

Experiencing Chinese
100 Popular Chinese Idioms

compiled by

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1 多谢。 Duōxiè. Thanks a lot.

A: 请把那个杯子递给我。

B: 给你。

A: 多谢。

A: Qǐng bǎ nàge bēizi dì gěi wǒ.

B: Gěi nǐ.

A: Duōxiè.

A: Please pass me the cup.

B: Here you are.

A: Thanks a lot.

A: 请问去动物园怎么走？

B: 从这里坐 22 路 公交车 可以直接到。

A: 多谢。

A: Qǐngwèn qù dòngwùyuán zěnmē zǒu?

B: Cóng zhèlǐ zuò èrshí'èr lù gōngjiāochē kěyǐ zhíjiē dào.

A: Duōxiè.

A: Would you tell me how to get to the zoo, please.

B: Take bus No. 22 from here. It will take you right there.

A: Thanks a lot.

This is a commonly used expression to say thanks. You may use it to express gratitude whenever someone helps you.

Synonymous Expressions

谢谢。 Xièxie.

非常感谢。 Fēicháng gǎnxiè.

2 麻烦您了。 Máfan nín le. Thanks for the help.

A: 请问地铁站在哪儿?

B: 就在那边。

A: 谢谢，麻烦您了。

A: Qǐngwèn dìtiě zhàn zài nǎr?

B: Jiù zài nàbian.

A: Xièxie, máfan nín le.

A: Where's the subway station please?

B: It's right there.

A: Thanks for the help.

A: 你要的书我都帮你找到了。

B: 真是麻烦您了。

A: Nǐ yào de shū wǒ dōu bāng nǐ zhǎodào le.

B: Zhēn shì máfan nín le.

A: I've found the books you asked for.

B: Thanks for the help.

This expression literally means “(sorry for) troubling you”, and is used to express your gratitude to the person who takes the trouble to help you.

Synonymous Expressions

太麻烦您了。 Tài máfan nín le.

给您添麻烦了。 Gěi nín tiān máfan le.

3 辛苦了。 Xīnkǔ le. So much toil for you.

A: 昨天晚上我们工作了一个通宵。

B: 辛苦了！快回去休息吧。

A: Zuótiān wǎnshang wǒmen gōngzuò le yí gè tōngxiāo.

B: Xīnkǔ le! Kuài huíqù xiūxi ba.

A: We worked all through the night last night.

B: So much toil for you! Go back and have a rest now.

A: 老师，这个学期您辛苦了。

B: 哦，别这么说，应该的。

A: Lǎoshī, zhège xuéqī nín xīnkǔ le.

B: Ò, bié zhème shuō, yīnggāi de.

A: Teacher, it's been so much toil for you this semester.

B: It's nothing really. I've done what I'm supposed to.

This expression is used to comfort and show understanding for the person who has put great effort into something meaningful and positive.

Synonymous Expressions

受累了。 Shòulèi le. (受累 shòulèi = be put to much trouble.
e.g. Jiào nín shòulèi le. - I'm sorry to have put you
to so much trouble.)

4 哪儿的话。 Nǎr de huà. Don't mention it.

A: 谢谢你来机场送我。

B: 哪儿的话，我很高兴来为你送行。

A: Xièxie nǐ lái jīchǎng sòng wǒ.

B: Nǎr de huà, wǒ hěn gāoxìng lái wèi nǐ sòngxíng.

A: Thank you for seeing me off at the airport.

B: Don't mention it. I'm pleased to be able to say goodbye to you.

A: 谢谢你请我们吃饭。

B: 哪儿的话，我早就应该请你们吃饭了。

A: Xièxie nǐ qǐng wǒmen chīfàn.

B: Nǎr de huà, wǒ zǎo jiù yīnggāi qǐng nǐmen chīfàn le.

A: Thank you for inviting us to dinner.

B: Don't mention it. In fact, I should have invited you sooner.

This is a casual and idiomatic response to somebody saying thanks, which is often used between acquaintances and good friends.

Synonymous Expressions

别这么说。 Bié zhème shuō.

别客气。 Bié kèqi.

5 应该的。 Yīnggāi de. It's my pleasure.

A: 谢谢你的帮助。

B: 客气什么，咱们是朋友， 应该的。

A: Xièxie nǐ de bāngzhù.

B: Kèqi shénme, zánmen shì péngyou, yīnggāi de.

A: Thanks for your help.

B: You are too polite. We're friends, it was my pleasure

A: 李老师，您每个星期都给我们补习功课，我们真不知道怎么感谢您才好。

B: 应该的，别客气。

A: Lǐ lǎoshī, nín měi ge xīngqī dōu lái gěi wǒmen bǔxí gōngkè, wǒmen zhēn bù zhīdào zěnmē gǎnxiè nín cái hǎo.

B: Yīnggāi de, bié kèqi.

A: Teacher Li, every week you come to give us a lesson after school. We really don't know how to thank you

B: You're welcome. It's my pleasure.

When others say thanks to you, you may reply with this expression to show that you think it's your obligation to help them.

Synonymous Expressions

这是我应该做的。 Zhè shì wǒ yīnggāi zuò de.

6 对不起。 Duìbuqǐ. I'm sorry.

A: 对不起，我把你的书弄丢了。

B: 没关系，我再买一本。

A: Duìbuqǐ, wǒ bǎ nǐ de shū nòngdiū le.

B: Méiguānxi, wǒ zài mǎi yì běn.

A: I'm sorry, I lost your book.

B: It doesn't matter. I'll buy a new copy.

A: 我又迟到了，对不起。

B: 快去工作吧，下次注意。

A: Wǒ yòu chí dào le, duìbuqǐ.

B: Kuài qù gōngzuò ba, xià cì zhùyì.

A: I'm late again. Sorry.

B: Get to work and don't be late again.

If you ever think you've done something improper, you may use this commonly used expression to ask for forgiveness.

Synonymous Expressions

请原谅! Qǐng yuánliàng!

(e.g. Qǐng yuánliàng, dǎrǎo nín le. - Excuse me for interrupting you.)

7 真抱歉。 Zhēn bàojiàn. I'm really sorry.

A: 好久都没有跟你联系, 真抱歉!

B: 没关系, 你一直很忙吧。

A: Hǎo jiǔ dōu méiyǒu gēn nǐ liánxì, zhēn bàojiàn!

B: Méiguānxi, nǐ yìzhí hěn máng ba.

A: It's been so long since I contacted you last, I'm really sorry.

B: It's all right. You must have been really busy.

A: 今晚的宴会你能参加吗?

B: 真抱歉! 我今晚正好有事。

A: Jīnwǎn de yànhuì nǐ néng cānjiā ma?

B: Zhēn bàojiàn! Wǒ jīnwǎn zhènggǎo yǒu shì.

A: Are you coming to the dinner party tonight.

B: I'm really sorry. I have an appointment tonight.

This is an expression used to apologize for mistakes or improper behavior. Here, “真 (zhēn, really)” indicates the sincerity of the speaker.

Synonymous Expressions

真不好意思! Zhēn bù hǎo yìsi!

8 没关系。 Méiguānxi. It doesn't matter.

A: 对不起，让您久等了。

B: 没关系，我也刚到一会儿。

A: Duìbuqǐ, ràng nín jiǔ děng le.

B: Méiguānxi, wǒ yě gāng dào yíhuìr.

A: Sorry to have kept you waiting.

B: It doesn't matter. I just arrived a while ago.

A: 真抱歉，我帮不了你这个忙。

B: 没关系，我再想想办法。

A: Zhēn bàoqiàn, wǒ bāngbuliǎo nǐ zhège máng.

B: Méiguānxi, wǒ zài xiǎngxiang bànfǎ.

A: I'm really sorry, I can't help you with that.

B: It doesn't matter, I'll try to find a way out.

This is a response to apologies such as “对不起 (duìbuqǐ, I'm sorry)”, “抱歉 (bàoqiàn, I apologize)”, and “请原谅 (qǐng yuánliàng, please forgive me)”. This expression is used to show your understanding and to console the apologizer.

Synonymous Expressions

没什么。 Méishénme.

9 不送了。 Bú sòng le. I'll stop here.

A: 外面冷，您回去吧。

B: 好吧，那我就**不送了**。

A: Wàimian lěng, nín huíqù ba.

B: Hǎo ba, nà wǒ jiù **bú sòng le**.

A: It's cold outside, please go back.

B: Alright, I'll stop here.

A: 这边的路我很熟，你们就别送我了。

B: 那好，我们**不送了**，您走好。

A: Zhèbian de lù wǒ hěn shú, nǐmen jiù bié sòng wǒ le.

B: Nà hǎo, wǒmen **bú sòng le**, nín zǒu hǎo.

A: I'm quite familiar with the way. You don't have to accompany me any further.

B: OK, we'll stop here. Take care.

This is a casual expression used by hosts when they see a guest off. You may use this phrase if you do not intend to accompany your guest further from your home.

Synonymous Expressions

不远送了。 Bù yuǎn sòng le.

就送到这儿了。 Jiù sòng dào zhèr le.

10 慢走！ Mǎn zǒu! Take care!

A: 我要回家了。

B: 好吧， 那你慢走， 我就不送了。

A: Wǒ yào huíjiā le.

B: Hǎo ba, nà nǐ mǎn zǒu, wǒ jiù bú sòng le.

A: I have to go home now.

B: Alright, take care. I'll stop here.

A: 别送了， 回去吧。

B: 好， 你慢走， 有空儿再来。

A: Bié sòng le, huíqù ba.

B: Hǎo, nǐ mǎn zǒu, yǒu kòngzǐ zài lái.

A: Please stop here and go back.

B: OK. Come again when you're free. Take care.

This expression literally means “walk slowly”, which indicates that the host wishes the guest “bon voyage”.

Synonymous Expressions

走好。 Zǒu hǎo.

请慢走。 Qǐng mǎn zǒu.

11 别送了。 Bié sòng le. There's no need to
go any further.

A: 太晚了，你回去吧， 别送了。

B: 好吧， 你走好。

A: Tài wǎn le, nǐ huíqù ba, bié sòng le.

B: Hǎo ba, nǐ zǒu hǎo.

A: It's too late now, just go back please. There's no need to go any further.

B: Alright, take care.

A: 别送了，都是朋友，不用客气。

B: 那我就不送了，慢走。

A: Bié sòng le, dōu shì péngyou, búyòng kèqi.

B: Nà wǒ jiù bú sòng le, màn zǒu.

A: There's no need to go any further. We're friends, you don't have to be so
courteous.

B: I'll stop here then. Take care.

This expression is used by a guest. In China, some hosts have the custom of
accompanying guests out the door or farther when they leave to show respect and
friendliness.

Synonymous Expressions

回去吧。 Huíqù ba.

12 留步吧。 Liúbù ba. Please stop here.

A: 我不送你了，有空儿常来我家玩儿。

B: 留步吧，我会的。

A: Wǒ bú sòng nǐ le, yǒu kòng r cháng lái wǒ jiā wánr.

B: Liúbù ba, wǒ huì de.

A: I'll say goodbye here. Come again when you have time

B: Please stop here. I'll surely come again

A: 你一定要照顾好自己。

B: 我知道了，您留步吧。

A: Nǐ yídìng yào zhàogù hǎo zìjǐ.

B: Wǒ zhīdào le, nín liúbù ba.

A: Do take good care of yourself.

B: I will. Please stop here.

This expression is similar to “别送了 (bié sòng le, there's no need to go any further)” or “回去吧 (huíqù ba, please go back)”, but a little bit more formal.

Synonymous Expressions

请留步。 Qǐng liúbù.

13 失陪了。 Shīpéi le. Excuse me, I have to go
now.

A: 公司有急事，我得马上回去。对不起，失陪了。

B: 没关系。

A: Gōngsī yǒu jí shì, wǒ děi mǎshàng huíqù. Duìbuqǐ, shīpéi le.

B: Méiguānxi.

A: Something urgent has come up at the company, I have to go back right away.

Sorry, I have to go

B: It doesn't matter.

A: 你们谈吧，我还有别的事情，要先走了。失陪了。

B: 好，那你走吧。

A: Nǐmen tán ba, wǒ hái yǒu bié de shìqing, yào xiān zǒu le. Shīpéi le.

B: Hǎo, nà nǐ zǒu ba.

A: Excuse me, I have to go now. I have something else to attend to. Please continue.

B: OK, see you.

This is a polite expression used when you have to leave your friends at gatherings.

Synonymous Expressions

对不起，我不能陪你们了。

Duìbuqǐ, wǒ bù néng péi nǐmen le.

14 干得好！

Gàn de hǎo!

Well done!

A: 今天这场足球赛黄洪一个人就踢进了三个球。

B: 干得好！

A: Jīntiān zhè chǎng zúqiú sài Huáng Hóng yí ge rén jiù tījìn le sān ge qiú.

B: Gàn de hǎo!

A: In today's football match, Huang Hong alone scored three goals.

B: Well done!

A: 那个小偷在偷自行车的时候，被我抓住了，我把他教训了一顿。

B: 干得好！

A: Nàge xiǎotōu zài tōu zìxíngchē de shíhou, bèi wǒ zhuāzhù le, wǒ bǎ tā jiàoxùn le yí dùn.

B: Gàn de hǎo!

A: I caught a thief stealing a bike and gave him a dressing down.

B: Well done!

This expression is used to give praise or show admiration for good deeds.

Synonymous Expressions

干得不错！ Gàn de búcuò!

好样儿的！ Hǎoyàngde!

15 酷毙了! Kù bì le! Cool!

A: 你看那个女孩的发型多新潮。

B: 哇塞! 酷毙了!

A: Nǐ kàn nàge nǚhái de fàxíng duō xīncháo.

B: Wā Sài! Kù bì le!

A: Look at that girl's hairstyle, so chic.

B: Wow! Cool!

A: 你的太阳镜是在哪儿买的? 酷毙了。

B: 是吗? 你也买一个吧。

A: Nǐ de tàiyángjìng shì zài nǎr mǎi de? Kù bì le.

