

# Music education and musical experiences in Hong Kong

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**Abstract:** In the last two decades, educational and curricular reforms in Hong Kong have been designed to prepare students for the challenges following the return of Hong Kong's sovereignty from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China in 1997. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has repeatedly emphasized the importance of the development of national identity and patriotism in school education, and has at the same time introduced Chinese cultural values into the school curriculum. This article explores how the dynamics and complexity of the relationships between the state and cultural identity in Hong Kong are re-shaping music education and music experiences in response to contemporary sociopolitical changes. The first problem for the HKSAR is how to incorporate Chinese music into a Western-orientated music curriculum; and the second is how to cultivate national identity and social harmony through school music education. Questions of how to integrate such musical experiences in school music education will remain a challenge for the future.

**Keywords:** Music education. Musical experiences. National identity. Chinese music. Western music. Hong Kong.

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## Educação musical e experiências musicais em Hong Kong<sup>1</sup>

**Resumo:** Nas duas últimas décadas, reformas educacionais e curriculares em Hong Kong tem sido elaboradas para preparar os discentes para os desafios decorrentes da devolução de Hong Kong para a República Popular da China pelo Reino Unido em 1997. O Governo da Administração Regional de Hong Kong tem repetidamente enfatizado a importância do desenvolvimento da identidade nacional e do patriotismo na educação escolar, e ao mesmo tempo introduzido valores culturais chineses no currículo escolar. Este artigo explora como a dinâmica e complexidade da relação entre o estado e a identidade cultural estão reformulando a educação musical e experiências musicais em resposta às mudanças sócio-políticas contemporâneas. O primeiro problema para o governo é como incorporar a música chinesa num currículo de música com orientação ocidental; e o segundo é como cultivar a identidade

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<sup>1</sup> Tradução de Ingrid Barankoski.

nacional e a harmonia social através da educação musical. Questões de como integrar tais experiências musicais na educação musical nas escolas será um desafio para o futuro.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação musical. Experiências musicais. Identidade nacional. Música chinesa. Música ocidental. Hong Kong.

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## Educación musical y experiencias musicales en Hong Kong<sup>2</sup>

**Resumen:** En las últimas dos décadas, han sido elaboradas en Hong Kong reformas educacionales y curriculares para preparar a los estudiantes ante los retos derivados de la devolución de Hong Kong a China por el Reino Unido en 1997. El Gobierno de la Administración Regional de Hong Kong ha destacado reiteradamente la importancia del desarrollo de la identidad nacional y del patriotismo en la educación escolar, y al mismo tiempo introducido valores culturales chinos en el currículo escolar. Este artículo explora cómo la dinámica y la complejidad de la relación entre el estado y la identidad cultural están transformando la educación musical y las experiencias musicales en respuesta a los cambios socio-políticos contemporáneos. La primera problemática para el gobierno es cómo incorporar la música china en un plan de estudios de música con una tendencia occidental; y la segunda es cómo cultivar la identidad nacional y la armonía social a través de la educación musical. Cuestiones sobre cómo integrar estas experiencias musicales en la educación musical en las escuelas serán un desafío para el futuro.

**Palabras clave:** Educación musical. Experiencias musicales. Identidad nacional. Música china. Música occidental. Hong Kong.

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<sup>2</sup> Tradução de Bryan Holmes.

## Introduction

Music education takes place in many contexts and offers many facets of learning, development and music experience in relation to the diverse contexts of schooling. Music in education should be experienced in meaningful ways that allow us to explore our potential as human beings within rich cultural and social contexts (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998; Gardner, 1999). If music and education are thus culturally embedded, then musical experience is not limited to aesthetic development, but also enhances the quality of life (Westerlund, 2008). Musical experiences relate not only to musical knowledge and skills, but also to ethics, morals, spiritual growth, and education for a more humane society (Stamou, 2002; Woodford, 2005; Carr, 2006; Heimonen, 2006). The value of music education is measurable in terms of the quality of learners' educational experiences and their development of these experiences (e.g., Law & Ho, 2004; Mark, 2005; Dunn, 2006; Westerlund, 2008).

