

龍爭虎鬥

long2 zheng1 hu3 dou4

The Legislative Council elections are over, with some longtime incumbents losing their seats to young politicians from newly-established groups.

This is to be expected as society changes and the new generation wants a say in the affairs of the community.

Also, seats in the lawmaking body are considered political positions of the highest level in the territory, so the race naturally attracted the strongest contestants with the strongest backing, and can be called “龍爭虎鬥” (*long2 zheng1 hu3 dou4*)

“龍” (*long2*) is “a dragon,” “爭” (*zheng1*) “to compete for,” “to vie for,” “to strive for,” “to dispute,” “虎” (*hu3*) “a tiger” and “鬥” (*dou4*) “a fight,” “to fight,” “a struggle.” Literally, “龍爭虎鬥” (*long2 zheng1 hu3 dou4*) is “dragon fights tiger struggles,” “the dragon wars, the tiger battles.”

The dragon is fierce and mighty. It is also a symbol of the monarch in Chinese culture. Tigers are strong

Idiom by Lon Yan

and deadly too. We can't possibly know which will win if a dragon fights with a tiger. It will never happen in the real world as the dragon is a creature that exists only in mythology.

In any event, the dragon and the tiger are used in the idiom as metaphors for something that is powerful and strong. So the idiom means “a fierce struggle between two evenly-matched opponents,” “a fierce battle between giants.”

“龍爭虎鬥” (*long2 zheng1 hu3 dou4*) is the equivalent of the English expression “a clash of the titans,” which means a hard struggle or competition between parties, both of which are very important, strong, big or clever.

Terms containing the character “龍” (*long2*) include:

龍捲風 (*long2 juan3 feng1*) – a tornado; a cyclone

龍蝦 (*long2 xia1*) – a lobster

龍井 (*long2 jing3*) – Longjing, a famous green tea produced in Hangzhou

九龍 (*jiu3 long2*) – Kowloon