

金烏玉兔

太陽照耀萬物，溫暖大地；月亮灑下清輝，照亮黑夜。《易經·繫辭下》曰：“日往則月來，月往則日來，日月相推而明生焉”，道出宇宙自然的運作循環不息。日月往來，交替有序。古人以日升月落的現象觀照人生，悟出不少道理，從而產生各種以日月作喻的說法。

“旭日初升”呈現一片光明的景象，代表朝氣勃勃，雄心萬丈。曙光初現，一天伊始，正是希望的象徵。“日升月恆”便是指太陽冉冉升起，月亮漸漸盈滿，常用來比喻事物興盛發展。“日升月恆”語出《詩經·小雅·天保》：“如月之恆，如日之升，如南山之壽，不騫不崩”，今常用於祝頌，喻指事業蒸蒸日上。至於“如日中天”和“如日方中”，則指猶如正午的太陽，意謂事物正發展至全盛階段。還有“日月長明”，用於祝壽，取其永恆之喻，寓意與日月同光，長壽永享。

“日落西山”與“旭日東升”剛好相反。夕陽西沉，黑夜將至，象徵人到暮年。“日落西山”也作“日薄西山”或“日薄崦嵫*”，“薄”是迫近之意，而“崦嵫”則為山名，相傳為日落之處。屈原《離騷》云：“欲少留此靈瑣兮，日忽忽其將暮，吾令羲和弭節兮，望崦嵫而勿迫”。“靈瑣”指神靈聚集之處；“羲和”是古代傳說中負責駕馭日車的羲氏、和氏兄弟；而“弭節”有放慢、稍停之意。《離騷》是屈原在放逐期間所作，處處流露出生不逢時、壯志未酬的鬱悶和憤慨。已屆日薄之年，是指步進了晚年。至於“日暮途窮”，則指夕陽西照，前路已盡。唐代李商隱《樂遊原》一詩有以下千古名句：“夕陽無限好，只是近黃昏”。詩人借景抒情，既感懷身世，也慨嘆盛世不再，感觸滿腔，難掩悵惘之情。要表示事物臨近衰亡，也可借“落日”為喻，例如“夕陽工業”是指前景黯淡的行業。

日與月分屬晝夜，交替出現，因此有“日東月西”的說法，指異地相隔，難以聚首。漢代蔡琰《胡笳十八拍》曰：“日東月西兮徒相望，不得相隨兮空斷腸”，以日月相隔表達分離的無奈。與“日東月西”意近的還有“日月參辰”，當中“參辰”是指參星和辰星，二星此出彼沒，互不相見。日落月出，參隱辰現，比喻彼此分隔，無法相聚。

古人常以金烏指代太陽，以玉兔指代月亮。相傳太陽中有三足金烏，而月中則有白兔，“金烏玉兔”遂成為日月的合稱。宋人張掄《阮郎歸·詠夏十首》云：“金烏玉兔最無情，驅馳不暫停。春光才去又朱明，年華只暗驚”。“朱明”指夏季，春去夏來，詩人驚覺時光飛逝，年華易老。唐代韓琬《春愁》一詩云：“金烏長飛玉兔走，青鬢長青古無有”；唐代韋莊《秋日早行》亦曰：“行人自是心如火，兔走烏飛不覺長”。由此產生了“烏飛兔走”和“兔走烏飛”的說法，形容光陰流逝。人生倉促而日月之光不減，令幾許騷人墨客不勝唏噓。“日月如梭”和“日月如箭”也是光陰飛馳的意思。梭是織布時牽引緯線的工具，“日月如梭”指日月不居，恍似織布的梭子不停運行。

天上日月，何解喻意如此不同？常言景隨心移，境由心生，觀者喜見物便喜，觀者悲見物也悲，這就是劉勰在《文心雕龍·物色》中所說“情以物遷，辭以情發”的移情作用。

* 崦嵫，粵音“淹之”。



東周青銅三足烏
《文心雕龍·物色》中所說“情以物遷，辭以情發”的移情作用。

今人不見古時月，今月曾經照古人。

李白《把酒問月》



水月鏡花

水中月，鏡中花，在中國文學裏常用來比喻虛幻的美好影像。在西方文化中，月亮也用來比喻非分之想和虛幻的事物。

“鏡花水月”原作“鏡像水月”，本為佛家語。東晉名僧慧遠在《鳩摩羅什法師大義》中說：“如鏡中像，水中月，見如有色，而無觸等，則非色也”，以鏡中像、水中月比喻世間萬物虛幻不實。明代謝榛《詩家直說》以“水月鏡花”比喻詩中空靈意境：“詩有可解，不可解，不必解，若水月鏡花，勿泥其迹可也”。中國成語也有“水中撈月”這一條，意指試圖去做不切實際之事，到頭來徒勞無功，枉費精力。“水中撈月”也作“水中捉月”或“水底摸月”。宋代黃庭堅《沁園春》一詞曰：“鏡裏拈花，水中捉月，覷着無由得近伊”。另明代郎瑛《七修類稿·奇譚類》寫道：“賒酒時風花雪月，飲之時流星趕月，討錢時水底摸月”，短短三句，把一個無賴酒徒描寫得淋漓盡致。

