

21世纪大学生英语拓展课程教材

中外文化导读

(中英美卷)

魏先军 / 主编

Outlook on Cultures

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中外文化导读

(中英美卷)

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科学出版社

北 京

内 容 简 介

本书从历史、教育、经济、政治、体育和风俗等侧面,来展示中英美的文化风貌。所选材料均来自中英美三国的官方网站、报刊、杂志和文学评论,兼顾语言文字的水平及内容的思想性、信息性、趣味性和前瞻性。为便于学习,各篇文章都有难词注解和背景知识介绍,还设计了相应练习,供读者操练语言点和进行口语讨论。本书所配 VCD 光盘,可以用于视听说教学。

本书适合于普通高等学校本科大学生进行英语应用能力拓展课程的学习,同时也可供硕士研究生、英语爱好者学习与提高英语水平之用。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中外文化导读. 中英美卷/魏先军主编. —北京: 科学出版社, 2008

21 世纪大学生英语拓展课程教材

ISBN 978-7-03-020919-1

I. 中… II. 魏… III. 英语—高等学校—教材 IV. H31

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2008) 第 009476 号

责任编辑: 张维华/责任校对: 桂伟利

责任印制: 钱玉芬/封面设计: 张 放

科 学 出 版 社 出 版

北京东黄城根北街 16 号

邮政编码: 100717

<http://www.sciencep.com>

新 蕾 印 刷 厂 印 刷

科学出版社发行 各地新华书店经销

*

2008 年 1 月第 一 版 开本: 787 × 1092 1/16

2008 年 1 月第一次印刷 印张: 15 3/4 插页: 68

印数: 1—5 000 字数: 500 000

定价: 32.00 元(含 1VCD)

(如有印装质量问题, 我社负责调换<长虹>)

前 言

为配合新时期大学生英语拓展课程的建设,我们精心策划编写了“中外文化导读”系列教材,以满足大学生们越来越多地关注世界、关注文化大融合和拓展自身能力的需要。

语言的学习是漫长的综合过程,学习一种语言就是学习一种文化。运用所掌握的语言基础知识和技能去探索中外文化世界,已成为众多大学生的迫切愿望。“中外文化导读”属大学英语系列课的能力拓展课程,其设立初衷是为了弥补非英语专业大学生在英语文化学习方面的缺憾,为培养面向未来的创新型复合人才贡献力量。因此,期望本课程的开设对大学生的全面发展有所裨益。

《中外文化导读(中英美卷)》包括六章,从历史、教育、经济、政治、体育和风俗等侧面,来展示三个国家的文化风貌。其中所有材料均精选于中英美三国的官方网站、报刊、杂志和文学评论,兼顾语言文字的规范及内容的思想性、信息性、趣味性和前瞻性。每章包括阅读和视听说两部分。阅读部分由精读、泛读组成,侧重不同的方面。精读文章重在学习相应的背景知识和欣赏语言;泛读文章从总体上介绍各主题发展的历史,重在扩大知识面,同时提高快速阅读能力。视听说部分强调趣味性,在提高听说能力的同时,把握时代脉搏,了解当今所发生的重要事件,寓教于乐。为便于学习,各篇文章都有难词注解和背景知识介绍,还设计了相应练习,供读者操练语言点和进行口语讨论。本书配有一张光盘,用于视听说学习。为方便教师的课堂教学和自学者的学习检查,将视听内容的文字和部分练习答案做成活页,附于书末。

我们希望学生通过对本教材的学习与操练,在提高英语语言技能的过程中,了解并欣赏中英美的历史与文化,以达开阔视野、提高素质之目的;同时引导学生以积极的态度多视角地进行文化解读,提高他们对多元文化的敏感性、鉴赏力和宽容度,以逐步培养跨文化交际的能力。本书适合于普通高等学校本科大学生进行英语应用能力拓展课程的学习,同时也可供硕士研究生、英语爱好者学习与提高英语水平之用。

编写大学生英语拓展课程教材是一个探索与完善的过程。本教材旨在抛砖引玉,引导学生对所列国家文化的了解与兴趣,加强用英语进行文化交流的综合能力,为今后的实际应用打下基础。本书初稿承蒙在美工作的王建红博士、石淑芳博士和卞洁女士的审阅并提出修改意见,美国专家 Dianne Atkinson 博士(Purdue University)也给予了极大的帮助,谨此表示衷心的感谢!囿于水平和阅历,书中难免存在不足,尚望大家不吝指正赐教,以求不断完善和提高。相信在大家的关心下,“中外文化导读”系列教材将逐一面世,谢谢!

