

中国成语故事

The Stories Behind Common Chinese Idioms

# Stirring Deeds

## 奋发篇



Morning Glory Publishers, Beijing

*Published by*

Morning Glory Publishers

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

*Distributed by*

China International Book Trading Corporation

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

P. O. Box 399, Beijing, China

ISBN 7-5054-0502-0/J•0230

01580

88-EC-501P

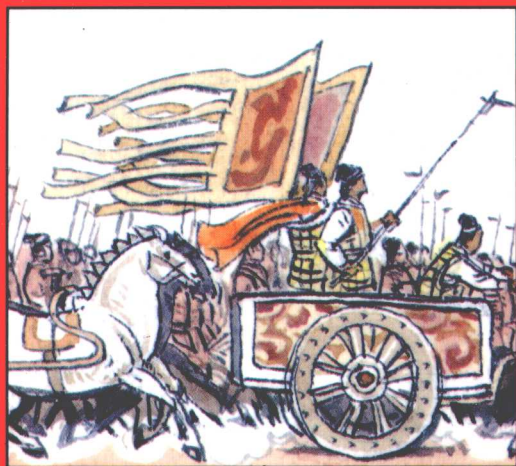
*Printed in the People's Republic of China*



## Introduction

The Chinese language has a very long history, and is rich in colorful idioms, which can be used to enhance the language's powers of expression enormously.

Here we present the 24 most common Chinese idioms in four categories: Stirring Deeds, Virtuous Conduct, Wisdom and Legends. Each idiom has a brief explanation, followed by the story, in Chinese and English, of how it arose. The profuse illustrations will help readers to understand the historical background to the idioms.



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翻译:英文部

ISBN 7-5054-0502-0



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## 内 容 简 介

汉语历史悠久,丰富多彩。在语言表达中,恰当地运用成语可以使语言精炼,富有感染力。

本画册选出常用 24 则成语进行分类:奋发、美德、机智、传奇共四篇。每个成语的“解释”部分,说明成语的意义和用法。“故事”部分介绍了成语的来源和出处,并配以插图,文图对照,能加深读者对成语含义的理解,以便更准确地加以应用。

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(英汉文版)

编文:姜成安 绘画:张 有

出版者:朝华出版社

中国北京车公庄西路 35 号 邮政编码:100044

印刷者:北京外文印刷厂

发行者:中国国际图书贸易总公司

中国北京车公庄西路 35 号

北京邮政信箱第 399 号 邮政编码:100044

2003 年第一版

ISBN 7-5054-0502-0/J · 0230

01580

88-EC-501P

中华人民共和国印制



## Stirring Deeds

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# Destroying the Cooking Pots and Boats

## Explanation:

Equivalent to "burning one's bridges" or "crossing the Rubicon."

## Story:

Xiang Yu was a sturdy youth who devoted himself to martial training from his earliest days. Growing up, he followed his uncle to participate in the

## 破釜沉舟

### 解释:

釜是锅，舟是船。比喻下最大的决心，一拼到底。

### 故事:

项羽是楚国人，少年习武，能将百斤鼎高举过头。







uprising that toppled the Qin Dynasty.

Once, when the Qin army occupied the State of Zhao, the fugitive king of Zhao appealed to the State of Chu for help.

长大后跟随叔父  
参加推翻秦朝的起义。

有一次，秦军攻下了赵国，赵王逃到巨鹿，急忙派人向楚国求援。







The king of Chu dispatched Xiang Yu to rescue Zhao with 200,000 troops. When the troops arrived at a river which separated them from the enemy by only a short distance Xiang Yu personally led the main body across. He then ordered each man to carry no more than three days' rations and

to destroy all the cooking pots and the ferryboats. He then addressed his troops, "Now that we no longer have boats, we have no alternative but to advance. Also, with only three days' rations and without a cooking pot, we are forced to defeat the enemy within three days."

