

*Learn to listen wisely*

*Learn to live wisely*

*Learn to speak wisely*



# 4500

**双解  
英语谚语**

4500 English Proverbs with  
English & Chinese Annotations

朱正健 著



上海译文出版社

**I think; therefore I am.**

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

4500 双解英语谚语/朱正健编著. —上海:上海译文出版社, 2005.12

ISBN 7-5327-3743-8

I. 4... II. 朱... III. 英语—谚语—双解词典—英、汉 IV. H313.3-61

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2005)第 057247 号

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## 4500 双解英语谚语

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上海世纪出版集团  
译文出版社出版、发行

网址: [www.yiwen.com.cn](http://www.yiwen.com.cn)

上海福建中路 193 号

易文网: [www.ewen.cc](http://www.ewen.cc)

全国新华书店经销  
上海江杨印刷厂印刷

开本 787×1092 1/32 印张 17.75 插页 2 字数 522,000

2005 年 12 月第 1 版 2005 年 12 月第 1 次印刷

印数: 0,001-5,100 册

ISBN 7-5327-3743-8/H·694

定价: 25.00 元

本书如有缺页、错装或坏损等严重质量问题, 请向承印厂联系调换

## 前 言

我编这本书的愿望起自 2002 年。一次翻检儿子的中学课外学习材料,见有一些英语谚语的练习题做错了,便辅导其纠正。与此同时,我萌生了一个想法:中国人初学英语之时,不会接触到多少英语谚语。但如深入下去,到了阅书读报、翻译写作、收看英语新闻或影视节目以及用英语与外国人详细交谈的阶段,英语谚语的出现率就会大大增加。要掌握英语谚语,在英语国家长大的孩子尚需一个很长的学习过程,对于非英语背景的中国学生来说,难度自然就更大,因为许多谚语不仅在字面和语法结构上不易理解,还涉及历史典故、传统文化、风俗习惯和宗教渊源等,这些无疑是英语学习者的障碍。我何不趁生活在英语国家之机,利用当地丰富的英语语言资源以及自己曾先后从事过英语教学和英语新闻工作的专业优势,编写一本有关英语谚语的书供英语学习者参考使用呢?

有了想法我便立刻行动起来。一是上各家书店寻觅英语谚语类的书;二是上各图书馆查找借阅相关书籍。一边是聚沙成塔地搜集谚语词条,一边是耐得寂寞地推敲、注释和翻译。

为让读者更全面准确地理解每条英语谚语,我决定以英汉双解的方式进行诠释。在中文译文的编写上,我对自己提出的要求是:达意不怠,释意在精;力争对句,追求押韵;非雅即俗,朗朗上口。对那些需要加解释才能让读者清楚领会其含意的谚语,尽量做到译文和

相关解释一步到位。

写书撰文,最终总要有个出版的地方。当本书编撰过半时,我不揣冒昧地打电话至上海译文出版社,正好转接到词典教材编辑室主任朱亚军博士处。亚军君当即向我索要该书的内容提要、目录和部分样稿。一周后,答复说对此书很感兴趣并有考虑出版的意向,同时约我回沪方便时面谈。于是,在 2004 年底返沪时,我得以将完稿呈上。

我衷心希望这本书能给各位读者带来一些帮助。如是,我便满足了。当然,英语谚语浩繁,搜集一时难以穷尽,我还会继续努力。

朱正健

2005 年 8 月 18 日夜于墨尔本

## 凡 例

1. 英语中的 proverb 和 idiom 在翻译成中文时往往都作“成语”解。实际上,proverb 的英文定义为 a popular saying, a wise saying or a didactic sentence,而 idiom 则表示 a form of expression peculiar to a language, a phrase with a well-known meaning。所以,前者是成句的谚语,后者为惯用之短语。本书所列成语全是成句的谚语(proverb),惯用短语(idiom)不在包括之中。

2. 所列各谚语均按英文字母顺序排列。以不定冠词和定冠词开始的谚语一律排在 A 和 T 项下。以 It's 和 'Tis 开始的句子,不计省略号('),按一个词的 I,T,S 和 T,I,S 顺序排列,而不是 I,T 和 T。