Music and education are both part of the constantly transforming society and culture that surround them (Jorgensen, 2003). In this century, our traditional views of music teaching and learning are challenged, and are raised about how the pedagogy of music education could, or should, be extended (Green, 2008). School music can empower teachers and their students to connect to a larger musical world outside school (Jorgensen, 2003; Green, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Ho & Law, 2006; Jaffurs, 2006; Walker, 2007; Law & Ho, 2008). Woodford (2005) suggests helping music educators to recognize their role as agents in the transformation of society opens their contribution "to wider intellectual and political conversations about the nature and significance of music in our lives and those of our children" and advances democratic ends (p. xi). This implies that if teachers connect school music to students' own music, then music teaching becomes powerful, and offers them opportunities for meaningful musical experiences inside and outside class (Abrahams & Head, 2005). Changes in the structures, concepts, contents, and processes of societies and culture are affected by education as much as by other social institutions and systems. Schools are expected to recognize, accept and deal with diversity, but there is a question of whether the education system in Hong Kong is doing enough to achieve a fully-integrated society.

With reference to the cultivation of students' cultural and national identity in Hong Kong, this paper examines the dynamics and complexities of the relationships between music education, music experiences, and sociopolitical

changes. Some aspects of changes to the Hong Kong education system and curricular contents in response to socio-political development have been examined in the literature (for example, see Bray & Koo, 2004; Fairbrother, 2006; Luk-Fong, 2005; Kan, 2010; Kam, 2012; Lau, 2013). With particular reference to the transformations of Hong Kong society, this paper explores how Hong Kong music education responded to political and social change, and show how social and cultural education was organized in music education and society at large before and after the return of Hong Kong's political sovereignty to the PRC. It intends to analyze the complexity of relationships between social transformation, education development and musical culture in Hong Kong schools. First it is necessary to establish the social and cultural contexts in which Hong Kong's society, culture and educational development arose.

## Hong Kong Society and Cultures

Hong Kong is located on China's south-eastern coast, incorporating a small portion of the mainland east of the Pearl River, and adjoining the Guangdong Province of the PRC. It was ceded to the British in 1842 under the Treaty of Nanking, when the Hong Kong Island became a Crown colony. Then Great Britain acquired the Kowloon Peninsula in 1860, and obtained from China a 99-year lease for the New Territories in 1898. In the times of the setting-up of the 1949 Chinese Communist government, the outbreak of the Korean War in the early 1950s and the intensification of the Cold War, the political, economic and cultural relationship between Mainland China and Hong Kong was terminated. The alienation of the Hong Kong Chinese from the mainland was deepened by anti-communist propaganda supported by Western countries, particularly the United States, in Hong Kong after the formation of the PRC in 1949. The cultural life of Hong Kong people was assumed to be "a-political" and "pluralistic"; whilst in Mainland China, cultural life tends to be "political" and "centralized thinking" was demanded by the state.

Most Hong Kong people are the descendants of immigrants from Mainland China. The 1949 takeover of Mainland China by the Communists created a huge influx of Mainland refugees into Hong Kong, and its population increased by 50 percent to three million during the 1950s (Chan & Kirst, 1986, p. 54). By 1971, there was a demographic shift in the history of Hong Kong, so that "locally-born citizens" outnumbered the immigrants (Kam, 2012, p. 649). This gave rise to a new identity of Hong Kong people

as the “Hongkongers” or “Hong Kongese” (*Xianggnag ren*). Since the 1970s, a unique Hong Kong identity separate from that of the mainland has remained intact in society. According to the 2011 Population Census, almost 94% of the 7.2 million residents were ethnic Cantonese-speaking Chinese, whilst the remaining 6% comprised various nationalities, including Indonesians, Filipinos, White, Indians, Pakistani, Nepalese, Japanese, Thai, and other Asians (Home Affairs Department, 2012). In March 2014, the terms “Hongkonger” and “Hong Kongese” were both officially included in the Oxford English Dictionary.

