

Idiom by Lon Yan

不虞有詐

bu4 yu2 you3 zha4

How to you cheat 42 women out of HK\$2.1 million? By getting someone to pretend to be a “good man” and befriend them.

The “good man” approached the victims through Facebook and WeChat, and invited them to visit a beauty salon, where he used various tactics to coerce them into buying expensive service packages. The cases were exposed when the victims called a political party hotline for help. The scam worked because the victims said they were “不虞有詐” (*bu4 yu2 you3 zha4*).

“不虞” (*bu4 yu2*) means “unexpected,” “not worry that,” “有” (*you3*) “to have,” “to exist,” “there is,” and “詐” (*zha4*) “to deceive,” “to cheat,” “to swindle.” Literally, “不虞有詐” (*bu4 yu2 you3 zha4*) is “not worry that there is deception,” “not expecting to be cheated,”

“not suspecting a scam” which is what the idiom means.

“不虞有詐” (*bu4 yu2 you3 zha4*) is, actually, not much of an explanation about why people got cheated. People who got scammed are, of course, unsuspecting. If they had suspected, they wouldn’t have fallen for the scam in the first place.

So “不虞有詐” (*bu4 yu2 you3 zha4*) is stating the obvious, a rather redundant expression. To prevent such scams, we should rather dig deeper into why people would be in a mental state of “不虞有詐” (*bu4 yu2 you3 zha4*).

In this case, the victims were aged between 26 and 47, all were women, all single, and they were probably prone to fall for a fraudster who pretended to have the quality of a “good man.”

Terms containing the character “詐” (*zha4*) include:

詐騙 (*zha4 pian4*) – to defraud; to swindle

詐財 (*zha4 cai2*) – to cheat for money

詐死 (*zha4 si3*) – to feign death

欺詐 (*qi1 zha4*) – to swindle; deceit