

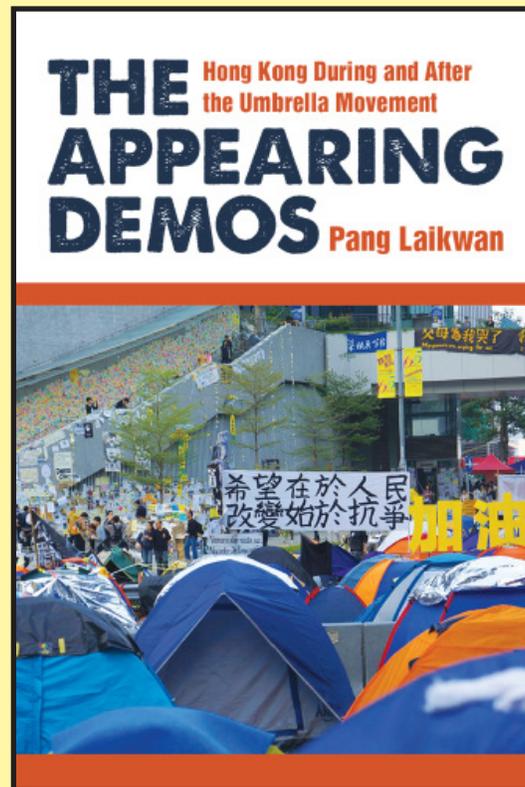
THE APPEARING DEMOS

HONG KONG DURING AND AFTER THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT

As the waves of Occupy movements gradually recede, we soon forget the political hope and passions these events have offered. Instead, we are increasingly entrenched in the simplified dichotomies of Left and Right, us and them, hating others and victimizing oneself. Studying Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, which might be the largest Occupy movement in recent years, *The Appearing Demos* urges us to re-commit to democracy at a time when democracy is failing on many fronts and in different parts of the world.

The 79-day-long Hong Kong Umbrella Movement occupied major streets in the busiest parts of the city, creating tremendous inconvenience to this city famous for capitalist order and efficiency. It was also a peaceful collective effort of appearance, and it was as much a political event as a cultural one. The urge for expressing an independent cultural identity underlined both the Occupy movement and the remarkably rich cultural expressions it generated. While understanding the specificity of Hong Kong's situations, *The Appearing Demos* also comments on some global predicaments we are facing in the midst of neoliberalism and populism. It directs our attention from state-based sovereignty to city-based democracy, and emphasizes the importance of participation and cohabitation. The book also examines how the ideas of Hannah Arendt are useful to those happenings much beyond the political circumstances that gave rise to her theorization. The book pays particular attention to the actual intersubjective experiences during the protest. These experiences are local, fragile, and sometimes inarticulable, therefore resisting rationality and debates, but they define the fullness of any individual, and they also make politics possible. Using the Umbrella Movement as an example, this book examines the "freed" political agents who constantly take others into consideration in order to guarantee the political realm as a place without coercion and discrimination. In doing so, Pang Laikwan demonstrates how politics means neither to rule nor to be ruled, and these movements should be defined by hope, not by goals.

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