

## 文訊

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## The Journey of Life



What is life? It is a question that has been asked and pondered upon by philosophers, writers and many others. Despite centuries of meditation, there is no standard answer, considering that all individuals are unique and they perceive their lives in their own way. The meaning of life is open to interpretation.

“Everything flows and nothing stays... You can't step twice into the same river.” This is one of the famous aphorisms of Heraclitus (540-480 BC). The Greek philosopher suggests that nothing lasts forever and hence nothing can transcend time. Life is like a body of flowing water which is constantly changing. When we step into the river again, it appears to be the same as before. Yet, it is no longer the same river that has wet our feet because the water is ever flowing. By the same token, we are different from the “we” that stepped into the water some time ago. Life never repeats itself. It can be lived only once and every moment of it should be treasured.

“Time and tide wait for no man.” This English proverb echoes the words of wisdom of Russian writer Maxim Gorky (1868-1936): “Time is the most fair and reasonable — it never gives more to anyone.” Time flies like an arrow and no one can wind back the clock. There are so many things we need to look after in our daily lives that sometimes we have no time to catch our breath. Life is long if we live it meaningfully; life is transient if we just idle away our time. Instead of waiting for opportunities to emerge, we should seize our time and make the best out of it. Procrastination is the thief of time, and making up for lost time is not easy.

Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) says in *Stray Birds*, a collection of his poems, “The best does not come alone. It comes with the company of the all.” Though not as dramatic as a roller coaster ride, life is often marked by many ups and downs. Good times and bad times come in the same way as the tide ebbs and flows. At certain points in our life, the sea may be rough. As long as we do not lose heart in adversity, we should be able to overcome the

hurdles. Sooner or later, the trying times will be behind us. Every cloud surely has a silver lining.

Life involves choices. We might make mistakes in the process, knowingly or unknowingly. To err is human, as the saying goes. This is elaborated by German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): “Man errs as long as he strives.” Of course, if we just sit back doing nothing, we will not risk making errors. But there are times in our life when we find ourselves at a crossroads where decision-making is unavoidable. Positive thinking is a way to guide us towards a solution. While looking ahead for a new path, we also look back to learn lessons. Life is a learning process, and the sands of time have much to tell and teach us. As English playwright Thomas Middleton (1580-1627) puts it, “A man is never too old to learn.” The longer we live, the more we should learn. The fullness of life is largely decided by our quest for knowledge. Even people at a ripe old age should have a zeal to learn.

American President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) draws the following comparison between life and racing: “Life is not a 100-yard dash, but more a cross-country run.” True enough, life is like a marathon that calls for persistence. In this long race, some run faster, some slower, and the finish line is different for each participant. But at whatever pace, we should stride ahead with a clear direction. We all have a goal in life, whether lofty or not. The heart of the matter is not how fast we are moving towards this destination, but how hard we are trying to get there. It is in the course of running that we truly understand the substance of life.

Like a leaf of blank paper, our life can become either just black and white or as colourful as a mass of flowers. Our life is in our own hands. It is up to ourselves to decide what to draw on this paper. While some work with their own hands, some invite the partnership of another. An accompanied journey is sometimes more heart-warming and fulfilling. In whichever case, this paper is a record of our history, from the cradle to the grave, as well as a memoir for those that come after us. So no matter what we are going to draw on it, we should put our heart and soul into it.





# 懸弧設帨

在昔日務農為主的父系社會，家有男丁，便等於保住了族人的勞動力和延續香燈的血脈，因此添丁成為大小家庭的普遍願望，重男輕女的傳統觀念可謂根深柢固。

生男稱為弄璋，生女稱為弄瓦，這種說法源出《詩經·小雅·斯干》：“乃生男子，載寢之牀，載衣之裳，載弄之璋……乃生女子，載寢之地，載衣之裼\*，載弄之瓦”。詩歌表達了古代男尊女卑的封建思想：家人會為男嬰備牀，女嬰則放在地上睡而已。生得男嬰，給他美玉把玩，期望他長大後品德高尚，位居侯王之列；誕下女嬰則讓她把玩紡錘（古代紡紗工具），希望她日後成為賢妻良母，操持家務井井有理。

另外，生男和生女也可以“懸弧”和“設帨\*\*”喻之。《禮記·內則》曰：“子生，男子設弧於門左，女子設帨於門右”。“弧”是木弓，而“帨”是佩巾。“懸弧”和“設帨”分別寄託了父母希望兒女長大後剛強尚武和勤於家務的心願。

