

Meet the losers

They might have lost the LegCo election, but they didn't go home empty-handed **p31**

**Why university students protest**

Is it just about national education or something more? **p38**

Delegates who do not represent

The Communist Party's phoney Taiwan delegates **p12**

Development for whom

Is the northeastern New Territories another Tsoi Yuen Village in the making? **p10**

THE YOUNG REPORTER *magazine*

NOV 2012

THE MOST “CELEBRATED” LOSER EVER



Now that the LegCo has moved on without him, DAB vice-chairman Lau Kong-wah tells us his plan, or lack thereof **p28**



W e need people to speak out loud, not a hero to save us.

p19

Clockwise from top left: Bulldozer and squatters in Northeast New Territories **p10**; Last WWII veterans forgotten by their children **p16**; Why students protest against national education **p36**; The bare truth about barefoot running shoes **p24**

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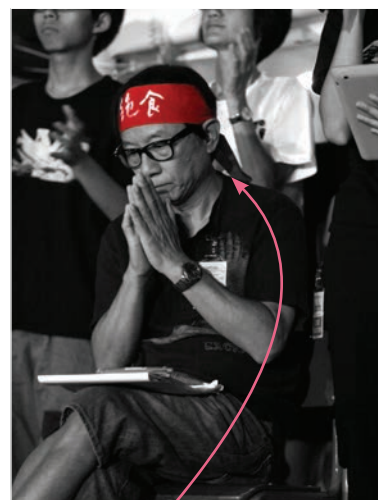
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Most university students have never read the curriculum guidelines



Celebrated (adjective), greatly admired; renowned.

Celebrate (verb), publicly acknowledge with a social gathering or enjoyable activity

NEWS

FEATURED



The cover story of our previous issue offers a glimpse into the lives of asylum seekers in Hong Kong and the difficulties they face. Check out our website for more TYR stories.

Letter from the Editor

This issue of The Young Reporter has an exciting fresh start and we set out to bring you more stories that matter to you. The news monthly now features a special section called “Journalism Matters” that takes on – as the name suggests – journalistic subjects, including opinions of media professionals and columns on the latest happenings in the news industry.

In this issue, we have Stephen Quinn, digital development editor at the South China Morning Post and a mobile journalism guru, to share with us his “MoJo” gears; and New York Times bureau chief Keith Bradsher to tell us what the company’s Hong Kong bureau does and his views on the newspaper’s coverage of China stories.

After the break you will find a wide range of stories on different issues, including the government’s contentious development plan for the North East New Territories, phoney Taiwan delegates to the 18th Communist Party National Congress, barefoot running shoes and more.

Our cover story features the losers in the September LegCo elections, including controversial

figures like DAB vice-chairman Mr Lau Kong-wah and independent candidate Ms Pamela Peck Wan-kam.

Starting from issue two, we will publish your letters (or emails, for that matter) in this space. We love feedbacks – whether they are comments on our stories or story ideas you want us explore. Please go ahead and drop us a few lines. *Alan Wong*

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One Moment





Protestors who oppose the introduction of national education form a human chain in front of rival demonstrators who support the subject's launch at a rally outside the Central Government Offices on October 19 Photograph by Alan Wong

Journalism Matters

With
Alan Wong

Fading Ink

Can the web really save Newsweek?

When Newsweek editor-in-chief Tina Brown announced in mid October that the 80-year-old weekly would drop its print edition and go all digital in 2013, the whole print industry reacted as if journalism had lost yet another battle against the internet.

In the sea of mostly mournful, and sometimes scornful, commentaries from online communities, the bright side of the transition, however, gets nearly no mention.

First, it should be much of a relief to the editorial and design team of the magazine which have tried – rather desperately – to seek attention by calling Barack Obama “The First Gay President” on a May cover. In another issue, the cover features the photo of a phallic asparagus stalk dangling suggestively above a pair of parted red lips. The cover story? “101 Best Places to Eat in the World.”

Now that the magazine’s newsstand sales do not matter, the remaining staffers of Newsweek, which will become Newsweek Global when the site launches in early 2013, can start anew and rethink what is at heart of the company.

Second, like the transition from bamboo scrolls to the printing press, when nostalgia subsides, people will put their focus back on not the medium but what it offers. Not to mention that the internet, or digital pub-

lishing, is largely in its infancy – you ain’t seen nothin’ yet.

In March 2011, the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism reported that, for the first time, more people got their news from the internet than from a print newspaper. And although the advertising revenue of digital magazines is far behind that of print magazines, the projected revenue of digital magazines will nearly triple before 2016, according to data compiled by Bloomberg Businessweek.

The robust growth of the internet and internet-capable smartphones, tablet computers is bringing in an ever increasing number of readers to news websites. Between readers and the news, what is missing is a working business model that doesn’t sacrifice quality journalism. Spoiler alert – on the internet, the winner won’t take all, but the ones who resist innovation will fall into oblivion at the speed of optical fibre.



The first issue of
News-Week
(now Newsweek)

Numberised

57.4

Rating given to Audrey Eu, the highest in a list of the 10 most recognisable legislators since June 1999. She lost her seat in the recent election.

34.3

Rating given to Leung Kwok-hung in the same poll. He kept his seat in the LegCo.

4.64 billion

The amount media tycoon Jimmy Lai Chee-ying sold his Taiwan newspaper and magazine holdings for

60

Percentage of reporters looking to leave the industry within 4 years

54

Hong Kong’s ranking in the 2011-12 Press Freedom Index

19.8

Percentage of people who think news media in HK practice self-censorship

63.3

Percentage of people who think news media in HK have misused the freedom of the press.

DATA: (1, 2, 6, 7) HKU Public Opinion Programme; (3) Bloomberg; (4) Hong Kong Journalists Association; (5) Reporters Without Borders **Compiled by Rev Hui**



Packing Lists

The mobile journalist's gears

Mobile journalists, also known as Mojos, are reporters who produce multimedia stories with their mobile devices, made possible by the availability of mobile internet and smartphones. **Stephen Quinn** is the digital development editor and a wine columnist at the South China Morning Post. He has written multiple books on the subject of mobile journalism. His latest book, **Mobile Journalism in the Asian Region**, is available online for free. Google the book's name or scan the QR code on the right to get it.



Gadgets are useless when they run out of battery. The 4800 mAh portable charger is good for two to three full recharges of an iPhone.

Shakey video footages can annoy the audience, but a conventional tripod is too bulky. The Gorillapod for iPhone is a flexible and light tripod that you can attach to many objects to shoot stable, sharp videos without the hassle of a tripod.

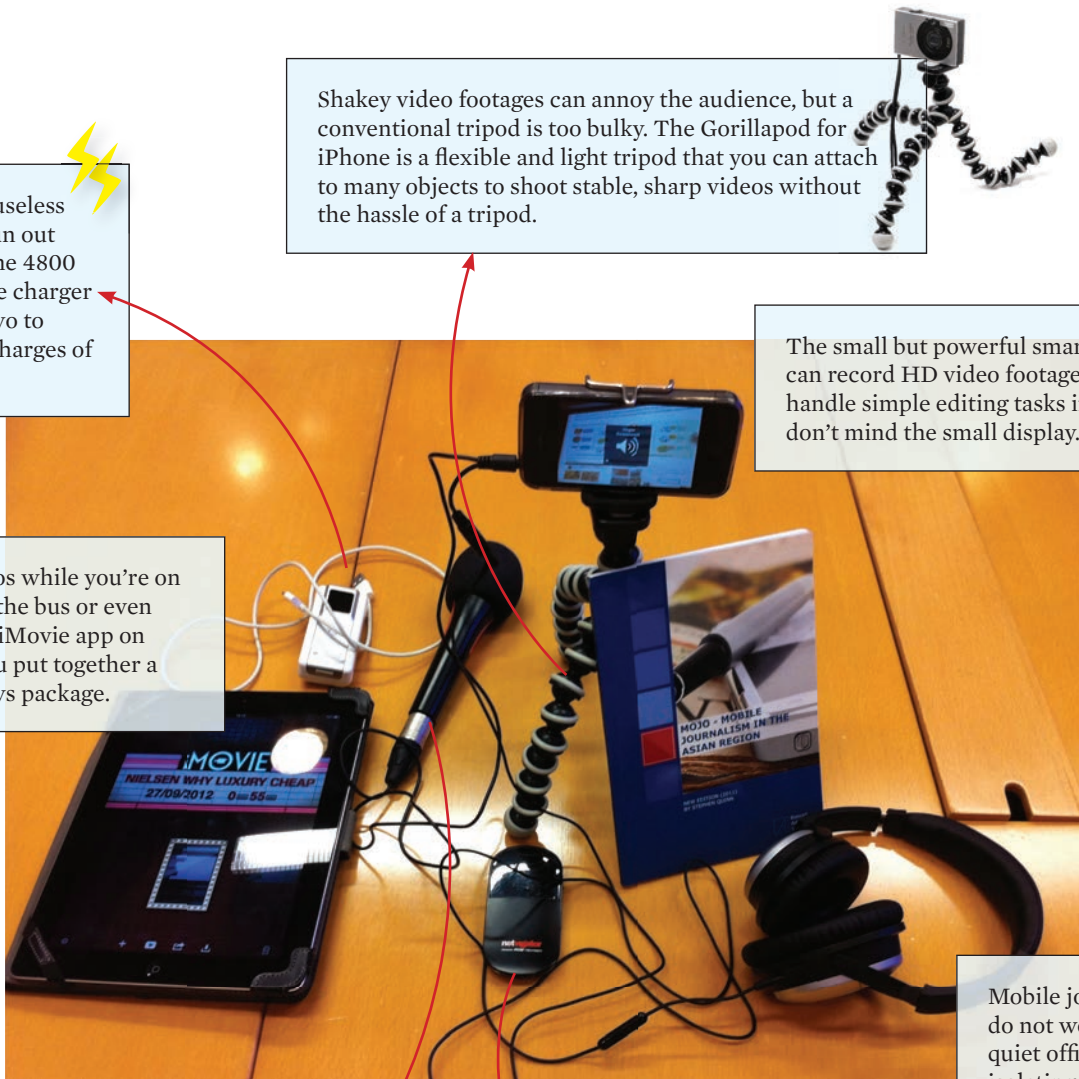
The small but powerful smartphone can record HD video footages and handle simple editing tasks if you don't mind the small display.

