

Read About China

阅读中国

主编 李雪顺



高等教育出版社
Higher Education Press

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前言

作为语言学习者,学好别人的语言、了解别人的文化是他的任务;作为社会主义未来的建设者和接班人,更深刻地认知自己的文化、向别人介绍自己的文化,则既是一种义务,更是一种素质和修养。阿里巴巴网站创始人马云中学时的地理老师,就曾经对他的同学们讲,要学好地理,更要学好英语,不然,当有外国人问你中国地理历史而你无法用英文介绍的时候,你就会给中国人丢脸。马云第一次到美国的时候,在西雅图第一家网络公司的电脑上敲进去 Chinese 这个单词,搜索结果竟然是 no data (没有数据),除了当时的互联网资源本身稀少之外,中国文化不为外人了解是相当重要的原因。

其实,时至今日,中国文化不为外人了解的状况并没有得到根本的改变,因为它太丰富、太博大精深了。而这个现象背后的另一个原因也已引发了许多学者的思考和忧虑,那就是要介绍和推广自己的文化的时候,出现了“中国文化集体失语症”和“中国文化缺失症”。很多青年学者、专门翻译人才以及当代大学生等群体面对英语文化显得从容不迫,表达起来游刃有余。他们了解“麦当劳”(McDonald)、“肯德基”(KFC; Kentucky Fried Chicken)和“圣诞节”(Christmas),却不知道怎么说“包子”(steamed stuffed bun)、“馒头”(steamed bread)和“孔夫子”(Confucius)。主要是因为,从小学到大学的英语学习材料,主要涉及的都是 New York (纽约), Christmas (圣诞节)和 Valentine's Day (圣瓦伦丁节; 情人节),却少有读到过 National People's Congress (全国人民代表大会), CPPCC (中国人民政治协商会议)和 Chinese duck (鸳鸯)。

因此,很有必要编写一本关于中国文化的英语学习材料,使学生既能学习英语语言知识,更能加深对中国文化的认识 and 了解,从而提高他们用英语表达中国文化的能力。Read About China 正是这样的英语读物,相信通过一段时间的认真学习,学生必然会被激发起用英语表达中国文化的兴趣和激

情,同时也大大增强和提高他们用英语表达中国文化的自信和水平。

本书选择了有关中国历史文化和习俗的各类英语文章共 14 篇,组成 7 个单元,基本上可供一个学期使用,也适合于英语爱好者自学使用。这些文章选自国内外英语媒体,内容真实,为广大学生所熟悉。撰写这些文章的既有中国人,也有外国人,他们之间文风上的差异正好可供学生比较和鉴别。文前和文后的练习题主要是检验和巩固学生所学的内容,题型与大学英语四六级考试的尽量吻合,这样做有利于学生更好地学习英语语言知识。由此看来,这本书真正让学生既能学习英语语言知识,又能掌握和了解中国文化。

在本书的编写过程中,在得知本书的编写目的是让学生增强用英语表达中国文化的能力的时候,国内外很多专家学者给予了充分的肯定和赞赏,新加坡南洋理工大学张军博士、美国查尔斯顿大学刘国力博士、纽约州立大学张宇博士等专家还提出了很好的意见和建议。还有作者专门向编者推荐他们自己用英语写作的关于中国文化的文章,希望能够供本书使用。*China Today*(《今日中国》),*Women of China*(《中国妇女》),*Chinavista*(中国指南)等机构专门向本书授权,以便帮助更多的读者提高用英语表达中国文化的能力。高等教育出版社的领导和责任编辑从创意到立项到内容选择,都对本书给予了大力的支持。有了他们的鼎力相助和全力支持,这本书才得以面世,在此我谨代表全体编者向他们致以衷心的感谢。

由于编者的认识和水平有限,本书还存在较多的缺憾和不足,希望读者在使用的过程中给我们提出宝贵的意见和建议,以便再版时修改。

编 者

2008 年 3 月

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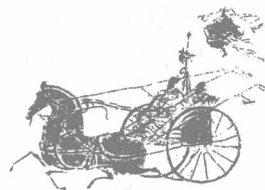
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Unit 1



TEXT A



Pre-reading Activities

I . Questions Before Reading

Directions: Before reading the text, discuss and try to answer the questions with your partner(s).

