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Chinese Stories in Chinese Characters

第二册



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中国文字 中国故事

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天

Sky

盘古开天辟地

Pan Gu Divides the Sky and the Earth

传说在很久很久以前，天和地紧紧地合在一起，像个大鸡蛋。盘古就睡在里面。他醒来后，发现周围混沌沌的，什么也看不见，就拿起斧子一劈，天和地就分开了。

At the beginning, the sky and the earth was an entity, just like a big egg, where Pan Gu slept. When he woke up and could see nothing at all, he waved his hatchet and divided the sky and the earth.



盘古怕天地还要合拢,于是用手撑着天空,脚踩着大地。他每天长高一丈,天和地就分开一丈。

Pan Gu was afraid that the sky and the earth would meet again, so he held up the sky and stood on the earth to separate the sky and the earth. He grew ten feet each day while the sky and the earth were ten feet more separated.

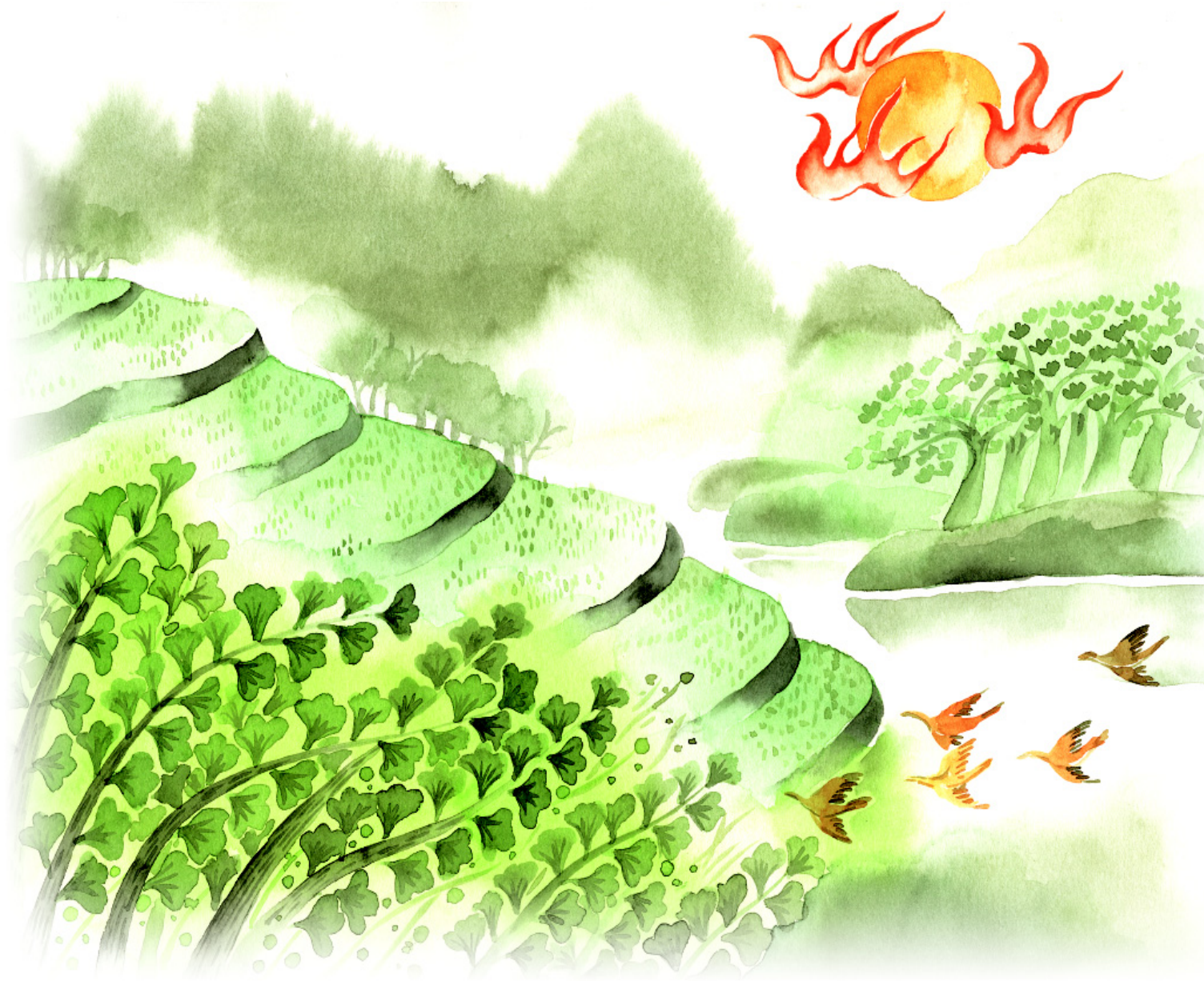




盘古撑了一万八千年，他觉得天和地再也不会合拢了，就笑着倒下死了。

After holding up the sky for 18,000 years, Pan Gu thought that the sky and the earth would not meet again. Therefore, he lay down and died in smiles.





