

文訊

WORD POWER

第一百零一期（二零二五年十月）：和平何價
Issue No.101 (October 2025): Peace at a Price

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES DIVISION, CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

碧血蒼穹

一九三一年九月十八日北大營響起炮聲，揭開十四年抗戰的序幕。瀋陽一夜城陷。短短五個月內，日軍便佔領了東北三省。

大片國土淪喪，激起全國反日浪潮。中華兒女敵愾同仇，紛紛獻身救國，例如北平師範大學學生張光明滿懷報國之志，瞞着父母轉投杭州笕橋中央航空學校，畢業後加入空軍行列，無役不與。紐約唐餐館老闆楊仲安受“捨航空無以救國”的口號感召，毅然遠涉重洋，回國考入中央航空學校成為飛行員，立下赫赫戰功。

我國空軍尚在襁褓之中，日本早已躋身軍事強國之列。縱然實力懸殊，勇士但憑一腔熱血，不顧生死，與敵人周旋到底。航校校園內有旗座，刻着“我們的身體飛機和炸彈，當與敵人兵艦陣地同歸於盡”這句悲壯之言，與空軍信條第一條“風雲際會壯士飛，誓死報國不生還”一樣，都是中國空軍精神的源泉。

飛將軍九霄殺敵，捨身成仁，最壯烈者，當屬閻海文和陳懷民。一九三七年淞滬會戰爆發，二十一歲的閻海文轟炸日軍司令部後返航，座機被高射炮擊中着火，被迫棄機跳傘，不幸因風向改變而陷入敵陣。他寧死不降，拔出配槍擊斃數名敵兵，喊出“中國無被俘空軍”後飲彈殉國。日軍將領深佩其勇，下令禮葬。翌年武漢空戰中，陳懷民被五架日機包圍，油箱中彈，操縱失靈。他本可跳傘逃生，卻調頭撞向敵機，結果雙雙墜落長江，一如航校旗座標語所言，與敵人同歸於盡。

抗戰十四年，因保家衛國而陣亡的空軍飛行員共四千三百多名。人稱“四大金剛”的第一代王牌飛行員高志航、劉粹剛、樂以琴、李桂丹，七七事變後不足一年便相繼犧牲。最年長的高志航得年三十，其餘三人不過二十三、四歲。這些英烈為國捐軀時，正值人

生的金色年華。青春生命如煙火迸發，倏然而逝，教人扼腕歎息，至親家人的痛悲更是無法言喻。有人萬念俱灰，自殺殉情，也有人走出傷痛，讓逝者遺愛人間，將國仇家恨昇華為不分國界的大愛。

四大金剛中的劉粹剛與妻子許希麟鵲橋情深。他大概料到妻子無法承受喪夫之痛，所以在信中勸解她切勿因自己陣亡而“犧牲一切”。許希麟得悉丈夫遇難後一度輕生，幸而獲救。後來她在《念粹剛》一文道出萬千烈士遺孀的心聲：“在你固是求仁得仁，已盡了軍人天職，可是我，正日月茫茫，又不知若何度此年華！”可幸她終能振作，為空軍子弟開辦粹剛小學，替亡夫圓了“退休後以餘力辦學”的心願。

軍國主義者窮兵黷武，中日兩國人民同受失去至親之苦。前文提到的陳懷民與敵人同歸於盡後，人們在敵機殘骸中發現日本飛行員妻子的家書，滿紙哀怨與恐懼。陳懷民之妹陳難讀後不禁流下同情淚，仇恨一掃而空。陳難寫信給這位叫美惠子的遺孀，向同受苦難的人表達善意：“我家裏的父母和大哥都非常深切地關懷你，像關懷他們自己的兒女兄妹一般，不帶一點怨恨。我盼望有一天讓我們的雙手互相友愛地握着，心和心相印着……我們有理由為這個信念而努力，使我們的心靈永遠地合在一起。祝你為全世界的和平而奮鬥！”這封信無法送達，陳難卻一直沒有放棄，五十二年後終於找到收信人。美惠子得悉陳難為要找到她堅持了半個世紀，感動不已，泣不成聲。這個傳達愛與和平的尋人故事從青絲到白頭，終於迎來尚算圓滿的結局。

貪婪、恐懼、仇恨、虛榮驅使當權者發動戰爭，數千年來干戈從未止息。戰火無情，但捨生取義的空中勇士、以德報怨的烈士遺屬在黑暗中點起星火，閃耀人間大愛，帶來和平的信念和希望。



