

A nighttime photograph of a busy street in Hong Kong. Tall buildings line the street, with many windows lit up. Neon signs and billboards are visible, including one for 'PETE FASHIONS TAILOR & OPTICAL' and another for 'BRAND C'. A traffic light is visible on the right side of the frame. The overall scene is illuminated by the warm glow of streetlights and the vibrant colors of the neon signs.

TYR

SEP 2012

# Is this place really their refuge?

*Asylum seekers in Hong Kong* p8

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# TYR

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FRONT

# Spotted







## An Aromatic Renaissance

**I**N the last decade, Starbucks has become an essential part of the lives of tens of thousands of people in Hong Kong. Many of them have got the idea of coffee – especially how it should taste – from the most prolific coffee retailer in the world. However, a coffee movement, known as the third wave, is gaining steam internationally that defies the common conception of coffee as a drink that most people prefer to have with milk or sugar.

Unlike Starbucks, the proponents of the movement almost unanimously prefer light roast, which enables coffee to articulate its very characteristics no matter how quirky they might be. It is common to find, in light roast coffee, notes of lemon zest, blueberry, orange and herbs, just to name a few.

The third wave movement encourages people to view coffee as a drink to appreciate, like wine, as opposed to an alternative to Redbull.

Like wine, the taste of coffee varies across varietals and regions. That's why in "third wave" cafes you would find menus that say "Colombia La Piramide", "Guatemala Finca El Injerto - Bourbon Varietal", among many other seemingly scary names, instead of the likes of latte and cappuccino, the products of the Italian "second wave."

You'll need a few things before you go to a "third wave" cafe – money, mood and a few minutes to spare. Specialty coffee usually costs double the price of a small latte from a high street cafe. It takes minutes to make, not seconds, using often brewing methods that require great attention from the barista. One of the most popular types is called the pour-over, which is basically just pouring hot water over ground coffee in a filter paper cone.

For those wondering whether they should down it with sugar and milk, the answer is a definite no-no. These specialty coffee drinks are nothing like what you've had in Starbucks. Depending on their varietals, they can taste more similar to fruit tea than what is called coffee at Starbucks. After all, coffee comes from a berry-like fruit of a plant called *Coffea*, not some burnt rubber tyres. **Alan Wong**



## Comment is Free

# News Internships in Hong Kong



### ATV

#### English News Team

The English news team at ATV World is very small, with no more than 10 people who are mostly expatriates. I worked for Main News, which goes on air at 7.30 every night. In the morning, the crew comes in and checks the assignment list. Everyone would get one (or more) story to work on. The news gathering is very much independent and not much goes on until 4 pm, when the deadline is looming but stories are still unfinished. Around 6.30 pm, people would start freaking out, running around, typing frantically and shouting out loud. All in the name of work.

Interns are usually spared such mayhem, since we are only in charge of minor stories or helping with information gathering, which usually means listening and transcribing sound bites and translating Chinese news stories. Still, it is very interesting to see how things unfold in a real TV newsroom and be involved in the production.

I was taught to edit videos with Final Cut Pro at school, but ATV definitely surprised me with its archaic video editing machines. When you enter one of the editing rooms, you can see four

giant machines, with three monitors staring at you, and buttons – numerous buttons – that would somehow remind you of the cockpit of a plane. It took me a week to figure out how to operate the machine. Eventually, though, I got that amazing feeling when I finally managed to use it to put together a story. For those who want to feel smart and geeky, ATV is the place for you.

**Coco Zheng**

### TVB

#### Intern Reporter

When it comes to TV news, it's all about cooperation and multi-tasking. Besides concentrating on the news story itself, it is imperative to also take care of the shots and your voiceovers.

Throughout my internship, I worked at the sub desk, finance desk,

public affairs desk as well as the assignment desk. In retrospect, I realised that taking good shots is of the utmost importance for TV news. A good shot enables one to transform an utterly boring news event into an interesting, yet still objective story.

As a TV reporter, I have to juggle between the cameramen, video editors, editors, drivers, and many others. It is essential to finish your drafts and stand-ups before the deadline and before someone, usually the boss, gets mad. Frightening as it may sound, it is, at the same time, challenging. The sense of achievement you gain from watching your finished product aired far outweighs the tiredness that has built up from one whole day of work. It's worth it. **Melody Chan**



## **RTHK**

### **Production Assistant**

Radio news is a world on its own. In the absence of visual images, audio is the only thing that matters to the audience. My seniors at RTHK would constantly remind me of the importance of sound as it is what draws the audience's attention.

My job as a part-time production assistant in the public affairs unit is to gather as much sound bites as possible and mix them into a meaningful soundtrack. The goal is to impress your audience – it can be quite a tricky craft at times.

