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# BEHIND THE TROPHY

The insecure career path of Hong Kong's retired athletes



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**Editor's note**

Being an athlete is never easy, especially in Hong Kong. Apart from enduring a rigorous training routine that requires persistence and hard work, athletes also need to keep up with their studies or make a living. After retiring as professional athletes, many of them find it difficult to engage in a totally different working environment.

To tackle the problem, the government has provided more support to athletes over the last few years so as to promote the sporting industry in Hong Kong. For example, it has set up the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme, given more funding to the Jing-Ying Sports programme and actively hosted sports events and competitions. The Young Reporter has talked to a number of sportsmen – from young to retired ones – to find out what they think about those assistance and what more can be done.

Gary Kwok Ka-lok  
Chief Editor


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Silently storing in your brain, scents  
may jog your memory to your surprise



# HERITAGE BUILDINGS' VARYING FATES

Only some of Hong Kong's historic buildings have been put to good use

The Old Stanley Police Station, the oldest remaining police building in Hong Kong, is now used as a supermarket, despite being declared a monument in 1984.

"It is kind of sad that a building with such a long history is not being utilized properly," said Mr. Hughie Doherty, who owns an art studio in Stanley Market.

In order to "strike a balance between sustainable development and heritage conservation," the government has been carrying out the "Revitalizing Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme", which was introduced in 2007.

Under the multi-million dollar project, non-profit making organizations (NPOs) are invited to revitalize selected government-owned buildings in the form of social enterprises.

Despite the renovation works that have been underway for years, many people seem unaware of the changes happening around them.

The Tai Po Old Police Station, which is set to become a 'Green Hub for Sustainable Living', induced barely a ripple in the neighbourhood.

"I thought the building was still abandoned", said Mr. Gordon Hui, 29, a Tai Po resident for 22 years. "No one said anything about it. I did remember reading about the revitalization scheme, but that's about it."

Similarly, Fong Yuen Study Hall in Tsuen Wan, one of seven in the first batch of buildings in the scheme, is currently undergoing renovations to become a "Tourism and Chinese Cultural Centre" cum "Ma Wan Residents Museum".

Ms. Joey Pang, a Tsuen Wan resident for all of her 21 years, said she was not even aware of the details of the Fong Yuen Study Hall renovation.

"I did notice that there were renovations going on, but I didn't realize it was going to become a museum. How was I supposed to know when there weren't any promotional efforts?" questioned Ms. Pang.

Dr. Lee Ho Yin, Director of the Architectural Conservation Programme at the University of Hong Kong and a member of the Antiquities Advisory Board, believes that the lack of



1881 HERITAGE INTS IM SHATSUI USED BY THE FORMER MARINE POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

public awareness is nothing to be concerned about.

"The revitalization scheme is still in its infant stage and most of the renovation works have not been completed. Moreover, these buildings are now run by NPOs. Unlike business enterprises, they do not spend millions in commercial activities such as advertising," he added.

According to the Commission for Heritage's Office, the reason for collaborating with NPOs and adopting the social enterprise approach is that many of the vacant historic buildings are deemed to have limited commercial viability, as it requires a very significant sum to renovate and maintain them.

According to Dr. Lee, one possible way to ease the concerns is to convince private developers that heritage conservation can be commercially viable.

"Conservation is not just about preserving the history of an old building; it is also about giving it a new lease of life, a new identity, a new function to adapt to the changing times. Conservation can also be forward looking," said Dr. Lee.

He said that the Former Marine Police Headquarters Compound in Tsim Sha Tsui, now renamed as 1881 Heritage, is one such example.

The compound, one of the four oldest surviving government buildings in the territory, was leased to Flying Snow Limited, a subsidiary of Cheung Kong Holdings, in 2003.

Historical features, such as an underground bomb shelter and a time ball tower, have also been preserved.

The main building has been converted into a heritage hotel that has been receiving rave reviews from tourists.

Ms. Lorraine Lloyd, an Australian tourist, was extremely impressed by the re-vamped compound.

"It is a really beautiful place. The identity of this place is very well preserved and unlike many other tourist attractions, this place isn't tacky at all. In my opinion, it is a very good blend of heritage conservation as well as commercialization," said Ms. Lloyd.

"Even though the private developer is only using heritage conservation as a gimmick, they did manage to preserve parts of the original structure and successfully transformed it into a hotel and a shopping mall. Historic buildings can be something else, not just museums which hardly anyone visits," said Dr. Lee. ■

STORY/REVHUI  
EDITED BY/HELEN WU



# DO FREE GIFTS AND BARGAIN TRIPS SWAY YOUR VOTE?

District councillors woo constituents by offering multiple treats

Many district councillors offer free food, host health seminars and even organise family trips at bargain prices to residents in their constituency as part of their work. But whether such treats could be regarded as improper means of inducing people to vote for them in elections has long been a controversial issue.

Technically, no law has been breached as long as those treats are not offered with the explicit goal of seeking electoral support. Yet, there have been concerns that councillors with more resources for these treats have an edge over less resourceful ones in winning support.

Mr Eric Tam Wing-fun of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) is one of the councillors who often hold free trips and seminars for his constituents and regards these activities have their social value. In the just concluded district council election in November, he won uncontested as no one came forward to run in his Chung Ting constituency in Tai Po.

"Residents feel freer to share their concerns about the district with me, no matter over trivial or substantial issues, during those leisure activities," he said.

But Mr Pun Chi-man of the Democratic Party doubts the importance of free treats. "Some pro-establishment candidates rely on those treats to seek support rather than their actual achievements," he said.

But he also felt that no regulation could assure absolute fairness. "So people's correct perception of voting is more important," he said.

As beneficiaries of those treats, some residents welcome the giveaways and would hence cast a vote for the candidates concerned. Frequently meeting a certain candidate on bargain trips and banquets, Mr Zhao Se-ming, 70, is supportive of the host of these events. "I know nothing about other candidates. I think I should cast my vote to someone I am familiar with," he said.

But Ms Tam Ka-wing, 26, said although the treats were attractive, she still preferred "long-term accomplishments" to this kind of "short-term happiness".

"I will be happier to see better hygiene in the street, rather than getting free household products to improve my own flat's hygiene," she said.

Sharing similar views, another incumbent district councillor who preferred to remain anonymous said voters were able to measure a candidate's devotion to the district when casting their vote.

The resources needed to fund those treats are another source of contention among political parties.

Mr Chan Yau-cheong of the Civic Party said the pro-government candidates tended to have more resources.

Joseph Cheng Yu-shek, professor of political science at City University of Hong Kong and a Civic Party member, feels that such offerings may affect the fairness of the elections. "The resourceful pro-establishment camp has an edge over others by systematically reaching more residents and providing extensive local services," he said.