楚王派项羽带领二十万楚军前去救赵。项羽先派英、蒲两位大将率两万人做先锋，然后，自己率主力渡河。

渡过了河，项羽命令将士，每人带

三天的干粮，把军队里的饭锅全砸了，把渡河的船只全凿沉了。他对将士说：“我们‘破釜沉舟’，有进无退，三天之内，一定要打退秦军！否则只有饿死在这里！”

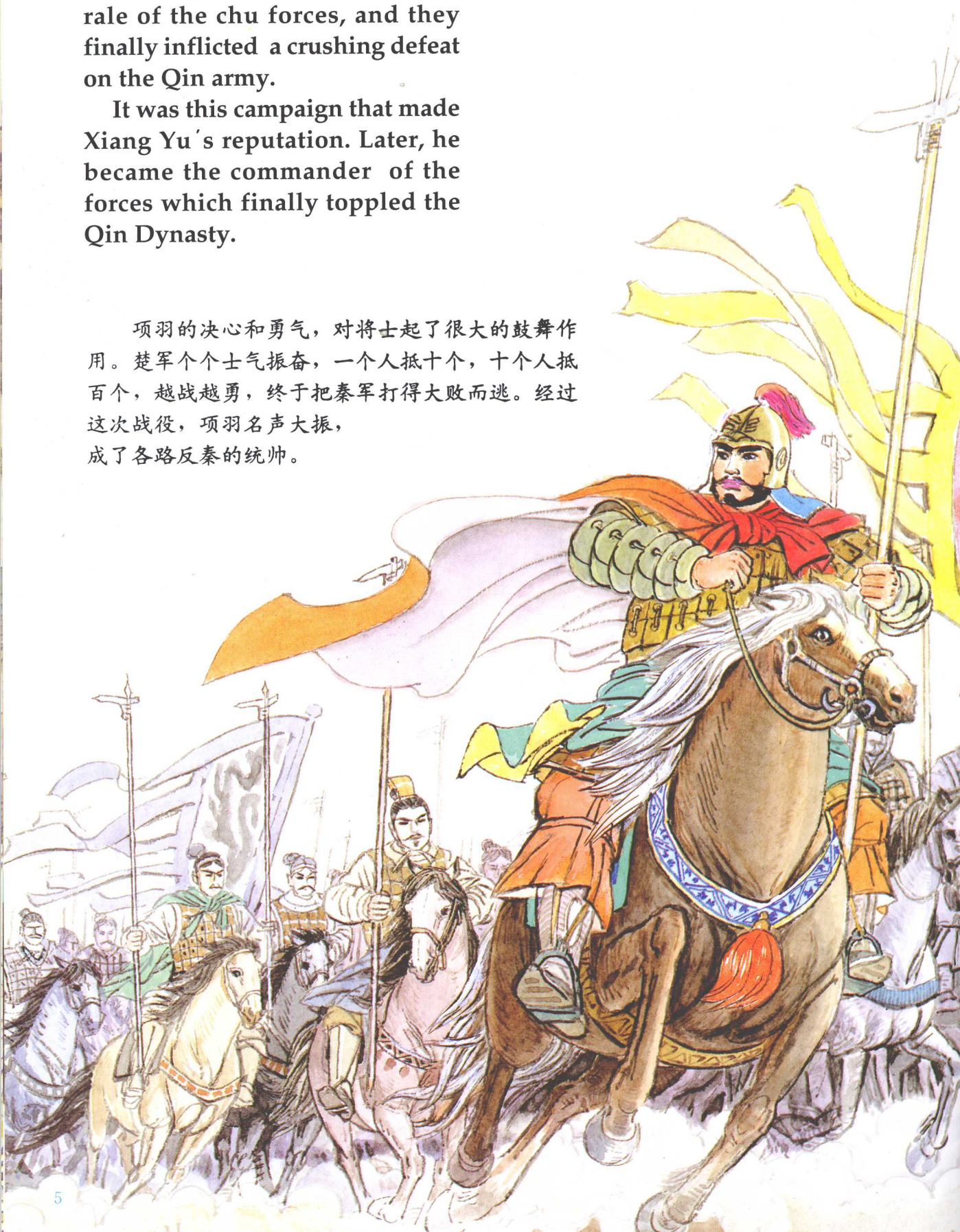