Edit HD videos while you're on the plane, on the bus or even walking. The iMovie app on iPad helps you put together a TV-ready news package.

The built-in microphone in most phones or tablets is a joke. An external microphone is essential to produce professional-standard soundtracks.

The mobile wifi device is a subscription-based service that connects your devices to the internet through wifi whenever mobile internet is available.

Mobile journalists do not work in a quiet office. A noise isolating headphone would enable the reporter to listen to what he has recorded to ensure that the audio quality is good.



Journalists Interviewed

Keith Bradsher



Keith Bradsher started reporting for the New York Times since 1989 and became the Hong Kong bureau chief in 2002. He has won awards for his coverage of clean energy in China and sport utility vehicles in the United States. He now covers primarily business and economic news in China and Asia.

What does the Hong Kong bureau of the New York Times do?

The New York Times bureau in Hong Kong is tiny: a long-time local news assistant and me. In addition to serving as Hong Kong bureau chief, I carry a second title that is more indicative of my actual responsibilities: senior writer for Asian economics and business. My title as Hong Kong bureau chief only means that I am the most senior (actually, the only) foreign correspondent for the newspaper in Hong Kong, and should not be taken to mean that I focus primarily on Hong Kong news.

Until 2007, the bureau was responsible primarily for business and economics news in Asia but also for coverage of political news in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In the 1990s, my predecessors mainly covered business and economic news in southeast Asia plus local events before, during and after the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. For many years, it was extremely difficult for anyone in Hong Kong to get a journalism visa to mainland China. That began to change in late 2002, shortly after my arrival in Hong Kong, and the beat began to shift toward covering the Chinese economy.

With growing international interest in China and in Asia in general, The New York Times has considerably expanded its coverage of the country and the region. We have expanded in Beijing from one correspondent to five, all of them covering political, diplomatic and cultural news for the foreign desk. The newspaper made a decision around 2007 that the small bureaus in Hong Kong and Shanghai (one correspondent apiece), would specialize mostly in business and economics news, reporting to the business news desk in New York, while the ever-expanding Beijing bureau would cover all other issues, reporting to the foreign desk.

The coincidental advent of direct flights between Beijing and Taiwan shortly afterwards resulted in the Beijing bureau's taking over most coverage of Taiwan. In 2009, the newspaper opened its first bureau in Mumbai to cover business and economics news in south Asia, so I stopped making trips to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and became even more focused on the Chinese economy.

As for local news in Hong Kong, I still write some stories for the foreign desk, although foreign correspondents from the Beijing bureau come here as well. In addition, I work closely with a separate subsidiary of The New York Times, The International Herald Tribune, which has its own staff of reporters and editors in Hong Kong who also cover the territory for the I.H.T. and for our shared web site, nytimes.com. While most other newspapers in the United States have closed their Hong Kong bureaus, The New York Times has retained a bureau here because this remains a great place to gather news about this part of the world.



Most readers of your newspaper are from the United States, what kinds of news in Hong Kong matter the most to them?

American readers are most interested in news from Hong Kong that gives them an idea of the broader direction of Chinese politics and the Chinese economy. China has become a consuming interest for American readers, as the country has emerged as a political, economic and technological challenger to the post-Cold War dominance of the United States. Hong Kong is in some ways the canary in the coal mine in terms of broader trends in China, and it is also a superb place from which to track developments on the mainland.

At the same time, Hong Kong also has its own unique history, and what happens in Hong Kong is often unrepresentative of trends on the mainland.

The New York Times's headquarter on Eighth Avenue in New York City



How important is it for a newspaper to have foreign correspondents when it can simply buy news from the newswires?

Newswires have traditionally not offered the depth of coverage that newspapers provide. But newswires and newspapers are to some extent converging, mainly because of the rise of the Internet. Newswires are providing more in-depth coverage than before. At the same time, newspapers are providing faster coverage of overseas developments through their web sites.

The New York Times also provides its articles to hundreds of newspapers and magazines around the world, so it is effectively one of the largest news wires as well as one of the largest newspapers.

It's been a decade since you became the chief Hong Kong correspondent for the the New York Times, what are the biggest changes in the media landscape?

The continuous spread of the Internet, most recently to mobile applications, means that news is ever more readily available.

What are the biggest challenges of covering news in China? How do you cover subjects that are as secretive as Foxconn?

Government officials in China give fewer interviews than their counterparts in most countries. Companies are sometimes easier to cover, as they have large numbers of employees, some of whom are always willing to talk.

Amid rising trade tension between China and the US, do you think the New York Times tends to cast China in a negative light?

No, I don't think so. Many Americans are worried about job losses during the economic downturn that started in 2008, and a very large trade deficit with China has played a role in those job losses. So it is important to write about the subject with sensitivity to American fears. But The New York Times has also covered the considerable prosperity that these exports have helped to create in China. Moreover, The New York Times has written extensively about the many causes of economic troubles in the United States that have nothing to do with trade or China, including financial troubles, a low savings rate, uneven quality of education and more.

Part of the trade tensions reflects differences in public attitudes. The Chinese government and public have focused on trade as a path to job creation through exports. Americans have wanted the jobs but have also had a strong appetite for imports, like Lexus cars or European fashions.

On a couple occasions, I have asked audiences in China whether they believe that China would accept a reversal of trade ratios with the United States. Would China be willing to buy \$4 of imports from the United States for each dollar of exports to the United States for many years, instead of the other way around? This would roughly reverse the trade situation that has prevailed for the past decade, and would allow the United States to repay much of its overseas debt to countries like China, contributing to much-needed global rebalancing. I have found scant enthusiasm in China, however, for such a reversal in the bilateral trade relationship, and it is unclear that such a large export-import imbalance is needed in any of the world's major bilateral trade relationships. But I continue to believe that free trade offers a path to greater global economic growth.

POLITICS

Consultation woes

Indigenous and non-indigenous villagers harbour conflicting interests over the government's development plans for NE New Territories



A boisterous crowd of 6,000 people congregated on a heavily guarded grass field under searing heat, and a cacophony of strident voices bellowing through loudspeakers and microphones rapidly engulfed the vast enclosed space.

Amidst fits of violent-jostling and slur-hurling within the crowd was the unceasing chanting of the all-too-familiar slogans: "No demolition or relocation" and "fight till the very end."

That was the third round of public consultation chaired by Secretary for Development Paul Chan Mo-po on the Northeast New Territories New Development Areas Project, which took place in Sheung Shui on September 22.

Initiated by former Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in 1998, the development plan would transform Kwu Tung North, Fanling North, Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling into three new development areas to accommodate a growing population.

The plan's implementation, howev-

Wearing a "martyr's" headband, a concern group member chants slogans through loudspeakers.

er, has been impeded by fierce opposition from non-indigenous villagers from these areas.

Mr Lee, a life-long resident of Kwu Tong North, said: "Our family has been here for over three generations and we have never had to pay rent, which wouldn't be the case if we move to subsidised housing. As an old man with no income, how am I going to do that?"

These non-indigenous villagers, who account for the bulk of the population living in villages under threat from development, migrated to the New Territories from the mainland after the World War II and have been residing and farming land owned by indigenous landlords ever since.

That said, a majority of them are, in fact, squatters who have settled on indigenous land, while the rest are either tenant farmers or those who have procured farmland from indigenous landlords without proper documentation.

With no rights to their land, these non-indigenous farmers will be bearing the full brunt of the massive development project, while developers and indigenous landlords are set to obtain lump-sum payments for selling land to the government.

If history is anything to go by, they are expected to mount a fierce campaign against the development, having witnessed how unyielding Tsoi Yuen Village residents were successful in



Props made by villages accusing the government of having a hidden agenda.

Our family has been here for over three generations and we have never had to pay rent, which wouldn't be the case if we move to subsidized housing. As an old man with no income, how am I going to do that?

—MR LEE, A LIFE-LONG RESIDENT OF KWU TONG NORTH

obtaining considerable compensation from the government.

The way in which the government has been engaging – or not engaging – some of the stakeholders of the development would seem to lend credence to their complaint.

While indigenous landlords have been well informed of the development plan and are looking forward to the fortunes they have been promised, tenant farmers have, until recently, been completely oblivious to it.

The prospect of being forcibly removed from their swellings only dawned on them when they attended a poon choi feast one evening in July, during which an indigenous villager burst into uninhibited joy and proclaimed that the celebratory meal was for the successful sale of land.

Dr Chen Yun-chung, a research assistant professor of sociology at Hong Kong Baptist University and a volunteer with the Land Justice League, a group that fights for residents' rights in urban renewal, said: "The government's current way of consultation is to first consult those in power – those with land and the elites; but it never consult the stakeholders who live there (non-indigenous villagers)."

Another non-indigenous villager from Kwu Tong North, Ms Tse, who declined to give her full name, said: "They (the government) have never consulted us about the plan. All the consultations held so far have been a charade, of which our villagers had no knowledge. All we discussed in yesterday's village council meeting was compensation, when in fact we have never – apart from consultation – wanted any payment."

Dr Chen argued, "We need to start with respect; you have to respect me as a legitimate inhabitant of this place and then talk about development. You don't put a gun to my head and say you have to go or the only thing you can talk about is compensation – then this kind of consultation is meant to be a failure."

Back in the public consultation forum, the repeated exchange of incendiary remarks and fists between avid supporters and staunch opponents of the development plan reflected the gaping polarisation among stakeholder groups consisting of developers, indigenous landlords and tenant farmers.

Mr Liu Hing-hung, the current head of Sheung Shui Village, said: "I agree there's a need for development in every city, every era. But what our villagers are most concerned is that the government has acquired vast tracts of land from us to build subsidised flats for urban dwellers, while our voices of concern have been ignored. Are we not Hong Kong people?"

For all the controversy and antagonism surrounding the development plan, there is as yet no consensus on whether the government urgently needs to develop large swathes of arable land in the rural areas to ease housing problems in the urban areas.

