

# TYR

## The Young Reporter

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Brussels - EU-China relations review

Nick Vujicic- Limbless but fearless

CK Lau - Journalists' plight is not top news



# TOP 10 News in 2009

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## Editor's Note

First of all, on behalf of *The Young Reporter*, I wish you every success in the new year.

The media has recently been occupied by a lot of environmental reportings due to the effect from Copenhagen Climate Change Summit held in Denmark. A lot of predictions, scientific or not, estimate the time the Arctic iceberg will disappear. Among them, the most alerting was former US president Mr Al Gore's "five-year" prediction.

As issue four of *TYR* went to press, the Cop 15 was still under progress. Some 56 media from 44 different countries published an identical editorial on their front pages, calling on world governments to strike an agreement on reducing greenhouse gases emission.

No matter how the result of the summit was, the future of the world should not hinge on just several world leaders' hands. The decisions they make have many political, economical and diplomatic concerns behind. Politics is just the art of negotiation, a power play among nations.

Every individual in this world is born with the privilege to enjoy a clean natural environment. At the same time we also have responsibility to protect our world.

But what are we, next Hong Kong generation, doing to conserve the environment? I can see little attention is paid to the summit among teenagers. They were either busy with their December final examinations, or closing monitoring the East Asian Games medal tally to see how well our delegation did.

We are all residents of the earth village. Although our individual efforts are small, the cumulative effect can be unimaginable. So let's join hand in hand to maintain its sustainability.

Simpson Cheung Wai-ming  
Chief Editor

### Correction:

Vol 42, Issue 3, P.19 The restaurant review on the left writes "Surprised to a menu with pork-only dishes?" But actually there should not be pork in a Islamic restaurant. We apologise for making such mistake and to anyone who finds it offensive.

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## GLOBAL

# Human rights issues sidelined in EU-China relations

BY ADA LEE in BRUSSELS

Although human rights issues are not specifically on the agenda in the EU-China Summit on November 30, 2009, they were addressed and the EU seems happy with the current Chinese commitment to human rights.

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, who currently holds the EU rotating presidency met Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in the Summit.

“They [EU and China] placed a high value on the EU-China human rights dialogue... The EU welcomed China’s commitment to ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as soon as possible,” the joint statement of the Summit said.

Helping China to be a more open and transparent nation is stated as one of the EU’s objectives in the relations. Human rights dialogues between the EU and China are held twice a year. The EU also publishes statements to condemn China’s approaches to human rights when things happen.

But the human rights dialogues are often criticised as weak and incapable of achieving concrete results.

Mr Vincent Metten, an EU policy director from the International Campaign for Tibet, also agreed the dialogues were positive but not effective enough.

“The EU only reacts when something has happened. They have failed to look into the future,” he said.

Mr Metten thought trade and financial cooperation had dominated the relation, and Tibetan and other human rights issues could hardly have any position in the EU-China summit while the topics of economic ties and climate change were the core subjects of the agenda.

He said the EU should link human rights issues to cooperation, instead of treating China as a “normal partner”.

“They have to show China that they are serious,” he said.

In response to the question whether the EU will negotiate with China about human rights in economic cooperation, Ms Christiane Hohmann, EU spokeswoman for external relations and European neighbourhood policy, said human rights issues were addressed under the political section of the partnership alongside with the economic, cultural and scientific section.

Despite all the calls for a tougher position



**Despite human rights dialogues with China and occasional condemnations of Chinese human rights approaches, the EU is criticised as not doing enough.**

in China human rights issues, many also realise EU is actually in a difficult position.

A report by the European Council on Foreign Relations said there was not much that the EU can do, as the pressure from the EU alone was not enough and the EU itself would be tangled if it was involved too much in the cross-strait issues.

Also, as China is now considered to be a very important partner in trade with the EU, the economic ties can be a factor why the EU is not involved in the human rights issues in China as much as the organisations expect.

Since 2005, France and Germany have been calling for lifting the arms embargo on China imposed since 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. Besides the arguments saying that the situation in China has changed a lot since 1989 and the embargo is out of date, another important argument is the arms embargo has hindered the growth of trade between Europe and the growing country.

Mr Graham Watson, a British member of the European Union Parliament, agreed that there were huge difficulties in dealing with human rights issues in China.

Although all the 27 member states shared the same human rights value, some emphasised that more than the others, and this division could make promoting human rights in China more difficult, he explained.

The European Council said in its report that China was exploiting this division between member states.

Last year, China shocked the EU by cancelling the EU-China Summit after French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who held the EU

Presidency at that time, made a plan to meet the Dalai Lama in Poland, and the European Council believed this was a move to create tension between EU member states.

“The cancellation of its annual summit with the EU last December, ostensibly to punish President Sarkozy for meeting the Dalai Lama, was a characteristic attempt to sow unrest within the EU,” it wrote.

The pressure from China also adds to the reluctance of EU to deal with human rights issues, as “all member states want to trade with China and with the world,” it said.

After the EU Parliament had awarded Chinese activists Mr Hu Jia the Sacharov Prize, a prestigious human rights award, China expressed strong opposition that the EU had awarded “a jailed criminal in China”.

And after the EU has issued a statement of condemnation of China executing the Tibetans involved in the riots in Lhasa, China issued a statement of dissatisfaction, with its usual saying of “this was China’s internal affair and judicial sovereignty which allows no other country to interfere with”.

It is believed all this pressure from China has made EU more tactful in the relations.

The European Council report said, “China is a skillful and pragmatic power that knows how to manage the EU.”

International Campaign for Tibet said more vocal and public statement to send Beijing clear and firm statements, instead of quiet, closed door diplomacy, were needed.

EDITED BY SIMPSON CHEUNG

## BUSINESS

### The Link shoots up rent despite record revenue

BY EDWARD MA

Small business tenants in shopping malls owned by the Link Management are barely hanging in as they have to either brave the skyrocketed rents and other new fringe rules, or have their contracts terminated despite the company has netted record high revenue this year.

According to the company's financial report, it recorded a revenue of \$2.438 billion in the first half of this year - up 10.7 per cent year-on-year. The average monthly rent has climbed 10.8 per cent while the occupancy rate is up 3 per cent at 90.6 per cent.

The rise in rent is choking the tenants.

Ms But, tenant of a housewares shop that has been in business in the Lok Fu Plaza for 30 years, said the rent had shot up "dozens of percentage" after the shop moved back to the shopping mall when renovation had completed.

"I don't think we can survive for long with such a high rent," she said.

The increase in rent is a result of the Link's Asset Enhancement Project that aims to improve business environment for tenants and attract more customers. Under this phased project, retail facilities will be renovated after the Link took over from the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) in 2004.

Mr Chow, another tenant who has been selling shoes in the Lok Fu Plaza for 18 years, admitted the operating environment has improved after the renovation. But he said it had brought increase in rent that he had to make it up by raising the goods price.

In fact, many small businesses like Mr Chow's have been operating in the Lok Fu Plaza for many years. They serve the neighbourhood with inexpensive goods and have cultivated a sophisticated relationship with the customers and other tenants. This unique and harmonious business environment is everyone's collective memory.

In an attempt to better the business environment, the Link has spent \$30 million to install air-conditioning and improve the lighting system in the dry market at Lok Fu in 2008. It was even renamed "Living +".

All original tenants were invited to continue their businesses, and 30 out of 45



Lok Fu Plaza's \$350 million facelift will be completed in the year 2010.

tenants decided to renew their contracts.

Mr Chow said the Link offered a three-year contract with a privileged rent because he is an old tenant. But a privileged rent does not mean a reduction in rent, but a rise to a smaller extent. In his case, the rise is between 20 and 30 per cent.

He expected the rent would be raised drastically to meet the market level after the \$350 million Lok Fu Plaza renovation project is completed in 2010.

"It seems that we are not doing business but are working for the Link and somehow we are passive," Mr Chow said.

"The estates malls' function of serving the community with inexpensive goods is vanished and only chained stores can afford the rent and stay in the Link's mall," he added.

LinkWatch, a non-governmental organisation that monitors the Link, conducted a research in July 2009 on 14 shopping malls that were having a facelift.

The result indicates that the number of big chained stores in those 14 malls has increased from 589 to 890, implying a gradual demise of the small businesses.

Besides the rise in rent, some tenants said there were more fringe rules and restrictions now than when the malls were under HKHA.

"We always have to organise our goods orderly and keep the shop clean with a good business image. Otherwise we may receive warning letters," Ms But said.

In March next year, the Link will renovate the Chuk Yuen Plaza in Wong Tai Sin. Tenants have to coordinate to get the chance to continue their businesses there.

"After the renovation begins in the centre, we will have to submit an interior layout to the estate management department before we move to the new shop," Ms Lau, tenant of a newsstand in the center for 19 years, said.

