

文訊 WORD POWER

第二十四期 二零零六年六月 Issue No.24 June 2006

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES DIVISION, CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

風雨文章

天文台台長林超英

人出生之後便無可避免地活在天之下，氣之中，終身走不出這個範圍，因此與天氣有關的詞語經常出現在我們的語言裏。



林超英台長攝於天文台開放日

中國人見面閑談，叫做聊天，跟英國人碰頭往往先談天氣，有微妙的對應。

天文台曾經使用電腦化剪報服務。根據服務供應商的要求，我們指定了一些所謂關鍵詞，其中包括氣候一條，結果我們不斷收到“經濟氣候”、“政治氣候”、“社會大氣候”的無關消息，造成很大不便，最後要回復人手剪報，真是始料不及。

事實上，政局動盪，大家會說風雨飄搖，革命將臨是暴風雨前夕，改朝換代是風雲變色。十九世紀西方文化進入中國，人稱西風東漸，二十世紀東方民族崛起，則號稱東風壓倒西風，用了一個風字，意象既概括又鮮明。國家安定時期，大家覺得風調雨順，國泰民安，其實客觀的天氣依然變幻不定，只是防災能力提高而已。

在辦事機構，有人成就大事業，我們會說他風雲際會，有人製造麻煩是“攪風攪雨”，某某仕途暢順是“順風順水”，不斷猜度機構的動向意圖則是捕風捉影，有小道消息是風聲，改組裁員是地震，後者不是天氣，但卻是天文台工作的一部分。

個人生活之中，影響我們的是社會風氣和潮流，後者與潮汐起落緊密關連，而潮汐亦是由天文台預測的。我們哀傷時愁雲慘霧，盛怒時大發雷霆，破涕為笑是雨過天青，生活優悠則是“風流快活”。短短幾句，風、雨、雲、霧、雷全部登場。幸得有天氣，語言的表達才能夠如此有聲有色。

隨着歲月過去，詞語有時會多帶了一些新的意義，結果引起尷尬。每年春天的潮汐起落幅度都很大，漲盡時偶然會水淹城門河畔的單車徑和中上環交界部分地區，此之謂“春潮氾濫”，但假如用於天文台的新聞稿，恐怕大家會以為是三級電影的廣告。多年前天文台有“豪雨警告”，因為諧音成為一時笑柄，後來借機會改了。近年天氣預報員一度喜歡說“華南有一道雲雨帶”，有人指我們不知“雲雨”為何物，年輕同事知道後改用“雨雲帶”，結果因為諧音再惹訕笑。香港人的聯想能力高超得令人啼笑皆非，惟有告知同事雲是雲，雨是雨，必須分開。

天氣滲透在我們的生活之中，亦為文學提供了素材，我很喜愛一副傳統對聯：

風聲、雨聲、讀書聲，聲聲入耳；
家事、國事、天下事，事事關心。

傳統的知識分子，睿智慈悲，澄明的心靈感應着大自然的流轉動靜，關懷着人世間的波折起伏。歷來香港天文台人員以觀測風雨為職志，以減少傷亡為己任，晝夜不停，春秋不斷，默默走過的，就是一條融合天意與人情的道路。

預測風雨，除了科學計算，還有世間文章。

The God of Thunder and Lightning

Meteorologists will never fail to tell us why lightning always comes before thunder, and why the saying “lightning never strikes twice in the same place” is not true. In many cultures, people believe that their weather gods, particularly the gods of thunder and lightning, know the answers too. Zeus, the Greek god of the sky, thunder and lightning, is a good example.

Zeus' name comes from the Greek word *dios*, meaning “bright”. In Greek mythology, he had control of all the heavens. The winds were at his service; day and night took their turns, and the seasons came and went, at his command. With the thunderbolt as his distinguishing mark, Zeus also controlled thunder and lightning. In Homer's *Iliad*, he did not hesitate to call forth thunderstorms against his enemies.

Hesiod once described Zeus as “the lord of justice”. As the supreme ruler of Mount Olympus, Zeus watched over the administration of law and justice in the world of mortals. He rewarded those who were honest, faithful and kind-hearted; and punished those who were deceitful, faithless or cruel.

In art, Zeus is often depicted as bearded and middle-aged, but with a youthful figure. His image is awe-inspiring, as his pose suggests that he is about to throw his bolt of lightning — that is, to mete out punishment to any wrongdoer.



