

文訊

WORD POWER

第五十期 二零一二年十二月 Issue No.50 December 2012

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES DIVISION, CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

FANCY a Nibble?

What do you want to eat for lunch today? Savoury seafood linguine with scallops, shrimps and mussels in traditional Italian tomato sauce? Mouth-watering lemon-sage chicken cutlets with roast potatoes? Or a slice of thick crust pizza with melted mozzarella cheese, salami and bacon? If you get no kick from greasy food, what about chicken salad with beetroot, cherry tomatoes and baby spinach? What for dessert? An apple tart or a poached-pear-and-cinnamon *mille-feuille*, and a cup of regular coffee with cream seem a perfect end to the meal.



So much more than something we ingest to nourish our body, food, be it caviar or French fries, is an important source of pleasure. However, this has been long forgotten by many people who live in a hectic and grab-to-go food world. In a hurry to work every morning, many of us are deprived of a decent breakfast. The joy of leisurely taking a big bite of a crispy croissant or dipping a piece of baguette in milk is luxury. For dinner at home, we choose to eat something that is easily and quickly cooked, and gulp down everything without tasting its real flavour. The pleasure of eating is dismissed by many as a subject on lifestyle TV programmes, though it is actually one of the most primal desires that we all have. It is time for us to rediscover the joy of eating!

When it comes to food, we all have our own preferences. Many people are drawn by the exquisite presentation and elegant culinary techniques of French foods, which can be simple or elaborate, ranging from appetising French onion soup to succulent roast beef with wild mushroom in truffle sauce. Chinese cuisine, well-known for its diversity of cooking methods and styles, is highly palatable with rich flavours. Aromatic stir-fried crabs with liberal use of ginger, garlic and green onions, as well as juicy and tender sweet and sour pork, have conquered many hearts. Italian dishes are rustic and simple. Taking a nibble of healthy yet tasty eggplant Parmesan or roast onions with balsamic vinegar is really wonderful.

Good food does offer us great comfort when we are down and drained. What is better than a big bowl of tasty snacks on a lonely night? A packet of crunchy Brazil nuts, or a big scoop of vanilla ice-cream topped with hazelnuts and drizzled with blackberry sauce may give us a quick mood lift. Can you imagine the joy of taking a sip of lobster bisque or savouring a piece of sirloin steak after a long day's work? Food can console

people, and give people strength. So, the next time you feel blue, why not tuck into something delicious? A slice of strawberry tart or some melt-in-the-mouth morsels of almond macaroons go down a treat.

Food, whether you consume it in a posh restaurant in formal attire, or in a cramped and noisy cafeteria in ripped jeans or scuffed sneakers, tastes a lot better when you are with your family and friends. An expression of love, food brings people together. Around the table, we banter, laugh and eat. Through sharing experiences, we foster stronger bonding and better relationship. Some special flavours or aromas take us down the memory lane, reminding us of somebody somewhere. Did you miss your mother's signature dishes when you were thousands of miles away from home? Will you rush to a restaurant to have a hearty meal of local flavours after a long stay overseas?

A hearty meal may mean guilt to some weight or health watchers. They cannot help counting the calories and carbohydrates when they eat. However, there are always dishes that are healthy and delicious, bursting with zingy flavours. To stay slim and fit, here are some tips from the professionals: eat in moderation; go for good food instead of junk snacks; and take smaller portions. A few ounces of baked salmon are definitely better than half a pound; one small piece of high quality dark chocolate is more rewarding than a stack of run-of-the-mill candy bars, and a gratifying sumptuous lunch means a light dinner. Simple and easy to follow, these tips can help us develop a positive relationship with food.



Delicious food brightens up our days. Whether we are planning a grand get-together or just inviting a few friends over, the party will be no fun without tasty bites. Can you imagine a Christmas party without irresistible nibbles? Good food consoles our body, nourishes the soul and awakens the taste buds.

Have you decided what to eat for lunch yet? Whether your choice is creamy risotto or refreshing steamed fish, just let the flavours explode on your palate.

Bon appétit!

Don't put off happiness you can have today.
Tomorrow is a hope, not a promise.

