

文訊

WORD POWER

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細說一



春秋戰國，諸子競起，開創華夏文化思想的盛世，史稱“百家爭鳴”。雖說百家，實際上此“百”不等於“一百”。這個乍看簡單不過的數字，字義隨語境而變，亦包含豐富的象徵意義，可謂百變多端。

《說文解字》曰：“百，十也。”“百”的基本字義，是十的十倍，其後引申出“眾多”之義，用來表達約數。“百折不撓”指經歷無數挫折仍不動搖；“百世流芳”指美名流傳久遠，不代表一百世之數。有時，“百”亦可包羅一切，表達“全部”的意思。例如，“海納百川”中大海所包納者，是天下間的江河而非一百條河流；“百無一用”是毫無用處而不是一百樣之中無一有用。“百”亦指各種各類。“神農氏嚐百草”、“百花齊放”、“百業興隆”、“百貨公司”中的“百”，都指種類繁多。“百家爭鳴”的“百家”，同樣指多種學說或思想流派。

上述的“百”或多或少包含“眾多”的意思。那麼，“百年”是否一定指多年呢？有趣的是，在不同語境裏，“百年”意思迥異。“百年之期”的“百年”是實數，指人壽百歲；“百年之後”的“百年”，卻是“死亡”的婉詞；慨歎“回頭已是百年身”，說的是遺憾終身，“百年”是一生的意思；“百年基業”指長遠穩固的事業或家業，“百年”是長久之意。

“百”不但是數字、數量，也是中國文化的重要概念。趨吉避凶，乃人之常情。吉祥美事，常以“百”言之，象徵圓滿興旺。當中最具代表性的祝頌語，大概就是“百子千孫”了。

中國以農立國，在古代，勞動力是生計所依。豐衣足食，宗族繁衍，光耀門楣，靠的是子孫滿堂，“百子千孫”自然人人稱羨。百子的典故可追溯至《詩經·大雅·思齊》。詩中讚美周文王之妻太姒承先祖懿德，使周室人丁興旺：“大

姒嗣徽音，則百斯男。”據史書記載，文王有子十人，所以“百斯男”中的“百”只言其多而非實數。

百子之說始見於南宋，後因明代小說《封神演義》而大盛。故事中，姬昌（文王）有九十九子，往朝歌途中收養棄嬰，取名“雷震子”，合一百之數。“百子圖”是明清兩代極為盛行的吉祥圖案。從嬰孩抓周用的百子晬盤，到皇后的百子夾衣，都可以看見眾多小兒的身影，寄託着繼承香火、多子多福的願望。

除了百子圖，百福圖在傳統吉祥文化中也很常見。“百福圖”由一百個書體各異的“福”字組成，民間常以書法和剪紙的形式呈現，用作裝飾廳堂或門窗。早在先秦時代，“福”字已見諸《尚書·洪範》：“五福：一曰壽，二曰富，三曰康寧，四曰攸好德，五曰考終命。”五福體現於長壽、富裕、康寧、仁德與善終。人間福氣，自是多多益善，正因“百”字包羅萬有，美意滿滿，後世遂有百福之說。

百福乃人所共求，因此宮中也有以此入畫。清代大臣汪承霈的《百福繁生圖》，即屬一例。汪氏擅長丹青，按乾隆詩句“以昭百福繁生息，嘉與三農望阜成”作畫。畫中流雲紅蝠花瓶插上稻穗、柏枝、海棠，瓶後側有幡旗，左方有嘉量、笙管、水盂等物。柏（百）枝、蝙蝠（福）、幡（繁）旗、笙（生），四物緊扣畫題，妙用諧音，加上稻穗、水盂等象徵農事順遂，把古人對歲稔年豐、富貴壽考、毓子孕孫的追求概括其中。

字裏乾坤大，小小一個“百”字，盡攬吉祥美意，飽含華夏五千年文化意涵。際此百期之慶，感謝讀者二十五年來對《文訊》厚愛有加，謹祝各位百事大吉，百福並臻。



Tram Rides through a Century

Affectionately called “Ding Dings” by locals, trams are perhaps the most iconic means of transport in Hong Kong. Hopping on and off, riders can conveniently travel along the northern shore of the island and explore interesting places at their own pace. While the 13-kilometre tram route from Kennedy Town to Shau Kei Wan remains virtually unchanged, the cityscape along it has undergone dramatic transformation over the past century.

