



The Hong Kong Education and the Chinese nationalism in relation to Non-governmental organization before the invasion of Japan

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Abstract. The development of education before the fall of Hong Kong was closely linked with NGOs. NGOs are major players in education in Hong Kong, and Chinese play an important role in it. Chinese schools resisted the demands of the British Hong Kong government to promote English teaching and invited the people from mainland China to promote the New Culture Movement. After the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, teachers and students of schools run by Chinese people supported the War of Resistance in China through donations and charity sales. Nationalism became a prominent feature of Hong Kong education during this period.

Keywords: British, China, History of Colonial Hong Kong, Non-government organization, Christian, Education, Nationalism.

1 Introduction

Hong Kong was under the British colonial control before it fall into the hand of the Japanese in 1941, and the colonial government was trying to use education to maintain their colonial control. Under colonial rule, there are “resistances”, from Non-governmental organization, and nationalism. However, these resistances were interrupted by the invasion of Japanese. This article focus on the these two resistances

before the fallen of Hong Kong, discussing their relationship with Hong Kong colonial government and education.

Based on Peacock's book, Anthony Sweeting and Edward Vickers believes that Hong Kong's education policy is heavily influenced by governor, and after the massive strike in 1925-1926, Hong Kong government believes more direct intervention should imply to local Chinese schools[1]. Kim Fong Poon-McBrayer discussed the effort of Christian educator in establishing inclusive education and special education in early phase of colonial period[2]. David Walter Vikner also recognize the effort of Christian missions in forming Hong Kong education, in period between 1841 to 1897[3]. Thomas Kwan Choi Tse thinks that the Christian church maintain their relation with the government in aspect of education since 1870s[4]. Although previous researches did focus on Hong Kong education, they focused more on individual rather than Non-government institution, or those focus on nationalism fail to discuss the essential of language education in Hong Kong schools, thus could not relate school education with no nationalistic goal and the spread of nationalism in Hong Kong.

After the July 1, 1997, official Handover of Hong Kong, this colony of the British Empire finally return to the hand of Chinese people. The return of Hong Kong, or the Handover of Hong Kong did not suddenly happened in 1997, it was set up long before it happened. At an early phase, education conducted by Non-governmental organizations was part of the push factor of the Handover. The British colonial government in Hong Kong tried to use education as a tool to sustain their colonial rule and set barriers against the emergence of the Chinese nationalism. The colonial government would depoliticizing students, and pushing foreign language learning through policy to stop the spread of the Chinese nationalism, generally speaking, to identify as a Chinese, whether as a Chinese under Kuomintang's or Communist Party of China's control. The British colonial government in Hong Kong had its policy and goal; however, they were not in charge of all the educational institutions.

A part of the educational institutions run by non-governmental organizations was Tung Wah and The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel(USPG), they would run the school using funds both from society and from the government. Despite the fact that government could and did influence these organizations and the schools they fund, they failed to spread the English language at the early phase, or the pre-war period. Through the documents from the government, school, and newspapers, the education provided by these organizations was an important factor for the spreading

of nationalistic ideology. However, these Non-governmental organizations in Hong Kong were funded by, apart from the colonial government, British Anglican Church or foundations organized by wealthy Chinese from mainland China. They controlled part of Hong Kong's education out of their interests and did not necessarily operate their schools as the British colonial government expected. Thus, they helped push forward the spread of Chinese nationalism, although it was not their priority, which is the spreading of the Christianity.

2 The relationship between non-governmental organization and government

2.1 Non-governmental organization in Hong Kong education

For private school, which includes religious group funded school, would concern less about the governmental regulation. According to the report to the Church Missionary Society in 1913, the amount of government support was nearly half of the total receipts that year for the day schools the report included[5]. The report, however, focused mainly on the aspect related to religious behavior of these day schools instead of their specific academic performance. The author of this report cares more about the Christianity of the day school than how well they followed the government's policy. Add to the point, these day school were "To give a Christian education to Chinese girls in their own language." Chinese was an important part of their education process. According to how they frame the report, at this stage, converting Chinese through their day schools and maintaining the Christian population were more important compared to following all the regulation of the education department of Hong Kong. Certainly, "the secular part of the education is according to the code provided by the government." Yet, they did not give secular education as much status, for they did not report on the issue of how their code had been practiced. The decision they made was intentional, but the result was unintentional, as a religious organization, decolonization would not become their priority, but preaching and maintaining local Christian population was.

