

# CITY

## SOCIETY

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y to gain  
al suffrage

the pan-democratic and  
camps must find answers

suffrage would be in place for  
the 2017 chief executive election  
depended on "a flash of  
thought" on the part of the  
central government.

Without naming names, a  
signed commentary published  
in pro-Beijing *Wen Wei Po* on  
October 2 launched a veiled  
attack on the Beijing-friendly  
heavyweight. It criticised the call  
for Beijing to remove "demons"  
as being very unfair.

In a commentary published  
in pro-Beijing *Ta Kung Pao* on  
Wednesday, Basic Law  
Committee member Lau Nai-  
keung criticised Tsang for urging  
Beijing to remove "demons"  
while turning a blind eye to the  
interference by the United States  
and Britain in Hong Kong's  
political reform. British foreign  
office minister Hugo Swire and  
US consul general Clifford Hart  
last month expressed their  
nation's support for Hong  
Kong's democratisation,  
sparking criticism from Beijing.

"People in the pro-  
establishment camp have no  
choice, but to unite with the  
central government in saying no  
to external forces," Lau wrote.

The criticism levelled against  
Tsang spoke volumes about the  
difficulties facing moderates in  
the pro-establishment camp.  
Moderates in the pan-  
democratic camp face a  
similar plight.

Student-led group  
Scholarism earlier called for  
parties to sign a charter listing  
public nomination – allowing all  
voters to put forth names for the  
2017 chief executive race – as a  
priority for the fight for "genuine  
universal suffrage". But Beijing  
rejected the idea as it is not in  
line with the Basic Law.

The Democratic Party and  
the Association for Democracy  
and People's Livelihood, the  
moderate pan-democratic  
groups, came under fire for  
refusing to sign it.

It is political common sense  
that the city's constitutional  
reform can hardly move forward  
if the rival camps remain poles  
apart. Whether Hongkongers  
can elect their leaders by "one  
man, one vote" in 2017 will  
depend on whether cool heads  
in both the pro-establishment  
and the pan-democratic camps  
can win over their allies.  
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on cooling  
says minister



Tsang Tsz-kwan is adapting to her new school life as she studies for her four-year translation degree at Chinese University. Photo: Felix Wong

# GRIT, DETERMINATION AND A CAMPUS INSPIRATION

Blind student Tsang Tsz-kwan may not be keen  
on the limelight, but when she does share her  
views, you can be sure she'll speak her mind

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It's a rare interview. Tsang Tsz-  
kwan normally shuns publicity.

The 20-year-old blind and  
hearing-impaired student sits in  
a room at her alma mater Ying  
Wa Girls' School. Here's the girl  
who made headlines in July with  
her excellent Diploma of Second-  
ary Education examination re-  
sults. She scored 5\* and above in  
five subjects and a 4 in the sixth.

In July, the public learnt  
through media reports about  
how Tsang – who was educated  
at the Ebenezer School and  
Home for the Visually Impaired  
at the primary level – read Braille  
with her lips because her fingers  
lacked the sensitivity to read it  
with her hands.

Now, Tsang studies transla-  
tion at the Chinese University,  
where she's gradually settling  
into and trying her best to adapt  
to her new school life.

These days, she continues to  
read Braille with her lips. But with  
the help of the Jockey Club Reha-  
bilitation Centre, she now uses a  
modified keyboard that better  
suits her fingers. The keyboard  
allows her to input braille that her  
computer would translate direct-  
ly into words.

Up until the end of secondary  
school, Tsang had a resource  
teacher from Ebenezer to help  
her with her studies. But now, she  
is learning to cope on her own in  
her four-year translation degree  
course, with the help of her uni-  
versity peers.

"The lifestyle and mode of  
learning in university is very dif-  
ferent from before," she says.

Prior to the interview, Tsang  
had said she would speak in Can-  
tonese; but in the end, she opted  
for English instead. Her economy  
of language and succinctness in  
vocabulary has a public-speak-  
ing aplomb to it.

"This is the hardware; we  
need to work on the software,"  
she says as I ask about facilities for  
blind people in Hong Kong.  
"There have to be more activities  
that ordinary people and dis-  
abled people can participate in  
together. So disabled people can  
learn how to integrate into soci-  
ety and ordinary people can learn  
how to get along with disabled  
people. Theoretical education is  
not enough."

Tsang smiles readily, is  
amused by some of my ques-  
tions, but also controls her an-  
swers. I ask her age. "You know  
that from the other media inter-  
views," she says. I ask her father's  
job, as a way of giving some fam-



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TSANG TSZ-KWAN

ily background. "I don't think  
that's the focus of this interview."

Future spokeswoman for the  
chief executive?

Tsang lives in university ac-  
commodation, but doesn't share  
a room. "She has a lot of equip-  
ment," says Ying Wa College En-  
glish teacher Kwong Ho-ka, who is  
close friends with Tsang these  
days. "Her Braille machine  
makes quite a bit of noise. And  
she has so many books."

Tsang loves reading novels  
and books about science. "I still  
find time to squeeze in some no-  
vels," she says, after describing the  
painstaking process of writing in  
Braille, where she not only has to  
type everything into the compu-  
ter herself, but also has to rely on  
her peers to inform her of when  
something from her lecture notes  
is underlined or in italics.

"It's all very time-consum-  
ing," she says, remarking that the  
arduous process of studying and  
essay writing for her usually takes  
about three to four times as long  
as for other students.

"I'm interested in both arts  
and science subjects, and I like  
chatting with others. It's one way  
in which I learn about other peo-  
ple's lives. There's mutual en-  
couragement and spiritual sup-  
port that you get through sharing  
feelings."

Tsang's choice of novels  
ranges from British author Wil-  
liam Golding's *Lord of the Flies*  
"which I found very thought-pro-  
voking", to American writer Jean  
Webster's *Daddy-Long-Legs*, to

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.  
"I like encouraging novels," she  
says. "Books about people's  
struggles, how Jane Eyre's early  
childhood was not that smooth  
and the very harsh environment  
she faced growing up in an or-  
phanage. Right from the begin-  
ning, she had to learn to cope."

But what about the bit where  
Jane Eyre gets to kiss her boss  
when she worked as a governess?  
"No, I'm not particularly ro-  
mantic," says Tsang, adding that  
she also enjoys writing. "Some-  
times, I do write essays about my  
own experiences and activities."

She says she's slowly making  
new friends in the university.  
It takes her a while, she says,  
because not only can she not see  
her peers' faces, being hearing-  
impaired, it also takes her a while  
to become accustomed to the  
tenor of her friends' voices so she  
can recognise each person.

For those with disabilities,  
Tsang thinks it's up to them to  
study hard for academic achieve-  
ments. But for the public in gen-  
eral, she believes that more edu-  
cation is necessary.

"We might have a lot of limita-  
tions," she says, speaking about  
people with disabilities. "But  
nowadays, with new knowledge  
and state-of-the-art technology  
available, our problems can actu-  
ally be solved one way or another.  
People should be more open-  
minded and provide us with  
more opportunities."

"One way people can see what  
we can truly do? Assign us tasks."