

ASIAPAC COMIC SERIES

The Sayings of HAN FEI ZI

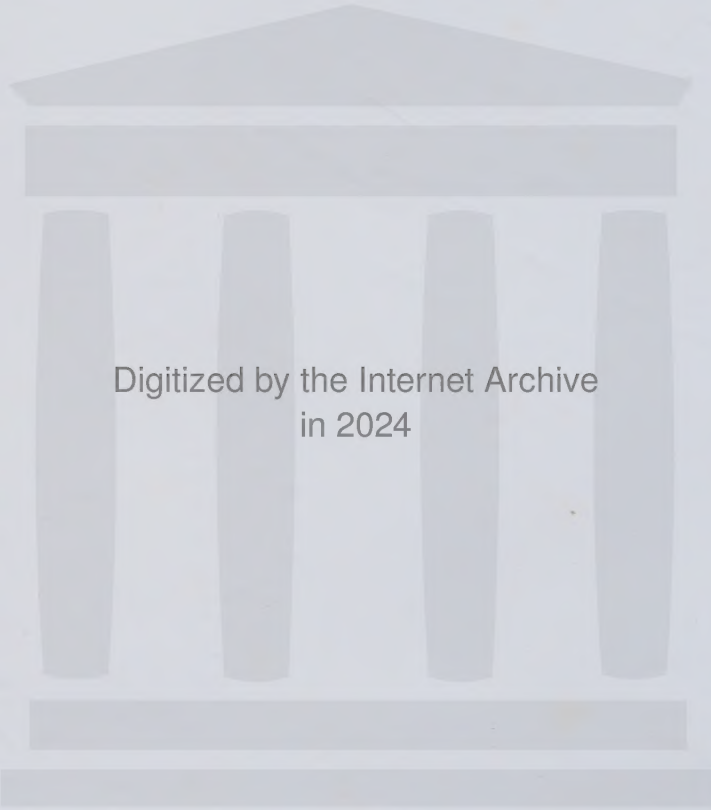
The Severe Code of The Legalist

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An Asiapac Publication





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He who Conquers Himself is Mighty



1

Zi Xia asked Zheng Zi:

Why have you become so stout?

Because I've won a battle.

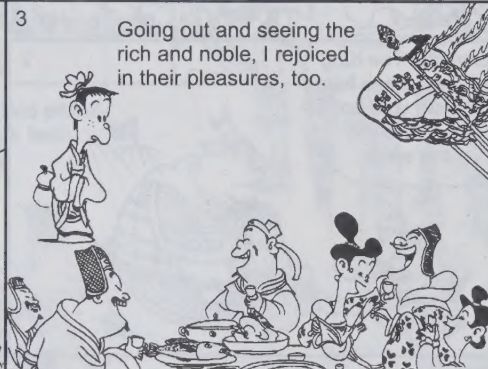


What do you mean by that?

Reading about former kings, I rejoiced in their virtues.

2 3

Going out and seeing the rich and noble, I rejoiced in their pleasures, too.



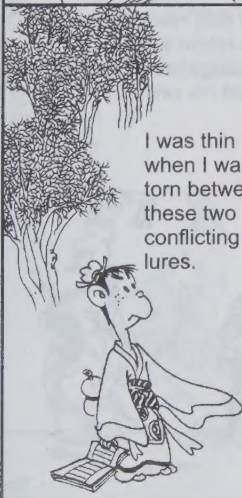
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Now I'm stout because the virtues of former kings have triumphed.

5

I was thin when I was torn between these two conflicting lures.

The difficulty of volition lies not in conquering others but in conquering oneself.



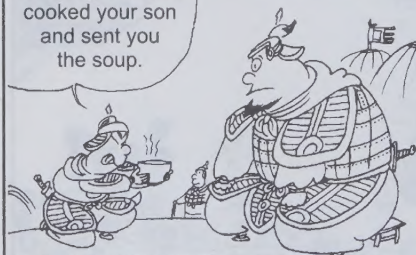
Skilful Deception and Clumsy Sincerity

Yue Yang, a general of Wei, led an attack on Zhongshan. His son was in the besieged town.

1



General! The King of Zhongshan has cooked your son and sent you the soup.



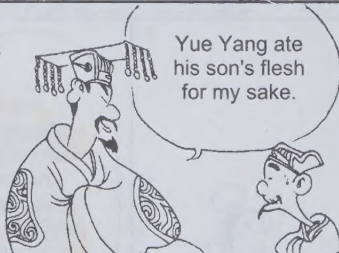
2

Let me finish it and I'll flatten Zhongshan.



3

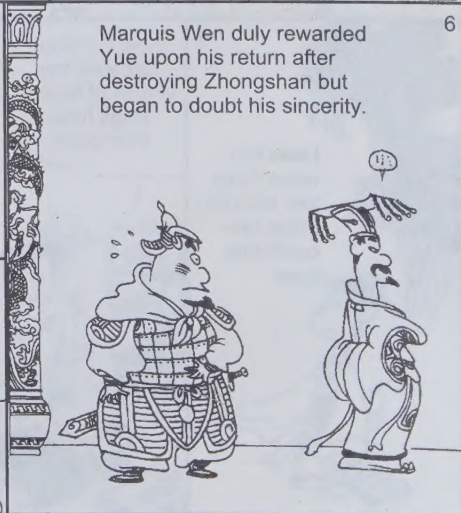
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Marquis Wen, the Wei ruler, said to Du Shizhan:



Yue Yang ate his son's flesh for my sake.

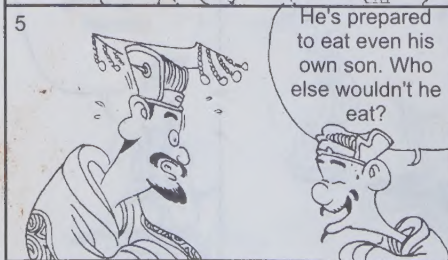
Marquis Wen duly rewarded Yue upon his return after destroying Zhongshan but began to doubt his sincerity.

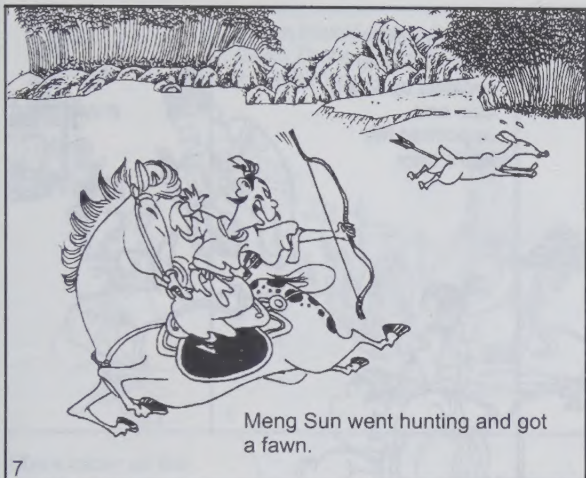
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5

He's prepared to eat even his own son. Who else wouldn't he eat?

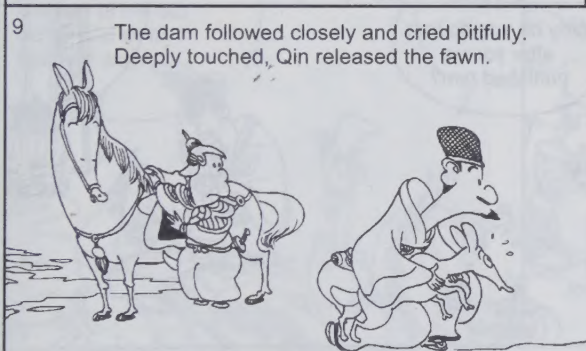




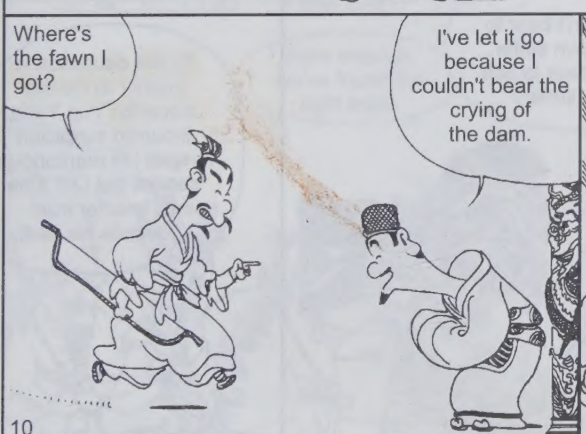
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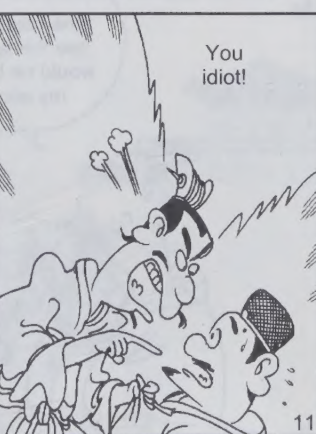
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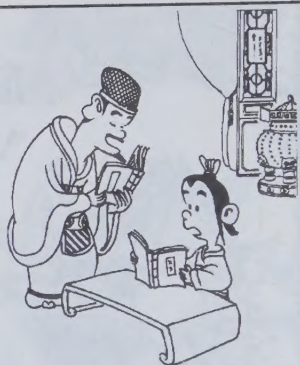
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12

Qin was sent packing.



Three months later, Qin was recalled by Meng Sun and appointed his son's tutor.



13

Meng Sun's coachman asked in wonder:

Why do you do that after you've punished him?



14

15

If he couldn't bear to see the fawn suffer, would he bear to see my son suffer?



Skilful deception is inferior to clumsy sincerity. Yue Yang incurred suspicion despite his meritorious service but Qin Xiba gained greater trust despite his fault.



Old Horse Knows the Way

Home bound after a foreign campaign, Guan Zhong, Xi Peng and their men lost their way.

Where are we now?



Let's count on the wisdom of the old horse and let it lead the way.

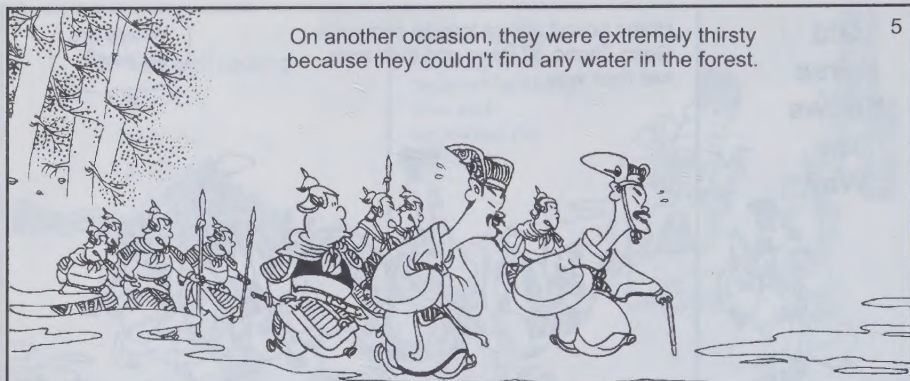
Good idea.

Please lead the way.



Sure enough, we've found the right track.



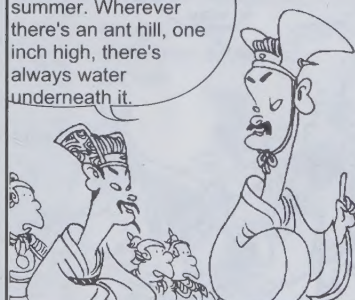


On another occasion, they were extremely thirsty because they couldn't find any water in the forest.

5

Ants live on the sunny side of the hill in winter and the shady side in summer. Wherever there's an ant hill, one inch high, there's always water underneath it.

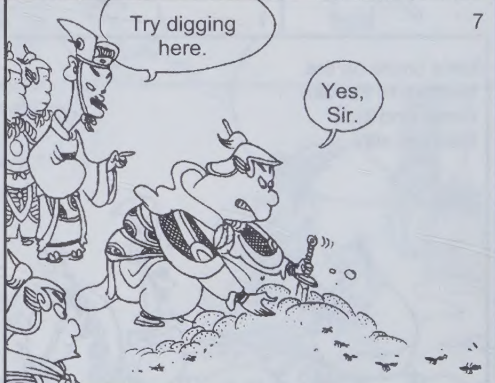
Xi Peng said:



6

Try digging here.

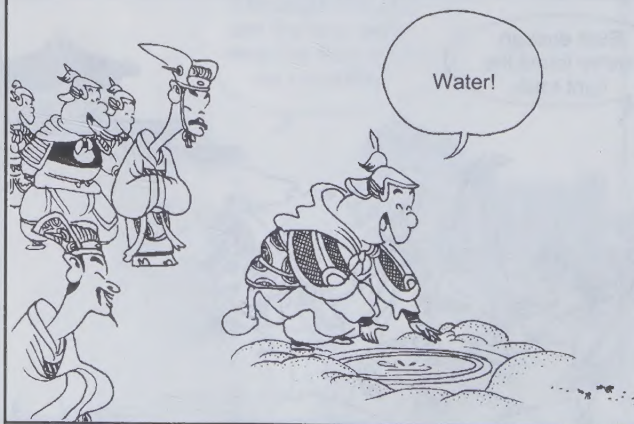
Yes, Sir.



7

8

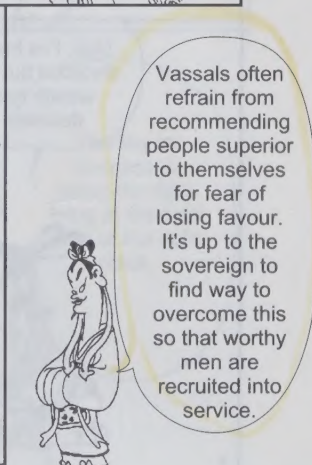
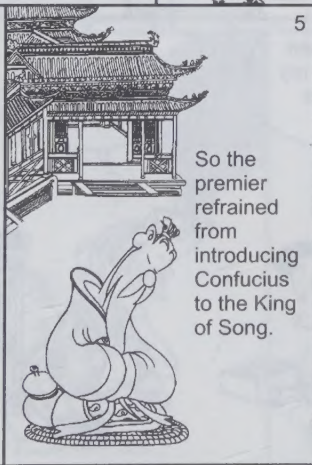
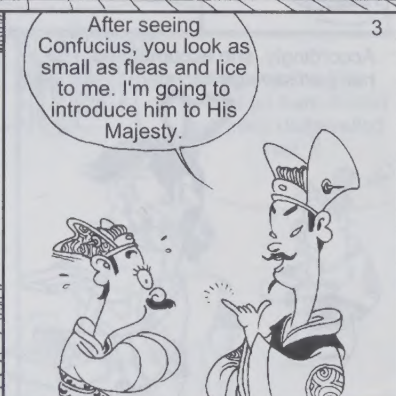
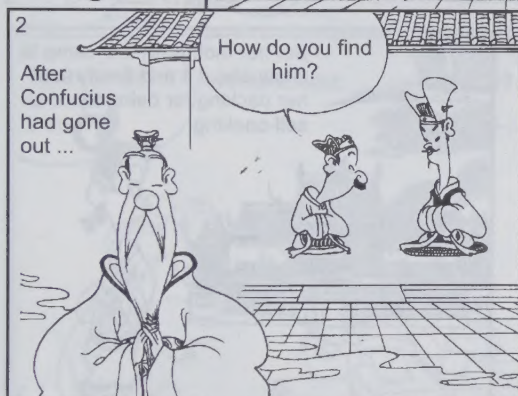
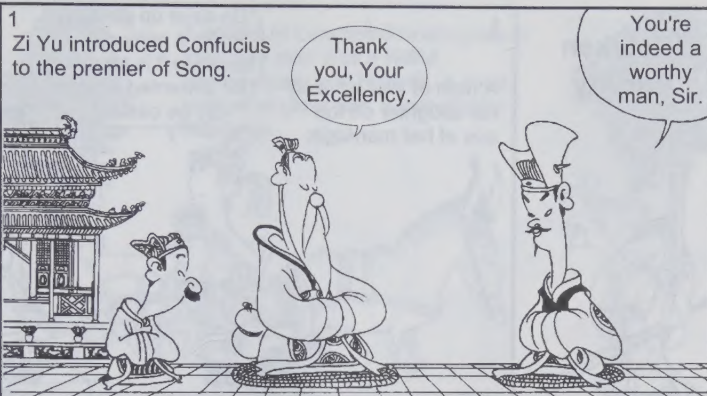
Water!



The wise never hesitate to learn even from an old horse or ants. But the unwise never think of learning from the wisdom of sages. How utterly stupid they are!



The Likes of Fleas and Lice



Mistaken Priority



1

A man of Wei advised his daughter on the eve of her marriage:

Do save up privately for a rainy day because it is common for a married woman to be cast off.

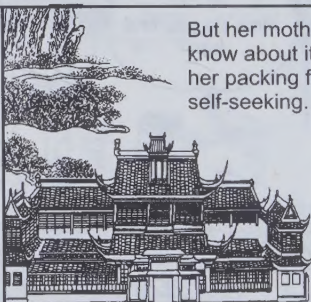


Accordingly, she accumulated her own savings secretly.



2

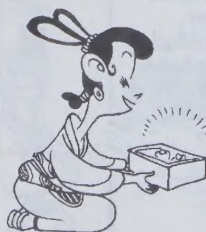
But her mother-in-law came to know about it and finally sent her packing for being too self-seeking.



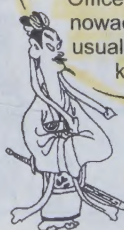
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Dad, I've been divorced but my wealth has doubled.

Well done. You've been very wise.

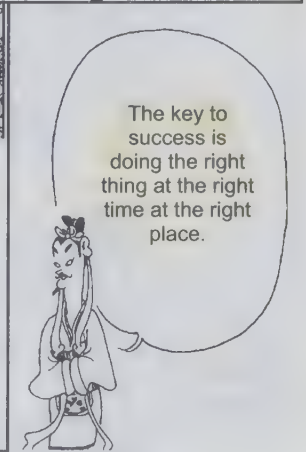
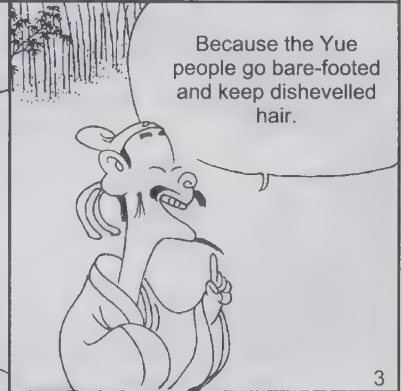
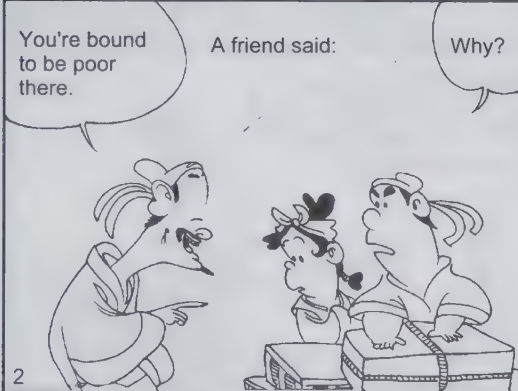
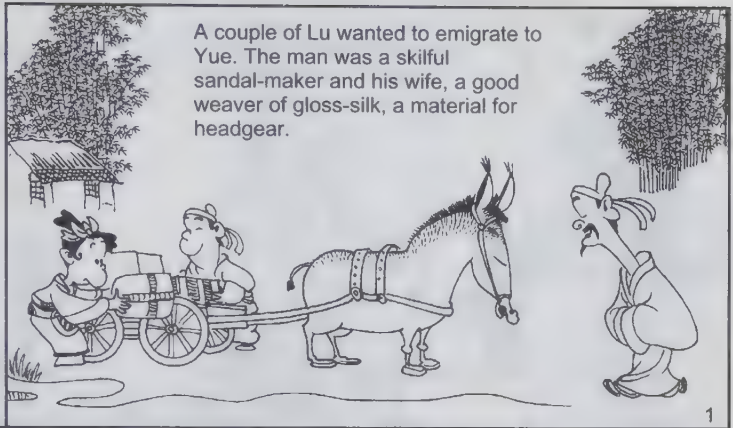


Man is given to self-interest. Being obsessed with self-interest often makes one forget one's rightful role. Office-seekers nowadays are usually of this kind.



4

Barking Up the Wrong Tree

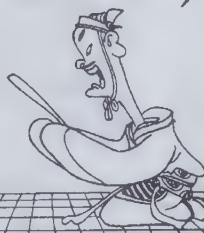
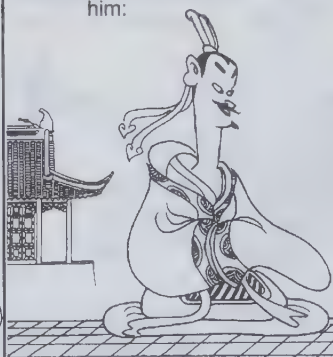


Distant Water and a Fire at Hand

1

Duke Mu of Lu wanted his sons to take up offices in the courts of Jin and Chu. Li Chu remonstrated with him:

A drowning child won't be saved by good swimmers from Yue because they are too far away.



2

Likewise, water from the sea, though abundant, can't be relied upon to put out a fire at hand.



3

Now, though Chu and Jin are strong, Qi is our close neighbour. Will Jin and Chu be able to come to our rescue in the event of a conflict with Qi?

Practical usage counts. The best help is a timely help.



Holding up a Target for Yi

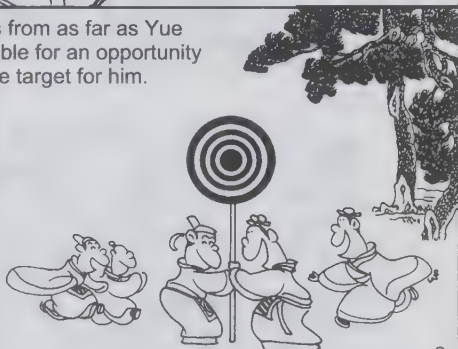
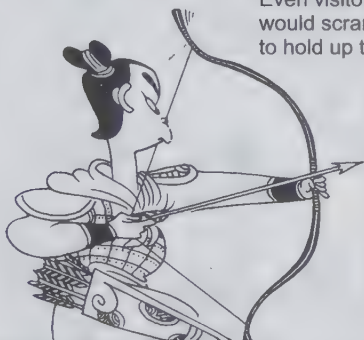


When Hou Yi, a legendary crack shot, got ready to shoot ...



1

Even visitors from as far as Yue would scramble for an opportunity to hold up the target for him.



2

However, when a young boy tried shooting an arrow, even his loving mother would keep a wide berth.

Danger!



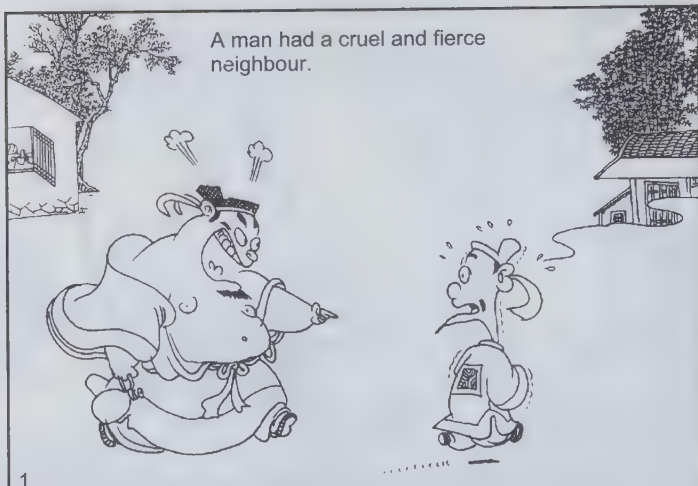
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Even a stranger can trust another on something known to be perfectly safe; but a mother can't even trust her own son when it comes to a matter of little confidence.



Portent

A man had a cruel and fierce neighbour.



1

Finding the situation unbearable, he wanted to sell his property and move away.



2

The day of retribution is due for this guy. Why not wait for a while?



3

I'm afraid his day of reckoning comes only after he has killed me!

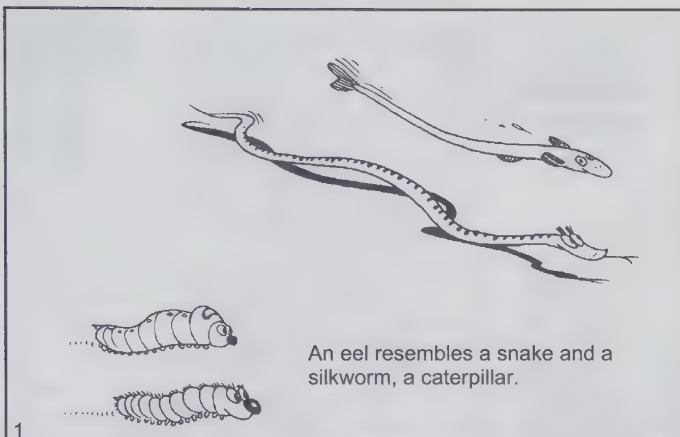


4

A portent of danger should be heeded and precautionary measures taken.



A Source of Courage

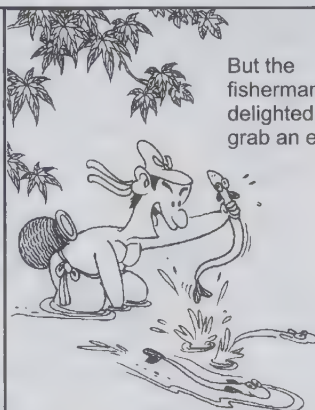


An eel resembles a snake and a silkworm, a caterpillar.

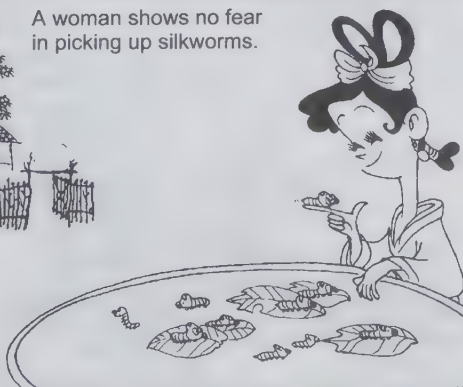
A man is frightened at the sight of a snake; a woman's hair stands on end at the sight of a caterpillar.



But the fisherman is delighted to grab an eel.



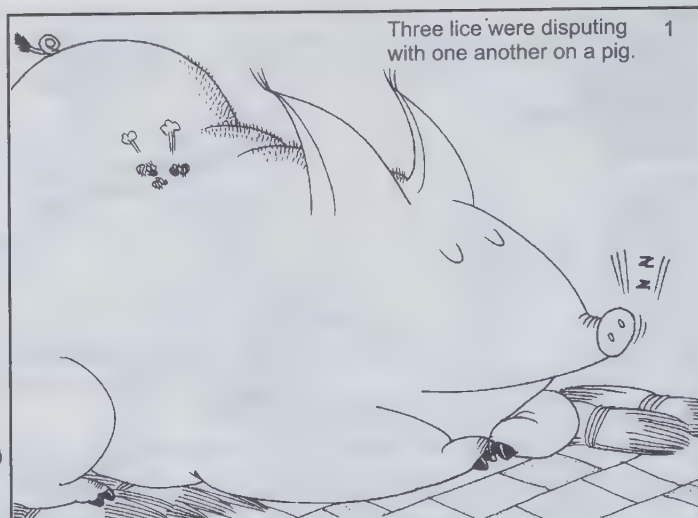
A woman shows no fear in picking up silkworms.



