

文訊

WORD POWER

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冬去春來

四季有序

炎夏中午，萬里晴空雲也沒一片，猛烈的陽光把中環油亮的瀝青路直烤得炙熱，蒸氣不斷由地面冒上來，混雜着汽車的廢氣，酷熱難耐。外出用膳的上班一族，男士手拿西裝上衣，汗流浹背，不停擦拭額上豆大的汗珠；女士架上太陽鏡，躲避熾熱陽光的毒舌。工地工人都聚在蔭涼的地方歇息。整個城市像燒透的鍋爐，熱得令人煩燥，叫人喘不過氣來。

火傘高張、熱浪撲面的日子，香港人早已習慣了。踏入六月，人們都躲進室內享受空調，誓要與外面熱烘烘的世界隔絕。不過，蝸居室內太久，偶爾出外走走，舒展筋骨，對身心還是大有裨益的。其實，香港很多公園綠樹成蔭，栽種了各式各樣的花卉，紅的、紫的、白的、藍的，就像繡了一幅五彩繽紛的百花圖，賞心悅目。趁早上、傍晚時分，坐在樹蔭下納涼，看看蜻蜓在空中盤旋，聽聽此起彼落的蟬聲，也是不錯的消暑妙法。

烈日灼灼的夏天過後，秋天悄然來到。十一月份，清早和晚上涼風颯颯。秋高氣爽，不少香港人愛遠離塵囂，到郊外登山遠足，欣賞明媚風光。沿着蜿蜒山徑信步前行，越過小河清溪，聽到流水潺潺，幸運的話，還會看到香港特有的盧文氏樹蛙；經過一些荒廢村落，從遺留下來的家具和農具可以尋找舊日莊稼人生活的片段。吸一口清新空氣，仰望藍天，沐浴於大自然中，洗滌身心的塵埃，對不少城市人來說，許是夢寐以求的生活。

香港的冬天雖沒有北方的冷，但寒風呼呼，有時也讓人冷得瑟瑟發抖。季節轉變，身心總是最先反應，提醒大家要及時進補。吃時令食物保持體內陰陽平衡是中國人的生活智慧。寒風刺骨，為了暖身祛寒，人們都愛吃熱騰騰的火鍋；一家人或三五知己圍爐共坐，邊吃邊

談，樂在其中。香港冬天不下雪，沒有白雪皚皚的迷人景色。不過，寒流南下，山上氣溫降至冰點時，有些人會特意穿上厚厚冬衣，興致勃勃地走到大帽山觀賞結霜奇景。這是在南方城市生活的人難得的冬日樂趣。

踏入三月，維多利亞港白茫茫一片，渡海小輪不時鳴笛，警示舵手注意航行安全；太平山頂春霧繚繞，朦朧朧，置身其中，恍如騰雲駕霧，遊歷蓬萊仙境。牆壁街道都是濕漉漉的，家裏掛滿萬國旗似的濕衣服。春寒料峭，細雨綿綿，涼茶店顧客盈門，人人喝一口保健涼茶，去濕生津，調理五臟六腑。香港的春天雖是惱人，但高高的木棉樹上開滿紅花，又美麗又壯觀，為這個乍暖還寒時節增添耀目色彩。

冬去春來，四季有序，大自然依着固定節律循環不息。不過，近年香港愈來愈暖，樹木蟲鳥的生長周期顛倒倒，一反自然常態。春天綻放的杜鵑花早在一、二月便含苞吐萼；在十一月的初冬日子裏，鳳凰木依然紅花滿枝，欣欣向榮；深秋時節，通常在夏天繁殖的朱頸斑鳩仍在求偶，在空中繞飛不停；碧鳳蝶幼蟲提早結蛹，冬天未過已羽化成蝶，在花間飛舞。

氣溫不斷上升，寒冬日漸遠離；恐怕三數十年後，香港全年都是赤赤炎炎的日子，再無法享受四季變化所帶來的生活樂趣。在深秋初冬，穿上暖和的衣服走在街上，陣陣涼風拂面，那份愜意舒適，也許漸成這一代香港人的回憶。假如我們願意放慢發展步伐，選擇過較簡樸的生活，多一點環保，也多種一些樹木，不知又能否把冬天留住？



水光山色與人親，說不盡、無窮好。

李清照

Where will you go for your next holiday? A shopping spree in Europe, a beach jaunt in Bali or a culinary tour to Japan? However attractive such destinations may be, some travellers like to hit the road less travelled.

