



中译经典文库·中华传统文化精粹[汉英对照]

中国成语故事选

Chinese Idioms And Their Stories

杨立义 编选、英译

Compiled and translated by Yang Liyi



中国出版集团
中国对外翻译出版公司



本书选录一百条中国成语，源出四十多种文史名著，包括《论语》《左传》《史记》《汉书》《世说新语》《资治通鉴》等。各篇成语语源的故事，内容广泛，包括寓言、笑话、历史故事等，均富情节和趣味。每篇均加中文注释、生僻字注音以及全篇英译、白话文翻译。

This book selects 100 Chinese idioms from more than forty literary and historical classics including *The Lunyu (The Analects)*, *Zuo Zhuan (Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals)*, *Shi Ji (Historical Records)*, *Hanshu (Book of Han)*, *Shishuo Xinyu (New Accounts of Old Episodes)*, *Zizhi Tongjian*, etc. Chronologically arranged, the etymological stories of the idioms visualize a wide range in narrative landscape, including allegories, humors, and historical tales, all so dramatic and entertaining.

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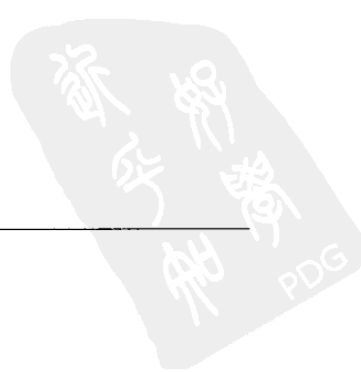
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致选译者



“中华传统文化精粹”丛书,是根据我公司 20 世纪 90 年代出版的“一百丛书”重新编选、修订的。与本丛书有关的各项版权事宜,包括选译者的稿酬等,我公司已委托中华版权代理总公司代为办理。

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世界从书中认识中国
中国通过书走向世界

出版说明

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书脱胎于我公司出版的 20 世纪八九十年代中国最富盛名的双语读物“英汉汉英对照一百丛书”。这套丛书曾经影响了几代英语和中华文化学习者、爱好者，深受读者的喜爱，以至今天还有许多翻译界、外交界、教育界等各界取得卓越成就的人士，对这套书籍仍怀有浓重的情结。这套书不仅仅是当初他们学习英语的课外启蒙读本，亦是他们的良师益友，是他们追求知识、拼搏向上的青春记忆。

这套丛书最初由中国对外翻译出版公司于 20 世纪八九十年代同香港商务印书馆合作陆续推出，丛书的编者和译者都是在各自领域做出贡献的学者、教授，使得该套丛书在读者中获得了很好的口碑，创造了良好的社会效益和经济效益。

为了将这一品牌发扬光大，我公司对“英汉汉英对照一百丛书”进行了修订、重组，聘请了享誉海内外的中国翻译界专家组成阵容强大的顾问团，在题材、选篇、译文、栏目设置等方面进行了严谨的论证、精心的编辑，打造出适应新时代读者需求以及提升中国文化新形象的精品图书——“中华传统文化精粹”。

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书内容丰富。秉承以中外读者为本的宗旨，我们增加了白话翻译、中文注释、汉语拼音、经典名句等栏目，删除了晦涩、冗长的篇目，使丛书更加通俗、实用。

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书整体性强、版式精致且与内容和谐统一，相信必将受到中外读者的喜爱。

**The Classics Bring a
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The Traditional Chinese Culture Classical Series originated from the Chinese-English 100 Bilingual Series, the most popular one in the last two decades of the 20th century in China. The series had so impressed generations of English learners and admirers of Chinese culture that still *leaves a deep impression in readers' mind*. The books were their *primary reading materials* of English language, resourceful teacher and intimate friend, witnessing a perennial youth in pursuit of knowledge and success.

The series gradually came into being through the cooperation between China Translation and Publication Corporation (CTPC) and Hong Kong Commercial Press in 1980s and 1990s. The series was compiled and translated together by a group of outstanding scholars and professors.

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Characteristic of holistic configuration and harmonious unity between the fine format and the excellent content, the Traditional Chinese Culture Classical Series will certainly be cherished by readers from both home and abroad.

前言

PREFACE



成语是语言中的精华，汉语以及世界上任何别的语种都各有大量成语，可以说丰富多彩，美不胜收。

但是“成语”一词的概念和范围在各语种中却不完全一样。什么叫做“成语单位”？一般人对此不是很清楚，尽管对此有不同的看法和理解，但这并不妨碍他们使用成语。学者们在这个问题上有很多争论，至今难下结论，不能趋于一致。俄罗斯的学者把成语作为语言学的一门独立学科来加以研究，已有四十余年的研究历史。就单拿英语来说（因为本书所载的是中国成语故事的英译文），一般译成汉语为“成语”的 idiom 一词的定义也有多种。把英美出版的一些著名词典（如韦氏、牛津、朗曼、钱伯斯等等）所列的义项归纳一下，最主要的有 3 项：

① 具有一个民族、国家、阶级、社会（甚至包括地区和个人）特性的语言表达形式；

② 在语法、句法或结构形式上，往往不能从字面来理解的独特表达形式；

③ 一个音乐家、艺术家、作家等人的特殊的个性风格和表现形式。

1980 年版的 *Britannica Book of English Usage* 是一册罗

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列现代英语用法的辞书,它甚至只提②这一项,直截了当地说:An idiom is a phrase which is an established and correct part of a particular language but which makes little sense, if taken literally. 它举的例子是:catch a cold, by and large 和 strike a bargain. 这显然指的是一些固定短语或词组。

看来第③项不全属语言范畴,可撇开不谈。但是,即使属于语言范畴的第①、②两项的定义,同汉语成语的概念也不完全相同。

那么,就产生了这样的问题:能否把英语中的 idiom 和汉语中的“成语”一词作为对应词而等值互译呢?这还在其次,主要的是本书该选材些什么呢?要回答这些问题,还需看看汉语成语究竟指的是什么。

有人说汉语成语指的是熟语、俗语、谚语;有人说还包括寓言、典故;也有人主张包括惯用语(习语)、名言、格言、歇后语、俚语;甚至有人主张还应包括合成术语和标语口号,如此等等,不一而足,莫衷一是。

还有一说,即应包括在古代已经吸收入汉语而且已经汉化了的外来成语,如由佛教输入的“普渡众生”、“六根清净”、“三生有幸”,“半途出家”、“当头棒喝”等等。如果这样,就有人提出“武装到牙齿”、“一石二鸟”、“旧瓶装新酒”、“披着羊皮的狼”、“以牙还牙,以眼还眼”等诸如此类目前常用,在外国文化中属于古代而尚未完全汉化的成语,应否也包括在汉语成语之内呢?

既然众说纷纭,看来还需探讨一下汉语成语的定义。要探讨,只能求助于目前较具权威的几本辞书了,即《辞海》、《辞源》和《现代汉语词典》。为了方便读者起见,列表于下页。

从下表几个定义来看,汉语中的成语主要同熟语、俗语和谚语有交叉,无法断然分割,而且每一种都说不完全(有的还说得不太正确)。归纳之后,成语的特点是:固定的结构方式、言简意赅、精练生动、富有表现力和生命力、带有历史性色彩、流行广泛等。与英语中的结构固定、约定俗成这两点相同。至于英语中的 idiom 往往不能从字面来理解一点,汉语成语却多数可以望文生义。当然,也有不少需知道来源才能懂得的,也就是说汉语成语的另一个特点:具有典故性,有来历、有出处。出处不止于神话、传说、历史故事等,也有源出古代前人的诗文。至于内涵丰富、意在言外,常用比喻(明喻和隐喻均有)等,也可说是汉语成语的又一特点。

编者就根据以上特点为本书选材,并特别注意所选成语是富于故事性的。

成语是习见常用的语言,经过时间的考验,一直流行,经久不衰,为人们所乐于运用。不符合这种条件的成语没有收入本书。再者,成语是固定的词组(当然有时也有一些变体或词序的更动),是比较凝固而不是松散或随意的凑合。随意摘录的诗文名句和任意概括的历史故事,以及变化较多的四字词(如“心神恍惚”、“波光粼粼”等)均不收入本书。此外,这些四字词也缺乏故事情节,不符合收录的条件。

本书的选材范围较紧较窄的原因就如上述。再者,中国成语浩如烟海,从中挑选绝非易事,只能限于有书证可举、有渊可寻的成语。且本书既称为故事集,则不仅需选定型的通俗的,以及前面提到的富于故事性和趣味性的成语。这样,有些人们很熟悉的但不合这个条件的成语只能割爱。另一方面,由于篇幅有限,有不少合条

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中华传统文化精粹

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	《辞海》	《辞源》	《现代汉语词典》
成语	熟语的一种。习用的固定词组。组织多样,来源不一。有些可从字面理解,如“万紫千红”、“乘风破浪”;有些要知道来源才懂,如“青出于蓝”出于《荀子·劝学》,“守株待兔”出于《韩非子·五蠹》。	习用的古语,以及表示完整意思的定型词组或短句。	人们长期以来习用的、形式简洁而意思精辟的、定型的词组或短语。
熟语	语言中定型的词组或句子。使用时一般不能任意改变其组织。包括成语、格言、歇后语等。		固定的词组,只能整个应用,不能随意变动其中成分,并且往往不能按照一般的构词法来分析,如“慢条斯理”、“无精打采”、“不尴不尬”、“一来二去”、“乱七八糟”、“八九不离十”等。
俗语	流行于民间的通俗语句,带有一定的方言性。指“谚语”、“俚语”及口头上常用的成语等。	约定俗成、广泛流行的定型的语句。	通俗并广泛流行的定型的语句,简练而形象化,大多数是劳动人民创造出来的,反映人民的生活、经验和愿望。如:天下无难事,只怕有心人。也叫俗语。
谚语	熟语的一种。流传于民间的简练通俗而富有意义的语句,大多反映人民生活斗争的经验。如“人多力齐推山倒,众人拾柴火焰高”等。谚语也是民间文学的一种形式。		在群众中流传的固定语句,用简单通俗的语言反映出深刻的道理,如“三个臭皮匠,赛过诸葛亮”、“三百六十行,行行出状元”、“天下无难事,只怕有心人”。

件的,甚至更好的,也免不了挂一漏万。

还需说明的是关于“源流”,即出处问题。编者才疏学浅,手头资料有限,缺乏追根究底的时间和条件,在探求语源方面定有不足之处。近偶翻阅《辞书研究》双月刊(1983年第2期)见有《简评〈成语词典〉》一文,其中提到有些成语的出处历代均以为如此如此,但近来学者又有了新的发现。例如:

“不可同日而语”——原云出自《汉书·息夫躬传》

现云出自《战国策·赵策二》,汉贾谊《过秦论》

“冰消瓦解”——原云出自《隋书·杨素传》

现云出自晋成公绥《云赋》

“大公无私”——原云出自清龚自珍《论私》

现云出自汉马融《忠经·天地神明》

新发现的出处均为更早的语源。然而本书的每篇故事,只能择一般认可的出处注上。

再者,尽管成语一般说来是固定形式的,但有变式或变体(variant)。因成语在流传过程中,往往会出现若干不同的书写形式(即用同音或同义的字改换其中一二字而保留原义或增添改变意义,也有把词序颠倒等情况)。如“别无长物”也可以“一无长物”出现。此外,“尔虞我诈”可以写成“我诈尔虞”、“假道灭虢”可改为“假途灭虢”,“马齿徒增”可改为“马齿渐增”,则意义上并没多少改动或毫无变更(也许有时在使用上、语法上略有差异而已)。

可是,有的成语原来使用时是这个意思,后人却改动了原意,或者把原意发展和引伸,甚至以适得其反的意思来运用,如“按图索骥”改成“根据具体标示,在繁复的情况下,顺利地找到需要的事

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PREFACE

物”。“枯木朽株”引伸为“无庸之辈”，“朝三暮四”改成“善变”之意。“李代桃僵”用来比喻“代替”和“顶替”，失去原来表示“兄弟手足之情”的意思。“陌路萧郎”变成“薄情郎”，“买椟还珠”原来是讽刺卖珠者，却变作讽刺买珠者迷惑于表面的华丽而忽略了实际，成为取舍不当之意了。“尔虞我诈”与原来盟约上的“我无尔诈、尔无我虞”的意思完全相反，成为“彼此不信任，互相欺骗”之意。可见成语的意义变迁也不小，凡能指出的，本书都加以说明，不过相信还有疏漏之处。

至于感情色彩上的褒贬转化（从褒转贬或从中性转成贬义的情况较多）则有很多例子，都是在长期使用中不知不觉地转变的。“如丧考妣”在古代是褒义的，形容哀痛之深，多用于帝王逝世时刻，在现代则由褒转贬，带有强烈的揶揄和讽刺意味以形容伤心和着急。“再作冯妇”古时用来形容重操旧业，是中性的，现在却包含讥讽色彩。“马齿渐增”原意是中性的，仅指年事渐长，但现在含有年岁徒然增长而感叹无所成就的意味了。

有时，一个故事引出不只一条成语，而是几条成语。可是，虽然同出一源，意义却很不相同，如“毛遂自荐”的故事生出成语“脱颖而出”。至于“两败俱伤”、“一举两得”、“坐山观虎斗”和“坐观成败”都出自同一故事；“世外桃源”一则引出“不足为外人道”；“负隅顽抗”一则生出“再作冯妇”；“破釜沉舟”和“以一当十”则出自同一故事。

有的成语出自前人或古代诗文名句，本身并没有什么故事，原不应列入本书。可是，与之相关联的故事却可以找到，故仍把这些成语列入而将故事放在脚注中。例如，“河东狮吼”、“走马看花”、

“瓜田李下”、“城门失火，殃及池鱼”和“相煎何太急”等。

成语的本义不言自明，读者完全可以从故事中理解的，本书就不再加以说明。只有意义有变动或使用反其意而用之等等的情况下才加以说明。

最后，谈谈翻译成英语的问题。

汉语中的“成语”和英语中的 idiom，如前所述是不完全相同的。英语的 idiom 强调语言的特殊用法和结构方式，也就是习惯用法(习语性)和相当固定的形式(定型性)。汉语中的“成语”则比较强调言简意赅、出处和典故性。两者有相同处，也有不相同处，如作对应词来互译是不完全确当的。但现有的汉英词典(包括北京外语学院的《汉英词典》、林语堂的《当代汉英词典》、梁实秋的《最新实用汉英词典》和江苏人民出版社的《实用汉英词典》)都把“成语”一词译成 idiom 作为对等词或对应词，偶而加上(set) phrase, idiomatic phrase(expression)作为第二义(或第一义)。在找不到完全对应的词的情况下，只能译成 idiom。好在翻译者多少都有这样的感觉：有时候翻译碰到这样的困难，只能用“妥协”的方式(Benjamin Jowett: “All translation is a compromise—the effort to be literal and the effort to be idiomatic.”)，本书书名也只好暂译为 *Chinese Idioms and Their Stories*。故事本身的翻译，由于汉语(尤其是古文或文言)与现代英语差别很大，恐怕在很多地方也只能用“妥协”的办法。

成语的篇名，编者在翻译时尽量保持中国民族色彩，基本上采取直译；极个别的采取意译，即直译在英语中实在行不通时才采用

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意译。编者所以不强求寻找完全对应的英语成语来翻译,原因是表面上似乎对应的,其实并不完全等值;意思、感情色彩、情境总有些出入,有时还是错误的。例如:“躺倒不干”译成 lie down on the job,似乎十分对应,其实这个英语成语的意思是“不好好干”、“磨洋工”。可以简单列表再举几个例子如下:

汉语成语	英语成语	英语中实际意义
行尸走肉	walking skeleton	非常消瘦的人
一叶知秋	one swallow does not make a summer	轻率推断必成大错
翘尾巴	have one's tail up	兴致勃勃,信心十足
轻而易举	have something at one's fingers' ends	很熟悉
锦上添花	carry coals to Newcastle	徒劳而多余的事
害群之马	black sheep of the family	辱没门庭

以上各例仔细分析起来,汉语成语和英语成语之间的意思、感情色彩等等都有差异,因此宁愿直译(个别采意译)反而确切。

当然,也有基本对应的英语成语,尽管其中个别词或用喻并不对等,如“火上加油”(pour oil on the flame),“混水摸鱼”(fish in troubled waters),“旁观者清”(The onlooker sees most of the game),“昙花一现”(a flash in the pan),“眼见为实”或“百闻不如一见”(Seeing is believing)等。不过,我们仍须用得确当才好。

汉语同英语差别很大,在此不能细举其异同,仅举一例,如汉语中常有行文重复的写法,尤其是古文或文言文,但英语除作为修辞手段外,尽量避免重复。翻译时为了保持原文风格,还是重复为好。

译者同时力求简洁、朴素,使用的英语也不求词藻的华丽,只是一般通用的语言,主要希望达到通顺易懂的效果。是否恰当还乞读者批评指正。

原文里有些不大常用的古汉语,译者特别在脚注加上汉语拼音和简明释义。英译部分的脚注都是译者加的,并非自中文翻译过来,不妥之处,希望读者不吝赐教。

杨立义

1984年5月

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The general Chinese view of *chengyu* (literally “established speech”) is that it expresses the essence of the language, adding to it beauty and colour by virtue of its richness and originality.

But the expression *chengyu* may not have an exact equivalent in other languages. What exactly is *chengyu*, how can it be defined? To this question most users of Chinese have no definite answer, nor are they keen to seek it, so long as its lack does not hinder their use of the language.

Since we are dealing with the translation of Chinese into English, it is reasonable to look first at the English word idiom, which in almost all cases is expressed as *chengyu* in Chinese, just as *chengyu* is translated into English as idiom. Is there a difference between the two, or are they exactly equivalent and interchangeable in every case?

According to several popular English dictionaries, the



definitions for the word "idiom" are given as follows:

- Webster*—1. a. the language proper or peculiar to a people or to a district, community or class
- b. the syntactical, grammatical or structural form peculiar to a language
2. an expression established in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in grammatical construction or in having a meaning that cannot be derived as a whole from the conjoined meanings of its elements
3. a style or form of artistic, expression (as in painting, writing, composing) that is characteristic especially of an individual, a period or movement, or a medium or instrument
- Oxford*—1. language of a people or country
2. specific character of this
3. form of expression peculiar to a language or person, peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage though having meaning not deductible from those of the separate words

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4. characteristic mode of expression in music, art, etc.

Chambers—1. an expression with a meaning that cannot be guessed from the meanings of the individual words

2. the expressions of a language in general—the English idiom

3. an individual style in music, etc.

Longman—1. the language peculiar to a people, country, class, community or, more rarely, an individual

2. the structure of the usual patterns of expression of a language

3. a construction, expression etc. having a meaning different from the literal one or not according to the usual patterns of the language

4. a writer's characteristic use of words, a characteristic style in music, art, etc.

The 1980 edition of *Britannica Book of English Usage* gives only one, namely, "An idiom is a phrase which is an established and correct part of a particular language but which makes little sense, if taken literally."

The 1979 edition of *Longman Dictionary of Idioms*



states that: "An idiom is a fixed group of words with a special different meaning from the meanings of the separate words."

It is, therefore, clear that the word "idiom" in current usage chiefly refers to "a set phrase". This predominant feature in the English language, of course, can also be found in Chinese *chéngyǔ*, but it forms only one of the latter's many features. Its definition in Chinese is much more complicated. Some people say that it means *shúyǔ* (熟语 idiom, idiomatic phrase), *súyǔ* (俗语 common saying, folk adage) and *yànyǔ* (谚语 proverb, saying, adage, saw); others think that it should include *yànyán* (寓言 fable, allegory, parable), *diǎngù* (典故 allusion, literary quotation) and still others claim that it includes *xíyǔ* (习语 idiom), *míngyǔán* (名言 well-known saying, celebrated dictum, famous remark), *géyán* (格言 maxim, motto, aphorism), *xièhòuyǔ* (歇后语 the second part of a two-part allegorical saying that actually carries the message, though sometimes unstated), *lǐyǔ* (俚语 slang), *fāngyán* (方言 dialect), etc. Some people even assert that it should not exclude *shùyǔ* (术语 technical terms) and *biāoyǔ* and *kǒuhào* (标语、口号 slogan, poster, watchword).

Furthermore, there is the question of national characteristics. Some think that those expressions which

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originated from alien culture should not be considered Chinese *chéngyǔ*, for instance, “普渡众生”, “六根清静”, “三生有幸”, “半路出家” and “当头棒喝” (which came from Buddhism) and “武装到牙齿”, “一石二鸟”, “旧瓶装新酒”, “披着羊皮的狼” and “以牙还牙, 以眼还眼” (which came from a foreign language). Those who are opposed to this view argue that such expressions have become so commonly used that they can be regarded as part of Chinese *chéngyǔ*.

In view of the complexities and controversies involved, it may be necessary to consult the three popular and authoritative lexicographical works so far available here: *Cihai*, *Ciyuan* and *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (辞海, 辞源, 现代汉语词典). *Cihai* counts *chéngyǔ* as “a kind of *shúyǔ*, set phrases or word groups that are of customary usage. The formation of *chéngyǔ* is of great variety and the origins of various *chéngyǔ* are also diversified. Some of them can be understood from the surface meanings of the words they are composed of (万紫千红, 乘风破浪); others can be understood only if their origins are known (守株待兔, 青出于蓝).” *Ciyuan* puts *chéngyǔ* as “old sayings of common usage and those phrases or clauses which are set in form to express a complete idea.” *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* defines *chéngyǔ* as “set phrases or clauses that people have customarily used for ages in terse forms and with incisive meanings.”

In comparing the definitions of the word “idiom” in English and *chéngyǔ* in Chinese, we find that they are not exactly the same. The only element that is in common is that they are more or less established by usage and accepted through practice. The Chinese *chéngyǔ* involves much more. It seems to bear more historical colour, carries more literary allusions (including those from fables and legends) and is rendered more through analogy, whether metaphor or simile.

This feature of Chinese *chéngyǔ*, invites the compilation of a book like this which can supply stories to tell the origins of *chéngyǔ*. What, then, shall be the title of this book? Since there is no exact equivalent of *chéngyǔ* in English, the nearest word can only be “idiom”. So for lack of a better word, this book is called *One Hundred Chinese Idioms and Their Stories*. And the guiding principle in choosing the *chéngyǔ* that should go into the book is that they must have an interesting story behind them. Naturally, therefore, the readers will find that many commonly used *chéngyǔ* are not included in this volume, simply because their source is not from a story. For the same reason, popular quotations from famous essays or poems are often not included. It goes without saying this book cannot be a comprehensive one, being limited in its

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size.

As to the source or origin of a Chinese *chéngyǔ*, the compiler in most cases gives only that which has been recognized to be so. This is by no means to ignore recent findings that some *chéngyǔ* can be traced back still further to an earlier source. For instance, “不可同日而语” used to be attributed to *The Book of Han* (汉书·息火躬传), but now it has been found to have its source in the *Warring States Records* (战国策·赵策二).

Though the expressions *chéngyǔ* are considered to be more or less set or established in form or structure, variations are not rare. Variants are sometimes seen with the mere change of one word or replacement by a synonym or a nomonym or even change of the word order. For instance, “尔虞我诈” can be written as “我诈尔虞”; “假道灭虢”, as “假途灭虢”; “马齿徒增”, as “马齿渐增”. In this way sometimes the original meaning of the *chéngyǔ* is partially changed. For instance, “别无长物” can be written as “一无长物”, which of course emphasises the idea that the man has absolutely no personal possession at all.

But there are cases in which the original meaning of the *chéngyǔ* expression is entirely changed, so that the meaning is either extended or even contrary to the original one. For instance, “枯木朽株” now has an extended



meaning of “无庸之辈” (good-for-nothing persons); “朝三暮四” now has the meaning of a man who always changes his decision or inclination. “李代桃僵” is now only used to mean “substitution”, having lost the original idea of brotherly feelings. “陌路萧郎” refers now to a man who is inconstant in love, and “买椟还珠” used to be employed to satirise the seller of the pearl but now it is used to mock the buyer of the pearl who values superficial beauty more than actual worth. “尔虞我诈” is no longer used in the original sense of “neither side cheating the other”, but in the entirely opposite sense of “mutual mistrust with both parties playing tricks”. In all such cases, the compiler has supplied a note to point out the changes. Such changes may include those from commendatory sense to derogatory sense, or vice versa. They have of course evolved through the ages.

Another feature of Chinese *chéngyǔ* is that from one source or origin or story more than one *chéngyǔ* expression is often derived. That is to say, different *chéngyǔ* expressions can come from one and the same story. For instance, from the story of “Mao Sui Offers His Own Service” another *chéngyǔ* expression “脱颖而出” was derived. And “两败俱伤”, “一举两得”, “坐山观虎斗” and “坐观成败” all came from the same story.

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As has been said, if there is no story behind a *chéngyǔ*, it is not to be included in this book. But sometimes, there is another story associated with it, that other story is included in the footnotes.

As to the topic of a *chéngyǔ* story, the compiler and translator has tried his best to retain the national flavour by following the principle: Translate literally, if possible, or, appeal to free translation. In other words, if literal translation does not carry any meaning in English, nor can it maintain the national colour, then resort to free translation, which of course is a sort of compromise. As Benjamin Jowett once said, "All translation is a compromise—the effort to be literal and the effort to be idiomatic." To seek equivalents where there are none is a waste of effort. Speaking of seeking equivalents, we also have to guard against one thing. As most translators know well, sometimes one may find an idiomatic expression in English which seems to be almost equivalent to the Chinese and therefore think it is the right one to use. The fact is that in doing so, very often the original meaning, colour and taste are more or less lost, that is, face-value equivalence may not be very successful. Instead, it may lead to misunderstanding or even distortion of the meaning of the original expression. For instance, "行尸走肉" may

seem to be equal in sense to an idiomatic expression in English: “walking skeleton”, which, however, indicates a very thin man in that language; “锦上添花” may look like equal to the expression “carry coals to Newcastle” in English, but that sentence actually means “take goods to a place where they are already plentiful”—an effort uncalled for; and “轻而易举” may be easily translated into “have something at one’s fingers’ ends” which, however, actually means “be thoroughly familiar with something”. In such cases, they are rather to be translated more literally so as to be more “faithful” to the meaning of the Chinese *chéngyǔ*. Of course, there are rare cases of basic equivalence like “百闻不如一见” (which can be translated into “seeing is believing”) and “旁观者清” (which can be translated into “the onlooker sees most of the game”).

Before concluding, another point should be mentioned. It is about the question of “repetition”. In English, the repetition of a word, a phrase or an expression is generally not recommendable unless for rhetorical emphasis or forcefulness. But in Chinese, especially in classic Chinese, repetition is quite often employed, yet without giving the readers the feeling of redundancy or superfluity. So, in order to preserve the original style, the translator tries as much as possible to retain repetitions and at the same time

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to keep to the plain succinct character of the Chinese language. To use too many variations or too much florid language at the expense of the beauty and simplicity of Chinese is not advisable.

The footnotes are not translations from any ready Chinese versions, they are the translator's own.

Yang Liyi (Lanier Young)

May 1984 in Shanghai

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Chinese Idioms and Their Stories

wèn
问
yī
一
dé
得
sān
三

chén kàng wèn yú bó yú yuē zǐ yì yǒu yì wén
陈亢①问于伯鱼②曰：“子亦有异闻③

hū duì yuē wèi yě cháng dú lì lǐ qū ér guò
乎？”对曰：“未也。尝独立，鲤趋④而过

tíng yuē xué shī hū duì yuē wèi yě bù
庭。曰：‘学《诗》乎？’对曰：‘未也。’‘不

xué shī wú yǐ yán lǐ tuì ér xué shī tā rì
学《诗》，无以言。’鲤退而学《诗》。他日，

yòu dú lì lǐ qū ér guò tíng yuē xué lǐ hū
又独立，鲤趋而过庭。曰：‘学《礼》乎？’

duì yuē wèi yě bù xué lǐ wú yǐ lì lǐ
对曰：‘未也。’‘不学《礼》，无以立。’鲤

tuì ér xué lǐ wén sī èr zhě chén kàng tuì ér
退而学《礼》。——闻斯二者。”陈亢退而

xǐ yuē wèn yī dé sān wén shī wén lǐ yòu
喜曰：“问一得三：闻《诗》，闻《礼》，又

wén jūn zǐ zhī yuǎn qí zǐ yě
闻君子之远⑤其子也。”

lùn yǔ jì shì piān
《论语·季氏篇》

白话
翻译

陈亢问伯鱼：“你在老师那里听到过什么特别的教诲吗？”伯鱼回答说：“没有呀。有一次他独自站在堂上，我快步从庭里走过。他问：‘学《诗》了吗？’我回答说：‘没有。’他说：‘不学《诗》，就不懂得怎么说话。’我回去就开始学习《诗》。又有一天，他又独自站在堂上，我快步从庭里走过，他说：‘学习《礼》了吗？’我回答说：‘没有。’他说：‘不学习《礼》就不懂得怎样立身。’我回去就开始学习《礼》。我就听到过这两件事。”陈亢回去高兴地说：“我提一个问题，得到三方面的收获，听了关于《诗》的道理，听了关于

Learning Three Things by Asking One Question



Chen Kang^① once asked Boyu^②: “Has our teacher Confucius given you any special instruction?”

“No,” answered Kong Li. “One day he was standing alone in the courtyard. When I passed by him, he stopped me and asked me whether I had learned *The Book of Songs*, and my reply was ‘not yet’. Then he advised me, ‘Without learning *The Book of Songs*, you will not be able to speak a refined language.’ So, I began reading *The Book of Songs*. On another day my father was standing in the courtyard without any of his disciples around when I passed by. Again he asked me whether I had learned *The Book of Rites*, and my answer was again ‘no’. As before, he admonished me, saying: ‘Without reading *The Book of Rites*, you know not how to behave properly.’ As before, I listened to his advice and went back to read *The Book of Rites*. These were the only two things I have heard from my father.”

Hearing this, Chen Kang withdrew, feeling satisfied. He said: “I have raised one question, but I have learnt three things—I am now aware that I should learn *The Book of Songs*, read *The Book of Rites* and that a man of character like

《礼》的道理，又听了君子不偏爱自己儿子的道理。”



注释

① 陈亢(kàng):孔子的学生,字子禽,陈国人。他问这个问题,是因为他和孔鲤都是孔子的学生,因此很多学生都怀疑孔子会教给孔鲤更多的东西。

② 伯鱼:孔子的儿子孔鲤,也跟从孔子学习。

③ 异闻:这里指不同于对其他学生所讲的内容。

④ 趋:比喻快步向前走。

⑤ 远:不亲近,不偏爱。



Confucius does not give special favour to his own son.”

Lunyu (The Analects)



Notes

- ① His courtesy name was Zi Qin, and who came from the State of Qi. He asked the question because some people were suspicious that Confucius must have taught his son more than his disciples.
- ② Confucius' son Kong Li.

wù
五
shí
十
bù
步
xiào
笑
bǎi
百
bù
步
①

liáng huì wáng yuē guǎ rén zhī yú guó yě jìn
梁惠王^②曰：“寡人^③之于国也，尽

xīn yān ěr yī hé nèi xiōng zé yí qí mín yú hé dōng^④，
心焉耳矣。河内^④凶，则移其民于河东^⑤，

yí qí sù yú hé nèi hé dōng xiōng yì rán chá lín guó zhī
移其粟于河内。河东凶亦然。察邻国之

zhèng wú rú guǎ rén zhī yòng xīn zhě lín guó zhī mín bù jiā
政，无如寡人之用心者。邻国之民不加

shǎo guǎ rén zhī mín bù jiā duō hé yě
少，寡人之民不加多，何也？”

mèng zǐ duì yuē wáng hào zhàn qǐng yǐ zhàn yù
孟子对曰：“王好战，请以战喻。

tián rán gǔ zhī bīng rèn jì jiē qì jiǎ yè bīng ér zǒu
填然鼓之，兵^⑥刃既接，弃甲曳兵而走。

huò bǎi bù ér hòu zhǐ huò wǔ shí bù ér hòu zhǐ yǐ wǔ shí
或百步而后止，或五十步而后止。以五十

bù xiào bǎi bù zé hé rú
步笑百步，则何如？”

yuē bù kě zhí bù bǎi bù ěr shì yì zǒu yě
曰：“不可，直不百步耳，是亦走也。”

yuē wáng rú zhī cǐ zé wú wàng mín zhī duō yú lín
曰：“王如知此，则无望民之多于邻

guó yě
国也。”

mèng zǐ liáng huì wáng shàng
《孟子·梁惠王上》



One Who Retreats Fifty Paces Mocks One Who Retreats a Hundred



King Hui of the State of Wei^① said to Mencius^②, “I have done my very best in dealing with state affairs. When there was a crop failure in Henei^③ I moved my people to Hedong^④ and brought back grain to Henei. When Hedong had a famine, I did likewise. But from my observation I don’t see the administration of our neighbouring states any better cared for than mine. Why then does their population show no decrease and ours no increase?”

“Your Highness likes to fight wars,” Mencius answered. “So please allow me to take the battle as an example. Suppose the battle drum has already been beaten and the soldiers have taken up their arms, but instead of forging ahead, the men throw away their armour and flee with their weapons trailing behind, with some coming to a halt after retreating a hundred paces and others after fifty paces. If the latter try to mock at the former, what would you say about that?”

“They are wrong, of course. They have retreated just the same, whether a hundred paces or less than a hundred,” said the prince.

“Well, since Your Highness knows that, then you can’t expect to have a greater population than your neighbouring

白话
翻译

梁惠王说：“我治理梁国，真是够尽心的了。河内地方发生了灾荒，我就把那里的百姓迁移到河东去，把粮食运到河内去赈济。河东发生了灾荒，我也这么办。我曾经考察了邻国的政务，没有哪个国君能够像我这样对百姓用心的了。但是，邻国的人口却并没有因此而减少，而我们魏国的人口也并没有增多，这是什么缘故呢？”

孟子回答道：“大王喜欢打仗，请让我用战争打个比喻吧。咚咚地擂起战鼓，枪尖刀锋刚一接触，有些士兵就抛下盔甲，拖着兵器向后逃跑。有的人跑了一百步停下来，有的人跑了五十步停住了脚。如果，那些跑了五十步的士兵竟耻笑跑了一百步的士兵，那怎么样呢？”

惠王说：“不可以，只不过他们没有跑到一百步罢了，但这同样也是逃跑呀？”

孟子说：“大王如果懂得这个道理，就不要指望魏国的百姓会比邻国多了。”

注释

① 五十步笑百步：比喻自己跟别人有同样的缺点或错误，只是程度上轻一些，可是却讥笑别人。

② 梁惠王：即战国时魏惠王，公元前369~前319年在位。魏原来都城在安邑（今山西夏县西北），因秦国的压力，公元前361年魏惠王迁都大梁（今河南开封），因此魏也被称为梁，魏惠王也被称为梁惠王。“惠”是他死后的谥号。

③ 寡人：古代国君称自己的谦词。现在用于形影孤单的人。

④ 河内：指黄河以北的今河南省沁阳、济源、博爱一带，当时是魏国的领土。

⑤ 河东：指黄河以东的今山西省西南部，当时是魏国的领土。

⑥ 兵：兵器。

states,” concluded Mencius.

Mengzi (Mencius)



Notes

- ① also called Liang, a powerful state during the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).
- ② (c. 372–289 BC), a great thinker, politician and educationalist at the time.
- ③ present-day region north of the Huanghe (Yellow) River in Henan Province.
- ④ present-day southern part of Shanxi Province.

shuǐ

水

shēn

深

huǒ

火

rè

热

①

qí rén fá yàn shèng zhī
齐人伐燕，胜之^②。

xuān wáng wèn yuē huò wèi guǎ rén wù qǔ huò wèi
宣王问曰：“或^③谓寡人勿取，或谓

guǎ rén qǔ zhī yǐ wàn shèng zhī guó fá wàn shèng zhī
寡人取之，以万乘^④之国伐万乘之

guó wǔ xún ér jǔ zhī rén lì bù zhì yú cǐ bù qǔ bì
国，五旬而举之，人力不于此。不取，必

yǒu tiān yāng qǔ zhī hé rú
有天殃。取之，何如？”

mèng zǐ duì yuē qǔ zhī ér yàn mǐn yuè zé qǔ zhī
孟子对曰：“取之而燕民悦，则取之。

gǔ zhī rén yǒu xíng zhī zhě wǔ wáng shì yě qǔ zhī ér yàn
古之人有行之者，武王是也。取之而燕

mǐn bù yuè zé wù qǔ gǔ zhī rén yǒu xíng zhī zhě wén
民不悦，则勿取。古之人有行之者，文

wáng shì yě yǐ wàn shèng zhī guó fá wàn shèng zhī guó
王是也。以万乘之国伐万乘之国，

dān shí hú jiāng yǐ yíng wáng shī qǐ yǒu tā zāi bì
箪^⑤食壶浆^⑥以迎王师，岂有他哉？避

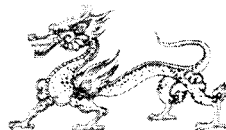
shuǐ huǒ yě rú shuǐ yì shēn rú huǒ yì rè yì yùn ér
水火也。如水益深，如火益热，亦运^⑦而

yǐ yǐ
已矣。”

mèng zǐ liáng huì wáng xià
《孟子·梁惠王下》



Deep in Water and Scorched in Fire^①



The State of Qi went on a punitive expedition against the State of Yan and triumphed over it.

King Xuan of the State of Qi asked Mencius, “Some have advised me not to annex Yan while others have insisted that I should. Consider now, it took a state with 10,000 chariots^② like ours only 50 days to beat another with the same number of chariots. This was something that could never have been achieved by human strength, it must have been the divine will. If I don’t annihilate Yan this time, there will certainly be punishment from Heaven. What is your opinion?”

“If you carry out the annexation and the people of Yan are glad of it, then proceed,” replied Mencius. “There was one among the ancients who did the same thing and that was Emperor Wu. On the other hand, if you carry it out and they are not happy about it, then you’d better not. There was a similar case in ancient times and that was in Emperor Wen^③. When a powerful state has overwhelmed another one of the same strength, and the conquered people come out to welcome the conquering army with food baskets and wine pots, it shows nothing but their eagerness to be relieved of the miseries they have long suffered under their own ruler. But, if

白话
翻译



齐国人攻打燕国，取得了胜利。

齐宣王问孟子道：“有的人劝我不要吞并燕国，有的人劝我吞并它，一个拥有万乘的大国去攻打另一个拥有万乘的大国，只五十天就攻打下了它，人力是做不到这样的。看来不吞并它，一定会遭受上天的祸殃。您认为吞并它，怎么样呢？”

孟子回答说：“如果吞并燕国，当地百姓反而很高兴，那就吞并它。古人有这样做的，周武王便是。如果吞并燕国，当地百姓并不高兴，那就不要吞并它。古人也有先例，周文王便是。一个拥有万乘的大国去攻打另一个拥有万乘的大国，老百姓拿着饭筐和酒壶来迎接大王的军队，难道有别的用意吗？不过是想摆脱原先那种如在水火中一样的痛苦生活。如果齐国进而吞并燕国，燕国百姓要蒙受比原来的水更深，比原来的火更热的灾难，那他们的情感必然会转向别的国家了。”

注释

① 水深火热：老百姓所受的灾难，像水那样越来越深，像火那样越来越热。比喻人民生活极端痛苦。

② 胜之：按《史记》记载，燕王哙把国家让给了自己的相国子之，因此国家大乱。齐国为此讨伐燕国，燕国的士兵不迎战，城门紧闭，齐国于是大胜。

③ 或：有的人。

④ 万乘(wàn shèng)：万辆车，形容是大国。

⑤ 簋(dǎn)：古代盛饭的竹筐。

⑥ 浆：用米熬成的酸汁，古人用以代酒。

⑦ 运：转的意思。

stead you are going to plunge them deeper into the water and scorch them in a yet fiercer fire, it will only make the people turn away from you and look for help elsewhere.”

Mengzi (Mencius)



Notes

- ① meaning “to plunge people in an abyss of suffering”.
- ② In ancient times a state with 10,000 chariots was a powerful one; the strength of a state was measured by its number of chariots.
- ③ Emperor Wen is known for his justice and benignity during the early Western Zhou days.

zhuān

专
xīn

心
zhì

致
zhì

志
①

jīn fū yì zhī wèi shù xiǎo shù yě bù zhuān xīn
今夫弈^②之为数^③，小数也，不专心

zhì zhì zé bù dé yě
致志，则不得也。

yì qiū tōng guó zhī shàn yì zhě yě shǐ yì qiū huì
弈秋，通国之善弈者也。使弈秋^④诲

èr rén yì qí yī rén zhuān xīn zhì zhì wéi yì qiū zhī wèi
二人弈，其一人专心致志，惟弈秋之为

tīng yī rén suī tīng zhī yī xīn yǐ wèi yǒu hóng gǔ jiāng
听。一人虽听之，一心以为有鸿鹄^⑤将

zhì sī yuán gōng zhuó ér shè zhī suī yǔ zhī jù xué fú
至，思援弓缴^⑥而射之，虽与之俱学，弗

ruò zhī yī wèi shì qí zhì fú ruò yú yuē fēi rán yě
若之矣。为是其智弗若欤？曰：非然也。

mèng zǐ gào zǐ shàng
《孟子·告子上》

白话
翻译



下棋这种技艺，原本是一种小技艺，但不用心专一，集中精神地学习，也是不能学会的。

有一个下棋能手名叫秋，他是全国棋艺最好的人。假如让秋教两个人下棋。其中一个学生集中精力，跟老师学习，只能听到秋的讲解。另一个却不这样，老师讲解的时候，他虽然坐在那里听着，心里却认为将要有一天鹅飞来，想着拉弓射箭射下天鹅（因为他总是胡思乱想，心不在焉，老师的讲解一点也没听进去）。（结果）他虽然跟另一个人一起学习，但却比不上另一个人。这是因为他的智力比不上那个人吗？我说：不是这样的。



Single-hearted Devotion



Now, playing chess as a skill is insignificant. But, if one does not give single-hearted devotion to it, it won't be learned, just like any other skills.

Yi Qiu was known as an expert at the game throughout the land. Once he gave lessons on chess to two men. One of them was completely absorbed in his teaching, listening attentively to Yi Qiu while the other, who seemed to be listening, had his mind on something else. In fact, he was having a fancy that a swan was flying towards him and he had in his hands a bow and an arrow adorned with a long trailing silk tape, ready to shoot. As a result, though he was having the same lesson together with the first man, yet he turned out a much inferior pupil.

Should we say that the second man had a lower intelligence? No, that would not be true.

Mengzi (Mencius)



注

① 专心致志：用心专一，聚精会神。致：极的意思。

② 弈(yì)：围棋。

③ 数：技能。

④ 弈秋：一个擅长下围棋的人，名字叫秋。

⑤ 鸿鹄(hóng hú)即天鹅。因飞得很高，所以常用来比喻志向远大的人。

⑥ 缴(zhuó)：用绳子系箭而射。





fù
负
yú
隅
wán
顽
kàng
抗
①

jìn rén yǒu féng fù zhě shàn bó hǔ zú wéi shàn shì ③。
晋人有冯妇者，善搏②虎，卒为善士③。

zé zhī yě yǒu zhòng zhú hǔ hǔ fù yú mò zhī gǎn yǐng ④。
则之野④，有众逐虎。虎负隅，莫之敢撓⑤。

wàng jiàn féng fù qū ér yíng zhī féng fù rǎng bì xià chē ⑥。
望见冯妇，趋而迎之。冯妇攘臂⑥下车。

zhòng jiē yuè zhī ⑦ qí wéi shì zhě xiào zhī ⑦。
众皆悦之⑦，其为士者笑之。

mèng zǐ jìn xīn xià
《孟子·尽心下》

白话翻译



晋国有个叫冯妇的人，善于打虎，后来改变了自己的行为，不打虎了。有一次他到野外去，有许多人在追逐一只虎，老虎背依靠山的角落，没有人敢靠近它。人们远远看见了冯妇，跑上去迎接他。冯妇便将起袖子下车去打虎。众人都因此而喜欢他，可是那些被称为士的人却因此而讥笑他。



Fight Stubbornly with the Back to the Wall



Feng Fu of the State of Jin^① was good at tussling with and subduing tigers. Later, he decided not to kill any more living creatures in his life.

One day when he was out in the wild, he saw some people chase a tiger and finally drive it into a corner. As the desperate animal was ready to fight with its back to the wall, nobody dared challenge it any more. Seeing Feng Fu approaching, they at once went up to greet him as a heroic tiger killer. Understanding the situation, Feng Fu rolled up his sleeves and dismounted from his carriage, ready to kill the beast. ^② At this all the folks were pleased except some of the gentry who mocked Feng for going back on his word.

Mengzi (Mencius)



注释

① 负隅顽抗：指依仗地形险阻顽固抵抗。负：依靠。隅：山势弯曲险要的地方。

② 搏：捕捉。

③ 卒为善士：后来能够改变自己的行为，成为善士。

④ 则之野：则表示前后两事时间相距很近，有因果、条件关系，相当于“即”、“便”。之：适，到。

⑤ 攫(yīng)：接触。

⑥ 攘臂(rǎng bì)：捋起袖子，露出胳膊，表示振奋。

⑦ 悦之：士人讥笑他不能真正地停止打虎。



Notes

- ① founded during the Zhou dynastic rule (c. 11th century-256 BC) and located in present-day Shanxi Province and the southern part of Hebei Province.
- ② From this stems another idiomatic expression 再作冯妇 (to do a trusted yet unwelcome job once again under compulsion or to mock at somebody who cannot change his old habit by going back on his pledged word).

dé
得
qí
其
suǒ
所
zāi
哉
①

yǒu kuì shēng yú yú zhèng zǐ chǎn zǐ chǎn shǐ qí xiào
有 饋 生 魚 于 鄭 子 产 ; 子 产 使 其 校 ②

rén xù zhī chí xiào rén pēng zhī fǎn mìng yuē shǐ shé
人 蓄 之 池 。 校 人 烹 之 ， 反 命 ， 曰 ： “ 始 舍

zhī yǔ yǔ yān shǎo zé yáng yáng yān yōu rán ér
之 ， 围 围 ③ 焉 ； 少 则 洋 洋 ④ 焉 ， 攸 然 而

shì zǐ chǎn yuē dé qí suǒ zāi dé qí suǒ zāi xiào
逝 。” 子 产 曰 ： “ 得 其 所 哉 ! 得 其 所 哉 ! ” 校

rén chū yuē shú wèi zǐ chǎn zhì zǐ jì pēng ér shí zhī
人 出 ， 曰 ： “ 孰 谓 子 产 智 ? 子 既 烹 而 食 之 。

yuē dé qí suǒ zāi dé qí suǒ zāi
曰 ： ‘ 得 其 所 哉 ! 得 其 所 哉 ’ ! ”

mèng zǐ wàn zhāng piān
《 孟 子 · 万 章 篇 》

白话
翻译



从前有人赠送条活鱼给郑国的子产；子产叫管池塘的校人养在池中。校人把鱼煮着吃了，回来向子产回复说：“那鱼刚刚放下去还有些不自然，过了一会，便摇头摆尾很满意，忽然加快速度，一下子潜入水底不见了踪影。”子产说：“它算是找到了它应该去的地方！它找到了它应该去的地方啊！”校人出来就说：“谁说子产聪明呢？我已经做熟吃掉了，他却说：‘鱼找到了应该去的地方！鱼找到了应该去的地方’！”

It Gets to the Place Where It Belongs



One day someone gave a fish as a present to Zi Can^① of the State of Zheng, who then asked the pond keeper to keep it in the pond. But the man had it cooked for his own meal and reported to Zi Can, saying: “When I first put the fish in the water, it wasn’t very active. By and by it swam freely and disappeared.”

“Good! It has got to the place where it belongs,” said Zi Can.

The keeper went out and told everyone, “Who says Zi Can is a man of intelligence? I’ve cooked the fish and eaten it, yet he kept saying: The fish has got to the place where it belongs! Where it belongs?”^②

Mengzi (Mencius)



① 得其所哉(dé qí suǒ zāi):找到了适合于它的地方。
指得到理想的安置。所:处所,环境。

② 校(xiào)人:管理池塘的小官吏。

③ 困困(yǔ yǔ):困而未舒的样子。

④ 洋洋:欢喜快乐。



Notes

- ① otherwise known as Gongsun Jian, a famous statesman of the State of Zheng during the dynastic rule of the Western Zhou (c. 11 th century-771 BC).
- ② This idiomatic expression is used to describe a person in circumstances he finds entirely to his satisfaction, like a fish in the water.

yà
揠
miáo
苗
zhù
助
zhǎng
长
①

sòng rén yǒu mǐn qí miáo zhī bù zhǎng ér yà zhī zhě
宋人有悯^②其苗之不长而揠之者，

máng máng rán guī wèi qí rén yuē jīn rì bìng yī
芒芒然^③归，谓其人曰：“今日病^④矣，

yǔ zhù miáo zhǎng yī qí zǐ qū ér wǎng shì zhī
予^⑤助苗长矣！”其子趋^⑥而往^⑦视之，

miáo zé gǎo yī
苗则槁^⑧矣。

tiān xià zhī xià zhù miáo zhǎng zhě guǎ yī yǐ wèi wú yì
天下之下助苗长者寡矣。以为无益

ér shě zhī zhě bù yún miáo zhě yé zhù zhī zhǎng zhě yà
而舍之者，不耘苗者也；助之长者，揠

miáo zhě yě fēi tú wú yì ér yòu hài zhī
苗者也。非徒^⑨无益，而又害之。

mèng zǐ gōng sūn chǒu shàng
《孟子·公孙丑上》

白话
翻译



宋国有个人，嫌自己的庄稼长得慢，就将禾苗一棵棵拔高。他疲惫不堪地回到家里，对家人说：“今天累坏了，我帮助庄稼长高啦！”他儿子赶紧到地里去看，禾苗都已枯萎了。

天下不去帮助禾苗生长的人是很少的。而认为帮助禾苗没有益处而放弃帮助的人，是不耕耘的人；而帮助禾苗生长的人，是拔苗的人。对禾苗不仅是没有帮助，反而有害。



Try to Help the Shoots Grow by Pulling



A man in the State of Song^① was worried that the shoots of his crops might not grow, and so he pulled every single one of them a bit upward. After that, he returned home very tired, saying to his family: "I'm exhausted today because I have given the shoots some help for them to grow." Hearing this, his son went to the fields and looked, only to find the shoots had all withered away.

There are very few in the world who will refrain from helping the shoots grow. But there are some who think it useless to give any help and give up. They are those who do not weed the fields. Whereas there are others who want the shoots to grow quickly by pulling them upward. In their case, not only is it of no help, it actually does harm.

Mengzi (Mencius)



注释

① 揠苗助长 (yà miáo zhù zhǎng): 古时候宋国有个人,嫌禾苗长得太慢,就一棵棵地往上拔起一点。后来用来比喻不顾事物的发展规律,急于求成,反把事情弄坏。揠:拔。长:生长,成长。

② 闵(mǐn):同“悯”,担心,忧虑。

③ 芒芒然:疲倦的样子。芒:疲乏。

④ 病:精疲力尽,是引申义。

⑤ 予:我,第一人称代词。

⑥ 趋:快走。

⑦ 往:去,到……去。

⑧ 槁(gǎo):草木干枯。

⑨ 非徒:不仅,只是。



Note

- ① a state during the Zhou dynastic rule, located in present-day Henan Province.

jǐng
井
dǐ
底
zhī
之
wā
蛙
①

kǎn jǐng zhī wā wèi dōng hǎi zhī biē yuē wú
坎井^②之蛙……谓东海之鳖^③曰：“吾

lè yǔ chū tiào liáng hū jǐng gān zhī shàng rù xiū hū
乐与！出，跳梁^④乎井干^⑤之上，入，休乎

quē zhòu zhī yá fù shuǐ zé jiē yè chí yí jué ní zé
缺甃^⑥之崖；赴水则接掖^⑦持颐，蹶^⑧泥则

mò zú miè fū hái hán xiè yǔ kē dòu mò wú néng ruò
没足灭附^⑨。还虬^⑩、蟹与蝌蚪，莫吾能若

yě qiě fū shàn yī hē zhī shuǐ ér kuà zhì kǎn jǐng zhī
也。且夫擅一壑之水，而跨峙^⑪坎井之

lè cí yì zhì yí fū zǐ xī bù shí lái rù guān hū
乐，此亦至矣。夫子奚不时来入观乎？”

dōng hǎi zhī biē zuǒ zú wèi rù ér yòu xī yī zhī
东海之鳖左足未入，而右膝已褻^⑫

yǐ yú shì qūn xún ér què gào zhī hǎi yuē fū qiān lǐ
矣。于是逡巡^⑬而却，告之海曰：“夫千里

zhī yuǎn bù zú yǐ jǔ qí dà qiān rèn zhī gāo bù zú
之远，不足以举其大。千仞^⑭之高，不足

yǐ jí qí shēn yǔ zhī shí shí nián jiǔ lào ér shuǐ fú
以极其深。禹之时，十年九涝^⑮，而水弗

wèi jiā yì tāng zhī shí bā nián qī hàn ér yá bù wèi jiā
为加益；汤之时，八年七旱，而崖不为加

sǔn fū bù wèi qǐng jiǔ tuī yí bù yǐ duō shǎo jìn tuì zhě
损。夫不为顷久推移，不以多少进退者，

cǐ yì dōng hǎi zhī dà lè yě
此亦东海之大乐也。”

yú shì kǎn jǐng zhī wā wén zhī shì shì rán jīng guī guī
于是坎井之蛙闻之，适适^⑯然惊，规规

rán zì shī yě
然^⑰自失也。



A Frog at the Bottom of a Well



A frog making his home on the uneven bottom of a shallow well... once told a big turtle from the East Sea: "Oh, how happy I am! If I come up and out, I am free to gambol on the curb, and if I want to have a rest, I can retire into a hole down there in the broken wall. When I plunge into the water, it is deep enough to reach my armpits and support my chin; when I step into the mud, it is thick enough to hold my feet and cover up my insteps. Look at the wigglers, crabs and tadpoles; they can't be compared with me. Besides, I have all the water of the well for myself, and great is my pleasure in frolicking here. Why don't you come down to have a look, once in a while?"

