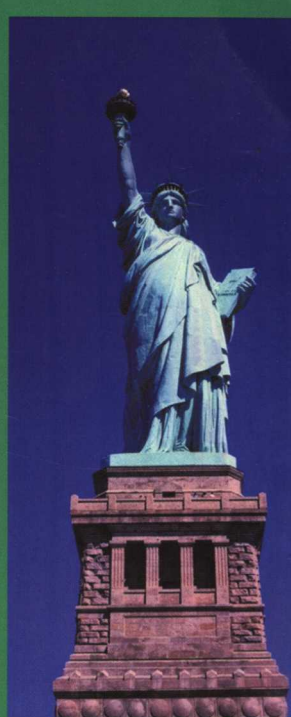




英美 文化 之旅



A TOUR OF the British and American CULTURE

白树勤 主编



中国商务出版社
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前 言

本书介绍了有关英语学习的背景知识，涵盖英美文化的各个方面，涉及文学、历史、政治、宗教、教育、人物等多个主题。目的是帮助学生开阔视野、扩充知识面，扫除因缺乏背景知识引起的理解障碍。

当代应用语言学特别强调语言外知识 (extra-linguistic knowledge) 或背景知识 (world knowledge) 的重要性，认为单单有语言知识是不够的，两者必须结合起来才能较好地理解输入的语言信息。我们发现，中国英语学习者遇到的困难有时往往就是由于背景知识的缺乏造成的。鉴于此，我们编写了这本介绍英美文化的书。

本书的编写，语言上注重准确地道，明白易懂；内容上注重时代感，资料新颖；较好地融合了知识性和趣味性，可读性强。对提高读者的英语水平和扩充知识面都将起到很好的作用。

本书的读者对象是具有中等以上英语水平的学习者，可供大中专学生或英语自学者使用。

本书共十章，围绕着十个主题展开。每一章以英语介绍该主题，又分为若干小节。每一节之后附有注释，就学生不太熟悉的人名、地名、事件等专有名词给出汉译，并略作背景介绍。文中也插入了少量语言注释，对学生容易理解错或不易查到的语言点加以说明。对于其他一般生词，学习者可根据上下文进行合理推测，或使用英语词典当可自行解决。

本书由白树勤担任主编，荆江波担任副主编。第一、九章由白树勤编写，第二、七章由荆江波编写，第三、四章由张秋凤编写，第五章由梁文武编写，第六、八、十章由史靖编写。

由于编者水平有限，书中缺点和不妥之处在所难免。盼望读者不吝指正，以便提高和改进。

编 者
2004 年 3 月

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Chapter 1 Holidays

节日文化：日历上如果没有了节日，我们的生活就会突然变得没有了期待，我们的日子会过得单调、沉闷。儿时最盼望的节日是过年，这是大多数中国儿童的期待；对于西方国家的儿童来说，圣诞节是孩子们每年最开心的时刻，在全家团聚一堂的时刻，他们最想要的是圣诞礼物。了解西方国家一年中的节日，有助于我们更好地开展国际交流。可以说，节日是文化的浓缩，一个个节日加起来就构成了一年美丽的画卷。让我们开始这次文化旅行，去穿越春夏秋冬，去感受每个季节的欢快。

1. Happy New Year

“Happy New Year!” That greeting will be said and heard for at least the first couple of weeks as a new year gets under way. But the day celebrated as New Year's Day in modern America was not always January 1.

Ancient New Years

The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon¹ about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible crescent 新月) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring 春分点). The beginning of spring is a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand,

has no astronomical or agricultural significance. It is purely arbitrary.

The Babylonian New Year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison.

The Romans continued to observe the New Year in late March, but their calendar was continually tampered with (篡改) by various emperors so that the calendar soon became out of synchronization (同步) with the sun.

In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate², in 153 B. C., declared January 1 to be the beginning of the New Year. But tampering continued until Julius Caesar³, in 46 BC, established what has come to known as Julian Calendar. It again established January 1 as the New Year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the precious year drag on for 445 days.

The Church's View of New Year Celebrations

Although in the first centuries AD the Romans continued celebrating the New Year, the early Catholic Church condemned the festivities as paganism (信奉异教). But as Christianity became more widespread, the early church began having its own religious observances concurrently with many of the pagan celebrations, and New Year's Day was no different. New Year is still observed as the Feast of Christ's Circumcision⁴ by some denominations (教派).

