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SELECTED

北京青年报（双语视窗）文选

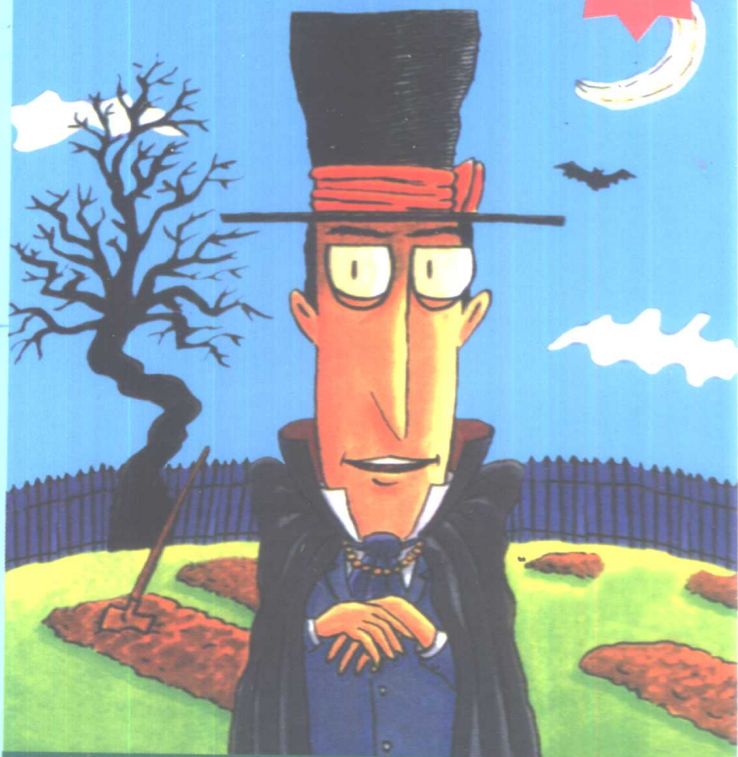
选读

ENGLISH

ESSAYS


英语小品文

I



Reading
英文系列

外文出版社



Selected English Essays

英语小品文选读(I)

主 编 张爱学
中文译文 张爱学
英文顾问 W. D. White
责任编辑 王 蕊

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在琳琅满目的书店、书摊，众多的记者、作家及海外华人已向人们奉献出了一本本中国人看西方的画卷。那么，西方人又是如何看中国的呢？

本书作为北京青年报“双语视窗”栏目的集萃，恰恰成为了中国读者透过老外的目光反观自身的窗口。这些文章由在华外国友人撰写，以他们在华所见所闻为切入点，生动具体地反映出东西方观念、习俗的异同之处，向我们提出了一个个既有趣又值得深思的问题。“不识庐山真面目，只缘身在此山中”，换一个角度，从外国友人目光的折射中审视一下，更有助于全面地了解我们自身的文化。在二十一世纪的今天，中国需要与世界尽快接轨，也就需要我们尽快地了解世界，了解自己，相信广大读者能从本书中有所感悟。

同时，本书采用英汉对照形式。这些原汁原味的英文不仅有助于加深对作者原意的理解，也是一本学习现代英语的鲜活教材。

希望本书在大家攻克英语的漫长征途上成为一小片绿洲。

北京青年报社 社长 陈 星
总编 张延平

CONTENTS 目 录

- 1 The Vietnamese are ahead in the race
越南人捷足先登了! (1)
- 2 My biking debut on the streets of Beijing
我在北京骑自行车 (9)
- 3 A foreigner talks about Jazz
老外神侃爵士乐(上) (17)
- 4 A foreigner talks about Jazz
老外神侃爵士乐(下) (25)
- 5 The Dutch impact on English
荷兰人对英语的冲击 (33)
- 6 A painting goes on trial
“审判”中国山水画 (41)
- 7 A Harvard professor teaches business
哈佛教授这样上课(上) (49)
- 8 A Harvard professor teaches business
哈佛教授这样上课(下) (57)
- 9 The US deputy chief of mission speaks at the
temple of Confucius
美国公使孔庙演讲(上) (65)
- 10 The US deputy chief of mission speaks at the
temple of Confucius
美国公使孔庙演讲(上) (73)

