


UNIT  
**2**

**CULTURAL SECURITY AND  
SOCIAL SECURITY**



The background of the page features a scenic view of a modern architectural complex. A prominent building with a dark, angular facade is situated on a grassy slope. In the distance, a large body of water, likely a lake or bay, stretches across the horizon, with rolling mountains visible under a clear sky. The overall lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a daytime setting.

Cultural security refers to a state in which a country's culture is free from danger, internal and external threats, along with the ability to ensure safety constantly. It is related to the national stability, national unity and spiritual heritage, and it is also an important guarantee for national security. Culture is the lifeblood of a nation and the spiritual home of people. On the basis of a specific economic foundation, culture interprets and defines people's code of conduct, moral norms, value concepts and political beliefs. It provides the ideological and spiritual foundation for the national identity and political identity necessary for the establishment of a country. Cultural security can not be separated from national identity and political identity, only in this way, can the security of a modern country be guaranteed deeply.

Social security refers to preventing, eliminating, and controlling public cases, criminal proceedings and violent terrorist incidents as well as large scale group events, that directly threaten social public order and the safety of people's lives and property, involving various aspects such as combating crime, maintaining stability, social governance, public services, etc. It is closely related to everyone's vital interests. The government and society should cooperate to improve the system and mechanism for effectively preventing and resolving social contradictions, improve the public security system, and actively prevent, reduce and resolve social contradictions. We should properly handle public health, social security and other emergencies that affect national security and social stability, promote social harmony, and maintain public safety and social stability.

# Cultural Security

## HIGHLIGHTS

### ① Cultural Security Concerns a Nation's "Independence of Spirit"

- 1.1 Culture is the lifeblood of a nation
- 1.2 Cultural independence and continuity is a matter of national security
- 1.3 Hong Kong: preserving our roots in a multicultural society

### ② Passing on the Treasures of Traditional Chinese Culture

- 2.1 Abandoning tradition is cutting off one's spiritual lifeline
- 2.2 "Embracing the new while honouring the old"
- 2.3 Traditional Chinese culture thriving in Hong Kong

### ③ Promoting Cultural Exchange and Equality While Opposing Double Standards and Cultural Hegemony

- 3.1 "Diversity in all things is natural"
- 3.2 Cultural "aggression" only exacerbates divisions and conflict

### ④ Safeguarding Language as the Foundation of Cultural Continuity

- 4.1 Multilingualism as Hong Kong's competitive advantage
- 4.2 Hong Kong's fight to defend the Chinese language

### ⑤ Promoting Core Values Centred on Love for the Nation and Hong Kong

- 5.1 Advocating core values in society
- 5.2 Values education must include patriotic education



## Warm-up

The Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance, performed during the Mid-Autumn Festival, is one of Hong Kong's most renowned traditional celebrations. According to legend, a plague broke out in Tai Hang in the sixth year of Emperor Guangxu's reign (1880) during the Qing Dynasty. To ward off the illness, villagers crafted a fire dragon and paraded it through the community while setting off firecrackers. This practice eventually became a cherished tradition.

For decades, Tai Hang has transformed into a bustling urban area, yet the Fire Dragon Dance remains a significant Mid-Autumn Festival event for the local community. This tradition plays a vital role in promoting Chinese cultural heritage, fostering a sense of community identity, and strengthening social bonds. Today, the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance is one of the ten Hong Kong traditions inscribed on China's National Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Ensuring the continuity of intangible cultural heritage is one of the greatest challenges in its preservation. Fortunately, more and more young people are getting involved in this grand tradition. Mr. Chan Ka-chun, who has been participating in the Fire Dragon Dance since the age of eight for over a decade, shared his thoughts: "Most people love their homes. When you discover something unique in your hometown that is over one hundred years old, you naturally want to protect it." The community has established the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Heritage Centre to preserve this century-old tradition.