According to a press release by Information Services Department, the Development Bureau had stated in a report to the Legislative Council in July that there were a total of 2,154 hectares of vacant land outside northeastern New Territories – in which Yuen Long and Sha Tin account for 786 of them – that had been earmarked for residential developments.

These figures contradict with the 1,200 hectares mentioned by Secretary Chan during the third public consultation. Critics have argued that without a comprehensive survey of available land, it would be unwise to displace 6,000 villagers from the New Territories.

Mr Thomas Yan Sun-kong, vice-chairman of People Power, a political group, argued: "Land in the New Territories does not only belong to its inhabitants, but also to the entire Hong Kong population. If the government wishes to continue with the implementation of the development project, then it should restart the consultation process and take the general interests of Hong Kong as well as the villagers into account."

HKBU's Dr Chen contended: "Instead of looking at land supply, we should look at the distribution of land and give priority to allocating any available land to building public housing. Then we will talk about the Northeast."

Even if there is an agreement on the need to develop vacant land along the border to meet the demand for housing, Mr Hau Kam-man, a member of the Northern District Council who represents the Sheung Shui Rural Committee, said the government should conduct door-to-door consultation with affected villagers instead of holding public forums. *By Brian Yap*



A banner says the government disregards Hong Kong people's right to plan their own future.



POLITICS

Delegates who do not represent

Most delegates representing Taiwan in the upcoming national congress of the Communist Party of China have never lived on the island

THE Communist Party of China is not known to have ever openly operated in Taiwan. But in the party's 18th National Congress, set to start on November 8, there will definitely be ten delegates representing the party's "branch" on the island, even though most of them have never lived there.

One of the "Taiwan Province" delegates is Mr Liang Guoyang, president of the All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots, or in Chinese shorthand "Tailian". Founded in 1981, Tailian is officially known as a non-governmental organisation but is funded by the Chinese government.

In fact, nine of the ten delegates come from Tailian, most of whom are the second or third generation of Taiwanese who had settled down on the mainland.

Born in Shanghai in 1951, Mr Liang admitted it was not until 1997 that he first visited Taiwan. Between 1998 and 2008, he did not set foot on the island because the Democratic Progressive Party, which championed independence for Taiwan, was in power.

In 2009, the year the deadly hurricane Morakot struck Taiwan, Mr Liang could finally make his second trip to Taiwan with donations from the mainland.

Even though he had been to Taiwan only a handful of times, Mr Liang is confident that he understands the needs of the Taiwanese people.

He noted that Tailian had branches all over the country at the provincial and municipal levels, except in Tibet, and they received about 30,000 visiting Taiwanese compatriots every year.

Tailian also organised trips to places where many Taiwan compatriots lived, he added. In 2010, it sent ten groups to Taiwan and seven in 2011.

"The connection and communication is frequent enough for us to understand well what Taiwan compatriots think, need and want," he said.

Unlike in Taiwan, votes in China are not popular, and he deflected the question of whether he also represented the half of Taiwan's population that was opposed to reunification with the mainland.

He criticised the Taiwanese model of democracy as inefficient. "They simply copied from the US model without careful analysis and assessment," he said.

Ms Liu Yu-ching, a Taiwanese studying at Hong Kong Baptist University, said: "I have no idea who these delegates are. And he (Mr Liang) called us 'Taiwan Province', but we are a country. It's insane to have people holding another country's passports to represent our country."

Mr Chen Ziming, a Chinese dissident who was jailed for 13 years for being the "black hands" behind the student-led pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989, said: "It is raping public opinion. The Party has people who pretend to be Taiwanese, because a real Taiwanese can never tolerate it."

In fact, there was once a real Taiwanese among the CPC's Taiwan delegates in the 1980s.

"There was a real Taiwanese delegate before, but he quit after voting against a couple of motions, because he was prohibited from doing so and from speaking out. He just went to microphone to speak whenever he felt like it," he said.

Indeed, thanks to this "unruly" delegate's conduct, microphones are no longer placed in front of every delegate at meetings.

"In 1980s, there was a microphone in front of every delegate, but now they are all taken away to eliminate the possibility that a delegate might speak," said Mr Chen.

As delegates of Taiwan Province, we were also elected



Born and raised in Shanghai, Liang Guoyang says he represents the will of Taiwanese people

The Chinese Way

How does it work?



What will happen during the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China?

The Party Congress will begin on November 8 and is expected to run for at least a week. Some 2,200 delegates will descend on Beijing to formally anoint China's next generation of leaders.

No one knows for sure the actual happenings in the Congress. But first, obviously, the delegates from across the country will clap. Everything except the opening and closing addresses happens behind closed doors.

According to the Constitution of Communist Party of China, amended and adopted at the 17th CPC National Congress in 2007, the national congress will hear and examine the reports of the Central Committee, the highest authority within the Party, which appoints the General Secretary and the members of the Politburo, Standing Committee and Central Military Commission. Other events include discussion on major issues concerning the Party, revising the Constitution of the Party, and electing the Central Committee and Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. By the way, there will be long and soporific speeches.

Who will be China's next leaders?

There are no presidential polls like these in the United States. But Vice-President Xi Jinping is widely expected to succeed Hu Jintao China's next president and Communist Party chief.

What are the key issues for the next generation of leaders?

Development and stability are two of the most-used words in the party's slogans. With China's economy losing its growth momentum (although it still records a GDP growth at 7.6 percent), the next leaders of China have to find ways to keep its economic powerhouse running and social problems at bay. Also, it may need to decide whether they should keep Bloomberg News and the New York Times's website blocked (so are Facebook, Twitter and Youtube).

How are the delegates selected? What do they do?

Delegates are generated at local congresses and by elections held in all China provinces. But the selection process is largely opaque and varies across regions.

What is the difference between the Communist Party's National Congress and the National People's Congress?

The National People's Congress is commonly known as China's rubber-stamp parliament, where 3,000 members gather in Beijing in March to vote on new legislations. They are always passed.

The Communist Party's National Congress is, as some pundits put it, a long, boring Powerpoint presentation where the attendees cannot raise questions and, perhaps more importantly, are required to clap hard, and long.

The Great Hall of the People, where the National People's Congress convenes.



Place Your
AD Here and
*Be Seen by
People Like
You and Us
and those who
like us, too.*

editors@tyr.hk

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

SOCIETY

War stories no longer told

Surviving WWII vets who fought against the Japanese say young people are not interested in their heroic acts

At the age of 86, Mr Liu Chun-sing looks like any other man in his 80s: lean, diminutive, and thin-haired. His wizened hands are not special either except for his right thumb, which bends backwards and hints at a different story – his past as an anti-Japanese guerrilla during World War II.

"You can never fire a Mauser pistol unless you cock the hammer really hard before squeezing the trigger," Mr Liu said. "My thumb bone is permanently deformed after I repeated the same action countless times."



When he was 15, he dropped out of school in Hong Kong and joined the fight against Japanese troops in Guangdong. A front-line commando during the war, he has lost count of how many times he had been wounded. Beneath his wrinkled skin, fragments of grenade are testimony to his turbulent past.

There were many young Hong Kong fighters like him, but

of those who survived the war, as few as 130 are still alive in Hong Kong. Most of them are well into their 80s and 90s. Like many other elderlies in the city, they face the seemingly inescapable fate of detaching from the fast-walking younger generations.

"They're much too busy," said Mr Liu, the father of four sons and eight grandchildren. Mr Liu lives on his own in an apartment in Sheung Shui and has spent years of Spring Festival alone. His eyes, though, gleamed with pride when he talked about his family.

Eventful his past may seem, Mr Liu has told his children few of his stories. "They show no interest in listening to my stories, nor did I talk much," he said.

Not that he is not keen on telling stories. Serving as the manager of the Old Veterans' House, an organisation that caters to local veterans, he spends much of his free time on writing a memoir.

"My children and grandchildren will know my stories by reading it, after I'm laid to rest," he said.

Occasionally, Mr Liu would drop by at a shoe shop in the neighbourhood to chat with the shopkeeper Ms Tse Chin-chi, sharing his fighting stories – sometimes more than twice.

"It could be kind of boring at times," she says, "but I will not interrupt him, since it's reasonable for an 86-year-old man to behave like this."

Mr Peter Choi, a 91-year-old veteran who served at the British Garrison Forces, is the president of the World War II

Veterans Association. His job is to manage the association's clubhouse, in Causeway Bay, that accepted members of World War II veterans before the membership requirement changed to accept all local veterans.

The number of members of the association had halved in recent years, vice president Mr Leung Hing-chuen said.

"All of the old soldiers are in their 90s. It means that most of them can just be found lying on beds in hospitals and nursing houses," he said.

Mr Leung is one of several middle-aged veterans volunteering at the association who chat with Mr Choi every now and then.

"Living alone, Mr Choi just wants to have someone to talk with," he said. "Most of Mr Choi's

veteran buddies have died over the last 20 years. Obviously, it's easy for him to feel lonely."

A single father who received no formal education, Mr Choi brought up his six children on his own, who are mostly working professionals who earn decent incomes. Still, they are too busy to spend time with their father. In fact, money is rarely a concern for the old veterans; loneliness is.

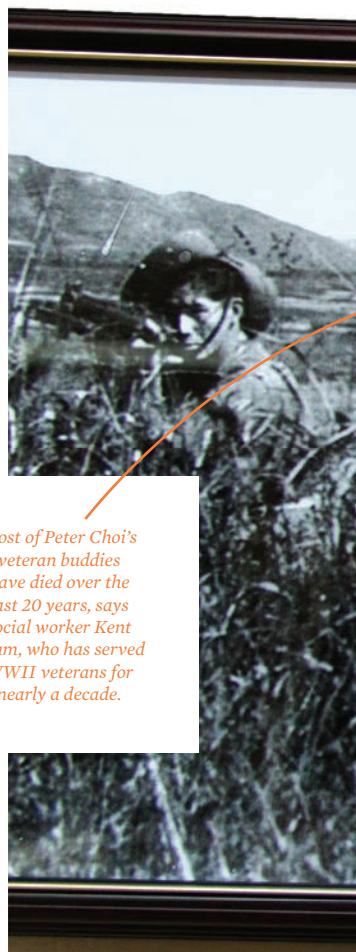
"Thanks to the social welfare system, the old veterans do not lack money," said Mr Kent Shum Wing-kin, a social worker who has served World War II veterans for nearly a decade. "The major problem is that they feel lonely with nobody keeping them company."

