：“此何遽不为

fú hū jū shù yuè qí mǎ jiāng hú jùn mǎ ér guī rén  
福乎？”居数月，其马将胡骏马而归，人

jiē hè zhī qí fù yuē cǐ hé jù bù néng wéi huò hū  
皆贺之。其父曰：“此何遽不能为祸乎？”

jiā fù liáng mǎ qí zǐ hào qí duò ér zhé qí bì rén jiē  
家富良马，其子好骑，堕而折其髀，人皆

diào zhī qí fù yuē cǐ hé jù bù wéi fú hū jū yī  
吊之。其父曰：“此何遽不为福乎？”居一

nián hú rén dà rù sāi dīng zhuàng zhě yǐn xián ér zhàn jìn  
年，胡人大入塞，丁壮者引弦而战，近

sāi zhī rén sǐ zhě shí jiǔ cǐ dú yǐ bō zhī gù fù zǐ  
塞之人，死者十九。此独以跛之故，父子

xiāng bǎo  
相保。

huái nán zǐ rén jiān xùn  
《淮南子·人间训》



## Blessing or Bane



Near China's northern borders lived a man well versed in the practices of Taoism. His horse, for no reason at all, got into the territory of the northern tribes. Everyone commiserated with him.

"Perhaps this will soon turn out to be a blessing," said his father.

After a few months, his animal came back, leading a fine horse from the north. Everyone congratulated him.

"Perhaps this will soon turn out to be a cause of misfortune," said his father.

Since he was well-off and kept good horses his son became fond of riding and eventually broke his thigh bone falling from a horse. Everyone commiserated with him.

"Perhaps this will soon turn out to be a blessing," said his father.

One year later, the northern tribes started a big invasion of the border regions. All able-bodied young men took up arms and fought against the invaders, and as a result, around the border nine out of ten men died. This man's son did not join in the fighting because he was crippled and so both the boy and

白话  
翻译



靠近边塞居住的人中，有位掌握术数、擅长推测吉凶的人。他的马无缘无故跑到了胡人的住地，人们都为此来宽慰他。那老人却说：“这怎么就不会是一种福气呢？”过了几个月，那匹走失的马带着胡人的良马回来了，人们都前来祝贺他。那老人又说：“这怎么就不能是一种灾祸呢？”家中有很多好马，他的儿子爱好骑马，结果从马上摔下来摔断了大腿，人们都前来慰问他。那老人说：“这怎么就不能变为一件福事呢？”过了一年，胡人大举入侵边塞，健壮男子都必须拿起武器去作战。边塞附近的人，死亡的占了十分之九。这个人唯独因为腿瘸的缘故免于征战，父子俩一同保全了性命。



his father survived.

*Huainanzi*





tián  
田  
zǐ  
子  
fāng  
方  
jiàn  
见  
lǎo  
老  
mǎ  
马

tián zǐ fāng jiàn lǎo mǎ yú dào kuì rán yǒu zhì yǎn yǐ  
田子方见老马于道，喟然有志焉，以

wèn qí yù yuē cǐ hé mǎ yě qí yù yuē cǐ gù  
问其御曰：“此何马也？”其御曰：“此故

gōng jiā chù yě lǎo bà ér bù wéi yòng chū ér yù zhī  
公家畜也。老罢而不为用，出而鬻之。”

tián zǐ fāng yuē shǎo ér tān qí lì lǎo ér qì qí shēn  
田子方曰：“少而贪其力，老而弃其身，

rén zhě fú wéi yě shù bó yǐ shù zhī bà wǔ wén zhī  
仁者弗为也。”束帛以赎之。罢武闻之，

zhī suǒ guī xīn yǐ  
知所归心矣。

huái nán zǐ rén jiān xùn  
《淮南子·人间训》

白话  
翻译



田子方在路上看到一匹老马，有所感慨，于是问他的车夫说：“这是匹什么马？”车夫说：“这马以前就是您家里的，又老又病弱，没什么用处了，就拉出来准备卖掉。”田子方说：“年轻的时候压榨它的劳力，年老了却抛弃它的身体，品德高尚的人不做这样的事。”于是用一束帛赎回了这匹老马。衰老的武士们听说了这件事，知道田子方是个值得他们信赖尊敬的人。



## An Old Horse



Tian Zifang saw an old horse on a road. He heaved a sigh, deeply moved.

“What horse is this?” he asked his carriage driver.

“Master, this horse used to be kept by you,” replied the driver. “Since it is old and weak, it is not much used, so it was taken out to be sold.”

“To exploit its strength in its youth and then get rid of it in its old age is not the way a man with decency and honour should behave.”

Therefore Tian Zifang used five rolls of silk to buy back the horse. When old veterans heard of this, they were full of admiration and respect for him.

