

A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic

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There are few wealthy people in the world and many poor people. It would be difficult and impractical for the poor people of the world to depend solely upon the few wealthy ones. That is why society encourages middle class people to emulate wealthy philanthropists. There are also some people who give ostentatiously, letting everyone know about their charitable giving. The best people are those who give without seeking recognition for it. There are many such people in Hong Kong. They are the truly benevolent ones.

In China there are two types of private schools. One type is built by charitable organizations for children of the poor who have no options for education. These tend to be of relatively poor quality, with low quality facilities and average pay for teachers. The second type is international schools, which have luxurious facilities and excellent teachers. These are very expensive and are built for the children of wealthy people. The common people have taken to calling these schools “schools for the aristocracy”.

International schools tend to hire foreign teachers because such teachers have connections with American and European universities. The international schools cooperate with foreign universities, and so after graduating, many students go directly to attend school in the United States or Europe.

Society is continually advancing, our knowledge growing greater all the time, and science becoming more and more advanced. In the past in China, high school graduates were referred to as intellectuals. In those times, intellectuals were very low in the social hierarchy. Nowadays one cannot even necessarily call college graduates intellectuals because there are many people with bachelor degrees.

In my opinion, one must have at least a masters or doctoral degree, or be some kind of talented specialist, before being a true intellectual. This is because someone’s level of knowledge must achieve other people’s respect in order to be thought of as an intellectual. In the past it was considered good for a child to have even just graduated from elementary school, and high school graduates were even rarer. Nowadays every city and district has high schools, and universities. Now that the people of China are able to satisfy their basic necessities, they have begun to focus on becoming educated.

After China’s economy opened up, the southeast coast immediately implemented reforms and attracted foreign investment and encouraged private industry. Many local governments also developed quickly, raising revenues from taxes and sales of land.

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Development in the northwest has not happened as quickly. The government has invested a great deal into the infrastructure there, building public roads and highways, providing water and electricity, building railways and airports, while at the same time encouraging entrepreneurs and businesses from the southeast to come and start businesses. The local governments have enacted business-friendly land usage rights and tax exemptions, and cheap labor. Much has been invested in education as well.

As soon as someone comes into this world, luck becomes an important factor in their life. For example, a child is lucky to be born into the family of a millionaire, and will enjoy a comfortable life. On the other hand, a child can be born into one of the many poor families of the world, and may be impoverished his or her entire life.

However, the most important thing someone can have is health. If someone is born handicapped, they would not be considered lucky even if the family was wealthy. Other people are born in war zones and from a young age live life as refugees. But even if someone is born into a poor family, they can sometimes achieve wealth through hard work and study.

Eight: American and European fast food arrives in China, children are receptive.

By the 1970s, China's population had swelled to twice its level in 1940. If the government had not controlled birth rates, it would have become a serious social problem. This is because as the population grows, it becomes more and more of a problem finding sufficient resources to meet everyone's basic needs. In the 70s, the government enacted the one child policy. There were voices of protest from abroad, but in reality the policy did not reduce the population, just its growth rate. The policy was enforced most strictly in the cities. If even one more child was born, there would be severe punishment. However in the countryside, people held onto feudal mindsets and would often have two or three children. Due to the long held prejudice against women, families would marry their daughters off quickly to lessen the economic burden. Because of this, it was common for men to have several wives. However now there is an imbalance between the number of men and women, and some men have trouble finding wives. The United States government judges the one child policy to be inhumane, and grants asylum to those in China who oppose it, allowing them to become residents.

In China, the first nine years of education are obligatory. After that, talented students can apply for scholarships, or if the family is wealthy the student can attend special schools.

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The children of wealthy families can also attend the international schools or study abroad.

The law prohibits businesses in China from hiring workers under the age of eighteen; however, since the population is large, the social structure is complicated, and there aren't many opportunities for employment, some underage workers are employed as apprentices in small businesses. Working as an apprentice is a way to toughen oneself up. Apprentices do household work, plant vegetables, raise chickens, geese, and ducks, as well as study the work of their teacher. If they study hard they can eventually become entrepreneurs.

While those who start working from a young age do not have the opportunity to receive an education from school, they benefit from working for their own income. Sometimes they will even receive better salaries than their peers who have graduated from college.

In the past, many wealthy households in China would coddle their children and make them soft. When the children would grow up they would use up all of the family fortune. For this reason, China has the saying that wealth does not last more than three generations.

