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拔萃女書院
Diocesan Girls' School

「"Cha Chaan Teng" in Hong Kong - A Vanishing Culture」

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The "cha chaan teng" of Hong Kong—A Vanishing Culture

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We were first introduced to this competition by our history teacher—Mr K Tang. Although we were very interested with the theme, we had several debates as to what we wanted to do in our project. We had different ideas such as the Star Ferry Pier, Public Housing, the MTR systems and so on. However when we considered the theme of “Cha Chaa Teng”, we all unanimously said yes. This was partly because we all are under the influence of these “cha chaa tengs”, but most importantly, we hoped to express our love to this unique heritage of Hong Kong and promote this legacy to the future generations and the public of Hong Kong.

After the decision of the topic, we started doing research on the Internet as well as finding reference books in order to get a better understanding on the history of “cha chaa tengs”. We started by finding books that illustrate the history of Hong Kong and reading news articles on this vanishing culture. Also, we went to “bing suuts”, which are the “cha chaa tengs” in the beginning, to further understand the heritage situated in those restaurants, and to discover certain distinct features and characteristics of “bing suuts” through our observation.

Later on in the New Year Holidays, we started doing certain interviews and divided the work up. We interviewed many regular customers of these “cha chaa tengs”, many who are old customers of these restaurants to understand why their love and sense of belonging to these restaurants are so deep. We also hoped to know more about the old characteristics of “cha chaa tengs”, and about their views on the vanishing heritage of Hong Kong. We also interviewed an international school student to understand more about the views of teenagers and how they view this unique heritage of Hong Kong. We also hope to find out the reasons as to why “cha chaa tengs” are vanishing very gradually and have been replaced by more high-class restaurants. On the other hand, we interviewed an owner of the “cha chaa teng” to discover the various obstacles that he experienced when running the business. We also hoped to find out the regular customers that go to these “cha chaa tengs” and the link between the attitude of young generations nowadays and the degradation of “cha chaa teng”’s popularity in Hong Kong. Most importantly, we hope to emphasize how important this collective memory is in this “cultural desert” and how this can be sustained in the urban spaces of Hong Kong as the most unique heritage in Hong Kong.

After all the interviews and planning the report together in mid-February, we have split the work and started finishing the report. Although there are times where we feel that all our information is too banal, and without creativity, we all put in our hearts and spill out what we feel deep inside—true love to this unique culture of Hong Kong. In the beginning of March, we finished our report and thanks to the guidance from our teacher-in-charge—Mr K Tang, we identified certain areas for improvement and started editing and putting in more pictures to make our whole report more innovative and entertaining to read.

It has indeed been a long way for all five of us, but we feel that we have indeed learned a lot in this period of time.

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Abstract

Hong Kong has always been treated as a "cultural desert". According to many critics, Hong Kong lack culture due to the strong influence of many British and Chinese traditions, and lack originality and creativity. However, the most important and unique trait of Hong Kong is that we combine the best of both the West and the East to make a whole new culture that still lives in Hong Kong nowadays, and is extremely evident in a restaurant that you and I are familiar with—"Cha Chaan tengs".

In this project, we are going to investigate on the infamous "Cha chaan teng" (茶餐廳) of Hong Kong, otherwise known as "bing suut" (冰室) and their impact on the urban spaces and culture of Hong Kong.

On this topic, we will focus in the beginning on the history of "cha chaan tengs", mainly discussing how "bing suutts", which merely served light-weighted lunches and breakfasts evolved into "cha chaan tengs" with hundred kinds of different dishes and also providing dinners to the general public in Hong Kong. After this, we will then study the significance of "cha chaan tengs" to the lives of Hong Kong citizens and how they reflect the collective memory of all Hong Kong citizens. In this part, we will draw interviews and news articles to listen to the voices of different stakeholders and how "cha chaan teng" has influenced their memory of Hong Kong and their sense of belonging. Lastly, we would like to discover creative and innovative ways to allow us, as future leaders of the world, to preserve this culture so that our future generations can still enjoy this wonderful experience of dining in "cha chaan tengs".

Our research methods include oral interviews with different stakeholders such as owners of the restaurants, regular customers of those restaurants, or even the elderly who used to go to tea restaurants in their childhood. We will also seek more information through old movies of Hong Kong that included scenes in tea restaurants, documentaries of tea restaurants and books that explored similar or the same topics that we wish to investigate.

"Cha chaan teng", since the 1960s, have become the living proof of our ever-changing food culture in Hong Kong. Although this culture is vanishing very quickly due to the inability to attract customers in the younger generations and compete against other higher-class restaurants which serve more delicious, and higher variety food. It's up to us to determine whether or not this legacy can be passed on to our younger generations.

Introduction

After being colonized by Britain for 99 years and handed back to China for almost 15 years, Hong Kong, as an international city, has a special type of chain restaurants that combines the best from both the West and the East—tea restaurants, also known as "cha chaan teng". From Po-lo Bao, Milk Tea to Cream Corn with Chicken on Rice, these are some of the unique dishes you can find in any Hong Kong "cha chaan teng".

"Cha chaan tengs" are disseminated everywhere in Hong Kong. When walking through MongKok, Central, Chai Wan, Tsuen Wan and many more places, you will always see a tea restaurant nearby. Undoubtedly, the urban spaces of Hong Kong are filled with this historical kind of Hong Kong cuisine.

As the saying goes "The past shapes who we are, and the present shapes who we will be tomorrow" – this is the same for buildings and any other cultures. The history of "cha chaan teng" not only shapes the dining culture of Hong Kong people today, but also will stay as an important role in the future development of Hong Kong's food culture. The familiar aroma of milk tea, green and white tiles, box seats on the sides sticking to the walls, round tables in the center, ceiling fans on the top, these well-known "cha chaan tengs" will forever symbolize the mix of Western and Chinese food culture, and most importantly, the unique identity that each one of us as a Hong Kong citizen possess.

"Cha chaan teng" will always situate in our hearts, and whether we are here in Hong Kong or not, we will always remember the lovely milk teas we used to drink in these small family-business restaurants. "Cha chaan tengs" will always be part of our collective memories, as it not only representational in the food sector of Hong Kong, but it also worked as a means for the elderly or people in the public to talk together, and strengthening the communal bond in our society. However due to inflation, tense competition between the bigger businesses and the failure to attract the younger generations to dine in, a lot of "cha chaan tengs" have been forced to shut down. Shouldn't we, as Hong Kong people, take up a leading role to preserve this precious collective memory that has been embedded in the urban spaces of Hong Kong for decades?

Research Methodology

In this project, we will use both primary and secondary source to investigate the history of "cha chaan tengs" in Hong Kong. For primary sources, we will conduct two interviews with different stakeholders, such as regular customers dining in "cha chaan tengs" and the owner of these restaurants to investigate on the problems that he is currently facing. As for secondary sources, we will use scholar's articles, news, published essays from both Internet and different books regarding the issue to analyze their development during the past few decades. We hope that through consulting different sources, we can have a deeper understanding of the history of "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong and how they shaped the Hong Kong people's collective memory and food culture of Hong Kong.

