Taiwan model and actress Lin Chi-ling (林志玲) was linked by the media to a police probe into an international prostitution ring. She was angry, naturally, and asked “media friends” to stop the speculation, which she said hurt her badly. She posted a mini statement on Weibo (微博), calling the speculation “無的放矢” (wu2 di4 fang4 shi3).

“無” (wu2) is “no”, “nil,” “的” (di4) is “the bull’s eye,” “the target,” “放” (fang4) is “to release,” “to set forth,” and “矢” (shi3) is “an arrow.” Literally, “無的放矢” (wu2 di4 fang4 shi3) is “no target release arrow,” “shooting an arrow without a target,” “to shoot aimlessly,” or “to shoot at random.” It means to speak or act without a clear purpose, or to say things that are impractical. The idiom is more often used to describe allegations or accusations that are made without basis in either facts or reason.

That was what Lin meant when she called the speculation “無的放矢” (wu2 di4 fang4 shi3). When someone makes unfounded and unfair accusations against you, you can say, “無的放矢” (wu2 di4 fang4 shi3)!” to express your indignation strongly. That is like saying “That’s absurd!”

Lin also used two other idioms in her post. She described the media’s “insinuating (影射的) reports” as “子虛烏有” (zi3 xu1 wu1 you3) - no such man and nothing like that - meaning “pure imagination.” And she also said media bodies “捕風捉影” (bu3 feng1 zhuo1 ying3) - catch at the wind and grab at shadows,” meaning “to make accusations on hearsay.”

Terms containing the character “放” (fang4) include:

- 放棄 (fang4 qi4) - to give up
- 放下 (fang4 xia4) - to put down
- 放心 (fang4 xin1) - to rest assured
- 放火 (fang4 huo3) - to set on fire