英語中有“cry for the moon”和“ask for the moon”的說法，意指痴心妄想，想得到像天上的月亮一樣無法觸及的東西，例如“Given the company's financial situation, the demand for a pay rise is like crying for the moon”。因此，實事求是的人根本不會奢望得到天上的月亮，因為明知那是絕不可能的。與“cry for the moon”和“ask for the moon”意思相近的還有“aim at the

moon”和“level at the moon”，即“異想天開”或“想入非非”之意。務實的人同樣不會隨便“promise somebody the moon”，也就是不會對別人作出無法兌現的承諾。待人接物，恪守承諾至為重要，倘若言而無信、背信棄義，早晚也會遭人離棄。

中國有一則名為“猴子撈月”的童話。話說一隻猴子來到井邊，看見水中的月影，以為月亮掉進井裏，便召集其他猴子，想方設法要把月亮撿回來。這羣猴子爬上井邊的大樹，由上而下，一隻拽住一隻連在一起，深入井中，最下方的猴子負責把月亮撈起。但當牠伸手進水裏去，月亮卻一下子消失得無影無蹤，撈起來的不過是幾顆水珠，無意間抬頭一看，赫然發現月亮還是好端端的掛在天邊，這才恍然大悟，明白水中倒影的道理。

《伊索寓言》中也有一個關於月亮的故事。月亮懇求媽媽給她裁一件斗篷，月亮媽媽回答女兒：“我怎麼能給你做一件合身的斗篷呢？你現在是新月，然後又是滿月，再接着既不是新月，又不是滿月了。”月亮的形狀不斷變換，周而復始。這則寓言，是要說明世事萬物都在不斷變化，因此做事不能墨守成規，應該因時制宜，靈活應變。

千里共嬋娟

宋代蘇軾《水調歌頭》以“但願人長久，千里共嬋娟”作結，當中的“嬋娟”是指月亮。蘇軾與弟蘇轍分隔千里，賦詞以表思念，祝願彼此均享長壽，同沐月輝之下。“嬋娟”本指美好的女子，因古人相信月中有仙女，故常用以指代月亮。

蘇軾借月抒懷，表達了他對悲歡離合的看法：月有圓缺，人有聚散，乃千古不變的道理。既然人生變幻不定，詞人唯有為遠方的至親許下美好的願望。“但願人長久，千里共嬋娟”背後其實有彼此分隔異地的意思，今人用作贈言或祝福語，除非臨別寄意，否則不太恰當。


以千里共明月來解懷人思念之苦，這種寄寓在蘇軾之前已有。南朝宋人謝莊《月賦》便是一例：“美人邁兮音塵闕，隔千里兮共明月”。另外，唐代孟郊《古怨別》曰：“別後唯所思，天涯共明月”；唐代另一詩人許渾《懷江南同志》又曰：“唯應洞庭月，萬里共嬋娟”。由此可見，託月寄情這種表現手法歷代皆有，但以蘇軾的《水調歌頭》為佼佼者，傳頌千古。

自古以來，文人雅士喜以“花容月貌”來形容女子容貌娟秀。中國古代四大美人西施、王昭

君、貂蟬、楊玉環，更有“沉魚”、“落雁”、“閉月”、“羞花”之譽。據《三國演義》所載，貂蟬是漢獻帝大臣王允的歌姬，某夜在花園拜月，正巧一陣風吹過，令明月被浮雲所蔽。王允見此，便藉機讚美貂蟬，說她美貌出眾，國色天香，連明月也自愧不如，躲進雲中。因此，後人以“閉月”作為貂蟬的雅號。

《詩經·陳風·月出》一詩同樣以月亮作為美人之喻：“月出皎兮，佼人僚兮……月出皓兮，佼人憫兮……月出照兮，佼人療兮”。詩人月夜巧遇貌美姑娘，歸去後念念不忘，從月色聯想到女子的白皙，從月亮的形態聯想到女子的俏臉，從月亮的皎潔聯想到女子的純潔。由此可見，以月亮的美比喻女子的美，自古已有。