家中添了寶寶，不論男女，總是喜慶之事。說到生小孩，昔日有各種各樣的古老習俗。

古時醫學不發達，雛兒夭折並非罕見。從前人們以為嬰孩養不活是受鬼怪所纏之故，家中長輩於是花心思給嬰孩取乳名，或求神靈庇祐，取名“天祐”、“龍保”等，或索性起個“貓娃”、“小狗”之類的卑賤名字，希望鬼怪誤以為是貓狗而不會上門來犯。西漢辭賦家司馬相如的父母便給他起了“犬子”這個小名，冀能避災消殃。另外，有些父母為求男嬰添福添壽，甚至給他起個女嬰的乳名，再戴上一個耳環。有此習俗，是因為人們認為女孩子卑下，鬼怪不會來找麻煩。

為求嬰孩平安，快高長大，父母還會給嬰孩戴上長命鎖，意謂鎖住其性命，以免丟掉。據說長命鎖可辟邪擋煞，消災解厄，功用有如護身符。長命鎖狀如頸飾，通常用金屬製造，金也可銅也可，豐儉由人，上面刻有吉祥字眼，如“長命百歲”、“富貴安樂”、“福壽雙全”等，再配以祥雲、蝙蝠、靈芝等吉祥圖案。待孩子長大後，長輩才會把鎖打開。



滿月是初生嬰兒的重大日子，父母會設宴與族人友好等慶祝彌月之喜。這天，嬰孩按習俗進行“洗兒”和“落胎髮”的儀式，目的是除掉身上污垢，乾乾淨淨地接受賓客祝福。宋代孟元老《東京夢華錄·育子》如此記載：“浴兒畢，落胎髮，遍謝坐客”。據說剃下來的胎髮不能亂丟，必須妥為保存，否則會給嬰兒帶來災害。人們相信胎髮可聚攏孩子的靈魂，因此把胎髮放進紅布袋，縫綴在孩子的枕頭上，以免孩子失魂。有些鄉俗則拿胎髮做毛筆，作為永久紀念。

嬰孩滿周歲，便會按舊俗進行“抓周”，在嬰孩面前擺放各式各樣的器物，任其抓取，以測卜日後的志趣。抓周又名“試兒”，北齊顏之推《顏氏家訓》早有記載。通常抓周的物件有十來個，如印章、竹簡、墨硯、算盤、串鈴、墨斗、炊具、陀螺等，各有象徵。《紅樓夢》第二回有一段描寫賈寶玉抓周的文字：“那年周歲時，政老爹便要試他將來的志向，便將那世上所有之物擺了無數，與他抓取。誰知他一概不取，伸手只把些脂粉釵環抓來。”寶玉父親賈政登時光火，斷定寶玉將來是個難成大器的酒色之徒。年少的寶玉確是無心向學，終日混在女兒堆，牽腸掛肚盡是兒女感情事。



張愛玲在《流言·童言無忌》一文也談到抓周的經驗：“我周歲的時候循例在一隻漆盤裏揀選一件東西，以下將來志向所趨。我拿的是錢——好像是個小金鎊吧。我姑姑記得是如此。還有一個女傭堅持說我拿的是筆，不知哪一說比較可靠。”究竟是作者姑姑還是女僕說得對，無從稽考；但從作者生平可知，張愛玲相當依戀繁華的生活，而她獻身文藝創作也是不爭的事實。

與誕兒有關的風俗流傳至今，保留下來的大抵不多，一方面由於人們思想進步，破除迷信，另一方面也因為醫學昌明，嬰孩在父母悉心呵護下大多健康地成長。

\* 裼，粵音“惕”，普通話讀作“tì”，裹嬰用的小被。

\*\* 帨，粵音“稅”，普通話讀作“shuì”。

人生天地之間，若白駒之過隙，忽然而已。

莊子《知北遊》



# 我的新生命

食物環境衛生署  
二級法定語文主任傅晶

“原來牀上有兩個人！”年青的醫生笑着說。醫院竟然擁擠到兩人一牀？非也。現在我才體會到醫院不一定是個傷感的地方，至少有一個角落時常充滿歡笑。躺在牀上的我，雖然十分疲倦，卻感到非常幸福，看看寶寶，再向那位醫生報以微笑。