The situation changed slightly in a later report: the report of the Church Missionary Society in 1940[6]. This report was more concerned with a new regulation, which limited the number of pupils one classroom can have. The number was decided by government officials, and according to the memoir of Elsie Tu, Colonial Hong Kong

in the eyes of Elsie Tu, which was about Hong Kong after the Japanese invasion, the government official did not necessarily set the standard best suited for each school. They dully apply the standard for every classroom, and might also involve corruption in the process. Teacher and students had to struggle to make their classroom fit the standard. According to Elsie Tu, “The aggravating thing about all these rules was that they applied only to private and not to government-built schools.” She also mentioned anther incident where the inspector ignore the breaking of rule in another school, which “another school nearby that had the same sized room, partitioned into two rooms, with about sixty students in each.” While Tu’s school had about forty students in the room with same size, to get more tuition to support the operation of the school[7]. The government regulation did not performed humanely and equally.

2.2 Government’s education policy

Language is an important aspect in showing the effort of those school sponsored by non-governmental organizations. According to Ernest Gellner, language is an essential aspect in the forming of nationalism. Teaching through English was recommended by the Governor Hennessy, whom wish to raise the number of English speaking elite Hong Kong citizen to help their govern and government policy, which according to one of the Hong Kong Government Reports in 1873, the government set up different levels of economic support, and in period of Governor Hennessy, he pushed English study in Hong Kong, and wish to raise elite Hong Kong citizen who could speak English to help their govern. It divided schools into five level: the highest level was “School in which a European Education is given in any European Language, With Chinese in Addition” and Level four was “School in which a European Education is given in any European Language.” Each level would divide into different standards, the higher the standard, the higher the expectation. These standards were taken into consideration of schools, for example according to the Report of the Church Missionary Society in 1913: “In both these schools there are girls in the fourth standard and sometimes in the fifth standard.” But these day schools were less concerned about the level, compared to the standard, for they did not discuss the issue of raise their level in the report. It emphasized that the government supportive policy to increasing English language learning was not popular in these religious group founded schools.

2.3 NGO's opposive action towards Government education policy

Governor Hennessy pushed English study in Hong Kong, and wish to raise elite Hong Kong citizen who could speak English to help their govern. There are more government policies regarding English language study in transcripts of a student from Tack Ching Girls' Secondary School, founded by Sisters of the Precious Blood, a Christian sect. The transcript was mostly in Chinese, except for the Arabic numeric. Different from the previous transcript, English was included as one of the courses. For all the transcripts Haofu Ma had in Tack Ching Girls' Secondary School, four in total, none of her English grads got over 60, which was a pass; they were steadily below 50. In theory written on only one of the transcripts "This student failed on English test and need to pass the exam in order to level up or graduate." She was not supposed to get to higher education before passing the make-up test. However, there was no record that she passed or even took any make-up test for English courses at school.

This was not only missing from the transcript, but also missing from her interview. According to the data written on both the diploma and last semester's transcript, which she had 46 out of 100 in English, she even got her diploma earlier than her transcript was issued. Considering the fact that her average score was above 80, including the English score, her academic performance in other areas was decent. Although the English course was required by the education department's policy to graduate from the school or advance in grades, the school did not value it as important as government department believed. They let the student graduate without passing or even do the make-up test. According to the account of the student, Haofu Ma, She was could not find time to review the English course with English teacher's father, it seems unreasonable for her to find time to review for the make-up exam later, and she did not mention anything about a make-up exam. With the case of Haofu Ma, even for a school with 8 to 10 teachers, a school founded by a Christian organization that required students to take English language courses, this requirement was not well supervised. Students and school both did not think it was necessary for students to learn how to read and write English well even under the Hong Kong colonial Rule, and it was also a form a resistance towards Hong Kong government's education policy.