*Huainanzi*

táng  
螳  
láng  
螂  
bó  
搏  
lún  
轮

qí zhuāng gōng chū liè yǒu yī chóng jǔ zú jiāng bó qí  
齐庄公出猎，有一虫举足将搏其

lún wèn qí yù yuē cǐ hé chóng yě duì yuē cǐ  
轮。问其御曰：“此何虫也。”对曰：“此

suǒ wèi táng láng zhě yě qí wéi chóng yě zhī jìn ér bù zhī  
所谓螳螂者也。其为虫也，知进而不知

què bù liàng lì ér qīng dǐ zhuāng gōng yuē cǐ wéi  
却，不量力而轻敌。”庄公曰：“此为

rén ér bì wéi tiān xià yǒng wǔ yǐ huí chē ér bì zhī  
人而必为天下勇武矣。”回车而避之。

yǒng wǔ wén zhī zhī suǒ jìn sǐ yǐ  
勇武闻之，知所尽死矣。

huái nán zǐ rén jiān xùn  
《淮南子·人间训》

白话  
翻译



齐庄公出去打猎，有一只虫子抬足想挡住车轮。庄公问车夫说：“这是什么虫子啊？”车夫回答说：“这个叫螳螂。它是虫子的一种，只知道前进而不知道后退，不自量力而且态度轻敌。”庄公说：“如果这是人的话，那他一定是天下的勇士啊！”于是就掉转车子避开螳螂。天下的勇士听说这件事，知道庄公是值得为之尽忠效死的人。



# The Indomitable Mantis



Duke Zhuang of the state of Qi was out hunting when an insect lifted its legs and was about to fight with the wheel of his carriage.

“What insect is this?” the duke asked his carriage driver.

“This is called a mantis,” replied the driver. “This insect only knows how to advance and never retreats. It overestimates its own strength and underestimates its enemy.”

“If this is a man,” said the duke, “he would be one of the bravest in the world.”

He turned his carriage to avoid the mantis. When men of courage heard of this they realized to whom they could be loyal unto death.

*Huainanzi*



yǔ  
与  
shǎo  
少  
wàng  
望  
shē  
奢

wēi wáng bā nián chū dà fā bīng jiā qí qí wáng shǐ  
威王八年，楚大发兵加齐。齐王使

chún yú kūn zhī zhào qǐng jiù bīng jī jīn bǎi jīn chē mǎ shí  
淳于髡之赵请救兵，赏金百斤，车马十

sì chún yú kūn yǎng tiān dà xiào guān yīng suǒ jué wáng  
驷。淳于髡仰天大笑，冠缨索绝。王

yuē xiān shēng shǎo zhī hū kūn yuē hé gǎn wáng  
曰：“先生少之乎？”髡曰：“何敢！”王

yuē xiào qǐ yǒu shuō hū kūn yuē jīn zhě chén cóng  
曰：“笑岂有说乎？”髡曰：“今者臣从

dōng fāng lái jiàn dào bàng yǒu ráng tián zhě cāo yī tún tí  
东方来，见道傍有穰田者，操一豚蹄，

jiǔ yī yú zhù yuē ōu jù mǎn gōu wū xié mǎn chē wǔ  
酒一盂，祝曰：‘瓠窋满篝，污邪满车，五

gǔ fān shú ráng ráng mǎn jiā chén jiàn qí suǒ chí zhě xiá  
谷蕃熟，穰穰满家。’臣见其所持者狭

ér suǒ yù zhě shē gù xiào zhī  
而所欲者奢，故笑之。”

yú shì qí wēi wáng nǎi yì jī huáng jīn qiān yì bái bì  
于是齐威王乃益赍黄金千溢，白璧

shí shuāng chē mǎ bǎi sì kūn cí ér xíng zhì zhào zhào  
十双，车马百驷。髡辞而行，至赵。赵

wáng yǔ zhī jīng bīng shí wàn gé chē qiān shèng chū wén  
王与之精兵十万，革车千乘。楚闻

zhī yè yǐn bīng ér qù  
之，夜引兵而去。

shǐ jì huó jī liè zhuàn  
《史记·滑稽列传》



## Exorbitant Demands



When King Wei ruled the state of Qi, armies from the state of Chu attacked Qi in the eighth year of his reign. The king wanted Chunyu Kun to go to the state of Zhao and ask for troops to come to the rescue. Chunyu Kun was to take with him as presents one hundred catties of gold and ten carriages each drawn by a team of four horses.

Chunyu Kun threw back his head and laughed so much that all the tassels of his hat broke.

“Sir,” said the king, “do you think that the presents are too meagre?”

“Sire, how would I dare to harbour such thoughts?” replied Chunyu Kun.

“Then why do you laugh?” asked the king.

“Today on my way here from the east, I saw a man praying to the heavens for a good harvest by the side of the road. He held up a leg of pork and a jar of wine to offer to the gods, praying as he did so, ‘May the narrow fields high up the slopes produce enough to fill many baskets; may the fields in the low flat lands produce enough to fill many carts; may all the food crops grow in abundance; may my house be chockfull of



白话  
翻译



齐威王八年，楚国派大军进犯齐国。齐王派淳于髡到赵国求援，让他携带礼物黄金百斤，四匹马驾的马车十辆。淳于髡仰天大笑，将系帽的带子都笑断了。威王说：“先生是否嫌礼太少？”淳于髡说：“怎敢嫌少！”威王说：“那你笑，难道有什么说辞吗？”淳于髡说：“今天我从东边来时，看到路旁边有个祈祷田神的人，拿着一个猪蹄，一杯酒，却祈祷说：‘高地上收获的谷物盛满篝笼，低田里收获的庄稼装满车辆；五谷繁茂丰熟，米粮堆积满仓。’我看他拿的祭品很少，而祈求的东西太多，所以笑话他。”

于是齐威王就把礼物增加到黄金千镒、白玉十对、驷马车百辆。淳于髡告辞而出行，来到赵国。赵王拨给他十万精兵，一千辆包有皮革的战车。楚国听到这个消息，连夜退兵而去。



grain.' His offering was so pitiful and his demands so exorbitant that I could not help laughing."

