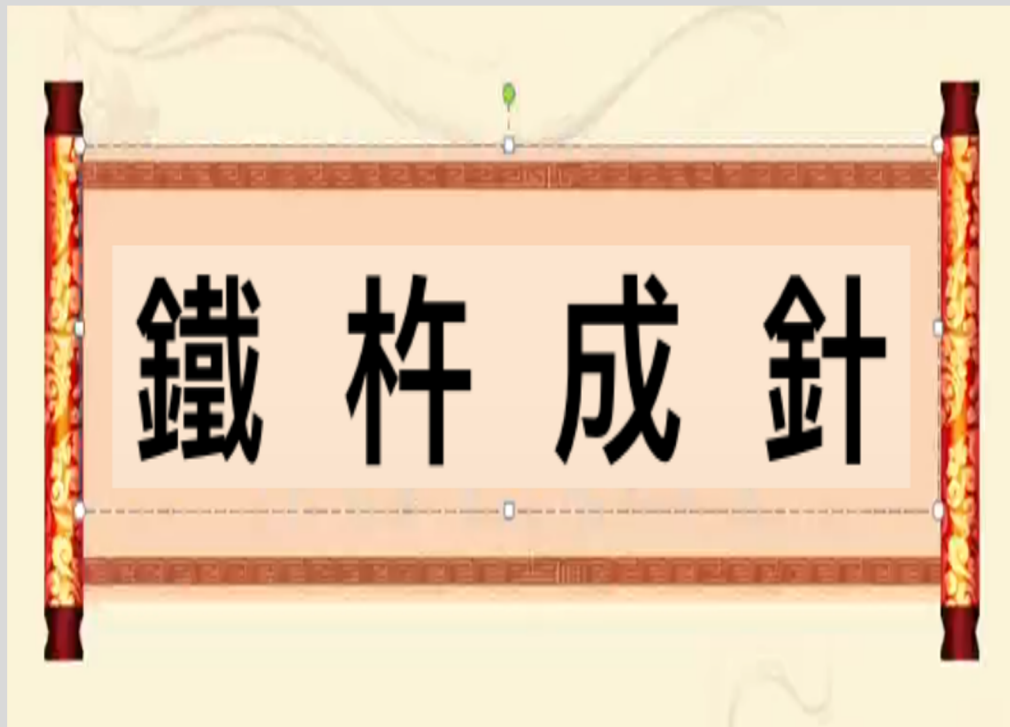


# An Idiom Story: Grinding An Iron Bar Into A Needle \*\*鐵杵成針\*\*

Preparator Fiona Qu



tit3 cyu5

Tiě Chǔ

鐵杵 Pestle

sau3 faa1 zam1

Xiù Huā Zhēn

繡花針 Embroidery Needle

- Author: Zhizhen Zheng 鄭之珍
- Dynasty: Wei and Jin Dynasties 魏晉
- It is roughly translated as “Hard work pays off” in English.



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## Original Text (Classical Chinese 文言文) :

mó zhēn xī zài méi zhōu xiàng ěr shān xià

磨針溪，在眉州象耳山下。

shì chuán lǐ tài bái dú shū shān zhōng wèi chéng qì qū

世傳李太白讀書山中，未成，棄去。

guò xiǎo xī féng lǎo āo fāng mó tiě chǔ wèn zhī yuē

過小溪，逢老媪方磨鐵杵，問之，曰：“欲作針。”

tài bái gǎn qí yì hái zì yán xìng wǔ

太白感其意，還卒業。媪自言姓武。

jīn xī páng yǒu wǔ shì yán

今溪旁有武氏岩。



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- Li Bai, a famous poet of the Tang Dynasty, didn't like to study when he was a child and often was truant
- He would hunt butterflies every and each day
- Little did he know his time would fly away
- Almost quicker than any butterfly friend he had made



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- Motivated by play he found class extremely boring
- He would sit, stir, and spin - sometimes even sleep and be caught snoring
- The boy found that the more he went out to hunt - the less time he had for his homework
- So the boy would fall behind giving up his persistence to keep up with his work



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- Unfocused and unsure - the boy began searching for something to divert
- But when the boy went outside to play - he found something which bewildered him more than anything
- The boy saw a most peculiar thing besides the shore
- That of an elderly lady milling a iron bar against a rock she was hunched over



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- The elderly lady had noticed him and motioned him over
- What could she be doing with that bar - why had she wanted him to come over
- Emanating sound signaled the boy once more - “do not be of two minds boy, make your decision to leave or come over”
- And so the boy would follow her lead as he made his way to her mill and pestle amongst the sea