Debra Anastasia



花甲背包客

在希臘雅典機場的入境櫃檯前站着一對頭髮斑白的夫婦，他們嘴裏念念有詞，不停背誦準備好的英語答案，希望過關時能夠用得上，但始終擔心言語不通會使他們被拒入境。出乎意料，入境人員頭也不抬便在他們的護照上蓋章，他們就這樣展開了漫長的環球之旅。這對夫婦年過六旬，家住北京，丈夫叫張廣柱，妻子叫王鐘津，帶着大半生的積蓄，在數年內遊遍世界。旅程結束後，二人把所見所聞撰寫成書，故事笑中有淚，感動萬千讀者。

步入晚年，張爸張媽不斷問自己日後想過怎樣的生活。他們從小就喜愛旅遊，為了重拾童年舊夢，毅然放下傳統安享晚年的觀念，決定與相濡以沫的老伴踏上旅途，雖然只會說幾句破英語，還是渴望到外面看看美麗多姿的世界。兩位旅者克服了語言障礙，在意大利旅館租房時還懂得用比手劃腳的工夫討價還價，最後竟然以六十歐元租到一間雙人房間，十分划算。

夫婦的旅程饒富趣味。他們在南極露營，在亞馬遜雨林睡吊牀，在馬丘比丘尋找歷史痕跡，在周末市場細看人生百態，在星空下與篝火為伴，在青年旅館與來自五湖四海的朋友談天說地……。不過，人生不可能永遠無風無浪，旅途上也不可能只

有晴天。他們在意大利遇劫，更曾經迷路不知多少遍。身處困境，張爸張媽沒有卻步，反而更積極樂觀面對，最終完成旅程，對生活有更大的感悟，對快樂有更深的體驗。

在三年多的旅程中，夫妻風雨同路，互相扶持，背着重甸甸的登山袋，撐着破舊的登山杖，手牽手踏上石階，走過遼闊草原，迎着晨曦，聽着鳥鳴，隨心率性地走着看着，高興時還跳起舞來，彷彿又回到青春歲月。張媽在秘魯病倒了，差點兒沒命。張爸親自為患病的妻子熬粥，卻冒失地把半個雞蛋殼煮在粥裏。看到張媽大病初癒，面容憔悴，張爸更珍惜與妻子一起的日子。在旅程中，他對張媽說：“我現在的願望就是健康和你一起再走三十年。”簡單的一句話令妻子暖透心窩。



《花甲背包客》以簡樸的文字勾畫出一段溫馨難忘的旅程。張爸張媽走遍七大洲，四十多個國家，有苦有樂。難得的是，面對困難險阻，更見真情。二人一起走過絢爛的日子，一起經歷平淡的生活；一路走來，相依相伴，幸福的真諦，莫過於此。

Love Works Magic

A volunteer barber grinned contentedly when he saw an old lady smile and give a big thumbs-up after having a new haircut in an old folks' home. A "mother" looked merrily at a photo of her sponsored child who beamed proudly while holding a perfect test paper in front of a run-down village school. Inside a crowded theme park, a young helper was leading a group of thrilled orphans to queue up for their first roller-coaster ride. Seeing the happy faces, the barber, the mother and the helper all felt an unspeakable joy at lending a hand to others.

Serving others can of course warm our hearts. But calling a friend up or sending a greeting message to him or her will also do. We always feel good when friends are with us. A candid conversation with buddies, be it about the talk of the town, the hottest new restaurants, or our grievances, always gives us a lift. The joy of bumping into a long-lost friend in the street is indescribable. No matter how long you have not seen each other, years fall away once the conversation starts. With our friends around, we know that we are not alone. They can always lend us a



sympathetic ear and a shoulder to cry on when we are sad. This is what friends are for.

Animals also make wonderful friends and companions. Examples of enduring ties between pets and their owners abound. Having a slobbery dog kiss after a stressful day, stroking a purring kitty on the sofa while watching TV, and talking to a parrot, so the experts tell us, do help create an inseparable bond between man and their pets. Many pet lovers say that their little darlings can detect their mood and listen to them when they are down in the dumps. Have you noticed that some kids bury their heads into the fur of their dogs when they are worried or nervous? Many owners are as dependent on the pets as their pets are on them. They live for each other, and keep each other going.