Intrigued, the turtle of the East Sea began climbing down, but before his left foreleg could enter, his right one was caught on the curb. He hesitated and then retreated, but he told the frog about the sea, saying: "The sea is so vast that to talk of a thousand *li* does not describe its breadth; it is so deep that to talk of a thousand fathoms does not describe its depth. In the days of Yu^①, there was a flood nine out of ten years, but the sea never had more water than it could contain. In the days of Tang^②, there was a drought seven years out of every

白话
翻译

浅井里的青蛙……它对东海的大鳖说：“我快乐极了！我出来在井栏杆上跳跃着，回到井里，在破砖边上休息着；游到水里，水就浮起我的两腋托着我的两腮，踩着井里的泥巴刚刚盖过我的脚背。回头看看井里的赤虫、螃蟹与蝌蚪，没有能像我这样快乐的。而且我独占着一坑的水，一口浅井，这样跳跃的快乐，这也是最大的快乐了。你为什么不时进来看看呢？”

东海的大鳖左脚还没有伸进去，右脚就已经被绊住了，于是就从容地退却了。大鳖把大海的情形告诉给青蛙说：“千里路的遥远，不足以用来形容它的大。八千尺的高度，不足以用来测量它的深度。大禹的时代，十年有九年是水灾，可是海水并没有因此而增加；汤的时代八年有七年干旱，可是海岸也没有因此而浅露。它不因为时间的顷刻还是长久而有所改变，也不因为雨水的多少而有所增减，这也是东海的大的快乐。”

于是，浅井里的青蛙听了，惊慌失措，茫然若有所失。

注释

① 井底之蛙：身处井底而只看到一小片天的青蛙。比喻见闻狭窄、眼光短浅的人。

② 坎井：浅井。坎，凹地。

③ 鳖(biē)：爬行动物，形似龟，又名团鱼、甲鱼。

④ 跳梁：跳跃。

⑤ 井干：井栏。

⑥ 甃(zhòu)：井壁。缺甃，破砖的井壁。

⑦ 掖：古通“腋”。

⑧ 蹶(jué)：踩。

⑨ 跗(fū)：脚背。

⑩ 𧈧(hán)子子。

⑪ 跨踣(zhì)：盘桓，跳跃。



eight, but the seashore remained as it was, without any loss. So no length of time brings it any changes and no amount of water, either more or less, affects its vastness. Here lies the great joy of living in the East Sea.”

The turtle’s speech so astonished the frog in the well that it immediately realized its own smallness and was at a complete loss.

Zhuangzi



Notes

- ① referring to the Xia Dynasty (c. 21st-16th century BC).
- ② referring to the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th-11 th century BC).



- ⑫ 縶(zhí): 绊住。
- ⑬ 逡巡: 形容退却的样子。
- ⑭ 仞: 古代长度单位。周制是八尺, 汉制是七尺。
- ⑮ 涝(lào): 水灾。
- ⑯ 适: 古通“惕”。适适然, 惊讶恐怖的样子。
- ⑰ 规规然: 自失之貌。



dōng

东

shī

施

xiào

效

pín

颦

①

xī shī bìng xīn ér pín qí lǐ qí lǐ zhī chǒu rén jiàn
西施病心而颦其里，其里^②之丑人见

ér měi zhī guī yì pěng xīn ér pín qí lǐ qí lǐ zhī fù rén
而美之，归亦捧心而颦其里。其里之富人

jiàn zhī jiǎn bì mén ér bù chū pín rén jiàn zhī qiè qī zǐ
见之，坚闭门而不出；贫人见之，挈^③妻子

ér qù zhī zǒu
而去之走。

bǐ zhī pín měi ér bù zhī pín zhī suǒ yǐ měi
彼知颦美而不知颦之所以美。

zhuāng zǐ tiān yùn
《庄子·天运》

白话
翻译



西施由于有心脏病，在村子里皱着眉头，同村的一个丑女见到西施发病时的神态认为很美，回去也在村里捂住胸口皱着眉头。同村的富人看了，就闭紧门不看她；穷人看见了，也带着妻子儿女走开。

那个丑女只看到了(西施)皱眉时很美，但是却不知道为什么(西施)皱眉很美(意指西施的美是天生的而不是皱眉得来的)。

Dongshi Imitates Eyebrows Knitting^①



Xishi^②, known for her peerless beauty, was beset by some sort of heart trouble, and so she was often seen knitting her brows and walking with a hand on her chest.

Now there was an ugly woman in the neighbourhood who one day saw Xishi in the village street. In admiration she returned home determined to imitate Xishi's way of walking and mannerisms. But this only increased her ugliness. So much so that every time she walked abroad the rich would shut their doors tight and disdain to come out, while the poor with their wives and children would avoid her and quickly turn their steps away.

Alas, that woman mistook frowning for something invariably beautiful, and was unaware that it only adds beauty to a real beauty.

Zhuangzi



注释

① 东施效颦(dōng shī xiào pín):比喻胡乱模仿,效果极坏。效:仿效;颦:皱眉头。

② 里:同一个村子的人。里,古代一种居民组织,先秦以二十五家为一里。

③ 挈:带领。



Notes

- ① Dong in the name Dongshi literally means “east” while *xi* in Xishi means “west”. In Chinese *dong* and *xi* are usually used to show two diametrical opposites or a contrast. The original tale did not give the name of the ugly woman as Dongshi, which was an addition by later generations. Another source found in the Qing Dynasty, however, records that in the county to which the village mentioned in the story belonged, there were actually two families, one being Xishi and the other Dongshi.
- ② an acclaimed beauty in the State of Yue during the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC).

hài
害
qún
群
zhī
之
mǎ
马
①

mù mǎ xiǎo tóng yuē fū wéi tiān xià zhě yì xī yǐ
牧马小童曰：“夫为天下者，亦奚以

yì hū mù mǎ zhě zāi yì qù qí hài mǎ zhě ér yǐ yǐ
异乎牧马者哉？亦去其害马者而已矣！”②

zhuāng zǐ xú wú guǐ
《庄子·徐无鬼》

白话
翻译

放马的孩子说：“治理天下的人，难道和放马有什么不同吗？也就是除去危害马群的马罢了。”

注释

① 害群之马：危害马群的劣马。比喻危害集体的人。

② 与《淮南子》“治国者，若耨田，去害苗者而已”之意相同，即去其有害于马群者。但习惯所说的“害群之马”意谓“去其害马”和《汉书·卜式传》中“恶者辄去，毋令败群”之意相仿。



A Harmful Member of the Herd



A boy herdsman had this to say: “Now, to rule the land, as I see it, is no different from herding horses. You also have to get rid of anyone who does harm to the horses.”^①

Zhuangzi



Note

- ① It was meant to be anybody harmful to “the whole group”, but our much used idiomatic expression has been “One of the horses harmful to the herd”, which seems to be a variation of the original story. In *Huainan Zi* we can find a saying: “To rule a state is like weeding the fields, getting rid of that which is alien and harmful to the seedlings”, and at the same time there is a saying in *The Book of Han*—“Always get rid of the evil one so that he may not do harm to the group”.

tàn
探
lǐ
骊
dé
得
zhū
珠
①

hé shàng yǒu jiā pín shì wéi xiāo ér shí zhě qí zǐ mò
河 上 有 家 贫 恃 纬 萧 ② 而 食 者 。 其 子 没

yú yuān dé qiān jīn zhī zhū qí fù wèi qí zǐ yuē qǔ
于 渊 ， 得 千 金 之 珠 。 其 父 谓 其 子 曰 ： “ 取

shí lái duàn zhī ③ ! fū qiān jīn zhī zhū bì zài jiǔ chóng zhī
石 来 锻 之 ③ ! 夫 千 金 之 珠 ， 必 在 九 重 之

yuān ér lí lóng hàn xià zǐ néng dé zhū zhě bì zāo qí shuì
渊 而 骊 龙 ④ 颌 下 ， 子 能 得 珠 者 ， 必 遭 其 睡

yě shǐ lí lóng ér wù zǐ shàng xī wēi zhī yǒu zāi ⑤ ! ”
也 。 使 骊 龙 而 寤 ， 子 尚 奚 微 之 有 哉 ⑤ ! ”

zhuāng zǐ liè yù kǒu
《 庄 子 · 列 御 寇 》

白话
翻译

黄河边上，有一户贫穷人家靠编制芦苇过生活。他的儿子潜入深渊里，得到价值千金的珠子。他的父亲对儿子说：“拿石头来砸碎它！这价值千金的珠子，一定是在九重深渊的骊龙的颌下，你能够得到这颗珠子，一定是恰逢骊龙正在睡觉。假使骊龙醒着，你难道还会剩下什么吗？”

Obtain a Pearl from a Sleeping Black Dragon



Beside the Yellow River was a poor family who earned their livelihood by weaving reed mats. One day the son plunged deep into the water and came out with a pearl which was worth a thousand taels of silver. Seeing it, the father said to the boy: "Get a stone and smash it. Such a valuable thing, you know, can only be found in the throat of the black dragon deep down. You must have got it when the dragon was asleep. I'm afraid once it wakes, there will be no hope of you to keep body and soul together."^①

Zhuangzi



注释

①探骊得珠：在骊龙的颌下取得宝珠。原指冒大险得大利。后常比喻文章含义深刻，措辞扼要，得到要领。

②结萧：编制芦苇。

③锻之：打碎它。

④骊(lí)：纯黑色的马。骊龙，黑龙。

⑤尚奚微之有哉：你难道还会剩下什么，意思是要被蚕食掉不会剩下什么。



Note

- ① Zhuang Zi the philosopher told this story to counterattack a man who, after receiving great favours from Xiangwang of the State of Song, was inflated with pride and belittled Zhuang Zi. The story ended with these words of Zhuang Zi: The man had got his favours simply because the Prince was muddleheaded at the moment, just like the dragon was asleep when the pearl was taken from its throat.

杞
rén
人
yōu
忧
tiān
天
①

qǐ guó yǒu rén yōu tiān dì bēng zhuì shēn wáng suǒ
杞国有人忧天地崩坠，身亡^②所

jì fèi qǐn shí zhě yòu yǒu yōu bǐ zhī suǒ yōu zhě yīn wǎng
寄，废寝食者。又有忧彼之所忧者，因往

xiǎo zhī^③ yuē tiān jī qì ěr wú chù wú qì ruò^④
晓之^③，曰：“天，积气耳，无处无气。若^④

qū shēn hū xī zhōng rì zài tiān zhōng xíng zhǐ nài hé yōu
屈伸呼吸，终日在天中行止，奈何忧

bēng zhuì hū
崩坠^⑤乎？”

qǐ rén yuē tiān guǒ jī qì rì yuè xīng sù bù dāng
其人曰：“天果积气，日月星宿，不当

zhuì yē shǐ zhuì yì bù néng yǒu suǒ zhòng shāng^⑥。”
坠耶？使坠，亦不能有所中伤^⑥。”

qǐ rén yuē nài dì huài hé^⑦？”
其人曰：“奈地坏何^⑦？”

xiǎo zhě yuē dì jī kuài ěr chōng sāi sì xū^⑧，
晓者曰：“地，积块耳，充塞四虚^⑧，

wú chù wú kuài ruò chū bù cǐ dǎo zhōng rì zài dì
无处无块。若躇步趾蹈^⑨，终日在地

shàng xíng zhǐ nài hé yōu qǐ huài^⑩？”
上行止，奈何忧其坏^⑩？”

qǐ rén shě rán dà xǐ xiǎo zhī zhě yì shě rán dà xǐ
其人舍然^⑪大喜，晓之者亦舍然大喜。

liè zǐ tiān rui
《列子·天瑞》



Groundless Worry that the Sky Might Fall



There was a man in the State of Qi^① who was haunted by the fear that one day the sky might fall and the earth collapse, and he would have no place to settle. So worried was he that he could not eat and sleep in peace. Someone, anxious that the man would be worried to death, went to reassure him about this. He said to the man: "The sky is only an air mass and there's air everywhere. You move about all day long in the air, inhaling and exhaling, bending and stretching your limbs—why do you have to worry about the sky's falling, when it is never likely to happen?"

"It's true that the sky is a congregation of air," the man rejoined, "but how about the sun, the moon and the stars? They will surely fall, won't they?"

"The sun, the moon and the stars are merely such bodies in the congregated air as happen to shine," the persuader replied. "Even if they did fall, they would hit nothing."

"Then suppose the earth collapses. What should I do?"

"The earth is merely amassed dust and rocks filling up the space everywhere. There is no spot that has not such masses. And you move about on the earth everyday, stepping on it and walking on it. Why worry that it might collapse?"

白话
翻译



在杞国,有个人他担心天会塌下来,地会陷下去,这样他就丧失了能够寄居身体的地方,于是他顾不得吃饭,忘记了睡觉。又有因他这样忧虑而为他担心的人,于是前来劝说使他明白:“天,是积蕴气而成的,没有地方没有气。你身体的弯曲伸展,你的一呼一吸,每天都在天下行动停止着,为什么要担心天会塌下来呢?”

那人说:“天果然是积蕴气体而成,那么天上的日月星辰,不应当掉下来吗?假使掉下来的话,人不是也能被打中击伤吗?”使他明白的人说:“日月星辰,也是存积了气的,它们是其中的发光者,即使坠落下来也是不能有什么东西被打中击伤的。”

那人说:“那地坏了又怎么办呢?”

使他明白的人说:“大地是土块堆积成的,充满了四方,没有地方没有土块。你坐立行走,每天都在地上行动与停止,为什么要担心他会坏呢?”

那人放松了下来,非常高兴,使他明白的人也释然而十分高兴。



注释

① 杞人忧天:杞国有人怕天塌下来。比喻不必要或缺乏根据的忧虑和担心。杞(qǐ):周代诸侯国名,在今河南杞县一带。

② 亡:亡同“无”,丢失;丧失。

③ 晓之:使他明白。

④ 若:你。

⑤ 坠:即使坠落。

⑥ 中(zhòng)伤:打中击伤。

⑦ 奈……何:对……怎么办。

⑧ 四虚:四方。

⑨ 蹠步蹠蹈:泛指站立行走。蹠(chú)、蹠(cí),都是踩、踏的意思。

⑩ 舍然:释然,放松。



The man was gladly relieved, and so was the successful persuader.

Liezi (Writings of Lie Yukou)



Note

- ① a small state during the Zhou dynastic rule, located in present-day Qixian County in Henan Province.

歧
路
亡
羊
①

yáng zǐ zhī lín rén wáng yáng jì shuài qí dǎng
杨子之邻人亡羊，既率其党②，

yòu qǐng yáng zǐ zhī shù zhuī zhī yáng zǐ yuē xī
又请杨子之竖③追之。杨子曰：“嘻！

wáng yī yáng hé zhuī zhī zhě zhòng lín rén yuē duō qí
亡一羊何追之者众？”邻人曰：“多歧

lù jì fǎn wèn huò yáng hū yuē wáng zhī
路。”既返，问：“获羊乎？”曰：“亡之

yí yuē xī wáng zhī yuē qí lù zhī zhōng yòu
矣。”曰：“奚亡之？”曰：“歧路之中，又

yǒu qí yān wú bù zhī suǒ zhī suǒ yǐ fǎn yě
有歧焉，吾不知所之，所以返也。”

yáng zǐ qī rán biàn róng bù yán zhě yí shí bù xiào zhě
杨子戚然变容，不言者移时，不笑者

jìng rì mén rén guài zhī qǐng yuē yáng jiàn chù yòu fēi
竟日。门人怪之，请曰：“羊贱畜，又非

fū zǐ zhī yǒu ér sǔn yán xiào zhě hé zāi yáng zǐ bù
夫子之有，而损言笑者，何哉？”杨子不

dá mén rén bù huò suǒ mìng
答。门人不获所命。

liè zǐ shuō fú
《列子·说符》

白话
翻译

杨子的邻居丢失了羊，于是率领他的朋友，还请杨子的童仆一起追赶。杨子说：“呵！丢一只羊，干吗要这么多人去追？”邻居说：“岔路很多。”不久回来了，杨子问：“找到羊了吗？”回答：“走掉了。”问：“怎么会呢？”回答：“岔路之中还有岔路，我们不知道往那边去追，所以就回来了。”杨子的脸色变得很忧郁，不说话有两个小时，没有笑容一整天。他的学生觉得奇怪，请教（杨子）道：“羊，不过

Losing the Track of a Missing Sheep



Once, a neighbour of Yang Zi^① lost a sheep. He came over to ask Yang's child to look for it together with him and his family.

"Why, is it necessary to have so many people together just to search for one sheep?" Yang wondered.

"There are several forks in the road, so we need more people to help," the neighbour answered.

After the whole search party returned, Yang inquired if they had found the lost sheep.

"No. It has gone for good."

"How can that be?"

"Each fork in the road has one or more forks. We did not know which way the sheep had gone, so we had to give up and return."

Hearing this, a dark cloud came over Yang Zi's face. He was gloomy and silent for a long time, and did not smile throughout the day. This surprised his disciples who ventured to ask: "A sheep is not worth much and besides, it is not your sheep. Why do you, our respected teacher, speak so little and smile not at all?"

Yang Zi did not answer, and his disciples were never

是下贱的畜生，而且还不是老师您的，却使您不苟言笑，这是为什么？”杨子没有回答，(他的)学生最终没有得到他的答案。



注释

① 歧路亡羊：歧路：岔路；亡：丢失。因岔路太多无法追寻而丢失了羊。比喻事物复杂多变，没有正确的方向就会误入歧途。

② 党：旧时指亲族。

③ 竖：童仆。



answered.^②

Liezi (Writings of Lie Yukou)



Notes

- ① Zi was used to address a scholar. Yang Zi's real name was Yang Zhu and alternate name was Ziju. A great thinker, he lived in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).
- ② This idiomatic expression is used to mean "in face of complexities of a problem, no solution will be gained without a correct approach to it."

zhāo

朝

sān

三

mù

暮

sì

四

①

sòng yǒu jū gōng zhě ài jū yàng zhī chéng qún

宋有狙公^②者，爱狙，养之成群，

néng jiě jū zhī yì jū yì dé gōng zhī xīn sǔn qí jiā

能解狙之意，狙亦得公之心。损^③其家

kǒu chōng jū zhī yù é ér kuì yān jiāng xiàn qí

口^④，充^⑤狙之欲。俄^⑥而匮^⑦焉。将限其

shí kǒng zhòng jū zhī bù xùn yú jǐ yě xiān kuàng zhī

食，恐众狙之不训^⑧于己也，先诳^⑨之

yuē yǔ ruò xù zhāo sān ér mù sì zú hū

曰：“与若^⑩芋^⑪，朝三而暮四，足乎？”

zhòng jū jiē qǐ ér nù é ér yuē yǔ ruò xù cháo sì

众狙皆起而怒。俄而曰：“与若芋，朝四

ér mù sān zú hū zhòng jū jiē fú ér xǐ

而暮三，足乎？”众狙皆伏而喜。

liè zǐ huáng dì

《列子·黄帝》

白话
翻译

宋国有一个养猴子的老人，很喜欢猴子，饲养着它们就成了一群，老人能理解猴子的行为意图，猴子也能够明白老人的心思。老人减少了家里的粮食来满足猴子们的食欲。不久，老人的粮食匮乏了。他想要限制给猴子们的粮食数量，但又担心猴子们不顺从于自己，就先和猴子商量说：“从今天开始，给你们的橡子，早上是三颗，晚上是四颗，可以吗？”众猴子听了都跳起来非常生气。一会儿，老人说：“给你们的橡子，早晨四颗而晚上是三颗，这样该可以了吧？”猴子们听了，都趴在地上高兴起来。

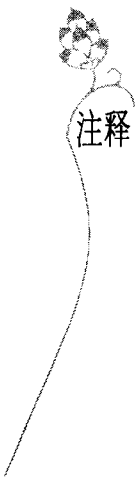


Three for the Morning and Four for the Evening



In the State of Song there was an old man who kept monkeys. He took to this so much that his animals grew into a large group. What was more, he understood what they wanted and they knew how to please him. In order to satisfy their desire, he took a part of his family's food to feed the monkeys. Before long his grain was running short, and he thought to cut down their food. Afraid that the animals might hence be not so tame and docile, he hoodwinked them by saying: "I'm thinking of feeding you with acorns, three for the morning meal and four for the evening meal. Will that be sufficient?" The monkeys all rose to their feet in anger. Seeing this, the old man said, "Then how about four for the morning and three for the evening? ① I presume that'll be enough." At this the animals all prostrated themselves before him in joy.

Liezi (Writings of Lie Yukou)



① 朝三暮四(zhāo sān mù sì):原意是指实质不变,用改换名目的方法使人上当。后用来比喻常常变卦,反复无常。朝,早晨。暮:晚上。

② 狙(jū):古代的一种猴子。狙公,养猴子的老头儿。

③ 损:损失,减少的意思。

④ 家口:本意是人口,这里指家里的粮食。

⑤ 充:充实,这里是满足的意思。

⑥ 俄:俄顷,不久的意思,表示时间短暂。

⑦ 匮(kuì):缺乏,不够的意思。

⑧ 驯(xùn):驯服,顺从的意思。

⑨ 诳(kuáng):欺骗,哄骗的意思。

⑩ 若:文言人称代词,就是“你”、“你们”的意思。

⑪ 芋(xù):橡实。



Note

- ① This idiomatic expression is used to reproach one who changes a great deal in his words and action.

zì
自
xiāng
相
máo
矛
dùn
盾
①

rén yǒu yù máo yǔ dùn zhě yù qí dùn zhī jiān
人有鬻^②矛与盾者，誉^③其盾之坚：“

wù mò néng xiàn yě é ér yòu yù qí máo yuē wú
物莫能陷^④也。”俄而又誉其矛曰：“吾

máo zhī lì wù wú bù xiàn yě
矛之利，物无不陷也。”

rén yīng zhī yuē yǐ zǐ zhī máo xiàn zǐ zhī dùn hé
人应之曰：“以子之矛，陷子之盾，何

rú qí rén fú néng yīng yě
如？”其人弗能应也。

hán fēi zǐ nán shì
《韩非子·难势》

白话
翻译

有个卖矛和盾的人，向人们赞美他的盾的坚固道：“世上任何锋利的东西都不能刺穿它。”一会，又赞美他的矛说：“我的矛的锋利，没有什么能挡住它的！”

有人回应他问道：“（依你的说法）拿你的矛来刺你的盾，结果会怎么样呢？”卖兵器的人无从回答。

注释

① 自相矛盾：比喻自己说话做事前后抵触。古时候，矛和盾都是作战用的武器。矛用来刺杀敌人，盾则用来保护身体，以免被对方的矛刺中。

② 鬻(yù)：卖。

③ 誉：赞美。

④ 陷：攻破。这里是刺透的意思。



Spear and Shield Contradicting Each Other



There was a man who was a seller of spears and shields. To advertise the firmness of his shields, he cried, "Look, nothing can penetrate my shields." A moment later, to advertise the sharpness of his spears, he cried, "Look, there's nothing they will not penetrate."

"How about using your own spear to try on your own shield?" someone asked.

The man could not make a reply.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)

shǒu

守
zhū

株

dài

待

tù

兔

白话
翻译



注释

sòng rén yǒu gēng zhě tián zhōng yǒu zhū tù zǒu chù
宋人有耕者，田中有株，兔走^②触

zhū zhé jǐng ér sǐ yīn shì qí lái ér shǒu zhū jì fù
株，折颈而死。因释其耒^③而守株，冀^④复

dé tù tù bù kě fù dé ér shēn wéi sòng guó xiào
得兔，兔不可复得，而身为宋国笑^⑤。

hán fēi zǐ wǔ dù
《韩非子·五蠹》

宋国有个耕田的人，田里有个树桩子，一只奔跑的兔子撞在树桩上，碰断脖子死了；这个人便因此放下手里翻土的农具，守在树桩子旁边，希望再捡到死兔子，兔子不可能再得到，可是他本人却被宋国人笑话。

① 守株待兔：比喻死守经验，不知变通。亦用来讽刺妄想不劳而获的侥幸心理。株：露出地面的树根和树茎。

② 走：跑，逃跑。

③ 耒(lěi)：古代称犁上的木把叫耒，这里泛指农具。

④ 冀：希望。

⑤ 而身为宋国笑——而他自己却被宋国人耻笑。



Stand by a Stump Waiting for More Suicidal Hares



A farmer of the State of Song was ploughing in the fields when a hare came dashing past and ran into a tree stump in its way. It broke its neck and fell down dead. Seeing this, the farmer put aside his plough and went up to stand by the stump, hoping to get some more hares this way.

Naturally, no more hares came and for this the farmer became a laughing stock all over the state.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)

lǎo
老
mǎ
马
shí
识
tú
途
①

guǎn zhòng xī péng cóng yú huán gōng ér fá gū
管仲^②、隰朋从于桓公^③而伐孤

zhú chūn wǎng dōng fǎn mí huò shī dào guǎn zhòng yuē
竹^④，春往冬返，迷惑失道。管仲曰：

lǎo mǎ zhī zhì kě yòng yě nǎi fàng lǎo mǎ ér suí zhī
“老马之智可用也。”乃放老马而随之，

sù dé dào
遂得道。

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín
《韩非子·说林》

白话
翻译

管仲和隰朋跟随齐桓公出征孤竹国，军队去的时候是春天，回来是时候已经是冬天了，归途中迷失了道路。管仲说：“可以让老马发挥它的智慧了。”于是放开几匹老马在前面走，队伍跟在后面，终于找到了道路。



An Old Horse Knows the Way



Guan Zhong and Xi Peng^① went with Qi Huangong, Duke of the State of Qi, on an expedition to Guzhu^②. They had started in spring, but by the time they returned it was already winter. The scenes along the way were so changed that the troops lost their way.

Under these circumstances Guan Zhong suggested: "Old horses are intelligent enough to remember the way and can prove useful." So a few old horses were driven in front to lead the way. Following closely behind, the Qi troops eventually found their way home.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)



注释

① 老马识途：老马认识道路。比喻富于经验或富有经验的人。途：就是路途、道路。

② 管仲：生年不详，卒于公元前645年，名夷吾，字仲，又称管敬仲。周王同族姬姓之后，生于颍上（颍水之滨）。春秋时杰出的政治家，著名的军事家、军事改革家，以其卓越的谋略辅佐齐桓公成为春秋时第一个霸主。管仲的言论见于《国语·齐语》。另有《管子》一书传世。

③ 桓公：自敬王迁都成周，号东周也。桓公都王城，号西周桓公。

④ 孤竹：古国名，位于今河北、辽宁一带。



Notes

- ① Guan Zhong was then the Prime Minister and Xi Peng, his assistant. Both had rendered services to Qi Huanwang, Duke of the State of Qi during the Zhou dynastic rule, in establishing Qi's hegemony.
- ② Originally, Duke Qi was attacking the State of Shan Rong, but when the prince of Shan Rong fled to Guzhu, he pursued him all the way there. It was an expedition that had not been planned or expected to last so long and be so time-consuming.

mǎi

买

dú

楮

huán

还

zhū

珠

①

chǔ rén yǒu mài qí zhū yú zhèng zhě wéi mù lán zhī guì
楚人有卖其珠于郑者，为木兰之柜，

xūn yī guì jiāo zhuì yǐ zhū yù shì yǐ méi guī jí yǐ
薰以桂椒^②，缀以珠玉，饰以玫瑰^③，辑以

yǔ cuì zhèng rén mǎi qí dú ér huán qí zhū
翡翠。郑人买其楮而还其珠。

cǐ kě wèi shàn mài dú yǐ wèi kě wèi shàn yù zhū yě
此可谓善卖楮矣，未可谓善鬻珠也。

hán fēi zǐ wài chū shuō

《韩非子·外储说》

白话
翻译



(春秋时代)楚国有个到齐国去卖珠宝的商人，他选了上等的木兰，做成许多精美的小木匣，用月桂和花椒的香料熏制它们，使盒子会发出一种香味，匣子外面缀上珠子和玉石，装饰上玫瑰色的宝石，四周还镶嵌了翠绿的羽毛，然后把珍珠放在匣子里面。有一个郑国人买下了他的盒子而把珍珠退还给他。

这可以说是擅长卖木匣的人，却不能说是擅长卖珍珠的啊。



Buy the Case and Return the Pearl



A man of the State of Chu went to the State of Zheng^① to sell his pearl. He had made a case for the pearl with finegrained *magnolia* wood, fumigated it with *guijiao* incense, mounted it with white jade, adorned it with rose-coloured stone and sewed green jadeite onto its fringes. The craftsmanship was so exquisite that a Zheng buyer took the case but returned the pearl to the seller.

It may be said that the man was good at selling the case, but not the pearl^②.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)



① 买椟还珠：买下木匣，退还了珍珠。比喻没有眼力，舍本逐末，取舍失当。椟(dú)：木匣；珠：珍珠。

② 桂椒，月桂和花椒，皆香料也。

③ 玫瑰：文中指玫瑰色的宝石。



Notes

- ① Both were states during the Zhou dynastic rule.
- ② This idiomatic expression has always been used to satirise the man of Zheng, the buyer, instead, because he did not know what right choice he should make—a thing of real worth, not one of beautiful appearance.

é
恶
guàn
贯
mǎn
满
yíng
盈
①

yǒu yǔ hàn zhě lín yù mài zhái ér bì zhī rén yuē
有与悍者邻，欲卖宅而避之。人曰：“

shì qí guàn jiāng mǎn yǐ zǐ gū dài zhī dá yuē wǒ
是其贯将满矣，子姑待之。”答曰：“我

kǒng qí yǐ wǒ mǎn guàn yě suì qù zhī
恐其以我满贯也^②。”遂去之。

hán fēi zǐ shuō lín
《韩非子·说林》

白话
翻译

有个人与凶悍的人作邻居，想要卖掉自己的宅院而避开凶悍的邻居。有人说：“当这个时候，他的钱就快穿满一个绳子了，也就是说，他的罪恶就要满了，到该收到惩罚的时候了，你姑且等待他吧。”邻人回答说：“我担心他因为害了我才能恶贯满盈。”于是离开了他。

注释

① 恶贯满盈(è guàn mǎn yíng)：罪恶之多，犹如穿钱一样已穿满一根绳子。形容罪大恶极，到受惩罚的时候了。贯：穿钱的绳子；盈：满。

② 我恐其以我满贯也：意思是我担心他因为害了我才恶贯满盈。



Retribution for Enough Crimes Will Come in Fullness of Time



There was a man who found his next-door neighbour criminally outrageous, and so wished to sell his house and leave the place. Then someone said to him, “You might as well wait. He has done enough evils, and one more will mean the end of him. It takes the thousandth coin to make a full *guan*.”^①

“No. This is exactly what I have feared—he will make me his last victim,” the man answered and moved away as contemplated.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)



Note

- ① In ancient times, coins were strung together on a string, and one thousand cash made one full string, which was called a *guan*.

zhèng

郑

rén

人

mǎi

买

lǚ

履

①

zhèng rén yǒu yù mǎi lǚ zhě xiān zì duó qí zú ér
郑人有欲买履者，先自度^②其足，而

zhì zhī qí zuò zhì zhī shì ér wàng cǎo zhī yǐ dé
置之^③其坐^④。至之市，而忘操^⑤之。已得

lǚ wèi yuē wú wàng chí dù fǎn guī qǔ zhī jí fǎn
履，谓曰：“吾忘持度。”返归取之。及返，

shì bà suì bù dé lǚ
市罢^⑥，遂不得履。

rén yuē hé bù shì zhī yǐ zú
人曰：“何不试之以足？”

yuē níng xìn dù wú zì xìn yě
曰：“宁信度，无^⑦自信也。”

hàn féi zǐ wài chū shuō zuǒ shàng
《韩非子·外储说左上》

白话
翻译

郑国有个人想去买双鞋，他先测量了一下自己的脚，然后把量好的尺码放在座位上。他到了集市上，却忘了带那个尺码。他已经拿到鞋子，说：“我忘记带尺码来了。”又转头回家去取。等到他赶回来，集市已经散了，他终于没有买到鞋。

有人问他说：“你为什么不用自己的脚试一试鞋子的大小呢？”

他回答说：“我宁可相信尺码，也不相信自己的脚！”

When a Man of Zheng Bought Shoes



There was a man in the State of Zheng^① who wanted to buy himself a pair of shoes. He measured his feet, and then left the measurement on his seat and started for the market.

When he got to the market, he found that he did not have his size sheet with him. Still, he paid for a pair of shoes. Then he told the shoemaker that he had forgotten his measurement at home and would go back for it. By the time he came again to the market, business had ended. So, he did not get the shoes he wanted.

“Why didn’t you try the shoes then and there when you were buying?” someone asked him.

“I’d rather believe in my measurement than my own feet,” he replied.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)



注释

① 郑人买履：郑，春秋时代一个小国的名称，在今河南新郑。履(lǚ)就是鞋子。

② 度(duó)：忖度，这里作动词用，即计算、测量的意思。后面的“度”字，音杜，作名词用，就是尺子。

③ 之：文言代名词，这里指量好的尺码。

④ 坐：同“座”，就是座位，这里指椅子、凳子一类的家具。

⑤ 操：操持，带上、拿着的意思。

⑥ 罢：罢了，完结的意思，这里指集市已经解散。

⑦ 无：通“毋”，没有，这里是不能、不可的意思。



Note

- ① during the dynastic rule of the Western Zhou. Its capital was present-day Xinxiang County, Henan Province.

làn
滥
yú
竽
chōng
充
shù
数
①

qí xuān wáng shǐ rén chuī yú bì sān bǎi rén nán guō ②
齐宣王使人吹竽，必三百人。南郭②

chù shì qǐng ④ wéi wáng chuī yú xuān wáng yuè zhī lǐn
处士③请④为王吹竽。宣王说⑤之，廩

sì yǐ shù bǎi rén xuān wáng sǐ mǐn wáng lì hào yī
食⑥以数百人。宣王死，湣王立，好⑦一

yī tīng zhī chù shì táo
一听之，处士逃。

hán fēi zǐ nèi chū shuō
《韩非子·内储说》

白话
翻译

齐宣王让人吹竽，一定要三百人一起吹。南郭处士请求为齐宣王吹竽。齐宣王很高兴。官仓供养的乐手有好几百人。齐宣王死后，他的儿子齐湣王继位。湣王喜欢一个地听吹竽，南郭处士逃走了。



Pass Oneself as a Musician Just to Make Up the Number



King Xuan of the State of Qi loved to listen to the *yu*^① being played, but insisted on an ensemble of three hundred players. Now there was a scholar by the name of Nanguo who passing himself as a *yu* player applied to make up the number. King Xuan was pleased and took him on giving him the same emolument as all the others.

After the decease of King Xuan, his son King Min came to the throne. But he liked solos, and ordered the *yu* players to entertain him one by one. At this, Nanguo had to take to his heels.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)



注释

① 滥竽充数(làn yú chōng shù):不会吹竽的人,混在吹竽的乐队里充数。比喻没有真才实学的人混在行家里面充数,或是以次货充好货。也用作自谦之词。竽:一种乐器的名称,很像现在的笙。

② 南郭:复姓。

③ 处士:古代称有学问、品德而没有做官的人为处士。这里带有嘲讽的意味。

④ 请:请求。

⑤ 说:同“悦”,高兴。

⑥ 廩食(lǐn sì)由官府供给粮食。

⑦ 好(hào):喜爱。



Note

- ① an ancient wind instrument, something like sheng—a reed or bamboo pipe.

hui
讳
疾
忌
医

biǎn què jiàn cài huán gōng lì yǒu jiàn biǎn què
扁鹊^②见蔡桓公^③。立有间^④，扁鹊

yuē jūn yǒu jí zài còu lǐ bù zhì jiāng kǒng
曰：“君有疾^⑤在腠理^⑥。不治，将恐^⑦

shēn huán hóu yuē guǎ rén wú jí biǎn què
深^⑧。”桓侯曰：“寡人^⑨无疾。”扁鹊

chū huán hóu yuē yī zhī hào zhì bù bìng yǐ wéi gōng
出^⑩。桓侯曰：“医之好治不病以为功^⑪！”

jū shí rì biǎn què fù jiàn yuē jūn zhī bìng
居十日^⑫，扁鹊复见。曰：“君之^⑬病

zài jī fū bù zhì jiāng yì shēn huán hóu bù yīng
在肌肤^⑭。不治，将益^⑮深。”桓侯不应^⑯。

biǎn què chū huán hóu yòu bù yuè
扁鹊出。桓侯又不悦。

jū shí rì biǎn què fù jiàn yuē jūn zhī bìng zài
居十日，扁鹊复见。曰：“君之病在

cháng wèi bù zhì jiāng yì shēn huán hóu yòu bù yīng
肠胃。不治，将益深。”桓侯又不应。

biǎn què chū huán hóu yòu bù yuè
扁鹊出。桓侯又不悦。

jū shí rì biǎn què wàng huán hóu ér huán zǒu huán
居十日，扁鹊望桓侯而还^⑰走。桓

hóu gù shǐ rén wèn zhī biǎn què yuē jí zài còu lǐ
侯故^⑱使人问之。扁鹊曰：“疾在腠理，

tāng yù zhī suǒ jí yě zài jī fū zhēn shí zhī suǒ jí
汤熨之所及也^⑲；在肌肤，针石^⑳之所及

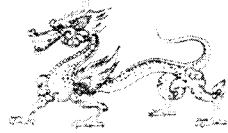
yě zài cháng wèi huǒ jì zhī suǒ jí yě zài gǔ suǐ sī
也；在肠胃，火齐^㉑之所及也；在骨髓，司

mìng zhī suǒ shǔ wú nài hé yě jīn zài gǔ suǐ chén
命之所属^㉒，无奈何也^㉓。今在骨髓，臣

shì yǐ wú qǐng yě
是以^㉔无请^㉕也。”



Delusion over Health and Evasion of Treatment



Bian Que^①, a celebrated physician, was granted an audience by Cai Huangong, Marquis Cai. He stood looking at the ruler for a while before he spoke, "Your Highness is suffering from an ailment, which for the moment remains in between the skin and the muscles. But it may get worse without treatment."

"I'm not at all indisposed," said the Marquis complacently.

When Bian Que left, the Marquis remarked, "It's the medicine-man's usual practice to pass a healthy person as a sickman in order to show his brilliance."

Ten days later, Bian Que had another chance to see the Marquis. This time he pointed out to him: "The ailment has developed into the muscles. It will go from bad to worse if no treatment is given."

To this the ruler said nothing. But after Bian Que had gone, he showed a greater displeasure than before.

Another ten days went by. On seeing the Marquis again, Bian Que warned him that the illness had gone into the stomach and the intestines and that unless immediate



jū wǔ rì huán hóu tǐ tòng shǐ rén suǒ biǎn què yǐ
居五日，桓侯体痛。使人索^⑧扁鹊，已

táo qín yǐ huán hóu suì sǐ
逃秦矣。桓侯遂^⑨死。

hán fēi zǐ yù lǎo
《韩非子·喻老》

白话
翻译



扁鹊进见蔡桓公。站了一会儿，扁鹊说：“在您的皮肤间有点小病，不医治的话，恐怕要厉害了。”桓侯说：“我没有病。”扁鹊退出后，桓侯说：“医生喜欢给没病的人治病，以此作为自己的功劳！”

过了十天扁鹊又去进见，（对桓侯）说：“您的病已经到了肌肉里，不医治的话，会更加严重下去。”桓侯不理睬。扁鹊走后，桓侯又一次不高兴。

过十天，扁鹊再去进见，（对桓侯）说：“您的病已经到了肠胃中，不医治的话，会更加深入下去。”桓侯还不理睬。扁鹊走后，桓侯再一次不高兴。

过了十天，扁鹊（远远）望见桓侯转身就跑。桓侯特意派人去问他。扁鹊说：“病在表皮，用热水焐，用药物热敷能够治疗；（病）在肌肉里，用针灸能够治疗；（病）在肠胃里，用火剂能够治疗；（病）在骨髓里，那是司命的事了，（医生）是没有办法的。现在（他的病）在骨髓里，所以我不再过问了。”

过了五天，桓侯浑身疼痛，派人寻找扁鹊，（扁鹊）已经逃到秦国去了。桓侯就死去了。



treatment be given, it would certainly go on worsening. Again the Marquis said not a word. Unheeded, Bian Que had to leave, and the ruler looked strongly displeased.

After a third period of ten days, when Bian Que happened to see the Marquis on the way, he simply turned round and went away. Feeling it strange, the Marquis sent a man to overtake Bian Que and ask him for the reason.

“Well, an ailment lying in between the skin and the muscles remains on the surface, and so external application with warm water and ointment can cure it,” said Bian Que. “If it sinks into the muscles, acupuncture will do good; if it resides in the stomach and the intestines, a decoction of herbs will take effect. But when the sickness penetrates into the bone marrow, it becomes fatal and nothing can be done about it. Now, the Marquis has come to that last stage; therefore, I have nothing to recommend.”

Five days after that, the Marquis felt pains all over. He ordered his men to look for Bian Que, only to find that he had fled to the State of Qin.

Soon afterwards, the Marquis died.

Hanfeizi (Writings of Han Fei)



注释

① 讳疾忌医:指自己有过失,却不喜欢接受别人的规劝。讳疾:隐瞒过失。

② 扁鹊:姓秦,名越人,战国时郑(mào)人,医术高明,所以人们就用传说中的上古名医扁鹊的名字来称呼他。

③ 蔡桓(huán)公,蔡国(现在河南省上蔡县一带)国君,下文称“桓侯”。

④ 间(jiàn):一会儿,表示过了很短的时间就发生。

⑤ 疾:小病。

⑥ 腠(còu)理:皮肤和肌肉之间。

⑦ 将恐:恐怕要。将,要。

⑧ 深:甚,厉害。

⑨ 寡人:古代诸侯对自己的谦称。

⑩ 出:退出。

⑪ 医之好治不病以为功:医生喜欢给没病(的人)治病,把治好“病”作为自己的功劳。

⑫ 居十日:待(dāi)了十天。居、止、停。

⑬ 之:助词,没有实在意义。

⑭ 肌肤:肌肉和皮肤。

⑮ 益:更。

⑯ 应:答应、理睬。

⑰ 还(huán)走:转身就跑。还,同“旋”,回转、掉转。

⑱ 故:特意。

⑲ 汤熨之所及也:(是)汤熨(的力量)所能达到的。汤,同“烫”,用热水焮(wù)。熨,用药物热敷。

⑳ 针石:金属针和石针。这里指用针刺治病。

㉑ 齐:通“剂”。火齐,火剂汤,饮用的汤药名。

㉒ 司命之所属:司命,星名,三台中的上台二星。传说中掌管生死的神。属,隶属,管。

㉓ 无奈何也:没有办法。

㉔ 是以:就是“以是”,因此。以;因为、由于。

㉕ 无请:不问,意思是不再说话。请,问。

㉖ 索:寻找。

㉗ 遂:结果就。



Note

- ① actually a comendatory title given to any physician as eminent as the famous Bian Que in the ancient days of Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor, a legendary ruler). The Bian Que mentioned in this story refers to an excellent doctor by the name of Qin Yueren of the State of Lu in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).

kè
刻
zhōu
舟
qiú
求
jiàn
剑
①

chǔ rén yǒu shè jiāng zhě qí jiàn zì zhōu zhōng zhuì yú
楚人有涉^②江者，其剑自舟中坠于

shuǐ jù qì qí zhōu yuē shì wú jiàn zhī suǒ cóng
水，遽^③契^④其舟，曰：“是吾剑之所从

zhuì zhōu zhǐ cóng qí suǒ qì zhě rù shuǐ qiú zhī
坠。”舟止，从其所契者入水求之。

zhōu yǐ xíng yī ér jiàn bù háng qiú jiàn ruò cǐ bù
舟已行矣，而剑不行，求剑若此，不

yì huò hū
亦惑^⑤乎！

lǚ shì chūn qiū chá jīn
《吕氏春秋·察今》

白话
翻译



有个乘船渡江的楚国人，一不小心，他把佩带的剑掉进了江水里。他急忙在船沿上刻上一个记号，说：“我的剑就是从这儿掉下去的。”船靠岸后，这个人顺着船沿上刻的记号下水去找剑（但没有找到）。

船已经走了很远，而剑还在原来的地方，没有行动。用刻舟求剑的办法来找剑，不是很糊涂吗？

Cut a Mark on the Boatside to Retrieve a Sword



Once, a man of the State of Chu took a boat to cross a river. It so happened that his sword slipped off and fell into the water. Immediately he cut a mark on the side of the boat and assured himself: "This is where I have dropped my sword."

By and by the boat came to the destination and stopped. The man plunged into the stream at the point indicated by the incised mark trying to retrieve the lost sword.

The boat has moved on, but not the sword. To recover his sword this way—the man is indeed muddle-headed.

Lüshi Chunqiu (Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals)



注释

① 刻舟求剑：死守教条，比喻拘泥成法，固执不知变通。这个成语告诉我们：世界上的事物，总是在不断地发展变化，人们想问题、办事情，都应当考虑到这种变化，适合于这种变化的需要。

② 涉：跋涉，就是渡过江河的意思。

③ 遽(jù)：急遽，立刻，表示时间很紧迫。

④ 契(qì)：动词，用刀子雕刻。

⑤ 惑(huò)：迷惑，这里是对事物感到糊涂不理解的意思。



chún

唇

wáng

亡

chǐ

齿

hán

寒

①

xī zhě jìn xiàn gōng shǐ xún xī jiǎ dào yú yú yǐ
昔者，晋献公使荀息假②道于虞以

fá guó xún xī yuē qǐng yǐ chuí jí zhī bì yǔ qū
伐虢③。荀息曰：“请以垂棘④之璧与屈
产之乘⑤，以赂虞公，而求假道焉，必可
dé yě
得也。”

xiàn gōng yuē fū chuí jí zhī bì wú xiān jūn zhī bǎo
献公曰：“夫垂棘之璧，吾先君之宝
yě qū chǎn zhī shèng guǎ rén zhī jùn yě ruò shòu wú bì
也；屈产之乘，寡人之骏也，若受吾币
ér bù wú jiǎ dào jiāng nài hé
而不吾假道，将奈何？”

xún xī yuē bù rán bǐ ruò bù wú jiǎ dào bì bù
荀息曰：“不然，彼若不吾假道，必不
wú shòu yě ruò shòu wǒ ér jiǎ wǒ dào shì yóu qǔ zhī nèi
吾受也；若受我而假我道，是犹取之内
fǔ ér cáng zhī wài fǔ yě yóu qǔ zhī nèi zào ér zhù zhī wài
府而藏之外府也，犹取之内皂⑥而著之外
zào yě jūn xī huàn yǎn
皂也。君奚⑦患⑧焉！”

xiàn gōng xǔ zhī nǎi shǐ xún xī yǐ qū chǎn zhī shèng
献公许之，乃使荀息以屈产之乘
wèi tíng shí ér jiā yǐ chuí jí zhī bì yǐ jiǎ dào yú yú
为庭实⑨，而加以垂棘之璧，以假道于虞
ér fá guó
而伐虢。

yú gōng làn yú bǎo yǔ mǎ ér yù xǔ zhī gōng zhī
虞公滥⑩于宝与马，而欲许之。宫之
qí jiàn yuē bù kě xǔ yě yú zhī yǔ guó yě ruò chē
奇⑪谏曰：“不可许也。虞之与虢也，若车
zhī yǒu fù yě chē yī fù fù yī yī chē yú guó zhī shì
之有辅⑫也。车依辅，辅亦依车，虞虢之势
shì yě xiān rén yǒu yán yuē chún jié ér chǐ hán fū guó
是也。先人有言曰：“唇竭而齿寒。”夫虢

With Lips Gone, Teeth Are Exposed to Cold



Earlier on, Duke Xian of the State of Jin, bade Xun Xi launch an expedition against the State of Guo by way of the State of Yu^①. Thereupon Xun Xi ventured to suggest: "To secure Duke Yu's promise to let our army pass when we come to Yu, the surest way is to buy him over with our Chuiji jade^② and Quchan steeds."^③

"But the stone is a treasure by inheritance and the horses are for my own use," said Duke Xian. "Suppose Duke Yu accepted our gifts but refused our request, what is to be done then?"

"Well, if he didn't mean to let us pass, he wouldn't accept them; if he did and accepted, we'd only be allowing a temporary shift of the jade from our own house to be stored in somebody else's and the horses from our own stable to be kept in somebody else's," answered Xun Xi. "What is there to be worried about?"

Duke Xian nodded with approval and readily sent Xun Xi to the State of Yu to achieve his purpose of attacking Guo by way of Yu.

The horses were soon displayed in the courtyard of Yu,

zhī bù wáng yě shì yú yú zhī bù wáng yě yì shì guó
 之不亡也，恃^⑬虞；虞之不亡也，亦恃虢
 yě ruò jiǎ zhī dào zé guó cháo wáng ér yú xī cóng zhī yī
 也。若假之道，则虢朝亡而虞夕从之矣，
 hé qí jiǎ zhī dào yě
 何其假之道也！”

yú gōng fú tīng ér jiǎ zhī dào xún xī fá guó kè zhī
 虞公弗听而假之道。荀息伐虢，克之；
 huán fǎn gōng yú yòu kè zhī
 还，反攻虞，又克之。

xún xī cāo bì qiān mǎ ér bào xiàn gōng xǐ yuē bì zé
 荀息操璧牵马而报。献公喜曰：“璧则
 yǒu shì yě mǎ chǐ yì báo cháng yǐ
 犹是也，马齿亦薄长矣！”

gù yuē xiǎo lì dà lì zhī cán yě
 故曰：“小利，大利之残^⑭也。”

lǚ shì chūn qiū quán xūn
 《吕氏春秋·权勋》

白话
翻译



从前，晋献公让荀息向虞国借用道路去讨伐虢国。荀息说：“君主为什么不用垂棘出产的美玉，北屈出产的良马贿赂虞公，从而向虞国借路呢？一定可以借到路。”

献公说：“垂棘的美玉，是我祖传的国宝；屈产的良马，是我的骏马。如果虞公接受了我的礼物而不借路给我，那又该怎么办？”

荀息说：“不是这样的。虞公不借道路给我们，一定不敢接受我们的礼物。如接受了我们的礼物而借路给我们，那么就仿佛我们把东西从里面的仓库里拿出来，而藏在外面的仓库里，从里面的马房里拿出来，而放在外面的马房里。你担心什么呢！”

晋献公采纳了荀息的计策，于是就让荀息用屈产的良马作为送给虞公的礼物，并且加上垂棘的美玉，用来向虞



with Xun Xi holding the precious stone in his hand. Duke Yu, greedy for the fine gifts, was about to make the messenger a promise when his subject Gong Ziqi came forward to protest: "There shall be no promise of any kind, Your Highness. What Yu is to Guo is like gums to cheeks. Gums are closely related to cheeks and cheeks to gums, ^④ which exactly represents the situation of Yu in relation to Guo. Our ancestors had a saying, 'If the lips are gone, the teeth will be exposed to cold.' That Guo is able to subsist depends on Yu while Yu's ability to survive hinges on Guo. If we make way for Jin, then the day will see Guo perish in the morning to be followed by Yu in the evening. Why should we ever let Jin pass?"

Duke Yu, however, refused to listen and gave the Jin troops access to Guo. Thus Xun Xi attacked Guo and conquered it, and on the way back attacked Yu and conquered it, too.

Xun Xi triumphantly returned the jade and the horses to Duke Xian who, greatly pleased, said in a good humour: "The jade remains the same, but the horses have got some more teeth! "

The lesson is: "Seek a small gain, only to harm vital interests."

Lushi Chunqiu (Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals)



公借取道路用以攻打虢国。

虞国国君贪恋宝玉和良马，就想答应荀息借取道路的事情。虞国大夫宫之奇听说后，进谏道：“不能答应。虞国对于虢国来说，就好像是车和车两旁夹车的木头。车子依赖着辅，辅也依赖着车，虞国和虢国的形势是一样的。俗话说：‘唇亡没有了，牙齿就会寒冷。’虢国不灭亡，依赖的是虞国；虞国不灭亡，也是依靠虢国的原因。如果借道路给晋国，那么虢国如果早晨灭亡了，虞国晚上就会跟从着虢国一样灭亡。借给晋国道路岂不就是这件事情吗！”

虞公不听从宫之奇的建议而把道路借给晋国。荀息带兵征伐虢国，战胜虢国；返回的时候反而攻打了虞国，又大败虞国。

荀息捧着璧玉牵着马匹向晋献公汇报。晋献公高兴地说：“璧还是这样，而马也只是牙齿增加了！”

因此说：“贪恋小的利益，是对大的利益的伤害。”



注释

① 唇亡齿寒：比喻双方关系密切，相互依存

② 假：借。

③ 虢(guó)：虢与晋、虞在周代都是山西省境内的诸侯国。当时，晋献公想要扩充自己的实力和地盘，就找借口说邻近的虢国经常侵犯晋国的边境，要派兵消灭虢国。可是在晋国和虢国之间隔着一个虞国，晋要讨伐虢国必须经过虞地，所以才会有晋向虞借用道路之事。

④ 垂棘(jí)之璧：垂棘，地名，现在的泽州县，在今山西省晋城市境内。晋献公重贿虞公的垂棘之璧就是这里特产的美玉。现在泽州县的高都镇还有垂棘山，山上有垂棘洞，洞口题刻“夏桀迁都处”五字，洞中石壁坚实而润泽，晶莹而光洁，据说当年的垂棘之璧就是从这里凿出后琢磨而成。

⑤ 屈产之乘(shèng)：屈产，地名，也在今山西省境内。当时此地盛产好马。

⑥ 皂(zào)：马槽。



Notes

- ① All these three states were in Shanxi Province during the Zhou dynastic rule, with Jin occupying an area of present-day Shanxi Province and the southern part of Henan Province, and Yu and Guo founded in and around present-day Pinglu County.
- ② Chuiji in Shanxi Province was then famous for producing excellent jade stones.
- ③ Quchan in Shanxi Province was at that time renowned for its fine horses.
- ④ Other idiomatic expressions derived from this are 辅车相依 (mutual dependence), 假道(途)灭虢 (conquer a state by way of another) and 马齿渐(徒)增 (increase in age). In the case of 辅车相依, in which 辅 means the shafts of a carriage—a second meaning, this idiomatic expression retains the sense of mutual dependence between a carriage and its shafts.