"If it isn't qualified, the Link will not offer any contract to us and we have to re-design the layout until it's qualified," she said.

Ms Lau added that many rental arrangement restrictions were inconspicuously listed on the contract, tenants might find it difficult to notice them when signing the contracts.

She felt insecure because tenants have to hand over about seven per cent of the monthly revenue to the Link as commission.

"I think I can't keep the newsstand business running...it may probably be kicked out of the Link's mall very soon," she added.

The Link declined to comment on the leasing arrangement and said all information was already on the company's website.

EDITED BY PHILA SIU



Members of the Green Collar attend the Social Enterprise Summit 2009 in November. (Courtesy: Green Collar)

## BUSINESS

# Social enterprise sprouts from business competition

BY CANDICE WONG

A group of youth is making their business plan come true after winning a business competition.

Green Collar, one of the champions of Hong Kong Social Enterprise Challenge (HKSEC) 2008, is currently working towards the launching of their All Food Wastes Gone Initiative.

"We will gather food wastes from catering firms and turn them into organic fertilisers; and at the mean time, we want to promote more green jobs," said Ms Sandy Lau Wing-shan, the chief executive officer of Green Collar Social Enterprise.

Out of the 130 proposals received last year, only 16 teams entered semi-final. Green Collar is the only winning team expected to launch their green business in late 2010.

"We are raising fund of about 1 million to 1.5 million from investors," Ms Lau said, "We are short-listed in the Social Investment Forum to see whether we can get investment from HKSEC."

To them, running a social enterprise means more than maximising profits.

"If you were to set up a social enterprise, you actually have to meet two bottom lines -

maximising profit and generating social impact," said Mr Adco Leung Shek-ho, member of Green Collar.

Sharing with HKSEC 2009 participants, he added, "What really makes a social enterprise stand out is the balance between the two bottom lines."

Hong Kong Social Enterprise Challenge is pioneer in advocating the concept. The inter-collegiate business competition started in 2007 was the first local social enterprise business plan contest.

For the past two years, over 700 students from local tertiary institutes have joined the competition and more than 100 creative social ventures ideas were received.

HKSEC provides sufficient post-competition support which makes them stand out from typical business competitions in town.

On top of the internship opportunity that gives out a total salary of \$24,000 per member, the two winning teams will continue to develop their social enterprise proposals into a real business.

Over 200 teams have been attracted to present their green business ambitions. VeggieMania from The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology is one of them. The team comprised five undergraduates from the electronic and computer engineering school and the business school.

"We compared different social problems and came up with the idea of building up a vegetarian fast-food restaurant," said Mr Koala Kwan, member of VeggieMania.

Considering the time cost and the competition in the food industry, VeggieMania planned to take over other eateries.

"We may use about \$200,000 to take over a restaurant," said Mr Charles Woo, another member of VeggieMania.

Being confident to be qualified for the final six, VeggieMania believes joining HKSEC offers them a chance to have a glimpse into the real business world.

"I am studying a course about business planning and I really want to put what I have learnt into practice; I would also want to try running a business different from high-tech stuff," said Mr Kwan, a third year electronic and computer engineering student.

Supporting his students to join HKSEC, Mr Woo Kam-tim, visiting assistant professor of the department of electronic and computer engineering at HKUST, said it is beneficial for students to join these kinds of competition.

"They should not just focus on the technological know-hows, but also the techniques to cooperate with others."

EDITED BY JOJO CHOI

## SOCIETY

### Four new centres for ethnic minorities to adapt to HK



Courses like cookery course can help the ethnic minorities to adapt to life in Hong Kong.

BY JESSICA ZHANG

It is the first time for Mr Fernando Gomez Gonzales, a Filipino in his early 20s, to pass the probation period at work in Hong Kong.

With the help and encouragement of the social workers of an ethnic minority assistance organisation SHINE Centre in Tuen Mun, he worked hard for his manual tasks and performed well. His manager is considering promoting him to a higher position after several weeks.

“Sometimes I thought of giving up,” He said, “but the Centre helped me a lot. I told myself not to give up anymore and I could hold on with this job.”

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau announced the granting of funds to four non-governmental organisations, to establish and operate four support service centres for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong on April 7. The SHINE Centre is one of the four centres opened in August by Christian Action.

The other three are the HOPE Centre, the CHEER Centre and the Yuen Long Town Hall Support Service Centre For Ethnic Minorities operated by International Social

Service Hong Kong Branch, Hong Kong Christian Service and the Yuen Long Town Hall Management Committee respectively.

A total of \$8 million was allocated to each centre as start-up costs. And the four centres secure additional annual funding of up to \$16 million for two years as the operating expenses.

“The money really helped us a lot,” Ms Priscilla Chan, person in charge of the SHINE Centre, said. “We used the money to organise programmes empowering ethnic minorities to better integrate to the community.”

The programmes include English and Cantonese classes, Chinese tutorials guidance, band groups, cross-cultural women ambassador project, sight translation, and employment support.

The ethnic minorities can become members of the centres for free and take part in these activities at a reasonable price. It only costs \$10 to enrol to a fun trip to tour around Hong Kong to learn Cantonese.

“We aim at helping those people so we wouldn’t charge them a lot,” Ms Chan said.

The proportion of the ethnic minority population is five per cent in Hong Kong. Most of them are from the Philippines, India, and Nepal.

Many face racial discrimination and have

difficulties in adopting lives in Hong Kong.

Mr Gurrinder Singh Khanna came to Hong Kong from India last April. He did not understand Cantonese and spoke only a little English.

He talked about the communication problem he once had, “It’s hard for me to figure out which bus I should take,” he said, “I couldn’t understand the stations’ names.”

As he could not afford the tuition fee of language classes in schools, he took the English and Cantonese classes provided by the CHEER Centre for three months. Now he can do simple daily conversation in Cantonese with others.

“The centre is important to me. It helps me adapt my life in Hong Kong faster,” Mr Khanna said.

However, programme officer Mr Hashmi Midhat Ali expressed concerns about the lack of publicity about the new centres.

“As we are quite new to other people, some may feel curious about us. They want to know who we are and what we are doing before they receive the service,” he said.

“Also we don’t have enough staff members. We desperately need volunteers to help us in running the programmes,” Mr Midhat Ali added.

EDITED BY MAVERICK LI

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

# Foreign domestic workers fight for minimum wage

BY JOHN A.L. NICOLAS

**F**oreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) demand to be included to the Statutory Minimum Wage (SMW) bill as the government continues to exclude them. This is due to the difficulties of calculating the pay for their “round-the-clock” service.

Asian Migrants Coordinating Body, consisting of unions representing FDWs, has sent letters to LegCo’s Bills Committee on SMW in April and November, proposing fixed wages in ten-hour-a-day shifts.

“There might be extra work but working hours are usually between breakfast and dinner,” Ms Jenny Moran, one of the many FDWs aware of the situation.

The SMW bill proposes a set amount of wage for a minimum of eight-hour work shifts for employees under the Employer’s Ordinance. It aims to establish equal footing on all pay-level jobs.

But it proposes to exclude FDWs because the government said it was impossible to calculate their varied working period - usually going past eight hours - due to the “round-the-clock” service.

One group in AMCB, Indonesian Domestic Workers Network, rebutted the government’s explanation saying that it was “false and exploitive”. They urged the government to legislate fixed working hours for them.

The Employer’s Federation of Hong Kong believed the exclusion could avoid “significant negative impact”, saying that if the costs are too much, employers would fire the workers to seek other “fiscally suitable” ones.

An August Liberal Party survey showed that 53 per cent of 560 corresponding employers would do so.

Employer Mrs Cilla Murray believes the elderly employers would be one of the groups to do so as they earn less. She said the government should research all local employers’ varied income before they decide for inclusion or not.

In terms of increased costs, the government also said “socio-economic ramifications”, including sacking of FDWs, would



Foreign domestic workers protest in Central with banners and flags.

happen if FDW’s current minimum allowable wage of \$3,580 rose.

About two-thirds of 650 people opposed the inclusion, a survey conducted in October by the Democratic Party revealed.

Ms Dolores Balladares, Chairwoman for United Filipinos in Hong Kong, said the groups’ current focus has become the general public, which is important to change government’s opinion but is unaware of the situation because it would not concern them until the Bill becomes law.

“So far, we have support from the Hong Kong Catholic Commission and Labor Affairs, and Families for Domestic Workers,” she said.

But for FDWs like Ms Giselle who works for a three-child family, inclusion might be troublesome. “If wages are within set hours, assigned work, which changes in length and amount daily, might be stricter or on a tighter deadline because you would be only allowed to work for eight hours, less than ‘normal,’” she said.

However, Ms Doris Lee, a representative for Families for Domestic Workers, said working middle-class parents spending more time at work than at home would not fire their FDWs because they need them, increased costs or not.

