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COME DRINK WITH ME —— If You Dare:  
Golden Swallow, King Hu, and the Cold War  
《大醉俠》——金燕子、胡金銓與冷戰時代

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A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.<sup>1</sup>

Mao Tse-tung, 1927

While the Chinese title for *Dazuixia* (大醉俠 *Come Drink with Me*, 1966) refers to its male lead, Drunken Cat (Yueh Hua 岳華) as the “big drunk hero,”

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1 “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan” (March 1927). *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. Vol. I (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1965) 28. A note on Romanization: Shaw Brothers, the studio which produced the film, used Wade-Giles, the system preferred in Taiwan, for most of its Romanization, although Celestial (who issues the current collection of Shaw Brothers DVD sometimes prefers *pinyin*, the system favored in the PRC. I will render names as they are usually seen in English language contexts, and I will include *pinyin* equivalents when there may be doubt about the reference.

the English language title offers an invitation, *Come Drink with Me*. This title directs attention away from the male protagonist and puts the film's heroine, Golden Swallow (Cheng Pei-pei 鄭佩佩), at the center of the narrative as a series of men invite her to share a cup—Smiling Tiger Tsu Kan (笑面虎祖幹 played by Lee Wan-chung 李允中), Jade Faced Tiger (played by Chen Hung-lieh 陳鴻烈), and, of course, Drunken Cat (a.k.a. Fan Ta-pei 范大悲). None of these invitations (including the one Drunken Cat offers) promises anything “so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous.” For all these men, having a drink with Golden Swallow challenges her and provides a challenge for them as well. The invitation to drink in this world of the martial arts *jianghu* (江湖 the “rivers and lakes” of an environment that has its own laws and values) lays down the gauntlet and clearly is no “dinner party.”

From the moment she first appears, dressed as a man, taking an advantageously located table at an inn infested with bandits, Golden Swallow becomes the focal point of the drama and the cynosure of competing aesthetic and political discourses. The women on both sides of the “bamboo curtain” have been given an invitation (or an ultimatum) to “hold up half the sky” or otherwise toe the line for their respective camps in the Cold War, and this invitation is clearly not to a “dinner party.” *Come Drink with Me* invites the viewer to share its cup, and box office clout, as colonial Hong Kong's role as one of the potential flashpoints in Asia during the Cold War became more salient.

America's presence in the region increased exponentially as the war in Vietnam escalated after the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964. In the mid-1960s, Mao prepared to launch the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, and martial law continued in Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石). In 1965, Chiang built his version of the Palace Museum in Taipei to showcase the treasures the KMT (*Guomindang* 國民黨) took with them from the Forbidden City in 1949. As Chiang Kai-shek made his own move in the “culture wars” by showcasing his claims to cultural continuity through imperial art, Mao used his critique of the cinema to launch the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and Mao's wife Chiang Ching (Jiang Qing 江青), a former actress in the Shanghai studios before the Revolution,

took up the challenge of forging a new theatrical aesthetic suitable to Mao's vision of the "continuing revolution." In 1966, Hong Kong's Star Ferry riots, occasioned by an increase in the standard fare to cross the harbor provided a preview of the 1967 riots the following year that were more directly linked to the Cultural Revolution across the border. Around the same time these culture wars, that would have ramifications far beyond the Chinese-speaking world, were raging across the Taiwan Straits. King Hu, an artist from Beijing, found himself making his first *wuxiapian* (武俠片 martial arts swordplay film) at Shaw Brothers in Hong Kong.<sup>2</sup>

### King Hu (Hu Jinqun, 1931-1997) — Politics of the Marketplace

Born in Beijing, King Hu made his way to Hong Kong in 1949. Trained as a painter, he had a keen appreciation of literary and performance arts as well. After working as a commercial artist and doing other odd jobs in the colony including a stint at "Voice of America," Hu took up work as a set dresser in the film industry in 1951, starting at the "left-wing" studio Great Wall (長城). In 1958, he moved to Shaw Brothers, working as an actor, writer, and assistant director, primarily under the tutelage of another mainland exile Li Han-hsiang (李翰祥). The two had a major success (Li as director and Hu as assistant director) with the female-to-male cross-dressing *huangmei* (黃梅) opera *The Love Eterne* (梁山伯與祝英台 1962). As the bouncing between so-called "left" and "right" -wing concerns and the checkered past of Zhang Shankun (張善琨), one of the founders of Great Wall who ended up in Hong Kong (not Beijing or Taipei) because of his accommodation to the Japanese in Shanghai during the war, would indicate, Hong Kong's "bamboo curtain" was rather porous. Often, Mandarin and an affinity for either northern or Shanghai culture meant more than ideology within the film industry.

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2 There are many excellent overviews of the development of Hong Kong martial arts film, including: Sek Kei, "The Development of 'Martial Arts' in Hong Kong Cinema," *A Study of the Hong Kong Martial Arts Film*, ed. Lau Shing-hon (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Urban Council, 1980) 27-38; Verina Glaessner, *Kung Fu: Cinema of Vengeance* (London: Lorrimer, 1974); Bey Logan, *Hong Kong Action Cinema* (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1995).

Like so many of their fellow northern, Mandarin-speaking, mainland *émigrés*, Li and Hu struggled to create a vision of “China” similar to what Benedict Anderson might call an “imagined community.”<sup>3</sup> As Hector Rodriguez has pointed out:

These filmmakers turned to Chinese tradition not only as an alternative to progressive or left-wing cinema but also to cement their shared identity as serious intellectuals with a genuine concern for the national identity and traditional culture.<sup>4</sup>

At Shaw Brothers, the *huangmei*, the historical costume epic, the *wuxiapian*, as well as the modern musical, crime film, and comedy, sought primarily to create an imaginary Mandarin speaking world in which “China” served as both an emblem of past glory and traditional Confucian virtues as well as a sign of a modern culture in tune with progressive ideas, current technology, and global capitalism. Out of the British colony, a cinematic cultural nationalism emerged that could play in the newly independent and fiercely anti-colonial Singapore, challenge Japanese films in the regional market, be strictly anti-Communist for the KMT in Taiwan, and sufficiently “progressive” to compete with the “left wing” studios financed by the PRC and the product that was allowed to flow across the border during periodic thaws in the Cold War. Hong Kong film navigated British censorship by dealing with colonialism and the Cold War and the other fact that the “bamboo curtain” had its holes and that Mao in Beijing was a force that always threatened to be felt from across the border.

In fact, as Tan See-kam and Annette Aw have pointed out in their research on screen adaptations of “The Butterfly Lovers” on which *The Love Eterne* was based, the story played a pivotal role in the culture wars raging at the time in Greater China — with the PRC version *Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai* (1954, shown in Hong Kong the same year) circulating with several other versions of

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3 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991).

4 Hector Rodriguez, “Questions of Chinese Aesthetics: Film Form and Narrative Space in the Cinema of King Hu,” *Cinema Journal* 38:1 (Fall 1998): 78.

