

Unit 3
Reading B

On Eating 《吃饭》
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1 The first word that comes to mind when someone starts to talk about Chinese Lunar New Year is most definitely "eating". This has its origins in my childhood, and the still-vivid memories of gleeful anticipation, lasting all winter, every winter. We children pined for Spring Festival and everything about it, above all, though, the variety of foods offered. Our anticipation grew stronger with every passing day before the Festival.

当有人开始谈论中国农历新年时，首先想到的词肯定是“吃”。这源于我的童年，以及每个冬天都持续一整个冬天的欢乐期待的生动记忆。我们这些孩子渴望春节以及春节的一切，不过最重要的是提供的各种食物。在春节前的日子里，我们的期待与日俱增。

2 The Chinese are a people of the world particularly skilled at eating. In an average home, when a guest arrives, the host and hostess will get right to work, respectively going out to get the food, then hurrying to the kitchen to prepare a meal. Meanwhile, the guest is usually waiting in the living room, enjoying some watermelon seeds, waiting for mealtime to arrive, listening to the cacophony of bowls, plates, kitchen knife, and cutting board. After the meal, where the purpose of the visit is usually expressed and addressed, the guest will stand and apologize for "Causing so much trouble," while the host will say "Nothing to it." Sometimes, the host will even try to convince the guest to stay and say, "Have afternoon tea" or "Stay for dinner".

中国人是世界上特别擅长吃的民族。在一个普通家庭中，当有客人到来时，男主人和女主人会立刻行动起来，分别出去买食物，然后急忙赶到厨房准备饭菜。与此同时，客人通常在客厅里等候，享用着一些西瓜子，等待用餐时间的到来，听着碗、盘子、菜刀和砧板的嘈杂声。饭后，通常会表达和讨论来访的目的，客人会站起来并为“带来这么多麻烦”而道歉，而主人会说“没什么”。有时，主人甚至会试图说服客人留下来，说“喝下午茶吧”或者“留下来吃晚饭”。

3 On occasions of celebration or mourning, though the ceremony is usually held for its own sake, its substance is still, in fact, about filling the stomach. For the rich, this usually means a feast lasting five to seven continuous days, while for the poor it will take one to three. Through breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner and evening snacks, each day is filled with one meal after another, until the wine drunk could almost fill a bathtub and the meat eaten could be piled high.

在庆祝或哀悼的场合，虽然仪式通常是为了仪式本身而举行，但实际上其本质仍然是填饱肚子。对于富人来说，这通常意味着一场持续五到七天的盛宴，而对于穷人来说，则是一到三天。通过早餐、午餐、下午茶、晚餐和夜宵，每一天都充满了一顿又一顿的饭，直到喝的酒几乎可以装满一个浴缸，吃的肉可以堆得很高。

4 On the eve of the Lunar New Year, close relatives will exchange food and alternate inviting one family or the other for the New Year's Eve Meal. During the first several days of the New Year, relatives and friends will visit one another and share a meal or two. We eat at the Dragon Boat Festival in early summer, we eat at the Mid-Autumn Festival, we eat on birthdays, we eat when

we gather with friends or when we say farewell to a friend. In fact, on virtually every possible occasion, whether we celebrate or mourn, we eat. It seems as though eating is the start and finish of all things and supersedes everything else.

在农历新年前夕，近亲会交换食物，并轮流邀请一家人来吃年夜饭。在新年的头几天，亲戚和朋友会互相拜访，一起吃一两顿饭。我们在初夏的端午节吃，在中秋节吃，在生日时吃，在与朋友相聚时吃，在送别朋友时也吃。事实上，在几乎每一个可能的场合，无论是庆祝还是哀悼，我们都要吃。似乎吃是一切事情的开始和结束，超越了其他一切。

5 Children will ask their Mother for a nickel or two several times a day for the snacks they eat to keep them happy, in addition to the three meals they eat to keep them sated. For an adult, the first rule of morality is to let your parents eat well. Learning to cook has always been a critical part of the traditional education of girls in China. The Analects testify that Confucius himself likes good food. "The finer the grain the better, the more exquisite the meat the better", he writes. "Go and buy wine as well as bacon." He would not deign to eat "meat improperly cut"! A man can be proud if his wife can prepare delicate dishes. Many scholars have also taken pains to try their hands at writing a gourmet's handbook.

