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**Hong Kong Literature in the Context of
Modern Chinese Literature**

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**HONG KONG LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF
MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE**

by

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I

Formerly described as the "forsaken child" of Chinese literature, the literature of Hong Kong has attracted serious attention only in recent years. While it is generally agreed that Hong Kong literature, here referring to a body of literature written in Chinese and by Chinese authors in Hong Kong, constitutes part of modern Chinese literature, and hence part of Chinese literature, it remains to be demonstrated how the former is related to the latter.

The purpose of this paper is to give such a demonstration. Before one begins to do so, however, a sketch of the development of Hong Kong literature as reflected by local literary periodicals is necessary.

II

Sixteen years after the island became a British colony, Hong Kong published in 1858 Chung-wai hsin-pao 中外新報 which was probably the first privately-owned newspaper in the history of the Chinese press. Another sixteen years later, that is, in 1874, appeared the famous Hsün-huan jih-pao 循環日報 in which Wang T'ao 王韜 frequently wrote editorials to comment on Chinese receptions of Western culture. He suggested that China reform her political system with reference to those of the Western

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¹I am grateful to Professor Lawrence Wong of the University of Hong Kong for his valuable comments and suggestions. In the following notes, since almost all sources are in Chinese, romanization of authors and titles is omitted in order to save space. This paper was originally presented at the conference "The Commonwealth of Modern Chinese Literature" held at Reicensburg, West Germany, June 30 to July 4, 1986.

countries; in his view, military and economic westernization alone could not help China to become a strong nation comparable to the West. Wang T'ao recommended that the Eight-legged Essay examination be abolished and that Chinese intellectuals study Western civilization and current affairs.²

At the turn of the century, there was no lack of liberal intellectuals like Wang T'ao in Hong Kong; however, the literary atmosphere in the colony in the 1910s and 20s was rather conservative. Classical Chinese literature was preferred to the vernacular, and Lu Hsün 魯迅, on a lecture-tour to Hong Kong in 1927, "offended a number of people because [he] attacked the Chinese tradition."³

Companion (Pan-lü 伴侶), the first literary periodical in the vernacular language, made its debut in August, 1928, one and a half years after Lu Hsün gave his lectures. Hailed as "the first swallow of the Hong Kong literary world," this semi-monthly marked the beginning of a new period. Publishing works by local writers, it also introduced to its readers recent literary developments in the Mainland. Incidentally, in its fifth issue, a special section was devoted to essays on "My First Kiss," a gesture, no doubt, on the part of the publisher to project a

²For Hsün-huan jih-pao and Wang T'ao's opinions, see Chapter 4 of 黃振權, 《香港與清季洋務建設運動之關係》(香港, 珠海書院, 1980)

³See the third volume of 《魯迅全集》(北京, 人民文學出版社, 1981). here quoted from p.4 of 盧璋鑾編, 《香港的憂鬱》(香港, 華風書局, 1983).

modern image.⁴

One "swallow" does not make a new literature. Between the appearance of Companion in 1928 and the inaugural issue of Red Beans (Hung-tou 紅豆) in 1933, at least twelve more literary periodicals came on the scene. An important magazine in the history of Hong Kong literature, the monthly Red Beans lasted for nearly three years. It published works of various genres by local and Mainland writers. Printing translations of Western and other Oriental literatures being a constant feature, it had several special issues such as those on contemporary English fiction, on ten Major English Writers and on Gypsy literature.

When the war against the Japanese invasion broke out in 1937, Hong Kong became a haven for a great number of refugee writers from Mainland China. Already famous before they came here, many of them played a very active role in Hong Kong and outshone their local counterparts. In 1938 alone, three literary supplements of newspapers were launched, with, among others, Mao Tun 茅盾, Tai Wang-shu 戴望舒 and Hsiao Ch'ien 蕭乾 as their editors. Hong Kong fell to the Japanese in December, 1941. Until the victory in 1946, Hong Kong, together with its literature, was as it were, in the grip of a long winter.