5 Tan See Kam and Annette Aw, “*Love Eterne*: Almost a (Heterosexual) Love Story,” *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry (London: BFI, 2003) 137-43.

the story in East and Southeast Asia during the height of the Cold War period.<sup>5</sup> Left-wing and right-wing studios would rush to produce competing films based on the same popular opera, classical beauty, or historical figure. As Chiang Kai-shek built his “palace” to house the treasures of the Forbidden City, filmmakers vied for their own versions of the life of the Empress Dowager, royal concubines, conniving eunuchs, and beleaguered emperors. Not only Dynastic China, but Sun Yat-sen, Republican China, the resistance against the Japanese, and other key symbols of an “imagined” China were also up for grabs on the silver screen. With *Sons and Daughters of the Good Earth* (大地兒女 1964), the film he directed immediately before making *Come Drink with Me*, Hu finds himself in the thick of the culture war over “China” with a tale of KMT resistance to the Japanese.

In terms of entertainment, the left and right agreed on quite a bit. Cross-dressing romances could be “anti-feudal” in their celebration of modern love as opposed to Confucian obligation or “conservative” because of their tragic outcomes. In fact, films based on Chinese operas, in general, commented on contemporary circumstances while maintaining ties to the familiar with stories about women generals, classical beauties, and fantastical creatures from mythology. A sense of urgency regarding the solidification of a “Chinese” identity rallied viewers for anti-Manchu court dramas or anti-Japanese war films. A modern world of youthful vigor, current technology, cultivation of the arts, patriotic, pro-Chinese sentiments, and a celebration of the value of education provided the backdrop for stories about the joys of consumer capitalism or the benefits of socialist modernity.

According to *Flickering in the Same Firmament: Mainland Chinese Films in Hong Kong*,<sup>6</sup> a wide range of films from the PRC routinely screened in Hong Kong before the Cultural Revolution dramatically changed the type and quantity to cross the border. From 1960-65, Peking opera and *huangmei* films (with women playing male romantic leads or taking over the roles of women generals traditionally played exclusively by men in Peking Opera) like *Women Generals of the Yang Family* (楊門女將, screened on both sides of the border in 1960), its follow-up

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6 Zhu Hong, ed., *Flickering in the Same Firmament: Mainland Chinese Films in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2005).

Yang Gui-fei (楊貴妃)/ *The Battle of Hongzhou County* (穆桂英大戰洪州 1962/64), *The Scholar and the Fairy Carp* (追魚 1959/60), *Love Detective* (王魁與桂英 1958/61), *The Emperor's Female Son-in-Law* (女駙馬 1959/61), *Sweet Dream in the Garden* (遊園驚夢, with Peking opera female impersonator Mei Lan-fang (梅蘭芳, 1960/61), documentaries on opera figures Mei Lan-fang and Zhou Xin-fang (周信芳), among other similar fare, were screened in the colony.

Liberal quoting from Chinese opera traditions, King Hu entered the culture wars in good company. As Yung Sai-shing points out in his examination of the relationship between Chinese opera and Hong Kong cinema during the Cold War, various opera traditions and practitioners coming from Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai ended up in Hong Kong at the time.<sup>7</sup> In fact, Simon Yuen (Yuen Siu-tin 袁小田, the father of Yuen Wo-ping 袁和平, the principal martial arts choreographer on Ang Lee's (李安) *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* 臥虎藏龍, 2000), who makes a cameo appearance in *Come Drink with Me* as one of the bandits, blended many of these traditions within his own career — coming from Shanghai, trained in Peking opera, and recruited in the 1930s to add spice to the Cantonese opera stage in Southern China. The action choreographer on *Come Drink with Me*, Han Yingjie (韓英傑), who also appears as a bandit in the film, was trained in Peking opera, and several of the children, like Ching Siu-tung (程小東), came from Hong Kong's Chinese opera schools. Han Yingjie, of course, had worked in the film industry for several years before *Come Drink with Me*, and he had choreographed films like Yueh Feng's (岳楓) *The Swallow Thief* (燕子盜 1961), which starred King Hu.

Left-wing, pro-PRC studios in Hong Kong like Great Wall, Feng Huang (鳳凰), and Sun Luen (新聯) (which merged into Sil-Metropole 銀都 in 1982) made films in the 1950s and early 1960s that suited this market. According to one of the Hong Kong left's biggest stars Chu Hung (Zhu Hong 朱虹):

**Hong Kong cinema was greatly influenced by left-wing cinema. Initially, Shaw**

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7 Yung Sai-shing, "Moving Body: The Interactions Between Chinese Opera and Action Cinema," *Hong Kong Connections: Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema*, eds. Meaghan Morris, Siu Leung Li, and Stephan Chan Ching-kiu (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005) 21-34.

Brothers bought many of our films, which had audience appeal, especially in Southeast Asia, where “left” or “right” meant nothing — they were merely Mandarin films. Shaw wasn’t producing much then and it had theatres in Singapore, where Mandarin was spoken, like it was in Indonesia. Overseas, Mandarin films had bigger markets than Cantonese films.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, all this came to an abrupt halt with Mao’s support for the Red Guards in 1966. The battle over the politics of culture had been raging within Chinese Communist circles for decades, and many old wounds reopened in the mid-1960s as Mao jockeyed for tighter control over the Party and the nation. Mao began to heat up his rhetoric against “poisonous weeds” in 1964 with attacks on several popular films. In 1966, a film that had been criticized much earlier *The Life of Wu Xun* (武訓傳 1950) again came under attack, and an older Hong Kong film that had been shown in the PRC in 1950, *Sorrows of the Forbidden City* (清宮怨 1948), became an object of renewed criticism.<sup>9</sup>

Produced at precisely the wrong time, Xie Jin’s (謝晉) *Two Stage Sisters* (舞台姐妹 1965) was unceremoniously shelved because of the heat leading up to the Cultural Revolution, and the film did not make it to Hong Kong screens until the 1980s.<sup>10</sup> However, even though the filmmakers had no contact, the similarities between *Two Stage Sisters* (more accurately translated as just *Stage Sisters*) and *Come Drink with Me* are quite striking. Although one is a story of that spans the Shaoxing (紹興) opera world around Shanghai in the decades preceding the 1949 Revolution and the other deals with dynastic China, both works owe an important debt to the female warrior/ *daomadan* (刀馬旦) of the opera world. Chunhua (春花, played by Xie Fang 謝芳), the principal protagonist of *Two Stage Sisters*, who emerges from the peasantry to become an opera star

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8 Donna Chu, “Interview with Chu Hong,” *Monographs of Hong Kong Film Veterans 2: An Age of Idealism: Great Wall and Feng Huang Days*, ed. Wong Ain-ling (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2001) 243.

