

Discovering yourself



你希望参加中国传统形式的成人礼仪吗？你认为是否有必要举行成人礼仪？

你经常独处自省吗？你在大学生活中通过何种方式探察自己的内心世界？

本单元给我们展示了人生的各个侧面：儿时的理想与现实的差距、成长之路的曲曲折折和对成长本身的纪念。这些话题无时不在提醒我们莎翁的那句话——人生就像一座大舞台。从出生到死亡，我们需要自己演出一幕一幕的人生之戏。扮演什么样的角色、演绎怎样的生活全凭自己来做主。

Self-discovery

Simon Greenall

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It was the first time I'd flown Air China, and on the long overnight flight to Beijing, I must have finally got to sleep. Suddenly one of the cabin crew made an announcement to the whole plane, something I couldn't understand but which sounded urgent. Was the plane going down? I listened intently as the announcement gave way to gentle music and a soothing voice. I looked at the video screen and, to my astonishment, a woman on a warm beach was doing exercises. Gradually I realized all the passengers had been woken up and told to wave their arms in the air, stretch their legs, and turn their heads from side to side.

My fear turned to irritation. How dare they wake me in the middle of the night to do exercises? Surely everyone else must be just as angry? Yet, I looked around and saw all the other passengers waving their arms, legs, and heads, all doing as they'd been told. I sat down and, with a pillow over my head, I tried to go back to sleep.

It was to be the first of many cultural bumps I experienced when I first began travelling to China. What I should have done, and what I learnt to do later, was to consider why people were behaving in this way and, specifically, if it wasn't in fact quite a good idea to be doing exercises a couple of hours before we landed.

Experts in cross-cultural training suggest that the key to becoming aware of differences in other cultures is to develop an awareness of your own culture. So, in restaurants and in meetings, instead of asking myself "Why do they keep serving me hot water? Why can't I have a nice cold drink?" I should be thinking about why I prefer cold drinks, and if drinking warm water wouldn't in fact be better for me.

When I had a sore throat, I shouldn't have rejected with a knowing smile all those boxes of strange-looking pills my friends offered me. I should have thought "Unlike Western medicine, traditional Chinese medicine has been around for centuries. Maybe I should give it a try?"

Instead of telling a conference participant at the end of a lecture that I didn't want to sign his copy of my book, but have some coffee first, I should have signed the book in the first place. I shouldn't have been so surprised when he sat down opposite me in the coffee bar and waited.

In fact, developing cultural awareness is a long journey of self-discovery. Cultural bumps – those little differences in behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, traditions, and customs – can be amusing, surprising, sometimes shocking, maybe even irritating. But rather than reacting negatively to a cultural bump, you should think about why it's happening, and what it reveals about your own assumptions. This process of self-discovery will allow you to take pleasure in recognizing similarities between cultures, and to celebrate cultural differences.



CULTURE LEARNING

“Know thyself!”

Ancient Greek aphorism (格言)

INTRODUCTION

“When I grow up, I want to be a train driver.” In the late 1950s, it was (almost) every boy’s ambition in Britain to be sitting in the driver’s seat of a mainline steam locomotive. Girls, it seemed, just wanted to get married and have children. The toy market offered a choice between train sets for boys and dolls for girls.

Half a century down the line, things are different. Barbie, the role model doll for modern girls, was launched in 1959, and is still going strong. The last steam locomotive was removed from public service in the 1960s to be replaced by charmless diesel locomotives, but this has not given way to a commercial airline pilot becoming the career choice for boys. Today, the number one ambition of pre-teen boys, according to a survey by *The Daily Telegraph*, is to become a sports star. And girls? In the words of the 1980s song by Cyndi Lauper, they “just want to have fun”. Or rather, they want to become pop stars, actresses, or participants in reality TV shows.

