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**Museum and Cultural Identity –  
Hong Kong Heritage Museum**

A Report Submitted to  
Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Cultural and Heritage Management

by

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## **Abstract**

To sustain a city's values and to harmonize its communities, it is believed that museum collections can help the community to understand and construct their own cultural identity. This study is an examination of the analysis and critique found in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum on its effectiveness to shape Hong Kong people's identity. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum which was established and opened in 2000, is the latest public museum about culture and heritage under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The Heritage Museum is comparatively rich and diverse in museum collections, with a relevance to different communities in Hong Kong.

In order to examine the success of the Museum in constructing people's cultural identity, quantitative questionnaires and qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted to collect relevant data. Investigation found that permanent exhibitions curated by the Museum can both address and trigger visitors' memories and past history. The Museum's intention to foster a local identity within a larger sense of Chinese nationalism is also discussed. In closing, recommendations are made for the Heritage Museum. By utilizing resources more wisely by putting more focus on intangible cultural heritage and on Hong Kong's colonial heritages, Hong Kong citizens can better relate to the objects and the Museum can fit its mission statement.

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## **I. Introduction**

Cultural Heritage has become a vital part of a society, since it plays an important role in forming one's sense of self and identity. Museums have long been discussed in helping visitors to explore their cultural identity. The museum and archive serve as institutions of civic education to enrich people's lives by providing a deeper sense of connection to their past and to their living experiences. With its cultural significance, the museum is then considered an invaluable public asset of a city.

It is believed that the development of public museum services in Hong Kong has been relatively late compared to the other metropolises, like London, New York or Paris. Although the museum development started in the 20<sup>th</sup> century here in Hong Kong, the SAR Government was yet to recognize the importance of heritage conservation. An urgency for museum development could be found in the government after the handover from Britain to China.

Along with the government's interests in preserving precious heritage, it has been trying to pursue and strengthen a sense of belonging in citizens after Hong Kong's reunification with China. Since the handover, Hong Kong people have found it hard to define their own identity because it is a complex and very personal thing that cannot be executed by the government.

Aiming to examine the intention of the SAR Government in constructing Hong Kong people's identity, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum was chosen as a case study to discuss. Established in 2000, distinguished as the only public museum about cultural heritage, ways of interpretation of exhibitions and collections were then assessed in order to see how Hong Kong's culture is defined.

## **II. Museum and the Community**

### **Museum and its Role**

Museums are important vessels for cultivating people's awareness of different aspects such as culture and history. According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM, 2007), a museum is "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment". Through interpreting the community's own history and heritage, it is believed that museums can give people a sense of identity, and can foster a sense of locality.

The role of museums has changed rapidly from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, spaces for exhibitions were social places for nobles (Fyfe, 2006, pp. 35-36). In museum halls, labels, brochures and lectures were the permanent interpretive devices in museum halls, which normally contained a large amount of information such as dates, places and facts (Anderson, 2004, p. 212). Nowadays in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, museums are institutions about ideas, actively encouraging debate, critical thought and action, and increasingly have become more involved in political issues (Kelly and Gordon, 2002, p. 156). According to Hooper-Greenhill (2000), choosing the objects, putting them together, and writing or speaking about the objects can all have political effects. These effects are not only those of the objects *per se*; instead, these objects and their interpretive frameworks can open up or close down historical, social and cultural possibilities. Museum pedagogy is able to become a critical pedagogy, mainly because of "successfully making those marginal cultures visible, and also by legitimating difference" (p. 148). Museums are places for providing rich learning



experiences for many visitors, too. Museums are not “cabinets of curiosities” with objects shown in didactic ways anymore (Kelly and Gordon, 2002, p. 156).

### **Museums and their Audiences**

According to Hooper-Greenhill (1999), an audience used to be considered a passive homogeneous group of receivers of museum exhibitions (p. 19). In the past, museums took the initiative to convey messages to visitors through exhibitions. The process of production was entirely closed. The interactions between museums and their audiences were like monologues, one-way conversations without feedback from the audience. The visitors were constituted as separate from the processes of the museum, and were considered as a general, undifferentiated passive mass (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, pp. 210-211).

However, nowadays a museum’s audience is active and each member of the audience is considered as an individual. Interactions between museums and audiences are two-way dialogues enabling contributions from both parties. The audience, as the interpreters, plays an active role in the process of making sense of experiences. Interpretation is necessarily based on an audience’s own experiences, and own position in history and culture (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, pp. 48-49). In addition, Chen (2007) also stated that memories are not passively received by the museum audience. Instead, memories are actively recalled and constructed by the audience. Their experiences visiting museums can actively trigger memories of the old days, open dialogues between the past and the present as well as articulate audiences’ memories and identities (pp. 178-179). Objects in museums can thus enable active meaning-makers to make use of their prior knowledge and cultural experience to develop their

own unique interpretations, perceptions, and memories. The knowledge which audiences learn from the objects is now obtained through the interpretation of experiences of the audience, but not objective facts simply transmitted from museum to audience as in the past. This process of constructing meaning enables an open-ended conversation between audience and objects. The conversation remains open while the meaning interpreted is never fixed (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, pp. 50-51).

### **III. Museum and Cultural Identity**

Museums, as cultural institutions, play an important role in preserving heritage and at the same time, enhance cultural awareness. Hooper-Greenhill (2000) suggested that the very nature of museums as repositories for knowledge makes them key institutions in the production of social ideas in many nations (p. 5). According to Karp (1992), identities of people are defined by the content of public-culture events such as museum exhibitions (p. 20). Museums have the power to classify and define what is significant to a community. Museum collections and activities are bound up with assertions about what is central or peripheral, valued or useless, essential to identity or marginal (p. 7). Falk (2009) further suggested that museums can reinforce personal identity and a sense of belonging through objects as meanings and values are attached to the objects by the museum (p. 47). Museums' displays illustrate how the selection of knowledge and the presentation of ideas and images are enacted within a power system (Karp, 1992, p. 1). Thus, modern states often use museums to foster citizenship and national identity (Carroll, 2005, p. 77).

#### **Hong Kong's Identity**

“The sense of the temporary is very strong, even if it can be entirely counterfactual. The city is not so much a place as a space of transit. It has always been, and will perhaps always be, a port in the most literal sense – a doorway, a point in between – even though the nature of the port has changed”.