9 For more on these culture wars, see Zhang Yingjin, *Chinese National Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

10 For more on the film, see my essay, “The Blossoming of a Revolutionary Aesthetic: Xie Jin’s *Two Stage Sisters*,” *Jump Cut* #34 (March 1989): 95-106; reprinted in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, ed. Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997) 59-80; and *Celluloid China: Cinematic Encounters with Culture and Society*, ed. Harry H. Kuoshu (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002) 32-51; see also Zhang Yingjin, *op. cit.*

and revolutionary, and Golden Swallow, the privileged daughter of an imperial governor, indeed, have a lot in common as they both represent a vision of the Chinese woman emerging from the background to become a force within Chinese culture. In the world of the theater in Chunhua's case and in the *jianghu* for Golden Swallow, both find themselves challenged in a competitive environment dominated by ruthless men. They each take up this challenge with confidence, however, and put a female face on China that goes beyond the downtrodden victim or the antiquated heroine from the Peking opera canon. Xie and Hu delve deep into Chinese traditional culture and filter the results through contemporary global cinema aesthetics to create a new vision of the Chinese heroine suitable for each side of the bamboo curtain.

However, in addition to being emblems of competing visions of "China" allegorized as female, Chunhua and Golden Swallow also represent competing ideologies vying to occupy the moral high ground of an emerging global woman's movement. The Cold War changed the geopolitics of human rights. Communism loudly claimed the liberation of oppressed minorities and the elevation of women from the mire of feudal traditions. The 1950 Marriage Law in China, for example, put teeth into the rhetoric, and films like *Two Stage Sisters* depicted Communism as a way for women to better their lot. The KMT and the British colonial authority in Hong Kong as well as a litany of progressive voices within the Christian missionary and other Western service communities, at various points in their histories, championed the rights of Chinese women as a sign of the elevation of "China" out of the feudal, backward past into the modern world. Neither side in the Cold War wanted to appear to be "backward." Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 at the height of the Cold War, the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964, and Friedan helped to found NOW (National Organization for Women) in 1966. Although the sexually repressed female "comrade" had been a running joke in Hollywood with films like *Ninotchka* (1939), the fact that a "human rights gap" might exist along side an "arms gap" or force anti-Communists to lag behind in a race that might be as critical as the space race provided fertile ground for African Americans, women, and other marginalized groups to begin to demand better treatment.



In *Come Drink with Me*, the fight involves China, China as a woman, and women on overlapping ideological planes. Golden Swallow serves as the point in which the three, often contradictory discourses, meet. Stephen Teo describes Cheng Pei-pei's interpretation of Golden Swallow as follows:

Her character, Golden Swallow, exhibits youthful freshness and vigour, but also an aloofness that points to her innate superiority of character and moral steadfastness. She is eager yet restrained, tough but graceful. Though a warrior, she never loses her femininity (even when disguised as a male), and this is what distinguishes Hu's female warriors and constitutes his breakthrough in the genre: the female sex is entirely comfortable as warriors and accepted as such by their male counterparts.<sup>11</sup>

While campaigns against Confucian thought raged across the border, Golden Swallow had to mediate a feminist demand for the empowerment of women with a vision of China as rooted in a national legacy that included Confucian hierarchies and a respect for the patriarchal clan. Defiant and self-confident, she still needed to be "feminine" and bow down to male authority in the figure of Drunken Cat, while acting in the service of her absent father and incapacitated brother. She remains a subordinated figure who can embody a crisis in masculinity and the nation while remaining at its beck and call. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution and after, the woman warrior traveled well outside of the People's Republic, and she became a fixture on Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asian, and other screens through the Chinese diaspora.

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### The Cold War *Jianghu*

Although opera films overflowed with supernatural events and feudal virtues, they maintained a hold on Communist screens in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, the post-war martial arts film that took off the same year Mao estab-

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen Teo, "King Hu," *Senses of Cinema*,  
<<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/hu.html>>.

lished the People's Republic in 1949 with the first appearance of Kwan Tak-hing (關德興) as Wong Fei-hung (黃飛鴻) on Hong Kong screens did not have a Communist counterpart. Serialized wuxia novels by writers like Jin Yong (金庸, Louis Cha 查良鏞) became hugely popular in the mid-1950s as well. While the woman with a gun or sword would become *de rigueur* under Jiang Qing's "model opera" scheme during the Cultural Revolution, the world of the *jianghu* offered "rivers and lakes" too far from the dictates of the capital. As can be seen in *Come Drink with Me*, government authority seems to win over banditry and lawlessness, and the message does not appear to be that far removed from martial operas and historical novels like *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志演義) and *The Water Margin* (水滸傳) which inspired the films and novels of the 50s and 60s. However, socialist filmmakers did not open their arms up to the *jianghu* until after the Cultural Revolution when many of the first co-productions after the trial of the Gang of Four were martial arts films starring Jet Li. Great Wall made one significant new style *wuxiapian* before the Cultural Revolution entitled *The Jade Bow* (雲海玉弓緣 1966), which helped to forward the careers of Liu Chia-liang (劉家良, trained by his father, a noted Hong Gar 洪家 practitioner) and Tang Chia (Tang Jia 唐佳, whose master was Simon Yuen) as up and coming martial arts choreographers. Tang and Liu had worked together previously on Wu Pang (Hu Peng 胡鵬)'s *South Dragon, North Phoenix* (南龍北鳳 1963), and the duo moved to Shaw Brothers in 1966.

Certainly, the move on the left away from *wuxiapian* has to do with timing. Through the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward, filmmakers had enough to worry about with socialist realist dramas and traditional opera stories. The *jianghu* that emerged in Cantonese *kungfu* films and Hong Kong martial arts novels offered an alternative vision of China in which the martial arts world had its own hierarchy, rules, and values parallel, and often in opposition, to the official world of the Chinese government. Temples, monks, supernatural practices, secret cults, and Confucian virtues all played prominent roles. While workers, peasants, and the downtrodden appeared, they did not serve heroic functions. Rather, the martial adept — gifted, elite, secretive, often individualistic — took center stage as both villain and hero. Male and female Communist guerilla fight-

ers (engaging in armed and unarmed combat) peopled the screen in the People's Republic, but, unlike Golden Swallow and Drunken Cat, they did not wander the *jianghu* with spectacular displays of their martial prowess. The filial governor's daughter and the drunken martial arts master offer a clear alternative to *The Women's Red Army Detachment* (紅色娘子軍 1961) that is off *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* (智取威虎山 1970).

## Film Aesthetics — East and West

Despite big budget blockbusters like *The Sound of Music* (1965), Hollywood was descending into a slump in the mid-1960s. Most Hollywood films had been behind the Cold War from *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) through Sam Fuller's corpus of B-grade anti-Communist films such as *China Gate* (1957), *Pick-up on South Street* (1953), and *Steel Helmet* (1951). However, the controversy surrounding the Vietnam War and public protests against the draft, put filmmakers in a difficult position. The war in Vietnam was not a subject of major motion pictures at mid-decade, and the Cold War became (e.g. *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, 1964; *The Russians are Coming, The Russians are Coming*, 1966; *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, on television from 1964-68) less of a threat and more of a joke on screen. Even British spy James Bond faced villains spawned by the Cold War with their own ambitions taking them far from the "party line" in the USSR or the PRC in films like *Dr. No* (1962) and *From Russia with Love* (1963), which both toned down the more direct references to the Soviet/ Chinese threat in their screen adaptations of the popular Ian Fleming novels.

