



THE YOUNG REP•RTER *magazine*

March 2016

Farewell to the last urban walled village

*Fading the lights
Should neon light billboards
be turned off at night?*

P10

*Hong Kong craft beer
Local breweries hope to attract
customers with a local flavour*

P12

*Chasing his dream through
the lens
Award-winning photographer
talks about his passion*

P16

In This Issue

FEATURE

4 *Farewell to the last urban walled village*

Demolishing Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen could have been the right choice

NEWS

12 *Hong Kong craft beer*

Local breweries hope to attract customers with a local flavour

NEWS

16 *Chasing his dream through the lens*

Award-winning photographer talks about his passion

NEWS

10 *Fading the lights*

Should neon light billboards be turned off at night?

14 *Green tea: a healthy drink?*

Research shows that it could affect the reproductive system

18 *From the keyboard to the chopping board*

Former info-tech firm manager turns to catering

Letter from the Editor

In February, The Young Reporter covered the budget and the New Territories East by-election with great results, so thank you for visiting our Facebook page.

In this issue, we explore a topic that has been the subject of discussion for quite a while: the demolition of Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen. While it is the last of its kind, experts believe that there isn't much value in keeping it.

The next story is about neon light billboards, something that can be seen all around Hong Kong. In the past, their size has raised concerns

over safety and now its relation to light pollution is becoming an issue.

Following is a story on local breweries that aim to use distinctive, local styles to attract customers. You will also find a range of stories, including one on the effects green tea, a feature on an award-winning photographer and another one about a manager of an info-tech firm who became the owner of a Halal restaurant.

Jon Chan
Editor-in-Chief

Editor-in-Chief
Jon Chan

Deputy Editors
Hilda Lo
Lindsay Long
Candice Tang

Social Media and Web Editors
Fred Lai
Janet Sun
Julianna Wu
Charlotte Yang

Video Editors
Sharon Shi
Sharon Tang
Natalie Wong

Art Directors
Phoebe Chau
Arisa Lai
Rainie Lam

Public Relations Officer
Flavia Wong

Distribution Officer
Choco Chan
Herbert Cheung

Advisers
Jenny Lam
Francis Moriarty

Publisher
Alice Lee

The Young Reporter
Volume 48 No. 6
2016

Editors
Aaron Au
Jonathan Chan
Michelle Chan
Kary Hsu
Alvin Kor
Ann Li
Anna Tang
Joanna Wong
Catherine Xu

Reporters
Morris Chan
Emily Cheung
Paulus Choy
Connie Fong
Susan Gao
Ellen He
James Ho
Melissa Ko
Celia Lai
Alfred Lam
Sing Lee
Isabella Lo
Tiffany Lui
Daniel Ma
Crystal Tai
Henry Wong
Nicki Wong
Cecilia Wong
Richelia Yeung
Tracy Zhang

Design Adviser
Wade Chan

Printer
Department of Journalism
School of Communication
Hong Kong Baptist
University

E M A I L
editors@tyr.hk
W E B S I T E
tyr.hk





FAREWELL TO THE LAST URBAN WALLED VILLAGE





The remaining tenants of Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen packed their belongings and cleared their houses in the largely abandoned and messy village. Most of the other residents had moved out already.

They were ready to hand over their homes to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA).

Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen in Wong Tai Sin district has a history of more than 650 years. It is known as “the last walled village in the city”. The URA calls it a chapter in Hong Kong’s “lost history”.

A conservation project began in 2007 to preserve three of the relics: Tin Hau Temple, the village gatehouse and the gatehouse “Hing Yau Yu” stone tablet. The target is to complete the works in 2018-19.

“I think the whole village should have been preserved,” said Mr Wing, who lives near Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen.

Although many residents and neighbours may share his view, conservation experts find little reason to keep the whole village.

“Since the development of Morse Park, living conditions in Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen has changed,” said Wu Chi-wai, Legislative Council member for Kowloon East, and District Council member for Wong Tai Sin.

Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen, which means “overflowing prosperity” was fortified against pirates and cannons in the 18th century.