Whatever you do — providing services to your local community, asking your friends out for a drink, or taking care of others, will it feel different if you do it with a big heart? Life flourishes when we are connected to others. Reach out to those around us. Love works magic.



三更夢書當枕

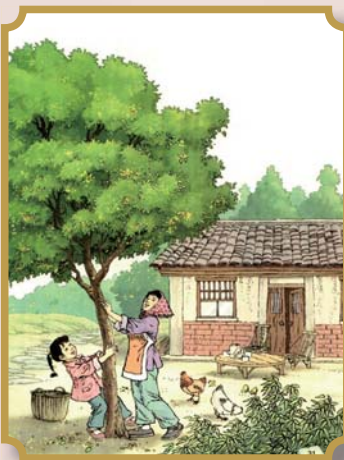
夜深人靜，手執一書，在燈光映照下，細意咀嚼，讀到共鳴處，心聲和應，沉醉在濃濃書香中，渾然忘我，閱讀之樂妙不可言。

文字世界浩瀚無垠，俯首細讀聖賢明哲古訓、文人騷客的詩詞，彷彿穿越時空，回到過去與古人一聚。走進唐詩，與豪邁奔放的詩仙李白對酒當歌，深深體會到何謂“人生得意須盡歡，莫使金樽空對月”，功名利祿如浮雲，又何必執着得失？“舉杯邀明月”，“明朝散髮弄扁舟”，不是更曠達灑脫嗎？

讀杜甫的《春望》，猶如上了一節歷史課。春天來了，詩人登高遠望，眼見長安淪陷，國破家亡，不禁低嘆“感時花濺淚，恨別鳥驚心”；戰火連綿，親人音信斷絕，倍覺“家書抵萬金”；雖有救國之心，可惜年事漸高，“白頭搔更短，渾欲不勝簪”。詩句沉鬱悲壯，憂國思親、傷時感懷之情躍然紙上，觸動人心。

“東風夜放花千樹，更吹落、星如雨”，一邊吟詠宋詞《青玉案》，一邊與辛棄疾在元宵之夜漫步賞燈。穿過車水馬龍的大街，聽到悠揚的“鳳簫聲”，又看到魚龍形的花燈隨風舞動。良宵月夜，詞人苦苦思念的人不知去向，“眾裏尋他千百度”，兜兜轉轉，芳蹤渺然，傷心失望之際，“驀然回首，那人卻在，燈火闌珊處”，詩般浪漫的情懷盈盈蕩漾。

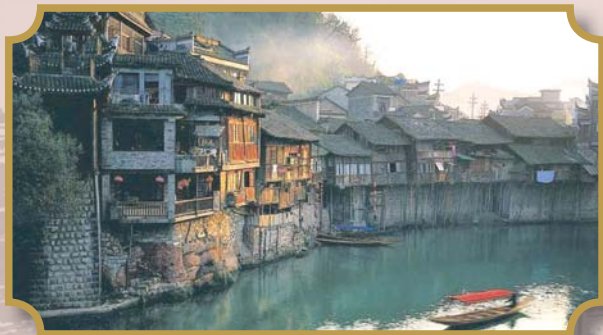
談到浪漫多情，怎可以不提納蘭性德的詞？這位烏衣公子，才富學贍，風度翩翩，“自是天上癡情種，不作人間富貴花”，與愛人雖是“一生一代一雙人”，奈何情深緣淺，“相思相望不相親”，最終好夢難圓。與妻兩地分隔，朝思夜念，在心裏輕輕喚着“別是柔腸繫掛，待歸才罷”；久別重逢，聽到愛妻哽咽地對他“說不盡、離人話”，愧疚之情湧上心頭。性德的詞清新雋秀，哀感頑豔，愁中有美，好一句“愁無限，消瘦盡，有誰知？”，盡顯詞人感性深情的一面。



