

## **Heritage Preservation and Revitalization**

The Star Ferry Pier, a place for Hong Kong people to spend their leisure time or celebrate festivals, was demolished in order to lessen the heavy traffic congestion in Central. It was once one of significant landmarks in Hong Kong, part of our life, growth and memory. Some people may think that the government is so heartless. To me, the relationship between heritage preservation and regional development can be co-existence rather than a confrontation.

Nowadays, the meaning of development is different from the previous one. In the past few decades, Hong Kong changed from a small fishing village to a world city. The development process was very fast and great. But the government ignored one thing that is sustainability. Besides the economic factors, we also have to concern about social and environmental factors in order to strike a balance between them. However, the economy has long been the most important thing. How about environment and society?

The demolition of the Star Ferry Pier has triggered off a great outcry recently and social unrest occurred. Reclamation would also seriously destroy the environment of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government cannot turn a blind eye to these problems. Actually, heritage preservation and regional development can occur at the same time.

When we want to get more economic benefits from heritage, demolition and change in land use is not the only way. Heritage can be turned into a tourism spot or other uses. Just like Lui Seng Chum, this is now a Chinese medicine shop. He Chang Pawn Shop is now a popular restaurant. They are some of the successful examples of sustainable development. The government does not need to pull the buildings down..

People always think that they need to sacrifice economic growth in order to preserve the heritage. However, it is a wrong concept. Relocation is one of the alternatives to strike a balance among economic, social and environmental aspects. Just like Mei Lee House which was relocated from Central to Stanley. The building is still very beautiful. After the process of reconstruction, it can be retained too. Therefore, relocation can save Mei Lee House and that area in Central can be developed into a commercial building. This method can also lessen the resentment of the citizens and environmentalists.

“All things must come to an end”. The heritage cannot be there forever but the key is how to keep them in another way and record them as part of our history. At all events, heritage beared a witness to the development valuable and unique asset. But development is a must to all countries and cities. Therefore, development and conservation are not opposing forces.