《美国人又抖机灵了，用土拨鼠预测天气》

这个冬天格外寒冷，谁也不知道温暖的春天何时才会来临。在美国，如果人们想知道冬天还会持续多久，就会在2月2日这天看一只土拨鼠能不能看到自己的影子。人们为什么会认为土拨鼠能预测天气？这只土拨鼠预测得准不准呢？

It’s only been in the past 60 or so years that humans have been able to rely on television meteorologists for weather predictions. Before Al Roker, the Babylonians looked at cloud formations; in 300 BC, the Chinese had a calendar broken into 24 festivals, each with its own unique weather patterns.

????60??????????????????????????????????????.????????????????????????????????300??????????24????????????????????

Today we use satellites and other costly equipment to gauge our environment, examining changes in the atmosphere and running sophisticated computer models. And sometimes, we just stare at a groundhog.

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Every February 2, a doughy rodent named Punxsutawney Phil briefly emerges from his winter hibernation to have a look around. If he sees his shadow, that means there will be six more weeks of winter. If he doesn’t, we can assume that warm weather is looming.

????2??6????????????????????????????????

The ritual has been carried out in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania every year since 1887. Relying on Phil is actually not much better than flipping a coin—he’s right an estimated 64.4 percent of the time—but clearly someone at one time believed a groundhog had predictive abilities. Who? And why?

?1887???——????????????????64.4%——????????????????????????????????????

To understand Phil’s current status, it helps to know that superstition and weather have had a long association. Observers of the Christian holiday Candlemas, for example, received candles blessed by clergymen. If the skies were cloudy that day, warm weather was imminent; if the sun was out, winter would persist.

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