

BEST CHINESE IDIOMS

(Volume 2)

Chinese—English



中國成語選粹續篇

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海峰出

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前言

漢語有豐富的詞匯和各種形式的固定詞組。成語就是一種經常使用的固定詞組，在漢語詞匯中佔有重要的地位。

漢語成語形式簡潔、含義深刻。它們常被用來說明一件事實、一個道理或比喻一種形象，從而構成漢語的獨特風格。

漢語成語是在漢語的長期發展過程中形成的。大多數成語由四個字組成，在使用的時候實際上相當於一個詞。在談話、演講或寫作時，如運用得當，將會增強語言的感染力，產生其他方法所不能比擬的表達效果。

正確地運用成語，首要之點在於瞭解它的意義。有些成語的意義，從字面上不難瞭解；有些成語則不能按字面望文生義，而必須知道它的來源，才能準確掌握和運用。

漢語成語，數量龐大，除來自民間口語者外，相當大的部分來自古代典籍。這些來自古代典籍的成語，有的出自寓言故事，有的出自歷史事件或神話傳說，通常也叫典故。本書所選的大都屬於這一類。

中國的古代典籍記載了大量絢麗多彩的寓言故事和神話。這在先秦諸子的著作中尤為顯著，其中許多寓言故事和神話都有成語的概括形式，如“害羣之馬”（參見第 182 頁）、“鵬程萬里”（參見第 292 頁）。歷史上的事件，也常常被概括為一個成語，如“三顧茅廬”（參見第 26 頁）、“投筆從戎”（參見第 99 頁）。這些來自寓言、神話和歷史事件的成語，有不少蘊含着深刻的哲理和寶貴的生活經驗，直到今天還有其現實意義。此外，還有一些成語，來源於古代作品中的名句，因而成了格言。

本書為一九八四年出版的《中國成語選粹》的續集，共收錄常用的和有故事性的成語二百零三條。在介紹成語故事時，為使讀者容易瞭解起見，有的地方作了一些刪節和修飾，增加了一點

背景材料。許多中國成語並列有意義相近的英語成語。此外，還在成語條目的下面附加漢語拼音，不懂漢語的讀者，可以借助於“漢語拼音發音指南”（見書後），直接讀出漢語成語。

書前成語“目次”按首字筆劃順序排列。書末附有按漢語拼音字母順序排列的“條目索引”。

Foreword

The Chinese language is rich in vocabulary, phrases and idioms. As a form of set phrases, Chinese idioms are in wide use and occupy an important place in the language as a whole. Concise yet meaningful, they illustrate certain specific facts, carry certain moral teachings or suggest certain particular images, thus constituting a unique characteristic of the Chinese language.

Chinese idioms, which emerged and developed in the long years of Chinese history, mostly consist of four characters which go together and virtually function as a set term. When used properly and cleverly in everyday conversation, speeches or writings, they add to the appeal of the language and make it more to the point and achieve what cannot be achieved by other ways of expressing the same thought.

A correct understanding of their meaning is the key to the correct use of Chinese idioms. While some can be taken literally, others cannot be interpreted or used correctly without first delving into their real meaning and origin.

Being numerous and having backgrounds that can be traced back to ancient times, Chinese idioms are partly derived from oral language and partly — perhaps in the case of a greater percentage of them — from ancient historical records, literature and other writings. The latter category, with which this book chiefly deals, embraces those coming from parables or fables, historical stories or anecdotes, and fairy tales or legends.

Chinese historical records of the remote past abound in wise fables, didactic parables and thought-provoking tales. A case in point is the works of the philosophers of the various schools prior to the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.). Many of the fables and tales contained in them are summarized in a few words, such as "The Harmful Horse in the Herd" (see p. 182 of this book) and "A Roc Can Fly Ten Thousand Miles" (see p. 293). Some idioms deal with historical events or anecdotes, such as "Calling Thrice at the Thatched Cottage"

(see p. 26) and "Throwing Down the Pen and Joining the Army" (see p. 99). Quite a number of Chinese idioms belonging to the above categories carry a philosophical note and draw on practical experiences, which make them significant even for contemporary life. There are also some idioms which have been taken from well-known ancient works and have thus become maxims.

The present book, a continuation of *Best Chinese Idioms* published in 1984, contains 203 Chinese idioms which are in common use and behind each of which there is a story or an anecdote. Generally speaking, the stories and anecdotes are based on the original versions in classical Chinese but, where necessary, abridgement and modifications are made and brief descriptions of their backgrounds given. Many of the Chinese idioms are accompanied by English equivalents. Chinese phonetic spelling (*pinyin*) is given to each title, and for readers who are not familiar with this system the appendix "Guide to Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" at the end of the book may prove useful.

The table of contents in this book has been arranged according to the number of strokes of the first Chinese character in each title. There is an index at the end of the book compiled alphabetically, using the *pinyin* system.