升降機正徐徐下降，現在究竟是什麼時候？剛才經歷了人生中一次重大考驗。窗外先是漆黑一片，然後是濛濛雨霧，什麼都看不見。我又痛又冷，一直發抖，望着牆上掛鐘的時針一圈又一圈的行走，換班的醫生、護士進進出出，心裏越來越不安。“抽血、輸液，再沒有進展的話，就開刀”——醫生這樣決定。我不想開刀！我要繼續努力！這次可能是醫生給我的最後機會，我絕不想放棄！

憑着意志，我終於把新生命帶來世上。過去十個月寶寶跟我天天連在一起，在剪斷臍帶那一刻，這些日子才告結束。我心情異常矛盾，既高興寶寶平安誕生，又有些空虛失落。由現在開始，他便是獨立的個體，我要好好學習，去了解他、照顧他，陪伴他成長。幸好空虛的感覺一下子便過去了。

剛剛來到這個世界的小生命現在和我緊緊靠在一起。升降機裏面，陌生的臉孔對我們綻放微笑；我躺在牀上，由從未嘗試過的角度張望四周，目光所及的範圍跟以往很不一樣。我想自己的生命也會起極大的變化，今後會從不同的角度看生命、看世界。

寶寶經醫生檢查後再次送在我面前。護士跟我核對寶寶的資料後，給我一一份印有寶寶小腳掌的文件，讓我在上面壓印指模，並為他繫上手環和腳環。這一刻，我覺得母子之間非常親密，因為無論他將來如何，彼此的關係永遠不會切斷。



在產後病房的三天，除探病時間外，其餘時間就只有我和寶寶，但我依然非常滿足。他一舉手一投足，由撅嘴、哭鬧，以至吃奶、吮手指，都教我十分着迷，禁不住讚嘆生命的奧妙。外面天氣很冷，氣溫不到十度，天色昏暗，細雨霏霏。幸好我在溫暖的室內避寒，摟着軟綿綿的寶寶，這裏簡直是世界上最溫馨的安樂窩。

有一位已為人母的朋友跟我說，寶寶就是魔鬼與天使的化身。產後回家，我深深領會箇中意思。有時寶寶真像“小魔怪”，令你睡不安寧、食不知味，甚至心情起伏不定。但當他手舞足蹈，咿咿呀呀對你嘻嘻笑的時候，他就是天使，叫你樂透。

為什麼每個寶寶都會在不同時候發出“獨特的訊號”？哭聲、笑聲、不同的叫喊聲代表什麼？起初真的給這些訊號弄得迷惘，嬰兒不是外星人呀！我們不是屬於同一個世界的嗎？“忸怩”是什麼意思？他想要什麼？為什麼我不懂他的語言？我會通曉這種“外語”嗎？經過數個月的訓練，終於學會了一點點。

## 文趣偶拾



## 苦盡甘來

名副其實，苦瓜味苦而澀，如此獨特，並非人人愛吃。俗語云，吃得苦中苦，方為人上人。能吃苦瓜的人，大抵不是平庸之輩。這固然是戲言，但苦瓜倒有個值得細味的別稱，就是“半世瓜”。據說一般人前半生都不懂得欣賞苦瓜，更因其苦澀敬而遠之。當年歲閱歷漸增，經過生活的磨煉後，才發覺苦瓜之苦也不外如是，不但不再厭棄，反而開始試着品嚐。

詩人余光中在博物館欣賞過用白玉雕成的苦瓜後，寫下《白玉苦瓜》一詩，借物喻人，把苦瓜比作在祖國土壤上茁壯的嬰孩，再引伸為神州子民。詩歌的結語道出國人先苦後甜的命運：

一首歌，詠生命曾經是瓜而苦  
被永恆引渡，成果而甘

口味因人而異，人生也因際遇不同而有酸甜苦辣各種滋味。人生路途有起有跌，有甘有苦。走過了低谷，才發現眼前豁然開朗；捱過了困境，才明白何謂苦盡甘來。

散文家余秋雨以季節喻人生，他在《余秋雨人生哲言》中這樣說：“人生的滋味，在於品嚐季節的詩意——從自然的季節到生命的季節。”春夏秋冬乃自然更迭，而人生的四季則風景迥異，若抱平常之心，當能有所感悟。其實不管陰晴冷暖，只要處之泰然，生活就會愜意，只要常懷希望，就可樂在其中。



Life must be understood backwards; but...it must be lived forwards.

