

- 50 [10] "The Hong Kong government will not grant new licenses to newsstands, which is why you see them less nowadays." Additionally, these independent street operators are unable to compete with the proliferation of convenience store chains, which have become a more prevalent medium for selling various printed materials. They charge higher fees than newsstands to have content stocked in their stores, so many comic book publishers do not use this platform.
- 55 [11] The industry veteran left the local comic scene four years ago to join the animation TV, film and toy business in the Mainland at Anitime Animation Studio. "It's tough being in a new business and a totally different environment, but if I had stayed in Hong Kong, I would have faced having to shrink my business and changing everything just for a small market." Wan would rather work hard to overcome his challenges in the Mainland (which include different regulations and audience tastes), as he's optimistic about the prospect of greater gains in a bigger market if he succeeds.
- [12] Many former publishers like himself have adapted in the new era, whether it's by switching to different markets or mediums or by branching out to other sides of the business such as licensing digital content to gaming companies. "You can't just rely on the old market of comic book publishing," Wan says.
- 60 [13] Yet he remains positive about the industry's outlook, hoping it becomes more creative and innovative in these evolving times. "People want more content from many devices, not only from publishing but from TV, mobiles, game consoles and computers." Wan insists that in these more connected and globalised times, content producers need to reevaluate their competitors and consumers, as every product needs to be international, not local. "Your competition is now worldwide," he says. So locally-focused content, which only Hong Kongers can appreciate, won't
- 65 export well. He advises instead: conceive good content that attracts a broader audience.
- [14] Lam agrees that a greater diversity of comic styles is needed as the new generation of readers demand new stories and visuals. While other leading comic nations like the US and Japan have worked to stay in tune with the evolving readership, this is not so in Hong Kong. "Many old-school comic artists have not updated their kung fu-style, which was popular from the 1960s to the 1990s," explains Lam. The artist adds most young people find these
- 70 fighting comics outdated. "Now they want lifestyle comics about girlfriends and boyfriends, families or themes relatable to the troubles in their lives."
- [15] He's pessimistic about the industry's future, citing the demolition of the Kowloon Walled City as an example of how culture and history is unappreciated in Hong Kong. "People's style here is money, money, money. They don't want to keep the culture. They just destroy and destroy." Asked whether he foresees improvements in the industry
- 75 anytime soon, he simply shrugs.

END OF READING PASSAGE

Sources of materials used in this paper will be acknowledged in the *HKDSE Question Papers* booklet published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority at a later stage.