

中國二十五故事



# TWENTY-FIVE SHORT CHINESE STORIES

TOLD IN SIMPLE ENGLISH BY

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THE COMMERCIAL PRESS, LIMITED  
SHANGHAI, CHINA

1933

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# TWENTY-FIVE SHORT CHINESE STORIES

## THE BOY WHO HAD NO PAPER

Once there was a little boy named Yang Su. When he was only four years old, his father died and his mother became very poor. Later, Yang Su wanted to study for the examinations, but he had no money to buy paper, or pen and ink. He did not know what to do. But where there is a will there is a way. The boy lived near the sea, so he took a stick and went down to the shore. There, with the stick, he wrote down his lessons on the sand, and afterwards he became a great scholar.

## THE BOY AND THE GLOWWORMS

Once there was a boy who was studying for the examinations, but he could not read when it was dark, because his family was too poor to buy oil. What could he do? At last, he thought of a plan. He remembered that glowworms give a tiny light, and so he collected a large number together. By their light he was able to continue studying for a long time into the night.

## THE HOLE IN THE WALL

A poor boy, named Kwang Heng, was very fond of books and loved to study. He worked for a magistrate who gave him books instead of money. But the books were no use, for the boy was too poor to buy oil for a lamp at night. At last, he thought of a plan. His next-door neighbor was wealthy and had lamps; so he made a little hole in the wall between the two houses. Then he held his book in front of the hole and caught the light that came through, and so was able to study.

## THE SLEEPY STUDENT

Once upon a time, there lived a boy who was very anxious to do well in the examinations, and thus bring honor to his parents. He discovered, however, that after he had been studying for some hours, he began to be very drowsy. His head used to nod until he fell fast asleep. This distressed him very much indeed.

At last, he tied a piece of cord to the end of his queue, and fastened it to a beam in the roof, so that, when his head began to nod, the pull of the queue roused him. In this way, he was able to keep awake and study for a long time

## THE BIG JAR OF WATER

A little boy, named Ssŭ Ma Kwang, was playing with some children in a beautiful garden. One of the boys was sitting on the edge of a large earthenware jar and looking at the goldfish swimming in the water. Suddenly he fell in. The jar was a high one, and none of the children could reach their playfellow. What could they do? Quickly Ssŭ Ma Kwang thought of a plan. He took up a large stone, which was lying on the ground, and threw it at the earthenware jar. The jar broke. The water ran out, and thus the boy's life was saved.

## THE BALL IN THE HOLLOW TREE

In a little village, there once lived a boy who was very clever, and always knew what to do in difficult circumstances. One day, when he was playing ball with some companions, the ball struck the top of a hollow tree and then fell inside.

All the other children thought that the ball was lost forever, but this boy ran immediately to the village well and drew a pail of water. He carried it to the hollow tree and poured the water inside. The ball floated to the top, where the children could reach it quite easily.



## TWENTY-FIVE SHORT MENCIUS AND HIS MOTHER

Mencius was only three years old when his father died, so his mother worked hard that her son might have a good education. She sent him to school, and, at first, Mencius liked to go. After a while, he became lazy, and, throwing his books to one side, he left school and returned home.

When Mencius entered the house, he saw his mother weaving a piece of cloth, she had put a great deal of hard work into it, so that the cloth was very valuable. As soon as she saw Mencius, she picked up a knife and cut the cloth from the top to the bottom.

“My son,” she said, “you are not so sorry to see me cut this cloth as I am to see you leave your studies.”

The heart of Mencius was so moved that he went back to school at once, studied hard, and became a great teacher.

## THE STOLEN ROPE

A man was once punished by having a large wooden frame fixed round his neck. As he was going through the streets he met some of his friends.

“What have you been doing?” they asked.

"Oh, nothing," replied the man; "I just picked up a piece of rope that I saw lying on the road."

"But," said his friends, "surely you have not been made to wear a wooden frame simply for picking up a piece of rope?"

"Well," said the man, "there happened to be an ox at the other end."

#### ADVICE FOR A DOCTOR

A Chinese doctor was called in to see a sick man. He treated him so unskillfully that the man died, so the family took the doctor and tied him to a post, meaning to kill him the next day.

In the night, however, he ran away and swam across a river to his home. When he reached his house, he saw his son, hard at work, studying some medical books.