Most senior citizens in Hong Kong, he said, face the same issue, with their children being too exhausted at work and spending little time with their folks. There was also a wide generation gap between the elderlies and their children, as

their lifestyles were poles apart, he said.

Mr Leung of the World War II Veterans Association said the future of the organisation was unclear. But he was sure about one thing. "The veterans would like to enjoy the rest of their life peacefully," he said. "And none of them wants war again."

Most of Peter Choi's veteran buddies have died over the last 20 years, says social worker Kent Shum, who has served WWII veterans for nearly a decade.



Mr Liu Chun-sing, one of the last living WWII veterans, says his children are not interested in his past.

By Celine Ge
Edited by Alan Wong



SOCIETY

In and out of foster care

The trauma of being shuffled between their adoptive and birth parents is hard on children who are eventually given up for adoption, say social workers



Mother's Choice, a non-profit organisation founded in 1987, offers counseling services to mothers and mothers-to-be.

PARENTS who consider putting their children up for adoption are urged to make a firm decision earlier to increase the chances of their kids getting mothered and save them from a turbulent childhood.

Social workers say young children who are in and out of foster care while their families are trying to come to a decision may develop psychological problems that deter adoptive parents.

Ms Connie Wat Hong-ying, supervisor of the Adoption Department of Mother's Choice, a charity that helps single mothers, said quite a number of families might send their children to foster care while considering whether to give up their kids.

They would send their children away when they were stressed out by

personal difficulties, but welcome the kids back when their conditions get better, she said.

Ms Wat said it would form a vicious cycle, as the parents would send their children to foster care again when they experienced bad times.

The personal difficulties of these parents were usually a combination of financial problems, drug addiction or being a young mother, she added.

"At first they thought they could put them in the foster care system while they tried to work, saved money and did whatever they could to take care of their children. But several years later, they still couldn't secure a job," said Ms Wat.

She hopes that parents can make up their minds earlier because "it's much easier for a baby to be adopted than an



Adopted children who have developed psychological problems are less likely to be adopted.

older child.”

Children, usually the elder ones, who developed psychological problems when they went in and out of foster care, might have a lower opportunity of being adopted, she said.

Kids with psychological problems, disabilities or other health issues were labeled as having special needs and usually got through a longer pending period than their healthy counterparts, said Ms Wat, who is both an adoptive and birth mother.

Her adoptive daughter, who was once suspected of having a genetic disease, was not being adopted until eight months after the biological parents relinquished their parental rights.

Ms Wat thinks the suspected medical issue was the obstacle in the girl’s adoption process.

But her girl is luckier than others who have experienced the frequent moves and developed psychological problems.

Ms Wat explained that this kind of children would show more behavioural problems during their growth, which might be a consequence of an attachment problem formed early in life.

Attachment refers to the consider-

able closeness a child feels to an authority figure, such as a parent. Children having attachment problems have difficulty connecting to others and managing their own emotions.

“They might challenge their foster parents’ authority by stealing, lying, and other (unruly) behaviour,” she said. “Some foster parents cannot cope with such behavioural problems, and the children then have to move again.”

Mr Jackie Chan Hiu-yeung, a counselling psychologist at the Hong Kong Psychological Counselling Centre, said the frequent change of environment during children’s developmental stage when attachment should form could be “very detrimental”.

Children form attachment when they are about nine months old and will attach to anyone, not necessarily a birth parent. The attachment-forming stage will usually last till they are three years old, according to Mr Chan.

He said children would feel insecure about the world and have trouble trusting other people, which might be of long-term impact, if they failed to form attachment in the early stage.

“Older kids have a very, very hard time to attach to new people. It’s not that

they don’t want to. Actually they would love to,” he said. “But the problem is that, they try, but they can’t trust other people, and they just don’t know why they end up this way.”

Mr Chan suggested parents who move their children in and out of foster care balanced their own will and the benefits of the children.

“I would rather say that for the benefits of the child, they should try to find a more suitable family where the child can attach to a person and form a strong bonding,” he said.

Ms Janette Pepall, an experienced Australian social worker and adoptive mother of five kids, stressed the importance of children growing up in a secure and loving environment.

She said trust would be internalised as part of the infants’ understanding of the world only if they were nurtured in a caring environment free of harm.

“Children who have experienced many moves may not have had the opportunity to receive good quality care,” she said. “They will have internalised that adults are unreliable. They need to remain in control to ensure their safety and that the wider environment is a hostile place.”

By **Vanessa Piao**
Edited by **Johnny Lo**

PEOPLE

Talent + Determination = Success

Gifted youth shows his musical brilliance to the world

WITH glasses and a pull-over shirt, the quiet teenager looks just like any other Form Three school student in Hong Kong. But Harry Chiu Chin-pong was one of the six professional French horn players of the Asian Youth Orchestra, which recruits 100 young Asian musicians every summer for a world tour. Yo-yo Ma, now a well-known cellist, was one of the musicians that played in the orchestra in 1997.

The AYO has a strict age limit for participants - they only allow on young musicians from the age of 17 to 27. But Harry Chiu made it to the stage when he was 14.

Knowing they were well below the eligible age, Harry and his friends wrote to Mr Richard Pontzious, founder and director of the Asian Youth Orchestra last summer, to appeal for an audition. They managed to impress the judging panel so much that the orchestra took Harry despite his young age.

"It all comes down to how technically skilled they are in the instrument. Passion comes through in how well they play," said Mr Pontzious, the head of the judging panel for the summer world tour.

During the world tour, Harry, together with other young musicians, went through three weeks of intensive rehearsal and three weeks of performances on stage. The average time spent per day on rehearsals was nine hours, and each performance had an

audience of 1,600 to 2,000.

After his 13 performances throughout a six-week world tour, Harry, now 15, has decided to turn his passion into a lifelong career. Not only does he dream to perform in the Berliner Philharmonic

with it ever since. "My primary school teacher saw that I might have talent in French horn," said Harry with a cheerful smile. "I believe it was the instrument that chose me." - he did not say this

"French horn is a very difficult instrument, and it's rare that you can find such a young player who is so naturally gifted in playing it," said Mr Pontzious.

Harry's love for music emerged long before his first encounter with French horn. "I heard from my parents that when I was three, only music could put me to sleep," said Harry. "And this is still true today."

By Primary Five, Harry completed the French horn Grade-8 examination of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music as well as the Licentiate of the Trinity College in London. He was invited to perform a French horn solo concert in Denver, United States, at the age of 10. Now he frequently participates in the orchestra of Diocesan Boys' School as well as its brass and wind ensembles.

Despite his early success in the music sector, Harry called himself a perfectionist. He said he would get frustrated when he was not playing as well as expected, but that never deterred him from his passion.

While many see him as the one born with talent, Harry believes himself to be the one born with love for music. "Music is my life, and pressure is my motivation," said Harry, as his arms wrapped around his French horn, and a smile appeared on his face.



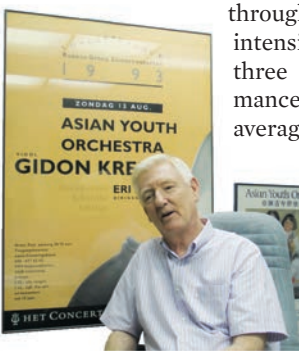
Orchestra as a hornist, Harry also wants to become a professional conductor.

Born and raised as the only child of a businessman father and an accountant mother, Harry has got full support from both parents, although neither of them is in the music industry. "Whatever he likes to play, whether he wants to join a competition or a performance, we support him," said Mrs Chiu.

Harry was first introduced to French horn at the age of seven, and fell in love

Mr Richard Pontzious, founder and artistic director of the Asian Youth Orchestra, says the admission to the orchestra "all comes down to how technically skilled they are in the instrument"

By **Natasha Chan**
Edited by **Coco Cheng**



PEOPLE

I am not a hero

Hunger striker tells of how he turns from being a moderate to an activist

HE is seen by his supporters as a “hero”, but Mr Hon Lin-shan sees himself only as a determined ordinary citizen who is persistent in achieving his goals.

“Once I have made a decision, no one can stop me,” said the retired English teacher who starved himself for 171 hours to protest against the introduction of moral and national education as a school subject.

“My family and friends understand me. They support me instead of saying ‘No,’” he added.

Mr Hon camped out at the Tamar Government Complex for seven consecutive days and nights from September 1 to September 9. But while he is now widely seen as a fighter who is willing to take radical actions to advance his cause, he used to be a moderate. It was not until the year 2000 that he stood up to fight against the government for forcing its will on the people.

What prompted him to act was the government’s decision to require every serving English teacher to pass a proficiency test. With the support of 6,000 teachers, he launched a campaign against the test for posing an extra burden on teachers.

Ten years later, Mr Hon took issue with the government by writing commentaries in different newspaper every day on the issue of the School-based voluntary drug testing. The one-year pilot scheme was launched in 2009 in Tai Po District to tackle rising number of under-aged drug addicts. The test was widely condemned.

Talking about his change from being an “obedient teacher” to an advocate of social movements, Mr Hon laughed and said

he was amazed, but not surprised.

“I am astonished because I think I will continue to be a ‘good teacher’ for the entire life,” Mr Hon said. “I am not surprised because I know how much I love the kids and will protect them to the fullest.”

