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'Attachment to China' urged

By KENT CHEN

THE Hongkong Foundation has called for a greater effort to boost civic education and strengthen the school curriculum to improve young people's understanding of China.

In the run up to 1997 local people must learn to reconcile their sense of Hongkong identity with their sense of nationalism, the foundation said.

In its latest bulletin, the group also urged Hongkong people to

keep an open-mind on Chinese affairs to avoid annoying Beijing.

Hasty and ill-conceived actions by a few could easily lead to misunderstanding and jeopardise the well-being of the community as a whole, it warned.

The suggestions follow an appeal of foundation co-founder, senior Legislative Councillor, Mr Allen Lee Peng-fei, who last month called on Hongkong people to refrain from meddling in China's domestic affairs.

The foundation is a privately-funded think-tank set up by Mr

Lee and fellow legislator, Mr Stephen Cheong Kam-chuen.

"China has already made a major compromise to its principles by agreeing to a continuation of Hongkong's capitalistic ways after 1997.

"In signing the Joint Declaration it made an open admission of the territory's economic importance to it," it said.

The foundation urged Hongkong people to respond by making a psychological adjustment to put their instinctive antagonism behind them.

"While Hongkong people should develop a sense of belonging to the territory, they must at the same time build up a sense of attachment to China."

Being antagonistic to the Chinese Government might prove popular in the short term, but would not be in the territory's long-term interests, it added.

"It is beyond the tolerance of any country to allow a part of its people to alienate themselves from the central authority. In the 'one country, two systems' concept, the

country must come first," it said.

While it might be unpalatable to some, the foundation urged restraint on matters not directly related to the interests of Hongkong.

Slogans and comments expressing radical views might arouse the wrong feelings and place Hongkong on a collision course with China, it added.

Those who want to take China to task should be careful not to be manipulated by people who owe no allegiance to Hongkong, it warned.