

# Hong Kong bookstore under attack in China reopens in Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—The part-owner of a Hong Kong bookstore specializing in texts critical of China's leaders has reopened his shop in Taiwan after fleeing Hong Kong due to legal troubles, saying he was grateful for the chance to make China's Communist rulers "less than happy."

The opening and accompanying news conference came days after Lam Wing-kee was splattered with red paint by a masked man while sitting alone at a coffee shop in Taiwan. Lam suffered no serious physical injuries and showed little sign of the attack other than a red tint in his hair.

China's leaders don't want to allow a bookstore selling tomes that would "make them uncomfortable or impact on their political power," Lam, who moved to Taiwan a year ago, told journalists.

He thanked supporters in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory, for the opportunity to start over. "This makes (China's leaders) less than happy," said Lam, who raised nearly \$200,000 through online fundraising to finance his new venture.

Commenting on the assault, Lam said the Communist Party appeared to think it could stifle the shop's business in both Hong Kong and Taiwan by using "underhanded methods of all sorts."

However, on a slightly pessimistic note, he added that China's policies had left little room for idealistic young Hong Kongers other than "into the big sea."

Lam was one of five shareholders and



staff at the Causeway Bay Book shop in Hong Kong, which sold books and magazines purporting to reveal secrets about the inside lives of Chinese leaders and the scandals surrounding them.

Along with others, he was taken across the border and put into Chinese custody in 2015, but was released on bail and allowed to return to Hong Kong in June 2016 in order to recover information about his customers stored on a computer.

After refusing to return to China, he went public with accusations that he had been kidnapped and brought to the mainland, where he says he was interrogated under duress about his business. Following the detentions, the shop was forced to close while edgy political texts have largely disappeared

from mainstream book retailers under pressure from Beijing.

Lam moved to Taiwan last year amid fears over proposed legislation that would have allowed suspects to be extradited to China, likely to face torture and unfair trials. Concerns over the legislation, which was later withdrawn, sparked months of sometimes violent protests in Hong Kong, a former British colony that has retained its own legal, political, and economic system after being handed over to the mainland in 1997.

Hong Kong police arrested 15 prominent lawyers and opposition figures over their alleged involvement in the protests, prompting further concerns that the city's civil liberties are being eroded by China's increasingly stringent political controls.

**NEW LOCATION.** Lam Wing-kee, who was one of five shareholders and staff at the Causeway Bay Book shop in Hong Kong, shows his congratulatory gift, Chinese calligraphy that reads "Freedom," at his new book shop on opening day in Taipei, Taiwan, on April 25, 2020. The part-owner of the Hong Kong bookstore specializing in texts critical of China's leaders reopened his shop in Taiwan after fleeing Hong Kong due to legal troubles, saying he is grateful for the opportunity to make China's Communist rulers "less than happy." (AP Photo/Chiang Ying-ying)

Although claimed by Beijing as its own territory, self-governing Taiwan, with its flourishing democracy and robust defense of civil rights, has become a safe haven for critics of the Chinese government.

Two high school students who turned out for the event at the minuscule shop on the 10th floor of a business building in Taipei's Zhongshan District said they saw its reopening as a sign of both hope and defiance.

"It offers Hong Kong people a safe place to develop," said one of the students, Hsu Shih-hsun.

Taiwan's own experience with dictatorship and martial law under Nationalist Party leader Chiang Kai-shek, who fled to the island with his government ahead of the Communist takeover of the mainland in 1949, adds special resonance to the values the bookstore represents, said the other student, Wang Tsung-fan.

"I think that this bookstore coming to Taiwan makes us Taiwanese extremely proud. We can give Hong Kong a helping hand," Wang said. "After all, our own freedoms were not easily won."

## Virus Diary: In South Korea, a daughter's worry and a test

By Juwon Park  
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — I've always thought I would be prepared to face my mom's death. I grew up watching her go through a series of illnesses and a medical accident that almost took her life a few years ago.

She often speaks of a future without her in it. She's been rushing me to save up and buy a flat so she can find peace knowing I'll have a roof over my head. To be frank, she's not the only one who's been thinking about a possibility of her sudden absence. I'm a journalist, though. I can handle surprises.

But when unexpected news about the coronavirus ambushed my family, I found that I couldn't.

When I heard my mom saying, through a door crack, that she might have the coronavirus, my heart sank like a free-falling elevator. I jumped out of bed. She had just received a call from her employer who told her that a colleague had tested positive for COVID-19. Eight days before, my brother and mom chatted with that colleague and drank coffee that she'd brewed.

Someone from a local community health center will be in touch shortly, my mom was told.

"What do we do?" I asked, realizing the vagueness of the question. As I spoke, Soonduk, a baby pug we adopted a few months ago, suddenly yelped. "What do we do with him if we are all quarantined?" my dad asked.

While waiting for the call, my mom sat down at our kitchen table and started typing on her computer. She said she was organizing everything, from bank account details to old photos, in case she was hospitalized and "doesn't make it back home." We sat there, not knowing what to do.

Over the next few hours, my brother and mom separately received calls. They were asked about their recent whereabouts and people they'd been in contact with. They were asked to download an app with a location tracker and report their temperature twice a day. Two bags containing medical equipment, masks, and an official self-quarantine notice



arrived a couple hours later. A bag full of groceries was also quietly left in front of our doorstep.

I decided to self-isolate as well. I'd been breathing the same air as them, after all.

Soon, though, I regretted my decision. The house started to simmer with tension and anxiety. I know that having a place to self-quarantine is a privilege in itself, but the fear and the sudden transition to an enclosed environment affected everyone in different ways.

The chest pain that mom already had started getting worse. My brother started to breathe heavily while sleeping. My

### Low-tech Japan challenged in working from home

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Futoshi Takami, a "salaryman," as Japanese workers are called, says he had to work from the office until mid-April, when he was finally told he could work from home. But so far, he's gotten few directions about what he's supposed to be doing. He might soon be assigned to take some online classes, he said.

Takami, who asked that his employer not be identified, said he has been doing some soul-searching about workplaces that seem to value rules over human life.

"I am going to devote my time to think about what it is I really want to do with my life," he said.

irritation grew into anger when I found out my mom's colleague had an infected family member yet still came to work while running a fever. I asked myself: "Would I be able to forgive her if my mom dies?"

I started waking up at 3:00am because I

**TESTING ACCESS.** Medical equipment and an official quarantine notice, delivered by the government, are laid out on a floor in Seoul, South Korea. South Korea has been lauded for its effective response to the pandemic without enacting lockdown and other draconian measures. (AP Photo/Juwon Park)

ran out of the prescription sleeping aids I take every day. As the night stretched toward dawn, waves of anxiety and fear hit me.

Saturday came, and my family all got tested. It took 30 seconds. I got the back of my throat swabbed with what looked like a giant Q-Tip.

The results arrived in less than 24 hours: Every member of my family tested negative.

Not everyone was so fortunate. My mom's colleague is currently on a ventilator, and I feel guilty about being upset with her. My thoughts and prayers go out to her.

"Virus Diary," an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus saga through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world.

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