



*A Sandpiper, a Mussel,
and a Fisherman*
(A Chinese idiom)

鷸蚌之爭 漁人得利

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Written and illustrated by T. W. Yuen-Lee

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A Sandpiper, a Mussel, and a Fisherman

Historical Background: The Warring States Period (481 / 403 BCE – 221 BCE)

In the 5th century BCE, the Eastern Zhou (Chou) Dynasty (周) was crumbling. Military powers were scattered in all the states. Each state attacked each other. Between 535 and 286 BCE, there were 358 warring states. Thus the period is known as the warring states: 戰國.

By the early 4th century BCE, the small states were consolidated by conquest into seven major states. This is known as "The Heroes of the Warring States Period". (戰國七雄: zhan guo qi xiong). They are: Chu 楚, Han 韓, Qi 齊, Qin 秦, Wei 魏, Yan 燕, Zhao 趙. Each hero, rule by the military power, declared himself king and became independent of the Zhou emperor.



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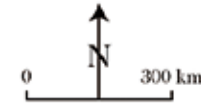
歷史背景：戰國時期（公元前 475 ~ 221 年），各諸侯混戰不休。周天子權威沒落，各國為獲得土地、財富，不斷展開兼併戰爭。4 世紀初，各國由 358 個小國，演變為七個國家，即所謂戰國七雄。

七雄是為：楚、韓、齊、秦、魏、燕、趙。各國各自為政，各自稱王，史稱之為戰國七雄。

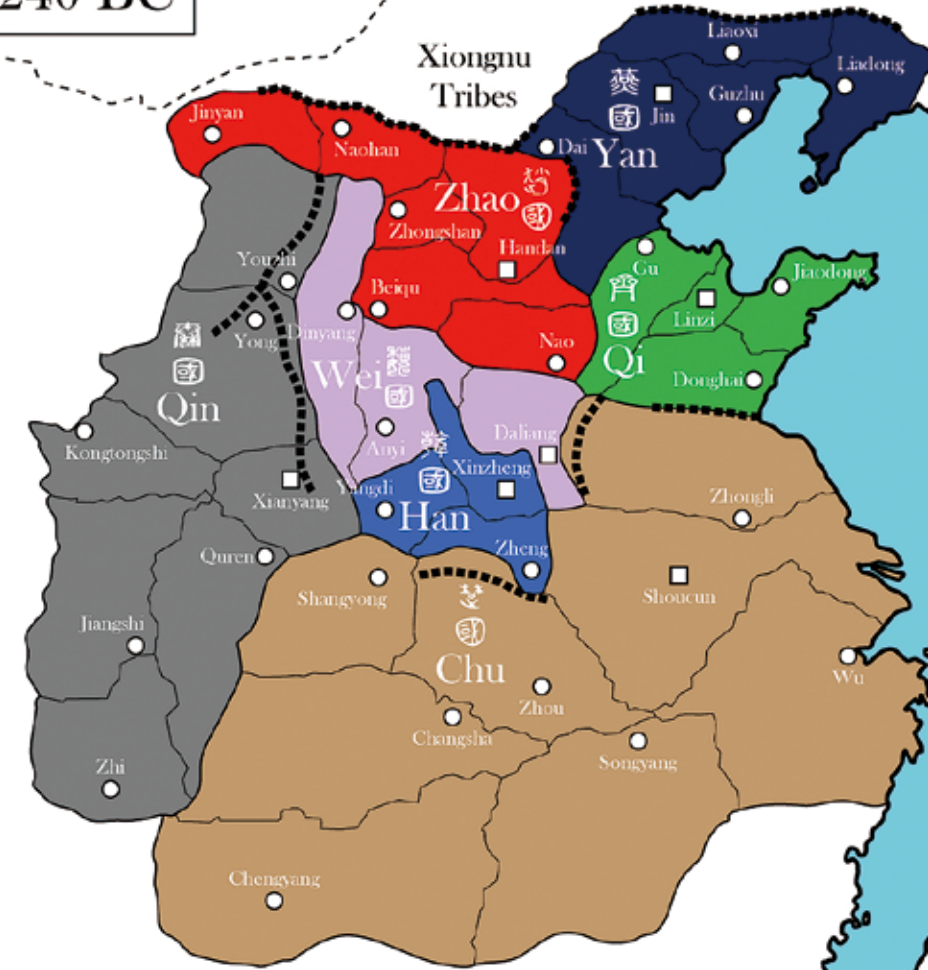
历史背景：战国时期（公元前 475 ~ 221 年），各诸侯混战不休。周天子权威没落，各国为获得土地、财富，不断展开兼并战争。4 世纪初，各国由 358 个小国，演变为七个国家，即所谓战国七雄。

