

A balance between the old and the new

Although Hong Kong is one of the most developed cities in the world, the sense of cultural identity of Hong Kong people is declining daily.

The government continues with demolition projects and ignores the heritage value of old buildings. They believe they are helping the city's economic development, but I disagree.

I am not asking the government to stop development, but just to strike a balance with the preservation of heritage sites. Otherwise our original culture will be buried.

So, what is a heritage site? In my opinion, it is a site that has historical value and is full of memories for people.

Historical buildings can also serve as tourist attractions. For example, the Star Ferry was one of our most valuable heritage sites before it was dismantled. It attracted visitors from all over the world and gave them a lasting impression of Hong Kong.

And these heritage sites are not pieces of art; they can also generate income from entrance fees.

Of course, the income is much lower than from commercial development, but it helps to pay for the preservation of our culture and memories.

And many historical buildings are owned by individuals who, along with the general public, may wish to preserve them. Before starting demolition projects, the government should give consideration to the social benefits of preservation, and it should consult the public. While development is not bad, if a city does not have any heritage sites, it will become a "dead city".

And if the focus is only on money, memories will be forgotten. The government should put more effort into preserving heritage sites.

→ **Steve Law, SKH Li Fook Hing Secondary School**

Time to tackle solid waste

Hong Kong's solid waste problem becomes more serious each year.

According to recent research, 600 million tonnes of solid

waste is generated in Hong Kong every year. I wonder why people waste so much when there are people who are starving in poor countries.

At the same time, Hong Kong's three landfills are soon going to be full. Some people suggest the government just creates more landfills, but we need to make fundamental changes to reduce waste.

According to a survey conducted by my school's Environmental Protection Club, most students have no sense of environmental protection. They are constantly wasting food and paper. I really wish they would learn to recycle and to value what they have. Many people are not as lucky as we are.

We need to make sure we use up paper on both sides, and that we put our waste into recycling receptacles.

At home we should ask our parents only to cook the food we are going to eat, and encourage them to reuse things if they can.

**Chris Wong, SKH Li Fook Hing
Secondary School**

Take better care of the elderly

A lot of elderly people take paper boxes, newspapers and cans from recycling bins so as to earn some money. There are a lot of poor elderly people in Hong Kong: recent reports show that 30 per cent of them live below the poverty line.

There is also an increasing proportion of elderly people receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance from the government. And reports of physical and psychological abuse of old people by family members are rising.

I have some ideas as to how we could all take better care of the elderly.

First of all, we should express our affection for elderly friends and relatives. Those who live alone in particular often feel lonely and abandoned, and a burden on society. We must take the time to prove to them that we care. Old people may suffer from various sicknesses. Treatment and medication can be very costly, so the government should ensure they receive free medical attention and medicine.

The government should also provide more facilities, such as parks and social centres, for the elderly so that they have somewhere to meet their friends and occupy their time.

Perhaps most importantly, we should all remember the important contributions these people made to Hong Kong when they were younger. They don't deserve to be neglected.

**Louisa Lo, SKH Li Fook Hing
Secondary School**

No more space for waste in HK

Hong Kong's population produces 600 million tonnes of solid waste every year. Our city cannot handle it anymore, and our three landfill sites are going to be full very soon.

The government has been researching ways to reduce waste but students can help, at school and at home.

At school we don't have to throw away plastic bags, papers, lunchboxes, and the like.

Partially used paper can be used for drafts and for photocopying, and we should consider using recycled paper. We can also use reusable bags, lunchboxes and tableware.

At home, we can buy large bottles of soft drinks instead of cans, and these bottles can then be used for other purposes. We should avoid fast food, as it is not only bad for our health, it is usually packed in plastic bags or cans.

Instead of wasting tissues and napkins, we can use handkerchiefs, which are reusable.

All these measures can reduce the problem and much

of what is left can be sorted for recycling, further reducing the burden on our city's landfills.

Steve Law, SKH Li Fook Hing Secondary School

Act now on teen suicide

The rate of teenage suicide is increasing day by day, especially in Asian countries.

I think the major reason is that teenagers are suffering from too much stress. Society should help them reduce their pressure.

Teenagers face pressure from all areas – family relationships, school, problems of puberty and relationships with friends.

Stress is not a bad thing. It can give people an incentive to

improve themselves, but if it is not controlled, it can lead to suicide.

Stress is not just caused by your mental state but also your physical state. It is essential teenagers get enough rest as they use so much energy. Therefore, time management is very important. Another thing is to have balanced eating habits.

Adequate leisure time is also important. Most teens have a very tight timetable and little time to relax. Sports can help relieve daily pressure.

Teens have to be helped to control their emotions and stress. For example, we can teach them to focus on the positive. Good communication skills can also reduce the stress, bringing better relationships with family and friends.

Lastly, we can teach them to be more confident.

Overall, we have to help teenagers physically and mentally because not being able to deal with stress can have fatal consequences.

**Steve Law, SKH Li Fook Hing
Secondary School**

Don't rush to have children

Many young couples are deciding not to have children. They prefer to enjoy the life of a couple, and are therefore referred to as "Dinks" (Double Income No Kids).

Some people might argue that since Hong Kong's birthrate is so low, couples should be encouraged to have children.

However, I do not agree with them.

Firstly, the relationships of young couples may not last. If they were to split up, their children would feel hurt and confused.

Living in single-parent families affects children's long-term development. This is a good reason why young couples should not be encouraged to have children too soon.

Secondly, young couples may not be able to afford children. It is said raising a child in Hong Kong costs HK\$4 million. How many young couples have so much money?

Last but not least, young couples may not be patient and mature enough to look after children.

Based on these reasons, I support young couples should they decide not to have children right away.

There will be plenty of time for them to have children when they are in a stable relationship, have matured, and have enough money to raise children happily and provide them with all of the things that they need.

Hung Hiu Po, SKH Li Fook Hing Secondary School

Be proud of our charitable spirit

Some people say most Hongkongers only think about money and do not help others. I disagree.

I have seen teenagers offer their seats to the elderly or pregnant women on buses and the MTR.

Moreover, Hongkongers willingly give directions to foreigners. Some locals may lack confidence to talk to foreigners, but they try their best to help visitors.

In addition, there are many organisations that help poor people and the elderly. Hundreds of volunteers are involved in these activities.

We should be proud of our charitable spirit.

**Wong Lai-sha, SKH Li Fook Hing
Secondary School**