

文訊 WORD POWER

法定語文事務署通訊 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AGENCY NEWSLETTER

迎春接福話新年

爆竹聲中一歲除，春風送暖入屠蘇。
千門萬戶曠曠日，總把新桃換舊符。

宋王安石《元日》

中國傳統節日之中，說熱鬧、說氣氛，首推農曆新年。

新年是一歲之首，古代又稱元日、元旦、新春、新正等，而今人則稱春節。古代中國以農立國，古人依循按月令計算的農曆耕種，不違農時。“年”字的古寫上半為“禾”，下半從“人”，像人背負禾的樣子，表示一年的豐收。“年”的初義，《說文解字》的解釋就是“穀熟也”。由於莊稼一年一熟，“年”才有了“一年”的時令意義。在農業社會裏，“過年”也就成為闔家團圓，共享收成的節日。

根據民間傳說，“年”是一種兇猛的野獸，每年除夕跑出來為禍人間。人們躲藏起來，整夜不眠，並燃燒竹子，發出爆破的聲響，好把年獸嚇跑。到了第二天，大家沒給年獸吃掉，就往親友家串門子，互相道賀。守歲過年、放爆竹、拜年，就成了新年習俗。

新年習俗既慶賀過去的一年，又祝願新的一年五穀豐收、人畜興旺，多與農事有關。新年每多舞龍助興，這是源於鄉村祈求龍神庇佑，風調雨順；舞獅原是為了鎮懾糟蹋莊稼、殘害人畜的年獸，也成了歡度佳節的助興節目。隨社會的發展，新年的敬天祭祖色彩逐漸淡化，但許多避禍納吉的傳統

年俗至今仍廣為流行。

鬧哄哄的年貨市場、街頭紅彤彤的年飾、商戶送給客人的年畫、利市封包……總在提醒大家：新年來了。從農曆十二月歲暮之始，家家戶戶便準備過年，打掃家居、購買年貨，到處喜氣洋洋。除夕夜，家家擺上豐盛的菜餚，闔府團聚吃年飯，長輩給孩子分賞壓歲錢，接下來大家或喝酒聊天，或說笑耍樂，通宵不眠守歲。初一元日到十五元宵，燃鞭炮、貼春聯、掛年畫、舞龍舞獅、拜年賀喜、團拜春茗等習俗，都是華人社會常見的新春活動。

傳統年節的習俗傳承久遠，時至今日仍饒有意義。除夕的年夜飯、過年的祀神祭祖，不就是全家團圓和感恩謝天的體現嗎？現代社會生活忙碌，親友難得相聚，拜年便成了維繫友道情誼的良機。過年要說吉祥話，還有諸多禁忌，看似迷信，但細想一下，大家見面碰頭，恭喜問好，總有助促進人際和諧吧！誰不希望新的一年就有好的開始？春臨半島，福澤香江，都是大家的祈願。

農曆新年雖有鮮明的時代印記，但它的主旋律——親情、祥和、歡欣和對來年美好的期盼，卻是永恆不變，歷久常新。

Chinese New Year — A Time for Blessings

When was the Chinese New Year first celebrated? It may be too distant to trace. One legend, however, may help throw some light on its origin.

Once upon a time, a monster called *Nin* (年, meaning 'year') came to a village on New Year's Eve and preyed on the villagers. The following year it returned and again ravaged the village. The villagers were scared but helpless. But Heaven seemed to show mercy and a sage came to their rescue.

On that New Year's Eve, the villagers acted on the sage's advice by putting up red banners on their doors and windows, playing drums and gongs, setting off firecrackers. The auspicious red colour and the deafening noises were intended to scare the monster away. All this worked and the village survived the evil *Nin*. In celebration, the villagers visited one another, exchanged gifts and extended their congratulations. This custom has since passed from generation to generation.

Today, the Chinese New Year is a time for reunion and thanksgiving. Family members get together to give prayers and offerings to deities and the family's ancestors who, they believe, have protected them over the past year. If worshipped and remembered with due respect, they will continue to give their blessings in the coming year.

Other practices of the Chinese New Year are also meant to bring good luck. On walls and doors hang good wishes written on bright red paper. They represent the aspirations of all ages, such as '萬事勝意' ('may all your wishes come true'), '大吉大利' ('great luck and great fortune'), and '龍馬精神' ('vigorous like a dragon and a horse'). Actually, only a single word '福' (meaning 'good fortune') hung upside down is good enough as the Chinese character for 'upside down' and that for 'arrival' sound alike. An upturned '福' thus

means 'good fortune will come'.