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The Warring States 240 BC



- State symbols
- State capitals
- Commandery capitals
- Great walls
- Borders
- Modern-day China



故事背景

戰國時期，秦國企圖獨霸天下。

故事背景

战国时期，秦国企图独霸天下。

Story Background

During the warring states, Qin was getting more and more aggressive. The emperor wanted to invade all the neighboring states.



趙國與燕國不和，趙國準備攻打燕國。

赵国与燕国不和，赵国准备攻打燕国。

At the same time, the Zhao state and the Yan state were in conflict. Zhao wanted to declare war against Yan.



洛陽人蘇代見趙王，勸說趙惠王，他引用了鶻蚌相爭，漁人得利的故事。

蘇代說：“現在趙國要攻打燕國，雙方相持不下，元氣大傷，秦國會乘虛而入，獨收其利。”趙惠王認為蘇代有道理，便停止了這次行動。

出處“戰國策，燕策二”

洛阳人苏代见赵王，劝说赵惠王，他引用了鶻蚌相争，渔人得利的故事。

苏代说：“现在赵国要攻打燕国，双方相持不下，元气大伤，秦国会乘虚而入，独收其利。”赵惠王认为苏代有道理，便停止了这次行动。

出处“战国策，燕策二”

Suday (蘇代) from Luoyang (洛陽) hurried to Zhao to advise the king there.

He told the story of the sandpiper and the mussel. While they struggled and fought, the fisherman got both of them without any effort. A war between Zhao and Yan would exhaust the energy and resources of both states. This would give Qin an advantage to destroy them.

Zhao recognize the truth behind the story and decided not to invade Yan.



一個美好的春日，微風吹拂，陽光暖和，小河邊，浪花靜靜打在石灘上。

一个美好的春日，微风吹拂，阳光暖和，小河边，浪花静静打在石滩上。

It was a nice spring day. The soft breeze blew gently across the sandy shore of River Ye. The sun shimmered on the cool water. The wave rippled smoothly against the black pebbles.



一隻大蚌張開了堅硬的大殼，享受着溫暖的陽光。

“今天真是曬太陽的好日子。”牠說。

一只大蚌张开了坚硬的大壳，享受着温暖的阳光。

“今天真是晒太阳的好日子。”它说。

A giant mussel was washed up the shore. It opened wide the shells to enjoy the warm sun.

"What a wonderful day to have a sunbath."



一隻鷓鴣鳥剛好來到河邊覓食，正好看上了肥美的蚌肉。

“我真是交上好運了！”牠說。

一只鷓鴣鳥剛好來到河邊覓食，正好看上了肥美的蚌肉。

“我真是交上好運了！”它說。

A sandpiper was searching for food along the river bank.
It spotted the mussel with the thick, juicy morsel.

"What a lucky day to fill up my belly."