“Parents cannot always take care of their children when kids do extra curricular activities which can cost over \$1,000. If they can afford that, I think another \$1,000 given to their FDWs would not affect them drastically,” Ms Lee said.

Barrister Kelvin Leung Yiu-cheung believed the government had less emphasis on FDWs because the Bill was originally created to suit the majority workforce, who are permanent residents with low-income jobs.

“They are the ‘target groups’ affecting government votes and their opinions affect the bill legislation,” he said, adding that FDWs have no voting power due to immigrant status.

Five of six planned LegCo Bill Committee general meetings on various group responses have been completed. According to Ms Balladares, the FDWs case has only been briefly mentioned recently to discuss if the AMCB’s proposal is practical.

She feels it is not going forward but will continue to attend the remaining three meetings.

Ms Balladares said if nothing changes, she would not eliminate the chance of staging more protests in the future.

EDITED BY SIMPSON CHEUNG

# FEATURES

## Clearing project sets rooftop dwellers to migrate

BY MINERVA CHENG

Little kids climbed up and down the only double-decker bed at home. They giggled as they played hide-and-seek around the wooden bed. The bed was clammy. Mr Lei Deqiu bought it for his children from a second-hand stall.

“Our house is muggy and there’re insects. We had spent like a thousand dollars on medicine since my children were bitten by fleas,” he sighed while wiping sweat inside his flat.

The Lei family is one of the thousands households living in the rooftop community. These dwellers had to evacuate from their homes within 2009 as the government announced the clearing of rooftop houses as to tackle the derived safety problems.

According to Ms Phoebe Lo Siu-ping, a team coordinator of the social service team in the Buildings Department, roof dwellers are not necessarily in poverty or the underprivileged ones. Some are young couples, the elderly, and newly immigrant families.

Some envisage the possibility to move out, others see rooftop houses as a transition while they are queuing up for public housings.

The Lei family is also on the waiting list. Mr Lei said if they were offered temporary housing by the government, they could have a safer living environment.

His family is not eligible for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance as Mr Lei’s monthly income has exceeded the upper limit for application. His monthly salary is around \$11,000 as an airport limousine driver.

Spending over \$2,000 a month for the rooftop rental housing, Mr Lei lamented that they could not afford renting a better place other than that.

“I want to offer my kids a better living environment, but I just don’t have enough money to move to other private accommodation,” he explained that with similar rental costs, rooftop houses were slightly larger than private suites to offer more room for his children.



Rooftop houses are illegally built on the roof of many local buildings.

Mr Lei estimated they would have to wait for three more years for public housing.

Ms Lin (pseudonym), in her 50s, moved to a sharing rooftop house from the mainland with her husband five years ago. The couple lives with two men in separate rooms in the same house.

Whenever typhoon strikes, the rotting wood on the rooftop leads to further troubles for Lin’s family.

“The incoming rainwater drops onto our bed, waking us up in the middle of the night. We usually become so wet that we can barely sleep. How pathetic we are!” she said. Ms Lin always puts a bucket at the upper deck to collect dripping water.

The couple is also in the queue for public housing. Ms Lin hopes to move out from the rooftop flat shortly.

“I am really afraid of living here for long. Typhoon, heavy rain, water leakage...they all screw me up!” Ms Lin said.

As rooftop houses are mostly located on older buildings in districts like Kwun Tong, Tai Kok Tsui and Sham Shui Po, they are more likely to be purchased by private companies for renewal projects. These companies often act quickly to cash out large amounts of compensation for evacuation.

It is the private companies, but not the government, to offer compensations to them ranging from \$2000 to \$30,000, according to Ms Lo.

Roof dwellers’ fates are put on the private companies, not surprising for those like Ms Lin.

EDITED BY LUNA LAU

## Dramatic victory recalls heyday of local football

BY BONNIE FUNG

On December 12, the Hong Kong Stadium was immersed in red. More than 30,000 supporters witnessed Hong Kong's dramatic giant-slaying victory over Japan in the football finals of East Asian Games, seizing the team's first gold medal in international sports event.

Two months earlier in October, the red sold-out flag flew in the stadium in the match between South China and Kuwait Sports Club. All the 40,000 tickets were snatched 90 minutes before the game started. The match generated about \$2 million in income.

It had been 15 years since the Hong Kong Stadium last saw the sold-out flag in a non-friendly match after its renovation in 1994.

The busy auditorium was reminiscent of local football in its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s, contrasting its grim reality today.

"In the mid-1970s everyone could only buy at most two tickets for a match." Mr Alex Chu Chi-kwong, administrative director of Kitchee Football Team and former player said. "If you wanted to see next weekend's match, you'd have to buy the tickets this week."

He said a match could attract more than 10,000 people in his school days. When Mr Chu went professional, an average of six to seven thousand spectators turned up per match. The number sustained until 1988.

"Some people chose to climb the hill beside the stadium to watch." Mr Raymond Kwong Hiu-Ming, Director of Happy Valley Athletic Association Football Club recalled the frenzy.

"In the 1970s to 1980s...the ticket income could cover the cost of running a team. So teams didn't need sponsors." Mr Kwok Kaming, Director of International Relations of Hong Kong Football Association and a retired football player added his testimony for the golden age.

Besides high attendance, the salaries and social status of players were also at its peak.

Mr Alex Chu said players were even better paid than a bank manager at that time.

Mr Kwok himself was a well off young athlete.

"I earned \$3,500 [per month] after the fifth year of my career, when I started to become famous and draw crowds," he said.

"An inspector in the Police Force only made about \$1,000. I could earn what he could have earn in 30 years, in just ten years," he added.

His regular trainings in Happy Valley were also frequented with fans. "Fans, espe-

cially the teenage girls, would follow me during trainings," Mr Kwok said. "Girls wrote letters to me and sent their photos to me...At that time, football players were stars."

This brought back memories to another former player, Mr Raymond Kwong.

"When I was playing for the South China Athletic Association, many children would ask players to sign autographs for them.

"But now when you pass by a player, you don't even know he is one," he said.

The drastic decline in popularity resulted in overall lack of investment and resources

"But for games without the South China team, if only a few hundred or a thousand spectators show up, it's difficult to get more people to sponsor local football or draw more resources to the field," he continued.

Mr Raymond Kwong said that teams are basically in the red and few investors would get involved.

"Running a football team takes a few million dollars. No one would want to invest in something they don't know the meaning of," he said.

He took Mr Yu Kam-kee as an example.



Old magazines on local football, collected by Mr Kwok Ka-ming.

for the local football industry.

In November, two local league games only sold 581 and 420 tickets respectively.

Mr Alex Chu regarded competitiveness as the solution to the cold seats.

"Watching football matches is an entertainment and people pay for good matches," he said. "If a match is not attractive, why don't they go to play mahjong or have a good meal?"

"[The fact that] so many people went to the South China match reflected that football fans who go to the stadium want competitive matches," Mr Lui Tai-lok, Professor of Sociology at Hong Kong University, concurred.

"That's why it is hard for our local league to revive. There are not enough strong teams to make people feel the need to go to the stadiums frequently," the football fan and local football expert said.

"South China has a fixed amount of fans and these people do go to watch its matches," he said.

The generous businessman used to put millions of dollars into the sport.

"But then he changed his mind and gave the money to the Community Chest, so as to gain honour from that," he explained.

He noted that players could hardly ensure their basic living expenses, "I told my players they should leave the field before 22 if they find it difficult for them."

"It is deplorable that salaries of players now are not higher than normal working people as they only have a short period of time to earn money from playing football," Mr Chu said.

"There are no good players worthy of higher pay. You can see there are no Hong Kong players playing overseas," he added.

But the veteran player remained somehow optimistic. "In the past eight to ten years, local football has bottomed out. It can only be better in the future."

EDITED BY ECHO CHEN

## Bats present more benefits than harm, say experts

BY LEILA POON

**P**ointed ears, flurry body and big round eyes; tiny claws, protruding nostrils and “convertible” webbed wings. Bats look more or less like a mouse with wings but more often than not they are thought to be evil.

More public seminars and eco-tours will be held to correct the misconceptions towards the mammal and promote its ecological importance. One of the biggest seminars will be held in August 2010 in the Hong Kong Science Museum.

“We are trying to promote this issue by different means,” said Mr Shek Chung-tong, who will give a talk then.

“The public should also take the initiative to spend time on learning about the environment,” he said.

Mr Shek is the Wetland & Fauna Conservation Officer (Enforcement) of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. He said that people generally had negative thoughts of bats.

“[Some people] think bats are dirty and terrible. There are lots of misconceptions that probably come from the portrayal of bats as vampires or ghosts in the movies. People may also imagine bats flying out from some dark and dirty places,” he said.

Although vampire bats do exist in Central and South America, they prefer to feed on blood from animals and it is rare that they attempt to bite human.

