

LOOKING GLASS: HONG KONG

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GUMSHOE



Pelgrane Press

LOOKING GLASS:

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HONG KONG

香港

ONCE THE OUTPOST OF A EUROPEAN EMPIRE, now an anomalous city on the edge of an Asian one, Hong Kong clings to the southern coast of the People's Republic of China, and a tenuous quasi-autonomy as one of the PRC's two Special Administrative Regions (SARs). Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842 as part of a trade deal that didn't pan out the way the British hoped — they wanted unlimited commercial rights in China, not an island with a nice harbour but no fresh water — and became a thriving free port. In 1898 the colony was expanded by the lease of the New Territories. When that lease ran out in 1997, the New Territories were returned to China, and the rest of Hong Kong handed over along with them. With visa-free entry for most nationalities, and direct flights to all over the world, Hong Kong is a good place to escape to in a hurry: it was the first port of call for American whistleblower Edward Snowden in 2013.

HONG KONG - ONE LOOK

POPULATION

7 million (a little more than Los Angeles and Chicago combined)

LANGUAGES

Cantonese, English; Indonesian and Tagalog among domestic servants; Mandarin is spoken by mainland visitors and the businesses that cater to them.

CURRENCY

Hong Kong dollar, pegged to the US dollar at US\$1 = HK\$7.75–7.85

BEST HOTEL

The Peninsula is the oldest hotel in Hong Kong, opened in 1928. It collects guests from the airport with a fleet of 14 signature dark green Rolls-Royce limos. It houses seven restaurants, two bars, and a shopping arcade on the ground floor with branches of Prada, Chanel, Tiffany & Co., and Hermès, among others. Rooms are priced from HK\$3,880/night. On the top floor, the 411 sqm Peninsula Suite commands a view over the harbour through huge plate-glass windows, and can be had for HK\$128,000 a night. There's a private helipad on the roof.

BAD NEIGHBORHOODS

Sham Shui Po is the poorest district in Hong Kong, blighted by urban decay and heavy triad presence. Ailiu Street market and the Golden Computer Centre are hotspots for the sale of cheap electronics. Kwun Tong, developed as a new town with several housing estates in the 1950s, is a declining industrial area and the most densely populated district of the city, packed with low-income tower blocks.

SPECIAL EFFECTS RULES

The Difficulty of tests made to acquire black-market weapons, drugs or money-laundering services in Hong Kong is 1 lower than normal. In *Night's Black Agents*, all Heat gains are doubled due to the high number of police and other state watchdogs per capita (see *The Dracula Dossier Director's Handbook*, p. 230). Characters unused to the humidity are at -1 to all tests until they get a chance to cool down.

By default, all chases in the urban areas of Hong Kong are Cramped. Chases in the country are Open. Setting up a Normal chase in either case requires an Urban Survival spend.

Hong Kong is hot and humid most of the year round, even when it's raining. During the typhoon and monsoon season, the locals are constantly on the look-out for the "T8" typhoon warning or "Black" storm signal, because that's when they get the day off work.

Hong Kong Island (Cantonese 香港島 *hēunggóng dóu*) gives the city its name and is the centre of the territory's government, finance and international trade. Commonly referred to simply as "the Island", it's steep; basically a mountain rising out of the sea, which means that people mostly live round the edges near the shore. The higher up the hills you go, the richer people get. The upper middle classes, and expats with a fat accommodation allowance, live in the Mid-Levels, accessed by a string of escalators from Central district. The highest point is found at the Peak – officially Victoria Peak, but no one calls it that – and only the very wealthy can afford to live there.

Across the harbor from the Island is **Kowloon**, (Cantonese 九龍 *gáulühng* "nine dragons"). The Kowloon Peninsula stretches from Tsim Sha Tsui in the south to Boundary Street in the north, once the border with China. The area between Boundary Street and the mountains to the north, including the iconic Lion Rock, is generally referred to as part of Kowloon, although it's officially in the New Territories. This crammed urban area runs from Kwun Tong a major industrial area and Hong Kong's most densely populated district, in the east, to Sham Shui Po, Hong Kong's poorest district, in the west.

Though the Island houses Hong Kong's elite, and the New Territories have most of its land, Kowloon is arguably the city's heart. Its 47 square kilometres are home to over two million Hongkongers, with sizeable public housing like the Shek Kip Mei and Tsui Ping Estates creating some of the world's most densely populated areas. This is also the site of "cage homes", where Hong Kong's massive wealth inequality pushes the poorest of the poor – unskilled labourers, the elderly, drug addicts and the disabled – dozens to a

room into what the government officially calls "bedspace apartments". Hong Kong has low numbers of homeless people, in part because a bunk bed, surrounded by chicken wire and padlocked shut when you're away, counts as a home.

Yau Tsim Mong is Kowloon's downtown, comprising three distinct areas – Yau Ma Tei, Mongkok and Tsim Sha Tsui – all packed with shops and restaurants. Mongkok is the neon-lit, 24-hour scene from *Blade Runner*, while Tsim Sha Tsui has steadily climbed upmarket to cater to the tourist trade, driving out local residents and businesses. Yau Ma Tei is quieter, more old-fashioned, and home to the busy Temple Street night market.

The New Territories (Cantonese 新界 *sāngaai* "new border") dwarf both Kowloon and Hong Kong Island in area, stretching from Kowloon up to the border with Shenzhen. Much of this land is sparsely populated by Hong Kong standards, with small villages and mountainous countryside predominating. Beginning in the 1950s, the government began to build new towns, originally to house refugee squatters. These densely populated, self-contained satellite towns now pack in a population of around three million in total, while leaving most of the New Territories reserved for conservation. Sai Kung district, in the north-east, is

a popular hiking destination reached mainly by minibus. Sai Kung Town itself attracts visitors for seafood, fishing, and junk trips.

Many villages in the New Territories look like permanent construction sites, with new-build houses resembling compact mansions sitting cheek by jowl with one another, often to the point that it is near impossible for vehicles to pass through. The reason for this is the Small House Policy, a law enacted in 1972 to improve the low standard of village housing. Intended as a temporary measure, it is still in force, allowing any adult male descendant of an 1898 New Territories resident the right to build a "small" house within his village boundaries. The mini-mansion effect is the product of building out to the maximum allowed dimensions, and often illegally beyond. As more and more such descendants reach the age of 18, more and more houses spring up. Arguments over these land rights have led to many feuds, which sometimes turned violent. But clan politics still hold great sway in the New Territories, as does the Heung Yee Kuk villagers' association, a powerful pro-Beijing bloc in the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (LegCo), so the police are often reluctant to intervene.

A major town in Yuen Long district is Tin Shui Wai, built on reclaimed land to

TYPHOON MEMORIES

"Typhoons were awe-inspiring happenings. At the first sign of the coming of a typhoon, signals were hoisted, so that people could prepare. The sampan and junk people took their boats to the typhoon shelters, and the Naval and merchant ships went to the middle of the harbour to "ride out" the storm. Typhoons came in the heat of the summer. At first there was a queer stillness, a dark grey sky and a little rain.

Offices and shops closed, and everyone hurried to catch the last ferries or trams to get home. Then the last signal went up, and our houses were made safe by closing and barring the wooden shutters over the windows, and shutting every door. The rain

came, and the wind started blowing, harder and harder. It was so hot indoors with everything closed up, we

felt stifled. And the wind howled and shrieked, and trees were uprooted, branches torn off, and everything loose in the streets would fly. People were knocked over – you couldn't stand in such a wind – and sometimes ships were sunk in the harbour. Once Audrey and I tried to go outside our house in a typhoon, but we were soon knocked over and had to crawl back indoors."

