

**TWO STREAMS OF HISTORY SUBJECTS TEACHING IN HONG KONG'S  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS FROM THE 1950S TO THE 1990S**

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## Declaration

This work has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

This article investigated the development of history education in Hong Kong, after World War II under British colonial rule, through an examination of a wide range of primary sources and secondary literature. The juxtaposition of two history subjects, History and Chinese History as two electives of equal importance in the education system, was a special phenomenon in the colonial world. By examining the way British-ruled Hong Kong history education had developed and why it developed in this way, this article shows the unique political and geographical situation of Hong Kong during the Cold War period. Also, the changing status of the two history subjects in Hong Kong reflects the real interests and goals of different interest groups, e.g., the British colonialists, the American NGOs and the Chinese literati, and the educational means by which these groups achieved their goals. This change has resulted in Hong Kong local history being excluded from the Hong Kong's history textbooks silently, which encourages us to think more about the choice of content and the teaching methods in multicultural areas' history education.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a hub between East Asia and Europe, Hong Kong is influenced by many different cultures and capitals for a long time. Situated at the southern tip of mainland China, Hong Kong is a seaport city in the Western Pacific Ocean and a major shipping hub of both the Pacific and Indian Oceans. During the Cold War, it was a place under the tripartite influence of the communist of mainland China and nationalists of Taiwan China, British colonisation as well as the expansion of American capital, which shows a long history of colonial rule and multiculturalism.<sup>1</sup>

Among the many factors, education is one of the most essential means with a long-lasting impact on the next generation at scale. The ruling class can control the content and views of its output by censoring the compilation of textbooks to serve the needs of the government and society, which is particularly true of history education, which acts as a 'remembered history'<sup>2</sup> that is re-screened and reassembled for specific purposes, influencing the next generation. It is sensitive, especially in the colonial period, education seemed like a way of cultural imperialism invading the colonies by ignoring their national history and inculcating the colonies with the colonist history and needs, thus assimilating, and enslaving them.<sup>3</sup>

By contrast, the British Authority in Hong Kong seemed not so “colonialism” in terms of History education. In British-ruled Hong Kong, although the Education Department was expanded to control the schools, curriculum, textbooks, etc., in the

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll, John M. (John Mark). *A Concise History of Hong Kong*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> Li Wei Zhu, “香港的中國歷史意識：1960年代以來初中中國歷史教科書與社會論述的轉變 [Awareness of Chinese History in Hong Kong: Changes in Chinese History Textbooks and Social Discourses in Junior Secondary Schools since the 1960s],” *思想[Si Xiang]*, No.31, (2016), 97-131.

<sup>3</sup> Zhang, Huan. “The Influence of Japanese Colonial Education on the Formation of a Taiwanese Identity”. Thesis (M.A.) --University of California, Santa Barbara, 2014.

1940s, both government schools and aid schools are under government control, accounting for about 89% of the total in 1998, and had always supported an English-language education as the core. The large Chinese population in Hong Kong and the growing nationalist community still led to educational reforms in the early 20th century, which succeeded in the establishment of Chinese language schools, the promotion of Chinese language education, and the introduction of Chinese history in 1947.

After 1947, one of the unique characteristics of British-ruled Hong Kong history education emerged. One History subject was separated into two selective courses, History and Chinese History, with two languages used to teach these different sections of history subjects. Colonial Hong Kong, in terms of this, was different from the other British colonies (e.g., the secondary-level history education syllabus of British-ruled Tanzania only focused on Britain and Europe, and their impact on Africa<sup>4</sup>) and mainland China (mainly focused on Chinese history, and world history was involved in the same history subject taught in Chinese<sup>5</sup>), Japanese-ruled Taiwan (Japanese history only, exclusion of Chinese Language and history education<sup>6</sup>), and Portuguese-ruled Macao (government required to “restrict Chinese education” and “all schools shall teach the Portuguese language and Portuguese history”<sup>7</sup>). With so much emphasis on its motherland’s history education under colonial governance, this

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<sup>4</sup> 优素福·拉维, 徐哲, and 陆旻红. “后殖民时期坦桑尼亚的历史教育.” *Li shi jiao xue wen ti*, no. 1 (2019): 6–14.

<sup>5</sup> 王雙懷, 方駿, “20 世紀中國的中學歷史教育[The History Education of Secondary Level in 20 Century China].” *陝西師範大學繼續教育學報[Shanxi Normal University Journal of Continuing Education]*, no.1(2006): 50-57.

