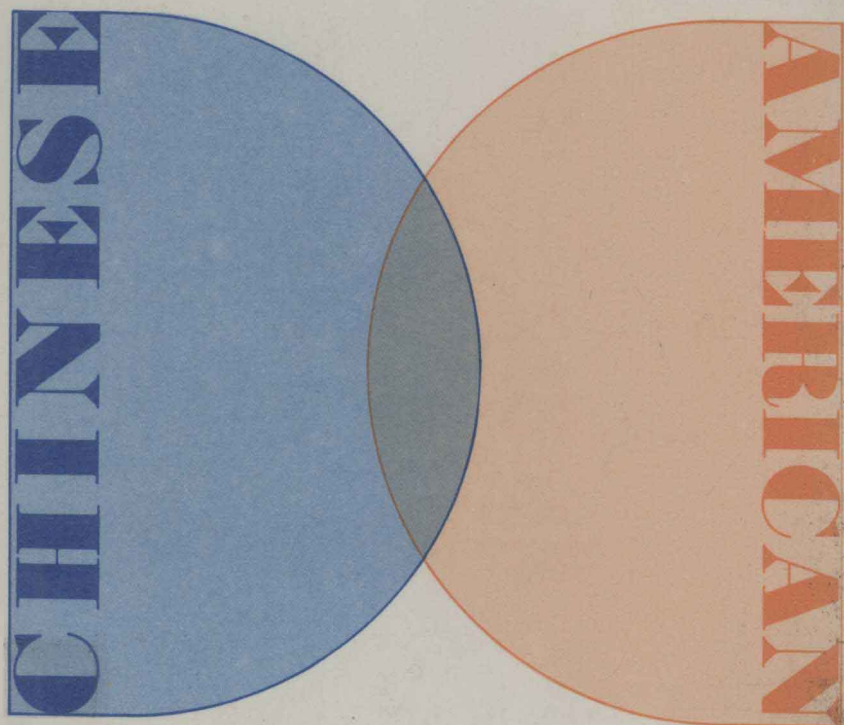


# EPSTEIN'S DIALOGUE

中美文化與生活：高級英語對話錄

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## PREFACE

During my several years of teaching in Taiwan I have been asked by many students to relate various aspects of life in the United States, such as, "Are students and campus life different in the U. S. from that of Taiwan? What is the culture like there?"

Therefore, I have attempted through the use of dialogues to express the ways of life and activities in the U.S. with contrastive views of the same in Taiwan derived from my own experiences. I am hopeful that students will learn something new and perhaps different from the reading of these dialogues, even those who have felt that they have already become expert in the English language. Perhaps it will whet their appetite to learn and study further.

My intention and hope is that communication in the language will become easier. Additionally these dialogues should lend some new insights into the knowledge of colloquial speech. The combination of both the colloquial and general expressions should improve the student's ability to understand and communicate.

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## Words and Expressions 1

the National Palace Museum:	國立故宮博物院
take some time off:	stop working and be free from work or duties
capital:	excellent
keep in good shape:	keep in good physical condition
stretch one's legs:	have a walk, esp. after sitting for a time
swell:	very good
thrilled:	deeply moved or excited
the new addition:	the new additional building
magnificent:	splendid and elegant
striking:	remarkable
splendor:	brilliance and brightness
super:	very good
the admission ticket:	入場券
stub:	the remaining part of a ticket
souvenir:	something kept as a reminder
calligraphy:	Chinese handwriting 書法
make out:	understand
hastily drawn:	(calligraphy) written in a hasty way
stroke:	a mark or movement made by a brush
flourish:	an extra curved line for decoration in writing
description plate:	the plate which tells about exhibition in words
trace back:	go back to the past
insignificant:	having little or no importance
move along:	go and see forward
celery cabbage:	白菜
exquisite:	delicately beautiful

**direct one's steps:**

go; walk

**call it a day:**

finish working for the day

**snack:**

light meal

## Dialogue 1

### A Student's Trip to the National Palace Museum

Characters: John & Wendy

John: Wendy, it's a beautiful day and I think I'll **take some time off** and take a trip to the National Palace Museum. Would you like to join me?

Wendy: It sounds great. It's a **capital** idea. I'll put on my walking shoes. I need the exercise, and a walk would help us both **keep in shape**.

John: Are you implying that I should lose some weight?

Wendy: No, no. But we are sitting in class so long that we need to **stretch our legs**.

John: O.K. I am with you. I'll be ready to go in 10 minutes.

Wendy: **Swell**.

(10 minutes later on the way)

John: Wendy, do you know that the museum administration changes their exhibits quite often? I have been there several times and I am always **thrilled** by the new things that I see.

Wendy: I am really looking forward to my first visit there.

John: Did you notice **the new addition** to the museum? It's beautiful! I think the entrance has a **magnificent** style.

Wendy: Standing here you can see a **striking view** with its grace and symmetry. It makes me think of what the **splendor** of ancient China may have been.

John: Why don't we go up to the higher plaza and look at the view from there? From here it is hard to believe what wonderful treasures it contains within.



Wendy: Why don't we go in now and later we can have a picnic under the trees later.