(Abbas, 1997, p. 4)

Ackbar Abbas here stated that although Hong Kong now has grown to be a cosmopolitan city, it is a place once made up of refugees and migrants from China, who did not consider Hong Kong home, but only a place of transit. Due to the colonial heritage, even though Hong Kong people acquired Chinese nationality, it is

difficult to locate a public consensus concerning their heritage and identity. Abbas also mentioned that Hong Kong was well described as a “cultural desert”; he mentioned that “until as late as the seventies, Hong Kong did not realize it could have a culture” (p. 6). People started to fear for their way of life, the mixture of two countries were “a culture to be disappeared”, inspired by the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration (1984) and Tiananmen Massacre (1989). “Are we Chinese? Hong Kong Chinese? Hong Kongers (*Heunggongyahn*)?” are questions frequently asked by Hong Kong people. This group of people is described as confronting an “identity crisis” (Lau, 1997, p. 1; Henderson, 2001, pp. 223-225) in that they think they are related to, but very detached from China. By the mid-1990s, the question was very much at the forefront of the collective endeavour of the city, at a time of “unprecedented transformation” (Chan, 1994, p. 443). That is to say, especially from 1990-1997, people started to get irritated, struggling with “Hong Kong’s culture” because of the fear of the handover. Since then, Hong Kong’s social values put more emphasis on the sense of belonging like what is stated in the 2001 Consultation Paper written by the Culture and Heritage Commission, “to build up the confidence and pride of Hong Kong people in their country and society”.

### **Heritage and Cultural Identity**

As Hong Kong is a very special administrative region blending East and West, its strength is the dynamic fusion of cultural events and entertainment. In its 2001 Consultation Paper, the Culture and Heritage Commission stated that “we must assimilate the best of Chinese and other cultures, and build a cultural environment that is grounded in Chinese culture but pluralistic and open to the world”. By this, it is

admitted that the HKSAR Government is beginning to realize the importance of using museums and heritage to foster a sense of belonging, and to stress Hong Kong's East-West hybridity and openness to the world.

More measures for heritage conservation have been implemented, for example archaeological sites must be registered with the agreement of the Antiquities and Monuments Office. The tourism industry also started to pay attention to preserving and promoting cultural heritage to the community, for example, the Hong Kong Tourism Board is promoting Hong Kong as a city "blending the historical and futuristic with gleaming skyscrapers and quaint Chinese temples" (Henderson, 2001, p. 228). Not only the work done by the government, but the sense of heritage preservation by the mass public has also increased recently, for instance the protest against demolishing Queen's Pier, Wing Lee Street, King Yin Lane, etc.

This urgency of heritage conservation started from the transition in 1997, when it was understood that cultural heritage not only can help Hong Kong people to form a sense of self, but also can sustain their values and communities, and allows them to share a collective history. To sustain and promote one's identity, it is here shown that heritage has become one important manifestation because identity cannot be observed solely. Public museums, as institutions that create linkages between heritage and its people, thus "play an important role in preserving heritage, enhancing cultural awareness, and nurturing aesthetic sensitivity", as stated by the Cultural and Heritage Commission in its 2001 Consultation Paper.

## **Museum Services in Hong Kong**

The first museum in Hong Kong was established in the 1870s at the old City Hall. It was closed when the old City Hall was demolished in 1947. Public museum services started in 1962 when the City Museum and Art Gallery was established in the Hong Kong City Hall by the Urban Council (Carroll, 2005, p. 81). In 1975, the Gallery was split into the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Hong Kong Museum of History. Developed by the Urban Council, the Hong Kong Space Museum and the Hong Kong Science Museum were opened in 1980 and 1991 respectively.

After the dissolution of the two Municipal Councils (the Urban Council and the Regional Council), according to the Culture and Heritage Commission's 2002 Consultation Paper, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) took over the role of providing and managing public museums in Hong Kong under the Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132) from 2000. There were 14 museums and four cultural venues managed by the LCSD as at 1 January 2012.

<b>Museums under the LCSD</b>	<b>Established</b>
1. Lei Cheung Uk Han Tomb Museum	1957
2. Hong Kong Space Museum	1980
3. Sheung You Folk Museum	1984
4. Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware	1984
5. Hong Kong Railway Museum	1985
6. Sam Tung Uk Museum	1987
7. Law Uk Folk Museum	1990
8. Hong Kong Museum of Art	1991
9. Hong Kong Science Museum	1991
10. Hong Kong Museum of History	1998

11. Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence	2000
12. Hong Kong Heritage Museum	2000
13. Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum	2006
14. Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery	2007

*Table 1 Museums under LCSD*

<b>Cultural Venues under the LCSD</b>	<b>Established</b>
1. Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre	2001
2. Hong Kong Film Archive	2001
3. Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre	2005
4. Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre	2007

*Table 2 Cultural Venues under the LCSD*

In April 2000, the Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) was established to advise the SAR Government on the policies on culture and arts. In April 2003, the CHC submitted the CHC Policy Recommendation Report to the government, making its policy recommendations on different areas relating to the long-term cultural development, including the development of museum services in Hong Kong.

In its 2002 Consultation Paper, the Commission defined “Hong Kong identity” as follows:

The Commission believes that Hong Kong people’s cultural identity should start from local culture, be grounded in Chinese cultural traditions, and possess a global vision. It is on this premise that Hong Kong will be able to open up new opportunities on the cultural front.

The Commission also stated that Hong Kong’s cultural root “is deeply connected with the Lingnan culture, which was manifested by popular art forms such as Cantonese opera and films that flourished from the 1840’s to the 1950’s/60’s”. In order to

encourage Hong Kong people “to fully recognize their Chinese identity” and “to build up the confidence and pride of Hong Kong people in their country and society” after Hong Kong’s reunification with China, the Commission suggested that the SAR Government strengthen Hong Kong people’s cultural affiliation with China through civic education. Museums as cultural and educational institutions, play an important role in fulfilling this ambition. According to the LCSD Annual Report 2002, the Hong Kong Museum of History was committed to “enhancing public interest in Chinese history and cultural heritage” while the Hong Kong Heritage Museum “seeks to foster the cultural identity of the local community, and features a wide variety of programmes on local history, arts and culture”. In its 2003 Policy Recommendation Report, the Commission even proposed to “convert the Hong Kong Heritage Museum into a Museum of Lingnan Culture or Ethnic Culture”.



#### **IV. Hong Kong Heritage Museum**

We have chosen to discuss the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, which was developed by the Regional Council, in this paper because it is mainly devoted to Cantonese opera, folk art, folk craft and culture, and visual arts heritage. These folk cultures are the main aspects shaping our cultural identity. Yim Shui-yuen, the former chief curator of the Heritage Museum said that:

The Museum is tasked to conserve and study our cultural heritage. Besides, it has an important function of achieving better social cohesion and establishing more shared values, with a view to improving the quality of life as well as to fostering cultural, social and economic development.

