

A Few Personal Words

I was born in Hong Kong in the last mid-century. Life then was harsh, but I failed to get used to discipline. I fled from the school in the very first morning of my formal education, wandering around the food market for some time before reluctantly surrendering myself to my surprised and furious parents. What happened next I couldn't recall.

In the subsequent years I was preoccupied with street-side (plastic) football matches and fist-fights about trivialities (e.g. a seat for the Saturday morning cartoon show). My worried mother succeeded in bestowing through a (divine?) connection a Buddhist name on me, which had patently negligible behavioural consequences.

I turned more subdued in the secondary school, enjoying scouting and astronomy; and was later mesmerized by the translations of Franz Kafka and Karl Marx. That was why I enrolled in philosophy and political science at the University of Hong Kong. But I wisely balanced such a sublime choice by moving to the forefront of the action-packed student movement of the early 1970s. I spent much time on the street, leading demonstrations against colonial injustice instead of playing football. Given so little energy I could invest in my "academic" pursuit, justice was done on me and I missed the first-class honours for my bachelor degree.

I thought about Pareto's foxes and lions. "If you can't beat them, join them." Although I was never persuaded, somehow I got an MBA degree from the Chinese University and worked for the apex of financial capitalism. I was respectively employed as a credit analyst, a gold and foreign exchange dealer, and a treasury assistant. The experience turned out to be interesting, even morally challenging, but not intellectually rewarding. So I used the money I still had to rejoin the academia, studying at Manchester, where I met my future wife, and ending up as an economics professor here in the Baptist University.

In between, I got involved in the politics of Hong Kong's future in the early 1980s, being a founding member of Meeting Point, the first local organization to openly support the return of the territory to the motherland after 1997. I was also strangely linked to Hong Kong's currency board system, employed as an economist at the note-issuing Chartered Bank in the midst of the currency crisis of 1983. I never imagined that I would have more things to do with it over a decade later.

If there were a next life, I suspect I would want to become an astronomer.