⑦ 奚(xī):代词,什么,何。

⑧ 患:忧虑,担心。

⑨ 庭实:贡献的物品。

⑩ 滥:通“欲”。贪欲;卑污。

⑪ 官之奇:官之奇是春秋时虞国(今山西省平陆县北)人,生卒年不详。他明于料事,且有远见,是春秋时著名的政治家。

⑫ 辅:车子两旁夹车的木。

⑬ 恃(shì):动词,依赖,依靠。

⑭ 残:动词,伤害。



yǎn
掩
ěr
耳
dào
盗
líng
铃
①

fàn shì zhī wáng yě bǎi xìng yǒu dé zhōng zhě yù
范氏之亡也^②，百姓有得钟^③者，欲

fù ér zǒu zé zhōng dà bù kě fù yǐ chuí huǐ zhī
负^④而走，则钟大不可负，以椎^⑤毁之，

zhōng guāng rán yǒu yīn kǒng rén wén zhī ér duó jǐ yě
钟 咣 然^⑥有音，恐人闻之而夺己也，

jù yǎn qí ěr
遽^⑦掩其耳。

è rén wén zhī kě yě è jǐ zì wén zhī bèi yì
恶人闻之，可也；恶己自闻之，悖益。

lǚ shì chūn qiū zì zhī
《吕氏春秋·自知》

白话
翻译

范氏逃亡在外，有人在范氏家里找到了一口大钟，想把这口大钟背走。可是钟太大了背不走。他想用锤把大钟打碎，大钟咣的发出了声音。他害怕别人听到大钟的声音过来与自己争夺大钟，就迅速地捂上了自己的耳朵。

害怕被别人听见钟声，是可以理解的；害怕自己听见大钟的声音，真是太糊涂了。





Plug One's Ears While Stealing a Bell



A Fan family deserted their homestead and went elsewhere. Someone caught sight of a bell they had left behind, and he was eager to carry it home. But the thing was too big for him, and so he used a sledge hammer and tried to break it to pieces. His first hit produced a clangour so loud that he was afraid people would hear it and come to take the bell from him. As quick as could be, he plugged his own ears.

To be worried that people may hear the sound is within reason, but to fear that he himself should hear it only shows his muddleheadedness.

Lushi Chunqiu (Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals)



注释

①掩耳盗铃：捂住自己的耳朵偷铃铛。比喻自己欺骗自己。掩：遮盖；盗：偷。

②范氏之亡也：范氏是春秋末期晋国的贵族，被其他四家贵族联合打败后，逃在齐国。亡，逃亡。

③钟：古代的打击乐器。

④负：用背驮东西。

⑤椎(chuí)：锤子。

⑥咣(guāng)然：形容钟声。

⑦遽(jù)：急速。



sān
三
rén
人
chéng
成
hǔ
虎
①

páng cōng yǔ tài zǐ zhì yú hán dān wèi wèi wáng
庞葱^②与太子质^③于邯郸^④。谓魏王

yuē jīn yī rén yán shì yǒu hǔ wáng xìn zhī hū wáng
曰：“今一人言市有虎，王信之乎？”王

yuē fǒu èr rén yán shì yǒu hǔ wáng xìn zhī hū
曰：“否。”“二人言市有虎，王信之乎？”

wáng yuē guǒ rén yí zhī yí sān rén yán shì yǒu hǔ
王曰：“寡人疑之矣。”“三人言市有虎，

wáng xìn zhī hū wáng yuē guǒ rén xìn zhī yí páng
王信之乎？”王曰：“寡人信之矣。”庞

cōng yuē fū shì zhī wú hǔ míng yī rán ér sān rén yán ér
葱曰：“夫市之无虎明矣，然而三人言而

chéng hǔ jīn hán dān qù dà liáng yě yuǎn yú shì ér
成虎。今邯郸去^⑤大梁^⑥也远于市，而

yì chén zhě guò yú sān rén yī yuàn wáng chá zhī yě wáng
议臣者过于三人矣，愿王察之也！”王

yuē guǒ rén zì wéi zhī yú shì cí háng ér chán yán
曰：“寡人自为知。”于是辞行，而谗言

xiān zhì
先至。

hòu tài zǐ bà zhì guǒ bù dé jiàn
后太子罢^⑦质，果不得见。

zhàn guó cè wèi cè èr
《战国策·魏策二》



Three Liars Make a Tiger



Pang Cong was going to go with the heir-apparent of the State of Wei to Handan, the capital of the State of Zhao, as a hostage ①. Before leaving he said to the Prince of Wei, "Suppose a man comes to report that he has seen a tiger in the open market, will Your Highness believe it?"

"No," the prince answered.

"Suppose a second man comes to say so, will Your Highness believe it?"

"I'll begin to wonder."

"Suppose a third man comes with the same report, will Your Highness take it as true?"

"I believe I will."

"Well, it is now as clear as daylight that no tiger dare go to the open market, but since three men have said the same thing, the presence of a tiger there becomes established. Now, Handan is much further from our capital Daliang than the market is from the court, and those who talk behind my back will be more than just three. When I'm gone I hope that Your Highness will not fail to judge what you will hear from them, and judge carefully."

"I know how to judge."

Then Pang Cong asked to be excused and bid farewell to

白话
翻译



魏国大臣庞葱，将要陪魏太子到邯郸去作人质。临行前对魏王说：“现在有一个人来说街市上有老虎，大王相信他的话吗？”魏王说：“我不相信。”庞葱说：“如果有第二个人说街市上有了老虎，大王相信他的话吗？”魏王说：“我有些将信将疑了。”庞葱又说：“如果有第三个人说街市上有了老虎，大王相信他的话吗？”魏王道：“我当然会相信他的话了。”庞葱说：“街市上不会有老虎，这是很明显的事实，可是经过三个人一说，好像真的有了老虎了。现在邯郸距离大梁，比这里的街市远了许多，议论我的人又多于三个。希望大王明察才好。”魏王说：“一切我自己知道。”于是庞葱辞别魏王远行邯郸，在他回来之前毁谤他的言语已经先到了。

庞葱陪太子回国后，魏王果然没有再召见他。

注释

① 三人成虎：三个人谎报城市里有老虎，听的人就信以为真了。比喻说的人多了，就能使人们把谣言当成事实。

② 庞葱：战国时候魏国的大臣。

③ 质：抵押；以……作人质。战国时代，互相攻伐，为了使大家真正能遵守信约，国与国之间通常都将太子交给对方作为人质。

④ 邯郸：位于河北省最南部，战国时期赵国国都。

⑤ 去：距离。

⑥ 大梁：位于河南省，是古城，战国时期魏国国都。

⑦ 罢：结束。



the prince, but after he had left calumnious words against him came at once to the prince's ears.

When the agreed period for the hostages was over, the heir-apparent returned. Just as expected, Pang Cong was not given an audience by the prince, who no longer trusted him.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)



Note

- ① This was a practice at the time between the states to dissipate mutual suspicion after making an alliance. Pang Cong was a subject of the State of Wei, during the dynastic rule of Zhou.



nán
南
yuán
辕
běi
北
zhé
辙
①

wèi wáng yù gōng hán dān
魏王^②欲攻邯郸^③。

jì liáng wén zhī zhōng dào ér fǎn yī jiāo bù shēn
季梁闻之，中道而返，衣焦不申，

tóu chén bù qù wǎng jiàn wáng yuē jīn zhě chén lái jiàn
头尘不去，往见王曰：“今者臣来，见

rén yú dà xíng fāng běi miàn ér chí qí jià gào chén yuē
人于大行，方北面而持其驾，告臣曰：‘

wǒ yù zhī chǔ chén yuē jūn zhī chǔ jiāng xī wéi běi
我欲之楚^④。’臣曰：‘君之楚，将奚为北

miàn yuē wú mǎ liáng chén yuē mǎ suī liáng běi
面？’曰：‘吾马良。’臣曰：‘马虽良，北

fēi chǔ zhī lù yě yuē wú yòng duō chén yuē
非楚之路也。’曰：‘吾用多。’臣曰：‘

yòng suī duō cǐ fēi chǔ zhī lù yě yuē wú yù zhě
用虽多，此非楚之路也。’曰：‘吾御^⑤者

shàn cǐ shù zhě yù shàn ér lí chǔ yù yuǎn ěr jīn
善。’此数者愈善，而离楚愈远耳。今

wáng dòng yù chéng bà wáng jǔ yù xìn yú tiān xià shì
王动欲成霸王，举欲信于天下，恃^⑥

wáng guó zhī dà bīng zhī jīng ruì ér gōng hán dān yǐ guǎng
王国之大，兵之精锐，而攻邯郸以广^⑦

dì zūn míng wáng zhī dòng yù shù ér lí wáng yù yuǎn
地尊名，王之动愈数，而离王愈远

ěr yóu zhì chǔ ér běi xíng yě。”

zhàn guó cè wèi cè sì
《战国策·魏策四》



Trying to Go South by Driving the Chariot North



King Wei of the State of Wei^① was planning to attack Handan, the capital of the State of Zhao.

Hearing the news, Ji Liang, who was on his way back to the state, hurried home to see the King. He was in such haste that he even did not have time to smooth his wrinkled gown and dust his face.

“On my way home, at the foot of Taihang Mountains^② I saw a man preparing to drive his carriage north,” began Ji Liang. “But he told me that he was going to the State of Chu. Then I said to him, ‘So you’re going to Chu, I see. But why take the road north?’ His answer was that his horses were good enough for the journey. I said, ‘Good or not, the road you’re taking does not lead to Chu.’ Then the man answered that he could afford the travelling expenses. I said, ‘You may have plenty of money, but your direction is wrong!’ Again the man insisted that he had excellent drivers to make the journey. I retorted, ‘Well, the better your horses, the more your money and the more skilful your drivers—all these combined, the further away you will be from Chu.’”

Ji Liang paused, and then added: “Now Your Highness

白话
翻译



魏王准备攻打邯郸。

季梁听到这件事,半路上就返回来,来不及舒展衣服的皱褶,顾不得洗去头上的尘土,就忙着去谒见魏王,说:“今天我回来的时候,在大路上遇见一个人,正在向北面赶他的车,他告诉我说:‘我想到楚国去。’我说:‘您要到楚国去,为什么往北走呢?’他说:‘我的马好。’我说:‘马虽然不错,但是这不是去楚国的路!’他说:‘我的路费多。’我说:‘路费即使多,但这不是去楚国的方向啊。’他又说:‘我的车夫驾车本领高。’我最后说:‘这几样越好,反而会使您离楚国越远!’如今大王的每一个行动都想建立霸业,每一个行动都想在天下取得威信;然而依仗魏国的强大,军队的精良,而去攻打邯郸,用来使土地扩展,名分尊贵,大王这样的行动越多,那么距离大王的事业就越来越远。这不是和那位想到楚国去却向北走的人一样了吗?”



注释

① 南辕北辙:车辕向南车辙向北,比喻行动与目的相反,结果离目标越来越远。辕(yuán):车前驾牲畜的两根直木。辙(zhé):车轮压的痕迹。

② 魏王:据《战国策·魏策四》记载,战国时期,秦、魏、赵、韩、齐、楚、燕七雄争霸,天下大乱。魏国实力强大,对齐、韩、赵等国屡次发动进攻。公元前344年,魏惠王召集“逢泽(今开封东北)之会”,率十二诸侯朝周天子于孟津(今河南孟县南),魏惠王开始称霸天下。但是,以后几十年里,魏国开始衰落,屡次败给秦、楚、齐等国,并经常与邻国赵国发生武力之争。本文中魏王的攻打邯郸就发生在魏国已经衰落之时。

③ 邯郸:位于河北省最南部,战国时期赵国国都。

④ 我欲之楚:之,动词,往,朝某方向走,到…去。

⑤ 御(yù)者:御,人握轡行于道中,即驾驶车马。御者,就是车夫。

⑥ 恃(shì):动词,依赖,依靠。

⑦ 广:动词,扩大。



wants to take action to achieve a hegemony—to become chief of all princes and dukes and extend your power over the whole land^③. What you depend on is the vastness of the area in your possession and the expertise of your troops, and your purpose is clear—to begin by attacking Handan in order to expand your territory and raise your prestige. Then it will come to this: the more frequently you make moves, the further you will deviate from your object, just like that man going north while he wishes to reach the State of Chu in the south.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)



Notes

- ① a state during the Zhou dynastic rule.
- ② The two characters signifying “Taihang” can also be interpreted as a “a broad road”; in that case, then they are not referred to the famous mountain.
- ③ The expression *xin yu tian xia* 信于天下 can also mean “winning the confidence of all the people”, not necessarily “ruling the land”.

狐
假
虎
威
①

hú qiú bǎi shòu ér shí zhī dé hú hú yuē zǐ wú
虎求百兽而食之。得狐。狐曰：“子无

gǎn shí wǒ yě tiān dì shǐ wǒ zhǎng bǎi shòu jīn zǐ shí
敢食我也。天帝使我长^②百兽，今子食

wǒ shì nì tiān dì mìng yě zǐ yǐ wǒ wéi bù xìn wú wèi
我，是逆天帝命也。子以我为不信，吾为

zǐ xiān háng zǐ suí wǒ hòu guān bǎi shòu zhī jiàn wǒ ér gǎn
子先行，子随我后，观百兽之见我而敢

bù zǒu hū
不走乎？”

hǔ yǐ wéi rán gù suì yǔ zhī háng shòu jiàn zhī jiē
虎以为然^③，故遂与之行。兽见之皆

zǒu hǔ bù zhī shòu wèi jǐ ér zǒu yě yǐ wèi wèi hú yě
走。虎不知兽畏己而走也，以为畏狐也。

zhàn guó cè chǔ cè yī
《战国策·楚策一》

白话
翻译



一只老虎寻觅百兽作为食物。它抓住了一只狐狸。狐狸说：“你不敢吞掉我。天帝已经命令我为百兽的首领，现在你要吃了我，是违反天帝的命令。你认为我是不可信的，那么我先走在你的前面，你跟随在我的后面，看百兽看见我而有敢于不逃跑的吗？”

老虎信以为真，于是就跟在狐狸后面与他一起行走。百兽看见他们都跑掉了。老虎不知道百兽是惧怕自己才逃跑的，以为是惧怕狐狸呢。



The Fox Assumes the Tiger's Might



A tiger caught a fox while looking for any beast that might come his way and fall a prey to him.

“Don’t you dare eat me! ” said the fox. “The Emperor of Heaven has made me king of the beasts. You eat me and you will be going against His orders. If you don’t believe what I say, just let me lead the way and you follow close behind. Then we’ll see if they all flee or not at the sight of me.”

The tiger agreed to the idea, and so the two of them set off together. When the other beasts saw them coming, they all turned tail. Not realizing it was he that was the cause of their panic-stricken flight, the tiger thought they were afraid of the fox.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)



①狐假虎威：狐狸借老虎之威吓退百兽。比喻依仗别人的势力来吓唬人。假：借。

②长(zhǎng)，长官、首领的意思。

③然：就是这个样子，“对”的意思。



jīng
惊
gōng
弓
zhī
之
niǎo
鸟
①

yì rì zhě gèng léi yǔ wèi wáng chù jīng tái zhī
异日者，更羸与魏王处京台^②之

xià yǎng jiàn fēi niǎo gèng léi wèi wèi wáng chén
下，仰见飞鸟。更羸^③谓魏王：“臣

wèi wáng yǐn gōng xū fā ér xià niǎo wèi wáng yuē
为王引弓虚发^④而下鸟^⑤。”魏王曰：

rán zé shè kě zhì cǐ hū gèng léi yuē kě
“然则射可至此乎？”更羸曰：“可。”

yǒu jiàn yàn cóng dōng fāng lái gèng léi yǐ xū fā
有间^⑥，雁从东方来，更羸以虚发

ér xià zhī wèi wáng yuē rán zé shè kě zhì cǐ hū
而下之。魏王曰：“然则射可至此乎？”

gèng léi yuē cǐ niè yě wáng yuē xiān shēng hé
更羸曰：“此孽^⑦也。”王曰：“先生何

yǐ zhī zhī duì yuē qí fēi xú ér míng bēi fēi xú
以知之？”对曰：“其飞徐^⑧而鸣悲。飞徐

zhě gù chuāng tòng yě míng bēi zhě jiǔ shī qún yě
者，故疮^⑨痛也；鸣悲者，久失群也。

gù chuāng wèi xī ér jīng xīn wèi qù yě wén xián yīn yǐn
故疮未息而惊心未去也，闻弦音，引^⑩

ér gāo fēi gù chuāng yǔn yě
而高飞，故疮陨^⑪也。”

zhàn guó cè chǔ cè sì
《战国策·楚策四》



A Bird Startled by the Mere Twang of a Bowstring



Years ago, Geng Lei and the King Wei standing on a high terrace saw some birds flying past. At this Geng Lei boasted that he could down a bird by drawing his bow but not shooting.

“You mean to say that shooting skill can reach such a high level?” the King wondered.

“Indeed I do.”

A while later a flock of wild geese came from the east. Geng Lei went into action and succeeded in downing a bird by merely producing a twang with his bowstring.

“Really, archery can go that far!” cried the King.

“Well, that bird has an unhealed wound.”

“How do you know, sir?”

“Because it was flying slowly and uttering a plaintive cry. Generally, an old wound affects the speed of flying and lagging behind the crowd for long leads to a desperate calling. So, an unhealed wound means an unrecovered fright. At the twang of my bowstring the bird strove to soar but fell because the wound burst open.”

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)

白话
翻译



有一天,更羸陪同魏王站在高台之下,仰头看见有一只鸟飞过。更羸对魏王说:“我可以不用箭,只要虚拉弓弦,就能把天上飞着的鸟为大王射下来。”魏王说:“你的射箭技术竟能高超到这等地步?”更羸说:“可以。”

过了一会,那只大雁从东方飞过来了,更羸用虚发箭的方式使大雁跌落下来。魏王说:“你的射箭技术竟能高超到这等地步?”更羸说:“这是一只受过箭伤的大雁。”魏王说:“你是怎么知道这只大雁是受过了箭伤的呢?”更羸回答道:“因为这只大雁飞得慢且叫声悲凉。飞得慢的原因,在于它身上的箭伤在作痛;叫的声音悲凉,是因为它离开同伴已很久了。旧的伤口在作痛,还没有好,它心里很害怕。当听到弓弦声响后,就拼命往高处飞。由于急拍双翅,用力过猛,引起旧伤迸裂,才使得它跌落下来。”

注释

① 惊弓之鸟:原指已经被箭所伤,内心生出惊恐的鸟。后来比喻人曾经遭受祸患的打击,惊恐过度,心有余悸,听到声音就恐惧。

② 京台:高台。

③ 更羸(léi):战国时的名射手。

④ 虚发:虚拉弓弦,不放箭。

⑤ 下鸟:使鸟落下来。

⑥ 有间(jiàn):过一段时间。

⑦ 孽(niè):病。

⑧ 徐:缓慢。

⑨ 故疮:旧伤。

⑩ 引:伸,展。这里指伸展翅膀。

⑪ 陨(yǔn):从高处掉下来。



wáng

亡

yáng

羊

bǔ

补

láo

牢

①

zhuāng xīn wèi chǔ xiāng wáng yuē jūn wáng zuǒ zhōu

庄辛谓楚襄王曰：“君王左州

hóu yòu xià hóu niǎn cóng yān líng jūn yǔ shòu líng jūn
侯，右夏侯，犇^②从鄢陵君与寿陵君，

zhuān yīn chí mí bù gù guó zhèng yǐng dū bì wēi
专淫侈靡，不顾国政，郢^③都必危

yī xiāng wáng yuē xiān shēng lǎo bèi hū jiāng yǐ wéi
矣！”襄王曰：“先生老悖^④乎？将以为

chǔ guó yāo xiáng hū zhuāng xīn yuē chén chéng jiàn qí
楚国妖祥乎？”庄辛曰：“臣诚见其

bì rán zhě yě fēi gǎn yǐ wèi guó yāo xiáng yě jūn wáng zú
必然者也，非敢以为国妖祥也。君王卒

xìng sì zǐ zhě bù shuāi chǔ guó bì wáng yǐ chén qǐng bì
幸四子者不衰，楚国必亡矣。臣请避

yú zhào yān liú yǐ guān zhī
于赵，淹留^⑤以观之。”

zhuāng xīn qù zhī zhào liú wǔ yuè qín guǒ jǔ yān
庄辛去之赵，留五月，秦果举鄢、

yǐng wū shàng cài chén zhī dì xiāng wáng liú yān yú
郢、巫、上蔡、陈之地。襄王流掩于

chéng yáng yú shì shǐ rén fā zōu zhēng zhuāng xīn yú zhào
城阳。于是使人发驹^⑥征庄辛于赵。

zhuāng xīn yuē nuò
庄辛曰：“诺。”

zhuāng xīn zhì xiāng wáng yuē guǎ rén bù néng yòng
庄辛至，襄王曰：“寡人不能用

xiān shēng zhī yán jīn shì zhì yú cǐ wèi zhī nài hé
先生之言，今事至于此，为之奈何？”

zhuāng xīn duì yuē chén wén bí yǔ yuē jiàn tù ér gù
庄辛对曰：“臣闻鄙语曰：‘见兔而顾

quǎn wèi wéi wǎn yě wáng yáng ér bǔ láo wèi wéi chí
犬，未为晚也；亡羊而补牢，未为迟



Mend the Fold After a Sheep Is Lost



Zhuang Xin^①, an aristocrat of the State of Chu, said to King Xiang of the State of Chu, "In the palace you have Marquis Zhou and Marquis Xia to keep you company and when you are out in the carriage you have the two merchant-princes Yanling and Shoulin as your retinue. You have been wallowing in luxury and pleasure and neglecting state affairs. Alas, our capital Ying^② is in danger and bound to fall."

"Have you lived so long that you've grown muddleheaded?" King Xiang reproached him. "And do you dare to foretell the fortune and misfortune of a state?"

"But as I see it, these things are bound to happen. It is not that I dare guess the fate of our land," explained Zhuang Xin. "If Your Highness does not mend his ways, and keeps on favouring those four men, Chu is doomed to fall. Would you kindly let me take refuge in the State of Zhao and stay there for a while, till we see what is going to take place?"

So, Zhuang Xin went to Zhao, and it was only five months later that Qin attacked Chu and seized such places as Yan, Ying, Wu, Shangcai and Chen, and King Xiang had to quit the capital to seek shelter at Chengyang. At that hour King Xiang



yé chén wén xī tāng wǔ yǐ bǎi lǐ chāng jié zhòu yǐ
也。’臣闻昔汤、武以百里昌，桀、纣以

tiān xià wáng jīn chǔ guó suī xiǎo jué cháng xù duǎn yóu yǐ
天下亡。今楚国虽小，绝长续短，犹以

shù qiān lǐ qǐ tè bǎi lǐ zāi
数千里，岂特百里哉？……”

xiāng wáng wén zhī yú shì nǎi yǐ zhí guī ér shòu
襄王闻之，……于是乃以执珪^⑦而授

zhī wèi yáng líng jūn yǔ huái běi zhī dì
之为阳陵君，与淮北之地。

zhàn guó cè chǔ cè sì
《战国策·楚策四》

白话
翻译



庄辛对楚襄王说：“君王左有州侯右有夏侯，车后又有郢陵君和寿陵君跟从着，一味过着毫无节制的生活，不理国家政事，如此会使郢都变得很危险。”楚襄王说：“先生老糊涂了吗？还是认为楚国将遇到不祥呢？”庄辛说：“臣当然是看到了事情的必然后果，不敢认为国家遇到了不祥。假如君王始终宠幸这四个人，而不稍加收斂，那楚国一定会因此而灭亡的。我请君王准许臣到赵国去避难，留在那里来静观楚国的变化。”

庄辛离开楚国到了赵国，他在那里住了五个月，秦国果然发兵攻占了郢、鄢、巫、上蔡、陈这些地方。楚襄王流亡在外躲藏在城阳。在这时候，楚襄王才派人率骑士到赵国召请庄辛。庄辛说：“可以。”

庄辛到了城阳以后，楚襄王对他说：“我当初不听信先生的话，如今事情发展到这地步，对这事可怎么办呢？”庄辛回答说：“我知道一句俗语：‘见到兔子以后再放出猎犬去追，并不算晚；羊丢掉以后再补羊圈也不算迟。’我听说过商汤王和周武王，依靠百里方圆的土地，而使天下昌盛，而夏桀王和殷纣王，虽然拥有天下，到头来终不免身



dispatched his attendant on horseback to invite Zhuang Xin to see him. To this summons Zhuang Xin readily responded.

When Zhuang Xin arrived, King Xiang said to him, “I regret I didn’t follow your advice. Now, you see my situation, what shall I do?”

“Well, I heard a popular saying,” Zhuang Xin rejoined. “It runs: ‘It is not too late to look back and signal your hound to give chase, even after you have already caught sight of a running hare. Nor is it too late to mend the fold even after some of your sheep have been lost.’” Zhuang Xin paused and then continued, “Besides, we all know that in the early days Emperor Tang and Emperor Wu^③ started with a small state of a hundred square *li* but gradually won the world, whereas Emperor Jie and Emperor Zhou, ^④ though they already had the world in their hands, finally lost it. Now, though Chu has been reduced to a small size, it still has, discounting the poor land and counting only the good, several thousand square *Li* left, much more than a hundred. It is not a small state at all, is it?...”

On hearing this, ... King Xiang made Zhuang Xin the Marquis of Yangling and granted^⑤ him the land north of the Huai River.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)

死亡国。现在楚国土地虽然狭小,然而如果截长补短,还能有数千里,岂止一百里而已?……”

楚襄王听了庄辛这番话之后,……在这时才把执珪的爵位授予给庄辛,封他为阳陵君,不久庄辛帮助楚王收复了淮北的土地。



注释

① 亡羊补牢:羊逃跑了再去修补羊圈,还不算晚。比喻出了问题以后想办法补救,可以防止继续受损失。亡:逃亡,丢失;牢:关牲口的圈。

② 辇(niǎn):国君所乘之车。辇从,跟着坐车。

③ 郢:楚都,在今湖北省江陵县北。

④ 悖(bèi):昏惑,糊涂。

⑤ 淹留:长期逗留;羁留。

⑥ 驺(zōu):驱从,贵族官员出门时所带的骑马的侍从。

⑦ 珪(guī):长方形,上圆下方,用美玉制成,拿着作为封邑的符信。执珪,指封官。



Notes

- ① who lived in the Warring States Period(475–211 BC), a descendent of Chu Zhuangwang, hence his surname being Zhuang.
- ② in present-day Hubei Province.
- ③ referring to the first Emperor Tang of the Shang Dynasty and the first Emperor Wu of the Zhou Dynasty, both known for their winning the world by justice and benignity in rule.
- ④ referring to the last Emperor Jie of the Xia Dynasty and the last Emperor Zhou of the Shang Dynasty, both known for their loss of the world because of their misrule, cruelty and luxurious life.
- ⑤ “Grant” is suspected to be a mistaken word. It should read “recover”, meaning “Chu recovered most of the land north of the Huai River.”

qiān jīn mǎi gǔ
千 金 买 骨 ①

yān zhāo wáng shōu pò yān hòu jí wèi bēi shēn hòu
燕昭王收破燕后，即位，卑身厚

bì yǐ zhāo xián zhě yù jiāng yǐ bào chóu
币，以招贤者，欲将以报仇。……

zhāo wáng yuē guǎ rén jiāng shéi cháo ér kě
昭王曰：“寡人将谁朝而可？”

guō wéi xiān shēng yuē chén wén gǔ zhī jūn rén
郭隗^②先生曰：“臣闻古之君人，

yǒu yǐ qiān jīn qiú qiān lǐ mǎ zhě sān nián bù néng dé juǎn
有以千金求千里马者，三年不能得。涓

rén yán yú jūn yuē qǐng qiú zhī jūn qiǎn zhī sān yuè
人^③言于君曰：‘请求之。’君遣之，三月

dé qiān lǐ mǎ mǎ yǐ sǐ mǎi qí gǔ wú bǎi jīn fǎn yǐ
得千里马；马已死，买其骨五百金，返以

bào jūn jūn dà nù yuē suǒ qiú zhě shēng mǎ ān shì sǐ
报君。君大怒曰：‘所求者生马，安事死

mǎ ér juǎn wú bǎi jīn juǎn rén duì yuē sǐ mǎ qiě mǎi
马？而捐五百金！’涓人对曰：‘死马且买

zhī wú bǎi jīn kuàng shēng mǎ hū tiān xià bì yǐ wáng wèi
之五百金，况生马乎？天下必以王为

néng shì mǎ mǎ jīn zhì yǐ yú shì bù néng qī nián^④，
能市马。马今至矣！’于是不能期年^④，

qiān lǐ zhī mǎ zhì zhě sān jīn wáng chéng yù zhì shì xiān
千里之马至者三。今王诚欲致士，先

cóng wéi shǐ wéi qiè jiàn shì kuàng xián yú wéi zhě hū qǐ
从隗始。隗且见事，况贤于隗者乎？岂

hái qiān lǐ zài
还千里哉！”

yú shì zhāo wáng wèi wéi zhù gōng ér shī zhī yuè yì^⑤
于是昭王为隗筑宫而师之。乐毅^⑤

zì wèi wǎng zōu yǎn zì qí wǎng jù xīn zì zhào
自魏往，邹衍^⑥自齐往，剧辛^⑦自赵



Buy a Carcass with a Thousand Taels of Silver



King Zhao of the State of Yan became ruler after clearing up a messy situation. ① To take revenge on the State of Qi, he humbly offered a generous reward to any capable and honest man who was willing to serve him. . . .

He went to call on Guo Wei and asked him, "Whom should I visit, I mean, which talented man?"

"Well, let me tell you what I have heard. In the old days there was a ruler who offered a thousand taels of silver for any fine steed that could cover a thousand *li* a day. For three years he failed to get one. Then, a eunuch ventured to suggest, 'Let me try.' So, the ruler gave him that mission, and in three months the eunuch found one real steed, but a dead one. He paid five hundred taels for its carcass and returned with it to report to the ruler. The ruler flew into a rage and shouted, 'What I want is a living horse. What's the use of a dead one? And you paid five hundred taels for it! '

"'Since a dead horse costs five hundred taels, how much more will a living one cost?' answered the eunuch. 'From this transaction people of the whole land will certainly see that you are a serious buyer. Just wait, good steeds will come very soon.' Truly as the man had said, in less than a year three

wǎng shì zhēng còu yàn
往；士争凑燕。

zhàn guó cè yàn cè yī
《战国策·燕策一》

白话
翻译

燕昭王收拾了残破的燕国后，登上王位，他降低自己的身份，拿出丰厚礼物用来招揽人才，希望将来凭借他们的力量报仇。……

昭王说：“我应拜访谁合适呢？”

郭隗先生说道：“我听说古时的一位君王，想用千金求购千里马的事情，三年也没买到。他身边的一人对他说：‘请允许我去寻求它。’国君派遣他去了。三个月后获得千里马；马已经死了，涓人用五百两黄金买了死马的骨头，返回去把此事回报国君。国君大怒，说道：‘我所要购求的是活马，怎么带回死马而丢失五百两黄金呢？’涓人答道：‘死马况且要花五百两黄金购买，何况活马呢？天下必定认为大王您是能出高价买马的人，千里马现在就会到来了。’于是不到一年，千里马来了好几匹。现在大王果真想要招揽贤士，就先从我开始吧。我尚且被尊奉，何况胜过我的人呢？他们难道会嫌路远而不来燕国吗？”

于是燕昭王为郭隗专门建造房屋，并让郭隗作为自己的老师。乐毅从魏国赶来，邹衍从齐国赶来，剧辛从赵国赶来；人才争相奔向燕国。



thousand league horses were brought to the ruler.”

“If Your Highness is serious about getting talented people to help you, please start with me. Then people will think that with a man like me in an important position, those who are much more talented than I am will surely be given still higher posts. Capable men will come from even a thousand *li* away. Don't you worry.” Thereupon, King Zhao built a palace for Guo Wei and honoured him as his teacher. Soon Le Yi, a famous general, came to Yan from Wei; Zhou Yi, an eloquent debater, from Qi; Jue Xin, a gifted counsellor, from Chao; and many more scholars hailed from other states and gathered in the State of Yan.

Zhanguo Ce (warring States Records)



注释

① 千金买骨：古代君王悬赏千金买千里马。战国时郭隗用马作比喻，劝说燕昭王招揽人才。比喻招揽人才的迫切。

② 郭隗(wěi)：战国之时有才学的人。

③ 涓人：君王身边的亲近的人。

④ 期年：一周年。

⑤ 乐毅：战国时燕国的名将，曾率燕军先后攻占齐国七十多城。

⑥ 邹衍：战国时齐国临淄人。《史记》记载他对阴阳有很深的研究，著作有《终始》、《大圣》等篇，共十余万言。他游历各国，后来到燕国。

⑦ 剧辛：赵国人，后来成为燕国大将。



Note

- ① The State of Yan was in a mess because of a civil war followed by a great defeat at the hands of the State of Qi.

yù
鹬
 bàng
蚌
 xiāng
相
 zhēng
争
 ①

zhào qiè fá yān sū dài wèi yān wèi huì wáng ⑤
 赵②且伐燕③，苏代④为燕谓惠王⑤

yuē jīn zhě chén lái guò yì shuǐ bàng fāng chū pù ⑦
 曰：“今者臣来，过易水，蚌方⑥出曝⑦，

ér yù zhuó qí ròu bàng hé ér qián qí huì yù yuē ⑨
 而鹬啄其肉，蚌合而钳⑧其喙⑨。鹬曰：‘

jīn rì bù yǔ míng rì bù yǔ jí yǒu sǐ bàng bàng ⑩
 今日不雨⑩，明日不雨，即有死蚌。’蚌

yì wèi yù yuē jīn rì bù chū míng rì bù chū jí yǒu ⑪
 亦谓⑪鹬曰：‘今日不出，明日不出，即有

sǐ yù liǎng zhě bù kěn xiāng shě yú zhě dé ér bìng ⑬
 死鹬。’两者不肯相舍⑬，渔者⑬得而并⑬

qīn zhī ⑮
 擒⑮之。”

jīn zhào qiè fá yān yān zhào jiǔ xiāng zhī yǐ bì ⑰
 今赵且伐燕，燕赵久相支⑰，以弊⑰

dà zhòng chén kǒng qiáng qín zhī wéi yú fù yě gù yuàn ⑱
 大众，臣恐强秦之为渔父也。故愿

wáng shóu jì zhī yě ⑲
 王熟计之也。”

huì wáng yuē shàn nǎi zhǐ ⑳
 惠王曰：“善！”乃止。

zhàn guó cè yàn cè èr ㉑
 《战国策·燕策二》

白话
 翻译

赵国准备讨伐燕国，苏代替燕国去劝说赵惠王说：“这次我来赵国，经过易水，看见一只河蚌正从水里出来晒太阳，一只鹬飞来啄它的肉，河蚌马上闭拢，夹住了鹬的嘴。鹬说：‘今天不下雨，明天不下雨，你就变成死的河蚌了。’河蚌对鹬说：‘今天不让你出去，明天不让你出去，你就成了死鹬了。’它们两个谁也不肯放开谁，一个渔夫走过来，把它们两个一起捉走了。”

When the Snipe and the Clam Grapple, the Fisher man Profits



The State of Zhao was going to assault the State of Yan.^①

Su Dai came to see King Hui of the State of Zhao, and said, "On my way here I was crossing the Yishui River when I saw a clam just coming out to take the sun on the shore. A snipe came over to peck at the exposed flesh of the clam, which quickly closed its shell to clamp the bird's bill.

'If no rain comes today or tomorrow, there'll be a dead clam,' said the snipe.

'If you can't get your bill free today or tomorrow, there'll be a dead snipe,' riposted the clam.

None of the two would budge. Then along came a fisherman, who easily caught them both."

After a pause, Su Dai continued, "Now that Zhao is ready to attack Yan. But, if both states were locked in a long stalemate with neither side ready to yield, then both peoples will be equally worn out. I'm afraid then the powerful Qin will turn up as the fisherman. Therefore, I do hope that Your Highness will give this matter careful consideration before you act."

现在赵国将要攻打燕国，燕国和赵国如果长期相持不下，老百姓就会疲惫不堪，我担心强大的秦国就要成为那不劳而获的渔翁了。所以希望大王认真考虑出兵之事。”

赵惠文王说：“好吧。”于是停止出兵攻打燕国。

注释

① 鹬蚌相争(yù bàng xiāng zhēng):比喻双方相持不下,而使第三者从中得利。鹬:一种水鸟,嘴和腿都细长,常在浅水边或水田中捕食小鱼、昆虫、河蚌等。

② 赵:春秋、战国时的国名,疆域在现今河北省南部、山西省东部一带地区。

③ 燕:春秋、战国时国名,疆域在现今河北北部一带。

④ 苏代:人名,苏秦的弟弟,是战国时著名的说客,洛阳人。

⑤ 惠王:就是惠文王,赵国的国君,名叫赵何。

⑥ 方:正在。

⑦ 曝(pù):晒。

⑧ 钳(qián):同“钳”,夹住。

⑨ 喙(huì):鸟兽的嘴。

⑩ 雨:这里用作动词,下雨。

⑪ 谓……曰:对……说。

⑫ 相舍:互相放弃。

⑬ 渔者:就是后面的“渔父”,以捕鱼为业的人。

⑭ 并:一起,一并。

⑮ 擒:捕捉。

⑯ 支:支持,这里是相持、对峙的意思。

⑰ 弊:弊病,害处,这里是疲弊的意思。

“Well said,” nodded King Hui. And he gave up his military plan.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)



Note

① both in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).

mén
庭
若
市
①

zōu jì^② rù cháo jiàn wēi wáng yuē chén chéng^③
(邹忌^②)入朝，见威王曰：“臣诚^③

zhī bù rú xú gōng měi chén zhī qī sī chén chén zhī qiè wèi
知不如徐公美，臣之妻私臣，臣之妾畏
chén chén zhī kè yù yǒu qiú yú chén jiē yǐ měi yú xú
臣，臣之客欲有求于臣，皆以美于徐
gōng jīn qí dì fāng qiān lǐ bǎi èr shí chéng gōng fù zuǒ
公。今齐地方千里，百二十城，宫妇左
yòu mò bù sī wáng cháo tíng zhī chén mò bù wèi wáng sì
右莫不私王，朝廷之臣莫不畏王，四
chéng zhī nèi mò bù yǒu qiú yú wáng yóu cǐ guān zhī wáng
城之内莫不有求于王。由此观之，王
zhī bì shèn yǐ
之蔽甚矣。”

wáng yuē shàn nǎi xià lìng qún chén lì mín
王曰：“善。”乃下令：“群臣吏民
néng miàn cì guǎ rén zhī guò zhě shòu shàng shǎng shàng shū
能面刺寡人之过者，受上赏；上书
jiàn guǎ rén zhě shòu zhōng shǎng néng bàng jī yú shì cháo
谏寡人者，受中赏；能谤讥于市朝，
wén guǎ rén zhī ěr zhě shòu xià shǎng
闻寡人之耳者，受下赏。”

lìng chū xià qún chén jìn jiàn mén tíng ruò shì shù yuè
令初下，群臣进谏，门庭若市；数月
zhī hòu shí shí ér jiàn jìn qī nián zhī hòu suī yù yán wú
之后，时时而间进；期年之后，虽欲言，无
kě jìn zhě
可进者。

yān zhào hán wèi wén zhī jiē cháo yú qí cǐ suǒ
燕、赵、韩、魏闻之，皆朝于齐。此所
wèi zhàn shèng yú cháo tíng
谓战胜于朝廷。

The Courtyard Is as Crowded as a Market



Zou Ji^① went to the court to see King Wei of the State of Qi, and said to him: “To my knowledge I am indeed not so handsome as Xu Gong, but my wife says that I am, because she flatters me; so does my concubine because she fears me; and even my guests say the same thing because they want to ask me favours. From this I realize that since ours is a big state possessing a thousand square miles of land and 120 cities, there is no lady around you who does not flatter you, no courtier who does not fear you, and no one throughout the state who do not want to ask you a favour. So, I should say Your Highness must have been much more fooled by honeyed words than I.”

“You are quite right, rejoined the King. Then he decreed that “whosoever among my subjects can point out my faults in my face will be highly rewarded; those who remonstrate with me in writing will receive a reasonable reward; and those who lampoon me and speak ill of me in the court and the market and whose remarks eventually reach my ear will be moderately rewarded.”

In the first few days of the proclamation, great numbers of subjects went to the court to remonstrate so that the courtyard

白话
翻译

邹忌上朝拜见齐威王，说：“我确实知道自己不如徐公漂亮。可是我妻子偏爱我，我的妾害怕我，我的客人想有求于我，他们都认为我比徐公美。如今齐国有方圆千里的疆土，一百二十座城池，宫中的妃子、近臣没有谁不偏爱您，朝中的大臣没有谁不害怕您，全国范围内的人没有谁不有求于您。由此看来，大王您受蒙蔽很深啦！”

齐威王说：“好！”就下了命令道：“大小官吏百姓能够当面指责我的过错的，受上等奖赏；书面劝谏我的，受中等奖赏；能够在公共场所批评议论我的过失，并能传到我的耳朵里的，受下等奖赏。”

命令刚下达，许多大臣都来进谏，宫门前庭院内人多得像集市一样；几个月以后，还不时有人来进谏；满一年以后，即使有人想进谏，也没有什么可说的了。

燕、赵、韩、魏等国听说了这件事，都到齐国来朝见齐王。这就是通常所说的在朝廷上战胜别的国家。

注释

① 门庭若市：门前和院子里人很多，像市场一样。原形容进谏的人很多。现在用来形容来的人很多，非常热闹。门：官门，家门；庭：院子，庭院；若：好像；市：集市，市场。

② 邹忌：生卒年约为公元前385—公元前319年。战国时齐国大臣。齐威王立志改革，思贤若渴。邹忌鼓琴自荐，被任为相国，封于下邳（今江苏邳县西南），称成侯。劝说威王奖励群臣吏民进谏，主张修订法律，监督官吏，严明赏罚，并选荐得力大臣坚守四境。曾献计围魏救赵，取得桂陵（今河南长垣西北）之战的胜利。推行改革，使齐的国力渐强。

③ 诚：确实，的确。

was as crowded as a marketplace. A few months later, those who entered the court to criticize became less in number and they came only occasionally. A year later, nobody had any criticism to make though he wished he could have something to say.

At this news, the states of Yan, Chao, Han and Wei all came to pay tribute to Qi. This is what is meant by conquest through peaceful means starting right in the court.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)



Note

- ① Prime Minister in the court of the State of Qi, during the Zhou dynastic rule, known for his eloquence.

huà
画
shé
蛇
tiān
添
zú
足
①

chǔ yǒu cí zhě cì qí shě rén zhī jiǔ shě rén
楚有祠^②者，赐其舍人卮酒^③。舍人^④

xiāng wèi yuē shù rén yǐn zhī bù zú yī rén yǐn zhī yǒu
相谓^⑤曰：“数人饮之不足，一人饮之有

yú qǐng huà dì wéi shé xiān chéng zhě yǐn jiǔ
余，请画地为蛇，先成者饮酒。”

yī rén shé xiān chéng yǐn jiǔ qiě yǐn zhī nǎi zuǒ
一人蛇先成，引酒^⑥且^⑦饮之，乃左

shǒu chí zhī yòu shǒu huà shé yuē wú néng wèi zhī
手持卮，右手画蛇曰：“吾能为之

zú wèi chéng yī rén zhī shé chéng duó qí zhī yuē
足。”未成，一人之蛇成，夺其卮曰：“

shé gù wú zú zǐ ān néng wèi zhī zú suì yǐn qí
蛇固^⑧无足，子安^⑨能为之足？”遂^⑩饮其

jiǔ wèi shé zú zhě zhōng wáng qí jiǔ
酒。为蛇足者，终亡^⑪其酒。

zhàn guó cè jì cè èr
《战国策·齐策二》

白话
翻译

古代楚国有个贵族，祭过祖宗以后，把一壶祭酒赏给前来帮忙的门客。门客们互相商量说：“这壶酒大家都来喝则不够，一个人喝则有余。让咱们各自在地上比赛画蛇，谁先画好，谁就喝这壶酒。”

有一个人最先把蛇画好了，他端起酒壶正要喝，于是左手拿着酒壶，右手继续画蛇，说：“我能够再给它添上几只脚呢！”没等他把脚画完，另一个人已经把蛇画成了。那人从他手中把酒壶抢过去，说：“蛇本来是没有脚的，你怎么能给它添脚呢？”便把壶中的酒喝了下去。那个给蛇画脚的人，终于失掉了可以属于他的那壶酒。



Supplying Feet to a Painted Snake



After offering sacrifices to his ancestors, a man in the State of Chu granted a goblet of left-over wine to his attendants, who, however, after talking among themselves decided that the wine would not be enough for all, though more than enough for one. And that it would be better for every one of them to draw a snake on the ground so that whosoever finished first might drink the wine.

Then one of them came out first and complacently took up the goblet, ready to drink. Holding it in his left hand, he said, "Oh, there's still time for me to supply the snake with feet." So saying, he used the other hand to do it, but before he could finish the feet, another man completed his snake. He immediately seized the vessel and cried, "A snake is born without feet. How can you give it them?" With that, he gulped down the wine, and the one doing the feet ended up losing what should have belonged to him.

Zhanguo Ce (Warring States Records)



注释

①画蛇添足：蛇本来没有脚，有人却给它加上脚。比喻做事多此一举，反而坏事。

②祠(cí)：春祭。

③卮(zhī)：古代的一种圆底酒杯。卮酒，一杯酒。

④舍人：古代王公贵族手下的办事人员。

⑤相谓：互相商量。

⑥引酒：拿过酒杯。引，取过来。

⑦且：将要。

⑧固：本来。

⑨安：怎么。

⑩遂：就。

⑪亡：失去。



yī
一
gǔ
鼓
zuò
作
qì
气
①

shí nián chūn jì shī fá wǒ gōng jiāng zhàn
十年^②春，齐师^③伐我^④。公^⑤将^⑥战^⑦。

cáo guì qǐng jiàn qí xiāng rén yuē ròu shí zhě móu
曹刿^⑧请见^⑨。其乡人^⑩曰：“肉食者^⑪谋^⑫

zhī yòu hé jiàn yān guì yuē ròu shí zhě bǐ
之，又何间^⑬焉^⑭？”刿曰：“肉食者鄙^⑮，

wèi néng yuǎn móu
未能远谋。”

nǎi rù jiàn wèn hé yǐ zhàn gōng yuē
乃入见^⑯。问：“何以战^⑰？”公曰：“

yī shí suǒ ān fú gǎn zhuān yě bì yǐ fēn rén duì
衣食所安^⑱，弗敢专也，必以分人^⑲。”对^⑳

yuē xiǎo huì wèi biàn mǐn fú cóng yě gōng yuē
曰：“小惠未徧^㉑，民弗从也。”公曰：“

xī shēng yù bó fú gǎn jiā yě bì yǐ xìn duì yuē
牺牲玉帛^㉒，弗敢加也，必以信^㉓。”对曰：

xiǎo xìn wèi fú shén fú fú yě gōng yuē xiǎo
“小信未孚^㉔，神弗福^㉕也。”公曰：“小

dà zhī yù suī bù néng chá bì yǐ qíng duì yuē
大之狱，虽不能察，必以情^㉖。”对曰：“

zhōng zhī shǔ yě kě yǐ yī zhàn zhàn zé qǐng cóng
忠之属也^㉗。可以一战^㉘。战则请从。”

gōng yǔ zhī chéng zhàn yú cháng sháo gōng jiāng gǔ
公与之乘。战于长勺。公将鼓^㉙

zhī guì yuē wèi kě qí rén sān gǔ guì yuē kě
之。刿曰：“未可。”齐人三鼓^㉚。刿曰：“可

yī qí shī bài jì gōng jiāng chí zhī guì yuē wèi
矣。”齐师败绩^㉛。公将驰^㉜之。刿曰：“未

kě xià shì qí zhé dēng shì ér wàng zhī yuē kě
可。”下视其辙，登轼^㉝而望之，曰：“可

yī suì zhú qí shī
矣。”遂逐齐师。

Accomplish in One Go



In the spring of the tenth year of the reign of Duke Zhuang, ① the State of Qi started to attack the State of Lu. Duke Zhuang was preparing to fight the war when Cao Gui asked for an audience. A villager, however, advised Cao, "War is the affair of the ministers. Why trouble to interfere?" To this Cao replied, "They are short-sighted; they can't think deeply and plan carefully for a war."

So Cao entered the court. When he saw the Duke, he asked him, "What makes Your Highness think that you can go to war?"

"Firstly, food and clothing give the people comfort; I dare not claim all for myself but share with them," the prince answered.

"Good. The people will certainly not follow your order before kindnesses, small as they may be, are given to all," Cao commented.

"Sacrificial animals and jades and silks which are marked for offering to the gods I dare not make a false account of, and I see to it that all is true and correct."

"The gods will not bless one when he is not true to his word even in small matters."

"Though I am not able to look into all cases, big or small,

jì kè gōng wèn qí gù duì yuē fū zhàn yǒng
既克，公问其故。对曰：“夫^①战，勇

qì yě yī gǔ zuò qì zài ér shuāi sān ér jié bǐ jié
气也。一鼓作气，再而衰^②，三而竭^③。彼竭

wǒ yíng gù kè zhī fū dà guó nán cè yě jù yǒu fú yān
我盈，故克之。夫大国难测^④也，惧有伏焉。

wú shì qí zhé luàn wàng qí qí mí gù zhú zhī
吾视其辙乱，望其旗靡^⑤，故逐之。”

zuǒ zhuàn zhuāng gōng shí nián
《左传·庄公十年》

白话
翻译

鲁庄公十年的春天，齐国军队攻打鲁国。庄公准备迎战。曹刿请求进见，他的同乡说：“吃肉的大官会谋划这事的，你又何必参与其中呢？”曹刿说：“吃肉的大官目光短浅，不能深谋远虑。”

于是入宫进见庄公。他问庄公：“凭借什么同齐国作战？”庄公说：“衣食这类养生的东西，不敢独自专用，一定把它分给别人。”曹刿回答说：“这是小恩小惠，不能遍及百姓，百姓不会跟从您的。”庄公说：“祭祀的牛羊、玉帛，不敢虚报，一定对神信实。”曹刿回答说：“这是小的信用，不能使神信任，神不会保佑您的。”庄公说：“大大小小的案件，即使不能一一明察，一定按事实的情况来处理。”曹刿回答说：“这是忠于职守的表现，可以凭这个打一仗。作战的话，就请允许我跟从您。”

鲁庄公和曹刿乘坐一辆战车，在长勺进行战斗。鲁庄公将要击鼓进军。曹刿说：“还不行。”齐军击鼓三次，曹刿说：“可以了。”齐军被打得大败。庄公将要下令追击，曹刿说：“还不行。”下车，看地上齐军战车碾过的痕迹，登车，扶着车前的横木远望齐军，说：“可以了。”于是追击齐军。

战胜以后，庄公问得胜原因。曹刿回答说：“作战，勇气啊，第一次击鼓能振作士兵的勇气，第二次击鼓勇气就减



I make a point of judging every one fairly and carefully.”

“This is a matter of full devotion to one’s duty. Well, from what you have said, you can go to war. When you do, I request you to let me follow you to the battlefield,” Cao finally appealed.

As promised, the Duke let Cao Gui sit by him in his chariot, when the battle was about to be fought at Changshao in the State of Lu.

With his troops deployed, the Duke wanted to beat the battle drum to start an attack. But Cao said, “Not yet.” And not until the Qi troops had beaten their drums three times did Cao cry, “Now is the time to beat ours.”

The Lu troops then charged and defeated the troops of Qi. The Duke of Lu was eager to pursue the retreating enemy, but he was again stopped by Cao who said, “Not yet.” Instead, Cao alighted and had a look at the tracks of Qi’s retreating chariots, and then climbed on to the front horizontal bar of his chariot and looked into the distance for a while. Finally he said, “All right, go ahead.” The Qi troops were thus driven out of the Lu territory.

After the victory was won, the Duke asked Cao Gui the reason for all his actions. Cao Gui’s reply was: “In battle, it is all a matter of morale. The first beating of the drum is to rouse the soldiers to action. If no action is taken, then at the second beating their morale dwindles and at the third, it melts. When the enemy was at the end of their enthusiasm, we were just full of go. That is the time to attack. Because of this we were able to defeat them. Again, in the face of a powerful state like

弱了,第三次击鼓勇气消耗尽了。他们勇气已尽而我们的士气旺盛,所以战胜了他们。大国难以揣测,害怕有埋伏,我看他们战车车轮痕迹混乱,望见他们军旗倒下了,所以下令追击他们。”

注释

① 一鼓作气:第一次击鼓,使士气振作起来。比喻趁劲头大的时候鼓起干劲,一口气把工作做完。一鼓:第一次击鼓;作:兴起,振作。这里是使动用法。气:勇气。

② 十年:鲁庄公十年,即公元前684年。

③ 师:军队。

④ 我:指鲁国。相传《左传》的作者是鲁国的左丘明,所以其书用鲁国的年号记事,称鲁国为“我”。

⑤ 公:鲁庄公。

⑥ 将:打算,准备。

⑦ 战:作战,迎战。

⑧ 曹刿(guì):即曹沫,一作曹翊。生卒年不详,春秋时鲁国大夫。著名的军事理论家。

⑨ 请见:请求拜见庄公。

⑩ 乡人:同一个乡的人。“乡”:古代的地方行政单位,相传周制以一万二千五百户为乡。

⑪ 肉食者:吃肉的人,即指有权位的贵族。

⑫ 谋:筹划,考虑。“之”:代抵御齐师之事。

⑬ 间(jiàn):参与。

⑭ 焉:兼词,于此。

⑮ 鄙:鄙陋,指目光短浅。

⑯ 乃入见:于是入朝拜见庄公。乃:于是。

⑰ 何以战:依靠什么去打仗。以:拿,依靠。

⑱ 衣食所安:衣食这类用来安生的东西。所:这里指用来安定生活的东西。安:安定。

⑲ 必以分人:一定把它分给别人。必:一定。以:把。

⑳ 对:应答,对答;一般用于地位低的人对地位高的



Qi, it is difficult to see through its tactics. I was therefore afraid that they might have an ambush ready for us, but when I found that during the retreat their chariot tracks were disorderly and their banners all down, I knew we could chase them out.”