⁴I would like to thank Mr. 楊國雄 of the 孔安道紀念圖書館, the University of Hong Kong. Mr. 楊國雄 kindly allowed me to use the literary magazines of the 1920s and 30s as mentioned in this paper. I am also indebted to the following authors and their articles: 黃俊東, 《三、四十年代香港文壇的回顧》, 《開卷》2:4 (1979年4月); 盧璋鑾, 《香港早期新文學發展初探》《星島晚報·大會堂》(1984年1月25日, 2月4日); 楊國雄, 《清末至七七事變的香港文藝期刊》, 《香港文學》(1986年1月至4月); 黃傲雲, 《從文藝期刊看戰前的香港文學》, 《香港文學》(1986年1月); 黃傲雲, 《戰後初期香港的文藝期刊與文藝路線》, 《讀者良友》(1986年3月).

No sooner had the Sino-Japanese War ended than the war between the Nationalist and the Communists resumed. A haven for refugee writers in 1937-41, Hong Kong was now a battlefield for rightist and leftist writers in 1946-49. Literary periodicals bloomed again, and two political ideologies contended.

When the Communists came into power in 1949, leftist writers in Hong Kong returned to the Mainland in large numbers, while many non-leftist writers in the Mainland fled to Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas. Again a port of safety for writers in fear, Hong Kong in the 1950s witnessed the flowering of anti-Communist literary magazines, such as Everyman's Literature (Jen-jen wen-hsüeh 人人文學, started in 1952), The Chinese Student Weekly (Chung-kuo hsüeh-shen chou-pao 中國學生周報, started also in 1952) and New Tide of Literature (Wen-i hsin-ch'ao 文藝新潮, started in 1956). Quite a number of the literary periodicals received American aid. Hence the name "Green-back Culture in Hong Kong." Some of these magazines continued into the sixties and even the seventies; together with such long-lived periodicals as Literary World (Wen-t'an 文壇, which started publication in Canton and moved to Hong Kong in 1949) and Current Literature (Tang-tai wen-i 當代文藝, started in 1965), they provided spaces for immigrant writers (since the early 50s) and a younger generation of local writers to publish their works, many of which were, in a broad sense, anti-Communist. Some of the magazines mentioned were pro-modernist in their editorial policy.

Another group of magazines and writers since the 1950s could be conveniently labelled as social realists more or less sympathetic towards

the literary ideology of Communist China. This group of writers consists of local ones, some of whom began to publish in the late 1920s, and of those who immigrated from the Mainland since the 1960s. Literary periodicals in which they most often published included Literary Century (Wen-i shih-chi 文藝世紀, started in 1957), Sea Light Literature (Hai-kuang wen-i 海光文藝, started in 1966) and Ocean Literature (Hai-yang wen-i 海洋文藝, started in 1972).

The clear dividing line between the rightist and leftist literatures began to blur in the early 1980s. Several periodicals, especially The Grand Meeting Hall (Ta-hui-t'ang 大會堂, a literary supplement of the newspaper Hsing-tao wan-pao 星島晚報) and Hong Kong Literature (Hsiang-kang wen-hsüeh 香港文學), have been printing the works of various writers regardless of their past political persuasions. This is made possible by the recent open policy of Mainland China, which has helped to remove sharp ideological differences.

III

From the above account we see that literature of the British colony has been closely connected with modern Chinese literature in the following respects. First, Hong Kong is an extension of the Mainland in literature. Both "old-fashioned" novelists like Hsü Chen-ya 徐枕亞 and modern writers like Shen Ts'ung-wen 沈從文 contributed their works to Hong Kong magazines in the 1920s and 30s. In fact, many modern Chinese writers who would not regard themselves as Hong Kong writers did write and/or publish their works in Hong Kong.

In 1935, Hsü Ti-shan 許地山 joined the University of Hong Kong as Professor of Chinese. Since then, until his death in 1941, he had published in the colony at least one short story, three historical plays and a number of essays. His short story written here, "Grills of the Iron Fish" ("T'i-yü te sai 鐵魚的鰓"), was acclaimed by Yü Ta-fu 郁達夫 as "solid and refined, distinguished not only among Chinese stories but also among the Anglo-American short-story writings in 1940."⁵

Mainland writers who took shelter in Hong Kong since the outbreak of the Resistance War had produced here a considerable number of works. The novelist Mao Tun came to the island twice in 1938 and in 1941. In his eighteen-month stay, he wrote and published many pieces of fiction, essay and criticism, in addition to serving as editor of the literary supplement of Li pao 立報. Story of the First Stage (Ti-i chieh-tuan te ku-shih 第一階段的故事) and Putrefaction (Fu-shih 腐蝕), which Mao Tun wrote in Hong Kong, were considered by Mainland critics to be his important novels.⁶ Mao Tun came to Hong Kong again in 1948 and produced a novel and some stories.

