

► Session 3:

From Art to Industry

16 November Afternoon

Moderator: **Ms Joy Shan LAM-KUNG**
Managing Director, Hong Kong Economic Journal

The Secret of Hello Kitty

Mr Makoto SATO
Director of Sanrio Company Limited

My Life as Mcdull

Mr Samuel CHOY
General Manager of Yellow Bus Publishing Ltd

Dance as a Creative Industry in The Philippines

Mr Nestor O. JARDIN
President of Cultural Center of The Philippines (CCP)

Asian Animation Industry in the New Creative Age

Mr Pramote CHOKESIRIKULCHAI
President of the Thai Entertainment Industry
Association (TENA)

Why is it called Liu Li Gong Fang?

Mr CHANG Yi
Director of Liu Li Gong Fang Crystal Co. Ltd.

Question and Answer

Mr Makoto SATO

Director of Sanrio
Company Limited



The Secret of Hello Kitty

Hello Kitty goods might be the best way to express your feeling, because it adds feeling to it. If you just give out money, that might be good, but there is no feeling to it. So, that was the concept of our business, called 'small gift, big smile'.

At the start there was no Hello Kitty. This year marks the 30th anniversary of Hello Kitty.

Our first theme was communication. We started out in the social communication business. This is actually about 45 years ago. In those days, the Japanese economy was not growing fast. We were trying to seek for material richness. Then, when we looked at the future, we thought it would be important to start a business that would create affluence of the mind. So, there are two directions of the business. One is the social communication gift business, namely to sell gift products. Another one is the social communication entertainment business, which was started from 1990, as a new business.

HELLO KITTY TO BRING ABOUT AFFLUENCE OF MIND

When you would like to send a message or try to convey your feelings to other people, you might like to give the message together with goods. That is what social communication gift business is all about. Currently, it is getting convenient: you have digital data and email. But 40 years ago or so, what is best way of communication or expression of your feelings? You could give some small handkerchiefs with 'Hello Kitty' on it; maybe just about 100 to 300 yen, as a gift, together with a note of thanks, to your friend. Although the price is lower, but Hello Kitty goods might be the best way to express your feeling, because it adds feeling to it. If you just give out money, that might be good, but there is no feeling to it. So, that was the concept of our business, called 'small gift, big smile'.

With this business philosophy, the environment where Hello Kitty was born, was created. What was most important in developing this business was the shop called Sanrio shop. Usually, if you go to the shop, you know what is sold there. If you ask me what kind of shops Sanrio shops are, you are not able to identify what kind of goods we are selling. So that is actually the special nature of our business. Rather than selling the goods, when you like to convey your feelings, of gratitude or congratulations, you go to the Sanrio shop. That was the definition of our shop. So when we explained it that way, which was about 40 years ago, nobody would understand. So it was difficult for us to explain what kind of shops we had.

SANRIO SHOPS: FELLINGS INTO BUSINESS

However, from there, we created new marketing, and I think that was one of

Question & Answer

THE ART OF
COMMUNICATION

Q: I think several of the speakers commented on the importance of communication, and the idea of using communication as both a business strategy and an aspect of creativity in your products, or your art. Could you elaborate on that?

MAKOTO SATO: When Sanrio started, we had an idea that human beings cannot live alone. We need communication and we need to share emotions with other people. That leads to the affluence of the heart, and that leads to culture. So, 'communication' was the keyword, and we have been using that as our key theme for 45 years. Not only us but for all cultural activities, communication is very important.

NESTOR JARDIN: That is true also in the performing arts, not only in dance but also in theatre and music. I think the success of an art form lies in its being able to communicate what you want to say, and it is the responsibility of the creator. So if I am a choreographer you must make sure that I know what I want to communicate, and the way I communicate it is done in an artistic or creative manner, as is expected of a performing arts forum with that integrity. On the other hand, the dance manager, in the sense of dance as a creative industry, has a great responsibility also, of bringing that art form and communicating to a wider

the major elements that give birth to Hello Kitty. Anyway, shops are selling something. The interior goods, display and services are very important elements. Sanrio is not a shop that sells hit products, but we wanted to put values to the gifts or the services; that is the way of developing a business.

First of all, good design is needed. Goods are created as gifts. Design and quality should be good. And the planning behind it should be good as well. At the same time, it should be reasonably priced. Your message should be easily conveyed.



For example, the flower ballpoint pen. In order to write things, you need to push up or open up this flower. But this is fun, it is a gift, and you need to convey your feelings, so this is necessary. That is product planning. There is also an old product, a mirror. You can put the mirror on the table and many women say it is cute. So we are not selling just mirrors. There is fun to it, and also cuteness, or excitement, and we made those feelings into a business. So, when you think of the Sanrio business, it is not just you put a popular character to any products, then you can sell. There is a

business philosophy behind it, and also we put importance on the development of the goods.

Next, about Sanrio characters. As mentioned, the products we develop are actually gifts, but gifts should not be so stimulating, and also it should not convey too strong a message. It should be there in a cold manner, then it can convey the warmth from the sender to the receiver, and that is quite important to our goods. Recently, what is popular is a character called U*SA*HA*NA, and also the Baby Cinnamoroll under the Hello Kitty. Just below the Kitty is called Charming Kitty. The person in charge of Kitty design is called Sakiyama. 2004 is the 30th anniversary, so we are supposed to create something new. Kitty's boyfriend was created in the 25th anniversary. It is called Daniel. The Charming Kitty is a pet of Kitty, although it looks similar to Hello Kitty itself. Although I do not know about the situation in Hong Kong or elsewhere in the world, but in Japan, Charming Kitty and Baby Cinnamoroll are getting very, very popular. We developed such characters because we like to differentiate our business, so design was quite important. Sanrio's shop, and also the know-how for the development of the products, differentiating characters, those three elements developed into one, and that became a driver for Hello Kitty.

