

FOR WHAT WE STAND

Beijing, today, is faced with the conundrum that, in order to make the people of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) happy, it is likely to have to make certain people in the PRC, proper, unhappy.

People holding, what they perceive to be, great power, rarely want to share that power.

As with a woman, prone to fits of jealousy when a competitor appears to be paying too much attention to her man, she does not want to share her lot with others; and, she will not tolerate that which is rightfully hers, taken from her ... or any part of it – not even for a short space of time.

But Beijing will have to come to terms with its ultimate destiny: It cannot have 7 million, unhappy HKSAR residents, or a sizeable number of them, for that matter, for very long, and it has no right to render them miserable because it is in Beijing's interest to make them happy, and to keep them in this happy frame of mood.

After all, it is a time-honour axiom that a happy worker is more productive than an unhappy one.

A solicitor may tell his client that which he may, or may not, do in accordance with the law, as it is written, but it is for the client, in good conscious, to tell his solicitor what ought to be done, in accordance with humanity, reason and justice.

If justice is balance, fairness or reasonableness, then, the justice of man in respect of his fellows is one whereby the political teeterboard is centred and balanced in the middle, and whereby opposing political factions may look at each other with respect while maintaining that balance.

Beijing may like to consider whether or not a political act is any the worse for being a generous one.

The problems that Mr Tung Chee Hwa, the Chief Executive of the HKSAR, is facing, today, are those caused by his own hand, or forced upon him by his masters in Beijing.

It is rare for a man to love the hand that feeds him, but it is more likely that a man will love he who teaches him to be self-reliant and to feed himself.

The restoration of tranquility in the territory, known as Hongkong, generally, by the world at large, must be the aim of this Administration, as well as being the aim of this Administration's Beijing masters.

Beijing must, also, consider that the general character of the people of a territory, as is the HKSAR with her people, will, ultimately, determine what sort of government is best fitted for the inhabitants of these 416 square miles.

The political formula for ruling the PRC, proper, is unlikely to be compatible to the character and temperament of the population of the HKSAR.

During the time that Great Britain ruled Colonial Hongkong (1842-1997), the general tenor of the territory was one of peace (except in times of world wars, of course) in spite of the fact that, today, it could be held that the people of the territory have more of a say in Government than ever before.

Never, during that period of 155 years when Great Britain ruled Hongkong, was there an outpouring onto the streets of the HKSAR, with an estimated 500,000 residents, claiming that they wanted freedom, democracy and Universal Suffrage – in addition to the impeachment of the Head of the Government of the HKSAR, Mr Tung Chee Hwa.

It is obvious that that which the British did, in ruling the old Hongkong, was more empathetic to the character and aspirations of the residents of the territory than the present Administration.

While criticism may be levelled, with some justification, at the British and the methods that were adopted, and employed, politically, in administering the Colony of Hongkong, Britain gave to Hongkong, an administrative infrastructure that was greatly admired and appreciated by the Civil Service.

The population of the territory, in those days, admired the Civil Service so much that to be a part of it was, in an of itself, a great honour.

Not so today.

Great Britain produced, continually instructed and continually fostered, the concept, among the rank and file, of maintaining the finest police force in Asia.

Great Britain organised The Volunteers, a voluntary '*army*', made up of local residents.

Great Britain encouraged an efficient and effective education system, which taught, among other things, the concept of the right of association, the right of the population to worship in the Church of their choosing, a free, aggressive and vibrant Press, and, she gave to the people of Hongkong, this idea as well as love of being part of the British Empire and the love of British democracy.

And the people of the HKSAR, who, more than likely, never analysed the above, they still cherish many of the virtues, engrained in their very being by the teachings, directly and indirectly, of the British.

When Japan invaded Hongkong in 1941, The Volunteers fought hard and long; many died, both during and after the battles for the territory.

The Volunteers fought because they believed in that for which they were fighting.

The love of Great Britain and their '*adopted*' Hongkong homes, and the ideals for which Great Britain stood, inspired The Volunteers to fight, often at a time when the situation was quite hopeless, militarily.

Soldiers fight best, even when conscripted, when they believe in the things for which they are fighting.

They die, grudgingly, it may be, but still they are willing to lay down their lives when they have love of country; and, they strongly believe in the reasons for going to war.

While man may enjoy killing, which is an unfortunate attribute of man, one that has been maintained throughout the history of this animal, without love, a country's navy would be so many floating tins upon the oceans of the world.

Men win wars; countries do not.

It follows that love, ultimately, is the conqueror of battles, not men, holding guns; not countries; not political regimes.

Close affection, the result of what could be termed, kindred blood, is stronger than any metal, or any composite material, ever produced by man, or ever to be produced by the science of man.

Though, perhaps, such concepts are as light as low-flying clouds to many of the people, resident in Beijing, the strong links that tie man to man cannot be broken.

Privileges, afforded to a small band of men, who agree to kowtow to the demands of a political clique and to spread the word of that clique, as the Gospel, according to that clique, will, eventually, result in the 'glue', which binds men to men and them to great ideals, to fail; the cohesion will fade; and, decay and dissolution is the resultant effect in the fullness of time.

Nearly every Chinese man and woman, now living in the HKSAR, has his or her roots in the People's Republic of China.

For many, they emigrated from the Motherland, for one reason or another.

They escaped from what they determined was a political regime, which was not to their liking.

They sought freedom – the freedom that was offered in the old Hongkong under the Colonial British.

Human nature is such that man's natural propensity for freedom cannot be crushed; it is man's most natural wont to be free; from fear; from poverty; from thought.

Abstract liberty is no liberty at all.

Liberty is only liberty when it is exercised by man.

If history teaches us little, it teaches man that most contests between governments and the people, who are governed, are centred on the right of election, of magistrates, of the delegates of the people.

Money is secondary when weighed against such lofty concepts as liberty.

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