Hsiao Hung 蕭紅 stayed in Hong Kong longer than Mao Tun and eventually died here in January, 1942. In the two years of her residence here, the sickness-stricken writer completed Hu-lan-he chuan 呼蘭河傳

⁵Quoted from p.255 of 周俟松、向雲休編，《許地山》（香港，三聯，1982）。

⁶See, for instance, 許翼心，《香港文學的歷史考察》collected in 《全國第二次台灣香港文學學術討論會專輯：台灣香港文學論文選》（福建，海峽文藝出版社，1985），頁266。

and wrote the first two parts of the unfinished Ma Po-le 馬伯樂。⁷

Another ill-fated author, Tai Wang-shu, stayed even longer--a total of over ten years in Hong Kong. He was very active in editing the literary supplement Constellation (Hsing-tso 星座) of Hsing-tao jih-pao 星島日報, promoting anti-Japanese literary activities, translating foreign literatures, studying traditional Chinese folklore and writing poems and essays. His poignant poem "Lines Written on a Prison Wall" ("Yü chung t'i pi 獄中題壁") was penned in Hong Kong and collected in his Years of Sufferings (Tsai-nan te sui-yueh 災難的歲月), which were also his years of intense creativity.⁸

It is impossible to make a complete list of the Mainland writers who had between 1937 and 1941 spent their time in Hong Kong and contributed to local literary activities. If such a list were to be compiled, the number would run into two or even three figures. Similarly, it is impractical to count the number of writers who made their residence in Hong Kong during the years 1946 to 1949. It is known, however, that of these writers, Hsia Yen 夏衍, Shao Ch'üan-lin 邵荃麟, Nieh Kan-nu 聶紺弩 (d. 1986) and Mao Tun were then serving as editors of literary magazines or supplements respectively; and that, in addition to those mentioned above, Ch'en Ts'an-yun 陳殘雲, Huang Ku-liu 黃谷柳 and many others

⁷See Chapter 6 of 葛浩文著，鄭繼宗譯，《蕭紅評傳》（香港，文藝書屋，1979）；see also Chapter 8 of 尚風，《蕭紅傳》（天津，百花文藝出版社，1980）。

⁸See 盧璋鑾，《戴望舒在香港》，in the second issue of 《香港文學》（February, 1985）。

had written their works here. The novel The Story of Hsia-ch'iu (Hsia-ch'iu chuan 蝦球傳) by Huang is perhaps one of the best known in this period of Hong Kong literature.

After 1949, such authors as Chang Ai-ling (Eileen Chang, 張愛玲), Chao Tzu-fan 趙滋蕃 (d. 1986) and Ch'en Jo-hsi 陳若曦, whom one would not classify as Hong Kong writers, also produced their important works here. In the first half of the 1950s, Chang Ai-ling turned out The Rice-sprout Song (Yang-ke 秧歌) and Love in Redland (ch'ih-ti chih lien 赤地之戀), both translated into English by the author. Within a few years after its publication, Professor C.T. Hsia highly evaluated the former, saying that it "is already to be placed among the classics of Chinese fiction";⁹ while in 1985, the phenomenally popular critic Lung Ying-t'ai 龍應台 praised it as "absolutely a work of art of 'the world standard.'"¹⁰

The Semi-lower Society (Pan hsia-liu she-hui 半下流社會), one of the novels written by Chao Tzu-fan in the 1950s and 1960s when he was a refugee in Hong Kong, was very popular, and translated into Japanese.¹¹

⁹C.T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1971), p.389.

¹⁰See the article on The Rice-sprout Song in 龍應台, 《龍應台評小說》(台北, 爾雅出版社, 1985), p.99.

¹¹Cf. 劉以鬯, 《五十年代初期的香港文學》 in the sixth issue of 《香港文學》(June, 1985).

As to Ch'en Jo-hsi, the majority of the eight pieces collected in The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (translated by Nancy Ing and Howard Goldblatt, with an introduction by Simon Leys, and published by The Indiana University Press, 1978) were written in Hong Kong and first published in Hong Kong's Ming-pao Monthly 明報月刊, in the years 1974 to 1976. The book was a great success and, through the English version, Ch'en Jo-hsi almost received international recognition overnight.