CHARACTER AND PRODUCT DESIGN: THE GROWING FAMILY OF HELLO KITTY

When it comes to the number of shops, there are directly managed Sanrio shops - we have 160 directly managed shops in Japan and also 38 shops overseas. Somewhere or other, there are other shops that deal with Sanrio Kitty products, which number 8,300. I think the floor in the shop is very important. The character which has a high popularity like Hello Kitty is attributable to the communication with the customer at the floor of the shop. Without the floor or without the shop, we could never have developed the lovable character. But I think the character which gave birth at the floor, through the communication with the customer, will be deep-seated and it will last longer.

Our business theme is communication. I would like to talk about the social communication entertainment business. This is a form of business. We have two entertainment businesses in Japan. One is the Puroland and the other one is Harmonyland, which is located in Kyushu in Japan and is not like the Puroland. We do not have so much attraction, but we have entertainment based on Hello Kitty, and 'small gift, big smile' was the theme of our gift business. Now we have 'small service, big smile'. That is the concept of this park. In other words, families and friends can gather at Puroland or these places so that they can share good memories. That is our concept. In Tokyo, Puroland commemorates its 14th anniversary and is likely to enter into its 15th year.

Against the background of these successes, we shifted Kitty from just an illustration or design to something that is alive. The design of Kitty is changed to a moving animal that further enhances the expression of the character, and there are many formats to express Hello Kitty. I think the stuffed animals or actual people wearing the costume of Kitty are a very important aspect, and many people visit to meet Kitty.

FROM AN ILLUSTRATION, A MOVING ANIMAL, TO A CELEBRITY

Zhang Ziyi, the actress, came to Puroland and played with Kitty. Mariah Carey, Britney Spears and many celebrities have been supporting Hello Kitty. Because of the fact that Kitty has become a celebrity herself, we need to have a communication site, which means theme parks, to promote this kind of character. We need to have performance places other than Puroland: in Korea, and Thailand next January; and if we have an opportunity in Taiwan, Hong Kong or Singapore, we would like to perform a Hello Kitty live show elsewhere. Also, we would like to provide a good memory of Puroland through the Internet. That is also one of the plans we have. On the Internet you can see the pictures, and now you can change that into memorial goods.

How is the Sanrio business, centring on Hello Kitty, going to proceed? We

public, so that the public can come and see the performing art, and know about what the artist is communicating.

PRAMOTE CHOKESIRIKULCHAI:

I used to produce films and dramas. You know what you want to produce, what you want to create. Regardless of your fans and viewers, just do it according to what your heart says and tell your mind to do it. But if you think commercial, you just have to study and know how to get to that customer group or target. But if you want to be natural and not forcing yourself, do it through your heart. Success or not, that is the matter of it. A producer of a big, successful film cannot say he is good. Other people are saying it, because it hits other people's minds and hearts. But maybe what we always see in Cannes, Lansanne or Tokyo Films Festivals most of the movies are not big box-office movies. It hits different groups and targets of people. So again, do what your heart says and love it. That is the way to communicate; you get money or you get pride, you get satisfaction because you choose it.

SAMUEL CHOY:

The media should speak for something, whether you are selling a boat, producing a film, some cast or figurine; sometimes we may not be very explicit, but as creators we must bear in mind that when you do something in creation, you must have something to express.

CHANG YI:

For me, when we were young, we were told that creation is about learning how people feel. The better you are in creation, the better you know how people feel, and you care about more matters and issues. It

is about human emotions and human feelings. If you care for people, you will find a niche for the level of your goods or products. You have a choice. You can go for a big or a small market. If I go for this market, I know it is a small market, a minority market. But there is no worry. I am not worried about competition or about strategy. The more important thing is whether you really care about something. Consumers want the concern and the passion. If you treat the products as an expression of emotion and passion, other things will be secondary.

LOCAL CHARACTERS GLOBAL BUSINESS

Q: I have another question for Mr Sato and Mr Choy. Why are cartoon figures always western looking? Why should we not be more confident about our identity? Why continue to have pale complexion, big-eyed characters? We should create our own tanned-skin, small-eyed, cute figures. What would you say to that?

MAKOTO SATO: We have a tanned Kitty too. But that is not an animation character but a product and merchandise character. So we started by making it as an icon, a symbol. We are exploring the sweetness and cuteness, and as a result it tends to look similar. However, the market probably can discern the details. Another challenge or task of Sanrio is that we like to create characters that can broaden the appeal to the world.

SAMUEL CHOY: I think what I have in mind is not those traditional

would like to create a business of our own, very unique business, and we also collaborated with a dancing team from China at Kitty's show. Also, we collaborated with acrobats of hip-hop; we are exploring new kind of performances or new kinds of dances.

Last but not least, we would like to, instead of making Japanese culture, collaborate with worldwide partners so that we can make something which will appeal to people in other countries in the world as well. Our theme this year is 'friendly relationships'. We want to bond with the rest of the world. I would like to contribute to create good business with the collaboration of people worldwide. 🌍



Mr Samuel CHOY

General Manager of Yellow
Bus Publishing Ltd.