How the elderly live in America 美国老人的活法·一	(81)
How the elderly live in America 美国老人的活法·二	(89)
How the elderly live in America 美国老人的活法·三	(97)
How the elderly live in America 美国老人的活法·四	(105)
I'm glad my son is growing up in China 儿子长在中国——我放心	(113)
Credit cards are no oddity for today's Chinese 信用卡——中国人不再陌生	(121)
Why westerners like to talk about architecture 西方人为什么喜欢谈论建筑	(129)
Superstition in modern Italy 意大利的迷信怪圈	(135)
A US architect looks at architecture in China 美国建筑师谈中国建筑(上)	(145)
A US architect looks at architecture in China 美国建筑师谈中国建筑(下)	(153)
Happiness in Nepal 在尼泊尔感悟幸福	(161)
Peasants or farmers? 中国农民是 peasants 还是 farmers?(上)	(169)
Peasants or farmers? 中国农民是 peasants 还是 farmers?(下)	(177)
How can I improve my English? “我怎样提高英语水平?”(上)	(185)
How can I improve my English? “我怎样提高英语水平?”(中)	(193)

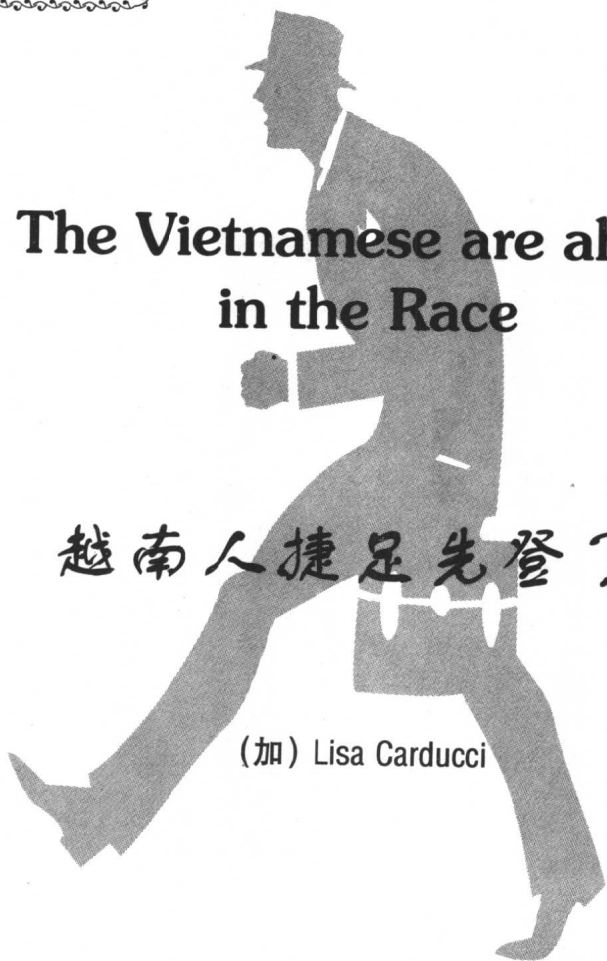
- 26 How can I improve my English?
“我怎样提高英语水平?”(下)(201)
- 27 While Americans are sound asleep, Indians
are hard at work
当美国人进入梦乡时(209)
- 28 Those brave Indian drivers!
印度司机胆子大(217)
- 29 I'll never go to Shidu again
我再也不去十渡了!(225)
- 30 Fun in the snow in America
美国雪天的乐(233)
- 31 Vendors, not too much attention, okay?
摊主,请不要太殷勤(241)
- 32 100 questions become 1000 questions
一百个问题变成一千个问题(249)
- 33 Girls, today you can propose
姑娘们,今天可以求婚(257)
- 34 The “secrets” of getting a US student visa
留学签证的“秘诀”(上)(265)
- 35 The “secrets” of getting a US student visa
留学签证的“秘诀”(下)(273)
- 36 Which makes women happier, holding down
a job or being a homemaker?
女人:工作幸福还是回家幸福(279)



The Vietnamese are ahead in the Race

越南人捷足先登了!

