

Hong Kong Writing and Culture: Community and Fault Lines

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Much of our attention in Hong Kong has been preoccupied by Occupy Central in the past two months, such that there is no way one could avoid at least a sideways glance at the Umbrella Movement that is still ongoing at the time of my writing this introduction in December 2014. Even though each has a specific scholarly trajectory, all four of the articles on Hong Kong writing and culture in this issue of *Asiatic* may nonetheless be read as research that enlarges on our understanding of the protest movement.

Tammy Ho's article, "Brief Notes towards a Collective Hong Kong Story," looks at a range of poems published in recent years in the online literary journal *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*. It examines how the sense of place, language, history and politics is articulated in the poems, out of which one could begin to understand the constitution of a Hong Kong identity.

In "The Hong Kong Poetic Community," an article based on interviews with ten Hong Kong poets and drawn from her recent book, *Becoming Poets*, Agnes Lam outlines for us Hong Kong's creative writing scene as experienced by the poets themselves. Issues to do with the poets' experience with funding support, and their relationships with editors, publishers and fellow writers are discussed in the article.

Michael Tsang in his article "English Writing as Neo-colonial Resistance" looks at responses to as well as parodies of a poem entitled "Hong Kong – an Ugly City" written by a mainland Chinese student studying in Hong Kong. Tsang's examination of the "social, cultural and political fault lines between China and Hong Kong" is a timely article on the responses to what is perceived as Chinese neo-colonialism by Hong Kong people.

The fault lines between mainland Chinese and Hong Kong cultures are further explored in Ruth Hung's "What Melts in the 'Melting Pot' of Hong Kong?" Hung's article analyses Hong Kong people's "hostility toward mainlanders"; at the same time, it examines "sometimes-dangerous sentiments that characterize, confuse and overtake the Hong Kongers' struggle for liberal democracy and regional autonomy." The article engages with the vexed question of why it is that two communities, with "such close historical

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connections, linguistic identity and geographical proximity,” could be so antagonistic towards each other.

Taken together, the four articles move from the literary to the cultural and socio-political sphere, engaging with urgent debates and issues that are currently being fought out on the streets of Hong Kong.