- Memoirs of Betty Steel,
1934



JUNK PARTIES

Some say those who haven't "done" a junk party haven't lived in Hong Kong, but were only visiting. This may come as news to octogenarian refugees of the Chinese Civil War, but it's still a popular activity. Some might imagine a junk party as a serene cruise on a traditional sailing boat. The reality is a motorised yacht – either sleek modern metal, or wood-built in more or less the classic style – with a sound system, inflatables, food, and as much booze as the partygoers can drink while floating around in the sea. The junk party is the spiritual descendant of the steam-powered "launch picnic" of the early 20th century. Organisers hire a junk for the day, pick up the revellers at

a public pier (usually in Central, Tsim Sha Tsui or Sai Kung), and set out for somewhere picturesque, maybe with a beach that can be swum to for a post-prandial sense of achievement. In the summer months it's hard to find a bay that doesn't already have another party junk in it.

Agents wishing to get close to a coastal location, such as one of the hyper-expensive villas on the Island's south coast, might do well to invite two dozen semi-strangers on a junk party as a cover. One popular junk-party bay lies right under the walls of Stanley Prison, if the scenario calls for a jailbreak.

house a population of around 270,000. It was dubbed the 'city of sadness' for its high suicide rates, cemented by a string of high-profile murder-suicides in the mid 2000s. Authorities and sociologists pointed to low incomes, low employment and a large number of possibly alienated immigrant families from the mainland as causes, but these problems are hardly peculiar to Tin Shui Wai.

The New Territories also includes the Outlying Islands: the remainder of Hong Kong's islands, islets and rocks in the middle of the sea, numbering in the hundreds. Most are uninhabited, but the district includes Lantau Island, the largest in the SAR.

Lantau is mostly rural – water buffalo

and wild dogs can often be found wandering around the roads – but it is also home to some of Hong Kong's more high-profile developments. As well as the airport and Hong Kong Disneyland, Lantau is the location of privately managed residential area Discovery Bay, favoured by airline pilots and mid-tier financiers raising a family. Golf carts rather than cars roam the streets between the identikit homes, and the overall effect is as if *The Prisoner* did a crossover episode with *The O.C.*

Lamma is a car-free island 25 minutes by ferry from Central, popular with expats able to cope without having all mod cons on hand. The island fills up with hikers and daytrippers every weekend, and the seafood restaurants do

a roaring trade. Sights include Sok Kwu Wan fishing village, scenic walks, and a huge power station. The stereotypes of the expat population as organic food-eating, weed-smoking hippies hold some truth, but are predictably reductive. Most ethnic Chinese residents work in fishing or at the power station. Conflict on the island centres on redevelopment, and the tendency of wealthy absentee indigenous families to build gigantic tombs out of poured concrete without permission.

No account of Hong Kong would be complete without a mention of its neighbours. Shenzhen is the city right across the border, and it was the driver of huge change in Hong Kong as it developed from a farming area to a commercial boomtown following China's "reform & opening up" policy of the 1980s and 90s. Shenzhen is the main entry point for the deluge of mainland tourists, small-time smugglers and property speculators that has brought Hong Kong prosperity and/or ruin, depending on whom you ask. Hoteliers, jewellers and estate agents generally approve of the trade; local residents unable to afford a flat, and owners of businesses serving local customers, are not as keen.

Macau, meanwhile, is the alternate universe version of Hong Kong. A Portuguese colony rather than British, the colonial power encouraged integration between colonists and locals, and everyone was given the option to relocate to the "mother country" before the handover to China. Today, Macau

has two faces: The garish, billion-dollar casino industry centred on the recently reclaimed land of the Cotai Strip, and the sleepy colonial streets of the old town, which close for the Grand Prix once a year like a mini-Monaco.

GATEWAYS

Overseas travellers arrive at the big, shiny Hong Kong International Airport, built on reclaimed land on the north side of Lantau Island. From there, it's a quick train ride to Kowloon or Hong Kong Island, or a somewhat slower bus ride to other parts of the territory.

From mainland China, visitors must come through the border city of Shenzhen (though a direct train doesn't have to stop there), and will arrive and go through customs at Hung Hom, not far from Victoria Harbour. Other than direct trains, arrivals by land go through both Chinese and Hong Kong border formalities at the crossing points in Lok Ma Chau or Lo Wu. Bus passengers must get off and bring their luggage across the border before reboarding. An alternative is to walk a couple of hundred yards and

get on the MTR, Hong Kong's metro system, which goes from the border to Tsim Sha Tsui, and a view of the famous Island skyline, in about an hour and a half.

MARKETS AND MASSES —

Tsim Sha Tsui, at the southern tip of the Kowloon peninsula, is the destination for many, if not most, mainland shoppers. Major international luxury brands can be found here, particularly along Canton Road. Nathan Road, a north-south avenue running the length of Kowloon, is the major thoroughfare — its southern terminus is the Peninsula Hotel. Nearby are Kowloon Mosque, and the legendary Chungking Mansions, 17 floors of dirt-cheap accommodation, Indian restaurants, shops, drug dealers and whatever else Agents might want. It's also one of the most culturally diverse places in Hong Kong, with thousands of people of all nationalities, notably from India, Nepal and sub-Saharan Africa, living there or passing through.

Tsim Sha Tsui is also the home of the iconic Star Ferry, which crosses the water to Hong Kong Island in a matter of

minutes. The ferry docks at Central Pier 7, adjacent to the piers for the ferries to the islands of Lamma, Lantau, Cheung Chau and Peng Chau — and not far from the towers of the International Finance Centre, which Batman broke into in *The Dark Knight*.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Most recent big-money retail or residential developments include public spaces, to sweeten the deal with the government (Hong Kong's only landowner) over the building plans. The rooftop between the two IFC towers, for example, is open to the public, and has free seating. This can be handy for spies who need to get a closer look at somewhere with tight security, although the private owners often make finding the public areas difficult. They may also adopt spoiling tactics — on Sundays, when most Filipino maids have their day off, the public seats are often moved away, or hosed down with water “for cleaning”.



On the Island, Causeway Bay is the other major destination for visitors on a shopping spree, with a more mixed range of goods on offer, from high-end Louis Vuittons to unbranded clothes and toys. Grey-market traders openly sell iPhones right outside the Apple Store here.

The major retail draw in Causeway Bay is the Times Square mall, a nine-storey temple to consumerism. In a quieter side street nearby is a bookshop-cum-cafe called the People's Recreation Community, which does a thriving trade in books that are banned on the mainland. Another nearby source of dissident publications, Causeway Bay Books, has seen five of its staff members go missing since October 2015, apparently abducted by the mainland Chinese security apparatus.

Further inland from Causeway Bay is Hong Kong Stadium. For most of the year, events here struggle to fill the 40,000 seats. That changes every summer on the weekend of the Hong Kong Sevens, a seven-a-side rugby tournament which

draws visitors from around the world – chiefly Australia, New Zealand and Britain – and by night, floods the bar-filled streets of Wan Chai and Central with revellers, many still in fancy dress from an afternoon in the infamously debauched South Stand.

Hong Kong also has more traditional tourist attractions, including Disneyland, the Ngong Ping cable car, the Big Buddha on Lantau Island, and Ocean Park's collection of amusements, rides and zoo exhibits, both aquatic and land-dwelling, on the south side of Hong Kong Island, near Aberdeen and the Jumbo Floating Restaurant.

