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After the anti-national education: Wishing for a Chinese identity pursuing a better world

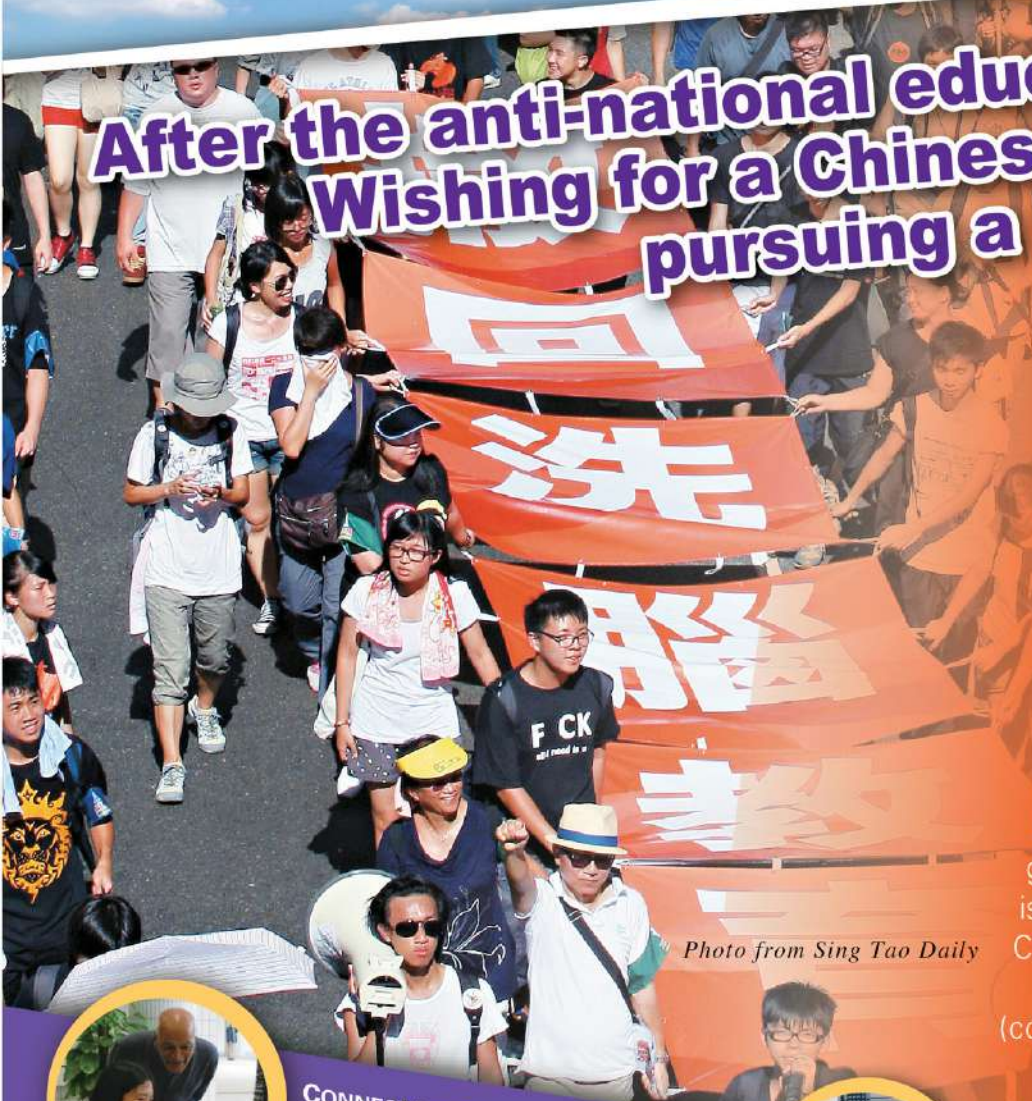


Photo from Sing Tao Daily

9th September is a special day in many senses. In the Chinese lunar calendar, the date is the 'Double Ninth Festival'. It is a Chinese tradition to pay tribute to our ancestors by climbing mountains on such a nice day in autumn. 'Double ninth' entails a special meaning of reserving our culture and history. In the Western calendar, the Chinese modern history also made the day 'Double ninth' unique. The Japanese army surrendered to the Chinese government on 9th September 1945. It is a date of celebration for us as Chinese, and as people loving peace.

