

梁正宇 刘绍忠 总主编

大学英语通识教程

中西文化阅读 ①

钱 珏 陈继红 主 编



复旦大学出版社

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前 言

《中西文化阅读教程》(1—4册)适用于非英语专业本科生使用,旨在使学生通过阅读拓宽文化视野,初步形成跨文化交际的意识,并培养他们独立思考的能力和广泛阅读的能力。

本套教材分为4册,每册8个单元,每个单元围绕一个与文化相关的主题,包括Section A和Section B两个部分,每个部分各包两篇文章。Section A以思考题为主,以拓展学生的思维能力;Section B与大学英语四、六级考试的长篇阅读相似。Section A中每篇阅读材料的长度控制在500—700个词,Section B中每篇阅读材料的长度控制在900—1200个词,文章难度循序渐进,长度依次递增。编者在编写中非常谨慎地对生僻词汇进行了少量替换与处理,为学生提供了其难易程度均不超过大学英语教学大纲规定的词汇范围。本阅读教程选择的绝大部分文章源于互联网、经典著作或国内外的各种报刊及书籍,选材新颖、题材广泛、体裁多样、信息量大。书中所有文章都是与中西方文化相关的内容,充分体现语言作为文化载体的作用,通过大量阅读让学生了解东西方文化。学生不仅可以欣赏地道的英语文章,培养英语语感,扩大词汇量和拓宽知识面,而且可以在提高阅读能力的同时发展其思辨能力,增强其人文素养。

在本套教材的编写过程中,得到了复旦大学出版社领导和编辑的支持和帮助,编者在此表示最诚挚的谢意!

本教程的编写在内容和形式上都有一些新的尝试,由于编者水平有限,再加上时间仓促等诸多方面的原因,书中肯定还存在很多不足之处,恳请使用本教材的广大读者及同仁多提宝贵的意见和建议,以便再版时得以更正、改进和完善!

编 者

2015年5月

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Unit One

The People and the Land of China

Section A

Directions: *Read the following passages and answer the questions.*

Passage 1

Diverse Land

China is a colossal country with a fantastic variety of landscapes, wildlife, peoples, and customs. It is the most populous nation on Earth — 1.3 billion people live here, or one in five of all humans alive today. Ninety percent of China's population take the ethnic identity “Han”, but there are 55 other ethnic groups in China, each with its own languages, and traditions. Vast areas of the north and west are a barren wilderness, but the crowded east coast is lined with megacities (大城

市), ports, and booming industrial zones. In the southeast are jungles and hot tropical lowlands. To the southwest lies the Plateau of Tibet, an enormous region of rock and ice that meets the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains. Two mighty rivers — the Yangtze and the Yellow River — cut across China to the ocean and provide a vital transport link.

Feeding the nation

Rice was probably first grown in China in around 8500 BC and it is still the main staple food. Rice is so important to Chinese life that one of the most common greetings is “Chi fan le ma?”, which means “Have you eaten rice yet today?”

The Himalayas

Many peaks in this range, known as the “Roof of the World”, soar nearly 20,000 ft (6,000 m) above sea level. Here at Mount Everest (珠穆朗玛峰) base camp in Tibet is where expeditions set off to climb the tallest mountain of them all, which rises to 29,029 ft (8,850 m). Tibetans call it Chomolungma or “Goddess Mother of the World”.

People of Tibet

There are 4.6 million Tibetans in China — half in Tibet and the rest in the nearby Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.

Where in the world

China covers around 3.7 million square miles (9.6 million km²) of land in central and eastern Asia and is the world's third largest country. Its long coastline meets the East China Sea and the South China Sea, which form part of the Pacific Ocean.

Northern desert

Almost one-fifth of China's land is desert. The largest deserts are in the northwest, where sand dunes and rocky plains stretch in all directions. Bactrian camels (双峰驼) are among the few animals that can survive this tough environment. The local Uyghur (维吾尔) people use camels for transport and burn their dung as fuel.

Modern metropolis

Hong Kong is a small island off the coast of southeast China. At night its bright neon glow and glittering skyscrapers are one of China's most famous views. Away from the highrise city center, three-quarters of Hong Kong is forest and mountains.

Miao people

South China is home to around nine million Miao people. There are many different Miao communities, such as the Hmong (赫蒙族), and each dresses differently and wears distinct hair styles and silverwork. Other groups of Miao people live in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Windswept grassland

The treeless hills and plains of northeast China have an extremely harsh climate, with bitterly cold winters and hot, dry summers. Few people inhabit this remote but beautiful land. Most are Mongolian nomads, who herd cattle, sheep, and goats on horseback.

Natural beauty

The stunning scenery of the Li River in Guangxi Province has inspired many of China's greatest writers and artists. The river loops between steep-sided crags (峭壁) draped with lush vegetation, and fertile farmland covers the valley floor. Each peak is given a name that describes its shape, such as Elephant Trunk Hill.

When the far north of China is gripped by fierce snowstorms, its southern provinces might bask in hot sunshine, and while one part of the country suffers from a severe drought, another area may be drenched by torrential rain.

(630 words)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Some foreigners claim that China is the fourth largest country in the world. Is it true or not?

2. What should be done to prevent Northern desert from expanding?
3. Should the forests in Hong Kong be felled to provide room for its growing population?