長安的蒲桃



“強漢盛唐”，中國歷史上軍事力量最強大的兩個朝代，也是開疆拓土的時代。“萬國衣冠拜冕旒”的背後，卻是流離失所，戰火烽煙。詩人如何把眼前生靈塗炭的情景化為擲地有聲的詩句？

漢樂府素以質樸自然著稱，善用白描手法傳遞真摯動人的情感。“戰城南，死郭北，野死不葬烏可食。”《戰城南》首句直指戰爭的殘酷：陣亡的士兵無人收殮，逃不過被烏鴉啄食的悲慘命運。戰事頻仍的結果不只是屍橫遍野，更是對整個社會造成的破壞：“梁築室，何以南？何以北？禾黍不穫君何食？願為忠臣安可得？”橋上建造防禦工事，南北無法往來，道路不通，莊稼無人收割。食不果腹，要為國盡忠又談何容易。

殘酷的不單是戰事本身，還有因為長期征戍引致骨肉分離，老無所依。描寫老兵退役歸家的《十五從軍征》，讀來令人心酸。老人家“十五從軍征，八十始得歸”，當兵六十餘年，歸來已是家破人亡。昔日居處松柏成蔭，墳冢累累。“兔從狗竇入，雉從梁上飛”，庭園荒蕪，杳無人煙，老兵煮好飯菜亦無人分享。“出門東向望，淚落沾我衣。”戎馬一生，只落得晚景淒涼。

自初唐滅東突厥到晚唐黃巢之亂，兩百多年大唐烽煙不斷。天寶年間爆發的安史之亂，更令金玉其外的大唐露出其中敗絮。王昌齡《塞下曲》的“黃塵足今古，白骨亂蓬蒿”，杜甫《兵車行》的“君不見，青海頭，古來白骨無人收”，都直指亂世中人命如草芥。暴於荒野的白骨，一去不返的征夫，都是戰事連年的鐵證。

杜甫另一首名作《垂老別》寫於安史之亂，以正要踏上征途的老翁之口，道出戰爭如何慘烈。“積屍草木腥，流血川原丹”，草木散發屍臭，平原山川被鮮血染紅，觸目驚心。

白居易《新豐折臂翁》的主人翁用大石捶斷手臂，以自殘避過遠征南詔，“一肢雖廢一身全”，算是如願以償，但舊患纏身數十載，每逢風雨陰寒，便痛得無法成眠。他卻說：“痛不眠，終不悔，且喜老身今獨在。”這種喜是何等悲酸諷刺。

唐代詩人喜歡以漢朝比擬本朝，原因有二：一是大唐之前只有大漢能與之媲美。二是要批評當朝國事，只能委婉其詞，借古諷今。反對長年征戰、同情戍兵征夫的詩人，自然把漢朝的人物和典故寫進詩中，以漢代唐，發出不平之鳴。

“誓掃匈奴不顧身，五千貂錦喪胡塵”出自陳陶的《隴西行》。匈奴與漢朝交戰百餘年，到唐朝時已與中原民族融合，史冊再無“匈奴”之名。奮不顧身的漢家兵將，其實是大唐男兒。杜甫《兵車行》“邊庭流血成海水，武皇開邊意未已”一句，諷漢武帝出兵開拓邊疆，大批士卒陣亡，仍無止息之意，其實是批評唐玄宗好大喜功，為開邊而頻繁徵兵。

李頎的《古從軍行》同樣以漢家借代李唐，不同之處在於加入意味深長的典故。“聞道玉門猶被遮，應將性命逐輕車。年年戰骨埋荒外，空見蒲桃入漢家。”這段歷史與汗血寶馬引發的戰爭有關。漢軍西征大宛，因斷糧而無法攻克，將軍上書請准罷兵。漢武帝龍顏震怒，遣派使者擋住玉門關，不准撤退。士卒後無退路，只能繼續作戰。雖然漢宛之戰以大宛投降告終，但天下虛耗，數萬兵卒葬身異鄉，對大漢並無實益，只是讓長安的皇親貴胄能啖嘗西域的葡萄罷了。

詩人把征夫戍卒的血淚凝煉成詩，讓我們在千百年後仍能看到硝煙不絕的戰場，聽見黎民百姓的悲歌，更加明白和平可貴。





The Power of Words

Best remembered as a wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill is widely revered for his leadership in bringing victory to Britain over the Germans during World War II. Equally impressive, though less known, is the literary achievement of this great statesman. In 1953, Churchill was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature “for his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values”.

