

“Green” weddings

Cupcake or sweet soup?



# Our road, their stage

*The city is testing  
a new platform for street performers*

# TYR

**The Young Reporter**  
-by HKBU journalism students since 1969-

# 02

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VOL.43, ISSUE 2, NOVEMBER 2010



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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Art is for everyone.

I remember when I was small, there was always a blind old man playing the erhu and singing the tragic love story theme song “Liang Zhu” of the world-famous Chinese legend “Butterfly Lovers” in the subway under a busy road of my home district. Passers-by stopped and dropped a few coins into his bowl.

This was my first experience of street performance.

In recent years, the form of street art has been redefined since a variety of performance emerged in pedestrian precincts around the city. It ranges from magic, acrobatics and instrumental music to band show, drama and mime. The talents have simply turned the streets into mini art hubs.

In April, Mr Funny was arrested for blocking public space by attracting 50 to 80 onlookers to watch his acrobatics in Causeway Bay. Perhaps to allay peoples' discontent over the unreasonable arrest, the government came up with an idea to open up its cultural facilities for performers through an open stage scheme. So far, has it been successful?

Turn over to our cover story to read more.

Alan Kwok Kim-fung  
Chief Editor



# Enhancing HK's shopping appeal

City strives to safeguard its name as shoppers' paradise

BY GINA NG

**H**ong Kong is cracking down on business malpractices through law amendment and new regulations after a spate of scandals that has dented consumer confidence.

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau proposed to amend the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, suggesting six measures to tackle unfair trade practices.

A three-month public consultation was launched till November. Afterwards, the CEDB will introduce the amendments to the Legislative Council in the 2010-11 legislative session.

"Our policy objective is to enhance protection of consumers' legitimate interests, and at the same time to preserve a business-friendly environment," said Mrs Rita Lau Ng Wai-lan, secretary for commerce and economic development.

The Travel Industry Council also submitted 10 methods to the authorities to tackle tour guide malpractices, especially against "zero- or negative-reception fee tour" which take visitors to designated shops to get commission from the shops.

The 10 methods, including a demerit point system, re-licensing regulations and required disclosure of any relationships between tour guides and shops, were welcomed by the CEDB and will be in place within three months.

A series of scandals this year has sparked significant concerns about consumer rights in Hong Kong.

In May, mainland veteran table tennis player Mr Chen Youming died of a heart attack after quarrelling with a tour guide, who allegedly refused to let him leave a jewellery shop as he did not spend enough.

Then Hong Kong's tourism industry was brought to disrepute again in July, when a video clip showing tour guide Ms Li Hau-chun berating mainlanders in her group for seven minutes because they did not do enough shopping was released on the Internet and broadcast across the mainland.

Apart from the travel industry, several yoga centres including Yoga Yoga, Planet Yoga and Beauty Yoga closed down after a short period of operation.



*Mrs Rita Lau (middle) presents the consultation on reforming consumer protection.*

A total of 17,000 members lost their pre-paid fees. Some were persuaded to renew their memberships just a few days before the centres closed.

In September the Consumer Council urged telecommunication companies to improve their services as it received more than 6,000 complaints against telecom service providers. More than 10 per cent were about contracts and changes of service address.

Ms Carol Lam was a victim overcharged by a dishonest telecom firm.

"Originally I used a plan which cost around \$100 per month, but I found my bill cost 50 per cent more. They imposed additional services on my account without my permission," said Ms Lam.

Mrs Lau said the CEDB's decision to draw up the proposal to strengthen consumer rights aimed to prevent "the dishonest few to undermine consumer confidence and tarnish Hong Kong's reputation."

"We believe that we could enhance consumer protection under the current legislative framework. Therefore, we propose to broaden the scope of the protection," said Mr Gregory So Kam-leung, under secretary for commerce and economic development.

While the TDO prohibits the application of false trade descriptions to goods, Mr So said the proposal would extend the coverage to trade descriptions to

services.

The amendment will also impose criminal sanctions to tackle unfair trade practices such as misleading omissions, bait-and-switch, aggressive sales tactics, and the practice of accepting payment without the intention or ability to supply contracted goods or services.

Another recommendation, the "cooling-off period," allows consumers to "have more time to digest the information and to familiarise themselves with the provision of the contract," according to Mr So.

He added that the amendment does not target specific industries.

"Rather we deal with specific unfair trade practices which appear in more than one industry," he said.

Some business owners welcome the measures. Ms Ng, a computer product shopkeeper, said she was pleased with the proposal as it helped restore customer confidence.

"If the government doesn't crack down those problem traders, we'll lose our customers as well because they tend to turn to top brands."

The Consumer Council will continue to play the role of mediator after the amendment of the ordinance. The government hopes consumer disputes can be resolved more effectively through mediation in the future.

EDITED BY DAISY ZHONG

# Sugary cupcakes vs. sweet soups

Traditional Chinese desserts are up against Western sweet treats

BY CLAIRE CHU

**D**ainty sugary cakes topped with colourful frostings and pinkish marshmallows have brought new choices of after-dinner dessert to picky local eaters who may occasionally be tired of traditional Chinese-style sweet soups.

More and more dessert shops selling pricey adorned cakes have popped up in the city. It is their appealing looks, covered with multi-coloured cream, sprinkles of toppings and even your favourite cartoon characters that draw people's attention.

Sprinkles Cupcakes, a US-based cupcake company, started its business in Hong Kong two years ago. The shop in Sheung Wan offers cupcakes in an extensive range of flavours like the "Death by Chocolate" and "24 Carrot", at \$25 each.

"I see more Hong Kong people ordering cupcakes these days," said Ms Melissa Brewster, sales and marketing manager of Sprinkles Cupcakes. She added that at the beginning her customers were mainly Westerners but now the locals made almost half of the orders.

"I think people are looking for something different, after having many years of the regular cakes," she said.

Ms Brewster also said the appear-

ance of the cakes was more important than its taste.

"The ingredients and taste of every cake is more or less the same. But we try different designs to make them look better," she said. "Cupcakes look pleasing, pretty. Some of them taste very sweet."

The use of creative flavours is another selling point. Collecting customers' suggestions on new flavours or toppings and adding them into menus is what Sprinkles Cupcakes always does to create a larger variety of cakes.

The shop also tailors unique cake designs to suit different customers' needs. For example, it reshapes and joins several cupcakes into a big one, which Ms Brewster said could replace the traditional round cakes for celebrations.

She said there was still great room for creativity in this tiny little cake.

"There aren't many cupcake shops in Hong Kong yet," she said. "There is still a lot of potential for the market."

Ms Cherry Wan, who is an office lady, orders cupcakes almost every week.

"I adore cupcakes because they look cute and stylish. Eating cupcakes shows that you are alert of the trend. They taste good too," said Ms Wan.

Despite the growing popularity of creative Western-style dessert, some think conventional Chinese-style des-

sert still has its market.

"I prefer Chinese dessert, especially in winter. I can eat it very often." Ms Helen Ng, a university student, said when tasting her tofu pudding in Tong Pak Fu, a local dessert chain that sells both old-style Chinese sweet soups and trendy western desserts.

Mr Leung Ka Fuk, branch owner of Tong Pak Fu, said looks did not always come first.

"Taste must be the first priority when it comes to food. Most feedbacks from our customers are about the food taste."

He also puts health benefits into consideration when making desserts.

"Chinese desserts are very good for health. Say, sesame soup makes the hair luxurious. Walnut soup improves the skin," he said. "Compared to western desserts made with fatty cheese and oil, they are a much healthier choice."

But he did not deny the importance of decoration. "Besides using fresh fruit to ensure good taste, we do a lot to make it look better, like using sprinkles of different colourful toppings," said Mr Leung.

According to him, the growing trend of dinky cakes might not necessarily be a knockout to the long-existing sweet soups, but definitely an increasing expectation of the look of desserts.

EDITED BY MAGGIE TAM



Cupcakes with multicoloured sprinkles and chocolate chips are offered in a range of flavours.



