The female pig that was rescued after having been buried under rubbles for a month in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake is in the news again. The animal, known in Harry Potter parlance as “the sow who lived,” or “zhu1 jian1 qiang2” (豬堅強) – Pig Sturdy – to locals, was reported to have died.

Her miraculous survival has been an inspiration for many, so heartbroken fans from near and far came to pay tribute, just to find the 10-year-old still alive, though not exactly kicking, as it has developed a limp due to old age.

For the past eight years, Sturdy has been living like a king (or queen, if you may) at a “luxury” home complete with a living room and a bedroom. Her daily diet consists of gourmet food. She takes walks outside two times a day, and gets regular body checks.

The pig’s dramatic change of fortune is called “否極泰來” (pi3 ji2 tai4 lai2).

“否” (pi3) is “evil,” “bad,” “negate,” “極” (ji2) “the utmost,” “to reach the final point”; “extremely,” “泰” (tai4) “safe and tranquil,” “peaceful,” and “來” (lai2) “to take place,” “to be at,” “to come to,” “to come.” Literally, “否極泰來” (pi3 ji2 tai4 lai2) “when a bad situation hits its extreme, good comes.”

“否極泰來” (pi3 ji2 tai4 lai2) means “out of the depth of misfortune comes bliss,” “when misfortune reaches the limit, good fortune is at hand,” “after extreme bad luck, comes good luck.”

“否極泰來” (pi3 ji2 tai4 lai2) is a comforting thought for those going through a rough patch in life.

Terms containing the character “極” (ji2) include:

- 極好 (ji2 hao3) – excellent; superb
- 極力 (ji2 li4) – giving every effort
- 極限 (ji2 xian4) – the limit; the ultimate
- 極刑 (ji2 xing2) – death penalty