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JE 2

Two sides of one coin

Introduction: different cultures may have different ways to express idioms but

there are two that tell similar meanings to “one coin has two sides” and have

similar expressions in Chinese and English, respectively.

I. Chinese Idiom-福兮祸所伏，祸兮福所倚 fú xī huò suǒ fú, huò xī fú suǒ yǐ.

II. English Idiom-Fortune lies in misfortune, misfortune lies in fortune.

Conclusion: despite different cultures there are similar expressions of life

wisdom and we can benefit from them.

Two sides of one coin

There are plenty of idioms in both Chinese and English, which are used to

express some certain points of view or life wisdom. As the old saying “Do

in Rome as Romans do,” we adapt idioms into different expressions for the

language habits of different cultures, thus two idioms may sound strange in

the other’s language but in fact have the same meaning. Fortunately here are

two looking similar both in Chinese and English, which tell good things and

bad things may come together, just like one coin has two sides.

“福兮祸所伏，祸兮福所倚” is a Chinese idiom to describe situations that

an unfortunate thing comes right after a good thing has happened or

conversely. This idiom is derived from *Laozi,* a book records philosopher

Laozi’s words and deeds. It is often used by older people to exhort youngers

not to be excessively excited when something good happens and to stay

optimistic in hard days. In fact, the idiom teaches us a sober attitude of life.

There is an idiom “Fortune lies in misfortune, misfortune lies in fortune”

having a similar expression in English. The idiom can be traced back to James

Harvey’s hymn and has been expressed differently by many people in the past

time. Since it shares a similar meaning with the idiom above, people usually

use it to encourage friends not to be depressed when bad things happen or not

to be arrogant when they succeed. Actually, when you are still regretful for

past failures, you are halfway to losing the next chance of success. And if you

have been immersing yourself in the last success, how do you pursue the next?

To conclude, what we’ve learned is “Though life ups and downs, we should

go forward with faith and a calm mind.” Thus from the two idioms mentioned,

we can see that despite different cultures there are still similar expressions of

life wisdom and we can enjoy great benefit by reading them and using them in

our life. After all, a good word is better than a good medicine.