An Overview of Book Publishing in Hong Kong

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Fung Ping Shan Library
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Hong Kong Book Publications

Number of books published & registered in HK in the past 10 years

- 2010-11: 14,428
- 2011-12: 15,475
- 2012-13: 14,564
- 2013-14: 14,229
- 2014-15: 14,785
- 2015-16: 15,285
- 2016-17: 13,994
- 2017-18: 13,960
- 2018-19: 13,128
- 2019-20: 13,788
Books Registration Ordinance (HK)
(Format changes—E.R. 1 of 2021)
HK Books Registration Office (BRO)

Duties

• Helps preserve Hong Kong's literary heritage by registering local publications and monitoring the effective use of the International Standard Book Number system.

• Publishes a Catalogue of Books Printed in Hong Kong in the Government Gazette at quarterly intervals.

Criteria for book has to be registered or not in HK

**New Books Published in HK**

- Has to be registered within a month after published
- Deliver 5 copies to the Books Registration Office (BRO)
- All books and accompanying materials submitted are not returnable
- 5 copies: 1 to HKU, 1 to CUHK, 3 to public libraries
- Penalty: may be liable to a fine of HK$2,000 (US$260)
- Over 60 % books published and registered are in Chinese

**Books Not Required for Registration:**

- Any book which will not be made available to the public at large.
- A publication which consists solely of a price list, sale catalogue, trade circular or trade advertisement.
Applying HK ISBN: Free

Requirements:
HK Address + HK Business Registration Certificate/HK ID Card

Company/Organization
- original of a completed International Standard Book Number (ISBN) Application Form
- a copy of Business Registration Certificate or Certificate of Registration of a Society

Individual
- The applicant should bring along his/her original Hong Kong Identity Card and submit the application in person

Publishers
- holding an e-Cert may submit electronic applications
Free to Publish

• No need to seek any approval for publishing a book/journal/newspaper in HK:

在香港創辦報紙、雜誌幾乎無限制，書號免費。……申請刊號和書號沒有批准不批准的概念……。不考慮成本的話，任何一個人都可以辦一份屬於自己的報刊，當然是否能運營下去又是另外一個問題。這種開放的紙媒環境，讓人們擁有了多元的發聲平台、豐富的媒體環境，無論是文化娛樂，還是政治經濟層面，都提供了更多種類的觀點，給香港人構建了一個開放的公共空間。’

田恬, 謝宇野, 吳麗婷, 關曉愉〈人文香港: 香港小眾雜誌靠創意視角、跨媒體實驗生存〉《南方都市報(深圳版)》，29 Aug 2013，p. A04。

• No book is banned in HK

Kenneth Hsien-yung Pai 白先勇 remarked HK had never banned a single book.  

Pai’s Honors Literature PhD Conferred speech, HK Polytechnic University, 5 Dec 2013
Banned Book?

Definition of “Banned” 禁書 books in HK
Rumor? Gossips? Sensitive works?

• “「禁書」是個範圍很含糊的書種，它可以是純屬謠传式的八卦秘聞，也可以是認真嚴肅的傳記研究。又有些時候，它根本就是大陸作者在大陸出過的書，但是到了香港才換了更全面更徹底的真面目。唯一可以界定「禁書」的，是由邊境的海關；凡是被他們發現之後要沒收的，就是我們所說的禁書了。”

梁文道〈牛棚讀書記〉 《蘋果日報》 3 Aug 2008, p.E06
Hub of “special” publications
Oasis of some scholarly works

Some Taiwan Authors had their works published in HK in the 70’s
• “這個香港也曾是七十年代台灣文化人心目中的香港。彼時台灣正在兩蔣威權治下，馬列恩毛、魯巴郭曹，俱為禁書.....不得入境。於是更要更全面地認識中國，必得經過香港中轉。更誇張的，是一些台灣作家也要在香港出版關於台灣的書。難怪詹宏志等台灣文化界大老回憶起來，也要感激昔年香港的啓蒙之功。

Some scholars in Mainland publish their books in HK
• 香港，一向是現代中國思想界文化界的後花園。內戰以後左右不吃香的文人要是不去海外，就只能來香港獨立綻放。或者人來不了，書過來，例如陳寅恪先生晚年著作，首發之地便在此城。大家都說這裏是文化沙漠，偏偏在這過去的幾十年裏，它是兩岸間的唯一綠洲。梁文道〈牛棚讀書記〉《蘋果日報》3 Aug 2008, p.E06
Publications:
In-depth Research in Modern Chinese History

• “香港很多年裏對歷史文化最大的貢獻，就是出版發行了大批根據調研和考證撰寫的中國現代史著作.....。
• 這些實事求是的出版物不僅在全球華人包括內地的學界備受重視，而且成為世界名校圖書館的必備研究資料，有些還譯成外文。

丁學良 〈中國評論：「歷史虛無主義」的辯證法〉
《信報財經新聞 Hong Kong Economic Journal》1 July 2017, p. 82-84.