雷公電母

雷電警世懲惡、替天行道的形象，深入人心。世人常言道，死於雷擊電殛者，必是壞人無疑。人們指天起誓，也常矢言，假如言而無信，必遭天打雷劈。雷電威力之大，可以想見。

中國社會對大自然神祇的崇拜，¹始於上古。雷、電、風、雨，無不成為膜拜對象。在古代神話中，雷公和電母是一對天神，司掌天庭雷電。雷公又稱雷神，電母又名閃電之神、閃電娘娘、金光聖母。雷公之名始見於《楚辭》，古時以雷為天庭陽氣，故稱“公”。閃電之職，最初由雷公兼司，至漢代有電父之稱，而電母之說則始於唐宋。唐崔致遠《桂苑筆耕集》曰：“使電母雷公，鑿外域朝天之路”；宋蘇軾《次韻章傳道喜雨》也有“麾駕雷公訶電母”的詩句。

歷來祈求雨雪的儀式，不少都以雷公和電母作為主要啓請的神明。規模較大的道觀和廟宇，通常都會供奉雷公和電母。《山海經》多處提及雷神，稱其為“龍身而人頭，鼓其腹”。雷公神像大都狀若力士，袒胸露腹，背插雙翅，額具三目，臉赤如猴，足如鷹爪；左手執鍬，右手持鎚，作欲擊狀；自頂至旁，環懸連鼓五個，左足盤躡一鼓，擊鼓即為轟雷。電母之像則容貌端雅，兩手執鏡，目光犀利。

雷公和電母能辨人間善惡，維護公義。相傳雷公視力欠佳，黑白難辨，電母寸步不離，捧鏡為其探照，明辨是非後，雷公才行雷，兩者可謂合作無間。

¹ “祇”粵音“祈”。

There is nothing more universally commended than a fine day;
the reason is, that people can commend it without envy.

William Shenstone



五黃六月 七月流火

《西遊記》講述唐三藏師徒四人往西天取經途中，甫踏足火燄山，頓覺熱氣蒸人。該處“有八百里火燄，四周圍寸草不生”，“無春無秋，四季皆熱”，讀之已覺熱浪逼人。

形容天氣炎熱，我們會說火傘高張，典出韓愈《遊青龍寺·贈崔大補闕》一詩：“赫赫炎官張火傘”，比喻烈日炎氛四射。又如流金鑠石，或鑠石流金，鑠解作“熔化”，意謂天氣酷熱，簡直能使金子、石頭熔化。這個成語出自《楚辭·招魂》：“十日代出，流金鑠石”。近義的成語有焦金流石，金屬燒焦，石頭熔化，形容陽光酷烈。焦沙爛石則指猛烈的陽光連沙也燒焦，石也燒爛。晉朝傅玄《雜詩》“炎景時鬱蒸，海沸沙石融”，謂天熱得連海水也煮沸，沙石熔化，同樣以誇張的手法形容酷熱。

中國以農立國，天氣好壞直接影響五穀收成，五黃六月即源出農事。五黃意謂夏曆五月麥子熟黃了，泛指夏天、大熱天。諺語“六月六，曬得雞蛋熟”同樣以六月天喻

指盛夏。北方一到夏曆七月便可望炎夏將盡，故有七月流火之說。流火，星座名，每年夏曆六月出現於正南方，位置最高，七月以後便漸漸偏西向下沉落，所以叫流火，預示夏去秋來，寒天將至，《詩經·七月》便有“七月流火，九月授衣”之句。不過，香港位處亞熱帶，夏曆五月間天氣轉熱，要到九月、十月始有涼意。

除了成語諺語，漢語裏頭形容天熱的詞組不少，如暑氣蒸騰、蒸籠一般，形象生動。談到暑熱，我們會說燠熱、溽熱、悶熱、苦熱，甚至毒熱，還會用疊字加重語氣：熱呼呼、熱烘烘、熱辣辣、火辣辣、熱騰騰、熱浪滾滾、火燙火燙。酷暑盛夏，熱得難受，自然要歸咎於頭頂上的太陽，烈日當空、熾熱的太陽似乎還不足以表達心情的煩躁，於是有通紅的火球、歹毒的陽光、毒花花的太陽。夏日陽光的威力，直如烈燄，炙人、燙人、灼人、烤人，不可小覷。



風微煙淡雨蕭然 詩詞的天候意象

天候入詩，由來已久。《詩經·蒹葭》開首以“蒹葭蒼蒼，白露為霜”點明敘情的場景。風霜雨雪、霧靄煙雲，歷來都是騷人墨客喜愛吟詠的對象，戰國宋玉有《風賦》，三國謝惠連有《雪賦》。歐陽修的“柳外輕雷池上雨，雨聲滴碎荷聲”（《臨江仙》），描摹雷聲隱隱，疏雨荷承，聲聲清脆，跳脫靈動。

中國詩詞的天候意象，每多寓意。物候的變化，揭示時光流逝，容易令人聯想到人生的變幻。漢武帝《秋風辭》一開頭，就以秋風起興：“秋風起兮白雲飛，草木黃落兮雁南歸”，感嘆人生的歡樂有時而盡，誰都不能長生不老。李清照的“乍暖還寒時候，最難將息”（《聲聲慢》），表面上是說天氣冷暖無常、陰晴不定，實則觸景生情，抒發詞人晚年孤獨的愁懷。