"My son," he said, "do not be in such a hurry to study your books. The first and most important business for a doctor to do is to learn to swim."

#### WHY THE GENERAL RETURNED

Many, many years ago the state of Ch'u was fighting against the state of Ch'i. An officer of the Ch'u army told his general that he would frighten the general of the Ch'i army, so that he would go back to his own country.

One night, he went to the enemy's camp and took away the general's bed curtain without any one knowing.

The second night, the officer stole the general's pillow.

The third night, he stole the pin which fastened the general's queue.

Then the general was greatly alarmed and said to his officers: "We must return at once. If I stay here for another night, my head, also, will be stolen."

#### THE WISE FORTUNE TELLER

A man once went to a fortune teller to ask him to help him to find something he had lost. The fortune teller said to him, "Go back to your house and look under the matting on the *kang*. You will find it there." So the man returned home and did what the fortune teller ordered.

The next day, he went again to the fortune teller and said, "I still cannot find what I have lost."

"Go and look again, and look more carefully this time," said the fortune teller.

The third day, the man went again to the fortune teller and said, "I have not found it yet."

"What is it you have lost?" asked the fortune teller.

"My camel," the man answered.

#### THE COURTEOUS HUSBAND AND WIFE

During the Later Han dynasty there was a man whose name was Liang Hung. He was a poor but ambitious man. In the daytime, he worked for other people, and when he had leisure, he studied books. His wife, Meng Kwang, was a virtuous woman.

One day Liang Hung was husking rice for a rich neighbor, and his wife brought him some food, which she had prepared for him. When she came up to him, she lifted up the tray on a level with her eyebrows. When people saw that they respected each other as if they were guests, they all wanted to be friends with Liang Hung.

#### THE VIRTUOUS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

In the Chou dynasty, there was a man named Yao Yang-tzu. His home was very poor, so he went far away to earn a living. One day, a fowl belonging to his neighbor flew over into his yard. His mother, who was greedy, took the fowl and killed it, for she wanted to eat it.

When her daughter-in-law saw what had been done, she was very grieved, but she did not blame her mother-in-law. She said very gently to her: "It must be that your daughter-in-law is not good, for there is no money to buy good food for you."

When the mother-in-law heard these words, she was greatly moved in her heart and did not eat the fowl.

#### THE STORY OF HAN PAI-YU

In the Han dynasty, there was a man named Han Pai-yu, who served his mother dutifully and obediently. He was a very filial son and always tried to make his mother happy. Sometimes, when he did wrong, his mother used to beat him.

One day his mother beat him with a stick and he wept. His mother said: "Why do you cry now? Whenever I beat you before this time, you never cried?"

He answered, "When you beat me before, it was very painful, so I knew you were strong. To-day it is not painful, so I am afraid you are getting old."

When his mother heard these words, she was very pleased, for she knew she had a very dutiful son. She lived to be ninety years old.

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

Once there was an old man who lost a horse. His neighbors came to sympathize with him, but the old man said, "How do you know that this is not a good fortune?"

A few months later, the lost horse returned, bringing with it another very fine horse. The neighbors of the old man came to congratulate him, but he said, "How do you know that this may not be a misfortune?"

A little while later, the old man's son, who was fond of riding, fell off the horse and broke his leg. The neighbors came again to sympathize with him, but he said, "May this not be good fortune?"

A year later, there was a great war with another country, and all the young men had to go and fight, and nearly all were killed. The old man's son could not go because his leg was broken, and the two lived together happily for many years.

## PRINCE YEN AND THE DOCTOR

One day, Prince Yen, who was the ruler of Hades, was seriously ill. He called in a great many doctors but not one could cure him. At last, he commanded a little ghost to go up to the World to ask a doctor there to come. He said to

the little ghost, "If you see a doctor who has not many ghosts following him, ask that one to come."

The little ghost came up to the World and looked everywhere for a doctor, but he could not find one who had no ghost following him. They all had a great many ghosts following them. At last, he saw a doctor who had only one ghost following him, so he asked him to go down to see Prince Yen.

When he came before Prince Yen, the latter asked him, "How long have you prescribed medicines and treated illnesses?"

The doctor replied, "I have only prescribed medicine once and treated one person."

"No wonder you had only one ghost following you," said Prince Yen. "With me, there would be two."

#### A FOX PRETENDS TO THE TIGER'S MAJESTY

One day, a tiger caught a fox and wanted to eat it. The fox said, "You cannot eat me."