Similar propitious wishes abound in Chinese New Year greetings. '*Kung Hey Fat Choy*' ('wishing you rich and prosperous') has become so popular in Hong Kong that it is not uncommon for a foreigner to greet you with these words during the festive days.

Special dishes for the Chinese New Year are meant to bring good luck too. Mushroom is one of the essential ingredients for it is a symbol of longevity. Some foods are especially popular because they are homophonous with certain auspicious words. Typical examples are dried oyster (*ho sze*, which sounds like 'good business' in Cantonese), and black moss (*fat choy*, which resembles 'prosperity'). Fish is indispensable since fish in Chinese (魚) is a homonym of 'surplus' (餘). This is particularly important as most Chinese people are used to saving money for rainy days.

One must not forget certain taboos during the Chinese New Year. Expressions which would remind people of bad luck like 'dying' and 'broken' are to be avoided. Sweeping the floor is forbidden on New Year's Day because good fortune must not be swept away. Similarly, knives or scissors are to be put away for the time being, and people should refrain from washing their hair if they want to keep their good luck.

From these various customary practices to the variety of traditional foods, from the lucky, and definitely favourite red packets to exuberant and acrobatic lion dances, none of the basic elements of the Chinese New Year is alien to any Chinese community. It is not merely about rituals and celebrations, rather it is about fostering bonds among family members and renewing friendships. Many Chinese traditions may have faded, but, in the Chinese world, the anticipation, preparation, and celebration of the Lunar New Year endures.





卓越顧客服務展覽

“法定語文事務署是做什麼工作的？”
“你們的部門是不是剛成立的？”
“你們會不會替市民翻譯文件？”

這些都是參觀卓越顧客服務展覽的市民最愛提出的問題。

展覽由公務員事務局主辦，於二零零二年二月一日至五日在中央圖書館展覽館舉行，目的是向市民介紹各政府部門的服務。

參展部門各出奇謀，或以鮮艷奪目的展板設計作招徠，或以各式各樣精緻的紀念品為“餌”，有些更以新穎的遊戲來吸引參觀者駐足觀看。

法定語文事務署以輕鬆的故事，配以生動的漫畫，概述為客戶提供的服務。不少市民看了我們的展板後，才知道我們肩負兩大任務：一方面為政府部門提供實際的語文服務，

例如翻譯施政報告等重要文件，以及在財富論壇會議等國際會議中擔任傳譯，另一方面，也是各政府部門的語文顧問。法定語文事務署的支援是全方位、多層次的。不論是即時的援助，例如為公務員解答遣詞用字的問題，或是較深化的服務，例如舉辦語文工作坊、編製公文寫作手冊和參考資料，都是因應各部門的工作需要而設的。市民了解我們的工作後，也明白到當其他部門在“前線”為市民服務之際，法定語文事務署的同事也在幕後默默耕耘，盡其職守。



法定語文事務署的參展攤位

除了以生動活潑的形式介紹本署的工作，我們也不讓其他部門專美，安排了“語文狀元紅”、“中文打字擂台”、“模擬傳譯”等知識與趣味兼備的遊戲，讓市民體會文字工作之樂。參加遊戲不但可以“測試”一下自己的語文水平，還有機會贏取別致實用的獎品呢！

Exhibition on Customer Service Excellence

The Official Languages Agency (OLA) took part in this year's Exhibition on Customer Service Excellence held from 1 to 5 February 2002 at the Hong Kong Central Library. The exhibition provided a good opportunity for the OLA to introduce itself to the public, whom it serves, albeit in an indirect way, through providing translation and language services to government bureaux and departments.

In presenting itself to the community, the Agency adopted a two-pronged approach. First, we gave the public a glimpse of the contributions of the OLA. Large, eye-catching comic strips were pinned on the panels of the booth to illustrate examples of situations which call for our services.

Those services which are more noticeable include translation of important publications such as the



Secretary for the Civil Service Joseph W P Wong at the booth of OLA

Policy Address, and interpretation at meetings of the local councils as well as international conferences. The OLA also provides drafting services to government bureaux and departments. We strive to lift the language standard of civil servants

through seminars, enquiry hotlines and publications in the forms of newsletter, glossaries and writing guides.

The second approach was to give the community a taste of our work. Language games were devised to tempt the bold-spirited to have a go. Many of the players, be they old or young, aspiring linguists or the uninitiated, went away with the conviction that the OLA's work was both stimulating and challenging.

FAQs about the OLA have always been: “Who are you?” “What do you do?” “How are your services related to me?” Hopefully this opportunity allowed us to answer all these questions.



