

Idiom by Lon Yan

樹大招風

shu4 da4 zhao1 feng1

The Michelin restaurants guide has announced its latest star awards and nine restaurants in Hong Kong are on the list.

You might or might not agree with the evaluation of the guide, getting the stars does represent recognition for the food establishment.

Restaurants should, therefore, be happy, for receiving the Michelin star, which would also be great promotion and would bring more customers.

Yet, a few small restaurants had found that there are downsides to getting as the stars – the landlord, expecting better business at the shop, would put up rent. One starred restaurant lamented that the rate of increase was so high as to threaten the very viability of the business.

This is a typical example of “樹大招風” (*shu4 da4 zhao1 feng1*).

“樹” (*shu4*) is “a tree;” “大” (*da4*) “big;” “招”

(*zhao1*) “to beckon;” “to attract;” “to provoke” and “風” (*feng1*) “wind.” Literally, “樹大招風” (*shu4 da4 zhao1 feng1*) is “a big tree attracts the wind.”

It means “a famous person attract criticism;” “if you are rich and famous, people will envy you;” “a big name brings trouble.”

“樹大招風” (*shu4 da4 zhao1 feng1*) is an accurate observation, as trees that fall in a typhoon are usually the tall ones. Smart people understand “樹大招風” (*shu4 da4 zhao1 feng1*) hence they keep a low profile.

It is also the reason for the advice “keep your head down” – to remain inconspicuous to avoid trouble.

Many people who got to high positions learned the painful lesson of “樹大招風” (*shu4 da4 zhao1 feng1*) when they attract all kinds of accusations and investigations.

Terms containing the character “風” (*feng1*) include:

風景 (*feng1 jing3*) – scenery

風水 (*feng1 shui3*) – feng shui

風險 (*feng1 xian3*) – risk; danger

風暴 (*feng1 bao4*) – a storm