

世说英语

TALES OF
MODERN
TIME

别样
时尚

系列丛书

英语精短人文译评

李家真 主编

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外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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编者的话（代序）

一向以为，每一种语言都承载着一个民族的智慧与文化。它的不断更新变化也反映着使用者思维方式的变异和他们所处社会的演进。倘若脱离了社会现实，单单把语言当作工具来学习，不但没有什么趣味，效果恐怕也要大打折扣。本书所收的短文中使用的都是鲜活生动、原汁原味的英语，其内容则是在我们这个日新月异的世界里最近发生的一些有意思的事情。这些记录真实事件的短文涉及政治、经济、科技、宗教、艺术、体育、娱乐等各个方面，正如折射国外社会风貌的一颗颗小水珠。读者们可以借鉴其中鲜活的词汇、生动的句法和颇富风趣的行文，由此改善阅读和写作的技巧；也可以从中管窥我们这个星球上各个角落人们十分多样化的生活和思想。

古代许多文人雅士都喜欢搜集当时的异人异事乃至神仙鬼怪之说汇编成书，用以美善刺恶、讽时劝世，如刘义庆的《世说新语》、袁枚的《子不语》、纪昀的《阅微草堂笔记》等皆如此类。编者愚陋，不敢追攀前贤，但选文之时亦力求每篇皆有其令人回味或发人深省之处。其意不在讥弹，只在让读者对别样的文化和生活有所认识。作为文化的载体，英语本身无疑已经为我们揭示了许多西方世界的历史、传统、世界观和思维方式，而众多短文中记述的种种真实事件更是让当今世界中其他民族的生活跃然纸上、如在目前。

作为中国人，我们已经拥有一种源远流长、辉煌灿烂的文化，但这并不妨碍我们以开放的胸襟去了解和借鉴其他民族对世界的认识和思索。立足自身文化、放眼地平线之外多元文化的绚烂繁花，其中的乐趣和收获绝不仅仅局限于语言方面。书名“英语”而兼“世说”，其意正在于此。

编译书中的一篇篇纪实短文，犹如驻足观赏一帧帧世态风情画。殚精竭虑之余，自不能了无触动。编者在每篇短文之后附上了自己的一点心得，正是希望借此与读者诸君分享思维的乐趣，或有强作解人之处，诸君但可一笑置之。总之，编者希望本书不仅是学习英语的好材料，也是一本值得在闲暇时一读的有趣的书。

李家真

二零零八年十二月二日

Truth or Lie?

Lipstick on his collar or a whiff of unfamiliar aftershave on her blouse? Time to reach for the Handy Truster, a portable gadget that promises to expose a liar on the spot. The palm-sized gadget developed by 911 Computer Co. samples the timbre in human speech for signs of faltering then delivers its verdict: An “apple of truth” appears on the screen indicating how blameless, or how rotten a liar, your subject is—A whole apple for little George Washingtons (level 1) and a whittled-away core for the unvarnished fibber (level 9). “Above all, the Handy Truster is a bit of fun to try out on friends and colleagues,” says David Han, manager of the 911 Computer overseas marketing team. “There is no real scientific evidence to support the principles behind its workings but a lot of our customers find it interesting and so cute.” However, the makers claim 84 percent accuracy.

真假立判



The Handy Trusteer
“便捷测谎器”

他的衣领上印着口红？她的衬衣留有陌生的须后水的气味？赶快使用“便捷测谎器”，它保证帮你当场揭穿说谎者。这个手掌大小的玩意儿是 911 计算机公司的发明，它能够通过检验说话者的音色中有无颤抖结巴迹象来作出判断。出现在它屏幕上的“真相苹果”会让你知道，你面对的是无可指责的真话还是彻头彻尾的谎言——完整无缺的苹果

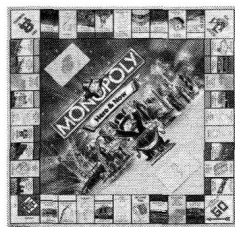
（第一级）说明你面对的人如少年乔治·华盛顿一般诚实，被削得就剩了核儿的苹果（第九级）则告诉你，他/她是一个不知遮掩的骗子。911 公司海外营销部经理大卫·汉说：“首先，用‘便捷测谎器’试朋友或同事是一件有趣的事情。许多顾客说它又好玩又可爱，虽然它的工作原理并没有严格的科学依据。”话虽这么说，这间公司还是宣称“便捷测谎器”的准确率可达 84%。

Remarks: 只需听听舞台上甚至生活里那些感天动地、如出肺腑的话语，你就可以知道这种装置有多么不可靠了——音色不说明任何问题。

Virtual Tycoons

They buy all the property they can, try to hoard their leftover cash while avoiding jail. Just another day in the rough and tumble real estate market? Thirty-nine players, all national champions, from 38 countries ranging from students and bus drivers to computer programmers and a horse breeder are taking part in the Monopoly championships in Toronto, Canada's financial capital. It's all for a chance to win \$15,140, as normally mild-mannered people unveil raw ambition and greed in their quest to crush all opponents by buying land and charging exorbitant rents that force others into bankruptcy. Invented in the Depression era by an unemployed salesman, Monopoly is one of the most popular board games in the world and has been translated into 26 languages.