Long favoured by American sailors on shore leave, Wan Chai is one of the city's red-light districts, catering mainly to the foreign visitor. Noisy bar fronts open onto the street along the length of the main strip on Lockhart Road, interspersed with working girls and mama-sans outside the girlie bars, doing their best to catch the eye of any passing wealthy-looking man. The bar names often hark back to the pubs of Britain and Ireland – the White Stag, the

Canny Man, the Old China Hand – while the strip clubs are usually named after something not likely to be found inside, such as California, Romance, or Love. At the far end of the main Wan Chai drag, tiny rock'n'roll bar The Wanch has live music every night, and no cover charge. Sooner or later, every band in Hong Kong plays there.

The bars of Lan Kwai Fong in Central are popular with a wide cross-section of foreign drinkers and locals who like to drink with foreigners. Up the hill at Wyndham Street, the drinks are pricier, so the clientele is more restricted to Hong Kong's Patrick Bateman set. Wyndham Street links up with the Central–Mid-Levels escalator and the bars and restaurants either side of it in SoHo, which in Hong Kong is short for “south of Hollywood Road”.

THREE BACKDROPS

Backdrops are what you set your stories against. They might be the main setting, a scenic or thematic element, or just somewhere to stage a fight scene.

CEMETERY

A pleasant view is a priority for the dead in Hong Kong, and many cemeteries overlook the sea.

The Chinese Christian cemetery at Pok Fu Lam, on the western side of Hong Kong Island, faces Lamma Island across a busy shipping channel, and covers a whole mountainside. With thousands of graves, there are plenty of places to hide here, and it's ideal for a nocturnal variation on the “race to the grave” sequence in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, preferably amid thunder, lightning and lashing rain.

Hong Kong's columbariums, where cremated remains are kept, offer less for the action sequence, but provide a quiet backdrop for a meet with an informant, and perhaps some laconic musing on mortality.

THE PENINSULA HOTEL

Perhaps the grandest hotel in Hong Kong and, if not, certainly the one with the grandest history. The Peninsula is close to the shore in Tsim Sha Tsui, overlooking the harbour and Hong Kong Island beyond. Opened in 1928, the hotel

MEETING CONTACTS

In a city as dense as Hong Kong, there are plenty of places to meet someone, but few that are away from prying eyes and ears. Options include:

- **Urban parks:** Most contain traditional Chinese design elements which can hide a conversation from view, such as screening walls, tile-roofed pavilions, and stands of trees or bamboo. Tiny public spaces called “sitting-out areas”, crammed between buildings and under noisy flyovers, have benches and boards for *jeuhng kái* (“Chinese chess”).
- **Country parks:** The easiest way to avoid people is to go really far away. Country parks cover huge swathes of the territory, and offer miles of rugged and secluded countryside. Go on the weekend for maximum discretion: the trails are crowded with hikers, and it's easy to slip away from the beaten track to a rendezvous.
- **Car parks:** The multi-storey parking garage is a spy classic, and Hong Kong Island has plenty of underground ones.

- **Restaurants:** A crowded *cha chaan teng* is good for passing a concealed note, but not for a quiet chat. For that, go for yum cha at an expensive dim sum place (the kind with carved wooden folding screens).
- **Sporting events:** Local sports are sparsely attended, which makes it hard to get lost in the crowd. The exceptions are the horse racing at Happy Valley and Sha Tin racecourses, and the annual Rugby Sevens tournament at Hong Kong Stadium.
- **High Culture:** Head to the Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui and slip quietly into the seat next to a contact at a performance by the HK Philharmonic, or the Hong Kong Ballet. Or mingle with the crowd at a festive performance of Cantonese opera on a temporary stage, on Hill Road in Shek Tong Tsui, or on Lamma Island.

retains its period decor, and has a fleet of Rolls-Royces for VIP guests. Meet your CIA contact in the men's room with the best view in the world, adjacent to the top-floor jazz bar; or perhaps at tea in the lobby, one table over from Jean-Claude van Damme, a lobby regular.

CHEUNG CHAU BUN FESTIVAL

Every year in the fourth lunar month (usually in April or May), a week-long festival of thanksgiving takes place on the island of Cheung Chau. For

the final three days, the whole island goes vegetarian, including the local McDonalds, which replaces all its burgers with the "McVeggie" for the duration.

The festivities culminate on the eighth day of the month with the Piu Sik ("floating colours") parade, which features lion and dragon dances, and small children carried at shoulder height, but suspended on metal frames engineered to make them look as if they are supported only by sword-tips or

paper fans. The children are dressed as celebrities, or supernatural beings.

Also on the eighth day of the month is the "bun-snatching" competition at the Pak Tai temple, in which contestants race to reach the top of a 14-metre tower of buns and grab as many of the baked goods as they can (higher buns score more points).

CONFLICTS

A major conflict in Hong Kong is that between rich and poor. Government policy and Beijing's political agenda skews strongly in favour of the rich, and tensions are on the rise as a large and rising percentage of the population live in poverty. Despite the city's trappings of great wealth, around a fifth of people in Hong Kong are below the official poverty line, including 72% of the elderly.

This situation plays into another conflict—control vs freedom. The Chinese government originally propped up Hong Kong's tycoon caste as a method of retaining stability immediately after the 1997 handover. That support continues, but with waning enthusiasm among some officials. The conditions of the handover included clauses guaranteeing

universal suffrage for Hong Kong, as well as continued judicial independence, and freedom of expression. Universal suffrage has yet to materialise, and proposed legislation to restrict Chief Executive elections to candidates greenlit by the Communist Party led to the Umbrella Movement protests of 2014. Increased pressure from Beijing on local institutions since then has created a large movement of young activists who advocate total independence for Hong Kong. Freedom of expression, the press, academia and the judiciary have all been slowly but surely curtailed over recent years.

The older generation, many of whom have personal memories of the Cultural Revolution and the refugee camps of the 60s, tend to side with the forces of control and stability. The young, finding themselves with little to look forward to under the current system, increasingly reject the importance of "stability above all".

FACTIONS

This section introduces the likely main players in GUMSHOE games set in the city, including local law enforcement, and any sufficiently colourful or interesting national law enforcement, security, or intelligence outfit with jurisdiction here.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Hong Kong's triads boast a history going back to the Qing dynasty in the

18th century. They started in opium trading and a little light anti-Qing rebellion, and today their main rackets are extortion, narcotics, counterfeiting, money laundering and – most recently – medical fraud. Extortion is perhaps the most visible locally, in the form of protection rackets, and illegal monopolies over minibus routes and other businesses. The Hong Kong Police Force records over 2,000 crimes each year as "triad-related", with perhaps a third of them classified as violent.

Major triads include the Sun Yee On, Wo Shing Wo, 14K and Shui Fong. Sun Yee On is the largest triad, with an estimated 60,000 members. The 14K has fewer than half that number, but is Sun Yee On's main rival, and has arguably been more successful in expanding its operations in western countries. Wo Shing Wo is one of the oldest triad societies, and still uses the traditional

SHOPPING MALLS

Malls are very important in Hong Kong. From the glitzy flagship stores of Central to the crammed-together mini-stores of Yau Ma Tei, the city is full of them. Factors driving this obsession include the climate and the real estate market. Hong Kong apartments are too small to spend much time in, so people go out. But outside is too humid to do much, so people prefer to spend time indoors where there's air conditioning, and malls are happy to provide stuff to buy and a food court with it. Any story set in Hong Kong should feature at least one visit to a mall.

SOMETIMES THEY'RE JUST ANGRY

Although the triads usually turn to violence for business reasons, they're only human. In June 2015, a Sun Yee On boss got into a contretemps with some nightclub doormen around 2am at a bar on Lan Kwai Fong street, and decided to call in backup. The anti-triad squad got wind of this through their sources, and the police were on hand to step in as the troops arrived: they arrested 109 men aged between 14 and 51.

