

梁正宇 刘绍忠 总主编

大学英语通识教程

中西文化阅读 ③

杨 军 梁正宇 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

Ancient Chinese Science and Technology

Section A

Directions: Read the following passages and answer the questions.

Passage 1

Four Great Inventions of Ancient China

Papermaking, gunpowder, printing and the compass are four ancient inventions by Chinese people that have had a huge impact on the entire world.

Paper Making

The invention of paper greatly contributed to the spread and development of civilization. Before its invention, bones, tortoise shells (龟甲), and bamboo slips

were all used as writing surfaces, but as Chinese civilization developed they proved themselves unsuitable because of their bulk and weight. Hemp fiber (大麻纤维) and silk were used to make paper but the quality was far from satisfactory. Besides, these two materials could be better used for other purposes, so it was not practical to make paper from them.

In AD 105, Cai Lun, a eunuch (太监) during the Eastern Han Dynasty, invented paper from worn fishnet, bark and cloth. These raw materials could be easily found at a much lower cost, so large quantities of paper could be produced.

The making technique was exported to Korea in AD 384. A Korean monk then took this skill with him to Japan in AD 610. During a war between the Tang Dynasty and the Arab Empire, the Arabs captured some Tang soldiers and paper making workers. Thus, a paper factory was set up by the Arabs. In the 11th century the skill was carried to India when Chinese monks journeyed there in search of Buddhist sutras (佛经). Through the Arabs, Africans and Europeans then mastered the skill. In the latter half of the 16th century, this skill was brought to America. By the 19th century, when paper factories were set up in Australia, paper making had spread to the whole world.

Gunpowder

The birth of gunpowder was quite accidental. It was first invented accidentally by alchemists (炼丹士) while attempting to make an elixir (灵药) of immortality. It was a mixture of sulphur, saltpeter, and charcoal.

At the end of the Tang Dynasty, gunpowder was being used in military affairs. During the Song and Yuan Dynasties, frequent wars spurred the development of cannons, and fire-arrows shot from bamboo tubes. In the 12th and 13th centuries, gunpowder spread to the Arab countries, then Greece, other European countries, and finally all over the world.

Printing Technique

Inspired by engraved name seals, Chinese people invented fixed-type engraved printing around AD 600. The skill played an important role in the Song Dynasty but its shortcomings were apparent. It was time-consuming to engrave a model, not easy to store and revise errors.

During the reign of Emperor Ren Zong of the Northern Song Dynasty, Bi Sheng invented the moveable, reusable clay type after numerous tests. Single types were made and picked out for printing certain books. These types could be used again and again for different books. Because of the large number of different characters in the Chinese written language, this technique did not have a dramatic impact at the time. However, today, this typesetting technique is regarded as a revolution in the industry. About 200 years later, this moveable-type technique spread to other countries and boosted the development of world civilization.

Compass

During the Warring States period, a device called Si Nan became the forerunner of the compass. Si Nan was a ladle-like magnet on a plate with the handle of the ladle pointing to the south.

In the 11th century, tiny needles made of magnetized steel were invented. One end of the needle points north while the other points south. The compass was thus created. The compass greatly improved a ship's ability to navigate over long distances. It was not until the beginning of the 14th century that compass was introduced to Europe from China.

(629 words)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do we say that the Four Great Inventions in ancient China have had a huge impact on the entire world?

2. Why did the director Zhang Yimou choose the Four Great Inventions as the main thread of the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics?
3. How would you introduce the Four Great Inventions to your foreign friends?

Passage 2

Zhang Heng and the Seismograph (地动仪)

The first seismograph of the world was invented by Zhang Heng, a famous scientist in the Eastern Han Dynasty. Zhang Heng was from Nanyang in Henan Province. He studied diligently, and was especially keen on astronomy, calendars and mathematics. As a whole, Zhang Heng can be regarded as a knowledgeable and talented scientist.

From the earliest times, the Chinese were concerned with the destructive force of earthquakes. It was recorded in Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian* (《史记》) that in 780 BC an earthquake had been powerful enough to divert the courses of three rivers. The ancient Chinese did not understand that earthquakes were caused by the shifting of tectonic plates (构造板块) in the Earth's crust; instead, the people of the ancient Zhou Dynasty explained them as disturbances with cosmic Yin and Yang (宇宙阴阳), along with the heavens' displeasure with acts committed (or the common peoples' grievances ignored) by the current ruling dynasty. These theories were ultimately derived from the ancient text of the *Yijing* (《易经》).

During the Han Dynasty, many learned scholars — including Zhang Heng — believed in the “oracles (预言) of the winds”. These oracles of the occult (超自然) observed the direction, force, and timing of the winds, to speculate about the operation of the cosmos and to predict events on Earth. These ideas influenced Zhang Heng's views on the cause of earthquakes. Going against the earlier theories proposed by his fellow Chinese and contemporary Greeks, Zhang Heng believed that earthquakes were caused by wind and air.

In AD 132, Zhang Heng presented to the Han court what many historians consider to be his most impressive invention, the first seismometer. It was named

Houfeng Didong Yi (an instrument for measuring the seasonal winds and the movements of the Earth).