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After the anti-national education: Wishing for a Chinese identity pursuing a better world

Photo from Sing Tao Daily

(from the cover page)

In 2012, once again, a special meaning has been created by the Hong Kong people on the day of 9th September. Ten of thousands of Hong Kongers would not forget this day. On this day, the new session of the Legislative Council, the first time with 70 members, has been elected, although the results of this election was not a big surprise for many. For thousands of activists and citizens, however, their strong memory and emotion would attach to the scenes taking place in the plaza outside the new government headquarters. Several tens of thousands of students and citizens wearing black T-shirts "occupied" the small square which had been renamed as 'liberty square'. They asked for a full withdrawal of the national education plan and rejected the compromised package offered by the government. After hours of discussions and debates, the 'Alliance Against the National Education', whose core members include a number of secondary students activists from 'Scholarism' (學民思潮), announced their decision to end the demonstration and leave the square.

I received comments from my friends in different corners of the city through Whatsapp. At 1:45am, one of my friends wrote that all hunger strikers are now leaving. The core member of 'Scholarism' was making a farewell statement. His message aroused many discussions: 'I am disappointed'; 'I would say upset'; 'Just afraid this will deliver a message to the general public that we are satisfied, or the purpose of strike is for the election'; 'Kill before it dies'; 'I

mean "kill before it dies" is a good tactic too; ' HK People's enthusiasm dies out quickly'; 'better let it finish tonight than letting it gradually fades away'; 'it is hard to gather again. You know most of the HKers are short-sighted, absent-minded. Only act on passion' The debate lasted for hours. Although many of my friends joined the demonstration, which lasted for more than one week, from time to time, they did not have the right to participate in the decision making process. Some people criticize that social movement is sometimes elite-led rather than based on mass democracy. Of course, others argue that it is necessary to have a coordinating body to think over strategies and make final decisions. The government's strategy to divide the participants and prevent the movement from being further politicalized by giving partial concession seemed to be working. But anyway, the people's mobilization has forced the government to change one of its major policies. It is especially important in a society like Hong Kong, where full representative democracy has not been in place.



Photo from Sing Tao Daily



The legitimacy of the current government (which activists would claim was elected by only 689 votes out of a population of over seven million) is already low and the anti-national education campaign has brought its credibility and authority to a breaking point.

People's identity is socially and historically constructed. Nobody will deny that common living experiences play a significant role in the formation of a common identification and political forces may facilitate or hinder such a formation. However, equally important, it is people's struggles that continually shape and reshape this process. Hong Kongers do have a strong Chinese identity. In 1925, tens of thousands of Hong Kong striking workers under British rule, supported by the government and citizens of Guangzhou, marched back to Guangzhou. As the longest strike in world history so far, the struggle lasted for one year and four months. Many of the strikers stayed in Guangzhou to join the Northern Expedition (北伐戰爭) led by the nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-shek, while many others returned to Hong Kong and became social activists. Hong Kong has been a part of the Chinese revolutions despite being a British colony prior to 1997. This legacy was also demonstrated in Hong Kong people's support and participation in the anti-Qing Dynasty revolution led by Dr. Sun-Yat-Sun, which was well captured by the film "Bodyguards And Assassins" 《十月圍城》. During the anti-Japanese war, again Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese joined hands in the struggle. All of these are far away historical events. However, Hong Kong people's enthusiastic support of the Chinese democratic movement in 1989 once more strengthened our Chinese identity.

The post-colonial Hong Kong government has put huge effort into promoting a Chinese identity among the younger generation. Among others, national anthem has to be broadcast before the main evening News on two major TV channels. Mandarin education has been introduced to



Photo from Sing Tao Daily

all primary schools. A large amount of subsidies have been paid to promote student exchange with mainland Chinese counterparts. Nevertheless, the rise of the new social activism in recent years, some of which is with a strong anti-mainland sentiment, proves that the government's strategy was not successful. The anti-national education campaign is further evidence to show that the artificial measures are in vain.

Contrary to the government's paternalistic approach to promote a Chinese identity, I wish that a Chinese identity for our future generation will forge through their common endeavor with our mainland Chinese fellows for a better world of human beings. I would like to quote from the book of Paulo Freire, a famous Brazilian educator, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in ending this essay: "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."



Dr. Chris King-Chi Chan,
Assistant Professor of SS

People

Connecting Communities and Empowering Youth through Service and Learning - City-Youth Empowerment Project



As the holiday season motions in full action, it also marks the end of a very fruitful semester for City-Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP). This year is marked with many challenges and changes, as well as growth for the project and those who are involved. Through the snapshots of some of our services below, we hope to illustrate our gratitude to the volunteers who have committed their time to contribute to our community, and our Project Officers who have truly been the tireless leaders in the trenches providing guidance to our volunteers, and supporting the services. Seeing through this semester's work is a confidence boost for the work that is to come. For that, CYEP is deeply thankful.



