

依樣葫蘆

yi1 yang4 hu2 lu2

Academic and Occupy Central co-founder Benny Tai Yiu-ting's strategic vote plan "ThunderGo" has blown up in his face.

The plan was meant to help get as many pro-democracy candidates into the Legislative Council as possible. But it has backfired as Tai was blamed for causing some veteran pro-democracy legislators to lose their seats and for confusing voters.

Tai admitted he had underestimated both the number of voters who would follow the scheme and the entire situation.

Political commentators noted that such schemes were used in Canada's 2015 federal elections to enable Liberal's Justine Trudeau to oust the Conservative Party's multi term prime minister Stephen Harper.

But transplanting something that has proven successful somewhere else for local use does not always work well, or even work at all. Such wholesale copying is described by the idiom "依樣葫蘆" (*yi1 yang4 hu2 lu2*).

Idiom by Lon Yan

"依" (*yi1*) is "according to," "樣" is "shape," "appearance," "a sample," "a pattern" and "葫蘆" (*hu2 lu2*) "a gourd." The idiom is shorthand for the expression "依樣畫葫蘆" (*yi1 yang4 hua4 hu2 lu2*). The additional character "畫" (*hua4*) means "to draw," "to paint."

Literally, "依樣畫葫蘆" (*yi1 yang4 hua4 hu2 lu2*) or "依樣葫蘆" (*yi1 yang4 hu2 lu2*) is "to draw a gourd from the model." It means "to follow suit," "to copy mechanically," "to imitate what was done by others."

Tai said he might not do strategic voting again in the next election. So "ThunderGo" is now effectively "ThunderGone". But he still thinks the idea is practical. That may be so, but at least some customizing is needed.

Terms containing the character "依" (*yi1*) include:

依賴 (*yi1 lai4*) – to depend on

依然 (*yi1 ran2*) – still; as before

依照 (*yi1 zhao4*) – according to

不依 (*bu4 yi1*) – not to comply