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# THE YOUNG REP•RTER *magazine*

December 2014

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**COVER** Illegal fare discounting is common among app users

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JOURNALISM MATTERS



## Letter from the Editor

# THE YOUNG REPORTER magazine

The Pulitzer Prize Winners Workshop held in late October to November was enlightening to The Young Reporter team. This year's theme is on the dilemma between the public's right to know and national security. In this December issue, our Pulitzer specials column features the winners' insights on the technology problems reporters face, and the tear and joy of being a political cartoonist.

Our cover story features the rise of taxi-hiring apps which give discounts to users, looking behind the popularity of this illegal business from the eyes of the users - both drivers and customers.

Next, you will find a wide range of stories on different issues, including a review of the high-school liberal-studies syllabus, problems with household-

medicine disposal and the life stories of a successful business woman and a female car racer.

Following is a feature on the deadly Ebola virus - whether Chinese medicine would make an alternate cure for the disease. After, we introduce to you new forms of arts and leisure activities - the making of miniature books and geocaching. You would not want to miss the stunning photo story of Chungking Mansions and its people - maybe the place holds more than you think!

Please write to us or find us on social media platforms if there are any exciting stories you wish our team explore in the new year. Happy holidays and see you in 2015!

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Cover story of last issue of TYR explores whether the Race Discrimination Ordinance should be covering outlawing discrimination against Mainlanders.

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# One Moment

*The Colour Run, a 5-kilometre paint race originating from the United States, makes its debut in Hong Kong with 16,000 runners dashing through the splash of colours at the AsiaWorld-Expo.*

By **The Young Reporter**

Photo by **Vicky Wan**











SBC  
1F  
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6 FEATURE

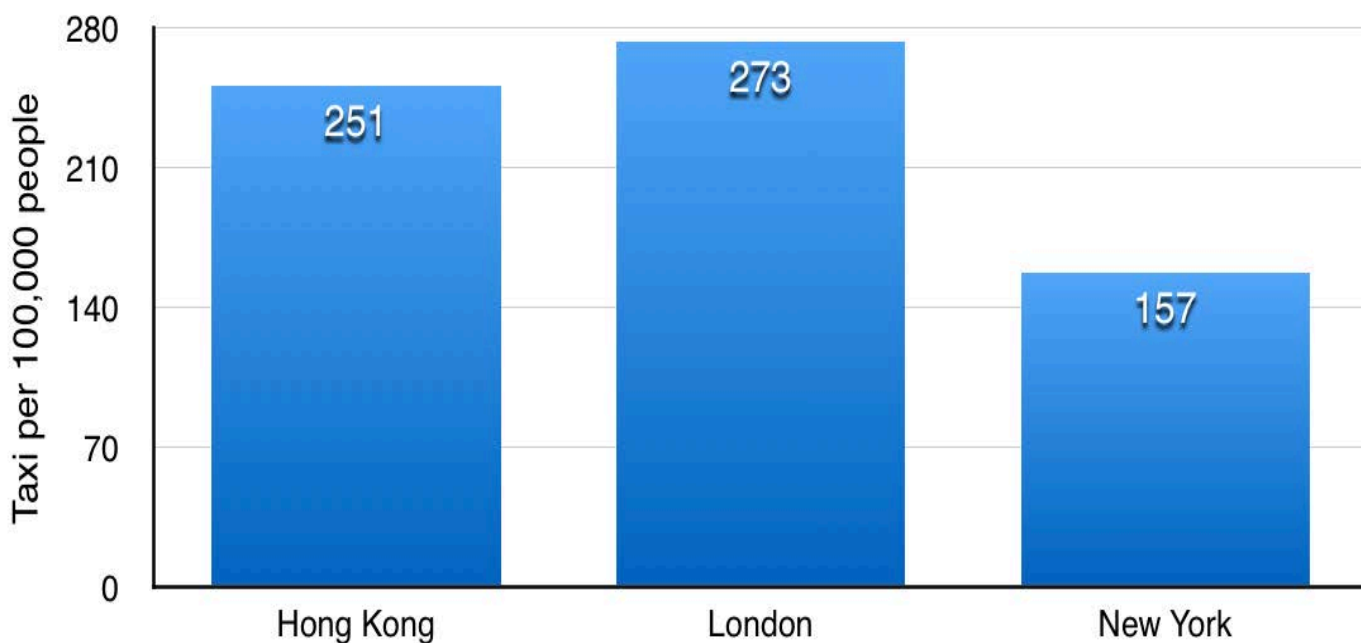


# Taxi Apps Change Market Ecology

*Illegal fare discounting is common  
among app users*



Figure1:No. of taxis per 100,000 people in three international cities



Now you do not need to hail a taxi on the street. Simply by entering your phone number and drop-off destination to the taxi apps in your smart phone, an available taxi will come to you. Because of its convenience and fare discount, this kind of apps is quite popular in Hong Kong – some have recorded 100,000 to 500,000 downloads in the past few months.

Taxi App-HK is the most popular cab-hiring app in town. It ranks second in Google Play free transport category and third in Apple's App Store free travel tier.

Spokesperson of Taxi App-HK, Ken, who refuses to reveal his full name, credited the success to the app's "localised and independent" background.

"Some developers bring the whole model from somewhere else to Hong Kong without making any adjustments," he said. "Other competitors may provide more comprehensive maps, more language options or more glamorous layouts but we know what Hong Kong people want and need."

There are 18,138 taxis in Hong Kong carrying 1 million passengers daily, according to Transport Department's statistics.

Among Hong Kong, London and New York, London

has the highest taxis-per-capita ratio, followed by Hong Kong and New York. Hong Kong, however, has the highest ratio of taxis per square kilometer among the three cities.

It is all about cost and efficiency.

The app processes around 3,000 orders a day. Of the 10,000 registered cab drivers, 2,000 are active users of this app.

It takes as short as 30 seconds for a consumer from order to getting on a cab if there are taxi drivers with the app activated nearby. The app automatically locates the user by GPS. The taxi driver who accepts the order will either phone or text the customer for the waiting time and the exact pick-up location.

As fare discounting is illegal in Hong Kong, it remains an "open secret" that drivers who use this app is very likely to offer a 15 per cent off discount. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and a term of imprisonment of six months.

"Taxi-App HK is only a platform bridging passengers and drivers. What is discussed between them is their own business," Ken said. "Our goal is that when people need a taxi, they would immediately think of Taxi App-HK. Once they use our app, they won't switch to other apps."





*Taxi App HK is the most popular taxi-hiring app in Hong Kong. About 300 people use it daily, according to the developer.*

There are many other taxi-hailing apps available in the app market like GoGo Taxi, Easy Taxi and HKTaxi.

The chairman of Taxi and Public Light Bus Concern Group, Mr Lai Ming-hung, said drivers could benefit from the taxi-booking apps.

“Imagine you have just dropped off passengers. If you have a taxi app, instead of looking for the next client, business opportunities will come to you,” he said, “Discount taxi is a long existing problem. It is all up to the drivers.”

