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The Management of Cultural Heritage in Hong Kong

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The Management of Cultural Heritage in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is well known for its modernity, and for its reputation as a fast-growing metropolis in Asia since the 1970s. Before the 1970s, the attitudes of the public and government towards cultural heritage had been one of indifference, even negativity, with the remains of the past regarded as old and obsolescent, irrelevant to the goal of economic development. Consequently, the management of such remains was almost non-existent. However, from the 1970s onwards the issue of cultural heritage gradually came to attract considerable attention in Hong Kong, as revealed by the surveys conducted by the government in 1989 and 1994, respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 1990, 1995). The past three decades have witnessed the establishment and enactment of laws and institutions to preserve cultural heritage, including archaeological resources in Hong Kong, and an increased awareness from the public of the potential and benefits of cultural heritage.

Such changes did not occur without reason. Apparently, political, social and economic factors have all played a role in this shift in public and government attitudes and/or practices. In this paper, the current condition of the management of cultural heritage resources in Hong Kong will be reviewed, and the relevant political, social and economic factors will be briefly discussed.

A Brief Historical Background to the Management of Cultural Heritage Resources

Human beings have a long history of interest in ancient remains. The concept of managing ancient remains first emerged in

Europe. In 1533, John Leland was employed as the English King's Antiquary and travelled around England and Wales, listing and describing objects of antiquarian interest, including prehistoric sites (Daniel, 1976). This can be viewed as an initial step in the building of a national inventory of archaeological and other resources of cultural heritage, which has further developed into part of the modern practice of cultural heritage management.

However, the establishment of cultural heritage management as a specialized field, with the promotion and participation of international and national organizations, governments of different levels, societies and people from all walks of life, seems to have occurred only after the Second World War. In addition to the huge suffering and lost of human life, the two world wars also caused dramatic destruction of cultural heritage including archaeological remains. After the Second World War, it was recognized that respect among different cultures was the foundation of world peace and human prosperity and that such respect must be created via educational and other scientific approaches (UNESCO, 2002). One of the goals of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), founded on 16 November 1945, was to "maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science" (UNESCO, 2002:8). According to UNESCO, the preservation of the cultural heritage of all human beings is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Cultural heritage is the evidence and remains of past human cultures, and thus is the "common heritage of humanity" for present and future generations (UNESCO, 2001:14).
2. Cultural heritage is an educational resource for creating respect and understanding among different cultures, with the latter being the foundation for world peace and human welfare.
3. As culture is often viewed as essential to "identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy" (UNESCO, 2001:14), it is important to preserve the

remains of past cultures in order to manifest cultural continuity and help to construct identities and social cohesion.
4. The access and exercise of cultural rights — be able to preserve and maintain one's own culture — is considered a universal human right (UNESCO, 2001).
5. Cultural and intellectual exchanges are important in the process of globalization.
6. Cultural heritage is a resource for creativity, innovation and pluralism.

The loss of many human creations from small works of art to ancient monuments has provoked an awareness of and desire to protect those that survive. In 1965, a non-governmental organization (NGO) called the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), whose main mandate is to strive for the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites, was founded in Paris. Today, ICOMOS has national committees in over 107 countries and is a principal advisor to UNESCO on the conservation and protection of monuments and sites (www.international. icomos.org/about.htm). Mainly due to promotion by UNESCO, ICOMOS and to collaborations between governments, NGOs and ordinary people, interest and action in preserving cultural heritage have been on the rise since the 1960s.

During two intergovernmental conferences held in Europe and Asia in 1972 and 1973, respectively, the discussions focused on the issue of cultural policies, on preserving cultural diversity during economic development, and other related issues (www.unesco.org/culture/laws/helsinki/html_eng/page1.shtml; www.unesco.org/culture/laws/yogya/html_eng/page1.shtml). At the 17th session of the General Conference of the UNESCO meeting in Paris from 17 October to 21 November 1972, the *Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* was adopted on 16 November 1972. The Convention was based on the following situations:

1. Threats to world's cultural and natural heritage have increased (due to economic development and other activities).

2. UNESCO considers that the loss of cultural and natural heritage of unique value will result in the "harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world" (UNESCO, 1973:135).

