

"Please let us skate..."

"Hey you guys! Skating is prohibited in this park. Would you please be so kind and leave. Thanks for cooperating and have a great day" exclaimed a security guard who worked for the park.

Apparently the security guard's idea of a great day in the park means monk-like silence. With an area restricted on roller-blading and skate-boarding, we are forced to skate elsewhere. "As a security guard for the past year, I want to keep the park as safe as possible," says the security guard. "Skaters get in the way. Skaters are crashing into other people who are just here to relax. It is very dangerous and it is prohibited in this park."

Well, for one thing, roller-blading hasn't been accepted as a sport here in Hong Kong and will continue to be that way unless something is done about the places where skaters are allowed to skate. There are many places where cycling is allowed but where skating is not allowed. Why is this? Maybe it is because people here don't feel that we skaters deserve the right any cyclists, or anything on wheels, have. All we ask for is a decent place to skate where we wouldn't have our rights denied.

I have been skating for two and a half years now. Until recently, I have started to skate with a couple of my friends whenever we have the time to. There has never been a time where we haven't been stopped and kicked out. This has been very irritating for us and we still don't understand why we're not welcomed at any parks, other than the answer we always get, "You might hurt someone". Personally, I think the only people that are going to get hurt are the ones with the skates, us.

Another big problem we Roller-bladers face here in Hong Kong is the fact that we are not only rejected by society but also by other skaters, skate-boarders. There are many places to skate here in Hong Kong and of those, 90 percent are dominated by local skate-boarding cliques. They don't like the idea of mixing with those have an extra 4 wheels stuck to their feet and usually get rid of us their way. Skate-boarders and Roller-bladers simply cannot get along. Personally, I enjoy the fine art of Roller-blading and

mixing in with some of the local skate-boarders in my school. I have found Roller-bladers and skate-boarders to be the most tolerant type of people. I have never been threatened or beaten up by a skate-boarder. The only people that ever rag on skaters are those weird freaks that do not even try to get to know you.

People view us as a "threat" to their health and, by this, restrict us from skating in that area. I think it just takes a mind readjustment- I know in Hong Kong, it's going to be impossible.

