

# 息事寧人

*xi1 shi4 ning2 ren2*

Cases of public bus drivers being assaulted by passengers are on the rise. Drivers have been attacked even for things like “the bus being too hot” and requesting to see the free ride card issued to the families of staff.

Perhaps it's time to add “Acting as sandbag for passengers who need anger management training” to the job description. Driving buses, has somehow, become a hazardous profession.

A trade body called a press conference to demand action. While passenger violence is inexcusable, the bus companies have also been blamed for not doing enough to protect their staff.

Despite strongly-worded statements denouncing such acts every time they happen, the drivers said the companies have taken a “息事寧人” (*xi1 shi4 ning2 ren2*) approach in the actual handling of the cases.

“息” (*xi1*) is “to cease,” “rest,” “事” (*shi4*) “affairs,” “trouble,” “寧” (*ning2*) is “tranquil,” “peaceful,” “人” (*ren2*) is “person,” “people.” Literally, “息事寧

## Idiom by Lon Yan

人” (*xi1 shi4 ning2 ren2*) is “cease trouble, tranquil people.” It means “to patch up after a quarrel and reconcile the parties concerned,” “to settle disputes and bring about peace,” “to make concessions,” “to avoid trouble,” “to gloss things over.”

“息事寧人” (*xi1 shi4 ning2 ren2*) can be a good policy for handling certain conflicts, as it could defuse animosity (敵意) and stop the conflict from escalating.

But assault is a serious criminal offence. A passenger hitting a bus driver is a crime. Letting the attacker off the hook may be “息事寧人” (*xi1 shi4 ning2 ren2*), but it would send the message that bus drivers can be attacked with impunity, which is not acceptable.

**Terms containing the character “寧” (*ning2*) include:**

寧靜 (*ning2 jing4*) – tranquil; placid

寧可 (*ning4 ke3*) – would rather; to prefer to

安寧 (*an1 ning2*) – calm; free from worry

寧波 (*ning2 bo1*) – Ningpo