“I must admit that most of the species I come across are very unaggressive,” said Mr Gary Ades, head of the Fauna Conservation Department of the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens (KFBG). He was the only person to study bats when he came to Hong Kong in 1989. “When I pick up a bat, it never tries to bite me.”

On the other hand, most bats consume insects, fruits and flowers. An insect-eating bat can catch and eat more than 3,000 mosquitoes in just one night.

“Bats play an important role in maintaining an ecological balance. If a large number of bats disappear, the number of insects will dramatically soar as well,” said Mr Shek.



**A young dog-faced fruit bat roosting on a tree. (Courtesy: Gary Ades/ KFBG)**

For fruit-eating and flower-nectar eating bats, plants like longans, lychees and banana flowers are consumed. Mr Ades said the hillside opposite to his office was completely bare six years ago but now it has been naturally reforested.

“Bats actually perform an important role in seed dispersal [and] are good pollinators just like bees,” said Mr Ades.

Bats are the only flying mammals in Hong Kong. So far 26 species, which make up over 50 per cent of all local mammal species, have been recorded. Bats are now under threats as their roosts are destroyed and their food sources are disturbed.

The Wild Animal Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) states that it is illegal for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or handle any wild bat species in Hong Kong without a licence.

However, conflict between bats and human is arising as more rural areas have been developed into urban ones. As a result, bats

may need to take shelter in roofs of buildings or underneath air-conditioners.

For instance, Mr Ades said some farmers will use mist nets to protect fruit crops and flowers which may kill bats.

The AFCD and the KFBG have been cooperating in organising bat-related seminars and workshops. In October 2008, the KFBG has organised a workshop for 50 educators, mostly teachers, to observe bats in their natural habitat and to learn about their ecology.

The World Wide Fund (WWF) has also organised a night walk tour which included a session to study bats. Mr Gary Szeto, one of the participants, said he has a brand new attitude towards bats after the tour.

“I believe people will have a more in-depth understanding of bats and learn to protect them through joining these eco-tours,” he added.

**EDITED BY VANESSA YUNG**

## Teachers break taboos through online videos

BY THOMAS YAU

“Today we’ll talk about sex and love, homosexual marriage, one-night stand and swinger.” A teacher starts his lesson with this opening line.

Presenting out-of-syllabus materials, three teachers set up an online channel “hk3teachers”. They are Mr Kursk Yau Siu-lun, Mr Tommy Chow Tsz-yan and Mr John Chan Shu-ming, who have been teaching for six to eight years in local secondary schools.

The trio started “hk3teachers” in 2006 after they knew each other in a webcast organised by a local social enterprise “Roundtable”, discussing liberal studies as hosts.

The channel is a platform for them to provide students an alternative source of information by analysing social taboos from various angles.

It is not hard to be impressed with one of their popular videos “A discussion on how to talk about sex and love”, which delves into the pornography culture in the past, with dynamic narration and catchy graphics.

Tucked in the corner of Mr Yau’s flat in Wan Chai, the three teachers produce videos once to twice a month in their home studio, using amateur microphones and boomsets linked to their computer.

They try to be neutral each time through

a role play. After Mr Chan introduces plain facts about an issue, Mr Chow and Mr Yau illustrate opposite views with examples, and jokes sometimes.

“It’s impossible to be value-free,” says Mr Chan, “Some teachers won’t present any opinions to students...but I think the most important thing is to let students learn how and why we develop certain stance.”

Ms To Yuen-ying, a form seven student who regularly follows the channel’s updates, says, “They’re representing different parties...[which] can lead us to think in different points of view. The questions they have raised, the example they gave, really helped us to think about the problem.”

When the channel first started, they only covered topics in the liberal studies syllabus, and later expanded to controversial issues, like the June 4 Tiananmen Crackdown.

In the video, they illustrated the concept of “self-censorship” in the mainland to audience with an experiment, creating a group named “VIIV” on douban.com, a mainland website popular for commentaries of books and movies. After a few days, the group was deleted and their account was suspended.

“When it comes to topics like politics and moral values, it’s hard to define what is correct and what is wrong,” Mr Yau, who teaches Liberal Studies, says, “We encourage them to look for other sources of information.”

All the videos can be seen on their YouTube channel, Sinablog and their Facebook group which has over 400 members. A piece about the use of Cantonese slangs in the 2008 HKCEE Chinese Language assessment has recorded a hit rate of over 8,800 in Youtube.

Comparing to the face-to-face teaching format, the trio says they have much more flexibility and creativity to go online.

Mr Chan, who teaches both Liberal Studies and Economics, explains, “When working out a regular syllabus with school colleagues, as we need to cater for different learning progress of students, we limit ourselves to certain content, ending up omitting some fresh perspectives.”

Mr Wong Chong-ye, vice principal of a local secondary school in Shatin who has been teaching for almost 30 years, says it is common for teachers to produce webcasts nowadays, but he reminds that teachers have to be very careful in “leading students to a correct direction” in the cyber world without much limitation on people’s behaviors.

The three teachers have their interpretation of a teacher’s role. Mr Chan says, “Things like sexuality and foul language are part of our life, they won’t disappear just because you don’t talk about it...Some say some social taboos should not be touched [by teachers] - we are here to fill this gap.”

EDITED BY NATALIE WONG



The three teachers produce videos once to twice a month for their online channel “hk3teachers”.

# COVER STORIES

## Top ten local news of 2009 in the eyes of HK journalism students

*The Young Reporter* conducted a survey in November among journalism students from five tertiary institutes, including the University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong Shue Yan University and Chu Hai College of Higher Education, to see what they believe were the 10 biggest local news in the year 2009.

A closed-ended questionnaire was constructed for the survey and 50 news items were provided. Some 279 respondents graded each item on a ten point scale where the importance of the news declines from ten to one. By calculating the average marks for each item, ten of them with the highest scores became the top ten local news listed below.



### No. 1

#### Violence by Xinjiang police against Hong Kong journalists

Three Hong Kong journalists from TVB and Now TV were detained, handcuffed and roughed up by armed police in mainland China on September 4 when covering the protests against syringe attacks in Urumqi.

The incident was widely condemned in Hong Kong. Both the government and journalist associations expressed deep concern about it.



#### No. 2 Quarantine of a hotel after the first confirmed H1N1 case

A Mexican visitor was confirmed as the first case of H1N1 human swine flu in Asia on May 1 in Hong Kong. The Metropark Hotel in Wan Chai, where the patient checked in before going to hospital, was placed under seven-day quarantine. Hong Kong's pandemic response level was raised to "emergency" - the top grade after that. So far, more than 30,000 people were infected.



#### No. 3 Mong Kok acid attack

Two bottles containing acid were hurled down into a busy pedestrian area at Sai Yeung Choi Street in Mong Kok on May 16. Thirty people were injured in the incident. Similar attacks occurred on the same street twice more, and later on in Sham Shui Po and Causeway Bay. Surveillance monitors were installed in Mongkok shortly after the incident and \$900,000 would be rewarded for those who can find out the culprits.



#### No. 4 Environmental levy scheme for plastic shopping bags

The environmental levy scheme on plastic shopping bags took effect on July 7. Each plastic bag assessed an environmental levy of \$0.50. About 2,970 outlets under 50 registered retailers are affected by the legislation.



### No. 5 Mr Charles Kao Kuen's winning of the Nobel Prize

Mr Charles Kao Kuen, the retired principal of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics on October 6 - the first Hong Kong scientist receiving the prize. He shared the prize with two American scientists for their pioneering work on semiconductors and digital imaging.



### No. 6 Tsang's slip of tongue: "I represent Hong Kong people"

Chief Executive Mr Donald Tsang Yam-kuen claimed his opinion represented the people of Hong Kong in regard of the Tiananmen Incident during the LegCo's policy address question-and-answer session on May 13. His slip of tongue led to public outrage and Mr Tsang made a public apology afterwards.



### No. 7 The Alliance: 150,000 joined the June 4 Vigil

It was the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. An estimate of 150,000 gathered in Victoria Park to commemorate those killed in the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. According to the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, it is the highest record in recent years and is equal to that of the first anniversary of June 4.



### No. 8 Tsang faced criticism on light bulb saga

Chief Executive Mr Donald Tsang Yam-kuen was accused of intentionally favouring the father of his daughter-in-law by proposing a scheme to encourage the use of energy saving light bulbs in the policy address 2009. Due to public opposition, the government has been forced to reconsider the scheme. A revised one would be ready early 2010.



### No. 9 Legco exercises special legal power in regard of Lehman mini-bonds debacle

LegCo's decided to use special legal power to require banking and securities regulators to disclose full reports on mini-bond issues. Banks receiving the most complaints and selling financial products in a problematic way have to supply further documents for investigation.