What impressed me most during my time in RTHK was the way producers gather pieces of ordinary sound bites and put together, with seemingly extreme ease, something informative and exciting. It is a skill that I am still trying hard to acquire. **Melody Chan**

## **GIS**

### **Intern**

I worked for the newsroom and I was responsible for compiling newspaper clippings about the Chief Executive, Chief Secretary and Financial Secretary every day. As my job was to collect all articles related to them, I had to read about 20 newspapers everyday, a task which greatly enhanced my speed in reading and analysing news articles.

The subdivision of the newsroom is also responsible for organising and holding press conferences as well as meet-the-press sessions with various government departments. I assisted in preparing several press conferences with different departments, including the Census and Statistics Department and Invest Hong Kong.

One of my personal highlights was helping out at the press facilities when president Hu Jintao visited Hong Kong from June 29 to July 1 to attend the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR and the inauguration ceremony of the current HKSAR administration.

My time at GIS helped me better understand the role of a reporter and provided me with a big picture of Hong Kong's political affairs. My news sense has also improved. In addition, I have learnt from a team of highly qualified colleagues to be accurate, speedy and attentive when dealing with news issues. **Fechon Wong**

## **The Standard**

### **Features Reporter**

Features is definitely a different world from the news desk - not that I've had any experience at all on the latter. But the beauty of working on Features for The Standard is that you do work in close proximity with the hard news writers, and you witness how hard news and features intertwine with each other on a daily basis.

Apart from all the freebies, the exclusive passes and the pleasure of meeting with some amazing people, my experience is further sweetened by the privilege of working under some extremely admirable journalists. My editors are at the office before I am, and they leave when the paper goes to sleep. A lot of stories get filed daily, and only some get published. Stories get published daily, and only some are read. This is a day in the life of journalists, but they work hard every day anyhow.

I've gotten the chance to go to work everyday knowing that I would go home with a new story to tell. There's just always something new in everyday's work, and that's what I loved most about being in Features.

**Kristine Basilio**

## **SCMP**

### **Intern Reporter (Culture)**

The intern experience at the culture desk of the South China Morning Post is very diverse. Interns are largely free to choose to write for whatever section they want. In fact, the first story I wrote was published in the China section of the newspaper. Up until now, I have never seen the editor that approved my story idea and asked me to produce the 500-word story that appeared on the paper the other day.

In the following two months, though, I wrote almost solely for the culture-related sections of the Post.

I had to cover, about twice a week, social events organised by companies who wanted press exposure and write 200-word blurbs for Page C2 of the newspaper. They were often gossip and promotional – talking about fancy new products and celebrities. It was obviously not the most exciting journalistic work, but it gave me a quick and dirty glimpse into the world of public relations professionals – a practical lesson on how to get the press to praise your products in the paper, and perhaps more importantly how not to be used by the people who try to ma-

nipulate your words.

Not all interns are created equal, not that it's a bad thing. Interns were encouraged to actively approach the editors they want to write for, that is, to walk up to their desks and say: "Hi this is Alan, I am a movie nerd, I have written movie reviews for a magazine before, and I'd love to write about the cinema, or just about anything related." The other intern at the culture desk was very interested in fashion, so she received mostly fashion-related assignments while I, a self-proclaimed fashion illiterate, wrote about the subjects I love, namely movies, the arts, technology, and food. But before these meaty assignments, you have to show your passion and knowledge about the subject. After all, you can't say that you want to write wine reviews if you don't drink.

Pitching story ideas is an essential and cruel process for anyone who wants to write more than assigned stories. First, obviously, you have to come up with an idea that the veteran journalists, who often have tens of years of experience in the field, find newsworthy and different to the thousands other stories that get published every day. Considering how much happens in every hour of the day, story ideas may seem dime a dozen. But once you start to present your idea to the editors, the flaws of the ideas would magically surface and sometimes render the whole idea obsolete, thus the importance of research and news judgement.

The intern experience is enriched by the diversity of interns. I did not stop learning right after work, when we occasionally met up for drinks and shared with each other our experiences during and before the internship.

The interns at the Post came from a variety of academic and work backgrounds. For instance, you would find among us someone who read politics at King's College London, English at Cambridge University, comparative literature at Brown University and journalism at Columbia University; as well as someone who has interned at the New York Times and Vogue magazine. It is humbling and eye-opening to get to know these competent and enthusiastic budding journalists. And it feels good to know that in the pursuit of a career in journalism, I am not alone. **Alan Wong**









COVER

# Life in the Shadow

*Deprived of legal status and protection, refugees and asylum seekers in the city are struggling for survival*





**T**HE section of Nathan Road in Tsim Sha Tsui is sometimes referred to as the “golden mile”. The dazzling neon lights of shops selling a wide range of consumer products tell the story of Hong Kong being an affluent society and shoppers’ paradise. But living in a small apartment in Chungking Mansion, a multi-storey commercial-residential building on that road that is popular among backpackers and other temporary visitors, Mr Mohammed Korshel (not his real name) has a very different story to tell. It is a story about survival.

