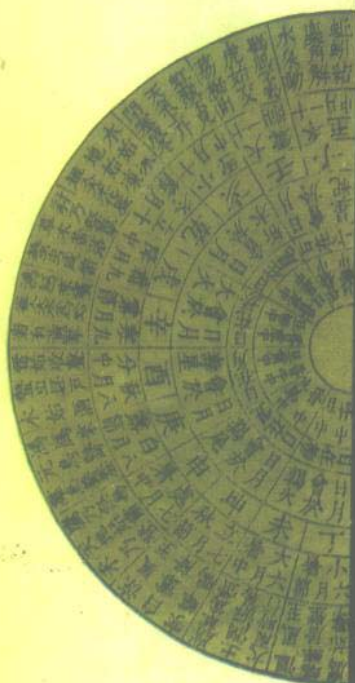


# CORRESPONDING CHINESE & ENGLISH PROVERBS

Cui Mingqiu Wang Shizhi

## 中英谚语合璧

崔鸣秋 王世智 著



中国电影出版社  
CHINA FILM PRESS

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# 前 言

在谚语中闪烁着哲理和智慧的光辉。

谚语的表达凝炼而精巧,几近字字珠玑;谚语的内容包罗万象,涉及自然、社会、人生各个领域,凝聚了人生体验和处世哲学,堪称文化的缩影。

在东西方不同文化背景中,谚语的表达方式却有惊人的相似之处,在汉语文化和英语文化中也不难找到许多对应的谚语。谚语的相近性表明,通过语言表达的真理是相通的。

《中英谚语合璧》的编纂是沟通汉语文化和英语文化的一次尝试。希望有志于通过汉语和英语从事文化交流的读者能够从书中获益。

# Foreword

The proverb is the wisdom of Mankind.

The tendency to speak in proverbial language is found in all countries; and rightly so. It is a method of expressing oneself more quickly and concisely than in any other way.

In the spoken and written Chinese and English of the past and present, proverbs are the established, universal and essential elements that—used with care—ornament and enrich the language.

More than a few proverbs have arisen in parallel across many different countries, languages and cultures—even in such widely different cultures as East and West.

The words of the wise and experiences of our ancestors have become incorporated into proverbs. From this wealth, all can learn.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Good boys who to their books apply, will all be great men by and by." This sentiment is echoed in the Chinese proverb,

十	年	寒	窗	苦
shí	nián	hán	chuāng	kǔ
一	朝	天	下	闻
yì	zhāo	tiān	xià	wén

which translates as:

"A student's ten years of hard study are noticed by none, his fame fills the land afar once honors are won".

The close similarities between English and Chinese proverbs sug-

gest that the "truths" expressed in their proverbs are similar, despite the widely differing cultures of Eastern and Western societies.

The many subtle variations on proverbial themes are reflected in both cultures. For example, Americans say, "A good example is the best sermon." The Chinese say,

身 教 胜 于 言 教  
shēn jiào shèng yú yán jiào

which means "*Setting an example is more effective than verbal instruction.*" The messages are the same.

Chinese proverbs can be counted by the ten thousand. Either side of almost every question can be supported by at least one or two proverbs. So highly are they regarded by the Chinese that one must recognize "Proverbial" Law.

James Summer says: "A language like Chinese is especially suited to express pithily and neatly the sayings of the wise, the maxim of a philosopher, or the adage of the common people."

And according to Lord Bacon: "The genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs." They possess such a vigorous principle of life, that they have held their place—ever fresh and ever applicable—throughout centuries of culture. So the East-West wisdom can be seen through proverbs.

By presenting English-translated Chinese proverbs along with similar English proverbs, we hope to provide a bridge between the two rich cultures from which we come.

We hope that the broad spectrum of themes chosen for this book provide everybody with at least a few proverbs which are especially suited to their individual lives. Please enjoy yourself immensely.

# The Pronunciation of Chinese

"a"	a	vowel	as in "far"
"b"	p	consonant	as in "be"
"c"	ts	consonant	as the "ts" in "its" or "cats"
"ch"	ch	consonant	as the "ch" in "church"
"d"	t	consonant	as in "do"
"e"	e	vowel	as the "e" in "her" (silent "r")
"ei"		diphthong	as the "ay" in "way"
"ie"		diphthong	as the "e" in "yes"
"f"	f	consonant	as in "foot"
"g"	k	consonant	as in "go"
"h"	h	consonant	as in "her" (strongly aspirated)
"i"	i	vowel	as in "eat" and as in "sir" (in syllables beginning with consonants c, ch, r, s, sh, z and zh)
"j"	ch	consonant	as in "jeep"
"k"	k	consonant	as in "kind" (strongly aspirated)
"l"	l	consonant	as in "land"
"m"	m	consonant	as in "me"
"n"	n	consonant	as in "no"
"o"	o	vowel	as the "aw" in "law"
"p"	p	consonant	as in "par" (strongly aspirated)
"q"	ch	consonant	as the "ch" in "cheek" or "cheese"
"r"	j	consonant	as "r" (not rolled) or as "z" in "azure"
"s"	s	consonant	as in "sister"
	ss	consonant	as in "sister"
	sz	consonant	as in "sister"
"sh"	sh	consonant	as "sh" in "shore"
"t"	t	consonant	as in "top" (strongly aspirated)
"u"	u	vowel	as in "too"
"v"	v	special	(only for dialects and foreign words)
"w"	w	consonant	as in "want"
		semi-vowel	(in syllables beginning with "u" when not preceded by consonants)
"x"	hs	consonant	as "sh" in "she"
"y"		consonant	as in "yet"
		semi-vowel	(in syllables beginning with "i" or "u" when not preceded by consonants)
"z"	ts	consonant	as in "zero" or the "ds" in "cards"
"zh"	ch	consonant	as "j" in "jump" or the "dg" in "fudge"