盘古死时，嘴里呼出的气变成了风和云，声音变成了雷，眼睛变成了太阳和月亮，头发和胡须变成了星星。他身体的各部分变成了山川、河流、道路、田地、矿藏、草木。一个多彩的世界诞生了。

When Pan Gu died, his breath became the wind and clouds, his noise became the thunder, his eyes became the sun and the moon, and his hairs and whiskers became the stars, while the parts of his body became the mountains, rivers, roads, fields, minerals, grass and woods. A colourful world was thus born.



“天”字字源

Etymology of the Chinese Character “天”



甲骨文



金文



小篆



隶书



人们头顶的上面是天空，古时候用这样的形态创造出“天”字。金文“天”字的人头保留了圆形，而甲骨文为了刻写的方便，写做方形或一横。后来的各种字体的“天”第一笔都是横画。

As the sky is above the head of the man, the ancient Chinese pictograph “天” was created. The Chinese character of “天” has a semi-circular shape at the top in the inscription on the bronze-ware and a horizontal line in the inscription on the bones or tortoise shell, to be followed in other scripts.





人

Man

杞人忧天

The Man in the State of Qi Is
Worried that the Sky Might
Collapse

从前，杞国有个人，老是望着天空胡思乱想：“天要是掉下来怎么办？”他越想越害怕。

Once upon a time, a man in the State of Qi gave way to foolish fancies when he gazes at the sky. “What will happen if the sky collapses?” The more he thought, the more he was in fear.





别人劝他说：“天只是些气体，怎么会掉下来呢？”他摇摇头。

He only shook his head when people told him that there was only air in the sky and would not collapse.



接着他又开始担心太阳、月亮和星星会不会掉下来。别人又劝他说：“这些即使掉下来也不会伤人。”他也不大相信。没过几天，这个人又开始为其他一些不必要的事情担心起来。

He was also worried that the sun, the moon and stars might fall down. He would not believe when people told him that they would not hurt anyone even if they should fall down. A few days later, the man was worried about some other trifles.



“人”字字源

Etymology of the Chinese Character “人”



甲骨文

金文

小篆

隶书



不要从现在的字形误以为“人”字的下方是两条腿，其实那只是汉字长期发展演变的结果，从甲骨文和金文的字形，可以清楚地看出“人”字原来像一个侧立的人形，他还伸出了一只手，因为能用手取东西是人类的一个特点。

Do not mistake the lower part of the character of “人” as two human legs. From the inscriptions on the tortoise shell and the bronze-ware, we can see the side view of a man with one hand stretching forward. To fetch things with hands is a distinctive feature of the human beings.





大

Big

夜郎自大

The Ludicrous Conceit of the People in Yelang

夜郎是个很小的国家，领土面积相当于汉朝的一个县，可是比它周围的邻国要大得多。夜郎国的国王和百姓都认为自己的国家是世界上最大的，山也是世界上最高的。

Yelang was a very small state, the size of a county in the Han Dynasty but much bigger than its neighbouring states. The king and the citizens in Yelang thought that their state was the largest in the world and that their mountains were the highest in the world.



有一次，汉朝的使者来到夜郎。夜郎国王问使者：“汉朝和我国比，哪个大？”

When a messenger from the Han Dynasty came to Yelang, the king asked him, “Which state is bigger, Han or Yelang?”





使者听了很吃惊，他觉得夜郎国国王太无知了，竟然会拿小小的夜郎和汉朝来比。

The messenger was amazed at the ignorance of the king, who should compare the small Yelang with the big Han.



“大”字字源

Etymology of the Chinese Character “大”



在古汉字中，“大”字像一个从正面看的直立的人形。古代的人们把人类看作是“万物之灵”，是伟大的，所以用人形来表示“大”的意思。古文里“大”和“太”常通用；后来才分为两个字。

The ancient Chinese character of “大” looks like an erect man from the front. The ancient people thought that human beings are great, they take the

human shape to denote “big” or “great”. The ancient inscriptions of “大” and “太” were interchangeable, only to be distinguished in later times.

