

# 文訊

## WORD POWER

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### On Waiting

Life is a string of unknowns separated by moments of waiting. Everyone is always waiting for something, big or small, important or trivial: waiting for the traffic lights to change; for a phone call; for a table at a popular restaurant; for medical test results; for success or love; for the children to grow up; for retirement; for the last bus.

In an era of instant results and immediate gratification, waiting seems to be universally perceived as tedious and annoying. It is particularly irritating if, for whatever reason, you are deprived of distractions such as smartphones and talking with friends. The line never moves. The clock seems to stop ticking. In waiting, time goes by so slowly that we can almost feel it. We fidget. We fret. We fume. We are frustrated with the wait, feeling that our time is being wasted. Dr Seuss describes "The Waiting Place" as "a most useless place" in his book *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* However, Henri Bergson, the famous French philosopher, would disagree. While waiting for a cube of sugar to dissolve in a glass of water, Bergson had an epiphany about the nature of human consciousness, duration and time. For those of us who might only think of calories under similar circumstances, is it possible to turn these mundane moments to our advantage?

Most of you have probably heard of Hayao Miyazaki, the legendary Japanese animator and filmmaker. In his films, there are often scenes devoid of dialogue or action. Sometimes it's two young sisters waiting at the bus stop for their father to arrive (*My Neighbor Totoro*). Sometimes it's a silent train journey of a girl heading deeper into the spirit world with her companions (*Spirited Away*). Nothing really happens; yet it's these moments that make Miyazaki's world feel so real and humane. In one of his interviews, Miyazaki explained, "We have a word for that in Japanese. It's called *ma* (間). Emptiness. It's there intentionally." He elaborated by clapping several times, "The time in between my clapping is *ma*. If you just have non-stop action with no breathing space at all, it's just busyness. But if you take a moment, then the tension building in the film can grow into a wider dimension."

The utility of emptiness is best illustrated by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu over 2,500 years ago in *Tao Te Ching*:

Thirty spokes connect to the wheel's hub;  
yet, it is the centre hole that makes it useful.  
Clay is shaped into a vessel;  
yet, it is the emptiness within that makes it useful.  
Doors and windows are cut for a room;  
yet it is the space where there is nothing that makes it useful.  
Therefore, though advantage comes from what is;  
usefulness comes from what is not. <sup>Note</sup>

Just as the centre hole that makes the wheel useful, the emptiness inside the vessel that enables it to hold things, the inner space of a room that renders it liveable, waiting can be a valuable experience. Instead of finding a way to "escape all that waiting and staying" as Dr Seuss urges, we might think of the pockets of time spent waiting as our moments of *ma*, a respite from the tension and haste of modern life. Instead of reaching for the phone and busying ourselves with texts, email messages, social media updates or whatever amusements, we might just let our mind wander and do nothing. As Winnie the Pooh, the honey-loving bear, says, "Doing nothing often leads to the very best of something." You can trust this little bear. He is considered the epitome of a Taoist thinker and his wisdom has been compiled by American writer Benjamin Hoff into a book titled *The Tao of Pooh*.

The value of waiting is all the more relevant in the current coronavirus pandemic. By waiting in quarantine for test results, by waiting in line to receive a vaccination shot, by waiting until it is safe enough to attend large gatherings or visit our favourite places, each of us plays a small but crucial part in weathering this storm together. Waiting can be an exercise of agency and can be experienced in myriad ways that do not necessarily entail negative feelings such as dullness, helplessness or boredom. Rather, even at its worst, waiting comes with an element of hope. And hope springs eternal.