孩子们除了一日三餐吃饱肚子外，每天还会几次向母亲要几枚五分镍币去买零食吃，让自己开心。对一个成年人来说，道德的首要准则是让父母吃得好。在中国，学会做饭一直是传统女孩教育的重要部分。《论语》证明孔子本人就喜欢美食。他写道：“食不厌精，脍不厌细。”“去买酒和腊肉。”他不屑于吃“切得不好的肉”！如果妻子能做出美味佳肴，男人会感到自豪。许多学者也不辞辛劳地尝试写一本美食手册。

6 In Chinese culture, it is not only the spirits and humans who like to eat, but Deities, too. Gods of the mountains and rivers, despite being mouth less, will enjoy a pig head, or perhaps even the whole animal. In some areas, it is the goat or ox that is offered as a sacrifice in return for good weather and a bountiful harvest, or protection from floods and droughts, among other things. There are even convenient books and calendars passed down in which you can find the Deities' personal preference for sacrifices. Compared to those Deities of pageants who are idealistic in their desire for only hymns and worship, the Deities of the Chinese seem extremely materialistic. 在中国文化中，不只是灵魂和人类喜欢吃，神灵也喜欢。山川之神，尽管没有嘴巴，却会享用一个猪头，甚至可能是整只动物。在一些地区，人们会献上山羊或牛作为祭品，以祈求风调雨顺、丰收，或者免受洪水和干旱等灾害。甚至还有流传下来的方便的书籍和日历，在其中你可以找到神灵对祭品的个人喜好。与那些只渴望赞美诗和崇拜的理想主义的游行神灵相比，中国的神灵似乎极其物质主义。

7 The poet, Mei Cun, once wrote, "Out of every ten shops of buying, three serve wine and are places of dine." He is right. As the saying goes, "There are seven tasks awaiting you the moment you open the door every morning. "Indeed, the most burdensome task that comes with running a home is not educating children or anything else, but preparing the day's three meals. In a school, the most difficult thing to handle is perhaps not improving the teaching or the teachers themselves, but rather disorder in the school cafeteria.

诗人梅村曾写道：“买得十千沽酒易，做成百计去钱疏。十家市肆三家饮，一岁春蔬几日无。”他说得很对。俗话说：“开门七件事。”的确，操持一个家庭最繁重的任务不是教育孩子或其他任何事情，而是准备一日三餐。在学校里，最难处理的事情也许不是改进教学或教师本身，

而是学校食堂的混乱。

8 The list of cooking techniques is endless, too: roast, stew, steam, pickle, fry, boil, treat with liquor, broil, sauté, scramble, cold blend, etc. Some great chefs of the past have had their names committed to history books, where they glimmer alongside those of great statesmen and generals. It seems that even this was not enough, and some lucky ones were even promoted to premier or chancellor. If there is one thing on which China can pride itself, it would not be its long and unbroken civilization, nor its vast territory, nor its great population, its mighty army, or noble military history. It would have to be the vibrancy of its cuisine and its people's love of eating. It seems that Chinese cuisine has conquered much of the world. There is a saying that the Chinese are best at using three kinds of knives; the first of these is the kitchen knife, of course (with the other two being the barber's knife and the foot doctor's knife).