<sup>6</sup> 郑梅淑. “日据时期台湾历史教育述论[The History Education in Taiwan during Japanese-ruled period].” *Li shi jiao xue wen ti*, no. 3 (1993): 29–31.

<sup>7</sup> Cheong, Hang. “Regulating Chinese Education in Colonial Macao: Political Struggle and the Role of ‘the Chinese Educators’ Association of Macau’ (c. 1914–1949).” *Asian education and development studies* 11, no. 4 (2021): 666–676.



“double history education system” was even a rare phenomenon worldwide.

So, what was history education in Hong Kong like from the 1950s and 1990s, being influenced by two different forces? This question has been the subject of much research by historians around the world. Some of them regarded the History curriculum as the “weakness of colonial government” and as “a vehicle for the promotion of liberal democratic values within the school curriculum”.<sup>8</sup> But Chinese History was indeed “cultural imperialism”, working as a political tool to instil a 'Chinese consciousness' in Hong Kong students<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that Britain "valued Britain over China" in the name of the concept of "global citizenship", controlled education through centralized school management and subsidized schooling, and, in the section on contemporary history, removed the Chinese section from textbooks in the name of "depoliticization", focusing on modern Western achievements to consolidate colonial rule.<sup>10</sup> However, compared to these traditional stereotypes that simply took colonial education as cultural imperialism, some scholars, also regarded the History curriculum of that time as “avoidance of political controversy”<sup>11</sup> and Chinese History had tried to be “politically neutral”<sup>12</sup>. Two history courses exist simultaneously allowing Hong Kong to maintain Chinese culture and internationalisation in parallel.<sup>13</sup>

I argue that the British colonial government made a concession to Chinese History on purpose instead of being a “weakness” or “avoidance of political

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<sup>8</sup> Kan, Flora, and Edward Vickers. “One Hong Kong, Two Histories: ‘History’ and ‘Chinese History’ in the Hong Kong School Curriculum.” *Comparative education* 38, no. 1 (2002): 73–89.

<sup>9</sup> Flora, and Vickers. *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> 屈宏, and 梁闪闪. “香港教育去殖民化问题研究[A Study on the Decolonisation of Education in Hong Kong].” *统一战线学研究[Journal of United Front Science]* 5, no. 3 (2021): 62–72.

<sup>11</sup> Flora, and Vickers. *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> 李帆, 黃兆強, and 區志堅. *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Li Wei Zhu, “香港的中國歷史意識”, *ibid.*

controversy”, and the traditional Chinese History section was not a threat to them. In the words of educational theorist Michael W. Apple, “Education is deeply implicated in the politics of culture. The curriculum is never a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone’s selection, some group’s vision of legitimate knowledge. It is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organise and disorganise a people.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, behind the superficial avoidance of political conflict and the peaceful situation of political neutrality, it required an examination of the relationship and interest of two groups representing those two history curriculums of Hong Kong, the national elite of mainland China and the British colonialists.

Above all, this paper uses a documentary approach to examine the material and literature on history education in Hong Kong after the Second World War, including primary sources like Chinese History and History subject textbooks, oral history archives and other secondary sources.

It will investigate three key questions as below:

Firstly, how were the Hong Kong history subjects developed from the 1950s to the 1990s? What was strengthened and what was missing?

Secondly, how many different groups have influenced the development of these two history curriculums in Hong Kong from the 1950s to the 1990s, and what is the relationship between them?

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<sup>14</sup> Apple, M. W. (1993). THE POLITICS OF OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE: Does a National Curriculum Make Sense? *Discourse* (Abingdon, England), 14(1), 1–16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630930140101>

Thirdly, in addition to the changes in the explicit development of the curriculum, what are the differences hidden in these two history curriculums that helped serve their groups' interests?

## 1. CHINESE HISTORY WAS "TAKEN SERIOUSLY" WHILE LOCAL HISTORY DISAPPEARED

Table 1. Development of Chinese History Curriculum from the 1950s to the 1990s <sup>15</sup>