Therefore the king added one thousand and five hundred catties of gold, ten pairs of white jade ornaments and one hundred four-horse carriages. Chunyu Kun took leave of the king and went to Zhao. The king of Zhao let him have a hundred thousand well-trained soldiers and one thousand chariots. When the state of Chu heard of this, their troops were withdrawn in the dead of night.

*Shiji* (Records of the Historian)



jī  
 鸡  
 yǒu  
 有  
 wǔ  
 五  
 dé  
 德

tián ráo shì lǔ āi gōng ér bù jiàn chá tián ráo wèi lǔ  
 田饶事鲁哀公而不见察。田饶谓鲁

āi gōng yuē chén jiāng qù jūn ér hóng hú jǔ yǐ āi gōng  
 哀公曰：“臣将去君而鸿鹄举矣。”哀公

yuē hé wèi yě tián ráo yuē jūn dú bù jiàn fū jī hū  
 曰：“何谓也？”田饶曰：“君独不见夫鸡乎？

tóu dài guàn zhě wén yě zú bó jù zhě wǔ yě dí zài  
 头戴冠者，文也；足搏距<sup>①</sup>者，武也；敌在

qián gǎn dòu zhě yǒng yě jiàn shí xiāng hū rén yě shǒu  
 前敢斗者，勇也；见食相呼，仁也；守

yè bù shī shí xìn yě jī suī yǒu cǐ wǔ zhě jūn yóu rì  
 夜不失时，信也。鸡虽有此五者，君犹日

yuē ér shí zhī hé zé yǐ qí suǒ cóng lái jìn yě fū hóng  
 淹而食之，何则？以其所从来近也。夫鸿

hú yī jǔ qiān lǐ zhǐ jūn yuán chí shí jūn yú biē zhuó jūn  
 鹄一举千里，止君园池，食君鱼鳖，啄君

shū sù wú cǐ wǔ zhě jūn yóu guì zhī yǐ qí suǒ cóng lái  
 菽粟，无此五者，君犹贵之，以其所从来

yuǎn yě chén qǐng hóng hú jǔ yǐ  
 远也。臣请鸿鹄举矣。”

āi gōng yuē zhǐ wú shū zǐ zhī yán yě tián ráo  
 哀公曰：“止！吾书子之言也。”田饶

yuē chén wén shí qí shí zhě bù huǐ qí qì yīn qí shù zhě  
 曰：“臣闻食其食者不毁其器，荫其树者

bù zhé qí zhī yǒu shì bù yòng hé shū qí yán wèi suì  
 不折其枝。有士不用，何书其言为！”遂

qù zhī yān yān lì yǐ wéi xiàng sān nián yān zhī zhèng dà  
 去之燕。燕立以为相。三年，燕之政大

píng guó wú dào zéi āi gōng wén zhī kǎi rán tài xī wèi  
 平，国无盗贼。哀公闻之，慨然太息，为

zhī bì qǐn sān yuè chōu sǔn shàng fú yuē bù shèn qí qián  
 之避寝三月，抽损上服曰：“不慎其前



## The Cock and the Wild Swan



Tian Rao served Duke Ai of the state of Lu but the duke did not appreciate his abilities.

“My lord,” said Tian to the duke, “I am going to leave you as a wild swan takes off to the skies.”

“What do you mean?” asked the duke.

“My lord, have you not seen the cock?” said Tian. “On its head sits a red comb — this is elegance; on its feet are sharp spurs — this is might; faced with an adversary it is always ready to put up a fight — this is courage; at the sight of something to eat, it calls its companions to share the food — this is benevolence; as a sentry watching through the night, it never fails to announce the hour — this is faithfulness. Though the cock has these five virtues, you, my lord, still give orders that it be cooked and served as food. Why is that so? It is because the cock is nearby, at hand. As for the wild swan, with a flap of its wings it covers hundreds of *li*. Resting in your garden and your pond, it devours your fish and turtles, and pecks at your grain and beans. Even though it lacks these five virtues it is still cherished by you. This is because it comes from far far away. Please give me leave to go far away like the wild swan.”



ér huǐ qí hòu hé kě fù dé  
而悔其后，何可复得！”

xīn xù jī shì wǔ  
《新序·鸡事五》

白话  
翻译



田饶侍奉鲁哀公多年而未受重用。一天，他对鲁哀公说：“我将离开您，像鸿鹄那样远走高飞了。”鲁哀公问：“这是什么意思？”田饶说：“您难道没有看见雄鸡吗？头戴红冠，这是文；脚上有距，这是武；强敌在前，敢于争斗，这是勇；遇见食物，呼唤同伴，这是仁；打鸣报晓，不误时辰，这是信。鸡虽然有这五德，您还是天天煮着吃它。这是为什么呢？因为离您很近，来得容易。而鸿鹄呢，展翅千里，栖息在您的林园池塘，吞吃您的鱼鳖，啄食您的五谷。它们并没有那五种品德，您反倒觉得它珍贵，这是因为它是从远处来，得之不易，所以我要请求离开您的身边，学鸿鹄而远走高飞！”

鲁哀公说：“等一下，我把你的话写下来。”田饶说：“我听说吃别人东西的人不会毁坏盛食物的器皿，借别人的树阴乘凉的人不会攀折树的枝条。有谋士却不重用，记下他的话干什么呢？”于是就离开鲁国到燕国去了。

燕国封田饶做宰相。三年之后，燕国的政局非常稳定，国家都没有盗贼。鲁哀公听说了，感慨惋惜，为此三个月独自睡觉、少穿华美的衣服，说：“事前不谨慎，事后才后悔，怎么能够失而复得呢？”



注释

① 距：鸡腿的后面突出的像脚趾的部分。



“Stay,” urged the duke. “I will write down your words.”

