Making Sense of SARS

This period is really a hard time for Hong Kongers. Many people have died of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The virus spreads promptly throughout the world and causes widespread fear. People with symptoms of SARS and their family members have to quarantine themselves. Hong Kong people stop all outdoor activities. If not, they have to wear face masks which are very choking. What it brings to Hong Kong people are inconvenience and tragedy, most of them think so.

However, every incident has two sides. The positive and negative sides co-exist. It depends on which perspective we choose when looking at the matter. If we can make sense of it, we will find that SARS is not a totally meaningless and negative incident. It indeed benefits Hong Kong in some ways.

Obviously, it improved the sanitary condition of Hong Kong. Before the incident, people did not try their best to keep public places clean as they think that it is not their responsibility in any way and it is also due to their selfishness. The situation cannot be improved if citizens are not involved. The tragedy of SARS arouses the awareness of all Hongkongers about public and personal hygiene. With everyone’s effort, we can show that Hong Kong is not a dirty city to the globe. And we can then have an ideal place to live.

More importantly, it gives the message that “life is invaluable and we have to fight for it.” People now learn to treasure their life and care about others. In the past, people give up their life too easily because of minor challenges. The crisis tells people that life should be treasured. People would have a deeper thought before deciding to take this stupid action.

How brave are Hongkongers? No one dares to think of the answer to the question, but now, people must be proud to respond to it. The front-line health-care workers show the bravery of Hongkongers. During the SARS outbreak, they keep carrying out their duties and doctors from private clinics go to ease the burden of the public hospitals automatically. In contrast, the medical staff in Taiwan dashed out of the hospital when knowing that the hospital was going to be quarantined. They only care for their own life.
While the medical staff is fighting for the disease, the citizens do not turn a blind eye to it. Instead, we show the world our team spirit. People are all warm-hearted and organize many charitable activities to raise fund for the front-line health-care workers to buy protective coats and the victims of SARS. Spontaneous caring acts make Hong Kong a warm place. What greets our eyes is LOVE!

The hustle and bustle of our city life has made us breathless. People spend their time working and leave very little time for the family. Since the outbreak, people stay at home for longer. As a consequence, a closer relationship between family members is built. It is what we have longed for.

As a result of the disaster, the centre for prevention of diseases is set up ultimately. Experts in Hong Kong can have more resources to tackle diseases. It will guarantee our safety in the long run.

In short, SARS is absolutely not a totally meaningless and negative incident. It benefits Hong Kong in many ways indeed. What matters is whether we think and respond positively.

Candy Wong (S.6S)