Churchill was well aware at a young age of the profound significance and the overwhelming impact of words, evident in his article “The Scaffolding of Rhetoric”. Written when he was just twenty-three, this essay says, “Of all the talents bestowed upon men, none is so precious as the gift of oratory. He who enjoys it wields a power more durable than that of a great king.” It was not until 10 May 1940 when Churchill succeeded Neville Chamberlain as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom that the unfolding of extraordinary events vindicated his belief in the magical power of words.

On the very same day when Churchill took the baton from Chamberlain, the Battle of France broke out. With German invasion of France and the Lower Countries, the situation for Britain had become more perilous and precarious than ever. Three days later, when the new Prime Minister gave his inaugural speech to the House of Commons, he found himself in a fragile political position: War was imminent and there was a lack of trust in his leadership. The speech he gave sought to unite the nation in preparation for war and ask for a vote of confidence in his new government.

“I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.” Churchill uttered the words that now adorn the back of £5 notes. He addressed the public’s fear of war, not through empty assurances, but by confirming and even sensationalising the challenges and difficulties to be faced by the people of Britain: “We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering.” He framed the war with Germany as a struggle for survival, and was adamant that no matter how hard and bitter the struggle would be, Britain would eventually prevail: “What is our aim? I can answer in one word: it is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.” The determination and spirit of resistance resonated across the nation and the world. The appeasement policy pursued by the British government since the rise of Hitler was finally abandoned.

Almost everything looked bleak and hopeless in early June. When France was on the brink of capitulation, the only comforting news was the successful evacuation from Dunkirk.

In his efforts to boost the popular morale, Churchill made one of his most famous wartime speeches to the House of Commons on 4 June. He struck a confident note that the British people would prove themselves once again able to defend their home, “if necessary for years, if necessary alone”. This speech ended with a sense of remarkable defiance: “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender ...” And most importantly, it reiterated an unwavering and uncompromising commitment from Britain that even if she was defeated her navy would carry on the struggle: “Our Empire beyond the seas ... would carry on the struggle, until ... the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.” His vow to fight until the end did not just buoy the spirit of the nation, but also proved crucial to securing support and assistance from the United States in early 1941, which at first doubted if the British would strike back.

When the news came through on 17 June that France had surrendered, there was an outbreak of pessimism and even defeatism across Britain. On the following day, Churchill delivered his “Finest Hour” speech to the House of Commons amid this crisis of confidence. Instead of dwelling on the colossal losses incurred in the Battle of France, he reviewed the forces currently available for home defence in a matter-of-fact manner and reassured his people: “If invasion has become more imminent, we ... have far larger and more efficient forces to meet it.” Through his classic use of powerful metaphors, he warned of the grim consequences of subjugation by the Germans, which he thought of as tantamount to sinking into “the abyss of a new Dark Age”. He ended by solemnly reminding his audience that posterity would have judgement about how well the men of this generation had done: “If the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour.’”

By delivering the most stirring words, Churchill rallied his people together to defend against invasion, boosting morale and empowering the nation to fight alone at the darkest hour. In the words of Edward Murrow, an American journalist, Churchill “mobilised the English language and sent it into battle”. This shrewd comment about the remarkable oratory of Churchill perhaps best encapsulates the amazing power of words.

Peace is not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous.

George Bernard Shaw



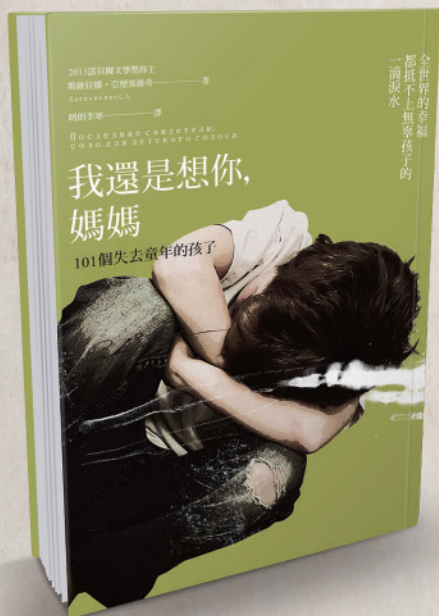
《我還是想你，媽媽： 101個失去童年的孩子》

一九四一年夏，蘇聯遭納粹德軍入侵，數千萬人傷亡，當中包括數百萬兒童。戰後出生的白俄羅斯作家亞歷塞維奇 (Svetlana Alexievich) 回首這段烽火歲月，借平民百姓之口述說歷史。她走訪蘇聯各地，花上數年時間蒐集資料，寫成《我還是想你，媽媽：101個失去童年的孩子》(Last Witnesses: Unchildlike Stories)。這部口述紀實文學作品在一九八五年出版，記述一百零一名受訪者的戰時回憶。

