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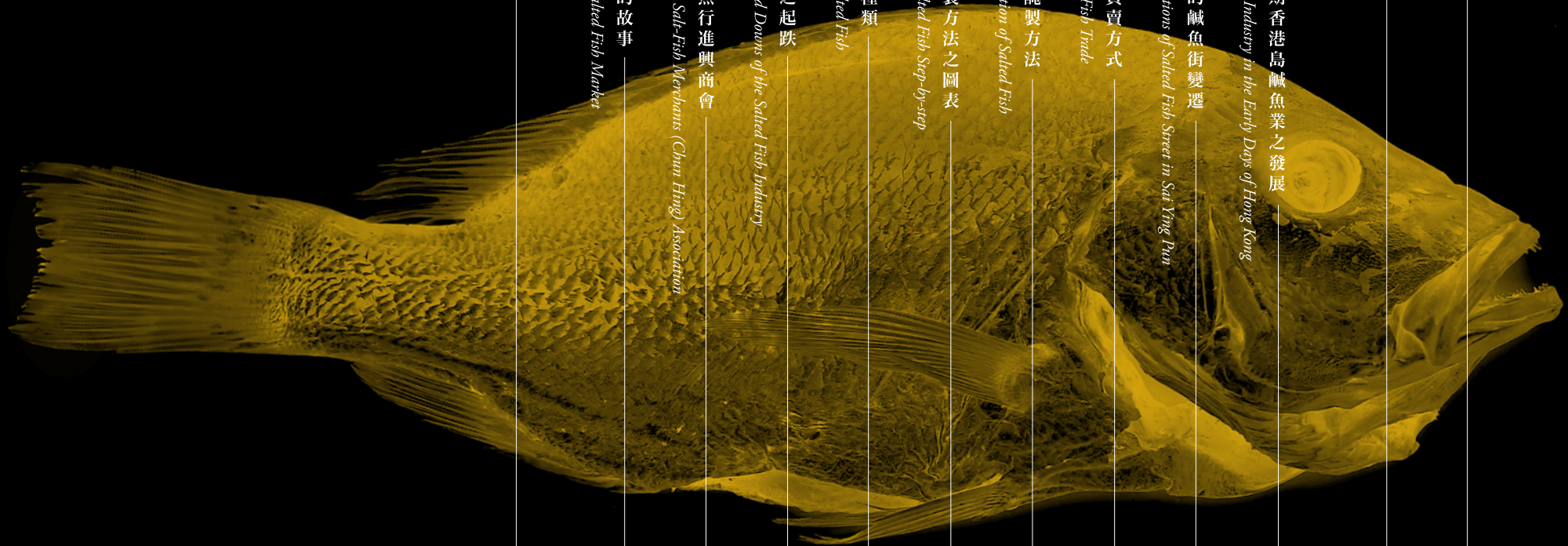
Hong Kong Salt-Fish Merchants (Chun Hing) Association

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去年底地鐵港島西支綫開通，雖然西營盤站要到今年三月底才投入服務，但「地鐵」帶來的影響早就發揮了！它帶給西區市民交通上的便捷，更推動了正在城市化的西環及西營盤地區的發展。但不少傳統行業卻在這個電動車頭的衝擊下，一個個地萎縮及沒落。

曾經光輝一時的西營盤「鹹魚欄」，時至今天已日漸式微，僅存的攤檔也要面對結業或轉型的問題。城市更新與社區經濟再發展是否必然引致對舊社區的破壞呢？

其實，一個「可持續發展」的社區更新，不應無情地摧毀社區原有的傳統文化。發展不應只追求經濟增長，而應顧及社區特質及它內裡的傳統行業，扶植它們「可持續地」發展，以適應新環境和新競爭，在城市發展中亦可以活化地區的傳統行業。長春社文化古蹟資源中心（CACHE）在此時出版這書，也許對這個即將被湮沒的傳統行業難以起實質作用，但是，我們仍然深信這個有人默默留守的傳統行業，還有重要的歷史文化和經濟價值，但願更多有心人都可正視社區內的傳統行業，使這城市的未來發展更多元，這才是真正的「可持續發展」的現代城市！

陳捷貴 BBS, JP 長春社文化古蹟資源中心主席
2015年2月

Although the Sai Ying Pun station will only be ready by the end of March this year, the MTR West Island Line, opened late last year, has long been affecting the district. Not only is the new line a convenience to people in Western District, but it also accelerates the urbanisation process of the area, including Sai Ying Pun. And because of the railway development, a number of traditional industries have withered and died.

Once a bustling hub, the “Salted Fish Market” in Sai Ying Pun is gradually shrinking these days, and its remaining stalls are facing the problem of closing or restructuring their businesses. Is it always the case that urban renewal and economic redevelopment will destroy the fabric of the existing community?

In fact, a “sustainable” urban renewal programme should not eradicate any long-established culture in a community. Development should not only pursue economic growth, but also take care of the characteristics and traditional industries of a neighbourhood, fostering a sustainable future in which community members can adapt to new competitions and a new environment. This book published by The Conservancy Association Centre for Heritage (CACHE) might not be able to save the salted fish businesses from disappearing, but we still firmly believe that there are important values – be they historical, cultural or economical – rooted in this old industry kept afloat by a handful of devotees. We hope more people will become aware of a community’s traditional industries, paving the way for a diversified city development in the future. This is what a truly “sustainable” modern city should be.

Stephen Chan Chit-kwai, BBS, JP,
Chairman of The Conservancy Association Centre for Heritage
February 2015

近年，中西區正經歷多事之秋，以上環至堅尼地城最為嚴重。興建多年的港鐵西港島綫終於趕及在二零一四年十二月底通車，各界預料將會為沿路地區帶來翻天覆地的變化，近年不繼颺升的樓價及舖租勢必變本加厲，又會再引發一連串商店的更替。

過去一年，社會時有關於發展社區文化特色的討論。但可惜討論過程中缺乏對香港歷史的基本認知，不少富有歷史文化價值的社區特色都被忽視，令社會失去了進一步認識香港歷史文化的機會。在缺乏政府政策的支援下，這些社區的歷史文化正慢慢消失。以西營盤為例，以梅芳街為中心的鹹魚欄曾是香港的鹹魚集散地。鹹魚欄發揮了香港作為中國大陸連接世界市場的重要角色，曾經風光一時。但時至今日已漸漸式微，成為夕陽行業。今天的梅芳街只餘下數間鹹魚店，其餘都陸續變成蔘茸海味舖，甚至藥房。

在鹹魚欄快將消失之際，我們希望為這個歷史悠久的行業，作一個記錄。我們從鹹魚製作方法、行業和商會歷史等不同角度切入，讓大眾深入了解鹹魚業。我們亦走訪鹹魚店，記錄店舖的故事。鹹魚店的守業者各有各的感慨與展望，亦正好反思社區發展和保育的關係，以及社區歷史文化遺產的重要性。

The Central and Western District – especially the section from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town – has been through a time of convulsive change in recent years. After a long time of planning and construction, the MTR West Island Line finally opened at the end of 2014. It is expected that the infrastructure will give a complete facelift to the areas along the Line, as property prices and shop rents will continue to rise more rapidly, triggering another series of turnover of shops.

Over the past year, there were often discussions in society as to how to develop the cultural characteristics of local communities. However, a basic understanding of Hong Kong history was neglected during the discussion process. While a number of significant community features are overlooked, the public actually misses the chance to learn about Hong Kong's history and culture. Due to a lack of government support, these historical and cultural elements rooted in our neighbourhoods are slowly fading away. In Sai Ying Pun, for instance, the "Salted Fish Market" clustered on Mui Fong Street used to be a trading centre for the city's salted fish industry; it even established itself as an entrepot between China and the world market. The industry, however, has gone downhill ever since. Today, while a few salted fish businesses remain on Mui Fong Street, the rest have gradually turned into dried seafood shops and even pharmacies.

As the Salted Fish Market is disappearing, we hope to take this opportunity to document its long-standing industry. From the production of salted fish to the industry's rise and fall and the history of its trade union, here we explore the topic from different perspectives to provide a deeper understanding into the sunset industry. We have also interviewed shop owners, who share with us their stories, struggles and hopes. This offers a chance to reflect on the relationship between development and conservation, as well as the importance of our community's historical and cultural heritage.

MIICHTHYS MIIUY

鰲魚



開埠初期 香港島 鹹魚業之發展

香港氣候良好，漁產豐富，漁業發展蓬勃，曾經是香港的重要經濟支柱之一。漁業發達帶動了其他相關經濟作業的發展，其中當然不少得鹹魚行業。香港擁有優良的海港和海灣，適合漁船舶碇，亦有海灘可供漁民曬製漁穫。此外，香港盛產海鹽，以前漁民出海捕魚，漁船沒有冷藏設備，漁民必定預先載有大量

的鹽以保存魚穫，防止腐壞。漁民每次捕捉魚穫後，部份用海水繼續養活，其餘則用鹽醃技術，存放在船艙，待船泊岸後，於鄰近的市集出售。此等天然有利優勢，造就鹹魚業在香港的興旺發展。

1841年1月26日，英軍強佔香港島，同年5月15日《香港憲報》(Hong Kong Gazette)公布第一次人口調查，全島人口共有7,450，當中有2,000人口為艇戶，可見當時有不少港人從事漁業，並且多集中於港島南部。港島人口以赤柱為首，港英政府稱之都邑和市鎮，發展較其他的地區繁盛。根據約翰斯頓(Alexander Robert Johnston)在《香港島紀事》的描述，「赤柱村是全島最大及最重要的村落……共有房屋及商舖180間……居民從事農耕、商業及醃曬鹹魚。」我們相信香港開埠初期，赤柱的漁業相當發達，伴隨鹹魚業也有不俗的發展。在1846年出版《香港藍皮書》(Hong Kong Blue Book)的記載，全島有15間鹹魚店(Salted Fish Store)，其中14間位於赤柱地區。此時，鹹魚業在香港島仍屬萌芽階段，鹹

魚商販的流動性很大，到處找尋商機。



*Salted Fish Industry
in the Early Days of
Hong Kong*

With its mild climate, Hong Kong once developed a thriving fishery, which not only formed a major part of the city's economy but also propelled other industries forward – one of which was salted fish making. While Hong Kong's fine harbours and bays allowed easy anchoring of fishing boats, its beaches were ideal locations for sun-drying sea produce – all these geographical advantages contributed to the rise of the salted fish industry in Hong Kong.