One of the St. Stephen's Girls College's yearly transcripts in 1936 is another example of how language was generally used in missionary schools. The whole transcript was in Chinese, including the score for each subject and the teacher's

comment on the student. It is also true that this particular student was at the top of her class. It could mean that she had a higher chance of passing the English courses required by the Hong Kong government when applying for more financial support, which was necessary for schools set up by non-governmental organizations in Hong Kong. However, the transcript belonging to a student in a Chinese language class could emphasize the attention St. Stephen's Girls College paid to the Chinese learning groups. They certainly did not force all their children and those who had a higher chance of passing English requirements to learn English to get more vital support from the government. It might also be because they favored the mainland Chinese Government since they were using "Year 25 of Republic of China" rather than C.E as calendar era in student's diploma, using such calendar era can interpret as an act of supporting Republic of China.

Apart from the example of the St. Stephen's Girls College transcript, the notes and textbook of Tung Wah Eastern Hospital's School of Nursing also reinforces that Chinese was the primary language used by the students. Chinese as a language were more critical to the Hong Kong students in the school founded by non-governmental organizations. Although they certainly would use English, but not as massive as Chinese. Most words were Chinese in their notes, including a detailed description of counting the pulse and a description of organs in the notes. There were nouns in English but only followed their Chinese translation and only occupied a small part of the page compared to Chinese. The fact that notes and textbooks were primarily written in Chinese firstly shows the language most people learned in lower education was Chinese. English was part of their education, but not as important as Chinese language study.

As Hong Kong Government started to strengthen the restriction on schools using Controlled School policy pushed by Governor Governor Nathan, In Chern Hwa school, there are resistance towards government policy, indicating school funded by Non-government institution was not in full cooperation with the Hong Kong government. From the perspective of the school and students, they must unwillingly follow the classroom standard published by Hong Kong colonial government. For instance, as Yanyun Rong (Teacher in Chern Hwa school) said in the interview, they had a limit of twenty students, but they took twenty five. When the government inspector came, five of the students had to hide on the top of the building, they were called "Running Ghost". In a case mentioned in the report of 1940, a school located in Stanley had 19 more students when the author of the report visited, and more might

come since: “The teacher said she had tried to refuse the children but the mothers insisted on leaving them.” Mothers would send their children to this school, even if it was already over limit, the controlled school policies restricted the scale of schools, however there are more people wish to get education than the number of student could attend school according to the policy, which means the controlled school policy was not well made, and causing resistance against this policy.

3 Nationalism, NGOs, and Hongkong education.

The Ideology of nationalism is a idea that loyal to “the nation”, identify the nation through history, tradition, religion, and, according to Hebert Adams Gibbons, also includes language. Using their same identity, to achieve the political goal of a unified nation, and making the nation a powerful independent country. As the starting of May Fourth movement, Hong Kong government and Governor Cecil Clementi was afraid of the influence of nationalistic ideology in Hong, using traditional education against Chinese nationalism, by removing textbook from Mainland China, and denationalize education.

As a result of the resistance of these schools funded by non-governmental organizations towards government policy, the use of Chinese language was the major and important language used by students in these schools. It was supported by the language used in the “The Hong Kong student essay contest” took place in May, 1941. Although it uses “The Hong Kong student” in the title, students who could join the contest were restricted to students from Christian schools and student organizations. The announcement of the contest was completely in Chinese, although Hong Kong government already relaxed the use of Chinese, they were still worried about the zeitgeist from the May Fourth Movement, which the contest support. The contest invited Dishan Xu as one of the commentators, who was one of the pioneers of the May Fourth Movement. The May Fourth Movement “was hoped, from a comparative perspective, to fulfill both the roles of Renaissance and Enlightenment in modern China.”The contest also invited Sir Robert Hutung and Lam Chi-fung as sponsors, the former was the first generation of Hong Kong Eurasian, recognizing himself as Chinese from Guangdong province, and the latter was a banker whom had a business in the mainland China that shrank due to the Japanese invasion. These sponsors’ presence emphasized the core of this contest: supporting the Chinese

nationalistic ideology which is hard to separate from language, thus making the contest a resist towards Hong Kong government's policy of Chinese nationalism.

