CHINA, HONG KONG, AND TAIWAN: THE CONVERGENCE AND INTERACTION OF CHINESE FILM

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Gwo-chauo Yu, B.A.

Denton, Texas

May, 1993
Yu, Gwo-chauo, *China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan: The Convergence and Interaction of Chinese Film*. Master of Arts (Radio, TV, Film), May, 1993, 95 pp., bibliography, 81 titles.

This study focuses on the evolution of the movie industries in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with an emphasis on the interaction and cooperation in movie production among these three areas.

The study consists of three sections: a general description of the development of Chinese cinema before 1949; an overview of the movie industries in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China after the civil war; and an intensive study of the recent changes, interactions, and connections among these industries.

In the third section, three models are proposed to explain the changing practices in movie production in these three areas. Obstacles preventing further cooperation and the significance of the reconstruction and integration of Chinese cinema are discussed.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude is expressed to Dr. Steven Fore for his diligent and enthusiastic direction in the writing of this thesis. His invaluable comments and advices are significant improvements to the text.

Appreciation is extended to Dr. Donald Staples and Dr. John Kuiper not only for their valued support and suggestions in this study, but also for acting as role models of academic intellect and professionalism throughout my studies at the University of North Texas.

Many thanks to my parents, sisters, and especially my wife Chi-mei. Her continuous support and encouragement are crucial throughout the duration of my study in the United States of America.
PREFACE

On 11 August 1896, the movies were introduced to a Chinese audience for the first time in Shanghai at the Hsu Garden. For several years after that the movies shown in China were made by foreigners, but Chinese have been making movies of their own since 1905. If not for the Opium War after which Hong Kong was ceded and become a colony of Britain in 1842; if not for the civil war between the Communist and National Party in 1949 which broke China into two, the definition of "Chinese Film" would be less confusing than it is today. Politically and geographically independent as they are, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan continue to share cultural and historical traditions, and even the same language. Although the countries are historically interrelated, after a separation of over forty years, developments in the movie industries in these three areas have diverged. Based on different ideologies and political beliefs, movie production has been seen as an extension of the ongoing political debate for both Taiwan and China since the early 1950s. Movie production was related to the political situation and was used by the government as a propaganda tool to reeducate the public. In this sensitive political game between China and Taiwan, Hong
Kong was situated as a very fragile intermediary. After the bloody, fierce military conflicts of the Chinese Revolution, a new battlefield was formed in Hong Kong for Taiwan and China to demonstrate their muscles. Under this political pressure, the attractiveness of Taiwan as a potential film market and the heavy dependence on daily food supplies from China combined to ensure that most of the movies produced in Hong Kong tended to be non-political in content in order for the colony to maintain its neutral position. Because of these historical developments, non-political, commercially oriented subjects became the mainstream of Hong Kong movie production in the early 1950s. During the cold war period, different kinds of Chinese movies and Chinese movie industries developed in each of these three areas. Because of the political taboo, movies produced in Taiwan could never be shown in China, and vice versa. Hong Kong film companies are allowed to export their product to Taiwan. However, the Taiwanese government required not only proper themes in movie content, but the filmmakers and actors have to be members of Hong Kong & Kowloon Cinema and Theatrical Enterprises Free General Association--a strategy for the Taiwanese government to control the movie industry in Hong Kong.

Scholars of Chinese cinema have tended to divide Chinese film by its country of origin: film from mainland China, the People's Republic; Hong Kong film; and film from Taiwan, Republic of China. Practically speaking, this kind
of classification might be justifiable and understandable. Nevertheless, most of the time, when Chinese film has been discussed or written about by western critics, usually only P.R.C. movies, directors, and film industry are considered. It seemed that after joining the United Nations in 1971, mainland China not only represented the only legal government of China in the world, it also represented the whole of Chinese culture, including the movies. For a long time, movies from Taiwan and Hong Kong have been critically neglected or treated as footnotes to the supposedly dominant mainland Chinese cinema. Obviously, this restricted focus will blur our understanding of the whole picture of Chinese movie production and reception, specially as we approach the turn of the century.

The interrelationship among China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan has entered a new phase in the late 1980s. In 1987, one year before President C.K. Chiang of Taiwan died, Taiwan's Martial Law, which was imposed by the Nationalist Party in 1949, was terminated. Four decades of intense hostility between two sides of the Taiwan Strait have begun to soften. In the same period, based on humanitarian considerations, people in Taiwan have been allowed to visit their surviving relatives in mainland China. The relationship between Taiwan and China has thus moved another step forward. With non-political exchange occurring more and more frequently, the movies became another hot issue for both the Chinese and Taiwanese governments to deal with.
Although mainland Chinese movies are still prohibited in Taiwan, some Taiwanese movies have been exported to China for exhibition. Cooperation in movie production, including actors, capital investment, and international distribution, has already begun. Although this activity is not completely legal, most of the filmmakers are optimistic about the future.

Situated as a mediator and buffer zone between China and Taiwan, Hong Kong has its own problems, too. The most complex of which is Hong Kong's impending return to the control of the P.R.C. in 1997. Although the Peking government more than once has stated that Hong Kong will be allowed to maintain its arch-capitalist economic and social structure for fifty years after 1997, residents of Hong Kong are still strongly worried about their future. Hong Kong filmmaker Tsui Hark articulates these fears when he says, "The nightmare is that the Chinese government itself does not know if it is capable of running Hong Kong (1)." This unstable and unpredictable situation, combined with the horrible experience of the student movement crackdown in Peking in 1989, has shaped the Hong Kong movie industry greatly. Sylvia Chang, an actress from Taiwan who has developed a successful career in Hong Kong, once commented that Hong Kong movie production has become more and more like a "fast food" industry. As 1997 comes closer and closer, the movie industry in Hong Kong, both through its assembly-line mode of production and movie content, can be
expected to reflect how Hong Kong residents think about their future.

Recently, another trend in Chinese movie production has emerged: specifically cooperation ventures, with capital from Taiwan, directors and crew from China, casts from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. Laws and regulations prohibiting this sort of arrangement have been temporarily ignored by the filmmakers involved, with the tacit complicity of their respective governments. Some of these cooperative ventures are quite ambitious, aiming not only at the domestic market but the whole world. The circumstances of this ongoing transition in the social and political arena, the continuing convergence of Chinese movies from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the impact of these changes on future Chinese movie production are the focuses of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Although some books and articles, either in English or Chinese, have been written on Chinese film, only a few have dealt with the most recent development affecting Chinese cinema, especially involving the political changes since 1987. The problem of this study is to describe the development of Chinese film after 1949 in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Emphasis will fall upon the study of the late 1980s and early 1990s in connection with the change in political, social, and economic climate. A new phase of Chinese cinema will be discussed.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study will be:

1. to understand how the movie industry was affected by political situations in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in the early 1950s.
2. to describe the development of the movie industries in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan since the 1950s.
3. to introduce the current movie industries in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and the difficulties they have encountered.
4. to analyze the change, exchange and convergence of the movie business in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in the late Eighties and early Nineties. This study will enhance our understanding of the new role of Chinese film in the world.

Research Questions

To carry out the purposes of this study, five basic research questions have been formulated:

1. What has been and is the influence of politics on movie production in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan?
2. How have law and regulation shaped the development of movie industries in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan?
3. What economic factors have affected movie production in China [a communist country with a state-supported industry], Hong Kong [a laissez faire capitalist area with a privately controlled industry], and Taiwan [with
a mixed history of state support/regulation and privately held companies]?

4. What are the differences among China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in movie production?

5. By the combined efforts of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, what is the likely future of Chinese movie production?

Significance of the Study

Chinese film in the late 20th Century can never be defined solely as films produced by mainland China. By the same notion, the study of Chinese film should not be confined only to film from China, film from Hong Kong, or film from Taiwan. Accompanying the end of Taiwan's Martial Law and the shadow of 1997 in Hong Kong, more and more variables have entered the production of the "Chinese movie". A study of contemporary Chinese movie industries in light of changing political, economic, social, and cultural factors is necessary, and a new perspective on Chinese film can be provided by this research.

Review of Literature

Anthony Slide in his study of Chinese cinema maintained that:

Despite the size of the country, Chinese films have never had any impact abroad, nor has the film industry achieved recognition in proportion to the audience
Slide's argument reflects at least two common phenomena in contemporary Chinese film study. First, in the context of western scholarship, Chinese film means film from mainland China only. Second, although in recent years a number of Chinese movies, including films produced in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as the P.R.C., have won awards at international film festivals, it seems that Chinese cinema has not been fully understood by film scholars. Part of the reason for this, as Robert W. Wagner has noted, has been the inaccessibility of the films and the paucity of related literature on this subject. As a matter of fact, film critics and scholars have tended to focus their research in one area, either China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. Even film scholars in Taiwan and China, although Chinese, do not understand each other's industries and films too well.

In the study of Chinese movies, Cheng Jihua is probably one of the major historian that most foreign film scholars would like to consult. Cheng's *History of the Development of Chinese Cinema*, with co-authors Li Xiaobai and Xing Zuwen, became an initial and primary source in the field of Chinese cinema research. Cheng's book was published in 1963 in the P.R.C., 14 years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China by the Chinese Communist Party. Detailed and thorough as the book may be, Cheng has been accused of having a partial attitude. Leo Ou-Fan Lee once described Cheng as the "official Chinese film historian" and
questioned Cheng's assessment that since 1931, the Communist Party had led the movement in modern Chinese cinema (4). Obviously, if not for its "extreme orthodoxy in attitude and in structure," Jay Leyda would not have spent his time in writing another Chinese film history Dianying, An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China (5). From 1949 to the present, because of political separation, a comprehensive history of Chinese film has become the main concern of film scholars in both Taiwan and China.

Materials on Mainland Chinese Film

Leyda's Dianying is probably the most detailed study of Chinese film history in English, dealing with the subject from the arrival of movies in China to 1967, the beginning of Cultural Revolution. Although the development of the movie industry in Taiwan after 1949 is not considered, Leyda briefly discussed the Hong Kong movie industry as a part of his study. Dianying has provided a framework for the study of the Chinese cinema which Leyda aligns with the political changes in China.

The ten-year Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 had a strong impact both on social and cultural life in the P.R.C.. Movie production was stopped for three years in this period because of political censorship and the deportation of film professionals to the countryside. Useful material dealing with this period may be found in Chinese Cinema by Paul Clark; the focus of this study is on
Chinese film after 1949, up to the early 1980s. Like Leyda, Clark explains the development of Chinese film according to its relationship to shifts in the political situation.

Chinese film after 1976 entered another new stage. *Yellow Earth* by Chen Kaige in 1984 marked the beginning of a new wave of movie production in China (6). *King of the Children & the New Chinese Cinema* by Chen Kaige and Tony Rayns discusses the emergence of Chinese new cinema, in which movies are treated as an art. *Chinese Film*, edited by George Stephen Semsel, explores the industry and the development of film theory in the P.R.C. during the early 1980s. Semsel's book also includes interviews with directors, such as Third Generation filmmaker Xie Jin and Fifth Generation director Tian Zhuangzhuang. In *Perspective on Chinese Cinema*, edited by Chris Berry, scholars seek to explain aspects of contemporary Chinese film through different methodological perspectives, with an emphasis on close readings of individual films. Traditional drama, poetry, and painting are discussed in connection with their influence on modern Chinese cinema. The emphasis of Berry's anthology is on P.R.C. films, but there are also two chapters which analyse aspects of Taiwanese and Hong Kong films.

Materials on Hong Kong and Taiwanese Cinema

Studies of Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema are few in number relative to the materials on P.R.C. films; the
materials that exist have appeared either in periodicals or as a part of books in the subject of world cinema. The Asian Film Industries by John Lent and Esther Yau's essay in World Cinema since 1945, edited by William Luhr, have provided brief but useful overviews of the development of Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema. Lent's focus on the contemporary movie industry, with material on production, directing, scriptwriting, and distribution, is an important source in this study. Other studies concerning Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema appear sporadically in journals including Cinemaya, Free China Review, Far Eastern Economic Review, and Jump Cut.

Since the focus of this study is the convergence of Chinese films in the late 1980s and early 1990s, current information on the development and cooperation among the movie industries of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan is necessary. Three main sources, all published in Chinese, are of significance to the proposed study. The first is China Times Weekly. Several thorough and critical analyses of current trends in Chinese cinema, such as the decline of the movie industry in each area, the movement towards, and obstacles facing cooperative endeavors are discussed in depth. The other two sources are daily newspapers, Central Daily News and the World Journal. The first, published by the Nationalist Party in Taiwan specifically for overseas Chinese, tends to be more conservative in news reporting. It is the second one, the World Journal, which provides the
most updated information in great quantity which may be very useful in this study.

