



EDITORIAL

大公社評

Making better preparations for more newborn babies

The Secretary for Food and Health Dr. York Chow Yat-ngok yesterday disclosed that over 70,000 babies were born in Hong Kong in the first 10 months of this year. So it is to be expected that the number of newborn babies will reach 90,000 or more for the whole of this year. This will set a "high production" record for Hong Kong in 45 years.

In Chinese tradition, the birth of a child is a happy event. For Hong Kong, the arrival of 90,000 new lives is especially welcome as in the past two decades the birth rate has remained low. This rate dropped as low as 0.9 percent (or nine births per one thousand people) in 2003. Although it rose slightly to 1.1% last year, it is still below the replacement rate of 2.1 births for every mother. As is well known, the only outcome of a low birth rate for society over a long period of time is the aging of the population and slower productivity. And as a result, both individual and public expenditures will rise sharply.

So, in general, it may be said that the 90,000 little lives will inject new vigour into Hong Kong society and **make up** fresh troops for future development. A large number of pregnant Mainland women who come to Hong Kong to give birth have thus made their "contribution" to Hong Kong society by **making up for** the low birth rate. But in view of the pressures brought on Hong Kong's obstetric services and distribution of public resources in future, a high birth rate boosted by Mainland women coming to deliver babies in Hong Kong has advantages and disadvantages, arousing concern as well as bringing happiness. The relevant authorities must consider this issue carefully and take necessary steps.

As a matter of fact, in regard to pregnant Mainland women **flooding into** Hong Kong to give birth, the Food and Health Bureau, Hospital Authority and public and private hospitals have already worked out a series of measures, including public hospitals giving priority to serving local pregnant women while the private hospitals focus on serving Mainland women who have booked places and received prenatal examinations. Despite this, cases of Mainland women in labour coming to deliver babies at the last minute, without making prior appointments, still occur. There have even been cases of Mainland women in labour giving birth at immigration checkpoints. On the other hand, seeing profits can be made from helping pregnant Mainland women come to give birth in Hong Kong, some savvy business people have set up so-called "intermediary services" companies. They claim they ensure bed bookings and prenatal examinations, and services for the one-month post-natal care. While they make profits, there is no assurance of safety.

Next year is the Year of the Dragon in the Lunar Calendar. Given people's mentality of "hoping their children to become dragons (successful)", the birth rate may shoot up higher. For this, relevant authorities and public and private hospitals must make sufficient preparations to further implement the system of giving priority to local pregnant women and requiring Mainland women to make bookings, to ensure fairness and safety.

Given Hong Kong's medical-care system, the serious shortage of medical personnel, including obstetricians, nurses and midwives, appears all the more serious and urgent. In public hospitals, job loads are heavier, shortage of hands more serious and work pressure heavier. On the other hand, in private hospitals,

the terms of employment are better. As a result, many experienced medical personnel have flowed into the private sector. Although medical schools and nursing departments of local universities have increased enrolment of students, they cannot immediately fill the vacancies. For this, the authorities concerned have proposed to recruit overseas doctors to meet this urgent need, though this move has yet to be accepted by local medical organisations. The issue **is still locked in** a seesaw debate. But health care for patients must not be neglected, and women in labour cannot wait to deliver their babies. The medical organisations concerned should put serving society and patients' interests above everything else, and should support the government in importing a limited number of qualified overseas doctors for public hospitals to ease the shortage of hands.

In the long run, local and Mainland pregnant women together will deliver 80,000 to 90,000 babies each year. This will build up considerable pressure on and demand for housing, education, medical-care and other social services in Hong Kong. As Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen put it in his last policy address, From Strength to Strength, the government does not encourage Mainland women to give birth in Hong Kong. But as long as these children are Hong Kong permanent residents, they are entitled to the same legal rights. Society must treat them with a positive attitude. It must be more accurately ascertained how many of these children will reside in Hong Kong or come to attend schools, so as to better plan for the provision of public services to nurture them into useful human resources for Hong Kong.

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WORDS AND USAGE

- ① **In general** (idiom) – In most cases; as a whole. (一般而言，從總體上看)
Examples: 1. In general, a grammatical clause contain a subject and a predicate. 2. In general, women live longer than men.
- ② **Make up sth** (phrasal verb) – To form a particular part of something. (形成……的一部分)
Examples: 1. Rice makes up a large part of their diet. 2. Women make up 55% of the population in this city.
- ③ **Make up for (doing) sth** (phrasal verb) – To do or provide something good to balance or reduce the effect of something bad. (彌補，補救)
Examples: 1. Hard work can often make up for a lack of ability. 2. After two years in prison, he is now making up for lost time.
- ④ **Flood in, flood into sth** (phrasal verb) – To arrive in great numbers. (大量湧入，蜂擁而來)
Examples: 1. Letters of support have been flooding in from all over the country. 2. Sunshine flooded into the room.
- ⑤ **Be locked in sth** (phrasal verb) – Unable to change a condition. (陷入……而無法擺脫)
Examples: 1. The two countries are locked in a dispute over the islands off the northern coast. 2. The parents are locked in a legal battle over the future of the twins.