這些人物兒時經歷雷同，正好互相佐證，說明個人的悲劇其實是一整代兒童的集體回憶。小故事就像一片一片拼圖，拼湊成一個時代的寫照。

小孩對戰禍和死亡沒有概念。看見敵機在空中盤旋，只覺精彩，高聲歡呼，不知道危險。看見村子着火，以為是漂亮的篝火，不會想到有人家園盡毀。四歲小孩呆呆地看着牀上奄奄一息的母親，不明白她怎麼會死。十一歲的愛德華陪鄰居上街尋父，翻轉滿街躺着的死人，不當一回事。

縱使戰爭結束，活下來的人也未必得到真正的安寧。十二歲的阿尼婭從列寧格勒被圍開始經歷饑荒，那時大伙兒吃光了公園和植物園的植物，甚至要吃泥土。十多年過後，她才能走出陰影，感受到純粹來自鮮花嫩草的快樂。四十多年後，她在電視上看到饑民空洞的眼神，仍無法承受，情緒失控。戰爭創傷揮之不去，遺憾無從彌補。另一個叫季娜的受訪者已為人母，說到四十多年前空襲時失散的至親，依然無法釋懷：“我還是想念媽媽。”



十歲的薩沙家園被毀，一家人投靠游擊隊。隊員跟他聊天，問他想在路旁松樹下找到糖果、餅乾還是麪包。薩沙的答案竟是子彈。不論是大人還是小孩，對德軍同樣深惡痛絕。不過，也有些孩子跟敵人接觸後，有不一樣的感受。前面所說的愛德華逃難路上遇到德軍，要他幫忙照料傷兵。看着敵人全身打哆嗦的痛苦樣子，愛德華心情複雜，多年後仍無法說得清楚：“厭惡？不是。仇恨？也不是。那是複雜的感覺。其中也夾雜着憐憫……人類的仇恨也需要形成過程，不是從一開始就有的。”

戰爭摧毀千千萬萬家庭的幸福。家園盡失，妻離子散，使人生活在絕望之中，但平凡人捨易取難的道德抉擇，帶來一點希望。不少蘇聯人歷盡劫難，遇上德軍戰俘卻非但沒有報復，反而向弱者施以援手。戰事平息後，吃遍公園植物的阿尼婭在孤兒院生活，某天午餐後遇上一個德國戰俘。他嗅到食物的氣味，就站在她旁邊，嘴巴不由自主地在動，像是在咀嚼一樣。阿尼婭心中不忍，把一小塊餘下的麪包送了給他。往後差不多一年的時間，院裏的孩子都偷偷給這些戰俘留食物。戰爭雖奪去快樂童年，卻沒有讓他們變得猙獰可怕，失去人性最寶貴的同情心。

尤為溫暖人心的是，沒有被仇恨蒙蔽的，不止是心思單純的孩子。瓦洛佳一家都加入游擊隊，哥哥不幸犧牲。有一次瓦洛佳母親提着馬鈴薯，對討食的德國戰俘說：“不給你。說不定，就是你打死了我兒子。”她說罷就走開，但之後又折回掏出幾個馬鈴薯給對方。瓦洛佳後來才明白，這是母親給孩子愛的教育。孤兒瓦夏獲部隊收留成為下士，隨軍攻打德國。他看見好友維佳跟德國小孩玩遊戲，還把軍帽送了給對方，大怒之下，把維佳關起來。指揮官知道後把瓦夏叫來，諄諄善誘：“你們都是好孩子，不管是蘇聯或德國的孩子，誰都沒有錯，戰爭快結束了，你們要相互友好對待。”真正的和平，並非只是終止戰鬥，而是放下仇恨。

亞歷塞維奇以文學手法重現受訪者的口述內容，忠實記錄隱伏其中的細微情感，掌握時代和歷史的脈搏。她用孩子純真明淨的眼睛來看這段血淚史，將戰火的殘酷無情如實呈現。二零一五年，她榮獲諾貝爾文學獎。正如評選機構所言：“其有如複調音樂般的作品，為當代世人的苦難與勇氣樹立了碑記。”