From the European art cinema to the Japanese *chambara* (*jidai-geki*, period dramas) films, Hollywood faced challengers from several corners. Hong Kong, with Hollywood and Japan as major competitors in the Asian regional market, positioned itself within a rapidly changing global film culture. Kurosawa's (黒澤明) *Sanjuro* (穿心劍 1962) and *Yojimbo* (用心棒 1961) updated the vision of ronin violence created in *Seven Samurai* (七俠四義 1954, remade as a Hollywood Western *The Magnificent Seven* in 1960) — part of the post-war revivifi-

cation of the feudal samurai film. Sergio Leone made *A Fistful of Dollars*, based on *Yojimbo*, in 1964, with Clint Eastwood as the wandering mercenary who cynically plays two feuding factions of a town off against each other in an Italian vision of a morally bankrupt American West.

James Bond, spaghetti Westerns, and *chambara* all fed the re-conceptualization of the martial arts film in Hong Kong in the mid-1960s. The *wuxiapian* has been a staple of Chinese cinema since the earliest days of the industry in Shanghai. After World War II, the genre became part of both the Cantonese and Mandarin film industries in Hong Kong, and there was always considerable overlap among the *huangmeidiao* (黃梅調), the historical costume drama, and the *wuxiapian*. However, as Kinnia Yau Shuk-ting points out in a study of the relationship between Japanese and Hong Kong action cinema in the mid-1960s, Hong Kong revamped the *wuxiapian* to be more in keeping with this changing global cinematic environment that included Sanjuro, the “Man with No Name,” as well as James Bond.<sup>12</sup> In 1965, Shaw Brothers produced *Temple of the Red Lotus* (江湖奇俠, dir. Hsu Cheng-hung 徐增宏) and its follow-up *The Sword and the Lute* (琴劍恩仇, 1967). With lavish widescreen color cinematography, newer faces like Jimmy Wang Yu (王羽) and established stars like Ivy Ling Po (Ling Bo 凌波), and a bloodier “Japanese” style approach to swordplay, these films helped to inaugurate the “new style” *wuxiapian* of the mid-1960s. As Stephen Teo has noted, there is a political dimension to this Mandarin revival of the genre: “The Mandarin cinema re-established the genre from the perspective of a nationalist folk art or myth.”<sup>13</sup> Discussing King Hu’s oeuvre, Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis directly connect James Bond as a Cold War icon to Hu’s interest in traditional Chinese culture:

The accumulation of archaic detail from the Ming dynasty answers, in a peculiar but powerful way, the outlandish, futuristic gadgetry of

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12 Kinnia Yau Shuk-ting, “Interactions Between Japanese and Hong Kong Action Cinema,” *Hong Kong Connections: Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema* 35-48.

13 Stephen Teo, “Only the Valiant: King Hu and His Cinema Opera,” *Transcending the Times: King Hu and Eileen Chang* (Hong Kong: Provisional Urban Council, 1998) 19.

007. The cultural armature of Chinese tradition, animated by ethical concerns of a bygone era, functions comparably to the Cold War mobilizations of technology and intelligence represented by the Bond franchise.<sup>14</sup>

Chang Cheh's (張徹) *Tiger Boy* (虎俠殲仇 1966) and King Hu's *Come Drink with Me* followed quickly in the wake of *Temple of the Red Lotus*. As the casting of Ivy Ling Po (from *The Love Eterne*) in *Temple of the Red Lotus* indicates, there was considerable overlap in the casting of *huangmeidiao*, *wuxiapian*, and other genres like the contemporary musical at Shaw Brothers. Cheng Pei-pei, for example, starred opposite Linda Lin Dai in the *huangmeidiao* *The Lotus Lamp* (寶蓮燈, dir. Griffin Yueh Feng 岳楓, 1965), cross-dressing as the male lead, before making *Come Drink with Me*. The same year as *Come Drink with Me* Cheng starred as one of the three female leads in Umetsugu Inoue's (井上梅次) musical *Hong Kong Nocturne* (香江花月夜 1967). Tadashi Nishimoto (西本正, a.k.a. He Lanshan 賀蘭山) worked as cinematographer on several of these films, including *The Love Eterne* and *Hong Kong Nocturne* as well as *Come Drink with Me*. The casting of Cheng and the use of Tadashi Nishimoto as cinematographer put *Come Drink with Me* in conversation with the romantic opera film, popular in the PRC and the ROC, as well as the Japanese influenced musical melodrama. Like Hu and so many others involved in both the "left" and the "right" -wing Mandarin language films of the time, Cheng came from the mainland (Shanghai, not Beijing), and, like Hu, she understood the meaning of displacement.

Golden Swallow emerges out of all this wielding twin swords like Okinawan *sai* (釵) and her straight sword like a samurai saber, fighting like a classical ballet-trained (which she was) chorine, cross-dressing in keeping with the *huangmei* tradition, sauntering into town like Clint Eastwood's "Man with No Name" from *A Fistful of Dollars* or Toshiro Mifune's (三船敏郎) Sanjuro, with the bearing of a female general from Peking Opera, and raising her sword against injustice like the women soldiers of the Chinese Communist imagination. As a Chinese woman

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14 Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors: A Treasure Island* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) 52.

within a Cold War context, she took up her sword morally superior to the women comrades across the border as well as Western cold warrior James Bond. As Stephen Teo notes of Hu's women warrior more generally:

In Hu's pictures, one sees woman as the epitome of cool, a taciturn heroine every inch the equal of male heroic stereotypes, from Gary Cooper to Jimmy Wang Yu, from the Western cowboy to James Bond. The last was held in special contempt by Hu. Indeed one could say that Hu created his heroines as female equivalents of James Bond but only as a reaction to Bond's immorality and his license to kill that puts him above the law.<sup>15</sup>

Working with Cheng Pei-pei, Hu crafted *Golden Swallow* as a hybrid to function within the Cold War Chinese diasporic imagination in which she needed to wander, compete, and prove herself.