The asylum seeker, a person who is outside their country of origin because they are suffering persecution, once narrowly cheated death in a Somali jail, where he and his friends were

brutally tortured by the police. A scar on his forehead bears testimony to this tragic episode of his life.

“I’m a lucky one,” he said. “When I heard they had chopped off my friends’ heads, I was just worrying whether my body would be intact if I were executed.”

Two years ago, he came to Hong Kong in search for a stable life free from the fears of persecution. Two years on, the search is still on.

“I’m not allowed to work, nor can I leave,” he said. “What future can I expect with a \$1,300 monthly housing allowance and a weekly food subsidy worth no more than \$300?”

“For us, the biggest problem is the right to work legally,” said Mr Lakony Wilson, an asylum seeker from Ugan-

da.

Mr Wilson tells an unfortunate story of one of his fellow asylum seekers. The man was sentenced to prison for three years after he was found working illegally in a restaurant. After his first release, he was soon imprisoned again for theft. On his second release, he came upon the cruel truth that his wife had turned to prostitution in order to raise their nine-year-old daughter. Having lost his will to live, he committed suicide.

Like many other asylum seekers, Mr Korshel and Mr Wilson chose Hong Kong because of its relatively liberal immigration policies. That was before they realised that Hong Kong has a very stringent refugee policy.

**486**

asylum seekers in Hong Kong

**43,700,000**

asylum seekers in the world

**80%**

of the world's refugees are women and children

DATA: The UN Refugee Agency

**“For us, the biggest problem is the right to work legally.”**

—MR. KORSEHEL, SOMALI ASYLUM SEEKER

Even though China ratified in 1982 The United Nations Refugee Convention, which stipulates the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states towards refugees, the treaty has not yet been extended to Hong Kong. As of January 2011, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there were 154 refugees and 486 asylum seekers in Hong Kong. All of them lack legal protection and have no right to work.

Without official aid, Mr Korshel and Mr Wilson are just two of many refugees who struggle to make ends meet in a city where living costs are exceedingly high.

These refugees and asylum seekers, said Ms Emily Halsall, Development Officer of the Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre, usually turn to non-governmental organisations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Christian Action

and Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre for financial assistance and free legal services.

These organisations, however, are in a constant battle to secure funding for their operations.

“Many local charitable trusts will only support projects whose beneficiaries are Hong Kong citizens,” Ms Halsall said. “International trusts are also reluctant to donate as they perceive Hong Kong as a developed city that has the financial power to support refugees.”

To complicate matters further, according to Professor Gordon Mathews, an anthropology professor at Chinese University renowned for his study on Chungking Mansion, refugees and asylum seekers in Hong Kong are extremely diversified. Some might have fled their home country for economic reasons while others might have been forcibly displaced due to political instability.

“Some of them are well-educated and had high social status in their home countries,” said Prof Mathews, who organises classes for refugees and asylum seekers to discuss international and local news issues every Saturday in Chungking Mansion.



## Chungking Mansion

Widely cited as the unofficial African quarter of Hong Kong, the building, built in 1961, is home to more than 4,000 people. It is the gathering place for many ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, including South Asians, Middle Eastern people, Nigerians and Europeans.

The building is notable for its persistent restaurateurs outside who go to great lengths to convince

passers-by to go to their restaurants, which often serve curry dishes. The same applies to the promoters of the plethora of hostels in the building.

On Tripadvisor, a popular travel website, Chungking Mansion ranks 56th among 171 shopping spots in Hong Kong. “Decent food, poor shopping, potentially dangerous accommodation option,” a reviewer says.







*ChungKing Mansion, a popular backpacker's spot, is where most of Hong Kong's refugee reside*

Mr Wilson, prior to settling in Hong Kong, was a businessman who chaired Uganda's presidential election campaign for the country's largest opposition party led by Dr Kizza Besigye. The candidate lost to incumbent Mr Yoweri Museveni, who has been President of Uganda since 1986.

"The police arrested Dr Besigye several times, but they wouldn't kill him because of his international influence," said Mr Wilson. "It is easy for them to kill small potatoes like me though."

Fearing for his life, he decided to leave Uganda.

"I had no choice," Mr Wilson said. "It's a matter of survival or death. Quite simple, isn't it?"

