

## Chinese Proverbs & Old Chinese Sayings

If you want happiness for an hour; take a nap. If you want happiness for a day; go fishing. If you want happiness for a month; get married. If you want happiness for a year; inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime; help someone else.

To believe in one's dreams is to spend all of one's life asleep

Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend's forehead.

With true friends...even water drunk together is sweet enough.

To attract good fortune, spend a new coin on an old friend, share an old pleasure with a new friend, and lift up the heart of a true friend by writing his name on the wings of a dragon.

There is only one pretty child in the world and every mother has it.

A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.

Mankind fears an evil man but heaven does not. Chinese Proverb

Not the cry, but the flight of the wild duck, leads the flock to fly and follow.

Not wine...men intoxicate themselves; Not vice...men entice themselves.

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.

One joy scatters a hundred griefs.

Public before private and country before family.

An ant may well destroy a whole dam.

A book holds a house of gold.

Butcher the donkey after it finished his job on the mill.

A crane standing amidst a flock of chickens.

A camel standing amidst a flock of sheep.

**Crows everywhere are equally black.**

**A dish of carrot hastily cooked may still has soil uncleaned off the vegetable.**

**Dismantle the bridge shortly after crossing it.**

**Distant water won't help to put out a fire close at hand.**

**Distant water won't quench your immediate thirst.**

**Do not want others to know what you have done? Better not have done it anyways.**

**Donkey's lips do not fit onto a horse's mouth.**

**A dog won't forsake his master because of his poverty; a son never deserts his mother for her homely appearance.**

**Add legs to the snake after you have finished drawing it.**

**Dream different dreams while on the same bed.**

**Even a hare will bite when it is cornered.**

**Fail to steal the chicken while it ate up your bait grain.**

**A fall into a ditch makes you wiser.**

**Fight a wolf with a flex stalk.**

**A flea on the top of a bald head.**

**Flowing water never goes bad; our door hubs never gather termites.**

**A frog in a well shaft seeing the sky.**

**Flies never visit an egg that has no crack.**

**A good fortune may forbode a bad luck, which may in turn disguise a good fortune.**

**Have a mouth as sharp as a dagger but a heart as soft as tofu.**

**Have one's ears pierced only before the wedding ceremony starts.**

**A horse cannot gain weight if not fed with extra fodder during the night; a man cannot become wealthy without earnings apart from his regular salaries.**

**How can you expect to find ivory in a dog's mouth?**

**How can you put out a fire set on a cart-load of firewood with only a cup of water?**

**If you do not study hard when young you'll end up bewailing your failures as you grow up.**

**If a son is uneducated, his dad is to blame.**

**If you have never done anything evil, you should not be worrying about devils to knock at your door.**

**An inch of time is an inch of gold but you can't buy that inch of time with an inch of gold.**

**It is easy to dodge a spear that comes in front of you but hard to keep harms away from an arrow shot from behind.**

**A Jade stone is useless before it is processed; a man is good-for-nothing until he is educated.**

**Kill a chicken before a monkey.**

**Kill one to warn a hundred.**

**Like ants eating a bone.**

**Looking for the ass on its very back.**

**Lift a stone only to drop on your own feet.**

**The longer the night lasts, the more our dreams will be.**

**Mend the pen only after the sheep are all gone.**

**No wind, no waves.**

**Of all the strategems, to know when to quit is the best.**

**Once bitten by a snake, he/she is scared all his/her life at the mere sight of a rope.**

**Once on a tiger's back, it is hard to alight.**

**One cannot refuse to eat just because there is a chance of being choked.**

**One monk shoulders water by himself; two can still share the labor among them. When it comes to three, they have to go thirsty.**

**Only when all contribute their firewood can they build up a strong fire.**

**An overcrowded chicken farm produce fewer eggs.**

**Pick up a sesame seed but lose sight of a watermelon.**

**Play a harp before a cow.**

**Paper can't wrap up a fire.**

**Reshape one's foot to try to fit into a new shoe.**

**Regular feet can't be affected by irregular shoes.**

**Shed no tears until seeing the coffin.**

**A smile will gain you ten more years of life.**

**A sly rabbit will have three openings to its den.**

**Some prefer carrot while others like cabbage.**

**Steal a bell with one's ears covered.**

**Three humble shoemakers brainstorming will make a great statesman.**

**There are always ears on the other side of the wall.**

**There is no silver here: three hundred taels.**

**A tiger never returns to his prey he did not finish off.**

**Vicious as a tigress can be, she never eats her own cubs.**

**Waiting for a rabbit to hit upon a tree and be killed in order to catch it.**

**We are not so much concerned if you are slow as when you come to a halt.**

**A weasel comes to say Happy New Year to the chickens.**

**When you are poor, neighbors close by will not come; once you become rich, you'll be surprised by visits from (alleged) relatives afar.**

**Without rice, even the cleverest housewife cannot cook.**

**You can't catch a cub without going into the tiger's den.**

**You think you lost your horse? Who knows, he may bring a whole herd back to you someday.**

**You won't help shoots grow by pulling them up higher.**

**You can't expect both ends of a sugar cane are as sweet.**

**Your fingers can't be of the same length.**

**Age and time do not wait for people.**

**Attack is the best defence.**

**Bad things never walk alone.**

**A bird in your hand is worth more than 100 in the forest.**

**The death of the heart is the saddest thing that can happen to you.**

**Different flowers look good to different people.**

**Giving your son a skill is better than giving him one thousand pieces of gold.**

**A great man can bend and stretch.**

**Once you pour the water out of the bucket it's hard to get it back in it.**

**Once a word leaves your mouth, you cannot chase it back even with the swiftest horse.**

**Only when all contribute their firewood can they build up a strong fire.**

**The soldier who retreats 50 paces jeers at the one who retreats 100 paces.**

**To cultivate trees, you need 10 years. To cultivate people, you need 100 years.**

**May you get what you wish for.**

**Laws control the lesser man. Right conduct controls the greater one.**

**Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a singing bird will come.**

**Pray to God, but keep rowing toward(s) the shore.**

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Only when all contribute their firewood can they build up a strong fire.