Graffiti on the ground is written “demolition”, “dissolution” and “put people first?”, demonstrating Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen villagers’ confusion.



“What makes Wong Tai Sin district special is the concept of a community network.”

Wu Chi-wai

Legislative Council member for Kowloon East

Ten years ago, it was full of shops and street food stalls, or Dai Pai Dong.

“Had we started preserving the village then, it would have been worthwhile,” he continued, “but now, I don’t see any point in keeping it. Only eight blocks are left and that’s not enough to represent the culture of the village,” Mr. Wu said.

Most of the old houses in Nga Tsin Wai have been torn down and there are fewer and fewer villagers over the years. All that’s left are rubble and the nearby construction waste.

Mr. Wu believed many people see what’s left of Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen as just a squatter area. They have no strong feeling on whether the village should be demolished.

“What makes Wong Tai Sin district special is the concept of a community,” he continued.. “We have the highest percentage of public housing in Hong Kong, which actually brings harmony. But I don’t see many connections between Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen and Wong Tai Sin.”

“If conservation means preserving a culture or a concept, I don’t feel that saving Nga Tsin Wai Tsuen can achieve that,” said Mr Wu.

A day before the deadline to move out on January 24, the last two tenants reached a deal with the URA. That came only after a night of resistance against forced eviction.

Initially, villagers were unwilling to leave because they thought the resettlement programme provided



by the URA was unreasonable. Their request for better resettlement conditions was rejected, according to the village concern group's Facebook page.

Uncle Ng, an outdoor barber who has worked in the village for over 20 years, said the preservation of the walled village was none of his business, feeling that he has no right to either support or reject the redevelopment programme.

Dr Lee Ho-yin, an associate professor in Architectural Conservation, and head of division of Architectural Conservation Programmes in the faculty of Architecture at The University of Hong Kong also believes that nostalgia alone is not a good reason for conservation.

"Cultural conservation should be about our living culture because that is relevant to us. It should be about cultural enrichment," said the expert in architectural conservation. "Not all old things are worth conserving."

"[If the village] can create a new relevance and new benefit for the community, then we should conserve it," he said.



Dr. Lee thinks the decision whether or not to conserve an ancient village should depend on whether the buildings can be adapted for other use to benefit the community.

“The conservation should be a community decision rather than that of the whole of society,” he added. “We might think the area is worth conserving, but the community might think it is useless.”

“A conservation park might not be the best alternative,” said Mr. Wu, “but it is all we can do right now.”

“The aim of conservation is to merge the old and new to benefit the community, but not the whole of society,” said the councilor, “because what we are serving is the community.”

“True conservation should be about preserving our way of life,” said Dr Lee, “because that is relevant to ordinary citizen.”

“I didn’t mean to reconstruct the whole village but to revitalise it,” said Mr Wing.

*By Nicki Wong and Melissa Ko
Edited by Joanna Wong*



SOCIETY

Fading the lights

Should neon light billboards be turned off at night?

The Environmental Bureau launched the Charter of External Light in January after three years of heated debate. The aim is supposed to reduce light pollution and energy wastage.

More than 800 companies and organizations are participating in the event. They will get a Platinum Award if they switch off their external lighting between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.. Those who turn off their lights between midnight and 7 a.m, will get the Gold Award.

Ruth Law, who lives in Mong Kok, said the government should penalise those who leave their lights on around the clock because of the nuisance to the neighbourhood.

“Businesses should bear liabilities because they are ignoring residents’ health and people living nearby should be able to claim compensation,” Mr Law said.

Chun Shing Jason Pun, principal lecturer at the Department of Physics at University of Hong Kong said energy-saving lighting devices are to blame for the light pollution.

“Using energy-saving lights means that their electricity charges would drop while the lights can be even brighter than regular lighting. This is incentive for the shops to turn on their lights for longer,” he said.

Despite concern expressed by some in the business sector, the problem remains because bill boards are often regarded as a special feature of Hong Kong, often shown in promotional photographs of the city.