Exactly one hundred years ago, fully enclosed double-decker tramcars came into service. Tickets were sold and punched by conductors on board: five cents for a lower deck seat and ten cents for one on the upper deck with better views. Trundling along with passengers on board, trams then shared the road with girls in wooden clogs, old men with carrying poles, handcarts, and the occasional automobiles.

An east-bound ride started at the Kennedy Town Terminus. Trams rolled past on Praya, Kennedy Town, passing warehouses and factories on one side and junks in the harbour on the other. The air smelt wet, salty, and dirty. Passengers were then greeted by a bustling cluster of cargo piers, cramped tenement houses and dried seafood shops in Sheung Wan. The vibrancy of this place was vividly captured in the myriad of sounds in the background: shouts from coolies unloading cargo ships, the clinking of frying shovels from chestnut vendors, and the clattering of mahjong tiles.

Central, the heart of Victoria City, has long been home to luxurious hotels and prestigious banks. Riding along Des Voeux Road Central, passengers would marvel at the splendid sights of the Hongkong Hotel and Alexandra Building. Outside the General Post Office, rickshaw pullers and sedan chair carriers lined up for potential passengers. Though their services were immediately available, the tram was still the preferred mode for long haul due to shorter travelling time.

After passing through the densely populated Wan Chai district, passengers would note that there was much less hustle and bustle in Causeway Bay and North Point. With landscape and townscape including a typhoon shelter, scattered low-rise tenement blocks and emerald hills, the areas looked laid back and relaxed. Further down the tramway line were Taikoo Sugar Refinery and Taikoo Dockyard in Quarry Bay, the backbone of the city’s industry in the pre-war years, and finally Shau Kei

Wan, a fishing village. Looking further, one would see hundreds of sampans and fishing boats berthed at Aldrich Bay in the last glow of sunset.

A hundred years have passed. Today, trams still depart from the Kennedy Town Terminus, but the area has taken on an entirely different vibe. Stylish apartment buildings, chic bistros and cosy cafes are abundant. Praya, ironically, is no longer by the waterfront. Views of the harbour are blocked by a futuristic public swimming pool, with the saltiness in the air replaced by the alluring aroma of coffee and croissants. In Sheung Wan, the days when people lived in dilapidated tenement buildings and coolies toiled in cargo piers are long gone. Dried seafood shops, however, still cling on and welcome every passerby with a nostalgic smell.

Now a maze of concrete, glass and steel, Central remains the financial hub of the city. Though some of the most stunning historic buildings have been demolished, tram riders can today look up at the magnificent skyscrapers such as the International Finance Centre and the Bank of China Building, and watch the reflections of tram bodies on the glass facades along the road.

As trams go further east, the urban fabric becomes more homogeneous, with Causeway Bay and North Point dominated by a mix of residential and commercial buildings. The refinery and dockyard in Quarry Bay have long vanished into history owing to the dwindling significance of industry to the city. The land on which they once stood is now a forest of giant, glitzy office towers. Shau Kei Wan is no longer home for boat dwellers or fishermen but a built-up area for the ever-growing population. Similarly, Aldrich Bay has become a residential area after a major reclamation scheme.

“Ding Dings” have day after day rolled through the city for over a century, standing witness to its metamorphosis from a trading and fishing port to an international metropolis. An efficient means of transport in the past, trams are today slow when compared with other modes of transport. In this fast-paced modern world, however, there is something timeless and beautiful in the ringing bells of the tram and something comforting in the stop-and-go motion of its ride. Not only do trams keep alive fond memories of the past, they also reassure us that tomorrow is just another day.



