

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Case Study

University: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 35 Area Studies and Cultural Studies

Title of case study: **Enriching Popular Culture Production and Consumption in Hong Kong and Japan through Interaction and Collaboration**

(1) Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The Department of Japanese Studies has had a strong research focus on Japan-Hong Kong cultural relations from cross-cultural and comparative perspectives. Special emphasis has been placed on bilateral collaborative interactions in popular culture. The Department has two professors who have built international reputations in this area. Three UGC-funded grants and six single-authored monographs represent tangible contributions to research and knowledge dissemination. Major research findings have been shared with the public through public lectures, TV interviews, newspaper articles, books, websites, blogs, and Facebook. This case study also provides important references for people working in the creative industries in Hong Kong.

(2) Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

This case study has challenged and redefined the current understanding of the making of Hong Kong creative industries and the globalization of Japanese popular culture in Asia. In our impact case study, we have examined Hong Kong-Japan interactions and collaborations in popular culture in the following four areas: (1) anime, comics and games (ACG), (2) TV dramas and pop music, (3) movies, and (4) food.

1. General Research Fund (GRF), 2014-2016

Principal Investigator: Ng Wai-ming

Project Title: A Historical and Ethnographic Study of Hong Kong Cuisine in Heisei Japan

Major Findings: (a) Hong Kong cuisine has been highly localized in Japan and localization is the key to business success in Japan; (b) Hong Kong restaurants in Japan have become increasingly diversified and localized.

2. The Sumitomo Foundation Research Grant, 2007-2008

Principal Investigator: Yau Shuk-ting

Project Title: A Study of the Asian Elements in Contemporary Japanese Cinema

Major Finding: Hong Kong and other Asian elements have been used to enrich Japanese films.

3. Competitive Earmarked Research Grant, 2005-2007

Principal Investigator: Ng Wai-ming

Project Title: Hong Kong-Japan Interactions and Collaborations in the ACG Industry

Major Findings: (a) Hong Kong's ACG have borrowed heavily from Japan; (b) Hong Kong provides inspiration and CG production support for Japanese ACG.

4. Competitive Earmarked Research Grant, 2002-2004

Principal Investigator: Ng Wai-ming

Project Title: Japanese Elements in the Hong Kong Entertainment Industry

Major Finding: Japan has been a model for Hong Kong in filmmaking, pop music and TV dramas.

Heretofore, there were two common perceptions of Japan-Hong Kong relations in terms of popular

culture. First, Hong Kong popular culture was created through a fusion of Western and local elements. People did not often associate Japan with the making of Hong Kong popular culture. Second, it was perceived that Japanese popular culture was very well received in Hong Kong and Japan-Hong Kong popular culture relations were unidirectional. The impact of Hong Kong popular culture in Japan and the localization of Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong were rarely studied and little understood.

Our impact study has made a major breakthrough in the understanding of the making of Hong Kong cultural industries and Japan-Hong Kong cultural relations. First, it is revealed that Japanese elements have been absorbed in different areas and aspects of Hong Kong popular culture. The impact of Japan on Hong Kong popular culture has been as strong as that of the West. The making of Hong Kong cultural industries can be redefined in terms of the interplay among Western, Japanese, and local elements. Second, Japan-Hong Kong popular culture relations should be examined in the context of transnational cultural flows and hybridity, instead of the globalization of Japanese popular culture. Hong Kong artists have been selectively absorbing and domesticating Japanese elements in the making of their cultural products. In many cases, Japanese elements are used to enhance the local identity and characteristics. Moreover, Hong Kong popular culture has had an impact on Japanese popular culture, particularly in filmmaking, figurine design, CG production, and game development.