But most people end up doing something completely different from their childhood ambitions. Of the parents interviewed in the same survey, 70 per cent said they had failed to follow their dream careers. Lack of qualifications or opportunities might be part of the explanation; personality factors another part. Looking back on our own lives, we find it is easy to be fatalistic (宿命论的) and to believe that we have had very little to do in shaping our destinies. In one of the great works of 18th-

century European literature, *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*, the French writer Denis Diderot has his character obsessively repeat “everything is written up there”, or pre-determined. Just how much in life is a matter of chance is the subject of the 1998 film *Sliding Doors*, which offers two parallel storylines. In the first, the main character just catches a London Underground train before the doors close; in the second, she misses the same train by a few seconds and, as a result, her life takes a completely different course.

And yet, we have to make decisions all the time – about 35,000 every day, in the opinion of experts – about careers and relationships, as well as about more mundane (平凡的) things such as what clothes to wear or what we are going to have for lunch. Some of those decisions are probably bad ones, and learning from mistakes is part of the process of growing up, or just getting on in life.

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato wrote that true wisdom comes from “knowing thyself”. Perhaps the real lesson is one of self-acceptance. Of course we know our limits (don’t we?), and maybe not all of us are burning with ambition to become world leaders. But it doesn’t matter. “Knowing oneself” also means not having regrets about who we are, what we have done, and what we are doing, even if we never become a train driver, a sports personality, or an overnight star on a reality TV show.

CULTURE POINTS

Integrated Course

Active reading (1) ▼

1 New England

New England, where the passage is set, is said to be the part of the US which is most similar to Britain, in its landscapes, culture, and variety of English dialects. It is in the north-east of the US and consists of six states: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

2 Impromptu ball games

When there aren't enough players, facilities, time, or space for more organized games, such as football or tennis, impromptu ball games are interesting enough to make many children or young people happy. Some parks have hoops and nets for playing spontaneous games of basketball or volleyball. Throwing and catching a Frisbee or rugby ball is also a popular impromptu game.

3 Hollywood

Hollywood is a district of Los Angeles in California and the traditional home of the American film industry. Today, it is more often used to refer to the American film industry, and in particular big-budget, blockbuster films produced for large audiences and starring famous actors and actresses.

好莱坞总是和电影联系在一起的。说到电影，我们总会谈及一个法国人——乔治·梅里爱（Georges Méliès）（1861-1938）。法国人吕米埃（Lumière）兄弟最早发明了电影，但与之生活在同一时期的梅里爱改写了电影历史。他在影片摄制过程中使用叠加、停机拍摄、多次曝光、模型摄影等技巧，把电影从简单记录现实生活带入了电影艺术时代。梅里爱的《月球旅行记》创作于1902年，是第一部科幻电影，第一次尝试了我们如今所说的电影特效，是电影史上的里程碑之作。可以说，梅里爱将电影转变为世界第七大艺术形式，而好莱坞则将电影与工业化紧密联系在一起。

The Hollywood sign in Los Angeles

A photograph of the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles, California. The sign is a large, white, three-dimensional structure spelling out 'HOLLYWOOD' in capital letters, set against a backdrop of a green hillside. In the foreground, there are some trees and a building. The sky is blue with some clouds.

4 The United States Congress

The United States Congress, or the body of people elected to legislate, consists of two institutions, the House of Representatives, or the Lower House, and the Senate, or the Upper House. There are 435 members in the House of Representatives, each elected for a two-year term. The Senate has 100 members, two for each state of the Union, each elected for a six-year term. Members of the Lower House represent specific districts within each state, while senators are elected by all voters within that state. The Lower House is more attentive to local issues whereas the Upper House sees the wider, national consequences of new legislation.



Capitol Hill

Active reading (2) ▼

5 Good news and bad news

“We have some good news and some bad news for you. Which would you like to hear first?” is the start of a typical joke, where the humour usually lies in the contrast between “good” and “bad”, which really mean “bad” and “worse”, as in:

Doctor: I have some good news and some bad news. The tests show that you have 24 hours to live.

Patient: What’s the good news?

