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外国神话与传说



中级英语读物丛书

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Foreign Myths and Legends

外国神话与传说

芳 芳 选注

江苏人民出版社

中级英语读物丛书

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编 者 的 话

为了帮助高中学生以及具有同等英语程度的读者较快地学好英语，我们特编辑了这套中级英语读物丛书，由江苏人民出版社分辑出版。丛书包括：《世界优秀故事选》、《英语幽默及语言游戏》、《英美名诗选》、《英语现代散文选》、《国外英语课文选》、《外国寓言童话选》、《外国神话与传说》、《英语科普小品选》以及《英语国家概况》等。选材不求系统全面，主要是向读者提供加注释的英语读物，作为学习英语的辅助材料。

本辑《外国神话与传说》编选了非洲、西德以及南太平洋群岛的神话故事十七篇。故事短小生动，充满了异国风光和生活气息。在这些动人的故事中，歌颂了真诚、勇敢、勤劳、正直等品质，鞭挞了贪婪、嫉妒、背信弃义等行为。现实的事物糅合着复杂的幻想和美丽的虚构，体现了人民的美好情感，给读者以美的艺术享受。入选故事均出自当代英美作者的译笔，语言规范，简洁流畅，比较口语化，是语言学习的好材料。为了便于读者了解作品内容，我们对作品中出现的难句及某些语言现象加了必要的注释，并就内容作简要介绍。

由于水平有限，本书注释中可能有欠妥或错讹之处，希望读者批评指正。

一九八二年八月

CONTENTS

目 录

1. Uwungelema
魔树 1
2. The Giant Bird
大鹏 11
3. The Seven Jealous Maidens
嫉妒的七少女 19
4. The Sky Father and the Earth Mother
天父与地母 31
5. The Farmer and the Tree-Fairies
农夫和树仙 36
6. Young Spider in the Sky
天国的小蜘蛛 46
7. Mwalyaka and the Crow
乌鸦与姑娘姆瓦里亚卡 53
8. Ingratitude Is the Way of the World
忘恩负义，世之常道 62
9. The Princess Elephant's Tail
象公主的尾巴 73

10. The Hunter	
猎人	89
11. The White Wolf	
白狼	95
12. The Lost Ring	
遗失的戒指	104
13. Spider, the Crafty One	
狡猾的蜘蛛	114
14. The Boy Who Came from the Sun Egg	
太阳蛋孵出的孩子	121
15. Tortoise and Leopard Build a House	
乌龟和豹比赛盖房子	132
16. The Adventures of Sudika Mbambi	
姆巴比历险记	142
17. The Tale of Caliph Stork	
鹤鸟王的故事	168

Uwungelema

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a famine in Africa¹ and all the animals were very hungry.

Now² there was a magic tree in the forest, and the animals knew that it would give them fruit to eat if they could only stand before it and call out its name. The trouble was that none of them, not even the oldest of the animals, could remember what the name was.

One evening the thin, hungry creatures gathered together round the tree, and discussed what could be done. At last an old lion stepped forward and said:

'My grandfather used to tell me³ that only the Mountain Spirit⁴ knew the name of this tree. Could not one of the younger and stronger animals among us climb up the mountain to ask the name from the Spirit? Then perhaps we shall not die of starvation after all.'⁵

All the animals started talking at once,⁶ but at last it was decided that the hare, being such a swift runner,⁷ should go on the journey to the Mountain Spirit to ask him the name of the tree.

Early next morning he set off,⁸ leaving the forest be-

hind him and hurrying along the little mountain path towards the summit.⁹ At length he came face to face with the great Mountain Spirit,¹⁰ and bowing low, the hare said, 'I have come to ask you the name of the magic tree, O spirit, for all my friends are dying of hunger.'

'The name is Uwungelema,' replied the Spirit. 'Go back to the forest quickly, before you forget it.'¹¹

'Thank you,' replied the hare as he turned and raced for all he was worth down the mountainside.¹²

Without stopping to look either right or left,¹³ he reached the bottom of the mountain and took the path which led to the forest, where he knew all his friends were waiting anxiously for his return.

