

Idiom by Lon Yan

愛屋及烏

ai4 wu1 ji2 wu1

The owner of a Peak home wanted to remodel the house. But there was one problem – what to do with a fish pond that had more than 1,000 koi?

The owner apparently didn't have much feeling for the koi, as the media reported that he was considering just pouring concrete into the pond, burying the fish, if no one wanted them.

A friend was horrified by the idea and came to the rescue. His request for help on social media was answered when a fish pond operator agreed to take in the koi.

Hongkongers like to carry out major renovations to their new home before they first move in. That was probably what this house owner was doing. But it seems that he has forgotten the spirit of “愛屋及烏” (*ai4 wu1 ji2 wu1*).

“愛” (*ai4*) is “love,” “affection,” “屋” (*wu1*) “a house,” “及” (*ji2*) “and,” “to reach” and “烏” (*wu1*)

“black,” “dark,” “a crow.” Literally, “愛屋及烏” (*ai4 wu1 ji2 wu1*) is “love the house and its crow,” “love the house and also the crows inside.”

It has a similar meaning to the English proverb “Love me, love my dog,” meaning if you love someone, you should accept everything and everyone that the person loves.

Another similar English expression is “warts and all” in which warts (疣) are used figuratively to mean minor defects (瑕疵). It means when taking or loving something or someone, one accepts even those features or qualities that are not appealing or attractive.”

The idiom means “to be involved with someone and everyone connected” and in this case, we can change it slightly to “愛屋及鯉” (*ai4 wu1 ji2 li3*) – love house, love the carps.

Terms containing the character “屋” (*wu1*) include:

屋企 (*wu1 qi3*) – home; family

屋頂 (*wu1 ding3*) – the roof

公屋 (*gong1 wu1*) – public housing

屋邨 (*wu1 cun1*) – a public housing estate