

THE BOOK OF CHINESE WISDOM BOOK I

TIMELESS TALES
OF THE ART
OF MANAGEMENT

Michael C. Tang

唐庆华 著

中國智慧故事

一 管理智慧篇

上海人民出版社



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The Book of Chinese Wisdom was originally published by the Foreign Language Press of Beijing in 1996 under the title of *A Treasury of China's Wisdom*. It was published in the U.S. by Prentice Hall Press in 2000 under the title of *A Victor's Reflections and Other Tales of China's Timeless Wisdom*. Subsequently it was translated into other foreign languages and published in Europe and Asia.

I have completely revised and substantially expanded the book for the bilingual version. The book is now in four volumes, each with a distinct theme.

The Book of Chinese Wisdom is the result of years of studying hundreds of Chinese classics in history, literature and philosophy, ranging from *The Book of Changes* to *Tao Te Ching*, from *The Intrigues of the Warring States* to *The Records of the Historian*, from *Remarks of Monarchs* to *The Comprehensive Mirror to Rulers*, from *The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms* to *The History of the Ming Dynasty*, traversing the vast panoply of China's history.

In recent years, there is a surge of interest in China. But most newly published books outside China deal with modern China. Few focused on China's classical wisdom. This book is meant to fill that gap. I approach the subject of Chinese classical wisdom with a view of applying it in our present-day life. No prior knowledge of China is needed as I take the reader on a tour through the treasure land of Chinese wisdom and call their attention to the gems in the treasure trove. I hope they will discover the practical value of Chinese wisdom while learning something about Chinese culture.

I am deeply grateful to Wang Meng, former Minister of Culture of China and well-known author, Nicholas Kristof, author and Pulitzer Prize winning journalist of *The New York Times*, Zhu Yinghuang, editor-in-chief emeritus of *China Daily*, and Ross Terrill, well-known author and China scholar at Harvard University, for their generous praise.

At the Shanghai People's Publishing House, I am indebted to Mr. Fan Weiwen and Ms. Pan Danrong for their enthusiasm and thoughtfulness and to Ms. Julia Zhang for her wonderful help.

I owe a special debt to Professor Constance Yang who read the entire manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions that have brightened these pages. I would like to thank Ms. Frances Zhang and Ms. Cecilia Qian for their patience and assistance.

致 谢

《中国智慧故事》原用英文撰就，由中国外文出版社于1996年出版。2000年该书由美国最大的出版公司之一普伦蒂斯·霍尔公司在美国出版，随后被译成多种语言在各国出版。

作者在撰写英汉对照本的过程中，对原著内容作了全面修订和大幅度的扩充，并拓展为四册。每册有一个主题。

《中国智慧故事》是作者根据多年来所研读的数百种中国书籍，包括《老子》、《庄子》、《易经》、《论语》、《左传》、《国策》、《国语》、《史记》、《三国志》、《资治通鉴》等等，选取其中最能代表中国智慧的精华故事，以现代英语重新撰写而成，旨在使不具备中国历史知识的普通英语读者也能了解渊源博大的中国智慧。

近年来，世界各国对中国的兴趣日趋浓厚。但是，目前国外出版的多为现代中国的题材，而以普通读者为对象，介绍中国古代智慧的书却极少。其实，中国古典智慧是很有现实意义和实用价值的。作者相信，通过此书，读者既可以受到中国智慧的启迪，又能够增进对中国传统文化的了解。

本书渥蒙前文化部长、著名作家王蒙，美国《纽约时报》专栏作家、普利策奖获得者纪思道，英文《中国日报》名誉主编朱英璜，美国著名作家、哈佛大学费正清中心研究员谭若思等撰写赞语，作者深感荣幸。

作者十分感谢上海人民出版社对本书的热情支持，特别是范蔚文先生和潘丹榕女士的悉心关怀和指导，以及张玲雅小姐卓有成效的工作。

阮式云教授细阅全稿，给我良多助益，我特别感激她。我也感谢张帆小姐和钱华小姐的耐心协助。

本书封面之美归功于著名书籍设计师袁银昌先生匠心独运。李静女士的创意也为本书增色无限。本书书名由家父唐清安题写。

The cover is the creation of Mr. Yuan Yinchang, renowned Chinese artist whose works have won domestic and international prizes. Ms. Li Jing has graced the page layout with her ingenuity. The calligraphy was elegantly written by my father with virtuoso brush strokes.

I owe the biggest debt of all to my grandfathers and grandmothers who taught me to love the Chinese classics and cherish their wisdom.

I shall be happy to hear comments and suggestions from my readers.

