

# 文訊

# WORD POWER

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## When the Clock Strikes Midnight...

*Every man should be born again on the first day of January. Start with a fresh page.*

*– Henry Ward Beecher*

“Five, four, three, two, one.” Millions of voices unite to count down the final seconds of the year as the New Year’s Eve Ball descends. Revellers cheer, hug and kiss each other under showers of confetti. Crowds gather in plazas, on river banks and around harbours, looking up at the sky and waiting excitedly for the moment to come. Fireworks explode. Colours burst, fly and splatter, brightening up the dark night. Amidst a cacophony of car horns, boat whistles and church bells, the new year is here.

“Let’s drink a toast. Here’s to health, peace and prosperity!” With clinks of champagne glasses, party-goers sing a rousing chorus of *Auld Lang Syne*. This timeless New Year’s Eve song, though often sung out of tune and with improvised lyrics, is a nostalgic expression of friendship and love, bringing us back to our good old days when we shared happy moments with our family and friends. We drink “a cup o’ kindness” with our loved ones and look forward to better days in the year ahead.

When the clock strikes midnight, many of us happily believe that this will be a year with fabulous stories – we will find true happiness, meet someone who will make a difference in our lives, or learn how to slow down and relax. When we look back on the year behind us, however, we would find that life trundles along pretty much as before, with ups and downs. But we still believe that it is the wish we make on New Year’s Day, more than any other day, that turns our dreams into reality. New Year brings hope, and we thrive on hope.

The beginning of the year gives us the opportunity to have a closer look at ourselves and reassess what we want to be. It is the time to start afresh with a clean slate. So, year after year, we make New Year resolutions – to take a thirty-minute brisk walk five days a week, run a marathon, quit smoking, or lose weight, to name just a few. Year after year, many of us fail to keep them. Yes, it is disappointing that we have finished only one-third of a marathon, or have only lost three pounds instead of a stone. Yes, it is hard to resist tempting tiramisu or the urge to idly surf the web. It seems we are always fighting a losing battle.

Actually, it would be much easier for us to stick to our resolutions by doing something achievable. For couch potatoes who may find taking a stroll a challenge, finishing a marathon is not an ambitious resolution but an impossible mission. Doing some simple exercises, like stretching arms and legs on a couch, may perhaps suit them better. Keeping a New Year resolution is not easy. So, if you have stuck to one, say having successfully cleared the clutter of a drawer, treat yourself to a mug of steaming hot chocolate. If you have resolved to be a nicer person, buy yourself a small gift after enduring a boring dinner gathering without insulting anyone.

Don’t give up even if your resolutions have run out of steam in March. Give it another go. Great things cannot be accomplished in one day. Resolutions are set in one day, but achieved with a myriad of small steps throughout the year. Making New Year resolutions at the beginning of a year is only a starting point.

What if we cannot follow through despite repeated rounds of efforts? Take it easy. The important thing about this annual goal-setting event is not to chalk up how many things we have accomplished but to prove to ourselves that we are not fated by circumstances, and that we can make choices to change ourselves. Life has a funny way of letting us know what we are and who we are. It is from our actions to make our resolutions a reality that we learn and grow. Most importantly, no matter our plan succeeds or not, we have at least tried.

Whatever we do to usher in the new year, be it in a boisterous or quiet way, we all share the wish that we will become a better person and have better days in the coming year. So, every day in the year ahead, let us fill our champagne glasses with joys, hopes and dreams, and drink to our heart’s content.

Happy New Year!

