

# 漁翁得利

*yu2 weng1 de2 li4*

Riots on Hong Kong streets have scared tourists away, with visitor figures registering a double-digit drop during the Lunar New Year holidays.

Tourism board chairman Peter Lam Kin-ngok told lawmakers local tourism suffered because the violence hurt Hong Kong's image. But, during the same period, Macau's tourist numbers went up.

This is a typical case of “漁翁得利” (*yu2 weng1 de2 li4*). “漁翁” (*yu2 weng1*) is a fisherman. “得” (*de2*) “to,” “to obtain,” “to gain,” and “利” (*li4*) means “profit,” “benefit,” “advantage.” Literally, “漁翁得利” (*yu2 weng1 de2 li4*) “the fisherman gets the benefit.”

Another form of the idiom is “漁人得利” (*yu2 ren2 de2 li4*). “漁翁” (*yu2 weng1*) and “漁人” (*yu2 ren2*) both mean “fisherman,” so there is no difference in meaning between the two versions.

## Idiom by Lon Yan

The idiom comes from the saying “鷸蚌相爭，漁人得利” (*yu4 bang4 xiang1 zheng1 yu2 ren2 de2 li4*). “鷸” (*yu4*) is a sandpiper, and “蚌” (*bang4*) is a clam. The saying means “when the sandpiper and the clam grapple, the fisherman profits.”

The clam closed its shell on the beak of the sandpiper. Neither the bird nor the Bivalvia were going anywhere, so a fisherman who happened to pass by just picked them up and had a nice meal.

Figuratively, the idiom means “neighbors who can't agree lose out to a third party.” And as people in Hong Kong fight each other, Macau has apparently become the fisherman.

### Terms containing the character “利” (*li4*) include:

利潤 (*li4 run4*) – profit, returns

利用 (*li4 yong4*) – to exploit, to make use of

利益 (*li4 yi4*) – benefit, advantage

利誘 (*li4 you4*) – to lure by gain