(加) Lisa Carducci



原书空白页

My Chinese husband and I recently travelled to Vietnam. The French ruled Vietnam for almost a century, so we assumed that between my French and his Mandarin we would easily be able to communicate with the local people. And in fact we could, though not precisely as we had expected. The ethnic Chinese in Vietnam are mostly from Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan, and we don't speak Cantonese, Hakka or Hokkien. As for French, most educated people over 50 can speak it, but not many younger people. English was much more useful.

On our first day in **Hanoi** we met a young man who could neither read nor write his own language, as we discovered when we invited him to a restaurant and found that he was unable to order from the menu. Yet he spoke English fluently! So did his friends, who earn their living on the streets by selling postcards or shining tourists' shoes. I asked some 8-year-olds where they had learned English: at school, said some, but others had picked it up by chatting with tourists. Some people we met said they had attended evening classes for six months. A few also learn French, at public or private school.

One area where Chinese visitors will feel at ease is Halong Bay^①, 40 kilometers northeast of **Haiphong**. This beautiful natural site is the exit point for "boat people"^② going to Hongkong. Here if you speak Mandarin, many people can reply in it. "My parents came from China", or "I worked in Shanghai for two years": these are the answers we got when we asked how they came to speak Putonghua.

Here and there we met young Vietnamese who had studied one or more foreign languages at a university. Some stores put up signs saying "Ici on parle francais" (French spoken here); Russian and Japanese are also widely spoken. With Taiwan and Hongkong



越南人捷足先登了！



investors increasingly doing business in Vietnam, Mandarin and Cantonese are becoming more common.

Little wonder, then, that so many of my friends told me how easy touring is in Vietnam. And it's not just the ability of Vietnamese to communicate with foreigners that makes it so. Far more than the Chinese, the Vietnamese have understood that tourism is an important industry that can bring lots of money into a country. Many "cafés" set up tours for visitors in English, and they advertise their services everywhere. Except in Dali, I've never seen such well-organized tourism anywhere in China. Imagine foreign tourists in Beijing: Can they guess where to go to plan a tour? Where to get an air-conditioned bus? Where to buy a plane ticket? CITS[®] hides in a big building near Xidan, and even if visitors go there they find **disconcertingly** few employees who speak English, which, like it or not, has become the lingua franca of international travellers.

It seems to me that China simply doesn't SELL its tourism. I hate to say it, but a "Middle Kingdom" mentality still **prevails** in the tourist industry: People come to China because... it's China. No need to advertise imaginatively, to offer solid information, to provide services and experiences that will make visitors come back again and again. How is the average foreigner to know what there is to see in Chengde or Dalian, or how to get there and where to stay? How can he or she communicate with service personnel who, often even in big hotels, don't speak English? Or who speak it so **lamely** that the foreigner is never positive that he's actually been understood? When people travel they want to enjoy life, not struggle.

China has been open to the world for twenty years now, Vietnam for ten. Not so long ago anyone caught studying English

in Vietnam would have been punished, while today even government and party cadres are pushed to learn foreign languages if they want to be promoted. China, meanwhile, **ambles** along with an educational system that produces **champions** at multiple-choice tests ^④ who have little ability to use the English they've been studying since primary school. I don't think for a moment that the Vietnamese are more talented than the Chinese. The difference is that they have understood the value of language as a tool in attracting travellers and businessmen (and their funds). Vietnam has got it right.

