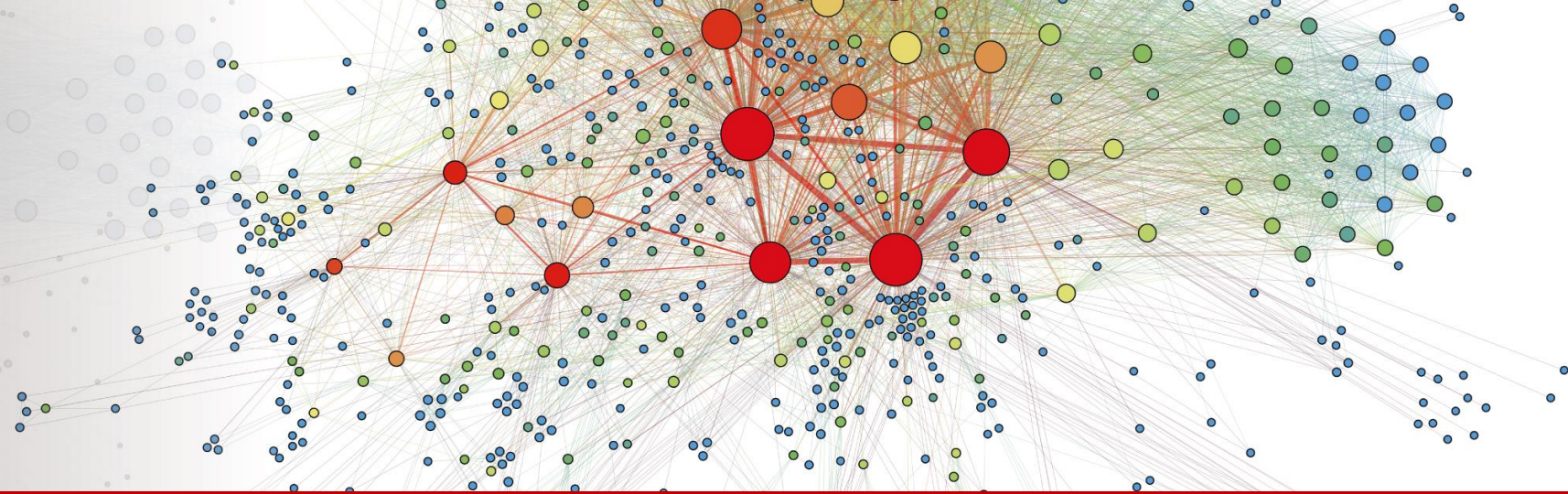


Fall Symposium on
Digital Scholarship 2020
@HKBU

October 20, 2020
via Zoom



How the Lion Rock Was Tempered: Early RTHK Dramas, Social Bonding, and Post-1967-Crisis Governance

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Research Assistant



Digital Database: TV Week magazine and movie scripts (1967-1997)



Television Viewing Habit, Experience, and Community

- Viewing time and viewing ritual
- Household and publicness
- Moral and social values ('soft propaganda')
- Hong Kong's economic takeoff in the 1970s and early 1980s

“The **shared experience** amongst virtually the entire population enjoying **the same television programs every day** contributed a great deal to the creation of a unified cultural identity for the populace” (Kai-cheung Chan and Po-king Choi)



Television in Hong Kong (Karin Gwinn Wilkins)

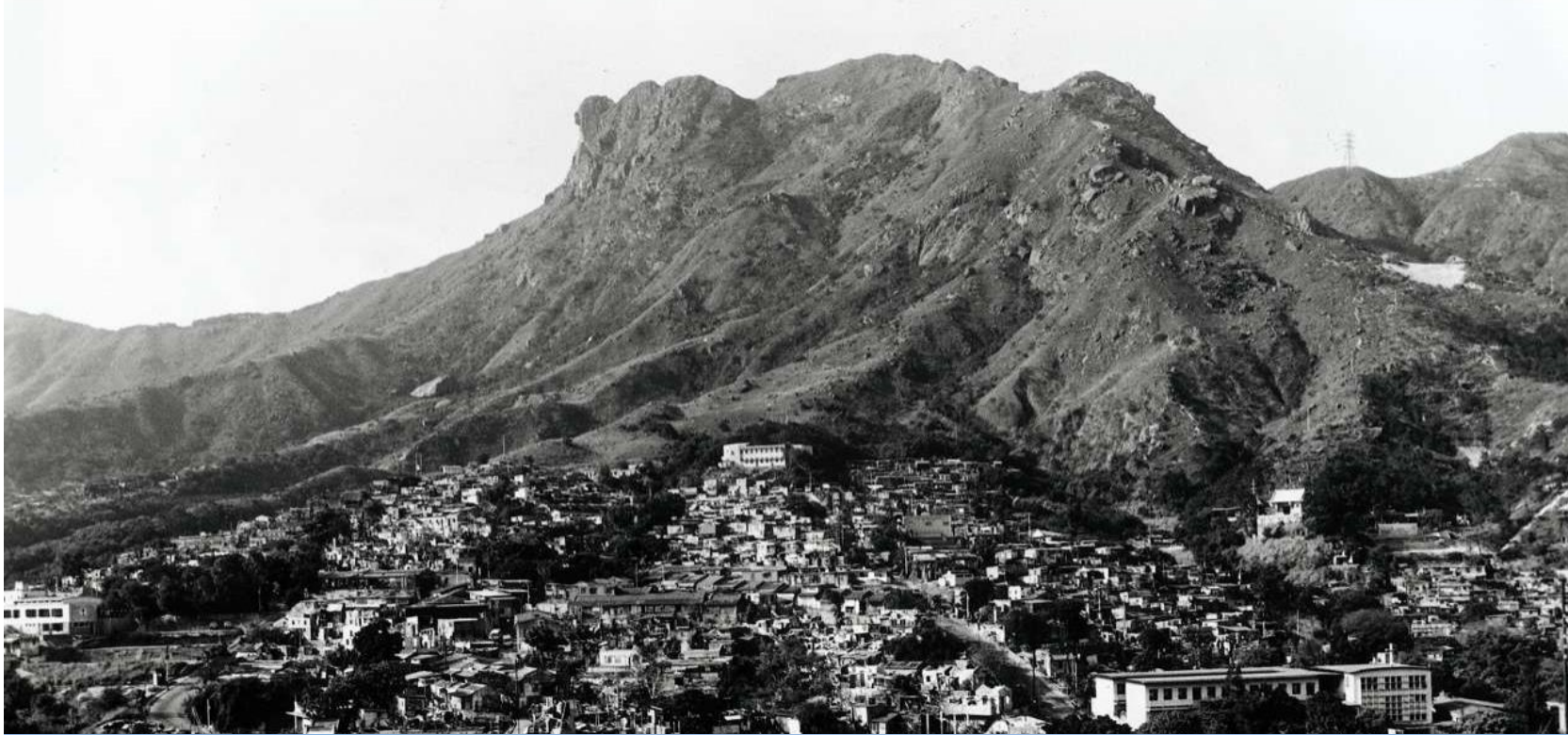
- Commercial factors more than the political, social, or cultural
- Laissez-faire; favor private enterprises and free trade
- Apolitical and market-driven
- Perpetuating a sense of local Hong Kong identity (at times with a larger Chinese community)

Commercial Market vs. Public Service (Mark Hampton)

- Government unconcerned with television's cultural potential
- Uninterested to promote British values
- Not adopting a public service approach
- Yet, after the 1967 riots, "the Government took a stronger hand in television, both for directly propagandistic purposes and to regulate it in response to public demands" in order to bridge "the communication 'gap' that had apparently developed between the government and people"

How could public TV programs promote communication and legitimacy of governance?





