CHINESE BOOST

# Legends and ancient life Chinese vocabulary list

93 words with pinyin, 繁體 and meanings, 69 of them with an example sentence.
Every word here links to its entry on the site.

Parts 1 2 3 4

Legends and ancient life Chinese vocabulary list on the web
The same words as a CSV, for Anki or a spreadsheet
A free account, which keeps 简体 or 繁體, pinyin or 注音 and the rest of how you read Chinese on every device

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## Elementary (HSK 1-3)

### 故事
gùshi narrative / story / tale
gùshì old practice

> 我想听个故事!
> Wǒ xiǎng tīng gè gùshi!
> I want to hear a story!

### 变成 變成
biànchéng to change into / to turn into / to become

> 变成了绿色。
> Biànchéngle lǜsè.
> It turned green.

## Intermediate (HSK 4-6)

### 传说 傳說
chuánshuō legend / folk tale / to repeat from mouth to mouth / they say that...

> 传说华佗会给病人做手术。
> Chuánshuō Huà Tuó huì gěi bìngrén zuò shǒushù.
> Legend has it that Hua Tuo performed surgery on patients.

### 神话 神話
shénhuà legend / fairy tale / myth / mythology

> 这是一个古老的神话。
> Zhè shì yí gè gǔlǎo de shénhuà.
> This is an ancient myth.

### 古代
gǔdài ancient times

> 他喜欢读古代经典。
> Tā xǐhuan dú gǔdài jīngdiǎn.
> He likes reading the ancient classics.

### 龙 龍
lóng emperor / surname Long / dinosaur / Chinese dragon / loong / dragon
chōng favour / glory
lǒng mottled / of mixed colours / high mound

> 龙年结束了。
> Lóng nián jiéshùle.
> The year of the dragon has ended.

### 古老
gǔlǎo ancient / old / age-old

> 希腊是个古老的国家。
> Xīlà shì gè gǔlǎo de guójiā.
> Greece is an old country.

### 神秘
shénmì mysterious / mystery

> 自然充满了神秘。
> Zìrán chōngmǎnle shénmì.
> Nature is full of mysteries.

### 农民 農民
nóngmín peasant / farmer

> 农民在田地里干活。
> Nóngmín zài tiándì lǐ gànhuó.
> The farmers are working in the fields.

### 毛笔 毛筆
máobǐ writing brush

> 毛笔用完要洗干净。
> Máobǐ yòng wán yào xǐ gānjìng.
> You should wash the brush clean after using it.

### 马车 馬車
mǎchē cart / chariot / carriage / buggy

> 古时候有钱人坐马车出门。
> Gǔshíhou yǒuqiánrén zuò mǎchē chūmén.
> In ancient times, rich people went out in horse carriages.

### 风俗 風俗
fēngsú social custom

> 这是我们老家的风俗。
> Zhè shì wǒmen lǎojiā de fēngsú.
> This is a custom from our hometown.

### 流传 流傳
liúchuán to spread / to circulate / to hand down

> 这是远古流传下来的故事。
> Zhè shì yuǎngǔ liúchuán xiàlai de gùshi.
> This is a story handed down from ancient times.

## 皇帝
huángdì emperor

> 皇帝以前住在宫里。
> Huángdì yǐqián zhù zài gōng lǐ.
> The emperor used to live in the palace.

## 古人
gǔrén people of ancient times / the ancients / extinct human species such as Homo erectus or Homo neanderthalensis / deceased person

> 古人相信天人合一。
> Gǔrén xiāngxìn tiānrénhéyī.
> The ancients believed in the oneness of heaven and humanity.

## 民间 民間
mínjiān among the people / popular / folk / non-governmental / involving people rather than governments

> 奶奶会唱很多民间小调。
> Nǎinai huì chàng hěn duō mínjiān xiǎodiào.
> Grandma can sing many folk tunes.

## 祖先
zǔxiān ancestors / forebears / ancestral species / ancient species from which present-day species evolved

> 祖先很早就开始种水稻了。
> Zǔxiān hěn zǎojiù kāishǐ zhǒng shuǐdào le.
> Our ancestors started growing rice very early.

## 英雄
yīngxióng hero

> 他不是英雄。
> Tā bú shì yīngxióng.
> He's not a hero.

## 朝代
cháodài dynasty / reign (of a king)

> 哪个朝代最有名？
> Nǎge cháodài zuì yǒumíng?
> Which dynasty is the most famous?