## 佳肴盛饌

逢年過節，餐桌上總是放滿各式各樣的美食。春節甘香鬆脆的油角，中秋皮薄餡甜的月餅，端陽香糯可口的糉子，往往令人食指大動。人們還會利用時令食材，做出一道道令人垂涎欲滴的應節佳肴。一家人圍坐一起，大快朵頤，談天說地，加上濃濃的節日氣氛，熱熱鬧鬧，豈不快哉！



中國不少節日食品都有特殊象徵意義。餃子是北方人的主食，也是賀年食品，形似元寶，象徵財富。過年時一家人吃餃子，寓意新的一年大富大貴，生活豐足。人們結婚時吃的餃子，餡裏可以加上花生和栗子，寓意早生貴子。南方人愛在元宵節

一家吃湯圓，餡料有桂花、豆沙、麻蓉等，寓意甜甜蜜蜜，闔家團圓。南宋宰相周必大在《元宵煮浮圓子》詩中這樣描繪湯圓：“今夕是何夕？團圓事事同。湯官尋舊味，灶婢詫新功。星燦烏雲裏，珠浮濁水中。”小小的餃子和湯圓滿載吉祥寓意，寄託我們對幸福和諧的期盼。

不僅凡人愛吃，天神也愛吃。相傳玉皇大帝正月初四派灶君下凡監察各家各戶，所以當天要“接灶”；到臘月二十四日灶君會返回天庭述職，向玉帝稟報每戶在過去一年的善行或惡行，讓玉帝依據功德善惡定賞罰。這就是“謝灶”的由來。灶君嗜甜，所以謝灶要有甘蔗，讓灶君向玉帝多說些好話，還要有又甜又黏口的湯圓，黏着他的嘴巴，不讓他張開口說壞話。現在祭灶的供品已

經從簡，但在唐宋時期是相當豐富的。宋代詩人范成大的《祭灶詞》生動描寫當時民間謝灶的情況：“古傳臘月二十四，灶君朝天欲言事。雲車風馬小留連，家有杯盤豐典祀。豬頭爛熟雙魚鮮，豆沙甘鬆粉餌圓。”家家戶戶“酌酒燒錢”謝別灶君，誠心祈求灶君早日歸來，保佑灶火不斷，飲食平安。

中國人表達情感素來含蓄委婉，有時候喜歡用食物向家人親友表達關懷。每逢節日，主婦一早便到菜市場買菜，忙足一天，為的是讓家人吃到一頓豐富的晚飯。現代人生活忙碌，全家人很難得聚在一起，所以那頓飯特別有意義。滿桌佳肴盛饌，後輩為長輩添菜添酒，年長的叮囑年青的多吃一點，下廚的人看見一家人開懷大嚼，暖在心頭，滿堂歡聲笑語，溫馨洋溢。

時代不同，過節的習俗和食品改變了不少，但我們依舊守着過節一家人吃飯的古老傳統。“一年能幾團圓月”，能聚在一起便應好好珍惜。只要家中老少平安，開開心心吃一頓飯，吃的無論是山珍海錯，還是青菜鹹魚，一樣津津有味。對於中國人來說，闔家團圓是人生最大的富足，幸福的滋味也莫過於此。



## 游藝

## 話說梨園

每逢農曆三月二十四日，粵劇伶人都會拜祭田竇二師。田竇二師何許人也？粵劇界對兩人的來歷也不太清楚，眾說紛紜。一說唐代宦官高力士熱愛戲曲，某日看見兩名身穿彩衣的小童在田野間載歌載舞，妙曼的舞姿，靈巧的動作，出神入化。高力士嘆為觀止，於是上前討教，但兩童隨即消失在田壟間，不知去向。後來，高力士在夢中得到兩童授予霓裳羽衣舞，再轉傳梨園子弟。兩名小童的身世無從稽考，只因他們躲入田壟的竇口，人稱田竇二師。

除了田竇二師外，粵劇伶人也拜祭華光先師。農曆九月二十八日是華光寶誕。凡有新戲演出，開鑼前劇團例必誠心上香，祭拜先師。相傳華光是火神，有三隻眼。玉皇大帝覺得戲棚鑼鼓喧天，十分煩厭，便下令華光燒毀。可是，華光被伶人的精彩表演深深吸引，不忍他們葬身烈火，曲藝失傳，於是教導他們廣燒香燭，圖以煙霧瞞騙玉帝，令他以為戲棚已付之一炬。梨園子弟避過火燒之劫，心存感激，為表尊崇，遂供奉華光為祖師爺。