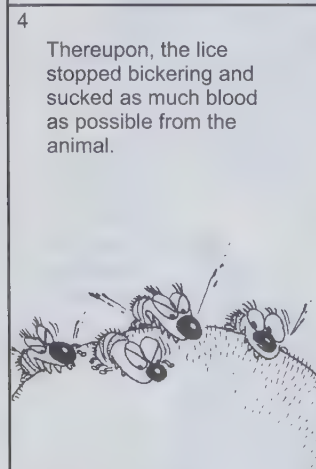
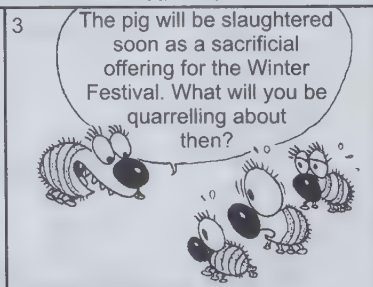
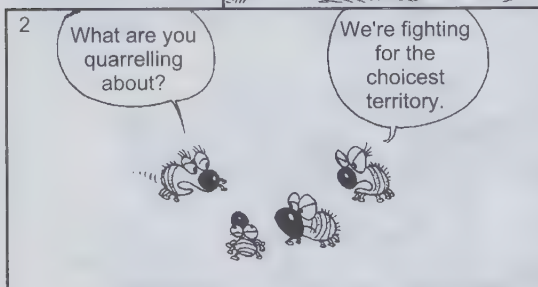
Motivated by profit a man would surge ahead, forgetting his abhorrence and fear.



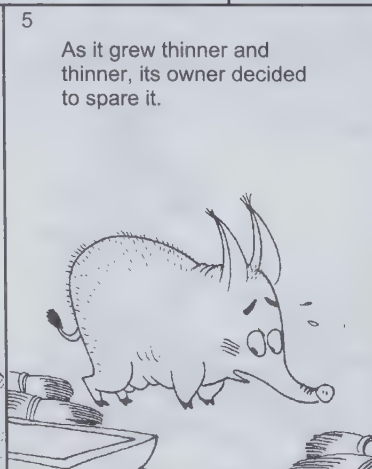
Lice Fighting Over a Pig



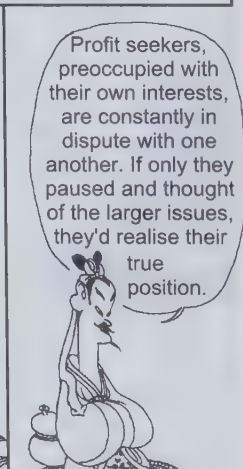
Three lice were disputing with one another on a pig. 1



Thereupon, the lice stopped bickering and sucked as much blood as possible from the animal. 4

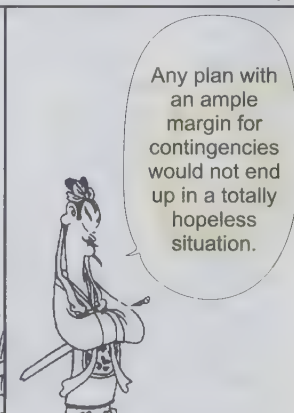
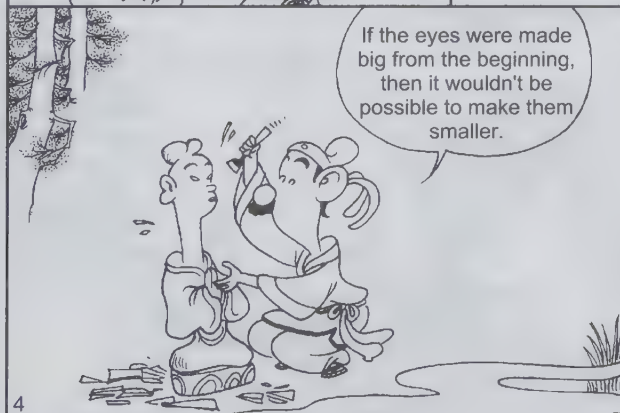
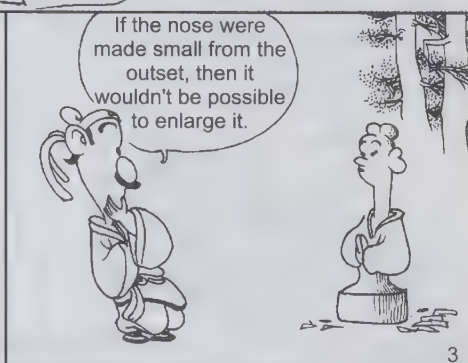
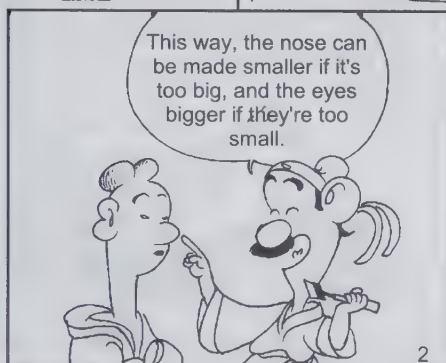
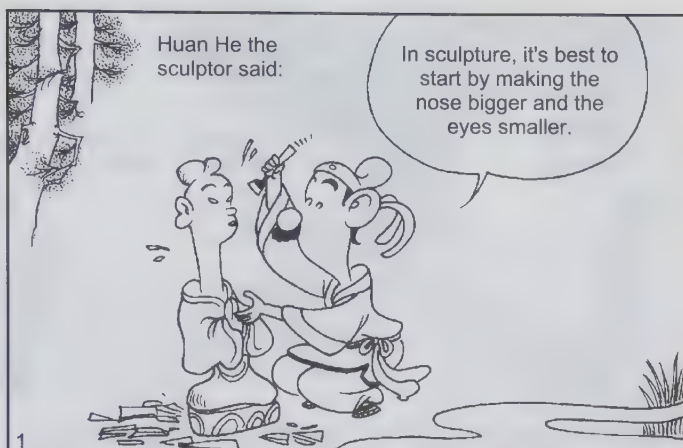


As it grew thinner and thinner, its owner decided to spare it. 5



Profit seekers, preoccupied with their own interests, are constantly in dispute with one another. If only they paused and thought of the larger issues, they'd realise their true position.

Leaving Margin for Manoeuvre



Wang Shou Burns Books



Wang Shou, a load of books on his back, met Xu Feng, a recluse.



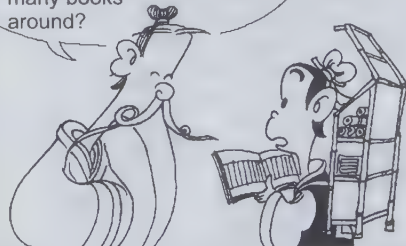
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Events are shaped by human actions which, in turn, depend on the exigencies of a situation. Therefore, to a wise man, nothing's immutable.



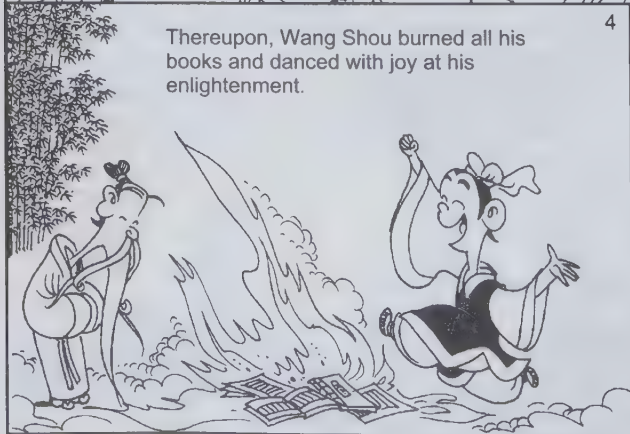
2

Books are born of man's wisdom. Therefore, a wise man never sticks to the letters of books. Why, then, are you lugging so many books around?



3

Thereupon, Wang Shou burned all his books and danced with joy at his enlightenment.



4

The wise do not keep books nor preach with words. They don't adhere rigidly to anything but follow the natural course of Tao.

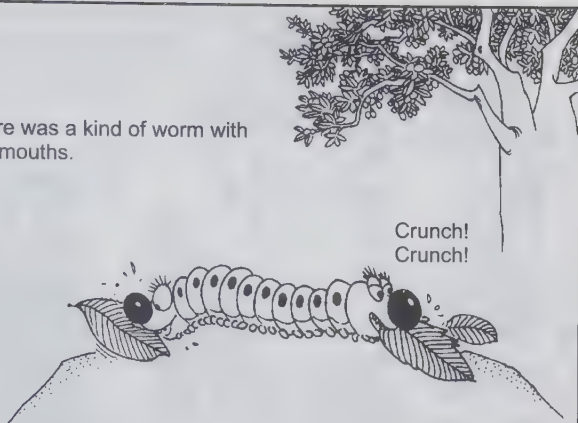


The Double-mouthed Worm



1

There was a kind of worm with two mouths.

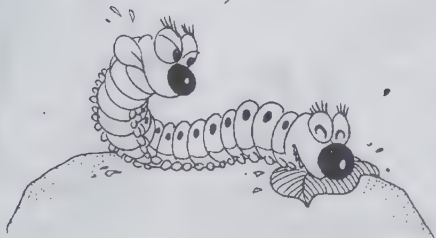


Delicious! Delicious!

2

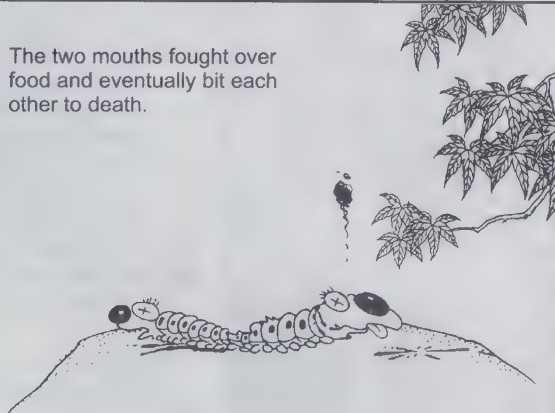
Owww! Ow! Hiss!, Hiss!

3



4

The two mouths fought over food and eventually bit each other to death.



Ministers who squabble for private gains will share the fate of the double-mouthed worm.



Bo Le Teaches Horse Appraising



Bo Le taught those he disliked to pick super-fast thoroughbreds,



1

And those he liked to pick ordinary horses.



2



3

Top thoroughbreds are hard to come by and yield slow profits but ordinary horses are fast selling and bring quick profits.



Geniuses are difficult to come by. The backbone of a nation is formed largely by ordinary, capable men. The sovereign who knows how to use these men effectively is a skilful one.



Gorge of Legislation

Dong Anyu, a magistrate of the Upper Land in Zhao, came to the brink of a deep gorge on a tour of the mountains.

1

Has anyone ever walked into it?

2



No, Sir.



3

Has any child, any blind or deaf or insane man ever walked into it?

4

No, Sir.

Has any ox, horse, pig or dog ever walked into it?

No, Sir.

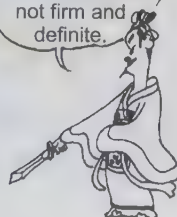


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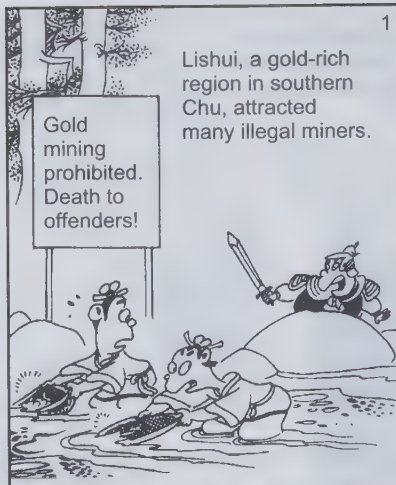
If the law is made severe and committing an offence is as fatal as walking into this gorge, then no one will dare violate it. Peace and order will prevail.

6

Excessive benevolence undermines the institution of the law. Enforcement of prohibitions would be impossible if punishment was not firm and definite.



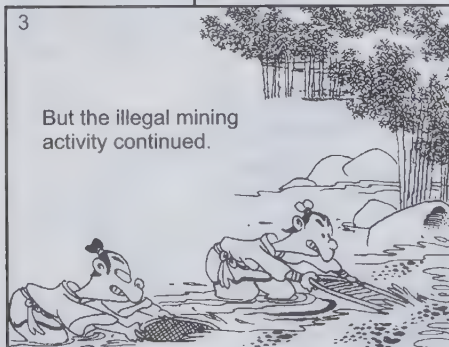
Taking Chances



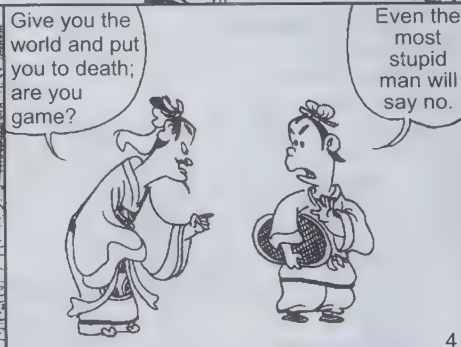
Lishui, a gold-rich region in southern Chu, attracted many illegal miners.



Many were caught for violating the official ban and executed at the market-place.

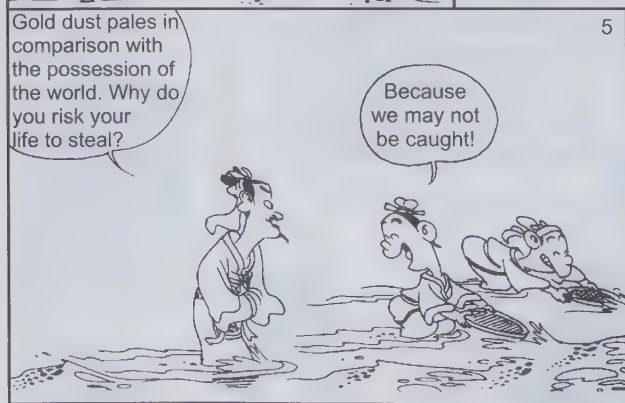


But the illegal mining activity continued.



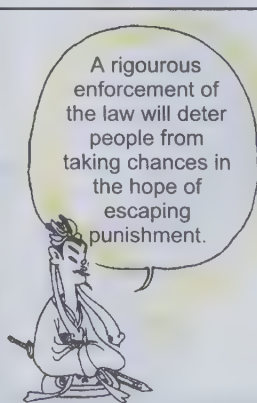
Give you the world and put you to death; are you game?

Even the most stupid man will say no.



Gold dust pales in comparison with the possession of the world. Why do you risk your life to steal?

Because we may not be caught!



A rigorous enforcement of the law will deter people from taking chances in the hope of escaping punishment.

Getting the People to Brave Fire and Water

In preparation for a war of revenge against Wu, the King of Yue wanted to test the efficacy of his training of his people.



1



Dong! Dong!
Dong!

He set fire to a tower and beat the drum. Thereupon, the people rushed to put out the fire because there was a reward for fire-fighting. 2

He beat the drum by the river and the people rushed into the water because there was a reward for braving the water.



Dong! Dong!
Dong!

3

On the war front, the people charged forward fearlessly because there was a reward for combat.

4

Dong! Dong!
Dong!



If reward can make people brave water and fire, then the law maybe used to a greater advantage as a means of promoting the services of capable men.

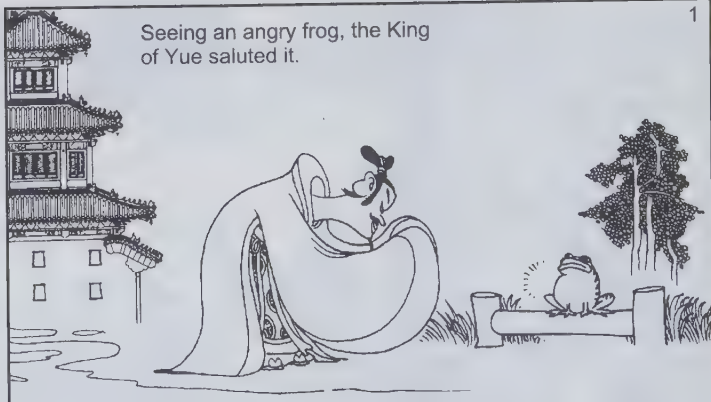


Saluting the Frog



Seeing an angry frog, the King of Yue saluted it.

1



Why does Your Majesty salute it?

His coachman asked:

A frog of such courageous spirit deserves my respect.

Even a spirited frog commands the respect of the King, let alone the brave.

That's true!

3



2



Later in the year, a brave man cut off his own head to be presented to the King.

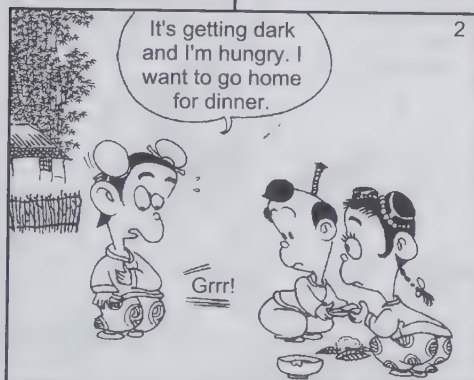
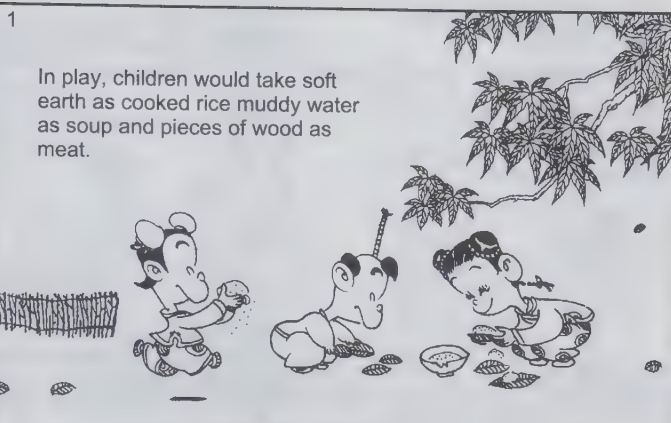
4



A man could give his life for recognition. By honouring courage, the King of Yue was able to motivate his men even to the point of sacrificing themselves.



Virtues are just for Jest



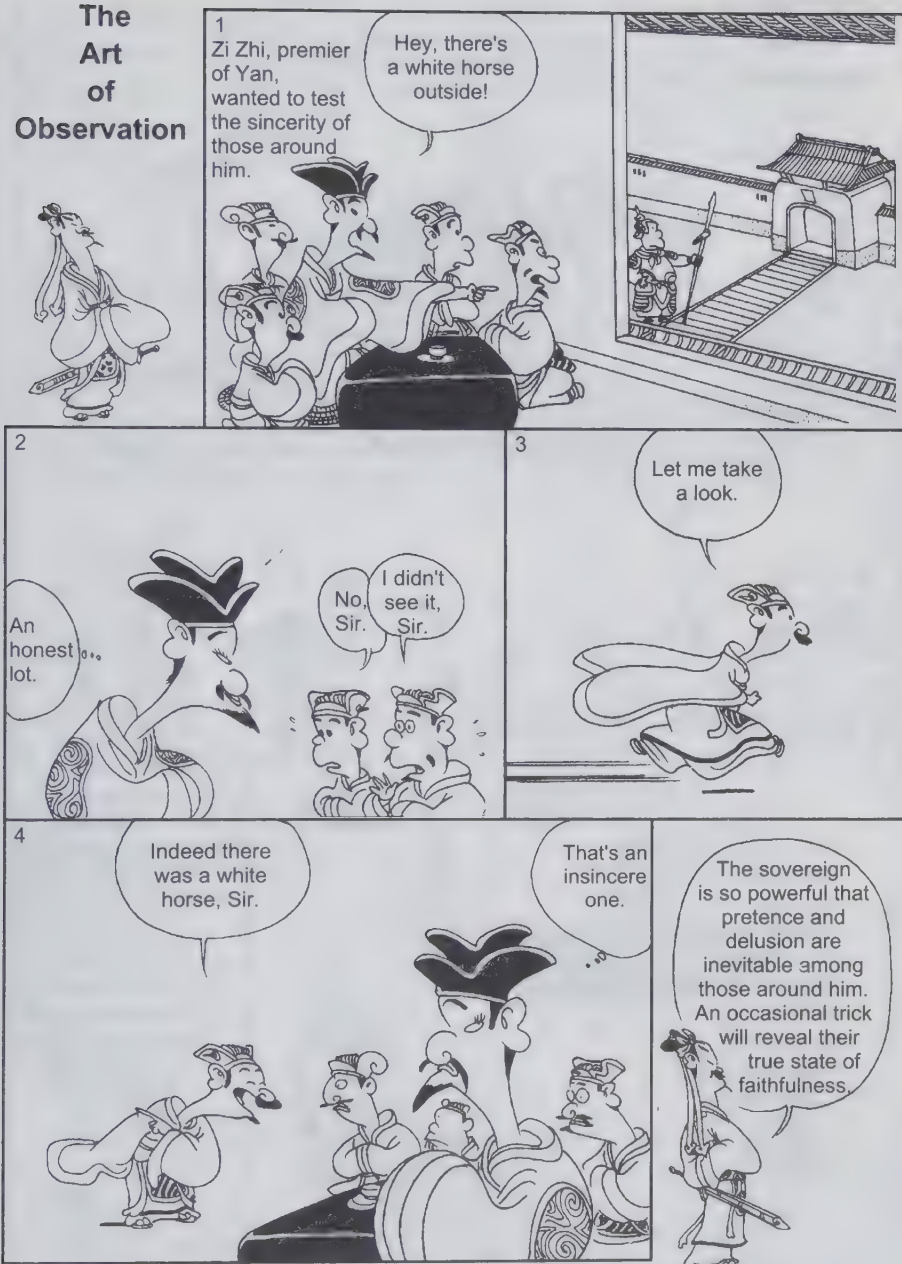
Eulogies for the legacy of remote antiquity are superficial no matter how eloquently they are expressed; and tributes for the virtues of former kings can't be used as instruments of government. They're just for jest.



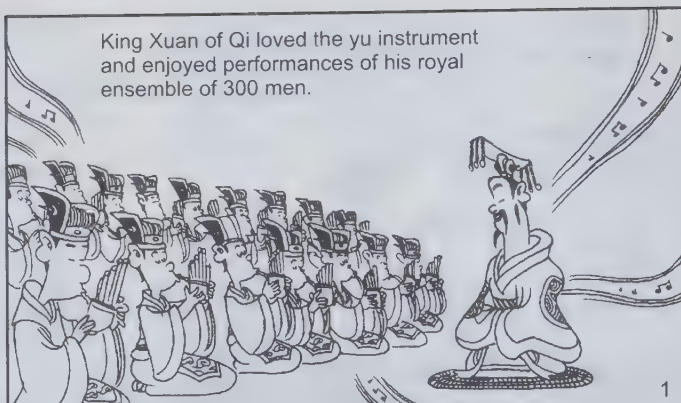
Excessive Compassion Ruins the Law



The Art of Observation



Just Making Up the Number in an Ensemble



King Xuan of Qi loved the yu instrument and enjoyed performances of his royal ensemble of 300 men.

2

A bogus musician was able to stay undetected in the ensemble.



After the demise of King Xuan, King Min ascended the throne and he, too, loved the yu-in solo performance.



3

4

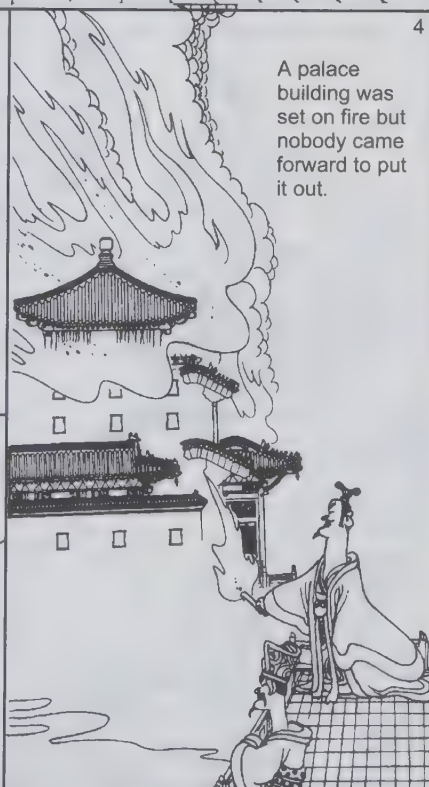
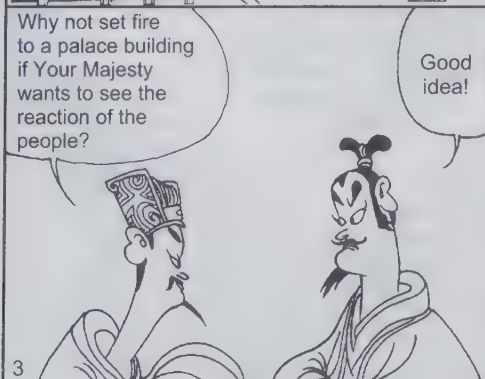
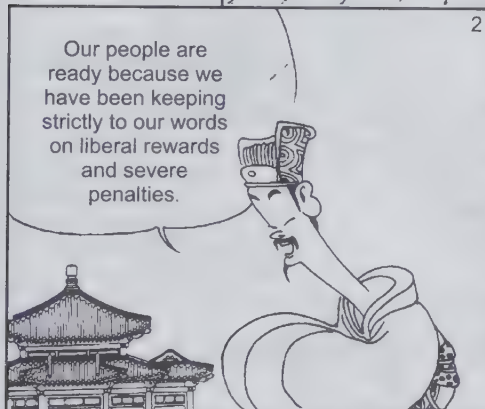
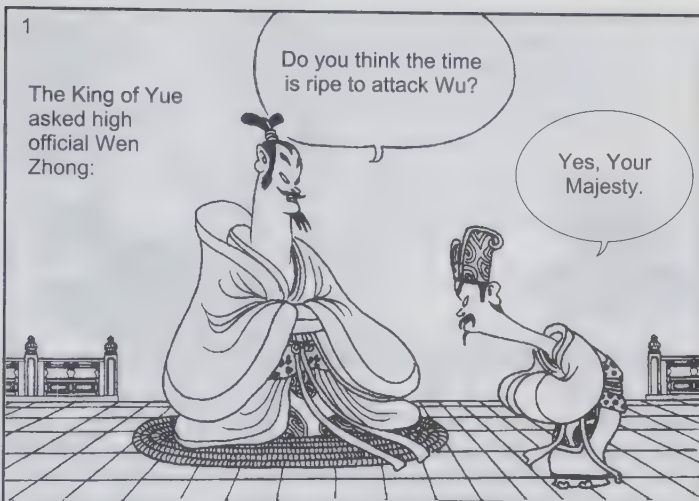
The bogus musician bolted at once.



A sovereign who listens carefully to individual opinions of his ministers is able to tell the wise apart from the foolish. This way, the incompetent will not be able to hide themselves.



An Acid Test of the Law

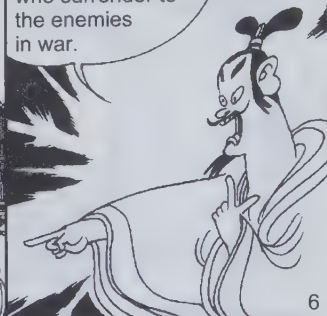


5

Those who die in fire-fighting will be rewarded the same way as those who die in battle; and those who survive will also be rewarded as those who defeat the enemies in combat.



Those who don't take part in fire-fighting shall be held guilty as men who surrender to the enemies in war.



6

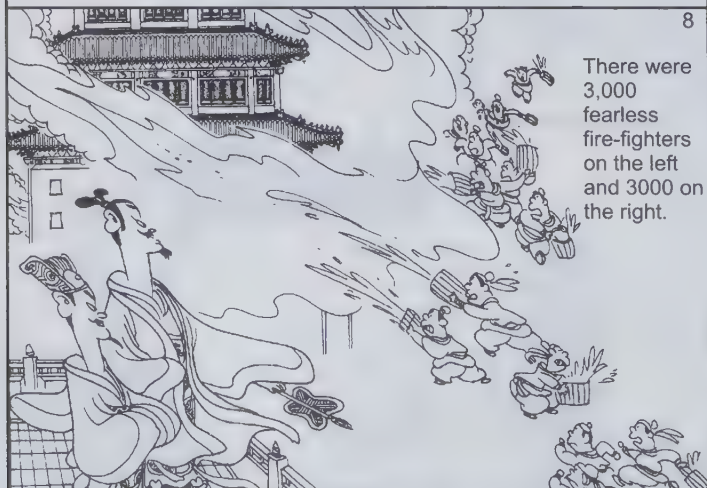
7 Thereupon, men who had rubbed mud and ointment on their skin and put on wet clothes raced to the scene of the fire.



