

BÓYÌ 博弈 · WEEK 4

yǐ yì dài láo

以逸待劳

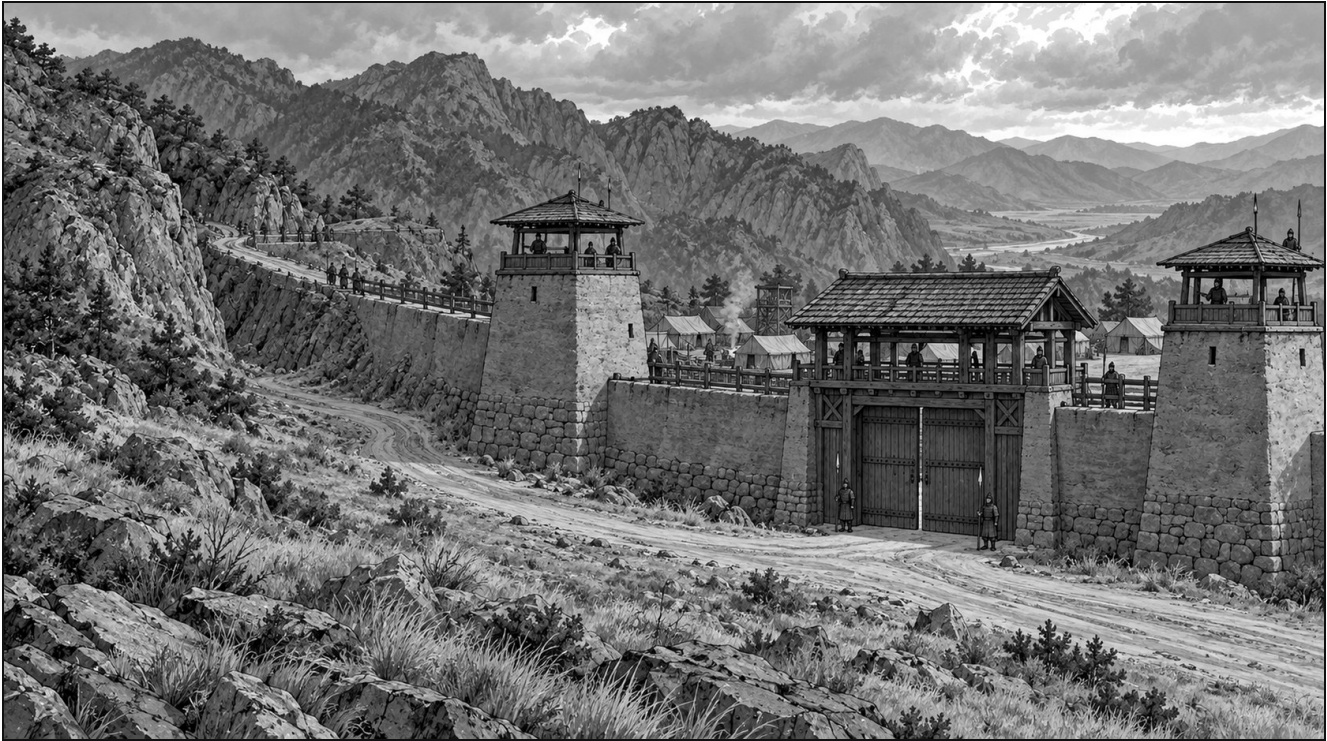
Wait at ease for the tired enemy.

More than 2,200 years ago, Li Mu guarded a mountain pass with a simple rule: never come out and fight. He fed his soldiers meat, drilled them daily, and let the raiders take nothing. They called him a coward — even his own king replaced him. This week you'll learn to write four characters: 以, 逸, 待, 劳.

Stratagem No. 4 of 36 · one story, one lesson, four characters.

本周学：以逸待劳 · 练字：以、逸、待、劳

HE FED THEM MEAT AND REFUSED TO FIGHT



Li Mu at the Yanmen pass — watching, not fighting.

In the north of the state of Zhao, one general held a mountain pass: Li Mu. Beyond the wall, riders came to raid. Every year.