Children who are born into wealthy families benefit from a life without hardship. If their parents pay attention to their education, they will discuss their children's mistakes with them, and raise them to have moral character. This type of child will grow up to be responsible, successful in his or her undertakings, and filial towards his or her parents. If children receive appropriate punishments when they do wrong, they will know not to repeat their mistake. When a child grows up he will only be filial and reciprocate his parents' love if they have raised him strictly. If a child is raised without punishments and is spoiled, he will not become a responsible person, and will fill his parents with a feeling of regret, but by that time it will already be too late.

Every country takes into account a minor's age and level of maturity when he or she commits a crime. For the most part, the courts are lenient towards minors, and will give them a chance to turn themselves around. Criminal organizations take advantage of the leniency towards minors by using them as drug traffickers. When minors are caught by the authorities, they receive lighter punishments, and the criminal organizations will have more success.

For a child that is born into a poor family and is not educated, it is easy to find himself at odds with the law. If the child is raised properly at home, then there is less chance of this happening. Children that commit crimes often grow up into society's dangerous characters.

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When children are growing up, some will be smart and others will be more obtuse. The smart ones will understand things at a level similar to adults, will respect others, and will progress quickly in their studies. All a teacher needs to do for this type of children is to give them direction and they will mature into good people.

Generally speaking, intelligent children will do well in school because they have talent and they work hard. Some children are not successful in their studies, but if they receive special attention can become successful artists or athletes. Other children do not study and only do what they find convenient. When they grow up they become trouble-makers. The most unlucky children are those who are mentally handicapped, and whose families do not take care of them. In the United States there are special schools for such children. The situation for such children in China though is not as favorable, as the government does not have the means to give proper care to them all. Therefore these children can only rely on their families for care, which burdens the families with difficult economic responsibilities.

From the perspective of modern students, studying carries more and more pressure. Pressure is a motivating force, and without it people do not have the incentive to strive for achievement. While pressure can help people improve themselves, it can make some children feel powerless and terrified. If the pressure from school is too great, it can cause them to suffer psychologically.

In the past, children played games like marbles, and tag that did not cost and money, but made them perfectly happy. Nowadays children have all types of expensive toys and cell phones, and still want to learn to dance, paint, and play the piano. It is very expensive to raise a child nowadays.

In the past children stayed at home during holidays and played outside with other children, but now they want to go on vacation with adults to all sorts of places like Southeast Asia, Europe, and America.

Ever since China's economy has taken off, there have been new millionaires created every day. Not only do they employ many workers in the house, but when they go out they have a driver. The wealthy people of Europe and the United States are not as ostentatious with their wealthy as people in China. In China, wealthy people buy name brand products, go to high level entertainment districts, and eat the finest delicacies.

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Abroad, wealthy people do not place much importance on shows of extravagance. They often are excited to go to markets that sell fake brand name goods, whereas Chinese wealthy people buy real brand name products. As for entertainment, in Macau it is mostly about gambling. In the casinos, the biggest customers tend to be from Mainland China rather than from the west or Hong Kong.

Because of the economic reforms, there is now free competition in the Chinese marketplace. In the future, China will be the world's largest consumer market and foreign companies will have many opportunities to capitalize on that. Fast food companies are a perfect example. China's children have been very receptive to the likes of McDonald's, Burger King, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Adults do not enjoy the food at all, but will go because their children want to. Children nowadays do not prefer to eat delicacies like their parents do, but instead want to eat fast food, so this type of business has grown quickly in China. Many Chinese people's lives have become very westernized. They even prefer to eat western fruits and vegetables over Chinese ones. In the past, very few Chinese people drank coffee, but now there are Starbucks everywhere even though it is overpriced. Many western chain stores have made their way into the Chinese market and compete for customers.

Chinese soil is fertile and can produce a great deal of food. However people's level of intelligence is not the same. Only some are smart and possess a good memory. At twelve or thirteen they can begin the college curriculum, and finish at fifteen or sixteen. These types of people have been called child prodigies, and their future has great prospects.

Some people are able to enter into society at a young age and conduct business even though they have not received an education. By their twenties they might even have their own business. This was especially prevalent in the old society, in which poor people from the countryside would come into the city to become apprentices. After working hard, they would have the chance to become entrepreneurs. China currently has many young people that are successful businesspeople even though they are not yet even twenty. This is not the case in the United States, where people are still finishing up their studies at age twenty.

