An expectant mother stole six items, including baby shoes and slippers, worth HK$400 from a Kwun Tong shop. She managed to escape unnoticed despite a supposedly watertight security system that boasts 12 surveillance cameras. Headline Daily reported that the stealing was carried out under “眾目睽睽” (zhong4 mu4 kui2 kui2).

“眾” (zhong4) is “numerous,” “many,” “a crowd,” “目” (mu4) “eye.” “睽” (kui2) and “睽睽” (kui2 kui2) both mean “to stare,” “to gaze.” Literally, “眾目睽睽” (zhong4 mu4 kui2 kui2) is “eyes of everyone staring,” “under the gaze of public eye.”

“眾目睽睽” (zhong4 mu4 kui2 kui2) means “the eyes of the masses are fixed on somebody or something,” “in the public eye,” “in the full light of public notice,” “in the full glare of publicity.”

“眾目” (zhong4 mu4) usually means the eyes of real people. The report used “眾目睽睽” (zhong4 mu4 kui2 kui2) to refer to the 12 cameras in the sense that they were “multiple eyes,” a tongue-in-cheek usage of the idiom which cleverly spiced up an otherwise rather minor crime story.

“眾目睽睽” (zhong4 mu4 kui2 kui2) is often used in connection with blatant (明顯的; 露骨的; 公然的) and unacceptable conduct, like urinating or defecating on MTR trains or by the road side. In such cases, we would say people do such things under “眾目睽睽” (zhong4 mu4 kui2 kui2).

And such conducts are described by the idiom “肆無忌憚” (si4 wu2 ji4 dan4) – “utterly unscrupulous,” “reckless and without inhibition,” “audacious.”

Terms containing the character “眾” (zhong4) include:

- 羣多 (zhong4 duo1) – numerous
- 羣人 (zhong4 ren2) – everybody; all the people
- 公眾 (gong1 zhong4) – the public; the community
- 羣籌 (zhong4 chou2) – crowdfunding