"The district council election is in fact not so fair. However, the nature of the election, not the regulations, is to blame," he said.

STORY//ADAYEUNG  
EDITED BY//HEIINLAI

# EX-CONVICTS STRUGGLE TO LAND A JOB

Despite increasing offers and improved attitudes towards them, ex-offenders still face difficulties holding on to their position.

Ex-convicts still face difficulties in the job market – from securing a job to opening a bank account, even though the government is making an effort to help them reintegrate into society.

One of the ex-offenders who once faced such hardship is Ah Kwong. The 27-year-old man, who refuses to reveal his full name to avoid discrimination, has been jailed six times since the age of 22.

Like many ex-convicts, he wants to keep his criminal records private, even to their employers, not realizing that would be regarded as dishonest behaviour.

It took a rejection by a potential employer for Ah Kwong to realise that he cannot conceal his criminal record by not revealing it in his job application.

"The interviewers checked if I had any criminal records on the Internet during the interview," he said.

**“Due to the lack of, or ineffective, communication, some employers make their ex-offender employees feel like being picked on.”**

Gloria Yuen Sin-nga

Another employer, Turboice Company Limited, was willing to hire him when he told them about his past. "I worked there in 2008 the first time. When I was released, I phoned

my boss and they offered me another opportunity," he said.

Mr Jiminey Li Man-kit, CEO of pet shop Discovery Beetles, said he did not mind hiring ex-offenders, but he expected them to disclose their criminal records beforehand.

He once hired a teenage ex-prisoner who tried to cover it up. He was disappointed to find out the truth, which brought the contract to an end.

"It is trust and personality that matter," Mr Li said. Instead of their criminal past, the ex-convicts' performance during job interviews and their abilities are also his important considerations. "They are released because they have changed, so they should be given an opportunity," he said.

After securing a job, ex-convicts face a big

challenge of maintaining their position. For example, some have found that they have difficulties opening a bank account to receive their salaries because of their criminal records.

A TYR reporter called HSBC's hotline as a customer to ask about the relevant policies on opening a bank account for ex-convicts. The customer service agent said it had to do with the seriousness of the crime, but refused to reveal the eligibility criteria.

"It really depends on individual situations," he said. "Basically you get the same result in every branch, because we are in the same system. Yet we don't reveal to clients how we do it."

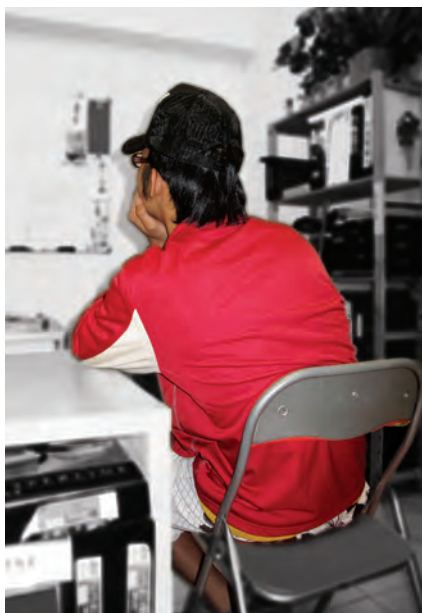
There are still more problems to deal with, according to Ms Gloria Yuen Sin-nga, Planning and Development Manager of the Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention.

She said that some ex-offenders, who usually started their career late due to long sentences, found it hard to adapt to new job requirements, such as day shifts.

"Due to the lack of, or ineffective, communication, some employers make their ex-offender employees feel like being picked on," she said.

To help ex-convicts re-enter the job market, the Correctional Services Department held its first-ever job fair for soon-to-be-released inmates on August 3. Twenty-six companies from different sectors joined the fair, offering 243 jobs.

Nearly 200 inmates submitted their applications for the jobs, most of which are physically demanding. ■



Ex-convicts face many difficulties reintegrating into the society.

STORY/ALVINA HUNG  
EDITED BY/CLAIRE CHU



WITH A DEARTH OF CUSTOMERS AT HIS SHOP, MR CHAN FINDS HIMSELF HAVING AMPLE TIME TO READ DURING BUSINESS HOURS.



## ANTIQUE STREET GOES OUT OF VOGUE

Shopowners at Hong Kong's famous antique district Hollywood Road struggle to stay afloat as new laws curb supply

For antique shop owner Mr Choi Wai-sem, a typical day at work involves reading the newspapers, listening to the radio and polishing the chinaware on display.

Business at Mr Choi's shop, located at Hollywood Road's famed 'Antique Street', is a pale shade of what the glitzy SoHo eateries and downtown boutiques enjoy.

Mr Choi's predicament is not unique. Shopowners on Antique Street face bleak prospects, with shoppers gravitating towards the more gentrified areas of the Central shopping district.

Empty pavements and idle shopowners are a frequent sight on this historical street, where foreign merchants and sailors used to hawk Chinese antiques and artefacts in the early years of the colonial era.

Like many of the shops on the street, Mr Choi's antique business is steeped in history. The establishment, which was passed on to Mr Choi from his father, has been selling Chinese porcelain for over 50 years. Having lived most of his life at Hollywood Road, Mr Choi noted the slow decline of antique businesses in the area.

"There used to be lots of antique shops, but the number is now declining," said Mr Choi.

He said that many antique shops on Antique Street started to disappear since 2000. "There were plenty of them back in the 90s, but now there are more coffee shops and fashion stores moving in and taking their

places."

The main reason for the decline in antique trade was the lack of supply, said Mr Choi. He said that antique dealers in Hong Kong used to import goods from mainland China, with Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangdong designated as legitimate ports of trade for antiques.

The Standards for the Entry-Exit Examination and Verification of Cultural Relics in China, a national level legislation launched in 2007, prohibits the export of antiques and artefacts and antiques from the pre-1911 era.

"It's getting more difficult running the business, with nearly no additional supply of antiques," said Mr Choi, who has decided not to pass on the business to his next generation.

"Antiques are not like other things. How can one make bricks without straw?," he said.

Similar worries bother Mr Chan, another shop owner at Hollywood Road who declined to offer his full name.

Due to the policy shift regarding the export of cultural relics, the only supply sources left for antique dealers at Hollywood Road are relic retailers in mainland China and international auction houses, he said.

But small antique merchants like him are outpriced by the exorbitant cost of procuring antiques from these sources.

According to antique expert Emma Watts,

lower grade antiques sold at these shops do not appeal to present-day antique collectors. Ms Watts, who is a lecturer at the Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University, said people are constantly looking to get antiques of the highest quality.

"If you are a collector, you want the best things but not those of lower-class," said Ms Watts.

"Today I can even buy good antiques from anywhere in the world from an antique shop, or an auction house or a private dealer on the Internet. The goods of old antique shops are not as competitive as those," she added.