At an Amazon tributary, a bunch of tourists get out of their canoes after an hour of strenuous paddling. Standing on a forest trail shaded by a dense tree canopy, they are surrounded by a labyrinth of emerald opulence — trees intertwined with creepers, buttress roots of giant trees, feathery tree ferns, draping vines, shrubs with broad heart-shaped leaves... Walking on, they see a green-camouflaged snake coiled on a tree branch and brightly-coloured macaws flying above their heads, while somewhere nearby, squirrel monkeys swing among the trees. Life is thriving! Suddenly, ear-splitting thunder roars and lightning flashes. Lashings of rain cascade from the sky.

On the other side of the world, some travellers are taking a bumpy camel ride under the scorching sun of the daunting Sahara. Sand dunes in all shapes — crescents, stars, domes and more — rise and fall as the gusty wind whirls powdery sand around. When several turquoise lakes

enveloped by a towering dune come into view behind clumps of cacti on the ridge of a slope, the travellers yell and whistle with joy, oblivious to the sweltering heat. They have come to an oasis. A few rudimentary mud houses sit next to a spring, with some palm trees and tussocks of grass around, displaying a unique way of life in nature.

Eleven o'clock at night, and people flock together in the Norwegian countryside, looking up at the dark sky. Braving the icy polar wind, the excursionists, clad in fluffy down jackets, are waiting excitedly for the aurora borealis, a natural wonder occurring when particles in solar winds are pulled into the atmosphere by the Earth's magnetic force, reminiscent of the laser beams above the skyscrapers in Hong Kong. Near midnight, it finally comes. A mysterious whitish-green sheen glides across the dark Arctic sky. It bends, grows, swirls and dances, illuminating the sky with shades of green and shafts of pink and blue. Dumbstruck, the spectators gaze avidly at the magical show in the freezing cold.

Tired of the hustle and bustle of city life, many of us want to take a plunge into nature. Travelling off the beaten path, we will rediscover the splendours of this planet and the joy of returning to a natural world that we all belong to. So why not take a tour to one of these spots the next time you hit the road?

山水有情

古語云：“知者樂山，仁者樂水”。神州浩瀚，華山之清雋，夏水之秀逸，悠悠千載，都是文人雅士仰瞻天地、參悟人生的勝所。滾滾長江、西湖柳岸、岳陽古樓，多少詩人騷客吟詩作賦，潑墨留香，流傳幾許千古絕唱。

唐代王維鍾愛佛理，優游林下，寫下《終南別業》，抒發山居之趣，禪意盎然。

終南別業

中歲頗好道，晚家南山陲。
興來每獨往，勝事空自知。
行到水窮處，坐看雲起時。
偶然值林叟，談笑無還期。

詩人隱居山野，常乘興獨遊，自得其樂。步至水流盡處，無路前行，便坐下靜看白雲隨風飄蕩。偶遇山中老者，閒話家常，忘了歸期。詩人隨緣而行，無拘無束，縱使人生無常，依然悠閒自若，展現深邃的處世智慧。

詩佛在林泉中逍遙修道，北宋文豪蘇軾也在大自然中有所領悟。

和子由澗池懷舊

人生到處知何似，應似飛鴻踏雪泥。
泥上偶然留指爪，鴻飛那復計東西。
老僧已死成新塔，壞壁無由見舊題。
往日崎嶇還記否，路長人困蹇驢嘶。

蘇氏在應和胞弟的詩中，把人生在世喻作空中鴻雁，偶爾在雪泥上留下爪印，但鴻雁展翅，冰雪融化，一切又轉眼成空。詩人感慨人生如寄，飄泊無定，發人深思。縱然看透世間變幻，東坡居士沒有傷懷，面對重重厄，更表現積極達觀的人生態度，激勵胞弟奮勇向前。

徜徉山水，澡雪心靈，每每領略到人生真諦。蘇軾妙筆一揮，巧論遊山玩水，玄妙無窮。

觀潮

廬山煙雨浙江潮，未到千般恨不消。
到得原來無別事，廬山煙雨浙江潮。

廬山煙雨迷濛，錢塘江大潮澎湃，蔚為奇觀，詩人未能一睹，總覺遺憾。慕名拜訪，親覽勝景，始知廬山煙雨浙江潮不外如是。大千世界，萬事萬物到頭來還不是“原來無別事”，何須執着？參透禪機，也許就能“見山是山，見水是水”，洞明事物的真理。