祖父母和外祖父母从小教我要热爱中国古典精华，珍惜中国智慧。他们是我应该感谢的人。

作者衷心欢迎读者来信交流心得，并馈赠宝贵意见和建议。

INTRODUCTION

Wisdom is the most precious asset our ancestors have left behind. But it is something that cannot be genetically inherited. Unless we make an effort to learn and practice it, wisdom will not be ours to keep.

The Book of Chinese Wisdom brings together a host of thought-provoking stories that are among the most famous in Chinese classics. They are the gems in the treasure trove of Chinese wisdom. You do not need prior knowledge of Chinese history to appreciate these stories whose morals transcend time and space.

Wisdom is not one-dimensional or singly focused; wisdom is rich in variety and kaleidoscopic in manifestation. *The Book of Chinese Wisdom* is in four volumes. *Book I* is about the art of management; *Book II's* theme is wit and humor; *Book III* focuses on virtues and values; and *Book IV* contains famous stories of power and influence.

Book I gleans nearly seventy tales of the art of management. With China's long tradition of civil administration, management was a refined art in ancient China. Management, in essence, is about people. Despite advances in science and technology, human nature has hardly changed since ancient times. That is why when I read the stories in the following pages, the practical value of the wisdom embedded therein strike me as fresh and relevant as I first discovered it.

The last part of *Book I* explores the wisdom of *The Book of Changes*. Besides serving as a tool for divination, this classic contains multi-dimensional wisdom. I shall examine the underlying wisdom of its oracles from a business perspective.

序

智慧是祖先留给我们的最宝贵的财富。但是，智慧不能靠基因遗传。如果不努力学习智慧，不运用智慧，我们就无法传承智慧。

《中国智慧故事》搜集了中国历史经典中最著名的故事。这些引人深思的故事是中国智慧宝库里的明珠。读者即使不熟悉中国历史，也能欣赏故事里超越时空的寓意。

智慧层面丰富，种类繁多，表现多姿多彩。《中国智慧故事》共有四册。第一册的主题是管理智慧。第二册的主题是机智与幽默。第三册的重点是教育与伦理。第四册的重点是权谋与兵法。

第一册搜集了近七十个有关管理艺术的故事。中国悠久的文职传统使管理在中国古代就已经成为一门练达的艺术。管理艺术，归根结底，是与人打交道的艺术。今天，尽管科学技术取得了长足的进步，但是人的本性几乎没有变化。这就是为什么当我重温本书故事的时候，我感到这些故事里的智慧既新鲜又实用，就像我第一次发现它们时那样。

本书的最后部分探讨了《易经》的智慧。《易经》不仅是占卜的工具，它的智慧有许多层面。在本书中，笔者将从管理角度来探讨《易经》的智慧。

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PART I

MANAGING YOURSELF

管理自我

THE HANDSOME MAN

Zou Ji, prime minister of Qi, was a handsome man. One day as he was straightening his clothes in front of a mirror before going to the court, he asked his wife, "Who do you think is more handsome, me or Lord Xu?"

"Of course, it's you, my lord," said his wife.

But Zou Ji was not sure because Lord Xu was well-known for his handsome look. So he put the question to his maid.

"Who is better-looking, me or Lord Xu?"

"Lord Xu can't compare with Your Lordship," came the maid's reply.

The following day Zou Ji asked a guest, "Between Lord Xu and I, who do you think is better looking?"

"Lord Xu is nowhere near so handsome as Your Excellency," said the guest.

A few days later Lord Xu himself called upon him. Looking at his visitor up close, Zou Ji decided that Lord Xu was definitely more handsome. There was no doubt about it.

He thought to himself, "My wife says I am better looking because she loves me; my maid says I am better looking because she is afraid of me; my guest says the same thing because he is asking a favor of me."

Then he had an audience with the king.

"I am not as handsome as Lord Xu," he said to the king,

邹忌谏齐王

齐相邹忌相貌英俊。一天早上，上朝前，他穿戴好衣帽，照着镜子，问妻子：“我和城北徐公相比，谁更英俊？”

他妻子说：“当然是你。”

城北徐公是齐国有名的美男子。邹忌不相信自己能跟徐公相比，就问妾：“我和徐公哪个更英俊？”

妾答：“徐公哪里有老爷美呢？”

第二天，有客人来，邹忌问客人：“我和徐公比，谁更英俊？”

客人说：“徐公肯定不如阁下英俊。”

几天后，徐公本人来访。邹忌仔细观察了他，觉得自己比徐公差得多。他想，妻子说我比徐公美，是因为她爱我；妾说我比徐公美，是因为她怕我；客人说我比徐公美，是因为有求于我。

于是，他上朝时对齐王说：“臣明明知道自己不如徐公美，但臣的妻、妾、客人都说我比徐公美。大王是一国之主。宫妃左右没有不偏袒你的；朝廷大臣没有不怕你的；四方境内没有不有求于你的。你受的蒙蔽一定