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1997 won't spoil Double Tenth

By TERRY CHENG

Local celebrations this year of the Double Tenth — national day of the Kuomintang — will be the same, according to pro-nationalists yesterday.

They said they would celebrate the event as usual, despite the fact that the political atmosphere might develop in an unfavourable direction after the expected initialling of the Sino-British agreement later this month.

The theme of the right-wing celebrations is expected to dwell on Hongkong's future.

In the past week, pro-Taiwanese organisations have begun to prepare for the celebrations of the Double Tenth.

Several trades and profes-

sions have formed their preparatory committees for the celebrations.

A major reception attended by people from all circles is scheduled to be held in a Central hotel on October 10.

In the morning a large-scale meeting with stage performances will be held in a Kowloon school.

Various smaller banquets and gatherings will also be held.

Meanwhile, it was understood that Taiwan's representatives here were concerned at the presence of some people with Taipei connections in a Mid-Autumn Festival banquet hosted by Mr Xu Jiatun, director of the local branch of the New China News Agency.

More than 130 people

from monetary, shipping, trading, travelling, journalism, movie and sports fields attended the banquet yesterday.

The names of those invited to the banquet were released by the NCNA. Some of them were understood to have Taipei connections.

According to some participants, Mr George Chao, of Wah Kwong Group and movie tycoon, Sir Run Run Shaw, were present and sat at the same table with Mr Xu.

Not long ago, Mr Chao visited Taipei to discuss business and it was agreed that Wah Kwong could open an office there.

Mr Chao's visit was publicised in the Taiwan press as an example of Hongkong businessmen worried about Hongkong's future.

Some scholars from Taiwan were also present at the banquet.

Mr Xu told the guests that it would be unwarranted if Taiwan moved its organisations and personnel from Hongkong after 1997.

In future, the relationship Hongkong enjoys with China, Taiwan and with overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and other countries should be reinforced and not weakened, he said.

Taiwan's representatives here yesterday dismissed Mr Xu's remarks as another "united front tactic."

They said the situation in Hongkong would not necessarily develop in the direction wanted by Peking.

However, it was understood that they were concerned with the presence of people with Taipei connections at the banquet.

Mr Xu warned against a tendency to make Hongkong an "independent political entity."

Last month, he said that interference with China's policy towards Hongkong could come from the domestic sector.

It was believed that Mr Xu's warnings partly pointed to nationalists here.