To these absurd restrictions, the response is "豈有此理" (qi3 you3 ci3 li3), which is a rather common remark when people run into unreasonable situations. “顧” (qi3) is “how?,” “有” (you3) “to have,” “to exist,” “此” (ci3) means “this,” “these: and “理” (li3) “reason,” “logic.” “豈有此理” (qi3 you3 ci3 li3) is, literally, “how could such logic exist?”

It means “How could this be possible?,” “It’s absurd!,” “It’s preposterous!,” “It’s outrageous!,” “utterly unreasonable!” This very versatile idiom can be used in almost any occasion when you want to express outrage. But it is for more serious matters. When the chief executive suggests people swim in the harbor, people may find the idea absurd but “豈有此理” is too strong a comment.

Terms containing the character “理” (li3) include:

理想 (li3 xiang3) – a dream; an ideal
理解 (li3 jie3) – to understand; to comprehend
理性 (li3 xing4) – reason; rationality
理論 (li3 lun4) – theory