1. What is the purpose of people's giving gifts to each other?
2. How can you find whether a gift is proper for a certain person?
3. What is your own experience of receiving or giving gifts?

II . Skimming and Scanning

Directions: You will have 15 minutes to go over the text quickly and answer the questions. For questions 1 ~ 7, mark Y (for YES) if the statement agrees with the information given in the text, N (for NO) if the statement contradicts the information given in the text and NG (for NOT GIVEN) if the information is not given in the text. For questions 8 ~ 10, complete the sentences with the information given in the text.

1. The reform and opening-up policy shifted the gift-giving etiquette from spiritual to physical sustenance.



2. By the early 1980s, bicycles, wristwatches and electrical goods were no longer rationed.
3. The public focus has shifted from basic commodities to healthy living and keeping fit in the late 1990s.
4. Local specialties are still a easy choice of gifts.
5. In urban China, a family makes a list of gifts received from the friends and relatives in significant occasions only.
6. In recent years visits between relatives and friends are less frequent than two decades ago.
7. For most people, they return a gift of equal value in response to the gift received from friends or relatives.
8. _____ has, in recent years, given rise to a new economic sector — the gift economy.
9. The Longgang Town was named “Gift City of China” in _____.
10. Gifts, as symbols of ceremony and propriety, are as important now as _____.

Text



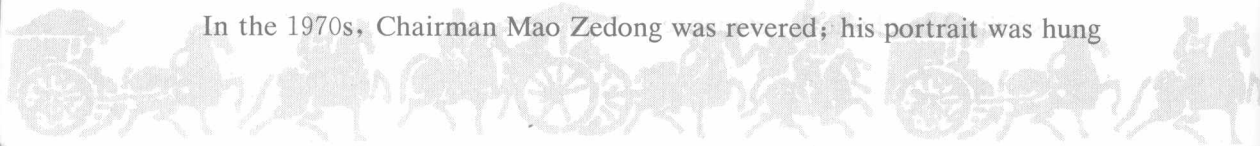
Gift-giving Revolution

by Luo Yuanjun

China is traditionally known as the “land of ceremony and propriety”, which was originally manifested in the imperial convention of exchanging gifts, in the form of tributes and rewards. Today it is manifested in jubilant seasonal exchanges among families, friends and work associates. Although the etiquette of gift giving has changed through the ages, its essential message of friendship and goodwill remains unchanged. Over the past 30 years, China has experienced a transition from material shortages to economic prosperity, which is most evident in the type of gifts people exchange now.

(From Mao Badges to MP3s)

In the 1970s, Chairman Mao Zedong was revered; his portrait was hung



in every household. At that time, the most commonly and enthusiastically exchanged gifts were badges bearing the image of the great helmsman and *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*.

In the early 1980s the Chinese government began implementing its reform and opening-up policy. The essence of gift-giving etiquette subsequently shifted from spiritual support to physical sustenance. Friends and relatives in urban areas presented one another with powdered milk, malt extract, and pastries. In rural areas, cereals were the main gifts. Wang Wu, a veteran farmer of Shimen County, Hunan Province, recalls, "The amount of grain a farmer had at his disposal was a measure of his wealth. When there was a wedding in my immediate family, relatives would present us with two baskets of grain, transported on a shoulder pole. We would reciprocate in kind at other clan weddings."

A length of fabric was also an accepted gift in the countryside. In certain areas, a family would present shoes to relatives shortly before a daughter's marriage. The greater proportion of farmers was emerging from poverty, yet memories of past privations were still vivid. Gifts at that time, therefore, were generally food and clothing.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the gift-giving trend had changed. Zhang Peng, a doctoral student at the Chinese Language Department of Nanjing University, remembers, "In the early 1990s when I was in senior high school, a relative presented me with a grain coupon of a face value of 50 kilograms. Shortly after, grain coupons were abolished." As basic commodities were in abundant supply, they were no longer rationed. Bicycles, wristwatches and electrical goods soon supplanted grain as the most popularly exchanged gifts.

