

# 明目張膽

*ming2 mu4 zhang1 dan3*

A former senior official and a few rich businessmen were found to have turned squatter structures into luxury homes, gardens and private piers at a village in Tai Tam on government land.

Despite their acts being absolutely “明目張膽” (*ming2 mu4 zhang1 dan3*), they were believed to have lived there for decades without being challenged. But after being exposed by the media, Lands Department workers quickly moved in to demolish the illegal extensions.

“明” (*ming2*) is “overt,” “open,” “clear-sighted,” “目” (*mu4*) is “an eye,” “sight,” “張” (*zhang1*) “to give free rein to,” “to indulge,” “to open” and “膽” (*dan1*) “the gall,” “the nerve.” Literally, “明目張膽” (*ming2 mu4 zhang1 dan3*) is “in plain sight and with unabashed gall.”

The idiom means “brazenly,” “flagrantly,” “to do evil things openly and unscrupulously,” “to have the impudence to do something,” “to set aside all scruples to the air,” “openly and without fear.” “明目張膽”

## Idiom by Lon Yan

(*ming2 mu4 zhang1 dan3*) is used to describe conduct that is undesirable – either morally or legally – or that does not represent a good deed.

Noteworthy is the concept of adverse possession, “the occupation of land to which another person has title with the intention of possessing it as one’s own.”

If the occupation of the land is long enough, this doctrine operates to let ownership of the land pass to the occupier. The purpose is to make sure that land does not fall into disuse.

But one important requirement for title acquisition via “adverse possession” is that the occupation has to be “open,” which means it has to be “明目張膽” (*ming2 mu4 zhang1 dan3*).

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

膽小 (*dan3 xiao3*) – timid; fearful

膽大 (*dan3 da4*) – daring; bold

膽量 (*dan3 liang4*) – courage; bravery

膽固醇 (*dan3 gu4 chun2*) – cholesterol