

# 20-day chronicle of cruelty

Staff reporters

**C**hild Abuse. Two words that should haunt every parent in Hong Kong. Over the past few weeks, four sickening cases have been highlighted in the media.

Last week a judge called on legislators to close a legal loophole which he labelled a "child molesters' charter".

On February 24, the director of a family welfare society said unless a victim was "bleeding or half-dead" it was not recognised as child abuse.

On Tuesday an inquest heard how a mother had abused her two-year-old daugh-

ter just days before she died from brain damage.

And all this in just 20 days.

Here are four cases - five young lives shattered by abuse.

**February 22:** Wong Chi-cho, 30, a drug addict who was hired to look after a two-year-old boy, admits he tortured him, stabbing him more than 80 times with an eight-centimetre pin.

His claim that the toddler cried and shrank back when stabbed but never screamed or tried to run away was rejected by Judge Muttrie as "totally unbelievable".

Yesterday Wong was sentenced to six years and five months in prison.

**March 3:** Lee Sau-ping, 28, was jailed for ten years when found guilty of drowning her daughter Man-yi, 5, after taking her from a children's home.

The mother of two had been convicted of cruelty after beating Man-yi in 1991.

Early last year, she packed the girl into a nylon laundry bag and dumped her in the sea. Man-yi's body was washed ashore at Aberdeen Boat Club a few days later.

Justice Seagroatt branded Lee a "danger to children" when he said: "She was in care to protect her and you took her out of that care in order to kill her, having planned it for a period of time."

**March 7:** In the District Court, Judge Ian Britton blasted existing laws and called on legislators to close a legal loophole that he labelled a "child molesters' charter". He said a law preventing sex attackers from being convicted solely on a child's unsworn evidence should be scrapped.

Judges are obliged to let defendants walk free unless there is evidence to corroborate a juvenile victim's testimony.

Britton delivered his broadside after saying he believed the account of a girl of nine, who said she was abused three times by Kung On, 77.

Because there was no cor-

roboration, he was forced to acquit Kung on two of the three charges of indecent assault.

He said: "The words stick in my throat. I am sure he is guilty of all three charges, but because of the state of the law I have to acquit him of two."

**March 10:** A schoolgirl tells a court how her father crept into her bed every night to sexually abuse her.

Now 16, she relived her three-year nightmare when she told the court how her factory worker father silenced her with threats.

The teenager said: "Father said if I told anyone I would die in my sleep."