



CHINESE PRACTICE

僧多粥少

(seng1 duo1 zhou1 shao3)

Too many monks and not enough gruel

今日的成語「僧多粥少」源出於明末清初長篇小說「明醒世姻緣傳」，該書作者為西周生（筆名）。「僧」就是和尚，「粥」是和尚常吃的食物，所以「僧多粥少」意即和尚太多，而供應和尚吃的粥太少。此成語可以比喻需求量大但資源有限，以致不夠分配，供不應求。英文中也有些類似的說法，如諺語 *there's not enough to go around*，或如片語 *thinly spread*，與僧多粥少的用法雷同。（台北時報記者古德謙整理）

- ◆ 去年，資源還要分配給這個組織之外的衆多關係組織，實乃僧多粥少。  
(Last year, resources had to be distributed among a great many entities related to this organization, and there was simply not enough to go around.)



- ◆ 大學畢業生滿街跑，企業卻無法提供足夠的職缺，僧多粥少使得失業率大幅攀升。

(There is a glut of university graduates, but companies simply cannot provide enough openings. The shortage of jobs has sent the unemployment rate soaring.)

英文練習

not enough to go around; thinly spread

Today's Chinese idiom — 僧多粥少 — originates from the late Ming or early Qing dynasty novel *The Story of a Marital Fate to Awaken the World* by Xizhou Sheng (a pen name). The word 「僧」 means monk; 「粥」 is gruel, or congee, a staple food for monks. The idiom, then, means that there are too many monks to feed, and not enough food to feed them all. This idiom can be used as a metaphor for situations in which demand is high, resources are limited, and there is not enough to go around.

There are a number of English phrases and adjectival phrases that do much the same job, such as "there's not enough to go around," "demand exceeds supply" and "thinly spread."

(PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES)

- ◆ We have arrived at this decision to avoid spreading our resources too thinly.  
(我們這麼決定是為了避免讓資源分配過於分散。)
- ◆ The UN is sending relief supplies to the affected areas, but resources are limited and it is concerned there won't be enough food or blankets to go around.  
(聯合國正送出救災物資，但資源有限，恐怕無法人人都分配到食物和毛毯。)

Beggars hold out begging bowls in Varanasi, India in this undated photo.

PHOTO: PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES

乞丐在印度的瓦拉納西乞討，拍照日期不明。

照片：台北時報記者古德謙攝

