



SCIENCE AND LIFE

主编 ● 霍冬克

科学与生活

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前 言

本书是为帮助广大中学生和业余英语爱好者巩固英语基础知识,扩大英语词汇量,提高英语阅读和写作能力而编写的英汉对照读物。

该书不仅挑选了一些物理、太空、机械等方面的科技内容,还着重选用了有关自然界科学现象及生活、真理等方面的篇章,趣味性、知识性、可读性较强,可谓知识小百科全书。文章均选自英美原文并对原文作了适当的删节和改动,语言生动流畅,形式活泼多样,内容丰富有趣。同时,为了阅读方便,各篇文章后面都附有难点注释和汉语译文。由于水平有限,疏忽错误在所难免,请读者批评指正。

编译者

2004 年 12 月

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Machines in the City

Dick Mallory is a book publisher. His office on the fortieth floor of a skyscraper in the center of New York City is the world he works in. The world he lives in is a white house on a quiet street in a suburb 30 miles from the big city. Whether he is at work in the heart of the big city or at home in the quiet suburb, Dick's life is tied to machines. In many ways he represents modern man in the big city—modern man in the machine age.

In a working day, Dick and his wife are awakened by the buzzing of an electric alarm clock. As he pushes a button to stop it he turns on the radio beside his bed to hear the morning news. Then he goes to the bathroom for a quick shave with his electric shaver.

After dressing, Dick goes to the kitchen, where his wife has begun to prepare breakfast. Eggs are cooking on the electric stove, bread is being toasted in an electric toaster, and coffee is being made in an electric coffee maker. From the electric refrigerator Dick takes cream, another of fresh milk, and a can of frozen orange juice. He opens the can with an electric opener and mixes the contents with several cans of cold water. Then the orange juice is ready, and Dick and his wife can begin breakfast. During breakfast, they sometimes watch the morning news program on television.

After breakfast Dick gets the car out of the garage, and his wife drives him to the railroad station. The station is crowded with other commuters like himself, people who must travel 30 or even 50 miles to

the city and back every day. Some are reading the morning paper; others are talking with one another, waiting nervously for the train. If the train is late, their routine could easily be upset. But exactly the train arrives at the station on time. Forty-five minutes later, it arrives in the city, still on schedule.

With the other commuters, Dick hurries from the train into the station. As he nears the door, it is opened quickly by an electric eye, and he passes through into the waiting room. A moment later he steps onto a moving stairway that takes him quickly up to the street level. Buses and taxis are everywhere, but because Dick's office is not far from it he always walks.

Soon he is inside the sixty-story skyscraper where his company has offices. At a long bank of elevators he waits until a green light flashes for an up car, then steps inside. He pushes the button for the fortieth floor, the door closes, and the car rises smoothly and quietly.

When the elevator reaches the fortieth floor, the door again slides open, and Dick steps into the familiar hall with its early-morning quiet, and hurries to his office. He turns on the lights and is soon at work. There is much to be done before the clerks and secretaries begin to arrive.

An hour later the day's routine begins with the arrival of the mail. As he reads it, he usually takes notes, and on the more urgent points picks up the telephone and calls other departments in the building and other businesses in New York. It is a matter of routine for Dick to call the company's offices in Chicago and San Francisco, and sometimes even to call its representatives in London and Paris. Once he has the information he needs, he letters into a recording machine for his secretary to type and return to him later for this signature.

At times Dick is aware of the workers in the outer office answering telephones, typing letters, and filling papers. From a room next door he hears the even clicking of a machine that is duplicating copies of schedules and instruction sheets. Other machines are taking pictures of important letters and documents and producing many copies in a few minutes. From a special office nearby comes the hum of an electronic computer, which is recording orders, billing customers, and making out the company payroll.

Often Dick is also aware of other sounds, from outdoor. But Dick is used to noise—for the big city, a city of machines, must be a city of noise.

Although he is used to the noise, Dick usually looks forward to the end of the day, when he can return to his house in the quiet suburb. For relaxation he may mow the lawn with his power mower; or sometimes he repairs a piece of furniture with his electric tools. He may help his young children build a pen for their pet rabbit. Or he may just sit in a comfortable chair watching television or listening to his favorite music on the record player.

In the office or at home, machines are a part of the Mallorys' life. Like many other city people, they would find it hard to live without machines.

