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Universities slammed for salary cut

Pong Nan - A music man with an attitude

Claudia Mo - Radical but (stay) rational



LABELLING THE POST-80S



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Editor's Note

There has been substantial media coverage on the post-80s these days. Just type "post-80s" in search engines, buzzwords like 'post-80s protesters', 'post-80s job seekers', 'post-80s couples' have flooded in to local news stories on any particular day.

"Post-80s" was initially defined as a sociological term to describe the common characteristics shared among youngsters born after 1980. No matter you think it does explain certain features of our social hierarchy or it is just too highbrow and lacks a factual backing, we can see that the "post-80s" group seems to be labelled as being radical, (over) idealistic and rebellious.

In the HK\$66.9 billion express rail link project, some young protesters had a dispute with the police outside Legco and then swarmed to the Government House's gates. It is understandable that the media look for catchy scenes like these to attract readers and audience. But at the same time we should know that violent scenes cannot fairly represent behaviour of the "post-80s".

Moreover, it is sad to read some of the young frontline reporters' blogs, which they have attached personal bias onto the young protesters when covering the anti-XRL protests. Journalists are obliged to let the public's voice being heard fairly and accurately. Labelling interviewees with unfair perceptions is definitely an obstacle for accountable reporting.

Some say that they that chances look slim for the post-80s to climb up to a higher class in the social ladder because it is pre-occupied by the elder people. They have a gloomy future and have nowhere to vent their anger, so they take to the street.

Attributing this to different social phenomena is no use to understand how they think. The post-80s do have their grounds to support their actions. And it is always good to have different voices in a society. Let's remove our perceptions to see and to listen to how those born after 1980 think about our city. You may discover some new perspective.

Simpson Cheung Wai-ming
Chief Editor

P.S. TYR presents you a video footage on Nobel Laureate Charles Kao's triumphant return to Hong Kong. Click <http://tyr.journalism.hkbu.edu.hk> to watch.



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Department of Journalism,
School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University

Publisher
Huang Yu

Advisors
Robin Ewing, Andrew Wood

Chief Editor
Simpson Cheung Wai-ming

Deputy Editors
Jojo Choi Tsz-tsun,
Natalie Wong Hiu-ying

Web Editor
Kelvin Chan Mankey

Art Director
Edith Tsang Hok-ye

Distributing Directors
Phila Siu Chi-yui, Connie Wan Pui-lam

Public Relations Directors
Isa Kwok Ling, Luna Lau Wan-lun

Email
tyrej@hkbu.edu.hk

Address
FSC 1015,
Fong Shu Chuen Library Building,
HKBU, Kowloon Tong

Tel
3411-5074

Fax
3411-5079

Website
<http://tyr.journalism.hkbu.edu.hk>

EDUCATION

Pay slash for universities staff despite huge “profit”

BY MINI LI

For tertiary education staff, the Year of the Tiger is not a time for celebration universities are planning to slash salaries despite huge profit.

The slash followed the government's pay cut move on civil servants in effect on January 1 this year. Those with a monthly salary over \$48,700 will face a 5.38 per cent cut.

Even though the link between lecturers' and civil servants' salaries were unpegged back in 2003, the government's retrenchment on university funding allocation has forced universities to cut cost by imposing pay cut.

The pay cut will be effective for The University of Hong Kong (HKU) in March; the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) in April; and is already afoot for The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Decisions have not been reached yet for other tertiary institutions.

Affected staff slammed this action, saying universities have been receiving handsome share of profit over the years that it is unfair to put the pay cut into effect.

Hong Kong Baptist University Faculty and Staff Union's spokesman Mr To Yiu-ming said that the university's external programmes nabbed nearly \$100 million for the school last year. The amount is more than able to make up for the government's cut of \$20 million funding.

He doubted if it was worth implementing the pay cut because the outbound programs



It remains undecided whether HKBU will implement pay cut.

have already increased the teaching staff's workload, and the cut would put yet another damper on the teaching morale.

“It is fair for us to brace for the pay cut if the university encounters financial difficulties out of the funding slash,” he said.

In a meeting between the university board members and the staff, the staff demanded a six-month temporary postponement.

Mr To said that when the staff's salaries were still pegged to that of the civil servants, they always got their pay rises three months later than the civil servants did. The university owes them a six-month postponement.

He hoped the postponement would buy some time for the release of the civil servant pay trend survey in April. If the survey shows a positive growth of salaries among companies in Hong Kong, the chance is fat that the salaries of the university staff will be adjusted accordingly.

The news is even worse for HKU's teaching staff because even those with a monthly salary lower than \$48,700 will also have their pays slashed. It is believed this will be a big blow to teaching morale.

Meanwhile, even though the PolyU would officially implement the pay cut in March, it was pouring \$20 million from its reserve to delay the pay cut for a month, according to chairman of the university's staff association Dr Joseph Lee Heung-wing.

The decision was laid down after the staff association expressed concern about low

teaching morale in a meeting with the school board.

Government funding to PolyU is down \$60 million this year, or \$5 million a month.

Mr Chong Yiu-kwong, vice-president of The Hong Kong Institute of Education Academic Staff Association, said the pay cut had set an example for other companies to follow suit.

He was also worried that universities would cut their staff's welfares such as housing and medication allowance.

University students hold different views on this issue.

Mr Michael Tse Chi-sum, a final-year English student at CityU, suggested the government look for other ways to cut cost.

“Universities have the likings to build and tear down facilities all the time. If they can have a better use of money, they don't have to even consider the pay cut,” he said.

Another student, Mr Tarquin Kwan Lui-ting, a year-two student majoring in accounting and finance at PolyU, appeared to be optimistic about the effects that would possibly be brought by the cut.

“I think the academic professionals would understand the salary adjustment. Though they are having pay cuts in times of economic recovery, they should not forget that they still have a rather stable job during the difficult times,” he said.



Spokesman of HKBU Staff Union Mr To Yiu-ming slammed the pay cut as universities nabbed huge profit.

EDITED BY PHILA SIU

ENVIRONMENT

Wild duck migration tracked by GPS in Mai Po marsh



(Top) Wild ducks in Mai Po marsh.
(Left) A transmitter is set on a wild duck for tracking purpose.
(All photos courtesy: WWF HK)

BY SARAH LAI

A new Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation technology was used to track wild ducks' migration journeys.

Scientific information obtained in phase two of the Mai Po Duck Satellite Tracking Project would help conservation and study into avian diseases.

Some 23 wild ducks in two types, Eurasian Wigeons and Northern Pintails were tracked. Advanced satellite transmitters featured with GPS navigation arials were tied to half of them. The other half were tracked by an old technique called Argos.

Signals transmitted from the ducks are scanned several times a day, while in phase one signals could only be tracked once every 1.5 days. This change would provide more information revealing their migratory paths.

Initiated by World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong (WWF), the project funding from

the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in its phase two research.

"We presume the new transmitters could work for two years and hope phase two could last to December 2011," Ms Katherine Leung Kar-sin, reserve officer at WWF Hong Kong who has participated in the project, said.

The project has kept track of the migratory route of the wild ducks from the south towards the north in phase one. Starting from Hong Kong, most of the ducks flew along the east coast and others flew to the Mainland.

"We monitored that two to three ducks have flown to Anhui province in mainland China and one duck has once stayed at Poyang Lake. But at last, most ducks flew to Yellow Sea," Ms Leung said.

Started in December 2008, phase one of the project is supposed to last 18 to 24 months but it only tracked migratory routes when the wild ducks flew from the south to the north and stopped before they flew back.

In the new phase, the route from the north to the south is expected to be found out.

Ms Leung explained that besides technical problems in the transmitters used in phase

one, death of ducks or some human factors were also causes of the lost information.

The last signal received was in November, 2009 from an island near Hokkaido, Japan.

"The signal from Hokkaido was sent near urban area, some experts believed that the duck might be killed by human. Another duck might have died as the signal was sent from a residence's garden in Russian," she said.

Researchers across the border have worked closely to get a full picture of the migratory route from Hong Kong to mainland China.