能否參破禪機並不重要，縱橫山水之間，自是樂趣無窮。錦繡河山，美景無限，人生匆匆一旅，若不看盡風光，誰又甘心歸去？



物我相親

天人合一

香火鼎盛的寺廟旁總有不少看相算命攤檔，攤外掛了牌匾，上面寫有“擇日問吉”等字，以招徠顧客。為何中國人做任何重要事情前都愛擇日問吉？中國以農立國，莊稼人相信凡事要“看天做人”，穀物“有收無收在於水，收多收少在於肥”，能否豐收得看老天爺下不下雨，人的命運全由天定。天就是指大自然。大自然變幻莫測，威力無窮，古人既敬且畏，故經常祭天問卜，祈求上蒼保佑。

由古至今，敬天畏天的自然觀對中國人影響深遠，諸子百家對大自然更有精闢見解。儒家認為人應與自然和諧共處，“親親而仁民，仁民而愛物”，不僅要對人親善，對萬物也要有情，物我相親。道家崇尚自然，樂山悅水，相信“天與人不相勝”，兩者同生共運，渾然一體，只要順天行，循天理，回歸自然，天人合一，人就可以找到快樂。

人類常常受到天災威脅，儒道兩家都主張按自然界的法則治理，不能反其道而行。大禹治水的故事家喻戶曉，孟子道：“禹之行水也，行其所無事也”，稱讚大禹沒有任意築堤堵截洪水，而是順着水勢排洪，這樣治理河道最符合儒家精神。同樣，應付天災，道家認為“道法自然”，一切都得依天

道而行，圖以急功近利之法抵禦，終必失敗。

放眼當今世界，人類發展步伐急速，自然環境受到破壞，青翠山林、綿延河川、廣闊田野逐漸消失。從儒家角度來看，徹底解決問題，先要愛護自然。植樹綠化可使荒山禿嶺重現生機；退耕還林可恢復生態平衡。以儒者仁愛之心對待自然，才能達到天人合一的最高境界。

道家主張“以輔萬物之自然而不敢為”，人應守本分，不可強行改變自然規律，否則會造成災禍，自吃苦果。把道家思想放諸今天，以耕種為例，使用化學農藥和肥料既違反自然，又危害人類健康。反之，“自然農法”以草除草，以蟲除蟲，通過淺耕保護土壤，才合乎自然無為之道。

儒道兩家的自然觀着眼點不同，但都是主張人與自然和諧共處。儒家從道德層面看大自然，倡言要以仁愛待之；道家提倡“知止”之道，人應節制物欲，知足常樂，利用自然資源也要適可而止。知易行難，如何把兩家學說活學活用，是一門艱深學問。在發展的巨輪下，工業文明破壞了環境，導致資源枯竭，自然災害氾濫。日後該何去何從，是人類要不斷反思的一大課題。



仁者以天地萬物為一體。

程顥



The Great Animal Orchestra

Spadefoot toads synchronise their guttural croaks into a chorus near a lake. A military jet flies low nearby, disrupting the amphibious ensemble and exposing individual frogs whose noises become distinctly audible. Born opportunists, hawks swoop down to pick off their targets. This distressing scene, as vividly narrated by sound recordist Bernie Krause in *The Great Animal Orchestra*, demonstrates how human-generated noise upsets the delicate balance of predator and prey in nature.

In his book, Krause explores with his readers how animals rely on their aural habitat to survive — the healthier the habitat, the more species there are, the more sounds they make, and the richer their scores. He denounces the disastrous impact of human interference on natural soundscapes. For him, a forest may appear almost the same to the eye before and after environmentally sensitive logging. The real damage can however only be heard. In burning forests and paving over meadows, we have destroyed the animals' orchestra pit and deprived ourselves of a decent tune.

In his search for truly wild places far beyond the cacophony of urban life, Krause takes us on a fascinating tour through nature's

sonic treasures. In his world, ants sing, hippos roar, beavers cry and insects drone. Mesmerised by the “biophony” of the animal kingdom, Krause lively depicts the sounds and rhythm of the natural world which, he thinks, inspire human music. He compares a chorus of trilling birds, grunting baboons and chirruping insects in the stillness of morning to Bach's Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, and a storm in the tropical rainforest to Fauré's *Requiem*.