走進現代文學世界，讀沈從文的遊記，恍如在鳳凰古城、綿長千里的湘西水道漫遊；看他的家書，讀者無不被他清麗的文筆感動。在給妻子的信中，他溫柔地說：“三三……你若今夜或每夜皆看到天上那顆大星子，我們就可以從這一粒星子的微光上，彷彿更近了一些”。他的代表作《邊城》，以淡淡的筆墨寫出真摯動人的故事。小說寫了翠翠和爺爺相依為命之情，更寫了大老和二老兩兄弟對翠翠之愛。邊城的小人物雖命不由人，但實實在在地生活，淳樸熱愛貫穿小說，令人感到溫暖。

讀台灣作家琦君的散文，聽她訴說兒時樂趣，就好像走到她的故鄉瞿溪，與她一起坐在戲棚前的長凳上，欣賞《秦始皇》、《三娘教子》，一邊啃甘蔗，一邊把核桃糖、藕片往嘴裏送；又好像與她一起讀四書，背誦《論語》、《孟子》，背錯了更給家庭老師打手心；還有，好像在桂花盛開時節，與她站在樹下使勁地搖，讓花落如雨，千里飄香。琦君的散文平淡中見真摯，素樸中見絢麗，真實自然，細膩親切，極富人情味。

讀至睏倦時，徐徐入夢，在那玉宇瓊樓，乘風起舞，唱一闕“但願人長久，千里共嬋娟”；又看到司馬遷隱忍苟活，“不虛美，不隱惡”，寫下千載不朽的《史記》；接着走過幽幽古道，來到贛江東岸，登上滕王閣，一睹“珠簾暮捲西山雨”，觀望落霞孤鶩，遠眺秋水長天。三更夢書當枕，一夜沉醉美文佳句，低吟唱詠，懷古思今，試問有誰願意夢醒？



花時浪過如春夢，酒敵先甘伏下風。
惟有吟哦殊不倦，始知文字樂無窮。

歐陽修

Angels in the Railway Station



Inside a small railway station, Kyle was sitting on a bench, looking worried. He dug around in his backpack, hoping that his wallet and passport would be found. A chubby police officer in a blue uniform walked up to him and said, "Sorry, young man, no good news so far. All offices are closed during the holiday. Nothing can be done. But don't worry. Things will look up."

Suddenly, Kyle heard noises coming from the other end of the station. A shabby man in a worn-out cloak was pushed away by a fierce kiosk assistant in front of a newspaper stand. The assistant yelled at the ragged man and snatched something from his hand. The police officer immediately walked towards them and took the man away.

The Christmas tree near the entrance of the station was lit with white lights making it look like frost from a distance. Stranded in a small town thousands of miles away from home, Kyle was not in the mood to appreciate its beauty. It was six o'clock. He looked out of the window and saw snow whirling in the wind. A little hand patted his lap and an adorable girl with curly locks was smiling at him.

"Do you know how to play rock-paper-scissors?" asked the girl innocently.

"Yes, I do. What's your name?" asked Kyle.

"Melanie."

With an embarrassed smile, Melanie's mother tried to stop her daughter pestering Kyle. Though not really interested in the game, Kyle, bored and anxious, wanted to find something to do to take his mind off his trouble. They counted "one, two, three", and moved their fists up and down. Melanie's angelic laughs echoed across the station and warmed Kyle's heart.

"Do you go to school?" asked Melanie, leaning her head on Kyle's shoulder.

"Yes, I do. I'm an art student in the university."

"What is art?"

"Sort of drawing pictures."

"Can you draw a fairy?"

"I guess so."

Melanie took out a red sketch book and a box of crayons from her bag, and gave them to Kyle. He made a few quick strokes on the sketch book. "It's beautiful. I like the wings. But where's the magic wand?" asked Melanie.

"Oh, sorry. I didn't realise that," uttered Kyle, blushing at his ignorance.

Melanie fumbled in her pocket, drew out two candies and gave one to Kyle.

"I like chocolate better. You take the toffee candy."

"No problem. I like toffee. Thank you, Melanie."

