

“Breaker’s Bridge” Sequencing Strips

There was once a boy who people called Breaker because he was always breaking things, but he proved to be quite clever.

The emperor asked Breaker to build a bridge. In return, he would have his weight in gold; however, if he failed, the emperor would have him beheaded.

Breaker traveled to the river and noticed it was mighty. The water flowed fast and splashed fiercely against rocks.

The river was too wide to build a simple bridge, so Breaker would have to construct two piers in the middle of the river.

Breaker encountered many problems and had to change teams of workers frequently.

When he finally was ready to set the stones on top of the logs, the river fought back, crushing the stones and destroying the logs.

Breaker and his workers tried again and again, but each time the river defeated him.

Finally his men built a dam to hold back the river so the largest and sturdiest piers could be constructed.

An official came from the emperor to check on his progress.

The mighty river broke the dam, causing the two piers already built to collapse.

The official gave Breaker a letter from the emperor who wrote that if a bridge wasn’t built in one month, he would have Breaker’s head.

Breaker tried hard to find a new scheme since the dam was his last resort.

Breaker saw a crooked old man sitting by the roadside and offered to make him a new crutch since his was broken. Breaker had a hard time making the crutch.

Breaker gave the old man his crutch, but the man strongly grabbed him and kept repeating, "We are all bound together and by the same laws."

Breaker was afraid the old man was some mountain spirit. He gave Breaker two pellets and told him where to place them.

Breaker put a pellet where one pier should be, and miraculously a stone pier was constructed.

Breaker rowed quickly to drop a pellet for the other pier, but his clumsy fingers crushed part of it so that only part of the pier was erected.

The workers helped to finish building the second pier; it was not as solid as the first one.

The emperor used the bridge and rewarded Breaker. When winter came, the second pier needed repair, which angered the emperor.

The old man suddenly appeared and told the emperor he didn't say how long the bridge was supposed to last. Everyone kneeled to the crooked old man.

Then Breaker learned that the old man was a saint and a powerful magician.

The emperor spared Breaker's life and sent him to build other projects throughout China.

Every year, the bridge had to be rebuilt, which meant that things change but yet really do not change.