

Ancient China Group Readers. This is a set of 5 'mini plays', covering five different aspects of Ancient China. Each has 6 speakers, and at the end of each is a quiz. These mini plays can be used for guided reading or as mini performance pieces – the quizzes acting as a useful tool for retaining the attention of the 'non speakers' i.e. rest of the class. Either way, these group readers offer a comprehensive coverage of the subject – via role play – in a fun but effective way.

•1. **3000-200B.C. The beginnings of a great civilization**

Speakers:

Narrator (Rat) Cai Lun

Ox Warrior

Farmer Silk worker

Ox: And just think if that princess, Xi Liu Shi, hadn't been sitting under that mulberry tree that day in 2640 BC!

Warrior: Another legend! You really shouldn't take such things too seriously

Farmer: But it does make a good story!

Warrior: To have a silk cocoon fall into her cup of tea!

Silk worker: But then to see it open, showing a beautiful thread of silk!

Rat: I bet she couldn't believe her eyes!

Warrior: (Muttering) Any more than we are to believe the story!

Silk worker: But that's just how silk happens!

Ox: What? From cups of tea?

•2. **Confucius**

Speakers:

Narrator (Rat) Rabbit

Confucius Parent

Tiger Child

Confucian Chant

Child:

I love my parents

I do what is right

I respect and obey

And don't put up a fight.

Horse: Especially as you'd convinced yourself you'd be 'divine' ruler!

Peasant: Thank goodness *that* didn't happen! One lifetime was bad enough - *more* than long enough for the rest of us, suffering at his hands.

Rat: Yeah, and not quite the fairy tale ending for him either! Alone, insane, and hated!

Horse: Now *there's* a surprise!

Snake: How on earth did you get such a reputation?

Qin: (Muttering) Hmm. Sadly it was only on earth! Those incompetent alchemists - all promising me eternal life. So much for the life-giving qualities of mercury!

Horse: I'm guessing - popping those 'super pills' *wasn't* such a great idea then?

4. Life in Ancient China

Speakers:

Narrator (Rat) Dragon Monkey

Rooster Dog Pig

Monkey: And what an exciting time and place it was! All those inventions!

Rat: So, come on! Tell us about them!

Monkey: Wow! So much choice! Where do I start?

Pig: Allow me! Now, they say the heart is the seat of intelligence, but the stomach is where it's at as far as power goes. So, let's talk about ice cream and noodles! Both invented in Ancient China!

Rooster: Ice cream? Are you serious?

Pig: Indeed! Never more so! Around 200 BC a nice little bundle of milk and rice, surrounded by snow, was discovered to be Mmmm Rather tasty!

Rat: (Tutting) And I suppose there was a McDonalds just round the corner which said, "Here! We'll sell it for you!"

Dog: No less unlikely than the way in which tea was supposedly discovered!

Rat: And how was that? Oh, don't tell me, it just appeared out of thin air?

Dog: Well, something like that! According to legend ..

5 The Monkey Who Would Be King - Chinese Myth

Speakers:

Sun Hou-tzu (monkey) Goddess (heaven)

Magician Laozi (wizard)

Devil (hell)

Buddha

Sun Hou-tzu: *Immortality!* Ah yes, that sure presented *you* lot with problems - when you were trying to do away with me, that is!

Magician: Hmm! That and your magical powers! If I'd *ever* thought you'd put them to such *bad* use, I'd *never* have been so generous in giving them out!

Sun Hou-tzu: *Your* mistake, old man!

Goddess: What insolence! If I'd been his mum, I'd have *scrambled* him at birth!

Sun Hou-tzu: But you *weren't!* Though it *did* feel a little as if I'd been *hard-boiled*, when I first emerged from that stone egg!

Devil: A real *egg*-head!

Laozi: So that's where he got his *eg_o* from!