Year	Socio-Political Issue	Impact on Subject Status
1949-52	The issue of widening subject choices in the public examinations, and the introduction of the Higher-level examination in 1952. 1. Chinese History and Chinese literature as one subject (Anglo-Chinese schools) 2. Chinese History and History as one subject (Chinese Middle school)	Chinese History began to emerge as a distinct area of the curriculum
1953	The Chinese Studies Committee recognized the role played by Chinese History to Chinese students in Hong Kong and specified 'social and cultural history' rather than political history be the focus of study.	The parameters of the curriculum were defined
1956-67	Chinese History emerged as an independent subject in public examinations at all levels	Independent status of the subject established
1974	Chinese became an official language of government in Hong Kong, and Anglo-Chinese schools and Chinese Middle schools adopted the same examination syllabus	Independent status strengthened
March 1975	Proposal to integrate Chinese History into Social Studies	Threatened
August 1975	A common core subject for F1-3	Recognized & Consolidated
1993	No longer a common core subject for F1-3	Weakened
1994	The Director of Education recommended '20 years be lapsed for the inclusion of an event in history'	Redefined
1995	Group leader of the Preliminary Committee for the HKSAR recommended Chinese History be made a compulsory subject after the handover	Stressed

Chinese History became an independent subject and received attention. This

<sup>15</sup> Kan, Lai-fong. "Chinese history in Hong Kong: the secondary school curriculum 1946-2001." *HKU Theses Online (HKUTO)* (2002).

happened because of influences from the 1950s to the 1990s, including changes in Hong Kong's politics, culture and international status. With the immigrants from mainland China to Hong Kong in the 1950s to the 1960s and the rise in the number and scale of Chinese language schools, Chinese history became an optional subject and was strengthened. According to Hui Chor Tin's oral history record about his experience in the 1960s, when he studied at Diocesan Boys' School, the Chinese diaspora sent their children to Hong Kong to study because they were afraid that their children would forget Chinese culture, which shows that Chinese history was valued by the Chinese community at that time.<sup>16</sup> In 1970s before the introduction of nine-year compulsory education, A.G. Brown, the chairman of the CDC, foresaw that the spread of secondary education would lead to a significant increase in the number of people taking Chinese History courses and, concerned about its influence, proposed that Chinese history be downgraded to a lower status in secondary school subjects. It was also influenced by socio-political status, such as the handover in the 1990s.

Table 2. Development of History Curriculum and Hong Kong Local History from the 1940s to the 1990s<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Oral History Archives of Hui Chor Tin," *Hong Kong Memory*, June. 04, 2010, [https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/oral\\_history/All\\_Items\\_OH/oha\\_24/records/index\\_cht.html#p45260](https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/oral_history/All_Items_OH/oha_24/records/index_cht.html#p45260)

<sup>17</sup> Vickers. *ibid*, 79-153.

Year	Socio-Political Issue	Impact on Subject Status
1940s	Curriculum development and textbook monitoring for all school subjects within the ambit of an expanded Education Department.	Centralize and bureaucratize
Before 1965	The history curriculum is Euro-centric, with a large proportion of British and American content.	Be neglected and dominated by Europe
Started from 1910s Britain, became prevalent from the 1970s to 1980s	Influenced by the teaching of the British history curriculum, such as the application of new 'skills'-based approaches.	UK-influenced teaching method
After 1967	From 1971, local history had been disappeared in the HKCE syllabus	Local history disappears as the colonial government tightens its grip
1990s	re-emergence of local history in syllabuses from the mid-1990s onwards	Strengthening, a reflection of Hong Kong's changing political and social context

Local history disappears from the history curriculum and History is heavily influenced by British teaching styles. In contrast to 'Chinese History', the 'History' curriculum was copied from the British model of teaching. It was heavily influenced by British philosophies and movements such as the 'New History' movement and the 'School Council History Project'. For example, in the 1980s, the CDC introduced a new 'skill-based approach to teaching', namely 'an attitude of constant inquiry and penetration of primary sources', which was, in fact, one of the influences from Britain. And many of the textbooks used were edited by British educators or came directly from Britain.

At the same time, in 1967, under the influence of the Cultural Revolution in mainland China, the Hong Kong government under British administration, fearing that unrest would threaten its own rule, removed the section on Hong Kong's local

history from the history curriculum to strengthen colonial control.<sup>18</sup>

In general, History education in Hong Kong is characterized by two aspects:

I. The content focuses on Chinese ancient history, and European-dominated world history, ignoring the history of Hong Kong's local history. Few curriculums enable Hong Kong people to understand where their ancestors came from and what changes are taking place in mainland China.

II. Changes with the changing socio-political status of Hong Kong. Unlike other subjects, the curriculum and range of content of Hong Kong history subjects have changed considerably over the past 50 years and have been updated in line with the changing positioning of Hong Kong.