詩詞的物候意象，以雲、雨、煙、霧最常見。雲隨風飄送，與浪迹天涯的遊子不無相似之處；李白的“浮雲遊子意，落日故人情”（《送友人》），正是由此而起。雲自在舒卷，望之使人忘卻塵俗的煩憂，王維遂有“行到水窮處，坐看雲起時”的名句。

雨在詩詞中的意象尤其突出。在詠物述懷詩中，雨滋潤萬物，為大地帶來生機，如“梅雨灑芳田”、“野舍時雨潤”。又如蘇軾的“軟草平莎過雨新，輕沙走馬路無塵”（《浣溪沙》），描繪春末夏初，一場新雨過後，芳草新綠可愛。天清氣爽，草軟路平，走馬奔行，自然十分寫意。

在詞人筆下，江南風物空靈秀逸。“杏花煙雨江南”，假如少了細細疏疏的微雨，肯定少了一份迷濛靈秀。寫江南，溫庭筠有“楊柳又如絲，驛橋春雨時”（《菩薩蠻》），皇甫松有“閑夢江南梅熟日，夜船吹笛雨瀟瀟”（《夢江南》）；韋莊的“春水碧於天，畫船聽雨眠”（《菩薩蠻·其二》），寥寥數語，寫出了愜意舒適的江南生活，意境深遠。

張志和的《漁父》是描寫江南的名作：“西塞山前白鷺飛，桃花流水鱖魚肥。青箬笠，綠蓑衣，斜風細雨不須歸”，展現一幅色彩淡雅秀逸的水彩畫卷，同時體現作者沖淡寧和的心境。色彩明麗的初春山水，再暈染上一層空濛細雨，顯得幽遠而曠淡。

賀鑄的《青玉案》，卻以江南暮春淒迷的景色：“一川煙草，滿城風絮，梅子黃時雨”，喻寫綿綿不絕的閑愁。煙籠春草，柳絮漫天飛揚，梅雨連綿不斷，三句既是比喻，又是寫景，更是抒情，表裏如一，不着痕迹，自北宋以來，深受詞家推重。

雨的意象，往往帶有個人感情色彩。羈懷詩詞中所描述的雨，有阻礙間隔的含意，象徵羈旅客愁。柳永的《八聲甘州》便是寓情於景的佳作：“對瀟瀟暮雨灑江天，一番洗清秋”，僅此一句，已將秋雨的聲勢、時間、背景勾畫別透，遼闊曠遠而又淒冷的圖景，正是遊子漂泊他鄉的內心寫照。



在惜別詩中，雨既是實景，也是詩人心境的虛景。雨中送別，更顯淒清。王維的送別名篇《渭城曲》：“渭城朝雨浥輕塵，客舍青青柳色新。勸君更盡一杯酒，西出陽關無故人”，以初春的濛濛細雨、青青柳色烘托離情，融情入景，含蓄蘊藉。

借雨寫愁的名作，還有蔣捷的《虞美人·聽雨》：“少年聽雨歌樓上，紅燭昏羅帳。壯年聽雨客舟中，江闊雲低雁斷叫西風，而今聽雨僧廬下，鬢已星星也……”。這闕詞概括了作者一生經歷的三個階段，用“聽雨”貫穿，藉着聽雨的情境，道出心中感慨，回首已蒼茫。從少年得志到老來一事無成，背後有着亡宋之痛，大自然的恆常與世事滄桑的對比，莫過於此。

同是雨景，不同的人看在眼裏，聽在耳裏，感受迥然不同。對於仕途多蹇的蘇軾來說，雨具有思想的啓示。在《定風波》一詞中，蘇軾寫眼前景，寓心中事：“莫聽穿林打葉聲，何妨吟嘯且徐行。竹杖芒鞋輕勝馬，誰怕！一蓑煙雨任平生。料峭春風吹酒醒，微冷，山頭斜照卻相迎。回首向來蕭瑟處，歸去，也無風雨也無晴”。在春寒料峭，晴雨濛濛之中，詞人悟出世事的風波，就像大自然的風風雨雨，不足繫懷，不論晴雨，一樣可以安之若素。“也無風雨也無晴”，許是歷經風雨後超脫塵俗、了無掛礙的人生境界。



人之才，譬如草木焉，雨從濡之，風從動之，則其長也。

蘇轍

Send Thou Us Some Rain

A Sketch of Rain-making Rituals

Rain. What immediately comes to your mind? Romance, interruption, or inconvenience? To those that live off the earth, rain means life. In many countries, water supply depends on showers. Without rain, vegetation withers, and animals and men languish and die.