Definitions of Terms

To facilitate understanding of this study, certain terms will be defined:

1. The term "China" will be defined as the People's Republic of China after the Communist Party has taken over mainland China in 1949.

2. The term "Taiwan" will be defined as the Republic of China after the defeat of Nationalist Party in 1949.

3. The term "Hong Kong" will be defined as the colony of Britain since 1842.

4. The term "third class film" will be defined as the erotic movies produced in large quantity in Hong Kong in the early Nineties.

5. The term "Taiwanese films" will be defined as films produced in Taiwan in mandarin. Taiwanese dialect movies will be excluded in this research.

Limitations of the Research

Like many other studies in the field of Chinese film, Chinese-English translation has been a big problem. For people in Taiwan, because of the popularization of Mandarin education, Mandarin Phonetic Symbols have become a universal tool for people below the age of 40. In mainland China, as in Taiwan, mandarin is the official language but is
pronounced based on Kwoyeu Romatzyh. In Hong Kong, Cantonese is the most popular and widely used dialect. Although the pronunciation is different, an English translation will be given to the titles of the movie, the name of the directors, etc., if it is available and has been generally accepted. In case no proper English name is available, a direct translation from Chinese pronunciation will be used based on the Thomas Wade system of Romanization.

Methods of Research

Two methods will be employed in the study. The first method will be an extensive review of the history of the development of the movie industries in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan from 1949 to the late 1980s. Movies in this period, generally speaking, were produced locally and autonomously. The second method will be a critical study of the change in the movie industries in these three areas in the late 1980s and early 1990s. To understand the evolution, the study will be constructed in the context of relevant political, economic, and social aspects.

Organization of the Thesis

The study will be broken down into the following chapters:
I. Introduction
   - Film as a Product of a Society
- Chinese Movie in the Early Days
- The Invasion of the Japanese and Chinese Civil War

II. Chinese Film after 1949
- Dream and Reality: Mainland China
- Hong Kong, Another Hollywood
- Made in Taiwan

III. The Change and Exchange
- A New Stage in Chinese History
- The Change and Quandary of Chinese Cinema
- The Silver Triangle

IV. Conclusion
ENDNOTES


# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film as a Product of a Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Movie in the Early Days</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Invasion of the Japanese and</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Chinese Civil War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. CHINESE FILM AFTER 1949</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream and Reality: Mainland China</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong, Another Hollywood</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made in Taiwan</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE CHANGE AND EXCHANGE</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Stage in Chinese History</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Change and Quandary of Chinese Cinema</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Silver Triangle</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the production of Chinese movies was extended to Taiwan [the Republic of China], and the movie industry of Hong Kong, which had been shut down during World War II's Japanese occupation of the colony, began to reestablish itself. Although sharing a similar cultural and literary heritage, the three Chinas have developed under very different economic, aesthetic, and political circumstances, and as a result, each area has taken a different path in movie production. Therefore, one may generally predict that a movie produced in Hong Kong will tend to be overtly commercial and entertaining in its content. On the other hand, in both China and Taiwan film often has been used as a tool by the respective governments to argue particular political positions and as a way to reeducate the public. Generally speaking, before the late 1980s, the movie industries of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan functioned autonomously and independently of each other.

This pan-Chinese cinema phenomenon has changed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The termination of Taiwan's Martial Law in 1987 softened the political enmity across the
Taiwan Strait. More and more non-political exchange activities, including movies, are available. Meanwhile, the shadow of 1997, the year in which Hong Kong will return to China's control, has had a strong impact on the present of the Crown Colony. The production of Chinese movies in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan has changed dramatically in the last few years. In the meantime, each country also faces different political, economic, and social difficulties, some of which have had an impact on film production practices and content. This study will discuss the recent evolution, convergence, and interaction of the movie industries in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Gerald Mast, in a discussion of American film history, maintains that each film-producing nation has its own social history of film. That is, movies and the movie industry in each country are developed differently according to the conditions of production, the system of distribution, the nature of local audiences, and the relationship of film to the moral and political climate in each historical period (1). Mast's analytic perspective makes sense in connection with the situation of movie production in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In order to appreciate the dynamic changes of recent Chinese film, it would be helpful to examine the relationship between these movies and the context in which they are produced.
Film as a Product of a Society

Film is a worldwide cultural influence. Its relationship with society is complex, subtle, and multi-dimensional. As Garth Jowett and James Linton describe:

The movies ... go beyond being only entertainment, but fill other needs in the society. Movies also have been used for both blatant and subtle attempts to propagandize. Culturally, the movies have been very important in shaping our "visual" perspective (2).

Film has been described as the art of the twentieth century. Art cannot be created in a void or isolated from the society in which it exists. Art is expressed through certain forms--visual, aural, or both--which are created by human beings who exist in complex, multi-faceted relationships to society. In other words, film as an art is produced by human beings and therefore has a strong relationship with the society in which it exists. Siegfried Kracauer in 1947 wrote From Caligari to Hitler, which set out to show that German films of the 1920s revealed a mentality in the German people which predisposed them toward Hitler. Since Kracauer, films frequently have been read in connection with what a country or society feels or thinks (3).

Film not only mirrors what a society thinks, it also
carries ideology and fortifies the values of a society. Moreover, under certain circumstances, film is able to produce social change, such as styles of dress, patterns of speech, and method of courtship, and reflects these changes in its content. But the relationship between movies and society is not univocal; it does not happen in one direction only. While film has become a significant influence on culture and society, the form and content of movies are affected by society, too. Therefore, for example, the activities of the Motion Picture Association's Code and Rating Administration in the U.S. since 1968 do not involve less film censorship, but they do suggest the general outlines of American attitudes towards what constitutes appropriate behavior in public and private life and in works of art (4).

The economic and political systems of a society are other elements that can affect the conditions of film production. In the United States, principles based in the Constitution have ensured that the film industry is relatively free of government interference, while capitalist economic system has always steered Hollywood in the direction of overtly commercial and popular movies. With immense reserves of capital, advanced technology, and the support of the huge domestic market, Hollywood was able to grow and become a giant in the international film market to a degree that no other country can hope to match. The
expansion of Hollywood's foreign markets in Latin America, the Far East, and Africa is in a sense an extension of American international political power. If Hollywood is a dream factory, as Hortense Powdermaker put it, then it is a factory rooted in American experience. Its product is enriched with American values and ideology, while it simultaneously reflects and shapes society.

Chinese film has had a similarly symbiotic relationship with the societies and cultures in which it has been created, and the study which follows is intended to explore some aspects of that relationship.

Chinese Cinema in the Early Days

The movies were first introduced to China through Hong Kong in 1896. In that year, on August 11, a film was shown in Shanghai Hsu Gardens and was known as dianying or electric shadows. Film was soon accepted and became a popular entertainment in Chinese society. During the first decade of the twentieth century, thousands of silent films were imported from France, the United States, Germany, and England (5). In 1905, the first indigenous Chinese film Dingjun Mountain was made by Ren Jingfeng. The first Chinese feature came in 1913. The Suffering Couple, directed by Zheng Zhengqiu, set up the genre of Chinese family melodrama that always carried a mild criticism of traditional feudalism (6). Film companies like China Film
Company and Mingxing Film Company were established in the late teens and twenties. Zhang Shichuan, director of Mingxing Film Company, also established the first Chinese film school and produced the first Chinese serial, *The Burning of Red Lotus Temple* in 1928, which was also credited as the first kung-fu movie (7). During the 1920s, although China was in chaos, the Chinese film industry seemed to be indifferent to this social unrest. Movies were completely detached from the harsh reality of the period and were generally of an escapist rather than a social-realist nature. Movies of this period included the "period costume films" like *The Orphan Saves His Grandmother* by Zheng Zhengqiu in 1923; *A Pearl Necklace* by Li Zeyuan in 1925; and "cape and sword" films like *The Burning of Red Lotus Temple* in 1928 (8).

Sound film came to China in 1929. Immediately small studios were experimenting with sound productions. The first sound film, *Sing-Song Girl Red Peony*, appeared in 1930, a co-production which involved the Mingxing Film Company. During this period, while "cape and sword" and fantasy films were all the rage, there was a reaction from the intellectuals. The excessive development of these "soft" genre films were accused of anesthetizing the public instead of rousing its awareness (9). With the establishment of Lianhua Studio by Luo Mingyou in 1930, major film production companies began to consider narrative technique
and the aesthetic quality of films (10). Luo intended to renew Chinese cinema by eliminating the "cape and sword" and fantasy films. His ambition was to promote art and culture by stimulating the public's intelligence and to produce popular, educational, and documentary films for both big and interior cities.

The scriptwriters, filmmakers and actors of Lianhua were almost all intellectuals with a bourgeois education: scholarship students who had spent time abroad, stage-actors, etc.. They were very different from the people who had dominated the cinema up to then. ... [They] stayed outside the "cape and sword" and fantasy film trend. ...[and] brought more than their predecessors had to mise-en-scene techniques and to the use of specific filmic devices (11).

Under this direction, Chinese cinema began dealing with social issues, attacking the feudal system and arguing for women's rights.

Lianhua's first film, *Spring Dawn in the Ancient Capital* in 1930 by Sun Yu, who was trained in the United States, was an enormous success. More importantly, it changed the attitudes of the intellectuals who previously had despised Chinese films and preferred foreign cinema (12). Hong Shen, in his analysis of the 66 films of 1933,
has classified these movies into three types which can lead us to a better understanding of Chinese films in this period.

1). Anti-imperialist films: Movies of this type usually depicted the threat of imperialism to China and people's opposition to it. Movies of this kind included *The Little Toy, Cigarette Girl,* and *The Struggle.*

2). Anti-feudal films: Some social traditions such as marriage and inheritance systems are criticized. Movies of this kind included *The Headlong Torrent, Daddy's Spring Regrets, The Tribulations of Two,* and *Tears of Blood.*

3). The denunciatory films: Women's issues, such as their rights and position in society, were raised and discussed. Movies of this type included *Women's Cries, The Future, Three Modern Women,* and *The Market of Tender Feeling* (13).

Chinese movies in the 1930s were produced in a certain neo-realist style which is usually associated with the suffering caused by the Japanese invasion. This period, according to Kwok and Quiquemelle, was the golden age of Chinese cinema (14).

Chinese cinema was influenced by western filmmaking models, especially the Hollywood style. As Jay Leyda notes, Chinese producers never managed to escape from "their entangling admiration of the efficient American film (15)."
Most Chinese films of the 1930s fit into genre categories familiar in the West. Sun Yu's *Daybreak* in 1933 was a local version of Sternberg's *Dishonored*. *Unchanged Heart in Life and Death* by Ying Yunwei in 1936 offered another version of *Prisoner of Zenda* (16). The domination of western movies in the Chinese film market further exacerbated this trend. In 1929, for example, less than 50 Chinese films were made, and they had to compete with an estimated 450 imported films [90 percent of which were from the United States]. In 1933, 67 Chinese films were produced while 500 American and 100 other films were imported. The ratio of domestic to foreign films on China's screens in this period was about 1:9. In 1936, the percentage of foreign films shown in China still remained as high as 88 percent (17). Hollywood movie stars like Chaplin and Garbo were widely recognized.

Movie exhibition practice also showed this western domination. In Guangzhou, for example, there were a total of 15 theaters in the city in 1929 and only 4 of them showed exclusively Chinese films. Two other theaters showed up to 50 percent and 6 theaters about one-third Chinese films. The other three exhibited only foreign movies (18). In 1934, according to Bergeron, American films occupied 85 percent of screen time (19). Other national film cultures were also visible, however. In 1926, *The Battleship Potemkin* by Sergei Eisenstein was screened in China, followed by *The Path of Life* by N. Ekk and *The Golden*
Mountains by Vsevolod I. Pudovkin. After the initial influence of American films, Chinese cinema began to imitate Soviet films from 1933 onwards (20). Many directors and screenwriters of this period were active in the Film Group, a subdivision of the League of Left-Wing Writers which was established in 1930. Movie exchanges were also available between China and the Soviet Union. The The Fisherman's Song by Cai Chusheng and Twin Sisters by Zi Mei Hua were selected to represent China at the Moscow Film Festival in 1934 and made a big impression. Generally speaking, by the end of the 1930s, Chinese film style was developed in a combination of "imported film narrative techniques, local theatrical performing styles, and story forms of contemporary popular literature (21)."