## 神
shén god / deity / spirit / mind / energy / look / expression / supernatural / magical / mysterious / awesome / amazing / lively / expressive / God

> 没有人看过神。
> Méiyǒu rén kànguo shén.
> Nobody has seen God.

## 大臣
dàchén chancellor (of a monarchy) / cabinet minister

> 唐太宗善于听大臣的意见。
> Táng Tàizōng shànyú tīng dàchén de yìjiàn.
> Emperor Taizong of Tang was good at listening to his ministers' opinions.

## 将军 將軍
jiāngjūn general / high-ranking military officer / to check or checkmate / fig. to embarrass / to challenge / to put sb on the spot / (common place name)

> 再走一步，我就能将军了。
> Zài zǒu yíbù, wǒ jiù néng jiāngjūn le.
> One more move and I can checkmate you.

## 士兵
shìbīng soldier

> 士兵给了我水。
> Shìbīng gěi le wǒ shuǐ.
> The soldier gave water to me.

## 村庄 村莊
cūnzhuāng village / hamlet

> 他必须离开村庄。
> Tā bìxū líkāi cūnzhuāng.
> He had to leave the village.

## 相传 相傳
xiāngchuán to pass on / to hand down / tradition has it that ... / according to legend

> 相传这棵树是皇帝种的。
> Xiāngchuán zhè kē shù shì huángdì zhǒng de.
> According to legend, this tree was planted by an emperor.

## 传承 傳承
chuánchéng to pass on (to future generations) / passed on (from former times) / a continued tradition / an inheritance

> 这是代代传承的老习惯。
> Zhè shì dàidài chuánchéng de lǎo xíguàn.
> This is an old habit passed down through generations.

## 起源
qǐyuán origin / to originate / to come from

> 佛教起源于印度。
> Fójiào qǐyuán yú Yìndù.
> Buddhism had its beginnings in India.

## 由来 由來
yóulái origin

> 你知道这个节日的由来吗？
> Nǐ zhīdào zhège jiérì de yóulái ma?
> Do you know the origin of this festival?

## 神奇
shénqí magical / mystical / miraculous

> 山里有一个神奇的古老传说。
> Shān lǐ yǒu yí gè shénqí de gǔlǎo chuánshuō.
> There is a mystical old legend in the mountains.

## 公主
gōngzhǔ princess

> 公主之前在哪里？
> Gōngzhǔ zhīqián zài nǎlǐ?
> Where was the princess?

## 陶器
táoqì pottery

## 农耕 農耕
nónggēng farming / agriculture

## Advanced (HSK 7-9)

### 神仙
shénxiān Daoist immortal / supernatural entity / fairy, elf, leprechaun etc / fig. lighthearted person

> 神仙只在童话里存在。
> Shénxiān zhǐ zài tónghuà lǐ cúnzài.
> Fairies exist only in fairy tales.

### 宫殿 宮殿
gōngdiàn palace

> 国王住在高高的宫殿里。
> Guówáng zhù zài gāo gāo de gōngdiàn lǐ.
> The king lives in a tall palace.

### 皇宫 皇宮
huánggōng imperial palace

> 你去过北京的皇宫吗?
> Nǐ qùguo Běijīng de huánggōng ma?
> Have you been to the imperial palace in Beijing?

### 皇后
huánghòu empress / imperial consort

> 她在话剧里扮皇后。
> Tā zài huàjù lǐ bàn huánghòu.
> She plays the queen in the stage play.

### 仙女
xiānnǚ fairy

> 故事里的仙女从天上飞下来。
> Gùshi lǐ de xiānnǚ cóng tiānshàng fēi xiàlai.
> In the story, the fairy flies down from the sky.

### 妖怪
yāoguài monster / devil

> 故事里有个会飞的妖怪。
> Gùshi lǐ yǒu gè huì fēi de yāoguài.
> There is a monster that can fly in the story.

### 鬼
guǐ disembodied spirit / ghost / devil / person with a certain vice or addiction etc / sly / crafty / resourceful (variant of 詭|诡[gui3]) / one of the 28 constellations of ancient Chinese astronomy

> 你在搞什么鬼。
> Nǐ zài gǎo shénme guǐ.
> What the devil are you doing?

### 凤凰 鳳凰
fènghuáng phoenix

> 那只凤凰画得真漂亮!
> Nà zhī fènghuáng huà de zhēn piàoliang!
> That phoenix is beautifully drawn!

