

The Politics of China-Orientated Nationalism in Colonial Hong Kong 1949-1997: A History

By

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, Michael Hon-Chung Chun, declare that this thesis is my own original work; where the work of others is used, I have acknowledged accordingly throughout.

Signed _____

Michael Hon-Chung CHUN

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Abstract

This thesis is the first comprehensive study of the history of China-orientated nationalism in post-World War II (WWII) colonial Hong Kong. The thesis examines events in each decade diachronically and links them together in a broader perspective. It shows the continuities and changes in the meaning and politics of China-orientated nationalism and how the focus of that nationalism became increasingly on what was happening in Hong Kong rather than China in the long period from 1949 to 1997.

Three types of China-orientated nationalism emerged in Hong Kong during the 1949-1997 period: cultural nationalism, political nationalism, and popular nationalism. Some of the exiled Chinese intellectuals in the 1950s promoted cultural nationalism, while political nationalism in Hong Kong revolved around the Chinese Communist Party-Guomindang (CCP-GMD) struggle. Popular nationalism in the post-1967 period was tied primarily to Hong Kong politics.

This thesis demonstrates how the various nationalist sentiments were a product of the China factor, the Hong Kong factor, and colonialism. China-orientated nationalism was open to interpretation and its rise and evolution was a haphazard process. Over time, the rhetoric of political nationalism that revolved around the CCP-GMD struggle became less significant as younger generations of Hong Kong Chinese who had little interest in Chinese politics became politically active in the 1970s. In this new phase, nationalism was tied not to the pro-CCP/pro-GMD rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s, but to young Hong Kong

people's concern about problems in Hong Kong society and Hong Kong politics. In the 1980s and 1990s, expressions of popular nationalism were linked to Hong Kong people's concern over the future of Hong Kong following the Tiananmen Square incident and on the eve of the 1997 handover.

This study of the evolution of China-orientated nationalism in colonial Hong Kong also provides an understanding of how the colonial government responded, and how some sectors of the Hong Kong Chinese community manoeuvred vis-à-vis the colonial administration and other Hong Kong-based groups by using their own strategically constructed nationalism.

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