中文基本功

虛與委蛇的蛇要圈聲讀儀 逶迤就是由委蛇變化而來

十月廿六日亞洲電視《百年共和》我沒有收看。不久一位觀眾告知，當晚這個節目出現「虛與委蛇」這個成語，旁白將蛇字照字面讀，讀成蛇蟲鼠蟻的蛇，記得老師認為不是這麼讀，這個蛇字，也不作動物之蛇解。

不錯，成語「虛與委蛇」，與蛇蟲鼠蟻的蛇無直接關係。此語典出《莊子·應帝王》，比原文有一字之改。委蛇二字都有彎曲之意，後世文字類化，寫成各加同部偏旁的逶迤。語中委蛇，有曲從之意，即故意順從之謂。「虛與委蛇」，就是表面上順從對方的意思，實則拖時間，用兩字概括其涵義，那就是「敷衍」。當然。這成語生動地刻劃了敷衍的形狀，比敷衍兩字更有文化內涵，否則，不會有人樂於應用，時隔二千年而流傳至今。

談到逶迤，想起唐代大詩人杜甫《秋興八首》中的一首，有「昆吾御宿自逶迤，紫

閣峰陰入漢陂」之句。逶迤，讀作威儀，可見委蛇本來也讀作威儀，久了，委變讀仄聲，照字面讀，但蛇讀儀，是不變的。

這一晚，有人提到，《百年共和》有人雖曾把張謇的謬誤讀謬，後來有人改讀件（陰上聲），總算依照字典讀音云云。

我認為，字典雖如此讀音，不等於就是粵音，正如所謂「正音」人士把糾正的糾讀成九，也有字典可「據」，但不等於粵音那樣。

字典舊字讀件（陰上聲），古時如此讀，且是北音。君不見陳第有言：「時有古今，地有南北，字有更革，音有轉移，亦勢所必至！」謬和蹇在粵語讀剪，歷史悠久，同樣有字典可作依據。謬讀件（陰上聲），在粵語中沒有師承。我幼年時，老師宿儒是不承認的，還是孟子那句話：「盡信書則不如無書。」

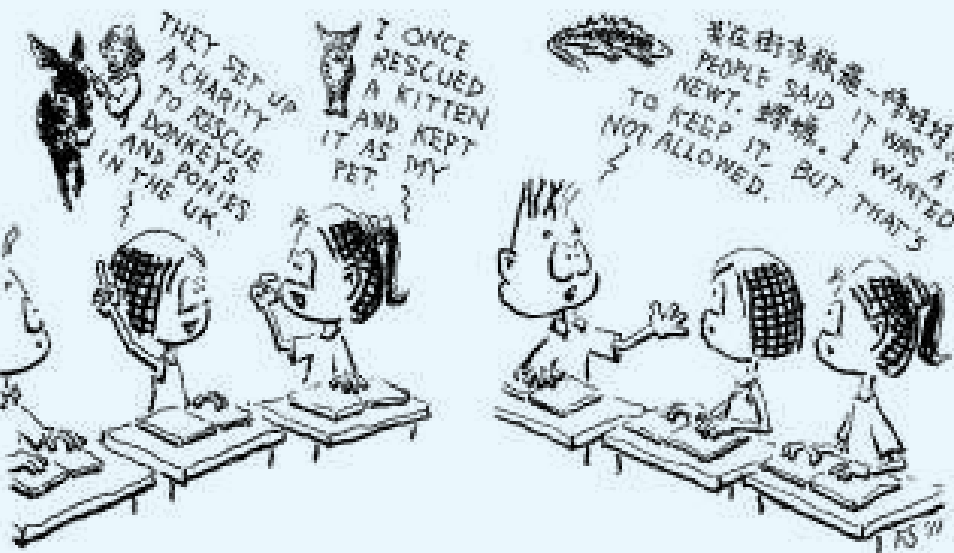
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觸景立畫



拔萃男書院附屬小學四年級 徐易東

SOHO DIARY



Rescued Animals

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In some parts of the UK, animals are usually sold at auctions. And, if no one buys them, they will not be given a chance to live. In Norwich, a charity was set up to rescue those unwanted animals.

During the two months I stayed in Norwich, I used to walk there and watch the donkeys. One day I met the founder of this charity. She said that George, one of the donkeys, did not let anyone go near him. At the end she consulted an animal psyche: someone who could communicate with animals. She said the donkey told the psyche his story. After that, he allowed only the founder, not even her husband and her son, to approach him. Later, I wrote a poem about George in my book *Why do People in Norwich Look Young?*

rescued donkey talked to a psyche told her that he was not happy for he'd never been consulted of

what he wanted to do with his life with human beings

wanted to write another Black Beauty, he wondered if it will really wake up the respect working animals expect

A few years before I met George, I rescued a kitten on a small lane near my studio in Hong Kong. It could hardly survive like other street cats if it was not rescued.

There are many street cats near the open market in Central. The market is about to be removed. It is close to the Alley of a Hundred Children, the place where the anti-Qing revolutionaries gave talks to enlighten the public more than a century ago. Now, the historical site attracts quite a lot of visitors. I also wrote about this place in my book.

