Observing America from Many Angles

横看竖看





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美利坚

一个中国公民对美国社会文化的解读程 宏 習



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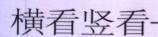
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前 言

改革开放以来,中国人研究、讨论与写作美国的热情持续高涨不衰。可是,在美国逗留得越久,就感到越难下笔写美国。美国社会五光十色,确实是个谜,他像一个蒙着神秘面纱的多面人,要想看到他的完整面孔,告诉读者一个真实的美国是一件很不容易的事情。

美国历史很短暂,但经济和科学技术很发达;美国选举活动很激烈,但社会基本和谐平稳;美国种族结构很复杂,但国家凝聚力很强;美国民主自由度很高,但法律条款很苛刻;美国社会保障体系很完善,但流浪乞丐并不罕见;美国人追金逐利是千方百计,但捐献援助更是慷慨解囊;美国人富有正义感和同情心,但意识中习惯用自己的价值观念去评断别国事务,动辄充当"世界宪兵和国际警察"。不同的人了解美国、认识美国和解释美国的角度不同、观点各异,于是结论就会有差异,就会产生形形色色的美国。而一个抽象的完整的美国的面目总是要体现在成千上万个关于美国的故事中。

如果说"美国的月亮圆",那不免是崇洋媚外;如果说"美国的月亮明",却是不争的事实,因为美国环境保护好,空气质量高。诺贝尔物理、化学、生理或医学的科学奖 1901 年首次颁发至 2005 年,近 490 位获得者,大约 43%是美国人。美国人口占全世界人口的比重不到 5%,2004 年 GDP 总量占了全世界 29%,人均 GDP 达到 41000 美元,生产力与生活标准保持了在全世界的较高水平。追溯历史,美国建国仅仅 200 多年,先后实现了工业化和现代化,并快速地超越了所有老牌的资本主义国





家。对于年轻人来说,不管付诸了行动没有,几乎没有人没做过 美国梦。对于许多国家来说,很多方面正在参考美国的模式,奋 起追赶,接轨国际,加快现代化建设。事实也正是如此,在我国, 大到社会保险福利救助的保障制度、法院陪审员制度,银行存款 保险制度,小到某些博物馆的少儿免费参观,某些服务机构的排 队一米线,甚至公厕的管理等,都正在经历着变革。

作者在美国的大地上走了看了之后,才对美国的社会有了一些第一手的所闻所见所感,但当作者想提笔写点美国时,却感到自己的经历和能力都有限,难以从社会学家和媒体工作者的角度和水平去体验、采访、收集和写作美国。作者只能站在一般文化层面上,就多数中国人所关心和能接触到的美国社会表面话题,以纪实散文和随笔杂文的形式写下一点有关美国的"比较社会学"的感性文章,对笔者算是"美国、美国,没白去过"吧。

作 者 2006 年 10 月于北京





Foreword

Since China has reformed and opened up to the world, there has been a continuous and enthusiastic upsurge of interest in American culture. Many Chinese want to study, discuss and understand the United States better. However, even for one lives for quite a long time in the US, it can be a difficult subject to write about. There are many sides to the culture there, both glorious and resplendent, and there is another darker side that needs to be addressed as well. It is not easy to see all these sides and explain them to a Chinese reader, but I have attempted to do so.

The history of the US is comparatively short, yet it has reached great complexity in economy and technology. The electoral activity of the US is very impetuous, but the society is ultimately harmonious for the whole. There are many different races living together in the US, but all the Americans are closely united. The US is a free and democratic country, but those freedoms have limits sharply defined by their system of law. Their social security system is amazingly well-designed, yet beggars are not as rare as one would think. The typical American seems to worship the pursuit of money, but at the same time, he is also generous, sympathetic and quite willing to give to those in need. The American sense of justice is so strong that they tend to judge the domestic affairs of other countries by their own moral standards; this frequently leads the American government to act as a kind of International Police force. Each person





who lives in the US will have his own experience and view, for good or bad, hence the uniform conclusions are impossible to make. However, an abstract and a complete appearance of the US is represented in thousands of stories concerning the US.

If one says, "The moon as seen from the US is especially beautiful", this sounds like one has blind faith in the foreign view of things; if, however, we say, "The moon as seen from the US is comparatively bright", this is being more factual, because the environmental protection of the US is better, and the air quality is higher. The Nobel Prize in Science began in 1901, and total recipients is close to 490 till 2005, of which 43% of them were American. Although the population of the US represents only 5% of the total world population, their portion of the total GDP of the world was about 29% in 2004, and their average GDP was up to 41,000 USD. Their standard of living and high productivity have given them a higher place in the world. During last 200 years, the US quickly overstepped all those old-line capitalistic nations in industrialization and modernization. Every youth has an "America dream", regardless of where they come from. Our country has used the United States as a kind of model, which has hastened our progress enormously in catching up with the developed countries in the world. Frankly, in China today, from the social security system, to the court juror system, from the bank deposit insurance system, to the free museums for children, as well as the habit of standing in an orderly line to wait, even to the management of the public restrooms. all things are emulated.

