

The Land of Courtesy and Integrity

礼义之邦

Dennis Fong October 5th, 2008 十月五日冯欣明著

(Simplified Chinese Script 简体版)

http://www.tsoidug.org/Papers/Land_Courtesy_Integrity_Simp.pdf

(To Complicated Chinese 到繁體: http://www.tsoidug.org/Papers/Land_Courtesy_Integrity_Comp.pdf)

Who says Chinese people are not capable of returning to being The Land of Courtesy and Integrity? Hong Kong is proof that Chinese people can.

谁说华人不可以再构成礼义之邦？香港就证明华人可以。

Twenty-four years ago, in 1984, when I went back to Hong Kong for the first time in twenty years, it was truly shocking. The place was completely unlike what I remember as a child.

二十四年前，1984年我二十年第一次回到香港，令我非常惊讶：跟我童年记忆中的香港完全不同了。

Back then, in the late fifties and early sixties, the Hong Kong of my childhood was a place of at least courtesy, if not integrity. My mother would take me to market with her and would teach me that one must address the vendors on the street politely as Lao Ban (“boss”) and the workers in the shops as Shi Fu (“master”). In turn they would always address her politely as Shi Nai (“respected madam”) or Xiao Jie (“miss”). In the shops people were always polite and friendly. In school we were taught *li rang*: to be courteous, considerate, and to let others go first. When the teacher entered the classroom we stood up as a class, bowed and said in unison, “Good afternoon, teacher.” When we met a teacher on the street we bowed and said the same thing. It was considered shameful beyond imagination for siblings to argue, let alone fight, in front of anyone other than the immediate family. We were taught by our elders and by the popular culture surrounding us to be polite and respectful, to be kind to others, and to never speak ill of others. The movies we saw extolled courtesy, integrity, loyalty to country, and of course, being good to parents (xiao).

那时，五十年代尾、六十年代头，我童年时代的香港就算不是礼义之邦也是礼貌之邦。妈妈带我去市场时就教我，街上的小贩们就要有礼貌地称呼做“老板”，商店里面的工人们就称呼做“师傅”。他们也有礼貌地称呼妈妈做“师奶”或“小姐”。商店里的人们都有礼貌和

友善。学校教我们要“礼让”：对人礼貌，为他人着想，让人家先行。老师进入课室时我们整班起立、鞠躬，然后同声说，“老师午安”。街上遇到老师时我们也鞠躬问好。如果兄弟们在人家面前有一点争执，那是再羞耻不过的了，在公众场所兄弟们互相打骂就没人敢想像了。长辈们和周围的大众文化教育我们要尊敬有礼，对人善良，不要说人家坏话。看的电影都歌颂礼、义、忠、孝。

In 1984, however, when I walked into a store the staff just stared at me and didn't say a word when I said good morning. When I couldn't find what I wanted the staff yelled at me as I walked out the door, "If you are not going to buy why did you come in?" When I tried to flag down a taxicab I had to flag down five cabs before I could get in: all the four others I flagged down someone appeared out of nowhere and jumped into the very cab in front of me! The only way I could get a cab was to jump in as soon as the cab stopped, before the previous passenger had gotten out, and to sit right next to him as he paid his fare. By the way, I had been warned about this before my trip, that Hong Kong people were so bad they barged into cabs flagged down by returning overseas Chinese, but I had dismissed it as anti-Hong Kong fabrication – no people in the world, I had reasoned, could be that barbaric, let alone Chinese people! And the children, why, the children! The ones I had contact with were very cute and energetic, but when they opened their mouths filth came out! Little five year olds were spouting words of contempt, cynicism and outright insult to strangers, and then looking to their parents for applause! And the parents proudly smiled and said, "So smart, this cunning little kid!" The children fought with their siblings loudly in public, with the parents approvingly looking on! When I turned on the TV, I could see where it all came from. The people on TV lightly and constantly yelled at, insulted, and lashed out at each other; what was in fashion was cynicism and contempt. Quite the opposite of the Land of Courtesy and Integrity. I left Hong Kong saddened and angry.