Doctor: That was the good news. The bad news is that I forgot to call you yesterday!

6 Jokes about death

英语中除了与死亡有关的词用委婉语外，与身体排泄机能有关的表达也会用委婉语，如“wash one’s hands”，“spend a penny”；身体缺陷、残疾也会用委婉语，如“on the heavy side”表示胖，“not all there”表示精神不正常。有些不太体面的工作也会用委婉语表达，如“pet control officer”是捉老鼠的人，“sanitary engineer”是垃圾清理工。委婉语为语言营造了弹性空间，因此被广泛地运用在政治、外交、军事等领域。如将税收提高说成“revenue enhancement”；将某些军事行动冠以“peacekeeping”或“rescue mission”等名义。

Jokes about death are not taboo in British and American culture so long as they refer to death as an abstract idea, rather than to actual people. Joking about a difficult subject like death is one way of making it more acceptable; this is one of the reasons why the English have dozens of euphemistic (委婉的) or humorous expressions referring to death and dying, such as “be pushing up the daisies” (for a dead person), “kick the bucket” and “bite the dust” (to die), or “curtains” (death) as in “It’ll be curtains for you if you do that again”, an image which may come from the final curtain at the end of a performance at the theatre.

7 Theatres in London's West End

There are over 40 theatres in London's West End, a comparatively small part of Central London between the City and Hyde Park. Many of the theatres date back to the Victorian age; the oldest, the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, has been operating since 1663. West End theatres have acquired the reputation of being the best in the country, and a West End play is a must for many visitors to the capital, with many theatres sold out every night, and with more than 12 million attendances every year. The West End is also home to the longest-running play in the history of modern theatre, *The Mousetrap*, which has been running continuously since 1952.

维多利亚时代 (Victorian era) (1837-1901), 前接乔治时代, 后启爱德华时代, 被认为是英国工业革命和大英帝国的峰端。维多利亚女王是第一个以“大不列颠与爱尔兰联合王国女王和印度女皇”名号称呼的英国君主。她在位的六十多年期间是英国最强盛的所谓“日不落帝国”时期。维多利亚时期以崇尚道德修养和谦虚礼貌而著称, 也是一个科学、文化和工业都得到很大发展的繁荣昌盛的太平盛世。这一时期还形成了男女平等和种族平等的进步观念。维多利亚时期英国开始盛行下午茶, 并围绕着这种下午茶习俗形成了多彩的茶文化。

8 Buffet restaurant

A buffet restaurant is a self-service restaurant where you help yourself to food and are allowed to eat as much as you want within a certain period of time. When you finish what's on your plate, you can go back for a second, or even a third helping, if you can manage it. Buffet restaurants tend to be more popular with young people who have large appetites. They developed in the UK (possibly influenced by the US) after the Second World War, and are now common.



A buffet restaurant

9 A once-a-year holiday to Florida or Spain

For many British people, a once-a-year holiday to America's sunshine state of Florida or to Spain is one of the best ways to relax – lying on a beach, enjoying the sunshine. It can be a package holiday, with everything provided by the same tour operator: travel, accommodation, full board, and usually an entertainment programme too.

10 The reaper

In sharp contrast with light-hearted references to death are the medieval images of the reaper, or the Grim Reaper, a stark (明显的) and effective symbol of death. Traditionally, the Grim Reaper is portrayed as a skeleton wearing a black hood and cloak, and holding a scythe – a long curved knife at the end of a wooden stick, used for cutting hay. Many medieval European churches contain paintings which depict the “Dance of Death”, showing a cross section of people from all walks of life dancing with the Grim Reaper, a reminder that sooner or later the Grim Reaper will come to “harvest” every human being.



A sketch of the reaper

Reading across cultures ▼

11 Elbert Hubbard

Elbert Hubbard (1856–1915) was an American writer and artist who began his working life as a soap salesman. His best-known work is an essay entitled “A Message to Garcia”, which gives advice to businessmen. It is based on the story of a soldier who had to deliver a message to a Cuban general during the Spanish-American War. The book stresses the importance of loyalty and obedience. Hubbard died during an Atlantic crossing when the ship he was travelling on was sunk by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland.

