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Stalls still selling animals for release

THE belief that freeing captive animals on Vesak Day brings good karma is still held in some quarters, despite the pleas of the authorities and animal rights groups.

Two stalls in Chinatown were still selling live animals for release yesterday.

Mr Louis Ng, executive director of animal rights group, Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres), said stallholders admitted they had sold about 20 red-eared slider turtles yesterday, and that their customers had ordered them ahead of Vesak Day.

Acting on a tip-off, the group sent an undercover team to Smith Street, where Chinese soft-shell turtles were also being sold.

Organisations like Acres and the National Parks Board have warned that releasing animals into the wild can harm both the animal and the native ecosystem.

Mr Henry Baey, who heads the Buddhist Fellowship, said: 'Many such animals, especially those bred in captivity or imported, are known to be unable to adapt to the new surroundings and do not survive long after their release. They will also upset the existing ecosystem and may be harmful to the native wildlife. It is therefore not necessarily a kind act.'