Though produced in different periods of time, diversified in their attitudes towards Chinese Communism and heterogeneous as works of fiction, the novels and stories by Mao Tun, Huang Ku-liu, Chang Ai-ling, Chao Tzu-fan and Ch'en Jo-hsi all belong to the commonwealth of modern Chinese literature, and they were written and published in the British colony of Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, writers come and go, making literature. In the thirties and forties, Mao Tun, Hsia Yen and others came from the Mainland, stayed in Hong Kong, left their literary footprints here, and returned to the north. Chang Ai-ling, Ch'ao Tzu-fan and Ch'en Jo-hsi, also moving south to Hong Kong, turned out their works here, and settled down in North America or Taiwan. Probably beginning from the sixties, there have been a stream of writers coming to Hong Kong from Taiwan. Among them, Yü Kwang-chung 余光中 taught in Hong Kong for about ten years (1974-1985) before he went back to the island. Chiang Yün 蔣芸 has been here longer than Yü and, like Hsü Su 徐速, Li Hui-ying 李輝英, Sung Ch'i 宋淇 and Liu I-ch'ang 劉以鬯 (who all came from the Mainland

around 1950), she is more a Hong Kong writer than anything else. If Shih Shu-ch'ing 施叔青 and Chung Ling 鍾玲 continue to stay here, they will certainly become "authentic" Hong Kong writers. Even Yü Kwang-chung has identified himself as a Hong Kong writer. In the preface to his Spring Comes to the Peninsula (Ch'un lai pan-tao 春來半島), a "selection of poems and essays of a decade in Hong Kong," Yü said that he had produced 156 poems here on the peninsula, about a quarter of his total poetic output thus far; he had written 29 lyrical essays here, more than half of his entire output in this genre thus far. Moreover, he had a good harvest of critical articles and translations during this decade. In his own words, "the Hong Kong period" is "very important" to him.¹² Perhaps future literary historians may agree that many of his best works thus far were composed in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong period is important not only to the literary career of Yü Kwang-chung but also to those of others. Indeed one may say that the Hong Kong portion is important even to the whole of modern Chinese literature.

IV

Hong Kong literature is also closely related to modern Chinese literature in its reflection of the political situations and society of modern China. While Huang Ku-liu's The Story of Hsia-ch'iu, set in Hong Kong

¹² See Yü's preface to 《春來半島》 (香港, 香江出版社, 1985) .

in the 1940s, tells of the centripetal swing of the young hero towards Communist guerrillas at the end of the novel, Chao Tzu-fan's The Semi-lower Society, set in Hong Kong in the early 1950s, portrays the plights of several young intellectuals who left their homeland because it had been occupied by the Communists. Needless to say, the previously mentioned The Rice-sprout Song and Love in Redland by Chang Ai-ling reflect, or are intended to reflect, the life and society under the Communist rule. The Execution of Mayor Yin by Ch'en Jo-hsi, also mentioned above, was warmly received because, apart from the author's artistic achievements, the book depicts the chilly days and cold-hearted people of the Cultural Revolution, a chain of political and social happenings the significance of which will be studied over and over again in the history of China.

Such writers as Han Chiang-hung 韓江鴻, Tung Tung 冬冬, Yang Ming-hsien 楊明顯, Yü Hsüeh 虞雪, Chin Chao 金兆, P'ei Li-p'ing 裴立平 and Pai Lo 白洛, who had personally experienced the Cultural Revolution while in the Mainland, settled down in Hong Kong in the 1960s and 70s, and started writing in the late 1960s, could not help using the unforgettable Cultural Revolution as their subject-matter.¹³ In dealing with the Cultural Revolution, "a decade of disasters," many of the authors just mentioned had published their short stories much earlier

¹³ See my paper on "Mainland China from the Perspective of Its Emigré Writers in Hong Kong," which was presented at St. John's University conference on Contemporary Chinese Literature, May, 1982.

than their Mainland compatriots, whose "Wound Literature" was not started until late 1977.

