

Idiom by Lon Yan

視若無睹

shi4 ruo4 wu2 du3

Kindergartens are not allowed to charge more than HK\$40 for admission application unless approved by the Education Bureau.

But the office of the Ombudsman found 36 kindergartens charging over this limit, many by 25 times, and one even by over 90 times.

The bureau was found to be giving approvals without specific criteria, without asking for supporting details and without checking. It appeared that it was just a matter of a kindergarten asking and approval will be granted, no questions asked.

Ombudsman Connie Lau Yin-hing called this unbelievable, and said by being “視若無睹” (*shi4 ruo4 wu2 du3*) to such a state of affairs, the Education Bureau has failed as a gatekeeper to safeguard the interest of parents.

“視” (*shi4*) is “to look at,” “若” (*ruo4*) “as if,”

“seem,” “無” (*wu2*) “without,” “not to have,” and “視若無睹” (*shi4 ruo4 wu2 du3*) “睹” (*du3*) “to see,” “to observe,” “to notice”. Literally, “視若無睹” (*shi4 ruo4 wu2 du3*) is “look but it’s like not seeing,” “look but not see.”

It means “to turn a blind eye to,” “to ignore.”

The idiom is often used as a criticism against people who fail to correct a problem as their duty requires, or law enforcement officers who choose not to take action even though they are aware of an offence being committed.

When a hygiene officer sees someone throwing garbage on the street and doesn’t issue a ticket, it is “視若無睹” (*shi4 ruo4 wu2 du3*). Policemen taking bribe to let criminal activities go on under their nose is also “視若無睹” (*shi4 ruo4 wu2 du3*), but of a much more serious kind.

Terms containing the character “視” (*shi4*) include:

視力 (*shi4 li4*) – sight; vision; eyesight

視網膜 (*shi4 wang3 mo2*) – retina

近視 (*jin4 shi4*) – nearsightedness

遠視 (*yuan3 shi4*) – farsightedness