

視而不見

shi4 er2 bu2 jian4

Conservationists (保育人士) issued a scathing (尖刻的) report about the ivory trade in Hong Kong and accused us of helping to push elephants toward extinction (絕種).

The report described Hong Kong as the world's third largest ivory smuggling hub (走私中心) and a spokesman said: "A mass slaughter of African elephants is underway, yet the Hong Kong government is turning a blind eye."

To "turn a blind eye" means to "pretend not to notice." The Chinese idiom that has a similar meaning is "視而不見" (*shi4 er2 bu2 jian4*).

"視" (*shi4*) means "to look at," "而" (*er2*) is "and" or "but," "不" (*bu2*) is "no" or "not," and "見" (*jian4*) means "to see." Literally, "視

Idiom by Lon Yan

而不見" (*shi4 er2 bu2 jian4*) is "look but not see." It means "to willfully ignore."

The Hong Kong government was accused of "視而不見" the illegal practice of passing off new ivory as old to take advantage of the domestic-use exemption (豁免) for ivory that predated a 1989 ban.

An example of using the idiom in a sentence: The driver clearly ran a red light (衝紅燈), but the policeman 視而不見 (acted like he did not see it).

You can find the character 視 (*shi4*) in the term 電視機 (*dian4 shi4 ji1*), a television set.

The literal meaning of "電視機" (*dian4 shi4 ji1*) is "electric look machine" which is actually quite an accurate description of the TV set – a machine that is powered by electricity and gives you something to watch.