“I have heard,” said Tian, “that one who accepts food from another does not destroy the vessels; and one who enjoys the shade of a tree does not break its branches. If a capable man is not given the chance of using his abilities, what is the use of writing down his words?”

Tian left Lu and went to the state of Yan where he was appointed prime minister. After three years, Yan enjoyed peace and prosperity and not a thief was found in the whole state. This came to the ears of Duke Ai who sighed with deep regret. Because of this he lived in solitude for three months and did away with many of his luxuries.

“Because of my own negligence in the past,” he said, “I am now filled with regret. Nevermore can I hope to regain what I have lost.”

*Xinxu*

yè  
叶  
gōng  
公  
hào  
好  
lóng  
龙

yè gōng zǐ gāo hào lóng gōu yǐ xiě lóng záo yǐ xiě  
叶公子高好龙，钩以写龙，凿以写  
lóng wū shì diào wén yǐ xiě lóng yú shì fū lóng wén ér xià  
龙，屋室雕文以写龙。于是夫龙闻而下  
zhī kǒu tóu yú yǒu shī wěi yú táng yè gōng jiàn zhī qī  
之，窥头于牖，施尾于堂。叶公见之，弃  
ér huán zǒu shī qí hún pò wǔ sè wú zhǔ shì yè gōng fēi  
而还走，失其魂魄，五色无主。是叶公非  
hào lóng yě hào fū sì lóng ér fēi lóng zhě yě  
好龙也，好夫似龙而非龙者也。

xīn xù jī shì wǔ  
《新序·鸡事五》

白话  
翻译



叶公子高很喜欢龙，用钩子、凿子在屋子的四处都雕刻上龙。于是真正的龙听说了就下降到叶公家里，从门里伸进头来窥视，尾巴拖在堂屋里。叶公看见了，抛下龙转身就跑，吓得失魂落魄、面如土色。这说明叶公不是喜欢龙，而是喜欢像龙又不是龙的东西。



## The Real Thing



Lord Ye, styled Zigao, was fond of dragons. He had dress ornaments and wine cups with the pattern of dragons, and all the carvings in the rooms of his house were in the shape of dragons. As a result, the real dragon heard about this and came down to his house, It stuck its head through a window to take a peep while trailing its tail in the hall. Lord Ye saw it and turned to flee with a terrified look on his face, frightened out of his wits.

This man was not really fond of dragons. He was only fond of what looked like a dragon but was not a dragon in reality.

*Xinxu*

zhōng

中

tiān

天

tái

台

wèi wáng jiāng qǐ zhōng tiān tái líng yuē gǎn jiàn zhě  
魏王将起中天台，令曰：“敢谏者

sǐ  
死。”

xǔ wǎn fù léi cāo chā rù yuē wén dà wáng jiāng  
许绾负累①操锤入，曰：“闻大王将

qǐ zhōng tiān tái chén yuàn jiā yī lì wáng yuē zǐ hé  
起中天台，臣愿加一力。”王曰：“子何

lì yǒu jiā wǎn yuē suī wú lì néng shāng tái wáng  
力有加？”绾曰：“虽无力，能商台。”王

yuē ruò hé yuē chén wén tiān yǔ dì xiāng qù wàn  
曰：“若何！”曰：“臣闻天与地相去万

wǔ qiān lǐ jīn wáng yīn ér bàn zhī dāng qǐ qī qiān wǔ bǎi  
五千里，今王因而半之，当起七千五百

lǐ zhī tái gāo jì rú shì qí zhǐ xū fāng bā qiān lǐ jìn  
里之台。高既如是，其趾须方八千里，尽

wáng zhī dì bù zú yǐ wéi tái zhǐ gǔ zhě yáo shùn jiàn zhū  
王之地，不足以为台趾。古者尧舜建诸

hóu dì fāng wǔ qiān lǐ wáng bì qǐ cǐ tái xiān yǐ bīng  
侯，地方五千里，王必起此台，先以兵

fá zhū hóu jìn yǒu qí dì yóu bù zú yòu fá sì yí dé  
伐诸侯，尽有其地，犹不足，又伐四夷，得

fāng bā qiān lǐ nǎi zú yǐ wéi tái zhǐ lín mù zhī jī rén  
方八千里，乃足以为台趾。林木之积、人

tú zhī zhòng cāng lǐn zhī chǔ shù yǐ wàn yì dù bā qiān  
徒之众、仓廩之储，数以万亿：度八千

lǐ zhī wài dāng dìng nóng mù zhī dì zú yǐ fèng jǐ wáng zhī  
里之外，当定农亩之地足以奉给王之

tái zhě tái jù yǐ bèi nǎi kě yǐ zuò  
台者。台具以备，乃可以作。”



## Halfway up the Skies



When the king of Wei decided to build a tower that would reach halfway up the skies, he gave an order: "Anyone who tries to dissuade me will be put to death."

Xu Wan, a minister of Wei, came to the presence of the king, carrying a dirt basket on his back and holding a spade in his hand.

"Sire, I heard that you are about to build a tower that would reach halfway up the skies," said Xu, "your humble servant would like to offer a helping hand."