Note: Translated by Tolbert McCarroll. The original text reads:  
三十輻，共一轂，當其無，有車之用。埴埴以為器，當其無，有器之用。鑿戶牖以為室，當其無，有室之用。故有之以為利，無之以為用。





# 望夫石

沙田獅子山一隅有巨石高約十五米，形如婦人背着小孩。相傳從前有女子因丈夫出海謀生後音信全無，於是每天背着孩子爬上山峯，遙望茫茫大海，苦候一家團聚，可是望穿秋水，仍不見夫君歸航。有一天，一陣狂風暴雨過後，婦人和孩子一同化作石頭，後人稱之為望夫石。

望夫石的傳說在各地流傳已久，古書多有記載。南朝宋劉義慶《幽明錄》寫道：“武昌陽新縣北山上有望夫石，狀若人立。相傳：昔有貞婦，其夫從役，遠赴國難，婦攜弱子，餞送此山，立望夫而化為立石。”

《太平御覽》卷四十六引《宣城圖經》云：“望夫山，昔人往楚，累歲不還，其妻登此山望夫，乃化為石。”卷五十二引《輿地志》曰：“南陵縣有女觀山，俗傳云，昔有婦人，夫官於蜀，屢愆秋期，憂思感傷，登此騁望，因化為石，如人之形。”

這些故事大同小異，大都是男子為了生計前程或從軍服役而遠走他方，女子終日翹首以待，日久化而為石。淒美的傳說成為歷代騷人墨客吟詠的題材，以下是其中兩首名篇：

## 《望夫石》

王建

望夫處，江悠悠。  
化為石，不回頭。  
山頭日日風復雨，  
行人歸來石應語。

## 《望夫山》

劉禹錫

終日望夫夫不歸，  
化為孤石苦相思。  
望來已是幾千載，  
只似當時初望時。

在江畔那雲霧迷濛的山峯上，女子孤寂地凝望遠方，心中的思念如江流般綿綿不絕。她日夜盼望丈夫回家，縱使一次又一次失望，縱使熬成了石頭，依然無怨無悔，誓不回頭！悠悠數千載，她站在山頭上，飽受風吹雨打，真情始終不渝，只想有朝一日等到遊子歸來，盡訴相思之苦。

宋詩人陳造另闢蹊徑，以問答方式描述化石女子的心理煎熬：

亭亭碧山椒，依約凝黛立。  
何年蕩子婦，登此望行役？  
君行斷音信，妾恨無終極。  
堅誠不磨滅，化作山上石。  
煙悲復雲慘，彷彿見精魄。  
野花徒自好，江月為誰白？  
亦知江南與江北，紅樓無處無傾國。  
妾身為石良不惜，君心為石那可得！

青青山頭，依稀可見望夫石，詩人不禁浮想聯翩：這個化作巖石的痴情婦人，在這裏佇立了多少年月？在一片煙雲繚繞中，他彷彿看到一縷芳魂含悲低語：“大江南北，處處紅樓，何處無傾國佳人？妾身化石亦在所不惜，只盼君心也堅如磐石，不改忠貞，但願這不是痴心妄想。”只要丈夫沒有變心，婦人雖守候到天荒地老猶未悔，只怕良人已忘記家中的糟糠之妻，那麼耗盡一生的等待還有什麼意義？

石頭本無性別之分，為何只要狀如人形，便是望夫石，而非望妻石呢？古代男兒志在四方，或披甲從軍覓封侯，或天南地北作商賈，或不遠千里求功名。相反女子只能獨守空房，“寂寞梧桐深院鎖清秋”。男子可以建功立業，治國平天下，女子卻連小小的家庭幸福也不可得，只得在絕望中等待，通過“望夫”守節體現其人生價值。

兩千多年後，女詩人舒婷在船上仰望巫山神女峯時，賦詩問道：“但是，心／真能變成石頭嗎？”巫山神女和天下間無數女子真的甘心“為眺望遠天的杳鶴／而錯過無數次春江月明”嗎？還好，“沿着江岸／金光菊和女貞子的洪流／正煽動新的背叛”。詩人慨歎：“與其在懸崖上展覽千年／不如在愛人肩頭痛哭一晚”。

滄海桑田，沙田昔日海面如今成了高樓林立之地，只有望夫石仍在原地迎風眺望，等了一個世紀，又一個世紀。凝眸處，日月換了新天，一個個揚眉女子擺脫性別枷鎖，活得恣意精彩：有的馳騁職場，有的縱橫舞台，有的埋首探索新知，有的徜徉於靈山秀水之間……就像女媧補天的彩石一樣，不但各有姿彩，而且頂起了半邊天。





# Waiting for the Last Bus

Venturing out to somewhere new is exhilarating, and a little bit intimidating too. Before heading off, we usually do some research on the destination by reading travel guides and asking someone who has been there for advice. Unfortunately, though it is the destination that we all share, no one comes back from death to tell us what it is like on the other side. In the absence of first-hand accounts, Richard Holloway, an octogenarian and a former bishop who has spent a lifetime guiding the dying to a peaceful death and helping the bereaved, is eminently qualified to give us some tips on ageing and dying well.

