

Idiom by Lon Yan

豐儉由人

feng1 jian3 you2 ren2

Designer Balenciaga's huge blue Arena Extra-Large Shopper Tote Bag has become a talking point as people found that it looks like Ikea's iconic blue tote bag.

The bags are, of course, not the same as the former is made with "blue, wrinkled, glazed leather" while the latter, nylon. The biggest difference is the price: the Balenciaga will set you back by US\$2,145 or HK\$16,731, while you can get the Ikea one for HK\$5.

The Sweden furniture maker said they are "deeply flattered that the Balenciaga tote bag resembles the Ikea iconic sustainable blue bag." It even produced a poster with instructions on how to identify an "original Ikea FRAKTA bag" – you "shake it," and "If it rustles, it's the real deal."

Those who like the designer bag may, of course, buy it. But those who are unable or

unwilling to pay a princely sum for it may choose the Ikea one. This is a nice example of "豐儉由人" (*feng1 jian3 you2 ren2*).

"豐" (*feng1*) is "abundant," "plentiful," "儉" (*jian3*) "frugal," "thrifty," "由" (*you2*) "to follow the wishes of," "to allow or entrust someone to do," and "人" (*ren2*) "a person," "people." "豐儉由人" (*feng1 jian3 you2 ren2*), literally, is "abundant or frugal according to one's wishes." It means "fancy or simple according to one's budget."

Consumers like choices as they may "豐儉由人" (*feng1 jian3 you2 ren2*).

Mainland visitors illustrate the spirit of "豐儉由人" (*feng1 jian3 you2 ren2*) as big spender are spending a fortune on luxury goods in Tsim Sha Tsui while the frugal ones are sleeping on the beach in Cheung Chau.

Terms containing the character "豐" (*feng1*) include:

豐富 (*feng1 fu4*) – abundant; plentiful

豐收 (*feng1 shou1*) – a bumper crop; a plentiful harvest

豐盛 (*feng1 sheng4*) – flourishing; sumptuous; rich

豐滿 (*feng1 man3*) – plump; ample; well-rounded; well-developed