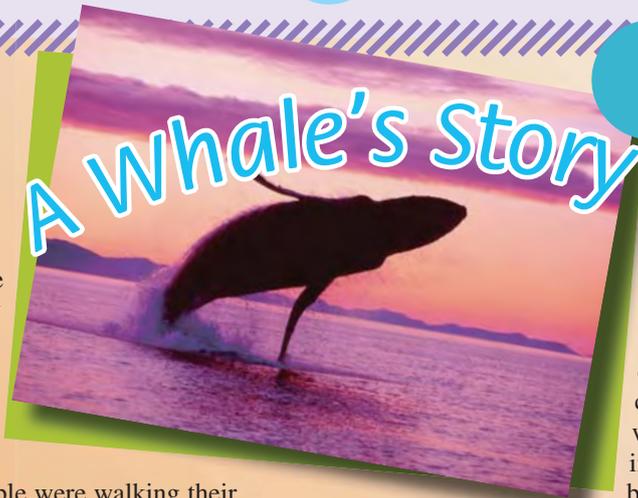
To feel the sensual pleasures of nature's sounds, Krause crouches by a stream on an autumn morning and stays silent. As gusts of wind rustle a cluster of reeds, he hears a myriad of tones, sighs and groans, which resembles the sounds of a church organ and a colossal pan flute. To his ears, the sound of rain falling on the ground and water, the roar of turbulent storms, the echo of dropping dews, and the gentle slap of waves against the shore are like heavenly music, the finest artistic experience and the greatest show on Earth.

The Great Animal Orchestra is a story about a man's search for vanishing soundscapes in our rapidly changing Earth. With a calling to conserve the music of the wild, Krause makes a fervent plea to stop human noise pollution before the natural world is drowned out.





A Whale's Story



The darkness of a late summer night was giving way to the pale light of dawn. The moon was still hanging in the sky, but a halo of blue began to show over the mountain. On the beach, a few early risers were out for a morning jog, and a couple were walking their dog. It was six o'clock and the town was waking. Sounds of voices and commotion were heard. More and more people, with an expression of deep concern, came down to the beach and circled around an enormous, slimy object. A twenty-foot-long baby male humpback whale, with multiple wounds on his knobby head and pectoral fin, was found lying in the shallow water near the shore.

Ten months ago, the humpback calf was born in the warm waters off the Pacific coast. Like any other new born whales, he learnt to swim and dive with his mother every day. One sunny afternoon, the whale family swam near an island. While the little whale was naughtily chasing shoals of small fish, the mother, out of sheer joy, leapt high up into the air, revealing her distinctive stripe-like markings and ejecting a long stream of water. A natural acrobat, she did one somersault after another, and landed beautifully with a loud splash. She then dived into the water, stuck out her tail in the air and swung it around playfully. She was putting on a mighty show of nature.

Suddenly, the mother whale felt something moving at high speed in the water. Sensing a sign of imminent danger, the mother slapped her tail, urging her son to move faster. A big dark shadow was lurking below them. It was a ferocious shark with a broad head and a massive jaw. Only half the size of the mother whale, the shark chose not to get close to them. An ambush hunter, the shark hid itself behind the coral reefs, waiting patiently for the opportunity to come. It stealthily accelerated its speed and opened its big mouth, attempting to rip apart the baby whale's tail. Instinctively, the mother whale rammed into the shark and successfully pushed it away. The shark made a swift turn, poised for another attack. Losing no time to save her son, the furious mother showed her knife-sharp teeth and took a big bite at the shark's head, ending the battle with an overwhelming victory.

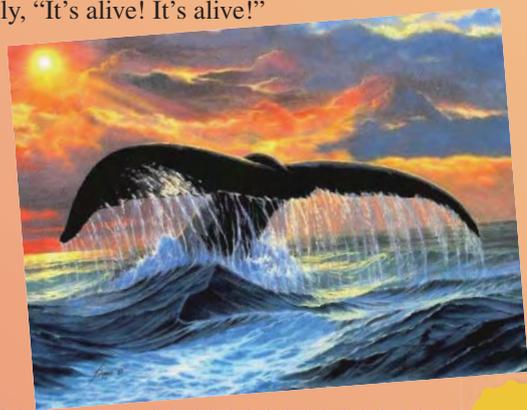
Temperatures were rising. It was time for the mother whale and her son to go north. Snugly protected by his mother, the little whale set off in the company of other humpback whales with great excitement. As curious as any child, he swam across the ocean, exploring inlets and playing with dolphins. Imitating his fellows, he did twists

in the air and sang sonorously. People on boats cheered and applauded whenever he leapt out of the water, making eye-to-eye contact with them. Only a baby whale of eight months old, he innocently believed that all human beings were friendly.