“The external lighting of restaurants and hot-pot shops in areas such as Tsim Sha Tsui and Lan Kwai Fong are an attraction,” said Ricky Lam Kwok-Leung,

vice-chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurant and Related Trades Limited.

Mr Lam said consumers might think the restaurants are closed if they switch off their external lights after 11 p.m.

He added that the external light installations and neon light billboards are “special features of Hong Kong” and should not be turned off.

Following the launch of the Charter of External Light, Wong Kam-sing, Secretary for the Environment was asked whether turning off external lights could have adverse effects on the tourism and retail industry.

“This Charter focuses on reducing light installation for promotional and advertising purposes but the community’s daily routine and the needs of local business operation,” Mr Wong said.

“The needs of society and the economy have to be balanced as we tackle the problem of light pollution,” he added.

“The attractiveness of Hong Kong is not merely the bright neon light billboards,” said Yolanda Ng, Wan Chai district councillor.

“Even if Hong Kong’s night scene with all the neon lights has an international reputation, it does not mean we have to allow these external lights to remain switched on.”

“Are there really that many tourists hanging around on the streets to admire the neon lights billboard in the middle of the night or at 4 a.m.? It is unreasonable,” she added.



“The situation might improve if there is greater public awareness of the problem of light pollution.”

Mr Pun
spokesperson, Hong Kong Night Sky Brightness
Monitoring Network

Although most residents living near commercial-residential areas generally believe the business sector is to blame for the light pollution, researchers have found otherwise.

Research by Hong Kong Night Sky Brightness Monitoring Network show that the brightness index of the sky over Hong Kong's suburban areas is higher than that of most capital cities around the world.

“Business activities in areas such as Tin Shui Wai and Fanling are not as busy as in Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok. But the brightness index of the sky in Tin Shui Wai is very high,” said Mr Pun, the spokesperson of Hong Kong Night Sky Brightness Monitoring Network.

“It is actually about Hong Kong people's attitudes and habits,” he said. “They may keep the lights on just because they can afford to pay.”

“Over the past few years, we've seen cases in which the bright external lights outside certain buildings are dimmed because of public pressure and complaints,” he said.

The government has started using some dark-sky-friendly light installations in recent years, he said.

“The situation might improve if there is greater public awareness of the problem of light pollution,” Mr Pun said. “Designing environmentally friendly lighting or installations that are less polluting may actually provide business opportunities.”

By Daniel Ma
Edited by Anna Tang



BUSINESS

Hong Kong craft beer

Hong Kong breweries hope to attract customers by coming up with their distinctive local styles

Hong Kong craft beer brewery, Mak's Beer, has been promoting their products for half a year. The Tsuen Wan-based brewery's latest offering: "Cantonese beer" which they hope will attract local drinkers.

The brewers got their inspiration from Yim Tin Tsai Village, a historic neighborhood in Hong Kong that produced salt. The ingredients include traditional Chinese herbal tea, wolfberries and longan fruit.

"It's called 'Cantonese beer' because we want to build a relationship with our community and educate local people on how to appreciate craft beers," said Mark Mak, co-founder of the company.

Mak's brewery hosts free factory tours twice a month. Twenty per cent of their beer is offered for free at business and cultural events in order to promote their brand.

Mak's beer is not alone. City Brew's beer "Kong Girl", for example, uses the nickname for Hong Kong women in their branding.

The Bottle Shop in Sai Kung is one of the largest retailers of craft beers in the city. They stock local brands such as Gweilo, Mak's and Moonzen. And the Little Beer Room in the Central District, where we had the interview, is a the branch that the company established.



"It's called 'Cantonese beer' because we want to build a relationship with our community and educate local people on how to appreciate craft beers."

Mark Mak
Co-founder of Mak's Beer





Serving craft beer from all over the world, a bartender says the advantage of local craft beer is freshness, while there is still room for improvement in terms of the stability of quality among different batches.

“Some of the beers include creative local ingredients such as goji berries and chilies to spice up the drink,” said Joey Chung Wing-yi, the brand and event manager at the Bottle Shop.