History of "Cha chaan teng"

"Cha chaan teng" as "bing suut"¹

According to China Press dotcom², back in 1840s, having afternoon tea was habit of many British. At that time, Western families only ate two meals a day—breakfast and dinner. As many wealthy families usually had dinner at around 8 in the evening, they grew hungry in the afternoon. Therefore many of the wealthy families organized tea parties or afternoon teas where they eat cakes, delicacies or even sandwiches to satisfy their hunger. These tea parties became an opportunity for good friends to meet with each other, talk about their own lives and to connect with each other better. This culture was only for wealthy families, however. Later on in history, this culture was passed down to those in the grass- roots as well.

In the 20th century, "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong were called "bing suut" (冰室), also known as ice cafes or sorbet restaurants. In the earlier years of Hong Kong, due to the influence of British culture, there were only high-class restaurants which were expensive and only provided high-class western food. Before the 2nd World War, Hong Kong also developed the "dai pai dong" (大排檔), which were basically hawker selling congee or noodle in the middle of the streets under a small shelter with foldable tables and chairs. These shops provided Hong Kong people with different Chinese food, such as Chinese congee or dumplings.

During the Second World War, Hong Kong was invaded by the Japanese; many of the foreigners were captured into the concentration camps, leading to the downfall of Western restaurants. As Hong Kong people were afraid of the depreciation of money value during the war, they therefore hoped to spend all the money earned, thus many more people started to eat afternoon teas. Cheap cuisine started to increase its popularity around Hong Kong, and many more cafes were introduced.

After the Second World War, Hong Kong was still under the influence of the Western democracies. Although many of them would like to drink coffee and milk tea just like any other foreigners, many of them could not afford to pay for meals in those

¹冰室為何值得保留? - 冰室的歷史 12/5/2012
http://gp06-3c0910.blogspot.com/2010/04/blog-post_1163.html

²中國報新聞網【食主題】：懷舊冰室破格新濶點
<http://www.chinapress.com.my/node/228021>

high-class Western restaurants as Hong Kong was yet to be developed and many were still fishermen. Also due to discrimination, many of the Hong Kong people were not allowed to enter those high-class restaurants, simply because they were of a lower social rank. In order to solve this problem, some businessmen saw the opportunity to open small cafes or "cha chaan tengs" to provide cheap yet delicious Western snacks to Hong Kong people. That's when, in 1940s, small "bing suuts" started to develop. These shops were usually situated in less developed areas such as Sheung Wan, where the general Hong Kong public lived.³

In the beginning, only teas, coffees, toasts and noodles were served, however the demand for such "bing suuts" started to increase, and businessmen began to seek for different snacks to be served in order to maximize their profit. Later in the 1960s, food served in the western restaurants and in normal "bing suuts" started to combine, and unique cuisine such as the red bean ice and the French Toast were introduced to the general public of Hong Kong.

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Traditional ice cafes

"Bing suuts" usually don't open till very late at night as the customers were only factory bosses and workers who hoped to find a place for afternoon teas and lunches. Also, the working hours are much shorter than nowadays. However due to the increase in technology and factorial advancements, working hours started to increase. In order to cope with the long working hours, ice cafes started to introduce simple and light-weighted dinners for the people to enjoy.

Unlike "cha chaan tengs", "bing suuts" are usually more crowded. ⁴In the 1960s to 1970s, these "cha chaan tengs" were used as a means for the older generations to talk to each other, a better alternative to being stuck at home and degrading under hours of boredom. Over time, the older generations made friends with other customers, and whenever one walked inside a "bing suut", one would always see a bunch of elderly, although not sitting together, chatting happily with others and sometimes even with the staff, who, after so many years, became their only friends.

³ Hong Kong Heritage Museum Leisure and Cultural Services Department – Hong Kong's Food Culture
http://www.heritagemuseum.gov.hk/downloads/materials/Hong_Kong_Food_Culture-E.pdf

⁴ 我那無聊文字 - 話說冰室 <http://moliuology.mysinablog.com/index.php?op=ViewArticle&articleid=571660>

Stepping into a “bing suut”, there is always certain distinct furniture that is present, whether they be old or new. The floor is always covered with white and green tiles. Instead of having separate, isolated seats, the “bing suuts” are usually filled with box seats which are traditionally coffee brown in color. On the ceiling, we can see the green ceiling fans turning gently in order for the customers to feel some breeze. Of course, what’s a café without tea or coffee? The special thing about “bing suuts” is that coffee or tea is always served with a traditional tea set—a white porcelain small cup with red borders. These features are unique and can only be seen in a traditional ice café, never in the modern and well-furnished restaurants that we now see today.

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The traditional tea set

Life running a "bing suut" (Interview with a "bing suut" boss Mr Hui)

In a news article by the Oriental Daily, it features a "bing suut" boss Mr Hui, whose "bing suut" has already been established for 50 years.⁵ Mr Hui's "bing suut"—Pak Kung Café, was established in the 1950s by his father in To Kwa Wan. He and his father were originally running a "dai pai dong", yet after the government has retrieved his license, Mr Hui had no choice but to go to To Kwa Wan and establish the Pak Kung Café, which is one of the very few ice cafes that still exists nowadays.

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In the 1970s, the elder Mr Hui decided to retire and passed his ice café to his son. When asked about his life as the boss of the bing suut", he answered "We were asked to help out in the "bing suut" when we were very small. This "bing suut" can be treated as a traditional family business. We never really had any specific job divisions like nowadays, whenever there's a need for help, we just went and helped. Sometimes we could be taking orders, filling drinks, or even baking bread. The older generations weren't used to teaching the newer generations on how to fill drinks or make meals, so you just have to be intelligent and diligent when working. Learn when you're doing these tasks, and always be observant towards the elder generations and see how they run the whole business. Even though it's quite tiring, all our customers were usually the old people who lived near the neighborhood. Where they sit and what they want to eat had already become a routine, when we took orders we chatted with them a bit, this really warmed up our hearts."

Mr Hui the boss of the ice cafe

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Pak Kung Cafe

The food that you can choose from in the earlier "bing suuts" is very limited, such as hot and cold drinks, ice-creams and other little snacks such as bread. Yet in the 1960s to 70s, "bing suuts" started becoming well-known in Hong Kong. After a few years, the "bing suuts" have started to degrade, and many of the younger generations neglect the existence of

⁵冰室打撈 50 年 http://orientaldaily.on.cc/cnt/lifestyle/20100421/00321_001.html 2010/4/21

these restaurants. Mr Hui added in the news article "Bing suuts" are only popular during the 1960s and 70s. Nowadays, only the old customers and the newer generations who want to remember the good old memories of Hong Kong come by."

Indeed, "bing suuts" in general nowadays in the perspective of younger generations, are much too simple. They only serve very common dishes such as almond milk paste, pineapple milk paste, while many of the restaurants nowadays have a variety of dishes and cuisines to choose from. The younger generations usually choose to dine in more decent restaurants due to the better and more comfortable seating arrangements, and the better food quality. Therefore, less and less people visit these restaurants. Yet to some older customers, they have already established a fondness towards the "bing suuts", and therefore even though the dishes are simple, they usually sit in a box seat and chat with the staff for hours before leaving. This sense of belonging and love for the staff cannot be replaced overnight and still lives in many of the older generations' hearts. This collective memory, although simple, is warm and happy in many of the people's eyes.