Crash! He ran straight into a huge ant-hill which knocked all the breath from his body.¹⁴ When he had recovered he walked unsteadily towards the magic tree and the expectant animals.

'What is it? What is it? What is the name?' they all cried.

'It is Uwun-uwun-uwun—. I've forgotten,' gasped the poor hare.

The animals were furious, and pushing the hare aside they held another meeting and this time chose the buffalo to fetch the name from the Great Spirit.

Off he went, crashing his way up the mountain path,¹⁵ until he reached the summit. There stood the Mountain

Spirit, and the buffalo said: 'Hare has forgotten the name of the magic tree. Tell me, O Spirit, that I may return to the forest and save my friends from starvation.'

'The name is Uwungelema,' replied the Spirit. 'Go back to your friends quickly before you forget it.'

The buffalo was very pleased that he had been told the name and hurried down the mountain-side, his feet often slipping on the loose stones.¹⁶ When he reached the bottom of the mountain, he found the little path that led to the forest, and ran joyfully along it.

Crash! He had not been looking where he was going, so pleased was he at the thought of getting food from the magic tree.¹⁷ He too had bumped into the huge ant-hill at the edge of the forest. For several moments the buffalo stood dazed, then he slowly lumbered round the ant-hill towards the place where he had left his friends.

As soon as they saw him they rushed towards him saying: 'The name! The name! What is it, buffalo?'

The buffalo tried hard to remember. 'It's Uwun-uwun-uwun' he stammered, but he could not finish the word. The blow from the ant-hill had put it right out of his head.¹⁸

The other animals were very angry indeed. 'We shall all die of hunger soon if we cannot get fruit from this tree,' they said. 'Who can we send now?'

This time the lion was chosen for they thought that

surely the king of the beasts could be trusted to bring back the name.

He followed the path up the mountain with a rolling, easy gait¹⁹ until he too came face to face with the Mountain Spirit.

'O Great Spirit,' said the lion humbly. 'Both the hare and the buffalo have forgotten the name of the magic tree. Will you tell it to me so that I may save my friends from death?'

'The name is Uwungelema,' said the Spirit. 'Hurry back to the other animals before you forget it.'

Stopping only to say thank you,²⁰ the lion turned and rushed away down the mountain-side. He was determined to get back before dark, for already he could see the sun sinking lower and lower behind the forest trees.

As he reached the path that led into the forest and the magic tree, he said to himself: 'No other animal could have run so swiftly. I shall be back before the sun sets.'

Crash! The lion had been so taken up with watching the sun²¹ that he had run straight into the ant-hill. And of course the same thing happened to him that had happened to the hare and the buffalo.²² He could not remember the magic name.

'Uwun-uwun-uwun—,' he said as he stood before the other animals, who jumped and stamped and bellowed and growled at the poor lion, while he tried in vain to

remember the word.²³

Then a small tortoise which had been standing on the edge of the crowd, lifted its head and said: 'I will go to the Mountain Spirit. As soon as²⁴ the sun rises I will climb the mountain and bring the magic word back to you.'

The animals stopped being angry and began to laugh. 'What?' they said. 'Do you think that you can remember the word when much larger animals than you have forgotten it?'

'Wait until tomorrow,' replied the tortoise, 'and then you will see.'

At last the other animals, who by now were so hungry and weak that they were only too willing for someone else to make the journey,²⁵ agreed to let the tortoise go.

So at the first glimmer of daylight the tortoise began his slow climb upwards. On and on he went, hour after hour, not reaching the Mountain Spirit until midday.²⁶

'Another animal?' said the Spirit. 'Surely the lion has not forgotten the magic word too?'

'Yes,' said the tortoise. 'He has forgotten as the buffalo and the hare also forgot.'

'Well, listen carefully,' said the Mountain Spirit, 'for I shall not tell anyone else this name. It is Uwungelema.'

'Thank you,' said the tortoise as he turned to begin his long, slow descent.

'Uwungelema,' said the tortoise as he left the top of

the mountain, and 'Uwungelema,' he said, when he had gone a little farther down.

Presently the rocky ground changed to sandy soil with tufts of dried-up grass upon it, and 'Uwungelema', said the tortoise without stopping a moment.

