

各懷鬼胎

ge4 huai2 gui3 tai1

Filibustering by pan-democrat lawmakers has finally killed the copyright amendment bill, at least the chance of it being passed within this legislative session.

Apparently frustrated with months of futile tussling and hundreds of wasted hours, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Gregory So Kam-leung lashed out at the bill killers.

He used the scenario in Louis Cha's (金庸) famous martial arts novel *The Heaven Sword and Dragon Saber* (倚天屠龍記) to criticize the dissenting lawmakers, saying that while they were proffering seemingly noble reasons for blocking the bill, they were “各懷鬼胎” (ge4 huai2 gui3 tai1).

“各” (ge4) means “each,” “懷” (huai2) “to harbor,” “to carry concealed,” “鬼” (gui3) “ghost,” “devilish” and “胎” (tai1) “a fetus,” “an embryo.” Literally, “各懷鬼胎” (ge4 huai2 gui3 tai1) is “each harboring a devilish fetus.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

“鬼胎” (gui3 tai1) means “evil plots,” “dark schemes,” “sinister design,” “ulterior motive.” So the idiom means “each having private ends to serve,” “each having an ulterior motive,” “each with his own ax to grind.”

The week before the government's final attempt to have the bill's legislative process put back on the right track, Financial Secretary John Tsang Chun-wah called on those who were disrupting the process to “懸崖勒馬” (xuan2 ya2 le4 ma3) – “to rein in the horse at the edge of the precipice,” meaning to pull back before it is too late.

Obviously his appeal fell on deaf ears. (無人理會)

Terms containing the character “鬼” (gui3) include:

鬼屋 (gui3 wu1) – a haunted house

撞鬼 (zhuang4 gui3) – encounter a ghost

鬼話 (gui3 hua4) – nonsense

替死鬼 (ti4 si3 gui3) – person made to suffer for another's mistake, a scapegoat