為求演出順利平安，戲行一些約定俗成的規矩必須遵守。後台擺放戲班家當和衣箱前面的地方稱為“龍口”，閒人不得內進，假如有人在龍口站立或坐下，猶如把伶人的咽喉卡住，令他們失聲，故視為一大禁忌。衣箱有如伶人的身家性命，任何人均不得坐在其上，不可用腳亂踢，更不可在衣箱上睡覺。

演戲的地方如果從未上演過粵劇，戲班就要進行破臺儀式，慣常形式為上演“祭白虎”的短劇。破臺儀式完成前，戲棚內必須鴉雀無聲，任何人都不可開口說話，否則不吉利的事便會接踵而來。此外，演出前也不可隨便敲打鑼鼓，因為打鑼打鼓之後沒有演出，乃不吉利之兆。

這些禁忌與規矩流傳多年，早已成為粵劇文化的一部分，梨園子弟至今仍然嚴格遵守，可見他們尊重傳統，演出認真。



# Where Should the Stress Fall?

Please read the following passage aloud and mark where the stress should fall on the words in italics:

The funding *committee* turned down the *tentative* loan scheme submitted by the Golden *Triangle* Food and Beverage Company because ten people had been hospitalised after consuming *hamburgers* in one of the company's chain stores. Under the existing *mechanism*, no application for funding by a blacklisted company shall be approved.

The five words in italics are commonly used in our everyday life but some people make mistakes in stressing the syllables. Except for the word “committee” /kə'mɪti/, whose second syllable should be pronounced louder and longer, the other four words are all stressed on the first syllable: “tentative” /təntətɪv/, “triangle” /traɪæŋɡl/, “hamburger(s)” /hæmbɜːɡə(r)z/ and “mechanism” /mekənɪzəm/.

Word stress, or the emphasis given to certain syllables in a word, is a key to understanding spoken English. Stressing the wrong syllable can very often cause misunderstanding. While native speakers learn syllabic stress naturally, some non-native speakers, probably because of interference from the intonation patterns of their mother tongue, put the stress on the wrong syllable of certain words.

In words with multiple syllables, there may be more than one level of stress. While one syllable is always pronounced most prominently (i.e. primary stress), another syllable may have a kind of intermediate stress though not as strong as the primary stress. This is called “secondary stress”. For example, the word “economic” /iːkə'nɒmɪk/ or /ekə'nɒmɪk/. The primary stress is clearly on the third syllable ([nɒ]), but the first syllable ([iː] or [e]) also has more stress than the other syllables.

Word stress may change with parts of speech. For words that can be used as both nouns and verbs, the nouns usually have the stress on the first syllable while the verbs are stressed on the second one:

Noun	Verb
suspect /'sʌspekt/	suspect /sə'spekt/
increase /'ɪŋkriːs/	increase /ɪn'kriːs/
record /'rekɔːd/	record /rɪ'kɔːd/
insult /'ɪnsʌlt/	insult /ɪn'sʌlt/
conduct /'kɒndʌkt/	conduct /kən'dʌkt/

Although there are some general patterns of word stress in multi-syllabic words, we cannot rely on them totally because there are many exceptions. In fact, word stress must be learned as an integral part of the pronunciation of a word by, for example, listening to how native speakers pronounce it.

Now, another quiz. In each of the following, which option – A or B – correctly reflects the word's primary stress?

	A	B
1. access (verb)	'ækses	æk'ses
2. access (noun)	'ækses	æk'ses
3. consultative	ˌkɒnsʌl'teɪtɪv	kən'sʌltətɪv
4. preparatory	pri'pærətəri	ˌprepə'reɪtri
5. comparable	kəm'pærəbl	'kɒmpərəbl
6. preferable	'prefrəbl	pri'færəbl
7. patrol	pə'trəʊl	'pætrəʊl
8. petrol	pe'trəl	'petrəl

Check out the answers at the end of this article. Each correct answer is awarded one point. How many did you get?