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"He who asks the question is a fool for a minute; he who does not is a fool forever."

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The journey is the reward.

If your strength is small, don't carry heavy burdens. If your words are worthless, don't give advice.

Who is not satisfied with himself will grow; who is not sure of his own correctness will learn many things.

Better do a good deed near at home than go far away to burn incense.

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember. I do and I understand.

Talk doesn't cook rice.

Teachers open the door but you must walk through it yourself.

The journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

To talk goodness is not good... only to do it is.

A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials.

Biggest profits mean gravest risks.

The woman who tells her age is either too young to have anything to lose or too old to have anything to gain.

Clear conscience never fears midnight knocking.

If you stand straight, do not fear a crooked shadow.

**Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time.**

**Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend's forehead.**

**Those who have free seats at a play hiss first.**

**If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow.**

**Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without one.**

**There are two perfectly good men, one dead, and the other unborn.**

**Don't open a shop unless you like to smile.**

**Of all the thirty-six alternatives, running away is best.**

**Ceremony is the smoke of friendship.**

**To be uncertain is to be uncomfortable, but to be certain is to be ridiculous.**

**One dog barks at something, the rest bark at him.**

**He who sacrifices his conscience to ambition burns a picture to obtain the ashes.**

**You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair.**

**Life is a dream walking death is a going home.**

**If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed.**

**The superior doctor prevents sickness; The mediocre doctor attends to impending sickness; The inferior doctor treats actual sickness;**

**Great doubts deep wisdom. Small doubts little wisdom.**

**I dreamed a thousand new paths. I woke and walked my old one.**

**The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than him.**

**A great fortune depends on luck, a small one on diligence.**

**Experience is a comb which nature gives to men when they are bald.**

**Everyone pushes a falling fence.**

**The great question is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with failure.**

**Riches: A dream in the night. Fame: A gull floating on water.**

**All people are your relatives, therefore expect only trouble from them.**

**Govern a family as you would cook a small fish -- very gently.**

**In a broken nest there are few whole eggs.**

**Man is the head of the family, woman the neck that turns the head.**

**He who asks is a fool for five minutes, but he who does not ask remains a fool forever.**

**If a man fools me once, shame on him. If he fools me twice, shame on me.**

**The saving man becomes the free man.**

**A man should choose a friend who is better than himself. There are plenty of acquaintances in the world; but very few real friends.**

**With true friends... even water drunk together is sweet enough.**

**When men speak of the future, the Gods laugh.**

**Sow much, reap much; sow little, reap little.**

**Your friend has a friend; don't tell him.**

**Climb mountains to see lowlands.**

**Enough shovels of earth -- a mountain. Enough pails of water -- a river.**

**Habits are cobwebs at first; cables at last.**

**Happiness is like a sunbeam, which the least shadow intercepts, while adversity is often as the rain of spring.**

**If you want happiness for an hour -- take a nap. If you want happiness for a day -- go fishing. If you want happiness for a month -- get married. If you want happiness for a year -- inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime -- help someone else.**

**If I keep a green bough in my heart, the singing bird will come.**

**Do not employ handsome servants.**

**If you suspect a man, don't employ him, and if you employ him, don't suspect him.**

**A hundred men may make an encampment, but it takes a woman to make a home.**

**One never needs their humor as much as when they argue with a fool.**

**Insanity is doing the same thing in the same way and expecting a different outcome.**

**One joy scatters a hundred grieves.**

**When you cease to strive to understand, then you will know without understanding.**

**Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.**

**The palest ink lasts longer than the most retentive memory.**

**If you are poor, though you dwell in the busy marketplace, no one will inquire about you; if you are rich, though you dwell in the heart of the mountains, you will have distant relatives.**

**The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names.**

**If you wish to know the mind of a man, listen to his words.**

**When we have nothing to worry about we are not doing much, and not doing much may supply us with plenty of future worries.**

**To understand your parents' love you must raise children yourself.**

**Patience is power; with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes a silk gown.**

**The tongue can paint what the eye can't see.**

**One step at a time is good walking.**

**When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for life, train and educate people.**

**Pleasure for one hour, a bottle of wine. Pleasure for one year a marriage; but pleasure for a lifetime, a garden.**

**Be not afraid of going slowly, be afraid only of standing still.**

**In the midst of great joy, do not promise anyone anything. In the midst of great anger, do not answer anyone's letter.**

**If you want 1 year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people.**

**A maker of idols is never an idolater.**

**Respect for ones parents is the highest duty of civil life.**

**What is told into the ear of a man is often heard a hundred miles away.**

**Never do anything standing that you can do sitting, or anything sitting that you can do lying down.**

**To climb a tree to catch a fish is talking much and doing nothing.**

**Those who do not study are only cattle dressed up in men's clothes.**

**Think of your own faults the first part of the night when you are awake, and of the faults of others the latter part of the night when you are asleep.**

**An inch of time cannot be bought with an inch of gold.**

**It is later than you think.**

**The greatest conqueror is he who overcomes the enemy without a blow.**

**With virtue you can't be entirely poor; without virtue you can't really be rich.**

**Great souls have wills; feeble ones have only wishes.**

**A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books.**

**Beauty is the wisdom of women. Wisdom is the beauty of men.**

**Deep doubts, deep wisdom; small doubts, little wisdom.**

**A man grows most tired while standing still.**