

Gossip Boys & Girls 是非男女

Book 5
TranStory

English Version

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Introduction

Project Details

TranStory is a project that presents a group of trans people who use storytelling to create their life narrative which spans the spectrum of gender. Each story is colorful and vivid, and shows their courage in facing gender struggles.

The concept to completion stages of the entire project involved drafting the concept; positioning; planning; recruiting the advisors, interviewers, interviewees, editor, artwork designer and trainers; and applying for funding. So much around the project was happening at the same time. Many invaluable ideas were produced during the training sessions. All of the interviewees were involved in the final editing of their story to provide a true and honest self-reflection of their life circumstances. In doing so, the TranStory project provides a new perspective for transgender experiences.

In the past, transgender stories in Hong Kong were usually based on the following sources:

- 1) Transgender community initiated or special interest publications, which were very rare and mainly focused on transwomen;
- 2) Media interviews, which catered to the interest and needs of the reader audience. There were very few articles that reflected on real-life stories; and
- 3) Student interviews and academic research work. These are not intended for the general public and the scopes of discussion are very limited. They are usually somewhat difficult to understand nor accessible to the mass audience.

The Story of Trans

We are introducing the term 「跨兒」 for the first time in the Chinese version of this publication, which is pronounced kuà er (sounds a little bit like queer). 跨 or kua is the first character of the Chinese term for transgender and translated literally, means 'to cross', while 兒 or er means child or a person. Therefore, 「跨兒」 is not a direct translation nor an abbreviated format of transgender. It is a newly created term that reflects the unique non-binary gender in traditional Chinese culture especially under the context of spoken Mandarin. The founder of the Transgender Resource Center in Hong Kong, Joanne Leung, first conceived this term in 2013 while she was doing advocacy work for transgenders for about a month in Mainland China. Her visit was hosted by a local LGBT+ organization called Common Language (Tongyu) to facilitate a series of sharing sessions on her life experience as a transgender. Joanne and a Chinese transman visited different cities and venues in line with the May 17th International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT).

It was then and there that she realized the term transgender and the whole concept had been translated and adapted from the Western context as there is no other reference. While the West has had a great impact on how gender is perceived in the Chinese culture, and also paved the way for Chinese transgender people to understand and accept their identity, there are nevertheless, many differences between the two cultures. The Western concepts around transgender do not always apply to the Chinese. In fact, the gender diversities found historically in China and in the Chinese culture have yet to be articulated and discussed, and more or less suppressed by the Western discourse. That is why the Chinese need their own discourse and language around gender.

Joanne then proceeded to draft a framework that would properly organize the hundreds of terms that would contribute to a Chinese discourse on gender, but the work was put aside until 2018, when she was invited as one of the guest speakers for the first Trans Pride event in China. Joanne found out about an organization in Shanghai called TransTalks (跨兒說) that was established in 2015. Not long afterwards, the Trans Center (跨性別中心 or Kuà Xìngbié Zhōngxīn) in China consulted TransTalks to change their Chinese name. They removed 跨性別 (Kuà Xìngbié or translated literally, crossing genders) and replaced the term with kuà er (跨兒) instead in their center name, and became 跨兒中心 (Kuà er Zhōngxīn). The name change also served to promote the usage of kuà er in China. Joanne then proceeded to discuss the idea of kuà er with the Trans Center and TransTalks, and realized

that it was a happy accident that they shared the same views around kuà er. That is, in contrast with the translation of transgender in Chinese, kuà er conveys a broader and more inclusive identity. Furthermore, the most important factor is that it is not a label that depicts a transition between the binary genders, but a unique non-binary gender. Today, kuà er is being increasingly used in China.

A Story about Them

In some of the contexts of this book, **They** is used as a singular form to minimize the problem of using the gender pronouns of he/his/she/her, and at the same time, serves as a reminder that gender is not binary. We can also show our respect to people by addressing them with their preferred pronoun. For more information on the usage of **They** as a singular form, readers may refer to Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singular_they

Editor's Introduction

Joanne

Recently, some have voiced their opposition against gender recognition. There are commonly two arguments. The first argument is that "They (trans people) don't even dare to face the truth (about who they are) and are forcing everyone else to lie with them" and "When there is a gender recognition law, people (men) will take advantage of it (and go into the women's toilets to peep on women), so women will worry about going to the toilet".

It goes without saying that these views are just pure nonsense. But since there are so many people who are worried about gender recognition, is there anything that we can do to rectify this situation? Did we forget something in our advocacy work? Did we neglect anyone or the rights of others and placed them in an unfair position while we are fighting for ours? I believe that an equality movement serves to advocate for the rights of everyone, but not prioritize someone's rights over those of others. In reality, it is still very difficult to please everybody especially those with very conservative opinions. However, as humans, we should try our best to understand and improve the conditions of those who being oppressed in society.

In 2017, the government launched a public consultation on gender recognition to collect opinions from the community for legislations around transsexual persons based on court orders after a post-operative transgender woman dubbed W won the right to a transsexual marriage. Unfortunately,

the consultation became heated discussions rather than mutual exchange of dialogue. In fact, this response from the community is quite prevalent when there are fears around the introduction of any new legislative proposals especially on LGBT+ rights. I really look forward to the day when everyone can calmly and logically share stories and information so that more people would empathize with the plight of the LGBT+ community instead of feeling threatened.

Some people may feel that advocating for human rights is an aggressive act. Yet if we see others suffering, should we be only concerned about our own personal interests and look the other way? Or should we insist on understanding first why they are suffering before helping them? However, note that humanitarianism and human rights are two different concepts. The former is the "...active belief in the value of human life, whereby humans practice benevolent treatment and provide assistance to other humans, in order to better humanity for moral, altruistic and logical reasons" (Wikipedia, available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarianism>), whereas the latter are "...moral principles or norms (Wikipedia, available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights).

Those who accuse trans people of lying may never understand their hardships. We do not know yet why there are individuals who have tried their best but cannot accept their birth assigned gender. I often like to use the following analogy to explain the plight of trans people. Let's say that one day, your doctor informs you that you are actually an intersex person. How would you accept and understand that you are not the gender that you have known for your entire life? Some of the trans individuals have already tried their very best to cater to societal expectations. Why can't we just 'live and let live'? If someone is so worried about the safety of using the female toilets (in the event that a transwoman is also using the facilities), why not work together to provide facilities that meet everyone's needs, and not just exclude trans people?