Children from the cities are more open-minded and have a greater range of experiences than other children. Everyday numerous things happen in the city, and there is modern technology everywhere.

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Growing up in the countryside, children have to take care of their younger siblings. That is why generally speaking Chinese children are more independent. In the United States, children younger than twelve are not permitted to be left at home without supervision by law, whereas in China there is no such regulation.

The life of the farmers that live in the outskirts is very difficult, and it is difficult even to satisfy basic needs such as food and shelter. To go be able to go sightseeing is something unimaginable for them. In the past it was rare for children to go outside of their own district in the city. They would go to school and live entirely in their neighborhood.

For children from the countryside, to go into the city and buy some things is a happy occasion. Most children in the countryside had never been even to China's biggest cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. Nowadays the situation has changed with the growth of the economy and the advancement of society, people can know about China and the rest of the world through computers. In the past if you wanted to study abroad it had to be at your own expense, and the necessary paperwork was very difficult to complete. Now children can study abroad with the costs covered by the government, and it is more common. When they return they can become officials. Studying abroad is good for young people because it can broaden their horizons and help them become more knowledgeable.

With China's economy improving, wealthy households are wondering how best to raise their children. The schools in England and the United States are very good. Not only are there good schools for medicine and the sciences, but also for business. In England there are many Chinese students studying in the colleges and middle schools. For college students, studying abroad is very useful because as they become adults they can be exposed to more things. With middle school however, the students are still very young, and not used to being away from their homes and cultural background. For them, studying abroad is not necessarily a positive thing.

Nine: The Four Asian Tigers; Creating diverse industrial parks.

Construction in Hong Kong advanced rapidly during the sixties.

In 1959, all of the buildings in Hong Kong's North Point district were just two stories tall. By the latter half of the sixties, there were already numerous towers dotting the skyline. At that time the shipyards were immense, and on the western edge of the shipyards was farmland.

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All that was there was what is now the Taikoo Shing neighborhood. From this, one can see how quick the development was.

In the thirty years after the revolution, all kinds of government campaigns took place. The result was social unrest, which in turn hurt the country's manufacturing capability and made life difficult for the common people. In contrast, the economies of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea were growing so rapidly that they had been termed "The Four Asian Tigers." Eventually the Chinese government realized that the political movements were preventing growth and making life difficult for both officials and the people. With joint ventures between Chinese organizations and foreign companies, the companies could take advantage of China's cheap labor and land, while China benefitted from the investment. Now every large Chinese city has many industrial parks, and China has become the world's factory.

Foreign companies without local partners are rare in China because foreigners do not understand how to do interact with Chinese people. During the development period, priority was given to attracting foreign investment. Private enterprises, while small, benefit from their flexibility, and manage to avoid many of the government's regulations. Joint ventures are larger, and can benefit from use of foreign technology and investment.

China has many types of industrial parks and development districts. There are development districts that the central government controls, that are beyond the jurisdiction of local government. Likewise there are development districts that are administered solely by the local government. What both have in common though is that they provide companies with an opportunity to make money while avoiding taxes. Not only can businesses there operate without paying taxes, but have great independence as well. For this reason, such development districts have developed rapidly. In the past, the residents of villages near the coastal cities were subsistence farmers. Now they have cars and drivers, and attend social events every day. Although the economy has improved, the local environment has suffered from heavy pollution, and air and water quality are very low. Thirty years ago, there were no foreigners at all in Guangdong. Now there are some areas of Guangdong where foreigners outnumber local people.

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There are also special districts for scientific and technological research. For example some have factories that produce electronics or precision medical instruments. The businesses in these areas receive favorable treatment from the government.

If research is successful, the government will give the land to the company for free, provide money to cover expenditures, and even encourage Chinese banks to provide loans. Ten years ago, it was very easy for students returning from studies abroad to receive government support for their research and business. If their research was successful, they would become very wealthy. If the venture was unsuccessful, the students would not be personally responsible, and the government would cover the loss. These policies had some bad results as well though. For instance, one person used the government support to build a factory, and then rented it out to another company to get rich. Generally speaking, Chinese students abroad have better opportunities for success in China if they have an invention because in the Caucasian-majority United States, things have always been difficult for Chinese people.

Since the industrial districts are planned out first, they are divided into heavy and light industry. For example textiles, shoes, and electronics are all manufactured in light industrial parks. Each type of industry has its own place determined scientifically, and the management system is also very scientific. The surroundings of every industrial district are also beautified by planting grass and trees in the area.