Hong Kong is an international cultural metropolis. The music of Hong Kong has been an eclectic mixture of popular and traditional genres from both Western and non-Western societies, and as well as local cultures. The Hong Kong Government’s policies on culture and heritage matters are coordinated by the Home Affairs Bureau. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is responsible for developing and promoting recreation and sport at the community level. Three local professional orchestras - the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO), the Hong Kong Sinfonietta (HKS) and the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (HKCO, the only local professional, full-size Chinese orchestra) - regularly perform Western and Chinese classical music, give outreach courses and visit communities and schools. Outside school education, the Music Office (MO), which was established in 1977 by the Hong Kong Government and has come under the management of the LCSD since January 2000, is responsible for promoting outreach music interest courses and the knowledge and appreciation of music, particularly through instrumental and ensemble training for school students in both Chinese and Western musical instruments.

Radio (particularly the Radio Hong Kong English Channel) was the main medium for introducing Western popular songs in Hong Kong in the 1950s. During the 1960s and 1970s such songs dominated the local music market, and the Beatles, the Bee Gees, Abba, Elton John, Olivia Newton John, the Rolling Stones and Simon and Garfunkel were the idols of Hong Kong young people. Cantopop developed in Hong Kong in the early 1970s with a demand from Hong Kong audiences for popular music in their own dialect, Cantonese. Cantonese is the one of the most widely known and influential forms of Chinese, and is spoken in the southern provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi and throughout South-East Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. The influence of Cantonese and its culture on Hong Kong as well as other Chinese-populated areas increased in the 1980s and 1990s

years due to the popularity of films, television programs and popular songs from Hong Kong.

## Hong Kong Music Education during the Colonial Period

During the early period of the British colony, the colonial government became the main provider of Chinese education in Hong Kong. The introduction of English teaching in 1853 was one aspect of the educational policy of building “Western learning and Christianity on to the traditional Chinese curriculum” (Evans, 2006, p. 296; also see Evans, 1998, pp. 158–159). According to the *Hong Kong Government Gazette* of 9 March, 1878, there should be given “more time to English and less time to Chinese studies” (Sweeting, 1990, p. 234). In 1914, E. A. Irving, the first Director of Education in colonial Hong Kong, said that “... English must be the general medium of communication. Thus at the very outset we are committed to the establishment of English schools for the Chinese, not as a moral obligation but as a commercial necessity” (cited in Sweeting, 2007, p. 98). The *White Paper on Education Policy* (Hong Kong Government, 1965, para. 254) stated the policy of integrating English in the whole curriculum as follows:

We would expect English studies to be emphasised in the curriculum for the sixth year of general education and English to be used as the language of instruction in some subjects. We consider that such emphasis on English language would not only facilitate later study in Anglo-Chinese secondary schools<sup>3</sup> but also improve English language standards in Chinese secondary schools and ultimately at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The Anglo-Chinese schools placed their emphasis on learning the English language, along with modern science and the humanities, and the classical Chinese language was only introduced as a supplementary course in the secondary school curriculum.

However, there were no opportunities to develop formal music education in Hong Kong before the middle of the twentieth century. The beginning of informal music education in Hong Kong was connected with the

<sup>3</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, schools in the government sector were divided into three types: English, Chinese, and Anglo-Chinese (Even, 2006, p. 301).



“missionary invasion” or “cultural invasion” from Western countries. In particular, the London Missionary Society, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church contributed greatly to the development of school music education in Hong Kong. Missionaries of Protestant and Roman Catholic associations arrived in Hong Kong from different parts of the world. The first missionary body which worked for Hong Kong education was the Morrison English Society<sup>4</sup> (Ng, 1984). In 1870, elementary music was taught as an experiment at the Government Central School<sup>5</sup> (but this was not continued in subsequent years) (Sweeting, 1990). Up to the 1960s, music education was mainly provided by the church schools through the informal curriculum. Missionaries played an important role in the spread of Western music education in Hong Kong. Nuns and priests were music teachers in these schools. According to Sweeting (1990), these missionaries shared one common desire - to promote their religious beliefs through education.