# Group buying online is a hit - for now

New portal hopes to change distrust over shopping via the Internet

BY JOCELYN ZHAO



Mr Aaron Lee, director of uBuyiBuy.com, says group buying portals can spearhead a change in attitude towards online shopping amongst Hong Kong people.

Online group buying portal uBuyiBuy.com has been doing well since it was launched in June, but foresees an uphill battle in maintaining its competitiveness after the initial frenzy.

"We've saved our customers over 5 million dollars with more than 40,000 vouchers sold to date. This makes uBuyiBuy.com the leader in the South East Asian market," said Mr Aaron Lee, director of uBuyiBuy.com.

Online group buying portals have been a business running for decades in the West.

They operate on websites and offer products such as spa treatments or hot-pot buffets at discounts of up to 50 to 90 per cent off, but only when the target number of purchases are made.

They make money by charging a commission from the discounted price and paying the service providers within ten days.

The deal will be cancelled if there are not enough purchases and buyers will get a refund.

The business model appears to be a win-win situation for both sellers and buyers, as merchants get paid upfront for services they have not yet provided, thus minimising risks, while shoppers can get unmatched bargains.

Unlike successful group buying sites

such as Groupon.com in the US, portals in Hong Kong rely heavily on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to feature their "deal of the day", explaining why their businesses boom at an infant stage.

Although online group buying portals in the US and the UK matured shortly after they were launched, their counterparts in Hong Kong face obstacles in replicating their success.

According to the latest report on an annual survey of Internet use by the City

**"We are building a new industry, a new behavior and a new lifestyle."**

- Aaron Lee, director of uBuyiBuy.com

University of Hong Kong, only five per cent of respondents said they shopped online, while 41 per cent said they "half trust, half distrust" Internet security. Another 40 per cent "partially trust" it.

General distrust towards the Internet could prove a stumbling block for online group buying to grow as a business in Hong Kong.

However, Mr Lee from uBuyiBuy.com said even if people felt insecure to buy before they saw, no one ever got tired of looking to get more for less.

He believes by picking top and credible brands, widening the range of products and avoiding overwhelming shoppers with information, group buying portals can help develop a more mature online shopping environment for Internet users in Hong Kong.

"The major obstacle in this business is to build as much credibility as possible, not only for uBuyiBuy.com alone, but for the whole idea of group buying as well," said Mr Lee.

While uBuyiBuy claims its business is a hit, one of its competitors is getting prepared for the downside.

Mr Nicolas Reille, co-founder of Twangoo.com, believes online group buying is a flawed marketing strategy.

"If everybody buys the deal of the day, the business partner will acquire a very large number of new clients but will also get out of business because this would jam the business with clients at a discount," said Mr Reille.

He added that the quality of the client base was more important than its size.

Mr Wallace So of The PLATFORM, an art and design gallery which did its promotion with uBuyiBuy.com, said all businessmen preferred customers to pay a premium for their service, but not necessarily bargain-hunters.

He said they employed the service of uBuyiBuy.com only to attract their first batch of customers, and revealed that his company did not plan for a long-term cooperation with the portal.

Ms Vivien Tang, from the award-winning spa service provider, Sense of Touch, rated online group buying the top choice for business kicks, but said it was not a practical long-term marketing strategy.

Despite the doubts about the business's sustainability, Mr Lee from uBuyiBuy.com is confident that online group buying will get even more popular in Hong Kong.

He believes the increasing volume of clients and shoppers using the service are signs of a bright future.

"The snowball keeps rolling bigger and bigger," said Mr Lee.

We are in reality building a new industry, a new behavior and a new lifestyle."

EDITED BY ANDY AU YEUNG

# Beating homelessness with football

A group of homeless men from Hong Kong has regained their self-confidence by taking part in the Homeless World Cup in Rio

BY GOOSIE CHAN



*The homeless defeat foreign teams and bring victory back from Brazil.*

The Hong Kong Contingent brought victory back from Brazil after competing with football teams from around the globe. But its members were not going home afterwards - they are players for the Homeless World Cup 2010.

"Chung Jai", who scored the first goal in the match versus Canada with a beautiful penalty kick, was once a habitual gambler when he was 20.

He had long been unemployed and used to receive financial assistance from the government.

Now he got a job and managed to pay off his rent about two months ago.

"I become more hardworking since I

**"You must forget the unhappy past... and strive for the future."**

- Mr Leung Chi-wing, coach of the Hong Kong Contingent

joined the team," he said.

He said the Homeless World Cup "has changed his life."

"My teammates show support to me. They encouraged me to get rid of gambling," said "Chung Jai".

According to Mr Sonny Yau Kin-man, community organiser of Society for Community Organisation (SoCO), "Chung Jai" is one of the successful cases of the Hong Kong Contingent which aims

to help homeless players get a stable job and start planning for their future.

"At first, 'Chung Jai' could not stay at a job for longer than a month. But he has become more mature now and is doing his current job for longer than two months," Mr Yau said.

"Chung jai" ran away from home when he was 12. Bad family relationship led to the beginning of his homeless life.

According to Mr Yau, the homeless are often gamblers, drug addicts or even drug traffickers. He said it was hard for them to get out of their plight because of restricted social contact. Many of them just went to their bad old friends when they faced financial difficulties.

"When we say homelessness, it means they are both physically and psychologically alone," Mr Yau said. "They might not have grown up with their parents and might come from broken families."

He said the Homeless World Cup helped the homeless by expanding their social circle. "By making new friends, they are encouraged to refrain from their bad habits."

Some of the homeless may lose their competitive edge in the labour market after reaching the age of 40. They may even have a family to feed.

"Renting a room in Sham Shui Po could even cost them half of their monthly salary," said Mr Yau. "So they would rather sleep on the street to save

money."

SoCO's figures show that more than 70 per cent of Homeless World Cup players significantly changed their life. About 29 per cent found employment while 38 per cent improved their housing situation.

Mr Yau said the team members used to give up easily when they faced difficulties. But they showed their perseverance in their last match against Greece. They were losing 0-3 in the first half, but beat Greece by 5-4 by the end of the game.

Mr Leung Chi-wing, coach of Kitchee Football Team who also teaches the Hong Kong Contingent, said the team showed their discipline, unity and desire to win in the match against Greece.

He was glad that they did not fear of competing against foreigners who were stronger and faster.

"A football match is just like life," Mr Leung said. "To shoot or to pass the ball to teammates? If you make the right decision, you can win the game."

"If the homeless could keep away from bad company, they might not have ended up sleeping on the street," said Mr Leung.

He hoped the team could make good use of what they learned from taking part in the World Cup.

"You must forget the unhappy past, like the previous match you lost, and strive for the future."



*"Chung Jai" (4th from the right at the back) draws applause on the football field for HK.*

EDITED BY CATHIE GUO





Apart from newspapers and magazines, local newsstands sell chewing gums, lighters, tissues and a lot more at their stalls

# News stalls struggle to stay afloat

Streetside news vendors lose out as convenience stores grow their market share for newspapers, magazines and more stores

BY SIMON YUEN

In the face of fierce competition from convenience stores, the city's newspaper vendors are struggling to keep their roadside stalls afloat.

There are more than 1,300 convenience stores in the city, but only 563 newsstands, according to the latest figures compiled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

Newspaper vendors say they find it difficult to compete with convenience stores, as they are restricted from selling certain items.

"Convenience stores are permitted to sell various types of products. It's hard for newsstands to compete with them as newspaper vendors will be prosecuted if they sell products like toys or soft drinks without authorisation," said Mr Liu Sair-ching, chairman of the Coalition of Hong Kong Newspaper and Magazine Merchants.

"When convenience stores gain, newsstands lose," Mr Liu said.

The disadvantaged industry also finds it costly to maintain its competitiveness by imitating the convenience stores.

"Convenience stores give tissues and plastic bags to customers who buy newspapers or magazines. We follow suit in order to retain our customers," said Ms

Li, a newsstand keeper outside Shamrock Hotel in Jordan.