《水調歌頭》	蘇軾
明月幾時有把酒問青天	
不知天上宮闕今夕是何年	
我欲乘風歸去	
又恐瓊樓玉宇高處不勝寒	
起舞弄清影何似在人間	
轉朱閣低綺戶照無眠	
不應有恨何事長向別時圓	
人有悲歡離合	
月有陰晴圓缺	
此事古難全	
但願人長久千里共嬋娟	





星空雋語



年青的冰心

冰心(1900-1999)，原名謝婉瑩，五四時代活躍文壇的傑出作家，求學時期已投身創作，晚年在病榻中依舊筆耕不輟，一生著作甚豐，包括小說、散文及詩歌，散文集《寄小讀者》和詩集《繁星》均入選“百年百種優秀中國文學圖書”。

冰心在《繁星·自序》中表示，所收錄的詩歌本來是一些不易成篇的零碎思想，由於棄之可惜，於是聽從大弟的建議，記在一個小本子裏。其後二弟從書堆裏翻出這個小本子來看，在首頁寫上“繁星”二字，而么弟則鼓勵姊姊拿去發表。冰心如此形容《繁星》詩集的緣起：“是兩年前零碎的思想，經過三個小孩子的鑑定”。在《繁星·四九》中，冰心解釋了繁星與小詩的關係：

零碎的詩句，
是學海中的一點浪花罷；
然而他們是光明閃爍的，
繁星般嵌在心靈的天空裏。

繼《繁星》後，冰心發表了另一詩集《春水》，並以《繁星·一二零》作序：

母親啊！
這零碎的篇兒，
你能看一看麼？
這些字，
在沒有我以前，
已隱藏在你的心懷裏。

冰心的小詩來自一些觸動思潮的情緒。《繁星》收錄短詩164首，以序號排列，沒有個別起題。詩人把生活體會娓娓道來，當中包括她對生命的愛、對大自然的愛。《繁星·一》便是她對神奇宇宙的禮讚：

繁星閃爍着——
深藍的太空，
何曾聽得見他們對語？
沉默中，
微光裏，
他們深深的互相頌讚了。

這首詩與《繁星·一二七》可說互相呼應：

流星，
飛走天空，
可能有一秒時的凝望？
然而這一瞥的光明，
已長久遺留在人的心懷裏。

在冰心的作品中，母愛是重複出現的主題，《繁星·三三》便是一例：

母親啊！
撇開你的憂愁，
容我沉酣在你的懷裏，
只有你是我靈魂的安頓。

冰心十分緬懷孩提的快樂時光。她的小詩充滿了對童年的依戀，《繁星·七一》如是說：

這些事——
是永不漫滅的回憶；
月明的園中，
藤蘿的葉下，
母親的膝上。

冰心愛母親，也愛兒女。推而廣之，青年和小孩都是她關心的對象。冰心傾注心力從事兒童文學創作，用文字帶出正面的信息。從《繁星·三五》可見，孩童的地位在詩人心目中何其重要：

萬千的天使，
要起來歌頌小孩子；
小孩子！
他細小的身軀裏，
含着偉大的靈魂。

冰心的小詩也蘊藏人生哲理，《繁星·五一》便以形象鮮明的語言道出言多必失的道理：

常人的批評和斷定，
好像一羣瞎子，
在雲外推測着月明。

冰心後來談起自己的小詩，指出詩歌應該是有格律、有音樂美的，她本來並非立意寫詩——“三言兩語就成一首詩，未免太單薄太草率了”。但也許正是由於作者不經意、不做作，才創造出真摯動人的小詩。反覆雕琢，有時反為不美。在《繁星·一六四》中，冰心以“我把最後一頁，留與你們！”為詩集作結，鼓勵讀者把真摯的感情記下來，把小詩延續下去，令滿天繁星的夜空更為璀璨。

冰心的小詩凝練雋永，沒有澎湃的感情，只有淡淡的情懷，在現代文學中別樹一幟。二十年代，像《繁星》和《春水》這樣的小詩相當盛行，詩人宗白華、劉大白、劉半農、俞平伯等都寫過小詩。學者更以“繁星體”和“春水體”為這種體裁的詩歌命名。冰心對詩壇影響之深，於此可見。

冰心以清新的文字、真摯的感情、樸實的風格，打動無數讀者，作品充滿對年輕一代的愛護和期許。巴金曾這樣說過：“一代代的青年讀到冰心的書，懂得了愛：愛星星，愛大海，愛祖國，愛一切美好的事物”，這正好概括了冰心作品的特點，就在於謳歌愛的偉大。



晚年的冰心

日出而作，日入而息，逍遙於天地之間，而心意自得。

《莊子·讓王》



High Up in the Sky

What would it be like to live on the moon? Chang'e (嫦娥), the Chinese lunar goddess said to be living on the moon, would definitely have an answer, if not the best. For mortals on earth, making home on the moon is an entirely different experience. *To be living on the moon* means to be out of touch with everyday reality. We may, therefore, say, "Grandma gave me thirty cents to buy an apple. She must be *living on the moon*!"

