

# 犁庭掃穴

*li2 ting2 sao3 xue2*

Lawmaker-elect Eddie Chu Hoi-dick and his family received death threats, believed to be connected to Chu's campaign against some local interests regarding land use in Yuen Long.

In response, police raided entertainment establishments in the district for a few nights consecutively, and the operations were called “犁庭掃穴” (*li2 ting2 sao3 xue2*).

“犁庭掃穴” (*li2 ting2 sao3 xue2*) is actually how the police often describe their crackdowns on criminals.

“犁” (*li2*) is “a plow,” “to work with a plow,” “庭” (*ting2*) “a front courtyard,” “a home,” “掃” (*sao3*) “to sweep with a broom,” “to clean,” “to wipe out,” “to exterminate,” and “穴” (*xue2*) “a cave,” “a den,” “a hole.”

Literally, “犁庭掃穴” (*li2 ting2 sao3 xue2*) is “plow home and sweep clean hole,” “to plow a home and sweep a den,” “to clean out a hole.” The cave, den or hole in the idiom refers to the hideout of one's enemies, and that is where the plowing and sweep take place.

## Idiom by Lon Yan

So the idiom means, figuratively, “to wipe out the enemy,” “to exterminate the enemy.” In the case of Eddie Chu Hoi-dick, the target of the “plowing and sweeping” are triad members, who are public enemies.

The raids were made on venues of businesses allegedly controlled by triads, including pubs, brothels, game arcades and mahjong parlors.

They disrupted the businesses and caused heavy losses, and were clearly meant to turn up the heat and send a strong message to criminals that there will be a stiff price to pay to threaten a lawmaker, even one who has yet to take office.

### Terms containing the character “掃” (*sao3*) include:

掃地 (*sao3 di4*) – to sweep the floor

掃墓 (*sao3 mu4*) – to visit a grave

掃把 (*sao4 ba3*) – broom

掃把星 (*sao4 ba3 xing1*) – comet; bearer of ill luck