When he reached the lowest parts of the mountain, where there were trees brown and shrivelled through lack of rain,²⁷ he said again, 'Uwungelema', and as he came to the little path which led to the forest he circled slowly round the giant ant-hill and murmured, 'Uwungelema', to himself.

It was almost dark when he reached the other animals in the forest and at first²⁸ they did not notice him coming towards them.

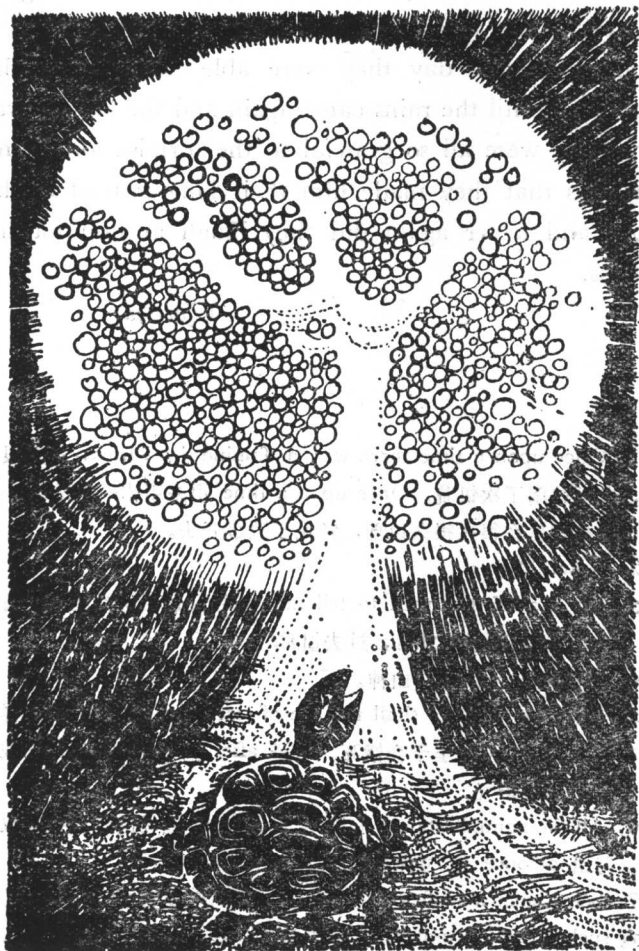
Then the deer saw him and shouted: 'Tortoise! Here's tortoise! Come and tell us the magic word.'

All the animals rushed towards him, but the tortoise plodded steadily onwards, until he stood at the foot of the magic tree.

'Uwungelema!' he said slowly and distinctly.

Then, like rain, delicious juicy fruit began to drop from the tree. The hungry animals rushed upon it and ate it ravenously until they could eat no more.²⁹ Tortoise too managed to eat some, and that night for the first time for many weeks the animals went to sleep with full stomachs.

in the morning the sun's rays
and the wind was the only thing
that was left of the night.



In the morning, the tortoise stood beneath the tree again and called out, 'Uwungelema', and once again hundreds of ripe fruits fell about the animals' feet.

And now, each day they were able to eat from the magic tree, until the rains came again and the famine was over. They were all so grateful to the tortoise for saving their lives that they made him their king instead of the lion,⁸⁰ and never again did they laugh at him for his slowness.

(Zambia)

【注 释】

1. Once upon a time there was a famine in Africa: 很久很久以前, 非洲曾闹了次饥荒。Once upon a time 用来引出一个故事, 笼统地讲故事发生在很久很久以前, 常见于故事开头。

2. Now: 当时。

3. My grandfather used to tell me: 我祖父过去常常在我面前说起。used to 表示“过去常常, 过去惯常”。

4. Mountain Spirit: 山神。

5. Then perhaps we shall not die of starvation after all: 那样的话, 我们大家也许还不至于会饿死。习语 after all 常用于否定句或疑问句中, 以加强语气。

6. All the animals started talking at once: 在场的动物顿时议论纷纷。习语 at once 作“立刻”解。

7. being such a swift runner: 作为一个跑步能手。分词短语“being such a swift runner”作原因状语, 修饰谓语动词, 在意义上相当于表示原因的状语从句: since he was such a swift runner.

