

## Upheaval in China; Canton's Prosperous Students March

By BARBARA BASLER and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 25, 1989

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In Canton, young women may march for democracy carrying pretty parasols to protect them from the sun, and young men may ride buses rather than walk to a rally, but those relatively prosperous, privileged students are turning out in the tens of thousands to support their tougher, more political counterparts in Beijing.

In a commercial city so driven that many families keep the household clock set 10 to 15 minutes ahead - "so we will never be late," a woman explained - the Cantonese have been giving more and more of their time to politics.

On Tuesday night as many as 100,000 people took part in the third demonstration to be held in three days, and the largest since the student vigil began.

Under stormy skies lighted by huge flashes of white lightning, the Cantonese began marching at 9 P.M. and did not go home until 3 A.M. The marchers were primarily students, but they included workers carrying banners from organizations and factories, a group from the local China writers association and even a 60-year-old senior editor of a local publishing house. Trading Center Becomes Involved

Foreign officials here say the fact that the students and more and more of the citizens of this provincial southern capital have been drawn into the Beijing political debate suggests the breadth and depth of the changes sweeping through

China now.

"The demonstrations here are not as passionate as in Beijing or as vigorous as in Shanghai, but they are still almost unprecedented for an area that has traditionally kept its mind on business and preferred not to get involved," said a foreign consular official here.

This lively, sprawling city on the edge of southern China has traditionally been a wealthy trading center, and after the Communist revolution hundreds of thousands of Cantonese fled to Hong Kong, the nearby British colony that they helped turn into one of Asia's richest commercial centers. The Cantonese who remained here continued to concentrate on business and moneymaking, rather than party slogans and politics.

The Cantonese have one of the highest standards of living in China, and quiet privileges like the ability to get Hong Kong's television broadcasts -which include news and reruns of "Dynasty" and "Dallas" - with special antennas. The antennas, though, are allowed up or ordered down based on the political winds, and now, most of the television apparatus is down. 'Beijing Woke Us Up'

Still, Hong Kong radio news poured into the warm May afternoon today, from the open doors of small shops and from apartment windows. And everywhere people gathered, the talk was of politics.

Many students and residents conceded that even though the people here are among the best informed in China, the push for change that began in Beijing would never have started here. A university graduate who now manages an apartment complex in Canton said that while many teachers and students are hard pressed, "here we have moonlightings." She continued: "People can always find an extra job in a hotel or driving a taxi. Nobody has to do without more."

In Canton, she said, people were asleep. "And a man who is dreaming is happy," she said. "But Beijing woke us up, and now we want change."

"Many students were afraid that bad, powerful people might take revenge on them if they spoke out, so they remained silent in the beginning," said a demonstrator who is a student at South China Industrial College and a Communist Party member. "But they are growing braver, and joining in now." 'Stay Inside and Study'

A chemistry teacher from Zhongshan University in Canton, one of the two largest universities in Guangdong Province, said that in the beginning, "teachers here said, do nothing." He continued: "No one said which side they were on. We

just said, stay inside and study."

Now, he said, "98 percent of the teachers are behind the students here and in Beijing."

"We do not march, but we are in sympathy," he said. "We give extra lectures if they miss class because of demonstrating."

The teacher, interviewed on the lovely, sprawling campus, said, "Now, everyone talks about support for the students, and young teachers discuss the politics of the day even in class, in the open." That, he said with a smile, "is a big change, a very very big change." Students From the North

"The turning point for teachers here came on May 20, when Li Peng gave his bad speech," the teacher said, referring to the Prime Minister.

Still, a former Cantonese student involved with the demonstrations cautioned that in the next few weeks, activity may wane. "we are very practical, and it is exam time," he said. "We must pass our exams."

"We have always been a commercial city, and few of us paid attention to politics," said the former student, who now works in one of the city's big, gaudy Western-style hotels. "It is a question of degrees. We are very mild, but in the north of China, they are very heated, very angry."

He said that even in Canton, the most politically active students "are the ones who came from the north to go to school here."

"Listen to the loudspeakers," he said. "You will not hear the Cantonese accent with many of the speakers." Tolerance of Marches

Moreover, even though the demonstrators here consistently echo the demands of the Beijing students - for dialogue, democracy and the resignations of Prime Minister Li and China's senior leader, Deng Xiaoping - in Canton the slogans, drawings and chants are milder, more decorous.

For example, in Beijing the students have been making a visual pun on Mr. Deng's name, Xiaoping, which can sound like "small bottle" by hanging little bottles from the trees around Tiananmen Square. In Canton, they have large paintings of a big broom sweeping away a little bottle lying in the street.

"Here we sweep the bottle away; in Beijing, they hang it by the neck from a tree," said a former schoolteacher who was watching the demonstrations.

While the provincial government shows no signs of breaking with the central Government in Beijing, Westerners here say, students and teachers praised the provincial officials for their noninterference, their extreme tolerance of the

marches, rallies and constant speeches.

Asked if those students would stand up to a Government crackdown, a foreign consular official said: "Who can tell? Once we never would have believed they would go this far, and now that the genie is out of the bottle, who knows if they can put it back."

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