### No. 10 Ex-police officer jailed 12 years for rape

An ex-police officer was sentenced to 12-year jail for raping a young woman and molesting three others. Mr Leung Lai-chung, the ex-officer was described by the judge as a sexual predator and there is no room for leniency. The judge also said Mr Leung had abused the trust held by the general public for the police force.

## How do academics see these top-10 news?

“Police violence in Xinjiang against Hong Kong journalists ranked first in the list. It is particularly a matter of concern for journalism students, the respondents of this survey. Certainly, they will be more wary of practicing china news coverage if they regard this as a sign of declining press freedom in Mainland.”

- Professor Clement So York-kee,  
School of Journalism and Mass  
Communication, CUHK

“Tsang’s slip of tongue: ‘I represent Hong Kong people’ and the light bulb saga are just two pieces of sensational news. The news itself is not that serious, but they reflect the dissatisfaction of Tsang administration. This orchestrates with the plunge in his popularity this year.”

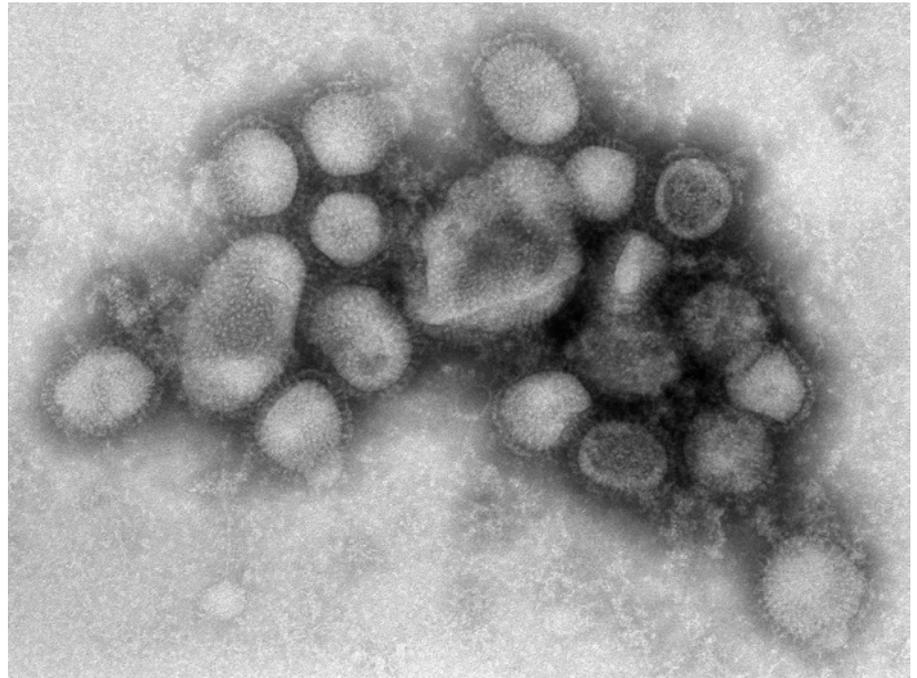
- Professor Ting Wai,  
Department of Government and  
International Studies, HKBU

“When Mr Tsang first became the chief executive, the public’s attitude towards him is neutral. However, his remarks and scandals leave negative images in his moral standard and dedication in making progress in democracy. Although there was not any proof of the bulb saga, his cunning image is already rooted in the public.”

- Professor Ma Ngok,  
Development of Government and  
Public Administration, CUHK

“Lehman Brothers’ bankruptcy largely influenced the retail market for structured products and other financial instruments, also prompted a redefinition in banking industry – separation of deposit and investment functions. This incident leads to tougher supervision on retailing financial products which is giving more protection to the mass of ordinary investors.”

- Professor Joseph Fung Kwun-wing,  
Department of Finance and  
Decision Sciences, HKBU



Microscopic image of the newly identified H1N1 influenza virus.  
(Courtesy: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA)

## Mutated H1N1 strain found in HK

**H**uman Swine Influenza (H1N1) might be growing more severe and strong since virus mutation has already been found in countries worldwide with an one-year-old boy in Hong Kong infected by the same mutation as that was found in Norway in November.

Professor Paul Chan Kay-sheung of department of microbiology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong pointed out that the current mutation described by the Norway group is not new, but still uncommon.

“In general, mutations in influenza virus are expected because this virus has an intrinsic property to allow genetic changes,” he said.

“The mutation has been found in mild cases as well. It is not yet known whether infection with this mutated virus is associated with a higher chance of severe disease. However, the current antiviral agents, Tamiflu & Relenza and vaccine should work for this virus.”

H1N1 has swept through Hong Kong since May, up to November, the battle has accumulated 32,301 infections and 41 deaths.

The development of the outbreak of swine flu is like a roller coaster.

The seal-off of Wan Chai Metropark Hotel on May 1 with 300 people quarantined served as a prelude. The government announced the closures of all kindergartens and primary schools on June 11 due to the spread of the disease.

At the peak period, there were nearly a

thousand new infections a day.

Although sterilisation had been taken in schools, the cluster infection could not be completely prevented. In the new academic year, more than 50 schools were forced to be closed for a week because of flu outbreak.

As the peak period has already passed, experts predict that seldom does Hong Kong see massive infection in the season due to people’s herd immunity of the flu and the low activity of virus in cold weather.

For further protection against the outbreak of seasonal swine flu, the government has secured three million doses of swine flu vaccine and the first 500,000 doses are available in December. Free vaccination will be given to the two-million people at high risk of infection such as children aged from six months old to six years old, elderly aged over 65 and those with long-termed disease.

“I’ll receive the vaccination since it is free and it might provide protection,” Mr Li Wing-yu, 70, said, “But I worry about the possible adverse reaction after vaccination.”

Prof Chan said that the current swine flu vaccine was expected to be effective and safe. He encouraged the public, especially the high-risk groups, to receive the vaccine and maintain good personal hygiene to prevent infection.

On the other hand, Director of Health Mr Lam Ping-yan announced that declaration forms would remain at all border control points because swine flu infection cases overseas were still increasing.

## Time to discuss phase 2 of the levy scheme, Greeners Action urges

Local environmental group Greeners Action urged the government to start consultation for phase two of the Environmental Levy Scheme quickly because it worried that people would be less alert of the issue when it's too late to discuss.

A government spokesman said that the first phase of the scheme which started on 7 July 2009 had yielded positive results given that reduction of plastic bags was as much as 80 per cent to 90 per cent.

According to the Environmental Bureau, in the first three months of the scheme, 13.46 million plastic shopping bags were distributed by about 3,000 registered retailers.

"This means that on average less than two plastics bags were used by each Hong Kong resident," said Ms Kwok Ying-ying, the Project Officer of the Greeners Action, a local environmental group. She added consumers used to take three to four plastic bags each time in the past.

However, the first phase was carried out only at large-scale chain supermarkets, convenience stores and personal healthy and beauty stores. Ms Kwok thought that the government should go further by starting the consultation for phase two as soon as possible.

She explained that as people started to get used to the scheme, they were well prepared for the second phase. As such, she thought it was not necessary for the government to wait for a year to start the consultation.

"The scheme will be less effective be-

cause people will be less alert of the issue when spending one year on consultation," Ms Kwok said.

Furthermore, considering that the current scheme only covers the large retailers, Ms Caroline Mak Sui-king, the Chairwoman of the Hong Kong Retail Management Association said that the government should extend the levy to include all retail outlets because there were still lots of retailers shops not included in the scheme, such as newspaper stalls, bookstores, boutiques, bakery etc.

Some types of products are also not included under the scheme. According to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD)'s information, the government allows exemption to a retail outlet in which more than half of its retail area is offering non-specified goods i.e. goods other than food or drink; medicine or first-aid item; and personal hygiene or beauty product.

The Greeners Action suggested that Hong Kong could learn from the experience of Taiwan where all non-food products will be placed under the scheme.

"It will definitely be a more comprehensive approach which Hong Kong should follow suit," said Ms Kwok.

Although details about the phase two are not confirmed, the EPD announced that it would conduct surveys at landfills towards the end of this year and in the middle of next year to look into the extent of waste reduction for the purpose of a comprehensive review of the levy scheme's effectiveness and as reference when considering the way forward.

