

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 雖敗猶榮

*sui1 bai4 you2 rong2*

The chief executive election is over, and the winner is out. As expected, former chief secretary for administration Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, who has Beijing's blessing, won.

But many think that her two competitors have put up a good fight. A commentator used the idiom “雖敗猶榮” (*sui1 bai4 you2 rong2*) to describe Woo Kwok-hing's campaigning specifically.

“雖” (*sui1*) is “although,” “even if,” “敗” (*bai4*) “to lose,” “to be defeated,” “a defeat,” “猶” (*you2*) “still,” “even” and “榮” (*rong2*) “honor,” “glory”. Literally, “雖敗猶榮” (*sui1 bai4 you2 rong2*) is “glory even having been defeated.”

The idiom means “a glorious defeat,” “to be glorious in defeat,” “to have a moral victory.”

Woo was said to be “雖敗猶榮” (*sui1 bai4*

*you2 rong2*) because his was clearly a David-and-Goliath battle in terms of resources and political backing, despite which his small team kept fighting until the bitter end, so to speak, and secured double-digit votes, which was no mean feat considering the situation.

Some see no glory in losing, say there is only winning or losing, and that there is are no such thing as a “glorious failure,” or a “glorious defeat.”

But there is certainly an idiom that describe the flip side of “雖敗猶榮” (*sui1 bai4 you2 rong2*), which is “勝之不武” (*sheng4 zhi1 bu4 wu3*), which means “to fight a one-sided battle,” “to have an unfair advantage in a contest” and there is, of course, no glory in a victory so achieved.

### Terms containing the character “敗” (*bai3*) include:

失敗 (*shi1 bai4*) – to fail; to lose; defeat

敗北 (*bai4 bei3*) – to be defeated; to lose a battle or election

敗壞 (*bai4 huai4*) – to ruin; to corrupt

敗家子 (*bai4 jia1 zi*) – a spendthrift; a prodigal