During the Middle Ages⁵, the Church remained opposed to celebrating New Years. January 1 has been celebrated as a holiday by Western nations for only about the past 400 years.

The New Year Traditions

Other traditions of the season include the making of New Year's resolutions (新年的决心). That tradition also dates back to early Babylonians. Popular modern resolutions might include the promise to

lose weight or quit smoking. The early Babylonian's most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment.

The Tournament of Roses Parade⁶ dates back to 1886. In that year, members of the Valley Hunt Club decorated their carriages with flowers. It celebrated the ripening of the orange crop in California. Although the Rose Bowl football game was first played as part of the Tournament of Roses in 1902, it was replaced by Roman chariot races the following year. In 1916, the football game returned as the sports centerpiece of the festival.

The tradition of using a baby to signify the New Year was begun in Greece around 600 BC. It was their tradition at that time to celebrate their god of wine, Dionysus (酒神), by parading a baby in a basket, representing the annual rebirth of that god as spirit of fertility. Early Egyptians also used a baby as a symbol of rebirth.

Although the early Christians denounced the practice as pagan, the popularity of the baby as a symbol of rebirth forced the Church to reevaluate its position. The Church finally allowed its members to celebrate the New Year with a baby, which was to symbolize the birth of the baby Jesus (耶稣). The use of an image of a baby with a New Year was brought to early America by the Germans. They had used the effigy since the fourteenth century.

For Luck in the New Year

Traditionally, it was thought that one could affect the luck they would have throughout the coming year by what they did or ate on the first day of the year. For that reason, it has become common for folks to celebrate the first few minutes of a brand - new year in the company of family and friends. Parties often last into the middle of the night after the ringing in of a New Year. It was once believed that the first visitor on New Year's Day would bring either good luck or bad luck the rest of the year. It was particularly lucky that visitor happened to be a

tall dark-haired man.

Traditionally New Year foods are also thought to bring luck. Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes “coming full circle,” completing a year’s cycle. For that reason, The Dutch (荷兰人) believe that eating donuts (面包圈) on New Year’s Day will bring good fortune.

Many parts of the U. S. celebrate the New Year by consuming black-eyed peas. These legumes (豆子) are typically accompanied by either hog jowls (猪颊肉) or ham. Black-eyed peas and other legumes have been considered good luck in many cultures. The hog, and thus its meat, is considered lucky because it symbolizes prosperity. Cabbage is another “good luck” vegetable that is consumed on New Year’s Day by many. Cabbage leaves are also considered a sign of prosperity, being representative of paper currency. In some regions, rice is a lucky food that is eaten on New Year’s Day.

Auld Lang Syne⁷

The song, “Auld Lang Syne,” playing in the background, is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the new year. At least partially written by Robert Burns⁸ in the 1700’s, it was first published in 1796 after Burns’ death. Early variations of the song were sung prior to 1700 and inspired Burns to produce the modern rendition. An old Scotch tune, “Auld Lang Syne” literally means “old long ago,” or simply, “the good old days.”

Notes:

1. Babylon: 巴比伦, 古代中东的城市, 巴比伦国的首都, 以富有闻名于世。
2. the Roman senate: 古罗马元老院。
3. Julius Caesar: 凯撒 (公元前 101—前 44), 罗马将领和政治

家。他把罗马从共和国变为帝国，自己担任皇帝。后被元老派贵族刺杀。

4. the Feast of Christ's Circumcision: 基督行割礼日。这里的 feast 是宗教节日之意。
5. The Middle Ages: 中世纪，指从公元 1100 至 1500 年之间的欧洲历史时期。
6. The Tournament of Roses Parade: 玫瑰花车游行。每年的 1 月 1 日，在美国加州的 Pasadena 城，要举行盛大的花车游行，有乐队伴奏，并通过电视向全国转播。
7. Auld Lang Syne: 《友谊地久天长》，原意为“美好的昔日”，英国著名歌曲，由彭斯据民歌改编，常在新年欢庆时唱。
8. Robert Burns: 彭斯（1759—1796），苏格兰杰出的民族诗人。

2. Groundhog Day¹

How did the groundhog get a day of his own?