天下大亂，無有安國，一國盡亂，無有安家，
一家皆亂，無有安身。

《呂氏春秋·有始覽·諭大》



It Won't Be Long Now

How would one react when being taken as a captive out of the blue? Graham Heywood wrote in his diary, published as a book under the title *It Won't Be Long Now* in 2015, that his feelings were more of excitement and amusement than of shock and dismay. It was the afternoon of 8 December 1941 and the Japanese Imperial Army had a few hours earlier stormed into Hong Kong. Heywood, then assistant to the Director of the Observatory, was captured by the invaders when working afield in Yuen Long. One of the very first British prisoners taken by the Japanese forces in the Pacific War, Heywood did not realise then that he would have to spend three and a half years in a prisoner of war (POW) camp in Sham Shui Po.

After going through horrific times, Heywood recorded in his diary the things that he saw and the people whom he met with appreciation and a great sense of humour. On arrival at the camp, he was overwhelmed with gratitude when a number of old Scout friends insisted on making up his everyday items and clothing out of their own slender stocks. He recalled with regard and affection, "These gifts represented a real sacrifice, for my friends only had what they had been able to carry with them ...". On a number of occasions, along with other POWs, Heywood was sent to work as a labourer to expand Kai Tak Airport. "Supposing you had a drug which would put you gently to sleep for six months," a fellow worker said in a little chat during a break one day, "would you take it?" All decided that it would be best to be conscious rather than unconscious. Heywood later amusingly wrote: "If we had known that we should not get out for nearly another three years, I feel sure we should have all voted for the drug." After all, getting more sleep is a perfect way of passing the time when in great distress.

Despite all the agonising ordeals, Heywood still managed to sarcastically quip about the *Hong Kong Daily News*, the news sheet published in English by the Japanese administration during the occupation: "We were to understand that entire American Navy had been sunk several times over; yet, curiously enough, the fighting seemed to draw nearer and nearer to Japan." It is absolutely incredible for POWs to keep a sane mind, not to mention being able to discern the ebb and flow of the war amid a mist of propaganda and disinformation.

Hope, humour and humility are the best antidotes to depression and disorientation, particularly so in POW camps.

"Most of us kept our self-respect and our sense of humour; loud bursts of laughter were frequently heard in the camp; people would break into a song, or whistle when they did their washing-up." Heywood revisited this positive mind-set, "Life was still worth living, and the future was still full of hope." The prisoners mostly knew that it was the willpower and cheerfulness that counted in their struggle for survival, for dreadful diseases and death were around the corner from the moment they entered the camp. They faced their predicament in a light-hearted manner, as exemplified by Heywood's account of studying subjects ranging from botany to psychology. For many POWs, the internment presented a golden opportunity to "pick up all sorts of curious knowledge" and meet men from different walks of life, who "had had all kinds of interesting experiences and held the most divergent opinions".

Heywood's personal reflection on his captive years provides much food for thought. While hunger and chaos would easily make one lose faith in human nature, time and again he marvelled at the fundamental kindness of his comrades. The prisoners refused to give in to the cruelties of war, and were always willing to share food and clothing with messmates, which they could ill afford. With a big chunk of life being wasted in captivity, Heywood tried to make the best of each day, and aspired to be a wiser and better man when the internment was over. Perhaps the one thing that is the most touching to contemporary readers is his simple yet profound realisation that one could do perfectly well without luxuries – that material possessions had little bearing on well-being and happiness. He reminisced about the pure joy of learning astronomy through star-gazing on "those dark evenings when no lights were allowed". There was plenty of time for self-reflection and contemplation, and many revisited their values and spent time thinking about the meaning of life. Instead of crying for the moon, one would be more grateful for the simple yet important things in life such as freedom and family love – those things that are easily overlooked and taken for granted.

Apart from being a captivating account of wartime experience, Heywood's diary stands as a timeless testament to the courage, resilience and strength of human beings in the face of unthinkable horror and evil. It teaches us that with indomitable optimism, one can shine brightly even in the abyss, and, as the tide turns, shape a better world for the next generation.



Courageous people do not fear forgiving, for the sake of peace.