城市中的机器

迪克·麦洛雷是一位图书出版商。位于纽约市中心一幢摩天大楼内的第40层的办公室是他工作的地方。他的住宅是郊区的一座白色小楼,那里街道幽静,距市中心约30英里。无论是在这个大城市的中心工作还是在郊区安静的家中,迪克的生活总是与机器密不可分。在许多方面,他扮演的是一个大都市的现代人——一个机器时代的现代人的角色。

在工作的日子里,迪克和他的妻子会被电子闹钟的嗡嗡声叫醒。他一按按钮,闹钟便停了下来,他打开床边的收音机收听早间新闻,之后又到洗手间用他的电动剃须刀迅速地刮胡子。

穿着完毕,迪克来到厨房,他的妻子已经开始准备早餐了。她在电炉上煎着鸡蛋,电烤箱内烤着面包,电咖啡壶里煮上了咖啡。迪克从电冰箱中取出一些冰激凌,另外有鲜牛奶、一听冰镇橘汁。他用电动起子打开罐头,用几听冷水将这些东西搅拌在一起。橘汁做好后,迪克和妻子便开始吃早饭,饭间,他们还不时从电视上收看早间新闻节目。

早饭后,迪克从车库开出汽车。妻子开车送他到火车站。火车站拥挤着和他一样来往于两地间的办公人员。他们每天上下班往返30英里,甚至50英里路。有些人在看晨报,有些人在相互交谈,都焦急地等着火车。如果车晚点,他们作息时间的安排就很容易被打乱。但如果火车准时到站的话,之后再等45分钟抵达市里,那么他们的一切将仍按计划进行。

随着上班的人流,迪克匆忙地下火车,走近车站大门时,电眼

很快把门打开,他穿过门进入了候车室,片刻就踏上自动楼梯。电梯将他迅速带到了街道。街上到处都是小汽车和出租车,但由于迪克的办公室离此不远,他通常步行。

一会儿,他就到了他公司办公的60层的摩天大楼里。在长长一排的电梯口前他等着,等到指示向上运行的绿灯一闪,他便走进电梯。他按下去40层的电钮,门关住了,电梯平稳而又安静地上升。

当电梯到达40楼时,门再次开启,迪克在清晨静谧的气氛中步入熟悉的大厅,匆匆走进办公室。他打开灯很快开始工作,在职员和秘书到达前他有许多事要做。

一小时后,一天的日常工作从邮件的送来开始。他通常边看邮件,边记录,对于较紧急的项目,他就拿起电话与本厦里的部门或纽约的其他商家通话。与芝加哥和旧金山的公司办公室通话是迪克日常工作中的一件事,有时他甚至与住在伦敦和巴黎的代表通话。一旦他获得了所需信息,他把信放入记录机器让秘书打印。然后交还他让他签名。

有时迪克能感觉到室外的工作人员正在回电话、打字和整理文件。他甚至能听见从隔壁房间传来的正在复制日程表和指示复印件的机器发出的咔哒声。其他机器复制重要信件和文件的图片,并在几分钟内复印许多份。从附近的一个特别的办公室里传来电子计算机的嗡嗡声,它正在记录订购量、记载客户,并做出公司的工资单。

迪克通常也会觉察到门外的声响,但他已习惯了这种噪音,因为一个大城市、一个工业城市,必然是一个嘈杂的城市。

尽管迪克习惯于这些噪音,但他常期待一天工作的结束,然后回到他郊外宁静的房子里放松自己,他可以用他的剪草机来修剪他的草坪;有时用他的电动工具修理家具;他可以帮他的孩子们为他们的宠物——小兔子造一个窝;要么干脆坐在安乐椅上看电视。

或听听唱机中喜爱的音乐。

无论在办公室还是在家里,机器都是麦洛雷一家生活的一部分,正如许多其他的城市人一样,离开机器,他们将很难生活。

Notes:

to be tied to ... 与……相联系

buzz[bʌz] v. (蜂、蝇等)嗡嗡叫

button['bʌtn] n. 按钮;电钮

toast[təʊst] v. 烤;焙

commuter[kə'mju:tə] n. 经常往来于某两地间(如郊外住所与市内办公处)的人

upset[ʌp'set] v. 扰乱;打翻

schedule['skedju:l] n. 计划表;时刻表

flash[flæʃ] v. 闪电

representative[,reprɪ'zentətɪv] n. 代表

signature['sɪgnɪtʃə] n. 签字;签名

clicking['klikiŋ] n. 咔哒声

duplicate['dju:plikeɪt] v. 复写;复制

hum[hʌm] v. 作嗡嗡声;哼唱

bill[bil] vt. 给……开账单

payroll n. 工资名单

relaxation[,rɪ'læks'eɪʃn] n. 松弛;放松

mow[məʊ] vt. 收割;刈草

lawn[lɔ:n] n. 草地;草坪

pen[pen] n. (家畜的)栏、圈、棚

pet[pet] n. 宠物

A Chopsticks Comeback in Japanese Schools

A decade ago, parents and educators here began noticing, with some horror, that Japanese children were losing the knack of eating with chopsticks.

Seduced by spoons and by cheese and hamburger, the younger generation wasn't practicing the more difficult, traditional method of eating. Some children held their chopsticks hamhandedly, some speared their food, some ate "dog-style"—with their faces in their rice bowls—and some couldn't use chopsticks at all.

Faced with this threat to the physical ability and mental acuity of the next generation—and to an essential element of Japanese culture—the Ministry of Education launched a program of "utensil reform".