8. set off: 作“动身, 出发”解。

9. summit: 山顶。

10. At length he came face to face with the great Mountain Spirit: 他终于来到巍峨的山神面前。习语 at length 意为“终于”。

11. Go back to the forest quickly, before you forget it: 趁你还没忘记, 赶快回到森林里去。

12. raced for all he was worth down the mountainside: 拼命地奔下山去。for all he was worth 作“拼命地, 尽力地”解。

13. Without stopping to look either right or left: 顾不得停下来左顾右盼。

14. Crash! He ran straight into a huge ant-hill which knocked all the breath from his body: 砰! 他一头撞在一座高大的蚁冢上, 被撞得晕头转向。

15. Off he went, crashing his way up the mountain path: 野牛立刻出发, 四蹄得得地沿着山路向上奔去。off he went = he went off, 为表达生动, 故将副词提前。he 指代上文的 buffalo。

16. his feet often slipping on the loose stones: 他不时地踩在松动的石块上而失足。his feet often slipping on the loose stones 为独立结构, 作表示伴随情况的状语。

17. so pleased was he at the thought of getting food from the magic tree: 一想到能从魔树那儿得到食物, 他得意忘形了。此句系倒装句, 目的是为了表达生动、使句子平衡并使之与上文衔接紧密。

18. The blow from the ant-hill had put it right out of his head: 经往蚁冢上这么一撞, 他把魔树的名字给忘了个精光。it 指代 the name of the magic tree.

19. with a rolling, easy gait: 摇摆、从容的步态。

20. Stopping only to say thank you: 只是停下来道了声谢。

21. The lion had been so taken up with watching the sun: 狮子一门心思只顾着望太阳。短语动词“take up”意为“占去(注意力)”。

22. of course the same thing... to the hare and the buffalo: 毫无疑问, 发生在野兔和野牛身上的事情, 同样发生在狮子他身上。

23. he tried in vain to remember the word: 他极力想记起魔树的名字, 但也枉然。习语 in vain, 作“徒然地, 枉然地”解。

24. As soon as: —……就……

25. by now were so hungry... to make the journey: 此刻, 他们一个个饥肠辘辘、心神疲惫, 巴不得有人去走一趟呢。短语 by now, 意为“此刻, 现在”。

26. On and on he went... until midday: 他爬呀, 不停地爬, 爬了一个又一个小时, 结果直到正午时分才爬到山神跟前。

27. there were trees brown and shrivelled through lack of rain: 树木因缺水而变焦枯萎了。介词 “through” 作“由于、因为”解。名词短语 “lack of” 意为“短缺”。

28. at first: 起先。

29. The hungry animals... until they could eat no more: 饥饿的野兽们一齐扑向果子, 狼吞虎咽地吃了起来, 直至再也吃不下为止。

30. they made him their king instead of the lion: 他们拥戴乌龟取代狮子为林中之王。

【内容提要】

本文描写野兔、野牛、狮子和乌龟在向山神求得魔树的名字的过程中, 表现了各自不同的态度和表现。故事嘲讽了野兔的行为莽撞, 野牛的过早乐观和狮子的骄傲, 赞扬了乌龟的任劳任怨、脚踏实地、沉着冷静的优良品质。

The Giant Bird

‘WHAT ARE YOU going to do today?’ Tutu-Wathiwa-thi asked her husband. ‘You have been working in the plantation for a long time. You must be tired.’

Okova smiled at his wife. ‘Work that I do for you makes me as happy as other men when they are at play,’¹ he said. ‘But it is true that I am tired of working in the garden. Perhaps I will go to the reef. Would you like to come with me?’

She clapped her hands. ‘Yes, I’m as tired of washing and cooking as you are of weeding. It would be lovely to come with you. I’ll bring cooked food and fruit and when the sun is high we’ll eat and drink the milk from the coconuts that I’ll bring in my bag.’

They had a busy time on the reef.² Tutu gathered shellfish³ from the quiet pools on the landward side, while Okova went close to the channel where the ocean waves surged past like sea monsters. He knew a place where the biggest fish swam in the deep water. While the waves rose high above his head he held fast to the coral.⁴ When