When a driver drops off a passenger in a remote area, the driver may not be able to find a customer. The app serves as a platform for the driver to look for orders nearby, so that it is more likely for drivers to pick up customers before returning to the urban area. This is why Mr Lai calls these drivers as “return trip gangs”.

On the other hand, some taxi drivers are not in favour of taxi-hailing apps.

“I don’t understand why some drivers offer discounts,” said Mr So Ting-bong, a night shift taxi driver who refuses to use taxi-hailing apps.

“The taxi fare structure is unfavourable to them. All drivers should obey the law and charge according to the

taximeter. If not, why do we need the meter rate?”

According to Mr So, in order to determine whether a driver uses the hailing apps, the easiest way is to observe the number of smartphones attached in front of the driving wheel. The more smartphones, the more likely the taxi driver is using multiple taxi-hailing apps to find customers.

Mr Andrew Lee, a full-time taxi driver who has a smartphone placed in front of his driving wheel, echoed Mr So’s view. He said life is tough for taxi drivers who offer discounts especially when they take long-haul orders. He added that long-haul orders such drivers take could be “deficit-ride” if they could not pick up customers on the returning trip.

In 2008, the government launched a public consultation on proposals that could open the way to legal discounting of taxi fares. Yet, the taxi fare discounting problem still remains unsolved.



*People tend to use their smartphones rather than watching the Roadshow.*

#### POLITICS

## Call to tighten monitoring of Roadshow

**B**us passengers and civil society organisations have urged the government to strengthen the monitoring of Roadshow, a multi-media on board service owned and operated by Kowloon Motor Bus Company (KMB).

The channel provides entertainment and news programmes, which are broadcast to about 2.6 million passengers daily since 2000. But there are complaints that Roadshow broadcasts more commercials than the prescribed limit and is a nuisance to passengers who want to travel in a quiet environment.

Under the advertising guidelines issued by the Transport Department, the three major bus companies - KMB, CityBus Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited are not allowed to broadcast more than 20 percent of commercially related content within an hour.

The Transport Department has carried out 10 investigations in 481 buses in 2012 to 2013 and found that only two cases in 2012 did not comply with the advertising guideline.

“Except the two cases, all other buses inspected were found in compliance with the relevant condition. This shows that the bus companies have been making improvements,” Mr Yau Shing-mu, Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing said in a written reply to the Legislative Council last year.

The Transport Department has also received 21 complaints regarding to huge amounts of advertisements in the same period.

But Mr Lo Hon-Man, organiser of the Anti-Coercive Advertising Campaign, a movement which aims at raising public awareness of advertisement, conducted a study in 2012 which findings challenges the official result to find out whether

Roadshow has affected their travel experience.

He found that the percentage of Roadshow’s commercially related content was about 60 to 90, far higher than allowed by the Transport Department.

He had filed about 100 complaints regarding the noise, number and length of the advertisements created by Roadshow to the Transport Department and Office of the Ombudsman in the past four years.

But he was not happy with the official responses: “They (Transport Department) only said they would urge the KMB to check its advertisements.”

The Transport Department oversees the daily operations of Roadshow by reviewing the reports submitted by KMB. The department would only urge the bus operator to improve when it fails to follow the guidelines.





*Most buses in Hong Kong are installed with televisions.*

“I think it’s a bit ridiculous because it sounds like they (Transport Department) are lobbying their own people,” said Mr Lo.

The Young Reporter has interviewed several regular commuters on KMB to find out how whether Roadshow has affected their traveling experience. Most of them said the sound and advertisements from the mobile television were annoying.

Ms Lau, 18, a student who commutes by KMB 45 minutes per day, said Roadshow does not only broadcast business commercials. “I become more aware of laws and regulations in Hong Kong. For instance, last week I learnt about the Competition Ordinance through the Roadshow programme,” she said.

Mrs Wong, 48, a clerk who commutes by KMB twice a week, said the volume of roadshow in some

buses is relatively high and she finds it very unpleasant and noisy. But she said the volume of the shows varies at different time on different buses. She added that sometimes the televisions on the bus are muted throughout the ride.

Mr Lau, 48, a civil servant who commutes by KMB once a month, said the information broadcast in Roadshow is not up-to-date and it appears to help the government promote certain sensitive messages, such as promoting anti-occupy movement through the advertising materials or celebrity talk shows. He suggested Roadshow broadcasts something informative, such as daily news instead of advertising materials.

Mr Lee, 22, a master student, a regular KMB bus commuter who commutes three to four times a week, said that the volume is too loud which intensifies his motion sickness.

He also suggested Roadshow broadcasting something informative instead of advertising materials. He said that the dull and repetitive content in the TV shows lowers his intention to watch Roadshow. He added that he would never watch Roadshow again.

While the government is planning to renew the franchise with the KMB in 2016, Mr Lo said that the government should consult the public before any franchise agreement is signed.

“Consumers pay the bus fare so they should have the expectation of not constantly being bombarded by unwarranted commercials,” said Mr Lo.

POLITICS

## *The scourge of Liberal Studies*

While pro-government lawmakers call to reform Liberal Studies, subject teachers and academia criticise them for not tackling the problems at heart



Colin Lai expresses that political concerns should be left out in the discussion on Liberal Studies



After the release of the Diploma of Secondary Education examination report on Liberal Studies in April, the inter-disciplinary subject is once again a matter of public contention.

Demonstrations in recent years have shown a steady growth in the number of student advocates, most notably in the Occupy Central protests, the North East New Territories New Development Areas and the dock strike. The introduction of Liberal Studies has been suggested by a number of legislative councilors to account for this phenomenon.

Reforms they have called for in light of the subject's first mid-term review in November propose trimming the topic 'rule of law and socio-political participation' in the syllabus, reverting Liberal Studies to an elective and incorporating the concepts of 'One country' and 'Basic Law' to the course. But teachers of Liberal Studies have slammed the attribution and believe these reforms futile.

"Problems exist in society - Liberal Studies simply introduced students to a wide variety of concepts like human rights and democracy," said Mr Cheung Yui-fai, the Education Research Department director of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union and a teacher of Liberal Studies.

"In class, we discuss opinions of different stakeholders to have a

full picture of the issue. After all, it is still up to students' judgment in whether or not to participate in social movements."

Gary Cheung, 15, is a convener of a secondary student social issues concern group, and was one of the 511 protesters arrested in July for an illegal sit-in at Chater Road. He believes that it's not the influence of Liberal Studies, but the government's incompetence that drummed up the number of student advocates.

"How I felt [about the government] at that time was built upon what was really happening and reported in the media rather than [what I learned in] school," said Gary.

Despite the whiplash from teachers and secondary students, members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong met with the Education Bureau (EDB) in October to discuss trimming the content of 'Rule of Law and socio-political participation' from the subject's syllabus.

While most teachers generally accept this amendment, Mr Cheung disagrees that the subject led to the upsurge of young bloods in mass protests and points out that a reduction in the content of the aforementioned topic was not stated during the mid-term review.

