

博 古 通 今 学 汉 语 丛 书

Gems of the Chinese Language Through the Ages

*The Stories Behind  
100  
Chinese Idioms*

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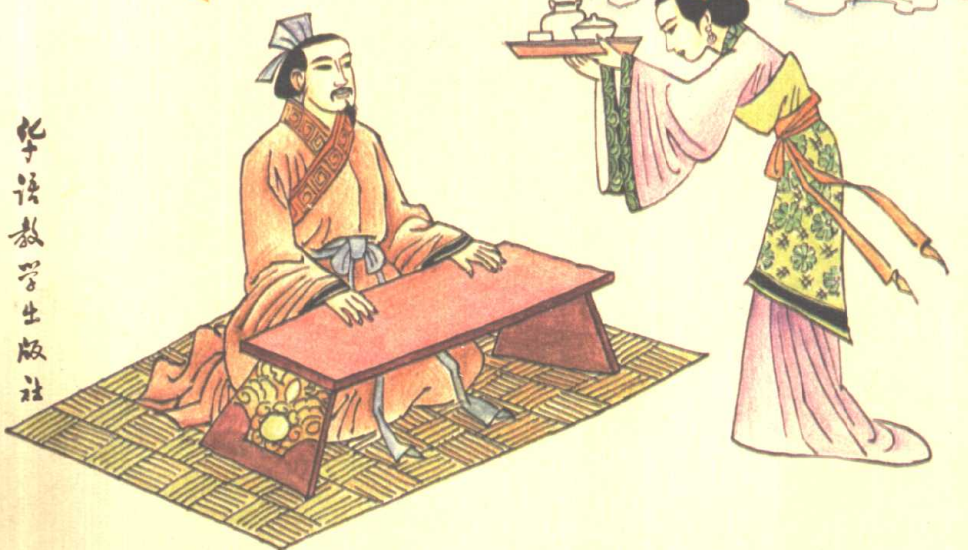
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周苓仲

何泽人

编、译

100



外语教学出版社

博古通今学汉语丛书

Gems of the Chinese Language Through the Ages

# 典故 100

## The Stories Behind 100 Chinese Idioms

周苓仲 编、译  
何泽人  
李士伋 绘 图

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## 出版者的话

典故对于语言和文字的精炼和美化作用是众所周知的。了解典故的内容和来源,不仅对外国人,便是对某些知其然不知其所以然的中国人恰当地运用典故来说,也是有意义的。

本书是由周苓仲先生与其表兄何泽人先生编写、翻译的。一百则典故中,何泽人先生完成二十篇,周苓仲先生完成八十篇。

周先生与何先生退休前均为高级技术人员,并不专门从事语言文字工作;然而他们两人都出身于对中国文化有深刻了解,同时又熟悉英美文化的家庭。他们从小受到家庭文化气氛的熏陶和良好教育,在中、英文方面均学养有素,对祖国文化遗产怀有一腔热忱。

另外,周先生、何先生几十年来均生活、工作在陕西省渭水流域的西安、临潼、泾阳等地。渭水流域这片中国古代文化的重要发源地,那些产生过多少传世典故的名城、古迹,曾经给予他们怎样的影响是不言而喻的。

1995年初,年逾古稀、健康欠佳的何泽人先生出于帮助外国人学习汉语、介绍中国文化的美好意愿,向中国翻译工作者协会的《中国翻译》编辑部提出编写这本书的计划并付诸实施;不幸只写了一部分便因病去世了。病重时,何先生将未竟之事嘱托给其表弟周苓仲先生,周先生慨然承诺。

后来，书稿转到华语教学出版社，周先生与我们再次商榷书的编写原则。他科学地排列了条目顺序，孜孜矻矻，历时半年，终于完成全部书稿；并将何先生所写的那部分加以充实、完善，圆满地实现了表兄的遗愿。

1999年4月5日

## Publisher's Note

Idioms serve to refine and beautify all languages. So it is helpful both for foreign students and native speakers of languages to learn to use these allusions appropriately. But to do so, they must know the origins and implications of the idioms.

This book was written and translated into English by Mr. Zhou Lingzhong and his cousin, the late Mr. He Zeren. Of the 100 idioms presented here, Mr. He worked on 20, and Mr. Zhou completed the rest.

Before their retirement the two compilers were senior technicians and research fellows. They had never specialized in literary work, but they came from a family which, steeped in Chinese culture, was at the same time well acquainted with the cultures of Britain and the United States of America. So the authors brought to this work a wide knowledge of both the English and Chinese cultures and languages, as well as a strong attachment to the rich cultural heritage of their motherland.

Mr. He and Mr. Zhou lived and worked for decades in Xi'an, Lintong and Jingyang, in Shaanxi Province, and in the Wei River Valley — all major cradles of Chinese culture. It is not hard to imagine how these famous ancient cities with

their plethora of cultural relics, which gave rise to a multitude of popular tales and allusions, influenced them and gave them inspiration.

In 1995, Mr. He Zeren, though in poor health and advanced in years, proposed to the editors of *Chinese Translation* that this book be compiled in order to help foreigners better understand Chinese culture. Unfortunately, illness overtook him not long after the work began. On his sickbed, Mr. He entrusted the task to his cousin, and Mr. Zhou took it up readily.

Later, the manuscript was forwarded to Sinolingua, and Mr. Zhou collaborated closely with us in the further stages of its publication. He re-arranged the contents and enriched the parts written by Mr. He. After six months of diligent work the manuscript was completed, and thus the last wish of his dear cousin was fulfilled.

April 5, 1999



## 前 言

中国有五千年文明史,有世界上最多的人口,然而中国语言,或者范围小些是汉族语言——汉语,并未被外国人广泛学习。这种情况妨碍了他们与中国在文化及其它方面的交流。

外国人对汉语了解甚少的原因之一,是汉语相当复杂,特别是古汉语和文言文。其中的许多引语和典故,有不少现在还在使用,不懂这些就会导致误解。我偶尔读过几篇中国古文的英译出版物,很遗憾地发现其中的一些错译,明显的是由于误解了原文中的引语和典故。

显然,现在有必要做些事来帮助外国人学汉语,特别是不同体裁的中国古文。我虽然只是中国文学和语言知识的爱好者,但是仍然愿意尽力做些工作,与海外华人和说英语的朋友们共享这方面的知识,因此编了这本小书。希望它对帮助读者学习汉语能起一些作用。

何泽人

1995年1月31日

## Preface

China has a history of 5, 000 years of civilization, and the largest population in the world; yet her language, or in a narrower sense, the language of the Han nationality, has not been widely studied by foreigners. This places impediments in the way of cultural and other types of communication between China and the outside world.

The Chinese language is a rather difficult one, which is one of the reasons why foreigners often fail to have a profound understanding of it. This is especially the case with the learning of the Chinese classics or writings in archaic Chinese. A lot of literary quotations and allusions are used in them, and many are still used nowadays. Ignorance of these is a prime cause of misunderstanding. I happened to have read a few English translations of classical Chinese, and was sorry to find some mistakes in the translation which were obviously due to incorrect comprehension of the Chinese literary quotations and allusions in the original.

It is clear that more ought to be done to help foreigners learn Chinese, especially the Chinese classics in their various forms. Though I am only an amateur in Chinese literature and language, I would like to do my best in this field to share my knowledge with overseas Chinese and English-speaking friends by producing this small book. I hope

that it will be of some use in clearing away the obstacles in the way of international understanding.

He Zeren  
Jan. 31, 1995

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