"But spending on tissues and plastic bags costs a lot of money. We are just operating a small business," she said.

Mr Mak, a newspaper vendor at Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier, said he earned only a dollar or slightly more for every newspaper sold.

"It's hard to earn a living by operating a newsstand," he said. "My stall earns little. We earn \$15,000 a month and this is the total income of my entire family," said Mr Mak, who is in his 60s.

**"The government should support our newsstands or they could hardly survive."**

—Mr Liu Sair-ching,  
chairman, Coalition of Hong Kong  
Newspaper and Magazine Merchants.

The prevalence of convenience stores has badly affected the newsstand industry for years.

At their peak in the 1990s, there were over 3,000 newspaper vendors in Hong Kong. But the number has dropped by more than 80 per cent within a decade.

Roadside pollution's threat to their health is also a risk that news vendors have to bear.

"I have been running my stand since

the 1960s. There are always so many vehicles at this bus terminal. Both my wife and I have developed allergic rhinitis," said Mr Mak.

Dr Chan Kwok-kwan, from Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, said roadside air pollutants contained toxic chemicals such as nitrides and sulphur dioxide.

"When people are always exposed to these contaminants, they will develop asthma or malfunction of the respiratory system," he said.

Apart from the fear of infections and illnesses, the vendors may also encounter possible prosecution by the government.

"The legal size of a newsstand is six feet long and four feet wide. The vendors will be prosecuted if their stalls are oversized," said chairman Mr Liu.

"In fact, it's impossible for a newsstand to operate in such a small area," he added.

Mr Liu suggested Hong Kong people should treasure these iconic stores as part of the collective memory of the territory.

"The government should support the city's newsstands. Otherwise, they could hardly survive," he said.

EDITED BY CANDICE WONG



By KMB

The gBus, with "g" standing for green and genesis, needs to be re-charged frequently by connecting its pantograph to a charger

# First green bus put to 6-month test

## Can it survive in the city's busy and jammed transport network?

BY THOMAS CHAN

The city's first electric bus, named the gBus, arrived in Hong Kong two months ago and has been put on trial running a route between Mei Foo and Lai Chi Kok.

Introduced by Kowloon Motor Bus Company Limited, the gBus has zero emissions as it runs on electricity.

Still, it has incurred doubts among some critics, who have reservations over its effectiveness in alleviating pollution and its adaptability to local traffic.

According to Ms Susanna Sin, senior manager of media relations of KMB, the gBus is suitable to operate in both newly developed areas such as Kai Tak and some of the city's busiest roads because it does not require an extensive network of continuous overhead cables.

It takes three minutes for a full re-charge of its battery at the terminal to travel five kilometres. Then a 30-second recharge is needed every one to two bus stops by attaching its retractable grid-like pantograph to a roadside charger.

However, Dr Cheuk Mang-lung from Hong Kong Baptist University's geography department said he did not think the gBus was environmentally friendly enough.

"Although pollution would be reduced as multiple roadside emissions were replaced by single sources of pollutants from charging stations, carbon

would still emitted," Dr Cheuk said.

He is also worried about the potential threat of improper disposal of the battery system as well as the high cost of relocating some bus stops for building chargers.

Ms Kwok Ying-ying, project manager of Greeners Action, said eco-friendliness should not be confined to zero roadside emissions only.

"The whole lifecycle of a bus, including its manufacture, packaging, transportation, maintenance as well as promotion, should all be considered," said Ms Kwok.

"It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of shifting from diesel to electricity as emissions from both sources are equally harmful," said Ms Kwok.

The 12-metre long single-decker bus running on an electrochemical power system can carry up to 70 passengers. Its loading and reliability are being tested for six months.

Before the trial, a team of driving instructors, engineers and technicians was sent to Shanghai to study the design and operation details of the electric bus.

"A fully-recharged gBus is said to be able to travel up to five kilometres. But more electricity is needed for air-conditioning which may affect the actual distance it can travel," said Prof Eric Cheng Ka-wai from the Department of Electrical Engineering at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

"Its supercapacitor system can't store too much energy so the bus may need re-charging frequently," said Prof Cheng.

Ms Kwok said the gBus might cause a potential danger as it would break billboards or windows overhead if its pantograph malfunctioned.

The situation would be even worse if an accident happened in the bustle and hustle of the city's centre.

Despite the concerns, some appreciate KMB's initiative to go green.

"Roadside air pollution is a big headache. I am glad to see big corporations like KMB shoulder their responsibility to deal with the problem," said Ms Bonnie Mak Wing-man, a student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, Citybus and New World First Bus said they would pay heed to the trial of KMB's electric bus and continue to incorporate Euro E-friendly Buses into their fleets.

### More about gBus

Size: 12-metre long, single-decker

Capacity: 70 passengers

System: Electrochemical power

Battery: Travel up to 5 km when full

Recharge: 3 minutes for a full recharge (a 30-second recharge is needed every one to two bus stops for air-conditioning)

EDITED BY MINNIE LI



# Green weddings on the rise

More couples are breaking with traditions by opting for a banquet with no shark-fin soup

BY SADIE LO

Kisses, hugs and tears from parents, relatives and friends are demonstrations of affection for the newlywed at weddings.

But how could a couple show their concern for the environment on their big day?

"Marriage is sacred. We should share our love and blessings at our wedding," said Ms Indera Ie Meng-ya, a 36-year-old teacher at Waldorf Education who held a green wedding two years ago.

"So we decided to make our wedding more meaningful by sharing our love for nature and the environment."

Ms Ie opted for vegetarian dishes, homemade bread and soyabean milk for her wedding organised in a school in Tuen Mun. It was simple but ingenious.

However, going green on wedding day is not that easy as senior family members usually insist on following certain rituals according to Chinese traditions in arranging weddings.

"At first, we decided not to wear gold accessories because gold mining causes serious pollution," Ms Ie said. "But this idea was banned by our parents."

The clash between traditions and the environment is the strongest over whether the wedding feast should serve shark fin soup, a dish that symbolises the wealth of the newlywed's families.

"Our parents were shocked when we told them there would be no shark fin dishes at our wedding banquet," said Ms Sarah Lee Po-shan, who held a green wedding with the help of Wedding Management Association on Hong Kong Sustainable-Wedding Action (HKWMA).

"Even friends at my age told me they would not do that," Ms Lee said.

According to Climate Care, a British carbon offset organisation, an average wedding emits around 14.5 tons of carbon dioxide.

There are about 50,000 newlyweds every year in Hong Kong, according to the HKWMA, resulting in a huge consumption of shark fins.

"It's hard to stop people from eating shark fins immediately," said Mr Alex Choi, vice-chairperson of Divers Kinetic, a non-profit organisation which works for marine life protection.

Mr Choi hoped the message of protecting sharks could be pushed by green weddings.

"Banning shark fin soup at banquets would not be successful without the government's help," he said.

Ms Angel Kwong Hung, chairwoman of the HKWMA, agreed.

"We need support from and promotion by the Hong Kong government so that more people understand the essentials of green wedding," she said.

In Singapore, the government attached importance to the practice of green wedding.

National parks there offer a 20 per cent rental discount for wedding venues if the newlyweds take at least eight eco-friendly measures at their weddings.

The Canadian government also encourage wedding planners to promote green wedding practices to their customers.

For example, couples could rent their wedding gowns and suits instead of buying new ones.

They could ride a bicycle instead of a motor vehicle, and gifts for guests could be homemade and carried with reusable

## Tips for green wedding

1. Send e-cards for invitations.
2. Rent wedding garments.
3. Travel by public transport.
4. Have a shark-fin free banquet.
5. Adopt a menu with more vegetables and less meat.
6. Choose organic food.
7. Use e-album for photos.

shopping bags.

These were what Mr Faith Chan Ka-shun, who teaches at the University of Leeds, had for his wedding in Hong Kong two years ago.

"Protecting the environment is easy, even on your big day," he said.

Though not many people in Hong Kong choose a green wedding and some couples did so only because it is trendy and fresh, progress is being made.

