

## **Report of the Special Committee on Young Barristers 2010**

In 2010, the number of young barristers (“YBs”) (i.e. members of 5 years’ call or below) continues to increase, totalling a number of 264 YBs as at 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010. With its ever-growing size, the Special Committee on Young Barristers (“YBC”) has another hectic yet fulfilling year.

The primary objective of the YBC is to act as a platform for YBs - to provide assistance and support to them in practice-related issues or other matters of common interests as well as maintaining a strong sense of fraternity among YBs. Besides, the YBC strives to promote a better understanding of the Bar by reaching out to other sectors of the community, in particular university and secondary school students. Furthermore, the YBC is continuously exploring opportunities to exchange ideas with our counterparts in other jurisdictions. All these aims could not be achieved without the dedication and devotion of all those sitting in the committee (whom I am most indebted to).

The following is a summary of events held earlier this year.

### **Internal Activities**

#### ***1. The YBC Talks***

The YBC talks aim to provide opportunities for sharing among YBs and pupils in an informal manner. This year, we organized two criminal practice-related talks by inviting judges and young barristers to be our speakers. They include “Practical Tips and Advocacy in Criminal Trial” by His Honour Judge Douglas Yau held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010, and “Practical Tips on Legal Visit, Plea and Mitigation, Transfer Proceedings and Arraignment” by Derek Chan and Joseph Lee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The said two talks were informative and well received by YBs. Furthermore, on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2010, The Honourable Mr. Justice Reyes gave a talk entitled “The Future of the Young Bar” to share his views with young barristers and pupils on how the Bar might evolve to ensure its future, especially the future of young barristers, and how young barristers can better equip themselves to meet the challenges that they face. The topic of the talk attracted a number of YBs and provided food for thought.

#### ***2. YBC Discussion Forum***

As a result of the inspiring talk given by the Honourable Mr. Justice Reyes, the YBC further organized the YBC Discussion Forum on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010 in order to let YBs discuss about the issues raised or suggestions by the Honourable Mr. Justice Reyes. More than 40 YBs attended the talk and it provided a platform for the YBC to better understand the views of YBs. In the same occasion, YBs’ views on the recently proposed pupillage reforms were also sought and eventually, the YBC submitted a paper to the Bar Council on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010 summarizing the views of YBs on the proposed pupillage reforms gathered in the said discussion forum.

### ***3. The BUZZ***

The YBC's publication, BUZZ, serves as an invaluable channel of communication and it continues to welcome articles and letters from YBs and pupils alike. The July Issue (Issue 15) was well received amongst members of the Judiciary and the Bar. We continued to include featured articles relating to YBs, including a report on the YBC Official Trip to Shanghai 2009, an interview with Graham Harris, and letter to senior & letter from senior. In particular, when reporting about our trip to various Chinese authorities and organization during the YBC Official Trip to Shanghai, our contributors tried to include more articles in Chinese, partly because Chinese has become all the more important in our daily practice and partly because we aimed to distribute this Issue of Buzz to a number of Chinese readers during the Hong Kong Legal Services Forum in Shanghai organized by the Department of Justice on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 to promote legal services in Hong Kong.

### ***4. Sports, Recreation and Social Activities***

The YBC continues to organize and lead the Bar's team, Dragon Advocates, in the dragon boat competition held on the Tuen Ng Festival at Stanley beach. Five practice sessions were held in the preceding two months and a junk boat was chartered on the day of the competition. To our reward, the Bar's team attained satisfactory results and was ahead of other fellow legal professionals in the final race. The dragon boat competition and the practice sessions were great occasions, not only for some exercise, but also for fostering a closer and friendlier relationship amongst YBs and pupils of different sets of chambers. Besides, we managed to recruit some university students to join our team this year and this was a good opportunity for us to promote a better understanding of the Bar.

Apart from YBC Drinks which were usually held after the YBC talks, the YBC also hosted the annual pre- Christmas Drinks Party on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 at the China Club. The event was well attended by members of the Bar and the Judiciary and, as always, it was a great occasion enjoyed by all.

The YBC also sent its committee members to participate in the Caring Cooking Competition organized by the Law Society of Hong Kong on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2010 on behalf of the Bar. The events was held in the Chinese Cuisine Training Institute and aimed at fostering relationship and partnership between the legal profession and other NGOs. Our members had a good chance of showing off their culinary skills.