Lion Rock in the 1970s.
Photo credit: Housing Authority



Lion Rock in the 2010s.
Photo credit: OutdoorTrip SE

RURAL BROADCASTING IN HONG KONG

When Typhoon Mary struck the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong in 1960 an old Chinese farmer who had to be evacuated insisted on taking his litter of piglets -- and an ancient, battery-powered radio. The piglets, he said, represented his income for the next six months; the wireless was essential because of the market prices and 'tips for farmers' he received on it. More than 400,000 people -- one in eight of Hong Kong's population -- earn their living as farmers or fishermen and all would agree with the old Chinese that a radio is far too precious to abandon.

Well aware of this radio consciousness among rural people, the Chinese service of Radio Hong Kong broadcasts special programmes for farmers and fishermen four times a week. The broadcasts were an immediate success when they started in 1959 and now have a bigger audience than any other specialist programme carried by Government-operated Radio Hong Kong. From the outset the programmes were designed to help farmers and their families improve their income and thus their standard of living. Experts from the Agriculture and Forestry Department gave easy-to-understand talks on such subjects as planting first-crop paddy and combating common insect pests. Two relatively new rural enterprises in Hong Kong -- pond fish culture and the cultivation of edible oysters -- were dealt with by Fisheries officers early in the series.

Rural people are given every chance to take part in the programmes and, because they are usually completely unaffected, many prove natural broadcasters. Chinese programme assistants take their tape recorders to every part of the Colony to get on-the-spot views about crop conditions, market prices and other subjects of interest to primary producers.

THIS PICTURE SHOWS one of Radio Hong Kong's interviewers talking to a Chinese farmer who is using a wooden plough little different from those in use centuries ago. Despite his primitive implements, the farmer had modern ideas and asked many questions about crop improvements.

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GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES,
WEST WING, CENTRAL GOVT OFFICES,
HONG KONG.

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1962







WHERE THE AIR REALLY SINGS
-- Radio and TV in Hong Kong --

Millions of people all over the world tune in to their favourite radio programmes with sets made in Hong Kong.

And in this British Crown Colony of four million people the air is fairly singing what with two television and two radio stations -- each putting out two different services, in Chinese and in English.

Radio Hong Kong, launched in 1928, is the "grand-daddy" of them all. In a novel move this government broadcasting service plans to produce public affairs programmes -- for television.

Hong Kong also has one of the world's highest proportions of tuned-in people. Nine out of ten are regular radio listeners, although television here -- as elsewhere -- captures more viewers each day. There are currently about half a million, and in five years, say TV executives, there will be another million regularly watching the "box".

PICTURED: "What's your opinion of the world ice-lolly situation?" -- could be the question being posed by one of Radio Hong Kong's reporters. The government broadcasting service provides public affairs programmes, music and drama 17 hours a day.

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT
 INFORMATION SERVICES

1969

1969



RTHK HKTV History

First wired TV (Rediffusion/RTV) 麗的映聲 - 1957

First wireless TV (TVB) 電視廣播有限公司 - 1967

ETV (Radio Hong Kong) - 1971

RTV re-modified as wireless TV 麗的電視 - 1973

- The majority of these programmes are produced by Radio Hong Kong's television production unit.

1928 - Radio Hong Kong Launched

1964 - Television Ordinance, No 32 & Television Authority

1972 - Radio Hong Kong television production unit (RHKTV)

- Executive Council endorsed the recommendation of the Working Party on the output of RHK-TV (now RTHK) should be expanded to include programmes of a **public service** nature.
- The main role of RHK-TV remained – and still remains – to keep the public informed on what government is doing and why, and generally to **foster civic awareness**.
- Viewership: At the end of 1972, it was estimated that **79.6% of TV possessed households**, of which 550,000 received only TVB, 43,000 received only RTV and 83,000 received both.
- Of the total, 40 hours a week are taken up with the transmission of the government's educational television service.

1974 - First closed-circuit hotel television service

RTHK HKTV History

Commercial Television (CTV) 佳藝電視 - 1975

- The television output of RHK TV increased to more than 3 hours a week, taking up a total of **8 hours/week** on the five channels.
- **RHK TV's programme 'Below the Lion Rock' achieved biggest success. It is seen by 2.7 million people weekly on the three Chinese channels** - the largest viewer rating of any programme in Hong Kong.
- One episode of the show 'On Good Neighbourliness' - won a special award in the Asian Broadcasting Union's Shiraz Film Festival for young film makers.

1976 - Introduction of satellite relay

- The public affairs television programme output of RTHK was approximately 4 hours a week, taking up a total of around **8.5 hours /week** on the five commercial channels.
- **'Below the Lion Rock'** series continued to command one of the highest viewer ratings of any programme in Hong Kong....Among new RTHK programmes introduced during the year were **'Youth Call'**, a 30-minute programme for the young which incorporates the popular and well-established **'Junior Police Call'**, and a new 26-part documentary series.
- Fresh versions were also introduced of the **weekly police report programme** shown on all five TV channels, aims to inform and **involve the community in the police fight crime campaign.**

Shutdown of CTV - 1978

RTV renamed as ATV (亞洲電視) - 1982

- Television Home Viewing Groups set up by Television Authority

1977 -

- The first Development plan provides for an increase in RTHK's public affair output from **3½ to 12 hours per week by 1980/81.**
- The Second Plan will record that the target of 12 hours production has slipped to 1981/82.

1991 - Multichannel sound television broadcasting (NICAM); First Hong Kong based satellite television (STAR TV) 衛星電視

First subscription television (Wharf Cable Limited) - 1993 (九倉有線電視有限公司)

SRH Media Index - General Report (1981)

Age group

Entertainment	Age group	Percentage
Television watching	9-19	Over 90%
	20+	81-88%
Radio listening	12-49	45-61%
	15-24	60-61%
Cinema going	9-14	20-30%
	15-24	Over 50%
	25-29	41%
	30-34	20-30%
	45+	10%

Education Attainment

Entertainment	Education Attainment	Percentage
Television watching	Post secondary education	76%
	Lower education	82-89%
Radio listening	Some secondary education	54-58%
	Primary education	47%
	No formal schooling	26%
Cinema going	Some secondary education	39-41%
	Primary education	22%
	No formal schooling	5%

Occupation

Entertainment	Occupation	Percentage
Television watching	Students	93%
	Other occupation	81-85%
	Professional, executive or managerial level	68%
Radio listening	Different types of occupation	49-56%
	Retired, unemployed and housewives	34-37%
Cinema going	Unskilled office workers	48%
	Skilled office workers	41%
	Housewives	12-14%
	Retired and unemployed	9%

Race

Entertainment	Race	Percentage
Television watching	Chinese	87%
	Non-Chinese	40%

SRH Media Index - General Report (1981)