Through the ages, humans have beseeched the heavens for rain. Praying for rain is an ancient ritual in Arabia, dating back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. In many races, magic has claimed to control the forces of nature for the good of man. The task of the tribal magician is to control the weather, and especially to regulate the heavenly water supply. His methods are generally based on the principle of imitative magic. In the Mara tribe of northern Australia, the rain-maker goes to a pool and sings his magic song over it. Then he takes some of the water in his hands, drinks it, and spits it out in various directions. After that he throws water all over himself. Rain is supposed to follow.

Rain-making rituals are by no means confined to the inhabitants of arid lands. They are, or used to be, common among folk in the moister parts of Europe. For example, in a village near Dorpat, Russia, when rain was much wanted, three men used to climb the fir trees of an old sacred grove. One of them drummed with a hammer on a kettle to imitate thunder; the second knocked two firebrands together until sparks flew to imitate lightning; and the third, who was called “the rain-maker”, had a bunch of twigs with which he sprinkled water on all sides from a vessel.

In many communities, people believe that to have wet weather, you had to get wet yourself. In other words, you have to identify with the desired phenomenon. An Armenian rain-charm is to throw the wife of a priest into the water and drench her; the Arabs of North Africa fling a holy man into a spring instead. Among the Greeks of Macedonia, when a drought has lasted a long time, it is customary to send a procession of children to all the wells and springs nearby. At the head of the procession walks a girl adorned with flowers who is drenched by her companions with water at every halting place.

Animals feature prominently in rain-making charms. In Kathmandu Valley, “sacred serpents” are regarded as the chief agents of rain. In many parts of Java, a common way of making rain is to bathe two cats, one male and one female. Sometimes the two animals are carried in procession, with music. To procure rain, the Wagogo tribe of Central Tanzania

sacrifices black fowls, black sheep, and black cattle at the graves of the ancestors. The colour of the animals is part of the charm; being black, they will darken the sky with rain-clouds.

The intimate association of frogs and toads with water has earned for them a widespread reputation as custodians of rain. Hence, they often play a part in charms designed to draw much-needed showers from the sky. To usher in good monsoon rains, villagers in many states of India hold ceremonies to “marry” two toads, which are then released into the local pond.



But what if the rain-making charms and rituals do not work? For the exasperated people, it is time to demand water from heaven by threats and curses, or even by physical force.

In the old days in China, townspeople suffering from a prolonged drought would vent their anger at Cheng Huang (城隍), their patron deity whose portfolio included rainfall and drought. They rushed to his temple, threatening to destroy his shrine and have him beheaded if he still “cut them off at the mains”. In a Japanese village, when the guardian divinity had long been deaf to the peasants’ prayers for rain, they pushed over his image and, with curses loud and long, hurled it into a stinking rice field.

Folk in Christian Europe have resorted to similar modes of procuring rain. More than a century ago, there was great distress in Sicily for lack of water. Food was becoming scarce. Seeing their pleas to the saints go unanswered, the peasants began to lose patience. Most of the saints were banished. St. Joseph was dumped in a garden; St. Angelo was put in irons, and threatened with drowning or hanging. “Rain or the rope!” roared the angry people at him.

To create rain out of nothing, a rain-maker would need to control huge amounts of energy to overcome the inertia of the stable weather systems associated with droughts. In history there has been no lack of unsuccessful cases. Today, people can resort to cloud-seeding to create or increase rain. However, the advent of science does not mean the dying out of rain-making rituals — far from it. Prayers and rituals to induce rain enter the scene whenever human control mechanisms fail. At the end of the day, these practices let people in truly desperate straits have some cause for hope, at least for a while.





這裏的天空有點藍

食物環境衛生署
一級法定語文主任伍妍臻

可曾想過，天空何以這樣藍？

從科學角度解釋，那是自然現象，跟光線散射的波幅有關。不過，我無意在此細究藍天的成因，倒有興趣知道，朝暉夕陰的萬千氣象可會牽動你我他的心情。

有人會因雷雨霏霏、霧鎖霞蔽而眉頭攏聚；也有人因冬去春來、星現雲散而笑逐顏開。天際泛藍，清風徐送，心情該是舒暢閑適，有人卻因輕風吹皺一池春水而微嗔暗怨。烏雲重壓，狂風怒號，雖說會叫人難以定下心神，卻總有人因疏雨侵鬢而浪漫之意頓生。有人愛傷春悲秋，也有人愛吟風弄月。幾許騷人墨客、痴男怨女，莫不借四時旦夕的變化，寄意傳情。春花秋月何時了？誰曉得。怕只怕朝來寒雨晚來風，任夜雨空階滴到明，到頭來只能輕嘆一句“怎一個愁字了得”。人世間的七情六慾，也往往與天象糾纏，諸如酸風醋雨、腹如雷鳴、餐風飲露、暴跳如雷、淚如雨下、談笑風生等，俯拾即是。風雲變幻，冷暖交替，是情非情，全在你我如何演繹。

