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The City Trilogy (Modern Chinese Literature from Taiwan)

Hsi-kuo Chang

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Taiwan's most innovative science fiction writer presents three tales of intrigue, espionage, betrayal, political strife, time travel, and Chinese history and mysticism. After thousands of years of civil unrest and countless wars, the weary Huhui people of Sunlon City have once again succumbed to a ruthless and overpowering enemy. In *Five Jade Disks*, the first book in the trilogy, the imperialistic Shan have enslaved the inhabitants of Sunlon City and imposed a harsh martial order. As the Shan fight to retain control of the restless Huhui natives, an unstable rebel alliance prepares to win back its homeland. Amidst the confusion of revolt, Miss Qi, a determined young girl, emerges as an unlikely leader. With the help of her friends and the loyal Green Snake Brotherhood, Miss Qi discovers that an ancient cult and its insidious and unusually powerful leader may hold the key to the rebels' victory?or may yet be the cause of their undoing. As she rushes to put the pieces together, the rebels, divided by internal factions, strive to band together in a heroic attempt to overthrow the Shan.

The story continues in *Defenders of the Dragon City*. The Shan have been defeated, but the victory celebrations of the Huhui are quickly brought to an end. After deserting Sunlon City, the Shan regroup and return for one final and bitter attempt to destroy the weakened rebel forces. During their exile, the Shan turn their aggressions against the indigenous races of the Huhui planet, a colorful mix of peaceful tribes resembling serpents, eagles, and leopards. Forced into the war to save their remaining territory, the indigenous peoples join the Huhui in their continuing struggle against the Shan.

The third novel, *Tale of a Feather*, opens with images of chaos and devastation. The conflict with the Shan has left the city in flames, and refugees are fleeing in droves through the main gates. Taking advantage of the turmoil, a ruthless dictator assumes control of the weak interim government and begins a treacherous campaign to eliminate his adversaries. In this volatile atmosphere, Miss Qi continues her desperate search to discover the origin of the mysterious Bronze Statue Cult and come to terms with the dark power it wields over her people.

The trilogy, first published in Taiwan in the late 1980s and early 1990s and widely considered to be a modern classic, is now presented for the first time in English and in a single volume. In these allegorical tales, Chang confronts some of the most serious and divisive issues of our time, including the burden of history and the ravages of oppression, racism, and ethnic displacement.

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