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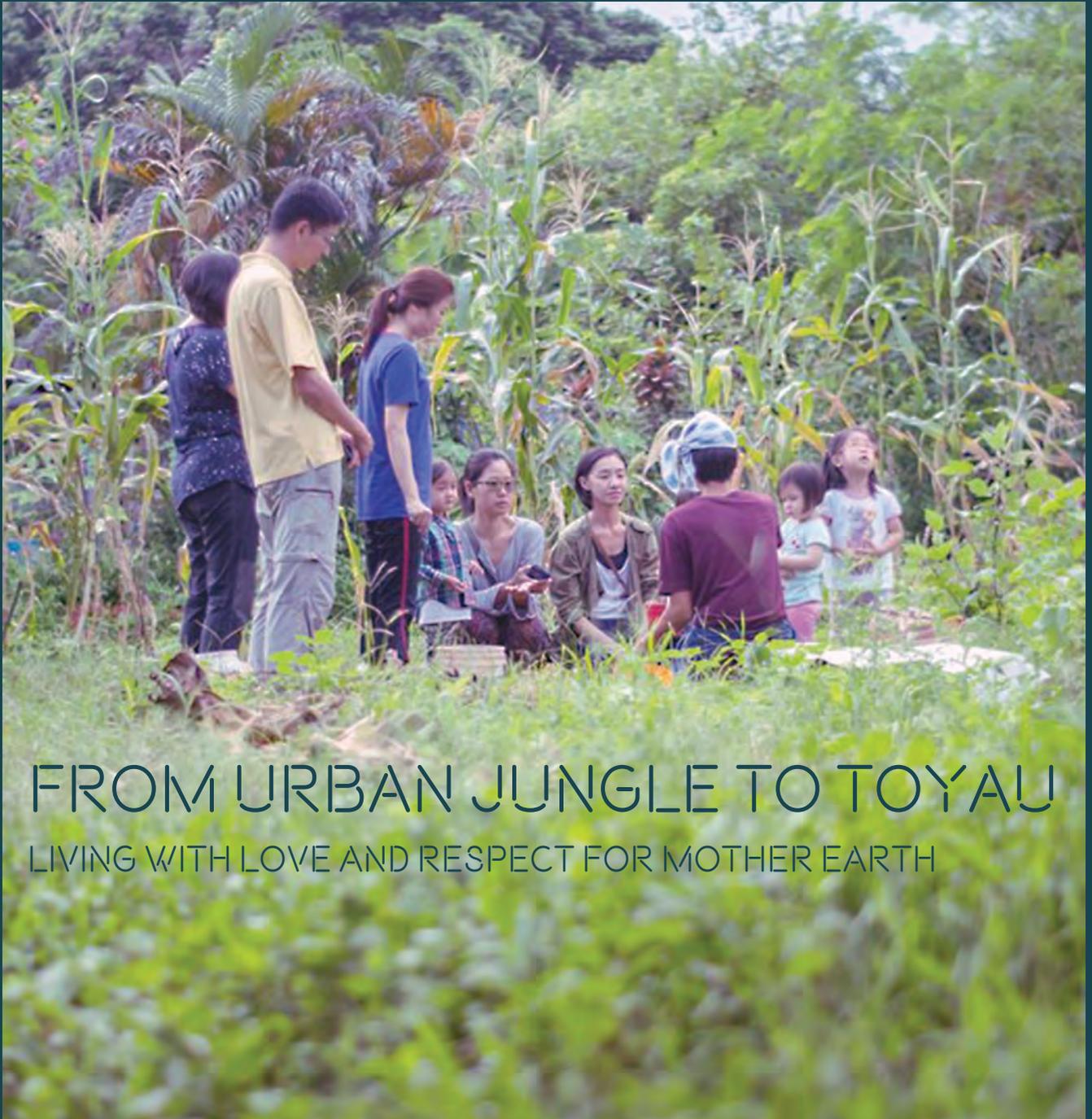
Getting Away from Petty People

The demand for more breastfeeding friendly places

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THE YOUNG REP•RTER magazine

JANUARY 2017



FROM URBAN JUNGLE TO TOYAU
LIVING WITH LOVE AND RESPECT FOR MOTHER EARTH

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Letter from the Editor

Hong Kong, a city having 90% of her food, particularly fresh vegetables, imported, has merely a bite-sized of the territory engaged in agriculture.

While less than 1% of her 7 million residents participate in farming, we are glad to hear a story from one of the sprinkling.

Our cover story features several young adults setting up a farm whereby they lead their lives with an ideal way- self-sufficient lifestyle.

As regards people's pursue of better way of living, local mothers endeavour to get a room for infants' lebensraum- being able to be breastfed in public.

Having mothers, a legislator and a concern group's chairperson interviewed, the problem is discussed against the backdrop of diversified opinions from society.

On another touch, Otokonoko is introduced, with local crossdressers voicing that fashion should not bind with gender.

You will also find an assortment of stories featuring traditional, historical careers and shops, including stories about a Chinese ritual, hiring a "Petty Person", in fighting evil, an almost-four-decade-old barbershop and one of a few knife sharpeners left in the city.

Apart from local stories, we would also like to look into e-commerce bandwagon in African countries, particularly in Uganda .

This marks the first of many issues that our new editorial board is going to produce. We strive to keep you informed and entertained in the time coming.

