

**THE GARDEN OF HONGKONG:
WILL IT FLOWER?
OR, WILL IT DIE OF NEGLECT ?**

History will, no doubt, record that the administration of Mr Tung Chee Hwa, the Chief Executive of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), as being one of the very rare occasions that the people of the southern China put aside their natural propensity for acquisitiveness and/or their preoccupation with the amassing of wealth, in favour of dabbling (and squabbling) in local politics.

Also, history will have to record that the period, during which the HKSAR was being administered by Mr Tung Chee Hwa, was the first time in the history of modern China that the Beijing Government, repeatedly, had to reaffirm, publicly and vociferously, its support for its choice of a leader for this small territory, measuring just 416 square miles.

One notes that the Beijing Government has never, once, had to reaffirm its support for the Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) of the PRC, Mr Edmund Ho Hau Wah.

Also, one notes that it is, indeed, rare for a mayor/governor/vice governor, etc of any other part of the PRC to receive very much attention from Beijing (except when there is a major scandal or economic or medical problem), and never has there been a time that a top Beijing Government Officer has had to visit a town/city/province, etc in order to lend support for an administration.

Historians will have to record, no doubt, that the administration of the HKSAR since the assumption of sovereignty over Colonial Hongkong by the Government of the PRC on July 1, 1997 had been fraught by one economic crisis after another, with the Government of Beijing, artificially, propping up the economy, and assuring the people of the HKSAR of the Central Government's support, economic as well as political, for its problem territory.

Last Friday, after many months of silence on the subject of Universal Suffrage, the HKSAR Chief Executive delivered a well-considered speech, affirming Beijing's determination for the political development of the territory.

Mr Tung Chee Hwa said, inter alia:

'There has been much enthusiastic discussion of late on the subject of patriotism. I believe that the great majority of Hongkong citizens love their country and Hongkong. They would not do anything to harm their country or Hongkong.'

'Since the Central Government first expressed serious concerns about the constitutional review, relating to the Hongkong Special Administrative Region, it has raised, through different channels, a number of issues of principle.'

'In a nutshell, these issues are:

**"One Country, Two Systems": Specifically, the Central Government has pointed out that "One Country" is the premise on which "Two Systems" is implemented. "One Country"*

refers specifically to the People's Republic of China;

** "Hongkong people running Hongkong": Patriots must form the main body that runs Hongkong. There are specific criteria for a patriot. A patriot respects one's own nation, sincerely supports "One Country, Two Systems" and does not do anything that would harm our country or Hongkong;*

** "A high degree of autonomy": Hongkong's autonomy is exercised under authorisation of the Central Government;*

** "Executive-led": This is an important principle under the design of The Basic Law. Constitutional development in Hongkong must not deviate from this principle; and,*

** "Balanced participation": Our political structure must have due regard to the interests of all sectors of society. Also, constitutional development must accord with the principles of gradual and orderly progress and fully reflecting the actual situation in Hongkong.*

'I consider that the principles, spelt out by the Central Government, are very important.

'Only if constitutional development in Hongkong complies with these principles can we ensure the successful implementation of "One Country, Two Systems", safeguard the well-being of Hongkong people, and maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hongkong.

'I hope that the community will consider and discuss these issues calmly and rationally.

'I have often said that it is a blessing for Hongkong people that Hongkong returned to the Motherland at a time when China was undergoing robust growth.

'Since the reunification more than 6 years ago, the Central Government has given us a free hand, shown us great trust, and has given us staunch support in times of major challenge.

'This has helped us successfully implement "One Country, Two Systems".

'For the benefit of our constitutional development and healthy development of our community, it is important for us to reflect carefully on the issues of principle, recently raised by the Central Government.

'I hope that all sectors of the community will seriously consider these issues in a forward-looking, calm and rational manner, while holding fast to the position of loving our country and Hongkong.

'I firmly believe that serious consideration and thorough discussion of these issues will be of great benefit to us.'

TARGET perceives the above speech to indicate:

1. It was delivered on specific instructions from Beijing (and was, probably, penned in Beijing, at least in essence); and,
2. It is, in effect, a threat to the people of the HKSAR that, should the population not toe the political line, measures will be taken to ensure that they do toe the line.

Prior to Mr Tung Chee Hwa, delivering his little speech, The China Daily and The People's Daily, 2 official, PRC-Government newspapers, whose editorials, naturally, are vetted by the Central Government, ran a series of commentaries, all of which were on the same topic and which appeared to mirror all of the points, mentioned by Mr Tung Chee Hwa.