My Life as Mcdull

We believe that Mcdull also needs a new language. It can no longer speak only Cantonese. We cannot just talk in very colloquial Cantonese which can only be understood by Hong Kong people.

The character of Mcdull started from a story; the product of Mcdull was in fact a book. There were cartoons or comics in some magazines, and we already have about 40 such publications. With the series of publication, we have already accumulated some creative experience and tried to improve upon our experience.

We are continuously exploring new styles, new interpretations, and also different feelings and sentiments. Behind the story, we would like to bring forth our diversified creations. Some might find it humorous, warm, with a lot of goodwill and very philosophical. These are the creative elements which have been put into the creation of Mcdull.

McDULL'S LIFE IN ORIGINALITY

During the first few years, we gradually accumulated some experience and we tried to maintain some characteristics. First, in our creation, we attach a lot of importance to originality. That also has to do with the personal style of the creator. In fact, creation is a very subjective thing and whatever you come up with, you can create it. So we may not be market-led but then in the course of evolution, we also attach a lot of importance to the message that we were trying to bring out, for example, what we are trying to communicate with our readers. Over the years, when we look back, we look at the originality and also the diversified style, we believe that this is something we have to cherish, and also different interpretations of people. That is why in the early 1990s, during the first few years we gradually accumulated different groups of readers. In fact, I am one of them. I became a fan of Mcdull, and I believe many of you in the audience are also fans of Mcdull, so we gradually gathered a large group of followers.

Gradually, we went further and tried to create our own gifts. We gradually started to produce and create some of our products. We have now over a thousand products.

In Hong Kong, we are also one of the minority groups creating comics and comic characters. That is why we sometimes work with different commercial bodies, government institutions, and we try to be the spokesperson and we try to promote the image of these entities. This is also good for us, because through such co-operation we have expanded our exposure. For example, we have done some Visa cards, also some TV advertising; we have also worked with petrol stations and fast food chains, and so on. This has been a very good experience for us because that has also increased our exposure, to reach out to different groups and communities.

< pg.162

products. When we first created the image of Mcdull, it started as a character in a comic book. It is a piglet. So we did not really give much thought to that feeling of appealing to the public. We just wanted to create something that you will feel comfortable with. Of course, the subsequent developments were unexpected. We did not really consider whether it would appeal to a foreign audience and so on. So it was purely a creation arising from some ideas.

MARKET A PLACE FOR CREATIVITY

Q: We are all in the so-called creative industries, and arguably we need to use creativity more than other businesses. I am wondering, in each of your respective businesses or organisations, how is creativity used differently than say in other industries? Because it has always been quite perplexing to me, why these certain industries are called creative industries, when really in the business world creativity is a must if you want to survive. How do you feel you have used creativity differently?

NESTOR JARDIN: I would like to relate a story. Three or four months ago I wanted some figures on the creative industry in The Philippines, so I went to the Department of Trade and Industry, the Undersecretary who was in charge of the small, medium and micro industries, and she was perplexed. She has heard of the creative industry but it is not a

For us, one of the more important developments has been the development of the animation TV series. Starting from 1996 onwards, we started to set up our own animation team and in 1999 we launched our own 13-episode TV series. We were beginning to explore our own creation, direction, the style we want and message we are trying to send out. So that was a very important time for us in terms of team building. Also in 2001, we introduced our first full-length animated feature on Mcdull, and we also managed to make a miracle in terms of box office. We also distributed VCDs and videos. What is more important is that we managed to reach out to a different audience in overseas countries, for example, film distributors, and also we attended some film festivals and so on.

THE WONG KAR WAI OF ANIMATION



In answer to the question that I raised last year, for the time being, filming is giving us more benefit and more helpful to us, because through films we managed to produce the animation, it is more lively. The response to the first animated feature was rather good.

That is why last year we produced another film, *Mcdull the Prince de la Bun*. That was shown last summer and that was a very different attempt because we hoped that our own animated feature would have a new style. Some people call us the 'Wong Kar Wai' of animated feature. We have received very good reviews in terms of the storyline and also the way we tell the story; we have adopted some new approaches. Also, there are many Chinese local flavours which have been added to the film.

We have also had chances to go overseas. That is because of the success of the *Mcdull Story*. We attended different festivals and received very good reviews, several awards and prizes. There were websites in France, and this year *Mcdull* was also shown in Korea. Earlier this year, we also went to Japan and a 13-episode TV series was shown there. That is the first time Mcdull managed to speak Japanese. In the mainland, we introduced four Mcdull series publications in simplified characters, and this year we are going to launch four more.

We have been doing this for more than ten years and we still believe that there are many things we can do, because we do not have a theme park yet, so there are many things that we could get involved in. But then over the years, we have tried to step out and gradually see that our attempts are bearing fruit, and they are translating our philosophy into reality. Our creation has a lot to do with Hong Kong's way of life, for example, interpersonal relationships, and also the warmth between people and human sentiment.

MCDULL NEEDS NEW ADVENTURES

In different places, when we try to launch our products, we have also gradually learnt a lot of experience. We believe that Mcdull also needs a new language. It can no longer speak only Cantonese. We cannot just talk in very colloquial Cantonese which can only be understood by Hong Kong people. This year, we

attended a few festivals in Switzerland, and *Mcdull the Prince de la Bun* also managed to be shortlisted. Many Swiss people also understood it and they laughed. Then, you might ask, we use a lot of symbols and symbolic things. But we also need to learn something new. We also need to make new attempts, so that more people would understand what we are trying to say. That would be a new language for Mcdull.

