

Bow To The Chinese Juveniles!

By Lim Sian-Tek

PERHAPS the most familiar story known to young Chinese schoolboys of a precocious age is that tale of how Ssu-ma Kuang, the famous historian, when but a mere youngster, saved a playmate from death with his ready wit.

Ssu-ma Kuang was playing in a garden with his companions, when one of them who had been angling the goldfishes in the earthenware jar fell into the water with a splash.

All the youngsters, terrified by the tragedy, fled in terror. Alone the child Kuang stood his ground with his wits about him. Picking up a big stone he broke the jar to let out the water—saving the unfortunate

boy from drowning.

Another famous precocious Chinese lad was Ts'ao Chung, the son of notorious General Ts'ao Ts'ao of the Three Kingdoms. 'Tis said that one day the lad's father received an elephant as a present. Peeved by the size of the beast, the man wanted to know its weight.

All the general's counsellors were at a loss how to find a way whereby the elephant's weight could be ascertained. The predicament reached the ears of the little boy—who had never heard the story of Archimedes and the king's gold crown—and who suggested the following plan.

The pachyderm is to be placed in a big boat and placed in midstream. The draught of the loaded boat is marked down. Taking the elephant ashore, the boat is now loaded again with stones enough to sink the craft to the line of the marked draught. Weigh the stones—and you have the weight of the beast!

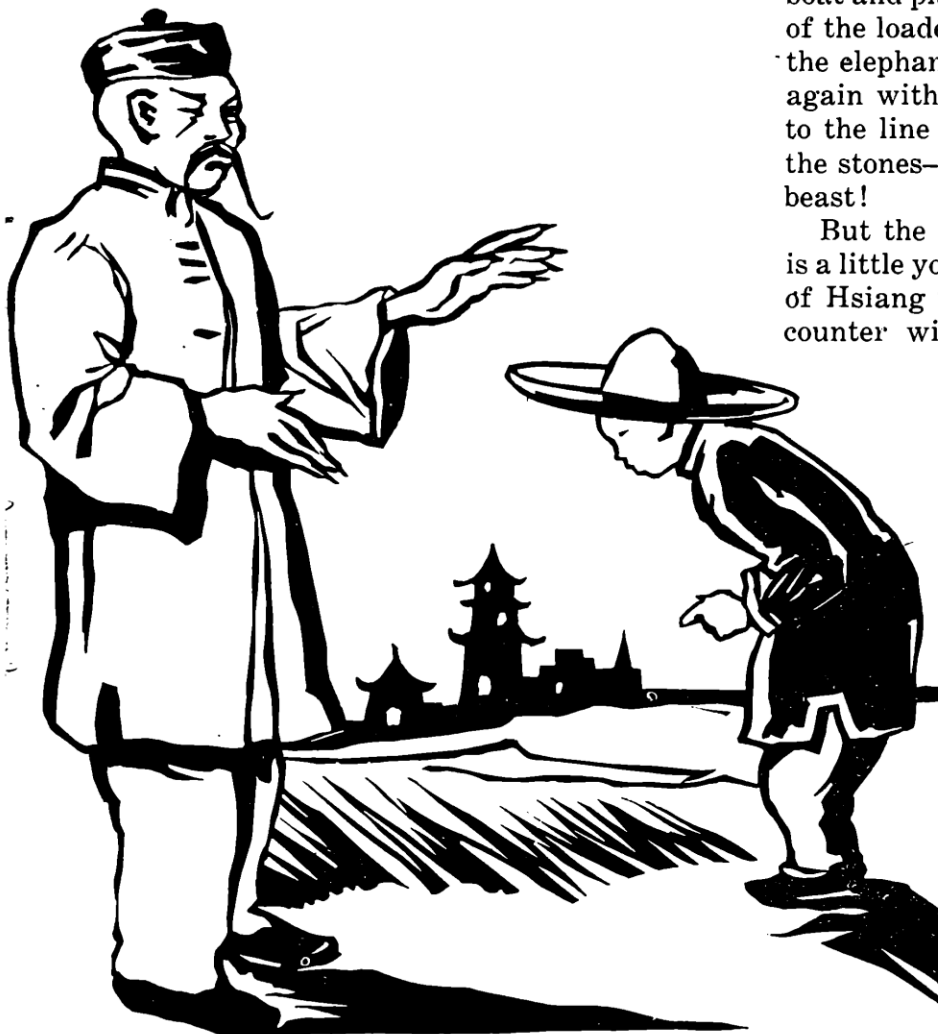
But the brightest Chinese lad in history is a little youngster, aged seven, by the name of Hsiang To, who by a conversational encounter with the Sage Confucius showed great cleverness and intelligence.