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Traditional "bing suuts"

Through the interview, we can see a big swift in values. The younger generation nowadays are usually more aware of food quality and comfort, however the older generation focus more on the emotion that they still feel for these "bing suuts", and don't mind the simplicity. We can see that younger generations no longer share the collective memories of the older generations as they don't understand the love and sense of belonging portrayed by them, and if the government hoped to preserve this unique culture of Hong Kong, it's evident that it has to provide more opportunities for the younger generations to understand the social network that "bing suuts" build that is interwoven between different parts of the community.

Interview with Mr and Mrs Chui—regular customers of "bing suuts" in the 1960s⁶

Mr and Mrs Chui lived in a small island in Hong Kong named "Kut O". During the 1960s, they were regular customers of the "bing suut" that was built in that island.

Regarding the question as to why they would choose "bing suuts" over traditional restaurants, Mr Chui replied "Bing suut" is very convenient and cheap as there is no service charge. The traditional restaurants are much more expensive than the "bing suuts". The major reason for this is because the restaurants usually have a 10-20% service charge, and because Kut O is only a small bight, many people are fishermen and cannot afford to pay so much for one meal. Similar to them, I chose to eat in "bing suuts" simply because they're more convenient and less expensive."

After dining in "bing suuts" for many years, Mr Chui reiterated his deep friendship with the customers and waiters. "The feeling is very warm and it feels like home". To Mr Chui, these "bing suuts" were a means for him to communicate with other people in the neighborhood, thus strengthening the cohesion and bond of the whole community.

Although Mr Chui said that "bing suuts" have little variations as compared to modern "cha chaan teng" nowadays, Mrs Chui added that the meals cooked in the "bing suuts" were also very delicious. "I recall eating a steamed dried fish with rice, and it really is very tasty. I don't usually go there for lunches, but rather for afternoon teas. The tea sets are really delicious, such as milk tea and toast or fried noodles. It only costs \$20 for the whole set!"

Unlike modern "cha chaan tengs", there were no air-conditioning systems, and the only source of breeze was the ceiling fans above. Both Mr and Mrs Chui expressed their admiration to this continued legacy of "bing suuts", and believed that without the presence of these "bing suuts", the community wouldn't have been so peaceful.

To Mr and Mrs Chui, although they haven't visited "bing suuts" in a long time due to poor health, they both share the collective memory of chatting with their neighbors in the box seats of the "bing suuts", or even discussing about certain social issues with your friends, or just enjoying the breeze brought by the ceiling fans. This memory will forever be embedded in their hearts, and at the end of the interview, both of them urged the government to do something to promote this culture to the

⁶ Transcript attached in appendix 1

younger generations.

We can evidently see a change in atmosphere between the younger generations and the older generations. We can deduce it to the living culture in Hong Kong. In the older generations, neighbors usually open their doors and greet each other when they see them walk past. Sometimes even, as said by Mrs Chui later on, children play together and even at

times, neighbors will help their friends take care of their children. People usually trust each other more and the social network is therefore preserved in the community.

However nowadays, younger generations tend to mind their own business and tend not to talk to people they don't know. People started to become more and more distant from each other and we no longer see younger generations talking with each other in the "bing suuts", it seems like due to the city development, the society becomes more and more competitive, thus the interpersonal relationships with each other started to defer.

It is true that the government has to provide more opportunities for the community itself to build social cohesion and bond, so that the culture, or rather, the social bonds built by the "cha chaan tengs" in the older generations can continue even in the future to make the society more peaceful and tranquil.

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Hullabaloo in "cha chaan
tengs"

From "bing suut" to "cha chaan teng"—"Cha Chaan Teng"

As time went on, "bing suuts" and "Da Pai Dong" merged, leading to the "cha chaan tengs" we see today. Yet, it is hard to know the exact time when "cha chaan tengs" were first formed; but the history of "bing suuts" in Hong Kong can be traced back to the late Qing dynasty as shown in a book "Café series" written by Leung Kai Chiu.

During the 1980s to 90s, Hong Kong's economy started to change, many factories started going up to China due to cheap labor and high efficiency. The business of "bing suuts" which targeted the factory workers started to decline. Many of those "bing suuts" that still hoped to continue running the business started to think of different dishes such as seafood, vegetables to sustain the demand in the market. Due to this change, "cha chaan tengs" started to appear. In the 21st century, many "cha chaan tengs" started to follow up with the good service provided by high-class restaurants, thus became well-furnished, computerized and this became another stage of Hong Kong's food cuisine.

An example is Tsui Wah Restaurant, one of the longest-standing restaurant in Hong Kong. ⁷In 1967, Tsui Wah Restaurant was only a small "bing suut" in Mong Kok serving only coffee, tea, cakes and bread to factory workers nearby. After customers started to demand for more creative and delicious dishes, Tsui Wah Restaurant started to reform from "bing suut" into "cha chaan teng". Not only did Tsui Wah develop some more innovative dishes, it also improved its service, hygiene, and adopted a computerized system to serve the general public, becoming one of the most-loved restaurants in Hong Kong.

The culture of "cha chaan tengs" has been transmitted into other countries around the globe as well. In January 2002, the first Hong Kong "cha chaan teng" in Kuala Lumpur was established. It originated in Hong Kong and was established in 1992. As Malaysian people knew a lot about Hong Kong's food culture, in less than half a year, the Hong Kong based "cha chaan teng" was widely known and became one of the most popular restaurants in Kuala Lumpur. Instead of only transmitted to Malaysia, there are also a lot of "cha chaan tengs" in overseas such as China Town in the United States, Australia and Europe.

During the period of 2004-2005, many more "cha chaan tengs" started to open, and whether they be big or small, they became very popular in the hearts of many

⁷ Tsui Wah Restaurant: <http://www.tsuiwahrestaurant.com/history.html>

people. Instead of only limiting the food in the "cha chaan tengs" to pineapple buns, milk teas, lemon coca colas, businesses have decided to put in famous Western dishes such as ⁸ spaghetti Bolognese, Baked Cheese Rice, instant noodles etc. These wonderful and delicious dishes became one of the most important dishes that are mandatory in any "cha chaan teng".

Some local "cha chaan tengs" also made their own twists when preparing for the dishes. Some decided to bring in cuisines from other parts of China such as fried e-noodles, Guangdong stir-fry noodles etc, which played an important role in shaping the different local food culture embedded in Hong Kong's history.

The new generation of "cha chaan tengs" no longer looks like traditional "bing suuts". Instead, they are better furnished. In addition, "cha chaan tengs" are no longer family businesses, rather they are controlled or opened by businessmen from Mainland China or some from local areas. Even though some of the restaurants still use paper and pen for taking orders, many are now using a computerized system to boost efficiency. Yet, we cannot deny the fact that many features that existed in old "bing suuts" aren't incorporated. In the "cha chaan tengs", box seats and very narrow seating arrangements are still adopted. ⁹ Also, waiters still use wet towels to wipe the tables clean whenever customers leave, swiping all the dirt or pieces of food to the floor. The efficiency of the "cha chaan tengs" didn't disappear as well in order to suit the needs of many working people. ¹⁰ Most importantly, the prices of the food still stayed roughly the same—\$26 for a lunch set, which is very attractive to the middle to low-class people. These became special icons in every Hong Kong person's heart.