In the 21st century, the public focus is on healthy living and keeping fit. This is reflected in the frequently quoted slogan: "Health-giving gifts are the best." Friends and relations now present one another with vitamins, tonics and other health products. In this era of high-tech, gifts of handsets, computers and various digital products are also commonplace. Sun Yan, who works at a publishing house in Beijing, recalls, "Years ago, domestic electric appliances were the most well-received gifts in my home village in southern China. But, when I go home the next Spring Festival, I plan to give a digital





camera to my elder brother and a latest MP3 to my nephew.”

The advent of the Internet has expanded the scope of gifts beyond recognition. Finding something truly original can consequently be a problem. When Sun Yan first took business trips he would bring back gifts he thought were characteristic of the town he had visited. To his disappointment, however, what he assumed were local specialties were also widely available in Beijing. He has since given up buying souvenir gifts.

Gifts and Relationships

Gifts are an integral aspect of interpersonal relations in rural China. When a family member weds, the head of the household makes a list of all the gifts received from relatives and friends. This is a practical measure to ensure appropriate reciprocation occurs when the occasion arises. This is not the case for presents given on less formal occasions. The caliber of the gift presented is nonetheless borne in mind by the giver, and a gift of similar value is expected in return.

Visits between relatives and friends, other than at the lunar New Year, or the Spring Festival, are much less frequent now than just two decades ago. Many attribute this to the common preoccupation with wage earning in order to keep pace with the expanding economy. Hometown visits in the mid-to-late 1980s often lasted a month, and inexpensive gifts of candies were the norm. Li Qiang, a migrant worker in Beijing, remembers, “In the 1980s, we paid a New Year visit to every single relative, which could amount to scores of visits. In these circumstances, sweets were both affordable and happily received presents.”

Today, however, things have changed. As Li Qiang sadly notes, “In recent years visits between relatives and friends are far fewer. Family reunions at the Spring Festival are often out of the question for migrant workers like us, because the trains are too crowded and air fares are far beyond our means.”

As the pace of daily life increases, relatives and friends seldom visit one another, other than on traditional festivals. But if a meeting is not feasible, gifts may still be exchanged. Li Qiang explains, “I often ask my fellow villagers to take small gifts to my relatives and friends to let them know that

I'm thinking of them. This is the only way of maintaining family unity and friendships."

There is a close relationship between gift giving and the concept of "face". In this context, courtesy demands reciprocity. Zhang Yang, a research fellow with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, explains, "In general, receiving gifts does not add to people's possessions, or at any rate, only temporarily, because they are obliged to reciprocate. Sometimes it's necessary to expend more on reciprocating than the cost of gifts actually received, in order to 'keep face'. Gifts are a way of expressing, and also maintaining, goodwill."

When economic circumstances allow, the principle "You offer me one foot, and I'll offer you ten feet in return" applies. But if finances are not equal to this approach, a gift in response to the one received should be at least equal in value.

The Gift Economy

After three years in the US studying for his Ph.D., Yuan Ping was all set to visit his parents in China. Before leaving, he contacted his schoolmates on the Internet chatroom, asking for their advice on what presents to bring with him. The unanimous answer was none, because anything he bought in the US would also be available in China, and at a far lower price.

Yuan Ping still remembers when his uncle went abroad on a business trip over a decade ago. Friends and relations showered him with requests to bring back items that were then unavailable in China. The present giving and receiving scenario has since completely transformed. Now that the Chinese people can buy anything they need in Chinese markets, and the gifts they exchange are generally for the purposes of broaching and cementing relationships. This trend has, in recent years, given rise to a new economic sector — the gift economy.

