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# Talking About China (II)

一个西方人眼中的中国 (II)



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(II)



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## INTRODUCTION

*Talking about China* was one of my first books about China, where I have now lived for almost 17 years. Very popular especially among foreigners and the Chinese who like to read English, the booklet was ready for its third reprint when the publisher decided to produce a completely new book. Of course, I agreed, because in the six years since the first edition, China has followed her drastic evolution, and I have continued to write about China.

What is the special interest of this bilingual collection of articles? On the one hand, *Talking about China (II)* may serve as a textbook for Chinese readers who want to improve their English, or for non-Chinese people studying Chinese language. As English for me is also a second language, my style is simple and easily accessible. Thanks to the professional English polisher,



## 前言

我已经在中国居住了将近17年，《一个西方人眼中的中国》是我写的有关中国的第一批书之一。这本书大受读者欢迎，尤其是外国人和喜欢看英文的中国读者，因此到第三次重印时，出版社决定出一本新书。我欣然同意，因为第一版出版后的六年里，中国一直迅猛发展，其间我也一直没有停笔。

这本中英对照的《一个西方人眼中的中国》有什么特别呢？一方面，它可以作为中国读者提高英语的教材，或者作为外国人学习中文的教材。由于英语对于我本人而言也是一门外语，因此我采用简洁易懂的文风。经过英文专家的修改，本书的语言达到了准确无误。内容方面也力求多样，时而幽默，时而讽刺，因为我们都知道寓教于乐是一个古老的教育原则。另一方面，这些文章可以让读者有机会见识一下中国是如何迅猛发展的，中国的确是

the language should be correct. On the one hand, the content is varied, sometimes humorous, sometimes satirical, since we all know that learning through fun is an old pedagogical principle. On the other hand, the reading of these articles provides a chance to see how rapidly China—a rather unpredictable country—has changed. In this aspect, the book shows that China is a country on the move, and this can be felt in the following pages.

Much has been written about China, and the eyes of the world are focused on this huge country, especially with the Olympics coming to Beijing in 2008. This work offers a glance at China from one set of Western eyes; but having lived in China since 1991 and observing her daily advances, would I not be also considered an insider? May this reading offer you a channel for reflection, communication, and exchange.

Lisa Carducci

2008

个不可预测的国家。从这个角度来看，本书展示了中国是个不断发展的国家；读者可以在后面的文章中体会到这一点。

关于中国的作品很多，全世界都在关注这个大国，尤其是当北京即将举办2008奥运会之际。虽然本书描述的是一个西方人眼中的中国，但是，我从1991年起就在中国居住，一直关注着中国日新月异的发展，人们是否可以不把我视为老外？希望本书成为思考、沟通和交流的一个渠道。

李莎·卡尔杜齐

2008

## **1. Beijing's Turn Has Come!**

In 1994, I was among the thousands of Beijingers who had spent a sleepless night, waiting for the International Olympic Committee to announce its choice of host city for the 2000 Olympics. Despite feeling betrayed, like so many others, when Sydney won over Beijing, I realized that because Beijing would bid again, more had been gained than lost. To win the Olympic bid, China's capital city would need to accelerate its development. Achieving the improvements and modernization of the bidding period would have taken another five or ten years otherwise. So wasn't it a success in terms of the entire population getting to enjoy a more modern and comfortable lifestyle sooner than expected?

Later, when Beijing bid for the 2008 Games, national and Western media believed that the Chinese capital city stood a much better chance to host the Olympics than it did seven years earlier. It was much better prepared, and the two votes missing earlier would not escape again.

The city has changed beyond recognition. Efforts were made to update the infrastructure, improve the environment, and step up the construction of satellite towns. The city strived to develop its telecom, transportation, commercial, financial, tourist, real-estate and information sectors. Sometimes it seemed to me

## 轮到北京了！

1994年，我和其他成千上万的北京人一样度过了一个不眠之夜，等待着国际奥组委宣布2000年奥运会的主办国。结果是悉尼胜出。虽然和许多人一样我感到很失望，但转念一想，北京还会继续申办，这一次失败也许收获更大。中国的首都要想申奥成功就要加速发展。如果没有申奥，首都要想有同样的发展可能得再等上五到十年。对于老百姓来说，早点享受到更现代、更舒适的生活不是更好吗？

后来，当北京申办2008年奥运会时，国内和西方媒体都认为，中国首都现在申奥成功的机率比七年前高得多。因为它准备得更充分了，上次差的两票这回肯定能赢回来。

北京这座城市变得几乎让人认不出来了。从基础设施的更新到环境的改善、卫星城的建立，这座城市在电信、交通、商业、金融、旅游、房产和信息领域都加快了发展。有时候那些公寓楼和办公楼就好像一夜之间从土里钻出来似的。

一些大建筑项目让老北京旧貌换新颜。例如，王府井商业街被改造成了霓虹闪烁的步行街。街上有电子音乐喷泉、200多家商店，包括亚洲最大的购物中心东方广场。其

that apartment buildings and office buildings had grown out of the soil overnight.

Major construction projects gave the old city a new look at that time. For instance, the commercial street of Wangfujing was made into a pedestrian plaza, with better lighting, electronic musical fountains, and 200 stores including the Oriental Plaza, the largest shopping center of its kind in Asia. Other achievements included the Beijing Book Center, International Financial Street (Chinese Wall Street), the Badaling Expressway to the Great Wall, and the Capital International Airport.