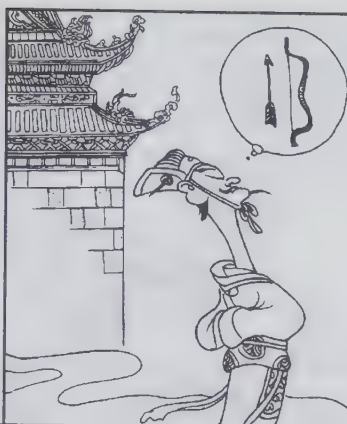
Liberal rewards and severe punishments, administered strictly, are effective tools to direct the people. Used judiciously, they're a guarantee for victory.

8

There were 3,000 fearless fire-fighters on the left and 3000 on the right.



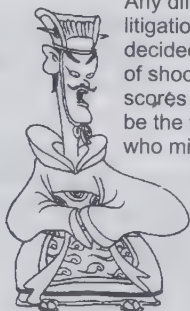
Archery Justice



1

When Li Kui was governor of the Upper Land in Wei, he wanted every man to shoot well.

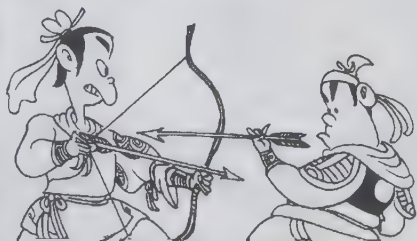
So he issued an order:



Any difficult case of litigation shall be decided by the outcome of shooting: he who scores a direct hit shall be the winner and he who misses, the loser.

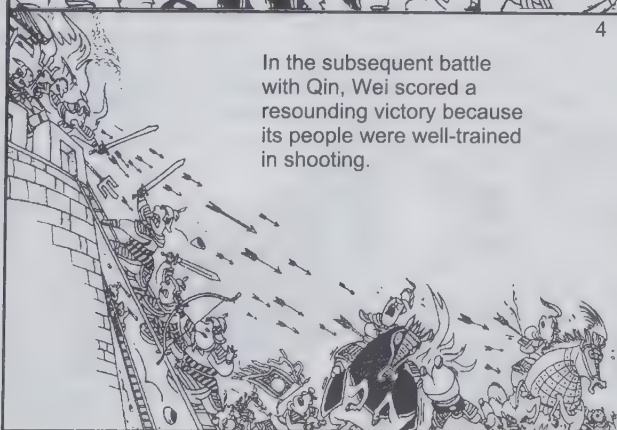
2

Archery became a popular pursuit overnight.



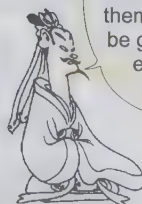
3

In the subsequent battle with Qin, Wei scored a resounding victory because its people were well-trained in shooting.



4

Man is self-seeking by nature. To get others to proceed in a desired direction takes nothing more than telling them the profit to be gained at the end of that journey.

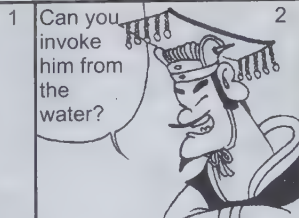


Invoking the River God



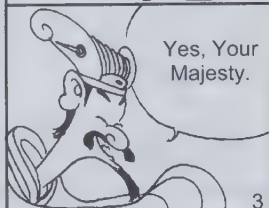
He Bo the River God is an important deity. Why doesn't Your Majesty make an attempt to meet him?

A man said to the King of Qi:



1 Can you invoke him from the water?

2

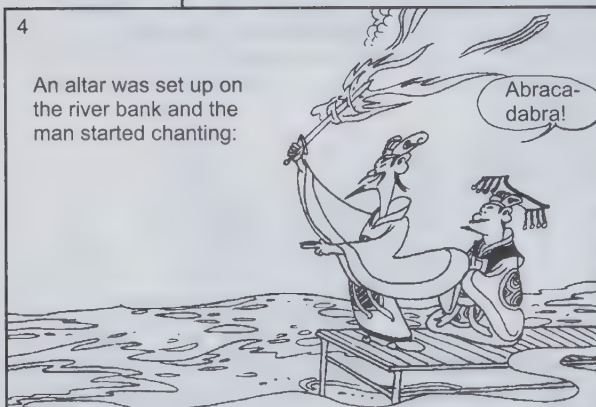


Yes, Your Majesty.

3

4

An altar was set up on the river bank and the man started chanting:



Abraca-dabra!

5

At the same time a big fish was seen swimming by.



6

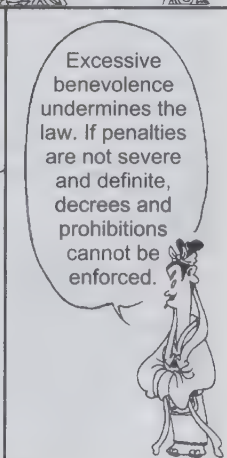
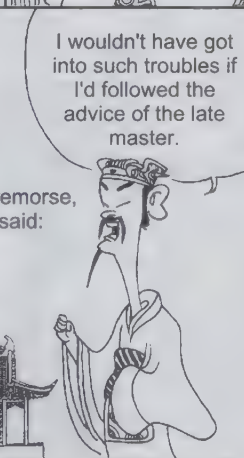
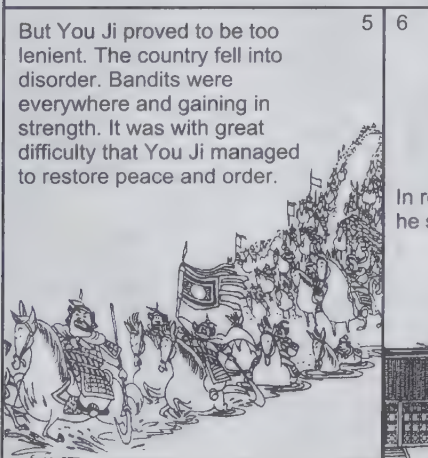
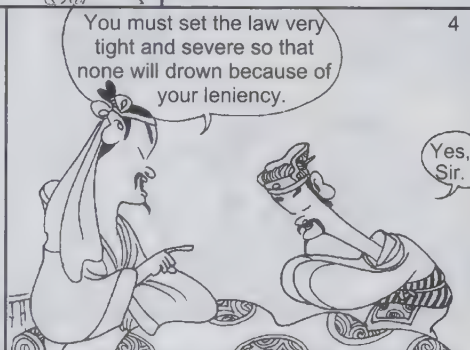
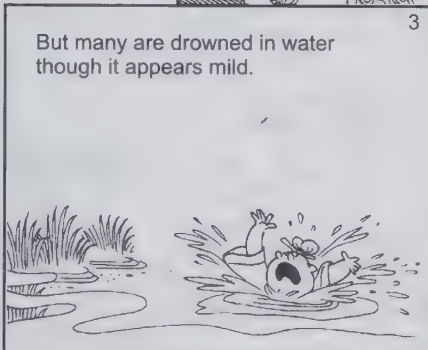
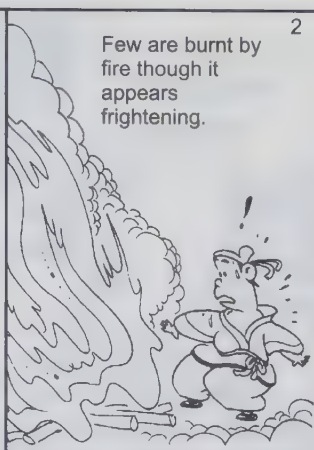
That's He Bo, Your Majesty!



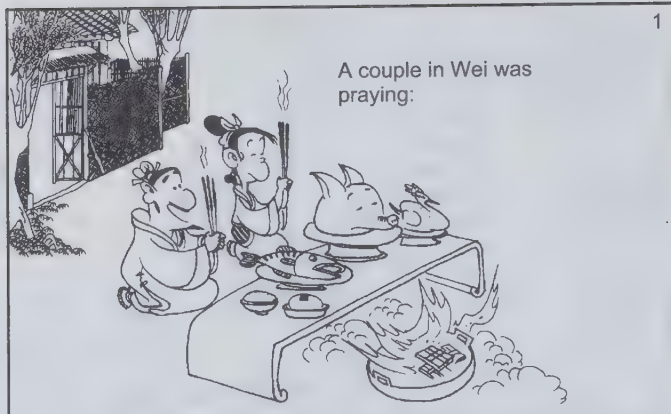
Over trusting someone without consulting others makes one a vulnerable target for deception.



The Nature of Water and Fire



A Wife's Prayer



A couple in Wei was praying:

1



God, please grant me a hundred rolls of cloth.

2



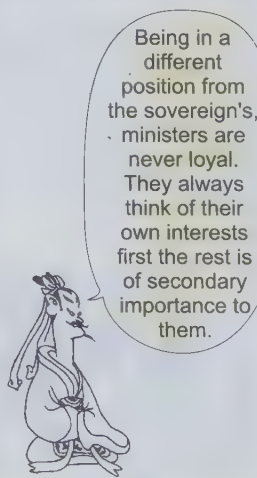
Why did you pray for so little?

3



If I prayed for more and you became rich, you'd buy a concubine.

4



Being in a different position from the sovereign's, ministers are never loyal. They always think of their own interests first the rest is of secondary importance to them.

He who Conquers Himself is Mighty

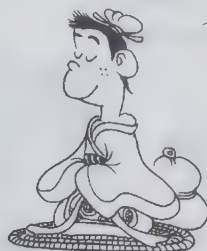


1

Zi Xia asked
Zheng Zi:

Why have you
become so
stout?

Because
I've won a
battle.

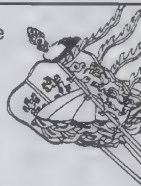


What do
you
mean by
that?

Reading about
former kings, I
rejoiced in their
virtues.

2 3

Going out and seeing the
rich and noble, I rejoiced
in their pleasures, too.



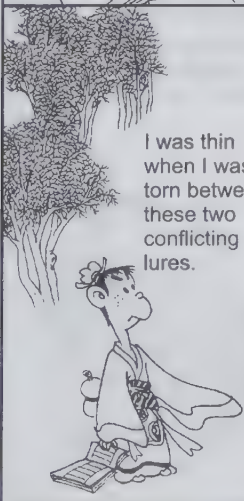
4

Now I'm stout
because the
virtues of former
kings have
triumphed.

5

I was thin
when I was
torn between
these two
conflicting
lures.

The
difficulty of
volition lies
not in
conquering
others but in
conquering
oneself.



Skilful Deception and Clumsy Sincerity

Yue Yang, a general of Wei, led an attack on Zhongshan. His son was in the besieged town.

1

General! The King of Zhongshan has cooked your son and sent you the soup.

2

Let me finish it and I'll flatten Zhongshan.

3

4

Marquis Wen, the Wei ruler, said to Du Shizan:

Yue Yang ate his son's flesh for my sake.

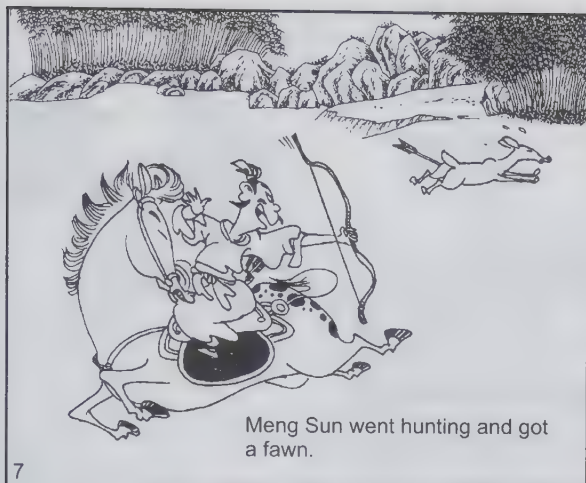
5

He's prepared to eat even his own son. Who else wouldn't he eat?

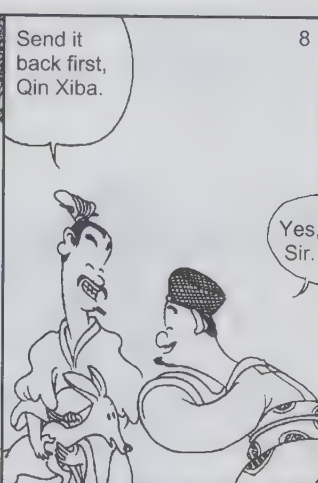
Marquis Wen duly rewarded Yue upon his return after destroying Zhongshan but began to doubt his sincerity.

6

34

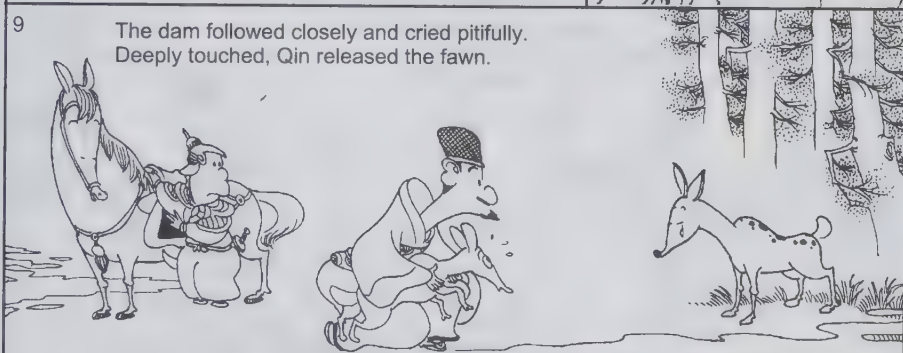


Meng Sun went hunting and got a fawn.

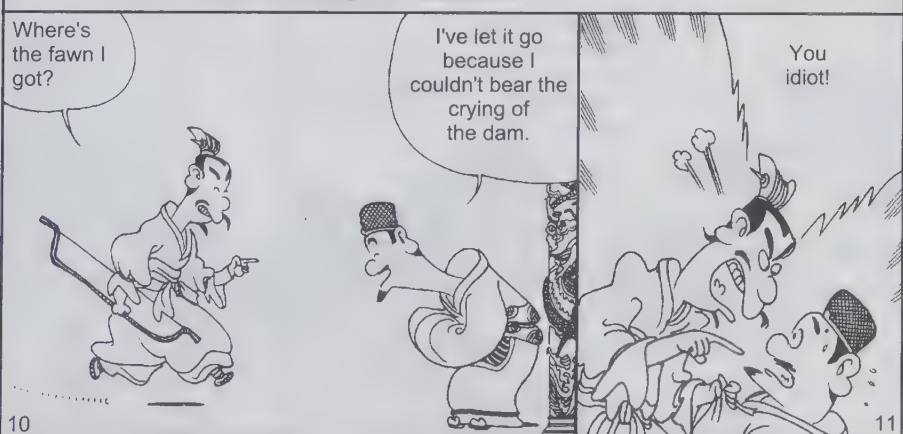


Send it back first, Qin Xiba.

Yes, Sir.



The dam followed closely and cried pitifully. Deeply touched, Qin released the fawn.



Where's the fawn I got?

I've let it go because I couldn't bear the crying of the dam.

You idiot!

12

Qin was sent packing.



Three months later, Qin was recalled by Meng Sun and appointed his son's tutor.



13

Meng Sun's coachman asked in wonder:

Why do you do that after you've punished him?



14

15

If he couldn't bear to see the fawn suffer, would he bear to see my son suffer?



Skilful deception is inferior to clumsy sincerity. Yue Yang incurred suspicion despite his meritorious service but Qin Xiba gained greater trust despite his fault.



Old Horse Knows the Way



Home bound after a foreign campaign,
Guan Zhong, Xi Peng and their men
lost their way.

Where are
we now?



Let's count on the
wisdom of the old
horse and let it
lead the way.

Good
idea.

Please
lead
the
way.

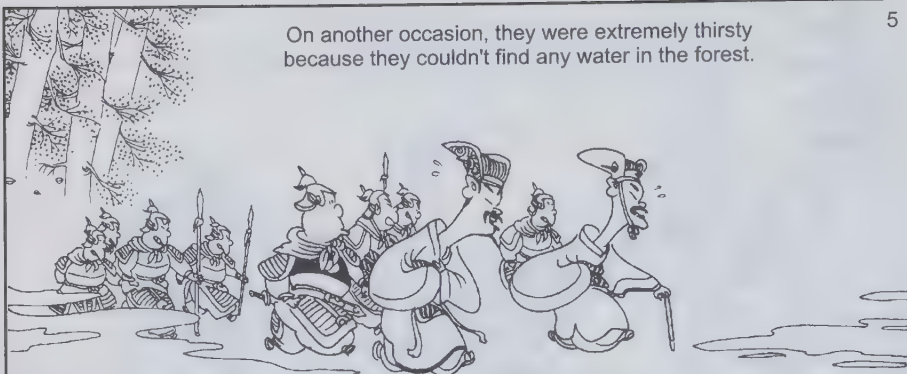


Neigh!

Sure enough,
we've found the
right track.



On another occasion, they were extremely thirsty because they couldn't find any water in the forest.

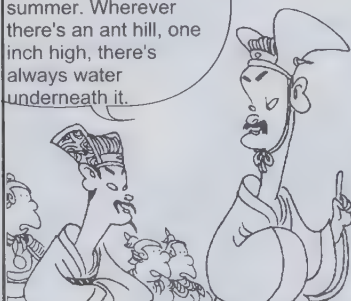


Ants live on the sunny side of the hill in winter and the shady side in summer. Wherever there's an ant hill, one inch high, there's always water underneath it.

Xi Peng said:

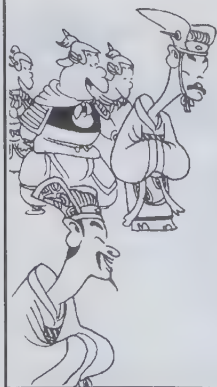
Try digging here.

Yes, Sir.



Water!

The wise never hesitate to learn even from an old horse or ants. But the unwise never think of learning from the wisdom of sages. How utterly stupid they are!



The Likes of Fleas and Lice



Mistaken Priority



1

A man of Wei advised his daughter on the eve of her marriage:

Do save up privately for a rainy day because it is common for a married woman to be cast off.

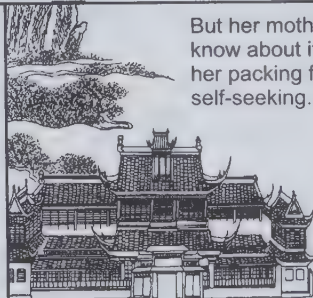


Accordingly, she accumulated her own savings secretly.



2

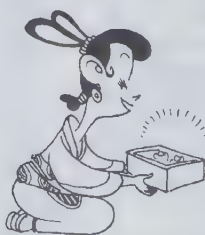
But her mother-in-law came to know about it and finally sent her packing for being too self-seeking.



3

Dad, I've been divorced but my wealth has doubled.

Well done. You've been very wise.

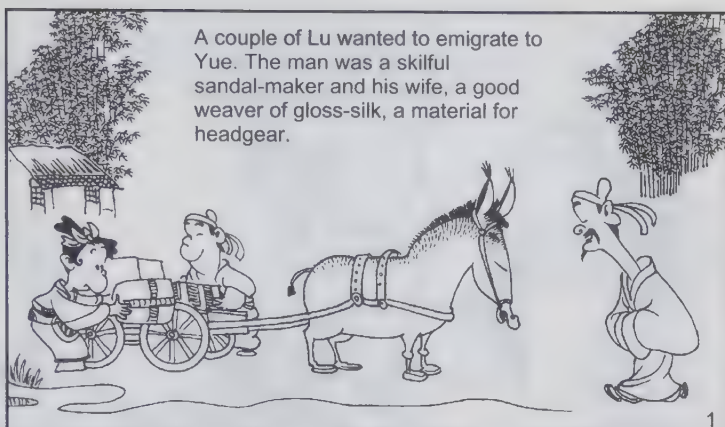


Man is given to self-interest. Being obsessed with self-interest often makes one forget one's rightful role. Office-seekers nowadays are usually of this kind.



4

Barking Up the Wrong Tree



1

You're bound to be poor there.

A friend said:

Why?

Because the Yue people go bare-footed and keep dishevelled hair.

2

3

You maybe skilful, but you're bound to be poor in a country that doesn't need your expertise.

The key to success is doing the right thing at the right time at the right place.

4

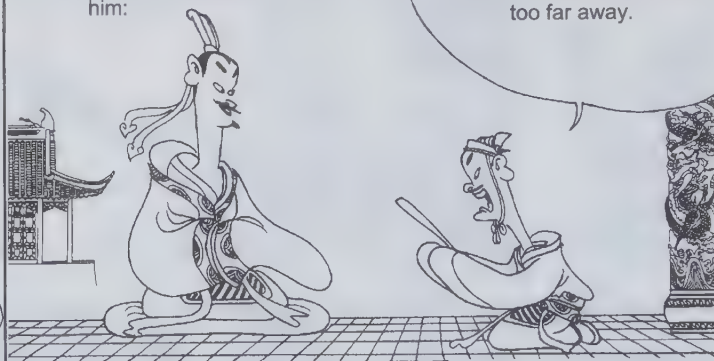
Distant Water and a Fire at Hand



1

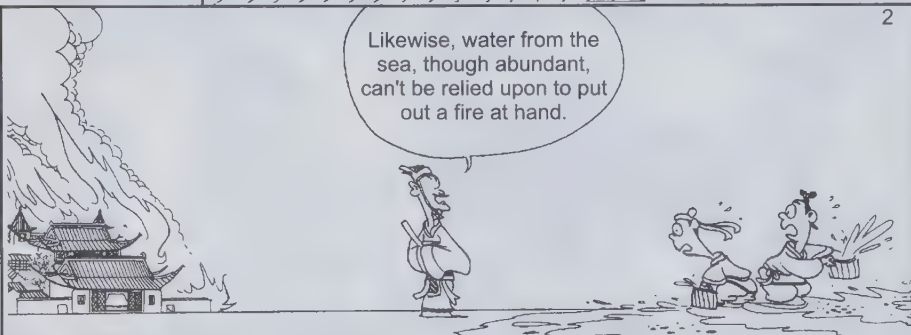
Duke Mu of Lu wanted his sons to take up offices in the courts of Jin and Chu. Li Chu remonstrated with him:

A drowning child won't be saved by good swimmers from Yue because they are too far away.



2

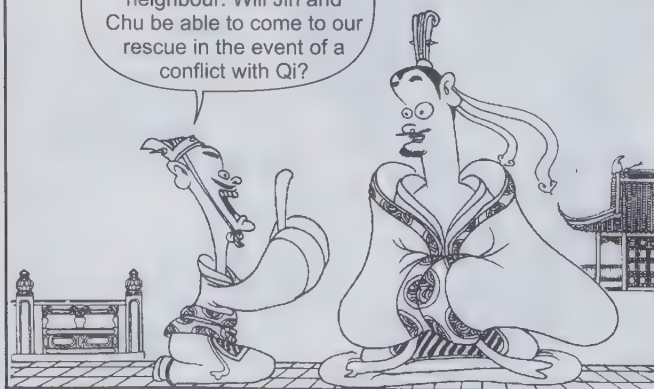
Likewise, water from the sea, though abundant, can't be relied upon to put out a fire at hand.



3

Now, though Chu and Jin are strong, Qi is our close neighbour. Will Jin and Chu be able to come to our rescue in the event of a conflict with Qi?

Practical usage counts. The best help is a timely help.



Holding up a Target for Yi

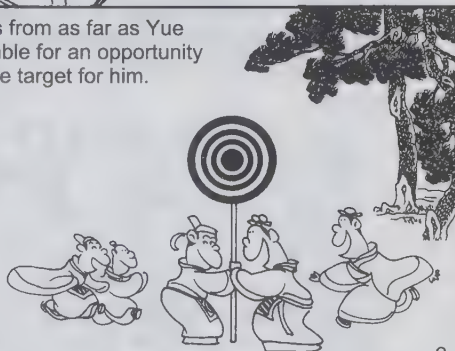
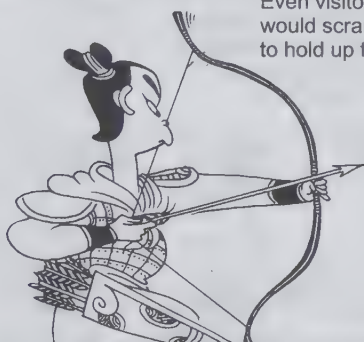


When Hou Yi, a legendary crack shot, got ready to shoot ...



1

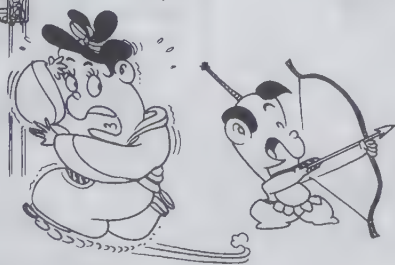
Even visitors from as far as Yue would scramble for an opportunity to hold up the target for him.



2

Danger!

However, when a young boy tried shooting an arrow, even his loving mother would keep a wide berth.



3

Even a stranger can trust another on something known to be perfectly safe; but a mother can't even trust her own son when it comes to a matter of little confidence.



Portent



A man had a cruel and fierce neighbour.

Finding the situation unbearable, he wanted to sell his property and move away.



The day of retribution is due for this guy. Why not wait for a while?



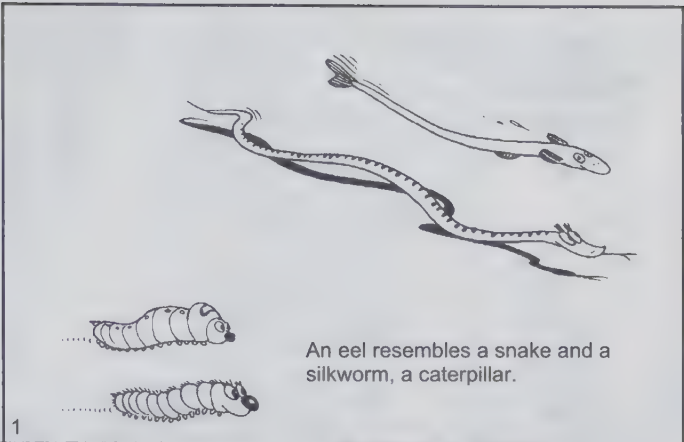
I'm afraid his day of reckoning comes only after he has killed me!



A portent of danger should be heeded and precautionary measures taken.



A Source of Courage

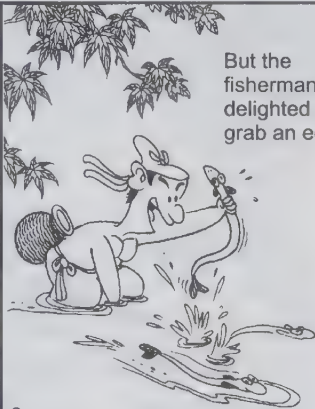


An eel resembles a snake and a silkworm, a caterpillar.

A man is frightened at the sight of a snake; a woman's hair stands on end at the sight of a caterpillar.



But the fisherman is delighted to grab an eel.



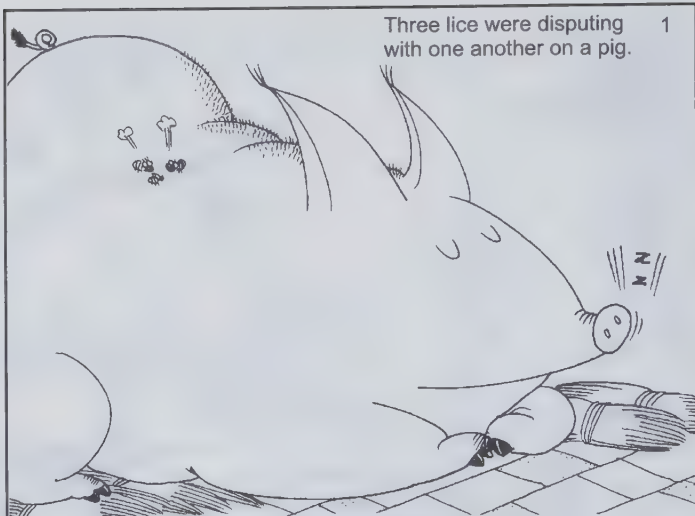
A woman shows no fear in picking up silkworms.