John: **Super!** But let's go in now.

Wendy: Do you have **the admission tickets**?

John: Yes, you might want to keep the **stubs** as a **souvenir**.

Wendy: (On entering) Where shall we begin?

John: Let's start here at the **calligraphy**.

Wendy: Can you **make out** the characters?

John: I can read the regular calligraphy but this is the ancient writing style. It's a script that seems **hastily drawn**. But it's an art to be able to make such skillful **strokes** and **flourishes**.

Wendy: Look, John! The **description plate** states that this writing **traces back** to the beginning of written Chinese. Can you imagine the earliest form of written Chinese? I wish I were a linguist to comprehend the many changes and stages of the Chinese language development.

John: I feel so **insignificant** when I imagine the thousands of years of history in our midst—the many creations and artifacts that exist here. We should **move along** though. Otherwise we'll be here all day.

Wendy: Oh, I see the jade room! It's the exhibit with all kinds of jade in various forms. The white and light green articles are beautiful. Look at that stalk of **celery cabbage** made out of beautiful jade.

Wendy: There are so many **exquisite** things I don't know where to **direct my steps**.

John: We can look at the priceless oriental rugs and then **call it a day**. It will take several visits to see everything.

Wendy: You're right, John! Let's get some **snacks** and have a picnic under the trees.

(They exit.)

# **Dialogue    2**

**Families Compared East  
and West**



## Words and Expressions 2

fit the bill:	be exactly suitable
flattered:	be praised excessively
formal outfit:	formal clothes
taking potluck:	(esp. of an unexpected guest) having the same meal as everyone else 吃便飯
wedding bells will be ringing:	someone will marry
nostalgia:	fondness for something formerly known or for some period in the past
Atari game:	電腦遊戲
trip the light fantastic:	play joyfully
fret:	worry
rustic:	rural
cherish:	taking loving care of
prevalent:	widespread
make a go of something:	make the most of something
concern:	serious care or interest
at the seams:	澈底
feel in bones:	have deep feeling
go without saying:	definitely; certainly
go-between:	matchmaker
take off for the hills:	run away and hide
solidify:	unite firmly
imprint:	influence; impress
hurray for love:	愛情至上
Vive l'amour:	愛情萬歲
head for:	go toward
head to:	go to



## Dialogue 2

### Families Compared: East & West

Will & Wendy

Will: Wendy, I have been invited to a friend's home to meet with his family and he asked me to bring along a good friend. You **fit the bill**. Would you like to accompany me?

Wendy: I am **flattered**. I'd love to, but let me change into a more **formal outfit**.

Will: Oh, that's not necessary. They asked that we be informal, since this is not to be a special dinner. It's sort of **taking potluck**. I told them not to prepare special food just for us. Oh, my friend has three sisters and two brothers and they all live at home right now. But I think **wedding bells will be ringing** soon for one of his sisters and one of his brothers.

Wendy: Does this mean that the wife and husband of each of the married couples will come to live with the parents?

Will: I don't think so, Wendy. My friend's sisters and brothers have become somewhat westernized in their thinking and will rent or buy their own apartments. The attitudes of the Chinese family in Taiwan are not what they were 20 years ago.

Wendy: Neither are the attitudes of families in the U. S. the same. We in the U. S. surely have changed. But I still have **nostalgia** for the good old days. Somehow the kids nowadays with their computers and **Atari games** have missed many carefree moments in the country **tripping the light fantastic** with Mother Nature and her surroundings. I feel it is so crowded almost every place I go.

Will: Don't **fret** Wendy. There are still those **rustic** places around. I had several brothers and sisters, and growing up together

brought me many unforgettable experiences. I shall **cherish** them all my life

Wendy: I was just thinking how **prevalent** divorce has become in America and how difficult it has been for people to end their marriages. I have been told it is a relatively easy procedure in Taiwan. In the good old days people did not divorce so easily but tried **to make a go of** it. They also had more children than couples have today. There seemed to be more **concern** and responsibility.

Will: What bothers me is watching the family structure slowly breaking apart **at the seams**. I feel hopeful that there will be turn around. My friend told me that some of his relatives had arranged a number of marriages. I **feel in my bones** that one can find a mate for oneself.

Wendy: **That goes without saying**. I don't think I need a **go-between**.

Will: I think in old times it was probably more difficult to find a mate because of family, particularly in the East where parents often made arrangements years in advance.

Wendy: I believe if I had a bad situation I'd **take off for the hills**.

Will: I know, but some marriages turned out happy.

Wendy: I wonder what the percentage of success was.

Will: Do you realize that matchmaking is still traditional in some societies? Often certain families want to **solidify**, to strengthen their influence and wealth.

Wendy: Nothing like keeping it in the family, I'd say.

Will: I guess the **imprint** of our environment is deep. I wouldn't change the tradition of courtship—love and marriage. **Hurray** for love! Didn't the French say **Vive l'amour**? Although the institution of marriage has had bad times, I hope it is **headed for** prosperity. And I think we should **head to** my friend's house. Let's hurry. We might be a little late.

# **Dialogue 3**

**Traffic in Taiwan(Taipei)**