Personal Income

Entertainment	Personal Income	Percentage
Television watching	Over \$7,500	57%
	Below \$7,500	79-85%
Radio listening	All groups	43-55%
Cinema going	Over \$7,500	22%
	No income	22%
	All people	33.8%
	Between \$1,500 and \$1,999	Highest

Household Size

Entertainment	Household Size	Percentage
Television watching	Income over \$15,000	62%
	Income below \$15,000	80-90%
Radio listening	All households	44-55%
Cinema going	Income over \$15,000	28%
	Income below \$3,000	20%
	Other households	35%

Marital Status

Entertainment	Marital Status	Percentage
Television watching	Engaged couples/couples married for less than one year	75%
	Single/married for a longer period	83-85%
Radio listening	Engaged couples/couples married for less than one year	55%
	Married for a longer period	13%
Cinema going	Married for a longer period	41%
	Engaged	60%
	couples married for less than one year	63%

Literacy

Entertainment	Literacy	Percentage
Television watching	Literate (Chinese and Bilingual)	83-88% (30% watch Chinese TV; 58% watch English TV)
	Illiterate	83-88%

SRH Media Index - General Report (1981)

- Television

Groups	TV Channel	Percentage
Overall audiences	TVB Jade	89-97%
	TVB Pearl	7-36%
	RTV-1	67-81%
	RTV-2	5-17%
Shop decision makers (15+)	TVB Jade	90%
	TVB Pearl	16%
	RTV-1	70%
	RTV-2	9%

- Number of hours spend in watching television

Age/Occupation group	Percentage	Number of hours Daily
9-19	12-18%	4-6 hours
9-14	16-19%	Over 6 hours
Other age groups	8%	Over 6 hours
Professionals, executives	35%	Below 2 hours
and managers	3%	Over 6 hours
Other occupation	18%	Below 2 hours

- Television (English Channel)

Groups	TV Channel	Amount of audience / Percentage
Overall audiences	English channels	1048
	Chinese channels	3946
15-34 age group		32-39%
Other age group		22%
Professionals		61%
Housewives		20%
Household income over \$15,000	English channels	67%
Household income below \$3,000		17%
Personal income over \$7,500		72%
No personal income		24%

- Radio

Age groups	TV Channel	Percentage
15-34	RTHK	34-45%
	Commercial Radio I	24-27%

7th April, 1977

Mr. Steve S.C. Huang,
Managing Director,
Rediffusion Television Limited,
81, Broadcast Drive,
Kowloon.

Dear Steve,

Your letter of April 2 was received with sorrow! I was sorry that we had got into correspondence again, sorry that you and your staff had been upset and sorry if, unintentionally, RTHK had been the cause.

As you know, "Below the Lion Rock" has always tried to be an honest and realistic reflection of the life and times of Block 24. The episode in question tried to look at the influence of television on our younger generation especially in public housing areas where television seems to be the main source of recreation and occupies about 95% of leisure time.

The examples used in our episode included Kung Fu, drama, cops-and-robbers, gun slinging, romantic love scenes, sexy scenes - both modern and in costume! - commercials, and quiz programmes with attractive cash prizes. I think viewers would have appreciated that we covered a broad range and were clearly not biased against any particular channel. Again, our programme examples tried to cover the sort of television which has been frequently criticized by sections of the public but in our episode such criticism was not left unchallenged - Kimmy Got defended the stations throughout the programme. Her lines were scripted to represent the sensible, better informed youngster capable of forming more balanced judgements and willing to accept new ideas. Tak-Suk on the other hand was the "traditional" grumbler, but he was outplayed by Kimmy's arguments and again, as part of the programme design, he revealed his own prejudices.

Basically there was nothing different about this particular episode. Lion Rock is always polemic, frequently controversial and it tries to deal with those issues which engage large sections of the public. Obviously, the subject of television is a reasonable topic for the programme to handle.

May I raise another point? RTV ran week after week a satirical parody on our own Needlepoint - you called it Blade Point (roughly translated). Needlepoint was an extremely important public communication exercise which has had few parallels. Your

/programme.....

- 2 -

programme made it out to be trivial, disorderly, and lacking in purpose or direction. The fact that TVB carried the programme and not RTV made the lampoon even more fraught with offence. But we were not in fact offended. However I would stress that our episode of Lion Rock was not in retaliation!

I might add that no complaints have been received from CTV and HKTVB. I have also asked for comment from the Television Authority's monitors; again, no objections noted in the reports.

As I have said, I am sorry if our programme judgement caused offence, even more if we have erred. But at least it was a judgement professionally taken. It was certainly not "a deliberate attempt to smear RTV" whose cooperation and friendship we highly value.

(J.B. Hawthorne)
Director of Broadcasting

Mr. J.B. Hawthorne:

(Director of Broadcasting, Radio Television
Hong Kong)

"...The episode in question tried to look at the influence of television on your younger generation especially in public housing areas where television seems to be the main source of recreation and occupies about 95% of leisure time."

"I think viewers would have appreciated that we covered a broad range and were clearly not biased against any particular channel. Again, our program examples tried to cover the sort of television which has been frequently criticized by sections of the public but in our episode such criticism was not left unchallenged..."

"Lion Rock is always polemic, frequently controversial and it tries to deal with those issues which engage large sections of the public. Obviously, the subject of television is a reasonable topic for the programme to handle."

April 1977

Mr. Steve S.C. Huan:

(Managing Director, Rediffusion
Television Limited)

"...I welcome constructive criticisms at all times but the insinuations were uncalled for and out of context. There appears to me to have been a deliberate attempt on the part of your producer to smear RTV programmes: all the so-called examples shown could be clearly identified as shows on RTV."

To add insult to injury, some of the insinuations were voiced by RTV talents whom I allowed to appear in the programme at your request as a sign of goodwill."

To _____ Date _____
From MD/L/77/052 Ref. April 2, 1977.

Mr. J.B. Hawthorne,
Director of Broadcasting,
Radio Television Hong Kong,
Broadcast Drive,
KOWLOON.

Dear Jimmy,

Further to our telephone conversation yesterday, I have since had time to view the episode in question of UNDER THE LION ROCK.

I can only say that I was totally shocked at the very blatant insinuations against programmes on RTV and I can well understand why our viewers have called in to ask how the station had allowed such a show against itself to go on air.

I welcome constructive criticisms at all times but the insinuations were uncalled for and out of context. There appears to me to have been a deliberate attempt on the part of your producer to smear RTV programmes: all the so-called examples shown could be clearly identified as shows on RTV.

To add insult to injury, some of the insinuations were voiced by RTV talents whom I allowed to appear in the programme at your request as a sign of my goodwill.

As a professional, I know you will look into the situation and agree with me that with the kind of cooperation and relation we have discussed in the last few days, such handling on the part of RTHK is certainly not helpful of the good faith on the part of your staff.