詩中有數

“一姐不如二姐嬌，三寸金蓮四寸腰，輕搽五六七錢粉，妝成八九十分俏。”這首打油詩據說為才子倫文敘所作，充滿民間趣味。以數字入詩絕非打油詩的專利。騷人墨客興之所至，也會用平平無奇的數字寫景抒情，留下傳誦千古之作。

李白自言“一生好入名山遊”，初訪廬山，即景成詠，作《望廬山瀑布》，當中名句“飛流直下三千尺，疑是銀河落九天”，極言瀑布有三千尺高，雄奇壯麗，仿似從天而降。另一詩作《宣城見杜鵑花》曰：“蜀國曾聞子規鳥，宣城還見杜鵑花。一叫一回腸一斷，三春三月憶三巴。”太白暮年旅居宣城，見杜鵑花開，想起傳說中蜀帝死後化成杜鵑鳥，子規啼血，鄉愁油然而生。詩中的“一”和“三”字各自重複兩次，有如哀鳴不絕，纏綿悱惻。杜甫不讓詩仙專美，《絕句》每句嵌入一個數字：“兩個黃鸝鳴翠柳，一行白鷺上青天。窗含西嶺千秋雪，門泊東吳萬里船。”詩中妙用“一”、“兩”、“千”、“萬”四個數字，描寫鸛鳴柳間、白鷺在天、西山映雪、門泊舫艫的景致，有動有靜，聲色並茂。

宋人邵雍精研易經象數，對數字特別敏感，其《山村詠懷》饒富妙趣：“一去二三里，煙村四五家。亭臺六七座，八九十枝花。”除數詞外，全詩只有十字，便足以勾勒出山村野趣。吳承恩《西遊記》第三十六回的數詩則字數較多，畫面亦更豐富。詩中倒序嵌入十至一之數：“十里長亭無客走，九重天上現星辰。八河船隻皆收港，七千州縣盡關門。六宮五府回官宰，四海三江罷釣綸。兩座樓頭鐘鼓響，一輪明月滿乾坤。”這首數詩雖然無關情節，但奇巧中不失氣韻靈動，果然是高手之作。

清人鄭板橋的《詠雪》亦是傳誦極廣的數詩。相傳鄭板橋到揚州訪友，途中遇上數名書生對雪吟詩。諸生見他一身麻衣粗布，便出言不遜。鄭板橋順口吟道：“一片兩片三四片，五六七八九十片。千片萬片無數片，飛入梅花都不見。”詩人賞雪，一片一片數算雪花，由一到十，以至數之不盡，隨後詩鋒一轉，將雪花幻化成梅花。全詩不着一“雪”字，盡得風流，言雖簡而意無窮。諸生聽罷，嘖嘖稱奇，方知人不可以貌相。

文學與算術看似風馬牛不相及，卻有詩人數字邏輯特別強，作品包含加減運算。例如白居易有《自誨》詩，其中“人生百歲七十稀，設使與汝七十期。汝今年已四十四，卻後二十六年能幾時。汝不思二十五六年來事，疾速倏忽如一寐”數句，自忖行年四十四，設想壽數七十，屈指算來，驚覺人生只剩二十六個寒暑。光陰似箭，人生若夢，詩人感悟到自己更應樂天曠達，悠然自適。

更有趣的是，有人別出心裁，以算術入詩，寓數理於詩文。清代《古今圖書集成》收錄了不少數謎詩，當中以《以碗知僧歌》最為家喻戶曉。詩云：“巍巍古寺在山中，不知寺內幾多僧？三百六十四隻碗，恰合用盡不差爭，三人共餐一碗飯，四人共嘗一碗羹，請問高明能算者，算來寺內幾多僧？”寺僧用餐，僧多碗少，只好三人一碗飯，四人一碗羹，剛好用盡三百六十四隻碗，寺僧有多少人？若用代數方程式計算，應可輕易解謎，讀者不妨一試（答案見頁底）。數謎詩將刻板枯燥的數學運算，變成開動腦筋的謎語題，也可算是寓教於樂了。

