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Editors of the Hong Kong Geographer

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Contributions to the Hong Kong Geographer are welcome. Please send your manuscripts to the editors via the following address:

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NOTE:

Part I of the Hong Kong Geographer will report the activities of the HKGA and hopefully to inform members of other activities related to geography in Hong Kong sponsored by other institutions. Part II of the Hong Kong Geographer will include short feature articles for general readers. These features do not reflect the views of the Hong Kong Geographical Association. The contributors are solely responsible for their papers.
PART I ACTIVITIES

Executive Committee for 1982-1983

At the Annual General Meeting on 30th Jan., 1982, the following members have been elected for office-bearers for 1982-1983:

Chairman: Dr. Sit Fung Shuen, Victor (HKU)
Vice-chairman: Mr. Chan Pui Kai (Northcote)
Hon. Secretary: Dr. Chu Kim Yee, David (CUHK)
Hon. Treasurer: Dr. Hsu Sheng T (CUHK)
Committee Members:
Mr. Lau Pak Ling (Diocesan Boys Sec)
Ms. Linda Lee (Cheungshawan Catho)
Dr. S.M. Li (Baptist)

Membership Renewal

To ensure continuous receipt of circulars, Newsletters (the form of The Hong Kong Geographer), Asian Geographer etc., please renew your membership as soon as possible. A renewal form is attached with this issue of the Hong Kong Geographer. Feel free to contact us if you fail to receive the publication of the HKGA after your renewal of membership or if you have queries or suggestions about the activities of the association. The Hon. Secretary Telephone No. is 0-633111 Ext 475; the Hon. Treasurer 0-633111 Ext 469; the Chairman 5-4097240 and the Vice-chairman 5-871281.

Scheduled Programmes for the coming year

a). Dr. Sit has consented to lead a field trip to the New Territories. It would be a whole day trip with handout.
b). On Feb., 1983, there will be a one-day conference on "Resource and Development of the Pearl River Delta". Registration Fee was set at $250.00 each (non-members) and $100.00 each (members only). Dr. K.Y. Wong was elected as conference chairman and Dr. Sit, Vice-chairman.

Symposium on Development and Environmental Management

in China and Hong Kong

To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the Geography Department of The Chinese University is going to host and hold a symposium on environmental management on 22nd May 1982 at the C.U. campus. The symposium aims at providing a forum for professional geographers, scholars and Government officials to discuss the major environmental consequences of economic development in China and Hong Kong and the strategies to maintain environmental balance.

The following is a list of speakers and their presentation topics:

1. Dr. C.T. Wong (A.F.D.), Environmental Implications of Agricultural Development in Hong Kong.
2. Mr. C.S. Shen (Zhongshan Univ., Guangzhou), Ecological Balance in the Pearl River Estuary.
3. Dr. K.S. Pun (H.K. Royal Town Planning Institute), Environmental Control through Urban Planning in Hong Kong.
5. Prof. Y.L. Tang (Zhongshan Univ., Guangzhou), Environmental Strategy in China.
6. Dr. Stuart Reed (H.K. Environmental Protection Agency), Environmental Control in Hong Kong.
7. Dr. K.C. Lam (C.U.H.K.), Development and Environmental Strategies in Developing Countries: lessons from China and Hong Kong.

H.K.G.A. members are welcome to attend the above symposium, the details of which can be obtained from Dr. Lam Kin Che of The Chinese University Geography Department (Tel: 0-633111 Ext 475).
PART II FEATURES

DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION: HONG KONG AND JAPAN COMPARED
Norman Y. T. Ng
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The theory of demographic transition, like the Malthusian theory in its time, is certainly one of the most debated demographic theories in the present century. It has been criticized for being an adequate framework for the study of the demographic situation of contemporary society as much of present-day experience with regard to population growth deviates from the position on which the original theory was based. Some even argued that it is not a theory but a description of historical events that have occurred in the developed countries with some regularity. However, to those propounding it e.g. Kingsley Davis, Frank W. Notestein and George J. Stolnitz, the theory is a valuable generalization and that it serves well as a fruitful guide for observation and analysis. At any rate, what is implicit in the theory does afford some optimism as opposed to the more fatalistic view of the Malthusianists. In some of the better-off developing countries of to-day we do find a general decline of fertility as suggested in the theory.

The Conventional Demographic Transition Theory
The Pre-transition Condition
Before dwelling into the model itself (Fig. 1), one must realize that the so-called population transition which took place in Industrial Europe at roughly the middle of the 19th century, is an unprecedented historical phenomena, never occurred before in the history of mankind. Prior to this period human population growth must be viewed as either stagnant or increasing at an imperceptibly slow pace. Typical economies of this long history of mankind were represented by primitive gathering and hunting, subsistence farming. High and fluctuating death and birth rates characterized this long period depending on the vicissitudes of nature.