Zuo Zhuan (Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals)



Note

① the year 684 BC during the Spring and Autumn Period.



人,或晚辈对长辈的应答。

⑳ 小惠未徧: 这些微小的恩惠没有普遍施于一般人(国君的这些赏赐只有国君左右的人才能得到)。未: 没有。徧: 同“遍”。

㉑ 牺牲玉帛: 祭祀用物。牺牲: 供祭祀用的牲畜。玉: 玉器。帛: 丝织品。

㉒ 必以信: 一定用诚实不欺的态度对待神灵。以: 用。信: 诚实, 不欺。

㉓ 孚: 诚信感人。

㉔ 福: 降福, 保佑。

㉕ 必以情: 一定依照实情来处理。以: 按, 依照。情: 情况, 实情。

㉖ 忠之属也: 这是尽心尽意处理政事一类的表现。属: 种类。

㉗ 可以一战: 可以凭借这点打一仗。以: 凭借, “以”后省略“之”字。

㉘ 鼓: 击鼓, 古代作战击鼓以发起进攻。

㉙ 三鼓: 三次击鼓, 即三次进攻未能奏效。

㉚ 败绩: 军队溃败。

㉛ 驰: 驱车进击。

㉜ 轼(shì): 车厢前扶手横木, 这里意为扶轼。

㉝ 夫(fú): 语气词, 置于句首, 表示要发议论。

㉞ 再而衰: 第二次击鼓, 士气就衰减下来。再: 第二次。

㉟ 竭: 尽, 没有了。

㊱ 测: 猜测。

㊲ 靡: 倒下。



shàng

上

xià

下

qí

其

shǒu

手

①

chǔ qīn zhèng zhèng huáng jié shù zhī chū yú chǔ shī
楚侵郑。郑皇颡戍之^②，出于楚师

zhàn bài chuān fēng xú qiú huáng jié gōng zǐ wéi yǔ zhī
战，败。穿封戍囚皇颡，公子围与之

zhēng zhèng yú bó zhōu lí bó zhōu lí yuē qǐng wèn yú
争。正于伯州犁。伯州犁曰：“请问于

qiú nǎi lì qiú bó zhōu lí shàng qí shǒu yuē fū zǐ
囚。”乃立囚。伯州犁上其手^③曰：“夫子

wéi wáng zǐ wéi guǎ jūn zhī guì jiè dì yě xià qí shǒu
为王子围，寡君之贵介弟也”；下其手

yuē cǐ zǐ wèi chuān fēng xū fāng chéng wài zhī sūn yīn
曰：“此子为穿封戍，方城外之孙尹

yě shéi huò zǐ qiú yuē jié yù wáng zǐ ruò yān
也。谁获子？”囚曰：“颡遇王子弱^④焉。”

zuǒ zhuàn xiāng gōng èr shí liù nián
《左传·襄公二十六年》

白话
翻译

楚国出兵侵略郑国。郑王颡(jié)戍守城麇，郑王颡出城与楚军交战，战败。穿封戍抓住了郑王颡，公子围与他争功。请求伯州犁裁判。

伯州犁说：“问一下俘虏。”于是押来俘虏站在石阶下。伯州犁高举其手指着公子围说：“这个人是王子围，是我们君王尊贵的弟弟。”手向下指着穿封戍，说：“这个人的穿封戍，是方城外的县令。是谁把你俘虏的？”郑王颡说：“我碰到的是王子，抵挡不住他被擒。”



Manipulate a Case by Raising and Lowering the Hand



The State of Chu was invading the State of Zheng. Zheng's general Huang Ji was therefore commissioned to defend the capital. When he went out to fight with the Chu troops, he suffered a great defeat and was captured by Chuan Fengxu, a magistrate of Chu. Immediately, however, Prince Wei came to claim the prisoner. The magistrate refused, while the prince stuck to his claim. So, they went to Bozhouli, Minister of Internal Affairs, for arbitration.

"The best way is to ask the prisoner himself for the facts," said the Minister.

The prisoner was brought in. Holding up his right hand, the Minister said to him, "This is Prince Wei, a favourite brother of our sovereign ruler." Then, lowering the hand, he said again, "This man is called Chuan Fengxu, a magistrate of one of our border counties. Well, tell us which of the two actually captured you."

Fully understanding the Minister's gesture, the prisoner answered, "I chanced upon Prince Wei and was defeated and taken captive."

Zuo Zhuan (Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals)



①上下其手：原指以上下的手势作暗示，是舞弊伎俩。后来比喻玩弄手法，暗中作弊。但现今多用于实指，即于女性作非礼之举，常用此语。

②之：代词，它，指城廛(jūn)，郑地，现在不知是何处。

③上其手：高举手。

④弱：抵挡不住。意思是被擒。





wài
外
qiáng
强
zhōng
中
gān
干
①

qín bó fá jìn sān bài jí hán
秦伯伐晋，……三败及韩。

jìn hóu wèi qīng zhèng yuē kòu shēn yī ruò zhī
晋侯谓庆郑曰：“寇深矣，若之

hé duì yuē jūn shí shēn zhī kě ruò hé gōng
何？”对曰：“君实深之，可若何！”公

yuē bù sūn bǔ yòu qīng zhèng jí fú shǐ bù
曰：“不孙^②。”卜右^③，庆郑吉；弗使。步

yáng yù róng jiā pú tú wéi yòu chéng xiǎo sì
扬^④御戎，家仆徒^⑤为右。乘小驷^⑥，

zhèng rén yě qīng zhèng yuē gǔ zhě dà shì ⑦, bì chéng
郑人也。庆郑曰：“古者大事^⑦，必乘

qí chǎn shēng qí shuǐ tǔ ér zhī qí rén xīn ān qí jiào xùn
其产，生其水土而知其人心，安其教训

ér fú xí qí dào wéi suǒ nà zhī wú bù rú zhì jīn
而服习^⑧其道。唯所纳之，无不如志。今

chéng yì chǎn yǐ cóng róng shì jí jù ér biàn jiāng yǔ rén
乘异产以从戎事，及惧而变，将与入

yì luàn qì jiǎo fèn yīn xuè zhōu zuò zhāng mài ⑩
易^⑨。乱气^⑩狡^⑪愤，阴血^⑫周作，张脉^⑬

fèn xìng wài qiáng zhōng gān jìn tuì bù kě zhōu xuán ⑮
愤^⑭兴，外强中干，进退不可，周旋^⑮

bù néng jūn bì huǐ zhī fú tīng
不能。君必悔之。”弗听。……

rén xū zhàn yú hán yuán jìn róng mǎ hái níng ér
壬戌，战于韩原。晋戎马还泞^⑯而

zhǐ gōng hào qīng zhèng zhèng yuē bì jiàn wéi bǔ
止。公号^⑰庆郑，郑曰：“悞^⑱谏违卜，

gù bài shì qiú yòu hé táo yān suì qù zhī liáng yóu mí yù
固败是求，又何逃焉？”遂去之。梁由靡御

hán jiǎn guó shè wéi yòu lù qín bó jiāng zhǐ zhī zhèng
韩简，骜射为右，辍^⑲秦伯，将止之^⑳；郑



Outwardly Strong but Inwardly Weak



The Earl of Qin was attacking the Marquisate of Jin. . . After defeating it in three battles, he reached the place called Han.^①

Marquis Jin said to his minister Qing Zheng, “The enemy has now entered deep into our territory. What shall we do?”

“It was you yourself who invited their incursion into our domain. ^② There is nothing we can do now,” replied Qing Zheng.

The Marquis reproached Qing Zheng for his imprudence and sought help from divination to decide who would be the Right Guard in command of the charioteers. The oracle was in favour of Qing Zheng, but the Marquis refused to appoint him for that post. Instead, he asked Bu Yang to take command and Jia Putu to be the Right Guard; the latter, however, after taking over the command, chose to use small chariots drawn by teams of four horses brought from the State of Zheng.

Seeing this, Qing Zheng pleaded to the Marquis, “Our forefathers, whenever they dealt with an important affair like going to war, only used horses of our own breed. Such animals are native-born and know the mind of the native riders; they obey their orders and are familiar with the local roads; therefore, no matter how you use them, they will always

yǐ jiù gōng wù zhī suì shī qín bó qín huò jìn hóu yǐ guī
以救公误之，遂失秦伯。秦获晋侯以归。

zuǒ zhuàn xī gōng shí wǔ nián
《左传·僖公十五年》

白话
翻译

秦穆公发兵攻打晋国，……晋军打了三次败仗，退到了韩地。

晋惠公对庆郑说：“敌人深入了，怎么办？”庆郑回答说：“君王您让他们深入进来，还能够怎么办？”晋惠公又说：“无礼。”占卜选任车右的人选，庆郑吉利，但晋惠公不用他。派遣步扬驾驭战车，家仆徒为车右，用小驹驾车，这小驹是郑国赠送的。庆郑说：“古代遇到战争，必定用本国所产的马驾车，因为它们生长在自己的国家，懂得主人的心意，安心于主人的调教训练，习惯熟悉本国的道路。随便在什么场合使用它都能使你如愿满意。如今用外国的马驾车去作战，遇见意外的事情便惊惧失去常态，将会和驾车的人的意愿相违背。它们将会紧张地胡乱喷着气，乖戾暴躁，体内周身血液沸腾，血管暴涨突起，外表看上去很强壮，骨子里却枯竭空虚了，进退都不能听指挥，旋转不灵活。您一定会后悔的。”晋惠公不听从他的话。……

壬戌，在韩原交战。晋惠公驾战车的马在泥泞中盘旋出不来。晋惠公大声呼叫庆郑来救援。庆郑说：“不听劝谏，不依着占卜行事，本来就是自求失败，又为什么要逃避呢？”于是不理晋惠公而走开了。梁由靡为韩简驾驭战车，觥射作为车右，拦截住秦穆公，将要俘虏他。庆郑来招呼他们去救晋惠公，因此失掉了捉住秦穆公的机会。秦军抓获了晋惠公后回国。



Chinese Idioms and Their Stories

meet your purpose. Now we are using alien-bred horses in the war; they will be apprehensive and go against our intention. And apprehension causes uneven breathing, disturbs the spirit, swells the chest, quickens the circulation of the blood and irritates the nerves. The horses may look strong but they are actually weak; they will find themselves lost, not knowing which way to turn—going forward or backward, this way or that way. I am sure you will regret your decision.” The Marquis, however, refused to listen to him.

On the day of Renxu^③, the Qin and the Jin troops fought at Han. And it turned out that Jin’s war horses could only go round and round, bogged down in deep mire. The Marquis then cried to Qing Zheng for help.

“You were adamant in refusing to listen to my remonstrance and you disobeyed the oracle, so you have brought about your own defeat. Why should you now try to escape your fate?” Qing Zheng said, and left the Marquis to himself.

Liang Youmi was then driving the chariot for Han Jian, and Guo She became the Right Guard. They encountered the Duke of Qin on the way and were going to stop him when Qing Zheng came to ask them to go and save the Marquis. So, they missed the chance of capturing the duke.

In the end, Qin captured the Marquis and its army returned to their own state in triumph.

Zuo Zhuan (Master Zuo’s Spring and Autumn Annals)

注释

① 外强中干:外有强形,内中干竭。泛指外表强大,内实空虚。干,枯竭。

② 不孙(xùn):无礼。孙,同“逊”,恭顺。

③ 右:车右。

④ 步扬:晋国大夫。

⑤ 家仆徒:晋国大夫。

⑥ 小驷:马名。

⑦ 大事:指战争。

⑧ 服习:反复练习,熟悉。

⑨ 易:相反。

⑩ 乱气:呼吸无节奏。

⑪ 狡:乖戾。

⑫ 阴血:体内的血。周作:周身发作。

⑬ 脉:血管。

⑭ 债(fèn)兴:兴奋。

⑮ 周旋:旋转驰逐。

⑯ 还(xuán)泞:在泥泞中盘旋不出来。

⑰ 号:呼叫。

⑱ 愎:执拗。

⑲ 辍(lù):遇到。

⑳ 止之:俘虏他。



Note

- ① The story took place in the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) and Han was a place in present-day Shanxi Province.
- ② The reason was that Jin had promised to give Qin five cities in gratitude for Qin's helping the Marquis of Jin to assume the rule of the state, but the latter did not keep his word. Again, once when Qin had a famine, Qing Zheng asked the Marquis to give aid for relief, but his proposal was unheeded, hence the war.
- ③ the 13th day of the 9th month in the 15th year of the reign of Lu Xigong, Duke of the State of Lu.

tui
退
bi
避
sān
三
shě
舍
①

jī chǔ chǔ zǐ xiǎng zhī yuē gōng zǐ ruò fǎn jìn
及楚，楚子^②享之，曰：“公子若返晋

guó zé hé yǐ bào bù gǔ duì yuē zǐ nǚ yù bó
国，则何以报不谷^③？”对曰：“子女^④玉帛，

zé jūn yǒu zhī yǔ máo chǐ gé zé jūn dì shēng yān qí
则君有之；羽^⑤毛齿革，则君地生焉；其

bō jí jìn guó zhě jūn zhī yú yě qí hé yǐ bào jūn
波^⑥及晋国者，君之余也。其何以报君？”

yuē suī rán hé yǐ bào wǒ duì yuē ruò yǐ jūn zhī
曰：“虽然，何以报我？”对曰：“若以君之

líng dé fǎn jìn guó jìn chǔ zhì bīng yù yú zhōng yuán
灵，得返晋国，晋、楚治兵，遇于中原，

qí bì jūn sān shè ruò bù huò mìng qí zuǒ zhí biān mǐ
其避君三舍；若不获命^⑦，其左执鞭弭^⑧，

yòu zhǔ gāo jiān yǐ yǔ jūn zhōu xuán
右属^⑨橐囊^⑩，以与君周旋^⑪。”

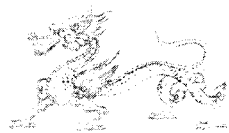
zuǒ zhuàn xī gōng èr shí sān nián
《左传·僖公二十三年》

白话
翻译

(重耳)来到楚国，楚成王设宴招待他，楚王问重耳说：“你若有一天回晋国当上国君，该用什么来报答我呢？”重耳回答说：“男女侍从、珍宝丝绸，大王您有的是，珍禽羽毛、象牙兽皮，是君王您土地上出产的。那些流及到晋国的，是您的剩余物，我哪有什么珍奇物品献给大王呢？”楚成王说：“虽然这么说，可总该对我有所表示吧？”重耳回答道：“如果能托您的福，果真能回国当政的话，晋国与楚国如果操演军事，在中原相遇，我将退兵九十里相让；如果还不能得到您的原谅，那我就左手拿着鞭子与弓，右边佩带着箭袋和弓套，与您较量一番。”



Retreat *San She*^① to Give Way



When Chong'er arrived at the State of Chu^②, the Prince of Chu gave a banquet in his honour.

"If one day you can return to your own state Jin, how would you reward me?" asked the host.

"So far as beautiful girls and attendants are concerned, I know you have plenty of them. As to birds' feather, elephant's tusks and animal skin, they are your native products. Of all these the State of Jin feels an obvious lack; what's been imported into Jin amounts only to a fraction of what you have. I really don't know how I'm to compensate you," answered Chong'er.

"What you have said is true. But, is there any way in which you can reward me?"

"If with your blessing I were able to return to my own state, then let me now make this promise: In case our two states came to be engaged in war and had to encounter each other in the central plain, I would order my troops to retreat *san she* without *hesitation*. How about that? Suppose I still fail to convince you of my good will, then I shall take up my bow and whip with my left hand and my quiver with my right to deal with you."

注释

① 退避三舍：主动退让九十里。比喻退让和回避，避免冲突。避：退让。舍：古时行军计程以三十里为一舍。

② 楚子：楚成王。

③ 不谷：不善。古代诸侯自称的谦词。

④ 子女：男女奴隶。

⑤ 羽：孔雀、翡翠等用做装饰的鸟羽。毛：兽毛。齿：象牙。革：牛皮。

⑥ 波：散播、流传。

⑦ 获命：指不能取得对方谅解，获得对方允许。

⑧ 弭：没有装饰的弓。

⑨ 属(zhǔ)：佩，系。

⑩ 囊囊(gāo jiǎn)：藏箭和弓的器具。

⑪ 周旋：本意是应酬、打交道，这里是对付、较量的意思。



Notes

- ① where *san* means “three” and *she* means “thirty li” in a military march—altogether ninety li.
- ② In 655 B.C., a strife went on in the court of Jin over the succession of the throne, with the result that the heir, Prince Sheng Sheng, was killed and his younger brother Chong'er had to flee the country. After taking refuge in one state after another, Chong'er finally came to the State of Chu where he was well received. He returned to his own state after nineteen years of exile.

bing
病
rù
入
gāo
膏
huāng
育
①

gōng jí bìng qiú yī yú qín qín bó shǐ yī huǎn wèi
公疾病，求医于秦。秦伯使医缓^②为
zhī wèi zhī gōng mèng jí wèi èr shù zǐ yuē bǐ
之。未至，公梦疾为二竖子^③，曰：“彼
liáng yī yě jù shāng wǒ yān táo zhī qí yī yuē jū
良医也，惧伤我；焉逃之？”其一曰：“居
huāng zhī shàng gāo zhī xià ruò wǒ hé yī zhī
育^④之上，膏^⑤之下，若我何！”医至，
yuē jí bù kě wéi yě zài huāng zhī shàng gāo zhī xià
曰：“疾不可为也！在育之上，膏之下，
gōng zhī bù kě dá zhī bù jí yào bù zhì yān bù kě
攻^⑥之不可，达^⑦之不及，药不至焉，不可
wèi yě gōng yuē liáng yī yě hòu wéi zhī lǐ ér guī
为也！”公曰：“良医也！”厚为之礼而归
zhī
之。

zuǒ zhuàn chéng gōng shí nián
《左传·成公十年》

白话
翻译

晋景公病重，向秦国请求良医。秦桓公派医师缓去晋国为他诊治。医师缓还没有来到，晋景公梦见疾病变成两个小孩子，一个说：“他是个良医，我害怕受到伤害；逃到什么地方好？”另一个说，“呆在育的上面，膏的下面，他能把我们怎么样呢？”医师缓到达后，说：“疾病已经不能治疗了。在育的上面，膏的下面，艾灼不能治，针刺够不着，药力达不到，没办法治了！”晋景公说：“好医生啊！”赠送给他丰厚的礼物让他回国。

Sick to the Vitals



Duke Jing of the State of Jin was ill. He sought medical counsel from the State of Qin, whose ruler Huangong then sent a physician along to see what could be done.

Before the arrival of Huan the physician, Duke Jing had dreamt of his disease in the person of two kids. One of them was saying, “The coming physician is very competent; I’m afraid he will hurt us. Let’s run away.” The other rejoined, “No. We’ll stay somewhere above *huang* and below *gao*^①. I bet he can do nothing to us.”

At last the physician came. After making a diagnosis, he concluded: “There’s no cure for the disease. It lies above *huang* and below *gao* where no moxibustion can be applied nor acupuncture be manipulated, and drugs will never reach there. Nothing can be done about it.”

At these words the Duke commended Huan as a truly eminent doctor and sent him home richly rewarded.

Zuo Zhuan (Master Zuo’s Spring and Autumn Annals)

注释

① 病入膏肓:形容病情十分严重,无法医治。比喻事情到了无法挽救的地步。

② 缓:秦国名医。

③ 竖子:儿童。

④ 肓(huāng):指心脏与膈膜之间。

⑤ 膏(gāo):指心尖脂肪。

⑥ 攻:指灸。

⑦ 达:指针。



Note

- ① In ancient times, *huang* was meant to be the term for the diaphragm; and *gao*, the fat tissue on the tip of the heart. So *gao huang* signified a region in-between the heart and the diaphragm where no medicine could produce any curative effect.

ér
尔
yú
虞
wó
我
zhà
诈
①

chǔ shī jiāng qù sòng
楚师将去宋。

..... shēn shū shí pú yuē zhù shì fān gēng
..... 申叔时^②仆^③，曰：“筑室^④，反耕

zhě sòng bì tīng mìng cóng zhī
者^⑤，宋必听命。”从之。

sòng rén jù shǐ huá yuán yè rù chǔ shī dēng zǐ fān
宋人惧，使华元夜入楚师，登子反

zhī chuáng qǐ zǐ yuē guǎ jūn shǐ yuán yǐ bìng gào yuē
之床。起子曰：“寡君使元以病告，曰：

bì yì yì zǐ ér shí xī hái yǐ cuàn suī rán chéng xià
‘敝邑易子而食，析骸以爨^⑥；虽然，城下

zhī méng yǒu yǐ guó bì bù néng cóng yě qù wǒ sān shí
之盟，有以国毙，不能从也。去我三十

lǐ wéi mìng shì tīng zǐ fǎn jù yǔ zhī méng ér gào
里，唯命是听！’”子反惧，与之盟，而告

wáng tuì sān shí lǐ
王，退三十里。

sòng jí chǔ píng huá yuán wéi zhì méng yuē wǒ wú
宋及楚平。华元为质。盟曰：“我无

ěr zhà ěr wú wǒ yú
尔诈，尔无我虞！”

zuǒ zhuàn xuān gōng shí wǔ nián
《左传·宣公十五年》



Cheat Against Cheat^①



The troops of the State of Chu were going to withdraw after having failed to subdue the State of Song.

... Shen Shushi the charioteer then proposed to the ruler of Chu: "Build houses on the battlefields and send farm-soldiers home to grow grain to sustain the protracted siege we have just begun. Eventually Song will have to surrender."

The ruler of Chu did as suggested. This alarmed Song, and Hua Yuan was immediately charged with an important mission to go to the Chu camps at night. When Hua Yuan sneaked into the tent of the Chu commander Zi Fan, he dragged him out of the bed, saying: "I am sent by our ruler to tell you the truth about our precarious situation. But his message is: 'My people have been exchanging their children and killing them for food, and dismembering the skeletons to serve as fuel. Nevertheless, we'd rather all die than conclude any treaty with you under coercion. We shall never sign anything imposed on us.' Therefore, I advise you to withdraw your troops thirty *li* and we shall be prepared to accept your dictated terms."

Zi Fan was shocked at Song's resoluteness and agreed to negotiate. He told this to his sovereign, who gave orders to sound a retreat and withdraw thirty *li* as proposed.

Song and Chu soon began negotiations. Hua Yuan was

白话
翻译

楚国的军队准备离开宋国。

……申叔时正在为楚庄王驾车,说:“可以让士兵在这里盖房舍、种田,装作要长期留下。这样,宋国就会因害怕而投降。”楚庄王听从了他的话。

宋国人很害怕,派华元夜里潜入楚国的军队中,登上了子反的床。把他叫起来,说:“我们君王叫我把宋国现在的困苦状况告诉你,说:‘国内已经交换儿子杀了当饭吃,用拆散的尸骨当柴烧。即使这样,你们想以此来压我们订立丧权辱国的城下之盟,那么我们宁肯让国家灭亡也不会接受。如果你们能退兵三十里,宋国将完全听你们的命令。’”子反听了这番话很害怕,与华元私下约定后,禀告了楚庄王。楚军退兵三十里。

宋国与楚国讲和。华元作为人质到楚国去。盟词写的是:“我不欺骗你,你也不欺骗我!”

注释

① 尔虞我诈(ěr yú wǒ zhà):比喻互相勾心斗角,玩弄花招。尔:你;虞:猜测。

② 申叔时:楚国的大夫。

③ 仆:驾车。

④ 筑室:建筑房屋。

⑤ 反耕者:叫回耕田的农民。这样表示楚国将长久留在此地。

⑥ 爨(cuàn):烧火做饭。



then kept in the Chu camps as a hostage, and in the final agreement it was stated: “We shall not cheat you and you will not cheat us.”

Zuo Zhuan (Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals)



Note

- ① Its origin came from “We shall not cheat you and you will not cheat us”, but it is generally used in the reverse. So this idiomatic expression has come to be “Cheat Against Cheat”, “Plot and Counterplot” and the like.

kē
苛
zhèng
政
měng
猛
yú
于
hǔ
虎

kǒng zǐ guò tài shān cè yǒu fù rén kū yú mù zhé ér
孔子过泰山侧。有妇人哭于墓者而

āi fū zǐ shì ér tīng zhī shǐ zǐ lù wèn zhī yuē
哀。夫子式^①而听之，使子路^②问之，曰：“

zǐ zhī kū yě yī sì zhòng yǒu yǒu zhě ér yuē
子之哭也，壹似^③重有忧者。”而曰：“

rán xī zhě wú jiù sǐ yú hǔ wú fū yòu sǐ yān jīn wú
然，昔者吾舅^④死于虎，吾夫又死焉，今吾

zǐ yòu sǐ yān fū zǐ yuē hé wèi bù qù yě yuē
子又死焉。”夫子曰：“何为不去也？”曰：“

wú kē zhèng fū zǐ yuē xiǎo zǐ zhī zhī kē
无苛政^⑤。”夫子曰：“小子^⑥识^⑦之，苛

zhèng měng yú hǔ yě
政猛于虎也！”

lǐ jì tán gōng
《礼记·檀弓》

白话
翻译

孔子路过泰山的一侧，有一个妇人在坟墓前哭泣看上去十分忧伤。孔子立起身来靠在横木上听她哭，派遣子路去询问那个妇人，说：“你哭得那么伤心，好像有很伤心的事情。”那个妇人说：“是的，过去我的公公被老虎吃了，我的丈夫也被老虎吃了，现在我的儿子也被老虎吃了。”孔子说：“那为什么不离开这里呢？”妇人回答说：“（这里）没有苛刻的暴政。”孔子说：“你们记住，苛刻的暴政比老虎还要凶猛可怕。”



Tyranny Is Fiercer than a Tiger



Confucius^① was passing by at the foot of Taishan Mountain when he heard a woman wailing before a grave. As he bent over the front bar of his carriage listening with concern, he sent his disciple Zi Lu over to inquire.

“From your crying we presume you have met many misfortunes,” Zi Lu said to the woman.

“Exactly. Some time ago my father-in-law was killed by a tiger, then later my husband, and now my son.” the woman responded.

“Then, why hasn’t she chosen to quit this place?” wondered Confucius, putting this question to her through Zi Lu.

“Because this place is not plagued by tyranny,” came the woman’s answer.

At this Confucius admonished his disciples, “Keep this in mind—tyranny is indeed fiercer than a tiger.”

Li Ji (Book of Rites)



注释

① 式：即轼，车前的横木。这里“式”作动词用，是“凭着式”的意思。

② 子路：生活在公元前542~前480年。孔子的弟子，鲁国卞（今山东泗水）人，仲氏，名由，一字季路。

③ 壹似：很像。壹：真是，实在。

④ 舅：公公。注意：与现代语“舅”所指的意思不同。

⑤ 苛政：包括苛刻烦琐的政令，繁重的赋役等。

⑥ 小子：古时候长辈对后辈，或老师对学生的一种称呼。

⑦ 识(zhi)：记住。



jiē
嗟
lái
来
zhī
之
shí
食
①

qí dà jī qián áo wèi shí yú lù yǐ dài è zhě ér
齐大饥。黔敖为食于路，以待饿者而

sì zhī
食之②。

yǒu è zhě méng mèi jī jù mào mào rán lái
有饿者，蒙袂③辑屣④，贸贸然⑤来。

qián áo zuǒ fèng shí yòu zhí yǐn yuē jiē lái shí yáng
黔敖左奉食，右执饮，曰：“嗟，来食！”扬

qí mù ér shì zhī yuē yǔ wéi bù shí jiē lái zhī shí yǐ zhì
其目而视之，曰：“予唯不食嗟来之食，以至

yú sī yě cóng ér xiè yān zhōng bù shí ér sǐ
于斯也。”从⑥而谢⑦焉。终不食而死。

lǐ jì tán gōng
《礼记·檀弓》

白话
翻译

齐国发生严重的饥荒。黔敖在大路旁摆上一些食物，等着饿肚子的人经过，施舍给他们吃。

有一个饥饿的人，用袖子遮着脸，身体无力迈动脚步，莽莽撞撞地走过来。黔敖左手拿起食物，右手端起汤，说道：“喂，来吃吧！”那人扬起眼睛（轻蔑地）看着他，说道：“我就是因为不吃这种‘嗟来之食’才饿成这个样子的。”黔敖跟着那人向他赔礼道歉。那人最终还是因不肯吃嗟来之食而饿死于路旁。



Food Handed Out in Contempt



Now it happened that there was a great famine throughout the State of Qi. A man by the name of Qian Ao set up a charity kitchen on the roadside to feed the starving passers-by.

Then came a hungry man, trudging along in tattered shoes, with a sleeve raised to hide his face and eyes that looked vague and dim. With a bowl of food in his left hand and soup in his right, Qian Ao shouted, "Hey, come over and eat." The man opened wide his eyes and looked, then said: "I have never eaten 'any food handed out in contempt'. And just because of that, I am now a hungry man, as you see."

Hearing this, Qian Ao made an apology to him. But the man still refused to eat, and eventually he starved to death.

Li Ji (Book of Rites)



注释

① 嗟来之食：意思是指带有侮辱性的或不怀好意的施舍。嗟：不礼貌的招呼声，相当于现在的“喂”。

② 食(sì)之：拿饭给人吃。

③ 蒙袂(mèi)：用衣袖蒙着脸。

④ 辑屣(jù)：身体无力迈不开步子的样子。

⑤ 矙矙然：眼睛看不清而莽撞前行的样子。

⑥ 从：跟随。

⑦ 谢：表示歉意。



sāi
塞
wēng
翁
shī
失
mǎ
马
①

sāi shàng zhī rén yǒu shàn shù zhě mǎ wú gù wáng ér
塞上之人，有善术者，马无故亡而

rù hú rén jiē diào zhī qí fù yuē cǐ hé jù bù néng
入胡。人皆吊^②之，其父曰：“此何遽不能

wéi fú hū
为福乎？”

jū shù yuè qí mǎ jiāng hú jùn mǎ ér guī rén jiē hè
居数月，其马将胡骏马而归。人皆贺

zhī qí fù yuē cǐ hé jù bù néng wéi huò hū
之，其父曰：“此何遽不能为祸乎？”

jiā fù liáng mǎ qí zǐ hào qí duò ér zhé qí bì rén
家富良马，其子好骑，堕而折其髀^③。人

jiē diào zhī qí fù yuē cǐ hé jù bù néng wéi fú hū
皆吊之，其父曰：“此何遽不能为福乎？”

jū yī nián hú rén rù sāi dīng zhuàng zhě yǐn xián ér
居一年，胡人入塞，丁壮者引弦而

zhàn sāi shàng zhī rén sǐ zhě shí jiǔ cǐ dú yǐ bō zhī
战，塞上之人，死者十九，此独以跛之

gù fù zǐ xiāng bǎo
故，父子相保。

gù fú zhī wéi huò huò zhī wéi fú huà bù kě jí
故福之为祸，祸之为福，化不可极，

shēn bù kě cè yě
深不可测也。

huái nán zǐ rén jiān xùn
《淮南子·人间训》

When the Old Man on the Frontier Lost His Mare^①



On the frontier^② there was a man who was skilled in divination. One day his mare, for an unknown reason, fled north into the domain of the Hu tribes. On learning this, sympathetic people came to console him, but his father remarked, “Who says that this may not be a blessing?”

Several months later, the mare returned, not alone but with a fine steed of the Hu breed. Sympathizers again came to congratulate the owner of the new horse, but again his father observed, “Who says this won’t be a misfortune?”

Now that there was a fine steed in his stable, the son, fond of riding, mounted the new-comer. During the ride he fell from the horse and broke his hip bone. Sympathetic people again came to console him, but his father as usual passed the matter off with the same remark, “Who says this won’t be a blessing?”

A year went by. The Hu tribes made inroads, crossing the frontier line. The able-bodied took up arrows and bows to fight, and nine out of every ten of the frontier inhabitants were killed. But the son, being crippled, had not gone to fight, so he and his father survived.

Therefore, a blessing may turn out a misfortune and a

白话
翻译

靠近边塞上居住的人中，有一位擅长占卜的人，他的马无缘无故跑到了胡人的住地。人们都为此来宽慰他。那老人却说：“这为什么就不会是一种福气呢？”

过了几个月，他的马带着胡人的良马回来了。人们都前来祝贺他。那老人又说：“这为什么就不能是一种灾祸呢？”

占卜人的家中有许多好马，他的儿子爱好骑马，结果从马上摔下来摔断了大腿骨。人们都前来慰问他。那老人说：“这为什么就不能变为一件福事呢？”

过了一年，胡人入侵边塞，健壮男子都拿起武器去作战，边塞附近的人，死亡的占了十分之九。这个人惟独因为儿子腿瘸的缘故免于征战，父子俩一同保全了性命。

所以福变成祸，祸变成福，变化得无法穷极，深刻得无法测量。

注释

① 塞翁失马：边塞一老翁丢了一匹马，人家来安慰他，他却说：“怎么知道这不是好事呢？”过了些日子，这匹马竟然带着一匹好马回来了。比喻暂时受损却可能因此受益，坏事在一定条件下可以变为好事。

② 吊：慰问。

③ 髀(bì)：髀骨，大腿骨。



misfortune, a blessing. It is extremely difficult to tell, as things are so changeable.

Huainanzi (Writings of Prince Huainan)



Notes

- ① This idiomatic expression is generally followed by another phrase 焉知非福, meaning “who knows it wasn’t a blessing in disguise?”
- ② generally referring to the Great Wall, north of which was then called “beyond the frontier”.

yī
zì
字
qiān
千
jīn
金
①

zhuāng xiāng wáng jí wèi sān nián hōng tài zǐ zhèng
庄襄王即位三年，襄，太子政

lǐ wèi wáng zūn lǚ bù wéi wéi xiāng guó hào chēng zhòng
立为王，尊吕不韦为相国，号称“仲

fù qín wáng nián shǎo tài hòu shí shí qiè sī tōng lǚ
父^②”。秦王年少^③，太后时时窃私通吕

bù wéi bù wéi jiā tóng wàn rén
不韦。不韦家童万人。

dāng shì shí wèi yǒu xìn líng jūn chǔ yǒu chūn shēn jūn
当是时，魏有信陵君，楚有春申君，

zhào yǒu píng yuán jūn qí yǒu mèng cháng jūn jiē xià shì
赵有平原君，齐有孟尝君，皆下士^④

xǐ bīn kè yǐ xiāng qīng lǚ bù wéi yǐ qín zhī qiáng xiū
喜宾客以相倾^⑤。吕不韦以秦之强，羞

bù rú yì zhāo zhì shì hòu yù zhī zhì shí kè sān qiān rén
不如，亦招致士，厚遇之，至食客三千人。

shì shí zhū hóu duō biàn shì rú xún qīng zhī tú zhù shū bù
是时，诸侯多辩士，如荀卿之徒，著书布

tiān xià lǚ bù wéi nǎi shǐ qí kè rén rù zhù suǒ wén jí lùn
天下。吕不韦乃使其客人入著所闻，集论

yǐ wèi bā lǎn liù lùn shí èr jì èr shí yú wàn yán yǐ
以为八览、六论、十二纪，二十余万言。以

wèi bèi tiān dì wàn wù gǔ jīn zhī shì hào yuē lǚ shì chūn
为备天地万物古今之事，号曰《吕氏春

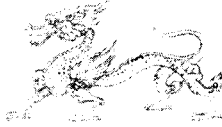
qiū bù xián yáng shì mén xuán qiān jīn qí shàng yán zhū
秋》。布咸阳市门，悬千金其上，延诸

hóu yóu shì bīn kè yǒu néng zēng yī zì zhě yǔ qiān jīn
侯游士宾客有能增一字者予千金。

shǐ jì lǚ bù wéi liè zhuàn
《史记·吕不韦列传》



One Thousand Yi for Every Word^①



Three years after assuming the rule of the State of Qin, King Zhuangxiang passed away. He was succeeded by his heir, Prince Zheng^② who made Lu Buwei his Prime Minister and entitled him “Zhong Fu”, or second father. The Prince of Qin, however, was yet young, and his mother was all the time having an affair with Lu, who was rich and powerful, with as many as ten thousand servant boys in his house.

At that time, there were several powerful merchant-princes, such as Xinling of the State of Wei, Chunshen of the State of Chu, Pingyuan of the State of Zhao and Mengchang of the State of Qi. As a matter of prestige, they all vied with each other in making friends with talented men and loved to treat or feed them in their houses with great hospitality. Thinking that Qin was a powerful state, yet could not be compared with these states which were so proud of their merchant princes, Lu Buwei felt ashamed and began to collect scholars, too, giving them very generous treatment. The persons he was feeding numbered three thousand.

One thing more, all principalities at that time were interested in recruiting numbers of gifted debaters, like the famous Xun Zi (Xun Kuang), who wrote books, which were

白话
翻译

(秦)庄襄王即位三年之后死去,太子嬴政继位被立为王,尊奉吕不韦为相国,称他为“仲父”。秦王年纪还小,太后常常和吕不韦私通。吕不韦家有奴仆万人。

在那时,魏国有信陵君,楚国有春申君,赵国有平原君,齐国有孟尝君,他们都礼贤下士,结交宾客,并在这方面要争个高低上下。吕不韦认为秦国如此强大,把不如他们当成一件令人羞愧的事,所以他也招来了文人学士,给他们优厚的待遇,门下食客多达三千人。那时各诸侯国有许多雄辩之士,像荀卿那班人,著书立说,流行天下。吕不韦就命他的食客各自将所见所闻记下来,综合在一起成为八览、六论、十二纪,共二十多万字。自己认为其中包括了天地万物古往今来的事理,所以号称《吕氏春秋》。并将书刊布在咸阳市的城门,上面悬挂着一千金的赏金,遍请诸侯各国的游士宾客,若有人能增删一字,就给予一千金的奖励。

注释

① 一字千金:原指增减一字,赏赐千金。意思是说一个字值一千金。现用来形容文辞精妙,不可更改。

② 仲父:亚父,仅次于父。

③ 秦王年少:始皇时年十三岁。

④ 下士:谦恭有礼地对待士人。

⑤ 倾:超越,压倒。



widely read. Seeing this, Lu Buwei asked every one of his guests too to put down in writing what they had heard or seen, and collected their writings into a book. It ran into more than two hundred thousand words under the headings of *Ba Lan* (Eight Series of Readings), *Lu Lun* (Six Categories of Essays) and *Shi'er Ji* (Twelve Chronicles). He gave this huge book the title of *Lu Shi Chun Qin* (Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals), claiming that it contained all things under the sky, ancient or contemporary. He also had a notice posted at the gates of Xianyang, the capital, and hung one thousand *yi* of hard currency above it, inviting all the scholars and guests of the principalities to read the book over. And any one who in reading found it necessary to add or take away one single word would get this monetary reward.

Shi Ji(Historical Records)



Notes

- ① In the Qin times, one *yi* equalled to twenty (or twenty-four) ounces, that is, one *jin* (catty), which in Chinese is represented by the same character as that for “gold”, but at that time, the hard currency was a metal like copper, not gold. This idiomatic expression has thus been used to mean that a word, if found to be very appropriate or valuable, is worth a thousand taels of gold.
- ② later entitled Qinshihuang (First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty) after he conquered all other principalities and achieved the unification of China.

yī
一
míng
鸣
jīng
惊
rén
人
①

qí wēi wáng zhī shí xǐ yīn hào wéi yīn lè cháng yè
齐威王之时喜隐^②，好为淫乐长夜

zhī yīn chén miǎn bù zhì wěi zhèng qīng dà fū bǎi guān
之饮，沉湎^③不治，委政卿大夫。百官

huāng luàn zhū hóu bìng qīn guó qiě wēi wáng zài yú dàn
荒乱，诸侯并侵^④，国且危亡，在于旦

mù zuǒ yòu mò gǎn jiàn chún yú kūn shuō zhī yǐ yīn yuē
暮，左右莫敢谏。淳于髡说之以隐^⑤曰：

guó zhōng yǒu dà niǎo zhǐ wáng zhī tíng sān nián bù fēi
“国中有大鸟，止王之庭，三年不蜚^⑥

yòu bù míng wáng zhī cǐ niǎo hé yě wáng yuē cǐ
又不鸣，王知此鸟何也？”王曰：“此

niǎo bù fēi yī fēi chōng tiān bù míng zé yǐ yī míng jīng
鸟不飞，一飞冲天；不鸣则已，一鸣惊

rén yú shì nǎi cháo zhū xiàn lìng zhǎng qī shí èr rén
人。”于是乃朝诸县令长^⑦七十二人，

shǎng yī rén zhū yī rén fèn bīng ér chū zhū hóu zhèn
赏一人，诛一人，奋兵^⑧而出。诸侯振^⑨

jīng jiē hái qí qīn dì wēi xíng sān shí liù nián
惊，皆还齐侵地。威行三十六年。

shǐ jì huà jī liè zhuàn
《史记·滑稽列传》



Once It Cries, the Cry Shocks All^①



King Wei of the State of Qi loved not only to use enigmatic language but also to spend whole evenings drinking. Because of his indulgence, he stopped dealing with state affairs and left them to his ministers. As a result, things went from bad to worse, as most of his officials, big and small, also neglected their trusted duties and led an easy life. This gave other principalities a chance to make inroads into Qi. The state was on the way to falling apart at any moment. No one around the prince, however, dared to remonstrate with him.

There was one man, a certain Chunyu Kun, who ventured to speak to the King. Using careful innuendo, he said, "There is a large bird perching in this court, and for three years it has not taken wing nor uttered a cry. Probably Your Highness can tell what has happened to this bird."

"Well, I know this bird. If it ever flies, it will soar into the sky; and if it ever cries, it will amaze the world," answered the King, knowing what Chunyu Kun was driving at.

After this talk, the King summoned all the seventy-two county magistrates in the state to his presence. Among the group he rewarded one good one and executed one bad one; then he mustered all his troops, who were now greatly encouraged and ready for action. Courageously they went out

白话
翻译

齐威王在位的时候,喜好说隐语,又好彻夜宴饮,陶醉于隐语、饮酒之中,不管政事,把政事委托给卿大夫。文武百官荒淫放纵,各国的诸侯都来侵犯,国家危亡,就在旦夕之间,齐王身边的近臣都不敢进谏。淳于髡用隐语来规劝讽谏齐威王,说:“都城中有只大鸟,落在了大王的庭院里,三年不飞又不叫,大王知道这只鸟是怎么一回事吗?”齐威王说:“这只鸟不飞则已,一飞就直冲云霄;不叫则已,一叫就使人惊异。”于是就诏令全国七十二个县的长官全来入朝奏事,奖赏一人,诛杀一人,又发兵御敌。诸侯十分惊恐,都把侵占的土地归还齐国。齐国的声威竟保持了长达三十六年。

注释

① 一鸣惊人:比喻平时没有突出的表现,却一下子做出惊人的成绩。

② 喜隐:喜欢说隐语,隐语即谜语。

③ 沉湎:指陶醉于饮酒之中。不治:不问政事。

④ 并侵:都来侵犯。

⑤ 说之以隐:用隐语来说齐威王。说:劝说,说服。

⑥ 蜚(fēi):同“飞”。

⑦ 县令长:县的行政长官,人口万户以上的县,称令;人口不及万户的县,称长。

⑧ 奋兵:举兵。

⑨ 振:通“震”。



to repel the invaders. In great alarm, the other principalities returned to Qi all the lands they had seized from it. Qi's power thus remained strong for the next thirty-six years.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



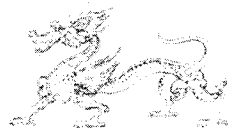
Note

- ① This idiomatic expression is used to speak of an obscure person who amazes the world with a single brilliant feat.

máo
毛
suì
遂
zì
自
jiàn
荐
①

qín zhī wéi hán dān zhào shǐ píng yuán jūn qiú jiù
秦之围邯郸，赵使平原君^②求救，
hé zòng yú chǔ yuē yǔ shí kè mén xià yǒu yǒng lì wén
合纵于楚^③，约^④与食客门下有力文
wǔ bèi jù zhě èr shí rén xié dé shí jiǔ rén yú wú
武备具者二十人偕^⑤。……得十九人，余无
kě qǔ zhě wú yǐ mǎn èr shí rén mén xià yǒu máo suì zhě
可取者，无以满二十人。门下有毛遂者，
qián zì zàn yú píng yuán jūn yuē suì wén jūn jiāng hé
前^⑥，自赞^⑦于平原君曰：“遂闻君将合
cóng yú chǔ yuē yú shí kè mén xià èr shí rén xié bù wài
从于楚，约于食客门下二十人偕，不外
suǒ jīn shǎo yī rén yuàn jūn jí yǐ suì bèi yuán ér xíng
索。今少一人，愿君即以遂备员^⑧而行
yǐ píng yuán jūn yuē xiān shēng chù shèng zhī mén xià
矣。”平原君曰：“先生处胜之门下
jǐ nián yú cǐ yǐ máo suì yuē sān nián yú cǐ yǐ
几年于此矣？”毛遂曰：“三年于此矣。”
píng yuán jūn yuē fū xián shì zhī chù shì yě pì ruò zhuī zhī
平原君曰：“夫贤士之处世也，譬若锥之
chù náng zhōng qí wèi lì jiàn jīn xiān shēng chù shèng
处囊中^⑨，其未立见^⑩。今先生处胜
zhī mén xià sān nián yú cǐ yǐ zuǒ yòu wèi yǒu suǒ chēng
之门下三年于此矣，左右未有所称
sòng shèng wèi yǒu suǒ wén shì xiān shēng wú suǒ yǒu
诵^⑪。胜未有所闻，是先生无所有
yě xiān shēng bù néng xiān shēng liú máo suì yuē
也。先生不能，先生留。”毛遂曰：“
chén nǎi jīn rì qǐng chù náng zhōng ěr shǐ suì zǎo dé chù
臣乃今日请处囊中耳。使遂蚤^⑫得处
náng zhōng nǎi yǐng tuō ér chū fēi tè qí wèi jiàn ér
囊中，乃颖脱而出^⑬，非特其未见而
yǐ píng yuán jūn jìng yǔ máo suì xié shí jiǔ rén xiāng yǔ
已。”平原君竟与毛遂偕。十九人相与

Mao Sui Offers His Own Services



Qin's troops^① laid siege to Handan, the capital of the State of Zhao. Therefore, the Prince of Zhao sent the merchant prince Pingyuan to the State of Chu to form an alliance against Qin. It was agreed that he could bring with him twenty of his own guest advisers who were well-versed in letters and martial arts. . . . Pingyuan had picked nineteen; there was no one competent enough to fill the twentieth place.

Among the guests fed by Pingyuan was a man called Mao Sui who went up to his host and introduced himself, saying: "I heard that you are going to form an alliance with Chu and will take along twenty of your own guest advisers, without any outsiders. And I know there is one man lacking, so I would like to make up the number and go with you."

"Sir, may I know how long you have been here under my patronage?" asked Pingyuan.

"It's three years since I came here."

"Well, an able and virtuous man gets on in the world just like an awl getting in a cloth bag. No sooner does it enter than its point penetrates and comes out. Now, you have been here for three long years, sir, yet no one around me has ever said anything in praise of you nor have I ever heard of you. This shows you have no special skill at all. You can't go with me;

mù xiào zhī ér wèi fèi yě
目笑之^⑭，而未废也。

máo suì bǐ zhì chǔ yǔ shí jiǔ rén lùn yì shí jiǔ rén jiē
毛遂比^⑮至楚，与十九人论议，十九人皆

fú píng yuán jūn yǔ chǔ hé zòng yán qí lì hài rì chū ér
服。平原君与楚合纵，言其利害，日出而

yán zhī rì zhōng bù jué shí jiǔ rén wèi máo suì yuē xiān
言之，日中不决。十九人谓毛遂曰：“先

shēng shàng máo suì àn jiàn lì jiē ér shàng wèi píng
生上^⑯。”毛遂按剑历阶^⑰而上，谓平

yuán jūn yuē zòng zhī lì hài liǎng yán ér jué ér jīn rì chū
原君曰：“纵之利害，两言而决耳。今日出

ér yán zòng rì zhōng bù jué hé yě chǔ wáng wèi píng yuán
而言纵，日中不决，何也？”楚王谓平原

jūn yuē kè hé wéi zhě yě píng yuán jūn yuē shì shèng
君曰：“客何为者也？”平原君曰：“是胜

zhī shě rén yě chǔ wáng chì yuē hú bù xià wú nǎi yǔ
之舍人^⑱也。”楚王叱曰：“胡不下！吾乃与

ér jūn yán rǔ hé wéi zhě yě máo suì àn jiàn ér qián yuē
而^⑲君言，汝何为者也！”毛遂按剑而前曰：

wáng zhī suǒ yǐ chì suì zhě yǐ chǔ guó zhī zhòng yě jīn shí
“王之所以叱遂者，以楚国之众也。今十

bù zhī nèi wáng bù dé shì chǔ guó zhī zhòng yě wáng zhī
步之内，王不得恃^⑳楚国之众也，王之

mìng xuán yú suì shǒu bái qǐ xiǎo shù zǐ ěr shuài
命悬^㉑于遂手。……白起，小竖子耳，率

shù wàn zhī zhòng yǔ shī yǐ yǔ chǔ zhàn yī zhàn ér jǔ yān
数万之众，与师以与楚战，一战而举鄢、

yīng zài zhàn ér shāo yí líng sān zhàn ér rǔ wáng zhī xiān
郢^㉒，再战而烧夷陵^㉓，三战而辱王之先

rén cǐ bǎi shì zhī yuàn ér zhào zhī suǒ xiū ér wáng fú zhī
人^㉔。此百世之怨而赵之所羞，而王弗知

ě yān hé zòng zhě wéi chǔ fēi wéi zhào yě wú jūn zài qián
恶^㉕焉。合纵者为楚，非为赵也。吾君在前，

chì zhě hé yě chǔ wáng yuē wéi wéi chéng ruò xiān shēng
叱者何也？”楚王曰：“唯唯^㉖，诚若先生



you'll have to stay behind."

"Until today I didn't ask to get into the bag," answered Mao Sui. "Had I been placed in it earlier, my point, like the awl, would have broken through it long ago, and more than that, the whole awl itself would have come out."

Half-believing, Pingyuan asked Mao Sui to accompany him for the trip, while the nineteen chosen men eyed each other and laughed in their sleeves, although they did not protest.

When the party arrived in the State of Chu, Mao Sui began to discuss things with the nineteen men. During these discussions they soon became convinced of his talents.

Soon Pingyuan began to talk over the alliance with the King of Chu, putting forward the advantages as well as the disadvantages involved. The negotiations went on from morning till noon, yet nothing definite came of them. Seeing this, the nineteen men asked Mao Sui to mount the platform where the negotiations were being held. Placing a hand on the hilt of his sword, Mao Sui ascended the steps and said to Pingyuan, "The advantages and the disadvantages of an alliance are clear enough; it takes only a few words to settle the matter. Why spend the whole Morning on it?"

At this, the King of Chu turned towards Pingyuan and asked, "And who is this man?"

"He's one of my guest advisers," answered Pingyuan.

"Then why do you come here, sir?" shouted the King of Chu. "I'm talking with your patron. What has that to do with you?"

Mao Sui went forward, his hand on the hilt of his sword,

zhī yán jǐn fèng shè jì ér cóng zòng
之言，谨奉社稷而从纵^㉔。”

shǐ jì píng yuán jūn yú qīng liè zhuàn
《史记·平原君虞卿列传》

白话
翻译

秦国围攻邯郸时，赵王曾派平原君去求援，当时拟推楚国为盟主，订立合纵盟约联兵抗秦，平原君约定和门下有关有谋文武兼备的食客二十人一同前往楚国。……结果选得十九人，剩下的人没有可再挑选的了，竟没办法凑满二十人。门下食客中有个叫毛遂的人，径自走到前面来，向平原君自我推荐说：“我听说您要到楚国去，让楚国作盟主订下合纵盟约，并且约定与门下食客二十人一同去，人员不到外面寻找。现在还少一个人，希望您就拿我充个数一起去吧。”平原君问道：“先生寄附在我的门下到现在有几年啦？”毛遂回答道：“到现在整整三年了。”平原君说：“有才能的贤士生活在世上，就如同锥子放在口袋里，它的锋尖立即就会显露出来。如今先生寄附在我的门下到现在已经三年了，我的左右近臣们从没有称赞推荐过你，我也从来没听说过你，这是先生没有什么专长。先生不能一起去，先生留下来。”毛遂说：“我就算是今天请求放在口袋里的吧。假使我早就被放在口袋里，是会整个锥锋都脱露出来的，不只是露出一一点锋尖就罢了的。”平原君终于同意让毛遂一同去。那十九个人互相使眼色示意，暗暗嘲笑毛遂，只是没有发出声音来。

等到毛遂到达楚国，跟那十九个人谈论、争议天下局势，十九个人个个佩服他。平原君与楚王谈判订立合纵盟约的事，再三陈述利害关系，从早晨就谈判，直到中午还没决定下来。那十九个人就鼓动毛遂说：“先生上殿堂。”于是毛遂紧握剑柄，一路小跑地登上台阶到了殿堂上，对平原君说：“谈合纵不是‘利’就是‘害’，只两句话罢了。现在从早晨就谈合纵，到了中午还决定不下来，是什么缘故？”楚王



and said, “The reason why Your Highness bawls at me is that Chu has a large backing force—more people and more troops. But within this short distance of ten paces separating you and me, the backing is of no avail, for your life is in my hand. . . . Qin’s general Bai Qi is a nobody. But when he had several thousand troops under his command and fought with you, he took your capital—Yi and then Chen—at the first encounter, and in the next he despoiled Yiling, the site of your late father’s tomb, and the third battle brought shame of all your forefathers. You have a never-to-be-forgotten score to settle with Qin. We of the State of Zhao feel that it should be a galling shame to you, just to think on all this. Nevertheless, Your Highness feels no humiliation or disgrace! In fact, our proposed alliance is more to the advantage of Chu than of Zhao. Why then, with my lord present, do you shout so much?”