(Information Services Department, 2000)

Located in Shatin, the Heritage Museum is a five-storey building which occupies a gross floor area of 32,000 square metres and enjoys a net exhibition area of 7,500 square metres.

As stated on its official website, the Heritage Museum's mission is "to preserve, study, present and interpret the material culture of the peoples of Hong Kong for the education, inspiration and enjoyment of Hong Kong residents and visitors". The Museum houses 12 exhibition galleries, including six permanent galleries and six thematic galleries. For the most part, the Museum's content and emphasis are unmistakably "Hong Kong Chinese" rather than just "Hong Kong" or "Chinese".

The 2002 Cultural and Heritage Commission's Consultation Paper stated that: "as a southern Chinese city, Hong Kong's local culture has strong Lingnan influences" and "Hong Kong people's cultural identity should start from local culture, be grounded in Chinese cultural traditions, and possess a global vision". As a museum that "seeks to foster the cultural identity of the local community" (2002-2004 LCSD Annual

Reports), the Hong Kong Heritage Museum is trying to emphasize that Hong Kong culture shares common deep roots with Chinese culture.

<b>Permanent Galleries</b>	<b>Function/Main Focus</b>
1. Orientation Theatre	Offers visitors a brief introduction to the Museum and its role in the preservation of Hong Kong's cultural heritage
2. New Territories Heritage Hall	Introduces the history and development of the New Territories
3. Children's Discovery Gallery	With interactive and hands-on exhibits plus an exhibition to introduce the development of local toys
4. Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall	Displays and showcases the costumes, make-up and documents of Cantonese Opera
5. T.T. Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art	Features Dr. T.T. Tsui's collections which mainly include ancient Chinese bronze, ceramics and pottery from different dynasties
6. Chao Shao-an Gallery	Displays the masterpieces, manuscripts and sketches of the Lingnan School of Chinese Painting master, Chao Shao-an

*Table 3 Permanent Galleries in the Heritage Museum*

### **The New Territories Heritage Hall and the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall**

Among the six permanent galleries, the New Territories Heritage Hall and the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall will be the focus of this paper. In terms of exhibition content and displays, the two permanent exhibitions cover different aspects of Hong Kong's culture, history, arts and heritage. The New Territories is regarded as a "living museum" that "provides a fascinating glimpse of Hong Kong's rich heritages" (Henderson, 2001, p. 223). Cantonese Opera was recognized in 2009 by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage. The two exhibitions housed in the New Territories Heritage Hall and the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall are dedicated to "our local

cultural inheritance, as distinct from the colonial influences” (Information Services Department, 2000).

With over 300 artifacts from the New Territories on display, the New Territories Heritage Hall brings together the history and development of the New Territories under eight main themes: 1) “The Natural History”, 2) “Life in Prehistory”, 3) “Trade and Coastal Defence”, 4) “Glimpse of Fishermen’s Life”, 5) “Life in a Village”, 6) “British Rule”, 7) “Great Transformation”, and 8) “New Challenges”. The exhibition also provides an overview on the customs, religions, rituals and social history of the villagers in the New Territories.

The Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall features with over 200 exhibits, including newspaper clippings and various documents, and the exhibition introduces the history and characteristics of Cantonese opera. The Hall is mainly divided into three parts: 1) Theatres, 2) Costumes & Make-Up, and 3) Librettos. A variety of costumes, mainly donated by leading opera stars, adds to the exhibition. Informative captions explaining masks, gestures and the whole complex symbolism of the Chinese operatic form, allow visitors to take a closer look at this unique art.

## **V. Methodology**

In order to explore how the Heritage Museum's exhibitions help shape the cultural identity of local Hong Kong people, primary and secondary sources were collected from various channels. On-site visits were conducted and materials such as government documents, scholarly works, journals, news articles and images were collected.

A quantitative questionnaire was distributed on-site to evaluate visitors' museum experience in the Heritage Museum. Qualitative in-depth interviews were held to examine how effective the two exhibition halls, namely the New Territories Heritage Hall and the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall, are in shaping visitors' cultural identity. To perform this assessment, two separate sets of qualitative interviews were conducted on site.

The questionnaires and interviews were conducted on 7 March 2012 (Wednesday), a regular free admission day, 16 March 2012 (Friday), a normal weekday and 17 March 2012 (Saturday), a normal weekend, to have a wider range of visitors' responses. Respondents were all immediate visitors and were chosen on the basis of residence, in that they were local Hong Kong residents living in Hong Kong for more than five years, so as to ensure that they have good knowledge of the local culture. Based on these criteria, a total of 20 questionnaires were completed and 10 visitors were interviewed in the New Territories Heritage Hall and the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall respectively.

Interviewees from the two exhibition halls are identified by an English letter followed by an Arabic number to indicate the exhibition hall where they were interviewed. C stands for respondents interviewed in the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall while N

refers to respondents interviewed in the New Territories Heritage Hall. The Arabic number following the letter refers to the chronological order in which the respondents were interviewed. The background information of interviewees is listed in Table 4.

<i>Exhibition Hall</i>	<i>Visitor</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Area of Residence</i>
<b>Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall</b>	C-1	M	Above 60	Primary School	New Territories
	C-2	M	Above 60	Primary School	Kowloon
	C-3	F	40 to 49	Secondary School	Hong Kong Island
	C-4	F	18 to 29	University or above	New Territories
	C-5	M	50 to 59	Secondary School	Hong Kong Island
	C-6	F	Above 60	Primary School	Kowloon
	C-7	M	Above 60	Secondary School	Kowloon
	C-8	F	Above 60	No formal schooling	Kowloon
	C-9	F	40 to 49	Secondary School	New Territories
	C-10	M	18 to 29	University or above	New Territories
<b>New Territories Heritage Hall</b>	N-1	M	Above 60	Primary School	New Territories
	N-2	M	Under 18	Secondary School	New Territories
	N-3	M	18 to 29	Post Secondary	New Territories
	N-4	F	Under 18	Secondary School	New Territories
	N-5	F	40 to 49	Secondary School	Hong Kong Island
	N-6	M	30 to 39	Post Secondary	New Territories
	N-7	F	30 to 39	Post Secondary	Hong Kong Island
	N-8	F	18 to 29	University or above	New Territories
	N-9	M	30 to 39	Secondary School	New Territories
	N-10	F	18 to 29	Post Secondary	Kowloon

*Table 4 Background Information of the Interviewees*

## **VI. Analysis**

The following analysis is basically divided into two parts. The first part about visitors' attitudes towards the Hong Kong Heritage Museum is mainly based on the results collected by the quantitative questionnaire conducted on-site, aiming to learn about visitors' satisfaction with the Heritage Museum. The second part of the analysis about visitors' impressions and interpretations of the New Territories Heritage Hall and the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall is based on the responses collected from the qualitative interviews.