The Stage of High Potential Growth
Towards the beginning of the Industrial Revolution which was preceded by a period of improved commerce and standard of
living in western Europe, particularly, expanded European influence over other continents, and an added scientific knowledge, we see a decline of death rate while birth rate remained high. Such a condition was most conducive to rapid population increase. Such demographic conditions, characterized by high fertility with as yet no tendency to decline and declining death rate is termed in the theory as the Stage of High Potential Growth.

The Stage of Transitional Growth
It is really in the second stage, known as the Stage of Transitional Growth that growth of population of revolutionary proportion took place. Throughout this stage death rate continued to drop as living conditions and medical facilities improved. At the first phase of this stage, however, the birth rate was still high, very often with a tendency to rise, basically for the same reasons which accounted for the drop of death rate. Rapid population increase characterized this early phase of the Stage of Transitional Growth. However, as experienced by the industrial western European countries, it does not take long before the birth rate began to decline. As at any point of time in this stage there is a time lag between the declines of death and birth rates, the stage is one of growth but at a declining rate towards the close of the stage when death rate began to level off.

The Stage of Incipient Decline
The third stage, the Stage of Incipient Decline is characterized by both low death and birth rates. It may be assumed that at this stage the population was increasing at a rate which would not overly tax the existing social and economic resources. One has to realize that to have reached such a low birth rates efforts have to be made to deliberately curbing fertility as in the case for most of the western European countries whose populations have undergone the demographic transition.

Experience of the Developing Countries
Since W.W. II most of the developing countries have increased their efforts to industrialize, become more modernized and have become more urbanized. If their growth patterns had been anything
comprehensive demographic transition are not restricted as continent, creed, or culture." Is Hong Kong likely to achieve the same thing? This should be an interesting question.

**Growth Patterns: Hong Kong and Japan Compared:**

**Death Rates**

As far as the graph (Fig. 2) shows Japan has experienced a gradual decline of death rate. The drop took place long before the 1920's when the Crude Death Rate at the early part of the decade was around 23. It was in the 1950's when the rate dropped down to below 10 reaching 6.6 in 1971. It took over 40 years to drop 16.4 points. For Hong Kong the drop is abrupt. Although we do not have reliable data for a few years because of the Pacific War, the Crude Death Rate for the four years immediately before the war averaged at 35.7. Five years after the war (1950) the death rate had already gone down to below 10 and is now around 5. Within 10 years (1940-1950) the Crude Death Rate dropped 25.7 points. This indicates a very high rate of natural increase. Coupled with the influx of refugees from China in the post-war years one can easily understand why the increase of population in Hong Kong had been so phenomenal.

**Fertility Rate**

The initial decline of fertility of Japan took place in the 1920's when it had already emerged in the Far East as a highly urbanized nation with less than half of its population engaged in agriculture. The rate of decline was somewhat retarded by militarism and expansionism when man-power was considered most important. More rapid decline was seen in the post-war years. The drop of fertility very much follows the pattern of the drop of death rate, allowing roughly a 1.3 percent natural increase per year throughout the whole period from 1920-1971.

The pre-war birth-rate of Hong Kong was about 23. This, however, needs qualification as it tends to underestimate the fertility of the population of Hong Kong. The pre-war population was made up of a substantial proportion of transients whose families were in other parts of China and were not taken into account for calculating the birth rate. At any rate, the fertility rate in Japan is far less than 20.

The trend of demographic changes in these two populations indicated that they both have traversed different paths at arriving at nearly the same fertility and mortality levels. Traditionalism and success in industry and modernization are shared by both. For both the populations, (Japan 1940, Hong Kong 1962) appreciable decline can only be maintained through vigorous sponsorships by government, international and local organizations in family planning programmes. Certainly urbanization and industrialization have brought about new values and norms. Such changes in society are only responsible for preparing the way for the population to accept the idea of small families. The important thing is how much information and what methods that are available may be readily conveyed to the individual. The success of guiding the growth of population to the incipient decline stage rests very much on the effort of the government and interested organizations.

**FIG. 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN - HONGKONG AND JAPAN**
References


SHENZHEN SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE: China's Experiment in Modernization

Editor: Kwan Yiu WONG

Authors: David K.Y. CHU, Kin Che LAN, Mo Kwan LEE FONG, Yen Tak NG, See Lou TOO, Kwan Yiu WONG

This book provides the first systematic treatment of various aspects of Shenzhen including its natural environment, its history and its recent development in agriculture, industry, housing, transport and tourism. The Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, which is economically the most vital part of the Shenzhen Municipality, is given special attention. This work assesses in great detail the profound implications of such development on Shenzhen itself, on China and on its neighbour, Hong Kong.

Publication of this book is the outcome of a year-long research project undertaken by six members of the Geography Department of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Its coverage of over 130 pages is fully enriched with illustrations and maps which have never been published before.

Publisher: Hong Kong Geographical Association. Price: U.S. $8.00

Copies can also be obtained from: Geography Department, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong.

Cheques payable to the Hong Kong Geographical Association Members at Special Discount Rate of HK$35.00 from the Hon. Secretary