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Special Issue: 20th Anniversary of HKGA

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Words from the Editor

This year the Association celebrates its twentieth anniversary. Five prominent geographers, namely, Professor Charles Grant, Professor Leung Chi Keung, Professor Yeung Yue Man, Mr. Fung Yee-wang and Mr. Law Hing Lun, were invited to speak at this year’s Hong Kong Geography Day. Professors Grant and Yeung talked about the development of the geography departments (in the case of Hong Kong University, the Department of Geography and Geology) -including the size and research and teaching orientation - in the two universities, respectively, in the past twenty years. Professor Leung presented a thought-provoking essay on the geography of Hong Kong. Mr. Fung commented on the development of the secondary school geography curriculum. Finally, Mr. Law spoke on the events leading to the founding of the Association twenty years ago and the Association’s subsequent development. Together these talks give a highly valuable account of the current state of geographical education and research in Hong Kong both at the secondary and tertiary level, and thus form an important milestone in the development of geography as a discipline in the Territory. Contained in this issue of the Hong Kong Geographer are four of the above speeches. Hopefully, we will be able to publish Professor Grant’s speech in the next issue.

Largely because of historical reasons - the chairs of geography at the two universities are, by constitution, also the honorary presidents of the Association, Baptist College was somehow left out on the scene. But in recent years the department of geography at Baptist has been experiencing rapid development. There are currently eight teaching staff, with an additional ninth to join in the next semester, whose specialities range from physical / environmental to human / economic. Many of them are active members of the Association. The department is currently offering two degree courses, the first being the BA(hons) course organized on a traditional way and the second is the BSc(hons) in China Studies the focus of which is on the geography of China. The current in-take for geography majors is about 60. The department, which is currently housed in a temporary structure, will move back to the main campus early next year and will then be equipped with proper cartography and environmental laboratories. Certainly the department is fast becoming one of the major centres of geographical education and research and will be well represented in the Association’s thirtieth anniversary.
The Founding of Hong Kong Geographical Association

by

Law Hing Lun

Founding Member of Hong Kong Geographical Association

1969 marks the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong Geographical Association. As one of its founding members, I am most happy to share with fellow geographers my reflections of what had happened to the Association in these last 20 years.

Twenty years is not a short time, and to see that the HKGA has gone through its various stages of growth and has prospered as a highly organized body is definitely something we should all be proud of. I am going to share with you what I, as a veteran member of the Association, would like to see how the Association could further promote geographical learning in Hong Kong.

Let me trace the events leading to the formation of the HKGA. More than 20 years ago, there was only a handful of geography teachers. There were even less chances of formal gatherings among these teachers. But there was a common feeling that there should be some means by which fellow geography teachers could gather together to share each other’s experience of geography teaching. Following on this idea, a small group of energetic geography teachers held irregular evening meetings to discuss the common problems they faced and how they resolved their problems. During these evening meetings, staff from the Geography Departments of the Two universities would be invited to give talks on the recent developments of geographical research. From this nucleus group of dedicated teachers, an idea sprang up that there should be a formal body to promote the learning and teaching of geography in Hong Kong. This body should also function to disseminate new geographical ideas to those who are interested in this subject. This idea immediately gained widespread support. Thus a Steering Committee was formed, and was charged with a special duty to establish a formal geographical association for Hong Kong. I had the fortunate opportunity of being one of the Steering Committee members.

The duties given to this Steering Committee were by no means easy tasks. The immediate task was to draw up a draft constitution
and by-laws for the proposed Association. This was to be vital
document, as it would embody the proceedings of the Association,
as well as streamlining the proper organization of the Association.
We had to prepare a blueprint for the future activities and functions
for the Association so that they could be attractive enough for people
to join. Here we had to strike a balance. On the one hand, we had to
promote and disseminate formal ideas about geographical
education, as well as to cater to the general interest of the members.
We had also to solicit support from academic institutions and key
figures in geographical education. Finally, three members of the
Steering Committee were charged with the special duties to liaise
with the Registrar of Societies and the Police Department for the
formal registration and the setting up of the Association. These same
three persons were later elected as the first Chairman, Hon.
Secretary and Hon. Treasurer of the first Executive Committee of the
Association in 1969.

So you will see that we had a very difficult task. However, the
Steering Committee worked hard and fast. Having gone through all
the painstaking efforts and made all the necessary arrangements, the
Steering Committee finally obtained formal approval from the
Governor and the Association was officially registered on 26 April
1969. Thus the HKGA was formally inaugurated in the same year.

The founding of the HKGA owed much to the kind support of the
Geography Departments of the two local universities. Prof. Dwyer
in particular played a key role and gave all the support for the setting
up of the association. Since 20 years ago, the Chinese University of
Hong Kong at Sha Tin was still regarded as somewhat remote from
the city centre, so we had to use the facilities in the University of
Hong Kong to carry out our activities, including our regular meetings.

The first Executive Committee of the Association fully realized that
the primary objective of the Association was to promote a wider
interest in the study of Geography. The constitution made it explicitly
clear that "the Association exists to promote interest in, stimulate
teaching of, and research in, Geography. Membership is open to all
who are interested in the aims of the Association". Towards this end,
special sub-committees were formed to meet the wide ranging needs
of its members. There were sub-committees on field studies, talks
and seminars, and also publications of geographical interests.

Various activities were organized for its members, not only for those
who wish to seek academic enrichment, but also for those with
general interest in geography. As a matter of fact, it is interesting to
know that in its first year of inception, the Association membership
was made up of a large proportion of non-geographers.

Because of the enthusiastic support of its members, and the
dedicated efforts of the Executive Committee, by the end of the first
year, the Association could proudly report in its first Annual General
Meeting it had an enrollment of 120 members.