B: Shì ma? Nǐ yě mǎi yí ge ba.

A: Where did you buy your sunglasses? They're cool.

B: Really? You can buy a pair too.

The expression literally means “cool to the point of death”. The character “酷 (kù)” is a transliteration of the English word “cool”. Young people often use this expression to pay a compliment when they think someone or something is very modern or fashionable.

Synonymous Expressions

真酷! Zhēn kù!

太酷了! Tài kù le!

16 太棒了！

Tài bàng le!

Great!

A: 你尝尝我做的菜，味道怎么样？

B: 嗯，太棒了，味道好极了。

A: Nǐ chángchang wǒ zuò de cài, wèidào zěnmeyàng?

B: Ng, tài bàng le, wèidào hǎo jí le.

A: Taste the dish I cooked. How is it?

B: Eh, great! It tastes fabulous.

A: 这本书怎么样？

B: 太棒了，你也拿去看看吧。

A: Zhè běn shū zěnmeyàng?

B: Tài bàng le, nǐ yě náqù kànkān ba.

A: What do you think of this book?

B: Great! Just take it and have a look.

The expression is commonly used by the northerners in China to praise anything that is admired: a dish, a book, a performance or a behavior.

Synonymous Expressions

棒极了！ Bàng jí le!

真棒！ Zhēn bàng!

17 真了不起!

Zhēn liǎobuqǐ!

It's admirable!

A: 黎明这次考试又是全班第一。

B: 真了不起! 他太聪明了。

A: Lí Míng zhè cì kǎoshì yòu shì quán bān dìyī?

B: Zhēn liǎobuqǐ! Tā tài cōngmíng le.

A: Li Ming ranks first again in the examination this time.

B: Admirable! He's so smart.

A: 我哥哥炒股票, 一年就赚了五十万!

B: 你哥哥真了不起!。

A: Wǒ gēge chǎo gǔpiào, yì nián jiù zhuàn le wǔshí wàn.

B: Nǐ gēge zhēn liǎobuqǐ!

A: My brother speculated in the stock market and made half a million dollars in a year!

B: Your brother is admirable.

This is an expression of admiration for somebody's extraordinary conduct in words or deeds.

Synonymous Expressions

真行! Zhēn xíng!

真不得了! Zhēn bùdéliǎo!

18 真有两下子。 Zhēn yǒu liǎngxiàzi.

You're so capable.

A: 这是我自己做的衣服。

B: 看不出来，你还真有两下子。

A: Zhè shì wǒ zìjǐ zuò de yīfu.

B: Kàn bu chūlái, nǐ hái zhēn yǒu liǎngxiàzi.

A: I made the clothes myself.

B: I can't believe it. You're so capable.

A: 张飞已经把电脑修好了。

B: 他真有两下子，我修了两天都没修好。

A: Zhāng Fēi yǐjīng bǎ diànnǎo xiūhǎo le.

B: Tā zhēn yǒu liǎngxiàzi, wǒ xiū le liǎng tiān dōu méi xiūhǎo.

A: Zhang Fei has fixed the computer.

B: He's so capable. I tried to fix it for two days without success.

This expression is used to compliment someone who you think is capable and skilful.

Synonymous Expressions

真有本事。 Zhēn yǒu běnshi.

真不简单。 Zhēn bù jiǎndān.

19 不太好! Bú tài hǎo! Not too good!

A: 最近生意怎么样?

B: 不太好! 很多货都卖不出去。

A: Zuìjìn shēngyì zěnmeyàng?

B: Bú tài hǎo! Hěn duō huò dōu mài bu chūqù.

A: How is your business lately?

B: Not too good! There are many goods in stock that can't be sold.

A: 你妈妈身体怎么样?

B: 不太好, 每天都得吃药。

A: Nǐ māma shēntǐ zěnmeyàng?

B: Bú tài hǎo, měitiān dōu děi chī yào.

A: How is your mother?

B: Not too good! She has to take medicine every day.

The Chinese and English versions of the expression are almost equivalent. Inserting “太 (tài – too)” between “不 (bù - not)” and “好 (hǎo – good)” makes the tone more mild and polite.

Synonymous Expressions

不怎么好。 Bù zěnmě hǎo.

不太理想。 Bú tài lǐxiǎng.

20 就那么回事儿。 Jiù nàme huí shìr.

(It's) nothing special.

A: 那个新建的游乐园你去了吗? 感觉如何?

B: 去了。就那么回事儿。

A: Nàge xīn jiàn de yóulèyuán nǐ qù le ma? Gǎnjué rúhé?

B: Qù le. Jiù nàme huí shìr.

A: Did you go to the new amusement park? How is it?

B: I did. It's nothing special.

A: 你儿子最近学习怎么样了?

B: 就那么回事儿, 英语经常不及格。

A: Nǐ érzi zuìjìn xuéxí zěnmeyàng le?

B: Jiù nàme huí shìr, Yīngyǔ jīngcháng bù jígé.

A: How is your son getting on with his studies?

B: Nothing special. He often fails his English tests.

You may use this expression to express your dissatisfaction if you think something is humdrum or mediocre. The literal meaning of the expression is “it’s just like that”. The tone is comparatively strong.

Synonymous Expressions

不怎么样。 Bù zěnmeyàng.

21 还是老洋子。 Háishi lǎo yàngzi.

Still the same old story.

A: 你和婆婆的关系怎么样了?

B: 还是老洋子, 没有什么变化。

A: Nǐ hé pópo de guānxi zěnmeyàng le?

B: Háishi lǎo yàngzi, méiyǒu shénme biànhuà.

A: How are you getting on with your mother-in-law?

B: It's still the same old story. Nothing changes.

A: 你爸爸的病好了没?

B: 还是老洋子。

A: Nǐ bàba de bìng hǎo le méi?

B: Háishi lǎo yàngzi.

A: How is your father's illness?

B: It's still the same old story.

You use this expression to show your dissatisfaction or anxiety when someone or the state of affairs are not progressing or changing.

Synonymous Expressions

没什么变化。 Méi shénme biànhuà.

22 还行。 Hái xíng. Acceptable.

A: 你觉得中央电视台的节目怎么样?

B: 还行, 有的节目挺好的。

A: Nǐ juéde Zhōngyāng Diànshìtái de jiémù zěnmeyàng?

B: Hái xíng, yǒude jiémù ting hǎo de.

A: What do you think of CCTV's programs?

B: Acceptable. There are some good programs

A: 你看这套房子怎么样?

B: 还行, 位置和环境都还可以。

A: Nǐ kàn zhè tào fángzi zěnmeyang?

B: Hái xíng, wèizhì hé huánjìng dōu hái kěyǐ.

A: What do you think of the house?

B: Acceptable. The location and environment are both alright.

If you think something is generally adequate, though not without some deficiencies, use this expression.

Synonymous Expressions

还可以。 Hái kěyǐ.

还不错。 Hái búcuò.

23 马马虎虎。 Mǎmǎhūhū. Passable.

A: 你觉得这篇论文怎么样?

B: 马马虎虎吧。

A: Nǐ juéde zhè piān lùnwén zěnmeyàng?

B: Mǎmǎhūhū ba.

A: What do you think of the thesis?

B: Just passable.

A: 你们公司今年的汽车销售量怎么样?

B: 马马虎虎, 还过得去。

A: Nǐmen gōngsī jīnnián de xiāoshòuliàng zěnmeyàng?

B: Mǎmǎhūhū, hái guòdeqù.

A: How are your company's auto sales this year?

B: Passable, and acceptable.

Use this expression to evaluate someone or something that is neither very good nor very bad.

Synonymous Expressions

一般般。 Yìbānbān.

凑合。 Còuhe.

24 错不了!

Cuòbuliǎo!

It can't be

wrong!

A: 这是黄校长的电话吗?

B: 错不了, 我昨天还打过呢。

A: Zhè shì Huáng xiàozhǎng de diànhuà ma?

B: Cuòbuliǎo, wǒ zuótiān hái dǎguo ne.

A: Is this the telephone number of President Huang?

B: It can't be wrong. I dialed it just yesterday.

A: 小刘家是住这个楼吗?

B: 错不了, 我来过他家。

A: Xiǎo Liú jiā shì zhù zhège lóu ma?

B: Cuòbuliǎo, wǒ lái guo tā jiā.

A: Is Xiao Liu's home in this building?

B: It can't be wrong. I visited his home once

Use this expression to reassure someone who somewhat doubts what you said or did.

Synonymous Expressions

没错。 Méi cuò.

不会错的。 Bú huì cuò de.

25 没问题。 Méi wèntí. No problem.

A: 已经十点了，咱们能赶上末班车吗？

B: 没问题。

A: Yǐjīng shí diǎn le, zánmen néng gǎnshang mòbānchē ma?

B: Méi wèntí.

A: It's ten o'clock already. Can we catch the last bus?

B: No problem.

A: 你觉得今天晚上的球赛咱们队能赢吗？

B: 没问题，肯定能赢。

A: Nǐ juéde jīntiān wǎnshang de qiúsài zánmen duì néng yíng ma?

B: Méi wèntí, kěndìng néng yíng.

A: Do you think our team will win the match tonight?

B: No problem. We will surely win.

When someone feels worried or lacks confidence in what you're doing, you can use this expression to reassure him. At the same time, it implies a promise.

Synonymous Expressions

问题不大。 Wèntí bú dà.

26 那当然! Nà dāngrán! Of course!

A: 你太太让你看世界杯吗?

B: 那当然! 她不让我看, 我也要看。

A: Nǐ tàitai ràng nǐ kàn shìjièbēi ma?

B: Nà dāngrán! Tā bú ràng wǒ kàn, wǒ yě yào kàn.

A: Does your wife allow you to watch the World Cup?

B: Of course! I'd watch it anyway, even if she disagrees.

A: 你是不是也喜欢体育运动?

B: 那当然, 我每天都游泳。

A: Nǐ shìbúshì yě xǐhuan tǐyù yùndòng?

B: Nà dāngrán, wǒ měitiān dōu yóuyóǒng.

A: Do you love sports too?

B: Of course, I swim every day.

This is an affirmative and confident expression that is used to dispel the doubts of others when you think you have no problem in doing something.

Synonymous Expressions

当然! Dāngrán!

当然啦! Dāngrán la!

27 那还用说。 Nà hái yòng shuō. Absolutely!

A: 当飞行员身体素质一定要好。

B: 那还用说。

A: Dāng fēixíngyuán shēntǐ sùzhì yíding yào hǎo.

B: Nà hái yòng shuō.

A: You need a good physique to become a pilot.

B: Absolutely.

A: 你还能记得我们上次遇险的地方吗?

B: 那还用说, 我一辈子都忘不了。

A: Nǐ hái néng jìde wǒmen shàng cì yùxiǎn de dìfang ma?

B: Nà hái yòng shuō, wǒ yíběizi dōu wàngbuliǎo.

A: Do you still remember the place where we had that emergency?

B: Absolutely, I'll never forget it.

When someone expresses doubt about something you are proud of because they lack full knowledge, you can respond with this expression. It has a sense of pride, confidence, even complacency.

Synonymous Expressions

那是。 Nà shì.

28 不可能。 Bù kěnéng. It's impossible

A: 听说小王和小陈离婚了。

B: 不可能，昨天我还看见他们逛商场呢。

A: Tīngshuō Xiǎo Wáng hé Xiǎo Chén líhūn le.

B: Bù kěnéng, zuótiān wǒ hái kànjiàn tāmen guàng shāngchǎng ne.

A: I hear Xiao Wang and Xiao Chen got divorced.

B: It's impossible. I saw them window-shopping only yesterday.

A: 你们两个好好聊聊，矛盾就可能解决了。

B: 不可能，我们没什么好说的了。

A: Nǐmen liǎng ge hǎohǎo liáoliao, máodùn jiù kěnéng jiějué le.

B: Bù kěnéng, wǒmen méi shénme hǎo shuō de le.

A: You two have a good talk and maybe the conflict will be resolved.

B: It's impossible. We have nothing to say to each other.

Use this expression when you think the odds of something happening are very low.

Synonymous Expressions

不会的。 Bú huì de.

29 鬼知道! Guǐ zhīdào! Only the devil
knows!

A: 不知道明天天气怎么样。

B: 鬼知道! 这几天天气老变, 一会儿晴, 一会儿阴。

A: Bù zhīdào míngtiān tiānqì zěnmeyàng.

B: Guǐ zhīdào! Zhè jǐ tiān tiānqì lǎo biàn, yíhuìr qíng, yíhuìr yīn.

A: Don't know what the weather will be tomorrow.

B: Only the devil knows! The weather is always changing these days: cloudless one hour and overcast the next.

A: 老板什么时候给我们加薪呀?

B: 鬼知道!

A: Lǎobǎn shénme shíhòu gěi wǒmen jiā xīn ya?

B: Guǐ zhīdào!

A: When will the boss give us a pay rise?

B: Only the devil knows.

This expression is one of denial that means: "I don't know". It expresses the idea that you are unable to understand, are dissatisfied, or don't care about something. It conveys a tone of dissatisfaction and complaint.

Synonymous Expressions

谁知道。 Shéi zhīdào.

天知道。 Tiān zhīdào.

30 谁说的? Shéi shuō de? Who said that?

A: 听说你要去国外发展?

B: 谁说的? 我根本就没这个想法。

A: Tīngshuō nǐ yào qù guówài fāzhǎn?

B: Shéi shuō de? Wǒ gēnběn jiù méi zhège xiǎngfǎ.

A: I hear you're going abroad for personal development.

B: Who said that? I've never had that idea at all.

A: 你们公司不是经营得不错吗?

B: 谁说的? 都快倒闭了。

A: Nǐmen gōngsī bú jīngyíng de búcuò ma?

B: Shéi shuō de? Dōu kuài dǎobì le.

A: Your company has been running well, hasn't it?

B: Who said that? It's going bankrupt.

This is a way of expressing denial. It means: “不对 (bú duì - that's not right)” or “不是这样的 (bú shì zhè yàng de – it's not like that)”. Sometimes it conveys a sense of resentment.

