

無濟於事

wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4

A breeder of golden coin turtles lost 13 of the valuable shelled reptiles worth HK\$400,000 when his village house in Tai Po was burglarized in May.

Security cameras with night vision that were used to monitor the roof garden where the turtles were kept in a pond were clearly not adequate.

So the owner set up fences around the perimeter of the house. But recently, another break-in took place and 23 more of the turtles, valued at HK\$900,000, were stolen.

The security measures that had been taken were apparently “無濟於事” (wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4), and the breeder said he just didn't know what else to do.

“無” (wu2) is “without,” “nil,” “濟” (ji4) “to relieve,” “to aid,” “to benefit,” “於” (yu2) “at,” “in” and “事” (shi4) “a matter,” “trouble.” Literally, “無濟於事” (wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4) is “no benefit in matter,” “nil aid to matter.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

“無濟於事” (wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4) means “unhelpful,” “useless,” “of no avail,” “of no help,” “to no effect,” “to serve no purpose,” “not helping matters.”

Other versions of the idiom include “於事無補” (yu2 shi4 wu2 bu3) in which the character “補” (bu3), meaning “help,” “benefit,” “use,” takes the place of “濟” (ji4) and “無裨於事” (wu2 pi2 yu2 shi4). All versions mean “it won't do any good,” “it will not help matters,” “it doesn't help.”

When someone suggests a solution that clearly won't solve the problem at hand, you can say this will be “無濟於事” (wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4) – it won't help.

Terms containing the character “濟” (ji4) include:

濟事 (ji4 shi4) – be of help

不濟 (bu2 ji4) – not good; ineffective

濟助 (ji3 zhu4) – to relieve and help

同舟共濟 (tong2 zhou1 gong4 ji3) – to help one another