Ms Watts also pointed out that the newer generation is less interested in collecting antiquities because of a change of perception about old things and their value.

"People nowadays care less about old stuff, especially the younger generation aged from 25 to 40," said Ms Watts. "They are not buying or appreciating antiques and old things, instead they like to chase new and modern things."

For Ms Watts, the antique shops are victims of Hong Kong's rapid modernization. "The city has changed, and those old antique shops are left behind," she said. ■

STORY/PEYTON GUAN  
EDITED BY/BHAVAN JAIPRAGAS

Government has no plans to deal with 4 million copies of free newspapers published every weekday

## NO WAY OUT FOR WASTE



FREEDAILIESACCOUNTFOR  
MORETHAN70PERCENTOF  
TOTALCIRCULATION

Circulation of free papers  
**Sharp Daily: 800,000**  
**Headline Daily: 799,749**  
**Skypost: 506,388**  
**AM730: 380,730**  
**Metro Daily: 363,784**  
**The Standard: 213,411**

**Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations  
Hong Kong estimates by agents.  
(April-June 2011)**

Environmentalists have raised concern over Hong Kong's lack of a policy on recycling waste paper as the total circulation of newspapers has surpassed four million a day.

With the launch of Sharp Daily in September and Skypost in July, six free dailies with a combined circulation of about 3 million are competing for readership against 13 paid dailies with a total print run of 1.2 million copies.

In other words, 4.2 million copies of newspapers are vying for attention in this city of 7.1 million people.

"The city does not need so many free newspapers. Most of the newspaper publishers decide the number of copies printed with an eye on advertising income, but they should instead make their decision based on readership," said Green Council worker Ms Grace Ma Hiu-kwan.

A survey conducted by Green Sense on free Chinese newspapers in September has found that the companies concerned use about 2,187 tons of paper a week. Producing that amount of newsprint is estimated to require cutting down 37,000 trees or destroy 62 hectares of forests, an area the size of three and a half Victoria Parks.

According to the Environmental Protection Department, 1,195 kilotons of waste paper were collected for recycling last year, and all of them were then sent to the mainland, the Philippines or

other countries for further processing.

"As the amount of waste paper increases, the city needs its own factories to recycle paper," said Green Sense project officer Mr Gary Wong Chung-woon.

He said that setting up paper-recycling factories might not be cost-effective at first, and the government should provide incentives for private companies to start the business.

However, a spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department said that the authority had no plan to build a government-funded recycling factory for the time being, but it could offer companies lower rents to build the factory at the Ecopark.

He also said that the government would not limit the number of copies of free newspapers circulated in the city.

"The government will not interfere with newspaper publishers' business decisions," he added.

The authority has no plans to address the issue of rising volume of waste paper. At present, waste paper recycling is carried out by about 240 private recycling companies, and recycling bins have been placed at various locations throughout the city by the government.

"But the government has already provided facilities for recycling and educating the public," the spokesman said.

Environmentalists questioned the necessity of printing so many free newspapers.

Green Sense project officer Mr Wong said that media organisations were profit-oriented and his group would not force them to reduce the number of copies printed. He said that the ideal number of copies was 20 per cent of the current level.

Metro, one of the media organisations that publish free newspapers, has set up 28 recycling spots at MTR stations since the company's recycling scheme "Metro Share" started in 2004. The scheme recycles more than 40,000 copies of its newspaper every day.

"It aims at encouraging our readers to recycle Metro Daily by passing it to other readers so as to eliminate wastage. It could reach the ultimate goal of reducing printing cost, and increasing the readership of our newspaper at the same time," said Ms Fey Wong, head of marketing of the Metro Daily.

Green groups have asked free newspaper companies to take action to reduce waste paper but no improvement has been shown so far. ■

STORY/BETH LIU  
EDITED BY/SIMON YUEN

# Donald Tsang's last policy address: What are people saying?



## Chats

The government should use our taxes more efficiently, especially on medical subsidies for Hong Kong people. Also, the government should have trained more more doctors and nurses to solve the shortage of medical talents in recent years.

Ms Mau Kwai-mui, 55, housewife



I wish there would be more support for students to go to university and more travel and study subsidies for us.

Mr Leung Chi-man, 15, student

The government should provide more support to the middle class. Now we enjoy adequate support, but we pay heavy taxes. It should pay more attention to the middle class.

Ms Choi Chi-wah, 40, logistics manager



As a university student about to graduate next year, I hope the government can help lower the sky high property price and the first installment for the home ownership scheme. I hope it would have a more detailed plan on housing.

Ms Lau Po-yi, 23, student



Info

I have nothing to complain; so far, the government's policies are able to cover the needs of my family.

Mr Wong Yuen-kong, 40,  
customer servicer



I support the resumption of the Home Ownership Scheme, but I hope the income limit could be higher, so the middle class could enjoy this benefit and do not need to suffer from high property prices.

Mr Kenneth Yan, 35, I.T. technician

The governemnt should have more transparent policies. They seem to work without knowing what citizens want.

Ms Yandy Suen, 20, student



More public housing should be built and the land supply should be handled more effectively to cope with the soaring property prices. Land in the New Territories, in particular, should be developed to cater to the city's pressing need for housing.

Leung Sum-kuen, 59, insurance accounts executive

Send



# JUST THE FIRST KICK

Professional athletes devote themselves to sports when they are young, spending most of their time training and competing. But some of them struggle to make a living after retiring- and TYR takes a closer look into the issue.

STORY//CLARIE LEE, COCO ZHENG, KRIS LUI, ROY CHAN,  
EDITED BY//CALVIN YANG, GOOSIE CHAN, JACK AUNG, SADIE LO







# YOUNG FOOTBALLERS STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

Local soccer players face many obstacles on their way to be a professional

Becoming a professional soccer player is a difficult undertaking for aspiring youngsters in Hong Kong because of scarce government funding and parental opposition.

Government funding for soccer development is limited as the sport is not included in the elite sports scheme rolled out by the Hong Kong Sports Institute in April this year.

With little help from the government, small football clubs have to look for sponsorship from commercial enterprises.

The clubs usually tilt their resources towards professional players, for example, by purchasing insurance for them. Meanwhile, young players have to pay for everything – from equipment to medical fees – on their own.

Mr Li Chin-pang, a coaching instructor of Hong Kong Football Association, expressed his concern over the development of youth soccer in the city.

He said that football teams of the Hong Kong First Division League failed to enroll

at least one young player every year.

"The football clubs would rather spend money on recruiting and retaining professional local and foreign players," said Mr Tam Yu-fai, a 22-year-old amateur football player.

Mr Tam had dreamt of being a professional soccer player of the Hong Kong National Football Team since he was eight.

He joined the newly established Tin Shui Wai Pegasus Football Club in 2008 and was soon promoted from the youth team to the reserve team.