3. 除了那些使用非常固定的谚语形式,有若干以 It is 或 He is 或 There is 等开始的谚语,在不同的版本或具体使用中也可能作 It's 或 He's 或 There's 等,或者正好相反,It's 等形式变成了 It is 等。读者在使用本书时需明了此种情况。

4. 编撰者对各条英语谚语都加以英文注解及中文诠释。英文注解列于每句谚语之下,中文解释放在【释义】后边。中文的释意不一定是英文谚语的逐字翻译,但是该谚语含义的忠实诠释,因为无论中英文注释,重要的是将谚语含义诠释清楚。

5. 有许多英语谚语并不是光凭字面就可以理解的,其需要相关的解释。但本编撰人基本不采用惯常文章和著作中所用的括号里面加注的形式,而是在中文翻译中将所内含之意表达出来,比如 A pot

that belongs to many is ill stirred and worse boiled. 一句, 编撰人中文作“公用烧锅无人珍惜, 大家之事没人在意。”另如 Rats desert a sinking ship. 一句, 中文作“航船沉, 鼠逃亡; 人落难, 众离叛。”

6. 本书中另加有【对照成语】、【对照俗语】和【对照名句】条, 为编撰者尽力对参照得上的英文谚语附加参考性的, 但偶尔并不一定是严格对应的中文成语(多为四个字, 用于书面或口头)、俗语(民间流行的智慧和经验的口头语, 字数可长可短)和名句(包括一些常引用的著名诗句、对联、文词和警句等, 如“宝剑锋从磨砺出, 梅花香自苦寒来”〈见 The wind in one's face makes one wise.〉和“合抱之木, 生于毫末; 九层之台, 起于累土”〈见 Rome was not built in a day.〉)。对照成语、俗语或名句可能意思与原句完全或大致吻合, 如 More haste, less speed. 对照成语“欲速则不达”; 也可能在具体上下文中才用得上, 比如 All's well that ends well. 所对照的俗语“有情人终成眷属”, 只有在描写男女恋情经过波折获有圆满结局时才成立; 还有的因有历史、风俗、宗教等原因, 只起辅助和开拓理解作用, 并不适宜于对译, 如 Good and evil are chiefly in the imagination. 一句下加了“菩提本非树, 明镜亦非台; 本来无一物, 何处惹尘埃”这一佛教名句来对照。列入【对照成语】、【对照俗语】和【对照名句】条目, 为的是提供一些参考。编撰者心祈列入对照的成语、俗语和名句能对读者在阅读理解、翻译以及写作方面有所裨益。

7. 有的同义谚语只有个别字不同, 它们是人们长期生活和使用中形成的变体现象, 比如 You can't judge a book by its cover. 与 You can't tell a book by its cover. 这两句。遇上这类谚语, 本书中在变体一句的英文注解处标【变体】和另一同义英语谚语全句。但是, 有一些谚语在人们的长期日常使用中形成了比较多的变体, 有的甚至可

因人因事产生比较灵活的变体,比如 Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion. 这一句,人们可能会用 fox、mouse 或 lizard 来代替 dog,亦或用 ass... horse、pike... sturgeon 或 yeomanry... gentry 来代替 dog... lion。遇上这种情况,本书省略未收那些比较多样不定的变体。

8. 如果一句变体谚语是另一句的缩略形式,而意思基本不变,例如 The mills of God grind slowly. 是 The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small. 的缩略,也作变体处理。

9. 再有些变体谚语只是取原来谚语的一部分(包括若干文字变动),意思也取相应的那部分,比如 To err is human. 是 To err is human, to forgive, divine. 的前半句, Save us from our friends! 是 God defend me from my friends; from my enemies I can defend myself. 的前半句,本书则相应注明。

10. 但有的变体是在原来谚语的基础上增加文字和内容而生成,比如 Sorrow and bad weather come unsent for. 是 Sorrow comes unsent for. 的变体。本书将这一类谚语作为不同的谚语分别注解。

11. 有的变体谚语意思也随之起了变化,本书中将这类变体谚语也以不同的谚语对待,如: Stolen waters are sweet. 和 Stolen fruit are sweet. 两句。

12. 由于历史原因,英语中绝大多数谚语凡涉及到人的代词和名词,出现的都是阳性。实际上,特别在现代,那些谚语的意思往往是男女通适的。对此,本书在作英语注释时,除非是有男女针对性的,一律写成 he/she, him/her, himself/herself 或中性的 person, one, people 等,以求更好地表达谚语的意思。

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## A

**A bachelor of arts discusses books, a pork butcher talks of pigs.**  
People of different trades or social positions have different qualities and interests.