These misconceptions, misunderstandings and myths around trans people have led to this publication, where we would like to present some very real stories of trans people that show their hardships and triumphs. While transwomen have told their stories, the narratives of transmen and gender non-binary people have been less prevalent. We hope that giving them a voice in TranStory will inspire a more diverse world.

Day

Under the Protective Wing of the Community

In 2018, a survey conducted by the Transgender Resource Center in Hong Kong revealed that over 60% of the transgender respondents have contemplated suicide. The situation is even more dire among the younger respondents who are under 30 years old, with 70% having had suicidal thoughts and 40% reporting suicidal attempts. Engaging in a close reading of their life stories, I found myself asking: what are the forces that drive them into such a helpless dilemma, and overwhelm them with so much pain that they hardly wish to live? What are also the forces that enable them to find their way back and develop resilience to societal pressure?

One of the informants of this book, Icarus, stated that he had considered suicide. He was bullied and humiliated at school. Yet he suffered the most from the rejection of his parents, who often berated him about his gender. They were worried about how they would explain his sex-change to their relatives. They often told him, "if you continue like this, we won't care even if you jump off a building" which caused Icarus to suffer years of emotional agony. He felt that parents should love their child unconditionally. In his case, love and care were only available if he acted in accordance with conventional norms, which would give face to his family.

Another survey carried out by the Transgender Resource Center in Hong Kong indicated that family abuse is among the most prevalent forms of interpersonal violence that is carried out against transgender people. Among the victims of family abuse, 60% have experienced physical violence. Given this, what are the factors that motivate transpeople who have been ostracized by their family and society to overcome their adversities?

First, social support is indispensable for cultivating resilience. The narratives of Yin and Julian in this book show that support and encouragement from their colleagues and supervisors gave them the courage to undergo their gender transition. Work not only offers the opportunity for economic independence, but also provides them with support networks. They felt empowered and protected against negativity. Eddie, another informant in this book, and Icarus, both received emotional support from their girlfriend as their companion, which reinforced their determination to be themselves. The girlfriend of Icarus took on the role of a supportive family member, and said, "The best way to support him (Icarus) is for everyone around him to keep him company and show him that he is cherished." It is equally important that the parents of transgender children receive social support. One of the

parent informants of this book, Angela, was able to manage her emotional struggles with the support of a friend who is also her mentor.

This book presents the life stories of five transmen and a mother. Each informant is a brave warrior, who has embarked on a journey on which they can express their true self and live a free life. However, the conservative policies and legislation in Hong Kong have given them multiple obstacles in their life path. Eddie spent his childhood in the UK. He feels strongly that discrimination is ubiquitous in Hong Kong as the policies are over ten years behind those of the UK. All six informants have expressed their concerns and opposition as a whole to the legal stipulation that requires full sex reassignment surgery for gender recognition. Aside from Eddie who opted to self declare his gender, the other five informants hold the view that transpeople should be allowed to legally change their gender on their identity documents based on substantial assessments of doctors and professionals. This sort of a policy would help to remove the obstacles that they face in employment situations and everyday life. For 65-year-old informant Ben, who is experiencing a deterioration in health, the withdrawal of the requirement for sex reassignment surgery is an important and reasonable move in consideration of his health concerns. The other informants are also concerned about the repercussions of surgery on their health, such as Yin, who does not want to see his body parts cut into small bits. Then there is Icarus, who would rather wait for further advancements in medical technology before considering surgery. To the worried mother Angela, removing this requirement would definitely be a relief to her.

It is imperative to develop policies and laws from the perspectives of transpeople. Only by doing so can the needs of transpeople be addressed and resilience promoted at the community level. Perhaps we are not policy makers. Yet, we might be able to provide support as a friend or a co-worker. Say “Hey man” when you greet Ben, or use the correct pronoun “he” when you address a transman. Treat transpeople with respect and give them the recognition that they deserve.

Eleanor

As a researcher, counsellor, and participant in the Hong Kong transgender community, I've witnessed the progress of the transgender movement in Hong Kong which is the result of the hard work and unconditional contributions of people in the community. We've come a long way from blatant discrimination (such as the common usage of “rényāo” (人妖) or literally a demon person or freak) to label transpeople in the media and

everyday life, and the hostile treatment of transpeople on the streets) to more awareness and increasing respect for transgender people (for e.g., the Chinese term for “transgender” is being used in everyday lexicon, victory of the “W case”, and the public discussion on the Gender Recognition Ordinance (GRO)).

However, the road to equal rights is still long, and misunderstandings or even phobic resistance are still common (as reflected during the public discussion on the GRO). Thus, the publication of this book will help readers enhance their understanding of transgender and deconstruct misunderstandings and misrepresentations around transgender. The publication of this book is also a breakthrough for Hong Kong as it is the first publication that focuses on transmen (in the past, most published works mainly focused on transwomen). This book allows us to hear the diverse voices in the transgender community, and also depicts the life stories of different transmen in Hong Kong. Unlike the many publications on lived experiences, the interviewees in this book were given the opportunity to read and modify the draft for an accurate portrayal of their feelings and experiences.

TranStory(s)

Please give me a new gender - Icarus

by Natalie Yim



While most other children were saving money for toys, Icarus was hoping to save enough money for sex reassignment surgery (SRS). Ever since he heard the term 'transsexual' in Grade 5, his greatest desire was to transform "back into a boy again". Icarus gave himself the best present for his 18th birthday - he decided to live as his preferred gender. Icarus said: "When I grew up and understood what transsexuality really meant, I made the decision to visit the gender clinic after I turned 18". He admitted that he really hates his breasts, girlish voice and all of his other female characteristics. As long as he can become a man, he does not mind the surgery and its many potential side effects. Indeed, he is making a very courageous life decision.

"I thought about committing suicide after working for a few years."

Icarus is someone who is full of energy with a great sense of humor and loves to make jokes. His eyes would brighten up each time that he talked about his desire to become a man. Yet as a youth, he had contemplated about ending his life. "I suffered a great deal of discrimination and disgrace when I was growing up just because I behaved like a boy. I suffered from psychological stress and low self esteem, so I made plans to kill myself after I graduated, worked for a few years and enjoyed life." He was bullied in primary and secondary school because he was masculine in appearance. Why? His head teacher gave him an explanation for the abuse: "You should know why. None of your classmates want to be in the same group as you. They just hate you". And so it was that an innocent secondary student was rejected by the entire class as well as his teacher. Later, he came to understand that his masculinity was the reason that he was boycotted. The teacher never tried to understand his gender identity nor examined the situation at large, but instead, promptly decided that his personality was the problem.