The HKGA has stood up to the test of time. It has prospered and
has gained a widely recognized standing. It has always been
responsive to the needs of its members. Let me take an example.
You will recall that in the 1960s, Geography received much impetus
from statistics and its related science, hence the 'quantitative
revolution' in Geography. To help disseminate this major impact, the
Association made use of Prof. Peter Haggett's visit to Hong Kong to
talk to members on quantitative geography and geographical
models. Special conferences were also jointly held with the
Education Department for secondary school teachers to disseminate
this aspect of geographical approach. Today through the efforts of
the successive executive committees, the Association has been able
to give even more welcome service to its members. Its publication
'Asian Geographers' has gained international support and are now
available in many overseas university libraries, while the "Hong Kong
Geographers" is much value to local geography teachers. Recently
weekend camps have been held for teachers on various topics.

Looking back, we have experienced years of hardship, yet we have
overcome many difficulties. What about the future? I suggest that
there are two major areas we can look at. Locally our Association
should look for diversification of activities. As the Association aims at
the promotion of a wider interest in geography, activities should
serve the needs of a wider category of membership. The Association
used to hold functions which attracted a large number of general
public who would like to know more about Hong Kong. Likewise the
Association also organized highly successful seminars on more
academic aspects. Undoubtedly the Association is a most
appropriate body for the dissemination of new ideas. I have
mentioned about the seminars on new geography and quantitative
revolution. The Association had also organized other equally successful courses on new geography curriculum in secondary schools. Indeed in many other places, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, their geographical associations have been the driving force behind curriculum innovations. It is gratifying to see that this afternoon we will have a talk on the Geography curriculum in the secondary schools in Hong Kong. It is hoped that more in-depth discussions of this kind could be held in future.

Looking at Hong Kong as a whole, the Association would be heading towards another era of new development. An hour ago Professor Leung has touched on the changing character of Hong Kong and how Hong Kong will continue to change in the run-up to 1997 and beyond. Similarly the HKGA has evolved from a small nucleus in the beginning to its present status which includes professional geographers, teachers as well as the general public. It is now high-time for the Association to consider how we can better meet the challenges of future. There are many directions towards which we can proceed. Could we, for example, establish better relationship with fellow societies outside Hong Kong. Indeed, as geographers, we should always be concerned with what happens not only locally, but also abroad. As Hong Kong is heading towards radical changes in the coming eight years, should our Association also consider how we are going to match up with these changes? With this concluding question may I invite all fellow members to give careful thoughts to these imminent challenges.

GEOGRAPHY OF HONG KONG AND HONG KONG’S FUTURE
by
Prof. C.K. Leung
Department of Geography and Geology, Hong Kong University

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to speak to you here this morning, on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Geographical Association. the Annual events of the Association have always been colourful and glamorous, and this year being its 20th is expectedly even more so. May I on this memorable day offer the Association, Mr Chairman, and your Committee my hearty congratulations.

I have been asked to say something about the geography of Hong Kong and Hong Kong’s future. I must confess that I find this topic not an easy one: for the geography of Hong Kong as a subject to a professional and distinguished audience such as this is too familiar or even too static in some sense, while the future of Hong Kong is indeed everybody’s guess. However, I will try.

THE CHANGING GEOGRAPHY OF HONG KONG

I do not propose to begin, as one normally should dealing primarily with regional geography, with a consideration of Hong Kong’s location, territory, and site per se, which as I have said may be too static, although I will probably return to these from time to time. I do however propose to take a couple of special routes to caricature some of the features of the changing geography of Hong Kong.

Let me begin by quoting S.G. Davis, the first Chair of Geography in this University, from his classic on local geography, Hong Kong in its Geographical Setting, where he provided the most vivid description of the geography and the raison d’etre of Hong Kong as a colony:

The selection of the Island of Hong Kong as the base was the obvious one which would be expected of a maritime nation. It had the advantage of being sited at the entrance of the Chu Kiang or Pearl River.
Almost ever since its establishment, Hong Kong, more than any other treaty port, afforded a refuge for runaway persons and capital from China as well as an interim abode for rural emigrants destined for Southeast Asia and beyond. Such movements of Chinese people between China and Hong Kong were free and were highly sensitive to the political and economic conditions prevailing. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, Hong Kong was once more a refuge, with thousands of Chinese fleeing there before the advancing Japanese. With the outbreak of War in Europe in 1939, the position of the colony became even more precarious, and the Japanese quickly attacked and occupied Hong Kong in December 1941. Trade completely disappeared, local currency lost its value, the supply of food was seriously disrupted, and many residents fled to Inland China. The 1941 population of 1,639,337 was drastically reduced to about 650,000 in 1945 on the Japanese surrender.

British troops returned to the city on August 30, 1945, and civil government was reestablished in May 1946. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Chinese and foreigners returned, who were soon joined by economic and political refugees from China, who were fleeing the civil war between the Nationalist and Communist armies.

Published in 1949, Davis's book as its title suggests exhibits a strong consciousness of the geographical setting of Hong Kong, particularly the centrality of its location in relation to other major cities in the region, and of the importance of its entrepot trade. Indeed, post-war Hong Kong was booming with entrepot trade, especially with China and countries in Southeast Asia, until the imposition of a trade embargo by the United States in December 1950, followed by the United Nations in May 1951, as a result of China's participation in the Korean War.