(3) References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- (1) Ng Wai-ming, 『日本流行文化與香港：歷史、在地消費、文化想像與互動』 (Japanese Popular Culture and Hong Kong) (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2015), 225 pages. This is the first academic book on the popularization, localization, and impact of Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong. It is a by-product of two UGC-earmarked grants. College students and the general public are the main beneficiaries.
- (2) Yau Shuk-ting, *Japanese and Hong Kong Film Industries: Understanding the Origins of East Asian Film Networks* (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), 288 pages. This English book is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation on the cooperation between Japan and Hong Kong in filmmaking during the early post-war era. Filmmakers and film critics in Hong Kong and Japan are the main beneficiaries.
- (3) Yau Shuk-ting, 『港日影人口述歷史：化敵為友』 (An Oral History of Japanese and Hong Kong Filmmakers: From Foes to Friends) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 240 pages. This book is a collection of interviews that the author conducted with Japanese filmmakers and actors about their roles in the development of Hong Kong film industry in the early post-war period. Filmmakers and film critics in Hong Kong and Japan are the main beneficiaries.
- (4) Ng Wai-ming, "The Historical Reception of Hong Kong-Style Yumcha in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 19 (June 2017): 77-92. This is a product of a GRF grant, highlighting the reception and localization of Hong Kong *dim sum* in Japanese Chinatowns. Food industrialists and the general public are the main beneficiaries.
- (5) Yau Shuk-ting, 〈從邵氏到嘉禾：鄒文懷的日本關係〉 (From Shaw Brothers to Golden Harvest: Raymond Chow and Japan), in Po Fung and Kau Yam, eds., *Golden Harvest: Leading Changes in Changing Times* (Hong Kong: The Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 2003): 62-69. This book chapter traces Japan's impact on the Hong Kong filmmaker Raymond Chow. Film critics and the general public are the main beneficiaries.
- (6) Ng Wai-ming, "The Consumption and Perception of Japanese ACG (Animation-Comic-Game) among Young People in Hong Kong," *International Journal of Comic Art*, 12:1 (Spring 2010): 460-477. This is a product of a UGC-funded grant, tracing the changing perception and consumption model of Japanese ACG among Hong Kong young people. Influencers in Hong Kong ACG industry are the main beneficiaries.

(4) Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

(1) Impact on Education and Knowledge Transfer in Hong Kong and Japan:

- (i) Six single-authored academic monographs, four competitive research grants, one edited volume, and a large number of journal articles and book chapters in English, Japanese and Chinese have been published. Ng's *Japanese Popular Culture and Hong Kong* (2015) is the first academic book on Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong.
- (ii) Ng was invited by the Digital Content Association of Japan, the Japan Economic Foundation and the Nippon Foundation to write articles on Hong Kong-Japan interactions and collaborations in comics and animated series in their annual whitepapers and research reports.
- (iii) Keynote speeches, invited lectures and academic presentations on Japan-Hong Kong exchange in popular culture were given at international conferences, academic forums and anime fairs overseas.
- (iv) Ng's research on Hong Kong-Japan interactions and collaborations in the ACG industry was featured in *Research Frontiers*, the Newsletter of the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong, as an example of excellent UGC-funded projects.
- (v) From 2007 to 2017, Ng trained three RPg students who wrote their theses on Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong (one Ph.D. and two M. Phil.). Ten of the twenty-six graduated RPg students in the Department wrote about Japanese popular culture.

(2) Impact on Hong Kong Society and the General Public:

- (i) Public lectures, seminars and forums on Japan-Hong Kong popular culture were frequently held in museums, libraries, convention centers, universities, and secondary schools in Hong Kong. For instance, on 12 March 2019, Ng chaired and participated in the dialogue with Lai Ming-zhu on the Chinese translation of Murakami Haruki's novels, during the 4th I-Care Book Festival in Hong Kong. About 600 people showed up for this talk. On 2 December 2014, Ng delivered a public lecture on the localization of Hong Kong cuisine in Japan at the Hong Kong Central Library. About 300 people attended. The talk was videotaped by Radio Television Hong Kong.
- (ii) The Public Lecture Series on Japan-Hong Kong Cultural Exchange was launched by the Department in late 2018. Scholars and influencers in Hong Kong cultural industry are invited to share their experiences and views with public audiences.
- (iii) Social media platforms such as blogs, Facebook and Instagram are used to share information and data. A website on the impact case of Japanese Studies has been set up.
- (iv) Three popular books based on Ng's articles in his blog on Japan-Hong Kong cultural interchange for general readers have been published. His blog is one of the most popular blogs in Hong Kong. (total hits: 27,700,000; articles posted: 1,436)
- (v) Positive media coverage has been gained, including TV and radio interviews, columns and articles in magazines and newspapers, and YouTube video sharing. For example, in January 2018, Ng was interviewed by BBC News on the Japanese AV culture in Greater China.
(<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-42640569>)
- (vi) To promote knowledge transfer, two websites with search engines were set up to share data and major findings generated from two UGC-funded research projects with the public.