天文氣象就是生活一部分，世人因天氣或悲喜，或愛恨，不同的際遇自有不同的感受。我不愛以風雨相逐霜雪滿天作引子的故事，倒愛憑窗遙看雲際雷電交迸的夜空。不愛鬧市沾染塵俗直倒橫傾的悶雷暴雨，卻愛雨後田野間泛起的蛙聲一片。曾幾何時，心裏數算着寒暑，卻不知時光早已從眼波間流逝；半生歷經天地陰晴更迭，卻不懂得如何細味雲霞幻變的絢麗多彩。多渴望能感受一下“晚來天欲雪，能飲一杯無”的情懷，偏偏兩鬢披霜仍未許如願；如或得一睹“大漠孤煙直，長河落日圓”的磅礴蒼涼，總比“卷帷望月空長嘆”好吧？最討厭是驚蟄前後水珠掛牆、陰濕冷晦的梅雨日子，那種鬱悶難抒、揮之不去的惱人感覺總是叫人難受。教人羨慕也最難得到的，可會是也無風雨也無晴？

在這欲暖還寒時節，眼前窗外的天空有點藍。藍天下，雲影斑駁，大地四周盪漾着陣陣溫軟的花香、草香、泥土香。此時此刻，與其憂戚終日，何不拈一盞香茶，輕倚半簾清風，笑看塵世間四時的變易？

寫於丙戌年暮春



天氣與戰役

天氣的影響無處不在，大風雪會令交通癱瘓，暴雨會造成水浸，甚至山泥傾瀉。有沒有想過，天氣對戰爭的成敗也有影響？

就以漢末赤壁之戰來說吧，孫權、劉備聯軍兵力僅五六萬，卻能殲滅曹操二十萬大軍，關鍵原來是一場東南大風。

話說兩軍相拒於赤壁，長江風浪不息，曹操聽信龐統之言，用連環計穩住戰船。周瑜得知消息，決定用火攻。凡用火攻，必藉風力。可是，時值冬季，江上多西北風，如用火攻，只會燒毀聯軍戰船。

據《三國演義》所載，諸葛亮精通天文，早已測知冬至前後會有一場東南大風，於是自告奮勇，要“借”東風，助周瑜一臂之力。周瑜大將黃蓋以“苦肉計”騙得曹操信任，在東南風乍起之時，率領二十隻小船，載滿裹有硫磺的乾草，直撲敵軍戰船。剎那間，江面煙火冲天。曹軍戰船用鐵環連鎖，一船着火，迅即蔓延，曹營頓成一片火海。孫劉聯軍乘勢追擊，水陸並進，曹操從華容道僥倖逃脫，二十萬大軍損失殆盡。

當然，諸葛亮是否真的神機妙算，預知天氣變化，設壇“招來”東風，抑或純屬羅貫中憑空杜撰，尚無定論，但周瑜火攻能夠大獲全勝，全仗一場東南大風，確是史實。

西方的戰役又如何？拿破崙遭遇滑鐵盧，也是拜天氣突變所賜。一八一五年，拿破崙回國復辟，歐洲各國大為震驚，英、俄、奧、普四強再結同盟，進攻法國。英國、普魯士軍隊率先南下。拿破崙慣用的戰略，是設法把聯軍

隔開，逐個擊破。法軍行軍迅速，英軍見到法軍突如其來，不免張皇失措，軍隊開始北退至滑鐵盧村南方。這時剛好有一個低氣壓由西向東移動，受到暖鋒影響，開始下雨，戰鬥受阻。

為了等待雨勢稍歇，法軍延至翌日午后才冒雨進攻。午後普軍的先頭部隊逐步接近戰場。奉命攔截的法軍元帥，受暴風雨所阻，遲遲才追擊，結果普軍擺脫追兵，到達滑鐵盧，與英軍會師，後續部隊源源而來，聯軍聲勢大振。法軍失去先機，節節敗退。假如拿破崙知道暖鋒來臨時天氣的變化，及早行動，也許歐洲的歷史就要改寫了。

一九四四年六月六日，盟軍登陸諾曼第，扭轉了第二次世界大戰兩軍的形勢。在戰略部署階段，盟軍各軍種向氣象官提出理想的天氣型態：天氣最好不是雨天，也不是晴天；最低的雲幕須在七百多公尺以上，能見度最少五公里。氣象幕僚研究後，認為只有六月六日和十八日的天氣可能符合要求。