**THINK** Do you know any other Hong Kong traditions that are listed as National Intangible Cultural Heritage?

**DISCUSS** In recent years, some countries have attempted to claim elements of China's intangible cultural heritage as their own, sparking widespread concern. What can we do within our abilities to help preserve the intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong and our nation as a whole?



# ① Cultural Security Concerns a Nation's “Independence of Spirit”

## 1.1 Culture is the lifeblood of a nation

Culture is the lifeblood of a nation. As Chinese people, our most fundamental trait is our unique intellectual worldview. The political aspiration of “worrying before the world worries, and rejoicing only after the world rejoices”, the patriotic spirit of “sacrificing oneself for the country, undeterred by personal fortune or misfortune”, the unwavering integrity of “remaining uncorrupted by wealth, unmoved by poverty, and unyielding to power”, and the dedication of “exhausting one’s efforts in service, until the very end”—all reflect the values and ideals that the Chinese people have upheld for generations.

**In a world made up of nations with diverse ethnicities, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds, cultural independence and heritage preservation are essential to a country’s independence of spirit.** “Without the independence of spirit, the foundations of political, ideological, cultural, and institutional independence will be fundamentally weakened.” At the same time, it is closely tied to individual identity. While openness and inclusivity are essential, so too is the need to navigate cultural exchange without losing oneself or becoming uncertain about “who we are.” It is a fundamental inner spiritual need for every individual.



A poster on the theme of “cultural security” by the mainland National Security Education Office

## 1.2 Cultural independence and continuity is a matter of national security

Today, nations are more interconnected and interdependent than ever before. Promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual exchange among diverse cultures has become a prevailing trend in the modern world. However, amid cultural integration, interaction, and influence, we must also consider how to safeguard our country's cultural independence and continuity—key aspects of cultural security.

Cultural differences and conflicts between nations serve as the backdrop for cultural security concerns. When foreign values, ideologies, and cultural influences enter a country, there is an inherent risk of losing cultural autonomy. In extreme cases, a nation may become subordinate to a dominant foreign culture. The Qing dynasty scholar Gong Zizhen once said: **“To destroy a nation, one must first erase its history. To annihilate an entire people, one must first eradicate their culture.”** Throughout human history, many groups of people have faded into obscurity after abandoning their unique cultural traditions and assimilating completely into dominant cultures.

In addition, certain countries deliberately engage in cultural infiltration and cultural colonisation. The development of new technologies, such as the Internet, has also facilitated the spread of harmful content, including violence and pornography. These trends pose challenges to cultural security that nations must address today.

## 1.3 Hong Kong: preserving our roots in a multicultural society

Over the past century of conflict and exchange between China and the West, Hong

Kong, at the forefront of these interactions, has ultimately developed a unique style where East meets West and diverse cultures blend. As a global metropolis, Hong Kong has served as a vital “window” for China's cultural exchange and outreach since its return to the Motherland.



The West Kowloon Cultural District and its diverse cultural venues

China's 14th Five-Year Plan highlights the goal of supporting Hong Kong in becoming a hub for cultural and artistic exchange between China and the world. This will help Chinese cultural soft power reach a wider audience and allow people around the world to appreciate the charm of Chinese stories. Hong Kong's century-long history as a bridge between East and West also reflects the fact that cultural security has always been an essential part of national security.



## Explore

### The Hong Kong Palace Museum: A New Window for Cultural Exchange

In July 2022, the Hong Kong Palace Museum, located in the West Kowloon Cultural District, officially opened to the public. Among the first batch of exhibits brought to Hong Kong, as many as 166 pieces were classified as grade-one national treasures. This marks the largest and most prestigious exhibition of artefacts from the Palace Museum outside Beijing since its establishment.

China has long been a centre of world art and culture. The precious treasures displayed in Hong Kong not only allow visitors to admire the rich collections of the Palace Museum and experience the deep history and cultural heritage of the Motherland, but also strengthen cultural ties between Hong Kong and the mainland. For foreigners living in Hong Kong, the museum offers a rare chance to experience the richness of China's 5,000-year-old civilisation up close, without the need to travel to Beijing.



