



CHINESE PRACTICE

同舟共濟；吳越同舟

cross a river in the same boat; having common interests

(tong2 zhou1 gong4 ji4;
wu2 yue4 tong2 zhou1)

孫武，也可尊稱為孫子、孫武子、兵聖，是中國春秋時期著名軍事家，著有《孫子兵法》十三篇，為後世兵法家所推崇，堪稱國際間最著名的兵學之書。第十一篇「九地」裡，當被問及如何鼓舞將士讓他們齊心為他效力打仗時，孫子回答說戰場是生死之地，若讓軍隊處於非生即死、非贏即敗的情況之下，他們必然會齊心協力求勝。書中孫子說「夫吳人與越人相惡也，當其同舟而濟，遇風，其相救也如左右手。」後來衍生出兩個成語，即「同舟共濟」和「吳越同舟」，字面意思即共乘一條船渡河，比喻無論遇到何種困難，只要面臨危險，人人都會為了求生而忘記舊仇，團結互助。英文中也有“be in the same boat”的諺語，但意思稍有不同。“be in the same boat”指的是人遭遇到相同（一般來講是負面）的處境，但沒有「同舟共濟」隱含的合作的意思。

(台北時報記者古德謙整理)

- ◆ 他們兩人在深山裡迷了路，只能同舟共濟，互助求生。
(The two of them got themselves lost in the mountains, and had to work together to make it out.)
- ◆ 近來經濟不景氣，需要所有公司同仁更加努力，同舟共濟。
(The economy has not been doing so well lately, and we need everyone in the company to pitch in and get us through this difficult time.)

A wall carving in the Bishan Temple on Mt. Bishan in Taipei's Neihu District, taken on Nov 2.

PHOTO: PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES

台北內湖碧山巖開漳聖王廟內的雕刻，攝於十一月二日。

照片：台北時報記者古德謙



英文練習

Be in the same boat

Sun Wu, also known by the honorific titles Sunzi, Master Sun Wu, and the Sage of War, was a famous military strategist from the Spring and Autumn period of ancient China. Sunzi wrote the *Art of War*, a work in 13 chapters that is now revered by military strategists and is the most internationally renowned treatise on military strategy.

In the 11th chapter, *jiudi (Nine Situations)*, Sunzi is asked how best to encourage his armies to fight for him. He replies that battlegrounds are places of life and death, and that if soldiers are placed in a position in which they must either be victorious or die, they will fight for you. In the text, Sunzi writes, 「夫吳人與越人相惡也，當其同舟而濟，遇風，其相救也如左右手。」, meaning “the people of Wu and those of Yue hate each other, yet if they are crossing a river in the same boat and a storm hits them, they will work to save each other, just as the left hand helps the right.” This idea would later form the basis of two

idioms, 同舟共濟 and 吳越同舟, both meaning crossing a river in the same boat. Metaphorically, they mean that people will work together if faced with a common danger, even if they have to put aside old enmities to do so.

In English, we have the phrase “to be in the same boat,” although the meaning is slightly different from the Chinese idioms here. “To be in the same boat” merely means that people are in the same predicament: it does not necessarily imply that they will cooperate with each other to get out of it.

(PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES)

- ◆ It's funny, but I always feel reassured when somebody is in the same boat as me.
(說來可笑，但每次得知他人和我有相同的處境，總是能讓我鬆一口氣。)
- ◆ I know exactly how you feel. I'm in the same boat as you.
(我完全懂你的感覺，我也處於同樣的情況中。)