

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 文武雙全

wen2 wu3 shuang1 quan2

A student of the University of Science and Technology was brought to court for an assault charge in connection with a fight that took place on campus about a year ago.

Nobody was seriously hurt, but still, violence on campus is a serious matter. There was a light moment during the hearing when the judge, in his usual humor, asked the defendant whether he was majoring in martial arts.

That question has to be a tongue-in-cheek one, as everybody knows no university in Hong Kong offers such a program. Those who want to learn Kung Fu should go to Shaolin in the mainland instead.

A student facing punishment for fighting might feel that he or she was born at the wrong time and the wrong place because back in the old days in China, being able to

fight and study well was considered a rare talent that was to be treasured. Such kind of brilliance was described by the idiom “文武雙全” (*wen2 wu3 shuang1 quan2*).

“文” (*wen2*) is “literature,” “culture,” “education,” “武” (*wu3*) “military,” “of the martial arts,” “雙” (*shuang1*) “two,” “double,” “both” and “全” (*quan2*) “fully,” “completely,” “entire,” “complete.” Literally “文武雙全” (*wen2 wu3 shuang1 quan2*) is “literature and martial arts both complete,” “complete with both academic and martial arts skills.”

The idiom means “to be well versed in both polite letters and martial arts,” “to be master of both the pen and the sword,” “well versed in letters and military technology,” “fine scholar and soldier,” “master of pen and sword.”

### Terms containing the character “武” (*wu3*) include:

武器 (*wu3 qi4*) – arms; a weapon

動武 (*dong4 wu3*) – to use force; to start a fight

武力 (*wu3 li4*) – military might; armed force

武術 (*wu3 shu4*) – martial art