He did something strange. He fed his soldiers meat, every day. He drilled them daily, kept the beacons lit, paid his scouts. Then he gave one order: if raiders come, everyone gets inside the walls. Nobody fights.

The raiders came. The gate closed. Nothing happened. Year after year, he lost not one thing.

But everyone thought he was afraid. His own soldiers thought so too — paid, fed, and never used. Even the King of Zhao told him to fight. He didn't.

《史记》卷八十一〈廉颇蔺相如列传〉

THEY REPLACED HIM, THEN ASKED HIM BACK



The King of Zhao ordered him to fight. Li Mu stood still.

So the king replaced him. The new general fought — and for one year it was defeats, lost ground, empty fields. The king had to ask Li Mu back.

Li Mu stayed home and said he was sick. When the king asked again, he said one thing: "Use me my way."

So Li Mu came back to the pass with the same rule. For years: nothing. Everyone was sure now — he was a coward. His soldiers wanted one fight.

Then he prepared: wagons, horses, picked men, drills. He pushed the herds out into the open, lost a small raid on purpose, and left some of his own men behind. The chieftain heard, and brought his whole army. Li Mu opened both wings — and closed them. For more than ten years after that, nobody came near that border.

《史记》卷八十一〈廉颇蔺相如列传〉

WHY IT WORKED

Step	Who vs who	中文 · pinyin	Result
What Li Mu did	Fed, trained, scouted, kept the wall	底子 dǐ zi	He built first
What he refused	Never came out to fight	不动 bú dòng	Years, nothing lost
What they thought	"He's afraid"	误判 wù pàn	They came to him tired — and lost

He didn't win by fighting more. He won because he was ready. 以逸待劳 yǐ yì dài láo

THE ORIGINAL LINES

《三十六计·第四计 以逸待劳》

The Thirty-Six Stratagems, No. 4 — "Wait at ease for the tired enemy"

1 kùn dí zhī shì bù yǐ zhàn
困敵之勢，不以戰；
Corner them by the situation, not by a battle.

2 sǔn gāng yì róu
損剛益柔。
Wear down the hard; build up the soft.

Two lines, nothing more. 损 (sǔn) is a hexagram in the I Ching — "Decrease": take from what is strong, add to what is soft. That is the logic of the stratagem, not a separate story. The long commentary that follows in the old editions (about 致敵之法) is not part of this text.

原文只有这两句。「损」是《易经》的损卦（减损），不是人名、也不是另一本书。后面那段按语（讲致敵之法、引兵书）是老版本的注释，不进原文框。

PRACTICE · 以 Yǐ · 逸 Yì

Follow the numbers. Write each stroke in order.

先描一遍分解格，再在田字格里写 5 遍。

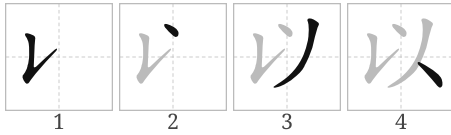


yǐ

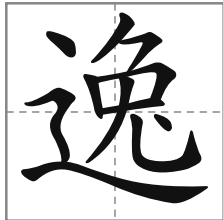
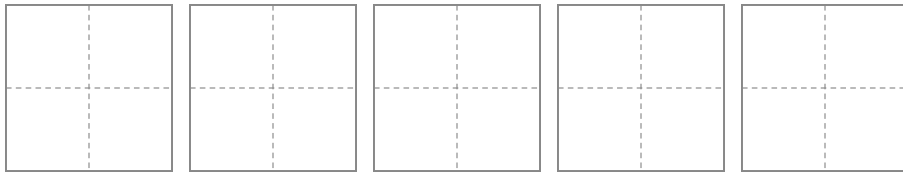
with; by means of