Hongmen initiation ceremonies. Shui Fong originated as a workers' union at a now-defunct soft drinks company – in the 1990s, Shui Fong and 14K were the two main sides in the bloody gang war that erupted in the run-up to Macau's handover to China.

One of the triads' key moves in recent years was to get on the Communist Party's good side, beginning as early as the 1980s. The Sun Yee On triad in particular has connections to the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and has provided security for Chinese dignitaries abroad.

Triads have their claws deep into Hong Kong's entertainment industry – music, TV and movies. In 2013, the production of the Michael Bay-helmed *Transformers: Age of Extinction* was targeted by triads for extortion during location filming in Hong Kong, although arguably the real crime was *Transformers: Age of Extinction*. Triad involvement is also one reason gangsters have been so romanticised in Hong Kong movies over the years.

GOALS AND STORIES

By and large, the triads are all about money. That's their goal – the violence is just a sometimes necessary adjunct to the job. Today's triads will consider any business venture, legal or illegal, and are willing to work together with

THE MOVIES

Like many other Hong Kong industries such as printing and manufacturing, making films has largely moved to the mainland, where labour is cheaper. But the production companies (and the triads) are still HK-based, and if you set your film in Hong Kong, that's where you have to do your location shooting. The relatively compact footprint of urban areas means that it's hard to find out-of-the-way places for city locations, so even in busy areas like Mongkok and Central you'll often see movie or TV drama crews shooting a scene. Or in the case of player characters, not so much "see" as "drive through at high speed, embroil in a hostage situation, or disguise themselves as".

rival gangs. When violence breaks out, it's a big deal and triads often go for the spectacular in order to shame their rivals and/or the police. Once such incident occurred in 2009, when the Wo Shing Wo triad carried out a hit on Lee Tai-lung, the Sun Yee On triad boss of Tsim Sha Tsui. The assailants knocked Lee down with a car in front of the luxury Shangri-La hotel in broad daylight before hacking him to death with machetes. A turf war followed for Lee's Tsim Sha Tsui business, contested between Wo Shing Wo and several Sun Yee On underbosses.

In 1989, Operation Yellowbird helped over 400 dissidents on China's "most wanted" list escape to safety abroad during the post-Tiananmen crackdown. Hong Kong activists including pro-democracy leader Szeto Wah and singer (and star of *The Heroic Trio*) Anita Mui enlisted "Brother Six" Chan Tat-ming, head of a Sun Yee On smuggling outfit, to spirit the dissidents away with the aid of British and American intelligence services.

THE COPS

Hong Kong has the second highest ratio of police to citizens in the world, though even with 40,000 members, there are still far more triad society associates than cops. Until recently, Hong Kong's police had a reputation for being "the pride of Asia" – they were, broadly speaking, good at their job and unlike many Asian police forces – those of China or Japan, say – they would wait for you to commit a crime before hassling you. That reputation has been tarnished in the last decade or so by a series of incidents that suggest the Hong Kong Police Force is starting to become a political tool. Critics of the government have been harassed and detained, while acts of violence and disorder by grassroots (and astroturf) pro-Beijing groups have gone unpunished. Recently retired commissioner Andy Tsang was widely seen as a puppet of Beijing, enforcing the Communist Party's will rather than the law. The police's status in the eyes of ordinary Hongkongers took a battering after the inept handling of the 2014 "Umbrella Movement" protests, in which police commanders were quick to hand out punishment by baton and tear gas. This swelled the ranks

of the protestors with outraged citizens, protectively rallying round the young demonstrators.

China's Ministry of State Security (MSS) does operate in Hong Kong, though few details of its activities are public knowledge. One that is known is the surveillance of pro-democracy figures, though this was only confirmed in 2014, when Hong Kong police officers arrested an MSS surveillance team tailing Democratic Party lawmaker James To. The MSS works in conjunction with other Chinese intelligence agencies, "patriotic" retired HK police officers, and the United Front Work Department, a branch of the Chinese Communist Party which funds and coordinates soft-power initiatives abroad.

GOALS AND STORIES

Most cops just want a quiet life like everyone else. Which means keeping the peace, enforcing the law and, increasingly these days, arresting who they're told to. That pressure creates an "us vs them" divide between the citizens and the police, and causes grumbling in the ranks as they face public distrust and insults in the street.

The formerly good reputation of the HK police is pretty recent. After World War 2, corruption became rife in Hong Kong's public life. Nothing got done without paying a little "tea money" in advance. The police wouldn't investigate crimes, and even firemen wouldn't put out fires, without a cash incentive up-front. The situation came to a head in the 70s when senior policeman Peter Godber absconded with millions in bribes. Public outcry prompted the creation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), and a massive crackdown on the civil service. Hong Kong is still home to its fair share of shady finance, but paying bribes isn't the daily occurrence it used to be.

THE TYCOONS

Every dollar you spend in Hong Kong goes, sooner or later, to one of five men: Li Ka-shing, Thomas and Raymond Kwok, Lee Shau-kee or Cheng Yu-tung. There are other plutocrats in Hong Kong, but those are the most important.

Hong Kong was always designed to serve business ahead of the inhabitants

– that was the whole point of Britain getting it off China in the first place. The power and wealth of these tycoons, whose dominance of the Hong Kong business landscape is based largely on property development, is the product of decades of government policy, aimed at allowing a “free” market and pushing up property prices. They’re not a cartel, although sometimes they act like it, and between them they own most of the office and apartment buildings in the city, and have monopolies or duopolies over everything from utilities to supermarkets. Importantly, this isn’t illegal. They didn’t make the system, they just benefit from it.

GOALS AND STORIES

The current generation of tycoons built up fortunes that they try to pass on to

their descendants. But where papa made his bones through knowing a little something about business (Li Ka-shing, Asia’s richest man, borrowed money from friends and family to start manufacturing plastic flowers), the next generation grew up in luxury and seem to cause nothing but headaches for their parents. Either they’re uninterested or inept at business, or their private lives are not what their parents had in mind – the less said about Cecil Chao’s increasing offers of multi-million dollar dowries for his daughter Gigi, who has zero interest in marrying a man, the better.

Nina Wang was Asia’s richest woman, worth over US\$4 billion at the time of her death in 2007. She always wore her hair in pigtails and favoured traditional Chinese dresses. Her husband Teddy was kidnapped twice. The second time,

he never came back – and in 1999, he was declared dead. Nina was the sole beneficiary of his will and made the family firm, Chinachem, even richer by diversifying into real estate. Teddy Tower, which sits alongside the smaller Nina Tower in Tsuen Wan, was intended to be the world’s tallest building – but planning restrictions limited it to a mere 320m. When Nina died, her personal feng shui consultant and (according to him) secret lover Tony Chan stepped forward to claim her estate. He was immediately challenged by the Wang family trust and, after a series of murky legal wranglings, Chan was convicted of fraud and sentenced to 12 years in jail.

HONG KONG STORIES

The perennial tagline for Hong Kong is “east meets west”, but it’s just as much as place where east meets east. It’s a city of new arrivals. Even though they might not like to admit it, most Hongkongers are originally from immigrant families. Everyone comes to Hong Kong with a history, which can never really be left behind. Hong Kong stories are about the weight of the past upon the present, and an uncertain future.

