

登峰造極

deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2

A Japanese whisky maker will send samples of its spirit into space. The purpose is to test the effects of a zero-gravity environment on the flavor (味道) of the drink.

The company's researchers believe storing the beverage (飲料) in an environment with only slight temperature changes and limited liquid movement may lead to a mellower (較醇香的) flavor.

The samples will be stored at the Japanese laboratory facility on the International Space Station for at least a year, with some flasks staying longer.

Such an experiment cannot be cheap. Some might even say that it is a bit extreme (極端). But the search for excellence is an extreme process with the aim of “登峰造極” (*deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2*).

“登” (*deng1*) is “to mount,” “峰” (*feng1*) is “a peak,” “造” (*zao4*) means “to reach,” “to make” and “極” (*ji2*) is “the utmost,” “the extreme.” Literally, “登峰造極” (*deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2*) is “to mount peak reach extreme.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

“登峰造極” (*deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2*) means “reaches the peak of perfection.” The idiom is used to describe skills and techniques that are extremely outstanding. If the skills of a calligrapher are described as “登峰造極” (*deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2*), it is to say that he or she possesses extremely high skills.

It is better for us to consider “登峰造極” (*deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2*) as a target than as a place where we can actually reach.

It is very well for others to praise you for being “登峰造極” (*deng1 feng1 zao4 ji2*). But it cannot be good if you actually believe it, as that is complacency (自滿). And if you are at the “峰” (*feng1*) (peak), the only way to go, sadly, is down.

Terms containing the character “極” (*ji2*) include:

南極 (*nan2 ji2*) - the South Pole

極權 (*ji2 quan2*) - totalitarian rule

極光 (*ji2 guang1*) - the aurora australis, aurora borealis

極刑 (*ji2 xing2*) - the death penalty