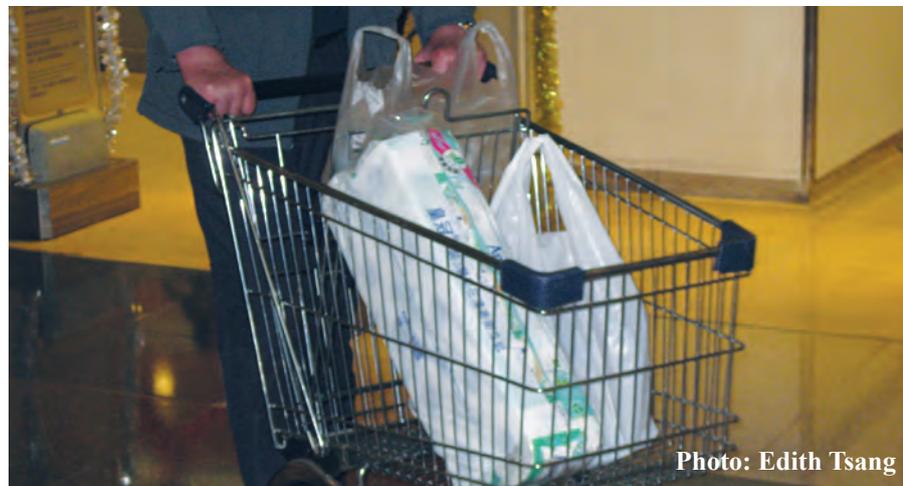


Photo: Edith Tsang

Some shoppers still prefer using plastic bags even the levy is imposed.

WRITTEN BY VIVIAN CHUI, ALAN KWOK, SARAH LAI, MINI LI  
EDITED BY IRENE HUANG, JAYSON HUI, ISA KWOK, SAMSON LEE

## How do future journalists see these top-10 news?

"As a journalism student, I pay special attention to what happens to journalists. It is highly possible for us to be reporting in the mainland in the future," he commented on the top ranked news of the journalists' plight in Xinjiang.

- Mr Lam Hon-shan,  
Department of Journalism and  
Communication, HKSJU

"Mongkok's acid attack has large involvement. As we all go to Mongkok, we are aware and afraid of it," she said, referring to the incident that panics the public.

- Ms Vanessa Leung Suet-yi,  
School of Journalism and  
Communication, CUHK

Concerning Mr Kao's winning of the Nobel Prize, Mr Wu described it as a glory to Hongkongers since Mr. Kao is Hong Kong's first Nobel laureate.

- Mr Simon Wu Chung-pong,  
Department of Journalism, HKBU

"The government fails to maintain its integrity. People lose confidence towards the government," she said government's scandals are brought to the top ten due to their impacts.

- Ms Leung Pui-duan,  
Department of Journalism and  
Communication, Chu Hai

**Further reading :**

**Journalists' plight is not top news of the year  
by CK Lau on page 20**

# INTERVIEWS

## Pulitzer winner records with passion

BY JEMELYN YADAO

Erger university students have quickly filled a usually dreaded lecture room to listen to an attractive man wearing a sharp grey suit complete with a pair of black stud earrings. This puzzles him. “Is it usually this crowded?” asks Mr Damon Winter from New York, staring at what he is about to face. He is amateur when it comes to conducting a lecture in front of hundreds of students but when it comes to using a camera, Mr Winter is no beginner. Just ask the members of the Pulitzer Prize Board.

Photojournalist for *The New York Times*, Mr Damon Winter, 34, has come to Hong Kong along with six other speakers to host a series of lectures and forums in November.

Coincidentally, it was a workshop like the ones he hosted that week which triggered his passion for photojournalism back when he was student studying for a degree in Environmental Science at Columbia University, New York.

“I got exposed to some amazing photography. I started to fall in love with it. Right now, I love the work of so many photographers who are not necessarily photojournalists. I’m learning everyday, ever since I first picked up a camera,” he says.

Mr Winter has covered a range of stories from conflict in Afghanistan, Israel and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York to sexual abuse victims in western Alaska. He has seen many places and attended many funerals but he had never before covered a presidential campaign. To many an assignment like this is a photographer’s big break, but to him it was also extremely exhausting.

“It was tough. The days were long and tiring. It was a real challenge for me. Not only did I have to focus on taking good photographs, I had to be aware that I was out there competing with many other photographers and we all wanted the same thing which was to come up with something different,” he says, “I guess it was all worth it at the end.”

And it was. His fresh approach in shooting and shadowing the then Senator Barack Obama won him the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for feature photography.



**Mr Damon Winter, winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for feature photography. (Right) One of his award-winning shots. (Courtesy: Damon Winter, *The New York Times*)**



Now, these photographs including Mr Obama’s emerging dark silhouette on a burst of light have become recognisable to many.

Mr Winter covered the campaign for a year and took over 90,000 images.

“It was a pretty amazing experience. I was pushed to not shoot the straightforward shot, and to look around for different angles, to pay attention to the crowds. Especially for Obama, the story was about all the excitement around him wherever he went. I was busy everyday. I took each day as it came,” he says.

Covering Mr Barack Obama’s story of his road to presidency and bliss is a change from the stories of normal people who have suffered severe trauma in their lives and who would not normally open up to a stranger like Mr Winter.

“It takes a lot of time and a lot of smiling. You have to let them understand that you’re not being threatening, that you’re a nice person who is not there to harm in anyway. It’s taken me a long time to get use to it,” he says.

The challenges he faces as a photojournalist doesn’t stop there.

“I’ve got editors to deal with too,” he says. “As a photographer for a newspaper working on tight deadlines, you constantly wish you had more time to take more pictures or reshoot.”

Despite the exhaustion, the competition and being no longer familiarised with the word ‘sleep,’ Mr Winter wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I watch office people going off into the same old daily routine of having a nine to five job and I feel so lucky. For me, no two days is ever alike. I never know what I’ll be doing next,” says Mr Winter.

Mr Winter has become an influential photographer, yet he finds it difficult to advise students due to the gruelling reality that job openings for photojournalists are limited and highly competitive.

“At the same time, if you are one of lucky few who have a passion for something then by all means pursue it,” he says.

**EDITED BY DODO YIN**

# INTERVIEWS

## Nick Vujicic - limbless but fearless

BY MAGGIE TAM

**B**ouncing up and down while speaking in a confident, high-pitched voice, this man was in a black suit with no sleeves or trousers legs.

Smiling a lot, blinking a lot, he made full use of his bodily limitations and channeled them into an expressive sharing on the talk "By Faith, We Soar!" on November 7, 2009 in Hong Kong.

Born in 1982, Mr Nicholas Vujicic has come to this world with neither arms nor legs, a birth defect known as "tetra-amelia disorder". And one could have hardly imagined that this limbless infant would one day become someone who would inspire and touch so many lives all over the world.

During his childhood, Mr Vujicic was always teased and bullied. He struggled with depression and loneliness.

"I beg God for arms and legs. My parents could only hold me when I cried," he said. "I couldn't marry. I couldn't work. Even there's someone who marry me, I couldn't hold her hands."

There were times when such feeling just seemed too much for him to handle.

"At eight, I told my mom I wanted to kill myself. At ten, I tried," he said. "But I didn't want to leave my parents upset for the rest of their lives."

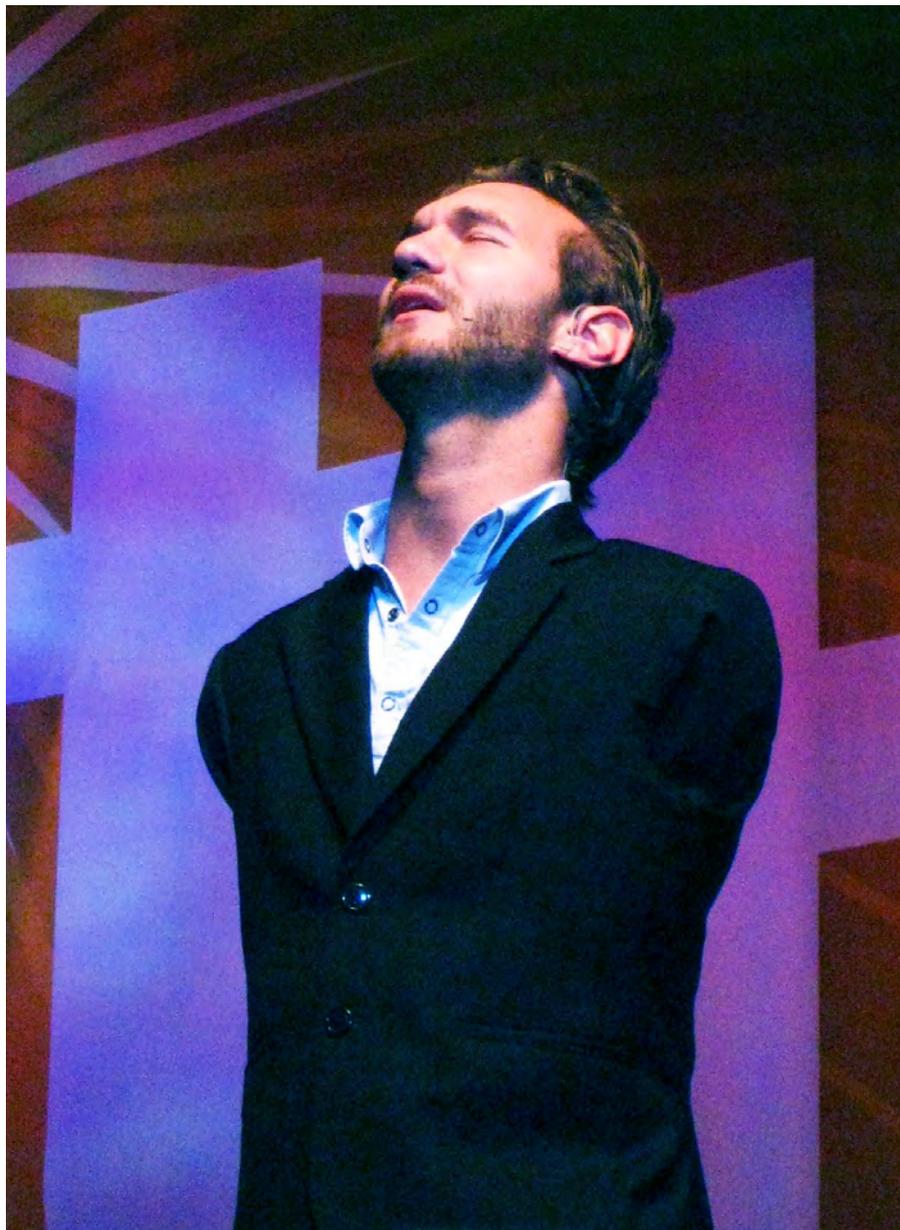
As he grew up, he got used to his situation and tried very hard to accomplish tasks that most people were only able to complete by using their hands and legs. He even learnt how to swim, play sports and many more.