舊學邃密 新知深沉

語文是文化的載體。要掌握一種語文，對其所體現的文化豈能一無所知？為推廣中國文化，法定語文事務署邀請了兩位著名學者，在四月主持兩個文化講座。

四月十九日下午，北京大學中文系李零教授會在香港文化中心主講“說中國早期藝術中的外來影響”，討論中國藝術根源裏的外來因素。四月二十六日，美國普林斯頓大學東亞系中國語文組周質平教授會在香港中央圖書館主持另一個講座，講題為“親情與愛情——近代中國知識分子的婚戀情結”，以中國近代學者胡適的婚戀關係為主線，探索近代中國知識分子如何在傳統“父母之命”的婚姻制度之下爭取婚戀的自由。

名家演說，精彩可期。有興趣參加的同事，請與法定語文事務署訓練組黃翠媚女士(電話：2867 3003)聯絡。

南腔



北調

明天是我的東兒 葉春生

在一本給外國人學漢語用的教科書上，有這麼一個例句：“明天是我的東兒”，搞得老外們一頭霧水。什麼意思？

東西南北的“東”原是個方位詞，在漢語裏，“東兒”又可作“東道”講，那是由古時主位在東，賓位在西衍化而來的，“東”就是主人，“東兒”就是“東道主”，“我的東兒”就是“我請你們吃飯”。再說得地道一點：“趕明兒是我的東兒”。這才是正宗的北京土話。老廣注意：兒化音只需輕輕把舌頭翹起，不要讀成“兒子”的“兒”。

同樣道理，在最近一次漢語“托福”考試中，有這麼一句：“這個演員很紅”。外國朋友不理解，大多把“紅”改為“白”。他們認為，“紅”是血腥的象徵，“白”代表純潔，而不知道漢語裏“紅”象徵喜慶、順利、成功。這就是東西方理念的差別。

* “托福”為美國“對非英語國家留學生的英語考試”(Test of English as a Foreign Language)英文縮寫(TOEFL)的音譯。

本文作者為內地中山大學中文系教授，專長民間文學、民俗文學，主要著作有《簡明民間文學》、《嶺南俗文學簡史》等。葉春生教授這次為《文訊》撰文，借一句地道的普通話，點出南北言殊的社會語言現象，旁及東西方文化理念的差異，言簡意賅。承蒙葉教授惠賜稿件，謹致謝忱。

WORD FOR WORD



HORSE TALK

“That man has shown no slightest horse sense. What he can offer is only horseback opinions. Yet he still thinks he should be promoted. If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride. He is bound to be a failure.”

In days of old, people used to travel on horseback. It was said that horses, especially the old ones, were shrewd and sensitive. They were acute observers of the situation and knew how to get round treacherous paths and lead people out of danger. ‘Horse sense’ is therefore used to refer to the ability to make sensible judgements and practical decisions.

‘Horseback opinions’, on the other hand, are not as positive as ‘horse sense’. Horse riding is exciting but bumpy. An opinion formed under such circumstances may be hasty and immature.

It is not likely to get you anywhere without more thorough consideration.

‘If wishes were horses, beggars would ride’ is a saying which cautions people against being an unrealistic dreamer. Success is not something you can pick from trees. Instead, you must strive for it. If wishing was all it took to succeed, there would be no failure in the world.

References to horses abound in the English language, but if you want to learn all horse-related phrases and idioms, you will have to ‘work like a horse’ too!

福？財？

一元復始，萬象更新。每逢春節，家家戶戶都喜氣盈門，除舊布新，迎春接福。人們除了布置家居，添置過年食品花果外，還喜歡在門、牆，甚至家具上張貼“福”字，祈願新年多福祥瑞。

千古以來，中國民俗文化熱切祈福求吉，中華民族嚮往幸福的生活。到底民間所求的“福”真正的意義何在？什麼才是中國傳統家庭的普遍願望呢？

在中國人的心目中，吉祥就是福，福就是吉祥。《禮記 祭統》：“福，備也。備者，百順之名也。無所不順者謂之備。”福就是諸事皆吉的總稱。《尚書 洪範》記載，福有五種：“一曰壽，二曰富，三曰康寧，四曰攸好德（指“所好者德”），五曰考終命（指“善終，不橫天”）”。可見安穩富足，福壽康寧，五福臨門，正是人們追求的幸福生活。近世把五福闡釋為“福、祿、壽、喜、財”，意義雖略有分別，但同樣反映人們祈福致祥的心態。“人臻

五福，花滿三春”，正是中華民族千古永恆的熱望和追求。

人們貼“福”字時，總愛把“福”字倒貼，寓意“福到了”，以求來年豐衣足食，福滿門庭，正貼“福”字的情況反不多見。相傳晚清時恭親王把御賜“萬福”的“福”字倒拿，慈禧太后的太監李蓮英為恭親王解窘，將之辯解為福真正“到”了（取“倒”字諧音“到”）。自此，倒貼“福”字成為時尚。