Søren Kierkegaard



# 友誼萬歲

求學時期大伙兒有說有笑，一同用功，一同成長，如斯快樂時光最是難忘。可惜天下無不散之筵席，一個階段告終，便是分別之時。畢業在即，或會在紀念冊上互相題贈，盡訴依依離情，送上真摯祝福。

紀念冊中常見的名言雋語多有典源。例如“玉不琢，不成器；人不學，不知義”及“勤有功，戲無益”均出自《三字經》。誠如唐代散文家韓愈在《進學解》所言，“業精於勤，荒於嬉”，求學問並無捷徑，必須持之以恆、努力不懈，耽於逸樂自然難成大器。要曉義理、明是非，做學問是不二法門。

孔子是萬世師表，給後世留下了無數金石良言，而《論語》記載其言其事，自然成為名言寶庫。在《論語·學而》一篇，孔子闡釋何謂好學之道：“君子食無求飽，居無求安，敏於事而慎於言，就有道而正焉，可謂好學也已”，意謂君子不求飽足，不求舒適，應該做事勤快，小心說話，並求教於高人，從而自我匡正，這樣就是好學了。當中“敏於事而慎於言”常用作互勉的格言。在《論語·為政》一篇中，孔子又曰：“學而不思則罔，思而不學則殆”，指出光讀書而不思考，容易受人



蒙騙；但只是思考而不讀書，卻會缺乏信心。由此可知，汲取知識和訓練思考同樣重要，缺一不可。學海無涯，洄浮越久，便越覺其廣其大，這就是《禮記·學記》所說的“學然後知不足”。

岳飛的《滿江紅》氣勢恢宏，字字鏗鏘，堪稱千古佳作。當中“莫等閑，白了少年頭，空悲切”講出少壯不努力，老大徒傷悲的道理，一針見血。另外，唐代杜秋娘的《金縷衣》，也是莘莘學子互勉時經常引用的一首詩：

勸君莫惜金縷衣，勸君惜取少年時。  
花開堪折直須折，莫待無花空折枝。

金縷衣貴重華麗，但青春年華更為寶貴，正所謂一寸光陰一寸金，寸金難買寸光陰。青春固然美好，但始終短暫如花開花謝。雖說太陽每天東升，但凡事推宕容易浪費光陰。勸人把握分秒，善用韶光，也是明代錢鶴灘《明日歌》一詩的主旨：

明日復明日，明日何其多。  
我生待明日，萬事成蹉跎。

人生聚散本無常，同窗好友在畢業後便要各奔前程。不過，流水不因石而阻，友誼不因遠而疏。常言“紀念冊中留紀念，莫忘紀念冊中人”，別後或許未必常聚，但思念之時翻開一看，再讀當中贈言，同窗生活點滴便浮現腦海，青春歲月又恍如昨天。

## Word for Word



## Recycled Teenager

Age is a very sensitive topic. With the proliferation of rejuvenating products, which do magic to mask the users' age, it has now become rather difficult to tell people's age from their faces. In fact, it is often regarded as inappropriate to ask a person's age, especially when they are no longer in their prime — the stage in their life when they are most vigorous or successful. If we need to refer to someone in middle age, in particular, a lady, it might be a good idea to use the euphemism “of a certain age”, which is usually taken to cover the range between the forties and the sixties.

When we meet friends with small children, we may strike up a conversation by asking the age of these younger acquaintances. Normally, your friends will be pleased to tell you their children's age and share with you the joy of seeing them grow up. This, however, might not work if their children are already in their teens, since teenagers may find this somewhat inquisitive. Teenagers are those aged between thirteen and nineteen, so called because the numbers from thirteen through nineteen all end with “-teen”.

Adolescence is often known as the awkward age. This is because adolescents bidding farewell to childhood have yet to find a comfortable way of coping with the transition to maturity. When teenagers come of age, they are about to attain the legal age of adulthood, at which they will

no longer be regarded as underage, which varies from country to country. As adults, they will be expected to act their age, which means to behave in a way commensurate with their age, and be accountable for decisions and actions they have taken.