Although his coach had high expectations on him, he felt it would be insecure to start a soccer career, so he gave up his childhood dream after being offered a place to study at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Despite the challenges facing would-be professional soccer players, both local and foreign soccer big names have set up training schools for children aged five or above.

Arsenal Soccer School (Hong Kong)

Company Limited, established in 2010, aims at bringing fun to children and training them to be skillful players at the same time.

Talented students in the school could be recommended by their coaches to join the youth teams of the Hong Kong First Division football clubs.

"I hope Hong Kong Arsenal Soccer School can act as a platform for retired footballers to have a job and contribute to this industry by teaching children," said Mr Goldbert Chi-chiu, 30, a retired professional player who is director and coach of the Hong Kong Arsenal Soccer School.

Mr Lau Bok-hung, whose son is a student at the school, said he did not know if he would let his son become a professional player in the future, but he was happy with what his son was doing now.

"Football is a great sport after all, as it is good for his health," Mr Lau said. "He can learn to cooperate with others too." ■



Very few Hong Kong parents want their children to go all the way to become a professional athlete.

A photograph of a person in a white shirt and dark shorts playing tennis on a blue court. The court has white and yellow lines. In the background, there is a building with large windows and a black metal fence. The title "More athletes to gain benefit from the government" is overlaid in a stylized font at the bottom of the image.

## More athletes to gain benefit from the government

Like many of his peers, undergraduate Leung Ki Ho often finds himself in a rush for time.

At the end of a typical school day, the 23-year-old has to make a 20-minute journey from the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), where he is currently pursuing a degree in Asian Studies, to the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) at Sha Tin for a three-hour athletics training, four days a week.

"The most difficult part was taking care of my studies [when] my trainings started to get intensive as I had to dedicate more time to it. Sometimes, it was tiring to go for practice after a day of lessons," he said.

But the national record holder for the 400-metre sprint is not complaining about the hectic schedule.

He explained that despite having to sacrifice time, the support he receives in exchange has been substantial. The provision he obtains now, is more comprehensive than when he first started out in athletics in 1998.

"With the world-class coaching and facilities that I am provided with, I am able to focus better on doing well in international tournaments. Also, I do not have to fret over my travelling expenses anymore as they are fully covered," he added.

Mr. Leung is one of about 1,125 elite athletes taken under the wing of the HKSI in the Government's efforts to promote long-term sports development in Hong Kong.

The move is in recognition of local athletes performing admirably well at recent international meets. At the 2009 East Asian Games (EAG), athletes participated in 22 sports and notched up an unprecedented 26 gold medals out of 110 podium finishes.

Since 2004, the HKSI has been the government's key delivery agent for providing training and other support, such as training facilities, career and educational advancements, to elite athletes.

Mr. Leung, who is currently Hong Kong's top-ranked 200-metre specialist, has benefited from one of the schemes since joining the institute in 2003.

Initially, the Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) alumnus was unable to pursue his Advanced Level education due to mediocre results for the Hong Kong Certificate of

Education Examination (HKCEE).

But with the recommendation of the HKSI under the Integrated Educational and Vocational Development Programme, he was offered the opportunity to attend university at CityU.

In recent years, the HKSI has been collaborating with local universities to provide developments for its sporting talents. Under this initiative, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has admitted ten elite athletes in various degree programmes.

"I think the Government and the institute have been giving me adequate support. Apart from the financial assistance, they have arranged make-up tutorials to ensure that I do not lag behind in my schoolwork," the Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association (HKAAA) Athlete of the Year 2008 and 2009 added.

In the 2011-2012 budget speech delivered in February, the Government proposed the establishment of a HK\$7 billion Elite Athletes Development Fund (EADF) to replace the current mode of subvention, which provides an annual recurrent funding of HK\$160 million to the institute.

This has given rise to a number of initiatives, such as the Sports Scholarship Scheme, to provide athletes with a more conducive environment to undergo training and compete in major games.

These services and subsidies vary according to an athlete's performance and commitment to the training programmes stipulated by the institute.

However, elite sportsmen receiving support are only a selected few. Many lower-ranked athletes are lacking such assistance, with some resorting to extreme measures to keep their medal hopes alive.

20-year-old Wu Ho-ching, a national tennis player, was one of the many who have struggled with sponsorship.

"Travelling expenses and accommodation for international tournaments are expensive. But to rise up the ranks, I need these overseas experiences. I have no choice but to fork out the money for them," she said.

Asked if the support from the Government was sufficient, she lamented that their limited

resources rendered to tennis players have made circumstances tougher.

Ms. Wu, who is the seventh-ranked women's singles player this year, turned full-time last year, quitting her studies as a result.

"Tennis was once on the list of elite sports. But, the resources and support we obtain now are not as much as those given to [sports currently on the list]. But I will still continue to be a full-time player for one or two years," said Ms. Wu, the third player to win the women's open singles titles at all three local majors in the same calendar year besides Patricia Hy (1978) and Lam Po Kuen (2002).

Currently, there are 15 elite sports, including cycling and windsurfing, under the HKSI Elite Training Programme. These sports are thoroughly reviewed under a four-year cycle and selected by the Elite Sports Committee based on the achievements of its athletes.

"The ultimate goal of elite training at the HKSI is to help athletes win medals at the Asian and Olympic Games. To this end, it is important that resources are allocated in such a way that elite sports are given the strongest support at the preparation stage," said Prof. Frank Fu, Chair Professor of the Department of Physical Education at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU).

"I know it is difficult for some athletes [in non-elite sports] to make it through. But winning medals is the government's foremost concern. Moreover, the events that have potential to become elite sports are actually provided with actual support." The former HKSI board member added.

With the HKSI's announcement to enhance training and monetary support to four potential elite sports, including tennis, young athletes like Ms. Wu and Mr. Leung would have less probability of quitting and more motivation to excel.

Mr. Leung, who is one of the seven local athletes awarded the London 2012 Olympic Scholarship by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), said: "With this, I hope to represent Hong Kong at the 2012 Olympics.

"I think that is the best gift to those who have been supporting me." ■

## AN ATHLETE'S PATH IS RIGOROUS, ITS FUTURE CLOUDY

Athletes find it difficult to pursue a career after retiring from the sporting industry, despite the efforts they devoted over the years. Sport cannot be a life-long career for any athlete, as there will come a time when his body can no longer endure the physical demands of vigorous training and competition. For some athletes, injuries may force them to retire much earlier than they want.

Representing Hong Kong in the game of hurdling at the East Asian Games 2009, Mr Ambrose Leung Chi-cheong, now 26, was forced to give up his sport career because of injuries to his knee.

He said he was inspired to become a hurdler after watching world champion hurdler Liu Xiang performed in a competition at the University of Hong Kong in 2002. He was injured before the East Asian Games in 2009, but he kept on training and still participated in the competition.

