

心存僥倖

xin1 cun2 jiao3 xing4

A young Hong Kong couple took eight “iPads” across the border into the mainland, thinking they were working as couriers for parallel traders to earn a few hundred dollars.

But when the packages were opened by mainland customs officers for inspection, guns were found in them instead.

The couple were shocked as carrying firearms into the mainland is a serious offense with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

If it was any consolation, the “guns” turned out to be authentic imitations for the model-guns market up north, not those that shoot bullets.

A social worker said young people such as the couple who are lured into doing something illegal for little money are “心存僥倖” (*xin1 cun2 jiao3 xing4*).

“心” (*xin1*) is “the heart,” “存” (*cun2*) “to keep,” “to retain,” “僥倖” (*jiao3 xing4*) “by a fluke,” “by luck,” “by chance,” “a piece of luck.” Literally, “心存僥倖”

Idiom by Lon Yan

(*xin1 cun2 jiao3 xing4*) is “heart has fluke,” which does not make much sense.

Actually, “心存僥倖” (*xin1 cun2 jiao3 xing4*) means to think that one might be lucky, “to take a chance,” “to take a risk in the hope of a favorable outcome.” “心存僥倖” (*xin1 cun2 jiao3 xing4*) is the mindset that makes people behave in a way that leaves them vulnerable to danger or failure.

The favorable outcome for smugglers is that they won’t get caught. Students who walk into an exam having studied only half of the material are “心存僥倖” (*xin1 cun2 jiao3 xing4*). The favorable outcome they are hoping for is that the exam questions will cover what they have studied.

Terms containing the character “存” (*cun2*) include:

存在 (*cun2 zai4*) – to exist

保存 (*bao3 cun2*) – to keep

存款 (*cun2 kuan3*) – bank deposit

存摺 (*cun2 zhe2*) – a bankbook