After the Second World War, the school music curriculum focused mainly on listening to Western traditional music and singing English songs, particularly in public Anglo-Chinese secondary schools. The singing of English songs was a means to improve students' English proficiency. The music curriculum and public examinations always expressed and inculcated the “high-culture” knowledge of the Western traditions (Ho, 1999a). The Western orientation of Hong Kong music education was intended to achieve cultural political ends during the colonial period. It was apparent that Hong Kong music education fitted the general patterns described by Kelly and Altbach in that in the colonial situation schools were separated “from indigenous cultures in the languages and in the social values they taught” (cited in Bray, 1992, p. 92).

In order to suppress the spread of communist influence in Hong Kong's schools, the Education Ordinance was amended in 1948, as requested by the Director of Education, to refuse or cancel the employment of any teacher with a political agenda (Sweeting, 1993; Tang, 2004). The political nature of the Education Ordinance was an important means of the centralization of Hong Kong's education policies. The 1971 education regulations explicitly banned political activities in schools (Morris, 1992). These regulations were amended in 1990, and political activities were no

longer explicitly forbidden (Morris, 1992). The process of approving textbooks was one of the existing mechanisms of curriculum control used by the Education Department. This process was prescribed in the suggestions for curriculum guidance issued by the Education Department, and a small sample included (Morris, 1992).

The bureaucratization of education was thus an outcome of a concern about the influence of Chinese policies in Hong Kong's schools. Hong Kong publishers also exercised self-censorship in order to ensure that their textbooks were “politically correct” for the Hong Kong authorities. Consequently, the introduction of Chinese communist music was highly restricted, and traditional Chinese music was also undermined in the music curriculum. There was no acceptance of politicization in the incorporation of political issues in music. No political songs (including either the PRC's patriotic songs or Chinese political songs in support of democracy and political freedom) were introduced in the formal music curriculum (Ho, 1999a, 1999b). Due to political considerations, Chinese music (including traditional Chinese music and the “new music” of Mao's period) was not recognized in the Hong Kong music curriculum. Music education in Hong Kong was a “colonial product”, and the supposedly a-political content of Western musical knowledge was featured in the music curriculum (Ho, 2000). However, owing to the imminent political change, the 1983 music syllabus for junior secondary forms emphasized the introduction of Chinese music in listening programs and singing Chinese folk songs as part of the repertoire. Nevertheless, the recommendation of Chinese music was mainly focused on listening activities.

## Music Education Before and After the 1997 Changeover: An Emphasis of Traditional Chinese Music and National Identity

The return of Hong Kong to the PRC was first demanded by the Beijing authorities in the late 1970s. After Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's historic visit to Beijing in September 1984, much attention was focused on the question of Hong Kong's future. The Sino-British Joint Declaration on its future was begun in Beijing on 26 September 1984. The Declaration stated that Hong Kong would return to China and become its special administrative region (HKSAR) on July 1, 1997. China promised to grant the HKSAR special privileges under a “one country, two systems” policy (a

<sup>4</sup> In 1835, the Morrison English Society was founded in Canton, a province in Southern China, in memory of Robert Morrison who was the first Protestant missionary to the Chinese.

<sup>5</sup> The Government Central School, now known as Queen's College, was the first public boys secondary school founded by the British colonial government.

constitutional principle formulated by Deng Xiaoping during the early 1980s) that guaranteed on Hong Kong's capitalist lifestyle and social system for 50 years after 1997. This began a process of the decolonization of Hong Kong and its convergence with the social system of the PRC, after 1997.<sup>6</sup> The new situation was encapsulated by the former Chief Executive, Tung Chee Hwa (1997, sec. 110) in his first policy address in October 1997:

As we face the historic change of being reunited with China, for every individual there is a gradual process of getting to know Chinese history and culture, so as to achieve a sense of belonging.