Besides scaling down the subject, Mr Cheung believes the inclusion of 'one country' and 'The Basic Law' into the syllabus could revive

the fear of a quasi-Moral, Civic and National Education episode where tens of thousands of young protesters chastised the "brainwashing" curriculum and took to the streets in 2012, resulting to the subject being shelved.

A third idea put forward by pro-government lawmaker Dr Priscilla Leung Mei-fun, convener of the Liberal Studies Education Concern Group was to de-politicize the compulsory subject and to make it an elective course for students instead.

However, legislator Mr Ip Kin-yuen, who represents the education constituency, retorts that it could weaken the foundation of the curriculum and jeopardise the foreign accreditation of the diploma.

After the first mid-term review, the EDB together with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority and the Curriculum Development Council concurred in a similar Liberal Studies examination syllabus and format for the next six years with a slight reduction of certain topics that teachers regard as too difficult for students.

But the Bureau admits that there is still room for improvement. A second consultation will begin in late November and those results are scheduled to release July next year.

## POLITICS

# Household drug disposal problem should be tackled at source: legislator

Prescription and over-the-counter medications are powerful in treatment and prevention of illness, yet the unwanted drugs may cause potential hazards to the ecosystem

Common medications like aspirin are necessities in household medicine cabinets, yet their final destination is often the trash can.

Statistics from Taiwan Pharmacists Association shows that more than 65 per cent of surplus drugs in Taiwan families end in trash cans or toilets.

“Hong Kong is estimated to have a larger percentage for the amount of unwanted drugs disposed improperly by families compared to Taiwan,” said Ms Iris Chang, president of the Hong Kong Academy of Pharmacy.

The Department of Health said

there has not been any official record about the quantity of medicines in domestic waste in the territory without giving reasons.

Ms Chang warns of a potential contamination of food chain due to the large amount of improper disposal of medicines, since pharmaceutical components may concentrate if drugs are directly thrown into the trash can or flushed down the toilet.

Tracing the root cause, Ms Chang said the general practice of the Hospital Authority giving superfluous drugs to patients may be one of the reasons.

The Hospital Authority usually

dispenses four to six months' medicine for elderly or chronic disease patients at one time. However, if patients died or chose to take other drugs, the medicine prescribed would become useless and thus be abandoned. Most of them would then be buried in landfills together with other municipal solid waste.

The government opposes the idea of possible contamination. Secretary for Environment Mr Wong Kam-sing said the unwanted drugs abandoned by citizens will not affect public health nor cause pollutions, since “the quantities of residual medicine and injections generated in

**Professor Joseph Lee Kwok-long, Legislative Councilor from the Constituency of Health Service, believes the problem should be tackled from the root rather than through legislation.**







*Researches have showed that the active pharmaceutical ingredients left in the abandoned drugs could do harm to the environment.*

households are relatively small.”

In order to alleviate the problem, Hong Kong Academy of Pharmacy has launched a scheme to collect unwanted medicine since February, aiming at raising public awareness on proper disposal of unwanted drugs. They have collected drugs from more than 100 people so far.

“Pharmacies or hospitals would hardly accept unwanted drugs as the recycling procedures take human, physical and financial resources,” said Ms Chang “unless there are concrete laws giving strict supervision and guidance.”

Mr Joseph Lee Kwok-long, the Legislative Councilor from the Constituency of Health Service, pointed out another factor worsening the issue, “people in Hong Kong lack knowledge on drugs disposal, and education on rational use of drugs is necessary.”

But he opposes to setting up laws to implement compulsory drugs recycle programme. “‘Recycle’ is not just a word, but an operation process involving logistics and resources distribution which requires the

support of government funds” said Mr Lee, “if the profit of the recycling process is unable to cover the costs, it is meaningless.”

Mr Lee said there has not been any reports indicating a “harmonious harm, rather than a potential risk” of abandoned household drugs to the environment. “Scholars are stealing the spotlight by persuading government to make laws on their ‘maybe’,”

He added that it’s more effective to introduce measures at source to reduce the generation of surplus pharmaceutical materials. “The application of Electronic Health Record Sharing System helps to reduce unnecessary prescriptions. As the medical histories of patients are on record, the phenomenon of overlapping drug dispensation is greatly alleviated.”

Affirming the necessity of a clear set of obligations, Mr Cheng believes that the practice in other countries are good examples for Hong Kong to follow and could help reduce the risk of environmental contamination. “Why do other countries bother

to set up a collecting and recycling system if it is totally useless?” he said.

A number of countries and regions, including the United Kingdom, France, South Korea and Taiwan, have drawn up guidelines on how to throw away the unwanted drugs appropriately,

Collection boxes for expired medicines are set up in pharmacies in South Korea and the drugs are sent to uniform incineration while Taiwan has set up checkpoints for domestic usage of medicines to assist citizens for recycling.

“If there are concrete statistics showing that there are large amount of drugs expired and to be discarded in households, the government should consider setting up special trashcans on streets,” said Mr Lee.

“It would become the matter of garbage classification”, he added, “But Hong Kong people haven’t made the most fundamental classifications like paper, glass and plastic yet.”





*Ms Lizette Smook is working at her office at Sheung Wan, behind her is a pile of low carbon towels.*

Some years ago, when Ms Smook worked for “Next”, a jeans retailer, she started to realize the problem of how manufacturers directly discharged the dyed water and waste fabrics into the river near the factory in Bangladesh.

“I was absolutely shocked and I don’t want to be part of the waste,” Ms Smook said.

Ms Smook is also sick of the frequent use of shortcuts in production because cost is the only concern for many retailers. She thinks it is so irresponsible of them to not care about the environment.

“When we say we are throwing something away, there is no away.

Away is actually to the landfill, away is actually to the ocean,” she added.

Ms Smook, an eco-savvy businesswoman and a veteran in blue technology industry, is keen to change the recycling business in Hong Kong and she is on the track of blue economy development.

From advising the Maxim’s Group to reduce the use of plastic packaging to directing her own company, “InnovAsians”, Ms Smook always leads a healthy and environmental-friendly life.

For example, from time to time, Ms Lizette Smook would spend a whole day at the Luohu Commercial City, one of the most popular shopping

mall in Shenzhen. But unlike many shopaholics, what she is after is not fancy counterfeit clothes or bags bearing the fake labels of luxurious brands, but colourful fabrics.

When she is back to Hong Kong, her next stop is usually to an old Shanghaiese friend, who is also her “private tailor” to help her turn the colourful fabrics she has just bought into clothes that fit her well.

“Blue technology is all about turning wastes into something useful,” she mentioned that retailers and consumers nowadays were producing too much rubbish and had little awareness of making good use of the things they threw away.



PEOPLE

# *Eco-savvy businesswoman supports blue technology development in Hong Kong*

To support local companies that aim at greener business practices, Ms Smook founded “InnovAsians” in 2007. Her company counsels retail corporates and hospital authorities on the application of sustainable technologies in developing and manufacturing eco lifestyle products.

