



CHINESE SOCIETY AND CULTURE

蒙兴灿 熊跃萍 编著

中国社会与文化



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外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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BEIJING

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国社会与文化: 英文/ 蒙兴灿, 熊跃萍编著. — 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 2012. 11
ISBN 978-7-5135-2574-9

I. ①中… II. ①蒙… ②熊… III. ①中华文化—介绍—英文 IV. ①K203

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2012) 第 281675 号

出 版 人: 蔡剑峰

责任编辑: 程 序

封面设计: 覃一彪

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 北京传奇佳彩数码印刷有限公司

开 本: 787×1092 1/16

印 张: 20.5

版 次: 2013 年 1 月第 1 版 2013 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5135-2574-9

定 价: 80.90 元

* * *

购书咨询: (010)88819929 电子邮箱: club@fltrp.com

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联系电话: (010)61207896 电子邮箱: zhijian@fltrp.com

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物料号: 225740001




前言

近年来，随着中国经济的快速发展和经济全球化的加剧，中国需要走向世界，世界需要了解中国，这使得中国与世界的跨文化交流空前频繁。语言作为文化沟通和交流的主要工具，在各国受到了越来越多的关注和重视。中国的英语热热度不减，而国外汉语热不断升温。这一切无疑为中国文化的传播提供了良好的基础和难得的机遇。

一方面，到中国来学习汉语、了解中国社会与文化的外国留学生逐年增多，而具有五千年积淀的中国文化博大精深，要迅速了解和掌握具有悠久历史的中国文化，对留学生而言并非易事；另一方面，作为肩负历史使命的中国当代大学生，在以英语为工具了解掌握世界信息的同时，充分利用英语向世界介绍中国社会和传播中国文化也是应尽之责。令人遗憾的是，在以西方社会与文化为背景的英语学习中，当代大学生对祖国文化缺乏深入的了解，更谈不上用英语进行表达和交流，这构成了传播中国文化的一大障碍。

本教材就是基于当前国内外形势与现状，专门为中国高校学生（含非英语专业学生、留学生和英语专业学生）编写的中国社会与文化教材，可为非英语专业学生开设大学英语拓展课，留学生开设中国文化课和英语专业学生开设中国文化素质通识课使用。本教材有以下特点：

1. 图文并茂，信息量大，内容涉及中国概貌，中国汉字、语言与教育，中国传统节日，中国历史故事、神话、寓言与民间传说，中国文化瑰宝，中国文学，中国古典哲学，中国建筑与园林，中国医药以及中国科学与技术，并有的放矢地提供了补充阅读材料。
2. 由按主题划分的单元构成，每单元包括若干小节。教材的主要对象既有中国高校学生，也有外国留学生，为了帮助他们更好地了解和掌握中国社会与文化的方方面面，我们特别对文中出现的一些社会文化现象进行了必要的注释，并编写了形式多样、生动活泼的讨论和辩论练习，以利于复习和巩固所学知识。
3. 读者群包括外国留学生，因此在内容上有选择性地集中介绍了中国社会与文化中最具特色的部分，语言表述简单易懂，目的在于有效地传播和弘扬优秀中华文化，满足世界日益增长的了解中国社会与文化的需求。



本教材所使用的材料广泛选自国内外有关中国社会与文化的出版物，在此特向原作者表示衷心的感谢。本教材作为浙江省高校重点建设教材能够顺利出版，要感谢浙江省教育厅的经费资助和外语教学与研究出版社的大力支持。由于中国社会历史悠久、文化源远流长，而编者水平有限，错误与不当之处在所难免，敬请广大读者与同行批评指正。

编者

2012年8月



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Chapter 1 A Panoramic View of the Chinese Land

Section 1 Geography

Location and Boundary

Located in the east of the Asian continent, on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean, the People's Republic of China has a land area of about 9.6 million sq km, and is the third largest country in the world, next only to Russia and Canada.