烹饪技法也是无穷无尽：烤、炖、蒸、腌、炸、煮、用酒处理、烤炙、炒、搅和、凉拌等等。过去一些伟大的厨师的名字被载入史册，与伟大的政治家和将军们的名字一起闪耀。似乎这还不够，一些幸运的厨师甚至被提拔为宰相或大臣。如果说中国有一件事可以引以为傲，那既不是它悠久而不间断的文明，也不是它广阔的领土，不是它庞大的人口、强大的军队或辉煌的军事历史。而必须是它充满活力的美食以及人民对吃的热爱。似乎中国美食已经征服了世界大部分地区。有句话说中国人最擅长使用三种刀；当然第一种是菜刀（另外两种是剃头刀和修脚刀）。

9 Have you ever seen that picture of the three Deities', often hung in the hall of a pious and reverent household? To have the blessing of the three Deities, Fathers Fu, Lu, and Shou, who represent prosperous posterity, wealth and authority, and health and longevity, respectively, is the goal of every Chinese. Depicted in the center of the picture is Father Lu, on his right, Father Fu and his left, Father Shou. In the simplest sense, Father Lu represents good food. Lao Tzu, the great Chinese philosopher in the age before Christ, also said once that "the multitude should have their brains empty and their stomach filled" and "Saints rule by keeping their people from starvation, not from boredom." As you can see, eating always comes first for the Chinese, who would easily forget all else. Among sex, gambling, hedonism, and luxurious clothes — the most common sins and pleasures — people here all regard a fondness for eating as most venial. "Vanity is vain, good food is good for the body, gambling never really wins, and too much sex ends in nothing." Ultimately, other than being sated with good food, all is meaningless.

你是否见过那幅常常挂在虔诚恭敬的家庭厅堂里的三位神的画像？得到分别代表子孙昌盛、财富权势以及健康长寿的福禄寿三位神仙的庇佑，是每个中国人的目标。画的中央描绘的是禄神，他的右边是福星，左边是寿星。从最简单的意义上说，禄神代表美食。中国伟大的哲学家老子，在公元前那个时代也曾说过“民之难治，以其智多。故以智治国，国之贼；不以智治国，国之福。”以及“圣人之治，虚其心，实其腹。弱其志，强其骨。常使民无知无欲。使夫智者不敢为也。为无为，则无不治。”正如你所看到的，对于中国人来说，吃总是第一位的，他们很容易忘记其他一切。在性、赌博、享乐主义和奢华服饰这些最常见的罪过和乐趣中，这里的人们都认为喜欢吃是最轻微的罪过。“虚荣是徒劳的，美食对身体有益，赌博永远不会真正赢，过度的性行为最终一无所获。”最终，除了饱食美食之外，一切都是毫无意义的。

10 The Chinese fondness of eating has lent many colorful expressions to their mother tongue. The

simple word“chi”, to eat, by virtue of numerous extended meanings has become perhaps most complicated in the Chinese language. It is commonly used as the substitute for the words“have”or “suffer”in English. For example, “Have been taken advantage of”is“chi kui. ”“Have had a slap in the face” is“chi erguang. ” “To long for things one is not worth of”is“to dream to 'chi' the meat of a swan. ”“Being sued by somebody”is“chi guansi. ”To be hit by a bullet is to“chi zidan”. In addition, there are expressions in the Shanghai dialect, such as“chi shenghuo”and“chi greetings for most peoples are usually“Good Morning, ”“Good Afternoon, ” and “Good Evening. ”For Chinese, it is“Had your breakfast?”“Had your lunch?”or “Had your dinner?”You can express your line of work with“chi . . . fan”(have a certain bowl of rice). For instance, “chi du fan, ”means to make a living in the gambling trade. “Chi tangzi fan”means to run a brothel. “Chiyanghang fan”means to be a comprador, and so on. What's more, for serious things like religious beliefs or service in the army entrusted with the protection of the country, the Chinese use“chi”to denote a level of devotion, rather than a way for making a living. Colloquially, Catholics in China are called those who “chi tian zhujiao de. ”And other Christians are the “chiyesu jiao de. ”Those in the army are not usually called soldiers or servicemen but rather“chi huangliang de, ”meaning those who get their rice from the government. Lately, new phrases have emerged, like“chi dang fan”or“chi sanminzhuyi, ” meaning those working for the Kuomintang and the followers of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary doctrines.