WWF also partnered Asia Ecological Consultants and the US Geological Survey to study the role of migratory birds in the ecology and epidemiology of avian diseases, including avian influenza.

The project was praised for its role in enhancing international cooperation.

"Migratory birds fly from one country to another, so the protection cannot continue without cooperation," said Dr Yu Xiaojiang, assistant professor in geography at Hong Kong Baptist University.

"The project could help related areas establish effective protection policies. If any country's protection is troubled by local government or some other factors, pressures from other countries will have some positive effects," he said.

EDITED BY JADE SHEN

ENVIRONMENT

Demand for qualified eco tour guides rises

BY VIVIAN CHUI

The shortage of professional eco tour guides is worrying local travel agencies.

Eco tours are usually available at weekends and tour guides can only make several hundred dollars per tour. So many eco tour guides are working on part time basis, despite increasing demand.

"More and more Hong Kong people are interested in exploring the natural environment," said Mr Chung Chak-wun, the founder of the Woodland Power Limited which organises eco tour.

"This [trend] is especially obvious after the SARS. People don't want an ordinary trip. They want to know more about the natural environment instead. For example, they want to know the names of the rocks, birds, or the geological functions of the red forest," said Mr Chung.

Eco tour guides are not the same as other travel tour guides. Knowledge of the environment is a must to ensure that participants can learn from them. For example, they need to talk about the features and functions of red forest when they visit one.

There is a shortage of professional eco tour guides in the face of increasing demand for eco tours, especially after the opening of the Hong Kong National Geopark.

"One of the reasons is that the general salary of eco tour guides is not satisfactory. Most of the eco tour guides are only freelancers," Mr Chung said.

The Hong Kong Wetland Park Volunteer Scheme was launched in 2002 by Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. The volunteers can become eco tour guides in the park through different trainings.

Mr Li Yui-yuen is a nature lover and joined the voluntary service after he retired.

"You can apply for the eco tour guide scheme after completing the basic training course for volunteers. Further training will be provided for the guided interpretation service," he said.

Volunteers who registered the eco tour guide scheme are required to attend practical sessions of at least 20 hours.

There will be an assessment to ensure that they deliver accurate information and correct ecotourism concepts.



Photo: Connie Wan

Mr Li Yui-yuen (left), a volunteer tour guide at Hong Kong Wetland Park, is describes the Hong Kong Abacus Plant to visitors.

According to Mr Chung, one cannot become an eco tour guide immediately after they finish a course in ecotourism.

"You need to work as a helper to gain relevant experience," he said.

Besides, there are always some participants with high academic qualifications. They may be professionals or doctors. Guides may not have the knowledge to answer the questions they ask.

Mr Chung said it took a long process to be a professional and an all-rounded eco tour guide.

As an eco tour guide himself, Mr Chung added that there were some tour guides who failed to respect the natural environment.

"Sometimes they use loud speakers. This is just not acceptable," he said.

Ms Lai Sau-ying is not only a volunteer tour guide in the Hong Kong Wetland park but also a part-time courier for local tours.

"In Hong Kong, eco tour guides don't need any license or qualification.

"Sometimes I can see the 'eco tour' guides bringing a large group of tourist to the sites and present wrong information to them. It is irresponsible and the participants can hardly learn from the trip," she said.

The government has organised free geo-tours with qualified tour guide to the Hong Kong National Geo-park from November 2009 to March 2010.

Five routes were planned, including High

Island Reservoir, Sharp Island and Jin Island, Lai Chi Chong, Port Island and Wong Chuk Kok Tsui, Tung Ping Chau.

While the quota for these free geo-tours are already full, there will be a fixed point tour organised every Sunday and public holiday in High Island.

Mr Lam Yui-fong, senior country parks officer of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said the fixed point tour was an additional tour created due to the high demand from the public.

"The tour is not part of the plan initially. Many people have been asking for eco tour on High Island, we arranged this tour to satisfy the visitors' demand," said Mr Lam.

Mr Owen Richard Bernhart, professor of the department of geography at Hong Kong Baptist University said that it was important to protect the environment when developing ecotourism in Hong Kong.

"It is good that Hong Kong people see what Hong Kong people own, as the land belongs to Hong Kong people, they should have access to it.

"However, you still have to protect the land, so there is a balance which needs to be reached," said the professor.

"Ecotourism is about tourists visiting places with minimal or preferably no impact on the environment," he said.

EDITED BY CONNIE WAN

BUSINESS

Bubble tea: boom or yet another bubble?

BY CARRIE CHENG

Taiwan-style bubble tea has made a big comeback recently, but some are wondering how long before the fad fades.

Since Gong Cha first entered Hong Kong in March last year, other brands have joined the market.

"I love drinking bubble tea very much, but the price was relatively expensive. It was about \$30 per cup. And the portions were too small. A man could finish it by one to two sips," Mr KK Ng, the first franchisee of Gong Cha in Hong Kong, said.

Bubble tea contains a Chinese tea base mixed with milk. It comes with tapioca balls, known as "pearls" in Chinese.

Mr Ng said the image and products of Gong Cha were suitable for Hong Kong people. As Gong Cha is not a big brand in Taiwan, it is relatively cheaper to start a franchised shop. So he joined this bubble tea company rather than others.

In fact, bubble tea is no stranger to Hong Kong people – the first bubble tea café, Saint Alps, emerged in the city 16 years ago. The number of its branches once peaked at 30.

The chain is expanding rapidly. Now Gong Cha has opened 14 branches in less than a year, overriding Saint Alps' 13 branches.

One of their outlets located in Dundas Street in Mongkok sells 1,000 to 1,500 cups per day on average, according to Mr Ng. He said the daily turnover was about 2,000 during the summer peak season.

Tsang Wing-yu, 16, buys Gong Cha whenever she is in Mongkok, but she said it was a bit expensive for her.

Another customer, Mr Leung Wai-kin, in his twenties, said, "I have tried other brands, but I like Gong Cha more."

When Mr Ng first introduced bubble tea takeaway shop to Hong Kong, there was no competitor. Several other brands, including Royal Tea, joined the competition later on.

Royal Tea will start its business and plan to open 15 branches in Hong Kong in this year, according to Mr Tai Hung-chan, who is in charge of their Hong Kong business.

Mr Tai thought the leading brands in Hong Kong were not famous in Taiwan and their products are not good enough. He said Gong Cha was successful just because the first store is situated at a prime location.

"I cannot stand still and watch those brands gaining a big profit here," Mr Tai said.



Long queues remain a common sight outside Gong Cha in Mongkok.

Royal Tea has some strategies to stand out from existing brands.

Mr Tai planned to sell buns alongside drinks to enrich the business.

"We will directly go to offices and persuade them to order our products," he said.

Its competitor, Gong Cha would maintain their tea quality to secure its foothold.

Although bubble teas are in a big hit, there are some limitations for investors to expand their business in the long run in Hong Kong.

The capital needed to set up a shop is about \$300,000. Franchising fee made up half of the cost, while rents, human resources and ingredients make up the rest.

Mr Tai said several interested parties have approached him. But they all gave up franchising because of lack of capital.

"I can say the trend will surely come to an end," Dr Alex Tsang Sze-lung, assistant professor in marketing at Hong Kong Baptist

University, said.

"Hong Kong people think bubble tea is different from 'silk stocking' milk tea' (Hong Kong-style milk tea). They see 'silk stocking milk tea' as a cultural tradition in Hong Kong," Dr Tsang added.

Still, investors are optimistic about this Taiwan-style drinks fad in Hong Kong.

Mr Tai originally planned to invest \$500,000, but he has put \$800,000 into his business in the end.

"Bubble tea was created 20 years ago. Still, the sales have been growing," the franchiser, who moved to Hong Kong one year ago to observe the market, said.

"Taiwan's culture and Hong Kong's culture are more or less the same in terms of dining habits... The sales of bubble tea will keep growing for at least 10 years," he added.

EDITED BY SIMPSON CHEUNG

Women feel the world through sensitive lens

BY MAGGIE TAM

Drops of dew hanging on a vine, cherries lying on the fruit tray and smiles in the sunshine: photos taken by women are often said to be based on feelings over technology.