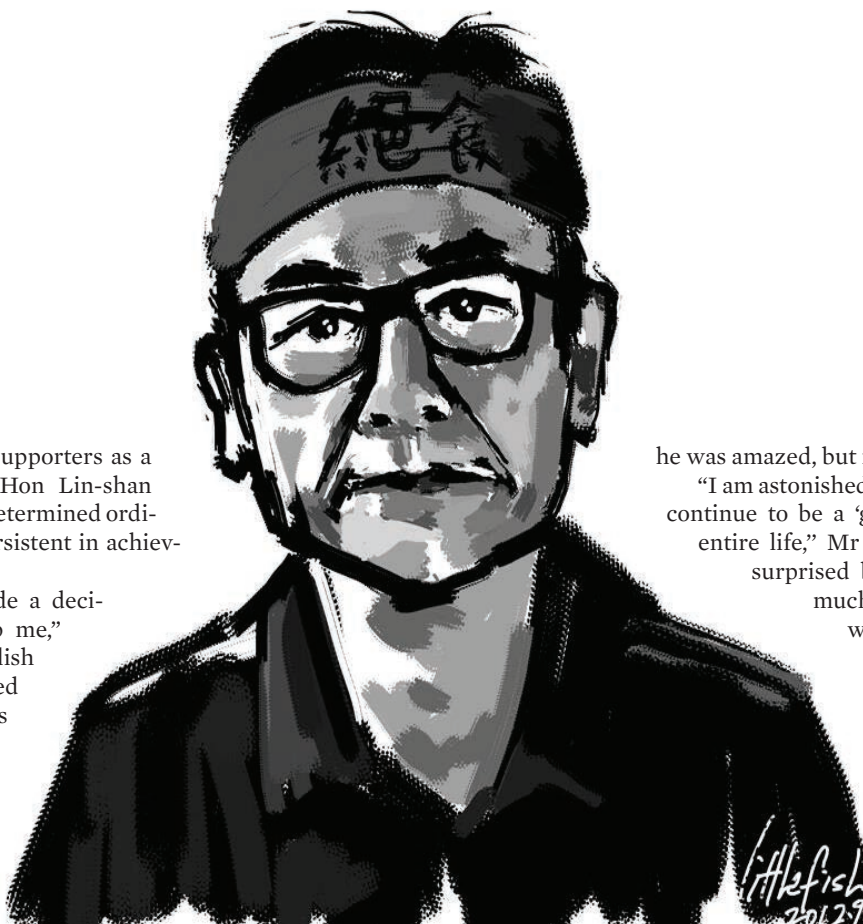
The change in his personality was triggered by the introduction of what he considered to be “despicable” educational policies in the past decade and the change in the political en-

vironment of Hong Kong, forcing him to voice his rage and dissatisfaction on the streets.

Reviewing the time before his transformation, Mr Hon admitted that when he was young, he did not think about standing up for teachers and the public to denounce something that was unfair or unjust.

“I did not pay a lot attention to politics when I was a student and a teacher,” he said, as according to his definition, a ‘good teacher’ should teach thoughtfully, take good care of the students and handle parents’ issues smoothly.

Because of his change in attitude, he is now deemed a “fighter”



Hours Mr Hon's hunger strike went on

171

in the eyes of some of his colleagues, including Mr Wong Hak-lim, vice president of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (HKPTU).

"Certainty and confidence are the words for him," Mr Wong said. "He will always be the first to stand up and the last to leave."

Mr Hon appreciated people's feelings about him as a hero or fighter, but noted that he did not believe in heroism.

"If a society needs a hero, it would be tragic," he said. "We need people to speak out loud, not a hero to save us." He believed that if citizens were willing to express what they really thought was wrong, everyone could be a hero that leads the crowd to move towards the right direction.

He added that a mass rally was, however, a way of resisting unscrupulous policies proposed by the bureaucracy and striving for righteousness.

Considering himself as persistent, Mr Hon joked that he would only show his steadfastness when something big happened. "When I started the protest (against the language test), the union did not act," he said.

"It was completely nonsense and disrespectful to the proficiency of teachers. As a professional teacher, I should stand up," he said.

The campaign failed eventually, but it did not dampen Mr. Hon's passion about the issue.

"Some parents told me that 'real gold fears no fire'," he said. "They said that if a teacher is qualified, he or she should be able to pass the test."

W e need people to speak out loud, not a hero to save us.

—MR HON LIN-SHAN, MEMBER OF THE HONG KONG PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS' UNION

"I can say I am the best English teacher in my school at the moment. Real gold does not need to be burnt to prove its authenticity," he added.

Mr Hon joined the HKPTU after fighting against the proficiency test and union membership has imbued the second half of his working life with lots of social activities. His is a typical case of "turbulent times turning ordinary people into heroes."

"I always tell my students to do the right thing. Think of yourself as a member of society, and what you can do to create a better world," Mr Hon said. "Work conscientiously and you will never regret."

He encourages youngsters to develop their individuality, critical thinking skills and way of living healthily.

"Don't blindly believe in my words or that of any others. Think twice before you decide to do anything."

By **Lawrence Mak**
Edited by **Alvina Hung**

*Retired teacher
Mr Hon Lin-shan
encourages
youngsters
to develop a
critical mind.*



ENVIRONMENT

Food for thought

Local group takes the lead to lower food waste, but more should be done, it says

**Daily food waste
in Hong Kong:
3,200 tonnes**



**Volume of food
waste doubled in
the last five years**



HEAVY traffic roared past the Yau Ma Tei wholesale fruit market, where the air was filled with the scent of a mixture of fruit. In the middle of two busy traffic lanes under the sizzling hot sun, a perfectly-round-shaped watermelon and a bag of mangoes lay still on the waist-high cement road divide.

From one side of the divide, a middle-aged woman gazed at bags of mangoes lying on the pavement on the other side of the road. She crossed the road, carefully negotiating her way through two lanes of traffic, only to find that the mangoes were rotten.

A middle-aged woman, standing at the opposite side of the road, gazed at those greenish and yellowish fruits. Alertly passed the traffic lane and cautiously picked up the fruit waste, she only found that the whole bag of mangos were rotten.

“Obviously we can’t use them as garbage enzyme because they are all de-

cayed and darkened,” said the volunteer from Woofer Ten, a local non-governmental organisation that has been picking dumped fruit for recycling.

The project, called “Yau Ma Tei Leftover Guide”, is co-organised by Woofer Ten and visual arts students from Hong Kong Baptist University. It enables participants to engage in the actual process of recycling food by collecting dumped fruit and using them to produce garbage enzymes as organic household cleansers.

Ms Li Sze-ming, a visual arts student at HKBU, appreciated the green groups’ efforts to save edible food waste, regarding it as an act of “respect for the value of each individual”.

“At least the dumped food goes to the hands of the people in need in the community rather than to the landfills,” the art student said.

According to the Environmental Protection Department, Hong Kong generates about 3,200 tonnes of food



Participants of the project “Yau Ma Tei Leftover Guide” collect dumped fruits and use them to produce organic household cleansers.

waste daily, or 30 per cent of all solid wastes. Only one-third of the food waste originates from the commercial and industrial sectors, with the bulk coming from households.

The volume of food waste has doubled in the last five years, even as the remaining capacities of Hong Kong’s three landfills will be exhausted by 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Friends of the Earth, the environmental group, has found that one-third of the 87 tonnes of food waste it analysed on five occasions from February to May this year was edible and could have fed 48,000 families of three.

And according to the research statistics from Friends of the Earth based



on an analysis of food waste on five occasions from February to May this year, one-third is still edible among those 87 tonnes of food waste. This figure is ex-

gy at HKBU, said the food waste problem posed a strain to our environment not only in terms of landfill space, but also global warming and odour pollution.

☒ At least the dumped food goes to the hands of the people in need ... rather than to the land ☒

—MS LI SZE-MING, A VISUAL ARTS STUDENT AT HKBU AND A CO-ORGANISER OF THE PROJECT

pected to feed the mouths of 48, 000 families of three.

Mr Jonathan Wong Woon-chung, professor from the department of Biolo-

Methane, a kind of greenhouse gas generated from decayed food waste, is one of the contributing factors to climate change. Meanwhile, odour from the land-

fills seriously annoys nearby residents.

“If we can reutilise the food waste instead of dumping it in landfills, we probably won’t have those negative environmental impacts,” said Professor Wong.

In fact, four leading supermarket chains, Wellcome, Jusco, CR Vanguard, and ParknShop in Hong Kong have already responded to the government’s request to donate 29 tonnes of edible food waste to charitable organisations.

Ms Celia Fung Sze-lai, environmental affairs officer of Friends of the Earth, said there was a growing consensus from all walks of lives in Hong Kong about garbage fees. “The government should impose mandatory garbage disposal fees on both households and commercial and industrial sectors without delay,” he said.

Ms Fung also called for the government’s initiative to “adjust the existing legal liabilities for food stores so as to encourage them to distribute surplus food.”

By **Ruby Leung**
Edited by **Sophia Fu**

LIFESTYLE

Barefoot running shoes take on conventional trainers

Experts cast doubt on new footwear's advantage, while users praise its performance

IT might sound like an oxymoron, but barefoot running shoes are gaining traction in the city, or at least in the production plants of sports brands that are busy marketing these minimalist sports shoes that give you the feeling of running barefoot.

The likes of Nike, Adidas and New Balance are making these barefoot running shoes that often feature a light, thin sole and minimal protection of runners' feet, often with claims that they are more "natural" and "high-performance" than conventional shoes.

"I feel like I run faster in barefoot shoes as I can feel the ground better and lift my legs faster," said Mr Wong Yung-chu, second runner up in the 10-kilometre Men's Junior Challenge in Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2010.

While the runner's endorsement of these shoes seem to align with the brands' marketing claims, some experts have warned that the efficacy of barefoot running shoes is unproven.

Dr Louie Hung-tak, associate professor at the Department of Physical Education, Hong Kong Baptist University, said there was no proof that showed one could run faster in barefoot shoes albeit they have a lower energy cost than cushioning shoes.

In June 2012, studies presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine show that while barefoot shoes may increase runners' speed, it may also mean "a greater risk of injury, causing strain in muscles and tendons".

While sports brands are promoting how barefoot running shoes prevent injuries, Dr Louie refuted, "potential risks may appear when people wear barefoot shoes with little cushioning as they are not really barefoot. And if they do not change their way of running, their heels would get hurt easily."

"People who promote barefoot running and claim that running with shoes

would change the shape of people's foot have forgotten the theory of evolution," Dr Louie added.

Human beings nowadays wear shoes to protect their foot and shoes are therefore made with thicker heels as shock absorbers. According to Dr Louie, due to this common characteristic of shoes, muscles used when running with shoes are different from that of running without shoes or with barefoot shoes.