Richard Holloway was born into a working class family in Scotland in 1933. At the age of 14, he entered Kelham Hall, the home of an Anglican order that trained impoverished boys for the priesthood. In the fifty years or so that followed, Holloway touched the lives of many people as he charted his journey in ministry. However, his support for same-sex marriage and women priests put him at loggerheads with proponents of the more conservative Anglican doctrines. Eventually, he resigned as Bishop of Edinburgh and head of the Scottish Episcopal Church in 2000 when he was 66. He has since written a stream of books on faith, ethics, forgiveness and the human condition. As he approaches his nineties and acknowledges that the last bus is on its way, he turns to explore how humans deal with the ultimate inevitability. His book *Waiting for the Last Bus*, subtitled “Reflections on Life and Death”, is the fruit of decades of deep meditation on the existential uncertainty. It gently nudges us to ponder our own eventual demise.

Holloway started going bald in his twenties. When all his attempts to save his mop proved futile, he grew to accept not only his baldness but also “the reality of the way we look and the certainty of our death”. Such acceptance does not come easy for most of us. Holloway observes that the modern society is more concerned about “the postponement of death rather than the enhancement of life”. And with increasing longevity, “life would soon become unsustainable on our little planet”. He does not understate the physical changes that come with ageing, but sees the process as no cause for resentment and bitterness. He suggests that ageing is our last chance to learn fortitude, “the ability to endure the reality of our condition without flinching”, and “courage is the wise person’s response to the fear of going”.

Still, the fear of the unknown is haunting. “To die will be an awfully big adventure,” Peter Pan tells himself when facing the danger of drowning. This is not so much a blithe disregard for death, but more like singing into the void to purge the welling fear and anxiety as one walks down a dark and eerie path. What

awaits us at the end of the path? For a Buddhist, karmic reincarnation. For a Christian or Muslim, the Last Judgement. Describing himself as “a doubting priest”, Holloway confesses that he no longer desires or expects life after death. But he concedes that at times there is no room for his own doubts; what’s needed is consolation and compassion. A child’s death is one of those times. “In the moment of encounter with the dying child, theory vanishes, as well as the doubts that must accompany all theory,” he says.

A leitmotif in this life-affirming volume is to live thankfully. Be grateful for winning the lottery of life and being born a human. Be grateful for the beautiful world that receives and nurtures us. Be grateful for the love that has been given to us. Looking back, he reproaches himself for “rushing” his life and “spending too much time trying to understand life rather than just living it”. Make a confession of past mistakes to a priest, to a friend or even to your pillow and forgive yourself and others. After all, people get to play the cards they are dealt in life. Quoting the poet Derek Walcott, Holloway urges us to master early the practice of honest self-examination and reconcile with our real selves. “You will love again the stranger who was your self,” Walcott writes. “Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart / to itself, to the stranger who has loved you.”

Walcott is among the many poets whom Holloway quotes, alongside William Shakespeare, WH Auden and Philip Larkin. It is delightful to see how the erudite author illuminates his thoughtful arguments with aphoristic gems from the greatest of English bards and with other more esoteric references. Biblical passages are cited too, as well as excerpts from the addresses he has given at funerals and weddings. Interspersed with materials from prose, novels, films, music and paintings, the book underlines a profound love of the arts. Holloway asserts with dignity that even if the universe is devoid of meaning, the great works of arts, as well as our acts of kindness “have proved ourselves better than the void that spawned us”.

Sooner or later the bus will come for us all. Keeping the end in mind will profoundly influence how we behave and what choices we make in the present. That’s why Holloway advises us to learn the many important lessons from death—such as gratitude, compassion, forgiveness and self-understanding—early in life, “while there may still be time to rewrite the script and make a happier story”. As for Holloway, happily he is still waiting at the bus stop, and indeed published a new book last year. When the bus comes along, he says, “I hope I’ll have time to lace on my boots and set out to meet it.”