### **Part 1: Data from Questionnaires**

#### 1.1 Visitors' Impressions and Expectations of the Heritage Museum

In the public's eyes, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum fits the definition of museum in accordance with the International Council of Museums, "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM, 2007), since 19 out of 20 (95%) of the respondents agreed that the Hong Kong Heritage Museum both serves the community and functions as an educational institute (see Appendix Table 1). For example, the Children's Discovery Gallery in the Heritage Museum is doing quite well in enhancing children's understanding of the culture and heritage of Hong Kong.

However, the Heritage Museum is not a popular tourist attraction in the eyes of local people, one-third of all respondents disagreeing that the Heritage Museum is a tourist attraction (also Appendix Table 1). This can be explained by the low accessibility of

the Museum affecting the eagerness of people to visit the Heritage Museum. 18 out of 20 (90%) of the respondents claimed that the accessibility to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum would affect their decision to visit it which suggests that the location of the Museum is not ideal (see Appendix Table 2).

The majority of the respondents agreed that the Hong Kong Heritage Museum should be an important place for preserving the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong as well as fostering a sense of belonging, with 17 out of 20 (85%) respondents and 14 out of 20 (70%) respondents respectively. Furthermore, almost all the respondents agreed that they wished to understand the colonial history of Hong Kong from the Museum with 19 out of 20 (95%) of the respondents agreeing with the statement. In addition, 15 out of 20 (75%) of the respondents tended to disagree that the Heritage Museum should stress the primacy of Chineseness while the same percentage of respondents agreed that it should stress the primacy of Hong Kongness (see Appendix Table 3).

### 1.2 Expected Functions Vary with Different “Self-defined” Nationalities

Interestingly, it was found that respondents who claimed to be of Chinese nationality rarely shared the same views as those respondents who saw their own nationality comprising Hong Kongness (“Hong Konger”, “Hong Kong Chinese” and “British Hong Kong”). The respondents could thus be divided into two groups, one embracing Chinese nationality with the other choosing a nationality more akin to Hong Kongness. They had different points of view on whether the Heritage Museum i) should preserve the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong; ii) should foster

understanding of the colonial history of Hong Kong; iii) should stress the primacy of Chineseness and; iv) should stress the primacy of Hong Kongness.

All the respondents with Hong Kongness agreed that the Heritage Museum should serve both functions: “to preserve the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong”, as well as “enable the audience to understand the colonial history of Hong Kong” (see Appendix Tables 4 and 5). They also agreed that the Heritage Museum needs to stress the primacy of Hong Kongness. 17 out of 20 (85%) respondents agreed with this statement (see Appendix Table 6). In addition, 15 out of 20 (75%) respondents disagreed that the Heritage Museum should stress the primacy of Chineseness as did all 12 Hong Kongers among these 15 disagreeing respondents (see Appendix Table 7).

On the other hand, respondent embracing Chinese nationality always shared a very different point of view from respondents claiming Hong Kongness. This Chinese respondent was the only one agreeing that the Heritage Museum should stress the primacy of Chineseness and disagreed with all the other functions of preserving the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong, fostering an understanding of the colonial history of Hong Kong and stressing the primacy of Hong Kongness.

To summarize, it was found that differences in how the respondents define their nationalities affected their responses about whether the Museum should stress Hong Kongness or Chineseness. Responses from the two nationality groups consistently indicated different points of view. Those respondents who felt their nationality comprised Hong Kongness agreed that the Heritage Museum should record and interpret the local culture of Hong Kong, instead of those of China. Only the



respondent who saw himself/herself as Chinese agreed that the Heritage Museum should stress the primacy of Chineseness.

Since the Heritage Museum is dedicated to exhibiting Hong Kong's local culture, it should be a museum emphasizing Hong Kongness, including colonial Hong Kong, rather than focusing on or stressing the issues related to Chineseness. Therefore, Hong Kong's local culture and its uniqueness should be the main focus of the entire museum, as it is meant to be a museum especially dedicated to the heritage and culture of local Hong Kong people.

### 1.3 Attractiveness of the Heritage Museum

Permanent galleries are the most important part of a museum as collections owned by a museum can represent the image and position of the museum. However, data collected from the questionnaire show that visitors go to the Heritage Museum not for the permanent exhibitions as 75% of all respondents replied that they in fact went to the Museum to see the thematic exhibitions (see Appendix Table 8).

Apparently, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum has put greater amounts of effort and resources into its thematic exhibitions including marketing and advertising, publications, and promotional materials such as brochures. In contrast, relatively few resources are put into the permanent exhibitions - there is not even a leaflet introducing the permanent galleries for visitors' referral. Hence, visitors cannot attain a holistic museum experience in permanent exhibitions as compared to the thematic exhibitions. A museum is distinguished by its collections, so the thematic exhibitions should not be the core of its focus.

Thematic exhibitions can undoubtedly attract audiences to the Heritage Museum and lead them to visit the permanent exhibitions. Yet, balancing between permanent and thematic exhibitions should be achieved, so the Heritage Museum should not invest too many resources into the thematic exhibitions though they are the highlights of the Museum. Better maintenance and constant updates of permanent exhibitions are needed.

## **Part 2: Data from Interviews from the Two Permanent Exhibition Halls**

### **2.1 New Territories Heritage Hall – Collection and Interpretation**

To highlight Hong Kong's "cultural richness", the New Territories Heritage Hall introduces the history and development of the New Territories in chronological order through eight main themes, which, according to the Museum's Information Leaflet "allowing you to experience daily life in the New Territories from different aspects and in different eras and enhancing your understanding of traditional cultures and societies in the New Territories". However, some of the respondents suggested that the content of the exhibition was rather patchy.

The exhibition offers only a rough introduction to the traditional culture in the New Territories. Some of the indigenous cultural traditions and rituals, such as Poonchoi banquet and the Jiao Festival of Cheung Chau are missing while some of the content overlaps with that of the Hong Kong Museum of History.