For many, childhood brings the sweetest memories. Indeed, as people grow old, their childhood tends to “come back”. We describe people as being in their second childhood when they behave in a childlike manner. In the good sense, this means they are still full of hope and energy, interested in things that children usually find attractive. But in the negative sense, this means they are already showing signs of dotage or senility, such as becoming forgetful and repeating themselves unintentionally.

Everyone ages with time and develops lines on the face. But becoming mature is not a terrible thing. Some say life begins at forty, because by the time we turn forty, we have already seen and experienced so much that we are now poised for the things we yearn for. As English writer Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873) says, “It is not by the grey of the hair that one knows the age of the heart.” To remain young at heart is far more important than counting the number of years we have been through. Recycling is the talk of the day. With more and more birthdays celebrated, maybe we can wittily choose to call ourselves “recycled teenagers”. So no one is old, not even the golden agers in their sixties. We are simply “recycled”!



## 鳳凰于飛

婚姻乃人生大事，也是步進成年階段的象徵。古時少男少女經過冠禮和笄\*禮後，男子加冠，女子加簪，便謂之成人，可以談婚論嫁了。《孔子家語》云：“男子二十而冠，有為人父之端，女子十五許嫁，有適人之道。”男女何時適婚，古時並無定制，而且因時因地而異。不過，《周禮》有“男三十而娶，女二十而嫁”之說，意謂男過三十，女過二十才婚嫁，則有失禮法。在當時來說，大抵男子三十之前有室，女子二十之前有夫，相當普遍。

據《禮記》所載，古時婚嫁須符合“三書”的規定，並遵從“六禮”的形式，否則不會得到長輩族人接受。“三書”指婚姻所用的文書，即聘書、禮書和迎書。聘書是訂親的文書，禮書是下聘的文書，迎書是迎親的文書。

“六禮”是“納采”、“問名”、“納吉”、“納徵”、“請期”、“親迎”。“納采”指男家託媒人向女家提親。隨後如女家接納提親，則男家再派媒人到女家請問姑娘的名氏生辰，以便占卜，此謂之“問名”。占卜如顯示雙方並無相沖相剋，則男家會把吉兆告知女家，至此婚事已大體議定，謂之“納吉”。“納徵”指下聘，由男家向女家致送聘禮。接着是“請期”，男家擇定成婚吉期，再託媒人徵求女家同意。最後一個程序當然是“親迎”，由媒人偕同新郎前往女家迎娶新娘，把新娘接回男家，敬拜天地祖先，叩見公婆長輩。

“三書”與“六禮”由談婚論嫁到新娘過門的程序都一一訂明。在現代社會，傳統婚俗已由繁趨簡，但仍有不少人沿襲下聘、迎親的禮俗。

談到婚嫁，原來“婚”和“嫁”背後各有含意。據漢代班固《白虎通·嫁娶》所載，古時婚禮在昏夜舉行，故曰“婚”。迎親當晚，男家會持火炬驅馬車到女家迎接新娘。《白虎通·嫁娶》又曰：“嫁者，家也”，意即女子出

嫁後便有了自己的家。男子娶妻成家立室，而女子嫁作人婦，也成為夫家一分子。

古代一些婚姻習俗，即使今天不再流行，在我們的語言中仍留有痕迹。為何男女婚後稱為“結髮夫妻”？原來古時男女均蓄長髮，在成婚之日，新郎新娘按例就牀並坐，男左女右，然後各取一縷頭髮，束結成髻，謂之結髮。因此，“結髮”成為夫妻成婚的代稱，後世也常把元配稱為結髮妻子。頭髮是古時的訂情信物，女子如把自己的一縷青絲送予男方，其實是表示以身相許。

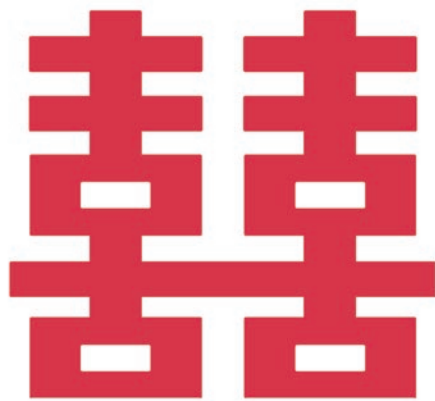
另外，女子出嫁稱為“結縵”，也源自古代婚俗。“縵”通“褸”，是古代女子繫在身前的佩巾。昔日，母親會為出嫁的女兒繫上佩巾，以示過門後盡心侍奉姑舅，

