Truckloads of rice were seen being dumped quietly at a landfill in the small hours of the morning. The rice was found to be perfectly edible. It was believed to be surplus from some organization’s rice-giving campaign.

Meanwhile, four tons of onion, also in good condition, were found discarded. It was believed to have come from supermarket chains that have overstocked and found it cheaper just to throw them away than paying for storage.

There is an idiom for such acts: “暴殄天物” (bao4 tian3 tian1 wu4). “暴” (boa4) means “sudden and violent,” “cruel,” “savage,” “excessively,” “殄” (tian3) “completely destroy or waste,” “to exterminate,” “to wipe out,” “天” (tian1) “the sky,” “heaven,” “nature,” and “物” (wu4) “matter,” “things,” “substance.”

Literally, “暴殄天物” (bao4 tian3 tian1 wu4) is “excessively waste things of nature.” It means “to waste God’s good gifts recklessly,” “to waste natural resources recklessly, “to misuse things,” “to waste products of nature.”

“暴殄天物” (bao4 tian3 tian1 wu4) is a criticism against people who do not know how to use things sparingly.

In fact, most of us are guilty of “暴殄天物” (bao4 tian3 tian1 wu4) every day as we leave food in the plate, don’t turn off the light when we leave the room, and keep water running when we brush our teeth.

Any kind of wastage can be called “暴殄天物” (bao4 tian3 tian1 wu4). When you see someone throwing away half a lunch box of food, you can say “Please don’t “暴殄天物” (bao4 tian3 tian1 wu4).

Terms containing the character “暴” (bao4) include:

- 暴力 (bao4 li4) – violence; force
- 暴動 (bao4 dong4) – a riot; an insurrection
- 暴露 (bao4 lu) – to expose; to reveal; to lay bare
- 暴風 (bao4 feng1) – a typhoon