Now that we know the meaning of *to be living on the moon*, we may instead prefer *to be over the moon*, which means ecstatically happy. This idiom has been associated mainly with football since the 1970s and is used to express great elation by football managers when interviewed about a victory scored by "the boys". However, its origin has nothing to do with this sport. The phrase originates from a well-known 16th century nursery rhyme *Hey Diddle Diddle* in which "The cow jumped over the moon".

Despite a number of successful moon landings over the past four decades, for ordinary people, the moon is still just a huge heavenly body hanging in the sky. Strictly speaking, the moon is not completely within our sight since it is never entirely visible to the human eye. One part of it remains permanently in the dark and is hence hidden from sight. No wonder the expression *the dark side of the moon* is used to refer to someone or something mysterious.

With the sun, it is a different story — we cannot access it because of its intolerable heat — but we may walk in the sun and enjoy its warmth. If someone has found a *place in the sun*, he is in a job or situation that offers him everything he wants

and makes him happy and well off. Now we probably associate the phrase with a holiday home in a sunny country, but the phrase was famously used in 1897 by Bernhard von Bülow (1849-1929), Chancellor of the German Empire, when he addressed his parliament with regard to Germany's ambitions to colonise East Asia: "We desire to throw no one into the shade [in East Asia], but we also demand our own place in the sun."

Sunshine creates a cheering atmosphere and is a symbol of positive life. Someone or something that brings people happiness or makes a difficult situation seem better is therefore described as *a ray of sunshine*. Talking of sunshine, there is an ancient English proverb which says, "*Make hay while the sun shines*". If someone does this, he makes good use of an opportunity while it lasts. Weather is variable, so it is always better to dry grass and turn it into hay while the sun is around because a storm might be looming. In a nutshell, the old saying advises us to act while conditions are favourable.

High up in the sky, both the moon and the sun are within sight but yet remote. Since, however, they have been incorporated into idiomatic expressions in our daily language, they are not totally out of reach.



蟾宮折桂

月亮古稱太陰，歷來關於月亮的神話傳說每多浪漫色彩，最為人熟悉者，莫過於嫦娥奔月的故事。

嫦娥據載是后羿的妻子，兩人均為天上神仙。嫦娥本名姮娥，漢朝人民因文帝名劉恆而避其諱，改稱姮娥為嫦娥。據《淮南子·本經訓》所載，遠古之時，天上十個太陽同時照耀人間，以致草木皆焦，莊稼不長，民無所食。堯帝為拯救萬民，令大地重生，命后羿挽弓射下九個太陽。這些太陽原是天帝兒子，后羿因此觸怒天帝，被謫凡間。後來后羿向西王母求得長生不老之藥，不料嫦娥暗中偷服，飛升上天，自此獨守清虛。唐代李商隱《嫦娥》一

詩云：“雲母屏風燭影深，長河漸落曉星沉。嫦娥應悔偷靈藥，碧海青天夜夜心”，以詩人豐富的想象力，道出嫦娥孤清

守月的心情。南朝梁人劉昭為《後漢書·天文志》作註時引張衡《靈憲》、《渾儀》謂，嫦娥後來“託身於月，是為蟾蜍”，故月宮又名蟾宮。

相傳月中有桂樹，仙人吳剛學仙有過，被罰天天伐桂，但斧傷之處卻馬上癒合，樹不但不倒，還不斷生長。桂樹因此與蟾宮產生了聯繫。

“蟾宮折桂”典出《晉書·郗詵傳》。郗詵學富五車，赴雍州任刺史前，晉武帝於東堂會送，問曰：“卿自以為何如？”郗詵答曰：“臣舉賢良對策，為天下第一，猶桂林之一枝，昆山之片玉。”宋人葉夢得《避暑錄話》載：“世以登科為折桂，此謂郗詵對策東堂，自云桂林一枝也，自唐以來用之。”現今“蟾宮折桂”常被誤用來形容人在競賽中脫穎而出，其實用得不貼切，因為典故專指考取功名、仕途得意。



你來我往

日常書信往來，猶如通信雙方在對話。因此，下筆行文往往不必“你你我我”一番，而意思依然可以交代清楚。在大多數情況下，文意所指的是發信人還是收信人，其實已隱含於字裏行間。把“你你我我”省掉，再適當地運用敬語和謙語，既言簡意賅，又得體合宜。