Hong Kong has attracted traders and refugees from far and wide since its earliest recorded days. Punti (“local”) immigrants from the north settled in the area from the 6th century onwards. In the centuries that followed, Hakka and “Tanka” people arrived, as did Portuguese, British, American, and other western missionaries and traders. In the 20th century, Hong Kong’s population was swelled by refugees from the Chinese civil wars and the Communist government.

New arrivals were not always warmly welcomed. The Punti–Hakka clan wars of the 19th century, for example, left around a million dead across the province of Guangdong, and traces of the conflict linger still in Hong Kong. Non-Chinese residents of Hong Kong,

particularly ethnic Indians, Indonesians and Filipinos, continue to suffer widespread discrimination today.

The most noticeable influx in recent years has been Mandarin-speaking mainland Chinese. Mainlanders have been coming (or escaping) to Hong Kong for centuries but historically, they learned to speak Cantonese quickly if they couldn’t already. Wealthier Mandarin speakers today simply don’t need to, while less well-off people like university students find themselves part of the “Hong Kong drifter” phenomenon, isolated from both the society around them, and their friends and family back home.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

In the classic *Trail of Cthulhu* era of the interwar years, Hong Kong perches at the edge of a China that is fractured and wartorn. Even after the nominal unification of the Republic of China in 1928 officially ends the warlord era, the Republic is never fully under the control of the government, and pressure from Japan increases, until a full-scale invasion initiates the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Hong Kong stories of the time, then, are tales of power-brokering

between Chinese and foreign factions, espionage, the smuggling of people and supplies through the port, and refugees fleeing to the new life that the port-city promises.

THE ESOTERRORISTS

Esoterror operations in Hong Kong are likely to play upon two of the city’s key fears – of disease, and of the dead. In the former case, Hong Kong is a hypochondriac city. Pseudo-scientific medical quackery abounds, from traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, to technobabble cosmetic treatments alleged to extend life. The city’s history of disease, from bubonic plague in the 1890s, to the 1968 flu pandemic, to SARS and swine flu, casts a long shadow. Visits to doctors, who always prescribe at least five kinds of pills, are frequent, and Hongkongers spend huge amounts of money on private medical procedures and tests.

Meanwhile, the dead haunt the living. Hungry ghosts must be appeased, ghost villages exhibit uncanny phenomena, and hauntings are accepted as a fact that can lower the market value of your home.



Hong Kong is a prime location for corpsejabbers, the Glistening and nesters. Returners, meanwhile, recall the form of the legendary *si-yuhk* 視肉, a creature attested in Chinese texts as far back as the Han dynasty. It resembles a lump of meat with two eyes, and can be eaten but always grows its meat back. The *si-yuhk* experienced a popular resurgence in the 2010s, with a number of “fake” reports and sightings in Mainland media.

FEAR ITSELF

In *Fear Itself*, play up the the alienating effect of isolation within one of the most densely packed places on Earth. A hiker with a broken leg lies on a hillside, only 50m from a busy town centre, unable to be heard as the sun sets. By night, the day-to-day landscape of abandoned factories and warehouses, parking garages and housing estates, becomes

empty and unfriendly, with nowhere to hide: lonely expanses of concrete, far from any form of help. A monstrous killer stalks you through the jostling crowds of the Ladies’ Market, but no one else sees it, or acknowledges your fear. In the midst of a faceless crowd, you are alone.

NIGHT’S BLACK AGENTS

Hong Kong is often the last chance to catch up with someone before they slip out of sight. A transit and cargo hub on the edge of an autocracy, Hong Kong is ideally suited to tales of smuggling, abduction and human trafficking. As a relatively neutral point on the Pacific Rim, with slow-moving extradition processes, Agents may come here specifically to meet contacts who have difficulty travelling to other jurisdictions: Russian or Chinese dissidents, for example, West

Papuan separatists, Iranian officials, or any number of central or west Asians on American terrorist watchlists.

You can use Hong Kong as a modern-day equivalent to the role West Berlin plays in post-WW2 spy dramas: it’s a speck of room to manoeuvre, just on the edge of an authoritarian state.

HONG KONG VAMPIRES

Alien

A weird glowing meteorite is as likely to fall on Hong Kong as on any other thousand-square-kilometre patch of the Earth. Aside from that, if you’re shipping something weird and extraterrestrial by sea, there’s a good chance it’ll pass through the container port here. Alien vampires might break out while their ship is in port, and escape into the city. Ship crew and unfortunate stevedores are likely first victims of the eerie extraterrestrial radiation that turns people into vampires.

For an alien vampire menace more thematically Hong Kong, consider an incursion of bloodsuckers whose behaviour mirrors the “locusts” from the mainland—a somewhat unkind pejorative for mainlanders who drain wealth from the city, by hyper-gentrifying once mixed business-residential districts into nothing but luxury shopping outlets, and using the real estate market as a place to store cash beyond the reach of mainland anti-corruption probes. Those empty apartments with their inflated prices in locations that seem totally unlivable? Sure, some of them are being used to squirrel away assets by Party cadres in the provinces. But some of those officials are cut-outs, setting up havens for their alien vampire masters: it’s true no one is living in those flats, but they’re home to unliving bodies inhabited by interstellar intelligences. They choose penthouses and upper floors because their alien physiology can’t survive for long below a certain altitude.

Alien vampires need not be physical in form. A pattern of sounds from the stars, sent to Earth by chance, or design from outer space, recycles itself in the piped music of a declining shopping mall in Kowloon City. The music lodges in the visitors’ brains, and they become mall vampires. By day they abandon their

old lives, shambling around the mall in a meaningless cycle of transactions. By night they hunt, venturing out into the city to drain Health and bring it back to be consumed by the mall-hive.

Mutant

Contamination of food and water is a fear that looms large in Hong Kong. Impurities often cause health problems, particularly in children and the elderly. In a world with mutant vampires, those problems can only be magnified.

In Shek Tong Tsui, away from the main streets and close to the docks, a butcher's shop stands open to the elements, beside a small park and an old, sinister shrine, at the nexus of several alleyways. Rats infest the area, but the pork chops from the Ng family's shop carries a more potent risk. Sourced from a farm over the border

in Guangdong, the latest shipment of pig carcasses contains a brain disease hitherto unknown to science. Those infected develop elongated canine teeth, and a taste for human blood.

Damned

Professing the existence of reincarnation, traditional Chinese cosmology largely precludes the prospect of eternal damnation. Though usually translated as Hell in English, the punishment of the afterlife in *Deih-yuhk* 地獄 is more akin to Purgatory. It is a place of suffering and restitution, but ultimately one of hope, as rebirth awaits after the payment of one's karmic debt.

However, in Buddhism, the five heinous sins known as the *Ānantarika-karma* (deliberate patricide and matricide, shedding the blood of a

Buddha, killing an arhat, causing schism in the sangha) are believed to lead to rebirth in *Avīci*, known in Cantonese as *Mougaan Deih-yuhk* (無間地獄), the part of *Deih-yuhk* where the dead suffer for countless aeons – according to some sources, without end.

Extrapolating from the Buddhist principle of *dukkha*, that life in this mundane world is ultimately suffering, impermanence and frustrated desire, a Damned vampire might be condemned to walk the dusty Earth forever as a form of living *Avīci*. Not only would they be unable to find rebirth, they would also be unable to achieve Enlightenment in their present lifetime as a result of *Ānantarika-karma*, trapping them in that life forever.

A HONG KONG CONSPIRACY

LEVEL 6

The Vampire Elders

These ancient creatures dwell across the border in Guangdong province, making their nests in the fortified *diaolou* 碉樓 towers of Kaiping county. They number half a dozen at most, and protect themselves with monstrous and mortal servants in the clan villages around their towers.