“Scientists struggle to solve the environmental problems by developing green technology but that was palliative. Nothing was really changed,” she added. “Why can’t we take a step back and make use of our own wastes, instead of relentlessly extracting oil to produce plastic, which also brings about toxic products?”

Her company has provided coffee cups, which are made up of bio plastic upcycled by bamboo, for more than 5000 employees in J.P. Morgan Hong Kong, which originally produced 15,000 disposable cups every day.

Having worked and lived in Hong Kong for 18 years, Ms Smook admitted that it was very hard to start a business in Asian countries.

“Language, culture differences... many barriers to get over,” she explained.

She was once cheated by a supplier of bio plastics from Mainland China, which disappeared after receiving her deposit. Luckily, she has some Chinese friends in the legal

profession now, who can give her advice before she makes investment in China.

Despite the crowded living condition and pollution in Hong Kong, Ms Smook never regrets about starting a business in Hong Kong, where to her is a place full of opportunities to meet people from all over the world and collaborate with big companies.

“It is easier to spread the idea of blue economy globally when you’re working with big companies in Hong Kong,” she said.

“It is good to say J.P. Morgan, Starbucks, Maxim’s Group and Ocean Park are my clients, people will trust you and listen to you.”

Apart from taking charge of “InnovAsians”, Ms Smook is also the vice president of the Hong Kong Entrepreneur Club and she loves this post even more than being the CEO of her own company.

She assists young entrepreneurs in Hong Kong to start their businesses, from giving advice to individual business plans to providing platforms for interaction and networking with other business partners.

“I like getting along with young people, and keep them dreaming,” she said. “It is all about experienced entrepreneurs giving back to other upcoming entrepreneurs.”

She mentioned that these young people reminded her of the memory that when she first came to Hong Kong alone with no ideas on how to start a business or whom to seek help from.

Growing up in the countryside of Cape Town, South Africa, Ms Smook loves the open living area and clean air there.

“Boys and girls race along the tree climbing and we build tree houses there,” she said.

Owing to the big difference between the 2 places, it took Ms Smook a while to adapt to the busy lifestyle in Hong Kong but her passion for the local culture makes her stay.

“I can’t describe the feeling when I first stepped out from the Chek Lap Kok Airport. I thought, this is the city where I want to start my business,” she said.

Ms Smook believes that young entrepreneurs are capable of making a change on the living environment while having a successful business.

“Forget about the money market, it is about innovation, it is about carry on dreaming, it is about never giving up, when you really want to make Hong Kong a better place to live,” she concluded.

By **Annie Lau**  
Edited by **Stephen Leung**

PEOPLE

# Female racecar driver shines in motor car racing

Ms Denise Yeung says that women can also be great racecar drivers

**M**s Denise Yeung, one of the very few female racecar drivers in Hong Kong, has been participating in this traditionally male-dominated sport as an amateur racer for five years.

Born to be a car lover and influenced by her father, Ms Yeung has familiarised herself with cars since she was small. She already knew different parts of car and their functions by the age of eight. When she was 16, she went all the way to Canada just for a driving license.

As a speed and excitement enthusiast, Ms Yeung became an amateur racecar driver to complete her life. "I really enjoy the high speed, not just driving on a straight road but turning on circuits," she said. "Most girls are afraid of high speed or the centrifugal force. But I enjoy them instead."

In 2009, Ms Yeung joined a race for fun for the first time and did not expect to win anything. Yet, she came home as a champion.

But she did not devote herself to racing at that time. She chose to focus more on her business.

"Racing costs a lot. The car is quite expensive, let alone the expenses for gas and tuning up the car," she said. One match costs about \$100,000, she added.

It wasn't until Ms Yeung has made progress in her career in a real estate agency and was given a car by her god-brother in 2012 that she started actively racing.

As the minority in the sport, Ms Yeung experienced stereotypes and

discrimination. A male driver crashed into her car in order to stop her taking the lead. Both of them were disqualified.

"They (male racers) think you are weak and cannot tolerate it if you overtake them," Ms Yeung said. "It is embarrassing for them to lose in something that is supposed to be dominated by them."

Similar accidents have happened to Ms Yeung twice. She learnt from the experience and promised to herself not to let it happen again.

"I am playing as tough as they do now. Just to let them know that I am not a pushover!" she said.

But She has overcome physical and emotional challenges and won several big races, including the 2013 Touring Car Series in Asia and The Chinese Cup, in which Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau send representatives to compete.

Ms Yeung's family did not support her racing at first. Yet, after she has explained the safety precautions for drivers to them, they started fully backing her up.

Besides support from family and friends, her fans also motivate her. "Now I have got a bunch of fans who follow every status I post on Facebook," Ms Yeung said.

Now, Ms Yeung is strict to herself and keeps fighting for better. "I will keep racing as long as I can afford it," she said.

By **Kyle Sun**  
Edited by **Alice Wan**







Ms Yeung is not afraid of potential danger brought by racing once she gets all the protection ready.



Ms Yeung represents Hong Kong in The Chinese Cup in November 2014 and wins the champion among four female racers.



## HEALTH &amp; BEAUTY

# Traditional Chinese medicine may offer possible cure for fatal Ebola

## Three plants extracts discovered to inhibit Ebola virus

A local expert in traditional Chinese medicine has identified three plant extracts that may have the potential to combat the deadly Ebola virus.

Associate Professor Zhang Hongjie and his team at the School of Chinese Medicine of Hong Kong Baptist University have found three plants that may contain anti-Ebola agents.

The expert in phytochemistry and drug discovery from natural resources says Ebola is considered a “blood heat” affliction in traditional Chinese medicine.

His team evaluated the anti-Ebola activity of selected active plant extracts and identified three plants, one found in Europe and two found in Hong Kong, as possibly containing anti-Ebola agents.

“All three plants have rich sources in Hong Kong and Mainland China. Two of them are available in all seasons. The cost to extract them should be cheap as they are common plants,” said Professor Zhang.

However, Prof Zhang said it would be long time before the extracts could be used to tackle the disease as his team has not yet identified the active ingredients in the extracts.

“We need to seek more funding from the Hong Kong government to continue the research but apparently there is no funding opportunity available for us now,” he said.

Prof Zhang and his team have collaborations with University of Illinois at Chicago to evaluate the anti-Ebola activity and are also trying to set up an anti-Ebola pseudo viral assay at Hong Kong Baptist University.

He said the government might not even know the existence of anti-Ebola drug discovery research programmes in Hong Kong, which results in the lack of funding. “People may think that the United States is the only country that has anti-Ebola research,” he added.

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) as an international concern in August, there have been growing concerns that it might spread from West Africa, where it originated, to other parts of the world.

Local authorities stepped up its precautionary measures only after a Hong Kong woman returned from Kenya showing symptoms of the virus. Fortunately, the woman tested

negative for the disease. But what if that wasn't the case?

Since the outbreak in March, the WHO has reported 14,413 cases of Ebola with 5,177 deaths in eight countries.

