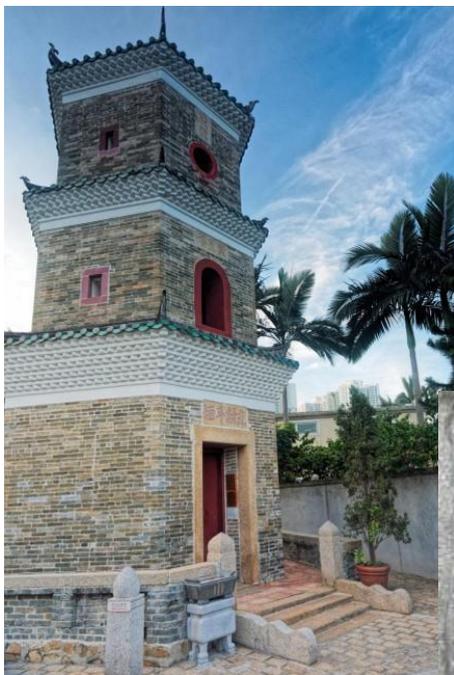


GTPP Research Award Competition 2016

# Traditional Heritage in a Modern Metropolis

*~ A research on how different stakeholders develop Ping Shan Heritage Trail to be a sustainable traditional Chinese heritage attraction in a modern Asia's World Metropolis- Hong Kong.*



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### Section 1: Market Analysis

The tourism industry has been a major pillar of the economy of Hong Kong for decades. In 2014, it constituted 5% of Hong Kong's GDP. Nowadays, the industry employs around 271800 persons, accounting for 7.2% of total employment in the territory. In a word, tourism development of Hong Kong keeps looming.

However, to our surprise and despair, in 2015, visitor arrivals declined by 2.5 % over 2014 to 59.3 million. The total number of visitors in the first quarter of 2016 fell by 10.9 per cent over the same period of 2015. Among the total, while Mainland arrivals fell by 15.1%, non-Mainland arrivals increased by 5.4%. The total arrivals still fell unfortunately.

During this period, short-hauls arrivals to Hong Kong registered a decrease of 2.7%. Overnight arrivals from Indonesia and Singapore dropped most significant with 15.9% and 14.1% respectively, followed by a decrease of 9% from Malaysia and 4.4% from Japan. In contrast, the Philippines and South Korea saw a growth of 8.4% and 1.6% respectively.

As regards long-haul markets, there was a drop of 1.6%. A sharp decrease of 7.9% and 5.6% was observed in overnight visitor arrivals from Australia and Germany respectively. Canada and the UK saw a slight drop of 0.6% and 0.1% respectively.



Growth was only seen in overnight visitor arrivals from the US with 3.3%. New markets also registered an overall decline of 5.7% with a most significant decrease in Russia but an up in India and Vietnam.

The Mainland China (known as “Mainland”) continued to be the largest source market accounting for around 77% of our visitors. However, the city is losing appeal to Mainland visitors. While there had long been tensions sparked by cultural and linguistic differences between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the anti-mainlander sentiment grew intense in the past year and was expressed in a number of protests. This accounts for the declining number of Mainland visitors to Hong Kong. In view of this, it is NOT sustainable to rely on Mainland visitors.

Facing the decline in the number of inbound visitors, it is vital to maintain a healthy and sustainable development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong. It should reduce its reliance on Mainland visitors and create a balanced mix of visitors. In order to achieve these, the city should enhance its tourist’s attractions. Alternative and possible forms of tourism are one of the means to remedy the current market situation.

In March 2016, a small scale of survey was conducted by our group. It was found that heritage tourism is one of the attractive forms of tourism which can enhance sustainable tourism development, by interacting with the interviewees from foreign countries and the Mainland. On the other hand, we also discovered a galaxy of cultural elements in our site visit in both May and June 2016. Therefore, it is strongly believe



that Ping Shan Heritage Trail is an appropriate destination for the abovementioned direction.

In this project, our objectives are...

1. to pick multitude of cultural interests of the Ping Shan Heritage Trail for tourists;
2. to conduct a SWOT analysis on its sustainable development as a cultural tourism destination;
3. to examine how the stakeholders, including the government, the locals and the business sector which can effectively apply technology, to make its sustainable development feasible.

It is our dream to have a more in-depth understanding of the Hong Kong traditional village's culture, to advocate the conservation of the folk culture Hong Kong, which is different to the Mainland China to a certain extent, and to showcase the alternate yet attractive image of the metropolitan Hong Kong. Of course, it is also our hope that all GTTP global partners and directors of GTTP from different countries can visit Hong Kong with us after our elaboration.



### Top 5 Attractively innovative destinations in Hong Kong

Rank (Top 1= Most attractive)	Name of the Destinations
1	Ping Shan Heritage Trail
2	The HK UNESCO Geopark
3	Historic villages in N.T.
4	Food courts of public estates
5	Local mini factories

On 17 and 18th March 2015, we interviewed 25 tourists in Tsim Sha Tsui. Only 11 of them have heard about Ping Shan Heritage Trail but 19 of them expressed great interest in exploring the folk culture of local clans in HK. This mini survey shows Ping Shan Heritage Trail promises much potential for further development!



## Section 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism (or just cultural heritage tourism or diaspora tourism) is a branch of tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the location where tourism is occurring.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past,” and “heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.”

It is found that Ping Shan Heritage Trail perfectly meets the US definition. The trail provides a very good cultural, historic and natural platform for heritage tourism. It preserves and displays a traditional Cantonese folk culture which might be altered in the Mainland China due to the political reason. It is also a historical place where is owned and managed by the Tang Clan, one of the major clans in the New Territories whose 86th generation ancestor, moved from Jiangxi Province to Guangdong Province in the early period of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). Of course, the trail is located in a rural part of Hong Kong which consists of a number of natural resources like natural well, farmland and hill.

We strongly believe that the cultural, historic and natural elements of the heritage



trail provide a golden opportunity to the visitors to acquire local culture and to see a very different feature of Hong Kong that tourists are not used to be.

## **2.2 Definition of Sustainable Tourism**

According to UNWTO, sustainable tourism is tourism that gives proper and complete consideration to current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. It is not a particular form of tourism; rather, all forms of tourism may try very hard to be more sustainable. In its definition the UNWTO and UNEP included environmental, socio-cultural and economic aspects of tourism development. The three aspects must set up a suitable balance between these three dimensions to make sure getting its long-term sustainability. (Source: UNWTO, UNEP 2005).

Therefore, the term ‘sustainable tourism’ is defined as:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a very important element in tourism development, keep up essential ecological processes and help to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
2. Respect the socio-cultural genuineness of host communities, preserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.



3. Make sure that there are feasible, long-term economic operations, give socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are even distributed, include stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contribute to poverty alleviation.