The city was known for its sea salt production, too. Owing to the lack of refrigeration equipments in the past, it used to be very difficult to keep catches fresh. Fishermen therefore stored a large amount of sea salt on their boats, where some fish were kept alive in sea water, while others were preserved in salt and to be sold in nearby bazaars upon landing.

On January 26, 1841, the British army occupied Hong Kong Island. The Hong Kong Government Gazette released the first census of Hong Kong on May 15 of the same year: the Island's population was 7,450, of which 2,000 were boat dwellers. This showed that many Hongkongers then were engaged in fishery, and they clustered on the southern part of the Island. At the time, Stanley was the most densely populated area in Hong Kong, and was labelled a “town” by the colonial government, for it was more developed than the rest of the territory. In his Hong Kong Island Chronicle, Sir Alexander Robert Johnston wrote: “Stanley Village is the Island's biggest and most important village ... with a total of 180 houses and shops ... residents engage themselves in farming, business and salted fish production.” It is believed that the fishery of Stanley had already matured in the early days, which benefited the salted fish industry around the area. According to the Hong Kong Blue Book published in 1846, there were 15 salted fish shops on the entire Hong Kong Island, of which 14 were based in Stanley. The salted fish industry was still in its infant stage then, with traders moving around the Island for better business opportunities.



1

四十年代的鹹魚店
Salted fish store, 1940's

(圖片來源: 艾思滔《香城故影》 Source: Edward Stokes, *Hong Kong As It Was: Hedda Morrison's Photographs 1946-47*, Hedda Morrison Collection, Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University. Copyright President & Fellows of Harvard College.)



2

七十年代鹹魚店
Salted fish store, 1970's

(圖片來源: 香港特別行政區政府新聞處 Source: HKSAR Information Service Department)



3

昔日鹹魚檔
Salted fish store in the past

(圖片來源: 伍惠記 Source: Ng Wai Kee)

西營盤的 鹹魚街變遷

第一代鹹魚街

1850年代，內地動亂頻仍，導致大量人口來港避難。人口暴升，令鹹魚的需求日益增加。起初漁民在西營盤海旁西（1880年代末更名為德輔道西）一帶賣魚，逐漸發展為商舖。據1858年《香港藍皮書》(Hong Kong Blue Book)載，香港島共有88個魚欄，當中近六成半為鹹魚欄，其中35個位於維多利亞城，22個則在郊區。1860年代鹹魚商販看準西營盤的地理優勢，紛紛集中在海旁西臨海地段93和94號大展拳腳，後來演變至成行成市，遂命名為「鹹魚街」。1870年全港有112個鹹魚商販，翻查差餉紀錄，光是西營盤已有39間店舖從事鹹魚買賣。1880年西營盤鹹魚欄的範圍進一步擴展，第一代的鹹魚街延伸至海旁地段106號。而當時的鹹魚街所處的地段，正好處於現今梅芳街及桂香街一帶，不過，鹹魚街是跟海岸線平行的，而現時的梅芳街及桂香街是跟海岸線垂直的。

第二代鹹魚街

1880年代末，港府在港島進行大規模填海。這次填海計劃共分七個部份進行，範圍西起西環煤氣公司，東止於美利碼頭，全長約10,200呎，造地58.7英畝。西營盤的海岸線擴展至干諾道西。當填海工程完成，海旁93和94號地段遷至介乎德輔道西（第一代鹹魚街所處的海旁西）與干諾道西之間，1895年鹹魚街也跟隨北移，原來地段則改為內地段(Inland Lot) 1262號和1247號。

從一幅1897年工務局地圖所見，第一代鹹魚街已經消失了，第二代鹹魚街設有街道號碼34個，又稱新鹹魚街。原有的地段則改為連溺加街(Rienacker Street)和多善街(Torsien Street)。根據1919年9月26日《憲報》所載，溺加街正式更名為梅芳街，多善街則改名為桂香街，並一直沿用至今。1915年出版的《香港中華商業交通人名指南錄》指出，大部份鹹魚商店均聚集於鹹魚街及德輔道西一帶。

第三代鹹魚街

從1922年出版的《中華人名錄》中看到，鹹魚欄的大欄在二十年代已從海邊的鹹魚街遷回內地段的梅芳街內，字號分別有：聯隆（梅芳街2號）、宏隆（梅芳街3號）、恆發（梅芳街5號）、怡昌隆（梅芳街7號）、信隆（梅芳街9號）、惠隆（梅芳街11號）、三隆（梅芳街13號）、興隆（梅芳街15號）、裕隆（梅芳街17號）、悅隆（梅芳街19號）、怡隆興（梅芳街21號）及恆隆（梅芳街23號），時人稱為「十三隆」。（資料顯示只有十二間店舖而已，但由資深業內工作者及1930年代書本上所知，大家均是以「十三隆」稱呼行內的大欄。）其它鹹魚店舖則分佈在德輔道西、東邊街和西湖里一帶。這時候的第二代鹹魚街內，已經沒有鹹魚店舖。



Transformations of
Salted Fish Street in
Sai Ying Pun

Salted Fish Street – The First Generation

In the 1850s, numerous unrests in China resulted in a large influx of refugees to Hong Kong. The population of the city thereby rose sharply and the demand for salted fish increased, too. Fishermen first sold their products along Sai Ying Pun’s waterfront named Praya West (renamed Des Voeux Road West in late 1880s), but gradually opened salted fish shops in the area as they saw potential in the industry. According to the Hong Kong Blue Book published in 1858, there were 88 fish markets on Hong Kong Island, of which 65% specialised in salted fish, with 35 of them located in the City of Victoria, and the other 22 in suburbs. In the 1860s, many salted fish traders spotted the geographical advantages of Sai Ying Pun, and moved their businesses to Marine Lots no. 93 and no. 94 in Praya West. The cluster evolved into what was later called “Ham Yu Street” (Salted Fish Street). There were 112 salted fish suppliers in 1870 Hong Kong, as historical records of rates revealed, and 39 of them were based in Sai Ying Pun. In 1880, Salted Fish Street further expanded to Marine Lot no. 106. This first generation of Salted Fish Street was located around today’s Mui Fong Street and Kwai Heung Street. However, while Salted Fish Street ran in parallel with the coastline, Mui Fong Street and Kwai Heung Street nowadays are perpendicular to the harbour.

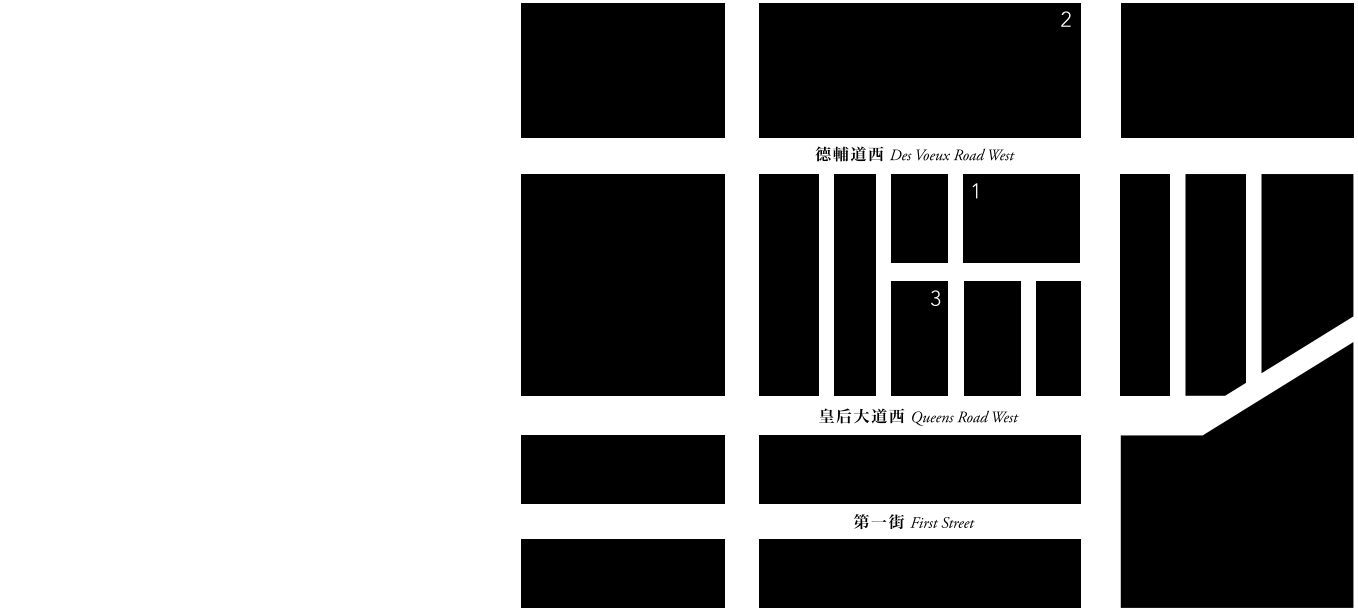
Salted Fish Street – The Second Generation

In the late 1880s, the colonial government conducted large-scale reclamation on Hong Kong Island. The project was divided into seven phases, covering 10,200 feet and producing 58.7 acres of land that stretched to Western District Gas Company to the west and Murray Pier to the east. The coastline of Sai Ying Pun extended to Connaught Road West thereafter. Once the reclamation was completed,

Marine Lots no. 93 and no. 94 were moved to the area between Des Voeux Road West (former Praya West) and Connaught Road West. In 1895, Salted Fish Street also moved northward with the Marine Lots, while the original area was replaced by Inland Lots no. 1262 and no. 1247. The first generation of Salted Fish Street had already disappeared on the map issued by the Public Works Department in 1897, but became Rienaecker Street and Torsiem Street. The map also showed that this second generation of Salted Fish Street, also known as “New Ham Yu Street” (New Salted Fish Street), had a total of 34 street numbers. According to the Hong Kong Government Gazette published on September 26, 1919, Rienaecker Street was later renamed Mui Fong Street, while Torsiem Street became Kwai Heung Street. The Anglo-Chinese Commercial Directory, published in 1915, revealed that most of the salted fish shops at the time were located on Salted Fish Street and Des Voeux Road West.