"What strength have you got to offer?" asked the king.

"I may be lacking in strength," replied Xu, "but I can help in the planning of this construction."

"Well?" inquired the king.

"Sire, I have heard the distance between heaven and earth is fifteen thousand *li*. Now since you want to build a tower that reaches midway up the skies, the tower should be seven thousand five hundred *li* tall. With a structure that tall, the foundations must have a circumference of eight thousand *li*. Not all your lands together, sire, is enough for the foundations. In ancient times, the monarchs Yao and Shun established



wèi wáng mò rán wú yǐ yīng nǎi bà qǐ tái  
魏王默然无以应，乃罢起台。

xīn xù cì shū  
《新序·刺奢》

白话  
翻译



魏王要建造一座中天台，下令说：“敢进谏的人就是死罪。”

许绾背着盛土的箩筐、扛着铁锹觐见，说：“听说大王要建造一座中天台，我愿意增加一份力量。”魏王说：“你有什么力量要加入啊？”许绾说：“虽然没有力气，但是能够商讨一下建台的事宜。”魏王说：“怎么样呢？”许绾说：“我听说天与地相距一万五千里，现在大王只取其一半，应当建一座七千五百里高的台子。既然达到了这样的高度，那么台的地基就需要方圆八千里，用尽目前大王的土地，也不够作为台的地基。古时候尧和舜分封诸侯，全国不过方圆五千里，大王如果一定要建造这座中天台，必须先派军队讨伐诸侯，全部占有他们的土地；这样还不够，就再讨伐四方的少数民族，得到八千里的土地，才够作为高台的地基。木材的积攒、人力的众多、仓库的储备，需要数以万亿。在这方圆八千里之外，还应当确定一些足以供养大王这座高台的农田。把这些都准备好了，就可以建造了。”

魏王听了沉默不语，无言以对，于是决定不再建造中天台了。



注释

① 蓐(léi):盛土的箩筐。



dukedom which had a circumference of five thousand *li*. If you are determined to build this tower, you must first attack the dukes and take over all their lands. That is still not enough. You must also subdue the various barbarous tribes living in the far away regions to our north, south, east and west. When you have got an area with a boundary of eight thousand *li*, it will be adequate for the foundations. As for building materials, workers and stores of food, all these must be calculated by hundreds of millions. Outside the area bound by eight thousand *li*, a large number of fields must be designated for producing food to feed the workers constructing the tower. When all the conditions for building the tower are met, the work can begin.”

The king was silent, unable to think of a reply. He gave up the idea of building the tower.

*Xinxu*

tài  
泰  
xī  
西  
bā  
巴  
shì  
释  
ní  
麋

mèng sūn liè dé ní shǐ qín xī bā chí tí qí mǔ  
孟 孙 猎 得 麋 使 秦 西 巴 持 蹄 其 母

suí ér míng qín xī bā bù rěn zòng ér yǔ zhī mèng sūn  
随 而 鸣 秦 西 巴 不 忍 纵 而 与 之 孟 孙

nù ér zhú qín xī bā jū yī nián zhào yǐ wéi tài zǐ fù  
怒 而 逐 秦 西 巴 居 一 年 召 以 为 太 子 傅

zuǒ yòu yuē fū qín xī bā yǒu zuì yú jūn jīn yǐ wéi tài  
左 右 曰 夫 秦 西 巴 有 罪 于 君 今 以 为 太

zǐ fù hé yě mèng sūn yuē fū yǐ yī ní ér bù  
子 傅 何 也 孟 孙 曰 夫 以 一 麋 而 不

rěn yòu jiāng néng rěn wú zǐ hū  
忍 又 将 能 忍 吾 子 乎

shuō yuàn guì dé  
《 说 苑 · 贵 德 》

白话  
翻译



孟孙打猎时得到一只麋，让秦西巴带着回去。麋的母亲一路跟随着哀鸣，秦西巴觉得不忍心，就把小麋放了还给了母麋。孟孙一怒之下赶走了秦西巴。过了一年，孟孙召回秦西巴任命他做太子的老师。左右大臣说：“秦西巴对您犯下了过错，现在却让他做太子的老师，为什么呢？”孟孙说：“他对一只麋都有恻隐之心，更何况是对我的儿子呢？”



## Compassion for a Fawn



When Meng Sun was out hunting he caught a fawn which he entrusted to Qin Xiba to take home. The mother deer followed Qin, crying piteously. Qin Xiba was touched so he let the fawn go with its mother. As a result, Meng Sun was so incensed that he banished Qin.

After one year, Meng summoned Qin and appointed him to the post of the crown prince's tutor.

"Qin offended you in the past," pointed out his close attendants. "Why are you appointing him to be the crown prince's tutor?"

"If Qin had compassion even for a little fawn," replied Meng, "will he not be good to my son?"