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### China as Woman and the Wandering Androgyne

As Rey Chow eloquently points out in *Woman and Chinese Modernity*, the nation often functions symbolically as a "woman" or a feminized figure within modern Chinese culture.<sup>16</sup> Embodying "China," the woman may be the victim of a backward, feudal society in need of liberation or the female warrior of Peking opera who feels compelled to take up the sword because all the men are dead or completely incompetent in the chaotic world in which she lives. In the Cold War culture wars, this figure became a bone of contention among competing ideologies. As the "nation" could be Nationalist or Communist (or neither), "China as woman" could take one side or the other — or refuse to be aligned. As a Cold

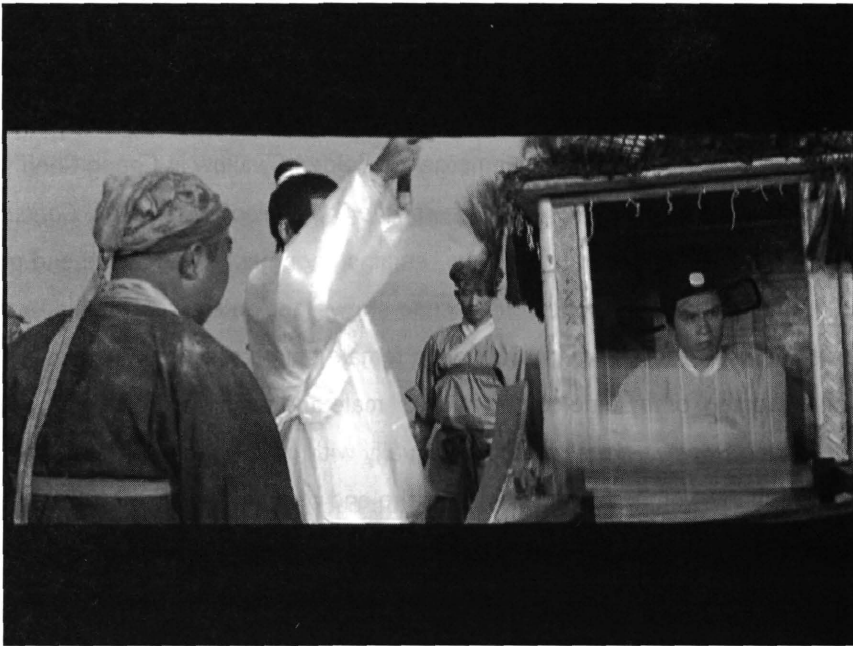
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15 Stephen Teo, "Only the Valiant: King Hu and His Cinema Opera," *Transcending the Times: King Hu and Eileen Chang* 23. It is interesting to note that Bond finally met his Cold War match in Michelle Yeoh's (楊紫瓊) PRC operative in *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997), with whom, in a gesture of détente, he becomes comrades.

16 Rey Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading between West and East* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

War heroine, Golden Swallow emerges out of a divided China and finds herself up for grabs.

*Come Drink with Me* opens with an image of China as a barren, brown, and mountainous landscape, and the next shot presents the representatives of the government as a phalanx filing through at the extreme right edge of the frame. Things are out of balance even before the actual fighting begins. In the opening scene, bandits ambush this government convoy and kill all with the exception of Master Chang, the governor's son, who is taken hostage. Jade Faced Tiger, the leader of the raid, plans to exchange the hostage for the band's captured bandit chief. Master Chang remains seated in his sedan chair throughout the fight, and the battle ends for him when Jade Faced Tiger cuts the bamboo curtain that covers him.



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Certainly, this image resonates with the feelings of many displaced by the 1949 Revolution i.e. China overrun by bandits, made barren by chaos, a government taken hostage, with a thin “bamboo curtain” separating the forces of legal authority and disorder. To underscore the fact that these “bandits” have no sense of the sacred quality of Chinese tradition, they hole up in a Buddhist temple. Like

the Communist atheists, they show no respect for religion.

Like many women warriors from Chinese opera and folk traditions, Golden Swallow appears as a figure of last resort. Her governor father remains far away from the action, and her elder brother has been taken prisoner and tortured. With no men up to the task available, she, like Mulan (木蘭), dresses in men's clothing and takes up the sword. Although this may seem out of keeping with the sequestered, subordinate role played by women with bound feet in feudal China, Golden Swallow actually upholds traditional authority. She not only has the authority of the state behind her (the governor), but she also has the authority of the patriarchal family supporting her (the governor is also her father). Although the bandits may challenge her and initially underestimate her martial prowess, no one questions her right to act — even after she exposes herself as a woman. Golden Swallow transcends the female norm in all regards, and she provides an appropriately exceptional, fantastical figure that does not upset the rules for the rest of her gender.

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Although romantic possibilities emerge for Golden Swallow in Chang Cheh's follow up to *Come Drink with Me, The Girl with the Thunderbolt Kick* (a.k.a. *Golden Swallow* 金燕子, 1968), Golden Swallow remains undomesticated at the end of King Hu's film. Rather, the concluding scene shows her on the road again, accompanied by an entourage of androgynous female soldiers. Appearing dressed as a man, a woman, or in some combination of male and female attire throughout the film, Golden Swallow does not return visually within the drama to the settled domestic life many women warriors enjoy at the end of their exploits. Rather, she stays on the road with her martial sisters, traveling between Drunken Cat and her father the governor. She exits the film as an androgynous and nomadic figure. As Esther Yau has pointed out in her discussion of Hong Kong film culture in *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*:

Instead of holding on to a single identity tied to a small territory or replaying the norms of a bounded culture, the “culturally androgynous” film cites diverse idioms, repackages codes, and combines genres that are thought to be culturally, aesthetically, or cin-



ematically incompatible...These modes help break down the notion of bounded cultures, so that the cultural entities that once appeared to be historically and geographically intact are often taken apart and reassembled. This process of “dis-integration” has contributed to the cultural androgyny of Hong Kong movies.<sup>17</sup>

Golden Swallow’s androgyny parallels Hong Kong’s “androgynous” cinematic culture as it emerged in the Cold War era, and she moves away from referencing “China” as a place to embodying “China” as a nomad. She has become more than an “exile” who may return “home” when the political tides turn in her favor. Rather, Golden Swallow serves as an unsettled figure, moving between male and female, within the diaspora — a bird with no nesting ground in sight.

## The Inn

Perhaps no place better suits the wanderer than the inn. In the Hollywood or spaghetti Western, the Japanese *chambara*, or the Hong Kong *wuxiapian*, the inn or tavern functions as a temporary residence, place of transition, and an arena for combat. Strangers meet, clandestine plots hatch, and traps are set. In his examination of King Hu’s oeuvre, Stephen Teo notes that the inn serves an allegorical function:

These “inn films” — so called because they are almost wholly set in the tavern — are also notable as political allegories, where one side fights for a political or patriotic cause against a side representing the forces of repression and authoritarianism.<sup>18</sup>

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17 Esther C. M. Yau. “Introduction: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World,” *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*, ed. Esther C. M. Yau (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) 7.

18 Stephen Teo. “King Hu.” *Senses of Cinema*. <<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/hu.html>>. Teo also discusses the importance of the inn in Hu’s oeuvre in Stephen Teo. “The Dao of King Hu,” *A Study of Hong Kong Cinema in the Seventies*, ed. Li Cheuk-to (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1984) 34-40. Also, the chapter on King Hu in Stephen Teo. *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: BFI, 1997).

