

不打自招

bu4 da3 zi4 zhao1

The lazy have a knack for hiding bad work behavior from supervisors, otherwise they would have been fired.

But a part-time census officer did just the opposite. She not only gave a lengthy account of how she came to work late and took long lunches on facebook, calling it “self-created flexi-hours,” but even posted pictures of a lunch party with a bunch of her colleagues outside the permitted lunch hour.

Since these are government employees drawing salaries from the public purse, the posting led to an uproar. The Census and Statistics Department was reported to have identified the employees concerned and reprimanded them severely.

Posting details of one’s dereliction of duty online can be described as “不打自招” (*bu4 da3 zi4 zhao1*).

“不” (*bu4*) is “no,” “not,” “打” (*da3*) “to hit,” “to strike,” “自” (*zi4*) “self,” “naturally” and “招” (*zhao1*) “to confess.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

Literally, “不打自招” (*bu4 da3 zi4 zhao1*) is “no hitting self-confess,” “confessing without beating.”

In the old days, beating a confession out of a suspect was common and considered as quite an acceptable crime investigation tool. And the “打” (*da3*) in the idiom refers to such practice. Now, of course, doing a “Jack Bauer” on a suspect is not only considered police brutality but illegal too.

“不打自招” (*bu4 da3 zi4 zhao1*) means “to confess without being tortured,” “to make a confession without duress,” “to confess without being pressed,” “to make a confession without duress,” which must be rather unusual in the old days.

Terms containing the character “打” (*da3*) include:

打架 (*da3 jia4*) – to come to blows; to fight

打擊 (*da3 ji1*) – to strike at; a blow

打擾 (*da3 rao3*) – to trouble; to disturb

打針 (*da3 zhen1*) – to have or give an injection