Apart from school, his family did not understand him either. They were opposed to his decision to use hormones as well as undergo SRS and used all means to prevent him from acting on both. Icarus mentioned that his family gives him the most stress. This is also the case with many trans people

as family can be very problematic.

"I am very afraid of my mother. When I was young, I had to completely obey her. When I acted more and more like a boy, my mother would buy more girl clothing for me to wear. After my mother found out that I was starting to undergo hormone therapy, she just cried and said something that was very painful to hear: "How can I explain this to the other people! If you continue on like this, you can jump off a building and I won't feel sorry for you!" Icarus was overwhelmed with the discrimination that he had experienced in primary and secondary school and then the stress from his family. He had suicidal thoughts and could not find any meaning in life. Fortunately, when God closes one door, He opens another, and Icarus saw that more beautiful experiences were waiting for him. While he was working towards his associate degree, Icarus made friends who accepted him and also found an understanding girlfriend. Surrounded by those who accepted and loved him, Icarus finally realized that the world is not a dark place.

"When I had no self-esteem left, she helped build my confidence."

Amidst feelings of fear and vulnerability, taking the first step towards making a life change is often the most difficult. Icarus was only able to take this step with the support and companionship of his girlfriend. During the interview, his love for his girlfriend, Samantha, was obvious as he looked at her with love and happiness in his eyes, and said: "When I had reservations about making life changes, my girlfriend would encourage me to believe in myself, that I am mature enough to make adult decisions. That I shouldn't follow others all the time. When I had no self-esteem left, she helped build my confidence."

Icarus recalled his doubts as he stood at the entrance of the hospital for an appointment of SRS consultation. Should he go in or not? What should he say? Even though he had practiced the words a thousand times, he was still unsure of himself. Fortunately, Samantha was there to support him. They are often on the same wavelength. Samantha discovered his desire to become a man soon after they met. She was even more convinced than Icarus and adamant that he should live his own identity as soon as possible. Icarus excitedly said that Samantha was the one who urged him to visit the gender clinic and undergo hormone therapy. "She really wanted me to be a man as soon as possible. Now everyone treats me like a man. I'm a lot happier now! She knew how much I wanted to be my true self. She's actually more excited than me that I have become more confident and more accepting of myself."

Support is not only spoken but also reflected through action. From doing the preliminary research work to accompanying Icarus to the consultation at the clinic, Samantha was entirely supportive and patient, especially when Icarus was under a great deal of pressure and feeling anxious. Perhaps not even a family member could be so understanding.

Samantha is not only a companion but also the life partner of Icarus. The support is very important because as Samantha said: "I think that taking the first step (to making changes in identity) is often the most difficult because you need a lot of courage. I went with him (to the gender clinic) because I suggested that he should go. Actually, if there is someone who goes with you to see the doctor and shows that they care, this is the best kind of support for all transgender people." Samantha admitted that Icarus has been quick to anger after he started hormone therapy. Even something very minor would result in a quarrel. Yet she does not think that this is an issue. It is important that Icarus is happier, more confident and courageous enough to be himself. Samantha feels that being understanding and giving companionship are the true forms of support and said, "Put yourself in someone else's shoes, and if you do so, the other person will feel that someone understands them, and won't feel so lonely."

"We are determined to be ourselves, and hope the society can support us."

In the eyes of many people, making the choice to be a transgender person is the wrong decision. They may rationalize the decision to rashness, that perhaps the individual is too young and ignorant, or impulsive. The decision to be a transgender person therefore worries the friends and saddens the family of the concerned individual. It may seem to be an irresponsible act. However, only the person who is suffering can feel the magnitude of their pain. Being yourself is already not easy for 'normal people', let alone gender minorities. But Icarus is one of the more fortunate. He has met someone who is willing to support him unconditionally so that he can eventually realize his identity. And so he embarks on a new life journey armed with a masculine appearance.

As society is becoming more aware of the transgender community, the legalities around gender have also evolved. In Hong Kong, the gender recognition legislation has been placed on the agenda of the government. But the reality is that there is a lack of public education around gender diversity which means that there is consistently a great deal of misunderstanding among the Hong Kong population around transgender people. Nevertheless, Icarus is still grateful that there is a gender identity

clinic in Hong Kong which gives him hope. The whole process up to the completion of SRS is not easy in Hong Kong. The risks are relatively high as the experience and skills of surgeons are still immature. Moreover, the recipient has no say in deciding on the scheduling of the surgery; otherwise Icarus would have certainly wanted the surgery sooner rather than later. There is a procedure that Icarus needs to follow in order to undergo SRS including an assessment, the different phases of the SRS, examinations, etc. The scheduling itself may take years.

One of the current recommendations from the public consultation is to make SRS and hormone therapy optional in changing the gender marker on legal identification documents, and instead, two years of psychiatric and psychological assessments would suffice. Icarus and Samantha both feel that this is most ideal because as Icarus said: "if there is a comprehensive Gender Recognition Ordinance (in which psychiatric and psychological assessments are adequate), I can delay the surgery until the doctors are more mature in skill, or at least wait until the hospital facilities are more advanced." SRS still has its risks and it does not make sense to undergo the risk of surgery and remove healthy body parts in order to change the gender marker on one's identification documents. The side effects of hormone therapy can also be detrimental for some people. It is already so hard for transgender people to accept themselves. If the legal requirements are more lenient for transgender people during their transition, perhaps they would feel more supported in the process.

Hong Kong is more than 10 years behind the UK - Eddie

by Lanlan Yu



Eddie gave himself a new name last year. He now calls himself Yat Tung (Cantonese). The Chinese character of yat includes the character for rabbit and tung is the East, both of which he likes very much. He smiled and said: "It also sounds nice!" The sun rises in the east and creatures awake to the beauty of the sunlight. Eddie is calm and often has a gentle smile on his face,

so Yat Tung is a very fitting name for him because there is nothing dark about him; he is like sunshine.

Eddie said: "My Chinese is not that great and I never thought that I would

be able to give myself a Chinese name. I've experienced many changes in the last 2 years including giving myself a new name which shows that I want to take charge of my life." Although his parents at times still cannot adjust to his new identity, and forget whether he is their daughter or son, or forget to call him by his new name, it does not matter to him very much.

In March 2018, Eddie made the most important decision in his life. He changed his name on his Hong Kong identity card and start to undergo hormone therapy to become a male. He also made preparations for top surgery (mastectomy) in Taiwan in December 2019. He is looking forward to swimming and tanning on the beach in the summertime after he has his breasts removed.