Salted Fish Street – The Third Generation

According to Anglo-Chinese Directory, Hong Kong, published in 1922, the biggest traders had already moved from Salted Fish Street to Mui Fong Street, which made the third generation of Salted Fish Street. Those traders included Luen Loong (2 Mui Fong Street), Wang Loong (3 Mei Fong Street), Hang Fat (5 Mui Fong Street), Yee Cheong Loong (7 Mui Fong Street), Shun Loong (9 Mui Fong Street), Wai Loong (11 Mui Fong Street), Sam Loong (13 Mui Fong Street), Hing Loong (15 Mui Fong Street), Yu Loong (17 Mui Fong Street), Yuet Loong (19 Mui Fong Street), Yee Loong Hing (21 Mui Fong Street) and Hang Loong (23 Mui Fong Street). Together they were called “Thirteen Loongs” (there were only 12 shops on historical records, though veteran practitioners and books from the 1930s used to call those big traders “Thirteen Loongs”). Other salted fish shops scattered on Des Voeux Road West, Eastern Street and Sai Woo Lane; none of them could be found on Salted Fish Street anymore.



- 1 第一代鹹魚街
The first generation of Salted Fish Street
- 2 第二代鹹魚街
The second generation of Salted Fish Street
- 3 第三代鹹魚街
The third generation of Salted Fish Street

鹹魚的買賣方式

戰前，漁獲裡的半醃製鹹魚隨著漁船到港後便會分配到各「大欄」（可以說是鹹魚的大分銷商），各「大欄」便會以拍賣形式，將鹹魚賣給「細欄」再作分銷，賣到酒樓及各商店。

基本上，大欄放債給漁民，漁民將其漁獲全數給大欄，大欄會扣起漁民所得的利益之一部份作為佣金（大約百分之六）。不過，當戰後1945年魚類統營處成立，所有西營盤的鹹魚欄（不論大欄或細欄）都需要到堅尼地城市場（及後遷至香港仔）買鹹魚。另一途徑，是經岸邊漁船購入次等漁獲，特別是在六、七十年代，中國還未對外開放的時期，許多中國漁民都會將漁獲運來香港，以較高價格出售圖利，於是就有大量這種半製成品的材料供應至西營盤的鹹魚欄。

香港仔魚類統營處分別設有鮮魚及鹹魚市場。在上世紀七、八十年代，鮮魚市場在早上七時十分便開始營業，讓各魚欄買手買貨，買賣以拍賣形式進行，各買家只需叫出買入價錢，互相競逐，最後價高者得。當時有些西營盤鹹魚大欄會直接買入新鮮魚類，自家加工醃製鹹魚。因成本問題，鹹魚欄不需購入最上等之魚類，故鹹魚買手大約五時到達市場，參與較次檔魚獲的競投。鹹魚市場則在早上10時30分開始拍賣，其他鹹魚買手會在此時購買漁民以鹽醃製過的鹹魚，送到店中再加工（打鱗、醃製、脫水、生曬），方可售賣。

有些鹹魚欄鋪很早已預計香港漁獲會逐漸減少，以及政府對業內作出種種規限，六、七十年代遂向其他國家（越南、孟加拉和泰國等）入口已製成的鹹魚，再以拍賣形式出售。鹹魚的拍賣行內叫「開盤」，入口商將漁獲按不同魚類品種、大小分類，供二盤商鋪（其他零售或批發鹹魚的商鋪，必須從不同入口商買入鹹魚再轉售）競投。每次開盤，各二盤商鋪買手會齊集到入口商店前，競投不同批次貨品，更會用到「密底算盤」，各自出價。例如大欄將其中一批貨品樣辦（如三箱馬友）放出作競投，對此批貨品有興趣的二盤商鋪買手，便會到賣家前撥動密底算盤顯示其競投價。密底算盤確保各買家難以窺探對手的出價，又可保持競價的節奏。出價最高者，便可取貨到其店鋪加工，再售賣給其它店鋪。當然，賣家認為各競投價錢未達心中的底價時，該貨便不會售出。如此類推，當各買家對不同貨物競投完畢，開盤隨之結束。

出價是一門學問，若出價太高，雖可保證較大機會購入貨品，但成本因而增加，利潤隨之而減少。出價太低，往往會失去購入心儀貨品的機會。細欄之店東指出，出價是靠多年累積經驗而成的。他們會分析貨品之數量及質量，判斷一個合理的價錢。

如今，開盤仍然可在德輔道西某些鹹魚鋪找到，十數位商戶代表在店鋪內競投心儀貨品，十分熱鬧。



The Salted Fish Trade

Before the Second World War, fish boats usually landed with semi-processed salted fish, which would be allocated to dai lan (salted fish distributors), who would then auction off the fish to sai lan (smaller salted fish suppliers) for their further distribution to restaurants and other buyers.

Basically, big dai lan traders first lent money to fishermen, who would pay back with their catches and approximately 6% of their profits as commissions. However, this practice stopped since the formation of the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO), which required all salted fish suppliers, big and small, to buy fish from the market in Kennedy Town (which later moved to Aberdeen). Still, inferior fishery products could be bought directly from boats along the Sai Ying Pun waterfront. This was especially the case in the 1960s-1970s, when China had not yet opened its door and many mainland fishermen would sell their catches in Hong Kong at higher prices. Therefore, a lot of intermediate products of this kind were supplied to the Salted Fish Market in Sai Ying Pun.

The FMO in Aberdeen was divided into fresh fish and salted fish sections. In the 1970s-1980s, the fresh fish market opened at 3:45 every morning, where potential buyers would call out prices and catches would be auctioned off to the highest bidder. A few dai lan suppliers from Sai Ying Pun also bought fresh fish this way to produce their own salted fish. Due to the high cost of production, salted fish makers could not afford the best catches so they usually arrived at 5am to bid in the second round. Auctions for salted fish started at 10:30am, where buyers would bid for intermediate products initially preserved by fishermen, and then took them back to their stores for reprocessing (scaling, salting, dehydrating and sun-drying), before they were sold on the market.

In the 1960s-1970s, some of the salted fish traders in Sai Ying Pun had already expected the declining catches in Hong Kong and the various government restrictions imposed on the industry. They began to import salted fish from other countries (e.g. Vietnam, Bangladesh and Thailand) and auctioned them off to local suppliers. At salted fish auctions, importers would categorise their products into different grades – based on species and sizes – for salted fish wholesalers and retailers to bid. Before an auction starts, buyers would congregate at the importer's shop. They would use a “bottom-tight abacus” for silent bids: the host would first display samples of salted fish (e.g. three boxes of threadfins), then interested buyers would come to the host and enter their bids on the abacus with its tight bottom facing the other buyers, so that only the host would know about the bids. The highest bidders would get the products and reprocess them for sale. The host, of course, may also retain the products if the bids are not acceptable.

There is a wealth of knowledge in bidding. A higher bid certainly stands a better chance of winning, though it also implies a higher cost and therefore a lower margin. Placing a low bid, however, would risk losing the item on auction. Salted fish buyers say they bring many years of experience to an auction, as they would judge by the quantity and quality of the products to come up with a reasonable price.

Today, salted fish auctions are still held by a few suppliers on Des Voeux Road West. They are usually attended by a dozen buyers from smaller shops, who come to bid for their favourite items in a lively, dynamic atmosphere.



1



3



4

1 昔日街市售賣鹹魚的牌檔
The salted fish store at the market in the past

2 七十年代香港仔魚市場
Fish Market at Aberdeen, 1970's

3 開盤以密底算盤拍賣
Wholesalers and retailers using bottom tight abacus during the auction

4 開盤競投記錄
Records of the auction

ILISHA ELONGATA

曹白



鹹魚之醃製方法

以下所描述的，基本上是在西營盤經營鹹魚細欄所作的鹹魚醃製方法。

當細欄從大欄處競投到不同批次的鹹魚貨品後，必需加工整理，方可分發售賣。這些加工程序實際上是相當繁複，需具相當經驗的鹹魚師傅才可製出具質量成品。

最初，製鹹魚工人（相信稱為「鹹魚工程師」更為恰當）要判斷魚之鹹度是否足夠，若已足夠，則可去鱗及浸水稀釋，之後將之吊高，讓魚肚內的水流清，再放到室外曬乾。

反之，若鹽度不足，必需將魚腮穿破，以手指將鹽放入魚肚中（此乃「密肚鹹魚」，意即沒有割破魚的肚皮、清除肚內腸臟而製成的鹹魚。不過，從外地引入之鹹魚多為「開肚鹹魚」，因清除肚內腸臟後較清潔及容易製作，選用此方法亦較易監管），放入已舖了一層鹽的鹽桶中，跟著再在魚上舖一層鹽，如此類推，層層疊疊至桶滿為止。醃製之時間長短需按魚的大小而定。而判斷該魚的鹽份是否充足，便是最功夫的程序之一。據製鹹魚之師傅稱，他們用手觸摸魚的肉質，便知道鹽份是否充足，這些方法並沒有書本指導或數據可依，只是每天工作累積的經驗所得而已。

當魚的鹽度充足，便可送到曬場（以西營盤為例，大多是附近荒廢的空地及唐樓的天台）曬乾。日間，鹹魚工人以鐵架架起兩條木條，木條上舖上以竹製成的「竹薄」，一批一批的鹹魚則會舖到每一塊竹薄上曬晾。當陽光充沛時，工人必需將鹹魚「翻身」，務求魚身盡快變乾。到了夜間，工人便要將竹薄收起，利用麻布袋及布袋作組合，將鹹魚蓋好以便吸收其水份。當遇上雨季及颱風季節，工人可能需要將鹹魚再醃製一次，以免其變壞。

此外，當時一些店舖會從魚市場購買新鮮魚製作鹹魚，工序跟上述大致相約而較為簡略，因不需分辨魚的鹹度便可開始醃製了。當然，醃製的時間必定比上述情況長。

現今大澳及長洲仍有製作鹹魚的商戶，不過產量非常之少，不像過往西營盤鹹魚欄般大量生產，而製作工序則大致相同。值得注意的是，大澳個別鹹魚店舖仍繼續製作密肚鹹魚，每年均吸引不少老饕購買。

The fish would be sun-dried on drying yards (which, in the case of Sai Ying Pun, are usually abandoned open spaces or rooftops of tenement buildings). During the day, salted fish would be laid out on a bamboo mat supported by two wooden strips mounted on an iron framework. On a sunny day, workers should keep turning the fish so that they could get dried more quickly. As darkness draws in, workers have to fold up the bamboo mat and cover the salted fish with gunny sacks and canvas bags to absorb moisture of the fish. During rainy and typhoon seasons, workers may need to process the salted fish one more time to avoid deterioration.