Our patience will achieve more than our force.

Edmund Burke





# 孩子你慢慢來

“快起牀，上學要遲到了！”

“趕快做功課，接着還要溫習呢！”

“快點，快點，動作快點，你以為有整天時間嗎？”

孩子就這樣在連綿不絕的催促聲中度過一天又一天。學校裏一年級讀二年級的課本，二年級讀三年級的課本，放學後還得學習百般文才武藝：樂器、繪畫、外語、游泳、跆拳道……在這個只爭朝夕的時代，龍應台卻說：

我，坐在斜陽淺照的石階上，望着這個眼睛清亮的小孩專心地做一件事；是的，我願意等上一輩子的時間，讓他從從容容地把這個蝴蝶結紮好，用他五歲的手指。孩子你慢慢來，慢慢來。

一九八五年，龍應台不但以辛辣的筆觸針砭時弊，在台灣燃起一把野火，還用筆名胡美麗在報上撰文，倡導女權。後來，她當了媽媽，不得不擱下從前的夢想和計劃。她忙着給孩子做魚粥，因為聽說“常吃魚的小孩聰明”；忙着帶孩子去踢足球；以前唱的是“滴不盡相思血淚拋紅豆，開不完春柳春花滿畫樓”，現在哼的是“咕哇呱呱呱呱呱，就是母鴨帶小鴨”。好友問：“你後悔嗎？”龍應台沒有斬釘截鐵否認，只是欲語還休：“還好……有些經驗，是不可言傳的。”

《孩子你慢慢來》一書記載的大概就是那些可以言傳的經驗。從書裏二十篇文章，大家所見的不是那個“橫眉冷對千夫指”的政治人物或文化界聞人，而是“俯首甘為孺子牛”的母親。在龍應台眼中，孩子是“上帝特別送給媽媽做女人的禮物”，她滿懷感恩，充滿幸福。書中有讓人忍俊不禁的童言童語，有濃得化不開的母愛，也有女性對於母親天職與個人理想兩難全的困惑。

雖說“孩子，你慢慢來”，但試問哪個母親不希望孩子取得好成績呢？安安是龍應台的大兒子，小時候字寫得歪歪斜斜，老師只蓋了一個老鼠印章。媽媽要他重寫一行作業，爭取三個老鼠印章。安安生氣地說：“你總要我得兩隻老鼠三隻老鼠，這麼好那麼好，我有時候也要得一隻老鼠——我也有權利要得一

隻老鼠，就得一隻老鼠呀……”我們總是把自己對生活的期許加諸子女身上，希望他們勤奮優秀，做事盡善盡美，卻忘了孩子有自己的成長步伐，而幸福的生活不一定需要滿分。那麼，為何要孩子用功讀書呢？龍應台在《親愛的安德烈》一書中對二十一歲的安安說：“我也要求你讀書用功，不是因為我要你跟別人比成就，而是因為，我希望你將來會擁有選擇的權利，選擇有意義、有時間的工作，而不是被迫謀生。”“得一隻老鼠的權利”與將來在社會上有“選擇的權利”，孰輕孰重？如何平衡？這些都是父母費煞思量的問題。

黎巴嫩詩人紀伯倫(Kahlil Gibran)寫過：“你的孩子不是你的，他們是生命的子女，是生命自身的渴望。他們經由你而生，但不是你創造的。他們在你身邊，卻並不屬於你。你可以給他們愛，但別把自己的想法加諸他們，因為他們有自己的思想。”龍應台正是以平等尊重的態度對待孩子。每當孩子遇到問題，她從不居高臨下發號施令，而是耐心聆聽，諄諄善誘。無論是安安在弟弟出生後擔心失寵而不安，還是兩兄弟對男女身體的好奇，她都認真對待，從不敷衍了事。她對幼小生命的尊重更兼及其他小動物。她曾帶着兩兄弟用細枝挑起蚯蚓，送回路邊的草叢，以免小蟲兒被自行車軋過或被行人踩到。她教導孩子，人說的好壞不一定是動物的好壞。長大了的安德烈在書跋寫道：母親“以一種安靜的、潛移默化的方式，把我教育成了一個，用她的語言來說，‘像一株小樹一樣正直’的人。”這不就是對母親最崇高的讚美嗎？