We have formed a new partnership with Green Connections of the School of Energy and Environment. The partnership has opened many doors for the project to work with other community partners in environmental conservation on various activities and services. The Green Workshop, that featured a seminar by Dr. Satish Kumar, was one of the many collaborations took place between the Green Empowerment Team of CYEP (headed by Project Officer Miranda) and Green Connections, Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden, Schumacher College, and Joint-University Environmental Innovation Forum. Dr. Kumar shared his philosophy of how we would treat our own home is how we should treat our earth. Dr. Kumar's speech on recognizing and making use of the creativity that lives within each of us to be a leader in our own circle of livelihood touched and inspired many participants and Green Empowerment

Team members. An art jamming session accompanied the workshop for participants to explore their creativity and self-expression.

In one of our regular services with youth in the Police Superintendents' Discretion Scheme as a partnership with Boys and Girls Club Association, a youth, nicknamed RMB, has left our Project Officer Danny with a deep impression, and thus came his epiphany of how "life influences life." RMB caught Danny's attention as problematic because of his "rough around edges" /gangster-like behavior the first time they met. Danny specifically matched this youth with an experienced volunteer, expecting that he would be difficult to work with. To Danny's surprise, RMB has never been absent throughout the entire semester. By the 4th session, he requested from his own social worker to be excused from the tutoring session but suddenly appeared during the tuition service. Regardless of the back and forth, his volunteer still insisted on making herself available, exactly because of that sliver of hope that the kid will change his mind last minute and decided to show up. Before she ran from the student residence to the campus after hearing that the kid decided to show up unexpectedly, she said, "I have reserved every Friday night for him in this semester. I am free now and will arrive soon!" she said." In the last session of the semester, RMB openly shared, "I love to study here. My mentor is definitely better than my teachers at school. And she is beautiful as well." This brought laughter to the whole class. Just as this volunteer who wouldn't give up on the slight chance of the kid changing his mind to show up - perhaps, the underlying message of it all is that through the volunteers' persistence and hope, these youth will change their mind and really show up for the own future.



Sometimes, when there are too many volunteers signing up for one service, it makes it a bit unmanageable. But, at the same time, surprises do happen. One of our new services, was borne out of this predicament. Maybe due to the desire for their children to succeed in school, the only way the parents (mostly new arrival immigrants who have difficulties accessing needed support and resources) know how to save their own children from the hardships they go through - the parents are always very involved in one of our tutoring services for a group of low-income and underprivileged children, a partnership service with Society for Community Organization (SoCO). They would bring the children to their tutoring session every week, and eagerly wait around the classrooms in order to squeeze in a word or two with the volunteer tutors. Coincidentally, there was a group of volunteers who enrolled into the service late and thus did not get assigned with any children. Noticing their "absent spirit," Project Officer Aster capitalized on the moment, met and discussed with them to understand more about their feeling and they honestly shared that they could not find their role in the service. This communication opened up the opportunity of exchanges of ideas, and this group "left-behind" volunteers suggested that they would like to work with the mothers to teach them basic computer skills. This class not only provided the mothers with the basic skills that they have long needed, but also has transformed into a platform for mutual support through issues such as parenting and accessing social resources. This experience has truly taught Aster about treasuring the volunteers'

motivation, and each opportunity is a gift of active intention and creativity waiting to be unwrapped.

Another population that warrants more social attention is the elderly. According to the 2011 census statistics of the Hong Kong Government, there are around 1,300,000 elderly aged 60, of which there are 151,886 elderly living alone. Through the partnership with Neighborhood Advice-Action Council, Sham Shui Po District Elderly Community Centre, we work with a group of "hidden" elderly who live alone and have difficulties integrating into the community. The service, headed by Bruce, is coined a "three-win" situation - to the elderly, students and the agency. Our volunteers do regular home visits to assess these elderly's daily living situations, and plan group activities to engage them socially. Assessments are conducted every visit on the elderly's physical mobility, housing condition, socialization, medical and financial support. With the preliminary assessment, we can try to prevent crisis and provide a way to identify preventative measures, ultimately to lessen the burden of the overloaded social workers, and social support could be enhanced. Our volunteers are also hugely benefitted in the process. They are given the opportunity to learn more about the living situations of the elderly in Hong Kong, and to learn about the history of this city through the elderly's narrative of their past - a valuable form of oral history. The volunteering platform has provided students "out-of-classroom" community learning opportunities; and has served as the meeting point of university students, elderly, and community organizations.

