

Idiom by Lon Yan

閉門造車

bi4 men2 zao4 che1

Headline Daily used the expression “閉門造車” (*bi4 men2 zao4 che1*) in its headline for a report on the Ocean Park’s plan to encourage pandas Ying Ying and Le Le to try to reproduce again after previous miscarriages.

“閉” (*bi4*) is “to close,” “to obstruct,” “門” (*men2*) “door,” “gate,” “造” (*zao4*) “to make,” “to build,” “to concoct,” “to fabricate,” and “車” is a baby.

The expression means “close the door to make babies,” “to make babies behind closed doors,” which makes sense, as even pandas need privacy too, especially when they are stars, and social decorum dictates that biological acts of procreation should not be conducted in public.

There is, of course, no such idiom as “閉門造B” (*bi4 men2 zao4 B*). The expression is a play

on words of the idiom “閉門造車” (*bi4 men2 zao4 che1*). The term “閉門” (*bi4 men2*) means “close the door,” “closed doors,” and “車” (*che1*) is “car,” “vehicle,” “chariot.” Literally, “閉門造車” (*bi4 men2 zao4 che1*) is “making a car behind closed doors.”

“閉門” (*bi4 men2*) connotes shutting out the world, not taking advantage of existing knowledge, not consulting those who can give useful advices.

So figuratively, the idiom means “to work on a project behind closed doors,” “to be oblivious to what is happening outside,” “to be overly subjective and disregard the outside world.” It also means “indulge in fantasy,” “build castles in the air.”

“閉門造車” (*bi4 men2 zao4 che1*) is never a good way to do things, because you would most likely get things wrong.

Terms containing the character “閉” (*bi4*) include:

封閉 (*feng1 bi4*) – to seal; to shut; closed

閉塞 (*bi4 se4*) – to stop up; to block

自閉 (*zi4 bi4*) – autism

閉路電視 (*bi4 lu4 dian4 shi4*) – closed circuit TV