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曹冲称象

Cao Chong Weighed an Elephant

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三国的時候，吳國的孫權送給曹操一頭大象。曹操和文官武將們高興地出去觀看。有個小孩子緊跟在曹操的身後，他是曹操的兒子，名叫曹沖。



In the period of the Three Kingdoms, Sun Quan of the Wu Kingdom once gave Cao Cao an elephant as a present. On hearing this, Cao Cao and his top officials were so happy that they all went outside to look at it.



A young boy followed Cao Cao closely. He was Cao Chong, Cao Cao's son.



Wow! The elephant was so huge! The four legs alone were as thick as the pillars of a palace. Despite its size, the elephant was quite tame.



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啊！这头大象好大哟，四条腿像大殿里的柱子那么粗。别看大象的个子那么大，脾气倒是挺温和。曹冲走近大象和它比一比，只能够摸到它的肚皮呢。

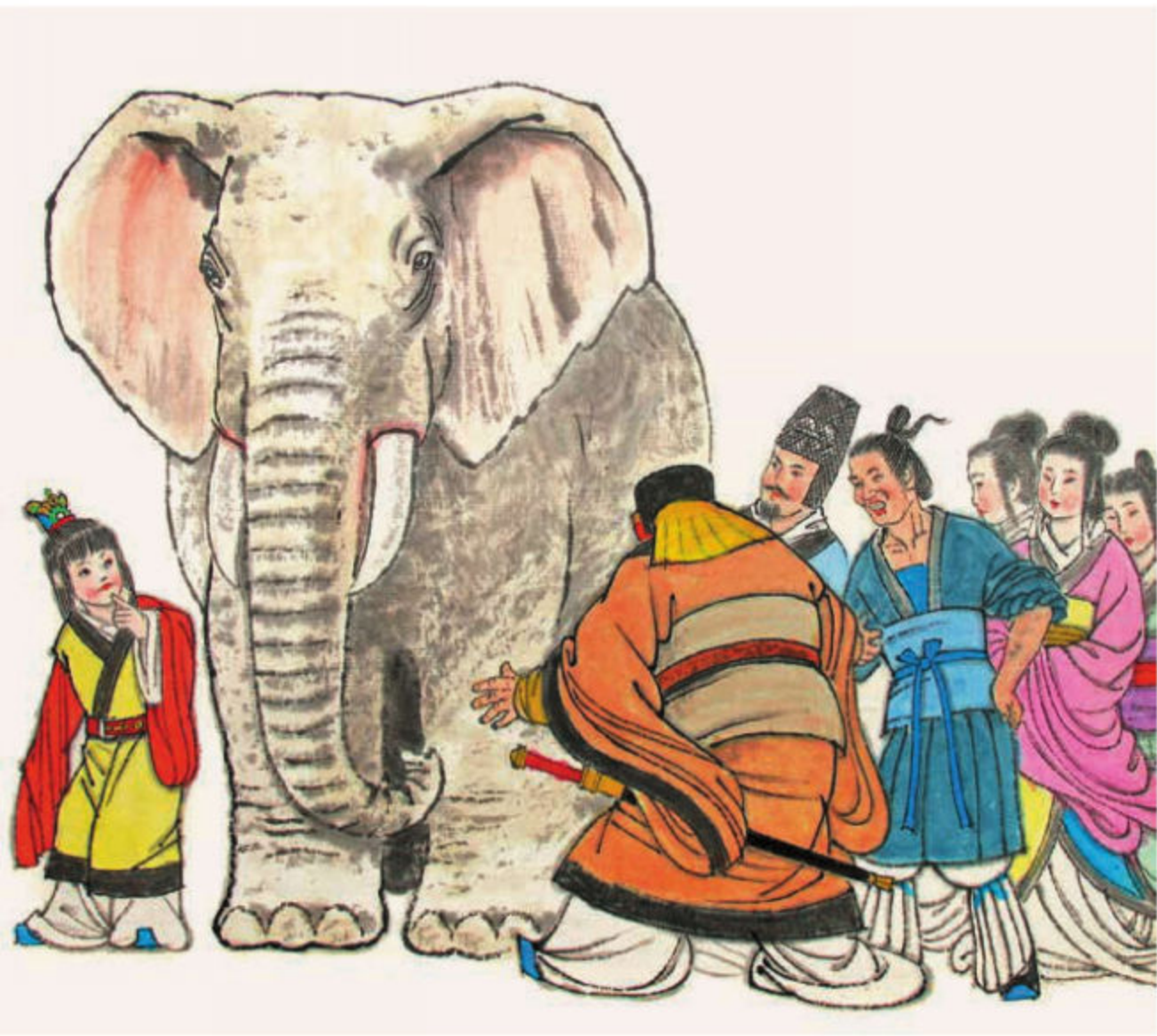
Wanting to see how big the elephant was, Cao Chong got very close to it, only to find that he could barely reach up to the elephant's belly.