More and more ladies fall in love with it in our city and they are trying to work out a unique way of photography. Some even started an online photography magazine only for female to gather friends who share the same interest.

"Women are not interested in the complicated data analysis of camera stated in those magazines like men do. We realised that there're a certain number of girls in Hong Kong who love photography, possesses single-lens reflex cameras and only pay attention on the feeling of their pictures. We wanted to gather them all so we started [a]

website," Ms Jenny Suen Lok-yi, local designer and the founder of *Fillens*, said.

Fillens, the first Chinese online female photography magazine, is named after a combination of "Fille", which means female in French, and "Lens" in English.

Meanwhile, *Fillens* resembles the pronunciation of "feelings", which implies that women put more emphasis on the feeling of the photo, while men focus more on photo-taking technical skills and the choice of equipment. The readership is over 13,000.

Members of *Fillens* upload their photos to the website and some of the shots are chosen to be published in the magazine issued every three months. The target audience is mainly ladies aged from 20 to 40.

Fillens only provides some basic photography skills to its members, but no professional training. Its main purpose is sharing, not teaching. It also holds some photo-taking gatherings for members from time to time.

Ms Connie Cheng Wing-sum, a secretary and part-time photographer, is an active member of *Fillens*.

"I had many girlfriends interested in photography. I'm overjoyed to meet more and more after I joined *Fillens*. It's a great platform solely for girls," she said.

"Some boys look down upon girls. They may think we can't even manage to carry the heavy single-lens reflex cameras with our tiny hands," she added.

"They are photography lovers, but not photographers. Most women enjoy taking photos without knowing cameras well. Men consider both the skills and the feelings of the picture while most women only pay attention to the latter," Mr Steven Wong Chun-kin, a 31-year-old property agent and an amateur photographer, said.

"Men regard themselves better in terms of the knowledge on camera equipment than women," said Mr Alex Tam Tsz-wai, the founder of *Fotobeginner.com*, a website for photography beginners.

"Male beginners spend more time on their skills and the quality of the equipment. But after they have a better grasp of techniques, they then focus more on the art and overall feeling of the pictures as well. We also want to express some emotion through pictures," he said.

"Women enjoy capturing every interesting bit of life. Men may tend to show off their skills and equipment instead," said Ms Ho Wai-hin, a 21-year-old local university student, who is a new fan of photography.

When considering buying a camera, Ms Ho is not really interested in unintelligible specification of those cameras, but only want one can capture beautiful pictures.

Many famous camera brands have approached *Fillens* to put advertisement in the magazine. Ms Suen mentioned that the market of male photography has already saturated. By introducing light and colourful cameras to attract ladies, many brands are now beginning to open up the female market.

"Our magazine does not provide any specification analysis, but simply show photos taken by each different camera. Our members can judge whether they should purchase it from photo quality," she said.

Mr Tam also agreed that female put more emphasis on the outcome of the photos, rather than the specification.

He regards women always do better on seizing feelings as women are born more sensual, but denies men ignore this aspect.

"Actually it all depends on individual, not gender. Photography is equal for both genders," he said, "art is subjective anyway."



Females tend to capture small objects in detail (above) while males tend to focus on the whole picture (below). (Courtesy: Brenda Chung, Thomas Yau)

EDITED BY MILEY LI

Ballroom blitz draws more schoolchildren

BY TIFFANY HO

Under the spotlight are schoolchildren in pairs, wearing rhinestoned costumes and overly dramatic make-up dancing away in great harmony.

Not everyone who learns ballroom dancing is going to take up the stage, but ballroom dancing, officially called dancesport, has become a hot craze in classrooms across Hong Kong, with a three-fold increase in the number of students attending regular classes organised by Hong Kong DanceSport Association Limited (HKDSA) in five years.

"Ballroom dance is a type of sport, art, and entertainment", Mr George Kwan, HKDSA's secretary general, who has engaged in it for over thirty years, said.

Over 800 students in local elementary

schools and secondary schools participate in the afterschool leisure ballroom lessons co-organised by HKDSA in their home school in 2009, compared to 200 students five years ago. Among them, four per cent of the participants have continued with advanced level training after the course.

HKDSA, established in 1998, is one of the few non-profit making dance associations in the city and a part of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, International DanceSport Federation (IDSF), and Asian DanceSport Federation (ADSF).

It aims at creating a quality and unified dancing environment for the public and to promote ballroom dancing to youth. The association has been providing lessons and organising competitions at an affordable price for schoolchildren to take part in.

"For most competitions, we do not charge admission fees for audience but only a small fee for competitors (\$100 per dance style)," Mr Kwan explains.

Youngsters are put through their paces as they attempt the waltz, jive, cha-cha and quick step - and other styles of ballroom dancing, creating their own titillating version of cha-cha-one-two-three or slow-slow-quick-quick-slow dance routines.

"It's a great way to make friends and to get some exercise", Ms Kanny Lee King-yi, 21, president of Hong Kong Baptist University DanceSport Society, says.

She adds that dancesport is interesting as both a sport for those who approach it competitively, and also as an entertainment for those who approach it as audience.

Mr Wing Nga-wing, 21, a second-year student at HKBU, started dancing two years ago and joined a

citywide competition recently.

"Dancing boosted my confidence and body coordination," he says.

As there are more young people engaging into the sport, competitions of different levels have sprung up in the past couple of years.

One is an inter-school dancesport competition held in March last year for primary school competitors aged from five to twelve.

A professional one is The First Hong Kong DanceSport Grand Slam organised by HKDSA held on January 31.

Competitors are required to follow rules regarding step figures and dress code set up by the International Dancesport Federation (IDSF).

Winners from about five categories are provided with free trainings for one year, and then take part in the coming Asian Games in Guangzhou.

Ms Holly Yau Sin-ting, 22, will attend an international competition in Shanghai this year, partnering with a handicapped professional dancer on wheels to strive for good results in the wheelchair dancesport category. She shares her experience when competing in high competitive level games.

"Costume, hair, and make-up are very important. We spend long hours designing costumes and doing hair and make-up before competitions", Ms Yau explains that it is more than dancing spectacularly on the dance floor, looking glamorously eye-catching is equally important.

Her joy of dance is being able to express her emotion freely by feeling and moving every muscle to the music.

"Dancing is the greatest form in expressing one's passion and emotion," she says.

Mr Kwan says, "Ballroom dance is great for people from age three to eighty", adding that with the effort of HKDSA, he hopes Hong Kong will become a "dancesport city" in the future.



Competitors under 11 dance the Tango in The First Hong Kong DanceSport Grand Slam.

Ballroom dancing categories

STANDARD:	LATIN:
- Slow Waltz	- Samba
- Slow Fox-trot	- Rumba
- Tango	- Cha-Cha
- Quick Step	- Paso Doble
- Viennese Waltz	- Jive

EDITED BY NATALIE WONG

Speedy Frisbee flies in HK university

BY MINERVA CHENG

Ultimate Frisbee or Ultimate is the newest sport at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) as a student society was set up in 2009. However, the flying disc did not reach other institutions due to limited space.

Mr Herman Chen Wing-wai, president of Ultimate CUHK, said the campus is more spacious than other local universities, so he established this student society to promote the sport in campus.

A standard ultimate field measures 110 metres by 37 metres, which is of similar length but half the width to a standard football pitch.

Therefore, area is important to ultimate development.

Dr Lobo H.T. Louie, an associate professor in physical education at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), said CUHK has sports fields which can meet the need for a standard ultimate game.

On the other hand, The City University of Hong Kong and HKBU do not have their own grass pitch or adequate open space. Instead, they share the Joint Sports Centre with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

People's interest in this game of plastic disc throwing is important to its development too.

Ms Amily Lam Ki-sum, a year two student at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), has not heard of the sport before and she does not think there will be an ultimate student society in HKU.

"There are lots of other sports like hockey and rugby which are unique in the HKU, people may not be interested in it," she said.