Currently, 18 local restaurants and hotels have joined WWF's "Alternative Shark-free Menu" programme and are offering shark-fin-free banquet menus.

"It takes time to get everyone to take action," said Ms Sarah Lee.



Ms Indera Ie Meng Ya and her husband ride a bicycle to their wedding.

By Indera Ie

EDITED BY PEARL LIU

# Hip dicts go on market

Dictionaries are picking up on the trend that being bilingual nowadays means keeping your glossary up-to-date

BY CECILIA CHAN



Many new Chinese terms pop up in Hong Kong and the mainland.

New popular Chinese terms like *niu*, which means amazing but literally means a cow, and even *baoxiao*, which means hilarious, are now included in the latest version of the Oxford Chinese Dictionary.

The most up-to-date Chinese-English and English-Chinese dictionary, published by the Oxford University Press (OUP), contains 1,930 new words. Ninety-five per cent of them originated in the mainland while 5 per cent were coined in Hong Kong.

The publication is seen as a breakthrough since its previous editions tend-

ed to be more traditional. Popular terms were usually avoided.

Ms Patience Zhou, project administrator of the dictionary, said the function of a dictionary was to tell the true meanings of words in a language precisely. Hence, it is necessary to incorporate new elements.

“Our main purpose of publishing this dictionary is to facilitate both non-Chinese and non-English speakers to learn the two languages. So focus is on the troubles and difficulties they might encounter,” Ms Zhou said.

Since the release of the dictionary for retail sale, the OUP said they had had good reviews.

New words added to the Chinese-English translations and their sample sentences are based on the raw data from the Linguistic Variations in Chinese Speech Communities (LIVAC) Synchronus Corpus, pioneered by the Research Centre on Linguistics and Language Information Sciences at The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

A number of publishers also started including new terms in their dictionaries as early as 15 years ago, according to

Dr Lu Danhuai, associate professor of the Language Centre at Hong Kong Baptist University.

He said the new popular terms were actually new expressions used by people to name new things and were mostly youth-driven.

“It is a good thing to include new terms because they are currently used by many people,” Dr Lu said.

“Even for my research, definitely I will make use of these words as they are of great value to my bilingual studies,” he added.

Mr Graham Horn, who has been teaching at the British Council since 1998, said the inclusion of new terms meant colloquial slangs were open to all and no longer kept secret.

As a senior teacher of adult language courses, Mr Horn advised his students to use local language terms instead of the translated ones in conversations.

“There would be a genuine sharing between cultures if I used these terms and you asked what it meant,” said Mr Horn.

The British Council usually uses only monolingual dictionaries as teaching material, although the new bilingual one would be a motivation for students, according to Mr Horn.

The formality of language is also a crucial part of the language chosen. It depends on situations.

“It is the recognising of when to use the language that is important, not the language itself,” he said.

## Additional features of the Oxford Chinese Dictionary

- 1 Kinship tree (A map clarifying Chinese family relationships in English. Each Chinese family title is matched with several English contexts and usage.)
- 2 Sample letters and SMS terms
- 3 Box notes of euphemisms
- 4 Cultural notes



The word *shanzhai* has three definitions.

EDITED BY INES NARVAEZ





Director Mr Chan Suk-yi reviews the performance of his students at the rehearsals.

# Behind the scenes

## The life of drama performers

BY SAI AUNG THEIN

Lavinia in her black suit, holding a box of poison, speaks to her mother Christine with her cold and grim voice next to the dead body of her father.

"It was Adam Brant who got you this medicine to make you sleep, wasn't it?"

Christine says distractedly: "No! No! No!" Then she looks at the dead man's face and says: "Ezra! Don't let her harm Adam! I am the only guilty one!"

In the rehearsal room of *Dying Lavinia*, the daughter who holds a grudge proves to her brother that their mother Christine was the killer who poisoned their father.

The cast consists of 21 drama students from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. And Ms Clara Ho is the lead actress who plays the role of Lavinia.

At first she was disappointed landing this role. She thought the character of Lavinia was too far from herself.

"But when we started the rehearsal, I got this thought off my mind and tried my best to act," said Ms Ho. "Now, I can do it."

Young Lavinia is stubborn, mysterious, jealous and kind of violent. Those who have a soft and gentle personality like Ms Ho might be upset to act as her.

"After some rehearsals, I felt I could touch some parts of Lavinia," Ms Ho

said with satisfaction.

"When you act, you have to step in the shoes of the character. And you have to enjoy yourself on the stage," said Mr Chan Suk-yi, director of the play.

Mr Chan, who has been teaching drama for six years at the academy, picked the play, which is adapted from Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winning American playwright Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*, with a plot set on the American Civil War.

Ms Ceci Chan acts as old Lavinia who narrates the story.

"It is difficult for me to imagine I am a 93-year-old dying lady who trapped herself in a dark house for 73 years," said Ms Chan.

"Understanding the character is the key to performing well," she added.

Ms Chan tried to understand the feeling of Lavinia by memorising the script, empathising Lavinia's feelings, reflecting on her performance and asking herself what Lavinia is thinking.

With a degree in Human Resource Management from City University, Ms Chan had worked as a recruitment agent for two years and a human resource management trainee before joining the

academy.

She decided to quit her job and join the drama school because of her passion for theatre.

"One day, I was sitting in my office and asking myself: Why can't I do something I really want? That's my life. I only live once," Ms Chan recalled.

It took her four years after graduation to make up her mind to go back to school and study drama for five years.

Ms Chan then became the oldest and the most mature among her classmates, who usually joined the academy after finishing the Advanced Level Examination or Certificate of Education Examination.

Though students studying acting may face difficulties getting a job after graduation, most of them want to pursue a career in drama.

"My parents were worried about me when I joined the school as they thought I might become a movie star with a life full of sex and disorder," said Mr Terrence Lau.

"But they fully support me as they know I like acting very much."

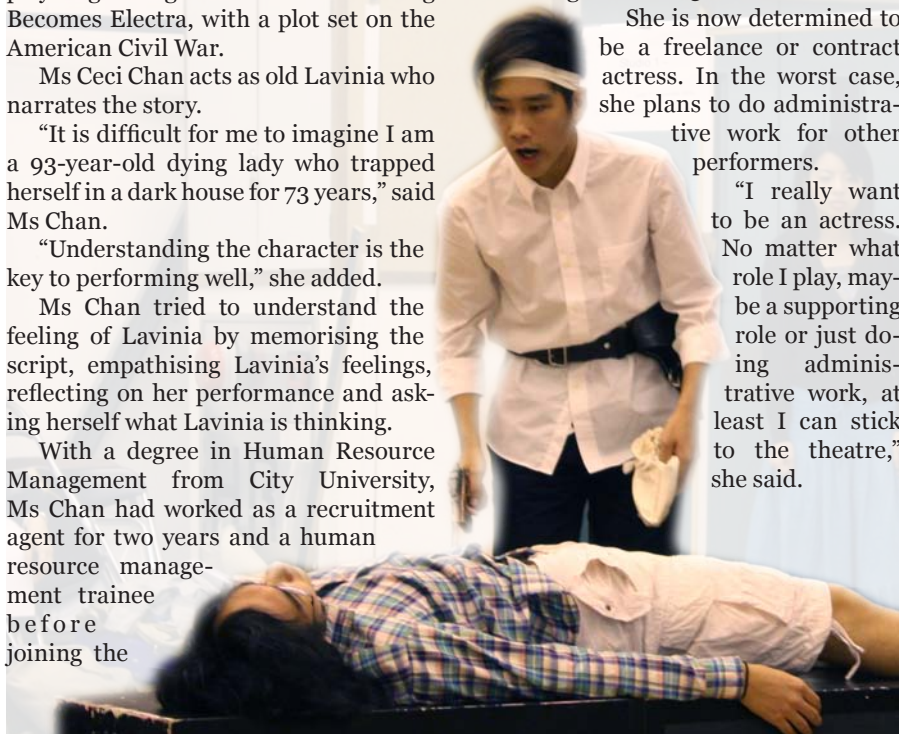
In *Dying Lavinia*, Mr Lau plays the part of Peter, who grew up with Lavinia and loved her.