Nelson Mandela

南京的活菩薩



一九三七年十一月，日軍佔領上海後，隨即向西進犯南京。十二月南京城陷，日軍四處姦淫擄掠，屠戮軍民三十萬。就在整個南京城淪為人間地獄之際，德國人約翰·拉貝秉持良知仁義，冒險營救素昧平生的中國人，為他們提供安身之所。

日軍進逼南京之前，富裕人家早已出逃，留下的都是貧苦百姓。日本海軍長官已通告各國領事將會大規模轟炸南京，要求外國人撤離。德國西門子公司南京分公司經理拉貝卻認為，一旦離開就無法維護公司的利益，而且不能撤下公司職員和家中傭僕而去，所以遲遲沒有啟程回國。

日機瘋狂轟炸，空襲無日無之。拉貝在家中院子挖了一個防空洞給職員和傭僕避難。本來只可容十二人的防空洞，後來竟擠進三十人。拉貝定下規矩，要求大家嚴格遵守：手抱嬰兒的婦女優先，坐在最安全的中間位置，然後是帶着孩子的婦女，男人只能站着或擠坐一旁。有一次，院子來了三個窮孩子想找地方躲避，拉貝把他們喊進洞裏來，安排三人坐在中間。拉貝希望防空洞裏的人都明白，在危急關頭，不論貧富，人人同樣重要。不時有婦孺拍打大門，還有男人翻過牆頭，哀求拉貝讓他們進來避難。他總是於心不忍，來者不拒。這個有“西門子難民收容所”之稱的房子，一度住了六百多人。

為向難民提供容身之所，十五名外國傳教士、大學教授、醫生和商人成立國際委員會，拉貝獲推舉為主席。經中日雙方同意，委員會劃出中立安全區，接手原先由市政府負責的市政工作，維持區內的秩序、醫療衛生和糧食供應。此時南京市長已經撤離，拉貝成了有實無名的市長。安全區佔地不到四平方公里，設有二十五個收容所，最高峯時庇蔭了二十五萬名難民。

安全區雖已正式成立，日軍指揮官卻違反承諾，任由

士兵強闖民居，姦擄燒殺。拉貝不時冒着生命危險，單憑納粹袖章，以德語高呼“德國人”，喝退殺氣騰騰的日兵，制止層出不窮的獸行。有一次，六個日兵摸黑爬牆進了拉貝的院子，他用手電筒照看其中一人的面，對方伸手準備掏槍。千鈞一髮之際，拉貝厲聲呵斥，把“卐”字袖章舉到他眼前，對方才立即把手放下。為保難民安全，拉貝經常要與日軍交涉周旋，以身犯險，卻從未後悔。他在日記寫道：“我絲毫不後悔留了下來，因為我的存在拯救了許多人的性命。”拉貝日記記錄了南京大屠殺的史實，成為日後揭露日軍暴行的重要證據。

南京淪陷後第一個新年，拉貝院子裏的難民排隊向他鞠躬致謝，獻上巨型橫幅，上有題字“濟難扶危 佛心俠骨 共祝天庥 俾爾戡穀”，“活菩薩”的稱號由此而來。拉貝以慈悲之心、仗義之舉點燃希望，以善行光照寒夜，“活菩薩”的美名，當之無愧。

一九三八年二月，拉貝收到總公司決定關閉南京分公司的消息，必須按指令前往上海。拉貝回國後不久便獲授勳章，可惜好景不常。德國戰敗後，拉貝因曾加入納粹黨而被公司投閒置散，生活艱困，三餐不繼。大善人好像沒有獲得應有的善報，但中國人從未忘記這位“活菩薩”。拉貝貧病交迫的消息傳到南京，市民立即集資二千元送給拉貝，其後每月都給他寄食物，報答當年的恩情。

一九五零年一月，拉貝鬱鬱而終。七十年後，新冠疫情爆發，藥物物資供不應求。海德堡大學醫學院托馬斯·拉貝教授致函中國駐德國大使館求助，希望代為聯絡某家中國藥廠購買藥物。藥廠得悉教授是拉貝的孫子，立即免費送上藥物，南京市政府也把籌集所得的口罩、防護服等抗疫物資，經大使館送到教授手中。“活菩薩”約翰·拉貝離世後大半個世紀，以奇妙的方式遺愛人間；這一次，受惠者是自己的同胞。

不戰而屈人之兵，善之善者也。

《孫子兵法·謀攻》



Peace and War: From Symbols to Words



How do ordinary things emerge as symbols of peace and war? Tracing their origins shows us that quite a few phrases or idioms we use have roots embedded in biblical history or the traditions of Native Americans.

