

# 就地取材

*jiu4 di4 qu3 cai2*

It is always better to obtain materials for production locally as it would save time and money. This is called “就地取材” (*jiu4 di4 qu3 cai2*).

“就” (*jiu4*) means “nearby,” “地” (*di4*) “the ground,” “a place,” “就地” (*jiu4 di4*) means “on the spot,” “locally.” “取” (*qu3*) is “to get,” “to take,” and “材” (*cai2*) “material.” Literally, “就地取材” (*jiu4 di4 qu3 cai2*) is “on the spot get material.” “就地取材” (*jiu4 di4 qu3 cai2*) means “to obtain material from local sources,” “to draw on local resources,” “using materials at hand.”

A burglar, however, gave new meaning to the idiom. He broke the window of a games room window at a Sau Mau Ping sports complex by throwing bricks that he had just pried from the pavement.

*The Headline Daily* report called his act “就地取材” (*jiu4 di4 qu3 cai2*), which is quite accurate, notwith-

## Idiom by Lon Yan

standing the fact that his act was bad “就地取材” (*jiu4 di4 qu3 cai2*). In any event, he was arrested.

“就地” (*jiu4 di4*) – on the spot – can be quite controversial too. We are talking about “就地解决” (*jiu4 di4 jie3 jue2*), a habit some visitors to Hong Kong let their children do in public places.

“解决” (*jie3 jue2*) is “to settle,” “to resolve,” like “解决问题” (*jie3 jue2 wen4 ti2*), to resolve a problem. But the term has a different colloquial meaning, which is “to relieve oneself,” “to answer the call of nature.” “就地解决” (*jiu4 di4 jie3 jue2*), to put it plainly, is “to pee on the spot”.

### Terms containing the character “材” (*cai2*) include:

材料 (*cai2 liao4*) – materials

建材 (*jian4 cai2*) – building materials

器材 (*qi4 cai2*) – equipment

蠢材 (*chun3 cai2*) – an idiot