

百毒不侵

bai3 du2 bu4 qin1

Chief Secretary Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor has been criticized as being draconian in discussing the issue of retirement protection. Critics also accused her of not listening to the opinions of the people.

In response, she said after going through the debate on political reforms, she has become quite used to being the target of personal attacks. The experience, she said, has rendered her “百毒不侵” (*bai3 du2 bu4 qin1*).

“百” (*bai3*) is “a hundred,” “numerous,” “毒” (*du2*) “poison,” “不” (*bu4*) “not” and “侵” (*qin1*) “to invade.” Literally, “百毒不侵” (*bai3 du2 bu4 qin1*) is “a hundred poisons not invade,” “not harmed even if exposed to different kinds of poisons.”

“百毒不侵” (*bai3 du2 bu4 qin1*) is an expression often used in martial arts novels. Usually, it is the protagonists who have accidentally acquired this enviable strength after having been poisoned many times and miraculously survived,

Idiom by Lon Yan

presumably because whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

No one can become “百毒不侵” (*bai3 du2 bu4 qin1*) in real life, and Lam did not really mean that she is not affected by poison.

The “毒” (*du2*) in the idiom does not necessarily refer to actual poison. It may mean things that are harmful or hurtful in general. So figuratively, “百毒不侵” (*bai3 du2 bu4 qin1*) means to “to be impervious to harm,” “not being affected, disturbed or even distracted by outside elements or adverse conditions.”

So Lam was really saying that having dealt with similar unpleasant experiences, she is no longer bothered by name calling and public attacks.

Terms containing the character “毒” (*du2*) include:

毒品 (*du2 pin3*) – illegal drugs

毒蛇 (*du2 she2*) – poisonous snake

毒藥 (*du2 yao4*) – poison

陰毒 (*yin1 du2*) – vicious with a friendly exterior