Laughing in excitement, he said: "Undergoing surgery safely is important, but it's also important to look good because it's how people see you."

This major life decision was delayed for 20 years until he met his girlfriend two years ago. The transition is a gift for himself in his thirties and a priority for him and his current girlfriend as they support each other on this journey.

"Prayed before sleeping at night to wake up in a body that belongs to him"

As is the case with many transpeople, the story begins with Eddie's earliest memories of gender: "My sister reminded me of an incident happened long time ago recently. We took a very funny photo together when I was five. In the picture, I wore my father's pajamas while she put on our mother's stilettos". The photo might be early evidence of Eddie's desire to be a man, but he remembered yearning to be one much earlier than that. At the age of three, he could already differentiate between male and female. When asked whether he is a boy or girl, as it is customary for most adults to ask young children, he would only answer: "I am a boy". Yet physically he was undeniably female. So before he went to bed each night, he always silently prayed that this was just a dream and he would wake up the next day in a body that belongs to him.

Eddie began his life in the UK when he was just a few years old until he returned to Hong Kong in 2009 for work purposes. He had a very good childhood in the UK without any bad experiences or issues. Nor did he encounter any discrimination or judgment from others in response to his desire to live life as a male.

"I've always lived life as a male. No one has ever reminded me that I'm

female. Everyone liked me the way that I was and was good to me.” Eddie’s parents have always been taken a neutral stance towards his gender preference. While Eddie walks like a male and likes male dominated sports such as shooting and football, his parents never deterred or condemned him for doing so. Eddie first really came to terms with all the doubts around his gender when he returned to the UK and went for two clinical psychologist sessions. He then made the decision to take the first step and undergo hormone therapy.

“I studied at an all-girls school and hated wearing a skirt (part of the school uniform). So I took part in almost all of the school sports and practiced for five days a week so that I can wear sportswear and sports pants every day. My classmates called me “Mr. Yu”. My roommates who were local UK girls said that they were surprised that I not only look like a boy, but my voice also sounds like one. I majored in electronic engineering at university and I felt very much at ease with almost all of the guys in my class. I felt that I belonged. I didn’t have to worry about what I said or did. It was so liberating... It’s like going to the men’s toilet. I’d feel really strange and awkward if I had to go to the women’s toilet.”

“My problem became her problem”

Why did it take Eddie 20 years to undergo his TRANSition?

Eddie does not like blood and pain, and therefore never considered SRS. “When I was in college, I met a transman on the Internet. He had a full SRS and told me about the process. He said that he has to have hormone injections for the rest of his life. I already feel that injections are horrible but then he sent me photos of the surgery to the genitals. That terrified me even more. I stopped thinking about it after that. At the time, I finally realized exactly what I was... I realized that I’m a transperson. The UK did not legislate its gender recognition law until 2004, and that’s why I didn’t think too much about it at the time.” Eddie was also not motivated to transition since no one really objected to his choice to live as a male or felt that it was a problem.

The moment of real self-awareness and turning point for change took place two years ago when Eddie came out as a transperson to his girlfriend. His girlfriend had suspicions about Eddie, which made him really reconsider and come face to face with his true gender identity.

“She didn’t know what transgender was in the beginning. She thought that I was a lesbian and treated me like her girlfriend, and kept referring to me

as her 'girlfriend'. She always used 'her' to refer to me and it felt very weird. A week after we met, we went together to Bali and when the time felt right, I told her that I would prefer if she referred to me as her 'boyfriend' and I didn't like it when she called me her 'girlfriend'. Later I found out that she was doing research about this, and discussing it with friends."

Eddie later watched an interview with Dr. Angela Ng Wing Ying on ViuTV who talked about transgender. He immediately called his girlfriend and told her to watch the program, and said, "Look, that is who I am." And that was how they began to come to terms with his gender identity. With the support of his girlfriend, he thought about his situation and came to terms that he needed to make changes. His girlfriend made an appointment for him with Dr. Ng to talk about his situation and start his transition.

Eddie joined the Transgender Resource Center last year as a volunteer. His girlfriend also gave him many suggestions and took part in discussions at the center. She had little knowledge about transgender before, and had done quite a bit of research on her own. So Eddie's issue also became that of his girlfriend: "My girlfriend had mistaken me for a lesbian, but actually, I'm a transperson. She told me to just be myself. She's really spiritual so I know that she understands me".

"Hong Kong is more than 10 years behind the UK"

Eddie indicated that he is indeed fortunate that he grew up in the UK where no one has ever discriminated him and he did not have any bad memories. When he returned to Hong Kong to work, he found that it was the opposite situation. While Eddie works at a more liberal minded UK company in Hong Kong, he has to face discrimination and ignorance everywhere else after work. "I can't even use the telephone banking service or cancel my bank card because of my voice. I have to show up in person at the branch to do my banking. Their record shows that I am Miss Yu. When they hear my voice on the phone, they immediately ask me, 'Who are you?' When I respond that I am 'Miss Yu', they proceed to tell me to visit one of their branches instead. It was never a problem in the UK if a woman has a male sounding voice."

His transgender friends who grew up in Hong Kong also shared some dark and depressing stories with him.

"Some people don't want to be identified as a transgender person. There is a transman who just finished his SRS including surgery on his genitals at

Prince Wales Hospital in August which is quite rare. I wanted him to share his experience with me. He told me that he didn't want to be identified as a transgender person and stressed that he is a man. I was being a wise guy and told him that even if he had the surgery, he still wasn't a real cis male (cisgender/cis man/cis woman are people whose gender identity match their birth assigned sex). He's a transgender. He told me to mind my own business and that he would rather be a fake man. He's always unhappy, depressed, and he doesn't have a girlfriend. He doesn't tell others that he's transgender because Hong Kong people are so discriminating."

"The gender recognition law is very important. Right now, there's no such law in Hong Kong which means that I won't be legally recognized as a male even if I do the surgery and change the gender marker on my ID card. But this is so important. Without legal protection, I won't have any privacy. I cannot hide the fact that I was a woman. For example, the mobile phone and internet companies can still look up my previous information and call me 'Miss'. Changing the gender marker on the ID card is only an administrative procedure and there's nothing to it at all."

In the UK, the self-declaration gender recognition law has already been tabled for discussion. However, Eddie stated that "Hong Kong is more than 10 years behind the UK". Hong Kong has just placed on its agenda in 2018 whether they would follow the 2004 model on gender recognition in the UK. Eddie is adamant about the lack of progress in Hong Kong and his views are more liberal as he grew up in the UK. Ideally, he would like to see people decide themselves whether they want to change their gender marker on their ID card and this has been the case in many Western countries which has no negative impact on others in a practical sense.

