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中国文字 中国故事

Chinese Stories in Chinese Characters

第二册



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牛

COW

对牛弹琴

Play the Lute before a Cow
(Cast Pearls before a Swine)

从前，有个大音乐家叫公明仪，他弹得一手好琴，但时常会做些傻事。

Once upon a time, there was a musician by the name of Gongming Yi, who was good at playing the lute, but often did foolish things.



有一天，他在郊外散步，看到一头牛在吃草，便产生了为牛弹奏一曲的想法。

When he saw a cow grazing in the fields while he was roaming in the suburbs one day, he hit upon the idea of playing the lute for it.





他从家里取来琴，对着牛弹起自己最拿手的曲子。琴声很动听，他自己都陶醉了。

He fetched the lute from his home and played his favorite tune for it. The tune was so sweet that he was intoxicated in it.





可是那头牛却根本不理睬，只顾低头吃草，最后竟摆摆尾巴走掉了。

However, the cow did nothing but grazing in the fields and went away by wagging its tail.



公明仪很失望。旁边的农夫笑着告诉他，牛不理睬是因为牛根本听不懂这种高雅的曲调。

Gongming Yi was greatly disappointed. A farmer by his side told him that the cow was unable to appreciate the elegant music.



“牛”字字源

Etymology of the Chinese Character “牛”



“牛”字是一个象形字。早期图画文字的字形，显然是一个从正面看的牛头，特点是它那向上弯曲的粗长的双角。后来字体变化很大，甚至“丢失”了一只角，又似乎“长出”了一条尾巴。

“牛” is a pictograph. Its earliest hieroglyph looks like an ox-head from the front with two crooked and thick horns. The shape of the character alters to a great extent so that one horn is missing and a tail is added.



羊

Sheep

苏武牧羊

Su Wu Tended the Sheep

西汉的时候，西汉与匈奴常年战争，汉武帝派苏武到匈奴去讲和。

In the West Han Dynasty, Su Wu was dispatched on a mission to the Huns.



但是，匈奴扣留了苏武，将他关在地窖里，不给吃不给喝，苏武也不肯投降。

The Huns detained Su Wu and imprisoned him in a cell, without providing him with food or drink. However, Su Wu refused to surrender.



单(chán)于(匈奴的君主)见苏武不肯屈服,很生气,他罚苏武去北海放羊,还说只有等公羊生了小羊,才会放他回去。

The Chan Yu (the sovereign of the Huns) was so angry with Su Wu's obstinacy that he sent him tending the sheep in the North Sea and said that he would release him if only the goat gave birth to a lamb.





苏武一个人在北海和羊群做伴，渴了吃雪，饿了挖草根，就这样过了十九年。

Staying by himself for nineteen years, Su Wu kept company with the sheep, drinking the snow water when he was thirsty and eating the grassroots when he was hungry.





后来，匈奴和西汉和好了，白发苍苍的苏武终于回到了长安。全城的百姓都出来迎接这个有气节的大丈夫。

When the Huns and the West Han resumed friendship, the grey-headed Su Wu returned to the capital Chang'an and was welcomed by the people of the whole city for his moral integrity.



“羊”字字源

Etymology of the Chinese Character “羊”



“羊”早期图画文字，像一个从正面看的羊头。同“牛”字相比，牛的双角向上弯，而羊角是向下弯的，可见古人观察事物是十分仔细的。不过，它也长了“尾巴”。

The earliest hieroglyph for “羊” looks like a sheep-head from the front. The horns of “牛” turn upward while the horns of “羊” turn downward. The fact shows that the ancient people had sharp observations. Do not mistake the horn for the tail!



鹿

Deer

蕉鹿自欺

Cover the Deer with Palm
Leaves as a Self-deceit

从前，有个郑国人在
郊外砍柴，忽然他看到一
只受了伤的鹿惊慌地逃了
过来。

Once upon a time, a
man from the state of Zheng
saw a wounded deer run-
ning towards him when he
was cutting firewood.