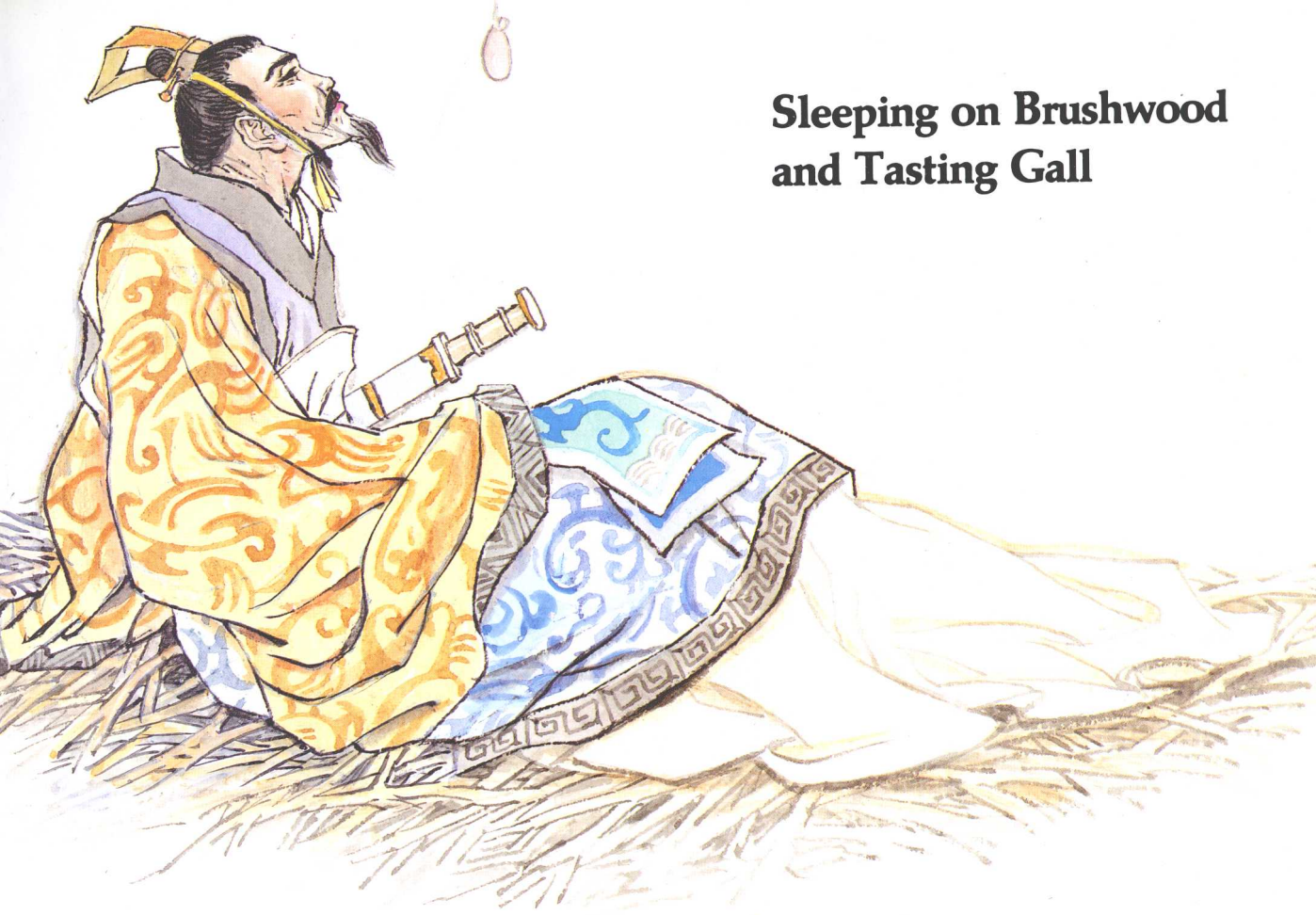
This speech stiffened the morale of the chu forces, and they finally inflicted a crushing defeat on the Qin army.