操持家務。因此，後世把結婚稱為結縵。《詩經·邶風·東山》是一首抒情詩，寄託了征人離家三載的思鄉之情。詩中第四章便提到結縵這種婚儀：“之子于歸，皇駁其馬。親結其縵，九十其儀”。征人解甲歸田，盼望闔家團圓，途中不禁想起當日新婚的情景：妻子過門時，各色駿馬準備迎接；岳母為新娘繫上佩巾，並依從各種儀式辦理親事。另外，根據清代郝懿行的義疏，“結縵”又指“女子嫁時用絳巾覆首”。

結婚乃大喜之事，不少儀式或已從簡，但其意義仍在。合卺是昔日嫁娶禮儀，今天婚宴大多以交杯代之，表示夫妻永結同心。不過，原來古時合卺酒並非用杯盛載。“卺”其實是一種婚用禮器，破瓠\*\*為瓢謂之卺。瓠即葫蘆，按古代婚俗，夫妻合卺前須先把葫蘆剖分為二，然後各執一瓢，盛酒漱口，以此象徵成婚。古人以葫蘆為吉祥物，皆因葫蘆多子多產，於是以此盛酒，取其瓜瓞綿綿之意。此外，葫蘆味苦難吃，用來盛酒，也有夫妻甘苦與共的含意。

\* 笄，粵音“雞”，普通話讀作“jī”。

\*\* 瓠，粵音“戶”，普通話讀作“hù”。



人生的過程，在多數情況下遠遠重於人生的目的。

余秋雨



# Wondrous Encounters with the Almighty

Flora Ma  
Official Languages Officer I  
Home Affairs Department

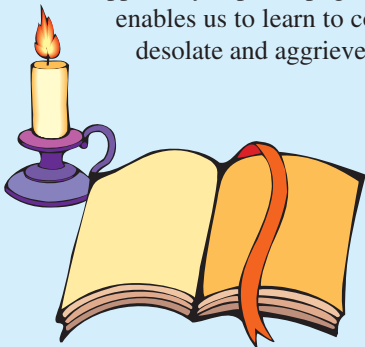
**My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation.  
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour.**

**(2 Samuel 22:3)**

What does “Almighty” mean to you at first glance? Literally, “Almighty” means someone or something supreme, invincible and omnipotent. For some, it may be perceived as wealth, fame, power, knowledge, courage, perseverance or any supernatural force that makes their dreams come true. To me, the “Almighty” is the Lord of my life, who walks side by side with me throughout my ups and downs, and makes memorable and amazing changes to my life.

## Absolute Reliance

All of us experience the vicissitudes of life as years roll on. We get elated with blissful events, but dispirited in the face of hardships, sorrows and sicknesses. Some choose to grumble over their suffering, whilst others get perplexed at their apparently hopeless plights. Conversion to faith in God enables us to learn to count solely on Him however desolate and aggrieved we are.



Despite frequent contact with it throughout my childhood and adolescence, Christianity failed to win a place in my heart until one of my beloved family members passed away some ten years ago. Like many others who experience bereavement for the first time, I was thrown into darkness for the initial couple of weeks. But magically, with the aid of prayers and Bible readings, which I had long abandoned, I could feel the gentle and yet powerful encouragement of an almighty one. He had not forsaken me, and even offered me peace to rid me of sleepless nights and enfolded me with courage to tide me over. As the Bible says, **“What is impossible with men is possible with God” (Luke 18:27).**

## Thanksgiving

As we are living on God’s grace each and every day, thanksgiving is our spontaneous response to His immense grace. The Almighty said to us, **“My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9)**, and we thank God that His grace is present at any time and at any place. In sunny and unruffled days, I recharge myself with His grace and advance bravely along my way. At low ebbs of life, be it a family or career gloom, I always count on His grace for courage and strength,

even though it may not come in the way I expect. After some turns, I realise that many dreadful events are in fact blessings in disguise, and the Almighty will enrich my spiritual life and lead me to the more beautiful place He has promised. I thank the Lord God so much for allowing me to savour the full measure of His grace in different scenarios of life.