Suppliers in the past might also buy fresh fish in order to make salted fish from “scratch”. The procedures were similar yet simpler – because one could start the salting process without checking the salinity level, though taking a longer production time as a whole.

Today, some of the workshops in Tai O and Cheung Chau are still making salted fish this way, but on a much smaller scale than in Sai Ying Pun before. It is worth noting that a few shops in Tai O are still using the traditional, close-belly method to produce salted fish, attracting many connoisseurs to visit all year round.

The Production of Salted Fish

The following method is generally used by small-scale sai lan suppliers in Sai Ying Pun.

Upon their return from an auction, the suppliers have to reprocess the fish they have just purchased before selling them on the market. The processing procedures are so complicated that only experienced practitioners can ensure the quality of the finished products.

First things first, salted fish workers (or better yet, “engineers”) need to check if a fish has an optimal salinity level. If so, the fish would be scaled, washed thoroughly and hung upside down to drain water from its stomach before it is sun-dried.

For fish with a low salinity level, salt has to be hand-filled into the fish’s stomach through the gills (this method is used for the type of salted fish gutted without their bellies cut open. However, most imported salted fish are belly-cut-opened because it is cleaner and easier to preserve – and to regulate). The fish are then put into a bucket, in which they are arranged in alternate layers with salt. The length of salting time depends on the size of a fish. Judging the salinity level of a fish is one of the most skilled procedures over the production process. According to salted fish makers, they would know how salty a fish is by pinching its body lightly. All these techniques are not written in books or supported by scientific data, but accumulated through everyday working experience.

Making Salted Fish
Step-by-Step

鹹魚醃製方法之圖表

• 開始

Start

• 從大欄購入半製成品鹹魚

Purchase semi-preserved fish from big dai lan suppliers [PHOTO 1]

• 鹽度是否充足？

Is there a high level of salinity in the fish?

否 *No*

將魚鰓部份穿破，以手指將鹽帶入魚肚中

Cut the gills and stuff salt into the fish's stomach by hand [PHOTO 3]

是 *Yes*

• 去鱗及浸淡水以稀釋之

Scale the fish and dilute them in water [PHOTO 2]

放入鹹魚桶中醃製

Salt the fish in a bucket [PHOTO 4]

• 將魚吊起讓肚內的水流出

Hang the fish upside down to drain water from their stomach

• 在魚身上輕抹，讓紋理順暢，賣相更佳

Brush the fish lightly to give a smoother texture and a better look [PHOTO 5]

• 放到曬場曬乾

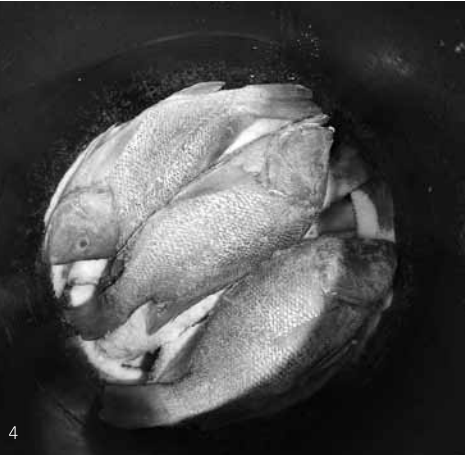
Dry the fish under the sun [PHOTO 6]

• 包裝

Packaging [PHOTO 7]

• 完成

Done [PHOTO 8]



鹹魚的種類

據業內人士指出，除了淡水魚外，幾乎不同種類的魚均可製成鹹魚。如今流行的鹹魚為馬友、鮫魚、牙或和白或等，因這幾款魚相對數量較其他魚多、並於不同季節均有供應。以往流行的黑鯪、白鯪及九棍等因產量不多，故現已不流行。往時業內有一諺語「第一鯪，第二鯪，第三馬交郎」已成歷史。第一，鯪魚由於魚身較肥，煮出來較多油脂，比較切合以往人們的口味，如今著重少鹽少油的年代，此款鹹魚已不受歡迎了。

市場上的鹹魚除了有不同的魚類可供選擇外，因應其製作方式的不同，亦產生兩款截然不同的口感和味道，分為霉香鹹魚和實肉鹹魚。霉香鹹魚意指魚捕獲後立即以鹽作保存，期間出現發酵過程，肉質便較「霉」及較香。但「實肉」鹹魚就是以冰作最初的防腐媒介，即使後來同樣用鹽醃製，但因沒有經過發酵，肉質便較「實」，基本上用手觸摸鹹魚的肉質便可以感受兩者的分別。

實肉鹹魚面世的歷史較短，因科技及資源問題，以往的遠洋漁船並未設有冷凍設備，能保存魚獲不致變壞的方法只有用鹽醃而已，故以往的鹹魚必然是「霉香」。

不同水域的魚類當造期並不一樣，香港水域以往在農曆三月產量最多，有云：「三月廿三，鹹魚大擔擔」，如今漁獲極少，此說法已不適用。由於西營盤如今所售賣的多是孟加拉及泰國的入口產品，孟加拉的漁獲產期為則每年8月至翌年1月（當中以牙或的產量最多），而泰國則在過年後會有較多馬友。



Types of Salted Fish

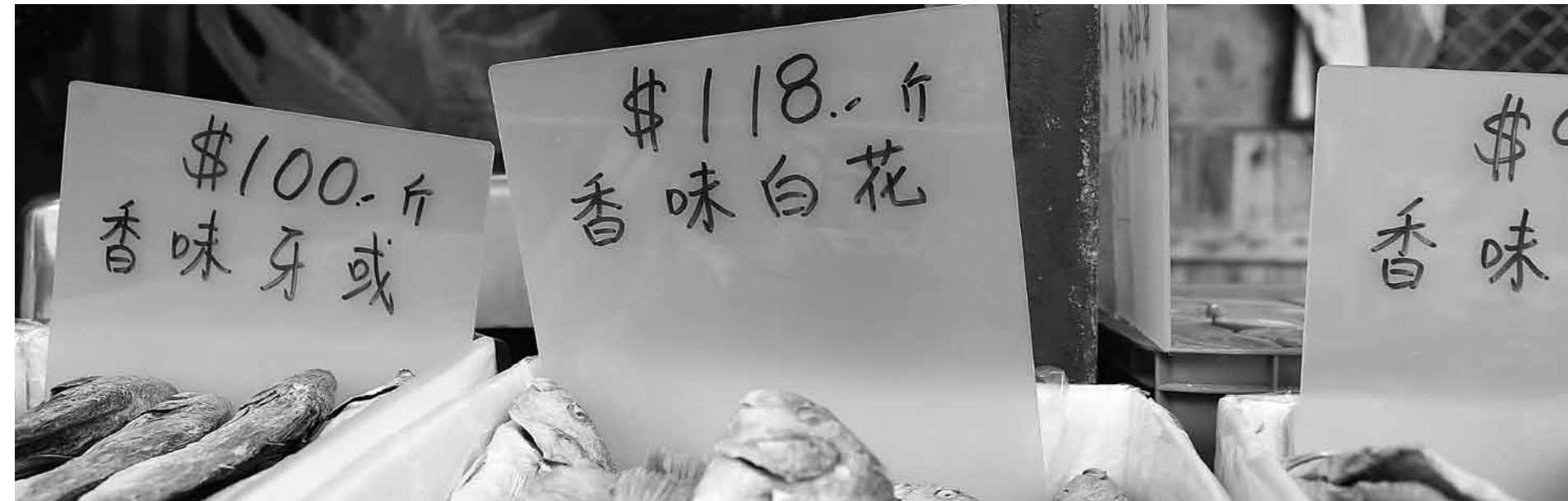
According to industry insiders, almost all kinds of fish – except freshwater fish – can be used to make salted fish. The most popular ones are threadfins, mackerels, tiger-tooth croakers and white croakers, as their supply is comparatively high and stable across seasons. Black pomfret, white pomfret and mullet used to be bestsellers but have become out of fashion because of their scarcity. There used to be an old saying in the industry: “Shark catfish the first, pomfrets the second, threadfins the third.” Since shark catfish is fatty and oily, it catered to the taste of the older generation. But people have become more health-conscious these days, so this type of salted fish is no longer well received.

Apart from the above-mentioned species, salted fish are also classified as “soft” and “firm”, as they are produced in different ways. Soft salted fish are preserved in salt once they are caught, during which they go through a fermentation process, giving them a fine texture and a piquant flavour. In contrast, firm salted fish are frozen before getting salted. Since they are not fermented, their texture is harder. Basically, one can pinch the fish lightly to tell which is which.

Firm salted fish have a shorter history than the soft ones. As ships and boats in the past were not equipped with refrigeration facilities, the only way to stop catches from deteriorating was to preserve them in salt. Salted fish in the old days were therefore mostly “soft”.

Fish in different waters grow at different times of the year. In Hong Kong, March of the lunar calendar is the peak season, as reflected in the old saying: “March twenty-third, salted fish come in herds.”

However, the idiom is no longer true as catches have drastically declined over the decades. Today, most salted fish sold in Sai Ying Pun are imported from Bangladesh and Thailand – while Bangladesh’s peak period for catches (mostly tight-tooth croakers) is from August to January, the best season for fish from Thailand (mostly threadfins) is after the New Year.