一直到了六月四日，天氣還是非常惡劣。天氣惡劣，會耽誤軍機。不過，正因天氣惡劣，德軍以為盟軍要登陸成功，極為困難，也就放鬆了戒心，還批准很多軍官休假，甚至趁壞天氣把大批部隊調防。

盟軍的氣象幕僚仍然堅持，六月六日的天氣有利登陸。艾森豪將軍根據氣象報告，指令一切按計劃行事。結果當天歐洲西部海岸密雲滿布，雲層高度大都符合各軍種的要求；密雲可以掩護空軍，對地面部隊的行動則毫無影響。盟軍登陸成功，把德軍殺個措手不及，可以說勝在準確的氣象預報。



In All Weathers

Dr Samuel Johnson once said, “When two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather”. This well-known observation is as accurate today as it was over two centuries ago. Indeed, weather is a common conversation starter, and a myriad of weather-related expressions have been put on the map of the English language. Everyday examples include:

“Cool!” uttered Jason when he saw his favourite salami pizza.

Joyce was feeling a bit *under the weather*, so she did not go to work.

Cool is not just a hip term among the young to express their happiness about something. The word itself has much to do with emotion. If a waiter slips and spills orange juice over your shirt, you may *lose your cool*. If you want to be a TV newsreader, you have to look *cool, calm and collected*. To *lose one's cool* means to lose one's temper. Someone who is *cool, calm and collected* is an unemotional person.

Apart from *cool*, quite a number of weather-related terms are used to refer to our emotion. For example, to *send a chill down someone's spine* means to make him very frightened. If you *put the wind up someone*, you make him feel anxious or frightened.

Weather not only affects our mood, but also our health. To be/feel *under the weather* is to feel slightly ill. This

expression comes from a nautical source. In the old days, when a sailor was unwell, he was sent down below to help his recovery, under the deck and away from the weather. If someone has completely recovered from an illness or accident, he is *as right as rain*, meaning perfectly well or healthy again.

Weather, especially bad weather, is often associated with unfavourable conditions. Take *a rainy day*. It represents bad times when it will be hard to make a living. Hence, financial planners always advise their clients to *put something by for a rainy day*. Otherwise, they might have to *raise the wind*. This is again a seaman's phrase, meaning to obtain ready money. A storm usually symbolises a crisis. To *ride the storm* means to confront a crisis bravely, whereas to *weather the storm* is to overcome a crisis, often a financial one. But *a storm in a teacup* is no cause for alarm. It is merely a fuss about nothing very much, or a dispute of only minor importance.

In bad weather, outdoor activities may be suspended. Some people, however, swim in the sea everyday *whatever the weather*, that is, whatever happens; *come rain or shine* has a similar meaning. Bad weather is not something desirable, and neither is *a fair-weather friend*. As the saying goes, “A friend in need is a friend indeed”. Who would like to make friends with someone who ceases to be a good friend when he/she is having problems?



Watch What You Say

While new developments in such areas as economy and technology constantly contribute novel terms to our daily vocabulary, have you noticed that some new words and phrases come from people's conscious efforts to avoid giving offence?

Never before have people paid so much attention to the implications of what comes out of their mouths, at least in public. This has much to do with the phenomenon of “political correctness”, or PC, which developed on the American campuses in the late 1980s. It was an attempt to promote, among other things, gender and racial equality. Since then, more and more concerns have been gathered under the umbrella of PC.

PC advocates believe that language can influence people's perceptions. Hence, they set out to challenge and alter language in order to effect change in the way people think and behave. What to call things is one of their preoccupations. They have made a point of dropping words that are deemed bigoted and therefore politically incorrect, such as *bastard/illegitimate child*. *Out-of-wedlock person/child* is now commonly used to refer to a person born to unmarried parents.

Today, different concern groups have been trying to influence a more positive view of certain social issues by encouraging more positive language. Their attempt includes coining new terms. For example, the term *birth parents* was introduced by the adoption community, because *natural*

parents and *real parents* are offensive terms to some adoptive parents. They think these terms imply that they are “unnatural” or “unreal” parents. PC supporters also avoid terms that may have a labelling effect. Therefore, when talking about young people who do not finish school, *school-leavers* is frequently used instead of *drop-outs*.

Since the creation of non-sexist language is a major concern to PC adherents, a host of gender-neutral terms and job titles have come into being: *chairperson/chair* (formerly *chairman*), *spokesperson (spokesman)*, *firefighter (fireman)*, *police officer (policeman/policewoman)*, and *flight attendant (air steward/stewardess)*, to name just a few. Another PC product is the renaming of TIME Magazine's *Man of the Year* as *Person of the Year*, regardless of which gender wins it.