敬語和謙語在漢語中的應用相當廣泛。一般而言，對他人應用尊敬的詞語，對自己則用謙卑的詞語，這才符合“外敬內謙”的原則，否則於禮不合。關於敬謙語，不妨記住“家大舍小令外人”的口訣。“家大舍小”是指謙稱自己的家人，比自己年紀大或輩分高的親人，用“家～”的說法，如“家父”、“家舅”；比自己年紀小或輩分低的親人，則用“舍～”的說法，如“舍妹”、“舍姪”。至於“令外人”，是指敬稱對方的親人，可用“令～”的說法，如“令尊”、“令郎”。

不過，這只是概括的說法，除此之外，還有很多不同形式的敬語和謙語。在指稱收信人所屬機構時，我們慣於在前面加上“貴”字，如“貴院”、“貴校”、“貴辦”、“貴會”等，就是敬語的形式之一。

酬酢書信中，敬語和謙語尤為普遍，而且往往結合使用。試看以下一例：

承蒙厚愛，委以主席之重任，不勝榮幸。今後當盡綿力，服務社會，免負眾望。尚祈時賜南針，以匡不逮。

當中並無半個“你”或“我”，意思依然明晰，而收信人也絕不會把“你”和“我”的身分倒轉。若把“你”和“我”一一補上，反有損文氣，累贅不堪：

(我)承蒙(你)厚愛，委以主席之重任，(我)不勝榮幸。今後(我)當盡綿力，服務社會，免負眾望。尚祈(你)時賜南針，以匡(我)之不逮。

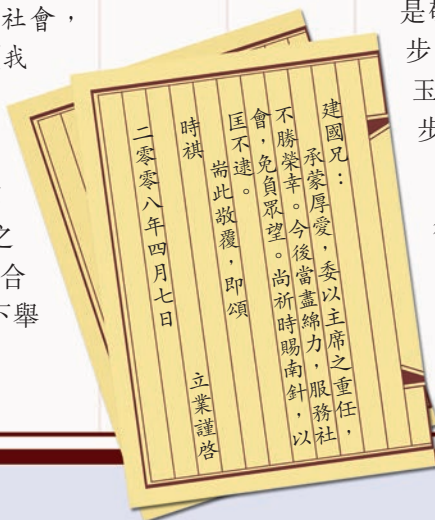
在上例中，“承蒙”、“厚愛”、“不勝榮幸”、“時賜南針”均屬敬詞；而“綿力”、“不逮”，則屬謙詞。兩者並用，向對方表示敬意之餘，自己又能保持謙遜。在酬酢書信或交際場合的應對中，敬詞和謙詞的使用十分普遍，以下舉出一些常見的例子，供大家參考：

	謙稱	敬稱
信函	寸函、寸札、寸緘、小簡、蕪箋	尊書、鴻書、大函、玉札、華簡、華翰
文章	拙作、拙著、拙筆	尊著、大作、鴻文
書畫	拙作、拙筆	尊作、大作、墨寶
身體	微軀、頑軀、陋軀	尊體、貴體、玉體、雅體
病痛	賤恙	尊恙、貴恙、清恙
禮贈	菲儀、薄禮、微物、芹獻	厚禮、厚賜、厚貽、雅贐*
心意	寸心、寸意、寸衷、芹意	厚意、高意、雅意、隆情、盛情
意見	愚見、拙見、淺見、鄙見、管見	尊見、高見
居所	舍下、寒舍、陋室、蜗居、敝處	府上、貴宅、華寓、華居、尊處
酒飯	便飯、菲酌、薄酌、薄饌、水酒	盛酌、嘉肴、美饌、佳珍、佳釀

使用敬語和謙語固然可使文章或應對莊重得體，多認識敬語和謙語也有助於減少病句。試看下列：“他獲推選為會長，正中下懷”。“下懷”是謙詞，是向他人謙稱自己的心意，當中的“下”其實就是“在下”的意思。因此，“正中下懷”只可用於說話人本身，而不能指稱他人。上例中，“正中下懷”宜改為“正切合其心意”。又如“匪徒高抬貴手，饒了他一命”，“貴手”是敬詞，本意為貴人的手，用來尊稱對方，不能用來指稱第三者。“高抬貴手”多用於懇求對方饒恕或寬容。如把例句中“高抬貴手”改作“手下留情”，文意便明確通達。再舉一例：“台上嘉賓雲集，我只好稍移玉步，站在一旁”。“玉步”是敬詞，古時合乎禮法的行步謂之玉步，不能用以自稱。在例句中，“稍移玉步”可以“稍為退讓”代之。“稍移玉步”也可縮略為“移玉”。

酬酢文書中，如果經常“你來我往”，既囉唆又唐突。其實，即使通篇不用一個“你”或“我”字，只要脈絡清楚，用詞妥貼，依然無礙溝通，而且行文更見簡潔流暢。

* 贐，賜贈之物，粵音“沉”。



Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth.

