

"Hong Kong Dream" - What Those "Quality Migrants" Say

Furumai Yoshiko

HKBU Journalism Fellowship Scheme

Introduction

I had been in Hong Kong from 1987 to 2001, and it is my 2nd hometown. It is also my growth period, I learned a lot in Hong Kong, experienced a lot, and I met a lot of people. It is here that I started my career as a magazine editor unexpectedly, and of course, the delicious food in Hong Kong is still my soul food...

When I first came here, I did not even have an acquaintance. While I went to a Cantonese school, I met friends in the class, but only teachers are local Chinese.

For me, the first so-called-local-friends were Ho Leung Foo (何良輔) and Foo ZhiRen (符之任).

Why "so-called"? Because they were the waiters working at the Hong Kong style cafe "cha-chan-ting", and I went there to have my lunch before my half day class every day. And, most importantly they were immigrants from the mainlands, Ho came from Hainan Province, Fu came from Guangdong province.

Compared to Fu who could only speak Mandarin with a robust Cantonese accent, Ho was talkative, and Mandarin was also good, he taught me a Chinese word because my Cantonese was not so good at that time. He was always reading something from his pocket as the store was not busy. I still remember I also borrowed my Chinese books to him.

He told me that he had been a football player in the provincial-national team as a child.

I wondered why this guy with the beautiful past and a rich knowledge of the literature was having peoples orders with a dirty uniform at the cafe at one corner of Hong Kong. I implicitly asked why they are in Hong Kong. Although I forgot what they said exactly, I felt that their life was not easy, but they were glad to be in Hong Kong. They thought there was hope while they were living in Hong Kong.

Their appearance to find hope in Hong Kong overlapped with me who had expected in Hong Kong at the time. In that time, Hong Kong was the city that let the various people coming from different places dreams hope.

However, recently, the role of such Hong Kong is rapidly changing. China became a "Big Country" with entirely different from the times that Ho and Fu left behind. People find hope in China as well.

What do the new comer, those so-called Quality Migrants expect in Hong Kong?

1. Interview Samples

This paper will be sampled by several interviewees as follows:

Name: the year of coming / Final education before / Purpose / Current occupation / Years (optional)

Nan Nan (楠楠): 2014 / UG in Nanjing / MA / Another MA degree after worked 2 years working

Alfred: 2015 / UG in Shenzhen / MA / IT entrepreneur

Nick: 2016 / UG in Shenzhen / MA / IT entrepreneur

Li Xiaofeng (李曉峰): 2014 / High School in Shangdong / UG / Corporate Management

Zhao Chi (趙池): 2012 / UG in Dalian / MA / PR industry

Xixi: 2014 / UG in Henan / MA / Insurance industry

Huang Lishan (黃麗珊): 2011 / UG in Shanghai / MA / Working Holiday in EU

Ran Pudong (冉撲冬): 2014 / UG in Shanghai / MA / Another MA degree after worked 3 years

Finn: 2013 / UG in US / transferred from New York by self-will / PR industry

* Remarks; Because to have live voices as much as possible, the names of the interviewees are all anonymous.

2. Why Did You Come to Hong Kong?

I could choose any city, any university, and any course with a high National College Entrance Examination scores. Then Professor LANG Xianping's video which introduces Hong Kong's education systems attracts my parents. They wanted to open my eyes and encouraged me out of my own town.

My dream was to become a UN interpreter. Britain and the United States have no bilingual environment. I thought that Hong Kong would be the place. I knew nothing about Hong Kong, either did not know the Chinese language spoken in Hong Kong was Cantonese. My friend told me that I could immigrate Hong Kong after 7 years. So I came.

It because it takes only one year for postgraduate courses in Hong Kong. I have not considered other countries.

When I was in middle school in Beijing, I liked Hong Kong and began to study Cantonese. All my classmates loved to watch TVB and sing Cantonese songs. Before I came from the United States, what I considered was that Hong Kong is the middle land for me to get back to China or to go back to the States.