Why does history education in Hong Kong emphasise traditional Chinese and European history at the expense of local history? How did Hong Kong's socio-political location influence history education in the post-World War II Cold War period?

The People Behind Hong Kong's History: British colonialists, mainland Chinese literati, "left-wingers" and American capitalists

Textbooks are particularly important in the educational process, and control over their compilation undoubtedly controls the discourse in education, which determines "whose knowledge it is that students are learning, negotiating, or opposing and what the social-cultural roots are of such processes".<sup>19</sup> So, who was able to dominate the writing of the most mainstream Hong Kong history textbooks between the 1950s and 1990s?

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<sup>18</sup> Flora, and Vickers. *Ibid*, 89.

<sup>19</sup> Apple, Michael W., and Linda K. Christian-Smith. *The Politics of the Textbook*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

On the one hand, after World War II, the most widely used History textbook from the 1960s to the 1980s was Morales' *East Meet West*<sup>20</sup>. Alberto C. Morales was the principal (1968-1995) of Raimondi College, a Catholic secondary school. While at the same time, he also served on the Curriculum Development Council's History Subject Committee. In other words, he is both a syllabus drafter and a textbook compiler. In the new Hong Kong Syllabus 1995, one of the aims of history education as stated was cultivating cultural identity: "One of the teaching points listed was the question 'Why do we study history?', to which the following answers were suggested: ...b) to cultivate a sense of cultural identity."<sup>21</sup> For the British-ruled Hong Kong governments, this pendulum swing undoubtedly refers to the cultural identification with Britain. From the beginning of the British occupation of Hong Kong, English language education was introduced. As can be seen, the same British history education curriculum has long been taught in Hong Kong's 'history' classes, representing the interests of the British colonialists and fostering a predominantly British Western cultural identity.

On the other hand, "Chinese History" represents the preservation and recognition of traditional Chinese culture through the literati of the former Qing Dynasty and the on the Republic of China. The first textbook on Chinese history was edited in the 1960s by Qian Mu, the great historian of state history, and was written by Sun Guodong, a student of Qian Mu. In 1949 he was one of the mainland elites and nationalists who emigrated to Hong Kong. According to an interview with Qian Mu, this textbook was in line with the neutrality of the British-ruled Hong Kong government to not offend the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party in

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<sup>20</sup> Vickers. *ibid*, 142-143.

<sup>21</sup> ED's Curriculum Development Council (CDC) committees, *Syllabus for History (Secondary I-III)*, (Hong Kong: CDC, 1995), 6.

Taiwan in case Hong Kong became a second battleground between Communism and capitalism. Qian Mu's purpose in founding the New Asia College and writing the Chinese History textbook was mentioned in a survey as“…文化在建國後，已再無希望，唯一可以做的就是興辦教育，尤其是歷史教育，籍以培養一群熱愛中國文化的知識青年，以求日後回饋祖國…”<sup>22</sup> To establishing a cultural reserve in Hong Kong to prevent the destruction of traditional Chinese history in the Mainland by revolutionary activities.

Apart from Qian Mu, a large number of former Qing dynasty Hanlin came to Hong Kong after the collapse of the Qing government following the Xinhai Revolution because of their discontent with the ruling Kuomintang government, such as Lai Ji-hei and Au Tai-dien, founders of the Chinese Department of the University of Hong Kong.<sup>23</sup> After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, many literati fled to Hong Kong as a result of the struggles of political parties in the Mainland. For example, after the May Fourth Movement and the implementation of the New Culture Movement, criticisms of traditional culture such as the "fight against Confucius" led to a large number of mainland literati who supported traditional culture gathering in Hong Kong. They lectured in Hong Kong, established Chinese language schools, taught traditional history and scripture, and paved the way for "Chinese history" to become an independent subject.

Why are 'History' and 'Chinese History' parallel electives with equal status?  
What was the relationship between the British colonialists and the mainland literati behind the history curriculum?

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<sup>22</sup> 李帆, 黃兆強, and 區志堅. 重訪錢穆. Edited by 李帆, 黃兆強, and 區志堅. BOD 一版. 台北市: 秀威資訊科技股份有限公司, 2021, 97.

