A family of four wild boars were spotted at a flower box in a park near Hin Keng Estate. Fearing that they would harm people, residents called for help. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department staff soon arrived with policemen.

Armed with nets and shields, the officers tried to round up the pigs, but the animals proved too agile for the team.

Finally after about two hours, the pigs decided they had had enough fun for one day playing hide-and-seek and ran back to the hills. Frustrated, the officers packed up and left. Headline Daily used the idiom “無功而回” to describe the officers’ outing.

“無功而回” is “without any achievement,” “to return without accomplishing anything,” which is what the idiom means.

Another version of the idiom is “無功而返”. “返” and “回” both mean “to return,” so the two versions mean the same.

A related idiom is “徒勞無功”. “徒” means “in vain,” “勞” is “to labor,” “徒勞” means “futile efforts,” “fruitless labor,” “wasted efforts.” “無功” is “no achievement,” “accomplishing nothing.” “徒勞無功” is “to make a futile effort,” “to work in vain.”

Terms containing the character “功” include:

- 功課 – homework; an assignment
- 功效 – effectiveness
- 功夫 – efforts; kung fu
- 功能 – function; capability