

Idiom by Lon Yan

瘡痍滿目

chuang1 yi2 man3 mu4

Successive typhoons hit Hong Kong and Macau, and news pages were filled with images of fallen trees, collapsed building structures and flooded streets.

On the other side of the world, hurricane Harvey dumped torrential rain on Houston, causing severe flooding. Aerial pictures showed rows of houses half submerged in water as rescue boats went around to pick up victims.

Such scenes of devastation can be described by the idiom “瘡痍滿目” (*chuang1 yi2 man3 mu4*).

“瘡” (*chuang1*) is “a sore,” “a skin ulcer,” “a wound,” “痍” (*yi2*) “a wound,” “bruise,” “sores,” “瘡痍” (*chuang1 yi2*), as a term, means “wound,” or figuratively “the desolation of trauma.” “滿” (*man3*) is “full,” “filled,” “packed,” and “目” (*mu4*) “the eye.” “滿目” (*man3 mu4*)

is “to meet the eye on every side.”

Literally, “瘡痍滿目” (*chuang1 yi2 man3 mu4*) is “bumps and bruises everywhere.” The idiom means, figuratively, “devastation everywhere.”

The idiom is used to describe the aftermath of a disaster, often natural ones, such as typhoons, flooding, earthquakes, or wild fires.

The idiom can also be written as “滿目瘡痍” (*man3 mu4 chuang1 yi2*), which means exactly the same, and is the version more often seen in the local media.

The character “瘡” (*chuang1*) – “a sore,” “a skin ulcer,” “a wound” – is also used in some other idioms, such as “千瘡百孔” (*qian1 chuang1 bai3 kong3*), literally, “one thousand boils and a hundred holes,” which means “in an extremely poor condition.”

Terms containing the character “滿” (*man3*) include:

滿分 (*man3 fen1*) – a perfect score; full marks

滿足 (*man3 zu2*) – satisfied; content; to fulfil

滿足感 (*man3 zu2 gan3*) – sense of satisfaction

不滿 (*bu4 man3*) – resentful; discontented; dissatisfied