Their principal agent in Hong Kong is the influential businessman Paul Chater (Level 5), who supposedly died in 1926. More broadly throughout China, they have infiltrated and directed the Chinese Communist Party since the early 1950s through their renfields.

Down: Paul Chater (vampire), Chinese Communist Party

LEVEL 5

Paul Chater (vampire)

A prominent businessman in Hong Kong until his "death" in 1926, Sir Paul Chater was a member of the governing Executive Council and the founder of Hongkong Land (Level 4). Still controlled by the undead Chater, the company remains one of the most powerful entities in the

city today, owning 450,000 sq m of high-value property in Central alone.

Up: The Vampire Elders

Down: Hongkong Land, Wo Shing Wo triad

Chinese Communist Party

The Party needs little introduction. Within Hong Kong, its official point of contact is the Liaison Office (Level 4), which issues "advice" to the Hong Kong authorities. It also funds numerous local political parties and groups, such as the DAB, and controls or maintains working relationships with media companies, leading business figures, triads and trade unions. The Chief Executive, Leung Chun-ying (Level 4), is the individual under the CCP's control who wields the most direct, open power in Hong Kong.

Up: The Vampire Elders

Down: Central Government Liaison Office, Leung Chun-Ying

LEVEL 4

Hongkong Land

This powerful firm handles the financial needs of the conspiracy within Hong Kong and overseas, providing numerous well-hidden bank accounts and slush funds. Senior executives have access to the services of the dhampir, or golden

vampire (Level 3), but do not necessarily know that it isn't human.

Up: Paul Chater

Down: Law firm, Dhampir / Golden Vampire

Central Government Liaison Office

The official mouthpiece of the CCP (Level 5) in Hong Kong. The Liaison Office pulls the strings of the dhampir, or golden vampire (Level 3), that acts as a supernatural assassin, and spy, for the conspiracy. It also passes directive to agents in the police force to detain or harass individuals who become targets of the vampire conspiracy.

Up: CCP

Down: Dhampir / Golden Vampire, HK Police

Leung Chun-Ying

Also known as "the Wolf", and often depicted as a vampire by his critics, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR may, or may not, be a renfield. Either way, he acts on the instructions given to him by his CCP (Level 5) handlers, some of which come from the vampire elders at the top of the pyramid. He has discretionary powers to send the dhampir, or golden vampire (Level 3), on missions, and commands the loyalty of key personnel in the Hong Kong police force (Level 3).

A HONG KONG CONSPYRAMID

6 CORE LEADERSHIP

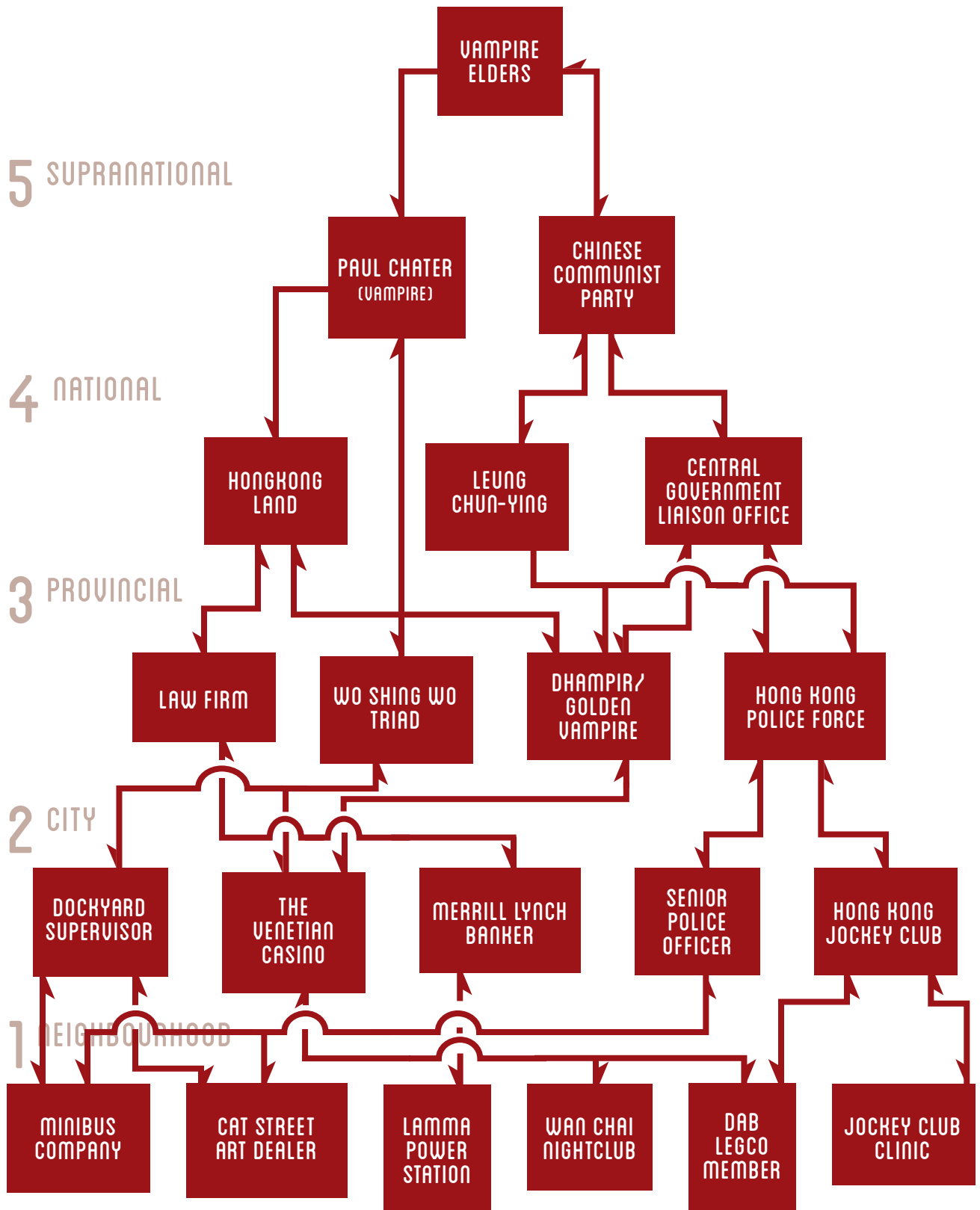
5 SUPRANATIONAL

4 NATIONAL

3 PROVINCIAL

2 CITY

1 NEIGHBOURHOOD



Up: CCP

Down: Dhampir / Golden Vampire, HK Police

LEVEL 3

Law Firm

A boutique operation charging colossal hourly rates. The company has three partners, and occupies small but opulent offices in the Admiralty area, with a picturesque view over Victoria Harbour.

Up: Hongkong Land

Down: Merrill Lynch banker

Wo Shing Wo Triad

One of the oldest triads in Hong Kong, involved in extortion, drug trafficking, prostitution and a wide variety of other crimes. Paul Chater (Level 5) makes sure the top leadership always includes one or more of his renfields, as he has done since the 1930s.

The dockyard supervisor (Level 2) is an affiliate of the group, though not a full member. Members of the group frequently frequent the Venetian casino (Level 2) for both fun and business matters.

Up: Paul Chater

Down: Venetian casino, dockyard supervisor

Dhampir / Golden Vampire

The conspyramid's supernatural enforcer. Send this creature in when you need a hitman. It has a nest in the basement of the Venetian casino (Level 2).