### 2.3 Definition of Heritage Trail

Heritage Trail is “a regional network of natural and cultural heritage sites which is created within a well-defined product identity, in order to support an interesting and varied tourist visit of up to one week”. (European Council for the Village and Small Town, 2006)

### 2.4 Difference between “Heritage Site” and “Heritage Trail”

Heritage sites are normally the places such as castles, churches, historic villages, natural caves, viewpoints, museums and art galleries - which could be used for tourism.

In contrast, to establish a heritage trail, the in-charge authority has to study a range of heritage sites, to identify those sites which might attract visitors, and to work closely with the landowners and with local people to decide whether the sites have the capacity to receive visitors (if a site did not have the capacity, it was omitted from the Trail). By doing so, the authority can bring the original heritage sites into such use in a way which truly benefits the people and the economy of the area;



and which is sustainable, so that the tourism does not damage the heritage sites .

### Section 3: From Several Heritage Sites to A Unique Heritage Trail

#### ~ A Brief Study of Ping Shan Heritage Trail

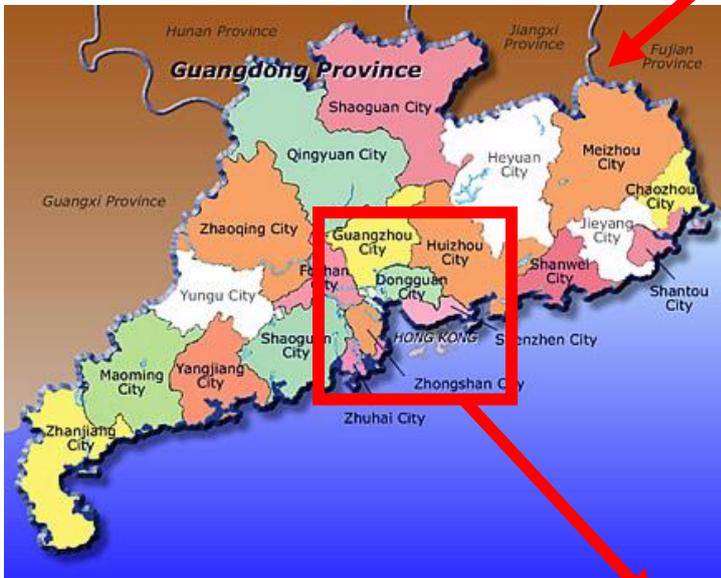
#### 3.1 A geographic and historic overview of Hong Kong and its clans

##### The geographic overview:

At the south-eastern tip of China, HK covers HK Island, Lantau Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories, and includes 262 outlying islands. Victoria Harbour lies between HK Island and the Kowloon Peninsula. It is one of the world's most renowned deep-water harbors. The downtown is located on HK Island and in Kowloon. The total land area of HK is 1105.7km<sup>2</sup> and the total population is 7.31 million in mid-2015.



HK is a small place in China.



*HK was originally a part of Guangdong Province (or called Canton Province) before 1840. Therefore, the people and clans of other cities or even other provinces could migrate to HK freely in the ancient time.*

*Nowadays, HK is a Special Administrative Region of China (was a British colony before 1997), which is next to Shenzhen City of Guangdong Province, Mainland China.*





**The historic overview:**

Hong Kong has been part of the territory of China since ancient times. It was occupied by Britain after the Opium War in 1840. So, the clans and people could move in and out freely in the ancient times.

The Tang Clan (Chinese: 鄧族; pinyin: Dèng zú) is one of the Great Five Clans of Hong Kong (新界五大氏族 - 鄧文廖侯彭). The others are Man, Hau, Pang and Liu. The Tangs came from Jishui (吉水) of Jiangxi Province(江西省) and are considered to be native Hong Kong people because they were the first immigrants to settle in what is now Hong Kong and what is now mainland China in the 11th century. Many of the Tangs settled in Ping Shan and Kam Tin, New Territories. One of the most famous Tang villages is Ping Shan Heung (屏山鄉). (Heung means a greater village area).

Ping Shan Heung (known as “Ping Shan”, thereafter) in the Yuen Long district is one of Hong Kong’s most historically significant areas and the Tang Clan is one of the major clans in the New Territories who has a long and clearly-explained history. Tang Hon-fat, the 86th generation ancestor, moved from Jiangxi Province to Guangdong Province in the early period of the Northern Song(北宋) dynasty (960-1127). He is regarded as the first generation Tang Clan ancestor of the lineage in Guangdong. During the middle period of the Northern Song dynasty, Tang Fu-hip, the great grandson of Tang Hon-fat, expanded his ancestors’ home in



Shum Tin (present-day Kam Tin). The 7th generation ancestor, Tang Yuen-ching and his only son, Tang Chung-kwong, alias Man-lei, moved from Kam Tin to Ping Shan in the 12th century. Tang Yuen-ching is regarded as the first generation ancestor of the Ping Shan lineage.

After settling in Ping Shan, the Tang Clan established “Three Wais (walled villages) and Six Tsuens (villages)” – Sheung Cheung Wai, Kiu Tau Wai and Fui Sha Wai, and Hang Tau Tsuen, Hang Mei Tsuen, Tong Fong Tsuen, San Tsuen, San Hei Tsuen and Hung Uk Tsuen. By then, Ping Shan has been full of their tangible and intangible culture which is mixed with their original culture in Jiangxi Province and local Hong Kong ones.

## **3.2 A Study of Why and How Ping Shan Heritage Trail Could Be Established**

### **3.2.1 Rich Cultural Heritage Made by Tang Clan**

After their settlement in Ping Shan, Tangs later built very many traditional Chinese buildings such as ancestral halls, temples, study halls and pagoda for ancestral worship, clan gathering and education. The Ping Shan Tang Clan keeps its certain traditional customs to this day, such as the organisation of various ceremonies during festivals. They symbolise the folk culture of the Tang Clan. They also reflect the traditional and unique characteristics of life in the New Territories. All these are really the genuine heritage places..



### 3.2.2 Support and Initiative of the Government and Charity Funds

The idea to set up a heritage trail was first suggested by the Antiquities Advisory Board. It was then brought to fruition by the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the Architectural Services Department while getting generous financial support of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust.



### **3.2.3 Full Support of Tangs**

Without the support and co-operation of the Tang Clan in Ping Shan, the Trail would not have been possible. They were a driving force behind the project. The buildings and land are the private properties of Tangs and their holding companies. Without their permission of the opening of some of the historic buildings—again the separate heritage sites-- to the public, the Trail would not come to its formation.

### **3.3 The Opening of Ping Shan Heritage Trail**

The first of its kind in Hong Kong, the Ping Shan Heritage Trail was officially opened on 12th December 1993. The Trail is about 1.6 km in length. It meanders through Hang Mei Tsuen, Hang Tau Tsuen and Sheung Cheung Wai. It connects a number of traditional Chinese buildings and heritage sites within easy walking distance of each other to provide visitors with a chance to learn more about traditional life in the New Territories in a convenient half-day excursion.