Another contest related to the May Fourth Movement was "Hong Kong Church Secondary School Mandarin Speech Contest" held in May 24, 1941. Similarly, the announcement of the contest was in Chinese, the target students were from Christian funded schools, and they specifically asked students to use Chinese to present the topic, which was "New China and New Chinese teenager." First, the use of Chinese for the contest shows, again, the importance of Chinese language in these church funded schools. Second, the choice of topic indicate that, not only regarding "New Youth", or New Teenager, but also "new China", New China, or the revive of China as a country. These two subtopics were closely related to the May Fourth Movement: "New Teenager" was the title of a magazine established at the beginning of the New Cultural Movement, or some argued the early phase of the May Fourth Movement, in 1915, and "New China" were closely related to the Kuomintang or Communist Party of China, as a vision for the revival of China as a country after 1930s.

Using these two topic might not necessary shows the Christian school's direct relation to these two parties, but shows their belonging to the Chinese culture as a group, which could include the organizer of the contest, the commentator of the contest, and the students who participates in the contest. These two contest, especially the "Hong Kong Church school Chinese language speech contest." were intentionally organized to spread and propagate a Chinese identity, not directly related to the Hong Kong government, but directly relate to Mainland China, which at the time was under invasion by Japanese militarism. Thus, they participated in constructing a national identity, whether intentionally or unintentionally, eventually influencing students' approaches towards Hong Kong's colonial rule, and pushed forward the built of the Chinese national identity in Hong Kong.

The presence of nationalism in Hong Kong was not only in school education and classroom, but also in extracurricular activities. Schools encourages students actively participate in the activities that would help the Chinese government, which need material assistance apart from slogan. The most popular and most supported extracurricular activities in Hong Kong school was raising fund and succor, both provide money and resources to the Mainland China. There are different ways to raise fund, for instance Charity sale on the street or concert. All the fund and resources raised by these students were sent to fund raising groups or directly to the soldiers on the front line.

The students' favor towards the anti-Japanese campaign or patriotism movement did not only take the form of attending contests, but also Pooi To Middle School's donation to the soldiers in the front line. Pooi To Middle School was not founded by British C.M.S, it was established by Southern Baptist Convention from the United States, another non-governmental organization. The document, an article on Ta Kung Newspaper did not only mention the amount of the donation these female students collected, it also describes their act as patriotic. Ta Kung Newspaper at the time was famous for the "four refused to do" doctrine, the newspaper supposed not to follow blindly, accept government subsidy, be neutral between political parties, and represent the citizens' benefits as a group, instead of for private interests. The newspaper at the time was at its peak, and enjoying a good reputation, thus their figure was creditable. According to the newspaper, "The student self-organized group donate 610.5 Hong Kong dollar for the soldiers at the front line, for they did not have enough cloth to wear... Their are passionate on saving the country. " This newspaper at the time was at its peak, and enjoying a good reputation, thus their figure was creditable. The student groups donated more than 600 Hong Kong Dollar, at a time when, according to the "Administrative Reports for the year 1939" complied by Hong Kong government, the average rate of wages was 1.8 Hong Kong dollar at most, 0.4 Hong Kong Dollar at least per day. If all the figures were true, then it was a large donation to the soldiers in the front line. As students, they were putting great effort into defending "their nation", even when they were still under colonial control. Although these religious group funded schools did not aiming at spread the Chinese nationality, their use of Chinese language in education and events eventually made students of these schools easily identify as a Chinese, rather than a part of the British colonial empire.