曹操理着胡子对大家说：“这头象真大，不知道它到底有多重，你们哪个有办法称一称它？”

嘿！这么个大家伙，可怎么称呢？文官武将们纷纷议论起来。



On seeing this, Cao Cao said to everyone, "I wonder how much this huge elephant weighs. Does anyone have any idea how to weigh it?"



"How can we weigh a thing this big?" All the civil and military officials started to talk to each other, searching for an idea.

有的说：“只有造一杆顶大顶大的秤来称才行。”可是，这秤得造多大啊！再说，大象是活物，也没法儿称啊！



Someone said, "We can only weigh it if we build a huge set of scales." But imagine how big that set of scales would have to be! And even with such scales, it would be impossible to weigh a living elephant on them!

有一位大将粗声粗气地说：
“这有什么难的，只要把象宰了，
切成好几块，然后再一块一块地
称，不就行了吗？”



A general spoke in a gruff voice, "This is easy! We only have to kill it, cut it up, and then weigh the pieces one by one."



他的话音刚落，大家都哈哈大笑起来，都说这办法太笨了。为了称重量就把大象活活地杀死，不可惜了吗？

On hearing this, everyone burst into laughter. Why would anyone kill an elephant just to have it weighed!

文官武将们谁也想不出好办法，都不好意思地
耷拉着脑袋不吭声了。



No one else could figure out a better idea. The civil and military officials all hung their heads in shame and stopped talking.



这时，曹冲走到大家面前，说：“我有个称大象的办法。”

曹操一看，是心爱的儿子曹冲，就假装生气地说：“那么多叔叔伯伯都没有办法，你小小年纪敢在这里夸口？”

Just then, Cao Chong walked in front of everybody and said, "I have a solution to weigh the elephant properly."