The description in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* (《后汉书》) says that it was a large bronze vessel, about 2 meters in diameter and looked like a big cup with a lid. The surface of the instrument was cast with eight dragons, whose bodies were downward vertically and heads pointed to eight directions (east, south, west, north, southeast, northeast, southwest, and northwest), and each dragon had a copper ball in the mouth. On the ground vertically below the mouths of dragons, there were eight copper toads raising their heads and opening their mouths. The inner side of the seismograph was elaborately constructed. When an earthquake occurring at that direction, to which the dragon pointed would open its mouth, and the ball would fall into the toad's mouth, automatically indicating the earthquake occurring at that direction.

One day in AD 138, the dragon pointing to the west expelled its ball. As expected, an earthquake had occurred on that day in Longxi four hundred miles away from Luoyang. It was the first time that mankind had used the instrument to sense an earthquake. This was essential for the Han government in sending quick aid and relief to regions devastated by this natural disaster.

Apart from the Seismograph, Zhang Heng also invented the first water-driven armillary sphere (水运浑天仪) in the world to measure the position of celestial bodies. With so many contributions, Zhang Heng was highly esteemed by the Chinese people. A ring of hills on the moon was named after him.

(588 words)

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the intention of the first seismograph invented by Zhang Heng?
2. What is the first seismograph's basic principle of operation?
3. Would you please list some other achievements in ancient Chinese astronomy?

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

The Chinese Abacus

- [A] The abacus, a unique counting tool invented by ancient Chinese people, has faded out in most areas of China, as calculators and computers are widely used in modern times. But in the long history until only twenty years ago, the abacus has long been an important calculation tool for every household, not to mention accountants and dealers.
- [B] The abacus is a rectangular wooden frame. Inside the frame, there are usually at least seven vertical rods and a horizontal beam. On each rod there are two rounded beads in the upper deck and five beads at the bottom. Each rod represents a different numerical digit (数位). To use the abacus well, one must recite a concise formula by which the calculations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division can all be simplified into the acts of moving the beads.
- [C] Beads knock, fingers flutter, and after a few seconds, the result comes out. In the past, in addition to the ability to write elegant brush pen characters,

another required skill for businessmen was to use an abacus skillfully. Whenever there was a calculation, there was an abacus. The earliest known written documentation of the Chinese abacus dates to the 2nd century BC.

[D] When did the Chinese invent the abacus? Scholars of China and other countries have been working at this question ever since Chinese Qing Dynasty, but still there is no set answer. Up to the present day, there have been three camps of scholars holding different opinions.

[E] Firstly, starting in the Qing Dynasty, a group of people advocated that there had been documents on abaci since the Han Dynasty. Their proof was the book *A Gleaning of Arithmetic* (Shu Shu Ji Yi) by the mathematician Xu Yue. In this book, Xu recorded fourteen ways of calculation, among which there was a description of a way of computation by moving beads within three beams.

[F] Then there came a second camp who believed that the abacus was invented in the middle period of the Yuan Dynasty and became widely used in the early Ming Dynasty. They cited the note of a Yuan writer named Tao Zongyi, who portrayed in his book that “unlike the newly-bought servants, the experienced ones were just like abacus beads; they wouldn’t move unless you poked them to.” It demonstrated that the using of the abacus was probably very common at that time.

[G] As the new discoveries on the old materials emerged, there appeared another assertion about the time of the abaci’s origin. Their proof is that, in the famous long scroll, *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*, painted by Zhang Zeduan during the Song Dynasty, an abacus is clearly seen lying beside an account book and a doctor’s prescription. Since the design of the abacus in the scroll looks like a very mature piece, the origin time of the abacus can be brought forward to the prosperous Tang Dynasty.

[H] The Chinese abacus family includes a great number of interesting and rare

members. Every treasure of a particular color, material and shape is the essence of the craftsman's wisdom. The materials used for producing abaci include ivory, elephant bone, rosewood, ox horn, bronze, iron, bamboo and so on. Below are some remarkable pieces of abacus work.

- [I] The echeloned (梯形的) abaci use rhombic (菱形的) beads, and have only one bead above the horizontal beams. This system can, on the one hand, reduce errors, and on the other, avoid the trouble of resetting the same abacus over and over again. At the same time, it serves as an illustration of a motto that Chinese intellectuals used to put on their table for self-motivation, because the set of the abaci forms a shape of a ladder, which symbolizes the drive to go higher and higher in one's studies.
- [J] The abacus inlaid (镶嵌) in a ring is a relic of the Chinese Qing Dynasty, and is made of pure silver. Inlaid in a ring like a decoration, the size of the abacus is $1\text{ cm} \times 0.5\text{ cm}$. It has seven rods and on each rod there are seven beads. More surprisingly, the beads can be moved easily and smoothly along the silver rods. For operating this tiny abacus, fingertips are too big. However, this is no problem for this abacus's primary user — the ancient Chinese lady, for she only needs to pick one from her many hairpins.
- [K] The abacus with rubber beads was made in the Qing Dynasty. Why did ancient Chinese craftsmen use rubber instead of wood as the raw material for the beads? Researchers have found that they did not simply want to be different. Being elastic, the beads will not produce any noise, even when many people are calculating simultaneously. The rubber-bead abacus is also a good choice when computations need to be done during the night, when any noise will be amplified. Through a small abacus, the Chinese virtue of respecting others is manifested.
- [L] The bi-directional abacus has two beams to divide the rectangle into three