Awe-struck and convinced, the King of Chu said, “Indeed, indeed. You have said rightly, sit. I will devote the strength of our whole state to the formation of an alliance with Zhao.”

Shi Ji (Historical Records)

见毛遂登上殿堂来，就对平原君说：“这个人是要干什么的？”平原君回答说：“这是我的随从家臣。”楚王厉声呵叱道：“怎么还不给我下去！我是跟你的主人谈判，你来干什么！”毛遂紧握剑柄走向前去说：“大王敢于呵叱我，不过是依仗楚国人多势众。现在我与您相距只有十步，十步之内大王是依仗不了楚国的人多势众的，大王的性命控制在我手中。……秦国的白起，不过是个毛孩子罢了，他带着几万人的部队，发兵与楚国交战，第一战就攻克了郢城、郢都，第二战就烧毁了夷陵，第三战便使大王的先祖受到极大凌辱。这是楚国一百世不能解开的怨仇，连赵王都感到羞耻，可是大王却不觉得羞愧。合纵盟约是为了楚国，不是为了赵国。我的主人就在你面前，你为什么这样呵叱我？”听了毛遂的话，楚王改变了态度说：“是，是，的确像先生所说的那样，我一定竭尽全国的力量履行合纵盟约。”



注释

① 毛遂自荐：毛遂自我推荐。比喻自告奋勇去做某项工作。毛遂(suí)：战国时赵国平原君的门客；荐：推荐，荐举。

② 平原君：战国四公子之一，赵国贵族。即赵胜。赵武灵王之子，惠文王之弟。因贤能而闻名。赵惠文王元年(公元前298年)被封为平原君，封地在东武(今山东武城)。与魏国的信陵君、齐国的孟尝君、楚国的春申君，他们四人被称为战国四公子。

③ 合纵于楚：指拟推楚为盟主，订合纵盟约以联兵抗秦。从：同“纵”。

④ 约：约定。食客：指投靠强宗贵族并为其服务以谋取衣食的人。

⑤ 偕：一起去。

⑥ 前：径自走到前面。

⑦ 自赞：自我推荐。

⑧ 备员：凑数，充数。



Note

① belonging to the State of Qin during the Warring States Period
(475-221 BC).

⑨ 锥之处囊中:锥子放在口袋中。

⑩ 其末立见:锥子的锋尖立即会露出来。末:锥尖。见:同“现”,显露。

⑪ 称诵:称赞荐举。称,称赞;诵,述说、宣扬。

⑫ 蚤:通“早”。

⑬ 颖脱而出:指整个锥锋都脱露出来。颖:原指禾穗的芒,这里指锥锋。

⑭ 目笑之:用眼光示意,暗笑毛遂。废:当作“发”,发声。

⑮ 比:及,等到。

⑯ 上:指登堂。

⑰ 按剑:握紧剑柄,作刺杀之势。历阶:不停足地连续登阶,形容急速。

⑱ 舍人:家臣。古时王公贵官的亲近侍从。

⑲ 而:你的。

⑳ 恃:依仗。

㉑ 悬:系缚,控制。

㉒ 一战而举鄢、郢:指前279年秦将白起攻下楚国鄢、邓五城及前278年攻取郢都。

㉓ 夷陵:楚国先王的墓地。

㉔ 辱王之先人:侮辱您的祖先。指楚屡为秦所败,祖先陵庙被毁,又被迫迁都等。

㉕ 恶:羞愧。

㉖ 唯唯:表示应答的声音。相当于“嗯嗯”、“是是”。

㉗ 谨奉社稷而以从纵:一定尽全国之力来履行合纵盟约。谨:严;奉:献出,倾尽全力。



wéi
围
wei
魏
jiù
救
zhào
赵
①

wèi fá zhào zhào jí qǐng jiù yú qí qí wēi wáng
魏伐赵，赵急，请救于齐。齐威王

yù jiāng sūn bìn bìn cí xiè yuē xíng yú zhī rén bù
欲将孙臆，臆辞谢曰：“刑余之人②不

ké yú shì nǎi yǐ tián jì wéi jiāng ér sūn zǐ wéi shī jū
可。”于是乃以田忌为将，而孙子为师，居

zī chē zhōng zuò wéi jì móu
辎车中，坐为计谋。

tián jì yù yǐn bīng zhǐ zhào sūn zǐ yuē fū jiě zá
田忌欲引兵之赵，孙子曰：“夫解杂

luàn jiū fēn zhě bù kòng quǎn jiù dòu zhě bù bó jī pī
乱纠纷③者不控卷④，救斗者不搏击。批

kàng dǎo xū xíng gé shì jìn zé zì wèi jiě ěr jīn
亢捣虚⑤，形格势禁⑥，则自为解耳。今

liáng zhào xiāng gōng qīng bīng ruì zú bì jié yú wài lǎo ruò
梁赵相攻，轻兵锐卒必竭⑦于外，老弱

bà yú nèi jūn bù ruò yǐn bīng jí zǒu dà liáng jù qí
罢⑧于内；君不若引兵疾⑨走大梁，据其

jiē lù chōng qí fāng xū bǐ bì shì zhào ér zì jiù shì
街路，冲其方虚⑩，彼必释赵而自救。是

wǒ yī jǔ jiě zhào zhī wéi ér shōu bì yú wèi yě tián jì
我一举解赵之围而收弊于魏⑪也。”田忌

cóng zhī wèi guǒ qù hán dān yǔ qí zhàn yú guì líng dà pò
从之，魏果去邯郸，与齐战于桂陵，大破

liáng jūn
梁军。

shǐ jì sūn zǐ wú qǐ liè zhuàn
《史记·孙子吴起列传》



Besiege Wei to Rescue Zhao



The State of Wei attacked the State of Zhao and besieged its capital. Desperate, Zhao asked the State of Qi^① for help. King Wei of the State of Qi was prepared to commission Sun Bin^② as Commander-in-Chief to carry out the operation. This Sun politely refused, saying: “It is not advisable for a man like me who has suffered corporal punishment.” Then, the King gave the post to Tian Ji, and Sun was appointed military counsellor and arranged to sit in a covered van to mastermind the coming military moves.

Tian Ji was planning to march his troops directly to Zhao when Sun suggested: “It is common knowledge that to disentangle a messy skein of silk, closing one’s fist and pulling at it won’t help, and to try to mediate two fighting parties, taking part in the conflict won’t work. Stay clear of the enemy’s main forces and strike at his weak point to create conflicts and apprehension in the enemy, then inevitably the siege will be lifted.”

“Now, Liang^③ is attacking Zhao,” Sun added, coming to the point. “Its mobile elite troops must be fatigued, having marched far from their homeland. On the other hand, its older, weaker forces that remain behind at home, must be under

白话
翻译

魏国攻打赵国,赵国形势危急,向齐国求救。齐威王打算任用孙臆为主将,孙臆辞谢说:“受过酷刑的人,不可任主将。”于是就任命田忌做主将,孙臆做军师,坐在带篷帐的车里,暗中谋划。

田忌想要率领救兵直奔赵国,孙臆说:“想解开乱丝的人,不能紧握双拳生拉硬扯;解救斗殴的人,不能卷进去胡乱搏击。要撇开争斗者充实的地方,冲击争斗者空虚的地方。争斗者因形势限制,就不得不自行解开。如今魏赵两国相互攻打,魏国的精锐部队必定在国外精疲力竭,老弱残兵在国内疲惫不堪。你不如率领军队火速向大梁挺进,占据它的交通要道,冲击它正当空虚的地方,魏国肯定会放弃赵国而回兵自救。这样,我们一举解救了赵国之围,而又可坐收魏国自行挫败的效果。”田忌听从了孙臆的意见。魏军果然离开邯郸回师,在桂陵地方交战,魏军被打得大败。

注释

① 围魏救赵:战国时,魏国围攻赵国都城,赵国向齐国求救,齐国乘魏国国内空虚,发兵攻打魏国,魏军撤回救助本国,齐军乘其疲惫,在桂陵(今山东菏泽)大败魏军,赵国因而解围。后来用“围魏救赵”来指类似的作战方法。

② 刑余之人:受过肉刑,身体不完整的人。

③ 杂乱纷纭:事情好像纠缠在一起的乱丝,没有头绪。

④ 控卷(quán):不能紧握拳头。控,控制,操纵,引申为掌握。卷,通“拳”。

⑤ 批亢捣虚:撇开敌人充实的地方,冲击敌人空虚的地方。批,排除、撇开。亢,充满。

⑥ 形格势禁:(敌人)局势发生了被阻遏的变化,对原来的进攻计划必然有所顾忌。格,被阻遏。禁,顾忌。

⑦ 竭:精疲力尽。

⑧ 罢:通“疲”。疲劳,疲乏。

⑨ 疾:赶快。

⑩ 方虚:正当空虚处。

⑪ 收弊于魏:坐收魏军自行挫败的效果。弊,败。

heavy strain. So, it would be wise for you to rush our troops to the capital of Liang, cut off their line of communication and attack their weak spot; then, for sure, Liang will have to give up Zhao and turn to save its own capital. In this way we shall in one operation raise the siege of Zhao and at the same time reap the rewards of Liang's collapse."

Tian Ji agreed and did as advised. Soon Wei withdrew from Handan^④ and on the way home its army encountered that of Qi at Guiling^⑤. Qi won an overwhelming victory over Liang.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Notes

- ① These three states were among the seven powerful states at the time during the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).
- ② Sun was a descendant of the famous military strategist Sun Wu. He and Pang Juan were both students of the art of war under the same teacher. Knowing Sun was superior in talent, Pang invited Sun to serve the State of Wei as his assistant, and then on a frame-up charge sentenced Sun to corporal punishment, having his feet amputated. Later, Sun fled to the State of Qi and he was well received by King Wei and Tian Ji. He emerged as a famous strategist, and was known as Sun Bin (*bin* in Chinese bearing the meaning of being amputated) so that his actual name was never recorded in history.
- ③ Wei was also called Liang because its capital was later moved to Daliang (present-day Kaifeng, Henan Province).
- ④ the capital of Zhao (in present-day Hebei Province).
- ⑤ near present-day Heze County, Shandong Province.

mén

门

kě

可

luó

罗

què

雀

①

xià guī dī gōng wèi tíng wèi bīn kè tián mén jí
下邳翟公为“廷尉”，宾客填^②门；及

fèi mén wài ér shè què luó hòu fù wéi tíng wèi kè yù
废，门外而设雀罗。后复为“廷尉”，客欲

wǎng dī gōng dà shǔ qí mén yuē yī sǐ yī shēng
往，翟公大署^③其门曰：“一死一生，

nǎi zhī jiāo qíng yī pín yī fù nǎi zhī jiāo tài^④ yī guì yī
乃知交情；一贫一富，乃知交态^④；一贵一

jiàn jiāo qíng nǎi jiàn^⑤。”

shǐ jì jì zhèng liè zhuàn
《史记·汲郑列传》

白话
翻译

下邳(guī)县翟公曾做“廷尉”，家中宾客满门；等到一没了官，门外便冷清得可以布网捕雀。他恢复“廷尉”的官后，(从前的)宾客们又想前往拜见，翟公就在大门上写道：“一死一生，乃知交情；一贫一富，乃知交态；一贵一贱，交情乃见。”



You Can Trap Sparrows at the Quiet Door



When Zhai Gong, whose native place was Xiagui^①, was made administrator of justice, guests swarmed to his residence. But, when he was dismissed from office, it was so quiet at the door of his mansion that a sieve-trap for sparrows could be set there without fear of being disturbed.

Later, on his resuming office, his guests wanted to call on him again. He at once wrote some big words on a piece of paper and had it posted up at the gate. The words were: If one wants to know who is true-hearted, the best moment is when he becomes dead or, fortunately, escapes from death; and to find out who has a sincere attitude, then it is when he becomes poor or, as the case may be, rich. The best time to test friendship is when he is exalted or, unfortunately, humiliated.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



注释

① 门可罗雀：原指大门之前可以张起网来捕麻雀。形容十分冷落，宾客稀少。后形容为官者昔日权势熏天，而丢官失势后，门庭冷落车马稀；或形容事业由盛而衰，宾客稀少之况，常用此语。罗：用绳线结成的捕鸟网。

② 填：充满。

③ 署：题写。

④ 交态：结交的状况，指交情的真伪深浅。

⑤ 见：同“现”。显现。



Note

① present-day Weinan County in Shaanxi Province.

liǎng
两
bài
败
jù
俱
shāng
伤
①

hán wèi xiāng gōng qī nián bù jiě qín huì wáng yù jiù
韩魏相攻，期年不解。秦惠王欲救
zhī wèn yú zuǒ yòu zuǒ yòu huò yuē jiù zhī biàn huò yuē
之，问于左右。左右或曰^②救之便，或曰
wù jiù biàn huì wáng wèi néng wèi zhī jué
勿救便，惠王未能为之决。

.....

chén zhēn duì yuē yì cháng yǒu yì fū xià zhuāng
陈轸^③对曰：“亦尝有以夫卜庄
zǐ cì hǔ wén yú wáng zhě hū zhuāng zǐ yù cì hǔ guǎn^④
子刺虎闻于王者乎？庄子欲刺虎，馆^④
shù zǐ zhǐ zhī yuē liǎng hǔ fāng qiè shí niú shí gān bì
竖子^⑤止之，曰：‘两虎方且食牛，食甘必
zhēng zhēng zé bì dòu dòu zé dà zhě shāng xiǎo zhě sǐ
争，争则必斗，斗则大者伤，小者死，
cóng shāng ér cì zhī yī jǔ bì yǒu shuāng hǔ zhī míng
从伤而刺之，一举必有双虎之名。’
biàn zhuāng zǐ yì wèi rán lì xū zhī yǒu qǐng liǎng hǔ guǒ
卜庄子以为然，立须之。有顷，两虎果
dòu dà zhě shāng xiǎo zhě sǐ zhuāng zǐ cóng shāng zhě ér
斗，大者伤，小者死。庄子从伤者而
cì zhī yī jǔ guǒ yǒu shuāng hǔ zhī gōng jīn hán wèi xiāng
刺之，一举果有双虎之功。今韩魏相
gōng qī nián bù jiě shì bì dà guó shāng xiǎo guó wáng
攻，期年不解，是必大国伤，小国亡，
cóng shāng ér fá zhī yī jǔ bì yǒu liǎng shí cǐ yóu zhuāng
从伤而伐之，一举必有两实。此犹庄
zǐ cì hǔ zhī lèi yě chén zhǔ yǔ wáng hé yì yě huì
子刺虎之类也。臣主^⑥与王何异也。”惠
wáng yuē shàn zú fú jiù dà guó guǒ shāng xiǎo guó
王曰：“善。”卒弗救。大国果伤，小国
wáng qín xìng bīng ér fá dà kè^⑦ zhī
亡，秦兴兵而伐，大克^⑦之。

shǐ jì zhāng yí liè zhuàn
《史记·张仪列传》



Both Sides Lose, Neither Side Gains



The State of Han and the State of Wei^① were fighting each other. For a whole year, the two were locked together in the tussle. King Hui of the State of Qin was thinking of interfering, and so he asked his ministers for their opinion. Some said that interference would bring good to the state while others asserted that it would only bring harm. This left King Hui in a dilemma, unable to come to a decision.

....

An eloquent debater called Chen Zhen^② opened up, saying: "Has anyone ever told Your Highness the story of Zhuangzi^③ killing tigers? Well, Zhuangzi was going to kill tigers having an ox as their prey when an attendant in his inn came to stop him, saying: 'Not now. The two animals are just beginning to eat the ox, and when they find the taste of the meat really delicious, they will certainly come to contend for it. And contention will lead to a fight, and in fighting the big one will suffer injury while the small one will be killed. Then you can go and kill them and you will win yourself the fame of having killed two tigers at one stroke.' Bian Zhuangzi thought that the man had said the right thing and waited. Before long the two

白话
翻译

韩国和魏国交战，整整一年不能解除。秦惠王打算让他们和解，询问左右亲信的意见。左右亲信有的人说让他们和解有利，有的说不和解有利，惠王不能为此事作出决断。

……

陈轸回答说：“也曾有人把卞庄子刺虎的事讲给大王听吗？卞庄子正要刺杀猛虎，旅馆有个小子阻止他，说：‘两只虎正在吃牛，等它们吃出滋味的时候一定会争夺，一争夺就一定会打起来，一打起来，那么大的就会受伤，小的就会死亡，追逐着受伤的老虎而刺杀它，这一来必然获得刺杀双虎的名声。’卞庄认为他说得对，站在旁边等待它们。不久，两只老虎果然打起来了，结果大的受了伤，小的死了，庄子追赶上受伤的老虎而杀死了它，这样一来果然获得了杀死两只老虎的功劳。如今，韩国、魏国交战，一年不能解除，这样势必大国损伤，小国一定危亡，追逐着受到损伤的国家而讨伐它，这一讨伐必然会获得两个胜利果实。这就如同庄子刺杀猛虎一类的事。我为自己的国君出主意和为大王出主意有什么不同呢？”惠王说：“说的好。”终于没有帮助它们和解。大国果然受到损伤，小国面临着危亡，秦国趁机出兵讨伐，战胜韩国和魏国，取得了非常大的胜利。

注释

① 两败俱伤：斗争双方都受到损伤，谁也没得到好处。俱：全。

② 或曰：有的人说。

③ 陈轸(zhěn)：游说的策士，侍奉秦惠王，受到重用而显贵。

④ 馆：旅舍。

⑤ 竖子：小子。对人的蔑称。

⑥ 臣主：指楚怀王。王：指秦惠王。

⑦ 克：战胜。



beasts as predicted came to a strife and also as had been said, the big one got injured and the small one succumbed. Zhuangzi then thrust his sword into the wounded one and obtained two dead tigers at once.”

Chen Zhen paused and then went on, “Now, Han and Wei have been fighting each other for a year and come out even. But it will turn out that the bigger state is to suffer from damage and the smaller one to collapse. Taking advantage of this, we will reap double gains, just like the case of Zhuangzi, the tiger-killer.”

“Good! ” uttered King Hui, who then gave up the idea of interference. Truly, things happened as expected: the bigger state Wei lost much of its strength and the smaller Han was vanquished. Qin then despatched its troops to attack both and won an overwhelming victory.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Notes

- ① during the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).
- ② an eloquent debator and counsellor of the State of Chu.
- ③ also called Bi Zhuangzi, a brave fellow of the State of Lu, known for his audacity in tiger killing.

wán
完
bì
璧
guī
归
zhào
赵
①

zhào huì wén wáng shí dé chǔ hé shì bì qín zhāo
赵惠文王时，得楚和氏璧^②。秦昭

wáng wén zhī shǐ rén yí zhào wáng shū yuàn yǐ shí wǔ
王闻之，使人遗^③赵王书，愿以十五

chéng qǐng yì bì zhào wáng yǔ dà jiāng jūn lián pō zhū dà
城请易璧。赵王与大将军廉颇诸大

chén móu yù yǔ qín qín chéng kǒng bù kě dé tú jiàn^④
臣谋：欲予秦，秦城恐不可得，徒见^④

qī yù wù yǔ jí huàn qín bīng zhī lái jì wèi dìng qiú
欺；欲勿予，即患^⑤秦兵之来。计未定，求

rén kě shǐ bào qín zhě wèi dé
人可使报秦者，未得。……

yú shì wáng zhào jiàn wèn lǐn xiàng rú yuē qín wáng
于是王召见，问蔺相如曰：“秦王

yǐ shí wǔ chéng qǐng yì guǎ rén zhī bì kě yǔ bù^⑥ xiāng
以十五城请易寡人之璧，可予不^⑥？”相

rú yuē qín qiáng ér zhào ruò bù kě bù xǔ wáng yuē
如曰：“秦强而赵弱，不可不许。”王曰：

qǔ wú bì bù yǔ wǒ chéng nài hé xiàng rú yuē
“取吾璧，不予我城，奈何？”相如曰：“

qín yǐ chéng qiú bì ér zhào bù xǔ qū zài zhào zhào yǔ bì
秦以城求璧而赵不许，曲在赵。赵予璧

ér qín bù yǔ zhào chéng qū zài qín jūn zhī èr cè níng
而秦不予赵城，曲在秦。均^⑦之二策，宁

xǔ yǐ fù qín qū wáng yuē shéi kě shǐ zhě xiàng
许以负秦曲^⑧。”王曰：“谁可使者？”相

rú yuē wáng bì wú rén chén yuàn fèng bì wǎng shǐ^⑨
如曰：“王必无人，臣愿奉^⑨璧往使。

chéng rù zhào ér bì liú qín chéng bù rù chén qǐng wán
城入赵，而璧留秦；城不入，臣请完

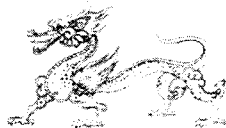
bì guī zhào zhào wáng yú shì suì qiǎn xiāng rú fèng bì xī
璧归赵。”赵王于是遂遣相如奉璧西

rù qín
入秦。

qín wáng zuò zhāng tái^⑩ jiàn xiàng rú xiàng rú fèng bì
秦王坐章台^⑩见相如。相如奉璧



Return the Jade Intact to Zhao



When King Huiwen was ruling the State of Zhao, he was fortunate enough to acquire a piece of jade discovered by Bian He of the State of Chu. Hearing this, King Zhao of the State of Qin sent a letter to the King of Zhao, offering fifteen cities in exchange for the treasure. The King immediately sought counsel with General Lian Po and his ministers, confessing that he was worried he might thus lose the jade for nothing if the ruler of Qin broke his word and refused to give him the cities, and on the other hand, if he did not let go the jade, Qin might come to attack Zhao. Much discussion went on, but the matter was not settled. Pending the solution of this problem, King Huiwen looked for a person who could give Qin a satisfactory reply, yet he was not able to find the right man. . . .

The King, then, summoned Lin Xiangru to his presence and brought out the question.

“Shall I give the King of Qin my jade in exchange for his fifteen cities?” asked the prince.

“Since Qin is more powerful than Zhao, it seems you have to comply with the request,” answered Xiangru.

“Suppose he takes my stone without giving me the cities, what is to be done?”

“If Qin offers the cities in exchange for the stone and Zhao

zòu qín wáng qín wáng dà xǐ chuán yǐ shì měi rén jí
 奏^①秦王。秦王大喜，传以示美人^②及
 zuǒ yòu zuǒ yòu jiē hū wàn suì xiàng rú shì qín wáng wú yì
 左右^③，左右皆呼万岁。相如视秦王无意
 cháng zhào chéng nǎi qián yuē bì yǒu xiá qǐng zhǐ shì
 偿赵城，乃前曰：“璧有瑕^④，请指示
 wáng wáng shòu bì xiāng rú yīn chí bì què lì yǐ
 王。”王授璧。相如因持璧却^⑤立，倚
 zhù nù fā shàng chōng guān wèi qín wáng yuē dà wáng yù
 柱，怒发上冲冠，谓秦王曰：“大王欲
 dé bì shǐ rén fā shū zhì zhào wáng zhào wáng xī zhào qún
 得璧，使人发书至赵王，赵王悉召群
 chén yì jiē yuē qín tān fù qí qiáng yǐ kōng yán qiú
 臣议，皆曰：‘秦贪，负^⑥其强，以空言求
 bì cháng chéng kǒng bù kě dé yì bù yù yǔ qín bì chén
 璧，偿城恐不可得。’议不欲予秦璧。臣
 yǐ wèi bù yī zhī jiāo shàng bù xiāng qī kuàng dà guó hū
 以为布衣之交^⑦尚不相欺，况大国乎！
 qiè yǐ yī bì zhī gù nì qiáng qín zhī huān bù kě yú shì
 且以一璧之故，逆^⑧强秦之欢，不可。于是
 zhào wáng nǎi zhāi jiè wǔ rì shǐ chén fèng bì bài sòng shū
 赵王乃斋戒^⑨五日，使臣奉璧，拜送书
 yú tíng hé zhě yán dà guó zhī wēi yǐ xiū jìng yě jīn chén
 于庭。何者？严^⑩大国之威以修敬也。今臣
 zhì dà wáng jiàn chén liè guān lǐ jié shèn jù dé bì
 至，大王见臣列观，礼节甚倨；得璧，
 chuán zhī měi rén yǐ xì nù chén chén guān dà wáng wú yì
 传之美人，以戏弄臣。臣观大王无意
 cháng zhào wáng chéng yì gù chén fù qǔ bì dà wáng bì yù
 偿赵王城邑，故臣复取璧。大王必欲
 jí chén chén tóu jīn yǔ bì jù suì yú zhù yǐ
 急^⑪臣，臣头今与璧俱碎于柱矣！”

xiàng rú chí qí bì nì zhù yù yǐ jī zhù qín wáng
 相如持其璧睨^⑫柱，欲以击柱。秦王
 kǒng qí pò bì nǎi cí xiè gù qǐng zhào yǒu sī àn tú zhǐ
 恐其破璧，乃辞谢固请，召有司^⑬案图，指
 cóng cǐ yǐ wǎng shí wǔ dū yǔ zhào xiàng rú dù qín wáng tè
 从此以往十五都予赵。相如度秦王特^⑭



refuses, Zhao will be in the wrong. If Zhao gives the jade and Qin does not give the cities, Qin will be in the wrong. Weighing these two situations, I prefer to give consent to Qin's request so that Qin will be put in a position susceptible of going wrong."

"Then, who is eligible for this mission?"

"I know Your Highness can't find the right person. I am willing to be the messenger and escort the jade to Qin. If Zhao gets the promised cities, then I will leave the jade in Qin; otherwise, upon my word, I will bring it back intact."

So, the King of Zhao despatched Xiangru westward to Qin with the jade.

On arrival, Xiangru was received by the King of Qin in Changtai Palace. Xiangru offered the jade to the ruler of Qin who was greatly pleased. He showed it round among his palace maids and attendants. The courtiers hailed and applauded.

Seeing that the King of Qin had no intention of giving the promised cities to Zhao, Xiangru stepped forward and said, "The jade has flaws. Please let me show it to Your Highness." The King of Qin handed the jade over to Xiangru, who with the stone in hand retreated a few steps to lean on a column, and in great fury addressed the King, "When Your Highness wrote to the King of Zhao expressing your wish to possess the jade, our prince immediately called in all his ministers to seek their opinion. The ministers said, 'Qin is a greedy state and on the strength of its power and might only want to get the jade for nothing. We are afraid that we may not be able to get the

yǐ zhà yáng wéi yǔ zhào chéng shí bù kě dé nǎi wèi qín wáng
以祚佯为予赵城，实不可得，乃谓秦王
yuē hé shì bì tiān xià suǒ gòng chuán bǎo yě zhào wáng
曰：“和氏璧，天下所共传^②宝也，赵王
kǒng bù gǎn bù xiàn zhào wáng sòng bì shí zhāi jiè wǔ rì
恐，不敢不献。赵王送璧时，斋戒五日，
jīn dà wáng yì yí zhāi jiè wǔ rì shè jiǔ bīn yú tíng chén
今大王亦宜斋戒五日，设九宾^③于廷，臣
nǎi gǎn shàng bì qín wáng duó zhī zhōng bù kě qiáng duó
乃敢上璧。”秦王度之，终不可强夺，
suì xǔ zhāi wǔ rì shè xiàng rú guǎng chéng chuán
遂许斋五日，舍相如广成传^④。

xiàng rú duó qín wáng suī zhāi jué fù yuē bù cháng chéng
相如度秦王虽斋，决负约不偿城，
nǎi shǐ qí cóng zhě yī hē huái qí bì cóng jìng dào wáng
乃使其从者衣褐^⑤，怀其璧，从径道^⑥亡，
guī bì yú zhào
归璧于赵。

shǐ jì lián pō lǐn xiàng rú liè zhuàn
《史记·廉颇蔺相如列传》

白话
翻译



赵惠文王的时候，得到了楚国的和氏璧。秦昭王听说了这件事，就派人送给赵王一封书信，表示愿意用十五座城请求交换这块美玉。赵王同大将军廉颇等大臣们商议：想要把美玉给了秦国，秦国的城池恐怕不可能得到，白白地被欺骗；想要不给呢，就怕秦军马上来攻打。怎么解决还没有确定，想找一个能派到秦国去回复的使者，没能找到。……

于是赵王召见，问蔺相如说：“秦王用十五座城请求交换我的和氏璧，能不能给他呢？”相如说：“秦国强大，赵国弱小，不能不答应它。”赵王说：“得了我的和氏璧，不给我城池，怎么办？”相如说：“秦国请求用城交换璧，赵国如果不答应，赵国理亏；赵国给了璧而秦国不给赵国城池，秦国理亏。两种对策衡量一下，宁可答应它，让秦国来承担理亏



cities promised by Qin.’ So it was their consensus that we should not give you the jade. But, to my mind, not even commoners will ever resort to cheating when making friends, let alone a powerful state. Moreover, it is not worthwhile for Zhao to offend the powerful Qin’s friendly feelings merely because of a piece of jade. Having listened to my advice, the King of Zhao fasted for five days before he asked me to bring the jade here, and when he sent me off, he even went through a ceremony in the courtyard for the solemn act of giving me the credentials. Just think, why should the King of Zhao do all that? It only shows his double respect for the prestige of a powerful state like yours. Well, now I am here and you receive me in an ordinary palace like this without any protocol, which cannot but be a sign of your arrogance. What is more, you have just passed the jade around among the maids to make me look ridiculous. Since I see that Your Highness has no intention of compensating Zhao with the cities which you definitely promised, I claim the jade back. If Your Highness chooses to put pressure on me to submit it, I will immediately knock both the stone and my head against this column, and break both.”

Saying this, Xiangru held up the jade and directed his eyes toward the column, ready to act. Afraid that he was going to smash the jade, the King of Qin made an apology and entreated Xiangru not to do so. Then, he summoned the official concerned to read the map of Qin to Xiangru and mark off fifteen cities to be given over to Zhao.

Being a cautious man, Xiangru had a notion that the King



的责任。”赵王说：“谁可以派为使臣？”相如说：“大王如果确实无人可派，臣愿捧护和氏璧前往出使。城池归属赵国了，就把和氏璧留给秦国；城池不能归入赵国，我一定把和氏璧完好地带回赵国。”赵王于是就派遣蔺相如带好和氏璧，向西出行进入秦国。

秦王坐在章台上接见蔺相如，相如捧璧献给秦王。秦王大喜，把璧玉给嫔妃和左右侍从传看，左右都高呼万岁。相如看出秦王没有用城池给赵国抵偿的意思，便走上前去说：“璧上有个小红斑，让我指给大王看。”秦王把璧交给相如。相如于是手持璧玉退后几步站定，身体靠在柱子上，怒发冲冠，对秦王说：“大王想得到璧玉，就派人送信给赵王，赵王召集全体大臣商议，大家都说：‘秦国贪得无厌，倚仗它的强大，想用空话得到璧玉，给我们的城池恐怕是不能得到的。’商议不想把璧玉交换给秦国。我认为平民百姓的交往尚且不互相欺骗，何况是大国呢！况且为了一块璧玉的缘故，就使强大的秦国不高兴，也是不应该的。于是赵王就斋戒了五天，派我捧着宝璧，在殿堂上恭敬地拜送国书。为什么要这样呢？是尊重大国的威望以表示敬意。如今我来到秦国，大王却在一般的台观接见我，礼节非常傲慢；得到璧玉后，传给嫔妃们观看，用这样的方式来戏弄我。我观察大王没有给赵王十五城的诚意，所以我又收回宝璧。大王如果一定要逼迫我，我的头今天就同宝璧一起在柱子上撞碎！”

相如手持宝璧，斜视着庭柱，就要向庭柱上撞去。秦王怕他把宝璧撞碎，便向他道歉，坚决请求他不要如此，并召来主管的官员查看地图，指明从某地到某地的十五座城池交割给赵国。相如揣度秦王不过是用欺诈的手段假装给赵国城池，实际上赵国是不可能得到的，于是就对秦王说：“和氏璧是天下公认的宝物，赵王惧怕秦国，不敢不奉献出来。赵王在送璧之前，斋戒了五天，如今大王也应斋戒五天，在殿堂上安排九宾大典，我才敢献上宝璧。”秦王估量此事，毕竟不可强力夺取，于是就答应斋戒五天，请相如住在广成宾馆。



of Qin was only playing a trick, pretending to make Zhao a gift of the cities, but not intending that Zhao should actually obtain them. So he said to the King of Qin seriously, "Heshi Jade is known by all to be a treasure. That Zhao has offered it to Qin is out of fear. Since our King, when he sent the jade to you, fasted for five days, it is only proper that Your Highness should do likewise and, later, perform a solemn ceremony of reception in the main palace. Only then dare I offer the jade to you." Realizing that after all he could rob it from Xiangru by force, the King of Qin promised to fast and ordered Xiangru to be lodged in the Guangheng Palace Guest House.

Considering again that the King of Qin, although he had promised to fast and might actually do so, was any minute ready to go back on his words and refuse to give the cities, Xiangru asked his attendant to disguise himself as a commoner by putting on a coarse hemp coat and to return to Zhao with the jade by a short-cut.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)

相如估计秦王即使答应斋戒，但必定背约不给城池，于是派跟随自己的人穿上粗麻布衣服，怀中藏好宝璧，从小路逃出，把宝璧送回赵国。

注释

① 完璧归赵：出自战国故事。秦王许诺赵王以十五座城换取和氏璧，当使臣蔺相如献璧之后，秦王却不提换城之事，蔺相如施巧计使和氏璧重归赵国。现在多指以原物归还其主。璧：指和氏璧，它是一块美玉的名称。

② 和氏璧：据《韩非子·和氏篇》记载，楚人卞和在山中得到璞，献给楚厉王，厉王派玉匠鉴别，说是石块。厉王下令砍断卞和的左脚。楚武王即位，卞和又献璞，玉匠仍说是石块。武王又砍断他的右脚。楚文王即位，卞和抱璞在山中大哭。文王令匠人把璞剖开，里边果然是一块美玉，于是命名为和氏之璧。

③ 遗：送。

④ 徒：白白地。见：被。

⑤ 患：担心。

⑥ 不：通“否”。

⑦ 均：衡量。

⑧ 负秦曲：使秦国承担理屈的责任。

⑨ 奉：恭敬地捧着。

⑩ 章台：战国时秦国渭南离官内的一座台观(guàn)名。

⑪ 奏：进献。

⑫ 美人：指妃嫔、姬妾。

⑬ 左右：指秦王近侍。

⑭ 瑕：玉上的赤色小斑点。

⑮ 却：退。

⑯ 负：倚仗。

⑰ 布衣之交：平民交友。

⑱ 逆：违背，触犯。





① 斋戒：古人在祭祀之前几天要沐浴更衣，戒酒、戒荤，戒女色；以表示对神的虔诚，总称为斋戒。

② 严：尊重。修敬：致敬。

③ 急：逼迫。

④ 眈(nì)：斜视。

⑤ 有司：主管某方面事务的官吏。

⑥ 特：不过。

⑦ 共传：公认。

⑧ 九宾：当时外交上最隆重的礼仪，由九名迎宾典礼人员，依次传呼接引宾客上殿。

⑨ 舍：安置住宿。广成传：传，传舍，宾馆。广成，宾馆的名称。

⑩ 褐(hè)：粗麻布短衣。

⑪ 径道：小路。



fù
荆
请
罪
①

guī guó yǐ xiàng rú gōng dà bài wéi shàng qīng
……归国，以相如功大，拜为上卿^②，

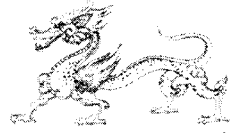
wèi zài lián pō zhī yòu lián pō yuē wǒ wèi zhào jiāng
位在廉颇之右^③。廉颇曰：“我为赵将，
yǒu gōng chéng yě zhàn zhī dà gōng ér lǐn xiàng rú tú yǐ
有攻城野战之大功，而蔺相如徒以
kǒu shé wéi láo ér wèi jū wǒ shàng qiè xiāng rú sù jiàn
口舌为劳^④，而位居我上。且相如素贱
rén wú xiū bù rěn wéi zhī xià xuān yán yuē wǒ
人^⑤，吾羞，不忍为之下。”宣言^⑥曰：“我
jiàn xiàng rú bì rǔ zhī xiàng rú wén bù kěn yǔ huì
见相如，必辱之。”相如闻，不肯与会。
xiàng rú měi cháo shí cháng chēng bìng bù yù yǔ lián pō
相如每朝时，常称病，不欲与廉颇
zhēng liè yǐ ér xiàng rú chū wàng jiàn lián pō xiāng
争列^⑦。已而^⑧相如出，望见廉颇，相
rú yǐn chē bì nì
如引车避匿。

yú shì shě rén xiāng yǔ jiàn yuē chén suǒ yǐ qù
于是舍人相与谏^⑨曰：“臣所以去^⑩

qīn qī ér shì jūn zhě tú mù jūn zhī gāo yì yě jīn jūn yǔ
亲戚而事君者，徒慕君之高议也。今君与
lián pō tóng liè lián jūn xuān è yán ér jūn wèi nì zhī
廉颇同列^⑪，廉君宣恶言而君畏匿之，
kǒng jù shū shèn qiè yōng rén shàng xiū zhī kuàng yú jiāng
恐惧殊甚，且庸人尚羞之，况于将
xiàng hū chén dēng bù xiǎo qǐng cí qù lǐn xiàng rú
相乎！臣等不肖^⑫，请辞去。”蔺相如
gù zhǐ zhī yuē gōng zhī shì lián jiāng jūn shú yǔ qín
固止之^⑬，曰：“公^⑭之视廉将军孰与秦
wáng yuē bù ruò yě xiàng rú yuē fū yǐ qín
王？”曰：“不若也。”相如曰：“夫以秦
wáng zhī wēi ér xiàng rú tíng chì zhī rǔ qí qún chén xiàng
王之威，而相如廷斥之，辱其群臣，相
rú suī nú dú wèi lián jiāng jūn zāi gù wú niàn zhī
如虽弩^⑮，独畏廉将军哉？顾^⑯吾念之，



Bear a Birch to Offer a Humble Apology



When Lin Xiangru returned to Zhao^①, he was made a high official ranking above Lian Po because he had rendered an outstanding service to the State.

At this, Lian Po complained to everyone: "I am a general of the State of Zhao and have rendered meritorious services on the battlefield. Now, Lin Xiangru is put in a position superior to mine for his mere eloquence. Besides, he is a man of humble birth. I can't bear to be below him, it is a disgrace." In the end he went so far as to declare: "If he comes into my sight, I'll cry shame on him." On hearing this, Xiangru decided to avoid Lian Po in every way.

When the time came for the ministers to appear at court, Xiangru always absented himself and stayed home on the pretext of ill health. This was simply to avoid contending with Lian Po for precedence at court. Later, whenever Xiangru was out driving and sighted Lian Po on the way, he would order his carriage to turn about and avoid him.

Lin's guest advisers all began to protest at his undue humility, saying: "The reason why we left our own people and came to serve you is just that we admire your noble quality.

qiáng qín zhī suǒ yǐ bù gǎn jiā bīng yú zhào zhě tú yǐ wú liǎng rén
 强秦之所以不敢加兵于赵者，徒以吾两人
 zài yě jīn liǎng hǔ gòng dòu qí shì bù jù shēng ①。wú suǒ yǐ
 在也。今两虎共斗，其势不俱生^①。吾所以
 wèi cǐ zhě yǐ xiān guó jiǎ zhī jí ér hòu sī chóu yě
 为此者，以先国家之急而后私仇也。”

lián pō wén zhī ròu tǎn fù jīng yīn bīn kè ② zhì lǐn xiàng
 廉颇闻之，肉袒负荆，因宾客^②至蔺相
 rú mén xiè zuì yuē bǐ jiàn zhī rén bù zhī jiāng jūn kuān
 如门谢罪，曰：“鄙贱之人^③，不知将军宽
 zhī zhì cǐ yě zú xiāng yǔ huān wèi wǎn jǐng zhī jiāo
 之至此也！”卒^④相与欢，为刎颈之交^⑤。

shǐ jì lián pō lǐn xiàng rú liè zhuàn
 《史记·廉颇蔺相如列传》

白话
 翻译

(渑池之会结束之后)相如回到本国,(赵王)因为蔺相如功劳大,就任命他做了上卿,职位在廉颇之上。廉颇说:“我成为赵国的大将,有着攻城野战的大功劳,可是蔺相如只是凭着言词立下了功劳,如今职位却比我高。况且蔺相如出身卑贱,我感到羞耻,不能忍受(自己的职位)在他之下的屈辱!”对外扬言说:“我碰见蔺相如,一定要羞辱他。”蔺相如听说这话,不肯和廉颇见面。相如每到上朝时,常说有病,不愿和廉颇争位次上的高低。过了些日子,蔺相如出门,远远望见廉颇,就叫自己的车子绕道躲开。

于是他的门下客人都对相如说:“我们所以离开家人前来投靠您,就是因为爱慕您的崇高品德。现在您和廉颇将军职位一样高,廉将军在外面讲您的坏话,您却因为害怕而躲避他,恐惧得太厉害了。连一个平常人也觉得羞愧,何况您还身为将相呢!我们实在不中用,请让我们告辞回家吧!”蔺相如坚决挽留他们,说:“你们看廉将军和秦王哪个厉害?”门客回答说:“自然不如(秦王)。”相如说:“像秦王那样威风,而我还敢在秦国的朝廷上叱责过他,羞辱他



Now, you are of equal rank with Lian Po, who has been openly speaking evil of you, yet you fear him so much that you hide yourself away from him. This is more than needed and is something even the common people would feel ashamed of, not to say a prime minister or any other ranking official. It seems we are not useful here. Please allow us to leave.”

Lin, however, insisted on their staying and asked them a question: “You gentlemen please tell me who is more formidable? Lian Po? Or the King of Qin?”

“Of course, Lian Po is not so formidable as the King of Qin,” was the answer.

“Well,” Lin Xiangru came to the point at issue, “despite the awesomeness of the King of Qin, I dared rebuke him in his court and bring shame on his courtiers. Incapable as I may be, I don’t think I have any reason to fear General Lian. What I have been turning over in my mind is why the powerful Qin so far dare not invade Zhao. Isn’t it merely because Lian Po and I are both in the service of Zhao at court? Suppose we two ‘tigers’ now pitch into each other, one of us must go out of existence. That I’ve been treating Lian Po in the way known to you all is to show I put the safety of the state above private grievances.”

When these words of Lin Xiangru were passed on to Lian Po, he was extremely moved. Stripping himself to the waist and carrying a birch on his back, he asked his guest adviser to take him to the mansion of Lin Xiangru to offer a humble apology. Lian said to Lin, “What an ignorant man I am! I never realized how magnanimous you are.” In the end, the two

的群臣。我虽然无能，难道唯独害怕一个廉将军吗？但是我考虑到这样的问题，强大的秦国之所以不敢发兵攻打我们赵国，只是因为我们有两人在。现在两虎相斗，势必有一个要伤亡。我之所以这样做，是因为先顾全国家的安危，而后考虑个人的恩怨。”

廉颇听到了这些话，便解衣赤背，背上荆条，由宾客引着来到蔺相如家中请罪，说：“我这鄙贱的人，不晓得将军宽厚到这个地步！”两人终于和好，成为誓同生死的朋友。

注释

① 负荆请罪：背上荆条请求责罚。表示真诚地认罪赔礼。负，背着。荆，荆条。

② 拜：授官。卿：周天子及诸侯所属高级官职的通称，分上、中、下三级。上卿，相当于后来的宰相。

③ 右：古代席位以左为尊，职位以右为尊。

④ 徒以口舌为劳：只不过因为能说会道立了功劳。

⑤ 贱人：指蔺相如出身微贱。

⑥ 宣言：对外扬言。

⑦ 争列：争位次的上下(先后或尊卑)。

⑧ 已而：不久，过些时。

⑨ 相与：共同，一起。谏：下对上的劝告。

⑩ 去：离开。

⑪ 同列：指二人同为上卿。

⑫ 不肖：不贤，不才。

⑬ 固止之：一再劝阻他们。

⑭ 公：敬称对方之词。孰与秦王：比秦王怎样。

⑮ 弩：劣马，比喻庸碌无能。

⑯ 顾：但是。

⑰ 不俱生：不能一起都生存下来。

⑱ 因宾客：通过自家的宾客引导。

⑲ 鄙贱之人：鄙陋卑贱的人，自责之词。将军：当时上卿职兼将相，故蔺相如也可称将军。

⑳ 卒：终于。

㉑ 刎颈之交：即生死之交。



were on good terms and vowed to be life-and-death companions.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Note

① see the story "Return the Jade Intact to Zhao"

zhǐ
shàng
tán
bīng
①

zhào kuò zì shǎo shí xué bīng fǎ yán bīng shì yǐ tiān xià
赵括自少时学兵法，言兵事，以天下
mò néng dāng cháng yǔ qī fù shē yán bīng shì shē bù néng
莫能当^②。尝与其父奢言兵事，奢不能
nàn rán bù wèi shàn kuò mǔ wèn shē qī gù shē yuē
难^③，然不谓善。括母问奢其故，奢曰：“
bīng sǐ dì yě ér kuò yì yán zhī shǐ zhào bù jiāng kuò zé
兵，死地也，而括易言之。使赵不将括^④则
yǐ ruò bì jiāng zhī pò zhào jūn zhě bì kuò yě
已，若必将之，破赵军者必括也。”……

qī nián qín yǔ zhào bīng xiāng jù cháng píng shí zhào
七年，秦与赵兵相距^⑤长平，时赵
shē yǐ sǐ ér lǐn xiàng rú bìng dǔ zhào shǐ lián pō jiāng
奢已死，而蔺相如病笃^⑥，赵使廉颇将
gōng qín qín shù bài zhào jūn zhào jūn gù bì bù zhàn qín
攻秦，秦数败赵军，赵军固壁不战。秦
shù tiāo zhàn lián pō bù kěn zhào wáng xìn qín zhī jiàn
数挑战，廉颇不肯。赵王信秦之间——
qín zhī jiàn yán yuē qín zhī suǒ wù dú wèi mǎ fú jūn zhào
秦之间言曰：“秦之所恶^⑦，独畏马服君赵
shē zhī zǐ zhào kuò wéi jiāng ěr zhào wáng yīn yǐ kuò wéi
奢之子赵括为将耳。”赵王因以括为
jiāng dài lián pō
将，代廉颇。……

zhào kuò jì dài lián pō xī gèng yuē shù yì zhì
赵括既代廉颇，悉更约束^⑧，易置^⑨
jūn lì qín jiāng bái qǐ wén zhī zòng qí bīng yáng bài zǒu
军吏。秦将白起闻之，纵奇兵，佯败走，
ér jué qí liáng dào fēn duàn qí jūn wéi èr shì zú lì xīn
而绝其粮道，分断其军为二，士卒离心。
sì shí yú rì jūn è zhào kuò chū ruì zú zì bó zhàn
四十余日，军饿，赵括出锐卒^⑩自搏战，
qín jūn shè shā zhào kuò
秦军射杀赵括。

shǐ jì lián pō lǐn xiàng rú liè zhuàn
《史记·廉颇蔺相如列传》

Strategic Planning on Paper



Zhao Guo^① had had lessons in the art of war since he was very young. Therefore, in speaking of military strategy and tactics, he thought none could excel him. Once he had a discussion with his father Zhao She, a senior general, about the command of troops and conduct of wars. He talked in such a self-assured way that his father, though finding it impossible to refute him, distained to say a word in his praise. For this Guo's mother asked her husband the reason.

"To fight a war entails fatal danger," answered Zhao She. "But Guo passed it off as something easy in his talk. It would be better if our state did not appoint him as a commander. If they do, he will surely be the one to lead our troops to doom."

In the seventh year^② (259 BC), the army of the State of Qin drove into the State of Zhao, and their troops confronted each other at Changping^③. By that time Zhao She had passed away and Lin Xiangru was very ill, and so the King of Zhao ordered Lian Po to take command and attack Qin. Having suffered several defeats, the Zhao troops firmly held their position in defence and stopped fighting. In spite of Qin's repeated challenges, Lian Po refused to make any move. Then

白话
翻译

赵括从小就学习兵法,谈论军事,以为天下没人能抵得过他。他曾与父亲赵奢谈论用兵之事,赵奢也难不倒他,可是并不说他好。赵括的母亲问赵奢这是什么缘故,赵奢说:“用兵打仗是关乎生死的事,然而赵括却把这事说得那么容易。假使赵国不用赵括为将也就罢了,要是一定让他为将,使赵军失败的一定就是他呀”。……

孝成王七年(前259),秦军与赵军在长平对阵,那时赵奢已经死了,蔺相如也已病危,赵王派廉颇率兵攻打秦军,秦军几次打败赵军,赵军坚守营垒不出战。秦军屡次挑战,廉颇置之不理。赵王听信秦军的离间散布的谣言——秦军间谍说:“秦军所厌恶忌讳的,唯独怕马服君赵奢的儿子赵括来做将军。”赵王因此就用赵括为将军,取代了廉颇。……

赵括代替廉颇之后,把原有的规章制度全都改变了,把原来的军吏也撤换了。秦将白起听到了这些情况,便调遣奇兵,假装败逃,又去截断赵军运粮的道路,把赵军分割成两半,赵军士卒离心。过了四十多天,赵军饥饿,赵括出动精兵亲自与秦军搏斗,秦军射死赵括。

注释

① 纸上谈兵:在书面上谈论用兵策略。比喻空谈理论,不能解决实际问题。

② 当:抵敌。

③ 难(nàn):驳难,反驳。不能难:意思是不能驳倒。

④ 将括:让赵括为将。

⑤ 距:通“拒”,抵御。

⑥ 病笃:病重,病危。笃:重。

⑦ 恶:憎恨,畏忌。

⑧ 约束:此指军中的各种规定。

⑨ 易置:撤换。

⑩ 锐卒:精兵。



Qin sent a spy to Zhao to spread a rumour, which said: "Qin has only one thing to worry about. They are afraid that Zhao Guo, son of Zhao She, might come out to command the army." The King of Zhao believed the rumour and had Lian Po replaced by Zhao Cuo. . . .

As soon as Zhao Guo took the place of Lian Po, he changed all the latter's orders, rules and systems, and dismissed many military officers. When General Bai Qi of Qin got this information, he started an ingenious military move. Feigning to retreat after a defeat, his troops went to sever Zhao's food supply line and cut Guo's troops in two. This put the soldiers into great trepidation. Forty days later, the soldiers weakened from hunger. Zhao Guo himself went into combat with his crack troops and was shot to death by the arrows of the Qin troops.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Notes

- ① of the State of Zhao during the Warring States Period (475–221 BC).
- ② the seventh year of the reign of Xiacheng Wang of Zhao (259 BC).
Another version of the story says that it was the sixth year (258 BC).
- ③ present-day Gaoping County, Shanxi Province.



zhǐ
指
lù
鹿
wéi
为
mǎ
马
①

zhào gāo yù wéi luàn ③, kǒng qún chén bù tīng nǎi
赵高②欲为乱③，恐群臣不听，乃

xiān shè yàn ④, chí lù xiàn yú èr shì yuē mǎ yě。
先设验④，持鹿献于二世⑤，曰：“马也。”

èr shì xiào yuē chéng xiāng wù xié wèi lù wéi mǎ wèn
二世笑曰：“丞相误邪？谓鹿为马。”问

zuǒ yòu zuǒ yòu huò mò huò yán mǎ yǐ ē shùn zhào gāo
左右，左右或默，或言马以阿顺⑥赵高。

huò yán lù zhě gāo yīn yīn zhōng zhū yán lù zhě yǐ fǎ ⑧。
或言鹿者，高因阴⑦中诸言鹿者以法⑧。

shǐ jì qín shǐ huáng běn jì
《史记·秦始皇本纪》

白话
翻译



赵高想要谋反，恐怕群臣不听从他，就先设下计谋进行试验，带来一只鹿献给二世，说：“这是一匹马。”二世笑着说：“丞相错了，把鹿说成是马。”问左右大臣，左右大臣有的沉默，有的故意迎合赵高说是马，有的说是鹿，赵高就在暗中假借法律陷害那些说是鹿的人。

Call a Stag a Horse



Zhao Gao^① harboured the intention of usurping power, but he was afraid that the ministers would not follow and obey him. So, he tried to test which ones would be faithful to him.

One day he offered a stag to Emperor Ershi^② and said, “Your Majesty, here is a horse I would like to offer to you.”

“You’re mistaken, Prime Minister,” said the Emperor with a smile. “You’ve called a stag a horse.”

Zhao Gao turned to the other ministers present and asked them whether it was a horse or a stag. Some kept silent; others, to please Zhao Gao, affirmed that it was a horse; and still others said that it was a stag.

