As far as “livability” (宜居性) is concerned, Hong Kong is slipping fast, falling 15 places over the past 12 months to 46th among 140 cities.

A spokesman for the Economist Intelligence Unit that compiled the latest rating said it is “primarily a result of heightened fears of unrest following pro-democracy protests.”

But a student leader said people do not fear unrest, but the weaknesses that were exposed by the movement, such as a government that only works for Beijing – not the locals – and the erosion of Hong Kong’s core values. Others said unaffordable housing is the main complaint.

The situation can be called “眾說紛紜” (zhong4 shuo1 fen1 yun2).

“眾” (zhong4) means “a crowd,” “numerous,” “說” (shuo1) means “to say,” “to speak” and “紛紜” (fen1 yun2) is “profuse and confusing.” Literally, “眾說紛紜” (zhong4 shuo1 fen1 yun2) means “numerous sayings profuse and confusing.” That is basically what the idiom means, which is “opinions are widely divided,” or “views are diverse.”

The idiom “各執一詞” (ge4 zhi2 yi4 ci2) also describes diverse views on a subject, but connotes an unyielding attitude on the part of all parties. “眾說紛紜” just means many people are expressing different views, and does not necessarily refer to a head-on argument.

“眾說紛紜” (zhong4 shuo1 fen1 yun2) is often used with “莫衷一是” (mo4 zhong1 yi2 shi4). “眾說紛紜, 莫衷一是” means many different opinions have been expressed, and we do not know which one is right. It also means the lack of consensus (共識).

Terms containing the character “說” (shuo1) include:

- 胡說 (hu2 shuo1) - talk nonsense
- 小說 (xia3 shuo1) - a novel
- 說明 (shuo1 ming2) - to explain
- 說明書 (shuo1 ming2 shu1) - note of instructions, a manual

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**Sudoku**

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Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Tetrad-code answer is available upon request by email tsoww@tsoww.com