The usually gentle Eddie became hardened as he said, "Some people said that there should be a panel of professionals like doctors who would make the recommendation (to change the gender on the ID card). But I don't agree that a doctor should have such power to determine the life decision of someone else because a doctor is only a human being and might be wrong. They might make mistakes. We're all human beings with different needs. We need the gender recognition law to live a better life. There are trans people who also study and work hard. We have abilities so we're not using up societal resources. We also contribute to society and give back."

Put on a shield of armor and escape an imprisoning body - Julian

by Carmen Wong



Julian is a biracial Hongkonger who was born in Singapore. He grew up in a very traditional Chinese family. His family often moved from one place to another when he was young because of his father's work. Since his father often traveled for work, Julian is not very close to him. However, he understands that this was part of his father's job and beyond his control.

Julian's father is a very dominant man, so Julian had never gone against his wishes. He hid his emotions and thoughts, and was overall a good child in the eyes of his parents. Also, Julian accepted all the dresses that his mother wanted him to wear as he did not want to be punished. He was afraid to tell his parents about his true needs and wants. Therefore, he did not complain or object; he just complied and all was well.

"Everyone has the right to choose how they want to live"

As a child, Julian once took bath with his younger brother. After that he drew a picture of his brother's genitals and showed it to his father in the hopes that his father would understand that he too desired to be like his brother. Instead, his father became very angry and they never talked about gender related issues ever again.

At about 13 to 14 years old, Julian impulsively cut his hair short but at the same time, was afraid that his parents would punish him. Each time he changed anything on his own wish, his relationship with his parents deteriorated. He found out that anything that he did that was not feminine would anger his parents. He felt that they never cared about his feelings and situation, only his appearance and attire. So in his decision to transition, Julian decided to just go ahead. After nearly two months of hormone therapy, his father heard the distinct change in Julian's voice. Over a long distance call, he bawled at Julian and said: "I gave you life, how dare you change your body and disrespect what I gave you."

Julian did not feel the same way, and feels that everyone has the right to choose how they want to live and that he does not owe his parents anything. Nevertheless, he emphasized that he is grateful to his parents for raising him, and will care for them in their old age. However, he should have the right to

make decisions about his own body.

The resistance of his parents made it difficult for Julian to be honest with them. Also, their attitude indirectly caused him to be in denial of his own gender identity. Julian often found excuses for himself to avoid the transition process and talk himself out of transitioning, such as telling himself that being a trans person would be troublesome, and that there is discrimination, and surgery might be necessary. Yet regardless of the excuses that he gave himself, he could not hide the desire deep in his heart to do so. Although he was uncertain, he knew that he did not want to be female anymore. When he was younger, he had to suppress his desire to be his real self. Now that he is working at a job that makes good use of his talents, Julian can finally decide on the next steps of his life.

"Maybe because I am working in the creative field, my colleagues are really easy-going. My supervisor even shows support for gender change. That's why I really like the work atmosphere and company culture. I treasure that everyone is so open minded and won't take it for granted." The support of his supervisor has empowered Julian and given him a shield of armor that protects him against the calamities of discrimination so that he can gradually change the body that has long imprisoned him.

" 'He' is the correct pronoun"

Although Julian has become more positive in outlook, transitioning is still a long and difficult process which requires support from his peers. Julian connected with the Transgender Resource Center after found it on the Internet. He also joined the TGR FTM WhatsApp group and received different information such as starting hormone therapy and seeking counselling services. After suppressing his feelings for so many years, he decided to seek psychological help, and obtained the contact information of Dr. Mak, a psychiatrist whose expertise is on gender assessment.

The first time that he spoke to Dr. Mak, Julian expressed without any doubts that he was experiencing a gender identity crisis. Dr. Mak then proceeded to ask him several routine questions such as those about family, work and interpersonal relationships. After he answered the questions, Julian restated his gender identity crisis. When Dr. Mak asked him: "Do you want to take hormones?", he immediately answered: "Of course!" while imagining at the same time about having a deeper voice and masculine facial features. After he shared his story with Dr. Mak, the psychiatrist informed him that he does indeed have a gender identity disorder and felt that it was the right

time to start hormone therapy. Julian was surprised and at the same time could not hide his happiness because he never thought that someone would agree with him, and encourage and support him.

After undergoing hormone therapy, some of his friends began to use the pronoun “he” to address Julian. Julian also feels that this is “the correct pronoun” for him. Everything now feels right to him.

“We will be here when you need us”

Julian is now often concerned about other people and matters rather than his own. For example, he will give up the opportunity for a part-time job, and spend more time helping other transgender people to find themselves, gain more self-determination and become independent. He really believes that feeling lost on gender identity brings everyone together. When people are brought together, there is more strength in unity, which will make transitioning a much easier process.

Since there is a need for a network that can specifically provide support for transgender people when they are feeling lost, Julian spent a very long period of time to establish a transgender support network on a platform called “DISCORD”, with the aim to help transgender people especially those who do not speak Chinese, to exchange information online.

Julian excitedly shared that in just a few weeks after the launch of the network on DISCORD, 20 individuals had started to actively participate on the platform: “I hope that this project can continue to grow, and anyone else in Hong Kong is also welcome to take part. It's good to have a cultural blend and help more people in need”.

“The need for diverse sex education is urgent”

Julian feels that sex education in Hong Kong has its shortcomings. In addition to the more conservative attitude of Hong Kong people, it is generally taboo to discuss sex-related topics. In the absence of such discussions, most people would not have the opportunity to learn and understand gender identity issues. “When people encounter something that they don't know about or understand, they become ignorant. Ignorance often leads to fear, and fear will eventually result in discrimination. To stop discrimination, we need to start with education.”

In addition, Julian does not agree on the mandated SRS to change the

gender marker on the HKID card. He hopes that the general public can understand that there are people who have health issues and some do not want to mutilate their body and remove healthy body parts. We should not insist on transgender people undergoing a series of surgeries and causing unnecessary harm to their body. He also hopes to promote sex education which should not be taboo. Instead, sex should be openly discussed so that more people, especially children, would have a better understanding of gender diversity in society at an early age, which would facilitate an open attitude in discussing sexuality and gender.

He also hopes that parents would understand that gender recognition is not a choice, and that their understanding and support are the greatest motivation for trans people to bravely acknowledge their true identity.