The following transcript (**TARGET** has made no changes to the original) is part of one such commentary, which appeared in The People's Daily, last Friday, but was approved last Thursday and was foreshadowed by similar such commentaries, published on Monday and Tuesday of last week in both newspapers:

Why it's vital to recall what Deng said about HK

The republication of Deng Xiaoping's speech two decades ago on "One Country, Two Systems" is by no means coincidental. It aims to point out certain confusions and misconceptions in the recent debate on constitutional development in the SAR and clarify them at the level of principle.

This historic speech was delivered by Deng to a group of [Hong Kong](#) celebrities, many of whom are still alive. The content of his words became well known from early on. But twenty years later, many of the pivotal principles expounded therein have been forgotten by many, and there is certainly the need to refresh people's memories.

The address defines "One Country, Two Systems". The essence is the correct interpretation of the relationship between "One Country" and "Two Systems" and the ruling of Hong Kong by patriots. These are two underlying principles. Whether Hong Kong is able to uphold these two principles will have a strong bearing on the future and well-being of its people and on the stability, security and development of the country.

There exists in Hong Kong an alarming phenomenon -- some people talk generally about "One Country, Two Systems" and "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong", but neglect the specific content of these principles.

Take the latter for example. Deng said very clearly that it must be required that patriots form the main body of administrators of Hong Kong. A patriot is one who respects the Chinese nation, sincerely supports the motherland's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong and wishes not to impair its prosperity and stability.

That is to say, mere permanent residency does not qualify a person to rule Hong Kong. He must love the motherland and Hong Kong from his heart and actually safeguard the fundamental interests of the country and the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

Judging with this criterion, some people in the SAR who are currently in positions of power do not meet this pre-requisite to be rulers of Hong Kong. They are not willing to live under "One Country". They keep on hassling the SAR government and the central authorities. They are opposed to legislation for national security, organize or participate in activities against the central government, invite foreign intervention in Hong Kong affairs, and lend open support to [Taiwan](#) independence.

Such behaviour has worried Hong Kong people and the central government. This serves as a footnote for another remark made by Deng two decades ago: Don't think that Hong Kong will be rid of destructive forces after reunification; such a fantasy is not practical.

Merely paying lip service cannot make one a patriot. Whether a person is patriotic or not is judged by what one has done, and not by what one claims oneself to be.

Everybody has a yardstick in their heart with which to pass judgment. The subject of "patriots" has aroused heated debates in the territory recently. To cool down the row, some have called it an "unnecessary dispute", and even warned that Hongkongers will all stand by the "democrats" if the argument continues. This worry is obviously unwarranted since such debates are absolutely necessary.

In fact, if the actual meaning of the principles of "One Country, Two Systems" and "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong" were clarified a few years ago, many events that have jeopardized the interests of the country and Hong Kong may not have happened ...

Deng's 'One country, two systems' theory

"We are pursuing a policy of one country, two systems," late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping told the world 20 years ago ...

"More specifically, this means that within the People's Republic of China, the mainland with its one billion people will maintain the socialist system, while Hong Kong and Taiwan continue under the capitalist system," Deng briefed members of a Hong Kong industrial and commercial community and with prominent Hong Kong figures several times 20 years ago.

Deng expanded on the concept, the requirements or qualifications for the administration of Hong Kong by Hong Kong people and the definition of a patriot.

"We have stated on many occasions that after China resumes the exercise of its sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, Hong Kong's current social and economic systems will remain unchanged, its legal system will remain basically unchanged, its way of life and its status as a free port and an international trade and financial centre will remain unchanged and it can continue to maintain or establish economic relations with other countries and regions," Deng said.

Strangely, while there has, of late, been a great deal of talk in the HKSAR about Universal Suffrage, and there were those 500,000 Hongkongers, protesting, peacefully, on July 1, 2003, all claiming that they want more of a say in the governing of the territory and, as such, they would like to see the back of Mr Tung Chee Hwa, for the people of Hongkong to be vocal about the governing body of the territory is a modern phenomenon.

When Great Britain governed Hongkong, as it was known until June 30, 1997, while there was little in the way of a political voice from the bulk of the human inhabitants of the territory, few people seemed to mind: Apathy ruled politics, by and large.

Because the population was too busy, making money and acquiring all of the things that they coveted.

It appears that, only when shekels are scarce do a people look elsewhere for 'recreation'.

TARGET recalls the words of the former Chairman of the (old) Hongkong Urban Council, Mr A. de O'Sales, who said, many years ago when the British ruled the roost, that Universal Suffrage would not be of value for Hongkong because the voting population of Hongkong was not sufficiently versed in matters of pith and moment, as they affected the affairs of the British Colony.

Therefore, there ought to be qualifications for those, desirous of voting at Urban Council elections, in order to sort the wheat from the chaff.