Three decades have passed since the adoption of this Convention, which has now been ratified by 175 nations. The concept of cultural heritage has matured and the notion expanded. Today, cultural heritage is generally defined as human created remains that represent unique cultures of the past, including tangible and intangible assets of human heritage.

According to UNESCO, tangible cultural heritage includes the following:

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.

Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.

Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites that are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Movable items such as artefacts found on the ground and under water, or as part of private or public collections (e.g., museum collections) (whc.unesco.org/world_he.htm).

As for intangible cultural heritage, this consists of festivals, rites and beliefs, music, dances, the performing arts, culinary traditions, languages, oral traditions, etc., which are transmitted by oral, imitative or other means (www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible/html_eng/index_en.shtml).

Although the definitions of cultural heritage are clear, no universal definition so far exists of the management of cultural heritage (McManamon and Hatton, 2000:3). However, it is argued here that this management should at least consist of the following:

1. Directing: to set up missions, objectives, strategies, plans, guidelines, laws, professional standards, policies, working manuals, codes of practice, etc. for managing cultural heritage.
2. Implementation: to locate, identify, value, record, repair, maintain, rescue and study tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage, including archaeological remains and other items.
3. Administration: to control, monitor and organize daily activities related to cultural heritage, to solve problems and issues, to deal with various parties, to make decisions, to delegate, etc.
4. Training at different levels to provide sufficient human resources for the tasks of cultural resources management.
5. Performance evaluation and appraisal, consultation, feedback (to higher authorities, for further improvement, etc.), integration, etc.

Different from managing a business, the management of cultural heritage is a task dealing with tangible or intangible items, ranging from prehistoric remains to customs of contemporary society. Thus, a much broader knowledge of management is required. Further, if in managing a business one deals with suppliers, producers and consumers, in managing cultural heritage one deals with various sectors of society, including different levels of politicians and communities, private companies, property owners and ordinary people, all with different, even conflicting, political, economic and social interests. All of this makes the task more complicated.

In view of the above issues, a basic agenda in managing cultural heritage should include the following:

1. Clear policies and strategies on town planning, and cultural development related to the preservation, reconstruction, interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage should be formulated.

2. Legal regulations on antiquities, archaeological excavations, export and import restrictions, etc. should be established, as those are all related to the management of cultural heritage resources.
3. Authority should be given and administrative institutions should be established to monitor, control, communicate and liaise with all parties involved. Consultative institutes should also provide opinions to the authorities and to administrative sectors.
4. Funding should be provided for matters related to the preservation, protection, representation and interpretation of cultural heritage.
5. There should be sufficient, well-trained and skilled human resources, from experts of various disciplines to frontline staff, to implement various duties and carry out related responsibilities and tasks.
6. Completed database should be established for both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which will in turn function as a major reference for both daily operations and planning.
7. Clear, easy-to-follow administrative guidelines and procedures should be established and cover the major aspects of the management of cultural heritage, from decision making to daily operations.
8. Promotions and educational programmes tailored for different groups of society should be drawn up and carried out in order to publicize the notions and the importance of cultural heritage, and to encourage the participation of the public. It has been argued that support from the public is important in preserving cultural heritage (Bonnette, 2001).
9. Although the major responsibility for the management of cultural heritage may rest with the authorities and with the responsible administrative institutions, if this is purely a business of the social "elite," such management is unlikely to be sustainable and effective. There should be participation, cooperation and support from different sectors of society, from private companies to ordinary citizens, and property owners

to schoolchildren. Such broad participation and co-operation can only be achieved by education, promotion and other strategies, including incentives.

The performance and achievements of the management of cultural heritage in a state or a region should be evaluated based on this agenda and criteria. As mentioned above, cultural heritage consists of archaeological remains, also called "archaeological resources" within the management of cultural heritage, and of other tangible and intangible items. This paper will focus on the management of tangible cultural resources, particularly archaeological resources in Hong Kong.

The Management of Cultural Heritage Resources in Hong Kong

Hong Kong was ceded to the United Kingdom in 1841, following the Opium War. It was then designated as a commercial port and a station for the British Navy on their global routine (Miners, 1975:3). As the focus of Hong Kong was on its economic and military value, the colonial government naturally had no interest whatsoever in the cultural and natural heritage of this island. In addition, there might have been another reason for the British government to ignore the local heritage, including archaeological remains.