中国人对吃的喜爱为他们的母语增添了许多丰富多彩的表达。简单的“吃”这个字，由于有众多引申义，在汉语中也许变得最为复杂。它通常被用作英语中“have”（有、进行）或“suffer”（遭受）的替代词。例如，“Have been taken advantage of”（被占便宜）是“吃亏”；“Have had a slap in the face”（挨了一记耳光）是“吃耳光”；“To long for things one is not worth of”（渴望自己配不上的东西）是“癞蛤蟆想吃天鹅肉”；“Being sued by somebody”（被某人起诉）是“吃官司”；被子弹打中是“吃子弹”。此外，上海方言中有“吃生活”等表达。对大多数人来说，问候语通常是“早上好”“下午好”“晚上好”。对中国人来说，则是“吃早饭了吗？”“吃午饭了吗？”或“吃晚饭了吗？”你可以用“吃.....饭”来表达你的职业。例如，“吃赌饭”意思是靠赌博为生；“吃堂子饭”意思是经营妓院；“吃洋行饭”意思是当买办，等等。而且，对于像宗教信仰或肩负保卫国家重任的服兵役这样严肃的事情，中国人用“吃”来表示一种虔诚程度，而不是一种谋生方式。口语中，中国的天主教徒被称为“吃天主教的”，其他基督教徒是“吃耶稣教的”。军队里的人通常不被称为士兵或军人，而是“吃皇粮的”，意思是从政府那里领取粮食的人。最近又出现了一些新的短语，如“吃党饭”或“吃三民主义”，意思是为国民党工作的人和孙中山博士革命学说的追随者。

11 Originally, it was human nature to be concerned about clothing, dining, housing and travelling, the basic elements of everyday life. Man, of course, would not survive without eating. However, no country outside China has connotations of the word for eating so complicated, concern for eating so serious and conspicuous, cuisine methods so complicated, the variety of foods so wide-ranging, or the appearance that nothing seems to matter more than eating. It seems that Chinese could put up with dirty clothes, a shabby dwelling, and muddy streets, but never with perfunctory meals. Among those four basic concerns of a human being, the importance of eating is greater than everything else, a rather awkward tendency and philosophy, I think. It is as though the Chinese culture is one based solely on a concern for stuffing one's mouth.

原本，关心衣、食、住、行这些日常生活的基本要素是人的本性。当然，人不吃饭就无法生存。然而，在中国以外的任何国家，“吃”这个词都没有如此复杂的内涵，对吃的关注都没有

如此严重和显眼，烹饪方法都没有如此复杂，食物的种类都没有如此广泛，也没有那种似乎没有什么比吃更重要的样子。似乎中国人可以忍受脏衣服、破旧的住所和泥泞的街道，但绝不能忍受敷衍的饭菜。在人的这四个基本关切中，吃的重要性大于一切，我认为这是一种相当尴尬的倾向和哲学。就好像中国文化完全是一种基于对填饱嘴巴的关注的文化。

12 In Buddhism, the Buddha divides all beings into six echelons. From the top they are the Heavenly, the Human Being, the Xiu Luo, the Animal, the Daemon, and the Starving Ghost. If we believe in this division as well as Samsara or Transmigration preached by Buddha, one might wonder whether the Chinese are all born into the sixth echelon, the Starving Ghosts.

在佛教中，佛陀将所有众生分为六个层次。从高到低依次是天、人、修罗、畜生、饿鬼和地狱。如果我们相信这种划分以及佛陀所宣扬的轮回或转世，人们可能会想，中国人是否都是出生在第六个层次，即饿鬼层次。