Mcdull might also need some new experience. It might also need to learn some martial arts in the mainland. So at the philosophical level and also in terms of life experience, we also need to make some new attempts, and that is what we think we can do. Compared to Hello Kitty, which is very much a global icon or phenomena, Mcdull is still very much a local phenomenon, but we hope that gradually we will be able to rise to more new challenges. We hope that we could achieve that goal so that we can mature gradually.

Mcdull is a very simple kid and we can also call it a boy scout. That was a moronic prince. 🍥



category at the moment. When I explained to her that the creative industry constitutes industries generated through the performing arts, visual arts, film, broadcast arts, cultural heritage, cultural activities, she told me that the small industries of these categories are really spreading out. As you said, there is creativity in all industries.

But I think the big difference, when we try to lump together all these categories that I mentioned into one major category called creative industry, is the fact that the products are really artistic creations. They are cultural expressions that emanate from the creator or the artist, as opposed to other industries which manufacture machines, toilet paper and candies that are made in answer to the public need. So, the manufacturers or the creators make them because there is a need or demand from the public, whereas in creative enterprises, the artists create and reach out to the public.

PRAMOTE CHOKESIRIKULCHAI:

I think the biggest difference is, when you do not think about commercial, it could turn commercial by itself, but when you have a cultural thing, you do not want the word 'competition'. You want to say Mcdull goes abroad and people will follow Mcdull doing the Hong Kong or Chinese way. Pride is pride, but you are not brainwashing people. If they like it, if they like Mcdull's way of eating noodles in the Chinese way and all that, they will do it. The same way like when Hello Kitty or Doraemon, you see Doraemon is closer to the Japanese culture - I do not say Hello Kitty does not represent

Mr Nestor O. JARDIN

President of Cultural Center of The Philippines (CCP)

Dance as a Creative Industry in The Philippines



Dance is a creative industry and therefore a creative expression that contributes to the economic output of the country. This is a relatively new concept.

As the president of the Cultural Center of The Philippines, I undertake dance programmes. My career in the arts began 31 years ago as a member of Ballet Philippines, the resident dance company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Back then, straight out of college, I did not care whether my monthly salary as a dancer barely covered my apartment rental. I just wanted to dance and travel with the company. My parents were, of course, the most disappointed persons in the world when they found out that their only son would go into ballet rather than to medicine, as originally planned. Dance as a professional career was totally unthinkable in The Philippines then. But that fact was some sort of an enigma because, as far back as I can remember, Filipinos love to dance and sing. Music and dance have been part of our lives since the early civilizations that thrived in our archipelago before the Western colonisers came.

Many foreigners have observed that Filipinos possess a natural sense of rhythm. One theory forwarded was that of Norman Walker, an American choreographer who worked in The Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s. He said that due to the archipelagic nature of our country, being surrounded by the sea, the constant rhythm of the waves has imbibed in our bodies this musical and bodily rhythm. Some may consider this a bit far-fetched, but the truth is, dance and music still permeate the lives of Filipinos to this very day.

Our dance heritage is as rich and varied as the age-old cultural heritage of more than 100 ethno-linguistic groups all over the country. Indigenous Philippine dances are generally categorised into ritual dances, occupational dances, mimetic dances or those that imitate nature, festival dances and life cycle dances. The coming of the Spaniards in 1521 and the subsequent colonial period lasting more than 300 years brought new dance forms, many of which were indigenised or transformed to adapt to local practices. The dances that evolved were either religious in nature or those which were performed on social occasions.

THE WEALTH OF DANCE: CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE PHILIPPINES

The American colonial period from 1901 to 1946 introduced more Western forms of dance, including classical ballet, modern dance, and ballroom dances. During this period, dance as a theatrical presentation was introduced together with the establishment of many theatres which served as venues for local and foreign dance companies.

Today, Philippine dance, to a large extent, still reflects the historical-cultural heritage of the country. Many of the indigenous dances are still prevalent in all of the cultural communities living in one or more of the 7,100 islands of the archipelago. These dances have been researched, studied, and documented by scholars or choreographers who transposed them into folk dances for theatrical presentations. At present, there are over 1,000 professional, amateur, school-based, and community-based folk dance troupes all over the country. Almost all high schools, colleges, and universities have folk dance groups. Classical ballet is another popular dance form in The Philippines. At present, there are hundreds of private ballet schools which train thousands of students in urban centres. During the last four decades, several professional groups which presented regular seasons were established. Some of them, for one reason or another, have folded up, while some still exist and have sustained their operations successfully.



Modern dance had its beginnings in The Philippines in the early 20th century, when it was introduced by American teachers and choreographers who took up residence in Manila. Since then, it has flourished and increased its popularity among local audiences. Many young choreographers have developed unique styles and forms, which have incorporated in Filipino themes and traditions.

Another offshoot of the successive colonial eras in The Philippines is ballroom dancing. The rigodon de honor, a quadrille dance, is the best-known ceremonial dance performed in ballrooms during the Spanish period. Subsequently, other European and American ballroom dances were introduced. Nowadays, ballroom dancing is a favourite pastime and exercise that has caught on like wild fire in all sectors of Philippine society. At present, some of the leading professional dance groups include the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, a resident company of the Cultural Centre of The Philippines which was established in 1958; the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group, known for presenting folk dances on stage in as close a manner to the original as possible; the Philippine Ballet Theatre which was established in 1987; Ballet Manila which was able to popularise classical ballet among the masses. In contemporary dance, we have Ballet Philippines which was established in 1970 and popularised modern dance through its innovative repertoire and programming; and Powerdance, a young dynamic group that fuses jazz and modern dance.