It was this campaign that made Xiang Yu's reputation. Later, he became the commander of the forces which finally toppled the Qin Dynasty.

项羽的决心和勇气，对将士起了很大的鼓舞作用。楚军个个士气振奋，一个人抵十个，十个人抵百个，越战越勇，终于把秦军打得大败而逃。经过这次战役，项羽名声大振，成了各路反秦的统帅。







## Sleeping on Brushwood and Tasting Gall

### Explanation:

Nursing a grievance and biding one's time for vengeance.

### 卧薪尝胆

#### 解释:

薪：柴草。形容刻苦自励，发奋图强。

#### 故事:

春秋末期，越王勾践每天睡在柴草上，临睡前，用舌头舔舔鹿胆的苦味，以此来提醒自己过往苦日子，要发奋图强，报仇复国。

### Story:

Goujian, king of the state of Yue during the Spring and Autumn Period, was defeated in battle and taken captive by Fu Chai, king of the State of Wu. Fu Chai forced his royal prisoner to labor as a groom.

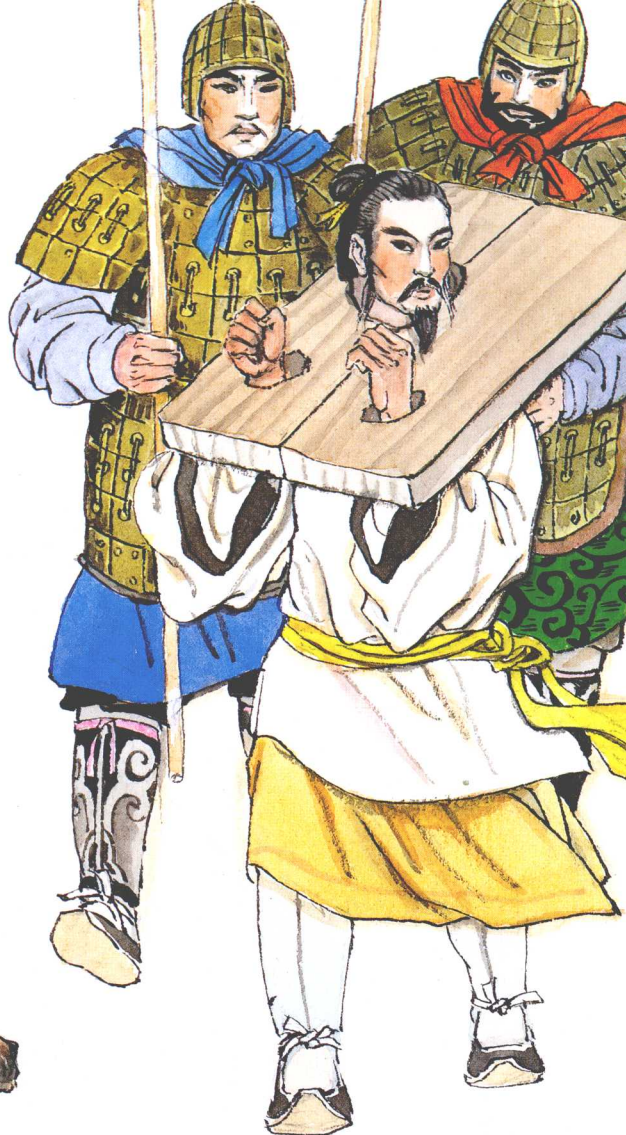




Goujian endured drudgery and humiliation with apparent resignation, performing his duties well and showing the utmost devotion to his master. In reality, he was determined to restore his own state and was simply biding his time.

Fu Chai, convinced that Goujian had accepted his overlordship and could be used as a faithful vassal of Wu, restored him to the throne of Yue.

Returning to his own country, Goujian swore to make Yue strong enough to avenge his humiliation.