Ms Ceci Chan's family also backs her up. Her mother never complains, even though she had not gone home for dinner for almost two months.

Her father encouraged her to chase her dream after she finished her first degree in 2003.

She is now determined to be a freelance or contract actress. In the worst case, she plans to do administrative work for other performers.

"I really want to be an actress. No matter what role I play, maybe a supporting role or just doing administrative work, at least I can stick to the theatre," she said.



EDITED BY ALAN KWOK

# Our road, their stage

Along one of the city's busiest streets, passers-by stop and form a circle. At the centre, a coin-operated human jukebox says: "Please do not put in money, otherwise, I will sing..."

BY CARLOS CHENG, HEIIN LAI, HELEN WU & JASMIN YIU

**L**ike a jukebox, he is a coin-operated "machine". Sometimes he dances. Sometimes he sings. Sometimes he shouts. This 27-year-old man always attracts a big crowd.

"All of us, regardless of age, qualification, career and background, deserve a right to appreciate art for free," said the street performer.

Mr Fung Sai-kuen, who graduated from Hong Kong Polytechnic University, has been performing at Sai Yeung Choi Street South in Mong Kok for six years.

In 2004, he quit his job as a social worker and joined FM Theatre Power

(FMTP) as a full-time actor. Inspired by street performances overseas, he introduced this art form to Hong Kong - a "cultural desert" to many.

"Enjoying expensive dramas in theatre is not the only form of art," he said.

Aiming at spreading street performances to people from all walks of life, Mr Fung wants to boost the cultural level of HongKongers. However, wishes are not that easy to come true.

"I wish people know that art can be everywhere," he said.

At the beginning Mr Fung encountered many difficulties. Some thought

he was a weirdo and some thought he was an at-risk youth. Others simply ignored him.

In 2008, a Facebook group named "Kick FMTP out of Mongkok" was set up after his "Girlfriend Wanted" show. He received many criticisms because he blocked the street and kissed women in the audience.

Since then, he has chosen to act like a jukebox and would perform only when people drop him money.

"I didn't expect so many negative reactions," Mr Fung said.

But now, he has finally won some sort



*On-lookers enjoy Mr Fung Sai-kuen's performance on Sai Yeung Choi Street.*





of recognition and a steady audience.

With no income from such stunts, he makes a living from teaching drama workshops and occasional stage performances. "But I have no regrets as I love street drama," he said.

Some street performers agree that it is difficult to draw people's attention. At the same time, they accept that the audience would come and go.

"It is the value of the show that determines whether it deserves to have a big audience," said Ms Lai Yan-chi, nicknamed Mo, actress of FMTP.

Mr Fung plans to study for a doctoral

degree and join the education sector in the future. Apart from teaching acting skills, his goal is to train the next generation through meaningful and educational plays.

Nothing can stop him from performing, not even marriage.

"I'm afraid that the street performing culture would fade away if I stopped," he said, adding that his dream was to set up a "street shows area" in each district.

His heart will always be with Sai Yeung Choi Street. "I love this bustling street. My shows, the street and I are inseparable," he said.

Once an old man offered Mr Fung and his partners drinks after their performance and such gesture meant the world to him.

"He gave us immense support. I know I have chosen the right way."

To support street art development, the government has implemented the Open Stage Pilot Scheme, which lasts for six months from July to December.

Designated outdoor areas are available for free for performers to showcase their talents.

But so far, how successful has the pilot scheme been?





Yi Ng's duo performance outside Kwai Tsing Theatre attracts a few parents and children who are having a break between classes.

# “Open Stage” on trial

Street performers welcome pilot scheme that allows them to showcase their talent outside major arts venues for free

**P**edestrians, dust, heavy traffic and noise restrictions used to haunt artists who wanted to showcase their talents on the city's bustling streets. But now, they have an alternative.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has launched a six-month Open Stage Pilot Scheme from July to December to enable the public to appreciate arts at leisure and enrich the cultural atmosphere in the community.

Under the scheme, qualified performers, who have gone through an audition, can perform in the designated outdoor areas at the piazza of three venues for free. They include the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Sha Tin Town Hall and Kwai Tsing Theatre.

Different forms of performing arts including music, dance, mime and juggling are open to application. Performers can be an individual or a group. The LCSO will also provide necessary venue set-ups for performers for free.

“It is quite simple to apply for an opportunity to perform under the scheme,” said Mr Kot Chun-ning, a member of “Yi Ng”, an amateur duo.

“The whole application procedure can be done on the LCSO website. The requirements of the scheme are not

strict either,” Mr Kot added.

At 4 pm on a Saturday afternoon, Yi Ng was going to start their show at the piazza outside Kwai Tsing Theatre. This would be the third time they performed under Open Stage.

During the one and a half hour performance, the duo sang English and Chinese songs ranging from jazz to pop.

Children having a break at their classes inside the theatre building were attracted by the melody. Genuine laugh-

**“Unlike street performers who only want money, this is all about sharing art.”**

- A mother in the audience

ter could be heard from time to time.

“I think it is purer and better than ordinary street performances,” said a mother in the audience who was waiting for her daughter off from class. “Unlike the street performers who only want money, this is all about sharing art.”

Not only the audience, but also the performers enjoy the stage being open.

“Now you won't have to fear about being driven away by the police and you can use an amplifier freely here,” said

Mr Lai Yee, another performer of Yi Ng.

From the view of the performers, the pilot scheme seems to be a good opportunity for them to show their talents. But the venue supervisors are not sure about that.

“It is too early to comment on the arrangements of the scheme. We will evaluate its outcome after the trial period,” said a spokesman for the Kwai Tsing Theatre.

Legislator Mr Alan Leong Kah-kit raised his concerns in Legco about what he regarded as a dilemma for street art.

According to Mr Leong, while the government claims it welcomes street performance, it is threatening street performers by limiting their room to perform through law enforcement.

“Our law does not prohibit street performances and the government welcomes street art performances as they enrich the cultural life of the community,” said Ms Florence Hui Hiu-fai, undersecretary for home affairs, in a Legco meeting.

“The public, including street performers, must observe the laws of Hong Kong,” she added.

The Summary Offences Ordinance, the Noise Control Ordinance, the Con-



trol of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance and other related law articles keep reminding the performers to stay away from possible “misbehaviours”.

The government is still reluctant to expand the pilot scheme to a larger number of venues or even streets.

“Hong Kong is densely populated with limited land resources. Should street performances be held at crowded places, inconvenience or even nuisance may be caused to the pedestrians, nearby residents and shops,” said Ms Hui.

At 8 pm on the same day, a group of medical staff from Kwong Wah Hospital were gearing up to present their band show at another open stage along the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, which faces the picturesque Victoria Harbour.

“We want to bring here a happy atmosphere,” said a band member in a loud voice in front of the crowd before taking his turn to sing on the stage. All their gears - drums, guitars and keyboard - were set for the good show.

Mr Chen Pui-shan, nicknamed Shan Shan, and his band “Rock on the Road” were also surrounded by a large crowd.

With a guitar in his hands, Shan Shan sang some Cantonese oldies. Several middle-aged people immersed themselves in the melody and swayed with the rhythm. A tourist couple soon joined in.

This is what happens every Saturday at the waterfront. Thanks to the Open Stage Pilot Scheme, tourists and residents nearby can now experience a vari-

ety of art performances by local talents with Hong Kong’s world-famous harbour as the backdrop.

Shan Shan used to perform at the Avenue of Stars further down along the promenade.

He applied to join the Open Stage Pilot Scheme because his band was asked to stop performing.

“The new administrator of the area wanted to run a campaign on public hygiene and asked me to stop for three months. I refused and thought of performing somewhere else. Then the scheme came up and I applied.”

Starting out as a husband-and-wife duo singing in Mongkok, Shan Shan’s band and fans grew over the years.

