

Short Story by Anna Wing Bo TSO & Agnes Wai Kei LAM

Your City, Your Voice

[Time: 12:00]

The moment when Wing-yee Chan, the trainee reporter of *Freedom Post*, sent her newly drafted script to her supervisor, the news script read as follows:

Town Planning Board suggests canceling tram services

17 August 2015 12:00 noon · By Wing-yee Chan

Though slow and can at times be a bit crowded, Ding Ding Trams have been roaming around our city all the way from the East coast to the West coast since 1904, the year when *Viola Transport*, a French company, first founded the tramway company here in the city over a century ago. As Ding Ding Trams are turning 111 years old this year, the Town Planning Board, supported by a consulting firm, proposes to cancel the tram service because the tram tracks and stations have occupied 30 percent of the roads in the central business district. It is believed that the traffic jam in the CBD can be eased as soon as the tram service is phased out.

But the proposal has drawn a huge wave of criticism from the general public. A 70-year-old lady named Lydia Sham told *Freedom Post* that Ding Ding trams are a historic icon of the city and cannot be replaced. “Ding Ding trams must stay! They are a landmark in our city.” She said. Another citizen, Mr. James Wong, who has been living in the city for half a century, asserted that trams are a major tourist attraction. “Save the Ding Ding trams! We love Ding Ding; tourists love them too. I cannot bear to see our city’s heritage being torn to pieces, bit by bit.”

Ms Anita Mui, a parent of two children, reminded *Freedom Post* that trams are the cleanest form of transport. “Leave trams alone! Though slow, Ding Ding trams are the most environmentally-friendly form of transport. Most of all, they provide my family with the unique experience that we cannot buy anywhere but here in our city. We feel proud of Ding Ding.” Meanwhile, Mr. Leslie Cheung who lives close to the CBD, questioned the real reason of heavy traffic congestion. “Why eradicate the tramways? What is causing the traffic jam every day? Ding Ding, or private cars packed along major roads of the CBD?”

Across a spectrum of economic, social, and cultural considerations, whether Ding Ding Trams are here to stay, or not, depends on the government’s decision now.

[Time: 18:08]

Wing-yee's supervisor, Kwok-keung Wong, has been working for *Freedom Post* for well over 30 years. All these years from 1980 to 2015, Kwok-keung gets to work by tram every day, which costs him only \$4 for a return ride. But Kwok-keung knows too well that behind the Town Planning Board, it is most likely the central government's decision to phase out Ding Ding Trams, whose owner is a French company. The city has well past its colonial era. *Freedom Post* can, of course, test the boundaries of the freedom of speech, but at what price? To iron things out, Kwok-keung makes a number of corrections to Wing-yee's original draft:

Town Planning Board suggests solutions for CBD traffic congestions

17 August 2015 12:00 noon · By Wing-yee Chan

Slow and a bit crowded, Ding Ding Trams have been roaming around our city all the way from the East coast to the West coast since 1904, the year when *Viola Transport*, a French company, first founded the tramway company here in the city over a century ago. As Ding Ding Trams are turning 111 years old this year, **the tram tracks and stations have also** occupied 30 percent of the major roads in the central business district, **causing serious traffic congestions during peak hours from Monday to Saturday**. The Town Planning Board, supported by **facts and figures** provided by a consulting firm, **pointed out** that the traffic jam in the CBD can be eased as soon as the tram service is phased out.

The ~~proposal has drawn a huge wave of criticism from the~~ general public has shown different opinions on the proposal. A 70-year-old lady named Lydia Sham told *Freedom Post* that Ding Ding trams are ~~a historic icon of the city and cannot be replaced~~. “Ding Ding trams must stay! They are “a landmark in our city.” ~~She said~~. Another citizen, Mr. James Wong, who has been living in the city for half a century, asserted that trams are a major tourist attraction. “~~Save the Ding Ding trams!~~ We love Ding Ding; tourists love them too. ~~I cannot bear to see our city's heritage being torn to pieces, bit by bit.~~”

