



## A LONG NAME

There is a very old legend in one Chinese village that people with long names would live long and happy lives. Every villager, when they had a child, would spend a lot of time coming up with the longest names they could think of, so that their children would prosper.

One day, a villager had a son and decided she would give him the longest name anyone had ever given a child. She puzzled over what to call him for three days and three nights, thinking of nothing else, not even sleeping, just thinking and thinking. Exhausted, she finally came up with a truly long name and with the last remains of her strength, she called for all her family to come over so she could tell them.

“His name shall be Chon...” she began, and then she passed out from exhaustion, never to wake up. Everyone wailed and wept for her and they never found out what was the name the boy should have had. After a long talk, the family decided that they would keep the name his mother gave him, and so from that moment on his name was Chon.

A few years later, Chon’s father married again and soon enough they were expecting another son. This mother, too, believed a long name would bring a long and happy life to her child, and so when the boy was born, she also didn’t eat or sleep for three days and three nights. She was completely exhausted, just

## A LONG NAME

like Chon's mum, but this woman pulled through.

She called for the whole family and when they came, she said: "His name will be Len-Li-Liu-Ji-Tsu-Tsoni-Yasi-Hasi-Komosu-Mosu-Amosu-Obo-Sobo-Kobo-Hasobo-Taki."

They all nodded and wrote it down, because no one could remember such a long name.

As the boys grew up, the younger son with the long name always seemed to fare better than his short named older brother. Whenever anybody needed anything, however, they would call the older son because they only had to say "Chon" and Chon would immediately come and do what they asked.

"Chon, go get some water from the well."

"Chon, bring some wood."

"Chon, tidy up a bit."

Nobody wanted to call the younger child because his name was too long. Even when the two got in trouble, Chon was the one who got punished, because it was too exhausting to scold Len-Li-Liu-Ji-Tsu-Tsoni-Yasi-Hasi-Komosu-Mosu-Amosu-Obo-Sobo-Kobo-Hasobo-Taki.

One day, Chon and his brother were playing with their friends in front of the house, running around in the yard, coming up with all sorts of games, crawling and jumping and climbing. After a run and an uncoordinated jump, Chon fell down the well. Everyone ran screaming to Chon's father.

"Chon fell down the well! Chon fell down the well!" they screamed.

Chon's dad jumped up and ran to help his son. As he was pulling him out, he thought to himself about how children with short names really got the short end of the stick.

Chon wasn't hurt, luckily. A few days later the kids were playing in the yard again and this time Chon's younger brother climbed up the ledge of the well, thinking nothing bad could ever happen to him.

He started playing a flute and mocking his brother, singing: "Chon fell down the well, 'cause he's got a short name, which can't happen to me, since I've got a looong..." Suddenly his foot slipped and he found himself tumbling into the cold water at the bottom of the well.

All the kids came running to his parents.

## A LONG NAME

“Help! Quickly! Len-Li-Liu-Ji-Tsu-Tsoni-Yasi-Hasi-Kom...”

They realized they’d made a mistake at this part and started over.

“Your son Len-Li-Liu-Ji-Tsu-Tsoni-Yasi-Hasi-Komosu-Mosu...”

But they had to stop because they forgot the rest of his name. Suddenly one of them remembered and tried again:

“Len-Li-Liu-Ji-Tsu-Tsoni-Yasi-Hasi-Komosu-Mosu-Amosu-Obo...” He paused, took a deep breath, and finished. “...Sobo-Kobo-Hasobo-Taki fell down the well, please come help him!”

Immediately the parents sprang to their feet and ran to the well, but so much time has passed because of the children’s troubles with saying his long name, and they only just managed to save the boy before he drowned.

After that day, they called the younger brother Li, for short, so there would never be another such incident. From that moment on, both boys lived happily. There were no more differences between them, and whenever there was work that needed to be done or an errand that needed to be run, the brothers would take turns.