Synonymous Expressions

没有这回事儿。 Méiyǒu zhè huí shìr.

31 想得美! Xiǎng de měi! In your dreams!

A: 明年咱们也买辆车吧?

B: 想得美! 咱们哪有钱呀。

A: Míngnián zánmen yě mǎi liàng chē ba?

B: Xiǎng de měi! Zánmen nǎ yǒu qián ya!

A: Shall we buy a car next year?

B: In your dreams! We don't have the money.

A: 一个星期要是只工作三天多好啊!

B: 想得美! 快干活吧。

A: Yí ge xīngqī yàoshi zhǐ gōngzuò sān tiān duō hǎo a!

B: Xiǎng de měi! Kuài gàn huó ba.

A: How nice it would be if we only had to work three days a week!

B: In your dreams! Just get on with your work.

The literal meaning of the Chinese expression is “(you) think so beautifully (that your idea can never be realized)”. It is used to ridicule someone whose expectation is too high or whose ideas are unrealistic. It shows that you are strongly opposed to someone's ideas or suggestions and want them to give up their position. Women usually use it.

Synonymous Expressions

做梦! Zuòmèng!

不可能! Bù kěnéng!

32 好说。 Hǎoshuō. Alright.

A: 把你的自行车借给我用用行吗?

B: 好说, 这是车钥匙, 给你。

A: Bǎ nǐ de zìxíngchē jiè gěi wǒ yòngyong xíng ma?

B: Hǎoshuō, zhè shì chē yàoshi, gěi nǐ.

A: Can I borrow your bicycle?

B: Alright. Here's the key.

A: 我想学打字, 你能教教我吗?

B: 好说。你打算什么时候开始学?

A: Wǒ xiǎng xué dǎzì, nǐ néng jiāojiào wǒ ma?

B: Hǎoshuō. Nǐ dǎsuàn shénme shíhou kāishǐ xué?

A: I want to learn to type. Can you show me how?

B: Alright. When do you want to start?

The literal meaning is close to “(I’m) easy to be persuaded”, and is used as a light-hearted expression of agreement. When you say this, you show that you agree to someone’s request and want to accede to the request.

Synonymous Expressions

没的说。 Méi de shuō.

没说的。 Méi shuō de.

33 好主意! Hǎo zhǔyi! Good idea!

A: 咱们开个网吧吧, 现在上网的人很多, 开网吧一定能挣钱。

B: 好主意!

A: Zánmen kāi ge wǎngbā ba, xiànzài shàngwǎng de rén hěn duō, kāi wǎngbā yídìng néng zhèngqián.

B: Hǎo zhǔyi!

A: Let's open an internet bar. I'm sure we can make money, because there are so many web-surfers nowadays.

B: Good idea!

A: 这次旅游咱们坐火车去, 坐飞机回来, 怎么样?

B: 好主意! 这样又不耽误时间, 又便宜。

A: Zhè cì lǚyóu zánmen zuò huǒchē qù, zuò fēijī huílái, zěnmeyàng?

B: Hǎo zhǔyi! Zhèyàng yòu bù dānwù shíjiān, yòu piányi.

A: For this trip how about we go there by train and come back by plane?

B: Good idea! That way we can save both time and money.

Use this expression to show admiration for a good idea or suggestion.

Synonymous Expressions

太好了! Tài hǎo le!

好办法! Hǎo bànfǎ!

好极了! Hǎojí le!

34 行。 Xíng. OK.

A: 咱们买一台 DVD 机吧, 在家里看电影方便。

B: 行, 你买吧。

A: Zánmen mǎi yì tái DVD jī ba, zài jiālǐ kàn diànyǐng fāngbiàn.

B: Xíng, nǐ mǎi ba.

A: Let's buy a DVD player so we can watch movies at home.

B: OK, go ahead.

A: 咱们明天去爬山吧。

B: 行, 几点出发?

A: Zánmen míngtiān qù páshān ba.

B: Xíng, jǐ diǎn chūfā?

A: Shall we go hiking in the mountains tomorrow?

B: OK, when shall we set out?

This is a simple and idiomatic way of expressing agreement. If you think someone's request or suggestion is reasonable, you can use this expression to show your agreement.

Synonymous Expressions

好。 Hǎo.

好吧。 Hǎo ba.

可以。 Kěyǐ.

35 有道理！

Yǒu dào lǐ!

You're right.

A: 你必须坚持做美容皮肤才会好。

B: 有道理。

A: Nǐ bìxū jiānchí zuò měiróng pí fū cái huì hǎo.

B: Yǒu dào lǐ.

A: You must have continuous beauty treatments in order to have good looking skin.

B: You're right.

A: 早睡早起身体好。

B: 嗯，这话有道理。

A: Zǎo shuì zǎo qǐ shēn tǐ hǎo.

B: Ng, zhè huà yǒu dào lǐ.

A: Early to bed and early to rise makes a person healthy, wealthy, and wise.

B: Eh, you're right.

This expression means that you agree with others' suggestions or ideas, but without commitment.

Synonymous Expressions

说的对！

Shuō de duì!

36 胡说八道! Húshuō bā dào! Nonsense!

A: 听说你不想参加 HSK 考试了。

B: 胡说八道! 谁说的?

A: Tīngshuō nǐ bù xiǎng cānjiā HSK kǎoshì le.

B: Húshuō bā dào! Shéi shuō de?

A: I hear you don't want to take the HSK test.

B: Nonsense! Who said that?

A: 小刘说搞传销可以挣大钱。

B: 胡说八道! 那可是违法的。

A: Xiǎo Liú shuō gǎo chuánxiāo kěyǐ zhèng dà qián.

B: Húshuō bā dào! Nà kěshì wéifǎ de.

A: Xiao Liu said you can make big money by pyramid selling.

B: Nonsense! That's illegal.

This is an expression showing strong opposition. Use it with caution: it is comparatively rude, unfriendly, and nearly abusive.

Synonymous Expressions

胡说! Hú shuō!

胡扯! Húchě!

37 话不能这么说。 Huà bù néng zhème shuō.

You can't be that conclusive.

A: 我觉得买保险一点儿用都没有。

B: 话不能这么说，发生意外的时候就有用了。

A: Wǒ juéde mǎi bǎoxiǎn yìdiǎnr yòng dōu méiyǒu.

B: Huà bù néng zhème shuō, fāshēng yìwài de shíhou jiù yǒu yòng le.

A: I think insurance is simply useless.

B: You can't be that conclusive. It will be useful if an accident happens.

A: 电子游戏对孩子一点儿好处都没有。

B: 话不能这么说，玩儿电子游戏也能锻炼孩子的反应能力。

A: Diànzǐ yóuxì duì háizi yìdiǎnr hǎochù dōu méiyǒu.

B: Huà bù néng zhème shuō, wánr diànzǐ yóuxì yě néng duànliàn háizi de fǎnyìng nénglì.

A: Computer games can never do children any good.

B: You can't be that conclusive. Computer games can surely strengthen children's reflexes.

Use this roundabout expression when you disagree with someone's opinion, but don't want to embarrass him.

Synonymous Expressions

也不尽然。 Yě bújìnrán.

不尽然吧。 Bújìnrán ba.

38 没门儿!

Méiménr!

No way!

A: 今天你做饭, 我看电视剧去。

B: 没门儿! 我还想看电视剧呢。

A: Jīntiān nǐ zuòfàn, wǒ kàn diànshìjù qù.

B: Méiménr! Wǒ hái xiǎng kàn diànshìjù ne.

A: You cook today and I'll watch the sitcoms.

B: No way! I want to watch the sitcoms too.

A: 咱俩老吵架, 我看离婚算了。

B: 想跟我离婚, 没门儿!。

A: Zán liǎ lǎo chǎojià, wǒ kàn líhūn suàn le.

B: Xiǎng gēn wǒ líhūn, méiménr!

A: We quarrel too much. We'd better divorce.

B: You want to divorce me? No way!

This is an abrupt and strong rejection to a request or suggestion made by someone else. The tone is very strong.

Synonymous Expressions

做梦! Zuòmèng!

休想! Xiūxiǎng!

39 那哪行啊！ Nà nǎ xíng a! That's

unacceptable!

A: 我借给你的钱就不用还了。

B: 那哪行啊，好借好还再借不难嘛。

A: Wǒ jiè gěi nǐ de qián jiù búyòng huán le.

B: Nà nǎ xíng a, hǎo jiè hǎo huán zài jiè bù nán ma.

A: You don't have to repay the money I lent you.

B: That's unacceptable. As the saying goes: repay the borrowed money duly and you may borrow again easily.

A: 你们先回去吧，剩下的事情我来做吧。

B: 那哪行啊，还是咱们一起做完再走吧。

A: Nǐmen xiān huíqù ba, shèngxià de shìqing wǒ lái zuò ba.

B: Nà nǎ xíng a, háishi zánmen yìqǐ zuò wán zài zǒu ba.

A: You go back first, I'll finish the rest.

B: That's unacceptable! Let's finish it together and then go.

This is an expression of disagreement or opposition to someone's way of saying or doing something. You can also simply say: “不行 (bù xíng)”.

Synonymous Expressions

那不行。 Nà bù xíng.

那怎么行啊！ Nà zěnmé xíng a!

40 你有病呀 ?!

Nǐ yǒu bìng ya?!

Are you

nuts?

A: 我把这个月的工资全买彩票了。

B: 你有病呀?! 那咱们吃什么呀?

A: Wǒ bǎ zhège yuè de gōngzī quán mǎi cǎipiào le.

B: Nǐ yǒu bìng ya ?! Nà zánmen chī shénme ya?

A: I've spent all of this month's salary buying lottery tickets.

B: Are you nuts?! Then what do we live off?

A: 你看，我今天上街买了五件衣服。

B: 你有病呀?! 一下子买这么多衣服穿得完吗?

A: Nǐ kàn, wǒ jīntiān shàng jiē mǎi le wǔ jiàn yīfu.

B: Nǐ yǒu bìng ya ?! Yí xià zǐ mǎi zhème duō yīfu chuān de wán ma?

A: Look! I bought 5 pieces of clothing today.

B: Are you nuts?! Can you wear so many clothes?

This is an expression of scolding used to rebuke somebody for doing something unreasonable or something that should not be done.

Synonymous Expressions

有毛病呀你!

Yǒu máobìng ya nǐ!

41 别担心。 Bié dānxīn. Don't worry.

A: 我这病怕是好不了了。

B: 别担心，会好的。

A: Wǒ zhè bìng pà shì hǎobuliǎo le.

B: Bié dānxīn, huì hǎo de.

A: I'm afraid I can never recover from this illness.

B: Don't worry, you'll recover.

A: 你一个人在国外生活行吗？

B: 没问题，别担心。

A: Nǐ yí ge rén zài guówài shēnghuó xíng ma?

B: Méi wèntí, bié dānxīn.

A: Is it alright for you to live alone in a foreign land?

B: No problem. Don't worry.

This is an expression that is used to comfort your friend who is worried about someone or something. Usually you add a reassuring reason before or after the expression.

Synonymous Expressions

放心吧。 Fàngxīn ba.

放心。 Fàngxīn.

42 别急！ Bié jí ! Be patient!

A: 咱们什么时候结婚？

B: 别急！等有房子再说。

A: Zánmen shénme shíhou jiéhūn?

B: Bié jí ! Děng yǒu fángzi zài shuō.

A: When will we get married?

B: Be patient! We'll wait until we have a house.

A: 火车就要开了，他怎么还没来呀？

B: 别急！再等等。

A: Huǒchē jiù yào kāi le, tā zěnméi hái méi lái ya?

B: Bié jí ! Zài děngdeng.

A: The train is about to leave. How come he hasn't arrived yet?

B: Be patient! Just wait a while.

Use this expression to comfort someone who is getting impatient.

Synonymous Expressions

急什么。 Jí shénme.

着什么急。 Zháo shénme jí.

43 想开点儿。 Xiǎng kāi diǎnr. Look on the
bright side.

A: 我身体不好，太太又失业了，这日子可怎么过呀？

B: 想开点儿，一切都会好起来的。

A: Wǒ shēntǐ bù hǎo, tàitai yòu shīyè le, zhè rìzi kě zěnmē guò ya?

B: Xiǎng kāi diǎnr, yíqiè dōu huì hǎoqǐlái de.

A: My health isn't good, and my wife is out of work again. How can I go on?

B: Look on the bright side. Everything will turn out fine.

A: 我跟经理一点儿也合不来，真不想在他手下干了。

B: 想开点儿，领导都这样。

A: Wǒ gēn jīnglǐ yídiǎnr yě hébulái, zhēn bù xiǎng zài tā shǒu xià gàn le.

B: Xiǎng kāi diǎnr, lǐngdǎo dōu zhèyàng.

A: I can never get along with the manager. I really don't want to work under him any more.

B: Look on the bright side; and besides, all superiors are alike.

When someone is caught up in difficulties, is in low spirits, looks on the dark side, feels disappointed, and is even desperate, use this expression to console him, open his mind to look at things from a different point of view, and relax his state of mind.

Synonymous Expressions

别老想不开。 Bié lǎo xiǎngbukāi.

44 没事儿。 Méishìr. It's nothing.

A: 我存在电脑里的文件都找不到了, 急死我了!

B: 没事儿, 我来帮你看看。

A: Wǒ cún zài diànnǎo lǐ de wénjiàn dōu zhǎobudào le, jí sǐ wǒ le!

B: Méishìr, wǒ lái bāng nǐ kànkàn.

A: I can't find my files in the computer. I'm feeling very anxious.

B: It's nothing. Let me help you with it.

A: 我刚到北京, 有些水土不服。

B: 没事儿, 过几天就好了。

A: Wǒ gāng dào Běijīng, yǒu xiē shuǐtǔ bùfú.

B: Méishìr, guò jǐ tiān jiù hǎo le.

A: I just arrived in Beijing, and I'm feeling a bit under the weather.

B: It's nothing, you'll be fine in a few days.

