

一舉成名

yi4 ju3 cheng2 ming2

One of two capybaras that escaped from their enclosure at a Toronto park has been returned home after 19 days on the run. The dog-sized rodent was lured into a cage with corncocks, but its companion is still at large.

Capybaras are the world's biggest rodents. These two, dubbed Bonnie and Clyde, became folk heroes, with their escapade followed enthusiastically in the social media as well as by the local, national and international press.

Residents of Toronto had fun posting hilarious pictures of "sightings" of them on the internet. One showed the two mixing with tourists on the observation deck of the CN Tower; another had them mingling inconspicuously with skyward-looking people in a crowd.

There was no word yet as to whether the recaptured one was Bonnie or Clyde. In any event, both rodents can be described using the idiom "一舉成名" (*yi4 ju3 cheng2 ming2*).

Idiom by Lon Yan

“一” (*yi4*) is “one,” “single,” “舉” (*ju3*) “to raise,” “to lift up” and “成名” (*cheng2 ming2*) is “to make a name for oneself,” “to become famous,” “to succeed,” “to make one’s mark.” Literally, “一舉成名” (*yi4 ju3 cheng2 ming2*) is “one lift makes one’s name.”

How do you make a name “lifting” something, unless you are a record-breaking Olympic weightlifter? Actually, “舉” (*ju3*) in the idiom refers not to its meaning of “lift” as a verb, but to “科舉” (*ke1 ju3*), the imperial examination in ancient China.

“一舉成名” (*yi4 ju3 cheng2 ming2*) means “to become famous overnight,” “to achieve instant fame,” “to set the world on fire,” “to leap to fame.”

Terms containing the character “名” (*ming2*) include:

名牌 (*ming2 pai2*) - a famous brand

名人 (*ming2 ren2*) - a famous person

名譽 (*ming2 yu4*) - fame; reputation

名字 (*ming2 zi4*) - the name of a person