## **Section 4: SWOT Analysis of the Development of Heritage Tourism in Ping Shan Heritage Trail**

### **4.1 Strengths**

#### **4.1.1 Wide Range of Cultural Heritages**

Because of the particular history of Ping Shan Tang Clan, a wealth of folk cultural elements, tangible and intangible, is one of Hong Kong's attractive tourism assets which may impress visitors from different parts of the world.

The 13 distinctive heritage sites in our Trail are depicted as follows.

#### **Site 1: The Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail**

##### **Visitors Centre- The only colonial heritage in Ping Shan**

The Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre is situated on the hilltop in Hang Tau Tsuen. It overlooks the villages in Ping Shan. It is the only colonial building along the Trail. Changed from the Old Ping Shan Police Station being completed in 1900, it is one of the few remaining pre-war police stations in the New Territories. The station compound was used by various units of the Police Force in various capacities such as a sub-divisional



station, training centre, Police Dog Unit and Traffic New Territories North. The premises were formally handed over to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in late 2002 and were later changed to the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre. In 2007, the centre was opened to the public to introduce local folk culture and heritage along the Trail.

The centre is made up of three buildings. The main building is a two-storey structure with an embracing arched verandah with observation posts at the roof level. On the north side, a two-storey structure with prominent chimney stacks joined to the main building forms the Annex Block. There is also a small detached single-storey building.







## Site 2: Hung Shing Temple

The Hung Shing Temple, which is situated in Hang Mei Tsuen, is thought to have been built by the Tang Clan in Dinghai (1767) during the Qianlong reign of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), which is the year inscribed on the board inside the temple. The existing structure was rebuilt in the 5th year of the Tongzhi reign (1866) of the Qing dynasty. In 1963, substantial renovation work was carried out. It is said that Hung Shing was originally a governor of Kwong Lee (Guangli) during the Tang dynasty (618-907), and was known by the name Hung Hei. After his death, the reigning emperor offered him the posthumous title of “Kwong Lee Hung Shing Tai Wong”. Hung Shing is widely worshipped, particularly by shermen and people whose livelihoods depend largely on the sea. The Hung Shing Festival is held annually on the 13th day of the second lunar month.

The Hung Shing Temple is a simple building with two halls separated by an open courtyard. In most of the other temples in Hong Kong, open courtyards are roofed over to form incense towers. With better lighting and ventilation, the original courtyard design at the Hung Shing Temple has been well preserved and remains one of the temple’s attractive features.



The god Hung Shing is widely worshipped, especially by fishermen and people whose livelihoods depend on the sea. In 1767, the Tang clan built a temple to commemorate him. It is a simple two-hall building with an open courtyard in between. This is clearly different from most other temples in Hong Kong, where the open courtyards are usually roofed over to make incense towers.



The Shui Hing Study Hall, which is situated at Tong Fong Tsuen, was built by the Tang Clan in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the Tongzhi reign (1874) of the Qing dynasty to commemorate the 21<sup>st</sup> generation of its ancestor Tang Shut-hing (1810-1856). It was used for teaching and preparing clansmen for examinations and gaining appointments to positions in government.



Originally this structure was a traditional two-hall building with grey brick walls and granite door frames. The lintel of the entrance is engraved with four Chinese characters depicting “Shut Hing Study Hall”. The study hall was left in a bad condition after the Second World War. The rear hall was demolished in 1977 to prevent a dangerous collapse, and left only the entrance hall. The interior has become residential buildings. The great beauty of the Shut Hing Study Hall is still reflected in the distinguished design of the roof ridge decorations, murals, carved brackets and eaves boards that survive in the entrance hall.





#### **Site 4: Kun Ting Study Hall**

The Kun Ting Study Hall, which is situated in Hang Mei Tsuen, was built in 1870 by Tang Heung-chuen of the 22nd generation of the Tang Clan in commemoration of his father Tang Kun-ting. The study hall offered facilities for both ancestral worship and education. When the British occupied the New Territories in 1899, the study hall was once used as the police station and land office. Despite the cancellation of imperial civil service examinations in the early 20th century, the study hall continued to provide educational facilities for the clan's younger generations in Hang Mei Tsuen and the surrounding areas until the early post-Second World War period. The study hall was turned back to its original greatness in 1991 because of a donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

The Kun Ting Study Hall is a two-hall building with a single courtyard. It is made of grey bricks and granite columns. The distinguished design of the ancestral altar, brackets, screen panels, wall paintings, ridge decorations, eaves boards and plaster mouldings inside the study hall reflect the high level of skill of the craftsmen of the period in which it was built.



Used both as an ancestral hall and a place of study, this 1870s large fine building is a beautiful piece of craftsmanship. It is a two-hall building with an enclosed courtyard. It is famous for its finely carved granite columns and granite block base along the façade. The particular design in the interior reflects the special skills of the craftsmen of that time.





### **Site 5: Ching Shu Hin**

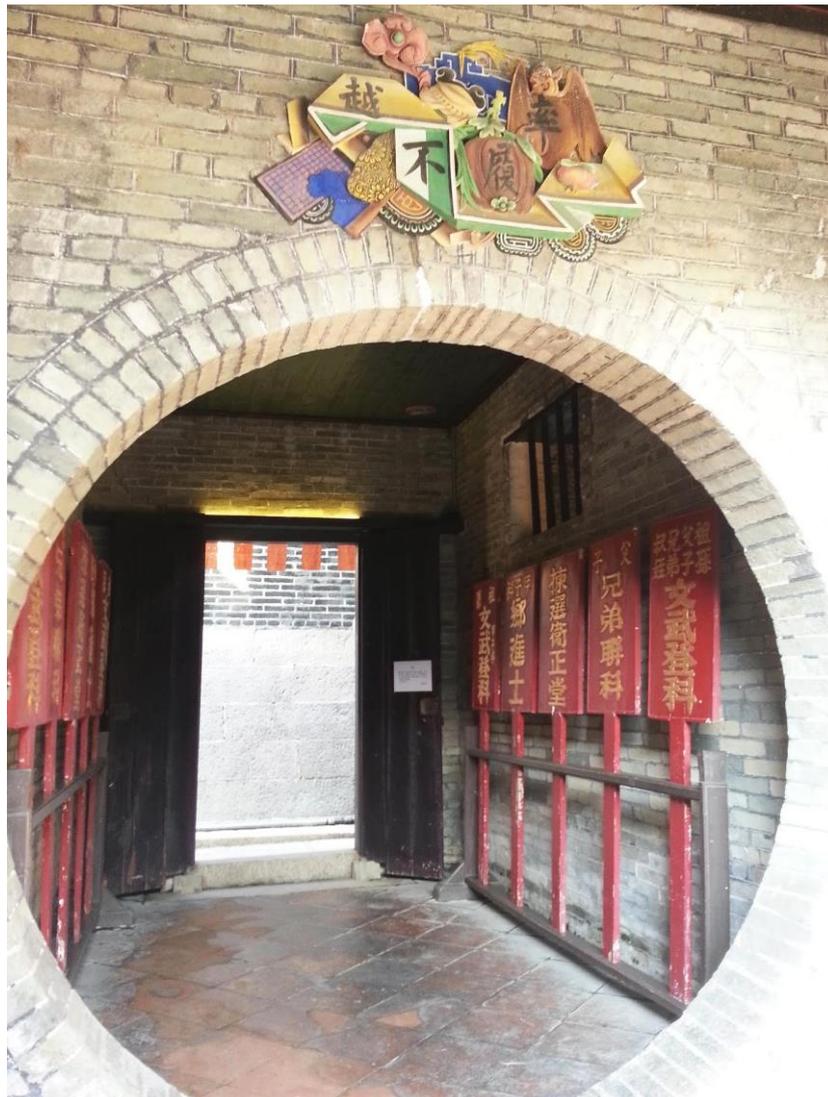
Being very close to the Kun Ting Study Hall and built shortly after its completion, Ching Shu Hin was used as a guesthouse for important visitors and scholars. It originally had no particular name, with Ching Shu Hin in fact referring to a chamber on the ground floor. The restoration of Ching Shu Hin was completed in late 1993 because of a donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