Ms Anita Mui, a parent of two children, reminded *Freedom Post* that trams are the cleanest form of transport. “~~Leave trams alone!~~ Though slow, Ding Ding trams are the most environmentally-friendly form of transport. ~~Most of all, they provide my family with the unique experience that we cannot buy anywhere but here in our city. We feel proud of Ding Ding.~~” Meanwhile, Mr. Leslie Cheung who lives close to the CBD, questioned the real reason of heavy traffic congestion. “~~Why eradicate the tramways?~~ What is causing the traffic jam every day? ~~Ding Ding, or private cars packed along major roads of the CBD?~~”

Across a spectrum of economic, social, and cultural considerations, whether ~~Ding Ding Trams are here to stay~~, **we want to ease the traffic congestions in the CBD**, or not, depends on the government's decision now.

[Time: 22:13]

Mr Zhu Xi, the chief editor of *Freedom Post*, is not at all happy when he reads the story in the final version of the issue, right before sending it to the printers. He orders his trusted reporter, within an hour, to rewrite Wing-yee's story. To Mr Zhu's satisfaction, the final version of the story becomes:

Town Planning Board suggests provides solutions for CBD traffic congestions

17 August 2015 12:00 noon · By Wing-yee Chan

Slow and a bit crowded, Ding Ding Trams have been roaming around our city all the way from the East coast to the West coast since 1904, the year when *Viola Transport*, a French company, first founded the tramway company here in the city over a century ago. As Ding Ding Trams are turning 111 years old this year, ~~the tram tracks and stations have also~~ occupied 30 percent of the major roads in the central business district, ~~causing serious traffic congestions during peak hours from Monday to Saturday~~. The Town Planning Board, supported by facts and figures provided by a consulting firm, ~~pointed out~~ that the traffic jam in the CBD can be eased as soon as the tram service is phased out.

The proposal has drawn a huge wave of criticism from the general public has shown different ~~their~~ opinions on the proposal too. A 70-year-old lady named ~~Zhan Qi~~ Lydia Sham told *Freedom Post* that Ding Ding trams are a historic icon of the city and cannot be replaced. "Ding Ding trams must stay! They are ~~a total waste of time~~ landmark in our city." She said. Another citizen, Mr. ~~Wang Lu~~ James Wong, who has been living in the city for half a century, asserted that trams are a major ~~cause of traffic jam~~ tourist attraction. "Last time, the tram ride took my mom over 2 hours to see the doc. The long ride was awful. Save the Ding Ding trams! We love Ding Ding; tourists love them too. I cannot bear to see our city's heritage being torn to pieces, bit by bit."

Ms Anita Mui, a parent of two children, reminded *Freedom Post* that trams are the cleanest form of transport. "Leave trams alone! Though slow, Ding Ding trams are the most environmentally friendly form of transport. Most of all, they provide my family with the unique experience that we cannot buy anywhere but here in our city. We feel proud of Ding Ding." Meanwhile, Mr. ~~Lin Ziyou~~ Leslie Cheung who lives close to the CBD, questioned the real reason of heavy traffic congestion. "Why eradicate the tramways? What is causing the traffic jam every day? ~~Without a shadow of doubt, trams! Ding Ding, or private cars packed along major roads of the CBD?~~"

Across a spectrum of economic, social, and cultural considerations, whether ~~Ding Ding Trams are here to stay~~, we want to ease the traffic congestions in the CBD, or not, depends on the government's decision now.

[Time: 07:00, the next day]

Wing-yee could not believe her eyes when she picked up the newspaper the next morning. She rushes into Kwok-keung Wong's office to know what has happened. 'Take it easy,' Kwok-keung Wong sips his tea in the calmest way he could be. 'This is reality,' he tries to comfort the frustrated girl in front of him, but he doesn't dare to look into Wing-yee's angry gaze. Frustrated about the unsolicited revisions, Wing-yee sent her original version of the story to *Subaltern Speak*. Sometimes, fiction is more real than reality.



[The End]

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