

Selected Chinese-English
Witticisms
and
Wisecracks



新编俏皮话

(中英文对照)

何恺青 编译

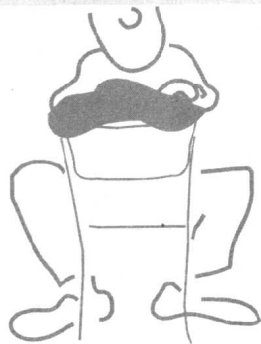


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作者简介

何恺青，原名何兆男。1914 年出生于北京。现居于美国西雅图市；北京大学、西南联大毕业。与汪孝龙氏结合，超逾金婚。曾任台北师范学院、(台湾)清华大学教授。赴美后任教于华盛顿大学东亚语文系，以迄退休。复在西雅图仁人服务社教授中国语文及书法。著有《国学概论》，《中文会话 140 课》，及学术论文多篇，小说《月与灯依旧》；译有《中国书法概论》等。

她朴实治学，诲人不倦，热爱人生，助人为乐。课余之暇常撰写幽默小品，世界各国游记，散见于中美各报章杂志上。本书乃积其多年之稿，以中英文编译，嘉惠于中外学子。

About the Author

Kai-ching Ho was originally Chao-nan Ho Wang. She was born in Beijing in 1914, now lives in Seattle. She graduated from Peking University which became Southwest Affiliated Universities then. She was married to the late Mr.



Hsiao-lung Wang for over fifty years. She was a professor at Taipei Teachers College and Tsinghua University in Taiwan. Upon moving to the U. S., she taught at Eastern Asian Languages and Literature Department of University of Washington till she retired; then she taught Chinese Language, Literature and Calligraphy at Chinese Information and Services in Seattle. Her publications include *Introduction to Sinology*, *140 Lessons in Chinese Conversation*, many academic papers, a fiction *Moon and Lamp as of Old*, and *Introduction to Chinese Calligraphy* which she translated.

Professor Ho studies diligently, teaches patiently, is enthusiastic about life and graciously helps others. In her leisure, she often writes humorous articles and travelogues for newspapers and magazines. In this book, she shares with students in and outside of China many years of her hard work compiled in both Chinese and English.

作者前言

“俏皮话”也就是古来所称的“歇后语”。但是“歇后语”一词往往不为大众所熟知；如说“俏皮话”，谁都晓得这话语是俏皮的，因此本书采用了“俏皮话”。这种风趣而形象的语言，运用时常隐去后文，只以前文来表示它的意义：如“泥菩萨过江”来表示“自身难保”。这也就是“歇后”的意义和来源。但也可以前后文并列，如“韩信将兵——多多益善”。

俏皮话是一种独特、巧妙的修辞方式。它浅显易懂，形象生动，寓意深刻，诙谐有趣，而富于讽刺和幽默。在谈话和写作中，若用得恰当，可以添加喻意及趣味，从而增强语言色彩和表达效果。我国古典小说如《红楼梦》、《儒林外史》，以及宋元杂剧、近人小说、电视连续剧中多所采用。我在西雅图华盛顿大学执教时，许多西方学子都对此大感兴趣。由于俏皮话具有时代、地区、行业等特点，故随着潮流、地域与民生的变迁和演进，某些用语已逐渐被淘汰或取代。

最早出现“歇后”这一名词是在唐代《旧唐书·郑綮列传》中提到过的所谓“郑五歇后体”（一种诗体）。但这种语言形式却远在先秦

时期就已出现了。《战国策·楚策四》“亡羊而补牢，未为晚也”就是一例。

关于歇后语的分类，向无完全的说法。一般来说分为四类：

1. 谐音类，如：

空棺材出殡——木（目）中无人

小葱拌豆腐——一青（清）二白

2. 喻意类，如：

弄堂里搬木头——直来直去

冷水发面——没多大劲儿

3. 喻物类，如：

秋后的蚂蚱——蹦跶不了几天

棋盘里的卒子——只进无退

4. 故事类，如：

楚霸王举鼎——力大无穷

周瑜打黄盖——一个愿打，一个愿挨

虽然有这些分类法，本书并未采用，而惟以汉语拼音字母序排列，查起来比部首、注音、威氏各法都方便。读者只需按音索字，运用之妙，在乎方寸之间。注音而外，或有注释例句，均有英译。