Answers: 1.A 2.A 3.B 4.A 5.B 6.A 7.A 8.B



# 纖雲弄巧 簾捲西風

古時每逢佳節，文人墨客都喜歡賦詩詠詞，抒發情懷。宋代詞人秦觀的《鵲橋仙》，詠嘆牛郎織女的凄美愛情，千古傳誦。

纖雲弄巧，飛星傳恨，銀漢迢迢暗度。  
金風玉露一相逢，便勝卻、人間無數。  
柔情似水，佳期如夢，忍顧鵲橋歸路。  
兩情若是久長時，又豈在、朝朝暮暮。

詞的上闕描寫牛郎織女七夕重逢的情景。兩人銀河相隔，千里迢迢，繁星流動，正忙着傳遞他們的相思凄苦。金風送爽，夜涼如水，玉露初凝。兩人久別重逢，互訴衷腸，“說不盡、離人話”。每年只此一夕相聚，但彼此的愛堅貞不渝，凡夫俗子之情怎可比擬？

詞的下闕道盡兩人離別之苦。溫柔美好的時光如夢般短暫，稍縱即逝。相逢也是別離。是時候歸去了，他們臨別依依，纏綿繾綣。然而，只要真情永在，又何必在乎能否朝夕相對，長相廝守。

《鵲橋仙》構思特別，虛實相間，情景交融，寫得自然流暢，溫婉感人，最後兩句更道出愛情的真諦，讓讀者細細回味牛郎織女天長地久的感情，動人心弦。

宋代女詞人李清照也善於刻劃人間至情。《醉花陰》是她在重陽佳節思念丈夫而寫下的佳作，膾炙人口。

薄霧濃雲愁永晝，瑞腦消金獸。  
佳節又重陽，玉枕紗廚，半夜涼初透。  
東籬把酒黃昏後，有暗香盈袖。  
莫道不消魂，簾捲西風，人似黃花瘦。

詞的首兩句借秋天晦暗的景象表達詞人孤單寂寞、暗自神傷的心情。悠長的白晝一片陰沉，金獸爐中的龍腦香早已燒盡，勾起人縷縷愁緒。雪白的瓷枕、牀畔的碧紗帳，滲透着半夜的涼氣。這三句暗示詞人在重陽佳節未能與夫婿團聚，感到無限淒涼。

下闕寫詞人對重九的感懷。良辰美景理應與愛郎把酒賞菊，但她卻在東籬獨酌到黃昏，淡淡黃菊幽香飄滿雙袖，益顯孤苦零丁，形單影隻。最後三句用西風吹捲簾幕寫出詞人憔悴的顏容，好比黃花般消瘦。全詞雙調仄韻，用筆明快，流轉如珠。詞人巧妙運用比喻襯托的手法表達相思之苦，真摯細膩，甚有情致。

這兩闕詞都是描寫感人肺腑之情，道出“天不老，情難絕”的綿綿愛意，詞句清麗，意境融徹，文學欣賞價值甚高。

The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other.

Burton Hillis

Going Upstream



## Kissing under the Mistletoe

When you sing the words “everybody knows a turkey and some mistletoe help to make the season bright”, have you ever wondered why mistletoe could work magic? Why is it a tradition to hang the shrub under the doorway during the holiday season? Do you know why a man and a woman are obliged to kiss under the plant?

The myths about mistletoe are many. The Norse mythology has it that Balder, the god of light and truth, told his mother, Frigga, the goddess of love and beauty, that he was haunted by the nightmare of his own death. Alarmed by her son’s dream, Frigga sought assurance from all the elements in the nine worlds save mistletoe not to harm her son. However, Loki, the trickster god, came up with an evil plan. He made a dart with poisonous mistletoe and tricked Hod, Balder’s blind brother, into shooting the arrow to kill Balder. Each of the elements tried in vain to restore the life of Balder. Grieved over the loss of her beloved son, Frigga cried and her tears changed the red berries of mistletoe to white, miraculously raising Balder from the dead. To express her gratitude to those who had helped her get back her son, Frigga kissed everyone who walked under the mistletoe.



Mistletoe also promised that it would never do bad deeds again.