The fatality rate of EVD cases varies from 25 to 90 per cent in past outbreaks, depending on the strain. The virus causes severe immunosuppression and often leads to death by internal dehydration from the inability of the intestines to absorb water.

According to Prof Zhang, the distinctions between TCM and western medical treatments are the time needed to control the disease and the side effects caused by treatments. Western medical treatments usually target on a single purpose while TCM is multi-targeted.

Western medication directly attacks the virus and alleviates the symptoms. But TCM is aimed at curing the root cause of the disease by enhancing and mobilising the body's internal factors to improve the weak immune system's resistance to the virus.

Thus, TCM requires a longer curing period than western medical treatments to take effect on a



*Plant extraction is the first step of the experiment.*

**“In addition to maintaining high alert for Ebola, Hong Kong people should as well be conscious to and re-examine personal health care to resist the virus strike.”**

patient’s illness. This makes TCM less effective in stopping the Ebola virus immediately after a person is infected.

However, western medical treatment generally weakens one’s immune system because it kills not only the virus but also normal cells, while TCM’s plant treatment won’t produce these side effects.

“Because of the different approaches of the two treatments, they should be used simultaneously to compensate each other’s disadvantages,” said Prof Zhang when asked if it is possible to solely use TCM.

Prof Zhang describes EVD as “hard to track” and “hard to control” especially when it is spread to densely populated countries. The incubation period, that is, the time interval from infection with the virus to onset of symptoms, is two to 21 days. The disease has highest risk of spreading during this period as people carrying the virus may not know what they are infectious.

“In addition to maintaining high alert for Ebola, Hong Kong people should protect themselves against the virus by paying attention to personal health,” says Dr Wong Nui-yiu, a registered Chinese medicine practitioner.

While we do not know when EDV may reach the city, Dr Wong says reinforcing one’s vital essence and strengthening the primordial Qi, the most essential substance that makes up the body and maintains life activities is the key to improving the immune system so as to conquer communicable diseases.

Dr Wong Nui-yiu, a registered Chinese practitioner

By **Yanis Chan**  
Edited by **Nikki Wu**



## HEALTH &amp; BEAUTY

# *Sun-kissed to Curb Weight and Diabetes, study finds*

**M**oderate amount of sun exposure could curb weight gain and halt the development of diabetes, a study from Australia has found.

The findings showed that regular exposure to 10 minutes of noonday sun could suppress the development of obesity and symptoms of diabetes, including insulin resistance and abnormal fluctuation of glucose level.

Dr Shelley Gorman, the study's lead researcher from Australia Telethon Kids Institute, said the key factor is to get one's skin to generate nitric oxide under sunlight exposure to reduce blood pressure.

The research also found that nitric oxide could also benefit our metabolic systems besides our blood vessels.

Professor Juliana Chan Chung-ngor, founding director of the Hong Kong Institute of Diabetes and Obesity, said nitric oxide could improve blood flow through vessel dilation. It may also help in nutrient provision, waste removal and promote healing inside our bodies through inflammatory responses.

Besides the physical benefits, sunlight also elevates

people's mood that is essential in the amount of food intake.

"People who receive more sunlight tend to be happier and would eat less, because stress or sadness could drive people to eat more. We call that comfort eating," said Ms Joanne Chan Yuk-yi, a registered dietician who specialises in weight management and paediatric nutrition.

The theory behind this, according to Ms Chan, is that sunshine could increase serotonin levels in our body. Serotonin helps relay messages between approximately 40 billion brain cells, including parts that control our mood and appetite.

Ms Chan added that seasonal affective disorder (SAD) which typically happens during winter is an example of how the darkening of summer sunshine could affect us psychologically.

However, no clinically approved nitric oxide donors other than hypertension-treating sodium nitroprusside and organic nitrates (which can cause blood pressure reduction and local irritation when applied to the skin)



are available for human use at present, said Dr Gorman.

So far the tests were only done for groups of overfed mice that were exposed to ultra-violet light and topical nitric oxide compound cream. Further research is needed to see if the same effect can be reproduced in humans.

Dr Gorman notes of a setback caused by nitric oxide. She warned that the usage of nitric oxide on humans might lower blood pressure and induce serious headache under excessive or prolonged exposure.

Dr Gorman also advised the public to seek advice on sun exposure from cancer councils before carrying out sunlight-related weight-loss plans.

But Professor Chan worries that people bogged down by weight problems expect reaching out to sunlight as a quick fix and would continue indulging in their unhealthy lifestyles after losing weight.

“Disease is really a consequence of complex interplay between people, timing and setting, and it would oversimplify the situation if we just focus on one factor,” said Professor Chan.

For unhealthy lifestyles, Professor Chan blames the society.

“We are living in a high risk society with too much food, too much stress and too little exercise. Keeping a balanced lifestyle and being positive and happy are critically important to staying healthy,” she said.

Professor Chan said the essence of staying fit is to remember that “We eat to live and not live to eat.”

“The point is we need to go back to basics and understand the importance of adhering to certain principles and patterns which are applicable to many aspects of life,” said Professor Chan.

And one “basic” Dr Gorman suggested is to regularly exercise outdoors.

“We all may be able to achieve a ‘double-whammy’ of the positive benefits of moderate sun exposure and exercise for weight and diabetes control,” she said.



## ARTS&amp;CULTURE

# A GPS Treasure Hunt

*With your smartphone, geocaching brings you beautiful nature, treasures and fun*

*"Geocaching gave me the chance to discover beautiful places in Hong Kong," said Pavey, who went to this waterfall pool in Sai Kung for an underwater cache.*

People are staring at Ms Emilie Pavey, a 31-year-old editor, who is climbing up a tree in Cornwall Street Park. Ignoring the awkward stares of spectators, she has been searching for something for the past hour, from looking under the benches to checking the bushes.

She puts on a smile when she pulls out a magnet sign saying "No Climbing". She unfolds the paper attached to the back of it and carefully writes her name on the log sheet – she just completed one of her tasks in geocaching of the day.

Geocaching, a not-so-common activity in Hong Kong, is a global treasure hunting game that has attracted more than 6 million people in the past 14 years. The participants, also known as "geocachers", hide and hunt for "treasures" across the globe, using devices that connect to the Global Positioning System (GPS).

By navigating the location with GPS, geocachers then attempt to

look for geocaches or containers that store surprises, such as logbooks and little toys. As caches are distributed around the world, geocaching is also popular for geocachers who are on holiday.

Integrating gaming with outdoor activities, geocaching is a fun activity that could be done during invigorating exercises, such as hiking, diving or rock climbing.

Ms Pavey, a regular geocacher, has hidden a cache five metres under water. So far, seven people have found it. The cache is rated level five for both difficulty and terrain. In order to find it, participants are required to swim to a buoy and dive.

Introduced to the activity by a British friend who was on a visit, Ms Pavey is now a geocaching lover who has found more than 500 caches in Hong Kong. She believed there were about 100 geocachers here when she joined the sport and about half of them were active players.