By the time Denis Dwyer assumed the Chair of Geography in the University in 1967, Hong Kong was a very different place. As an urban geographer interested in cities in Southeast Asia, of which Hong Kong is one, Dwyer was preoccupied, as was evident in his first major work, Asian Urbanization: A Hong Kong Casebook, with problems such as,

... the evolution and socio-economic characteristics of squatter settlements, locational preferences of
street hawkers and their economic role in the cities of the developing world, environmental conditions and urban renewal problems in tenement housing, ..., the role of small-scale industrial units in urban and economic characteristics of the Hong Kong urban population. (D.J. Dwyer, 1971,8)

This is not surprising since by that time the so-called industrial transformation of the economy as a result of the migration of Shanghai entrepreneurs to Hong Kong after 1949 with their capital, machinery, technological know-how and international contacts (HK Research Project, p.20) had successfully offset problems of a depressed entrepot trade, and provided the needed employments for the burgeoning population which more than doubled itself between 1946 and 1956 to over 3.7 million, while poor working conditions, in small factories in domestic premises as well as large ones in new industrial blocks, overcrowding in old urban areas, squatting on rooftops and slopes, and hawking in the streets were widespread. Moreover, the 1967 disturbances which started as an industrial dispute in a San Po Kong plastic factory but ended in highly charged political turmoil helped focus attention on problems of the emerging urban geography accompanying the industrial and demographic transformation in Hong Kong.

Yet there was no doubt in Dwyer's mind that cities were places where regional and national developments were initiated, and that historically the Industrial Revolution was essentially urban-based. Following Meier, he pointed out that cities were designed, consciously or unconsciously, not only to provide better physical access to goods and services but also as communication centres and store houses of information. Cities too had repeatedly bred movements designed to establish new forms of order as national ways of life. In short, he conceptualized, as the title of his 1969 conference, The City as a Centre of Change in Asia, indicated, the city as a catalyst intellectually, socially, and politically. By making reference to the fact that Chinese cities were essentially administrative centres, he obviously hinted that Hong Kong, where the conference was held, might well be the centre of change for the region.

To complete the survey, it is interesting to note that Charles Grant, a soil specialist taking the Chair of Geography in 1974, chose to focus on the problems of reclamation and land use in the Pearl River Delta. (C. Grant, 1976) He pointed to the land use, especially agricultural land use, and development potential of the Delta, though he could not by the greatest stretch of imagination in the mid-1970s have foreseen the rapid industrialization of the area today. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the New territories were being urbanized and the problems of land shortage driven home more clearly, he was the first to turn to the Pearl River Delta for a possible solution to the restricting geography of Hong Kong.

If the above have been individual geographers' views, let me now take another route by referring you to a multi-disciplinary assessment in the late-1970s of the situation of Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Dilemmas of Growth (C.K. Leung, et al. 1980) was the result of a Conference of the same title held in Canberra, December 1979, where Hong Kong specialists in history, geography, economics, political science, sociology, planning, etc., analyzed and evaluated the city's post-war development and transformation, and the possible future path it might take. Looking beyond, most of the specialists in their own field and with their own reasons saw the continued growth and prosperity of Hong Kong, and felt that status quo or some form of the Hong Kong system would survive beyond 1997. For example, one economist, pointing out that Chinese leaders had gone as far as possible, short of an explicit undertaking to renew the lease, in hinting that Hong Kong's institutional framework might not be changed, argued that.

This willingness to leave Hong Kong alone has often been explained in terms of economic advantage which China derives from the city. In 1978 China's net visible trade surplus against Hong Kong alone amounted to some US$2.18 billion. There is no reliable estimate of invisible earnings such as remittances, tourism, banking services, and investment profits, but an educated guess is that China probably obtained foreign exchange worth US$3.7 billion from Hong Kong in 1978. Apart from this, Hong Kong also serves as a trans-shipment centre, ... a laboratory for testing consumer
products, and an outpost for acquiring market Information and foreign technology... (Y.C. Jao in C.K. Leung et al, 1980, 187)

and he concluded that,

In the end, therefore, what determines Hong Kong's future is not a piece of paper on which China signed under duress in the 19th century, but China's evolving Realpolitik in which many wider and more urgent issues are involved. (Y.C. Jao in C.K. Leung et al, 1980, 188)

This view had the concurrence of the political scientist, who confidently stated,

... Hong Kong's prospects as a separate political entity seem assured and better than they have been for more than half a century. Moreover there are good reasons, primarily economic, why this should remain true for the next ten or even twenty years. Whether the colony can survive beyond 1997 will depend on the size of its continued contribution to China's economic progress... and the willingness of the Chinese leadership to take decision on a hardheaded assessment of the costs and benefits of reincorporation, and to be prepared to allow their nationalism to be called into question in order to accommodate the legal difficulties which arise primarily on the British side. (N.J. Miness in C.K. Leung et al, 1980, 27)

Just when everyone seemed to feel so sure that the 1997 issue might be evaded and that Hong Kong could survive intact, the Sino-British negotiations commenced in 1982 and the Joint Declaration was signed, as we all know, on December 19, 1984.

I hope that I have been able to show that the crucial elements of the geography of Hong Kong are not simply its location, territories, or site, but the dynamic and ever changing functions of the city and its external relationships, on which the city's future depends.

HONG KONG'S FUTURE

So far, Hong Kong has been extremely lucky. "In spite of the influx of population, depressed entrepot trade since the early 1950s, internal social and political unrest, and a shortage of natural resources including space and time, Hong Kong remerged from every setback as a stronger and more proper place, albeit with a changing role as an entrepot, a manufacturing centre, a highly industrialised city, a regional financial centre, and a vital agent in the trade and modernization of China. Today, Hong Kong is well known not only for the rapid growth of its economy, its trade and shipping, or even its financial capability, but also as a model of urbanization in Asia..." (C.K. Leung et al, 1980, 1) Hong Kong in 1989 has a per capita GNP of US$ 9,390. Hong Kong is world number one in the consumption of cognac, ownership of Mercedes Benz per 1000 population, car density per mile of road space, and so on, but the most impressive and important is being the first container port in terms of annual turnover of container boxes, which in 1988 stood at 4 million 20-foot equivalent units. (HK Economic Journal, 11.2.1989)

Against the changing geography and almost infinite growth of Hong Kong, what does the signing of the Joint Declaration have in store for its future? Does it signify another round of transformation, which, like the change in 1841, promises to be the opening of an era of unknown potentials?