But the cost of production is an issue for some of the breweries. Mak’s produces 4000 bottles a month and they are priced higher than most commercially available beers.

“The competitiveness is about branding and the craft beer trend in the city,” Mark Mak said.

Ms Chung at The Bottle Shop believes craft beer market will become as popular as coffee and red wine in Hong Kong.

“There is increasing demand for local craft beers and as more bars stock them, locals became more supportive of this emerging industry,” according to Ms Chung.

“The average price of a bottle of local craft beer is between \$25 and \$40. That’s acceptable and close to the price of imported beer,” said Ms Chung.

“Compared with imported beers, locally brewed liquors have room for improvement, for example, in terms of their complexity, taste and consistency in quality,” she said. “However, local beers are getting better and better. It just takes time.”

But Ms Chung believes more needs to be done to promote local craft beers. She has suggested that local brewers should unite to build a stronger beer culture.

“It will be better if our city has a specialised magazine on local beers, just like in Taiwan and Japan, so that people can learn more about the industry,” said Ms Chung.

Justin Poon is the bartender at the Little Beer Room, the on-tap counterpart of The Bottle Shop. He says local brews taste fresher than imported ones, because there is no extensive shipping time.

“Many tourists are really interested in trying local craft beers, but they do not find the drinks taste particularly good,” he said.

But Mr Poon is optimistic about the future of the industry, but he believes it is crucial to promote local breweries to local people.

“If the public love local beers, the brewers will be motivated to produce more and better craft beers, and eventually the business model will be sustainable,” Mr Poon said.

HEALTH & SCIENCE

Green tea: a healthy drink?

Over-consumption could be detrimental to the reproductive system

Vienna Lau Cheuk-lam has been drinking ten cups of green tea every week for three years. She believes it keep her fit and invigorated.

“I feel re-energized after drinking green tea,” said the second year student at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. “It helps me a lot to concentrate on my studies.”

Vienna is among many Hong Kong people who drink up 1.42 kilograms of tea every year. This makes the city the 12th biggest tea consumer in the world, according to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States (FAO).

However, recent studies have found drinking too much green tea may be detrimental to the reproductive system.

In an article in the December issue of *Journal of Functional Foods*, researchers from the University of California, Irvine, discovered that a high dose of green tea can have adverse effects on reproductive development in fruit flies.

In the study, fruit fly larvae were exposed to different doses of green tea polyphenols (GTP). It was found that larvae exposed to ten milligrams or more of green tea have slower development and are generally smaller in size than the controls. They also produce less offspring.

“Experiments on insects like fruit flies are just a start,” said Dr. Ko Ka-shun Joshua, pharmacologist at Hong Kong Baptist University. “It is not yet known whether green tea will have significant effects on humans.”

With various health benefits including delaying ageing, regulating weight, and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, green tea has become one of the most popular drinks worldwide.

The harvest of green tea has increased by 60 per cent in volume over the last decade, according to the Tea Association of USA. However, Dr. Ko suggested not to drink too much green tea despite its high antioxidant content.

“A well-known antioxidant, vitamin E, has also been proven to be linked with an increased risk of prostate cancer,” he said.

Although green tea may help promote healthy teeth and gums, over consumption can ruin the teeth.



TenRen's Tea, a Taiwan-based company specialising in tea, is gaining popularity in Hong Kong.

Pigmented molecules found in tea can easily adhere to the outer layer of teeth and cause staining.

James Li Chun-hei, a law student at City University of Hong Kong, sees green tea as an alternative to water and has been drinking two cups a day for four years.

“I have noticed that my teeth are somewhat darkened,” he said.

Dr. Han Quan-bin Simon, an expert in medicinal chemistry, suggested that consumers should consider their health conditions before drinking too much green tea.

“People on medication should avoid green tea because it contains polyphenols, which may cause irritation to the stomach and digestive system,” he said.

Mr Wai-ming, the author of Chinese Tea Therapy, said green tea is ‘cold’ in nature, which serves the purpose of “clearing away heat and toxic materials” from a Chinese medicine perspective.



There are more than 600 kinds of Chinese green tea. Most of them can have therapeutic purposes in Chinese medicine.