### 迷信
míxìn superstition / to have a superstitious belief (in sth)

> 考试前，你别太迷信运气。
> Kǎoshì qián, nǐ bié tài míxìn yùnqi.
> Before the exam, don't put too much faith in luck.

### 祭祀
jìsì to offer sacrifices to the gods or ancestors

> 古代的人常常祭祀天地。
> Gǔdài de rén chángcháng jìsì tiāndì.
> People in ancient times often offered sacrifices to heaven and earth.

### 祭祖
jìzǔ to offer sacrifices to one's ancestors

### 祈祷 祈禱
qídǎo to pray / to say a prayer

> 思念又祈祷。
> Sīniàn yòu qídǎo.
> Thoughts and prayers.

### 神灵 神靈
shénlíng god / spirit / demon / occult or supernatural entities in general

### 仙人
xiānrén Daoist immortal / celestial being

### 长生不老 長生不老
chángshēngbùlǎo to live forever and never grow old

> 皇帝渴望长生不老。
> Huángdì kěwàng chángshēngbùlǎo.
> The emperor longed for immortality.

### 王朝
wángcháo dynasty

> 清朝是中国最后一个王朝。
> Qīngcháo shì Zhōngguó zuìhòu yí gè wángcháo.
> The Qing was the last dynasty of China.

### 太子
tàizǐ crown prince

> 太子以后会当皇帝。
> Tàizǐ yǐhòu huì dāng huángdì.
> The crown prince will become emperor later.

### 状元 狀元
zhuàngyuán top scorer in the palace examination (highest rank of the Imperial examination system) / top scorer in college entrance examination 高考[gao1 kao3] / the most brilliantly talented person in the field / leading light

> 古时候他考中了状元。
> Gǔshíhou tā kǎo zhōng le zhuàngyuán.
> In ancient times, he came first in the imperial examination.

### 科举 科舉
kējǔ imperial examination

> 他参加科举，可惜没考上。
> Tā cānjiā kējǔ, kěxī méi kǎoshàng.
> He took the imperial examination, but unfortunately he didn't pass.

### 耕地
gēngdì arable land / to plow land

> 爷爷每天早上去田里耕地。
> Yéye měitiān zǎoshang qù tiánlǐ gēngdì.
> My grandfather goes to the fields to plow every morning.

竹简 竹簡
zhújiǎn bamboo slips (used for writing on in ancient times)

蜡烛 蠟燭
làzhú candle

> 把蜡烛点燃。
> Bǎ làzhú diǎnrán.
> Light the candle.

轿子 轎子
jiàozi sedan chair / palanquin / litter

古装 古裝
gǔzhuāng ancient costume / period costume (in movies etc)

> 她穿着古装拍照。
> Tā chuānzhe gǔzhuāng pāizhào.
> She is having her photo taken in ancient costume.

四合院
sìhéyuàn courtyard house with a fully enclosed courtyard (type of Chinese residence)

城墙 城牆
chéngqiáng city wall

> 城墙上架着一门炮。
> Chéngqiáng shàng jià zhe yìmén pào.
> A cannon is mounted on the city wall.

集市
jíshì market / bazaar / fair

> 我奶奶爱去集市买菜。
> Wǒ nǎinai ài qù jíshì mǎicài.
> My grandmother loves going to the market to buy vegetables.

丝绸 絲綢
sīchóu silk (cloth)

> 丝绸摸起来又软又滑。
> Sīchóu mō qǐlai yòu ruǎn yòu huá.
> Silk feels soft and smooth to the touch.

自给自足 自給自足
zìjǐzìzú self-sufficiency / autarky

> 古代的国家想自给自足。
> Gǔdài de guójiā xiǎng zìjǐ-zìzú.
> Ancient states wanted to be economically self-sufficient.

魔法
mófǎ enchantment / magic

> 你相信世界上有魔法吗?
> Nǐ xiāngxìn shìjiè shàng yǒu mófǎ ma?
> Do you believe there is magic in the world?

宝物 寶物
bǎowù treasure

勇士
yǒngshì a warrior / a brave person

太监 太監
tàijiàn court eunuch / palace eunuch

> 太监给皇上端来了茶。
> Tàijiàn gěi huángshang duān láile chá.
> The eunuch brought tea to the emperor.

天子
tiānzǐ the (rightful) emperor / "Son of Heaven" (traditional English translation)

> 天子一声令下，大军马上出发了。
> Tiānzǐ yìshēng lìng xià, dàjūn mǎshàng chūfāle.
> At the emperor's command, the great army set off at once.