孩子年幼時，龍應台牽着他們嫩嫩的小手慢慢走；父親年老時，她又緊握老父的手，攙扶他徐徐挪開腳步。現在，她在武山下，挽着母親的手緩緩前行。從孩子和父母身上，我們看到生命從何而來，往哪兒去。人生苦短，除了多給孩子一點時間，讓他們慢慢成長，慢慢學會生活，也許我們自己也應放慢腳步，聽聽窗外風聲雨聲，望望天邊雲卷雲舒，且停且走，活出自己心中的模樣。

君子藏器於身，待時而動。

《周易·繫辭下》



# Breaking Up



*Photograph: James Brooks/Flickr*

“O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?” exclaimed the great English romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Any Alaskan would have answered him right away, “Of course spring could be far behind!” Coming with a thick blanket of snow and precious little sunshine, winter is a particularly long season in Alaska. In interior Alaska, winter lasts for at least a good 200 to even 300 days.

Break-up is a hot topic of conversation in Alaska during March and April. Not the break-ups of celebrities, mind you, but the break-up of river ice. In Alaska, springtime is often referred to as the break-up season. It is a transitional period of days or weeks in between gorgeous winter wonderland and wondrous midnight sun. Animals come out of hibernation. Birch sap starts running. The snow melts and the ground thaws, leaving the trails knee deep in slush and mud, and generally a treacherous mess—just like any break-up. Yet this rejuvenating and often infuriating liminal period not only brings extended daylight hours, but heralds something better, such as a cash prize.

Every year, thousands of Alaskans enter the Nenana Ice Classic to bet on when the ice on the Tanana River will break up, down to the minute. On the first weekend of March, when the ice is still thick and stable, a wooden tripod is planted 300 feet from the shore and two feet into the Tanana river ice at Nenana. The top of the tripod is connected by wires to a clock in a watchtower onshore. When the ice melts and the tripod is swept 100 feet downriver, the clock will stop, signalling the long-awaited arrival of spring and a substantial windfall to the lucky entrants who have guessed the exact or closest minute. In 2020, five winners who had chosen the exact time shared US\$125,000 in prize money, an impressive sum considering that each guess costs only US\$2.50. This year the ice went out officially on 30 April at 12:50pm Alaska Standard Time.

The 105-year-old Nenana Ice Classic goes back to 1917 when a group of engineers building the Alaska Railroad from Seward to Fairbanks came up with an idea to pass the boredom of pre-television winter. They bet against each other on when the ice would give way on the Tanana River. Eight hundred dollars landed in a pot in a roadhouse; rules were determined on how to time the break-up; and the wager was on. What began as a winter diversion has since evolved into an annual state-wide event and become an iconic Nenana tradition.

Nenana is located about 55 miles southwest of Fairbanks, the largest city in interior Alaska. For this isolated town with a current population of 363, the Nenana Ice Classic is more than

a guessing game. It offers yearly temporary employment to nearly 100 locals. The proceeds from ticket sales are used to fund scholarships, sporting groups, medical charities, senior centres and other local causes. With people from across the world watching obsessively a lonely tripod on a living-room-sized patch of ice through a live webcam, the Ice Classic is Nenana’s moment in the sun. To the residents of Nenana, the Ice Classic is an intrinsic part of the fabric of the community and they strive to keep everything going in the same way it started. The tripod is always 26 feet tall and constructed of spruce. It is always set up in the same spot. The old Heath Robinson contraption is still in use to determine the winning time. “The Ice Classic is owned by the people in the community,” says Cherrie Forness, who has worked for the Ice Classic for 25 years, in an interview. “It employs people. And they’ve always just wanted to keep it the way it’s been. It’s traditional. This works for us.”

