

Asian 204

Unit 01: Comrades, Almost a Love Story

Comrades, Almost a Love Story: Basic Information

Chinese Title (Mandarin): *Tian mimi* (Literal translation: Honey-sweet)

Date of Release: 1996

Production Companies: Golden Harvest, UFO (Hong Kong)

Director: Peter Chan (Chen Kexin)

Screenplay: Ivy Ho

CAST:

Li Xiaojun (Jun), a newcomer to Hong Kong - Leon Lai (Li Ming)
Li Qiao (Qiao), a woman he encounters there - Maggie Cheung (Zhang Manyu)
Ouyang Bao (Pao), a gangland boss - Eric Tsang (Zeng Zhiwei)
English Teacher - Christopher Doyle
Aunt Rosie, Li Xiaojun's relative in Hong Kong - Irene Tsu
Li Xiaoting, Li Xiaojun's fiancée back home - Kristy Yang (Yang Gongju)

Literature and History

I. History as a background for understanding literature

II. History and the nation as subjects and themes of literature

a. Modern Chinese literature's "moral burden;" an "obsession with China" (C.T. Hsia).

III. Two caveats:

a. Modern Chinese literature and film are not only "about China."

b. Literature is not an "open window" on history or life.

Hong Kong: A Historical Sketch

I. Geography

- a. Island and associated territories off Guangdong coast, near city of Guangzhou (Canton)
- b. Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories

II. History

- a. The First Opium War, 1839-1842
- b. The Treaty of Nanjing
- c. The expansion of the colony
 - i. Hong Kong Island, 1842
 - ii. Kowloon Peninsula, 1860
 - iii. The New Territories, 1898
- d. Hong Kong's Functions before 1949
 - i. Gateway for foreign trade with China
 - ii. Gateway for Chinese emigration
 - iii. Haven for Chinese economic and political refugees
- e. Hong Kong as political haven
 - i. Early 20th century revolutionary movements
 - ii. Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945
 - iii. Japanese occupation, 1941-1945
 - iv. Chinese Civil War, 1945-1949
 - v. Establishment of PRC, 1949
- f. Hong Kong after 1949
 - i. From entrepot to manufacturing center
 - ii. From manufacturing to financial center
 - iii. Financial boom
 - iv. Destination and gateway for mainland emigrants
- g. Hong Kong's return to China
 - i. 1997 expiration of New Territories lease
 - ii. 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration
 - iii. "One Country, Two Systems"
 - iv. Tiananmen Square, June 4, 1989

v. July 1, 1997 establishment of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC)

III. Hong Kong and Modern China

a. The Opium Wars as the "beginning of modern Chinese history"

i. The nation as the subject of history

ii. Chinese national modernity: victimization, resistance, and the struggle for wholeness

iii. Hong Kong as a symbol of national shame

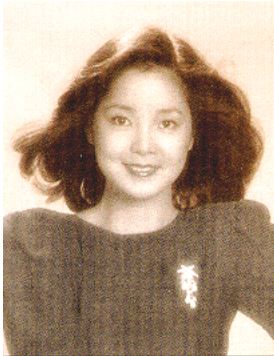
iv. Hong Kong's return: the end history?

b. Alternative narratives

The personal versus the national

China and "Chineseness" through Hong Kong eyes

Teresa Teng (Deng Lijun, Teresa Tang)



I. Birth in Taiwan (1953) and early career

II. International Chinese pop star in 70s and 80s

III. 1980s craze in mainland China

a. Deng Xiaoping's post-Mao "reforms and opening up"

b. Flood of popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan

c. "Deng Xiaoping rules by day, Deng Lijun by night"

IV. Death of asthma attack in Thailand, 1995