The tiger said, "Why can I not eat you?"

The fox replied, "Because Heaven has appointed me the king of all the beasts."

The tiger said, "I don't believe it."

The fox said: "If, indeed, you don't believe it, you can come with me to the forest and see. When the beasts see me they will all run away."

The tiger said: "Very good. I will go with you to see if it is true or false. When we come back, it will not be too late to eat you."

Then the fox led the tiger to the forest. It was indeed true that when all the beasts saw them they hurriedly ran away, for they thought that the fox had led the tiger there to eat them. The tiger, when he saw this, also ran away frightened.

#### PLANTING A PEAR TREE

One day a countryman was pushing a wheelbarrow full of pears to market. At a certain place a priest happened to appear in front of him and asked for a pear to eat. The man was very angry and ordered the priest to go away. The priest said: "I asked for only one pear. Why are you so angry with me?"

Just then a kind-hearted man, who stood by, bought a pear and gave it to the priest to eat. The priest took a pip from the pear and asked for a cup of boiling water from the bystanders. The priest made a hole in the ground and planted the pip in the hole. Then he poured the water into the hole. In a little time, the pip began to



sprout. It grew larger and larger, and had first leaves, then flowers, and finally large ripe pears. The priest picked the pears and handed them one by one to the bystanders, till they were all gone.

The countryman turned his head to look at his own pears, but they were gone too. Then he tried to find the priest, but he was gone also. So the countryman knew that the pears, which the priest had handed to the bystanders, were his own pears, and the tree was a handle of his wheelbarrow, for it now had only one.

#### THE HUNTER AND THE ELEPHANT

Once a certain man went out to hunt with his bow and arrows. He was very tired and fell fast asleep in a wood. When he was sleeping, an elephant came and lifted him onto its back with its trunk. The man awoke and found himself on the elephant's back. He did not know what to do.

At last the elephant stopped and put him down gently at the foot of a tree. Then it made a loud noise and a great many elephants gathered quickly in that place. The largest elephant looked up at the tree and then looked down at the man. It seemed to order him to go up. Then it lay down on the ground and the hunter jumped up on its

back and climbed to the top of the tree. Suddenly he saw a fierce lion creeping softly through the high grass. There was not a moment to lose. The hunter quickly shot at the lion and killed it.

Then he climbed down again onto the elephant's back and it took him to a place where it scratched the ground with its large foot. Underneath there were a great many tusks. The hunter wrapped them into a bundle, and the elephant led him to a place where he could easily find his way home again.

#### A GRATEFUL DOG

A certain man was going home in a boat with a large sum of money. On the river bank he saw a man who was just going to kill a dog for food. He was very sorry for the dog and bought it from the man and took it with him in the boat.

The boatman, who had formerly been a robber, when he saw that the man had a great deal of money, wanted to steal it; so he quickly drew out his knife to kill him. The man begged that his body might be complete in death, so the boatman wrapped him in a piece of canvas and threw him into the water. The dog immediately jumped into the water, and, seizing the bundle with its teeth, struggled hard and swam to a shallow place.

Then it barked loudly so that some men, who were working in a field near by, came and set the man free.

Then the man determined to try to find the robber. Suddenly the dog disappeared. The man searched for several days but in vain. One day the dog appeared in front of him and led him to a certain boat, where some men were busy working. He barked loudly and caught one of them by the leg, and the man recognized him as the robber, and all his money was found in the boat.

It is wonderful to think that a dog could be so grateful. It not only saved its master's life, but also found the robber and got all his money back.

#### A FAITHFUL DOG

Once there was a certain man who lived in Lunan. His father was in prison and about to die. His son wanted to help his father but did not know how to do so. At last he thought of a plan. He took one hundred ounces of silver and set out on a mule to try to set free his father.

As he was riding along the road, he saw that a black dog, which belonged to the family, was following him. In vain, he tried to make it stay at home. The dog followed him all the time.

At one place, he got down from the mule to rest. He picked up a large stone and threw it at the dog, but the dog would not go away. He got on the mule again and the dog pulled the tail of the mule, so the man beat it with a whip. Then the dog ran in front of the mule and barked loudly. It seemed to want to stop its master. The man was very angry and drove the dog away. Then he rode on to the city.