## ② Passing on the Treasures of Traditional Chinese Culture

### 2.1 Abandoning tradition is cutting off one's spiritual lifeline

The rich and enduring traditional culture of the Chinese civilisation, shaped over thousands of years, forms the very roots and soul of the Chinese nation. It is also the foundation that allows us to stand firm in today's dynamic global cultural landscape.

Since the Opium War, the once-flourishing Chinese culture was overshadowed by national crises. In the pursuit of saving the nation from peril, many devoted reformers began to question and even reject traditional culture. They were drawn to the powerful foreign cultures behind gunboats and cannons, which has led to repeated waves of radical reforms that sought to abandon tradition.

However, **forsaking tradition and severing our cultural roots is akin to cutting off our spiritual lifeline.** It is important to recognise that China's past weaknesses in modern times relative to the West did not stem from its culture. On the contrary, it was the very depth, openness, and resilience of Chinese culture that enabled the nation to survive and endure, even in its most vulnerable moments, without falling entirely into colonial rule like other ancient civilisations. In human history, China is the only civilisation that has maintained an unbroken cultural lineage, standing the test of time. This should give us unwavering confidence in our rich cultural heritage and proud history.

The teachings of Laozi, Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Zhuangzi, and other great thinkers of the Hundred Schools of Thought have shaped the spiritual foundation of generations of Chinese people and continue to hold profound cultural significance worldwide.



## 2.2 “Embracing the new while honouring the old”

“When granaries are full, people learn etiquette; when food and clothing are sufficient, they understand honour and shame.” After a century of trials and transformations, with economic growth, national resurgence, and the restoration of cultural confidence, we are now able to appreciate traditional Chinese culture with greater objectivity and balance.

Traditional culture is inevitably shaped by the conditions of its time and may contain elements that no longer suit the present. However, this makes it all the more important to “preserve its essence while discarding the obsolete” and “embrace the new while honouring the old.” It is only through openness and inclusiveness that the revitalisation and promotion of China’s fine traditional culture can be achieved—enabling the nation to flourish in the wave of globalisation, and individuals to attain genuine peace of mind and self-assurance.



### Explore

#### China’s Rapid Growth in World Heritage Recognition

China became a signatory to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1985 and later joined the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004.

By the end of 2020, China had successfully inscribed 41 sites—including the Great Wall, Mogao Caves, and the Forbidden City of the Ming and Qing dynasties—on the World Heritage List. Additionally, 42 cultural traditions, such as Kunqu opera, guqin music, Mongolian Long Song, and the Uyghur Muqam of Xinjiang, had been recognised as intangible cultural heritage. Today, China ranks first globally in both World Heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage listings, solidifying its position as one of the fastest-growing nations in world heritage recognition.



Mogao Caves



The Forbidden City



Yungang Grottoes

## 2.3 Traditional Chinese culture thriving in Hong Kong

Hong Kong shares an unbreakable bond of kinship with the Motherland. As an integral part of Chinese culture, Hong Kong has particularly close links with Lingnan culture. Although it was once under British rule, the city has always preserved and been imbued with the rich traditions of Chinese culture.

Traditional customs continue to shine in Hong Kong, especially during festivals. Mid-Autumn lantern displays, the welcoming of the God of Wealth during Lunar New Year, and Dragon Boat races of the Dragon Boat Festival take place in succession. Other important folk celebrations, such as the Hungry Ghost Festival, Tin Hau Festival, and Tam Kung Festival, feature traditional dragon and lion dances, as well as lively parades that fill the streets.