This is a friendly and idiomatic expression used to comfort an anxious person.

Synonymous Expressions

没什么。 Méishénme.

45 破财免灾。 Pòcái miǎnzāi. A loss of wealth is
a gain of health.

A: 我的手机又丢了。

B: 别心疼，破财免灾。

A: Wǒ de shǒujī yòu diū le.

B: Bié xīnténg, pòcái miǎnzāi.

A: I lost my mobile phone again.

B: Don't get distressed. A loss of wealth is a gain of health.

A: 我家今天被盗了，真气人。

B: 别生气，破财免灾。

A: Wǒ jiā jīntiān bèi dào le, zhēn qì rén.

B: Bié shēngqì, pòcái miǎnzāi.

A: A burglar broke into my house today. It's outrageous.

B: Don't get angry. A loss of wealth is a gain of health.

“破财 (pò cái)” means “lose property” and “免灾 (miǎn zāi)” means “dispel disaster”. The literal meaning of the expression is “if you lose your property, you'll dispel disaster.” If someone loses money or something valuable, you can use this expression to console him.

Synonymous Expressions

折财人安。 Shécái rén'ān.

46 别捣乱! Bié dǎoluàn! Don't make trouble!

A: 妈妈，陪我玩儿一会儿游戏吧。

B: 别捣乱! 妈妈做饭呢，吃完饭再玩儿。

A: Māma, péi wǒ wánr yíhuì yóuxì ba.

B: Bié dǎoluàn! Māma zuòfàn ne, chī wán fàn zài wánr.

A: Mum, can you play games with me for a while?

B: Don't make trouble! Mum is cooking, and will play with you after dinner.

A: 我来帮你钓鱼吧。

B: 别捣乱! 鱼马上就要上钩了。

A: Wǒ lái bang nǐ diàoyú ba.

B: Bié dǎoluàn! Yú mǎshàng jiù yào shànggōu le.

A: Let me help you with your fishing.

B: Don't make trouble! The fish is going to bite

The expression is used to admonish someone not to disrupt an ongoing work or activity. For instance, you can use it with a child who is disrupting your work.

Synonymous Expressions

别胡闹。 Bié húnào.

(胡闹 húnào = horse around; run wild.
e.g. Tā xiǎoshíhou ài húnào. - He liked to
run wild when he was young.)

47 别多心! Bié duōxīn! Don't be so sensitive!

A: 你认为我干不了这件事吗?

B: 别多心! 我不是这个意思。

A: Nǐ rènwéi wǒ gànbuliǎo zhè jiàn shì ma?

B: Bié duōxīn! Wǒ bú shì zhège yìsi.

A: You think I can't do this?

B: Don't be so sensitive. I didn't mean that.

A: 王伟是不是生我的气了?

B: 别多心, 不会的。

A: Wáng Wěi shìbúshì shēng wǒ de qì le?

B: Bié duōxīn, bú huì de.

A: Is Wang Wei angry with me?

B: Don't be so sensitive. I don't think he is angry.

When someone is uneasy and suspicious as a result of misunderstanding what you or others say or do, you can use this expression to reassure them.

Synonymous Expressions

别瞎猜! Bié xiā cāi!

别瞎想! Bié xiā xiǎng!

48 别多嘴! Bié duōzuǐ! Don't interrupt!

A: 我认为他的这种说法不对。

B: 别多嘴, 让他把话说完。

A: Wǒ rènwéi tā de zhè zhǒng shuōfǎ bú duì.

B: Bié duōzuǐ, ràng tā bǎ huà shuō wán.

A: I think what he's saying is not right.

B: Don't interrupt. Let him finish.

A: 妈妈, 你别老跟爸爸吵架了。

B: 别多嘴! 大人的事情小孩少管。

A: Māma, nǐ bié lǎo gēn bàba chǎojià le.

B: Bié duōzuǐ! Dàrén de shìqíng xiǎohái shǎo guǎn.

A: Mum, don't quarrel with Dad anymore.

B: Don't interrupt! You kids mind your own business.

This reprimand is used when you think someone speaks at the wrong time or is not qualified to interrupt. For example, parents may use this expression to stop a child from interrupting adults' conversations.

Synonymous Expressions

不许多嘴。 Bùxǔ duōzuǐ.

少多嘴。 Shǎo duōzuǐ.

49 别小看人。 Bié xiǎokàn rén. Don't
belittle others.

A: 这件事很复杂，你能处理好吗？

B: 别小看人，我一定会让你满意的。

A: Zhè jiàn shì hěn fùzá, nǐ néng chǔlǐ hǎo ma?

B: Bié xiǎokàn rén, wǒ yídìng huì ràng nǐ mǎnyì de.

A: This is a complex situation. Can you handle it well?

B: Don't belittle me. I'll surely make you satisfied.

A: 孩子，这个椅子很重，你能搬动吗？

B: 妈妈，你别小看人，我已经长大了。

A: Háizi, zhège yǐzi hěn zhòng, nǐ néng bāndòng ma?.

B: Māma, nǐ bié xiǎokàn rén, wǒ yǐjīng zhǎngdà le.

A: Hey kid, this chair is really heavy. Can you lift it?

B: Mum, don't belittle me. I've already grown up.

This is a confident reply to someone who you think looks down on you or others. In this expression, “小看 (xiǎo kàn)” means “to look down upon, to despise”. If you think someone looks down upon your ability, you can use this expression in response.

Synonymous Expressions

别瞧不起人呀。 Bié qiáobuqǐ rén ya.

50 何必呢? Hébì ne? No need for that.

A: 工作压力太大，有时候都不想活了。

B: 何必呢? 大不了换个工作。

A: Gōngzuò yālì tài dà, yǒushíhòu wǒ dōu bù xiǎng huó le.

B: Hébì ne? Dàbuliǎo huàn ge gōngzuò.

A: I work under too much pressure. Sometimes I just don't want to live any more.

B: No need for that. At worst, you can find another job.

A: 我真受不了我太太那个坏脾气，想跟她离婚算了。

B: 何必呢? 孩子都那么大了。

A: Wǒ zhēn shòubuliǎo wǒ tàitai nàge huài píqì, xiǎng gēn tā líhūn suàn le.

B: Hébì ne? Háizi dōu nàme dà le.

A: I really can't bear that bad temper of my wife. I just want to divorce her.

B: No need for that. After all, your kid has grown into such a big child.

This is an expression to console someone with goodwill in order to persuade him against a poor idea, such as divorce, suicide, and so on. Usually something rational or "reasonable" follows.

Synonymous Expressions

何苦呢? Hékǔ ne?

有什么必要啊? Yǒu shénme bìyào a?

51 算了吧！ Suàn le ba! Just leave it as it is!

A: 这只烤鸭好像有点儿生，我去找服务员来换一只。

B: 算了吧，凑合吃吧。

A: Zhè zhī kǎoyā hǎoxiàng yǒudiǎnr shēng, wǒ qù zhǎo fúwùyuán lái huàn yì zhī.

B: Suàn le ba, còuhe chī ba.

A: The roast duck is a little raw. I'll find the server to have it exchanged.

B: Just leave it as it is. I can put up with it.

A: 我明明买了两斤西红柿，怎么少了四两？我去找那个小贩说说。

B: 算了吧，以后不在他那儿买就行了。

A: Wǒ míngmíng mǎi le liǎng jīn xīhóngshì, zěnmē shǎo le sì liǎng? Wǒ qù zhǎo nàge xiǎofàn shuōshuo.

B: Suàn le ba, yǐhòu bú zài tā nàr mǎi jiù xíng le.

A: I bought two jin of tomatoes. How come it's four liang less? I'll talk to the peddler.

B: Just leave it as it is and don't buy from him next time.

This is an expression that is used to persuade someone. For example, if your friend has a conflict with someone, you can use this expression to persuade him to give up his own position or to compromise in order to resolve the conflict.

Synonymous Expressions

行了。 Xíng le.

得了。 Dé le.

52 万万不可！ Wànwàn bùkě! Never do that!

A: 我觉得工作压力很大，真想辞职不干了。

B: 万万不可！现在工作可不好找了。

A: Wǒ juéde gōngzuò yālì hěn dà, zhēn xiǎng cízhí bú gàn le.

B: Wànwàn bùkě! Xiànzài gōngzuò kě bù hǎo zhǎo le.

A: I work under too much pressure. I really want to resign.

B: Never do that! It's very hard to get a job right now.

A: 咱们挪用点儿公款买房吧。

B: 那是违法的，万万不可！

A: Zánmen nuóyòng diǎnr gōngkuǎn mǎi fáng ba.

B: Nà shì wéifǎ de, wànwàn bùkě!

A: Why don't we appropriate a little public money to buy a house?

B: That's illegal. Never do that!

When a friend is planning to do something rash and harmful you may use this expression to admonish him not to do so in order to avoid bringing about a bad result. The tone of the expression is both cordial and direct.

Synonymous Expressions

千万别！ Qiānwàn bié!

使不得！ Shǐbudé!

53 最好别。 Zuìhǎo bié. You'd better not.

A: 让我喝一点儿酒吧。

B: 最好别，你还要开车呢。

A: Ràng wǒ hē yìdiǎnr jiǔ ba.

B: Zuìhǎo bié, nǐ hái yào kāichē ne.

A: Let me drink a little.

B: You'd better not. You're driving today.

A: 老刘的病很严重，咱们应该把病情告诉他。

B: 最好别，他会受不了的。

A: Lǎo Liú de bìng hěn yánzhòng, zánmen yīnggāi bǎ bìngqíng gàosu tā.

B: Zuìhǎo bié, tā huì shòubuliǎo de.

A: Lao Liu is seriously ill. We should tell him the truth.

B: We'd better not. He won't be able to take it.

This is an expression of both admonition and advice. Use this when you think someone's idea or conduct is improper or may entail adverse consequences.

Synonymous Expressions

最好不要吧。 Zuìhǎo búyào ba.

54 不象话。 Búxiànghuà. That's shocking!

A: 小李的父亲病的很重，他也不回家看看。

B: 太不象话了，哪有这样的孩子！

A: Xiǎo Lǐ de fùqīn bìng de hěn zhòng, tā yě bù huíjiā kànkàn.

B: Tài búxiànghuà le, nǎ yǒu zhèyàng de háiizi!

A: Xiao Li's father fell seriously ill and he won't go home to see him.

B: That's shocking! How can a son be like that?

A: 他又把垃圾从阳台扔出去了。

B: 不象话，一点儿公德心都没有。

A: Tā yòu bǎ lājī cóng yángtái rēng chūqù le.

B: Búxiànghuà, yìdiǎnr gōngdédéxīn dōu méiyǒu.

A: He threw rubbish from the balcony again.

B: That's shocking. He has no sense of social morality at all.

If you think someone's words or actions are contrary to common sense, even causing people to be resentful or indignant, then you can use this expression to condemn him.

Synonymous Expressions

太不象话了。 Tài búxiànghuà le.

真不象话。 Zhēn búxiànghuà.

55 太过分了！ Tài guòfèn le! He's gone too far!

A: 老板已经三个月没给我们发工资了。

B: 太过分了，你们还不罢工？

A: Lǎobǎn yǐjīng sān ge yuè méi gěi wǒmen fā gōngzī le.

B: Tài guòfèn le, nǐmen hái bú bàgōng?

A: The boss hasn't paid our salaries for three months!

B: He's gone too far! Why don't you go on strike?

A: 今天这场比赛裁判吹黑哨，特别不公平。

B: 是吗？太过分了！

A: Jīntiān zhè chǎng bǐsài cáipàn chuī hēishào, tèbié bù gōngpíng.

B: Shì ma? Tài guòfèn le!

A: The referee of today's match is corrupt and outrageously unfair.

B: Really? He's gone too far.

This is an expression of strong resentment and condemnation used when what someone says or does exceeds the bearable limits of the average person.

Synonymous Expressions

太没天理了。 Tài méi tiānlǐ le.

56 郁闷！

Yùmèn!

Sulk!

A: 我也想到国外去看看，但是没有钱，郁闷！

B: 急什么，等你找到了工作就有钱出国旅游了。

A: Wǒ yě xiǎng dào guówài qù kànkàn, dànshì méiyǒu qián, yùmèn!

B: Jí shénme, děng nǐ zhǎo dào le gōngzuò jiù yǒu qián chū guó lǚyóu le.

A: I want to go abroad as well, but I don't have the money. Sulk!

B: No hurry. You'll have money to travel abroad after you find a job.

A: 我又被老板炒鱿鱼了，郁闷！

B: 有什么郁闷的，再找工作呗。

A: Wǒ yòu bèi lǎobǎn chǎo yóuyú le, yùmèn!

B: Yǒu shénme yùmèn de, zài zhǎo gōngzuò bei.

A: I got fired by the boss again. Sulk!

B: It's nothing to sulk about really. Just find another job.

A very popular expression used by young people in China. This phrase implies a sense of resentment and discontent. You can use this expression when something is beyond your patience and you can't stand it any more.

Synonymous Expressions

真受不了。 Zhēn shòubuliǎo.

57 怎么搞的? Zěnmě gǎo de? What happened?

A: 怎么搞的? 突然停电了。

B: 是不是线路出故障了?

A: Zěnmě gǎo de? Tūrán tíngdiàn le.

B: Shìbúshì xiànlù chū gùzhàng le?

A: What happened? The electricity suddenly went out.

B: Is there something wrong with the power line?

A: 咱们订的货他们还没送来。

B: 怎么搞的? 他们怎么这么不守信用。

A: Zánmen dìng de huò tāmen hái méi sònglái.

B: Zěnmě gǎo de? Tāmen zěnmě zhème bù shǒuxìnyòng.

A: They still haven't delivered the goods we ordered.

B: What happened? How could they fail to keep their promise?

When you can't understand someone's action or the result of something, you can use this expression to question him. It has a sense of resentment, anxiety, and agitation.

Synonymous Expressions

怎么回事? Zěnmě huí shì?

58 真是的！

Zhēnshìde!

What a pity!