Wade System (older) pronunciation convention

Modern System

# 拼音说明

## Introduction

### The Pinyin Alphabet and Pronunciation

Above each Chinese character is its Pinyin equivalent which indicates the pronunciation of the character. The box at left provides a pronunciation guide for the alphabet. In addition to the standard alphabet, Pinyin has four accent marks for each of the vowels which direct different inflections or intonations of the vowel sound. The direction of the mark indicates the direction of tone. The grave accent (à, è, ì, ò or ù) directs a falling tone, as when adamantly saying, "No!" The acute accent (á, é, í, ó or ú) directs a rising tone, as when asking, "far?" The level accent (ā, ē, ī, ō or ū) directs a long, relatively high, even tone, as when singing the note "la." The upside-down circumflex (ǎ, ě, ĭ, ǒ or ŭ) directs a falling-then-rising or dipping tone, as when irritably asking, "So?" The absence of an accent indicates that the vowel is pronounced quickly, without emphasis or tonal inflection.

### Chinese Phonetic Alphabets

The two major phonetic alphabets for the pronunciation of Chinese characters are the Modern system and the Wade system. Although the Wade system (shaded italics) has been superseded, it may be more familiar to many Western readers (see facing page).

### "One" and "Not" in Context

The Chinese words "yi" (one) and "bu" (not) are pronounced



differently depending on the pronunciation of the following word.

1. When yī (一) is not conceptually joined with the following word, or if it occurs at the end of a phrase, it is pronounced with an even accent(yī). For examples:

举 一 反 三                  以 防 万 一  
jǔ yī fǎn sān                  yǐ fáng wàn yī

2. When yī precedes a word with a falling accent(à,è,ì,ò or ù), it is pronounced with a rising tone(yí). For example:

一 次  
yí cì

3. Yi is pronounced with a falling tone (yì) when the subsequent word has an even accent(ā,ē,ī,ō or ū), rising accent(á,é,í,ó or ú) or falling-then-rising accent(ǎ,ě,ǐ,ǒ or ǔ). For examples:

一 心                  一 人                  一 本  
yì xīn                  yì rén                  yì běn

4. The word bù (not) is pronounced as bú when preceding a word with a falling tone accent(à,è,ì,ò or ù). For example:

不 见  
bú jiàn

5. The word bù(not) is pronounced as bù when preceding a word with an even accent, rising accent or falling-then-rising accent. For examples:

不 知                  不 如                  不 可  
bù zhī                  bù rú                  bù kě

6. When pronunciation is light, there is no need to mark accent. For example:

一 个 巴 掌 拍 不 响  
yí ge bā zhāng pāi bu xiǎng

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教 育

ON EDUCATION

chéng dé dá cái, jiào yù zhī běn  
成 德 达 材, 教 育 之 本

Chinese  
proverb:

- \* THE PRINCIPLE OF EDUCATION IS TO  
BUILD MAN'S CHARACTER AND TO BRING  
HIM UP TO BE USEFUL.
- 

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent:

- \* *VIRTUE AND A TRADE ARE THE BEST  
PORTION FOR CHILDREN.*  
\* *THE GREATEST JOB OF TEACHERS IS TO  
CULTIVATE TALENT UNTIL IT RIPENS  
FOR THE PUBLIC TO REAP ITS BOUNTY.*

—Jascha Heifetz—

"On Teaching Music"

- \* *THE VERY SPIRIT AND ROOT OF HONESTY  
AND VIRTUE LIE IN THE FELICITY OF  
LIGHTING ON GOOD EDUCATION.*

—Plutarch—

shí nián shù mù, bǎi nián shù rén  
十 年 树 木, 百 年 树 人

Chinese  
proverb:

- \* IT TAKES TEN YEARS TO GROW A TREE  
AND A HUNDRED YEARS TO BRING UP A  
GENERATION OF GOOD MEN.
- 

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent:

- \* *IT TAKES THREE GENERATIONS TO  
MAKE A GENTLEMAN.*  
\* *IT TAKES THREE CENTURIES TO MAKE A*

# GENTLEMAN.

yù      bù      zhuó,      bù      chéng      qì  
玉      不      琢,      不      成      器

Chinese  
proverb;

\* A PIECE OF JADE UNLESS CUT FORMS NO  
ARTICLE OF VERTU.