While most geocachers elsewhere are middle-aged or retired, Ms Pavey notices that adolescents make up a large proportion of the participants in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong being a compact city with dense urban areas close to rural areas, caches can be hidden in shopping malls, libraries, parks or hiking tracks.

With the unique characteristic of Hong Kong, Ms Pavey has seen a rise in the number of geocachers to more than 1,000, who have set up online forums, websites and Facebook groups.

Geocaching is classified as a kind of orienteering that is done with the aid of GPS applications instead of traditional maps and compasses. However, Mr Lee Chikin, chairperson of Hong Kong Orienteering Club (HKOC) believes there are differences between orienteering and geocaching.

While orienteering is well





organised and follows international regulations, geocaching is less organised and a game “just for fun”, according to Mr Lee.

With the popularisation of smart phones, Ms Pavey predicts that geocaching will attract more people, as “everyone can play it with the application in their phones, even without paying.”

However, Mr Lee said the HKOC would not organise geocaching activities, as members of the club did not know much about it.

With limited promotion, most people have no idea what geocaching is and the complexity of the game might put people off. Ms Cheung, a mother-of-two, has never heard of the game and is concerned about the safety of her children if they join the game.

Besides looking for hidden caches on their own, geocachers get to meet one another at organised events such as picnics, dinners or sport activities.

Every year, the worldwide geocaching community also organises an international environmental clean-up. The event, Cache In Trash Out, focuses on trash clean up, removal of invasive species, re-vegetation efforts or trail building. The 13th Annual Cache In Trash Out will be held on April 25 and 26 in 2015.

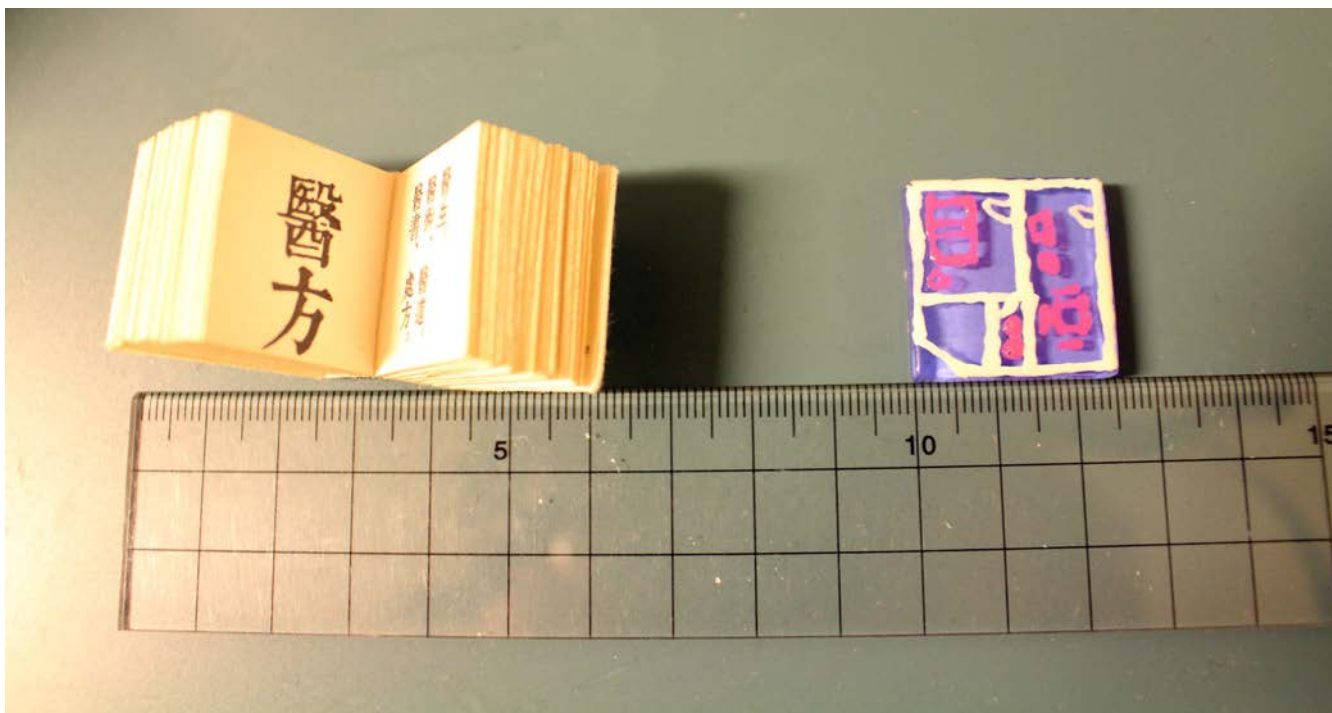
By **Jane Cheung**  
Edited by **Katrina Yau**



Photo courtesy of © Emilie Pavey



# Miniature books



*The size of an eggwich can be as small as 5cm.*

In a bookstore, the smell of coffee filled the air, a Japanese Gashapon is standing at the corner unexpectedly. Gashapon is a vending machine-dispensed capsule toy, but this one is a little bit different. Once you put in a coin and turn the crank, what is expecting you is not a toy, but a transparent circle capsule with a miniature books sized 45mm.

Miniature books are like any other books but printed on a smaller scale which is no more than three inches in height, width or thickness. Reading themes range from dictionaries, religious allusions to well-known stories. But instead of buying the final product from publishers, some people are making handicraft miniature books in Hong Kong and selling them as capsule toy.

Ms Tiana Wong Tin-ying, chairperson of the Hong Kong Miniature Book Association, has

always been a hand-made book lover and creator because it helps her to relieve stress. She was first inspired to make content based miniature books during a trip to Japan's Jinbocho, where countless stylish bookstores were located.

"Miniature books are well received by people over there. I was amazed to find that expensive miniature books can cost up to \$300 (HKD)."

When she went back to Hong Kong, she partnered with some friends to start up their 'unconventional' book business "eggwich". Eggwich is the abbreviation of egg sandwich, in Chinese it sounds like "gashapon" and "zine". With the notion to promote book art and expand the market out of small crafts, eight creators made their own content based miniature books according to the same theme.

Rather than putting their products on shelves, they choose to sell their

little books in gashapons, which is a type of vending machine that a toy capsule will drop down when the crank is turned. The prices of books are also lowered from \$300 to \$30, which they concluded would be the optimum price.

The first issue of eggwich was published in September 2012, packaged in a gashapon and sold at a bazaar held at the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC). By the end of the day, all 80 books were sold out. This result encouraged them to double the output to 160 copies and all were sold out in the following day.

The response of the market triggered them to develop eggwich into a bimonthly publication. They are now publishing the 14 issues and selling 120 miniature books each time.

Ms Wong said she encountered some difficulties when she tried

*You can get a eggwich in Gashapon machine in Kubrick bookstore*

to get the permission to sell them in bookstore. “Since handicraft miniature books have never been sold in capsules in Hong Kong before, the storekeeper was a bit skeptical about its popularity at first.”