*Shuiyuan*

táng  
螳  
láng  
螂  
bǔ  
捕  
chán  
蝉

wú wáng yù fá jīng gào qí zuǒ yòu yuē gǎn yǒu jiàn  
吴王欲伐荆，告其左右曰：“敢有谏

zhě sǐ shè rén yǒu shào rú zǐ zhě yù jiàn bù gǎn zé  
者死。”舍人有少孺子者，欲谏不敢，则

huái wán cāo dàn yóu yú hòu yuán lù zhān qí yī rú shì  
怀丸操弹游于后园，露沾其衣。如是

zhě sān dàn wú wáng yuē zǐ lái hé kǔ zhān yī rú  
者三旦。吴王曰：“子来，何苦沾衣如

cǐ duì yuē yuán zhōng yǒu shù qí shàng yǒu chán  
此？”对曰：“园中有树，其上有蝉。

chán gāo jū bēi míng yīn lù bù zhī táng láng zài qí hòu yē  
蝉高居悲鸣饮露，不知螳螂在其后也。

táng láng wēi shēn qū fù yù qǔ chán ér bù zhī huáng què zài  
螳螂委身曲附欲取蝉，而不知黄雀在

qí hòu yē huáng què yán jǐng yù zhuó táng láng ér bù zhī  
其后也。黄雀延颈欲啄螳螂，而不知

dàn wán zài qí xià yē cǐ sān zhě jiē wù yù dé qí qián lì  
弹丸在其下也。此三者皆务欲得其前利

ér bù gù qí hòu zhī yǒu huàn yē wú wáng yuē shàn  
而不顾其后之有患也。”吴王曰：“善

zāi nǎi bà qí bīng  
哉。”乃罢其兵。

shuì yuán zhèng jiàn  
《说苑·正谏》



## The Mantis and the Cicada



The king of the state of Wu wanted to attack the state of Chu.

“Anyone who attempts to dissuade me,” the king warned his ministers, “will be put to death.”

Among those who served the king was a young man who wanted to dissuade the king but dared not. He took some pellets and went into the rear garden holding his catapult. He stayed there until his clothes were damp with dew. This went on for three successive mornings.

“Come here young man,” said the king, “is it worth getting your clothes so damp?”

“There is a tree in the garden,” replied the young man, “and on it was a cicada. High up in the tree, the cicada chirped shrilly and drank the dew, unaware that behind it lurked a mantis. The mantis crouched low in its hiding place, bent on getting the cicada, unaware that right next to it was an oriole. The oriole strained its neck hoping to peck the mantis, unaware that there was a catapult below. All three of them were only concerned with getting the advantage before them and were heedless of the disaster that came in from behind.”



白话  
翻译



吴王执意要攻打楚国，告诫左右大臣说：“有敢进谏的人，就判死罪！”大臣中有个年轻人，想进谏又不敢，于是天天拿着弹弓在后花园里转来转去，露水都打湿了衣服也不管。这样过了三天，吴王问他：“你过来，露水把衣服湿成这样，是何苦呢？”那个人回答说：“园中有树，树上有蝉。蝉高高地居住在树梢上，一边喝着露水一边鸣唱，却没发现有只螳螂正在它身后。螳螂藏在那里想捕捉蝉，却不知道黄雀正在自己后边。黄雀伸长脖子想啄螳螂，而不知道我的弹弓已经在下面瞄准它了！这三个家伙，都只知道它们眼前的那点利益，而不顾及自己身后潜伏的灾祸呀！”吴王说：“说得好啊！”于是停止了攻楚的计划。



"Well said," pronounced the king. He gave up the idea of attacking Chu.

*Shuiyuan*



jǐng  
景  
gōng  
公  
hào  
好  
yì  
弋

jǐng gōng hào yì shǐ zhú chú zhǔ niǎo ér wáng zhī jǐng  
景公好弋，使烛雏主鸟而亡之。景

gōng nù ér yù shā zhī yàn zǐ yuē zhú chú yǒu zuì qǐng  
公怒而欲杀之。晏子曰：“烛雏有罪，请

shǔ zhī yǐ qí zuì nǎi shā zhī jǐng gōng yuē kě yú  
数之，以其罪乃杀之。”景公曰：“可。”于

shì nǎi zhào zhú chú shǔ zhī jǐng gōng qián yuē rǔ wèi wú  
是乃召烛雏，数之景公前，曰：“汝为吾

jūn zhǔ niǎo ér wáng zhī shì yī zuì yě shǐ wú jūn yǐ niǎo  
君主鸟而亡之，是一罪也：使吾君以鸟

zhī gù shā rén shì èr zuì yě shǐ zhū hóu wén zhī yǐ wú  
之故杀人，是二罪也：使诸侯闻之，以吾

jūn zhòng niǎo ér qīng shì shì sān zuì yě shǔ zhú chú zuì  
君重鸟而轻士，是三罪也。”数烛雏罪

yí bì qǐng shā zhī jǐng gōng yuē zhǐ wú shā ér xiè  
已毕，请杀之。景公曰：“止。”勿杀而谢

zhī  
之。

shuō yuán zhèng jiàn  
《说苑·正谏》

白话  
翻译



齐景公喜欢射鸟，让烛邹掌管那些鸟，但鸟跑掉了。景公大怒想要杀掉他。晏子说：“烛雏有罪，请让我列出他的罪过，再按照他犯的罪杀掉他。”景公说：“可以。”于是召来烛雏，在景公面前列出这些罪过。晏子说：“你为国君掌管鸟而丢失了，是第一条罪；使我们的国君因为丢鸟的事情而杀人，是第二条罪；使诸侯们知道这件事了，以为我们的国君重视鸟而轻视士人，是第三条罪。”把烛雏的罪状列完了，晏子请求杀了烛雏。景公说：“住手。”不杀烛雏并且向他道歉。

## A Broad Hint



Duke Jing loved to catch birds. He ordered Zhu Chu to be in charge of bird catching but Zhu let the captured birds fly away. Duke Jing was incensed and wanted to put Zhu to death.