Up: Liaison Office, Leung Chun-ying

Down: Venetian casino

Hong Kong Police Force

The SAR's law enforcement agency. They're pretty much like cops anywhere. Leung Chun-ying (Level 4) controls the force in general. His instructions may influence what the senior police officer (Level 2) does, but he's probably unaware of the actual man's existence. While the Chief Executive (Level 4) is publicly in charge, the Liaison Office (Level 4) issues unofficial marching orders: send its more trusted officers as relatively in-the-know team leaders when an Organised Crime squad kicks down the door and bursts in on your Agents.

Up: Leung Chun-ying, Liaison Office

Down: Senior police officer, HK Jockey Club

LEVEL 2

Merrill Lynch Banker

Desperately in over his head, and being blackmailed by the law firm (Level 3) and/or the dhampir / Golden Vampire (Level 3) over a combination of drugs, prostitution and financial malfeasance. If not a renfield already, well on his way to becoming one. He has a large house on Lamma Island, and an ill-fated infatuation with one of the prostitutes at the Wan Chai nightclub (Level 1).

Up: Dhampir / Golden Vampire, law firm

Down: Lamma Power Station, HKJC clinic

The Venetian Casino

An opulent gambling establishment in Macau, complete with huge gaming floor, artificial canals, hotel, luxury shopping and Cirque de Soleil residency. The ideal place to unwind, spend or gamble embezzled monies, and meet with secret paymasters.

Up: Dhampir / Golden Vampire, Wo Shing Wo triad

Down: DAB LegCo member, Wanchai nightclub

Hong Kong Jockey Club

A horse racing operator founded in 1884, owner of a monopoly on legal gambling in Hong Kong, and the city's largest charitable giver. The HKJC sponsors schools, sports centres, and medical facilities throughout the territory.

Up: HK Police

Down: DAB LegCo member, HKJC clinic

Senior Police Officer

Suborned indirectly by the vampire conspiracy, this Superintendent is driven by his zeal for "law & order", which he sees as meaning "an adherence to the pro-Beijing agenda". He is unaware of the conspiracy, but is earmarked by it as one who will follow orders if they are presented as being in aid of stability, or cracking down on dissidents.

Up: HK Police

Down: Minibus company, Cat Street art dealer

Dockyard Supervisor

A night shift supervisor at a dock in Kowloon, easily bribed to look the other way.

Up: Wo Shing Wo triad

Down: Minibus company, Cat Street art dealer

LEVEL 1

Lamma Power Station

Built in 1982 for Hong Kong Electric, this coal-fired facility provides power to Lamma Island and Hong Kong Island. It has its own private docking facilities – good for discreet entries and exits from the SAR. One of the three chimneys is a dummy. HK Electric say it's for aesthetics, and that there's nothing inside, but then they would say that if it was hiding something for a vampire conspiracy.

Up: Merrill Lynch banker

Jockey Club Clinic

A public outpatient clinic funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

Up: HK Jockey Club

Wan Chai Nightclub

A seedy hostess bar on Lockhart Road. Shadowy lighting, negotiable affections, mystery credit card charges, rohypnol in the drinks, all that stuff. Ideal hunting ground for vampires, or worse.

Up: Merrill Lynch banker

DAB LegCo Member

Elected in questionable circumstances to a New Territories geographical constituency, this politician owes favours to a number of HK Jockey Club (Level 2) members. Addicted to your choice of: vampire blood/hookers/adulation/the good life.

Up: HK Jockey Club

Minibus company

A group of half a dozen drivers of red minibuses (red-roofed minibuses have approximate routes but no fixed stops). The dockyard supervisor (Level 2) is their contact point for the Wo Shing Wo triad (Level 3), to whom they pay HK\$10,000 a month each in protection money. In return, the triad makes sure no other drives can use their routes. The senior police officer (Level 2) makes cops available to harass rival drivers if necessary.

Up: Dockyard supervisor, senior police officer

Cat Street Art Dealer

Owner of a small gallery located on Upper Lascar Row, a.k.a Cat Street – historically, a place to pick up stolen goods. Today, the shops on this pedestrianised lane are full of art, antiques and bijou home decor.

Up: Senior police officer, dockyard supervisor

SEEDS AND HOOKS

- The infamous Hello Kitty murder reads like an Esoterrorists op aimed at giving sinister overtones to an omnipresent cultural icon – and if it was one, it worked. In 1999, a 14-year-old girl walked into Tsim Sha Tsui police station and reported that she was being haunted by the ghost of a woman she had helped to murder. Skeptical officers investigated the address she gave them, and discovered the site of a brutal crime, where three triad thugs imprisoned and tortured a young woman named Fan Man-yee (樊敏儀) for over a month, with the teenage girl as a spectator and sometimes accomplice, before Fan died from the abuse. The gang dismembered her body for disposal, discarding most of the parts but hiding her head inside a Hello Kitty mermaid doll.
- Notable murders by wealthy expats: 1) the Milkshake Murder in 2003. American Nancy Kissel drugged her husband with sedatives in a strawberry milkshake, bludgeoned him to death once he'd passed out, then rolled up his body in a carpet and hid it in their garage. She pleaded self-defence, but was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2011. 2) In 2014, British banker Rurik Jutting murdered two Indonesian women in a rented apartment in Wan Chai, calling the police himself. Police arrived at his flat to find Jutting babbling deliriously next to the second woman, Seneng Mujiasih, who soon died at the scene. Jutting was arrested, and eight hours later, the partially decomposed body of Sumarti Ningsih was found in a suitcase on his balcony. Jutting and Milkshake Murder victim Robert Kissel both worked for wealth management firm Merrill Lynch, although that's almost certainly a coincidence. At the time of his arrest, Jutting's out-of-office email read: *"I am out of the office. Indefinitely. For urgent enquiries, or indeed any enquiries, please contact someone who is not an insane psychopath. For escalation*

THRILLING ELEMENTS: HONG KONG

Here are some thrilling elements to introduce into a Hong Kong chase scene (see *Night's Black Agents*, p. 54).

- Bamboo scaffolding
- Procession of priests, gongs, statues and lion dancers in honour of Tin Hau, the sea goddess
- Typhoon – torrential rain, deserted streets, falling neon signs, smashed windows, tourists wondering where everybody's gone, the calm at the eye of the storm
- Flat baskets of starfish, shark fins and assorted sea creatures, laid out by the road to dry
- Gaggle of mainland tourists, led by a pushy tour guide with a flag and a loud hailer
- Crowd of Filipino maids picnicking in improvised cardboard shelters (Sundays and public holidays only).
- It's Sevens weekend! The way is blocked by a group of drunk white guys in co-ordinated fancy dress costumes
- Red-topped minibus, recklessly driven
- Pro- and anti-democracy demonstrators shouting at each other
- Lion dance in the street, for the opening of a new shop or restaurant
- Open-topped party tram (Hong Kong Island only)
- Delivery truck unloading propane tanks or mineral water bottles
- Bodyguards and cops keeping people out of the way of a visiting dignitary
- Temporary Cantonese opera stage, constructed in the street or in a park

please contact God, though suspect the devil will have custody (Last line only really worked if I had followed through)."