“Now we have a drummer and a tambourine player. Our fans come to support us every week. They love our songs and dance together to have fun.”

In order to perform under Open Stage, applicants have to fill in a form and go through an audition conducted by a panel.

“In the past, I used to think government applications were all complicated stuff. But I found the scheme easy and convenient to apply for. I will give the government a nine out of ten score.”

However, not everybody is happy with the scheme.

Fan of “Rock on the road”, Mr Chan Ga-yum, said: “They used to play for a long time every Saturday, and sometimes even on Sunday. Now because of the scheme, they can’t perform whenever they want.”



*Shan Shan and his wife sing Cantonese oldies for their audience.*

Every week, LCSD officers help maintain order during the performances. Ms Susana Tao, organiser of the scheme, said the timeslots offered by the government had not been filled up yet.

“We are still receiving applications,” Ms Tao said. “I think the scheme is necessary. With our help and support, performers can enjoy a safer environment, forget about anything else and commit themselves fully to the performance.”

According to the LCSD, performers might have to compete with each other to get a golden timeslot if the scheme continues to gain popularity.

This concerns Shan Shan but will not deter him. “I will submit my application form on time every eight weeks when the new application period begins, till the end of the scheme,” he said.

Shan Shan also said presently few were familiar with the policy. He suggested that the government should improve the promotion of the scheme.



*The crowd enjoys the free street arts of the open stage at the Tsim Sha Tsui promenade with a Victoria Harbour backdrop.*

# Failing to attract all?

Open Stage lets them perform outside cultural facilities, but some buskers still prefer to do it on bustling streets

While many street performers welcome the Open Stage pilot scheme, some feel that it has a major shortcoming because of its chosen venues.

"I do have a strong desire to share my music," said Mr Ho Yin. "But performing outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, which is crowded with mainly tourists, does not help promote art and culture to the locals."

"The Cultural Centre's regular visitors have already attained a certain level of cultural knowledge. They are not most in need of art and culture," the 28-year-old performer added.

Under Open Stage, only designated outdoor areas at the piazza of three venues operated by the LCSD are available to street performers. Some are not satisfied with the venues.

"I live in Kwun Tong and I have to travel for quite a long time even if I

**"I just want to share my music with people walking down the street."**

- Kinda Li, member of a street band

choose the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, the closest venue to my home," said Mr Kinda Li, member of a street band.

He also said some restrictions set by the government might deter artists from joining the scheme.

First, applicants will have to be examined by art experts and government officials in an audition. Then successful applicants are permitted to perform at the venue on weekends for two hours only.

"If I perform on the street, I can do it on weekdays and with no time constraints," Mr Li said.

"I just want to share my music with people walking down the street and I don't want to be restricted."

According to the regulations of the pilot scheme, performers are not allowed to solicit any donation from the audience either.

"Here, we can perform whenever we want," said Mr Cheng Yan-ho, Mr Li's

partner in the show. "We can open our guitar box and receive money from the audience. It's much freer."

But both Mr Li and Mr Cheng appreciate the government's initiative to promote the culture of street art and gave some performers a chance to show their talent at LCSD's venues.

"If the application procedure can be simpler and the performance can also be held on weekdays, I will apply for it," Mr Li said.

According to Professor Lo Kwai-ch-

eung from the Department of Cultural Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University, the government fails to promote art and culture by Open Stage.

He is afraid that the scheme will only narrow down the diversity of street performance in Hong Kong.

"The scheme doesn't work and it's not welcomed by street performers," said Prof Lo. "It'd be better to let performers develop their own culture rather than or the government to regulate them."

"We should have a diverse culture."



Mr Kinda Li and Mr Cheng Yan-ho (left) perform at Sai Yeung Choi Street.

EDITED BY CARRIE CHENG, EDWARD MA, RACHEL WONG & JESSICA ZHANG



# Painting rainbows heart and soul

Visual artist Vincy Leung brings HK's spirit to full play by overcoming physical disability

BY JACKIE YIN

When the 2010 HK Spirit Ambassador list was announced, a thin young lady sitting in the front row burst into tears of joy.

"I was so happy that I was finally recognised by people after all the ups and downs," said Ms Vincy Leung Yan-yan, 30, a physically disabled designer and visual artist in Hong Kong.

"I'm not a miracle. I just did all I could," she said.

Diagnosed with having cerebral palsy since birth, Ms Leung has been suffering from language and physical disorders. Frequent visits to hospital for medical treatment and rehabilitation were her childhood memories.

"I always compared myself with others even though I knew I couldn't win," she said. "I felt so inferior to others."

In spite of difficulties in controlling her hands, Ms Leung never asked for special treatment.

"Even though the teachers gave me extra time to finish the exams, I knew I shouldn't count on that," she said. "In real life, no one will give you extra time."

After graduating from a special school, she was admitted to the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education.

"I wanted to enroll in the art programme, but they said I wouldn't be able to handle it due to my illness," Ms Leung said. "So I chose business instead."

One month later, a car accident and a bad fall down the stairs changed her life. Being bed bound, the then 20-year-old girl gained insight about her future.

"I asked myself if I really wanted to study business, and I realised I didn't," she said.

In the new semester, the young girl took all her courage and talked to the school board again about studying art. They demanded an all-distinction result from her.

"I knew it would be really hard, but I knew I had to give it all," she said.

True to her words, Ms Leung fulfilled all the requirements and registered as a

design student the following year.

Without any formal art training, Ms Leung was dispirited at first: "Other students were so much better than me. I can't even draw a straight line."

Every day Ms Leung spent hours finishing her homework which took others one or two hours to complete at most. She became more open-minded about her disability and learned to adapt to it.

"I can't draw straight lines but curves can also convey meanings. I now draw curves to symbolise my own character. I'm the line," Ms Leung said.

"It's not bad to walk slow. People who rush every day might never notice how amazing the grass can grow with so little soil under the foul car exhaust."

Ms Leung's view towards life is reflected in her favourite design "Simple Life • Transformation" which is composed of a collection of five glass cubes of different size.

"Life is like these simple cubes, one comprising another. It's simple. And we should be content with that."

Ms Leung's friend Jenny is inspired by her commitment to herself.

"Vincy has demonstrated a real example of how to tackle difficulties by determination and courage," Jenny said.

Ms Ann So Lai-chun, one of the seven judges of HK Spirit Ambassadors and Kwun Tong District Councillor, said she was moved by Ms Leung's story.

"Vincy has very high goals and she works hard despite her disabilities," Ms So said. "She tried hard to tell her own story to us because she thought she can't express herself well."

Ms Leung, together with six other 2010 HK Spirit Ambassadors, will give lectures to students in schools and communities.

"I would like to share my story with them so that they find more strengths in life," Ms Leung said.

EDITED BY BRIAN LAW



Ms Vincy Leung Yan-yan displays her artwork with a contented smile.

# Political doctor

Dr Jeff Au Yeung ignites youth's passion for politics online

BY XAVIER NG



Leaving the first three buttons of his black shirt open, Dr Jeff Au Yeung Ying-kit puts on his pair of headphones and shares his views on the previous episode of RTHK's *City Forum* over the microphone through his online radio channel.

"What Ho Chun-yan said lacks content," the 35-year-old doctor said.

Nicknamed Dr Sing Sit, which means stardust in Chinese, Dr Au Yeung owns a clinic in North Point. But what has catapulted him to fame in the cyber world is his blog, "The Doctor is In", and his online radio channel, "AJ.hk".

"These new media are very powerful," said Dr Au Yeung.

"Take a look at the government. They spend so much money hiring people to use Facebook for them, but still they fail to utilise this powerful platform."

Dr Au Yeung has been a blogger since 2005 with over four million page views.

To let young people know more about politics in Hong Kong, Dr Au Yeung set up "AJ.hk". Internet users can click on its Youtube links to watch programmes

produced by Dr Au Yeung and his friends on various topics.

"AJ.hk" has over 300,000 total upload views, and more than 500 subscribers to its youtube channel since its setup in January this year.