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PHOTO ESSAY

“The Egg Tart”: evolution of a classic hairstyle

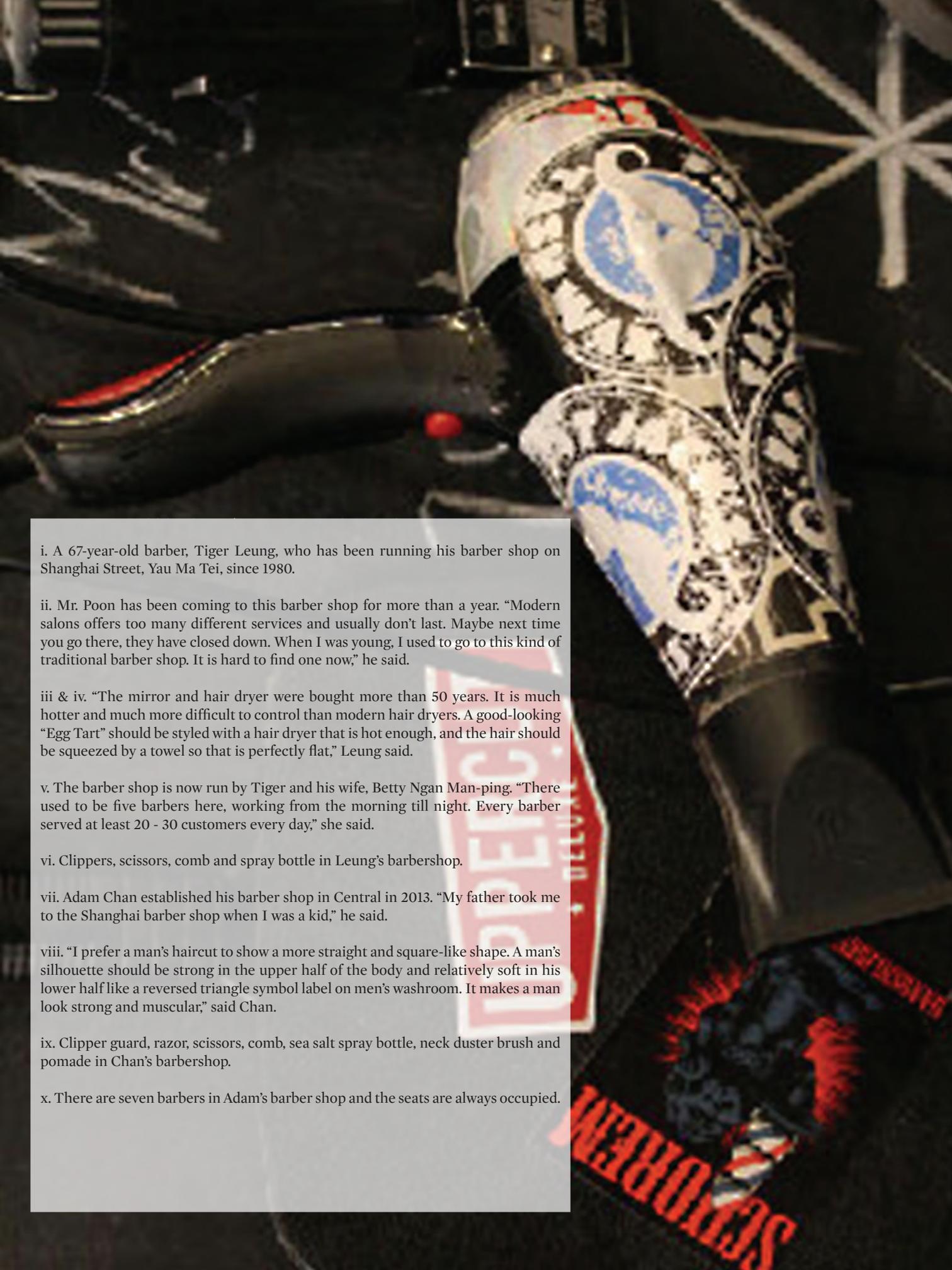
Modern interpretation of a traditional look.











i. A 67-year-old barber, Tiger Leung, who has been running his barber shop on Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei, since 1980.

ii. Mr. Poon has been coming to this barber shop for more than a year. "Modern salons offers too many different services and usually don't last. Maybe next time you go there, they have closed down. When I was young, I used to go to this kind of traditional barber shop. It is hard to find one now," he said.

iii & iv. "The mirror and hair dryer were bought more than 50 years. It is much hotter and much more difficult to control than modern hair dryers. A good-looking "Egg Tart" should be styled with a hair dryer that is hot enough, and the hair should be squeezed by a towel so that is perfectly flat," Leung said.

v. The barber shop is now run by Tiger and his wife, Betty Ngan Man-ping. "There used to be five barbers here, working from the morning till night. Every barber served at least 20 - 30 customers every day," she said.

vi. Clippers, scissors, comb and spray bottle in Leung's barbershop.

vii. Adam Chan established his barber shop in Central in 2013. "My father took me to the Shanghai barber shop when I was a kid," he said.

viii. "I prefer a man's haircut to show a more straight and square-like shape. A man's silhouette should be strong in the upper half of the body and relatively soft in his lower half like a reversed triangle symbol label on men's washroom. It makes a man look strong and muscular," said Chan.

ix. Clipper guard, razor, scissors, comb, sea salt spray bottle, neck duster brush and pomade in Chan's barbershop.

x. There are seven barbers in Adam's barber shop and the seats are always occupied.