Mr Danny Ho Yuk-wa, a year three student at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), does not think there will be an ultimate student society in his university.

"Not many people in the HKUST love exercising, but it may be good to promote the sports here," he said.

Although CUHK can provide more space for its students to have weekly practices and master basic techniques like throwing and catching, lack of outside competitors becomes a concern to the Frisbee players.

"I wish to play Ultimate with students from other universities. It's a kind of culture exchange," Ms Wendy Wong Yuen-ting, a member of the Ultimate CUHK, said.

Right now, the society has around 80 members and the active ones are mostly exchange students from the USA, Canada



CUHK students practice Ultimate Frisbee weekly on their campus.

and UK. However, these exchange students usually stay on the campus for only one or two semesters.

To promote the sport in other universities that have limited open space, Dr Louie suggested that rules and regulations could be simplified.

For instance, he said that it could reduce the number of players to save more space, or else it would be dangerous to passers-by.

"There is actually a potential for the development of Ultimate in other universities," he said.

In the future, we may see the CUHK team of CUHK compete with other universities. Actually, joint-university competition is not a new idea in the world. For example, UPA College Championship Series have attracted over 11,000 student athletes on more than 650 college teams across North America.

The popularity of this game not only arises from the excitement it brings to athletes, but also the benefit to health.

Dr Louie said that Ultimate is good for our nervous system as it helps develop and train our hand-eye coordination.

And the professor believed Ultimate is good for amateur sports players, although he pointed out that most parks do not allow visitors to play this kind of throw-and-catch game.

"We play shuttlecock kicking in the Chinese world; in the west, they play Ultimate," the professor said.

Ms Apple Tong, president of the Hong Kong Ultimate Players' Association, said the majority of Ultimate players in Hong Kong are foreigners. Thus, the association is trying to attract more locals to the sports through training programmes.

The Ultimate CUHK is also recruiting more new blood. Mr Chen said another group

of Ultimate lovers was forming the second cabinet.

And he said it was just the second year of this sport game and it would take much longer to see the impact of their work.

"We are trying to 'localise' Ultimate. We hope there will be time when it no longer favors exchange students only," the president said.

More about Ultimate...

INITIATE PLAY

Each point begins with both teams lining up on the front of their respective endzone line. The defense throws ("pulls") the disc to the offense. A regulation game has seven players per team.

SCORING

Each time the offense completes a pass in the defense's endzone, the offense scores a point. Play is initiated after each score.

NON-CONTACT

No physical contact is allowed between players. Picks and screens are also prohibited.

SPIRIT OF THE GAME

Ultimate stresses sportsmanship and fair play. Competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect between players, adherence to the rules, and the basic joy of play.

Source : www.hkupa.com

EDITED BY SAMSON LEE

FEATURES



Members of the Snow Cleaning Team work hard to clear the road in Jingshan Park after a record snow hits Beijing.

GLOBAL

Beijing keeps cool with better snow forecasts

BY CATHIE GUO

The alarm clock went off at 7 am. as usual, but the sky seemed a little brighter on the third day of the New Year in Beijing. The whole city turned white in front of her eyes as Ms Hu Minglu, a retired nurse, revealed a literal snow curtain outside her windows.

After breakfast, Ms Hu heard a broadcast from the An Ding Men community in the neighborhood. Putting on a thick coat, she joined the snow cleaning team there with a broom and a shovel in her hands.

“What a heavy snow!” Ms Hu said excitedly. “It was the 70s’ tradition that people swept away snow on the street. Today I’m happy to experience it again.”

While people in Beijing were complaining about global warming for watering down the coldness of their New Year, a record snow in 59 years seemed to have caught them off guard on January 3, 2010.

In fact, this record snow had brought back memories of genuinely cold winters in the city few decades ago.

60s: Icicle and Coal

There was a three-day blizzard starting from February 19, 1966. 76-year-old Mr Gu Weijun vividly recalled those chilly days,

“Eating icicles under the eaves everywhere was one of our fondest childhood

memories in winter and you did not need to worry about pollutions back then,” he said.

In the 60s, people were still using coal to stay warm. When winter came, schools would hire workers to burn coal before students’ arrival.

Ms Li Ping, a 49-year-old shop assistant, said of her experience, “Every morning when we got to school, the flaming stove was surrounded by kids. Our faces and hands would turn red as apples.”

70s: Revolution and -20C

According to the Beijing Weather Bureau, the temperature in the city dropped to -20.1 degree Celsius on January 5, 1970. Despite such an abrupt change, reports on the bad weather were rare.

Mr Zhang Jianguo, a 60-year-old worker, said it was actually an era in which everyone was talking about was the Cultural Revolution. He said, “From newspaper to broadcast, the Revolution was everything.”

That said, people still had their memorable moments. “There were not many games for kids but my father would always drive me in an ice wagon in winter days,” said Ms Pan Wenhong, a 37-year-old housewife.

80s: Ash and Radiator

When the city stepped into the 80s, automobiles gradually replaced bicycles and the resultant traffic issues started to attract attention. As more cars were on the streets, the government had to use ash to prevent

slipping. “I remembered there was no longer white snow but dirty ash,” said Ms Pan.

While traffic became a serious problem, heating solutions underwent significant improvement as radiators gradually replaced coal. As Ms Li said, “Instead of stoves, we used radiators to heat up our lunch boxes.”

2000+: Traffic and Forecast

With deicing salt replacing ash and public transport getting humanised, transportation problems such as road closure, traffic paralysis and tumbling injuries have become main public concerns in the snowy days in Beijing in the last 20 years.

On June 11, 2007, the China Meteorological Administration issued the “Meteorological Disaster Early Warning Signal Distribution and Communication Methods” to ensure adequate preparation for extreme weathers.

As for the recent record snow, Mr Guo Hu, manager of the Beijing Meteorological Bureau, said they had issued relevant weather forecasts to make sure Beijing Traffic Management Bureau could start up emergency plans to ensure smooth traffic.

Even so, Mr Guo suggested people not entirely rely on the forecast given that Beijing was still under extreme weather condition.

“People should realise that they are facing global warming today and there will be more unpredictable weather changes ahead,” he said.

EDITED BY YVONNE LOU

TRAVEL

Innsbruck: a must-go for ski and museum lovers

BY SYBIL KOT

It is a brand new morning in the city of Innsbruck in Austria. The sun scatters away the clouds and sheds light on the Triumph Arch. The holiday crowds have vanished from the town square and the city of Innsbruck returns to its pleasant tranquility. In Between Christmas and Easter is the time when the number of tourists drops and locals can enjoy the city by themselves. It is also the time for budget travelers to take a closer look to the city's magnificent nature surroundings and cultural heritages.

Innsbruck is the capital city of Tyrol province in Western Austria. It is a city built on a broad valley surrounded by ranges of mountains and glaciers on the Alpine highlands. It is also a world renowned winter sport paradise. As host of both 1964 and 1976 Winter Olympics, Innsbruck has one of the most renowned skiing and snowboarding infrastructures and cable car system in the world.

For the winter sport fanatics on a smaller budget, the Innsbruck Ski Package would be very much helpful. The package covers bus transfer from Innsbruck, one-day liftpass to the glacier and ski/snowboard rental at the ski resorts for €56 (\$598) per person. Buy the ticket at any tourist information centre in the city. Hungerburgbahn is the magical rail connecting the city centre and the glaciers, travelers can reach 3,000 metres above sea level in less than 20 minutes. It also stops at the Alpenzoo, which is the highest zoo in Europe and contains the biggest collections of several Alpine species.

Those who are obsessed with European culture and history would not be disappointed by Innsbruck. The city offers a great lot of historical architectures and museums. Hofkirche on Universitäts Strasse is the famous Gothic church contains the cen-

taph of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and the tomb of Austrian national hero, Andreas Hofer. The church has a very remarkable collection of 28 German Renaissance bronze statues. It offers a multimedia tour which visitors can easily obtained background information about the church and the emperor. The museum charges a €2 (\$21) entry fee for students from any country.

Other major historical sites includes the Golden Roof, St. Jacob Cathedral, and Schloss Ambras, the imperial court.