Honouring the tradition and legacy of the community pays off not just for the locals, but also for scientists. The Ice Classic has provided valuable climate data covering over a century for researchers studying global warming because the methodology and definition of ice break-up have been constant from year to year. Even the town’s population has remained more or less the same. “It’s almost as perfect a climate record as you could get,” says Rick Thoman, an Alaska climate specialist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The earliest break-up date in the history of the Nenana Ice Classic was 14 April 2019, a whole two weeks earlier than the first record. Climatologists suggest that the increasingly early melt reflects a gradual trend towards earlier springtime, which is in line with historical temperature data from Nenana and Fairbanks.

Alaska, fondly described as the Last Frontier, is considered the last pristine and unspoiled wilderness in North America. But now, it has become one of the places most affected by climate change. Temperatures in Alaska have been rising at twice the rate of the global average. Native communities in remote areas such as Nenana, where subsistence activities are critical to livelihoods, will be particularly susceptible to the dire consequences of accelerated warming. A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations states that human-induced warming has already reached about 1°C above pre-industrial levels. Unless humans act urgently and decisively to hold global warming at 1.5°C, the impact will be catastrophic for life on this planet. The ice is disappearing. The clock is ticking. If we don’t act now, can our end be far away?



Life was always a matter of waiting for the right moment to act.

Paulo Coelho





# Waiting in the Wings

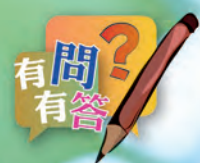
Traditionally, actors wait in the wings of the theatre until it's time for them to step on the stage. If we say someone or something is **waiting in the wings**, we mean that they are ready to make an entrance, be brought to public attention, or take over a role or a position: *A new start-up wave is waiting in the wings. My deputy is waiting in the wings and will take over once I retire.* To **wait on someone hand and foot** means to serve someone well, attending to all personal needs: *I am going to wait on my mother hand and foot on Mother's Day. This hotel is a perfect place for a getaway when you just want to relax and be waited on hand and foot.*

Something that is **practical** is useful or effective: *The book is practical and easy to read, not some theoretical fluff.* **Practicable** is more narrowly defined. It means feasible, possible: *It is simply not practicable to complete the project by the end of this month.* Consider the following sentence: *I don't think your suggestion is very practical/practicable.* If you mean to say the suggestion is ineffective, choose **practical** here; if you want to say it is impossible, choose **practicable**. A **practical joke** is a mischievous trick intended to embarrass someone and involves a physical action rather than words: *Peter played a practical joke on his roommate by slipping a whoopee cushion onto his chair.*

**Assume** and **presume** both mean "to take for granted or to suppose that something is true". Although they are often used interchangeably in this sense, there is a slight difference

in the degree of confidence held by the speaker or writer. When you **assume** something, you are not really sure. When you **presume** something, you are making an educated guess based on probability. If your cat is limping, you might assume that it had had an accident. However, if you had seen an event take place—say, a fall or a fight, you might presume that this was the primary cause of the limp.

**Continuously** and **continually** are words with similar but not quite identical meaning. **Continuously** describes an action that goes on and on without interruption: *Jogging continuously for 30 minutes or more is best for burning calories.* **Continually**, on the other hand, describes things that occur repeatedly or regularly with intervals of interruption: *As information is continually being updated, it is important to keep on top of the latest developments.* The same distinction holds true for the adjectives **continuous** and **continual**. The most common mistake is to use **continuous** when you actually mean **continual**. For example: *The continuous rumble of thunder during the night kept me awake.* A continuous ten-second clap of thunder is terrifying enough, whereas non-stop, continuous thunder for the whole night would be apocalyptic! The word **continual** would fit better in this context.



