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A DICTIONARY

OF

CHINESE IDIOMATIC PHRASES

Prepared, Translated and Annotated

By

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ASIA

A

阿⁴ 父 阿 母
a fu a mu

Father and mother.

Origin: from the T'ung Chien 通鑑: 「阿父在, 汝亦何憂」, and from a verse by Ch'iao Chung-ching 焦仲卿: 「上堂拜阿母」。

Synonym: 阿爺阿娘; 父親母親。

阿 公 阿 婆
a kung a p'o

My grand-pa and grand-ma.

Origin: from the Nan Shih 南史 "Southern History": 「答曰, 身非三公之公, 又非田舍之公, 又非君家阿公, 何以見呼爲公」。

Synonym: 祖父祖母。

Antonym: 外公外婆。

阿 伯 阿 叔
a pē a shu

Father's elder brother and younger brother.

Origin: from the Wu Tai Shih Pu 五代史補: 「辯曰, 新婦參阿伯, 豈有答禮」, and from the Pē Shih 北史 "Pē History": 「孝琬呼阿叔, 帝怒曰, 誰是爾叔」。

Synonym: 伯父叔父。

Antonym: 伯母叔孀。

阿 兄 阿 弟
a hsiung a ti

My elder brother and younger brother.

Origin: from a verse by Ch'iao Chung-ching 焦仲卿: 「阿兄得聞之, 悵然心中煩」, and from the Mu Lan Tz'ü 木蘭辭: 「阿弟聞姊來, 磨刀霍霍向豬羊」。

Synonym: 哥哥弟弟。

阿 姊 阿 妹
a tzū a mei

My elder sister and younger sister.

Origin: from a verse by Li Hsiang-yn 李商隱: 「階前逢阿姊」, and from the Mu Lan Tz'ü 木蘭辭: 「阿妹聞姊來, 出郭相扶將」。

Synonym: 姊姊妹妹。

阿 哥 阿 嫂
a ko a s'ao

My elder brother and his wife.

Synonym: 哥哥嫂嫂。

阿 姑 阿 姨
a ku a i

Father's sister and mother's sister.

Origin: from a verse by Yüan Hào-wên 元好問: 「阿姨襟袖阿姨香」。

Synonym: 姑母姨母。

阿 諛 取 容
a yü ch'ü yung

To flatter and to curry favours—to toady in order to get a living.

阿 媚 奉 承
a mei fêng ch'êng

To flatter and toady—in order to gain a reward.

Synonym: 奉承阿諛。

阿 鼻 地 獄
a pi ti yü

The hell of A Pi—the lowest hell of Buddhism. A Buddhist term.

Origin: from the Ching Chu Tz'ü 淨住子: 「經中廣說此洲地下八大地獄, 最下阿鼻, 四萬由旬」。

阿 其 所 好
a ch'i so hao

To give assent to one's fondness—to be partial to one's favorite.

Origin: from the Mencius 孟子: 「汗不至阿其所好」。

阿 附 權 貴
a fu ch'üan kuei

To cling to the powerful—to attach to powerful and influential persons.

Synonym: 依附權貴。

阿 彌 陀 佛
a mi t'o fu

Amitabha Buddha—often used as an exclamation.

AI

哀¹ 樂 相 生
ai lo hsiang shêng

Grief and joy reciprocally produce each other.

哀 矜 勿 喜
ai ching wu hsi

To extend sympathy rather than be glad—the judge is lenient with the prisoner, when he finds the truth of the case.

Origin: from the Lu Lun 魯論: 「如其得情, 則哀矜而勿喜」。

哀 矜 無 辜
ai ching wu ku

To pardon the innocent—to pardon those who are wrongly imprisoned.

哀 鴻 遍 地
ai hung pien ti

Pitiful wild geese are found everywhere—homeless and distressed people suffering from famine or other disasters are found everywhere; refugees.

Origin: from the Shih Ching 詩經 "Book of Odes": 「鴻雁於飛, 哀鴻嗷嗷」。

Synonym: 哀鴻遍野。

哀 毀 骨 立
ai hui ku li

Grieved, only bones left standing—emaciated with grief because of the death of one's parent.

Origin: from the Shih Shuo 世說: 「王戎雖不備禮, 而哀毀骨立」。

哀 毀 逾 恒
ai hui yü hêng

Unusually sick and thin—in mourning of one's parents.

哀 感 頑 艷
ai kan wan yen

Lamentable and beautiful—said of one's love which moves both dull and clever persons.

Origin: from an essay by Fan Ch'in 繁欽: 「淒入肝脾, 哀感頑艷」。

哀 絲 豪 竹
ai szū hao chu

Sadness of the bamboo instruments—the effect of sad music.

Origin: from a verse by Tu Fu 杜甫: 「酒肉如山又一時, 初絃哀絲動豪竹」。