

前 言

学习汉语的外国学生，当他们初步掌握了汉语的语音、词汇、语法和文字时，很想进一步提高自己的汉语水平。怎样提高呢？一件重要的事就是需要掌握一些汉语语言中最有特色的东西——例如成语、谚语、歇后语、典故和古诗。这些东西既和汉语汉字有密切关系，又和中华民族的文化背景有密切关系。掌握了它们，不但能够丰富外国人汉语的表达能力，而且也能够增强他们汉语表达的本土特色。简而言之，他们所掌握的汉语就更像汉语了。这就向成为一个“中国通”迈出了重要的一步。

为以上目的，我们给这样的外国学生编了一套“博古通今学汉语丛书”，包括“成语 101”、“谚语 101”、“歇后语 101”、“典故 101”和“古诗 101”。

本套书精选汉语中最有价值的、常用的、表现力强的成语、谚语、歇后语、典故和古诗各 101 则。每则均附英文释义，每则配一幅精美插图，另有一些难解词语中英文注释。随书附 MP3 光盘。

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Gē jī yān yòng niú dāo

1. 割鸡焉^①用牛刀

Why use a poleaxe to kill a chicken?



① 焉：哪里。(why, how, in rhetorical questions)

此典出自《论(lún)语》^①。

孔子^②的学生言偃(yǎn)在武成^③做县令。有一次孔子到武成，听到弹琴和唱歌的声音。孔子以为在一个小城施行礼乐^④没有必要，就笑对言偃说：“杀鸡哪里要用杀牛的刀(割鸡焉用牛刀)。”言偃分辩说，他进行礼乐教育正是遵照了老师的教导，而且这样做有利于治理武成。于是孔子承认言偃是对的，并说：“刚才的话只是一句玩笑。”

后世用“割鸡焉用牛刀”这句话来比喻小题大做或大材小用。

① 《论语》：孔子弟子关于孔子言行、思想的记录，为儒家经典。(Analects of Confucius, one of the Confucian classics, is a collection of the thoughts, words and deeds of Confucius compiled by his disciples.)

② 孔子：(公元前551—前479)春秋末期思想家、政治家、教育家，儒家的创始者。(Confucius, 551-479 BC, was the father of Confucianism, statesman, educationist and thinker in the Spring and Autumn Period.)

③ 武成：今山东省费县西南。(Wucheng: in the southwest part of present-day Fei County, Shandong Province)

④ 礼乐：宣扬儒家政治思想和社会、道德规范的音乐及教育。(music and rites that advocate Confucian political ideas along with social and moral code)

This story is taken from *Analects of Confucius*.

Yan Yan, a disciple of Confucius, was the magistrate of Wucheng. Once when Confucius went there he heard the strains of zithers and the sound of singing. Deeming it extravagant to enact lavish ceremonies in such a small town, he said with a smile, “Why use a poleaxe to kill a chicken?” Yan Yan defended himself, saying that he was doing what Confucius had encouraged him to do, namely to educate people with music and rites, and thereby would govern Wucheng better. Then Confucius recognized the reason in Yan Yan’s words, and said that he had only been joking.

Later, the metaphor began to be used to describe making a fuss over a trifling matter, or wasting one’s talent on a petty endeavour.

Kē zhèng měng yú hǔ

2. 苛政猛于虎

Tyranny is fiercer than a tiger



孔子经过泰山^①旁边，听见有一个妇人在墓前哭得很伤心，就叫学生去问她说：“你的哭声里好像是有很重的哀伤。”她回答说：“是的。从前我的公公被老虎吃掉，后来我的丈夫也被老虎吃掉，现在我的儿子也被老虎吃掉了。”孔子问她：“为什么不离开这里呢？”她回答说：“这里没有暴虐（bàonüè）的统治（苛政）。”孔子回头对他的学生们说：“年轻人记住，暴虐的统治比老虎更可怕（猛于虎）。”

后世用“苛政猛于虎”这句话来告诫当政者不可暴虐，或者用来指责某处的统治者压迫人民。

Confucius was once passing by Mount Tai, when he heard a woman, who was in front of a grave, wailing bitterly. He sent one of his disciples to enquire the reason. “By the sound of your lamentation,” he said, “you seem to be afflicted by some grievous sorrow.” The woman replied, “Yes, a tiger killed and devoured my father-in-law, and then my husband suffered the same fate. Now my son has been gobbled up by another tiger.” Hearing this, Confucius asked her, “Then why don’t you leave this place?” The woman answered, “Because here there is no tyrannical rule.” Thereupon, Confucius turned to his disciples and said, “Keep this in mind, young fellows:

^① 泰山是中国的名山之一，在山东省。(Mount Tai is one of China’s most famous mountains, situated in Shandong Province.)

tyranny is fiercer than a tiger.”

Later, this saying came to be used to warn rulers not to act in a tyrannical fashion and to criticize governments which oppress their people.

Fá kē

3. 伐^① 柯^②

Shaping an axe handle



① 伐：砍。(to hew)

② 柯：斧子的柄。(axe handle)

《诗经^①·邠(bīn)风·伐柯》一章说：“怎样砍出斧柄呢？没有斧头就砍不出来。怎样娶到妻子呢？没有媒人就娶不到。”后世按这个比喻称做媒为“伐柯”，称媒人为“伐柯人”。

The stanza “Shaping an Axe Handle” in the “Songs of Bin” in the *Book of Songs* goes: “How does one shape an axe handle? It cannot be done without an axe. How does one marry a wife? It cannot be done without a matchmaker.” Later, based on this metaphor, matchmaking came to be called “shaping an axe handle,” and matchmakers came to be called “axe handle shapers”.