“Zhu Chu is guilty,” said Yanzi, “please let me enumerate the crimes he committed and then sentence him to death for his offenses.”

“You may do so,” said the duke.

Accordingly Zhu Chu was brought to the presence of the duke and Yanzi enumerated his crimes, “You are supposed to help our lord catch birds but you let them escape. This is your first offence. You caused our lord to put a man to death because the birds got away. This is your second offence. When the princes of the other states hear about this, they will think that our lord value birds more than men. This is your third offence.”

After enumerating Zhu’s crimes, Yanzi asked that Zhu be put to death.

“He should not be put to death,” said Duke Jing. And so the duke not only did not kill Zhu but also extended his apologies to him.

bái  
白  
lóng  
龙  
xià  
下  
qīng  
清  
líng  
冷  
zhī  
之  
yuān  
渊

bái lóng xià qīng líng zhī yuān huà wéi yú yú zhě yù qiè  
白龙下清冷之渊，化为鱼。渔者豫且

shè zhòng qí mù bái lóng shàng sù tiān dì  
射中其目。白龙上诉天帝。

tiān dì yuē dāng shì zhī shí ruò ān zhì ér xíng bái  
天帝曰：“当是之时，若安置而形？”白

lóng duì yuē wǒ xià qīng líng zhī yuān huà wéi yú tiān dì  
龙对曰：“我下清冷之渊，化为鱼。”天帝

yuē yú gù rén zhī suǒ shè yě ruò shì yù qiè hé zuì  
曰：“鱼，固人之所射也。若是，豫且何罪？”

shuì yuàn zhèng jiàn  
《说苑·正谏》

白话  
翻译



白龙下凡到了清冷之渊，变成一条鱼。一个叫豫且的渔夫射中了他的眼睛，白龙就去向上帝告状。

天帝说：“在你被射中眼睛的那个时候，你是什么形体啊？”白龙回答说：“我下凡到清冷之渊，变成了一条鱼。”天帝说：“鱼本来就是让人射的，如果是这样，豫且有什么罪呢？”



## A Shrewd Judge



The white dragon (whose duty, according to legend, was to bear the king of the gods on its back) descended to the Qingling abyss and turned into a fish. A fisherman Yu Qie shot at it and hit its eye. The white dragon returned to the heavens and complained to the king of the gods.

“At that time what shape were you in?” asked the king.

“I descended to the Qingling abyss,” replied the dragon, “and turned into a fish.”

“A fish is the proper prey of a man,” said the king. “In that case, what crime has Yu Qie committed?”

*Shuiyuan*

xiāo  
梟  
jiāng  
将  
dōng  
东  
xī  
徙

xiāo féng jiū jiū yuē zǐ jiāng ān zhī xiāo yuē  
梟逢鸠。鸠曰：“子将安之？”梟曰：

wǒ jiāng dōng xī jiū yuē hé gù xiǎo yuē xiōng  
“我将东徙。”鸠曰：“何故？”梟曰：“乡

rén jiē wù wǒ míng yǐ gù dōng xī jiū yuē zǐ néng  
人皆恶，我鸣，以故东徙。”鸠曰：“子能

gèng míng kě yǐ bù néng gèng míng dōng xī yóu wù yú zhī  
更鸣可矣；不能更鸣，东徙犹恶于之

shēng  
声。”

shuì yuàn tán cóng  
《说苑·谈丛》

白话  
翻译



猫头鹰碰到斑鸠，斑鸠说：“你要到哪里去？”猫头鹰说：“我要向东方迁徙。”斑鸠问：“为什么？”猫头鹰说：“乡里的人都讨厌我的叫声，所以我要迁徙到东方去。”斑鸠说：“你如果能够改变叫声还可以；如果不能改变叫声，搬到东边去人们仍然会讨厌你的叫声。”



## The Owl Intends to Move



An owl met a pigeon.

“Where are you off to?” asked the pigeon.

“I am moving to the east,” replied the owl.

“Why are you moving?” asked the pigeon.

“The people here detest the sound of my hoots. That’s why I am moving to the east.”

“It would be a good thing if you could change the sound of your voice,” said the pigeon. “If you couldn’t, then when you have moved to the east, the people there will still detest your hooting.”

*Shuiyuan*

zhōu

周

rén

人

bù

不

yù

遇

xī zhōu rén yǒu shì shù bù yù nián lǎo bái shǒu qì  
昔周人有仕数不遇，年老白首，泣

tì yú tú zhě rén huò wèn zhī hé wèi qì hū duì  
涕于涂者。人或问之：“何为泣乎？”对

yuē wú shì shù bù yù zì shāng nián lǎo shī shí shì yǐ  
曰：“吾仕数不遇，自伤年老失时，是以

qì yě rén yuē shì nài hé bù yī yù yě duì yuē  
泣也。”人曰：“仕奈何不一遇也？”对曰：

wú nián shào zhī shí xué wéi wén wén dé chéng jiù shǐ yù  
“吾年少之时学为文，文德成就，始欲

shì huàn rén jūn hào yòng lǎo yòng lǎo zhǔ wáng hòu zhǔ  
仕宦，人君好用老。用老主亡，后主

yòu yòng wǔ wú gēng wéi wǔ wǔ jié shǐ jiù wǔ zhǔ yòu  
又用武，吾更为武，武节始就，武主又

wáng shào zhǔ shǐ lì hào yòng shào nián wú nián yòu lǎo  
亡。少主始立，好用少年，吾年又老；

shì yǐ wèi cháng yī yù shì huàn yǒu shí bù kě qiú yě  
是以未尝一遇。”仕宦有时，不可求也。

lùn héng féng yù piān

《论衡·逢遇篇》



## The Man Who Never Got a Break



Long ago in the Zhou region (around present day Loyang city) was a man who, after repeated attempts, failed to start a career in the government. In his old age, covered with white hair, he wept by the side of the road.