<sup>23</sup> "About Us-History" *School of Chinese, the University of Hong Kong*, [https://web.chinese.hku.hk/zh-hant/general\\_information/history/](https://web.chinese.hku.hk/zh-hant/general_information/history/)



## 2. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S NEO-COLONIAL APPROACH AND THE US "EDUCATIONAL SIEGE" UNDER THE COLD WAR

Firstly, it is important to mention Hong Kong's unique world political position, which allowed Britain to promote bilingual education instead of cultivating "yellow-skinned British" in Hong Kong, as was the case with the education policy in India. After the Second World War, the United States was pitted against the Soviet Union, and the economies of mainland China were rejected by the capitalist world. At the same time, between 1946 and 1952, the civil war and the gradual consolidation of the communist regime in Mainland China forced 700,000 Mainland refugees, including elites and businesspeople, to flee to Hong Kong.<sup>24</sup> As a result of the inflow of cheap labour, capital from wealthy mainland merchants, and techniques from elites, Hong Kong was quickly upgraded from a trading port to a "world factory"<sup>25</sup> that received overseas capital, manufacturing industries, and global market demand. It was undoubtedly in the best interests of the bilingual colonies to take in refugees from the mainland and to accommodate the US-led "anti-communist" policy.

How did the British Hong Kong government cultivate a bilingual colony based on stable colonial rule? "Chinese history" and mainland literati were their tools to counterbalance the anti-colonialists. In the post-World War II period, the world witnessed a battle between decolonization and "neo-colonialism". While colonies around the world engaged in anti-colonial activities and wars of liberation and gained their independence and sovereignty, "neo-colonialism" was the use of indirect means

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<sup>24</sup> Hamilton Peter E, *Made in Hong Kong: Transpacific Networks and a New History of Globalization*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021),06-18.

<sup>25</sup> Monks Sarah, *Toy Town: How a Hong Kong Industry Played a Global Game-Chinese version*, (Hong Kong: Toys Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, 2010), 98-99.

by former colonialists to exercise indirect control over former colonies in the form of economic and educational support. The British colonial government used "neo-colonialism" as a means of gaining control of Hong Kong during the world's "decolonisation". This was a two-step process, one is the "depoliticization" of education,<sup>26</sup> by setting a peaceful image of non-politics in support of the literati and a "leftist" image of the anti-colonial forces.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, traditional education was promoted, and Chinese education was "valued the ancient history over the modern one".

"Depoliticization", meaning that the British government drew in and used literary figures such as Qian Mu and Lai Ji-hei to divide and educate the great scholars in Hong Kong at the time. The survivors of the former Qing Dynasty and the literati who fled to Hong Kong in the early years of the founding of the country were wary of the Communist Party and revolutionary upheaval. In addition, the number of Hong Kong residents increased dramatically after the war, and more than half of them were refugees from mainland China fleeing political struggles and turmoil. In response, the Hong Kong government promoted a "de-politicization" stance, banning talk of politics in schools and political activities, among more than 40 other related acts, and making it a criminal offence to violate them.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, in response to the anti-colonial movement of Hong Kong youths, such as the Guangdong and Hong Kong general strikes in the 1920s and the "Hong Kong 1967 leftist riots" in the 1960s, the British Hong Kong government defined revolutionaries and anti-

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<sup>26</sup> 陸鴻基. *坐看雲起時：一本香港人的教協史* = *A people's history of the Hong Kong professional teachers' union volume 1: post-war Hong Kong and the birth of the HKPTU*. 香港：香港城市大學出版社，2016，79-82.

<sup>27</sup> 許崇德. "攻心為上：香港政府應對「六七暴動」的文宣策略." 二十一世紀, no. 147 (2015).

<sup>28</sup> 陸鴻基. *A people's history of the Hong Kong professional teachers' union*, *ibid.*

colonialists as "left-wing" and used media propaganda and other means to shape and reinforce the negative image of the "left-wing",<sup>29</sup> This was in opposition to its image of protecting the Qing literati, the persecuted scholars and the stability of Hong Kong, and thus isolating the "left-wingers" to reduce the threat of anti-colonial or other revolutionary activities.

"Valued the ancient history over the modern one", in other words, meant the Hong Kong Government supports the study of traditional Chinese culture in Hong Kong and has adopted a Chinese cultural education that emphasizes the past over the present. After the Chinese Communist Party came to power, a series of revolutionary movements were carried out in the mainland to destroy traditional culture. Against the backdrop of the New Culture Movement in the 1910s-1920s and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s-1970s, which criticized, undermined, and even destroyed traditional culture. Mainland literati who fled to Hong Kong had a heart for the preservation and transmission of ancient Chinese culture. This was in line with the British Hong Kong government's aim of "protecting traditional Chinese culture against the Communists".