TIGER-TOOTH CROAKER

牙 或



鹹魚業之起伏

香港鹹魚業早在開埠前已開始經營，開埠後，因地理關係，西營盤一直是鹹魚業的重鎮。翻查紀錄資料，二十世紀三十年代中期，日本侵華，中國漁場被日人侵佔，漁獲減少同時，日本漁民又以平價放售漁獲，競爭加劇，導致行業萎縮。

五十年代初，政府修例規管鹹魚店之經營，當時鹹魚業內人士深感徬徨，希望政府可暫緩執行新例，其間有13家鹹魚店設備未符規定，遭政府下令停止營業。同時，中國亦於1950年公佈禁止鹹魚類進口，雖然只維持了六個月，但已令鹹魚業大受打擊。

1951年，鹹魚店紛紛改建工場，符合新的衛生條例，危機總算暫時緩解。七十年代，因中國大陸開放的關係，是鹹魚業最輝煌的時期。不過，從魚類統營處年報之經銷海產數據可見，漁獲由七十年代中開始已緩緩下降，至1999/2000年度，已沒有鹹魚經魚類統營處售賣了，至今即使想買大量鮮魚製作鹹魚亦不容易。故一些鹹魚欄商人早在六十年代，已開始在外地經營鹹魚工場及曬場，他們派駐鹹魚師傅到越南及孟加拉等地，負責傳授醃製技術予當地工人，待鹹魚製成後便運到香港，再以拍賣形式分銷到各細欄，不少店舖至今仍以此形式運作。

至八、九十年代，屋宇署嚴格執行天台違例僭建條例，店舖無法再於天台曬鹹魚，再者，某些店舖在香港仔及其它地區的曬場均被改建成房屋，製鹹魚工場遂消失殆盡，現今只有零星地方製作鹹魚，但每次數量少之又少，不可跟以往比較。

對於鹹魚業最致命的打擊，無疑是關於「食鹹魚致癌」的研究。1977年，本港報章發表了一些研究報告，指出廣東人吃鹹魚易患鼻咽癌，不過在當時對鹹魚銷情並未有太大影響。1986年再有醫學界人士指出鹹魚會致癌，此新聞對鹹魚業的影響極大，據接受訪問的鹹魚店東指出，當時氣氛「蕭條」，本身存貨要減價一半才有機會售出，差不多在兩年後氣氛才稍為好轉。再加上漁獲每年遞減，令很多鹹魚舖結業或轉售海味。鹹魚欄逐漸褪色，海味店遂取而代之。

雖然近年受自由行影響，鹹魚之銷路不俗，惟受各地漁獲減少的大勢不變，而對鹹魚醃製方法嫺熟的老手亦買少見少了，鹹魚業的前景並不明朗。缺乏人才的問題尤其嚴重，因為一些特別的技術例如用手去分辨魚的鹹度、對沖水與生曬時間拿捏，俱是一門高深又極需要經驗的學問。加上這行連業內人士都形容為「厭惡性」行業（因下班總會帶著陣陣臭味回家，途人皆敬而遠之），所以入行者稀，相信不久之後這門手藝便會失傳了。



*The Ups and Downs
of the Salted Fish
Industry*

The salted fish industry in Hong Kong started long before the British landed on the island in 1841.

Due to its geographical advantages, Sai Ying Pun had always been the epicentre of the industry.

Historical records showed that fisheries in China were occupied by the Japanese during the mid-1930s, resulting in a decrease in catches. The industry was further beset by the competition from Japanese fishermen, who managed to sell their catches at low prices.

In the early 1950s, the Hong Kong government revised its policies to regulate salted fish businesses.

People in the industry were worried, hoping that the implementation of the new legislation could be delayed. During that period, the government ordered a halt to 13 salted fish companies, since the facilities of their shops did not meet the official requirements. The Chinese government also imposed an embargo on salted fish imports in 1950, which even though was lifted six months later, the industry had been hit hard by it.

In 1951, salted fish shops gradually converted their workshops to comply with the new hygiene regulations, so the local crisis was temporarily over. The industry entered its heyday from the 1970s-1990s thanks to China's Open Door policy. However, as the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO) Annual Report reveals, catches have been declining since the mid-1970s, and no more salted fish were sold through the FMO in 1999/2000. Today, it is no longer easy to get hold of fresh fish in order to mass-produce salted fish in Hong Kong. So, as early as in the 1960s, salted fish traders were already running production workshops and drying yards abroad. Many businesses today are still operating under this model: professional practitioners are sent to countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, where they teach local workers techniques of making salted fish. The finished products would then be shipped to Hong Kong for auction.

Regulations regarding illegal rooftop structures were tightened since the 1980s-1990s, and salted fish shop owners could no longer use their roofs for sun-drying purposes. Furthermore, drying yards in Aberdeen and other areas were forced to close to make way for urban housing. Salted fish workshops were therefore disappearing, too – only a few of them scatter around the city today, running on such a small scale that cannot be compared to the golden past.

Nevertheless, the most fatal blow to the industry was a research claiming that “salted fish is cancerous”. In 1977, local newspapers published studies that related nasopharyngeal cancer to Cantonese’s consumption of salted fish. The report did not have a big impact on the market then. However, in 1986, medical professionals again pointed out that eating salted fish could cause cancer. The news shook the whole industry, even the shop owners we interview call the period a “depression”, as they only managed to sell their stocks at half price, and it took almost two years for the market to pick up. In addition, with local catches declining each year, many salted fish businesses folded, or else they survived by selling dried seafood. As the Salted Fish Market faded away, dried seafood shops came into existence in Sai Ying Pun.

Although the sale of salted fish has improved in recent years thanks to mainland tourists, the decrease in global catches and the loss of veteran practitioners make the future of the industry uncertain. The lack of professionals is a particularly serious issue, as certain procedures – such as checking the salinity level by pinching the fish, as well as timing the washing and sun-drying processes – are niche skills that can only be learned through experience. Even insiders regard the industry as “offensive” (as the pungent smell of salted fish would stink the worker and everywhere he or she goes), so very few young people want to pursue a career in the field. It is believed that the traditional craft of salted fish making will soon be lost.



1 昔日天台曬鹹魚已不復見
Traditional rooftop sun-drying no longer exists
(圖片來源:伍惠記 Source: Ng Wai Kee)



2 昔日天台曬場的景況
Sun-drying at rooftop in the past
(圖片來源:保生號 Po San Ho)

香港鹹魚行 進興商會

商會成立於1949年，前身為1946年成立的鹹魚行業公會，成立目的是協調勞資關係及向政府表達業界的意見及訊息。戰前，已有鹹魚行聯益社、策進會等組織，代表行業跟政府溝通，惟戰後這些組織並未繼續運作。

根據會員名冊顯示，四十至六十年代，商會總會員數目為500至600多個，如今，會員數目只剩下15個，可見行業已萎縮至什麼地步。

商會多年擔當跟政府爭取權益的角色。一九五零年代，政府推行經營鹹魚業之新例，商會全力爭取政府延期執行新例，好讓業界有充足時間適應。

有需要時，商會亦會撥出相關費用援助會員家屬，在1952年商會註冊章程第六章第三十條（三）指出：「每遇會員仙遊一人，各科花圈費五毫，並規定會員入會滿一個月後，不幸仙遊者，給殯葬費三百元。」另外，在其它文件上亦可見到，商會亦會不斷捐助相當金錢予去世會員之家屬。

此外，商會在香港仔魚類統營處設置休息室及僱有雜工，讓會員可在競投前後，在休息室內喝茶及歇息。

商會如今每年均會組織旅行或聚餐活動，活躍程度卻今非昔比。



*Hong Kong
Salt-Fish Merchants
(Chun Hing)
Association*

Founded in 1949, the Hong Kong Salt-Fish Merchants (Chun Hing) Association was formerly known as the Salt-Fish Industry Union, first established in 1946. It was set up to coordinate labour relations and represent the industry’s views to government. Before the Second World War, there were already similar organizations such as Lun Yik She and Chak Tsun Community. But they did not resume operation after the war.

According to the membership roster, there were 500-600 members during the 1940s-1960s. But now the number has dropped to 15, which tells how much the industry has shrunk over the years.

The Association has been playing an important role in fighting for the rights of the salted fish community. In the 1950s, when the government drafted new laws for salted fish trading, the Association made substantial effort to delay their implementation, so that the industry had sufficient time to adapt to the legislative constraints.

When necessary, the Association would allocate financial aid to its members’ families. According to its Articles of Association drafted in 1952, “if a member passes away, 50 cents will be collected from every other member as condolences. And a total of 300 dollars will be given as funeral expenses to the family of any unfortunate member who dies after joining the Association for more than a month.” Other documents show that the organisation is committed to continually supporting the families of its late members.

The Association also runs a lounge and hires helpers at the Fish Marketing Organization in Aberdeen, so that its members can have tea breaks before and after the salted fish auctions there.

Today, the Association is still organising trips or dining activities for its members every year, though on a much smaller scale than in the past.



1 香港鹹魚行進興商會註冊章程
Hong Kong Salt-Fish Merchants (Chun Hing) Association Article of Registration

2 香港鹹魚行進興商會
Hong Kong Salt-Fish Merchants (Chun Hing) Association



THREADFIN

馬友



*Stories of Salted
Fish Market*

According to old-timers of the district, a tram would be suffused with a pungent smell of salted fish once it reached Sai Ying Pun. Now things have changed: along the tramway are a mix of dried seafood shops, hotels and eateries, serving people and tourists from outside the neighbourhood.

Today, Mui Fong Street, once the centre of salted fish trade in Sai Ying Pun, houses only a few salted fish suppliers. We have visited three of them to listen to their stories, struggles, and hopes.