编 者

2007年10月26日于上海交通大学

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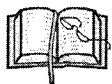
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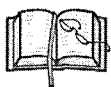
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Chapter One

History and People



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Extensive Reading

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Video-Watching and Discussion

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Intensive Reading

Passage 1

The Living Present

By Li Dazha

Of all things in the world, I think, the present is the most precious, and also the most apt to slip through our fingers. We, therefore, treasure it all the more because of its transience^①.

Why is the present so precious? The following quotation from the philosopher *Emerson* best serves for an answer: "Make use of time if you love eternity^②; yesterday cannot be recalled; tomorrow cannot be assured; only today is yours. One today is worth two tomorrows."

Why is the present so easily lost? Because the universe as well as human life is changing, non-stop all the time. Time never tarries^③ us a bit longer just because we treasure and love it. It is hard to tell which moment in the ups and downs of life is our present or now. What we call our present or now at one moment will at the next be quickly gone and become the past. Isn't it a pity to unthinkingly idle away the present?

Some philosophers say that we have the past and the future, but no present. Others say that the present is inclusive of the past and the future. I, however, incline towards the latter view because the present is where all the past empties itself or, in other words, where lies hidden the entire legacy of the past. The prevailing thought of any age does not come into being all by itself. It is the synthesis^④ of the popular thoughts of numerous previous ages or probably of all the past. The rippling sound stirred up by a pebble thrown into the current of the times will keep spreading forever. *Li Sao*^⑤, authored by Qu Yuan, will continue to touch a deep chord in the heart of every reader through all ages. The lethal^⑥ shot that hit Abraham Lincoln's head will keep echoing through all lands and all eternity. The changes of each age, instead of becoming extinct, will pass on to the next. The process will go on endlessly to

① transience 短暂

② eternity 永远

③ tarry 等候

④ synthesis 合成

⑤ Li Sao 《离骚》

⑥ lethal 致命的

form an eternal link in the world. The events of yesterday and today will combine to form several complicated events which will in turn combine with those of tomorrow to form several new complicated events. Thus one influence combines with another; one problem gives rise to another. The infinite past results in the present, and the infinite future results from the present. It is the present that serves as a connecting link between the past and the future to bring about continuity, eternity and a boundless big whole. Ring the bell of the present, and you will hear the distant echoes of the infinite past and future. That accounts for the fact that the present is inclusive of the past and the future and that the living present is the most precious.

Nowadays two kinds of people don't know how to care for the present. One kind is sick of the present; the other is crazy about it.

Among those who are sick of the present, some are so dissatisfied with everything of today that they become nostalgic^① about yesterday. To them, things nowadays, including politics, law, morality and social customs, are all inferior to those in the past. They place their only hope on turning the clock back to days of old. They throw themselves heart and soul into the back-to-the-ancients^② campaign. Some, though also dissatisfied with everything of today like those mentioned above, long for the future instead of the past so much so that they abandon themselves to dreams and fantasies and even give up many things that can be achieved right now through their own efforts. People of these two categories hinder social progress instead of furthering it.

People who are crazy about the present are generally apathetic^③ and lack high aspirations^④. They see nothing wrong in the present. Complacent^⑤ about their present circumstances, they feel no need for progress or creation. Such people abuse the present and stem the tide of progress. There is no difference at all between them and those who are sick of the present.

It is common among human beings to be discontented with the present. They usually dream of something that has not yet come into being with fantasies about its being extremely agreeable and beneficial. But, once that something has become a reality, they call it just so-so and then fall into despair and grow weary of the present. Or they may feel a new environment rather unimpressive, but once things have changed, they begin to think well of it and recall it with tenderness. The former case has to do with future expectations, and the latter with past memories. However, given a combination of the two cases, dissatisfaction with the present will become a great moving force of social development. Being content with things as they are

① nostalgic 怀旧的

② back-to-the-ancients 复古

③ apathetic 麻木

④ aspirations 热情

⑤ complacent 满足

is a kind of inertia^①. We need to understand that the present is precious not because it can allow us to idle about in the midst of comfort and pleasure, but because it offers us an opportunity to strive to create the future.

Those keen on returning to the past keep telling us how dark and vile^② the status is and what serious wickedness and heavy misfortune it brings. They should understand, however, that what they speak of, if true, is a long-standing inheritance from the past, definitely not a product of today. It is utterly wrong to attribute it all to the present. The only way to change the status quo^③ is to strive to create the future, not to attempt to revive the past.

Now let me sum up briefly as follows:

We should not let the present slip away idly, being displeased with it and lost in past memories and future dreams. Nor should we rest content with the present and thus make absolutely no efforts to achieve future development. Let's make the best of today so as to create tomorrow. Our deeds of today, good or bad, will have an everlasting impact on the future. It is therefore our duty to keep up with the trend of the times and strive for the well-being of future generations.

Notes

1. "The Living Present" and Li Dazha: 李大钊的《今》发表于1918年的《新青年》第4卷4号上。文章强调为今天而工作,创造美好的未来,反对崇古、复古,但也反对全面否定过去和随意菲薄古人,认为只有承受古人,才能启发来者。本文选自《英译中国现代散文选》,由张培基译注,原文英译时略有删节。
2. Ralph Waldo Emerson: 拉尔夫·沃尔多·爱默生,19世纪美国文学的思想领袖、著名作家、超验主义哲学家,对中国文化和东方文明有一定的研究,其思想影响了一大批中国思想家。
3. 《离骚》:作者,战国楚人屈原。“离骚”即“离忧”、“别愁”。《离骚》是中国古代诗歌史上最长的一首浪漫主义抒情诗。诗人自叙身世,抒发了自己遭谗被害的苦闷与矛盾,诗中运用了大量古代神话传说,以想象和联想的方式表现了诗人对理想的热烈追求。

① inertia 惯性

② vile 可恶的

③ status quo 现状

Exercises

A. Match the words in Column A with their definitions in Column B.

Column A

1. transience
2. treasure
3. prevail
4. lethal
5. extinct
6. echo
7. infinite
8. aspirations
9. fantasy
10. misfortune

Column B

- a. something you hope to achieve
- b. no longer exist
- c. lasting only for a short time
- d. cherish
- e. resound
- f. able to cause death
- g. happiness, a pleasant situation
- h. main, popular
- i. no limit, boundless
- j. disaster, something unlucky

B. Translate the following passage into Chinese.

Of all things in the world, I think, the present is the most precious, and also the most apt to slip through our fingers. We, therefore, treasure it all the more because of its transience.

Why is the present so precious? The following quotation from the philosopher Emerson best serves for an answer: "Make use of time if you love eternity; yesterday cannot be recalled; tomorrow cannot be assured; only today is yours. One today is worth two tomorrows."