(Interviewee N-2)

In the New Territories, the Tang, Hau, Pang, Liu and Man clans were the first settlers and are renowned as the Great Five Clans. Generation after generation, these clans have managed to pass down their oral traditions, festivals, rituals and histories of their kin groups. The respondents agreed that these rich cultural traditions contribute to part

of Hong Kong's culture and commented that the Heritage Museum should focus more on the history and cultural traditions of the five clans.

The history and social features of the New Territories are the important parts of Hong Kong's culture. The New Territories is changing so fast. There is an urgent need to collect reminders of the past, to help older people to remember their past way of life and to communicate this information to the next generation.

(Interviewee N-8)

In a news article from the South China Morning Post (Sinclair, 1998), the former chief curator of the Heritage Museum, Yim Shui-yuen, mentioned that:

The remarkable social history of the Tang and the other four great clans of the New Territories will be a major focus at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. It promises to be a splendid addition to Hong Kong's cultural collection.

Yet, this "major focus" is not what has been promised. The cultures and stories of the Great Five Clans are only mentioned in the section under "Life in a Village", which is just one section under the eight themes at the New Territories Heritage Hall. The important lineage rituals of the villagers, including ancestral worship, lantern lighting ceremony and pork-sharing, are only displayed on one exhibition board, featuring a 15-minute video programme. The display board looks rather plain when compared to that of the Hong Kong Museum of History. The permanent exhibition of the History Museum, "Hong Kong Story", also introduces the lineage rituals and ceremonies, but with more elaborate content and detailed exhibits. For example, the ancestral hall of the Tang Clan is shown as a replica to visualize the "Lighting Lantern" ceremony.

When talking about the heritage or culture of the New Territories, I immediately think of the folk culture of the traditional villages. Although there are exhibits to introduce the cultural traditions of the lineage villages in the History Museum, the Heritage Museum should have more content dedicated to the traditional New Territories culture. However, it is always better to concentrate all these things in one of the two museums than presenting them separately in two museums.

(Interviewee N-1)

The overlapping content of the two museums reveals a lack of coordination among public museums. It is also interesting to find exhibits regarding the handover ceremony of Hong Kong in 1997 in a permanent exhibition that is trying to “evoke the importance of village lineage, festivals and rituals” (Museum’s Information Leaflet, 2004).

The focuses of the “British Rule” are the “Battle of Tai Po” in 1899, showing that the British government encountered strong resistance from villagers in the New Territories, and the 4-year land survey started after the British government took over the New Territories. Little attention has been paid to the influence of the colonial rule on the development and transformation of Hong Kong (Chow and Teather, 2002, p. 15). However, these should not be the focuses under the “British Rule”.

The exhibition can have a more detailed display on the “British Rule” and its influence on the development of Hong Kong.

(Interviewee N-10)

It is not an exaggeration to say that the British government played an important role in preserving the culture and traditions of the New Territories. The colonial government took a protective attitude and policies towards the villagers, inadvertently encouraging the perpetuation, up to the present, of privileges such as inherited land rights. These are reasons why so many traditions, customs and practices can still be found and preserved in the New Territories (Johnson, 2000, p. 29). These are the supposed focus and what are thought to be included under the “British Rule”.

According to Falk (2009), the exhibitions at the museum are the information they contain, and what messages the museum is trying to convey (p. 17). The exhibition content of the New Territories Heritage Hall indicates that the SAR Government is trying to emphasize Hong Kong’s “Chineseness” by blending Hong Kong’s unique

culture and heritage with the greater heritage of mainland China (Chow and Teather, 2002, p. 1). The discussion of this permanent exhibition raised fundamental questions about who controls the exhibition and collection processes and whose interests the exhibition and the Heritage Museum actually serve.

Heung Yee Kuk, the politically powerful representative of the New Territories indigenous inhabitants, was the major contributor to the Heritage Museum. In an interview in the South China Morning Post (Wordie, 2000), Belinda Wong, one of the curators of the Heritage Museum commented that:

In the process of setting up the Museum, Heung Yee Kuk's involvement was not in the content, but in collecting relics from the villages.

She stressed that based on their individual research and the available exhibits, the Museum curatorial staff were responsible for deciding what should be included in the Heritage Museum. However, it remains a question what kind of influence Heung Yee Ku has taken in selecting "the right thing" to exhibit.

## 2.2 New Territories Hall: Reconstruction of Past Memories

Hong Kong people forget things very quickly, probably because as Hong Kong is a city with a fast pace of life, people have too many things to worry. Generally, the exhibits in the New Territories Heritage Hall not only can trigger visitors' memories, but can also retrieve the lost memories of visitors and leave records for visitors to trace back their past.

I had a warm feeling after visiting the New Territories Heritage Hall; it reminded me of when my husband and I dated at Lam Tsuen, and we threw worshipping materials into the tree to make a wish. But now Lam Tsuen does not allow people do this, so it is part of our collective memory that cannot be replaced.

(Interviewee N-7)

The gallery reminds me of my friends who have the surname Tang. He took me to his village for a walk and told me about the history of the Tang's Village in the New Territories. Also, the aroma and taste of Poon Choi flashed across my mind. I suddenly want to visit there again.

(Interviewee N-3)

I was a boat dweller. It reminds me of my childhood life, because the place where I lived was full of fishing San-Ban. And the fishing ship in the gallery reminded me of the bitter life my family and I went through in the old days.

(Interviewee N-9)

The respondents replied very quickly saying that the New Territories Heritage Hall could trigger memories of their domestic life. The interview data suggested that visitors give their own interpretations to the exhibits in the New Territories Heritage Hall though some of the respondents commented that the current selection of exhibits is not comprehensive enough for them to learn about the culture of the New Territories. The respondents tend to think that 1) "Great Transformation", 2) "Life in a Village" and 3) "British Rule" are the three most important parts in the exhibition for remembering life episodes and that the Museum should expand its collections.

1) "Great Transformation"

"Great Transformation" shows how new towns developed in the New Territories. As Hong Kong people are more interested in economic and business, things appear and disappear at a fast pace, and this is described as "the culture of disappearance" by Abbas (1997, p. 6). "Great Transformation" emphasizes the reclamations in the area and how it became the New Territories of today. This part is very important because it records past and lost history.

2) "Life in a Village"

"Life in a Village" not only can help people who lived there remember their domestic lives, but also can let those who have not experienced

village life know more. Visitors can learn from materialized objects rather than from books. By making their own interpretation, visitors connect with the exhibits in different ways. Even though some of them did not experience village life, they can understand and somehow feel what people's life in the village was like.