From Urban Jungle to Toyau

Living with love and respect for Mother Earth.

They farm what they eat, make what they use and love what they have.

In Sheung Shui Wa Shan Tsuen, several young people have set up Toyau, a place where they can get away from the hustle and bustle of city life, to explore nature. This is where they live and work and learn to get along with one another and with Mother Earth.

The inhabitants of Toyau farm, do carpentry, pottery and they draw.

“If we have guests, we will get up at 6 a.m. to start the day, for example, by cooking,” said Sum Wing-kiu, 26, a full-time member of Toyau responsible for ceramics.

In order to get soil suitable for pottery, they dig and process the earth. Then the clay is made into tableware for everyday use. They also pick up abandoned wood, making the bigger pieces into chairs, rice scoops and spoons, and use the smaller bits for firewood.

“We retrieve the wood before it’s sent to the landfills,” said Sum.

They varnish the woodwork with a layer of oil to protect it. “Butcher stalls do not need to apply oil on their chopping boards because meat releases grease. But we are vegetarians, so we have to do this,” said Wu Ching-yi, 28, another fulltime member of Toyau responsible for drawing and food.

Their farm is next to their house. “We made the entrance shorter on purpose, so that everyone has to bow their heads when they enter,” Sum said.

The Toyau dwellers only farm what they need, without over burdening the land. They compost their kitchen waste, reuse water for washing dishes where possible and use ash from the firewood for cooking. It is all part of their effort to use all their resources to the fullest extent.

“The purpose of composting is to let the land rest. When the land be-

comes healthy again, we can grow more kinds of plants. We can make better use of the land that way” said Kung Ling-yin, 28, a farmer at Toyau.

The people of Toyau live a self-sufficient lifestyle by growing their own food and making their own tools. Even their paint brushes and pigments are made of wood, bamboo and earth from their environment.

They once collected 100 discarded laminated boards from an exhibition and turned them into tables, chairs and cabinets. “We don’t want single-use resources but we recycle them in different ways, so they don’t end up in junkyards,” said Sum.

But making the switch to an alternative lifestyle was not easy. Sum tried to look for part-time jobs but found it hard to balance that with her life in Toyau. “I started to feel safe here because the others would be with me.



Jinny, a member of Toyau, prepares dinner by burning branches in a traditional brick stove.

We work and help each other, and the division of labour is very good.”

What are the advantages of this lifestyle? For Sum, it is about basking in the sun. In the past, she spent most of her time indoors which made her weak. But living in Toyau means she works outdoors and eats healthily.

Their families and friends worry about them sometimes, Sum said, because this lifestyle is not common in Hong Kong, and they parents doubt if they can make a living. But people would often change their minds once they have visited Toyau to understand the joy of living at one with the environment.

The source of income at Toyau is from offering pottery and woodwork classes to the public. They also have food experience activities in which the food comes from their farm or from farmers who they agree with the way they treat their land. There are six to eight students in a class. They not only learn how to make things, but also how to find the materials they need, such as wood discarded from city development and soil from farmland. Admittedly, sometimes classes are cancelled because they do not get enough students.



From raw to finish: residents at Toyau make pottery from mud.

Sometimes they get visitors who are enthusiastic about this lifestyle and would like to try it. But they find it hard to give up their current ways of life.

Ting Hoi-ning, a student in one of their classes, found their style fresh and inspiring.

“Everything here is natural and comfortable. It’s new to me because it makes me realise that there are still people living in this kind of lifestyle nowadays,” said Ting.

Environmental studies teacher, Au Wai-han believes there are constraints for urban residents to adopt a green living style.



The residents of Toyau agree with Au that education can help people understand the need for green living. “By holding classes and providing nature related experiences to participants, we are planting a seed in their hearts,” said Sum.

In Toyau, the living concept is that everything comes from the earth and is closely linked to our lives in an inseparable cycle: soil with clay, clay turns into utensils, utensils can contain food, and food, in turn, comes from the soil.

We are still learning subtle things such as stop eating once we are full,” Sum said. “If one day we cannot run Toyau anymore, I don’t think it would be due to financial problems, but working here can be tiring,” she explained.

*Reported by Elisa Luk
and Sharon Pun
Edited by Susan Gao*

“It is especially difficult for adults”, said Au, “because they think they deserve a more luxurious life if they can afford it.”

When she tries to promote an organic lifestyle at school, she finds that most students and colleagues would opt for convenience rather than protect the earth. For example, some would insist on turning on air-conditioners because they do want their class to be disturbed by the noise outside.

But she remains confident that students can learn to get along with nature through education. That’s why she continues to organise workshops and campaigns for her students.



Pottery and carpentry made from natural resources .

SOCIETY

Breastfeeding Still at Infancy Stage?

The demand for more breastfeeding friendly places.



A mother, Ngai Hung Mui has mentioned that the nursery room in K11 is very clean and comfortable, and it has comprehensive facilities for changing nappy and breast feeding.

Signage outside the baby care room in K11.

In December, a taxi driver uploaded an image of a woman breastfeeding on the back seat of his cab onto Facebook.