數字看似是平淡不過的書寫符號，但在匠心之下，可以淬鍊成飛瀑千尺、雪花萬片，甚或待解之謎，讓人馳騁其中，感受無盡詩意與韻趣。

行百里者半九十。

《戰國策·秦策五》

丁巳十二月：端陽



100 and Beyond

While one and a hundred have a huge difference in quantity, the words “one” and “hundred” often go hand in hand in idioms or fixed expressions. **A hundred to one** describes things with a low probability of happening: *There is a hundred to one chance of rain today.* As an idiom, **a hundred and one** means very many. In these expressions, the word “hundred” is interchangeable with “thousand” or “million”.

It is perplexing that **101** (pronounced “**one-oh-one**”) and a hundred and one are not synonymous. In the United States, college course codes are usually expressed in three-digit numbers, with the first denoting the year of study and the last the sequence of classes. Introductory courses are therefore designated a code number 101. Nowadays the number is no longer confined to a college setting but widely used in an extended sense. When placed after a noun, 101 refers to the basic facts or knowledge of something: *To avoid colour distortion, washing light and dark clothes separately is laundry 101.*

Geometry 101: a semicircle measures 180 degrees, and a full circle is 360 degrees. The distinction between 180 and 360 in language usage is, however, easy to overlook. In a figurative sense, **doing a 180** (or **doing a one-eighty**) means a complete reversal in views, attitudes or positions: *The committee members were in favour of the motion, but they went on to do a 180 and*

voted against it. But **doing a 360** (or **doing a three-sixty**) simply means making a 360-degree spin: *My car slid, did a 360, and eventually came to a stop.*

As an adjective, **360-degree** carries the figurative meaning of “comprehensive”: *The deadline for this 360-degree report falls on the coming weekend.*

Despite the seemingly straightforward expressions with numbers, making an educated guess is easier said than done. While **a hundred per cent** is another expression of “absolutely”, it also means healthy and fully fit: *She did not feel a hundred per cent.* In mathematics, 100% and 110% are two different percentages, but, in English usage, the expressions **give a hundred per cent** and **give 110 per cent** both convey the meaning of making the fullest efforts.

Given this line of thought, it is tempting to presume that **keep it 100** is a proverb encouraging one to make the best efforts or stay in good shape. The real meaning, however, is staying true to oneself or behaving honestly and sincerely. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, this colloquial expression is probably the shortened version of “keep it 100 per cent real”. Despite its increasing popularity in recent years, it was not entered into the *OED* until 2024.



百 里 之 才

古代一縣轄地約百里，故“百里”是“縣”的代稱，亦可借指“縣令”。從字面來看，“百里之才”指管治一縣的人才。要理解這個成語的真正涵義，得從東漢末年的龐統說起。

龐統，字士元，時人譽為“鳳雛”，與“卧龍先生”諸葛亮齊名。劉備紆尊降貴，三顧草廬，請諸葛亮出山，龐統卻沒有這樣的待遇。《三國志·蜀志·龐統傳》記載，龐統投奔劉備後，派往耒陽當縣令，因政績不彰而被免職。東吳謀士魯肅寫信給劉備代為說項：“龐士元非百里才也，使處治中、別駕之任，始當展其驥足耳。”意思是，龐統的能力不在於管治小地方，派他擔任治中、別駕等要職，才華方能施展。劉備召見龐統，詳談後才發現他是了不起的人才，於是授以治中從事之職。後來劉備聽從龐統之計，奪得益州，為蜀漢打下穩固根基。

歷代文人以“百里才”為喻，慨歎懷才不遇或大材小用。唐代詩人孟郊在《贈萬年陸郎中》一詩，就以“誰言百里才，終作橫天梁”勉勵友人。現在，“百里之才”除了指人才，也有人用來形容能力平平的人；是否帶有貶意，視乎上文下理而定。