中國人事事崇尚吉祥，就連過年時所掛的年畫、所寄的賀年卡，也常用蝙蝠這種吉祥象徵，用“蝠”“福”諧音，以圖像把吉祥話表現出來。這也可說是中文的特色之一。

 補闕拾遺

農曆新年前後，常見把歡度節日的橫幅寫成“歡渡春節”；也有報章報道市民回鄉過年，用的標題是“回鄉渡歲”。

“度”和“渡”讀音相同，形體相近，但意思卻不一樣。“渡”，義從水，指通過江河湖海等水域，是從此岸到彼岸的意思，如擺渡、渡口等。香港過去每年都舉行“渡海泳”比賽，參加的健兒要游過維多利亞港。港內外的交通工具，也有“渡輪”，接載乘客往來香港、九龍和離島地區。可見表達與過江、過河有關的現象，該用“渡”字。

把“歡度春節”、“回鄉度歲”的“度”寫成“渡”的人，大概以為“渡”是過河，過年過節也可寫作“渡”。

“度”也有過的意思，是由這時到那時。“度”和“渡”在古漢語中，有的地方通用。《漢

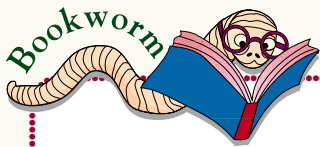


“度”
和
“渡”



書 賈誼傳》：“猶度江河亡維楫”（“維楫”指繫船的繩和船槳）中，“度”即“渡”。在現代漢語中，“渡”、“度”卻分工明確：“渡”用於過江河湖海，即空間上的越過；“度”也指越過，但對象是時間段落，意思較虛。因此，形容日子難熬是“度日如年”；說人蹉跎歲月是“虛度光陰”；放假的日子，常說是“度假消閑”。

兩字不容易掌握的是用在時日方面。“度假”、“度周末”、“度蜜月”、“歡度春節”等都是表示“過日子”，當然用“度”。但“渡過難關”、“過渡時期”等詞語為什麼卻用“渡”呢？這其實是一種借喻的用法。“難關”有“江河險阻，關山難越”的意味，“過渡”也如同由江河的此岸到對岸去，於是借用了本義是越過江河的“渡”。寫成“度”的話，就失卻比喻的含意了。



Chinese New Year in the Eyes of a Foreigner

- Patricia Bjaaland Welch's *Chinese New Year*, Oxford University Press

Tangerine trees and plum blossoms. Strings of firecrackers and clusters of gold coins. Dinners with family and offerings to ancestors. All this reminds us of the festive days during the Lunar New Year. No date in the Chinese calendar is accorded greater importance than New Year's Day.

Patricia Bjaaland Welch's *Chinese New Year*, published by the Oxford University Press, is a colourful book which provides an introduction and a complete guide to the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

The author explores an array of age-old symbols and rituals of the holiday and traces their history and meanings. Also covered in the book are the differences in celebration among the Chinese communities in



Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Mainland China. Beginning with notable days in the month preceding the holiday and extending to the Lantern Festival fifteen days into the new year, the book guides the reader through the etiquette of gift-giving, the selection of special foods, holiday greetings, and popular decorations.

Directed at tourists and locals alike, *Chinese New Year* takes a panoramic view of customs both in China and in Chinese communities worldwide. Combining introductory

texts and extensive illustrations both in colour and monochrome, it serves as a map for one to acquire a deeper understanding and appreciation of the festival in its multiplicity and richness.

Net Guide

Bank of English

Can't find a way to enrich your vocabulary? Studying a dictionary may help, some ardent readers venture to suggest. But turning thousands of pages from A to Z on your own sounds too forbidding a mission. Here comes a solution. Collins Cobuild's website may be a perfect companion to help you through.

Based on the Bank of English, which is a corpus of modern English language both in written and spoken forms, this website should not be mistaken for an e-dictionary. It contains several features dedicated to helping learners with the meaning, usage and pragmatics of English words and idioms in an interesting way.

Operating daily, 'Idiom of the Day' picks a word at random and displays a few relevant idioms. Examples are there to illustrate the usage of each idiom and its possible variations. 'Wordwatch' features a weekly article written by a language expert to make comments on the usage and meaning of a word or phrase. Automatic delivery of the article by email allows the busiest of all to benefit from this column. To make learning more interesting and enjoyable, you may also try your hand at the 'Definition game' where the definition of a word is shown for you to guess what word is being defined.