Bursting out as a rainbow - Yin

by Minnie Chiu



To make the decision to be yourself is always a difficult task. It is even more difficult to be yourself as a transgender person. "It's not that I am sacrificing a lot to transition. The process has actually allowed me to be reborn. It's like bursting out as a rainbow from my old body and life. I used to see things as only grey and black. Now I'm more positive. Life is so much more colorful. I hope that one day, I will finally see my rainbow." There is hope in Yin's shiny eyes, and he is indeed a warrior.

"I can look at myself in the mirror and live life as it should be."

Although Yin's identification documents indicate that he is 'female', he has never thought of himself as a woman. As a child when he was still ignorant about gender, he felt that he was no different from the other boys and often spent time with them. Then he reached puberty and his breasts began to develop, and he realized that he is physically different from the other boys. The physical changes were so traumatic that he refused to look into the mirror and hated the sound of his own voice. He wore a girdle every day to bind his breasts and downplayed any feminine features so that he looked as male as he felt inside. His strategy worked; nobody thought of him as female.

It was not until he was 34 years old that Yin found out that the public hospitals

in Hong Kong offer SRS. He began his search for information on transitioning and soon after, decided to see a psychiatrist for a gender identity assessment and assistance in transitioning. In the first year of his transgender journey, he spent an average of HK\$2,500 a month to use the services of a private psychiatrist and undergo hormone therapy. He also had to do blood tests every three months to see if the hormone therapy had any side effects and whether his body was rejecting the hormones. After a series of psychiatric assessments, he received a referral letter from his psychiatrist for surgery, and made arrangements with the hospital for the top surgery (mastectomy) to remove his breasts. The hormone therapy deepened his voice, and the top surgery gave him a more masculine physical form. He was finally able to look at himself in the mirror and live life as it should be. He continues to be in awe of the subtle changes in his body every day, and takes good care of his new hard-earned body.

“My head chef said that I am a man with a female body”

Yin is a chef, whose workplace environment is male dominated, but no one has ever treated him like a woman. His head chef even told him that he is a man with a female body. Other than his physical body, he is a man who lives and works like any other man. While he was still binding his breasts for work, his female supervisor who is a foreigner often urged him to surgically remove his breasts: “You don’t like your breasts anyway. Why do you bind them up? Just go get the surgery!”

Although Yin felt encouraged by his colleagues, he was still embarrassed when the time came to undergo the surgery, and he did not know how to tell his friends. After much thought, he decided to tell his friends who are not Chinese as they had always encouraged him to undergo SRS. He also felt that non-Chinese people are more open and would be more receptive to his decision to undergo SRS. So he invited his Nepalese friends to a meal at a Chinese restaurant and told them this important news. They were not very surprised and asked “Why so late? And why were you afraid to tell us?” While Yin believed that no response is the best response, it turned out that his close friends had always accepted him and were happy that he could be himself. Now, they frequent go to the gym together and show him how to build his muscles. Although changing his gender is a long process, he is fortunate to have some good friends and colleagues who will accompany him along the way.

“I am strongly against the government forcing us to undergo SRS”

While Yin is looking forward to removing his breasts, he does not think that it is necessary to undergo male genital reconstruction because constructing a penis requires the extension of the urethra in order to stand while urinating. There are often failures, and the risk of urinary tract infections is high as such surgical procedures are still in their infancy in Hong Kong. Constructing a penis (phalloplasty) requires the use the forearm or lower leg as a donor site and the flap of skin which is 1.5 cm in diameter along with the tissues and blood supply are completely removed from the arm or leg and then anastomosed and grafted to the site of transfer. Yet the reconstructed penis is not very functional. It cannot provide a natural erection, and there is the possibility that urine will leak. Moreover, phalloplasty is not a one-time procedure. There could be the possibility of hospitalization for half a year. Yin has heard about a case in which the individual has been in and out the hospital twelve times for surgery and still unable to urinate well. He does not understand why a healthy and not visible part of the body has to undergo unnecessary surgery which would cause so many health problems.

Yin feels that the requirements for changing the gender marker on the HKID card should really be two years of assessment by a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist, along with hormone replacement therapy (HRT), and a two years of real life experience (RLE) as that gender. Removing, reconstructing or constructing the genitals should be a personal choice. As a female-to-male transgender person himself, he already passes as a man (passing is the ability to be perceived as the gender identified and not as a transgender), with a greater social acceptance. However, the social acceptance of male-to-female transgender persons is still very low, even if they have a very feminine appearance or even undergone SRS. If their gender cannot be changed on their ID card, they would still be labeled as predators when they attempt to use women's toilets.

Therefore, the gender marker on the HKID card is important for safety and self-preservation especially for transwomen. “It is already difficult for transgender people to be themselves, why should they be forced to undergo unnecessary reconstruction surgery?”

65 years and only 15 minutes of happiness - Ben

by Lanlan Yu



Ben said that for the entire 65 years of his life, he only had 15 minutes of happiness. Imagine the hardships that he has suffered. Ben was abandoned by his birth mother and if his adoptive mother did not take him in, he would have surely perished that spring day. He was born in spring — the start of life, yet he almost died. Nevertheless, he managed to survive.

However, again and again he faced death, and it was like one trial after another.

He remembers all of the details of sad incidents that have come to pass, and speaks rapidly as he relives them again. He had suffered physical and mental health problems, hardships around romantic love, and misery over his gender. He feels that he was born with the wrong sex. The turmoil in his heart consumed him and trapped him in the physical shell of a woman for 65 dark years.

He felt joy very late in his life – a full 15 minutes of happiness. It was the time that he played the gongs and drums in a Cantonese opera performance at a community hall. The MC introduced Ben to the audience as the “Handsome Drummer” which made him so happy that he could not stop smiling until the end of the performance. “In my 65 years of life, there were only 15 minutes of happiness,” said Ben. Nevertheless, those two words acknowledged and recognized Ben as his true self.

“My adoptive mother treated me liked a princess, but I wanted to be a prince”

Fortunately, his adoptive mother came into his life. He only weighed five pounds when his adoptive mother found him, so she did not know whether he would survive. She was a widow, whose husband was killed during the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong. She raised Ben with love and care as they only had each other. “She doted on me and worked really hard to provide everything that I needed. There isn’t going to be anyone who will love me as much as she loved me.” Ben was silent for a moment, and then said, “She treated me like a princess, but I wanted to be a prince. That’s why I wasn’t happy.”

