

# 飛來橫禍

*fei1 lai2 heng4 huo4*

A construction worker (地盤工人) was working outside the former government headquarters in Central when a 14-meter-tall banyan tree (榕樹) fell on her.

The 54-year-old woman suffered injuries to many parts of her body. Fortunately (幸運地), she survived and was recovering at hospital.

Lo Kam-tai was transporting materials in a trolley (手推車) with her sister at the time. The job did not appear to be particularly dangerous nor was she working in bad weather. The tree fell quite suddenly and Lo could not have expected it.

When disaster (災難、禍害) strikes without warning, we can use the Chinese idiom “飛來橫禍” (*fei1 lai2 heng4 huo4*).

“飛” (*fei1*) means fly, “來” (*lai2*) is come, “橫” (*heng4*) means horizontal and “禍” (*huo4*) is disaster or calamity.

Literally, “飛來橫禍” is “fly come horizontal

## Idiom by Lon Yan

disaster,” which does not seem to make a lot of sense.

A disaster is a disaster. There is no such thing as a horizontal disaster or, for that matter, a vertical one! The character 橫 (*heng4*), in this context, carries the meaning of “by accident” or “unexpected.”

So, “飛來橫禍” is when disaster “flies in” unexpectedly. It refers to an unexpected disaster, calamity that strikes out of the blue.

An unexpected disaster struck and the father of three young children was killed in a car crash. We can use “飛來橫禍” in the sentence like this: 飛來橫禍, the father of three young children was killed in a car crash.

### Terms containing the character “禍” (*huo4*) include:

車禍 (*che1 huo4*) - traffic accident

惹禍 (*re3 huo4*) - bring misfortune on oneself or others

禍害 (*huo4 hai4*) - a disaster

禍根 (*huo4 gen1*) - root of trouble; seed of future