

# 心膽俱裂

*xin1 dan3 ju4 lie4*

A young photographer in the UK accidentally crashed a £150,000 (HK\$1.54 million) Lamborghini into the front of a luxury car showroom. As if that was not bad enough, the car hit two Ferraris inside, one of which was believed to be a collectors' item with a price tag of £274,995.

The aftermath was described as "mayhem," and witnesses said the poor young chap was seen burying his face in his hands when the ambulance arrived.

He had to be treated, not for physical injuries, but for shock. To say the truth, who wouldn't be shocked when having, in one second, committed a mistake that could add up to £600,000.

Henceforth to be known as the "six million dollar man" for the rest of his career – presuming he still has one – is not a prospect to be looked forward to. At the moment of impact, the young photographer must be "心膽俱裂" (*xin1 dan3 ju4 lie4*).

## Idiom by Lon Yan

"心" (*xin1*) is "the heart," "膽" (*dan3*) "the gall," "俱" (*ju4*) means "complete," "all" and "裂" (*lie4*) "to crack," "to split." Literally, "心膽俱裂" (*xin1 dan3 ju4 lie4*) is "heart and gall all cracked." The idiom means "to be frightened out of one's wits," "to be terror-stricken."

Moments of "心膽俱裂" (*xin1 dan3 ju4 lie4*) are, in fact, quite common among the career-minded. That is the feeling of an engineer who sees the bridge he or she built collapses for no apparent reason, or that of Melania Trump's speech writer, or the newspaper editor who picks up the morning paper and discovers the biggest headline he wrote on the front page contains a misspelled word.

### Terms containing the character "裂" (*lie4*) include:

裂縫 (*lie4 feng4*) – a crack

破裂 (*po4 lie4*) – rupture; breakdown

龜裂 (*jun1 lie4*) – chaps; to split with many cracks

裂痕 (*lie4 hen2*) – a fissure