

## **Saving the Planet, One Chopstick at a Time**

With constant news reports showing the destruction of tropical rainforests, a rapidly-depleting ozone layer, and signs of global warming, two Tamkang students decided to make a difference. Chen Hong-ming (PhD candidate, TKU Department of Civil Engineering) and Yeh Ya-ting (TKU alumna, Department of Architecture) created a set of reusable chopsticks that not only boasts a modern look, but is more environmentally-friendly and hygienic than most such chopsticks. They called their invention the “Bamboo Knot Chopsticks” .

With their innovative “Bamboo Knot Chopsticks” , they entered the IF Concept Design Award held in Hannover, Germany. The contest is an annual event that draws over 10,000 entrants from around the globe and 56 expert judges from countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Singapore and Korea. Out of all the entries, the judges choose the “Best 100” , and present the designers of these products with the IF Design Award. This year, Hong-ming and Ya-ting received the Design Award for their Bamboo Knot Chopsticks.

The chopsticks are unique because of the in-built chopstick stand or protruding “knot” at the bottom of the chopsticks, near the end which you use to clasp food. Because of this, it is more convenient than traditional reusable chopsticks, some of which require the user to bring along a separate “chopstick stand” . In Taiwan, for hygienic purposes, users of reusable chopsticks often rest their chopsticks on tissues or paper napkins, not wanting to lay them directly onto the table. With the Bamboo Knot Chopsticks, the use of tissues is no longer necessary, making them more environmentally friendly than your average chopsticks.

Hong-ming has in the past received numerous awards in major design competitions. In 2011, he won the “Best Application Prize” in the Lite-On Awards held in Taiwan; in 2010, he received two first prizes in the Light-metal Innovative Application Contest held by the Ministry of Economic Affairs; and in 2009, he claimed first prize in the Form-Z Joint Study Program held in the US.

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