Later, Zhao Gao secretly framed charges against all those who had asserted that it was a stag and had them executed.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



① 指鹿为马：指着鹿说那是马，比喻故意颠倒黑白、混淆是非。

② 赵高：秦宦官，秦始皇死后任中丞相。专权，后被子婴所杀。

③ 乱：谋反。

④ 验：试探。

⑤ 二世：秦二世，胡亥，秦始皇少子。公元前210~207年在位。

⑥ 阿顺：曲意顺从

⑦ 阴：暗中。

⑧ 中……以法：使伏法，处死。



Notes

- ① a eunuch in the Qin court, who after the decease of Qinshihuang (First Emperor of Qin) hounded his heir, Prince Fushu, to death and through a coup d'etat replaced him with Huhei, while he himself assumed the post of Prime Minister.
- ② Emperor Qin the Second, i.e., young Prince Huhei—made Emperor by Zhao Gao who, wishing to usurp his power, later compelled the young emperor to commit suicide.

pò
破
fù
釜
chén
沉
zhōu
舟
①

xiàng yǔ yǐ shā qīng zǐ guān jūn wēi zhèn chǔ guó
项 羽 ② 已 杀 卿 子 冠 军 ③ ， 威 震 楚 国 ，

míng wén zhū hóu nǎi qiān dāng yáng jūn pú jiāng jūn jiàng zú
名 闻 诸 侯 。 乃 遣 当 阳 君 、 蒲 将 军 将 卒

èr wàn dù hé jiù jù lù zhàn shǎo lì chén yú
二 万 渡 河 ④ ， 救 巨 鹿 ⑤ 。 战 少 利 ⑥ ， 陈 余

fù qǐng bīng xiàng yǔ nǎi xī yǐn bīng dù hé jiē chén chuán
复 请 兵 。 项 羽 乃 悉 引 兵 渡 河 ， 皆 沉 船 ，

pò fǔ zèng shāo lú shè chí sān rì liáng yǐ shì shì zú
破 斧 甑 ⑦ ， 烧 庐 舍 ， 持 三 日 粮 ， 以 示 土 卒

bì sǐ wú yī huán xīn yú shì zhì zé wéi wáng lí yǔ
必 死 ； 无 一 还 心 。 于 是 ， 至 则 围 王 离 ， 与

qín jūn yù jiǔ zhàn jué qí yǒng dào dà pò zhī shā sū
秦 军 遇 ， 九 战 ， 绝 其 甬 道 ， 大 破 之 ， 杀 苏

jiǎo lǚ wáng lí shè jiān bù jiàng chǔ zì shāo shā
角 ⑧ ， 虏 王 离 。 涉 间 不 降 楚 ， 自 烧 杀 。

shǐ jì xiàng yǔ běn jì
《 史 记 · 项 羽 本 纪 》

白话
翻译

项羽杀死卿子冠军以后，威名传遍楚国，并在诸侯中传颂。就派遣当阳君、蒲将军带领两万兵渡过漳河去救巨鹿。战斗取得了一些胜利，陈余又请兵出战。项羽于是就引兵全部渡过漳河，把船都沉入河中，砸破做饭的锅，烧了住处，只带三天的干粮，用以表示一定战死，不准备再回来（的决心）。在这种情况下，到了巨鹿就包围了王离，与秦军相遇，交战多次，断绝了他们的通道，打败了他们，杀死苏角，活捉了王离。涉间不肯投降楚军，自己烧死了。

Break the Camp Cauldrons and Sink the Boats



After slaying his superior ^① for his inaction, Xiang Yu astonished the whole State of Chu with his might and power and established his name among all the principalities that were fighting jointly against the Qin Dynasty. He then put twenty thousand troops under the command of Dangyang Jun ^② and General Pu, ordering them to cross the Zhang River to rescue the prince of the State of Zhao who was at the time besieged at Julu ^③. As the battle brought about a small victory, Chen Yu ^④ asked for reinforcements from Xiang Yu who then took all his troops to cross the river. Soon after the crossing, Xiang Yu ordered his troops to sink all the boats, break all the camp cauldrons and cookers, and burn all the tents and living quarters. And the men were also asked to bring with them food enough for three days only. All this was to show that they were fully determined to fight a last-ditch fight and entertain no thought of coming back alive.

As soon as Xiang Yu's troops arrived at the battle scene, they surrounded the army of Qin's general Wang Lian and engaged them in nine battles. Having succeeded in cutting off the enemy's food supply line, Xiang Yu beat his opponents

注释

① 破釜沉舟:《史记·项羽本纪》记载,项羽跟秦兵打仗,过河后把釜(锅)都打破,船都弄沉,表示决不后退。比喻决心战斗到底。釜(fǔ):锅。

② 项羽:生活于公元前232~前202年。秦下相(今江苏宿迁西南)人,名籍,字羽,楚国贵族出身。秦二世元年(前209年)从叔父项梁在吴中(今江苏苏州)起义,项梁战死后他杀宋义,率军渡河救赵,巨鹿一战摧毁章邯的秦军主力。秦亡后称西楚霸王,实行分封制,封六国贵族为王。后与刘邦争做帝王,进行了四年的楚汉战争,公元前202年兵败,在垓下(今安徽灵壁南)乌江边自杀。

③ 卿子冠军:即宋义。公元前207年,秦围赵,楚怀王封宋义为上将军,项羽为次将,范增为末将,救赵途中,宋义畏缩不前,被项羽所杀。卿子:是当时对人的尊称。宋义是上将军,在诸将之上,所以称为卿子冠军。

④ 河:这里指漳河。

⑤ 巨鹿:在现在河北平乡西南。

⑥ 少利:胜利不多。

⑦ 甗(zèng):瓦制煮器。

⑧ 苏角:秦将。



hollow, killing Su Jiao, capturing Wang Lian. She Jian refused to surrender and burnt himself.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Notes

- ① General Song Yi who had the honorary title of *Qingzi*.
- ② referring to General Qing Bu.
- ③ to the southwest of Pingxiang County, Hebei Province, not the present-day Julu County.
- ④ a native of Daliang and a general under the prince of the State of Zhao.

xiàng
项
zhuāng
庄
wǔ
舞
jiàn
剑
①

pèi gōng dàn rì cóng bǎi yú qí lái jiàn xiàng wáng ,
沛公旦日从百余骑^②来见项王，
zhì hóng mén xiè yuē chén yǔ jiāng jūn chuō lì ér gōng
至鸿门，谢曰：“臣与将军戮力而攻
qín jiāng jūn zhàn hé běi chén zhàn hé nán rán bù zì yì
秦，将军战河北，臣战河南，然不自意^③
néng xiān rù guān pò qín dé fù jiàn jiāng jūn yú cǐ jīn zhě
能先入关破秦，得复见将军于此。今者
yǒu xiǎo rén zhī yán lìng jiāng jūn yǔ chén yǒu què xiàng
有小人之言，令将军与臣有却。”项
wáng yuē cǐ pèi gōng zuǒ sī mǎ cáo wú shāng yán zhī bù
王曰：“此沛公左司马曹无伤言之；不
rán jí hé yǐ zhì cǐ xiàng wáng jí rì yīn liú pèi gōng
然，籍何以至此。”项王即日^④因留沛公
yǔ yǐn xiàng wáng xiàng bó dōng xiàng zuò yà fù nán
与饮。项王、项伯东向坐^⑤，亚父南
xiàng zuò yà fù zhě fàn zēng yě pèi gōng běi xiàng zuò
向坐。亚父者范增也。沛公北向坐，
zhāng liáng xī xiàng shì fàn zēng shù mù xiàng wáng jǔ suǒ
张良西向侍。范增数目^⑥项王，举所
pèi yù jué yǐ shì zhī zhě sān xiàng wáng mò rán bù yīng
佩玉玦^⑦以示之者三，项王默然不应。
fàn zēng qǐ chū zhào xiàng zhuāng wèi yuē jūn wáng wèi
范增起，出召项庄，谓曰：“君王为
rén bù è ruò rù qián wéi shòu shòu bì qǐng yǐ jiàn
人不恶^⑧，若^⑨入前为寿，寿毕，请以剑
wǔ yīn jī pèi gōng yú zuò shā zhī bù zhě ruò shǔ jiē
舞，因击沛公于坐，杀之。不者^⑩，若属皆
qiě wéi suǒ lǔ zhuāng zé rù wéi shòu shòu bì yuē
且为所虏^⑪。”庄则入为寿。寿毕，曰：
jūn wáng yǔ pèi gōng yǐn jūn zhōng wú yǐ wèi lè qǐng yǐ
“君王与沛公饮，军中无以为乐，请以



Xiang Zhuang Performed the Sword Dance as a Cover for His Attempt on Liu Bang's Life



The following morning Pei Gong^① came to call on King Xiang, bringing with him about a hundred horsemen. When he arrived at Hongmen he said apologetically to the host, "You and I are in joint action against the Prince of Qin, you in the areas north of the Yellow River and I in the south. It happens that I was the first one to enter the Hangu Pass to defeat Qin. Notwithstanding I'm glad to be able to see you here, too. Now there is some mean fellow who has spoken ill of me, thinking to cause a rift between you and me."

"Well, it was your own Minister of War Cao Wushang who said all this," answered King Xiang. "Otherwise, how could I come to think this way?" Having said this, King Xiang asked Pei Gong to stay and have a drink with him.

At the feast, King Xiang and his uncle Xiang Bo sat facing the east and Ya Fu, Xiang's counsellor Fan Zheng, sat facing the south, while Pei Gong was opposite Ya Fu and his own counsellor Zhang Liang was opposite King Xiang. Fan repeatedly turned his eyes towards King Xiang and raised thrice the jade pendant on his belt, hinting that King Xiang should



jiàn wǔ xiàng wáng yuē nuò xiàng zhuāng bá jiàn qǐ
剑舞。”项王曰：“诺。”项庄拔剑起
wǔ xiàng bó yì bá jiàn qǐ wǔ cháng yǐ shēn yì bì pèi
舞，项伯亦拔剑起舞，常以身翼蔽沛
gōng zhuāng bù dé jī
公，庄不得击。

yú shì zhāng liáng zhì jūn mén jiàn fán kuài fán kuài yuē
于是张良至军门见樊哙。樊哙曰：“

jīn rì zhī shì hé rú liáng yuē shèn jí jīn zhě xiàng
今日之事何如？”良曰：“甚急。今者项

zhuāng bá jiàn wǔ qí yì cháng zài pèi gōng yě kuài yuē
庄拔剑舞，其意常在沛公也。”哙曰：“

cǐ pò yǐ chén qǐng rù yǔ zhī tóng mìng kuài jí dài jiàn
此迫矣，臣请入，与之同命。”哙即带剑

yōng dùn rù jūn mén jiāo jǐ zhī wèi shì yù zhǐ bù nèi fán
拥盾入军门。交戟之卫士欲止不内，樊

kuài cè qí dùn yǐ zhuàng wèi shì pú dì kuài suì rù
哙侧其盾以撞，卫士仆地，哙遂入……

shǐ jì xiàng yǔ běn jì
《史记·项羽本纪》

白话
翻译



第二天一清早，沛公带着一百多名侍从人马来见项王，到达鸿门，向项王赔罪说：“我跟将军合力攻秦，将军在河北作战，我在河南作战。却没想到我能先入关攻破秦朝，能够在这里又见到您。现在是有小人说了什么坏话，才使得将军和我之间产生了嫌隙。”项王说：“是您的左司马曹无伤说的；不然，我怎么会这样。”项王当日就让沛公留下一起喝酒。项王、项伯面朝东坐，亚父面朝南坐。亚父也就是范增。沛公面朝北坐，张良面朝西陪侍着。范增好几次给项王递眼色，又好几次举起身上佩戴的玉块向他示意，项王只是沉默着，没有反应。范增起身出去，叫来项庄，对他说：“君王为人心肠太软，你进去上前献酒祝寿，然后请求

take action without delay. But King Xiang kept silent, showing no response. Impatient, Fan rose and went out to look for King Xiang's cousin Xiang Zhuang. When he found him, he whispered to him, "Our King is too kind-hearted. You'd better go over to Liu Bang to drink a toast to him and suggest a sword dance. Then take this chance to slay him in his seat. Otherwise, all of you will one day be captured by Liu."

So, Xiang Zhuang entered and acted as instructed, first proposing a toast to Liu. After the toast, he said to King Xiang, "Your Highness and Pei Gong are having a drinking bout, but in the army, I regret to say, there is no musical entertainment for this occasion. Let me perform a sword dance to amuse you both." To this Xiangwang agreed.

The next moment saw Xiang Zhuang draw out his sword and begin to dance. Seeing this, Xiang Bo followed suit—drawing out his own sword and doing a sword dance, too. But he was only trying to shield Pei Gong, protecting him with his own body from time to time. His action left Xiang Zhuang no chance to assault Pei Gong.

At this moment, Zhang Liang went outside the camp and found Liu's general Fan Kuai at the entrance.

"How are things going on there just now?" asked Fan eagerly.

"Very precarious. Now Xiang Zhuang is doing a sword dance. It is obvious that he's trying to make an attempt on Pei Gong's life," answered Zhang Liang.

"Then this is a critical moment. Let me go in and grapple with Xiang Zhuang," Fan said.

舞剑，趁机刺击沛公，把他杀死在坐席上。不然的话，你们这班人都将成为他的俘虏。”项庄于是就进来，上前献酒祝寿。祝酒完毕，对项王说：“君王和沛公饮酒，军营中没有什么可以娱乐的，就让我来舞剑吧。”项王说：“那好。”项庄就拔剑起舞，项伯也拔剑起舞，常常用身体掩护沛公，项庄没有办法刺击沛公。

见此情景，张良走到军门，找来樊哙。樊哙问道：“今天的事情怎么样？”张良说：“很危急。现在项庄正在舞剑，他一直在打沛公的主意。”樊哙说：“这么说太危险了，我请求进去，我要跟沛公同生死。”樊哙带着宝剑拿着盾牌就往军门里闯。交叉持戟的卫士想挡住不让他进去，樊哙侧过盾牌往前一撞，卫士们扑倒在地，樊哙于是闯进军门。

注释

① 项庄舞剑：这个成语来源于鸿门宴上张良所说的“今者项庄舞剑，其意常在沛公也”。后来演化成了“项庄舞剑，意在沛公”。用来比喻行动或言语隐约针对某一个人。“沛”本是地名，刘邦曾在那里做过官，所以沛公指刘邦。

② 从百余骑：带领随从一百多人。骑：骑兵。

③ 不自意：自己想不到。

④ 即日：当天。

⑤ 东向坐：面朝东坐。这是表示尊贵。

⑥ 目：用眼色示意。

⑦ 玦(jué)：环形而有缺口的佩玉。

⑧ 恶：狠心。

⑨ 若：汝，你。

⑩ 不者：不然的话。“不”，同“否”。

⑪ 若属：你们这班人。且：将。为所虏：被他俘虏。

⑫ 翼蔽：遮蔽，掩护。“翼”，用翼遮盖，保护。

⑬ 与之同命：跟沛公共生死。一说：“同命”，拼命。

⑭ 拥：抱，持。

⑮ 交戟：把戟交叉起来。

⑯ 仆：倒下。

With these words, Fan pushed his way in with a sword and a shield in his hands. He was stopped by the two sentry guards who had their spears crossed. Fan raised his shield to fend off the spears with such a great force that the guards fell to the ground, and walked straight in. . . .

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Note

- ① also known as Liu Bang who after seizing the Hangu Pass blocked the way of Xiang Yu's forces. An official under Liu called Cao Wushang turned out to be an informer who told Xiang Yu that Liu was going to declare himself ruler of the Guanzhong region. Xiang was furious and immediately ordered his troops to attack Liu. When Xiang Yu's uncle Xiang Bo heard of this, he went to see his old friend Zhang Liang in Liu's camp and told him the news that Xiang Yu was going to take action against Liu. Knowing that he was not a match for Xiang Yu in military strength, Liu Bang when he got the information was prepared to go to call on Xiang Yu the following morning to make an apologetic gesture.

fēn
wò
wǒ
yī
bēi
gēng
羹 ①

xiàng wáng yǐ dìng dōng hǎi lái xī yǔ hàn jù lín
项王已定东海，来西，与汉俱临

guǎng wǔ ér jūn xiāng shǒu shù yuè
广武而军，相守^②数月。

dāng cǐ shí péng yuè shù fǎn liáng dì jué chǔ liáng
当此时，彭越^③数反梁地，绝楚粮

shí xiàng wáng huàn zhī wèi gāo zǔ zhì tài gōng qí
食。项王患之，为高俎^④，置太公其

shàng gào hàn wáng yuē jīn bù jí xià wú pēng tài
上，告汉王曰：“今不急下^⑤，吾烹太

gōng hàn wáng yuē wú yǔ xiàng yǔ jù běi miàn shòu
公。”汉王曰：“吾与项羽俱北面^⑥受

mìng huái wáng yuē yuē wéi xiōng dì wú wēng jí ruò
命怀王，曰‘约为兄弟’，吾翁^⑦即若

wēng bì yù pēng ér wēng zé xìng fēn wǒ yī bēi
翁，必欲烹而^⑧翁，则幸分我一杯

gēng xiàng wáng nù yù shā zhī
羹。”项王怒，欲杀之。

xiàng bó yuē tiān xià shì wèi kě zhī qiě wèi tiān xià
项伯曰：“天下事未可知，且为天下

zhě bù gù jiā suī shā zhī wú yì zhǐ yì huò ěr xiàng
者不顾家，虽杀之无益，只益祸耳。”项

wáng cóng zhī
王从之。

shǐ jì xiàng yǔ běn jì
《史记·项羽本纪》

Give Me a Share of the Broth



King Xiang^①, after quelling the opposition in the east, marched westward. Coming to Guangwu^②, his troops encountered those of King Han^③, resulting in a months-long confrontation and stalemate on two sides of a ravine.

At that time Peng Yue^④, as a local rival, had made several moves against King Xiang in the area under Wei's jurisdiction^⑤ and succeeded in cutting off his army provisions. Greatly worried, King Xiang chose to have a thick chopping block installed and laid on it King Han's father who was then in his custody. At the same time he sent a message to the son with the threat: "If you do not immediately surrender, I'll have your father butchered to make a broth." In reply King Han said, "You and I are both subjects of Emperor Huai of Chu^⑥ who has asked us to be sworn brothers. So, my father is your father. When you have the old man cooked, be kind enough to let me have a bowl of the broth." At this King Xiang got furious and prepared to kill the old victim. His uncle Xiang Bo, however, quickly stopped him, saying: "The matter of who's going to rule the whole country is yet in the balance. Besides, one ambitious enough to secure order across the land seldom cares for the fate of his family. Slaughtering his father will help

白话
翻译

项王东击彭越，打败了刘贾，已经平定了东方，现在又回过头来西进，在东广武与汉军隔着广武涧扎下营来，两军各自坚守营垒，持续了好几个月。

就在这个时候，彭越几次往返梁地，断绝了楚军的粮食，项王为此深感忧虑。他做了一张高腿案板，把汉王父亲太公搁置在上面，向汉王宣告说：“现在你如果不赶快投降，我就把太公煮死。”汉王说：“我和项羽作为臣子一块接受了怀王的命令，曾说‘相约结为兄弟’，这样说来，我的父亲也就是你的父亲，如果你一定要煮了你的父亲，就希望你能分给我一杯肉汤。”项王大怒，要杀太公。项伯说：“天下事还不知道怎么样，再说要夺天下的人是不顾及家的，即使杀了他也不会有什么好处，只会增加祸患罢了。”项王听从了项伯的话。

注释

- ① 分我一杯羹：一杯肉汁，多指可分享的部分利益。羹(gēng)：调和五味的汤。
- ② 相守：各自守住营垒。
- ③ 彭越：使彭越走，把彭越打跑了。
- ④ 高俎(zǔ)：古代祭祀时放置牲肉的高案桌。
- ⑤ 急下：赶快投降。
- ⑥ 北面：古时君主见臣下，南面而坐，臣下北面朝见君主，故以北面指称臣。
- ⑦ 翁：父亲，老子。
- ⑧ 而：代词，汝，你的。



nothing; it will only bring on a still greater misfortune.”

King Xiang agreed with his uncle and gave up the idea.

Shi Ji (Historical Records)



Notes

- ① referring to Xiang Yu who declared himself Chief Prince of West Chu after several successful campaigns against the Qin Dynasty.
- ② a mountain in present-day Henan Province.
- ③ referring to Liu Bang who was made Prince Han by Xiang Yu in the name of the King Chu Huaiwang on account of Liu's cooperative moves against the Qin Dynasty.
- ④ also a resurgent leader who fought on the side of Liu Bang in the overthrow of the Qin Dynasty. He was active in the region of Liang, then the capital of the State of Wei.
- ⑤ Wei was called Liang because of its capital being in Daliang.
- ⑥ referring to the second Emperor Huai named Xiong Xia, grandson of the first Emperor Huai in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC), and then the nominal king of Chu.



yè
叶
gōng
公
hǎo
好
lóng
龙
①

yè gōng zǐ gāo hào lóng gōu yǐ xiě lóng záo yǐ xiě
叶公子高好龙，钩以写②龙，凿以写

lóng wū shì diāo wén yǐ xiě lóng yú shì tiān lóng wén ér xià
龙，屋室雕文以写龙。于是天龙闻而下

zhī kǔi tóu yú yǒu shī wěi yú táng yè gōng jiàn zhī
之，窥③头于牖④，施尾于堂。叶公见之，

qì ér huán zǒu shī qí hún pò wǔ sè wú zhǔ shì yè
弃而还⑤走，失其魂魄，五色无主。是叶

gōng fēi hào lóng yě hào fū sì lóng ér fēi lóng zhě yě
公非好龙也，好夫似龙而非龙者也。

xīn xù zá shì
《新序·杂事》

白话
翻译

叶公子高非常喜欢龙，用钩子画龙，用凿子刻龙，住处雕刻的图案也都是龙。在这样的情形下，天上的真龙听说了叶公，就从天上下来。龙头从窗户探进来，龙尾拖在厅堂里。叶公一见，转身就跑，吓得魂不附体，脸色都变了。由此看来，叶公并不是真的喜欢龙，他喜欢的，是似龙非龙的东西。



Lord Ye's Professed Love of Dragons



Lord Ye, whose name was Zigao^①, was so fond of dragons that the pendant on his robe and his drinking cup both took the shape^② of a dragon, and even the decorations and carvings in his house all bore the design of this mythical animal. On learning all this, the Dragon in the Heaven descended from on high to pay him a visit. It poked its head in at the window and swung its tail into the hall of the house of Lord Ye. At sight of the dragon, he immediately turned and took to his heels. He was scared out of his wits and turned quite pale and white-lipped.

It was not that Lord Ye really loved dragons; what he did love was something in the shape of a dragon — all but a real one.

Xin Xu (Writings of Shen Buhai)



注释

① 叶公好龙:这个成语后来通常用来比喻自称爱好某种事物,实际上并不是真正爱好,甚至是害怕。

② 写:这里是用刀、笔刻画的意思。

③ 窥(kuī):窥伺,就是探望、偷看的意思。

④ 牖(yǒu):窗户。

⑤ 还(xuán):通“旋”字,转身就走的意思。



Notes

- ① an official of the State of Chu during the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC). The place Ye (pronounced as she in ancient days) was his feuf—present-day Yexian County in Henan Province.
- ② Recent philological studies find the character 寫 (used three times) in the story should read 象 whose variant form 魚 in the old days looked like 寫.

wēi
危
rú
如
lěi
累
luǎn
卵

jìn líng gōng zào jiǔ céng zhī tái fèi yòng qiān jīn wèi
晋灵公造九层之台，费用千金，谓

zuǒ yòu yuē gǎn yǒu jiàn zhě zhǎn
左右曰：“敢有谏者，斩！”

xún xī wén zhī shàng shū qiú jiàn líng gōng zhāng nǚ
荀息闻之，上书求见。灵公张弩

chí shī jiàn zhī yuē chén bù gǎn jiàn yě chén néng léi shí
持失见之。曰：“臣不敢谏也。臣能累十

èr bó qí jiā jiǔ jī zǐ qí shàng gōng yuē zǐ wèi
二博棋，加九鸡子其上。”公曰：“子为

guǎ rén zuò zhī xún xī zhèng yán sè dìng zhì yì yǐ qí
寡人作之。”荀息正颜色，定志意，以棋

zǐ zhì xià jiā jiǔ jī zǐ qí shàng zuǒ yòu jù shè xī
子置下，加九鸡子其上。左右惧，偃息。

líng gōng qì xī bù xù gōng yuē wēi zāi wēi zāi xún
灵公气息不续。公曰：“危哉！危哉！”荀

xī yuē bù wēi yě fù yǒu wēi yú cǐ zhě gōng yuē
息曰：“不危也，复有危于此者。”公曰：“

yuàn jiàn zhī xún xī yuē jiǔ céng zhī tái sān nián bù
愿见之。”荀息曰：“九层之台，三年不

chéng nán bù gēng nǚ bù zhī guó yòng kōng xū lín guó
成，男不耕，女不织，国用空虚，邻国

móu yì jiāng xìng shè jì wáng miè jūn yù hé wàng líng
谋议将兴，社稷亡灭，君欲何望？”灵

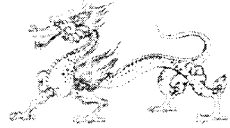
gōng yuē guǎ rén zhī guò yě nǎi zhì yú cǐ jí huài jiǔ
公曰：“寡人之过也，乃至于此！”即坏九

céng tái yě
层台也。

shuō yuàn
《说苑》



As Precarious as a Pile of Eggs



Duke Ling of the State of Jin started building a nine-storey platform, which would cost a thousand taels of silver. Fearing objections, he said to his ministers, "Anyone who dares to remonstrate with me will be executed! "

This news came to the ear of Xun Xi who wrote a memorandum asking to be given an audience. Duke Ling granted his request but on receiving him had a drawn bow and an arrow ready in his hand.

"I'm not going to remonstrate; I dare not do so," said Xun Xi, "but I can pile up twelve chessmen and then top them with nine eggs."

"Then do that for me," said Duke Ling.

With a serious look and the utmost concentration, Xun Xi did what he had claimed. When the nine eggs were piled up, the ministers were astonished but they dreaded that the eggs might fall at any minute. In the meantime Duke Ling, who had been watching the game intently, holding his breath, finally uttered, "How precarious! How precarious! "

"No," rejoined Xun Xi. "It is not so precarious as you think; there is something more precarious than this."

"Then, let me hear of it."

"Now, a nine-storey platform will take more than three

白话
翻译

晋灵公命人为他建造一座九层的高台，费用将用去千金，并对左右说：“谁敢进谏阻拦，就斩首！”

荀息听说这件事情，给晋灵公上书请求接见。灵公让卫士们张弓搭箭，然后召见了荀息。荀息说：“我不敢来劝说您，我能把十二枚棋子垒起来，再在上面加置九颗鸡蛋。”灵公说：“你为我演试一下！”荀息一本正经，专心致志地表演起来。先把十二枚棋子垒在下边，再把九颗鸡蛋垒在上面。灵公左右的人都很担心，屏住了呼吸不敢出声，灵公自己也紧张得喘不过气来。连声说：“好险哪！好险哪！”这时荀息说：“这不算什么，还有比这更危险的呢！”灵公便说：“愿意见识。”荀息说：“大王要筑九层高台，三年将不能完成。三年之中，百姓来服役，男人不耕田，女人不织布，弄得钱财耗尽，国库空虚，邻国将谋求计议侵略晋国，国家破灭。到那时候，您站在九层高台之上，又能观望到什么呢？”灵公说：“筑台的后果如此不堪设想，这是我的过错！”于是下令停止筑台。

注释

① 危如累卵：比喻形势非常危险，如同堆起来的蛋，随时都有塌下打碎的可能。卵：蛋。累：通“垒”，危险得像垒起来的蛋，形容危险到了极点。

② 僇(shè)息：因害怕而不敢出声。



years to complete. During its construction, farmers will have to stop ploughing, weaving women will leave their looms idle, and the state treasury will be exhausted. Seeing this, our neighbouring states will work out plans against us, and our state will be ruined. By then, what will be there for you to watch on the platform?"

"Truly, for all that I will have to be blamed," admitted Duke Ling, who immediately gave orders to stop building the platform.

Shuo Yuan (A Collection of Historical Events and Comments)

táng
螳
láng
螂
bú
捕
chán
蝉
①

wú wáng yù fá jīng gào qí zuǒ yòu yuē gǎn yǒu
吴王欲伐荆^②，告其左右曰：“敢有

jiàn zhě sǐ
谏者，死！”

shě rén yǒu shǎo rú zǐ zhě yù jiàn bù gǎn zé huái wán
舍人^③有少孺子者，欲谏不敢，则怀丸

cāo dàn yóu yú hòu yuán lù zhān qí yī rú shì zhě sān dàn
操弹游于后园，露沾其衣，如是者三旦。

wú wáng yuē zǐ lái hé kǔ zhān yī rú cǐ
吴王曰：“子来何苦，沾衣如此？”

duì yuē yuán zhōng yǒu shù qí shàng yǒu chán chán
对曰：“园中有树，其上有蝉，蝉

gāo jū bēi míng yǐn lù bù zhī táng láng zài qí hòu yě táng
高居悲鸣饮露，不知螳螂在其后也；螳

láng wēi shēn qū fū yù qǔ chán ér bù zhī huáng què zài
螂委身曲附^④欲取蝉，而不知黄雀在

qí páng yě huáng què yán jǐng yù zhuó táng láng ér bù zhī
其旁也；黄雀延颈欲啄螳螂，而不知

dàn wán zài qí xià yě cǐ sān zhě jìe wù yù dé qí qián lì
弹丸在其下也。此三者，皆务欲得其前利

ér bù gù qí hòu zhī yǒu huàn yě
而不顾其后之有患也。”

wú wáng yuē shàn zāi nǎi bà qí bīng
吴王曰：“善哉！”乃罢其兵。

shuō yuán zhèng jiàn
《说苑·正谏》

The Mantis Stalks the Cicada, Unaware of the Oriole Behind



The King of the State of Wu^① was determined to start a punitive expedition against the State of Jing^②, and so he declared before his ministers that anyone who dared to plead with him not to would be put to death.

Among his attendants was a young man who wished to stop the Prince from taking action but had not the nerve to speak out straightforwardly. However, he thought of a way. He went to roam around in the King's back garden with a bow in his hand and some balls in his bosom early in the morning until his clothes were all soaked. This he did for three days.

Told of this, the King beckoned to the young man, "Come over. What have you been doing there? You are asking for trouble, getting yourself so wet."

The young man replied: "There is a cicada resting high on a tree. It is chirping for all it's worth and drinking in the dew, oblivious of a mantis behind. The mantis, bending over and arching up its front leg, is going to catch the cicada, but does not know that there is an oriole beside it. The bird has stretched out its neck, ready to peck at the mantis. Again the oriole is unaware that it is under the threat of my balls, down



白话
翻译



春秋时期,吴国国王寿梦准备攻打荆地(楚国),遭到大臣的反对。吴王很恼火,在召见群臣的会上警告:“有谁胆敢阻止我出兵,将他处死!”尽管如此,还是有人想阻止吴王出兵。王宫中一个青年侍卫官想出一个好办法:每天早晨,他拿着弹弓、弹丸在王宫后花园转来转去,露水湿透他的衣鞋,接连三天如此。吴王很奇怪,问道:“这是为何?”侍卫道:“园中的大树上有一只蝉,它一面唱歌,一面吸饮露水,却不知已有一只螳螂在向它逼近;螳螂想捕蝉,但不知旁边又来了黄雀;而当黄雀正准备啄螳螂时,黄雀又怎知我的弹丸已对准它呢?它们三个都只顾眼前利益而看不到后边的灾祸。”吴王一听很受启发,随后取消了这次军事行动。



注释

① 螳螂捕蝉(táng láng bǔ chán):螳螂正要捉蝉,不知黄雀在它后面正要吃它。比喻目光短浅,只想到算计别人,没想到别人在算计他。蝉:知了。

② 荆(jīng):荆地,指位于长江中下游的楚国。

③ 舍(shè)人:公子,少爷。



below. The three creatures all covet gains ahead without being aware of an imminent danger behind.”

“How well you’ve put it!” cried the King, and gave up his military venture.

Shuo Yuan (A Collection of Historical Events and Comments)



Notes

- ① a state during the Zhou dynastic rule.
- ② another name for the State of Chu.

qū
曲
tū
突
xì
徙
xīn
薪
①

kè yǒu guò ② zhǔ rén zhě jiàn qí zào zhí tū bàng yǒu
客有过②主人者，见其灶直突，傍③有

jī xīn kè wèi zhǔ rén gèng wèi qū tū yuǎn xí qí xīn
积薪。客谓主人：“更为曲突，远徙其薪；

bù zhě ④ qiè yǒu huǒ huàn zhǔ rén mò rán bù yīng
不者④，且有火患。”主人嘿然⑤不应。

é ér jiā guǒ shī huǒ lín lí gōng jù zhī xìng ér
俄而，家果失火，邻里共救之，幸而

dé xī ⑥ yú shì shā niú zhì jiǔ xiè qí lín rén zhuó làn
得息⑥。于是杀牛置酒，谢其邻人。灼烂

zhě ⑦ zài yú shàng xíng yú gè yǐ gōng cì zuò ér bù lù ⑧
者⑦在于上行，余各以功次坐，而不录⑧

yán qū tū zhě
言曲突者。

rén wèi zhǔ rén yuē xiāng shǐ ⑨ tīng kè zhī yán bù fèi
人谓主人曰：“乡使⑨听客之言，不费

niú jiǔ zhōng wáng huǒ huàn jīn lùn gōng ér qǐng bīn qū
牛酒，终亡火患。今论功而请宾，曲

tū xí xīn wáng ēn zé jiāo tóu làn é wéi shàng kè yē ? ”
突徙薪亡恩泽，焦头烂额为上客耶？”

zhǔ rén nǎi wù ér qǐng zhī
主人乃寤⑩而请之。

hàn shū huán guāng zhuàn
《汉书·萇光传》



Bend the Chimney and Remove the Faggots



A man was calling at his friend's house when he saw the chimney in the kitchen had been made straight up and there was a pile of faggots nearby. So, he advised the host, "It would be better to allow the chimney a bend and move the fuel far away lest a fire should break out." The host, however, said not a word, not so much as showing any response.

Not long afterwards that house was on fire. All the neighbours came to help, and luckily the fire was quickly put out. To show his gratitude, the owner of the house had his cattle killed and treated his neighbours to wine and meat. Those who had been badly burnt in extinguishing the fire were asked to occupy the seats of honour, and the rest were seated in the order of the amount of help they had rendered. But no mention was made at all of the man who had once given the host that piece of good advice.

At this one of the guests spoke up: "If you had listened to your friend's warning the other day, you needn't have to spend so much on wine and meat today and, above all, the fire wouldn't have taken place. Now that you've invited so many guests to reward them according to merit, I should say you are rather ungrateful to the man who once advised you to

白话
翻译

有一个过访主人的客人，看到(主人家)炉灶的烟囱是直的，旁边还堆积着柴草，便对主人说：“把烟囱改为拐弯的，使柴草远离(烟囱)。不然的话，将会发生火灾。”主人沉默不答应。

不久，家里果然失火，邻居们一同来救火，幸好把火扑灭了。于是，(主人)杀牛置办酒席，答谢邻人们。被火烧伤的人安排在上席，其余的按照功劳依次排定座位，却不邀请提“曲突徙薪”建议的客人。

有人对主人说：“当初如果听了那位客人的话，也不用破费摆设酒席，始终也不会有火患。现在评论功劳，邀请宾客，(为什么)提‘曲突徙薪’建议的人没有受到答谢、恩惠，而被烧伤的人却成了上客呢？”主人这才醒悟去邀请那位客人。

注释

① 曲突徙薪(qū tū xǐ xīn):把烟囱改建成弯的,把灶旁的柴草搬走。比喻事先采取措施,才能防止灾祸。曲:弯;突:烟囱;徙:迁移;薪:柴草。

② 过:拜访。

③ 傍:同“旁”,旁边。

④ 不者:如果不这样的话。

⑤ 嘿(mò)然:不说话的样子。嘿,同“默”。

⑥ 息:同“熄”,灭。

⑦ 灼(zhuó)烂者:被火烧伤的人。灼,烧。

⑧ 而不录:却不邀请。而,却;录,录用,此处指邀请。

⑨ 乡(xiàng)使:当初如果。乡,同“向”,从前;使,假如。

⑩ 寤:同“悟”,醒悟,觉悟。



remake the chimney and remove the faggots. How strange that scorched faces and charred foreheads^① have now become guests of honour! ”

The host, realizing his own fault, immediately sent an invitation to his well-meaning friend.

Hanshu (Book of Han)



Note

- ① Therefore, another idiomatic expression 焦头烂额 has been formed as a derivative from this story to describe such an outcome as “in a terrible fix”, “being badly battered” and the like.



jiào
矫
wǎng
枉
guò
过
zhèng
正
①

hàn xìng zhī chū hǎi nèi xīn dìng tóng xìng guǎ shǎo
汉兴之初，海内^②新定，同姓寡少，

chéng jiè wáng qín gū lì zhī bài yú shì pōu liè jiāng tǔ
惩戒^③亡秦孤立之败，于是剖裂疆土，

lì èr děng zhī jué gōng chén hóu zhě bǎi yú yì zūn wáng
立二等之爵^④，功臣侯者百余邑，尊王

zǐ dì dà qǐ jiǔ guó ér fān guó dà zhě kuà zhōu
子弟，大启九国^⑤。……而藩国大者跨州

jiān jùn lián chéng shù shí kě wèi jiǎo wǎng guò qí
兼郡，连城数十。……可谓矫^⑥枉过其

zhèng yī
正矣。

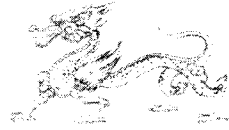
hàn shū zhū hóu wáng biǎo
《汉书·诸侯王表》

白话
翻译



西汉在建国之初期，国家内部刚刚稳定，拥有王权的同姓人很少。汉吸取灭亡了的秦的教训：没有同盟，孤立而造成的失败，于是就把国土分割开来，确立了二等的爵位。（如此）汉的功臣被封侯的有一百多个，自己的子弟都得到尊位，在国内开启了九国的划分。……势力大的藩国可以横跨州府兼并郡县，连接着数十座城池。……可以说汉初对于孤姓局面的纠正又超过了合适的限度。

Exceed the Proper Limits in Righting a Wrong



When the Han Dynasty first rose, order was just newly established throughout the land and the Liu families^① were yet few in number. Taking lessons from the Qin Dynasty whose fall was chiefly attributed to its power having been cut off and isolated, the Han emperor began to split his territory among his feoffs. Two ranks were set up: Those who had done meritorious services became marquises, numbering over a hundred; and his children, numbering nine in all, were made princes... Some vassal states, as a result, were as big as many *zhou* and prefectures combined, and possessed dozens of cities. ... This really exceeded the proper limits in correcting a wrong.

Hanshu (Book of Han)



注释

① 矫枉过正(jiǎo wǎng guò zhèng)把弯的东西扳正,又歪到了另一边。比喻纠正错误超过了应有的限度。矫:扭转的意思;枉:弯曲。

② 海内:古人认为我国疆土四面为海所环抱,因而称国境以内为海内。

③ 惩(chéng)戒:以前人的事物作为警戒。

④ 二等之爵:汉初分封,大者王,小者侯。

⑤ 九国:指燕、代、齐、赵、梁、楚、荆、吴、淮南。长沙王吴芮为异姓,不计在内。



Note

- ① The first emperor of Han was Liu Bang, and hence the Liu families became the royal families.

kū
枯
mù
木
xiū
朽
zhū
株
①

sī mǎ xiāng rú shàng shū quàn jiàn
司马相如^②上书劝谏：

jīn bì xià hǎo líng zǔ xiǎn shè měng shòu cù rán
“今陛下好陵阻险，射猛兽，猝然^③

yù yì cái zhī shòu hài bù cún zhī dì fàn shǔ chē zhī
遇逸材^④之兽，骇不存之地，犯^⑤属车之

qīng chén yú bù jí yuǎn yuán rén bù xiá shī qiǎo suī
清尘，舆^⑥不及远辕，人不暇施巧，虽

yǒu wū huò páng méng zhī jì bù dé yòng kū mù xiū
有乌获^⑦、逢蒙^⑧之技不得用，枯木朽

zhū jìn wéi hài yī
株，尽为害矣！”

jiàn liè shū
《谏猎疏》

白话
翻译

司马相如上书劝谏汉武帝说：

“现在陛下您喜好在丘陵险要的地方射取猛兽，假如突然遇到不同寻常的猛兽，惊骇没有立脚之地，冒着车子跑起来的尘土，马车来不及驾上远行的车辕，人没有时间施展自己的精巧技能，即使是大力士乌获，有名的弓箭手逢蒙的本领也得不到很好地发挥，露出地面腐烂的树桩、烂树根，都成为危害！”



Withered Trees and Rotten Branches



In his memorandum to the Emperor, Sima Xiangru^① once said:

“Now Your Majesty is fond of hunting in the dangerous wilds and hazardous mountains. Suppose one day you meet a beast that is especially fierce and when it is startled by the hunting group, it will run amuck. What can you do then? The beast may kick up the dust and dash against your carriage. At such a critical moment, there is no time for the driver to turn the carriage about and the guard to use his skill to protect you even if he were as brave as Wufou the warrior and could shoot as accurately as archer Pang Meng. Besides, it is quite probable that withered trunks and rotten branches of the trees will become obstacles to block your way. They can all do you harm.”

Jian Lie Shu

(A Memorandum Remonstrating Hunting Expeditions)



注释

① 枯木朽株(kū mù xiǔ zhū):枯木头,烂树根。比喻衰朽的力量或衰老无用的人。朽:腐烂;株:露出地面的树桩。

② 司马相如:生卒年为公元前179~前117年。字长卿,蜀郡成都(今四川成都)人,西汉著名的辞赋家。《谏猎疏》大约写于元朔六年(公元前123)。当时,司马相如随汉武帝到长杨宫打猎,便写了此文,着重从保卫皇帝安全,防止发生意外的角度来劝武帝。

③ 猝然(cù rán):突然地,出乎意料。

④ 逸(yì)材:超越一般的才能。

⑤ 犯:遭遇;顶着;冒着。

⑥ 舆:车辆,尤指马车。

⑦ 乌获:古代传说中的大力士。

⑧ 逢(páng)蒙:夏朝的时候,出名的弓箭手,曾经拜后羿为师。



Note

- ① a celebrated man of letters in the Han Dynasty. Seeing that Emperor Wudi was addicted to hunting, he remonstrated with him in a memorandum, pointing out the risks he so often took.

yī
一
yè
叶
zhàng
障
mù
目
①

chǔ rén jū pín dú huái nán zǐ dé táng láng cì
楚人居贫，读《淮南子》②：“得螳螂伺③

chán zì zhàng yè kě yǐ yǐn xíng suī yú shù xià yǎng qǔ
蝉自障叶，可以隐形。”遂于树下仰取

yè táng láng zhí yè cì chán yǐ zhāi zhī yè luò shù xià
叶。螳螂执叶伺蝉，以摘之，叶落树下。

shù xià xiān yǒu luò yè bù néng fù fēn bié sǎo qǔ shù dòu
树下先有落叶，不能复分别，扫取数斗

guī yī yī yǐ yè zì zhàng wèn qī qī wū rú jiàn wǒ
归。一一以叶自障，问其妻曰：“汝④见我

fǒu qī shǐ shí héng dá yán jiàn jīng rì nǎi yàn juàn bù
否？”妻始时恒⑤答言见，经日乃厌倦不

kān dài yún bù jiàn mò rán dà xǐ jī yè rù
堪，给⑥云：“不见。”默⑦然大喜。赍⑧叶入

shì duì miàn qǔ rén wù lì suī fù yì xiàn xiàn guān
市，对面取人物。吏遂缚诣⑨县⑩。县官

shòu cí zì shuō běn mò guān dà xiào fàng ér bù zhì
受辞，自说本末。官大笑，放而不治。

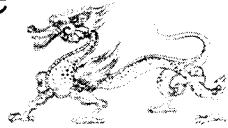
xiào lín
《笑林》

白话
翻译

古时候，楚地有个穷苦的读书人，读《淮南子》这部书时（看到书上有这样的记载）：“螳螂用树叶遮住自己的身体来观察蝉，这样的叶子可以隐去自己的形体。”于是他抬起头，寻找那种叶子。他看见一只螳螂躲在一片树叶的背后观察蝉。他准备采那片叶子。要采的那片叶子落到地上。树下已经有一些落叶了，他无法分别哪一片是螳螂用过的。于是就扫了几斗树叶回家。回去之后，他一片一片地拿起树叶遮住自己的眼睛，问他妻子说：“你能看见我吗？”起初，他妻子总是告诉他：“看得见。”经过了一天就



A Single Leaf over an Eye Shuts Out the View of Taishan Mountain^①



A man of the State of Chu lived a life of poverty. In reading *Huainan Zi*^② he came to the sentence which said, "If one can get the leaf a mantis covers itself with to catch a cicada, he can become an invisible man." So, he stood under a tree and looked up, hoping to find such a leaf. When he saw a mantis hiding behind a leaf to watch for its prey, he stretched out his hand to pick the leaf, but it slipped away and fell to the ground. As there were already plenty of fallen leaves, he could not tell which was the one he wanted. In desperation, he gathered all the leaves, scores of catties of them, and returned home.

At home, he covered his eye with one of the leaves and asked his wife whether she could see him now. His wife answered yes. Then he tried another and another, and every time his wife answered the same way. This went on and on and at the end of the day his wife got so bored that she could not put up with it any more. Finally she lied: "No, I can't see you this time." The man was delighted. Without a word, he took the leaf to the market, where he began publicly taking everything he could lay his hands on. For this he was at last

厌倦不能承受，哄骗他说：“看不见了。”他心中暗暗地高兴拿着树叶进入市场。书生当着人的面就拿取别人的东西。官吏把他绑着扭送到县衙门。县官审问他的时候，他自己说出了这样做的原因（我找到了一片能隐身的树叶，用它遮住自己的眼睛，什么都看不到，这才去拿人家的东西）。县官听了，大笑起来，知道他是个书呆子，把他释放了而没有惩治。



注释

① 一叶障目(yī yè zhàng mù):比喻被眼前细小的事物所蒙蔽,而看不到事物的真实情况以及主流和本质。障,即蔽。

② 《淮南子》:书名,为汉代淮南王刘安撰写的。

③ 伺(sì):侦察。

④ 汝:人称代词,你。

⑤ 恒:常,总是。

⑥ 给(dài):欺哄。

⑦ 嘿:同“默”,默默地。

⑧ 赍(jī):带着。

⑨ 诣:到,到达。

⑩ 县:县衙。



caught by a constable and sent to the magistrate in ropes. On trial before the governing official, the man told the truth from beginning to end. The official burst into laughter and set him free without punishing him.

Xiao Lin (A Collection of Jokes)



Note

- ① “Taishan Mountain” is often replaced by “all other things” to describe a person who lets a tiny or trifling matter blind him to big or important matters.
- ② also named *Huai Nan Hong Lie* written jointly by Liu An, the Prince of Huai Nan in the Western Han Dynasty, and his advisor scholars.

shì
世
wài
外
táo
桃
yuán
源
①

jìn tài yuán zhōng wǔ líng rén bǔ yú wéi yè yuán ②
晋太元中，武陵人捕鱼为业。缘②

xī xíng wàng lù zhī yuǎn jìn hū féng táo huā lín jiā àn
溪行，忘路之远近。忽逢桃花林，夹岸
shù bǎi bù zhōng wú zá ③ shù fāng cǎo xiān měi luò yīng ④
数百步，中无杂③树，芳草鲜美，落英④
bīn fēn ⑤ yú rén shèn yì zhī ⑥ fù qián xíng yù qióng
缤纷⑤。渔人甚⑥异之⑦。复前行，欲穷
qí lín
其林。

lín jìn shuǐ yuán biàn dé yī shān shān yǒu xiǎo kǒu
林尽水源，便得一山。山有小口，
fǎng fú ruò yǒu guāng biàn shě chuán cóng kǒu rù chū jí
仿佛若有光。便舍船从口入。初极
xiá cái tōng rén fù xíng shù shí bù huò rán kāi lǎng tǔ dì
狭，才通人；复行数十步，豁然开朗。土地
píng kuàng wū shě yǎn rán yǒu liáng tián měi chí sāng zhú
平旷，屋舍俨然⑧。有良田、美池、桑竹
zhī shǔ qiān mò jiāo tōng jī quǎn xiāng wén qí zhōng
之属⑨。阡陌交通⑩，鸡犬相闻。其中
wǎng lái zhǒng zuò nán nǚ yī zhuó xī rú wài rén huáng
往来种作，男女衣着，悉⑪如外人。黄
fà chuí tiáo bìng yí rán zì lè
发⑫垂髻⑬，并怡然自乐。

jiàn yú rén nǎi dà jīng wèn hé cóng lái jù dá zhī
见渔人，乃大惊，问何从来，具答之。
biàn yào hái jiā shè jiǔ shā jī zuò shí cūn zhōng wén yǒu
便要⑭还家，设酒杀鸡作食。村中闻有
cǐ rén xián lái wèn xùn zì yún xiān shì bì qín shí luàn
此人，咸⑮来问讯。自云先世避秦时乱，
shuài qī zǐ yì rén lái cǐ jué jìng bù fù chū yān
率妻子⑯邑人⑰，来此绝境⑱，不复出焉，
suì yǔ wài rén jiān gé wèn jīn shì hé shì nǎi bù zhī
遂与外界人间隔⑲。问今是何世，乃⑳不知
yǒu hàn wú lùn wèi jìn cǐ rén yī yī wéi jù yán suǒ wén
有汉，无论魏晋。此人一一为具言所闻，



The Land of Peach Blossoms Alienated from the World



During the reign of Taiyuan^① of the Jin Dynasty, there was a man in the Wuling County^② who earned his livelihood by fishing. One day as he sailed on and on up the stream, he was not aware how far he had gone. Also without his knowing, he came to a whole grove of peach trees which stretched for hundreds of paces along the banks, with no other trees to be seen. The grass was freshly green, dotted all over with the crimson of fallen petals, and more blossoms were still falling in riotous profusion. He was intrigued by the beautiful scene, so much so that he decided to keep on sailing till he could see the end of the grove.

Eventually he found the grove ended where the head-spring was. The water issued from the side of a mountain and there seemed to be some light coming through a small cave-like opening. Very much intrigued, he left the boat and went in. At first, the passage was extremely narrow, barely admitting a man, but after dozens of paces, it suddenly opened out before his eyes into a wide expanse bathed in the brightness of light. There, the land was level and the houses neat and orderly. His eyes also fell upon fertile fields, beautiful ponds, mulberry



jiē tàn wǎn ① yú rén gè fù yán zhì qí jiā jiē chū jiǔ shí
皆叹惋①。余人各复延至其家，皆出酒食。
tíng shù rì cí qù cí zhōng rén yǔ yún bù zú wéi wài rén
停数日，辞去。此中人语云：“不足为外人
dào yě
道也。”

jì chū dé qí chuán biàn fú xiàng lù chù chù zhì ②
既出，得其船，便扶②向②路，处处志②
zhī jí jùn xià ③ yì tài shǒu shuō rú cǐ tài shǒu jí qiǎn
之。及郡下③，诣③太守说如此。太守即遣
rén suí qí wǎng xún xiàng suǒ zhì suī mí bù fù dé lù
人随其往，寻向所志，遂迷不复得路。

táo huā yuán jì
《桃花源记》

白话
翻译



东晋太元年间，有个武陵人以捕鱼为职业。有一天，他沿着溪水划船行走，忘记了路程的远近。忽然遇到一片桃花林，桃树紧靠着溪流两岸生长，长达几百步，中间没有别的树。花草鲜艳美丽，坠落的花瓣繁多交杂。渔人对这种美景感到很惊异。再往前走，想走完那片桃林。

桃林在溪水发源的地方就没有了，紧接着便看见一座山，山上有个小洞口，里面好像有光亮。渔人就舍弃小船，从洞口进入。洞口开始很窄，仅容一个人通过；又走了几十步，突然变得开阔敞亮了。那里土地平坦开阔，房屋整整齐齐，有肥沃的田地，美丽的池塘和桑树竹子之类（的景物）。田间小路交错相通，村落间能听到鸡狗的叫。那里的人们来来往往耕田劳作，男女的穿戴完全不像桃花源以外的世人。老人和小孩都悠闲愉快，自得其乐。

桃花源中的人看见渔人，于是很惊奇，问渔人从哪里来。（渔人）详尽地回答了他。他就邀请渔人到自己家去，摆酒杀鸡做饭菜给渔人吃。村子里的人听说有这样一个人，都来打听消息。他们自己说前代祖先为了躲避秦朝时



trees, bamboo groves, and paths and roads leading in all directions. And he could even hear the cries of fowls and dogs. There were people bustling about and busy working in the fields. These people were all dressed in the same fashion as people outside this small world—men and women. Both the grey-haired and the children looked peaceful and happy, enjoying a life of ease and comfort.

When a villager saw the stranger, he was greatly astonished.

Asked where he had come from, the fisherman told the whole truth. He was then invited to the villager's home and treated to wine and chicken. On hearing of the visit of a stranger, all the other villagers came over to enquire about the outside world, and at the same time told the fisherman that their ancestor had come to this secluded place to take refuge during the turmoils in the Qin Dynasty, not only with his wife and children but also with his fellow villagers, and thenceforth they never went out, remaining isolated from the outside world. They were interested to know what dynasty it was by now—evidently they were ignorant that there had been a dynasty called Han, let alone the Wei and the Jin. In answer, the fisherman told them everything he knew and could think of about his own world. At all this they were amazed, their sighs bearing witness to indefinable feelings. Then more of them asked the man to have a drink and dine with them at home. It was not until several days later that he begged to leave. When he was leaving, the villagers advised him: "Better keep to yourself all these things you've seen and heard here."

候的祸乱,带领妻子儿女和同乡人,来到这个与世隔绝的地方,再没有从这里出去过,于是和桃花源以外的世人隔绝了。他们问现在是什么朝代,竟不知道有过汉朝,更不用说魏朝和晋朝了。渔人一件件为他们详细地说出自己所知道的情况,那些人听罢都感叹惊讶。其他的人各自又邀请渔人到自己的家中,都拿出酒和饭菜来招待。渔人住了几天,告辞离去。这里的人告诉他说:“这里的情况不值得对桃花源以外的世人说啊。”

渔人出来后,找到了他的船,就沿着旧路回去,一路上处处作了标记。回到郡里,去拜见太守,报告了这些情况。太守立即派人跟着他前去,寻找先前做的标记,竟迷失了方向,没有再找到原来的路。

注释

① 世外桃源:晋·陶渊明在《桃花源记》中描写了一个与世隔绝、安居乐业的好地方,用以比喻不受外界影响的地方或理想中的美好地方。太元:晋孝武帝年号。武陵:晋郡名,治所在今湖南常德。

② 缘:沿着。

③ 杂:不纯。

④ 英:花。

⑤ 缤纷:繁多的样子。

⑥ 甚:很,非常。

⑦ 异之:对此感到诧异。

⑧ 俨然:整齐的样子。

⑨ 属:类。

⑩ 阡(qiān)陌(mò)交通:田间小路纵横贯通。南北小路叫阡,东西小路叫陌。交通:交错相通。

⑪ 悉:全。

⑫ 黄发:指老人。

⑬ 髻(tiáo):小孩子头上扎起来的下垂的短发。垂髻,借指小孩子。



When the fisherman came out of the sequestered place and found his boat, he went back the way he had come, marking as he went along every spot he wanted to remember. As soon as he returned to his home village in the prefecture, he asked to see the prefect and told him about his adventure. The prefect immediately let his men go with the fisherman to find the place, but strange to say, all the marks that he had made had vanished, so they lost their way, and never reach it.