British writer Leslie Hartley once made a well-known proposition: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there" (1958:7). While Hartley stressed the remoteness and irrelevance of the past to his present by calling it "a foreign country," for the British colonial government, the past of Hong Kong was indeed foreign. The past in Hong Kong before its cession to Britain differed significantly in terms of culture and people from that of Britain; that past was very much the past of "others." In addition, in the early colonial period, hostility and tension existed between the government and ordinary people, and between Chinese and westerners (Gao, 1994). The government in-

evitably would not be interested in preserving the past of something foreign, even hostile, to them.

While there was little incentive from the government side to preserve and manage the past, Hong Kong people also did not demonstrate much interest in the past of this city prior to the 1970s.

1. The majority of Hong Kong residents prior to the 1970s were refugees or migrants from mainland China, whose major interest was to seek a relatively stable life and economic advancement in Hong Kong. They regarded Hong Kong as a place to live in temporarily and to make their fortunes (Gao, 1994). This lack of a sense of belonging resulted in the indifference towards cultural heritage in Hong Kong.

2. Globally, in both the West and the East up to the 1960s, the preservation of the past seems to have been mainly performed and promoted by the social "elite," often without the participation of ordinary people. In Hong Kong, the European "elite" had little interest in a foreign past, while the Chinese "elite" of the time had little interest in something irrelevant to their business.

Therefore, if the tradition of British governing was to listen to the opinions of the people (Miners, 1975), prior to the 1970s, there was little concern from the public to push the government to preserve the past. In addition, Hong Kong had constantly been under political, social and/or economic chaos up to the 1960s. The Japanese occupation in the 1940s and the influx of migrants after 1949 brought many social and economic problems, and managing cultural heritage was simply not a priority.

However, there were a few professionals, the majority of them westerners, carrying out archaeological surveys and excavations in Hong Kong from the 1920s onwards. Motivated initially by personal interest, their initial objective was to study the coastline of Hong Kong in search of fossils. However, during their survey, they found rich archaeological remains at many sites. Excavations were carried out at Lung Kwu Chau in 1931, at Tai Wan on Lamma Island in 1933 and at Shek Pik on Lantau Island in 1937

(Bard, 1995). Although not always up to the best professional standards, the works of these pioneers were important contribution to the establishment of cultural heritage management in Hong Kong in several aspects:

1. They established an archaeological inventory. Schofield, who was one of the pioneers, had mapped more than 100 archaeological sites by the 1950s (Bard, 1995). This is the earliest inventory for managing archaeological resources in Hong Kong.

2. They preserved important archaeological remains through excavation. The excavation of the Lei Cheng Uk tomb in 1955, which attracted much public attention then, was carried out by some of the pioneers, and the tomb was later converted into a museum. The first archaeological team was formed in 1956, led by the head of the Chinese Department of Hong Kong University. In 1964 the team was dissolved to form the Hong Kong Archaeological Society (Bard, 1995), with members from different professions. Prior to the late 1970s, all archaeological excavations were conducted or organized by members of the society.

3. They persuaded the colonial government to promulgate legislation and guidelines, and to establish consultative and administrative institutions to manage Hong Kong's cultural heritage (Bard, 1995). It was mainly due to their work and promotion that the government and society, including some members of the "elite," recognized that this island had not been a barren rock prior to the colonial epoch and that there were rich remains of the past, which should be preserved. In the mid-1960s, the Museum Selection Committee proposed that a museum archaeological team be formed (Hong Kong Government, 1965:16). This remains a proposal. One of the pioneers, Dr. Bard, was appointed as the first Executive Secretary of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) in 1976.

Hong Kong became more stable after the mid-1960s, following the violent events of the mid-1960s. These events caused cer-

tain government policy changes in Hong Kong. The government realized that it was important to provide cultural facilities for the communities, particularly the younger generations, as means to reduce social conflicts and make Hong Kong easier to govern. Museums were then established in Hong Kong as places for the preservation and presentation of the past and for the enjoyment of the community. Meanwhile, many Hong Kong-born young people viewed Hong Kong as their home instead of a temporary place in which to live, as their parents had done (Ding, 1994). This also strengthened their sense of identity and, consequently, interest in Hong Kong's past.