The HKSAR hoped that the Chinese national anthem and the Chinese national flag would help increase students' patriotism, and all schools would have to participate in flag ceremonies, particularly on the National Day of 1<sup>st</sup> October.

After the return to China, the Hong Kong government deliberately amended the education regulations<sup>7</sup> in order to liberate the overall education system by reducing central control over political activities in the community and in schools. The Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education on Home Affairs is now responsible for promoting national education in the HKSAR through television programs and advertisements. According to a curriculum reform document "Learning to Learn", national identity has been highly promoted as one of the key values and attitudes (Curriculum Development Council, 2001a). Since April 2005, mainland officials and scholars have been invited to present talks to teachers through a program of a series of talks on contemporary China to senior secondary school students and teachers of primary and secondary schools (Tse, 2007, p. 239–240).

On June 30, 2007, the former president, Hu Jintao, spoke at a welcoming banquet organized by the HKSAR to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the handover, advising earnestly that "we should put more emphasis on national education for the youth in Hong Kong and

promote exchanges between them and the young people of the Mainland so that they will carry forward the Hong Kong people's great tradition of loving the motherland and loving Hong Kong" (HKSAR, 2007). Subsequently, training programs such as thematic seminars and courses on national education were organized for school teachers. In 2008, a National Education Funding Scheme for Young People was launched to subsidize large-scale events promoting national education for the young (Kan, 2012, p. 64). The quota of secondary school students in mainland exchange trips has been subsidized and increased from 5,000 per year to 37,000, and the bond between local young people and their "motherland" is invoked (Kan, 2012, p. 64).

Music education in Hong Kong has been caught in the tension between the transmission of musical and non-musical approaches in the school curriculum. The return of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997 has led to another form of cultural transmission within school music education: the introduction of Chinese elements and ritual expressions of national identity. The introduction of Chinese culture and national identity is a means to maintain the principles of Hong Kong as part of China and "One Country, Two Systems", so as to promote an intensely unifying cultural identity as political commitment to help students find their roots and adjust culturally and psychologically to the political changeover.

First, Hong Kong school education had to resolve the problems that resulted from the long colonial period by the introduction of Chinese culture into the school curriculum. After the political change of 1997, one of the most essential influences of China's cultural heritage is the intensity of students' engagement in learning. The *Guidelines* (Curriculum Development Council, 1996) and *Biannual Report* (Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, 1996) specified that the promotion of Chinese culture and traditions was an important task for civic education. One result of this curriculum reform was that the whole 3,000 years of Chinese history were repeated three times through grades seven to nine, 10 to 11, and 12 to 13 in secondary school education (Kan, 2010, p. 276).

Moreover, the emphasis on Chinese elements has influenced the official outlook on music education (Ho and Law, 2004, 2009a, 2009b; Ho, 2009). The curriculum includes introducing Chinese culture into arts education (Curriculum Development Council, 2002b). The curriculum guideline recommends singing and listening to folk songs from diverse regions of China, and the musical skills of luogujing (music played by gongs and drums as preludes for songs, and to accompany acting and the martial arts, particularly for Peking opera) (Curriculum

<sup>6</sup> July 1 is a public holiday in Hong Kong, and large-scale protests on that day have become an annual tradition since the massive demonstration in 2003. The 2003 demonstration expressed the protesters' anger against a controversial proposed national security law. Activists were openly challenging China's version of the city's political future in the pro-democracy rally on July 1, 2014, the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule.

<sup>7</sup> The 1971 education regulations included an explicit statement banning political activities in schools (Morris, 1992). In July 1990, the Hong Kong government and the Legislative Council agreed to amend the words, concerning political activities in schools. The regulations related to political activities were amended and political activities were no longer explicitly forbidden (Morris, 1992).