China is currently the world's largest gift production base. Shenzhen, for example, has more than 1,600 gift production enterprises. They have an annual output value of RMB 13 billion and an annual export volume of US \$1 billion. Gifts are in 12 broad categories and include metal arts and crafts; the four treasures of the study (calligraphy brush, inkstick, inkstone, and



paper); drawnwork and embroidery; crystal arts and crafts; resin arts and crafts; artificial flowers; and ceramics.

Most of these enterprises own patents, and operate on internationally advanced levels of production technology. Gift exhibitions are held in Shenzhen twice a year, in spring and autumn. They are the largest events of this kind nationwide. Christmas gifts and artificial flowers made in Shenzhen occupy 75 percent of the American market.

Three other cities — Beijing, Shanghai and Wenzhou — are also notable gift producers. Wenzhou's Longgang Town holds 110 gift production enterprises. Its products, which include leather goods, arts and crafts, clocks and watches, and stationery, generate an annual production value of RMB 300 million. In 2003, the China National Light Industry Council named Longgang Town "Gift City of China."

In a business activity recently held in Chaoyang District, Beijing, those in attendance were given electric shavers and hair dryers as mementos of the event. Other small-scale business activities might give participants USB flash disks, MP3s, MP4s, palm computers or digital cameras as promotional souvenirs. These days, ornaments are rarely presented for business functions. Digital products and electric appliances are a more effective form of publicity as well as good public relations.

The most popular gifts at the Spring Festival are quality cigarettes and alcohol, health products, and specialties, as well as digital products. The MP3 is a particularly popular gift item. One MP3 vender in the Hailong Building in Zhongguancun — Beijing's Silicon Valley — confirms, "Listening to music at all times is now an accepted aspect of young adults' lifestyle. Compared with other digital products, the MP3 is inexpensive and has the functions of a USB flash disk. It was the most popular electronic product of 2006."

Wang Shicheng, vice president of the China National Light Industry Council, began his career as a researcher when the gifts sector was taking shape. "This sector is becoming increasingly significant on the market. Its development prospects are vast," he says confidently. Gifts, as an extension of consumer goods, have become a necessary item at national events, political, and business activities, and market promotions. Wang Shicheng

believes that the gift industry is imbued with cultural connotations. China has long been known as the “land of ceremony and propriety”. Gifts, as symbols of ceremony and propriety, are as important now as ever they were.

(1,611 words)

From <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn>



New Words

manifest /'mænɪfɛst/	v.	表明; 证明
tribute /'trɪbjʊt/	n.	贡品; 礼物
jubilant /'dʒuːbɪlənt/	a.	欢腾的, 喜悦的
etiquette /etɪ'ket/	n.	礼节
badge /bædʒ/	n.	徽章; 证章
idolize /'aɪdəlaɪz/	v.	偶像化; 崇拜
euphoria /juː'fɔːriə/	n.	欢欣, 欢快
helmsman /'helmzmən/	n.	舵手
sustenance /'sʌstɪnəns/	n.	食物; 生计
malt /mɔːlt/	n.	麦芽
pastry /'peɪstri/	n.	面粉糕饼
veteran /'vetərən/	n.	老兵; 退伍军人; 经验丰富的人
disposal /dɪs'pəʊzəl/	n.	处理; 支配
reciprocate /rɪ'sɪprəkeɪt/	v.	酬答; 报答
clan /klæn/	n.	宗族
emerge /ɪ'mɜːdʒ/	v.	显现
privation /praɪ'veɪʃən/	n.	穷困; 缺乏
coupon /'kuːpən/	n.	券; 票据
ration /'ræʃən/	v.	定量配给
supplant /sə'plɑːnt/	v.	代替
tonic /'tɒnɪk/	n.	滋补品
advent /'ædvənt/	n.	降临
specialty /'speʃəltɪ/	n.	特产
preoccupation /priː'ɒkjʊ'peɪʃən/	n.	当务之急
norm /nɔːm/	n.	标准, 规范
migrant /'maɪgrənt/	n.	移居者; 移民



