

\$24,300 donor is rebuffed

BY ARIES LAU

THE World Wildlife Fund's opposition to the keeping of reptiles as household pets has cost its Hongkong branch a \$24,300 donation.

The organiser of a reptile exhibition in Hongkong, Manning's Alternative Pets Association, successfully raised funds by displaying a soft shell turtle it would set free soon in a Buddhist ceremony.

The money was to be handed over to the Hongkong WWF, but office manager Ralph Leonard had told the fundraisers their money was not wanted.

"The Buddhist ceremony of taking a turtle from the wild and setting it free does not comply with our theme," Mr Leonard said.

The WWF was also worried that the turtle's release would adversely affect the ecology.

The WWF's loss is a gain for the Po Leung Kuk. Association founder Albert Lai decided the funds would go to the Kuk instead.

"It is meaningless to give a donation to an organisation with contrary views to ours over the keeping of reptiles as house pets," he said.

The turtle will be set free at a location with good *Fung Shui*.