"People tend to land on the fore-foot when running barefoot while they land on their heels habitually when running with shoes," explained Mr Law Hiu-fai, a prosthetist and orthotist consultant.

Mr Law said the biggest difference between traditional trainers and barefoot shoes was that the former had a thicker heel but soles of the latter shared the same thickness and were rather thin.

Those thin soles provided inadequate support for the arches and had bad shock proofing, Mr Law added.

Though the product is heavily criticized by experts, a barefoot shoes enthusiast begs to differ.

"I've been wearing barefoot shoes for four years and I have never got injured; yet, when I shifted to wear tradi-



Mr Wong Yung-chu, a junior competitive runner, says barefoot running shoes allow him to run faster.



Mr Law Hiu-fai, a prosthetist and orthotist consultant, says barefoot running shoes may cause foot injuries if runners' muscles and brains fail to adapt.



tional trainers, my arch and heels got hurt and ache as they are too thick and hard,” said Mr Mak Ka-wing, associate student of Health and Physical Education, The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

“Barefoot shoes are really light, thin, and fit,” added Mr Mak.

A slow adaptation phase is of utmost importance for the muscles and brain, which is the commander of the limbs, to get used to the new running style in order to avoid injuries, according to Mr Law and Dr Louie.

As one gets used to wearing shoes with a completely flat sole during an adaptation period, one gradually increases his running speed.

Mr Law said marketing campaigns had emphasized the benefits of barefoot running, including strengthening the leg muscles and reducing injuries.

But as they failed to remind users of the importance of an adaptation period, people wearing these shoes may suffer from shin splints, Achilles tendinitis and plantar fasciitis, he said.

A public relations officer of the sport brand New Balance, one of the companies selling barefoot shoes, who declined to be named, emphasised that they did warn their customers in writing to wear their barefoot running shoes with an adaptation period as the soles were different from traditional trainers.

“We also made use of promotion

✘ And we never claim that we can improve the running performance of users. ✘

—A PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER OF NEW BALANCE

materials, such as Facebook, to tell people to train slowly in our barefoot running shoes instead of doing a huge amount of exercise at once,” the officer added. “And we never claim that we can improve the running performance of users.”

New Balance barefoot running shoes are made of soles from Vibram the sole manufacturer which has been sued in a class action lawsuit in America over ‘deceptive health claims’ associated with the sale of the series FiveFingers.

The representative made no response to this case, but stated that so far there were no reports showing people got injured by wearing their barefoot running shoes in Hong Kong.

If one wants to have more protection for their feet, the company spokesmen

the MINIMUS running shoes could help prevent sports injuries by correcting runners’ ways of running.

Talking about minimalist shoes which provide people with barefoot running experiences, Mr Law said those shoes were not suitable for runners who did long-distance running as the shoes were too soft to give enough support for users’ feet, and thus their legs might get tired and ache easily.

Dr Louie agreed with Mr Law that barefoot shoes were just a gimmick. “Sports is a kind of culture, and people are following changes in the culture,” said Dr Louie.

“I see no big difference between plimsoll shoes and barefoot trainers except that the latter look cooler than the former,” said Mr Wong.

By **Jessica Lee**
 Edited by **Joyce Cheung**



MEET THE LOSERS



By **Song Cheng, Cleo Tse and Katheleen Wong**
Edited by **Jim Wong, Dennis Lee and Helen Yu**

Starry Lee Wai-king's urgent call for support may have contributed to Lau Kong-wah's defeat, say critics

民建聯
DAB

新社會聯盟
NTAS

成功
當選

莊元荃

Chong Yuen Tung, Kenny
西貢區議員

黃冰芬

Wong Ping Fan, Iris
中大社工碩士生
社區主任

李世榮

Li Sai Wing, Stanley
沙田區議員

A Nasty Surprise

HOURS AFTER THE LEGISLATIVE Council election results became known, a high-spirited crowd gathered outside Mr Lau Kong-wah's district council office in Sha Tin to "celebrate" his unexpected defeat. Young men and women arrived with snacks and cold beer, sang joyful tunes and partied as if he was the victor, though the sporadic profanity in the evening air clearly suggested otherwise.

Indeed, the vice-chairman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) has been greeted with a dramatic outpour of mockery from his opponents, as he tries to sort out his next moves to keep himself afloat in the fast-changing political landscape.

It is not just his pro-government stance as a DAB heavyweight, but his previous association with the pro-democracy camp,

區議會（第二）功能界別候選人

劉江華

選舉廣告 天茂實業

謝

名謝支持!

帆

婚姻與家庭
治療碩士
Elizabeth Quat (EQ)

十大傑出青年

李

李家良
Li Ka Leung, Philip
西貢區議員

支

持

鍾佩蘭
Tung Kin Lan, Kelly
註冊社工
沙田區議員

地址：新界沙田大圍道42/44號嘉寶樓1樓A及B室
電話：2606 6900
電郵：shatin@dab.org.hk

[http://w](http://www.shatin@dab.org.hk)

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that has made Mr Lau so unwelcome by his detractors. Back in 1989, he was a co-founder of the United Democrats of Hong Kong, a pro-democracy group that was the forerunner of the Democratic Party. But he later quit the group and joined the DAB, becoming its vice-chairman in 2005.

Chinese University associate professor Ma Ngok said Mr Lau's decision to cross the political divide to join the other side contributed to the hostility towards him among some young people, who might despise him for being "disloyal" and "untrustworthy".

However, Mr Lau rejected the notion and said his past had enabled him to see both sides of the coin.

might have contributed to his defeat.

The party-list proportional representation system used in the 2012 LegCo election requires that voters vote for a party's list of candidates as a whole. To win a seat, the top candidate on any list has to secure a threshold number of votes, calculated by dividing the number of votes cast across all lists by the number of seats to be filled.

The system, Prof Ma said, made it necessary but difficult for a large political party, like the DAB, to assess the situation and devise tactics to allocate its supporters' votes. As a result, Ms Starry Lee Wai-king, Mr Lau's junior colleague, might have inadvertently

steered the so-called "iron votes" of loyal DAB supporters to her with her call for support.

"Everyone thought he'd have no problem winning," DAB party chairman Mr Tam Yiu-chung said, adding that voters might

have accidentally hampered Mr Lau's chances by voting for weaker DAB candidates out of sympathy.

Despite Mr Lau's defeat, DAB was a big winner in the election, taking 13 of the 70 seats in the assembly, making it the party with the largest number of seats. "Even though I failed to get that extra seat for the party, I'm nonetheless satisfied with the result," he said.

While Mr Lau may find it easy enough to laugh off the plethora of YouTube parodies and hateful comments, his nearly 200,000 supporters, having seen the Beijing-loyalist in office for 15 years, are not so prepared for his departure from LegCo.

"I often see neighbours that feel sorry for me crying in front of me, saying they cannot accept the election result," Mr Lau said. "And I'll have to cheer them up, sometimes by promising I'll be back in four years."

In fact, Mr Lau said he had not made up his mind whether to run in the next LegCo election. "I promised to run again in order to comfort my supporters," he said.

Rumour has it that Mr Lau would become DAB chief, though he said the party chairman should also be a legislator and he would instead focus on mentoring the party's novice members to prepare for the DAB's future.

By now, the "celebratory" parties outside his office are well over and Mr Lau has resumed his duties as a Sha Tin District Councillor. He hopes that his younger peers who have made it to LegCo would seize the opportunity to work heartily for the people, and that his supporters would be "more mature" in the future.

Everyone thought he would have no problem winning

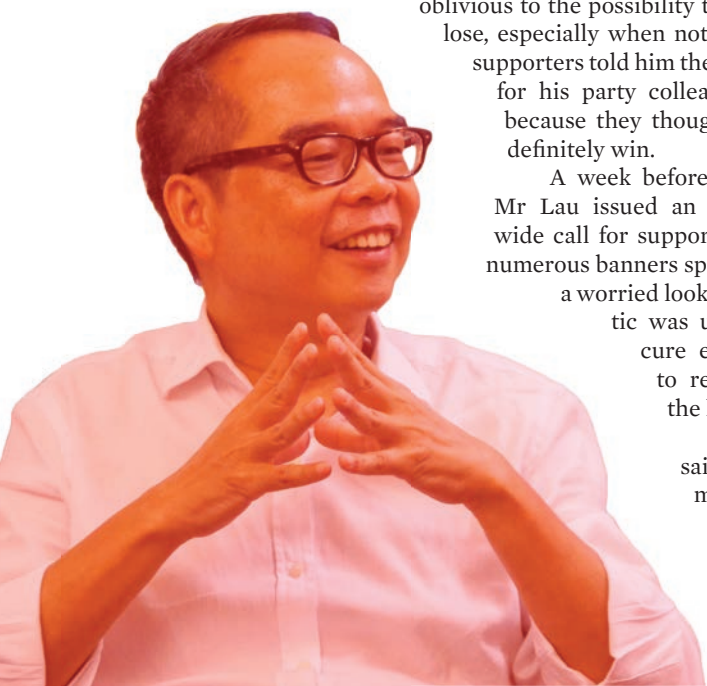
"Maybe I need to soften the way I deliver my message, but I will always stand firm on my stance," he said, adding that he considered himself an icon among his party colleagues for having a "clear-cut opinion and stance."

But the icon has fallen in September's LegCo election, when his nearly 199,732 votes placed him sixth among the seven candidates for the district council (second) functional constituency, losing narrowly to Democratic Party chairman Albert Ho Chun-yan, whose 228,840 votes snatched him the last seat of the five.

The veteran politician said he was not oblivious to the possibility that he might lose, especially when not a few of his supporters told him they would vote for his party colleagues instead because they thought he would definitely win.

A week before polling day, Mr Lau issued an urgent, city-wide call for support by hanging numerous banners sporting him in a worried look. But the tactic was unable to secure enough votes to return him to the legislature.

Prof Ma said the party's misjudgment and the electoral system



Against All Odds

Why three independent candidates joined a fight they had no chance of winning at all





“I want to break the monopolisation of political parties,” said Miss Pamela Peck, who is proud to have got more than 60,000 votes.



Mr Pong Yat-ming joined his campaign against received by the public.