Taohuayuan Ji (The Spring of Peach Blossoms)



Note

- ① the reign mark of Emperor Xiaowu.
- ② present-day Changde County, Hunan Province.



- ⑭ 要:通“邀”,邀请。
- ⑮ 咸:都。
- ⑯ 妻子:妻子和孩子。
- ⑰ 邑人:老乡。
- ⑱ 绝境:与世隔绝的地方。
- ⑲ 间隔:隔离。
- ⑳ 乃:竟然。
- ㉑ 叹惋:感叹,惋惜。
- ㉒ 扶:沿着。
- ㉓ 向:原先。
- ㉔ 志:作标记。
- ㉕ 郡下:指武陵郡城下。
- ㉖ 诣:拜访。





fù
覆
shuǐ
水
nán
难
shōu
收
①

tài gōng wàng chū qū mǎ shì dú shū bù shì chǎn
太公^②望初娶马氏，读书不事^③产，

mǎ qiú qù tài gōng fēng qí mǎ qiú zài hé tài gōng qǔ
马求去。太公封^④齐，马求再合。太公取

shuǐ yī pén qīng yú dì lìng fù shōu shuǐ wéi dé qí ní
水一盆，倾于地，令妇收水，惟得其泥。

tài gōng yuē ruò néng lí gèng hé fù shuǐ dìng nán shōu
太公曰：“若能离更合，覆水定难收！”

shí yí jì
《拾遗记》

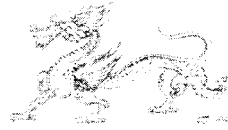
白话
翻译



姜太公刚娶马氏的时候，只是读书而不从事生产，马氏请求离开。(马氏离开后)太公受封于齐地，马氏请求重新结合。太公取了一盆水，倒在地上，让马氏把水收起来，只得到了泥。太公说：“如果离开了又能复合，那么倒在地上的水就一定收起来了。”



Spilt Water Cannot Be Retrieved



Taigongwang^① had at first taken Ma as his wife. Seeing her husband devoted entirely to learning but caring not a fig for earning a livelihood, the woman divorced him and left. When Taigong was later made Prince of Qi, Ma pleaded for a reunion. Thereupon Taigong took up a basin of water and splashed it over the ground, and then asked the woman to retrieve it. All she could gather was mud. Taigong then asserted: "For a desertion to be redressed is as difficult as trying to retrieve spilt water."

Shi Yi Ji (Picked Up Stories)

注释

①覆水难收：泼在地上的水难以收回。比喻事情已成定局，无法挽回。覆：翻、倾倒。

②太公：即姜太公。应该是立国于吕（今河南南阳）的姜姓部族一支的后裔，故为姜姓、吕氏。名望，字子牙，或单呼牙。任周初“太师”之职，被尊为“师尚父”，因有“吕尚”之称。又以齐国始祖而称“太公望”，俗称姜太公。于周文王时进入周族方国统治集团，成为主掌军政的核心人物。

③事：做，从事。

④封：分封土地。



Note

- ① His original name was Jiang Shang, Taigongwang (better known as Jiang Taigong) being an honorary name granted him in his later years. His talents were not discovered until he was a poor old man of eighty when Zhou Wenwang, King of the Zhou Dynasty, met him beside the Wei River where he was fishing. He first assisted Wenwang in ruling the kingdom and later Wuwang in overthrowing the Shang Dynasty. For this he was made a prince.

yāng

殃

jí

及

chí

池

yú

鱼

①

chǔ guó wáng yuán huò yán lín mù chéng mén shī
楚国亡^②猿，祸延林木；城门失

huǒ yāng jí chí yú
火，殃及池鱼。

xí liáng wén
《榷梁文》

白话
翻译

楚国逃跑的猴子，祸患延及林中树木；失火的城门，
灾害连累了池塘里面的鱼跟着遭遇灾祸。



When the City Gates Are on Fire, Misfortune Befalls the Fish in the Moat



Once, in the State of Chu, the escape of an ape brought great disaster to the forests. ① This was as much as when the city gates were set on fire and misfortune befell the fish in the moat. ②

Xi Liang Wen



Notes

- ① The story of the escaped ape runs like this: One day, the King of the State of Chu lost his precious ape, and it was reported that it had fled back to the forest it had come from. The King immediately sent men there to recover it. But, as the forest was immense and trackless, it was not an easy task to locate the animal. In order to let it have no place to hide, the King decreed that the forest be burned to the ground.
- ② Concerning the misfortune of the fish in the moat, there was a story that took place in the State of Song. One day, the gates of the Song capital were on fire. People used the water in the moat and nearby ponds to extinguish the fire until they were dry. —*Bai Jia shu* (《百家书》) Another story was recorded in *Guang Yun* (《广韵》) to show how this idiomatic expression originated. Once upon a time,



注释

① 殃(yāng)及池鱼:成语的意思是,灾害连累到了池塘里面的鱼。比喻无端遭受牵连。殃,祸害,灾难。及:连累;关联。

② 亡:逃跑。



Chinese Idioms and Their Stories

a man by the name of Zhong Yu (*yu* means “fish”) or Chi Zhongyu (*chi* means “pond”) had his home neat the city gate. When the gates were on fire, the flames spread to his house and destroyed it. Chiyu was also burnt to death.

liáng
梁
shàng
上
jūn
君
zǐ
子
①

yǒu dào yè rù qí shì zhǐ yú liáng shàng
有盗夜入其^②室，止于梁上。

shí yīn jiàn nǎi qǐ zì zhěng fú hū mìng zǐ sūn
寔^③阴^④见，乃起自整拂，呼命子孙，

zhèng sè xùn zhī yuē fū rén bù kě bù zì miǎn bù shàn
正色训之曰：“夫人不可不自勉，不善

zhī rén wèi bì běn è xí yǐ xìng chéng suì zhì yú cǐ
之人，未必本恶，习以性成，遂至于此，

liáng shàng jūn zǐ zhě shì yǐ
梁上君子者是矣！”

dào dà jīng zì tóu yú dì jī sǎng guī zuì
盗大惊，自投于地，稽颡^⑤归罪。

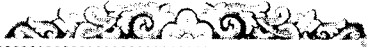
hòu hàn shū chén shí zhuàn
《后汉书·陈寔传》

白话
翻译

有个小偷夜间进入陈寔家里，躲在房梁上。

陈寔暗中发现了，就起来整顿衣服，让子孙聚拢过来，正色地训诫他们说：“人不可以不自我勉励。不善良的人不一定本性是坏的，(坏)习惯往往由(不注重)品性修养而形成的，于是到了这样的地步。梁上君子就是这样的人！”

小偷大惊，从房梁跳到地上，跪地磕头，诚恳认罪。



A Gentleman on the Beam



One night a burglar sneaked into the house of Chen Shi^① and hid himself on a beam. Aware of all this in spite of the darkness, Chen rose to get himself properly dressed, dust his clothes clean, and call together his children and grandchildren for a talking-to.

“Listen,” he began, “it is wrong if a person does not exhort himself to do good things. On the other hand, he that does evil things may not be evil in nature. It is constant evil practices that end in the formation of a bad habit, and such a person may be called a gentleman on the beam.”

Greatly moved by these words, the burglar came down from the beam and kowtowed to Chen Shi pleading for his forgiveness.

Houhan Shu (Book of Later Han)



注释

① 梁上君子：是躲在梁上的君子，成为窃贼的代称。现在有时也指脱离实际、脱离群众的人。梁：是房梁。君子：是古代对有教养的读书人的称呼，用在这里含有幽默的意思。

② 其：他，指下文提到的陈寔。

③ 寔(shí)：即陈寔，据《后汉书·陈寔传》记载，陈寔在汉桓帝时，任太丘县的太丘长。他理政有方，秉公办事，善于以德感人，深受人们的尊敬与爱戴。

④ 阴：副词，暗中，暗地里。

⑤ 颡(sǎng)：额，脑门子。



Note

- ① He lived in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220) and was once a magistrate known for his benevolence, justice and educational competency.

bié
别
wú
无
cháng
长
wù
物
①

wáng gōng cóng huì jī huán wáng dà kàn zhī jiàn qí
王恭从会稽^②还，王大看之，见其

zuò liù chǐ diàn yīn yǔ gōng qīng dōng lái gù yīng yǒu
坐六尺簟^③，因语恭：“卿东来，故应有

cǐ wù kě yǐ yī lǐng gěi wǒ gōng wú yán dà qù hòu
此物。可以一领给我。”恭无言。大去后，

jǐ jǔ suǒ zuò zhě sòng zhī jì wú yú xí biàn zuò jiàn^④
即举所坐者送之。既无余席，便坐荐^④

shàng hòu dà wén zhī shèn jīng yuē wú běn wèi qīng
上。后大闻之，甚惊，曰：“吾本谓卿

duō gù qiú ěr duì yuē zhàng rén bù xī gōng
多，故求耳。”对曰：“丈人^⑤不悉^⑥恭，

gōng zuò rén wú cháng wù
恭作人无长物。”

shì shuō xīn yǔ dé xíng
《世说新语·德行》

白话
翻译

王恭从会稽回来，王大去看他。王大看见王恭坐着一张六尺长的竹席，就对他说：“你从东边回来，一定富裕这种东西，能不能给我一领？”王恭没有回答。王大去后，王恭就把坐着的这张席子给王大送去了。自己没有竹席了，就坐在草垫上。后来王大听说此事，非常吃惊，就对王恭说：“我本来以为你那里多呢，所以才要的。”王恭回答说：“您不了解我，我作人除了自己的身体以外，从来没有多余的东西。”



Not a Thing Which Is More than Necessary



When Wang Gong^① returned from a trip to Guji^②, an elder member of the family named Wang Da came to see him. Noticing the host sitting on a six-foot bamboo mat, Wang Da said in admiration: “You’ve just come back from the east. That must be how you got this nice thing. Can you spare me one?” Wang Gong did not reply, but no sooner had the guest gone than he sent over the very mat he had been sitting on. And since that was the only bamboo one in the house, he himself was content with a straw one.

Later, on hearing this, Wang Da was disquieted. He went to Wang Gong’s house to explain himself: “I thought you had brought back plenty of these luxuries, so I asked for one.”

“Sir, maybe you do not know me too well. I am a man who believes in holding not a thing which is more than necessary in life.”^③

Shishuo Xinyu (New Accounts of Old Episodes)



注释

① 别无长物(bié wú cháng wù):除一身体之外再没有多余的东西。原指生活俭朴。现形容贫穷。长物:多余的东西。

② 会稽:地名,今浙江绍兴市。

③ 簟(diàn):竹席。

④ 荐(jiàn):草垫子。

⑤ 丈人:古时对老年男子的尊称。

⑥ 悉(xī):详尽的知道、了解。



Notes

- ① lived in the Jin Dynasty(265-420).
- ② present-day Shaoxing County, Zhejiang Province, situated to the east of Nanjing, then the capital of the state, where the Wang family were living.
- ③ This idiomatic expression is now used to describe a man holding no earthly possession whatever, hence its variants such as “身无长物”, “家无长物”, and “一无长物”。

máng

盲
人

xià

瞎
马

má

①

huán nán jùn yīn zhòng kān gù kǎi zhī zuò wēi yǔ
桓南郡^②、殷仲堪、顾恺之^③作危语

huán yuē máo tóu xī mǐ jiàn tóu chuī yīn yuē
④。桓曰：“矛头淅米^⑤剑头炊。”殷曰：“

bǎi suì lǎo wēng pān kū zhī gù yuē jǐng shàng lù lú wò
百岁老翁攀枯枝。”顾曰：“井上辘轳^⑥卧

yīng ér yīn yǒu yī cān jūn zǎi zuò yuē máng rén qí
婴儿。”殷有一参军^⑦在坐，曰：“盲人骑

xiǎ mǎ yè bàn lín shēn chí yīn yuē duō duō bī rén
瞎马，夜半临深池。”殷曰：“咄咄逼人^⑧！”

zhòng kān miǎo mù gù yě
仲堪眇目^⑨故也。

shì shuō xīn yǔ pái diào
《世说新语·排调》

白话
翻译

桓玄、殷仲堪、顾恺之三个人在一起说形容危险的句子。桓玄说：“矛头淘米剑头拔火。”殷仲堪接着说：“百岁老翁攀登枯枝。”顾恺之接着又说：“井上辘轳上睡婴儿。”这时，殷仲堪有个参谋在旁插了一句：“盲人骑着瞎马，半夜三更走到了深池边。”殷仲堪说：“这句话说得太伤人！”原来殷仲堪一只眼睛瞎了，所以对此特别敏感。



A Blind Man Riding a Blind Horse



Huan Nanjun^①, Yin Zhongkai^② and Gu Kaizhi^③ were playing a game of trying to mention or describe the most frightening and dangerous situation.

Huan began the game with one like this: “Use a spearhead to wash rice in a sieve-basket, and a sword point to stir food in a cooking pot.”

Yin followed Huan, saying: “A centenarian clammers along a withered branch on the tree.”

Gu contributed one really dangerous situation, saying: “A baby lies on the windlass of a well! ”

When the three of them had said all these, a staff officer of Yin, who was also there, ventured to say: “A blind man riding a blind horse approaches the brink of an unfathomable pool at midnight.”

Because he himself was blind in one eye, Yin Zhongkai exclaimed on hearing this: “Dear me, how truly dangerous and sharp-witted! ”

Shishuo Xinyu (New Accounts of Old Episodes)



注释

① 盲人瞎马:是说一个盲人骑着一匹瞎马在半夜没人的时候,走在深池的边上,快要掉下去了,很危险。现在经常比喻面临着巨大的危险而不自知的情况。

② 桓(huán)南郡:姓桓名玄,晋朝人。

③ 顾恺之:东晋人,字长康,小字虎头,晋陵(今江苏无锡)人。义熙初年(405-418)任通直散骑常侍,博学多能,工诗善书精丹青。

④ 作危语:说形容危险的话。桓、殷、顾三人“作危语”这实际上是一种比赛,看谁说得最惊险。而这一短文中最为突出的是殷仲堪的参军的插言,一语惊人,出人意料。他的“盲人骑瞎马,夜半临深池”实在是惊险之极,叫人毛骨悚然。更为值得一提的是,这一危语的特殊语言环境,即殷仲堪本人一只眼睛瞎了。所以他对这一危语特别敏感,因此他作出“咄咄逼人”的评价。

⑤ 浙(xī)米:淘米。这句意思是用牙头淘米剑头拨火,这样淘箩,锅底非戳破不可。

⑥ 辘轳(lùlú):安在井上绞起汲水斗的器具。

⑦ 参军:参谋。

⑧ 咄(duó)咄逼人:这里指参军的危语,言辞伤人,使人难受。咄咄,使人惊惧的声音。

⑨ 眇(miǎo)目:一只眼睛瞎了。



Notes

- ① a high ranking official in the Jin Dynasty(265-420).
- ② a famous general at the time.
- ③ a celebrated Jin-dynasty painter.

xiāng

相

jiān

煎

hé

何

tài

太

jí

急

cáo zhí shī
曹植^①诗：

zhǔ dòu rán dòu qí^②，
煮豆燃豆其^②，

dòu zài fú zhōng qì^③；
豆在釜^③中泣；

běn shì tóng gēn shēng，
本是同根生，

xiāng jiān hé tài jí^④？
相煎^④何太急？

shì shuō xīn yǔ wén xué
《世说新语·文学》

白话
翻译

煮豆子的时候，燃烧的是豆秸，豆子在锅中哭泣。“豆荚”和“豆”本来是在同一个根上面生长起来的，豆荚对豆为什么逼迫得这样急呢？



Why the Beanstalk Roasts the Beans So Mercilessly?



Under painful circumstances, Cao Zhi^① was forced to compose a poem impromptu. Literally, it carries the following meaning:

To fry the beans means burning the beanstalks.

The beans thus heated are crying in the wok:

We both grew out of the same root,

Why roast us so mercilessly?

Shishuo Xinyu (New Accounts of Old Episodes)



注释

① 曹植：曹植(192~233)，字子建。沛国谯(今安徽亳县)人。三国时魏之杰出诗人。曹操第三子，封陈思王。据《世说新语·文学》中说，曹丕做了皇帝以后，对才华横溢的胞弟曹植一直心怀忌恨，有一次，他命曹植在七步之内作诗一首，如做不到就将行以大法(处死)，而曹植不等其话音落下，便应声而说出六句诗来，就是上面的这首脍炙人口的诗。因为限止在七步之中作成，故后人称这首曹植诗为《七步诗》。

② 豆萁(qí)豆秸的俗称。

③ 釜(fǔ)：古代的一种锅。

④ 煎：煎熬，隐喻迫害。



Note

- ① He was the third son of Cao Cao, the first emperor of Wei, that is, Wei Wendi, who favoured the boy specially because of his great talents. It was said that Cao Zhi could make poems when he was only ten years old. His eldest brother Cao Pi was, therefore, very jealous of him. One day he asked his young brother to compose a poem walking, to test whether he was really talented or not. One requirement Cao Pi imposed on his brother was that the poem should be finished at the end of the seventh pace, not later. Under such pressure Cao Zhi could not but try, yet he finished a poem before he took the seventh.



wàng

望

méi

梅

zhǐ

止

kě

渴

①

wèi wǔ xíng yì shī jī dào jūn jiē kě nǎi lìng yuē
魏武行役失汲道^②，军皆渴，乃令曰：

qián yǒu dà méi lín ráo zǐ gān suān kě yǐ jiě kě shì
“前有大梅林，饶子甘酸^③可以解渴。”士

zú wén zhī kǒu jiē chū shuǐ chéng cǐ dé jí qián yuán
卒闻之，口皆出水，乘此得及前源^④。

shì shuō xīn yǔ jiǎ jué
《世说新语·假谲》

白话
翻译

曹操带领队伍行军，途中找不到取水的地方，士兵们非常渴。为了激励士气，曹操就对士兵们说：“前面不远处有很大的一片梅树林，梅子特别多，又甜又酸，可以用来解渴。”士兵们听了，一个个都流出口水来，凭借这句话他们就到达了目的地。





Quenching Thirst by Thinking of Plums



Once, Wei Wu^① and his troops were on the march during a campaign. Unable to find any water source, the men were terribly thirsty. He, then, said to them: “I know there is a big grove of plum trees ahead. You will find quantities of plums there, and the fruit is sour with a tinge of sweetness, excellent for quenching the thirst.” At these words, the men’s mouths became wet with saliva, and because of this they pushed their way forward.

Shishuo Xinyu (New Accounts of Old Episodes)



注释

① 望梅止渴：成语原意是梅子酸，人想吃梅子就会流涎，因而止渴。后比喻愿望无法实现，用空想安慰自己。梅是指青梅。

② 魏武行役，失汲道：曹操带队行军，途中找不到取水的地方。魏武：指的是曹操。

③ 饶子甘酸：有很多果子酸酸甜甜很可口的。

④ 乘此得及前源：凭借这句话他们就到达了目的地。



Note

- ① referring to Cao Cao of the Three Kingdoms Period (220–280), who established the Kingdom of Wei. So, when his son came to the throne, he honoured his father posthumously as Wei Wuti (Emperor Wu of Wei).

fù
覆
cháo
巢
wú
无
wán
完
luán
卵
①

kǒng róng bèi shōu zhōng wài huáng bù shí róng ér
孔融^②被收，中外^③惶怖。时融儿

dà zhě jiǔ suì xiǎo zhě bā suì èr ér gù zhuó dīng xì
大者九岁，小者八岁，二儿故琢钉戏^④，

liǎo wú jù róng róng wèi shǐ zhě yuē jì zuì zhǐ yú
了^⑤无遽容^⑥。融谓使者曰：“冀罪止于

shēn èr ér kě dé quán bù ér xú jìn yuē dà rén
身，二儿可得全不？”儿徐进曰：“大人^⑦，

qǐ jiàn fù cháo zhī xià fù yǒu wán luǎn hū xún yì shōu
岂见覆巢之下，复有完^⑧卵乎？”寻亦收

zhì
至。

shì shuō xīn yǔ yán yǔ
《世说新语·言语》



No Complete Eggs Under an Overturned Nest



The apprehending of Kong Rong^① caused a great stir both within and without the court.

Now Kong Rong had two boys, one nine and the other eight. They were deeply engrossed in a chess game when the writ-servers came to arrest their father, but they betrayed not a bit of alarm. It was Kong who pleaded with the men: "Let me face the serious charges alone, I beg. Can the two kids be spared?" Before the men could say anything, the two children spoke with great composure, "Father, have you ever seen any egg remaining intact when the nest is overturned?"

Before long the children were also taken into custody.

Shishuo Xinyu (New Accounts of Old Episodes)

白话
翻译

孔融被曹操抓捕起来了，朝廷内外都很惊恐。当时，孔融的儿子大的才九岁，小的八岁，两个孩子依旧在玩琢钉戏，一点也没有恐惧的样子。孔融对前来逮捕他的差使说：“希望惩罚只限于我自己，能不能让两个孩子保全性命呢？”这时，儿子从容地上前说：“父亲难道看见过打翻的鸟巢下面还有完整的蛋吗？”随即，来拘捕两个儿子的差役也到了。

注释

① 覆巢无完卵：字面意思是鸟巢倾覆了，里面的卵应当都被打破了。比喻毁灭性的打击降临于众时，无一可以幸免。

② 孔融：153~208年，他是孔子的二十世孙，鲁国曲阜人，后来为曹操所用、所杀。

③ 中外：指朝廷内外。

④ 琢钉戏：一种小孩玩的游戏。

⑤ 了：完全。

⑥ 遽(jù)容：恐惧的脸色。

⑦ 大人：对父亲的敬称。

⑧ 完：完整。



Note

- ① Kong Rong was a talented scholar at the close of the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), but his incisive criticisms and satires enraged the then all-powerful Prime Minister Cao Cao, who finally had him arrested and killed.

xiǎ
瞎
zǐ
子
mō
摸
xiàng
象
①

yǒu wáng gào dà chén rǔ qiān yī xiàng lái shì ② 盲
有王告大臣，汝牵一象来示

zhě shí zhòng máng gè yǐ shǒu chù dà wáng huàn zhòng wèn
者，时众盲各以手触。大王唤众问

zhī rǔ jiàn xiàng lèi ③ hé wù chù qí yá zhě yán xíng rú luó
之，汝见象类何物？触其牙者言形如萝

fú gēn chù qí ěr zhě yán rú jī chù qí jiǎo zhě yán rú
菘④根。触其耳者言如箕。触其脚者言如

jiù chù qí jí zhě yán rú chuáng chù qí fù zhě yán rú
臼⑤。触其脊者言如床。触其腹者言如

wèng chù qí wěi zhě yán rú shéng
瓮⑥。触其尾者言如绳。……

dà bān niè pán jīng
《大般涅槃经》

白话
翻译

有一天国王告诉他的大臣：你牵一头大象让这些盲人看，当时盲人们各自用手去摸大象。（然后）国王召唤众盲人问他们：你们所摸到的大象像什么东西？”摸到大象牙的盲人说：大象的体形象萝卜的根；摸到大象的耳朵的盲人说：大象像簸箕；摸到大象的脚的盲人说大象像舂米的器具；摸到象的背脊的盲人说大象像床；摸到大象的肚子的盲人说大象像陶器；摸到象的尾巴的盲人说大象像麻绳。



The Blind Men Trying to Size Up the Elephant



Once there was a king who ordered his minister to bring in an elephant and let some blind men touch the animal one by one. After every one of them had their turn, the king asked them what they thought the elephant was like. The one who had touched its tusk said it was like a turnip; the next had touched its ear, and said it was a dustpan; the third its foot, and said it was a pestle; the fourth its back, and said it was a bed; the fifth its belly, and said it was a jar; and the last its tail, and said it was a rope.

Daban Niepan Jing (The Mahapra Janaparamita Sutra)



注释

① 瞎子摸象：许多瞎子摸象，摸到象腿的说象是一根柱子，摸到象身子的说象是一堵墙，摸到象尾的说象是一条蛇，互相争论不休。比喻看问题以偏概全，不对全局作判断。

② 示：让人看，显示。

③ 类：相似，像。

④ 萝菔(fú)：萝卜。

⑤ 臼(jiù)：舂米的器具，用石头制成，样子像盆。

⑥ 瓮(wèng)：陶制盛器，小口大腹。



kōng
空
zhōng
中
lóu
楼
gé
阁
①

wǎng xī zhī shì yǒu fù yú rén chī wú suǒ zhī
往昔之世，有富愚人，痴^②无所知。

dào yú fù jiā jiàn sān chóng lóu gāo guǎng yán lì xuān
到余富家，见三重楼，高广严丽，轩

chǎng shū lǎng xīn shēng kě yǎng jí zuò shì niàn wǒ yǒu
敞疏朗，心生渴仰，即作是念：我有

cái qián bù miè yú bǐ yún hé qǐng lái ér bù zào zuò rú shì
财钱，不灭于彼，云何顷来而不造作如是

zhī lóu jí huàn mù jiàng ér wèn qí yán yuē jiě zuò bǐ jiā
之楼？即唤木匠而问其言曰：“解作彼家

duān zhèng shě bù mù jiàng dá yán shì wǒ suǒ zuò
端正舍不？”木匠答言：“是我所作。”

jǐ biàn yǔ yán jīn kě wèi wǒ zào lóu rú bǐ
即便语言：“今可为我造楼如彼。”

shì shí mù jiàng jí biàn jīng dì lěi jī zuò lóu yú
是时，木匠即便经地^③垒壑^④作楼。愚

rén jiàn qí lěi jī zuò shě yóu huái yí huò bù néng liǎo zhī
人见其垒壑作舍，犹怀疑惑，不能了知，

ér wèn zhī yán yù zuò hé děng mù jiàng dá yán zuò
而问之言：“欲作何等？”木匠答言：“作

sān céng wū yú rén fù yán wǒ bù yù xià èr chóng zhī
三层屋。”愚人复言：“我不欲下二重之

wū kě xiān wèi wǒ zuò zuì shàng wū mù jiàng dá yán
屋，可先为我作最上屋。”木匠答言：“

wú yǒu shì shì hé yǒu bù zuò zuì xià wū ér dé zào bǐ dì èr
无有是事。何有不作最下屋而得造彼第二

zhī wū bù zào dì èr yún hé dé zào dì sān chóng wū
之屋？不造第二，云何得造第三重屋？”

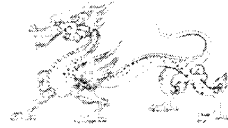
yú rén gù yán wǒ jīn bù yòng xià èr chóng wū bì kě wèi
愚人固言：“我今不用下二重屋，必可为

wǒ zuò zuì shàng zhě
我作最上者。”

shí rén wén yǐ biàn shēng guài xiào xián zuò shì
时人闻已，便生怪笑，咸^⑤作是



Castles in the Air



Once upon a time there was a man of wealth who was ignorant and foolish. When he was on a visit to another rich family, he saw they had a three-storeyed house. It was a grand and lofty one and had bright spacious rooms. In secret admiration he said to himself: I am no less wealthy than he. Why did it not occur to me to build one like this?

Upon returning he sent for a carpenter and asked: "Was it you who built the magnificent house for that family?"

"Yes, it was my work," the carpenter answered.

"Now I want you to build one exactly the same as theirs," said the rich man.

As agreed, the carpenter soon surveyed the land, laid bricks and began constructing.

Seeing all that was going on, the foolish man became doubtful, not knowing what laying bricks was for. So he asked the carpenter: "What kind of house are you building?"

"A three-storeyed house, of course," was the reply.

"No, I don't want the first two storeys. You may build me the toppest one first."

"That's impossible. How can the second storey go up without the first? And without the second, where comes the third?"

yán hé yǒu bù zào xià dì yī wū ér dé shàng zhě
言：“何有不造下第一屋而得上者？”

bǎi jù pǐ yù jīng sān chóng lóu yù
《百句譬喻经·三重楼喻》

白话
翻译

远古时期，有一个很富有，但却愚蠢的人，迟钝到对事情一无所知。他到其余富人家作客，看见一座三层的楼房，高大宽敞，庄严华丽而且敞亮通风，内心十分羡慕，心里立刻就想：我有钱财，并不比他的少，为什么以前没能建造一座这样的楼呢？于是他立刻叫来木匠，问道：“懂不懂怎样造一座像他家那样漂亮的三层高楼？”木匠回答说：“他家那座楼就是我建造的。”富人便说：“现在就请你照样为我建造一座楼！”

当时，木匠就清理地基测量土地、制坯垒砖准备造楼。蠢人看到他这些安排，心里怀疑，不能明白，就问他：“你这是在干什么？”木匠回答说：“建造三层楼房。”蠢人说：“我不要盖下面这两层的房屋，你可以先为我建造最上面的一层楼房。”木匠回答道：“没有这样的事情！哪里有不造最底层的就能造第二层的楼房？哪里能不造第二层就能造第三层楼房的道理？”这蠢人固执地说：“我现在就是不要下面两层，你一定得给我建造最上面的那层楼房。”

当时人听说这故事，都感到稀奇可笑，都说“哪有不盖下面一层屋而能得到上面的房屋呢！”



Chinese Idioms and Their Stories

“I tell you I’m not going to use the first two. You must just build the top one for me.”

On hearing this, people burst out laughing and all had but one remark to make: “How can a multi-storeyed house go up without building the base?”

Baiju Piyu Jing

(One-Hundred Sentence Sutra in Analogies)

注释

① 空中楼阁：悬在半空中的阁楼。比喻虚幻的事物或脱离实际的空想。

② 痴：不聪慧；迟钝。

③ 经地：测量土地。经，量度；筹划。

④ 整(jī)：未烧的砖坯，这里指砖。

⑤ 咸(xián)：普遍都，全部。



bēi
杯
gōng
弓
shé
蛇
yǐng
影
①

lè guǎng cháng yǒu qīn kè jiǔ kuò bù fù
(乐广)尝②有亲客③,久阔④不复
lái guǎng wèn qí gù dá yuē qián zài zuò méng
来。广问其故⑤,答曰:“前在坐⑥,蒙
cì jiǔ fāng yù yǐn jiàn bēi zhōng yǒu shé yì shèn wù
赐酒,方⑦欲饮,见杯中有蛇,意⑧甚恶⑨
zhī jì yǐn ér jí yú shí hé nán tīng shì bì
之,既饮而疾⑩。”于时⑪河南⑫厅事⑬壁
shàng yǒu jiǎo gōng qī huà zuò shé guǎng yì bēi zhōng
上有角⑭弓,漆画作蛇⑮。广意杯中
shé jí jiǎo yǐng yě fù zhì jiǔ yú qián chù wèi kè yuē
蛇即角影也。复置酒于前处,谓客曰:“
jiǔ zhōng fù yǒu suǒ jiàn bù dá yuē suǒ jiàn rú chū
酒中复有所见不?”答曰:“所见如初⑯。”
guǎng nǎi gào qí suǒ yī kè huò rán yì jiě chén kē
广乃告其所以⑰。客豁然⑱意解⑲,沈疴
dùn yù
顿愈。⑳

jìn shū yuè guǎng zhuàn
《晋书·乐广传》

白话
翻译



乐广曾经有一个极为亲密的朋友,很长时间没有来了。乐广问他不来的原因。客人回答说:“上次在你这儿入座,承蒙你请我喝酒。我正要喝的时候,突然看见杯中有一条蛇,心里很是厌恶。喝下去以后,我就病倒了。”正当那个时候,乐广家里的墙壁上挂着一张角弓,那弓上用油漆画了一条蛇。乐广心里猜想客人所见杯中的蛇,也许就是这张弓的影子。于是,重新倒了一杯酒,放在原先的位置上,问客人道:“你在这酒中又看见什么没有?”客人回答说:“我所看到的,同上次见到的一样。”乐广就向客人讲明了原因,使他明白杯中的蛇不过是弓的倒影。客人心中的疑团一下子解开了,久治不愈的毛病不久就好了。



An Illusory Snake in a Goblet



Yue Guang^① had a frequent guest, who used to call on him regularly but had failed to turn up for some time. When Yue asked for the reason why, the man answered: "On my last visit you kindly treated me to wine. Just as I was going to take a sip, I saw a snake wriggling in the goblet and I felt quite sick. Nevertheless, I drank; then I soon fell ill."

Now in those days it was a custom prevailing in Henan Prefecture^② for a prefect to have a bow painted to look like a snake and hung in his hall. Suspecting that the snake alluded to was nothing but a reflection of the decorated bow, he invited the man again for a drink and set the table in the usual spot.

"Do you still see something in the wine cup?" asked the host.

"Yes. Exactly as before," was the answer.

Then Yue Guang explained what he thought the whole trouble must have been. At that, the guest, realizing what had happened and instantly relieved of his obsession, returned to normal.

Jinshu (Book of Jin)



注释

① 杯弓蛇影:将映在酒杯里的弓影误认为蛇。比喻因疑神疑鬼而引起恐惧。

② 尝:曾经。

③ 亲客:关系亲密的客人、朋友。

④ 久阔:久别。

⑤ 其故:这里指久别不来的原因。

⑥ 坐:同“座”。

⑦ 方:正要。

⑧ 意:心里感到。

⑨ 恶(wù):厌恶。

⑩ 疾:生病。

⑪ 于时:在那个时候,当时。

⑫ 河南:晋朝郡名。

⑬ 厅事:官府办事的厅堂。乐广当时为河南尹。

⑭ 角:角弓,用牛角装饰的弓。

⑮ 漆画作蛇:(在弓上)用漆画成蛇的花纹。

⑯ 如初:如同上次一样。初,起初(的),第一次(的)。

⑰ 告其所以:告诉他(杯中有蛇影的)原因。所以,表示“……的原因”。

⑱ 豁(huò)然:心情开朗的样子。

⑲ 意解:怀疑解除。

⑳ 沈疴(chén kē)顿愈:重病立刻痊愈了。沈疴,积久难治的病。



Notes

- ① lived in the Jin Dynasty (265–420).
- ② present-day area in the north of Henan Province on the banks of the Huanghe (Yellow) River.

hóu
侯
mén
门
rú
如
hǎi
海
①

cūi jiāo shī
崔郊^②诗：

gōng zǐ wáng sūn zhú hòu chén
公子王孙逐后尘，

lǜ zhū chuí lèi dī luó jīn
绿珠^③垂泪滴罗巾^④，

hóu mén yī rù shēn rú hǎi
侯门^⑤一入深如海，

cóng cǐ xiāo láng shì lù rén
从此萧郎^⑥是路人。

yún xī yǒu yì
《云溪友议》

白话
翻译

崔郊的诗这样写道：

你是那样的美丽，公子王孙们都竞相追逐着你身后的尘土。你就像绿珠那样的泪珠儿垂在罗巾上。你一走进显贵之家，便像走进深深的大海。从此，我便成为了你陌生的路人。



The Mansions of the Noble as Deep as the Sea



In the Tang Dynasty there was a scholar named Cui Jiao who composed a poem after a great disappointment in love.^①

A literal interpretation of the poem is as follows:

As the son of a high official comes to take away my love,
The girl sheds tears that wet her silk handkerchief.

Once she enters the noble's mansion, which is as deep as the sea,

Xiaolang^② from thence becomes a stranger, a mere passerby.

Yunxi Youyi

注释

① 侯门如海：是说显贵之家门禁森严，外人不能随便出入。

② 崔郊：崔郊，唐朝元和年间秀才。唐元和年间，崔郊与其姑母的一个婢女互生情愫，互相爱慕。但是后来婢女却被卖给了显贵于某。崔郊悲伤怅惘不已。一年寒食节，偶尔外出的婢女，邂逅了崔郊，崔郊百感交集，写下《赠婢》诗。

③ 绿珠：这里是用典。绿珠原本是西晋富豪石崇的宠妾，传说她“美而艳，善吹笛”。赵王伦专权时，他手下的孙秀倚仗权势指名向石崇索取绿珠，遭到石崇的拒绝。石崇因此被收下狱，绿珠也坠楼身死。本诗用此典故一方面形容崔郊所爱慕的女子具有像绿珠那样美丽的容貌，另一方面以绿珠的悲惨遭遇暗示出女子被劫夺的不幸命运。

④ 罗巾：轻软的丝织品。

⑤ 侯门：指权豪势要之家。

⑥ 萧郎：是诗词中的习惯用语，泛指女子所爱恋的男子，此处是崔郊自己的称谓。



Notes

- ① The story began with Cui Jiao falling in love with a dignified yet beautiful maid in his aunt's house. Gifted with a good voice, she could sing excellently. Cui Jiao loved her very much while she also held him in great admiration. Ignorant of their love affair, the aunt sold the maid off to a high official. Once the maid entered the latter's mansion, she seldom came out. At the Pure Brightness Festival (in spring) one year, Cui by chance saw her standing under a willow tree outside the mansion, but he dared not approach her nor did she try so much as to greet him. Though their eyes met, he could only stare at her from a great distance. Utterly distracted, Cui composed this poem impromptu.
- ② "Xiaolang" in early days was a name given to a lover, but by the Tang Dynasty, it referred to men in general while the term "xiaoniang" was for women in general.

mó
磨
chǔ
杵
chéng
成
zhēn
针
①

lǐ bái shǎo dú shū wèi chéng qì qù dào féng lǎo
李白少^②读书，未成弃去，道逢老

yù mó chǔ bái wèn qí gù yuē zuò zhēn bái gǎn qí
姬^③磨杵，白问其故，曰：“作针。”白感其

yán suì zú yè
言，遂卒业。

qián què lèi shū
《潜确类书》

白话
翻译

李白年轻时读书，没有读完就放弃离开，在路上碰到（一个）老妇人在磨铁棒。李白问她（这样做）原因。老人说：“做针。”李白有感于她的话，于是终于完成了学业。



Grind a Rod into a Needle



Li Bai^① when young did not show well in learning, and so he decided to give up his studies halfway. On the way home he saw an old woman applying herself to grinding an iron rod. In wonder Li Bai asked her what she was about. The old woman replied curtly, "Making a needle of it."

Feeling ashamed of his own lack of perseverance, Li Bai went back to learning and finally acquired great scholarship.

Qian Que Lei Shu



注释

① 磨杵成针(mó chǔ chéng zhēn):把铁棒磨成了针。比喻做任何艰难的工作,只要有毅力、下苦功,就能够克服困难。杵:舂米的棒槌。

② 少(shào):幼年。

③ 老妪(yù):老妇人。



Note

- ① Li Bai (701–762) was a great poet of the Tang Dynasty, his alternate name being Taibai and style-name being Lay Buddhist Qinglian.

huà
画
lóng
龙
diǎn
点
jīng
睛

zhāng sēng yáo yú jīn líng ān lè sì huà sì lóng bù
张僧繇^②于金陵^③安乐寺画四龙，不

diǎn jīng yún diǎn zhī jí fēi rén yǐ wéi dàn yīn qǐng diǎn
点睛；云点之即飞。人以为诞，因请点

zhī xū yú léi diàn pò bì èr lóng chéng yún shàng tiān
之。须臾，雷电破壁，二龙乘云上天，

wèi diǎn jīng zhě jiàn zài
未点睛者见在。

lǐ dài míng huà jì
《历代名画记》

白话
翻译

张僧繇在金陵安乐寺的墙壁上画了四条龙，并不点眼睛；他说，如果点上眼睛龙就会立即飞走。人们都认为这是他怪诞的言论，因此请他点上眼睛。霎时间，电闪雷鸣，两条点上眼睛的龙乘着云彩飞上了天，只有没有点上眼睛的龙还在。

注释

① 画龙点睛：原形容梁代画家张僧繇作画的神妙。后多比喻写文章或讲话时，在关键处用几句话点明实质，使内容生动有力。

② 张僧繇(yáo)：吴(苏州)人，晋梁武帝时期，著名大画家。擅长于写真，并擅画佛像、龙、鹰，多作卷轴画和壁画。成语“画龙点睛”的故事即出自于有关他的传说。

③ 金陵：现在的南京。



Painted Dragons Brought to Life



Zhang Sengyou^①, a famous painter, once completed four dragons on a wall of the Anle Temple in Jinling^② but he left them without pupils in their eyes. When asked the reason for the omission, he said that he was afraid the dragons would fly away once they were given their pupils. Dismissing this as nonsense, disbelievers asked him to try, and a few moments after he did give the requested finishing touches to two of the painted dragons, there was a sudden peal of thunder, with flashes of lightning. The wall was shattered, and the two dragons rode the clouds and ascended into the sky. The two without pupils remained.

Lidai Minghua Ji

(Famous Paintings throughout the Dynasties)



Notes

① said to have lived in the Liang Dynasty during the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (402–589) and to have been skilled in painting dragons.

② present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu Province.



guā
瓜
tián
田
lǐ
李
xià
下
①

jūn zǐ xíng
《君子^②行》

jūn zǐ fáng wèi rán^③,
君子防未然^③,

bù chù xián yí jiān
不处嫌疑间;

guā tián bù nà lǚ,
瓜田不纳履,

lǐ xià bù zhěng guān^④.
李下不整冠。^④

jūn zǐ xíng
《君子行》

白话
翻译



《君子行》这样写道：

有德行的人能够防止有损德行的事端的发生，在它没有发生之前，他们不让自己身处在容易引起别人嫌疑的地方。经过瓜田时，不要弯腰提鞋子；走在李树下面，不要举手整理帽子，免得别人怀疑你偷瓜摘李子。



While Walking in a Melon Patch or under a Plum Tree



There is an ancient folk song literally interpreted as follows:

A gentleman always seeks to provide against possible troubles, And never renders himself under suspicion:

- He will not pull on his shoes in a melon patch,
Nor adjust his hat under a plum tree.^①

Junzi Xing



注释

① 瓜田李下:指瓜地和李子树下。借以说明做任何事情都要注意避开容易发生嫌疑的地方。

② 君子:原指对统治者和贵族男子的通称,后来也指称有德性的人。

③ 未然:还未变成现实。

④ 《唐书·柳公权传》载有故事一首,内有“瓜李之嫌,何以户晓?”之句。



Note

- ① One story recorded in *The Book of Tang—The Life Story of Liu Gongjuan* illustrates the poem and, later on, the use of this idiomatic expression. It says that Emperor Wen Zong of the Tang Dynasty commissioned Guo Min to be a magistrate in Binning (present-day Binxian County, Shaanxi Province). This became the subject of much discussion. It was said that Guo Min got this appointment because he had offered his two daughters to the throne. On hearing this, the Emperor at once said to Liu Gongjuan, a celebrated calligraphist, who was then Assistant to the Minister of Construction and Public Works, by way of explanation: “Guo Min’s two daughters were only given an audience by my mother. That was how they came into the palace. It has nothing at all to do with me.” But Liu Gongjuan had this to say to the Emperor: “How can you make people understand you when you are under the suspicion of having been ‘in a melon patch and under a plum tree’?”

qián
黔
lú
驴
jì
技
qiòng
穷
①

qián wú lú yǒu hào shì zhé chuán zǎi yǐ rù zhì
黔无驴。有好事者船载以入。至，

zé wú kě yòng fàng zhī shān xià hǔ jiàn zhī páng rán dà
则无可用，放之山下。虎见之，庞然大

wù yě yǐ wéi shén bì lín jiān kōu zhī shāo chū jìn
物^②也，以为神。蔽^③林间窥^④之。稍出近

zhī yīn yīn rán mò xiāng zhī
之，惻惻然^⑤莫相知^⑥。

tā rì lú yī míng hǔ dà hài yuǎn dùn yǐ
他日，驴一鸣，虎大骇^⑦，远遁^⑧，以

wéi qiè shì jǐ yě shèn kǒng rán wǎng lái shì zhī jiào
为且噬^⑨己也，甚恐。然往来^⑩视之，觉

wú yì néng zhé yì xí qí shēng yòu jìn chū qián hòu
无异能^⑪者。益习其声^⑫，又近出前后，

zhōng bù gǎn bó shāo jìn yì xiá dòng yǐ chōng
终不敢搏^⑬。稍近，益狎^⑭，荡^⑮倚^⑯冲^⑰

mào lú bù shèng nù tí zhī hǔ yīn xǐ jì
冒^⑱。驴不胜^⑲怒，蹄之。虎因喜，计^⑳

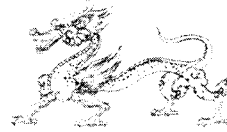
zhī yuē jì zhǐ cǐ ěr yīn tiào liáng dà hǎn duàn qí
之曰：“技止此耳！”因跳踉^㉑大嚼^㉒，断其

hóu jìn qí ròu nǎi qù
喉，尽其肉，乃去。

liǔ hé dōng jí sān jiè
《柳河东集·三戒》



When a Donkey Has Exhausted Its Tricks



Guizhou was a place where donkeys were not bred. A man full of fancy ideas shipped one there, but when it arrived he found it was not of much use. Therefore, he took it to the mountain area and left it there.

Then a tiger saw it and, impressed by its size, took it to be a mysterious creature. So, he hid himself in the woods to steal a good look at it. By and by he came out and tried to approach it with great caution, though still not sure what it was.

One day, the donkey brayed. Shocked, the tiger fled far away in extreme fear, thinking it was going to bite him. While keeping at a distance, he paced to and fro and watched, only to find that it had no special powers. Gradually used to its bray, the tiger got nearer and walked around the donkey. Nevertheless, he still dared not attack it. Then, going still nearer, he tried flirtation with it, and even went as far as touching it, leaning on it, bumping at it and provoking it. The donkey could not withhold its anger and gave the tiger a kick. At this the tiger rejoiced because he calculated that that was all it could do. Then he leaped on it, roaring, and gnawed at its

白话
翻译

以前,贵州没有驴子,一个好事的人用船装载着运来了一头。运来后,又觉得没有用处,就把它放在山下。一只老虎看到这头驴子庞然大物的样子,以为是神。虎就隐蔽在树林里偷偷地观察它。后来又渐渐走近它,但仍十分谨慎。

一天,驴子一声大叫,老虎大吃一惊,连忙远远地逃开,还以为驴子要吃它,心里很恐惧。但经过反复地观察,觉得驴子并没有特别的本领。而且对驴子的叫声也习惯了,便慢慢靠近到它的身前身后,但总不敢去袭击它。(后来)老虎进一步走到驴子的身边,故意戏弄它、冲撞它。驴子禁不住大怒,用蹄子乱踢老虎。老虎一见如此,因而大喜,心想:“原来它的本领仅此而已!”于是,纵身大喊猛地扑过去,一口咬断了驴子的喉咙,吃光了驴肉,方才离去。

注释

- ① 黔驴技穷:比喻有限的一点本领也已经用完了。
黔(qián):今贵州省一带;技:技能;穷:尽。
- ② 庞然大物:形容体积大而笨重的东西。
- ③ 蔽:躲藏。
- ④ 窥(kuī):偷看。
- ⑤ 惴惴(yìn yìn)然:忧虑,发愁的样子。
- ⑥ 莫相知:不知道(它是什么东西)。
- ⑦ 骇(hài):害怕。
- ⑧ 遁(dùn):逃避。
- ⑨ 噬(shì):咬。
- ⑩ 往来:来来回回地。
- ⑪ 异能:特别的本领。
- ⑫ 益习其声:更加习惯它的叫声。益,更加,进一步。
- ⑬ 搏:捕捉,这里指老虎抓驴。
- ⑭ 狎(xiá):表示亲近但态度放荡、不庄重。



throat. Having eaten the donkey's whole flesh, the tiger went off contented.

Liu Hedong Ji (A Collection of Essays by Liu Zongyuan)



- ⑮ 荡:晃悠。
- ⑯ 倚:挨近。
- ⑰ 冲:碰撞。
- ⑱ 冒:冒犯。
- ⑲ 不胜(shèng):禁不住。
- ㉑ 计:心里盘算。
- ㉒ 跳踉(liáng):腾跃跳动。
- ㉓ 大嚷(hǎn):大声吼叫。



tiān
天
yī
衣
wú
无
fèng
缝
①

guō hàn shǔ yuè wò tíng zhōng yǎng shì kōng zhōng yǒu
郭翰暑月卧庭中，仰视空中，有

rén rǎn rǎn ér xià yuē wú zhī nǚ yě xú shì qí yī
人冉冉而下，曰：“吾织女也。”徐视其衣，

bìng wú fèng hàn wèn zhī wèi yuē tiān yī běn fēi zhēn
并无缝。翰问之，谓曰：“天衣本非针

xiàn wéi yě
线为也。”

líng guài lù guō hàn
《灵怪录·郭翰》

白话
翻译

有个名叫郭翰的人，夏天的一个晚上，在庭院里睡觉。他仰望天空，有一个人从空中飘落下来，说：“我是天上的织女。”郭翰打量织女的衣服，并没有衣缝。郭翰就问织女（是怎么回事），织女回答说：“天衣本来就不是用针线缝起来的，自然没有衣缝。”

注释

① 天衣无缝：这则成语的原意是天仙的衣服没有缝，后来比喻事物完美自然，浑然一体，没有破绽。



A Seamless Heavenly Dress^①



It was a moonlit night in hot summer. Guo Han was lying on a couch looking up at the sky when he saw a figure descending slowly from on high. After landing, it turned out to be a girl who said, “I am the Girl Weaver, the Vega?”

Guo Han scrutinized her dress and saw it was seamless. So he asked her about it in wonder.

“A Heavenly dress is certainly not made by sewing with needle and thread,” replied the girl.

Linguai Lu (Records of Strange Tales)



Note

① now used to mean “being flawless” or “being perfect”.

zǒu
走
mǎ
马
guān
观
huā
花
①

mèng jiāo shī
孟郊^②诗：

xī rì wò chuò bù zú kuā
昔日齷齪^③不足夸，

jīn cháo fàng dàng sī wú yá
今朝放荡^④思无涯。

chūn fēng dé yì mǎ tí jí
春风得意马蹄疾，

yī rì kàn jìn cháng ān huā
一日看尽长安花。

jiù táng shū mèng jiāo zhuàn
《旧唐书·孟郊传》

白话
翻译

孟郊46岁那年考中进士及第，此前他已经两次落榜了。因此中举后他按捺不住自己得意喜悦的心情，写了这首别具一格的小诗。

以往那种生活上的困顿和思想上的不安再也不值得一提了，今朝金榜题名，自由自在，真是说不尽的畅快。迎着春风纵马奔驰在鲜花烂漫的长安道上，此时称心如意，马蹄也格外地轻快。偌大一座长安城，春花无数，却可以一天看尽。

Enjoy Looking at Flowers while on Horseback



Meng Jiao^① once wrote a poem, which can be literally interpreted as follows:

Reserve anness of yesterday is nothing to boast of;

Today, being without any restraint, I feel my joy is boundless.

The spring breeze kissing my face, the horse hastening its hoofs,

I will see all the flowers and beauties of Chang'an in one day's time.^②

Jiutang Shu (Old Book of Tang)



Notes

- ① a noted poet in the Tang Dynasty. He loved poetry so much that he did not care to be an official, even though he was very poor. Not until forty was he prompted by his mother to try sitting the imperial examinations. The first two times he failed, and for this he received all kinds of mockery. However, he succeeded the third time, and upon his success he hummed the aforementioned poem to show how happy he was after living through years of repression. He



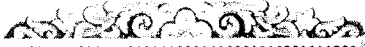
注释

① 走马观花:原意是骑在奔跑的马上看花。形容春风得意的样子。现在常用来形容大略地观察一下。走马:骑着马跑。

② 孟郊:751~814年,唐代诗人。字东野,湖州武康(今浙江德清)人。年轻时隐居嵩山,性情耿直,一生穷困潦倒,,50岁中进士为溧阳尉,终身倾心于诗词的创作,用字造句也非常谨慎,诗的内容大多反映自己愁困的生活和不平的心境。

③ 龌龊(wò chù):指处境不如意和思想上的拘谨局促。

④ 放荡:自由自在,无所拘束。



wanted to see all of the capital city, Chang'an. But, this idiomatic expression is generally used to describe a superficial understanding through cursory observation, not in the sense as originally expressed in the poem.

- ② There is another folk tale about "riding on horseback to look at flowers". It runs like this: Gui Liang, a crippled young man, wished to get a beautiful girl as his wife. And it happened that there was a girl called Ye Qin who had a flat snub nose but wished to get a handsome husband. The two of them both asked Hua Han to be a matchmaker, and he was only too glad to do so. To make a success of his matchmaking, Hua Han did not tell them each about the fault of the other party. On the day he had fixed for letting them have a look at each other, Hua Han told Gui Liang to pass by the girl's door on horseback whereas he asked the girl to stand at the doorstep covering her nose with a spray of flowers. So, after the encounter, both sides felt satisfied, and a wedding was successfully arranged. Not until they were married did they see each other's fault. Nevertheless, they laughed it off and continued to be husband and wife, deeming it a good marriage.

lǐ
李
dài
代
táo
桃
jiāng
僵
①

xiōng dì sì wǔ rén jìe wéi shì zhōng láng ②。
兄弟四五人，皆为侍中郎②。

wǔ rì yī shí lái guān zhě mǎn lù páng。
五日一时来，观者满路旁。

huáng jīn luò ③ mǎ tóu jǐng jǐng hé huáng huáng ④！
黄金络③马头，颍颍④何煌煌④！

táo shēng lù jǐng shàng lǐ shù shēng táo páng。
桃生露井上，李树生桃旁。

chóng lái niè táo gēn lǐ shù dài táo jiāng。
虫来啮桃根，李树代桃僵。

shù mù shēn xiāng dài xiōng dì hái xiāng wàng！
树木身相代，兄弟还相忘！

yuè fǔ shī jí jī míng
《乐府诗集·鸡鸣》

白话
翻译

有兄弟四五人，都成为了达官贵人。他们每隔五天在家里相聚的时候，观看的人站满道路两旁。他们用黄金做成辔头套住马头，而护卫的兵器辉煌闪亮（但是，兄弟中有人作乱而被处罚，其余兄弟中居然没有一人站出来帮一帮）。

（乐府的作者叹息）露天井边的桃树与李树相依为伴；虫子来蛀咬桃树的根，往往是李树代替桃树受蛀而枯萎。树木还能够用身体相互代替，他们兄弟的情谊还能相互遗忘。



The Plum Tree Suffers for the Peach Tree^①



There was a folk song, the last two stanzas of which ran as follows:

One family has five brothers, all in the position of Attendant to a Minister.