Motivated by profit a man would surge ahead, forgetting his abhorrence and fear.



Lice Fighting Over a Pig



Three lice were disputing with one another on a pig. 1

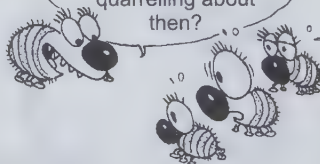
2 What are you quarrelling about?



We're fighting for the choicest territory.



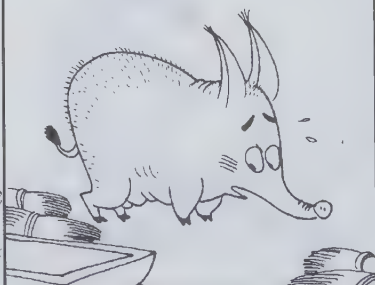
3 The pig will be slaughtered soon as a sacrificial offering for the Winter Festival. What will you be quarrelling about then?



4 Thereupon, the lice stopped bickering and sucked as much blood as possible from the animal.



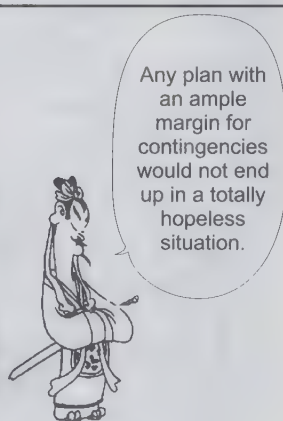
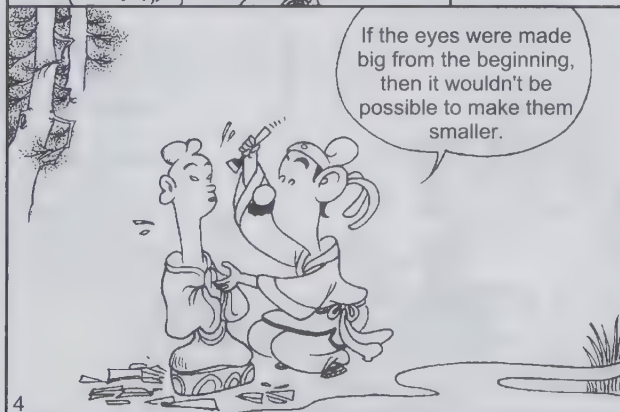
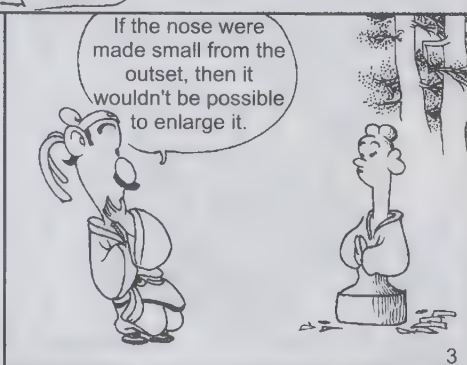
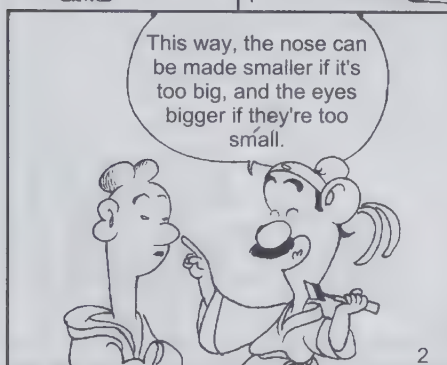
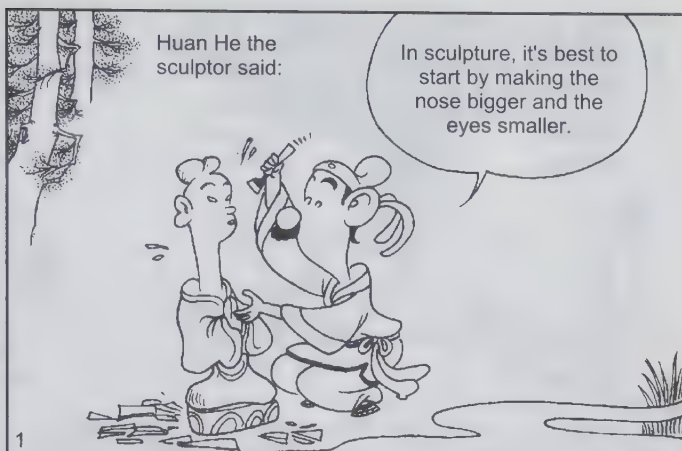
5 As it grew thinner and thinner, its owner decided to spare it.



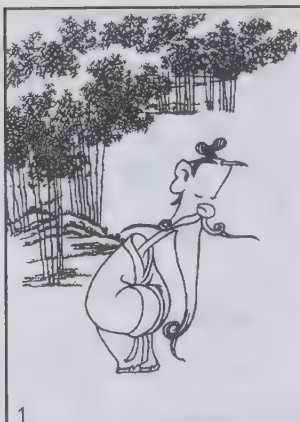
Profit seekers, preoccupied with their own interests, are constantly in dispute with one another. If only they paused and thought of the larger issues, they'd realise their true position.



Leaving Margin for Manoeuvre



Wang Shou Burns Books



Wang Shou, a load of books on his back, met Xu Feng, a recluse.

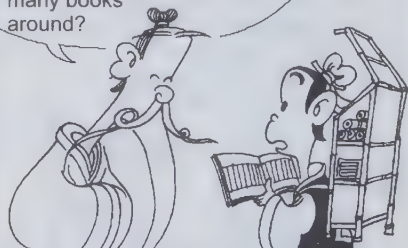


Events are shaped by human actions which, in turn, depend on the exigencies of a situation. Therefore, to a wise man, nothing's immutable.



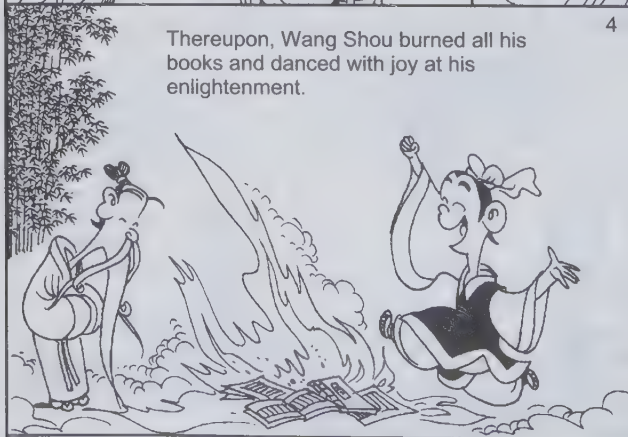
2

Books are born of man's wisdom. Therefore, a wise man never sticks to the letters of books. Why, then, are you lugging so many books around?



3

Thereupon, Wang Shou burned all his books and danced with joy at his enlightenment.

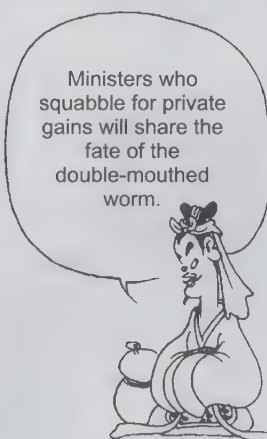
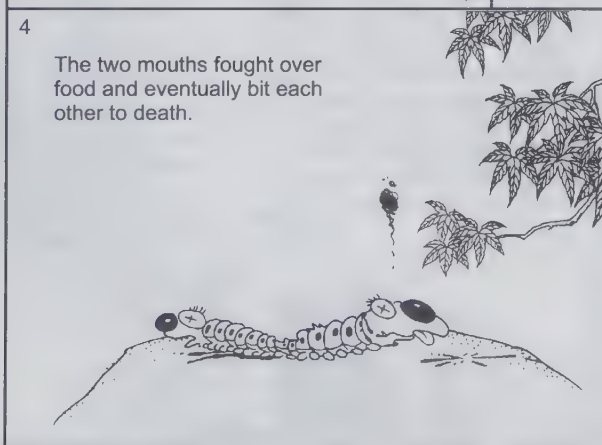
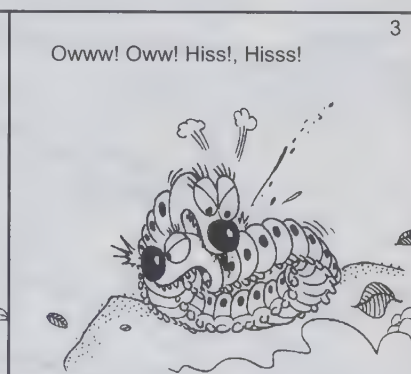
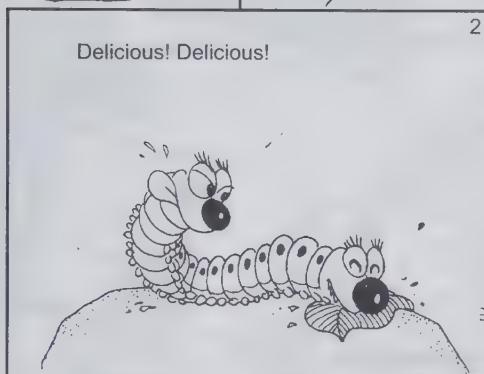
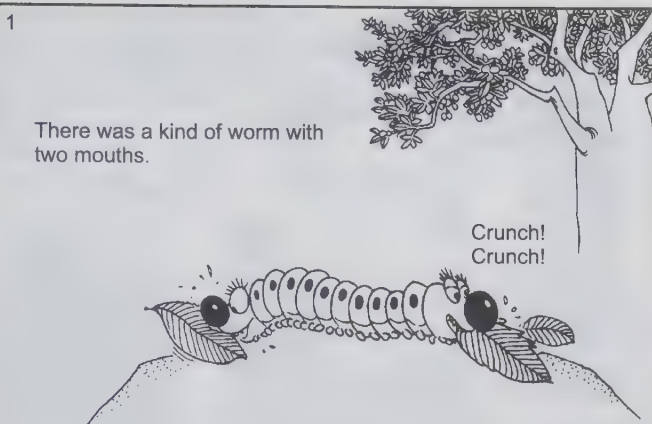


4

The wise do not keep books nor preach with words. They don't adhere rigidly to anything but follow the natural course of Tao.



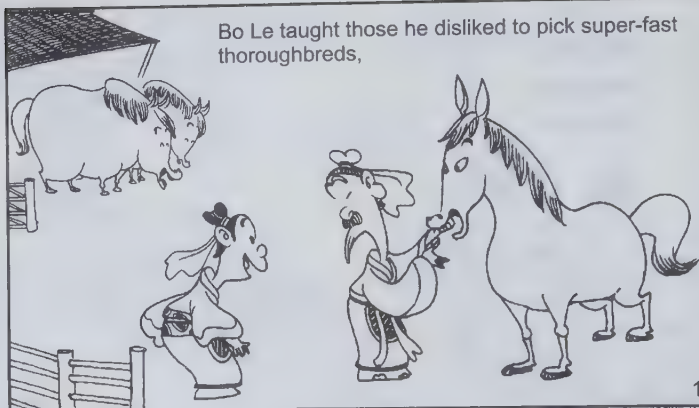
The Double-mouthed Worm



Bo Le Teaches Horse Appraising

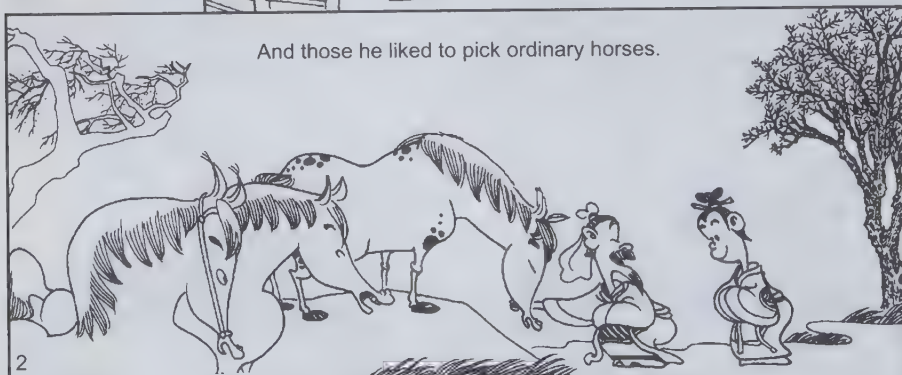


Bo Le taught those he disliked to pick super-fast thoroughbreds,



1

And those he liked to pick ordinary horses.



2

Top thoroughbreds are hard to come by and yield slow profits but ordinary horses are fast selling and bring quick profits.



3

Geniuses are difficult to come by. The backbone of a nation is formed largely by ordinary, capable men. The sovereign who knows how to use these men effectively is a skilful one.



Gorge of legislation

Dong Anyu, a magistrate of the Upper Land in Zhao, came to the brink of a deep gorge on a tour of the mountains.

1

Has anyone ever walked into it?

2



No, Sir.

3

Has any child, any blind or deaf or insane man ever walked into it?

4

No, Sir.

Has any ox, horse, pig or dog ever walked into it?

No, Sir.

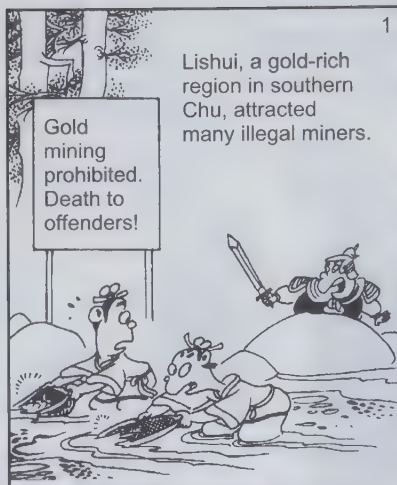
5

If the law is made severe and committing an offence is as fatal as walking into this gorge, then no one will dare violate it. Peace and order will prevail.

6

Excessive benevolence undermines the institution of the law. Enforcement of prohibitions would be impossible if punishment was not firm and definite.

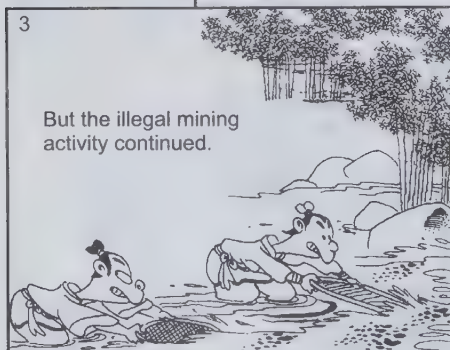
Taking Chances



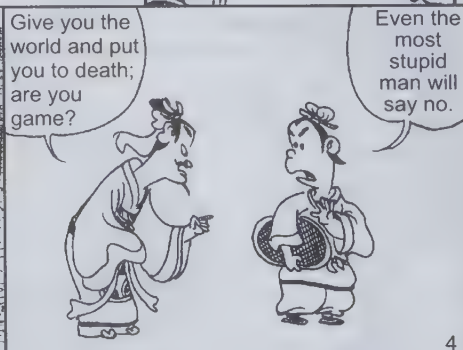
Lishui, a gold-rich region in southern Chu, attracted many illegal miners.



Many were caught for violating the official ban and executed at the market-place.

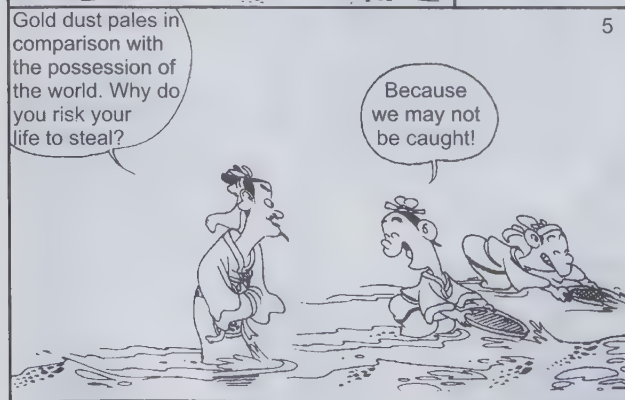


But the illegal mining activity continued.



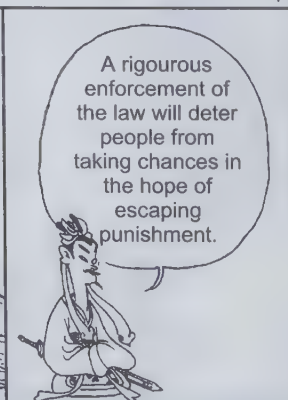
Give you the world and put you to death; are you game?

Even the most stupid man will say no.



Gold dust pales in comparison with the possession of the world. Why do you risk your life to steal?

Because we may not be caught!



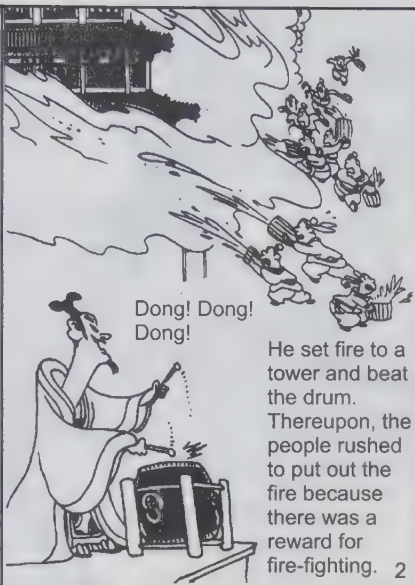
A rigorous enforcement of the law will deter people from taking chances in the hope of escaping punishment.

Getting the People to Brave Fire and Water

In preparation for a war of revenge against Wu, the King of Yue wanted to test the efficacy of his training of his people.



1



Dong! Dong!
Dong!

He set fire to a tower and beat the drum. Thereupon, the people rushed to put out the fire because there was a reward for fire-fighting. 2

He beat the drum by the river and the people rushed into the water because there was a reward for braving the water.

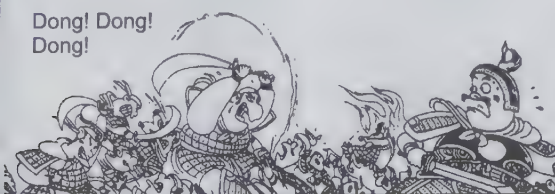


Dong! Dong!
Dong!

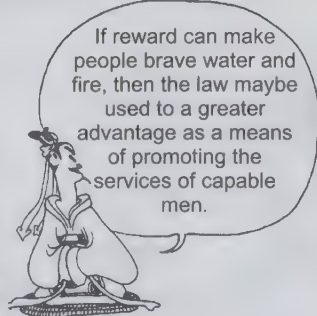
3

On the war front, the people charged forward fearlessly because there was a reward for combat.

4



Dong! Dong!
Dong!



If reward can make people brave water and fire, then the law maybe used to a greater advantage as a means of promoting the services of capable men.

Saluting the Frog



Seeing an angry frog, the King of Yue saluted it.

1

Why does Your Majesty salute it?

His coachman asked:

A frog of such courageous spirit deserves my respect.

Even a spirited frog commands the respect of the King, let alone the brave.

That's true!



2



3

Later in the year, a brave man cut off his own head to be presented to the King.

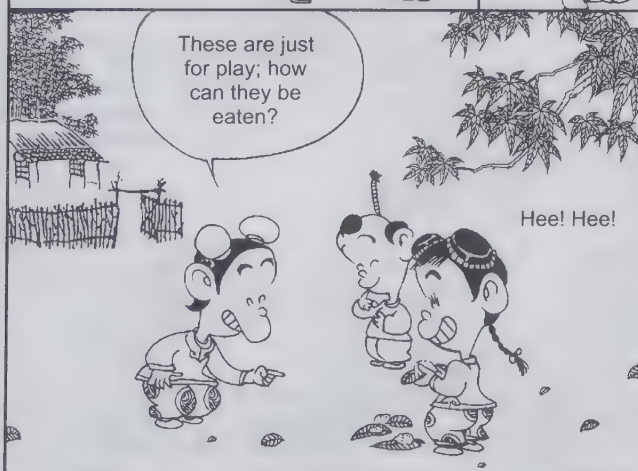
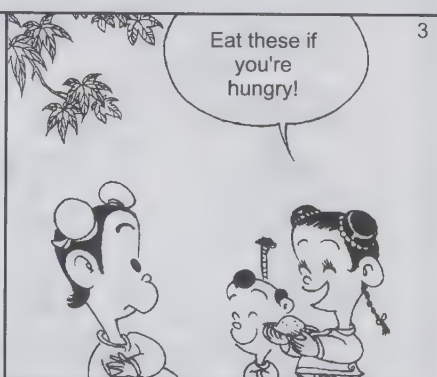
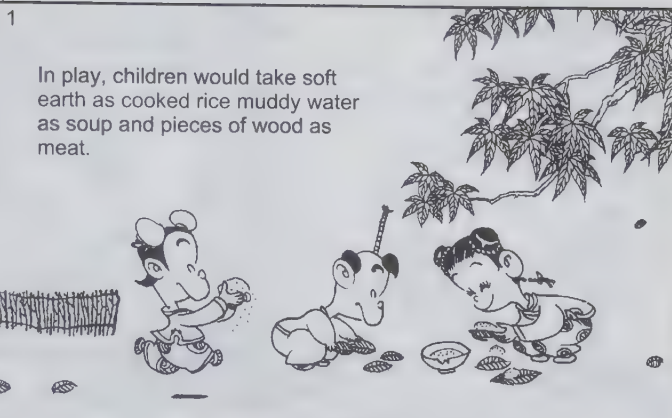
4



A man could give his life for recognition. By honouring courage, the King of Yue was able to motivate his men even to the point of sacrificing themselves.



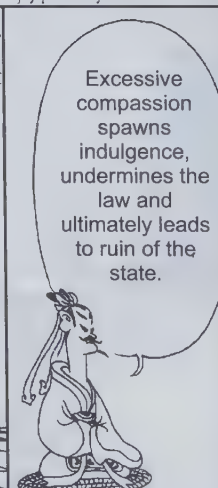
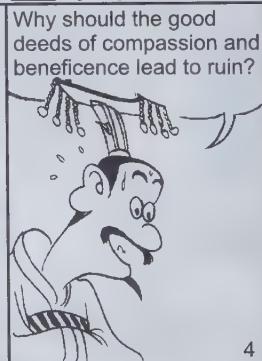
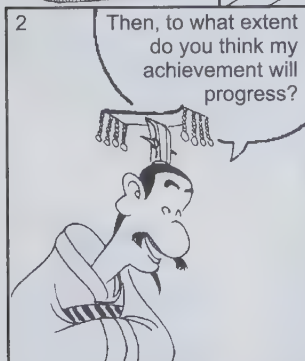
Virtues are just for Jest



Eulogies for the legacy of remote antiquity are superficial no matter how eloquently they are expressed; and tributes for the virtues of former kings can't be used as instruments of government. They're just for jest.



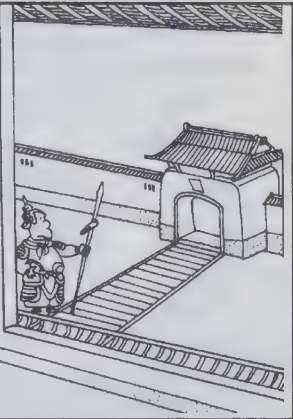
Excessive Compassion Ruins the Law



The Art of Observation

1
Zi Zhi, premier of Yan, wanted to test the sincerity of those around him.

Hey, there's a white horse outside!



2

An honest lot.

No, Sir.

I didn't see it, Sir.

3

Let me take a look.

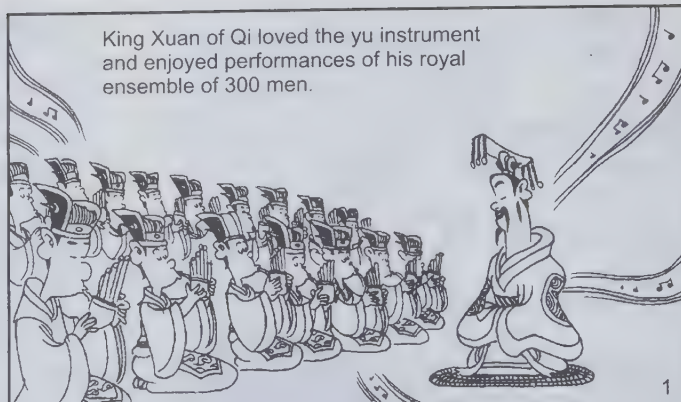
4

Indeed there was a white horse, Sir.

That's an insincere one.

The sovereign is so powerful that pretence and delusion are inevitable among those around him. An occasional trick will reveal their true state of faithfulness.

Just Making Up the Number in an Ensemble



King Xuan of Qi loved the yu instrument and enjoyed performances of his royal ensemble of 300 men.

2

A bogus musician was able to stay undetected in the ensemble.



After the demise of King Xuan, King Min ascended the throne and he, too, loved the yu-in solo performance.



4

The bogus musician bolted at once.



A sovereign who listens carefully to individual opinions of his ministers is able to tell the wise apart from the foolish. This way, the incompetent will not be able to hide themselves.



An Acid Test of the Law

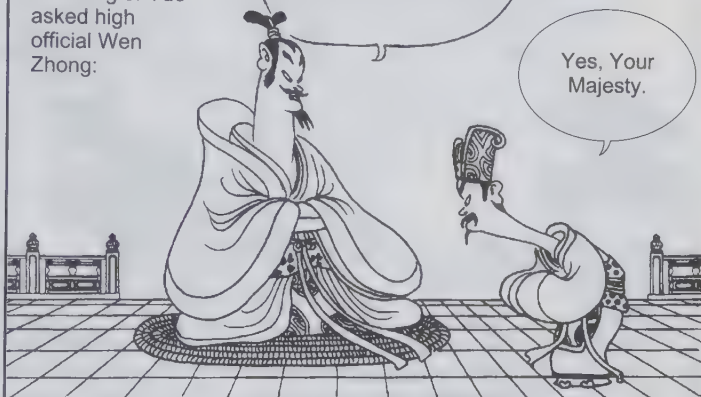


1

The King of Yue asked high official Wen Zhong:

Do you think the time is ripe to attack Wu?

Yes, Your Majesty.



Our people are ready because we have been keeping strictly to our words on liberal rewards and severe penalties.

2



4

A palace building was set on fire but nobody came forward to put it out.

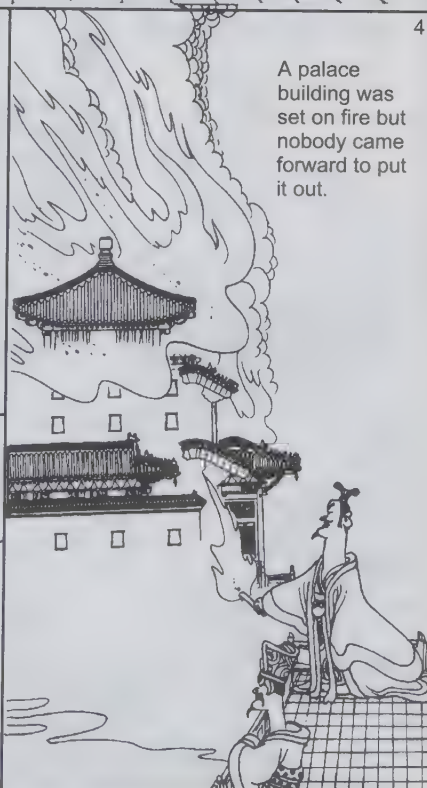


Why not set fire to a palace building if Your Majesty wants to see the reaction of the people?