Another legend about mistletoe originates from Britain. A long time ago, the Druids, priests of an ancient religion, believed in the magical power of mistletoe. They cut the branches of the plant into many sprigs and doled them out to the people, who hung them over doorways to ward off evil. Without roots, and therefore with no connection to the earth, mistletoe was considered sacred. The Celts believed it could not only make humans and animals fertile, but also heal diseases and protect people from witchcraft.

Mistletoe is also a symbol of peace, harmony and joy. In the past, enemies who happened to meet under trees bearing mistletoe were supposed to lay down their arms, embrace and stop fighting until the next day.

In observing the age-old custom of smooching under the mistletoe, a man should remove one berry after kissing a woman. When all the berries are gone, there is no more kissing. It is said that a couple who kiss under the mistletoe will ensure themselves of a happy marriage and a beautiful life.



# 流光璀璨 火龍舞

踏入農曆八月，寧靜的大坑區便會熱鬧起來，坊眾為着一年一度的舞火龍忙箇不停。為了參加慶典，不少已搬離大坑的居民都會重訪舊地，也有移居外國多年的老街坊專程回來。舞火龍不單團結了幾代的大坑人，更維繫了街坊的感情。

大坑原是客家農村，人口稀少，村民主要靠耕種和捕魚為生。據說一八八零年大坑受到風暴吹襲，村內出現一條蟒蛇，四處為禍，最後村民把那條蛇殺了。風災過後，蛇屍不翼而飛，村內隨即發生瘟疫。當晚，菩薩向村中父老報夢，說只要在中秋舞火龍，便可驅除瘟疫，消災解難。舞過火龍後，瘟疫果然消失，舞火龍自此流傳至今。

《禮記·禮運》記載：“麟鳳龜龍，謂之四靈”。龍為四靈之首，代表尊貴勇猛，是吉祥慶瑞之兆。自古以來，中國民間出現不同形式的龍舞。根據史籍，早於漢朝時人們已經開始舞龍，主要是為了祭天和祈雨。後來，在某些節日或盛大集會中，人們也會舞起長龍，以表達歡樂喜慶，並祈求風調雨順，國泰民安。

每年從農曆八月十四晚起，大坑一連三晚舞火龍。火龍先在蓮花宮開光，簪花掛紅，然後在街上巡迴。龍身長六十七米，用珍珠草紮成，分三十二節，插滿線香，兩顆龍珠則以柚子插上線香製成。舞龍的動作花樣百出，包括火龍過橋、火龍纏雙柱、綵燈火龍結團圓等招式。



舞龍時，走在前面的健兒揮動龍珠，數百名壯漢輪流舞動龍身追趕，隨着鑼鼓節奏左騰右挪，在大坑一帶穿梭，所到之處，都會迎來圍觀市民和遊客的熱烈歡呼。大街小巷煙香繚繞，火光閃爍，宛如點點繁星在夜間飛舞。按照傳統，農曆八月十六舞龍過後，火龍會送到銅鑼灣避風塘下海，稱為“龍歸天”。

舞火龍糅合了武術與鼓樂，別具特色，今年更列為“國家級非物質文化遺產”。時代變遷，很多民間傳統逐漸消失，希望舞火龍這個充滿地方色彩的活動可以一代一代傳承下去，發揚光大。

The best birthdays of all are those that haven't arrived yet.

Robert Orben



## 天保九如

## Happy Birthday

傳統一輩的母親喜於子女生辰做紅雞蛋，祈求子女吃了快高長大。某些地方的習俗是把熟雞蛋在孩子頭頂滾圈，寓意祛災納福。時至今日，不少母親仍會在孩子生日那天煮雞蛋，當中包含了媽媽對孩子無微不至的慈愛。

在隋唐五代，人們認為過生日是為了記念父母生養之恩。據《隋書·帝紀第二(高祖下)》所載，隋文帝曾下令全國在他生日當天“斷屠”，以茹素懷念他的雙親。時人過生日不尚慶祝，而是着重表達儒家感恩孝親之情。