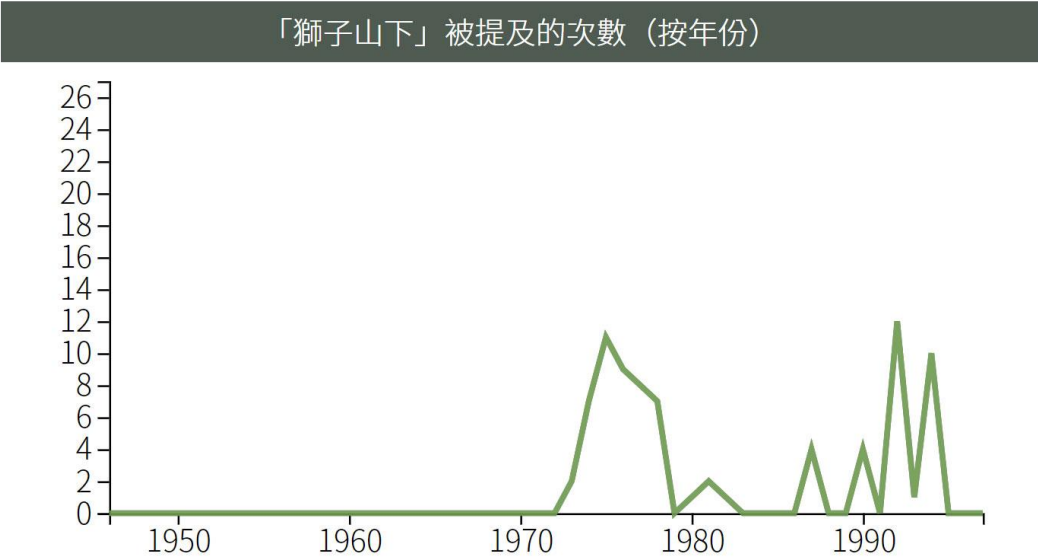
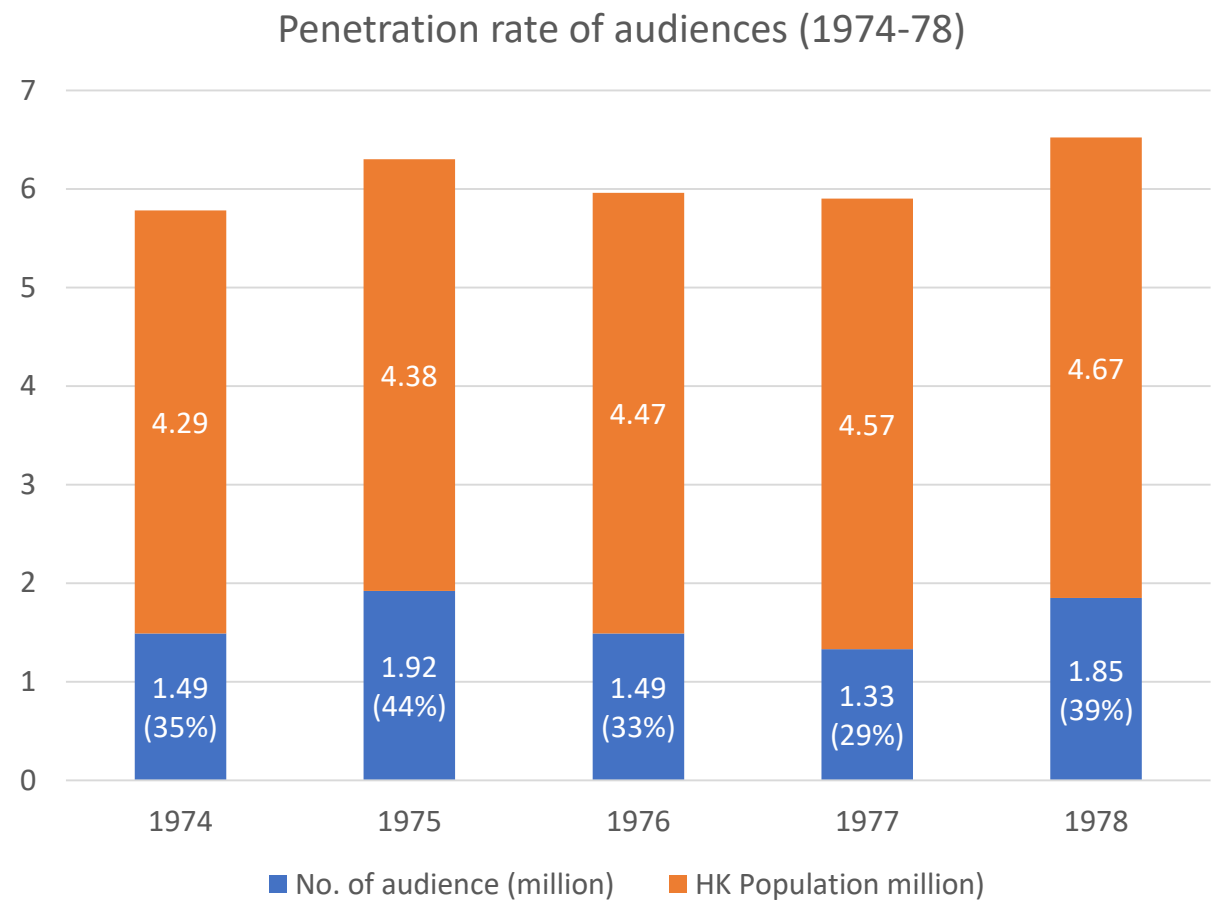
I anxiously await your reply before taking any action.

Yours sincerely,
REDIFFUSION TELEVISION LIMITED

S.SCH/jw

STEVE S. C. HUANG
MANAGING DIRECTOR

“Below the Lion Rock” Popularity Rating in 1970s



Lion Rock attracts ^{H.K.} ^{Standard} 2.7 million viewers ^{Nov. 28} ⁷⁴

BELOW the Lion Rock has become the most watched programme in Hongkong, according to the soon-to-be published Third Quarter in an article based on an independent TV survey conducted by the Survey Research Hongkong Limited.

The Radio Hongkong TV produced series has now reached an audience of 1.8 million at TVB and 900,000 at RTV, respectively. The total of 2.7 million viewers broke all records so far.

In the same survey, TVB's last most watched programme was News and Weather, which was seen by 1.5 million. That was a drop from its previous 1.69 million viewership.

Commenting on the new success yesterday, director of broadcasting, James Hawthorne described it as an extremely stimulating news.

But he expects a still much larger audience. The Lion Rock series could attract more viewers if it is telecast in a more ideal time. It is being shown currently on Thursdays at 7.55 pm at RTV-1 and repeated on Saturdays at 9 pm on TVB-Jade.

Hawthorne said future episodes will dwell more on the subjects of crime and corruption rather than solely focusing on domestic and sociological topics.

This doesn't mean changing the theme of the series to become pro-government, he said.

"Crime and corruption, is not necessarily tied up with Government.

Something we never want this programme to be is one in which there is any lack of confidence in its true motivation."

He said the programme will be presented as truth, whether it's for or against Government.

"We want people to continue to see and to watch something which is valid and balanced. We never want to use the programme to 'sell' any particular interest; it should be a programme in which people can see themselves."

Despite the fact that it's now the most watched TV series, Hawthorne said Lion Rock will still not accept commercial sponsorship.

"Under the law commercial televisions must provide us time to screen government-produced programmes.

"The livelihood of a successful commercial television station depends on advertising revenue. At present our two local stations are obviously in keen competition, with each other, and we don't want to get into that kind of commercial competition," he said.

Meanwhile, Hawthorne is going to buy the whole Lion Rock crew a dinner on his own to celebrate the big achievement in audience.