From north to south, the territory of China stretches from the center of the Heilongjiang River north of the town of Mohe to the Zengmu Reef at the southernmost tip of the Nansha Islands. From east to west, the nation extends from the confluence (交汇处) of the Heilongjiang River and Wusulijiang River to the Pamirs.

With a land boundary of some 22,800 km, China is bordered by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the east; Mongolia to the north; Russia to the northeast; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the northwest; Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan to the west and southwest; and Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam to the south. Across the seas to the east and southeast are the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Chinese mainland is flanked to the east and south by the Bohai Sea, Yellow Sea, East China Sea and South China Sea. More than 7,000 islands scatter across the seas. The largest of these is Taiwan Island. The Diaoyu and Chiwei Islands are located to the northeast of Taiwan Island. China's southernmost island groups are called the Dongsha, Xisha, Zhongsha, Nansha and Zengmu Reef.

Topography (地形)

China is a country of varied topographical feature with highlands in the west and plains in the east. Mountainous land and very rough terrains make up about 67% of Chinese territory, basins and plains 33%.

Taking a bird's-eye view of China, the terrain gradually descends from west to east like four steps of a staircase.

The first step is the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in Southwest China. With an average

elevation of about 4,000 m, it is known as the “roof of the world”. Its highest peak is called Mount Qomolangma^①. The surrounding snow-capped mountains are the origins of many of China’s large rivers.

The second step includes the gently sloping Inner Mongolia Plateau, the Loess (黄土) Plateau, the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, the Tarim Basin, the Junggar Basin and the Sichuan Basin, with an average elevation of between 1,000 m and 2,000 m.

The third step, dropping to 500–1,000 m in elevation, begins at a line drawn around the Greater Hinggan, Taihang, Wushan and Xuefeng mountain ranges and extends eastward to the coast of the Pacific Ocean. Here, from north to south, are the Northeast Plain, the North China Plain and the Middle-Lower Yangtze Plain. Interspersed amongst the plains are hills and foothills.

To the east, the land extends out into the ocean, in a continental shelf, the fourth step of the staircase. The water here is mostly less than 200 m deep.

Mountains, Rivers and Lakes

China is home to many famous mountains, such as the Five Great Mountains (五大名山), the Four Sacred Mountains of Buddhism (四大佛教名山), and the world-famous Huangshan, Lushan, etc. Mountain areas cover two thirds of the country’s land area.



Mt. Huangshan



Mt. Putuo

The spectacular mountain landscapes attract many visitors, climbers and adventurers alike. The Five Great Mountains refer to Taishan Mountain in Shandong, Hengshan (恒山) Mountain in Shanxi, Songshan Mountain in Henan, Huashan Mountain in Shaanxi and Hengshan Mountain (衡山) in Hunan. They are located in central China and named according



Mt. Taishan

to the cardinal points on the compass. As Buddhists used to build temples on the mountains, over time there appeared the Four Sacred Mountains worshipped by the followers: Wutai in Shanxi, Emei in Sichuan, Jiuhua in Anhui and Putuo in Zhejiang. Huangshan Mountain in Anhui is famed for its spectacular rocks, odd-shaped pines, hot springs and sea of clouds. Some other mountains, like Lushan Mountain in Jiangxi and Wuyi Mountain in Fujian are also world-famous.

China abounds in rivers. More than 1,500 rivers drain 1,000 sq km or larger areas. Most of the large rivers have their sources on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and drop greatly between sources and mouths. As a result, China is rich in water-power resources, leading the world in hydropower potential, with reserves of 680 million kw.

China's rivers can be categorized as exterior and interior systems. The catchment area (汇水面积) of the exterior rivers that empty into the oceans accounts for 64 percent of the country's total land area. The catchment area of the interior rivers that flow into inland lakes

or disappear into deserts or salt marshes (沼泽地) makes up about 36 percent of China's total land area.