最近,我和我的中国丈夫去越南旅游。由于法国曾统治越南近一个世纪,我们想,靠我的法语和他的汉语就能很容易地与当地人交流。事实上也的确如此,尽管并不完全像我们想象的那样。越南华人的祖籍多数是福建、广东和海南,而我们并不会说广东话、客家话或闽南话。至于法语,多数 50 岁以上有文化的人都能说,但很多年轻人并不会说。英语则有用多了。

到河内的第一天,我们遇见了一个少年,他不会用本国语言看书写字,这是我们请他一起去餐厅时发现的,他不能从越南文的菜单上点菜。但是,他的英语却说得很流利。他的朋友们在大街上以卖明信片、给游客擦皮鞋为生,英语同样很流利。我问几个 8 岁左右的孩子从哪儿学的英语,有的说是在学校,有的说是通过和旅游者聊天学到的。我们遇到的另一些人说他们参加为期 6 个月的业余英语班。还有少数人在公立或私立学校里学法语。

中国游客感到很轻松的一个地方是位于海防市东北 40 公里处的下龙湾,这一美丽的风景区是乘船去香港的非法移民的出海口。如果你在这里讲普通话,很多越南人会用普通话来应答。“我父母是从中国过来的”,或“我在上海工作过两年”,这些都是当我们问他们怎么会讲普通话时得到的回答。



越南人真是先登了!



我们不时地会遇到一些在大学学了一种或多种外语的越南青年。有的商店还用法语写着“这里说法语”；俄语与日语用得也很普遍。随着台湾与香港投资者在越南经营的业务越来越多，普通话与广东话变得更加普及。

怪不得我的很多朋友都告诉过我去越南旅游多么容易：这不仅仅是因为越南人具有与外国人的交流能力。越南人远比中国人更深刻地懂得旅游业是能给国家带来大量财源的重要行业。很多餐馆酒吧都用英语为来访者组织旅游，他们到处张贴广告宣传他们的业务。在中国，除了大连，我就没见到过组织得这么好的旅游业。想想在北京的旅客吧：他们能猜得出去哪里联系游览吗？哪儿有带空调的大巴？上哪儿去买飞机票？中国国际旅行社藏在西单附近的一座大楼后面，即使游客到了那里，也只能沮丧不安地找到极少的工作人员会说英语（不管你喜欢与否，英语已经成为国际旅游者共用的语言）。

在我看来，中国简直就没有推销她的旅游业。我并不想说到这点，但是“泱泱中心大国”的心理在旅游业还很盛行：人们来中国就是冲我们中国而来的，不必进行富有想象力的宣传，不必提供翔实的资料，不必提供可使旅游者成为一次次回头客的服务与体验。那么，一个普通的旅游者怎么才能知道承德、大连有什么好看的？怎样去各个地方？去了住在哪里？旅游者怎么与那些工作人员——即使是在大饭店也往往不会说英语的——工作人员沟通？或者与那些能说点蹩脚的英语但外国人从来不能肯定自己的话真的被听懂了的工作人员沟通？人们出门旅行希望享受生活，而不想处处有难题。

中国已经开放了 20 年，越南开放了 10 年。并不太久之前越南人学英语还要受到惩罚，而今天那些想得到提升的党政干部都急着去学习外语。与此同时，中国在普及英语上缓缓地走着，其教育制度所产生的语法考试冠军虽然从小学就开始学英语，而实际交流能力却很差。我从来不认为越南人比中国人聪明，其区别在于他们知道作为吸引旅游者与商家（以及其资金）的工具的外语的价值。越南人已经觉悟了。



Words to remember

Hanoi /hæ'noi/ *n.* 河内(越南民主共和国首都)

Haiphong /'hai'fɒŋ/ *n.* 海防(越南民主共和国港市)

disconcertingly /,diskən'sə:tɪŋli/ *adv.* 使仓皇失措地,使困窘地

lingua franca /'liŋgwə'fræŋkə/ *n.* (不同民族间交往或进行交易时用的)混合语,混合方言

prevail /pri'veil/ *v.* 盛行,占优势

lamely /leimli/ *adv.* 站不住脚地,有缺陷地

champion /'tʃæmpjən/ *n.* 优胜者,冠军

amble /'æmbl/ *vi.* 从容轻松地行走

Key expressions

1. Halong Bay: 下龙湾,越南境内的一处风景地
2. boat people: 船民,这里特指乘船偷渡者
3. CITS: 中国国际旅行社,全名为 China International Tourist Service
4. multiple-choice test: 多项选择测验



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