One day, the humpback whale group was passing a narrow sea channel, and heard loud machine noises coming from all directions. Not realising that it was their death knell, they continued their journey. Before long, they found themselves being surrounded by a huge fishing net. Trying hard to find a way out, they kept banging their heads against it. Explosive harpoons were shot into the water and a thundering splash roared up, killing many whales in the group. The sea turned red. With all her force, the injured mother whale made a big hole in the fishing net, allowing the baby whale to pass through it.

Panic-stricken and exhausted, the baby whale finally stopped near a quiet bay hours after the attack by the fishing fleet. He looked around but no companion was in sight. For the first time being separated from his mother after birth, he did not know what to do, but kept circling around the bay, expecting his mother to come to find him. Unaware of the danger of swimming along a busy shipping route, the little whale raised his head above the water from time to time. All of a sudden, a loud bang was heard.

The sun was shining over the town. Everybody on the beach looked worried. Some kids, holding tight their parents' hands, said tearfully, "The whale is dying." Several men jumped into the water, covering the wounded head and fins of the stranded baby whale with plastic sheets, pouring buckets of water on him, and praying a timely tide would come soon. The clock was ticking. Fire-fighters and marine specialists finally arrived, and while they were trying to turn over the whale, a stream of water was ejected from his blowhole. The onlookers clapped their hands and shouted happily, "It's alive! It's alive!"



In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.

John Muir

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

An extensive ice sheet in Antarctica has sheared off; polar ice changes the North Atlantic current; migrating birds darken the sky and animals all over New York become agitated. Intense winds blow and rain pours down, flooding the congested Manhattan streets knee-deep. Mass destruction is caused by extreme weather across the world. New Delhi is blanketed in snow, Tokyo struck by a powerful hailstorm, and Los Angeles plagued by devastating tornadoes. A massive climatic change caused by global warming ushers in global cooling and leads to a new ice age. The Earth plunges into a deep freeze. Frightening enough? You may shrug and say, "This only happens in the disaster movie *The Day After Tomorrow*."

Is all this so fictional? Not really. In 1991, hikers near the top of the Austrian Alps found a man's body half-buried in ice, thinking that he was an unfortunate mountain climber who had died recently. Carbon dating however revealed that he came from the Bronze Age and had lain buried under ice for thousands of years. Glaciers on Mount Kilimanjaro, the backdrop of Hemingway's famous story *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, have been retreating at an alarming rate, tarnishing its image as a famous tourist destination. Sightseers can no longer enjoy the breath-taking view of Glacier National Park in Montana from major roads or small hiking trails as some of the glaciers there



have shrunk considerably. What is the story behind all this? Just a simple fact: the mercury is rising and ice is melting.

What is the big deal? The order of nature has been upset. In the years to come, with rising sea-levels induced by global warming, the homes of people living along low-lying atolls will be inundated, and many islands, like pearl necklaces in the ocean, will disappear from the world. In the mountainous areas around the Himalayas, farmers will temporarily enjoy milder winters, but will face a much harder time when the steady supply of fresh water is cut off in the long run. With tonnes and tonnes of melting ice flowing into the ocean, sea water will be diluted, and marine life species failing to adapt to such change will go extinct. The recession of glaciers will relieve the pressure exerted on the rocks deep under the ice sheets, and trigger catastrophic earthquakes. Massive tsunamis may come at any moment without warning, burying us alive under the sea.

Man-made gases recombine the atmosphere, and chain saws chew through the rainforests. Our planet is heating up. It is time for action. Should we remain sluggish in response, the horror depicted in *The Day After Tomorrow* will one day come true.

文化廣場

城中綠土

南生圍位於新界元朗東北部，蒼翠盈目，景色宜人，是城中彌足珍貴的綠土。這片鄉郊田野東臨錦田河，西靠山貝河，鄰近珠江河口，屬鹹淡水交界的濕地，孕育出豐富多樣的動植物，自然生態價值甚高。

從南生圍路口起步，沿着錦田河畔的堤道徐行，會看到一大片紅樹林植物老鼠簕。細看不難發現葉面滿布鹽粒，原因是植物生長在河口交匯處，水份含鹽量高，為了適應惡劣環境，唯有在葉面排鹽。紅樹林中還有秋茄樹，每年三、四月，樹上總掛滿長長綠色的種子胚軸；這些胚軸從母樹吸收養分，成熟後插進河牀的軟泥裏生長。適者生存之道，體現了大自然的奧妙，令人嘖嘖稱奇。