However, not all asylum seekers live a miserable life in Hong Kong. Mr Wolali Dometi, an asylum seeker from Togo, has been living here for six years and makes a living by teaching French. He also receives a small amount of allowance for attending a church in Tsim Sha Tsui every weekend.

"If UNHCR approves my case, I

hope to go to Canada or Australia," he said. "But I've been waiting for six years and there still isn't any news."

While asylum seekers such as Mr Dometi have their hearts set on seeking pastures anew in a foreign land, returning home is what others such as Mr Korshel yearns for.

"My father and grandfather's properties are in Somalia," he said. "I have to go back to continue my family business."

"Of course, only if the political environment changes in Somalia."

STORY **Celine Ge**  
EDITING **Clarie Lee**

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

***editors@tyr.hk***

*The Young Reporter*

*run by HKBU journalism students since 1969*



## BUSINESS

# China-made mannequins combat rising costs

**F**acing the increase of labour and raw material costs and the demand of customers on higher quality products, a mannequin factory in Dongguan is developing new materials, and is transforming to automation.

Labour cost is increasing at the pace of 15 to 20 percent every year,

said Mr Jerry Yang, General Manager of Guangzhou Panyu Kariyo Mannequin Co., Ltd. "When I started the business in 2002, the salary was about \$1,000 per worker per month. Now I pay them \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month," Yang said.

China's cheap labour market is shrinking, he said, especially in coastal cities with prosperous industries, because the cheap labour is mainly from mountain areas, but now they would rather work in newly founded factories in their hometowns.

"Every year some of my workers go home for the Spring Festival and never come back. It's very hard to hire new employees now," he said.

The company has built a new factory with automated assembly line in Dongguan with 70 people working in it. Its production is two to three times as that of the old factory, where 50 workers were hired.

The mannequins are hand-made in the old factory. The workers daub the liquid fibreglass inside the

molds and wait until it's dry and form a mannequin, of which a worker can make tens each day.

The molds of the head, arms, legs and the body are separate, and divided into the front and the back piece. When the fibreglass is dry, the workers need to paste the front and the back piece of the mannequin together, but different parts of the body are easy to assemble or disassemble.

"New material invented by the company itself is used in the new factory," Yang said. "The mannequins made from the new material are durable and not liable to warp."

"Foreign consumers always demanded high quality, and Chinese consumers are also aiming at products with higher quality every year," he said.

The price for a mannequin can range from 600 yuan (HK\$730) to thousands of yuan. "Chinese consumers are willing to pay more for higher quality," Yang added.

Fibreglass is the most widely used material for mannequin production,





Mannequins in Guangzhou Panyu Kariyo Mannequin Co., LTD

but it's environmentally unfriendly and Europe has banned it for industrial use to protect the environment, according to Yang.

"The new material our company invented is environmentally friendly. I think it will become the trend for the industry to use it," he said.

About 70 per cent of the products from the company are sold in China,

**"Every year some of my workers go home for the Spring Festival and never come back."**

—MR JERRY YANG, GENERAL MANAGER OF GUANGZHOU PANYU KARIYO MANNEQUIN CO., LTD.

mainly in Guangdong Province. But with GDP of China decreased by 0.5 per cent last year, the orders the company received has decreased by 20 per cent.

But foreign orders from Europe are increasing in recent years. "Europe has bad economics, so they have to purchase cheap Chinese products to cut the cost," Yang said.

The mannequins are sometimes made after pictures of real people. Pictures of models from the front, the back, and the side are needed to make a clay sculpture. Molds are made according to the clay sculpture.

The copyrights of mannequins are also well protected. If the pictures are provided by the consumer, the manufacturer is not allowed to sell the mannequins made after the pictures to other consumers, Yang said.



Different parts of a mannequin are to be hand-assembled by workers

STORY **Lavinia Mo**  
EDITING **Corie Lynch**



## PEOPLE

# Man vs developers

*Pong Yat-ming's personal campaign against property hegemony*

**Z**igzagging his way through the concrete forest of Hong Kong on a bicycle, Mr Pong Yat-ming shows no sign of yielding in his fight against developers.

Inspired by indigenous people in North America who campaigned to safeguard their rights to their native land, the 39-year-old freelance teacher and event organiser started his own campaign against the “hegemony of developers” in 2010.

Mr Pong tries his best to avoid using monopolised services and products provided by the city’s property giants. Instead, he lives a life that revolves around eating in small-scale eateries, shopping in wet markets and travelling by bicycle. He even washes his clothes by hand to reduce electricity consumption.

Despite his efforts, his campaign thus far has garnered little support.

Dr Chan Hing-lin from the Department of Economics of Hong Kong Baptist University said that Mr Pong’s campaign was ineffective as there was little public support.

