

多此一舉

duo1 ci3 yi4 ju3

Education chief Eddie Ng Hak-kim (教育局局長吳克儉) has again blundered, this time for giving a day off to 510,000 kindergarten, primary and special school students for fear that they might not be able to survive the exceptionally cold weather.

It turned out that the day was not as cold as it was touted to be. Children staying home disrupted their parents' schedule, and they were understandably upset. After all, the parents did not ask for the bonus holiday.

Some also think the decision to keep youngsters at home is yet another example of the overprotection of our children, denying them the chance to face and deal with adversities.

After all, Chinese University vice chancellor Sung Jao-yiu survived minus 37 degrees Celsius conditions when he was studying in Canada where primary schools make children go outdoors in sub-zero temperatures with thick snow on the ground.

Idiom by Lon Yan

While Ng's intention was good, his move clearly ended up being “多此一舉” (*duo1 ci3 yi4 ju3*).

“多” (*duo1*) means “plenty” or “excess,” “surplus,” “此” (*ci3*) “this,” “一” (*yi4*) “one,” and “舉” (*ju3*) is “to raise,” “to life” or “an action,” “behavior.” Literally, “多此一舉” (*duo1 ci3 yi4 ju3*) is “excess this one action.” It means “to make an unnecessary move.”

When someone does something clearly unnecessary, like washing bowls and plates that are to be put in the dishwasher, or sticking a stamp on a postage prepaid envelop, you can say: “This is really 多此一舉 (*duo1 ci3 yi4 ju3*).” – “This is really unnecessary.”

Terms containing the character “舉” (*ju3*) include:

舉動 (*ju3 dong4*) – a move, an act

舉行 (*ju3 xing2*) – to hold (a meeting, conference etc.)

舉例 (*ju3 li4*) – to give an example

選舉 (*xuan3 ju3*) – an election