The political situations in the Mainland are reflected not only in the works of those who emigrated from the Mainland (nevertheless, many of the immigrant writers later became "authentic" Hong Kong Writers), but also in the works of "authentic" Hong Kong writers. By "authentic" Hong Kong writers I mean the following four types:

1. Those born, educated and having their literary career in Hong Kong;
2. Those educated and having their literary career in Hong Kong;
3. Those having started and continuing their literary career in Hong Kong;
4. Those continuing their literary activities in Hong Kong as a major part of their entire career.¹⁴

An important feature of Hong Kong literature is the omnipresence of the short essay (tsa-wen 雜文) in daily newspapers. This is the most effective and widely read genre that can quickly and straightforwardly reflect, analyse and comment on the political situations in the Mainland (and Taiwan as well). What has been produced by the most gifted short-essay columnists, mostly "authentic" Hong Kong writers, enriches the tsa-wen tradition as exemplified by Lu Hsün.

What is happening in the Mainland also forms the subject matter

¹⁴ See pp.16-18 of my 《香港文學初探》（香港，華漢文化事業公司，1985）。

of Hong Kong poetry composed by writers of the first and second types. Published in 1973, a poetic eulogy "Steel Giants--To the Steel Workers at An-shan" ("Kang-tieh chu-jen: hsien-kei An-shan te kang-tieh kung-jen 鋼鐵巨人：獻給鞍山的鋼鐵工人") by Ku Ts'ang-wu 古蒼梧 reads:¹⁵

.....

Each of them has skin like steel
 bones like steel
 and blood like molten steel

Their hearts are like the steel they are smelting
With a temperature of thousands of degrees Fahrenheit
Using their own bones, flesh and blood
They make steel plates and seamless tubes
To be shipped to places of the motherland
To set up the backbone of our national industry

The poet goes on to catalogue, in a romantic sentiment, the uses of steel in aspects of national life and in supporting the friendly developing countries of the third world. He thus concludes:

I know my pen
Is as light as a goose feather
Yet I would no longer write

¹⁵ This poem is collected in Ku's 《鋼蓮》（香港，素葉出版社，1980）。

The sorrow of the ginkgo leaves falling like butterflies
 No longer write
 The melancholy of evening clouds in dark purple
 I would rather throw it into the white-heated tall furnace
 Smelted into a body like steel
 To write about you
 To write about you, these
 Giants of steel

In a doggerel entitled "Hope Heaven Will Help" ("Wang t'ien ta-ch'u
 望天打救") by Lan Hai-wen 藍海文, however, the image of the worker
 is completely different:¹⁶

Being a monk he is lazy to ring the bell
 ----Waiting to get off duty
 Everyday he labors eight hours
 ----For whom does he work?
 Working, without eating, he feels weak
 ----When will the time to get off come?
 Only hope Heaven will send down white noodles
 ----To save the people

Here the monk is a metaphor referring to the worker.

¹⁶This poem is collected in Lan's 《漫畫詩三百首》(香港, 阿爾泰出版社, 1984) .

Many of the "authentic" Hong Kong writers, though without personally experiencing the major events of the 1960s and 70s, are concerned, or even obsessed, with China. They use their pen to reflect the Chinese political and social reality as well as to reflect on the significance of that reality. The obsession with China in the poetic work of Huang Kuo-pin 黃國彬 (born 1946) reached its peak in 1976 and 1977. In 1976, the year Chou En-lai 周恩來 died, Huang lamented him with "Ch'ing-ming Festival of the Year Ping-ch'en" ("Ping-ch'en Ch'ing-ming 丙辰清明"), which is over one hundred lines. He quickly responded to the T'ang-shan earthquake in the same year with a 500-line "Earth Calamity" ("Ti chieh 地劫"). In 1977, in the month of the Ch'ing-ming festival, Huang Kuo-pin finished the enlargement of the poem on Chou En-lai; the result is an approximately 1000-line "Lamentation on a Star" ("Hsing lei 星隕").

In the three poems, the gifted poet fuses narrative with lyricism, which is an overflow of powerful feelings; he adorns them with epic similes and heightens them with historic and mythic allusions, showing a grand style rarely seen in other poems of the same subject-matter:¹⁷

¹⁷Cf. My two long articles on the poetry of Huang Kuo-pin: one in 《怎樣讀新詩》(香港, 學津, 1982) and the other in 《香港文學初探》.