中國人敬親尊長，所以特別重視為長者做壽，逢十的大壽更會隆重其事，宴請親友，並送上松鶴圖、福祿壽等寓意祥瑞的壽禮，祝願永享遐齡。

中國人視高壽為福氣，最廣為人熟悉的生辰賀詞莫過於“壽比南山”。此語出自《詩經·小雅》的《天保》篇：“天保定爾，以莫不興。如山如阜，如岡如陵，如川之方至，以莫不增……如月之恆，如日之升。如南山之壽，不騫不崩。如松柏之茂，無不爾或承。”詩中以九個比喻祝頌福壽綿長，故後世以“天保九如”為祝壽詞，而“如山如阜”、“如日之升”、“南山之壽”、“萬壽無疆”等也成為壽誕常用的賀詞。

Except those who are born on 29 February, we all celebrate our birthday once a year.

Western birthday customs have a long tradition. In ancient times, it was believed that people had a close link with the supernatural world and were surrounded by evil spirits on their birthdays. To fend off the demons, family and friends gathered around the birthday boy or girl and made merry together. This is how the birthday party came into being.

The highlight of a birthday party is blowing out candles on the birthday cake after making a silent wish. It is said that those who can blow out all the candles with one puff will be blessed with good luck. In ancient Greece, worshippers placed on the altar moon-shaped honey cakes lit with tapers as offerings to Artemis, the goddess of the moon, on her birthday, believing that the candle flame had the magic power to deliver their wishes to the goddess.

No birthday party is complete without the blessings of our loved ones. What makes our birthdays special is not that people buy us drinks and feed us cakes, but that we can have a happy time with someone we cherish. While not many people may know the exact origin of the birthday party, the joyous celebration and the good wishes of our family and friends continue to make our birthdays sweet and memorable.



# Parisian Holiday

It was five days until Christmas and the shops in the bustling Place Saint-Michel were festooned with garlands and tinsel. Lit up by twinkling lights, the plaza looked particularly romantic. Sightseers, carried away by the festive ambiance, took endless snapshots of the iconic Saint-Michel Fountain. It started to drizzle. They rushed awkwardly across the plaza with souvenir bags clutched in their hands and cameras dangling on their chests. Sean was sitting snugly by the window in a cosy restaurant, sipping his favourite dark coffee and reading a Paris map. He looked out through the clouded window pane and saw an Asian girl with short hair wiping her face under the red canopy of a patisserie. Sean leaned forward to have a closer look. But she had vanished.



Image acknowledgement:  
Painting by Eugène Galien-Laloue

Sean felt a tinge of loss, and was wondering where the girl had gone, when he was startled by a loud bang. He raised his head and saw the girl, clad in a dark blue flannel overcoat, apologising to the waiter at the entrance for her blunder. Sean looked at her mud-stained sneakers and giggled. He then quickly lowered his head, fearing that he might be discovered.

The girl took a window seat near the entrance, facing Sean, who, probably under the influence of the laid-back French melody playing, felt a strong urge to know more about her.

“*Garçon, un café noir, s’il vous plaît,*” said the girl in a beautiful voice.

“That’s interesting. She also likes dark coffee.” Sean said to himself.

The girl noticed Sean and smiled.

“You are a tourist?” asked the girl.

“Yes and you?” asked Sean.

“Yes, it’s the first time I’ve been in Paris.”

“I thought you lived here because you spoke beautiful French.”

“You heard what I said? I must have spoken too loud.”

Realising that his attention to her had been discovered, Sean blushed. The girl smiled at him again. The drizzle had stopped and the girl had finished her coffee. She picked up her overcoat and walked to the door. Before leaving, she suddenly turned back and warmly said “*Au revoir*” to Sean, who knocked over the coffee cup on the table when he was about to stand up to say good-bye.

It was freezing. Sean looked around outside the restaurant. The Place Saint-Michel, enveloped by the December chill, was still thronged with people. Sean stood in the plaza, blaming himself for his shyness and forced nonchalance.