退潮後，紅樹林下的泥灘原來是小生物的天堂。遠處，有許多彈塗魚鼓起魚鰓，在濕滑的泥面飛快彈跳，樣子十分逗趣；眼前，不少招潮蟹爬來爬去，四處覓食，白鷺在河邊靜候已久，會覷準機會飛過泥面，捕魚捉蟹果腹。

沿堤道繼續慢走，瞬間就來到錦田河和山貝河交匯處。在秋冬季節，常常看到一羣羣來港過冬的水鳥在這

裏聚集。灰白色的海鷗在天際翱翔，姿態優美；嘴狀如琵琶的黑臉琵鷺在上空俯瞰魚塘的動態，忽地猛然撲入水中捉魚，既快且準；紅頭潛鴨、青頭潛鴨在河裏悠然暢泳；翠鳥、鸕鶿也忙於覓食。高空獵鷹盤旋，受驚的鳥羣四處亂飛，啞聲噪起，場面多麼壯觀！

再往前走便看到一排排檸檬桉樹；微風過處，桉樹沙沙暗響，沁出淡淡清香，令人精神一振。堤道旁是荒廢的魚塘、基圍，長着一些蘆葦草。昔日這裏原是一大片密密麻麻的蘆葦林，許多蟲鳥都愛在此棲息。不過，一場大火已把不少蘆葦燒毀。走到桉樹徑的盡處，可在古樸的渡頭坐橫水渡返回元朗舊墟。渡頭雖然簡陋，但饒有古意，讓人感受到一份原始的鄉土情懷。

南生圍是香港重要濕地，生氣勃勃，綠意盎然，也是觀鳥勝地，在這一片遼闊的濕地魚塘區漫遊，觀賞多姿多采的生態環境，親親大自然，當可一洗煩囂。



Are We Going Extinct?

Some things disappear quietly and you can hardly notice they are gone. But some vanish with a bang. The gigantic and vicious *Tyrannosaurus*, the vast and benign *Brachiosaurus*, the speedy and fierce *Velociraptor*, and many other huge reptiles suddenly died out sixty-five million years ago. It is thought that a ten-kilometre-wide asteroid hit the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, causing massive forest fires and tsunamis. Smoke and dust clouded the sky, blocking out the sun for years. Temperatures plunged. Dinosaurs were frozen to death, ending their long years of dominance on Earth.

Will human beings be wiped out like dinosaurs? Perhaps not in one single collision, but step by step, and by humans themselves. Human extinction may still be a long way off, but other creatures have started disappearing already. Bees are dying in all corners of the world rapidly. Far more than the bane of picnic-goers, they play a critical role in sustaining our food supply by spreading pollen. Without bees, plants and crops will decline. Without crops, we all will die. Though frightening, it is rather likely, as claimed by some scientists, that human beings would not survive more than four years if bees disappeared from the Earth. Are we the real culprits for their massive die-off? Yes, we are. To create a pest-free environment, we have excessively used chemical pesticides which have damaged the bee's ability to navigate.



Mountain gorillas, one of our closest relatives in the animal kingdom, are also disappearing. In the alpine forests in Rwanda and Congo, they roam around in groups, feeding on leaves; males pound their chests and grunt nosily; infants tumble, wrestle, and play happily with their siblings. However, to expand our territory, we have forced many of them to leave their habitat. Other species like cheetahs and leopards share the same fate. Unlike dinosaurs, their extinction may leave a seemingly insignificant footprint in human history. Yet every species on Earth, just like each tiny piece of a jigsaw puzzle, forms part of the whole picture, and their demise suggests that the ecosystem has been thrown off track, and things are falling apart.



All along, humans have been fighting a battle against nature. To survive and prosper, we kill any species that stands in our way. Like a slow catastrophe, just as devastating but without the meteoric clash which destroyed the giant reptiles, we put a methodical end to other species every day. Isn't it high time to think seriously how to create a new world in which we may learn to live in harmony with other species?