鹹魚欄的故事

曾經有老街坊說當電車駛進西營盤路段，濃烈的鹹魚味撲鼻而來，這就是西營盤的特色。時移勢易，今天的西營盤在鐵路沿線，電車路兩旁都開滿了一間間參茸海味店、酒店及食肆，為區外的遊客服務。

曾是西營盤鹹魚集散地的梅芳街，今天只餘下數間鹹魚店，我們拜訪了其中三家，記錄店舖故事，寫下守業者的感慨和展望。

《伍惠記》 碩果僅存的 鹹魚檔

從前的鹹魚欄所在地——梅芳街現在就只剩下「伍惠記」一個鹹魚檔，其餘的大都是鹹魚欄式微後才搬進來的商舖。「伍惠記」的牌檔富有香港文化特色：綠色鐵皮小屋裏裏外外都掛滿包裝整齊的鹹魚，上面寫着不同的價錢，中間的招牌沿用超過六十年，醒目地寫着「伍惠記」，是店主伍先生父親的名字。伍先生接手經營這個鹹魚牌檔已經三十多年，但說到鹹魚欄的歷史，始終要由父輩的日子說起。

1938年，當年伍惠先生才九歲，便由東莞走到上水，年少當過粉嶺高爾夫球場的「執波仔」，最後輾轉之下來到西營盤一帶的鹹魚欄找工作。當時的鹹魚欄已經頗具規模，街道兩邊都是賣鹹魚的舖頭，路上亦擠滿牌檔和小販，伍先生的父親一開始就是在這種小販檔打工。檔位日間做生意，晚上加兩塊床板便成了宿舍。伍老先生邊學邊做，慢慢由檔口轉入舖頭學師造鹹魚，工作了一段時間待儲得足夠資金便租了牌檔自立門戶，不足二十歲便以自己之名成立「伍惠記」。

第二代店主伍先生從小就替父親打理排檔大小事務，據他憶述，今天的鹹魚欄與過去的營運方式大不相同。單以生產為例，今天大部份鹹魚都是從海外，包括孟加拉、越南及泰國等地製作，然後運到香港再作批發。反觀當時所有鹹魚都是在本地製作及出售。伍先生說，從前在梅芳街附近的兩層高唐樓和後巷都是鹹魚製作工場，這些唐樓地面是鹹魚舖，一樓及二樓兩層則分房出租。做鹹魚的多數會租二樓及天台，並把天台變成「曬地」。當年的街道規管並不嚴謹，鹹魚商販在碼頭取貨後，直接就在街頭及巷間進行加工、清洗及曬乾，天台陽光充足，自然亦成為曬鹹魚的理想場地。當年的鹹魚欄名副其實舖天蓋地都是鹹魚，與現況實在有天壤之別。

伍先生談到天台曬鹹魚的往事仍面露嚮往之色。他說做鹹魚其實要處理買貨、製作、零售及批發，十分忙碌。天雨時更要跑上跑落，趕上天台遮蓋等待曬乾的鹹魚，「我曾試過一日走十幾次呢。」伍先生提到年少時的往事，不禁面露得意神色。後來從梅芳街搬到德輔道西的唐樓，更要一口氣跑十二層。為了適應環境，便慢慢學懂細看風雲，預測天氣，他說鹹魚欄的人都會看天氣，這也是謀生技能之一。七、八十年代是鹹魚欄的黃金時期，批發生意好得應接不暇，每天也要製作鹹魚應付需求，由早上一直忙到晚上八、九時。行內人士以曬鹹魚

伍惠記

Ng Wai Kee

The One That Remains

Once dubbed the “Salted Fish Market”, Mui Fong Street is left with just one salted fish stall today, and that is Ng Wai Kee; most of the other shops moved in after the Market declined. Ng Wai Kee is a unique Hong Kong pai dong: every inch of the little green tin structure is hung with salted fish neatly packed and marked with different prices. In the middle of the stall is a sign that has been standing for over 60 years, on which “Ng Wai Kee” is written to refer to the name of Mr. Ng’s father. Although Mr. Ng has taken over the business for more than three decades now, the history of Salted Fish Market has to be traced back to one generation earlier.

Mr. Ng Wai relocated from Dongguan to Sheung Shui when he was nine years old in 1938. As a young man, he used to work as a “ball boy” at a golf course in Fanling. Later, for some reasons, he went to Sai Ying Pun to look for jobs. At the time, the Salted Fish Market had already developed into a certain scale: the area was full of shops and vendors selling salted fish. Mr. Ng’s father started out working at a hawker stall, which, with two simple bedplates, was also where he slept at night. Learning on the job gradually, he later moved into a shop to learn how to make salted fish properly. After he had saved enough money, he rented a stall and set up Ng Wai Kee before he was 20.

Mr. Ng, the second generation owner of Ng Wai Kee, had been assisting his father to run the stall since he was a child. As he remembers, the Salted Fish Market was operating in a different way then. For example, salted fish in Hong Kong used to be locally produced and consumed, while today they are mainly imported for wholesale from Bangladesh, Vietnam and Thailand. According to Mr. Ng, all the two-storey tonglaus and alleys around Mui Fong Street were workshops for making salted fish. While the ground floors were shop spaces, the first and second floors were subdivided flats for lease. Salted fish makers would normally rent the second floors and rooftops for drying fish. As street

regulations at the time were not strict, once fish arrived at the pier, they would be processed, washed and dried in the streets and alleys nearby. With plenty of sunlight, the rooftops were ideal as drying yards, too. The Salted Fish Market then, like its name suggested, was indeed filled with salted fish and very different from its current conditions.

Mr. Ng is delighted as he recounts the days when he used to dry salted fish on his rooftop. Running a salted fish business, he says, involved a lot of work that ranged from ordering fish and production to retail and wholesale. On a rainy day, he even had to run up and down his building to cover the salted fish up. “I once ran around a building more than 10 times a day,” he brags about the past. Mr. Ng later moved from Mui Fong Street to another tenement building on Des Voeux Road West, where he had to climb 12 floors. To adapt to the new environment, he slowly picked up how to study the weather, which he says was a “survival skill” for every practitioner in the Salted Fish Market.

The Market was at its peak in the 1970s-1980s, when wholesale was so profitable that Mr. Ng had to produce salted fish every day from early morning until 8pm-9pm, so as to meet the overwhelming demand. During that period, it was common for Ng Wai Kee to sell more than 2,000 fish daily. The owner says there were two main reasons for the popularity of salted fish: firstly, life was tough then and people valued frugality; not only did salted fish go well with rice, it also supplied sodium chloride much needed by us and especially the working class, such as the coolies who worked at Wing Lok Pier (also known as San Kok Pier). Secondly, when freezers were not yet common items, salted fish as a food ingredient was easy to store. Today, however, while the standard of living has generally improved, the demand for salted fish has gone downhill. Mr. Ng admits that, although he can still make a living out of selling salted fish, it has become a sunset industry already.

伍先生坦言，自己可能是香港僅餘懂得製作鹹魚的師傅當中最年輕的一人，即使在海外的工場也很難找到一個懂得全部程序的師傅。近年他亦積極參與區內舉辦的各種保育及導賞活動，向學生等來客介紹鹹魚業的發展和製作過程。眼見一種曾經繁盛、養活許多上一代人、見證香港經濟發展的傳統行業及手藝將近被遺忘，難免覺得可惜，然而率性的伍先生反倒灑脫的說：「政府如果收回我的牌照就乾脆不做，只是見到行業式微，就幫忙保留這味道，讓有些人認識。」但提到保育甚至復興鹹魚欄的可能性，他卻始終不敢樂觀。「搞保育能否說服更多年輕人食鹹魚？」彷彿概括了傳統行業保育與市場萎縮之間的矛盾，一種傳統手藝隨著需求減少而式微固然無可厚非，而在需求不足的環境下，如何透過保育來維持行業的有機活力亦是一大難題。

隨著鹹魚的需求降低，鹹魚欄的面貌及行業生態亦不斷改變。戰後的梅芳街到鄰近德輔道西一帶都是鹹魚店，到後來開始出現其他零售小店，售賣雞蛋、水草、舊報紙、醃製食品等生活所需，直到八十年代開始鹹魚舖數目日減。伍先生解釋，這行業衰落的另一原因是生意後繼無人，大部份店舖都在老一代退休後結業。「畢竟鹹魚業是厭惡性行業，既要付出勞力，工作環境亦惡劣，年輕一輩都不願接手，老一輩也不想下一代接棒。」行內人找不到接班人，而外圍環境在過度捕魚下漁獲大減，魚類統營處亦關閉了半製成鹹魚的市場，在香港製作鹹魚的成本因而日漸高昂。於是伍先生亦在九十年代中期停止製作鹹魚，改從外地進口，而牌檔就只經營門市及批發。

的竹蓆為單位，稱為一「薄」。以伍惠記來說，其時一天賣二十「薄」也是等閒，即每天有超過二千條的驚人銷量。伍先生歸納出當時鹹魚大受歡迎的兩個主要因素：一是當年生活艱難，市民生活節儉，鹹魚不但可以「送」飯，又可補充身體流失的鹽份，適合勞動階層，如三角碼頭的苦力。二是在雪櫃不普及的年代，鹹魚是方便儲存的食材。可惜，時至今日，整體生活條件變好之後，鹹魚的需求就日走下坡，伍先生坦言雖然買賣鹹魚仍足以維生，但已是夕陽行業。

As the demand for salted fish has dropped, the ecology of both Salted Fish Market and the industry has also been changing over time. Mui Fong Street and the nearby Des Voeux Road West were all salted fish businesses in the post-war period. But other retailers emerged later, selling everyday items such as eggs, seaweed, dated newspapers and preserved food. Starting from the 1980s, the number of salted fish shops in the area decreased. Another reason for the decline of the industry, Mr. Ng explains, is that there is no one to take over the business; most of the shops shut down when the older generation retired. “It’s an ‘offensive industry’ to a certain extent. Not only is it labour-intensive, but its working environment is so harsh that young people are reluctant to pursue it. Even the senior practitioners themselves don’t want to pass the business to their children.” While there is no one to carry on the tradition, the size of catches has also been greatly reduced because of overfishing, and the Fish Marketing Organization has closed down the salted fish market for intermediate products. Under all these factors, the cost of production kept rising. Therefore, Mr. Ng stopped making salted fish in the mid-1990s. Instead he began to import salted fish from overseas and sell them at his stall, for both retail and wholesale customers.