The Invasion of the Japanese and the Chinese Civil War

It is impossible to "read" a Chinese movie without referring to the national situation at the time it was made (22).

-- Scott Meek and Tony Rayns

From 1896, when film was first introduced, to 1949, when the Communist Party took over Mainland China, the production circumstances and content of Chinese film clearly reflected the social and political situation at the time it was made. Nationally, these repercussions began with the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, continued through the overthrow of
the Qing dynasty in 1911, the coming of the warlord era which ended in 1928, and the conflicts between the Nationalist and Communist Parties. Domestic social chaos and political revolution were interwoven with international upheavals beginning with World War I (1914-18), continued with the invasion by the Japanese Empire, World War II (1939-45), the coming of the Cold War and the confrontation between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The invasion of the Japanese and the clash between the Communist and Nationalist Parties seem to be the two most influential elements in the development of Chinese cinema in the period.

Shanghai has been China's undisputed film capital since the introduction of the movies in 1896. In the 1930s, it was a cosmopolitan city and a focus of national culture, the center for the importation of foreign films, and the major site of Chinese film production. Between 1921 to the mid-1930s, at least 164 production companies were established in China and most of them were in Shanghai (23). The invasion of the Japanese in the early 1930s and their capture of Shanghai in 1936 had significant effects both on the industrial and narrative aspects of the Chinese cinema (24). Although some movie companies like Xinhua continued to function during the Japanese occupation, the production of Chinese films was extended to Hong Kong and Chungking, a situation which lasted until at least 1945 (25).

The movie industry in Hong Kong began in 1909 with the
production of *To Steal a Roasted Duck* by Liang Shaobo (26). By the 1930s, the Japanese bombing and military actions in the northeast part of mainland China motivated the film industry shift to the south, either to Hong Kong, a British Colony since 1842 under the Treaty of Nanking, or to southeast Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia (27). The successive immigrations of the twentieth century, each with an influx of capital, equipment, and talent, have had a positive effect on the growth of the movie industry in Hong Kong and laid the groundwork for its development in the future.

The first wave of film refugees came to Hong Kong in about 1930 when Lianhua Film Company set up its main office in Hong Kong. Approximately 100 films were produced by about 50 companies between 1932 and 1936. In this period, Hong Kong was established as the center for Cantonese movies (28). Although far from the sophisticated standards of Shanghai, these Cantonese films "were a genuine response to popular demand, and outgrowth of a traditional folk subculture (29)."

The second wave arrived at the outbreak of war with Japan in 1937. More political and Mandarin-oriented, filmmakers of this wave saw film as a way to fight the Japanese. Another reason that filmmakers left China was because of a decree imposed by the Nationalist Party in 1937 that movies were to be in Mandarin. Therefore, Cantonese
producers began to move to Hong Kong. In this period, filmmakers were able to benefit from financial and trading advantages:

Raw film was freely importable. Land for studios was cheap. Taxes, duties, licenses and regulations were minimal; there was no pre-censorship of scripts. Export, like import, was without restriction (30).

From 1937 until Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese in 1941, about 60 percent of local production was taken up by Cantonese operas, sword-play, folklore, and romances. Patriotic and anti-Japanese films, such as Bloodshed at Po Shan City by Szeto Huimin in 1938 and Orphan Island Paradise by Cai Chusheng in 1939, made up the remaining 40 percent (31).

The Japanese invasion also dispersed some filmmakers to Chungking, the wartime capital dominated by the Nationalist Party, and Yanan, the base of the Communist Party. Before the full-scale Japanese invasion in 1937, the conflict between the Nationalist Party and Communist Party already existed, and part of the political clash was shown in the movie industry.

The influence of Soviet film and the production of social realist films in the 1930s mentioned earlier in this chapter is evidence of the growing influence of left-wing writers and directors in movie production. After the
Shanghai massacre in 1927, the Communist Party went underground but stayed very active in intellectual circles. In 1930, a decree was instituted by the Nationalist Party which prohibited all films:
1). protesting against the government, or capable of affecting national prestige
2). dangerous to morality and public order
3). encouraging superstitious practices and feudalism (32)
The newly imposed censorship did not stop leftist film making. As Cheng Jihua explains:

Left films took as their goal to struggle against imperialism and feudalism through the depiction of the anguish, suffering and uncertainties of the ordinary public. But because of censorship, this ideology could not be openly expressed. It was necessary to use roundabout methods. For example, by making films without conclusions, which were content to expose the facts and to show the audience clearly the present injustice and the necessity of social change (33).

The leaders of the Communist Party had recognized the propaganda promise of film and established an organization, the Film Group, in 1932 to guide progressive filmmakers in Shanghai. The first major studio infiltrated by the communists was Mingxing, the most successful studio of the
1920s (34). After the bombing of Shanghai in 1932 by the Japanese, Xia Yan, leader of the Film Group, became the head of the script team at Mingxing. Soon other young left-wing artists like Zheng Boqi, Ah Ying, Zheng Zhengqiu, and Hong Shen joined and Mingxing began to produce films featuring the life of city dwellers and peasants. The other big studio infiltrated by the Film Group was Lianhua Company. Unlike Mingxing, Lianhua was less hospitable to communist influence. The main obstacle was the close relationship of Luo Mingyou, the founder of Lianhua, with the ruling Nationalist Party. Two of the three studios in Lianhua were controlled by the Nationalist Party and paradoxically, both left- and right-wing features were produced by Lianhua until 1936, when the communists gained control of the whole company (35). Three other film companies were also infiltrated by the communists, including Yihua, Daintong, and Xinhua companies. The expansion of the communists into the film industry was temporarily stopped by the Blue Shirt faction of the Nationalist Party. In 1933, the Blue Shirt faction destroyed Yihua's facilities. When production resumed in 1934, the content of Yihua's movies was less socially oriented in order to avoid further trouble from the authorities (36).

In Chungking during the War of Resistance to Japan, movie production was under the control of the government or the Propaganda Department of the Nationalist Party. Left-
wing filmmakers who had escaped from Shanghai once again infiltrated studios controlled by the Nationalist Party and found a creative outlet. In 1941, aware of the political loyalties of the left-wing filmmakers, the studios in Chungking ceased production for almost three years (37). While production was limited and somewhat restricted, the experience in Chungking was significant for many filmmakers. Unlike the days in Shanghai, filmmakers were forced to encounter a real Chinese society. The connection between Chinese society and filmmaking was strengthened during the war years, and this became a major factor in the cinematic achievements of the late 1940s (38).

After the Japanese were defeated in 1945, in spite of the ensuing social unrest, movie production in China remained active. Two post-war epics became important classics of this period. The best-known is Spring River Flows East, written and directed by Cai Chusheng and Zheng Junli. It was exhibited in Shanghai for three months to an audience of almost three-quarters of a million people (39). The second is Eighty Thousand Miles of Clouds and the Moon by Shi Dongshan. This film surveyed the national trauma during wartime through the perspective of a traveling theater group. Produced in 1947, these two movies signified a distinct move away from the romance and costume movies of the 1920s and early 1930s. With the beginning of the Left-Wing Film movement in the late 1930s, the earlier modes of
pure fantasy and sensationalism in movie production gradually dissolved into increased moral and political edification. Throughout the 1940s, social criticism and the depiction of human tragedies became the two main subjects for film making (40).

After victory in 1945, the Nationalist Party once again tried to establish its monopoly over the film industry, but without success. Government interference in filmmaking became stronger than it had been in the 1930s. From October 1945 to September 1948, 162 films were submitted for censorship and 48 of them, about 30 percent, had to be cut (41). In spite of the severe censorship, movie production soon rediscovered the realist form of the 1930s and produced quality works. Left film production was active. Kunlun studio was established in 1946 as the center of left-wing filmmaking. Even studios controlled by the Nationalist Party produced progressive works on occasion (42). The Japanese defeat did not bring true peace and prosperity to China. Social unrest increased. China was on the brink of civil war.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that the Japanese invasion and the political conflict between the Nationalist Party and Communist Party in the 1930s and 1940s should have found their reflection in the films of the period. As Meek and Rayns have pointed out:

A Chinese film of the 1930s and 1940s is
a site for a clash of ideologies. Every film, like every novel and every newspaper article, had to have a position on the key issues of the day: whether or not to resist Japanese aggression, what to do about widespread poverty and corruption (43).

The Chinese civil war broke out in 1946. In 1949, the Communist Party took over mainland China. The Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan. After the Korean War began in 1950, the separation of the Chinas became irreversible, and the Chinese film industry became similarly divided.
ENDNOTES


6. Ibid


9. Ibid.

10. Yau, 117.


13. Ibid., 185.

14. Ibid.


18. Ibid.


20. Slide, 81.

21. Yau, 118.


23. Clark, 7.

24. Yau, 118.

25. Clark, 14.


27. Yau, 118.


29. Ibid., 10.

30. Ibid., 3.

31. Yau, 132.

32. Kwok, 185.

33. Cheng, 147.

34. Clark, 11.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 12.

37. Ibid., 14.

38. Ibid., 15.

39. Ibid., 18.
40. Yau, 118.
41. Cheng, II, 159.
42. Kwok, 188.
43. Meek and Rayns, 216.
CHAPTER II

CHINESE FILM AFTER 1949

The year 1949 was a turning point for the Chinese people. On the mainland, the People's Republic of China was established, to be managed and developed under the theories of Marxism. Having retreated to Taiwan, the Nationalist Party began to experiment with Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. Hong Kong still retained its colonial status and was situated as a mediator and buffer zone between China and Taiwan. While politically and geographically independent, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan have continued to share cultural and historical traditions. Although they were historically interrelated, the enforced separation of over forty years ensured that the organizing principles of the three movie industries have diverged. The distinctions can be largely attributed to the differences in political and economic systems as well as ideologies maintained in each area.

Dream and Reality: Mainland China

The development of the movie industry in mainland China after 1949 has been divided into three distinct parts. The
pre-Cultural Revolution era from 1949 to 1966 could be characterized as an experimental period during which filmmakers adjusted to the new socialist standards. The period of Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 was disastrous for all aspects of social and cultural life. Movie production was stopped for three years because of political censorship and the deportation of film professionals to the countryside. The post-Cultural Revolution era after 1976 set out a new relationship between the movie industry and the Communist Party. Under the major premise of modernizing China, a more relaxed policy toward art and literature was adopted (1). However, the specifics of this policy were decided by a few top level administrators and changed frequently according to shifts in the political climate.

As an extension of the experience of the 1930s and 1940s, the movies were regarded as an important tool for mass movement by the Communist Party during the early years of socialist revolution. Soon after the liberation of the country, the National Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture was established and the Party began to construct and finance a national film base by converting all private film production facilities into state-run operations. Although five independent companies were allowed to operate, the movie industry was completely nationalized in 1953 (2). In the production area, ten major studios were built all over
China by the state. In the exhibition area, the number of theaters was increased from 646 in 1949 to 20,363 in 1966. A central distribution operation was also established in this period to make sure that each film produced by the studios would be distributed nationally. Under this arrangement, the movie industry was primarily controlled by the state and the production of movies was free from commercial influence (3).

In the pre-Cultural Revolution period, film, like many other artistic and literary media, was required by the Party to assist the transition of Chinese society to a socialist state. Messages carried in the films were more significant than matters of style. Filmmakers were encouraged to achieve the socialist aesthetic ideal— a combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. Films produced by the Northeast Studio during 1949 and 1950, such as Boundless Light, Daughters of China, and The White-Haired Girl, set the narrative paradigm and tone for the new revolutionary cinema. Stereotyped characters like sympathetic peasants, exploitative landlords, the brave Red Army, and the corrupt Nationalist Party officials were frequently depicted in movies which criticized the society before 1949 and indicated the coming of a bright future. This was the first stage in which film was used by the Party to stabilize the society and to consolidate its power.

Films produced by the newly built studios marked the
beginning of the second stage. Movies began to deal with the themes of new life in the New China. The relationship between politics and movie was manifest. As Esther Yau has pointed out:

> It was quite obvious by then that in the socialist state, Party politics became the leading factor in shaping the development of cinema, subjugating the autonomy of the studios, filmmakers, and audience to national economic plan and political movements (4).