Now, spurred by that effort and by a general sense of national self-confidence, chopsticks, have made a comeback. A government poll published this week that 90 percent of the nation's school lunch programs now provide chopsticks—or hashi, in Japanese—for at least some meals, an increase from 69 percent five years ago and less than 10 percent in 1975.

"I think the trend is going the right way now, because all over Japan traditional culture is being revived," said Tsuneco Baba, an elementary school vice principal in Tokyo. "From that sense, the hashi culture is regaining its strength."

Still, Baba cautioned that the battle is not over, at least judging

from the 336 pupils in his Taimei Elementary School, where chopsticks were only introduced last April.

"Frankly speaking," he said, "the children are not skillful."

In Aya Takeuchi's second-grade class, two dozen 7-year-olds provided the evidence to back up that statement as they wrestled gamely with large pieces of fish and mixed Chinese vegetables. None of the children went hungry, but none—with perhaps the exception of Tani Yuta, who said his mother worked on his fork throughout last summer's vacation—would have won many points for style.

"It's easier to handle a fork and spoon, and many kids just hold onto that habit," said teacher Takeuchi, a 25-year veteran of the classroom and a great believer in chopstick training, "I think the capacity is clearly declining."

But Takenchi said that she, too, is fighting back. Beginning this year, she will start using a chopstick video to train her pupils in proper finger holds.

"To eat with chopsticks is to train the hand, and so the brain," the teacher said, "and to eat beautifully is the first step toward living a civilized life."

The technique of using two long sticks of wood or ivory to carry food from bowl to mouth originated in China and reached Japan more than 1 000 years ago, according to hashi historians here. Through World War II, chopsticks remained unchallenged as the eating utensil of choice. Even today, Japanese would no sooner eat a traditional meal of rice and side dishes with a spoon than an American would watch a ball game while eat hot dog with a knife and fork.

But American generosity after the war triggered a long and at first unnoticed, decline. When U. S. occupation forces launched a school

lunch program for the malnourished children of this defeated nation, the staple of the diet, not surprisingly, was U. S. wheat.

Until 1976, in fact, school lunch programs in Japan never served rice. They offered hamusando (ham sandwiches) and other western food and provided forks, spoons or a utensil that looks like a cross between the two and is said to encourage the worst possible manners.

Outside the schoolroom, meanwhile, an increasingly wealthy and cosmopolitan nation was learning to appreciate curry, spaghetti, Big Macs and other culinary wonders of the western world that seemed to make hashi superfluous. "In some cases, hashi are rarely used in the home," Takeuchi said disapprovingly.

So when school officials began serving rice and traditional Japanese meals from time to time—in deference to the powerful rice farmers' lobby as well as to Japanese tradition—they were in for a surprise.

"We gradually came to understand that children's ability to use chopsticks was very low," said Toshio Kudo, deputy director of the school lunch division of the Ministry of Education. "So utensil reform was necessary."

The ministry could not order schools to provide chopsticks any more than most parents can order their children away from McDonalds. But officials did everything short of that. They funded the development of chopstick—training slide shows. They designated certain schools as centers for research into the promotion of chopstick use.

"When we introduced the school lunch program, the main point was to get nourishment to poor Japanese children," another official said. "Now in our affluent society, children have plenty of chances to get nourishment. Now education in how to eat has become more important."

筷子重返日本校园

10年前,家长和教育工作者们就开始惊奇地注意到:日本的孩子们正在失去使用筷子进餐的能力。

在勺子、奶酪和汉堡包的诱惑下,年轻一代不再用较麻烦的传统饮食方式。有些孩子握筷子非常笨拙,有的扎食物吃,有的干脆像狗一样把整个脸埋在饭碗里吃,有的压根就不会用筷子。

面对下一代人在劳动能力、思维敏捷,以及保持日本文化的基本素质所构成的威胁,教育部举办了“用具改革”的活动。

现在,在这项措施和普遍民族自信意识的驱动下,筷子再度流行。本星期出版的政府民意测验显示,90%的公立学校现在午餐提供筷子——日语的说法是“hashi”——至少某些伙食是这样的。从5年前的69%与不足10%的1975年相比,这是一个提高。

“我认为这是势在必行,举国上下传统文化正在复苏,”东京一所小学的副校长山列巴巴说,“由此可见,筷子文化正在复兴。”

但巴巴提醒人们道,斗争并没有结束,至少从他们的太美小学的336名学生身上可断定。筷子只在上个月即4月份才被介绍到该学校。

他说:“坦白地说,孩子们并不熟练。”

在阿亚·塔克基学校二年级,24个7岁的孩子,在用筷子食用大块鱼和混合中国菜的游戏比赛时,他们的表现给予了支持此观点的论据。没有人感到饿,但如果对筷子的握法上进行评分的话,没有人能得高分,除了坦郁托外。他说上个暑假他妈妈一直都在他的握式上下工夫。