青铜器 青銅器
qīngtóngqì bronze implement / refers to ancient bronze artifacts, from c. 2,000 BC

> 博物馆里有很多古代青铜器。
> Bówùguǎn lǐ yǒu hěn duō gǔdài qīngtóngqì.
> The museum has many ancient bronze objects.

图腾 圖騰
túténg totem (loanword)

> 博物馆里有一件几千年前的图腾。
> Bówùguǎn lǐ yǒu yí jiàn jǐqiān niánqián de túténg.
> The museum has a totem from several thousand years ago.

占卜
zhānbǔ to divine

> 老奶奶会用纸牌占卜。
> Lǎonǎinai huì yòng zhǐpái zhānbǔ.
> The old lady can tell fortunes with cards.

## Outside HSK

天宫 天宮
tiāngōng Temple in Heaven (e.g. of the Jade Emperor) / Tiangong, Chinese space station program

> 故事里的猴子大闹了天宫。
> Gùshi lǐ de hóuzi dà nàole Tiāngōng.
> In the story, the monkey caused an uproar in the heavenly palace.

玉皇大帝
yùhuángdàdì Jade Emperor

> 人们向玉皇大帝求雨。
> Rénmen xiàng Yùhuáng Dàdì qiúyǔ.
> People prayed to the Jade Emperor for rain.

嫦娥
cháng'é Chang'e, the lady in the moon (Chinese mythology) / one of the Chang'e series of PRC lunar spacecraft

牛郎织女 牛郎織女
niúlángzhīnǚ Cowherd and Weaving maid (characters in folk story) / separated lovers / Altair and Vega (stars)

盘古 盤古
pángǔ Pangu (creator of the universe in Chinese mythology)

> 盘古死后，身体变成了山河。
> Pángǔ sǐ hòu, shēntǐ biànchéngle shānhé.
> After Pangu died, his body became the mountains and rivers.

女娲 女媧
nǚwā Nüwa (creator of humans in Chinese mythology)

后羿
hòuyì Houyi, mythological Chinese archer whose wife was Chang'e

## 孙悟空 孫悟空

sūnwùkōng Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, character with supernatural powers in the novel Journey to the West 西遊記|西游记[Xi1 you2 Ji4] / Son Goku, the main character in Dragon Ball 七龍珠|七龙珠[Qi1 long2 zhu1]

> 孙悟空是从石头里蹦出来的。
> Sūn Wùkōng shì cóng shítou lǐ bèngchūlai de.
> The Monkey King burst out of a stone.

## 八仙

bāxiān the Eight Immortals (Daoist mythology)

## 龙王 龍王

lóngwáng Dragon King (mythology)

> 渔民出海前，先拜龙王。
> Yúmín chūhǎi qián, xiān bài Lóngwáng.
> Before going out to sea, the fishermen first pay respects to the Dragon King.

## 麒麟

qílín qilin / giraffe

## 灶神

zàoshén Zaoshen, the god of the kitchen

> 小年那天家家都拜灶神。
> Xiǎo nián nàtiān jiājiā dōu bài zàoshén.
> On Little New Year, every household worships the Kitchen God.

## 狐狸精

húlijīng fox-spirit / vixen / witch / enchantress

> 故事里的狐狸精会变成人。
> Gùshi lǐ de húlijīng huì biànchéng rén.
> The fox spirit in the story can turn into a person.

## 炼丹 煉丹

liàndān to concoct pills of immortality

## 皇族

huángzú the imperial family / royal kin

## 书生 書生

shūshēng scholar / intellectual / egghead

> 书生在油灯下读书。
> Shūshēng zài yóudēng xià dúshū.
> The scholar is reading by the light of an oil lamp.

## 油灯 油燈

yóudēng oil lamp

> 书生在油灯下读书。
> Shūshēng zài yóudēng xià dúshū.
> The scholar is reading by the light of an oil lamp.

## 私塾

sīshú private school (in former times)

## 驿站 驛站

yìzhàn relay station for post horses (old)

## 客栈 客棧

kèzhàn tavern / guest house / inn / hotel

## 织布 織布

zhībù woven cloth / to weave cloth

> 她奶奶年轻时在家织布。
> Tā nǎinai niánqīng shí zàijiā zhībù.
> Her grandmother used to weave cloth at home when she was young.

## 以物易物

yǐwùyìwù to barter / barter

## 巫师 巫師

wūshī wizard / magician

## 妃子

fēizi imperial concubine