The British Hong Kong government and American capital used the mainland literati, like Qian Mu, to implement the policy of "educational siege" to suppress anti-colonial activities and exclude the Communists. After the 1925-1926 "Provincial Strike", the Governor of Hong Kong, Cecil Clementi (then the Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong), promoted the education of traditional Chinese culture,<sup>30</sup> and applied for a grant from the British Government for the University in the name of

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<sup>29</sup> 許崇德. "攻心為上." *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> 趙雨樂. *近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識 = Modern south-coming intellectual's impression of Hong Kong and their nationalist awareness.* 三卷合訂本, 香港第一版. 香港: 三聯書店香港有限公司, 2016.

establishing a Chinese Department.<sup>31</sup> In 1926, the University of Hong Kong officially recruited the former Qing dynasty relics Ji Xi and Ou Da Dian as Professors, who had been lecturing only on an hourly basis. In 1927, the Chinese Department of the University of Hong Kong was officially established which largely strengthened the Chinese and History research power in Hong Kong.<sup>32</sup> From 1949 to 1952, the British Hong Kong government also strengthened the teaching of ancient Chinese history in primary and secondary schools and made Chinese history a separate elective course. It was not until 1962, when Qian Mu and Sun Guodong wrote "Chinese History", that Hong Kong had its first Chinese history textbook based on the syllabus set by the Hong Kong Department of Education. In this set of textbooks, ancient history accounted for more than 80% of the content, and in the 1970s, sales of this book accounted for more than half of the market, and it still accounted for more than a quarter of the market in 1988,<sup>33</sup> In case of this, it was clear that the Hong Kong government was not adequately prepared for the introduction of Chinese History as an independent subject, and the content of Qian Mu's first Chinese History textbook in Hong Kong was very much in line with the Hong Kong government's teaching objectives.

In the context of the Cold War, the United States sponsored a variety of literary figures from mainland China who fled to Hong Kong and used them to promote the idea of "valuing the ancient history over the modern one" to achieve the goal of "educational siege". After the Communist Party came to power in mainland China in

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<sup>31</sup> 程美宝. "庚子赔款与香港大学的中文教育——二三十年代香港与中英关系的一个侧面." *Zhongshan da xue xue bao. Zhe xue she hui ke xue ban*, no. 6 (1998): 61-74.

<sup>32</sup> 許振興(Chun-Hing Hui). "清遺民經學家寓居香港時期的史學視野－區大典《史略》考索." *中國學術年刊*, no. 34\_1 (2012): 31-56.

<sup>33</sup> 游黎麗玲., and Bernard H. K. Luk. 香港初中中史科和社會科課本裏的性別角色研究. 香港: 香港中文大學社會研究所, 1988, 7.

the 1950s, US attention to Hong Kong and other areas around China increased rapidly, and the number of US consulates in Hong Kong increased to one of the largest in the world to establish a "containment" defence.<sup>34</sup> Similarly in education, the 1950s-1970s Asia Foundation, promoted by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) behind the scenes, funded the publication of the "Chinese Students Weekly" by literati who had fled to Hong Kong from the Mainland. This newspaper was aimed at secondary school students and introduced the theme of "anti-communist" ideas, one of which was to quote Qian Mu's views and advocate for students to study traditional Chinese culture, forming an opposing camp to the Chinese Communist Party's push to break down traditional cultural restrictions on the mainland.<sup>35</sup> In 1953, two American NGOs (the Yale-China Association and the Ford Foundation) came across the New Asia College founded by Qian Mu and others on the recommendation of the Hong Kong Director of Education at the time. From then on, the two NGOs sponsored and sent outstanding Hong Kong teachers and students to American universities for further studies and exchanges for nearly 40 years.<sup>36</sup> They have also promoted the association and development of many Chinese language schools in Hong Kong.

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<sup>34</sup> "1954-10-22 Wah Kiu Yat Po," *Multimedia Information System of Hong Kong Public Libraries*, Oct. 22, 1954, <https://reurl.cc/eXndLM>

<sup>35</sup> 傅葆石. "文化冷戰在香港:《中國學生周報》與亞洲基金會, 1950 – 1970 (下)." 二十一世紀, no. 174 (2019).

