

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 理直氣壯

*li3 zhi2 qi4 zhuang4*

A woman boarded a route 87B KMB bus with a young boy, presumably her son, and paid \$2 for fare, which the driver said was not enough.

The driver asked the woman to pay the proper fare, but she refused. So the driver asked her to get off the bus, which she also refused, and argued: "I have always just paid two dollars!"

Such "reasoning" left everyone on the bus scratching their head. But the woman unabashedly (不怕羞地) held her ground in a manner that was described as "理直氣壯" (*li3 zhi2 qi4 zhuang4*).

"理" (*li3*) is "reason," "logic," "直" (*zhi2*) "straight," "just," "upright," "fair," "氣" (*qi4*) "air," "gas," and "壯" (*zhuang4*) "strong". Literally, "理直氣壯" (*li3 zhi2 qi4 zhuang4*) is "when reason

is on your side, you can speak forcefully."

The idiom means "to be in the right and self-confident," "bold and confident with justice on one's side," "to have the courage of one's convictions."

When you are in the right, you can be "理直氣壯" (*li3 zhi2 qi4 zhuang4*) even if you are up against someone powerful.

The woman on the bus acted like she was "理直氣壯" (*li3 zhi2 qi4 zhuang4*), which she definitely was not. Her so-called reason was "歪理" (*wai1 li3*) – fallacious reasoning, preposterous argument, and she was certainly "理虧" (*li3 kui1*) – in the wrong position, in an indefensible position.

What she was doing was just "強詞奪理" (*qiang2 ci2 duo2 li3*) – "to argue irrationally."

### Terms containing the character "壯" (*zhuang4*) include:

強壯 (*qiang2 zhuang4*) – strong; sinewy

壯觀 (*zhuang4 guan1*) – spectacular; magnificent sight

壯士 (*zhuang4 shi4*) – a heroic man; a warrior

壯志 (*zhuang4 zhi4*) – great aspiration; lofty ideal