

# 世说英语



系列丛书

英语精短文译评

TALES OF  
MODERN  
TIME

五味  
人生

李家真  
编译



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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

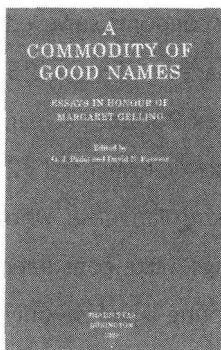
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## What's in a Name?

**Bujia** (Spark Plug) or **Llanta de Milagro** (Miracle Tire), both are legally registered first names that parents in Honduras have given children in recent years, and which Honduras' National Electoral Tribunal feels are over the top.

The tribunal, which oversees the country's public birth registry, announced it will ask the country's legislature to forbid parents from registering children under "extravagant or offensive" names, and allow children to sue parents who gave them "gross or insulting" names. "Without doubt, such names are a bother to the people who have to carry them through life," the tribunal said. Also banned would be names of well-known personalities. According to electoral rolls, at least one Honduran bears the first name Bill Clinton, and another Ronald Reagan.

## 名不可不正



在洪都拉斯，这些年里出现了像Bujia（火塞）和Llanta de Milagro（神奇轮胎）这样的怪名字。这些名字虽然也是受之父母并经过正式登记，但却显然已经超出了洪都拉斯国家选举特别法庭的忍耐限度。

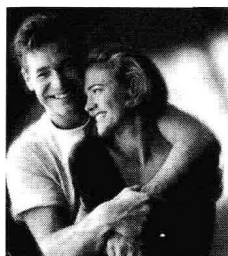
负责监管本国出生登记的这一特别法庭宣布，它将要求政府立法禁止父母给孩子登记“夸张或令人不快的”名字，并允许身负“粗俗和侮辱性的”名字的孩子控告他们的父母。根据该法庭的说法，“毫无疑问，这样的名字会使背负它们过活的人们烦恼多多。”此外，名人的名字也将被禁止使用。在洪都拉斯的选民名册中，至少有一个“比尔·克林顿”和一个“罗纳德·里根”。

**Remarks:** 名字虽然是符号，也不能随便乱取。在中国有姓名笔画决定一生命运之说，而西方人经过一系列计算之后，发现希特勒的名字可转换为数字“666”，这在基督教中是撒旦的代表数字。

## Who's Number One!

SSL International, which manufactures Durex condoms, surveyed 18,000 people around the world between the ages of 16 and 25 and discovered that the average Earthling has sex 96 times a year, and Americans may be the world's most enthusiastic lovers at 132 times a year. Most loveless were the hardworking Japanese, who are apparently using their hands for other things—like consumer electronics and state-of-the-art video games. Young Japanese only get away from their joysticks for hanky-panky 37 times a year. The French seemed to have the most sexual partners, claiming an average of 16.7 each. Indians were the most faithful to their partners, with 82 percent saying they have had sex with just one person. The survey didn't only crunch the numbers—it also delved into who taught various countrymen about the birds and the bees. The Dutch thanked their mothers, while most Americans thanked Pops. Most Italians said their siblings gave them a primer, while the French skipped the instruction manuals and learned it on their own.

## 谁第一？



**杜蕾斯安全套的生产者 SSL 国际公司**对全球 1.8 万名 16 至 25 岁之间的青年进行了调查，统计出世上的凡夫俗子们年平均做爱 96 次。其中以美国佬最为乐此不疲，年平均达 132 次之多。整日奔忙的日本人则是另一个极端——很明显，他们的注意力主要放在了家用电器以及最新的电视游戏上——年轻的日本人难得离开电玩去享受鱼水之欢，一年只有 37 次。法国人交游最为广泛，自称平均拥有性伴 16.7 人；82% 的印度人说他们只与一人有过巫山之会，忠诚度位列全球之冠。咬嚼数字之外，调查报告还对各国人民学到有关鸟儿和蜜蜂的事情（指性知识）的途径进行了探究。荷兰人感谢母亲，大部分美国人感谢父亲，而大多数意大利人则说自己受的是兄弟姊妹的启蒙。最了不起的是法国人，他们草草翻阅有关指南之后便无师自通了。

**Remarks:** 想来这次调查对 SSL 制定新的营销策略颇有帮助，对社会学家、人类学家等等也很有参考价值，在我们只是有趣而已。

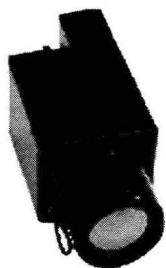
## Don't Make Rude Gestures at Traffic Cameras!

German motorists have been told to stop making rude gestures at traffic cameras or they could be charged with offending the police. A Bavarian court has recently ruled that a driver who held up his middle finger while passing a traffic camera was addressing police officers rather than the equipment itself, German auto association Automobil Club Europe said.

The motorist in question had argued that he didn't think the camera was switched on. "But the video footage proves the opposite, showing the defendant looking at the video camera, raising his left arm and holding out his middle finger close to the windshield," ACE said.



## 非礼勿动！



德国的司机们已被警告不得对交通摄像机无礼，否则将被控以藐视警方的罪名。德国汽车联合会欧洲汽车俱乐部透露：巴伐利亚州的一个法庭日前对一名在交通摄像机前竖起中指的司机作出裁决，认定其行为乃是向警官们挑衅，而非针对该装置本身。

欧洲汽车俱乐部还说，虽然该司机辩称自己不知道摄像机当时开着，“但摄像机拍下的一组镜头驳倒了他的遁辞，镜头显示被告一边盯着摄像机，一边抬起左臂将中指伸到离挡风玻璃很近的地方。”

**Remarks:** 虽然司机的行为确实过火，但德国法院也未免有些刻板。看看美国法院对藐视国旗者的态度：“国旗保护尊重它的人，也保护那些藐视它的人。”