The Yangtze River is the longest river in China (6,300 km), and the third longest river in the world. Its source is in the Tanggula Mountain of Qinghai Province. It flows through 11 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities (直辖市) . The Yangtze River is one of the main artery of water transportation between eastern and western China. Many important ports and economic centers are located along it.



The Yangtze River

China's second longest river, the Yellow River, rises in Qinghai Province and flows some 5,464 km to the Bohai Sea. As the most heavily silt-laden river in the world, the Yellow River has formed a raised-bed river (地上河) in middle and lower reaches. The Yellow River catchment area is an important production base for grains in China.

Scattered through China are approximately 24,800 natural lakes, most of which are found on the Middle-Lower Yangtze Plain and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Freshwater lakes such as Poyang Lake, Dongting Lake, Taihu Lake, and Hongze Lake mostly lie in the former



The Yellow River

area, while in the latter are saltwater lakes, such as Qinghai Lake and Nam Co Lake.

Poyang Lake, in the north of Jiangxi Province and with an area of 3,583 sq km, is the largest of its kind. Qinghai Lake, in northeast Qinghai Province and with an area of 4,583 sq km, is the largest one of its kind.

Apart from the natural rivers and lakes, there are also many man-made canals. The most famous is the Grand Canal (大运河) between Beijing and Hangzhou, 1,801km in length. It passes through the city of Tianjin and four provinces (Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang) and links five major rivers: the Haihe River, the Yellow River, the Huaihe River, the Yangtze River and the Qiantangjiang River. The canal was open to navigation over 1,000 years ago. It played an important role in facilitating trade between the south and the north and was regarded as the country's transportation and information "highway" before the advent of the railway.

Today, some of the canal's sections have been widened, deepened or straightened out, and a number of water conservancy and ship locks have been added. This old canal still provides water transportation from north to south, irrigation water for the farmlands on both of its sides, and cruise tours to the delight of travelers from home and abroad.

Climate

China has a marked continental monsoon climate characterized by great variety. Most parts of China are in the northern temperate zone (北温带) while parts of the southern area are in the tropical or subtropical zone and parts of the northern area in the frigid zone (寒带).

Most of China lies in the north temperate zone, characterized by a warm climate and clear division between seasons, a climate well suited for habitation. In winter, northern winds from high latitude areas keep the northern parts cold and dry; while in summer, monsoons from eastern and southern coastal areas bring warmth and moisture.

The climate also varies with the extensive territory and various topography from region to region. In north China, summer is warm and short, while winter is cold and long. In south China, summer is long, humid and hot, and winter short and warm, with temperature rarely below freezing. In central China (the valley area along the Yangtze River), division between seasons is clear—summer is long, hot and humid while winter, short and cold.

In northwestern China, such as Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia (内蒙古), summer is dry and sweltering and winter is formidably cold. On the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau (about 4,000 meters above sea level) in southwestern China, winter is extremely cold and summer is short and moderately warm, with little precipitation and great difference in temperature between day and night.

Geographical Influence on Chinese Culture

So far, we have got a general knowledge of the land. The varied landforms and diverse climates inevitably have a great effect on the Chinese culture.

(1) Different life styles

The east part of China is flat and moist, with abundant arable farmland while the northwest and the areas north to the Great Wall are dry all the year round and mainly fit in with animal husbandry. The different temperatures and moistures lead to the fact that north to the line of Qinling Mountains-Huaihe River wheat and corn are the staple grains while south to it rice takes the place. The regional diversity is the natural base for the co-existing multi-cultures in China.

(2) A united nation

As is known that China is a mountainous country, with towering mountains in the west and southwest borders, deserts and Gobi (戈壁) in the far north, boundless waters around its east and southeast, it has been a secluded place in the long run when the transportation

was quite slow. The fact made China a less open country, bringing China into a united nation most of the time with long and continuous development as well as a strong and pure culture, but leading to the strong sense of self-obstruction and self-satisfaction.