He made the promise to show appreciation should Below reach an audience of two million.

The survey showed more than he expected.

1974

從市場調查數字看：

港人喜歡什麼電視節目？

香港華洋雜處，市民口味各有不同。因此電視台方面，亦備有各種不同內容的節目，俾供各階層人士需要。

但是，香港人普遍喜歡甚麼節目呢？那一類節目才可迎合大多數人的口味呢？

有關各類電視節目的收看率，「香港市場調查研究社」每年均有詳細統計，在其發表的報告數字中，可獲知香港人看電視的口味。

根據日前發表的最新獨立調查報告顯示，無線電視仍然擁有最多觀眾。

在翡翠台播映的節目，其中二十五個每次播映都能吸引過百萬觀眾。

此廿五個節目為：

「新聞及天氣報導」、「翡翠劇場」、「唔出奇呀」、「心太細」、「總督妙論人生」、「聲實之夜」、「愛」、「西遊記」、「有上有落」、「賽馬結果」、「仙杜拉之歌」、「老太爺」、「水滸傳」、「龍鳳呈祥」、「歡樂今宵」、「校際盃問答比賽」、「蒙太奇」、「時來運到」、「廣角鏡下」、「網球雙鳳」、「杏林雙傑」、「溫故知新」、「電視劇場」、「青春樂」及「蕭芳芳特輯」。

上述二十五個節目中，最受歡迎的三個節目是：

①「新聞及天氣報導」：觀眾一百八十九萬五千人

②「翡翠劇場」：觀眾一百七十八萬七千人

③「唔出奇呀」：觀眾一百六十六萬五千人

此外，該項調查又指出麗的電視最受歡迎的三個節目及其所擁有的觀眾人數如下：

①「麗的電視劇」 四十二萬二千人

②「麗聲之夜」 三十九萬一千元

③「秀蘭歌聲處處聞」 三十八萬四千人

另一方面，由「香港電台電視部」製作的「獅子山下」，其觀眾人數為一百四十九萬。

如果我們將這一次的結果，與上兩次的調查報告作一比較，就會發現香港電視觀眾在欣賞電視口味上的轉變。據去年（一九七三）七月調查報告指出：

香港有八十六萬九千電視家庭，其中有七十二萬七千家庭收看無線電視。無線電視有卅五個電視節目擁有過百萬觀眾。

其中以現實諷刺喜劇「七十二」擁有觀眾最多，計為一百六十一萬四千觀眾。

本刊記者 江角立

1977

全港電視節目·又係無綫最威！

一月份調查顯示：囊括廿三個超過百萬觀眾的節目，最受歡迎節目「總督奇趣錄」觀眾逾一百八十六萬人。

無線電視的最近一次市場調查中，仍穩佔全港最受歡迎電視台地位。

由國際市場研究所及雅達信有限公司今年一月份進行之電視觀眾調查顯示，全港過百萬觀眾的電視節目全由無線電視囊括，共有廿三個節目超過百萬。最高收視率的節目是「總督奇趣錄」，觀眾有一百八十六萬六千人。茲將廿三個過百萬觀眾的節目列下：

- ①總督奇趣錄 一百八十六萬六千人
- ②聲實片場 一百七十二萬二千人
- ③樂聲特輯之「唔駛問阿貴」一百七十萬零四千人
- ④歡樂今宵 一百六十二萬八千人
- ⑤民間傳奇 一百五十三萬六千人
- ⑥陸小鳳 一百四十九萬二千人
- ⑦相見好 一百四十六萬二千人
- ⑧良友金剛 一百四十四萬五千人
- ⑨翡翠劇場 一百四十二萬一千元
- ⑩食咗當飲食世界 一百三十八萬二千人
- ⑪晴人列傳 一百三十三萬五千人
- ⑫獅子山下 一百三十三萬五千人
- ⑬男人女人 一百三十二萬六千人
- ⑭諸事丁 一百三十一萬五千人
- ⑮新聞及天氣報導 一百二十八萬二千人
- ⑯保鏢 一百二十八萬一千元
- ⑰相依為命 一百二十六萬五千人
- ⑱猛龍特務隊 一百二十四萬八千人
- ⑲青春校園 一百二十三萬九千人
- ⑳世界名劇集 一百二十一萬三千人
- ㉑少年十五二十時 一百一十九萬八千人
- ㉒Bang Bang咁嘅聲 一百一十五萬五千人
- ㉓三代同堂 一百零二萬七千人

·易之·

1978

三月份市場調查收視率結果顯示

翡翠劇場最受歡迎·觀眾逾二百五十萬

據國際市場研究所及雅達信有限公司今年三月份進行之電視觀眾調查數字顯示：無線電視翡翠台所播映之節目，佔最受歡迎之前列十九個節目。

翡翠台收視率最高之節目為「翡翠劇場」之「大亨」，觀眾計共二百五十一萬三千人，麗的電視收視率最高之節目，觀眾為一百二十六萬七千人，佳視收視率最高之節目，觀眾為十八萬六千人。

全港最受歡迎之前列二十個節目計為：

- ①「翡翠劇場」之「大亨」觀眾二百五十一萬三千人。
- ②「小李飛刀」觀眾二百四十二萬二千人。
- ③「總督奇趣錄」觀眾二百零九萬九千人。
- ④「K一百」觀眾二百零八萬一千元。
- ⑤「續續咁嘅聲」觀眾一百九十一萬七千人。
- ⑥「歡樂今宵」觀眾一百八十九萬三千人。
- ⑦「雙星報喜」觀眾一百八十六萬九千人。
- ⑧「獅子山下」觀眾一百八十五萬七千人。
- ⑨「美極女人妙到極」觀眾一百八十二萬一千元。
- ⑩「唔駛問阿貴」觀眾一百七十四萬四千人。
- ⑪「黑色報告」觀眾一百七十二萬八千人。
- ⑫「袋裝絲苗為兩餐」觀眾一百七十一萬一千元。
- ⑬「聲實片場」觀眾一百七十萬零一千元。
- ⑭「翡翠精選」觀眾一百六十五萬三千人。
- ⑮「男人女人」觀眾一百六十三萬二千人。
- ⑯「新聞及天氣報導」觀眾一百五十三萬五千人。
- ⑰「猛龍特務隊」觀眾一百四十四萬六千人。
- ⑱「樂聲特輯」之「一屋兩伙三人行」觀眾一百四十萬零九千人。
- ⑲「鏢鏢集」觀眾一百廿八萬四千人。
- ⑳「大電影」觀眾一百廿六萬七千人。