If you want to have a typical Austrian experience, a coffee and a piece of cake at Café Central would be the best choice. This Austrian Kaffehaus, which the locals would call "everyone's living room", offers high-quality coffee and fantastic local desserts at reasonable prices. Local people can easily spend an afternoon in this place talking with friends. If you have a loose schedule, never forget to pay a visit and enjoy the moments.

Travel Tips

- ◆ Bear in mind that Austria has a strict law on longest working hour. Shops start closing down right after 7 pm. and there is no such thing as 24-hour convenient store. Buy your supplies before hand!
- ◆ Though the city has a high-developed tram system, it is better to walk as everything is within walking distance.
- ◆ In Austria, drinks like fresh fruit juice and wine are mixed with either still or sparkling water. If you want the drinks to be served as they are, tell your waiter/waitress while ordering.



Innsbruck is a very important transport terminal in central Europe. It directly connects Munich, Germany to the North and Verona, Italy to the south. If you plan to travel these countries, don't forget to stop by Innsbruck.

More information on transportation:

2 hours by train to Munich, Germany
2 hours by train to Salzburg, Austria
5 hours by train to Vienna, Austria
6 hours by train to Verona, Italy
9 hours by train to Venice, Italy
10 hours by train to Prague, Czech Republic
12 hours by train to Budapest, Hungary

EDITED BY EDITH TSANG



Colourful houses in European style line up along the Inn River.

COVER STORIES



Labelling the Post-80s

Young people engaged in social movements were labelled as "post-80s". Are they really radical, violent and over idealistic? Do they have solid grounding to support what they do? Andy Au Yeung, Vera Chen and Jessica Zhang find out what they think.



What did the "adults" do when they were young...



60s: 1967 Leftist Riots



70s: 1971 First Tiaoyu Islands Protest



80s: 1989 June Tiananmen Crackdown



Photo: Thomas Yau

Young messages yet to be heard

The tag of “post-80s” has drawn the attention of local public and media.

Members of the “Post-80s Anti-Express Rail” group petitioned outside Legislative Council with a clear message - shelve plans for the SAR’s 26-kilometre section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and restart the consultation.

The then peaceful group was found on January 16 confronting the police as they refuse to leave the Legco without meeting the pro-constitution legislators.

The media tag the lot after protestors calling themselves “post-80s” lashed out at the barricade of the Central People’s Government’s Liaison Office at the end of the New Year Day rally.

The term “post-80s” was first coined in the mainland. It refers to the social group who are born after the year 1980, the “Generation Y” of China. “Post-80s” are distinguished by growing with over-indulgence from their parents who have grown rich rapidly because of the country’s aggressive economic expansion.

Instead of enjoying the new found pleasure of capitalism like their mainland counterparts do, the “post-80s” of Hong Kong are believed to have suffered from it.

According to the media, the “post-80s” are angry with their dismal situation; they feel underpaid and have a negative prospect of their career. They cannot enjoy the success their previous generation has as economic development had slowed down.

Some think they are a group of political radicals. Some think they are just a group on the Facebook social network. However, the group of young people refuses to submit to what the society thinks of them. They believe not only their voices are not heard, they are being secluded.

The public believe the “post-80s” took to the streets and behaved radically just to let out their anger and discontent with their lives, they are branded a disturbance to social order.

“These adults believe that the “post-80s” group are only staging a farce with the protest against the high speed railway link”, said Ms Ng Tsz-yan, a young protestor at the petition outside Legislative Council.

“The older generations of the society mistrust us. They won’t believe in what we are striking for. It is ridiculous,” she added.

“Post-80s” activists felt that they are being marginalised by the rest of the society.

“Yes they are. It’s inevitable,” said Ms Jessica Mo Lai-ching, a reporter who covered the Anti-Express Rail Link movement. She thought the press was responsible for their bad reputation.

Ms Mo reckoned that the term “post-80s” was overused by the media.

To simplify news and draw the public’s attention, catchy words like “post-80s” are often preferred by the media over specific phrases.

“Reporters focus on the most newsworthy aspect in their reporting, which are in this case the “post-80s” social activists and their confrontation with the police. It makes it easier for the public to associate them with the negative impressions,” she added.

Rather than accusing the media, Mr Tung Kai-cheung, author who spoke in the protest, thought the term itself as a label has no problem. It is just how people perceive it.

“It just means a group of people who care about the social issue and want more social participation. I don’t think “post-80s” are radical people. Their behaviours are based on thought. The protest is not radical but peaceful. It is the government and the conservative society which cause these problems,” he said.

Not only are the “post-80s” subject to criticism from their forerunners, they feel antipathy from their own generation too.

People who were born in the 80s loathed the idea of being categorised as post-80s, regarding it as a stigma which relates them with immaturity and radicalism.

“That’s a somewhat shallow thought,” said Ms Mo, “Hong Kong is a diverse society, and it is good to have a larger variety of voices. I’m proud to see people of my age standing out and speaking up.”

“There is no one-to-one relationship between age and political orientations as the formation of social and political attitudes is a highly complex process,” Mr Leung Hon-chu, principal lecturer who teaches Hong Kong Society in department of sociology at HKBU, said.



4
down



90s - 1996 Landing on
Tiaoyu Islands

COVER STORIES



While the so-called Post-80s are trying every means to get their voice heard, *The Young Reporter* interviewed a group of young people with different stance and views towards the label and express rail link project. Here are what they say...



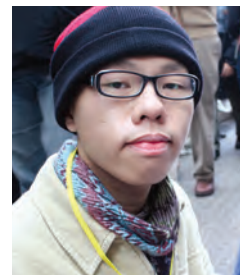
Mr Chan King-fai, 28, is a core member of the Post-80s Anti-Express Railway Group.

"To our generation, the experience to the city is different. Super mall is not a sign of modernisation, but over-modernisation. It's boring, repetitive, and homogeneous, which leads to our childhood with no story, no memory, and no identification. This experience motivates us into protecting local culture [and] fighting for a suitable space for us to live in."



Mr Pang Ho-yan, 20, disproves of the government's attitude.

"Some people in our generations seldom care about politics. But I think as a person who is just, conscious, he should stand out and fight injustice. And I'm not protesting against the railway proposal, I'm protesting against the government's attitude."



Mr Chan Siu-kei, 26, teacher, came to the protest to observe young peoples' behaviour.

"It's good that those young people have passion about politics. This should be encouraged. But I hope they will be more rational in the future. I also hope that young people don't label themselves. Some of them are radical because the society has many rules and they may feel repression and being disregarded. The process is painful, but the society should be pluralistic and be more tolerating to the young."



Mr Lau Ka-ling, 23, is against the railway proposal.

"It's unbearable not being informed by the government. We can fight for the ideal society we dreamed of. I don't want to be trapped in the world that deceives us."



Mr Anderson Cheung Sze-chun, 26, vice president of the Young DAB is the creator of the Facebook group "I was born in post-80s. I dislike radicalism."

"I think the label will make radical people more radical. Everyone has the right to voice his own opinions but it is unacceptable if this is done in a radical way or causing disturbance and harm to the others."



Mr To Chor-ka, 26, student, is an organiser of a sit-down demonstration in support of the railway project.

"Post-80s against the project only represent part of the generation. This is not reflecting the truth. Since they have no trust in the government, they won't support everything the government does. But a bad guy can also do good things. I hope there will be more peace. I didn't join any radical protests and I am never ready to bleed."





Vangi Fong

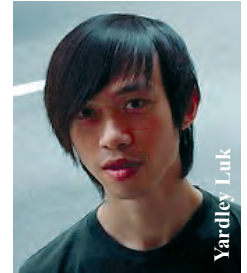
Ms Vangi Fong Wan-chi, 25, founder of Complaints Choir of Hong Kong, thinks it would be fine if people use the term "post 80s" to refer to the age group, but not if it means being radical.

"Not everyone prefers protesting or getting involved in radical behaviours, so they choose to join us," Ms Fong said. "We use a more moderate way. We use music to show our concern."