When he arrived at the inn, it was dark. He looked at his silver and saw that half of it was gone. He did not know what to do. In a flash, he remembered the strange action of the dog and thought it might have some meaning. So, next morning very early, he went back along the road to try to find his lost money. When he came to the place where he had rested the day before, he saw the dog lying dead on the road. He lifted it up by one of its ears and there underneath was the silver.

The man was very grateful to the dog, so he bought a coffin and buried it in that place. Nowadays people call that place "The Grave of the Faithful Dog."

## THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Once there was a very rich old man, whose surname was Li. He was very queer, for he used to bury his money in the ground.

One day, he fell ill and called his two sons to divide his property between them. He gave four fifths to the elder and only one fifth to the younger. He said to the latter: "I do not love your brother more than I love you, but I have other money hidden, and, when you are alone, I will give it to you."

A few days later, the old man grew worse and the younger son, whose name was Yueh Shang, was afraid that his father was going to die, so he took an opportunity to see him, when he was alone, to ask about his money.

His father said: "You are not old enough to use money rightly. You are only just twenty years old. If I gave you a thousand ounces of gold, you would soon spend it all. But when you have drunk the cup of bitterness to the dregs, then you shall have your money."

Now Yueh Shang was a dutiful son, and; when his father spoke in this way, he did not dare to say anything. The old man gradually became worse and at last died.

His sons gave him a big funeral, and the elder brother refused to pay the expenses, so the younger son paid them. Yueh Shang was also very hospitable, and his wife often had to prepare three or four meals a day for guests, so, in a short time, he became extremely poor. He did not have enough money to buy food and clothes, so he borrowed from his elder brother. Then the latter died; his own wife and son died also, and he was quite alone.

One night he had a dream. He dreamed that his father came to him and said: "My son, you have now drunk the cup of bitterness to the dregs. You shall have your money."

When Yueh Shang woke up, he thought it was only a dream. That day, when he was digging in his yard, he found a large quantity of gold. Then he knew what his father meant when he said, "When you are alone," for he was, at that time, quite alone in the world.

#### THE TIGER OF CHAO CHENG

Once there was an old woman who lived at Chao Cheng. She had only one son, and she was more than seventy years old. One day her son happened to go up to the hills to gather firewood, and there a tiger caught and killed him.

The old woman was greatly troubled at her son's death and went to the magistrate to ask him to arrest the tiger. At first, he only laughed at her, but the old woman continued to beg until he promised to do what she wanted. One of his servants, named Li Neng, who was drunk at the time, said that he was willing to arrest the tiger, so the old woman returned happily to her home.

When Li Neng became sober, he was troubled because he had promised to catch the tiger. He did not know what to do, so he went to a temple in the East Suburb, where he began to pray. By and by he saw a tiger coming in through the doorway, and he thought it was going to eat him. He was very frightened. The tiger, however, did not do anything but just lay down quite still.

Li Neng then spoke to the animal and said, "Tiger, if you killed that old woman's son, let me bind you with this rope."

Immediately the tiger dropped its ears, and Li Neng bound it. Then it followed him to the magistrate's office.

The magistrate said, "Did you eat the old woman's son?"

The tiger nodded its head. The magistrate then said: "You ought to die. You killed this old woman's son, who used to support her. However,

if now you will act as a son to her you may live." The tiger again nodded its head and the magistrate ordered it to be set free.

Next morning, when the old woman opened her door, she saw a dead deer lying on the ground. She sold the flesh and skin and bought food for herself. Every day the tiger used to bring her something, either food or money, till she became quite rich.

When the old woman died, the tiger suddenly disappeared, and no one saw it again.

#### HOW CHANG BECAME A FAMOUS DOCTOR

A certain poor man, named Chang, happened to meet a priest one day. The priest looked at his face very carefully and then said, "You ought to be a doctor."

He replied: "How can I possibly be a doctor? Alas! I cannot read nor write."

"That doesn't matter," said the priest. "A doctor does not need to be a scholar. You go home and try."

So Chang returned home. As he was very poor, he collected a few of the most common prescriptions and set up a small stall with some fishbones and some dry honeycomb.



Now the governor of the province happened to have a bad cough and he commanded his officials to find the most skillful doctor to cure him. The magistrate of the district, where Chang lived, could not find any one, so he ordered Chang to go. At that time, Chang happened to be ill himself with a bad cough, so he begged the magistrate to let him stay at home. The magistrate refused, and Chang had to go.