The issue of the status of Hong Kong was raised in the early 1980s. The Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed, and Hong Kong's scheduled return to China stimulated much interest in the cultural heritage of this city (Ding, 1994). From the 1990s onwards, the desire to preserve local heritage has intensified, particularly after the 1997 handover. In his 1998 Policy Address, the Chief Executive spoke of the need to promote cultural heritage to foster a sense of belonging and identity (Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 2002). It seems highly likely that, as Hong Kong enters the post-colonial epoch, local cultural heritage is going to serve social and political aims.

Briefly speaking, it was after the early 1970s that the preservation of cultural heritage became an item on the Hong Kong government's agenda, and the management of Hong Kong's heritage was initiated. The management of cultural heritage in Hong Kong can be synthesized from the following aspects.

Legislation

The first legislation on cultural heritage — the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance — was passed in 1971. It states clearly that "the purpose of this bill is to establish control over archaeological discoveries in Hong Kong and to ensure that items of particular historical interest are preserved for the enjoyment of the community"; and to ensure that future generations are able to learn

from the past (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 1971:55). However this very bill also stated that "there has been tendency in Hong Kong to *concentrate on the needs of tomorrow rather than on preserving evidence of the past*. Naturally this legislation will have to be very selective in its application so as to ensure *that necessary developments are not held up for the preservation of antiquities of minor importance*" (Ibid; italics added). However, the ordinance did not clarify the issues of what criteria was to be used, and who was to decide what items are "of minor importance."

The major points of this ordinance are, as follows:

1. Any human-made artefacts and features and fossils dated prior to 1800 are defined as antiquities and/or monuments.
2. Any artefacts dated prior to 1800 and found after the commencement of the ordinance are government property.
3. The management of these remains rests with the Secretary for Home Affairs for the urban areas and with the District Commissioner for the New Territories. Both are defined as "authorities."
4. These authorities will consult the Antiquities Advisory Board and with the approval of the Governor, declare certain items to be monuments.
5. However, private owners and occupiers of any proposed monuments have the right to object to such a declaration. The lawful interest of private owners and occupiers is to be respected, and compensation is to be paid to them.
6. Once declared, it is the government's responsibility to preserve these monuments.
7. The search for or excavation of antiquities is also to be controlled (Ibid).

Another legal document, *Antiquities (Excavation and Search) Regulations*, was passed in 1976. It outlawed any unauthorized digging and searching activities in Hong Kong and established a system of controlling such activities by issuing licenses. The *Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance* was passed in 1997. Briefly, this ordinance requires large-scale construction projects carried out in Hong Kong to obtain environmental permits from the

government by passing through an assessment procedure, in which the possible environmental impact of each project will be assessed. The concept of environmental impact also includes the possible impact on cultural heritage remains (Hong Kong Government, 2001b). This means that, from now on, companies have to demonstrate that their construction projects will not cause damage to cultural heritage remains such as archaeological sites or ancient buildings; or if the projects do cause damage, the companies are required to carry out mitigation measurements (Ibid:20). In practice, this often results in salvage archaeological excavations and/or other rescue methods to preserve the cultural heritage sites that may be affected.

Administrative Institutions and Other Facilities

In Hong Kong, as in many other places of the world, administrative and advisory institutes are responsible for managing the local cultural heritage. The AMO as an administrative institute, and the Antiquities Advisory Board as a consultative institute, were both founded in 1976.

Since its establishment in 1976, the AMO has played a central role in managing cultural heritage. The objectives of the AMO are to "search for, to record and to protect the antiquities" (Bard, 1988:10). It is responsible for restoring, preserving, maintaining, rescuing and protecting all tangible ancient remains, from architectural and archaeological remains to underwater artefacts. The AMO also participates in educating the public on heritage preservation. In addition, it has actively participated in promoting heritage tourism since the late 1990s (Chiu, 1999). This office has carried out many projects, including conducting archaeological surveys and excavations, surveying and restoring of ancient buildings, producing publications and promoting heritage preservation.