Dr Au Yeung always pays attention to politics, but it was the row over the construction of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) that prompted him to speak out.

"It all started when the government was trying to pass the XRL funding, destroying homes of Tsoi Yuen villagers," he said.

"When I was in the rally that night with the post-80s, I found that I needed to use my own way to spread messages around."

He believes there are many ways for the public to get involved in politics, apart from becoming a district councillor or an assistant to a political party. He hopes more young people will develop a passion for politics in Hong Kong.

"I believe politics is for everyone who has the ability," he said. "There are more

and more young faces in the UK and the US joining the political circles and they bring new mindsets."

The family doctor loves interacting with young people and has been holding talks in secondary schools.

He also established a political organisation called "Power Voters" after he and his friends became furious at the Democratic Party's decision to support the government's political reform package.

"The Democrats betrayed their voters. Therefore, we are offering a choice for voters to show their anger at such a party," said the doctor.

Founded by some active netizens, "Power Voters" conveys its messages by various channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

As the spokesman of the new political group, Dr Au Yeung aims to bring new waves to our "already-constrained political situation" and to boost voting rates.

"Most of the votes missing in elections belong to the young generation, and we aim to bring them out to vote."

As a very good friend of Dr Au Yeung since secondary one, Mr Chris Lau Ka-hung hosts the programmes on AJ.hk with the doctor.

"He sat next to me when we were at school and I was his best man at his wedding too," said Mr Lau. "I do enjoy working with him."

Sharing similar views, the two have become good partners on the channel.

"I didn't hope to change Hong Kong," said Dr Au Yeung. "But the situation now is like we are frogs waiting to be boiled. If we don't speak out, we will die very soon."

"As a doctor, my diagnosis is that Hong Kong politics is suffering from a 'cancer' and it causes different pains in different areas. If you just focus on the pains, trying to ease the symptoms but not curing the 'cancer' itself, you are definitely not a good doctor."



Dr Sing Sit (left) and Mr Chris Lau Ka-hung (right) air their programmes online.

EDITED BY MINERVA CHENG



# Reliving your childhood dreams

Tim Cheng's paintings depict children's yearning to grow up

BY PEARLIE YIU

Most of us have dreamt about being an adult when we were small. We tried to look old by wearing our mother's high-heel shoes or carrying our father's oversized suitcase. And when we have grown up, we miss the time when we were small and care-free.

Do you treasure and enjoy every moment of your yearning for adulthood?

If you are looking for something to help you relive your childhood, then "30+ Children", an exhibition of Mr Tim Cheng Chi-shing's paintings, might just be what you need.

Using simple lines and sharp colours, Mr Cheng projects the world from a child's perspective in his paintings.

One depicts a child playing with his parents' gramophone records. Another features a child pretending to smoke like adults.

All these paintings illustrate what children like to do most in their own world.

The painting entitled *My Cave* is the one that has strongest effect in awakening my childhood memories. It shows a boy hiding himself in a little box.

My sister and I used to move chairs to the corner of my mother's bedroom and created a room exclusive for us. We covered ourselves with a quilt and made that our own private place.

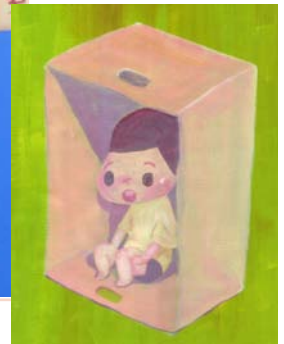
Mr Cheng's paintings provide us with the warmest reminder of our childhood, the precious moments that we may have forgotten bit by bit when we grew up.

Are we able to pursue the same happiness even though we are no longer children anymore?

There are two series of works named "Before" and "After". "Before" depicts a little boy holding a bottle of drink while "After" shows a teenager holding the same bottle of drink.

Such a contrast conveys the message that we should cherish every single moment of adulthood as we are now able to do the things that we had been longing to do when we were small.

Unlike most other painting exhibi-



*Mr Tim Cheng uses simple lines and sharp colours to illustrate childhood. By Tim Cheng*

tions, "30+ Children" is not held in a gallery but a café.

The organiser of the exhibition, Mr Jarvis Luk Chun-wing, who is also art coordinator of MobArt Gallery, said the idea was to let the audience enjoy the exhibition in the most comfortable way.

"This setup suits the aim of Tim's solo exhibition and aims to make people feel relax," he said.

According to Mr Luk, in traditional exhibitions, when you walk in the gallery, a staff member will follow you to offer help. But here, you can view the paintings with no one watching you.

The cozy café provides the audience with a sense of harmony between music, food and dessert, and of course Mr Cheng's paintings.

In such a setting, customers do not have to view the paintings purposefully. Rather they can have a look at the works when they are sitting in the café, having a drink with their friends.

"We can easily bring art into our daily life," Mr Luk said. "Art is not that far away from us. Everyone can view that."

I have found my precious memories in this exhibition. Have you?

## 30+ Children Exhibition

### Time

Sept 30 to Nov 27, 2010

### Venue

Pop Bites, UG/F,  
3-5 Old Bailey Street, Soho, Central

### Opening hours

Mon – Thu: 12 noon – 11 pm;

Fri: 12 noon – 1 am;

Sat: 10 am – 1 am;

Sun & Public Holidays: 10 am – 11 pm

### Cost

Free admission

EDITED BY VIVIAN CHUI

# Magic of workcamp

BY BIRD TANG

I was standing on the grassland of Mongolia. It's my first international workcamp, and it led me to establish VolTra in 2009 to promote international voluntary services.

As a volunteer, I was here to farm and do construction work at a children care centre with workcampers from all over the world. Everything is basic in Mongolia; yet the experience was unique.

There were no telephone lines, not to mention Internet service. Mobile phones could be used when necessary, but you had to go up to the top of a hill to get the transmission signals.

After all, I did not mind being "cut off" from technology, as I just wanted to have a taste of being away from the world.

Although my mobile phone was offline, there was still a song, Ji Xiang San Bao, saved in it. Whenever I played it, the kids would be excited. They said it was a "Mongolia song" and would sing together.

Friends from France didn't know what song it was, yet they ended up singing it fluently after the brainwashing rendition by the children.

Unbelievably, and indeed with the great power of music, mobile phones drew people closer together in the end.

The electricity network was not well

laid, so there was no light at fixed locations. Nonetheless, my own headlamp was not really useful.

Mongolia enjoys a long period of sunlight in the daytime of July. It means the sun rises in the morning at 4 am and stays up in the sky until 10 pm. There, one day can be utilized as much as two days in Hong Kong.

Energetic Mongolian kids have plenty of time to consume you. After dusk, you who are so exhausted would sleep so sound in the simple Mongolian yurt.

If it's too much of a waste to go asleep just like this, you could just go out of the yurt before bedtime to try counting the stars.

Please try to switch off your headlamp as there are simply countless stars emitting light from the sky above the grassland.

I still remember that night with a full moon, which was so bright that it was as if it were asking everyone a question: "Do you really think you NEED the streetlight?"

Moreover, there were no tap water, no air-conditioner and no toilet bowl... Everything was so different from Hong Kong. Nothing modern was offered there; everything was back to basics.

You may call it 'backward', but I would like to call it 'natural'. Everything

is available here in Hong Kong, but there is a lack of simplicity and down-to-earth nature.

When life is away from modernity, the themes of conversations turn to nature too. Here, chats among the volunteers were not about politics, finance or technology.

In fact when we became so ignorant of time, we never cared whether it was a weekday or weekend, because so-called work here was nothing but farming and cooking.

Whether it is work or entertainment depends on how you define it. For me, there's even no need for a definition.

In a highly developed modern city, people depend so much on all kinds of technology. Should something go wrong on one side, big chaos, or even big disasters, result.

In Mongolia, when we were free from most of the modern stuff that we formerly classified as 'necessities', we still managed to survive, and even live more happily.

Without being carried away, the things which made us happy became apparent. They were laughing faces of the innocent children, friendship without boundaries, and unvarnished nature around us.