3. Image of Hong Kong Before

A super financial metropolitan city! Very prosperous. Shopping cheaper!

The place to buy shoes for the Chinese New Year. It is still a big shopping place cheaper than Shenzhen.

My uncle brought me to Hong Kong since childhood. Although he did not receive a higher education himself, however, he valued the child education. He made money and invested in the education of children. Then, he brought his kids and me to the summer camp or other cities to show us the outside world.

I didn't watch any Hong Kong movies or TV dramas. I didn't know there was Hong Kong Island in Hong Kong. I thought that Hong Kong was a just "Hong Kong". I had never been to Hong Kong, and I had no interest in Hong Kong.

The original impression of Hong Kong was full of entertainment, like in the Hong Kong movies. I already know that it is an illusory Hong Kong. Although it is illusory, I still like it.

4. The Impression After

When I came to Hong Kong, I didn't know anything about what happened in Beijing in 1989 at all. I first walked into the campus, I saw the Statue of Liberty, and asked my mother "What is this? Why it is here?" Then she told me. My mom and dad experienced the days, but our family and the people in my hometown, no one had ever mentioned it, the teacher had not talked about it.

I am happy to live here with so many cultural activities, such as many artistic events and music, troupes performances are going on. As like MacLehose Trail, Hong Kong also has so many trails which are well-planned. It is also safe even for only girls going. Compared with Nanjing, transportation developed well in Hong Kong, and it is easy to get there.

What I most impressed is that there are so many country parks in Hong Kong. I thought it was a very modern, busy city, but found that there were the islands, wild parks in the weekend to go. Shenzhen has no country parks.

When I came to Hong Kong, it happened the strike against the National Education. I couldn't understand Cantonese at all, but I wore a black T-shirt and went to the Government Building to see Joshua Wong. I was shocked at the site. Many people had gathered there, but the whole place was well organised. As like where you went out for or where you came in from, how you looked around, and where to throw garbages, the students arranged spontaneously.

This is the society that ruled by law. This is the society that people does not live to depend on the relationships. This is the society to suits my values. (That is why you did not go back to Beijing?) Yes.

Once I came to Hong Kong, I became to like Hong Kong. I had not been to Hong Kong before. This is a small, self-contained world with their legal systems, languages and cultures. Nothing is the same as the mainland cities.

I like working in Hong Kong by regulations and regulations and services are very systematic. Hong Kong is a very modern society. Although it is a small place, it is difficult to take this city in one sentence or one perspective. I think that this is the charm of Hong Kong city.

5. Disappointment in Hong Kong

I wanted to learn British English, so I once wanted to go to the UK. English here was not a British accent.

The media reported Hong Kong as a financial city, and the different talents of various countries gathered in this international city. However, this is just a "local village". There are differences between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon side. The people in the Kowloon side is with the strong localism. They do not understand or don't accept other cultures. It is quite far from the internationalised city. However, Hong Kong Island is very international. A lot of multinational companies are there, so brought the rich global cultures from other regions.

The "fall" of Hong Kong is a bit faster than I expected. However, I understood now that this is because Hong Kong is a typical Chinese society. Chinese society is patient and respects harmony. Hong Kong people are not much willing to fight. I am not disappointed with this. I know that I expect too much. It is not that they let me down, but my disappointment. Because I know I imposed my thoughts on others.

No disappointment. Because Here I can concentrate on my research relaxedly. I like good service attitude and good service system.

6. Living in the Hong Kong Society

It is a pity that I have been in Hong Kong for so many years and I do not know the life of the locals at all. The waiters in Hong Kong are very fierce. They are easy to be loud. With such circumstances, communication with them has been affected.