4 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

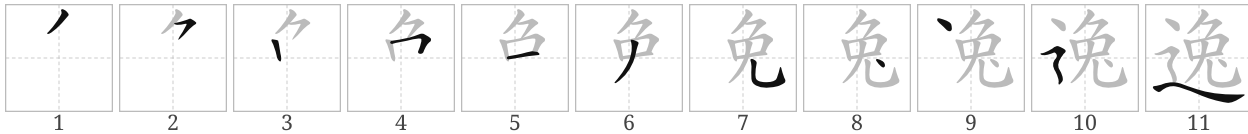


yì

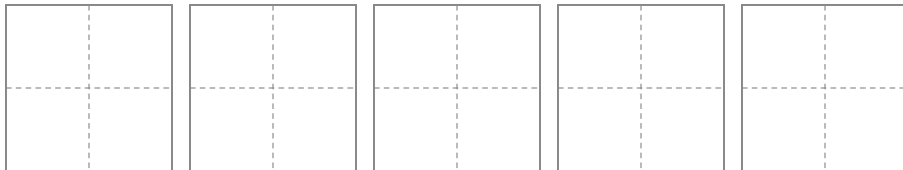
ease; rest

11 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 待 DÀI · 劳 LÁO

Same order again. Write slowly, and say the sound out loud.

写完 4 个字，再回到第 7 页连写整句。

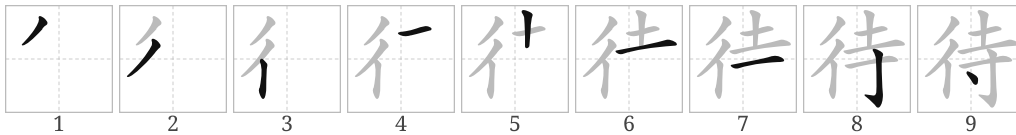


dài

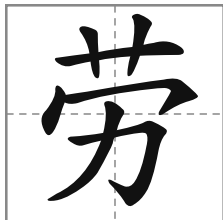
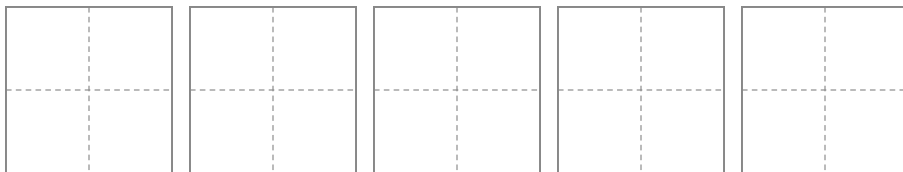
to wait for

9 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

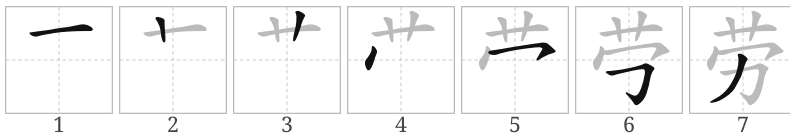


láo

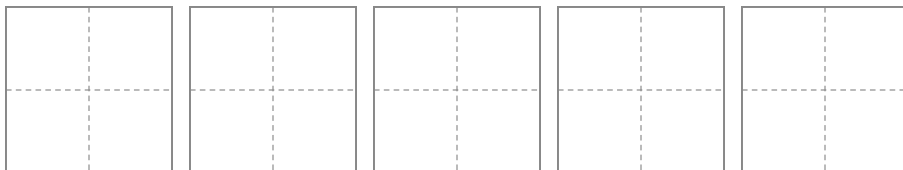
toil; tired

7 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 以逸待劳 Yǐ Yì Dài Láo

Trace the first row, then write the whole phrase four times. Say it out loud each time.

yǐ	yì	dài	láo
以	逸	待	劳

以逸待劳 · Wait at ease for the tired enemy.

THREE MORE WORDS

dǐ zǐ

1 底子

the foundation; what you've built up.

xiān zǎn dǐ zǐ zài děng

先攒底子，再等。

Build first. Then you can wait.

Li Mu fed and drilled them for years before he waited for anything. Without the foundation, waiting is just doing nothing.

lèi

2 累

tired; worn out.

tā pǎo de tài yuǎn lèi le

他跑得太远，累了。

He ran too far, and got tired.

