

風雨不改

feng1 yu3 bu4 gai3

More than 74,000 people registered to take part in the Hong Kong Marathon this year. Only about 60,000 did and the turnout rate of 83 percent was not the highest.

But we have to consider the weather. It was raining throughout the day of the event, and many runners completed the race in raincoats. So what we should say is 60,000 turned up despite the bad weather.

Those who were undeterred displayed the spirit of “風雨不改” (*feng1 yu3 bu4 gai3*). “風” (*feng1*) is “the wind,” “雨” (*yu3*) “the rain,” “不” (*bu4*) “not,” and “改” (*gai3*) “to change,” “to alter,” “to switch.” Literally, the idiom is “wind rain no change,” “no change even if there is wind and rain.”

The idiom is similar to the English expression “come rain or shine,” which means “whatever the weather,” as in he jogs around the block every morning, rain or shine. It also means “whatever

Idiom by Lon Yan

happens,” “whatever the circumstances.” Come rain or shine, I will stand by you. So “風雨不改” (*feng1 yu3 bu4 gai3*) means “come rain or shine,” or “standing firm whatever the circumstances.”

The term “風雨” (*feng1 yu3*), apart from meaning the elements, is also a metaphor for “trial and hardship.” “風風雨雨” (*feng1 feng1 yu3 yu3*) means obstacles, complications or aggravations that one encounters on the way to achieving a goal.

“風雨不改” (*feng1 yu3 bu4 gai3*) also describes someone who is morally strong, who does not waver from his or her course and principles, or renege on a promise, even if doing so would mean hardship.

Terms containing the character “改” (*gai3*) include:

改善 (*gai3 shan4*) – to improve

改變 (*gai3 bian4*) – to change, changes

改革 (*gai3 ge2*) – to reform

改過 (*gai3 guo4*) – to mend one’s ways