

Idiom by Lon Yan

興風作浪

xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4

Foreign minister Wang Yi recently talked about troubles in the South China Sea, telling countries in the region: "If there are outside forces that don't want stability in the South China Sea, and still want to stir up trouble, we need to take a stand and say no together."

And after meeting his Japanese counterpart Taro Kono, Wang said China hopes Japan matches its words with actions and translates its positive stance about improving ties with China into tangible policies and actions in respect of territorial issues in the South China Sea.

He also told Japan not to "follow other countries' lead" to "興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*).

"興" (*xing1*) is "to launch," "to promote," "風" (*feng1*) "wind," "style," "作" (*zuo4*) "to make," "to do," "to grow" and "浪" (*lang4*) "waves."

Literally, "興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*) is "stirring up wind and making waves."

"興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*) means "to stir up trouble," "to make trouble," "to fan the flames of disorder," "to cause unrest," "to make waves," "to incite trouble. By telling Japan not to "興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*), Wang was warning it not to try to stir up trouble.

"興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*) is what troublemakers do. People who instigate workers to go on strike are, in the eyes of the management, "興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*).

And if you want to warn someone not to stir up trouble, you can say: "Stop "興風作浪" (*xing1 feng1 zuo4 lang4*)!"

Terms containing the character "浪" (*lang4*) include:

浪費 (*lang4 fei4*) – to squander; to waste

浪漫 (*lang4 man4*) – romantic

浪濤 (*lang4 tao1*) – ocean wave

風浪 (*feng1 lang4*) – stormy waves; winds and waves