This raised doubts among the general public on whether the government's promotion of breastfeeding in public is a good idea.

According to the Department of Health, in 2014, 86 percent of newborns discharged from hospital were breast fed. But that dropped to 27 per cent, by the time the babies were four months old.

In the following year, the department found in a survey that most of the mothers who responded agreed that there was need for more breastfeeding friendly places in Hong Kong.

In May 2016, the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions looked at 24 nursing rooms in government

buildings and shopping malls.

They based their inspection on the Advisory Guidelines on Babycare Facilities, which is the collaboration of various government departments such as the Department of Health, the Government Property Agency and the Building Department etc. They assessed the environment, the entrance, nappy changing facilities and actual breastfeeding circumstances of the rooms.

Seven out of 12 of the nursing rooms in the shopping malls plus eight out of 12 of those in the government buildings did not reach the standards.

Chiu Yuen-man, a mother who has used nursing rooms, recalled how she could not even get her stroller into the room at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. She said there are not enough nursing rooms in shopping malls and commercial buildings in general, and

sometimes the rooms are too small, making it inconvenient for mothers to breastfeed and to change nappies.

But another mum, Ngai Hung-mui, said that the K11 Mall has a relatively clean and comfortable nursing room, with full facilities for changing nappies and breastfeeding.

She also appreciated the fact that there was no smoke door on the way to the room because she found it inconvenient to navigate the baby carriage through smoke doors.

Legislator, Jonathan Ho Kai-min has an eight month old infant. He recalled how people stared at his wife when she breastfed their baby in a coffee shop once. He agreed that there aren't enough nursing rooms.

"The government focuses on increasing the number of nursing rooms in the public area, but

ignores the places which have a higher demand for nursing facilities like the MTR stations and big shopping malls,” said Ho.

He pointed out that if there is only one nursing room in the entire building where a shopping mall is located, that would fall short of the requirements under the government’s Practice Note on the Provision of Babycare Rooms in Commercial Buildings issued in 2009.

According to the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions study, mothers may have to wait at least 40 minutes to use nursing rooms in shopping malls during lunchtime or at weekends.

Apart from a lack of facilities, members of the public are not always supportive of breastfeeding.

Jannie Leung, chairperson of the Hong Kong Breastfeeding Mothers Association, agreed that nursing rooms in shopping malls can provide more options for mothers on where to breastfeed, but she added that it is not necessary to breastfeed in these rooms.

“Mothers can breastfeed in public whenever the infants are hungry with the help of a scarf

or a nursing cover,” said Leung who usually breastfeeds that way.

Leung said that she understands that some mothers may feel uncomfortable to breastfeed under the weird gazes from others.

However, nearly 80 per cent of 2000 respondents thought that it was definitely acceptable for women to breastfeed in public area, according to a telephone survey in 2015 commissioned by the Department of Health.

Leung believed that breastfeeding in public will become more acceptable if more mothers do so.

Both Ho and Leung agreed that the government has already tried its best to promote the physical and psychological advantages of breastfeeding to mothers in public hospitals.

“Apart from public education, the government needs to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all nursing rooms in Hong Kong and push policies to protect mothers from being disturbed while breastfeeding in public,” Ho said.

Leung believed the government has already made leaps and bounds

in promoting and supporting breastfeeding over the past 20 years.

According to the Department of Health, the proportion of mothers who started breastfeeding their newborns on discharge from hospital increased from 19 per cent in 1992 to 89 per cent in 2015.

Leung believed that Hong Kong can learn from other regions such as Taiwan, where breastfeeding gets a lot of support.

The World Health Organization recommends mothers to exclusively breastfeed infants for the first six months because breast milk is the ideal food for babies and breastfeeding is vital for the mothers’ health.

Leung pointed out that breastfeeding is also the ideal way to deepen the bond between mother and baby.

“But without the support of others, mothers may give up breastfeeding easily,” she added.

*By Wing Li
Edited by Paulus Choy*



Correct signage for the babycare rooms. The one on the left is at Taikoo Plaza while the one on the right is at iSquare.

BUSINESS

Shopping Africa

An e-commerce platform based in Uganda may bring the country out of poverty and outdated technology.



Kilimall Uganda has 11 employees. The online platform processes, on average, more than 300 orders a day. At its peak, the number of orders can reach 1000 a day.

While online shopping is already common for most Chinese, e-commerce is rapidly changing the way people shop in Uganda.

Dozens of shopping websites pop up with a Google search for “online shop Uganda”. They offer electronics, fashion items, home appliances, and even real estates plus specialty stores for fresh products or food delivery.

According to a KPMG report in 2015, the e-commerce industry accounted for between one and three per cent of the gross domestic product of seven Sub-Saharan countries, including Uganda. KPMG expected this to grow to 10 per cent of total retail sales in key markets by 2025.

Last May, another company, Kilimall Uganda adopted the

business to customer (B2C) model. Within six months, its market share in the local market has consolidated.

On Black Friday 2016, the online portal received more than 1000 orders and 2000 items were sold out in less than 24 hours, according to PC Tech Magazine.

A common operating model of Ugandan online shops is to cooperate with foreign and domestic brands to display their merchandise on their websites. The companies then deliver the goods to shoppers directly after receiving orders.

“Kilimall has already cooperated with over a hundred brands, including Samsung, Huawei and Nike,” said Wang Cheng-yang, managing

director of Kilimall Uganda.