This interactive website builds education into entertainment. Practice makes perfect. Just click <http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk> and start building up your word power today.



燈謎猜猜看

正月十五是元宵節，又稱上元節。按照傳統，當夜街頭會掛滿各式彩燈，百姓都外出遊玩，以賞燈為樂。彩燈中有貼上或寫上謎語給人猜射者，為節日增添氣氛。這項活動廣為流傳，人稱“猜燈謎”。下列燈謎十則，大家也來湊湊熱鬧，看看能猜中多少。

1. 新曆初一(猜一中國地名)	
2. 三人同日離開(猜一氣節名)	
3. 表如一(猜一字)	
4. 正月初一禁止通行(猜一集郵用語)	
5. 春節放假三天(猜一字)	
6. 入入入(猜李白詩一句)	
7. 一路平安(猜一中國地名)	
8. 初一至十一(猜一字)	
9. 正月初一(猜一《紅樓夢》人名)	
10. 除夕回鄉(猜一成語)	

讀者只需填妥答案和個人資料，在二零零二年五月三十日前寄回“香港金鐘道政府合署23樓法定語文事務署《文訊》編委會”，便有機會獲得精美禮品一份，名額5個。答案及得獎名單下期公布。

Issue No.6 “Food Crossword” Answers :

The winners are:

Name	Department
CHENG Ka-yu	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Irene CHAN	Department of Health
CHUM Chui-chi	Education Department
LEUNG Kwok-wing	Fire Services Department
LAM So-han	Home Affairs Department

Winners will be notified individually by post.



游藝

中國剪紙

剪紙是中國流傳已久的民間藝術。所謂剪紙，就是在紙上鏤空、剪刻。一般認為刀剪並用的可稱為剪紙，而純用刀刻的作品應稱為刻紙。在古代，剪紙常用於宗教儀式、裝飾等方面。現在，剪紙多用於點綴牆壁、門窗、燈飾等，甚至剪紙本身也可成為藝術作品。

目前發現最早的剪紙實物，是新疆吐魯番火焰山附近出土的北朝時期(公元385至581年)五幅團花剪紙，用的都是摺剪法，與今日的民間團花剪紙極為相似。

剪紙除了是女紅之外，也有男性以之作為職業。魏晉以後，已有製作紙紮器物的糊紙匠、巫師。唐宋以後，工商業發達，於是出現了專業的剪紙藝人，一些士大夫也寄情剪鏤，偶剪聯屏以自娛。



剪紙：年年有餘

中國剪紙的題材都注重寓意，取材範圍因作者的階級和文化修養而異。文人淑媛多取材經史故事、成語嘉言，刀剪並用，作品細膩而有書卷氣；村婦山姑多以祝福祛邪、生活習慣為題材，用的只是剪刀，稿樣多承傳而來，花樣樸拙，富鄉土味。



剪紙：喜鵲

今日社會形態轉變，文人婦女少有閑情逸致精剪細鏤。匠人為省時省力多以鋼模製作，毫無技藝可言，反而現代的藝術家會以剪紙作為創作的題材。創作性質的剪紙藝術有藝術家繼承發展，而民間剪紙是農村婦女以一雙巧手和個人的審美觀，融會數十年的人生歷練和製作經驗，顯示豐富的農民生活面貌。剪紙這門具有民族風格的藝術，也循民間剪紙和純藝術剪紙這兩大發展途徑而有所開拓傳承。

編者的話 From the Editor

還記得去年的問卷調查，不少讀者建議《文訊》邀請語文學者和翻譯名家供稿，讓大家分享他們的心得。讀者既是如此關心和重視語文，《文訊》自當從善如流。

批評本港語文水平的聲音，近年不絕於耳：文法不依、用詞不當、讀音不正……情況令人痛心不已。《文訊》往後會請來英語專家，論述港人常犯的英語錯誤，正本清源；也會請翻譯學者為現代漢語歐化和公文寫作的問題把脈。諸位學者既與語文為伴，對本港獨特的語言環境，體會殊深。名家筆墨，大家不容錯過。

Hong Kong is a place where east meets west. This is evident in its linguistic environment which, ironically enough, is polluted with both 'Chinglish' and westernized Chinese. This dip in language proficiency has aroused much public attention.

In the coming issues, masters of English and translation will be here to examine this phenomenon and offer advice. Focus will be on common errors in English and the influence of westernized Chinese on translation and official writing. Given their expertise and experience, their pieces promise to give you a whole new perspective on the languages. Don't miss it.

英語顧問

苗學禮先生 (Mr Tony Miller)

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