Hong Kong is, and has been, a very commercialized society. To preserve the past is a costly business. Furthermore, preservation is often in conflict with modernization and business develop-

ment. Hence the task is a very difficult one. However, the AMO has made significant achievements since its establishment. Territory-wide surveys have been conducted since the late 1980s, and an inventory on archaeological resources and historical buildings has been established. Archaeological excavations and restorations of historic buildings have been carried out since the late 1970s. Their work is up to international standards and has been recognized as such. The excavation organized by the AMO at Ma Wan was given the accolade of one of the ten most significant archaeological discoveries in China in 1996. The restoration of two ancient buildings won the UNESCO Asian and Pacific Region Award in 2001 and 2002.

From the very beginning, the AMO recognized the importance of public support and participation. Dr. Bard, the first Executive Secretary of AMO, was certain that "no conservation policy could fully succeed" without the interest and support of the community (Bard, 1988:10). The AMO has made a great effort to publicize all events related to heritage, such as increasing public awareness by reporting news and co-operating with the mass media, educating the public by promoting academic activities such as seminars and exhibitions, and providing information on heritage trails and other cultural heritage sites for tourists. The AMO also welcomes students from secondary and tertiary institutes to visit archaeological sites and participate in excavation and other related works, so that the significance of archaeological remains in Hong Kong can be widely known.

However, the AMO alone does not have sufficient resources, and cannot reach out to the whole of society, as it is mainly an administrative office, not an institute open to the public. To educate the public more efficiently, other cultural facilities open to the public, particularly museums, have to play their role. In Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Heritage Museum are public institutes that also function as important facilities for cultural heritage management. The major roles of the museums are, as follows:

1. Preserving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Hong Kong by collecting items related to heritage assets, including those on customs, food culture, performing arts, etc.
2. Ensuring that antiquities and monuments are preserved, restored and maintained properly. This duty is mainly performed by the conservation unit within the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the Hong Kong government. The unit resides at several Hong Kong museums and looks after mobile and immobile items from archaeological excavations, folklore and historical contexts.
3. Educating the public about the contents and importance of cultural heritage through permanent and thematic exhibitions, as well as various activities including inter-school competition on certain topics related to Hong Kong's cultural heritage and history, and weekend out-door activities, seminars and workshops.
4. Providing necessary data resources and archives for scholarly work related to the preservation and management of Hong Kong's cultural heritage.

Other government departments, particularly the Education Department and Hong Kong Tourism Board, have also made much effort on the education and promotion of Hong Kong's cultural heritage in recent years, particularly after the 1990s. For example, several education and mass media programmes related to cultural heritage preservation were produced after the late 1990s (Table 1). Consequently, local communities and politicians are more aware of, and have begun to explore cultural heritage, including archaeological remains, as resources for various purposes (Table 4). One of the archaeological sites, the southern gate of Kowloon Walled City, was preserved in its original position and became part of the Kowloon Walled City Park. This approach integrates the objectives of preserving archaeological sites and utilizing cultural heritage, and is a common practice in cultural heritage management worldwide.

Table 1   Publications on Cultural Heritage Preservation

	Before 1990	After 1990
Mass media programmes	No data	8
School education	No data	3
Books	7	14

Source: Library catalogues, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Funding

Archaeological excavations or the maintenance of historical buildings can cost hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars. Unlike a business investment, such expenses often do not bring a monetary return. Thus, public funding is essential. From the late 1970s funding has been provided for the preservation of cultural heritage in Hong Kong, and the amount has substantially increased in recent years. Generally speaking, the government's funding consists of two parts. One is an annual provision for general maintenance and rescue work (Table 2); the other consists of special funds for certain large projects (www.info.gov.hk/fstb/tb/estimates/2001-02/printed/english/head095.pdf). In addition, there is funding from the private sector and from other areas of the public sector to preserve Hong Kong's cultural heritage.

From the 1970s to the 1990s Hong Kong enjoyed an economic boom. Consequently, the government had more resources to provide for cultural activities, including activities to manage Hong Kong's cultural heritage such as archaeological excavations and the restoration of historical buildings. After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, although the economic situation has been unstable, public funding for both archaeological work and the restoration of monuments has remained steady (Table 2).