Since Hong Kong's return to the Motherland, the HKSAR Government has introduced various measures to protect traditional culture, such as conducting intangible cultural heritage (ICH) surveys, compiling ICH inventories and representative lists, and establishing an ICH office. Thanks to these efforts, numerous traditions have been recognised as National Intangible Cultural Heritage, including Cantonese opera, herbal tea, the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, the Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade, the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Hungry Ghost Festival, the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance, guqin music, Quanzhen Temples Taoist Ritual Music, the Hakka unicorn dance in Sai Kung, Wong Tai Sin beliefs and customs, the Tin Hau Festival, and the sewing technique of traditional Chinese Cheongsam. Among these, Cantonese opera, jointly nominated by Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.



Herbal tea



As a treasured art form, Cantonese opera serves as a “living fossil” of the ancient Chinese performing arts.

“The Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade” has been inscribed on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



## Explore



### Cantonese Opera—From Hong Kong to the World

Cantonese opera originated in Guangdong and later spread to Guangxi, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and beyond. With over 400 years of history, it is one of China's traditional opera forms. Its unique performance style and artistic beauty have captivated generations in the Greater Bay Area.

Since 2003, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao have designated the last Sunday of November as Cantonese Opera Day. In 2009, the three regions jointly nominated Cantonese opera for inclusion on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It was the first world-class intangible cultural heritage item recognised in Hong Kong.

Today, Cantonese opera is more than just a local form of theatre in the Pearl River Delta and the Greater Bay Area. It reflects the unique traditions and customs of the region and has spread to Chinese communities around the world. For many overseas Chinese, it is a treasured link to their heritage that carries fond memories of home and strengthens their connection with Chinese culture.



Cantonese opera

### ③ Promoting Cultural Exchange and Equality While Opposing Double Standards and Cultural Hegemony

#### 3.1 “Diversity in all things is natural”

“Diversity in all things is natural.” The culture of every nation and ethnic group is deeply rooted in its own land. Differences in political, economic, and social conditions have given rise to distinct and unique cultural traditions across nations and peoples. Cultural diversity is a defining feature of human civilisation, and mutual exchange has long been the driving force behind cultural progress. For millennia, societies have thrived through continuous interaction and communication.

Since the late Qing Dynasty, visionary scholars have urged China to “look at the world with open eyes”, and systematically explored how Chinese and Western cultures could be brought together. Their insights continue to shape discussions today, providing valuable intellectual foundations for those seeking to revitalise Chinese culture while engaging with the western world. The fusion of Marxism with Chinese culture is also a significant product of cultural exchange. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Marxism has served as a guiding force in shaping a scientific system of thought that drives the nation towards survival, modernisation, and national rejuvenation.

#### 3.2 Cultural “aggression” only exacerbates divisions and conflict

Every culture is shaped by its people’s history and reflects their understanding of how to live with dignity. Many cultures share universal values, but no culture should see itself as “superior to others” or seek to “reshape” another. This kind of cultural “colonisation”—or even cultural “aggression”—only leads to greater divisions and conflict in the world.

As human society progresses, we must strengthen mutual understanding and forge closer bonds among peoples. Facing growing global challenges, different cultures should work together for a better future. Mutual respect and equality enable each country to keep its own culture thriving while creating conditions for others to develop.



## Explore

### Confucius Institutes: “Ambassadors” of Chinese Culture to the World

Since 2004, China has established non-profit Confucius Institutes in partnership with institutions around the world to promote the Chinese language and culture. From the first institute in Seoul, South Korea, to the present day, more than 500 Confucius Institutes and thousands of Confucius Classrooms have been established across 150 countries and regions.

Established in 2014 to mark the 10th anniversary of Confucius Institutes, Confucius Institute Day has been celebrated annually around September 27. Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in over 100 countries host open days and various events to promote and share Chinese culture.



Established in 2006, the Confucius Institute at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is the first and only one of its kind in Hong Kong. It provides local residents with opportunities to learn Mandarin and explore Chinese history and traditional culture.