### 3) "British Rule"

Although the interpretation of the colonial history is quite negative and ambiguous in the "British Rule" section, visitors still manage to make their own interpretations of Hong Kong's colonial past. When asked about their perceptions or impressions of the colonial government and colonial history after visiting the exhibition, respondents from different age groups had different answers. Respondents aged above 60, suggested reservations concerning the British rule of Hong Kong, respondents aged from 18 – 40 generally had a positive attitude towards the colonial government while respondents aged under 18 expressed that they did not have much feeling about the colonial government or the colonial history of Hong Kong.

Most of the respondents commented that the content for the "British Rule" section was not enough, but part of the colonial history is still preserved and it shows how Hong Kong people lived in the British colony. While objects and museums' interpretations are very important ways to convey messages to visitors, visitors still respond to the museum displays actively according to their prior experiences, culturally learned beliefs, values, and perceptual skills that they gained through membership of multiple communities, as suggested by Karp (1992, p. 3). The "British Rule" at least provides a channel for those who do not have any experience of colonialism; especially for the new generation in Hong Kong which grew up after the

return of sovereignty to China, they can create their own memory based on the information provided by the gallery.

### 2.3 Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall - From Regional Identity, to National Identity

Cantonese Opera originated in Guangdong, Foshan to be exact. There are differences between the Cantonese Opera in Guangdong and that in Hong Kong. Although the entrance of the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall is not attractive, the Hall actually does very well, especially the selection of objects shown in this exhibition. The exhibits not only show the differences in style between Chinese and Cantonese Opera, the objects on display can also emphasize other differences between the two. Cantonese Opera is the fusion of Chinese Opera and Western elements, making Hong Kong Cantonese Opera unique and its style cannot be found in other provinces in China, for example, incorporating Western musical instruments into Cantonese Opera like the violin, piano and saxophone. Also, the opera actors wear suits instead of the traditional costumes. These are advantages brought by the colonial period, putting Chinese and Western aspects together. The Hall fully introduces the unique features of Cantonese Opera.

From the interviews, the respondents agreed that Cantonese Opera is a part of Hong Kong's culture with roots from China, but the two cultures are not exactly the same.

Cantonese Opera can represent part of Hong Kong's culture because it is a traditional art form in Hong Kong. I watched Cantonese Opera since I was young; it is part of my life. However it can also represent the culture of China.

(Interviewee C-3)

Cantonese Opera is generally regarded as a part of Hong Kong's culture, because many librettos are based on folk stories and festivals. The context of the Cantonese Opera changes continuously to suit the taste of the audience.



Although we all know that Cantonese Opera is from China, Hong Kong people are closely attached to Cantonese Opera. In the early days like the 50s-70s, Cantonese Opera was the major form of entertainment for the public, so it could also be a collective memory for Hong Kong people.

(Interviewee C-8)

These comments are indicative, as they can give a full picture of what identity is in the eyes of Hong Kong people. This can also be explained in the below quoted text about national identity:

Perceptions of national identity may be personal and fluid, changing over time and according to conditions. Nevertheless, there must be a common core of feelings and beliefs shared by those of the same nationality that are widely accepted whereby those concerned willingly recognize themselves as a community, whether real or imagined.

(Anderson, 1991, pp. 6-7)

Hong Kong is now under communist Chinese sovereignty, however Henderson (2001) mentioned that “although Hong Kong people have acquired Chinese nationality, interest persists in formulating and asserting a cultural identity that is related to but separate from that of China” (p. 219). This is reason why British colonization made Hong Kong people’s identity unique, yet complicated. The attempt by the government to connect Hong Kong people with China seems to have failed. It is true that museums play an important role in shaping and defining a person’s cultural identity, only if we accept visitors are passive (Chen, 2007, p. 173). In the old days, visitors were passive and could perceive all the messages conveyed by the museums, because they had no interaction with the objects. However, with the rapid change in society’s development, visitors are now considered active. They interpret and construct meanings in the museum with their own sense of the world and personal experience, unlike the former museum experience (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002, pp. 16-20; Silverman, 1995, pp. 161-70; Chen, 2007, p. 175).

Some may argue that there is no such political intention by the SAR Government. It preserves and promotes Cantonese Opera because of its aesthetic values, but in the Legislative Paper titled “The Promotion of Cantonese Opera and other Xiqu” (Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, 2008), the SAR Government clearly states that its intention and objective to promote Cantonese Opera is not only due to the fact that it is a refined art form, but also because it is “an emblem of our culture”. The government uses the term to show how it has put emphasis on promoting and preserving this unique culture to increase the sense of belonging of Hong Kong people to China.

Edward Vickers (2003) also argued that Hong Kong’s political culture and sense of its own identity have placed “countervailing pressures” on local museum curators, who have been forced to perform “a delicate balancing act” between Hong Kong and China (Vickers, 2003, p. 74). Just as Carroll (2005) mentioned in his paper clarifying that the four purposes of Hong Kong museums are: 1) to foster a local identity within a larger sense of Chinese nationalism; 2) to preserve an “authentic” Hong Kong past; 3) to promote colonial and postcolonial Hong Kong as a product of a fusion of East and West, but grounded in traditional Chinese culture and tradition, and 4) to present Hong Kong as an international city (p. 80). Even though Hong Kong people are very proud of their unique colonial identity, the SAR Government tries very hard to tie Hong Kong people to China. After all, Cantonese Opera is a performing art rooted in China, just as Hong Kong people are. The West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre, the first cultural event organized by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, also features Cantonese Opera. Therefore, it is believed that, Cantonese Opera, a cultural product with such political correctness, is one thing that the SAR Government would put much emphasis on.

#### 2.4 Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall: The Cultural Inheritance

Since 2003, the SAR Government has put a lot of effort into preparing an application to put Cantonese Opera on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity, and it was officially inscribed on the list in 2009. Since then, the government has made great effort to promote Cantonese Opera. From the official Press Release by the government, it is estimated that the government injected around \$33 million for promoting and developing Cantonese Opera (Information Services Department, 2009) through different types of communication channels, from research to collections, from educational programmes to showcasing exhibits in the Heritage Museum. Moreover, not only does this Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall house a permanent gallery about Cantonese Opera, many thematic exhibitions in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum are related to Cantonese Opera, e.g. Virtuosity and Innovation – “The Masterful Legacy of Lam Kar Sing” and “Splendour of Cantonese Opera: Masters Tong Tik Sang and Yam Kim Fai”, etc. This shows the government’s intention to connect Hong Kong people to China with this unique culture, so as to help them to find their national identity.