Good idea!



3

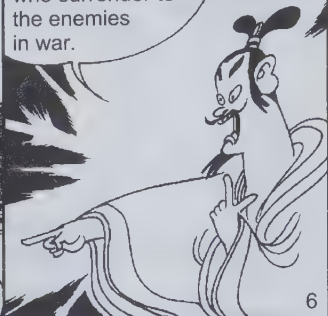


5

Those who die in fire-fighting will be rewarded the same way as those who die in battle; and those who survive will also be rewarded as those who defeat the enemies in combat.



Those who don't take part in fire-fighting shall be held guilty as men who surrender to the enemies in war.



6

7

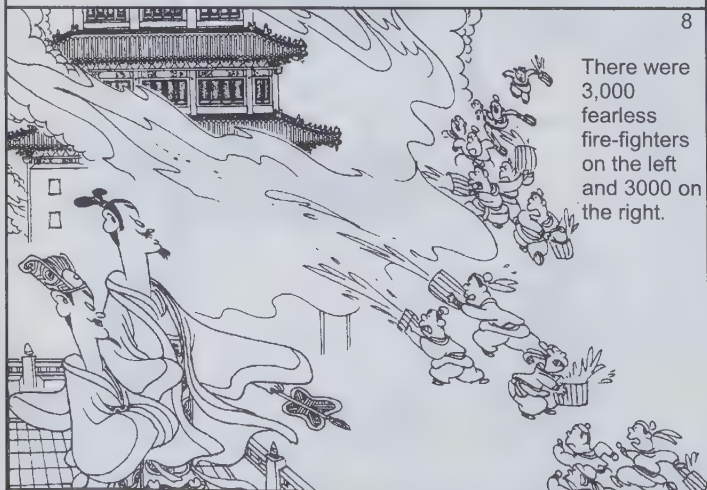
Thereupon, men who had rubbed mud and ointment on their skin and put on wet clothes raced to the scene of the fire.



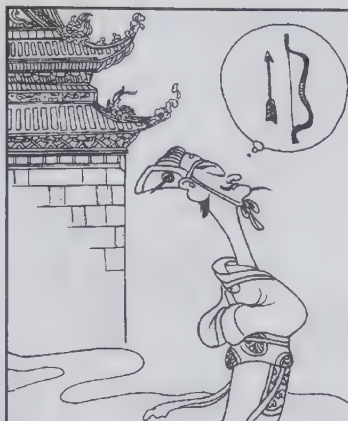
Liberal rewards and severe punishments, administered strictly, are effective tools to direct the people. Used judiciously, they're a guarantee for victory.

8

There were 3,000 fearless fire-fighters on the left and 3000 on the right.



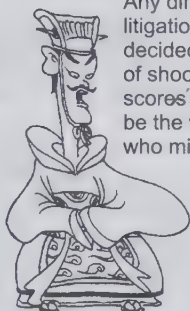
Archery Justice



1

When Li Kui was governor of the Upper Land in Wei, he wanted every man to shoot well.

So he issued an order:

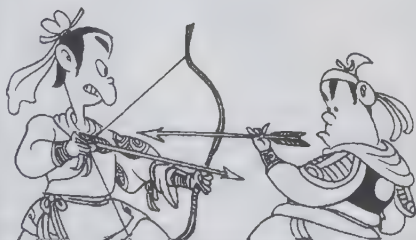


Any difficult case of litigation shall be decided by the outcome of shooting: he who scores a direct hit shall be the winner and he who misses, the loser.

2

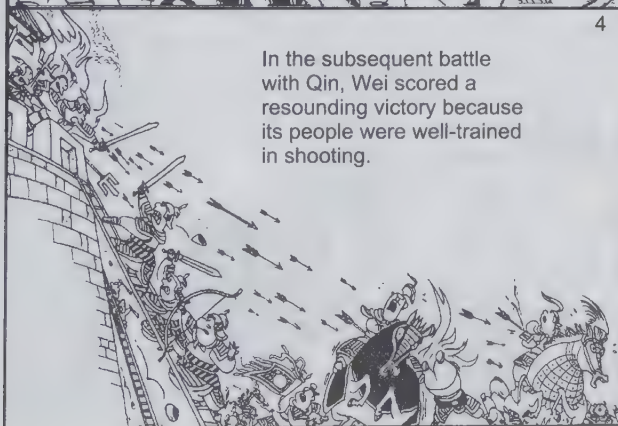
Archery became a popular pursuit overnight.

3



4

In the subsequent battle with Qin, Wei scored a resounding victory because its people were well-trained in shooting.



Man is self-seeking by nature. To get others to proceed in a desired direction takes nothing more than telling them the profit to be gained at the end of that journey.



Invoking the River God



He Bo the River God is an important deity. Why doesn't Your Majesty make an attempt to meet him?

A man said to the King of Qi:



1

Can you invoke him from the water?

2



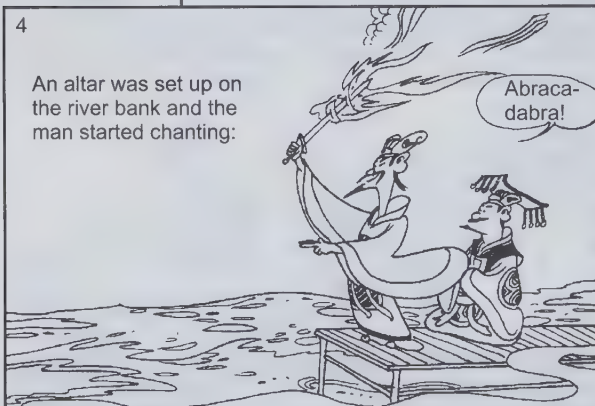
Yes, Your Majesty.

3



4

An altar was set up on the river bank and the man started chanting:



Abracadabra!

5

At the same time a big fish was seen swimming by.



6

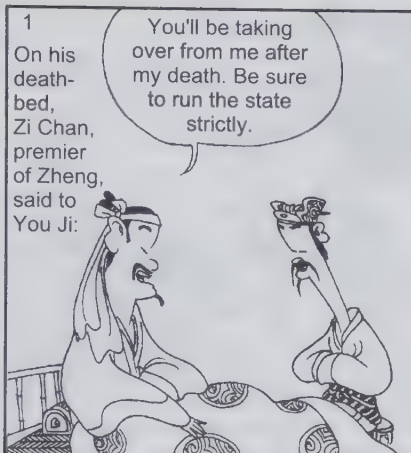
That's He Bo, Your Majesty!



Over trusting someone without consulting others makes one a vulnerable target for deception.



The Nature of Water and Fire



1

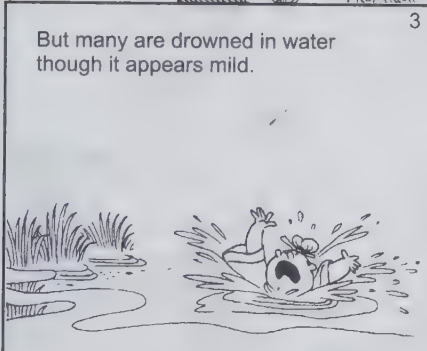
On his deathbed, Zi Chan, premier of Zheng, said to You Ji:

You'll be taking over from me after my death. Be sure to run the state strictly.



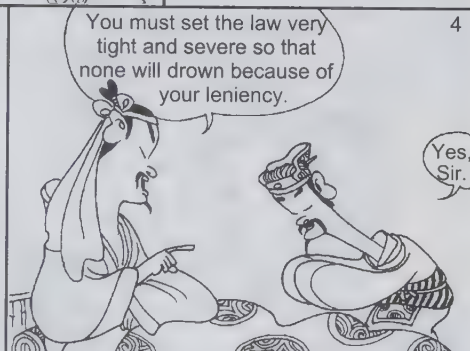
2

Few are burnt by fire though it appears frightening.



3

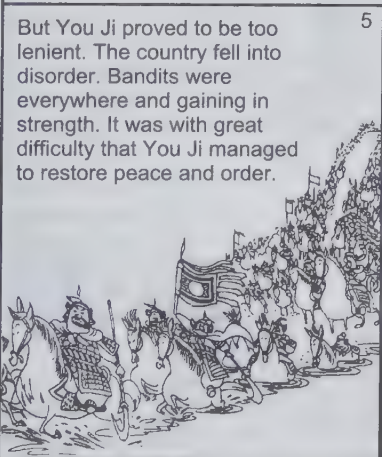
But many are drowned in water though it appears mild.



4

You must set the law very tight and severe so that none will drown because of your leniency.

Yes, Sir.



5

But You Ji proved to be too lenient. The country fell into disorder. Bandits were everywhere and gaining in strength. It was with great difficulty that You Ji managed to restore peace and order.

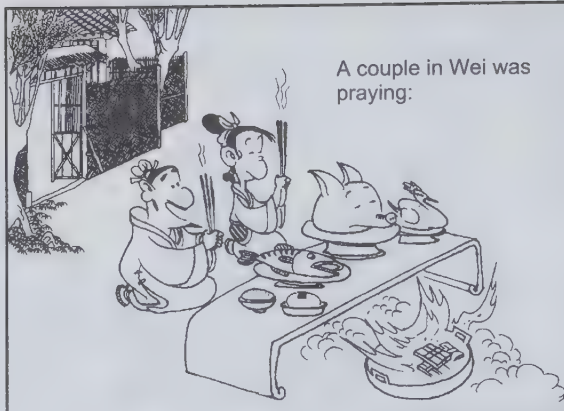
6

I wouldn't have got into such troubles if I'd followed the advice of the late master.

In remorse, he said:

Excessive benevolence undermines the law. If penalties are not severe and definite, decrees and prohibitions cannot be enforced.

A Wife's Prayer



A couple in Wei was praying:



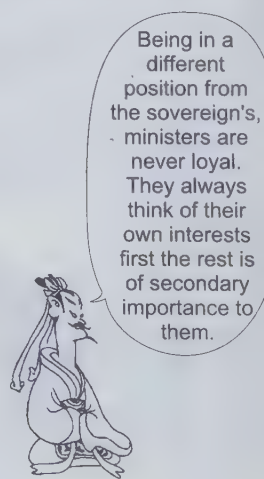
God, please grant me a hundred rolls of cloth.



Why did you pray for so little?

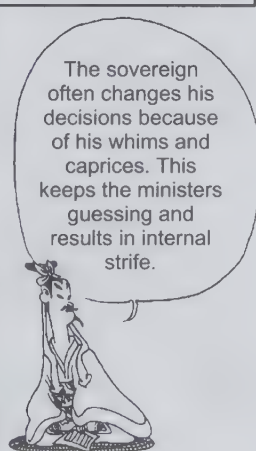
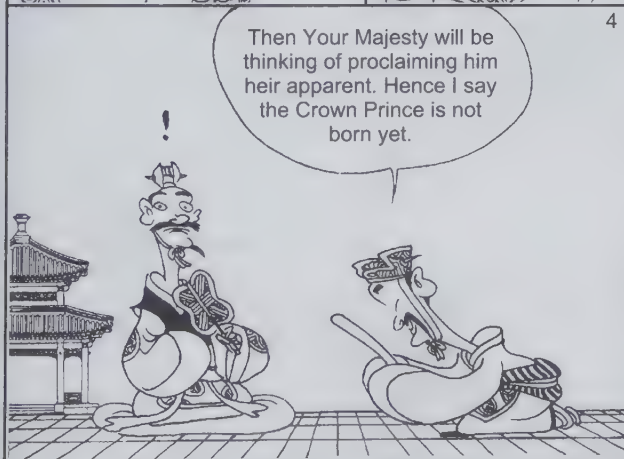
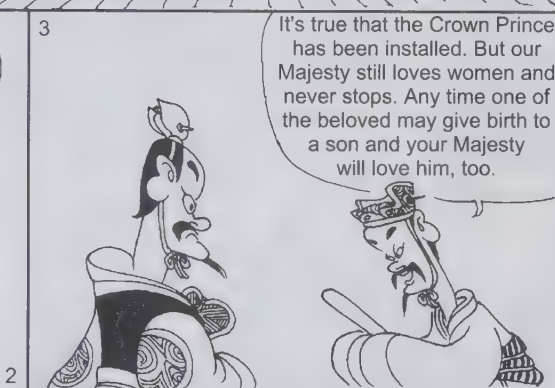
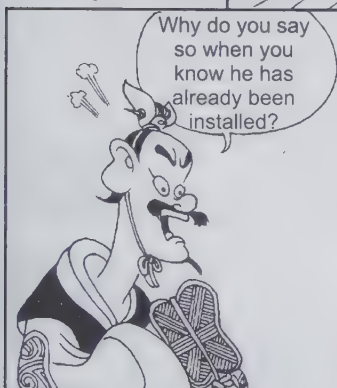
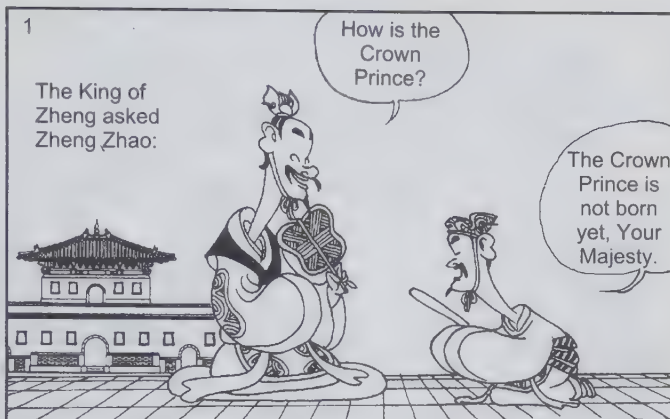


If I prayed for more and you became rich, you'd buy a concubine.



Being in a different position from the sovereign's, ministers are never loyal. They always think of their own interests first the rest is of secondary importance to them.

The Crown Prince Is Not Born Yet



The Unburnt Hairs

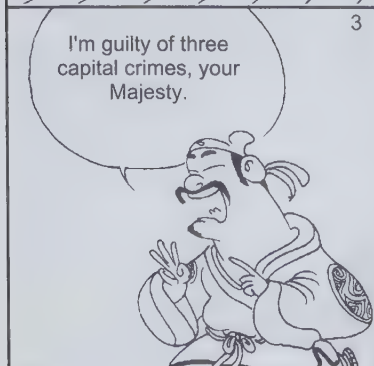


1

One day, Duke Wen of Jin found his roast meat twisted with hairs.



2

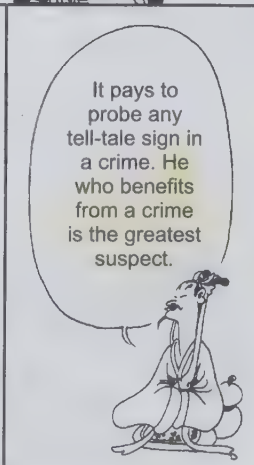
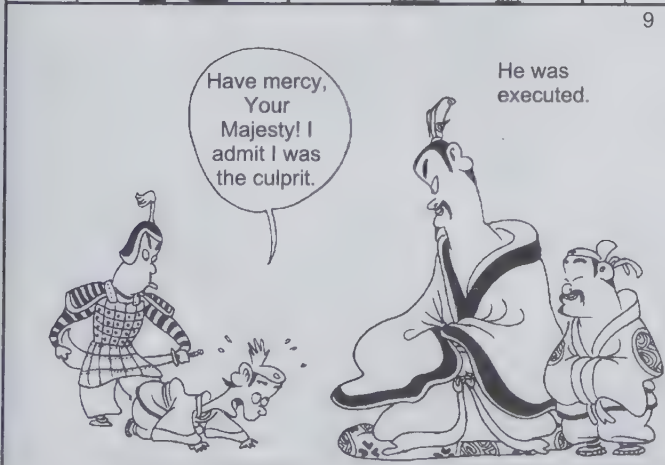
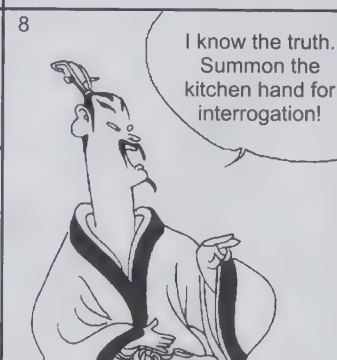
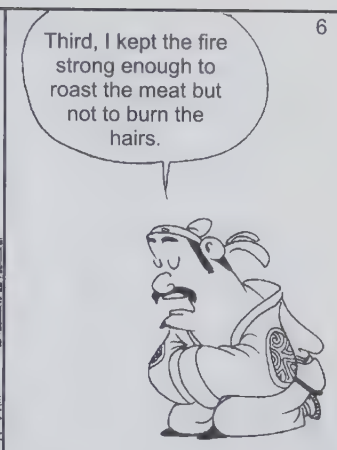


3



4

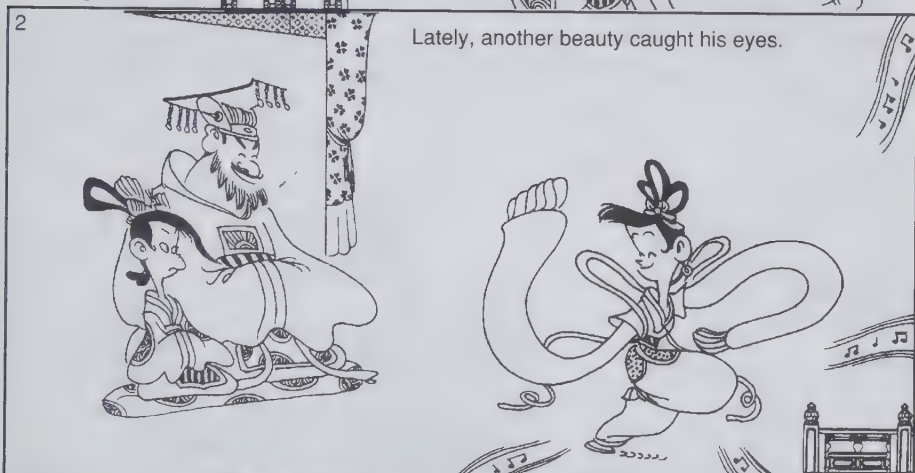
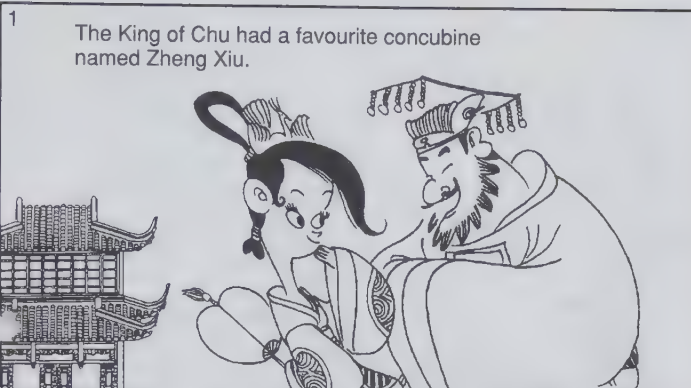
* a legendary sword

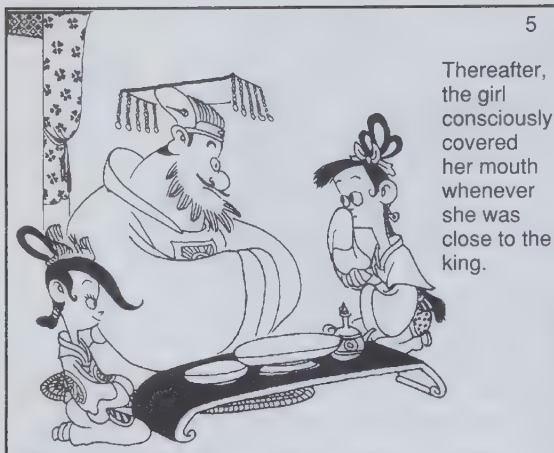


Pebbles in the Bath



A Noseless Beauty





5

Thereafter, the girl consciously covered her mouth whenever she was close to the king.

6



Why does she always cover her mouth?



Obviously she hates Your Majesty's bad breath.

What!

7



How dare you complain about my bad breath! Cut off her nose!

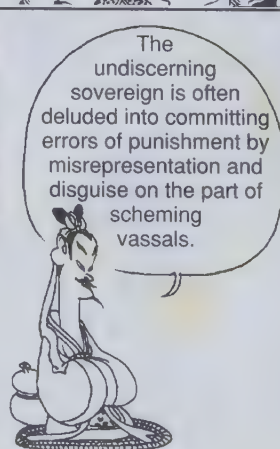
8



Hee! Hee!

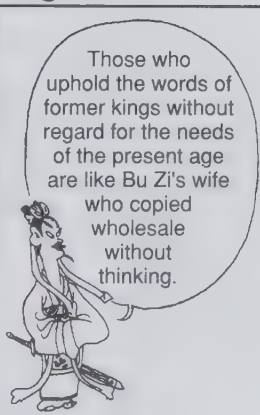
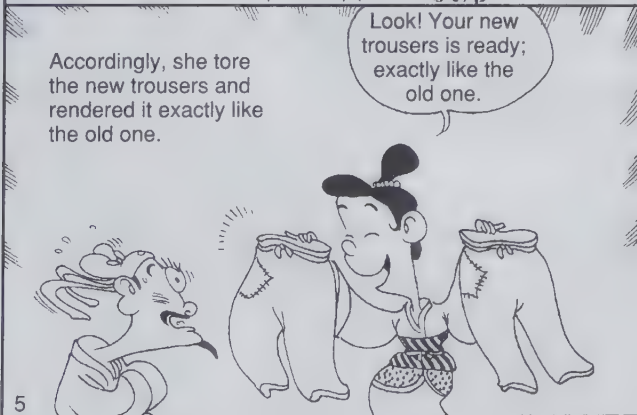
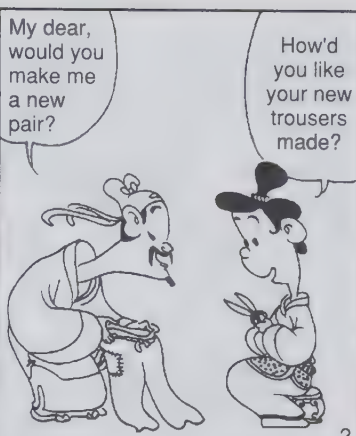
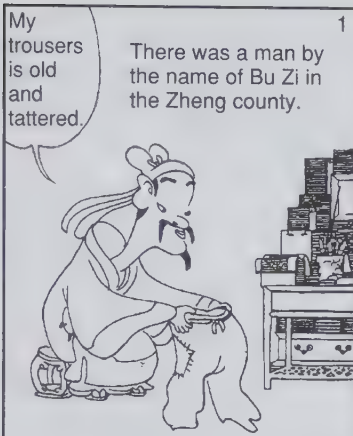
Ouch!

9



The undiscerning sovereign is often deluded into committing errors of punishment by misrepresentation and disguise on the part of scheming vassals.

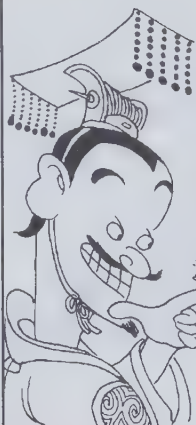
New Trousers by Bu Zi's Wife



Monkey at the Tip of a Bramble Thorn



1



A man of Wei knew that the King of Yan had a passion for all things small and exquisite.

I can carve a monkey at the tip of a bramble thorn, Your Majesty.

Wonderful!



2

3

A man of great skill like you deserves a fief of 30 square li* When can I see your monkey carving?



4

Your Majesty must first abstain from the harem and from meat and wine for half a year.



Then, when the rain stops and the sun shines again, Your Majesty will be able to see the monkey in a dark, shady place.



Oh dear!

5

6

Hee! Hee! Hee!



That's too much for me!



* 1 li = 1/2 km

So the king continued to provide for this man but never got to see the monkey carving.



7

I make carving knives, Your Majesty. The object being carved must be bigger than the carving knife. The tip of a bramble thorn can't even take the blade of a knife, how can it be carved into anything?

A blacksmith from Zheng knew of the matter and said to the King of Yan:



8

9

Your Majesty'll know the truth simply by asking the man to show his carving knife.

That's right!

What instrument do you use for carving the monkey?

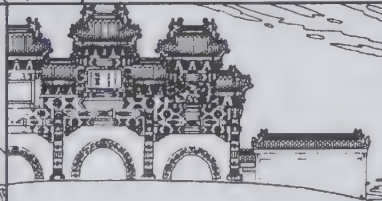
A carving knife, Your Majesty.



10

Can I see it?

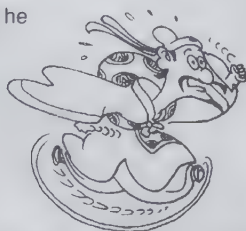
11



And off he bolted.

The sovereign who doesn't take function and utility as the objective of taking counsel is apt to be deluded by spurious talks of roving strategists.

Let me fetch it from the guest house, Your Majesty.



12

13



The Shape of Water



1

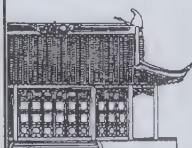
A ruler is like a receptacle, and the people, the water in it.

Confucius said:



2

If the receptacle is square, the water is square.

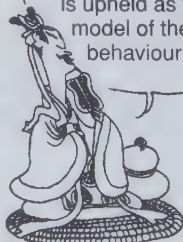


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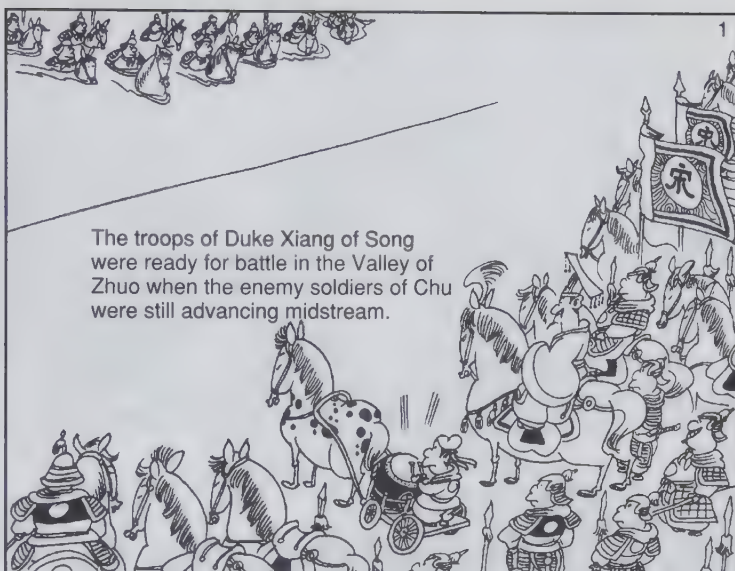
If the receptacle is round, the water is round.



The masses wouldn't believe in something which the sovereign doesn't practise himself. He is upheld as the model of their behaviour.

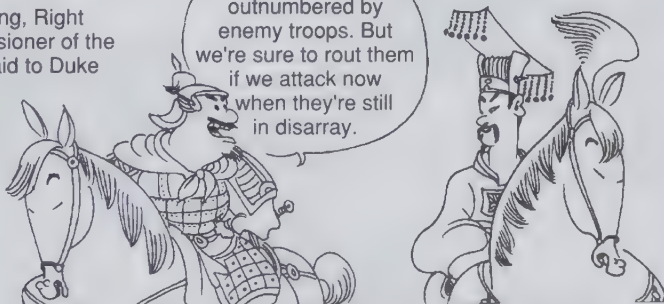


The Benevolence of Duke Xiang

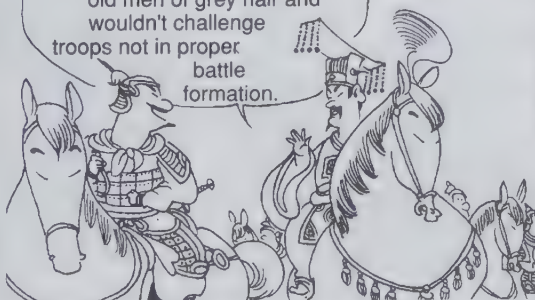


The troops of Duke Xiang of Song were ready for battle in the Valley of Zhuo when the enemy soldiers of Chu were still advancing midstream.

