

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 志不在此

*zhi4 bu2 zai4 ci3*

Cycling tracks separate cyclists from traffic and pedestrians and keep everyone safe. The lengths of cycling tracks vary depending on their location, with some stretching for kilometers. But a 20-foot track? Are you serious?

That was exactly what people are asking when picture of just such a track was recently posted online. Located near the Central Park Towers in Tin Shui Wai, the “track” is complete with specially-painted green surface, elaborated white ground signs and 14, no less, reflective top, florescent yellow plastic traffic poles at both ends.

Just what real use can one make of this “track” on which cyclists would practically have to dismount right after they have mounted their bicycles? In fact, there are similar miniature tracks in Tai Po and Yuen Long too, people reported. But perhaps, as

some suggested, the government was “志不在此” (*zhi4 bu2 zai4 ci3*) when building these tracks.

“志” (*zhi1*) is “aspiration,” “ambition,” “不” (*bu2*) “not,” “在” (*zai4*) “(locate) at,” “(to be) in,” and “此” (*ci3*) “this.” Literally “志不在此” (*zhi4 bu2 zai4 ci3*) is “ambition not in this”. The expression means “having an ambition for things beyond what is presently available or obtainable,” “having an extraneous goal or ambition.”

When people do things for goals other than those that are apparent, we can say he or she is “志不在此” (*zhi4 bu2 zai4 ci3*). What then is the government’s “志” (*zhi4*) in building such tracks that could be the shortest ones that one can find anywhere in the world?

To get them listed in the Guinness World Records, of course!

### Terms containing the character “志” (*zhi4*) include:

志願 (*zhi4 yuan4*) – an aspiration; a desire

志向 (*zhi4 xiang4*) – an ambition; a goal

志向 (*zhi4 xiang4*) – to be determined; to make a resolution

大志 (*da4 zhi4*) – high aims