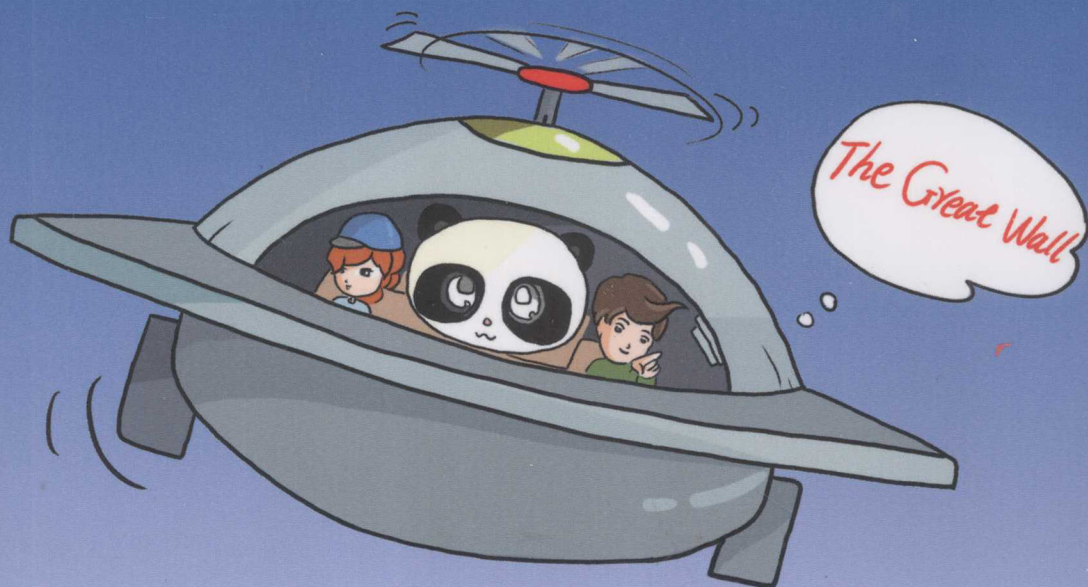


Travel through time and learn Chinese
with adventure stories



Emma's Adventures Through Chinese

爱玛穿越中国

李娜 李锦青 孙兰 编著

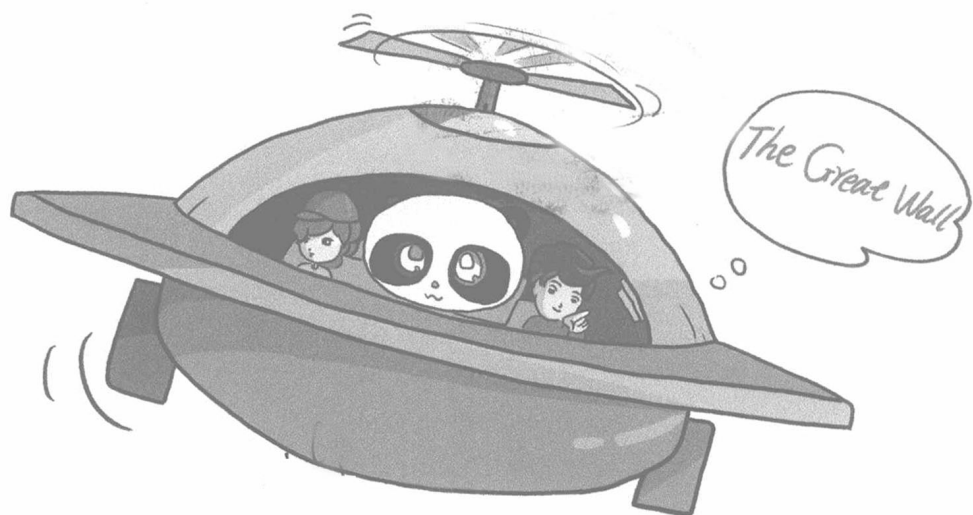


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前 言

创作《爱玛穿越中国》，是我们几位在美国教中文的老师为改变中文阅读教材匮乏的现状而进行的一次大胆尝试。

近几年，海外中文热可以说是到了如火如荼的程度。可是，头脑冷静的人们还是敏锐地意识到，中文虽热，但离“沸点”仍有相当大的一段距离。究竟是什么因素影响了中文的“沸腾”呢？是阅读能力的不足！我们见过一些学中文的美国学生，他们用中文交流起来完全没有障碍，可是却读不了中文报纸，读中文小说则更是难上加难。AP 中文考试的阅读也是最让美国学生头痛的部分。