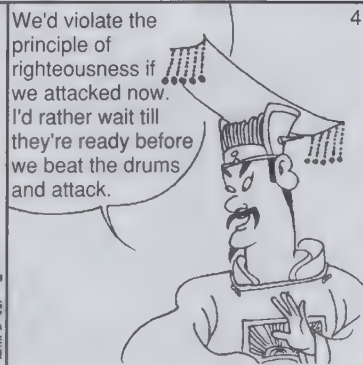
2
Gou Qiang, Right Commissioner of the Army, said to Duke Xiang:
We're outnumbered by enemy troops. But we're sure to rout them if we attack now when they're still in disarray.

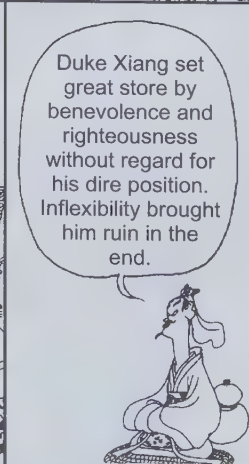
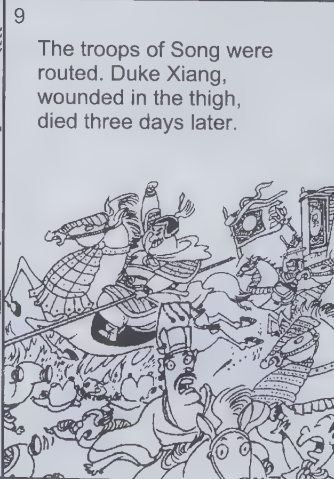
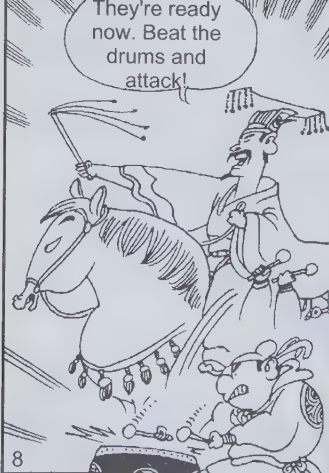
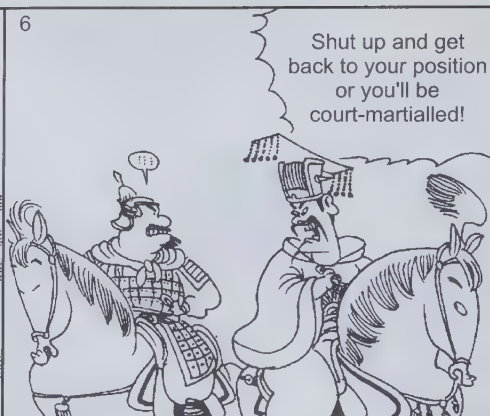


A gentleman wouldn't harm an injured person, wouldn't abduct old men of grey hair and wouldn't challenge troops not in proper battle formation.



3
We'd violate the principle of righteousness if we attacked now. I'd rather wait till they're ready before we beat the drums and attack.





A Dowry of Woe

1

Duke Mu of Qin betrothed his daughter to Zhong Er, a Prince of Jin.



I'll give you a grand dowry to add splendour to your wedding.



2

She was sent off with 70 beautifully dressed maids.



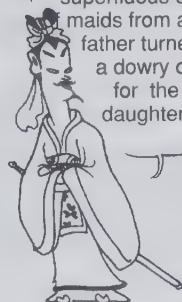
3

On arrival, the Prince of Jin loved the maids and gave the bride cold shoulders.

Ha!
Ha!
Ha!
Ha!



Superfluity often clouds the real issue. The superfluous dowry maids from a loving father turned into a dowry of woe for the daughter.

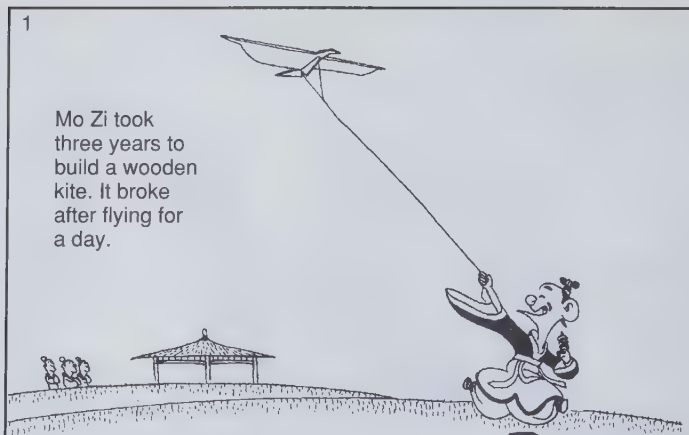


Wooden Kite and Cross Bar



1

Mo Zi took three years to build a wooden kite. It broke after flying for a day.

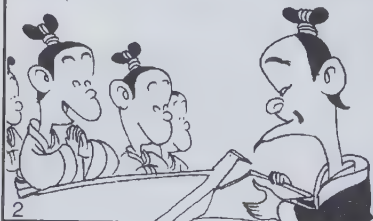


The master is really skilful. He can make even a wooden kite fly.

My skill is no match for that of the maker of cross-bars for ox carts.

He can fashion a cross-bar with a short length of wood in less than half a day.

3



4

But the cross-bar can take a load of 30 dan* and last a long time, whereas the wooden kite I made in three years flew only for a day.

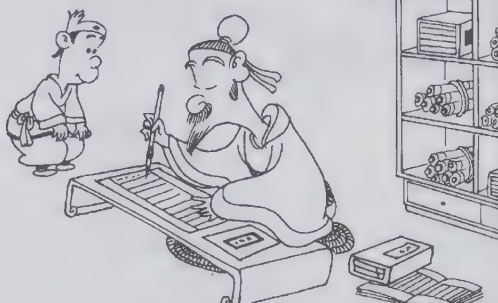
A refined skill without practical usage is worthless. One which can truly be called "ingenious" must be of concrete benefits to people.



* 1 dan = 45 kg

Raise the Candle

1 A man in the capital of Chu was writing a letter to the premier of Yan. As it was dim, he asked his attendant to hold the candle higher.

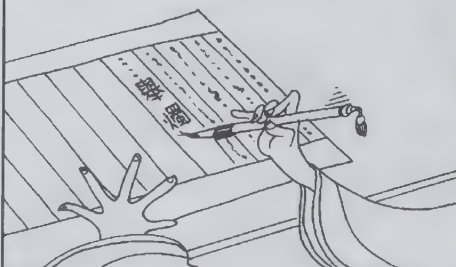


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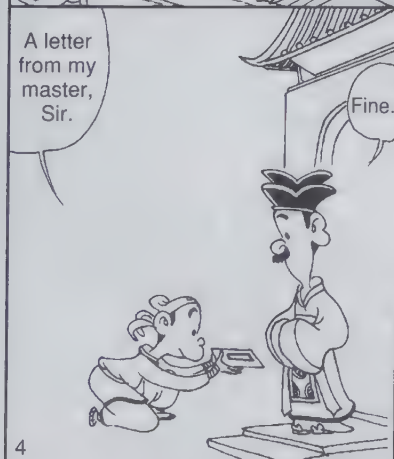


3

So saying, the man unconsciously included the words "raise the candle" in the letter.

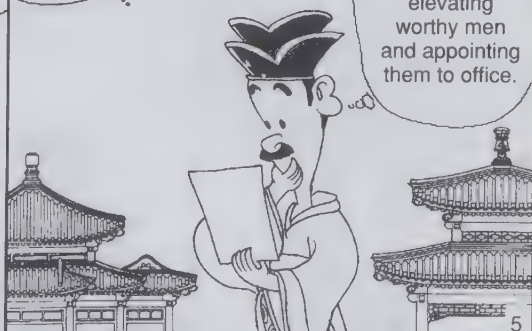


A letter from my master, Sir.



Raise the candle? What does it mean?

Probably it means exalting the bright; in other words, elevating worthy men and appointing them to office.



4

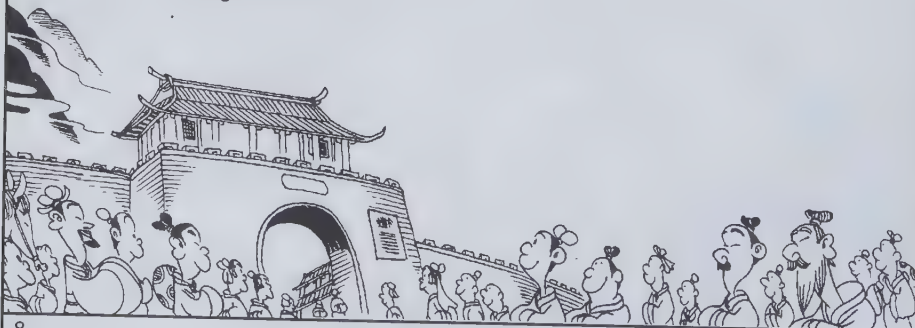
5



6

7

Accordingly, Yan utilised its capable people liberally and became a well-governed state.



8

The premier of Yan heeded your advice of "raising the candle" and now the state is progressing well.

Raising the candle? When did I write that?

Scholars often extrapolate the meanings of words from ancient books. There's a lot of guessing and their interpretations may not be the true meanings of the original words.



A White Horse is a Horse After All



1

Ni Yue was a skilful dialectician who argued that "a white horse is not a horse". Many of his peers could not beat him in debates.



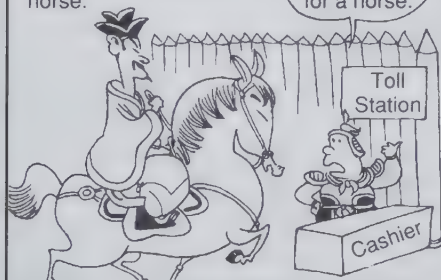
A white horse is not a horse.



One day, he came to a checkpoint riding a white horse.

One dime for a man and two for a horse.

2



3

But a white horse is not a horse!

Not a horse? Don't tell me it's a goat!



4

All right, you win.



Logical argument is no match for facts. A champion dialectician can't take advantage of even a minor checkpoint guard when confronted with facts.

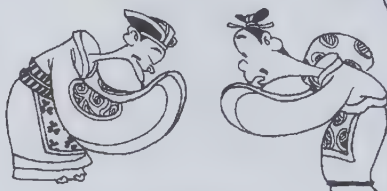


A Diffident Governor of Shanfu



You Ruo visited Mi Zijian, the governor of Shanfu.

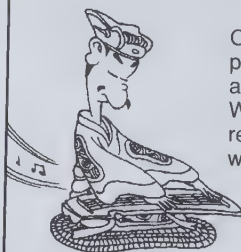
Why have you become so thin?



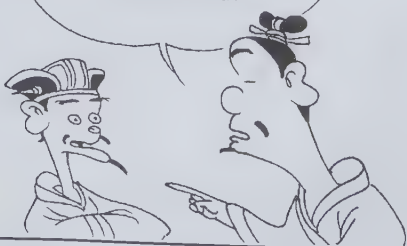
His Majesty appointed me governor of Shanfu despite my unworthiness. Work's heavy and pressing and I'm worried. That's why I've become thin.



Of old, Shun* played the zither and sang the South Wind Poem yet the realm was well-governed.



Now, you're worried governing a tiny place like Shanfu, what if you're to rule the world?



A resourceful ruler can relax on the throne while everything goes smoothly; but an unproficient one may exhaust himself yet be unable to govern well.



* a legendary virtuous ruler

A Useless Gourd



1

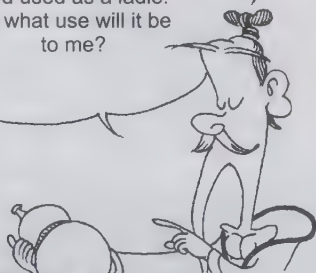
A Song man, Qu Gu, called on Tian Zhong, a recluse in Qi.

I heard that you, master, never depend on others for your livelihood. This gourd is a gift for you. It's as hard as stone and solid inside.



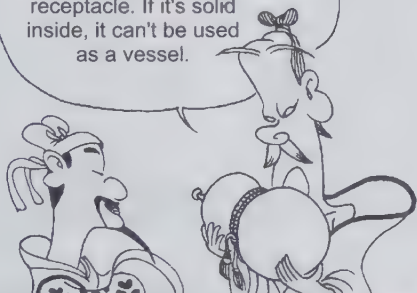
3

If it's as hard as stone, it can't be split and used as a ladle. Of what use will it be to me?



2

A gourd is valuable insofar as it serves as a receptacle. If it's solid inside, it can't be used as a vessel.



4

You're right, master. It's useless. I'll discard it.



Tian Zhong doesn't depend on others for his livelihood but he, a recluse, is also useless to the state. Isn't he like the hard gourd?



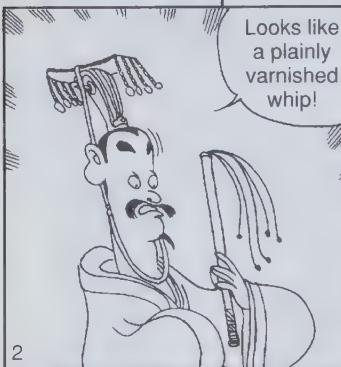
Painting a Whip



1

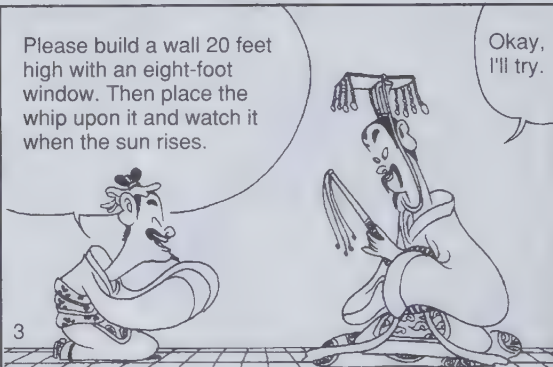
Done, at last!

A man spent three years painting a whip for the ruler of Zhou.



Looks like a plainly varnished whip!

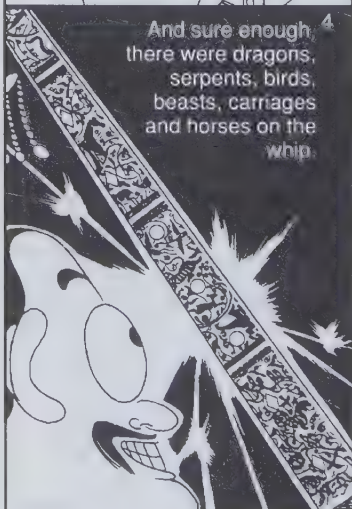
2



Please build a wall 20 feet high with an eight-foot window. Then place the whip upon it and watch it when the sun rises.

Okay, I'll try.

3



And sure enough, there were dragons, serpents, birds, beasts, carriages and horses on the whip.

4



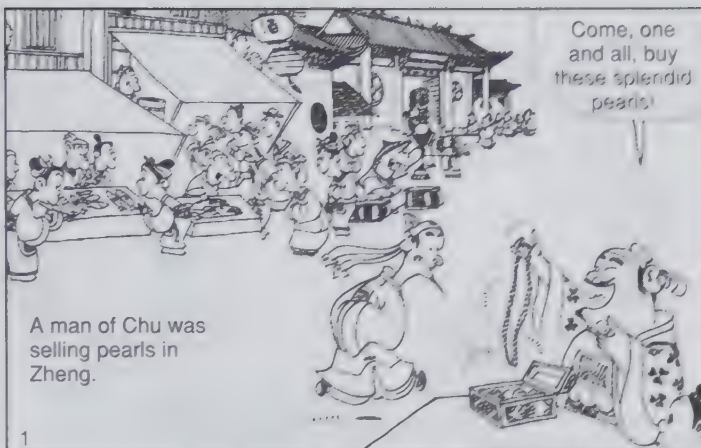
Wonderful!!

5

The painting was indeed done with great skill. But from the utility point of view, the whip was the same as an ordinary one.

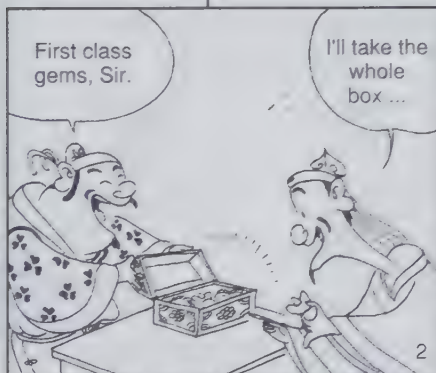


The Gem Box That's Better Than the Gems



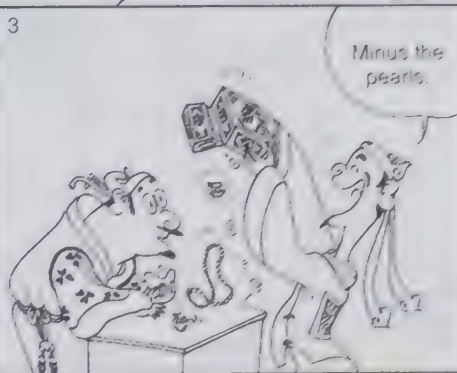
A man of Chu was selling pearls in Zheng.

1

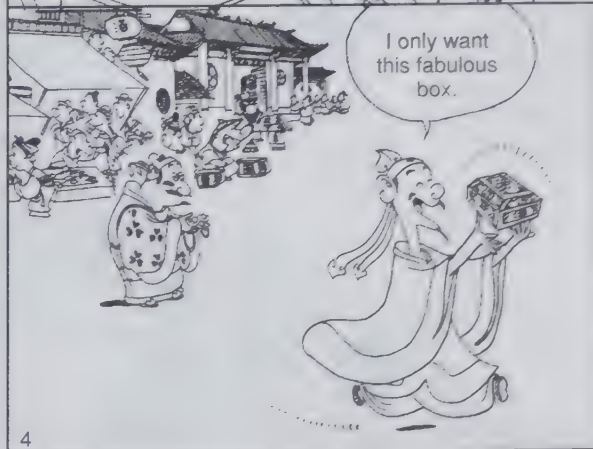


I'll take the whole box ...

2



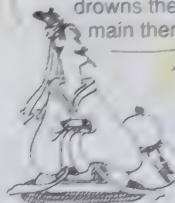
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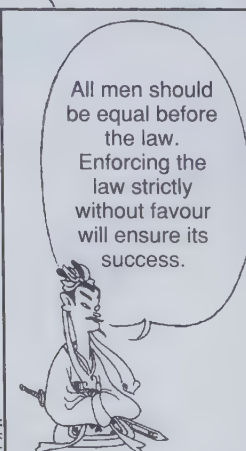
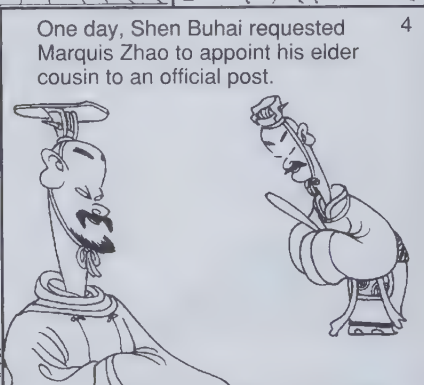
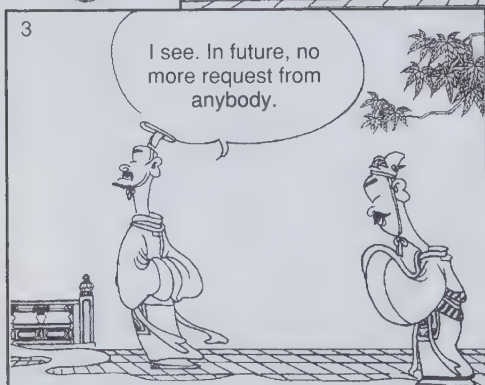
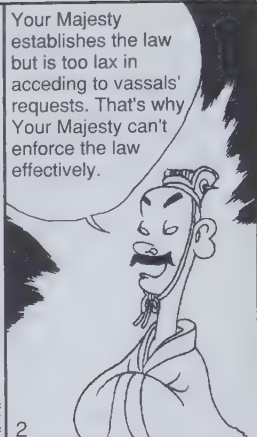
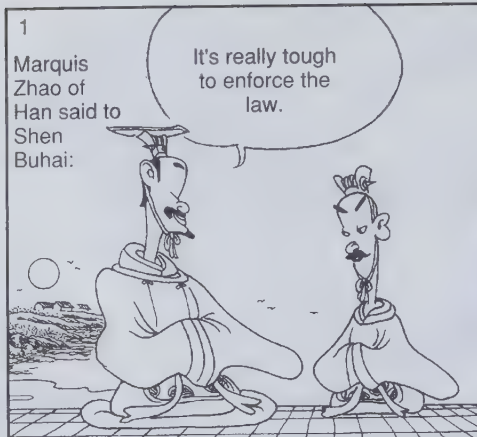
I only want this fabulous box.

4

The frills, overly done, often upstage the principal item. The importance of a discourse lies in its substance. Excessive pompous literary embellishment only drowns the main theme.



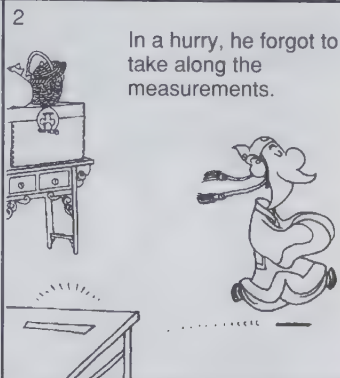
A Taste of One's Own Medicine



Buying Shoes for Measurements



A man of Zheng took measurements of his feet before setting off to buy a pair of shoes.



In a hurry, he forgot to take along the measurements.

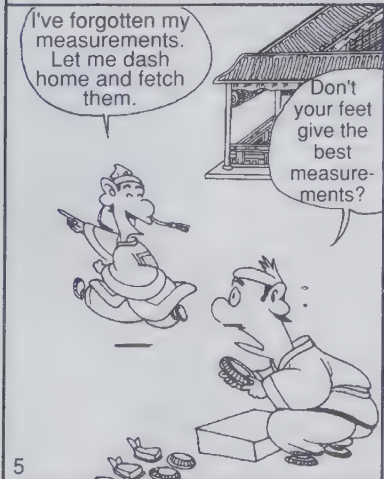


Shoes for sale!



Let me try this pair.

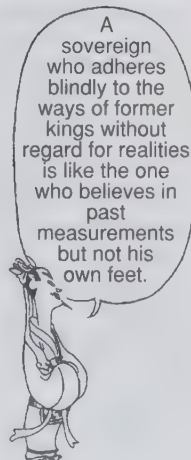
Very fitting.



I've forgotten my measurements. Let me dash home and fetch them.

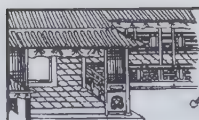
Don't your feet give the best measurements?

By the time he returned to the market-place, the shoe vendor had gone.



A sovereign who adheres blindly to the ways of former kings without regard for realities is like the one who believes in past measurements but not his own feet.

Ghosts are the Easiest to Draw



A man was drawing for the King of Qi.

1



Dogs and horses, Your Majesty.



What're the hardest things to draw?



2

The easiest?



3

Ghosts, Your Majesty.



4

Dogs and horses are familiar sights. Their life-like pictures are therefore most difficult to draw. But ghosts are shapeless. Since no one has seen them, they're the easiest to draw.



In listening to views, the sovereign must be wary of those which sound profound and remote but are of little utility, because the illusory and the shapeless offer the best avenue for fraud.



A Woman's Benevolence



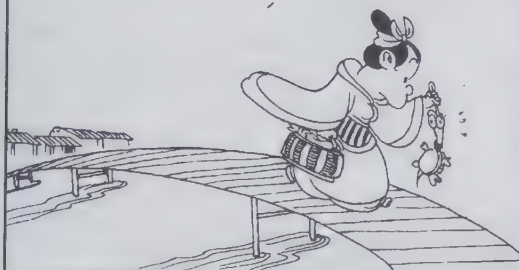
Mrs Bu of the Zheng county was on the way home with a turtle she bought at the market.



1

2

Are you thirsty?



3

I'll let you have a drink in the river but promise not to escape, okay?



The truly benevolent don't expect repayment for their good deeds but ordinary mortals do; hence their blames and grumbles.



4

The Premier who Loves Fish



1

Gongsun Yi, premier of Lu, loved to eat fish.



2

But he never accepted gifts of fish from his countrymen.



3

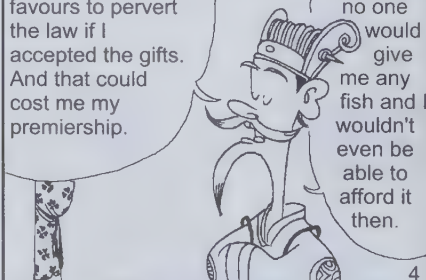
Curious, his younger brother asked:

Why do you refuse the fish since you like it so much?



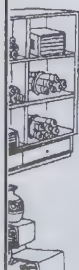
I'd be obligated and bound by favours to pervert the law if I accepted the gifts. And that could cost me my premiership.

When that happened, no one would give me any fish and I wouldn't even be able to afford it then.



5

If I refused, I'd not be dismissed and I could always buy fish myself.



Don't lose your principle for the sake of minor benefits. It's better to rely on yourself than on others.



Shao Shizhou the Honest Strongman



1

Shao Shizhou, a burly bodyguard of King Xian of Zhou, was an honest and upright man.

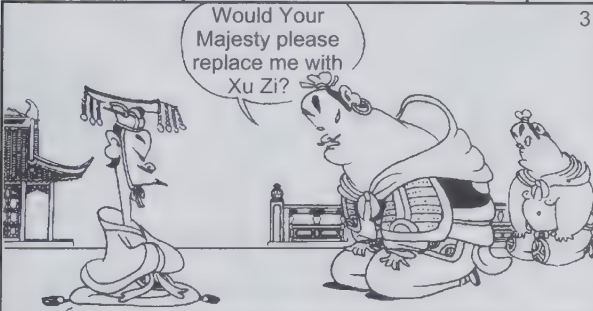


2

Once, after losing a wrestling contest with Xu Zi from Zhongmou, he recommended the winner to take his place.



Would Your Majesty please replace me with Xu Zi?



3

4

Why do you recommend him when you're holding a position coveted by many?

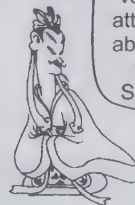


5

I serve with my physical strength. Now that Xu Zi's proven to be stronger than me, people will gossip if I don't recommend him to you.



When a sovereign recognises talents and use them liberally, vassals will not attempt to shield able men and all will emulate Shao Shizhou.



A Divorce of Public and Private Interests



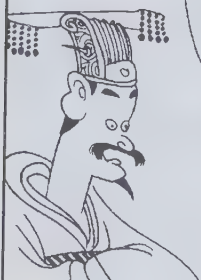
1

Zhongmou had no magistrate. Duke Ping of Jin asked Zhao Wu:

Zhongmou is strategically important to us. I want a competent man to be the magistrate there. Who should I send?

The son of Xing Bo, Your Majesty.

2



Isn't Xing Bo your enemy?

3



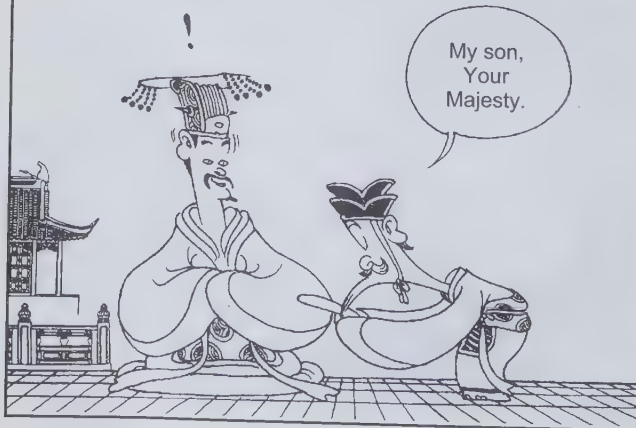
Private feuds should be divorced from official matters.

