

肆無忌憚

si4 wu2 ji4 dan4

A thief visited the Wonder Computer Centre in Sham Shui Po three days in a row. Needless to say, he was apprehended.

His face was captured by the mall's CCTV on his first visit at night when he broke into a shop and stole goods. His picture was passed around to all shop owners so they could take action when they saw him.

On the second night, the thief returned but fled empty-handed when he triggered an alarm. On his third visit, he came back in the daytime and was caught with burglary equipment including a glass cutter on him.

The way the thief acted may only be described either as utter stupidity or the attitude of “肆無忌憚” (*si4 wu2 ji4 dan4*). “肆” (*si4*) means “reckless” and “without fear,” “無” (*wu2*) “no,” “absent of,” “忌憚” (*ji4 dan4*) “dread,” “scruple,” “fears that keep a person from committing irregularities.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

Literally, “肆無忌憚” (*si4 wu2 ji4 dan4*) is “reckless without scruple.” The idiom means “utterly unscrupulous,” “reckless and without inhibition,” “audacious.”

The burglar was acting as if there was nothing to fear, that he could just walk into the shops and take what he wanted without consequence. Therefore he was “肆無忌憚” (*si4 wu2 ji4 dan4*).

“放肆” (*fang4 si4*) means “audacious,” “unruly.” When someone is acting like that in front of you, you can say “放肆!” (*fang4 si4*) sternly. This is to reprimand that person for taking too much liberty, or for being disrespectful. It has the same effect as “How dare you!”

Terms containing the character “忌” (*ji4*) include:

禁忌 (*jin4 ji4*) – taboos

畏忌 (*wei4 ji4*) – aversion

猜忌 (*cai1 ji4*) – be suspicious and jealous of

死忌 (*si3 ji4*) – anniversary of a person's death