

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS13/H01/17 <hr/> (please insert ref. above)

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within six months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within 12 months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

An analytical compilation of Chinese couplets on structures in Hong Kong

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	TANG Chiu-kay, Dean (now Vice President)	Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Chu Hai College of Higher Education
Co-Investigator(s)	NIL	NA
Others	NIL	NA

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC/ Institution Approval <i>(must be quoted)</i>
Project Start Date	1 January 2018	NA	31 August 2017
Project Completion Date	31 December 2019	30 June 2020	21 August 2019
Duration <i>(in month)</i>	24	30	21 August 2019
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31 December 2020	30 June 2021	21 August 2019

Part B: The Final Report**5. Project Objectives**

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. The proposed research aims to salvage a precious component of Hong Kong literature, art, and culture by recording couplets posted or inscribed on outdoor and indoor structures.

2. It is hoped that by compiling Hong Kong couplets, the position of this genre in the literary arena would be raised to a level equal to that of shi and ci poems and prose written in the classical style.

3. The couplet is an integral component of local literature, therefore future books on the history of Hong Kong literature will not be complete if this genre is not discussed. Scholars can only start to write books on the history of Hong Kong literature from a local perspective if they are provided with the necessary materials. It is hoped that the outcome of the proposed research would serve such a purpose.

4. *The outcome of the proposed research will include many couplets which contain valuable information on the history, culture, and anecdotes of the literary arena of Hong Kong, thus contributing to a better understanding of local history, customs and behaviour of the inhabitants. This kind of information is definitely important to the discipline of Hong Kong studies.*

5. *An analytical examination of the recorded couplets may produce substantial evidence to support or controvert the theory of horse hoof rhythm in couplet composition.*

6. *Many excellent local couplets have been written by famous calligraphers. Therefore, they are not only precious literary works but also valuable works of art. The proposed research will try to photograph every couplet collected so as to give the readers a good chance to appreciate the artistry of the calligraphers.*

7. *The research outcome may serve as teaching materials for courses dealing with the appreciation and composition of couplets offered by tertiary institutions in Hong Kong.*

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: NA

Reasons for the change: NA

- 1.
- 2.
3.

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Objective 1: The project aims to salvage a precious part of Hong Kong literature, art, and culture by recording couplets on local structures. Couplets found in temples, pavilions, pagodas, quadrangles, schools, ancestral halls, Chinese gardens, and memorial archways in Hong Kong have been recorded. Books and articles on the history and description of a particular region of Hong Kong were examined before a field study to make sure that all those places where couplets could most likely be found were visited. However, the PI had to admit that the findings were not exhaustive because there were buildings which did not welcome visitors, buildings which were undergoing repair or refurbishment, and walled villages (圍村) which only allowed the entry of indigenous villagers.

Objective 2: I have been trying my best to elevate the status of couplets in the literary arena in the past 20 years. Besides compiling all the couplets found on structures in Hong Kong into an electronic book, I have been publishing journal articles on local couplets and giving lectures on couplets to many secondary schools, tertiary institutions (including City University and HKU), the public, and the Education Bureau. I also taught a course titled *Poetry and the Couplet: Composition and Appreciation* for a few years and successfully supervised an MA dissertation on couplets at HKU. To further public interest in couplets, I had hosted a weekly RTHK programme titled 奇聯•祺賞 for more than one year. I have been actively involved in the composition of couplets for a wide variety of occasions and was one of the winners of the open Couplet Composition

Contest organized by Miu Fat Buddhist Monastery. I am confident that the goal of raising the position of couplets in the literary world to a level equal to that of classical *shi* and *ci* poems and prose has been reached.

Objective 3: No books on the history of Hong Kong literature have ever discussed local couplets in depth. One of the main reasons for this absence is most likely a lack of enough materials to write about this topic. The e-book provides a record of all the couplets found on Hong Kong structures. This will certainly facilitate future authors on local literature to include couplets in their works.

Objective 4: Couplets containing valuable information on local literature, history and culture were chosen and discussed in details in articles that have been published recently in scholarly journals in Hong Kong and Taiwan. These articles, together with the thousands of couplets recorded, would serve as teaching or reference materials for courses in Hong Kong studies offered by tertiary institutions.

Objective 5: Every word of the couplets recorded has been marked as belonging to the level or oblique tone. Apart from the use of leading words (領字), which are absent in classical *shi* poetry, the rules governing the tonal and rhythmic patterns of couplets have been found to be similar to those of *shi* poetry. The patterns of using level and oblique tones in the last words of the clauses of the couplets have been derived from the data obtained using a quantitative method. A detailed analysis of the data has been presented in the <總結報告> (Appendix I). The conclusions drawn from this analysis would serve as practical guidelines for future composers of couplets. In this research, it has been found that the theory of horse hoof rhythm did not play a dominant role in the composition of local couplets.