为什么会这样？究其原因，大部分的海外中文学习者，其母语均源于印欧语系，与属于汉藏语系的中文完全不同。中文的字形大多源于图形。虽然后来的汉字中有大约 80% 的形声字，可以让我们根据声旁猜测发音，但要做到这一点，必须先掌握大量基础字形，才能够“读半边猜全部”。否则，通篇的生字不啻于天书，没有足够的词汇作基础，阅读中文谈何容易？

那么，要提高阅读能力，汉字认得多就够了吗？当然也不

是。我们知道，英文单词的拼写规律很强，比如“Apple”，我们一见这个拼写，就知道它的意思是“苹果”。可是中文呢，简直就像一个文字的万花筒！同样的单字（same character），进行不同的排列组合，就能产生差别巨大的意思。比如“故事”和“事故”，“喜欢”和“欢喜”，“人家”和“家人”；“难为”和“为难”……凡此种种，不胜枚举。如果再加上语法结构、不同的固定搭配，本已困难重重的中文阅读就会难上加难。让一些中文程度不够高的学习者对中文阅读，进而对学习中文，产生畏难情绪。这也是造成海外中文教学金字塔式发展的一个重要原因。

当前，越来越多的人都已经注意到，中文阅读能力差、阅读材料短缺已经成了海外中文教学的“拦路虎”，严重影响了中文教学水平的提高。因此，越来越多的中文老师和出版商都在想方设法解决问题。近年来，中文书籍在市场上越来越丰富，但是真正适合初学者的却并不多见。而初学者又是最需要培养中文阅读能力的一个群体。因此，编写适合初学者的读物，应该成为中文阅读类图书创作和出版的重点。这样的图书需要具备以下特点：

1. 使用简单的语言形式；
2. 使用常见的汉语词汇；
3. 具有生动活泼的故事形式和故事情节。

这本《爱玛穿越中国》就是为初级中文水平的学习者“量身定制”的一本读物。我们将它设计成了特殊的中英文混合编写版，

其阅读对象是没有任何中文背景的中文初学者，他们的中文生字量只有 50 个甚至更少。在编写的过程中，我们力争既保持内容的可读性，又兼顾阅读者的中文水平。考虑到初学者用中文思维的能力非常有限，在本书的前半部分，我们基本是按英语的语法结构来安排行文的。其中难词难句都用英文呈现，只用了少量的中文词句。学生们在现有的中文基础上，稍加努力就能够读懂。这样的安排，有利于学生温故知新，在阅读中学生们不仅可以巩固“旧”学，还能开展“新”学。这本书是一个不设门槛的入门级读物，初学者拿起来就能读。虽然没有“门槛”，但却设有“台阶”。一旦入门以后，语言的难度会呈阶梯式、螺旋式的上升，坡度不大，初学者的阅读水平将得到稳步提升。随着词汇量的增加，学习者的中文水平逐渐提高。当他们的生字量突破 300 个之后，书中提供的英文就会越来越少，行文方式就会逐渐变成在中文句子中偶尔镶嵌英文单词。这时，学习者就可以尝试着把英文思维调整为中文思维了。

与市场上类似的中文阅读材料相比，《爱玛穿越中国》的特色还体现在以下几个方面——

第一，选取了最时尚的“穿越”主题。因为读者主要是年轻学生，所以我们的故事选择了当下最时尚的“穿越”主题。“穿越”的好处在于，可以把不同历史时期、不同地点的人物和事件串连起来。不同时期的人、不同地点的事，犹如珍珠一样散落在历史的长河中。通过“穿越”，我们可以不受时间和空间的限制，毫不费力地将其串成一串美丽的项链。“穿越”让一个

