

Preface
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The Department of English is pleased to be given the opportunity in adjudicating the Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award 2023. This year, we have received more than 1,700 entries from primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. The themes of this year's Award are: 'Diligence', 'Cherish what we have' and 'Care for Others'.

What is Diligence? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it refers to the 'constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken; persistent application and endeavour; industry, assiduity'. In Cheung Ming Ting's meticulous poem entitled 'The Spider's Will', the poet offers a thick description of the creation of a spider web. The description is marked by meticulous details and vivid imageries. The spider making the web is at war with the wind. 'The spider, powerless, fragments of the broken work scattered / The destroyer, now gone, leaving its brutal demolition'. Despite nature's destructive power, the spider returns with a stronger will. The poem teaches us the importance of accepting failures in life. The spider continues to spin the web without being discouraged by nature. 'Not fearing the deadly attacks of the wind's fatality, / Nor being washed away to nowhere by the deadly rain. / Persistence, effort, determination and assiduity, / The unbreakable web of strings it built and attained'. The poem can be seen as a beautiful commentary on Eric Carle's children's book, *The Very Busy Spider*.

Working on 'Cherish what we have', Sze Yeuk Sze wrote the poem entitled 'In a Special Assembly'. It begins with the narrator complaining about homework and not being allowed to play video games. It then moves on to a morning assembly where s/he hears the extreme condition of children suffering from poverty. The assembly has inspired the narrator of the poem: 'How embarrassed I am when listening to their sharing. / A stab of regret has forcefully seized my heart'. In 'A Lesson of Cherishing', Chung Chi Hang tells a story between two friends, one rich and the other poor. The rich man does not cherish what he possesses and ends up in starvation. At the end it is the poor man, now turned into a rich man, who offers his helping hand to his friend. The poem tells the readers that we should not only cherish our material possessions, but also our friendships with others – which often take years to come to fruition.

In Nicole Pun's 'Snapshots of Sentiments', the poet captures the expression of love and care in moments of silence. The examples she provides are diverse and powerful. A lady holding her child in her arms; a grandfather gently waking up his grandchildren; new lovers embracing each other under the moon; a soldier carrying his wounded comrades. Care is an abstract word. The poem makes it tangible using all the emotions and bodily movements associated with that very affect which invests one's energy in others. It is also a reminder for all of us: care can be expressed in many different forms. Sometimes care equates to a gentle touch and an encouraging remark, but sometimes it is expressed in angry words and complaints.

I am grateful for being part of this meaningful event where I have the chance to witness many dazzling gems. I look forward to more inspiring poems to come.

Welcome Speech
Mr WONG
Chung Po

Associate Director

The Hong Kong Academy
for Gifted Education

Dear distinguished guests, esteemed judges, and talented student poets:

I am honoured to be standing here today as the Associate Director of the HKAGE, to celebrate the exceptional achievements of the budding poets who have participated in this year's contest.

Students, your outstanding performance has impressed us all and has left an indelible mark on the poetry landscape of Hong Kong. Your creativity, your passion, and your dedication to the art of poetry have been truly inspiring. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the teachers and judges who have supported and encouraged our budding poets throughout this journey. You have played an essential role in nurturing their talents and helping them reach this point.

As we gather here today, I cannot help but reflect on the growing impact of technology, particularly AI, in the field of poetry. The development of AI technology has opened up new possibilities for poets to explore and experiment with language, form, and style. AI-generated poetry has demonstrated an ability to create verse that is both expressive and thought-provoking. AI has the potential to generate poems and even imitate human writing styles.

But, it is important to note that the most profound and moving poems come from the depths of the human heart and soul. Poetry is a form of art that requires empathy, introspection, and a deep understanding of the human experience. In my opinion, AI-generated poetry cannot replace the human experience of writing and reading poetry. The human mind and heart remain the ultimate source of inspiration for all poetry.

Some people even argue that AI-generated poetry lacks the emotional depth and authenticity that comes from the human experience in poetry. Teachers, let us continue to nurture the creativity and imagination of our young poets while also recognising the importance of the human element in the art of poetry.

I want to congratulate once again all the talented student poets who have participated in this contest. Your contribution to the art of poetry is invaluable, and I hope you will continue to explore the limitless possibilities that this field has to offer. Thank you for your outstanding performance, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavour.