

UP-TO-DATE BUSINESS ENGLISH READINGS

新世纪 商务英语阅读 (3)

主 编 叶兴国

UP-
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新世纪商务英语阅读(3)

UP-TO-DATE BUSINESS ENGLISH READINGS

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内 容 提 要

本教程共分四册。本书共 18 个单元,每个单元由课文、词汇和短语、注释、练习、补充阅读课文和参考答案几部分组成。课文均有一定难度,词汇和短语从详,注释包括背景知识和语言难点,练习主要是为了检查和提高读者的阅读能力。全书内容涉及国际商务及世界上的一些重大事件和热点问题,如香港回归,国际互联网的影响,环境保护和可持续发展,对克隆技术的态度,中美关系,区域经济合作,世界贸易组织,欧盟和欧元,知识经济,电子商务,跨国公司,国际投资,市场营销,跨文化交际和东南亚金融风暴等。

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前 言

随着我国改革开放和市场经济的不断推进,社会对经贸专门人才的需求已发生了变化。培养复合型国际商务人才已经成为高等学校在新世纪的重要任务之一。经贸界和英语教学界已经形成共识:商务英语是复合型国际商务人才必须具有的知识结构的重要组成部分。商务英语教学从来没有像今天这样显得如此重要。为了使能适应 21 世纪经济全球化趋势,和全方位、多层次、宽领域的对外开放格局,更新英语泛读课内容已刻不容缓。为此我们编写了《新世纪商务英语阅读》。

在编写过程中,我们力求体现国际商务和内容新颖两大特色。根据大外贸的格局,以及外经贸企业的集团化、实业化、国际化进程,选材时充分考虑了涉外经贸类专业的知识结构和人才规格的共同点。选用的文章大多是英语国家近几年出版或发表的,内容涉及国际商务及世界上的一些重大事件和热点问题,如香港回归,国际互联网的影响,环境保护和可持续发展,对克隆技术的态度,中美关系,区域经济合作,世界贸易组织,欧盟和欧元,知识经济,电子商务,跨国公司,国际投资,市场营销,跨文化交际和东南亚金融风暴等等。选材尽量兼顾知识性和可读性。

本教材共分四册。每册 15~18 个单元,每个单元由课文、词汇和短语、注释、练习、补充阅读课文和参考答案几部分组成。课文均有一定难度。词汇和短语从详,以减轻学生课外查词典的负担。注释包括背景知识和语言难点。注释留有余地,以便于教师课堂检查和讲解。部分难点留在练习中加以解决。练习的设计主要是为了检查和提高学生的阅读能力。对于疑难句子,要求学生通过翻译来加深理解。

《新世纪商务英语阅读》主要供高等院校涉外经贸类专业学生使用。可以根据学生的英语程度,在一、二年级或二、三年级使用。每周 2 课时,每学期 18 个教学周,共四个学期。本书也可供具有相当英语水平的国际商务从业人员自学和参考。

本教材由叶兴国教授、罗国梁教授和徐雅琴教授等 10 位教师编写。本教材正式出版前已在上海对外贸易学院 12 个涉外经贸类本科专业和双学位一、二年级学生中试用。在试用过程中编写人员设计了专门的调查问卷收集学生的反馈意见。任课教师王光林副教授和朱建中同志给本教材提出了一些意见和建议。

本教材的编写得到了上海对外贸易学院的资助。上海对外贸易学院副院长王兴孙同志一直关心本书的编写。上海交通大学外国语学院院长郑树棠教授拨冗审阅了书稿并提出了指导性意见。上海交通大学外国语学院俞理明博士、陈永捷教授、周国强教授和胡全生教授分别审阅了第一至第四册并提出了宝贵的修改意见。他们深厚的英文造诣和严谨的治学态度给我们留下了深刻的印象。在此,一并表示衷心感谢。

由于编者水平有限,书中难免有错误和不妥之处,我们恳切希望使用本教材的教师、学生和其他读者批评指正。

编 者

2000 年 1 月

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Unit 1

Hong Kong, a Look Back and a Look Forward — the Perspective of One China¹

The issue of Hong Kong is current, complex and controversial. It is steeped in history and has many aspects and implications. Not only are there many “players” involved, but there the rules of the “game” are not always observed, sometimes with excited spectators rushing right into the field,² which makes the outcome even harder to predict. What I shall try to do is to provide some background information which I hope will help in an understanding of the basic issues involved here. I am not a Hong Kong specialist, but I will make use of my knowledge of Chinese and world history, of international affairs and of impressions gathered during a recent month-long visit to Hong Kong, especially the comments my wife and I heard there through meeting with a wide range of people. Then I will draw a few conclusions. Whether my perspective and analysis are right or wrong will soon be known, initially within six weeks or so.