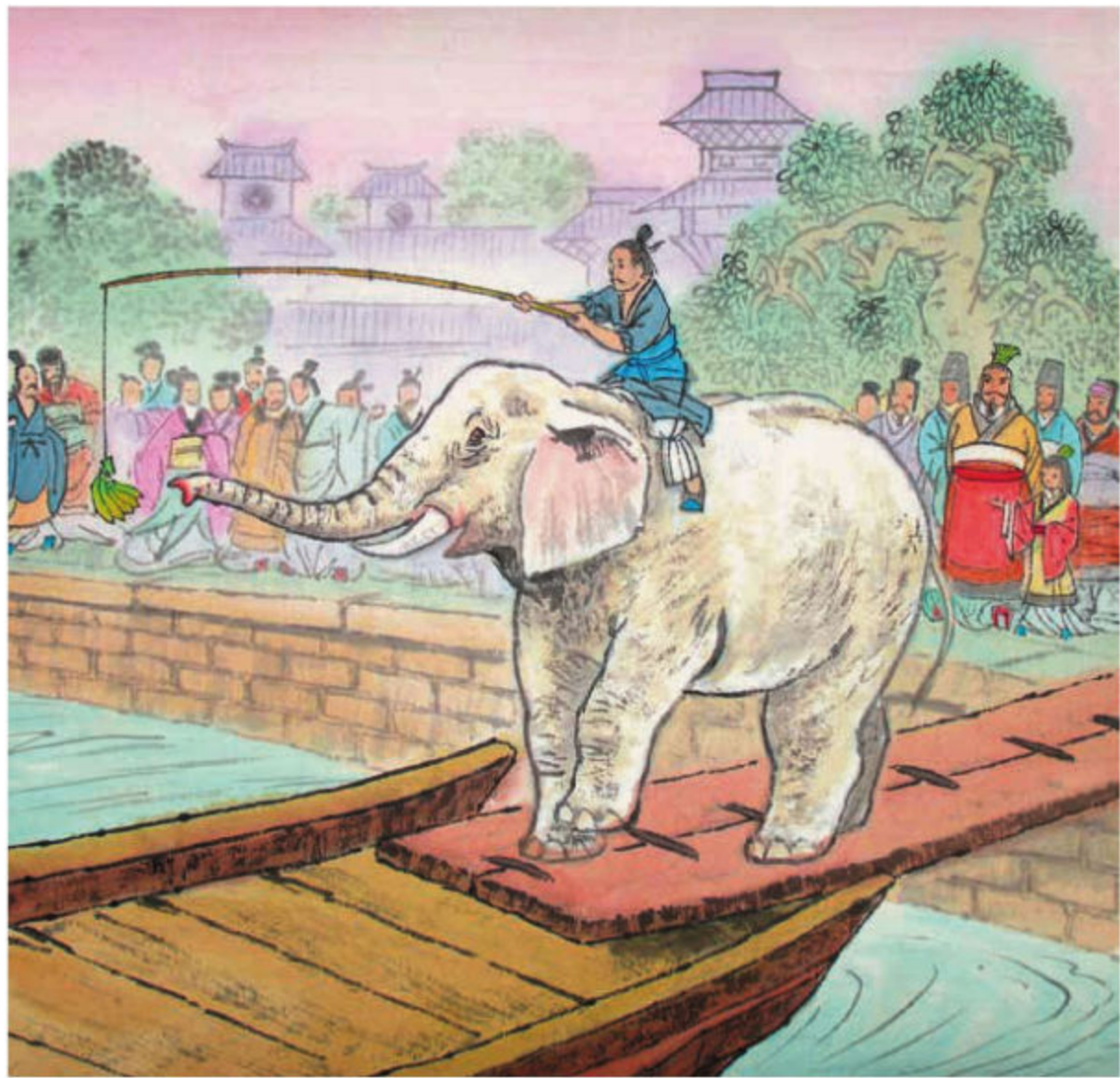
Seeing that it was his beloved son Cao Chong, Cao Cao pretended to be angry, and said, "No one in my court can figure out how to weigh an elephant. So how can you, a mere child, solve this problem?"