I am tempted again to quote S.G. Davis, who in his concluding chapter stated,

If in the future there are discussions to decide Hong Kong's status vis-a-vis China it would seem that two main propositions must be considered:-

1. That a piece of land belongs to the main territory with which it forms a part (physiographically) and to whose people the bulk of the inhabitants belong.

2. That a state, whose nationals first occupied and developed an empty piece of
land and have since been responsible for its prosperity, has a good claim to continue to rule it. (S.G. Davis, 1949, 193-4)

I do not wish to debate the validity or otherwise of these propositions, especially the second one, but it seems striking that writing almost half a century before the problem was due Davis already provided a geographical analysis and precipitated the grounds of the British claim. This of course is history now and Hong Kong's future in this context is already decided, in the sense that as a result of the Joint-Declaration, Hong Kong will return to China and will be established as a Special Administrative Region.

In early 1970's I ran an extra-mural course, Hong Kong's Past, Present, and Future and considered along with academics in other disciplines Hong Kong's possible options for the future. As a geographer, I attempted to measure the options with the three principles in political geography for the survival of political areas, namely, lebensraum or living space, which must be adequate and sufficiently endowed; iconography, or common values among the people, whether historical, cultural, social, religious, or political; and circulation or communication and interaction, especially on a common language or via an integrated system. Seen in this light, there was very little chance that Hong Kong could survive once the lease of the New Territories expired, and the only feasible interim was the development of local government. One can argue that the HKSAR, with its promised autonomy, is likely to be the highest form of local government and will therefore be best suited to Hong Kong.

However, let me come back to the geography proper. Consequent to the open policy of China, the relative location of Hong Kong seems changing, with far better access even to the most remote parts of China, and its centrality as has been pointed out by Davis more pronounced. The establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, approximately one-third the size of Hong Kong, not only effectively shifts the boundary of Hong Kong northwards but directly organizes the vast hinterland in Guangdong and other provinces in the service of Hong Kong. (Guangzhou Institute of Geography, 1985, 170-1). Today, Hong Kong plus Macau provides over three quarters (76%) of the foreign direct investments in China. (K.Y. Wong et al.

1388, 195) and directly and indirectly Hong Kong employs 4 million workers in the Pearl River Delta area. Effectively, therefore, the territory of Hong Kong has been extended in more than one way, and to the extent that industrial location will be under very different spatial and terrain constraints, even the site and the internal structure of the city are undergoing subtle changes. In short, Hong Kong seems being compensated for its long arrested physical expansion and is destined to be the most dominating city in South China.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I have tried to confine myself strictly to geography as I am asked to, but I am acutely aware of the vital importance of political climate to the future of Hong Kong. Judging from progress on the drafting of the Basic Law and from recent events in China, there is reason to believe that instead of being the target of jealousy with all its dangers, Hong Kong sets the standards in many spheres and acts truly as a centre of change; it is a city of catalyst, of innovation, and indeed of revolution.

In conclusion, therefore, I see a future of Hong Kong managing the affairs of the Pearl River Delta, probably again with a primarily transient population including non-Chinese and Chinese who are international managers, technocrats, merchants. I also see a future of Hong Kong being the Chinese city of innovation and revolution, where the residents, particularly the intellectuals, Industrialists, and politicians, will have an immense role to play. In this connection let me end with another quote, this time from Dr Sun Yat Sen's address to students of the University of Hong Kong:

Where and how did I get my revolutionary and modern idea? I got my ideas in this very place; ... Hong Kong impressed me a good deal, because there was orderly calm and because there was artistic work being done without interruption ... Afterwards, I saw the outside world and I began to wonder how it was that foreigners ... could do such things as they had done, for example, with the barren rock of Hong Kong within 70 or 80 years, while China, in four thousand years, had no place like Hong Kong... My fellow students, you and I have
studied in this ... English University and we must learn ... (and) carry the ... example of good government to every part of China. (Sun Yat-sen, 1923)

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Sun Yat-sen, address to the Hong Kong University Union, February 20, 1923, as quoted in S.G. Davis, 1949, page x.

Geographical Research and Study at the Chinese University of Hong Kong

by

Prof. Yue-man Yeung

Department of Geography, Chinese University of Hong Kong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong celebrated the 25th anniversary of its founding in 1988 and thus, instead of following rigidly the assigned task of reviewing geographical education at this University over the past two decades, it might be more meaningful to trace development from the beginning. In any event, early development tended to be slow and limited and it was really during the past decade or so when the geographical curriculum began to crystallize into a coherent program and research began to increase markedly in quantity and quality, creating an impact both locally and internationally. In surveying geographical education at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, this paper draws and builds on a similar exercise undertaken by Dr. K.Y. Wong exactly ten years ago. 1

Administrative Evolution

Soon after the founding of the University in 1963, separate departments of geography were established at United College and Chung Chi College, whose large physical separation prevented any pooled arrangement or the effective use of manpower and facilities. In the late 1960s, there was a trend towards intercollegiate teaching in order to maximize resources for the purpose of increasing course offerings and harmonizing the curriculum in the two colleges. In 1969-70, only six courses were offered on this basis, but with the centralization of the colleges in one campus in Shatin by 1971, all courses were offered on an intercollegiate basis. Rational use of manpower and facilities dictated that only one geography department was responsible for teaching the subject. This

delineation of the components of a balanced education, has been in effect since 1986, replacing the hitherto hybrid degree examination and credit unit system. In 1988-89, the department enrolled 305 students, with 190 majoring in geography and another 115 minorin the subject. By 1990, students under the new credit unit system will graduate from the University.

