

Idiom by Lon Yan

義無反顧

yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4

Land for development is in short supply, and the government has been proposing reclamation and creating artificial islands to address the problem.

But has been pointed out that there are in fact huge areas of “brownfield” that could be used instead of dumping soil into the sea, wreaking havoc with precious marine ecology.

Brownfields refers to deserted or damaged agricultural land in rural areas, and the government has not been enthusiastic in exploring their potential use.

Recently, the government finally changed its direction with Secretary for Development Paul Chan Mo-po admitting the pace of work has been slow and pledged to speed up developing these wasted land in a “義無反顧” (yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4) manner.

“義” (yi4) is “justice”, “righteousness,”

“無” (wu2) ‘without,’ “nil,” “no,” “反” (fan3) “in reverse,” “to turn over,” “to turn back,” and “顧” (gu4) “to turn around and look.” “反顧” (fan3 gu4) is “to look back.”

Literally, “義無反顧” (yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4) is “righteousness don’t look back”. The idiom means “to be duty-bound not to turn back,” “proceed without hesitation.”

When something is right, we should “義無反顧” (yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4) and do it. When someone says he or she is “義無反顧” (yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4) about a certain course of action, it represents determination.

“義無反顧” (yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4) has the same meaning as being resolute – being “admirably purposeful, determined and unwavering”. And citizens would certainly want the officials to be “義無反顧” (yi4 wu2 fan3 gu4) in doing the right things.

Terms containing the character “顧” (gu4) include:

顧客 (gu4 ke4) – a customer; a client

顧問 (gu4 wen4) – an adviser, a consultant

顧慮 (gu4 lü4) – misgivings

照顧 (zhao4 gu4) – to look after