

Class : 4A

Name : Anais Leung

Topic : Hong Kong's Buskers

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my view on a recent article in the Hong Kong Daily, which claimed that most of Hong Kong's buskers are an embarrassment. I personally believe that the street performers are an embarrassment in Hong Kong. Furthermore, I deem that buskers should be licensed and regulated.

First and foremost, I believe that most of our buskers are an embarrassment. Most of the buskers infringe people's right. People should have the freedom to choose whether they want to listen or watch the buskers' performances. Yet, buskers block their paths and people cannot avoid listening to their music or watching their performances. In fact, the street performers have a varying quality of performances. For instance, there is a high likelihood that we can hear a busker at Sai Yeung Choi Street in Mong Kok destroying a classic pop song. Some of them are just too loud and cause noise pollution. Some people think buskers in Hong Kong are an awful nuisance. As a result, I believe that most of our buskers are an embarrassment.

To improve the quality of buskers, I deem that buskers should be licensed and regulated. Buskers in Hong Kong need a well-structured licensing scheme. Some buskers are treated like beggars, so the government should recognize street performers. Also, the government should give them an identity. This can encourage Hong Kong's street performance culture and weed out acts of poor quality. There are an estimated 300 or so active street performers in Hong Kong. Most of them can be found in some of the city's most crowded areas such as Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and Causeway Bay. Nevertheless, the buskers have no identity. Licensing and regulating them is the most proper management of buskers.

Furthermore, I have some additional suggestions regarding the ways to improve the quality of busking in Hong Kong. Not only can the government help improve the quality of busking, but buskers can also develop the culture of busking by coordinating among themselves.

First of all, the government can improve the quality of busking in Hong Kong through official policies. The government can regulate buskers by launching a well-structured licensing scheme. For instance, the Open Stage Scheme and the West Kowloon Street Performance Scheme are the closest mechanisms Hong Kong has to a licensing system. The government can launch some similar schemes to those. By doing so, qualified performers can showcase their talents whereas acts of poor quality can be weeded out. What's more, it helps to promote the appreciation of street performances.

Second, buskers can improve the quality of busking in Hong Kong through self-regulation. Buskers could coordinate among themselves to prevent problems such as noise and the occupation of public space. They can share a spot with other performers and perform for 20 minutes on rotation. Lyson Sze, a freestyle football player in Hong Kong, demonstrates how self-regulation can actually work by using such a method. In addition, some buskers can join training courses to improve their singing techniques.

All in all, I personally believe that buskers in Hong Kong are an embarrassment. I deem that buskers should be licensed and regulated so as to help the busking culture to develop in an orderly fashion.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong