

Idiom by Lon Yan

禍從天降

huo4 cong2 tian1 jiang4

A man parked his BMW on the side of the road in To Kwa Wan, came back the next morning, and found a nasty dent on it.

Determined to track down the culprit, the owner viewed video recording of cameras at nearby stores.

Finally, he found the tape that recorded a man picking up a yellow bamboo stick from the ground next to the car. The owner believed the dent was made by the stick when it fell from one of the units above.

The owner pledged to take legal action against the bamboo owner to recover the cost of fixing the dent, which he estimated at HK\$8,000.

That someone's carelessness has caused the car owner so much trouble can be called "禍從天降" (*huo4 cong2 tian1 jiang4*).

"禍" (*huo4*) is "disasters," "calamities," "從" (*cong2*) "from," "天" (*tian1*) "the sky," "the

heavens," "overhead," and "降" (*jiang4*) is "to drop," "to fall," "to descend." Literally, "禍從天降" (*huo4 cong2 tian1 jiang4*) is "a disaster falling from the sky," or "disaster comes from the sky."

It means "misfortune dropped from heavens and fell on somebody," "a disaster that struck out of the blue." In this case, misfortune literally fell out of the sky.

"天降" (*tian1 jiang4*) is "fall from the sky" literally. When something is "天降" (*tian1 jiang4*), it means it comes unasked, unexpected, with no apparent cause.

Bad things can be "天降" (*tian1 jiang4*), and so can good things. When there is a sudden unexpected happy event, we call it "喜從天降" (*xi3 cong2 tian1 jiang4*).

Terms containing the character "降" (*jiang4*) include:

降低 (*jiang4 di1*) – to lower

降落 (*jiang4 luo4*) – to descend, to land (a plane)

降落傘 (*jiang4 luo4 san3*) – a parachute

升降機 (*sheng1 jiang4 ji1*) – a lift; an elevator