个独立成篇的小故事有机地组成了一篇大故事，每个小故事的内容都具有连续性，这也是与当前市场上绝大多数中文阅读类书籍不一样的地方。

第二，内容是有趣味、有意义的历史故事。如果把这本书比成是一块美味的“夹心蛋糕”，中间最美味的一层是文字部分。我们选取生活中的基础字、常用字和高频字，让这些字词在文章中不断重现，使读者与这些字词逐渐“熟识”，从而达到识字的目的。下面的一层是文化。学习语言不能脱离文化背景。文化既体现在衣食住行上，也通过意识形态领域反映出来。爱玛在中国看到和经历的种种都和中国文化有关，学习者通篇读下来，既提高了语言技能，又扩展了对中国文化的了解，一举两得。那么，“蛋糕”最上面的一层是什么呢？那就是融合在书中的故事性和趣味性，这二者会牢牢地“抓”住读者的心。在我们的书中，每一个故事都是爱玛的“亲身经历”，那些历史上大名鼎鼎的大人物都成了可以随意造访的“邻居”，我们可以和他们面对面地交谈。每一次穿越的旅程之间联系紧密、情节紧凑，用悬念和暗示指引读者“游”完全程。

第三，提供丰富的词汇注释和帮助理解的思考题。每个章节中都提供了丰富的词语注释，以帮助读者解决词汇量不足的困扰。这里面有基础词汇，也有专用词，有兴趣的学习者可以通过阅读和学习词语注释扩大词汇量。只想“悦读”的人也不会被太多的生字、生词羁绊住，通过查看词语注释，他们能立即读懂文章的意思。每章之后的思考题与故事的内容以及读者的理解相关，读

者如果能顺利地回答思考题，就意味着他们对这个故事理解得八九不离十了。

第四，仿照美国青少年习惯的章节小说（chapter book）进行编排。对美国读者来说，虽然故事的内容是陌生的，但其形式却是他们喜欢的。加上故事连贯并富有趣味性，他们阅读起来应该很快能适应。

或许有些人会对这种中英混编的形式怀有疑议，觉得它不伦不类。实际上，在现实生活中，我们的学生也常有在表达时词不达意的情况，这时他们不是卡住不表达，而是加入对应的英文词来辅助表达。例如，当他们忘了怎么说“爱”时，“我爱你”就可能被他们说成了“我 love 你”，这并不影响我们的理解。为此，我们专门邀请了一些外国学生试读这本《爱玛穿越中国》，他们很快就理解并接受了这种新的编排方式。由此看来，中英文混合的编写方式是适合初学者的，是一条帮助初学者提高阅读能力的新路，我们也殷切地希望，老师们在使用这本书时能向学生做一些解释，使他们能更快地开始享受阅读的过程。

综上所述，我们所做的这种尝试，主旨就是为了尽快提高汉语初学者的阅读水平。虽然这是一条新路，但我们相信，在这条路上，我们不是踽踽独行。我们衷心地盼望各位读者能将阅读过程中发现的问题和您的建议告诉我们，让我们一起携手并进，把中文阅读这段崎岖之路走成一片坦途！

编者

Preface

For the few of us who teach Chinese in the United States, writing *Emma's Adventures Through Chinese* is a bold attempt to enrich Chinese reading textbooks in the US market.

In recent years we have witnessed the ever increasing popularity of learning Chinese overseas as a foreign language. However, cool-headed people are keenly aware that it is still far from reaching its pinnacle. The reason behind it? Insufficient reading exercise! We've seen American students fluent in speaking Chinese but unable to read Chinese newspapers, let alone Chinese novels. The reading section on the AP Chinese test plagues far too many students in the States.

What is the logic behind all of this? The mother tongues of most learners of the Chinese language belong to the Indo-European language family, which is entirely different from the Sino-Tibetan languages, such as Chinese. The forms of most Chinese characters originate from shapes. Though 80% of them later evolved into pictophonetic characters, whose pronunciations can be deduced from their phonetic components, students must have mastered a large number of basic characters to make a reasonable guess at the pronunciations. Without a good command of enough Chinese vocabulary, reading a passage full of new characters can be a daunting task for Chinese learners.