In elementary school, his adoptive mother took Ben for ballet lessons and

dressed him in a pink lace dress like a little princess. "She loved me, but what she gave me and the lessons were totally unsuitable for me." Yet Ben could not bear to oppose her decisions, and just followed her will: "She was the head nurse and responsible for thoracic and respirology clinics with over 400 subordinates. Nobody dared to say no to her, and I was no exception."

In middle school, there were other tomboys (usually refer to lesbians with masculine appearance) who also had short hair but wore the school uniform with a skirt. To avoid wearing other skirts in his closet, he just wore his school uniform all day long. He continued his role for his adoptive mother to hide his desire to become a prince.

Ben has been identifying himself as a man as far back as he can remember. He becomes very angry when people address him as a woman. Being called "Ma'am ... Ma'am" is very painful and he has been struggling with being addressed as a woman all of his life. "The annoying security guard in my building keeps calling me Ma'am and Pretty Lady, which really pisses me off, but I don't want to blow up at her. It makes my blood boil when everyone else keeps calling me Ma'am. So I tell myself that they are all crazy and ignorant to feel better, but of course, it still makes me very upset."

His adoptive mother died of a second stroke when Ben was 25 years old. They had mutually cared and relied on each other for over two decades. The person who loved him the most was gone. Since then, Ben was alone. The anxiety, helplessness, and struggles around gender gradually consumed his body and soul. His health was poor when he was only in his thirties, and often, he felt that he was dying.

"The situation at the time was worse than it is now. My hands could completely have no feeling and my body felt cold on one side and hot on the other side. It was so unbearable and I thought that I was dying." Life often gave him challenges but also guardian angels. He found a Chinese medicine practitioner who saved his life and his health gradually recovered after more than 30 years of treatment. After 25 years of Chinese medication to regulate his body, he will still get sick due to diet or stress. "The worst is feeling helpless and there is nobody there for you. You have to fend for yourself and you feel so hopeless." Ben said since he is older now, he feels even more lonely. He even feels insecure even walking on the streets. "I can't walk for very long periods of time. I don't have the energy. Without a companion, the farthest that I can go is San Po Kong. I won't even go to Wong Tai Sin."

“Want to meet my Juliet”

Ben has always longed to meet his Juliet like Romeo but this never happened for him. He has been alone since 1983. In Grade 9, he decided for the first time to pursue a female classmate who was beautiful and seemed to like him too. He mentioned about his crush to his judo instructor, Eva, and she offered to help him. “I thought to myself, it's my own business so why would I need your help to pursue this girl? Soon after that, I became involved with that girl and would often go to her place. Later, I found out that she was cheating on me with Eva. It turned out Eva was secretly dating her behind my back”.

“It really hurts when you're betrayed by someone you trust.” At the time, Eva was a trusted friend and Ben considered Eva to be his brother.

His second relationship was another nightmare. Ben found a civil servant job in 1972 but was forced to wear a dress every day. At the time, he worked with a newly recruited staff member. “Although I wore a dress, she still thought that I was a man and wanted to be with me. I didn't like her very much, but still got involved with her. When we had sex, she found out that I was really not a man and dumped me. She became really cold to me.” They had an on-off relationship for 10 years which caused Ben to have mental health issues. “At the time, another girl in the office was interested in me and she (the on-off girlfriend) found out. That's when all hell broke loose! At home, she pulled my hair and wouldn't let me sleep. She went up to my office to look for me and even wrote a letter to the office director to report me for being a homosexual. I wasn't able to sleep for a long time and had to put up with her harassment. I ended up being slightly schizophrenic.”

These two relationships made him lose his faith in people. “I have no confidence in people anymore,” said Ben and then he said it again. “After 1983, I didn't meet anyone who truly likes me. Am I a pushover so that people take advantage of me? The girl who was interested in me saw that I had mental health problems so she dumped me and dated other men. Women have been the source of my problems, so I'm done with them.”

“I transformed from a clerk in a skirt to an auxiliary policeman, and then to a handsome drummer”

Ben served for the government from 1972 to 1993 and during that era, men were required to wear a suit and tie, while women wore dresses to work. “It

was hard for me. I really want to quit after the first day of work. However, my adoptive mother told me not to quit and work until I retire as she knew that she would soon pass away. So I stayed with the government for 20 years.” Ben has short hair and crude mannerism, but still had to wear a skirt. He was the object of curiosity in the office and especially when he had to go to the female toilet. People thought he was a crossdresser. Homophobia and transphobia were always prevalent. At that time, he did not know that he is actually a transgender person and just thought that he was a tomboy.

“I thought transgender people are those who have completed surgery, but I hadn’t gone through surgery yet. Then 6 years ago, I met Joanne, the chairperson of the Transgender Resource Center who, aside from my adoptive mother, cared about me. Later, I came to realize that I am a transman.” Being identified as a “transman” has been very important for Ben. He finally understands why he hates to wear dresses and frustrated by those who call him “Ma’am”. Now everything makes sense. “I was very happy during my part-time auxiliary police work. My boss treated me like a man and so did the other policemen. They called me Brother Ben. I dressed in casual wear like shirts and jeans when I went patrolling. Those were good times. “

Ben joined the Blessed Minority Christian Fellowship in 2011 and found a community that accepts his identity. However, as the transgender community was quite small at the time, he did not feel that many understood him or cared about him. Later on, he took part in gatherings with other transgender people but they were much younger, and conversation mostly revolved around SRS. “You know how hard it is to go through surgery at my age? We had nothing in common to talk about.” However, Ben does not want to be alone. So he wants to meet more people so that they can give each other support. He also wants other people to care about him.

“Have you ever thought about surgery?”

“My health was deteriorating when I was only in my thirties and I was suffering from schizophrenia. There were too many things to worry about. Twice, I felt that I wouldn’t make it, that I would die. I didn’t have the money to do the surgery because I had to make a living and support myself. So that’s why I didn’t even think about it.”

Ben is 65 years old now and would not risk the complications of surgery. He will be forced to continue to tolerate the “F” marker as his identity on his HKID card as he goes into his senior years.

In discussions around the gender recognition legislation, mainstream society in Hong Kong generally believes that full SRS is mandatory for claiming gender. Would this not deprive the rights of elderly transgender people?

"For 65 years of my life, there were only 15 minutes of happiness." 'Handsome Drummer' was just a simple salutation, but affirmed and recognized his gender. If you feel saddened for Ben's 15 minutes of happiness, then let us wish many more happy moments for him.

