

City Talk



A BYD electric bus production line in California and a DJI drone at the CES in Las Vegas.

IT'S TIME TO LEARN FROM BAY DEVELOPMENT

I was most impressed with the visit by a team of Legislative Council members to the Greater Bay Area a fortnight ago.

In particular, I found the places they visited to be world-class leaders in their fields and good models.

More importantly, they showed us how hard work and focus, together with a bit of innovative thought, can project us onto the path of world leadership.

The first place they visited was BYD, which started out as a battery manufacturer for vehicles and soon branched out into electric bus building and is now a leading electric vehicle manufacturer.

We know that making vehicles needs a lot of skills in development to ensure that they are roadworthy not only for short city runs but equally capable of handling twisty country roads in a high level of comfort and total reliability.

In Europe, it would take a few decades to develop such credentials, but our neighboring region has accomplished it in a few years.

BYD is now the largest EV manufacturer in the world, overtaking even Tesla.

We also know that it is developing AI mass transit systems, commonly known as cloud bus, which runs on virtual tracks and can be used on public roads. This system may be adopted to supplement our underground mass transit system.

Another worthy place to visit was DJI, inventor and manufacturer of drones, and now the world leader in this field. Its drones have found worldwide applications in many areas: photography and videos, building inspections, and delivery of goods.

I have, in previous articles, pointed out that Dr Frank Wang, the young engineer who invented and commercialized drones for worldwide applications, was a graduate of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, but found that Shenzhen was a more appropriate city for rapid technological development.



Nuts and bolts

Edmund Leung

His success has shown us we have the capability to incubate high technology.

Over the last century and up to about 20 years ago, Hong Kong was the leader in technology in southern China, and many of us had the opportunity to help our mother country with infrastructure development, manufacturing and trading activities, bringing in international experience and management technology.

But from the last 10 years onward, China has developed its own technology and management to build world-class railways, bridges, tunnels, factories, high-rise office buildings and many other modern facilities. We also started their huge manufacturing centers with our knowledge and experience, but now they are one of the world's largest manufacturing centers.

We might have had doubts in their ability to operate and maintain these systems in the early days, but we must accept that they are now in the forefront of technology in these areas.

What it means to us as Hongkongers is that it is now our turn to learn from them. We still have excellent connections with the western world and could probably lead in financial services and some other soft skills, but if we do not start participating in projects in the Greater Bay Area to join their mammoth growth, we could lose our lead forever.

Young people in Hong Kong must visit the Greater Bay Area often to understand more and be prepared to work in these rapid development area to pursue their careers. Merely staying in Hong Kong, repeating what we have done in the past half century, will not earn enough for us to maintain our living in the future.

Veteran engineer Edmund Leung Kwong-ho casts an expert eye over features of modern life