Buddha



Starry Night

As early as the creation of myths, people were aware of the moon's influence on living creatures, and this has already been proven by scientists. Legends have it that by the full moon, inexplicable things happen to men and beasts alike. People who behave in a strange or foolish way as a result of the changes of the moon are hence called lunatics. The word "lunatic" originates from "*luna*", the Latin word for moon.

Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), though recognised as a post-Impressionist master in art history, has often been dubbed a lunatic painter. His contemporary Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) once described Van Gogh's paintings as "the works of a lunatic". This echoes the comment of Zouave Milliet, an Algerian model Van Gogh met in France, that the painter "becomes abnormal as soon as he touches a brush". Despite his artistic achievements, Van Gogh never gained any fame during his lifetime, and his talent won acclaim only after his tragic death. Unlike some of the bourgeois Impressionists, Van Gogh lived a humble life, since his art dealer brother Theo had difficulty selling his works. Van Gogh would never have imagined that his passionate works would one day become widely admired and attract enormous sums at public auctions.

The Starry Night by Van Gogh is probably one of the best-loved paintings among museum goers and art lovers. Its replica can be found almost everywhere in the world. This masterpiece was completed by the Dutch painter in 1889, 13 months before he shot himself in a field. He was then staying in a mental asylum, where he produced a couple of signature pieces that marked the peak of his painting career, including *Irises* and *Wheat Field with Cypresses*.

Van Gogh seemed to be carried away by nightscapes, as he found the night sky far more fascinating than the day, stating that "the night is livelier and richer in colour". *The Starry Night* is an experimentation of bold brushstrokes, vibrant colours and thick paint. The wavy lines indicate a state of turbulence and the starry sky is far from static — clouds in the middle swirl, echoed by the flame-like cypress that sways in the foreground. Some believe that Van Gogh was painting a scene from a dream. Is it a mirror of his restless mind?

Van Gogh's biography reveals that he did not aspire to be a painter in his early adulthood, but had instead considered seriously following his father's footsteps by devoting himself to religious mission. His knowledge of the Bible may explain the eleven stars to the left of the crescent moon — they may be an allusion to Genesis 37:9 where Joseph tells his brothers of a dream he has had:

"Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

We cannot be sure of an underlying religious meaning to the painting, but viewers will not miss the steeple right in the middle of the background. It is quite obvious that the church had a place in Van Gogh's heart and hence on his canvas.

Despite his short life, Van Gogh was a prolific painter of over 700 works. It is no exaggeration to say that Van Gogh was obsessed with painting. Every time he received assistance from Theo, the first thing he would buy was paint rather than bread, and much of his money was spent on hiring models. Poverty weakened his health, but an undying passion kept him going — "I put my heart and my soul into my work, and have lost my mind in the process".

It is believed that Van Gogh's eccentricity was the fuel of his creativity. But what had caused his "insanity"? The unhappy childhood overshadowed by his stillborn elder brother? His dismissal by the church for his undignified way of preaching? The frustration in his love life? The despair in his artistic pursuit? Or a combination of all these?

As Don McLean sings in *Vincent*, Van Gogh "suffered for his sanity", but his spirit was set free in his works. He had his own vision of the world and his feelings were released unrestrainedly on the canvas, though few in his time were able to appreciate his expressiveness. All his life, Van Gogh believed in himself and remained faithful to himself. Loneliness was his lifelong companion. For a short span of time, he found consolation in the company of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), who moved into his little house at Theo's invitation. However, this only intensified Van Gogh's pain and suffering as the relationship between the two painters deteriorated. Gauguin finally turned his back on Van Gogh, who, desperate at being abandoned, cut off the lower part of his left ear with a razor. Rejected by the frightened people in the neighbourhood, he was then put into an asylum. When Theo announced his forthcoming marriage, Van Gogh was thrown into a deeper depression, as he was afraid of losing his only spiritual and financial support.

Abandoned by his church, the artistic circle and the community, Van Gogh lived almost in a world of strangers. "I wish they would only take me as I am", he sighed over the miserable feeling of being misunderstood. The life of Van Gogh can be aptly summed up by the remarks of his contemporary Camille Pissarro (1830-1903): "This man will either become mad or else leave us way behind". So was Van Gogh a lunatic or forerunner? It appears he was both.



The Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh

Keep your eyes on the stars, and your feet on the ground.

Theodore Roosevelt

鐵版趣談

香港海關

一級法定語文主任阮偉強

《鐵版神數》*成書於何時已難以稽考，資料顯示清代乾嘉年間這種術數已甚為盛行。《鐵版神數》共有條文一萬二千，當中大部分與清代官場職銜有關。本文並非鼓吹迷信，只是從時代背景和寫作特色兩方面，發掘這本奇書有趣之處，以饗讀者。

古時問卜者多為達官貴人，故《鐵版神數》大量條文皆與官職或科舉有關。明清科舉考試分為三級。鄉試規定在子、卯、午、酉年舉行，也稱秋闈，每次連考三場。通過鄉試的舉人，可於次年，即丑、辰、未、戌年參加會試，也稱春闈。取得貢士資格者，可參加同年的殿試，錄取名單稱為甲榜或金榜，分為三甲，一甲三人同賜“進士及第”。

因此，《鐵版神數》條文內出現的“鄉科及第”、“三場捷報”和“秋闈得意”，意思相同；而“名登黃甲”、“金榜題名”、“進士及第”和“春闈報捷”，也意思相近，所以又有“甲午之年鄉科及第”、“甲戌之年名登金榜”等條文。

《鐵版神數》的用語和表達方式自成一格，有規律可尋，例如常以椿樹和萱花分別比喻父母，以雁喻指兄弟。隨意舉兩個例子：“萱花蔭庇得長年，椿樹風吹定在先”是指父先亡；“同飛三雁，一隻先傷”指三兄弟中，有一個會遇上意外或災險。另外，“鼓盆之悲”指喪妻，出自莊子“鼓盆而歌”的故事。話說莊子失妻，惠子往吊喪，見莊子非但不悲哭，反而敲盆唱歌，錯愕不已。莊子則解釋，他已參透生命的道理，故此不哭不啼。有些條文內含“春”字，大多指涉及桃花感情事。

除比喻外，《鐵版神數》還大量採用典故、詩詞、成語等，描寫妻財子祿各方面。例如“子陵釣於富春江，悠然自得”一條，是指命主有如東漢隱士嚴子陵，拒絕應光武帝徵召為官，終老林泉，可謂不慕權貴追求自適。另“莫笑馮唐無晚景，期君老運享榮華”，則頗有生不逢時之嘆，或表示身已衰老，再不能有所作

為。蓋馮唐為三朝漢臣，至漢武帝時舉為賢良，已九十餘歲，不能為官矣！

關於男女感情，《鐵版神數》條文也有精彩生動的描寫，例如“東窗望月年復年，遊人薄倖無歸期”，是站在命主妻子的角度來說，指其立於窗前望月，嘆夫君遲遲未歸，帶一點點怨恨。另一條“早知潮有信，嫁與弄潮兒”，則錄自唐李益《江南曲》，也是責備男方久出不歸。海水漲退有時，始終有信；早知商人無情，當初該嫁給弄潮青年才是。這也反映了封建時代，男子重利（不論是為經商或出仕）而輕別離的普遍現象。

古人重視享兒孫福，不少條文跟後嗣有關。“命與伯道相同”的條文源於《晉書·鄧攸傳》“伯道無兒”一典，指命主沒有子嗣。另一方面，批算六十歲後命數的不少條文均會寫上“生子之年”，反映古代富裕人家三妻四妾，老來得子絕不稀奇，且蔚然成風。

《鐵版神數》不少條文富有文采，生動傳神。例如“秋風露滴迎春月，孤雁湘江任去來”、“湘江煙雨波濤闊，玉雁高飛任去來”，都有蒼涼飄泊之感，寓意人生四海為家。“畫水無聲山有浪，繡花雖美不聞香”，則指事業上有志難舒，雖然表面風光，畢竟難有作為。

簡言之，要參透《鐵版神數》的玄妙，除了要懂術數之外，還要對時代背景有深入的了解，並具備豐富的文學和歷史知識。不少條文詞藻華美，具有欣賞價值，盡顯作者深厚的文字功力和精深的文學造詣，《鐵版神數》堪稱一部奇書！

* “鐵版神數”是術數之一，據說清人鐵卜子以該術數為人算命，並把條文加以整理，時人皆趨之若鶩。後人稱鐵卜子所用術數為“鐵版神數”，意謂“鐵卜子版本的神奇術數”。



Not-a-Mindboggler

Issue No. 30 Solution

1. To be all ears
2. To have a sweet tooth
3. To follow one's nose
4. To kick something into touch
5. To get square eyes
6. To smell fishy
7. To see something with half an eye
8. To lose one's touch
9. To set one's sights on something
10. To get a taste of one's own medicine
11. To leave a nasty taste in someone's mouth
12. Not to hear a peep out of someone