俏皮话的含义丰富多姿，构成喻体的素材多种多样，其表现手法也因情而异。最常见的有下列数项：

1. 夸张法：比喻部分是言过其实的夸张，以给人强烈的印象，

如：

搬起碾盘打月亮——不自量力

一根头发分八瓣——细得厉害

2. 双关法：解释部分用谐音或语义上相同或相近部分来说明事理，如：

巴掌心里长胡须——老手

不熟的葡萄——酸味十足

3. 用典法：运用典故、历史、传说、神话等来说明较复杂的事，如：

八仙过海——各显神通

包公断案——六亲不认

4. 对比法：比喻部分列举两个同样的事或物，在其对方矛盾关系中说明道理之所在，如：

大炮打麻雀——大才小用

黄连树下弹琵琶——苦中作乐

此外还有拆字法、假想法、拟人法、借代法等，恕不赘述。

本书共收俏皮话八百余条，具有广泛的应用价值，其中含有一些以历史、成语、文学人物为题材的，如：玉皇大帝、王母娘娘、姜太公、刘备、曹操、诸葛亮、关羽、张飞、唐僧、孙悟空、猪八戒、白娘娘、铁拐李、何仙姑等。这些人物不仅为中华民族广大地区的民众所熟悉，而且西方读者也可从中了解中国的历史文化。至于低级趣味、庸俗内容的，则酌情删除。

本书承美国华盛顿大学亚洲语文系康达维 (David Knechtges) 教

授、台北淡江大学英文系杜德伦 (Darrel Doty) 教授、西雅图仁人服务社英语老师马浩明 (Herman Ross) 先生赐序并多所指正。广东中山大学中国文学系马文山教授题字，刘远先生题词。我女汪玖、我孙黄凯音 (Carrie Ann Huang) 负责中英文计算机植字，并提供意见。统此致谢！

本书完成于八秩之后，年迈体衰，才疏识浅，谬误难免。尚祈博雅君子幸而教之。

何恺青
2002 年孟夏
于美国西雅图

序

Forewords

Anyone who has studied the Chinese language, even for a short time, will know that Chinese is rich in proverbs and humorous sayings. This book by Chaonan Ho Wang is a most welcome contribution to the collection and study of one type of witty saying, the *xiehouyu* 歇后语 or *qiaopihua* 俏皮话 (witticism). As Mrs. Wang points out, the term *xiehouyu* is rather confusing, even to native speaker of Chinese. It also is virtually untranslatable into English. In one of the more scholarly studies of the form, John S. Rohsenow has called it "enigmatic folk simile." The basic form of these phrases involves a preliminary statement providing hints or clues to the meaning followed by a statement that "translates" or explains what the phrase means. Because there is a pause after the preliminary statement, Professor Samuel Cheung has suggested that *xiehouyu* be translated "post-pause expression." In order to avoid the ambiguities and difficulties of the term *xiehouyu*, Mrs. Wang wisely has decided to designate the terms she includes as *qiaopihua* (witticisms and wisecracks).

Mrs. Wang has taught Chinese language and calligraphy for her entire adult life. This collection represents work that she has undertaken over several decades. She has collected here over eight hundred expressions, for which she provides *pinyin* Romanization, a translation, and an example of how the expression is used in ordinary speech. If the phrase involves a particular literary allusion or a traditional Chinese custom, Mrs. Wang also supplies supplementary explanations. Thus, the collection is of particular value to students of Chinese folk customs and literature. The clarity of the explanations and the readability of the translations is a tribute to Mrs. Wang's vast learning and command of both Chinese and English. The book is a splendid contribution to our understanding of Chinese language and culture, and I am sure that it will be widely read and be warmly received by scholars and students alike.

David Knechtges

Professor of Chinese

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

I am happy to write a short "foreword" for Nancy Wang's *Selected Chinese-English Witticisms and Wisecracks*. I congratulate the author on her diligence and enthusiasm in the culmination of many years of work as she completes the publication of this dictionary.

I first met Nancy Wang when she was teaching Chinese at the University of Washington in the early 1970s. I had the good fortune to be a student studying Chinese then. At that time interest in this project started to take shape, and she collected many examples of witticisms and wisecracks working out translations, explanations, and examples of usage. This process continued over many years to be interrupted by more pressing demands of her career and family life. It is now after almost thirty years that Nancy Wang in her retirement has found sufficient time to put the finishing touches on her manuscript — which I think is remarkable considering her travels, other publishing and writing activities, and the active social life she leads.