大亨

上述二十個節目是以每十五分鐘最高收視率計算。

1978

Extract from MEDIA dated June 1978

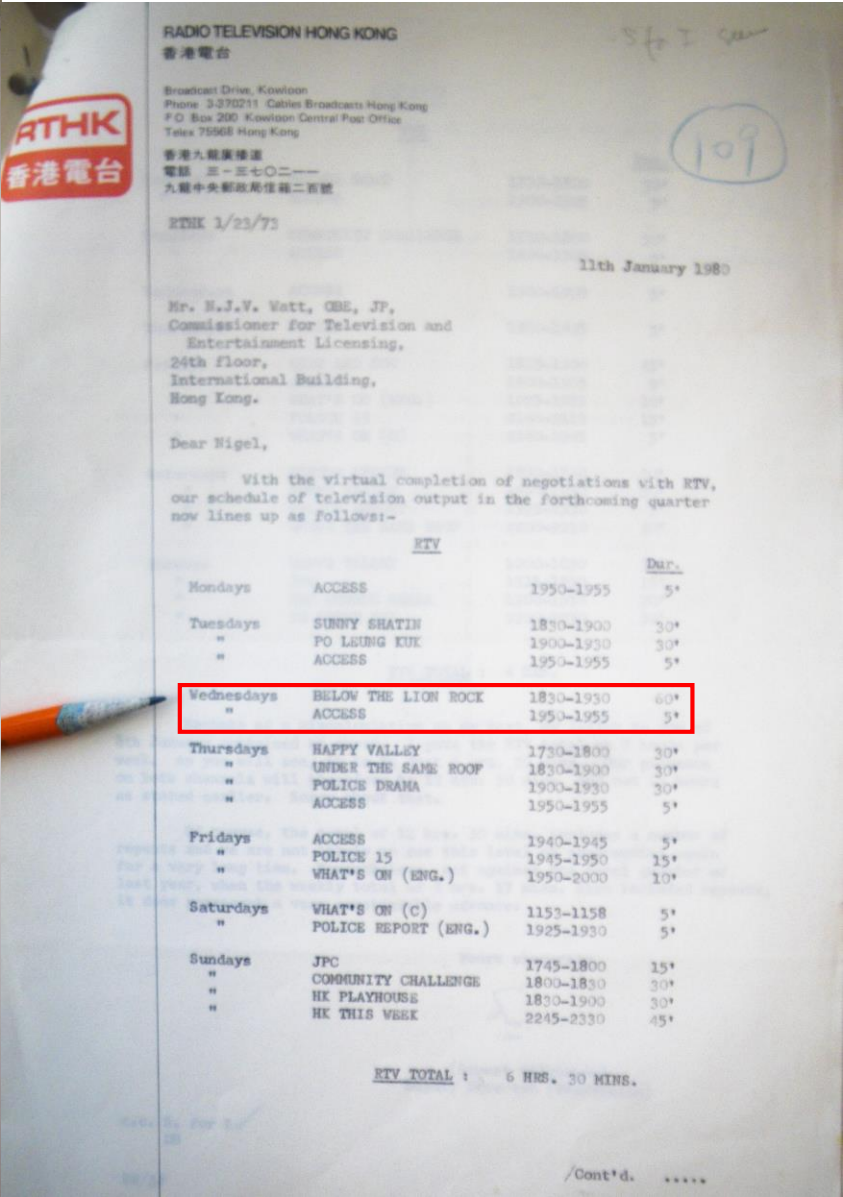
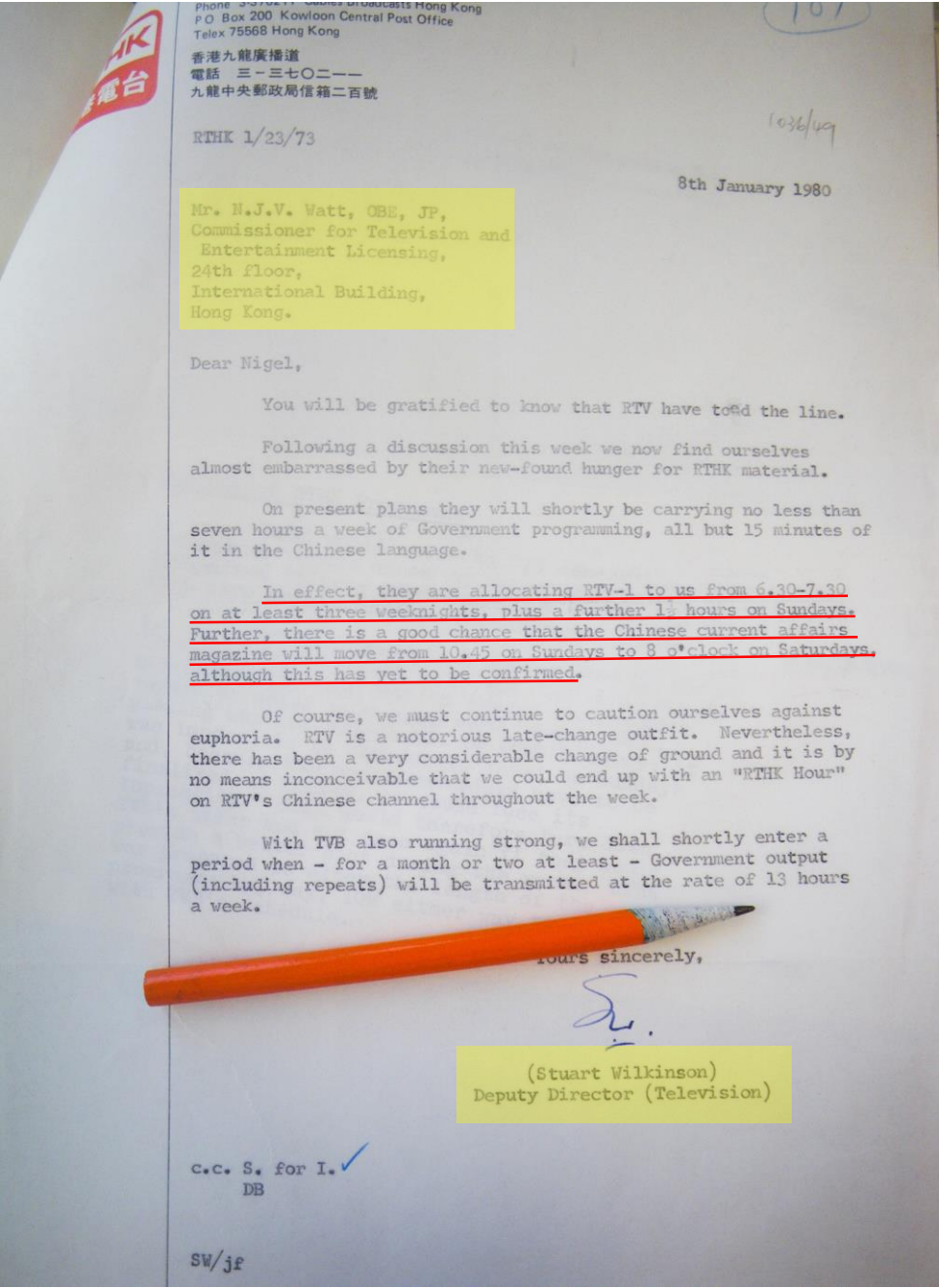
HONGKONG'S LEADING TV PROGRAMMES
(April 9 — 15)

		People 0+ '000	
1 Vanity Fair	Mon	TVB	2287
2 Viceroy Wonderfun	Mon	TVB	2174
3 K-100	Sat	TVB	2122
4 Below The Lion Rock	Sat	TVB	1961
5 National Special	Fri	TVB	1961
6 Interpol	Thu	TVB	1892
7 Enjoy Yourself Tonight	Fri	TVB	1852
8 Toshiba In The Mood	Mon	TVB	1812
9 Hong Kong story	Tue	TVB	1788
10 Better Or Bitter Half	Wed	TVB	1764
11 News and Weather	Sun	TVB	1695
12 Hui Brothers Show	Sun	TVB	1671
13 Nam Soong Special	Sat	TVB	1635
14 Police Call	Fri	TVB	1582
15 Man and Woman	Sat	TVB	1574
16 Sharp Studio	Wed	TVB	1574
17 Bionic Woman	Sat	TVB	1466
18 Under The Same Roof	Fri	TVB	1449
19 Common Sense	Sun	TVB	1417
20 G-Men '75	Sun	TVB	1208

Source: INRA/McNair

Stuart Wilkinson:
(Deputy Director (Television))

“In effect, they are allocating RTV-1 to us from 6.30-7.30 on at least three weeknights, plus a further 1½ hours on Sundays. Further, there is a good chance that the Chinese current affairs magazine will move from 10.45 on Sundays to 8 o’clock on Saturdays, although this has yet to be confirmed.”