## Pardon

Christians are not saints. This is especially true in a world laden with enticements. Now and then, it is not uncommon for fellow believers to falter and give up their integrity for worldly norms or interests. But when we repent, the Almighty will forgive unconditionally our wrongdoings and sins. It is with His teachings that we learn to rein in our will and resist temptations. Some believers may be confronted with outrageous attacks and irrational demands originating from family, school, workplace or social life. It is with the abundance of His love and grace that we survive these trying circumstances, and it is with His bestowal of heavenly courage that we pardon others for their wrong deeds. The prayer of one of my pastors is particularly inspiring — each pardon brings forth a rebirth so that our life fits God’s aspirations more pleasingly. As the verses go: **“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)**, I have a firm belief that the Almighty will speak for justice and make His ultimate judgement at the end of the day.

We all have our unique and unforgettable episodes in life — graduation, travelling, romance, marriage, childbirth, promotion, awards and achievements of all sorts. For me, the wondrous and miraculous part of my life came when I chose to follow the Almighty, who acts unconditionally as my guard and guide, and offers me salvation and protection. For the rest of my life, I know His love will embrace me and His promises will never let me down. I know I can lead a courageous and regret-free life because He will see me along the path ahead no matter whether I am in happiness or in woe. I know I can look forward to an eternal life and a reunion with my family in the heavenly home some day. It is a great blessing to share all this with you. May the wonders of this Almighty creator also come to all of you, whether you are believers, believers-to-be or non-believers, and draw you closer and closer to Him. May God bless you and be with you!

# 嗚呼哀哉

紅事喜，白事悲。自古以來，喪事都屬忌諱，人們不會直接宣之於口。文人知書識禮，溫文婉約，措辭合度，提到忌諱之事，每以婉詞隱去，免生尷尬。白色有哀悼之意，因此以“白事”婉指喪事。至於親人亡故，也有各種不同的委婉語。

“丁憂”本指遭逢憂傷之事，婉作遭逢父母喪事，泛指守喪。喪父謂之丁父憂，喪母謂之丁母憂。按古時規定，子女在守喪期間，三年內不做官、不婚娶、不赴宴、不應考。《儒林外史》第四回載：湯知縣接見門生范進，問范進既然寫得一手好文章，何解不去會試。范進應曰：“先母見背，遵制丁憂”，意謂由於喪母，依例不得應試。其後知縣命人備酒菜，但見范進不舉杯、不起箸，方發現原來杯箸均鑲了銀，不宜遵制丁憂者用，於是命人再備素杯竹箸。由此可見，先賢對丁憂的規定甚為尊重。

喪父又可婉稱“失怙\*”，而喪母則婉稱“失恃”，典出《詩經·小雅·蓼莪》：“無父何怙，無母何恃”。“怙”與“恃”本解作依靠，後來用作父母的代稱。如《聊齋誌異·珠兒》一篇，蒲松齡筆下的珠兒“六歲失怙恃，不為兄嫂所容”。

在上面《儒林外史》引文中，“見背”一詞也屬委婉語，指“被背棄”，即親人辭世的意思。晉朝李密《陳情表》曰：“生孩六月，慈父見背；行年四歲，舅奪母志”。李密上書婉謝晉武帝的徵召，從自己身世說起，表示自幼喪父，而舅父又迫使母親改嫁，奪其守節的志向，如今上有年邁祖母，兩人相依為命，因此不能離家出仕。

代表亡故的委婉語還有許多。在唁函碑文中，“捐館”一詞頗為常見。“捐”是“拋棄”之意，與“捐軀”中的“捐”同義。“捐館”即“捐館舍”，指拋棄平日居住的館舍，喻作離世。《戰國策·趙策二》載蘇秦為燕王出使說趙，告知趙王由於奉陽君嫉賢，不少有意效忠趙侯的豪傑均不敢挺身而出，“今奉陽君捐館舍，大王乃今然後得與士民相親，臣故敢獻其愚，效愚忠。”“捐館”有固定含義，切勿望文生義，誤作捐助館舍之興建云云。

“長遠”是另一個表示亡故的委婉語。“遠”解作離別，“長遠”就是永久離別。宋代王安石《祭蘇虞部文》曰：“聊陳薄奠，以告長遠”。分開日久稱作“久遠”，與“長遠”的意思相去甚遠。若與友人闊別多年，可用“睽違數載”來表達，睽違就是分離。

