

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 不切實際

**bu2 qie4 shi2 ji4**

The government has completed a consultant study on combating avian flu (禽流感), and the report's recommendations include the separation of customers from live poultry at market stalls.

The suggestion is to put up physical barriers between areas for selling, picking up and slaughtering chickens. But stall owners called this "mission impossible."

First, they said, many of the stalls are too small to make such alterations, which requires a floor area of at least 1,000 sq ft. Even if physically possible, installing the partitions will be too costly for them, especially when business would have to be suspended for months for such works to be completed.

Staff expenses would also soar, they said, as they need different people manning the different sections, and they might have to close down if the requirements are imposed. What the vendors are saying is that the

suggestion is "不切實際" (*bu2 qie4 shi2 ji4*).

"不" (*bu2*) is "no," "not," "切" (*qie4*) is "切合" (*qie4 he2*), meaning "to fit in with," "to suit."

實際" (*shi2 ji4*) is "reality," "actuality," "real situation," "practical," "realistic." "不切實際" (*bu2 qie4 shi2 ji4*), literally, is not fit in with real situation."

The idiom means "impracticable," "infeasible," "unrealistic," "to impose a difficult task on someone," "to force someone to do something against his will."

The opposite is "切合實際" (*qie4 he2 shi2 ji4*), meaning "practical," "corresponding to reality," "geared to practical situations." And what is "切合實際" (*qie4 he2 shi2 ji4*), according to the trader, is for the government to offer chicken vendors interest-free loans to upgrade the facilities.

### Terms containing the character "際" (*ji4*) include:

國際 (*guo2 ji4*) – international

際遇 (*ji4 yu4*) – spells of fortune; encounters in life

天際 (*tian1 ji4*) – the skyline; the horizon

際會 (*ji4 hui4*) – opportunity