鷓鴣鳥飛快一掠而上，快如閃電。

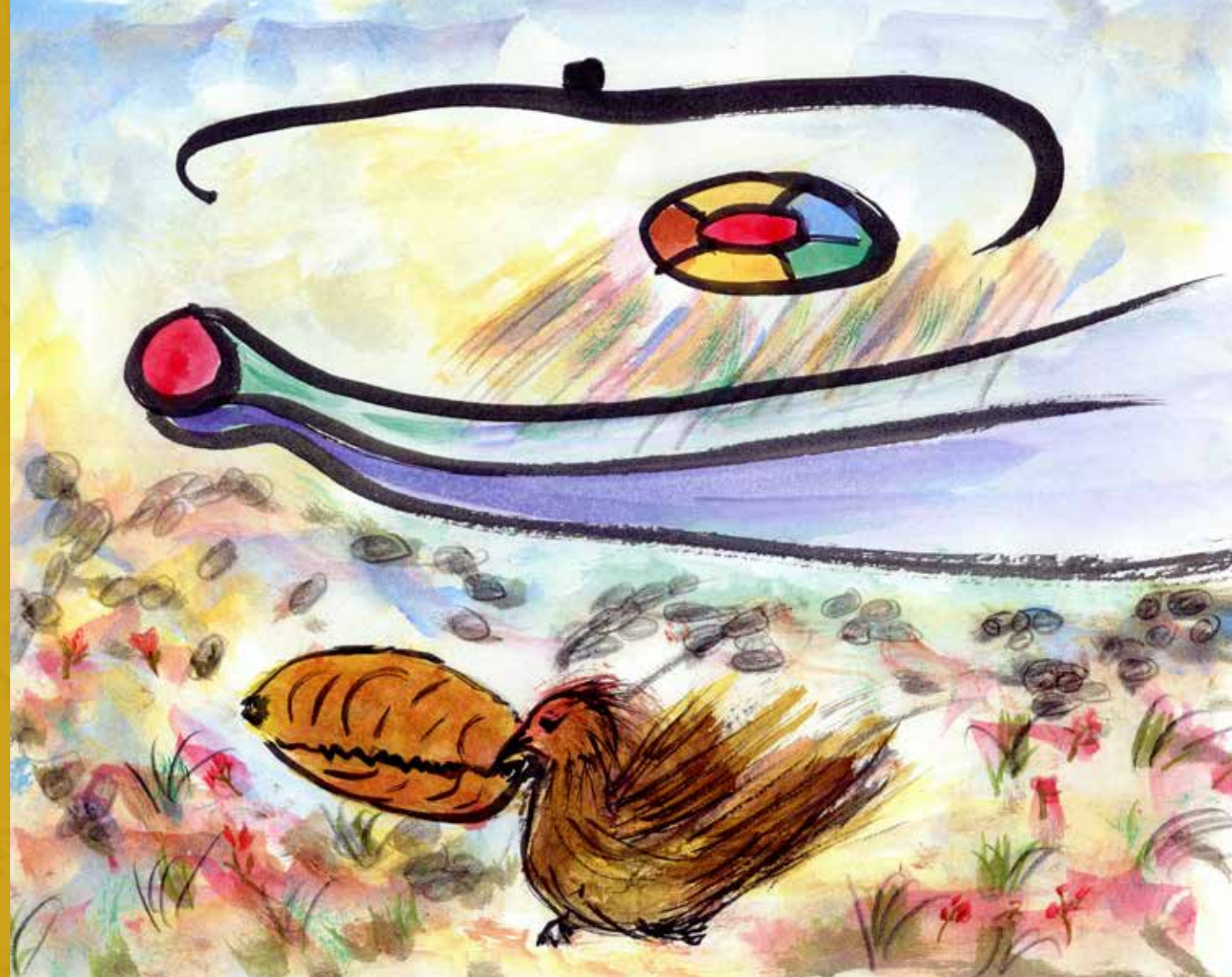
而那大蚌也連忙合上堅硬的殼，把鷓鴣鳥細長的嘴緊緊的掛着了；雙方各不相讓。

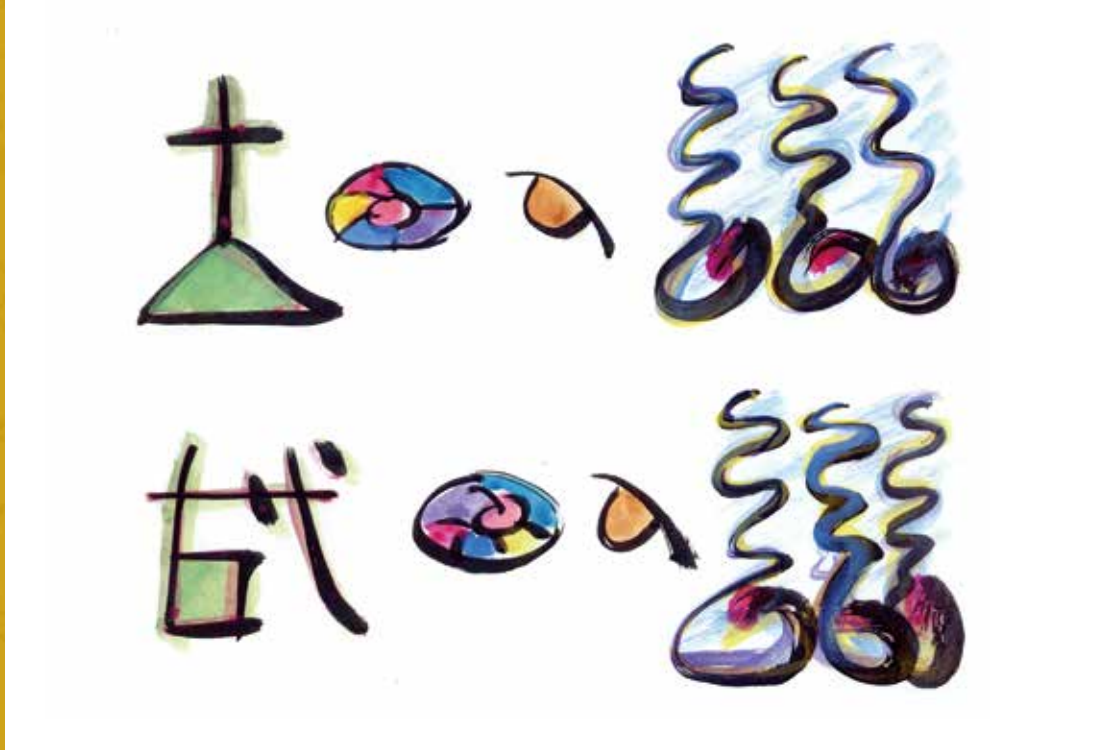
鷓鴣鳥飛快一掠而上，快如閃電。

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Quick as lightning, the sandpiper stabbed onto the morsel with its long beak. Quick as lightning, the mussel closed up its shells and locked in the long beak.

The sandpiper and the mussel held each other tight. Neither one was willing to let go. They stayed under the sun for a long, long time.





“看着吧，今天不下雨，明天不下雨，你會曬死在石灘上！” 鷓鳥說。

“看着吧，今天不下雨，明天不下雨，你会晒死在石灘上！” 鷓鳥說。

With a clenched beak, the sandpiper muttered. "Wait and see. If it will not rain today, and if it will not rain tomorrow, you will soon dry up under the sun and die right here on

18 the pebble beach."



A Sandpiper, a Mussel, and a Fisherman (A Chinese idiom) 鷓蚌之争 漁人得利 19



“看着吧，我今天不放你，明天不放你，你也會死在這裡。”大蚌說。

“看着吧，我今天不放你，明天不放你，你也會死在這裡。”大蚌說。

With tightened shells, the mussel mumbled. "Wait and see. If I do not open my shells today and if I do not open my shells tomorrow, you will soon starve to death by the river bank."



太陽下山了。

就在此時，一個漁人路過，他忙了一整天，卻是一無所獲，石灘上的鷸和蚌，正好是他意外的收穫。

太阳下山了。

就在此时，一个渔人路过，他忙了一整天，却是一无所获，石滩上的鷸和蚌，正好是他意外的收获。

The sun was setting.

A tired and hungry fisherman was heading home with empty hands. He had fished the whole day without any luck. He came upon the mussel and the sandpiper still holding on to each other.



“今晚我和家人有一頓豐富的晚餐了。”他說。

“今晚我和家人有一頓豐富的晚餐了。”他說。

The fisherman happily picked up both of them. He and his family would have a good dinner that evening.