In an analysis of King Hu's use of space, Ng Ho amplifies this point:

Historically speaking, all “black inns” were brought about due to political circumstances. As the peasants and city people rose up to oppose their unjust and oppressive feudal rulers, inns became bases for their activities. Rebels controlled far-off places and, in order to survive, resorted to banditry, targeting inns as places where they could rob and kill...The inn epitomizes the struggle between the *jianghu* (the bandit world) and politics, the confrontation between good and evil, life and death.<sup>19</sup>

150 With its hidden dangers, masked agents, secret codes, and concealed weapons, the “black inn” provides an apt metaphor for the Cold War imagination of a cloak and dagger battle between Communists and Nationalists. When Golden Swallow enters the inn in *Come Drink with Me*, she does so cautiously. As the Chinese orchestra plays, the importance of the inn within Peking opera comes to the surface, and set pieces like “At the Crossroads” (“Sanchakou” 三岔口)<sup>20</sup> come to mind. Beginning with this film, Hu used the inn as a primary location in many of his *wuxiapian*. Thematically, the inn makes sense for his wandering martial artists, but, as a stage for combat, this is also perfectly logical. With an open area surrounded on four sides by passages that serve as balconies, the main room of the inn provides a visual theater for the combatants. Still within a contained space, they can move freely vertically as well as horizontally — mimicking the Peking opera stage and allowing for aerial acrobatics to punctuate the action on several levels and within multiple visual planes. The woman warrior ties the theatrical space, the operatic tempo of the traditional orchestra, and the theme of the Cold War world in chaos together by citing Peking opera.

A storm brews as Golden Swallow, dressed as a traveling “gentleman” with flowing gown, topknot, and straw hat, enters the inn, and the sounds of thunder

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19 Ng Ho, “King Hu and the Aesthetics of Space.” trans. Stephen Teo, *Transcending the Times: King Hu and Eileen Chang* 46.

20 Hu's short piece. *Anger* (*Nu* 怒, 1970), was directly based on “Sanchakou”.

punctuate the scene along with the Peking opera-style percussion. Golden Swallow enters the space slowly and deliberately, casing the place, looking left and right. The camera tracks with her, but at a distance as she picks a table in the center of the tavern. A birdcage prominent in the foreground underscores the fact that Golden Swallow could be walking into a trap. With a certain élan, she kicks a bench away from the table and sits, posture erect and clearly alert. She puts down her travel sack, takes out her fan, and calls the waiter to order. In the enemy “tiger” bandit camp, her request for Tiger Bone wine meets with some surprise.



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Smiling Tiger Hsu Kan sits at one of the other tables. His confederates arrive and sit with him. Smiling Tiger opens his fan with a picture of a tiger on it, and the tavern erupts into action. Customers leave, bandits openly display their weapons, and Smiling Tiger, positioned out of focus behind Golden Swallow, continues to wave his fan. Unperturbed by the commotion around her, Golden Swallow takes the pin out of her topknot and removes her wide-brim hat. (Although Cheng Pei-pei has claimed King Hu insisted on the wide brims to counterbalance her small

head,<sup>21</sup> these wide straw hats, common in China, were an important part of the mise-en-scène in samurai films at the time — and, likely, served as another signal that *Come Drink with Me* was up to the international action standard.) Golden Swallow again calls for the waiter to bring her wine.



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Although he does not drink with her himself, Smiling Tiger comes over to pour for Golden Swallow, inviting her to drink, as if she is his guest. In fact, the entire scene parodies Chinese etiquette surrounding banqueting. As Mayfair Yang describes the importance of the banquet (dinner party) in *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets*,<sup>22</sup> the system of mutual obligation called *guanxi* (關係) that underpins the hierarchies that structure Chinese social relationships often manifest themselves in practices involving banqueting — dining and drinking in social groups. When Smiling Tiger pours wine for Golden Swallow, he turns the relationship between the rebellious bandits and the forces of the government into a dinner party, probing for weaknesses and looking for an advantage. Cautious within the *jianghu*,

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21 As noted on the Celestial DVD version of the film.

22 Mayfair Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).

he offers a drink and asks Golden Swallow questions before showing force. Small props foreshadow the fight to come — fans and chopsticks are fingered now to be used in combat later.

However, as Mao reminds us, the revolution — and allegories involving revolution — are not “dinner parties.” and both Smiling Tiger and Golden Swallow stand firm. Smiling Tiger returns to his table, and his minions move into action in what Cheuk Pak-tong has termed Hu’s “staircase formula”<sup>23</sup> of escalating threats. Taking a prop from traditional Chinese acrobatics, a jug of wine flies at Golden Swallow; however, she parries it with ease. Coins zoom at her like bullets, and she catches them on her chopstick. The bench, another common prop in Peking Opera, hurls toward her, and, again, she effortlessly parries the threat. As more coins fly through the air, two of the bandits argue over who should act as host and pay the bill. As Mayfair Yang points out, these ritualized arguments over paying the bill for a meal represent a jockeying for power and authority in a system of mutual obligation that gives weight to those who have others obliged to them. The fact that Golden Swallow is in the middle of this argument, the object of the assault, but not part of the fiction of an argument about paying the check that the bandits use as a pretext, speaks to her centrality as well as her distance from



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23 Cheuk Pak-tong, “A Pioneer in Film Language: On King Hu’s Style of Editing,” trans. Stephen Teo, *Transcending the Times: King Hu and Eileen Chang* 57-61.

their charade. Like the exilic Chinese outside the People's Republic, she becomes the audience and object for internal struggles that may or may not be acted out for her benefit. As the argument rages around her, she prefers to turn her back and drink alone.

Fans, coins, and chopsticks give Golden Swallow an opportunity to show her martial prowess without drawing her weapon. However, frustrated in the initial assault, Smiling Tiger signals his men to move in with weapons drawn. As the bandits circle around her, Golden Swallow draws two short swords from her leggings. (Although double short swords of various types exist within the arsenal of Chinese weaponry, these swords resemble Okinawan *sai* — again bowing to the Japanese influence on the global imagination of martial arts choreography in the mid-1960s.) She holds off the assault and gets the upper hand with her expansive swordplay. Drunken Cat appears at the door, his hand caught as he tries to crash the party in order to get a drink. The bandits encourage him to leave, but he remains to help Golden Swallow when she is assailed by the bandits' darts. She counters with her own dart and strikes one of her attackers in the hand, forcing his sword to drop and stick on a tabletop. Smiling Tiger steps in to put a stop to it. Ever confident, Golden Swallow books a room at the inn, and orders horses and a guide in anticipation of taking the entire gang prisoner.

Although her martial prowess adds weight to her wishful thinking, this initial fight, like the Cold War itself, ends in a stalemate. Although Golden Swallow has established herself in the enemy's territory in a room at the inn and the bandits make a tactical retreat, the war is far from over. Moreover, the extent of her power has been put in check by the fact she needs the help of an ally, Drunken Cat. An uninvited guest at the opening banquet, Drunken Cat has his own agenda that has little, if anything, to do with reestablishing the power of the government in the hinterlands. The drunken poet/ critic/ swordsman has a lengthy legacy in Chinese culture (e.g. Li Bo 李白),<sup>24</sup> including set pieces involving drunken movements choreographed for opera and a system of traditional martial arts known as "drunken fist" (*zuiquan* 醉拳). Simon Yuen (a bandit in this scene in *Come Drink*

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24 Hu references Li Bo directly in *A Touch of Zen*. See Mary Farquhar, "A Touch of Zen: Action in Martial Arts Movies." *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes* 167-74.

