

Idiom by Lon Yan

少見多怪

shao3 jian4 duo1 guai4

It snows everywhere in Canada, but Vancouver is blessed with mild winters. Obviously motivated by jealousy, the rest of Canada has always laughed at Vancouverites for being wimps as far as winter is concerned.

But it is true that residents of the West coast city would be alarmed by a few inches of snow, when the white stuff falls on a car-burying scale in some other parts of the country.

So when snowstorms hit Vancouver recently, even national television CBC couldn't help but poke fun again at poor Vancouverites with the headline "How to survive the snowpocalypse: Advice for Vancouver from the rest of Canada."

"How you, your home and your car can survive an honest-to-goodness Canadian winter", continued the sub-head in the same mock condescending tone.

"少見多怪" (*shao3 jian4 duo1 guai4*) is the

idiom for the occasion.

"少" (*shao3*) is "few," "little," "not many," "見" (*jian4*) "see," "多" (*duo1*) "many," "much," "plenty" and "怪" (*guai4*) "strange," "odd," "bewildering." Literally, "少見多怪" (*shao3 jian4 duo1 guai4*) is "less see, more strange," "rarely seen, very strange."

"少見多怪" (*shao3 jian4 duo1 guai4*) means "things seldom seen are strange," "the less one sees the more there will be to wonder at," "to express amazement due to lack of experience," "naive expression of excitement due to ignorance," "shocked through lack of experience."

The idiom is often used to express contempt for people who are amazed by things that are considered common place. When people scoff at the over-reaction of novices or amateurs, they would say "少見多怪" (*shao3 jian4 duo1 guai4*)!

Terms containing the character "怪" (*guai4*) include:

怪人 (*guai4 ren2*) – strange person; an eccentric

怪事 (*guai4 shi4*) – strange happenings

怪物 (*guai4 wu4*) – a monster; a freak

奇怪 (*qi2 guai4*) – odd; unusual; strange