So she did thorough background research on the development of miniature books in other places and target at the patriotic character of the storekeeper. “After presenting the possibilities of miniature books, I asked the storekeeper, why not Hong Kong? Then she accepted my selling proposal.” At the moment, eggwich can be found in the Kubrick bookstores in Kwun Tong and Yau Ma Tei.

Other than selling miniature books, they are also active in promoting the book art culture. Hong Kong Miniature Books Association once held an exhibition at the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre(JCCAC) and joined some art bazaars and co-exhibition. Ms Wong also becomes the book-making workshop tutor to promote the art. “I think miniature books are a good alternative of Facebook to transfer short messages since, most importantly, it is difficult for other Facebook users to trace back past records.”

A miniature book lover and reader Mr Raphael Lee Yu-san also said, “packaging stories as a piece of miniature artwork, then selling them in a down-to-earth form can narrow down the distance between high-end arts and the general public.”

The association is now promoting in Facebook and creating a website, even though money is in need to buy server space, Ms Wong has no fear to the problem. “When the time is right, everything will be there.” Ms Wong said.





PHOTO ESSAY

# Beyond the colours of Chungking Mansions

The world has long been captivated by the cultural richness in Chungking Mansions, the 17-storey building on Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, known as Hong Kong's "little United Nations" of for its clusters of residents and tourists of African and Southeast Asian origin.

Popular travel guidebook Lonely Planet describes it as one of the recommended guesthouses for budget travellers. But the multi-racial haven is also notorious for its potential danger. In 2013, a female university student from Beijing was allegedly raped by an Indian worker in a guesthouse.

Residents and shop owners in the landmark cultural icon have been lurked by the tension of racial stereotypes. As The Young Reporter walked through the labyrinth-like aisles with restaurants offering exotic cuisines, second-hand mobiles grey markets and hair salons, the camera was not welcomed. Most of the people were concerned where the photos would go.

"Are you from CS (Customer service related department)?" was the most frequent question asked.

They feared being captured on newspaper and being linked to people involved in previous crimes in Chungking Mansions.

They were mostly intimidated by the camera but returned with smiles and greetings after explanation. The gesture of inviting each other to join in the photo shooting showed the friendliness and intimacy among the residents.

"The media is too powerful. If it says we are dangerous, we are. The number of visitors has been shrinking since the massive reports, "An Indian restaurant owner who was willing to open up said.

He lowered his defence and handed a dish of kebab, an Indian style wrap, to The Young Reporter. "But we are doing business only. If you don't offend me, I won't touch you."

By **Amie Cheng**  
Edited by **Alpha Chan**







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



# THE 6TH PULITZER PRIZE WINNERS WORKSHOP

**T**HE Workshop was launched in 2006 by the university's Department of Journalism. It aims to advance journalistic education in Hong Kong and the Greater China Region. The workshop offers a week-long series of intellectual activities, including open lectures, forum and seminars.

This year, the theme of the forum is  
**“The Public’s Right to Know Versus National Security.”**



## **Prize winners from left to right:**

Mr Ewen MacAskill	Member of the 2014 winning team, Public Service category
Ms Inga Saffron	2014 winner, Criticism category
Prof David Boardman	Member of the 2012 winning team, Investigative Reporting category
Mr Chris Hamby	2014 winner, Investigative Reporting category
Ms Anne E. Kornblut	Member of the 2014 winning team, Public Service category
Mr Steve Sack	2013 winner, Editorial Cartooning category
Mr Kurtis Lee	Member of the 2013 winning team, Breaking News Reporting category



PULITZER SPECIALS

## *Pulitzer winners worried about high-tech surveillance*



A man in a suit is checking the stock lines on his phone; a group of school boys are huddling around a tablet playing an online game; a Filipino domestic helper is sharing interesting stories of her day with friends thousands of miles away at home through Bluetooth earphones.

This is a typical scene on the MTR these days, with everyone keeping their electronic devices within reach.

But for Mr Ewen MacAskill, a Pulitzer Prize winner of *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, getting rid of his smartphone is the first thing he would do when he wants to talk to his editors or interviewees about sensitive issues.

“The iPhone in my pocket is like a microphone, no matter I switch it on or off. The government can track my location and who I talk to,” Mr MacAskill said. He pointed out that the location services of the smart devices could also tell where one was even if it was switched off.

He said he would pick up his notebook and interview people face

**“The iPhone in my pocket is like a microphone, no matter I switch it on or off. The government can track my location and who I talk to.”**



**Mr Ewen MacAskill  
Pulitzer Prize winner  
of *The Guardian***

to face rather than using online platforms like Skype.

Mr MacAskill is a member of the winning team for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize’s Public Service category. The team reported on the mass surveillance programme conducted by the National Security Agency, the US government’s intelligence agency, after receiving evidence from the famous whistleblower Mr Edward Snowden.

Mr Snowden once worked as a contractor for the National Security Agency. In June last year, he disclosed thousands of the agency’s classified documents to several media outlets after he came to Hong Kong. Now he is living in Russia under a temporary residency permit.

Silicon Valley giants, including Apple, Google, and Microsoft, had reportedly provided the US government with direct access to their systems. The US intelligence agency had also hacked into information systems in other countries and spied on phones of political leaders all over the world, according to documents leaked



by Mr Snowden.

## Protecting Sources

Ms Anne Kornblut, a senior editor at the Washington Post, also won this year's Pulitzer Prize with her team for reporting the Snowden incident.

She said the large-scale government surveillance had made it more difficult for reporters to communicate safely with their sources, as some insiders were too afraid to reveal anything for fear that the authorities might try to nail reporters and their contact records.

Ms Kornblut said protecting the sources had since become a top priority for the Washington Post. The Post now uses an encrypted Dropbox called the SecureDrop on their webpage to let whistle-blowers upload materials or reach their staff with an anonymous login.

SecureDrop is a free system managed by the Freedom of the Press Foundation, a non-profit organisation headed by journalists and activists in other fields to promote investigative reporting.

As an editor, Ms Kornblut said she

tried to remind reporters to stick to the old-fashioned, but also the most secure way of reporting—meeting sources in person and taking down notes with paper and pen.

“Whistle-blowers take a massive



**Ms Anne Kornblut**  
Senior editor at  
the Washington Post

risk when using mobile devices and email accounts,” the Guardian journalist Mr MacAskill said. “We should think of better measures such that the risk of being spied on can be reduced.”

## Data About Data

Mr MacAskill also pointed out that metadata, or the properties of specific data, was the major target of intelligence agencies.

By looking into who you are calling, how frequently you contact with each other, and how long each conversation lasts, metadata analysts can know what kind of a person you are without listening to the content of your phone calls.

Mr MacAskill added that spying activities had been unceasingly increasing. It was no surprise to him that the US had been spying on China and Russia, but he was dismayed when the NSA allegedly had the phone conversations of 35 world leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, under surveillance, he said.

In the face of intense surveillance through new technologies, both Pulitzer Prize winners concluded that it was a journalists' responsibility to “keep reporting the truth.”