Probably, Mr A. de O'Sales was correct in his determinations, in the 1970s, but, today, it is a completely different situation, with nearly all of the adult population of the 7 million human inhabitants of the HKSAR very much in tune with their political lot.

And, it is only too apparent that the majority of the adult population of the territory wants a better deal; the population wants their inalienable rights; the population wants an effective and caring Government that reflects the aspirations of the population; and, the population wants the right to choose their leaders.

There is, clearly, a great deal of dissatisfaction with the Government of Mr Tung Chee Hwa, with strong suggestions that Hongkong has, what is known in the parlance, as a lame duck administration.

However, the HKSAR electorate is, like all electorates, fickle, and should the economic situation in these 416 square miles suddenly change for the good, with the stock market, becoming a roaring bull, again, politics might well be put on the back-burner in favour of amassing wealth.

But the unemployment rate of the territory is such that a fast turnabout in the economy is unlikely and, that being the case, one may expect more social unrest from those, who are demanding more democracy in the HKSAR.

Last Thursday, the HKSAR Financial Secretary, Mr Henry Tang Yin Yen, said, inter alia (**TARGET** has taken the liberty of modifying the original transcript, somewhat, in order to make it more readable):

'The latest (seasonally adjusted) unemployment figure for the period from November last year to January of this year is 7.30 percent; and, the under-employment rate is 3.30 percent.

'These figures are the same as the figures of the fourth quarter of last year.

'However, I am still cautiously optimistic that the general employment situation remains good because the total number of unemployed persons has been reduced by 8,200 persons to 245,000 persons, and the total employment has increased by 4,700 persons.

'Every day, The Labour Department is receiving about 1,000 vacancies, which reflects a continued improvement in the general employment situation.

'We emphasise that employment will continue to be a challenge for us; and, it is up to us to improve further our economy so that we may improve our employment situation.'

Are The HKSAR Democrats To Blame?

Southern China has, historically, been considered a rebel outpost, as far as the Central Government of China was concerned, with the Cantonese, being uncouth, uneducated, barbaric and trouble-makers.

From the Central Government's point of view, that perception of what now constitutes the Province of Guangdong, was correct, especially during the early part of the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911).

But things, today, in Guangdong, are very different from the situation that existed in this part of the country, during the reign of Emperor K'ang Hsi (1661-1722).

It is of interest to historians, no doubt, that when the rulers of China, during the Ching Dynasty, were unable to meet the problems, caused by increased population pressure and/or the concentration of land ownership, trouble, nearly always, ensued.

Popular unrest, aggravated by severe floods and famine, resulted in the rebellions of Taiping (1850-1864) and Nien (1853-1868).

Efforts at modernisation and westernisation of China, during the Ching Dynasty, met with severe opposition from conservative officials; and, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption became widespread.

Today, it is clear that history is repeating itself, at least in part if not in whole.

One cannot blame the population of the Guangdong Province for their heritage, or for their natural inclination to seek their fortunes in the territory of their choice.

The so-called democratic movement of the HKSAR cannot be held responsible for the lot of the unemployed, or the seeming discontent of those, who are desirous of having the right to choose their leader(s), or to call on incompetent or ineffective leaders to abdicate their positions of power, regardless of how that power was obtained/foisted upon them.

It is only too clear that the people of the HKSAR are desirous to grow their choice of flowers in their unique gardens.

They do not want to be forced to grow that flora and fauna that are dictated by Beijing or the Administration of Mr Tung Chee Hwa, conveyed through the orifice of the Chief Executive or through one of his underlings.

What they want, it is very apparent, is a garden that they can call their own, one created by them, a garden whose blossoms emit perfumes that permeate every corner of that garden.

Art is, without question, the nature of man; and, it is one of his most-natural inclinations.

It cannot be suppressed by force of arms; or, threats from the high and the mighty.

Tiananmen Square, on June 4, 1989, was proof positive of that assertion and, although that pro-democracy movement of the PRC was crushed at the Gate of Heavenly Peace on orders of Mr Li Peng, the then Chairman of the National People's Congress, it is not possible for Beijing to crush the idea of democracy, which, clearly, lives on, strongly, in the HKSAR.

Beijing ought not to fear the creation and the natural advancement of the Hongkong '*garden*' because, being a creation of beauty, tended with loving care, it can only embellish that which, already, exists in the country, known as the People's Republic of China.

The garden of Hongkong will, still, be part of the political concept of one-country, two-systems, regardless of the colour of the flowers that bloom.

But the colour of the Hongkong garden's blooms will change with the seasons of the year: It is a natural phenomenon.

One should not be afraid that colours of the flowers, within the garden, change – because these are wanted blooms: They are not unwanted growths, known as weeds, and should not be construed as such.

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