百 不 一 貸

“百不一遇”指一百次中遇不到一次，意即極為難得。“百不一失”指毫無差錯，沒有一次失誤。以此類推，“百不一貸”應指愛財如命，不論是誰來借錢，一律回絕。可是，中文博大精深，望文往往不能生義。

“貸”令人聯想到“貸款”、“借貸”等詞彙。其實，“貸”是個多義字，除與金錢有關的字義外，還可以指“推卸”、“寬恕”和“赦免”。“百不一貸”典出《新唐書·酷吏傳》，主角是遺臭萬年的酷吏和中國唯一女帝，裏面的“貸”是“寬法免刑”的意思。

來俊臣本是賭徒之子，因誣告李唐宗室獲武則天賞識，授以彈劾朝臣之職。他發明各種刑具和酷刑，甚至撰寫《羅織經》，講解如何構陷罪名，製造冤獄。武則天特設監獄，專供來俊臣審案，下獄者“百不一貸”，無一能獲寬免刑罰。據《新唐書》所載，不少朝臣宗室遭羅織罪名枉死，株連所及達千餘族。武氏諸王和太平公主屢次被來俊臣指摘，於是先下手為強，告發來俊臣有謀逆之心。武則天終於無法袒護，下詔把這個惡貫滿盈的酷吏斬於西市。



Love in 100 Words



“What kind of love story can you share in two tweets, an Instagram caption or a Facebook post?”

This is a challenge posed in *Tiny Love Stories*, a column of *The New York Times*. The rules are simple: the story must be true and within 100 words. Since its launch in late 2018, the column has drawn a wide readership and an avalanche of submissions. Subsequently, 175 submissions handpicked by Daniel Jones and Miya Lee were compiled into a book titled *Tiny Love Stories: True Tales of Love in 100 Words or Less* for publication in 2021.

While love manifests in many varied forms, romantic love is often the first that comes to people’s mind. Romance is the dominant theme of the book, but it is not a monotonous read. Each short story is beautifully written with a warm, personal touch, exploring and recording love from a different perspective.

Marriage life is akin to international affairs: trivial matters could easily escalate into major conflicts. Mary Janevic’s “A Breakfast Betrayed”, an anecdote that happened only weeks after she got married, sheds light on how to manage marriage. Janevic left for work after using up the milk without leaving any for her husband. Upon her return from work, she found a bowl on the table. The ceramic bowl, filled with milk-less cereal, sported a handwritten label: “A Breakfast Betrayed. 1993. Wheat on ceramic.” Treating domestic annoyances like this with humour and fun, according to the storyteller, ensured the long-lasting love in their 25-year marriage.

Romance is not a privilege for the young. In “Our Ages Added Up Perfectly” by Sharon Fratepietro, she remembers the anxiety of falling in love at the age of 48. To her relief, all doubts were dispelled when her love interest, a 52-year-old mathematics professor, told her, “I thought 52 and 48 make 100.”

Not all contributors tell happily-ever-after stories. In “I Didn’t Run”, Susan Purvis recalls her relationship with David, which began when he offered her his cupped palms and said, “It’s all yours. My heart.” He was then diagnosed with cancer, but they decided to tie the knot. Their story came to an end 22 months after they first met. Purvis recounted the loss of her husband: “I stood at the river, cupping my palms with ashes, and let go.” In just 100 words, Purvis portrays a bittersweet love that both wrenches and warms the heart, reminding readers that love can outlive mortality.

Familial love is another recurring theme of the book, which revolves around parents and grandparents with dementia. Patients may become incapable of caring for themselves, but their ability

and desire to express love remain strong. Drew Hasson’s father kept in his drawer a large stack of notecards showing the same thing: Drew’s name. Bella O’Connor’s grandfather barged into the bathroom only to share with his piano-loving little one a news article about robotic hands playing the instrument. Julia Camp’s grandmother kept pushing away a blanket while shivering from cold but never forgot to wrap it around her grandchild. “Even with everything taken from her,” writes Camp, “she found something to give.” In spite of the doom and gloom, there is at least an ounce of comfort in these stories: while memories may fade, love remains.