Apart from preserving this refined art form in Hong Kong, the SAR Government attempts to promote Cantonese Opera to the younger generations to arouse their interest. However, the “very fast” pace of Hong Kong lifestyles and the “slowness” of Cantonese Opera marks a complete counterpoint. This social phenomenon builds a wall between Cantonese Opera and the younger generations in Hong Kong so that they have little to zero interest in this valuable intangible cultural heritage.

I do not feel like Cantonese Opera is something fashionable that can attract teenagers, not even those in their early 30s. This is because they cannot relate to Cantonese Opera. Even if they go into the gallery, it is just out of curiosity, and

will not pay much attention. However, it can still give youngsters some idea of Cantonese Opera. But how many of them do really go inside and visit?

(Interviewee C-1)

This interviewee raised a very good point for discussion. It is true that the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall is mostly visited by the elderly and opera lovers. This is not a piece of good news for the Museum, because it can only attract the elderly and those who have a basic knowledge of Cantonese Opera. From observations taken sitting at the entrance of the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall on different days, it was found that the younger generations did not even try to put a foot inside the gallery. Some secondary school students even said that the gallery horrified them because it looked like a haunted house. These implied that the elderly can relate their identity to Cantonese Opera because they are interested in it, so they can connect themselves with Cantonese Opera. However, the TV generations grew up in an atmosphere surrounded by great choices of entertainment, ranging from animations to the Internet; therefore they cannot link their identity with Cantonese Opera. If the intention of the SAR Government is to preserve and promote Cantonese Opera to all as it mentioned in the Legislative Paper (2008), the aim to promote Cantonese Opera seems to have failed. It is true that the gallery may have to be too dark so as to protect the exhibits; however the gallery should make some adjustments to attract the youngsters.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Hong Kong is well-known for its forgetting culture. Nothing actually lasts very long because Hong Kong is a place of fast movement of everything, as Abbas (1997) mentioned, “the sense of the temporary is very strong” (p. 4). As recovery of the past is part of the process of constructing identity (Newman and McLean, 2002, p. 58), museums, institutions that allow visitors to “fuse the past with the present” (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 410), play an important role in preserving Hong Kong’s past history and constructing citizens’ cultural identity. For these reasons, the SAR Government is trying to define a “legitimate” identity for its people through museums.

To examine the role that public museums play in shaping Hong Kong people’s cultural identity, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum was chosen for this case study research. The results suggest that the Heritage Museum is a site where visitors can construct their own identities through remembering their past and celebrating the local culture of Hong Kong. By making their own interpretation of museum objects, visitors can relate, according to their own past memories and experiences, to the displays in the exhibitions of the Heritage Museum.

However, in order to stress Hong Kong’s Chineseness, there is a larger amount of collections focusing on the close relationship between Hong Kong and China in the Heritage Museum. It is believed that the Heritage Museum is trying to construct a Hong Kong-Chinese identity by linking Hong Kong’s regional culture and heritage with that of China.

## **New Territories Heritage Hall**

Roles between the Heritage Museum and History Museum are not clearly defined. There is an overlapping of displays and content between the Heritage Museum and History Museum. “The Hong Kong Story” in the History Museum, comprises eight sections. One of the sections, “Folk Culture in Hong Kong”, introduces traditional rituals, customs and festivals of Hong Kong. Displays regarding Hong Kong’s folk traditions and cultures are found, including replicas of the Cantonese Opera theatre and the ancestral hall of the Tang Clan. They are very similar to those in the Heritage Museum. This proves that there was a lack of coordination between the two museums. A re-alignment of museum collections and better coordination are needed. Moreover, the permanent exhibition housed in the New Territories Heritage Hall should focus more on the cultural traditions of lineage villages in the New Territories. The Heritage Museum can also establish a permanent exhibition dedicated to the intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong, for example, the festive activities of the Taiping Qingjiao (also known as Cheung Chau Bun Festival).

## **Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall**

The good selection of exhibits in the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall shows a strong linkage between Cantonese Opera and Chinese Opera and the collections can let visitors to distinguish the differences between the two. Conversely, it seems that the SAR Government’s effort may not have been effective in promoting this traditional art form to all. As the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall can only attract the elderly, it still cannot arouse the interests of youngsters. The Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall should first renovate the entrance and put an attractive and eye-catching sign there to

tell people that this gallery is there as the current one is too “secret” and small. Also, the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall can be brighter to lower the degree of the feeling of horror among youngsters since some reflected that the current one is horrible. Furthermore, although there are some computer games and technology aids in the exhibition hall for younger visitors to enjoy, visitors cannot fully utilize these devices since the hall is not attractive to the youngsters as mentioned before. Hence, mobile applications are strongly advised, so that the youngsters can download them to enjoy the exhibition and gain knowledge both before and after their visit.

### **Hong Kong Heritage Museum: In Name but Not In Reality**

On its official website, the Heritage Museum states that “through the rich heritage created by Hong Kong people, their ancestors and descendents to promote Hong Kong as a cultural metropolis”. One may expect that the Museum will build up collections on Hong Kong’s culture and heritage. However, some of the permanent exhibitions, such as T.T. Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art features Chinese art ranging from Chinese ceramics to artifacts, which are not really about “the rich heritage created by Hong Kong people”.

Moreover, every time Hong Kong culture and memory are mentioned, one cannot neglect the British influence on Hong Kong. The colonial period is the time when Hong Kong started to flourish and developed into an international city. Although the “British Rule” section mentions the days of colonial Hong Kong, it is neither the highlight nor the stress of the New Territories Heritage Hall. It seems that the Museum is under considerable pressure to de-emphasize the colonial influence over the culture of Hong Kong. Many of the respondents thus suggested that the Heritage

Museum should put more emphasis on colonial Hong Kong. The respondents believed that the uniqueness of Hong Kong's culture was developed during that era which marks the differences between Hong Kong's culture and that of mainland China.

Some of the respondents further commented that exhibitions in the Heritage Museum only described part of Hong Kong's culture. Most respondents suggested that the Heritage Museum should hold exhibitions which have greater connections to the daily lives of local people in the future.

Old and/or colonial architecture, such as Blue House in Wanchai, Pottinger Steet (also known as Stone Slabs Street) in Central, and Central Police Station Compound.

(Interviewee C-4 and Interviewee N-10)

Hong Kong is regarded as a "Food Paradise". The food culture of Hong Kong is unique.