目次

Contents

一字千金	1
A Word Is Worth a Thousand Pieces of Gold	
一字之師	2
A Teacher of One Word	
一衣帶水	3
A Narrow Strip of Water	
一身是膽	4
Full of Courage	
一狐之腋	6
The Underfur of a Fox	
一敗塗地	7
A Ruinous Defeat	
一朝一夕	9
In a Morning or Evening	
一登龍門，身價十倍	11
Once the Dragon Gate Is Crossed, One's Status	
Rises Ten Times	
一夜十往	12
Ten Visits in One Night	
一筆勾銷	13
Writing off with One Stroke of the Pen	
一意孤行	14
Insisting on Having One's Own Way	
一髮千鈞	16
A Heavy Weight Hanging by a Hair	
一曝十寒	17
One Day of Sunning and Ten Days of Freezing	
一顧之榮	19
Being Honoured by a Glance	
人人自危	21
Everybody Finds Himself in Danger	
人琴俱亡	22
Both Man and Lute Have Perished	

干將莫邪	23
Gan Jiang and Mo Ye	
大器晚成	25
Great Vessels Take Longer to Complete	
三顧茅廬	26
Calling Thrice at the Thatched Cottage	
上下其手	28
Raising and Lowering the Hand	
千慮一得	29
Hitting upon an Idea after Much Thought	
亡戟得矛	31
Losing a Halberd and Gaining a Spear	
天下無雙	33
Unequaled under the Sky	
木人石心	34
Man of Wood with a Heart of Stone	
犬牙交錯	36
In an Interlocked Canine-Teeth Pattern	
不自量力	37
Overrating One's Own Strength	
不寒而慄	39
Shivering All Over though Not Cold	
不覺技癢	40
Itching to Show One's Skill	
水深火熱	42
Deep Water and Hot Fire	
水滴石穿	43
Constant Dripping Wears Away the Stone	
月下老人	45
The Old Man under the Moon	
手不釋卷	47
Always Having a Book in One's Hand	
分道揚鑣	48
Going Separate Ways	
牛衣對泣	50
Crying Face to Face in an Ox Cape	
牛鼎烹鷄	51
Cooking a Chicken in a Cauldron for Stewing an Ox	

心腹之患	52
A Disease in the Vital Organs	
心懷叵測	54
Harbouring Evil Designs	
引錐刺股	55
Pricking One's Thigh with an Awl	
巧取豪奪	56
Seizing by Trick or by Force	
未能免俗	58
Unable to Break Away from the Conventions	
瓜田李下	59
In a Melon Plot and under a Plum Tree	
生吞活剝	60
Swallowing Raw and Skinning Alive	
外強中乾	62
Outwardly Strong but Inwardly Shrivelled	
包藏禍心	63
Having Secret Evil Intentions	
半途而廢	64
Giving Up Halfway	
立錐之地	65
A Place to Stick an Awl	
司空見慣	67
A Common Occurrence	
成也蕭何，敗也蕭何	68
It was Done by Xiao He and Undone Also by Him	
有恃無恐	71
Undaunted on Account of Powerful Backing	
老蚌生珠	72
An Old Oyster Yields Pearls	
老當益壯	73
Old but More Spirited	
老驥伏櫪	75
An Old Horse at the Trough	
仰人鼻息	76
To Be Dependent on the Whims of Others	
行屍走肉	79
A Walking Corpse	

各自爲政	Each Following His Own Policy	80
州官放火	The Magistrate Sets Fire	82
休戚相關	Sharing Joys and Sorrows	84
名落孫山	Falling behind Sun Shan	85
多難興邦	Many Hardships May Rejuvenate a Nation	87
亦步亦趨	Following Someone at Every Step	88
安步當車	Strolling Rather than Riding in a Carriage	90
江郎才盡	Master Jiang Has Exhausted His Talent	92
好好先生	Mr. Fine	94
如火如荼	Raging like a Fire	95
如鳥獸散	Scattering like Birds and Beasts	96
束之高閣	To Be Pigeonholed	98
投筆從戎	Throwing Down the Pen and Joining the Army	99
投鞭斷流	Throwing in Whips and Stopping a River	100
車載斗量	Cartloads and Bushelfuls	102
吳牛喘月	The Buffalo of Wu Pants at the Sight of the Moon	103
呆若木鷄	Dumb like a Wooden Cock	105
見怪不怪	Facing the Uncanny with No Fears	106
芒刺在背	A Thorn in One's Back	108

別無長物	109
Having Nothing to Spare	
含沙射影	111
Attacking by Innuendo	
作法自斃	112
Making Laws to Bind Oneself	
每況愈下	113
Getting Steadily Worse	
言過其實	115
To Exaggerate	
忍辱負重	116
Enduring Humiliations in Order to Perform an Im-	
portant Duty	
防微杜漸	117
Checking a Bad Thing at the Outset	
青出於藍而勝於藍	118
The Blue Dye Extracted from Indigo Is Bluer than	
Indigo	
東山再起	120
Rising Again from the East Mountain	
東窗事發	121
The Plot at the East Window Has Been Exposed	
玩物喪志	123
Riding a Hobby Ruins One's Will	
招搖過市	124
Parading through the Busy Streets	
其貌不揚	126
Undistinguished in Appearance	
抱薪救火	127
Carrying Faggots to Put Out of Fire	
臥薪嘗膽	129
Sleeping on Straw and Tasting Gall	
虎口餘生	130
Being Saved from the Tiger's Mouth	
咄咄怪事	131
A Strange Business	
金石爲開	132
Even Metal and Stone Can Be Pierced	