Before the coming of the Hundred Flowers movement in 1956, the film industry and the Party were basically in a honeymoon period. Stimulated by the Movement, in a climate of openness, filmmakers began to call for more artistic autonomy. The Hundred Flowers movement proved to be a political strategy of the Party designed to gain control over the movie industry. The Anti-Rightist movement immediately started in 1957. Outspoken filmmakers and actors during the Hundred Flowers movement were criticized for their "petit-bourgeois" and "anti-revolutionary" sentiments. Movies like Before the New Director Arrives by Lu Ban and Sun Yu's Braving Winds and Waves were under attack. By the end of the Anti-Rightist movement, filmmakers had learned to survive by remaining silent and aligning themselves closely with the Party.

The Great Leap Forward began in 1958. In response to
the Party's call for a production increase, studios cut the production budgets and shortened shooting schedules to meet the requirement. From 1958 to 1959, 229 features and animated films were made. Although output increased, movies of this period were invariably devoted to the subject matter of modernized production. From the ending of the Great Leap Forward in 1959 to 1964, the movie industry experienced less interference from political movements. Different kinds of tendencies co-existed in this period which can be classified as follows.

1). Realism became important again, even in films on contemporary life. Lu Ren's Li Shuang-shuang in 1962 and Shen Fu's The Land Is Also Fertile in the North in 1963 are two examples.


3). Comedy was also available in this period, produced specifically to entertain the public. Political sermons were ignored in most cases. The most successful comedy of this time was Big Li, Little Li and Old Li by Xie Jin in 1962. The rest included Lu Ren's I Am Resting Today in 1959 and Yan Gong's Happy or Not in 1963.

4). At the same time, there also existed highly political films like Zheng Junli's The Old Tree Takes on Life in

5). Finally, there were films which reconstructed the atmosphere of the old society. Movies of this kind included *Early Spring* by Xie Tieli in 1963 and *Stage Sisters* by Xie Jin in 1965 (5).

Ten years after victory, the socialist Chinese cinema had developed to a point in which politics and art were integrated with more sophistication. Filmmakers' aspirations and the audience's interests in this period were better acknowledged by the Party and the movie industry itself. Consequently, movies of this period showed a more mature integration of art, socialist world view, and Chinese culture and society (6). In 1964, a huge criticism campaign was launched against *The Land Is Also Fertile in the North* and *Early Spring*. The next victim was *Stage Sisters* in 1965. Both events presaged the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution in the next year.

The development of the movie industry was retarded during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. The production of feature films was stopped altogether for three years, from 1967 to 1969. In 1970, movie production was resumed but the content of films was tightly controlled by the Party. Subsequent productions were called "revolutionary model operas" which took militant, ultra-left approach to culture and society. Movies of this kind formed
a genre which is characterized by stylized dance and acrobatic performances. Aiming solely to praise the Party, Chinese movies of that time had little entertaining value and were completely subjugated to political control (7). A repetition of themes and the constant use of cliches and stereotypes made the movies detached from actual social life. Some examples are Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy by Xie Tieli and The Red Lantern by Cheng Yin in 1970; The Red Detachment of Women by Pan Wenzhan and Fu Jie in 1971; and Eulogy of the Dragon River by Xie Tieli in 1972.

Mainland Chinese cinema gradually recovered after the Cultural Revolution. Filmmakers and screenwriters were rehabilitated and returned to their studios. A policy of relaxed censorship was initiated by the Party in relation to art and literature. A new phase of Chinese cinema began to emerge. Two major categories could be perceived in the wave of movie production after the Cultural Revolution era. The first concerned the trauma caused by the disastrous Cultural Revolution itself. Often adapted from the "literature of scars," movies of this type were produced with fidelity to reality and corresponded to a kind of neo-realism (8). Flashbacks and voice-overs were frequently employed as narrative devices, which created a sense of the poetic in the structure of the movies (9). Compared to films produced before the Cultural Revolution, these films were more outspoken and provided a medium for the people to disclose
their pain and suffering during the chaotic ten years. Although movies about intellectuals were not considered as "petit-bourgeois," surveillance from the Party still remained. At the beginning of 1981, being afraid that the critique of the Cultural Revolution era would go too far, the Party banned a film called *Bitter Love* even before its distribution. The genre of "scar" films began to disappear.

The second type of films produced in the post-Cultural Revolution era was the entertainment films, which dealt with varied topics through crime stories, comedies, melodramas, and adventures (10). Since the beginning of the 1980s, the relationship between the State and the movie industry began to change. Encouraged by the nation's change to a modified economic policy, the film industry was given more autonomy in its financial structure. Full financial backing from the government was ceased and each studio became responsible for its own annual budgets. Consequently, the success of the boxoffice inevitably became the main concern for most studios. Another reason for the rising importance of the entertainment films can be attributed to the needs of the audience. Bored with political discourse, the general public began to reject the revolutionary model operas offered in the previous decade. It was quite natural for them seeking a new source of entertainment which was relatively free from political rhetoric.

Mainland Chinese cinema after the Cultural Revolution
has had to face substantial problems. Within the film industry, there is a shortage of experienced personnel and a gradual loss of talents as veteran filmmakers depart the scene. Outside the industry, serious journalistic and scholarly criticism of film has not been solidly established; a definition of overall policy is ambiguous (11); movie attendance is also declining. From the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949 to the present, the development of the movie industry in Mainland China has been truly a collision of politics and art (12). Recently, in a climate of openness, some new elements have entered movie production and the Mainland Chinese cinema is about to move to another new phase.

Hong Kong, Another Hollywood

During the World War II occupation, Hong Kong movie production was severely restricted by the Japanese. The seventy or so small companies were re-organized into the Hong Kong Motion Picture Association (13). Shortly after the war, Hong Kong film production quickly resumed. The southern migration of small businessmen and filmmakers helped to establish a stronger film industry in the late 1940s. After Mainland China was taken by the Communist Party in 1949, more film professionals and capital flowed to the Crown Colony. Political upheavals had made Hong Kong a non-socialist territory in which right-wing, non-aligned
filmmakers, and profit seeking businessmen co-existed in this tiny area. As I.C. Jarvie describes:

To the outside observer what is really bewildering is the co-existence of capitalist backers, communist film people, neutral film people, propaganda films and commercial films all within the same company (14).

Soon after 1949, the Mainland Chinese market was closed to Hong Kong films. From then on, Chinese cinema in Mainland China and Hong Kong developed in entirely different economic settings, dissimilar political systems, and divergent social-cultural backgrounds, which has ensured that the films produced by each industry have been very different from each other in terms of narrative and style.

Politics played an important role in the Hong Kong movie industry in the early 1950s. After 1949, military conflicts on the mainland between the Communist and Nationalist Parties ceased. However, a new battlefield was formed in Hong Kong, one aspect of which was manifested in the movie business. Hong Kong became a new arena for both sides to demonstrate their muscle. On the left, there were Tai Kwong Ming, Nan Kuen, Tai Kuang, Wen San, Nan Kwok, and Great Wall Films. Other companies like Yong Hua and Asia Film were controlled by the right wing. Afraid of the potential for disturbances caused by inflammatory movies, the Hong Kong government in May 1950 called on producers and
filmmakers to refrain from making movies which promoted any ideology or were politically controversial. The movement away from topical films was not immediate, but toward the end of the 1960s, due to the polarization efforts of the United States and the competition with anti-communist companies like Shaw Brothers and Cathay, the production of social-problem films by leftist directors began to decline and were replaced by more lighthearted comedies, urban musical and romances (15). After the Cultural Revolution began, left-wing companies were doomed to be the minority in Hong Kong movie industry. The position of the right-wing Hong Kong & Kowloon Cinema and Theatrical Enterprises Free General Association-- established in 1956-- was confirmed and stayed firmly entrenched (16).

Situated within a complex and politically sensitive environment, considering both the attractiveness of Taiwan's film market and the dependence on the Mainland for its daily food supply, Hong Kong movies came to be produced in a neutral and non-political manner so as not to offend each side. Under this circumstance, in the context of a laissez faire capitalist society, commercial films became the mainstream of Hong Kong movie production. During the 1960s, the Shaw Brothers Studio emerged as the major film production company; Shaw was a vertically integrated powerhouse, controlling means of production, distribution and exhibition. A Hollywood mode of production was initiated.
A 46-acre Movie Town was built in 1961 which consisted of ten studios, 16 permanent outdoor sets, three dubbing studios, and many film-processing labs. Besides the production facilities, there were a total of 1,500 actors/actresses under contract and 2,000 employees. The annual production was about 40 films on a budget of HK $ 2.5 million each. In the distribution and exhibition phase, the Shaw Brothers owned 143 movie theaters in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Canada and the United States (17). The movie kingdom established by the Shaw Brothers remained a force in all aspects of the movie industry until it temporarily stopped movie production in 1986.

Hong Kong cinema had little impact in the West until the late Sixties. The movie industry then began to realize the need to increase its penetration of foreign markets and to co-produce movies with other countries (18). The martial arts, kung fu movies of the early 1970s gave Hong Kong a chance to gain international recognition. Bruce Lee's quintessential martial arts performances, The Big Boss in 1971 and Fist of Fury in 1972 made a big profit. Their success also enabled Golden Harvest, a new independent studio founded by Raymond Chow in 1970, to become prominent and competitive in the southeast Asian market on the level of the Shaw Brothers (19). At the Cannes Film Festival in 1972, both the Shaw Brothers and Golden Harvest successfully persuaded American distributors that there was an audience
outside the Asian area for kung fu movies (20). In the next year, the first Hong Kong-American co-production *The Way of the Dragon* was released [the U.S. backer was Warner Bros.], and it was a large-scale hit in the United States. After Lee's sudden death in 1974, kung fu movie production temporarily slowed down. The local market reopened for Cantonese melodramas and social satire films. Kung fu movies and Cantonese comedies continued to dominate Hong Kong film production until 1979 when new, younger directors appeared and started making modern social dramas (21).

The sixty new directors, most of them trained abroad, began their careers in the three local television stations. Beginning in the late 1970s, they transferred their careers to feature film production and brought a "new wave" to Hong Kong cinema. Movies produced by these new talents were characterized by stronger social awareness, bolder treatment of sex, violence, and higher aspirations to stylistic sophistication (22). As a result of the crossover between television and film, new ideas were brought to the movie industry. More independent studios emerged in the early 1980s which ultimately challenged the Shaw Brothers' hegemony over the market. In the mid-1980s, competition between new independents and the majors remained fierce. The "new wave" cinema turned commercial.

In 1981, the British Government began negotiating with China about the future status of Hong Kong. In 1984, a
"Joint Declaration of the Question of Hong Kong" was signed by both governments, under which Hong Kong will be returned to the People's Republic in 1997. The shadow of 1997 has had a direct and strong impact upon Hong Kong and its film industry. Tsui Hark, a famous Hong Kong filmmaker, once commented, "The nightmare is that the Chinese government itself does not know if it is capable of running Hong Kong (23)." Tsui's statement reflects the attitudes of Hong Kong people about the coming of 1997. The movie industry, like other local businesses, has begun to evolve according to this political change.

Made in Taiwan

After the Sino-Japanese war in 1894, Taiwan was ceded to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki. In November 1901, the colonial government exhibited a newsreel in Taipei. This was the first film introduced into Taiwan. During its colonial days, movie production in Taiwan was mainly controlled by the Japanese for their own political purposes. Although there were a couple of studios operated by the Taiwanese, severe censorship imposed by the Japanese made movie production difficult. After the War of Resistance to Japan in 1937, film production declined and finally stopped. In 1940, by establishing the Taiwan Motion Picture Association, movie production, distribution, and exhibition were nationalized by the colonial government. The rebirth
of Taiwanese cinema had to wait until the Japanese defeat in 1945.

Unlike Hong Kong [a profit and market oriented society], or Mainland China [a communist country with a state-supported industry], Taiwanese cinema was developed in the context of an economy which is a mixture of state support/regulation and privately held companies. Movies produced by the government-operated studios are closely related to the political situation and the Nationalist Party's needs. The content of commercial movies produced by private film companies is also controlled under government authority. Films produced by the government studios are generally accused of being propaganda tools. On the other hand, private production, mindful to avoid controversial subjects, tends to steer clear of social reality, instead creating a pure fantasy cinematic world.