PC was once accused of posing threats to freedom of speech and leading to absurdities. Well, it might seem too much to insist that *history* become *herstory* or that an over-weight person be called *a person possessing an alternative body image*. Yet PC has its merit in placing emphasis on civility — the simple virtue of respecting the sensitivities of everyone. While it remains arguable whether or not changing the words people use does anything to change the way they think, PC has served to make people aware of the fact that our linguistic choices have consequences. So it is better to watch what we say.



應時行樂

大江南北的氣候，四季分明。人們順應四時變化，生活作息，消閑遣興，古今皆然。春光明媚，宜郊遊泛舟；秋高氣爽，宜登高望遠。二月春暖花開，初二為踏青節，江南城外柳枝吐芽，青草茵茵，古代都人士女紛紛去野外踏青，或乘畫舫遊湖。湖邊還有酒樓，遊湖文人登上酒樓，憑欄遠眺，把酒臨風，吟詠湖光山色。遊湖吟詩作詞的風氣歷代相傳，例如歐陽修十首《採桑子》都是唱詠潁州(今安徽)西湖的風光。

冬夏二季又如何？古時沒有冰箱、空調，凜凜寒冬、炎炎夏日，古人如何消磨？

中國北方的冬天，“千里冰封，萬里雪飄”。宋代有“暖爐會”之俗，與唐代“暖寒會”相近，在十月初一日邀請親友圍坐爐旁，一邊取暖，一邊就爐火烤肉飲酒，暢談一年來的生活。十月朔日“暖爐會”的風俗，遺風延續至今。今日北方的火鍋宴，可說上承“暖爐會”而來。

中華先民喜雪，所謂“瑞雪兆豐年”，雪可以殺蟲、保墒、¹解除春旱，有利農事。仲冬賞雪之俗，即源於人民喜雪的情思。南宋周密《武林舊事》記載朝廷賞雪的情景：“禁中賞雪，多御明遠樓。後苑進大小雪獅，並以金鈴彩縷為飾，且作雪花、雪燈、雪山之類”。文人雅士則愛踏雪尋梅，又或趁積雪初晴，到郊外欣賞重重山雪，暢懷自得。此時如有山僧送來雪水煮煎的清茶，坐在梅花樹下品茗賞景，更能怡情悅性。

古之賞雪遺風，一直延續至今，例如北方在仲冬大雪之後，有賞雪雕、雪戲和冰戲之俗。雪戲，即打雪仗、玩雪爬犁、玩雪橇等；冰戲，即冰上遊戲。冰戲始於何時，尚難確定，但宋時已有，相傳至今，當中一些遊戲已衍化成體育運動。

清代的冰戲，主要有冰牀、跑冰、打滑撻、冰上雜戲等。冰牀之戲，宋代沈括《夢溪筆談》記載：“冬月作小坐牀，冰上拽之”。冰牀之戲在清代民間十分流行，就連皇帝也樂此不疲。

明朝定都北京以後，冰戲成為宮廷的體育活動，當中跑冰屬於重點項目。清代朝廷將跑冰歸入習武練兵的活動：“冰上滑擦者，所著之履皆有鐵齒，流行冰上，如星馳電掣，爭先奪標取勝”(《帝京歲時紀勝)，近於今天的滑冰比賽，有起點，有終點，鳴槍始滑，還有皇帝觀看，相當隆重。

冰戲還有“打滑撻”，即從冰山上滑下，“自甚巔挺之而下，以到地不仆者為勝”(《清稗類鈔)，有類於今之高山滑雪。清代還有花樣滑冰：“技之巧者，如蜻蜓點水，紫燕穿波，殊可觀也”(《燕京歲時記)。清代的冰戲極盛，冬月，特別是正月後，陸上的舞龍、舞獅也會移師冰上，表演者改穿冰鞋，邊滑邊舞。

酷暑盛夏，氣候炎熱，古人如何避暑？唐代各家會在立夏日互送新茶。入夏喝新茶，古已有之。在天熱欲暍之際，飲上一杯清茶，無疑會神清氣爽。盧仝曾賦詩抒發連飲七碗茶的感受，詩中說新茶味道好，每飲一碗都有不同的感受，身體輕爽，精神舒暢，令人飄飄欲仙，什麼天熱氣濕，全然不怕。

夏至以後，天氣最為炎熱。朝廷放假，讓官員在家避暑養生。皇帝照例頒冰，賞賜下臣，以解暑氣。在伏天裏，朋友也會相互贈冰以消暑。古代無製冰設備，朝野人士為了能在盛夏得冰，特設有地窖，冬日割冰取塊，存放窖中，待夏天取用。

皇帝一到三伏天，便到特置的館閣中避暑。《武林舊事》談到皇宮中乘涼的情景：“長松修竹，濃翠蔽日”，“寒瀑飛空，下注大池可十畝”，“又置茉莉、素馨、劍蘭……等南花數百盆於廣庭，鼓以風輪，清芬滿殿”。皇宮庭院簡直可比人間仙境，奇花異草、瀑布清池，風輪一動，炎暑皆消。