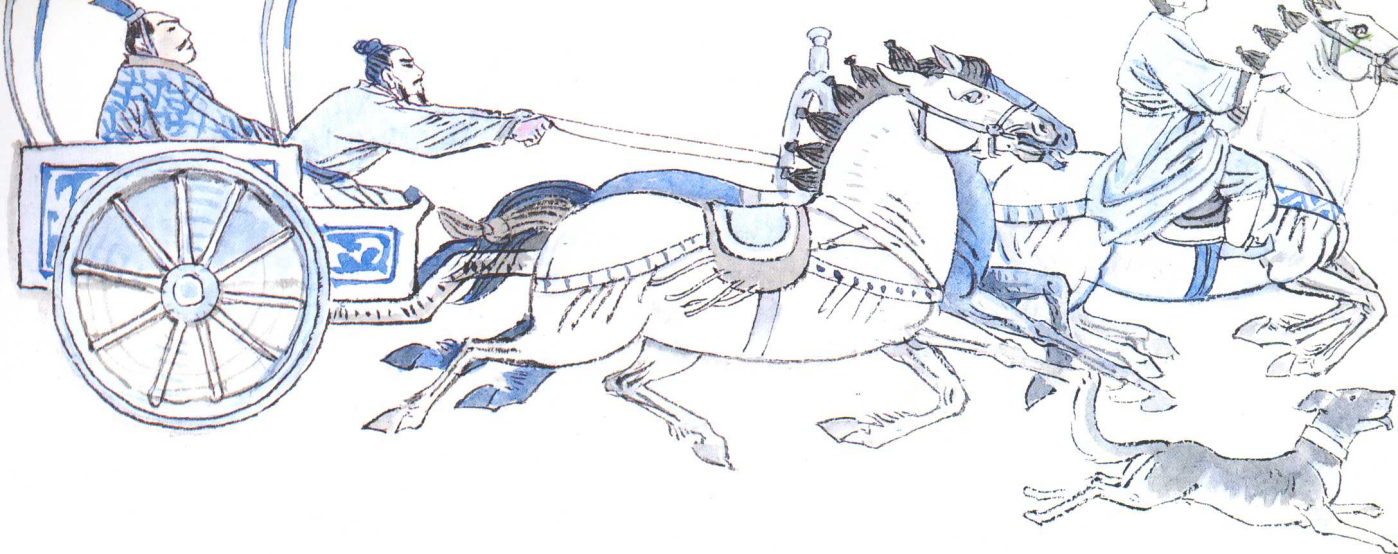
原来吴王夫差发兵打败了越国，越王勾践被捉来吴国当了马夫，日夜侍候马匹。

对于一个君王来说，这实在是非常难堪的。但是勾践暗下决心，一定要恢复自己的国家，所以他没有露出丝毫的抗拒神态，老老实实养马。

勾践还装出对夫差忠心耿耿的样子。





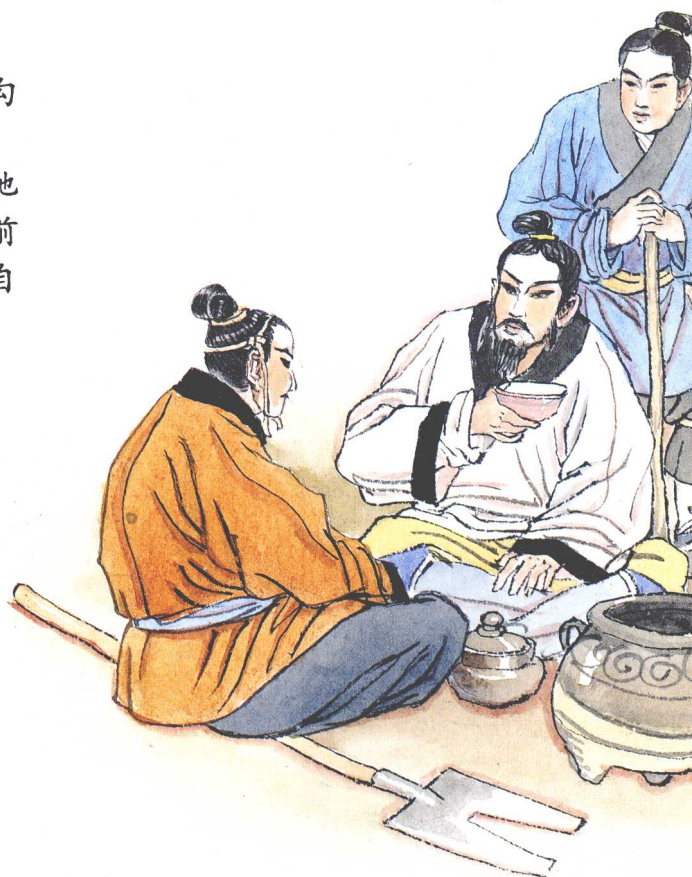


In person he helped the common people improve their farming methods, and soon prosperity reigned throughout