

Idiom by Lon Yan

喪心病狂

sang1 xin1 bing4 kuang2

Nine people were killed in an apartment fire in Taiwan. Police believed it was arson. A man who was found wandering in the vicinity was arrested.

Records showed that the 49-year-old suspect had burned a motorcycle and set fire outside a residential building in the past few months. There were no casualties in those cases.

But the suspect was reported to have told police that he liked to set fires whenever he felt unhappy. Arson will hurt someone sooner or later, and those who engage in such acts are “喪心病狂” (*sang1 xin1 bing4 kuang2*).

“喪” (*sang1*) is “to lose,” “心” (*xin1*) “the heart,” “mind,” “病” (*bing4*) “ill,” “a disease,” “狂” (*kuang2*) “crazy,” “mad,” “violent.” “喪心病狂” (*sang1 xin1 bing4 kuang2*), translated directly, is “losing the mind and is sickly mad.”

“喪心病狂” (*sang1 xin1 bing4 kuang2*) means “frenzied,” “frantic,” “perverse,” “unscrupulous,” “completely crazy.” The idiom is used to describe people who commit atrocities.

On the same day in Taiwan, a woman dropped off a four-year-old girl at a hospital and left. Doctors found the girl to be dead, with numerous horrific injuries all over her body.

Police found the woman to be the girl’s mother, and believed that her live-in boyfriend had tortured the girl - another victim of someone who is “喪心病狂” (*sang1 xin1 bing4 kuang2*).

Another idiom with a similar meaning is “喪盡天良” (*sang1 jin4 tian1 liang2*), literally “losing all conscience.” It is used to describe people who are “devoid of conscience,” “utterly heartless.”

Terms containing the character “喪” (*sang1*) include:

喪失 (*sang4 shi1*) – to forfeit; to lose

喪生 (*sang4 sheng1*) – lose one’s life

喪事 (*sang1 shi4*) – funeral arrangements

喪膽 (*sang4 dan3*) – to be terror-stricken