The lowly groundhog, often called a woodchuck, is the only mammal to have a day named in his honor. The groundhog's day is February 2. Granted, it is not a federal holiday; nobody gets off work. But still, to have a day named after you is quite a feat.

How did the groundhog come by this honor?

It stems from the ancient belief that hibernating creatures were able to predict the arrival of springtime by their emergence.

The German immigrants known as Pennsylvania (宾夕法尼亚) Dutch brought the tradition to America in the 18th century. They had once regarded the badger (獾) as the winter-spring barometer. But the job was reassigned to the groundhog after importing their Candlemas² traditions to the U. S. Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of Jesus.

Candlemas is one of the four “cross-quarters” of the year, occurring half way between the first day of winter and the first day of spring. Traditionally, it was believed that if Candlemas was sunny, the remaining six weeks of winter would be stormy and cold. But if it rained or snowed on Candlemas, the rest of the winter would be mild. If an animal “sees its shadow,” it must be sunny, so more wintry weather is predicted:

If Candlemas be fair and bright,
Winter has another flight.
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,
Winter will not come again.

The groundhog and badger were not the only animals that have been used to predict spring. Other Europeans used the bear or hedgehog—but in any case the honor belonged to a creature that hibernated. Its emergence symbolized the imminent arrival of spring.

Traditionally, the groundhog is supposed to awaken on February 2, Groundhog Day, and come up out of his burrow. If he sees his shadow, he will return to the burrow for six more weeks of winter. If he doesn't see his shadow, he remains outside and starts his year, because he knows that spring has arrived early.

In the U. S., the official groundhog is kept in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Every February 2, amid a raucous celebration early in the morning, Punxsutawney Phil as the groundhog is called, is pulled from his den (巢穴) by his keepers, who are dressed in tuxedos (小礼服). Phil then whispers his weather prediction into the ear of his keeper, who then announces it to the anxiously-awaiting crowd.

Of course, this is for show. It's a fun celebration and a great tradition. But Phil's keepers secretly decide upon the “forecast” in advance of the groundhog's arousal.

Besides, spring always arrives on or near March 21, so whether

the groundhog decides to return to his den or remain above ground, the sad fact is spring will always have to wait at least six more weeks.

Notes:

1. Groundhog Day: 土拨鼠节。相传这天土拨鼠会在春天第一次出洞, 如天气不好, 它会重新冬眠。
2. Candlemas: 2月2日圣烛节, 基督教的圣节, 庆祝耶稣诞生后40天玛利亚得圣洁。

3. Valentines Day¹

There are varying opinions as to the origin of Valentine's Day. Some experts state that it originated from St. Valentine, a Roman who was martyred (殉难) for refusing to give up Christianity. He died on February 14, 269 A. D., the same day that had been devoted to love. Legend also says that St. Valentine left a farewell note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From your Valentine". Other aspects of the story say that Saint Valentine served as a priest at the temple during the reign of Emperor Claudius². Claudius then had Valentine jailed for defying him. In 496 A. D. Pope (教皇) Gelasius set aside February 14 to honor St. Valentine.

Gradually, February 14 became the date for exchanging love messages and St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers. The date was marked by sending poems and simple gifts such as flowers. There was often a social gathering or a ball. In the United States, Miss Esther Howland is given credit for sending first valentine cards. Commercial valentines were introduced in the 1800's and now the date is very commercialized. The town of Loveland, Colorado, does a large post office business around February 14. The spirit continues as valentines are sent out with sentimental verses and children exchange valentine

cards at school.

The History of Saint Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire. In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honor Juno³. Juno was the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddesses of women and marriage. The following day, February 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia (牧神节).

The lives of young boys and girls were strictly separate. However, one of the customs of the young people was name drawing (抽签). On the eve of the festival of Lupercalia the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be partners for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose. Sometimes the pairing of the children lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and would later marry.

Under the rule of Emperor Claudius II Rome was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns. Claudius the Cruel was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues. He believed that reason was that Roman men did not want leave their loves or families. As a result, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome. The good Saint Valentine was a priest at Rome in the days of Claudius II. He and Saint Marius aided the Christian martyrs and secretly married couples, and for this kind deed Saint Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect (行政长官) of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off. He suffered martyrdom on the 14th day of February, about the year 270. At that time it was the custom in Rome, a very ancient custom, indeed, to celebrate in the month of February the Lupercalia, feasts in honor of a heathen god. On these occasions, amidst a variety of pagan ceremonies, the names of young women were placed in a

box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed.

