





A DICTIONARY  
OF  
ENGLISH PROVERBS  
ANNOTATED BILINGUALLY

# 英汉双解英语谚语辞典



知识出版社·上海



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**英汉双解英语谚语辞典**

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## 序

谚语是一个民族的语言中十分生动、有趣的成分。它大都形成于民间，反映大众的智慧，包含朴素的哲理。一条谚语实际上就是一条格言，在为人处世的态度和方法上给人们以启发、提醒或警告。因为它通常只是一句简短的话，用词浅易，比喻鲜明，真正做到深入浅出，所以易懂、易记、易用，流传极广，历久不衰。

也许一个民族的历史愈悠久，它的语言中的谚语也就会愈丰富。汉语如此，英语也是如此。正因为英语谚语很多，在各种场合出现，我们学英语的人就需要正确理解它们，进而能在适当的时候使用它们。但这并不象理解和使用汉语谚语那样方便，因为英语毕竟是外国语。

这就是为什么我们需要一部有用的英语谚语参考书。国内外已经出版了不少谚语辞典，各有特点和优点。盛绍裘和李永芳两位老师，在大学教英语多年，有丰富的教学经验。他们合编的这本《英汉双解英语谚语辞典》，在我看来，有以下三个特点：(1)每条谚语都有英文解释，所用的英文浅易清楚，并经过仔细推敲核对，力求解释确切；(2)对每一条谚语都提供相应的中译文，有时有两三种不同的译法，并提出近似的汉语谚语以为比较，可见编者在这一方面下了很大的功夫，对读者会很有帮助；(3)对较难的词、人名、掌故等作了注释，对某些谚语的用法也作了说明。所以我觉得这本谚语辞典非常适合我国英语教学和翻译工作者以及广大英语爱好者的需要。

丁往道

## 前 言

英国著名哲学家弗兰西斯·培根曾说过：“一个民族的特征、机智和精神，都可以在这个民族的谚语中发现”。英语谚语经过世代相传、千锤百炼，凝成了英语国家人民智慧的结晶——英语的精华。英语谚语内容广泛，言简意赅，生动隽永，通俗流畅，洗炼形象地反映了英语国家不同历史时期的社会制度、风土人情、生活哲理等。对于学习和研究英语语言、文学，对于了解英语国家的社会风貌和历史、文化背景等，英语谚语是一把不可缺少的“钥匙”。一本好的英语谚语辞典，不仅是英语教师、英语翻译、英语语言工作者以及外国文学研究人员的案头必备工具书，而且也是广大英语学习者的良师益友。

英语谚语在英语教学和研究中的意义，已引起国内外广泛重视。不少教科书编进了相当数量的谚语。近年来，有关英语谚语的书籍相继问世，为我国英语谚语的翻译和研究工作奠定了基础。本书力图在前人成果的基础上作一种新的尝试——除汉译外，还配上英文解释。其目的，一是为了更准确地介绍英谚的含义，纠正并避免因望文生义而在翻译和使用中造成的差错；二是为了满足英语教学以及英语水平日益提高的读者之需。现在我们把它奉献给读者，希望能在我国的英语教学、外国文学的翻译以及其它语文研究工作中，起到“铺路石子”的作用。

本书共收英谚 3000 余条，其中包括少数从其它语言中吸收来的谚语。每条谚语均用英语解释，然后配上中译文、近似汉谚或汉语成语。英文解释力求通俗易懂；中译文以意译传神为主，兼顾保留形象，有的还提供了数种译法，供读者在句式、韵律等方面可有所选择。对一般辞典上查不

到或难理解的词语、句式,适当加注。

使用谚语贵在精选。只有选得准确,用得恰当,方能奏画龙点睛之效。本书就目前能收集到的资料,介绍了一些英谚的历史背景、典故、使用场合等,供引用谚语的读者参考。

随着国内英文阅读和文学欣赏水平的提高,阅读英文古典原著者日渐增多。为适应这一形势的需要,本书还收集了部分古谚。

英语中客观地存在着一小部分带有封建迷信色彩或其它不健康意识的谚语。作为一本工具书,我们也酌情收录了些。

本书英释部分承蒙美国中部华盛顿州立大学 Curt A. Wiberg 教授、Betty Perkey Wiberg 夫人和 Martha Elizabeth Wiberg 小姐以及佛罗里达大学 Stephen Gano Long 教授细心校阅;在编写过程中又得到了北京外国语学院丁往道教授的关心和帮助;安徽省图书馆、安徽大学图书馆和外语系资料室等提供很多方便;安徽大学外语系领导及部分师生和亲友都给予了支持和帮助,特此一并致谢。