## 1. 問：“本分”還是“本份”？

答：“分”的本義是“分開”，引伸指“主體分出的局部”，也指“名位、權限、事物等的本質”。“份”主要用於表示把事物分為若干單位，每一個單位稱為一份，例如“股份”、“等份”。除《漢語大詞典》指“本分”亦作“本份”外，大部分內地、台灣和香港辭書都只收“本分”，不收“本份”。內地以“本分”為推薦詞形。綜上所述，建議寫作“本分”。

## 2. 問：“檢獲”還是“撿獲”？

答：“檢”用作名詞時解“法度”，引伸指查驗、檢核。“撿”本義是拱手，現指拾取。“檢獲”意指通過檢查而獲得，“撿獲”則解作拾得，並沒有查驗的意思。

## 3. 問：“可見一斑”還是“可見一班”？

答：“一斑”指豹身上的一塊斑紋，比喻眾多相類事物中很小的一部分。因此，正確的寫法是“可見一斑”。

## 4. 問：“痊愈”、“痊癒”還是“痊癒”？

答：“愈”的本義是“病情好轉”，引伸指“勝過”。另用作副詞，解作“越發、更加”的意思。後來“愈”加上義符寫作“癒”，表示病愈之義，簡化字則仍寫作“愈”。“瘉”是“癒”的異體字，在“病情好轉、恢復健康”這個義項上，“愈”、“癒”、“瘉”三字相通，可以互換使用。不過，香港多用“痊癒”，教育局編製的《香港小學學習字詞表》也以“癒”為建議字形。

## 5. 問：形容菜餚款式，應寫“菜式”還是“菜色”？

答：應寫“菜式”，意指“菜餚的品種樣式”，也指“不同地區的風味樣式的菜餚”。“菜色”指“青黃色”，多用作形容人極度營養不良而臉色不佳。



# 阿八

自古以來，狗一直是人類最忠誠的朋友，古今中外都不乏忠心義犬的故事。在史詩《奧德賽》中，希臘英雄奧德修斯因為參與特洛伊戰爭，離鄉二十年才重踏故土。他衣衫襤褸，連妻子也認不出他，唯獨年邁的獵犬阿爾戈斯一眼便認出久別的主人。牠搖着尾巴向主人問好，可是身體太虛弱，竭力嗚咽一聲後便倒地不起。對阿爾戈斯來說，等待的日子縱然漫長，但至少臨終前可以再見主人一面。

在上世紀二十年代的日本，另一條狗阿八便沒那麼幸運，牠巴巴地盼望了十年，只是空等一場。阿八是純種秋田犬，剛出生便由東京大學農業系上野教授收養。教授閒時會帶阿八在寓所附近散步，或到公園走走。沿途遇上的狗隻無不被鏈子拴住，只有阿八沒狗繩束縛，優哉游哉走在主人旁邊。每天早上阿八送教授去火車站，到了黃昏時分，又去車站接教授回家。教授夫人說，阿八沒有手錶，卻準時得很呢。

一年多後某天，教授如常上班，但阿八似有所感，在門口團團轉，似乎不願教授離家。送教授上班後，牠回到家中吠個不停，好像想告訴教授夫人什麼事情似的。可是，誰會理會一條狗亂吠呢？傍晚時分，阿八依舊走到火車站，可是這次沒能接到教授回家。原來當天教授上課期間突然暈倒，再沒有醒來。

阿八曾經擁有的幸福生活，隨着教授逝世而化為烏有。教授死後，牠聽得最多的就是“再見”。教授夫人搬去與女兒同住，委託在淺草的叔父收容阿八。新主人總是把阿八鎖在門外。下大雨時，再沒有人冒雨把牠抱進屋裏。屋外一片漆黑，阿八在雨中凝視屋子裏明亮溫暖的燈光，聽着傳出來的歡聲笑語。不知是否想起了教授，牠一再掙脫繩索，從淺草跑回澀谷車站呆呆地等，只盼奇跡出現。教授夫人知道後懇請舊鄰居大叔收留阿八。可惜大叔未幾意外身故，阿八又一次聽到了“再見”。大叔的妻子退了房子，蹲下來與阿八道別，臉上雖掛着溫柔笑容，嘴裏卻吐出最殘酷的話：“你很強壯，別輸給那些流浪狗，你可以當牠們的首領。”從此，阿八開始在街頭流浪的生活。



日復日，年復年，骨瘦如柴的阿八風雨不改，每天傍晚準時到達火車站，等待教授出現。阿八的事跡登報後，教授夫人回來尋牠，可是阿八卻躲在車站對面的小巷裏，看着女主人呼喊牠的名字不肯出去，生怕女主人又把牠送給別人，再找不到回車站的路。

