

Elementary-school students in Hong Kong recently received a student handbook about the territory's Basic Law from school authorities. Yet in many places, the handbook is unrelated to the law. Instead it contains a wealth of patriotic material, including directing students to work for unification with Taiwan, claiming that it "is part of our sacred territory."

Parents and Internet users have been fiercely critical of the Hong Kong government for, as they see it, using the Basic Law as a brainwashing tool. Some have even responded by calling Taiwan an independent country and not part of Chinese territory.

The handbook claims that as the Chinese flag was raised on the day of Hong Kong's return, it wiped away the national humiliation that was the result of the century-long British occupation and that the territory has prospered after being embraced by the motherland.

After 1997, Hong Kong was completely at the mercy of China and the idea that it is governed by Hong Kongers is nothing but an empty slogan.

The Sinicization of Hong Kong is quickly intensifying and this even includes the territory's demographic structure.

The Beijing-supported chief executive is constantly trying to think up new ways of brainwashing the population, while democracy, freedom, human rights and the economy deteriorate, leaving the number of Hong Kongers that identify with China at an all-time low.

Yet Hong Kong residents are refusing to bow to the authoritarian Chinese regime and its representative, and June 4 and July 1 have become political symbols of that resistance.

Hong Kong is not far from Taiwan and the so-called "one country, two systems" was devised to be used in the unification of Taiwan also. The added fact that President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was born in Hong Kong should serve to make the government warier of China.

However, Ma does not seem to care in the least that Hong Kong's economy is being controlled by China, as he stubbornly continues to pursue his goal of eventual unification by first attaching Taiwan to China economically.

The agreements signed by China and Ma, from the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement to the cross-strait service trade agreement are copies of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) that China has signed with Hong Kong, and now uses to control both the Hong Kong economy and its people.

Yet Ma does not care.

While more and more Taiwanese are waking up to the danger of the situation, Ma is launching an even greater effort to whitewash and "detoxify" the situation, in the process redefining the meaning of democracy.

The qualitative and quantitative changes in Hong Kong over the past 16 years contain many similarities with what is happening in Taiwan.

Hong Kong's "patriotic" politicians and capitalists have assured the authoritarian government in Beijing of their loyalty in exchange for individual political and economic advantages, which consolidate their position within the unification framework.

Just like the average Taiwanese, the average Hong Konger has seen job opportunities disappear and incomes drop while it becomes impossible to maintain a dignified lifestyle.

The happiness, employment and long-term welfare of the general public have been sacrificed for the prosperity and stability of a small minority of Hong Kong's elite.

Considering this situation, surely Beijing's hope that the people of Hong Kong should identify with China is futile.

In the 19th century, a weak and humiliated China suffered under the occupation of Great Britain, France and other imperialist states. Historically speaking, this is of course an injustice committed against China.

However, history often swings back and forth, and while ceding Hong Kong to Great Britain was a humiliation to China, the territory prospered and developed under the British far surpassing any Chinese city.

This does not apply only to Hong Kong. To this day, any part of China once occupied by a foreign power remains more developed than other parts of China. It is not very surprising that people sometimes jokingly say that China's biggest humiliation was not the cession of Hong Kong to Great Britain, but rather that the British turned Hong Kong into the pearl of the Far East. Ironically, this saying has been verified over and over again by Hong Kong's regression over the past 16 years.

Hong Kongers have continued to protest annually on June 4 and July 1 against the brainwashing going on in their educational system, the delayed introduction of universal elections and their puppet government.

There is repeated evidence that more and more Hong Kongers are leaving their colonial mindset behind in search of an identity of their own. At the July 1 demonstration this year some people held up the colonial British flag.

Though they do not long for a return to the colonial era, their opposition to China's authoritarian rule is evident.

At the same time, Ma and his cohorts, who are in fact in charge of a sovereign state, are inviting Chinese colonialism.

## **Ma wants Chinese colonialism**

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From “one China, different interpretations” and “one country, two areas” to the view that the relationship between Taiwan and China is not a relationship between countries, they are unreservedly, accepting the idea that even Hong Kongers reject: “Taiwan is part of China’s sacred territory.”

To say that this defies belief is a gross understatement.

Translated by Perry Svensson

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