Mr Yardley Luk Wai-kit, 26, social media specialist, chooses not to use to term "post-80s"

"I would rather choose not to use this term. It is more appropriate to describe mainland situation. I would use the term 'the fourth generation' (proposed by Mr Lui Tai-lok). It can better describe our local situation. I think 'post 80s' is an example of magic words' overused by the media. Just like the media like to add an 'i' or 'e' in front of terms to make it looks IT-related, it is a cycle. Soon there will be another term replacing 'post 80s'."



Yardley Luk

Mr Chung Wing-yuen, 26, is the host of a café set up with a fund collected on Facebook and also also the founder of the group "Post-80s Entrepreneur Corps".

"Many youngsters have no job or can't make much money, so they are not satisfied with the government. Starting a business is the most constructive social behaviour. It can make us rich, create jobs and reduce social problems. We young people have creativity, vitality and internet. We should make good use of them and can come up with ideas together to start business and improve our living quality, but not through protests."



Mr Lai Chung-hei, 20, tour guide, supports the building of the express railway.

"Some young people didn't do much analysis and were easily being instigated. They have some radical behaviours, but they should know these will affect others' normal life and they shouldn't do that. It is important for young people to be more rational, see and analyse things in different angles. If young people can't do that, they may make mistakes in life."



Mr Wong Ho-yin, 25, is a core member of the Post-80s Anti-Express Railway Group.

"After a few years, we will dominate the society and we must accept the result of the development of the city today. So we have the responsibility to think about the city's future. I'm different from the last generation on the concept of fortune. Villagers who lives harmoniously in Tsoi Yuen Tsuen are a good example. It's unnecessary to exhaust resources to make money."



Peter Yim

Mr Kong Kwai-sang, 28, is the convenor of the Youth Union.

"For every generation, the youths are the ones being oppressed, being deprived of rights. There are many restrictions to young people...As the youths can't change the situation of being oppressed, they can only resort to taking part in other heated social activities to release their discontent."

Further reading :

Radical but (stay) rational
by Claudia Mo on page 20

WRITTEN BY ANDY AU YEUNG, VERA CHEN, JESSICA ZHANG
EDITED BY JOJO CHOI, SYBIL KOT, VANESSA YUNG

INTERVIEWS

Pong Nan - A music man with an attitude

BY CANDICE WONG

By popular standards, Pong Nan is quite an eccentric in local showbiz. The pop icon is known for composing gloomy hit songs, for his indifference to media exposure, for his affluent background, and lately for his brutal honesty on talent shows.

For a musician of character, Nan was practical as a kid. The five-year-old started fumbling with the piano keys, simply to meet the school musical requirement.

"It was rather a need than an interest at that time," said Pong Nan, now 31, a singer-songwriter of East Asia Music (Holdings) Limited.

Young Nan proceeded to fail almost all the classical piano exams, and eventually gave up at Grade 4. But his real talent budged when he discovered pop music. The song *Who I Love Most* by George Lam Chi-cheung, Nan said, evoked his potential.

"It is the first song which melody I could play without a music score, later I learnt it's called ear-playing. I was about six or seven years old," he said.

The family moved to Canada when Nan was ten. There, Nan was taught to appreciate diverse music genres. By the late 1980s, "I was able to get in touch with music of different styles, like rap and heavy metal," he recalled.

Despite his fondness for music, he did not attend any music academy. Instead he got his bachelor degree from Georgetown University, Washington. He believed "studying is about learning more about the world and developing a sense on current affairs". His major was International Politics and Culture.

Nan was an office boy before he became a part-time composer behind the scenes. The rookie then proved himself front stage material. He sent the song *Happy Prince* to the Commercial Radio. And it finished at the top of the billboard.

But the supernova soon found himself in a dilemma. "I planned to be a low-key singer-songwriter that doesn't do any interviews or even show my face on the CD cover," said Nan, who signed up with Sony Music (now Sony BMG) in 2004. "But when it comes to advertising, I found it really contradictive.

And I had a hard time adapting to it."

After multiple attempts to blend in, he thought he had grasped the rules. "As an artist, I have certain compromises in my career but other than that, I will hold my stance firmly."

Nan's edges remained rough over the years and became his signature. In a local talent contest, *"The Voice"*, the tough judge told a contestant explicitly: "You are not a good singer".

More merciless comments spread on the media like a wild fire. People treat him as a local equivalent of Simon Cowell on American Idol.

The music insider has sat behind various judging tables. "I knew it from the beginning that people would have doubts about my ability, but I'm sure that I am qualified enough."

Aside from intensive television appearances, Nan tasted many first-times in 2009. He released two CDs in one year, held a concert with a harpsichord and participated in a movie. "I was pretty satisfied with 2009," he said with a gentle smile.

"In 2009 people remembered me for what I have said. For 2010 I hope people will remember me for what I have sung."

This year, Nan is anticipating

ting a breakthrough in his music. "For the past six years, my songs were unintentionally like preachment of life principles or too rational in a sense, I think it's time for an evolution."

In the coming album, he has made sure to include "mixed styles of songs with sustained quality".

His fans though, seem to like him the way he is now.

A critic on Hong Kong pop music, Professor Chu Yiu-wai, acknowledged Pong Nan's works. "He has a comprehensive style in composing and it's special of him to produce non-mainstream pop songs, even though it is gloomy in a sense. If this can be further developed, he could establish his own style."

But for the son of an unconventional adult toy tycoon, music is not the only option.

"My ideal plan is to run a concert in the Hong Kong Coliseum within three to five years. After that, I will leave the stage. I am not Andy Lau. I don't want to be a singer my whole life," he said.

"Who knows what I will be doing afterwards? I could be helping out with my family business, or maybe studying, teaching... or how about being a manager?"

"In 2009 people remembered me for what I have said. For 2010 I hope people will remember me for what I have sung."

EDITED BY ECHO CHEN

INTERVIEWS

BMX champion Wong triumphs with can-do spirit

BY INES NARVAEZ

A decade ago in the city of Dessel, Belgium, an 11-year-old won the opening race of a new bicycle motocross (BMX). From that day he has been a patron of these games he won.

The Hong Kong's first gold medallist for the 2009 East Asian Games said all the hard work that goes behind the scenes is not reflected in the 30 to 40 seconds in the race.

The studious athlete usually has two training sessions, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The only time he rests is Wednesday and Sunday afternoons.

It is just after lunch when Steven Wong talks to *The Young Reporter*, he has already burnt off a few thousands calories on the road. He says, "Sometimes I do 30 to 40 km, sometimes 60 to 70 km, which is not too bad."

"This knee hurts now, my back hurts so much now, but that's life right?" Wong adds. "It's part of the job. Your body gets used to it."

Injuries and pain are no strangers to him. He has a broken knee and a cracked hip. He has even brushed with death in recent year.



Wong on his ride at the HKJC International BMX Park in Kwai Chung. (Courtesy: Rex Lau)

Two years ago, he was sent to hospital during a race in which the handlebar of his bike punctured his liver, causing internal bleeding.

He recalled that his liver was severely damaged that the doctor said he would die if the bleeding did not stop within three minutes.

Thanks to a naturally higher count of red blood cells in his body, his endurance and strength were back to normal conditions in an unexpectedly fast pace.

Another accident caused injuries to his right knees. Physicians took most cartilages inside away and the patella was wired because it was fractured inside.

"There is still some [cartilage], but I don't think there is much left at all," he says in a placid tone as if it had happened to someone else.

There have been troughs in his athletic career when it was just one and a half months before the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Wong crashed in the qualifying race and almost broke his neck. The price to pay was failing to enter his most anticipated event.

"I felt bad that I couldn't go and get the experience of my life, but on the other hand, I wasn't strong enough, I wasn't fast enough," he says.

The passion he has for BMX is undeniable. He repeats, "I love BMX. I just love BMX." Ranging from BMX bikes, road bikes to mountain bikes, which he can look after all by himself.

"My mechanics are actually really good, and when something happens I don't want to blame other people," he says.

