

前車之鑑

qian2 che1 zhi1 jian4

The government plans to tender one section of the waterfront promenade together with hotel sites at Kwun Tong harborfront.

It believes doing so will “tap private sector design expertise, achieve seamless completion with hotel development, and potentially release the whole of the open space earlier for public enjoyment.”

But concern groups fear that it may end up as another Avenue of Stars. A major plan to upgrade the tourist attraction was practically dropped due to the threat of a court challenge. The fiasco was blamed on insufficient public consultation.

The government should, therefore, take the Avenue of Stars experience as - 前車之鑑 (*qian2 che1 zhi1 jian4*). “前” (*qian2*) means “front,” “the preceding,” “車” (*che1*) “a car,” “a vehicle,” “之” (*zhi1*) “that,” “those,” and “鑑” (*jian4*) “an exam-

Idiom by Lon Yan

ple.” Literally, “前車之鑑” (*qian2 che1 zhi1 jian4*) is “the example of that car in front.”

The idiom comes from the saying “前車之覆，後車之鑑” (*qian2 che1 zhi1 fu4 hou4 che1 zhi1 jian4*) - “the overturned cart ahead is a warning to the carts behind,” “warning taken from the overturned cart ahead.”

It means “a lesson from the failure of one’s predecessor,” “lessons drawn from others’ mistakes,” an object lesson.

“前車之鑑” (*qian2 che1 zhi1 jian4*) is advice that we should learn from other people’s failure, and not do the same thing.

Terms containing the character “車” (*che1*) include:

車輛 (*che1 liang4*) - a car, a vehicle

車站 (*che1 zhan4*) - a railroad or bus station

車禍 (*che1 huo4*) - a traffic accident

車公廟 (*che1 gong1 miao4*) - the Che Kung Temple