4



Who should fill the magistracy of Zhongfu?

5

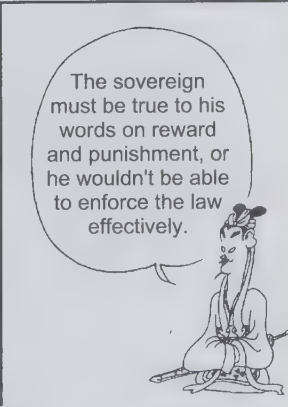
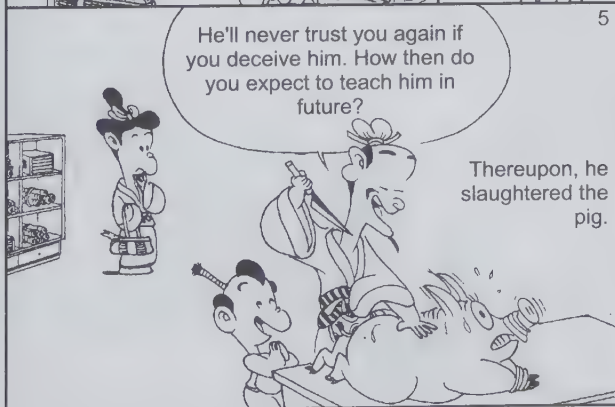
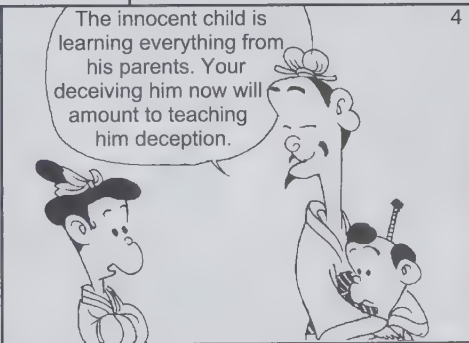
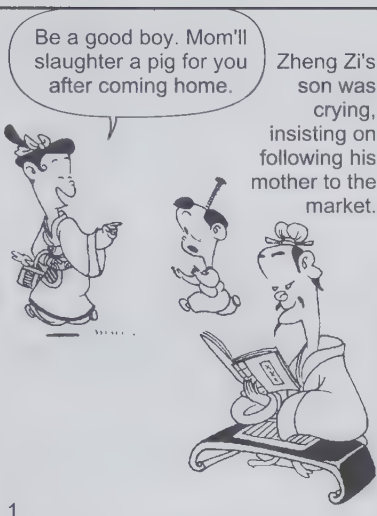


My son, Your Majesty.

Recommend the right man from among outsiders even if he's your enemy; recommend the right man from among your relatives even if he's your son. Merit alone should be the sole criterion.



A Father who Honours His Words

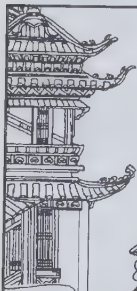
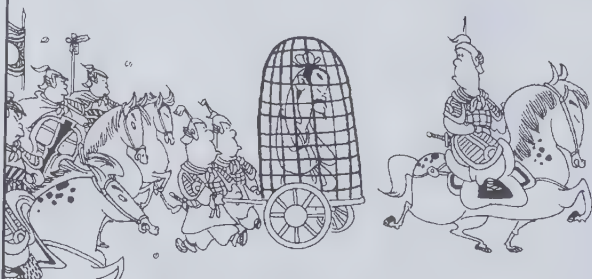


Expecting Repayment of Favour



1

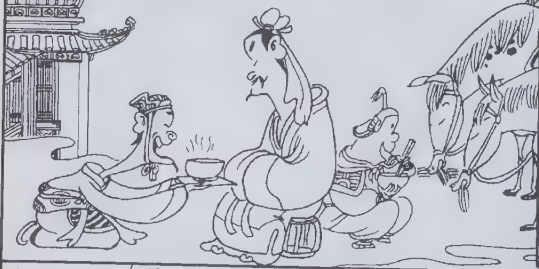
Guan Zhong was held and
being escorted from Lu to Qi.



Enroute at Qiwu, the chief
guard accorded him great
hospitality, to the extent of
serving him food on his
knees.

2 3

How would you requite
me if by luck you survived
and were taken into
service by the king
back in Qi?



4

If that happened, I'd take
the worthy into service,
employ the able and
commend the meritorious.
Why should I requite
you?

How
ungrateful!



When a
sovereign's
prestige ebbs,
ministers should play
safe by refraining from
uttering upright words.
Guan Zhong spoke
forthrightly and
incurred the
displeasure
of the chief
guard.

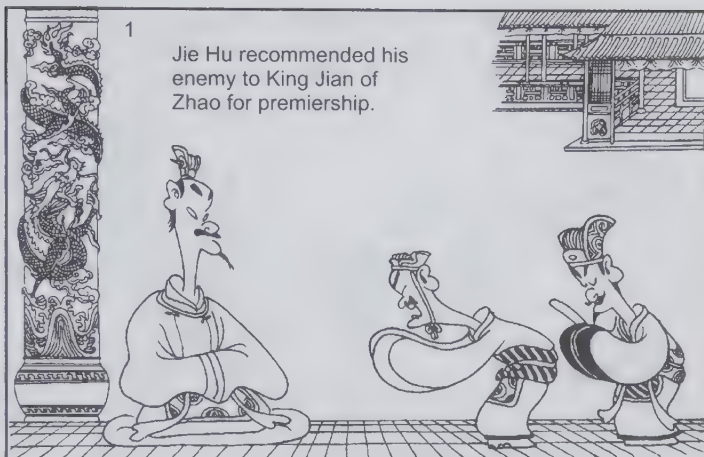
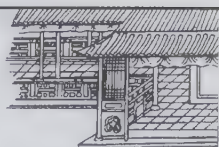


A Clear Line of Distinction



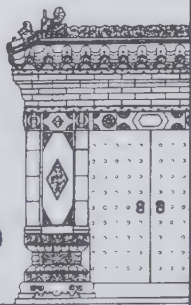
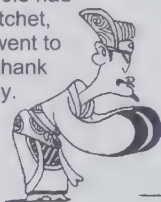
1

Jie Hu recommended his enemy to King Jian of Zhao for premiership.



Thinking that Jie had buried the hatchet, Jie's enemy went to his house to thank him personally.

2



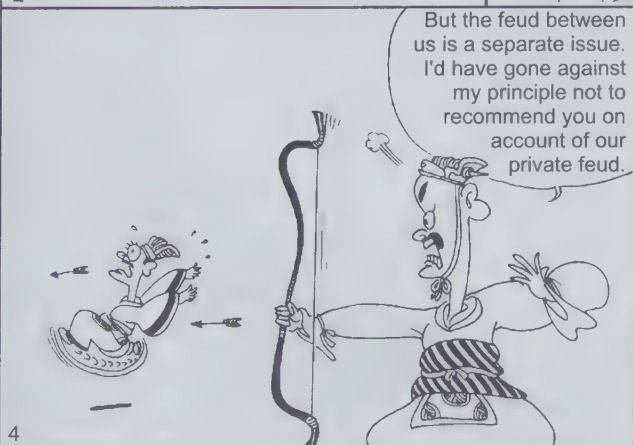
3

I recommended you for the premiership because you're a suitable candidate. That's an official matter.

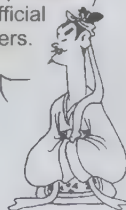


But the feud between us is a separate issue. I'd have gone against my principle not to recommend you on account of our private feud.

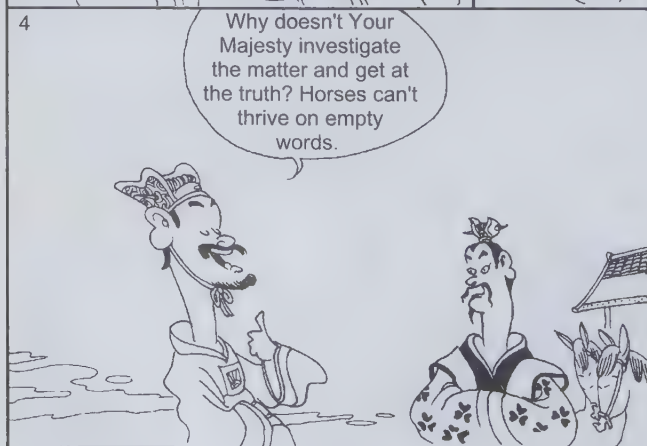
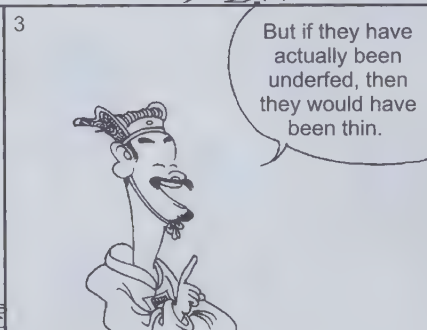
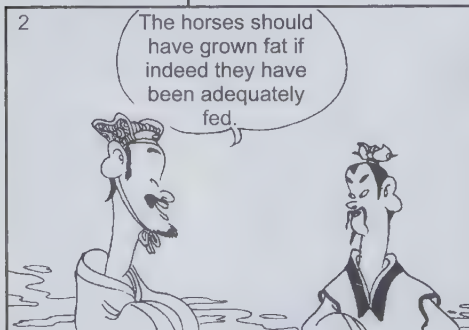
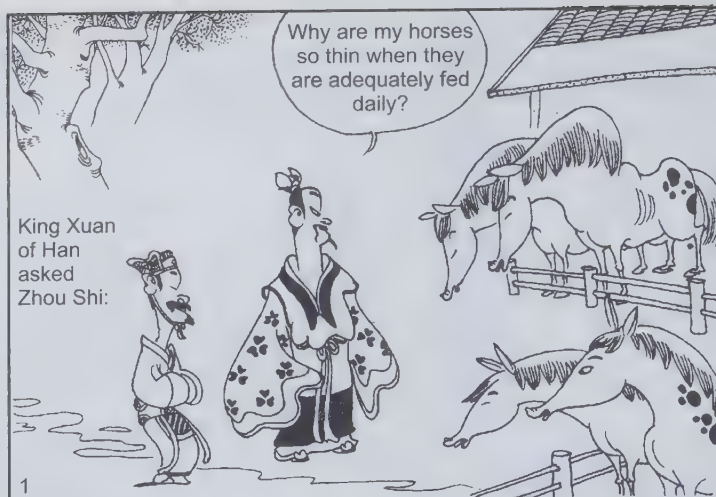
Ministers cannot drag their personal feuds into matters of the state. Jie Hu drew a clear line of demarcation between private and official matters.



4



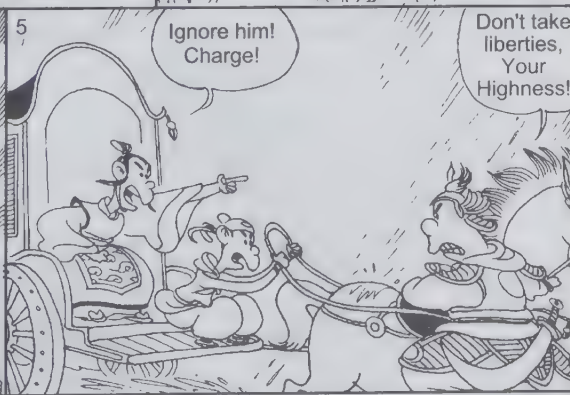
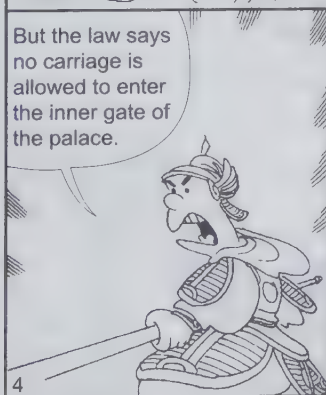
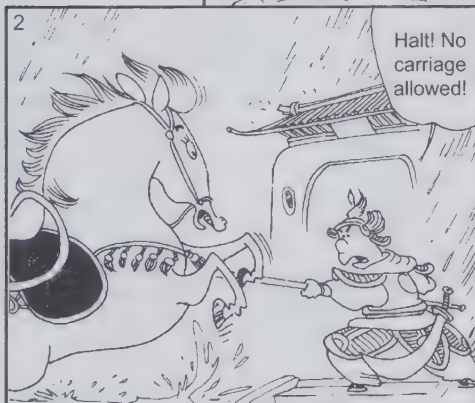
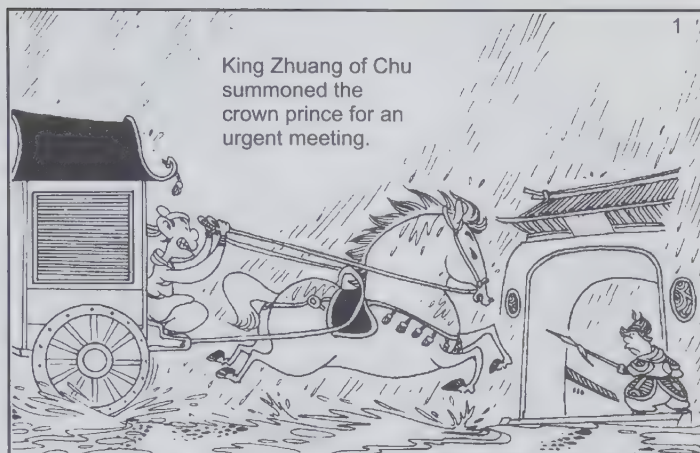
Horses Can't Thrive on Empty Words

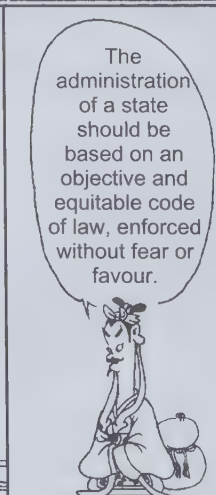
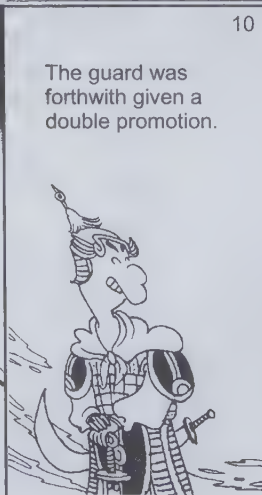
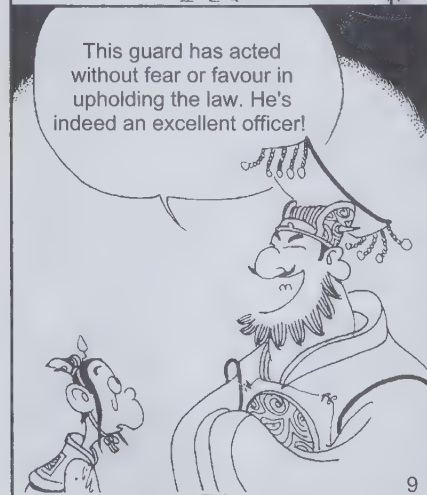
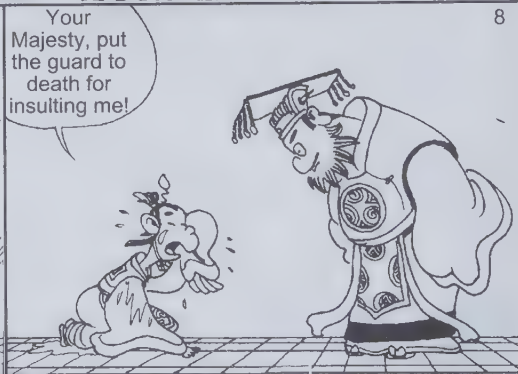
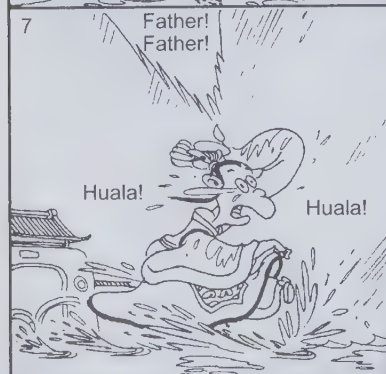
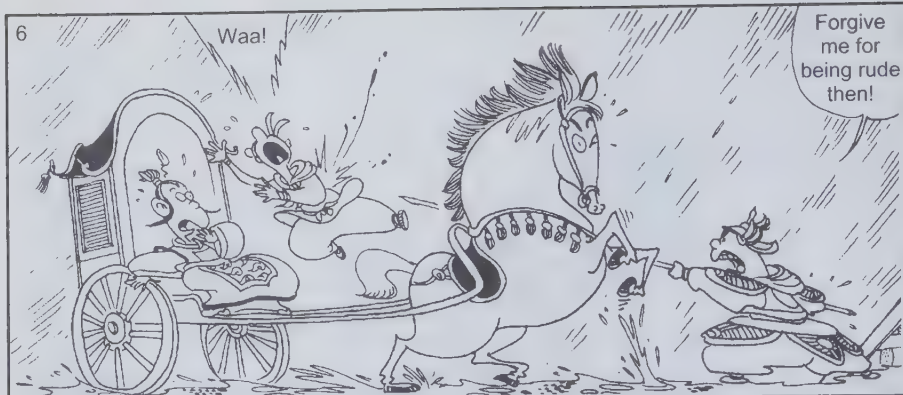


Reasoning along the line of natural law safeguards one against deception. Worrying alone will not help solve a problem at hand.

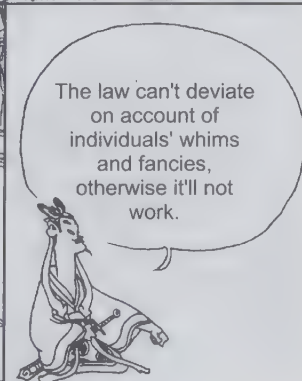
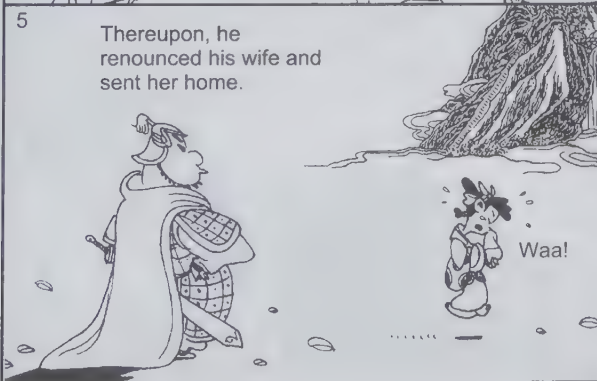


The Crown Prince is Not Above the Law

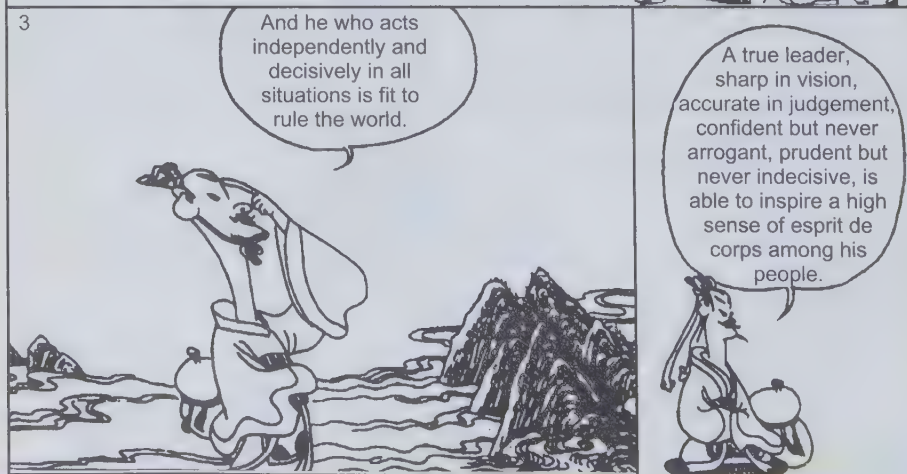
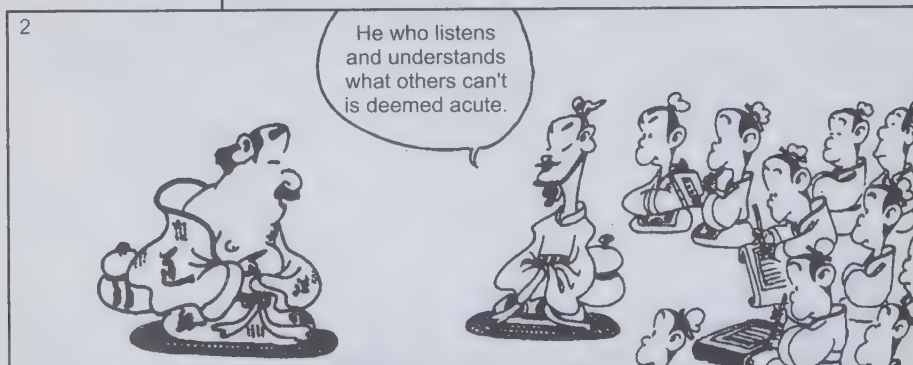
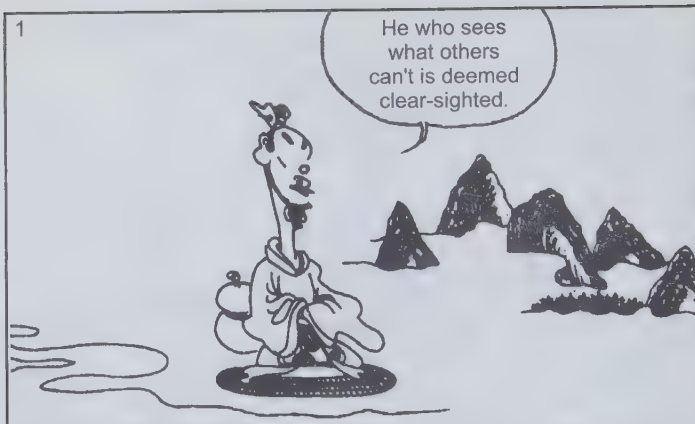
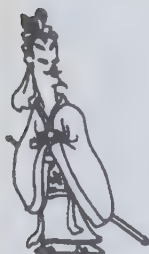




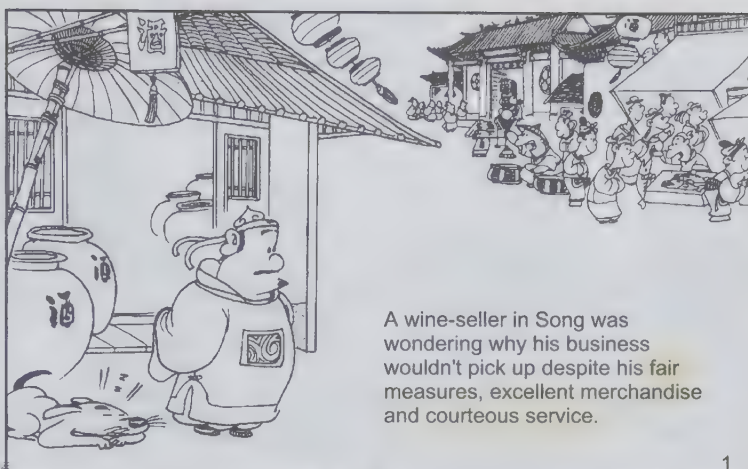
Wu Qi Renounces His Wife



Criterion for a Ruler



The Fierce Dog of the Wine-seller

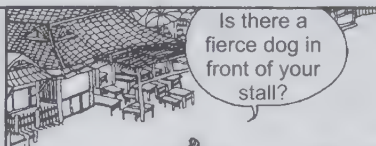


A wine-seller in Song was wondering why his business wouldn't pick up despite his fair measures, excellent merchandise and courteous service.

1

2

My wine can't sell and it has turned sour.



Is there a fierce dog in front of your stall?

Yes, Sir.

So he consulted Yang Qian, a village elder.

3



That's it. Your prospective customers have all been scared away by the dog.



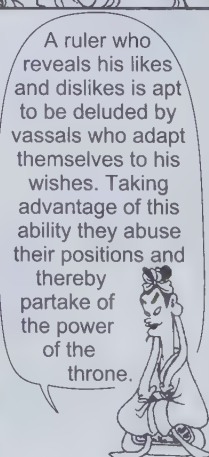
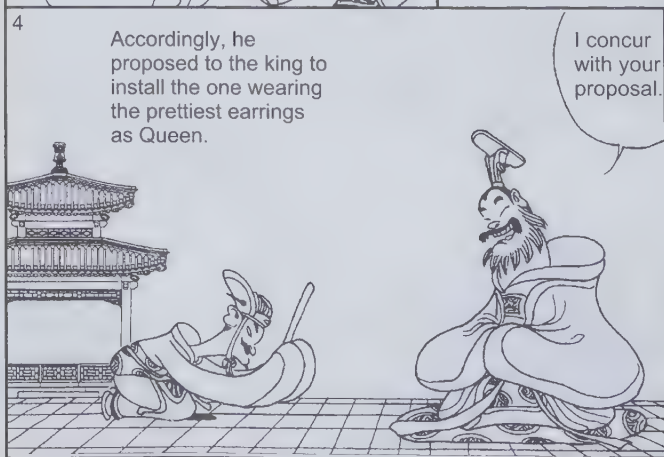
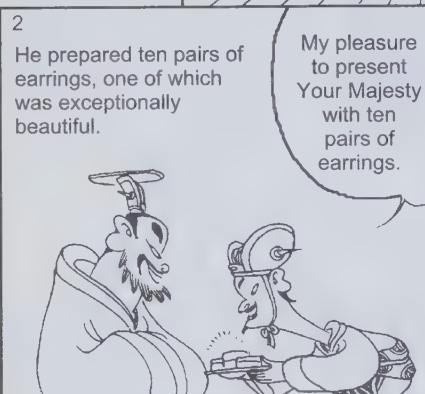
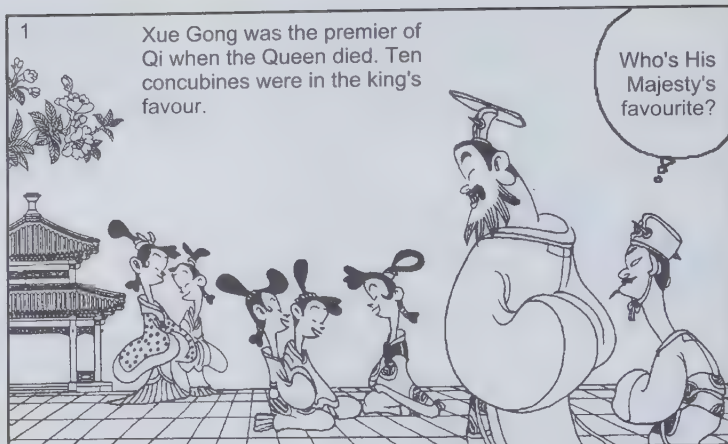
Oh, I see!

The state has ferocious dogs, too. Each time a worthy man wants to enlighten the sovereign on the art of achieving hegemony, his ministers would pounce on him like the fierce dog of the wine-seller.