(3) Impact on Creative Industries in Hong Kong:

- (i) People in creative industries approach us for advice to develop their cultural products or explore markets in the region. For example, the famous Hong Kong animation director Tommy Tse wrote: "I was making an animated film created by Hong Kong filmmakers ... After completing the film, we held a preview screening for Prof. Ng and a group of students he had invited, which gave us very effective and useful reviews. Prof. Ng is a pillar of Hong Kong's ACG industry and makes helpful comments in various cultural aspects." (recorded on 5 June 2019)
- (ii) The Department organized a business-academia exchange forum titled "The Japanese Food Business in Hong Kong" on 11 June 2016 for Japanese food businessmen and scholars to share ideas on culinary exchange between Japan and Hong Kong.

(iii) During the period from 2015 to 2017, Ng interviewed restaurant owners, chefs and customers in Yokohama and Kobe about Hong Kong cuisine in Japan. Hong Kong newspapers cited his findings. Lynne Nakano helps the Japanese instant noodle market in Hong Kong in the capacity as an independent non-executive director at Nissin Foods Hong Kong,

(iv) Hong Kong filmmakers, animators, comic artists, game designers, publishers and TV artists have been invited to give guest lectures for our Japanese popular culture-related courses or to have sharing sessions with students and the public in our public lectures. For example, Lee Chi-ching shared his stories about winning the first International Manga Award from the Japanese government.

(5) Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

(A) Impact on Education and Knowledge Transfer in Hong Kong and Japan

- (1) Ng's Interview in *Research Frontiers*, the Newsletter of Research Grants Council of Hong Kong, on his UGC-funded project on Japan-Hong Kong collaborations in creative industries. (bit.ly/2Y2nk6s)
- (2) Ng's academic book on Japan-Hong Kong interactions in popular culture, and Yau's academic book on Japan-Hong Kong collaborations in filmmaking (35_1_2_Corroboration.pdf).
- (3) International Workshop on "Transnational Cultural Flows, Diaspora and Identity in Asian Comics" organized by Ng on 12 May 2018. (bit.ly/2xJNAUm)
- (4) Ng's interview on Japanese popular culture in the *CUHK Newsletter* (Issue 437, May 2014). (bit.ly/2JEGICC)

(B) Impact on Hong Kong Society and the General Public

- (5) One-day workshop on Japan-Hong Kong Popular Culture for one hundred secondary school students, organized by Ng on 11 May 2019. Positive feedback was received from participants. (bit.ly/2XEpkCi)
- (6) Ng's dialogue with Lai Ming-zhu on the Chinese translation of Murakami Haruki's novels, a highly-publicized public talk at the 4th I-Care Book Festival in Hong Kong, on 12 March 2019. (<https://www.thenewslens.com/article/115337>)
Ng's public lecture on culinary exchange between Japan and Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Central Library on 2 December 2014.
- (7) Ng's three popular books based on his blog <http://www.cuhkacs.org/~benng/Bo-Blog/>, one of the most popular blogs in Hong Kong.
- (8) Two websites with search engines for the purpose of transferring knowledge generated from UGC-funded grants to the public. (35_1_8_Corroboratoin.pdf)

(C) Impact on Creative Industries in Hong Kong

- (9) Business-academia exchange forum on Japanese Food Business in Hong Kong in June 2016. (bit.ly/2LkrvEL)
- (10) Testimonials by 14 influencers (3 comic artists, 2 animators, 2 cultural project managers, 1 film critic, 1 comic production manager, 1 anime dubbing director, 1 music composer, 1 writer, 1 diplomat, and 1 comedy duo) in Hong Kong and Asian cultural industries (35_1_10_Corroboration.pdf).