Objective 6: Many local couplets have been written by famous calligraphers. An important part of the present research is a complete photographic record of all the couplets found. The calligraphers' artistry can be appreciated in greater detail by using the zoom function of the computer to magnify certain parts of the couplets recorded in the e-book. This feature would not be available if the research findings were presented in the printed form.

Objective 7: When I taught a poetry and couplet course at The University of Hong Kong, finding local couplets to use as teaching materials took a lot of time and effort. Local couplets can now be conveniently retrieved and replicated thanks to the production of the e-book. I am sure that lecturers of similar courses in the future will find it very handy to use the contents of this e-book as teaching or reference materials.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives (as per 5.1/5.2 above)	Addressed (please tick)	Percentage Achieved (please estimate)
1. The proposed research aims to salvage a precious component of Hong Kong literature, art, and culture by recording couplets posted or inscribed on outdoor and indoor structures.	✓	100%

<p>2. It is hoped that by compiling Hong Kong couplets, the position of this genre in the literary arena would be raised to a level equal to that of shi and ci poems and prose written in the classical style</p>	✓	100%
<p>3. The couplet is an integral component of local literature, therefore future books on the history of Hong Kong literature will not be complete if this genre is not discussed. Scholars can only start to write books on the history of Hong Kong literature from a local perspective if they are provided with the necessary materials. It is hoped that the outcome of the proposed research would serve such a purpose.</p>	✓	100%
<p>4. The outcome of the proposed research will include many couplets which contain valuable information on the history, culture, and anecdotes of the literary arena of Hong Kong, thus contributing to a better understanding of local history, customs and behaviour of the inhabitants. This kind of information is definitely important to the discipline of Hong Kong studies.</p>	✓	100%
<p>5. An analytical examination of the recorded couplets may produce substantial evidence to support or controvert the theory of horse hoof rhythm in couplet composition.</p>	✓	100%
<p>6. Many excellent local couplets have been written by famous calligraphers. Therefore, they are not</p>	✓	100%

<p>only precious literary works but also valuable works of art. The proposed research will try to photograph every couplet collected so as to give the readers a good chance to appreciate the artistry of the calligraphers.</p>		
<p>7. The research outcome may serve as teaching materials for courses dealing with the appreciation and composition of couplets offered by tertiary institutions in Hong Kong.</p>	✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

本研究計劃的一個重要目的，就是盡量以照片給文字記錄香港建築物上的對聯，免得這些本地歷史文化載體，在時間洪流裏被沖洗得一乾二淨。調查員共錄得3,352副對聯，撇除其中小部分重複、嚴重缺字或字體漫漶的對聯後，共得3,271副，其中：

單句對聯共計1,700副；

雙句對聯共計1,134副；

三句對聯共計327副；

四句對聯共計91副；

四句以上對聯共計19副。

筆者根據對聯照片，記錄對聯所在建築物的名稱、地址，並簡單介紹建築物的外觀、歷史及對聯的撰者和書寫者，以及把每副對聯的文字記錄下來。對聯以不同字體書寫而成，包括甲骨文、金文、篆書、隸書、行書、楷書、草書及藝術文字，筆者首先盡量準確辨認它們，然後記錄下來。對聯都沒有斷句，為了使聯語眉目更清晰，筆者在文義停頓處加上現代標點符號，並且對聯語裏每個字都注明平仄，以便探討對聯格律。上述資料已經編纂成電子書，存放在學院的圖書館，讀者可以利用電腦上的放大功能，詳細閱讀對聯文字及欣賞對聯書法藝術。老師可以利用書中材料編寫教材，作者可以根據書中材料撰寫香港文學史裏與對聯有關章節。

為了提升對聯的學術地位，筆者在整理這批對聯期間，對其中一些獨特的對聯深入分析研究，然後寫成論文，在學術期刊上發表。這幾篇論文，或敘述對聯的創作背景，或交代對聯的歷史價值，或審定對聯的疑難字詞，或剖析對聯的思想內容，或評賞對聯的寫作技巧等。2018年12月23日，筆者曾到香港大會堂擔任公開講座，題目為「陳湛銓先生對聯賞析」；2019年2月26日，筆者接受邀請到香港大學中文學院擔任一次公開講座，題目為「對聯賞析與創作」。講座材料包括本研究計劃所獲得的資料。

對聯句中平仄安排，按節奏而交替，上下聯對應節奏點上的用字平仄相反。如果對聯的句子是五言或七言，那麼這個要求就與近體詩的平仄格律差不多而略為寬鬆。調查員所錄得的對聯，正印證了這點，故本研究計劃對聯語句中平仄安排不作深入探討而把重點放在對聯句腳的平仄安排。下面所列舉的對聯句腳平仄安排的典型模式，是根據本研究計劃所錄得的對聯數目多寡而歸納出來的：

