

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 據為己有

ju4 wei4 ji3 you3

Two young women saw a young tree with beautiful blooming pink flowers as they were hiking on a mountain trail in Hubei (湖北), and decided that it was too beautiful not to take home. So they found themselves a spade and dug it up.

A policeman happened to pass by and told them to replant it, and wondered aloud why two women so pretty would do something so not pretty.

Instead of arresting them, he gave them a lecture, telling them digging up a tree like that would kill it, with the parting warning, in Don Corleone style, that should anything happen to the tree afterward, even if it was struck by lightning, he would blame the women and go after them.

What the women have done to the tree was “據為己有” (ju4 wei4 ji3 you3).

“據” (ju4) is “to occupy,” “to seize,” “為” (wei4) “to become,” “to serve as,” “for,” “as” “to take something as,” “己” (ji3) “oneself,” “one’s own” and “有” (you3) “to have,” “to possess.” Literally, “據為己有” (ju4 wei4 ji3 you3) is “to seize for oneself to have,” “to take for one’s own possession.”

The idiom means “to take forcible possession of,” “to have all to oneself,” “to keep for one’s own,” “to make something one’s own,” “to take for one’s own,” “to expropriate.”

“據為己有” (ju4 wei4 ji3 you3) is used to describe taking something improperly or forcibly, which in most cases, illegally. Shopping is also an activity that involves taking home things for our own possession, but the idiom doesn’t apply because we have paid for the goods.

### Terms containing the character “據” (ju4) include:

據悉 (ju4 xi1) – according to reports

證據 (zheng4 ju4) – evidence; proof

根據 (gen1 ju4) – to base on; a basis; according to

佔據 (zhan4 ju4) – to occupy; to take possession of