金城湯池	133
A City of Metal with Boiling Moats	
所向無敵	136
Unrivalled Anywhere	
狗尾續貂	137
Attaching a Dog's Tail to a Sable	
返老還童	138
Recovering the Youthful Vigour	
非驢非馬	139
Neither a Donkey nor a Horse	
河東獅吼	140
The Lioness Roars on the East Bank	
空洞無物	142
Hollow and Devoid of Content	
門可羅雀	143
One Can Catch Sparrows at the Door	
門庭若市	144
The House Is like a Marketplace	
孟母三遷	146
Mencius' Mother Moved House Three Times	
殃及池魚	148
Disaster Spreads to the Fish in the Pond	
畏首畏尾	149
Fearing the Head and Fearing the Tail	
苟延殘喘	150
Lingering On before Dying	
風雨同舟	151
In the Same Boat in a Storm	
侯門似海	153
A Noble's House Is As Deep as the Sea	
重蹈覆轍	154
Following the Track of the Overturned Cart	
後起之秀	155
Up-and-Coming Young Persons	
後顧之憂	156
Worrying about Trouble in the Rear	
約法三章	157
Agreeing on Three Articles of Law	

神工鬼斧	159
By the Hand of a God and the Axe of a Spirit	
馬革裹屍	160
Wrapping the Body in Horsehide	
捉襟見肘	161
Pulling the Lapels Only to Expose the Elbows	
胯下之辱	163
The Humiliation of Crawling under the Crotch	
釜底游魚	164
Fish Swimming at the Bottom of the Pot	
狼狽不堪	166
In a Sorry Plight	
笑裏藏刀	168
Hiding a Dagger behind a Smiling Face	
倒紉孩兒	170
Wrapping up a Baby Upside Down	
倒屣相迎	171
Wearing Shoes Back to Front to Welcome a Guest	
舐犢之愛 (舐犢情深)	173
The Love of a Cow Licking Her Calf	
病入膏肓	174
The Disease Has Penetrated the Vitals	
高山流水	175
Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water	
宴安酖毒	178
Living in Comfort Is like Drinking Poisoned Wine	
家徒四壁	179
A Home with Four Bare Walls	
家喻戶曉	181
Becoming Known to Every Household	
害羣之馬	182
The Harmful Horse in the Herd	
差強人意	183
Barely Satisfactory	
捲土重來	184
Kicking up the Dust and Coming Back	
推心置腹	186
Placing Full Confidence in	

斬草除根	187
Digging up the Weeds by the Roots	
專橫跋扈	189
Imperious and Despot	
眼中之釘	190
A Nail in the Eye	
趾高氣揚	191
Strutting About and Putting on Airs	
殺人不眨眼	193
Killing without Blinking	
殺妻求將	194
Killing One's wife for the Sake of Generalship	
貪天之功	195
Arrogating Heaven's Achievement	
欲加之罪，何患無辭	197
One Can Always Name a Crime to Frame Some- body	
既往不咎	198
Things That Are Past, It Is Needless to Blame	
從容不迫	199
Calm and Unhurried	
從善如流	200
Following Advice As Swiftly as a Stream Flows	
鳥盡弓藏	202
When All the Birds Are Killed, the Bow Is Put Away	
強弩之末	204
An Arrow at the End of Its Flight	
異曲同工	205
Different Tunes Played with Equal Skill	
欺世盜名	207
Cheating the Public to Gain Fame	
揮汗成雨、比肩繼踵	208
Sweat Falling like Rain, Shoulders Rubbing Shoul- ders and Toes Touching Heels	
喪家之狗	210
A Stray Cur	

黃粱美夢	211
A Golden Millet Dream	
圍魏救趙	213
Besieging Wei to Rescue Zhao	
傍人門戶	214
Hanging on Another's Door	
程門立雪	217
Standing at Cheng's Door in the Snow	
衆叛親離	218
Deserted by the Masses and Followers	
衆怒難犯	220
It Won't Do to Incur the Anger of the Many	
普天同慶	221
The Whole Nation Is Rejoicing	
開天闢地	222
The Beginning of Heaven and Earth	
開門揖盜	223
Opening the Door to Welcome the Bandit	
畫虎類犬	225
Trying to Draw a Tiger and Ending Up with the	
Picture of a Dog	
畫餅充飢	227
Drawing a Cake to Allay One's Hunger	
結草銜環	228
Tying Grass and Delivering Rings	
勢如破竹	230
Like Splitting a Bamboo	
解衣推食	232
Doffing Garments and Sharing Food	
傾城傾國	234
Overwhelming a City and a Country	
道聽途說	235
Roadside Gossip	
運籌帷幄	237
Planning Strategies in a Tent	
嫉惡如仇	239
Hating Evil as an Enemy	