In seventh grade, Mr Vujicic was elected the captain of his school and he worked for the student council, organising various fund-raising events for local charities and campaigns for the disabled.

"I never thought of what I can do with my foot. You know I can write. I can type 43 words a minute in a normal computer. I went to university. And I did two degrees, accounting and financial planning," he said.

Touched by a speech from a guest speaker at his school, the then 19-year-old started to learn public speaking, wishing to bring many others inspiration and hope through his speeches. He shared his story to motivate desperate people, telling them not to give up.

"I found the purpose of my existence, and also the purpose of my circumstance," he said, attributing his victory over his struggles and the passion he had for life to his family and friends, faith in God, and the many people he has met in his life who had



Mr Nick Vujicic is delivering a speech in AsiaWorld-Expo, Hong Kong.

ever inspired and encouraged him.

Mr Steven Cheung Chi-hang, a 25-year-old local pop idol, was among those being inspired by Mr Vujicic while struggling for his career.

"God and this person [Mr Vujicic] give me hope. They tell me that I could not give in and disappoint those who love me. Even Nick could make it, why can't I?" he said.

Ms Kwan Yee-kei, 26, was among the audience of the talk but could hardly put herself in his shoes. "His speech was inspiring and touching. But I am not him. The challenges I am encountering are a lot different from his and no one shows sympathy towards me at all like him or the way he did," she said.

Mr Vujicic was nominated for the 2005 "Young Australian of the Year" Award that

recognises youngsters for their excellence and service to their local community and Australia.

Now at the age of 25, he is the president of an international non-profit organisation, and also has his own motivational speaking company, Attitude Is Altitude.

He visited 24 countries to share his story with more than 2,400,000 people. He even inspired over 600,000,000 people via TV, the Internet, newspaper and magazines.

Mr Vujicic said he accepted his disability and would continue to meet challenges with his special blend of humor, perseverance and faith.

"Fear is the greatest handicap," he said.

EDITED BY YVONNE LOU

# REVIEWS

## Evangelion 2.0: A probe into status quo

BY BRIAN LAW

Voted as “the best Japanese animation ever” by the Japanese media this year, the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* original TV series has been rebuilt into a tetralogy movie. And the sequel *Evangelion: 2.0 You Can (Not) Advance* was screened on December 3 in Hong Kong.

Following the big success of its first and previous movie - *Evangelion: 1.0 You Are (Not) Alone*, the *Evangelion 2.0* has already gained a heavenly ¥3.8 billion (about \$330 million) in its domestic debut released in July.

The *Neon Genesis Evangelion* stories are set in an apocalyptic world where a “Second Impact” meteor crash destroys Antarctica, and subsequently leads to a catastrophic death of half the world’s population and the jeopardous tilt of the globe’s axis. The order of the world is to be restored. Thus, Evangelions are created for a “Human Aid Project” to evolve the inner world of human.

The movie is trying to give answers to the very basic question of human existence by spending a lot of time rendering the psychographic curve of the main characters.

The image of “Second Impact” has been compared to burst of the economic bubble in early 1990s, during which period social conflicts were erupted in a large scale - children complained the lack of care from their parents and parents were suffering the greatest pressure from the society in their lifetime.

Shinji and Asuka in the movie have very different characters. But both of their problems are the result of the “Second impact” which took away their parents’ jobs. Shinji became socially withdrawn as his mother passed away and his father abandoned him. Asuka’s mother became insane and committed suicide, and she became self-centered and arrogant so that nobody around can ignore her. The lost of care and love from their parents minimises their self-existence value.

One of the main features that makes *Evangelion* stand out from other mass production of Japanese animations each year is the realistic significance embedded in the story.

Before the series come out, animation characters are mostly defined simply as either good or bad. Seldom of them reflect the real world and the complexity of humanity.

*Evangelion*, however, shows a group of sick people, reflecting the Japanese generation in the 1990s. It proves to the audience



Poster of the *Evangelion 2.0* on its domestic release in July.

and other animators that anime can be given a more sophisticated and deeper meaning.

*Evangelion* beautifully illustrates the complexity of human being on the reflection of the current Japanese ethos, though the whole theory is presented through bloody horror scenes.

In response to the horror scene complaints, the director and scriptwriter Mr Hideaki Anno wrote in the release statement of rebuilt *Evangelion* movies that those horror scenes are intentionally set up for the main characters to go through by themselves. This emphasises their courage to be able to stand up in the end.

“It is a story of will; a story of moving forward, if only just a little. It is a story of

fear, where someone who must face indefinite solitude fears reaching out to others, but still wants to try,” he said in the release.

Compared to the original TV series, the new rebuilt movie has a new Evangelion constructed with Kaworu Nagisa, a human-like “Angel” who only shows up in the wane to the close in the original series, sitting on the base.

While the first movie received audience’s complaint of “more or less the same story as the original TV series”, Mr Anno has put his efforts in creating new characters and also new carving story development. The *Evangelion 2.0* might give the audience a fresh look.

EDITED BY JADE SHEN

## Movies

### Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs



(Courtesy: Sony / Columbia)

inventor happened to build a machine which can turn water vapour into food, and “food rain” of all kind starts pouring down in his small town. As town people’s appetite grows, the food raining is becoming a serious threat. Flint was the one who have to save the town from a food hazard.

The movie did a wonderful job in terms of its hilarious plot and witty script to keep people laughing out loud. And this fast-paced adventure comedy also conveys positive messages about self-confidence, the danger of greed, as well as the global food issue. The movie will be released in Hong Kong on December 31, 2009.

*Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* is a delicious movie for Christmas and New Year. The Sony pictures’ third animation is loosely based on a children’s book of the same name. It tells the story of Flint Lockwood (voiced by Bill Hader), a young

### Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging



(Courtesy: Paramount Pictures)

So Georgia and her best friends decide to change their horrible lives and show the world they have become mature women. They take snogging lessons to brush up their techniques, stalk “sex-god” boys with gummy tricks and dream for a hottest birthday party in a club with DJs.

The film successfully attracts audience with its amusing insight of being a 14-year-old girl. The director, Gurinder Chadha, also tried to present subtle portray of girls in this ironic age who are too old for toys but too young for boys. Enjoy your trip to old Eastbourne and discover impatient young girls’ lows and highs. DVD is out now.

“Welcome to the tragic universe, that is my sad life,” said Georgia Nicolson (Georgia Groome) while she is fed up with her parents from the “Stone Age” and her crazy little sister who always put their cat, Angus, in the fridge and her loony-bin school.

## Restaurants

### Taiwanese style fried chicken steak

39A, Sung Kit Street, Hung Hom



Taiwan fried chicken steak is famous for its tenderness, crispiness and its considerably big size. Now, you can experience this good taste without heading to Taiwan. A newly opened snack shop in Hung Hom serves you the most traditional Tai-

wanese style fried chicken steak.

The young Taiwanese shop owner who came to Hong Kong three years ago said the recipe was inherited from her mother, who used to sell fried chicken steak at night market in Taiwan. All the essential condiments for making the chicken steak are imported from Taiwan to keep the most authentic and traditional taste.

The deep-fried chicken steak is seasoned with garlic, chilly pepper and black pepper, which brings a deliciously spicy flavor. It’s crispy on the outside yet juicy and soft on the inside.

Every bite is truly a delight.