<sup>36</sup> "Link between Yale-China and New Asia" New Asia College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, <https://www.na.cuhk.edu.hk/about-new-asia/history/link-between-yale-china-and-new-asia/?lang=zh-hant>

### 3. “CHINESE HISTORY” INSTILLED ANCIENT HISTORY AND “HISTORY” SHAPED A EUROCENTRIC VIEW, CREATING A "GAP" IN HONG KONG'S LOCAL HISTORY

The development of both historical subjects hid the interests and aims of different groups, such as the British, American, and Chinese. The official curriculum of History, to develop different cultural identities, separately created a kind of “invisible curriculum”<sup>37</sup> through the selective content of the textbooks, the teaching techniques of the teachers, the standards of the course examinations and the control of the topics discussed in classes.

In Hong Kong, textbooks have shaped the popular stereotype of history in terms of content selection, where Chinese history equals ancient Chinese history and world history equals Eurocentric modern history. About the range of content chosen to be taught in Chinese history textbooks, according to the oral history accounts of many school students in Hong Kong from the 1950s to the 1990s, most Chinese history in Hong Kong secondary schools was taught only about the distant past and was not very relevant to the real life of contemporary students. For example, Yip Kam Fook, who was born in 1948, reported that in his secondary school experience in the 1960s, in contrast to the government school curriculum, which went up to the Sino-Japanese War, the curriculum of the Chu Hai English School, a Taiwanese-funded secondary school he attended, went up to modern history.<sup>38</sup> In a later issue of *Overseas Chinese Daily News* in 1975, it is shown that the government gradually became more liberal in

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<sup>37</sup> Alsubaie, Merfat Ayesh. "Hidden curriculum as one of current issue of curriculum." *Journal of Education and practice* 6, no. 33 (2015): 125-128.

<sup>38</sup> “Oral History Archives of Yip Kam Fook,” *Hong Kong Memory*, Jan. 01, 2010, [https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/oral\\_history/All\\_Items\\_OH/oha\\_75/records/index\\_ch.html#p48323](https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/oral_history/All_Items_OH/oha_75/records/index_ch.html#p48323)

the scope of teaching Chinese History, but still with a focus on Ancient History. "From 1977 onwards, the subject of Chinese History was changed to be taught chronologically up to 1949, and teachers were free to teach modern history".<sup>39</sup> In the textbooks, Qian Mu and Sun's third revision of Chinese History in 1964 covered from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Russian Chinese War of the 1910s. According to Qian Mu, the purpose of Chinese history education, mentioned at the beginning of the textbook was: "事有成敗得失，人有賢愚忠奸，時代則有治亂興衰，教歷史者，首貴能於此分析指點，可以使學者長見識，增修養，此乃歷史教育最大之功能。"<sup>40</sup> This shows that Chinese History emphasises the use of typical events and characters to reflect the changes of the time. The country's literati are guided by values that favour ancient history, although modern history is also covered. However, coupled with the restrictions on the scope of the government's Chinese history teaching, the neglected local history of Hong Kong and the history of modern Chinese culture became blurred and unfamiliar to students at the time.

World History equals Eurocentric modern history and European vision of Asian history. The European-centred perspective is reflected in the content framework of most popular History textbooks, for example, in Nelson Y. Y. Kan's 'New Certificate History' series, which consists of eleven chapters, seven of which are mainly about modern Britain and the development of other European countries, and two about modern Japan and China. According to the oral memories of students who attended secondary schools in Hong Kong between the 1970s and 1980s, the most impressive chapters in History are 'Louis XVI', 'The October Revolution', and 'The French

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<sup>39</sup> "Wah Kiu Yat Po 1975-07-09," Multimedia Information System of Hong Kong Public Libraries, July. 07, 1975, <https://reurl.cc/AdpO6j>

<sup>40</sup> 孫國棟., and 錢穆. 中國歷史. 香港: 人人書局, 1964, "編撰摘旨".

Revolution'. "<sup>41</sup>

The European vision is reflected in the narrative of large historical events. This visual difference is better illustrated by comparing it with that of Chinese history textbooks in terms of, for example, differences in the evaluation and approach to major historical phenomena, events and figures used to create different cognitive systems. A very typical example is the 1840 war between China and England, which was called the 'Opium War'<sup>42</sup> in Chinese History and was regarded as a planned war of imperial aggression by dumping opium to China, but was mentioned as Anglo-Sino War in History textbooks as the result of the destruction of opium by Lin Zexu and the accidental killing of a Chinese villager by a drunken British soldier, and with misunderstandings between the West and China over diplomacy, trade, and jurisdiction.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of teaching methods, Chinese History has a clear instillation motive, while History uses questions and primary sources to lead students to draw 'correct conclusions' and to develop and consolidate a pro-British and anti-communist stance.

