

不可思議

bu4 ke3 si1 yi4

A nine-year-old Chongqing (重慶) boy suddenly collapsed at school. As he was taken to hospital, his heartbeat slowed, and his parents were told there was little hope of saving him.

Doctors found many pre-existing health problems with the boy, including intracranial hemorrhage (顱內出血), leukemia (白血病), damaged heart muscles, respiratory problems and liver damage. Any one of these conditions sounds serious enough to be fatal. Treatment would, they concluded, be futile. So the ambulance was diverted to a funeral home. On the way, the heartbroken mother kept calling the boy's name. Just before entering the home, the his heart started to beat again, and breathing resumed.

He was reported to have spoken again three days later, taken fluids after five days, and completely regained consciousness after a week. Everyone called this a miracle and what happened to the boy was “不可思議” (*bu4 ke3 si1 yi4*).

Idiom by Lon Yan

“不可” (*bu4 ke3*) is “cannot,” “思議” (*si1 yi4*) “to comprehend.” “不可思議” (*bu4 ke3 si1 yi4*), literally, is “cannot comprehend,” which is what it means – “incomprehensible,” “mysterious,” “incredible,” “unimaginable,” and “beyond comprehension.”

If somebody survives a 30-meter fall, we can call it “不可思議” (*bu4 ke3 si1 yi4*), so is when a horse starts showing mathematical skills. The idiom has also been used to describe inexplicable happenings such as UFOs, cases of haunting, and people bending metal with “mind force.”

And if a stingy boss suddenly announces a 300 percent pay rise for everyone, this act may certainly qualify as “不可思議” (*bu4 ke3 si1 yi4*)!

Terms containing the character “思” (*si1*) include:

思考 (*si1 kao3*) – to deliberate

思念 (*si1 nian4*) – to miss; to long for

思想 (*si1 xiang3*) – thought; thinking

沉思 (*chen2 si1*) – to contemplate