虚拟大亨



如同处身危机四伏、风云变幻的地产市场，他们疯狂地买进一切可能到手的地产，拼命聚敛现金，同时还要避免锒铛入狱。来自 38 个国家的 39 个国内冠军——其中有学生、客车司机、计算机程序员以及一位马匹饲养员——正在加拿大的金融中心多伦多参加世界“大富翁”游戏冠军赛。为了赢得 15,140 美元的奖金，素日里温文尔雅的人们再也无法隐藏野心和贪婪。他们买进土地并收取高得离谱的租金，想尽办法令对手破产。在大萧条时期，一个失业推销员发明了“大富翁”，如今它已经成为世界上最受欢迎的棋盘游戏之一，并被译成了 26 种文字。

Remarks: 棋盘上倏来倏去的财富的确令人恍悟“人生如梦”。游戏与人生其实只有咫尺之遥。最好的办法是阿 Q 一点：得意时是人生，失意时便是游戏。

Clone Christ

While Christians believe Jesus Christ will someday return, they probably don't think he'll arrive by way of a petri dish. Yet that's exactly what a secretive group called The Second Coming Project is trying to do: clone Jesus. Members of the group see cloning technology as a chance to literally bring Christ to the modern age, find out exactly how divine he is and perhaps work a miracle. "I'm hoping it will bring world peace," said a member of the group. The group hopes a cloned Jesus fetus could be placed in a female volunteer's womb and then carried to term in a totally immaculate conception. The birth is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 25, 2001, and the mother wouldn't necessarily have to be a virgin. The group hopes to obtain a small DNA sample from one of the countless Christian relics that devotees claim include a piece of Jesus' body—a drop of blood or strand of hair, for example. There are potential pitfalls, of course. First are the ongoing questions about the authenticity of holy relics. Second, there's the challenge of cloning from a 2,000-year-old DNA sample.

克隆基督

基督徒们相信耶稣总有一天将重回人间，但却多半不会想到他将从培养皿中降临。而一个名为“二次降临计划”的秘密组织正在进行着这项工作：克隆耶稣。该组织成员希望通过克隆技术“真正”将基督带到现在来看他到底有多神奇，或许还可以由此制造出一些奇迹。其中一位成员说：“我希望这能给世界带来和平。”这个组织计划把克隆的耶稣胚胎放入一名女性志愿者的子宫，然后在完美的状态下将他养到足月。克隆耶稣的出生日期暂定为2001年12月25日，但作为母亲的这位女性倒不一定非得是个处女。虔诚的教徒们声称基督遗物包含有他身体的一部分——一滴血或一缕头发什么的。该组织希望从数不清的遗物中选取一样以便获得基督的DNA样品。当然，这个计划并非完美无瑕。首先，这些圣物本身就不一定可靠；即便可靠，对两千年前的DNA样品进行克隆也迥非易事。

Remarks: 下面是美国一位宗教界人士对此计划的评论：“the height of foolhardiness (愚昧透顶)”，“the highest silliness in the category of neither science nor religion (既非科学又非宗教的顶级愚行)”。我只想补上《大话西游》里的名句：“你不是真的想要吧？”

‘Marry a Millionaire’ Show Axed After Fix

Germany's top commercial television channel RTL axed its hit program "Marry a millionaire" after embarrassing revelations that the "winners" of the previous program fixed the result. The show was exposed as a farce when it emerged that the lucky bride chosen by millionaire Thomas Tepe from a group of 45 candidates was not only charming and beautiful, but also his current girlfriend. "Of course, it is rather embarrassing," said RTL head Gerhard Zeiler. But he rejected the view that the reputation of RTL had been damaged. "One show didn't work out—so what?" he said. The scam was exposed when viewers telephoned in during the live show to say that they had seen the pair together on numerous occasions.

相逢却是曾相识

由于被揭露此前一次节目的获胜者为预先安排所致，备感难堪的德国最大商业电视频道RTL砍掉了它的热门节目“百万良缘”。当人们发现被百万富翁托马斯·特普从45位候选人当中选出的幸运新娘不仅美丽迷人，而且是他的现任女友时，这个节目终以闹剧收场。“当然，这相当令人尴尬，”RTL的首脑格哈德·泽勒说。但他否认这一事件有损于RTL的声誉：“一个节目没做好——那又怎样？”在这个直播节目进行当中，有观众打来电话声称他们在许多场合看到这两位出双入对，一场骗局于是穿帮。

Remarks: 真佩服 RTL 老板的勇气——“俺耍了你们，咋的？”