Dance is a creative industry and therefore a creative expression that contributes to the economic output of the country. This is a relatively new concept. This is manifested as services or goods through the following industry categories: professional dance groups, which employ talents, produce theatrical presentations and undertake touring programmes; dance schools, which train

< pg.165

culture - because there are a lot of real stories of Japanese kids. A lot of Japanese or Asians in the whole world sometimes copy it but sometimes do not. You cannot say, hey, my Thai kid or Chinese kid doing in that Japanese way is wrong.

PULL AND PUSH: THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

Q. Should our government have a policy to support culture? Usually government would have policies to support industries or innovative industries and we even have a fund for quality education. The question is, should our government get a policy to support culture? I understand the Korean Government supports their industry extensively, and they invest heavily in film production. But here, for example, in relation to the West Kowloon site, should we promote culture by bringing in certain contents of commercial activity so that it would become viable, or should we let culture flourish on its own? Should there be a culture to that effect? I do not know how old Mcdull is. Hello Kitty is 30 years old. I hope that the products will be forever youthful, but how can you do it? Are you concerned that one day, like other products, your products will become history?

SAMUEL CHOY: I think creativity presents its difficulties. Like everything else, it is a difficult question to answer. How can you make something youthful forever? It is

difficult to answer. If we want to say something, if we want to do something and we have not done it, and we are able to do it, we will do it, or one day we may find ourselves repeating ourselves. But that is not the stage we have reached so far. We still have ideas that we can work on. Sanrio is a good example, an exemplary product development for me. We have to keep on trying new things, re-invent ourselves, using new perspectives.

On your first question, yesterday I had dinner with a Korean friend. I asked him whether the Korean Government is trying very hard to promote creative industry, and he said that in the last few years, support from the government was being reduced, because gradually, creative industries are expanding. The government's role should be a flexible one, not a fixed one. For example, in Hong Kong, what is the condition of the creative industries, and as Ms Lam said, are they really creative industries? Even a bowl of wonton noodles has creativity in it, so should we just label certain industries as creative industries and then support them; would that be unfair? I think all this needs to be considered by the government. For example, movies and music used to grow very rapidly, but then in recent years they have come across certain difficulties. Will the government adjust their roles and change their roles? These are my views.

JOY SHAN LAM-KUNG: I just want to add a point. Recently I had a conversation with the Korean Consulate representative. Recently we have seen a Korean boom, and

> pg.170

young talents and earn from this business endeavour; television dance groups and programmes, which employ talents and produce dance programmes; ballroom dancing, which employs talent and generates economic activities through clubs, memberships and entertainment services, including dance sports which allow the organisation of training, competitions and showcases; dance wear and gear, which generate employment, production and retail operations; and publications, which generate dance products such as books, magazines, videos and other information and promotional materials on dance.

THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINING DANCE AS A CULTURAL INDUSTRY

As a young industry that is largely unnoticed, unstudied and unassessed in growth and potential, dance as a source of economic output in The Philippines faces a lot of challenges. The viability of many dance programmes and activities and the sustainability of dance companies are major challenges that should be addressed by dance directors and managers. With competition from other performing arts groups and the more popular types of entertainment, the dance audiences have remained limited. As a consequence, many young dance talents have sought greener pastures abroad, thus, creating a constant need for professional dancers, particularly males.

Another issue is the need to systematically document, notate and preserve outstanding dance pieces that will eventually constitute the dance legacy of the country. An active programme for the preservation of intangible arts needs to be instituted, particularly covering the works of our national artists in dance. Together with this, choreographers and dance managers need to be more pro-active in intellectual property rights protection. More often, choreographies are not as actively protected in the same manner that musical compositions are. But despite these challenges, the fact remains that there is a wealth of dance heritage on which the creative industry could draw from - materials that will speak of the values, meanings, and identity of the Philippine society.

One phenomenon that is currently sweeping the country which has baffled and delighted us in the dance sector is what we call the 'street dance festival'. In more than half of the country's 2,400 municipalities and cities, there is an annual traditional street festival centred around the 'Mardi Gras' type of street dance competition participated in town districts and communities. Each participating group consists of about 100 youth and adult members of the community, all non-dancers who perform traditional dances and variations thereof. These annual competitions, which are held during fiestas, town anniversaries, or other non-secular presentations, are accompanied by trade or agro-industrial fairs, and other community activities, generate huge economic activity that contributes to the local economy. But more than this, local creativity in dance is collectively harnessed and dance becomes a thriving, dynamic and community-building force that no other art form could match. In so many ways, one can say that Philippine dance has gone back to its roots.



**Mr Pramote
CHOKESIRIKULCHAI**

President of the Thai
Entertainment Industry
Association (TENA)

Asian Animation Industry in the New Creative Age



It could be a regional co-production that helps and encourages exchange of cultural and historical influences between Asian countries. At the same time, it could expand business opportunities and explore the possibility of joint cultural co-operation among members of the countries...By proposing that, I would love to see a centre of information for Asian animation production companies.