Table 2   Annual Provisions by the Hong Kong Government for the AMO to Carry Out Certain Schemes (HK$ million)

	1998-99[1]	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Restoration of monuments	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.0
Archaeological excavation	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

Note: 1. This is the figure for actual expenditure. Estimates for this year cannot be found.

Sources: www.info.gov.hk/fstb/tb/estimates/estimates2000-2001/pdf/
english/head053.pdf;
www.info.gov.hk/fstb/tb/estimates/2001-02/printed/english/
head095.pdf;
www.budget.gov.hk/fb/2002/estimates/english/head095.pdf;
www.budget.gov.hk/2003/eng/head095.pdf.

In addition to the annual provision, extra funding for large projects has also been provided. According to the government's budget, a total of 9.9 million dollars was committed in the late 1990s for the protection of a kiln dating back to the Ming and Qing Dynasties in the New Territories. A grant of 4.5 million dollars was made in 2000 for the restoration of a historical building (Hung Lau); and 2.5 million dollars for the "compilation of a computerized record of heritage sites in Hong Kong" was committed in the financial year 2000-01 (www.info.gov.hk/ fstb/tb/estimates/estimates2000-2001/pdf/english/head053.pdf; www.info.gov.hk/fstb/tb/estimates/2001-02/printed/english/ head095.pdf; www.budget.gov.hk/fb/2002/estimates/english/ head095.pdf; www.budget.gov.hk/2003/eng/head095.pdf).

Apart from government funding, the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust was established in 1992 as another resource for "the preservation and conservation of Hong Kong's heritage" (www.info. gov.hk/yearbook/2001/ehtml/21/21-13.htm). Since then, this trust has been funding academic research and other activities related to archaeology and the management of cultural heritage in Hong Kong.

The Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Hong Kong

Territory-wide surveys on the tangible aspects of cultural heritage were conducted in the 1980s and the 1990s. An inventory of tangible remains (archaeological sites and monuments) seems to have been established. More than 900 historical buildings and structures have been recorded. As of 15 December 2002, 77 of these had been declared monuments (www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/ Museum/Monument/eng/faq/index.html) and their maintenance rests with the government. By April 2003, 235 archaeological sites and finding places in Hong Kong had been monitored by the AMO (Education Section of the AMO, personal communication). This is a crucial database for the management of cultural heritage, including cultural development, town planning, construction plans, and so forth.

Regulations and Guidelines

Several guidelines and procedures have been set up for issues related to managing archaeological resources, such as guideline for submitting an environmental impact assessment report, procedures for applying for the environmental permit, and regulations for applying for a license to conduct archaeological surveys and excavations in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Government, 2001a).

Social Participation and/or Support

Generally speaking, many Hong Kong residents are still more concerned about the present and the future, and little interested the past/history. They focus on economic gains and judge success by the amount of the fortune accumulated. On the other hand, after the 1960s a sense of belonging has been gradually forming,

and has strengthened after 1997. It seems that private companies and the public have begun to participate in the preservation of Hong Kong's cultural heritage (Tables 3 and 4).

As the economy slows down and tourism becomes more important, many local politicians and residents realize that the redevelopment of archaeological sites, parks and heritage trails may be good income-generating resources. They have therefore proposed various projects according to their objectives (Table 4).

Among the proposals, the remains of a kiln in Tai Po dating to the Ming dynasty were to be preserved and converted as part of a theme park. This proposal was funded by the Hong Kong Tourism Board and supported by local residents. It can be anticipated that with the support and participation of the public, the preservation and utilization of archaeological remains and sites will be more feasible in Hong Kong.

In summary, an inventory of cultural heritage in Hong Kong has now been established; laws and ordinance protecting archaeological remains and controlling diggings have been legislated, administrative and consultative bodies have been founded, and there are more human resources in Hong Kong now to carry out work on cultural heritage preservation. Apparently, the management of cultural heritage resources in Hong Kong has made significant achievements in the past two and a half decades. On the other hand, problems remain.

Hong Kong is now a post-colonial city after more than 150 years of British rule, and is designated as a commercialized city

Table 3   Private Donations to the Work of the AMO (HK$ million)

	1999-2000	2000-01
Private donations	3.048	1.720

Source: Leisure and Cultural Services Department (2002).