① 《诗经》：周代到春秋时代编成的诗集。部分为官僚和知识分子(fēnzǐ)所写，部分采集自民间，本诗即采自幽(bīn)地。幽在今陕西省旬邑(yì)县附近。(The *Book of Songs* is a collection of poems, some written by officials, scholars and some being folk ballads, from the Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn Period. This poem is from the region of Bin which was near the present Xunyi County in Shaanxi Province.)

Duō xíng bú yì bì zì bì

4. 多行不义必自毙

An evil-doer is his own grave-digger

此典出自《左传》^①。

郑国国君寤 (wù) 生，于公元前 743 年即位，他的母亲不喜欢他而喜欢小儿子段，并且总想让段成为国君。她一再强求国君将一个重要城市京^②给段作为封地。段到京后一再扩建城墙，扩大自己的管辖范围。郑国的大夫劝国君及早除去段，以免因段的强大而危及郑国的安全。国君说：“多行不义必自毙。”要大家等待。后来段聚集军队准备进攻郑的都城，国君说：“到时候了。”于是发兵攻京，京地的人叛离了段，段只好逃到卫国。

后世以“多行不义必自毙”来形容作恶多了就会自取灭亡。

This anecdote is excerpted from the *Zuo Zhuan*.

The ruler of the State of Zheng, Wu Sheng, succeeded to the throne in 743 BC. His mother did not like him, but doted on her younger son Duan. She prevailed upon the ruler to give the major city of Jing to Duan as his fief. After Duan obtained

①《左传》：相传由史学家左丘明所著。由此故事至第十五个故事都取材于《左传》。(Zuo Zhuan, also known as *Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals* covers the years 722-454 BC and is said to be written by Zuo Qiuming. Stories 4 to 15 in this book are adapted from *Zuo zhuan*.)

②京：古地名。在今河南荣 (xíng) 阳东南，距郑国都城很近。(Jing, a place used to be located in the southeast of Xinyang in present-day Henan Province, near the capital of Zheng.)

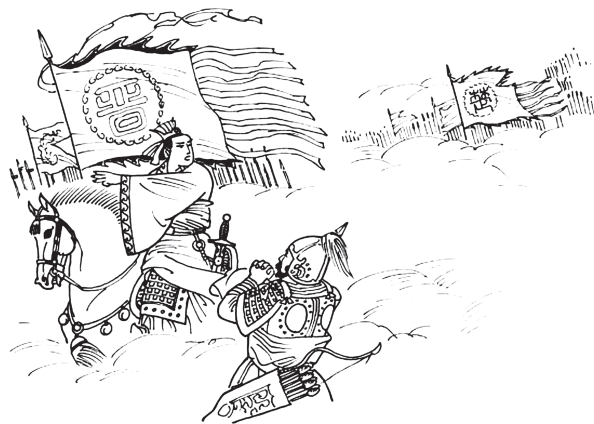
the city, he reinforced and heightened the city wall, and continuously expanded the area under his control. The ministers of Zheng warned the ruler that Duan was a threat to the stability of Zheng, and that he should take steps to get rid of him. But the ruler said, “An evil-doer shall bring about his own destruction.” He told his advisors to wait and see. Finally Duan gathered an army to attack the capital of Zheng. Wu Sheng said, “The time has come,” and mustered an army to attack Jing. The people of Jing immediately deserted Duan who then fled to the State of Wei.

Later, the expression was used to warn wrongdoers of the fate in store for them.

Tuìbì-sānshè

5. 退避三舍^①

Withdrawing for three *she*



① 三舍：古时行军以三十里为一舍，三舍即九十里。(One *she* equalled 30 li, about 15 km, and was reckoned a day's march.)

春秋时，晋国公子重（chóng）耳为避难流亡在外。他到楚国时，楚王以诸（zhū）侯^①礼仪接待重耳。有一次楚王问重耳：“你将来回晋国做了国君，会怎样报答我呢？”重耳说：“一切珍奇宝物你都有很多，我不知道还有什么更好的东西可以用来感谢你厚待我的情谊。”楚王还是坚持要求他说将怎样答谢。重耳说：“以后万不得已要与你打仗，我将退避，让你三舍。”

后来，重耳回晋国做了国君。有一次楚国侵犯宋国，晋国应宋国请求与楚国交战。当楚军进攻时，重耳就命令他的军队后退三舍——九十里，遵守了从前的诺言。但楚军仍步步紧逼，最后被晋军打得大败。

后世以“退避三舍”来表示有意对人退让或回避。

In the Spring and Autumn Period, Prince Chong'er was exiled from his native State of Jin and wandered from state to state for 19 years. When he went to Chu, the ruler of Chu received him with the honour due to a fellow ruler. One day the former asked Chong'er, "If you return to your own country some day and succeed to the throne, what will you give me in

^① 诸侯：古代帝王统治下的列国君主的统称。(dukes or princes under a king in ancient times)

return?" Chong'er replied, "Your Highness has plenty of treasure; I do not know what would be worthy of being presented to Your Highness." When the ruler of Chu persisted, Chong'er answered, "Should I be forced some day to fight with the army of Your Highness on the battlefield, my troops would retreat for three *she* so as to express my gratitude to Your Highness."

Later, Chong'er did return to Jin and succeeded to the throne. An invasion by Chu upon the territory of the State of Song brought Jin into conflict with Chu because of Jin's alliance with Song. When the army of Chu launched an attack against his army, Chong'er ordered his men to retreat three *she*, i.e., 90 li, carrying out his promise made years before to the ruler of Chu. Chu pursued but suffered a crushing defeat in the end.

Later, the phrase came to be used to denote deliberately giving way or avoiding doing something.