From 1945 to 1949, only a few documentaries were made by the studio abandoned by the Japanese. The local movie industry had not yet been established. With Taiwan embroiled in the prospect of reunion with the motherland, the previously prohibited Mainland Chinese films were a hit in the film market. After the Nationalist Party fled to Taiwan, a number of movie organizations and filmmakers migrated from China which helped to stimulate indigenous movie production. Martial Law was imposed in 1949, followed by the Regulation of Movie Production during War Time in
1954, and the Film Censorship Law in 1955. Afterwards, movie production in Taiwan was tightly restricted in regard to the subject matter it dealt with. Throughout the 1950s, four government-owned studios dominated most filmmaking. Usually the film carried an anti-communist and anti-Russian theme and concentrated on the crimes and evil of the communist party. *Awaking from the Nightmare* in 1950 is a perfect example. Obviously, film in this period became an extension of politics and was utilized by the government to promote its policy and help to stabilize the chaotic society.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the government initiated a program to assist the development of the movie industry. Ironically, the focus was not on the local film industry. Perhaps for political reasons, this program aimed to invite overseas Chinese filmmakers, mainly from Hong Kong, to produce films in Taiwan. Under this arrangement, with the government's encouragement and assistance, some Hong Kong filmmakers began to make movies in Taiwan. The result was the establishment of Grand Movie Company in 1963 by Li Han-Hsiang, a former director of Shaw Brothers. After the success of *Eternal Love*, Li produced *Seven Fairies* in Taiwan, which started a trend of ancient costume musicals for the next few years. Li contributed enormously to the evolution of Taiwan feature films by leading narrative film away from propaganda (24). In 1964, another wave of Hong
Kong swordsman films began to appear in Taiwan. King Hu made his Taiwan debut *Dragon Inn* in 1965. With a rapid cutting and magnificent swordfight sequences, *Dragon Inn* became the paradigm of the genre. Between 1967 to the mid-1970s, swordsman movies became the dominant output of most of the studios (25).

In the early 1960s, the government took another active role in the film industry. Led by the government-supported Central Motion Picture Corporation, a positive, healthy, and bourgeois trend in movie content was launched. Usually blessed with a happy ending, this kind of "soft genre" movie tended to emphasize the bright side of contemporary society and avoid depicting the negative aspect. Less concerned with political ideology, such movies included *Oyster Girl*, best picture winner of the Tenth Asian Film Festival in 1964, *The Lonely Seventeen*, *Rolan, My Daughter*, and *The Beautiful Ducklings*. In 1971, however, Taiwan was replaced by Mainland China in the United Nations, and film once again became a vehicle for the government to pacify an insecure society. To stimulate national morale, government-produced movies changed the designated enemy from the communists to the Japanese and tried to promote patriotism. In the meantime, although the world economy was in recession, commercial movies were produced in large quantity.

Beginning in 1973, the Taiwanese movie industry was under the supervision of the Government Information Office.
(GIO). To improve the quality of movie production, GIO announced plans to support the movie industry, including low-interest loans and founding the Film Library, an affiliation of The Motion Picture Development Foundation which conducted seminars and published the bimonthly Film Review. However, under continuing censorship, although the number of movies produced did increase, the quality remained the same. The release of In Our Time in 1982, though, marked the coming of New Taiwan Cinema. New generation directors like Hou Xiaoxian, Chang Yi and Edward Yang began producing films of a more personal nature. Generally recognized as "new wave" cinema, their movies tended to focus on the "process of growing up in Taiwan with narratives that placed stylistic emphasis before plot complexity (26)." Although some of their works won international acclaim, by the mid-Eighties, new wave cinema was considered largely dead. In 1988, among nine new wave directors, only Edward Yang felt that New Taiwan Cinema was still a valid term (27).

The movie industry in Taiwan was regarded as a special enterprise until 1982. Under the government's protection, film production peaked at 252 features in 1979 alone. However, when import restrictions were removed--Japanese films were allowed in as of 1985; the GIO cancelled its quota system for foreign films in 1986--the movie industry began to face heavy competition. After the loss of foreign
markets and the large scale invasion of Hong Kong movies, the pace of movie production sharply dropped. Currently, there is a dramatic change in the film industry and the Taiwanese cinema is moving toward a new stage.


3. Yau, 120.

4. Ibid., 121.


7. Ibid., 125.


9. Yau, 129.


11. Ibid., 197.

12. Yau, 120.

13. Ibid., 118.

14. I.C. Jarvie, Window on Hong Kong: A Sociological Study of the Hong Kong Film Industry and Its Audience (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1977), 52.


17. Lent, 99.


21. Ibid., 194.

22. Yau, 137.


25. Lent, 65.


CHAPTER III

THE CHANGE AND EXCHANGE

Beginning in the late 1980s, the relationship among Taiwan, Hong Kong and China began to change. In 1987, one year before President C.K. Chiang of Taiwan died, Taiwan's Martial Law was terminated. Four decades of intense hostility between the factions on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have begun to soften. In the same period, based on humanitarian considerations, people in Taiwan have been allowed to visit their surviving relatives in China. For almost forty years, although both governments still refuse to communicate, their people have successfully made the first step to connect with each other through non-political activities.

A New Stage in Chinese History

Attracted by its huge market and cheap labor, the incentive of lower taxes, and the closeness of a similar culture, the Mainland has become Taiwan business's first choice of investment. In this experimental stage, while the Taiwanese government prohibited direct Taiwan-Mainland trade, Hong Kong became an important station serving both
sides of the strait. In 1991, US $ 4.7 billion in Taiwanese products reached the Mainland market through Hong Kong, while US $ 1.2 billion in Mainland exports reached Taiwan through the same route (1). Despite the withdrawal of many foreign and domestic companies from Hong Kong in anticipation of the impact of 1997, a growing number of Taiwan companies are entering the British Colony to fill the vacuum. According to John C.I. Ni, trade representative of Taiwan in Hong Kong, currently there are more than 2,500 Taiwan-invested companies in Hong Kong and 90 percent of them are connected with Mainland businesses (2). The booming Taiwan-Mainland trade has substantially enhanced the relationship among these three areas. Some official information and figures can best illuminate the ongoing trend of this interdependence:

1). The Chinese government in July 1992 released a report indicating that an accumulation of over US $ 50 billion, mainly from Taiwan and Hong Kong, has flowed to the Mainland. The amount of triangular trade has reached US $ 370 billion (3).

2). Taipei Central Bank of China in November 1992 claimed that for the past five years, over US $ 7 billion has been brought to the Mainland by Taiwanese people (4).

3). The Hong Kong China Travel Agency pointed out that the number of Taiwanese visiting Mainland has exceeded 4 million (5). [The current population in Taiwan is about
4). A report from the P.R.C. government showed that Taiwan-invested business has reached every province of China except Chinhai (6).

5). In 1992, from January to September, a total of US $11 billion Taiwanese products were exported to Hong Kong (7).

6). The Taiwanese government pointed out that in 1993, the Taiwan-China trade is expected to grow 10 percent (8).

Besides the growing relationship in the economic area, other non-political and cultural exchange also occurred. There is more and more evidence that the boundaries among Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong are gradually disappearing.

The Change and Quandary of Chinese Cinema

Accompanied by these political changes, the movie industries in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China have begun to encounter different problems and difficulties. In the meantime, each industry has also taken some actions to resolve its own dilemmas.

Taiwan

In Taiwan, after Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos fell into communist hands, the regional market for Taiwanese films in the Indo-China Peninsula was gradually lost and new markets have not been developed. Under this situation, 90 percent
of the indigenous movies have to depend for boxoffice revenues on the home market, which is not large enough to support the expense of movie production [an average cost of at least NT $ 10 million per film (9)]. Consequently, the number of movies produced began to drop sharply. In the 1980s, annual production was about 200 films per year. This number has dropped to only about 20 films per year in the early 1990s (10). The decline of production has directly influenced the distribution and exhibition phases of the business. The number of movie theaters in Taiwan has dropped from 736 in 1981 to 382 in the late 1992 (11). To meet the shortage of films, distributors began to seek foreign-made product and Hong Kong films began to occupy most Taiwanese theaters. The large-scale invasion of Hong Kong movies has had a snowball effect, progressively steering the audience away from indigenous movies. Without the audience's support, Taiwanese movie production was doomed to a dwindling share of the film market. The domination of Hong Kong film in Taiwan is illustrated clearly by the fact that during the 1992 Chinese New Year [a marketing window equivalent to the Christmas season in the U.S.], a total of six new movies opened in Taiwan, and none of them were Taiwan-produced. All of them were imported from Hong Kong.

When indigenous movies are not profitable, funding for movie production becomes more and more difficult. A large
amount of Taiwanese capital has begun to flow to the Hong Kong movie industry, where most of the commercially successful films in the East Asian region are currently produced. In 1991, an estimated NT $1.4 billion was invested in the Hong Kong movie industry. The collapse of the local movie industry has forced some Taiwanese filmmakers to seek foreign financing for their projects. Director Edward Yang, frustrated and disappointed with the local market, has said that his films would only aim at the international market in the future. The distribution rights of Yang's latest movie, *A Brighter Summer Day*, were sold to the Japanese Mico Company for US $130 thousand for the international market and US $600 thousand to the Hero Company for the Japanese market (12).

The Taiwanese government has always played an important role in the film business. To stimulate the movie industry, some new strategies recently have been undertaken by the government, in cooperation with the efforts of the movie industry itself.

1). A program called "1993 National Film Year, Taiwan, R.O.C." was launched and partially sponsored by GIO with a budget of NT $14 million. Consisting of three main parts—"Back to the Theater," "Fun in Simontin," and "A Trip to the Movie Street,"--this promotional program will be started on the New Year's day of 1993 and will continue for the whole year.
2). To establish new foreign markets, a "Taiwanese Film Festival" will be held in Russia in spring 1993. Invited by Russian Transart Film Company, a total of eight Taiwanese films, including *Pushing Hands*, *The Straw Man*, and *The Terrorizers*, will be sent to this festival by GIO. According to Dikov, chairman of Transart Film Company, these selected Taiwanese films will be shown in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vladivostok. To promote Taiwanese film, GIO will financially fully support the expense of this program [over NT $2 million] and film producers are encouraged to sell their products and copyrights directly to Russian film agents. Ten other films also have been selected by GIO for showing on a circuit of Southeast Asian countries in hopes of developing a new overseas market for Taiwanese films.

3). The National Film Conference was held by GIO in December 1992. Hong Kong and Taiwan filmmakers, actors and actress, scholars, and government officials were invited. Different ideas were proposed, such as legalizing the production of adult films, governmental financial assistance, and the revision of current film laws and regulations.

At the end of the Film Conference, ten resolutions were made relating to issues such as the cultivation of new talent, reducing taxes, and developing the international
market. Despite this effort to recover the lost audience for Taiwanese films by both the film industry and the government, the future of Taiwanese cinema remains unclear.

Hong Kong

Besides the uneasiness caused by the approach of 1997, the Hong Kong movie industry has been in an unstable situation recently. The most serious problem is probably the occurrence of violence resulting from the increasing presence of gangland personalities and capital in the film business.

On January 15, 1992, a parade with the theme "Show Business Against Violence" was organized by members of the Hong Kong entertainment industry. Their objective was to call the problem of underworld influence to the public's attention. The parade attracted worldwide attention, especially in countries which have the same problems. Over forty overseas reporters gathered in Hong Kong to cover this event. In the meantime, aware of the Asian organized crime problem and afraid that the violence may spread from Hong Kong and Taiwan to the United States, several public hearings were held by the U.S. Senate on the impact caused by Asian gangsters.

The anti-violence parade did not stop the occurrence of violent activities. On April 17, 1992, Jim Choi, owner of Hong Kong Fu Ngai Film Production Co. Ltd., was assassinated
in front of his office. In May, another movie company owner, Huang Weilung, was killed. On May 20, the headquarters of Wins' Movie Production & VE Company was riddled with gun shots. On October 30, Wins' owner, H.S. Shiung, was attacked and severely injured by several unknown assailants. In July, director Tsui Hark's studio in Kowloon Tan was damaged by a gasoline bomb. The involvement of the underworld society in the film business is probably the main reason behind these violent activities. The key cause of the incidents has centered on gaining movie distribution rights and the control of bankable movie stars.