But the injury eventually ended his career as a hurdler. He then decided to become a teacher by studying for a certificate in education, and now teaches at Wah Yan College in Kowloon.

Career future is the main concern for many athletes. To some such as Hong Kong team cyclist Mr Szeto Hin-leung, 23, retiring from sport meant going back to school. "If I don't study, I cannot get a well-paid job in the future," Mr Szeto said. When he became a full-time athlete, he had completed only Form Five. After quitting the cycling team, Mr Szeto went back to study Secondary Six in 2008. He is now studying law and commerce in Brisbane, with the goal of becoming a professional.

Mr. Szeto said there were only a few cyclists in the Hong Kong senior squad, as many others decided to leave early, feeling that it would be difficult for them to find a good job when they retired.

But there are also people who persist in being athletes. Mr Kevin Chu Kam-yin, a Hong Kong team swimmer who has more than 10 years' experience, is still preparing for the London Olympics in 2012.

Mr Chu echoed the view of Mr. Chan that one's determination was crucial to be an athlete. "My goal is pretty straight forward – the Olympics – therefore I will not stop until I reach that goal next year."

But Mr Chu said many athletes in Hong Kong complete in high school but give up when they go to university because it is hard to strike a balance between training as an athlete and a student.

Mr Szeto said many athletes did not have a long-lasting career, and many people felt that one could not earn much money as a sportsman, causing many young sportsmen to give up.

Parents' objection is another main obstacle for young sportsmen. Many athletes say Hong Kong parents do not have the patience to wait for their children to become successful sportmen and want immediate career results.

Mr Leung is pessimistic about the sporting industry in Hong Kong, noting that the Hong Kong Sports Institute only supports full-time sportsmen by providing free housing and catering and a monthly payment of about \$7,000.

He believes the Hong Kong government does not provide enough support to retired sportsmen, unlike many other countries. "And the lack of an academic background may hinder future careers for athletes," he said.

Meanwhile, the government has granted \$8 million to the Hong Kong Sports Institute to manage the Hong Kong Athletes Fund to provide financial support for current and retired elite athletes. The Institute launched the Sports Scholarship Scheme and between 2009 to 2010 has successfully recommended 16 sportsmen for further studies.

Together with the good results of the Hong Kong team, such as Kwok Ho-ting winning the 2011 UCI Track Cycling World Championships in March, Mr. Szeto believe more teenagers now want to become elite athletes. But as they have seen, a sportsman's path is rigorous and its future is cloudy. ■

## THE FINISHING

While most people are still at the starting point of their career, an athlete may have already passed the finishing point of his life as a sportsman. Stepping down from the podium, what lies ahead is not another fruitful chapter, but possibly complete desperation and hopelessness.

Although they have been ahead of ordinary people in a chosen sport, many retired sportsmen actually lag behind others in terms of social skills, connections and professional knowledge that qualify them for a job.

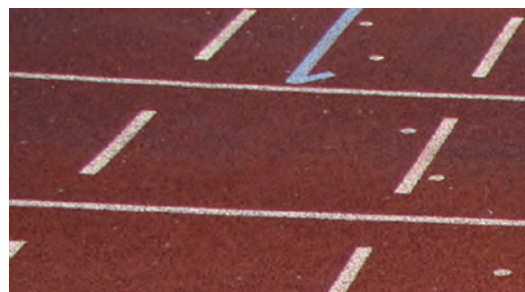
Desperate retired sportsmen could seek help from the government, which has set up schemes to help retired athletes to find jobs or further their studies. However the entrance bars for these programmes are quite high.

Launched in 2008, the Hong Kong Athletes Career & Education Programme (HKACEP) aims at helping retired sportsmen to find jobs or study. However, applicants have to either place at least eighth in the Olympic Games or become medalists at World Championships, Asian Games, Asian Championship competitions, National Games, World University Games or East Asian Games.

Mr. Gi Ka-man, 27, is a medaled runner in the East Asia Games and Asian games. He said that this programme only helped the most elite athletes, but there were thousands others who had devoted great effort but might have never got any medal.

"Government looks at the medals you got, not the time you spent in training," said Mr Gi.

He said that most of the athletes he knew





# NG LINE IS JUST ANOTHER START

could not meet the eligibility benchmarks. He felt that the government was not helping sportsmen by weighing medals more importantly than passion and effort.

"Look at the eligibility benchmarks. Only top, top athletes will qualify, but if you are really that top, you won't even need government's help. You will find plenty of schools and companies wanting you to join," he said.

HKACEP is funded by both the government and business, which covers athlete members of the Hong Kong team who have served full-time for at least eight years. It also provides subsidized online English course and other language enrichment programmes for them.

Yet the benefits are available only to sportsmen who are in the first four years of their retirement. Each applicant gets only one access to each item provided by the HKACEP.

Over the past three years, more than 20 athletes received scholarship through the HKACEP, while about 30 found either part-time or full-time jobs.

"I did not get any help from the government when I retired. No scholarship, no career opportunities, nothing," Mr Gi said. He also said that most of his friends had the same experience.

The medalist returned to study and got a degree in Physical Education Resource Management after retiring from field and track. Now he works as a private coach for amateur runners. He thinks the scheme is not helping at all.

But the fund administrator said the

Programme covered by Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme

Integrated General English Course

Seminars & Workshops on Education, Career Development and Athletes Affairs

Scholarship Programme for Post-Secondary Education & Vocational Skills Training

Language Enrichment Course

Scholarship Programme for Undergraduate Studies

Academic Enhancement Scheme for Post-Secondary & Undergraduate Studies

Consultation Services on Athletes' Education and Career Development

Career Programme (Job Opportunities)

Source: HKACEP WEBSITE

problem lied in a lack of resources. Mr. Sam Wong Tak-sum, manager of the programme, explained that it received only a one-off allocation of HK\$8.5 million from the government in 2008, with follow-up funding from local businesses.

Mr Wong insisted that the government was already making a huge effort in supporting Hong Kong sportsmen. He said what the government could do was to encourage more businesses to support Hong Kong sport.

He also said that sportsmen's own experience actually could help them in getting a job. "I know that some human resource managers prefer retired sportsmen, because they are more responsible, punctual and willing to work twice as hard as young degree holders," Wong said.