*with Me*) brought this character of the drunk martial arts master to new heights in the Hong Kong *kungfu* comedy *Drunken Master* (醉拳 1978), featuring Jackie Chan (成龍) and directed by Yuen's son, Yuen Wo-ping. Although Drunken Cat gravitates as a natural ally to Golden Swallow, he has no particular loyalty to the ruling regime she represents, and, as a drunk, seems to have little interest in the more sober world of politics.

Later, Drunken Cat pushes his way into Golden Swallow's room demanding the "young gentleman" have a drink with him. However, it is only a pretext to steal Golden Swallow's swords to lure her away from her room because the bandits have planned a late night ambush. The drunken invitation to have a cup of



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wine has, indirectly, saved Golden Swallow's life. Also, the nimble chase from the tavern dining room, up the compound's walls, and over the rooftops of the inn indicates that Drunken Cat shares her martial ability. Ridding the China of the imagination depicted in *Come Drink with Me* of (Communist) bandits requires unlikely alliances and the marshalling of powers beyond the ken of the warrior heroine.

## The Temple

Whenever the bandits appear in the temple, they seem to be eating. Whether torturing Master Chang, plotting their next move, or trying to hold Golden Cat prisoner, a banquet always appears to be spread for the hungry bandits and their guests. Like the Red Guards across the border who would soon begin to ravage ancient religious sites, the bandits kill young monks,<sup>25</sup> damage temple artifacts, and show a complete disregard for Buddhist rites and regulations. Lustily eating meat in a temple immediately indicates that this dinner party goes against Chinese Buddhist notions of propriety.

156 Taking a hint from a song Drunken Cat sang in the inn, Golden Swallow sets off to the temple to investigate. Dressed as a woman on a pilgrimage, Golden Swallow arrives at the temple in a sedan chair and is warned by the driver to take care. She goes inside to worship and shakes fortune sticks in front of the deity. Jade Face Tiger appears and jokes about her praying to Buddha when he is a “living god.” With thick white make-up and flowing white gown, Jade Face Tiger embodies ill fortune. White, in Chinese lore, is associated with mourning and funerals, and his readiness to compare himself to a deity and commit sacrilege underscores his evil nature. Thin and lean, the pale Jade Face Tiger, also serves as an appropriately androgynous foil for Golden Swallow. Like his female opponent, he often wields a fan as a weapon, and he prefers the subtler use of poison to the brute strength of a naked blade. Paralleling the earlier fight at the inn, after Golden Swallow’s true identity emerges, bandits surround her to test her abilities. Jade Face Tiger complains about her shedding blood in a Buddhist temple, and he invites her to sit down and have a drink instead.

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<sup>25</sup> According to Cheng Pei-Pei on the Celestial DVD release, the young monk killed for ease-dropping is played by Ching Siu-tung, who went on to direct films such as *A Chinese Ghost Story* (倩女幽魂 1987).





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Golden Swallow also recognizes and calls Jade Face Tiger by name. As they duel, they begin to strip away further at their outer identities. Jade Face Tiger begins by cutting off Golden Swallow's outer robe, so that she appears in pants — her more feminine shell stripped away. Cornered on the altar, Golden Swallow escapes to the courtyard to continue the fight. Her hair ornaments and earrings contrast sharply with her dusty trousers and increasingly disheveled appearance. Golden Swallow counters in kind and cuts through Jade Face Tiger's belt so he must strip off his outer garment to fight her. The two appear evenly matched. Golden Swallow strips him, but he manages to partially disarm her. She counters with a slash to his head, drawing blood, but Jade Face Tiger manages to get her on the ground. However, he slips on something before he can lunge, and she rebounds. The idea that they appear to be evenly matched is undercut by the revelation that Drunken Cat has been helping. Glimpsed in the frame early in the scene, Drunken Cat opened the window for her escape, sent the food flying to trip up Jade Face Tiger, and returns the sword she lost to her enemy to her. Although Jade Face Tiger also has plenty of help from his minions, Golden Swallow's martial prowess has been shown to have limits, and she needs Drunken Cat

to even the balance. Her gender eventually tips the scales in Jade Face Tiger's favor. When Golden Swallow's bodice is cut, the villains' laughter indicates she cannot possibly continue to fight while covering her naked breasts, and Golden Swallow makes a vertical ascent up the temple wall to escape. Even though



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Drunken Cat helps to divert arrows, Jade Face Tiger manages to wound her with a poison dart. Her feminine modesty has undone her. Although she manages to escape, she will not get far in the woods with the poison in her system.

### **In the Background**

For Mao, "women hold up half the sky," and Golden Swallow holds up roughly half a film in *Come Drink with Me*. Drunken Cat gradually emerges to take up his titular role as the "hero," and Golden Swallow fades into the background. After the fight at the temple, Drunken Cat comes to Golden Swallow's rescue, removes the prick that Jade Face Tiger used to penetrate her with his poison, and sucks the poison from her bosom as she clutches a phallic bamboo shaft for support

while moaning with pain (or pleasure).



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Women, irrational, overconfident, but weak, may be poisoned by Communist doctrine, but they can be saved by a true hero.<sup>26</sup> The narrative shifts to focus on the story of Drunken Cat, and the film moves away from the struggle between the government and the bandits for control of the heartland to a struggle between Drunken Cat and his nemesis Abbot Liao Kong (了空大師 played by Yang Chih-ching 楊志卿) for a powerful artifact, a cultural treasure. The move from government to cultural legitimacy takes the form of a feud between two *kungfu* brothers with the same master. Reminiscent of the bickering between the PRC and the ROC over the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, Drunken Cat and Liao Kong quarrel over the rightful owner of a bamboo staff (an object associated with phallic potency). Given that the abbot is in league with Jade Face Tiger and the bandits, Drunken Cat, although he is a drunkard and beggar, takes the moral high ground.

At this point, the plot to recover Master Chang and imprison the bandits be-

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<sup>26</sup> For more on masculinity and heroism in Chinese culture, see Kam Louie, *Theorizing Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

comes minor in comparison to the abbot and Drunken Cat's struggle over their dead master's bamboo stick. In fact, during the battle that follows the planned exchange of prisoners, Golden Swallow has her victory over Jade Face Tiger robbed from her. Earlier, Drunken Cat had removed his venomous sting by taking the poison daggers out of his fan/ dart gun. After battling her enemy with straight sword and double short swords, Golden Swallow manages to get the advantage. However, the abbot arrives to shield his comrade with his superior *qigong* (氣功) iron jacket technique, which her sword cannot penetrate. Drunken Cat moves in to take up the battle, and, after letting the abbot go, ends up killing him in a bloodbath later back at his rural shack. Although Golden Swallow does ride off accompanied by her female soldiers with Drunken Cat and his following of street urchins cheering her on in the final shot, she does not get the glory of the absolute destruction of the enemy reserved for Drunken Cat. Rather, the half of the sky she upholds is the conservative side dominated by her absent governor father and her elder brother, the cultural heartland of the *jianghu* remains the domain of drunken poets/ nomadic martial artists like Drunken Cat.