A: 你看这手机，刚用了两天就出毛病了。

B: 真是的，质量真次。

A: Nǐ kàn zhè shǒujī, gang yòng le liǎng tiān jiù chū máobìng le.

B: Zhēnshìde, zhìliàng zhēn cì.

A: Look at this mobile phone. Something has gone wrong with it after I used it for only two days.

B: What a pity! The quality is really bad.

A: 我这次 HSK 考试差一点儿就六级了。

B: 真是的，太可惜了。

A: Wǒ zhè cì HSK kǎoshì chà yìdiǎnr jiù liù jí le.

B: Zhēnshìde, tài kěxī le.

A: I just missed the chance to pass the HSK test band six this time.

B: Too bad. It's a great pity.

This expression is used to show dissatisfaction, pity, and regret. An explanation of the reason is given either before or after the expression.

Synonymous Expressions

怎么会这样啊！

Zěnmé huì zhè yàng a!

59 真无聊!

Zhēn wúliáo!

Tiresome!

A: 小李和小张俩总是为了一些小事吵架。

B: 真无聊!

A: Xiǎo Lǐ hé Xiǎo Zhāng liǎ zǒngshì wèile yìxiē xiǎo shì chǎojià.

B: Zhēn wúliáo!

A: Xiao Li and Xiao Zhang always quarrel over minor trivialities.

B: Tiresome!

A: 刘飞特别喜欢在背后说别人的坏话。

B: 这种人, 真无聊!

A: Liú Fēi tèbié xǐhuan zài bèihòu shuō biéren de huàihuà.

B: Zhè zhǒng rén, zhēn wúliáo!

A: Liu Fei simply loves to speak ill of others behind their backs.

B: This kind of person is tiresome!

If you have no interest in someone or something, you can use this expression. The tone has a sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment.

Synonymous Expressions

真没意思。 Zhēn méi yìsi.

真没趣。 Zhēn méi qù.

60 不会吧。 Bú huì ba. That can't be.

A: 听说咱们这儿要地震了。

B: 不会吧，一点儿征兆也没有啊。

A: Tīngshuō zánmen zhèr yào dìzhèn le.

B: Bú huì ba, yìdiǎnr zhēngzhào yě méiyǒu a.

A: I hear there's going to be an earthquake here.

B: That can't be. There's no sign of it at all.

A: 儿子现在还没回来，是不是出事了？

B: 不会吧，你别吓我。

A: Ērzi xiànzài hái méi huí lái, shìbúshì chūshì le?

B: Bú huì ba, nǐ bié xià wǒ.

A: Our son hasn't come back yet. Could there be something wrong?

B: That can't be. Don't scare me.

If you think what someone said is contrary to common sense, or is unbelievable, you can use this expression to show your doubt.

Synonymous Expressions

哪儿会啊。 Nǎr huì a.

61 吹牛! Chuīniú! Braggart!

A: 我一小时就能把这些单词背完，你信不信？

B: 吹牛！我才不信呢。

A: Wǒ yí xiǎoshí jiù néng bǎ zhèxiē dāncí bèiwán, nǐ xìnbuxìn?

B: Chuīniú! Wǒ cái bú xìn ne.

A: I can recite these new words in an hour. Do you believe me?

B: Braggart! I don't believe you.

A: 我一个人就可以把这个冰箱搬上楼。

B: 吹牛！这个冰箱沉着呢。

A: Wǒ yí ge rén jiù kěyǐ bǎ zhège bīngxiāng bān shàng lóu.

B: Chuīniú! Zhège bīngxiāng chén zhe ne.

A: I can move this fridge upstairs by myself.

B: Braggart! This fridge is very heavy.

This expression literally means “blow the cow”. You can use this expression when you think someone is exaggerating. It is usually used between close acquaintances.

Synonymous Expressions

别吹了。 Bié chuī le.

别吹牛了。 Bié chuīniú le.

62 太夸张了吧。 Tài kuāzhāng le ba. Unbelievable!

A: 今年冬天，南方的雪比北方的还大呢！

B: 南方的雪怎么会比北方的大呢？太夸张了吧。

A: Jīnnián dōngtiān, nánfāng de xuě bǐ běifāng de hái dà ne!

B: Nánfāng de xuě zěnmé huì bǐ běifāng de dà ne? Tài kuāzhāng le ba.

A: This winter it snowed more in the south than in the north!

B: How could it snow more in the south? Unbelievable!

A: 听说老张今年炒股赚了三百万。

B: 太夸张了吧，明年我也去炒炒。

A: Tīngshuō Lǎo Zhāng jīnnián chǎogǔ zhuàn le sānbǎi wàn.

B: Tài kuāzhāng le ba, míngnián wǒ yě qù chǎochao.

A: I hear Lao Zhang made three million dollars by speculating in the stock market this year.

B: Unbelievable! I'll do the same next year.

Use this expression to show disbelief in response to an exaggeration.

Synonymous Expressions

可能吗？ Kěnéng ma?

63 怎么会呢? Zěnmě huì ne? How could that be?

A: 咱们走吧, 老张他们可能不来了。

B: 怎么会呢? 他说好来的。

A: Zánmen zǒu ba, Lǎo Zhāng tāmen kěnéng bù lái le.

B: Zěnmě huì ne? Tā shuō hǎo lái de.

A: Let's go. Lao Zhang and his company may not come.

B: How could that be? He promised to come.

A: 听说老板去美国了。

B: 怎么会呢? 我昨天还看见他了呢。

A: Tīngshuō lǎobǎn qù Měiguó le.

B: Zěnmě huì ne? Wǒ zuótiān hái kànjiàn tā le ne.

A: I hear the boss has gone to the US.

B: How could that be? I saw him only yesterday.

When you doubt or disbelieve what someone said, you can use this expression as a question in reply.

Synonymous Expressions

不会吧。 Bú huì ba.

不可能。 Bù kěnéng.

64 真的吗? Zhēn de ma? Really?

A: 听说刘德华要举办个人演唱会了。

B: 真的吗? 那咱们一定得去看看。

A: Tīngshuō Liú Déhuá yào jǔbàn gèrén yǎnchànghuì le.

B: Zhēnde ma? Nà zánmen yídìng děi qù kànkàn.

A: I hear Andy Lau is to give a concert.

B: Really? We really must go then.

A: 听说房子马上就要降价了。

B: 真的吗? 如果真是这样就太好了。

A: Tīngshuō fángzi mǎshàng jiù yào jiàngjià le.

B: Zhēnde ma? Rúguǒ zhēn shì zhèyàng jiù tài hǎo le..

A: I hear the price of housing is going down.

B: Really? That's great if it's true.

When you feel that what someone said is unexpected or doubtful, you can use this expression as a question in reply.

Synonymous Expressions

是吗? Shì ma?

65 好家伙！

Hǎojiāhuo.

Good gracious!

A: 你看我钓的这条鱼。

B: 好家伙！ 这么大个儿。

A: Nǐ kàn wǒ diào de zhè tiáo yú.

B: Hǎojiāhuo! Zhème dà gèr.

A: Look at this fish I got.

B: Good gracious! It's so big.

A: 好家伙！ 混得不错嘛，自己有车了。

B: 和你比差远了。

A: Hǎojiāhuo! Hùn de búcuò ma, zìjǐ yǒu chē le.

B: Hé nǐ bǐ chà yuǎn le.

A: Good gracious! You have your own car, you've made your fortune I bet.

B: You are far ahead of me.

Use this expression of surprise when you encounter something unexpected.

Synonymous Expressions

哟嗬！ Yōhē!

66 天哪！ Tiān na! My God!

A: 天哪！我的钱包不见了。

B: 别急，你再好好找找。

A: Tiān na! Wǒde qiánbāo bú jiàn le.

B: Bié jí, nǐ zài hǎohǎo zhǎozhao.

A: My God! I've lost my wallet.

B: Don't panic. Just try looking for it carefully.

A: 天哪！我中的是头奖呀！

B: 小声点儿，别让别人听见。

A: Tiān na! Wǒ zhòng de shì tóujiǎng ya!

B: Xiǎo shēng diǎnr, bié ràng biéren tīngjiàn.

A: My God! I've won the first prize in the lottery.

B: Quiet! Don't let others hear you.

This is an expression commonly used to show various emotions, such as surprise, fear, regret, or happiness.

Synonymous Expressions

我的天哪！ Wǒde tiān na!

妈呀！ Mā ya!

我的妈呀！ Wǒde mā ya!

67 哇塞！ Wā Sài! Wow!

A: 这是我女儿。
B: 哇塞！长得好漂亮呀。

A: Zhè shì wǒ nǚ'ér.
B: Wā Sài! Zhǎng de hǎo piàoliang ya.

A: This is my daughter.
B: Wow! She's so beautiful.

A: 我写的书出版了。
B: 哇塞！你真厉害！

A: Wǒ xiě de shū chūbǎn le.
B: Wā Sài! Nǐ zhēn lìhai!

A: My book has just been published.
B: Wow! You're good!

Young people in China often use this expression to show surprise and admiration.

Synonymous Expressions

哇！ Wā!

68 原来如此！

Yuánlái rúcǐ!

Oh, I see!

A: 玛丽的汉语怎么说得这么好呀？

B: 她七岁就跟爸爸妈妈到了中国，在中国已经生活了十年了。

A: 哦，原来如此。

A: Mǎlì de Hànyǔ zěnmě shuō de zhème hǎo ya?

B: Tā qī suì jiù gēn bàba māma dào le Zhōngguó, zài Zhōngguó yǐjīng shēnghuóle shí nián le.

A: O, yuánlái rúcǐ.

A: How come Mary speaks Chinese so well?

B: She came to China with her parents when she was only seven, and she's been living in China for ten years.

A: Oh, I see.

A: 你怎么这么会炒菜？

B: 因为我爸爸是特级厨师呀。

A: 原来如此。

A: Nǐ zěnmě zhème huì chǎo cài?

B: Yīnwèi wǒ bàba shì tèjí chúshī ya.

A: Yuánlái rúcǐ.

A: How come you can cook so well?

B: Because my dad is a master chef.

A: Oh, I see.

This expression is used by someone who has a sudden realization of the reason for, or the truth of something and they no longer think it strange.

Synonymous Expressions

怪不得呢。 Guàibudé ne.

难怪呢。 Nánguài ne.

69 糟糕！ Zāogāo! What bad luck!

A: 怎么有股糊味？

B: 糟糕，米饭糊了。

A: Zěnmē yǒu gǔ húwèi?

B: Zāogāo, mǐfàn hú le.

A: Something's burning?

B: What bad luck! It's the rice burning.

A: 已经七点五十五了，糟糕，我要迟到了。

B: 急什么，老师已经通知了，今天不上课。

A: Yǐjīng qī diǎn wǔshíwǔ le, zāogāo, wǒ yào chídào le.

B: Jí shénme, lǎoshī yǐjīng tōngzhī le, jīntiān bú shàng kè.

A: It's 7:55 already. What bad luck! I'm going to be late.

B: No hurry. The teacher has already said that we don't have class today.

This expression occurs spontaneously when someone suddenly realizes that there is a problem.

Synonymous Expressions

坏了！ Huài le!

糟了！ Zāo le!

70 真没想到。 Zhēn méi xiǎngdào. I never
knew that.

A: 小刘买了一套别墅。

B: 他那么有钱呀, 真没想到。

A: Xiǎo Liú mǎi le yí tào biéshù.

B: Tā nàme yǒuqián ya, zhēn méi xiǎngdào.

A: Xiao Liu bought a villa.

B: He's so rich! I never knew that.

A: 真没想到, 她骗了我整整二十年。

B: 过去的事就别提它了。

A: Zhēn méi xiǎngdào, tā piàn le wǒ zhěngzhěng èrshí nián.

B: Guòqu de shì jiù bié tí tā le.

A: I never knew that. She cheated me for twenty years!

B: Let bygones be bygones.

This expression is a response to an entirely unexpected event, which can be happy, irritating, or pitiable.

Synonymous Expressions

谁能想到呢。

Shéi néng xiǎngdào ne.

71 不见不散。 Bú jiàn bú sǎn. See you there.

A: 明天上午十点咱们公园门口见。

B: 好, 不见不散。

A: Míngtiān shàngwǔ shí diǎn zánmen gōngyuán ménkǒu jiàn.

B: Hǎo, bú jiàn bú sǎn.

A: We'll meet at the gate of the park at ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

B: OK, see you there.

A: 今天晚上六点我在电影院门口等你。

B: 好, 不见不散。

A: Jīntiān wǎnshàng liù diǎn wǒ zài diànyǐngyuàn ménkǒu děng nǐ.

B: Hǎo, bú jiàn bú sǎn.

A: I'll wait for you at the gate of the cinema at six this evening.

B: OK, see you there.

This expression is used to warn someone of an appointment. For example, you and your friend have already agreed upon a time and place to meet, and then you use this expression to emphasize that you will keep the appointment and you want your friend to do the same.

(Editor's Note: Chinese friends tell me this expression actually has a light-hearted tone, indeed I have it seen it translated elsewhere as: 'Be there or be square!', not something we really say in English nowadays but I hope you get the idea.)

Synonymous Expressions

到时候见。 Dào shíhòu jiàn.

72 待会儿见。 Dāi huìr jiàn. See you in a
minute.

A: 我在办公室等你。

B: 好，待会儿见。

A: Wǒ zài bàngōngshì děng nǐ.

B: Hǎo, dāi huìr jiàn.

A: I'll wait for you at the office.

B: OK, see you in a minute.

A: 我去办点儿事，一会儿去找你们。

B: 好的，待会儿见。

A: Wǒ qù bàn diǎnr shì, yíhuìr qù zhǎo nǐmen.

B: Hǎode, dāi huìr jiàn.

A: Excuse me for a minute. I'll catch up with you later.

B: OK, see you in a minute.

This is a self-evident expression that is used when parting for a short time.

Synonymous Expressions

一会儿见。 Yíhuìr jiàn.

回头见。 Huítóu jiàn.

73 一言为定! Yìyán wéidìng! It's a deal!

