The idiom came from Laozi’s (老子) writing “天網恢恢，疏而不失” (tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1 shu1 er2 bu4 shi1). Another version is “天網恢恢，疏而不漏” (tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1 shu1 er2 bu4 lou4), which means “the net of heaven has large meshes, but it lets nothing through.”

“天網恢恢” (tian1 wang3 hui1 hui1) means “nobody escapes the judgment of heaven,” “God’s justice is all-encompassing,” “God's justice is inescapable.”

Clearly, lawbreakers in this day and age must not only watch out for the proverbial net of heaven, but the actual network of overhead security cameras!

Terms containing the character “網” (wang3) include:

- 網絡 (wang3 luo4) – a network
- 漁網 (yu2 wang3) – a fishing net
- 上網 (shang4 wang3) – to go online
- 互聯網 (hu4 lian2 wang3) – the internet