Can reading ability be effectively improved by recognizing more Chinese characters? Not necessarily. As we know, spelling rules can help us learn English words. For instance, we know its meaning at the sight of word

“apple”. But Chinese characters seem like a kaleidoscope, which means different combination of same characters will form words with completely different meanings. There are myriads of such examples as 故事 (story) and 事故 (accident), 喜欢 (like) and 欢喜 (joy), 人家 (others) and 家人 (family members), 难为 (embarrass) and 为难 (feel awkward). If grammatical structures and collocations are considered, reading Chinese can become very difficult especially for beginners and can even hinder their learning experience. This is why there are fewer and fewer students as learning goes on.

Currently, an increasing number of people are becoming aware that the scarcity of reading materials has led to students' poor reading ability and has become the bottleneck for teaching Chinese overseas. Increasingly, Chinese teachers and publishers are coming up with solutions to tackle this problem. While more and more Chinese books have emerged in the market in recent years, only a few are suitable for beginners who are the ones most in need of training in reading. Therefore, priority should be given to publishing reading books for beginners with:

Simple everyday language;

Commonly-used Chinese vocabulary;

Dynamic stories and interesting plots.

This book was designed by mixing Chinese and English in the text and is tailored for beginners with a command of 50 Chinese characters or less. During its compilation, readability and readers' Chinese level have been taken into full consideration. Therefore, in the first half of this book, a limited number of easy Chinese words are imbedded into English sentences so beginners will find it easy to start with. By reading this book, learners will constantly review what they've learned while coming across new vocabulary from time to time. The difficulty will increase gradually, so your vocabulary will grow and your reading ability will steadily improve. Once you have

mastered over 300 characters, you'll find only a few English words embedded into the Chinese sentences, and now you are expected to think in Chinese.

Compared with the other Chinese reading materials of the kind, this book retains the following features:

1. The very fashionable theme of “traveling across space and time” is selected. This theme caters to young learners and is conducive to forging links between figures and events of different historical time periods or sites in this book. The whole story introduced by this book is composed of small stories with intrinsic connections, which is a typical feature that most other Chinese reading books lack.

2. The historical stories in this book are interesting and meaningful. This book can be compared to a cake, the centre of which is Chinese characters. The basic characters and those that are commonly or frequently used are imbedded into the stories repeatedly so learners can recognize them by reading the stories. The foundation of the cake is culture, from which we cannot isolate ourselves when learning a language. What Emma sees and experiences are closely linked with Chinese culture; therefore, learners can expand their knowledge of Chinese culture while improving language skills by reading Emma's stories. The icing of the cake is the narrative and funny plot, which captivates its readers. In this book, each chapter is a recount of Emma's experience, in which she drops in on great historical figures at will like neighbors, conversing with them face to face. Each chapter is closely connected by suspicion and hints, which guide the readers to complete the whole adventure.

3. Vocabulary annotation and questions on the stories are offered as well. Basic words and proper nouns are supplied with annotations so the learners can turn to them when coming across new words or even expand their vocabularies by learning them. For those who just want to focus on the stories, they won't be overwhelmed by new characters and words because they can easily

understand the stories by looking them up in the annotations. The questions at the end of each chapter are designed based on the story. If clear answers are given by the readers, it shows that they have understood the story pretty well.

4. The format of chapter book, which is familiar to US teenagers, is adopted. Though the stories are new to them, the format is very familiar. In particular, the stories are funny and easily understood, so readers will find it very enjoyable.

Some people may be skeptical about the mix of Chinese and English in one story. Actually, our students often turn to English when they cannot find the Chinese equivalent to express what they want to convey. For example, when they forget how to say 爱, they may say 我 love 你 instead of 我爱你. Although love is imbedded into the Chinese sentence, it can still be understood clearly. Some international students have been invited to read this book before its publication and have enjoyed the compilation style. This shows that the mix of Chinese and English words can meet the demand of beginners and can be considered as a new approach of improving their reading ability. It is sincerely hoped that teachers give further explanations to their students so that they can enjoy reading it immediately.

To sum up, we hope that our efforts will help beginners to improve their reading ability as soon as possible. Combining Chinese and English words in one text is a new approach, but we believe that there are companions who are embarking on the same path alongside us. We sincerely appreciate your comments and suggestions on Chinese reading so that more books will be compiled to meet your demand!

The authors

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