Ms Constance Ching,
Project Officer



Student Sharing Forum on Professional Internship in Applied Criminology

By Dr. Chang Yao Chung, Lennon (Assistant Professor) and Mr. Leung Ka Ho, Andy (Research Assistant)

Every year, the criminology program provides different perspectives on professional internship for local and overseas students. This program is very popular among students. This year, we organized a sharing forum on 17 September 2012 and invited 20 final year criminology students to share their own experiences with 20 freshmen. Altogether, there were five presentations introducing the six-week internship program in Vancouver, Shanghai, Singapore and Taiwan. In the sharing forum, the background of the internship agencies, their work and duties, self-added value activities during the internship, their own reflection as well as self-evaluation were shared. Here are some of their reflections:

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Vancouver)

The experience during the five weeks internship program in S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is memorable. For me, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is a well-organized social institution. The management and the services provided are comprehensive and highly qualified. If I am required to use a few words to summarize, I would like to say the experience is more than I expected. Before the trip, the information I gathered on the work content was about the practice and application in criminology field. However, that was just a small part indeed. Our work duties in the whole five weeks were definitely much more fruitful than we expected. Apart from exercising criminology knowledge, we have also learned the culture and passion of Canadian. I really enjoyed staying in Vancouver which gave me a strong sense of belonging. Indeed, during the internship, we could not contribute much; meanwhile the colleagues there spent much time to teach us and tried hard to fulfill our expectations. To sum up, we have learned much knowledge and now can foresee how useful the criminology concepts can be in application to real life situations. But more importantly, we are delighted to have had the experience to work and learn with all who extended their love and care to us.

*Tsui Sing Yuen, Stanley
BSS in Criminology student*



Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (Singapore)

This trip actually helped me a lot. Before the internship, I was an introvert; I rarely talked with people who speak English; I could not deliver my idea fluently in English. During the internship, however, my classmates and colleagues were very encouraging. They put an effort in pushing me to be more active in learning, speaking and sharing. After all, my ability in communication, research, and interpersonal skills are definitely strengthened. I should say thank you to the internship agency, my schoolmates, my on-site supervisors, and my internship supervisor.

In the meantime, freshmen expressed their concerns such as pre-internship preparation, expenses, transport and accommodation and subsidies. After all, the sharing was a very good chance to foster mentor-mentee relationships as well as to help me prepare for future challenges.

*Kwan Man Leung, Kevin
BSS in Criminology student*

Shanghai Sunshine Community-Youth Affairs Centre (Shanghai)

It was a great experience to practice with the Shanghai social workers during the six week internship. It helped me and my colleagues to understand more about the social work system in Shanghai. We can see the expansion of social work in mainland China. This indicates the government starts to put effort into improving the living quality of people. Since social work has only been established in Shanghai for only 8 years, some policies were appreciated but some should be improved. By comparing the similarity and differences of policies and systems between Hong Kong and Shanghai, we can learn from the good policies as well as reflecting on the lapses.



Moreover, we have experienced the living in China on our own. The social workers in Shanghai Sunshine Community-Youth Affairs Centre were very nice and their passion towards social work can be sensed. We appreciate this lot. For sure, there are cultural differences between Hong Kong people and Shanghaiese, but this experience provided us a great chance to train our communication skills with people from different backgrounds. We all think it was a wonderful and unforgettable experience.



Fung Kei Man, Feon
BSS in Criminology student

Taiwan Aftercare Association (Taiwan)

During our internship in the Taiwan Aftercare Association, we not only we learnt a lot of rehabilitation knowledge, we also had unexpected experiences when visiting and cooperating with different organizations. Firstly, we had a lot meaningful working experiences in the Taiwan Aftercare Association. This organization tries to prevent rehabilitants from being labeling as ex-offenders in the society, and promotes them as normal citizen in order to increase their acceptance by society. This approach can help us to think of some useful ways in dealing and helping people to have more meaningful daily works.

Secondly, we think this is an important and challenging work. In the Aftercare Association, we had an opportunity to become an Aftercare Association officer in dealing with rehabilitants' cases. Also, we had many chances to talk with ex-offenders, to listen to their stories and hear about their lives after being released from the prison. Sometimes, we even learned to reject their unreasonably demands, and to comfort them in appropriate ways. Hence, it was definitely a challenging work. Moreover, it was a great opportunity for us to learn about differences in rehabilitation systems between Taiwan and Hong Kong. We appreciate the rehabilitation system in Taiwan as it has a relatively complete system

and policies to help ex-offenders. In addition, the working attitudes of Aftercare Officers impressed us with their respect for clients and emphasis on reality and providing emotional support. It demonstrated their respect for humanity.

