The government pay survey showed senior civil servants should get a pay rise. Senior doctors in public hospitals were, however, told that they wouldn’t get it.

So they staged a sit-in, signed a petition, and threatened to stop doing administrative work unless they got a rise too. The government caved in, so did the Hospital Authority. So we can say that it is a case of “如願以償” (ru2 yuan4 yi3 chang2) for the doctors.

“如” (ru2) is “according to,” “願” (yuan4) is “hope,” “wish,” “desire,” “以” (yi3) also means “according to” and “償” (chang2) is “to pay back,” “to fulfill.” Literally, “如願以償” (ru2 yuan4 yi3 chang2) is “fulfilled according to wish.” It means “to have one’s wish fulfilled,” “to achieve what one wishes,” “to obtain what is desired.”

A variation of the idiom is “得償所願” (de2 chang2 su3 yuan4) – “have fulfilled that which is desired,” which is “to have one’s wishes fulfilled.”

When we fail to get what we want, it is “事與願違” (shi4 yu3 yuan4 wei2), literally “the matter is contrary to wish.” It means “to get the opposite of what one wants,” “to get an outcome cross to the purpose,” or simply “not getting what one wishes for.”

A man proposes and the woman says “yes,” it is “如願以償” (ru2 yuan4 yi3 chang2) for him. If he is rejected, it is “事與願違” (shi4 yu3 yuan4 wei2).

Terms containing the character “償” (chang2) include:

- 抵償 (di3 chang2) – to compensate for loss
- 賠償 (pei2 chang2) – to indemnify, an indemnity
- 索償 (suo3 chang2) – demand for reimbursement or compensation
- 償還 (chang2 huan2) – to repay a debt