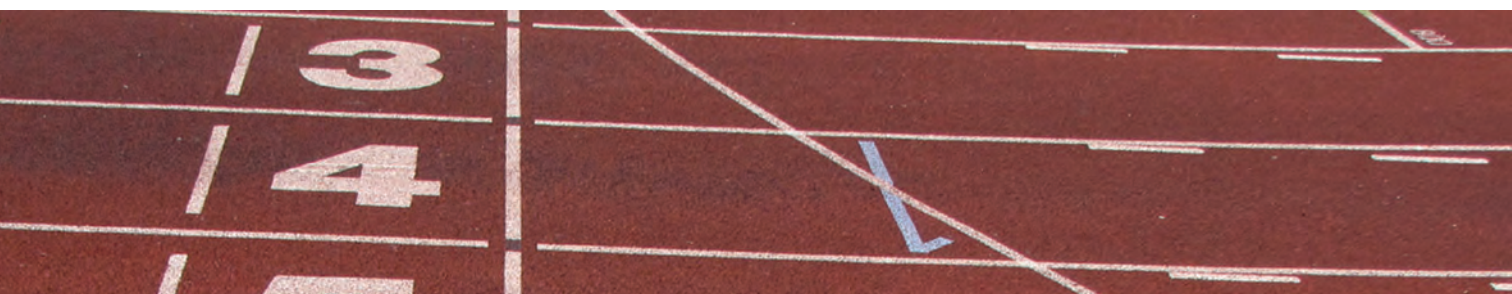
While many athletes feel the government is not offering sufficient support to retired sportsmen, a sports academic said that they should not just depend on the government for help.

"The media often overemphasize on how

the government is not doing enough to help retired athletes in finding jobs, but a democratic government should provide opportunities, not jobs," said Associate Professor Lobo Louie Hung-tak from department of Physical Education at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Prof Louie feels that the government is already doing well in helping sportsmen. He suggested that athletes should prepare themselves when they were still competing in the squad. "Sportsmen need to equip themselves with skills before entering the job market," he said.

There have been similar schemes such as the Elite Athletes Education Subsidy and Elite Athletes Tutorial Support, which also provide assistance for study, before the HKACEP was set up in 2008. The funds are administered by the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI). However, only retired athletes of 14 designated "elite sports" are eligible to apply. ■





# SCENT MARKETING IS IN

*An enchanting fragrance that brings up beautiful memories for business, even though its effect won't last*

Scents are everywhere, but only particular ones will pull up the memories, either sweet or nasty, of those with discerning noses.

It is their links with personal emotions and experiences that make the scents meaningful and easily be recognizable by people for the rest of their life.

According to the perfume brand Demeter, which boasts a collection of 200 kinds of scents, scents of snow, paint, glue, dust and firefly are popular among its customers as they remind them of the most innocent memories of childhood.

Ms Yao Pei-wen, a Taiwanese customer of Demeter, said on the Internet that the Taiwanese like the scent of straw as it could remind them of the big pieces of rice paddies in the old times.

The same recalling power of smell applies also in businesses.

Scent marketing is the use of smell to enhance a brand image, attract customers and build their long-term loyalty through the brand-recalling effect: customers may subconsciously remember the tailor-made

scent and will relate it to the corresponding brand whenever they come across the same scent.

Sky Work Design, opened in March this year, is one of the design houses that provide clients with this scent strategic solution in Hong Kong.

By selecting and mixing at least 50 to 60 scents, a unique scent is found to suit its client's image. For example, the fashion chain "2%" adopts a sweet and spicy scent, said Mr Daniel Fong Ming-san, 46, Marketing Director of Sky Work Design.

Surveys have found that scent marketing is an effective sensory tool to boost sales or promote new products as consumers would stay longer and were more likely to consume in a scented environment.

The whole thing work automatically. "You can avoid listening to or watching advertisements, but you just can't avoid breathing in the scent," said Mr Fong.

The strategy is commonly used nowadays in boutiques and events. But apart from simply spraying the scent in the air, Mr Fong



# Beautiful memories is good a life time

also uses it in various means to reinforce the impacts. For example, there are scented leaflets, name cards, stickers, souvenirs, and even scented garments like bra.

While some people think the memories

“You can avoid listening to or watching advertisements, but you just can't avoid breathing in the scent.”

Mr Daniel Fong Ming-san,  
Marketing Director of Sky Work Design

brought by scents could last forever, others have doubts about the idea.

In an essay published in 1996, psychologists Rachel Herz and Trygg Engen say that olfaction

(smell sense) is the slowest of all senses to transmit messages to the brain.

Professor Ken Yung Kin-lam, 45, said memory brought by scent may not last the longest period of time, compared to that of other senses like visual and audio.

He said humans use classical conditioning – a behavioral learning theory that explains how things occur with the associations between an environmental and a naturally occurring stimulus – to associate scents with memories. So how long the memories can last actually depend on how far-reaching the incident is on that person, he said.

Yet, he admitted that scents can help people memorize complex things. “Scent is a mixture of chemical signals,” said Prof Yung. “Perhaps because each type of scent has more than 1,000 combinations, different stimulated neuro cells are competent to distinguish among them.”

STORY // JOYCE CHEUNG  
EDITED BY // CECILIA CHAN



# REDEFINING AN OLD CULTURE

Cantonese opera is undergoing reforms to engage the younger generations



CUSTOM AND SETTING ARE MODERNISED IN THE PLAY, FUNG LAU MUNG - SIU MING SING. PHOTO/HONG KONG OPERA PREVIEW

Twirling the lance in circles and doing a back flip off a ten-foot-high wall, Macbeth, a character from a famous Shakespearean tragedy, is performing on the stage, but this time in a Chinese-style ancient costume in the Cantonese opera "Heroes' Treason".

With a totally different creation, dialogue, arrangement, costume and setting, the play is a far cry from the traditionally known performing mode of Cantonese operas. It is just one of the many examples of a

"modernized" play for Cantonese opera aimed at arresting its declining number of viewers.

Cantonese opera has long been southern China's most popular theatrical entertainment. Actors are clothed in ornate silk costumes and perform movements on a more or less bare stage. Accompanied by traditional string, wind and percussion instruments, performers are required to finish a series of stylized acts through

sequences of singing, dancing, musical dialogues, and martial arts.

The once flourishing art is facing a downturn, with its hardcore fans growing old and youngsters finding it uninteresting. In order to keep it alive, Cantonese opera performers are looking for ways to reform the unappealing performances.

According to Ms Lio Mio-mei, chief editor of Hong Kong Opera Preview, Cantonese opera is running on dual tracks, by either



A SCENE FROM JING HUNG BUN GWOK PHOTO/HONG KONG OPERA PREVIEW

translating classical foreign works like Shakespeare and Chekhov into Cantonese operas, or adding modern elements to local plays to engage the younger generation.

But it is easier said than done when it comes to involving youngsters. "It takes a very long time, probably several years, to study Cantonese opera before one can get in the door as a performer, said Ms Lio. "That is why we are losing the young crowd."

According to veteran actress Ms Koi Ming-fai, another problem faced by the performers is the lack of ideal performing

venues.

