

## BBC Learning English – Ask About Britain

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### British Gentlemen 英国绅士

Finn: Hi, I'm Finn.

Yang Li: Hi, I'm Li. Welcome to Ask About Britain.

Finn: Now Li, when I'm in China, I have this kind of conversation almost every day.

Yang Li: What is it?

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*Taxi driver:* 去哪里?

*Finn:* 到王府井, 谢谢。

*Taxi driver:* 你是哪一个国家的?

*Finn:* 我是英国人。

*Taxi driver:* 英国人都很绅士, **very gentleman!**

*Finn:* 其实...

Finn: So you know Li, I really do hear that very often, 你们英国人都很绅士...

Yang Li: Yes, I think many people in China do have that impression. But, is it true?

Finn: Well, are British men gentlemen? And actually, what is a gentleman?

Yang Li: 好今天的英国问答节目我们就来谈谈绅士这个话题, 因为中国海口的 Amanda 同学向我们提出了如下这个问题:

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*To many Chinese minds, they believe that British people are gentlemen. However I heard that many young people are addicted to drinking and other things, and I wonder whether British people really are still gentlemen as before?*

Finn: So, I think this is a really good question Li.

Yang Li: Indeed. 在面临酗酒和其他社会问题的英国，还有没有人们印象中的英国绅士呢？ But Finn, before we do that let's start by asking: what exactly is a gentleman?

Finn: Well, I thought we should speak to a real expert about this. Diana Mather runs a company called Public Image which teaches social etiquette 社会礼仪。

Yang Li: 戴安代女士解释了绅士这一概念的传统定义。

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*A gentleman in the old days meant somebody who was born with gentle birth; which meant they didn't have to work. They usually were – they were born to a family with money and they were taught how to behave.*

Yang Li: 这么说，绅士这一概念最初是同社会的阶层或等级连在一起的 **social class**，就像很多影片中描绘的，看看一个人是不是出生于一个饭来张口，衣来伸手的绅士或贵族家庭 **someone of gentle birth, or noble birth.**

Finn: Yes, so these gentlemen back in the old days had a lot of time and money. So they could spend their time learning how to behave properly in society. Like this:

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*The etiquette of the British gentleman was always to stand up when a lady entered a room, to walk on the outside of the pavement, to always give up his seat, to carry her bags, always to pay for her if he took her out for dinner, never to swear and not to smoke in front of her. That was a gentleman in the old days. Unfortunately, there are not many of those gentlemen left.*

Yang Li: 当女士进门时立刻起身；花钱时主动为女士付款，为女士让座 **giving up his seat**，还有为女士提包， **not swearing** 不说脏活... It sounds just like you Finn!

Finn: Do you think so Li, really? Well, I'm not so sure, but that's very very kind of you! Anyway, as Diana said, this was the traditional British gentleman.

Yang Li: But Diana thinks there aren't many of these left.

Finn: Which is exactly what our listener, Amanda, was wondering.

Yang Li: So, why is this?

Finn: Well, in many ways the society which allowed the old-fashioned British gentleman to exist has changed; we no longer have such a clear class system.

Yang Li: 等级或阶层制度 **class system** 已经大体上不存在了。当然这并不意味着传统概念上的绅士风度应该被遗忘。实际上 **Diana** 认为所有的英国男士都应该体现一种现代绅士的风范。

### **Insert**

*A gentleman today is somebody who has good manners, and good manners mean treating other people with kindness, consideration and respect. And they are in fact ageless, classless and priceless, and we all should have them.*

Finn: Ok, so as Diana said, it's really all about good manners.

Yang Li: 良好的行为。

Finn: And good manners mean treating other people with kindness, consideration and respect.

Yang Li: Kindness 善良, 和善, consideration 体谅 and respect 尊重。

Finn: And that these values are things we should all have. She said they were ageless, classless and priceless.

Yang Li: Ageless 不分年龄大小的, classless 不分社会等级的 and priceless 无价的。So being a gentleman really isn't a question of class any more; we can all try to have better manners.

Finn: Yes, and I think those qualities are equally important for both men and women.

Now finally, before we go, I do want to clear one little thing up.

Yang Li: Ok.

Finn: The word gentleman which we've been using today is a noun, it can't be used as an adjective.

Yang Li: 这点很重要, 千万不要说 very gentleman 因为 gentleman 是名词, 而不是形容词。

Finn: That's right, so language point over; I think we're almost finished here for the day.

Yang Li: 最后我想请大家经常到我们的网页上来看看, [www.bbcchina.com.cn](http://www.bbcchina.com.cn) 这里有大量的英国文化与生活的节目, 开拓视野又练习语言。

Finn: And why not write us an email to [chinaelt@bbc.co.uk](mailto:chinaelt@bbc.co.uk) if you have any questions of your own.

Yang Li: Now Finn, would a gentleman such as you like to invite me to dinner?

Finn: Oh definitely Li, of course. Now, shall we go to a restaurant?

Yang Li: Yes.

Finn: Alright, here's a taxi. Taxi!

**Insert**

*Taxi Driver:* 去哪里?

*Finn:* 到这附近的一个比较好的餐馆, 好吗?

*Taxi driver:* 你是哪一个国家的?

*Finn:* 我是英国人。

*Taxi driver:* 英国人都很绅士。

*Finn:* 嗯。