

“YOU CAN LIVE LIKE A KING ...”
A POSTCOLONIAL TOUR OF COLONIAL HONG KONG

JAMES W. ELLIS
Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University
5 Hereford Road, Hong Kong
jwellis1@hkbu.edu.hk

For a long time Westerners were attracted to the Far East by a romantic vision of the Orient. This essay explores how written tourism texts, travel advertisements, and related ephemera, blended fantasy and reality to lure Western visitors to the remote, ‘exotic’ British colony of Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a divided city, with a small British contingent overseeing a large Chinese society. Westerner writers, advertising illustrators, and the tourism industry generally, reflected colonialist perspectives and exploited a largely contrived East-West dichotomy between Hong Kong’s Chinese and British residents, reinforcing an Orientalist view of exoticism and colonial superiority. The essay treats tourism images as cultural relics and social statements, which transmitted disturbing messages about relationships of social power, through a compositional device called *visual positional superiority*. The essay takes the reader on a hypothetical Grand Tour of colonial Hong Kong, visiting racially segregated Western enclaves, the private world of international hotel “microcultures”, and “contact zones”, where people met in “asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination”. The essay concludes with musings on Hong Kong’s recent effort to change its global identity to “Asia’s World City”, after the British transfer of sovereignty to the People’s Republic of China in 1997. Even in the postcolonial era, efforts to encapsulate Hong Kong’s essence rely on troubling symbols carried over from the colonial past.

Key words: Hong Kong, Postcolonial, Tourism, Grand Tour, “Asia’s World City”

The Fragrant Harbour

Selling a tourism destination requires capturing travelers’ imaginations and appealing to their desires. The tourism accounts and posters discussed in this essay include meaningful mixtures of fantasy and reality, intended to lure visitors to a remote, ‘exotic’ land.

For a long time a romantic vision of the Orient attracted Westerners to Hong Kong, including the English novelist, poet, and journalist, Rudyard Kipling.

Kipling traveled across the British Empire in 1889, taking the sea route from his home in provincial India to London, and along the way chronicled his impressions of Rangoon, Penang, “Singapur”, Hong Kong (the fragrant harbour),¹ and other Far Eastern ports of call. He later published his travel journals. By 1889, Hong Kong had been a Crown Colony for approximately fifty years and the British Empire was at its apex. Kipling wrote from a colonialist perspective, proudly and arrogantly surveying the string of British outposts. He was on holiday, but still treated Hong Kong with a sense of ownership and entitlement.

When Kipling arrived in Hong Kong, he immediately noted distinctions between British and Chinese subcultures. In Victoria Harbour he saw the “squat sails of junks” dancing “like autumn leaves” and thousands of tiny sampans bobbing beside fleets of British naval vessels that filled Kipling’s heart with pride.² Beside the harbour he saw hardworking “Chinamen” and “coolies”³ swinging rickshaws on one wheel around corners of winding, hilly streets, past “Englishmen walk[ing] as Englishmen should – hurriedly and looking forward”.⁴ Kipling lamented the British had spent so much effort colonizing

¹ The Chinese name for Hong Kong (香港) is roughly translated “fragrant harbour” or “spice harbour”. For centuries, Chinese traders shipped boatloads of aromatic agarwood (or aloes wood) through the harbour from China’s Guangdong province to northern provinces along the coast. Agarwood resin is used in perfumes, incense, and medicine. This may account for the designation.

² KIPLING, R. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*, Vol. I, p. 296. The picturesque harbour captivated many Western visitors. In 1910, for example, the aristocratic Count Fritz von Hochberg wrote: “...the harbour looked like a fine gouache painting... the many mediaeval-looking junks and sampans, with their high prows and tattered tan-coloured sails... the large imposing steamers towering above all that smaller crowd, were an amusing, interesting sight.” (VON HOCHBERG, C. F. *An Eastern Voyage*, p. 121) Edward Ward recalled entering Victoria Harbour in 1947: “In a twinkling the ship was surrounded with sampans loaded with trashy curios, fruit, bottled drinks, fountain pens, watches, gaudy kimonos. A brisk trade started up. Shouting, gesticulating Chinese women offered their goods for sale and pushed up nets on the end of long bamboo poles to receive the money.” (WARD, E. *Chinese Crackers*, p. 10).

³ “Coolie” was a British bureaucratic term used in the 19th century to describe indentured labourers, particularly from South Asia and East Asia. Over time, the definition broadened to include practically all unskilled native labourers from India and China. Today the term, especially when uttered by Westerners, is widely recognized as pejorative, and is considered as such in this essay. See <<http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/11/25/247166284/a-history-of-indentured-labor-gives-coolie-its-sting>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁴ KIPLING, R. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*, Vol. I, p. 269.

India: “Let us annex [all of] China”, he wrote.⁵ Though he was a traveler experiencing Far Eastern cultures for the first time, Kipling considered the Orient a prize possession available for Western colonial consumption.