T many politicians, losing an election is akin to the end of their political career and a failure they would never want to remember. But for three independent candidates in the LegCo election, they are proud of their defeat for it has made an impact on the election culture in Hong Kong.

“This is one of the most unfair elections in the world,” independent candidate Miss Pamela Peck Wan-kam, 68, said.

“I want to break the monopolisation of political parties,” the outspoken former radio presenter said. “Even though I do not have a large support team, I still man-

aged to garner more than 60,000 votes.”

“If I had started my promotional campaign earlier and in a larger scale, I would have had even more votes,” she added.

Despite coming in last in the District Council (second) functional constituency election, Miss Peck maintains that she has already proven her point and broken the dominance of political parties. She describes her defeat as a personal victory, which proves that candidates without any backing of political parties can still stand out.

While Miss Peck sees herself as a victor, she is worried about the democratic future of Hong Kong’s younger generations.

“One of the reasons pan-democratic parties met their Waterloo was they didn’t give young people the chance to

step up to the plate,” said a concerned Miss Peck. “Pro-government parties have done a better job in this regard.”

Similar to Miss Peck, 39-year-old Mr Pong Yat-ming also wanted to prove his own point in the elections.

“It seems to me that elections nowadays are overly focused on verbally abusing and criticising other candidates rather than introducing your own views to the public,” Mr Pong said. “There are no constructive discussions in the elections these days.”

Mr Pong, a candidate from the New Territories East constituency, joined the elections in a bid to extend his signature “anti-developer hegemony” campaign.

Even though he did not manage to get a seat in LegCo, Mr Pong was surprised that he somehow managed to get 6,031 votes, calling it a “semi-miracle”.



the election to see how property hegemony is
He lost by getting only
6,031 votes.



"I thought I would get at least a thousand votes," said
Mr Ho Kar-tai, the candidate who got the least number
of votes - 343.

"This was quite a sudden decision," Mr Pong said. "Friends suggested that I should participate in the election to test whether my campaign is well received by the society."

For the time being, his campaign looks set to continue, but the same cannot be said of his political career.

"My friends are asking me to join the next elections," said Mr Pong. "But I'm still not sure if I would go for it."

While Mr Pong seeks to fight against property hegemony, 48-year-old Mr Ho Kar-tai, also known as "Whatever Man", is trying to protect a core value that he believes Hong Kong is gradually losing - freedom of speech.

"Hong Kong people don't realise that the government is reducing our freedom of speech bit by bit because they're

too preoccupied by other problems," Mr Ho said. "Someone has to do something about this because freedom of speech is our ultimate asset."

However, he concedes that his focus does not really match Hong Kong people's wishes.

"It might be one of the reasons I lost, since people care more about housing policies and national education."

Mr Ho, like Mr Pong, participated in the elections in the hope of spreading his own ideas to the people. But unlike other independent candidates, he was left bitterly disappointed by the results.

"I thought people would have voted based on candidates' achievements such as how much they have done for society," said Mr Ho.

He says his defeat may also have to do with the unfair electoral rules, especially in so far as they impact on independent candidates. "If every candidate had the same budget for campaigning, I don't think I would have lost," Mr Ho said.

"Results under the current system is heavily dependent on campaigning," he added. "What about those who have no resources to promote themselves?"

In the meantime, Mr Ho expresses his desire to keep a low profile, admitting that the elections had taken a toll on him and were the biggest lesson in his life.

"I was too silly and naive," Mr Ho laughingly said. "I thought I would get at least a thousand votes."

Divided they fall

A look at the pan-democrats' utter defeat in LegCo poll

T

he pro-democracy political parties will have to cooperate more in future elections if they want to win more seats, the head of the largest pro-Beijing political party and the pan-democrat's biggest rival has said.

Mr Tam Yiu-chung, chairman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, was commenting on the outcome of September's Legislative Council election.

In the election, the pan-democrats managed to win only 18 out of 35 seats in the geographical constituencies and three of the five so-called "super seats" in the new district council (second) functional constituency.

Including the seats they won in the traditional trade-based functional con-

stituencies, the pan-democrats snatched 27 seats in the 70-member council, compared with 43 by the pro-establishment camp.

Among the pan-democrats, the Democratic Party is seen as the biggest loser as it clinched only six seats, of which two were super seats, against eight in the 2008 election.

According to a system of proportional representation introduced in 1998, a candidate who is able to clinch a minimum number of ballots above a threshold is elected.

The system has fostered a so-called vote-splitting strategy among candidates in the same political camp. Instead of putting all the party's candidates under one ticket, they run under different tickets and ask their supporters to allocate their votes accordingly.

However, with little coordination over how votes are to be allocated, the strategy sometimes backfires, with even popular candidates failing to get elected.

In this year's election, votes for the Civic Party and the radical wings of the pan-democratic camp, including People Power and League of Social Democrats, were around 255,000 and 264,000 respectively, compared to 247,000 for the Democratic Party.

Were these votes cast evenly among the parties' candidates, more of them would have been elected.

Mr Tam said the Civic Party election

strategy was "too ambitious", leading to setbacks for the Democratic Party, as many voters cast their ballots in favour of the former.

The Civic Party's decision to put incumbents Ms Tanya Chan Suk-chong and Ms Audrey Eu Yuet-mee as the second candidate on their respective electoral tickets on Hong Kong Island and New Territories West had led to a "waste of votes", he said.

As things turned out, while their lesser known colleagues placed first on the tickets were elected, the number of votes the tickets received were not enough to return them to the council.

Mr Tam saw a lack of co-ordination and poor vote-splitting among the pan-





Albert Ho Chun-yan resigns as the Chairman of the Democratic Party for what he describes as the party's "serious failure" in the election.

democrats as the main cause of their defeat in the election.

Mr Albert Ho Chun-yan, who resigned as chairman of the Democratic Party to take responsibility for its poor performance in the election, said the Civic Party, especially Ms Audrey Eu's electoral ticket, had drawn many votes from among his party's supporters, causing his party's core members Mr Lee Wing-tat and Ms Chan Shu-ying to lose by less than 1,000 and 3,000 votes respectively.

Mr Ho admitted that vote-splitting was difficult to implement this year as many candidates tried to appeal for so-called sympathy votes.

"Candidates like Mr James To Kun-sun who ran for the district council (second) functional constituency enlisted support from newspapers and drained away the votes of other candidates," said Mr Ho, without making it clear if there was infighting among party members.

Chinese University professor of political science Ma Ngok said vote-splitting in the Legislative Council election put large political parties like the Democratic Party at a disadvantage while sustaining political diversity.

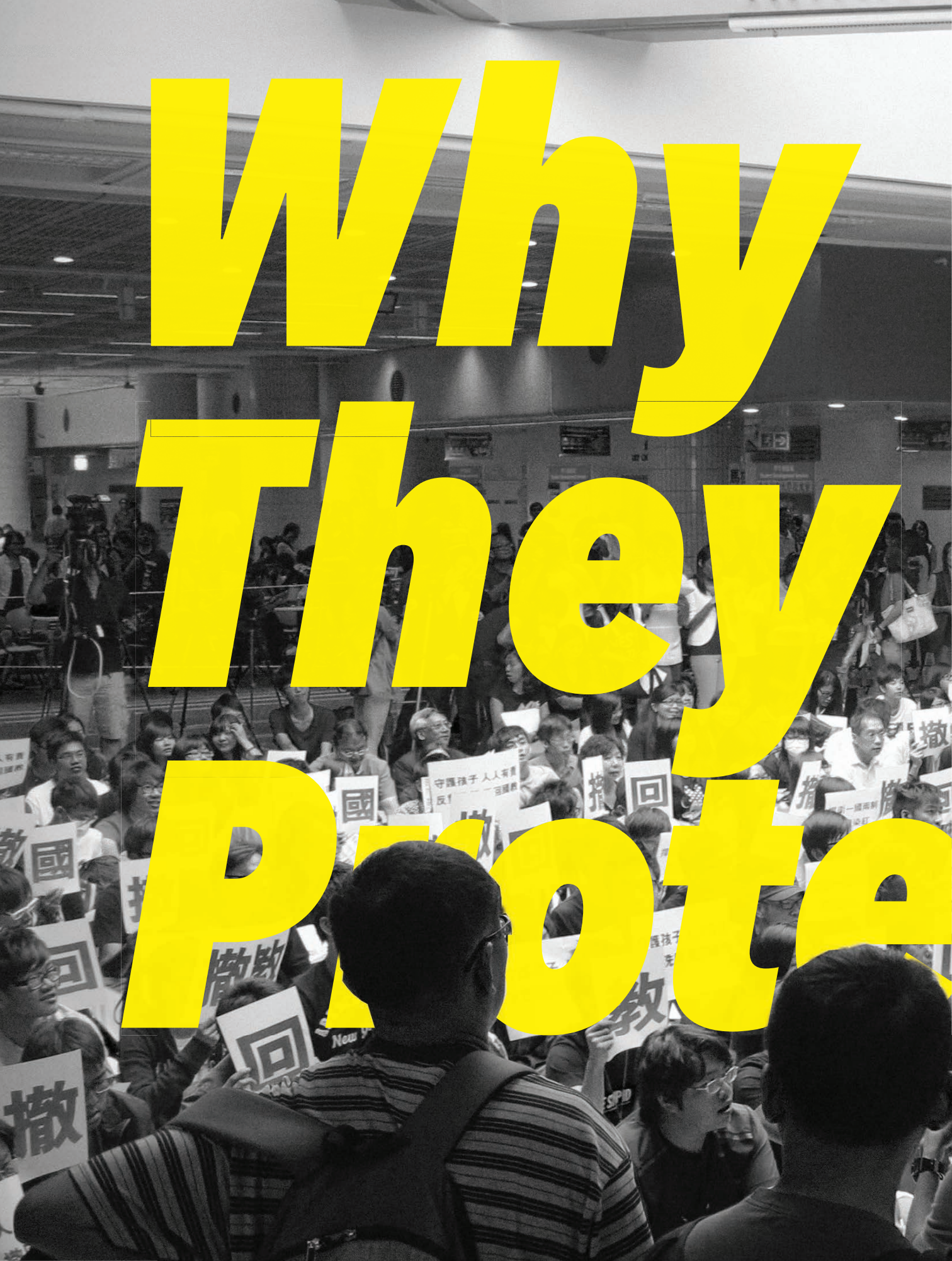
"The number of pan-democratic supporters is quite rigid, so non-main-

stream democratic parties have to stand out to compete for votes," Prof Ma said.