“The campaign needs greater public participation to be effective,” said Dr Chan.

However, instead of putting the blame on the people, Mr Pong said the responsibility lied with society.

“It depends on what choices are available to citizens. And there aren’t a lot of them,” said Mr Pong. “What I am doing is to provide an alternative for the people.”

“It is important to find a way to encourage people to participate in public affairs,” Mr Pong said.

For many years, Mr Pong has long had his own utopian vision for Hong Kong – a city where necessities like housing, transportation, electricity, education and medical services will



*Mr Pong rides around the city with his bicycle instead of travelling by monopolised transportation*



not be treated as commodities because of the involvement of developers.

Ms Mayson Fung Mei-sheung, who has joined the anti-developer campaign, is one of the few who share Mr Pong's concerns. She said that Mr Pong's belief in the power of an individual had a profound impact on her and others.

Ms Fung, who has been supporting Mr Pong's campaign for almost two years, admitted that it was not easy at the beginning.

"I would choose to walk most of the time, which can be inconvenient," said Ms Fung. "But that allows me to observe the city and feel more connected to it."

But Mr Pong did not stop there. He ran as an independent candidate in the New Territories East in the Legislative Council election in September.

Despite his slim hope of beating the likes of Liberal Party honorary chairman James Tien Pei-chun and "Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung from the League of Social Democrats, he wanted to use the campaign to boost awareness of his cause.

Contrary to conventional campaign strategies, he shouted no slogan, printed minimal amount of leaflets, with recycled papers, used his bicycle to get around and maintained a lifestyle that boycotts the developers during his election campaign.

While the practical effects of his campaign is questionable, he won the votes of more than 6,000 Hong Kong people. He said he might come back in the next LegCo election in 2016. But it is almost certain that he is determined to persevere with, if not further, his one man battle against developers no matter how winding and steep the road ahead seems.

STORY **Cleo Tse**  
EDITING **Kris Lui**







# Rock your spirit

*Independent rock band inspires people through its own style of music*

“Jump! Jump! Jump! Jump! Jump!”  
One by one, they did just that.

Singing and screaming out loud together with the heart-pumping music, highly-enthused audiences climbed up and jumped off the stage one after another. It was the show of their lifetime.

This happened at the concert “Music Trio AP 2012” in April, when a rock band called ToNick pulled off a performance that the crowd would never forget.

Formed in 2007, ToNick is an in-

he offered ToNick a chance to live their dreams.

But things got off to a rocky start. Due to a lack of funding, ToNick were forced to practice in a shabbily roofed apartment where water constantly seeped out from the walls, not to mention the roof that can be easily blown off.

“Our previous band room was in one of those old industrial buildings in Kwun Tong, where we had to open the elevator gates manually,” said guitarist Mr Woo Siu-gwai.

Ever the optimist, Mr Woo never thinks those days were hard. “Even the hardships would be worthwhile if you really love the thing you are doing,” he said.

The spirit of doing what they love regardless of hardships can be seen in many of their songs, including the band’s very first hit, Tonick.

Named after the band, the song Tonick is the best representation of their ideas and beliefs. With lyrics like “I believe nothing can knock me down” and “I’m not afraid of failure because at least I have tried”, the positive and energetic song has touched the souls of many listeners.

Since its release on YouTube in 2010, the song now has gathered more

**“Our purpose is not about fawning others. We sing because we love to.”**

—MR YIP SEN-HEI, TONICK’S DRUMMER

dependent rock band in Hong Kong powered by four faithful rock lovers. Hoping to nick down everything about their lives with music, the then four fresh graduates from Hong Kong Polytechnic University named their band “ToNick”.

In the same year, the band entered TVB’s UMC singing contest. Not only did they win the competition, they were also scouted by one of the judges, critically acclaimed music producer Mr Chiu Tsang-hei. Deeply impressed by the band’s song What a Sunny Day,



than 600,000 hits. Many netizens commented that the song has helped them relieve sadness and pressure and brought “colour back to their lives.”

“I can feel the influential power of ToNick, and that is the most important trait a band should have,” said Ms Ava Yau, a university student who was present at the Music Trio AP 2012 live show.

Though not a die-hard fan of ToNick, Ms Yau said she had gained a lot of inspiration from their songs, especially from Go Have Your Dream, written based on the true story of the Wright brothers. “It tells you that miracle won’t happen if you don’t have dreams.”

Many of ToNick’s songs were in-

spired by their real life experiences. Mr Chiu Heng-jai, the band’s vocal, said he once wrote a song based on a squabble with his girlfriend.