In 2004, "cha chaan tengs" were elected as the "most representative design for Hong Kong" organized by the Hong Kong Radio through the Internet, 106 votes ahead of tram.¹¹ The Democratic Alliance for Betterment has also suggested making "Hong Kong "cha chaan teng" Culture" as "Human Non-material Cultural Heritage", so as to promote tourism and build up an international brand for Hong Kong. In April 2007, another political party in Hong Kong proposed that "cha chaan tengs" should be recognized by the UNESCO as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity".¹²

⁸ <http://www.chinapress.com.my/node/228021>

⁹ <http://www.etsang.net/article/art041.htm>

¹⁰ http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=zh-TW&prev=/search%3Fq%3D%25E8%25AC%25B6%25E9%25A4%2590%25E5%25B8%25B3%25E6%2596%2587%25E5%258C%2596%26hl%3Dzh-TW%26sa%3D%26biw%3D1311%26bih%3D588%26prmd%3Dmvs&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=zh-CN&twu=1&u=http://www.douban.com/group/topic/2199883/?usq=ALk4rhhUZZ8GvtTOPrVWpvzKi7QP0eZzRQ

¹¹ <http://paper.wenweipo.com/200709/28/EO0709280015.htm>

¹² <http://www.dlscoveyhongkong.com/eng/dining/musttaste-foodstory3.html>

Characteristics of "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong

"Cha chaan tengs" in Hong Kong are famous for their efficiency, and are always known as Hong Kong style fast food chain restaurants. There is no need for you to queue up to order food like the fast food shops we see in Hong Kong. Instead, free seating is adopted in these "cha chaan tengs". Vulgar waiters or waitresses will greet you at the door and assign seats for customers (although you may also request for another seat). After being seated, the waiters/waitresses will pour a cup of tea or hot water for you to drink. They will usually ask you what you want to eat right after a few minutes you are seated, and as for regular lunch sets, in less than five minutes, your soup would be delivered while the main course will come shortly afterwards.

Waiters/waitresses in "cha chaan tengs" are not as polite or tidy as those in hotels or other kinds of restaurants. The usual look would be a man dressed in a dotted white shirt with the restaurant's logo, speaking crudely, and a pencil either on his ear or in his pocket. When delivering the meals, no tray would be used; rather, waiters/waitresses would directly put it on the table making it quick and crispy, no extravagances.

There are codes specially designed for ordering food in "cha chaan tengs" for the reference of waiters/waitresses, so as to speed up the time for taking the orders. Interesting examples include COT, meaning cold lemon tea; CO7, meaning cold lemon Seven Cup; "double base"(加底), meaning double the amount of rice or noodle; and "handsome guy"(靚仔) meaning rice¹³. These codes are still adopted in the main stream of "cha chaan tengs", and still kept a culture in modern ones.

The service is also rather casual, and they use phrases like "beautiful girl", "handsome boy" to address their customers, warming your heart up as you eat in the tea restaurant. To many people, these restaurants are like their second homes. When done with the meal, customers would go to the cashier and pay their bill. The cost of a set in general is reasonable, at around \$20 to \$50. Soups or drinks are often included in the set, while water and tea are free-of-charge.

When customers sit down, they can choose from a variety of pre-fixed regular sets (常餐), breakfast (早餐), set lunch(午餐), set dinner (晚餐), special set (特餐),

¹³ 香港茶餐廳落單之字眼 <http://bbs.cantonese.asia/thread-12523-1-1.html>

and quick set (快餐) with A, B, C choices for each one. Customers normally need not wait for a long time, which suits the lifestyle of Hong Kong people – quick¹⁴.

During lunch time, working people would flux into the restaurants, from construction workers to office ladies, from sales to administrative officers. They would gather in a "cha chaan teng" and discuss about current issues while watching the television, reading gambling columns in newspapers, or simply gossiping about their colleagues. During the busiest hours of the day, namely lunch hours, afternoon teas and dinner hours, waiters/waitresses may require customers, though they might not know each other, to sit together, so as to enable more customers to dine in the "cha chaan teng". Sometimes, though customers do not know each other, they would talk and befriend each other, and all these discussions form a special socializing culture in "cha chaan tengs". Everyone, from the customers to the cooks and waiters become one big family.

This memory of becoming one big family ties the whole restaurant together, from the cooks to the customers, they chat about all topics. Even though they don't stay long to dine due to the crowdedness of the "cha chaan teng", one small sentence of care and kindness from the staff is already enough to fill warmth in their hearts. This is the most unique culture of Hong Kong, even though we are a developed city, however, we never neglect our comrades. Even though "cha chaan tengs" are becoming less and less popular, this memory of being "one big family" still lives in everyone's hearts, and this is what makes even the lives of many elderly very meaningful and happy. This collective memory will never be forgotten.

The questions now posed is simple: Can this collective memory be forever passed down to the newer generations, or would this memory be merely embedded in the hearts of the older generations and be forgotten by everyone in the society?

¹⁴ <http://www.funhk.com/tabid/595/Default.aspx>

Food in "cha chaan teng"

Below are three dishes that are very well-known to all Hong Kong people and have their own share of history.

*版權所有

¹⁵Hong Kong Style Milk Tea: It was first introduced to the Hong Kong people in the late 1940s. During the 1950s, many people running "Dai Pai Dong"'s started to use different ways to make this kind of milk tea. Yet during the World War II, the British army started inventing different tea bags to brew tea. The method was very simple, they decided to put the tea leaves into a bag and then after putting it in a cup, pour hot water to extract the

"Pantyhose" milk tea

aroma and the taste. After this invention, brewing milk tea would be more efficient and less exhausting. Over different years, the "cha chaan tengs" started to bring in different kinds of brewing methods, some even tried to use a silk stocking to extract thin and rich milk tea by squishing the water and the tea leaves into a bundle. After that, many of the owners also decided to brew tea by pouring it into the cup at a very high position to prevent lumps from existing, making the milk tea smoother and more delicious.

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Pineapple Buns with cold butter: The method to make this kind of bun is very simple. First cut the pineapple bun open, and then put a piece of chilled butter in the middle. This kind of pineapple buns originated in Russia, and was named "Russian bun". It's not exactly made from pineapple, but however after baked, the top part of the bun is golden yellow and crispy, which looks really like a pineapple, thus was named "pineapple bun". Till now, these pineapple buns are still one of the most popular buns in bakeries or in "cha chaan tengs".

Pineapple bun—"Bo lor Bou"

¹⁵ <http://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/dining/musttaste-foodstory3.html>

*版權所有

French Toast

dish requires more money than other dishes in the "cha chaan teng".