That's the magic of "workcamp".



Mr Bird Tang is the Chairperson of VolTra, a non-governmental voluntary organisation which promotes international voluntary services in Hong Kong through a worldwide network of international workcamp organisations.



# Yes, I want to talk about sex

BY INES NARVAEZ

**T**he top three teenage trends in Hong Kong this year seems to be underage sex, getting pregnant and abandoning the unwanted baby.

Not surprising if five to seven per cent of secondary one to three students think compensated dating and taking sexy photos were acceptable.

So far this year, at least six newborn babies have been killed. This does not include cases that go undiscovered. The solution to this problem is apparent – we need to talk more about sex.

In 2008, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) surveyed 1,200 youth on the street aged between 11 and 18 to find out adolescent sexual behavioural pattern and their views on premarital sex.

It found that 81.5 per cent felt premarital sex was acceptable while 63.4 per cent were already sexually active. So teenagers having sex has been around – why has it only come to the attention of the authorities when lives are lost?

Now that the problem is getting increasingly more serious, there are frantic attempts to get to the root of the problem. Social workers and parents put their blame on a lack of sex education and teachers qualified to teach it. Teachers think parents should be held partly responsible because it is a sensitive topic, so the basics should be learnt

at home.

Since the implementation of two guidelines on sex education in Hong Kong in 1986 and 1997, more secondary schools have been adding it to their curriculum. Over two decades later, sex education is still not mandatory in all secondary schools.

It is obvious that the curriculum has not been working. Schools are teaching teenagers the concept of sex through uninteresting talks, without any real interaction. Another survey found nearly 50 per cent of students thought sex education at school was not informative.

Where do teens get their sexual knowledge from then? Online sources, peers and some even pornography sites. When only a quarter of the respondents get their information from parents, it is understandable when you hear about news of a teen girl disposing her newborn down the toilet.

The relationship between parents and teens is crucial when something unexpected like pregnancy happens.

The HKCSS survey found 62.3 per cent respondents went to their peers for help rather than their parents as fear is the main barrier. Hong Kong parents are much more conservative and feel embarrassed to talk about this topic.

Sex education should be introduced to parents and teachers first. They

must understand what sex means to the younger generation because nowadays teens need to know more about real sex rather than the basic how-babies-are-made talk.

If the right thing is done, negative outcomes from sexual behaviour such as unplanned pregnancies, infections and promiscuity amongst teens can be eliminated. In the HKCSS survey, over 10.9 per cent of respondents have had 10 or more sexual partners.

Young people need to have the right attitude towards sex. The media promotes the idea that attractiveness is associated with sex while school implies sex is bad. This creates more sexual curiosity among adolescents.

Those who teach sex education should not be negative about it because sex is not harmful or shameful if it is consummated in the right situation with the right partner.

Teenage sex is inevitable. Parents need to accept the fact that their teenage son or daughter will be having sex sooner or later, and they should take the initiative to educate their children.

The government has to provide sex education that works. Before tragedy strikes again and more innocent lives are lost, we all need to open up and find answers from people we trust.

Stop preaching abstinence, talk sex.

## TYR is now available at...

**All universities and other tertiary education institutes**

### **Olive Cafes**

Shop G41-G44, G/F, City Landmark 1,  
68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan

Shop G4, G/F Grand City Plaza,  
1-17 Sai Kok Road, Tsuen Wan

### **Hong Kong Reader**

7/F, 68 Sai Yeung Choi Street South,  
Mongkok

### **TC2**

G/F, 106 Portland Street, Mongkok

### **People's Recreation Community**

1/F, 18 Russell Street, Causeway Bay

### **Culture Shock**

Shop B2, G/F, Mei Sun Building,  
4-20 Kau Hui Chik Street, Tai Po

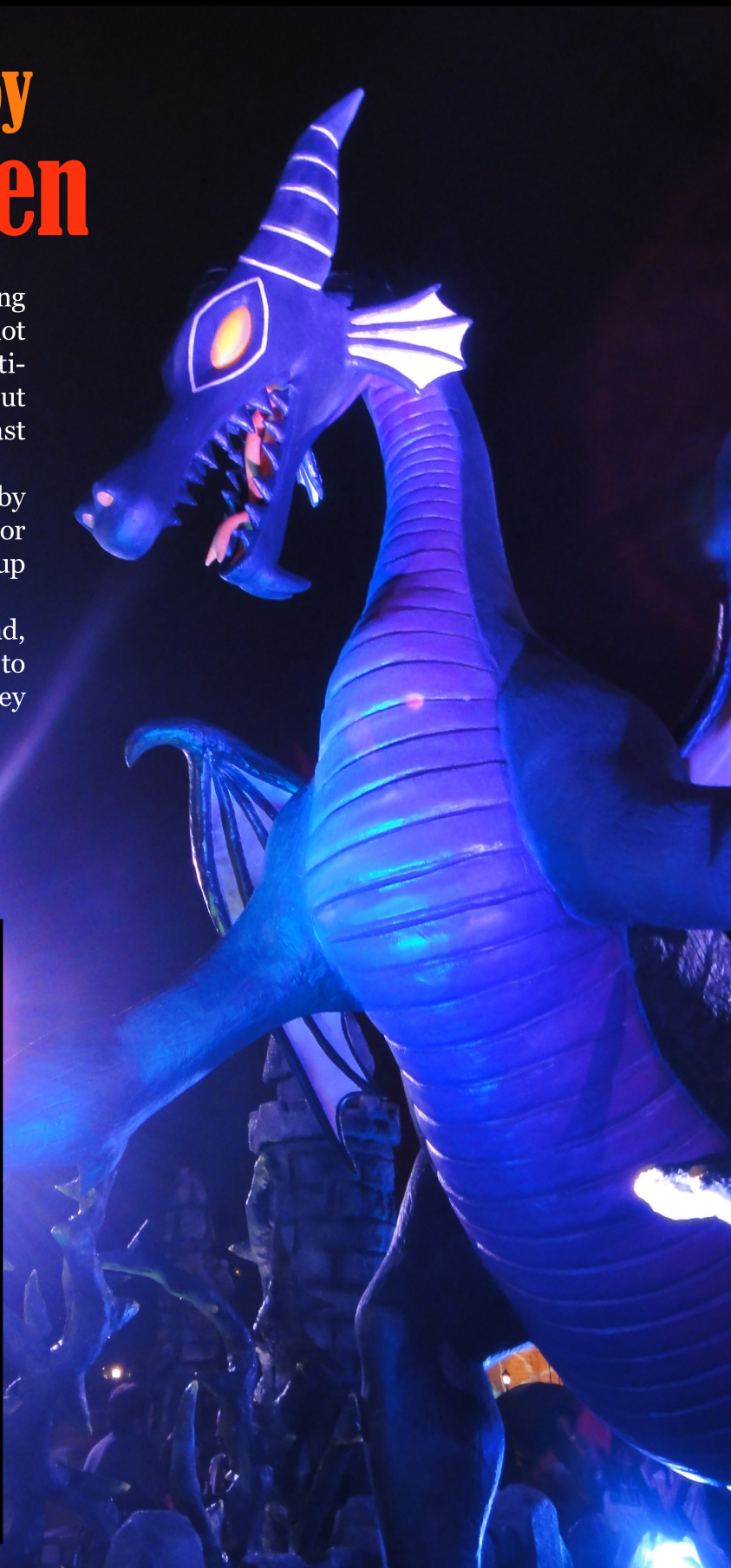
# Screams of joy on Halloween

Nothing can stop Hong Kong people from having fun, not even Halloween, a tradition that originates in the West, but has caught on in this city where East meets West.

The festival is not marked here by kids knocking on doors saying trick or treat, but by “haunted houses” set up by theme parks.

On the Main Street of Disneyland, hundreds of young people queue up to be scared by mock-up ghosts so they can have a good scream.

PHOTO AND TEXT BY JENEMY MA  
EDITED BY THOMAS YAU









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