A: 暑假咱们去欧洲旅行, 怎么样?

B: 好! 一言为定!

A: Shǔjià zánmen qù Ōuzhōu lǚxíng, zěnmeyàng?

B: Hǎo! Yìyán wéidìng!

A: How about we go on a tour of Europe this summer vacation?

B: OK, it's a deal!

A: 下星期五我们一手交钱, 一手交货。

B: 那好! 一言为定!

A: Xià xīngqīwǔ wǒmen yì shǒu jiāo qián, yì shǒu jiāo huò.

B: Nà hǎo! Yìyán wéidìng!

A: Next Friday we will execute the transaction.

B: OK, it's a deal!

This expression is used to indicate that something has been agreed to and will not change.

Synonymous Expressions

说好了。 Shuō hǎo le.

说定了。 Shuō dìng le.

74 不用了。 Bú yòng le. No need.

A: 我来做饭吧。

B: 不用了，你累了一天，歇会儿吧。

A: Wǒ lái zuòfàn ba.

B: Bú yòng le, nǐ lèi le yì tiān, xiē huìr ba.

A: Let me cook the meal.

B: No need. You've been working all day, just take a rest.

A: 外面下雨了，带把伞吧。

B: 不用了，雨下得不大。

A: Wàimian xià yǔ le, dài bǎ sǎn ba.

B: Bú yòng le, yǔ xià de bú dà.

A: It's raining outside. Take an umbrella.

B: No need. It's a light rain.

This is an expression used to refuse an invitation or an offer of help. You can use this expression when someone offers you help, but you don't want to trouble him.

Synonymous Expressions

不必了。 Búbì le.

不需要。 Bù xūyào.

75 改天吧。 Gǎitiān ba. Maybe some other time.

A: 咱们下午去买电脑吧。

B: 改天吧，我今天有事。

A: Zánmen xiàwǔ qù mǎi diànnǎo ba.

B: Gǎitiān ba, wǒ jīntiān yǒu shì.

A: Let's go and buy a computer this afternoon.

B: Maybe some other time. I'm busy today.

A: 周末咱们去看看我父母吧。

B: 改天吧，周末我们公司加班。

A: Zhōumò zánmen qù kànkàn wǒ fùmǔ ba.

B: Gǎitiān ba, zhōumò wǒmen gōngsī jiābān.

A: Let's visit my parents this weekend.

B: Maybe some other time. I have to work overtime at the company this weekend.

This is a polite rejection to an invitation. Its literal meaning is “(let's do it) some other day”. When you don't want to accept someone's invitation and you don't want to say so directly, you can use this expression to refuse in a roundabout way.

Synonymous Expressions

下次吧。 Xiàcì ba.

以后吧。 Yǐhòu ba.

76 再说吧。 Zài shuō ba. Let's talk it over later.

A: 咱们什么时候去看王老师?

B: 再说吧, 我最近特别忙。

A: Zánmen shénme shíhou qù kàn Wáng lǎoshī.

B: Zài shuō ba, wǒ zuìjìn tèbié máng.

A: When shall we visit Teacher Wang?

B: Let's talk it over later. I've been very busy recently.

A: 咱们商量商量下次去哪儿玩儿。

B: 我现在有点儿急事, 再说吧。

A: Zánmen shāngliang shāngliang xià cì qù nǎr wánr.

B: Wǒ xiànzài yǒu jí shì, zài shuō ba.

A: Let's discuss where we will travel to next time.

B: I'm attending to something urgent. Let's talk it over later.

Use this expression when you can neither accept nor overtly turn down a request to put off a matter. This expression can also be understood as a roundabout way of expressing a rejection.

Synonymous Expressions

回头再说吧。 Huítóu zài shuō ba.

以后再说。 Yǐhòu zài shuō.

77 我手头也不富裕。 Wǒ shǒutóu yě bú fùyù.

I'm feeling the pinch myself.

A: 我想买辆车，钱不够，你能借给我点儿吗？

B: 真抱歉，我手头也不富裕。

A: Wǒ xiǎng mǎi liàng chē, qián búgòu, nǐ néng jiè gěi wǒ diǎnr ma?.

B: Zhēn bàoqiàn, wǒ shǒutóu yě bú fùyù.

A: I want to buy a car, but I don't have enough money. Could you lend me some?

B: Sorry, I'm feeling the pinch myself.

A: 我最近急需用钱，你能借我一些吗？

B: 恐怕不行，我手头也不富裕。

A: Wǒ zuìjìn jí xū yòng qián, nǐ néng jiè wǒ yìxiē ma?

B: Kǒngpà bùxíng, wǒ shǒutóu yě bú fùyù.

A: I'm in urgent need of money right now. Would you lend me some?

B: I'm afraid I can't. I'm feeling the pinch myself.

Use this expression to show a polite and tactful refusal to lend money to someone when you do not have or are not willing to lend money.

Synonymous Expressions

我手头也缺钱。

Wǒ shǒutóu yě quēqián.

我手头也不宽裕。

Wǒ shǒutóu yě bù kuānyù.

78 当心！ Dāngxīn! Watch out!

A: 当心！前面有车。

B: 谢谢你提醒我。

A: Dāngxīn! Qiánmian yǒu chē.

B: Xièxiè nǐ tíxǐng wǒ.

A: Watch out! There's a car ahead!

B: Thank you for reminding me.

A: 当心！那儿有警察，别开那么快！

B: 哦，我知道了。

A: Dāngxīn! Nàr yǒu jǐngchá, bié kāi nàme kuài!

B: O, wǒ zhīdào le.

A: Watch out! There's a policeman, don't drive too fast.

B: Oh, I see.

This is an expression of warning used to urge someone to pay attention to what's happening at the moment. The tone usually carries a sense of urgency.

Synonymous Expressions

小心！ Xiǎoxīn!

79 多联系。 Duō liánxì. Stay in touch.

A: 你当了总经理，可别忘了我们呀，多联系！

B: 忘不了，我会常跟你们联系的！

A: Nǐ dāng le zǒngjīnglǐ, kě bié wàng le wǒmen ya, duō liánxì!

B: Wàngbuliǎo, wǒ huì cháng gēn nǐmen liánxì de!

A: You're general manager now. Don't forget us, and stay in touch.

B: Of course I won't forget you. I'll contact you often.

A: 谢谢你打电话给我，以后我们多联系。

B: 好，多联系。

A: Xièxiè nǐ dǎ diànhuà gěi wǒ, yǐhòu wǒmen duō liánxì.

B: Hǎo, duō liánxì.

A: Thank you for calling me. Let's stay in touch from now on.

B: OK, stay in touch.

This expression can be said to a parting friend or a friend who is far away. The aim is to encourage them to stay in touch.

Synonymous Expressions

保持联系。 Bǎochí liánxì.

常联系。 Cháng liánxì.

80 慢点儿! Mǎn diǎnr! Be careful.

A: 妈, 我上班去了。

B: 慢点儿, 路上车多。

A: Mā, wǒ shàngbān qù le.

B: Mǎn diǎnr, lùshang chē duō.

A: Mum, I'm going to work.

B: Be careful. The traffic is heavy.

A: 外面的雪下的真大。

B: 慢点儿, 别摔了。

A: Wàimian de xuě xià de zhēn dà.

B: Mǎn diǎnr, bié shuāi le.

A: It's snowing heavily outside.

B: Be careful. Don't slip.

This expression is used to show concern for someone. If your friend is preparing to do something, you use this expression to warn him to be careful and not to be in a hurry.

Synonymous Expressions

小心点儿! Xiǎoxīn diǎnr!

81 听你的！ Tīng nǐ de! At your command!

A: 今天咱们吃饺子，还是吃面条？

B: 听你的！你做什么我就吃什么。

A: Jīntiān zánmen chī jiǎozi, háishi chī miàntiáo?

B: Tīng nǐ de! Nǐ zuò shénme wǒ jiù chī shénme.

A: Shall we eat jiaozi or noodles today?

B: At your command! I'll eat whatever you cook.

A: 咱们是星期六还是星期天去看我妈妈？

B: 哪天都行，听你的。

A: Zánmen shì xīngqīliù háishi xīngqītiān qù kàn wǒ māma?

B: Nǎ tiān dōu xíng, tīng nǐ de.

A: Shall we go and visit my mother this Saturday or Sunday?

B: Whatever, I'm at your command.

The use of this expression indicates you respect the wishes and choice of your partner.

Synonymous Expressions

随你。 Suí nǐ.

你说吧。 Nǐ shuō ba.

82 无所谓。 Wúsuǒwèi. I don't care.

A: 你知道别人怎么议论你吗?

B: 别人怎么说, 我无所谓。

A: Nǐ zhīdào biéren zěnmeyìlùn nǐ ma?

B: Biéren zěnmeshuō, wǒ wúsuǒwèi.

A: Do you know what other people are saying about you?

B: Whatever they're saying, I don't care.

A: 给你换个新办公桌吧。

B: 新旧无所谓, 能用就行。

A: Gěi nǐ huàn ge xīn bàngōngzhuō ba.

B: Xīn jiù wúsuǒwèi, néng yòng jiù xíng.

A: Let me get you a new desk.

B: I don't care whether it's old or new, as long as it's usable.

This expression is used to indicate that you are very open and tolerant about the choice to be made.

Synonymous Expressions

我不介意。 Wǒ bú jièyì.

我不在乎。 Wǒ bú zàihu.

83 信不信由你。 Xìnbuxìn yóu nǐ. Believe it or not.

A: 你说他开了一个公司？我不信。

B: 信不信由你。

A: Nǐ shuō tā kāi le yíge gōngsī? Wǒ bú xìn.

B: Xìnbuxìn yóu nǐ.

A: You say he started his own company? I don't believe it.

B: Believe it or not.

A: 他怎么能赢呢？

B: 我不想跟你多解释什么了，信不信由你。

A: Tā zěnmé néng yíng ne?

B: Wǒ bù xiǎng gēn nǐ duō jiěshì shénme le, xìnbuxìn yóu nǐ.

A: How could he win?

B: Believe it or not! I won't explain it any more.

The expression is used to indicate that you don't care about the suspicion of others when they doubt what you have said.

Synonymous Expressions

爱信不信。 Àixìn búxìn.

不信拉倒。 Búxìn lādǎo.

84 怎么都行。 Zěnmē dōu xíng. Whatever.

A: 中秋节咱们买不买月饼?

B: 听你的, 怎么都行。

A: Zhōngqiūjié zánmen mǎibumǎi yuèbǐng.

B: Tīng nǐde, zěnmē dōu xíng.

A: Shall we buy moon cakes this Mid-Autumn Festival?

B: Whatever you want to do is fine.

A: 今年春节咱们去哪儿玩呀?

B: 你说吧, 怎么都行。

A: Jīnnián Chūnjié zénmen qù nǎr wán ya?

B: Nǐ shuō ba, zěnmē dōu xíng.

A: Where shall we travel to during the Spring Festival this year?

B: Whatever you want to do is fine.

The expression is used to transfer your right of making a decision to your partner. You will abide by his decision.

Synonymous Expressions

随便。 Suíbiàn.

怎么都可以。 Zěnmē dōu kěyǐ.

85 不干不行啊。 Bú gàn bù xíng a. I have no
choice.

A: 走，咱们去跳舞吧，别加班了。

B: 这是急活，不干不行啊。

A: Zǒu, zánmen qù tiàowǔ ba, bié jiābān le.

B: Zhè shì jí huó, bú gàn bù xíng a.

A: Let's go dancing. Don't work overtime any more.

B: This is urgent. I have no choice.

A: 你身体不好，别这么玩儿命工作了。

B: 不干不行啊，一家人都指望我呢。

A: Nǐ shēntǐ bù hǎo, bié zhème wánr mìng gōngzuò le.

B: Bú gàn bù xíng a, yì jiā rén dōu zhǐwàng wǒ ne.

A: You're not in good health. Don't work so hard.

B: I have no choice. My family depends on me.

This is a sighing expression of helplessness. Use it when you don't want to do something, but you have to it. Because if you don't, there will be a very serious result.

Synonymous Expressions

没法子呀。 Méi fǎzi ya.

86 没办法。 Méi bànfǎ. There's nothing I can do.

A: 你怎么又来晚了?

B: 没办法, 路上堵车。

A: Nǐ zěnmē yòu lái wǎn le.

B: Méi bànfǎ, lùshang dǔ chē.

A: Why are you late again?

B: There was nothing I could do. I encountered a traffic jam on the way.

A: 你们怎么天天加班呀?

B: 没办法, 事情多, 做不完。

A: Nǐmen zěnmē tiāntiān jiābān ya?

B: Méi bànfǎ, shìqíng duō, zuòbùwán.

A: Why do you work overtime every day?

B: There's nothing I can do. There's too much to do.

This expression has a tone of helplessness. It means that you have no control over events. You can only let matters take their own course.

Synonymous Expressions

没辙。 Méi zhé.

87 听天由命吧。 Tīngtiān yóumìng ba. Just let it be.

A: 这次考试我一点儿把握也没有。

B: 别想了，听天由命吧。

A: Zhè cì kǎoshì wǒ yìdiǎnr bǎwò yě méiyǒu.

B: Bié xiǎng le, tīngtiān yóu mìng ba.

A: I'm not sure about this examination at all.

B: Don't think about it anymore. Just let it be.

A: 食物和水几乎都没有了，怎么办啊？

B: 听天由命吧。

A: Shíwù hé shuǐ jīhū dōu méiyǒu le, zěnméi bàn a?

B: Tīngtiān yóu mìng ba.

A: Food and water are running out. What should we do?

B: Just let it be.

This expression has a tone of helplessness. It literally means “just let providence or fate decide”. Use it when you have no recourse and can only leave matters to providence.

Synonymous Expressions

看老天爷的了。

Kàn lǎotiānyé de le.

88 你以为你是谁? Nǐ yǐwéi nǐ shì shéi? Who do you think you are?

A: 你怎么总是对我指手画脚, 你以为你是谁?

