

天網恢恢

tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1

A man took a bag of potato chips from a convenience store in Yau Ma Tei without paying. When the shoplifter was confronted, he stabbed the store franchisee in the chest, inflicting life-threatening injuries. He died a few days later in hospital.

A security camera in the shop failed to yield usable information, as the attacker wore a peak cap and had his back turned to the camera all the time. But he was arrested 22 hours later as he was eating in a restaurant.

While he escaped the camera in the shop, he did not escape those at a supermarket he visited near the scene of the crime. Apparently, that was how he was tracked down. The idiom “天網恢恢” (*tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1*) is again proved right.

“天” (*tian1*) is “the sky,” “the heaven,” “網” (*wang3*) “a net,” “a network.” “恢恢” (*hui1 hui1*) means “vast,” “extensive.” Literally, “天網恢恢” (*tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1*) “sky net vast and extensive.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

The idiom came from Laozi's (老子) writing “天網恢恢，疏而不失” (*tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1 shu1 er2 bu4 shi1*). Another version is “天網恢恢，疏而不漏” (*tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1 shu1 er2 bu4 lou4*), which means “the net of heaven has large meshes, but it lets nothing through.”

“天網恢恢” (*tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1*) means “nobody escapes the judgment of heaven,” “God's justice is all-encompassing,” “God's justice is inescapable.”

Clearly, lawbreakers in this day and age must not only watch out for the proverbial net of heaven, but the actual network of overhead security cameras!

Terms containing the character “網” (*wang3*) include:

網絡 (*wang3 luo4*) – a network

漁網 (*yu2 wang3*) – a fishing net

上網 (*shang4 wang3*) – to go online

互聯網 (*hu4 lian2 wang3*) – the internet