Kyle put the toffee candy into his mouth and let it melt on his tongue. Moments later, tired but contented, they both fell asleep. The clock struck eight. Melanie crawled on Kyle's lap and kissed him on the cheek, which woke the young man up. Holding her mother's hand, she walked out onto the snow-carpeted platform. Before disappearing into the darkness, she waved back. A sudden feeling of grief took hold of Kyle.

The ragged man returned to the station. A few feet away from Kyle, he was searching a litter bin furtively. Seeing the police officer patrolling around, he hid himself behind a vending machine. At that moment, a beautiful girl wearing a black velvet party dress walked in, brushing off the snow on her wrap. She sat down opposite Kyle, texting her friends that she would be late for the Christmas party. Her eyes caught Kyle's and they smiled at each other.

"Hello, I'm Kelly. Is this the first time you've been here?"

"Yes. Or to be more exact, it's the first time I've been stranded here."

Half curious and half sympathetic, Kelly leaned forward to hear Kyle's story.

"Don't worry. Everything will be okay after the holiday. I'm going to a party, and we have a cool rock band tonight. Who's your favourite singer? Let me guess. Lady Gaga?" asked Kelly, who was trying to cheer up Kyle.

"How do you know? I am a huge fan of hers. Just kidding. Actually, I know nothing about pop music."

Their conversation went on until the station officer announced the departure of the next train. Kelly got up, gave Kyle a big hug and left. With a tinge of sadness, Kyle sat down and heard the noises in his stomach. Suddenly, someone shouted. Kyle turned around and saw Kelly waving to him with a radiant smile.

"There you go," said Kelly, giving a box of sandwiches to Kyle. "I've already added you to my Friends list."

Speechless and full of emotions, Kyle watched Kelly walk into the train compartment. It was almost nine o'clock. The police officer rushed towards him and said with a big laugh, "Young man, you're lucky. They're all here. You'd better hurry. The train you're going to take will depart in five minutes."

Kyle opened his wallet and tears welled up in his eyes. He held the police officer tight in his arms, and said gratefully, "You're my Santa Claus."

Next to the Christmas tree, the ragged man was bending down to pick up something. Kyle darted across the station and put his sandwiches into the man's hand. The man froze there, not knowing what to say. But a warm smile soon emerged on his wretched and wrinkled face.

"Merry Christmas!" said Kyle.

"Merry Christmas, Sir!"





追夢



小學上作文課時，老師總喜歡叫我們寫寫自己的志願。下筆前，同學們興高采烈地討論，人人心懷大志，有的喜歡當消防員，有的立志成為太空人，有的夢想成為出色的芭蕾舞家。大家的眼神都充滿了希望和期盼，不管目標能否達到，單單憧憬着實現理想那份喜悅，已經樂上半天。

人生只要有夢，就有期待，生活就充滿希望。香港單車女將李慧詩的夢想，是穿上代表世界單車冠軍的彩虹戰衣。要踏上世界單車壇最高的台階，要付出的努力可真不少。長期艱辛的訓練並沒有令李慧詩卻步，即使因傷差點要退役也沒有令她放棄夢想。面對逆境，她咬緊牙關，堅持不懈，不能習訓就在健身室踏單車機鍛煉體能，以汗水繼續編織她的彩虹夢。在倫敦奧運中，李慧詩在決賽最後一圈拼盡全力，奮勇衝刺，力壓對手，摘下銅牌。站在頒獎台上的一刻，她咬着獎牌，眼泛淚光，心情無比激動，經過一番拼搏取得佳績，那份快樂顯得特別珍貴。



夢想並非一定要幹一番驚天動地的偉業，小小的夢想也可令生活精彩。今年維港渡海泳比賽中，有一位五十多歲的健兒，患有小兒麻痺症，他有一個心願，就是完成整個渡海泳賽程。平日走路也得靠雙手撐着拐杖，要達成這個心願談何容易。他知道自己下肢無力，要游畢全程就要加強雙手划水的力量。為了超越自我，他不斷練習，希望以最佳狀態參賽。比賽終於來臨，槍聲一響，他縱身躍進大海中，冷冷海水撲面而來，他使勁地划動雙手，與其他健兒在碧波中一起奮進，最終完成賽事。游過這次渡海泳，他深深體會到只要下定決心，傾盡全力，總有一天可以圓夢。

