

# 世说英语

TALES OF  
MODERN  
TIME

人与  
自然

精短系列丛书

英语精短文译评

李家真 编译



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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地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

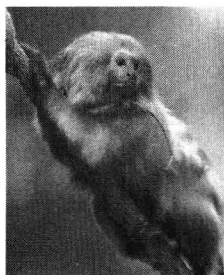
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## Extinction Surge

Recently a red monkey from the forests of West Africa was officially declared extinct—wiped off the planet as the first documented primate extinction since the 1700s. That may seem troubling, but even more worrisome, scientists say, is the swelling tidal wave of extinction that lies in the future. In fact, research indicates that at least one-fifth of the 608 species of primates that have evolved over millions of years could soon disappear. Although the situation is dire for a large portion of primates, scientists say they have learned that many species can be surprisingly resilient. Although small gene-pools can leave animals vulnerable to disease because of inbreeding, endangered species are not always doomed. As an expert in this field said, “As long as there is survival of a few individuals somewhere, and as long as humans leave them alone, they’ll often come back, often quite rapidly. A little protection can go a long way.”

## 未来时尚：绝种



最近，生活在西非丛林中的一种红猴正式宣告绝种，从我们的地球上彻底消失。这是自18世纪以来有记载的第一宗灵长类动物绝灭事件。这已经不是什么好事，更让科学家们担忧的是将来愈发高涨的绝种浪潮。实际上，相关研究表明，在经历了数百万年进化历程的608种灵长类动物当中，至少有1/5可能会很快绝灭。虽然大部分灵长类动物面临着可怕的处境，科学家们也认识到许多物种会有出人意料的坚韧生命力。的确，较小的基因库会引起近亲繁殖，大大削弱动物的抗病能力，但濒危物种也并不总会走到末日。正如一位专家所言：“只要还有一些个体存在，只要人类能给它们空间，它们经常可以迅速地发展起来。一点小小的保护措施就能有相当大的作用。”

**Remarks:** 类似的报道近年来越来越多，但我们好像已经无法勒住在自然的原野上肆意踩踏的“现代化”野马。希望猩猩们能学会如何在工业化社会生存。

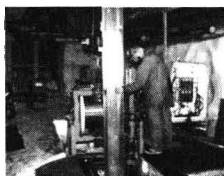
## Past Decade ‘Warmest for 1,000 Years’

The past decade has been the warmest for 1,000 years, according to an analysis of ice cores drilled from a glacier in the Himalayas. The findings, which were published in *Science*, offer new evidence of global warming.

The ice cores, which were taken from the glacier four miles above sea level on the Tibetan plateau, showed a record of at least eight major droughts. They were caused by a failure of the South Asian monsoon, the worst of which was a seven-year dry spell which killed more than 600,000 people.

Researchers said that the results offered particularly significant evidence of climate change, as early signs of global warming are always seen at high altitudes. And the evidence supported the idea that the warmer climate in recent decades was caused by human pollution.

## 最温暖的十年



A researcher is drilling the ice core.  
一个研究人员正在钻取冰芯。

根据对从喜马拉雅山脉钻取的冰芯所作的分析，过去的十年是千年来最温暖的十年。发表于《科学》杂志的这一发现为全球气候变暖提供了新的证据。

这些在青藏高原海拔四英里处取得的冰芯记录了至少八次由于南亚季风中断引起的大旱灾，其中为害最烈的是一段长达七年的干旱时期，它夺去了超过60万人的生命。

研究者们认为这些成果为气候变化提供了意义重大的证据，因为全球气候变暖的早期征兆总是出现在高海拔地区。这一成果也进一步证实了近几十年的气候变暖系由人类污染造成的说法。

**Remarks:** 个人的物欲引起头脑发热；人类的物欲引起全球发热。发展真的必须以环境为代价？

## Safari Seals Turn to Soccer

The British obsession with football is well known, but a safari park\* keeper has taken it to a new extreme—forming a soccer team of the seals in his care. Peter Montague said he started the team to cheer up staff at the West Midlands Safari Park who were depressed by the foot-and-mouth crisis. “They’re very gifted players with their ball control,” Montague, a Manchester United fan, told reporters. The 14 seals, who play against a human goalkeeper, pick up the ball on their nose and then slap it into the net with their flippers. Montague said Manchester United could learn some lessons from the seals: “A bit more ball control and a bit more bite in mid-field—or should that be mid-seal?” “These overrated football players get paid thousands of pounds a week; my seals do it for a couple of fish,” he added.