Most of their customers are white collars workers who are among the first batch of Ugandans to enjoy e-shopping. Their online shopping traffic generally peak at 11a.m. and 4 p.m., when most commuters are taking a short break from work.

Jumia Uganda is another leading Ugandan online platform launched in 2014. Lisa Kaitare, Head of Sellers said Jumia’s best sellers are woman fashion items.

In Kampala, the capital of Uganda, people aged between 25 to 33 years prefer purchasing online to going to physical shops, according to a report published on East African Business Week last year.

Other than Paypal and Alipay, e-commerce in Africa is also supported by the continent's own payment system, Mobile Money. As the name implies, it allows users to transfer money from person to person and pay for services with mobile phones.

All users have to type a distinctive code into the system and then follow the instructions. Shoppers do not need to use their banking account information or credit cards. The service is widely used in Africa from top-up phones to online purchasing.

However, even in Kenya, an African country where e-commerce is already well developed, the mobile friendly service is only the second preferred payment option. It is used by over 17 million users, according to a report published in IT New Africa last December.

Wang thinks that Mobile Money has good credibility among his customers in Uganda since the security is well supported.

“Those payment services are provided by very large scale operators, as big as China Mobile or China Unicom,” he said, “so people trust them and therefore they trust us.”



Uganda is still one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Urbanization has only just begun in recent years

Although internet penetration is only 16.2 per cent in Uganda according to Internet Society, Wang said the development of telecommunication in Africa is much broader than many people think. For instance, the fourth generation (4G) internet services in Kenya was launched earlier than the one in China.

Both Wang and Kaitare agree that the growth of the online industry is stagnated, largely because of the conservative attitude of businesses and a lack of understanding of e-commerce.

“Quite a few shoppers insisted on checking the inventory in person and would only allow cash payments,” Wang recalled. “and some of them called the brands to ask for the merchandise immediately as soon as they placed the orders. So we are educating the market,” said Wang. Kilimall is working on a variety of marketing schemes to promote e-shopping and make it more acceptable to the public.

“Most of the suppliers have already built offline businesses,” Kaitare said, “but many conservative sellers do not take the time to learn new technologies.”

Although it takes time for the e-commerce market to mature, Kaitare who was born and raised in Uganda, has faith in her country to learn.

“What we need to do now is to increase the number of shoppers and get them to refer us to their friends, families and co-workers to come and enjoy the platform and really embrace the market. So I think 2017 is more about educating the buyers and so on”, she concluded.

*By Yolanda Gao & Dorothy Ma
Edited by Emily Xu*



Despite the remarkable penetration of online market in recent years, physical stores still take up a substantial share of the retail industry in Uganda.

CULTURE

Men in Skirts Break Fashion Boundaries

Freedom in male clothing style.



In the 1960s, when fashion designers such as Coco Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent introduced trousers and suits for women, it was widely thought to be part of a woman liberation movement. Since then, women who wear men's clothes are generally accepted and often seen as gamine or unisex.

Today, two men from Hong Kong think that high heels and miniskirts should no longer be exclusively for women. They believe that men should not be bound to rigid fashion varieties as women were 60 years ago.

Otokonoko refers to men who dress like women. The concept first appeared in a Japanese manga series "Stop!! Hibari-kun!" by Hisashi Eguchi in 1981, in which a male character, Hibari Ozora, goes to school as a female.

The character was created to mock the popular teen girl manga in the 1980s. This genre of comics regained popularity worldwide in the early 2000s.