1. 單句聯： 仄；平(上聯句腳是仄聲，下聯句腳是平聲)
2. 雙句聯： 平仄；仄平(上聯第一分句句腳是平聲，第二分句句腳是仄聲；下聯相反。下面三句聯、四句及四句以上聯的「平仄」符號依次代表各分句句腳的平仄。)
3. 三句聯：(i) 平平仄；仄仄平
(ii) 仄仄平；平平仄
4. 四句聯：(i) 仄平平仄；平仄仄平
(ii) 平平平仄；仄仄仄平
(iii) 平仄平仄；仄平仄平
(iv) 平平仄仄；仄仄平平
5. 四句以上聯：由於這次研究所錄得的超過四句的長聯數量不多，很難準確歸納其句腳平仄安排，但就所得資料來看，這類長聯的分句句腳平仄安排，並沒有特定的標準模式，而「分節平仄黏接法」是最多作者有意或無意中採用來安排其分句句腳平仄的。這種模式並非一成不變而是靈活多變，句腳平仄因應聯語內容而定，較容易使聯語收到聲調和諧、旋律優美的效果。至於馬蹄韻正格的全合式，不見於這次研究計劃所錄得的四句以上長聯。

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action
(*Maximum half a page*)

I plan to write more scholarly papers on local couplets and publish them in academic journals, in addition to the papers that were written and published during the period of the present research. The historical and cultural significance of the chosen couplets, as well as their artistry, will be highlighted. Each couplet would be accompanied by its photograph so as to allow a close examination of its calligraphy. The papers would be compiled into a book when a sufficient number have been obtained. Hopefully this book could be used by secondary schools and tertiary institutions as teaching or reference materials for courses in local history, culture, and literature.

7. **Layman's Summary**

(*Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words*)

The research project saves a precious piece of Hong Kong history, literature, art, and culture by recording couplets posted or inscribed on outdoor and indoor structures in Hong Kong before they are lost over time. The tonal and rhythmic patterns of these couplets have been carefully examined and analyzed. Certain rules for couplet composition, notably the pattern of using words in the level or oblique tone at the end of each clause, have been clarified, thus allowing future couplet writers to have specific instructions for choosing the tonal patterns of a couplet's clauses. The results of this study have been collected into an electronic book (Appendix VI and VII) that can be found in the library. The e-book provides a handy record of all the couplets found on Hong Kong structures. This will certainly facilitate future authors on local literature to include couplets in their works. Lecturers of courses in couplet composition and Hong Kong studies will find it very handy to use the contents of this e-book as teaching or reference materials. I am confident that the research project has elevated this genre's status in the literary world to that of classical *shi* and *ci* poems and prose.

Part C: Research Output**8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
2018				鄧昭祺*	〈修竹園對聯管窺〉， 《文學論衡》總第 33 期，2018 年 12 月，頁 53-65。		Yes (Appendix II)	Yes	Yes
2019				鄧昭祺*	〈寶蓮禪寺牌坊對聯文字辨析〉， 《國文天地》第 34 卷第 12 期，2019 年 5 月，頁 62-67。		Yes (Appendix II)	Yes	Yes
2019				鄧昭祺*	〈香港名勝古跡對聯賞析舉隅〉， 《鑪峰古今-香港歷史文化論集 2018》，2019 年 12 月，頁 82-93。		Yes (Appendix II)	Yes	Yes
2020				鄧昭祺*	〈香港僅存的一副衙門對聯〉， 《國文天地》第 35 卷第 9 期，2020 年 2 月，頁 119-125。本文後被《灼見名家》轉載，2021 年 2 月 11 及 12 日。		Yes (Appendix II)	Yes	Yes

2020				Tang Chiu Kay*	A major episode in the history of HK as reflected in couplets, in 《鑪峰古今-香港歷史文化論集 2019》, Dec 2020, pp.6-19.		Yes (Appendix II)	Yes	Yes
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9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC <i>(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)</i>	Attached to this Report <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Acknowledged the Support of RGC <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Accessible from the Institutional Repository <i>(Yes or No)</i>
June/2018 /Sydney	香港名勝古跡對聯賞析舉隅	The Fifth International Symposium on Chinese Language and Discourse	2018	Yes (Appendix III)	Yes	No
June/2019 /Seoul	A Study of Chinese Couplets on Structures in Hong Kong	14 th International Conference on Language, Innovation, Culture and Education	No	Yes (Appendix III)	Yes	No

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

Yes. Knowledge Transfer : (1) Public lecture on 陳湛銓先生對聯賞析 organized by 學海書樓 on December 23, 2018. (2) Public seminar on 對聯賞析與創作 organized by the School of Chinese, HKU on April 2, 2019. (Appendix IV)

11. Student(s) Trained*(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)*

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
NA			

12. Other Impact*(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)*

13. Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	5	2	0	0	Type	No.
					〈髯翁對聯賞析〉，《仁聲：洪肇平教授榮休特刊》，(香港樹仁大學，2020年) 頁15-28。(Appendix V)	1

14. Public Access Of Completion Report*(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)*

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
Nil	