

蒸蒸日上

zheng1 zheng1 ri4 shang4

Headline Daily celebrates its 11th anniversary, and a lot of its friends took out congratulatory ads in the newspaper. One of the messages employed the idiom “蒸蒸日上” (zheng1 zheng1 ri4 shang4).

“蒸” (zheng1) is “to steam,” “日” (ri4) “the sun,” “a day,” and “上” (shang4) is “on top,” “up.” Literally, “蒸蒸日上” (zheng1 zheng1 ri4 shang4) is “rising quickly every day like steam.” The idiom means “to become more and more prosperous,” “to be on the up-and-up,” “flourishing,” “thriving.”

Wishing someone, or a company, “蒸蒸日上” (zheng1 zheng1 ri4 shang4) is to wish that the person or the business will do better and better. The idiom is most often used in respect of a business that is going from strength to strength.

Steam always goes up, just as river always flows down. So the opposite of “蒸蒸日上” (zheng1

Idiom by Lon Yan

zheng1 ri4 shang4) is “江河日下” (jiang1 he2 ri4 xia4). “江” (jiang1) and “河” (he2) both means “river,” “日” (ri4) “a day” and “下” (xia4) is down.

“江河日下” (jiang1 he2 ri4 xia4), literally, is “going down day by day, like the rivers.” It means “to go from bad to worse,” “to be on the decline,” “to decline steadily.”

When a company keeps losing customers, its business must be “江河日下” (jiang1 he2 ri4 xia4).

“江河日下” (jiang1 he2 ri4 xia4) is not something you would wish on anyone, unless if you want to pick a fight or make a lifelong enemy.

Terms containing the character “上” (shang4) include:

上課 (shang4 ke4) – to attend class

上司 (shang4 si1) – superior; boss

上網 (shang4 wang3) – to go on the internet

上水 (shang3 shui3) – Sheung Shui