



含英  
咀華

## 破釜沉舟



秦末，項羽率軍救趙，西渡漳水，在鉅鹿與秦軍決戰。軍隊渡河後，“皆沉船，破釜甑（音“贈”，蒸食用炊器），燒廬舍，持三日糧，以示士卒必死，無一還心”。（見司馬遷《史記 項羽本紀》）項羽下令砸破全軍的飯鍋，鑿沉所有渡船，燒燬全部營帳，每人更只准帶備三天糧食，以示不勝無歸的決心。結果，楚軍英勇殺敵，殲滅秦軍十萬，活捉秦將王離，為日後推翻秦朝奠定基石。

後以“破釜沉舟”表示下定決心，直幹到底。孫中山先生《號召國民會議之演講》：“要學辛亥的革命志士，同心協力，一往向前，抱定破釜沉舟的大勇氣。”

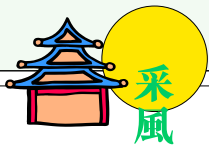
## Burn one's boats/ Cross the Rubicon

A Chinese legend holds that Xiang Yu showed his unflinching determination to overthrow the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) by burning his boats. Strangely enough, another great warrior in the West did the same in ancient Rome.

Julius Caesar (100-44 BC), the well-known Roman general and statesman, became the governor of Gaul in 58 BC. He had since then taken vast amounts of the region's wealth. However, he did little to appease his many rivals. Amongst them was Pompey, also a political strong man with strong military support throughout the provinces. Jealous of Caesar's success and hence eager to cease Caesar's power, he goaded the Senate into ordering Caesar to resign his command in Gaul and demobilise his army in 49 BC.

Caesar was adamant in pressing his honour, even at the price of a civil war. He marched his soldiers across the Rubicon River, the boundary between his province and Italy. That had constituted an act of treason under Roman laws. There he cried out the celebrated remarks “the die is cast”, ruling out any intention of a U-turn. It was further alleged that Caesar ordered his troops to burn all the boats after crossing the river to cut off the escape route. His determination paid off when he defeated Pompey in just three months and became the master of all Italy.

Thus the expressions to “Burn one's boats” or “Cross the Rubicon” mean that someone is acting very firmly and decisively in a way that will not allow him even the slightest chance to change his mind later. For example: “David was determined to quit his job. He burned his boats/crossed the Rubicon when he tendered his resignation letter to his boss.”



采風

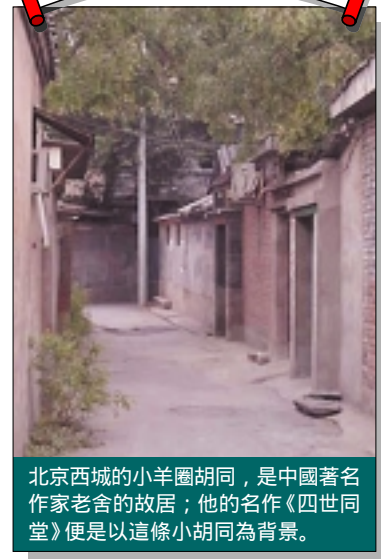
北京城裏最叫人感到親切的，莫過於那一條條曲徑通幽的胡同。有人稱北京的文化為“胡同文化”，實不為過。

“胡同”也就是小街巷，一般認為是蒙古語“水井”的借詞。元代在規劃大都（即今日北京）時，通常是先挖井後建屋，或是預留井的位置再規劃院落的布局，“因井而成巷”，所以“井”和“胡同”關係至為密切。

北京胡同的名目包羅萬有，用以命名的包括機構地方、貿易商品、人物名稱、花鳥蟲魚等，其中許多沿用至今。以機構或地方命名的有“按院胡同”、“貢院胡同”和“水井胡同”；以花鳥蟲魚命名的有“花枝胡同”和“養蜂夾道”；以人物名稱命名的有“賈家胡同”和“定府大街”，還有一些是以吉祥話命名的，如“喜慶胡同”和“壽長胡同”，五花八門。

過去，北京由千百萬大大小小的四合院平排並列地組成。四合院不是背靠背，就是面對面，每排院落間留出的通道就是胡同。胡同縱橫交錯，窮巷深處是無數溫暖的家，每個角落都展示出富有京城韻味的民俗風情，常常叫外地遊客陶醉其中，樂而忘返。

## 胡同拾趣



北京西城的小羊圈胡同，是中國著名作家老舍的故居；他的名作《四世同堂》便是以這條小胡同為背景。