由于我们水平有限,疏漏和错误难免,敬希读者指正。

编者

1988年5月

## 凡 例

### 词条:

1. 本辞书的词条按条头词英文字母顺序排列。
2. 词条变体前冠以“or”。  
如: Crow does not pick crow's eyes.  
or Crows do not pick (out) crow's eyes.  
or Crows will not pick out crows' eyes.
3. 如该词条与其变体之间还有其它词条, 则将该变体另立一条, 以便读者按字母顺序查找到所需词条。  
如: A friend is easier lost than found.  
朋友易失不易得。  
A friend is known in necessity.  
患难见知交。  
A friend is not so soon gotten as lost.  
朋友易失不得。
4. 如该词条与其变体各有不同的形象, 则另立一条。  
如: He could eat me without salt.  
他不用盐也能把我吞下肚。/ 恨我入骨。  
He could eat my heart with garlic.  
大蒜加我心, 他能一口吞。/ 恨我至极。
5. 词条中可省略的词语用“( )”表示。  
如: A bad excuse is better (than none).
6. 词条中如有替代词, 则用“(or……)”表示。  
如: A creaking door (or gate) hangs long on its hinges.

### 二、英文解释:

1. 英文解释以“——”为前导。有的谚语一语双关, 或一语多义, 有的谚语具有引伸义, 有的虽只有一层意思, 但不同著作有不同解释或说法, 本书则尽量收集。不同释文之间, 用“/”分开。

如: “Once bit, twice shy.” 条。

2. 谚语的使用场合, 背景知识, 典故出处及有关说明, 均另起一

行,置于英文解释之后、不同的使用场合及有关介绍,则以“/”分开。

3. 当几个词条同义,或一个词条有几个不同变体时,其英文解释尽量集中于一条,其它各条则采用“参见”的办法解决:译文相同者,用“See...”;英释文相同而译文有所区别者,用“See also...”;另外参见者,则以“Also see...”为先导。这是为了节省篇幅,并可使有关词条合在一起有一个完整的解释。

### 三、汉语翻译:

1. 译文置于英释文下方。凡有两句以上译文者,其顺序一般是:先按原文形象或基本意思翻译,然后意译。各句之间以“/”分开。

如: First creep, then go.

先学爬,后学走。/ 循序渐进。/ 按部就班。

2. 近似汉谚或汉语成语则置于译文之后,并以“≈”为先导。

如: Fish begins to stink at the head.

鱼烂头先臭。/ 鱼腐始于头。/ ≈上梁不正下梁歪。

3. 参见条与被参见条意思和形象均一样时,其译文只在被参见条出现。

### 四、注释:

1. 对古、僻词语,或形式上虽属常用词,但在该谚语中却另有所指,或一般辞典中难以查到的词语,均酌情加注。

如: pottage; (arch.) thick soup (浓汤)

2. 至于谚语的使用场合、背景、典故及其它有关情况,则根据英文解释酌情加注。

如: “Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.” 条。

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## A

### **A bad beginning makes a bad ending.**

—If a job or an enterprise is to be successfully completed, it must start well.

不善始者不善终。/ 欲善其终，必先善其始。

### **A bad bush is better than the open field.**

—Better to have a bad friend or relation than to be quite destitute

稀疏的灌木丛胜过不毛之地。

[注] 意即亲朋虽不如意，却强似无亲无友。

### **A bad custom is like a good cake, better broken than kept.**

—It is better to get rid of a bad habit, for which is like a good cake that will soon go stale if kept too long.

好糕点，莫保留；坏习气，要戒除。/ 好糕点趁早吃，坏习气趁早改。

### **A bad excuse is better than none (at all).**

—A bad excuse may or may not be accepted, but if no excuse is given for a fault or wrong action, blame or punishment is sure to follow.

强辩胜似不辩。/ ≈ 好歹总是个理儿。

### **A bad gardener quarrels with his rake.**

—See "A bad workman (always) blames (or quarrels with) his tools."

### **A bad husband makes a bad wife.**

—It is the opposite of "A good husband makes a good wife."

夫恶妻不善。

**A bad life, a bad end.**

—See “An ill life, an ill end.”

**A bad penny always comes back (or turns up).**

—If a shopkeeper accepts a bad penny, he will return it to you when he discovers his mistake. / A good-for-nothing person who leaves his home or town always returns.

缺损的便士总会被人退回。/ 工作不努力，到处会碰壁。/ 无用之人到处不受欢迎。

**A bad shearer never had a good sickle.**

—See also “A bad workman (always) blames (or quarrels with) his tools.”

拙匠手中无利器。

[注] shearer: (Scot.) person who reans with a sickle (用镰刀收割者)

**A bad thing is dear at any price.**

—A bad thing cannot last long. You may buy one at a low price, but you will soon have to get a new one. No matter how cheap it is, it is actually dear.