The pastors of the early Christian Church in Rome endeavored to do away with pagan element in these feasts by substituting the names of saints for those of maidens. And as the Lupercalia began about the middle of February, the pastors appeared to have chosen Saint Valentine's Day for celebration of this new feast. So it seems that the custom of young men choosing maidens for valentines, or saints as patrons for the coming year, arose in this way.

St. Valentine's Story

Let me introduce myself. My name is Valentine. I lived in Rome during the third century. That was long, long ago! At that time, Rome was ruled by an emperor named Claudius. I didn't like Emperor Claudius, and I wasn't the only one! A lot of people shared my feelings.

Claudius wanted to have a big army. He expected men to volunteer to join. Many men just did not want fight in wars. They did not want to leave their wives and families. As you might have guessed, not many men signed up. This made Claudius furious. So what happened? He had a crazy idea. He thought that if men were not married, they would not mind joining the army. So Claudius decided not to allow any more marriages. Young people thought his new law was cruel. I thought it was preposterous (荒谬)! I certainly wasn't going to support that law!

Did I mention that I was a priest? One of my favorite activities was to marry couples⁴. Even after Emperor Claudius passed his law, I kept on performing marriage ceremonies—secretly, of course. It was really quite exciting. Imagine a small candle-lit room with only the bride and groom and myself. We would whisper words of the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of soldiers.

One night, we did hear footsteps. It was scary! Thank goodness

the couple I was marrying escaped in time. I was caught. (Not quite as light on my feet as I used to be, I guess.) I was thrown in jail and told that my punishment was death.

I tried to stay cheerful. And do you know what? Wonderful things happened. Many young people came to the jail to visit me. They threw flowers and notes up to my window. They wanted me to know that they, too, believed in love.

One of these young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit me in the cell. Sometimes we would sit and talk for hours. She helped me to keep my spirits up. She agreed that I did the right thing by ignoring the emperor and going ahead with the secret marriages. On the day I was to die, I left my friend a little note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. I signed it, "Love from your Valentine. "

I believe that note started the custom of exchanging love messages on Valentine's Day. It was written on the day I died, February 14, 269 A. D. Now, every year on this day, people remember. But most importantly, they think about love and friendship. And when they think of Emperor Claudius, they remember how he tried to stand in the way of love, and they laugh—because they know that love can't be beaten!

Valentine Traditions

Hundreds of years ago in England, many children dressed up as adults on Valentine's Day. They went singing from home to home. One verse they sang was: Good morning to you, Valentine; Curl your locks as I do mine—; Two before and three behind. Good morning to you, Valentine.

In Wales wooden love spoons were carved and given as gifts on February 14th. Hearts, keys and keyholes were favorite decorations on the spoons. The decoration meant, "You unlock my heart!"

In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. To wear your heart on your sleeve now means that it is easy for other people to know how you're feeling.

In some countries, a young woman may receive a gift of clothing from a young man. If she keeps the gift, it means she will marry him.

Some people used to believe that if a woman saw a robin (知更鸟) flying overhead on Valentine's Day, it meant she would marry a sailor. If she saw a sparrow, she would marry a poor man and be very happy. If she saw a goldfinch (金翅雀), she would marry a millionaire.

A love seat is a wide chair. It was first made to seat one woman and her wide dress. Later, the love seat or courting seat had two sections, often in an S-shape. In this way, a couple could sit together—but not too closely!

Think of five or six names of boys or girls you might marry. As you twist the stem of an apple, recite the names until the stem comes off. You will marry the person whose name you were saying when the stem fell off.

Pick a dandelion (蒲公英) that has gone to seed. Take a deep breath and blow the seeds into the wind. Count the seeds that remain on the stem. That is the number of children you will have.

If you cut an apple in half and count how many seeds are inside, you will also know how many children you will have.

Notes:

1. Valentine's Day: 情人节; 圣瓦伦丁节。在每年的2月14日。
2. Emperor Claudius: 克劳狄二世 (214—170), 罗马皇帝, 269年打败入侵的哥特人。
3. Juno: 朱诺, 罗马神话中的天后, 主神 Jupiter (朱庇特) 的