The Common people lament for the loss of a red bow;
 Remember the plain arrows and the sharp arrowheads
 that accompany the bow;
 They grieve that Meng Valley is not yet reached
 and Yü Abyss still far away,
 And do not know when Hsi-he the sun-god will halt
 the chariot.

Since 1982, when China and Britain started their diplomatic talks on the future of Hong Kong after 1997, there have been writings in poetry, fiction and drama (and of course the tsa-wen) dealing with this problem. Among them, there is a novel by what can be called a semi-Hong Kong writer, Erh-ts'an 二殘. Entitled Wandering in Hong Kong in 1997 (Chiu-ch'i Hsiang-kang lang-yu chi 九七香港浪遊記), it is an imaginative and witty scholar-novel, designed to instruct its readers with political ideas and to entertain them with a sweet love-story.¹⁸ The "1997 literature" is clearly unseparable from the political situations in China.

V

Hong Kong writers are indebted to the Mainlanders whose literary achievements inspire and nourish their Hong Kong followers. This serves again to demonstrate how Hong Kong literature is related to the whole of modern Chinese literature.

¹⁸Cf. my review 《言情言志，馳騁幻想——讀〈九七香港浪遊記〉》 in 《信報》(1985年10月16日)。

There is always, as literary history and biography testify, the impact of established writers upon writers or would-be writers of a younger generation. As works of modern Chinese literature are absolutely free to circulate, and to be pirated, in Hong Kong (a situation not found in Taiwan, where works of the 1930s and 40s are censored, not to mention "Communist propaganda" published since the 1950s), younger Hong Kong writers or would-be writers can imitate whoever they admire. In this regard, I shall cite only a few examples.

The pen-name Hsün-ch'ing 迅清 of a young writer was, according to himself, taken from Lu Hsün and Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清. Hsi Hsi 西西, a writer mainly of fiction and poetry whose talent has recently been recognized in Hong Kong and Taiwan, admitted that she liked Lu Hsün's fiction.¹⁹ Certainly, in addition to his prose style, the fighting spirit of the tsa-wen master Lu Hsün has been inspiring to some other writers, while the works of Hsü Chih-mo 徐志摩 and He Ch'i-fang 何其芳, inked with the rosy colors of love and melancholy, are charismatic to adolescents. Pien Chih-lin 卞之琳 and Hsin Ti 辛笛 also have their followers. Lu Yin 盧因 once pointed out that the title Collection at the North Window (Pei-ch'uang chi 北窗集) by Li K'uang 力匡, popular in the 1950s as a Hong Kong writer, probably came from Collection at West Window (Hsi-ch'uang chi 西窗集), a book by Pien chih-lin, who had cast influence on the then young Li K'uang.²⁰ In the 1960s, Hsin Ti's book of poetry Palms (Shou-

¹⁹ See the interview with 西西, in 《讀者良友》(January, 1985).

²⁰ See 盧昭靈 (盧因), 《記詩人鄭力匡》 in 《星島晚報·大會堂》(February 22, 1984).

chang chi 手掌集), circulated in mimeograph form among members of the then fashionable literary clubs; more than a few of these literary youth (wen-i ch'ing-nien 文藝青年) could recite some of Hsin Ti's poems. The straightforward verse of Ai Ch'ing 艾青 also drew admiration from such writer as He Ta 何達 .

Several critics have pointed out that Pai Lo's Dusk Comes to the Tall Mansion (Ming-se ju kao-lou 暝色入高樓), a novel about the ups and downs of some rich families, and published in 1983, might have been modelled on Mao Tun's Midnight (Tzu-yeh 子夜), although there are big differences between the two works.²¹ Perhaps the most influential authors of the forties are Chang Ai-ling and Ch'ien Chung-shu 錢鍾書. Chang has probably left her most obvious marks in the talented Chung Hsiao-yang 鍾曉陽, who shares, to a certain degree, with her "mentor" the darker view of life and of human nature, as well as a highly sensuous and imaginative language. Ch'ien Chung-shu's prose, the so-called "scholar-essay," together with that of Liang Shih-ch'iu 梁實秋 and Wang Li 王力, is admired mostly by authors in academic circles, like Liang Hsi-hua 梁錫華, Huang Kuo-pin and their students. Incidentally, Professor C.T. Hsia in his preface to Liang's novel Standing Alone in Desolation (Tu-li ch'ang-mang 獨立蒼茫), has made a comparison between this work and Ch'ien Chung-shu's Fortress Besieged (Wei-ch'eng 圍城).²²

²¹See 饒芃子 and 黃仲文, 《試論白洛的〈暝色入高樓〉》 in 《台灣香港文學論文選》(福建, 海峽文藝出版社, 1985), pp.289-291.