残次品再便宜都昂贵。/ ≈便宜没好货，好货不便宜。

[注] 意为残次品价廉，然不经用，故不划算。

**A bad workman (always) blames (or quarrels with) his tools.**

—A careless or unskilled worker blames his tools to excuse himself for bad work, whereas it is his own carelessness or lack of skill which is really to blame.

拙工常怪工具差。/ 劣工咎器。/ ≈厨师笨，怪刀钝。

**A baited cat may grow as fierce as a lion.**

—See also “Even a worm will turn.”

上钩的猫儿凶如狮。/ ≈人急造反，狗急跳墙。

**A bald head is soon shaven.**

—A light job is soon done.

光脑袋，剃得快。/ 秃头好剃，轻活易做。

**A barking dog is better than a sleeping lion.**

—A barking dog seldom bites; but a sleeping lion may wake up and attack at any moment. / One who reveals his motive is much less dangerous than one who conceals his intentions.

吠犬不可怕，睡狮难提防。

**A beggar can never be bankrupt.**

—Simply because he has nothing to lose.

乞丐永远不会破产。

**A beggar's purse is bottomless.**

or **A beggar's scrip is never filled.**

—See "Beggars' bags are bottomless."

**A best marksman may miss.**

—Even the best of us is liable to make mistakes.

Also see "No man is wise at all times."

纵然神射手，失误也会有。/ ≈智者千虑，必有一失。

**A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush (or wood).**

—One bird which you have caught is worth two that are still uncaught. / It is better to accept one thing that is certain than two which you may or may not get in the future. / Possession is better than expectation.

双鸟在林，不如一鸟在手。/ ≈多得不如现得。

**A bird is known by its note, and a man by his talk.**

or **A bird may be known by its song.**

—A man is known by what he says.

鸟以声闻，人以言知。/ 听音识鸟，听话识人。/ 闻其言而知其人。

**A black hen lays a white egg.**

—A foul woman brings forth a fair child.

黑鸡下白蛋。/ 丑妇生俊儿。

**A black plum is as sweet as a white.**

—The prerogative of beauty proceeds from fancy. Therefore beauty may take different forms.

黑梅白梅一样甜。/ 心中喜爱皆为美。

[注] 意即对什么迷恋,就觉得什么是美的。

**A blate cat makes a proud mouse.**

—When parents and masters are too mild and easy, it makes their children and servants too saucy and impertinent.

猫儿腼腆,老鼠翻天。/ 猫儿害臊,耗子高傲。

[注] blate: (Scot.) shy, bashful (腼腆的,害羞的)。此谚实指父母太和气,孩子便淘气;主人宽容,仆人无礼。

**A blithe heart makes a blooming visage.**

—See “A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance.”

**A blunt knife may be sharpened on a stone, but if a man is stupid there is no help for his stupidity.**

—There is no remedy for foolishness. / Nothing can be done to a fool.

刀钝可磨快,人蠢无奈何。/ 刀钝可在石上磨,人蠢无药可治疗。

**A blustering night, a fair day.**

—A rough windy night is followed by a fair day.

风暴之夜兆晴天。/ 夜晚狂风呼啸,次日天气晴朗。

**A boaster and a liar are all one.**

—One is not different from the other.

吹牛者与说谎人,两者难以分得清。/ 吹牛和撒谎是一家。

**A boaster and a liar are cousins-german.**

—See “A vaunter and a liar are near akin.”

**A bonny bride is soon buskit(, and a short horse is soon curried).**

—What is of itself beautiful, needs but little adorning. / A little task is soon ended.

俊俏的新娘易打扮,矮小的马儿易梳理。/ 轻活易做,事小易办。

[注] buskit: (*Scot.*) dressed (梳妆打扮)

**A book that is (or remains) shut is but a block.**

—Books should be read or used, otherwise they are entirely useless.

藏书不读,如藏木块。/ ≈书本不常翻,犹如一块砖。

**A borrowed loan should come laughing home.**

—One should return with thankfulness what one borrows.

借钱应该笑脸还。

**A bow long bent grows weak.**

or **A bow long bent at last waxes weak.**

—It is spoken to advise people not to overwork themselves.

常拉满弓弓无力。/ 久张必弛。

**A bride is diligent for three days.**

—If a person starts work in a new situation, he will work with enthusiasm.

新媳妇三天勤。/ ≈新官上任三把火。

**A burnt child (or bairn) dreads the fire.**

—A child that has burnt himself while playing with fire will always be afraid of it in the future. / It is painful experience that teaches children and old people, where danger lies.

烧伤过的孩子怕火。/ ≈一朝被蛇咬,三年怕井绳。

**A bushel of March dust is worth a king's ransom.**

—Fine, dry weather in March is valuable as an aid to agriculture. The allusion is to the fact that in England the fine for murder used to be proportioned to the rank of the person killed. The lowest was £ 10, and the highest £ 60; the former was the ransom of a churl, and the latter of a king.