French Toast: It was originated from France. In the beginning only hotels in Hong Kong made these toasts, however after the making of this dish started to spread to the common people, "cha chaan tengs" started doing it as well. However as the process of making this French toast is rather complicated, and the ingredients are more expensive, therefore this

These pre-fixed sets are usually called "Elderly Sets" –Lo Yun Chaan. These sets can be eaten in the morning, and this set is already served in each and every one of the "cha chaan tengs" situated in Hong Kong although the food many vary. These sets usually contain fried eggs and macaroni, with a cup of coffee or tea. These sets are called "Elderly Sets" mainly because these sets have existed for a very long time. Also, another reason is because the ingredients of these sets are very healthy, and are even suitable for the elderly to consume.

*版權所有

Pre-fixed menus

There are still a variety of choices when dining in "cha chaan tengs"¹⁶. Other than ordinary drinks such as lemon water, lemon tea, and coffee, there are other special drinks which can only be found in Hong Kong "cha chaan tengs". Examples are YinYeum (鴛鴦), a mixture of coffee and milk tea; lemon coke (檸檬樂), made from lemon pieces and coca cola; "lemon seven" (檸七), a mixture of lemon pieces with seven-up; "Salty lemon Seven" (鹹檸七), is of salty citrus, lemon and Seven Up; lemon coffee(檸啡), a mixture of lemon and coffee; and lemon Rebina(檸賓), which is made of lemon pieces and Rebina. Most of the drinks can be served in cold or hot, yet the price may increase (usually adding \$2) when the drinks are cold.

As for snacks, there are all kinds of toasts – condensed milk and butter toast (牛油多), condensed milk and peanut butter toast (奶醬多), butter and jam toast (油占多), fried egg toast(西多士)etc. with the choice of using thick bread or thin bread.

¹⁶ <http://www.7mo.hk/info/353.html>

There are different sandwiches as well such as egg sandwich (雞蛋三明治), ham and egg sandwich (火腿雞蛋三明治), beef sandwich (碎牛肉三明治), egg and beef sandwich (雞蛋碎牛肉三明治), club sandwich (公司三明治) etc, with the choice of whether to remove the edge of the bread (飛邊) or making it toasted (烘底). Egg tarts (蛋撻), and many kinds of buns that can be bought in bakeries are also provided such as cocktail bread (雞尾包) and "Pineapple bread" (菠蘿包)¹⁷.

*版權所有

*Different types of food sold in
"cha chaan teng"*

For meals, there are different dishes such as macaroni, cart noodles (車仔面), spaghetti, rice, and oatmeal; famous dishes include Yangzhou Fried Rice (揚州炒飯), Xingzhou Fried Noodle (星洲炒米), and Dry Fried Noodle with Beef(幹炒牛河).

"Cha chaan tengs" is a place which is unique to all Hong Kong people, because it highlights the unique identity that we each possess—Being part British due to the colonization of Britain, and part Chinese as we are in our blood—true Chinese people. It is true that in Hong Kong, there are a lot of cuisines that we can dine in. When we walk down the streets, we see Japanese, Chinese, French and Australian cuisines down the road, which are all influenced by other countries. Many younger generations are astounded by these cuisines, and all love to dine in them due to the large variety of tasty food. However who really thinks about the real heritage that each of us possess? Who, even under the influence of other food cultures in the world due to globalization, still chooses to spend some time dining in the real Hong Kong-cultured restaurants? Shouldn't we, as real Hong Kong people, celebrate this unique identity rather than putting it aside and only devote our time solely on other food cultures?

¹⁷ Hong Kong Tourism Board <http://www.discoverhongkong.com/te/dining/tea-hongkong.html>

The significance of "cha chaan teng" in the hearts of Hong Kong people

Mr Sitt—A Hong Kong citizen emmigrated to Taiwan and coming back to Hong Kong for the first time after 10 years¹⁸

After coming back to Hong Kong, Mr Sitt went to one of the newly-opened "cha chaan teng" near his child's school. Although there were macaroni, egg beef sandwich and many more, he only ordered a cup of milk tea.

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"I remember going into these "cha chaan tengs" for meals when I was a little kid. When I was getting older, I immigrated to Taiwan to look for a job. During that time, I always asked myself "When can I drink a cup of Hong Kong "cha chaan teng"s milk tea?" I think "cha chaan tengs" are Hong Kong's unique collective memory."

Mr Sitt

"Cha chaan teng" is a place for the grass-roots or low-income people to socialize and eat, therefore although it's already very popular in the past, it still remains as the warmest and happiest restaurants in everyone's hearts.

Mr Sitt added "'Cha chaan tengs" are a mixture of both Chinese and Western culture. If Hong Kong wasn't colonized by Britain, then "cha chaan tengs" will never appear. If during colonization, Hong Kong people weren't poor, then "cha chaan tengs" will never have been established as well, the only things that will be established if this scenario was true, then, is the existence of high-class Peninsula coffee cafes which only serve expensive and extravagant milk teas and desserts for people of wealthier families to enjoy."

"Cha chaan tengs" are very cheap, yet the food they provide is limitless, from Western to Eastern cuisine, you name it, they have it. "The most amazing thing in "cha chaan teng" is that many of the dishes are interwoven between Western and Eastern cuisines, for example steak and pork are Western dishes, but customers can choose to eat these dishes with rice, which is a traditional Chinese ingredient. Another example is the YinYeum, which is a mixture of milk tea and coffee. Many of the dishes are half Western, half Eastern, and this is the most important food heritage in Hong Kong."

¹⁸ <http://www.crtv.tv/doc/10039/24/100392451.html?coluid=48&kindId=0&docid=100392451>

"Cha chaan teng" are icons of food culture in Hong Kong, they not only stand as proof to Hong Kong's big change in food culture in the last century, they are also filled with warmth among all the grass roots of Hong Kong. They acknowledge the local heritage and give people a kind of warmth in the neighborhood. Many Hong Kong people say that if they should, in the future, leave Hong Kong, they will definitely miss sipping coffee or tea in Hong Kong "cha chaan tengs".

Blogs on yahoo search engine regarding "cha chaan teng"

"Cha chaan teng", is a place where Hong Kong people will go pass or dine in every day. It's similar to a city's temple, which is provided for people to discuss social issues. It's also a place where sweet memories are embedded, which is forever kept in everyone's hearts, never to be forgotten. It's a gas station to the cold and emotionless reality where we all live in, it gives warmth to people. It's also a support for unhappy occurrences in life, it lets people locate their sense of belonging. It's also a good place to observe the vicissitudes of life."

"Cha chaan teng", to many Hong Kong people, play an important role in their everyday lives. They no longer have to be stuck in their homes and bore themselves to death. Through going down to different "cha chaan teng", they can already talk to people of the same neighborhood and generate sweet memories that will be forever preserved. To many people, these "cha chaan teng", although may not be as well-furnished as the high-class restaurants, serve as an energy boost, or a heart-warmer in this competitive and cold world of ours nowadays. "Cha chaan teng" not only provide us with food, it also provides us with an opportunity to bond with each other cohesively and strengthen the social community.