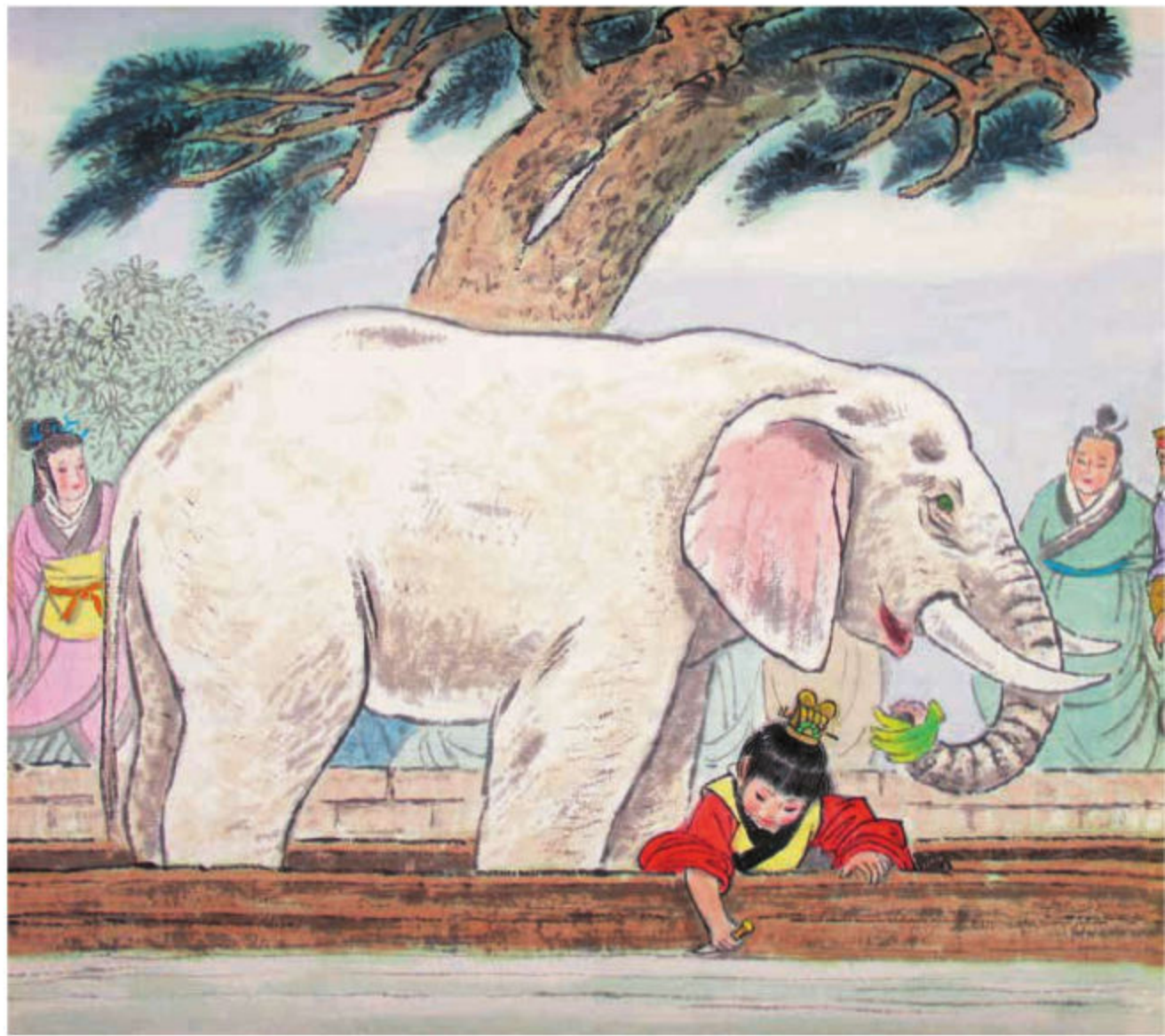
曹冲附在曹操的耳边说了几句悄悄话，曹操听完不由得笑了。他立刻对文官武将们说：“走！到河边看称象去！”

河里停着一艘大船，曹冲叫人把大象牵到了船上。大象好重啊！它一上去，船立刻下沉了好多。

Cao Chong then whispered something into Cao Cao's ears that made Cao Cao smile. Cao Cao immediately told everyone, "Follow me! Let's go to the riverside and watch this elephant being weighed!"