新生兒突破九萬 資源規劃須配合

食物及衛生局局長周一嶽昨日透露，今年一至十月份本港有逾七萬名嬰兒出生，預計全年新生兒的數目將會達到九萬名或以上。這將是本港四十五年來再度出現的「高產」紀錄。

中國人傳統生兒育女是一件喜事，對本港來說，更應該歡迎這九萬條小生命的到來。因為在過去二十年，本港的生育率一直偏低，在二〇〇三年曾跌至零點九的低位，去年回升至一點一，但仍低於一名婦女應生育二點一名子女的合理更替水平。而衆所周知，出生率長期偏低的唯一結果就是人口老化，生產力下降，個人及社會公共負擔均大幅增加。

因此，從整體角度而言，九萬個小生命是本港社會未來發展的活力和生力軍，大批內地孕婦來港產子對本港社會作出了「貢獻」，彌補了本地出生率的不足；但具體到產科醫療服務的要求和未來社會公共資源配置的壓力，則高企的出生率、特別是內地孕婦來港產子帶來的問題只能說是有利有弊、憂喜參半，需要各方正視及認真作好準備。

事實是，針對近年大批內地孕婦來港產子的事實，食衛局、醫管局及公、私營醫院方面均已制訂了一系列的措施和對策，包括公立醫院優先接收本地孕婦，私立醫院重點接納內地孕婦，且必須提前預訂床位及接受產前檢查，但儘管如此，「嚟到就生」的例子仍經常出現，甚至最後一刻「衝線」在入境處關口產子的情況也曾出現。另一方面，由於「生仔有價」，一些所謂的「中介服務」公司也應運而生，自稱包保有床位及產前檢查、產後「坐月子」服務「一條龍」，從中牟取利潤，孕婦的安全卻未必得到保障。



▲食物及衛生局預計香港新生兒將逾9萬名

明年是農曆龍年，在「望子成龍」心態下，生育率可能會再攀高峰，對此，有關醫衛當局及公私立醫院都必須作好充分的準備，進一步落實本地孕婦優先及內地產婦預約制度，以確保公平及安全的原則。

而從本港醫療體系內部而言，目前面對的醫護人手嚴重不足的問題實際上更為嚴重和迫切，包括婦產科的醫生、護士和助產士在內，由於公立醫院工作壓力大，人手緊、負擔重，加上私營醫院待遇更佳，不少有經驗的醫護人才流向了私營市場，儘管大學醫學院和護理專業已增加了學額，一時間也填補不上。為此，當局提出了招聘海外醫生的辦法以解燃眉，但未為本港醫學團體所接納，問題目前尚在「拉鋸」中。但病人的健康不容忽

視，要生仔的孕婦更不能等，有關醫學團體應將服務社會和病人權益放在第一位，支持政府有限度輸入外地合資格醫生到公營醫院服務，以減輕人手不足的压力。

而從長遠而言，未來數年間，本地孕婦及內地孕婦加起來一併計算，每年新生嬰兒的數目大概都會維持在八至九萬名之間，這對本港的住屋、教育、醫療及其他社會服務都會形成一個頗大的壓力和需求。正如特首曾蔭權在其最後一份施政報告《繼往開來》中所言，政府並非鼓勵內地孕婦來港產子，但這些在本港出生的孩子是香港永久性居民，依法享有港人權利，社會必須以正面的心態看待他們，要進一步掌握好這些兒童日後來港定居或就學的數字，做好公共服務的規劃，以培育他們成為對港有用的人才。

2011/11/15 大公報社評

供內地孕婦婦產科服務的公立醫院，其中5間直至10月的床位預訂已經爆滿。同時，由於私家醫院接收內地孕婦人數增加，大批公立醫院醫護被挖角，嚴重削弱公立醫院的服務人手。長遠來看，在「在香港出生即為香港永久居民」的效應下，大批新生兒湧入將影響香港人口結構，令現已緊繃的福利和教育資源負擔更重。

但是，內地孕婦來港產子給醫院和政府帶來巨大財政收益。每名內地孕婦在公立醫院分娩需繳付3.9萬港元。醫管局公布的數據顯示，2008/2009年及2009/2010年度由非本地孕婦分娩帶來的收入分別為4.34億和4.01億元，而2010年4至12月就有3.4億元。再者，香港出生率持續走低，在2003年曾跌至0.9，去年亦不過1.1，過低出生率必將帶來老齡化等問題。

通識記憶體

內地嬰佔本港新生兒半數

政府統計處資料顯示，本港截至今年10月共有7萬嬰兒誕生，預計全年將有逾9萬嬰兒出世。其中，配偶為非香港永久性居民的內地婦女所生的嬰兒就有近3萬，佔新生兒總數近五成。

特區政府欲於明年收關控制內地孕婦來港分娩人數，明年接受非本地孕婦數目限於大約35000名，總數比今年大約減少1萬名。

港接生內地嬰年進賬4億》》》

一方面，大量內地孕婦赴港產子給香港帶來負面影響。短期內，香港醫療資源或超負荷運轉；早在今年3月24日，全港8間提