【释义】文人论书，屠夫道猪。

【对照成语】道不同不相为谋

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

If the start is wrong, bungled or with trouble, the result can't be satisfying.

【释义】开局不好结果舜。

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

An open field with nothing in it has less value than a badly grown bush.

【释义】田里光秃秃，何如长歪树。

【对照成语】聊胜于无

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

Cake should be eaten, not kept; a bad convention must be broken, not followed.

【释义】蛋糕好吃不宜储，风俗不良须破除。

**A bad excuse is better than none at all.**

A clumsy excuse counts more than none.

【释义】借口再拙劣，总比没有强。

【对照成语】聊胜于无

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

The wife of a bad man can only be a bad woman.

【释义】夫恶妻不淑。

**A bad penny always turns up.**

A least wanted person is more often than others to turn up.

【释义】越讨人嫌的人，越是挤在人前（令人讨厌的人又来了）。

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

An incompetent worker shifts the blame to tools.

【释义】刈割庄稼能耐差,却怪手中镰刀钝。

【对照俗语】拉不出屎怪马桶不好

**A bad woman is worse than a bad man.**

If a woman is bad, she is nastier than a bad man.

【释义】女人坏起来,要比男人坏。

【对照俗语】最毒妇人心

**A bad workman always blames his tools.**

【变体】A bad workman blames his tools.

**A bad workman blames his tools.**

People tend to find excuses for their failure in doing certain things by blaming the available resources or circumstances.

【释义】自己做不成事,却怪外因限制。

【对照俗语】拉不出屎怪马桶不好

**A barber learns to shave by shaving fools.**

Only an idiot will allow other people to practise on him/her for their own experience and knowledge.

【释义】剃头匠学刮胡子,在傻瓜脸上试刀。

**A basket-justice will do justice right or wrong.**

A corrupt judge cannot handle a court case impartially.

【释义】腐败法官,执法不公。

**A bean in liberty is better than a comfit in prison.**

Tough but normal and free life is preferable to good living behind bars.

【释义】能有自由身,吃豆亦香;被囚坐牢房,食糖不甜。

**A beard well lathered is half shaved.**

Good preparation for a start is as good as a piece of work half finished.

【释义】肥皂泡沫涂周详,等于胡子剃一半;工作准备搞细致,事情一半已做完。

**A beggar can never be bankrupt.**

A beggar is destitute, so has nothing more to lose.

【释义】乞丐无所有,没有破产忧。

**A beggar pays a benefit with a louse.**

Of bad character, beggars are ungrateful to people's kindness.

【释义】乞丐无良心,受惠不领情。

**A belly full of gluttony will never study willingly.**

A person eating excessively has no interest at all in learning knowledge.

【释义】饕餮佬只好吃,学本事没兴趣。

**A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.**

It is better to hold on to what you have already got than to reject it in the wish for something more and better, since this might never happen.

【释义】一鸟在手胜于二鸟在林(实实在在在获得的东西,不管其是否完全令人满意,总比盼望或被许诺而又未实际到手的要实惠)。

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

A wrong impression on someone or something may be induced from their appearance, so we must not fall into the pitfall.

【释义】识人断事凭外表,认知错误少不了。

【对照俗语】人不可貌相

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

Under different appearances there might be the same good stuff.

【释义】黑李白李,是李皆甜;判人断事,不在外表。

【对照俗语】不论黑猫白猫,捉到老鼠便是好猫

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

Laissez-aller ends with ill-bred children and discipline-busting subordinates.