Olive branch and dove

In the Book of Genesis, God purged the world with a catastrophic flood after being disillusioned with humanity's corruption. The only righteous man, Noah was spared and told to make an ark for escape. While adrift on the Ark after the flood, Noah saw a dove fly back with a freshly plucked olive leaf in its beak. Only then did he realise that the Ark was about to reach dry land and that the flood water, like God's wrath, was finally abating. The dove was akin to a messenger of peace, with the olive leaf bringing hope.

An olive branch figuratively signifies peace or goodwill. **Extending an olive branch** means proposing peace or reconciliation with somebody.

Since the 1960s, the word "**doves**" has taken on a new meaning in the context of politics, sometimes used to refer to those believing in resolving conflicts through peaceful means. It is used in contrast to the word "**hawks**", which denotes people who believe in using force to achieve an end.

Sword and ploughshare

Originating from the Bible, the phrase "**beating swords into ploughshares**" was an imagery used by the prophet Isaiah to urge people to end wars and make peace. The word "**ploughshare**" refers to the broad metal blade of a plough, a tool used to loosen

soil. Though both are made of steel, swords and ploughs are tools for taking lives and growing crops respectively, therefore symbolising war and peace.

Over time, this imagery has evolved into an idiom connoting any efforts to stop conflict and to use the resources for warfare to improve people's lives.

Hatchet and peace pipe

The 17th and 18th centuries were a time of conflict between the indigenous people of North America and European settlers. Back then, it was customary for them to seal peace with adversaries by means of a ceremonial act: Both sides put a hatchet into the ground to signify the end of fighting. While hatchets are obsolete in modern warfare, the idiom "**bury the hatchet**" is still in use, meaning "restoring a relationship after a quarrel". Sometimes, peace might be short-lived, leaving people with no choice but to pick up their weapons again. The idiom "**dig up the hatchet**" means "to renew hostilities". In these expressions, the word "**hatchet**" is interchangeable with "**tomahawk**", which is an iconic stone-headed axe of the Algonquin people, who live in the eastern parts of Canada and the United States.

During treaty signings or peace talks, some of these indigenous tribes would bring along a calumet, a ceremonial pipe finely decorated with feathers. Also known as a **peace pipe** (or **pipe of peace**) by Europeans, it would be used in sacred rituals to communicate with the Great Spirit. Today, the object has given birth to a common phrase that indicates an intention to end disputes.



止戈為武

《說文解字》把漢字造字規律歸納為“六書”，其一為“會意”。“武”這個會意字由“止”和“戈”兩部分組成。“止戈為武”最早見於春秋時期，後世辭書大多解釋為“能止息干戈，才是真正的武功”。這個解讀真的正確嗎？

《左傳·宣公十二年》記載，楚軍在鄧地大敗晉軍後，楚國大夫潘黨向楚莊王進言，建議修建京觀（收集戰死的敵兵堆成高塚），讓子孫銘記先祖的功業。楚莊王答說：“夫文，止戈為武。”他又說“武有七德，我無一焉”，因此不能建京觀以垂後人。

楚莊王的霸業雖已湮沒在歷史長河之中，“止戈為武”卻流傳下來成為成語。《說文解字》解釋“武”的字義時，也援引楚莊王的典故：“夫武，定功戢兵，故止戈為武。”不過，後世學者認為“武”的本義並非指止息戰事，論據在於“止”

字除了“停息”這個引申義之外，還有其他含義。

“止”甲骨文作，象腳之形，本義是人足，引申出走路行進之義，本身沒有停止的意思。包含“止”的漢字，本義大多與腳或行動有關。例如“此”的本義是腳踩，“正”是朝着城邑進發，“歷”是踏田巡視禾苗，“涉”是步行過水。足不動就是靜止，因此“止”再引申包含“停止”之義。先秦之後，“止”加上部首“足”分化成“趾”字，專用作表達“腳”的意思，與引申義“停止”區分。

仔細梳理“止”字的源流，就會明白在楚莊王的年代，“止戈”的意思是“持戈行進”，是征伐示威而非止息干戈之象。後世把“止戈”解讀為放下武器，停止戰爭，雖說是望文生義，卻反映古人對仁義的追求，對和平的嚮往，也是人類宿願所在。



WHEN WORDS FAIL

As Elton John's song goes, "Sorry seems to be the hardest word." Indeed, it takes immense courage to ask for forgiveness, and sometimes it may not be simply about uttering the word "sorry". Read the following passage to see how a kneeling man laid the foundation for European peace. Fill in the blanks with words that best complete the sentences. Some letters have been given.