\* safari park: 在英式英语中等同于 animal park。

## 海豹踢球



英国人对足球的痴迷世所共知，不过一位野生动物园管理员又将这种痴迷发展到了一个新的高度——把自己照管的海豹编成了一支足球队。西米尔兰德野生动物园的彼得·蒙塔古说他组建这支球队是为了鼓舞被口蹄疫危机弄得垂头丧气的同事们。本身是曼彻斯特联队球迷的蒙塔古对记者说：“它们是很有天赋的球员，控球技术很好。”这14只海豹的对手是一个人类守门员，它们会用鼻子接球，然后用鳍击球入网。蒙塔古认为曼联队应该向这些海豹学习：“中场队员——也许叫‘中场海豹’更合适——要多控球，抢断要更积极。”他还补充说：“那些被吹得神乎其神的球员周薪高达数千英镑；而我的海豹踢球只为几条鱼。”

**Remarks:** 虽然所得不一，但海豹从几条鱼当中得到的快乐也许并不比贪得无厌的球员们少。

## Don't Saw Those, See These!

A California performance artist has launched what she hopes will be a new women's movement against logging ancient redwoods—baring her breasts and reciting poetry to stunned timber crews. “They stop their chainsaws and they stop their trucks and they pay attention,” Dona Nieto, who goes by the name “La Tigresa,” said as she prepared another demonstration. “I’ve changed some of these guys’ lives. But I’d like to change the laws, and I’d like to change history.” Since beginning her protests, La Tigresa has brought what she calls “Goddess-based, nude Buddhist guerrilla poetry” to a number of timber and logging sites in and around northern Mendocino County—an area some 120 miles (193 km) north of San Francisco that marks one of the main battlegrounds in the long fight between environmentalists and timber companies.

## 袒胸护林



为了抗议砍伐古红杉树林，加利福尼亚的一位行为艺术家采取了她希望会是一场全新妇女运动的非常手段——袒胸露乳并向被此超常之举惊得目瞪口呆的伐木工们念诵诗歌。在准备又一次抗议行动之时，化名为拉·泰雷莎的多娜·涅托说：“他们停住了链锯，停住了卡车，凝神倾听。我已经改变了他们中一些人的生活，但我更想改变法律，改变历史。”投身护林运动之后，拉·泰雷莎给一些采伐场带去了——据她自己说——“以女神形象为基础的，赤裸的佛教徒游行诗篇”。这些采伐场位于旧金山以北大约120英里的门多西诺县附近，那里是环保主义者和木材公司之间持久斗争的主战场之一。

**Remarks:** 激情可嘉，手法亦出人意表，只是动机难测。爱林乎？爱现乎？法律和历史想来不会因此改变，唯一确定的是，这的确会对伐木工人们产生某种影响。



## Fat City

What are the best places to live in if you want to be slim? According to the study by *Men's Fitness* magazine, try sunny, seaside San Diego, which topped the magazine's list of "fittest" cities in U.S.A. Stay away from Houston, which, with its polluted air, proliferation of bars and liquor stores, ranked as the "fattest" city. In its annual study, the magazine takes into account a range of issues that make up how healthy it is to live in a city, from air and water quality to the number of fast food joints per person. While the actual percentage of overweight people living in a city is also considered, the study focuses more on opportunities available for people who want to get fit. Because the study emphasized factors like recreation areas and climate, it seems only natural that San Francisco and Honolulu tied for second most "fit" cities after San Diego, while chilly Detroit and Philadelphia were the second and third "fattest" cities on the magazine's list.