Chinese history education lessons focus on the one-way output of historical facts and historical figures, with fewer open-ended questions.

"Focuses on depicting the contours of history in narratives of major events, revealing cultural traits in descriptions of people, and reflecting the evolution and course of dynasties through examples of major events and people, and concise academic ideas and political systems." <sup>44</sup> While the lessons are accompanied by 3-5

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<sup>41</sup> "Oral History Archives of Yung An Wan," *Hong Kong Memory*, June. 03, 2010, [https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/oral\\_history/All\\_Items\\_OH/oha\\_79/records/index\\_cht.html#p55909](https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/oral_history/All_Items_OH/oha_79/records/index_cht.html#p55909)

<sup>42</sup> 孫國棟., and 錢穆, *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Kan, Nelson Y. Y, *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> 孫國棟., and 錢穆. 中國歷史. 香港: 人人書局, 1964.



retrospective questions and a mind map of the development of individual dynasties and people over time to help students remember and understand.

History lessons, on the other hand, draw on the new 'skill-based approach to teaching' in the UK, with a selective mix of primary sources for students to observe and elaborate on, and 'open-ended questions' to guide them to the 'right conclusions' that fit with the European vision. From the textbooks of History and Chinese History from the 1950s to 1990s, History was supported by "Five Minute History, Quick Revision, Data-Based Questions (an average of 10-15 questions per chapter), Simple English (Chinese translation), Cartoon. Cantonese Equivalent and Back-up Exercises" and "numerous pictures, charts, illustrations, quotation boxes, further reading, etc"<sup>45</sup> to help students understand, reinforce, and explain concepts, major events, and trends in the book. As for the open-ended post-lesson questions were not always allow for open-ended assessment. Depending on the content of the material, the teacher needs to guide the outcome of the discussion in the direction of agreement with the British government. Woo Ho-wai, a history teacher in the mid-1960, had some memory about the colonial History textbook: "In those days, teachers weren't allowed to say anything against the government. We were not allowed to criticise the government ...I discussed different points of view on the Opium War with my students ...The textbooks were quite pro-British. they showed no sympathy for the 'Qing government, just said 'everybody was corrupt, from the top down, so the British had to come in and sort them out.'"<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kan, Nelson Y. Y. *Journey through History*. Hong Kong: Aristo Educational Press Ltd., 1997.

<sup>46</sup> Vickers. *ibid*, 104,

## CONCLUSION

In the context of the Cold War, the interests behind the two historical subjects, the British-ruled Hong Kong government, the literati of Mainland China and the American anti-communist NGOs, agreed to cooperate to achieve their respective aims of colonial control, anti-communism, and the preservation of traditional culture through their respective teaching methods. While it is true that the common aims of 'funding educational development' and 'maintaining peace in Hong Kong' and 'preserving traditional Chinese culture' have, to some extent, helped to preserve Chinese culture and the formation of an inclusive and rapidly developing multicultural city. However, the neo-colonial tactics of the British Hong Kong government from the 1950s to the 1990s, such as "emphasizing the past over the present", "depoliticization" and the deletion of Hong Kong's local history, have made Hong Kong's history a story about a distant colonial power and Chinese civilization thousands of years ago, rather than a story that belongs to modern Hong Kong. This kind of history education has created a historical education gap for this generation. In fact, between the 1950s and 1990s, from the time the British took Hong Kong from the Japanese to the time China took it back from the British, Hong Kong's history curriculum was revised, but neither the Chinese nor the British ever bothered to compile the sections of Hong Kong history textbooks on weak local history.<sup>47</sup>

The choice of content and the way history education is taught in multicultural areas require more attention and understanding than this. The development of a history education system in a multicultural region like Hong Kong requires more

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<sup>47</sup> Vickers, Edward. "The Politics of History Education in Hong Kong: The Case of Local History." *International journal of educational research* 37, no. 6 (2002): 587–602.

financial support and academic attention. In terms of teaching, there is a need to present a wider range of typical primary and secondary sources and perspectives in the selection of content. There is also a need to present a diversity of positions, reflecting both the holistic nature of China and the world, as well as the diversity of local characteristics and ethnic vision. In terms of pedagogy, reference can be made to multicultural approaches to history education in different parts of the world, to build up a history education system of Hong Kong's own, so that the multicultural background can remain tolerant of other strong or weak cultures without losing its cultural heritage.

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