Geography is one of eight disciplines within the University’s Faculty of Social Science. Geography education at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels has been available along with the earliest established disciplines at the University since the mid-1960s. The postgraduate curriculum is based on a combination of course work and dissertation preparation. The M.Phil degree program is offered on a full-time basis requiring two years for completion. At least 15 units of course work have to be completed, along with a dissertation representing the product of substantial independent research, before a student can graduate. Three fields of substantive interests are offered to postgraduate studies: geographical study of China, urban/economic geography, and environmental studies. Students are also encouraged to take elective courses outside geography insofar as they are relevant to their chosen subfield. Every year three or four students are admitted to the graduate program. Plans have been formulated for a Ph.D. program to be initiated in the academic year 1990-91.

Major Fields of Teaching and Research

As a relatively small department with a faculty strength of 11, some hard choices have been made with respect to the major fields of teaching and research. Traditionally, the department has devoted its energies and resources to at least the following groups of studies:

(a) Physical and Environmental Geography

The study of the earth’s environment and its physical landscape has always been a major focus of teaching and research. In terms of teaching, courses in geomorphology, geology, and climatology are offered. Recent research themes include geomorphological survey of selected sites, sediment analysis, study of drainage basin forms and processes, geomorphology, soil erosion, land management, telemetry systems for weather and air quality monitoring station, and climatic changes. Since the early 1970s, increasing concern for the environment in Hong Kong has led to the introduction of courses that deal with environmental issues such as conservation of natural resources, man and the environment and later urban environmental problems including pollution control and micro-climatology.

Teaching in environmental geography has been paralleled by research on subjects such as ambient noise levels in Hong Kong, human response to and modelling of traffic noises, and dispersion of vehicular exhaust gases in urban areas.

These efforts in teaching and research are supported by three laboratories. The Environmental Laboratory is equipped with modern facilities with particular strengths in air, noise and water pollution. The Geology Laboratory has a collection of over a thousand local and foreign mineral, rock and fossil specimens. It is equipped with instruments which can measure geotechnical properties and geomorphic processes. The Climatology Laboratory is equipped with Fortin and Kews barometers, micro-barographs, aneroid barographs, hygrometers and sling psychrometers which are used in demonstrations and laboratory exercises. Weather data are recorded daily and compiled in the laboratory. It also has a computerized system for receiving weather charts from short-wave radio and satellites.

(b) Human and Economic Geography

The study of the spatial organization and character of human activities has been a traditional strength of the department that has recently been further developed. Courses in urban, economic, behavioural, and cultural geography are offered and constitute a key component of the geography curriculum. Each of these subfields have fully taken advantage of the particularly rich and dynamic cultural and socioeconomic milieu in Hong Kong and China as a life laboratory to test and verify theoretical postulations. Consequently, both teaching and research in these subfields involve field investigation and an understanding of the spatial organization of human activities in the local environment and nearby China.

Research under this rubric is wide-ranging, including studies on urbanization in China, cities in Eastern Asia, livelihoods for the urban poor, urban agriculture, economic and demographic interactions in
China, and spatial and demographic characteristics of the Kowloon Walled City.

(c) Geography of China

Although the study of the region has been a traditional focus of geographical enquiry, only courses in the regional geography of Eastern Asia and China are offered in the undergraduate curriculum. In addition, the geography of Hong Kong is approached through "student-oriented" teaching that has been adopted by the University since the late 1970s. In tutorial and seminar-style sessions, students are allowed ample opportunities to explore their local environment in Hong Kong and to see how theory and reality are married.

From almost the inception of the department, teaching and research interests on the geography of China have been exceptionally strong. In about two decades of its existence until the late 1970s, the Geographical Research Centre, the research arm of the department, had approximately 80 per cent of its publications devoted to Chinese subjects touching on many aspects of historical, economic, cultural, urban and political life.

More lately, the concern for identifying the special characteristics of regions and localities in China has taken staff research to the southern Fujian region and Hainan Island. There has been a keen interest to assess the development potential of these regions through the tourist industry.

As a collaborative research effort among the staff, the department has for the past decade focused attention on the changing economic and social geography of China. In particular the effects of China's open policies on the spatial pattern of urbanization and economic growth in South China. All four special economic zones, especially Shenzhen, have been intensively studied. These sustained efforts have already produced a handsome harvest of book-length publications and journal articles. It is also a common ground where shared interest and commitment have drawn colleagues in other disciplines through a joint research program under the Centre for Contemporary Asian Studies at the University.

Finally, a research project on the Chinese coastal cities has also been in progress for some time, with the participation of scholars from China, Hong Kong and other countries. It is an ambitious undertaking considering the large number of researchers and the difficulties of coordination across different research environments.

(d) Geographical Techniques

In keeping with the trend in geographical education and research, there has been a conscious attempt to build into the curriculum courses that are designed to impart to students a range of techniques and methodologies. Courses under this category include cartography, quantitative methods, remote sensing, and surveying. Since the introduction of courses in quantitative methods in 1969, much progress has been made in enhancing among students a capability in numeracy and recently in computer application. Advanced qualitative courses have moved beyond descriptive and inferential statistics to deductive mathematical reasoning. In particular, the application of fuzzy sets theory to regionalization, spatial economics and planning problems is noteworthy.

Geographical techniques form an important part of the training as they provide the tools with which to embark on geographical enquiries. The emphasis on computer literacy is assisted by related courses students have to take in general education and by the installation of micro-computer laboratories at the colleges. In order to help students and staff to better access, retrieve, organize and analyze ever-increasing geographical information, preliminary efforts are being made to develop a capacity in the geographical information system for teaching as well as research.

(e) Planning Studies

The objective of increasing the practical and applied aspects of the discipline led to the introduction, in the early 1970s, of courses in urban and regional planning. This component of the curriculum later became an area of concentration, making it possible for some students to pursue higher degrees in this field after graduation. The courses offered cover the basic theories, methods, techniques and models of urban and regional planning, with an emphasis on the dynamics and process of planning in Hong Kong.
At a personal level, staff members have been active in the local professional planning bodies and work closely with like-minded academics at the University of Hong Kong which has the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning.