Table 4   Proposals for Preserving and Developing Heritage-related Sites/Parks/Trials

Year	Proposed by	Places and contents of proposal
1999	AMO	Tai Po kiln theme park/museum
Late 1990s	Local councillor and communities, inviting AMO	Ma On Shan Mining Theme Park
Before 2002[1]	AMO and local residents (the Tang clan)	Ping Shan Police Station converted to the Tang Museum
January 2002	Local councillor Li Kwok-ying	Tai Po Fu Shin Street historical walk
January 2002	Urban Renewal Authority	Wan Chai pre-war buildings
March 2002	Local community	Central and Western historical walks
April 2002	Local community	Tai O festival (marriage customs, etc.)
April 2002	Planning and Lands Bureau	Wan Chai "Old Hong Kong" Theme Park with a museum on the *Britannia* (purchased from the U.K.)
April 2002	Local councillor and residents	Kowloon Walled City antiquities complex
May 2002	Urban Renewal Authority	Nga Tsin Wai village partially preserved
October 2002	Local councillor and residents	Kom Tong Hall to be preserved
November 2002	Hong Kong Tourism Board	Invited a private company to develop the headquarters of the marine police into a commercial/tourism spot[2]

Notes: 1. The exact year in which this plan was initiated has not been disclosed but it is likely to have been before 2002.
2. This is the first time that the government has invited private developers to participate in the development of historical buildings.

Sources: *Ming Pao Daily News* and *The Sun*.

focusing on economic activities such as financial services and/or value-added industries. Although the city has a history of more than 6,000 years, the Tourism Board has decided to maintain and promote the image of Hong Kong as a dynamic city, a "shopping heaven," even as they have realized the increased importance of cultural tourism and preserving cultural heritage (Duncan, 2002). What is more, Hong Kong is still a city with limited land resources yet a fast-growing population. To make things worse, the government relies heavily on selling land to property developers for a major part of its income. All of these factors and related government policies have their impact on issues and problems relating to the management of cultural heritage in Hong Kong.

First, Hong Kong is still in search of cultural policy. In a recently issued consultation paper, Hong Kong was tentatively designated as a city characterized by the interaction and co-existence of both western and eastern cultures (Culture and Heritage Commission, 2003). This paper has yet to be accepted by the government, but it is not clear the impact of this cultural positioning of Hong Kong will have on the management of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, without a clear cultural policy, the management of cultural heritage in Hong Kong will not have a clear direction and focus.

The second problem is economic development and modernization versus cultural heritage preservation in Hong Kong. As mentioned above, the major income of Hong Kong government comes from selling land to property developers. When there is a conflict of interest between land sale and preserving heritage assets, very often it is the latter that is sacrificed (Chiu, 1999). To date, there is no clear government policy on this issue. As Hong Kong is now facing more economic difficulties, the government is even less likely to be concerned about preserving the past.

As it is "a most dynamic city in Asia" as claimed by the Tourism Board, Hong Kong always looks to the future instead of to the past (Morris, 1989:4). In addition to the high price of land, labour costs in Hong Kong are among the highest in Asia. Since preserving the past has the potential to both drain land resources and be demanding of labour costs, it is inevitable that such preservation often provokes different opinions from different parties, from property developers to landowners, not excluding indigenous residents and other interested groups. As the AMO is only an administrative department with limited power to enforce the law, it has to rely on negotiations and persuasion when trying to carry out its duties. Thus, when neither negotiation nor persuasion works, the preservation of ancient remains will have to give way to development in the future (Chiu, 1999).

Worse still, Hong Kong has been facing financial problems in the last few years. In many places of the world cultural heritage is never a priority but always a soft target for cuts. Hong Kong is no exception. Therefore, the Special Administrative Region government has recently been making plans to reduce the financial resources earmarked for preserving cultural heritage by corporatizing museums and contracting out other related services. How these changes will affect the management of cultural heritage is yet to be seen.

Also due to the economic problems, many local communities and politicians now view cultural heritage, including archaeological remains, as a way of generating income either for the territory or for the local communities, through tourism and other economic activities such as building a shopping mall, theme park, etc. (Table 4). There are pros and cons to this trend. While more resources may be invested to protect the ancient remains in order to generate income, a lack of proper management could cause severe damage to these remains once they have become a destination for tourists. Thus far we have yet to see any guidelines, bylaws or clear instructions from the government about this concern.