(Interviewee N-5)

To improve the current museum experience offered by the Heritage Museum, the Museum could:

- 1) Put more focus on Intangible Cultural Heritage:** According to the Legislative Paper titled "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage" (Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, 2012), the government set up the Intangible Heritage Unit in 2006 under the establishment of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum to undertake work to meet the requirements of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* of UNESCO. Public lectures on Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage, seminars, demonstrations of paper-crafting, field trips tied to local traditional festivals and thematic exhibitions have been organized by the Heritage Museum since 2007. The Heritage Museum also studies and documents the



ancestral worship of different clans and traditional handicrafts, and collects related artifacts. Thus, the Heritage Museum can take further steps by putting more focus on the intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong in accordance with the Convention of UNESCO. Based on the research conducted in the past, the Heritage Museum can encourage Hong Kong people to learn more and have respect for local intangible cultural heritage. Besides, the Heritage Museum can differentiate itself by stressing its position of exhibiting intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong. To invite and encourage more people from different sectors to participate, better marketing plans should be made when public lectures, seminars and demonstrations are held.

- 2) **Put more focus on Colonial Hong Kong:** A separate exhibition hall is suggested to describe the colonial influence on people's lives, history and culture of Hong Kong. Rather than stressing the colonial history, the exhibition can narrate Hong Kong's colonial past through showcasing the "East meets West" facet of Hong Kong's culture. For example, Cha Chaan Teng culture is one of the most representative local food cultures in Hong Kong. These local cafe-restaurants are the best examples showing how Hong Kong's culture is blended with East and West. Food available in Cha Chaan Teng is a symbol of local Hong Kong invention blending colonial elements and Chinese sensibilities, such as offering "silk-stockings milk tea". A Cha Chaan Teng essentially defines the uniqueness of Hong Kong's culture because of the colonial influence. Such culture is so unique and distinctive in Hong Kong that it is worth mentioning and exhibiting in the Heritage Museum.
- 3) **Build a Tourist Compound:** Since the Heritage Museum is located in the New Territories, it should take advantage of the geographic benefit of

connecting the different heritage sites and tourist attractions nearby. For example both Tsang Tai Uk, a Hakka walled village which is listed as one of the Grade I Historic Buildings in Hong Kong and Che Kung Temple, a Grade II Historic Building, echo the content introduced in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, especially the New Territories Heritage Hall. The Heritage Museum can collaborate with these historic sites, to enhance the visitors' experience by relating the real context to the exhibitions, so that the location problem can change from being a shortcoming to a strength. In addition, these different spots can work together and form a tourist compound to serve the local communities as well as attract non-local tourists. Tourism is thus enhanced and developed, and both locals and non-locals can learn more about the different cultures and lifestyles in Hong Kong.

All in all, the Heritage Museum can be concluded as being successful in providing a place for visitors to trace back their history. Respondents can relate to their past and history through the collections and exhibitions by the Heritage Museum, which also can trigger people's memories. These are all the important things that a museum should do to construct one's identity. Besides, respondents felt that their cultural identity was more related to colonial Hong Kong than China. The idea of "East meets West" is the core part of their cultural identity as the history and culture that colonization brought to Hong Kong are very significant in constructing citizens' cultural identity.

The Heritage Museum should build up more representative collections focusing on Hong Kong's culture and heritage. The current Heritage Museum cannot fully serve as an institution for exhibiting local heritage of Hong Kong because some collections

do stress the Chineseness. It is rather regarded as a museum that simply shows heritages just located in Hong Kong, without stressing the localness and uniqueness of Hong Kong's heritage. In this regard, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum could be renamed as the "Hong Kong, Heritage Museum", a museum about heritages geographically located in Hong Kong.

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## IX. Appendix

Do you agree that the HKHM <u>CAN</u> serve these functions?						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	A bit disagree	A bit agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>To serve the community</b>	0	0	1	1	16	2
<b>An educational institute</b>	0	0	1	0	13	6
<b>A tourist attraction</b>	0	3	4	7	6	0

*Table 1 Do you agree that the HKHM can serve these functions?*

Accessibility to the HKHM will affect the decision to visit	Response	%
<b>Yes</b>	18	90%
<b>No</b>	2	10%
<b>Total</b>	20	100%

*Table 2 Do you think accessibility to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum will affect your decision to visit?*

<b>Do you agree that the HKHM <u>SHOULD</u> serve these functions?</b>						
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>A bit disagree</b>	<b>A bit agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>To preserve the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong</b>	0	0	1	2	12	5
<b>To foster a sense of belonging</b>	0	3	3	7	6	1
<b>To understand the colonial history of Hong Kong</b>	0	0	1	9	7	3
<b>To stress the primacy of Chineseness</b>	1	8	6	5	0	0
<b>To stress the primacy of Hong Kongness</b>	0	2	1	10	6	1

*Table 3 Do you agree that the HKHM should serve these functions?*

To preserve the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong						
Nationality	Strongly disagree	Disagree	A bit disagree	A bit agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hong Konger	0	0	0	1	9	2
Chinese	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hong Kong Chinese	0	0	0	0	3	2
British Hong Kong	0	0	0	1	0	1
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Table 4 To preserve the collective memory, history and heritage of Hong Kong*

To understand the colonial history of Hong Kong						
Nationality	Strongly disagree	Disagree	A bit disagree	A bit agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hong Konger	0	0	0	4	7	1
Chinese	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hong Kong Chinese	0	0	0	4	0	1
British Hong Kong	0	0	0	1	0	1
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Table 5 To understand the colonial history of Hong Kong*

To stress the primacy of Hong Kongness						
Nationality	Strongly disagree	Disagree	A bit disagree	A bit agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hong Konger	0	2	0	7	2	1
Chinese	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hong Kong Chinese	0	0	0	3	2	0
British Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	2	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 6 To stress the primacy of Hong Kongness

To stress the primacy of Chineseness						
Nationality	Strongly disagree	Disagree	A bit disagree	A bit agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hong Konger	1	7	4	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0	1	0	0
Hong Kong Chinese	0	1	0	4	0	0
British Hong Kong	0	0	1	1	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 7 To stress the primacy of Chineseness

<b>Visiting the Hong Kong Heritage Museum is to...</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Visit permanent exhibitions</b>	5	25%
<b>Visit thematic exhibitions</b>	15	75%
<b>Total</b>	20	100%

*Table 8 Visiting the Hong Kong Heritage Museum is to...*