Popularly deemed as non-mainstream, ToNick added that everyone should have their own definition of music, and it was meaningless to categorise music into mainstream or non-mainstream. “If you like it, you listen to it. The music you most often listen to is your own mainstream music,” they said.

Mr Chiu also believes that nowadays many singers perform without true feelings because their songs are written by lyricists and composers and are not based on their own experiences. “The songs feel somewhat lacking.”

ToNick, however, does receive a fair share of criticisms, either from fans of other bands or netizens.

“Of course there will be criticisms,” said drummer Mr Yip Sen-hei. “It is important to respect the opinion of others and keep an open mind.”

“Our purpose is not about fawning others. We sing because we love to.”

STORY **Kasim Chan**  
EDITING **Peyton Guan**



*The band in its studio, from the left to right vocal Mr Chiu Hang-jai, drummer Mr Yip Sen-hei, guitarist Mr Woo Siu-gwai and bass guitarist Mr Ryan Chan*

## EDUCATION

# Higher education for ethnic minorities

*Ethnic minority students face great difficulties to attain further education*

A high number of ethnic minority students failing to attain higher education is proving to be a cause of concern for the educational sector. In a city where almost 95 percent of the population is ethnic Chinese, it is easy to leave out some of the minority groups that make up the rest of Hong Kong, and they are mostly from Asian countries such as India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines.

The latest figures show that only one per cent of minority students are able to reach post-secondary education and organizations such as Hong Kong Unison, are urging the government to reform the education policy. They are also asking the government to eliminate what they consider “un-fair treatments”, hindering minority students in their pursuit of higher education and employment.

“The first challenge is the lack of schools,” said Mr Mark Li Kin-yin, chairman of the Hong Kong Island branch for the Democratic Party. “Only a handful of schools would admit South Asian students.”

Hong Kong, owing to its British colonial past, once had English as the official language. But that was only until the 1997 handover and Chinese has since become the dominant language.

At that time, with the implementation of Education and Manpower Bureau’s mother-tongue teaching policy, 307 secondary schools were required to transfer from the English medium of instruction (EMI) to the Chinese medium of instruction (CMI).

However, this policy cost many minority students their places in CMI schools due to their lack of Chinese proficiency.

According to the figure released in 2011 by the Equal Opportunity Com-

mission, the enrolment of minority students in non-designated schools has shrunk by more than half for primary and secondary schools because, according to Mr Li, many institutions are simply unwilling to accept them. The figures now stand at 5,500 and 2,000 students respectively.

Mr Li added that some minority students have to wait for two years before getting a place and as a result, may be forced to mix with younger students, which could be an insult for some.

In response to the problem, the government has increased the number

College, is one such student.

“There were struggles in the first two years,” Miss Mendoza said. “My classmates bullied me because of my poor Chinese.”

“There was a classmate of mine who could not understand a single word of Chinese,” she said. “Then she could not bear the pressure and eventually quit school.”

The language difficulty for minority students is detrimental to their academic prospects since Chinese proficiency is weighted heavily under the current education system.

## “The traditional method focusing on examinations and memorisations are not catered for the South Asian students”

—MR MARK LI KIN-YIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG ISLAND BRANCH FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

of designated schools, which receives additional funding and resources from the government to help minority students, from four to 28. Yet the policy is widely criticised for further segregating students as these schools have limited Chinese language support.

Chinese has long been a problem for minority students as they could not understand the language and catch up with the school’s curriculum. It is one of the major obstacles in their pursuit of higher education.

Miss Geraldine D. Mendoza, a 19-year-old Hong Kong-born Filipino, studying in Sacred Heart Canossian

Acknowledging the problem minority students face, there have been calls from concern groups such as Hong Kong Unison to completely overhaul Hong Kong’s educational structure and curriculum so as to enable these students to compete on an equal footing.

“The traditional method focusing on examinations and memorisation are not catered for the South Asian students,” Mr Li said. “The curriculum must be carefully designed with a focus more on individual coaching as well as a thematic basis.”

STORY **Catherine Lim**  
EDITING **Jim Wong**





A local second-hand bookshop "The Book Attic", which looks no different from other bookshops, is struggling to survive

## ENVIRONMENT

# Boom to survive

*Local second-hand exchange platforms are struggling to show impact*

**S**ECOND-HAND exchange shops are somewhat of an enigma in Hong Kong. They have been around for years, but few people are aware of their existence or benefits.

The shops are believed to be treasure troves of unwanted items. By saying "unwanted", it does not mean the products are used, rather it is only transferring the ownership from one to another. A variety of goods, including books, branded handbags, watches, clothes, accessories and furnitures, are provided for customers.

Local shops make profits by earning commissions, usually charging around 10 per cent of the price of each successfully exchanged item. The shops, in a way, help "recycle" unwanted items to save them, at least temporarily, from ending up in landfills.