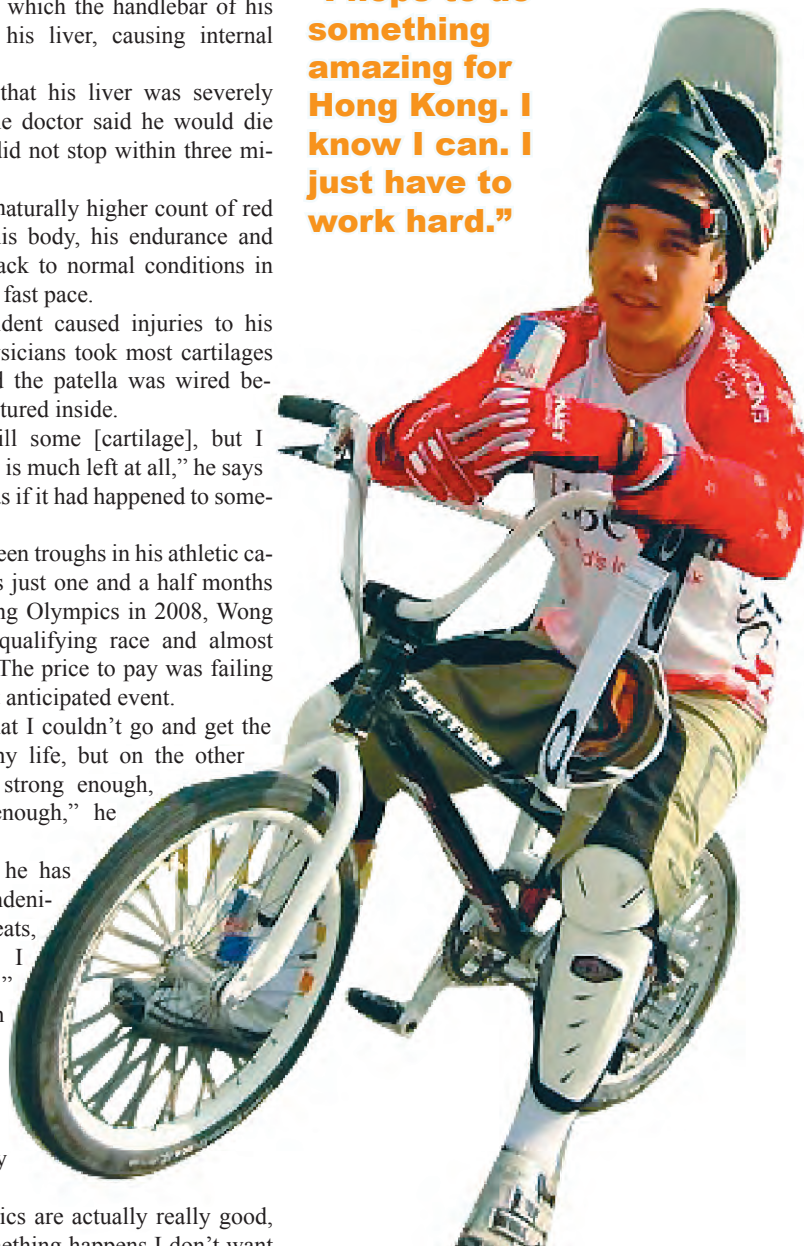
Though he turned professional at the age of 16, he still managed to finish high school and obtained a degree in mechanical engineering in Belgium.

The following months will be crucial for Wong, who is scheduled to spend time at the Olympics training centre in California, preparing for the European BMX Championship and the World Championships. These events will help him gear up for the big Games – the London Olympics 2012.

"The first target is to qualify and then, if I'm qualified I hope to do something amazing for Hong Kong. I know I can. I just have to work hard," he says.

EDITED BY KAREN SHIU

"I hope to do something amazing for Hong Kong. I know I can. I just have to work hard."



STEVEN WONG'S AWARDS

2001

Belgium Champion for boys under 13

2002

Belgium Champion for boys under 15

2005-2006

Gold Medal for All-China Games

2007

Gold Medal for the China City Games

2009

Gold medal for the East Asian Games in the BMX men's elite final

REVIEW

George Clooney UP IN THE AIR

From the Director of
"Juno" and "Thank You for Smoking"

A heartwarming and inspiring flight to one's origin

BY EDWARD MA

Seat belts, recycled air, artificial lightings and tray tables... all the things you come across in aircrafts may make you feel uneasy and hate travelling.

For Ryan Bingham (played by George Clooney) in *Up in the air*, all of the above are warm reminders of "I am home".

The movie is adapted from a novel written by Walter Kirn in 2001. Director Jason Reitman, well known as the director of *Juno* and *Thank You for Smoking*, produces a dramatic movie about a 'new creature', a man who lives in the sky.

In the movie, Bingham, 35, is a corporate downsizer that represents his boss-clients to stay with their employees and face one of their hardest moments in life - being fired. He spends 322 days out of a year to travel across the United States to provide career transition counselling to the fired employees.

The job leaves Bingham's life empty - having no friends, being alienated from his family, living in aircrafts as home - but with an extraordinary personal goal: to achieve ten million flight mileages.

He also occasionally delivers emotional speeches with the topic "what's in your backpack?" to extol his life philosophy: relations are the heaviest components in life and

people should stay away from any of those to enjoy a true life.

In an ordinary journey, Bingham met a seductive lady named Alex Goran (played by Vera Farmiga), another frequent flyer and started a casual relationship with her. Meanwhile, Bingham's company employed the young, ambitious Natalie Keener (played by Anna Kendrick) to implement a plan for saving operating costs by grounding the downsizers like Bingham and bringing all layoff jobs online.

The emergence of the two ladies, his sister's wedding party and the online lay-off system all lash Bingham's life and his "relationship-free" virtue, causing tremendous changes on his life.

Reitman spent seven years in total on writing the screenplay of *Up in the air*. The cast of the movie was always in his mind and Clooney has been the definite choice for starring Ryan Bingham.

"If you're going to make a movie about a guy who fires people for a living and you still want to like him, that actor should better be charming and I don't think there's a more charming actor alive than George Clooney," said Reitman in The London Film Festival in October last year.

It's an entirely new challenge for Clooney to act as Ryan Bingham. He is no longer a girls' sweetheart or superhero like Batman this time. He is just a lonely exile who fires

people for a living but certainly, still charming.

The effort of the casts and Reitman does pay off, so far *Up in the air* has been a great success. It won the best screenplay of Globe Awards 2010 and other 33 awards. For Clooney, he won eight best actors awards and is nominated in the upcoming Oscar with this film.

Instead of wonderful animations, vibrant sound effects and surprising plots, *Up in the air* successfully motivates the audience to have deep reflections on their lives with realistic emotional plots, settings and terse dialogues.

In the age of digitalisation, it seems everything can be done with high technologies but *Up in the air* shows you otherwise. Linking ordinary scenes like people being fired, relationships among boys and girls, and wedding parties, reminds us what are the most real and fundamental components of life that cannot be replaced nor digitalised.

By the time James Cameron's sparkling *Avatar* surprised the world with fascinating CG animations and declared the beginning of a new era of movie, *Up in the air* brings us back to origins and gives us a refreshing start in the new decade.

Bingham's next flight is landing in Hong Kong on February 25 this year.

EDITED BY LUNA LAU



(Courtesy: Paramount Pictures)

TYR'S SELECTIONS

YMCarts Creative Youth DIY Books Festival

Bored with traditional novels and magazines? Come and support the Fifth Creative Book Festival and find out the arts of DIY books. With their own creativity, 30 young DIY makers in Hong Kong are going to present their unique handmade books.

Venue: Wan Chai Shop of Joint Publishing (HK)
Date: Last till April 11, 2010



Be a Super Fan

by Rose
\$78

Read this book if you want to learn about how to become a professional fan. It is a detailed handbook which teaches about what to wear and take when going to a concert, what terminologies fans use and how to make light banners, etc. A fans leader, who makes money as a professional fan, also tells her story in this book.



Box Only

by Chan Pik-shan
\$98

The story of this book is placed inside a box. It needs a special reading method: readers need to read through the chink of the box in the darkness. What is the story about? You have to find out by yourself!