12 The seven ages of man

The seven ages of man are described in one of the most famous, and most quoted, of all monologues in Shakespeare's plays. The speaker is the sad clown Jaques; the play is *As You Like It*. In the opening line, Jaques says, “All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” He goes on to describe the seven ages, or periods of life, that human beings go through: infant, schoolboy, lover, soldier, justice (or self-satisfied middle age), pantaloon (or old age), and finally, second childhood (or extreme old age, “sans <没有> teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything” – a depressing picture indeed).

13 Bar Mitzvah

At a Bar Mitzvah ceremony, a 13-year-old boy has to read from the Torah (the Jewish holy book) and lead prayers. The symbolic meaning behind this is that he is now old enough to follow the commandments (戒律), such as fasting (斋戒) during Yom Kippur (犹太人的赎罪日), the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, which as a child he did not have to do. In Hebrew, Bar Mitzvah literally means “son of the commandments”. But the rite of passage is also an occasion for a big celebration with family and friends, with lunch following the ceremony, held on a Saturday morning.



Bar Mitzvah ceremony

14 Prom

The tradition of prom at the end of the final year of American high school dates back to the 1920s. Parents believed that a formal occasion to mark the completion of school would encourage the development of important social skills. Modelled on European traditions (especially the coming-of-age ball held each year in Vienna, Austria), boys were encouraged to wear black dinner jackets, and girls elegant dresses. Over the years, prom has become an opportunity for lavish spending and showing off – by arriving at the event in a stretch limousine, for example. But for many American students the anxieties remain as simple as “How do I look in these clothes?” or “Who is going to ask me to be their partner?”

15 Songlines

In Australian aboriginal (土著的) culture the songlines are paths across the country that recorded the route taken by “creator-beings”. The songlines are remembered in stories and songs handed down over the generations, and repeating the words, it is said, can help aborigines find their way hundreds of miles across seemingly barren land and desert. This age-old tradition (Aborigines are believed to have the oldest known culture in the world, stretching back over 50,000 years) was brought to a wide audience in 1987 by the British writer Bruce Chatwin.

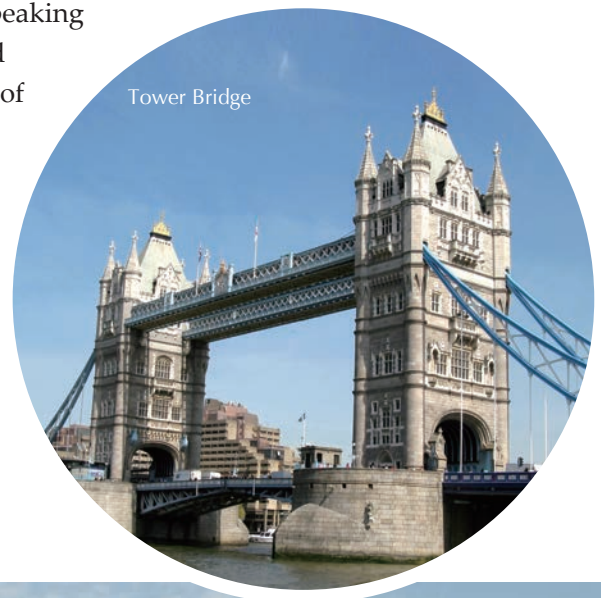
Listening and Speaking

Inside view ▼

Conversation 1

1 The best-known monuments and tourist attractions in London

The photos on Pages 2 and 3 of the Listening and Speaking book show some of the best-known monuments and tourist attractions in London. Completed at the end of the 19th century, Tower Bridge (Pages 2 and 3) is a feat of Victorian engineering. The lower part of the bridge can be raised to let tall-masted (高桅杆的) ships through; the upper part of the bridge was intended as a pedestrian crossing, but is now used as an exhibition space. The Houses of Parliament on Page 3 are the seat of the British government; the most well-known part is the clock tower, known as Big Ben (although this is actually the name of the bell inside which strikes the hour).