Despite the shops' apparent benefits and popularity in other places, second-hand exchange shops in Hong

Kong have failed to gain much traction. They have proven unconvincing to the more affluent Hongkongers nowadays, especially the differences in green philosophy. Locals are only used to recycling plastic, canned goods or used paper, but the choices of products are far more than these.

The Book Attic, an English-language second-hand bookshop, is one of the many shops that is struggling to find its feet. It has been in deficit for three out of four years of business.

"I have to work part-time in the morning to support the bookstore," says Miss Jennifer Li Sui-wan, the owner and the only member of the store.

Initially located at Amoy Street, Wan Chai, it moved to a cockloft in Central last year because of a cheaper rent, albeit less accessible to visitors.

According to Li, business is tough as many people are unwilling to buy

second-hand items. To make matters worse, out of the few that do visit the shop, most are under the window-shopping category.

"Books are my best friends," says the manager, who owes her perseverance in running the bookstore to her joy of reading. "I hope it (the bookstore) will survive."

To facilitate second-hand exchange in the territory, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) of Hong Kong government has set up Hong Kong Second-hand Exchange (HKSE), a free online exchange platform in hope of spreading the culture.

"What we do is to match potential buyers with sellers," says Mr Sam Wong, web-administrator of Waste Reduction Website of EPD. "We do not interfere with the dealing process."

Ms Katy Wong, who has posted as many as 551 items on HKSE, takes advantage of the platform to advertise



Provided by the Environmental Protection Department, Hong Kong Second-hand Exchange aims to facilitate the exchange of unwanted but still usable items to help reduce, reuse and recycle waste in Hong Kong.

and attract customers to her own second-hand shop, Haha Siu (Happy Laughter).

Apart from posting pictures and descriptions of the exchange items on HKSE, Ms Wong has a warehouse in Tai Kok Tsui where customers can check the products before paying. Her efforts, however, have not paid off well.

Even without the government's promotion, just simply search on the Web, one can easily access to online second-hand exchange websites. "2-hand" is one of the popular sites that is home to more than 100 thousand members and more than 100 businesses are done every day.

But compared to Hong Kong's seven million population, the trend for second-handed products still leaves a lot to be desired. Plus, with the territory being deemed "Shopping Paradise", it is hard to convince people to purchase "unwanted goods".

Perhaps the idea of exchanging unwanted stuff instead of tossing it in the bin is too much of a hassle. It remains to be seen whether the industry is able to reinvent itself or continue its struggle to stay relevant.

STORY **Cheng Song**  
EDITING **Sophia Fu**



## TECHNOLOGY

# Take virtual reality games seriously for stroke rehabilitation

**S**TROKE is no laughing matter. A condition where a blood clot or ruptured artery interrupts blood flow to the brain, stroke often leads to movement impairment as a result of brain damage. The rehabilitation process of post-stroke patients, however, can be fun with the help of motion-sensing video games.

Six stroke patients participated in the trials of KineLabs, a 3D software platform developed by Hong Kong Polytechnic University that makes use of Kinect, an Xbox 360 peripheral that makes motion-sensing video games possible on the popular game console by Microsoft. The device tracks the players' body segments and orientations in three dimensions.

In the virtual reality environment simulated on a TV screen, patients play video games that respond to their bodily movements. In the three games developed by the researchers, Good View Hunting, Hong Kong Chef, and Cockroach Invasion, patients are required to mimic the action of window cleaning, cooking and stepping on cockroaches.

"After playing the games, I feel that I can stand more steadily," says Mr Sam Chick Kin-sang, a stroke patient who suffers paralysis on the left side of his body.

Another stroke patient, Mr Li Tse-shing, says he wishes the games were invented earlier. "The [rehabilitation] exercises I did were very boring."

Dr Leonard Li Sheung-wai, the Head of Division of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University Department of Medicine, Tung Wah Hospital, says that the games are helping to motivate patients in the rehabilitation process.

"Motivation is the key. The more they are willing to participate, the more likely there will be improvements," he says.

In Tung Wah hospital's rehabilitation centre, patients can play Nintendo Wii, a game console akin to Xbox, that records the movement of the bundled wireless remote controller, as a part of their post-stroke therapy.

Dr Li adds that virtual reality therapies for post-stroke patients have been around for about 20 years and a lot of rehabilitation software products are already in use in many rehabilitation centres in the territory.

What makes the KineLabs stand out, Dr Li says, is that KineLabs games save the hassle of patients having to wear special gloves, hold a controller, or stand on a specific footplate in front of a motion sensor to register their movements.