the land. However, fearing that comfort might sap his determination, every night he slept

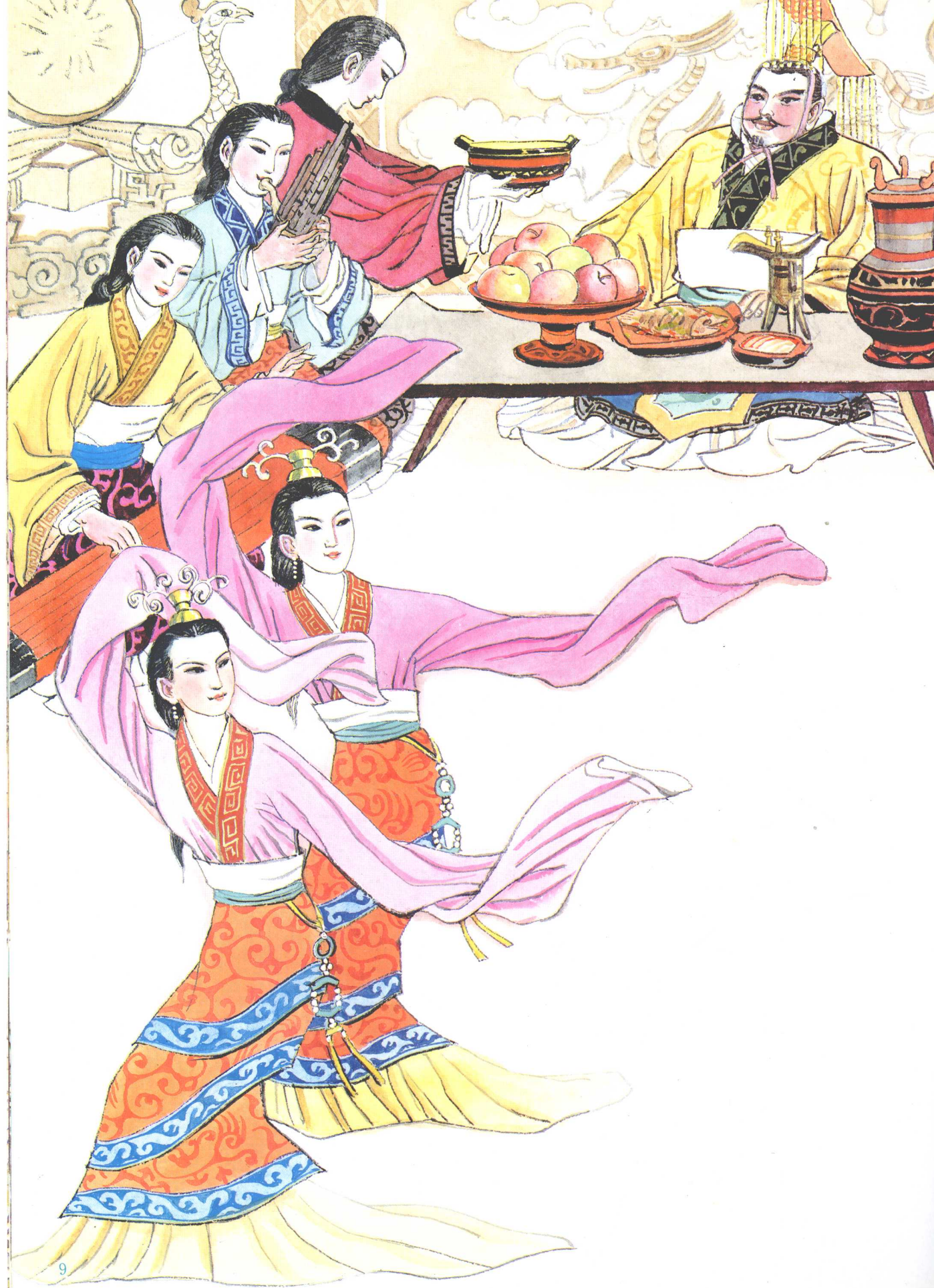
on a pile of brushwood and every morning sucked on a deer's gallbladder to keep alive his resentment and bitterness. He also stationed a servant at the door of his palace,

