Idiom by Lon Yan

"與時俱進" (yu3 shi2 ju4 jin4)

Much has been said, and much more will be said, about the Uber cab-hailing (呼召出租車) service, both locally and around the world. It is good. It is bad. It is legal. It is illegal. It is fair. It is unfair. Everyone seems to have a point of view. All arguments appear to be based on either law or reason. Out of this cacophony (不和諧音) of voices there are a few concerning how services can be improved.

One is that the taxi industry should “tackle the popularity (受歡迎) of Uber head-on by creating a smartphone app that promises a better service.” This is a move that can be called “與時俱進” (yu3 shi2 ju4 jin4).

“與” (yu3) is “with,” “時” (shi2) means “times,” “time,” “俱” (ju4) means “all,” and “進” (jin4) is “to move forward.” Literally, “與時俱進” (yu3 shi2 ju4 jin4) is “all to move forward with the times.”

It means “to keep up to date,” “to keep pace with the times,” “to keep abreast of developments.” The idiom connotes a progressive attitude. The opposite of “與時俱進” (yu3 shi2 ju4 jin4) is “抱殘守缺” (bao4 can2 shou3 que1). “殘” and “缺” both mean “deficient,” “抱” is to “embrace” and “守” is to “guard” “to defend.” There is clearly nothing progressive about embracing and defending that which is obsolete and deficient.

To any profession or trade, survival is about “與時俱進” (yu3 shi2 ju4 jin4), not “抱殘守缺” (bao4 can2 shou3 que1).

Terms containing the character “進” (jin4) include:

進步 (jin4 bu4) – progress
推進 (tui1 jin4) – to push forward
先進 (xian1 jin4) – advanced, developed
寸進 (cun4 jin4) – to inch forward