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Viewed allegorically, this Cold War story remains ambivalent. Neither the Communist bandits nor the “legitimate” Nationalists win the cultural battle for the emblem of power (i.e. the bamboo pole). Rather, the wandering drunk, supported by the contested figure of modern China, the androgynous “liberated” woman, ends up saving the imaginary nation. Drunken Cat, a poet (through his clever songs), a martial arts master, and a very flawed, alcoholic outcast, takes up the role of keeper of the essence of Chinese culture as he proves his right to inherit his master's (*shi-fu's* 師父) staff. More than a little of King Hu comes out in the character of Drunken Cat. Golden Swallow may walk away with governmental legitimacy on her side, but cultural superiority (as evidenced by his superior *kungfu*) remains with the poet/ artist Drunken Cat. China becomes a stateless culture, an ethnic legacy, within the *jianghu* and outside a nation divided by colonialism and the “bamboo curtain.”

### Conclusion: Cheng Pei-pei, King Hu and the Global *Jianghu*

King Hu parted ways with the Shaw Brothers after the success of *Come Drink with Me*. Paralleling the life of the wandering Golden Swallow, Hu went on

the road to Taiwan, South Korea, and the United States. In the ROC, Hu's *wuxiapian* brought a welcome relief from the "wholesome" realism that Central Motion Pictures relied on to counter socialist realism from across the straits, and it should be noted that Hu did not work with the official KMT studio until later in his career. Although Hu eventually settled in the United States, as an artist, he drifted. Never political in any overtly partisan way, Hu, like Golden Swallow, was a cold warrior in spite of himself. He voted with his feet and imagined a China away from Beijing through his film art.

Although both went on to continue to develop the female warrior heroine in the cinema, Cheng Pei-pei and King Hu worked together only once more. While Hu went on to Taiwan to make *Dragon Gate Inn* (龍門客棧 1967) and *A Touch of Zen* (俠女 1970/ 72), Cheng Pei-pei stayed in Hong Kong to work with directors like Chang Cheh and Lo Wei (羅維). In fact, she made the transition from the *wuxiapian* to the *kungfu pian* and joined the female ranks of Bruce Lee imitators in films like *None but the Brave* (鐵娃 1973), which directly parallels the plot of Lee's *Chinese Connection/ Fist of Fury* (精武門 1972) (both films were directed by Lo Wei). Like Hu, Cheng also drifted, and she also eventually settled in the United States. Over the years, she took up occasional roles in films such as *Wing Chun* (詠春 1994), in which she plays the eponymous heroine's *kungfu* master, and *Painted Faces* (七小福 1988), in which she plays an opera diva, based on Fen Ju Hua (粉菊花), friendly with the Peking Opera master Yu Zhanyuan (于占元), who trained Jackie Chan, Sammo Hung (洪金寶), and Yuen Biao (元彪).

Ang Lee, the director of *The Wedding Banquet* (喜宴 1993) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (飲食男女 1994), not surprisingly takes up the invitation to *Come Drink with Me* by incorporating so many elements of King Hu's film into his own *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2002). Although Lee clearly draws on other *wuxiapian* as well, including the Cheng Pei-pei vehicle, *Lady Hermit* (鍾馗娘子 1970), which also features a relationship between a female martial arts master and her female student, King Hu's oeuvre seems to be at the center of Lee's blockbuster. In addition to casting Cheng Pei-pei as the villainous Jade Fox, Lee freely lifts key elements from Hu's film, including the face-off of a single female

warrior in disguise (Zhang Ziyi 章子怡 as Jen) against a group of men in an inn, the use of *qinggong* to flit across rooftops in a heated chase, and the preferred use of poison rather than the sword for the most heinous assassinations. Lee also draws liberally from King Hu's other films (including *Dragon Gate Inn*, *A Touch of Zen*, etc.), and the question of whether Lee's channeling of King Hu's spirit has anything to do with the continuing legacy of the Cold War comes up. Assembling a transnational Chinese cast with Hong Kong, Taiwan, the People's Republic, and the overseas Chinese of the Nanyang amply represented, using a script first written in English, Ang Lee returns to *Come Drink with Me* as part of the ongoing battle over an imagined and imaginary China in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Like King Hu, Ang Lee is a multiply displaced mainlander whose family ended up in Taiwan because of Mao's victory, and who also has wandered the Greater Chinese world plying his trade as a filmmaker while choosing the United States as his residence. Clearly captivated by the martial arts novels and films of his Cold War childhood, Lee pits all the representatives of a splintered China against each other with himself, like director King Hu, in charge of their orchestration. The powerful mainland woman (Zhang Ziyi, another trained dancer, taking over from Cheng Pei-pei) becomes the spiritual bone of contention among competing factions, and Jade Fox, evoking the androgynous emblem of a China in exile from a previous generation, lurks as the source of the problem. While imagining the PRC jumping into the abyss in the figure of Jen/ Zhang Ziyi might work for some and the image of Jade Fox expiring in the muck of her cavernous lair may work for others, the culture wars persist, and Zhang Yimou (張藝謀) answers with his own highly ideological film *Hero* (英雄 2002).<sup>27</sup>

Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) has not only praised Lee and his films on a number of occasions, he recently pointed to *Brokeback Mountain* (2005)'s gay love story as an apt metaphor of US-Taiwan relations at a time when Chen was provoking the wrath of the PRC by eliminating the National Uni-

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27 See Evans Chan, "Zhang Yimou's *Hero* — The Temptations of Fascism." *Film International* #8 (March 2004). <<http://www.filmint.nu/netonly/eng/heroevanschan.htm>>.

fication Council.<sup>28</sup> Gay men seem adept at filling the allegorical gap vacated by the androgynous woman warrior of the mid-1960s — both point to a moral high ground of tolerance and desire for equality at the service ultimately of a Cold War cultural battle that continues to rage. Ang Lee seems to have, like King Hu and Cheng Pei-pei, voted with his feet and made his preferences quite clear with his choices. However, Lee's work continues to be fuel for Cold War fires, and how Golden Swallow re-imagined as Jade Fox rises from these ashes remains a moot point.

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28 See Chang Yun-ping, "Brokeback Mountain sets good example, Chen says," *Taipei Times*, Feb 24, 2006. <<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2006/02/24/2003294381>>. Lee and Chen, in fact, are graduates from the same high school, the Tainan First High School, where Lee's father (now deceased) had served as principal.