用心替他驾驭马车，态度谦卑。夫差认为勾践真心归顺了，就放他回国。

勾践回国后，决心要使越国富强起来。他亲自参加耕种，和百姓同甘共苦，他怕眼前的安逸消磨了志气，就“卧薪尝胆”，还常自问：“你忘了在吴国的耻辱吗？”









whose duty was to cry, every time the king entered or left: "Goujian, have you forgotten the disgrace inflicted on you by Wu?"

In the meantime, in order to distract Fu Chai's attention from affairs of state and bring about the degeneration of Wu, Goujian presented the beauty Xishi to Fu Chai.

the ploy worked, and, as Fu Chai sank ever deeper into debauchery his state went to rack and ruin. Finally, after 20 years' preparation Guojian decided that the time had come for vengeance, and in a lightning swoop he destroyed the State of Wu. Fu Chai was ashamed of himself and cut his own throat.

勾践又给吴王送去美女西施。吴王夫差就更加只顾吃喝玩乐，无心国政，弄得国家日渐衰弱。

经过二十年的充分准备，勾践看时机已经成熟，就在吴国没有防备的情况下，领兵把吴国打得大败。夫差感到很羞愧，举剑自刎而死。





## Stunning the World with a Single Cry

### *Explanation:*

A sudden rise from obscurity to prominence.

