

Idiom by Lon Yan

重見天日

chong2 jian4 tian1 ri4

An excavator unearthed a 500-pound bomb at a Pokfulam construction site. The bomb had probably been dropped by a warplane during World War II.

It had been buried in the ground for decades, but might still pose danger. Experts said it could cause destruction within a two-kilometer radius if exploded. So they gingerly worked on it for two hours and removed the threat.

To be unearthed after remaining buried for a long time, we can say the bomb has “重見天日” (*chong2 jian4 tian1 ri4*).

“重” (*chong2*) is “repeat,” “duplicate,” “見” (*jian4*) is “to see,” “to meet,” “天” (*tian1*) “the sky” and “日” (*ri4*) “the sun,” “day,” “the daytime.” “重見” (*chong2 jian4*) is “to see again,” “to meet again.” Literally, “重見天日” (*chong2 jian4 tian1 ri4*) is “to again see

the sky and sun.”

The idiom means “to see the light again,” “to once more see the light of day”. But it is not usually used for its literal meaning, as in the bomb, or an ancient tomb being dug up, but for its figurative meaning, which is “to be delivered from oppression or persecution.”

When a political prisoner was released from the dungeon after being locked up for years, we can say he or she has “重見天日” (*chong2 jian4 tian1 ri4*).

The idiom also has every day and less distressing applications. If you have been working the graveyard shift and are told you can now go back to daytime hours, you can say, “重見天日” (*chong2 jian4 tian1 ri4*) at last!”

Terms containing the character “天” (*tian1*) include:

天氣 (*tian1 qi4*) – weather

天真 (*tian1 zhen1*) – innocent; naïve

天才 (*tian1 cai2*) – genius

天堂 (*tian1 tang2*) – heaven; paradise