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Echoes of Hong Kong Spirits

‘Where are you from?’ – A question that I am frequently asked when meeting people from overseas, especially ever since I went studying in the UK. ‘Hong Kong,’ I replied. ‘Oh, so you’re Chinese – I mean, Hong Kong is in China, right?’ They are indeed correct, but I always emphasize the fact that I am from Hong Kong, not mainland China. Not that I am not proud of being a Chinese – of course I do – but being a Hongkonger somehow is not quite the same. I know we speak different dialogues; we have been cut off from our Mainland for a long time. But what exactly makes Hong Kong unique?

As one of the “post-90s”, I was able to witness China regaining the sovereignty of Hong Kong in 1997. I remembered watching the ceremony on TV with my family, but I could not understand what was going on because I was too young. Now I begin to appreciate some of the significance: having gone through over 150 years’ of British rule in Hong Kong, we should think about what legacies we have inherited.

To be fair, there are good things, such as a world-famous free economy, a general respect for freedom and rule of law and an efficient Civil Service. Yet, at least one sad thing is, during the time when we were colonized, the younger generations of Hong Kong were never genuinely taught of our rich history and culture. As a result, we do not have a sense of belonging not only to our motherland but also to our own home town. To me, this is because we lack a Hong Kong spirit to unite us. But, what is the Hong Kong spirit? Or, is there one?

Few of my friends overseas know much about Hong Kong. I also do not know what exactly I can be proud of as a Hongkonger. What’s more, few of us will take it as our target to excel ourselves so that Hong Kong can stand up in the world as a great city. We all strive only for ourselves or, at best, our families. It seems that, to many of us, we are still living in a borrowed place on borrowed time.

Having watched the movie *Echoes of the Rainbow*, I find a few things that we should learn from our parents’ generation and be proud of ourselves as a Hongkonger.

These are: a determination to overcome difficulties and to survive; self-reliance – working hard silently for a better living rather than blaming others for giving us a hard life; and, more importantly, the cherishing of the family as the ultimate source of support. It seems these virtues are fading but, I believe, as the future of Hong Kong, we must not allow this to happen.