Food: ★★★★★ Service: ★★★

Environment: ★★ Price: ★★★★★

### Tarot café

4/F, 65 Soy Street, Mongkok



“When could I find my Mr Right?” “Will my work go well?” Many people come to the place with their questions to Ah King, the resident tarot expert at Tarot Café.

The private tarot reading room showcases the speciality of the café.

From pictures representing the 12 constellations on the wall to the light color gauze curtains hung from the ceiling, from the hazy yellow light to the table set with tarot-patterns, mysterious tarot style is everywhere in the ambiance.

Everything is tarot, and food is not an exception. Constellation-drink is especially designed for different customers with different horoscopes. Nothing special with the taste, but the drink brings a sense of privilege as it comes with your own constellation. This makes it worth a try.

Besides playing card games or reading books, you may also be fascinated with the photos on the wall taken by the landlady who shares interesting stories in her trips with you.

Food: ★★★★★ Service: ★★★★★

Environment: ★★★★★ Price: ★★★★★

WRITTEN BY PEARL LIU, YOYO SUN  
EDITED BY SYBIL KOT, CONNIE WAN



CK LAU

## Journalists' plight is not top news of the year

**A** *TYR* survey has found most journalism students regard three Hong Kong journalists' rough treatment at the hands of Urumqi police in July as the most significant local news event in 2009.

The students' feelings are understandable. What happened to the trio was very unsettling. They were in the capital of Xinjiang to cover the ethnic riots that left almost 200 killed and some 1,700 injured. While trying to conduct interviews in the street, they were man-handled and beaten even though they had not flouted any rules. The incident has a chilling effect on Hong Kong journalists trying to do their job on the mainland. As prospective journalists, the students naturally empathise with the victims.

I feel uneasy about the students ranking the incident first out of a list of 50 items that dominated the headlines, however. For if a public poll were conducted, my hunch is that it might or might not make the top 10 and would definitely not come first.

I raise this issue because compiling year-end reviews is an annual exercise for the news media. What perspective should journalists adopt when they make the selections? There are no easy answers that can satisfy everyone, just as no one has been able to formulate a definitive definition of news. But this needs not bar us from putting a list together.

I do feel strongly, however, that journalists should set aside personal considerations and put ourselves in the position of readers and viewers in making news judgments. We should let a few questions guide our selection in putting together yearenders. What were the hot topics that everybody talked about? What were the items that people cared about most? What were the significant issues that bothered them and would have a lasting impact?

With these questions in mind, heading my list of top 10 news items in 2009 is the rifts among pan-democrats over a plan for some of their legislators to resign and stand

for re-election. The plan was hatched by the League of Social Democrats as a means of triggering a de facto referendum on the government's political reform proposal. It was supported by the Civic Party but opposed by the Democratic Party. As the *TYR* went to press, the three parties were showing no signs of bridging their differences. Whether or not the plan will be carried out, the row has undermined unity among the pan-democrats and will have far-reaching implications on the political scene.

Second on my list is the June 4 vigil that marked the tragic event in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989. There was particular significance to the larger than usual turnout this year on its 20th anniversary. It showed that 12 years after the city's reunification with the mainland, "one country, two systems" is alive and well and the people of Hong Kong are sticking to their values of freedom.

My other choices – not in order of importance – are HSBC shares' roller-coaster ride in the stock market, judicial veto of PCCW's privatisation, probate battle over Nina Wang's estate, swine flu, fallout from the demise of Lehman Brothers, fine-tuning of the medium of instruction policy, declining popularity of Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen, and introduction of a plastic bag levy.

As a journalist, my sympathy lies with the trio who got beaten up in Urumqi. But I would regard their plight as top news only if I were compiling a list of important events that affected the press. I believe while most Hong Kong people deplore the incident and back journalists' right to report, they consider it less important than many other items that have also attracted their attention during the year.

**CK Lau is former Editor of SCMP. He will join the Journalism Department of Hong Kong Baptist University as Principal Lecturer in January 2010.**

## Letters to the Editor

### Tattoos – back in vogue?

**O** riginated in ancient times, tattooing becomes a trend in this decade especially among the youth.

I do agree that people can have tattoos, but only when they become adults. Teenagers should concentrate on studying. If students persist in having tattoos, they will greatly affect the image and reputation of their school and also themselves. In addition, tattoos may give a bad impression to employers when students apply for jobs.

I do not oppose adults tattooing their bodies because they have the ability to choose wisely and make mature decisions.

As everyone knows, many adults, especially famous actors or singers, have lots of tattoos. For instance, Angelina Jolie had tattoos to represent the birth of her sons and daughters, as well as stories about her life. Hence tattooing can also be a way to express one's feelings. The meaning of tattoos has definitely changed as we move into the 21st century.

**JOANNE LEUNG WAI-LAM**  
Hong Kong True Light College

### Tackle Teenage problems

**T** eens are suffering vast pressure and want to release their stress. But some of them have chosen a bad method.

Some abuse drugs. Taking drugs does not only harm their body mentally or physically, but would also threaten people's lives. So, the whole society should deal with this problem immediately.

As more and more teenage girls are obsessed with luxury products in order to establish their self-confidence, some of them may participate in compensated dating. The girls' clients may ask for sexual transactions. It is nothing different from prostitution. After these dates, the girls involving in compensated dating may not only lose a bright future but also trust from their families.

I cannot turn a blind eye to the tremendous problems. The whole society should take those in hand.

**EUGENE YU WUN-CHING**  
TWGHs Lui Yun Choy Memorial College

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# EDITORIAL

## Govt putting economy first, people's interests second

BY PHILA SIU

From the high speed rail saga to the electoral reform proposal presented by Chief Secretary Henry Tang Ying-yan on November 19, it is obvious that the HKSAR government is neither a government by, nor for, the people.

This spate of events has forced Hong Kong people to believe that the government is manipulated by the central government in Beijing. Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen has no say when he confronted the central government.

Of course, it could be that Mr Tsang had already presented our wish to Premier Wen Jiabao under the table when they met in the APEC meeting in Singapore in November, but was given a rap on the knuckles. That just could be the reason why the latest electoral reform is a rehash of the 2005 one.

Alright, let's admit that he would not have the guts to do so.

If the proposal itself is already a problem, then the attitude of our dear Chief Secretary Henry Tang when he answered lawmakers'

questions should be given a thumbs-down.

When legislator Cyd Ho Sau-lan asked Henry Tang whether he really wanted the present political system to "widen the wealth gap steadily" and that he has no sincerity to tackle the worsening social problems, he said his answer was as simple as a "yes", with a disrespectful smile on his face.

If Hong Kong people are given the chance to choose the Chief Executive and other high-positioned government officials, will they dare to answer legislators' questions and people's wills that way?

On the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail saga, the way the government handled Choi Yuen Tsuen villagers clearly shows that Hong Kong people's wishes can be sacrificed when confronted with economic development, especially if it is related to development with China.

There is no doubt the 142km-long express rail will make the tie between Hong Kong and China closer. But at the cost of about \$65 billion, or a whopping \$4.5 billion per km, is it really worth it? Rail concern group The Professional Commons laid a proposal in November suggesting the express rail could be constructed at a lower cost and that Choi

Yuen Tsuen does not have to be demolished.

However, the Transport and Housing Bureau was quick off the mark to reject the proposal, saying the estimations are wrong. Its lack of sincerity in looking into the possibility of the proposal is disappointing.

A government that is for the people would put our interests first, then the economic benefits. Although hundreds of villagers have vented their anger and frustration by taking it to the streets several times, the government has turned a deaf ear.

In November, Secretary for Transport and Housing Eva Cheng Yu-wah has made her stance clear by saying "it is a must to construct the express rail." Her blatant remark has left every local wondering whether Hong Kong has already become a communist city. It is a "must"? Was she consulting the public or simply giving out orders?

According to the Basic Law, the current social, economic and legal systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 50 years. But it appears that the tentacles of communist rule have already spread to the city. It remains a mystery what Hong Kong will become after 2047.

We'll see.

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## Forgotten memories unfolded

**F**rom gold lacquer signboards, yellowed account books, discarded family portraits to dozens of love letters, he tries to save the old times of the local history.

Located on the top floor of Cheong Shing Industrial Building in Tai Kok Tsui, the small museum-like “What Laboratory” is owned by a local designer Mr Joel Chung Yin-chai. He has spent a few years collecting thousand of so-called scrap and brought back stuff from closed stores and second-hand stores. As Mr Chung puts it, the traditional culture in Hong Kong is like a fragmentary film and the less people cherish it, the more it turns into pieces.

Although the tiny laboratory has not enough place to keep the entire history of Hong Kong, he strives to help people feel a sense of belonging.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY CATHIE GUO  
EDITED BY VENICE WONG





"I don't want to see our next generation lose their traditions," Mr Chung said.



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