Every five days they gather together for a reunion, which attracts crowds of onlookers along the road;

Look, even the bits and straps of their horses are adorned with gold to vie with each other for splendour!

Now, a peach tree grows by a well, and next to it a plum tree.

When the worms come to gnaw at the root of the peach tree, the plum tree suffers them to gnaw at its own and eventually dies ossified.

If trees know how to sacrifice for others, it is a real surprise that brothers should cast aside brotherly feelings.

Yuefu Shiji

(A Collection of Folk Songs, Ballads and Melodies)



注释

① 李代桃僵：李树代替桃树而死。原比喻兄弟互相爱护互相帮助。后转用来比喻互相顶替或代人受过。僵：枯死。

② 中郎：在秦的时候设置的官职，汉代沿之，属郎中令，其长官称中郎将。曹魏时期设置中郎，隶属光禄勋，第八品，俸禄是六百石。

③ 络：用网状物兜住。

④ 颖(jǐng)：光亮。

⑤ 煌煌(huáng)：明亮辉耀的样子。



Note

- ① This idiomatic expression, however, is generally used to mean “substituting for another” only. It has lost its original sense altogether.

yǔ
与
hǔ
虎
móu
谋
pi
皮
①

zhōu rén yù wèi qiān jīn zhī qiú ér yǔ hú móu qí pí
周人欲为千金之裘^②而与狐谋其皮，

yù jù shǎo láo zhī zhēn ér yǔ yáng móu qí xiū yán wèi
欲具少牢^③之珍而与羊谋其羞，言未

zú hú xiāng shuài táo yú chóng qiū zhī xià yáng xiāng hū
卒，狐相率逃于重丘之下；羊相呼

cáng yú shēn lín zhī zhōng gù zhōu rén shí nián bù zhì yī
藏于深林之中。故周人十年不制一

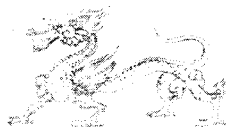
qiú wǔ nián bù jù yī láo
裘，五年不具一牢。

tài píng yù lǎn fú zǐ
《太平御览·符子》

白话
翻译

周朝时有一个人打算缝制一件价值千金的狐狸皮袍子，于是就与狐狸商量要它的皮，打算置办肥美的羊肉宴席，于是去找羊商量要它的肉。话没有说完，狐狸就相互率领逃到重叠的山峰下面去了；羊就互相呼唤着躲藏在茂密的树林里了。这样，那人十年也没缝成一件狐狸皮袍子，五年也没办成一桌羊肉宴席。

Ask a Tiger for Its Skin^①



A man in the Zhou Dynasty was fond of warm, light fur and rare delicious food. Thinking of getting for himself an expensive fur robe, he went to ask a fox for its skin. And to get a sacrificial animal^② so that he could taste its excellent meat after the performance of rites, he went to ask a sheep for its flesh. In both cases, before he could finish his words, the fox fled together with its mates deep into the mountains, and the sheep beckoned to all the other sheep and went to hide in the forest. As a result, this man was not able to get a single fur robe for ten years nor a single sacrificial animal for five years.

Taiping Yulan



注释

① 与虎谋皮：原来也写作“与狐谋皮”。意思是，与老虎商量，要谋取它的皮。比喻跟所谋求的对象有利害冲突，一定不能成功。现多用来形容跟恶人商量，要他们牺牲自己的利益，一定办不到。

② 裘(qiú)：皮衣。

③ 少牢：只有羊、猪，没有牛。由于祭祀者和祭祀对象的不同，所用牺牲的规格也有所区别：天子祭祀社稷用太牢，诸侯祭祀用少牢。



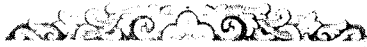
Notes

- ① The original version of the tale says that it was a “fox”. Later, as an idiomatic expression, people used the word “tiger”.
- ② Bovines, sheep and pigs were the three sacrificial animals required for a *tailao* offering while *shaolao* required only sheep and pigs. This story specifies the offering as the latter.

fēng
shēng
hè
āi
①

qín bīng bī fēi shuǐ ér zhèn jìn bīng bù dé dù
秦^②兵逼淝水而阵，晋^③兵不得渡。

xiè xuán qiān shǐ wèi yáng píng gōng róng yuē jūn xuān
谢玄^④遣使谓阳平公融^⑤曰：“君悬
jūn shēn rù ér zhì zhèn bī shuǐ cǐ nǎi chí jiǔ zhī jì fēi
军深入，而置阵逼水，此乃持久之计，非
yù sù zhàn zhě yě ruò yí zhèn shǎo què shǐ jìn bīng dé
欲速战者也。若移阵少却，使晋兵得
dù yǐ jué shèng fù bù yì shàn hū qín zhū jiāng jiē
渡，以决胜负，不亦善乎！”秦诸将皆
yuē wǒ zhòng bǐ guǎ bù rú è zhī shí bù dé shàng
曰：“我众彼寡，不如退之，使得上，
kě yǐ wàn quán jiān yuē dàn yǐn bīng shǎo què shǐ
可以万全。”坚^⑥曰：“但引兵少却，使
zhī bàn dù wǒ yǐ tiě jì cù ér shā zhī miè bù shèng
之半渡，我以铁骑蹙^⑦而杀之，蔑不胜
yī róng yì yǐ wéi rán suī huī bīng shǐ què qín bīng suī
矣！”融亦以为然，遂麾兵使却。秦兵遂
tuì bù kě fù zhǐ xiè xuán xiè yǎn huán yī dēng
退，不可复止。谢玄^⑧、谢琰^⑨、桓伊^⑩等
yǐn bīng dù shuǐ jī zhī róng chí jì lüè zhèn yù yǐ shuāi tuī
引兵渡水击之。融驰骑略阵，欲以帅退
zhě mǎ dǎo wéi jìn bīng suǒ shā qín bīng suī kuì xuān
者，马倒，为晋兵所杀，秦兵遂溃。玄
děng chéng shèng zhuī jī zhì yú qīng gāng qín bīng dà
等乘胜追击，至于青冈^⑪；秦兵大
bài zì xiāng dǎo jiè ér sǐ zhě bì yě sāi chuān qí zǒu
败，自相蹈借而死者，蔽野塞川。其走
zhě wén fēng shēng hè lì jiē yǐ wéi jìn bīng qiè zhì zhòu
者闻风声鹤唳，皆以为晋兵且至，昼
yè bù gǎn xī cǎo xíng lù sù zhòng yǐ jī dòng sǐ
夜不敢息，草行露宿，重^⑫以饥冻，死
zhě shí qī bā
者十七八。



The Sound of the Wind and the Cry of Cranes^①



The Qin army^② deployed its troops along the Feishui River to prevent the Jin^③ troops from crossing the waters. Xie Xuan, a Jin general, despatched a man to Fu Rong (Duke Yangping), the commander of the Qin army, carrying a message, which said, “Your army is an isolated force coming from afar. Now you have aligned your troops along the river. This shows that you are planning to hold your position for a long time and not to fight a quick war. If you could order your men to retreat a little way back so that our Jin troops would be able to cross the river and fight a decisive battle with you, it would be much better, don’t you think so?”

At this, all the Qin generals said, “Since our troops outnumber theirs, it would be better for us to block their way and prevent them from crossing the river. That will be a surefire Plan.”

“We may well withdraw our troops a little,” said Fu Jian, the ruler of Qin, “so that they can come across. By the time most of them have reached this side of the river, we can send our crack troops to press hard on them and annihilate them. Then, victory will surely be ours.”

白话
翻译

前秦军队在靠近淝水西岸的地方布阵，晋军不能够渡过淝水。谢玄派遣使者对阳平公苻融说：“将军率领军队深入到晋地，却沿着淝水布阵，这是想打持久战，不是速战速决的方法。如果您能让前秦兵稍稍后撤，空出一块地方，使晋军能够渡过淝水，两军一决胜负，这不是很好吗？”前秦军诸将都认为：“我们的士兵多晋兵少，不如这样逼止他们，使得他们不能冲上来，如此可以万无一失。”苻坚却说：“只是引兵略微后退，待他们一半渡河，一半未渡之际，我们再用精锐骑兵急促地冲杀，便可以取得胜利。”苻融也认为这样是正确的，便指挥秦军让他们后撤。前秦军于是就后退，但不能够再使他们停止后退。谢玄、谢琰、桓伊等人带领兵将渡过淝水攻打前秦军。苻融骑马飞驰巡视阵地，想整顿稳定后退的士兵，结果马倒在地上，被追上的晋军杀死，前秦军于是全线崩溃。谢玄等人率领晋军乘胜追击，一直到达青冈。前秦军大败，人马自相践踏而死的人，满山遍野，堵塞大河。活着的人听到风声鹤鸣，都以为是晋兵追来，白天黑夜都不敢停息，行走在草地上，住宿在露水中，特别是饥饿与寒冷，死的又有十之七八。

注释

① 风声鹤唳：听到风声和鹤叫声，都疑心是追兵。这个成语用来形容人在惊慌时疑神疑鬼。唳：鸟鸣。

② 秦：指的是前秦（351~394年），中国古代十六国之一。氐族苻坚所建。都长安（今陕西西安）。盛时疆域“东及沧海，西并龟兹，南包襄阳，北尽沙漠”，威名远扬。历六主，共四十四年。

③ 晋：就是晋朝，是中国历史上的一个朝代。分为西晋（265~316年）与东晋（317~420年）两个时期。西晋为晋武帝司马炎所建立，建都洛阳；东晋为晋元帝司马睿所建立，建都建康。

④ 谢玄（343~388年），字幼度，陈郡阳夏（今河南太康）



Sharing this view, General Fu Rong commanded his men to withdraw. But once the Qin soldiers started beating a retreat, nobody could stop them. Seeing this, Jin generals—Xie Xuan, Xie Yan and Huan Yi—at once directed their troops to cross the river and attack.

Fu Rong rode up to inspect the front, wishing to restrain the retreating troops. Unexpectedly, his horse stumbled and fell. Fu Rong was soon killed by the Jin troops. With that the Qin troops suddenly collapsed. Xie Xuan and the other generals followed up the victory in hot pursuit until they reached Qingang. In a total rout, the Qin troops trod on each other. Many lost their lives, with their dead bodies scattered all over the heath and blocking up the waterways. Those who fled, on hearing the rustling of the wind and the cries of some cranes, thought the Jin troops were approaching, and ran like mad day and night without rest. They picked their way through the weeds and slept in the open. Hungry and cold, nearly eight out of every ten of them met their ends.

Zizhi Tongjian



人,东晋著名军事家。

⑤ 融:前秦的苻融,在淝水之战中苻融为征南大将军。

⑥ 坚:前秦宣昭帝苻坚(338~385年),字永固,氐族人。是十六国时期前秦的皇帝。

⑦ 蹙(cù):紧迫,急促。

⑧ 谢玄:生活在343~388年,字幼度,陈郡阳夏(今河南太康)人,东晋著名军事家。谢玄是宰相谢安的侄子。

⑨ 谢琰:谢安的儿子。

⑩ 桓伊:字叔夏,小字子野。东晋时音乐家,善箏笛。

⑪ 青冈:在今寿阳附近。

⑫ 重(zhòng):特别。



Notes

- ① This idiomatic expression is used together with 草木皆兵, which means: “Every blade of grass and every single tree are taken as soldiers” as recorded in *The Book of Jin*.
- ② belonging to the dynastic rule of Qian Qin (the Western Qin Dynasty) (385–394).
- ③ referring to the Jin Dynasty (265–420).

请君入瓮 ①

zhōu xīng yǔ qiū shén jì tōng móu tài hòu mìng lái
周兴与丘神勳^②通谋，太后^③命来

jùn chén jū zhī
俊臣^④鞠^⑤之。

jùn chén yǔ xīng fāng tuī shì duì shí wèi xīng yuē qiú
俊臣与兴方推事对食，谓兴曰：“囚

duō bù chéng dāng wéi hé fǎ xīng yuē cǐ shèn yì
多不承，当为何法？”兴曰：“此甚易

ěr qǔ dà wèng yǐ tàn sì zhōu zhì zhǐ líng qiú rù
耳！取大瓮，以炭四周炙^⑥之，令囚入

zhōng hé shì bù chéng jùn chén nǎi suǒ dà wèng huǒ wéi
中，何事不承？”俊臣乃索大瓮，火围

rú xīng fǎ yīn qǐ wèi xīng yuē yǒu nèi zhuàng tuī xiōng
如兴法。因起谓兴曰：“有内状推兄，

qǐng xiōng rù cǐ wèng xīng huāng kǒng kòu tóu fú zuì
请兄入此瓮。”兴惶恐^⑦叩头伏罪。

zī zhì tōng jiàn táng jì
《资治通鉴·唐纪》

白话翻译

周兴与丘神勳联络谋反，武则天责令俊臣严查此事。

(来俊臣害怕自己不能很好地完成任务，于是就想出了一个审问办法，请周兴来家中吃饭。)来俊臣正与周兴互相敬酒吃饭，来俊臣对周兴说：“一些犯人死不认罪，应当用什么办法？”周兴说：“这是非常容易的！找一个大瓮，四周用炭火烤热，再让犯人进到瓮里，还有什么犯人不招供呢？”来俊臣于是命人抬来一口大瓮，按周兴说的那样，在四周点上炭火。然后回头对周兴说：“宫里有人状告你谋反，请兄长你进入瓮里吧。”周兴惊恐地磕头认罪。



Kindly Step into the Vat of Your Own Device



Informed that Zhou Xing^① was in conspiracy with Qiu Shenji^② against the state, Empress Wu^③ ordered Lai Junchen^④ to interrogate Zhou Xing.

As planned, Lai began discussing some criminal cases with Zhou Xing over a cup of wine, and he said to his guest: "Now, some prisoners simply refuse to admit their crime. What can you do with them?"

"That's very easy," answered Zhou. "Take a large vat and make it hot with charcoal around. Then order the prisoners to get into it. They will confess anything and everything."

On hearing this, Lai asked that a vat be brought in and heated the way Zhou had devised. Then he rose from his seat and said to Zhou, "I have received an imperial order to put you to trial, so please step into the vat and confess your crime."^⑤

The terrified Zhou kowtowed and pleaded guilty.

Jizhi Tongjian



注释

① 请君入瓮(qǐng jūn rù wèng):比喻用某人整治别人的办法来整治他自己。瓮:口小腹大的大坛子。

② 丘神绩:唐武则天朝的左金吾大将军。

③ 太后:即武则天,名墨,唐代并州文水(今山西文水县)人,唐高祖武德六年(623年)出生于长安。武则天自幼博览群书,诗词歌赋样样精通,而且长于书法。贞观十一年(637年),14岁的武则天凭其“花解语、玉生香”的美貌,被召入宫做了才人,太宗赐予“武媚”称号,人称“武媚娘”,又称“武才人”。后来武则天在激烈而残酷的宫廷斗争中,凭借机智精明,年近古稀的武则天连废二帝,于天授元年(690年)改唐为周,登位称帝,成为中国历史上唯一的一位女皇帝。

④ 来俊臣:唐武则天时期用残酷的方法进行统治的官吏。

⑤ 鞠(jū):鞠讯,审问犯人。

⑥ 炙:烧烤,把去毛的兽肉串起来在火上熏烤。

⑦ 惶恐:惶惧惊恐。



Notes

- ① known as one of the two most oppressive high officials at the time.
- ② later executed because of his rebellion against the throne.
- ③ Wu Zetian, mother of Emperor Zhongzong of the Tang Dynasty (618–907), whom she later dethroned. She took over the sceptre of an empress and ruled for twenty-two years.
- ④ the other of the two most oppressive high officials at the time, working hand in glove with Zhou Xing.
- ⑤ This is equal to saying: “Try yourself what you have devised against others.”

fàn
反
fù
复
tuī
推
qiāo
敲
①

jiǎ dǎo chū fù jǔ zài jīng shī yī rì yú lú
贾岛^②初赴举，在京师。一日，于驴

shàng dé jù yún niǎo sù chí biān shù sēng qiāo yuè xià
上得句云：“鸟宿池边树，僧敲月下

mén yòu yù tuī zì liàn zhī wèi dìng yú lú shàng yín
门。”又欲“推”字，炼之未定。于驴上吟

é yǐn shǒu zuò tuī qiāo zhī shì guān zhě yà zhī
哦，引手作推敲之势，观者讶之。

shí hán tuì zhī quán jīng zhào yǐn chē qí fāng
时韩退之^③权^④京兆尹^⑤，车骑方

chū dǎo bù jué xíng zhì dì sān jié shàng wéi shǒu shì wèi
出，岛不觉，行至第三节，尚为手势未

yǐ é wèi zuǒ yòu yōng zhì yǐn qián dǎo jù duì suǒ dé
已。俄为左右拥至尹前。岛俱对：“所得

shī jù tuī zì yǔ qiāo zì wèi dìng shén yóu xiàng
诗句，‘推’字与‘敲’字未定，神游象

wài bù zhī huí bì
外，不知回避。”

tuì zhī lì mǎ jiǔ zhī wèi dǎo yuē qiāo zì jiā
退之立马久之，谓岛曰：“‘敲’字佳。”

sù bìng pèi ér guī gòng lùn shī dào
遂并辔^⑥而归，共论诗道。

shī huà zǒng guī
《诗话总龟》



“Push” or “Knock”—Which Is Better?



Jia Dao^①, a scholar, went to the capital^② to sit the imperial examination for the first time in his life. One day he was ambling on a donkey in the street when a poem began to form in his mind. Two of the lines of the poem were:

The birds perch for the night on trees beside a pond,
A monk returns in the moonlight knocking at the gate.

But, wondering if “push” might be a better word than “knock”, he was weighing one against the other. So he recited the lines over and over again on the donkey, gesticulating with his hand, “pushing” at one moment, “knocking” at the next—to the great amazement of on-lookers.

It happened that Han Tuizhi^③, acting mayor of the capital city, came on a horse preceded by his equipage. Unaware of things around him, Jia Dao continued gesticulating until the long train had almost overtaken him. He was then taken by the guards to the mayor. On being questioned, Jia Dao told the whole truth, saying that as he had lost himself in making a choice of words—“push” or “knock”—he forgot to step aside as he should have.

Hearing this, Han drew rein to halt his horse and mused

白话
翻译

贾岛第一次到京城去考取进士。有一天，在驴背上灵感来了有了一首诗：“鸟宿池边树，僧敲月下门。”“敲”字又想使用“推”字，思考很久一时不知哪个好。在驴背上一面吟诵，一面用手做着推门和敲门两种动作。街上行人看到贾岛这种神情，感到十分惊讶。

当时韩愈担任京师的地方长官，他的车马刚刚出来。贾岛并没有察觉，闯进韩愈的仪仗队里已经走到第三节了，还在做着推和敲的手势。一会儿就被左右的士兵押解到韩愈的面前。贾岛把自己闯进仪仗队的原因都说了出来：“忽然得到一句诗，但是使用‘推’字还是‘敲’字没能确定下来，出神在万事之外，不知道回避。”

韩愈听后停住马停了很久，对贾岛说：“‘敲’字好！”于是与贾岛并马一起回来，共同谈论诗道。

注释

① 反复推敲：用来比喻做文章或做事时，反复琢磨，反复斟酌。推敲：原意是指推门或敲门，现引申为琢磨，修改。

② 贾岛：生活在779~843年，唐代诗人。字浪仙。范阳（今北京附近）人。早年曾出家为僧，号无本。元和五年（810）冬，至长安，见张籍。次年春，至洛阳，始拜见韩愈，以诗深得赏识。贾岛是著名的苦吟派诗人。

③ 韩退之：即韩愈（768~824年），唐代文学家、哲学家。字退之。河南河阳（今孟县）人，郡望昌黎，世称韩昌黎。因官吏部侍郎，又称韩吏部。谥号文，又称韩文公。

④ 权：担任，充当。

⑤ 京兆尹：古代京师的地方长官。

⑥ 辔（pèi）：驾驭牲口的嚼子和缰绳，这里指车骑。



quite a while before he said to Jia: "The word 'knock' seems to be better." The next moment the two of them were riding home side by side, chatting over the making of poetry.

Shihua Zongui

(A General Collection of Discourses on Poetry)



Notes

- ① Jia Dao(779-843), a poet of the Tang Dynasty.
- ② Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty.
- ③ referring to Han Yu (768-824), a celebrated prose writer in the Tang Dynasty.

yī
依
yàng
样
huà
画
hú
葫
lú
芦
①

táo gǔ shī
陶谷诗：

guān zhí yǒu lái xū yào zuò
官职有来须要做，

cái néng yòng chù bù yōu wú
才能用处不忧无；

kān xiào hàn lín táo xué shì
堪笑翰林^②陶学士，

nián nián yī yàng huà hú lú
年年依样画葫芦。

xù xiāng shān yè lù
《续香山夜录》

白话
翻译



北宋初年，有个翰林学士叫陶穀，在宋太祖赵匡胤身边担任起草各种文告的工作。时间一长，他自以为有功，便向宋太祖讨个高官做。谁知宋太祖却说：“翰林学士起草文告，无非是参照前人的旧本，其间不过换几个字句，充其量不过照葫芦画瓢而已，谈不上有什么贡献。”陶穀感到很失望，一气之下就作诗自我解嘲，他的诗的意思是：“当有官职可以做时，我还是很愿意做的。对于我的职务，我的才能是一点都不用忧虑的。可笑的是，我这个官职为翰林的陶学士，年年做的事情不过是照着葫芦的样子来描画瓢罢了。”从此以后，“依样画葫芦”就作为一句成语，流传在人们的口头笔下。人们常这个成语来比喻模仿别人，毫无创见。



Drawing a Bottle Gourd by Imitation



This idiomatic expression came from a poem by Tao Gu^①, whose literal meaning is as follows:

If there is an official position, certainly I would like to take it.

As for literary talents, if they are to be exploited, I have plenty.

What I laugh at is Tao the *hanlin xueshi*,
Who only draws a bottle gourd by imitation from year to year.

Xu Xiangshan Ye Lu

(A Sequel to Fragrant Hill Records)



注释

① 依样画葫芦：照着真葫芦去画葫芦。比喻一意模仿而没有创新。

② 翰林(hàn lín)：皇帝的文学侍从官，唐朝以后开始设置的官职，明、清修改选拔的制度，开始从进士中选取。



Note

- ① He served as a *hanlin xueshi*, a document writer at court, when Zhao Guangyin ascended the throne as the first emperor of the Song Dynasty. As a *hanlin xueshi*, he was only required to draft some documents and notices. Thinking highly of himself, and judging the court would not keep him in this position for long, he tried hard to show his talents in his work. Then, he asked somebody to put in a good word for him with the Emperor, expecting a promotion. But the Emperor said with a smile, “It has been often said that the works of a *hanlin* are based on old drafts; the best he can do is to change some words or phrases every time he writes. This is what is customarily called ‘drawing a bottle gourd according to a given sample sketch.’” Certainly, the Emperor did not mention anything about promotion, which was out of the question. Told of this, Tao Gu was very unhappy, and so he wrote the aforementioned poem on the wall of the *hanling yuan* (The *Hall of Hanlin*).

yī
 xiè
 蟹
 bù
 不
 rú
 如
 yī
 xiè
 蟹
 ①

táo gǔ fèng shǐ wú yuè zhōng yì wáng yàn zhī
 陶谷奉使^②吴越^③，忠懿王宴之，

yǐ qí shì xiè zì qiú móu zhì péng yuè fán luó liè
 以^④其嗜^⑤蟹，自蝓蛄^⑥至蜚蚶^⑦，凡罗列

shí yú zhōng gǔ xiào yuē zhēn suǒ wèi yī xiè bù rú yī
 十余种。谷笑曰：“真所谓一蟹不如一

xiè yě 。”
 蟹也。”

shèng sòng duō yì
 《圣宋掇遗》

白话
 翻译

陶谷奉命出使吴越地区。在那里，他被忠懿王设宴款待。因为陶谷喜欢吃螃蟹，忠懿王所设的宴席从蝓蛄到蜚蚶摆满了桌子，大概罗列了从大到小的十多种螃蟹。陶谷笑着说：“真是一种螃蟹比一种螃蟹小啊。”



Each Crab Smaller than One Before



Tao Gu was on a mission to the State of Wuyue. ① There he was banqueted by King Zhongyi. Knowing Tao liked crabs, the host ordered over a dozen kinds of this aquatic animal to be served in the order of their sizes, from big swimming crabs down to small brackish-water crabs. At this Tao Gu, smiling, observed: "Truly, each is smaller than the one before."

Sheng Song Duoyi
(Incidents in the Song Age)



注释

① 一蟹(xiè)不如一蟹:比喻一个不如一个,越来越差。

② 奉使:接受命令出使。

③ 吴越:古代吴国和越国所在地。古吴国首都大概在苏州附近,古越国首都大概在绍兴附近。吴越之地大体在苏南浙北一带。

④ 以:连词,因为,由于。

⑤ 嗜(shì):爱好。

⑥ 螯蟬(yóu móu):生活在海里的一种螃蟹,又名梭子蟹,甲壳略呈棱形,肉味鲜美。

⑦ 螳螂(péng yuè):水虫,形似蟹,比蟹小。这里指小螃蟹。



Note

- ① one of the ten states during the Five Dynasties, its territory covering Zhejiang, Southwest Jiangsu and Northeast Fujian provinces, where crabs are most abundant.

míng

名

luò

落

sūn

孙

shān

山

①

sūn shān huá jī cái zǐ yě fù jǔ shí xiāng rén tuō
孙山，滑稽才子也。赴举时，乡人托

yǐ zǐ xié wǎng bǎng fā xiāng rén zǐ shī yì shān
以子偕^②往。榜发，乡人子失意^③，山

zhuì bǎng mò xiān guī xiāng rén wèn qí zǐ dé shī shān
缀榜末先归^④。乡人问其子得失，山

yuē jiè míng jìn chù shì sūn shān xián láng gèng zài sūn
曰：“解名^⑤尽处是孙山，贤^⑥郎更在孙

shān wài
山外。”

guò tíng lù
《过庭录》

白话
翻译

孙山，为人不但幽默，而且很善于说笑话，所以附近的人就给他取了一个“滑稽才子”的绰号。他去参加举人考试的时候，他的同乡托付他和自己的儿子一同到京城。考试结束，放榜的时候，那位和孙山一起去的同乡的儿子，没有考上。孙山的名字虽然被列在榜文的最末端，但毕竟是榜上有名。不久，孙山先回到家里，同乡便来问他儿子有没有考中。孙山既不好意思直说，又不便隐瞒，于是，就随口念出两句不成诗的诗句来：“解名尽处是孙山，贤郎更在孙山外。”意思是说：“举人榜上的最后一名是我孙山，而你的儿子的名字却还在我孙山的后面。隐讳地说出了同乡儿子落榜的消息。”



A Name After the Last One on the List



Sun Shan^① was a talented scholar, known for his rich sense of humour.

One year Sun Shan was about to set off to sit an imperial civic examination at the county level when a villager came to ask him to accompany his son who was leaving for the same purpose. So the two of them journeyed together.

When the list of successful candidates was published, the villager's son turned out a failure and Sun Shan's name was, by good fortune, the last on the list. Sun Shan hurried home first with the glad news. The villager who was extremely anxious asked him about his son's fortune. Sun Shan replied suggestively in verse:

Sun Shan is at the end of the name-list,
Your worthy son comes after Sun Shan.

Guoting Lu (Family Records)



注释

① 名落孙山:名字落在榜末孙山的后面。指考试或选拔没有被录取。孙山,生活在宋代(960~1279年)。

② 偕:共同在一起。

③ 失意:不能实现自己的意愿,不得志。

④ 归:回家。

⑤ 解名:就是我国科举制度所规定的举人第一名。而孙山在诗里所说的“解名”,是泛指一般考取的举人。

⑥ 贤:形容词,良,美善。后用作对他人敬称。



Note

① lived in the Song Dynasty (960–1279).



yī
chǎng
chūn
mèng
①

dōng pō lǎo rén zài chāng huà cháng fù dà piào ④,
东坡老人^②在昌化^③，尝负大瓢^④，

xíng gē yú tián jiān yǒu lǎo fù nián qī shí wèi pō yún nèi
行歌于田间。有老妇人七十，谓坡云：“内

hàn xī rì fù guì yī chǎng chūn mèng pō rán zhī lǐ
翰^⑤昔日富贵，一场春梦。”坡然之。里

zhōng hū cǐ āo wèi chūn mèng pó
中呼此媪^⑥为春梦婆。

hóu qīng lù
《侯鯖录》

白话
翻译



苏东坡在昌化，曾经背着一个大瓢在田间行走歌唱。有一个老妇人年龄有七十岁了，对东坡说：“翰林你往日的富贵，不过就像一场春天的梦，转眼成空。”东坡认为说得很对。村子里的人因此称这个老妇人为春梦婆婆。

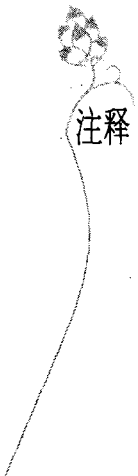


As Transient as a Sweet Dream



When Dongpo the Elderly^① was in Changhua^②, he used to sling a large gourd ladle over his shoulder and walk in the fields reciting poems. One day he met a woman of seventy or so who said to him: “When you were serving as a *neihan*^③ you enjoyed both riches and honour, but all this has gone, as transient as a sweet dream.” Dongpo nodded, approving the way she put it. From then on, the villagers called that old woman Dame Sweet Dream.

Hou Qing Lu (Hou Qing Records)



① 一场春梦：本来比喻世事无常，转眼成空。后来也用来比喻幻想破灭。

② 东坡老人：即苏轼。北宋文学家、书画家。字子瞻，号东坡居士，眉州眉山（今属四川）人。

③ 昌化：地名，现属浙江省。

④ 瓢(piáo)：舀水或取东西的用具，多用瓢葫芦或木头制成。

⑤ 翰：这里也是对苏东坡的称呼，因为他于哲宗时任翰林学士。

⑥ 媪(ǎo)：对老年妇女的敬称。



Notes

- ① referring to the famous Su Dongpo or Su Shi, a celebrated Song Dynasty poet and writer.
- ② a county in Guangdong Province.
- ③ an official title wherein *nei* means “inside the place” and *han* means *hanlin xueshi* (a scholar of the imperial academy whose work was to draw up imperial decrees).

jìn
近
shuǐ
水
lóu
楼
tái
台
①
xiān
先
dé
得
yuè
月

sū lín zèng fàn zhòng yān
苏麟赠范仲淹②：

jìn shuǐ lóu tái xiān dé yuè
近水楼台先得月，

xiàng yáng huā mù yì wéi chūn 。
向阳花木易为春。

qīng yè lù
《清夜录》

白话
翻译

宋仁宗时期，范仲淹任杭州知府，很多人得到他的关心与推荐提拔，有一个外地巡检苏麟到杭州办事，送范仲淹一首诗：

“靠近水边的楼台先得到月光。向着太阳那一面的花与树木容易得到春天。”表面上是写自然现象，实际寓意是：在您身边的人先得到了提拔的机会，而我没有得到重用（范仲淹理解他的心情，便为他写了一封推荐信，后来苏麟也得到提升）。



A Waterfront Pavilion Gets the Moonlight First



When Fan Wenzhen Gong^① was a prefect in Qiantang^②, many of the civil and military officials got recommendation and promotion, but not Su Lin, a *xunjian*^③ far away at his own post. So, Su Lin offered Fan two verses:

A waterfront pavilion gets the moonlight first,
Flowers and plants facing the sun grow better.^④

Qingye Lu (Tranquil Night Records)



注释

① 近水楼台：水边的楼台先得到月光。比喻由于接近某些人或事物而抢先得到某种利益或便利。

② 范仲淹：生卒年为989~1052年，北宋中叶的政治家、军事家和文学家。字希文，吴县（今江苏苏州）人。真宗大中祥符八年（1015）进士，仁宗时官至参知政事（副宰相）。



Notes

- ① referring to Fan Zhongyan, a great statesman and celebrated literary man of the Northern Song Dynasty.
- ② present-day Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.
- ③ an official stationed in a remote strategic place under the jurisdiction of a *zhou* (administrative division bigger than a *xian*) or a *xian* (county) in old days.
- ④ meaning “the advantage of being in a favourable position”.

zui
醉
wēng
翁
zhī
之
yì
意
bù
不
zài
在
jiǔ
酒
①

tài shǒu yǔ kè lái yǐn yú cǐ yǐn shǎo zhé ③
……太守②与客来饮于此，饮少辄③

zui ér nián yòu zuì gāo gù zì hào yuē zuì wēng yě
醉，而年又最高，故自号曰醉翁也。……

zui wēng zhī yì bù zài jiǔ zài hū shān shuǐ zhī jiān yě shān
醉翁之意不在酒，在乎山水之间也；山

shuǐ zhī lè dé zhī xīn ér yù zhī jiǔ yě
水之乐，得之心而寓之酒也。……

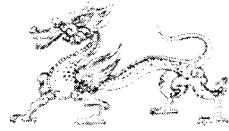
zui wēng tíng jì
《醉翁亭记》

白话
翻译

太守和宾客们在这里饮酒，喝一点点就醉了，而且年纪又最大，因此给自己起了个号叫醉翁。……醉翁的心思不在于饮酒，而在于山山水水之间；这山水的乐趣，是领会在心中，寄托在酒里的。……



The Drinker's Heart Is Not in the Cup



...The prefect^① came here with his friends to have a drinking bout, but he often got drunk even after a couple of cups. As he was the oldest of all, he styled himself “A Drunken Old Man”. ... A Drunken Old Man’s heart is not in the cup, but in the midst of mountains and rivers. The joy over mountain and river scenes rises in the heart but resides in the wine. ...

Zuiweng Ting Ji

(A Drunken Old Man’s Pavilion)



注释

① 醉翁之意不在酒：原是说欧阳修在亭子里的真意不在喝酒，而在于欣赏山里的风景。后用来表示本意不在此而在别的方面。醉翁：是欧阳修自己给自己的号称。

② 太守：这篇文章作于宋仁宗庆历六年(1046)，当时欧阳修正任滁州太守。欧阳修(1007~1072年)北宋政治家、文学家。唐宋八大家之一。字永叔，号醉翁，晚号六一居士。吉州永丰(今属江西)人。欧阳修自称庐陵人，因为吉州原属庐陵郡。

③ 辄(zhé)：立即；就。



Note

- ① referring the Ouyang Xiu, distinguished literary writer in the Northern Song Dynasty. He was once prefect of Chuzhou (present-day Chuxian County, Anhui Province). There was a beautiful spot in Langya Mountain with a running stream, and beside the stream was built a pavilion, which Ouyang named "A Drunken Old Man's Pavilion". This idiomatic expression is generally used to mean "having an ulterior motive behind one's action."

hé
河
dōng
东
shī
狮
hóu
吼
①

sū shì shī
苏轼^②诗：

lóng qiū jū shì yì kě lián
龙邱居士^③亦可怜，

tán kōng shuō yǒu yè bù mián
谈空说有^④夜不眠，

hū wén hé dōng shī zǐ hóu
忽闻河东狮子吼^⑤，

zhǔ zhàng luò shǒu xīn máng rán
拄杖落手^⑥心茫然。

róng zhāi sān bǐ
《容斋三笔》

白话
翻译

苏轼写给陈慥的嘲讽诗：

龙邱居士也很可怜，喜欢谈论空、论说有，夜深了还
不愿意入眠。忽然听到河东狮子的吼叫，手里拿的拄杖落
在地上，内心一片茫然。





The Lioness of Hedong Roars



Su Shi, a celebrated poet and man of letters in the Song Dynasty, once composed a highly entertaining poem, which is literally interpreted as follows:

Lay Buddhist Longqiu^① is a pitiful man;
He loves to sit up late talking endlessly on scriptures;
All of a sudden, the lioness of Hedong^② roars
And the rod pounds at the partition wall—his heart sinks.

Rong Zhai San Bi



注释

① 河东狮子吼：“狮子吼”代表的是“如来正声”，能降服一切邪魔邪道。

② 苏轼：宋代文学家和诗人苏轼（东坡），有一位好朋友，名叫陈季常。苏轼被贬黄州（今湖北黄冈）时，常和他在一起谈天游玩。陈季常也好客，朋友来了，必定热忱招待，总有说不完的话，夜深了还不愿分手。可是陈季常的妻子，性格凶悍，而且爱嫉妒。设宴招待客人的时候，如果有歌女在座，她往往用棍杖在隔壁用力敲打墙壁，大声叫嚷，闹得不可开交，客人们也只得被迫散去。陈季常很怕她。苏轼因此作这首诗进行嘲讽。

③ 龙邱居士：就是苏轼的好朋友。陈慥（zào），字季常，自称“龙丘先生”，又曰“方山子”。龙邱居士是陈季常的别号。信奉佛教的人，出家修行的叫和尚，在家修行的叫居士。陈季常喜爱佛学，所以自称“居士”。

④ 谈空说有：是形容陈季常讲佛论经，说个没完。

⑤ 河东狮子吼：陈季常的妻子姓柳。柳氏出身河东郡，苏轼用“河东”两字来暗指在隔壁吵嚷的这位柳氏夫人。狮子吼：本是佛家用来比喻正义和威严的，在这首诗里，作者一方面形容柳氏夫人像狮子似的怒吼，另一方面，又描写陈季常这位“居士”正在谈佛的时候，恰巧“狮子吼”了，这有双关的用意。

⑥ 拄杖落手：拄着的拐杖从手里脱落。旧时有人称“怕老婆”的丈夫为“季常”，或者说有“季常之癖”或“落杖”，而称妒悍的妻子向丈夫发怒为“河东狮子吼”。



Notes

- ① His real name was Chen Zao, and he styled himself Jichang and was a good friend of Su Shi. Chen was known for his great hospitality, always treating his visitors to wine and chatting with them late into the night. His wife, however, was a jealous and shrewd woman. Whenever there was a singsong girl among them, she would knock the wall partition with a stick and make a hullabulloo about it though she never appeared herself. When this happened, the guests had to leave immediately. On one occasion, Su Shi composed this poem as a joke; and henceforth “Jichang” became a term for “being henpecked” or “a henpecked husband”.
- ② Hedong was the name of a prefecture and it happened that Chen’s shrewd wife came from there. Su Shi used “Hedong” to suggest the woman making all these noises in the next room.

zhǐ
只
xū
许
zhōu
州
guān
官
fàng
放
huǒ
火
①

tián dēng zuò jùn zì huì qí míng chù zhě bì nù
田登作郡，自讳^②其名，触者必怒，

lì zú duō bèi bǎng chí yú shì jǔ zhōu jiē wèi dēng wéi
吏卒多被榜笞，于是举^③州皆谓灯为

huǒ shàng yuán fàng dēng xǔ rén rù zhōu zhì yóu guān
火。上元^④放灯，许人入州治游观。

lì rén suì shū bǎng jiē yú shì yuē běn zhōu yī lì fàng huǒ sān
吏人遂书榜揭于市曰：“本州依例放火三

rì
日。”

lǎo xué ān bǐ jì
《老学庵笔记》

白话
翻译



当田登作了一个州的太守以后，他的名字“登”就成了忌讳（不许用与“登”同音的字），有触犯了忌讳的人，田登一定大怒，因此小吏仆从都有被他笞打的，于是全州的人都把“灯”叫作“火”。上元节放灯，允许人们进入本州来游玩观看。州里的吏人于是就写出告示发放到街市上说：“本州依照惯例放火三日。”



Prefects Free to Light Fires, People Forbidden to Light Lamps



When Tian Deng^① became a prefect, the word *deng* was taboo. He avoided it in every way and certainly loathed people using it, in writing or speech. So, the whole prefecture ceased to hear it mentioned, even its homonym, another *deng* meaning “lamp”. They replaced it with *huo*, which means “fire”.

At the time of the Lantern Festival^②, his subordinate officials went out to post a notice in the market: “It is hereby declared that as an established custom, ‘fire’ will be lit for threedays throughout the prefecture.”

Laoxue An BiJi

(Laoxue Hut Notes)



注释

① 只许州官放火：只允许州里的长官放火。其下句往往接着使用“不许百姓点灯”。这个成语常用来讽刺封建官僚作威作福、胡作非为，而不允许百姓有行动的自由。

② 讳(huì)：避忌。有顾忌而躲开某些事或不说某些话。

③ 举：全。

④ 上元：农历正月十五日为上元节，十五夜称元夜、元宵。



Notes

- ① Tian Deng lived in the Song Dynasty (420–479), and was known for his arrogance and oppression of the people.
- ② the fifteen day of the first lunar month. Tian Deng's notice concerning the celebration of the Festival became a great irony and led to the formation of the idiomatic saying that officials are allowed to light fires and do evil while the common people are forbidden even to light their lamps.



gū
孤
zhu
注
yī
一
zhi
掷
①

wáng qīn ruò gào sòng zhēn zōng
王钦若告宋真宗：

bì xià wén bó hū bó zhě shū qián yù jìn nǎi qǐng
“陛下闻博^②乎？博者输钱欲尽，乃罄^③

suǒ yǒu chū zhī wèi zhī gū zhù bì xià kòu zhǔn zhī gū
所有出之，谓之孤注。陛下，寇准^④之^⑤孤

zhù yě sī yì wēi yǐ
注也，斯亦危矣！”

sòng shǐ kòu zhǔn zhuàn
《宋史·寇准传》

白话
翻译

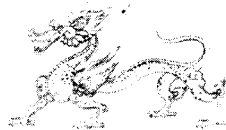
王钦若告谏宋真宗说：

“陛下听说过赌博吗？赌博的人把钱快输完的时候，于是就用尽所有的来当作赌注，这样就叫作孤注。陛下，寇准要走向孤注了，这样也是危险的了。”





Stake Everything on a Single Throw



Prime Minister Wang Qinruo said to Emperor Zhen Cong of the Song Dynasty: “Has Your Majesty ever heard of gambling? When a gambler finds he is soon to lose all his money, he will pour out what is left in his pocket and bet. This is called staking everything on a single throw. Mind you, Your Majesty, Kou Zhun^① is risking everything on a single venture. It is really dangerous.”

Song Shi (History of Song)

注释

① 孤注一掷：赌徒冒险尽其所有做赌注，以决最后胜负。比喻在情况危急时，竭尽全力作最后一次冒险的行为。
孤注：倾其所有用来当作赌注。

② 博：赌，博弈。

③ 罄(qing)：用尽；消耗殆尽。

④ 寇准：961~1023年，字仲平，宋代华州人。北宋初年，辽国肖太后亲率大军南下侵宋。宰相寇准坚持抗战，并请宋真宗到澶州督战，宋军士气高昂，连连获胜，逼迫辽宋讲和。王钦若嫉妒寇准，在真宗面前讲皇上亲征是孤注一掷，太危险的事情。

⑤ 之：往，朝某方向走，到……去。



Note

- ① In the reign of Emperor Zhen Cong, the Khitans in the North started an invasion. Most of the ministers persuaded the Emperor to leave the capital for safety while Kou Zhun strongly advocated resistance and even asked the Emperor to assume the role of Commander-in-Chief in the fight. Wang Qinruo, one of Kou Zhun's opponents, thought Kou Zhun was using the Emperor as a bet and warned the Emperor of the danger. But the Emperor would not listen and did as Kou Zhun said, and finally won a great victory over the Khitans.

xìn
信
kǒu
口
kāi
开
hé
河
①

zhāng guī chàng dào ǎn zì piē xià jiā yuán guò
张 珪 唱 道：“……俺 自 撇 下 家 缘 过

huó , zài wú xīn duàn pǐ líng luó nǐ xiū zhǐ guǎn xìn kǒu kāi
活 , 再 无 心 缎 匹 绫 罗 , 你 休 只 管 信 口 开

hé xù xù guō guō ǎn zhāng kǒng mù zěn hái kěn yuán
合 , 絮 絮 ② 聒 聒 ③ , 俺 张 孔 目 怎 还 肯 缘

mù qiú yú ④ ! ”
木 求 鱼 ④ ! ”

lǚ zhāi láng
《 鲁 斋 郎 》

白话
翻译

张珪唱道：“……我自己愿意抛弃了家过日子，再也无心贪恋绫罗绸缎，你不要只是随意乱说、絮絮叨叨，我张孔目怎么还愿意去做那缘木求鱼、劳而无功的事情呢！”





Wag One's Tongue Too Freely Talking Nonsense^①



This is what Zhang Gui^② sang at a moment of change in his life: "... It was I myself who chose to forsake my home and live alone. No longer do I care for silks and satins. So, how can I condescend to climb a tree for fish, making a fruitless approach? Don't just talk as you please and be garrulous."

Lu Zhai Lang



① 信口开河：随意乱说。信：放任；随便。河，通“合”，闭。

② 絮絮(xù)：形容说话连续不断。

③ 聒聒(guō)：象声词。杂乱喧闹的声音。

④ 缘木求鱼：爬上树去找鱼。比喻行事的方向、方法不对，必将劳而无功。



Notes

- ① The original idiom was formed by four characters: *Xin Kou Kai He* (信口开合), where *he* (合) means “close up”, but there is a homonym *he* (河) (meaning “a river”). So, now the idiom is written with the last character changed into *he* (河) the homonym.
- ② a minor official with clerical duties in the Song Dynasty who had his wife forcibly seized by a ruffian called Lu Zhailang. Greatly humiliated, he left home to become a Buddhist monk and wandered all over the land. And it was not until the well-known upright and just official Bao Zhen came to bring Lu to book and arrested and sentenced him to death that Zhang was given a chance to have a reunion with his family. But, Zhang was not willing to return to secular life, so he sang the above-quoted lines to his wife and children. After long persuasion, Zhang later consented to go home with them.

liáng

两

xiù

袖

qīng

清

fēng

风

①

yú qiān shī

于谦^②诗：

juàn pà mó gū yǔ xiàn xiāng ,

běn zī mǐn yòng fǎn wèi yǎng ;

qīng fēng liǎng xiù cháo tiān qù ,

miǎn dé lú yán huà duǎn cháng 。

dū gōng tán zuǎn
《都公谭纂》

白话
翻译

于谦曾经在河南、山西做官。按当时的规矩，地方官员每年都要到京城受考察。一些贪官污吏为了保住自己的“乌纱帽”，用搜刮老百姓的线财向京城的上司送礼、行贿。但在外省任巡抚的于谦进京时却什么也不带。周围的人问他为什么这样做，他写了首诗作为回答：

绢帕、蘑菇、线香这些东西，本来是供人民享用的，可是因为贪官污吏的搜刮，它们反而给人民带来了灾难。所以我什么也不带，只带两袖清风去朝见天子，免除百姓说长道短的不满。



Nothing but a Fresh Wind in the Two Sleeves



Yu Qian^①, to show he was uncorrupted, wrote a poem to that effect. Its literal interpretation is:

Silk handkerchiefs, mushrooms and incense sticks used to be for the people's use;

Now they have become a misfortune to them.

To see the Emperor I'll carry nothing but a fresh wind in my two sleeves

So that I will be beyond the reproach of the men in the street.

Dugong Tanzuan



注释

① 两袖清风：两只袖子里只有风。原指人迎风潇洒，飘飘欲仙的姿态。后来比喻为官清廉。现也指家贫，一无所有。
袖：衣袖。古时，人们把随身的钱物放在袖中。

② 于谦：1398~1457年，字廷益，号节庵，浙江钱塘（今杭州）人，明代著名清官、民族英雄。明朝永乐年间进士，曾巡按江西，巡抚河南、山西，政绩卓著。

③ 闾阎（lú yán）：泛指民间。闾，古代二十五家为一闾，又解作里门、巷口的门。



Note

- ① a very able statesman in the Ming Dynasty. He was also a talented scholar, but, above all, he was an upright official in contrast to nearly all other officials who were corrupt in the extreme. Every time they came back from a mission to other places, they would bring home quantities of valuables which they had extorted from the people. One day, he returned from a tour of patrol and inspection throughout the province of Henan without bringing back any valuable things. He wrote this poem instead to show his integrity.

wèi
为
hǔ
虎
zuò
作
chāng
伥
①

shì chuán hǔ niè rén rén sǐ hún bù gǎn tā shì ③,
世传虎啖②人，人死，魂不敢他适③，

zhé lì shì hǔ míng chāng guǐ hǔ xíng qiú shí chāng bì yǔ
辄隶事虎，名伥鬼。虎行求食，伥必与

jù wèi hǔ qián dǎo guò tú ④ yǒu àn jī fú jǐng zé yǔ
俱，为虎前导，过涂④有暗机伏阱，则迂

dào wǎng hū hǔ yuē jiāng jūn sǐ zé kū zhī
道往；呼虎曰将军，死则哭之。

tīng yǔ jì tán yuē rén guò hǔ yī dài zì jiě
《听雨纪谈》曰：“人过虎，衣带自解，

jiē bié zhì yú dì hǔ jiàn rén luǒ ér hòu shí zhī jiē chāng
皆别寘⑤于地。虎见人裸而后食之，皆伥

suǒ wéi chāng kě wèi guǐ zhī yú zhě yě
所为。伥可谓鬼之愚者也。”

zhèng zì tōng tīng yǔ jì
《正字通·听雨记》

白话
翻译



世上传说老虎咬了人，人死了，魂灵不敢到其他地方，就成为老虎的奴隶为老虎办事，命名为伥鬼。老虎出行寻觅食物，伥一定与老虎在一起，作为老虎的前导，遇见途中有暗中的机关埋伏陷阱，就告诉老虎要绕道前往；称呼老虎为将军，老虎死了就为它哭泣。

《听雨纪谈》上面记载说：“人遇到了老虎，衣服的带子自动解开，都置放在地上。老虎看见人赤身露体了然后吃掉人，这些事情都是伥做的。伥可以说是鬼中很愚蠢的。”



Play the Jackal to the Tiger



It is said that after a tiger gnaws a man to death, the latter's ghost dare not go elsewhere. It often stays near the beast to do service, and is thus called a *chang* ghost. Wherever the tiger goes to hunt for food, the *chang* is always there to help and goes ahead of it. If the ghost finds a trap or a pitfall on the way, it will advise making a detour. It addresses the tiger as General and will weep over the dead animal if it ever meets its end.

Ting Yu Ji Tan^① records this: "As soon as a man comes in the way of a tiger, he will strip himself and let his clothes fall on the ground. When the tiger sees the naked man, it will eat him up. The stripping is all a *chang*'s trick in fawning on the tiger. Indeed, *chang* is the most foolish of all the ghosts."

Zheng Zi Tong



注释

① 为虎作伥(wèi hǔ zuò chāng)替老虎做伥鬼。比喻充当恶人的帮凶。伥:伥鬼,古时传说被老虎吃掉的人,死后变成伥鬼,专门引诱人来给老虎吃。

② 啗(niè):咬的意思。

③ 适:往,到。

④ 涂:古通“途”。

⑤ 寘:古通“置”。



Note

① a book written by Du Mu of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

àn
按
tú
图
suǒ
索
jì
驥
①

bó lè xiāng mǎ jīng yǒu lóng sǎng diē rì tí
伯乐②《相马经》有“隆颡③跌日，蹄

rú lèi qū zhī yǔ qí zǐ zhí mǎ jīng yǐ qiú mǎ chū
如累麴④”之语，其子执《马经》以求马，出

jiàn dà chán chú wèi qí fù yuē dé yī mǎ lüè yǔ xiāng
见大蟾蜍，谓其父曰：“得一马，略与相

tóng dàn tí bù rú lèi qū ěr bó lè zhī qí zǐ zhī yú
同，但蹄不如累麴尔！”伯乐知其子之愚，

dàn zhuǎn nù wéi xiào yuē cǐ mǎ hào tiào bù kān yù
但转怒为笑曰：“此马好跳，不堪御

yě suǒ wèi àn tú suǒ jì yě
也。”所谓按图索驥也。

yì lín fá shān
《艺林伐山》

白话
翻译



伯乐的《相马经》一书中对好马有这样的描述语言：“马的额头丰满，眼睛突出闪亮，蹄子大而端正”。孙阳的儿子，拿着《相马经》寻找好马。出门看见了一只大癞蛤蟆。就对他的父亲说：“我找到了一匹好马，与你书写的良马的特征大略相同，只是蹄子不是大而是端正的罢了。”伯乐知道自己的儿子愚钝，只是哭笑不得地说：“这匹马太喜欢跳了，不能用来拉车。”这就是按照图样寻找好马啊。

Seeking a Steed According to a Picture



In his treatise *Xiang Ma Jing*^① Bo Le^② wrote of a fine horse as one having an ample forehead, sparkling eyes and large shapely hoofs. With the guidebook in hand, his son began to look about for horses that would answer to the description. One day on his way out he caught sight of a huge toad. He returned to tell his father: "I've found a steed as good as what you described, only its hoofs are not large enough." Seeing that to get cross with his son for his foolishness would not be of any help, Bo Le smiled and said good-humouredly: "Such a horse likes to leap, it can't be made a draught animal."

This is what is commonly expressed as, "Seek a steed according to a picture drawn."^③

Yilin Fashan



Notes

- ① a guidebook or manual concerning the selection of horses.
- ② According to legend, Bo Le used to be the name of a Constellation in charge of the horses in Heaven, but later became a

注释

① 按图索骥:按照画像去寻求好马。按照图像寻找好马,比喻按照线索寻找,也比喻办事机械、死板。骥(jì):好马;良马。

② 伯乐:本是天上的星名,据说负责管理天马。本文指春秋时候,秦国叫孙阳的人。他擅长相马,无论什么样的马,他一眼就能分出优劣。他常常被人请去识马、选马,人们都称他为伯乐。

③ 隆颡:形容马的额头丰满。

④ 麴(qū):酒母,酿酒或制酱用的发酵物,亦作“曲”。累麴,形容马蹄大而端正。



complimentary title to anyone who knows how to judge a horse for its worth. Here, it refers to Sun Yang who lived under the reign of Qin Mugong, Duke of the State of Qin, in the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC).

- ③ In this expression the character 駿(jùn), instead of the character 驥(jì) is used. These two share the meaning of a fine horse, a thoroughbred. The story is about seeking a horse according to “a guidebook”, but this expression is usually changed to “according to a picture” and, moreover, it is used not in the sense of “doing things according to a prescribed idea” but of “locating something by following up a clue”, so it has a positive note.

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