Ching Shu Hin is a L-shaped, two-storey building. It is linked to the Kun Ting Study Hall by a very small overhead foot bridge on the first floor. Besides chambers and a lobby, the building includes bathrooms and kitchen. Ching Shu Hin was richly decorated and used as a guesthouse. The whole building was decorated with carved panels, murals, plaster mouldings, patterned grilles and carved brackets to show out the greatness and elegance expected of residences of the local gentry.

Built in 1874 as a guesthouse for scholars and important visitors, Ching Shu Hin is a feast for the eyes, decorated with carved panels, murals, patterned grilles, carved brackets and plaster mouldings. Grouping all together, these demonstrate the grandeur and elegance



of a wealthy Chinese family's residence.





### **Site 6: Tang Ancestral Hall**

The Tang Ancestral Hall is situated between Hang Tau Tsuen and Hang Mei Tsuen and surrounded by the three Wais (walled villages) and six Tsuens (villages). It is the main ancestral hall of the Tang Clan that has resided in the area all these years. According to clan records, the ancestral hall was constructed by Tang Fung-shun of the clan's 5th generation about 700 years ago. The Tang Ancestral Hall underwent a major restoration financially supported by the clan between 1990 and 1991. As in the past, the ancestral hall is still used regularly as a venue for worship, festivals and ceremonies, and clan meetings. The Tang Ancestral Hall was declared a monument in December 2001.

The Tang Ancestral Hall is a grand three-hall structure with two internal courtyards. It is one of the finest examples of its kind in Hong Kong. It is fronted by two drum terraces with two columns on each terrace supporting the roof. The inner column is made of granite and the outer column of red sandstone. The elevated red sandstone pathway in the front courtyard suggests that at some time in the past, one of the Tang clansmen held a high-ranking position in the imperial government. The wooden brackets and beams of the



three halls are gracefully carved with auspicious Chinese motifs. The main ridges and roofs are decorated with new Shiwan dragon-fish and lion pottery figures. Ancestral tablets are displayed on the altar in the rear hall.

This Tang clan ancestral hall was constructed in 1273. It is a magnificent three-hall structure with two internal courtyards, and is one of the finest examples of this type of building in Hong Kong. Pay attention to the high elevation of the pathway in the courtyard — this indicates that one of the Tang clansmen held a high-ranking position in the imperial government.





### **Site 7: Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall**

The Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall is situated south of the Tang Ancestral Hall. It was constructed in the early 16th century by two 11th generation brothers of the Tang Clan: Tang Sai-yin (alias Yu-sing) and Tang Sai-chiu (alias Kiu-lum). The building served as an ancestral hall. It was also used as a teaching hall for children of the Ping Shan villages. From 1931 to 1961, it was housed the Tat Tak School. The last major renovation of the building probably took place during the Guangxu reign (1875-1908) of the Qing dynasty, as indicated by the engraved characters on the stone tablet above the main entrance. The original structure and features of the building, however, remain unchanged. Several repairs were undertaken to the Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall and a major renovation was completed in 1995. The Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall was declared a monument in December 2001.

With three halls and two courtyards, the layout and design of the Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall is the same as that of the Tang Ancestral Hall next door.



Built in the 16th century by two 11th generation Tang clan brothers, Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall served as a school for the children of the Ping Shan villages. The layout is identical to the Tang Ancestral Hall, with three halls and two internal courtyards.





### **Site 8: Yan Tun Kong Study Hall**

The Yan Tun Kong Study Hall, also known as Yin Yik Tong, is situated in Hang Tau Tsuen. The exact year of its construction cannot be made certain. However, according to the indigenous villagers it was built by the descendants of the Tang Clan of Ping Shan to commemorate Tang Wai-tak (also known as Yan-shaw), Tang Ji-fong (also known as Tun-fuk) and Tang Fung (also known as Ming-kong). They were the prominent ancestors of the clan's 14th to 16th generations. Besides being used as a venue for teaching, it also served as an ancestral hall, and it still hosts clan gatherings and festivities, such as the Spring and Autumn rites, today. The Yan Tun Kong Study Hall was declared a monument in October 2009.

In fact, the Yan Tun Kong Study Hall was a two-hall-one-courtyard structure. It had a two-storey annex added at its rear in the 1950s. A number of exquisite architectural features are still preserved in the study hall, such as the newly-carved ancestral altar, the camel humps, the fascia boards and the couplets. The roof ridges and façade are decorated with plaster mouldings of auspicious motifs.





### Site 9: Yeung Hau Temple

The Yeung Hau Temple is located in Hang Tau Tsuen. It is one of the six temples in Yuen Long dedicated to the god of Hau Wong (Emperor Hau). It has proved impossible to trace the exact date that the temple was constructed, but it is believed to have a history that dates back several hundred years. Inscriptions on the boards inside the temple clearly show that the building experienced major renovations in 1963 and 1991. A restoration project was also conducted in 2002. The identity of Hau Wong is the subject of several different stories, but the villagers in Ping Shan believe that he was the Marquis Yang Liangjie, a Song dynasty general who gave up his life to protect the last two Song emperors and who is therefore worshipped for his loyalty and bravery. The Hau Wong Festival is held annually on the 16th day of the sixth lunar month.

The Yeung Hau Temple is a simple structure divided into three bays housing the statues of Hau Wong, To Tei (the Earth God) and Kam Fa (patron saint of expectant mothers) respectively.





### Site 10: Old Well

On the trail between the Yeung Hau Temple and Sheung Cheung Wai lies an old well. According to the Tang villagers, it was built by the residents of Hang Tau Tsuen more than 200 years ago before the setting up of Sheung Cheung Wai. The exact date of its construction cannot be decided. The well was once the main source of drinking water for both villages.





### **Site 11: Sheung Cheung Wai**

Situated west of Hang Tau Tsuen, Sheung Cheung Wai was built by a line of the Tang Clan about 200 years ago. It branched out from Hang Tau Tsuen. It is the only walled village along the Ping Shan Heritage Trail.