Hong Kong had been Chinese territory until it was ceded to England in 1842. Since then, it has been a British Governor colony ruled by King or Queen. Known as a jewel on the British Crown, it has developed, especially in the last few decades, to become what a recent *New Yorker* article sarcastically termed the “cash cow of the British Empire”.

In 1982, while I was visiting the United States, England fought a war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands.³ All of a

sudden, the American press was full of news about that war, and everyone who cared was looking up the atlas to find out where the islands were. I wonder how many of you know that at about this time, negotiations began between Britain and China on the issue of Hong Kong. Now, why this difference in approach?⁴ Why negotiations and not war? "China is not Argentina, it is much bigger and more powerful", you might answer. Well, you would be wrong if you thought so. The main reason is: under the Sino-British Treaty of 1898, the "New Territories," which form the greater part of Hong Kong, was leased to Britain for 99 years. It was not ceded to Britain outright. And by 1982, the date of expiration of the lease, i.e., June 30, 1997, was not far off.

Although it was still in the early 1980s, the British were worried that since everyone knew their time in Hong Kong would be up by 1997, local real estate development, which had played such an important role in Hong Kong's prosperity but was mainly concentrated in the New Territories,⁵ would falter and Western capital would stop coming in and those already there might withdraw. Therefore, some kind of *modus vivendi*⁶ and, if possible, a permanent agreement had to be concluded to end this uncertainty. In short, Hong Kong Islands and Kowloon without the New Territories would suffocate. That was the reason why the British Prime Minister, the "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, went to Beijing to negotiate. Thatcher, and the governor of Hong Kong before her, had wanted China to agree to continued British rule with nominal Chinese sovereignty, but Deng Xiaoping did not agree. He said: no compromise on sovereignty, but the capitalist system can remain for another 50 years in Hong Kong.

Now remember, this was the period when China had just emerged from the disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which, according to the estimates of one Chinese historian, had cost

the country more than 500 billion Chinese Yuan, or 60 billion US dollars, in national income. Normalcy finally returned. Normalization of relations with the United States was achieved. So, the issue of reunification (meaning unification of the mainland with Hong Kong and Taiwan), shelved for an entire decade, was again on the country's agenda. That is the background to the proposal for a solution of the Hong Kong question on the basis of "One China with two systems." In other words, the whole of Hong Kong would be returned to China on July 1, 1997, but the capitalist system under which it had developed so speedily will continue as before.

Now, those of you who have studied political science know very well the great differences, and shall we say, the antagonism, between the socialist and the capitalist system. And to have the two systems coexist in one country is unprecedented and without parallel in history. Herein lies the boldness and fascination of this proposal. If it worked, it would have significant implications for Mainland-Taiwan relationship, and perhaps for the solution of many knotty ethnic and territorial differences throughout the world as well. On the other hand, if it failed, it would prove and reinforce doubts about feasibility of the entire proposition and suspicion of the sincerity of its proponents.

Let us go back a little into history. In 1840, Britain, a rising commercial power engaged in colonial expansion in all parts of the world, fought a war against China to uphold its opium trade there. It was therefore known as the Opium War. Prior to that, Britain had unfavorable balance of trade with China. Chinese tea, which had become the British national drink, was causing a drain on British silver and gold. Then British merchants discovered that they could turn the tables on China by exporting the opium produced in India, which had already come under British rule. It is recorded that beginning with only 200 chests in 1792, British exports of

opium to China had passed 1000 chests by 1796 and 4500 chests by 1800. During the next quarter century, China's opium imports rose almost ten times. Meanwhile, the constant inflow of opium caused a continuous outflow of silver from China. By the early 1830s, 9 million taels of silver were flowing out of China annually.

So, while the opium trade was a source of great fortune for the British merchants, it was a source of social evils and created an economic crisis in China. When the Chinese government banned opium trade, a British expeditionary force with 16 warships and 31 other ships attacked two major ports along China's eastern seaboard. Soon after, a second expeditionary force, doubling the size of the first, occupied several strategic Chinese cities, forcing the Chinese to negotiate. When Britain defeated China, it not only retained its right to continue the opium trade and got a huge indemnity for its "losses", but also seized Hong Kong and forced China to open up five trade ports. This was the beginning of a series of defeats and of foreign domination of China.

To be fair, Britain was not the only Western power forcing its way into China during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In fact, the extension of the Hong Kong territory to include the much larger New Territories, which is eleven times the size of Hong Kong and Kowloon put together, was partly a move to preempt the French from laying their hands on Kwangzhou Bay. In short, the Western powers were then engaged in a "great Games" to establish spheres of influence in China, then under the rule of the decrepit Qing Court.