Concluding Remarks

Clearly, the above-described groupings of major teaching and research activities represent only one way of expressing the highlights of geographical education that is available at the University. There are obviously other ways of capturing the spirit of geography there and other activities that have not been portrayed. They do, hopefully, convey the sense that in the mission of geography at the Chinese university, we try to be selective within a balanced orientation and effective given staff strengths and physical/financial provisions.

Within the congenial environment at the University, there is much scope for interdisciplinary collaborative research. Several studies in the population of China, special economic zones, and environmental studies are in progress. In recent years there have also been active collaboration with researchers in China, Canada and elsewhere in joint projects and publications.

The department publishes Occasional Papers in Geography as a vehicle for rapid dissemination of research results. The series has run to almost 100 titles since the first issue appeared in 1980. This has helped foster the international connections of the department. In fact, the international outlook of the department has been noticeably enhanced during the past few years through a wide range of activities. Staff members have served in consultancy work (the World Bank, the International Development Research Centre, the United Nations Centre for Regional Development, the United Nations University, etc.) on editorial committees in international geography journals (Progress in Human Geography, Geographical Analysis, Chinese Geography and Environment), and on executive committees of international geographical associations (Commonwealth Geographical Bureau, Asian Urban Research Association, IGU Commissions and working Groups). Within Hong Kong, they have also contributed in many ways to community service and offered expert advice in fields ranging from public housing, environmental pollution, volcanic eruption, hawker policy, to climatic change.

Hong Kong and its surrounding region are poised for a period of rapid change in the years ahead. The challenges in geographical teaching and research are manifold and exciting, offering a prospect that is brighter and more inviting than ever. We at the Chinese University are committed to contributing to the monitoring, interpretation and analysis of the changing geography of Hong Kong and the Pacific Rim. With your help and that of the community, we hope to further improve our role as a centre of geographical education in this territory.
Development of Geography Curriculum in Hong Kong Secondary Education since 1949*

by

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In this paper, the term "curriculum" is used in its wider sense. As such, it is not an equivalent for syllabus, but a process which involves a definition of aims and objectives, a selection of contents, a choice of teaching strategies and a form of evaluation as shown in Figure 1. The process normally, but not necessarily, begins with a definition of aims and objectives in response to economic, political, social and/or educational changes. This paper attempts to relate the development of geography curriculum in Hong Kong secondary education to economic, political, social and educational changes in Hong Kong and the world around us in postwar years.

Figure 1: A Curriculum Model

Economically, Hong Kong takes pride in her achievements in the past forty years. Before the 1950s, Hong Kong was just a small entrepot, relatively unknown to the outside world. Today, she is a prominent industrial and commercial city, ranking as the most important shipping and the third most important financial centre of the world. Economic development brings about political, social and educational development. Thus the last two decades have seen Hong Kong gradually evolving from a colony with an autocratic government to a much more democratic and open society. To keep pace with the economic, political and social development of Hong Kong, the Government launched a 9-year free and compulsory education programme in 1978 (Fung, 1986, Secretariat, 1981). It may also be noted that in 1960, 70% of the secondary school places were provided by the private sector, but the same percentage of places are now provided by publicly-financed schools.

Aims and Objectives

Before 1960, the Education Department adopted a laissez-faire policy, and as a result, very little guidance was given to schools with regard to curriculum development in geographical education. When its aims were first spelt out in the geography syllabus for Anglo-Chinese secondary schools (Education Department, 1960) published in 1960, priority was given to the dissemination of knowledge and training of skills and relatively little attention was paid to the cultivation of attitudes. In Hong Kong as in other parts of the world, the second half of the sixties and the first half of the seventies witnessed a widespread liberal movement which brought about significant political, social and educational changes. These changes eventually led to the emergence of new viewpoints on geographical education. Thus the geography syllabus for Forms 4-5 (Curriculum Development Committee, 1984) published in 1984 states, "Geography encourages students to observe, ask questions and seek answers. They should develop a wide range of skills and techniques concerned with the collection, organization, presentation, interpretation and evaluation of information about the world. They should be aware of the need for, and be committed to, responsible action where aesthetic and moral questions arise in relation to the maintenance of a balanced environment."

* This paper is based mainly on an article bearing a similar title which is jointly written by the same author and C.K.J. Lee for the Geography Bulletin (No.16).
Until 1960, schools had almost complete freedom in deciding what to teach as far as geography was concerned. Their decisions in this respect were mainly governed by two factors, namely, the scope of the School Certificate Examination syllabus and the textbooks available in the market. Available information showed that they invariably adopted a regional approach (Coxhead, 1956). The geography syllabus issued in 1960 basically followed this trend, but there was also an element of systematic approach. The interim syllabus for Forms 1-3 (Curriculum Development Committee, 1975) issued in 1975 was clearly one which adopted a systematic approach.

The mid 1970s saw Hong Kong making great strides in the reform of geographical education. A new Advanced Level geography syllabus (Hong Kong Examinations Authority, 1979) was prepared and subsequently implemented in 1979. Unlike the traditional syllabus which adopted a systematic approach within a regional framework, the new syllabus did not require the students to study slavishly different regions in the light of their relief, climate, vegetation, agriculture, industry, transport and population. Instead, it tried to interweave the facts with important geographical concepts so that the students could develop a deeper understanding of their surroundings and an awareness of a variety of social problems of geographical significance, together with the ability to make rational and sound choices in solving these problems.

The landscape and ecological paradigms form the foundation of the new syllabus. These two paradigms not only make it possible to weave together different geographical concepts, but also help to integrate physical geography with human geography to form a unique discipline. The basic concept behind these paradigms is that the various landscapes are the products of interaction between the human and the physical systems.