"The official website shows that the hiring charge for a performance hall in Ko Shan Theatre in Kowloon is \$8,600 per four hours for a profit-making organization and \$3,000 for a non-profit one," she said. "Even a group like us with a longer history cannot overcome the obstacles. The situation for younger performers must be much tougher," said Ms Koi.

A silver lining came after Cantonese opera was recognised by United Nations

Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as intangible cultural heritage in 2009. The Home Affairs Bureau subsequently injected \$69 million into the Cantonese Opera Development Fund in 2010-11 to further preserve and promote the art by providing professional training, education, community promotion and research.

One of the beneficiaries is the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, which has started an "Introduction to Cantonese Opera" course for the first time in the fall semester of 2011. Taught by renowned opera artists Mr Yuen Siu-fai and Mr Lui Hung-kwong, the course aims to nurture potential performers and re-engage the detached to the industry, with the ultimate goal of popularizing the art.

Apart from the government's efforts, industry seniors have also tried to help younger artists by nurturing a new pool of performers. Some organizations have started forums targeting amateurs, in addition to the opera courses they offer in primary and secondary schools.

Ms Lio is confident about the revival of the industry, but thinks it takes time. "Art will never die," she said. "[Cantonese opera] is at the stage of recovery, and it really needs the participation of the younger generation. But it is not easy." ■

STORY/DENNIS LEE  
EDITED BY/VISQI HE

**“It takes a very long time, probably several years, to study Cantonese opera before one can get in the door as a performer.”**

Lio Mio-mei

venues. The existing government halls and theatres do not have stages large enough for opera groups to set up big backdrops. Worse still, the rent of performance venues is rocketing and booking procedures are



KWONG GE GIVES A LECTURE TO HKUST STUDENTS. PHOTO/DENNIS LEE







# EVERYBODY LOVES KUNG FU FIGHTING

"Kung Fu Supernova" champion, Mandy Ho Pui-man's road to success

Every Saturday night, Mandy Ho Pui-man fascinated the audience with her long and short punches as well as skilled kicks and sweeps that rivalled the performances of other well-built male martial artists. Certainly, the champion of "Kung Fu Supernova", a martial arts variety show run by local television broadcaster TVB, did not fail the audience's expectation.

At first sight, none would believe that this 20-year-old woman, with long, straight hair and a broad grin on the face, to be a kung fu master.

"I'm in love with martial arts and I'm dedicating my life to it," Ho said with enthusiasm after winning her latest honour.

It all started in 1995 unexpectedly when she was just five.

"I was to learn ballet but classes weren't available, and then by chance my mother enrolled me in a kung fu course in a gymnasium near our home instead," she said, adding that she is more than

grateful for her family's decision and support afterwards.

She recalled playing piano as well in her early childhood. "But as I realized kung fu is a better match with my personality, I gave up music," she added.

Ho went to the first tournament at the age of six, winning a merit at the Chinese Martial Arts Self-Attainment Award Display. She was then selected to train in Wushu (the Putonghua name for martial art) at the Hong Kong Sports Institute, and four years later she joined the Hong Kong Youth Wushu Team.

To pursue the path as a martial artist, Ho has been participating in three to four local and international contests each year. In the early years she achieved merits, later on second runner-ups to championships. The numerous awards are too many to count.

"I went for the 'Kung Fu Supernova' as it was a valuable chance to broaden my horizon and to challenge myself," she said. "I've never thought of winning as ten out of 12 participants were males."

Chiu Man-On, 56, is the founder of Chiu Man On Martial Arts Association and

something they could easily abandon particularly when it becomes physically exhausting. But Mandy is an exception – she has always been serious about it."

Ho recalls that all of her female kung fu classmates gave up after a year or two, and only one other managed to keep up for years, like she does.

At times, despite her hardy posture, there were times Ho thought about giving up since the daily routine of training for four hours is tough even for men. "I carry on by constantly reminding myself that success comes after

patience and endurance," she said.

Twenty-year-old university student Sally Tsang Man-yi once felt like many of her peers that martial arts was for men.

"I did not expect that much from 'Kung Fu Supernova'," she said. "But it was Mandy's stunning performance that prompted me to follow all episodes. I can't believe that girls

can also make it."

And for sure, Tsang is just one of Ho's many admirers. Though many feel that women should be gentle and quiet, Ho said her ex-boyfriends were attracted to her because of her love for kung fu. But she now chooses to be single in order to devote more of her time to martial arts.

"Kung fu's both physical and mental training – it is a journey of growth, determination and self-affirmation. I will keep my goal and vision alive," she said with a smile. ■

STORY/FECHON WONG  
EDITED BY/JUDITH KI

“I carry on with kung fu by constantly reminding myself that success comes only after patience and endurance.”

Mandy Ho Pui-man

executive committee member of Hong Kong Chinese Martial Arts Dragon and Lion Dance Association. As Ho's coach for 15 years, he said her outstanding performance was based on her very solid foundation skills in kung fu.

"She has been learning 'Choy Lee Fut', a system that combines techniques from various Northern and Southern Chinese kung fu," he said. "She is good at the basics, like the horse-riding and the bow stance."

"Another reason is her perseverance," Chiu added. "Many girls started martial arts only to 'experience' it, meaning it's



## TAKE A SIP OF COFFEE AND EASE THE DAY

cappuccino and latte, they also serve the rarely seen Ristretto, a variant of espresso that uses less water, which makes it stronger and richer; Marrochino, a shot of espresso dusted with chocolate and topped with foamed milk.

The coffee in Holly Brown is freshly roasted on site. Their espresso has the sweetness of fruits and a hinted taste of chocolate, but is bold enough to keep you awake for hours. On top of the coffee is a thick layer of reddish-brown foam called crema, which only appears on the top of a well-shot espresso. When I finished my double shot served in an elegant glass, the

smooth, rich and honeyed body of the espresso left me an aftertaste that lasted for an afternoon.

Holly Brown also stands out among the rest for the impressive latte arts. Under the masterful hands of its baristas, textured milk is skillfully poured into a shot of espresso, or two shots if you prefer, to make various shapes by cleverly distributing the white colour of milk on the brownish espresso. Usually the latte art is made to resemble a heart shape or a fern leaf, sometimes the baristas would make swans with wings, multiple fern leaves or a tulip, all done with just a pitcher of steamed milk and

Located right next to Hong Kong's bustling Lan Kwai Fong district, Holly Brown Coffee serves one of the highest quality coffees in town and genuine Italian gelato.

Just a five-minute walk from Central MTR station would bring you to the front of the two-story cafe on Stanley Street, where a sweet mix of aroma from Italian gelato and freshly brewed coffee fills the area.

The welcoming setting characterizes the popular coffee house, with wooden tables and chairs, comfy deep sofas scattered around. The room is decorated in warm and earthy tones, with a splash of bluish green on cushions and posters on the walls and columns.