“Why are you weeping?” he was asked.

“I have tried many times to obtain an official post,” he answered, “but it was all in vain. Now I am old and can have no more opportunities. That is why I am weeping.”

“How come you never had a chance of getting a good official post?”

“In my youth,” replied the old man, “I studied to be a man of letters. When I became well-versed in literature and the arts and was ready to embark on a career in the civil service, the king preferred to employ older men. After the death of this king, his successor valued martial arts. Accordingly I turned from the pursuit of literature to applying myself to martial arts. When I became fairly accomplished in this field, the king died. The young king who came to the throne liked to have young men in his service. But by that time, I was already an old man. That is why I never had a chance of making good.”



白话  
翻译



从前周国有个人多次求官但是总当不上，年纪大了头发白了，在大路上哭泣。有的人就问他：“为什么哭啊？”回答说：“我几次求官都不被看中，自己感伤年纪大了失去了机会，是为这个而哭。”人家问道：“求官怎么就一次都没得到机会呢？”回答说：“我少年的时候，学的是文，道德文章学好了，准备去当官，国王喜欢用年老的人。用老人的国王死了，后来的国王又用武将。等我兵法武功学好了，用武将的国王又死了。少年的国王刚刚登基，喜欢用年轻人，我又老了，就这样没求成一次官。”

做官是要靠时机的，不可以强求啊！



A career in government service depends on the right opportunities. It is not something that is within everyone's grasp, however hard one tries.

*Lunheng*

qū  
曲  
tū  
突  
xǐ  
徙  
xīn  
薪

kè yǒu guò zhǔ rén zhě jiàn qí zào zhí tū bàng yǒu jī  
客有过主人者，见其灶直突，傍有积  
xīn kè wèi zhǔ rén gēng wéi qū tū yuǎn xǐ qí xīn bù  
薪，客谓主人，“更为曲突，远徙其薪，不  
zhě qiě yǒu huǒ huàn zhǔ rén hēi rán bù yīng é ér jiā guǒ  
者且有火患。”主人嘿然不应。俄而家果  
shī huǒ lín lí gòng jiù zhī xìng ér dé xī yú shì shā niú  
失火，邻里共救之，幸而得息。于是杀牛  
zhì jiǔ xiè qí lín rén zhuó làn zhě zài yú shàng háng yú  
置酒，谢其邻人，灼烂者在于上行，余  
gè yǐ gōng cì zuò ér bù lù yán qū tū zhě rén wèi zhǔ rén  
各以功次坐，而不录言曲突者。人谓主人  
yuē xiāng shǐ tīng kè zhī yán bù fèi niú jiǔ zhōng wú huǒ  
曰：“乡使听客之言，不费牛酒，终亡火  
huàn jīn lùn gōng ér qǐng bīn qū tū xǐ xīn wú ēn zé tóu  
患。今论功而请宾，曲突徙薪亡恩泽，头  
làn é wèi shàng kè yē zhǔ rén nǎi wù ér qǐng zhī  
烂额为上客耶？”主人乃悟而请之。

hàn shū huò guāng zhuàn  
《汉书·霍光传》



## Prevention and Cure



A man visited his friend's house and saw that his kitchen range had a very straight chimney by the side of which was stacked a lot of firewood.

The visitor said to his host, "You ought to make the chimney crooked and move the firewood far away from it, or else you will easily have a fire on your hands."

His host made no answer. Not long afterwards a fire really broke out, with the help of his neighbours he was fortunate enough to put out the fire. Therefore, he killed his calf and prepared a feast to express his gratitude to his neighbours. Those who were scorched by the flames were given the places of honour and the rest were seated according to the amount of service they rendered. But the man who suggested changing the chimney and removing the firewood was not invited.

One of the guests said to the host, "If you had listened to your friend, you would not have had a fire and there would be no need to kill the calf and prepare a feast. Now when you invite your guests because of what they did for you, are you going to pass over the one who advised you to take precautions and merely honour those who were hurt by the



白话  
翻译



有一个过访主人的客人，看到主人家炉灶的烟囱是直的，旁边还堆积着柴草，便对主人说：“把烟囱改为拐弯的，使柴草远离烟囱，不然的话将会发生火灾。”主人沉默不答应。不久，家里果然失火，邻居们一同来救火，幸好把火扑灭了。于是，主人杀牛置办酒席，答谢邻人。被火烧伤的人安排在上席，其余的按照功劳依次排定座位，却不邀请提出“把烟囱改为拐弯”建议的客人。有人对主人说：“当初如果听了那位客人的话，也不用破费摆设酒席，始终也不会有火患。现在评论功劳，邀请宾客，为什么提‘曲突徙薪’建议的人没有受到答谢，而被烧伤的人却成了上客呢？”主人这才醒悟去邀请那位客人。



flames?”

The host realized his oversight and invited his friend.

*Hanshu* (History of the Former Han Dynasty)

[ G e n e r a l I n f o r m a t i o n ]

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