Submitted by contributors of every age, the stories are not only a condensed account of love, but also a reflection of our contemporary lives. One thing rings true in the book: technological advancement does not necessarily translate into closer connections between people. Iris Shur, an old lady who does not text or tweet, describes receiving the first-ever phone call from her 14-year-old granddaughter as “unexpected but so welcome”. The title of her contribution, “Call Your Grandmother”, is as direct as it can get.

Julia DiGeronimo’s rib-cracking account of her brief venture into dating apps is both amusing and, in a way, inspiring. She was in a flutter of excitement to receive a message “Heyy”. Was the guy she was texting about to confess his love? Before she could figure out an appropriate response, a second message arrived: “Sorry, didn’t mean the extra ‘y’.” For those unfamiliar with cyber language, “Hey” is a simple greeting. “Heyy”, on the other hand, expresses interest and excitement. The moral of the story lies in the importance of proofreading! To avoid confusion, embarrassment and false expectation, we should always remind ourselves to read the text twice before hitting the send button.

In a Q&A session on Reddit, Daniel Jones explained what separated stories from those he eventually chose to print. “Is the writer able to elevate the story, make sense of it in a way that’s revelatory or even half-revelatory?” This piece of writing advice is also useful for our lives. Pondering on those trivial moments of life, we may somehow find someone or something to cherish and remember. A life well lived, after all, is a life well thought.

If you set out to do a good deed, you may do a hundred small kindnesses on the way.

Sarah Doudney

百年樹人

民國時代，內憂外患接踵而至，黑暗中卻有羣星閃耀，眾多教育家為國儲才，鞠躬盡瘁。當中最具代表意義的人物，是同樣享有“永遠的校長”美譽的蔡元培和梅貽琦。

北京大學前身是京師大學堂，學生多為做官求財而來，無求學之心。一九一六年，蔡元培接任校長，整頓歪風。蔡先生就任時向師生發表演說，提出三個要求：抱定宗旨、砥礪德行、敬愛師友。這三點是他對師生的期望，也是他一生守持的信念。



蔡元培“循思想自由原則，取兼容並包主義”主持校政。這種“思想自由、兼容並包”的精神，從他親聘的教員可見一斑：陳獨秀提倡民主科學，認為馬克思主義是救國唯一出路；辜鴻銘堅守傳統，主張恢復帝制；胡適建議全盤西化，擁抱西方文明。只要有真才實學，不問出身，不計資歷，不論年紀，都可加入北大，自由表達學術主張。在蔡先生領導下，北大百花齊放，成為新文化運動的策源地、思想學術的殿堂。

在那個風雨如晦的年代，蔡元培訓示學生“讀書不忘救國，救國不忘讀書”。蔡先生認為，學生不應閉門造車，但是“在學校裏面，應以求學為最大目的”。學生高昂的愛國熱情令他感動，但他亦告誡學生不要因政治犧牲學業。一九一九年五月四日，學生遊行抗議，反對政府在喪權辱國的“巴黎和約”上簽字。蔡先生不但沒有遵照教育部的訓令開除參加遊行的學生，還連夜奔走，營救了三十二名被捕學生。蔡先生帶領全校師生在校園迎接獲釋的北大學生，兩天後辭職。

蔡元培以宏大的胸襟、遠大的眼光改革校政，使北大從衙門式的舊學堂，變成真正的學府。後來蔡先生擔任大學院院長，全力支持蕭友梅創辦國立音樂院（現為上海音樂學院），又在西湖邊設立國立藝術院（現為中國美術學院），實踐“以美育代宗教”的理念，填補藝術教育的空白。一九四零年，蔡先生在香港病逝，長眠香港仔華人永遠墳場。