I would like to start with the Asian countries. We have been facing a lot of problems, especially our market distribution channels. As we all know, with the rapid changes in the world market, a lot of Asian companies have had to face a lot of so-called 'ins' and 'outs', struggling with problems in the export sector. No doubt about it, entertainment is one of the biggest export sectors where our government is trying to support local companies to go abroad. There are a lot of phrases seen as threats to Asians, such as 'Hollywood', in market competition as well as culturally. You have also heard of 'brainwashing', 'trend-setting', why we have to eat hamburgers and why we have to have rock dance and forget traditional cultures.

The entertainment industry to me is content industry. It is a growing business in the world, due to a lot of changes in the past ten years that you have seen in both technology and media and also communications. You have seen a lot of the words analogue to digital; that you start seeing films turned into comics, fiction, computer games, mobile game, and going back from characters, cartoons, to animations. You see a lot of music TV, character TV and interactive TV; all sorts of other new technologies and new content platforms, which actually make this so-called animation business very energetic and interactive. Quietly, or maybe openly, we laugh, cry; we interact easily with all the animation. I would like to see a lot of so-called small companies in Asian countries follow the success of 'the anime business' in Japan.

THE CONTENT INDUSTRY OF ANIMATION

McDull here may be on the way to follow Hello Kitty, in all the various kinds of business or distribution channels that technology could provide. No doubt about it, we are in animation-based entertainment. As I mentioned earlier, we start seeing a lot of animation special effects on TV series, cable, satellite, PC, mobile phones and broadband content. And something else tomorrow - who knows? There are a lot of problems in the entertainment business, especially in the animation business. It is very expensive. It is a very labour-intensive creativity, in a way. So, most of the companies are small and medium-sized companies. Hopefully some of them will come back with success, like we heard from McDull and Sanrio. Not many companies can afford to do proper training for their skilled animators, so that is why it is a big market, growing fast, but we are faced with a lot of technicians, a lot of good script writers and all that, like

Korean TV dramas are very popular. Many Japanese tourists are going to Korea. Many Japanese women go to Korea to find boyfriends because Korean men are very gentle, unlike those Japanese men that like to beat their women, who are chauvinistic. The government's participation getting smaller is good for the industry, but one thing is important, that is intellectual property. I think laws in that regard have to be more aggressive, and they should be enforced strictly, like the case in the western world, so that creative industries' originality can be respected.

NESTOR JARDIN: I agree. I was seated yesterday evening next to the Deputy Cultural Minister of Korea, and a Hong Kong lady, Shirley Lee, was telling me about this soap opera that you are talking about. There is a Korean actor, his name is Bae something. I am not familiar with him, but it seems that all women here in Hong Kong are in love with him. She said that that is the best thing as far as cultural promotion and cultural change is concerned. So the support of the Korean Government to the film and broadcast industry we see is bearing fruit. That is the cheapest way to promote Korean culture, to promote the new image of the Korean male, who everybody probably in Asia wants to marry. That is one clear indication that all governments, whether it is Hong Kong, Philippine or Malaysian Government, should indeed support arts and culture, whether for the purposes of development or for creative industry.

MAKOTO SATO: We did not calculate that Hello Kitty would be

the same thing that happened in the entertainment business.

I do believe that most of the countries in Asia, especially the governments, have been trying to support local companies to actually be able to survive locally and make it a bigger and bigger market in the international world. But for the export sector, as I mentioned, even with local companies supported by the governments to go abroad, it is a dream that is so far away. So, when we talk about the new creative age, I would like to propose today a new creative way of thoughts in animation production, in a way that we can see regional co-production between the governments and the private sectors that could help create both entertainment business and cultural industry.

REGIONAL CO-PRODUCTION IN ASIA

I believe there are a lot of people in the industry who would love to see the government support locally, and try the projects of the Asian Animation Association (AAA). It could be a regional co-production that could help and encourage exchange of cultural and historical influences between Asian countries. At the same time, it could expand business opportunities and explore the possibility of joint cultural co-operation among members of the countries. Who knows? Three months from now you might be seeing Mcdull shake hands with Hello Kitty and do a five-minute cartoons of cultural exchange promotion in the region.

By proposing that, I would love to see a centre of information for Asian animation production companies. Firstly, we could help find characteristics of the animation industry in Asia, which could provide and exchange lists of the companies to facilitate such as co-production. Then the other governments could actually help support a training and production centre, which means a cultural exchange centre as well. More importantly, it could help promote,



market and distribute in the region. Mcdull does not have to work so hard to try to go to all the countries in Asia, and can hopefully step back and go for the whole world market. We might be able to get real support, real lessons or know-how from Sanrio to help the regions.

Before that, another important thing is the regulations and copyright laws. We have been hearing a lot about this in Asia. Economies of scale now would actually help better pricing, products and qualities, but the governments must come and help both ways, in production, and at the same time protect the copyrights.

Next, I have a video that has been kindly helped by the top companies in animation in Thailand. We are proud to present Thailand's Mcdull, Pang Pond.

This has been done in only two weeks, for this forum. My initial concept was to have actually Hello Kitty, Doraemon, Mcdull, Mashimaro or Desaiyu the monkey grouped together and do this concept, but we have problems in the time limit and the copyrights that I might have to get approval. So I just want to show this video. I am not trying to promote Pang Pond. I am trying to promote the concept that with a co-production you might be able to see a lot of characters, a lot of cultures behind it.