土壁中的明珠 山麓旁的銅環



黃土高原上的山邊滿是洞穴，密密層層，鱗次櫛比；暮色四合，洞穴透出淡淡黃光，宛如土壁上的顆顆明珠。這些洞穴，就是中國西北高原老百姓的安樂窩——窯洞。

黃土高原氣候乾旱，覆蓋着厚厚的黃土，刮起大風時，塵土飛揚，一片荒涼景象。高原的土層非常厚，風吹雨打也不易崩塌。高原居民利用這個天然特點，沿着山坡或在地下鑿洞而居。窯洞大門多呈圓弧形，窗戶又高，讓陽光透進洞內，使居室乾爽舒適，冬暖夏涼。窯洞堅固耐用，樸實的設計配合自然環境，別具匠心。

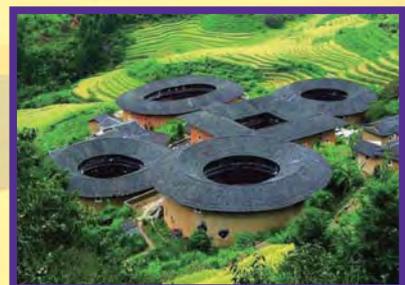
黃土高原的土壤含豐富礦物質，有利耕種，可惜夏季暴雨嚴重侵蝕耕地，難怪那裏的農民經常唸在嘴邊：“三天無雨苗發黃，下點急雨土沖光，山洪爆發遭大殃”。受地理、氣候條件所限，農民唯有“靠山吃山”，利用黃土特性，栽種出土豆、玉米、南瓜等耐旱農作物。黃土高原人民生活簡樸，自給自足，而窯洞更是他們生活的智慧結晶。

福建山區客家土樓是另一顆建築明珠。土樓有圓有方，但以圓樓居多。狀似銅環的圓樓，星羅棋布，遠看像在半空飄浮的天外來物，蔚為奇觀。有些圓樓由二、三圈組成，環環相套。外圈建有百多個房間，廚房、倉庫、臥室，一應俱全；第二圈是客房，中間有祖堂，是樓內居民婚喪喜慶的地方。

土樓多依山而建，也有建在溪旁。坐落溪旁的土樓，中央為天井，和煦的陽光照進天井，微風從門外河溪吹入，使樓內的居室舒適涼快。厚厚的土牆既可隔熱保暖，又可防震防盜。土樓設計古樸典雅，在環形迴廊走過，樓板嘎吱作響，別有一番情趣。

土樓居民愛在大門廳廊與親友拉家常，又愛在門前飼養禽畜，閒來編製竹器，那份“狗吠深巷中，雞鳴桑樹巔”的鄉土濃情，最是令人神往。

窯洞和土樓居民欣然接受上天恩賜，因地制宜，依山建屋，學懂如何與自然環境和諧相處。對城市人來說，在山間田野生活可能會諸多不便，但能夠與自然融為一體，過着“日出而作，日入而息”的閒適生活，快然自足，窯洞和土樓不就是很多人心中的桃花源嗎？



Have you ever got confused with using nouns? Are they countable or uncountable? Should they take a singular or plural verb? To test whether you know how to use them, why not try the following exercise? Check the answers at the bottom of this article:

- Two (tea, teas) and three (coffee, coffees) please.
- Measles (is, are) in most cases harmless.
- Some women wear (legging, leggings) as (pant, pants).
- The weather (condition, conditions) (is, are) so bad.
- Eight years (is, are) a long time.
- For some (reason, reasons), he will not be able to come this evening.

“Tea” and “coffee” are uncountable when you refer to them as drinks in general. For example: *I like coffee and tea.* But when you talk about their quantities, they are countable. For example, in a restaurant, you may ask for “two teas” and “three coffees”.

The names of diseases are usually uncountable in English, like “measles”, “flu” and “chickenpox”. But the words for some common ailments are usually countable, such as “a headache” and “a sore throat”, though “toothache” is always uncountable. For example: *I have toothache and a sore throat.*

Nouns referring to clothes or other items made up of two parts that people wear are usually plural, for example, “jeans” and “glasses”. When you want to refer to one such item, you may use “a pair of” in front of the noun. If more than one item is referred to, you can use a number or a quantifier. For example: *There are three pairs of pants in the chest.*

Some nouns only have a plural form when they are used with a particular meaning. “Conditions”, for example, is a plural noun and takes a plural verb when it refers to the circumstances or situation in which people live and work. Other examples include “premises”, “goods” and “regards”. For example: *Give your mother my regards when you see her.*

Also, when we refer to an amount, quantity or number as a whole, the noun, even though in plural form, takes a singular verb: *Ten kilometres is too far to walk.*

“Some” is an indefinite determiner and can take both countable and uncountable nouns, for example, “some flowers” and “some water”. Following this rule, “reason”, being a countable noun, should be plural if it comes after “some”. But the phrase “for some reason” does not follow this rule. “Some”, in this instance, implies one reason or another that the speaker does not know, so “reason” should be singular.

