Hong Kong Identity Past, Present, and Future
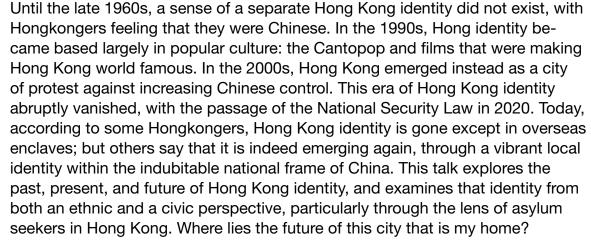
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The Chinese University of Hong Kong

May 8, 2024, 18:30-20:00
Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University
In person only / No registration required

Until the late 1960s, a sense of a separate Hong Kong identity did not exist, with Hongkongers feeling that they were Chinese. In the 1990s, Hong identity became based largely in popular culture: the Cantopop and films that were making Hong Kong world famous. In the 2000s, Hong Kong emerged instead as a city of protest against increasing Chinese control. This era of Hong Kong identity abruptly vanished, with the passage of the National Security Law in 2020. Today, according to some Hongkongers, Hong Kong identity is gone except in overseas enclaves; but others say that it is indeed emerging again, through a vibrant local identity within the indubitable national frame of China. This talk explores the past, present, and future of Hong Kong identity, and examines that identity from both an ethnic and a civic perspective, particularly through the lens of asylum seekers in Hong Kong. Where lies the future of this city that is my home?

Gordon Mathews is Emeritus Research Professor in the Dept. of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and is Chair of the World Council of Anthropological Associations. He has written or edited ten books, including *Hong Kong China: Learning to Belong to a Nation* (2008, with Tai-lok Liu and Kit-wai Ma), *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (2011), and *The World in Guangzhou: Africans and Other Foreigners in South China's Global Marketplace* (2017, with Linessa Dan Lin and Yang Yang). He has been teaching a weekly class of asylum seekers in Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong for the past fifteen years.

This talk is organized by James Farrer (Professor of Sociology, Sophia University).

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