In light industrial parks, multi-storey factories can be built. In these factories different products can be manufactured on different floors, and administration is made more convenient as well. Most of the workers in these types of factories are from farming villages.

In heavy industrial parks, the factories are of a larger scale. Chemical engineering and heavy machinery are concentrated in one area, which makes administration more convenient. These factories produce things like machinery and cement, which are essential for many other types of manufacturing, which makes them the foundation of industry.

Another type of special district is the educational district. This refers to areas in which several universities are situated on the same campus. These supply the work force with educated workers. In the past, it was not unusual for cities to not have even one university, but now it is common for cities to have several universities in just one district. Some education districts specialize in a specific industry, such as mining industry, or navigation.

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Usually it is considered good for a city or country's economy to grow at an annual rate of ten percent, but in China there are quite a few cities that are growing at a rate of twenty percent annually. Over a period of just a few years, rapidly growing cities such as Shenzhen experience huge changes.

In the past China had outdated airports and harbor facilities. However, now Chinese airports are modern facilities, much larger and more efficient, and the harbors are designed to accommodate container ships. In the past there were no public highways, and the trains were slow. Now there are highways everywhere and they are filled with cars, and the railroad system has been modernized. In the past, Shanghai only had the Hongqiao airport, but now it has the Pudong airport, which is even bigger than JFK airport in New York. From this one can see how quickly China's airports and harbors have developed.

Ten: Socialism with Chinese characteristics has greater opportunities for growth and prosperity than capitalism.

China is a socialist society in name, but in fact it is even more centered on wealth and property than capitalist societies. Take transportation for instance; China has built many public highways and large bridges. However the money for the construction is raised by through selling stock in a company. This is different from Europe or the United States, where the government raises the money for such infrastructure projects. In China the roads and bridges all collect tolls from drivers to cover the cost of construction.

Most cities in China have seen their revenues rise greatly in the past few years. For this reason, some have begun to spend money wildly. Ten or so years ago, the government in Shanghai built large and beautiful new theater. Many other cities in China have followed Shanghai's example and built impressive theaters and cultural centers. Having such buildings can be good for the people because it allows the city to invite famous artists to perform, and can also act as a conference center for large conventions.

The building materials used in the construction of the Shanghai Theater were expensive and of a high quality. There is a great deal of space in the theater as well. Sadly, there are just over one thousand seats in the theater, so it cannot be called a truly large theater, and the usage rate is low.

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In the past, China's cities grew organically and were not the result of government planning. Most cities in the past were situated on the banks of the Yellow River, which was where all trade and commerce was concentrated. In contrast, modern cities must undergo a process of careful planning as they develop. All of the residences, shops, and granaries on the riverbanks had to be relocated. In order to give the city residents a more pleasant life, these buildings were replaced with trees, grass, and pavilions.

Before the reforms in China, the train stations in large cities would have many travelers, and there would be people waiting to help carry your luggage. The train stations in those days were simple and crude. And the cities in those times did not have undersea tunnels for transportation either. At that time Shanghai was relatively more advanced, and had one tunnel for traffic to Pudong. Not long after this tunnel was constructed, high traffic volume became a problem, and an additional two-lane tunnel was built. Now there transportation in Shanghai is much better, with many trains, cars, and subway lines, as well as tunnels connecting Pudong and Puxi. There is even a tunnel that can be walked by foot. In the past there was no bridge crossing the Huangpu River. Now there are many bridges, with a design that mimics the Brooklyn Bridge in New York. The tunnels and bridges in Shanghai are different from other Chinese cities because they do not charge tolls.

China's economic growth rate is rising quickly. Some local governments had great foresight, and built race tracks for horses and race cars with the expectation of selling tickets. However, since the central government has not yet approved such things, the facilities are rarely used. For that reason, the investors suffered a great loss.

There are also many golf courses in China, and a great deal of money has been invested in them. However, there are few people in China who play golf. Some rich people join golf clubs to show off their wealth. The golf clubs in China are much more expensive than in Europe and the United States.

In 1960, the Chinese government constructed the People's Congress Hall, a grand building that gave a feeling of accomplishment. However, after the reforms, local governments had lots of financial resources and competed with each other to build the grandest government headquarters, and so now there are some local government buildings that are even bigger than the People's Congress Hall in Beijing