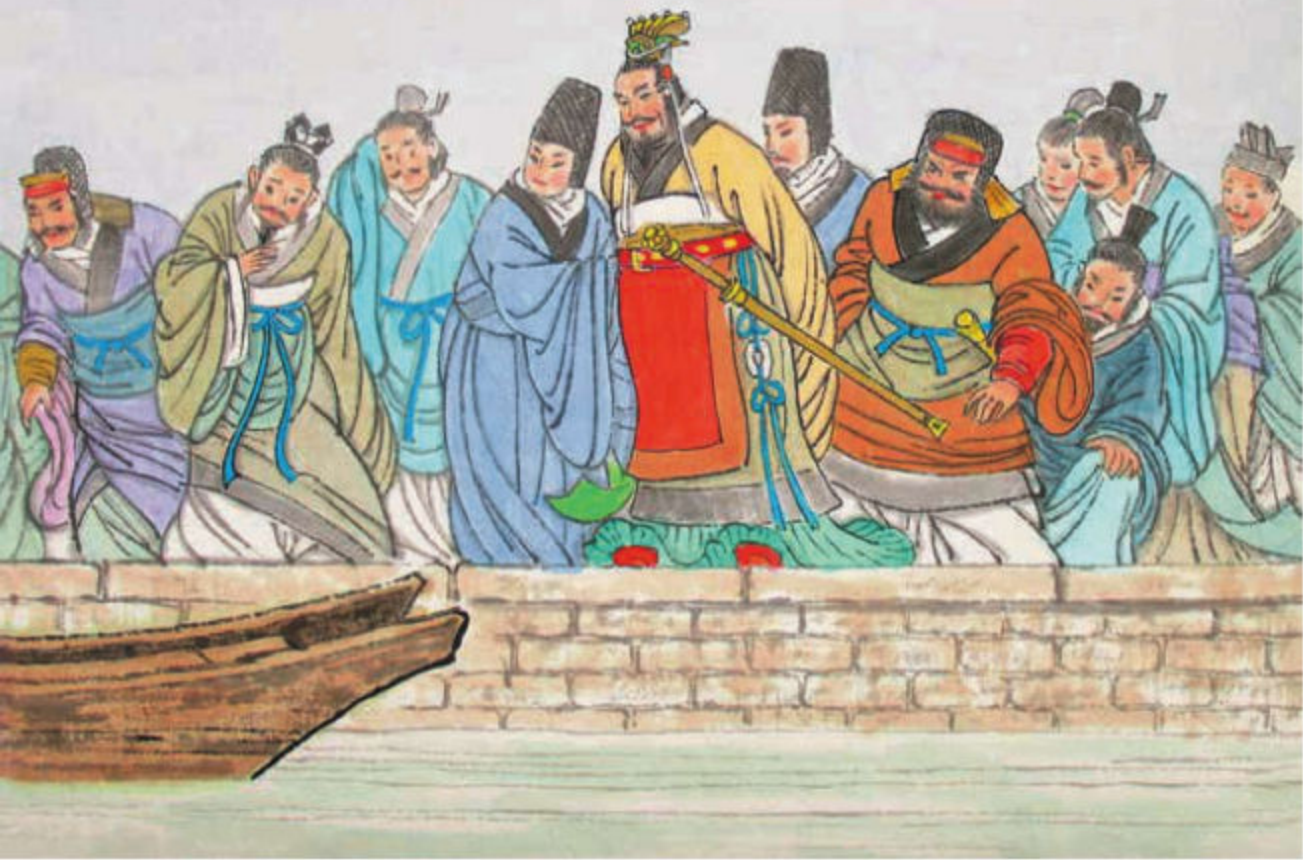


A big boat was moored in the river. Cao Chong asked someone to lead the elephant onto the boat. The elephant was so heavy! The moment it got onto the boat, the boat went down a lot.



When the boat stopped rocking, Cao Chong cut a mark along the waterline on the side of the boat with a small dagger. Then he asked someone to lead the elephant back onto the bank.

等船身稳定了，曹冲就用小刀在船舷上齐水的地方刻了一条线，再叫人把大象牵上岸去。大家都睁大眼睛看着，谁也不明白是怎么回事。



Everybody watched with their eyes wide open, but nobody had the slightest clue what was going on.