

TAMKANG ENGLISH

專題報導

It's All about the Almighty Dollar

John: Hi, Pete. I need some dough for groceries. Can you spare a ten-spot?

Pete: Sorry, man. I'm down to my bottom dollar. Wasn't your payday just a couple of days ago?

John: Well, it was. But they only pay me peanuts, and even those are gone in no time.

Pete: All right, let's see what I got. Will a fiver help?

John: Better than nothing. Thanks, pal.

標題中的almighty dollar指的當然就是那“有錢能使鬼推磨”的萬能的(almighty)金錢：He cares about nothing but the almighty dollar. (他眼中只有一個錢字)。在口語中常用dough或bread代表金錢，而「不義之財」則是filthy lucre (典出聖經提摩太前書第三章第三節，1 Timothy, 3:3)。

口語或俚語裡指金錢的數量時，有下列特殊用法。two bits指25 cents (aquarter, 兩毛五)，所以four bits就是50 cents。一塊錢可以說是a buck, an ace, 或a greenback。例如：It only costs an ace. Anyone can afford it. (只要一塊錢，誰都買得起。) 五塊錢可以說是a fiver, a five-spot或a fin (finn)。十塊錢是a tenner, a ten-spot, 或a sawbuck。一百塊是a C, a C-note, a C-spot, 或a century note。一千塊是a G, a K, a grand或a thou，如：Three thou (grand) -for that lemon (=a car that doesn't work properly)? You must be out of your mind! (花三千塊買那部爛車子？你是不是頭殼燒壞了！)

要說很多錢時，有好些不同方式可以描述，如：loads of money, heaps of money。當你說That new car cost her a mint，意思顯然是指那輛車子很貴。mint原意是「鑄幣廠」。在His late parents left a bundle to him的句子裡，a bundle也是指很多錢。Last year I made a pile in the stock market.（去年我在股票裡撈了不少。）在此a pile的意思與a bundle一樣。相形之下，peanuts, chicken feed, 或birdseed就是指微不足道的錢了。

談到錢，少不了提到bank。如果你說I can't afford to take that trip with you. No bank. 這兒的no bank顯然是指no money。bottom dollar是指「最後的一塊錢」。I'm broke是「破產了」。如果想加強語氣，可以說dead broke, flat broke, 或stone broke。I'm cleaned out或I'm wiped out也是相同的意思。

有人賺的是easy money（容易賺的錢），如：Do you know where I can get some easy money? 所以make easy money與make a quick buck意思很接近。而tight money就是「辛苦錢」了，如：All my money is tight money: I have to work very hard for every penny of it. 不過不管是easy money或tight money，可千萬不要是funny money（=counterfeit money，偽鈔）。