Sheung Cheung Wai is a typical local walled village. The symmetrical layout of the village features rows of houses. They are enclosed by a green-brick wall, with the gatehouse and shrine lying on the central axis. The wall of the village was once surrounded by a moat with the only entrance situated in the middle of the southern wall. The moat has been filled in, and the gatehouse and the shrine have been re-constructed. However, part of the enclosing walls and old

houses inside still remain to provide a general impression of the original setting, layout and characteristics of a traditional Chinese walled village.

This 200-year-old walled village consists of rows of symmetrical houses. They are enclosed by a green brick wall. The gatehouse, shrines and some of the old houses are still standing. Part of the



wall may be missing, but enough remains to give a feel for what a traditional Chinese walled village looked like.





### Site 12: Shrine of the Earth God

A shrine lies not far west of Sheung Cheung Wai. It is dedicated to To Tei Kung (the Earth God), who is known to the villagers as She Kung (also known as Pak Kung and Fuk Tak Kung). Altars such as this one are commonly found in traditional Chinese villages, as She Kung is believed to be the protector of villagers. They are usually simple brick structures on which a stone is placed to symbolise the presence of the god. Those with higher position may have gable walls with a “wok yee” (“the handles of a Chinese cooking pan”) design.

Just before getting into Sheung Cheung Wai, one will see the Shrine of the Earth God, who is known as ‘She Kung’ in this village and believed to protect villages and homes. His shrines are usually simple brick structures on which pieces of stone are placed to represent his presence.





### Site 13: Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda

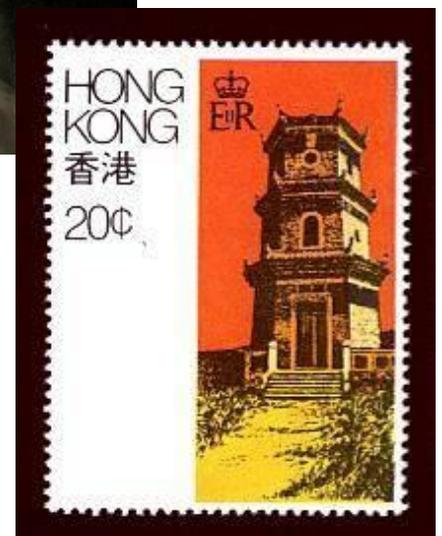
The Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda (Pagoda of Gathering Stars) is situated to the north of Sheung Cheung Wai.

It is the only ancient pagoda in Hong Kong. According to the genealogy of the Tang Clan in Ping Shan, the pagoda was built by Tang Yin-tung of the 7th generation more than 600 years ago. According to the Tang Clan, the Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda was originally situated at the mouth of a river. It faced Deep Bay and was intended as a feng shui structure designed to ward off evil spirits from the north and to prevent flooding. Its auspicious location, in alignment with Castle Peak, would ensure success for clan members in the imperial civil service examinations. The Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda was declared a monument in December 2001.

The Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda is a hexagonal shaped, three-storey green-brick structure about 13 metres in height distinguished by unique eaves between each level. A statue of Fui Shing (Champion Star) is housed on the upper floor. It is believed to be a god who controls success and failure in examinations. Auspicious titles are inscribed on each floor, including: “Over the Milky Way” on the top floor, “Pagoda of Gathering Stars” on the middle floor and “Light Shines Straight Onto the Dippers and the Enclosures” on the ground



floor.





### 4.11 High Accessibility to the CBD

Thanks to the well establishment of public transport and nearness of the trail is to the downtown, visitors can easily reach the trail for a pleasurable and educational outdoor experience with little travelling time.

Visitors can take MTR (local train in HK) from all districts to Ping Shan Heritage. The journey only takes you 45 minutes from Central HK. Getting off at Tin Shui Wai Station and walking 1 minute from the station, visitors can reach the trail. To a heritage trail in a rural village, this feature is likely unique in the world.

### 4.12 Distinctive Cuisines Available

Famous cuisine in Ping Shan is also a key sight for visitors, both domestic and foreign. There are TWO distinctive cuisines provided by two restaurants in Ping Shan respectively.

#### Cuisine 1: Poon Choi (Basin Cuisine)

Poon Choi is a traditional Chinese dish once common



throughout China. It first spread to the walled villages in New Territories, Hong Kong, and then to the rest of the territory. It is a Cantonese cuisine served in large wooden, porcelain or metal basins because of the communal style of consumption. The Chinese name, transliterated as Poon Choi, has been variously translated as "big bowl feast" or "basin cuisine".

Poon Choi was invented during the late Song Dynasty. When Mongol troops invaded Song China, the young Emperor fled to the area around Guangdong Province and Hong Kong. To serve the Emperor as well as his army, the locals collected all their best food available, cooked it, and because there were not enough serving containers available the people put the resulting meal in large wooden washbasins.

Poon Choi includes ingredients such as pork, beef, lamb, chicken, duck, abalone, ginseng, shark fin, fish maw, prawn, crab, dried mushroom, fishballs, squid, dried eel, dried shrimp, pigskin, bean curd and daikon (Chinese radish).

In order to respect their guests, the villagers put only a very



small amount of vegetables in Poon Choi because vegetables are regarded as not highly valued ingredients. In order to offer the best food during important annual events, villagers prefer to include mostly meat and seafood in Poon Choi.

Attentive layering of the ingredients contributes to the taste of the whole dish.

Poon Choi is unusual as it is composed of many layers of different ingredients. Traditionally, it is also eaten layer by layer in lieu of first "stirring everything up". However, some impatient diners may first snatch the popular daikon radish at the bottom with the help of the shared serving chopsticks.

Ingredients such as Chinese radishes, pigskins and bean curd are placed in the bottom of the container. In the middle of the dish there are usually pork and Chinese dried mushrooms. On the top, meat, seafood, and rare ingredients like abalone and sea cucumber are to be found.

It contributes to the attractiveness of Poon Choi if dried noodles with egg are put on top to symbolise a crown.



Usually quite dry ingredients such as seafood are placed on the top while other ingredients that can absorb sauce well are placed at the bottom of the basin. This allows sauces to flow down to the bottom of the basin as people start eating from the top.

In Ping Shan, near the Entrance Hall of the Shut Hing Study Hall, there is a prestigious restaurant called “Ping Shan Traditional Poon Choi. It is famous for the authentic recipes of this kind of dish. This must be a strength to this the development of the trail.





### Cuisine 2: Mrs. Tang Cafe

Owned and operated the local Tang's family, Mrs. Tang Café has become one of the signature restaurants in Ping Shan, and even the overall Hong Kong. It features a Hong Kong-style "Tea Café", serving unique cuisine with the mixed characteristics of Chinese food and European food.

The must-try signature item, Tomato and Egg Pineapple Bun, is a pioneer creation. In addition with a cup of milk tea, this is the ideal afternoon snack.

