

## **HONG KONG – Published on April 16, 2014**

### **“Mercedes Benz and Beggars in HK”**

The City of Hong Kong has the largest concentration of Mercedes Benz in the world, in comparison with any other metropolitan area. Now, considering that a car of that level might easily cost around 250.000 Euros (a regular one, not a custom-built Mercedes which is, by far, more expensive) we can guess the concentration of wealth and money in the hands of the Hong Kongers.

And yet, in such prosperous and luxurious environment from 80.000 up to 100.000 people or more (nobody knows the exact number) have to sleep literally locked up, inside metal cages, to protect themselves from rats and other dangers during the night. It would appear that the rental fee for one cage, in those undignified dormitories, is around 100 or 150 HKD per month, which projects the income of one of those derelict persons around 600 HKD per month, on average.

It means that in a city of about 7.155.000 citizens (2012) ... 40 of them spend more money per month to buy a car ... than 100.000 people spend for a dirty “dog basket” inside a cage – without breakfast or, if you prefer, 240 HK citizens spend more money per month over a Mercedes Benz ... that 100.000 people spend for their everyday life, for food, drinks, housing, transportation, health, medicines, pleasure and so forth, everything included.

It means that 7 million Hong Kongers might easily solve the problem of poverty in the city if they only wanted ??? Apparently, it is not that easy.

If – at the very same time – every single city in Asia decided to aggressively fight to eliminate poverty ... than for the city of HK it would be extremely simple to eradicate this problem, giving a better standard of living to few hundreds thousands members of their own population. But if HK acted alone (while the other cities are doing nothing) than ... in few months, millions of beggars, homeless and vagrants will relocate to HK to stay and nobody here desires such a development, not a single soul, including the most sensitive ones to this matter.

With this fear in their minds the HK Authorities will never try really hard to help “too much” the poorest part of their constituency. Never !!! Unless all the other cities will do the same, but then, ask yourself: how likely is that ???

One of the “good excuses” to do nothing or almost nothing to help those poor folks is that some of them do not want to change their conditions. Few of them are “bums” and they refuse to work anyway. Others are “hobos”: occasionally they accept to work but they cannot keep a regular job and they move from one place to another, making very little money. Sometimes they collect cartoon boxes, some other times aluminum cans but not on a regular basis and not every day.

Few of them are “deranged” – they have somehow “adapted” to their extreme poverty but they also have no idea of what they are doing and in what conditions they really are.

Let’s say that all those considerations are true, should we take a look also at the other side of the same coin ??? Hong Kong has been a British Dependent Territory for about 153 years and the “Victorian mentality” left its mark from the beginning. Of course, this is not just a Hong Kong problem. Such mentality (promoted and supported for centuries by “big money” and “Lobbying”) gradually spread around the world, everywhere.

To this day (and I mean April 2014) in the U.K. they still have the so called “House of Lords” with 92 members inside it “by virtue of a hereditary peerage” – They are not elected !!! They still have the right to seat in the House of Lords by birth. Many other members are still “nominated” – not elected. To this day, the House of Lords is a place full of Dukes, Archbishops, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons ... and the propaganda machine in their favor has been so strong, so loud – particularly in the last 30 years or so – that now, most of us have a favorable opinion about those parasites !!!

Without letting us realizing it, they are bringing us back to the 1700 A. D. – a period of discrimination towards the large majority of the population, in favor of a restrict minority of “born with a silver spoon – aristocrats” !!!

Let’s face it: we are trained (mostly by TV and the Media) to feel pleased to admire privileged people – while at the same time we feel disgusted by poverty and by poor beggars and this is happening in Asia, as well as in HK.

Sure, sometimes we are ready to “donate” few bucks to a person in need asking for it, especially in Hong Kong. Hong Kongers are generous people.

But take a look at how it happens: the poor and old person pleading for some money is on his/her knees, with the body bent, in a position quite curled up, facing the ground and bowing continuously, most of them feeling ashamed to be there, begging for assistance !!!

And yes, we give them some little money, but not in Admiralty, not in Central. “Tramps” are not allowed to be in rich environments or in front of elegant shops because they “discourage” sales, by making us uncomfortable.

It might be true, but how can they do that ??? By reminding us that one single tiny bottle of our “eau de perfume” costs much more than the entire money this poor guy, begging in front of us, is able to make in one month !!!

In Hong Kong, the owners of Mercedes Benz are not responsible for this absurd situation and I love those cars as much as they do. I am not blaming them or the car, for this matter.

But the city of Hong Kong has a special admiration for people with the tendency to love unnecessary accessories and the predisposition to pursue nonessential embellishments in ordinary events.

Here a superficial, extravagant, baroque approach to everything is “fundamental” to the everyday life of the affluent society and at least 16% of the food of the richest part of the population is wasted every day. The equivalent of hundreds of thousands dishes of food is recklessly thrown away, every single day, not because we have to do that, but because we can afford it and it is trendy to show off a bit, that we can.

That’s what I am definitely not in favor of, here.