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- Little did the boy know that this lady was of a strong conviction
- For she had him sit down as she began speaking of her situation
- She told of her misfortunes and that she needed a embroidery needle
- She had but one option that of to grind an iron bar until it could be of complete resemble

mo4  
M6  
磨 mill



## An Idiom Story: Grinding An Iron Bar Into A Needle \*\*鐵杵成針\*\*



- The boy spoke back to the elderly lady
- He said why would anyone do such a thing
- The lady spoke saying she had no other means
- That she hadn't given up on accomplishing her dream

hang4 sam1

Héng Xīn

恆心 Perseverance

kit3 ji4 bat1 se2

Qiè Èr Bú Shě

鍥而不捨 Never Give Up





## An Idiom Story: Grinding An Iron Bar Into A Needle \*\*鐵杵成針\*\*



- She had time and tenacity - for those two things
- Made her most certain she could accomplish almost anything
- The boy found this profoundly confusing
- Perseverance was the key to unlocking anything

saam1 sam1 ji6 ji3

Sān Xīn Èr Yì

三心二意 Be of Two Minds

bun3 tau4 ji4 fai3

Bàn Tú Èr Fèi

半途而廢 Give Up Halfway



## An Idiom Story: Grinding An Iron Bar Into A Needle \*\*鐵杵成針\*\*



- To persevere the boy remembered
- And so back in class the boy would apply his newfound learnings
- He found that he could use what he already knew
- Combined with that of his perseverance to see himself through

ci4 zi1 ji5 hang4

Chí Zhī Yǐ Héng

持之以恆 Persevere



## An Idiom Story: Grinding An Iron Bar Into A Needle \*\*鐵杵成針\*\*



- Finally, the little boy grew up and became an immortal poet. He was Li Bai
- He would go on to inspire and ensure that all others like him received the same treatment
- The impression put upon him by the elderly lady, gave him inspiration to see it in himself - that with determination anything can be done
- Li Bai used this teaching throughout his life, and whenever possible hoped to use its example to help others



# Enlightenment

無論做什麼事情，只要有恆心，一定會成功的，功夫不負有心人。同學們只要在學業上能做到認真、努力、有恆心，一定會獲得好成績的。重視生活中的細節，那將影響你的一生。請牢記：世上沒有做不到的事，關鍵在於你的態度。

No matter what you do, as long as you have perseverance, you will succeed. Everything comes to those who wait. As long as students can be serious, hard-working and persistent in their studies, they will certainly get good grades. Pay attention to the details in your life, which will affect your understanding. Please remember: There is nothing that can't be done in the world, and the key is your attitude. Everyone should succeed should they put in the effort to do so.



# RESOURCES

听故事 学中文 流行成语 - 铁杵磨成针  
(Grinding Needle From A Pestle)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABRWmA7IAQ>

「鐵杵磨針」廣東話成語故事

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF5AhBq5C0A>



# VOCABULARIES

1. <sup>mo4</sup><sub>M6</sub> 磨 = \_\_\_\_\_

2. <sup>tit3 cyu5</sup><sub>Tiě Chǔ</sub> 鐵杵 = \_\_\_\_\_

3. <sup>hang4 sam1</sup><sub>Héng Xīn</sub> 恆心 = \_\_\_\_\_

4. <sup>sau3 faa1 zam1</sup><sub>Xiū Huā Zhēn</sub> 繡花針 = \_\_\_\_\_

5. <sup>kit3 ji4 bat1 se2</sup><sub>Qiè Ēr Bù Shě</sub> 鍥而不捨 = \_\_\_\_\_

6. <sup>ci4 zi1 ji5 hang4</sup><sub>Chí Zhī Yǐ Héng</sub> 持之以恆 = \_\_\_\_\_

7. <sup>saam1 sam1 ji6 ji3</sup><sub>Sān Xīn Ēr Yì</sub> 三心二意 = \_\_\_\_\_

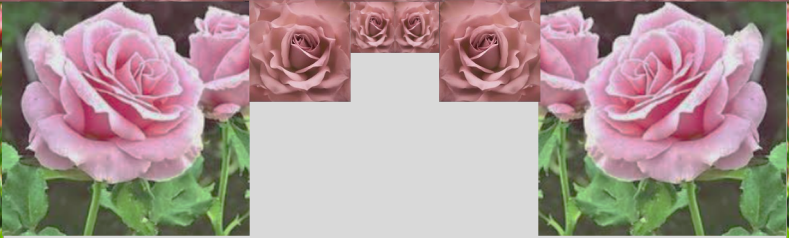
8. <sup>bun3 tau4 ji4 fai3</sup><sub>Bàn Tú Ēr Fèi</sub> 半途而廢 = \_\_\_\_\_



# QUESTIONS

1. Who is the little boy in the story? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the grandma grind on the stone? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does the grandma want to grind the pestle into? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did the little boy become when he grew up?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What does this story tell us?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the antonym for 半途而廢 (giving up halfway) ?  
\_\_\_\_\_





*The End*



*Preparator Fiona Qu*