What do we learn from this story?

Think win-win vs. conflict.

When conflicts arise, look for alternatives (Steven Covey). We cannot expect everyone to agree with us. Do not close the door to others' way of thinking or doing.

Learn to compromise and yield to conflicting situations. A lot of times, an unyielding attitude comes from our pride and ego. Think win-win is a way to live in harmony with our friends and family. In the meantime, it strengthens our bonds with our loved ones. This is also a win-win way to prevent invaders who want to take advantage of our weakened relationships.

I will...

- put my pride away
- be careful of what I do and say so I will not hurt others' feelings
- do not think I am always right
- be open about others' thinking
- always strike for harmony with loved ones and strangers

This is the first step that I can make the world a better place.

This is the path for the world to live in harmony.

Chinese Proverb Stories

Chinese idioms and proverbs, especially four-character expressions are an essential part of Chinese language and culture.

Understanding these idiomatic expressions is important for several reasons.

For young children in China, these stories are a guide-post for them in life. Children grow up learning and applying the values they learn from these stories. Proverb stories teach an important lesson in life. The emphases are work hard and aim high, respect life and human beings, honor the elderly and one's parents, foster good friendship, and most important of all, follow "the path"

道 . The goal of every proverb is to bring a message of wisdom for the readers or listeners to contemplate and apply in their own lives.

The stories usually come from a classical document or literature. Most of the time, they are about a historical event or a famous person. Many times they bring in a traditional Chinese concept. Thus learning these stories opens a world of lengthy Chinese history and rich Chinese culture.

Chinese proverbs are an important part of the Chinese language. Chinese speakers use the proverbs in their daily communication. These idiomatic expressions are an integral part of the Chinese language and have made it so rich and meaningful.

Illustrations

The pictures used in this book are taken directly from "Naxi Dongba Pictograph Dictionary" by Pinzheng, (Yunan Fine Arts Publishing House, 2004).

The Naxi is a minority tribe at the foot of Mt. Yulong. They live in the ancient city of Lijiang, Yunnan Province, Southern China.

The Dongba script dated approximately in the 12th century, though some scholars have argued for a much later date.

The Dongba pictograph is the only surviving ancient script still in use in the Naxi tribe. The Naxi people chant in praise of their nature gods in religious ceremonies.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has recognized the Dongba pictograph as part of the "1ST Memory of the World".

東巴字典 Naxi Dongba Pictograph Dictionary

	sky 天	tiān 天		river 河	hé 河
	sun 太陽	tàiyáng 太阳		road 路	lù 路
	moon 月亮	yuèliàng 月亮		rock 石	shí 石
	cloud 雲	yún 云		pebbles 小石	xiǎoshí 小石
	rain 雨	yǔ 雨		sand 沙	shā 沙
	sunset 日落	rìluò 日落		dust 塵	chén 塵
	dry in the sun 曬乾	shài gān 晒干		tree 樹	shù 樹
	hill 山	shān 山		wood / forest 樹林	shùlín 树林

	bamboo	竹	zhú 竹
	willow	垂柳	chuíliǔ 垂柳
	flower	花	huā 花
	grass	草	cǎo 草
	cooked rice	飯	fàn 飯
	soup	湯	tāng 汤
	home/house	家	jiā 家
	ancestor	祖先	zǔxiān 祖先

	dragon	龍	Lóng 龙
	palace	王宮	wángōng 王宫
	chief	首領	shǒulǐng 首领
	warrior	戰士	zhànshì 战士
	soldier with bow and arrow	射手	shèshǒu 射手
	sound a bugle	吹號	chuī hào 吹号
	pennant	旗	qí 旗
	victory	勝利	shènglì 胜利

	full	飽	Bǎo 饱
	hungry	餓	è 饿
	dead	死	sǐ 死
	happy	快樂	kuàilè 快乐
	today	今天	jīntiān 今天
	tomorrow	明天	míngtiān 明天
	no/not	不	bù 不
	open	打開	dǎkāi 打开

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