“People should decide on which kind of tea to drink and adjust the amount of consumption according to their body constitutions,” he said.

Vivian Mak, the founder of Mingcha Tea House, one of the major green tea shops in Hong Kong, suggested different kinds of green tea have different effects on the body.

“Jasmine Blossoms, for example, go through a longer process of oxidation during production, so the chemical components in the tea may be different from ordinary green tea, such as Longjing and Biluochun,” she said.

“Even though green tea has certain health benefits, we should never over consume it. Instead, we should adjust our drinking habit according to our own needs and body conditions,” Ms Mak said.

People with a “cold” nature may feel giddy if they consume too much green tea because the drink can over stimulate the stomach.

PEOPLE

Chasing his dream through the lens

Award-winning photographer talks about his passion

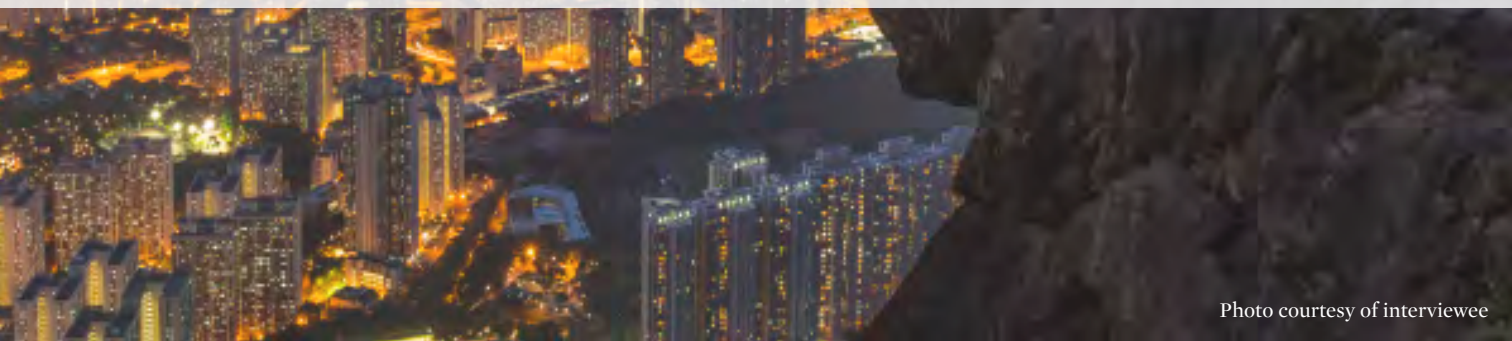


Photo courtesy of interviewee

The photo “The World of A Wild Child Who Chases His Dream” depicts a young man staring at the breathtaking night view of the city. The image shot a young photographer to fame.

Kelvin Yuen Sze-lok was the winner of the 2015 National Geographic’s International Photo Contest. He also had an honourable mention in the youth group of the contest’s Taiwan section.

The 19 -year-old Hong Kong photographer took the picture at Kowloon Peak, one of his favorite shooting spots. The award came as a surprise.

“I thought they sent the email to the wrong person,” Kevin said. “Being a photographer is more than just pressing a button on the camera.”

Kelvin did not plan to be a photographer. The year two student at Hong Kong Baptist University said it was a trip to Lion Rock nearly two years ago that first aroused his passion in landscape photography.

He was attracted by the clouds over the hill that day and brought his camera to record the moment. “I get to see a different side of Hong Kong,” he said.

He has since become a self-taught photographer, learning from online tutorials and articles. “I just keep trying and gain experience,” he said.

Kelvin tries to strike a balance between school and photography. “I go to classes in the morning after shooting the sunrise on the mountain.”



Going out to the wild is very different from looking at the photos on textbooks, he says.



Kelvin wants to be a full-time landscape photographer.

The aspiring photographer said his parents are more concerned about his safety than his academic results because he does not skip morning classes even if he had just hiked all night long, but it gets dangerous when he has to go through rough terrains.

“They are very supportive of my hobby,” he laughed.