TVB taking credit for Below Lion Rock
DONALD KERR Controller of Television Radio Television Hongkong
South China Morning Post (1946-Current); May 10, 1976;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: South China Morning Post
pg. 12

TVB taking credit for Below Lion Rock

"THANKS a Million" says HKTVB, presumably to the viewers, through the medium of a full-page advertisement in the S.C.M. Post.

And to illustrate this achievement in capturing the Hongkong television audience, the top 20 programmes, we are told, are produced and broadcast by TVB.

And to prove it the advertisement lists the programme names and the audience figures.

For good measure three more programmes with million-plus figures are thrown in by the copy writers who are, I fear, too smart for simple readers.

In sixth place for audience-size is the drama series "Below the Lion Rock" which, as all Chinese viewers know, is not produced by TVB but is a Government programme with a strong good citizen message

made by Radio Television Hongkong, produced by Miss Cheung Man-ye and shown on all three Chinese channels.

So TVB can only reasonably claim 19 of the top programmes - one definitely belongs to Government.

TVB's audience-pulling ability is certainly remarkable as the 1,505,000 viewers who joined them for "Below the Lion Rock" had already had a chance to see the same episode earlier that week on the other two Chinese channels.

So, with respect to advertising copy writers, let TVB settle for 19 out of 20 and we in RTHK are happy that our drama series is seen by a combined television audience of way over the two million mark.

DONALD KERR
Controller of Television
Radio Television Hongkong

TVB and Below The Lion Rock
TONY TONG Manager (Public Relations and Promotion) Television Broadcasts Limited
South China Morning Post (1946-Current); May 12, 1976;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: South China Morning Post
pg. 10

TVB and Below The Lion Rock

IN response to the letter from Mr Donald Kerr, Controller of Television, Radio Television Hongkong (S.C.M. Post, May 10) over the "Thanks A Million" advertisement, we would like to clarify the following:

● TVB, except for the audience-pulling ability, has no intention to take credit for the television programme "Below The Lion Rock" produced by Radio Television Hongkong.

● We showed the audience size for "Below The Lion

Rock" after the alphabetical listings of the TVB programmes to emphasise that, out of the top 23 TV programmes which commanded over one million viewers, 20 of them are produced and broadcast by TVB.

Any misleading impression to readers as a result of the subject advertisement is purely unintentional.

TONY TONG
Manager (Public Relations
and Promotion)
Television Broadcasts Limited.

Police below Lion Rock

RADIO Hongkong television's new series of **Below Lion Rock** programmes this month features two episodes centred on the Royal Hongkong Police Force.

The first introduces, as a young friend of the Ko family, a police constable on the beat, and dwells on some of the problems he encounters during a typical day. This will be shown on RTV 1 and on TVB Jade on Saturday.

The second highlights the newly introduced neighbourhood policing scheme and will be shown on the same two channels next week (October 16 and 19).

The screening of these two episodes is extremely opportune in time as the five adult stars of **Below Lion Rock** – Leung Ming, Fung Shui-chun, Tsang Kwong, Chan Kay-yue and Kot Kim-ching – are principal guests at the second large-scale public presentation of Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce good citizen awards to be held at Southern Playground, Wanchai, on October 17.

The stars will then be handing out a record fight-crime bonus – over \$40,000 – to public-spirited citizens who have recently assisted the police in the arrest of criminals.

South China Morning Post:
Oct 8, 1974

“Radio Hong Kong television’s new series of “Below Lion Rock” programmes this month features two episodes centred on the Royal Hongkong Police Force.

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...the five adult stars of Below Lion Rock... are principal guests at the second large scale public presentation of Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce good citizens awards to be held at Southern Playground, Wanchai, on October 17...

The stars will then be handing out a record fight crime bonus – over \$40,000 – to public spirited citizens who have recently assisted the police in the arrest of criminals.”



《男子漢》是我林嘉華



《男子漢》片段

已經真正成為警察



林嘉華



“Anti-government bias should be countered by more attractive material produced by the government”

(Paper for Chief Secretary's Committee, 1977)





Scene from *The Bridge* by Ann Hui in 1978, depicting a confrontation between the government and residents over a bridge. Inset: Cheung Man-ye, now director of broadcasting, made 15 episodes in 1975.

Courting controversy Below the Lion Rock

A CHRONICLE of life in the territory from its pre-cellular phone days to the run-up to the handover to China, Radio Television Hong Kong's *Below the Lion Rock* is about to mark its 20th season on air.

Although embroiled in controversy of late, the series has served as a breeding ground for young, talented artists who have moved on to bigger and better things.

Set in a squatter's hut at the foot of Lion Rock, the storyline has focused each week on the trials and tribulations of the under-privileged and their struggle to survive in a fast-paced, status-conscious culture.

Started in 1973, the original 15-minute black-and-white episodes were quickly expanded into a 30-minute show and later produced in colour.

Without a backwards glance, the Government-run station found itself taking up the torch for the poor, fighting Government apathy and the inequality resulting from an increasingly industrialised society.

Executive producer Mr August Yem, who joined the production team in 1978, said the late 1970s were the

The stir over RTHK's *Below the Lion Rock* is by no means its first. CANDY WONG looks at two decades of the ground-breaking drama series.

show's golden years, when it blossomed into "a social drama fulfilling creative responsibility".

With budding directors Allan Fong Yuk-ping, Ann Hui and Rachel Zen Wei-che behind the camera, the tack of the programme changed.

The format of a family saga was discarded for a more free-wheeling, individually-packaged drama - but its reputation as a champion of the people remained intact.

The programme's expose of corruption in the territory helped shape public opinion on the problem.

Among the first to deal with the issue, which was then regarded as taboo, *Below the Lion Rock* struck a chord with many people. Under intense public pressure, the Government agreed to set up an independent anti-graft organisation, the ICAC.

In 1977, Fong directed the episodes *Wild Children* and *Song of Yuen Chau Chai*.

The former episode, which won the gold prize at

the 1977 Asia-Pacific Young Film-makers Festival, was a moving narrative on youngsters' alienation from tradition.

The crusading, realistic approach adopted by Fong in his early years at RTHK was echoed in his films - *Father and Son* (1981), the acclaimed *Ah-Ying* (1983), and *Just Like Weather* (1986).

Hui, another legendary director of the programme who went on to film fame, is best known for the episodes *Vietnamese Visitors* and *The Bridge* (both 1978).