The implementation of the new Advanced Level geography syllabus in 1979 had repercussions upon geographical education in Hong Kong. Difficulties were encountered in the early stages of implementation owing to the lack of suitable teaching materials and well-organized familiarization programmes for teachers. Both the teachers and the students were worried by the sudden and drastic change in the approach and found it difficult to adapt to the new situation.

To keep pace with this innovative change, the syllabus for Forms 1-3 (Curriculum Development Committee, 1983) was also revised in 1983 and implemented in 1986 and that for Forms 4-5 (Curriculum Development Committee, 1984) in 1984 and 1987 respectively. Both syllabuses stress the inter-relationship between man and his environment and the learning of concepts.

Although the new junior geography curriculum still requires that Form 1 pupils study the general geography of Hong Kong and her neighbours, Form 2 pupils study Australia, South and Central America and Africa, and Form 3 pupils study Europe and North America, the treatment of these subject matters is remarkably different from that of the past. Whilst the interim syllabus expected the pupils to study each continent systematically, the new syllabus does not impose this restriction. Teachers are now encouraged to use case studies to help pupils understand geographical concepts and develop geographical skills. For example, instead of studying all the deserts in the Southern Continents, only the Sahara is now quoted in the teaching of desert landscape in Form 2. When temperate grassland is dealt with, the more familiar example of the Murray-Darling Basin is examined in some detail. Such an approach is intended to equip pupils with a more concrete and profound understanding of the curriculum.

The new geography curriculum for Forms 4 and 5 stresses the inter-relationship between man and his environment and the learning of concepts. In expounding the various geographical concepts in the examination, the students are expected to quote local examples together with examples from China, Japan and Australia, countries which are familiar to them and which have a strong impact upon their daily lives. Since the students do not have to contend with such a wide scope of study in terms of area, it is hoped that they may feel less burdened and become more active in their study of geography. The emphasis on the man-land relationship is also intended to have a positive influence upon the development of their attitudes towards the environment.
In short, the development of geography curricula in Hong Kong in the past forty years has gone through three phases: the regional approach before 1960, the systematic approach in the 1960s and 1970s and the concept-based approach after 1980 (Speck).

Method

The choice of teaching strategies is to a certain extent dependent on what facilities and teaching materials are available. The rapid improvement in the provision of school facilities and in the supply of teaching materials since the mid-seventies (Fung and Chan, 1984; Education Department, 1985) resulting from economic prosperity has helped to pave the way for some enthusiastic geography teachers to advocate a "student-centred strategy" which places a great deal of emphasis on the use of simulations, games, role plays, discussions, debates and projects. Table 1 compares the changes in emphases of teaching and learning strategies over the years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Logical approach</th>
<th>Systematic approach</th>
<th>Population analysis approach</th>
<th>Topic approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Inductive approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Pupil-centred approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Changes in Emphases of Teaching and Learning Strategies over the Years

Teachers are encouraged to supplement teaching with pictures, slides, films, specimens and field visits.

Teachers are encouraged to ask questions, build up a blackboard summary and use charts, atlases and other visual aids.

Teachers are encouraged to organize activities such as simulations, games, role plays, discussions, debates and projects.

The geography syllabus of 1960 suggested that teachers should vary their approaches and ways of presentation in accordance with their own personality and the abilities of the pupils. Four approaches were put forward in the geography syllabus: (1) the 'logical approach' (the continents are subdivided into themes), (2) the 'systematic approach' (the continents are divided into geographical regions which are taught as individual units), (3) the 'population analysis approach' (the analysis of population distribution is followed by the study of the basic geography), and (4) the 'topic approach'. The teachers were also encouraged to supplement their teaching with pictures, slides, films, specimens and even field visits wherever appropriate.

The interim syllabus of 1975 provided very little in the way of new ideas for geography teaching. It only emphasized that teachers should minimize the use of 'chalk-and-talk' method and increase the use of oral questioning, blackboard summary, charts, atlases and various other audio-visual aids to arouse the interest of the pupils. Teachers were also expected to train pupils to think both deductively and inductively.

In the mid-seventies, some enthusiastic local geographers and geographical educationalists became engaged in a reform movement led by David Shortie who advocated a 'student-centred strategy'. The strategy placed a great deal of emphasis on the use of simulations, games, role plays, discussions, debates and projects as it was believed that through these activities geographical knowledge could be acquired, and that the various cognitive and social skills pertinent to the cultivation of positive attitudes could be learned more effectively. Shortie's ideas have continued to influence local thinking and have been translated into reality step by step by his successors through the implementation of three new geography syllabuses: the A-level syllabus in 1979, the F.1-3 syllabus in 1986 and the F.4-5 syllabus in 1987.

Although there is no dispute that teachers should adopt the 'pupil-centred' approach in the teaching of geography, discrepancies do exist between the real classroom situation and the theoretical ideals. This may be attributed to the following factors:

(1) Some teachers have yet to receive professional training. They have therefore had little exposure to new ideas in geography teaching.

(2) Some teachers lack enthusiasm for teaching. Cross-fertilization through the exchange of teaching experiences among colleagues within a school, or between different
schools, is often lacking. Some teachers are reluctant to take courses to refine their teaching skills or refresh their professional knowledge.

(3) The refresher courses organized by the Education Department can only cater for a small number of teachers.

(4) The education system of Hong Kong is intrinsically examination-oriented. Teachers tend to devote themselves to training pupils for the public examinations, paying little attention to teaching techniques which would stimulate pupils' interest in the subject.

(5) Some teachers lack competence in classroom management. They tend to employ traditional teaching techniques to avoid disciplinary problems.

(6) Some teachers have neither the techniques nor the experience to lead group activities. The results of group activities are therefore frequently unsatisfactory.

(7) The language barrier often deters the pupils from participating effectively in discussions as well as in other activities if English has to be used.