### 一鸣惊人

#### 解释:

比喻平时表现并不突出的人，一下子干出了惊人的成绩。





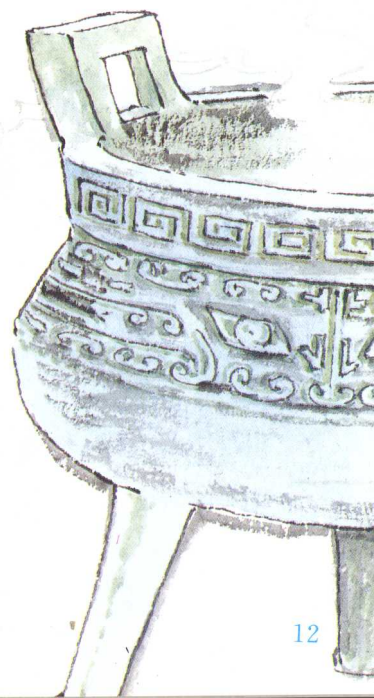


### Story:

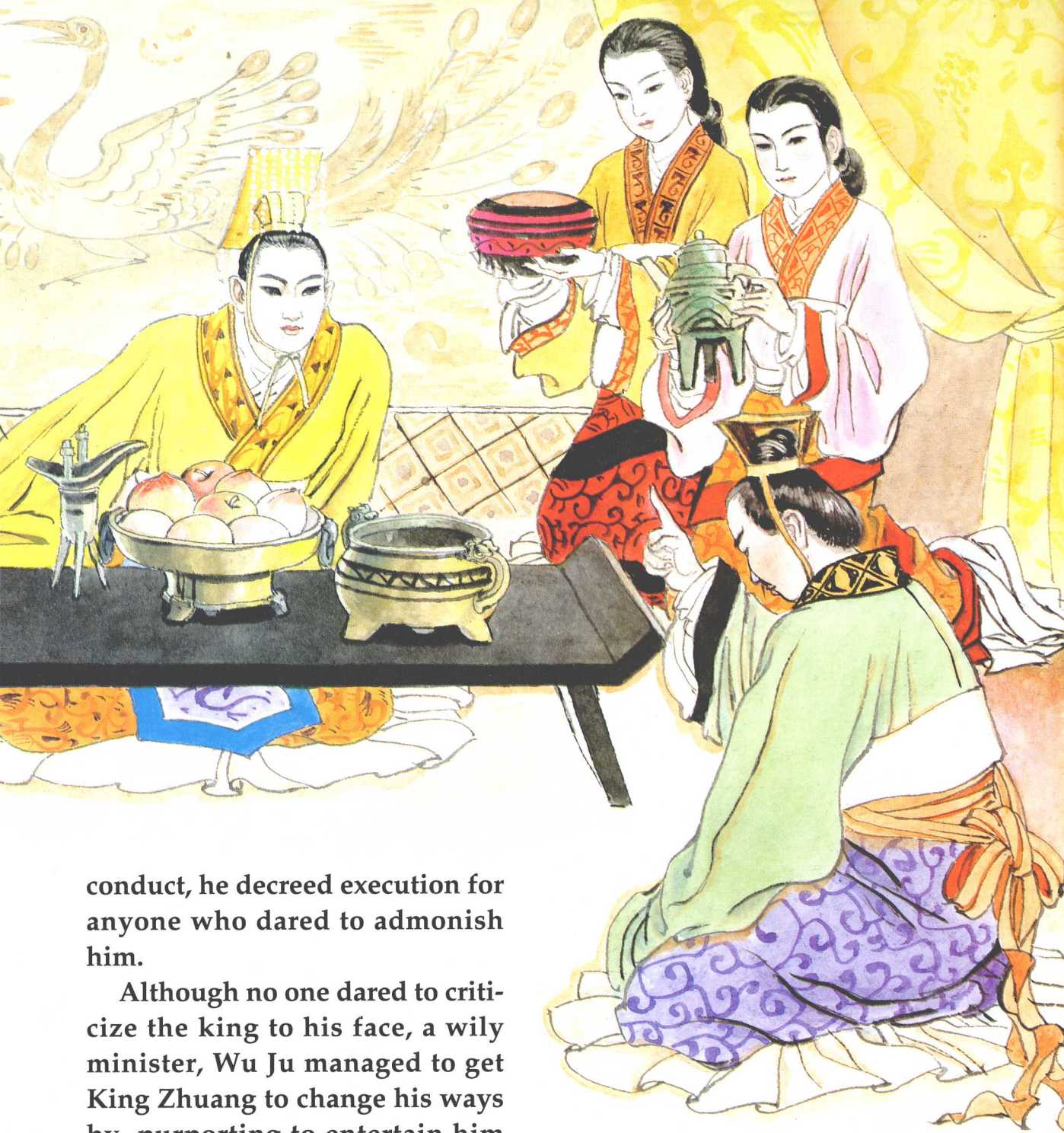
In the Spring and Autumn Period King Zhuang came to the throne of the State of Chu. For the first three years of his reign he devoted himself entirely to hunting during the daytime and feasting at night. Well knowing that his ministers frowned on such prodigal

### 故事：

春秋时，楚庄王即位已经三年，白天打猎，晚上喝酒，对国家大事全不放在心上。他知道大臣们对他不满意，就下了一道命令：“谁要是敢劝谏，就判他的死罪！”







conduct, he decreed execution for anyone who dared to admonish him.

Although no one dared to criticize the king to his face, a wily minister, Wu Ju managed to get King Zhuang to change his ways by purporting to entertain him with a riddle, as follows: "Your Majesty, here in our State of Chu lives a big bird renowned for its gorgeous plumage. However, for three years it has neither soared aloft nor uttered its majestic cry. What kind of bird is it?"

有个名叫伍举的大臣对庄王说：“我有个谜请大王猜猜。”庄王说：“你说吧。”伍举说：“楚国有一只大鸟，身披五彩，可是一停三年，不飞也不叫，这是什么鸟？”