With his muffler pulled up round his face, Sean walked back to the hotel under the dark sky, with the face of the girl on his mind. “I will definitely ask her name when I see her next time,” he said to himself. Awakened by an angry car horn, he found himself standing in front of a shop in which arrays of wooden toy soldiers in red uniforms

were neatly displayed. That reminded him of the large collection he once had when he was a little boy. He went inside.

“*Monsieur, c’est fermé!* It’s closed!” said the shop assistant.

“*Une minute, s’il vous plaît,*” Sean promised to be quick and swiftly picked up a tiny wooden soldier on a shelf. The shop assistant frowned. Sean gazed at the exquisite painting behind the shop assistant while she was wrapping the toy for him. “*Mademoiselle, we’re closed today. Come again tomorrow,*” shouted the shop assistant impatiently. “What a pity!” replied the girl who was about to come in. “That voice. Oh, oh it’s her.” Sean quickly turned around. Yet he saw no one – only the door closing with the ring of a bell. He rushed outside and the strong wind blew against his face.

It started raining again. Covering his head with the paper bag in which his toy soldier had been safely put, Sean dashed forward, wanting to take shelter under the canopy at the café not far away. He ran so fast that he almost



slipped. Feeling an immense chill, he rubbed his hands and tapped his feet as he stood under the canopy, inadvertently hitting someone behind him. He turned around and saw the back of a girl in a blue flannel overcoat. His heart leapt. Slightly irritated, the girl turned her head and found a young man standing there, bewitched like someone under a spell. Much amused, she said with a playful tone, “It’s you again.”

“Yes, it’s me again,” answered Sean, stupidly holding the half-torn paper bag in the rain.

\* This is a contribution from an Official Languages Officer.



# 花好月圓

來，詩人驚覺韶華虛度，正好趁立春之際，決心奮發圖強，與寒梅一同迎風綻放，勇展新姿。

春節詠梅，重九賞菊。重陽時節，秋高氣爽，菊花盛放，杜牧《九日齊山登高》抒發人生感悟：“江涵秋影雁初飛，與客攜壺上翠微。塵世難逢開口笑，菊花須插滿頭歸。但將酩酊酬佳節，不用登臨恨落暉。古往今來只如此，牛山何必獨霑衣。”詩人登山遠望，賞菊酣飲，頓覺花開堪折直須折，人生得意須盡歡，既然人生如寄，古與今同，何須像齊景公在牛山上悲泣。此詩盡顯疏放豁達、樂在當下的豪情逸趣。

對菊花情有獨鍾的陶淵明也曾於重陽感懷賦詩。《九日閒居》記靖節先生在重九之日無酒過節，在滿園秋菊中“空服九華\*”，思忖人生。念及自身“空視時運傾”，眼前“寒華\*徒自榮”，詩人一時感觸，“緬焉起深情”，心中湧起波瀾，直呼“棲遲固多娛，淹留豈無成”，對人生有更透徹的體會。

玉輪明晦，花開花落，每每牽動心中幽思摯情，讓時節添上深意。

\* “九華”、“寒華”皆指菊花



古代不少文人雅士愛託物言志，過節度歲，借身畔景物詠懷，明月華英，往往盡入詩興。

正月十五的上元節，是一年之中首個月圓之夜，古人都喜歡在這夜張燈結綵，出遊觀花燈，猜燈謎。唐寅《元宵》正是描寫元夜的盛況：“有燈無月不娛人，有月無燈不算春。春到人間人似玉，燈燒月下月如銀”，滿月的銀光灑遍人間，與萬千花燈互相輝映，一片繁華歡樂、人月團圓的景象。

景隨人遷，一樣的月光，卻會勾起際遇迥異的詩人另一番思緒。王建《十五夜望月寄杜郎中》：“中庭地白樹棲鴉，冷露無聲濕桂花。今夜月明人盡望，不知秋思落誰家？”中秋明月夜，原是團圓共聚的好時節，詩人卻孤身在淒冷寂寥的清輝下望月懷人，徒添愁思。