## ④ Safeguarding Language as the Foundation of Cultural Continuity

### 4.1 Multilingualism as Hong Kong's competitive advantage

Language develops over time as part of a nation's history. It is not only a means of communication but also a vessel for culture and civilisation. Among all cultural elements, language remains one of the most fundamental, stable and enduring.

As a global metropolis, Hong Kong has both Chinese and English as official languages that are widely used in different aspects of daily life. Government documents, legal texts, street signs, and bus displays all appear in both languages. Even addresses on mail and utility bills follow this bilingual format. This strong bilingual environment gives Hong Kong an advantage as a key hub for East-West exchange.

As a global metropolis, Hong Kong recognises both Chinese and English as official languages.



## 4.2 Hong Kong's fight to defend the Chinese language

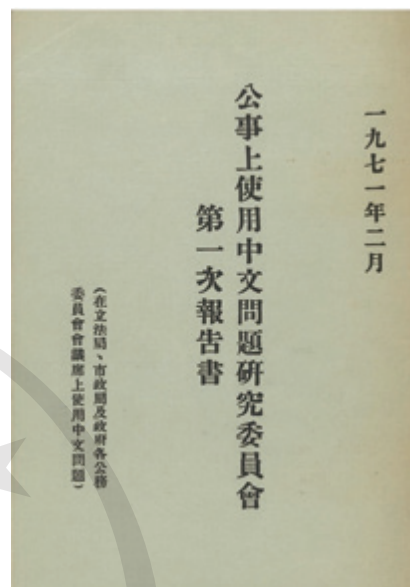
Although Hong Kong has always had a majority Chinese population, the status of the Chinese language was long suppressed. The rise of the Chinese language to its current status has been a hard-fought and lengthy process.

Under the British occupation, English was prioritised over Chinese in all aspects of governance. Government reports and public notices were issued only in English, with no Chinese versions available. Even in legal matters, street vendors prosecuted for obstructing public areas were charged and tried in English. Those who needed to submit written statements had to pay for translation services. The British administration in Hong Kong deliberately enforced rigid language policies that ignored the needs of the Chinese-speaking majority, with the aim to cultivate a group of people willing to adopt English while dividing the wider Chinese community.

This language inequality extended to education and employment. Secondary schools were divided into English-medium and Chinese-medium schools, with Chinese-medium school graduates barred from applying to universities in Hong Kong, which taught exclusively in English. Careers in medicine, law, or government required proficiency in English, and a pass in English public exams was a prerequisite for government jobs.

In 1970, teachers and students, along with people from all walks of life, launched the Movement to Make Chinese an Official Language. The campaign ignited strong anti-colonial and patriotic sentiment among Hong Kong residents. Faced with overwhelming public pressure and public demand, the British administration in Hong Kong eventually made a compromise. In January 1974, the government amended the Official Languages Ordinance, officially recognising Chinese as an official language.

Today, the Legislative Council of Hong Kong provides real-time interpretation services in Cantonese, Mandarin and English.



In 1971, the Hong Kong Chinese Language Committee released its first report recommending that the British administration in Hong Kong allow the use of Cantonese in the Legislative Council, Urban Council, and other government committees.

