

不敢苟同

bu4 gan3 gou3 tong2

There is growing agitation among the younger generation for the “independence of Hong Kong.” Many seasoned politicians have come out to try to put a brake on what they see as a troubling or even dangerous development.

At a recent political seminar that labeled itself “mild,” Democratic Party lawmaker Albert Ho Chun-yan made clear his stand on such suggestions, saying that he “難以苟同” (*nan2 yi3 gou3 tong2*).

“苟” (*gou3*) means careless, negligent, indifferent to right or wrong. 苟同 (*gou3 tong2*) is “to carelessly agree,” “to agree without regard to whether it is right or wrong,” “to agree for agreement’s sake.” “難以苟同” means “it’s hard for me to agree.”

The related idiom is “不敢苟同” (*bu4 gan3 gou3 tong2*). “敢” (*gan3*) is “to dare to,” and “不敢” (*bu4 gan3*) “dare not to,” “afraid to.” “不敢苟同” means “dare not agree with you on such a serious matter.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

“不敢苟同” (*bu4 gan3 gou3 tong2*) is meant to be a polite way of saying you don’t agree with what the other person is saying.

There is a slight apologetic tone to the idiom. It has the underlying meaning: not that I want to disagree with you, it’s just that I dare not agree with you without first doing some careful thinking.

Other speakers at the seminar believed the mainstream sentiment of the local community is to seek rights with a non-radical approach. So to radical ideas and actions, most people would probably respond by saying “不敢苟同” (*bu4 gan3 gou3 tong2*).

Terms containing the character “敢” (*gan3*) include:

勇敢 (*yong3 gan3*) - brave

敢於 (*gan3 yu2*) - to dare to

敢言 (*gan3 yan2*) - to have the courage to speak one’s mind

敢死隊 (*gan3 si3 dui4*) - a suicide squad