

· 英汉对照 · 英汉对照 ·

叶兴国 主编

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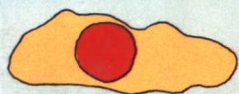
# 外国成语精选

ENGLISH—CHINESE

HIGHLIGHTS

OF FOREIGN

IDIOMS



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刘永涛 谢毅 编著

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## 说 明

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## 序

从某种意义上说,英语的成语、谚语和名言是英语的精华和西方文化的结晶。熟读精选的英语成语、谚语和名言不仅有助于对西方文化的了解,也能提高英语欣赏和表达能力。为此,我们为广大英语爱好者编译了这套《外国成语精选》、《外国谚语精选》、《外国名言精选》。

谚语(proverb)最主要的特征是言简意赅,用日常生活中的具体事例来说明带有普遍意义的道理。谚语通俗易懂,没有个人色彩,尽管英语中一部分谚语源自文学名著,但人们普遍认同这句话并已忘却它的作者时,这句话才成为谚语。如今 A rose by any other name would smell as sweet(玫瑰易名,馨香如故。)这句谚语仍在流传,但知道它源出莎士比亚的人大概不会很多,也没有谁会断言这句话在《罗密欧与朱丽叶》问世之前不在英国民间流传。

成语(idiom)的含义不能简单地从字面去理解,而应该把成语作为一个整体单位看待。成语的含义往往超出字面意思,这是成语的美妙之处,也是和谚语的相通之处。谚语是句子,可以引申出更深刻更普遍的含义,而成语是小于句子的语言单位,也不具有谚语所包含的劝诫性。例如:to cry before one is hurt 是成语,而 Don't cry before you are hurt. (未

受伤,不喊痛)就属于谚语。

名言(quotation)实际上就是名人的语录,名人从各个不同的角度和立场表达了对世界、事件和人生的思索、理解和看法。如1969年6月20日当美国宇航员尼尔·阿姆斯特朗登上月球时他说:“That's one small step for a man, one giant step for mankind(对于个人来说那是小小的一步,对人类来说那是巨大的一步。)”美国总统尼克松则说:“This is the greatest week in the history of the world since the creation. (这是自从上帝创世以来世界历史上最伟大的一个星期。)”这两句话是典型的名言。

《外国成语精选》有以下几个特点:

1. 根据成语的来源和本义对外国成语进行分类;

2. 选出的成语均为实用性和生命力很强的,原则上不收录俚语和短语动词;

3. 每一词条不但附有中文释义,而且配有英语原文释义。中英文释义力求准确、详尽和清楚,以帮助读者对该条成语的含义有更准确的把握;

4. 词条后的注释,主要叙述成语的来源、本义、引喻义、变体形式、同义或反义成语等,不但有助于读者对成语有更深入的认识,通过比较和联想对该成语有更牢固的印象和记忆,而且帮助读者扩大英语成语的词汇量;

5. 每一词条均附有精心挑选的例句,并附有译文。这一部分的目的在于帮助读者从语言实例中获得启发,从而提高自己运用它们的能力及技巧。

在这套丛书的编译过程中,我们得到了东方出版中心很大帮助,他们严谨的工作作风给我们留下了深刻的印象。特此致谢。

叶兴国

一九九六年春於上海外贸学院

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# 人 与 社 会



## 人 体

**bat an eye:** show surprise, fear, or interest

眨一下眼睛(表示惊讶、恐惧等)

〔注〕亦作 bat an eyelash。该成语通常用于否定句中，表示不露声色。

〔例〕Bill told his story without batting an eye, although not a word of it was true.

虽然没有一句话是真的，比尔编造故事却面不改色。

**be all fingers and thumbs:** be very awkward and clumsy in handling things

做事笨手笨脚

〔例〕She could not undo the string of the parcel—she was all fingers and thumbs.

她怎么也解不开包袱上的绳子——真是笨手笨脚。

**be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth:** born with inherited privilege or wealth

门第高贵；出生富家

〔注〕银具是富裕人家身份的象征之一，生在富贵人家的孩子多用银匙(silver spoon)喂食。同义成语有 be born in (或 to) the purple; be cradled in pur-

ple.

〔例〕 What does he know about hardship—— he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

他根本就不知道什么叫艰难——他出生在富贵人家。

**be in sth. up to one's neck:** be very much and very seriously involved in

深陷于……中

〔例〕 She said she knew nothing about the robbery, but I'm sure she's in it up to her neck.

她说她对这起抢劫案一无所知,不过我敢肯定她深深卷入其中。

**bite the hand that feeds one:** be very ungrateful

忘恩负义;以怨报德

〔例〕 She felt that her protege had bitten the hand that fed him by making unkind remarks about her in public.

她觉得她的被保护人在公开场合讲有损她的话是忘恩负义。

**bite off sb.'s nose:** scold sb. severely; disagree with sb. in a bad manner

气势汹汹地回答某人;声色俱厉地训斥某人

〔注〕 亦作 snap off sb.'s head. 该成语最早出现于 16 世纪。到了 18 世纪,有人用动词 snap 替换该成语中的 bite 一词。

〔例〕 She bites off his nose on the faintest provocation.