After going abroad to live in the US, I began to observe and





learn the true society of American. My experience was somewhat limited by time and circumstance, and so the full depth of each subject cannot be covered in the book. The information included is taken not from the viewpoint of the social scientist or the news reporter, but from the life of the Chinese ordinary citizen abroad. The topics of this book are all the most general themes of social culture that often arrest the attention of the Chinese. The article style of this book is attributed to perceptual essayistic about the American social culture. The book can be taken as my travel notes in America.

Hong Cheng October 2006, Beijing



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美国的法律执行官

美国是个资本主义会制度比较完善、法律程序比较健全的国家。美国号称民主国家,人人享受高度的自由,但这种自由是建立在人人遵守法律的基础上的,是建立在国家法律执法人员高素质水平的职业行为上的。美国法律多如牛毛,涉及范围可达社会的每个角落,交通安全、环境保护、烟酒管理、食品卫生、国家税收、市政市容、动物保护……不一而足。在美国遇到的法律事情就像空气,无处不有,无时不在。那么美国国家法律的行政执法官是谁?是各级政府的检察官?是各级法院的法官?是美国军人?是美国警察?还是全部政府机构的公务员?

这个问题对于不少去过美国的人来说恐怕也不容易一口回答得出来。美国首都华盛顿 DC 市中心有一座"National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial (国家法律执行官纪念碑)"。它告诉人们:法律执行官是警察的一个别称。那么在立法、司法和行政三权分立的美国,联邦及地方政府的司法和行政官员不也在解释、维护和执行国家法律吗?不错!美国联邦政府负有警察职能的执法机关主要分布在5个部的大约有25个局中,它们是司法部的联邦调查局、毒品管理局,财政部的烟酒枪械局、国内税务局,内政部的国家公园管理局、鱼类和野生动物管理局,国防部的国防调查局,国土安全部的移民及海关执法局,此外还有联邦邮政总局的邮政稽查局等。然而,这些负有警察职能执法机关的总人数远远小于全国警察总人数,并且执法的职责范围也有较大的专业化和局限性,远远比不上国家赋予警察的职责范围。西方发达国家警力配署密度平均为万分之三十五,据







说美国为万分至四十,由此看来,美国国家法律执行官的主体是 以警察为主就不足为奇了。

警察的制服是"国家权力"的符号及象征。美国除了警察和极少数难得一见的其他具有执法职能的公务人员(例如,移民及海关执法局的羁押和遗送处的官员)以外,所有没有执法职能的政府公务人员没有统一着装,这大概是基于维护国家法律执行的严肃性。由于美国是联邦制,各州警察的着装并不完全一致,Uniform(制服)大同小异;帽子常见的是的 Cover(大盖帽),少数南方地区州有牛仔型的 Hat(有沿帽),其次是驾驶摩托车、骑自行车和骑马的 Safety Helmet(安全头盔)。



纽约地勤警察的着装

除了警察外,其他行政官员是如何面对社会上广大市民,参与国家法律的实施和监督呢?笔者在访问一个朋友时,有机会目睹了一次美国城管工作的过程。朋友是一个 Motel(汽车旅馆)的 Owner(业主),由于有其他商务缠身,无暇细心过问和照顾旅馆生意,只雇用一位 Part-time(兼职)的管理员负责日常客人的登记和离店事物,人手少,加上旅馆较旧且占地面积较大,





以至于积累了不少问题。一些长期顾客在多次向业主投诉未果后,转而投诉于警方。一日早晨,突然来了五辆小汽车,其中有两辆警车,每辆车下来一人,警察全副武装,另外三人着西服和夹克。原来是警方与卫生局、消防局以及住房与城市发展局联合组成了一支临时"城管队"前来造访。他们一行见到我那朋友后,出示了工作证件,称根据当地的有关法律和旅馆客户举报前来联合检查旅馆的内外环境状况,希望朋友给予工作上的配合。

在业主的陪同下,经过一个小时的检查,"联合城管队"与业主以口头的形式简单谈了一下检查结果和要求,说书面文件将于一周内寄到。果然几天后,业主分别接到了市政府几个不同部门各自出具的书面检查报告和处理意见,列出了旅馆存在的近30项问题。这些问题主要有:

- (1)停车场内长期停放了一些不能开动的破旧汽车——影响市容:
 - (2)停车场及大院的地面卫生太差——影响环境卫生;
 - (3)室外晾晒衣物——影响市容;
- (4)房间门前开放式走廊里放置了一些废弃的弹簧床垫——影响市容;
- (5)后院草地(两千余平方米)的草高度超过了一英尺(0. 25 米)——容易滋生鼠类动物;
- (6)后院里堆放了大量的废弃的建筑木材——容易发生火灾、滋生节肢动物和老鼠;
 - (7)垃圾收集桶的盖子破损——滋生苍蝇和散发异味;
 - (8)房间门前开放式走廊里的照明灯残缺——不安全;
 - (9)旅馆周边的夜间红外光感照明设备损坏——不安全;
 - (10)旅馆房间内的烟感火警报警器部分损坏——消防不



