

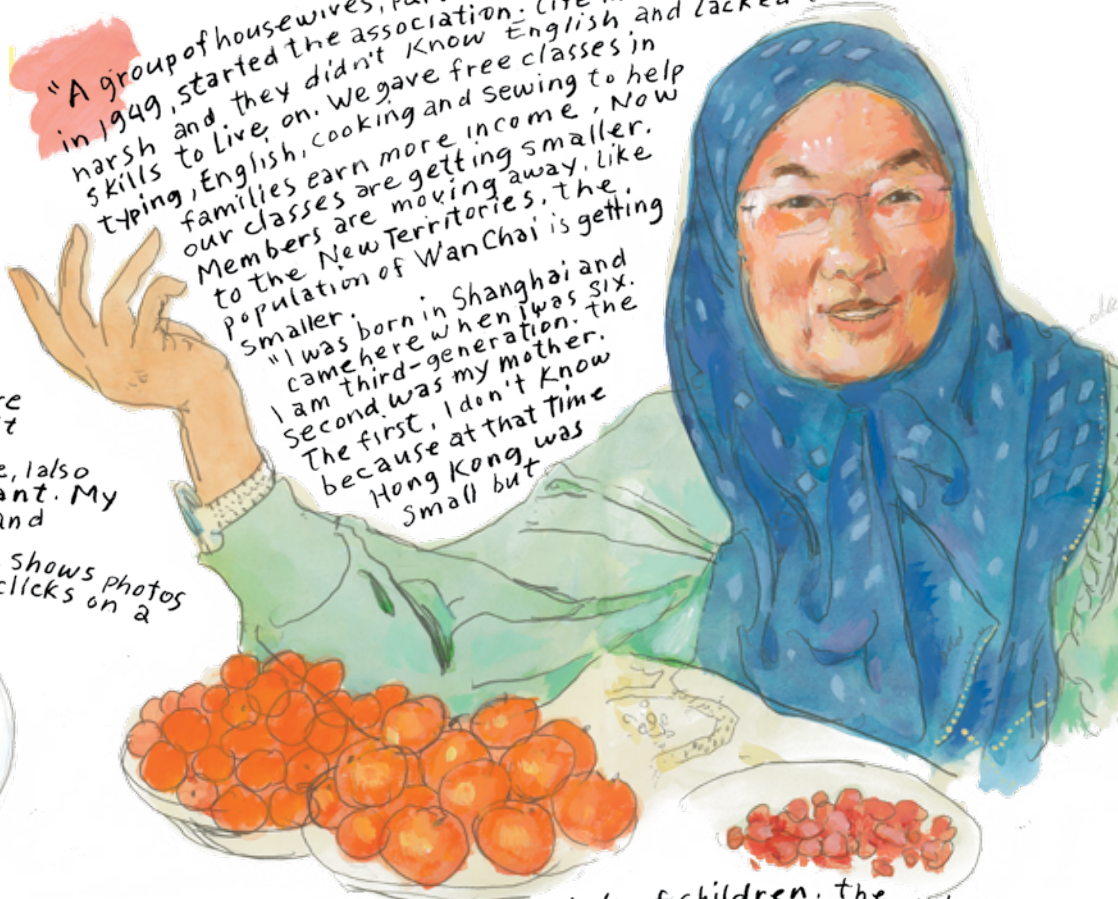
"A group of housewives, part of the rush out of mainland China in 1949, started the association. Life in Hong Kong was very harsh and they didn't know English and lacked the skills to live on. We gave free classes in typing, English, cooking and sewing to help families earn more income. Now our classes are getting smaller. Members are moving away, like to the New Territories, the population of WanChai is getting smaller."

"We are starting a workshop for youth about the power of art. Painting, drawing, color and composition. To let the students see that there are no rules or boundaries. Just create and play."

"Besides working here, I also work in a Syrian restaurant. My job is making appetizers and desserts."

On her computer she shows photos of her cooking class, then clicks on a plate with a drawing painted in chocolate of a bamboo stem and leaves.

In the restaurant, the dessert would be added onto the plate. Amazing.



"I was born in Shanghai and came here when I was six. I am third-generation. The second was my mother. The first, I don't know because at that time Hong Kong was small but"

everyone had lots of children. The second was my mother. We had five children. Next generation are having less and less. But, we still give seminars in medication, both Chinese and Western, and in Chinese laws. We visit homes for the elderly and orphanages.

"We cook traditional Muslim food. It is deepfried like in North-west China. Even as a child I always liked this kind of food. We make this food for celebrations like Muslim New Year, the sacrifice, the western New Year and Chinese New Year. On March we celebrate with the whole world International Women's Day."

"We also look after Muslims when they die. The body has to be washed. Male wash the male; female wash the female. We provide this work and also provide the ghaphoon, the white cloth to wrap the bodies. We do this work for more than 30 years, maybe 40. That is our job. Our duty."



Fatima Ong - Islamic Youth Assoc.

The outbreak of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2002 led to improvements in public health, such as extra chopsticks in restaurants so food can be shared safely in the traditional ways.





HaKima Ma, vice chairwoman of the Hong Kong Muslim women's Association, enjoys being outdoors mingling with Hong Kongers in Wan Chai district.



"Hong Kong was always a trade hub. Muslims from Indonesia came here to trade and stayed a few days. When they arrived they would pray. That was in the oldest mosque, the Shelly Street Mosque that was given by Queen Victoria in the 19th century. It was also a kind of guest house. They would stay until they went back home on their ships."

Those that came from the Subcontinent arrived with the British Army. Here and India were under British rule. They arrived here as soldiers from outside our local areas. They were Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims starting a new life in Hong Kong. They built this mosque in 1896 while they served in British regiments.

"They participated in World War I and World War II defending the British colony. When the Japanese invaded Hong Kong, many of us were killed. They also served in the police force and their offspring are now some of the oldest citizens in Hong Kong."

"During the revolution some Muslims came to Hong Kong because of persecution or for business reasons. Since the handover of Hong Kong to China there are no big changes. The Chinese said they will not touch the system for the next 50 years. So we are enjoying freedom. One country - two systems."

"I have served as Imam of this mosque and Chief Imam in Hong Kong for the past 11 years. I came here from Multan, Pakistan, one of the oldest historical cities on the Asian subcontinent."

"Hong Kong is a very good city. I like it because it has diversity of culture, ethnic groups and religion. Sometimes we go to the church, sometimes to a synagogue or a temple and they come to our mosque. If I was somewhere else I might not have a chance to have this opportunity. Not like here in Hong Kong."



Muhammad Arshad, Chief Imam, Hong Kong, Kowloon Mosque and Islamic Centre