【释义】家长主人无威严,儿辈下级呈威风。

**A blind man may sometimes hit the mark.**

Good luck might come to those who can least expect it.

【释义】瞎子或会射中的,劣势并非没运气。

【对照俗语】瞎猫逮到死耗子

**A blister will rise upon one's tongue that tells a lie.**

A liar will be punished.

【释义】说谎者舌上长疮。

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

Gaiety makes one look beautiful.

【释义】心怡面若花。

**A boisterous horse must have a rough bridle.**

The intractable should be trained and disciplined with harsh measures accordingly.

【释义】烈马须用猛轡驯。

**A bold heart is half the battle.**

Valour in a battle is as good as winning half a victory.

【释义】作战英勇,先胜半局。

【对照名句】战以勇为主,以气为决

**A bonny bride is soon buskit, and a short horse is soon wispit.**

A pretty bride needs less time to dress up and put on make-up, just as a small horse is easy to be rubbed down.

【释义】漂亮新娘易打扮,矮小马匹易洗刷。

**A book that is shut, is but a block.**

If one has a book but does not read it, that book is useless and wasted.

【释义】有书不翻书如砖(有书而不读,书便没有用)。

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

A loan can produce the creditor a considerable profit.

【释义】放人以债,收人以利,乐之乎哉。

**A brave arm makes a short sword long.**

Valour makes physical weaponry more powerful.

【释义】战士勇敢,短剑变长矛。

**A brave man may fall, but he cannot yield.**

The brave people will not yield though they can fall.

【释义】勇敢者会倒下,但绝不会投降。

【对照名句】士可杀而不可辱

**A brave man's wounds are seldom on his back.**

The brave, if wounded, are most often to have the wounds on the chest, because they always charge forward.

【释义】勇者负伤罕在背,因为勇者永向前。

**A bribe will enter without knocking.**

Bribery always sneaks in through the bribed's vigilance.

【释义】行贿之人行贿,从不大肆声张。

**A broken friendship may be soldered, but will never be sound.**

If damaged and then repaired, a friendship cannot be expected to be as good as before.

【释义】友情生隙可修补,补后友情不再固。

**A bully is always a coward.**

Bullies are actually faint of heart.

【释义】欺人恶棍,色厉内荏。

**A burnt child dreads the fire.**

One who has suffered will fear the same experience.

【释义】遭过火烫儿,遇火就心惊。

【对照俗语】一遭被蛇咬,十年怕井绳

**A careless hussy makes many thieves.**

If a housewife is careless, thieves can easily burgle into her house.

【释义】粗心主妇频遭窃。

**A carrion crow never brings luck.**

Crow is always a bird of ill omen.

【释义】乌鸦永远兆晦气。

**A carrion kite will never be a good hawk.**

A knave can never be a good person, as a vulture is always wicked.

【释义】坏人本性不会改,一如秃鹫食死尸。

【对照成语】江山易改,本性难移

【对照俗语】狗改不了吃屎

**A cat has nine lives.**

1. The cat can tease and defy death with its agility and fortune. 2. Somebody has great vitality like a cat that may survive very harsh conditions.

【释义】1. 猫有九条命,大难不死。2. 某人生命力顽强,仿佛猫有九条命。

【对照俗语】命大福大造化大

**A cat in gloves catches no mice.**

If too cautious, one gets nowhere.

【释义】猫戴手套捉不住鼠,过分小心人不成事。

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

The socially low deserve their own basic rights.

【释义】草民也应该有草民自身的权利(人人平等)。

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

A bungled minor segment may damage an overall plan.

【释义】一环不固环环弱。

【对照俗语】一着不慎,满盘皆输

**A change is as good as a rest.**

Change in life benefits one's health.

【释义】变化有益身心健康。

【对照俗语】树挪死,人挪活

**A cheerful look makes a dish a feast.**

If a host/hostess looks happy and sincere when entertaining his/her guests with a dinner, the dinner will be as delightful to the visitors as a luxurious banquet.

【释义】笑脸待客饭菜香。

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

A man can enjoy a happy family life if his wife is happy.