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent;

\* *AN UNCUT GEM GOES NOT SPARKLE.*  
\* *THE FINEST DIAMOND MUST BE CUT.*  
\* *UNPOLISHED PEARLS NEVER SHINE.*

yù      bù      zhuó      bù      chéng      qì  
玉      不      琢,      不      成      器  
rén      bù      xué      bù      zhī      yì  
人      不      学,      不      知      义

Chinese  
proverb;

\* GEMS UNWROUGHT CAN FORM NOTHING  
USEFUL, SO MEN UNTAUGHT CAN NEVER  
KNOW WHAT PROPER IS.

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent;

\* *WHAT SCULPTURE IS TO A BLOCK OF  
MARBLE, EDUCATION TO THE SOUL.*  
\* *GENIUS WITHOUT EDUCATION IS LIKE  
SILVER IN THE MINT.*

— Benjamin Franklin —  
"Poor Richard"

xún	chéng	jùn	mǎ
馴	成	骏	马
jiào	chéng	liáng	cái
教	成	良	材

Chinese  
proverb:

- \* HORSE WITH BREAKING WILL BECOME A FINE HORSE;
  - \* MAN WITH EDUCATING WILL BECOME AN ABLE PERSON.
- 

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent:

- \* *THE BEST HORSE NEEDS BREAKING, AND THE APTEST CHILD NEEDS TEACHING.*

liǔ	tiáo	cóng	xiǎo	yì
柳	条	从	小	抑
zhǎng	dà	yì	bù	qū
长	大	抑	不	屈

Chinese  
proverb:

- \* THE BRANCHES OF THE WILLOW TREE MUST BE BENT WHEN YOUNG, WHEN GROWN TO MATURITY THEY CANNOT BE BENT.
- 

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent:

- \* *AS THE TWIG IS BENT, SO GROWS THE TREE.*
- \* *AS THE TWIG WAS BENT, THE TREE WOULD GROW.*
- \* *A TREE MUST BE BENT WHILE IT IS*

YOUNG.

- \* *BEST TO BEND WHILE' TIS A TWIG.*
- \* *AS THE TWIG IS BENT SO DOTH THE TREE INCLINE.*
- \* *AN OLD TREE IS HARD TO STRAIGHTEN.*
- \* *THE TREE WOULD INCLINE, CONSIDERING HOW THE YOUNG TWIG HAD BEEN BENT.*
- \* *AS LONG AS THE TWIG IS GENTLE AND PLIANT, WITH SMALL FORCE AND STRENGTH IT MAY BE BENT.*

—*Thomas Ingelend*—

*"The Disobedient Child"*

- \* *I WILL BENT THE TREE WHILE IT IS A WARD.*

—*Thomas Lodge*—

*"Rosalynde"*

- \* *YOUNG TWIGS ARE SOONER BENT THAN OLD TREES.*

—*John Lyly*—

*"England"*

- \* *TENDER TWIGS ARE BENT WITH EASE, AGED TREES DO BREAK WITH BENDING.*

—*Robert Southwell*—

*"Loss in Decay"*

- \* *BY COMPLIANCE IS THE CURVED BOUGH  
BENT AWAY FROM THE TREE.*

—Ovid—

"*Ars Amatoria*"

- \* *JUST AS THE TWIG IS BENT THE TREE'S  
INCLINED.*

*Note: The above-mentioned proverb comes from the following:*

*"Tis education forms the common mind;*

*Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."*

—Pope—

"*Moral Essays*"

cóng	xiǎo	rèn	qíng	jiāo	guàn
从	小	任	情	娇	惯
zhǎng	dà	bì	wéi	guāi	wéi
长	大	必	为	乖	违

Chinese  
proverb:

- \* *IF YOU PAMPER YOUR CHILDREN IN CHILD-  
HOOD, THEY WILL BECOME ECCENTRIC IN  
MANHOOD.*

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent:

- \* *MOTHER'S DARLINGS ARE BUT MILKSOP  
HEROES.*



cóng	xiǎo	tōu	zhēn
从	小	偷	针
zhǎng	dà	tōu	jīn
长	大	偷	金

Chinese  
proverb:

- \* HE WHO STOLE PIN WHEN YOUNG, WILL  
STEAL GOLD WHEN GROWN UP.
- 

English  
proverb  
equiva-  
lent:

- \* *OUT OF SMALL SINS COME LARGE.*  
\* *HE THAT STEALS AN EGG WILL STEAL  
AN OX.*

—George Herbert—

- \* *HE THAT AVOIDS NOT SMALL FAULTS, BY  
LITTLE AND LITTLE FALLS INTO  
GREATER.*

—Thomas A. Kempis—

- \* *SO OUR LITTLE ERRORS LEAD THE SOUL  
AWAY FROM THE PATHS OF VIRTUE,  
FAR IN SIN TO STRAY.*

—Julia Fletcher Carrey—

"Little Things"

è	qí	méng	yá
遏	其	萌	芽
wù	shǐ	zī	màn
勿	使	滋	蔓