“Landscape photography is full of challenges,” he said. “The weather can make a huge difference in the photos even if I go to the same location.”

Kelvin said it is tough to walk through rough terrains while carrying all the photographic equipment in his backpack. But the satisfaction when he reaches the peak makes it worthwhile.

Photography has changed Kelvin from an introvert to someone who enjoys hiking and socializing. He

believes the hobby has made him a better person.

“Photography has become in my life,” Kelvin said. He hopes to become a full-time landscape photographer after graduation, but he believes it is not easy for a professional photographer to make a living in Hong Kong.

Last October, a post circulated around the internet detailing a woman who requested “sponsorship” from a photographer, which required him to shoot for a day at their party in exchange for likes on his FaceBook page. The request went viral on the Internet and Kelvin expressed dismay at the incident.

“Photographers spend time and energy on their photos. It is disrespectful to think that their artworks can be bought with likes on Facebook,” said Kelvin, who has declined such offers.

“Some beginners accept these offers hoping that they will become well known,” he explains, “but this encourages an unhealthy trend in the industry.”

The aspiring photographer still wants to turn his hobby into a profession in future.

“I hope I can change how society thinks of photographers,” Kelvin said.

He thinks the development of landscape photography in Hong Kong is not as mature as that of photojournalism or wedding photography.

“The government should allocate more resources to promote the art of photography,” he said.



PEOPLE

From the keyboard to the chopping board

Former info-tech firm manager turns to catering

Donning a cap and a simple greasy T-shirt, Osman Wong Kar-yi is wiping the table whilst taking an order from a family with ease.

From his relaxed demeanor, few would have guessed that he was a manager at an info-tech firm 20 years ago.

He is also the owner of Wai Kee, a nearly 70-year-old Halal restaurant in the Causeway Bay food market, that attracts non-Muslims as well as Muslim customers.

He aims to serve the Muslim community with authentic Halal dishes, just as his parents have done for decades.

Osman's grandfather started the restaurant in 1939 because there were few places that were selling Halal food at the time.

But working in a kitchen is a sea change for Osman.

As a boy, he used to help out in the shop every weekend. He then studied computer science in Canada, and began his career in the information and technology field. He was once a manager at the computer giant, IBM.

Then his mum got injured, the loving son did not want to let the family business end, so Osman quit his job at IBM and now works full time at Wai Kee, while providing computer consultancy for clients on the side.

"My daughter asks me why I don't wear a suit to work anymore," he said with a bitter smile.

Osman had to face various difficulties throughout his career as a restaurateur.

"During a parents sharing event at my kid's school, they were startled when they knew I ran a hawker stall," Osman said. "I simply ignored these reactions and carried on."

He has had to learn how to handle picky customers with eccentric personalities. One customer, for example, complained to him about his food, wanting to have duck instead of chicken over rice.

"This particular man never has the money to pay for the food," Osman said, "so he often asks other customers to pay for him." Restaurateur how to take a different approach to the business and simply stay with the flow.

He had doubts about his decision to switch jobs at the beginning and was reluctant to take over his parents' business.



“During a parents sharing event at my kid’s school, they were startled when they knew I ran a hawker stall,” Osman said. “I simply ignored these reactions and carried on.”

“I feel frustrated from the get-go because I don’t know why I am still working in the stall,” Osman sighed. Now he is fully committed to Wai-Kee because he is content with running the shop.

For many customers, a visit to Wai-Kee is a trip down memory lane because they have been eating here for years.

“I’ve been a regular [customer] for 20 years,” Mr. Vicky said, as he and his son ate the famous duck curry.

Another frequent customer, Mr. Nawar, prefers Wai-Kee to other Halal restaurants because their chicken and lamb are better.

Osman’s son also helps out at the restaurant whenever he can. As for the future of Wai-Kee, he is leaving that to his kids.

Wai-Kee celebrates its 68th anniversary this year and Osman hopes there will be many more years to come.

E M A I L
editors@tyr.hk

F A C E B O O K
The Young Reporter

W E B S I T E
tyr.hk