She has selected witticisms and wisecracks trying to avoid those in her opinion which are vulgar or scatological. First in an entry the Chinese text is written out followed by its equivalent *pinyin* Romanization. Next she gives an idiomatic English translation and additional information as needed to clarify the meaning of the entry; and where possible she gives an equivalent English proverb or witticism. She also provides an example sentence in Chinese with an English translation. This combination of features provides a useful treatment of Chinese witticisms and wisecracks which I believe will be helpful to learners of Chinese and those who want to delve more deeply into one representation of Chinese humor.

I hope the author will continue to pursue her writing and researching interests that we may further be graced with additional tools that will help to break

down the cultural walls of division between Chinese speakers and English speakers.

Darrel Doty

Professor of English

Tamkang University, Taipei, Taiwan

The wisecrack, just as the word implies, is a joke that also imparts wisdom. When I was assisting Professor Ho with the English portion of this book, I was trying to stick to a literal translation of the original Chinese as much as possible. But, as is so often the case, concessions had to be made, because leaving some things in their original cultural context would render them incomprehensible to non-Chinese speakers.

The tone of these wisecracks is often coarse, but the intellect behind them is, conversely, refined. When doing the translation, I always visualized the words being spoken by a quick-witted, older middle-aged person who is street-wise, the kind of person who has experienced everything in life more than once. I would imagine this crusty character uttering the words at street corners or on harbor piers, watching the passersby and keenly cutting to their cores and assessing their strengths and weaknesses. If I could hear and see my imaginary, experienced character speaking the words, then I felt the translation was remaining

fairly true to the original Chinese.

Not to be confused with four-character idioms, which abound in Chinese, wisecracks usually consist of two short sentences. The first one is the joke, it is an analogy to the person, thing, or situation upon which one is commenting. It is often cryptic and understood through context. The second sentence is explanatory and usually left unspoken, since most Chinese speakers know the full meaning just by hearing the first sentence.

The title of this book is *Selected Chinese-English Witticisms and Wisecracks*. And this is true, because herein is but a mere fraction of what the Chinese language has to offer in this field; it is, however, the first such reference book of its kind that we know.

It has been my pleasure to work on this project with Professor Ho, to share in her energy and good humor, and to get some insight into a whole subsection of the Chinese language that was heretofore unbeknownst to me.

Enjoy!

Hermann Ross
Seattle, Washington

题 词

A Poem to Commemorate the Publication

刘 远 Liu Yuan

问典穷经采集忙
诙谐直逼东方朔
事故人情多领略
凭君一管生花笔

翻成质胜好文章
传译无烦公冶长
语言辞汇少铺张
正本清源且漱芳

刘远，岭南梅县诗人，笔名江凌。曾任香港中国旅行社旅游杂志主编数十年。著有《玄都别院吟草》等。



矮子爬楼梯——步步高升

ǎi zǐ pá lóu tī—bù bu gāo shēng

[T] A midget climbing stairs finds every step rising (receives his due recognition).

Note: It means rising in rank or position step by step. It also refers to the improvement of one's life or accumulation of achievement.

[Ex] 你这次终于找到适合的工作，可以发挥你的才能。以后，你只要肯努力，一定矮子爬楼梯——步步高升的。

This time you finally found a job commensurate to your talents. From now on, as long as you are willing to work hard, you will be like a midget climbing stairs, ascending by every step.

矮子下河——越走越深

ǎi zǐ xià hé—yuè zǒu yuè shēn

[T] A midget steps into the river — Every step takes him deeper in.



按倒牛头喝水——办不到

àn dǎo niú tóu hē shuǐ—bàn bú dào

[T] Pressing an ox's head down to the water to make it drink. It can't be done!

[I] You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink.

[Ex] 你也许有你的方法，可是我活了这么久都习惯是这么做。你一定要我马上依照你的方式，那是按倒牛头喝水——办不到！

Maybe you have your way, but I've lived so long and my habit is to do it like this. If you want me to follow your method right away, that is pressing an ox's head down to drink — it can't be done!



八个油瓶七个盖——缺长少短

bā gè yóu píng qī gè gài—quē cháng shǎo duǎn

[T] Eight oil bottles with seven caps: Something lacks.

[Ex] 有吃有住，满屋子书，可是没个伴儿，生活仍然八个油瓶七