Passage 2

The Spirit of the English Nation

By Matthew Arnold

What are the essential characteristics of the spirit of our nation? Not, certainly, an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Our greatest admirers would not claim that we have this in a great degree. They might say that we had more of that; but they would not assert them to be our essential characteristics. They would rather allege^① our chief spiritual characteristics are energy and honesty. And, if we are judged favorably and positively, not jealously and negatively, our chief characteristics are no doubt these: energy and honesty, not an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Everybody will feel that openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence are very signal characteristics of the Athenian^② people in ancient times. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence are remarkable characteristics of the French people in modern times. I will not now ask what more the Athenian or the French spirit has than this. Nor what shortcomings either of them may have. All I want now to point out is that they have this, and that we have it in a much lesser degree. Let me remark, however, that not only in the moral sphere^③, but also in the intellectual and spiritual sphere, energy and honesty are most important and fruitful qualities; that, for instance, of what we call genius, energy is the most essential part. So, by assigning to a nation energy and honesty as its chief and great spiritual characteristics, openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence relegate^④ its importance and its power with effect from the intellectual to the moral sphere. We only indicate its probable special line of successful activity in the intellectual sphere, and, it is true, certain imperfections and failings to which, in this sphere, it will always be subject. Genius is mainly an affair of energy, and poetry is mainly an affair of genius; therefore a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be great in poetry; —and we have Shakespeare. Again, the highest reach of science is, one may say, an inventive power, a faculty of divination^⑤, similar to the highest power exercised in poetry. Therefore a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be great in science; —and we have Newton. Shakespeare and Newton: in the intellectual sphere there can be no higher names. And what

① allege 认为

② Athenian 雅典人

③ sphere 方面

④ relegate 体现

⑤ divination 超凡入圣

the energy, which is the life of genius, above everything demands and insists upon, is freedom; entire independence of all authority, prescription^①, and routine—the fullest room to expand as it will. Therefore, a nation whose chief spiritual characteristic is energy will not be very apt to set up intellectual matters, a fixed standard, an authority, like an academy. By this it certainly escapes certain real inconveniences and dangers, and it can, at the same time, reach undeniably splendid heights in poetry and science. On the other hand, some of the requisites of intellectual work are specially the affair of quickness of mind and flexibility of intelligence. The form, the method of evolution, the proportions, the relations of the parts to the whole and intellectual work depend mainly upon them. Even in poetry these requisites are very important; and the poetry of a nation, not great for the gifts on which they depend, will, more or less, suffer by this shortcoming. In poetry, however, they are, after all, secondary, and energy is the first thing; but in prose^② they are of first-rate importance. In its prose literature, therefore, and in the routine of intellectual work generally, a nation with no particular gifts for these will not be so successful. These are what can to a certain degree be learned and appropriated^③, while the free activity of genius cannot. Academies consecrate^④ and maintain them, and therefore, a nation with a turn for them naturally establishes academies. So far as routine and authority tend to embarrass energy and inventive genius, academies may be said to be obstructive^⑤ to energy and inventive genius, and to this extent, to the human spirit's general advance. But then this evil is so much compensated by the propagation^⑥, on a large scale, of the mental aptitudes and demands which an open mind and a flexible intelligence naturally engender, genius itself, in the long run, so greatly finds its account in this propagation. And bodies like the French Academy have such power for promoting it, that the general advance of the human spirit is, perhaps, on the whole, rather furthered than impeded by their existence.

How much greater is our nation in poetry than in prose! How much better, in general, do the productions of its spirit show in the qualities of genius than in the qualities of intelligence! One may constantly remark this in the work of individuals; how much more striking, in general, does any Englishman—of some vigor of mind, but by no means a poet—seem in his verse^⑦ than in his prose! His verse partly suffers from his not being really a poet, partly, no doubt, from the very same defects which impair his prose, and he cannot express himself with thorough success in it. But how much more powerful a personage does he appear in it,

① prescription 规定

② prose 散文

③ appropriated 借鉴的

④ consecrate 崇奉

⑤ obstructive 妨碍物

⑥ propagation 滋生

⑦ verse 诗文

by dint of^① feeling, and of originality and movement of ideas, than when he is writing prose! With a Frenchman of like stamp it is just the reverse: set him to write poetry, he is limited, artificial, and weak; set him to write prose, he is free, natural and effective. The power of French literature is in its prose—writers, the power of English literature is in its poets.

Notes

1. Matthew Arnold (1822–1888): 马修·阿诺德, 诗人、文学批评家。就读于牛津大学, 长期担任督学一职, 走遍英伦。任牛津大学诗学教授达十年。主张诗歌反映时代的要求。中年之后转向文学和文学批评, 写过大量关于文学、教育、社会问题的随笔。作品包括《新诗集》、《文化与无政府状态》等, 对中国文化思想有一定的影响。
2. 本篇选自《学府的文学影响》。

① by dint of 借用