

Idiom by Lon Yan

見怪不怪

jian4 guai4 bu2 guai4

No matter how much the world may wish, the Donald Trump spectre is not going away. Come January 20, the real estate tycoon is going to move into the White House as the 45th president of the United States.

After his election victory, which came as a shock to many, the president-elect continues to create shockwaves, ignoring protocol and long-standing policy to take calls that he shouldn't be taking, and appointing key officials whose credentials and connections were frowned upon.

But there is only so much shock people can take. After a point, people would just tune out, or start to get used to it, get desensitized (脫敏) and acclimatized (適應), to use fancy words, or in Chinese idiom, “見怪不怪” (*jian4*

guai4 bu2 guai4).

“見” (*jian4*) is “see,” “怪” (*guai4*) “odd,” “strange,” “weird,” “不” (*bu2*) “no,” “not,” and “怪” (*guai4*) is, again, “odd,” “strange,” “weird.” Literally, “見怪不怪” (*jian4 guai4 bu2 guai4*) is “see strange not strange.”

It means “to become inured to the unusual, weird or uncanny;” “not to wonder at strange sights;” “to keep one’s calm in the face of the unexpected.” It is a description of the process of adaption.

“見怪不怪” (*jian4 guai4 bu2 guai4*) is also an advice on how to deal with unusual situations. The full expression is “見怪不怪，其怪自敗” (*qi2 guai4 zi4 bai4*), meaning “if one remains calm upon seeing strange things, the strangeness will do no harm;” “ignore a monster and it will destroy itself.”

Terms containing the character “見” (*jian4*) include:

見面 (*jian4 mian4*) – to meet; to come face to face

見證 (*jian4 zheng4*) – witness; testimony

見鬼 (*jian4 gui3*) – see a ghost; to hell with it!

見識 (*jian4 shi*) – knowledge and experience