

Idiom by Lon Yan

阿諛奉承

e1 yu2 feng4 cheng2

China's Communist Party Congress has just ended, and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent a congratulatory message to Chinese President Xi Jinping, wishing him "great success" as head of the nation.

Western media observed that exchange of diplomatic correspondence and ceremonial letters between the two countries are quite routine, but personal messages to and from the leaders are rare.

North Korea has no friends in the world except China, so it is understandable for Kim to send friendly messages. But the international community has been calling on Beijing to rein in Kim's ambition to build nuclear missiles, and China has pledged to strictly enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions banning imports of North Korean.

Against such background, Kim's

congratulatory message smacked of "阿諛奉承" (*e1 yu2 feng4 cheng2*).

"阿諛" (*e1 yu2*) means "to flatter," "to toady (拍馬屁)," "to fawn on," "to play up to," "奉承" (*feng4 cheng2*) "to use flattering speech," "to fawn upon," "to cringe before," "to flatter." "阿諛奉承" (*e1 yu2 feng4 cheng2*) means "flattering and fawning," "to curry favor with," "to flatter and toady to," "to kiss-ass."

Most people work hard to get ahead in their career, some choose to "阿諛奉承" (*e1 yu2 feng4 cheng2*) their bosses.

"阿諛奉承" (*e1 yu2 feng4 cheng2*) might work sometimes. After all, flattery is something that nobody would refuse. But people who "阿諛奉承" (*e1 yu2 feng4 cheng2*) are despised by their co-workers, so it is never a good way to seek advancement.

Terms containing the character "奉" (*feng4*) include:

奉獻 (*feng4 xian4*) – to offer as a tribute; to dedicate; to consecrate

奉命 (*feng4 ming4*) – on orders; under orders; to follow orders

奉勸 (*feng4 quan4*) – to offer an advice politely

奉還 (*feng4 huan2*) – to return with thanks