Now, this is why to all Chinese conversant with their own history, not only those on the mainland but including those in Hong Kong,⁷ Taiwan and in other parts of the world, the return of Hong Kong is a matter of great historical importance. It signifies the end of more than a century of humiliations. Therefore, what will happen

on July 1 this year is, above all, a Chinese takeover. Here is something non-Chinese may not be able to fully appreciate.

Starting from the 60s, while the mainland of China was embroiled in the Cultural Revolution and experiencing several political and economic setbacks, Hong Kong began its economic takeover. Making use of its trade advantages and of Western management method to develop its labor-intensive industries, it soon became so successful that it was ranked among the "four small tigers" of Asia. By the 80s, its GDP per capita was way ahead of the mainland's. Social scientists gave different reasons for its achievements, but a market economy, social stability thanks to the rule of law, and favorable international ties are commonly acknowledged as constituting the basic causes.

On the other hand, Britain realized that without the New Territories, Hong Kong could not exist by itself, let alone prosper.⁸ It had to be supplied with food, water, goods, capital and business opportunities from outside. These were the objective facts which had to be recognized by both sides when some kind of arrangement was negotiated between Britain and China. It was to the credit of their leaders that they thought up the present arrangement whereby Hong Kong would be returned to China but would retain its capitalist system. It would be administered by the Hong Kong people themselves, but British economic and cultural influence would remain intact. A compromise, no doubt, agreed upon after much hard bargaining on both sides, but the result was far better than a settlement by war, like what happened over the Falkland Islands.

The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong⁹ and the 1990 Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region¹⁰ are too long for me to go into detail here. However, since they form the basis for Hong Kong's coming transfer and future development, I have summarized the gist of the two documents into the following

points:

- China will resume sovereignty over Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong will enjoy a “special administrative region” status, giving it a unique identity quite different from the rest of China.
- It will enjoy a high degree of autonomy, vested with executive, legislative, legal and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. But foreign affairs and defense matters will be in the hands of the Chinese central government.
- Hong Kong’s original political, economic and social systems and the people’s lifestyle will remain intact.
- The Government of HKSAR,¹¹ including the Chief Executive, 100 percent of the members of the executive council and no less than 80 percent of the members of the legislative council, and the chief judges in the court will all be Chinese citizens who are permanent Hong Kong residents with no right of abode in any foreign country and who have resided in Hong Kong for no less than 15 years or 20 years. The Central Government shall not send officials to take part in the government of Hong Kong at any level.

The feelings of the Hong Kong people about the changeover are not quite the same. According to several opinion polls made recently by independent sources in Hong Kong, nearly 80 per cent of the people feel confident. This does not mean there are no doubts or even fears. Why? Hong Kong has been a haven for refugees throughout recent decades of Chinese history. It was so during the Japanese invasion and occupation of parts of the Chinese mainland (1937-1941); in the late 40s when the defeat of the Nationalists in the civil war caused an exodus from the mainland (consisting mainly of business people and professionals from Shanghai and other coastal cities); and later, throughout the political campaigns on the mainland.

Aside from political reasons, there were also a large number of refugees who flocked to Hong Kong from nearby Guangdong Province to escape famine and economic difficulties. Among these were traders, workers and farmers as well as entrepreneurs, intellectuals, technicians. Over the years, a considerable number of the latter group have prospered in Hong Kong. When my wife lived in Hong Kong in the late 30s and early 40s, the population was somewhere around a million. Now, it is over six million.

Most of the Hong Kong people therefore have an ambivalent feeling towards the coming changeover. On the one hand, as Chinese, they feel that the end of the British colony is to be welcomed. On the other hand, they are afraid that the kind of life they have become used to will be changed. And the specter of upheavals like those of the Cultural Revolution frighten them. When I visited Hong Kong in 1988, quite a number of professors I met were thinking of leaving. "What about the Cultural Revolution? Or the previous political campaigns?" they would ask. "What assurances will I have if Beijing fails to live up to its words?"

Now, I could understand their not wanting to take any chances and choosing to go to Canada, Australia or the United States to get a passport or a permanent residence card there. That was exactly what a lot of them did. According to one estimate, between 1984 and 1990, about one-tenth of the population left (I have not checked on its accuracy, but there are now several enclaves of Hong Kongers in Toronto and Vancouver, Canada; in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia; and in San Francisco and Los Angeles, the United States). Now, according to Frank Ching, writing in the May/June issue of *Foreign Affairs*, about one-fifth of these expatriates have returned. When I visited Hong Kong again last December, the type of questions asked by some relatives and friends was somewhat different and people are more interested in developments on the