Passage 2

The People

Chinese society has always been predominantly rural rather than urban, and perhaps 75 percent of the population still lives in the countryside, in villages and small towns, rather than in large cities. The present government of the People's Republic of China takes account of this fact and has decentralized industry and attempted to interfuse it with the rural communes.

The population of China is not easy to calculate. Since population figures formed the basis for taxation, there was a temptation to alter the figures. At times, boys under one year and girls under five were not included. Major discrepancies occur when remote areas such as Tibet and Inner Mongolia were included in one count and omitted in another. Nevertheless, the census for China taken over the centuries is probably more accurate than for most countries.

The population has been traditionally reckoned as consisting of five groups: Han, Chinese; Man, Manchus; Meng, Mongolians; Hui, Muslims; and Zang, Tibetans. The Han, or pure Chinese, constitute probably 94 percent of the total. The government of the PRC has instituted a program of birth control by encouraging late marriages (age twenty-five for women and twenty-eight for men being considered optimum) and by the provision of contraceptive devices and medication. The practical aim ended up as one child per family in the cities, two in the countryside. On the other hand, increase of fertility among the minority ethnic groups is said to be favored by the government.

The Chinese belong to the racial type known as Mongolian, a group which also includes the Koreans, Japanese, Mongolians, Eskimos, and some Native Americans. The type is marked by slightly yellow skin pigmentation, relatively flat

faces, high cheekbones, almond-shaped dark eyes, and black hair. Within this type there are considerable variations between the northern and southern Chinese. Those in the north are taller by an average of two inches, have a ruddier and less yellow complexion, a less-evident almond shape to the eye, and a slightly larger head in proportion to the body than those in the south.

The culinary art has been highly valued in China from ancient times, and here also regional differences are evident. A Chinese proverbial saying points to a sweet taste in the south, a preference for salt in the north, a sour or vinegar taste in the east, and a hot, pungent taste in the west. The west China taste for hot foods has spread to New York and other cities, where menus appear in Sichuan restaurants with the names of the very hot dishes printed in red and the remainder in black, a salutary warning to the unwary foreign guest.

However, the principal regional differences are marked by wide variations in dialect. The written language is held in common and can be read by all scholars, but dialect pronunciation is so different as to make the spoken language mutually unintelligible to natives of, say, Guangzhou and Beijing. Geography has played a large part in the emergence of the dialects. The former official and court language spoken in Beijing — in the past called “Mandarin” and now “the national language” — was used all over the great north China plain, where intercommunication was relatively easy. It was also spoken in the southwest. But the broken nature of the mountainous terrain of south China favored the rise of different dialects. Communication downriver to the sea was much easier than it was over the steep mountains to strange villages in the next valley only a few miles away. Language thus developed in different linguistic directions and at varying rates in small isolated communities. There are said to be 108 dialects in the province of Fujian alone. The spread of modern popular education in both the PRC and Taiwan Province has led to an almost universal use of the national spoken language among a large majority of the

population of both sections of China. This fortunately makes secure a common heritage for all Chinese in the future.

(684 words)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Is it a good phenomenon that an increasing number of rural people choose to work in cities?
2. Is the one-child policy out of date now?
3. Is the disappearance of some dialects a good phenomenon in China?

Section B

Directions: *In this section, you are going to read two passages. There are ten statements attached to each of them. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter. Answer the questions by marking the corresponding letter.*

Passage 1

Group Cohesiveness in Contemporary China

- [A] China is the only country with a civilization stretching back continuously some five thousand years. Chinese civilization was built on agriculture; generations of peasants were tied to the land on which they lived and worked. Except in times of war and famine, there was very little mobility, either socially or geographically.
- [B] The agrarian nature of ancient Chinese society accounts for the cultural traits and values that came to characterize that society and that still characterize it today. Peasant families were cohesive units in which all members joined in the work of planting, raising, and harvesting. Often the entire population of a village was a clan or family group. Thus, family and clan membership was a key element in each peasant's identity. The collective (group-oriented) nature of Chinese values is largely the product of thousands of years of living and working together on the land.
- [C] The principal cohesive groups (primary groups) within Chinese society today

are family, school, work unit, and local community. The daily life of virtually every Chinese is deeply embedded in his or her relationships with other people in these groups. Very few significant relationships occur beyond the boundaries of these primary groups.

[D] At first glance the relationships within a Chinese family may seem similar to those within a Western family. But closer observation reveals important differences. Chinese parents are highly protective of their children. Chinese children, even as adolescents, do not expect to earn their own money by means of part-time jobs, and they make no important decisions about their own daily comings and goings. For example, parents often decide what kind of interest groups their children should join. Even grown children depend on their parents' financial support until they find employment; they live in their parents' household until they are married, if not longer. Filial piety is one of the principal virtues counseled by Confucius; this virtue is not an abstraction but one that continues to be played out on a daily basis as children — including adult sons and daughters — demonstrate again and again that they are obedient to their parents and solicitous (挂念的) of their welfare.

[E] Extended families in China are remarkably cohesive. Households that include three generations, though rapidly disappearing (especially in urban areas), are still far more common in China than in the West. Family-centered values and physical closeness combine to ensure that most Chinese have relationships with the members of their extended families that are durable and that involve frequent instances of aid and support being given and received.

[F] In school at any level, Chinese students are enmeshed (缠住) in another important network — that of peers. It is true that in Western countries peer relationships among young people are intense too, but there is an important difference. In China, school children remain members of the same small group