B: 真不知好歹, 我是为你好。

A: Nǐ zěnmē zǒngshì duì wǒ zhǐshǒu huàjiǎo, nǐ yǐwéi nǐ shì shéi?

B: Zhēn bù zhī hǎodǎi, wǒ shì wèi nǐ hǎo.

A: Why are you always criticizing me? Who do you think you are?

B: You must be senseless. I do it for your own good.

A: 小林, 你欺负小同学是不对的, 快向人家道歉。

B: 你以为你是谁? 居然敢管我。

A: Xiǎo Lín, nǐ qīfu xiǎo tóngxué shì bú duì de, kuài xiàng rénjiā dàoqiàn.

B: Nǐ yǐwéi nǐ shì shéi? Jūrán gǎn guǎn wǒ.

A: Xiao Lin, you're wrong to bully those younger classmates. You must apologize to them at once.

B: Who do you think you are? How dare you poke your nose into my business?

If you think there are some problems with someone's behavior or the way they do things, such as being arrogant and looking down on others, you can say “你以为你是谁 (nǐ yǐwéi nǐ shì shéi)” to him. Your aim is to get him to realize that there is no difference between him and others, and that he should respect other people.

Synonymous Expressions

你算老几!

Nǐ suàn lǎo jǐ!

89 你这是什么态度？ Nǐ zhè shì shénme tàidù?

What kind of attitude is that?

A: 小明，以后不能玩儿得这么晚！

B: 别管我。

A: 你这是什么态度？

A: Xiǎomíng, yǐhòu bù néng wánr de zhème wǎn!

B: Bié guǎn wǒ.

A: Nǐ zhè shì shénme tàidù?

A: Xiao Ming, never play this late again!

B: Leave me alone.

A: What kind of attitude is that?

A: 别躺在床上看书。

B: 少烦我。

A: 你这是什么态度？真没礼貌。

A: Bié tǎng zài chuáng shang kànshū.

B: Shǎo fán wǒ.

A: Nǐ zhè shì shénme tàidù? Zhēn méi lǐmào.

A: Don't read in bed.

B: Mind your own business.

A: What kind of attitude is that? You're really rude.

This expression doesn't mean that you want to know a person's actual attitude, but is used to express a strong resentment or protest against someone else's bad attitude.

Synonymous Expressions

什么态度啊！ Shénme tàidù a!

90 这与你有什么关系? Zhè yǔ nǐ yǒu shénme guānxì?

What's it to you?

A: 对不起, 请您不要随便扔垃圾。

B: 这与你有什么关系?

A: Duìbuqǐ, qǐng nín búyào suíbiàn rēng lājī.

B: Zhè yǔ nǐ yǒu shénme guānxì?

A: Sorry, but please don't throw litter everywhere.

B: What's it to you?

A: 你的车怎么停在这儿了?

B: 停在这儿怎么了? 这与你有什么关系?

A: Nǐ de chē zěnmé tíng zài zhèr le?

B: Tíng zài zhèr zěnmé le? Zhè yǔ nǐ yǒu shénme guānxì?

A: Why did you park your car here?

B: Why can't I park here? What's it to you?

In the expression “这与你有什么关系 (zhè yǔ nǐ yǒu shénme guānxì)”, “关系 (guānxì)” means “to have a bearing on”. This expression means: this has nothing to do with you. The speaker doesn't want anyone to interfere.

Synonymous Expressions

不关你的事! Bù guān nǐ de shì!

关你什么事! Guān nǐ shénme shì!

91 你有什么资格指责我？

Nǐ yǒu shénme zīgé zhǐzé wǒ?

Why do you think you're good enough to blame me?

A: 你有什么资格指责我？

B: 你做得不对，我怎么能说你！

A: Nǐ yǒu shénme zīgé zhǐzé wǒ?

B: Nǐ zuò de bú duì, wǒ zěnme bù néng shuō nǐ!

A: Why do you think you're good enough to blame me?

B: What you did is wrong. Of course I can criticize you.

A: 你怎么随便扔垃圾呢？

B: 你有什么资格指责我？你自己也是这样。

A: Nǐ zěnme suíbiàn rēng lājī ne?

B: Nǐ yǒu shénme zīgé zhǐzé wǒ? Nǐ zìjǐ yě shì zhèyàng.

A: Why do you drop litter everywhere?

B: Why do you think you're good enough to blame me? You do it too.

The literal meaning of this expression is “what qualifications do you have to blame me?” It is a rhetorical question meaning: you are not qualified to find fault with me. This expresses strong resentment towards a person who lays blame on you.

Synonymous Expressions

还轮不到你说我呢！

Hái lúnbúdào nǐ shuō wǒ ne!

92 恭喜恭喜！ Gōngxǐ gōngxǐ! Congratulations.

A: 告诉你一个好消息，我找到工作了。

B: 恭喜恭喜！你该请客了。

A: Gàosu nǐ yí ge hǎo xiāoxi, wǒ zhǎodào gōngzuò le.

B: Gōngxǐ gōngxǐ! Nǐ gāi qǐngkè le.

A: Let me tell you some good news: I've found a job.

B: Congratulations! You should give a party.

A: 下星期我结婚，你来喝喜酒吧。

B: 恭喜恭喜！我一定去。

A: Xià xīngqī wǒ jiéhūn, nǐ lái hē xǐjiǔ ba.

B: Gōngxǐ gōngxǐ! Wǒ yídìng qù.

A: I'm getting married next week. Please come to the party.

B: Congratulations! I'll definitely go.

This is an expression of good wishes and congratulations on the occasion of a marriage, birth of a child, promotion, getting a job, winning the lottery, and so on.

Synonymous Expressions

祝贺祝贺！ Zhùhè zhùhè!

93 一路顺风! Yílù shùnfēng! Bon voyage!

A: 听说你明天就要去中国留学了, 祝你一路顺风。

B: 谢谢!

A: Tīngshuō nǐ míngtiān jiù yào qù Zhōngguó liúxué le, zhù nǐ yílù shùnfēng.

B: Xièxie!

A: I hear you're leaving to study in China tomorrow. Bon voyage!

B: Thanks!

A: 我明天就要去北京旅游了。

B: 真的? 祝你一路顺风!

A: Wǒ míngtiān jiù yào qù Běijīng lǚyóu le.

B: Zhēnde? Zhù nǐ yílù shùnfēng!

A: I'm going to travel to Beijing tomorrow.

B: Really? Bon voyage!

This is an auspicious expression used when you see someone off. It is usually used at an airport or train station. For example, if your friend is going to travel or study abroad, you can use this to express good wishes to him at the airport when you say goodbye.

Synonymous Expressions

一路平安! Yílù píng'ān!

94 祝你成功！ Zhù nǐ chénggōng! I wish you
success!

A: 我下决心要把这个企业办好。

B: 好样的，祝你成功。

A: Wǒ xià juéxīn yào bǎ zhège qǐyè bàn hǎo.

B: Hǎoyàngde, zhù nǐ chénggōng.

A: I'm determined to make this business a successful one.

B: Good, I wish you success.

A: 明天我要参加汽车越野比赛。

B: 祝你成功！

A: Míngtiān wǒ yào cānjiā qìchē yuèyě bǐsài.

B: Zhù nǐ chénggōng!

A: Tomorrow I'm going to take part in an off-road auto race.

B: I wish you success!

This expression conveys your wish for someone's success when that someone faces something important and they hope to succeed very much.

Synonymous Expressions

祝你吗到成功！ Zhù nǐ mǎdào chénggōng!

95 过奖了! Guòjiǎng le! Not really!

A: 你的汉语说得真好，在哪儿学的？

B: 过奖了！我是自学的。

A: Nǐde Hànyǔ shuō de zhēn hǎo, zài nǎr xué de?

B: Guòjiǎng le! Wǒ shì zìxué de.

A: You speak very good Chinese. Where did you learn it?

B: Not really! I taught myself.

A: 真看不出你还是个电脑高手呀！

B: 呵呵，过奖了！

A: Zhēn kànbuchū nǐ hái shì ge diànnǎo gāoshǒu ya!

B: Hēhē, guòjiǎng le!

A: I never knew you were such a computer expert!

B: Oh, not really!

The literal meaning of this expression is “you’re overpraising me”, a typical Chinese way of expressing contentment to show modesty. When someone praises you or your family members and you feel that the praise is too great, you can use this expression.

Synonymous Expressions

不敢当。 Bùgǎndāng.

96 让您见笑了。 Ràng nín jiànxiào le. Don't
restrain your criticisms.

A: 这首诗是你做的吧?

B: 嗯, 让您见笑了。

A: Zhè shǒu shī shì nǐ zuò de ba?

B: Ng, ràng nín jiànxiào le.

A: Did you write this poem?

B: Uh, don't restrain your criticisms.

A: 你这篇论文写得真不错。

B: 哪里, 让您见笑了。

A: Nǐ zhè piān lùnwén xiě de zhēn búcuò.

B: Nǎlǐ, ràng nín jiànxiào le.

A: Your thesis is really well written.

B: Oh, not really! Don't restrain your criticisms.

This expression shows self-modesty. For example, when someone praises an article that you wrote, you can say “写得不好, 让您见笑了 (xiě de bù hǎo, ràng nín jiànxiào le)” to show your modesty.

Synonymous Expressions

见笑了。 Jiànxiào le.

97 哪里，哪里！ Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ! Don't say that.

A: 装修房子你是专家，我得向你请教。

B: 哪里，哪里！谈不上请教。

A: Zhuāngxiū fángzi nǐ shì zhuānjiā, wǒ děi xiàng nǐ qǐngjiào.

B: Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ! Tánbushàng qǐngjiào.

A: You're an expert in house decorating. I need your instruction.

B: Don't say that. I can offer help, but not instruction.

A: 电脑方面你还得指导指导我。

B: 哪里，哪里！互相学习吧。

A: Diànnǎo fāngmiàn nǐ hái děi zhǐdǎo zhǐdǎo wǒ.

B: Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ! Hùxiāng xuéxí ba.

A: regarding the computer, you still have to give me guidance.

B: Don't say that. We can learn from each other.

This expression can be used to show your modesty when someone praises you. It's literal meaning of “where, where” is a very Chinese response to a compliment.

Synonymous Expressions

哪儿呀！ Nǎr ya!

98 请多多包涵。 Qǐng duōduō bāohán.

Please forgive me.

A: 我刚来，对公司的情况还不太熟悉，不当之处，请多多包涵。

B: 哪里，哪里！我还得向你学习呢。

A: Wǒ gāng lái, duì gōngsī de qíngkuàng hái bú tài shúxī, búdàng zhīchù, qǐng duōduō bāohán.

B: Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ! Wǒ hái děi xiàng nǐ xuéxí de.

A: I'm new here and unfamiliar with the company's situation. Please forgive me if I do anything inappropriate.

B: Don't say that! I have to learn from you.

A: 我的孩子不太懂事，请多多包涵。

B: 您孩子挺不错的。

A: Wǒ de háizi bú tài dǒngshì, qǐng duōduō bāohán.

B: Nín háizi ting búcuò de.

A: My child is not too sensible. Please forgive him/her.

B: Your child is a good kid.

This is a polite expression used on formal occasions to solicit forgiveness for improper conduct.

Synonymous Expressions

请多多指教。 Qǐng duōduō zhǐjiào.

99 让你破费了。 Ràng nǐ pòfèi le. You've
spent too much on this.

A: 这是我送给您的礼物。

B: 哟，买这么贵重的东西干什么！让您破费了。

A: Zhè shì wǒ song gěi nín de lǐwù.

B: Yō, mǎi zhème guìzhòng de dōngxi gàn shénme! Ràng nín pòfèi le.

A: This is my present for you.

B: Oh, a very expensive gift! You've spent too much on this.

A: 今天这顿饭，让你破费了吧？

B: 哪里，我还得感谢你们赏光呢。

A: Jīntiān zhè dùn fàn, ràng nín pòfèi le ba?

B: Nǎlǐ, wǒ hái děi gǎnxiè nǐmen shǎngguāng ne.

A: Haven't you spent too much on the dinner today?

B: Don't say that. I'm very grateful that you came.

This is an expression of gratitude, and as it were, a very Chinese one. In China, the recipient of a gift uses this expression to indicate his understanding and appreciation of the sender's friendly feelings.

Synonymous Expressions

让你掏腰包了。 Ràng nǐ tāo yāobāo le.

100 一切还好吧? Yíqiè hái hǎo ba? Is everything OK?

A: 好久不见了! 一切还好吧?

B: 还行。

A: Hǎojiǔ bú jiàn le! Yíqiè hái hǎo ba?

B: Hái xíng.

A: Long time no see! Is everything OK?

B: Everything's fine.

A: 您什么时候出的院? 一切还好吧?

B: 还好, 恢复得差不多了。

A: Nín shénme shíhou chū de yuàn? Yíqiè hái hǎo ba?

B: Hái hǎo, huīfù de chàbùduō le.

A: When did you leave the hospital? Is everything OK?

B: Everything's fine. I've almost recovered.

This is a polite expression used when two people meet each other. It conveys one's respects and concern. You do not have to respond with a concrete answer. Saying only “还行 (hái xíng)” or “不错 (bú cuò)”, and so on is OK.

Synonymous Expressions

最近怎么样? Zuìjìn zěnmeyàng?

都挺好的吧? Dōu tǐng hǎo de ba?

附录 Appendix

歇后语 Allegorical Phrases

1. 茶壶里煮饺子 — 有口道（倒）不出
chá hú lǐ zhǔ jiǎo zi - yǒu kǒu dào (dào) bù chū

Dumplings in a teapot – cannot be poured out.
(Being unable to express oneself.)
(A play on the words 道 [dào] and 倒 [dào]).

2. 打破砂锅 — 问（甕）到底
dǎ pò shā guō - wèn (wèn) dào dǐ

Break an earthenware pot – cracked to the bottom.
(To interrogate thoroughly to get to the bottom of a matter.)
(A play on the words 问 [wèn] and 甕 [wèn]).