The raiders wore themselves out coming to him. The word in the stratagem is 劳 — toil, the tiredness that comes from moving first.

shí jī

3 时机

the right moment; timing.

děng shí jī bú shì děng yùn qì

等时机，不是等运气。

Waiting for the moment is not waiting for luck.

That's the whole difference between clean patience and lazy patience: one waits for a moment it has prepared, the other waits for luck.

SPOT IT · STOP IT 识破 · 防住

Your biggest customer calls at nine at night. Fifteen percent off, or he leaves next week. Your partner says: just cut it. You don't say a word — you don't cut, and you don't fight. Three months later his new supplier ships late, and he calls back. This time you name the price.

干净的等 <i>The wait you prepared for</i> yǒu dǐ zi 有 底 子 <i>You built something first</i> kàn qīng chu le zài dòng 看 清 楚 了 再 动 <i>You move when it's clear</i> 	懒的等 <i>The wait you're hiding in</i> méi dǐ zi 没 底 子 <i>There's nothing underneath</i> ná shí jī dāng jiè kǒu 拿 "时 机" 当 借 口 <i>You call it timing, it's stalling</i>
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Two ways to be patient. One clean, one lazy. The lazy kind fails on the third month. So, one line: build first, then let them tire.

「等」有两种：干净的，懒的。懒的那种，第三个月就撑不住。先攒底子，再让他累。《Děng》yǒu liǎng zhǒng: gān jìng de, lǎn de. Lǎn de nà zhǒng, dì sān gè yuè jiù chēng bú zhù. Xiān zǎn dǐ zi, zài ràng tā lèi.

SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN QUESTIONS

Day 1 What have you actually built in the last year — skill, savings, evidence, relationships? 底子 dǐ zi

Day 2 Which of your "waiting" is prepared, and which one is just avoiding the decision? 时机 shí jī

Day 3 Who is being pushed to move first in a deal you're in right now? Why them? 先动 xiān dòng

Day 4 Last time you waited, did you spend the time building — or only hoping? 攒 zǎn

Day 5 Where are you the tired one, running on someone else's clock? 劳 láo

Day 6 If they hold on three more months, can you? Be honest about the number. 撑 chēng

Day 7 What's one thing you could prepare this week so that next time you can wait with a straight face? 逸 yì

WEEK 4 REVIEW

Yoko
Read the 36 Stratagems with Yoko

第 4 计 / 36

以逸待劳

yǐ yì dài láo
听着简单，做不到。· Waiting is work.

困敌之势，不以战；损刚益柔。
Corner them by the situation, not by a battle.

古 THEN	练兵·斥候·烽火 Build the base; nobody fights	→	被换下·新将打败 The new man fought and lost	→	请回来·仍按老办法 Same rule. Wait until they tire
理 THE LOGIC	待，不是躲 Waiting — not hiding	→	他花力气·你攒底子 They spend; you save	→	等要有资本 Something to wait on CAN I HOLD THREE MORE MONTHS?
今 TODAY	降15%? 下周换人 The same phone call	→	三个月后·交期/质量出事 He leaves; his new supplier fails	→	他打回来·你定价 This time, you name the price WHO RAN OUT FIRST?
正用 AT WORK	新领导·三把火 New rules. Meetings. Pick a side	→	做稳手上的事·留结果 Keep your numbers clean 3 MONTHS LATER	→	他累了·轮到你 Walk in with the numbers

干净的等·先攒底子。再让他累；他的表不是你的表。

Then let them tire.

The one-page summary of this week. 本周一图总结。

1. In one sentence: why did Li Mu never fight a battle at the pass?

2. What does 以逸待劳 mean, in your own words?

3. Which of this week's four characters can you write now without looking: 以, 逸, 待, or 劳?

4. Think of a time you waited. Was there a foundation under it?

Who is moving first in your life right now — and are you letting them get tired, or are you the one running?

现在你生活里是谁先动? 你是在让他累, 还是跑的那个人是你?

Xiàn zài nǐ shēng huó lǐ shì shuí xiān dòng? Nǐ shì zài ràng tā lèi, hái shì pǎo de nà ge rén shì nǐ?