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唐朝的时候，有一位聪明又漂亮的公主，叫文成公主。周围各个地方的首领都想向公主求婚，派出许多求婚的使者。

In the Tang dynasty, there was a clever and beautiful princess named Princess Wencheng. Lords from everywhere wanted her hand in marriage, and so they sent envoys to propose marriage on their behalf.

当时有个吐蕃国，在今天的青藏高原一带。吐蕃国的年轻首领松赞干布也想娶文成公主。这天，松赞干布请来禄东赞，派他到长安城向公主求婚。



In the Tubo kingdom which ruled the area of today's Qinghai - Tibetan Plateau, a young king named Songtsan Gambo also wanted to marry Princess Wencheng. One day, Songtsan Gambo sent for Gar Tongtsan and dispatched him to Chang'an as his envoy for a marriage proposal.

吐蕃离长安很远，禄东赞带了一队人马，驮着很多珠宝，翻过一座座山，跨过一条条河，朝着大唐的京城——长安的方向前进。



Tubo was very far away from Chang'an. Gar Tongtsan brought with him a party of horses and men with many valuables. They climbed many mountains and crossed many rivers, heading for the capital city of the Tang—Chang'an.



走了很多很多天，禄东赞才来到长安的皇宫。他向皇帝说明了求婚的事。皇帝说：“你看，各个地方都派来了求婚的使者。我得先考考你们，看谁最聪明，就答应谁的请求。”

After many days of travelling, Gar Tongtsan finally arrived at the royal palace in Chang'an. He explained to the emperor the purpose of his visit. The emperor said, "Well now, many lords have sent envoys with the same mission. I must put all of you to a test to find out who is the cleverest, and then I will agree to his master's proposal for marriage."

皇帝叫人牵来一百匹小马驹，又牵来一百匹母马。他对使者们说：“这一百匹马驹，是一百匹母马的孩子。你们谁能帮助每一匹马驹找到它们各自的妈妈呢？”



The emperor ordered his men to bring to him 100 foals and 100 mares. Then, he challenged the envoys, "These 100 foals are the children of the 100 mares. Who can help every foal to find its mother?"



有的使者牵上马驹，让马驹去找妈妈；有的使者牵上母马，让母马去找孩子……马儿们又是踢，又是咬，场子里乱哄哄的，吓得别人不敢走过去。

Some envoys led the foals to look for their mothers, while others led the mares to look for their foals... The horses kicked and bit, causing total chaos. Nobody dared to get close to them.

聪明的禄东赞让人找来草料，把一百匹母马喂得饱饱的。母马有了奶水，就扬起头“唉儿——唉儿”地叫。小马驹听得出妈妈的叫声，跑过来吃奶，谁都没有找错。



Clever Gar Tongtsan asked some people to fetch enough hay to feed the 100 mares until they were all full. When the mares started to produce milk, they raised their heads and cried, “Neiiiiiiiiigh! Neiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiigh!” Each foal could easily distinguish its mother’s voice and quickly ran to her. So the pairing was easily done. None of them made a mistake.

皇帝在一边点头笑了，他说：“我还要考考你们。看，这是一颗有名的九曲珠，珠子的洞眼儿弯弯曲曲的。你们谁有办法能把丝线从这洞眼儿里穿过去呀？”



Seeing this, the emperor smiled, "Here comes your second challenge. Look, this is a famous nine-curve bead — the hole inside the bead has many twists and turns. Who can thread it through?"



各位使者轮流用丝线穿这颗九曲珠。有人歪着头，有人闭上一只眼……大家想尽了办法，急得脑袋上直流汗。可是，谁都不能把又软又细的丝线从弯弯的洞眼儿里穿过去。

Every envoy took turns trying to thread the bead. Some envoys tilted their heads, some closed one eye... They tried all the methods they could think of, sweating all the time. Yet, nobody could thread the fine soft silk thread through the curving hole of the bead.

最后，轮到禄东赞了。只见他弯下腰，从地上捉了一只蚂蚁，再把丝线拴在蚂蚁的细腰上；接着，又在九曲珠洞眼儿的一侧抹上了一些蜜糖。



Finally it was Gar Tongtsan's turn. He bent down, caught an ant from the ground, and carefully tied the thread to the ant's thin waist; then, he dabbed some honey at one end of the hole in the bead.



禄东赞把蚂蚁放进没抹蜜糖的洞眼儿另一侧，蚂蚁闻到前边有甜香的味道，就带着丝线向前爬，不一会儿，就把丝线从抹了蜜糖的洞眼儿里带出来了。

Next, Gar Tongtsan put the ant inside the end of the hole without honey. Detecting the sweet smell of honey at the other end, the ant hurried towards it. After a short while, the ant came out with the silk thread on the other end of the twisting hole.



没想到，皇帝又给大家出了新的难题。他说：“明天，大殿里会有三百个姑娘，穿戴都一模一样，你们谁能从她们当中认出文成公主，我就答应他的请求。”

However, the emperor gave the envoys a third challenge. He announced, "Tomorrow, you will find 300 young ladies dressed in the exact same way in the great court. I will accept the marriage proposal of the envoy who can first identify Princess Wencheng among them."

禄东赞从来没见过文成公主，这可怎么办？这天晚上，他找到了给公主洗衣服的老妈妈。老妈妈告诉他：“公主喜欢在头发上搽香蜜，她的香味会引来蜜蜂。”



Gar Tongtsan had never seen Princess Wencheng before, nor did he know what she looked like. He was at a loss. That evening, he went to seek help from the old maid who was in charge of Princess Wencheng's laundry. She gave him a tip, "Princess Wencheng likes to apply scented cream in her hair, and the scent tends to attract bees."

第二天，使者们来到三百个姑娘面前。她们打扮得全都一样，但是，只有一个姑娘头顶上有蜜蜂在飞。禄东赞赶紧说：“这一位是文成公主！”皇帝点头笑了。



The next day, the envoys gathered in front of the 300 young ladies who were all dressed in the exact same way. Gar Tongtsan quickly spotted the young lady with bees buzzing around her head and announced, "This is Princess Wencheng!" The emperor nodded with a smile.



吐蕃首领的使者求婚成功了！文成公主就要远嫁到吐蕃去。禄东赞对她说：“我们的首领不要别的陪嫁，只希望你带去五谷种子和农具，让我们那里的农业发展起来。”

The Tubo king's envoy had succeeded in his mission! Princess Wencheng was to be married to the Tubo king. Gar Tongtsan told her, "Our king says he doesn't need any dowry from you; he hopes instead that you will bring with you seeds of different grains and farming tools to help develop our agriculture."

这一天，送亲的队伍浩浩荡荡地出发了。文成公主带着随从、乐师和工匠，还带了许多书籍、丝绸和器物……出了长安城，向遥远的吐蕃进发。



A large army of people and horses carrying all kinds of goods finally set off with Princess Wencheng on her long journey. Princess Wencheng brought along her maids and servants, musicians and craftsmen, and a lot of books and scrolls, silk and tools among other things. They left Chang'an for the faraway land of Tubo.