As he was going on his way to see the governor, he became very thirsty and went to a village to ask for a drink of water, but no one was willing to give him a drink. By and by, he saw an old woman washing some vegetables in a very small quantity of water, which was consequently dirty. He was so thirsty that he asked for this dirty water and drank it all up. A little time afterwards, his cough was much better, and he thought he had discovered an excellent remedy.

When he arrived in the city, he heard that a great many doctors from other districts had already tried to cure the governor's cough, but they had failed; so Chang got some vegetables from the market and washed them as the old woman had done. He then took the dirty water and gave a dose to the governor, who was immediately cured.

The governor was so pleased that he gave Chang a beautiful red silk banner and a large sum of money, and Chang became a famous doctor all because of some dirty water.

#### THE DEER, THE LITTLE TIGER, AND THE FOX

One day a deer was eating grass on a hill. Suddenly a little tiger came behind him. The deer wanted to run away but he could not escape in time, so he stood still and thought of a plan.

The little tiger did not recognize the deer and asked him, saying, "Of what use are the horns on your head?"

The deer replied, "To fork the flesh of tigers and eat it."

The tiger asked again, "Of what use are the white spots on your body?"

"To show how many tigers I have eaten," said the deer. "Every time I eat a tiger, a white spot comes. You see how many spots I have already."

When the little tiger heard this, it was very frightened and immediately ran away.

A fox saw the little tiger running away alarmed, and said, "Why are you running away like this?"

The little tiger then told the fox what the deer had said. "Oh," said the fox, "the deer was only deceiving you. Don't be afraid. You go back

again." But the tiger was afraid and did not dare to go back.

The fox said: "You carry me on your back and I will go with you." The little tiger carried the fox and went back.

The deer saw them coming a long way off and knew that the tiger had told the fox about his stratagem, so he said to the fox in a loud voice, "Big Brother Fox, you promised yesterday to bring me the skin of a little tiger. The tiger that you are bringing to-day is a very good one. You certainly keep your promises."

When the little tiger heard these words, it quickly carried the fox to the edge of a mountain ravine and shook its body till the fox fell down into the ravine. Then it returned in safety. The deer returned in safety too.

## VOCAULARY

- |                   |   |                             |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| about to, 正要      | coffin, 棺材  | drowsy, 發困                  |
| action, 行爲        | collect, 收集   | drunk, 醉                    |
| advice, 忠告        | complete, 完全  | dry, 乾                      |
| alarmed, 恐慌       | congratulate, 道喜  | dutifully, 孝順               |
| alone, 孤單         | consequently, 於是  | earn a living, 謀生           |
| ambitious, 有志的    | continue, 繼續  | earthenware, 瓦器             |
| appear, 現露        | cord, 細繩  | edge, 邊                     |
| appoint, 任命       | countryman, 鄉下人   | education, 教育               |
| arrest, 逮捕        | courteous, 謙恭的  | elephant, 象                 |
| arrow, 箭          | cough, 咳嗽   | escape, 逃                   |
| bank, 岸           | creep, 扒  | examinations, 考試<br>(指科舉考試) |
| banner, 旗幟        | cure, 治好  | excellent, 極好               |
| bark, 咬           | dare, 敢   | expenses, 花費                |
| beam, 梁           | dark, 黑暗  | extremely, 極                |
| beasts, 野獸        | daughter-in-law, 媳婦   | faithful, 忠誠                |
| bed curtain, 帳幔   | deceive, 欺騙   | false, 假                    |
| beg, 求            | deer, 鹿   | family, 家                   |
| belong to, 屬於     | determine, 定  | fasten, 牢結                  |
| bind, 綁           | difficult, 難  | fell fast asleep, 熟睡        |
| bitterness, 苦     | dig, 掘  | fell ill, 病了                |
| blame, 譴責         | disappear, 隱沒   | fierce, 凶猛的                 |
| boiling, 沸騰       | discover, 查出  | filial, 孝順                  |
| borrow, 借         | distress, 苦難  | firewood, 柴                 |
| bow, 弓            | district, 縣   | fishbones, 魚刺               |
| bundle, 一包        | divide, 分   | fix, 定                      |
| bury, 埋           | doctor, 醫士  | flesh, 肉                    |
| bystander, 旁邊的人   | dregs, 渣滓   | float, 漂                    |
| call in, 請        | drew out (past tense<br>of <i>draw out</i> ), 拿出            | fond of, 愛                  |
| camel, 駱駝         | drop, 落下  | forever, 永遠                 |
| camp, 營           | drove... away (past<br>tense of <i>drive<br/>away</i> ), 闕開 | fork, 叉                     |
| canvas, 粗布        |   | formerly, 從前                |
| circumstances, 情形 |   | fortune, 福                  |
| climb, 攀登         |   |                             |