但是1984年我走进商店，说一声“早晨”时，售货员们只睁大眼睛盯着我，一声也不出。当我找不到要买的东西转身出门的时候，售货员高声骂，“不是买东西的，进来干什么？”当我在街上招计程车的时候，我招停了五架车才上到车，因为头四架都突然有人跑出来，抢在我面前跳进了我招的车子。最后我唯有学他们那样，车子里面的客人还没出来就跳进车子，他还在付钱我就坐在他身旁。其实，去香港前已经有人警告我，说香港人风气很坏，回去的海外华人招计程车会被他们抢坐，但当时我就不信，认为这是歧视香港的谣言，因为这世界没人会这样野蛮的，何况是华人！另外，香港的孩子，唉！我所接触的孩子都外形活泼可爱，但是张开口时出来的竟然是污垢！小小的五岁小孩子，对陌生人说出藐视、讥讽和侮辱的说话来，就回头望望父母，等待赏励。父母们竟然骄傲地笑着说，“很聪明的，这个蛊惑

崽”！孩子们跟兄弟姐妹们在公众场所大声吵骂，父母们却赞同地观看。我打开电视，便知道这些行为从那里来的。电视中的人们轻易地、经常地骂人、侮辱他人、突然攻击他人，流行的是讥诮和鄙视。跟礼义之邦完全相反。我带着悲愤的心情离开了香港。

In 2007, however, when I returned to Hong Kong after twenty-three years, the place had again changed completely. When I walked into a store, the staff were friendly and actually smiled and nodded. When I asked for directions the store people actually spent time to tell me two different ways to get there. When a taxicab stopped and my wife mistakenly thought that it had stopped for her, the person for whom it had actually stopped said that it was all right and waved us to go ahead and get into the cab when we started to apologize and defer the cab to him. The children I saw were actually polite and friendly! And on TV, the people spoke politely and were decent to each other. People told me that the famous Korean series “Da Chang Jin”, which I saw in America and which portrayed a very kind, polite, and idealistic Korean woman doctor, had been all the rage in Hong Kong. Good gracious! The wheel has turned; Hong Kong is back in the folds of civilization! Who says there’s no hope for Chinese people? I left Hong Kong elated.

但是，2007年，二十三年后重回香港时，又再完全变了。我走进商店时，售货员态度友善，又微笑又点头。问路时，店里人员化时间来教我两个不同的路线。至于招计程车，我太太误以为计程车是为她而停的要进去，而发现了车子是为前头一个人停的我们开始退出道歉的时候，他却摇手把车子让给我们。见到的孩子们居然又友善又有礼貌。电视中的人们说话有礼貌，互相对待也相当好。人们告诉我，描写一位很善良、有礼貌、追求崇高理想的女医生的著名韩剧“大长今”（我在美国也看过），风行香港。天啊！轮子转了，香港重新回到文明了！谁说华人没有希望？我带着欢乐的心情离开了香港。

Was it because I was better dressed last year, compared to 1984? No, not at all, I was still in my usual North American overseas Chinese plain garb. Was it because I was older now and so more respectable? No, because my children report the same thing: people, they say, are nice in Hong Kong.

是不是因为去年我比1984年衣着穿得好点？不，完全不是，我还是穿着北美洲华人的朴素装束。是不是因为我现在老一点了，所以被人尊重多一点？不是，因为我的孩子们也说同样的话：香港的人们很好。

Of course, these are all things on the surface that I see; deeper down there must be a lot of things not to one's liking. It is undeniable, however, that customs in Hong Kong have improved.

当然，这都是表面看到的東西，深一層的必然還有很多不如意的事情，但是，無可否認，香港風氣確實是進步了。

Yes, Chinese people can improve; it's entirely possible for Chinese people to return to being The Land of Courtesy and Integrity...

是的，華人可以進步，華人完全能夠再構成禮義之邦 ...

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