## PULITZER SPECIALS

# A journalist who draws a lot, writes a little

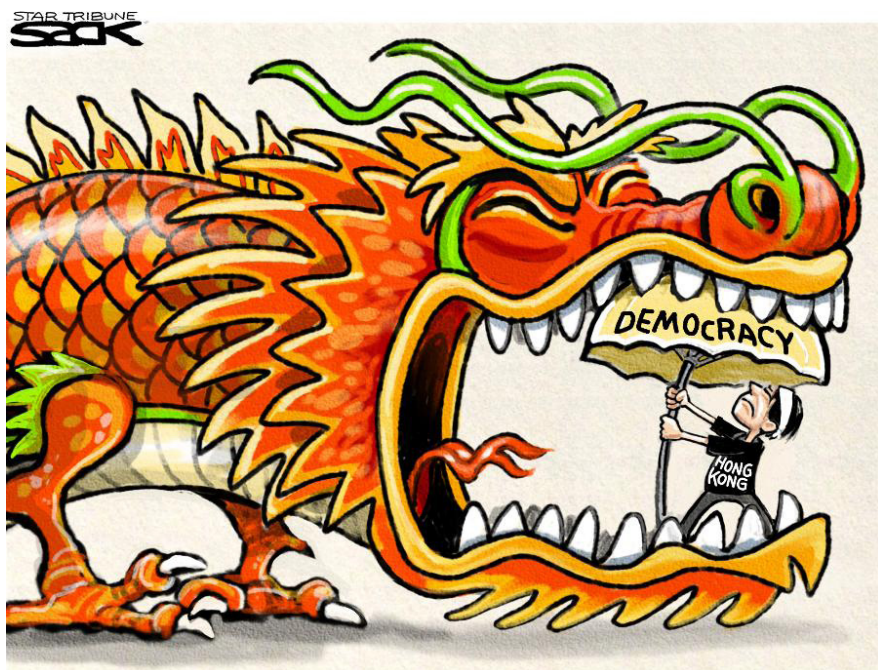
Mr Steve Sack talks about his 33 year career as an editorial cartoonist

Editorial cartoons can be controversial. Cartoons depicting the Islamic prophet Muhammad published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in 2005 provoked international protest against the caricature, which was allegedly offensive to Muslims. The protests resulted in deaths and violence, and people were jailed for plotting to kill the cartoonists and attacks on the newspaper which published the cartoons. Mr Steve Sack's work has not been as provocative, but is influential in its own way.

An editorial cartoonist since 1981, he works for the Star Tribune, a newspaper in Minneapolis. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 2013 for his "vivid, distinctive cartoons that used creative metaphors for high-impact results," according to the Pulitzer Board.

His drawings cover diverse topics from American politics to international news such as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong.

"Cartoons are cute," he said. "So they can be doing horrible things, even with harsh comment towards the issue."



*Mr Steve Sack depicts the central government as a powerful dragon trying to strip Hong Kong of its democracy.*

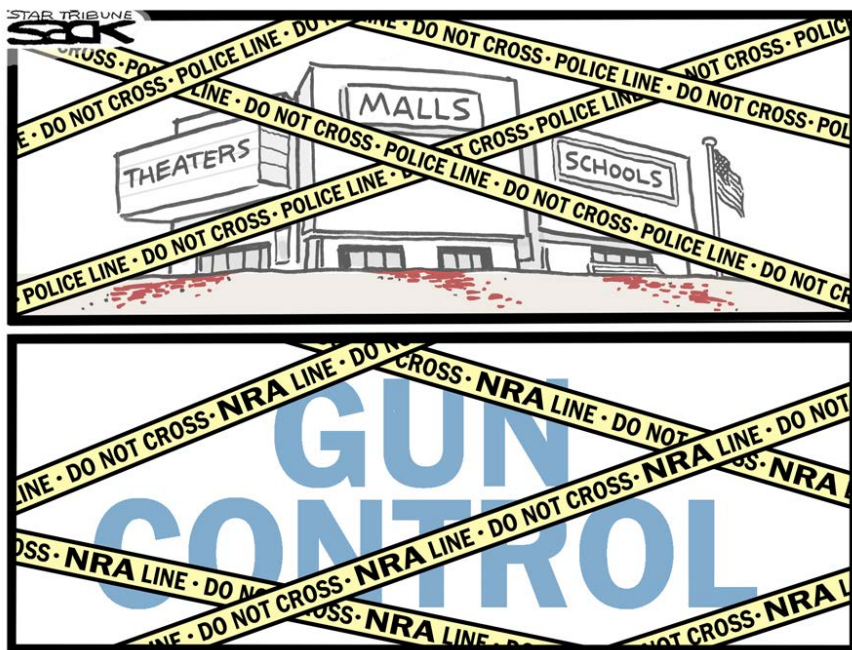
Mr Sack made his debut as an editorial cartoonist when he was in university. He illustrated features and drew cartoons for the Minnesota Daily, the newspaper of the University of Minnesota. He had enrolled to study economics, but realized it wasn't his passion and quit.

He describes his cartoons as "a reaction to the news" and attributes

his inspirations to fellow journalists, who are his sources of information, "I cannot do my job if other journalists did not do theirs well."

He usually makes a few sketches about his thoughts after reading the news, a daily habit of his, and send the sketches for his editor to choose from. "It's like doing a homework — that I have the little space to fill in every day."





*One of Mr Steve Sack's Pulitzer Prize winning pieces is about the Aurora theatre shooting which sparks another round of debate on gun control in the US.*

“Cartoon is around the world in any circumstances,” he said, believing that cartoon is about everything in life. He also regards cartoons as a visual form of writing that practically functions as poems – conveying a message with metaphors and similes.

Being imaginative, expressive and creative is vital for an editorial cartoonist, according to Mr Sack. He defines an editorial cartoonist as a

“smartass who can draw” with “an interest in the world”.

He pointed out that editorial cartoonists in America were “something of a dying rim”, mainly because some newspapers cut down production cost by axing cartoon columns, making it difficult for cartoonists to survive.

There were over 300 in the trade when he first started as an editorial

cartoonist, but the number has gone down to about 60 in recent years, he said.

But he believes that editorial cartoon has its values and is an inseparable part of the news industry. The shrinking sector has not shaken his belief. “We have to have cartoons, like we need to have letters to the editor and opinion columns,” he said.

Mr Sack has applied his playful drawing style not just to political cartoons, but also family comics.

He co-produces Doodles, a children’s cartoon feature, with Mr Craig MacIntosh, who used to be an editorial cartoonist. The comic strip published on Creator Syndicate features Professor Doodles and his menagerie of animal characters.

Unlike Mr Sack’s work at the paper, his zoo characters are purely for fun and lead children through activities such as games, riddles, drawing tips and jokes. In his leisure, Mr Sack also enjoys doing fine art like painting and making sculptures.

“There is no better way to express myself other than cartoons,” he said.

By **Joey Hung, Mari Chow**  
Edited by **Joyce Wong, Yupina Ng**



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