The third problem is the insufficiency of professional human resources in Hong Kong. No tertiary institution in Hong Kong offers an undergraduate major in archaeology or on the management of cultural heritage. The majority of archaeologists who can be in charge of field excavations in Hong Kong at present are not very young, ranging from at least 40 to 60 or over. Further, archaeological research is insufficient due to limited human resour-

ces. Since the 1980s the AMO has been inviting professionals from overseas to help with various tasks, from digging up archaeological sites to processing excavated materials. However, this practice may change in the future due to financial and administrative concerns. As for preserving historical buildings, at present there is no undergraduate programme in Hong Kong on this either, only a post-graduate programme run by the University of Hong Kong. Further, the human resources needed to carry out works of restoration and to repair old buildings using traditional techniques are insufficient, so the government also has to invite professionals and craftsmen from overseas or mainland China. It is hard to maintain the efficient management of cultural resources without a stable professional team with local experience and expertise.

The number of staff in the AMO has increased from 38 in 1999-2000 to 50 in 2001-02 (Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 2002), but they are still unable to carry out all the tasks required. Due to a shortage of human resources, much raw data gathered in past excavations have been sitting in storage rooms for years, waiting to be analysed and published. It is possible that, as those who participated in the excavations are now absent from Hong Kong, some of the primary data may not be recovered.

Last, but not the least, is the fact that there are no customs restrictions on the import and export of antiquities. While antiquity dealers embrace such a free port policy, the lack of legal regulations hinders the management of heritage in Hong Kong, particularly archaeological remains, as stolen or illicit artefacts and other items are easily taken in and out of the territory.

How should the above problems be addressed and solved? Below, are some suggestions.

1. It is necessary to identify the value of cultural heritage from the viewpoint of cultural continuity. The present is the history of the future. A lot more needs to be done to promote the idea of preserving cultural heritage, including archaeological remains, particularly to the public.

2. It is important that preserving cultural heritage not be in conflict with economic development. With good and balanced management it is possible to create mutual benefit. As cultural tourism is becoming popular, *well-preserved and well-managed* archaeological and other heritage sites can be attractive destinations for tourists without causing severe damage to the sites.

3. Town planning should take the preservation of cultural heritage into account, and clear guidelines and *implementation* are necessary.

4. Facing the current financial problems, the government should establish certain bylaws/regulations and require private companies to pay for salvage excavations and the preservation of monuments, providing tax reductions and other incentives for them to do so.

5. Participation from the public should be encouraged and further promoted.

6. There is an urgent need to train the younger generation, as human resources are insufficient.

In summary, the management of cultural heritage resources in Hong Kong is closely associated with political and social changes as well as with economic development after the 1970s, but it is still in its early stage compared to the situation in other countries. As a post-colonial and commercial city, the handling of the past in Hong Kong may be more difficult. It is probably not feasible to simply copy the management techniques and procedures of other countries. Hong Kong has to find a practical solution of its own. However, as public awareness is rising inside and outside Hong Kong of preserving Hong Kong's cultural heritage and of developing eco- and cultural tourism, we shall see further progress on the management of cultural heritage in Hong Kong in the years to come.

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The Management of Cultural Heritage in Hong Kong

Abstract

The image of Hong Kong is that of a metropolis with little remaining of the past. Yet there are rich cultural assets on this island, both tangible and intangible, reflecting Hong Kong's heritage. For various political, economic and social reasons, both the public and the government paid little attention to the past as a cultural resource prior to the 1970s. The situation, however, has improved since the 1970s, again for political, economic and social reasons. The emergence and development of cultural heritage management in Hong Kong is reviewed in this paper, and a few proposals are made.

香港文化遺產的管理

呂烈丹

（中文摘要）

　　香港以現代大都會著稱，然而在這個海島上還存在豐富的物質和非物質文化遺產。1970 年代以前，由於政治、經濟和社會的因素，政府和公眾對過去的遺產並不重視。不過，在1970 年代以後，同樣由於政治、經濟和社會的原因，這種情況有所改善。本文回顧了香港文化遺產管理的出現和發展，並且提出了有待改進之處。