As I mentioned, I hope that this so-called proposal or the concept of the AAA project could actually come true. I just hope all of us would actually pass my message today to your local governments and our distinguished guests that have relations or networks with the government or the private sector. So, we hopefully can see again Hello Kitty, Mcdull, Mashimaro or Desaiyu the monkey be presenters of Asian cultural exchange programmes. We could have the creativity industry go across the board. At the same time, we would have the cultural content business widened, understood, with love and peace. 🌍



loved more than 30 years. But we have been thinking that we should be assessed severely. I want to say Hello Kitty's balance sheet in the Japanese Government is zero. So I hope we would like to have some kind of budget. Maybe we could introduce financial measures into such aspects.

PRAMOTE CHOKESIRIKULCHAI:

I have two theories, culture and the so-called creative industry, and the roles of the government. It is pull and push. The government has to pull out the culture. The cultural industry is there everywhere in the world, in every village or groups of people, the culture is there; pull it out. To be seen, to be realised, by locals or by the whole world; pull it out, and push the creativity. So it is a pull for the culture, pull for it to be there, to be seen, but do not push it to people.

For creativity, you can push it to the world market and do the commercial, and maybe the culture that pulls along the way; with the push you could win both, if you are lucky.

Mr CHANG Yi

Director of Liu Li Gong Fang Crystal Co. Ltd.



Why is it called Liu Li Gong Fang?

Our future will not just be producing liuli, or adopting this lost wax approach, or casting and creating crystal glass. We hope that this will be a host or a carrier. We hope that we will be able to show our concern and our care for people around us.

When I was 16, there were two characters which I hated most: 'culture'. When I was in my secondary school, one of the textbooks in the curriculum is *Culture in the Renaissance Period*, and one guy wrote a lot of things which were very difficult to understand and memorise. That guy was a Confucian, and he wrote a book called *The Confucius Sayings* and we had no idea what this was all about. 30 years later, somehow I got related and hooked up with this word 'culture'.

So, to me, Liuligongfang is a very strange business. Nobody ever knew why this crystal glass should be called 'liuli'. To me, the word 'liuli' is very strange, because in 1987, when we decided on this logo, it was already a very complicated and very engaging concept, because when you look at the logo 'Liuligongfang', people immediately came up with the idea of crystal glass, and they came up with an Italian name or a French name. Many people advised us, 'Why do you not choose a name which is very similar to Bacarat or La Laique? Why do you have to choose this name which nobody can pronounce, namely Liuligongfang?' And also in the Chinese characters you can also see the very complicated procedures involved. For example, for the characters 'liuli', that is in fact the modern crystal, and also 'gong fang', the two words in traditional Chinese calligraphy meaning workshop.

'LIULIGONGFANG':
THE PRESENT LINKAGE TO THE PAST

But then this concept is very closely linked with my present and my future, and also my past, because as one ages, one will understand that if somebody does not know his past, what the present and the future fare for him does not really matter, because it does not really matter which direction you are going to take in the future. That is why, to us, we were very determined, we had to have very big resolve. The reason why we called it Liuligongfang was a very simple concept, because before eastern Han and even through the western Zhou Dynasty, that was about 4,000 years ago, China had already knew the words 'liuli'. So this was very good because of its link to the past.

Also, another meaning to this is that when you read Buddhist writings mention this word; it means that this is the last, final, best moment of a person. For example, if you call it 'liuli world', it means you have no demands, no requirements and no desires. Also, in the 'Four Books', it also says that it is hoped that in my coming life, I would be able to be free from all the other

demands and I would be as clear as crystal, or like a crystal glass. So it shows that the state of liuli means something without vitrification.

I turned from an actor, a film director, to an artistic worker, and the four people formed this very small workshop. We thought within six months' time we would be able to develop the technique that we needed, and this technique that we had chosen, back then, is something from the Chinese tradition. Then we tried Venetian glass which was different from the French La Laique press moulding, and from this concept we hoped that we would be able to find out one possible approach, that is a lost wax casting. From French literature, we knew that from the 16th century it was a very traditional method of glassmaking. The four of us, who knew nothing about the work, thought that if we could spend some 300,000 Taiwanese yuan then we would be able to work on something in six months' time. We never thought that we would be doing it ourselves. We believed that the glassmaking industry in Taiwan should be something very novel in Taiwan and this would be an emerging industry, and if you went to Hsinchu you would be able to find at least 400 glassmaking factories, so we would be able to use this lost wax casting and that should not have an impact on the glassmaking industry in Taiwan.

But then, when we tried to select the glassmaking factories, we found out something really bad: the 400 enterprises were only concentrating on one product, and that was called OEM. If there is an American buyer, the design sketch would be given to this workshop or studio and then he would be asking for the quotation, and this quotation would be given to another factory and he would say, 'This is from another factory so please give me another quotation', and after about 50 or so attempts this glass would be given a special name. This would be like a cut-throat competition, because the whole production would not be able to recover the cost. But then, if it does not accept this order, the business will have to close down because it cannot survive.



That is why we decided to do it ourselves, because we could not believe that within such an industry, within such a sector, we would be able to adopt this lost wax approach, and we thought that it would take us six months; eventually, it took us three and a half years. We thought that we could just spend \$300,000, but actually we spent \$3 million, and one of our partners actually sold the houses of his brother, his father and the houses of every family member. During those three and a half years we did not have any revenue, we did not have any income. By 1990, something interesting happened. In Japan, we exhibited some of the works, and of course works like this were also displayed. Our Japanese friend had told us that, in fact, lost wax casting was called *pate-de-verre* worldwide. Then, someone referred us to the tombs in Hebei Province, in Mancheng county, where two 11.5 centimetre cups from the tombs were discovered. These are very possibly the earliest lost wax items or articles from ancient China. So originally we thought that it was called a *pate-de-verre* in French. We suddenly had this mission feeling. We felt that the two words 'liuli' is not just about a material, it is also a sentiment, a feeling, and also our future



thinking. Eighteen years down the road, Liuligongfang today in Taipei still maintains our original approach, and in Shanghai we have a studio and all the staff, we have over 900 people working in our business, and every year we have about \$30 million revenue. Then for us this is a big enterprise, but then overnight the two characters ‘liuli’ no longer were what people used to think they were, from the Beijing Palace Museum, that the rooftop is called liuli tiles. In fact, in the majority of the Chinese world they can understand this business and relatively speaking, overnight, everywhere you see, everywhere you go, you can see different forms of crystal glass and they all call themselves liuli.

