

Idiom by Lon Yan

蕩然無存

dang4 ran2 wu2 cun2

University of Hong Kong law scholar and Occupy movement leader Benny Tai Yiu-ting (戴耀廷) called on Election Committee members to vote for a candidate who agrees to withdraw the government's legal challenge against four pro-democracy lawmakers.

He stood by this position despite criticisms that his call could violate election rules, and despite an open letter from the pro-establishment camp to Secretary for Justice Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung asking for follow-up action.

Tai insisted what he suggested was only a political demand, and that there is no problem for the voters to raise political demands to the candidates. The whole process, he said, was done in an open manner and does not involve personal advantage.

But Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong's Priscilla Leung Mei-fun, an associate

professor at City University, said Tai may have committed election corruption, contempt of court and perverting the course of justice.

Other critics said Tai's call would render the election system “蕩然無存” (*dang4 ran2 wu2 cun2*).

“蕩然” (*dang4 ran2*) means “vanished from the face of the earth,” “all gone,” “nothing left,” “無” (*wu2*) is “without,” “nil,” “nothing” and “存” (*cun2*) “to exist.” Literally, “蕩然無存” (*dang4 ran2 wu2 cun2*) is “nothing left, doesn't exist.”

The idiom means exactly that – “all gone,” “nothing left,” “to obliterate completely.”

When people rioted on the street, damaged property and harmed people without being punished, law and order will become “蕩然無存” (*dang4 ran2 wu2 cun2*). Old traditions often become “蕩然無存” (*dang4 ran2 wu2 cun2*) with the passage of time.

Terms containing the character “存” (*cun2*) include:

存放 (*cun2 fang4*) – to give over for safekeeping; to deposit

存貨 (*cun2 huo4*) – goods in stock; inventory of material

存款 (*cun2 kuan3*) – bank savings

生存 (*sheng1 cun2*) – to exist; to live; to subsist