【释义】家有欢乐妻,生活甘如飴。

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

Mother is often to pamper her child.

【释义】多少人子遭溺爱。

**A child's service is little, yet he is no little fool that despises it.**

Children's filial presents to their parents may never be enough considering what their parents have done to them, but parents may hurt them if they think the presents are too little and too few.

【释义】子女的孝敬是出于孝心,父母如嫌孝敬不多则有伤儿辈的心。

**A churl's feast is better than none at all.**

【释义】(请参照 Half a loaf is better than none.)

**A civil denial is better than a rude grant.**

If you are granted a benefit in a rude way, you feel more insult than to have your demand declined.

【释义】遭粗暴的给予不如受礼貌的拒绝。

【对照名句】廉者不受嗟来之食

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

If one's conscience is crystal clear, one does not fear wrong accusations.

【释义】问心无愧,不怕冤枉。

【对照俗语】1. 身正不怕影子斜 2. 行得正,立得直

【对照名句】君子坦荡荡

**A clear conscience is like a coat of mail.**

A clear conscience protects one from accusations and hurt.

【释义】无愧的良心是人生的守护之神。

**A client twist his attorney and counsellor is like a goose twist two foxes.**

When two lawyers rival for the legal trust from one client, they treat the client like two beasts fighting for the same prey.

【释义】两个律师争事主,两只狐狸撕一鹅——事主不幸鹅可怜。

**A close mouth catches no flies.**

A closed mouth will not provoke disputes or cause trouble.

【释义】唇闭蝇不入，嘴紧事不出。

**A constant guest is never welcome.**

Hospitality wears out with a constant guest.

【释义】频访之客，不受欢迎。

**A contented mind is a continual feast.**

With contentment, one enjoys on-going happiness.

【释义】知足之人乐常足。

【对照成语】1. 知足长乐 2. 知足常足

**A cool mouth, and warm feet, live long.**

Longevity is achieved through moderate eating and drinking, and plenty of physical exercise.

【释义】不贪嘴，多运动，人增寿。

**A crafty knave needs no broker.**

A cunning thug is bad enough to carry out craft alone.

【释义】狡诈之徒出损招，忙都不需别人帮。

**A creaking door hangs longest.**

【变体】A creaking gate hangs longest.

**A creaking gate hangs longest.**

A chronically sick person may enjoy longevity, as a creaking gate outlives a grand one.

【释义】陋门难用坏，病鬼寿命长。

**A crooked man should sow beans, and a wud man peas.**

A cripple should sow beans because they can be thickly sown, and a crazy man with too much energy should sow peas as peas need large row spacing.

【释义】瘸子种蚕豆，疯子种豌豆；蚕豆间距密，豌豆间距疏。[农谚]

**A crow on the thatch, soon death lifts the latch.**



Crow brings human beings misfortunes.

【释义】乌鸦叫，祸事到。

**A crowd is not company.**

There are many, many people around us, but all of them are not our friends, and we may even feel lonely.

【释义】作伴不需人多，人多更觉孤单。

【对照名句】相识满天下，知心能几人

**A crust is better than no bread.**

【释义】（请参照 Half a loaf is better than none.）

**A cut-purse is a sure trade, for he has ready money when his work is done.**

Pickpockets make theft their job, earning income from stealing.

【释义】做三只手好职业，工作完成即有钱。

**A dead bee makes no honey.**

A dead person can no longer make money.

【释义】死蜂不酿蜜，死人不生财。

**A dead mouse feels no cold.**

If one is dead, one no longer suffers from the hardship of life.

【释义】莫叹受冻苦，咽气艰辛除。

【对照成语】一了百了

**A dead wife's the best goods in a man's house.**

Wife is troublesome in a family, therefore, a good wife is a dead one.

【释义】好妻是亡妻。

**A deadly disease neither physician not physic can ease.**

If a patient is doomed to death with a fatal disease, doctors and medicines are impossible to save the life.

【释义】碰到病人膏肓人，医生药物概莫助。

【对照名句】良医不能措其术，百药无所施其功

**A deaf husband and a blind wife are always a happy couple.**