

<<美国历史文化读本>>

图书基本信息

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前言

当人们时常谈论美国在政治、经济、科技、军事等方面对世界局势产生持续深远的影响时，不免心怀种种疑问：一个建立在英国殖民地基础之上的国家，为什么能够发展成为今天世界上在经济、文化、外交、军事等领域最有影响的国家之一？

一个建国仅仅两百多年的国家，为什么能够产生最早的成文宪法、最早而又未曾间断过的联邦制度和最长的自治实践？

一个举世闻名的“大熔炉”，为什么能在包容并蓄各种文化特征的过程中形成自身独特的文化精神？

美国是全球最年轻的国家之一，也是当今世界唯一的超级强国。

人们常常把美国的成功归因于这个国家得天独厚的自然地理条件，以及它在政治、经济、科技、军事等方面的迅速发展。

然而，一个真正强大的国家必须有发达的文化加以支撑。

就世界各种文化特征来看，美国文化无疑是一支十分独特的新生力量。

一百多年来，它给世界各国文化带来的影响和冲击非常深远。

今天，无论你身在世界何处，你都会惊讶地发现，到处都有人在阅读美国小说，看美国电影，听美国流行音乐，吃美国快餐，观赏美国NBA篮球比赛等等，不一而足。

这些现象反映出—个事实，即美国文化无处不在。

美国文化的主要内容是强调个人价值，追求民主自由，崇尚开拓和竞争，讲求理性和实用，其核心是个人中心主义：强调通过个人奋斗、个人自我设计，追求个人价值的最终实现。

许多生活在美国的人，无论是土生土长的美国人，还是漂洋过海来到美国的外国移民，都有一个梦，即通过自己的努力，改变自己的社会地位，实现自己的人生梦想。

这就是人们常常津津乐道的“美国梦”。

美国公众注重成就，仰慕英雄，有深厚的成就崇拜和英雄崇拜的心理积淀。

个人成就是所有美国人价值观中评价最高的价值之一。

成功是所有美国人的追求，是诱人的前景、前进的动力。

他们坚信，一个人的价值就等于他在事业上的成就。

一些事业有成的企业家、科学家、艺术家和各类明星，成了新时代的英雄。

他们个人奋斗的过程和结果，成了社会文化价值取向的参照系、父母教育子女的活教材。

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内容概要

本书由10个教学单元组成，每个单元对应美国历史演进的不同阶段；编者在每个历史阶段中精心挑选出2—4个文化关键词并——给予较为详细的阐释；同时，每个文化关键词阐释后辅以3~5篇相关文章或选段；这些文章形式多样，有历史文献、名人演讲、歌曲、名家小说，以及著名学术论著和评论选段等；其内容覆盖领域广泛，所表达的内容和思想有相当的深度，能很好地帮助学生透过历史的表象了解各时段的文化核心，拓宽学生的文化视野，促进学生对美国历史文化发展脉络理解的深入。此外，本书每篇文章后还设计了数个有一定难度的问题供学生在课堂上讨论；这些问题不仅可以帮助教师检验学生对文章内容的理解，而且还可锻炼学生的思辨、陈述的表达能力。

本书编写新颖，将历史与文化知识相融合并用时代关键词的形式加以梳理，读者可通过每单元前的关键词把握该单元的主题。

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There is , for example , the whispering campaign , the circulation of anonymous rumors by men who cannot be compelled to prove what they say. They put the utmost strain on our tolerance , and there are few who do not rejoice when the anonymous slanderer is caught , exposed , and punished. At a higher level there is the moving picture , a most powerful medium for conveying ideas , but a medium which does not permit debate. A moving picture cannot be answered effectively by another moving picture ; in all free countries there is some censorship of the movies , and there would be more if the producers did not recognize their limitations by avoiding political controversy. There is then the radio. Here debate is difficult : it is not easy to make sure that the speaker is being answered in the presence of the same audience. Inevitably , there is some regulation of the radio.

When we reach the newspaper press , the opportunity for debate is so considerable that discontent cannot grow to the point where under normal conditions there is any disposition to regulate the press. But when newspapers abuse their power by injuring people who have no means of replying , a disposition to regulate the press appears. When we arrive at Congress we find that , because the membership of the House is so large , full debate is impracticable. So there are restrictive rules. On the other hand , in the Senate , where the conditions of full debate exist , there is almost absolute freedom of speech. This shows us that the preservation and development of freedom of opinion are not only a matter of adhering to abstract legal rights , but also , and very urgently , a matter of organizing and arranging sufficient debate. Once we have a firm hold on the central principle , there are many practical conclusions to be drawn. We then realize that the defense of freedom of opinion consists primarily in perfecting the opportunity for an adequate give-and-take of opinion ; it consists also in regulating the freedom of those revolutionists who cannot or will not permit or maintain debate when it does not suit their purposes. We must insist that free oratory is only the beginning of free speech ; it is not the end , but a means to an end. The end is to find the truth. The practical justification of civil liberty is not that self-expression is one of the rights of man. It is that the examination of opinion is one of the necessities of man. For experience tells us that it is only when freedom of opinion becomes the compulsion to debate that the seed which our fathers planted has produced its fruit. When that is understood , freedom will be cherished not because it is a vent for our opinions but because it is the surest method of correcting them.

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