日復一日，生活彷彿平淡如水，但有了夢想，每一天就變得不一樣。為了自己，為了家人，為了理想，每天奮鬥，無論目標是跑一次馬拉松比賽、學習一種外語、為摯愛學做一個生日蛋糕……，生活就充滿動力，也更有意義。人生是心靈之旅，只要懷着夢想，帶着希望，踏實地一步一步向前，一站一站走下去，不論是晴空萬里，還是陰霾密布，前面總會有更明媚的風光。

PAPYRUS
&
QUILL



Life Is Fun

You wake up late and find that the shirt or dress you want to wear is still in the laundry basket. Bad enough? No, far from it. You have huddled in line with many other gadget fans outside a giant store for one whole day, hoping to get your hands on the latest hotly-anticipated smartphone, only to be told by a store assistant with a smiling face that it has sold out, while those who have got one give each other a high five around you. These trifles, scattered along life's path, always get people down. Can't we just relax and laugh? When it seems like everything is going wrong, there is always something that is going right. In fact, joy is all around.

The pleasure of sleeping in on a Sunday morning is beyond words. There is nothing more precious than an extra hour or some more minutes in bed after a hectic week. Buried under a fluffy down blanket, you yawn, still half asleep, stretch your arms and legs, and roll across the bed, indulging in a quiet moment of doing nothing. When you feel hungry, you can have brunch in bed. Leaning against a pile of comfortable pillows, you read the morning paper, take a bite of your muffin, and sip your coffee slowly, letting the fresh aroma of the brew wake you up. Should you want some more sleep, just pull up the blanket and laze the whole morning away.

Watching a good movie is also an immense joy. Nowadays, we can see our favourite films anytime we like. On the couch with a bowl of yummy snacks on our lap, alone or in good company, we cry, laugh or scream as the story unfolds. Have you ever laughed so hard that your stomach hurt when watching Charlie Chaplin's endless blunders in his comedies? Are you moved by the subtle romance between the elfin princess and the handsome journalist in *Roman Holiday*? While feel-good movies can cheer us up and make the world feel like a better place, stories with an unhappy ending make us cry and release our pent-up feelings.

Life is indeed full of fun and surprises: two favourite songs coming on in succession on the iPod shuffle, chatting with an old friend on Skype, finding a forgotten one hundred dollar bill in the pocket of your coat, and getting butterflies in your stomach every time you see that special person. Caught up in the commitments of day-to-day living, however, we rarely remember them. So, from now on, forget the hiccups and seize the day!



謙謙君子 學富五車

二零一二年十月十五日，康寶文博士因病辭世。自二零零三年起，康博士一直擔任《文訊》中文顧問。這位溫文爾雅、滿腔熱誠的老師才高八斗，文章經他潤色，頓生華彩。老師的評語字字珠璣，多年來編輯小組得其指點，獲益良多。康老師熱衷傳揚中國語言文化，臥病在牀仍替《文訊》批閱文稿，無私奉獻的精神實在令人欽佩。

康老師春風化雨，深受學生愛戴。有幸聽過老師講課的公務員同事想必認同，老師風趣幽默，和藹可親，師德高尚，虛懷若谷。

青山不語，流水嗚咽。老師長陌遠行，但他的音容笑貌、寬厚美德定會長留我們心中。



逍遙遊

浮生若夢，似水流年，匆匆一生，為歡幾何？賞心樂事，各人感受不盡相同，但宋代大文豪蘇東坡認為人生有十六種美事值得細意體會。

**清溪淺水行舟，涼雨竹窗夜話，
暑至臨流濯足，雨後登樓看山，**

東坡居士乘烏篷船，順流而下；孤舟過處，濺起道道浪花。蘇子舉頭觀看兩岸景色，襟袂凌風，悠然自得，任隨河水打濕衣衫。夜雨不斷敲打竹窗，嗒嗒作響，與知己良朋促膝夜話，別是一番閒情雅趣。炎暑夏日，在清溪流濯足，涼意直透心扉，無比舒暢。雨後氤氳濕潤，登樓遠眺，天地蒼茫，羣山默默，詩人獨倚欄杆，物我兩忘，融入清雅如畫的靈山秀水中，塵囂盡洗。

