英汉对照
名人故事

逸云选编

The English-Chinese Bilingual Stories of the Famous Persons

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科学家和发明家

Scientists and Inventors

Morse: He Linked Every Corner of the World Up

Morse was born at Charlestown, Massachusetts, U. S. A., on the 27th April, 1791. His father was a Congregational minister of that town, and a man whose upright character and independence of mind had won for him universal respect. In no sense of the word a wealthy man, he was able, by careful economies, to send his three sons all to Yale University.

During the year 1809, Morse attended his first lecture on electricity. The subject, as taught by Day, intrigued his imagination enormously. He could think and dream of nothing but electricity. But electricity, then in its infancy, offered no possible openings for a career, so young Morse, who possessed very distinct artistic ability, decided to become a portrait painter.

Soon after his graduation from Yale, Morse met Washington Allston, then the best-known portraitist of the

United States. With Allston he came to England during 1811, returning to Boston four years later a fully equipped master of his chosen craft. Sitters were hard to find in Boston, so Morse set out on a trip through the eastern states, taking commissions for portraits on the way. During this venture he met and married, in 1818, Miss Lucretia Walker, of Concord. Until 1825 Morse flourished greatly, building up for himself a substantial reputation as an artist. Suddenly, however, his wife died, and the mainspring of his ambition was broken.

He had a family of three young children to support, so he continued painting in a desultory fashion. During 1827 his mind was again turned towards electricity by his attending a series of lectures on the subject in New York. In 1829 he journeyed once more to Europe in order to perfect himself as a painter by three years' further study.

In the autumn of 1832 he traveled home in the company of several scientists. One of them asked him in the course of conversation, "Is the velocity of electricity reduced by the length of its conducting wire?" Morse instantly recalled Benjamin Franklin's experiment, which showed that the time taken for a current to traverse several miles of wire was too minute to be measured. He thought this over for a few

seconds. Then, suddenly, the whole idea of an electrical telegraph flashed into his mind.

On his return to America, Morse more or less gave up his profession in order to devote himself to the working out of his great idea. For three years he was often reduced to starvation. But fortunately he got a post in New York University. And later his colleague, Leonard Gale became his collaborator. At last, on the 2nd September, 1837, a successful experiment was made with 1,700 feet of wire, which was stretched round and round Morse's studio. In fact, the success of the trial exceeded the inventor's wildest hopes. The telegraph came into being.

After years' great efforts, lines were laid from city to city. And later the "Morse telegraph", as it was called, began to be installed in Europe. Railway companies and war departments were the first to appreciate the services offered by the telegraph.

The public regarded the invention rather suspiciously, and to the cautious, commonsense men of mid-nineteenth century industrialism anything to do with electricity seemed rather a joke than otherwise. However, a case changed their attitude unexpectedly. A particularly brutal and senseless murder was

committed at Slough, and the murderer left by a train for Paddington before a hue and cry could be raised.

The Great Western Railway, however, had a telegraph line installed between Slough Station and Paddington, over which a description of the murderer was flashed, and he found the police awaiting him when the train drew into the London terminus. Without the aid of the telegraph, it is almost certain that he would have escaped. His arrest caught the popular attention, and completely broke down the great and unreasonable prejudice which had existed against the telegraph.

Unlike many other inventions, Morse reaped the rewards of his labors in the shape of a handsome fortune. For many years he continued to interest himself in telegraph enterprises, being associated with Professor Henry, among others, in gradually improving and perfecting his invention. He lived to see a telegraph line span the North American continent, and a submarine cable link America with England. Decorated and honored by many governments, universities, and public bodies, Samuel Morse died on the 2nd April, 1872.

莫尔斯：他将四海联为一体

莫尔斯于1791年4月27日出生在美国马萨诸塞州的查尔斯城。他的父亲是当地的一位公理会牧师，为人正直、思想独立，周围的人都对他十分敬重。他父亲无论如何算不上富有，但凭着精打细算，把三个儿子都送进了耶鲁大学。

1809年，莫尔斯上了他的第一堂电学课。这门由杰利米亚·戴主讲的课程大大激发了他的想象力。他白天想的、晚上梦的全是电学。但在那时，电学还处于起步阶段，提供不了什么工作机会；而年轻的莫尔斯又在艺术方面才华出众，于是他决心成为一名肖像画家。

从耶鲁毕业后不久，莫尔斯遇见了当时全美最著名的肖像画家华盛顿·阿斯顿。1811年，他和阿斯顿一道去英格兰待了四年，返回波士顿时，他已经是一名训练有素的绘画好手了。在波士顿，人体模特很难找，于是，莫尔斯动身远行，穿越东部各州，沿途替人画像赚取佣金。1818年，他在冒险途中遇见了来自康科德镇的卢奎西娅·沃克小姐，并与之结为夫妇。从那之后一直到1825年，莫尔斯的事业左右逢源，建立起了作为艺术家的显赫名声。然而，他的妻子骤然离世，他一展宏图的动力也随之瓦解。

家里有三个幼子要他养活，于是他继续潦草作画。1827年，他在纽约旁听了一系列关于电学的讲座，心中重新燃起了对于电学的渴望。1829年，为了磨炼绘画技艺，他再度远赴欧洲，开始了为期三年的进修。

1832年秋季，他和几位科学家一道返回故乡。其中的一位在谈话中问他："导线的长度会使电的速度降低吗？"莫尔斯立即想到了本杰明·富兰克林的实验，实验中的电流通过了数英里长的导线，经历的时间却短暂到无法测量。他想了几秒钟，接着，心里赫然闪过了电报的想法。

回到美国之后，莫尔斯多少放弃了本职工作，专心实践起了这个伟大的想法。他在此后的三年里常常食不果腹，但终于有幸在纽约大学获得了一个职位。后来，他的同事雷纳德·盖尔与他合作，两人终于在1837年9月2日用1 700英尺的导线进行了一次成功的实验，导线围着莫尔斯的画室摆了好几周。实验的成功超出了发明者最大胆的期望，电报诞生了。

经过人们几年的辛勤努力，电报线在城市之间铺设开来。后来，人们在欧洲安装了被称为"莫尔斯电报"的装置。铁路公司和国防部门最先使用了电报。

公众对这项新发明满腹狐疑，时值19世纪中期的工业社会，在那些谨小慎微、囿于常识的人们眼中，和电有关的一切都只是笑话而已。然而，一起案件却出乎意料地改变了他

们的观点。在斯劳发生了一次格外残忍、毫无意义的谋杀案，还没等人发现，杀手就已经登上火车，逃往帕丁顿。

然而，大西部铁路公司已经在斯劳和帕丁顿车站之间架设了一条电报线路，杀手的信息转眼便被传了过去。火车驶进伦敦站时，杀手发现警察已经在守株待兔了。如果不是电报的协助，罪犯多半已经逃之夭夭。他的被捕引起了公众的注意，之前对于电报毫无理由的巨大偏见也随之一扫而空。

与许多其他发明不同的是，莫尔斯的努力得到了丰厚的经济回报。多年以后，他的兴趣还保持在电报事业，他和亨利教授等人共事，逐渐提高并完善了他的这项发明。他在有生之年见证了电报线路贯通北美大陆，还目睹了海底电缆连接美洲和英格兰。许多政府、大学和公共组织对莫尔斯授予了勋章和荣誉。1872 年 4 月 2 日，塞缪尔·莫尔斯与世长辞。

（高天羽　译）