

# 不速之客

*bu2 su4 zhi1 ke4*

A bunch of monkeys invaded the CCC Kei Tsz Primary School in Tsz Wan Shan. They had a great time running around the playground and climbing fences until police and agricultural and fisheries staff showed up. It took the officers many bananas, peanuts, and two hours to disperse the monkeys.

Students were kept indoors as the monkeys were having their party outside. And we can call these hairy primates “不速之客” (*bu2 su4 zhi1 ke4*). “不” (*bu2*) is “not,” “速” (*su4*) means “fast,” “quick,” “speedy,” “invite,” “之” (*zhi1*) is “this,” “that” and “客” (*ke4*) is “a guest.” Literally, “不速之客” (*bu2 su4 zhi1 ke4*) is “no invite that guest.”

“不速之客” (*bu2 su4 zhi1 ke4*) are not usually welcome. So it is always better to call first than just show up at someone’s doorstep. Even though the character “客” (*ke4*) in the idiom

## Idiom by Lon Yan

means “a guest,” in many cases, he, she or it is, strictly speaking, not a guest.

The monkeys were certainly not guests of the school or the school would not have called in the law with batons and shields to try to get them to leave. They were actually “unwanted visitors” as they were described in *The Standard* report.

Students who recently gate-crashed university council meetings may be called “不速之客,” so are those who stage protests outside the Legislative Council or the government headquarters.

In this idiom, the character “速” (*su4*) takes the meaning “invite.” But “速” (*su4*) is most often used to mean “fast,” “quick,” “speedy.”

### Terms containing the character “速” (*su4*) include:

速度 (*su4 du4*) – speed, tempo, pace

加速 (*ji1 su4*) – to speed up

火速 (*huo3 su4*) – at top speed

神速 (*shen2 su4*) – with amazing speed