At that time, the rising director became interested in the tragedy of the Vietnamese boat people. She later added to *Vietnamese Visitors* with the box-office hit *The Story of Woo Viet* and *The Boat People*.

Joining the show at the same time as Fong, Zen also went on to focus on controversial subjects in her work.

The most recent episode she directed for the programme, *Stormy Weather*, has been at the centre of a political row due to its depiction of a fictitious fascist

country in which the leader is interviewed by a Hong-kong journalist.

Like many young television talents who joined RTHK in the late 1970s, Fong, Hui and Zen injected vitality into *Below the Lion Rock*.

The preference for non-commercial themes by these new directors, later branded the "new-wave generation," influenced other programmes and films as well.

Though *Below the Lion Rock* has won seven international awards in its time, it set out to achieve more than that.

In the '80s, the series kept up with the improvement in living standards. Episodes in the '90s have looked more at self-fulfilment and the impact of political and social changes on Hongkong people.

With the start of the brain drain, the programme set about broadening horizons by exploring the life of Hongkong people overseas.

"It has achieved a certain niche. It provides alternatives for the audience and fills in a vacuum," executive producer Yem said. "The production deals with certain types of problems which are not usually seen on television."

South China Morning Post: Sep 20, 1992

"With budding directors Allen Fong Yuk-ping, Ann Hui and Rachel Zen Wei-che behind the camera, the tack of the programme changed..."

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Like many young television talents who joined RTHK in the late 1970s, Fong, Hui and Zen injected vitality into *Below the Lion Rock*. "

'Lion Rock' on festival circuit

Two episodes of the "Below the Lion Rock" television series will be screened at the London Film Festival in November.

The drama series, produced by Radio Television Hongkong, has been running for five years on the three Chinese channels.

The two episodes are "Wild Children" and "Yuen Chow Chai" (Boat People). They will be sub-titled in English.

"Wild Children" was featured in the Hongkong Film Festival last month.

An English film critic, Mr Tony Rayne, was so impressed that he recommended the episode to the British Film Institute Selection Committee for inclusion in the London Festival.

Mr Rayne is a member of the Selection Committee.

RTHK's head of Television drama, Miss Cheung Man-ye, said Mr Rayne called television films in Hongkong better than feature films.

The London Film Festival is held annually, and last year Hongkong was represented for the first time - with a Shaw Brothers film.

Films from all over the world are shown on a non-competitive basis.

"Wild Children," which is directed by Mr Allen Fong, will also be shown at the Asian Broadcasting Union Film Festival in Iran this weekend.

The festival is for directors under 30 years.

Hongkong's entry last year, "Little Football Fiend," won the Silver Award.

"Yuen Chow Chai" will be entered in the Asian Broadcasting Union Film Contest in Turkey next month.

South China Morning Post: Aug 23, 1977

"Two episodes of the 'Below the Lion Rock' television series will be screened at the London Film Festival in November."

...

The two episodes are 'Wild Children' and 'Yuen Chow Chai (Boat People). They will be sub-titled in English.

...

'Wild Children' was featured in the Hong Kong Film Festival last month.

...

'Wild Children', which is directed by Mr Allen Fong, will also be shown on at the Asian Broadcasting Union Film Festival in Iran this weekend."

New fame for Lion Rock

HONGKONG has been awarded first prize in a Young Film-makers Festival held last week in Iran, with an episode from the Radio Television Hongkong series, "Below the Lion Rock."

The episode, entitled "Wild Children," was directed by Allen Fong, and was featured in the Hongkong Film Festival in July.

The Young Film-makers Festival, for directors under 30, was organised by the Asian Broadcasting Union and attracted more than 100 entries from Asia and the Pacific.

Mr Fong said the judges described his film as a "skillfully directed perceptive presentation of environmental influences on juvenile behaviour."

The film, which shows the activities of children living in a cemetery, was filmed in Pokfulam and Chaiwan.

It was the first film Mr Fong submitted for competition.

He has directed about 15 episodes of the "Below the Lion Rock" series.

Mr Fong has a master's degree in Fine Arts, majoring in cinema, from the University of Southern California.

He said his ambition is simply to make more films.

"It emerged at the Hongkong Film Festival that Hongkong films are fairly average by international standards, but the television films are of much better quality."

"This is probably because there are many young, dedicated people working in television films, who are not



Allen Fong

concerned about such things as salary," he said.

In addition to a gold trophy and a diploma, Mr Fong was also awarded US\$750 (about HK\$3,750).

Entries from Japan and Iran shared second prize, and New Zealand's entry received an honourable mention.

It was the second time that Hongkong had entered the festival, which is held annually.

Last year's entry, "Little Football Fiend," won second prize for director Patrick Lo.

"Wild Children" and another of Mr Fong's films, "Yuen Chow Chai" (Boat People), will be screened at the London Film Festival in November. Hongkong was represented at the festival for the first time last year by a Shaw Brothers film.

"Wild Children" will be shown again on television at a date to be decided.

-JE

South China Morning Post: Sep 7, 1977

"Hong Kong has been awarded first prize in a Young Film-makers Festival held last week in Iran, with an episode from the Radio Television Hongkong series, 'Below the Lion Rock'."

The episode, entitled 'Wild Children', was directed Allen Fong, and was featured in the Hongkong Film Festival in July..."

Journalism that questions

Your Hong Kong
Your SCMP

Time to look beyond the Lion Rock

Chris Yeung

Published: 12:00am, 24 Apr, 2002 [Why you can trust SCMP](#)



Post



CHEUNG MAN-YEE'S career has come a long way since she worked as a young producer on the RTHK television series *Below the Lion Rock*, a 1970s drama which is enjoying a nostalgic revival thanks to a government public relations effort.

She later rose under the British authorities to become the officially funded radio and television station's long-serving director of broadcasting, with a reputation for defending its independence and freedom.

Then came Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule in 1997 and Ms Cheung's position was intensely scrutinised by supporters of media freedom who feared she might be pressured, and by pro-Beijing figures who felt the station was too critical of the administration.

There was surprise three years ago when, amid a series of political attacks against the station as a bastion of Western liberal thought, from supporters of Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, she was appointed trade commissioner to Japan.

South China Morning Post: Apr 24, 2002

Cheung Man-Yee:

(First Chinese person to become Director of Broadcasting in the Hong Kong Government. She joined Radio Television Hong Kong as a Programme Officer in 1972.)

*"It comes as little surprise, in light of Ms Cheung's work on *Below the Lion Rock*, that she disagrees with how the Government has appropriated its theme. Ms Cheung disagreed with the way it was interpreted by Financial Secretary Antony Leung Kam-chung in his first Budget last month. He recited lyrics from the theme song in a bid to appeal to Hong Kong residents to put differences aside and unite during difficult times.*

"Our social and political system, ideology, are only developing, although we have first-class hardware infrastructure such as the airport and banking. The greater crisis we are facing is the confusion in social values.

She raised fears RTHK would face more pressure to act as a mouthpiece for the administration under ministerial system. But she maintained her long-standing support for the broadcaster's staff - most of whom are civil servants – and was adamant that RTHK could withstand the pressure, as it had done in the past, if it was able to continue making high-quality, independent programmes."

Thank you for the shows!