- Ghost villages are common in the New Territories, abandoned by the indigenous inhabitants who retain the land rights, but have moved to more modern accommodation in Hong Kong or overseas. So Lo Pun (鎖羅盆 "the compass is locked"), in Plover Cove Country Park, is one such abandoned village, which is reputed to be haunted. Compasses stop working there, say hikers who have visited. According to geomancy experts, So Lo Pun has "perfect" *feng shui*... so why would everyone leave?
- Cheung Po Tsai was a notorious pirate during the Qing dynasty, said to have commanded over 500 ships at the height of his powers. He surrendered to the Qing in 1810, and was commissioned into the imperial navy. On Cheung Chau island is a small cave, said to be where he hid his treasure.
- Since 1992, more than 200 dogs have been killed by a mysterious poisoner leaving toxic treats along secluded Bowen Road in the Mid-Levels. One dog walker may have come face to face with the poisoner in 1995, but did not act on his suspicions. The then governor Chris Patten's dog Whisky ate poisoned chicken left by the path in 1997, but survived. The police found no clues, despite staking the area out for several days afterwards. Similar poisonings on Lamma Island have killed around 100 dogs, mostly strays, in the last 20 years or so.
- Sea Ranch is a resort built in the 1970s on the south side of Lantau. Accessible only by boat, its atmosphere of desolate, decaying luxury makes it resemble the setting of a J.G. Ballard novel. The resort's 200 units were advertised as "a community with every luxury" when completed in 1979, but financial troubles left Sea Ranch unfinished,

and almost deserted. A private ferry travels to and from Cheung Chau every hour, docking at the pier where Sea Ranch's only shop, a refreshment kiosk, may be found. The planned cocktail lounge and other amenities never materialised, and the forlorn clubhouse buildings stand aging beside the empty swimming pool and tennis courts.

- Close to Junk Bay, Rennie's Mill was a village, which got its name from Canadian entrepreneur Alfred Rennie, who established the Hong Kong Milling Company there in 1907. The business failed, and Rennie drowned himself there just a year later. This was widely misreported as suicide by hanging, and the area gained the name Tiu Keng Leng (吊頸嶺 *diukéngléhng*, "Hanging Ridge"). Deemed inauspicious, this was soon changed to 調景嶺 *tiúgingléhng*, "Blending Scenery Ridge", which name the area retains today. In the 1950s, Rennie's Mill was a refugee village, housing former officials and supporters of the Nationalist government who fled China after the establishment of the People's Republic. It was a "little Taiwan", flying the Republic of China flag, with a Taiwan-backed school system, and handled with kid gloves by the Hong Kong police, who rarely sent anyone there. Many residents subsequently moved to Taiwan, and the last inhabitants were evicted in 1996, in a move widely perceived as appeasement of the incoming Communist government.
- Kowloon Walled City was an ungoverned square mile where the inhabitants built a human-scale ant's nest of apartments, corridors and walkways beyond the legal reach of two governments. Now long gone, its psychic echo remains in the maze of Chungking Mansions, and everywhere in Hong Kong that people hand-make extensions to their buildings twenty-plus storeys above the ground.
- Your Investigators might have to travel back to the time of the Walled City by speaking to former residents, if their case hinges on events that took place there

before the demolition in 1994.

- Typhoons are one of the most distinctive and dangerous aspects of Hong Kong's climate. In recent years, improved safety measures have sharply reduced the number of injuries that occur every year in typhoon season. In years past, typhoons usually caused fatal injuries whenever they struck. One of the worst in the city's history was the Great Hong Kong Typhoon of 1937, which killed 11,000 people.
- Commercial aviation came late to Hong Kong, starting in 1936 when Imperial Airways opened a route from Penang. The route's opening was something of a surprise – on March 12, the airline announced that one Maurice Curtis had arrived as the local manager, and they had opened an office in the Peninsula Hotel. On March 24, the route's lone plane *Dorado* arrived in Hong Kong, with 16 bags of mail and an unexpected passenger, a wealthy businessman called Ong Ee-Lim, who complained the flight had been "very cold".
- Since the 1990s, assaults on journalists perceived as having an anti-establishment bias have been on the increase. In 2014, former *Ming Pao* editor Kevin Lau was attacked by two men who stabbed him in the back and legs, a typical MO for triads when they want to maim rather than kill. Eleven people, some connected to the Shui Fong gang, were arrested, with the two chief suspects apprehended across the border in Guangdong.
- Tung Wah Hospital was the first public hospital in Hong Kong, founded in 1870 in response to the sight of the dying and dead huddled together at a small temple near Hollywood Road. Part of the hospital's remit was arranging to transport the bodies of Chinese migrants who died overseas back to their ancestral towns for burial – a service that continues to this day.
- Ma Wan is a small island just off the north-eastern tip of Lantau. In 2000, its main village, including several stilt houses over the water, had a population of 800. The village

now lies empty, as the inhabitants were moved to new homes in the north of the island when the land was bought for the Park Island apartment complex that now stands nearby. A short walk from Park Island is an evangelical Protestant theme park, containing a series of exhibits on creationism and a full-scale replica of Noah's Ark. The island is connected to Tsing Yi by the Tsing Ma Bridge, reputed to be one of the best places in Hong Kong to dispose of a body, thanks to the currents that flow beneath its span out to the South China Sea.

HONG KONG MYTHOS

Lovecraft does not feature Hong Kong in his works, and China as a whole only merits a mention as the source of debased foreign knowledge. In "The Call of Cthulhu", the prisoner Castro claims to have spoken to "undyng leaders of the cult in the mountains of China." In "The Shadow Over Innsmouth", the sinister malaise over the town is attributed to what "our New England ships used to have to do with queer ports in Africa, Asia, the South Seas, and everywhere else, and what queer kinds of people they sometimes brought back with 'em", though China is specifically not, in this case, the actual source of the problem. "The Diary of Alonzo Typer" mentions "unknown hieroglyphs of vaguely Chinese cast", but in general, this is undiscovered country as far as the Cthulhu Mythos goes.

Nevertheless, Hong Kong is redolent with locations and practices of an occult bent that would sit well in the backstory of a Trail of Cthulhu investigation.

- The fortune tellers of Temple Street are well known as the people to ask about what lies in your future. But if you want to make sure someone else's future contains bad news, you need to talk to the old ladies who practise *dáa siúyàn* (打小人, "villain hitting") under the Canal Road flyover. For a price, they'll curse anyone you like, or drive away misfortune, with a ritual that includes cutting out human or animal shapes in paper and beating them with a shoe. Ching Chih,

the last day of winter in the lunar calendar, is the best day for casting spells, but any time is OK. Trade is brisk for the spellcasters, but the business has a drawback – it's said that the longer you stay in the job, the greater the misfortune that will befall you in the end.

- Hong Kong is one of the few places where the law recognises the existence of haunted houses. Failure to disclose that your flat is haunted before you sell it to someone can be cause for legal action if they find out later, and estate agents maintain lists of haunted

properties with brief descriptions of the murders, suicides or other incidents that occurred there.

- Prehistoric stone carvings may be found at several locations on or near the shore in Hong Kong. These geometric carvings appear to depict monstrous faces. Scholars posit that their purpose may have been to repel evil spirits from the sea.
- Geomancers are commonly consulted before construction or renovation work is done, although it is said by some that the true power of feng shui is known only to a few.
- Large areas of Hong Kong have been

created through land reclamation projects, the earliest beginning in 1890. The airport, Hong Kong Disneyland, and many new towns were built on reclaimed land. Since land reclamation is basically humans stealing from the sea, any number of aquatic Mythos beings might take offence.

- People say there's an entrance to Hell in Sheung Wan, though you can only see it if you have yin-yang eyes. If you weren't born with them, you'll need a Taoist priest to whip up an amulet for you.

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

FILMS

20TH CENTURY

Chungking Express 《重慶森林》
Enter the Dragon 《龍爭虎鬥》
The Killer 《喋血雙雄》

21ST

The Midnight After 《那夜凌晨，我坐上了旺角開往大埔的紅VAN》
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MAPS

HONG KONG



HONG KONG ISLAND