Miss Wong—the boss of Mido Café (美都餐室)

On January 18th, 1950, Mido Café, a two-story high tea restaurant was opened in Yau Ma Tei. The first boss was Mr. Wong, who created this tea restaurant at the age of 26. After his retirement in 2000, he passed his tea restaurant to his daughter—Miss Wong.

Miss Wong, unmarried, stays in the tea restaurant 360 days, in hope to continue his father's legacy and preserve the collective memory of Hong Kong people. She once said "Mido is my amusement park".

Mido Café, although already established for more than half a century, was still unchanged. The windows still had green colored frames, which let sunshine flow into the room. During wintertime and autumn, Miss Wong would switch on the air-conditioner and open the windows on the second floor for the customers to enjoy the gentle breeze. Like ice cafes in the past, Miss Wong's "cha chaan teng" still have box seats for young couples or old spouses to sit on.

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Mido Café

Even though the whole tea restaurant is old, each wall in the restaurant is filled with different colored mosaics, which was quite unique at that time. "As the money that we have is limited, my father would go out and find his friends to ask for left-over porcelain tiles, and with a cheap price, sell those tiles in exchange for mosaic tiles. These mosaic tiles are pasted on the wall piece by piece, that's why the walls have different colors."

When Mr Wong retired, he didn't leave his daughter with any tricks or advice as to how to run a successful business, rather, there were two phrases that Miss Wong always remembers from her father—"Be trustworthy and sincere to others", "Always keep your promises". Keeping these two virtues in mind, Miss Wong treats her customers nicely and friendly, therefore after more than half a century has passed, she still has a lot of old customers visiting her tea restaurant every single day.

On the issue as to why her tea restaurant didn't change for more than 50 years, she responded by saying, "Keeping the same is sometimes harder than following the trend. I don't like change, for example the distinct aroma of steamed chicken leg rice

The "cha chaan teng" of Hong Kong
A Vanishing Culture

in the tea restaurant—it's still the same old aroma 50 years ago. I'm satisfied if all of these don't change, because they are part of my happy memories in life."

An Interview with a customer at a random tea restaurant¹⁹

The interviewee (whom doesn't wish to disclose his own name) is an old customer of Hong Kong restaurants, who has been dining in them for at least 30-40 years.

On the issue of why he still chooses to dine in "cha chaan teng" rather than the better-furnished, more delicious and better-serviced restaurants, he responded by saying "cha chaan teng" is a unique culture of Hong Kong, this kind of warmth and sense of belonging cannot be felt in other restaurants. After going to these "cha chaan teng" for so many years, even though other restaurants have more creative and delicious dishes, "cha chaan teng" have already become my daily routine, I can't bear to not pay a visit to "cha chaan teng".

However, he also pointed some changes towards the "cha chaan teng". He observed that the number of people visiting these restaurants is decreasing gradually these few years. He also emphasized that if the Hong Kong government doesn't pay enough attention to preserve this local heritage, then "cha chaan teng" will never escape their fate of being eliminated in the market.

¹⁹ Transcript attached in appendix 2

Interview with boss of Sceneway Garden "Cha Chaan Teng"—Mr Hui²⁰

The Sceneway Garden "Cha Chaan Teng" was established in 1998 and has already been created for 13-14 years. It is solely owned by Mr. Hui and his family.

On the issue of the differences between "cha chaan teng" and other modern restaurants, Mr. Hui said, "cha chaan teng" are very traditional shops in Hong Kong. They became popular 30 years ago. "Cha chaan teng" are warmer and the customers and staff are closer. Usually only the old customers come and dine here, but these past few years, the businesses started to drop and many "cha chaan teng" started to close down." Mr. Hui explained that the reason of this phenomenon is because less and less people are interested to dine in these "cha chaan teng". Also, there has been intense competition between the large corporations such as Café de Coral, Chui Wa Restaurant and the small business such as traditional ice cafes and "cha chaan teng". Many young people like fast food shops more and think that these "cha chaan teng" are dirty and not trendy, thus the number of customers started to decline, and due to the massive inflation, prices start to increase, making small businesses like us hard to survive.

"Many of our customers are the elderly. Perhaps they are the people who appreciate the local heritage of "cha chaan teng". I really hope that the government can do something to preserve the small businesses of Hong Kong and continue the legacy of "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong."

²⁰ Transcript attached in appendix 3

Interview with Thomas, a 13-year-old of Renaissance College ²¹

As the culture of "cha chaan tengs" are becoming less and less important in the eyes of the younger generations, we have decided to find a Hong Kong student, Thomas, for his opinion on the prospect and the culture of "cha chaan tengs" in Hong Kong.

Echoing the phenomenon as mentioned above, Thomas only visits these "cha chaan tengs" during the weekend. Yet many of his classmates seldom go to these restaurants as they prefer going to other western fast-food chain stores, such as McDonalds' and KFC. Also, during his visit in the "cha chaan tengs", he seldom see any people talking to each other rather than the older generations.

Thomas also emphasizes the importance of this social bonding culture by saying that if this culture isn't preserved, "cha chaan tengs" will just be any common restaurants, and will definitely be quickly eliminated from the market. Yet, he also points out that it's infeasible for "cha chaan tengs" to be preserved. This is mainly because he thinks that there's not potential. These restaurants earn little and contribute little to the society, and thus it's a wrong investment to still preserve this unique culture of Hong Kong.

It is shocking to find that the younger generations nowadays have no clue of the collective memory that the older generations still preserve. To them, "cha chaan tengs" are only normal restaurants with older people discussing about certain social issues. It has no value to them. Through this, we can see that the government hasn't done enough to let this unique legacy be passed down to the future generations. Also, the younger generations have never understood the happiness of social cohesion, rather they are totally absorbed by the Westernized world, and only focused on fast-food chain restaurants. They have never experienced the closeness of different neighbors in the community, and thus they do not value this Hong Kong culture. Is this what we want—culture disappearing due to the development of the world and the ignorance of it by newer generations?

²¹ Transcript attached in appendix 4

Why We Should Preserve "cha chaan teng": Collective Memory

It's evident that in the hearts of the older generation, the "cha chaan tengs" are an inescapable and unfailing part of Hong Kong's daily life.

However, it's also obvious that most of the older generation have accepted the sad fact that "cha chaan teng" will soon become history and no longer occupy the urban spaces of Hong Kong.

An increasingly competitive environment and inflation has caused a high number of "cha chaan teng" to shut down. These individual small businesses find it hard to compete with chain restaurants like Café de Coral, who not only serve the same dishes as them but also have money to advertise it on television. The trendy image that these chain restaurants often portray are sharply contrasted to the dingy and old image of "cha chaan teng" in the younger generation's minds. The fact that "cha chaan teng" are informal and often have a less-than-perfect environment does not help. As their loyal customers grow old, "cha chaan teng" find it harder and harder to attract the younger generation to their shops, when there is a sparkling, big Yoshinoya restaurant right around the corner.

Not only that, while chain restaurants or big businesses can easily take the brunt of the rising costs of food due to inflation, small businesses like "cha chaan teng" find it hard to survive. One of the advantages of "cha chaan teng" are that they offer low, reasonable prices for the food they offer. But when inflation causes prices to rise, "cha chaan teng" have no choice but to raise the prices of their food. Following the law of demand, customers then leave the "cha chaan teng". "cha chaan teng" are then left with even less customers and an even smaller chance of being able to survive.