²²See pp. 9-10 of 梁錫華, 《獨立蒼茫》(香港, 香江出版社, 1985) .

If we treat Taiwan literature as part of modern Chinese literature in the discussion here, and of course we should, then the study of influences has to include many more names. I would only slightly touch upon some Taiwan poets and their impact. Although the poetry of Lo Fu 洛夫, Ya Hsüan 痲弦, Cheng Ch'ou-yü 鄭愁予, Yeh Wei-lien 葉維廉 and Yeh Shan 葉珊 have their respective followers, the one poet who has been most influential is certainly Yü Kwang-chung. In the fall of 1985, at the time Yü was leaving Hong Kong, two young poets, Hu Yen-ch'ing 胡燕青 and Ch'en Te-chin 陳德錦, made it very clear that among contemporary Taiwan poets Yü (who is also a Hong Kong poet as stated above) has made the deepest impression on them, as well as on other young poets. In Hu's words, "when I look back at my writings of the past thirteen years, I am filled with gratitude that Mr. Yü's work have cast such an influence upon my words and lines."²³

VI

Hong Kong literature is thus viewed in the context of modern Chinese literature. Its "Chineseness" is clearly an important characteristic and certainly owes itself to modern Chinese literature. However, Hong Kong literature is a literature in its own right, with its own achievements.

First, of all Chinese communities in the world, Hong Kong is the one in which writers have enjoyed the greatest freedom. This hardly needs any explanation and documentation, if one realizes the nature of

²³胡燕青, 《余派以外——一些回顧, 一些感覺》in the sixth of 《香港文藝》(December, 1985), p.40.

government and society of Hong Kong. Yet, since the Joint Declaration between the People's Republic of China and Great Britain concerning the future of Hong Kong was made in 1984, or even a little earlier, certain writers, editors and publishers have in a sense imposed upon themselves a kind of "self-discipline," which means that harsh criticism on Mainland China should be avoided in their writings.

Second, the literature of Hong Kong is extremely diversified. It ranges from the narrowly circulating poetry to the widely popular "martial art" fiction (wu-hsia hsiao-shuo 武俠小說), which is best selling not only locally but also in the Mainland, Taiwan and Overseas. Some die-hard "high-brow" writers have refused to recognize "martial art" fiction as literature; however, the conferment of an honorary Ph.D. degree on Cha Liang-yung 查良鏞, whose pen-name is Chin Yung 金庸, a "martial art" novelist and publisher of Ming Pao 明報, by The University of Hong Kong in March 1985 seems to carry some weight in the recognition of this genre as literature.

Third, the short tsa-wen (miscellaneous prose) in newspaper supplements and magazines is perhaps the most important genre in Hong Kong literature since the 1970s. Within the range of 200 to 1000 characters apiece, this kind of tsa-wen is quickly produced and consumed in the highly commercial and busy society of Hong Kong. Everyday the columnists put out a quantity of tsa-wen which amounts to about half the volume of the classic novel Red Chamber Dreams (Hung-lou meng 紅樓夢), a record for columnists probably found nowhere else in the world. Though many of the tsa-wen columns are works of mediocrity,

there are good and even excellent pieces, depending on whether the reader or critic is able to sort out fine gold from the sand. The problem of "self-discipline" notwithstanding, the tsa-wen in Hong Kong aptly portrays the image of Hong Kong as a free place: there is no subject-matter or idea that cannot be included in the tsa-wen columns.²⁴

Fourth, before all the published works accumulated since the 1920s, or even earlier, are carefully examined for their literary merits, it is hard to tell who are the real masters of Hong Kong literature. Still, my reading of Hong Kong literature produced mainly in the past decade has convinced me that there is a wealth of remarkable works: we have verse crafted by poets of first-rate intelligence and imagination; we have prose as refined as that found in the T'ang, Sung masters and the best modern essayists; and we have fiction that experiments with new forms or blends traditional and modern techniques.