He added that the pan-democratic candidates who scrambled for seats by increasing the number of electoral tickets to eight in order to secure the five seats in the New Territories West constituencies were "wasting votes".

Regarding the lack of coordination in the pan-democratic camp, Prof Ma said there were no reasons to get them united when the number of elected seats in the Legislative Council had increased.

"Different pan-democratic parties have different ideologies – and that is why they are separate," he said.



Why They Protest



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By Eunice Leung, Ching Liu and Catherine Lim
Edited by Abigail Khoo, Peyton Guan and Jackie Yin

NATIONAL EDUCATION

More than half of university students have never read the curriculum guidelines

OVER 50 per cent of university students have not read the “China Model” handbook or the curriculum guidelines, a survey conducted by The Young Reporter has found.

The survey, carried out in September, gathered 386 responses from students of seven of Hong Kong’s universities.

Christy Leung, a student from City University of Hong Kong who joined a rally on campus, said she did not read any of the subject’s teaching materials or curriculum guidelines.

“I don’t know how to get these information. I’ve only read something about this subject on Facebook,” she said.

She said she attended the rally because she distrusted the government, which should have extended the public consultation period before implementing the subject.

Chan Hiu-tung, another City University student who joined the rally, admitted not having read the curriculum

guideline before going to the protest.

She protested anyway because she was dissatisfied with the government introducing the subject without listening to the public.

The survey also found about 40 per cent of the students have attended protests against national education.

Among them, about 84 per cent were dissatisfied with the national education curriculum, 52 per cent were dissatisfied with the government, 23 per cent participated because of peer influence and 11 per cent were influenced by the media.

It’s not just about national education

ALTHOUGH students have remained in the spotlight and have been praised for their perseverance and courage, the success of the youth-led campaigns is hard to define.

According to Mr Lau Siu-lun, a lecturer at the Department of Sociology of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the core value of social movement was negotiation and striking a deal, yet it has now turned into an all-or-nothing campaign.

“The government has already given the choice to schools and let them decide whether to implement national education or not, but it still could not satisfy the protesters’ demands and the protest is never-ending,” Mr Lau said.

Mr Leung Hon-chu, Principle Lecturer in Sociology of Hong Kong Baptist University, said protests nowadays were different from decades ago. He said people used to protest against the terror of communism as seen by a series of destructive events in Mainland, but now the target was the central government.

“Now people are protesting against a government that doesn’t need to be responsible for its own people,” said Mr Leung. He said negative news from the Mainland, like poisoned milk powder and railway accidents, affected people’s impression of the central government, especially among young people.

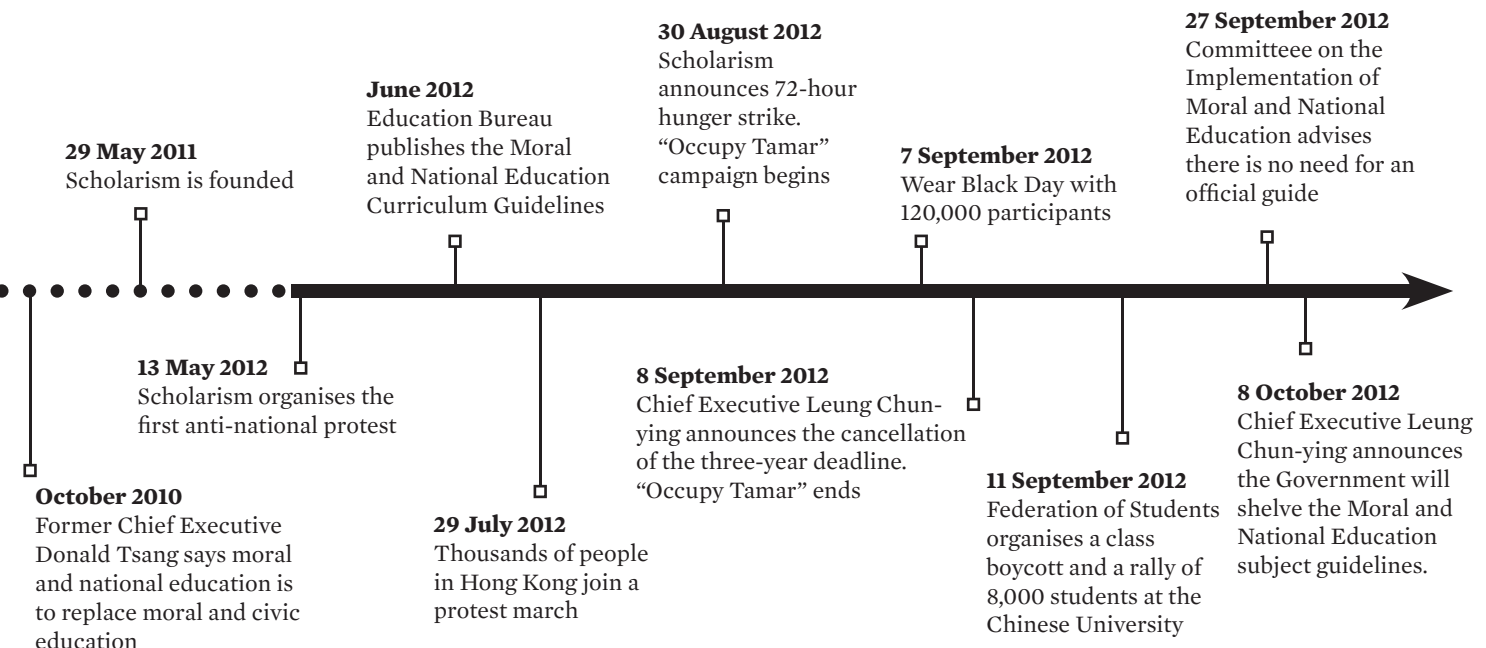
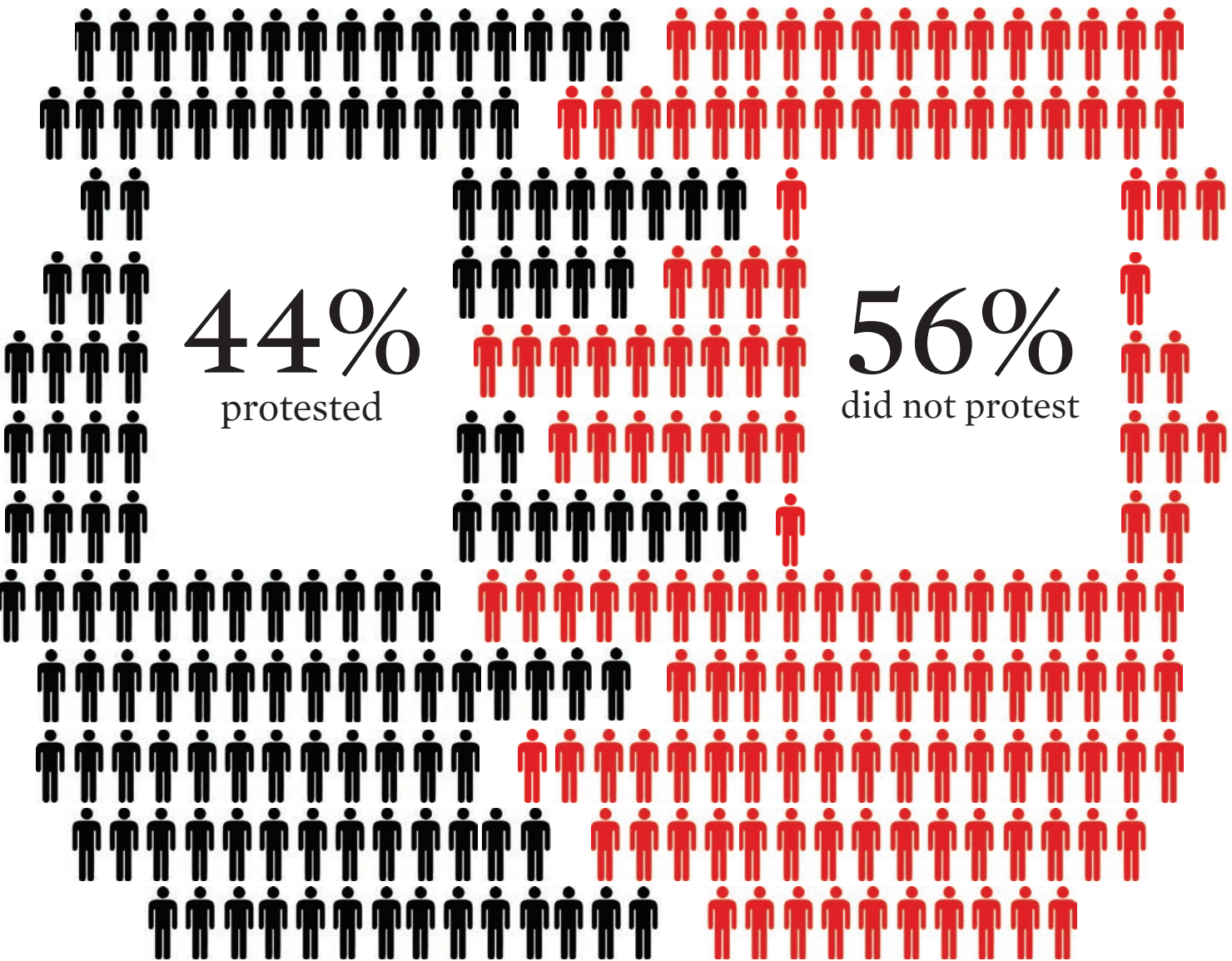
The view is echoed by Professor Steve Guo of the Department of Journalism at Hong Kong Baptist University.

“This is like ripples merging. The protest every year on July 1, rally on June 4, and now anti-national education – they are all about anti-Communist Party and asking for democracy. People go because they don’t like the Chinese government – they don’t need any other reasons,” he said.

University Students against national education

72%





E M A I L

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