

(Summary Translation of a submission from Mr Danny YUNG on 14.9.1998)

**Research studies should be the first step taken in
considering the prospect of cultural development in Hong Kong**

Cultural Ideals

1. Being fully equipped for a pluralistic culture, Hong Kong can become a global cultural centre in the 21st century.

Hong Kong is fully equipped, both socially and economically, to create the best cultural milieu for the cultivation of a race featuring flexibility, alertness, independent thinking, originality and global cultural insights, while at the same time promoting social and economic development.

With its cross-cultural characteristics, Hong Kong can contribute to the global cultural development in the 21st century.

Cultural Policy

2. The former colonial government in Hong Kong obviously did not have a long-term cultural policy.
3. The existing cultural policy is fragmented, relying on stopgap measures and lacking in macroscopic vision. The existing cultural structure, which lacks coordination and is not subject to objective assessment, is a waste of public funds.
4. The cultural perspectives and objectives in the leading hierarchy have decisive influence on the long-term development of society as a whole and international relations.
5. Freedom of creation and freedom of speech are fundamental in maintaining and upgrading the cultural standard in Hong Kong. Only with an upgraded cultural standard that Hong Kong is able to maintain its competitive edge in the world.

Viewing Policies from the Cultural Perspective

6. Policies on education should not only focus on economic development. They should also dovetail with cultural objectives. (For example, by laying emphasis on flexibility, the ability in expression, creativity and independent thinking)

Housing policies should not be meant to resolve “numerical” problems only. Cultural factors have to be taken into account (for example, family structure, filial piety and the quality of life).

Welfare policies should not be taken as a lubricant to social conflicts only. They should have regard for the development in cultural aspects (for example, generation gap, social order and cultural values).

Cultural Exchange

7. Cultural exchange is the most important part of cultural development in Hong Kong, similar to the importance of economic exchange in the development of the economy. Without cultural exchange, there will be no room for further development of culture in Hong Kong.

Where culture and the economy are concerned, efforts should be made to facilitate and assist exchange activities, not controlling and monitoring them;

8. In the absence of a strategy for long-term cultural exchange, the Hong Kong Government has no plan in place for the development of infrastructure for cultural exchange. It lacks knowledge of and fails to provide support for the development of both software and hardware, which are essential for equal and two-way cultural exchange to be conducted.
9. Hong Kong should mainly aim at cultural exchange with China, Asia and in the international context.

Discussions on the Chinese culture should be conducted in the context of international culture, and prior to the discussions on international culture, the question of “What is culture?” should be discussed in order to avoid the possibility of a confrontational juxtaposition of the Chinese culture and the international culture.

A realistic and down-to-earth approach should be adopted in the promotion of Chinese culture. Cultural exchange between China and Hong Kong should be conducted on an equal basis and should not be used as a means to

curry favour with either side.

10. Cultural exchange has a significant impact on Hong Kong in respect of its international image, tourism as well as cultural development.

Hong Kong should have cultural exchange with other territories on a city-to-city basis in order to avoid problems that may arise from cultural exchange at national level.

The Government should take concrete measures to support the development of infrastructure for cultural exchange.

Cultural Resources

11. In Hong Kong, the most creative cultural resources and talents come from non-government bodies and individuals, not the Government. Similarly, the biggest momentum of cultural advancement also come from non-government bodies and individuals, not government institutions. Therefore, the main duties of the cultural authorities are to improve the ways to harness talents and expertise, having regard for the opinion of non-government bodies and individuals.
12. The Government should utilize the resources from non-government bodies and individuals, and narrow the gap between the people and the Government. This can be achieved by enhancing the transparency of policy formulation and assessment, conducting consultation and studies on cultural policy, and working towards an organized and effective system by, for example, conducting an overall review of the appointment system.

13. A Summary Evaluation of the Current Situation

| <u>Government Institution</u> | <u>Problems</u> | <u>Direct Resources</u> | | <u>Suggestions</u> |
|---|--|-------------------------|--------------------|---|
| | | <u>(in 1997)</u> | <u>(in dollar)</u> | |
| Executive Council | Members with cultural in sights should be appointed to exclusively oversee cultural affairs. Lack of channels to solicit views on cultural affairs. | 0 | (-----) | A task force should be set up and a macroscopic policy should be formulated. |
| Legislative Council | The legislative process is overelaborate and protracted. Lack of policy studies. | 0 | (-----) | A task force should be set up and a macroscopic policy should be formulated |
| Urban Council / Urban Services Department | Members are laymen in the field. Members' knowledge of culture vary. Lack of cultural knowledge and insight in their operation. | 47% | (900 m) | The appointment criteria should be reviewed. Assessment and studies are warranted. |
| Regional Council / Regional Services Department | Members are laymen in the field. Members' knowledge of culture vary. Lack of cultural knowledge and insight in their operation. | 29% | (600 m) | The appointment criteria should be reviewed. Assessment and studies are warranted. |
| District Board / District Offices | Members are laymen in the field. Entertainment prevails over culture. Members' cultural knowledge and insight vary. | 1% | (20 m) | The appointment criteria should be reviewed. Assessment and studies are warranted. |
| Home Affairs (culture and recreation) | Lack of policy studies. Passive. Lack of a sound communication channel. | 12% | (200 m) | Assessment and studies are warranted. Communication with non-government bodies and individuals should be enhanced. |
| Hong Kong Art Development Council | Leadership and management are to be assessed. Insufficient resources. | 9% | (140 m) | The appointment criteria should be reviewed. A stable supply of resources |
| Education Department | Lack of policy studies. Passive. | 0 | (-----) | Assessment and studies are warranted. |

The essence of cultural development: research studies, assessment and infrastructure

| | <u>Research Studies</u> | <u>Assessment</u> | <u>Infrastructure</u> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 14. To conduct studies on a macroscopic policy; | X | | |
| To formulate a long-term plan for Hong Kong-China and Hong Kong-International cultural exchange; | X | | X |
| To study and assess the existing mechanism; | X | X | |
| To study and assess the operation of the two Councils; | X | X | X |
| To improve the appointment method and criteria of the two Councils; | X | X | X |
| To study and improve communication between the Government and non-government bodies and individuals | X | | X |
| 15. Immediate measures should be taken to set up a committee to assess the mechanism of cultural studies, prepare a long-term plan and conduct an overall assessment using an approach which is highly transparent, rational and objective; | | | |
| 16. The Home Affairs Bureau should be allocated sufficient funds to conduct policy studies and improve communication between the Government and non-government bodies and individuals. | | | |
| 17. The two Councils should be reorganized and the appointment system should be reassessed. | | | |
| 18. The Policy Address should cover the way forward for cultural development. | | | |