

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 彈盡糧絕

*dan4 jin4 liang2 jue2*

Sixtus Leung Chung-hang and his comrade-in-courts Yau Wai-ching have just had their appeal application rejected by the Court of Appeal.

But still, the duo wouldn't give up their quest trying to win back their lawmaker status, stripped by the court for improper swearing in, and for Yau, literally swearing in the swearing-in.

Leung declared: "This is not the end of the war, but its beginning", apparently in reference to their stated intention of going directly to the Court of Final Appeal – their next and final judicial recourse.

It's not over until it's over, they may think. Laudable never-say-die spirit, some may say. But wars are resource-intensive exercises, so are litigations. If your war chest is empty, the war is practically over for you, not to say if it is actually in negative territory.

So how are the two doing money wise?

In the latest lost battle, they have been ordered to pay HK\$335,702. Then there are the legal fees and costs for their earlier lost court battle, which are substantially more. The Legislative Council will also be knocking on their door soon to ask back the HK\$1.86 million they had received as advance payment. And there are other outstanding payments too.

The idiom “彈盡糧絕” (*dan4 jin4 liang2 jue2*) comes to mind.

“彈” (*dan4*) is “a bullet,” “a shell,” “盡” (*jin4*) “exhausted,” “finished,” “糧” (*liang2*) “grain,” “food,” “provisions” and “絕” (*jue2*) “to run out of.” Literally, “彈盡糧絕” (*dan4 jin4 liang2 jue2*) is “bullets exhausted, food run out,” “out of ammunition and no food left”.

Figuratively, it means “to have exhausted one's resources,” “supplies of food and ammunition,” “in desperate straits.”

### Terms containing the character “絕” (*jue2*) include:

絕望 (*jue2 wang4*) – hopeless; despair

絕對 (*jue2 dui4*) – absolutely

絕種 (*jue2 zhong3*) – a species becoming extinct

絕食 (*jue2 shi2*) – a hunger strike