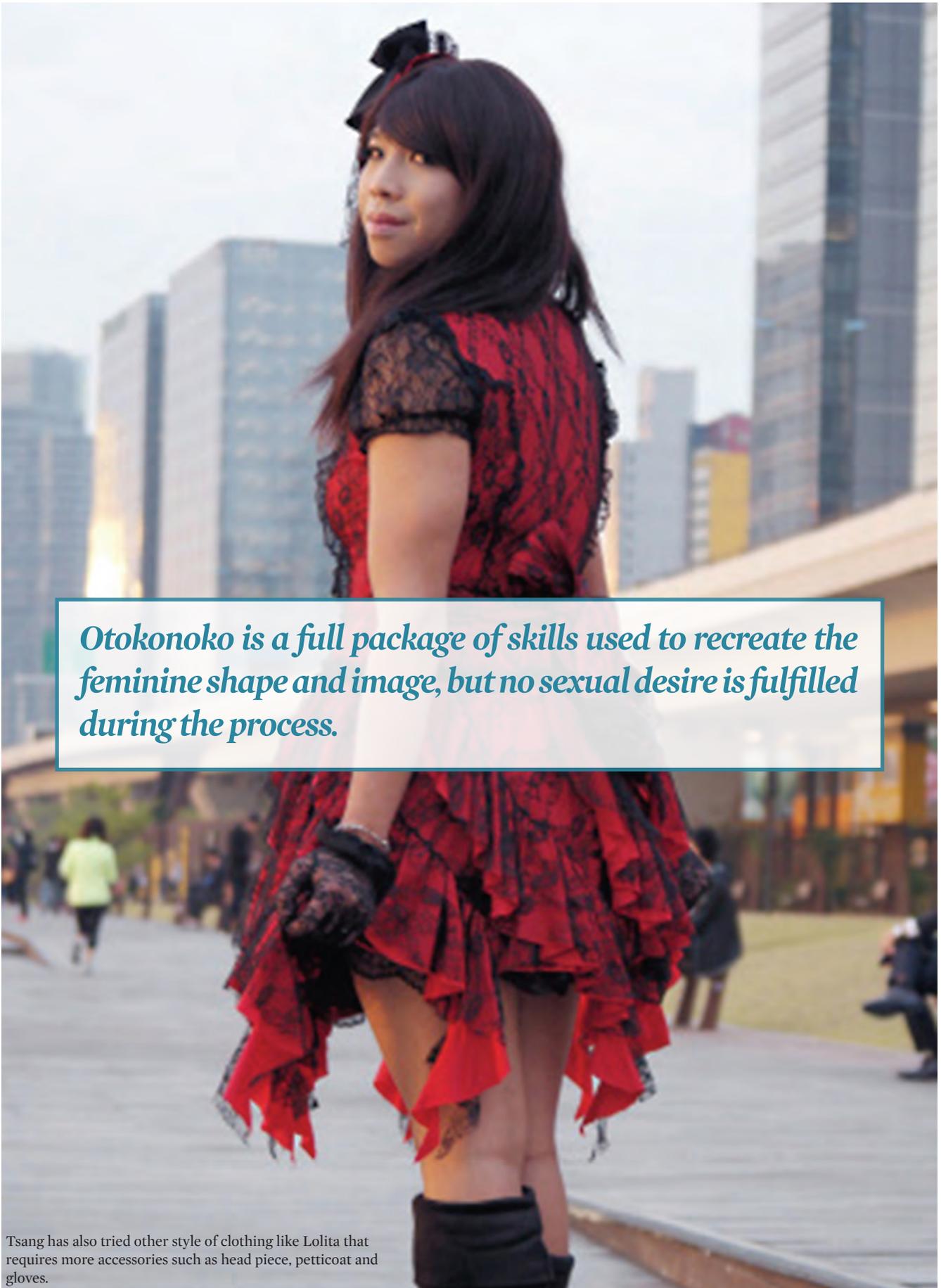
In recent years, otokonoko walked out of the two dimensional world of comics and came to real life. For

example, on May 1, 2009, otokonoko maid cafes such as "NEWTYPE" opened in Japan. In 2010, an online shopping website, "Lagrangel", which sells clothing specifically for otokonoko, was founded.

"I want to be more feminine than women," said otokonoko player Tsang Tsing.

Tsang Tsing, who refused to reveal his real name has been an otokonoko for almost six years. He likes being complimented on his female image which he builds with makeup and clothing. "I want to be more feminine than women," said the 30-year-old man.

He is in a stable relationship with his girlfriend. Tsang said being an otokonoko did not change his sexuality because it is just another way to express his freedom in different fashion styles.



Otokonoko is a full package of skills used to recreate the feminine shape and image, but no sexual desire is fulfilled during the process.

Tsang has also tried other style of clothing like Lolita that requires more accessories such as head piece, petticoat and gloves.

“It is strange that we can accept women wearing men’s clothing but not the other way around,” he said. “Clothing should not be limited to any gender, it has nothing to do with sexual orientation,” he added.

However, Tsang is worried about the age limit of being an otokonoko. He explained that makeup would no longer look good with wrinkles or poor skin conditions. Plus, men’s body shapes change and it will become difficult to mimic the female silhouette.

Another man in skirt with the stage name of Alisa Lau, 25, has been an otokonoko for about three years. He fell in love with women’s fashion because of the wide variety of makeup and clothing styles, ranging from sexy to cute.

Lau explained that otokonokos not only invest a lot of money in clothing items, they also devote a lot of time practising with makeup and staying slim to create the female figure.

Otokonoko is a luxurious fashion attitude. Both Lau and Tsang have rented storage units in Diamond Hill and Kwun Tong to store their corsets, wigs, high heels, cosmetics products, body-shaping garments and

hosieries that added up to more than \$30,000.

Lau can only afford to dress up as an otokonoko three to four times a month because of the high cost and limited spare time. He said otokonokos have to resemble females from head to toe, from outerwear to undergarments.

At the beginning, Lau was criticised for his poor makeup skills that failed to hide his masculinity. But he liked the criticisms because they challenged him to improve and strive for a full resemblance of the female image.

Nowadays, Lau said people on the streets often think he’s a woman as long as he does not talk. However, he enjoys being mistaken as female in public because it proves that he successfully blends in with his girl friends.

Lau, who is also heterosexual, said otokonoko is different from sexual fetishism. According to the Oxford dictionaries, fetishism refers to a form of sexual behaviour in which gratification is linked to an abnormal degree to a particular object, activity or part of the body. Lau said otokonoko is a full package of skills used to recreate the feminine shape and image, but no sexual desire is fulfilled during the process.



Lau says even when the weather is cozy he still feels hot with the wig on. He once got a heat rash on his scalp for wearing a wig for too long during the summer



Lau has also tried several other styles of women's fashion such as Lolita and sailor school uniform and maid uniform. "It's so much prettier," He said.



Tsang applying makeup before a photo shoot.

Also different from cosplay, drag queens and gender minorities, otokonokos see themselves simply as heterosexual males who dress up. They don't do so to entertain nor do their costumes mimic anime characters. Instead, they treat their attire as a style of regular clothing.