The language is significant. We have Cantonese classes for mainland students on the weekend in our office. We teach simple phrases, such as self-introduction, greetings, and "Next stop, please!" More and more information exchanges, then less and less friction happens. It is not necessary only to say that mainlanders have to learn Cantonese, but young people in Hong Kong should also go to the mainland to have a look. I also did not know Hong Kong very well, but it solved later through gaining the information. When both sides understand each other, then conflicts are getting less and less.

I did not like it here for the first year, but I had to finish my four years of undergraduate study here. So I forced myself to accept this place and gradually had found that the exchange was not as difficult as I imagined.

There are different ways of thinking in different languages. When you master a language to a certain level, it would be equal that you mastered the language and culture. When I listened to the "No Particular Order" 《排名不分先後》 by Tat Ming Pair (達明一派) the first time, I found that their lyrics were excellent, the rhymes were great. I learned the meaning of the lyrics and found that there are the symbolic meanings behind the lyrics, it caused my interest more and more.

After started working, my colleagues were either foreigners or Hong Kong people, so I learned Cantonese in three months. Cantonese is a beautiful language that it can easily to make a song. Mandarin would not easy, because it only has four tones. Moreover, it is fascinating that Cantonese retains a lot of old words.

I had taken a Cantonese class in Shanghai before I came, but found it was useless. In the university in Hong Kong, I attended a lot of classes, such as Hong Kong history, Cultural Revolution history, and Communist Theory. I had similar classes in China but were not objective. Those classes were all undergraduate courses and taught in Cantonese. However, I already knew the contents, so it was easy to understand.

7. Apply for the Permanent?

No any plan for it. Let it be.

I have not yet reached seven years. I will consider that where my career would be at that time. If my career is in Hong Kong, I will apply for it. I am already a Hong Kong resident, and it is very convenient to return to and from Shenzhen.

I do not much want to apply for the "Three Stars". Once I take it, then I cannot buy an apartment in Shenzhen. It is a big problem for me to "live" in Hong Kong.

I was born in a tiny and very small town in China. If I do not take Hong Kong's identity, I cannot do anything when going back. This is the only reason.

I feel more attached to Hong Kong than my hometown. I think I will take the permanent status.

The real permanent ID card does not have three stars anymore. Before making my decision, I have been swinging all the time. I was afraid that I could not wait for seven years, it seemed too long. On the other hand, our family in Shanghai does not trust the government. My father had been sent to Heilongjiang in his high school period, worked as a Lumberjack for eight years during the Cultural Revolution and went back to the college entrance examination after it finally was over. So he does not trust the Communist Party. There are

not so many negative reports, I cannot find the truth. I felt that this country was getting worse and terrible, so I was coming back to apply for permanent permission.

It is still not decided to take it. There are still three years remain, and there are always too many uncertain factors. The surrounding factors will change, and with those changes, I will decide at the time.

The values of this city are consistent with mine. I hope for the rule of law, and hope citizen self-determination, I also hope that citizen has certain qualities. In the mainland, even in Beijing, those are impossible to have. So I already decided to take it so that I could stay in Hong Kong for a long time.

8. The Umbrella Movement

I was in front line during the Occupy Central. When Joshua Wong occupied the Government Building, I was also at the scene. I could not say that I was involved, because I do not know what contribution I made for it. However, if someone asks me where I was during the Occupy Central, then I would answer I was at the site.

I was so excited. As like Hong Kong Handover, I felt that was a rare opportunity to witness the history in my life. However, I just came to Hong Kong and busy for the classes, and reports, speeches... I was very nervous. I kept paying attention to the movement, but I did not have another time to visit the site. The umbrella movement had impacts on the mainland students more and less at that time. Just everyone did not talk about it.

The movement brought many artistic creations. However, they made it as a symbol. One bad thing is that they wanted to show their thoughts, but it limited their artistic creation instead. Art should be universal. It should allow the audience to put their feelings onto the artistic creations or to feel some feelings on it. However, if the creation limited with specific thoughts, audience's feelings also become narrower. With watching the creation, it may bring people to guide specific concepts. That expression is not subtle enough, relatively blunt, like an irrational script.