After investigation by the police, illegal activities temporarily decreased. However, the structure of the movie industry remained the same, leaving it both vulnerable and a temptation to criminal elements. The attack of Tsui Hark's studio, for instance, involved a struggle over the distribution rights for *Once upon Time in China, Part III* in Taiwan. When the bombing happened, Tsui was in Peking shooting the film. "My goal is always to make good movies and not to be involved in any trouble. Why did it happen to me?" he sadly said (13). Tsui later admitted that when he was in Taiwan, an individual had tried to obtain the distribution rights for *Once upon a Time in China, Part III* from him but had failed. Tsui's case suggests further complications in the current relationship between the movie industries of Taiwan and Hong Kong.
Like Taiwan, the tiny size of the local Hong Kong film market is not sufficient to support its film industry adequately. Therefore, foreign markets have contributed a lot to the growth of the Hong Kong movie industry. Hong Kong films generate about one-third of their revenues from the local market, one-third from Taiwan, and another one-third from South Korea and other East Asian countries (14). This is why Peter Lam, in explaining the distribution strategy of Hong Kong's Cinema City Studio, indicated that "Once you secure a foothold in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, you're sure to be a winner (15)." In Taiwan, this process has been made easier by the decline of the industry. Hong Kong movies, with high commercial and entertainment value, have become the most welcome and profitable product for Taiwanese distributors. In the scramble to obtain distribution rights, competition and conflict escalated, followed by violence and illegal activities.

Control of bankable movie stars is another focus of these violent activities. Commercial movies in Hong Kong heavily depend on big-name casts to attract moviegoers. At Cinema City, the average production budget as of the mid-1980s was US $ 500 thousand, of which 30 percent was spent on hiring a cast (16). The price for signing superstar Jackie Chan is HK $ 25 million per movie and HK $ 4 million for Chow Yun Fat (17). In other words, it is widely
believed that a bankable star is a guarantee of boxoffice success. In the press conference after the attack on its headquarters, a spokesman for Wins' Movie Company suggested that the violence was a result of its refusal to let contracted star Chow Shinchi appear in a film produced by Houng Fa Film Company. Houng Fa immediately denied this accusation. However, it is true that movie companies formed and operated by the underworld society in Hong Kong have tended to lack bankable stars. The Wins' episode may have been a warning from the gangsters to show their discontentment at the monopolization of bankable stars by a few motion picture companies.

The emergence of the erotic, soft-core pornography film in 1992 [called "The Third Class Film"] is another unusual phenomenon in the contemporary Hong Kong movie industry. Pioneered by the success of I Cannot Help, the production of erotic films began to attract an increasing share of the film market. This popularity and the quick-buck mentality associated with these productions perhaps reflects the uncertainty and powerlessness felt by the movie industry about the coming of 1997.

Whether or not the blame for these disturbances may be attributed to the influx of Taiwanese capital into the Hong Kong film industry, more and more speculators have entered the movie business purely in hopes of making a big profit quickly. Under this notion, the value of art and the spirit
of creativity are usually ignored in the course of movie production. To make a profit in the shortest possible time frame, it becomes preferable to imitate the formulas of other successful movies or to produce sensational movies like *I Cannot Help*.

In his reception of Hong Kong director Stanley Kwan's *Rouge*, John Powers commented:

The glory of Hong Kong cinema is that it's genuinely popular--its best work shares the tastes and enthusiasms of ordinary filmgoers (18).

This emphasis on commercial success has made some film critics charge the Hong Kong movie industry, with a few exceptions [recent films to gain critical favor include *Ruan Lingyu* and *Days of Being Wild*], with a general lack of innovation and new ideas. Whenever a particular kind of movie is successful in the boxoffice, a flurry of narrative and stylistic imitators immediately follows until the whole market becomes saturated to the point that audiences begin to stay away from these increasingly cliched productions. John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* in 1986, for example, generated a cycle of highly violent romantic hero films. Suddenly, the whole market swarmed with hero films. Likewise, vampire movies, gambling stories, films about paranormal experiences, and gangster movies, each cycle followed by another, have been produced according to a certain formula.
and exploited until the last dollar is wrung out. The cycle of erotic films is another example of this phenomenon.

The most popular subject in recent Hong Kong movies is the legend of the martial arts master Huang Fei Hong. Inspired by the success of Tsui Hark's *Once upon a Time in China*, there are currently at least 14 or 15 movies in release focusing on the story of master Huang, either variations or parodies of Tsui's film [titles include *Once upon a Time a Hero in China, Young Huang Fei Hong*, and *Yi Dai Zon Shi*]. Jackie Chan has called this "mockingbird" tendency of Hong Kong film industry suicidal. Actress Sylvia Chang, more gently, has described the Hong Kong movie industry as being more and more like a fast food business. "Although the film industry is struggling to survive, while enjoying the 'fast food movie', the audience only wants to try something different occasionally." Chang said (19).

Besides the problems within the movie industry, the audience has also changed. The average age and education levels of Hong Kong residents have increased. Movie patrons above the age of 26 have been largely lost. The popularity of VCRs [90,000 in 1983, over 400,000 in 1987], video tapes, and video disks have contributed significantly to a decrease in the frequency of moviegoing among the middle class (20). Recently, some filmmakers have realized the seriousness of these problems and started taking action to create a new atmosphere for movie production. Heeded by director/actor
Tsan Tziwei, 20 directors, including Stanley Kwan, Chang Chiliung, and Zhang Wanting, have joined together and formed an organization to support each other. The primary goal of this organization is to create a new model of movie production by renovating cinematic contents. The directors have argued for the production of relatively small-scale film with strong stories and budgets of only HK $ 2.5 to 3.0 million per film (21). According to the founder Tsan, this movement has received the support of Taiwanese directors like Edward Yang and Hou Xiaoxian. Mainland Chinese directors will be invited to join later. Aiming to bring back the lost movie audience, this experiment has not received the support of movie exhibitors so far.

Mainland China

In a climate of economic openness, politics still remains the most unpredictable obstacle to Mainland movie production. As Tony Rayns describes:

It's always a mistake to take a narrow, short-term view of any matter relating to China's Communist government. Policies come and go as the political careers of their proponents wax and wane, and the unending power struggles within the Politburo rarely have immediate and visible effects (22).
The curse of political interference in movie production is clearly manifest in the practice of film censorship, which has hindered creativity in movie production on one hand and consequently reduced movie attendance on the other.

To celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Party in 1991, under the Party's encouragement, numerous officially favored movies such as Kaitian Pidi, Zhou Enlai, and Da Jyue Jann were made to praise the Party. In 1992, after the release of these so-called "main theme" movies, the film market immediately showed the consequences: The number of screenings per day dropped 12.4 percent; boxoffice revenue dropped 14.9 percent; admissions dropped 20.10 percent; and distribution revenue dropped 17.8 percent (23). Film scholars have attributed the decline of the movie industry to the following factors:

1). Beginning in 1990, under the policy of "decrease the quantity, increase the quality," the number of movies produced has dropped from 220-230 in 1989 to 189.5 in 1991. The resulting shortage of new films has made some movie theaters operate only 20 days in a month.

2). As required by the government, each movie theater has to show "main theme" movies. Seen as preachy, static propaganda tracts, audiences simply have stayed away from these films.

3). For a long time, theaters have been mainly supported by
group tickets purchases. Because of the current recession, many companies and factories can no longer afford to spend extra money to treat their employee to a movie.

4). The emergence of other leisure outlets like VCRs and karaoke have also reduced movie attendance (24). Each of these four factors can be regarded as results or consequences of the government's interference in the movie industry. In response to this crisis, veteran director Xie Jin argued "The idea of openness proposed by comrade Deng should be applied not only to economy, but also art--including film (25)."

The government's interference has also bothered movie directors a lot. Multiple standards in film censorship has confused many directors. For example, while Zhang Yimou's Raise the Red Lantern was approved by the Party for public showing, other controversial movies such as The Blue Kite by Tian Zhuangzhuang, Black Mountain Road by Zhou Xiaowen, Bloody Morning by Li Shaohong, and A Woman's Street by Zhang Liang were banned. An article in Wenhui Movie News in September 1992 attacked film censorship with a political term "one nation, two systems". In other words, the standards of censorship have varied according to the medium of expression. For example, some novels and other literary works have been censored and approved for public publication. However, when they were brought to the screen,
the criteria changed accordingly (26). Continuous harassment by the government and the tightening of censorship after the crackdown on the student movement in 1989 have motivated some filmmakers to seek financial support for their projects outside China. The first of these was Zhang Yimou's *Judou*, which was wholly financed by Japan's Tokuma Group. Zhang's example was followed by Chen Kaige's *Life on a String* [with principal financing from the U.K., Japan, and Germany] and Zhang's *Raise the Red Lantern* (27). The government's interference has also made some film artists and talents remain abroad. The famous Mainland actress Joan Chen has now developed her career in Hollywood. Zhang Yu, winner of the first Golden Rooster Award and the fourth Hundred Flowers Award, moved to Los Angeles. Xichin Gowa, winner of the third Golden Rooster and seventh Hundred Flowers Award, went to Switzerland. Jack Lee also went abroad after the success of his movie *Shaolin Temple* and is now an Ecuadorian passport holder (28). Besides the departure of movie stars, the director Wu Tianming has stayed in the States for three years and is currently filming his latest feature *Peking Ren in New York*. Other directors have also departed, at least temporarily: Peng Xiaolian is studying in New York; the director of *Black Cannon Incident*, Huang Jianxin, is studying in Australia; and Zhang Zeming, director of *Swan Song*, is living in London (29). While the political climate at home is still
uncertain, staying away from China and seeking foreign assistance and financing seem to be the best way to avoid political pressure and maintain one's creativity in movie production.

There was a sign of a thaw in the movie industry recently, however. On August 23, 1992, Zhang Yimou's *The Story of Qiu Ju* was exhibited at the Changchun Film Festival and was widely acclaimed. Ai Zhisheng, Minister for Radio, Film and Television changed his attitude by 180 degrees relative to Zhang's earlier films by saying to Zhang after the screening "From now on, Zhang, do whatever you want in your movies. Everything is O.K. (30)." [Interestingly enough, *The Story of Qiu Ju* turned out to be a flop at the boxoffice. Film critics said this was because it is too much like a documentary.] In September, *Judou* was finally released and has attracted numerous patrons. To solve the crisis in the movie industry, five major strategies have been initiated by the government.

1). Beginning on October 1, 1992, ticket prices are determined by each movie theater. According to Vice-Minister of the Film Bureau, Bao Tonchi, ticket prices will be decided based on the condition of the theater, duration of the film, and the time of showing (31).

2). To attract larger audiences, more varieties of interesting subjects will be allowed to appear in films.

3). Some controversial movies, which have been banned
previously, will be reassessed for public exhibition.

4). A program was initiated in 1992 by the Film Bureau to encourage the production of screenplays. This program will last for one year and a total of JMP $200 thousand will be awarded to the winners (32).

5). An unprecedented action will be taken in 1993. From January 1, 1993, the distribution rights of films will be in the hands of the sixteen studios all over China. Each studio is responsible for its own productions in domestic and foreign market distribution. While owning the copyright of the film, each studio is also responsible for its financial success. What this means is that a market oriented experiment is underway. In the domestic market, each studio is allowed to sell its product directly to provincial, county, or city distribution companies, or to movie theaters. On the other hand, local movie theaters and distribution companies may contact the studios directly and choose products according to their need. A model of a two-way selling and producing system has been built. The role of the official China Film Distribution Company is diminished. In the international market, each studio is allowed to export its product directly to overseas companies without going through the official China Film Export & Import Corporation (33).

Besides the new policies proposed by the government,
movie theaters have begun to change their management style. In Guangzhou, to compete with other leisure outlets, urban movie theaters are showing different varieties of movies continuously everyday from ten o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon. There is no "clearance" during this period. With one ticket, the patrons are allowed to enter the theater at any time and watch as many movies as they want. According to a theater manager, movie attendance has increased 30 percent in this way. Recently, some theaters have offered midnight shows, a practice which has been prohibited for three years; others have combined dancing and karaoke club programs into the movie theaters (34).

The Silver Triangle

There is an interesting phenomenon in the growth of the relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland. Except in political matters, the governments are usually led by public opinion. Especially in Taiwan, the government's authority is frequently challenged by business interests. Before the official permission and pertinent regulations issued by Taiwan's GIO in 1989, the movie connection across the Taiwan Strait had already begun.