Lau's parents did not object when they learned about his dressing preference because his sexual orientation will not stop him from carrying on his family name. Lau said some of his previous relationships did not work out because his partners did not accept his clothing style. "Now I would inform my prospective spouse of my hobby right away and my future girlfriend has to accept it," he said.

Professional makeup artist, Sharon Lam Yuk-kuen, 37, who specializes in special effect makeup, has been doing male transformation makeup for almost six years. She considers otokonoko as a form of role play. Most of these



Lau and makeup artist Sharon Lam Yuk-kuen. She gives styling advice on how to make himself more feminine.

role play makeup are for drag queens and cosplayers, but seldom for otokonokos.

As a female friend of Lau, Lam does not think Lau is any less macho than other men because his behaviour, his manner and his mindset are all very manly.

From a Christian perspective, Lam sees Lau as a male because she believes that the Bible has a clear distinction between men and women. "I do not discriminate against otokonokos, but I think overindulgence in otokonoko will cause confusion and can harm gender relations," she said.

Lau and Tsang said they see the otokonoko community growing in Hong Kong because society is increasingly accepting of androgynous gender images. They believe all male players should be able to dress however they like in public.

*By Caroline Kwok
Edited by Melissa Ko*

PEOPLE

Getting Away from Petty People

Did 2016 go well for you? If not, consider hiring a 'petty person beater' to beat away the bad luck.

"I beat you little people, I am sending you away!" Granny Leung chanted. At the same time, she repeatedly hit a paper effigy that represents the petty person lying on bricks using a shoe.

Granny Leung, 81, has been a professional 'petty person' beater for more than ten years. She is not willing to reveal her full name as she thinks that some competitors will curse her.

"Some 'petty person' beaters are bad," she said.



Every day from around 10 am to 7pm, Leung sits at her 'battle field' beneath the Canal Road Flyover in Causeway Bay. Her 'battle field' is comprised of an altar with a Buddha, a Monkey King and a whole host of fruits. Beside the altar, there is a little red table packed with two incense burners with dozens of joss sticks in them, plenty of yellow paper tigers and a thick piece of pork fat.

With HK\$50, Leung claims that she can help customers beat any petty people or their specific enemies away from them, using her unique "weapons" - effigies, paper tigers, an old shoe and last but not least, her powerful and fierce voice.

The beating process lasts for around 15 minutes. Leung beats the paper effigy with an old shoe until it is all beaten up. After that, she folds the paper effigy underneath a paper tiger that has been pressed on a piece of pork fat and burns it. The whole process ends with the tossing of sacred cups.

'Petty Person Beating' is a Chinese ritual to dispel evil, particularly enemies around people. They can be colleagues who snitch behind your back or intruders who ruin your relationship with your partner, just to name a few. This popular ritual is listed by the Hong Kong Home Affairs Bureau as one of the Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage and was selected as one of TIME magazine's 2009 "Best of Asia" features.

Before becoming a 'petty person' beater, Leung was once a domestic helper. However, her right wrist was hurt during work, and was hence unemployed. She then collected cardboards for a living.

"I was commissioned by Buddha later on," Granny Leung said. Therefore, the old lady taught herself and started working as a professional 'petty person' beater. She has helped thousands of people from all walks of life to repress different kinds of enemies over these years.



Granny Leung, 81, has been being a professional 'petty person' beater for more than ten years.



Granny Leung burns paper "charms" with the mock money and other paper goods. This is believed to bless the client.



Granny Leung beats a paper effigy that represents the petty person with her old shoe.

“I will not say either I like or dislike this job. I have been doing this for many years. If I do not do this, what else can I do? Just drift along!” Leung said, while dabbing her humpback.

Leung is single. She lives alone. Her brother passed away and all of her nephews and nieces are not in Hong Kong. Being an 81-year-old granny, retirement is not on her to-do list. Instead, she persists in working as a ‘petty person’ beater every day from dawn to dusk. “Though I am alone, I do not want to rely on anybody. I will not seek aids from the government,” she said with a firm voice.

Leung is one of the few professional ‘petty person’ beaters that still remain in Hong Kong. However, she is not intended to find a successor or teach someone else. What she prefers is to let things slide- if there is a successor, she will take that; if not, she will just let it go.

“If you are commissioned by god, you do not have to learn. If you are not commissioned by god, it is useless for you to learn because the cursing of petty person will never be effective,” Leung said.

Nowadays only at Canal Road Flyover can you find beaters performing ‘petty person’ beating every day. Others just perform it during Jingzhe, the third of 24 solar terms in the Lunar calendar, in some temples. Moreover, beaters are getting older. Nonetheless, Leung is optimistic about the tradition. “This tradition will never die. Nowadays even some youngsters want to become a ‘petty person’ beater!” Leung said.

People queued in front of her little red table.

Michael Yip, a 36-year-old businessman, came to dispel bad luck for himself and his parents. “If you believe in it, it will work. That’s what I do, so it works,” he said.

Sharon Chan, a 53-year-old secretary, comes to Granny Leung every half a year. “I beat for a peace of mind. I feel like my career goes smoothly after beating,” she said.

Leung coughed several times when she was talking, but she never stopped for a rest. “I do this all for the sake of others, not for myself,” she said with a humble smile. “People do not have to say anything good about me. They will come.”

