

以假亂真

yi3 jia3 luan4 zhen1

An egg bought from a market in Yuen Long was suspected to be a fake. Chinese newspaper reports said the egg yolk was bouncy “like a squash ball (壁球).” But a netizen suggested some egg yolks do behave like that after refrigeration (雪藏).

In fact, there have been numerous media reports about Made-in-China fake eggs. Mainland television also reported there were even “classes” that taught people how to make these “eggs” with cheap chemicals to sell as real eggs for profit. What they were doing was “以假亂真” (*yi3 jia3 luan4 zhen1*).

“以” (*yi3*) is “using,” “to use as,” “假” (*jia3*) is “fake,” “false,” “亂” (*luan4*) is “to confuse,” “真” (*zhen1*) is “real,” “true,” “genuine.” Literally, “以假亂真” (*yi3 jia3 luan4 zhen1*) is “use fake to confuse real.” It means “to mix the spurious (假的、偽造的) with the genuine,” “to pass imita-

Idiom by Lon Yan

tions for genuine” or “falsehood,” “deception.” “以假亂真” (*yi3 jia3 luan4 zhen1*) is usually bad, as the purpose is to deceive.

But some “以假亂真” (*yi3 jia3 luan4 zhen1*) may actually be helpful, and we welcome it. Artificial sweetener is one example. It creates a “fake” sweet taste as a substitute for “real” sugar. Only the taste buds are cheated.

There are good “fake eggs” too. The plant-based replacement egg products made by US company Hampton Creek, described in one magazine headline as “The Most Realistic Fake Eggs in Existence,” are said to be healthier, cheaper and taste better than real eggs!

Terms containing the character “亂” (*luan4*) include:

搗亂 (*dao3 luan4*) – to make trouble

亂說 (*luan4 shuo1*) – to blabber

雜亂 (*za2 luan4*) – disorderly and confused

胡亂 (*hu2 luan4*) – carelessly