道家思想對中國文化影響深遠。道教相信修煉者得道後能駕鶴飛升，“化鶴”本是得道成仙之意，

現在則泛指去世。東晉陶淵明《搜神後記》載：“丁令威本遼東人，學道於靈虛山，後化鶴歸遼”。唐代詩人崔顥《黃鶴樓》一詩又云：

昔人已乘黃鶴去，此地空餘黃鶴樓。  
黃鶴一去不復返，白雲千載空悠悠。

黃鶴樓位於武漢，因古代傳說而富神秘色彩。一說謂古代仙人子安曾乘鶴經過此地；另一說謂三國時費禕得道，在此駕鶴登仙。不論何者為正，詩人之意在於借黃鶴樓抒己懷，慨嘆世事多變，滄海桑田。

道教相信仙人得道後會長出鳥羽，飛升上天，故又以“羽化”作為成仙之喻。晉代葛洪《抱朴子·對俗》曰：“古之得仙者，或身生羽翼，變化飛行。”宋代蘇軾《前赤壁賦》有以下一句：“浩浩乎如馮虛御風，而不知其所止，飄飄乎如遺世獨立，羽化而登仙”，寫作者與友人泛舟峭壁之下，在悠悠天地間恬靜寡欲的出塵境界。現今“羽化”一般解作離開人世。

不同身分的人亡故，說法迥異。“薨\*\*謝”、“崩逝”專指王侯辭世；痛失賢良謂之“梁摧”、“玉摧”；“星隕”、“隕落”表示偉人身故；女子夭亡以“蕙損蘭摧”、“玉碎珠沉”喻之；未成年者早逝稱為“夭折”、“夭亡”。粵劇《帝女花·香夭》一折，講述長平公主與駙馬周世顯在連理樹下合巹交拜後雙雙仰藥自盡。長平公主貴為龍宮之花、崇禎皇帝的掌上明珠，其辭世遂以“香夭”代表。

委婉語的作用，是避免語言上的禁忌。在漢語裏，喻指離世的委婉語數目逾百，“過身”、“作古”、“謝世”、“安息”、“歸西”、“凋落”、“仙游”、“永訣”、“善終”、“就木”、“撒手人寰”、“壽終正寢”（“正寢”是住宅的正房，古時諸侯將薨，遷於正寢），都是較為常見的例子。

一個民族的文化底蘊越深，委婉語便越豐富。漢語委婉語之多，正好反映中國文化之深厚，也反映了中華民族含蓄敦厚的性情。

\* 怙，粵音“戶”，普通話讀作“hù”。

\*\* 薨，粵音“轟”，普通話讀作“hōng”。

Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's troublesome.

Issac Asimov



# 人生里程



人生之途何其漫漫。隨着年月增長，踏入生命旅程不同階段，當能體驗各種人生滋味。古時對於不同年歲，指稱各異。例如嬰孩初生滿一個月稱為彌月，長者八九十歲高壽稱為耄耋。左邊是一條人生路，路旁有十個不同年歲的代稱。按年歲先幼後長由下至上排列，你能把適當的代稱一一填上嗎？

請在二零零八年十一月十四日前，把答案連同下列個人資料寄回“香港金鐘道66號金鐘道政府合署高座2310室公務員事務局法定語文事務部《文訊》編輯委員會”。答對問題者可獲書券一張，名額五個。答案及得獎者名單下期公布（答案以《文訊》公布者為準）。

姓名：\_\_\_\_\_

先生／女士（請刪去不適用者）

部門：\_\_\_\_\_

職位：\_\_\_\_\_

電話：\_\_\_\_\_

辦事處地址：\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Not-a-Mindboggler

### Issue No. 32 Solution

The following winners will be notified individually by post:

Wearers	Items	Wearers	Items
Dutch peasants	Sabot	Sherlock Holmes	Cape
Sikh, Hindu or Muslim men	Turban	Jockeys	Silks
Charlie Chaplin	Braces	Margot Fonteyn	Tutu
Malaysians	Sarong	Repairmen	Overalls
Cowboys	Jeans	Cinderella	Glass slippers
Russian women and girls	Sarafan	Indian women	Sari
Jamie Oliver	Apron	Dae Jang Geum	Hanbok
The Queen's guards	Bearskin	South Americans	Poncho
Inspector Jacques Clouseau	Trench coat	Geishas	Kimono
Scottish men	Kilt	Officers of the Police Tactical Unit	Beret

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Sin Hung	Census and Statistics Department
Li Yuen-yee	Immigration Department
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