Tower Bridge

The Houses of Parliament



Conversation 2

2 London clubs

In the text, London clubs refers to London's lively and constantly changing nightlife. Many clubs offer a showcase for new or emerging singers and bands. But the term London clubs also refers to traditional (and usually men-only) "gentlemen's clubs", which date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. They offer a quiet haven from the pressures of London life, and for those too tired or drunk to go home, a bed for the night.

3 Museums and art galleries in London

Some of the world-famous museums and art galleries in London include the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the National Gallery. Entrance to these museums is free. From time to time they put on special exhibitions, which visitors have to pay for. London also has lots of smaller museums (more than 200 altogether), such as Dr Johnson's House, once the home of the English writer Samuel Johnson, where you can get a glimpse of what life was like in 18th-century London.

The British Museum



4 The Tube

The Tube, another name for the London Underground, is the oldest underground railway in the world, the first line having opened in 1863. With 402 km of track and 270 stations, its network size comes third after Shanghai and Beijing's underground systems. The London Tube map, with its colour-coding and non-geographic representation of the lines, has become a model for similar maps in many other places. The Tube currently has 11 lines, the most recent of which, the Jubilee line, opened in 1979.



The Tube in London

5 The Royal National Theatre

The Royal National Theatre (also the National Theatre) occupies a modern concrete building on the South Bank of the Thames. It is one of the two most important publicly funded theatre companies in the country (the other one being the Royal Shakespeare Company, based in Stratford-upon-Avon). The building houses three auditoriums, the biggest of which, named after the British actor Laurence Olivier, seats 1,160 people. The National Theatre offers both classic and contemporary theatre.

Listening in ▼

Passage 1

6 Reality TV shows

Reality TV shows became popular in the US and the UK in the late 1990s. The most famous of these was *Big Brother*, in which participants tried to live together in the same house, their every move captured on TV. The programme was shown in more than 60 countries. Some of the most popular reality TV shows include the US's *Dancing with the Stars*, *The Bad Girls Club*, *Survivor*, and *Jersey Shore*, which follows the fortunes of a group of Italian Americans on holiday. In the UK, *Big Brother* is still popular, as is the talent show *Britain's Got Talent*, in which ordinary people reveal some of their extraordinary talents. Much has been written about the success of reality TV, and the fact that it is often less "real" than it claims to be – for example, shows are usually scripted and not spontaneous. Nonetheless, it seems that they are as popular as ever.

7 The 2004 tsunami

The 2004 tsunami was the tidal wave caused by an underwater earthquake on 26 December, 2004, bringing death and destruction to South-East Asia, especially Indonesia, and spreading across the Indian Ocean to East Africa. More than 200,000 people died, and in the worldwide response to the tragedy more than two billion US dollars were raised in the relief effort.

