

Chain Smoking Cab Driver Complains About Pollution

BEIJING - Local cab driver Han Yansong complained to his fares Saturday about Beijing's worsening pollution as he chain smoked a pack of Zhongnanhai Tens, sources say.

Sucking down one cigarette after another, Han inveighed against the overreliance on coal power, rapid industrialization and the rise in personal car ownership as he ferried customers to their destinations.

Eyewitnesses say that between diatribes, the 47-year-old driver would operate the steering wheel with his knees while he lit his next cigarette with the still-burning end of his current one.

Han allegedly refused to roll down any window when asked, saying, "You think I'm gonna let you breathe that poison? Forget it!" while exhaling cigarette smoke against the tempered glass.

Though passengers complained that Han's cab smelled "like a Wudaokou nightclub," the driver insisted that the air inside his vehicle was still fresher than "the miasma beyond."

"The pollutants out there – the PM2.5 and all that – that stuff will kill you," he said, taking a deep drag of tar, nicotine and ammonia and holding it in his lungs,



before coughing up phlegm and spitting it into the cup he used as an ashtray.

At one point, Han looked out the window and, seeing the city shrouded in smog, remarked that the government should "ban polluting in public areas." Pausing to flick ash from his cigarette, Han then launched into a tirade about the detrimental effect of second-hand pollution on public health.

Despite his continuous lighting up, customers found Han to be courteous and polite. One passenger reported that Han even stopped the meter while he ran into a liquor store for a new carton of Zhongnanhais.

At press time, Han was at roadside malatang stall, ranting about food safety while downing an extra-large tub of instant noodles.

Beijing to Turn Third Ring Road into McDonald's Drive-Thru

BEIJING - In an effort to improve speeds on Beijing's oft-congested Third Ring Road, city administrators announced last week that it plans to partner with McDonald's to turn the slow-moving highway into a continuous, six-lane drive-thru.

"This is a great opportunity for both the city of Beijing and McDonald's," said company spokesman Jerry Miller. "Using our patented 'drive-thru technology,' we expect speeds on the road to increase by 200 to 300 percent."

Preliminary plans call for every bridge on the main road to be retrofitted with drive-thru windows that will take orders on one bridge and deliver food at the next.

"Not only will drivers experience a faster commute, they can also enjoy a healthy and robust dinner on the go," said Miller.

However, some critics argue that the city's plan could lead to an increase in obesity and traffic-related fatalities. Despite these concerns, the city is set to continue with the plan.

"We've tried everything – license plate restrictions, restrictions on large vehicles, license plate quotas – and nothing's worked," said one municipal official. "The world's longest drive-thru is as good an idea as any."

In related news, city administrators are considering plans to convert Beijing's Second Ring Road into a lazy river.