(3) Self-sufficient people

Big as it is, most of the Chinese people have crowded in the eastern part of the country, making farming their mainstay. In order to raise more mouths, people carried out an intensive farming in their limited fertile fields. Therefore, the Chinese culture shines with a strong agricultural color, bringing out a people who love the nature, their home and the world peace.

Section 2 Administrative Divisions

China's administrative units are currently based on a three-tier system. According to the Constitution of the P.R.C., the administrative division of China is as follows:

- (1) The country is divided into provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government;
- (2) Provinces and autonomous regions are divided into autonomous prefectures, counties, autonomous counties, and cities;
- (3) Counties and autonomous counties and cities are further divided into townships, ethnic minority townships, and towns.

China has 34 major Administrative divisions. They consist of 23 provinces, 5 autonomous (self-governing) regions, 4 centrally administered municipalities and 2 special administrative regions (see the following table). The autonomous regions are 1. Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, 3. Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, 4. Tibet Autonomous Region, 5. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. These regions have many people who belong to China's minority ethnic groups. The centrally administered municipalities—Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai and Tianjin—are huge metropolitan areas administered by the national government. Each centrally administered municipality consists of an urban center and a rural area. The Hong Kong^② and Macao^③ special administrative regions have their own executive, legislative and judicial powers. China is responsible for their defense and foreign policy.

**China's Provinces, Autonomous Regions, Centrally Administered Municipalities
and Special Administrative Regions (2010)**

Name	Seat of Government	Area (100,000 km²)	Population (100,000)
Beijing Municipality	Beijing	0.168	196.1
Tianjin Municipality	Tianjin	0.113	129.4
Hebei Province	Shijiazhuang	1.900	718.5
Shanxi Province	Taiyuan	1.563	357.1
Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	Hohhot	11.830	247.1
Liaoning Province	Shenyang	1.459	437.5
Jilin Province	Changchun	1.874	274.6
Heilongjiang Province	Harbin	4.548	383.1
Shanghai Municipality	Shanghai	0.063	230.2
Jiangsu Province	Nanjing	1.026	786.6
Zhejiang Province	Hangzhou	1.020	544.3
Anhui Province	Hefei	1.397	595.0
Fujian Province	Fuzhou	1.213	368.9
Jiangxi Province	Nanchang	1.670	445.7
Shandong Province	Jinan	1.538	957.9
Henan Province	Zhengzhou	1.670	940.2
Hubei Province	Wuhan	1.859	572.4
Hunan Province	Changsha	2.118	656.8
Guangdong Province	Guangzhou	1.800	1043.0
Guangxi Autonomous Region	Nanning	2.360	460.3
Hainan Province	Haikou	0.340	86.7

(to be continued)

(continued)

Name	Seat of Government	Area (100,000 km²)	Population (100,000)
Chongqing Municipality	Chongqing	0.823	288.5
Sichuan Province	Chengdu	4.814	804.2
Guizhou Province	Guiyang	1.760	347.5
Yunnan Province	Kunming	3.833	459.7
Tibet Autonomous Region	Lhasa	12.280	30.0
Shaanxi Province	Xi'an	2.056	373.3
Gansu Province	Lanzhou	4.544	255.8
Qinghai Province	Xining	7.223	56.3
Ningxia Autonomous Region	Yinchuan	0.664	63.0
Xinjiang Autonomous Region	Urumqi	16.600	218.1
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	Hong Kong	0.01101	70.9
Macao Special Administrative Region	Macao	0.000254	5.5
Taiwan Province		0.360	231.6

Section 3 Population and Languages

With just over 1.3 billion people (1,370,536,875 of 2010), China is the world's most populous country. As the world's population is approximately 6.5 billion, China represents a full 20% of the world's population, so one in every five people on the planet is a resident of China.

China's population growth has been somewhat slowed by the one-child policy in effect since 1979. As recently as 1950, China's population was a mere 563 million while the population grew dramatically through the following decades to one billion in the early 1980s.