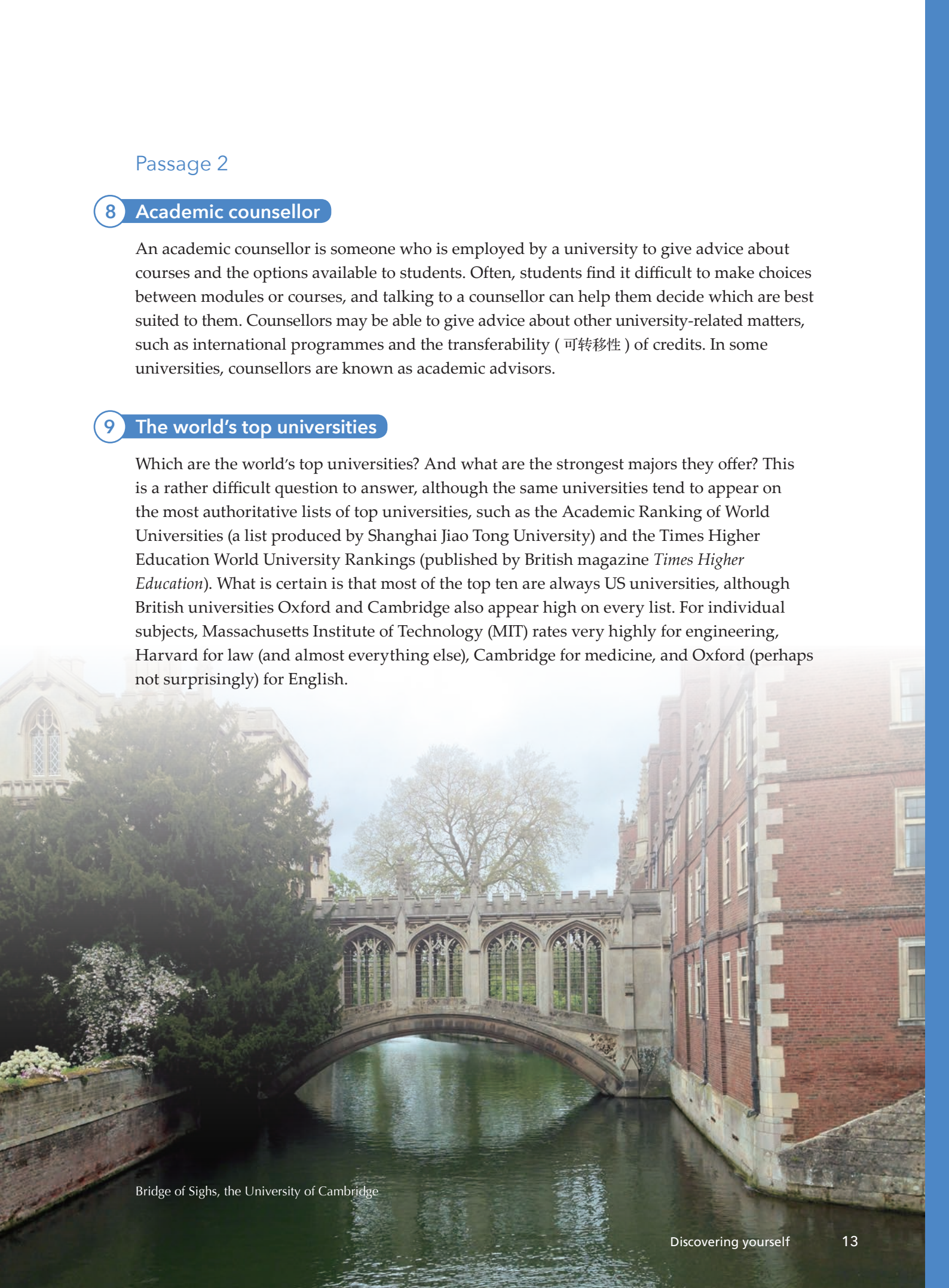
Passage 2

8 Academic counsellor

An academic counsellor is someone who is employed by a university to give advice about courses and the options available to students. Often, students find it difficult to make choices between modules or courses, and talking to a counsellor can help them decide which are best suited to them. Counsellors may be able to give advice about other university-related matters, such as international programmes and the transferability (可转移性) of credits. In some universities, counsellors are known as academic advisors.

9 The world's top universities

Which are the world's top universities? And what are the strongest majors they offer? This is a rather difficult question to answer, although the same universities tend to appear on the most authoritative lists of top universities, such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities (a list produced by Shanghai Jiao Tong University) and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (published by British magazine *Times Higher Education*). What is certain is that most of the top ten are always US universities, although British universities Oxford and Cambridge also appear high on every list. For individual subjects, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) rates very highly for engineering, Harvard for law (and almost everything else), Cambridge for medicine, and Oxford (perhaps not surprisingly) for English.



Bridge of Sighs, the University of Cambridge