These problems aren't just the "cha chaan teng" problem – they're the problem of every small business in Hong Kong. But what makes "cha chaan teng" so special is that they're a staple tradition, a collective memory of what Hong Kong's urban spaces used to be dominated by. They're a valuable part of Hong Kong's past history and a priceless resource for the historical landscape of Hong Kong. The customers there can not only tell you about the social issues of Hong Kong in the past decade, they can also remember the times when they sat down at the tea restaurant and hotly debated about it. Local politicians in those times didn't only go onto the streets to hand out pamphlets – they also went into the "cha chaan teng" and talked with the customers to win votes.

Ask any adult in Hong Kong if they ever went into a tea restaurant in their childhood. Almost all of them will say yes, and their eyes will mist over at the memories of a comfortable surrounding and pleasant chatter in the tea restaurant. This shows the collective memory of "cha chaan teng" in the older generation of Hong Kong. When Wedding Card Street was to be redeveloped, it sparked an outrage that such an indispensable part of Hong Kong's local culture and heritage was to be demolished and broken up. The emphasis was placed again on collective memory – the memory of a social network in which inhabitants supported each other, of wedding cards done in traditional Chinese customs. Chain restaurants are also demolishing the "cha chaan teng" of Hong Kong but it's not sparking an outrage because it's disappearing bit by bit. No one notices that "cha chaan teng" are going except the older generation and the owners, and probably no one will do anything to stop this historical urban space from disappearing.

Hong Kong teenagers have become more and more Westernized. They do not care about the heritage that has been kept secure for many decades due to the influence of different cuisines in Hong Kong, and thus, these "cha chaan tengs"—run-down and dirty places in their eyes, no longer have a value in their hearts. Hong Kong has really become a "cultural desert".

For the sake of the collective memory of Hong Kong's citizens, for the fact that "cha chaan teng" were once and still are a stable part of Hong Kong's culture, for the reason that it's an invaluable part of the history of urban spaces in Hong Kong, the government and the citizens themselves need to step in to preserve these "cha chaan teng" of Hong Kong.

Conclusion

"Cha chaan teng" emerged from "bing suuts", a type of small ice café or tea restaurant that could only be found in Hong Kong. These restaurants are a mixture of the Western and Chinese culture themselves, as their food consists of both the Chinese and English variety. At first their occurrence was to give the lower-ranking Hong Kong people a western tea experience, but as time passes by, these small ice cafes or "cha chaan teng" not only became part of the Hong Kong people's lives – today, they are also part of the Hong Kong culture, a heritage that all Hong Kongers are proud of.

When "bing suuts" first appeared in the Hong Kong society, there was only a limited variety of food to choose from, such as hot or cold drinks, ice creams and bread. Yet these ice cafes are still incredibly popular due to their cheap price and friendly atmosphere. Commoners, especially the elderlies, find it a platform to gossip, exchange news and basically chat with old buddies or new acquaintances. Waiters and customers are good friends, and the ice cafe is one big noisy household.

As time went on, "cha chaan teng" started to replace the ice cafes, due to the changing economy in Hong Kong and the rapid opening of fast food chain restaurants. New dishes started to appear in the "cha chaan teng", including well-known western dishes and cuisines from other parts of China. In addition, the new generation of "cha chaan teng" no longer looks like the traditional ice cafes. Gone were the green and white floor tiles, and the green ceiling fans. Instead they are better furnished, and look much cleaner. Businessmen replaced family businesses, and computers substituted papers and pens. Yet despite all changes, the low price, the friendly atmosphere and the efficiency of the cafes still stayed the same.

It is unmistakable that "cha chaan teng" are inescapable and important in the hearts of the older generation, but does the younger generation hold the same views? An increasingly competitive environment, as well as inflation, has caused numerous tea restaurant businesses to close down. The timeworn and dingy "cha chaan teng" find it hard to compete with the trendy fast food restaurants right across the street, and younger generation can no longer find any reason to eat in the "cha chaan teng" when there is a big and sparkling McDonald's nearby.

But what is so special about these "cha chaan teng" is that they are more than just small and timeworn eating-places. They are a staple tradition, a collective memory of

Hong Kong. They have a significant and invaluable role in the history of our city, thus the younger generation should actually learn to appreciate and enjoy this special dining culture. The government, and Hong Kong citizens themselves, therefore should help to preserve "cha chaan teng".

Limitations

Due to time constraints and limited connections, there are certain imperfections to our project that we were unable to avoid. Firstly, we are unable to contact officials, leading to insufficient material of the government's view on the phenomenon of declining "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong. Secondly, we are unable to contact and interview businessmen in charge of "cha chaan teng", thus we cannot gain their opinions on the issue as well. Thirdly, our predictions on the future role of "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong may be flawed, simply because there is not enough substantiation on what will happen in the future. Last but not least, due to limited knowledge and maturity of secondary school students, we were not able to gain satisfactory views and opinions from these two groups regarding the topic.

Areas for Further Research

There are certain issues that are not in our scope of research, yet may be useful in serving readers to have an even deeper understanding on the topic. These include legislation on the preservation of "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong, and governmental-related activities or programs regarding the same topic. Additional oral history projects with bosses, workers and customers of "cha chaan teng" may further help enrich our knowledge on the issue, and input more information on the experiences of these people. Interviews with businessmen in charge of "cha chaan teng" would be especially appreciated. Lastly, we would also like to further compare the similarities and differences between "cha chaan teng" and fast food restaurants, and continue to investigate the role of "cha chaan teng" in Hong Kong in the future.

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Appendix 1:

**Interview with Mr and Mrs Chui—regular customers of ice cafes (冰室) in the 1960s
(translated into English for more efficient analysis)**

Q: Good morning, thank you for agreeing to do this interview. So tell me Mr Chui, what food is served in those traditional ice cafes?

A: There are many different kinds of dishes. In Kut O, that's where I lived when I was in my 20s-30s, there were all sorts of desserts, toasts milk teas and coffees served. "Bing suut" is very convenient and cheap as there is no service charge. Also there are a lot of pre-fixed regular sets (seung chaan), I remember that there are ABCD sets. It's also very efficient and quick! Usually there are fried noodles during afternoon teas, and sometimes, there are ice-creams sold as well.

Q: I heard that there are a lot of restaurants situated in Kut O during that time. Why do you choose to still eat in ice cafes rather than enjoying the good service provided in those restaurants?

A: Those restaurants are much more expensive than the "bing suut". The major reason for this is because the restaurants usually serve like 10-20% service charge, and because Kut O is only a small bight, many people are fishermen and cannot afford to pay so much for one meal. Similar to them, I chose to eat in "bing suuts" simply because they're more convenient and less expensive.

Q: Can you tell me some more on the atmosphere in "bing suuts"?

A: Sure. I think that the people working in those "bing suuts" and also the customers are very close. During the first time, we don't usually talk but after going to the "bing suuts" for a few more times, I started talking to the regular customers as well as the waiters. Also, there's a TV so we usually watch TV together and discuss the issues broadcasted with each other. The feeling is very warm and it feels like home.