自辛亥革命以來，清華大學長期動蕩不安，二十年內十易校長。一九三一年，清華終於迎來梅貽琦，開啓輝煌年代。梅先生在就任演說中留下一句擲地有聲的名言：“所謂大學者，非謂有大樓之謂也，有大師之謂也。”在他眼中，大學能成為學術殿堂，關鍵在於有學問高深的老師。

平津淪陷後，清華大學、北京大學、南開大學一同南遷，組成臨時大學，不久再西遷昆明，定名為國立西南聯合大學。北大南開校長另有事務，長期不在昆明，日常校務由梅貽琦一力承擔。三大學府校風各異，學生比例不同，難免會有紛爭。梅先生持廉守正，維持各方人事平衡，兼顧三校利益，即使偶有爭執，始終以大局為重。西南聯大雲集陳寅恪、錢穆、華羅庚、陳省身等大師，培育出諾貝爾獎得主、“兩彈一星”元勳，以及百多位兩院院士。戰火中縱然物資極度匱乏，西南聯大仍能欣欣向榮，正好證明梅先生的真知灼見。

梅貽琦正直無私，安貧樂道。每年招生，遇有顯貴上門為子女說項，請予通融錄取，梅先生總是一一婉拒。即使自己的小女兒沒考上，這個剛正的父親也絕不徇私。抗戰中期物價飛漲，梅夫人曾擺地攤、賣糕點以幫補家計；兒子跑警報弄丟眼鏡，亦無餘錢另配；家中留客吃飯，要典當衣物才有錢加菜。儘管手頭拮据，梅先生仍不斷濟助有困難的師生。梅先生為清華奉獻一生，數十年來生活窘迫，始終不改其志。一九六二年，梅先生在台北病故後，人們發現病床下有一皮包，內有庚子退款基金的帳簿，當中帳目清晰，分毫不爽。梅先生留得清白在人間，在生命最後一刻，念茲在茲者，還是清華。



蔡元培說：“教育者，非為已往，非為現在，而專為將來。”梅貽琦則以游魚為喻，說老師如大魚前導，學生如小魚尾隨。智者之言，放諸今日仍是振聵發聵。兩位校長言傳身教，在破碎山河中延續薪火，猶如綿綿春雨，潤物無聲。

一日不作，百日不食。

《史記·趙世家》



100 Maps That Changed the World

For most people, maps are nothing more than direction guides and navigation tools. But for history aficionados, maps can reflect, reinforce and reshape contemporary views and ideas, bringing big changes to our world. It is this argument that Jeremy Harwood interrogates in his fascinating book *To the Ends of the Earth: 100 Maps That Changed the World*.

Deeply inspired by the wonders of nature, our ancestors expressed through maps their imagination and fascination about the origin and nature of the universe. Let's take a look at [the Babylonian Map of the World](#), one of the earliest surviving maps. Inscribed on a clay tablet from as early as 2 800 years ago, the map depicts ancient Mesopotamia as a disc floating on an ocean. The city of Babylon is represented by a rectangle near the centre of the disc. The outer islands marked as triangles outside the disc were believed to be beyond human reach. The cuneiform inscriptions on the back of the tablet reveal that they were "islands of transition". Based on key phrases like "perpetual darkness", "brighter than sunset or stars" and "horned bull", we can conclude that the map undoubtedly captures the cosmological views and religious beliefs of the Babylonians.

Such a linkage between cosmology and cartography is far from unique in ancient civilisations. The ancient Egyptians applied their cartographic skills to portray mythical worlds and produce lavish maps on sarcophagi. According to [the Book of the Dead](#), it is of paramount importance that the deceased follow the right path to resurrection. Elaborate routes painted on coffins would therefore navigate the dead to the underworld to appear before Osiris, the god of the afterlife, to gain a chance of rebirth in the next life.