fortune teller, 算命者	in vain, 枉然	plant ( <i>verb</i> ), 種
fowl, 雞	jar, 缸	post, 柱
fox pretends to the tiger's majesty, 狐 假虎威	keep awake, 警醒	prepare, 預備
frame, 枷	keep a promise, 守約	prescribed medicine, 開藥方
frighten, 驚嚇	kind-hearted, 慈心的	priest, 和尚
funeral, 出殯	latter, 後者	promise, 應許
gather, 聚集	leisure, 閒暇	property, 產業
general, 將軍	lifted the tray to the level of her eye-	province, 省
gently, 文雅	brows, 舉案齊眉	pull, 拉
ghost, 鬼	loud noise, 大聲	punish, 治罪
glowworms, 螢	magistrate, 知縣	push, 推
goldfish, 金魚	market, 市	quantity, 數量
gradually, 漸漸的	matting, 席	queue, 辮子
grateful, 感恩的	medical, 醫	queer, 古怪
grave, 墳	Mencius, 孟子	quite rich, 頗富
greedy, 貪	misfortune, 禍	ravine, 山澗
grieved, 憂愁	moment, 片刻	reach, 達到
guests, 賓客	mother-in-law, 婆婆	recognize, 認
Hades, 陰間	moved, 感動	refuse, 拒絕
hand ( <i>verb</i> ), 傳遞	mule, 驢	remedy, 法子
handle, 把	near by, 在左近	remember, 記得
hole, 穴; 孔	next-door, 隔壁	reply, 回答
hollow, 中空的	nod, 點頭	respect, 敬
honeycomb, 蜂巢	number, 數目	rest, 歇息
honor, 尊重	obediently, 順	ripe, 熟
horns, 角	official, 官	robber, 強盜
hospitable, 好客的	oil, 油	rope, 繩子
hunter, 獵人	opportunity, 機會	rouse, 叫醒
hurriedly, 倉卒的	order, 分付	sand, 沙
husk rice, 春米	ounce, 兩	scholar, 學者
inn, 客店	pail, 桶	scratch, 搔
instead of, 替代	pear, 梨	search, 尋找
in a flash, 轉瞬間	pick up, 拾起	seize, 攫, 捕
in safety, 平安	pillow, 枕	seriously, 嚴重
in time, 及時	pin, 針	serve, 服侍
	pip, 核	set free, 放

set out, 起身	struck (past tense of	trunk, 象鼻
set up, 立起	strike), 打	tusk, 象牙
shallow, 淺	struggle, 努力	unskillfully, 笨拙
shore, 海岸	student, 學生	valuable, 值錢; 貴
shook (past tense of	suddenly, 忽然	vegetables, 蔬菜
shake), 抖	surname, 姓	virtuous, 有賢德的
skillful, 巧	sympathize with, 表	weave, 織
skin, 皮	同情	well, 井
sleepy, 困	temple, 廟	wept (past tense of
sober, 清醒	there happened to be,	weep), 哭
sorry for, 憐憫	偶然有	wheelbarrow, 一輪
spots, 點	think of a plan, 想法	手推車
sprout, 芽	子	will, 主意; 志
stall, 貨攤	thirsty, 渴	wood, 樹林
state, 國	tie, 結	world, 陽世
stick, 杖	tiger, 老虎	wrap, 包裹
still 安靜	tiny, 很小	yard, 院子
stolen, 偷得的	treasure, 寶貝	
stratagem, 計策	treat, 治	

(二七五八)

# 中國二十五故事

Twenty-Five Short Chinese Stories

版權所有翻印必究

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發行兼印刷者 上海河南路  
商務印書館

發行所 上海及各埠  
商務印書館

定價 大洋貳角 外埠酌加運費匯費

中華民國十七年十月初版

民國二十二年<sup>二</sup>月<sub>九</sub>月印行國難後第三版