Chan Chung Po, Ball
BSS in Criminology student

Taiwan Kaohsiung Juvenile and Family Court (Taiwan)

Four criminology students went to the Taiwan Kaohsiung Juvenile and Family Court for a five-week internship. During these five weeks, we learned the differences between the legal systems of Taiwan and Hong Kong. From the law for juvenile offenders, we learned the seriousness of juvenile crimes, and what attitudes we should have for juvenile offenders. We recognized the weaknesses and room of improvement of the juvenile legal system in both countries. We learned deeper respect for the juvenile law within five weeks. The best way for improving the legal system is to learn the strengths from others and to use this knowledge to correct deficits. This also incorporates a humanistic attitude as well. We should not build up bias to others and learn from others, in order to improve ourselves.

Yuen Shuk Fan, Yvonne
BSS in Criminology student



From this sharing forum, we are very pleased that every student has learned a lot through their internship. It can be seen that they treasure these valuable and practical experiences. We hope that in the upcoming years, we can co-operate with more different types of agencies and encourage students to have more exchange experiences that will support their own development.

Department Highlights

應用社會科學系

Department of Applied Social Studies

Words from the Acting Head

Dear Alumni, friends, and students of SS,

Let's join hands together to build a better world

In recent decades, it has been customary for the society of Japan to choose a "Han Character" (Chinese word) to represent the situation of the previous year as well as to make a wish for the coming year. This custom was established as early as the mid-90s. For example, Japan once chose the character "震" (shake) in 1995, since there was a great earthquake at Kobe in that year. Subsequently, Japan chose the character "戰" (war) to memorize the 911 event for the year of 2001, and the character "變" (change) for the year of 2008, so as to reflect changes of political power in both Japan and USA.

If I were given a task to choose one character to represent Hong Kong in 2013, I would like to choose "義" (yi). "Yi" is commonly translated as "righteousness". The English word "righteousness" may denote the meaning of "doing what is morally right". The Chinese word "義" seems to have a broader meaning. When we talk about "yi" between brothers or friends, we may refer to a sense of brotherhood that denotes the meaning of mutual support. In a Chinese culture, good friends, particularly among boys, always pay great emphasis on "義氣(spirit of yi)" which calls for mutual help and support without charges. Interestingly, when we relate 'yi' to public ruling or governance, we normally refer to "公義" (justice). Justice refers to fair treatment or a reasonable behavior or a piece of policy that promotes well-being of individuals. A just society or institution demands a good balance between the powerful and powerless - something that nearly all good citizens are longing for.

A society without self-righteousness or justice may lead to disaster. Perhaps, readers are well aware of a recent gang rape case in India. The case is about a 23-year-old woman who was raped and killed by six men on a bus in New Delhi. The case has sparked protests in New Delhi and elsewhere, bringing international attention to the way rape

victims are treated across India. Apparently, the brutal attack and the lack of action of the Indian government remind us how poor citizens would be when justice is not seen to be done. When I saw and read the news, my heart was so heavy for this woman and all other women in India. I hope the death of the 23-year-old woman and the protests and public outcry can serve as a catalyst to advocate more rights for women as well as a reform of police malpractices, and subsequently a reform of all kinds of injustice systems in India.

Unlike countries such as India or Pakistan, which lacks an open and fair justice system to protect the powerless, Hong Kong society seems to be relatively civilized. Nevertheless, I pick the word "yi" for our society because I do feel that Hong Kong is still far from "doing what is morally right". For those who know me well, they will understand that I am surely not an anti-authority person who always says NO to the establishment. My request for more "yi" for Hong Kong society is due to my wish that Hong Kong, a so-called international civilized society, should become a more equal society where the "have not" or the powerless get a share of the cake. Despite the continuous growth of GDP, we can still see a great proportion of Hong Kong citizens living in poverty. These people are normally those who are sick, weak, powerless, marginalized or children of new immigrants. They deserve to get more so that they can live in a better world with self-dignity. "Yi", in the Chinese cultural sense, includes public justice as well as self-righteousness. I really hope that faculty and students at SS department join hands with me to practice 'yi' without any delay and grasp every chance to advocate for "yi" as well. This is what most of our faculty members have been teaching at SS, through psychology, sociology, criminology, counseling and social work disciplines. I hope my students really learn the wisdom of practicing 'yi' from CityU. "United we stand, divided we fall"; Hong Kong deserves to be a better place and a more equal society. Let's work together to build a better world.



Prof Dennis S W Wong
Acting Head, SS Dept