History of the Connection

Taiwanese and Mainland filmmakers began their historic
contact secretly in the mid-1980s. During this period, innovative films which received international recognition appeared in both areas. Through foreign film festivals and conferences, directors and producers were given the opportunity to meet each other. Without interference from their respective governments, Taiwanese and Mainland filmmakers were able to trade ideas about film in an uninterrupted fashion. Generally speaking, the communication in this period was made through cultural elites (35). With a similar culture and tradition, the longstanding political gap was ignored and a friendship was built. Although the connection has begun, politics--the GIO in Taiwan and the Film Bureau in Mainland--has made further exchange difficult. In 1988, the Taiwanese actress Hu Wheichon and actress/producer Hsu Feng were invited to the Mainland's Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Award. Taiwan's GIO immediately threatened to penalize whoever attended the ceremonies. Obviously, political hostility still remained and any official contact was prohibited.

Movie exchange in this period could only be held underground, either in international film festivals which are beyond the reach of both governments, or through private screenings. Taiwanese directors were strictly prohibited from shooting any footage on the Mainland. If any Mainland background was needed, directors could only use a local setting as a substitute or apply some technique, such as
superimposition, to create an impression of the Mainland. Beyond this control over Taiwanese filmmakers, even Hong Kong directors such as Ann Hui and Yen Hou, who have made films on the Mainland, have had to report and explain the circumstances of these productions to GIO before they may enter Taiwan again.

Beginning in 1988, however, Taiwanese people were allowed to visit their relatives in China. Suddenly, there was a so called "Mainland fever" around the island. In the meantime, a large number of Hong Kong movies featuring Mainland scenes began to appear in Taiwanese theaters. Under the new climate, GIO started to change its attitude. Before the movie industry was allowed to produce films on the Mainland, it was the television star Lin Fong who broke the rules first by producing his documentary TV program *Eight Thousand Miles of Cloud and Moon* there. Without the government's permission, Lin challenged authority by acting first, then waiting for approval. After the program was finished, Lin began to secure public support by holding a hearing at the Legislative Yuan. Under the ensuing social pressure, *Cloud and Moon* was finally allowed to air. Lin's example has inspired many Taiwanese film distributors, who have begun to pursue the distribution rights for Mainland movies like *Judou*, *Yellow Earth*, and *Raise the Red Lantern*. One thing can be sure: as soon as the barrier is completely removed, a torrent of Mainland movies will flow to Taiwanese
Theaters immediately.

The successful challenge made by Cloud and Moon has paved the way for Taiwanese film and television producers to stride over the historical boundary. Crew members of the television serials Six Dreams and Snow Mountain, Flying Fox began to move their cameras to the Mainland. Moreover, Mainland actresses such as Den Fong, Ho Chin, and Lin Fanbing began to appear on Taiwanese TV screens and were widely accepted by the audience. On April 24, 1989, GIO officially opened the gate for the Taiwanese mass communication industry to cover news and produce programs in Mainland. With this decision, after registering with GIO, Taiwanese and Hong Kong productions (the latter included because it is assumed that will be exhibited in Taiwan) may enter the Mainland for location shooting. In 1991, the first formal contact occurred: Hong Kong actress Maggie Chang and Taiwanese actress Hu Wheichon attended the P.R.C. 's Golden Rooster Award ceremonies, while Mainland directors Chen Kaige and Peng Xiaolian were invited by Taipei's Golden Horse Film Festival as special guests. The first film registered with GIO for shooting on the Mainland was a Hong Kong movie, Ba Liang Gin. Through early 1992, more than thirty Taiwanese and Hong Kong films had applied for shooting in Mainland through this protocol (36).

The interaction of the film industries has involved behind-the-scenes discussions as well. A director's meeting
was organized and held in Hong Kong in 1992, at which filmmakers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland exchanged ideas and discussed the future of Chinese film. It was agreed that this director's meeting will be held on January 11 every year. The second meeting was held in Shanghai in 1993. The third meeting is scheduled for a Taiwan venue in 1994. Besides the exchange of ideas, movie exchanges are now also possible. In November 1992, six Taiwanese and six Hong Kong movies were introduced and exhibited in the Mainland's Double Film Awards [a combination of Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Awards]. Taiwanese filmmakers and performers were also invited. In December, another meeting was held in Taipei. With GIO's approval, 15 Mainland directors, producers, and performers were invited to the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, and 10 of them attended. Unfortunately, the program of three Mainland movies was cancelled by GIO.

The Models of Interaction

The first Taiwanese film shot wholly on the Mainland was Salon Chuhai, a comedy directed by Zhu Yanping. Unfortunately, the filming of this picture in Peking coincided with the time of the student movement in Tiananmen Square. To dramatize the effect, actor Liao Chun in the film facetiously called the Liberation Army "gangsters"--a political term used by the Taiwanese government to describe
its political enemy. Moreover, when it was exhibited in Taipei, caricatures of Mainland leaders Deng Xiaoping and Mao Zedong were used to promote this movie. Zhu's example offended the Mainland administration, and consequently he was forbidden by the Party to produce any other films on the Mainland.

The inauspicious beginning of Salon Chuhai did not stop other filmmakers' ambitions in the Mainland. Different kinds of cooperation and interactions in movie production have begun to appear.

I. Location Shooting in Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

Location shooting on the Mainland has recently become the major trend in the Taiwanese film industry. This is also the earliest model of interaction across the strait. Beginning in the late 1980s, some directors, such as Hou Xiaoxian in his A City of Sadness, began to edit a few Mainland-shot scenes into their movies. This set the stage for the next logical step, and by the early 1990s there was a rush to shoot films in their entirety on the Mainland. Such movies have included My American Grandson by Ann Hui, Shanghai 1920 by Leung Pochi, and Ruan Lingyu by Stanley Kwan, all of which are Hong Kong productions. Taiwanese examples have included Five Girls and a Rope by Yeh Hung-wei, Twin Bracelets by woman director Huang Yusan, Ginhai Tsanlung by Chang Tsi-chauo, and many others.
For Taiwanese filmmakers, there are two main purposes to use Mainland footage in their movies. One is to reduce production expenses through Mainland's relatively low cost of goods and labor. The other is to develop a new market in the Mainland to reduce investment risk (37). By showcasing the Mainland's historic and beautiful scenery, filmmakers intend to attract larger audiences and hopefully increase sales in foreign markets. Unfortunately, most of these efforts have not turned out as planned. First, the labor system in the P.R.C. is rigidly structured. Although each individual laborer's wage is low, the total expense of labor is high. Second, there continues to be a risk that films produced on the Mainland may not be approved by the P.R.C. government for public showing (38). So far, only a few movies, such as Red Dust and Man Married to the Palace, have successfully obtained Mainland's copyrights.

Taiwanese film production in Hong Kong is permitted by GIO. However, because of the recent domination of Hong Kong movies in the Taiwanese film market, Taiwanese companies prefer to invest their money in Hong Kong projects rather than produce a Taiwanese movie in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong's case, long before it was possible to get the Taiwan GIO's permission, some filmmakers began to make movies on the Mainland. Usually, they had to suffer the consequences of not being allowed to enter Taiwan and seeing their films banned from exhibition there. The most
well-known figure in this situation is probably Li Han-Hsiang, who established the Grand Motion Picture Company in Taiwan and is now prohibited to enter the country for political reasons. Unlike the Mainland fever in the Taiwanese film industry, producing Hong Kong movies in the Mainland is a matter of necessity. When there is a profit, filmmakers will then consider filming in their future motherland. It has been rare for Hong Kong filmmakers to shoot movies on Taiwan for the past two years. In most cases, such movies were financed by Taiwanese capital, and the expenses of location shooting were also paid by Taiwanese companies.

The production of Taiwanese and Hong Kong movies on the Mainland has benefitted the local studios a lot, economically. An estimation of JMP $ 12-15 million has been generated through this model from 1989 to 1992 (39).

Only a few Mainland films have been produced in Hong Kong. All of them are the products of Silver City Company, a government-supported organization in Hong Kong. The situation of producing Mainland movies in Taiwan is still unclear. Recently, an experiment was conducted by Mainland director Lu Xiaowei to test this possibility. His Mirage, a product of Xiaoxing Studio, received assistance from Taiwan's Central Motion Picture Corporation and ERA Company. Lu has showed his optimism by arguing, "We are the first ones producing a Mainland film in Taiwan. More and more
Mainland filmmakers will follow our example (40)." Lu, together with the producer and scriptwriter of *Mirage*, visited Taiwan to observe and arrange the cooperation in June, 1992.

II. The Capital in Movie Production

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, political interference has made some Mainland directors seek financial support outside China. Hong Kong and Taiwanese capital is thus connected to the production of Mainland movies, which is the second type of interaction and is more commercially oriented.

In Taiwan, the most famous and successful example of this phenomenon involves Chou Fusen, owner of ERA Company, which produced Hou Xiaoxian's *A City of Sadness* in 1989. Following the example of *Judou* financed by Japan's Tokuma Group, Chou produced Zhang's next film, *Raise the Red Lantern*, and Hou Xiaoxian was credited as the producer. Hou's reputation helped *Red Lantern* receive international attention without paying a cent. Through the Hou connection, Zhang is going to direct two more films, *Taufua Mantian Hong* and *Muyi Tian Xia*, which also will be financed by Chou.

Zhang is not the only Mainland director Chou has been interested in. Besides the international market targeted through the cooperation with Zhang, Chou is now aiming for
the domestic market of the Mainland. *Sisi Buhau*, a "commercial experiment" in Chou's description, is another Mainland movie financed by ERA Company. Directed by Li Shaohong and produced by Tian Zhuangzhuang, Chou has stated that this movie was conceived with the Mainland audience in mind, and it will not be considered for foreign distribution. It is a test case, Chou maintains, to see if Taiwanese-financed movies can make a profit in the Mainland market (41).

Other companies have followed ERA's model, in which Taiwanese capital is invested through a company's Hong Kong branch in Mainland projects. Tomson Films, founded in Taiwan in 1984 by the former actress Hsu Feng, is another company actively collaborating with Mainland directors. Moving its base to Hong Kong in 1986, among its other projects, Tomson has produced Chen Kaige's latest feature, *Farewell to My Concubine*. Recently, Chen signed a contract to direct another five movies for Tomson.

Besides the investment in the Mainland movie industry, large amounts of Taiwanese capital have also flowed to Hong Kong. While themselves accused of disturbing the Hong Kong film market, Taiwanese companies have begun to complain that Hong Kong filmmakers have been spoiled by this large influx of offshore financing. Movies produced with Taiwanese capital are generally labelled as "roughly made products" which are killing the audience's interest in watching a
movie. There are a few exceptions, however. *Red Dust*, a Tomson-backed Hong Kong movie by Yen Hou, turned out to be more artistic in its style with less commercial value. *Ah Ying* by G.C. Chou is another example. Investment in Hong Kong movies did not come from private companies only. The official Central Motion Picture Corporation has recently signed a contract with Hong Kong director Lawrence Ah Mon.

There have been co-productions between China and Hong Kong for many years, but the Hong Kong companies involved have always been pro-China enterprises. This kind of relationship seems to have changed. *The Blue Kite*, financed by Hong Kong Rose Company and directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang, is a movie depicting the tragedy caused by political turmoil in the post-1949 era. This movie was recently banned by the Chinese government in its post-production stage for political reasons. Tian's previous film, *Li Lianying-The Imperial Eunuch*, is also a Hong Kong-financed Mainland movie which was successfully distributed outside China.

For economic reasons, Mainland companies usually provide facilities and crew in producing Hong Kong- and Taiwan-backed movies, rather than offering financial assistance. *Ruan Lingyu, Shanghai 1920*, and *My American Grandson* were all produced with the logistical assistance of the Shanghai Studio. So far, only one Taiwanese director has received financial support from the Mainland. *Gidu Fonghua Gidu Cho*, by Taiwanese director Xie Dengbiao, was
produced by Mainland capital, with Mainland crew, and was exhibited exclusively in the Mainland market.

III. The Cooperation of the Talent

Location shooting in each other's regions and cross-over investment in movie production constitute two models of the interaction of the movie industries in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. The third model involves the cooperation of technical and creative talent, and this interaction appears to be more active and complex than the first two. Because of the intensifying cross-boundary cooperation, the definition of specifically Taiwanese, Mainland, and Hong Kong movies has become more and more difficult to pin down. The cooperation of talent and movie elites has created another space for the development of Chinese film.

