

Hong Kong at the Crossroad

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From the view of an outsider who shares the same Chinese heritage, Hong Kong to me is a society full of extremes. It's a rich society yet one out of every seven citizens is below the poverty line; it has vigorous free market capitalism but with little democracy; it was under British colonial rule for one and half centuries but had never developed an East/West melting culture; its identity for a number of its citizens, at least for the time being, does not associate with a nation and its power to withstand the economic downturn is magically resilient. Such extremes have a lot to do with Hong Kong people's Chinese heritage but they also have a lot to do with the unique position Hong Kong is at historically.

Unlike other places in the world, Hong Kong did not sweep by the nationalism after the Second World War and had remained rather calmly under British colonial rule till 1997. There are many reasons for this particular situation but probably the most prominent one is afraid of Chinese Communist taking over. Such fear makes Hong Kong people choosing the lesser evil, in their perception, to tolerate British colonial rule over the risk of Communist invasion. Hong Kong people had made a deliberate choice to secure British protection to fend off their northern communist neighbor by giving up democracy, personal privacy, and the right to engage political decisions. They tolerate a privileged class among them as the British representative. On the other hand, Hong Kong enjoyed being the only window to China and made some unique financial gain out of this position. This kind of "tough love" still remains today. Because of this psychological complex, the middle class in Hong Kong is ready to flee on the sign of the risk that might threaten their security. This kind of exudes indeed happened around 1997 out of fear of such. In other words, a decent amount of the energy or effort of the middle class are diverted to set up an escape route rather than devoted to build up a better society.

Under the above-described sense of insecurity, making sacrifice to share burden is not an obligation to Hong Kong citizens. The Civil Service suing the SAR government over the proposition on pay cut in the 2004 economic crisis is one such evidence. Even today large number of the upper middle class, including many high-ranking civil service officials, has possession of estate in Europe, North America, or Australia. Their claim of "Loving HK" seems a lip servicing empty promise.

Thirty years after the Economic Reform of China, this situation has taken a twisted turn. Hong Kong is trying to adjust to a rapidly changing China. Though Hong Kong

still benefits economically from China's rising to the second economic power of the world but must absorb the consequences it brings. Such as higher costs of produce, building materials, and necessities like electricity and water. Hong Kong must also adjust to the social change of China. The improving mobility together with escalated economic strength in China adds pressure for HK to meet the demand on tourists, immigration and social differences. It is apparent that the recent problems of overcrowding public transportation system in holidays, high costs of rent, hotels and convention facilities, sky rocketing of housing price, shortage of beds for pregnant women in the public hospitals, shortage of daily goods like milk powders, and occasional bickering incidences out of behavior difference are all originated on the large influx of Chinese from Mainland.

Hong Kong needs to deal with it psychologically that the previous poor, passive and ready to serve neighbor of the north all of a sudden becomes a rich, aggressive and demanding customer. Hong Kong has little problem to build the physical infrastructure to meet the demand but Hong Kong must also be psychologically prepared for dealing with the consequence when soliciting business with China. In addition, fifteen years after the People's Liberation Army established its base in Hong Kong under the promise of "One Country Two Systems", people in Hong Kong is gradually losing the fear of the Communist. Some HK people began to lash out their economic and political frustrations toward the Central Government by waving British flag ignoring the fact that they could never get so much power sharing under the British rule.

Hypocrisy of the upper middle class is another issue in that they do not provide good leadership by setting examples for the society. Their apathy toward HK society not only is reflected in their building of escape hatches as mentioned before but also in many other areas. On education, for example, they will publicly cite the amount of public investment and ranking evaluation to preach HK citizens to use HK's education system but they will send their offspring overseas for education with no hesitation instead. They will use their power to secure influential positions for their children upon returning from studying abroad. Such a half-hearted attitude toward the society robs off to their children who are becoming the elite for HK society of the future. This kind of apathetical and monopolistic vicious cycle gobbles up the lion share of the wealth of the society and limits the chance for common folks. The illegal construction issue before, during and after the recent Chief Executive election clearly exposed such hypocrisy. Many of these offenders, who are supposed to be the leaders of the society, set bad examples as law-biding citizens and ICAC seems always reacting passively with a dubious standard.

Hong Kong people are at a crossroad. For too many years HK is able to stay at the crossroad joint reaping benefits and tolerating the aftermath from decisions made in London. Hong Kong people have lost their sense and courage of making decisions and shouldering the consequences. The former Chief Executive, the Honorable Mr. Tung

Chee-hwa, once termed the HK government being “ All talk but no action ” is still true today. The world outside is changing fast; it demands timely action or loses out. HK people need to have the courage to make their own decision and shoulder the consequence rather than waiting someone else making decisions for them.

HK does not have a status as an independent nation, it is part of PRC; therefore HK people cannot dodge the issue of national security and the nationalism education. Remember that HK is no longer a British colony; it is PLA garrison in HK to provide the protection nowadays. If HK fails to make the right choice, what waits for them is a region of colony ruled by PRC instead of a region that enjoys autonomous special administration.

World Trends: Sun Yat-sen & The International Development of China

Charles Wong

Sun Yat-sen Foundation for Peace & Education

Dr. Sun Yat-sen is recognized by both the Chinese Communist Party on mainland China and in Taiwan by the Nationalist Party as the Father of Modern China.

After failing to persuade the corrupt and inept Qing Dynasty to reform, Dr. Sun embarked on his revolutionary career to "Save China" from destruction by the establishment of the Xing Zhong Hui, "Revive China Society" as his first revolutionary organization in Honolulu, Hawaii on November 24, 1894, thus making Honolulu the birthplace of the Modern Chinese Revolution.

Even until this very day, the only thing which unites all Chinese, on the Mainland, Taiwan, and Overseas is the memory and legacy of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Revolution to transform China from a poor and backward country, into a modern, powerful and prosperous republic which would shape the course of human history and the world.

In 1919, Dr. Sun published his Chinese edition of Jianguo Fanglue, "The Plans for National Reconstruction" which was composed of three sections, Social Reconstruction, Psychological Reconstruction, and Plans for Industry and Commerce.

One section, Plans for Industry and Commerce, was translated and published in English in 1920 as **The International Development of China**. The International Development of China was written by Dr. Sun in reaction to the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles, which concluded World War One. At the time, China was a divided country ruled by warlords, who ruled their separate regions like fiefs, and were supported by different imperialist countries into what Dr. Sun called Hypo-Colonies or Spheres of Influence.

Dr. Sun was the head of a Military Government headquartered in Canton (Guangzhou) in the South, as opposed to warlord clique based in Beijing, called the Peking Government in the North.

Although the Allies Powers had sent emissaries to both the Peking Government and Dr. Sun's Military Government in Canton, requesting China to join the war on side of the Allies, Dr. Sun wanted to remain neutral. The Peking Government on the other hand declared war against Austria-Hungary on August 14, 1917. The British sent a representative to meet Dr. Sun in Canton to ask his government to join the Allied cause, but Sun refused stating that the British themselves were imperialists inside of China. Hong Kong had been taken from China as a result of the Opium War, and Burma which had been a tributary state of China had become a British colony, as well as Vietnam which had also been another tributary state of China had become a French colony.