The café is located in a historic Chinese village but serves localised Western food. This feature must be unique and appealing to inbound tourists.





## 4.2 Weaknesses

### 4.2.1 Cleanliness of the village

Ping Shan is still a village accommodating Tangs and other residents. For convenience, some residents may throw away their household refuse in the narrow passageways. They just wait for the collection by urban services agency. This must discourage tourism.

### 4.2.2 Traffic Problems

The paths in Ping Shan Heritage are mainly the shared passageways. In other words, vehicles like private cars and vans and pedestrians share the same roads. It is sure to cause danger to the visitors.

Another problem is there is not enough space for parking tourists' coaches. As it is only a village for locals, the nearby roads are quite narrow. So, there is insufficient space for buses to stop. If buses are stopping at the entrance of the trail near Hang Mei Tsuen to pick up tourists, it is sure they will block the road and cause traffic congestion. The annoying horn from other cars is always heard because of this.



Quite Narrow Path for Visitors

### 4.2.3 Nearness to the funeral service parlour

Next to the entrance of the visitors' centre, there is a mini funeral service parlour called Ping Shan Hau Sze Hall. Visitors must pass through it before entering the visitors' centre. Very often, the Chinese burn joss paper and incense during funeral ceremonies. If visitors pass through the parlour, they may suffer from the choking smoke and air.

What's more, funeral parlour must not be a favourable place for visitors who are supposed to enjoy tourism in a relaxing and pleasant mood.



### **4.3 Opportunities**

#### **4.3.1 Strong support of Government**

##### **4.3.1.1 Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO)**

Set up in 1993 by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) while getting the full support of the Ping Shan Tang clan, the Ping Shan Heritage Trail (Trail) takes visitors to different historic buildings. All of them are joined by a convenient walking route. The AMO and the clan co-operated again in 2007 to open the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre (Centre). It introduces local folk culture and heritage along the Trail.

The Centre is housed in the Old Ping Shan Police Station. It was originally built in 1900. And the three buildings of the Centre have now been changed to the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery, the Gallery of Ping Shan Heritage Trail and the Community Heritage Gallery.



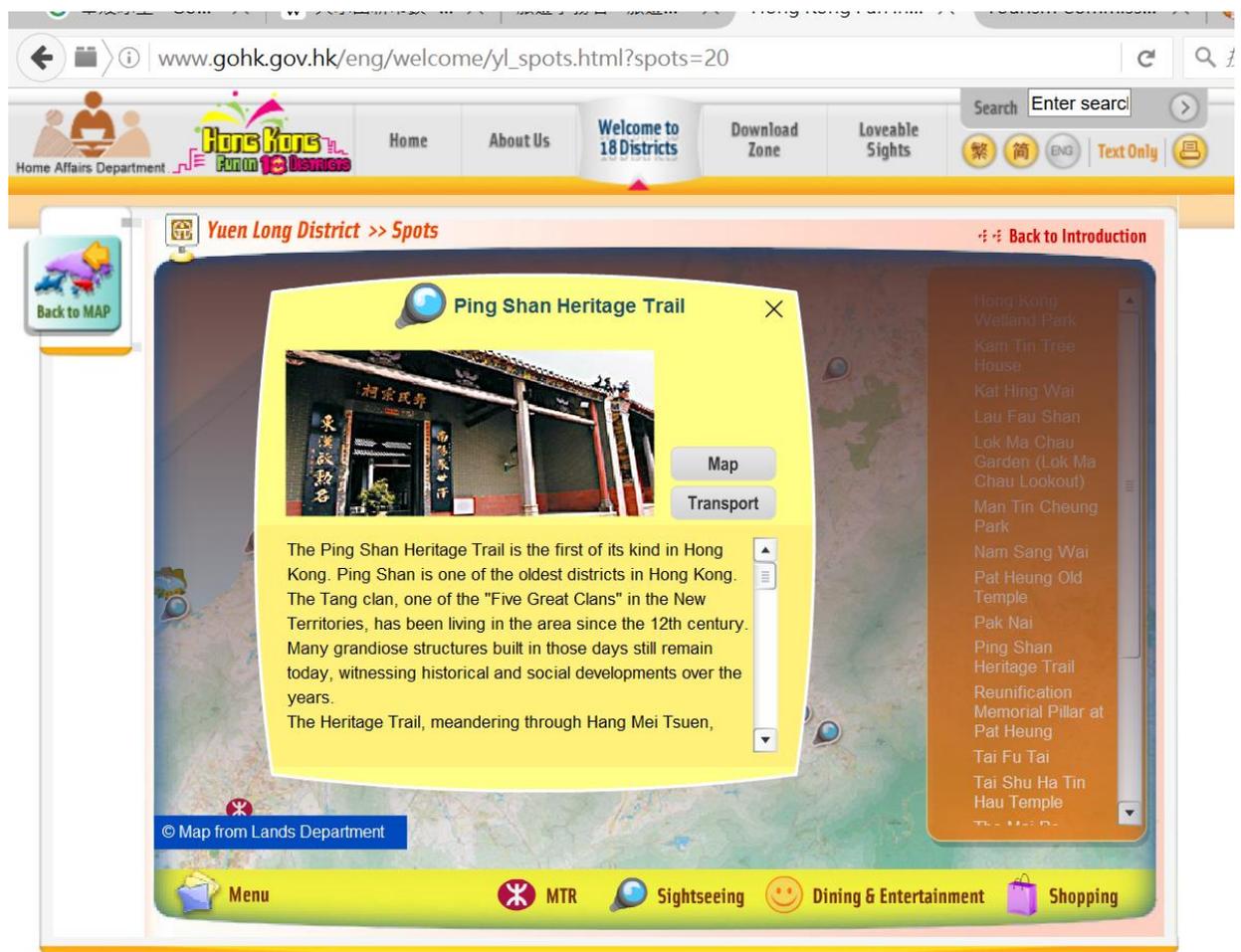
### 4.3.1.2 Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB)

Full range of information about Ping Shan Heritage Trail can be accessible on HKTB's website in different languages. What's more, information leaflets are available totally free of charge at each Tourist Information Centre.

### 4.3.1.3 Home Affairs Department

The Department established a website for tourists, providing information of all key destinations in Yuen Long. Ping Shan is of no exception.