Development Council, 2002b). The promotion of Chinese music was encouraged by the government's funding for schools to establish Chinese orchestras. In October 1997, the first Chief Executive, Tung Chee Hwa, announced in his Policy Address the establishment of the public Quality Education Fund (QEF) to finance projects for the promotion of quality education in Hong Kong. The QEF has funded a wide range of projects to promote the establishment of Chinese music workshops and orchestras in schools. Besides the establishment of Chinese orchestras and bands, other extracurricular activities related to Chinese culture, such as Chinese dance clubs and kung fu, have also been intensified in schools (Law, 2004, p. 266). To promote Chinese music further, the HKCO has expanded its discography to include live recordings of its concerts and studio recordings in CD, VCD and DVD formats. The HKCO also presents performances in schools for the development of a new generation of audiences for Chinese music, and has established the children's Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra and the Junior Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra in 2003 (Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, 2014).

The promotion of the PRC anthem<sup>8</sup> has been an important feature of the introduction of a national dimension of music education in Hong Kong education during and after the 1997 handover (Ho & Law, 2004, 2009). Political or patriotic songs had never been included in the colonial school curriculum. The promotion of national education has been an undertaking for the whole community through different means and channels, such as television, classroom teaching, teacher education, extra-curricular activities and cultural exchanges with young people from the Mainland. In 1998, the HKSAR encouraged all schools (except the international schools) receiving subsidies from the government and all private schools to raise the national flag and play the national anthem on important historical dates and at school events. A special educational television program entitled "Under Our National Flag" produced by the Education Department was broadcast on TV channels. A website established in 2004 was dedicated to 15 patriotic songs for learning (Tse, 2007, p. 240).

To boost the general public's patriotism and affiliation with the mainland, every evening since October 2004 the HKSAR government has broadcast the national anthem in a television advertisement for public interest entitled "Out Home, Our Country" before the evening news on the Chinese-language television channels. The singing of

the anthem has given rise to debates, as the lyrics of the anthem reflect the socio-political situation in mainland China in the 1930s (Law, 1997; Ho, 1999b). The inclusion of the PRC's anthem in music textbooks since the academic year 1997–1998 is deemed as a symbol of Hong Kong's dedication to the homeland (Ho, 2009).

Besides the incorporation of the PRC's anthem into the textbook materials, there are some promotion songs in secondary schools' music textbooks, such as "Dream on China" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012a, p. 79), "Chinese People" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012b, p. 42), and "The Brave Chinese People" (Editorial Board, Hong Kong Music Publisher, 2013a, pp. 118–119). The song "Dream on China", with phrases like "Yellow River", "five thousand years of history", "matching a new era of China" and "being happy and fortunate Chinese people" emphasise the shared roots of Chinese people and their shared dream of progress. Other songs, such as "Descendants of the Dragon" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012a, pp. 30–31) with phrases like, "black hair", "yellow skin", "black eyes", "heirs of the dragon", and "descendants of the Yellow Emperor" emphasize bonds of blood and cultural heritage.

Moreover, curriculum reforms after 1997 for primary and secondary school music education include the teaching of Cantonese opera and local popular music; the Education Bureau runs workshops to help music teachers introduce new teaching materials. The current curriculum guides (Curriculum Development Council, 2003; Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007) for Hong Kong encourage the appreciation of Cantonese opera and learning to understand and respect local traditional culture through singing and listening activities. For example, the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED) implemented a program costing more than HK\$2.6 million (about US\$0.334 million), funded by the QEF, to promote Cantonese opera in primary and secondary schools, as well as to help school music teachers to integrate Cantonese opera into the curriculum and further their knowledge so as they can introduce their students to texts and performances of this traditional Chinese art. Current music textbooks for primary and secondary schools have been specially revised to include units which introduce Cantonese opera through its musical characteristics – instruments, music and dramatic roles (see Editorial Board, *New Era Music*, 2011, pp. 131–138; Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012b, pp. 59–70; Editorial Board, Hong Kong Music Publisher, 2013b, pp. 111–118). Many local popular songs (sometimes identified as Cantonese popular songs) are

<sup>8</sup> On September 26, 1949, "Marching Song of the Volunteers" by Nie Er (1912–1935) was chosen as the national anthem of the PRC; this anthem absorbed the characteristics of European revolutionary songs (Malm, 1977, p. 169).



found in recent music textbooks, but local folk music still marginalized in the music curriculum.