Mr. Ng says he is probably the youngest among all the salted fish makers in Hong Kong; even in other countries, there is hardly anyone who knows the whole process of salted fish making. In recent years, Mr. Ng has been actively involved in various conservation activities and guided tours organised around Sai Ying Pun, in which he would introduce to students and visitors the production of salted fish and development of the industry. While it is saddening to see the fading of a traditional craft and its industry, which once supported the livelihood of much of the older generation and witnessed the economic boom of the city, Mr. Ng takes it easy and braces himself for the difficulty: “I’ll simply quit my business if the government wants my licence back. I’m keen to help out because I can see that the industry is declining. I want to keep this tradition and let more people know about it.” But when asked about the possibility of preserving or even revitalizing the Salted Fish Market, he is sceptical: “Can conservation help to convince more young people to buy salted fish?” This question reveals the conflicts between conservation and a shrinking market: a traditional craft confronted with falling demand would naturally die out, so how to use conservation to maintain the vitality of a failing industry becomes a real challenge.



《袁全號》 轉型不忘本業

在梅芳街還有另一間頗具歷史的老字號，就是早在一九六七年開業的「袁全號」。同樣經歷過鹹魚欄的盛衰，其經營軌跡卻反映出另一種生存之道，就是不斷迎合市場需求。

「袁全號」經營至今已有一百四十八年，店主財哥一家在路邊的攤檔開始其鹹魚業的生意。六、七十年代路面交通越見繁忙，政府便開始收緊監管街邊小販，財哥才把生意搬入地舖。財哥早在八歲時便跟隨父親入行，對鹹魚欄的回憶十分深刻，對於製作鹹魚的工序及經營之道更可謂瞭如指掌，提到舊時鹹魚欄的種種總是眉飛色舞。他提到從前梅芳街的兩旁都是「金字頂」唐樓，鹹魚店老闆為了在屋頂爭取更多曬鹹魚的空間，他們會以磚塊和木頭加工、搭建平台，將本來傾斜的屋頂改造為平台，變成曬場。這種靈活變通和自力更生的精神，很能夠代表過去的鹹魚欄。

財哥說六十年代的鹹魚欄生意雖然相當興旺，但跟父親經營的年代、以往成行成市的景況已經大不相同。除了鹹魚外，梅芳街還有米舖、食油店、雞蛋檔、鹹料店和鹹水草店等各種行業。財哥說「袁全號」的鹹魚生意自開業以來一直都很理想，尤其是八十年代時，隨著大陸改革開放、香港經濟起飛而達到高峰，當時日做二、三十「薄」鹹魚也供不應求。直到九十年代末，飲食文化改變，漁獲減少，市場萎縮，鹹魚生意日減，財哥才開始轉售其他需求較大的貨品。由最初出售越南進口臘味，發展到今天主銷海味雜貨，財哥都是跟著市場走。財哥的生意也越做越好，近年更租用對面另一單位擴充營業。由昨天的鹹魚店走到今天的海味舖，袁全記實在地反映了香港及中國的生活質素在過去三十年間的轉變。鹹魚，正慢慢被市場淘汰。

今天「袁全號」仍經營鹹魚批發業務，只是生意的比重已大不如前。「一定要跟着市場需求走，不然就會被淘汰。」這就是財哥的營商之道。鹹魚欄式微，財哥雖然不捨，但也無能為力。談起市場未來的走向或鹹魚欄的將來，財哥都有一絲感慨，他憂心港鐵通車後舖租上升、市區重建等問題。他不諱言說，德輔道西的海味店在不久將來也很可能被金舖取代，然後舖租的升勢會蔓延至內街，到時生意便會更難做。他認為政府若是關注鹹魚業海味業等中西區傳統行業，便應在週末舉辦推動行業的節日活動，協助加強推廣宣傳，至少也能帶旺氣氛。

葵

全

Yuen Chuen Ho
Restructuring with
Roots in Mind

Yuen Chuen Ho is another long-established salted fish supplier on Mui Fong Street. Opened since 1967, the shop has also been witnessing the ups and downs of Salted Fish Market, though its way of survival is to constantly adapt to market demands.

Company owner Choi Gor and his family started out as a street vendor. In the 1960s-1970s, as traffic was getting busy and the government began to regulate hawkers more strictly, the business had to move into a shop. Under the supervision of his father, Choi Gor began to make salted fish at 8am. Today, he is not only well-versed at the procedures of making salted fish, but also has fond memories of the Salted Fish Market and is always excited to talk about its glorious past: on both sides of Mui Fong Street were all tonglaus with a pyramidal roof. In order to get more space to dry fish, people would use bricks and woods to turn their roofs into flat platforms – flexibility and self-reliance were the spirit of the Market, Mr. Yuen says.

Although the Salted Fish Market flourished in the 1960s, Choi Gor says it could not compare to the earlier days when his father was still running the business where salted fish was literally everywhere. At the time, suppliers on Mui Fong Street were also selling rice, cooking oil, eggs, prickled ingredients and dried weed. Yuen Chuen Ho's business had been profitable, and it was especially so in the 1980s when China opened its door and Hong Kong's economy reached its height – even a daily production of 2,000-3,000 salted fish could not satisfy the overwhelming need then. Until the late

1990s, when food culture changed, catches dropped and the market shrank, business began to fall off and Choi Gor had to sell other products in greater demand. Starting with cured meats imported from Vietnam, Choi Gor has been following the market and went on to sell dried seafood and groceries. His business has been improving and growing –he has even rented an additional space opposite the shop in recent years. From salted fish to dried seafood, the path of Yuen Chuen Ho reflects the ever rising living standards in Hong Kong and the mainland over the past 30 years, as well as the subsequent collapse of the salted fish industry.

Today, Yuen Chuen Ho is still engaged in wholesale business of salted fish, though it is not as primary as it was before. “We must follow where the demands go, or otherwise we would be wiped out by the market.” This is how Choi Gor runs his shop. While he is reluctant to see the Salted Fish Market decline, there is nothing he can do about it. When asked about the future of the Market, Choi Gor sighs as he worries if urban redevelopment and MTR's opening would jack up rents in the area. He also predicts that the dried seafood businesses on Des Voeux Road West would soon be replaced by jewellery shops, and the soaring rents might expand to inner streets, by then the industry will have to get through an even harder time. If the government does care about cultural heritage in Central and Western District, Choi Gor says, more community activities should be organised over weekends to promote traditional industries such as salted fish and dried seafood.



《合利號》 鹹魚的 歷史任務

在德輔道西眾多蔘茸海味舖和食肆之間，有一間在牆上掛滿鹹魚的店舖，表現出一種老店特有的沉穩實幹，這就是開業接近六十年、到今天仍然專注鹹魚批發的「合利號」。由路邊攤檔做到牌檔，直至一九七一年被收回牌檔執照後搬入現址的舖位，便一直經營到現在。

第二代店主區先生性格爽直風趣，經常以「老闆」來稱呼其父。區先生憶述父親的生意也是從小做起，後來越做越大，成為鹹魚欄裡薄有名氣的字號。鹹魚檔的生意要有一定的規模和貨量才能夠「開盤」做大盤商，「合利號」便是其中一間，亦是現今唯一集生產、進口、批發及零售的鹹魚舖。區先生在八十年代跟隨父親入行，當時就是由「開盤」學起，再慢慢接手生意。當時行業興盛，各地的買手紛紛出價，要勝任這份工作，每位買手既要反應快而且記性好。他當時就在父親監督指導下，慢慢學會經營鹹魚生意。區先生說當年鹹魚欄還有很多批發商開盤，競爭頗為激烈，但他們都不怕以貨比貨，會在同一時間「開盤」，害得買手要在鹹魚欄跑來跑去。區先生坦言，他是願意接手生意的最後一輩。以經驗而言，他不及許多前輩，但其他老字號都因老師傅退休和無後輩接手下結業，在沒有太大競爭下，「合利號」才可堅持直到今天。時至今日，鹹魚欄雖已式微，「合利號」一家還會「開盤」，區先生仍會親自主持，只是次數已沒往昔頻密，而來貨和買手亦比以前少很多，區先生笑言開價時便更容易記了。

說起往昔，區先生面露嚮往之色，說當年坐電車轉入德輔道西時，自然便會被撲鼻的魚腥氣味喚醒。當年市況暢旺，鹹魚欄熱鬧得很。直到九十年代，因多方原因的影響下，市場需求下跌，鹹魚欄便開始式微。區先生說，在香港生產鹹魚的成本貴得驚人，由於近年漁獲大減，購買原材料的價錢比以往更高，加上醃製牽涉不少時間和人力，因此本地製品的售價非一般市民可負擔，導致業界經營困難重重。幸好「合利號」早已把貨源從依靠香港生產，改為從位於孟加拉和泰國的自設廠房生產進口。當說到行業最大危機時，區先生憤憤不平地說，最記得八十年代末，當時有傳媒說食用鹹魚可以致癌，立時令鹹魚銷量災難性下跌，更不幸是適逢當年盛產，產量比往年更多卻完全賣不去，結果該年所有商戶都要蝕錢，生意也自此走下坡。區先生至今仍深感無奈，他說當年的指控有欠嚴謹的醫學証明，可惜當時並未流行食品驗証，就算是商會亦無力澄清消息，只能眼看生意漸走下坡。即使近年多了內地旅客，又受惠於港鐵開通人流增加，但對行業幫助不大，畢竟飲食文化已經改變。曾有流行歌曲寫道「鹹魚白菜也好味」，以前鹹魚是勞動階層的主食，現在社會都轉變了，特別是年輕一輩更講求飲食健康，對鹹魚這類醃製食物不作嘗試。更何況如今食物的選擇更豐富，鹹魚產品更被忽略。鹹魚的消費群沒維持下去，這個行業終有一天會消失，區先生說鹹魚的歷史任務也已經完結了。

雖然看淡鹹魚業的前景，但區先生卻沒有考慮過轉型，很多人跟他說過如果兼賣海味可賺多點錢。但區先生習慣了經營鹹魚，便專注繼續做鹹魚，直到現在未想過放棄。西營盤鐵路站正正就在合利號旁邊，將來面對的挑戰肯定會更大。區先生豁達地說：「不敢想太多，想得多會灰心，有得做就繼續做。」面對大環境轉變，就更考驗傳統行業守業者的耐性和勇氣。



Hop Lee Ho
Historical Mission
of Salted Fish

Among the numerous eateries and dried seafood suppliers on Des Voeux Road West, only one shop is occupied with salted fish, and that is Hop Lee Ho, a steady old business that has been specialising in the wholesale of salted fish for almost 60 years. Initially a temporary street vendor, the business later evolved into a pai dong cabinet until the government took back its hawker licence in 1971. Soon afterwards it moved to its own shop space at the current address.