A Mother's Heartache - Angela

by Eunice Chau



In February 2016, when Angela's "youngest daughter" was 27 years old, he came out to his family about his transgender identification. At that moment, Angela took the news calmly. She did not reprimand her child, nor asked questions. On the contrary, she had utmost confidence in her child. Her child came out by writing them a letter along with a booklet published by the Transgender Resources Center. Her 'youngest daughter' even told Angela that he had searched on the internet, read a large volume of related materials and completed the questionnaires, and was very sure of his transgender identity.

Angela understood that exploring one's gender identity would not be an easy journey. She felt empathy for her child and her heart ached in anticipation of the hardships and challenges that he had to face all alone. Yet on the other hand, she also admired her child's strength and resilience.

"My two daughters" to "My daughter and son"

"After I found out about my child's decision to transition, I was torn because I knew that the whole process would not be easy at all. Yet my child had courageously gone through the process all alone. At the same time, it also saved me from having to deal with the process because I wouldn't have known what to do." Angela had previously worked in the business sector but retired early. For the past ten years, she has pursued the work in counselling. In her spare time, she would take part in workshops. She has always championed for breaking down societal gender stereotypes. She taught her children to be responsible for their own choices and decisions, and accept the consequences. Yet, even though she is a mother with an

open mind, she still struggled with her child's gender identity.

Angela appeared calm but she was conflicted inside. After finding out about her child's intention to transition, she felt confused and conflicted, and was unable to focus on meeting the deadline for her clinical supervision paper. Even worse, the turmoil translated into physical symptoms. Her left wrist was painful and felt stiff, like she was holding onto something tightly. The pain stayed with her for a long period of time. Angela said: "At first I thought that showing acceptance was enough, but then I realized that while I was being rational, I was still emotionally troubled about the whole situation. Everything was in a haze."

Even though Angela appears to be very resilient, it was not easy for her to face the situation. At the time, she had a very good mentor who was willing to listen to her and give her support. "She knows me well, and helped me get in touch with my inner self. She let me talk and vent. We have a trusting relationship, and I was able to open up myself to her without any reservations." The support from her mentor gave Angela the ability to quiet her thoughts and the pain from her left wrist along with the emotions gradually went away.

Angela said that actually, the changes to her child have not been very drastic. She saw her "younger daughter" physically transform through hormone use and weight-lifting into a man with a muscular body. Instead of saying "my two daughters", she now says "my daughter and son" when referring to her children, and calls her youngest child "Billy" (pseudonym). Regardless, her child is still the same person whom she has loved for the past twenty odd years.

Let transgender people be seen in society, and allow them to be accepted

Angela not only has to face the struggles around the gender identity of her child, she was also determined to be honest with her relatives. Fortunately, Angela did not have to carry out this task by herself. Her older daughter and husband were also very supportive. Thus, telling the relatives was a relatively peaceful event. Prior to attending any family related events, they took into consideration which relatives would be the recipient of the information, and discussed how they would respond to the questions. Interesting enough, even though they were thoroughly prepared, none of their relatives asked any questions. Angela recalled that during all of the previous family gatherings, Billy had always dressed in a gender-neutral style. He also loves sports, and has a strong and muscular body. Therefore, no one even noticed

that he was undergoing hormone treatment to become a man. On the other hand, sex and gender are still taboo subjects in Hong Kong, so no one took the initiative to ask questions. Angela said: "They didn't attempt to ask, or maybe they didn't know how to ask. Even if they asked, they wouldn't even know how to continue the conversation. Hong Kong is still very conservative in this respect."

Even though Hong Kong is conservative, Angela and her child are trying their best to bring about changes. When no one asked, Angela and Billy took the initiative to disclose to some of their relatives whom they felt would be more accepting. Also, Angela did not want to hide this change in her life from some of her closer friends. However, Angela informed Billy about her intentions to disclose his gender identity, and asked for his consensus prior to doing so. The disclosure to her friends was not meant to ask for their acknowledgment and acceptance of Billy's gender identity, but she wanted to be honest with them and hoped that transgender people could be more visible in society. Her close friends have been very supportive. Therefore, coming out is no longer just an individual matter. The entire family would need to be mutually supportive and encouraging.

Hoping for the arrival of spring in the future

Unfortunately, there is still currently insufficient information, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about transgenders. Even though Billy has changed his name on his HKID card to a masculine name, the gender remains female. Therefore, he does not feel comfortable coming out to his employer. Since he is on hormone therapy, he is gradually becoming more masculine. He can pass as a male but this has caused many inconveniences in his daily life activities. For example, when he wanted to use the staff fitness room, the other staff members asked him many questions. In order to avoid further embarrassment, Billy would change into his sportswear beforehand to avoid using the male/female changing rooms. Even though this seems to be a rather small incident and inconvenience in daily life, Angela feels badly about the challenges that her child must endure on a daily basis.

For the past two years, Billy has been going to the Prince of Wales Hospital for his transition process which includes the diagnosis and hormone injections. He has also traveled to the US for surgery to remove his breasts. Different specialists have issued letters to support him on living as a man. Although he has already been transitioning for two years, he still cannot change the gender marker on his HKID card because he has not undergone the

SRS in its entirety. Thus, he faced some awkward situations when going through immigration during his travels. So Billy had his mother and older sister accompany him when he went to the US for further examinations and surgery. Family members not only lend emotional support but when the immigration officers questioned him, they were able to further explain his situation to them. Angela said: "If the gender on his ID can be changed, then Billy can go through immigration smoothly, and there is no need to face all of these issues and problems." As a mother, she would like her child to live a happy life. Even though Billy intends to undergo the SRS in its entirety, changing the gender on identification documents based on psychiatric and psychological assessments would greatly reduce the difficulties and challenges in daily life of a transperson if the gender recognition legislation is passed in Hong Kong.

Angela stared at drawings that she and her children drew together in a drawing class. In the drawings, the trees are all bare, just like the loneliness that Angela felt at the beginning. However, the branches are strong and upright in the drawings, which parallels the hope that she maintained despite the emotional challenges. The strong branches mean that flowers will bloom again when spring arrives. These epitomize the internal struggles around the gender exploration process of both Billy and his family during the past two years, and are analogous to Angela's hopes for the future. Just like spring will come with rich and different colored flowers, Billy will live a similar extraordinary life.

PS
"It feels very lonely right now with just a few people in my life. Even though I see others from far away and it's quite nice here, I still feel lonely."



是非男女

Gossip **Boys** and **Girls**

English Version

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