feasible /'fi:zəbl/	a.	可行的
unanimous /ju:'næniməs/	a.	意见一致的
shower /'ʃaʊə(r)/	v.	大量地给予
scenario /sɪ'na:riəʊ/	n.	事态, 局面
broach /brəʊtʃ/	v.	钻孔; 开启
cement /sɪ'ment/	v.	巩固
enterprise /'entəpraɪz/	n.	企业, 公司
resin /'rezɪn/	n.	树脂
patent /'pɛtənt/	n.	专利
memento /me'mentəʊ/	n.	纪念品
souvenir /su:və'niə(r)/	n.	纪念品
sector /'sektə(r)/	n.	部门; 部分
imbue /ɪm'bju:/	v.	浸透
connotation /kənəʊ'teɪʃən/	n.	内涵, 意义



Proper Names

The Selected Works of Mao Zedong	《毛泽东选集》
the Chinese Language Department	中文系
Nanjing University	南京大学
the Spring Festival	春节
China National Light Industry Council	中国轻工业联合会
Gift City of China	中国礼品之都
Silicon Valley	硅谷



Post-reading Activities

I. Questions for Detailed Reading

Directions: Choose the best answers according to the text.

- In the early 1980s, friends and relatives in rural areas presented one another with _____.
 A. powdered milk
 B. malt extract
 C. pastries
 D. cereals



2. The frequently quoted slogan "Health-giving gifts are the best" reflects _____.
- A. a shift of the public focus
B. a change in the relationships among people
C. China's implementing of the reform and opening-up policy
D. the emerging of gift economy
3. Visits between relatives and friends are much less frequent now than just two decades ago **EXCEPT** on _____.
- A. the National Day B. the Mid-autumn Festival
C. the May Day D. the lunar New Year or the Spring Festival
4. Yuan Ping's schoolmates did not want him to bring any present from America back to China because _____.
- A. it was expensive to transport them
B. anything would be available in China, and at a far lower price
C. they did not have good relationships
D. they fear Yuan Ping would be short of money
5. In business activities, presents are given for various purposes **EXCEPT** _____.
- A. as mementos of the event B. commercial bribery
C. publicity D. good public relations

II . Questions for Further Understanding

Directions: Read the text again to find the answers to the following questions.

1. What did "the amount of grain a farmer had at his disposal" represent?
2. What are commonplace gifts in the era of high-tech?
3. What has made it a problem finding something original?
4. Why is reciprocity necessary in gift exchange?
5. What is the relationship between the gift-giving etiquette and economic development?

III . Vocabulary Development

Directions: Choose the correct word given below to complete each of the following sentences. Change the word form if necessary.





proportion	possession	symbol	include
focus	abundant	appliance	feasible

1. If you want what you cook popular with the guests, a proper _____ between oil and vinegar in the dressing is necessary.
2. In China, the amount of grain at a farmer's disposal _____ his wealth.
3. When the Spring Festival is coming, people send different gifts to each other, _____ flowers, computers, MP3s and so on.
4. TVs, radios, refrigerators, microwave ovens, washing machines can be classified as electrical _____.
5. I doubt it is _____ to have a swimming competition in such a cold weather.
6. When you write an article about this event, please _____ on its bad effects.

IV. Translation

Directions: Translate the following sentences into Chinese.

1. At that time, the most commonly and enthusiastically exchanged gifts were badges bearing the image of the great helmsman and *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*.
2. But, when I go home the next Spring Festival, I plan to give a digital camera to my elder brother and the latest MP3 to my nephew.
3. Many attribute this to the common preoccupation with wage earning in order to keep pace with the expanding economy.
4. Friends and relations showered him with requests to bring back items that were then unavailable in China.
5. The most popular gifts at the Spring Festival are quality cigarettes and alcohol, health products, and specialities, as well as digital products.

TEXT B

Gifts in Chinese Culture

by Wong Yee Lee

The Chinese people have their own culture when it comes to giving gifts