阿八與教授相處不過短短一年多，為什麼會願意為他奉獻一生呢？對阿八好的不只是教授，教授夫人、鄰居大叔、車站旁邊的小吃攤夫婦都對阿八抱有善意。可是，這世上只有教授一人給予阿八平等的愛。他嚴厲地呵斥戲弄阿八的家傭：“我養狗不是要牠耍把戲，你自己站在狗的立場想想看！”又對妻子說：“正如有權利一樣，狗也有權利。”只有他會細心地給阿八抓蟲子；輕拍阿八身體哄牠入睡；和阿八一起洗澡，溫柔地為牠梳洗毛髮；冒着大雨把阿八抱進屋裏，替牠抹身蓋毯子，渾然不顧自己也全身濕透。阿八不懂什麼動物權利，也不懂何謂“國士待我，國士報之”，牠只知道這個人如父親般照顧自己，給自己幸福快樂。牠只知道要守在那裏，直到主人歸來。

十年光景轉眼過去，火車站不知經歷多少人事變更，沒有改變的只有阿八。那天，和牠出生當日一樣也是漫天風雪，毛髮稀疏、瘦骨嶙峋的阿八又來到車站前。牠蜷縮在地上，凝望着車站樓梯，彷彿看見教授從火車站向牠走來，像以前一樣摸摸牠的頭，笑着說：“阿八真乖！”牠又好像看到教授站在那個美麗的櫻花林，露出溫暖的笑容，自己飛奔撲進主人懷裏，花瓣如雪般飄落。天色漸明，街上行人慢慢多了起來，可是沒有人在阿八面前駐足。雪依然下個不停，阿八咽下最後一口氣，在冰冷的雪地上，告別冰冷的人間。

曾經有人這樣形容人和狗的關係：你能擁有一切，而牠卻只有你。假如你付出真心，即使世界把你遺忘，你的愛犬只要一息尚存，仍會一直守望着你。二零一五年，東京大學豎立了一座阿八和教授重逢的雕像。阿八苦候近一世紀後，終於再次與主人相聚。



時不至不可強生也，事不究不可強成也。



劉向《說苑·談叢》

# NO RUSH

With advances in technology, we can get almost anything with a mouse click. The convenience of technology is making us more and more impatient. Many of us even become irritated just waiting for a sluggish webpage to load. Yet patience is the key to a happy life, and it may do us more good than we ever expect. To find out more about patience, read the following passage and fill in the blanks with words that best complete the sentences. Some letters have been given to you:

The word “patience” originates from the Latin word for (1) “s \_\_\_\_\_”, which suggests endurance or submission. When we are waiting for something pleasurable—for example, waiting in a long queue to nosh on our favourite food or to watch a good film—we are usually able to resist our desire for immediate (2) g \_\_\_\_\_ f \_\_\_\_\_. But when a situation is not under our control or when waiting doesn’t seem (3) w \_\_\_\_\_ w \_\_\_\_\_, we easily get exasperated. Patience, however, isn’t just a (4) v \_\_\_\_\_, as the proverb goes; it’s (5) e \_\_\_\_\_ to our health and happiness. Here are some simple tips to become as patient as (6) J \_\_\_\_\_. Take a few deep breaths whenever you feel impatient. Practising (7) e \_\_\_\_\_—that is, trying to put ourselves into others’ shoes—may also help us contain our impatience. It is also a good idea to reflect on why a situation is making us (8) i \_\_\_\_\_ n \_\_\_\_\_ and try to keep things in (9) p \_\_\_\_\_ p \_\_\_\_\_. Many studies show that patient people tend to experience less (10) d \_\_\_\_\_ s \_\_\_\_\_ and often report greater life (11) s \_\_\_\_\_ f \_\_\_\_\_. As you may have heard, good things will come to those who (12) w \_\_\_\_\_. So, let’s process the world in no rush.

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 **26 August 2021**. 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 ten to win a prize. The Editorial Board will have the final say on the answers.

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## 第八十三期參考答案

1. 賣懶
2. 水官大帝
3. 蜘蛛
4. 點燈
5. 謝灶
6. 端午節
7. 聰明伶俐
8. 龍歸滄海

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