

Idiom by Lon Yan

人人自危

ren2 ren2 zi4 wei1

The unthinkable has happened. Donald Trump has become head of the world's most powerful nation. The words "shocked" and "stunned" were seen in news headlines everywhere.

People often stage demonstration to ask blundering politicians to step down. In this case, there are protests across the US even before Trump takes office, which said a lot about how people feel about him.

People are also scared, and none more so than the Americans who are thinking of "Exit-Am". They were blamed for overloading the Canadian immigration office website and caused it to crash. But can you really blame them?

When the result of the election came out, the first question people around the world ask was what kind of havoc the Trump scourge would bring.

The mood can be described as "人人自

危" (*ren2 ren2 zi4 wei1*). "人" (*ren2*) is "a person," "people," "人人" (*ren2 ren2*) is "everybody," "everyone," "自" (*zi4*) "self" and "危" (*wei1*) "danger." Literally, "人人自危" (*ren2 ren2 zi4 wei1*) is "everyone feels danger," "everyone finds himself or herself in danger."

"人人自危" (*ren2 ren2 zi4 wei1*) describes the state of mind of a panicky public in times of grave crisis.

In 2008 when the US-caused financial tsunami threatened to break down the world's economic order, wiping out people's life savings, causing countries to go bankrupt, it is a situation of "人人自危" (*ren2 ren2 zi4 wei1*).

The idiom is used whenever there is a serious problem that threatens everyone. When a company warns of an imminent downsizing, the mood of the employees is also one of "人人自危" (*ren2 ren2 zi4 wei1*).

Terms containing the character "危" (*wei1*) include:

危險 (*wei1 xian3*) – danger; hazard

危機 (*wei1 ji1*) – a crisis

危害 (*wei1 hai4*) – to endanger; to jeopardize

危樓 (*wei1 lou2*) – a dangerous building