My American Grandson was a movie produced with Taiwanese capital and written by a Taiwanese scriptwriter, directed by Hong Kong director Ann Hui, and filmed in Shanghai with Mainland subject matter. It turned out to be more like a Taiwanese movie. Tomson's Five Girls and a Rope was directed by Taiwanese director Yeh Hung-wei, featured a Mainland scriptwriter, was shot in a rural area of the Mainland, and was cast mainly with Taiwanese actors and actresses. This combination made the movie more like a project of the Mainland's Fifth Generation directors (42).

More and more movies have been produced in this complex
format. If artistic value of these mixed ventures is as yet uncertain, their boxoffice value seems to be positive. A co-production from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, commercially speaking, has enough novelty value at the moment to attract the audience. *Mary from Beijing* is a good example. It was written and directed by Taiwanese director/actress Sylvia Chang, and starred the internationally famous Mainland actress Gong Li and popular Hong Kong idols Kenny Bee and Wilson Lam. Promoted as Gong Li's first movie shown in Taiwan, *Mary from Beijing* was clearly packaged in a way to appeal both domestic markets—Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China—and international audiences. Another example is Chen Kaige's latest feature, *Farewell to My Concubine*. Chen's previous four movies, *Yellow Earth*, *The Big Parade*, *King of the Children*, and *Life on a String*, were praised for their high artistic qualities. However, they did not receive the same support at the boxoffice as they did in international film festivals. *Concubine* was financed by Hsu Feng's Tomson Films, with a screenplay by Hong Kong writer B.H. Lee. But what really stands out in this production is the cast: Leslie Cheung and David Wu from Hong Kong; Gong Li, Zhang Fonyi, and Ge Yu from Mainland; Lu Yench, Yang Jemei, and Wang Jinwein from Taiwan. The production of *Concubine* has been described as a combination of the essences of the movie industries of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the P.R.C.. Although it was produced as a commercial movie, "It does not mean
that I have denied my previous projects," Chen argues (43). Concubine was recently released in Hong Kong with considerable boxoffice success.

The Obstacles to Cooperation

Sufficient capital, advanced technologies, and outstanding talents do not guarantee a rosy future for cooperation in movie production. Besides the political factor, a separation of over forty years has made a big gap between the people of Taiwan and the Mainland, psychologically speaking. A lack of mutual understanding, differences in ideology, social system, beliefs, and many other subtle elements have made it difficult for filmmakers to collaborate with each other.

The hand of politics is best illuminated by the case of Five Girls and a Rope. During the shooting on the Mainland, one of the Taiwanese actresses fell ill and was replaced by a Mainland actress, Ai Gin. Because of the appearance of a Mainland actress on the screen, Five Girls was banned in Taiwan. Ironically, while rejected by its government, the film received an award at the Fourth Tokyo Film Festival and the Grand Prix at the Nantes Festival des Trois Continents. The Taiwanese GIO was immediately attacked for discriminating against the film industry. Producer Hsu Feng argued that since television is allowed to feature Mainland actresses such as Wu Yujun, there is no reason to ban Five
Girls in Taiwan. In September 1992, GIO finally ruled that, to protect Taiwanese performers, the number of Mainland actors and actresses should not exceed 50 percent of a film's total cast. After having been banned in Taiwan for almost two years, *Five Girls* will be released in 1993. Because of Ai Gin's presence and GIO's intransigence, Hsu Feng maintains that she has lost about NT $10 million in revenues.

Political obstacles did not come only from the Taiwanese government. Taiwanese director Wang Xiaoli has pointed out that there are too many trivial rules to obey in Mainland. While shooting a geographical documentary film in Mainland, Wang was frustrated by the bureaucracy, the inefficiency, and many other unforeseen variables. The intricacies of the labor system is another problem encountered when working with local Mainland crew members. Under the concept of communism, there is not much difference between a director and a clapper boy. Even a set decorator may challenge and criticize the director's ability. An especially blatant example of this happened in connection with a Hong Kong movie, *Farewell to the Forbidden City*. During production in Peking, Mainland crew members held a strike and demanded the replacement of the director who they thought was incompetent (44). In order to please the crew members, money seems to have changed hands. To facilitate a smooth production, Season Wu, producer of *Once upon a Time*
in China, Part III, stimulated the morale of local crew members by an "allowance." Wu's strategy has worked, but the price raised the film's production budget.

Obstacles to cooperation do not exist outside the movie industry only. There are a few black sheep within the industry. The Tibet Kid is a Hong Kong movie financed by Taiwanese businessman A.G. Hsu. While this film was still in its production stage, Hsu ran out of money. Without an ending, Kid was exhibited in Taiwan first. Hsu then took the profit generated from that market to finish the film and then release it to Hong Kong theaters. Hsu was accused of exploiting the market and ignoring the rights of Taiwanese audiences. Besides Hsu's individual case, other filmmakers have criticized the selfishness of the Hong Kong film industry. Either taking advantage of Taiwanese capital or Mainland scenery, the Hong Kong movie industry has been taken to task for neglecting the transfer of its knowledge, professional skill, and experience with advanced technology to Taiwan or the Mainland (45).

When cooperation begins, competition, conflicts, and complaints follow, especially among performers. Painting Soul is a movie financed with Taiwanese capital, directed by a Mainland director, and cast with a combination of Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and Mainland actors and actress. During shooting in Shanghai, Taiwanese actress Shen Haizon charged the director of partiality in protecting and giving
in to Mainland actress Gong Li. In turn, Gong Li appeared indifferent to Taiwanese performers. When asked of her feeling about the release of Mary from Beijing, her first movie shown in Taiwan, Gong surprisingly replied, "I am not happy at all (46)." Moreover, Gong failed to appear at the premiere of Mary from Beijing in Hong Kong. While director Sylvia Chang had no comment, producer Hon Pou-chu sarcastically pointed out that Gong is not a novice any more, but a superstar. All these odds and ends are not a question of the production system. It is a matter of people. If intense cooperation is going to be continued, a better framework for communication and mutual understanding should be achieved in advance. Otherwise, more and more unexpected incidents will inevitably happen.
ENDNOTES


9. Exchange rate: US $ 1 = NT $ 25


24. Ibid., 83.

25. Ibid.


27. Rayns, 28.


29. Rayns, 29.


32. Exchange rate: US $ 1=JMP $ 5.8


36. Yu, 52.

37. Ibid., 53.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 54.


42. Ibid., 48.
43. Central Daily News, 10 January 1993, sec.3.
45. Ibid., 49.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In his 1989 study of Chinese cinema, Anthony Slide maintained that:
Despite the size of the country, Chinese films have never had any impact abroad, nor has the film industry achieved recognition in proportion to the audience it serves (1). Slide's argument is no longer true. In 1989, Taiwanese filmmaker Hou Xiaoxian's A City of Sadness won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival. In 1992, Mainland director Zhang Yimou's The Story of Qiu Ju received the same honor and Gong Li was honored as the best actress. In a span of three years, both Taiwanese and Mainland movies have solidified their international reputations at one of the most important film festivals in the world. Through Hou and Zhang's projects, Chinese people are represented in flesh and blood. Their ideas, feelings, and ways of living are better understood. The image of Chinese people is more than the stereotype of Hollywood's Dr. Fu Manchu or Charlie Chan.
In the past, when eastern cinema is mentioned, the first names people can think of are usually Japanese directors like Akira Kurosawa and Kenji Mizuguchi, or Indian director Satyajit Ray. They are widely known and recognized because their movies have been acclaimed at international film festivals. For example, Kurosawa's *Rashomon* won the Golden Lion Award in 1951 at the Venice Film Festival, and Ray's *Pather Panchali* won the Jury Prize at Cannes in 1956. Departing from this point, through the movies made by these oriental master directors, eastern philosophies, cultures, traditions, and esthetics have been expressed and introduced to the world. Their influence is great.

Beginning in the late 1980s, Chinese filmmakers have begun to enjoy the abundant harvest of international recognition. In addition to the awards mentioned above, Mainland director Wu Tianming’s *Life* received an award at the Tokyo Film Festival in 1987. In 1988, *Red Sorghum* by Zhang Yimou of the P.R.C. won the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin International Movie Festival. The Silver Bear Award of Berlin International Movie Festival was given to *Black Snow* by Xie Fei of the P.R.C. in 1990 and to *Evening Bell* by Wu Ziniu of the P.R.C. in 1991. Taiwanese director Edward Yang's *A Brighter Summer Day* picked up the Special Jury and FIPRESCI Prizes at the Tokyo Film Festival in 1991. Another Taiwanese director, Yeh Hung-wei, won second prize in the Young Cinema Competition of the Tokyo Film Festival in the
same year for his *Five Girls and a Rope*. In 1992, first
time director Lai Shentran of Taiwan received the same honor
at the Tokyo Film Festival for his debut movie *Anlian Tauhua
Yan*. Hong Kong woman director Lao Chauyau won the Golden
Leopard Award at the Locarno Film Festival for *Autumn Moon*.
Besides the reputation gained from recognition in the
international festivals competition, New York's Lincoln
Center has held a program for Taiwanese actress Hsu Feng
under the title "Woman Warrior: The Films of Hsu Feng" in
August 1992, the first time Lincoln Center ever held an
individual program for an Asian actress. Other Taiwanese
directors have recently been the focus at different film
festivals, too. The films of Sylvia Chang and Edward Yang
have been the subject of retrospectives at the Toronto
Festival of Festivals in September 1992 and Vancouver
International Film Festival in October 1992, respectively.
Moreover, during fall and winter 1992, Hong Kong director
John Woo directed his first Hollywood movie, *Hard Target*,
for Universal Pictures with a budget of US $20 million. In
January 1993, a special program of Hong Kong films was held
at the Sundance Film Festival. A total of five recent Hong
Kong movies, including *Autumn Moon* and *Days of Being Wild*,
were introduced at this festival. In March 1993, the P.R.C.
film *Shiung Hoon Nu* and the Taiwanese film *The Wedding
Banquet* shared the Golden Bear Award for best film at the
Berlin Film Festival.
All these examples suggest that filmmakers of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China, although coming from different social and creative backgrounds, are being mutually recognized by audiences around the world. Even Hong Kong commercial movies like *The Killer* and *A Chinese Ghost Story* have received wide popularity in foreign markets. More importantly, most of these internationally-acclaimed films have focused on social issues or the daily life of ordinary people. The lofty official subjects have been discarded and movies are much more often intended to reflect people's feelings and ideas. For example, *The Story of Qiu Ju* chronicles a pregnant woman's struggles against society. *A City of Sadness* depicts a family tragedy caused by political chaos. This is also the style of *A Brighter Summer Day* and *The Blue Kite*. In this way, film is constructed as a witness in the stream of Chinese history. The impact and influence of the movement of time upon human creatures are thus recorded.

To continue and enhance the development of Chinese cinema, the governments and the film industries on both sides of the Taiwan Strait need to change their attitude: movies should not be defined solely as entertainment or the servant of politics. If the Mainland's Fifth Generation directors are permitted to be as creative as they can be, they should be able to produce more excellent films. In Taiwan, to avoid cultural colonization, there is a need to
cultivate more new movie talents (2). To polish its skills and grow independently, instead of applying western values and practices, the film industry needs to renovate itself and reestablish an autonomous identity (3). Otherwise, with the exceptions of Edward Yang and Hou Xiaoxian, Taiwanese cinema will always be an dispensable part of the international film history. In Hong Kong, a wider variety of cinematic form and content should be attempted. To reduce the escalating cost of production, directors should be encouraged to consider the casting of novice performers.

For a long time, the development of Chinese film in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China has been suppressed either by politics or the pressure of commercial demands, and as a result, the industries diverged greatly. Through the experience of interacting, cooperating, competing, and learning from each other, Chinese film today is produced with new meaning in a new era. The international reputation and recognition of Chinese film is more than an accomplishment of art. It also demonstrates to the world the reconstruction of the human spirit of the Chinese people.
ENDNOTES


REFERENCES

In English


Jarvie, I.C. Window on Hong Kong: A Sociological Study of the Hong Kong Film Industry and Its Audience. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1977.


In Chinese


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In English


Hamilton, Clive. "Capital Industrialization in the Four

"Hong Kong '97: Will Filmmakers Flee?." Variety, 2 May 1990, 229.


--------. Window on Hong Kong: A Sociological Study of the Hong Kong Film Industry and Its Audience. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1977.


In Chinese


--------. New Taiwanese Cinema. 2nd ed. Taipei: China Times


Yu, Yeyin. "Cooperation and Obstacles: The Silver Triangle."