文人避暑之法在靜養，一般閉門而居，或彈琴，或賞書畫，安靜度日。如嫌寂寞，約三二好友，相聚於名園幽境，飲酒對弈，高談闊論，詠歌唱和，皆可悅心娛情，盡一時之興。

伏天太熱，平民百姓都把手頭活兒放下，尋找涼處生活，因此有“歇伏”之說。歇伏多在家裏，但生活悠閑得多，哪兒涼快便去哪裏，謂之“納涼”。《清嘉錄》介紹了清人三種納涼方式：鬥牌、曲局、說書，或會聚好友打牌，或去青樓賞曲，或進書場聽書，逍遙度夏。江南水鄉在盛夏有賞蓮盪舟之俗。人們傾城而出，不僅為了賞花，亦為納涼：“花香雲影，皓月澄波，往往留夢灣中，越宿而歸”(《清嘉錄)。在花香之中，在月光之下，在水面之上消暑過夜，豈不快哉。

¹“墒”粵音“商”，指田地裏土壤的濕度。



知天者仰視天文，知地者俯察地理。
陸賈



Jumbled Weather

The underlined words below are all related to the weather. The letters of each word are jumbled. Would you like to put them in the right order?

1. She had been running around northern England in a dwhiliwnr of activity.
2. Deserts have little or no rocepitinap.
3. The baby lquassl in the back of the church.
4. A visitor sought shelter from a dolbcusurt inside his shop yesterday.
5. Franilla affects the moisture content of the atmosphere.
6. Elosmetorogsit have predicted heavy rains for the next few days.
7. On top of that building is a gilhnitng conductor.
8. Denthru roared and rumbled in the sky overhead.
9. It was a cold, windy, cotervsa morning in Shanghai.
10. In winter leicsic hung from the roof.
11. Hefahniter is a scale for measuring temperature.
12. Athletes attended the Olympic Games in the rortid heat of Barcelona.
13. They were sitting outside a café in bright hsinunse.
14. I have only a goyfg idea of what QDII really is.
15. There is a sculominbumu cloud at the centre of the photo.

Answers

To participate, please fill in the information below and send it, with the completed answers, to the Word Power Editorial Board, Official Languages Division, Civil Service Bureau, Room 2310, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong before 7 August 2006.

Answers and names of the winners will be published in the next issue of *Word Power*. The Editorial Board will have the final say on the answers. Five prizes will be awarded. Lots will be drawn if necessary.

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

Department :

Post :

Tel. No. :

Address :



上期答案:

- | | |
|--------|--------------|
| 1. 帳幕 | 7. 不鳴則已，一鳴驚人 |
| 2. 孫尚香 | 8. 寬闊廣大 |
| 3. 諸葛亮 | 9. 黑色 |
| 4. 關羽 | 10. 戰國 |
| 5. 善戰者 | 11. 百萬之師 |
| 6. 老虎 | 12. 和氏璧 |

得獎名單

姓名	所屬部門
陳子明	土木工程拓展署
Wong Choi-seung	香港海關
Lau Wai-yin, Stella	房屋署
Tsang Wing-ying	康樂及文化事務署
王威淳	康樂及文化事務署

各得獎者將獲專函通知領獎。

中文顧問 康寶文博士 英語顧問 Dr Gillian M. Humphreys

編輯委員會

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| 主席 李婉莉女士 | 委員 何維安先生 | 委員 譚天恩女士 |
| 委員 彭李若瑤女士 | 委員 鄭建華先生 | 執行編輯 魯曼華女士 |
| 委員 梅李碧燕女士 | 委員 梁錦明先生 | 助理編輯 呂達婷女士 |

Honorary Adviser Dr Hong Po-man Honorary Adviser Dr Gillian M. Humphreys

Editorial Board

- | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|--------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Chairman | Miss Li Yuen-lee | Member | Mr James Ho | Member | Miss Susanna Tam |
| Member | Mrs Helen Pang | Member | Mr Cheng Kin-wah | Executive Editor | Miss Holly Lo |
| Member | Mrs Stella Mui | Member | Mr Reuben Leung | Assistant Editor | Ms Shirley Lui |

《文訊》另載於公務員事務局網頁，網址：http://www.csb.gov.hk/te_chi/publication/2006.html。歡迎提問或提出意見，郵件請寄香港金鐘道66號金鐘道政府合署2310室公務員事務局法定語文事務部；電郵地址：csbolrs@csb.gov.hk。

The contents of *Word Power* are also available on the CSB Homepage at <http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/publication/2006.html>. For enquiries, please contact us at the Official Languages Division, Civil Service Bureau, Room 2310, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong. E-mail: csbolrs@csb.gov.hk