The last factor is a prime cause for concern amongst educators in Hong Kong. More than 90% of the pupils in Hong Kong study in Anglo-Chinese secondary schools, but most of them lack the necessary competence and are incapable of learning geography through the medium of English. Many teachers in fact teach in Cantonese, or in a mixture of Cantonese and English, but the pupils still have to read and write in English. The obvious result is that both the learning effectiveness and the learning spirit of their pupils are seriously impaired.

Evaluation

In Hong Kong, public examinations, notably the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination, exert a strong influence on classroom teaching in secondary schools (Yau and Fung, 1988). The geography papers were traditionally dominated by “open-ended essay” questions and short questions, but structured essay questions began to appear in the mid-sixties. In 1970, multiple-choice questions were first introduced in the geography paper of the School Certificate Examination. Over the years the Hong Kong Examinations Authority has made every effort to improve the geography papers of the public examinations. It is encouraging to note that the geography papers in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination have improved steadily since 1970, keeping pace with the improvement of the syllabus. Table 2 shows that there has been a gradual increase in emphasis on the affective domain over the years. With regard to the cognitive domain, there has been a fairly steady decrease in the number of lower order questions and a gradual increase in the number of higher order questions.

Table 2: Percentages of Questions set on the Affective Domain and at Different Levels of the Cognitive Domain in the HKCEE Geography M.C. and Essay Papers from 1970 to 1986 (Yau and Fung, 1988)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>10.36</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>9.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>19.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>15.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there is still any serious doubt about the public examination, the root of the problem probably lies more in the way of marking than in the examination paper itself. In the markers' meeting, the marking scheme prepared by the setter of the question is discussed and
finalized. It includes the key points for the question. Individual markers then mark the papers in accordance with the agreed scheme. There is, however, a tendency for markers to give marks whenever they come across words or phrases which appear in the marking scheme, with little regard to the logic and presentation of the answers. It is not uncommon to find that where the same answer has different forms of expression, some pupils score no marks even though their answer is correct, because it is not expressed in the same words as those listed in the marking scheme. This way of marking not only encourages pupils to memorize facts and write their answers indiscriminately, but also discourages them from thinking and writing creatively.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it may be said that the development of geography curriculum in Hong Kong secondary education has made good progress in postwar years. There is, however, still much room for improvement. It is noted that a significant number of our geography teachers are still untrained. Moreover, geography has changed greatly in its nature and content in recent years. All these call for a more rapid development of teacher training and retraining programmes. There are also great demands for seminars and workshops, the organization of which should be the responsibility of the Education Department, the universities, the colleges of education and the various educational organizations.


Curriculum Development Committee, 1984, *Syllabus for Geography (Forms IV-V)*, Hong Kong Government.


Education Department, 1985, *Standard Fixtures, Furniture and Equipment for Geography Room*, Hong Kong Government.


Hong Kong Examinations Authority, 1979, *Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination Regulations and Syllabuses 1981*, pp. 10-16.


News of Colleges and Universities

Hong Kong University

Conference under Planning

The Department of Geography and Geology is going to organize an "International Conference on Geographical Research and Development" (tentative title) to be held at the University on April 27 - May 1, 1990. The objective of this conference is to bring together geographers from Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan and the rest of the world to share their ideas and research findings. Topics to be discussed include, *inter alia*, resource utilization and management, regional planning and urban and rural development, research methodology and geographical education. Chinese (both Cantonese and Mandarin) is adopted as the language medium. Local geographers are encouraged to take part in the conference.

Chinese University of Hong Kong

Staff News

Dr. Ronald Neller joined the Department of Geography to teach courses in geomorphology and geology.

Mr. Tang Wing Shing joined the department to teach courses in urban and regional planning.

Dr. Luk Chiu Ming completed a 3-year contract and left the university.

Conference under Planning

The Department of Geography is planning to host a conference on "Geography and Development of Pacific Asia in the Twenty-first Century" to be held in December 1990.

Hong Kong Baptist College

Staff News

Dr. Luk Chiu Ming joined the College to teach courses in cartography and geography of China.

Dr. Lewis Owen was appointed as a lecturer responsible for courses in geomorphology and earth science.

Dr. Wong Kwun Kwai who is specializing in environmental perception joined the college and is responsible for courses in resource management and planning.

Dr. William Collins, after completing his contract, went back to Chico, California.

News of the Hong Kong Geographical Association

Activities to be organized by the Secondary School Subcommittee

1. A field camp jointly sponsored by the Education Department and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is scheduled to be held at the Sai Kung Recreation Centre on Feb 2-3, 1990. The theme of this field camp is country parks in Hong Kong.

2. A visit to the Taipo industrial Estate to take place sometimes in December, 1989.


4. A visit to the sewage treatment plant at Shatin in April, 1990.

5. The Subcommittee plans to conduct a survey of field study sites in the Territory in November, 1989.

6. A workshop on the use and sharing of teaching aids and strategies is planned for November, 1989.
Board of Editors
Li Si Ming, Department of Geography, Hong Kong Baptist College
Pun Kin Shing, T.W.G. Hs. Chang Ming Thien College
Yeung Ka Ming, Country Park Section, Agriculture and Fisheries
Department
Kwan Yim Lin, School of Education, University of Hong Kong

Notes to Contributors
The Hong Kong Geographer is published on a tri-annual basis by the Hong Kong Geographical Association. The Journal welcomes full-length articles, research notes, and comments and opinions on current development of Geography both in Hong Kong and abroad and the teaching of Geography at the secondary level. It also welcomes book reviews and field trip guides and publishes news of schools, colleges, universities and research institutes which may be of interest to Hong Kong's geographers. Articles may be written in English or Chinese. In the latter case, the editorial board reserves the right to ask the author to submit a typewritten copy of the paper to bear the typesetting cost. Very tight financial restraints render this necessary.

All articles are to be submitted to:

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