Q: What are the seating arrangements of these "bing suuts"?

A: Usually, on the two edges are the box seats. Then in the middle column, big round tables are put for larger parties. However if you came with another person, you can only sit at one side of the box seats as they won't allow you to take up the whole place. The place is always very crowded during lunch hours.

Q: What is the difference between "bing suuts" and "cha chaan teng"?

A: "Bing suuts" have little variations, yet "cha chaan teng" have many creative dishes. But I guess their characteristics are similar, but I think "bing suuts" are the primary source of "cha chaan teng".

Q: Mrs Chui, what do you eat in "bing suuts"?

A: I remember going to those "bing suuts" when I was still at school. I recall eating a steamed dried fish and rice, and it really is very tasty. I don't usually go there for lunches, but rather for afternoon teas. The tea sets are really delicious, such as milk tea and toast or fried noodles. It only costs \$20 for the whole set! Also, there are shredded ice drinks such as red bean shredded ice (hong dao bing), and the cups are made from very thick glass.

Q: Are there anything you want to add?

A: All the menus are placed below a piece of very thick glass on the table. And these "bing suuts" are usually located on the ground floor facing the main road. There is no air-conditioning as ceiling fans are built for people to enjoy the gentle breeze during the hot summer time.

Appendix 2:

Interview with customer at 茶餐廳

Q: 謝謝你接受我的訪問. 我想問問你光顧茶餐廳有多少年了?

A: 真的不太記得了. 大概是三四十年前第一次光顧吧!

Q: 現在, 不同種類的食店相繼林立, 環境裝修, 食物種類等都比經典茶餐廳吸引, 爲甚麼你還選擇光顧茶餐廳呢?

A: 茶餐廳是香港的傳統特色, 那種親切感是其他食店不能感受到的. 那麼多年來光顧茶餐廳, 說多說少都有回憶, 有一種情吧. 雖然吃的可能比不上其他新興食店花巧, 但好像已養成習慣, 不能不再光顧, 哈.

Q: 這麼多年來, 你認爲茶餐廳有著甚麼變化?

A: 人流明顯少了. 其他食物等改變不大.

Q: 你認爲茶餐廳會漸漸被新式食店所淘汰嗎?

A: 若這種香港特色不再好好保留, 我相信茶餐廳難逃這個命運. 若真的被淘汰, 真的十分可惜.

Q: 我聽茶餐廳老闆說, 茶餐廳結合了以前的冰室和飯店, 你有光顧過嗎?

A: 當然有啦, 但現在都沒有了.

Q: 以前的冰室和飯店是怎樣的?

A: 冰室主要是喝東西的, 通常都是 coffee 和奶茶. 而飯店就是吃飯爲主. 茶餐廳的優勝之處, 就是能夠同時享用這兩種東西.

Q: 好, 不阻礙你進食了. 謝謝接受我的訪問.

Appendix 3:

Interview with 匯景茶餐廳 老闆 許先生

Q: 首先很多謝你接受我的訪問. 我想問一下匯景茶餐廳是甚麼時候創辦的?

A: 1998 年, 到現在大概是 13-14 年.

Q: 那是不是原址就是在現址的呢?

A: 對, 沒有搬遷過, 一直在藍田.

Q: 你們是怎樣經營的, 是一人, 還是合夥經營的?

A: 一人, 一直也是.

Q: 你認為茶餐廳與其他食店的分別在甚麼?

A: em... 茶餐廳是香港一類十分傳統的食店, 大概 30 年前左右開始在香港流行, 真實時間我就不太清楚了. 茶餐廳結合了香港昔日的冰室和飯店. 現在已經剩下很少了. 所以可以說是, 茶餐廳取代了冰室和飯店, 最傳統的在於以前冰室的 coffee 奶茶和飯店的小炒. 還有, 茶餐廳是比較親切的, 都是做街坊生意, 但是這幾年, 生意愈來愈難做了, 茶餐廳也愈來愈少了.

Q: 為甚麼生意會愈來愈難做呢?

A: 這幾年人流少了很多. 因為多了很多競爭, 如大集團, 大快活呀, 大家樂, 或翠華等壟斷整個市場, 我們這些小餐廳, 怎跟他們競爭呢? 加上現在的年輕人都比較喜歡到這些快餐店或食店, 認為茶餐廳不入流, 所以, 對比起以前也少了很多顧客. 還有, 因通漲的問題, 價格都提高了不少.

Q: 現在主要的顧客層跟以前有些甚麼分別?

A: 以前就所有層面都會有, 但是這幾年顧客都年老化, 大部份都是大年紀一點的人. 可能是因為只有他們還會欣賞茶餐廳罷了.

Q: 你當初開茶餐廳有沒有些甚麼特別的原因呢?

A: 因為我本身是做飲食的, 見那時茶餐廳容易做就加入了.

Q: 宏觀一點問, 你對茶餐廳的將來發展有些甚麼意見呢?

A: 人流、茶餐廳數目一定會愈來愈少，甚至幾十年後連茶餐廳都沒有了。好想我剛才說的一樣，大集團壟斷加上茶餐廳的吸引力隨著時間遞減，根本就很難做下去。

Q: 謝謝你接受我這簡短的訪問，將來還有甚麼問題，我會再聯絡你。謝謝。

Appendix 4:

Interview with Thomas, a 13-year-old of Renaissance College

Q: Thank you for giving me this time to interview you. Do you often go to "cha chaan teng" for meals?

A: I usually go to "cha chaan tengs" with my family during the weekend. However my classmates seldom go to these "cha chaan tengs" because they prefer going to fast food restaurants such as McDonalds. They are quite westernized, probably because of the education in our school.

Q: As you know, many people in the older generations go to "cha chaan teng" for discussions or to chat with the staff, do you feel that the social bonding atmosphere in the "cha chaan teng"s you know still embed this?

A: I guess I still see people chatting with the staff, but they're usually of the older generations. But I do acknowledge that the social bonding atmosphere is definitely better than the high-class restaurants because we never talk with the people sitting next to us.

Q: Do you hope that the culture of holding discussions or talking with the people next to you in "cha chaan tengs" be preserved?

A: This is what makes "cha chaan tengs" what they are. If this culture isn't preserved, then what makes these restaurants more special than others? They are still like proper restaurants, with no characteristics! Therefore I think that it's important for the government to preserve this unique culture of Hong Kong.

Q: How do you think that the government can promote this kind of culture in Hong Kong as "cha chaan tengs" are becoming less and less popular?

A: I guess there's no need to promote because "cha chaan tengs" make very little money compared to the more expensive restaurants. But I think that this legacy will still be preserved because there must be low-class citizens, and they definitely can't afford to dine in high-class restaurants, thus will be forced to dine in these "cha chaan tengs". Also the older generations like to dine here very much to talk with each other, therefore I'm sure that this culture will never disappear. But I mean the most important thing is that I don't see the potential of these restaurants, they earn little and contribute little. I don't think that this is a correct investment!

Q: Thank you for your time!

A: You're welcome!