- To make decisions by instinct
- To spend too much time watching television
- To be suspicious
- To listen very attentively
- To have a liking for sugary things
- Not to get any response from someone
- To halt, reject or postpone
- To lose one's ability to do something well
- To realise something at once
- To give someone the feeling that something unpleasant has happened
- To be determined to achieve a particular goal
- To run into difficulties of the same kind that one has been causing to other people

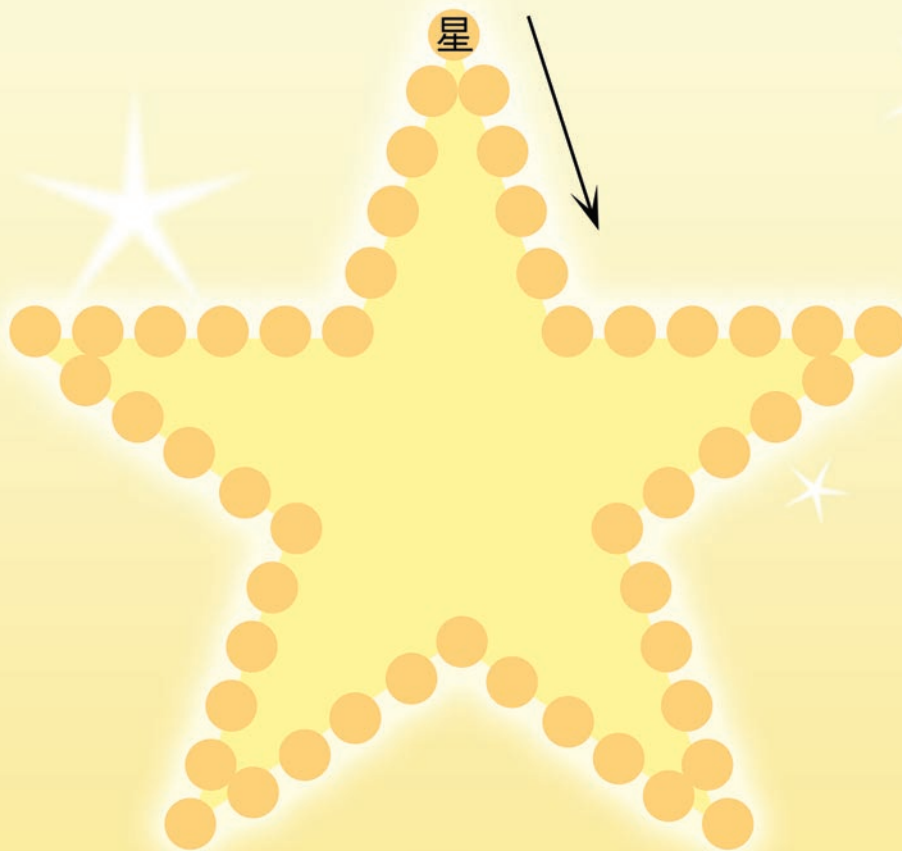
The following winners will be notified individually by post:

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星星連互陣

各位讀者，歡迎試闖這個星星連互陣，考驗一下自己！只要根據提示，填上適當的成語和詩句即可。成語和詩句各自包含一個或以上的“日”、“月”或“星”字，並以頂真方式排列，即前一句尾字與後一句首字相同，但相同之處不必重複填寫。請按箭頭指引的方向起步進發。



提示：

成語(四字)：星辰移動、景物改變。形容節令變化或世事變遷。

成語(四字)：比喻暗中以假代真，掩蓋事實真相，達到欺騙、蒙混的目的。

詩句(七字)：出自歐陽修《月》。

詩句(七字)：出自張若虛《春江花月夜》。

詩句(五字)：出自李白《渡荊門送別》。

成語(四字)：鏡裏的花，水裏的月。比喻虛幻不實的東西。

詩句(五字)：出自杜甫《旅夜書懷》。

成語(四字)：形容速度很快，好像流星追趕月亮一般。

成語(四字)：形容月夜的明朗恬靜。

成語(四字)：微風清涼，明月皎潔。比喻文人雅士的風致。

詩句(七字)：出自張繼《楓橋夜泊》。

詩句(七字)：出自李賀《天上謠》。

請在二零零八年五月九日前，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”。勝出者可獲書券一張，名額五個。答案及得獎者名單下期公布(答案以《文訊》公布者為準)。

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部門：_____

職位：_____

電話：_____

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