3. 电线杆子绑鸡毛 — 好大胆（掸）子
diàn xiàn gǎn zi bāng jī máo - hǎo dà dǎn (dǎn) zi

Tie feathers to a power pole – what a big duster.
(What gall!)
(A play on the words 胆 [dǎn] and 掸 [dǎn]).

4. 鳄鱼的眼泪 — 假慈悲
è yú de yǎn lèi - jiǎ cí bēi

Shedding crocodile tears – insincere show of sorrow.

5. 飞蛾扑火 — 自取灭亡
fēi é pū huǒ - zì qǔ miè wáng

A moth flies into a fire – to court destruction.

6. 狗拿耗子 — 多管闲事
gǒu ná hào zi - duō guǎn xián shì

A dog that catches mice – to poke one's nose into other people's business.

7. 狗撵鸭子 — 呱呱叫

gǒu niǎn yāzi - guāguā jiào

A dog chasing ducks – the ducks call out “quack quack”.
(Implies that someone is great or excellent.)

8. 狗咬吕洞宾 — 不识好人心

gǒu yǎo Lǚ Dòngbīn - bù shí hǎo rén xīn

The dog bites Lu Dongbin – biting the hand that feeds you.

9. 韩信用兵 — 多多益善

hán Xìn yòng bīng - duō duō yì shàn

Like soldiers at war – the more the better.

10. 和尚打伞 — 无法（发）无天

héshang dǎ sǎn - wú fǎ (fà) wú tiān

A monk holding an umbrella – above his head there is no hair and no sky (shows no respect for law or authority).

A play on the words 法 [fǎ] and 发 [fà].

11. 和尚头上的虱子 — 明摆着

héshang tóu shang de shīzi - míng bǎi zhe

A louse on the head of a monk – in plain sight.

12. 画蛇添足 — 多此一举

huà shé tiān zú - duō cǐ yì jǔ

Drawing a picture of a snake with feet - more than enough is too much.

13. 黄鼠狼给鸡拜年 — 没安好心

huángshǔláng gěi jī bàinián - méi ān hǎo xīn

A weasel wishing Happy new Year to a chicken - harboring no good intention.

14. 鸡蛋里头跳骨头 — 无中生有

jīdàn li tou tiào gǔtōu - wú zhōng shēng yǒu

Looking for a bone in an egg - purely fictitious or fabricated.

15. 姜太公钓鱼 — 愿者上钩

Jiāng tài gōng diàoyú - yuàn zhě shàng gōu

Jiang Taigong fishing (with a straight hook) - only the willing will get hooked.

16. 孔夫子搬家 — 净是输 (书)

Kǒng fūzi bānjiā - jìng shì shū (shū)

Confucius moves to a new house - nothing but books (loses all the time) (a play on the words 输 [shū] and 书 [shū]).

17. 老虎屁股 — 摸不得

lǎohǔ pìgu - mōbude

A tiger's buttocks - untouchable.

18. 临阵磨枪 — 不快也光

lín zhèn mó qiāng - bú kuài yě guāng

Sharpen a spear only before a battle - if it's not sharp, at least it's bright (implies that someone starts to prepare only at the last moment).

19. 聋子耳朵 — 摆设

lóngzi ěrduo - bǎishè

A deaf man's ears - just for show.

20. 麻布袋上绣花 — 底子太差

mábùdài shang xiùhuā - dǐzi tài chà

Embroidering on a piece of sackcloth - the basis rots.

21. 泥菩萨过江 — 自身难保

ní púsà guò jiāng - zìshēn nánbǎo

A clay Buddha crossing a stream - hardly able to save oneself.

22. 骑驴看唱本 — 走着瞧

qí lú kàn chàngběn - zǒu zhe qiáo

Reading a book on the donkey-back - wait and see how things work out.

23. 秋后的蚂蚱 — 蹦不了几天
qiū hòu de màzha - bèngbuliǎo jǐ tiān

A grasshopper at the end of autumn - its jumping days are numbered (it will die soon).

24. 肉包子打狗 — 有去无回
ròu bāozi dǎ gǒu - yǒu qù wú huí

Chasing a dog by throwing meat dumplings at it - gone, never to return (to lose something instead of accomplishing a goal).

25. 三十六计 — 走为上
sānshíliù jì - zǒu wéi shàng

Of the thirty-six stratagems - the best is running away.

26. 杀鸡用牛刀 — 小题大作
shā jī yòng niú dāo - xiǎo tí dà zuò

Use a pole-axe to kill a chicken - to overdo something.

27. 十五个吊桶打水 — 七上八下
shíwǔ ge diàotǒng dǎ shuǐ - qī shàng bā xià

Fifteen buckets to draw water from a well - seven up and eight down (at sixes and sevens, in disorder).

28. 铁公鸡 — 一毛不拔
tiě gōngjī - yì máo bù bá

Like an iron rooster - not a feather can be pulled out (miserly, very stingy).

29. 头顶生疮，脚底流脓 — 坏透了
tóudǐng shēng chuāng, jiǎo dǐ liú nóng - huài tòu le

Ulcer on the head and pus on the foot - to be rotten to the core.

30. 兔子的尾巴 — 长不了
tùzi de wěiba - chángbuliǎo

Like the tail of a hare - it can't grow longer (something won't last long).

31. 亡羊补牢 — 为时不晚

wáng yáng bǔ láo - wéi shí bù wǎn

Mend the fence after the sheep is lost - it's not too late yet (it's never too late).

32. 王八吃称砣 — 铁了心

wángba chī chēngtuó - tiě le xīn

Like a tortoise that has eaten a weight - its heart is as determined as iron.

33. 王婆卖瓜 — 自卖自夸

Wáng pó mài guā - zì mài zì kuā

Like Mother Wang selling melons - she praises what she sells (every potter praises his own pots).

34. 鲜花插在牛粪上 — 不配

xiānhuā chā zài niúfèn shang - bú pèi

Like a flower placed in a lump of bullshit - unmatched.

35. 小葱拌豆腐 — 一清（青）二白

xiǎo cōng bàn dòufu - yì qīng (qīng) èr bái

Small onions of azure blue and white mixed with white bean curd - one is blue and the other is white (something is perfectly clear) (a play on the words 清 [qīng] and 青 [qīng]).

36. 芝麻开花 — 节节高

zhīma kāihuā - jié jié gāo

Sesame stalk putting forth flowers - notch by notch, higher and higher (rising steadily).

37. 周瑜打黄盖 — 一个愿打，一个愿挨

Zhōu Yú dǎ Huáng Gài - yí ge yuàn dǎ, yí ge yuàn ái

Like Zhou Yu beating Huang Gai - one is willing to beat and the other is willing to be beaten.

(From a 14th century novel based on events that took place in the third century A.D. Zhou Yu of the kingdom of Wu cruelly beat Huang Gai, another Wu general who accepted the beating, and then sent him to the enemy camp in order to win a battle by deceiving the enemy.)

38. 猪八戒照镜子 — 里外不是人

Zhū Bājiè zhào jìngzi - lǐ wài bú shì rén

Zhu Bajie looking at himself in a mirror - not a person inside or outside (to be blamed by everyone).

39. 猪鼻子插葱 — 装象

zhū bízi chā cōng - zhuāng xiàng

A pig sticking scallions into its nostrils - pretending to be an elephant (to pretend to be other than what you really are).

40. 竹篮打水 — 一场空

zhú lán dǎ shuǐ - yì chǎng kōng

Like ladling water with a wicker basket - all in vain (wasted effort).

谚语 Proverbs

1. 百闻不如一见。
Bǎi wén bù rú yí jiàn.

Seeing is believing. (Seeing once is worth hearing a hundred times.)

2. 冰冻三尺非一日之寒。
Bīng dòng sān chǐ fēi yí rì zhī hán.

Rome was not built in a day. (One day of cold can't form three feet of ice.)

3. 病从口入，祸从口出。
Bìng cóng kǒu rù, huò cóng kǒu chū.

A closed mouth catches no flies and careful talk avoids trouble. (Diseases go into the mouth and misfortunes come out of it.)

4. 不打不成交。
Bù dǎ bù chéng jiāo.

No discord, no concord. (Conflicts make a companion.)

5. 初生牛犊不怕虎。
Chū shēng niú dú bù pà hǔ.

The less wit, the more courage. (A new-born calf is not afraid of the tiger.)

6. 大树底下好乘凉。
Dà shù dǐ xià hǎo chéng liáng.

Good shade is found under a big tree.

7. 刀子嘴，豆腐心。
Dāo zi zuǐ, dòu fu xīn.

His bark is worse than his bite. (A mouth as sharp as a knife and a heart as soft as bean-curd.)

8. 防君子不防小人。
Fáng jūn zǐ bù fáng xiǎo rén.

The devil lurks behind the cross. (It can only guard against the good but not the bad.)

9. 功夫不负有心人。
Gōngfu bú fù yǒuxīnrén.

Efforts never fail the aspiring.

10. 好的开端是成功的一半。
Hǎo de kāiduān shì chénggōng de yíban.

Well begun is half done.

11. 好借好还，再借不难。
Hǎo jiè hǎo huán, zài jiè bù nán.

He who borrows to repay may borrow yet another day. (Return what you borrowed before and you may borrow once more.)

12. 好事不出门，坏事传千里。
Hǎo shì bù chūmén, huài shì chuán qiān lǐ.

Bad news has wings. (Good deeds stay inside, and ill deeds travel far and wide.)

13. 患难见真情。
Huànnàn jiàn zhēnqíng.

Adversity is the test of friendship. (A friend in need is a friend indeed.)

14. 机不可失，时不再来。
Jī bù kě shī, shí bú zài lái.

Opportunity seldom knocks twice. (A missed chance is missed for good.)

15. 家丑不可外扬。
Jiā chǒu bù kě wài yáng.

Air your dirty linen at home. (A family stain is not to be aired.)

16. 家家有本难念的经。
Jiā jiā yǒu běn nán niàn de jīng.

Every family has a skeleton in the closet. (Every family has its own sad story.)

17. 姜还是老的辣。

Jiāng hái shì lǎo de là.

The older, the wiser. (Ginger is spiciest when it matures.)

18. 来得早不如来得巧。

Lái de zǎo bù rú lái de qiǎo.

The hindmost dog may catch the hare. (Early is not as good as the right time.)

19. 来而不往非礼也。

Lái ér bù wǎng fēi lǐ yě.

Mutuality is property.

20. 没有不透风的墙。

Méiyǒu bú tòufēng de qiáng.

Walls have ears. (There's no wall without a crack.)

21. 磨刀不误砍柴功。

Mó dāo bú wù kǎn chái gōng.

Sharpening your ax will not delay your job of cutting wood.

22. 强扭的瓜不甜。

Qiáng niǔ de guā bù tián.

Love cannot be forced. (A melon plucked too early is not sweet.)

23. 巧妇难为无米之炊。

Qiǎo fù nán wéi wú mǐ zhī chuī.

Without rice, even the cleverest housewife cannot cook.

24. 亲兄弟，明算账。

Qīn xiōngdì, míng suànzhang.

Even reckoning makes long friends. (The account must be clear even between blood brothers.)

25. 清官难断家务事。

Qīngguān nán duàn jiāwùshì.

Family affairs often confuse the cleverest judge.

26. 人多力量大。

Rén duō lìliang dà.

The more people, the more power.

27. 身正不怕影子斜。

Shēn zhèng bú pà yǐngzi xié.

A clean wants no washing. (An upright man does not worry about his crooked shadow.)

28. 胜败乃兵家常事。

Shèng bài nǎi bīngjiā chángshì.

You win some, you lose some. (Winning and losing are commonplace in war.)

29. 树挪死，人挪活。

Shù nuó sǐ, rén nuó huó.

A tree dies if moved, a man lives by moving.

30. 说曹操，曹操到。

Shuō cáocāo, cáocāo dào.

Speak of the devil and the devil appears.

31. 贪多嚼不烂。

Tān duō jiáo bú làn.

Don't try to do too much at once. (Greed for food causes indigestion.)

32. 贪小便宜吃大亏。

Tān xiǎo piányi chī dà kuī.

Penny wise, pound foolish. (The greed for small favors results in the loss of big benefits.)

33. 兔子不吃窝边草。

Tùzi bù chī wō biān cǎo.

A man won't harm the people around his home. (A hare won't eat the grass near his hole.)

34. 无风不起浪。

Wú fēng bù qǐ làng.

There's no smoke without fire. (There's no wave without wind.)

35. 五十步笑百步。

Wǔshí bù xiào bǎi bù.

The pot calls the kettle black. (It's like a fifty-step escaper laughing at a one hundred-step escaper.)

36. 新官上任三把火。

Xīn guān shàng rèn sān bǎ huǒ.

The new broom sweeps clean.

37. 羊毛出在羊身上。

Yángmáo chū zài yáng shēn shang.

Wool comes from sheep.

38. 一分钱一分货。

Yì fēn qián yì fēn huò.

Nothing for nothing and very little for a half penny. (One cent of price, one element of quality.)

39. 一个巴掌拍不响。

Yí ge bāzhang pāi bù xiǎng.

When one will not, two cannot quarrel. (A single hand cannot clap.)

40. 一年之计在于春。

Yì nián zhī jì zài yú chūn.

A year's plan starts with spring. (Spring is the queen of the year.)

41. 有得必有失。
Yǒu dé bì yǒu shī.

Omelets are not made without breaking eggs. (No pain, no gain.)

42. 远水救不了近火。
Yuǎn shuǐ jiùbuliǎo jìn huǒ.

The far water cannot quench the near fire.

43. 早睡早起身体好。
Zǎo shuì zǎo qǐ shēntǐ hǎo.

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

44. 真金不怕火炼。
Zhēn jīn bú pà huǒ liàn.

Real gold stands the test of fire.

45. 知足者常乐。
Zhī zú zhě cháng lè.

Contentment is happiness. (Those who feel satisfied are forever blessed.)

46. 纸里包不住火。
Zhǐ lǐ bāo bú zhù huǒ.

The truth always prevails. (Paper cannot wrap up the fire.)

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