## Discussion: Music Experiences and School Music Education

Music education in Hong Kong has always been affected by cultural constructs, experiences, and values. This section attempts to construct deeper understandings of music education and, by implication, to show how political and cultural education is organized after the seventeenth anniversary of the return of Hong Kong's political sovereignty to Mainland China. The first issue for policy makers was how to incorporate Chinese music into a Western-orientated music curriculum; and the second was to find a way to cultivate national identity and social harmony through music education.

After 150 years of British colonial rule, there was an urgent need to cultivate the younger generations' sense of belonging to the PRC, as well as to the HKSAR. The "re-sinofication" of school music education in HKSAR is reflected in the pronounced incorporation of Chinese music into the curriculum. School music education began in Hong Kong after the Second World War, and has often been depicted as narrow and unsatisfactory in terms of learning objectives, and identified with the music of the Western classical tradition. Only recent curriculum reforms (see Curriculum Development Council, 2002b, 2003) have recommended that students should learn about music from a variety of genres and cultures, including traditional Chinese music, Chinese folk and local music. Learning Chinese music is regarded as very important for manipulating historical consciousness, establishing the legitimacy of the PRC and consolidating the Chinese national identity, since a nation is "a named community possessing an historical territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs" (Smith, 2002, p. 15). Shared histories, memories, symbols, and values can help promote a sense of pride in one's state and country (Smith, 2002; also see Anderson, 1983).

Although issues of Chinese music in the Hong Kong music curriculum have been raised as a problem in the post-colonial setting, fundamental changes have not yet been made. While teachers are encouraged to teach their students about relevant Chinese sociocultural practices in class, many of them may feel uncomfortable teaching Chinese traditional music. In Ho's (2006) and Ho's and Law's (2009b) surveys, negative attitudes amongst music

teachers and school students were observed. Due to their musical background and educational training, all the teachers surveyed mainly taught Western music in their music lessons (Ho, 2006). Even though they noted that traditional Chinese music was important, they maintained that they only devoted "very little" time to this topic, and considered that this music style could be taught through extracurricular instrumental groups (Ho, 2006). The difficulty of teaching Chinese music may be due to the unimportant role of Chinese music (including both traditional Chinese and local classical or folk music) played in Hong Kong higher education and teacher education, which have long been centered on European classical music. As a result, Chinese music does not receive much attention in Hong Kong school music education. In Ho's and Law's (2009b), the three preferred musical styles among 3,243 school students surveyed were popular songs, traditional Western music and the music of other countries; whilst the least preferred ones were Chinese folk songs, Cantonese opera, and Beijing opera. Young students were likely to find Chinese music old-fashioned and out of date, and to have no interest in learning it.

Music as a school subject has been valued less and received a less important rating than other school subjects in Hong Kong. As with other school subjects, students can be motivated and committed or they can be unmotivated and uncommitted (Renwick & Reeve, 2012). Differences in beliefs relate not only to individual differences amongst students, but also to the relationship with the social context and the classroom climate, which can cultivate students' enthusiastic engagement (Renwick & Reeve, 2012). It is important to address a more deep-seated concern about many Hong Kong teachers and students, who lack interest in teaching and learning Chinese music. The low levels of understanding of and interest in Chinese music amongst music teachers and students may be related to their opinions of the relative unimportance of including political and musical values in school music education. Cultural belonging, cultural identity and cultural experience have emerged as one of Hong Kong society's fundamental problems (Fairbrother, 2006; Fairbrother & Kennedy; Tse, 2012). At present, in terms of music genres, most institutions in Hong Kong offer training in classical music and prefer music teachers who are professionally oriented mainly towards Western classical music. To rectify this, the curriculum of higher music education needs to be restructured with a view to providing pre- and in-service music teachers with an opportunity to study Chinese music, and perhaps other musical cultures, and particularly to learn how to teach a variety of musical styles. Professional artists or musicians



