

# 膽大包天

*dan3 da4 bao1 tian1*

A plainclothes policeman approached a young man who was acting suspiciously in Choi Wan Estate for questioning in the small hours on New Year's Day. The man threw a flashlight at the police and fled.

A vehicle then tore out of the car park and, despite being told to stop, the driver kept speeding up, ran over the foot of the policeman and sped away as the officer fired shots at it. Occupants of the vehicle were suspected of being associates of the first man.

One can only call these people “膽大包天” (*dan3 da4 bao1 tian1*). “膽” (*dan3*) is “gall,” “大” (*da4*) “big,” “包” (*bao1*) “to wrap up,” and “天” (*tian1*) “the sky.” Literally, “膽大包天” (*dan3 da4 bao1 tian1*) is “gall so big it wraps up the sky.” The idiom means “audacious in the extreme.”

Both the English and Chinese language

## Idiom by Lon Yan

somehow link gall with courage or boldness. “大膽” (*da4 dan3*), having a big gall bladder, means being bold. Calling someone “大膽” may mean he or she is brave like “You are really 大膽 (*da4 dan3*) to be sleeping in a haunted house.” “渾身是膽” - a body full of gall - is an idiom that describes a brave person.

But “大膽” may also be used in a critical way. “You are really 大膽 (*da4 dan3*) to ignore my express order!” “膽大包天” (*dan3 da4 bao1 tian1*) is usually used this way - to describe people who blatantly do bad things, as in the case of the driver who tried to run over a policeman.

### Terms containing the character “膽” (*dan3*) include:

膽量 (*dan3 liang4*) - courage

膽小 (*dan3 xiao3*) - cowardly

膽囊 (*dan3 nang2*) - the gall bladder

膽固醇 (*dan3 gu4 chun2*) - cholesterol