Indeed, the first novel using the stream-of-consciousness technique in modern Chinese literature is believed to be The Drunk (Chiu-t'u 酒徒) by Liu I-ch'ang, published in 1963; while the advocacy of modernism in the magazine New Tide of Literature, edited by the poet Ma Lang 馬朗, had helped the launching of the modernist movement in Taiwan in the 1950s.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the study of Hong Kong literature has just begun. The task facing the critics is onerous:

²⁴ See my 《香港文學初探》，pp.3-6, pp.183-185.

all sorts of works, "high-brow," "low-brow" or "middle-brow," have to be scanned and selected according to their literary significance. Then anthologies can be compiled and a history can be written. This is a tremendous project which, as Professor Joseph S.M. Lau rightly said, has to be supported by foundations or university research centres.²⁵

This project should be undertaken mainly by local critics and researchers. Western sinologists like those attending this "Commonwealth of Modern Chinese Literature" conference are too busy studying the contemporary literature produced by a nation with a population of one billion. They study this literature not only for its intrinsic value but also for the reason that it reflects the social and political situations of this country.²⁶ When many of the sinologists specializing in contemporary Chinese literature feel sorry for their lack of time in dealing also with Taiwan literature, how can we ask them to take up the extra burden of looking at the literature of a tiny territory which has so far produced no big names comparable to those in the Mainland and Taiwan?

Therefore the people of Hong Kong need to be "self-reliant" in studying and promoting their own literature. A few years ago, the study of Hong Kong literature by Hong Kong scholars began to receive support

²⁵ See Joseph S.M. Lau 劉紹銘, 《香港文學》, in his 《傳香火》 (台北, 大地, 1979) .

²⁶ See, for example, Michael Duke's Introduction to his Blooming and Contending: Chinese Literature in the Post-Mao Era (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985), p.ix: "It is extremely important that we study the literary works of the immediate Post-Mao Era in order to understand the problematic nature of life in the PRC as it is presented by its own writers to its own citizens."

and encouragement from the Mainland, where works by Hong Kong authors have been published, university courses in Hong Kong literature offered and conferences on Hong Kong (and Taiwan) literature convened.²⁷ Though motivated, at least at the beginning, by political considerations (the mother needs to understand the "forsaken child" before it returns to her arms and the study of literature provides such understanding), and, more often than not, tinted by political colors, the research work by Mainland scholars has yielded fruit. Critical articles on Hong Kong writers and works have been published, biographical handbooks are under preparation and series of literary works are to be compiled. If local scholars in Hong Kong work harder, if there is more cooperation between local and Mainland researchers, and if critics in Taiwan and in the West also care and contribute--in this case, even a little is better than nothing, Hong Kong literature will emerge with some generally recognized works and writers with stature, and share the glory of being in the commonwealth of modern Chinese literature.

²⁷ Cf. 明月, 《香港文學熱在內地興起》, 《星島晚報·大會堂》 (1984年12月5日) .

香港文學與中國現代文學的關係

(中文摘要)

黃維樑著

本文先介紹一九二〇年代以來的香港文學期刊，藉此概述香港文學發展的情形；跟著從下面各項，探討香港文學與中國現代文學的關係：

一、文學上，香港是中國大陸的伸延。三〇年代以還，衆多內地作家旅居或移居香港，對本地的文學貢獻良多。六〇年代以來，也有一些台灣作家旅居或移居香港，甚有建樹。不少著名的中國現代作家，在香港完成了重要作品。

二、若干香港作品反映了中國大陸的政治和社會狀況，例如對文化大革命的反映就是。

三、大陸和台灣作家的作品，啟發、影響了香港的文學青年。

香港文學固然與中國現代文學有深厚密切的關係，但香港文學具有本身的特色，茲分述如下：

一、在世界各地的中文作家中，香港作家享有最大的創作自由。

二、香港文學品種繁多，從曲高和寡的現代詩到大受歡迎的武俠小說都有；香港文學題材廣濶，風格多樣。

三、七〇年代以從，框框雜文作者日多，讀者日衆，可說是香港文學中最重要文類。

四、香港有才情並茂的詩人寫下的傑作，有堪與唐宋名家相比的精美散文，有融匯中西、技巧新穎的小說。香港文學研究是近年才開始的，全面的評價現在不是時候；但香港確有很多出色的作品，是中國現代文學的重要組成部份。