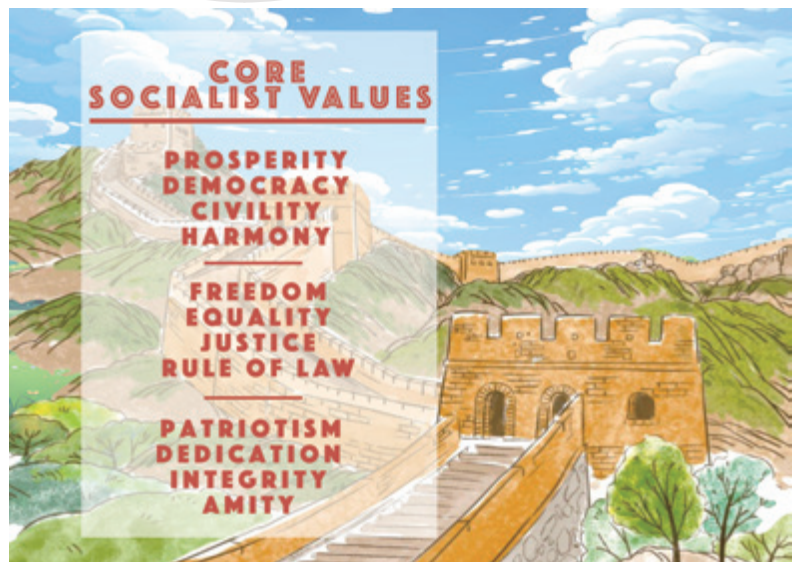


## ⑤ Promoting Core Values Centred on Love for the Nation and Hong Kong

### 5.1 Advocating core values in society

Core values shape how most people judge social and even natural phenomena. They reflect shared beliefs about what is right and wrong and guide decisions on personal behaviour, goals, and actions. The issue of core value security is essentially about how the majority perceives and responds to both the traditional and contemporary values of their community.

If language serves as a tool for communication and traditional culture becomes ingrained through habit, then defining core values is often a process of rational thinking and careful reflection. Over the past decade, China has developed a broad consensus on core values, summarised as “prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and amity”. Prosperity, democracy, civility and harmony are values that underpin the nation; freedom, equality, justice and rule of law are values that buttress our society; patriotism, dedication, integrity and amity are values that underlie individual conduct. In 2018, the Constitution was amended to include the promotion of socialist core values.



## 5.2 Values education must include patriotic education

Core values education plays a vital role in shaping social attitudes and is an essential part of the school curriculum in Hong Kong. In 2021, the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong SAR Government introduced the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) to help schools cultivate positive values and attitudes in students as they grow.

The Framework emphasises that “values education must include patriotic education.” Schools should foster a strong sense of national identity in students from an early age by helping them understand China’s history, appreciate Chinese culture and traditional values, and respect national symbols such as the national flag, the national emblem, and the national anthem. It also underscores the importance of learning about the Constitution, the Basic Law, and national security, so as to build a sense of national identity and understand that, as Chinese citizens, they share the responsibility to safeguard the nation and stand in solidarity with it through all circumstances.

On January 1, 2024, the Patriotic Education Law of the People’s Republic of China came into effect in the mainland. The law includes provisions on patriotic education for Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots. The Hong Kong SAR Government remains committed to promoting patriotic education, with the aim of enhancing public understanding of the country’s profound historical and cultural foundations, its all-round and rapid development, and the close relationship between the mainland and Hong Kong.



In June 2022, residents of Ping Shek Estate in Kwun Tong displayed the national and HKSAR flags to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the Motherland.



## The East River Column: A Testament to Communist Resistance and Patriotism

On December 8, 1941, as Japanese forces launched a surprise attack on the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, they also began a full-scale invasion of Hong Kong. By December 25, the Governor of Hong Kong surrendered. During the three years and eight months of Japanese occupation, the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column, established by the Communist Party of China, took up arms and engaged in resistance against the Japanese invaders. The brigade also carried out multiple rescue missions that successfully freed British prisoners of war. Until Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, at least 115 martyrs gave their lives in the fight to defend Hong Kong. Scholars have noted that “the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade was the only armed force in Hong Kong that maintained organised resistance from start to finish.”

On December 28, 1998, the Hong Kong SAR Government held a solemn ceremony to enshrine the names of fallen soldiers from the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column. In August 2015, the State Council of China announced the second batch of National Anti-Japanese War Memorial Sites, which included the Cenotaph for Martyrs at the Wu Kau Tang Martyrs Memorial Garden in Tai Po.



Cenotaph for Martyrs at the Wu Kau Tang Martyrs Memorial Garden in the New Territories.



The Sha Tau Kok Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall, restored from the Luo ancestral home, once served as a base and communication station for the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade. Eleven members of the Luo family joined the resistance.