

English Corner: Suggested Article of Discussion

1. Article 11-1: The Pilgrims and Thanksgiving

The Pilgrims (清教徒), who celebrated (庆祝) the first thanksgiving (感恩节) in America, were fleeing (逃走) religious persecution (宗教迫害) in their native (当地) England. On Sept. 6, 1620 the Pilgrims set sail (启航) for the New continent (新大陆) on a ship called the Mayflower (五月花). They sailed from Plymouth, England and aboard (在船上) were 44 Pilgrims, who called themselves the "Saints" (圣人), and 66 others, whom the Pilgrims called the "Strangers (陌生人, 异乡人)." The long trip was cold and damp (潮湿) and took 65 days. Since there was the danger of fire on the wooden ship, the food had to be eaten cold. Many passengers became sick and one person died by the time land was sighted (看见) on November 10th. After land was sighted, a meeting was held and an agreement was worked out, called the Mayflower Compact, (协议) which guaranteed (保证) equality (平等) and unified (团结) the two groups. They joined together and named themselves the "Pilgrims." When they arrived at Plymouth, the Pilgrims decide to settle there. Plymouth offered an excellent harbor (港口). A large river offered a resource for fish. The first winter was devastating (毁灭性的) to the Pilgrims. The cold, snow and sleet (冻雨) were exceptionally heavy (特别大), interfering with the workers as they tried to build their settlement (村落). March brought warmer weather and the health of the Pilgrims improved, but many had died during the long winter. Of the 110 Pilgrims and crew who left England, less than 50 survived (存留) the first winter.

On March 16, 1621, what was to become an important event took place, an Indian brave walked into the Plymouth settlement. The Pilgrims were scared (害怕) until the Indian (印地安人) called out "Welcome" (in English!). His name was Squanto, his importance to the Pilgrims was big (非常大) and it can be said that they would not have survived without his help. It was Squanto who taught the Pilgrims how to tap (刻痕导出) the maple (枫树) trees for sap (树液). He taught

them which plants were poisonous (有毒) and which had medicinal powers. He taught them how to plant the Indian corn (玉米) by heaping (使成堆) the earth into low mounds with several seeds and fish in each mound (土堆). The decaying (腐烂) fish fertilized (使肥沃) the corn. He also taught them to plant other crops (农作物) with the corn. The harvest (收成) in October was very successful (成功) and the Pilgrims found themselves with enough food to put away for the winter. There was corn, fruits and vegetables, fish to be packed in salt, and meat to be cured (熏, 腌) over smoky fires. The Pilgrims had much to celebrate (庆祝), they had built homes in the wilderness (荒野), they had raised enough crops to keep them alive during the long coming winter, they were at peace (和睦) with their Indian neighbors. They had beaten the odds (克服困难) and it was time to celebrate. The Pilgrim Governor (总督) William Bradford proclaimed (宣告) a day of thanksgiving to be shared by all the colonists (殖民地居民) and the neighboring (临近的) Native Americans (美洲本地人). They invited Squanto and the other Indians to join them in their celebration. Their chief, Massasoit, and 90 braves (勇敢的) came to the celebration which lasted for 3 days. The 3rd year brought a spring and summer that was hot and dry with the crops dying in the fields. Governor Bradford ordered a day of fasting and prayer (禁食祷告), and it was soon thereafter that the rain came. To celebrate - November 29th of that year was proclaimed (宣饰) a day of thanksgiving. This date is believed to be the real true beginning of the present day Thanksgiving Day. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln appointed a national day of thanksgiving. Since then each president has issued a Thanksgiving Day proclamation, usually making the fourth Thursday of each November as the holiday.

2. Discussion:

1. Briefly discuss who were the "pilgrims", where did they come from?
2. What was their relationship to Squanto, the native Americans?
3. How are the experiences of the pilgrims related to the first Thanksgiving day?