Mr. Au is Hop Lee Ho's second generation owner. Frank and humorous, he often calls his father "the boss". As he remembers, his father started the business from scratch in the beginning, worked all his way into a wholesaler and earned himself a big reputation within the Salted Fish Market. When Mr. Au first followed his father into the industry in the 1980s, he first had to learn how to host salted fish auctions. It was a thriving scene back then, he recalls, and buyers from everywhere came to bid – one had to act quickly and have a good memory in order to become a qualified one then. Under the guidance of his father, Mr. Au gradually picked up how to run salted fish business. He says competition in the Salted Fish Market used to be keen, and many wholesalers were auctioning at the same time, keeping buyers busy running around the area. Although he is not as seasoned as the older practitioners, Mr. Au thinks his is the last generation to carry on the tradition – many shops had to close down because there were no successors. As the environment has become less competitive, Hop Lee Ho has managed to remain in the industry until today, being the only place in the area that still organises salted fish auctions, which are conducted by Mr. Au himself – only not as frequently as before. With smaller quantity of auction products and fewer buyers, the auctioneer jokes that it has become easier to remember the bids being called out.

Mr. Au enjoys talking about the past. When he got to Des Voeux Road West on a tram, as he remembers, the smell of salted fish would perk him up. The Salted Fish Market was a hive of activity then. In the 1990s, when demand for salted fish dropped due to numerous factors, the market also declined. Mr. Au says the

cost of producing salted fish in Hong Kong is enormous. Since catches have been greatly reduced in recent years, fish are more expensive than in the old days. The cost of preserving salted fish has increased, too, leading to finished products which are beyond the average spending power. Fortunately, Hop Lee Ho has changed its the source to the workshops in Bangladesh and Thailand. Asked about the biggest crisis ever to face in the industry, Mr. Au is still frustrated as he recalls those media reports of the late 1980s suggesting that salted fish was cancerous, which caused sales to plummet immediately. Misfortunes never come singly: there was an abundant supply of salted fish in that year, leaving a lot of stock unsold. As a result, the whole industry made a loss and went downhill ever since. Today, Mr. Au is still upset about the incident. He says the charge was without rigorous medical proof, yet food auditing was not popular then, so even the trade union could not do anything about it. Although recent years have seen more mainland tourists visit Sai Ying Pun, and the MTR further brings in people from outside the district, the salted fish scene cannot benefit much from all these as our food culture has already changed. Having a Cantonese pop song saying "Salted fish with greens would be the perfect delicacies for us", salted fish used to be a popular food item for the working class, but the young generation today favours healthy eating and has therefore lost interest in cured and preserved food. In addition, there are many more food options nowadays, making salted fish out of the spotlight in our culinary pursuit. Since consumption has stopped growing, the industry is doomed to disappear one day. Salted fish has finished its historical mission, Mr. Au says.

While he is not positive about the prospect of salted fish industry, Mr. Au has not considered restructuring his business. Many people have told him how lucrative it could be if he were to sell dried seafood at the same time, but Mr. Au is used to salted fish trading and will continue to devote himself to the industry. Until now he has not thought about giving it up. Since one of the Sai Ying Pun MTR exits is right next to Hop Lee Ho, the shop will definitely face a bigger challenge in the future. "I dare not think too much. Thinking too much would let me down," Mr. Au says with ease. "I try to keep it up as long as I can." In the midst of a transitional time, it would take more patience and courage for traditional industries to ride the tide of change.



BAHABA TAIPINGENSIS

白花



我們走進鹹魚欄，聽了老店的故事，看著街道與路旁的唐樓，幻想著當年鹹魚欄車水馬龍的情況，但現實是今天的鹹魚欄，只剩下碩果僅存的幾間鹹魚舖。店東們回憶起當年鹹魚欄的「威水史」時無不侃侃而談眉飛色舞，但當談到這老行業該如何發展、甚或是保育時，他們都不甚看好，也會很現實地問：「搞保育能否說服更多年輕人食鹹魚？」這句話彷彿帶出了保育傳統行業、發展及市場三者之間的拉扯。現代社會經濟轉型，生活文化改變，傳統行業面對市場萎縮，逃不過式微或消失的命運，而這些甚有歷史價值的傳統行業將如何「活化」或被保育確是一大難題。發掘傳統行業可持續發展的可能？發展文化旅游？把歷史留在博物館？抑或消費懷舊？不少傳統行業從業員或保育工作者仍在探索中。

西港島綫鐵路通車，帶動了社區短時間內急速發展。西營盤區內遊客數量增加，租金上升，為原本的營商環境帶來轉變，亦為傳統行業帶來挑戰。就鹹魚欄而言，將來的情况不甚樂觀，轉變或會加快行業的式微。做牌檔的伍先生說，鹹魚欄鄰近鐵路站出口，如果將來政府要收回小販牌照，他會乾脆選擇退下來。財哥則憂心港鐵通車後舖租上升，成本上漲令生意做不下去。我們不禁在想，作為發展者的政府或鐵路公司在社區發展新建設、改變原有社區生活模式的同時，是否需要一併把社區裡的文化遺產，如街頭工藝、傳統老店及行業等，納入環境及文化古蹟的影響評估內，並承擔對社區生態的保育責任？此外，作為社區的持份者，又應如何擔當保育社區文化遺產的角色？舊有的社區被時代吞噬，除了旁觀嘆息，是否有更積極的方法應對？

我們相信，真正的「社區特色」有其歷史脈絡，並非憑空創造。2013年的施政報告提出「社區重點項目計劃」，由政府為每區預留一次過一億元撥款，以推一至兩個社區重點項目，內容講述：「項目需切合社區需要，並由區議會牽頭討論及落實」。在地標式發展主義的主導下，地區發展的討論容易側重經濟增長而忽視了保育社區文化遺產的可能性。地區爭相建造地標，「打造」新的旅遊景點，促進旅遊業及地區經濟。從經濟實用主義來看，社區文化遺產的歷史任務或已完成，但它們既是社區歷史的載體，亦是建構社區身份的基礎；既是社區生活的重要元素，亦是香港社會的重要凝聚力，這一切的文化功能與涵義，實在難以取代。其實發展與文化保育兩者並不對立，發展不應只著眼短期的資本經濟回報，更要顧及社區的歷史價值與生活質素。鹹魚欄及鹹魚業作為社區重要的歷史景地及傳統行業，過去百年來擔當凝聚社區的重任，是中西區內一項重要的文化遺產。「遺產」是前人為我們留下的重要財富，能將之發展、並繼續在社區發揮力量，才不至於浪費世代累積下來的文化資本。縱使各方在保育路上仍在摸索前行，但如何發展社區文化遺產，仍是不能忽視的重要社區議題，值得我們繼續探究思考，一起尋找出路。

conserving the community's ecology? Also, how should various stakeholders preserve the cultural heritage of their community? In face of old neighbourhoods being swallowed by our times, instead of moaning and groaning, what can we do proactively to deal with the challenges?

We believe that true “community characteristics” are not empty ideas but built on the social context. The Chief Executive announced in his 2013 Policy Address the “Signature Project Scheme”, where the government would reserve a one-off grant of \$100 million for each district to implement one to two projects that “address the needs of the district” and “are proposed, discussed and agreed by District Councils”. Guided by the mentality of landmark-oriented development, discussions of community development tend to focus on economic growth rather than cultural heritage. As a result, districts are eager to build more landmarks and tourist attractions to boost regional economy and tourism. From a pragmatic perspective, community heritage might have completed its historical mission already. But those traditions contain a neighbourhood's history and identity, and are key components of community life that have bonded Hong Kong people together – all these cultural functions are irreplaceable. In fact, development and conservation are not mutually exclusive; development should not only target short-term economic returns, but also take historical and community factors into consideration. As an important cultural heritage of Central and Western District, the Salted Fish Market has a wealth of history and has been connecting the Sai Ying Pun community for more than a century.

“Heritage” is a treasure passed to us from previous generations. Only if we develop it and bring it back to communities, would we not waste the social capital accumulated over the years. How to conserve and develop community cultural heritage becomes a pressing issue to be explored in today's society.

Having been to the Salted Fish Market and listened to old stories there, we may look at the tenement buildings around us and imagine how full of life the neighbourhood once was – today, there are only a few salted fish shops remaining in the area. While all the sellers we interviewed were excited to talk about the good old days, they were not as optimistic when asked about how the industry should be preserved and developed. Realistically, they say, “can conservation convince more young people to buy salted fish?” This question seems to point out the tensions between development, market and conservation. With a shift in the economic structure and lifestyle of modern society, traditional industries now face a shrinking market, and are therefore doomed to decline and disappear. How to protect and “revitalise” these industries of historical interest is a great challenge: through finding the possibilities for the industry's sustainable development, cultural tourism, or nostalgic consumption? Or by keeping their histories in museums? Many conservationists and practitioners of traditional industries are still exploring among all the possible options.

The opening of MTR's West Island Line has triggered rapid community development in a short span of time. As rents soar and more visitors come from outside the district, the commercial scene of Sai Ying Pun has changed and become more challenging to its traditional industries. In the case of salted fish, the future is bleak as all that is happening might well speed up the decline of the industry. Mr. Ng, whose stall is close to an MTR exit, says he will retire if the government takes back his hawkker licence; Choi Gor also worries if he could keep his business going, as the rent might not be affordable once the MTR station is operational. This makes us ponder: when the government and MTR Corporation take up the role of a developer, should they take into consideration the conservation of local community's cultural heritage, such as street arts and crafts, and traditional shops and industries, when transforming the existing neighbourhood life? Is it also necessary to bear the responsibility for

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