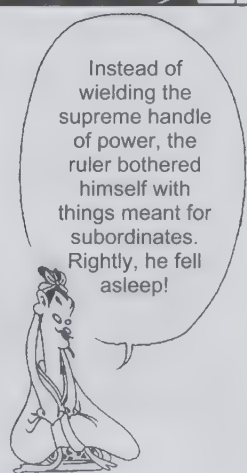
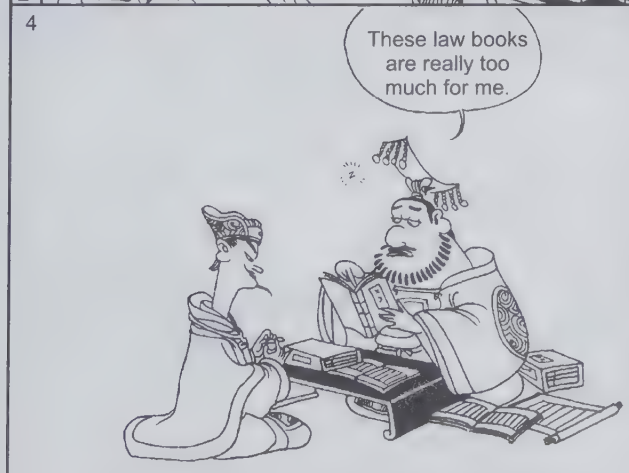
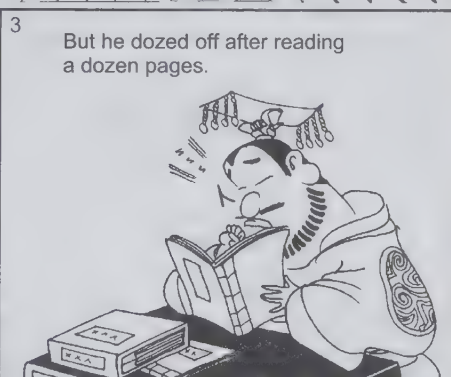
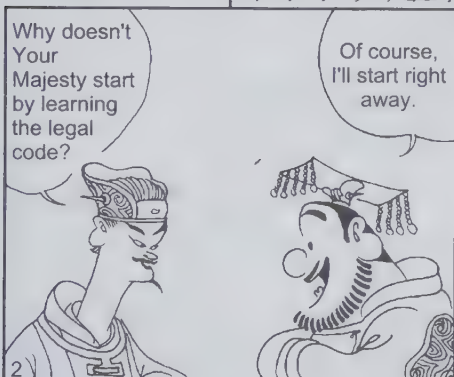
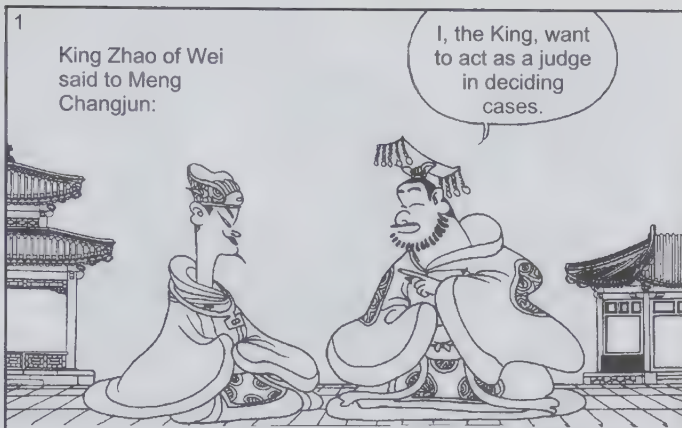
4



Qi Ruler Picks His Queen



The Principle of Statecraft



The Art of Running a State



1

Zao Fu was working in the field when a man and his son passed by on a cart. Startled, the horse refused to advance.



Would you please help us to move the cart?

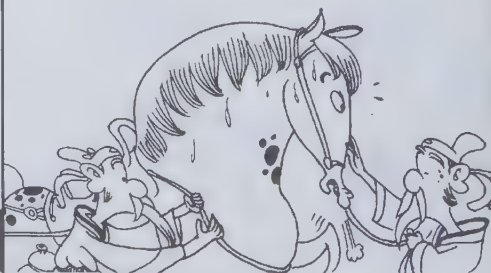
2

I'll try.



3

Zao Fu, a consummate driver, examined the bridle and held the whip.



4

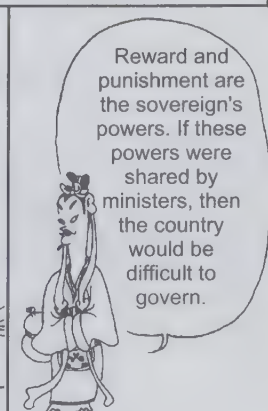
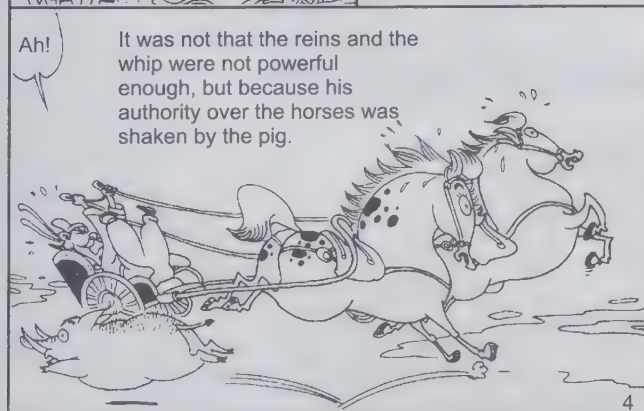
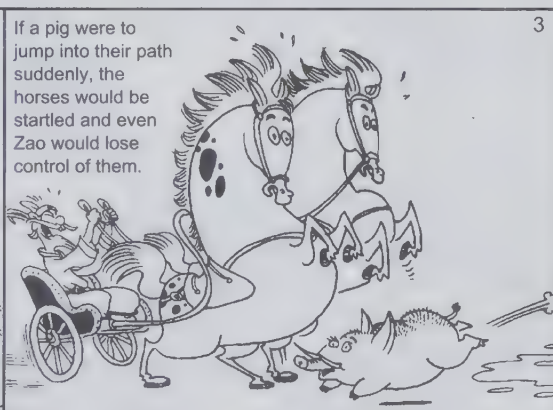
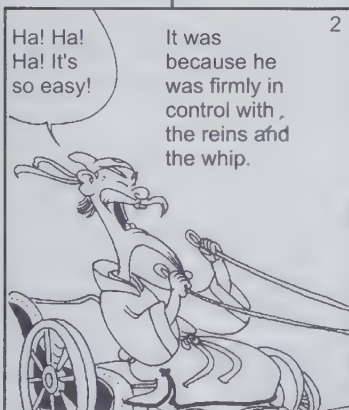
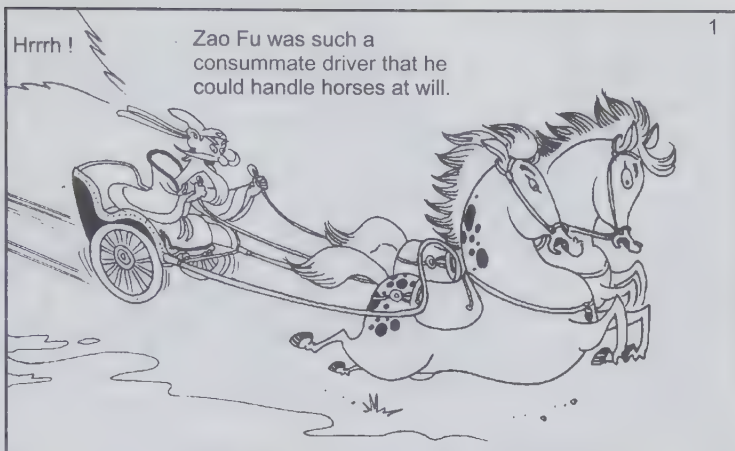
Even before he used it, the horse had started to gallop.



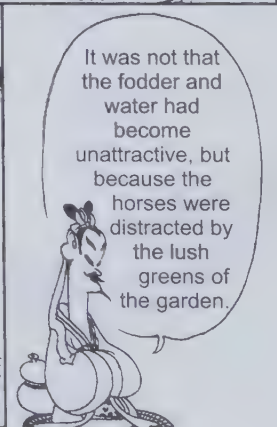
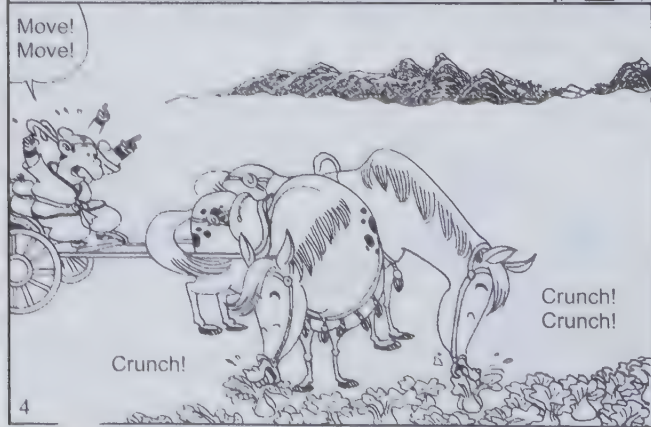
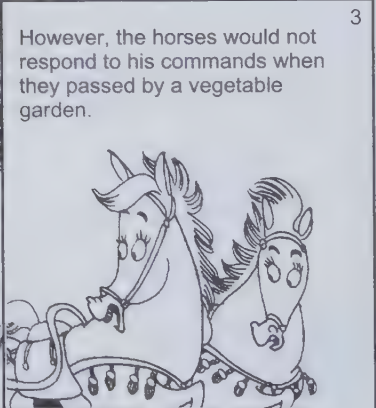
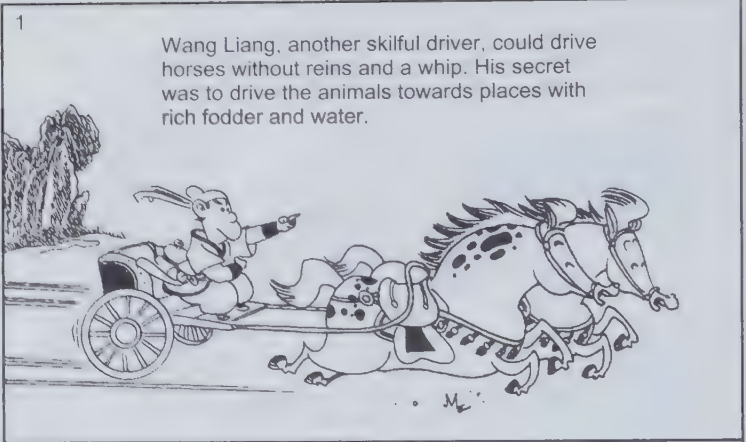
With the right technique, a ruler can stay at ease yet reaping the credit of running the state well.



No Sharing of Power with Ministers



**Profit's an
Unreliable
Means of
Motivation**

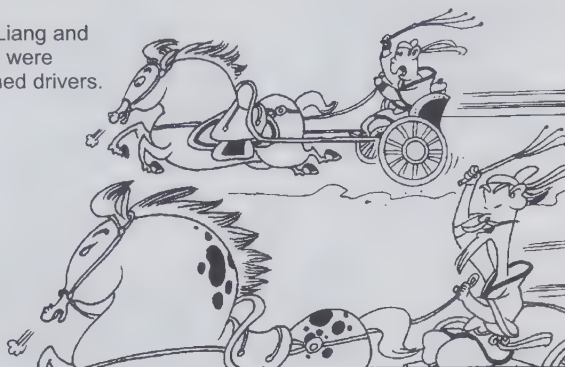


A Cart with Two Drivers



1

Wang Liang and Zao Fu were renowned drivers.



2

If both were asked to drive a cart simultaneously in two separate directions, they wouldn't be able to go even ten li.



3

Tian Lian and Cheng Qiao were maestros on the lute.

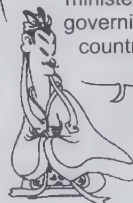


4

If Tian played the upper notes and Cheng played the lower notes simultaneously, the result could not be any tune at all.



Even people of great skills cannot work together if they don't co-ordinate well. How then can a ruler share his power with his ministers in governing a country?

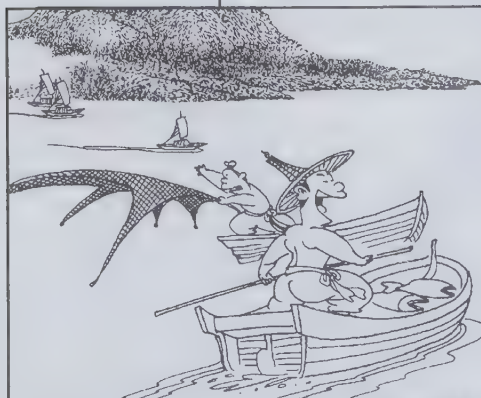


Incompatibility of Yao and Shun*'s Virtues



1

The farmers at Li Mountain encroached on one another's land. Thereupon, Shun went there and tilled among them. A year later, there were no more cases of encroachment.



The fishermen living by a river bank disputed over fishing territory. Thereupon, Shun went there and fished among them. A year later, they made concessions to the elders.

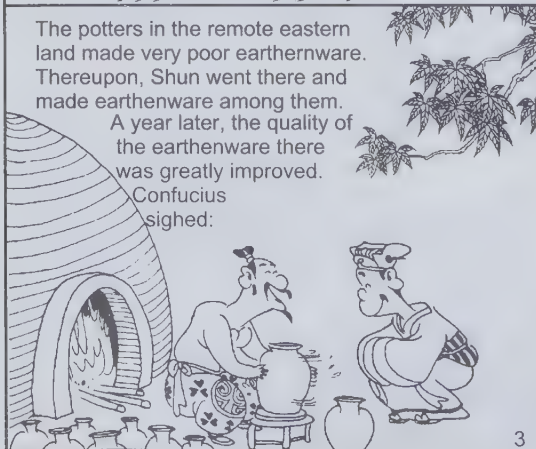


2

The potters in the remote eastern land made very poor earthenware. Thereupon, Shun went there and made earthenware among them.

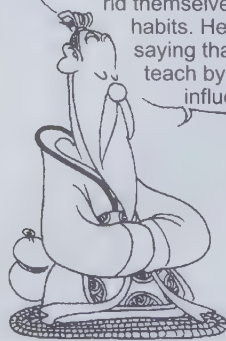
A year later, the quality of the earthenware there was greatly improved.

Confucius sighed:



3

It was not Shun's business to farm, to fish and make pots. Yet he toiled so that the people would follow his example and rid themselves of bad habits. Hence the saying that sages teach by moral influence.



4

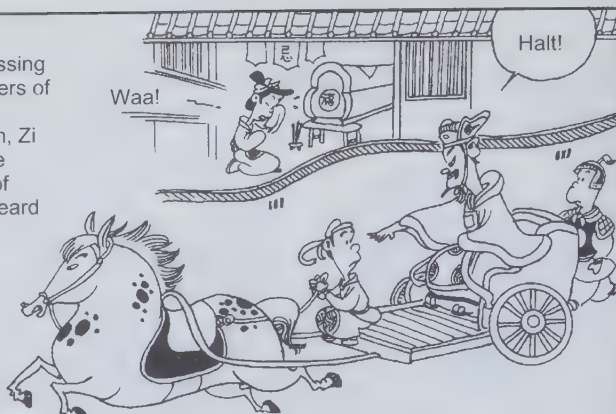
* legendary virtuous kings



Zi Chan Solves a Crime



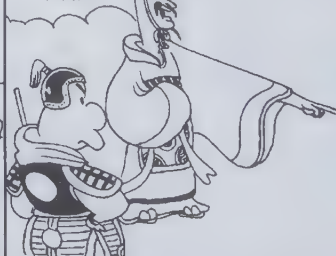
1 While passing the quarters of eastern craftsmen, Zi Chan, the premier of Zheng, heard a woman crying.



2 Arrest that woman for interrogation!



Why did you murder your husband? Come clean!



3 True, My Lord, I strangled my husband ...



Master, how could you tell she was guilty?



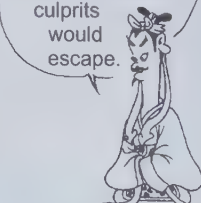
4 It's natural for a person to be worried when a loved one falls ill and sorrowful when the loved one dies. I found no sorrow in the woman's crying but fear, so I knew something was amiss.



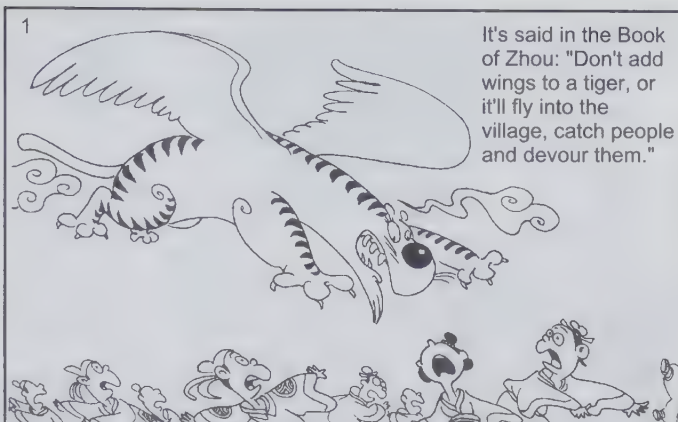
You're a genius, Sir.



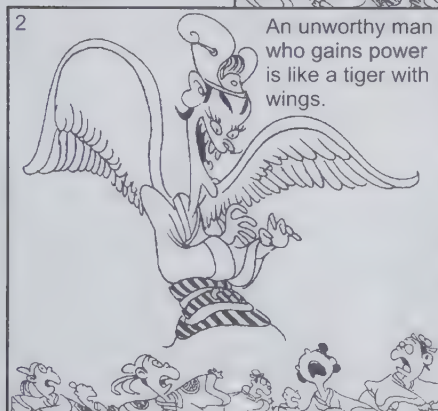
5 Few crimes would be solved if Zi Chan had to attend to every case. If the law was made draconian and its enforcement as tight as a net all over the world, few culprits would escape.



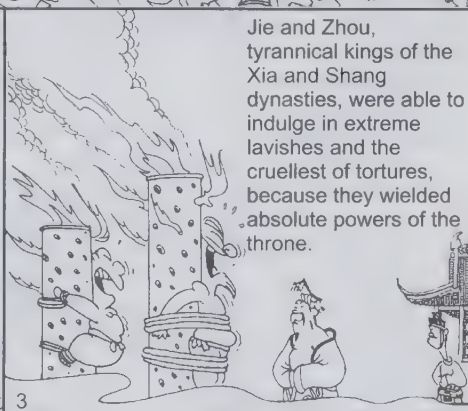
Like a Tiger with Wings



It's said in the Book of Zhou: "Don't add wings to a tiger, or it'll fly into the village, catch people and devour them."

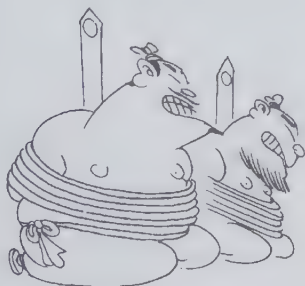


An unworthy man who gains power is like a tiger with wings.



Jie and Zhou, tyrannical kings of the Xia and Shang dynasties, were able to indulge in extreme lavishes and the cruellest of tortures, because they wielded absolute powers of the throne.

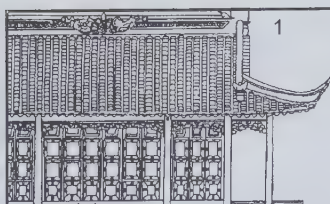
If they were mere commoners, they would have been found guilty and executed for offending the law before they could commit any atrocity.



Power, with its potential to corrupt and render a ruler as wicked as the tiger, is a scourge of the world.

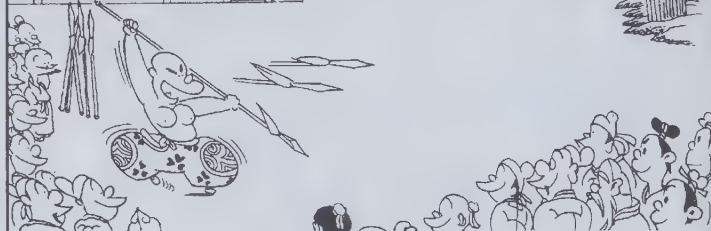


Spear and Shield



1

A man of Chu was peddling spears and shields.



My spears are so sharp that they can penetrate anything.

2

Bravo!



Now, let me show you another treasure.

3



Slash!
Slash!

Bravo!

4



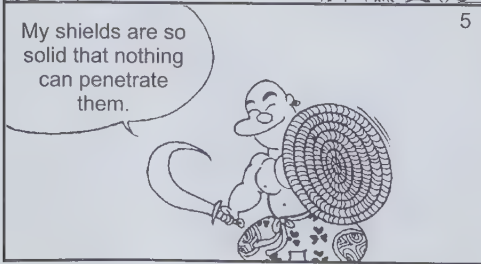
Wait a minute ...

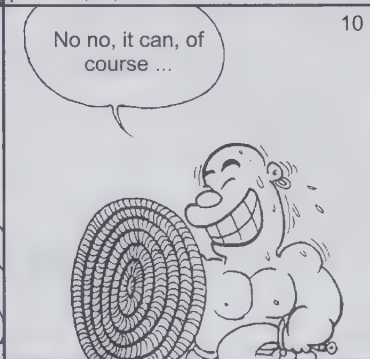
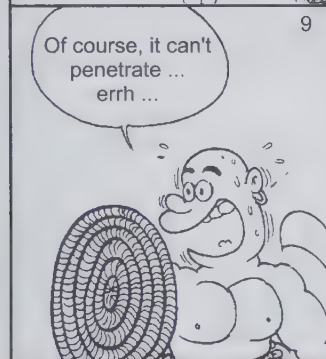
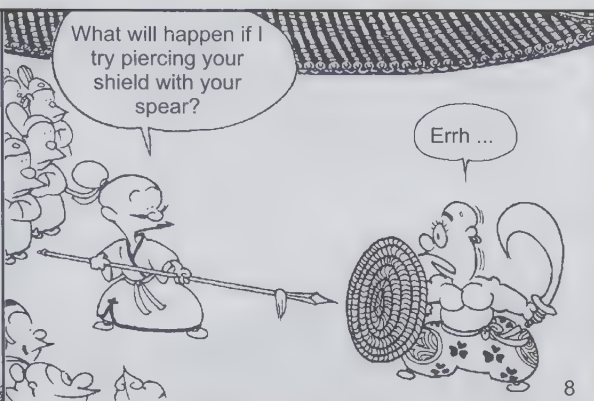
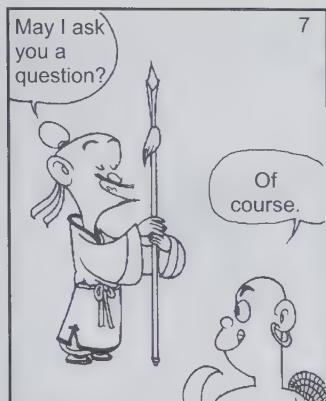
6



My shields are so solid that nothing can penetrate them.

5

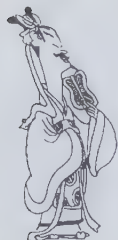




The moralists govern with benevolence while the legalists advocate draconian measures. The two are like the spear and the shield that can't co-exist.

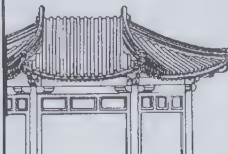


**Good
Medicine
Tastes
Bitter**



1

There's an ancient saying: "Governing is like washing one's hair. The hair drops but washing is necessary."



2

Opening a boil to rid it of pus is painful.



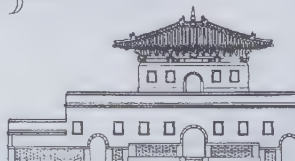
3

Taking medicine, too, is unpleasant.



4

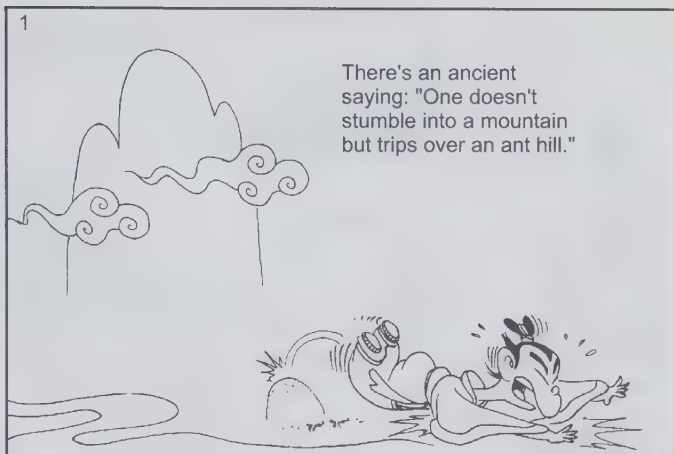
However, if on account of pain and bitterness one refrains from opening a boil and taking medicine, then one's illnesses can't be cured.



He who regrets the loss of hair and forgets the gain of new growth is ignorant of the art of balancing larger benefits against minor losses.

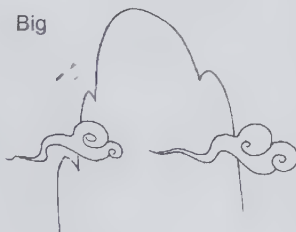


Tripping Over an Ant Hill

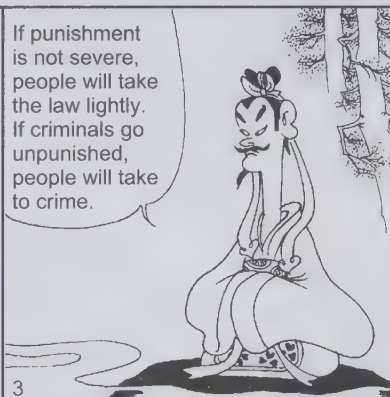


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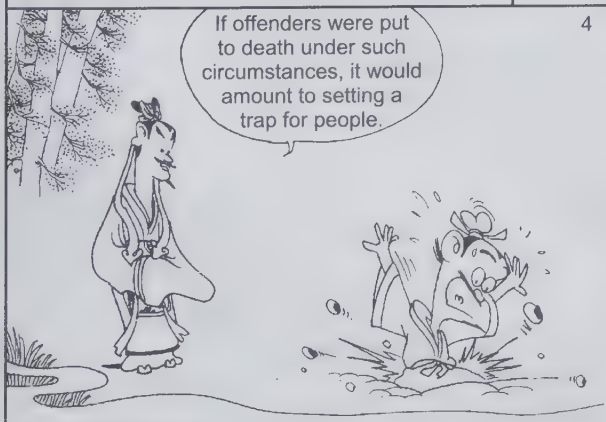
It's because the mountain is large and easily seen whereas the ant hill is small and easily overlooked.



If punishment is not severe, people will take the law lightly. If criminals go unpunished, people will take to crime.



If offenders were put to death under such circumstances, it would amount to setting a trap for people.



Light punishment, like the ant hill, either undermines the order of the state or induces people to fall into a trap. Either way, it harms the people.



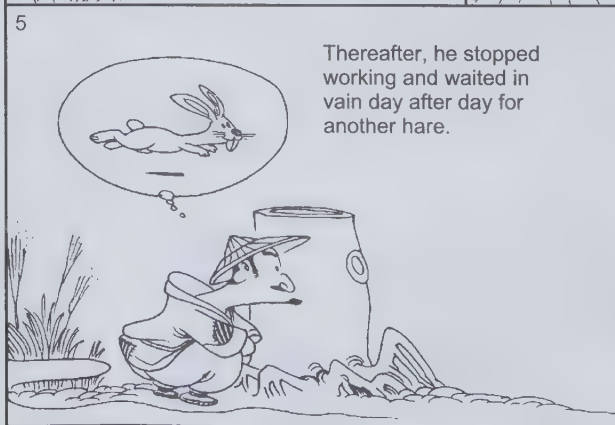
Waiting for Another Hare by the Stump



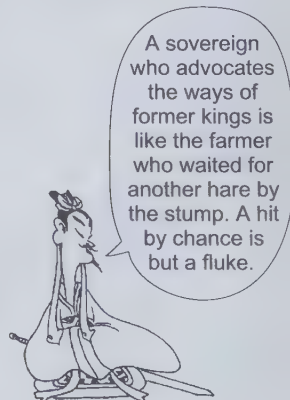
A farmer in Song was tilling the land ...



Ha! Ha! Ha!
I've got a
hare for no
sweat at all.



Thereafter, he stopped working and waited in vain day after day for another hare.



A sovereign who advocates the ways of former kings is like the farmer who waited for another hare by the stump. A hit by chance is but a fluke.

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