Another book used by Hua Guang group expressed the similar passionate in Chinese nationalism. In "Road to Hua Guang", author of the book, members of the YWCA, also uses Christian figures, for instance the Bible, to help members understand values demonstrated by the group. Since they did not quote the Bible directly in most demonstrations, their target audience was evidently familiar with the text: students from Christian Learning Schools, from school funded by Christians, but using Chinese as their major language. They intentionally used religious figures in both "Road to Hua Guang" and "Organizing Hua Guang Group" but that did not mean they were using nationalism as a tool to preach Christianity: they were using both comprehensively. Religious language was used to help students from religious

schools understand nationalism, and use nationalism to unite Christianity. Hua Guang Group's intentional use of these two marks the popularity of both religion and nationalism in their target groups, which was the students groups from the Church founded middle and high schools. As a result, the Hua Guang Group strengthened the nationalist thinking in students groups. As a non-governmental organization, founded by Hong Kong YWCA, it also showed the popularity of nationalist thinking among students groups.

The example of female students from Pooi To Middle School did directly point on the patriotism and the nationalism. The example of Hua Guang Group directly shows the nationalist ideology expressed in students' organizations. The name Hua Guang Group can be interpreted differently: it could be "Those who wish to be the guiding light for the Chinese nation." or "Those who do the best for the family, the Society and the nation, even if the achievement is so small that no one notices, could call themselves as 'Light of Huaxia(Hua Guang)'." or whoever striving for good for the country. The explanation varied throughout the source, but the core was the same: that it was for the good of Chinese culture, or to bring light to China. From the starting point of the group, the name, implied their Chinese nationalism belief. The Hua Guang group was both a student group, and an education group. It was founded by Hong Kong YWCA, "All the girls group set in middle school collectively referred to as Hua Guang Group." aiming at female pupils at middle and high schools. As a student group, they also served as an education group, for nationalism, feminism, and Christian ideology. In "Organizing Hua Guang group", the creator of these activities made it clear that "we", members of Hua Guang Group were citizens of the Republic of China: "we" shared the same nationality, and "our" leader was the Kuomintang and Sun Yat-sen, who was "the first to offer a dedicated political leadership for a cause that set China on its own path to modernity.", a forerunner and important figure in the forming of a new Chinese identity. Compare to the British colonial government they supported patriotism towards Chinese nationalism.

Apart from the nationalist ideology, they were also explaining Christianity through nationalism. In discussing the color of the national flag of the Republic of China, they said "Since Red is the color for brave and sacrifice, and God witness the sacrifice of the Chinese who died for our country, the Chinese nation, then God Give us red flower on the ground." The red representing the blood of revolutionary martyr was correctly addressed, but God was certainly not part of the national flag's design, which means they were "inventing" God's presence in the national flag of the

Republic of China. Similarly, God was also given the colors blue and white as a reward for the honor and selflessness of Chinese people who fought for the country, thus a Christian God was at the center of the nationalist belief.

The resistance of these contest and organization towards government are in different aspect, and not from only one organization. For instance, there were resistance towards government's regulation on the spread of nationalism, and resistance towards government's regulation on the spread of ideology from May Fourth Movement. And these resistance were from different non-governmental organizations. For instance Hua Guang Group and other organization who funded those two contests. These resistance proves that these non-governmental organizations and government are not in cooperation, but on the contrary, they were in conflict.

4 Conclusion

The participation of non-governmental organization founded schools in Colonial Hong Kong was significant in the pre-war period, before the invasion of Japan. Their education policy, which resist Hong Kong government's education policies in aspect of language using in school, evade language requirement policy for graduate, resist student limit in classroom, and in aspect of spreading of Chinese nationalism both in school and out of school. Although there are restriction from government, these non-governmental organization still had space to resist government's policy for the government did not enforce their policy with full attention, allowing cases for instance "running ghost" to happen. With the spread of the nationalism ideology, it lay the foundation for the future return of Hong Kong, for there are people from that generation who recognize themselves as Chinese, and Hong Kong as part of China.

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