'LIULI': THE FUTURE THINKING

To us, this is really very meaningful, because if in the future we move on, people will be asking us, ‘What do you want to do, what do you want to create?’ Being a film director for 11 years, now I have spent 18 years in Liuligongfang, the whole learning process has taught me one thing, and we gradually come to grasp this: history and culture. When I was young, history and culture was something very far away from me. It was something that I only learnt about in passing examinations. But then, any creation, its relationship with my surroundings and also the future, are so gradually called culture.

And what is culture? Frankly speaking, up to this day I am not able to give you a very clear and precise definition, but then I hope Liuligongfang has found this culture or so-called cultural thing, we hope it would be beneficial to people. This would be very difficult to translate. But then for us, an enterprise, we are trying to define ourselves to be something conducive to mankind. This would be very difficult, because we hope that there would be something constructive to people and to the hearts of people.

Of course, being an enterprise, we have to make a profit, but then we also have to have other meanings. But to us, we think that if we can move on, our future will not just be producing liuli, or adopting this lost wax approach, or casting and creating crystal glass. We hope that this will be a host or a carrier. We hope that we will be able to show our concern and our care for people around us.

THE MISSION THINKING OF LIULIGONGFANG

Since then, we started to create some works, and what we thought was not about the design and how we could make it more attractive. In fact, we hope that every item could carry a meaning. When we try to provide some descriptions to our productions, we hope that they would be able to send out messages.

In fact, we have exceeded what we have expected to do 18 years ago, because the French approach had a history of 180 years; we are not trying to compete with them. What we are trying to do is that, through the materials, we would like to understand more about Chinese, because there is no way I can

understand all the cultures in the world. Being a Chinese, a national Chinese, if I do not understand my own past, there is no way I can talk about my future.

Gradually, we started to have some Buddha products, and some people asked us what they mean. In fact, incidentally, this material, because of its brittleness and fragility, is like Life. So in the oriental world, in particular in the Han Buddhist world, everything, all the dreams, could burst into bubbles and they are just illusions. It is like Life. So it is like liuli, it is like dreams. So everything, all of a sudden, is like our Buddha creations. For example, we had some large objects, but then in the process it dawned on us that even for the most prosperous production, like flower or the blossom, will wither during its full blossom. Everything would not be eternal; everything would be momentous.

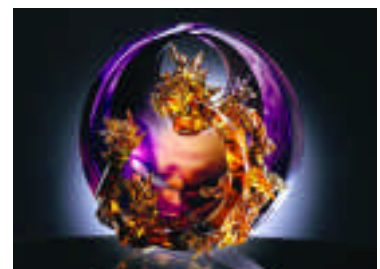
We also have other productions and works, and they would form part of the Chinese concepts. For example, we emphasise the importance of our orchids, and to Chinese people it is not just a plant in nature, but a mental state that everybody aspires to, and it is like a mindset, because everybody thinks that an orchid is a flower which is very fragrant, natural and very relaxed. That is what Liuligongfang gradually concerned about.

We find it really regrettable, that throughout the process of lost wax casting, because of the cost involved, the price inevitably would be rather high, but then we cannot just lock ourselves in a very small world. We have to reach out to more people. So we were thinking about, with the learning process over the past 18 years, to get closer to the ordinary public? This may not be materialised. But we have this restaurant and we call it a transparent or translucent thinking. In Shanghai, people like something modern, westernised, and therefore we call it 'TMSK'. Many people ask what 'TMSK' means. I am not going to tell you; that is actually the transliteration of the Chinese characters.

MOVING CLOSER TO THE PUBLIC, THE CHINESE HISTORY AND CULTURE

In this restaurant we created, we produced all the glasses, wine glasses and also the drinking glasses, and all the culinary and tableware. The interior decoration; was done by us. We hope that from every corner, from floor to ceiling, every tile, every pile, every pillar, everything would be done by us. It is like a revolution, a rebellion, because we are living in today's China, and I believe in my past, and also in relation to the 5,000 years of history. Why is there no interaction whatsoever?

We hope that we would be able to reinterpret everything afresh, because there is a gap of 2,100 years of new techniques. We are now trying to target the yuppies or the young professionals. We have no intention of competing with Cartier or Georg Jensen. We hope that every accessory that we produce would be a concept, to carry a meaning, so as to enlighten us in some way.



I remember when I was small, when I was having dinner, my parents would say, 'You must not leave any rice behind in the bowls because if you have some leftover then you would be hit by lightning', and a girl will also marry a husband with pimples. So it means that you have to attach importance to your life and every detail in your life. We always enclose a description to our products, but then we try to communicate, to expose ourselves; and artistically you should be more subtle, you should not speak the obvious or state the obvious, but in today's China, I have to say that works description is also one of the missions of Liuligongfang. 🌈