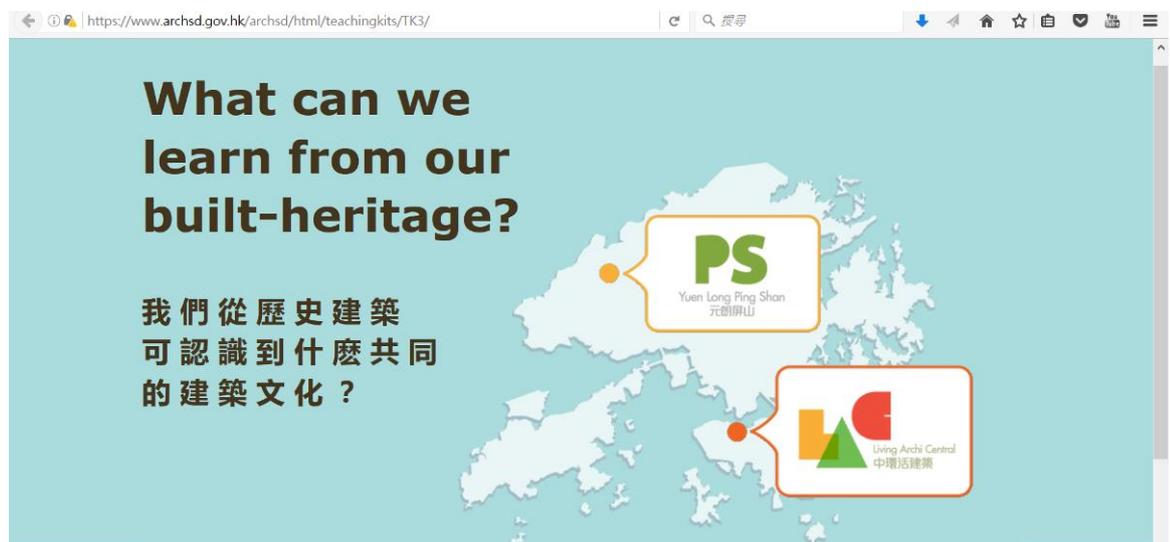
The website is named "HK Fun for 18 Districts" (香港自遊樂在 18 區). The address is <http://www.gohk.gov.hk>





### 4.3.1.4 Architecture Services Department

Architecture Services Department has developed a teaching kit for students. This aims at teaching how to vitalize and preserve the heritage. One of the topics in the teaching kit is Ping Shan Heritage Trail. Such a move must help ensure the sustainability of the destination by educating the next generation the importance and attitude of sustainable development of a historic village.





### **4.3.2 The “Synergy Effect” from the existence of the World-class Wetland Park nearby**

The Hong Kong Wetland Park is located in Tin Shui Wai, a new town close to Ping Shan Heritage Trail. The 61-hectare Hong Kong Wetland Park demonstrates the diversity of the Hong Kong's wetland ecosystem and highlights the need to conserve them. It presents an opportunity to provide an education and recreation venue with a theme on the functions and values of wetlands for use by local residents and overseas visitors.

With a famous attraction nearby, Ping Shan Heritage Trail can enjoy the “Synergy Effect”, absorbing those visitors who intend to visit the wetland park, providing them with a chance to visit cultural destination in one journey.

### **4.3.3 The Opening of a New Hotel Nearby**

There is a 5-star hotel called the Harbour Plaza Resort City in Tin Shui Wai, a new town close to Ping Shan Heritage Trail. Meanwhile, a new hotel in the same town will be in service in 2017. More accommodation facilities certainly benefit the sustainable development for the trail.



## **4.4 Threats**

### **4.4.1 Conflicts between Heritage Conservation and City Development**

Some indigenous people living in or around the Ping Shan regard property development or selling their land as a good way to gain personal profit. So conservation means a loss of their personal interest because it means a ban on property development for their own use. So arguments continue.

### **4.4.2 The Changing Status of the Heritage Sites**

In accordance with the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority may, after consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare a place, building, site or structure as a monument. The Antiquities Authority is then empowered to prevent alterations, or to impose conditions upon any proposed alterations as she/he thinks fit, in order to protect the monument.

Of the 13 sites in Ping Shan Heritage Trail, only 4 sites are assessed as Declared Monuments, which cannot be demolished and altered. In other words, the rest 9 sites can be modified. If any one of the nine



sites is renovated for economic reasons, this will distort the attractiveness and sustainability of the trail.



## Section 5: How Different Stakeholders Helps develop Ping Shan Heritage Trail into a Sustainable Heritage Tourism Destination

### 5.1 Local Ping Shan Tour offered by Local Tourism Company

Ping Shan Heritage Trail is a key destination for rural local tour in HK. Different agencies provide local tour or guided tour for tourists. English explanations are usually available.

Having the local tour run by business sector, the destination can be sustainably developed because of profits.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a Viator tour page. The URL is [tourguides.viator.com/sightseeing-tours-china-hong-kong-20965.aspx](http://tourguides.viator.com/sightseeing-tours-china-hong-kong-20965.aspx). The page features the Viator logo with a '100% guaranteed' badge and navigation links for 'Sign In', 'Sign Up', and 'Help'. A search bar is present. The main content area is titled 'Heritage Village in Ping Shan (City Day Tour)' and includes an introduction, tour details (4 hours, 10 people, walking only, USD \$30.00), and a list of highlights: Tsui Shing Lau Pagoda, Shrine of the Earth God, Yeung Hau Temple, Tang Ancestral Hall, and Ching Shu Hin. A 'Book this tour!' button is visible, along with a 'Question about this tour? Email the guide!' link. The page also shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Viator Private Guides Home > China > Hong Kong > Eddie Yu > Heritage Village in Ping Shan (City Day Tour)'.



### 5.2 Tour organized by the local NGO

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, a local famous charitable organization, has established a non-profit-making tourism agency known as BiciLine. BiciLine is a specialist in organizing bicycle tour in rural areas of Hong Kong. Ping Shan Heritage Trail is one of their products.

Having local tour organized by NGO and having the innovative form of tourism-- by riding bicycles-- in heritage trail, the tour in Ping Shan becomes more attractive. This help the sustainable development.





### **5.3 Support of local community and schools**

The Young Friends of Heritage (YFOH) Scheme began in 2004. It is set up for secondary school students. We hope that the participants can recognize the importance of heritage preservation and learn how to treasure our cultural heritage through the training programmes and voluntary services of the Scheme. There are many activities such as lectures, heritage site visits, archaeological workshops, docent services and so on. In the past few years, about 300 students have joined the Scheme. Membership of YFOH will be valid until the age of 18. YFOH recruitment will be arranged every two years and the next exercise is scheduled in 2016.

With this scheme, the heritage can be protected sustainably as the next generation is educated the importance of conservation.



## **Section 6: Recommendations**

To achieve sustainable development to a greater extent, three recommendations are made.

### **6.1 Road Improvement Works**

It is recommended to widen the main roads next to the Ping Shan Heritage Trail so that parking of a number of tourist buses is feasible. What's more, the pedestrian safety is also guaranteed once the roads are widened.

### **6.2 Visitor Signage Improvement Works**

Visitor Signage Improvement Works are recommended to be implemented in the trail with a view to providing a co-ordinated and easily identified system of signage for visitors. The objective is to promote visitor convenience and make the trail a visitor friendly destination.

The following three types of visitor signage should be provided:

- directional signs which help to guide visitors along the way to the desired destination;
- mapboards which show locations of nearby attractions; and
- identification signs which tell stories about a particular attraction

All types of signage should be in both Chinese and English.