Confucius one day was riding in his chariot. He came upon a youngster playing with some tiles in the middle of the road. The Sage called him to make way for him, whereat the little boy answered back:

"Not so, I am building a city. A city wall does not give way for a chariot, but a chariot goes around the wall."

The Sage was astonished by such a bright answer. He descended from his chariot, and approaching the boy, again asked him:

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"Little lad, you seem to be uncommonly clever for your years."

"How so?" answered the boy back. "A hare at the age of three days can scamper over the fields, and should I not know a thing or two at the age of seven years?"

Confucius smiled at the presumptuousness of the child and said: "Then, son, may I ask you a few things?"

"I am ready," said the child.

"Then," asked Confucius, "can you tell me what fire has no smoke, what water no fish; what hill has no stones, what tree no branches; what man has no wives, what woman no husband; what cow has no calf, what mare no colt; what is that which has not enough, and what is that which has an overplus;

cutter got it for five centavos.

When he reached home, he at once proceeded to clean the fish. When he opened it, he could not believe his eyes. For there before him was the precious ring which Mayaman gave him! He was so happy about recovering his treasure that he walked up and down the streets laughing and singing:

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!

I have found you now;

You are here and nowhere else."

His bad neighbors heard him. They thought that the wood-cutter had discovered who stole his money and were addressing those words to them. They were frightened, so running up to him, they gave him his bags of money. "Forgive us!" they cried, "We are returning everything to you."

The wood-cutter was greatly surprised, but he pretended to be angry. He took all the money from them.

With his ring and his bags of money, the wood-cutter soon became the richest man in the town.

"You see," said Mahirap to his friend, "With five centavos, I have made a man rich."

what city is without a market, and who is the man without a style?"

The child immediately answered: "A glow-worm's fire has no smoke, and well water no fish; a mound of earth has no stones, and a rotten tree no branches; genii have no wives, and fairies no husbands; carthen cows have no calves, nor wooden mares any colts; a winter day is not long enough, and a summer's day is too long; the imperial city has no market, and little folks have no style."

The eyes of the child brightened up with a roguish twinkle, as he continued: "If you will tell me how many stars there are in heaven, I shall know more than I do now."

"Why do you inquire about things so far away?" said the Sage. "Ask about something near at hand, and I will answer you."

"Then," said the boy, "please tell me how many hairs you have in your eyebrows?"

The Sage stood astounded at the clever sally. He shook his white head and went back to his chariot, the story says, muttering the following words: "The young generation is to be admired."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What are the principal designs on the Moro cloth?
2. Who was able to make the woodcutter rich, the Poor Man or the Rich Man?
3. What fire has no smoke?
4. What is a composite flower?
5. Why does a butterfly visit flowers?
6. For whom was the month of June named?
7. What happened to little Henry Ford?
8. What was the hottest day since 1915?
9. Why did the Moros object to the broad-brimmed hat?
10. Why did Juanito get a cold?

Strange Facts

Joan of Arc was considered a very good scamstress when she was a child in Domremy, France.

Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher of 350 B. C. thought the brain was a great sponge through which the blood passed in order to be cooled.

Ecaterina Teodoroiu, a Roumanian, was the only woman who really fought during the World War. At the age of 16, she dressed herself in a man's uniform and joined the army. She became noted for her bravery and was killed while fighting.

That very famous book, "Robinson Crusoe," which was written by Daniel Defoe, was turned down by twenty publishers before it was finally bought by someone. This book has been selling fast for 217 years now.

Florence Nightingale, founder of scientific nursing, owned a pet owl which she carried in her pocket wherever she travelled. She was known by the soldiers she nursed as "The Lady with the Lamp."

Experiments at the University of Michigan promise a cure for stuttering. Twenty-four cases of stuttering has been greatly improved by having the stutterer talk while he, or she, was walking on all fours. The reason for the cure is not very clear, but Miss Hazel Geniesse, who conducted the tests, believe that it may be the change in blood pressure.

11. Why did Mr. and Mrs. Del Valle give a birthday party?
12. Recite the song of the owl.
13. Why do children go to schools?
14. If you were in Lope's place, how would you feel?
15. Have you ever listened to a Children's Hour program? Why do you like to listen to it?