Holly Brown serves a wide range of coffee drinks. Apart from the familiar



HOLLY BROWN'S GELATO  
TREAT MOCHA LICIOUS



espresso.

Despite the queue during rush hours, staff at Holly Brown still manages to keep coffee lovers from waiting too long without sacrificing the quality of the beverages.

Coffee may not be everyone's favourite, but Holly Brown successfully captivates many customers with its signature gelato.

It was near 11 pm on Friday night, yet many people flocked to the place to get a cup of gelato, probably as after dinner desserts. Under the big bluish green menu board, staff of Holly Brown mix different flavours of gelato with toppings of your choice on a cold plate to make a unique, scrumptious dessert.

I ordered Mochalicious, which was made from a scoop of coffee-flavoured gelato, chocolate sauce and Oreo chips, served in a crispy waffle cradle. The crunchy Oreo chips make a perfect blend with the smooth and sweet gelato with a rich taste of coffee. It was definitely a mouthwatering and fulfilling experience for anybody's sweet desire.

If you are tired of the chain coffee shops that are expanding like convenience stores, Holly Brown is definitely a good alternative.

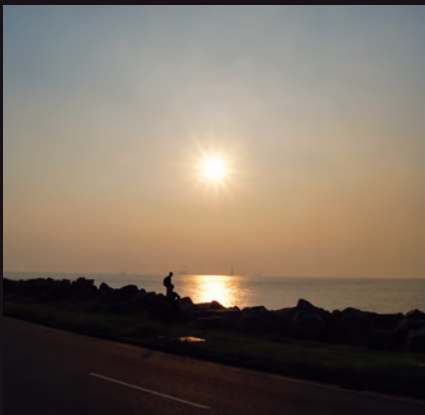


The brand has planned to expand to Causeway Bay and on the Kowloon side, and even across the border to China and Taiwan. As long as it keeps delivering quality treats, coffee lovers would be pleased to see it open next door. ■

STORY//ALAN WONG  
EDITED BY//GINANG







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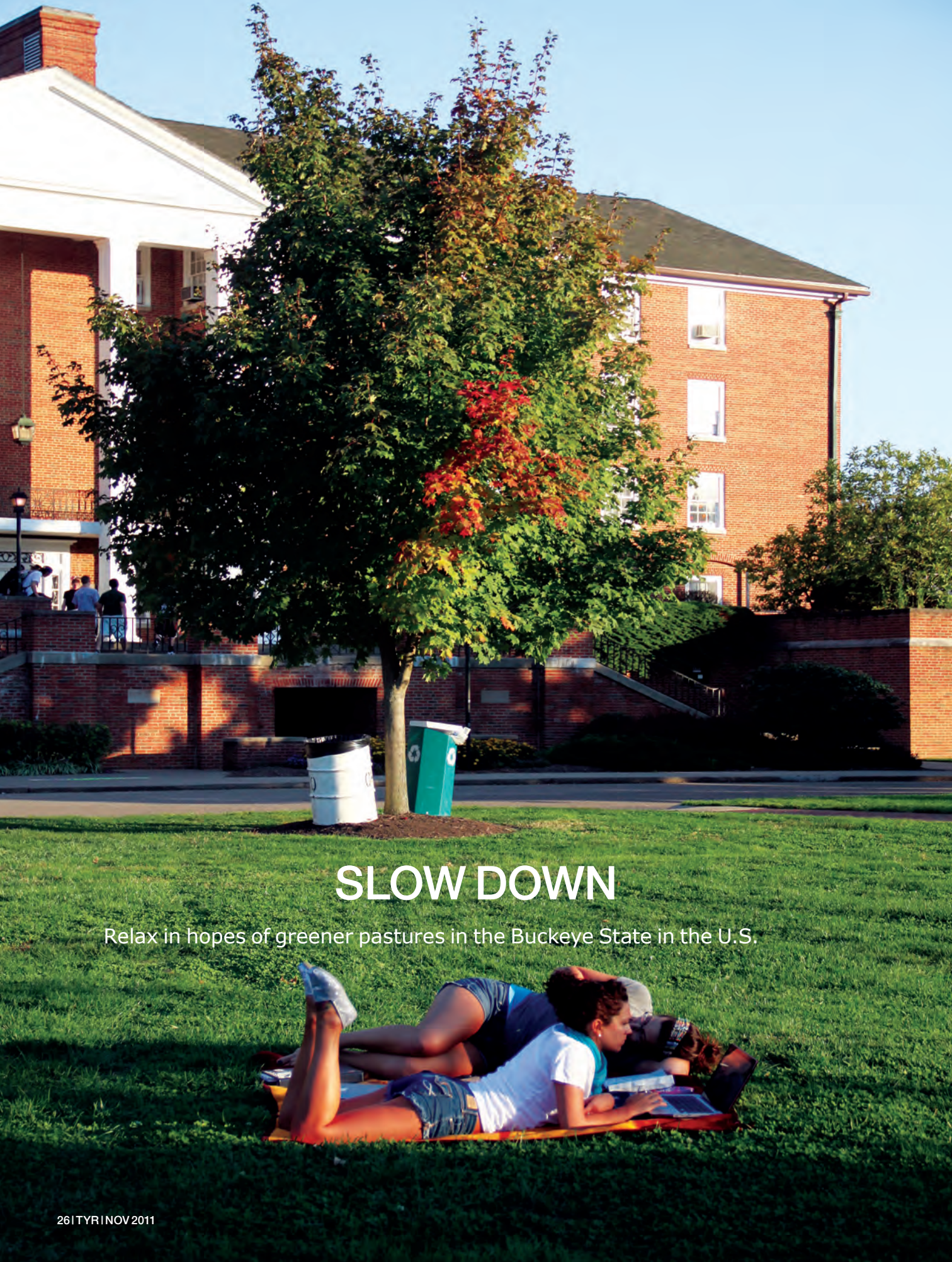


# *ne quietness in a bustling hub*

With a continuous flow of airplanes taking off and landing on its two runways around the clock, the Hong Kong International Airport is the key hub through which this city connects to the rest of the world. But few of the airport's hectic users realize that around this

bustling hub at Chek Lap Kok are quiet spots that offer breathtaking views. At the southern end of the runway, for example, the sunset is simply gorgeous as planes arrive and depart, guided by a beacon bridge that protrudes out into the sea.





# SLOW DOWN

Relax in hopes of greener pastures in the Buckeye State in the U.S.



Unlike the hectic lives that Hongkongers lead, locals in Ohio like to take their time to relax and enjoy the natural landscapes. Some may spend a day fishing or barbecuing in country parks. Others may simply choose to lie on the grass and chat with friends in the sun to enjoy a carefree day.

PHOTOS/SOPHIAFU  
EDITED BY/XAVIER NG





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