

馬不停蹄

ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2

six people were arrested for allegedly being involved in the death threats against legislator-elect Eddie Chu Hoi-dick. Some of the suspects were believed to have triad connections. *Headline Daily* described the investigating officers as having been “馬不停蹄” (*ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2*)

“馬” (*ma3*) is “a horse,” “不” (*bu4*) “not,” “停” (*ting2*) “to stop,” and “蹄” (*ti2*) is “a hoof.” Literally, “馬不停蹄” (*ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2*) is “horse not stopping hoofs.”

“蹄” (*ti2*), “a hoof”, is used in the idiom to refer to the legs of a horse. When the legs of a horse keep moving, it means it is running non-stop. So “馬不停蹄” (*ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2*) means “to make a hurried journey without stop,” “continuously,” “unrelenting,” “without stopping to rest”.

In this case, saying that the investigators have been “馬不停蹄” (*ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2*) is a compli-

Idiom by Lon Yan

ment. It means they have been working non-stop, relentlessly, to bring the culprits to justice and to protect Chu.

“馬不停蹄” (*ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2*) is generally used to describe diligent efforts to achieve a goal or complete a task. When a co-worker works overtime to complete a project, you can say, “You have really been 馬不停蹄 (*ma3 bu4 ting2 ti2*).”

The opposite attitude is “愛理不理” (*ai4 li3 bu4 li3*) – to be cold and indifferent. If the police have been “愛理不理” (*ai4 li3 bu4 li3*) with the case, they would not have cracked it quickly.

Terms containing the character “馬” (*ma3*) include:

馬路 (*ma3 lu4*) – a street used for vehicular traffic

馬虎 (*ma3 hu3*) – careless; sloppy

馬桶 (*ma3 tong3*) – a chamber pot; a toilet

馬上 (*ma3 shang4*) – at once; right away