**柳陰堤畔閒行，花塢尊前微笑，
隔江山寺聞鐘，月下東鄰吹簫，**

楊柳依依，堤畔瀰漫着綠樹的清芬，蘇子一襲青衫徜徉小徑上，淡定從容，沉醉於當下那份恬靜；閒來在花前暢飲，欣然自樂，滿面春風。忽聞隔江山寺傳來陣陣鐘聲，悠揚縹緲，不斷在風中回蕩，讓心靈安靜舒坦。明月如水，清輝流瀉大地，聽到東鄰吹奏一曲，簫聲如泣如訴，清耳悅心，實為美事。

**晨興半炷名香，午倦一方藤枕，
閑覽忽逢陶謝，接客不著衣冠，**

清晨起來，居士熏半炷清香，閉目凝神，縷縷幽香盈室，頓覺神清氣爽。午後感到睏倦便抱枕入眠，暫且忘卻煩擾的塵俗事；夢裏依稀，一覺醒來，睡眠惺忪，迷迷糊糊，沉溺在片刻的快意慵懶中。酒興大發，便開懷痛飲，無拘無束，一派醉卧白雲的灑脫。有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？蘇子不拘小節，那管還未穿戴冠，便趨前迎客，疏放自然。



**乞得名花盛開，飛來佳禽自語，
客至汲泉煎茶，撫琴聽者知音。**

百花吐豔，競相綻放，居士穿過爛漫的花叢，聽到樹上雀鳥爭鳴，嘰嘰啾啾地唱詠，鳥聲清脆悅耳，令人感到心曠神怡。千金易得，知己難求，故人到訪，泡一壺清茶共嚐，細說當年；忽發雅興，又抱琴彈奏一曲，相互唱和，琴聲笑語此起彼伏，如此消磨時光確是一大樂事。

東坡居士看淡名利，寄意於山川水色間，留情在煙波畫影中，樂做一個尋風追月的雅客。人生無常，繁華易散，何不倚着一幅幅水墨長卷，坐看雲起，醉數繁星，做一個晏然自處的人？保持着一份率性、灑脫，在大自然中尋找簡單平實的幸福，何嘗不是逍遙的人生？

樂天知命，故不憂。

《易·繫辭上》



Saying It Nicely

The following sentences contain some euphemistic expressions. Do you know their meaning? Check the answers at the bottom of this article.

1. A partially sighted person is someone who is part-_____.
2. A correctional facility is a _____.
3. I am afraid you are being let go. It means you are being _____.
4. The Government is going to have revenue augmentation, meaning it is going to _____.
5. She is vertically challenged. She is actually _____.
6. Character lines are _____.
7. Someone who is in between jobs is _____.

Euphemistic expressions are used to avoid making a statement that is direct, clear and honest, often out of kindness when the direct expression might give rise to offence. For example, a deaf person is often described as *hard of hearing* and someone who gets drunk as having *one over the eight*. The poor, in our euphemistic world, are in a *lower income bracket*, the *under-privileged* or *fiscal under-achievers*.

We need such expressions as replacements for those that are embarrassing, unpleasant or crude. *Adult entertainment* sometimes seems a better alternative for the word "pornography". *Au naturel*, a French loan-word which means being naked, is also used by many. These euphemistic skills are sometimes further honed. For

example, a transsexual is described as someone having *gender-reassignment* which simply means a sex-change operation.

Crime, on some occasions, is cloaked in euphemism. *Tax fiddling*, *meter feeding* and *fare dodging* all sound like some commendable streetwise skills. Yet they are all criminal activities. When you meet someone who is *economical with the truth*, you have to be careful because he or she is a liar.

There is no dearth of euphemisms for death. *Senior citizens* or *golden agers pass on*, *depart*, *sleep with the angels*, *go to their just reward*, *pop off*, *fade away*, *kick the bucket* or *pop their clogs*. Euphemism is also useful to help make some tedious-sounding jobs seem more attractive. Do you know what *savings strategists*, *endowment executives* or *pensions counsellors* do? They may simply be insurance salesmen, as we used to call them.