### 6.3 Interactive Apps for Visitors

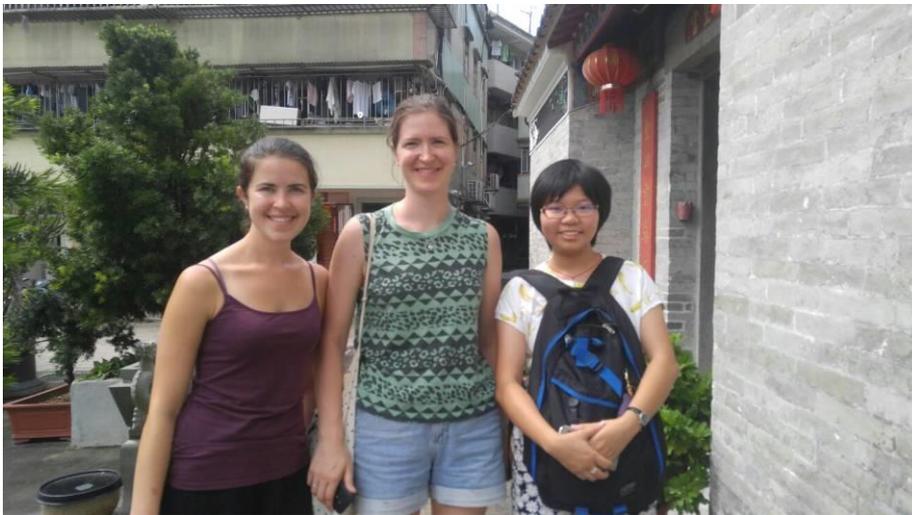
Visiting a heritage destination can be boring, especially for the young people or the person who does not have good understanding on a foreign culture. Therefore, it is suggested that the Tourism Board should develop mobile applications (Apps) for visitors. By downloading the Apps, visitors may play some interactive games by visiting different heritage sites in Ping Shan Heritage Trail.

By doing so, tourists can have fun and, above all, acquire more knowledge about the destination and culture.



### Section 7: Our Conclusive Remarks:

In conclusion, Ping Shan Heritage Trail has great potential to be developed into an ideal destination for sustainable heritage tourism and it is obvious that different stakeholders, including the NGOs, the business sector and the government are joining hands together towards the same goal.





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**GTTP Case Study Writing Competition  
International Conference 2016  
Nice, France, European Union**



**Theme of the Year:  
Heritage Tourism**

## **Traditional Heritage in a Modern Metropolis**

**A research on how different stakeholders develop Ping Shan Heritage Trail to be a sustainable traditional Chinese heritage attraction in a modern Asia's World Metropolis- Hong Kong.**

### **Teacher's Notes to the Case Study**



**Prepared by: Yuki Lau & Amy Yik  
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November 2016**

### Questions To Ask When Reading This Case Study

1. What is the “traditional” impression on Hong Kong from the prospective of foreign visitors?
2. What are the difference between “Heritage Site” and “Heritage Trail”?
3. Briefly give an introduction to “Ping Shan Heritage Trail”.
4. What was the former use of the building of the Ping Shan Heritage Visitors’ Centre?
5. What are the uses of Tang Ancestral Hall, in addition to a tourist attraction?
6. How old is the Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda?
7. What is the use of the pair of small windows in the entrance of the walled village in Ping Shan?
8. Suggest two dishes of “fusion food” to be served in Mrs. Tang’s Café in Ping Shan.
9. Apart from the government, name three other stakeholders who made contributions to the sustainable development of Ping Shan Heritage Trail.

### Learning Activities To Apply This Case Study to Your Own Country

- **Itinerary and Brochure Design Competition:** Students get into groups. Think of the heritage tourism resources they have in their country/community. Then design the itinerary for these resources and write a brochure to introduce the itinerary. Present the itinerary and the innovative elements of the trip to the teachers and classmates.
- **Role play:** Students get into groups, each student plays a role (namely, different types tourists, local residents, central/local government, tourism authority, travel agent, retail operator, hotel operator and so on) and think about the most possible views and interests of each role. Writing down such ideas as point-form notes and share them with other group members during discussion. Categorize the ideas into opportunities and threats.
- **Group project:** Students form groups, each group chooses an existing tourist’s attraction or an existing place and look for the potential and possible development plan from the prospective of heritage tourism. Visit the site of the tourism authority, if any. Explore the innovative tourism development opportunity share it with other groups. Discuss in class the common points from the findings of all the groups. Make suggestions on improvement.

## **Suggested Answers**

1. What is the “traditional” impression on Hong Kong from the perspective of foreign visitors?

*Suggested answer:*

*Hong Kong is a famous Asian cosmopolitan with modernized urban features. It is an international financial centre, which is full of skyscrapers, international brand-name hotels and hectic city life.*

2. What are the difference between “Heritage Site” and “Heritage Trail”?

*Suggested answer:*

*Heritage sites are normally the places such as castles, churches, historic villages, natural caves, viewpoints, museums and art galleries - which could be used for tourism.*

*In contrast, to establish a heritage trail, the in-charge authority has to study a range of heritage sites, to identify those sites which might attract visitors, and to work closely with the landowners and with local people to decide whether the sites have the capacity to receive visitors (if a site did not have the capacity, it was omitted from the Trail). By doing so, the authority can bring the original heritage sites into such use in a way which truly benefits the people and the economy of the area; and which is sustainable, so that the tourism does not damage the heritage sites.*

3. Briefly give an introduction to “Ping Shan Heritage Trail”.

*Suggested answer:*

*The first of its kind in Hong Kong, the Ping Shan Heritage Trail was officially opened on 12th December 1993. The Trail is about 1.6 km in length. It meanders through 3 traditional Chinese villages. It connects a number of traditional Chinese buildings and heritage sites within easy walking distance of each other to provide visitors with a chance to learn more about traditional life in the rural area of Hong Kong in a convenient half-day excursion.*

4. What was the former use of the building of the Ping Shan Heritage Visitors' Centre?

*Suggested answer:*

*It was a Police Station of the British Royal Hong Kong Police.*

5. What are the uses of Tang Ancestral Hall, in addition to a tourist attraction?

*Suggested answer:*

*It is used for worship, meeting and ceremony, mainly used by the Tang Clan.*

6. How old is the Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda?

*Suggested answer:*

*About 600 years old.*

7. What is the use of the pair of small windows in the entrance of the walled village in Ping Shan?

*Suggested answer:*

*It serves as the lookout for security purpose.*

8. Suggest two dishes of "fusion food" to be served in Mrs. Tang's Café in Ping Shan.

*Suggested answer:*

*[Any possible and feasible answers are welcome. Food combined with Chinese and Western cultures are highly expected as this is HK culture.]*

9. Apart from the government, name three other stakeholders who made contributions to the sustainable development of Ping Shan Heritage Trail.

*Suggested answer:*

- *Tang Clan*
- *Local tourism companies*
- *IT developer*

**Your Notes or Remarks:**



**HONG KONG**  
**July 2016**