

Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development in Hong Kong

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Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy.
Hong Kong: Hong Kong SAR Government 2003.

“Tourism is an important economic sector and a major source of employment opportunities. With the continuous growth of international, inter-regional and domestic travel demand, and the ongoing measures to attract international visitors and facilitate the entry of Mainland tourists into Hong Kong, it is envisaged that the total visitor arrivals could rise to about 37 million by 2011, 47 million by 2016 and some 70 million by 2030, of which two-thirds could be from the Mainland. Due to the many uncertainties associated with these figures, the forecast growth of visitors will need to be monitored and reviewed regularly.”

My proposed order

I would like to see the emphasis upon the involvement of different parties should be put in the order of: **firstly, local communities; secondly, local and international conservation groups as well as NGOs; thirdly, Hong Kong SAR Government; and lastly, private sector, mainly real estate and property developers.** The reason is obvious because we want to make sure the impacts brought by development are recognized and approved by the local residents, together with objective judgments, it should be benefited by the whole society.

Hong Kong, with its dominant image as an Asian global city as well as gateway to mainland China, has been representing itself with an image of *East meets West* for its tourist attractions in the last century. In order to maintain this image for its world visitors, there is no doubt that Hong Kong needs to find a balance between its global metropolitan aspect and unique cultural heritage with local characteristics in many ways. But, before moving on for extensive tourism development, we might want to think about:

- What kind of cultural heritage do we want?
- What kind of long-term heritage policy do we have?
- What kind of heritage management are we looking for?

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“With the growing popularity of eco-tourism and heritage tourism, there are opportunities to make good use of the wealth of natural and cultural heritage of Hong Kong to enrich the experience of visitors. The sustainable development of eco-tourism and cultural tourism calls for sensitivity to the environment and cultural relics, and close co-operation among the *Government, the private sector, conservation groups and the community.*”

Ping Shan Heritage Trail

- Cultural interaction (urbanites and locals)
- *fung shui* (political conflict)
- History and identity
- Local involvement is necessary
- Management committee needed



Deterioration of traditional buildings in local villages



Restoration, promotion and mode of development

Sha Lo Tung



THREE cases for consideration

- Moving out in the 1980s
- No farming
- Villagers keep the house ownership
- Continuing the ancestral worship
- Farmland were sold to outsiders
- *Questions:* How can tourism be carried out?
And, what role should tourism play in heritage preservation?

- Pak Lap, Sai Kung (single last name village)
- Chek Keng, Sai Kung (five last names)
- Yim Tin Tsai Island, Sai Kung (single last name Catholic village)

Pak Lap is a single (Lau) surname Hakka village in which 17 houses built in two rows. In the past, villagers depended on both farming and fishing; however, beginning in the early 1980s, farmland was taken out of agricultural production and most villagers moved away either working overseas or in the city. In 1993, a total amount of 300,000 square feet farm land belonged to Pak Lap villagers was all sold to a local developer, however, house land was still kept by the villagers. When I visited them in early 2002, I found the rebuilding of the Lau Ancestral Hall was completed and some abandoned farmland was cultivated to grow different kinds of vegetables for the meals provided to visitors and customers staying overnight in the Hakka houses.





Chek Keng is a traditional settlement consisting of five different lineage groups-- Fan, Chiu, Lee, Wong and Cheng living together, and it was probably founded more than 200 years ago. Chek Keng is abandoned now, but I suggest that there is a lot of potential in developing the village into a heritage tourism education center in which there are at least several aspects we should try to cover:

- Publicize migration history through touring in Hakka settlements
- Experience traditional village lifeways and folk cultures





Yim Tin Tsai is an island with a traditional settlement consisting of one single lineage group—Chan. With its unique history of salt collecting and Catholic missionary, it can be developed into an attraction with:

- a combination of nature based tourism and heritage tourism
- ‘pilgrimage’ to the early works of Catholic church in Hong Kong as well as the missionary of the Pontificio Instituto Missioni Estere as well as P.I.M.E.) from Milan in Asia.



Remarks

- Tourism as a tool for heritage preservation but not the other way round
- Enhance the interaction between local inhabitants and visitors
- Focus on educational purposes
- Promote cultural diversity in the society