It was a frosty morning on 7 December 1970 when a (1) c _ _ _ _ m _ _ _ _ _ e ceremony was held at the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw, Poland. A wreath was laid on the ground as a homage to the (2) f _ _ _ e _ . In this it was no different from many other similar occasions. Wearing a (3) _ _ _ _ m _ expression, a man in his long coat slowly came forward, and straightened the wreath ribbons, revealing their (4) _ _ _ _ _ , red and gold stripes.

The man took a few steps back. Remaining silent, he abruptly sank onto his knees, with his head slightly tipping forward and his hands (5) c _ _ _ p _ _ together in show of respect. For half a minute, he retained his kneeling posture on the wet stone platform. Press photographers wasted no time in capturing the (6) i _ _ _ _ c moment: Willy Brandt, the Chancellor of West Germany, knelt down to express sorrow for millions of Jewish victims murdered by Nazi Germany during World War II. Such an act of humility from a (7) _ _ _ _ of state was unheard of and (8) u _ p _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ d.

At a time when (9) d _ _ _ _ _ of culpability was prevalent in post-war Germany, Brandt's silent repentance spoke (10) v _ l _ _ _ s. It indicated not only remorse but also a plea for forgiveness. Instead of (11) d _ _ _ _ _ _ m _ _ _ _ the past, he was empathetic toward those who suffered in agony at the hands of Nazi Germany. In 1971, Brandt was awarded the Nobel Prize in Peace for his effort to achieve (12) r _ c _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ n between West Germany and Eastern Europe.

Years later, reflecting on the Warsaw kneeling, Brandt simply wrote in his memoirs, "I did what people do when words fail."

Please send your entry by fax (2521 8772) or email (csbolrs@csb.gov.hk) to the Editorial Board of *Word Power* by **27 November 2025**. Watch out for our coming issue to see if you get all the answers right, and better still, if you are one of the lucky ten to win a prize. The Editorial Board will have the final say on the answers.

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (delete as appropriate) _____

Department: _____ Post: _____

Tel. No.: _____ Email: _____



第一百期答案

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. 唐太宗李世民 | 6. 東坡肉 |
| 2. 蘇州園林 | 7. Shakespeare & Co. |
| 3. 《哈姆雷特》(Hamlet) | 8. 歎息橋 (The Bridge of Sighs) |
| 4. 余光中/余秋雨 | 9. 聰明伶俐 |
| 5. 鯨魚 | 10. 猜燈謎 |

以下得獎者將獲電郵通知領獎：

姓名	所屬部門	姓名	所屬部門
李娜	衛生署	陳德新	土木工程拓展署
林小楚	社會福利署	鄧景豪	衛生署
周志偉	香港警務處	羅劍雯	選舉事務處
邱鎔盈	水務署	Chen Yuen-choi	食物環境衛生署
陳嘉祺	衛生署	Wong Man-kei	香港警務處

二零二六年一月第一百零二期主題：似水流年

Issue No. 102 (January 2026) : As Time Goes By

二零二六年四月第一百零三期主題：百折不回

Issue No. 103 (April 2026) : Perseverance

歡迎同事投稿，細則請按[這裏](#)。

Contributions from colleagues are welcome. Please click [here](#) for details.

中文顧問 洪若震博士 英語顧問 Prof. Grant Hamilton

Hon Chinese Adviser Dr Hung Yeuk-chun Hon English Adviser Prof. Grant Hamilton

編輯委員會

Editorial Board

主席 田繼賢先生	委員 曾文祥先生	執行編輯 吳頌祺先生
委員 何穎嫻女士	委員 黃江健先生	助理編輯 蕭銘勳先生
委員 陳秀娟女士	委員 葉穎君女士	
委員 莫思雅女士	委員 鄭世琴女士	

Chairman	Mr Tin Kai-yin	Member	Ms Jessica Ho	Executive Editor	Mr Andy Ng
Member	Miss Kathy Chan	Member	Ms Sylvia Ip	Assistant Editor	Mr Martin Siu
Member	Mr Jerry Chen	Member	Ms Jackie Mok		
Member	Ms Kam Cheng	Member	Mr Thomas Wong		

如對本刊有任何意見或建議，請寄交香港金鐘道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，或電郵至 csbolrs@csb.gov.hk。

If you have any comments or suggestions about this publication, please write to the Editorial Board of *Word Power* (Official Languages Division, Civil Service Bureau, Room 2310, High Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong or csbolrs@csb.gov.hk).