can be invited to collaborate with music teachers to work with students in music making and experience in school. A subtle tension is arising concerning how Western music and Chinese music should or could be balanced in the school music curriculum. In this regard, more development and promotion of traditional Chinese music should be the main target for school music education (Ho, 2009a, 2009b; Ho & Law, 2009b).

Second, although Hong Kong marked the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reunion with the mainland on July 1, 2014, questions remain concerning whether school music education should use the PRC's national anthem and other Chinese patriotic songs to help students foster a sense of pride in China's history and traditions. The promotion of patriotism has been an essential component of the Chinese authorities' determination to create a new, unified collective political culture in Hong Kong. Since 2007, the HKSAR government has sought to introduce "national education" courses into the primary and secondary school curriculum, aimed at strengthening students' "national identity awareness" and nurturing patriotism towards China. However, in recent years this program has met with increasing public opposition, with many in Hong Kong viewing it as an attempt to brainwash students by the Beijing authorities. Controversial issues pertaining to the promotion of national identity in school music education and the challenges facing educators in cultivating national identity in students have also been identified.

In Hong Kong, a tension between whether or not to teach national identity in school music education continues to exist. The recent versions of music textbooks have attempted to delineate the concept of social harmony and love in song lyrics, as harmony is the finishing point of a happy, loving, prosperous society, rather than national identity. All recent music textbooks have relocated the PRC's national anthem from the first page to the supplementary materials or even removed it from their publications. These place more emphasis on other song materials on love, peace, and harmony, with Chinese and English lyrics, such as "Perhaps Love" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012c, pp. 95–97), "I Believe Love is Eternal" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012c, pp. 98–99), "Love Changes Everything" (Editorial Board, Hong Kong Music Publisher, 2013a, pp. 32–33), "Rely on Love" (Editorial Board, Hong Kong Music Publisher, 2013b, pp. 74–75), "A Whole New World" (Editorial Board, Hong Kong Music Publisher, 2013b, pp. 80–81), "What a Wonderful World" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012b, pp. 12–13), and "We Love Hong Kong" (Editorial Board, *New Trend in Music*, 2012b, p. 54). These songs promote social harmony through peaceful

interaction and to enhance the beauty of human dynamics among members of the society.

## Final Words

Musical knowledge, politics and music experiences are intimately linked in school music education. Musical experiences affect not only to musical knowledge and skills, but also through students' sensitivity to music, their activities for a more humane society (Stamou, 2002; Woodford, 2005; Carr, 2006; Heimonen, 2006; Westerlund, 2008). The challenge to music education can be seen to be the result of the interaction of two dynamic forces. The first derives from the political changes during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The second, another challenge to the bureaucratic Hong Kong music education system, is the politicization of the curriculum in Hong Kong. In addition, it must be remembered that the celebration of musical experience varies in the dimension of personal and social encounters between the state, teachers, and students in school music education.

Music, as a subject in Hong Kong schools, has always been adjusted to fit the schools' outer and inner frameworks. Educators, music practitioners and policy makers must exercise sensitivity and openness with regard to curriculum, resources and teaching strategies in order to promote music education. At the same time, schools, the mass media, social stratification, acculturation, social behavior, social interaction and politics are areas directly affecting (and affected by) music, music-making and learning about music. In the changing society of Hong Kong, there are complex issues concerning ***how to select musical materials and value students' musical experiences that can help them achieve more meaningful educational and musical values through school music education.*** Implementing long-term music education policy should bring together researchers, educators, practitioners, community music leaders and amateur and professional musicians to share research and ideas about the role and importance of music throughout people's lives.

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