TALES & TRADITIONS

and other essays

READINGS IN
CHINESE
LITERATURE SERIES

VOLUME
1
FOR ADVANCED BEGINNERS

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- Appendix 2: English Abstracts

#### Vocabulary Index

- 索引 / 索引
- Vocabulary Index
Chinese is the language of the country with the largest population in the world, and in the United States, Chinese is the language of the second-largest group of non-English speakers, after only Spanish. To date, although a number of comprehensive Chinese textbooks are currently available in the United States, interesting and informative pleasure-reading materials specifically designed for Chinese are scarce at all levels. Learners and instructors of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) have longed for such materials, and as the first AP® Chinese Language and Culture exam was offered in 2007, the need for quality readings that familiarize students with expressions essential to understanding Chinese culture is now greater than ever.

*Tales and Traditions: Readings in Chinese Literature Series* was created to meet the need for supplementary reading materials for Chinese language learners. Foreign language acquisition research has shown that extensive pleasure reading, in which students read large quantities of level-appropriate books and materials, is essential to attaining fluency in a foreign language. Pleasure reading not only improves students’ reading skills, speed, and language proficiency, but also leads them to lifelong fluency and enjoyment of reading in the target language. This series presents stories and anecdotes that are a part of the Chinese literary canon and essential for cultural
fluency: sayings from classical philosophers, folk tales, legends, excerpts from great works of literature, and more.

Volume 1 is designed for students who have finished the beginning level of Chinese study. Its three chapters, organized by theme, include ten Chinese literary quotations and fables; seven famous anecdotes from celebrities such as Confucius and Sima Guang; and six mythological stories and fantasies. Material within each theme increases in difficulty, but students and teachers should feel comfortable reading the selections in any order.

Each text in this Readings in Chinese Literature Series has an interesting story line, a vocabulary list, and stimulating post-text questions. The texts can be used both for individual student reading and/or for instructor-facilitated classroom reading. Using the discussion questions, teachers can engage students in comprehension checks, cross-cultural comparisons, and real-life reflections. Students may also enjoy acting out the stories (see the “Teaching Note” at the end of this Preface for more information). Teachers will find the texts easy to use and an essential tool to improve learners’ presentation skills. The stories will help students gain literacy and familiarity with Chinese written texts that are at the heart of Chinese culture. This focus on reading comprehension and cultural knowledge makes Tales & Traditions: Readings in Chinese Literature Series an excellent companion for students who are preparing for the AP® Chinese Language and Culture exam, or other standardized tests.

An appendix of pinyin texts is included for students who struggle with character recognition, and a comprehensive index of all vocabulary words, arranged in alphabetical order by pinyin, will help students review and look up unfamiliar words. Proper nouns that appear in the stories are underlined, so that students can easily recognize and identify them.
About the *Tales & Traditions: Readings in Chinese Literature* Series

Differentiated in the use of characters, phrases, sentence patterns, and discourse features, the series consists of four volumes for advanced-beginning, intermediate, advanced, and superior levels. All stories are adapted to a level appropriate for learners of Chinese, from the advanced-beginning level in Volume 1 to the superior level in Volume 4. Each level includes a variety of genres, such as myths, legends, classical and popular short stories, fables, Tang/Song poems, satirical and amusing essays and stories, and extracts of well-known literature. Texts from beginning to advanced levels are all illustrated. Authentic texts, vocabulary words, and sentence patterns were adapted to keep the stories level-appropriate, while maintaining their originality.

In each volume, vocabulary words, forms of usage, idioms, and phrases are selected according to their frequency of use and expository requirements. Vocabulary glossing is cumulative, so that if a word is glossed in the first story, it will not be glossed again in later stories. Students should focus on reading for comprehension, rather than being able to recognize each and every character. For students’ ease of vocabulary reference, however, an appendix of pinyin texts is included so that students can quickly check the pronunciation of a word and look it up in the glossary or in a dictionary.

To adapt these stories and compile vocabulary lists, we used three main sources: *Xiandai Hanyu Pinlu Cidian* (現代漢語頻率詞典) (1986), *Hanyu Shuiping Dengji Biaozhun he Dengji Dagang* (漢語水平等級標準和等級大綱) (1988), and *Far East 3000 Chinese Character Dictionary* (遠東漢字三千字典) (2003). Words and phrases used at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels are selected in accordance with the甲 乙 丙 levels specified in 漢語水平等級標準和等級大綱. The length (i.e., the number of running characters) of the texts gradually increases...
as the academic level advances, from 150 to 1,000 characters per text for
the beginning and intermediate levels, and from 500 to 2,000 characters
per text for the advanced and superior levels. For the beginning and
intermediate levels, we selected the first 1,500 most frequently used words
listed in 現代漢語頻率詞典 and expanded to the first 3,500 words for
the advanced and superior levels.

As globalization, multiculturalism, and multilingualism change the way
people interact with each other around the globe, a high level of Chinese
language proficiency has become an important qualification for individuals
in the United States and other English-speaking countries to gain a competi-
tive advantage in academics, business, and other areas. We hope this series of
stories will help students become fluent readers and speakers of Chinese, as
well as global citizens with a multicultural perspective.