不管有事无事,她动不动就声色俱厉地训斥他。

**break the back of sth.** : complete the heaviest or most difficult part of sth. ; hurt the most important part

完成最重要或最困难的部分;伤其要害

〔注〕 亦作 break the neck of sth. 。

〔例〕 Now that you've broken the back of the job, have a rest.

你既然已经完成了这项工作的主要部分,那就休息一下吧。

**bury one's head in the sand**: deliberately ignore sth. that is obvious but unpleasant

逃避现实;拒绝承认现实

〔注〕 鸵鸟遇到危险时,总是把头埋在沙里,自己看不见敌人就认为敌人也看不见自己,由此产生这一成语。

〔例〕 He had suspected for some months that his son was taking drugs, but he had buried his head in the sand and refused to admit it, even to himself.

几个月来,他一直怀疑自己的儿子在吸毒,但他却采取鸵鸟政策,拒绝承认现实。

**carry a chip on one's shoulder**: have rather an aggressive manner, as if always expecting to be insulted, ill-treated

以挑衅的态度出现;像要跟人打架似的

〔注〕 19 世纪中叶美国中西部的居民寻衅打架时,常把一块碎木片(chip)放在肩膀上,谁要与他打架就得先击落这块木片。

〔例〕 He is very difficult to deal with——he's always carried a chip on his shoulder about his lack of education.

他这个人很难对付——由于没能受到良好的教育,他整天都像要跟人打架似的。

**chance one's arm:** do sth. risky; take a risk

冒险一试;碰碰运气

〔注〕 该成语原出自拳击运动,后被裁缝吸收为行话;从 1890 年起,又被士兵们用来指“冒降级的危险”。

〔例〕 The doctor decided to chance his arms and try to write a book on medicine.

这个医生决定碰碰运气,试着写一本关于医药的书。

**come to one's senses:** realize the truth

醒悟过来

〔例〕 He had gambled away most of his money before he came to his senses and decided to stop gambling.

他在赌场上输掉了他的大部分钱财,然后才醒悟过来,决定戒赌。

**cool one's heels:** be kept waiting for some time

苦苦等候;坐冷板凳

〔注〕亦作 kick one's heels。在火车、汽车发明之前，马匹是人类最主要的交通工具，在长途旅行中，经过长时间跋涉马蹄就会变得过热，骑马的人不得不中断旅行，让马休息一下。后转义。

〔例〕Although I arrived on time for the meeting, I was left cooling my heels for half an hour.

尽管我及时赶去参加那次会议，却被留在门外坐了半小时的冷板凳。

**cut the ground from under sb. 's feet: do harm to sb.**

拆某人的台；驳倒某人

〔注〕亦作 cut the grass from under sb. 's feet.

〔例〕We mustn't allow these people to cut the ground from under our feet while we sit looking on.

我们必须采取行动，不能眼巴巴地看着这些人来拆我们的台。

**cut off one's nose to spite one's face: suffer harm while trying to harm sb. else**

拿自己出气

〔注〕亦作 bite off one's nose to spite one's face. 同义成语有 quarrel with one's bread and butter.

〔例〕Handing in your resignation just because you've had a difference of opinion with the boss would be cutting off your nose to spite your face.

你仅仅因为与老板观点不同就提交辞呈，真是在跟自己过不去。

**cut one's teeth on sth.:** get valuable experience from sth.

获得关于……的初步经验

〔注〕亦作 cut one's eyeteeth on sth.。

〔例〕The hunter boasted of having cut his teeth on tigers.

那猎人夸口说自己捕老虎有经验。

**drag one's feet:** act slowly and reluctantly

行动缓慢;不情愿采取行动

〔注〕亦作 drag one's heels。

〔例〕The children wanted to watch television, and dragged their feet when their mother told them to go to bed.

孩子们想看电视,母亲叫他们去睡觉时,他们慢腾腾地拖着腿走。

**fall on deaf ears:** be ignored

被忽视;不被理睬

〔注〕亦作 fall on strong ground。该成语在形式上是主动语态,表示的却是被动的含义。

〔例〕I went to see the boss, but my request for a pay rise fell on deaf ears.

我去见上司,可是我提高工资的请求遭到拒绝。

**fall on one's feet:** have some unexpected good luck, esp. after or because of sth. bad or unpleasant



化险为夷;安然脱险;运气好

〔例〕 He lost his job last year, but he really fall on his feet—he is now doing the same job for someone else at a higher salary.

去年他失了业,可是他运气好——他现在为别人干同样的活,薪水更高。

**follow one's nose: go straight forward**

笔直走;盲目行事

〔例〕 That man just follows his nose; he's just filled up a ditch without troubling to think where the water will go in wet weather.

那个人做事不动脑筋,只是把沟填满,也不想想下雨天水往哪儿流。

**get off on the wrong foot: begin badly**

开头不利

〔注〕 亦作 start (或 set) off on the wrong foot.

〔例〕 He got off on the wrong foot with a tactless remark about his audience.

他对听众说了句不得体的话,一开始就使自己处于不利的地位。

**get one's feet wet: do sth. for the first time**

首次尝试

〔例〕 "It's not hard to dance once you get your feet wet," said the teacher.

老师说:“一旦你开了个头,跳舞就容易了。”