

About this script

Please note that this is not a word for word transcript of the programme as broadcast. In the recording and editing process, changes may have been made which may not be reflected here.

关于台词的备注:

请注意这不是广播节目的逐字稿件。本文稿可能没有体现录制、编辑过程中对节目做出的改变。

Lucky Numbers 幸运数字

Jean: 大家好, 欢迎收听我们本期的《英国问答》节目, 我是董征。

Finn: And I'm Finn. Today's question is a good one, but quite long. Listen out for the following words and phrases that our listener Wendy uses: superstition.

Jean: 迷信 superstition.

Finn: Mystical power.

Jean: 神秘的力量 mystical power.

Finn: Auspicious and inauspicious.

Jean: 吉利的 auspicious 还有把这个单词前面加个 'in' 组成的词就是 inauspicious 不吉利的, 不过这两个词都不是我们现代社会里经常能够碰到的。

Insert

Hello there, this is Wendy from Shantou, Guangdong Province. Today my question is about superstition based on numbers. It seems that certain numbers are far more (than) counting tools, but also bearing mystical power. Like the number four in China. Many Chinese people avoid using this number as it sounds like death in Chinese. So it is widely considered as an inauspicious number. I wonder whether English people also have number superstition, and what numbers are regarded as lucky or unlucky in Britain and why. Thank you.

Jean: 谢谢这位中国听友 Wendy 给我们提出的这个问题。在英国, 有哪些数字是比较吉利而那些数字又是不吉利的呢? Great question, huh?

Finn: Yeah, actually, Jean, it's a good question but...

Jean: But what?

Finn: But there really aren't many. You know, I can only think of one number, and it's unlucky: number 13.

Jean: Oh.

Finn: Now there are lots of possible reasons why it's unlucky, but nobody really knows.

Jean: Oh. OK.

Finn: Yeah, so... that's it. Thanks for listening everyone, see you next week.

Jean: Bye.

(Wind blowing, rustling papers)

Finn: That was a bit quick, wasn't it?

Jean: Yes, it was a bit.

Finn: You know, people really don't like 13.

Jean: No, they don't.

Finn: Did you know lots of hotels don't have a thirteenth floor?

Jean: Yes.

(Wind suddenly stops)

Jean: OK, how about this:

Insert

Ask About China 中国问答。

Jean: 要不我们今天用英语来谈一谈我们中国文化里面认为不吉利的数字好不好?
Today's question comes from our producer Finn.

Finn: Hey, from me 是的。我知道在中文里确实是有一些数字是代表了一些吉利还有不吉利的含意，可是我本人对这方面其实并不是特别的了解。所以请问一下你能不能帮我介绍一下这些吉利还有不吉利的数字还有他们的根源所在吗？

Jean: Well, let's try! 我们大多数中国人都知道，数字在中国文化里有很多不同的代表含义 symbolic meanings, 不过怎么能给外国人解释清楚这些含义呢？ Which numbers would you like to know about Finn?

Finn: OK, well, eight 八 is a very lucky number isn't it, why is this?

Jean: OK, 那 Finn 我还是给你拿中文来解释一下好了，这样收听我们节目的中国朋友们也可以从中学到你用英语来解释这些中国的文化特征。 Finn 刚才问我数字“八”在中国文化中的代表意义。首先，“八”和“发”的发音相似，而“发”有“发财”“兴旺”的意思。

Finn: OK, so if we're talking about it in English we could say this: the word eight 八 sounds like the word for prosperity 发 or 发财 in Chinese. So I guess this is why car number plates 汽车车牌 with eight on them are very expensive in China.

Jean: Indeed. And of course our Olympics 2008 年 8 月 8 日!

- Finn:** The eighth day of the eighth month of 2008. Now, what about nine 九—九是不是也是一个幸运数字呢？
- Jean:** Yes, you're right. 在中国传统文化中，“九”这个数字总是和历代的皇帝有着密切的联系，比如说皇帝的黄袍上一定要绣有九条龙的图案。“皇帝”这个词在英语里就是：
- Finn:** Emperor.
- Jean:** 袍子呢？
- Finn:** Robes. So, nine is associated with the Emperor. And the Emperor's robes would be decorated with nine dragons, for example. Now, Jean, isn't there something to do with weddings as well? I was at a Chinese wedding last year and, you know, there seemed to be nine of absolutely everything!
- Jean:** 没错，因为和“九”这个数字发音相同的中国字还有“长久”的“久”，而新婚的夫妻们都希望自己的婚姻能够天长地久，所以在婚礼上的很多东西都已经要压上九这个数字！
- Finn:** I see. So if we're explaining this in English, we could say that nine is a lucky number at weddings because the word for nine in Chinese 九 sounds the same as the word for 'a long time' 久。
- Jean:** 是啊，我们很多中国人都选择在 2009 年的 9 月 9 日结婚就是因为这个道理了。
- Finn:** OK, so you could tell people that certain dates are seen as very lucky such as 9 September 2009: 09 年 9 月 9 日。
- Jean:** 年月日连起来是 999, very lucky!
- Finn:** Actually Jean, I'm not so sure...
- Jean:** Why's that?
- Finn:** Because that's the number you call for the police in the UK! 999!
- Jean:** 是吗？对呀，如果你和英国人说我们 999 紧急呼救的报警电话号码是个最吉利的数字的话，大家可能真的不会相信你的！So Finn, any more numbers you'd like to find out about?
- Finn:** Six?
- Jean:** Lucky. 首先，因为“六”和“流”发音相近。
- Finn:** OK, so six is lucky because it sounds like the word for flowing and smoothness. Seven?
- Jean:** Can be lucky and unlucky. Lucky 是因为“七”和“起”是谐音。

Finn: It can be considered lucky because it sounds like the word for rise 起。But you said it might be unlucky?

Jean: 不过有人说七是个不吉利的数字，因为中国农历的七月里有个鬼节，有点像你们西方的万圣节，就是阴间的鬼魂可以自由来到人间游荡的一个日子。

Finn: Ooh, Ghost month. According to the lunar calendar, which is 阴历 or 农历, the seventh month is Ghost month. But what about this? Isn't it also the month when you have 七夕、七夕节?

Jean: Oh yes... 中国农历的七夕现在已经成为了我们中国人的情人节了! So all these numbers really do have a lot of stories!

Finn: Yes, I think this is one area where Chinese is definitely a lot more interesting than English.

Jean: Yes, I agree. 那么希望我们今天的节目能够帮助大家学习掌握到一些谈到中国文化和吉祥数字方面的英语词汇和说法!

Finn: Yes and thank you to Wendy for her original question.

Jean: And thank you Finn for your question.

Finn: You're very welcome. That's all for this week. This time we can really say eight one eight one.

Jean: Eight one eight one?

Finn: 八一八一。

Jean: Ha ha. I think we'd be better calling 九九九!

Finn: 999. See you next time.

Jean: Bye.

Glossary

superstition 迷信	mystical power 神秘的力量
auspicious 吉利的	inauspicious 不吉利的
car number plates 汽车车牌	Emperor 皇帝
robes 袍子	lunar calendar 阴历 or 农历