Euphemisms have become part of our everyday life. Socially, we may need to use some euphemisms if we do not want to sound insensitive. But watch out for their misuse because they paint a thick veneer over clarity and understanding. The English language, in fact, has a wonderfully rich and expansive vocabulary, and there are always words that we can use to express ourselves politely and accurately.

Answers: 1. blind 2. prison 3. fired 4. raise tax 5. short 6. wrinkles 7. unemployed

Count your age by friends, not years.
Count your life by smiles, not tears.
John Lennon



A Sensory Stroll in Spring

The earth finally comes back to life after a long bleak winter. A warm, lush and fresh season emerges after the cold slumber — tiny leaves come out of coral-coloured buds; blooming flowers burst into a profusion of colour and fragrance, and nesting birds chirp happily in the trees.

It rains a lot in the spring, and sometimes it seems as if it will never stop. Pitter-patter, the raindrops keep falling. Early in the morning, we take a stroll down the country road, listening to the staccato tapping on our umbrellas. Lured by the fun of a wet and slippery world, we throw away our umbrellas, raise our heads, and let the tiny raindrops hit our faces and roll down gently along our arms and legs. Deeply immersed in our rain bath, we run, shout and jump, putting away our sorrows and worries. We run on and on and on. We are in heaven!

The rain stops, and the sun is out. We are in front of a muddy puddle. The profound smell of wet mud reminds us of the tactile, sensory experiences we had when we wallowed, romped and dug through mud as



little kids. To recapture the long-lost fun, we roll up our pants, kick off our shoes, and gingerly wade through the puddle, feeling a funny sensation as mud oozes through our toes. Dirty and sticky though it may seem, mud also makes sweet and fond memories.

After a refreshing foot shower, we continue our stroll. The sweet aroma of the dewy grass fills the air. We take a deep sniff. Blossoms of different species are thriving, offering a wealth of exquisite beauty for photography enthusiasts to capture. The trail is dotted with small flowers, a mix of red, orange, white and blue. With its small daisy-like yellow petals, ragwort is among the first to welcome the arrival of spring.

The countryside hums with life. Cyclists ride past leisurely, enjoying the warmth of the sun and the stunning beauty of spring. We arrive at a river where some campers are busy preparing their breakfast while some work together to erect their tents. Camping in the field, though not as comfortable as lying on a king-size mattress in a cosy hotel, does offer us the opportunity to experience the natural world and have a good time with our family and friends.

We may, if we feel tired, lie supine in a meadow flanking the trail, and look at puffy clouds slowly drifting across the blue sky. We may head back anytime as we like. It does not matter whether we get where we want to go. There is always an intense but simple joy in taking a stroll down a country road on a spring morning.

THINGS TO BE HAPPY ABOUT

When you find life frustrating and respite seems like a far-off dream, don't wallow in self-pity and grief. Spare a minute to look around and you will see many heart-warming or interesting things. Below is a list of things that make many people happy. Fill in the blanks with words that best complete the phrases. The first letter of each word has been given to you:

1. A_____ just in time for a train.
2. A day o__ from work.
3. Staying up all n_____ with our friends.
4. Snuggling d____ in a comfortable chair, listening to your favourite music.
5. A romantic taxi r____ home after a great night out.
6. The sound of p_____ rain on the roof.
7. Swinging on a s_____.
8. Wrapping p_____ under the Christmas tree while drinking eggnog.
9. S_____ up for what you believe in.
10. Living for a c_____ greater than yourself.

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 13 February 2013. 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.

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

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第四十九期答案

1. 星、斗	6. 烏鶻
2. 楊柳	7. 瓜、李
3. 黃鶴	8. 風、雨
4. 霜、楓	9. 夏、冬
5. 月、星	10. 橙、橘

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Issue No. 51 (March 2013) : The Flow of History

二零一三年三月第五十一期主題：歷史長河

Issue No. 52 (June 2013) : Footprints in Our Lives

二零一三年六月第五十二期主題：人生點滴

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。

英語顧問 Dr Robert J. Neather

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