*By Zinnia Lee
Edited by James Ho*

The paper tiger is pressed on a piece of pork fat. This called “feeding the white tiger”. Traditionally, people believe that the tiger will no longer hurt people after being fed. They also believe that smearing a greasy pork on its mouth makes its mouth unable to open because it is full of oil. The whole process represents the petty person being brought under the tiger’s control.





“This tradition will never die. Nowadays even some youngsters want to become ‘petty person beaters!’” Leung said.



PHOTO ESSAY

Master of Knives

The traditional craft of knife sharpening in Hong Kong

A full steel armour stands in the show window of Chan Wah Kee, a cutlery shop on Temple Street in Mong Kok.

Chan Dong-wah, 85, is one of the few remaining knife sharpeners in Hong Kong. He has been whetting blades for more than 70 years.

Chan first learnt the art of knife sharpening in Guangzhou when he was 11 years old. Four years later, he came to Hong Kong and set up his stall on Temple Street, sharpening tailor's scissors. After 20 years of hard work, he finally owned his cutlery store.

"The key to sharpening a blade," Chan said, "is all about hearing and manipulating the force." So he has been practising Qigong for a long of time.

One of his unforgettable customers was a Hongkonger, who immigrated to New York years ago. The man visited him with his newborn great-grandson, together with some pork knuckles and ginger stew.

"That was really remarkable, it reminds me that time really passed so quickly," he added.

"I am already 85 and can actually retire now," Chan said. "But I feel happy seeing my clients. That is why I keep on sharpening."

However, Chan has not found any successors yet. A handful of people tried to learn from him before but thought the job is too tough. So they left.

"Young people are not willing to learn the techniques because it takes a long time to master, not to mention it cannot bring them much money," he sighed.

*Text by Sammi Chan
Edited by Nicole Kwok*





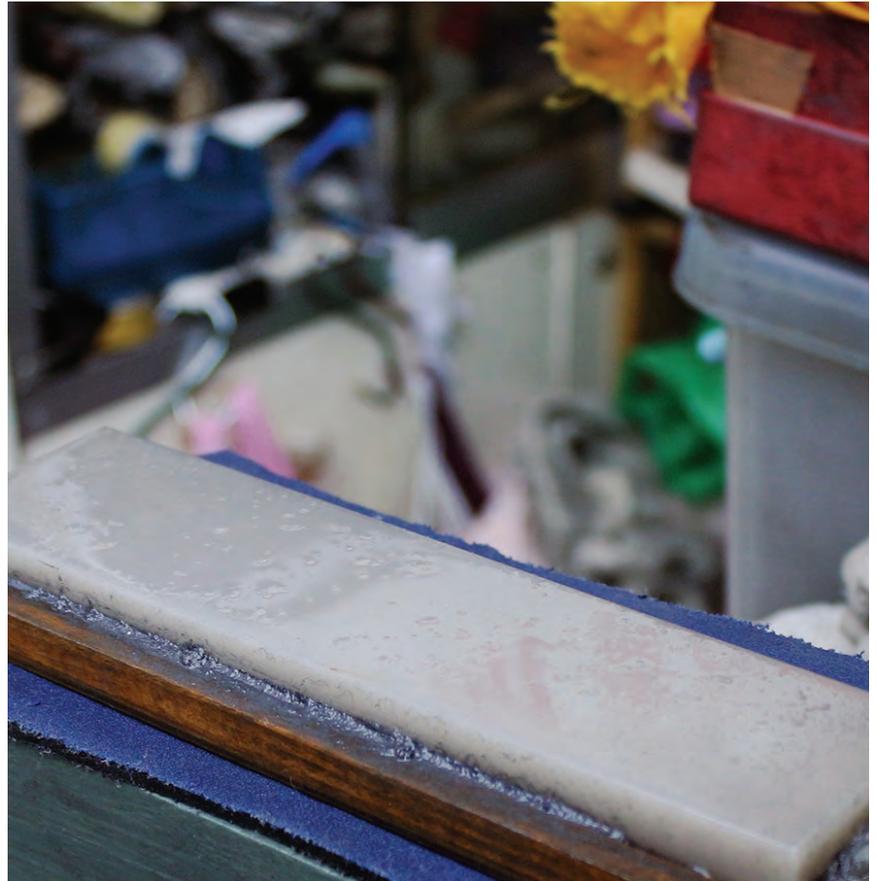
“People in my time are not well educated, we tend to learn a skill to earn a living. I chose to be a knife sharpener because only simple equipment is required, like stones, water and oil,” Chan said.



A drop of high-temperature lubricant is essential to preventing the temperature of the blade from going too high.



With years of experience, Chan said German manufacturers specialize in making scissors for cosmetic purposes while Japanese companies are good at producing knives.



The whole sharpening process involves water, oils, and nine pieces of stones. This rare natural stone with the highest density in the world is only for blades that are made of high-quality materials.



Chan demonstrates how a sharp-edged knife can cut through several layers of plastic bag without applying much force.



“Some people may just walk away after asking me the price of sharpening a knife, because they do not think it is worth spending hundreds of dollars on it,” Chan said.

“Once a chef asked me to repair broke a pair of scissors, I told him to wait for three months because there were too many orders. He said I was too arrogant then left. Never mind...he will never find someone like me.”

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