三月一斗尘，价值国王身。/ 三月干燥多风，庄稼定能丰收。

[注] a king's ransom: a great deal of money (巨款)。古时英国对杀人者处以罚金，其金额按被害者的地位而定：出身低贱者 10 英镑；国王 60 英镑。

**A carpenter is known by his chips.**

—The work shows the workman's skill.

Also see "As is the workman, so is the work."

什么工匠出什么活。

**A cat has nine lives.**

—It is very difficult to kill a cat. After being apparently dead, a cat may come to life again.

猫有九条命。

[注] 指猫的生命力强。此谚相当于中国东北地区流行的谚语：猫有七条命。

**A cat in gloves (or mittens) catches no mice.**

—See "The cat in gloves catches no mice."

**A cat may look at a king.**

—Even the most humble person may look at a great man, so long as he tries to do no harm. / Even the lowest rank of people have some rights.

猫也有权看国王。

[注] 指小人物也该有点权利。

**A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.**

—The weakness of even one link in a chain is fatal to the strength of the whole.

Spoken to advise people to try to remove a weak point rather than to rely on the strong points.

一环薄弱全局垮。/ ≈麻绳专在细处断。

**A cheerful wife is the joy of life.**

—A cheerful wife makes her husband and children cheerful too, and is the cause of all their happiness.

欢快的妻室乃人生之乐事。/ 妻子欢乐全家乐。

**A child may have too much of his mother's blessing.**

—Mothers are often too tender and fond of their children, who are spoiled by their cockering and indulgence.

慈母多败儿。

**A clean conscience fears not false accusations.**

—A person whose conscience is fine can defend himself against false charges.

只要问心无愧，何惧无端指控。

**A clean conscience laughs at false accusations.**

—A person who knows he has done no wrong is normally stronger than those who falsely accuse him.

只要问心无愧，无端的指责可一笑置之。/ ≈白日不做亏心事，半夜敲门心不惊。

**A clean hand wants no washing.**

—Those who live simply and honestly have no need for excuses or explanations.

清白的人无需为自己洗刷。

**A clear conscience is a sure card.**

**A clear conscience laughs at false accusations.**

—See “A clean conscience laughs at false accusations.”

**A close mouth catches no flies.**

—A person who talks carelessly exposes himself to trouble.

嘴唇紧闭，苍蝇难进。/ 嘴紧不招祸。/ ≈病从口入，祸从口出。

**A coach and four (or six) may be driven through any Act of Parliament.**

—See “You may drive a coach and four through an Act of Parliament.”

**A cobbler should stick to his last.**

—See “A shoemaker should stick to his last.”

**A cock is crouse on his ain midden.**

**or A cock is valiant (or bold) on his own dunghill.**

—It is easy to brag of your deeds in your own home when safe from danger, as your courage is not likely to be tested.

公鸡总是在自己的粪堆上称雄。/ ≈夜郎自大。

[注] crouse: (Scot.) bold (大胆的)

**A cold April the barn will fill.**

—If it is cold in April, there will be a good harvest.

四月冷，谷满囤。/ 四月寒冷粮满仓。

**A cold hand and a warm heart.**

—See also “His bark is worse than his bite.”

外表冷淡心肠热。/ ≈刀子嘴，豆腐心。

**A cold May and a windy**

**Makes a full barn and a findy.**

—Because a cold and dry May prevents weeds.

五月天干冷，准有好收成。/ 五月寒凉又多风，粮食作物定丰收。



【注】 findy: full; substantial (满的;大量的)

**A colt you may break, but an old horse you never can.**

—It is easy to teach young people, but not the aged.

Also see "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks."

小狗易驯,老马难教。

**A common servant is no man's servant.**

—He who serves many people serves nobody, for he cannot be faithful to any of them.

众家之仆实乃无主之仆。

**A constant guest is never welcome.**

—Guests are usually welcome when they come, but one who comes too often "wears out" his welcome, and no one is glad to see him.

常客讨人嫌。/ ≈勤来亲也疏,常客遭白眼。

**A contented mind is a perpetual (or continual) feast.**

—Contentment of mind is the cause of lasting happiness.

知足犹如不散的筵席。/ ≈知足常乐。

**A contented person is happy with his status quo.**

—See also "A contented mind is a perpetual (or continual) feast."

满足于现状者必心情舒畅。/ ≈知足常乐。

**A courtesy is a flower.**

—Politeness, like fragrant flowers, is sweet, which we all like.

礼貌是朵花,人人都爱它。

**A cracked bell can never sound well.**

**or A cracked bell is never sound.**

—A cracked bell, though invisible, may be perceived when you take the clapper and strike it because it doesn't sound as well as