

Read the Chinese story and answer the following questions.

Sending a Goose Feather from Thousands of Miles Away

1. During the Tang Dynasty*, the King of Huihe wanted to maintain a friendly relationship with the Tang Dynasty, so he sent his ambassador, Mian Bogao, to visit the Emperor of Tang and bring national treasures to him. The most precious one was the rare white goose.

2. On the way, Mian Bogao was distressed and restless. He thought, “If I lost the white goose, how could I explain it to my king?” Therefore, he kept an eye on the white goose and took good care of it.

3. Having walked for over a mile, Mian Bogao came to the Mianyang River. He wanted to bathe the white goose, so he opened the cage and put the white goose into the water carefully. All of a sudden, the white goose spread its wings. He jumped forward quickly and wanted to catch the white goose. Unfortunately, he could only pluck a goose feather and the white goose flew away.

4. Mian Bogao was very anxious as he did not know how to tell the Emperor of Tang that he had lost the white goose. He beat his chest and burst into tears. One of the servants told him, “The white goose has already gone. It is meaningless to cry and feel sorry. Let’s think of a solution together.”

5. A solution popped up in Mian Bogao’s head. He decided to continue the journey. He took out a piece of pure white silk and carefully wrapped the goose feather. Then he wrote a few lines on the silk:

“As I have lost the white goose on the way, it is difficult to return home.

May I ask the Emperor of Tang to accept my heartfelt apologies?

This goose feather is light but it is sent from afar and with the best wishes.”

6. Finally, Mian Bogao came to Changan, the capital of the Tang Dynasty, with jewellery and the goose feather. He met the Emperor of Tang and presented the emperor with the gifts. After the emperor opened a little bag, he saw a goose feather and read the lines on the white silk. He listened to Mian Bogao’s explanation. At last, the emperor forgave Mian Bogao for having lost the white goose and rewarded his honesty with appreciation. He returned home with great joy.

*The Tang Dynasty refers to a dynasty in ancient Chinese history that ruled from 618 AD to 907 AD.