Example:
張發奎將軍抗日戰爭回憶記, 香港 : 蔡國楅, 1981
Zhang Fa kui (1896-1980) Memoir was first published in HK in 1981
Some books are published in HK but are not printed in HK. Many non-HK citizens apply HK ISBN for their books.
The National Security Law of HK 《香港國家安全法》 was gazetted for promulgation on 30 June 2020


It is criminal:
• secession - breaking away from the country
• subversion - undermining the power or authority of the central government
• terrorism - using violence or intimidation against people
• collusion with foreign or external forces

No content is directly related to publishing, but some people do worry...
“Banned” Book list?


• Education officials asked primary and secondary schools to get rid of reading materials that may violate the law
• No clear guidelines nor banned books list are provided

• 教育局提醒學校不應有危害國家安全的藏書，但教育界坦言違法界線不清，難以執行。連月來，不論是公共圖書館的館藏，還是坊間的繪本，都有書籍疑觸犯《香港國安法》被列入「禁書」，不過國安法實施逾一年，當局至今未提供禁書清單作參考。

記者 陳倩婷 郭增龍 (7 Jan 2022)
The Biggest Publishing Network in HK
Sino United Publishing (Holdings) Ltd

- was formed in 1988
- originates from several publishing houses: Joint Publishing 三聯 (HK, 1980), Chung Hwa Book Company 中華 (HK, 1933) Limited & The Commercial Press 商務 (HK, 1924)
- Share more than 80% of HK publishing & book market
Sino United Publishing (Holdings) Ltd

Retail Network

Joint Publishing, JP@apm
- Shop L5-6, Level 6, spm, Millennium City 5, 418 Kwun Tong Road (MTR Kwun Tong Exit A3)
- (852) 3148 1089

Joint Publishing, Diamond Hill Branch
- 391, Level 3, Plaza Hollywood, Lung Poon Street, Diamond Hill (MTR Diamond Hill Exit C)
- (852) 2955 5966

Joint Publishing, Amoy Plaza Branch
Upstairs Book Stores
樓上書店

Characteristics:

• Mostly are located at old buildings: upstairs with no lift to avoid high rent
• At areas with good accessibility: Mongkok, Causeway Bay (shopping areas)
• Small in size
• Independently manage
• Offers 10-20% discounts on list book price
Themes of Interests:

HK Movie

書名：香港電影2020：紀實遺城
主編：鄭超、致寧
出版社：香港電影評論學會
出版日期：2021年8月

昨天今天明天：內地與香港電影的政治、藝術與傳統
作者：吳國坤
出版社：中華書局(香港)有限公司
出版日期：2021年06月25日

Past Hollywood of the East: Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan...
HK Film Critics Society, HK Film Archive
Local Dialect/Cantonese

Cantonese is the major spoken language in HK
城市回眸：香港文學探論
作者：張燕珠
出版社：初文出版社有限公司
出版日期：2021年7月

透視我城：香港文學文化十二講
作者：蔡益懷
出版社：初文出版社有限公司
出版日期：2021年7月

Cultural Desert？許地山，張愛玲，金庸，李碧華，董啟章。。。
1842- From a farming fishing village to an international financial centre
Some HK authors publish their works in Taiwan
HK Book Fair
Festival of Literature

• Attendance record: one million+
• Over 60% of local publications are published before the Book Fair
• Good discounts + *souvenirs*
• Opportunities to meet authors, publishers and friends
• Books launch, book talks, seminars, exhibitions etc.
• Sales of stationeries & supplementary textbooks
Welcome to the HK Book Fair

Good opportunity to purchase HK publications even for local librarians
THANK YOU!

謝謝！

https://www.fpsl90.hku.hk/programme