

層出不窮

ceng2 chu1 bu4 qiong2

Fraudsters (騙子) are very active these days. We see news reports about people being scammed (被騙錢) almost on a daily basis.

The police commissioner came out to warn people not to disclose banking or personal information to callers claiming to be mainland police after hundreds of people were cheated out of millions of dollars.

Days later, it was reported that Chinese soprano (女高音歌手) Li Yuen-yung was cheated out of HK\$20 million in a phone scam (騙局).

It seems that fraudsters never run out of tricks. Just when the public is made aware of one scheme, they will use another. People keep becoming victims because these scams are “層出不窮” (*ceng2 chu1 bu4 qiong2*).

“層” (*ceng2*) is “a layer,” “出” (*chu1*) is “to produce,” “to emerge,” “不” (*bu4*) is “no,” “not” and “窮” (*qiong2*) means “to exhaust.” Literally, “層出不窮” (*ceng2 chu1 bu4 qiong2*) is “layers emerge never

Idiom by Lon Yan

exhausted” or “to emerge in an endless stream.” “層” (*ceng2*) here has the meaning of repeating, as in fraudsters repeatedly coming up with new ways of cheating people. “不窮” (*bu4 qiong2*) can mean “not poor.” But in this idiom, the term takes the meaning “never runs out.”

The idiom is used to describe the many methods of the con men, or troubles that keep on coming. It means (tricks, troubles) pile up one after another. But the local media almost always use it in cases of fraud than as a reference to troubles.

If someone you know is always doing silly things or making mistakes, you can comment, sarcastically, that, “Your antics (mistakes) are really層出不窮!”

Terms containing the character “出” (*chu1*) include:

出生 (*chu1 sheng1*) - be born

支出 (*zhi1 chu1*) - expenses

提出 (*ti2 chu1*) - to bring up

出口 (*chu1 kou3*) - export, an exit