**TEACHING NOTE**

For teachers and students who are using this book as supplementary reading for
a Chinese course, we have provided questions in both Chinese and English to
stimulate class discussions of the stories. In addition, students can be asked to
retell the stories in their own words when class time allows. For extra speaking
practice, students may enjoy acting out the stories in small groups. Each group
selects a story, writes speaking lines, and assigns roles. A special day or two can
be set aside at mid-term or semester’s end for performance of the plays.
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<td>conj.</td>
<td>Conjunction</td>
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<td>mw.</td>
<td>Measure word</td>
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<td>n.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
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<td>on.</td>
<td>Onomatopoeic word</td>
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<td>part.</td>
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<td>pn.</td>
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<td>v.</td>
<td>Verb</td>
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<tr>
<td>vc.</td>
<td>Verb plus complement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vo.</td>
<td>Verb plus object</td>
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Fables and Literary Quotations
1

拔苗助长
Bá miáo zhù zhǎng

Pulling Seedlings Up to Help Them Grow
从前，有一个农民住在一个小村子里。他每天早上很早就起床到地里去工作，晚上很晚才回家。

一年春天，他在地里下了种子，不久就长出了禾苗。他非常高兴，天天给禾苗浇水，希望它们快快长高。他还每天都用一把尺子去量这些禾苗，看看它们长高了多少。十几天过去了，他觉得禾苗长得太慢了，很着急。他想：“怎样才能让这些禾苗长得快一点呢？

他想啊想啊，想出了一个办法：“如果我把这些禾苗都往上拔高一点儿，它们不就都长高了吗？”他很快跑到地里，把所有的禾苗都拔高了一点儿。

他拔到半夜才回家。虽然很累，但是很高兴。他告诉儿子说：“我今天帮助地里的禾苗长高了！”他的儿子到地里一看，却发现所有的禾苗都死了。
從前，有一個農民住在一個小村子裡。他每天早上很早起床到地裡去工作，晚上很晚才回家。

一年春天，他在地裡下了種子，不久就長出了禾苗。他非常高興，天天給禾苗澆水，希望它們快快長高。他還每天都用一把尺子去量這些禾苗，看看它們長高了多少。十幾天過去了，他覺得禾苗長得太慢了，很著急。他想：“怎樣才能讓這些禾苗長得快一點呢？”

他想啊想啊，想出了一個辦法：“如果我把這些禾苗都往上拔高一點兒，它們不就都長高了嗎？”他很快跑到地裡，把所有的禾苗都拔高了一點兒。

他拔到半夜才回家。雖然很累，但是很高興。他告訴兒子說：“我今天幫助地裡的禾苗長高了！”他的兒子到地裡一看，卻發現所有的禾苗都死掉了。
### Vocabulary List

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<th>Simplified Characters</th>
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<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>English Definition</th>
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<td>1. 拔</td>
<td>拔</td>
<td>bá</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to pull</td>
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<tr>
<td>籽</td>
<td>籽</td>
<td>miáo</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>seedling; shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>助</td>
<td>助</td>
<td>zhù</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>长</td>
<td>長</td>
<td>zhǎng</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to grow</td>
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<td>2. 农民</td>
<td>農民</td>
<td>nóngmín</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>farmer</td>
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<td>村子</td>
<td>村子</td>
<td>cūnzi</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>village</td>
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<td>种子</td>
<td>種子</td>
<td>zhǒngzi</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>seeds</td>
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<td>禾苗</td>
<td>禾苗</td>
<td>hémiáo</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>shoots of grain</td>
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<td>6. 浇水</td>
<td>濯水</td>
<td>jiāoshuǐ</td>
<td>vo.</td>
<td>to give water to plants</td>
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<td>7. 量</td>
<td>量</td>
<td>liáng</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to measure</td>
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<td>8. 着急</td>
<td>著急</td>
<td>zhāojí</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>worry</td>
</tr>
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<td>9. 跑</td>
<td>跑</td>
<td>pǎo</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>累</td>
<td>累</td>
<td>lèi</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>tired</td>
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<td>11. 发现</td>
<td>發現</td>
<td>fāxiàn</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to discover</td>
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<td>12. 死</td>
<td>死</td>
<td>sǐ</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>to die or to become withered</td>
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Pulling Seedlings Up to Help Them Grow

Questions for Discussion

Answer in Chinese:

1. 为了使禾苗长得快，这个农民做了什么？
   What did the farmer do to help his shoots grow faster?

2. 这个农民的儿子在地里发现了什么？
   What did the farmer’s son discover?

Discuss in English:

3. In what ways was the farmer impatient?

4. In what ways was the farmer excessively enthusiastic?

5. Why didn’t the farmer know that pulling up the shoots would cause them to die?

6. What is the moral of this story? Do you know another idiom that teaches the same lesson?

Please see p. x of the Preface for ideas about speaking activities that can be conducted in the classroom or as part of an extracurricular performance.