

Idiom by Lon Yan

水落石出

shui3 luo4 shi2 chu1

After a two-year investigation, international prosecutors say Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over eastern Ukraine in 2014 by a Buk missile that had come from Russia.

They also pinpointed the area from where the missile was fired – a field in territory controlled by Russian-backed rebels.

The Boeing 777 broke apart in mid-air as it was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. All 298 people on board perished.

Russia still insists that it cannot accept the findings as the final truth. But to the world, the mystery surrounding the tragedy is now “水落石出” (*shui3 luo4 shi2 chu1*)

“水” (*shui3*) is “water,” “落” (*luo4*) “to fall,” “to drop,” “to subside,” “to recede,” “石” (*shi2*) “a rock” and “出” (*chu1*) “to come out.”

Literally, “水落石出” (*shui3 luo4 shi2 chu1*) is “when the water subsides the rocks emerge,” “as the water recedes, the rocks appear.” It means “the truth comes to light,” “when facts are known, doubts dissipate.”

The idiom is used when a mystery is solved, or when the truth comes out, usually after the passage of a long time.

An idiom with a similar and more explicit meaning is “真相大白” (*zhen1 xiang4 da4 bai2*).

“真相” (*zhen1 xiang4*) means “the real situation,” “the truth,” “大白” (*da4 bai2*) is all clear. So “真相大白” (*zhen1 xiang4 da4 bai2*) means “everything is clear now,” “the truth about the matter has come to light,” “the truth has at last been revealed.”

Terms containing the character “落” (*luo4*) include:

落選 (*luo4 xuan3*) – to lose an election or contest

落實 (*luo4 shi2*) – to implement

下落 (*xia4 luo4*) – the whereabouts

墮落 (*duo4 luo4*) – to fall from virtue; depraved