*KineLabs makes use of the motion-sensing device built by Microsoft for the Xbox 360 video game console to track users' body segments positions and orientations in three dimensions*

## “The games motivate patients to participate more in the rehabilitation,”

—DR LEONARD LI SHEUNG-WAI, THE HEAD OF DIVISION OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE AT TUNG WAH HOSPITAL



*Mr Sam Chick Kin-sang, a stroke patient, and Dr Raymond Tong Kai-yu, the Principal Investigator of KineLabs, were playing the game “Cockroach Invasion”*

Ms Linda Wong Lai-man, an occupational therapist at the Community Rehabilitation Day Centre of Christian Family Service Centre, thinks the games are beneficial to patients.

She believes that patients can benefit from doing rehabilitation exercises, that is, playing the video games, at home given that they have received approval and guidance from therapists beforehand.

“The games are useful, but it depends on who is using them, and how they are used,” says Ms Wong. “It is im-

portant to use them wisely.”

Dr Wang Chun-xue, editor of Chinese Journal of Stroke and deputy director of the Department of Neurology at Beijing Tiantan Hospital, highlights the importance of guidance from therapists.

“Most stroke patients have poor balance and coordination,” says Dr Wang. “They fall easily.”

She adds that patients should consult with professionals before playing KineLabs to avoid muscular or joint injuries.

Dr Raymond Tong Kai-yu, Principal Investigator of KineLabs and Associate Professor in Biomedical Engineering at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, says KineLabs can calibrate patients’ maximum range of movements in a pre-test and customise the games according to the patient’s capability.

As the Silver Award winner in the Hong Kong ICT Awards 2012: Best Innovation & Research Award, KineLabs aims to promote interactive, non-traditional rehabilitation training to home, hospital and elderly centres.

STORY **Vanessa Piao**  
EDITING **Roy Chan**



BACK

O U T  
O F  
FOCUS







# The World's Oil Painting Factory

**I**F you happen to pick up a replica of a masterpiece by the likes of Van Gough or Monet, chances are it was painted by an anonymous artist in Dafen Village in Shenzhen.

A 20-minute taxi ride – or 30 minutes by metro – from Lo Wu, the small village is home to nearly 600 galleries and a production base for more than 5,000 artists, who reportedly churn out 60% of the world's replicated oil paintings.

Their slick – and lucrative – reproduction of such classics as Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci, Impression, Sunrise by Claude Monet, and Wheatfield with Crows by Vincent van Gogh and the likes have won them both fame and infamy.

“The skills of the copycats are no poorer than the creators, sometimes even better,” says an artist in the village who prefers to be known as Mr Black Sheep.

Dafen Village started off in 1989 as a colo-

ny of Hong Kong artist and dealer Huang Jiong and a group of more than 20 painters and apprentices.

The scale of the production grew steadily as more galleries opened in the village. In 2002, the local government turned the village into a base for cultural industries. The move drew many more orders from neighbouring Hong Kong as well as Japan, North America, and Europe.

The sale of replica paintings, however, stagnated in 2008 when the world economy went into a recession. Some artists were then inspired to try their hands at producing original artworks to appeal to a new group of buyers.

Today, the village also exports a host of artworks including Chinese paintings, calligraphies and sculptures. So if you fancy a replica of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival, the famous Song painting by Zhang Zeduan, you know where to go now.





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1. Dafen Art Museum holds regular exhibitions, workshops, and auctions

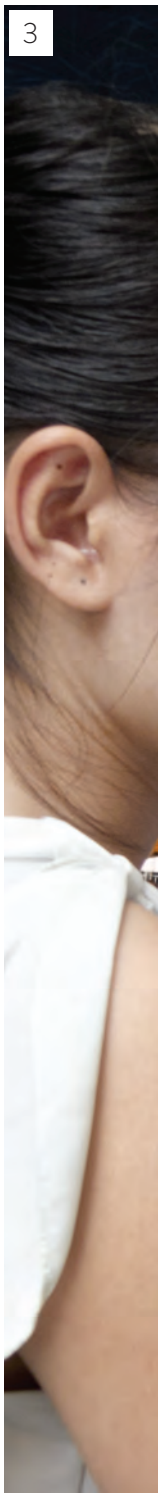
2. A corridor inside “The Louvre Original Oil Painting Mall” in Da Fen Village that houses galleries that sells only original artworks

3. A young woman paints a replica of the Napoleon Crossing the Alps, an oil on canvas portrait painted by the French artist Jacques-Louis David in the 1800s

4. A calligrapher watches his student paint in an alley in Da Feng Village. The sign at the front says: oil painting training available upstairs

3

PHOTOGRAPH  
**Katheleen Wong**  
EDITING  
**Alan Wong**







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