In addition to conveying cosmological views, maps can disperse knowledge and provide a representation of the world. A notable example is the largest extant medieval map, [the Hereford Mappa Mundi](#) created in England circa 1300. Drawn on a single sheet of vellum some 130 cm in diameter, the map provides information on locations of cities and towns such as Rome and Hereford, and also presents a kaleidoscope of Bible stories, myths, legends, as well as strange beasts and peoples of the world. For instance, there is a clear passage through the Red Sea shown on the map, telling the Bible story of the Exodus of the Israelites to the Promised Land after 400 years of slavery in Egypt. A cartographic masterpiece in all times, this map shows the history, geography and destiny of humanity as it was understood in Europe at the turn of the 14th century.

During the Age of Discovery of the 15th and 16th centuries, maps recorded explorations and discoveries of new lands by adventurers and seafarers. They expanded the world on one hand and contracted it on the other by making faraway lands seem more accessible. In 1502, an Italian agent in Lisbon called Alberto Cantino paid a cartographer to copy a map from the Portuguese hydrographical office, and secretly brought it back to Italy. [The Cantino Planisphere](#), the smuggled chart, presented an informative and up-to-date report on all the Portuguese discoveries, depicting the coasts of South America, Africa and India with awesome accuracy. It was jaw-dropping, given that Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope only in 1497 on his historic voyage to India. This world map helped convince those in power in Lisbon that it was feasible to claim the newly found lands, ushering in the further explorations of trading routes that ultimately led to Macao in 1513.

Maps are not always as objective as they appear. When used for propaganda purposes, they can be manipulated to influence or shape people's views. [The Christian Knight World Map](#) created by the Protestant Dutch mapmaker Jodocus Hondius in around 1596 provides a classic example of cartographic propaganda. Made in the middle of the Eighty Years War when the Protestant Netherlands was fighting Catholic Spain for independence, the map depicts an allegorical scene at the bottom where an armoured Protestant knight fights evils like vanity, sin and death, all symbolically associated with Catholicism and Spanish adversaries at that time. It is also believed that the face of the knight was drawn to resemble the king of France, an ally of the Protestants.

While these examples show the use of maps to reflect cosmological and world views, disseminate knowledge and advance territorial claims, there are other instances that maps have been used for the betterment of society. For example, the British social reformer Charles Booth pioneered in commissioning [maps](#) to chart poverty and wealth in late 19th century London. The findings were by any measure appalling: 35 per cent of Londoners were living in poverty. Surprised by the severity of poverty, he became a strong advocate of state pensions for the elderly, which eventually came into effect in 1909.

The assertion that the 100 maps in Harwood's book changed the world is open to debate. Yet, maps indeed open windows into the past and provide the instruments for understanding the present, allowing exploration in the uncharted territories of tomorrow.

A fool may throw a stone into a well which a hundred wise men cannot pull out.

George Herbert



百期餘韻



《文訊》自二零零零年創刊以來，一直致力向公務員同事推廣語文知識，介紹中外歷史文化。今期是第一百期，讓我們重溫舊文，細味餘韻，藉以下問題，一同回顧《文訊》二十五年來的足跡。

1. 第七期“典問”的主角是哪位一代明君？
2. 第十六期“書海拾貝”提及哪項世界文化遺產？
3. 第二十六期“Word for Word”提及莎士比亞哪部作品？
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5. 第四十九期“Kaleidoscope of Ideas”講述哪種海洋生物的生死故事？
6. 第五十七期“采風”提及以大文豪命名的菜餚，這道菜叫什麼？
7. 第六十四期“Bookworm”介紹海明威的回憶錄，提到塞納河左岸一家書店。這家書店叫什麼？
8. 第七十一期“Cultural Arena”介紹威尼斯哪個地標？
9. 第八十三期“牛刀小試”第七題的答案是什麼？
10. 第九十三期“語林”介紹中秋節哪個習俗？

請在二零二五年八月二十八日前，把答案連同個人資料傳真至 2521 8772 或電郵至 csbolrs@csb.gov.hk。答對問題者可獲書券一張，名額十個。答案及得獎者名單將於下期公布（答案以《文訊》公布者為準）。

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