

罪魁禍首

zui4 kui2 huo4 shou3

A mainland tourist was beaten and died over what was believed to be a dispute over forced shopping in Hong Kong. As a result, mainlanders called for a boycott of the city. State media, such as the *Global Times*, and the National Tourism Administration (國家旅游局) leveled criticism at us.

But the source of the problem may be package tours with super-low fees. This raises the question of who is the “罪魁禍首” (*zui4 kui2 huo4 shou3*) in this matter.

“罪” (*zui4*) is “crime,” “guilt,” “魁” (*kui2*) is “leader,” “chief,” “禍” (*huo4*) is “a disaster,” “a calamity,” “a plague,” and “首” (*shou3*) is “the head.” Literally, “罪魁禍首” (*zui4 kui2 huo4 shou3*) is “crime leader plague head.”

“罪魁” (*zui4 kui2*) and “禍首” (*huo4 shou3*) both mean “chief culprit.” And the idiom means “a chief offender,” “a super-criminal,” “an arch-criminal.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

“罪魁禍首” does not necessarily refer to a crime boss. The person or party that is mainly responsible for any serious problem is a “罪魁禍首” (*zui4 kui2 huo4 shou3*).

Mainland tourism bodies know the problem, so they ban zero-fee tours. But some agencies evade enforcement by submitting false documents to authorities signed by greedy tourists.

So is Hong Kong the “罪魁禍首” (*zui4 kui2 huo4 shou3*)? How about mainland travel agencies, greedy tourists, and the authorities who have apparently failed to enforce the law? Unless the “罪魁禍首” is identified and dealt with, the problem will persist.

Terms containing the character “罪” (*zui4*) include:

罪人 (*zui4 ren2*) - a sinner

罪名 (*zui4 ming2*) - a charge, an accusation

罪犯 (*zui4 fan4*) - a criminal

罪證 (*zui4 zheng4*) - evidence of a crime