People who have been living in Beijing for the last two decades may find it amusing to look back on all these changes, as I do. I recently stumbled across on an article of mine published in *Beijing Review* in June 2001, "Nine reasons why I think Beijing should host the 2008 Games." I think reading it reminds us of the last effervescent seven years and shows us the rapid progress the city has accomplished. Some of the objectives have already even been surpassed; while others, such as dealing with language barriers, have yet to be fully achieved.

**1. Improved natural environment.** Beijing has been renewed and made green, with fresher air. In 1998 and 1999, the municipal government released 69 urgent measures to reduce coal and fuel emissions, which are the main causes of air pollution in the capital. Thousands of vehicles have been reported un-serviceable or have been equipped with non-polluting engines. After only one year of effort, the air quality has seen remarkable improvement. Blue skies have returned and citizens can feel the difference when they breathe.

**2. Telecommunications.** The internet, which not so long ago was unknown, is everywhere now, and the number of users

他一些主要成绩有，北京图书大厦、国际金融街（中国的“华尔街”）、八达岭高速公路、首都国际机场。

但凡在北京居住了20年的，回过头看这些变化都会觉得很欣慰，我就是这样。最近我无意中看到了自己2001年6月在《北京周报》发表的一篇文章：“九个我认为北京应该主办2008年奥运会的理由。”让我们来回顾一下在这令人兴奋的7年中北京的飞速发展。其中一些目标已经被超越，其他一些比如语言障碍问题，还有待于更好地解决。

1. 自然环境的改善。北京更新了、城市更绿了、空气更新鲜了。1998和1999年，市政府颁布了69道紧急措施，减少城市空气的主要污染源——煤和燃油的排放。成千上万的机动车辆被限制上路或者装上了非污染引擎。经过一年的努力，空气质量明显提高。人们又可以看到蓝天、呼吸到比较新鲜的空气了。

2. 通信。英特网，不久前还不太为人所知，如今已经遍地开花了，而且用户数在以每6个月翻倍的速度增长。同样，固定电话和手机用户数也在猛长。奥运期间，媒体将用最先进的科学技术向全世界报道。

3. 交通。北京有五条环线路。9400多辆公交汽车，每年乘客量达50亿人次。新地铁路线已经完工，连接原有线路，更多地地铁线路正在建设当中。5年之内，70%的居民准备买私家车。

4. 国际活动。每年北京都要组织许多重大活动，如1995年举办的第四届国际妇女大会、2000年举办的中非会议、有600名成员的“加拿大参观团”，以及亚运会等体育

doubles every six months. It's the same story for fixed and mobile telephones. During the Olympics, the media will have all the most-modern technology for transmitting their reports to the whole world.

**3. Transit.** Beijing has five ring roads. Some 9,400 buses transport more than 5 billion passenger-times yearly. New subway lines have been completed and connected to existing sections, and further lines are under construction. Before five years are up, 70 percent of local families plan to buy their own car.

**4. International events.** Each year Beijing organizes major events, like the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the China-Africa Meeting 2000, the visit of the 600-member "Team Canada," and sport events such as the Asian Games, etc. It has the experience and the necessary facilities.

**5. English.** More and more taxi drivers and other public employees are studying English and are eager to practice their new language skills with foreign customers. They want to be ready, they say, for the Olympics in 2008. The language barrier has always been the main obstacle for foreign visitors. It should be removed by and large by the time of the Games.

**6. Green Beijing.** I realized long ago how green Beijing was compared to other large cities in the world that I have visited. Vegetation coverage in Beijing will reach 40 percent, providing an average of 10 square meters of green space per resident. "Not One Centimeter Uncovered" is not merely a slogan.

**7. Water.** The 30 rivers and 26 lakes in and around the city and moats around the Forbidden City were cleaned up in 2000. The drainage system is now defined by clear water and green banks. Ducks and swans have already returned.

**8. Heritage.** China has introduced laws to protect the



盛会。北京具备了相应的经验和设施。

5. 英语。越来越多的出租车司机和其他服务行业员工都在学习英语，并非常希望用新的语言和外国客人交流。按他们的话说就是，为2008年奥运做准备。对外国游客来说，语言始终是一个主要障碍，相信到08年奥运会的时候这个问题将得到基本解决。

6. 绿色北京。很早以前我就觉得北京比我去过的其他大城市绿化要好。北京的植被覆盖率将达到40%，平均每个居民能享受10平米的绿地。“绿化每一寸地”不再仅仅是口号。

7. 水。城内或绕城的30条河流和26个湖泊以及环绕紫禁城的护城河都在2000年被清理干净了。如今北京城的水系流淌的是清水，岸边绿草茵茵。河面上又能看到鸭子和天鹅了。

8. 遗产。在如今城市建设的大环境下，中国制定了保护城市历史遗产的法律。规划者必须遵守规定保护古街道和古建筑。北京受保护的地区占老北京城的37%。北京仍有4550条胡同。被选择改造的街道很多，它们既保持了建筑物原貌，又给旅游者提供乐趣。和罗马一样，北京新旧建筑和谐并存。奥运期间游客可能只有时间粗略地参观一下北京，但很多人肯定会再回来。

9. 奥运精神。民众的支持是成功申奥的必须条件。而在北京几乎每一个人都支持。发达国家申办奥运会意味着大投入小利润，对发展中国家来说则是一次发展的机会。巴黎和多伦多也同时申办了08年奥运会，但是我的一些法