月圓月缺，彷彿人生變幻。蘇軾在中秋佳節難得與胞弟聚首，同賞“暮雲收盡溢清寒，銀漢無聲轉玉盤”的美景，實為人生快事，可惜世事無常，詞人半生萍寄，身不由己，不禁慨嘆“此生此夜不長好，明月明年何處看”。

天際朗月教人感觸良多，地上百花也常為詩人吟詠的對象。盧仝藉《人日立春》，立志仿效梅花自強不息的精神：“春度春歸無限春，今朝方始覺成人。從今克己應猶及，顏與梅花俱自新。”春去春

新年納餘慶 嘉節號長春

孟昶

## 第四十五期答案：

稱己方		稱對方
家嚴	父	令椿
家慈	母	尊萱
豚兒	子	令嗣
小女	女	令媛
外子	夫	尊夫君
內人	妻	嫂夫人
家兄	兄	尊兄
舍弟	弟	令棣
家姊	姊	賢姊
室妹	妹	令妹

## 以下得獎者將獲專函通知領獎：

姓名	所屬部門
Fung Ka-po	持續進修基金
陳秀眉	香港警務處
黃婉萍	食物環境衛生署
Chan Kin-yi	財經事務及庫務局
廖寶珠	稅務局





## Not-a-Mindboggler

# Festivals Trivia

To see a place, we may make a tour; to know its culture, we can look into its festivals. Customs and rituals tell much about a culture, and shed light on its values. How much do you know about the festivals around the world? Can you answer the following questions?

- When it is midnight in Spain on New Year's Eve, what do people do each time the clock chimes to bring good luck?
  - Make a wish
  - Say a prayer
  - Eat a grape
  - Take a sip of champagne
- In Ecuador, what is burnt in public on New Year's Eve to ring out the Old Year?
  - Bonfires
  - Pine trees
  - Newspapers of the past year
  - Effigies of events and people from the past year
- Instead of chocolate and flowers, traditionally what did a man give to his lover on St. Valentine's Day in the past?
  - A pair of gloves
  - A handkerchief
  - A ring
  - His hat
- What is the origin of the name Easter?
  - The Bible
  - The story of the three magi
  - A pagan goddess of springtime and fertility
  - A town in Jerusalem
- On the Japanese Boys' Day or Children's Day, what is hung outside the house?
  - Japanese iris
  - Carp streamers
  - Teru teru bozu* dolls
  - Warrior dolls
- Who wrote about the festival of *San Fermin*, or the Pamplona bull running, in his book, and made the fiesta famous throughout the world?
  - Scott Fitzgerald
  - Mark Twain
  - James Joyce
  - Ernest Hemingway
- As the superstition goes, seeing a spider on Halloween means:
  - a relative will bring you good luck soon.
  - a deceased relative is protecting you.
  - the family is having a baby in the next year.
  - your grandfather will visit within a week.
- In Charles Dickens's novel *A Christmas Carol*, the miser Ebenezer Scrooge becomes much more loving and compassionate after the visit of some spirits on Christmas Eve. What does he do on Christmas Day then?
  - He goes to Father Jacob for confession.
  - He thanks Marley's ghost for enlightening him.
  - He sends a prize turkey to the impoverished Cratchits anonymously.
  - He donates a large sum of money to the orphanage.
- The figure Santa Claus is modelled on a benevolent bishop renowned for his generosity in giving presents to the poor. What is the name of the bishop?
  - Saint Clarke
  - Saint Claudius
  - Saint Michael
  - Saint Nicholas
- In the famous poem about Santa Claus, *'Twas the Night before Christmas*, which of the following is NOT one of the eight reindeers pulling Santa's sleigh?
  - Comet
  - Cupid
  - Prancer
  - Rudolph

Please send your entry to the Editorial Board of *Word Power*, Official Languages Division, Civil Service Bureau, Room 2310, High Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong before 14 February 2012. 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 five to win a prize. The Editorial Board will have the final say on the answers.

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Issue No. 47 (March 2012) : Vogue and Aesthetics

二零一二年三月第四十七期主題：時尚審美

Issue No. 48 (June 2012) : Creativity

二零一二年六月第四十八期主題：創意無限

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。

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