Experiencing 24 Filial Piety

by Hammer Tsui
\$80

This book tells people how to be a dutiful son and daughter. The whole book set is designed as a shelf and consists of several layers which mean having many sons and daughters in Cantonese. It includes game cards printed with traditional Chinese story and help the readers to experience filial piety during the game.



Destroy the Old, Establish the New

by Log 6
\$78

Urban renewal leads to the clearance of many old places. This book is a record, an observation, even an imagination to show the readers some special images of the old Kwun Tong district which is about to disappear.



CLAUDIA MO

Radical but (stay) rational

I was, as I would usually say, “loitering about” on the computer one morning last May, when a chat message came in to say a lone person was planning to stage a hunger strike outside Beijing’s Liaison Office here in the Western district on June 4, and that the event could use some publicity via the conventional media.

“Could you help?” the message sender asked. The planned 30-hour fasting was to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen bloodbath.

Initially wary of possible online pranks, I had remained non-committal until after more messages and one telephone conversation. I was then convinced the whole thing’s for real, and the hunger striker was a young man called Chow Lok-hang, behind his screen name Jaco Hendrix.

I proceeded to send out verbal press invites to my media friends at several local papers and TV stations. Came June 4, I was at the event venue with Jaco and a few other young people, including a secondary student and a university student. Although only one reporter showed up and probably only the Apple Daily bothered to run the story the next day, the snowballing of the message – of the young and politics -- had started.

And that marked my first taste of the post-80’s political awareness, initiatives, and their sense of togetherness online: No particular organization, just feel free to come along. Previously, there had been a few striking social campaigns, including the protests against the demolition of the Star Ferry and the Queen’s Piers carried out mainly by the young. Those had however been largely seen as a part of an on-going conservation, green movement.

The June 4 hunger strikers went on to do a similar event on July 1 last year, and their pro-democracy, political message spread.

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, the city’s young gathered in the cyber space, and their enthusiasm and effort (albeit disorganized) culminated in the series of vociferous opposition against the funding of the 26 kilometre express rail linking (XRL) Guangzhou to Hong Kong.

There was no bloodshed, no damage of public property, and no arrests made so far, excepting what some would call possible “vindictive prosecution”. The largely carnival-like anti-XRL protest, complete with snail-paced parades – during which the demonstrators got down on their knees every 26 steps – won the hearts of many.

But many others objected, calling the young being unnecessarily radical. There were surely scuffles with the police, and pepper spray was seen used once. There could have been onlookers who just enjoyed the “fun” of the occasion, or were happily looking for trouble. No one could say for sure. As freedom of demonstration is a human right, no prior mental screening could be performed on individual participants. On the whole, the crowds managed to keep their cool. They were radical, but rational.

The two decades of the 1980’s and 1990’s were largely dominated by the 1997 question. In the last 10 years, after the handover had become history, perhaps the young today have a fuller sense of not just personal identity but also of “Hong Kong My Home”. And they care.

Youth means passion, and sometimes radicalism. Why not indeed. I tell the two post-80’s members of my family: Do be radical if that’s your choice, but try stay rational. Time is on your side.

Claudia Mo is a media freelancer.

Letters to the Editor

Slavery – The blight was never cured

Slavery is growing exponentially as the widening gap between the rich and poor has guaranteed the functioning of the potential slaves market.

Today’s slaves may have been brutally treated, tortured, raped, deceived and drugged. They may have been sold and re-sold; or reduced to having no identity.

Modern slavery is blight on humanity and like blight it can be treated and cured.

Ending slavery forever will be a long and extremely difficult task. It will involve the compliance of governments and strong political leaders.

Tasks will fail if their determination is not firm enough or there are not enough funding available to combat the traffickers and slave-holders.

The rich world needs to cease exploiting an abundant cheap labour market in their ever increasing desire to maximise profits.

Likewise, governments of the developing world need to cease creating the supply by pimping out their own people into everything from sweatshops to the individual tourist pedophile.

Incorruptible legal systems and harsh sentencing of the criminals would be considered mandatory just as much as systems in place that recognise and rehabilitate the victims of this hideous crime rather than treating them as illegal immigrants and deporting them often back into the hands of their traffickers.

We need to enlighten those who doubt or even disbelieve that modern slavery exists and we must ignore the stigma and respond with tenacity that ensures awareness grows faster than the crime itself.

In the words of the African/American author Alice Walker, “activism is my rent for living on this planet”.

Let us consider, respond and then get started. Let us not ignore the plight of those without a voice bonded today in slavery.

DAVID McCracken

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EDITORIAL

Legislation on building inspection in urgent need

BY ISA KWOK

Hong Kong has been one of the safest places to live among the world as we seldom have to face the risk of tragic natural disasters, war affairs and chaos. However, when citizens are worrying about the acid attacks from rooftops, how could one imagine a terrible collapse of their homes?

The drastic fall of the tenement building in Tau Kwan Wan had not only taken away lives and homes, but also our confidence to the government. The incident reveals that the Buildings Department's long term half-hearted attitude and ignorance on ensuring the security of old aged buildings.

In fact, there were chances to prevent the accident from happening. Yet, once again, the government missed the valuable opportunities. Inspections were conducted in 2004 and recent months. The Buildings Department had issued orders to remove illegal structures but none of them had been complied with.

Building maintenance has long been a complicated task since it involves various issues and requires the cooperation of differ-

ent parties. Property rights problem, illegal structure and lack of management are all making renewal scheme even harder.

Many owners of the old buildings are retired elderly and the property is their only asset. Seldom do they have extra money for regular maintenance.

Even the government provides loans as assistance, they would not be able to pay back in the future and thus, they could just leave the worn out concrete walls and wrecked ceilings untouched.

On the other hand, many owners, who do not live in the buildings as residents, tend to neglect their buildings. They do not have the desire to repair the building as it would not affect their own living condition.

So, they just wait and see if any private estate company would acquire their property for redevelopment. Eventually, the condition of shabby old-aged buildings would continue to deteriorate, like a dying old man who has no cure for recovery.

Therefore, in order to clear all the "hidden bombs" inside our city, more should be done by the government.

To regain the confidence of the citizens, Mrs Carrie Lam, the Secretary for Develop-

ment, called on a large-scale check up on old buildings.

Buildings Department will dispatch 40 teams immediately and inspect nearly 4000 buildings of over 50 years in Hong Kong within one month.

If immediate danger is found, they will require the owners to arrange maintenance at once. Financial aids will be given to owners who have difficulties.

It seems that the government is finally taking up its responsibilities after the tragedy happened. However, some architectural experts thought it would be rush for inspection teams to check 4000 buildings in a month. In average, each team has to check up three to four buildings a day. Would cursory examinations happen? Who knows?

In the long run, legislation is clearly an indispensable tool. Government should make laws that require owners to bear the management and maintenance responsibilities. We look forward to the Legislative Council to consider the implementation of the mandatory building inspection scheme (MBIS), prompting owners of old structure to speed up the inspection of buildings, identify and clear all potential crises.

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GALLERY

A real version of the Chronicles of Narnia



Many English people woke up in the morning on January 5 and found themselves in a snowy country.

In Leeds, a city in England, trees were decorated with shimmering crystals, roads and grasslands were covered under a thick white blanket - it was the unusual freezing and tranquillity that made this winter so unforgettable.

The weeks-long blizzard condition forced people to stay inside their houses. Streets were left only with footprints of pigeons and sparrows.

According to the National Weather Office, this January there has seen the heaviest snow in Britain since 1981. The temperatures were below zero across the country, with up to 16 inches of snowfall dumped into some northern areas.



It is too cold that people choose to stay at home.



Drivers are hardly seen on the road.



Plants reach their heads out of the thick snow.



A lonely pigeon wandering on the white wonderland.



Can you trace the footprints of pigeons and sparrows?



The silvery rooftop of the church reflects the glory of God.



Trees are in their winter clothings.



Watch out for the wet bench before you sit!

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DAISY ZHONG
EDITED BY JOYCE KOON

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