### **External Activities**

#### ***1. Events for Law Students***

Like in the previous year, the YBC organized the Bar's booth in the Law Fair 2010 held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010. A number of law firms, the Department of Justice and the three local universities were also present to provide information to local and overseas law students. The presence of the Bar at the Law Fair is important as it increased the transparency of the profession and enabled queries on its entrance requirements and procedures to be properly addressed. The YBC has been liaising with the organizing committee of the Law Fair 2011, which is due to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2011.

At the university level, the YBC organized 3 visits to the law schools this year. On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the YBC gave a talk to the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Chinese University of Hong Kong respectively. On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the YBC also provided a career talk for the PCLL students at the University of Hong Kong. Members of the YBC were there to address and answer queries from students on topics ranging from applications for pupillage, admissions to the Bar, life as a pupil barrister, available scholarships and funds for pupils or new barristers etc. The talk was well attended and proved to be of assistance to those who wish to pursue a career at the Bar.

Moreover, the YBC maintained frequent contacts with student representatives of the three universities by inviting them to join our activities such as the Hong Kong Bar Association Debating Competition (“HKBA Debating Competition”) and the dragon boat competition as well as sending our committee members to attend their official functions such as the inauguration ceremony of various student bodies.

## ***2. Event for Secondary School Students***

The YBC has been organizing the HKBA Debating Competition for the seventh consecutive year with the aim of raising the awareness of socio-legal issues and the rule of law among secondary school students. It has proven to be a huge success and has attracted remarkable publicity and popularity. The debating competition was oversubscribed and, upon drawing of lots, a total of 32 teams participated in the preliminary rounds held in early November. The quarter-finals, the semi-finals and Grand finals will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 respectively. The event provides a platform for members of the Bar to discuss and share their thoughts on socio-legal issues with students, many of which had done extensive research on the law in presenting their arguments. I would take this opportunity to express my gratitude to members who spared their time to adjudicate the debates, the Debates sub-committee and the Faculty of Law of The University of Hong Kong for providing venues and their law students for their assistance.

## **Reaching Out**

### ***1. Hong Kong Legal Services Forum organised by the Department of Justice***

The Hong Kong Legal Services Forum was held in Shanghai on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The theme of the Forum is “Hong Kong Legal Services – Global Vision”. The Forum was co-hosted with the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, the International Chamber of Commerce International Court of Arbitration (Asia Office) and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. It was with great pleasure that 6 members of the YBC together with some other YBs had the opportunity to attend the Forum which was informative and enlightening, during which members of the YBC was also responsible for manning the information counter of the Bar and served as helpers during the Q&A sessions in the Forum.

## ***2. 2010 International Weekend***

Two YBs, Alfred Cheng and Queenie Lau, attended the 2010 International Weekend, organised by the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of England & Wales and the Young Barristers Committee of The Bar Council of England & Wales, held in London between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The aim of the activity was to provide a forum for international bonding and connections between young lawyers from different jurisdictions. The 4-day programme consisted of numerous social functions provided ample opportunities for participants to meet our counterparts from other jurisdictions. Our representatives successfully used this platform as a means to establish our presence and connections across a number of jurisdictions.

## ***3. Hangzhou and Shanghai***

Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010, 3 members of the YBC went on a trip to Hangzhou and Shanghai together with senior members of the Special Committee on Mainland Affairs. During the visit, our members were able to meet with representatives from the Zhejiang Lawyers Association, Hangzhou Lawyers Association and PDI (上海市浦东新区外商投资企业协会).

## **A Note of Appreciation**

Without the commitment and hardwork of fellow members of the YBC and other YBs, all the above activities would not be as successful as they were. I would also like to thank our Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Honorary Secretary, Deputy Honorary Secretary and members of the Bar Council for their immense and unfailing support. Last but not least, I would like to thank Rani Romani and the rest of the Bar Secretariat for their great support and assistance.

## **Members of YBC 2010**

Jolie Chao (Chairman)  
Gloria Tse (Vice Chairman)  
Kevin Li (Vice Chairman)  
Ann Lui (Secretary)  
Queenie Lau (Treasurer)  
Annie Leung  
Alfred Cheng  
Tony Ko  
Felix Li  
William Liu (employed member of DOJ)  
Isaac Chan  
Vincent Lung  
May Chung  
Johnny Fok  
Esther Chan (employed member of DOJ)  
Arthur Lam  
Sabrina Ho

Selina Kung  
Kay Seto

Jolie Chao  
Chairman  
Special Committee on Young Barristers

6 December 2010