Answers: 1. teas, coffees 2. is 3. leggings, pants 4. conditions, are 5. is 6. reason

Nature and books belong to the eyes that see them.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

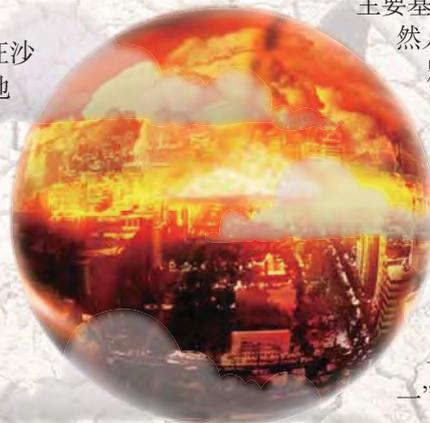


不用預測之事實

機電工程署
文書助理羅顯斌

人言二零一二年乃世界大限之時。對此煞有介事者有之，嗤之以鼻者有之。然當今之世，人類之於自然環境，破壞尤甚，竟至欲挽無從之絕地。倘猶不知珍愛，置環境保護之於不顧，末日之期庶幾近之，無庸卜測，亦可知矣。

君不見，漫天灰塵無散處，四野狂沙萬里飄；空氣污濁，綠土消斂，天變地異，面目全非。宋東坡先生有云：“曾日月之幾何，而江山不可復識矣！”今人何嘗不興嘆哉！方今污染蔓延不止，若善策良方付諸闕如，則危患處處，人間樂土，何以道哉？地球變暖，環境污染如江河之日下，縱當下厲行環保，恐亦為時晚矣，諸多舉措，杯水車薪，徒為減低禍害一二而已。



人與自然，相互隔絕，終必自損。人難勝天，唯順從之始可兼納並濟。往聖倡行“天人合一”，其理顯而易明。《中華思想大辭典》曰：“主張‘天人合一’，強調天與人的和諧一致是中國古代哲學的主要基調。”古哲先賢於此演繹或不盡相同，然人與大自然融和，方能成就美好世界，眾生方能安好生活，誠不刊之論也。

如何與大自然融和？最簡單之法，莫如唯環境破壞之務去，用力愈久，則護保乎其難哉！民不敬天惜地，其為害者，何嘗稍歇？劣行不偃，無異於自毀。皇天咆哮，后土哀鳴，皆聲聲入耳，神明鑒之，若不悟如故，則末日終期必至。莊子曰：“天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一”。人與自然和諧共處，萬事皆順也。



春花秋月

日月星辰、春夏秋冬、花草樹木往往是文人墨客的吟詠對象，成語和詩詞也常用自然景物作比喻。下列句子都載有與大自然相關的成語或詩詞，大家能否按句意，在空格內填上適當的字？

1. 日往月來，移轉，不覺又數十寒暑。
2. 今朝酒醒何處，岸，曉風殘月。
3. 一別三年，他去如，音訊全無。
4. 月落烏啼滿天，江漁火對愁眠。
5. 時值歲末，民工戴披，日夜趕路，希望早點回家與親人團聚。
6. 月明星稀，南飛，繞樹三匝，何枝可依？
7. 為免田下，還是自動備案，以釋疑慮。
8. 青箬笠，綠蓑衣，斜細不須歸。
9. 做事要切合時宜，不可爐扇，否則只會白費心機。
10. 一年好景君須記，最是黃綠時。

請在二零一二年十一月十六日前，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。答案及得獎者名單將於下期公布（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 : _____

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The following winners will be notified individually by post:

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| Lam Lan-fung Polly | Correctional Services Department |
| Tso Yee-yee | Department of Health |
| Maggie Yeung | Housing Department |
| Ng Ka-chun | Inland Revenue Department |

Solution of Issue No. 48

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. accident | 7. gravity |
| 2. synonym | 8. revolutionary |
| 3. innate | 9. Internet |
| 4. infants | 10. motivator |
| 5. mast | 11. unfathomable |
| 6. myth | 12. challenge |

Issue No. 50 (December 2012) : Pleasures and Delights

二零一二年十二月第五十期主題：賞心樂事

Issue No. 51 (March 2013) : The Flow of History

二零一三年三月第五十一期主題：歷史長河

Contributions from colleagues are welcome. Please refer to Issue No. 42 for details.

歡迎同事投稿，細則請參閱第四十二期。

中文顧問 康寶文博士 英語顧問 Dr Robert J. Neather

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