9. Alfred & Nick: We like the life with the regularity in Hong Kong

Everything in Hong Kong is following the regularity. It is very comfortable, we 90s or 00s with higher education are prefer to live with the regularity. I hate people jumping into the queue, and I would not cut into others. I like regularity life.

However, in the career, it is slightly different. Those stall on the streets in China would sometimes be policing, but not every time, there are loopholes. It would be a business chance. The internet company like us, the reality is virtual, and our regularity is on the online.

10. Li Xiaofeng: Meet the differences to understand each other

I began to understand Hong Kong people after I met a very old Hong Kong man. He is a very kind old man and a company CEO. Since I met him, I have started to meet more and more Hong Kong people because he is also an NGO volunteer.

If you want to join the Hong Kong society, you should start volunteering first. For example, going to a nursing home, going to elementary school, teaching in middle school, teaching English or teaching Mandarin.

Through the volunteering, I gradually understood their life and their value. Once you found that our value was different, then you got reasons why we felt a distance between us.

My Hong Kong classmates might go to part-time work to earn money to support their families even they were in school. However, we had parents giving us money to study instead. This is a big difference.

There are also many different classes in Hong Kong with rich people and poor people, and they are living in entirely different styles. After you knew that there are different lifestyles in the city, then you would realise that it is difficult to generalise this city.

I have already been here four years, have no plans to return to China. Because I know the mainland very well, but I do not know much about Hong Kong. I am interested in which I do not understand yet.

11. Zhao Chi: Vote and the community

The Legislative Council election was held in my first year in Hong Kong.

We mainland people have never seen elections. Maybe Hong Kong's democracy is deformed, but people still can choose their legislators.

I thought, for the vote, I would be willing to do anything. Although I know that this vote was of little significance now, I never had a chance to vote, so I eager to vote.

When you become a Hong Kong permanent resident who has a right to vote, you become a real Hong Kong citizen. It means you have your own community, what kind of expectation you have, then you can vote to express. You are the future of Hong Kong.

I speak Cantonese fluently, I learned so much about Hong Kong, but do not tell me that I have to integrate into local society. I will pay attention to Hong Kong because I am Hong Kong's future.

On the other hands, I want to immigrate to another country. because Hong Kong's ballot is not complete. When I have a Hong Kong identity then could vote, but I could not safely follow my own will to vote for my community.

What am I afraid of? Because my family is still in China, my girlfriend still has a Chinese passport.

What I told you today, can I say it in public? I certainly can't. Even I also can not dare to speak out when I serve my own community.

What I want is very simple, I am just looking for a community which I feel belonging to, that I can vote to decide what to do.

12. Xixi: Better living?

The lives of Hong Kong people are not just like reported in the media, not just like told online, not just like wrote in newspapers. Those images you saw on the media are the sporadic case here.

Many mainland cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, including some cities in the Central Plains, their economic development may be quite well.

So then, the reason people coming to Hong Kong is indeed not only for the pursuit of better living conditions.

There may have more pursuits, first of all, there is freedom here.

Hong Kong has better freedom than any city in the mainland, that is why more young people hope to stay here.

Closing

I found those interviewees through my friends, only with the conditions of "Chinese mainlanders working in Hong Kong" and "excluding media workers and students". Also, promised every interviewee to publish the voice with the prerequisite of anonymity, I got the impression that they were able to talk to me quite honestly.

I met twelve interviewees and picked up nine in this report. Each personality has individuality clear and also the interesting view of their own.

I am thinking that Hong Kong has been the city constantly absorbing talent from outside, and has activated the city inside with them. On the other hand, I think that it is time to think about how to advance the right people in the right place by paying attention to neat "contents" rather than just pursuing the numbers alone.

I would like to expect further studies so that human resources policy will be good for Hong Kong in the future as well as for those who intend to do their best here.