Fifty years later, in 1941, Martha Gellhorn, the American globetrotting journalist, arrived in Hong Kong on a Pan Am Clipper airplane that landed on Victoria Harbour. She was beginning her honeymoon with her new husband, Ernest Hemingway. Like Rudyard Kipling a half century earlier, the busy port provided Gellhorn with a lasting first impression of Hong Kong:

The masts of the anchored sailing junks make a hedge along the harbour front of Hong Kong. Beyond this hedge, green top-heavy ferries [“Star Ferries”] connect Kowloon and Hong Kong, blowing their steam whistles as they go. Freighters lie in dockyards on the Kowloon side and liners anchor offshore. A gray British cruiser heads out to sea with sampans rowing wildly away from its sharp bow. Tugs and pleasure yachts, armed mosquito boats and harbour-police launches crisscross the water. The harbour of Hong Kong is as violently alive and crowded and noisy as the city itself.⁶

Gellhorn and Hemingway made their way to Hong Kong Island’s Central district and to the Hong Kong Hotel. Hemingway settled into a lobby bar called “The Grips” with a group of hard drinking admirers while Gellhorn went out to do research for a travel essay she was writing for *Collier’s Weekly* entitled “Time Bomb in Hong Kong”. Gellhorn described the fear among Hong Kongers that the Imperial Japanese Army might try to capture the British Colony. The Japanese did, in fact, attack Hong Kong six months after *Collier’s* published Gellhorn’s article. Following just 2 ½ weeks of fighting, the British surrendered at the Peninsula Hotel on 25 December 1941, which locals remembered as “Black Christmas”.⁷ If Rudyard Kipling had still been alive, the quick capitulation would have undoubtedly saddened him, because he took great pride in British colonial conquests.

Travel writing, vintage tourism advertisements and photographs, and related ephemera have artistic and social significance. They imaginatively and powerfully speak to the relationships between people and places. Kipling and Gellhorn did not merely describe a certain locale at a certain time; their writings also suggested the authors’ attitudes, sympathies, and biases. This essay will consider a variety of tourism relics, including poster advertisements, which

⁵ KIPLING, R. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*, Vol. I, p. 277.

⁶ GELLHORN, M. Time Bomb in Hong Kong. In *Collier’s Weekly*, June 1941, p. 13.

⁷ <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2008-12/08/content_7279606.htm> [cit. 8 June 2017].

may, at first, seem to be simple decorations intended to give aesthetic pleasure, but collectively function as astute “pictures of persuasion [offering] a wealth of art, history... and popular culture” to consider.⁸ This essay will use travel posters and related images and texts, to analyze Hong Kong’s (past and current) self-conceptions and the city’s image in the West during the heart of its colonial period.⁹

“Contact Zones”

A full third of Hong Kong’s colonial era (1842 – 1997) passed between Kipling’s nineteenth century ocean voyage and Gellhorn’s arrival, at the dawn of what has been called the ‘Golden Age of Air Travel’.¹⁰ Nineteenth century trekkers like Kipling relied on a patchwork connection of regional ships, transoceanic liners, and trains to reach distant British colonies. In late 1889, just months after Kipling’s voyage, the American journalist Nellie Bly set out to travel *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days* – hoping to better the fictional Phileas Fogg’s feat in Jules Verne’s *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873). Bly’s timetable was entirely thrown off by the unpredictable schedules of railways and steamships in East Asia (Fogg fared somewhat better, although his voyage on the steamer *Rangoon* took 13 days to cross the Indian Ocean and South China Sea waters between Calcutta and Hong Kong). Far Eastern travel gradually improved after the railway terminus linking ‘Peking-Canton-Hong Kong’ opened in 1910. The first British ‘flying boats’ reached Hong Kong in 1928. However, traveling by plane from London’s Croydon, Gatwick, or Heston aerodromes to Hong Kong’s Kai Tak airfield during the late – 1930s

⁸ <<http://npg.si.edu/blog/curators-journal-wendy-wick-reaves-on-ballyhoo-posters-and-portraiture>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁹ Tourism advertisements often transmit powerful messages, combining understandable, everyday language and compelling images, which target specific sectors of societies to ensure efficient communication. See TIMMERS, M. *The Power of the Poster*. “When images affect, persuade, or appeal to viewers, viewers see and accept a particular claim or argument in the images” (CHRYSLEE, G., FOSS, C., RANNEY, A. L. *The Construction of Claims in Visual Argumentation: An Exploration*. In *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 199, p. 3).

¹⁰ For an amusing, eye-opening look at the so-called “Golden Age of Travel”, the purportedly glamorous early days of the Jet Set, see John Brownlee’s article: <<http://web.archive.org/web/20160513020256/http://www.fastcodesign.com/3022215/terminal-velocity/what-it-was-really-like-to-fly-during-the-golden-age-of-travel>> [cit. 8 June 2017]. Brownlee concludes the Golden Age was in fact “dangerous, smoky, boozy, boring, expensive, and racist”.

entailed skipping across Europe and Asia from one stopover to the next, a dozen-city expedition taking many days.

In spite of the difficulties, Hong Kong grew into an international transportation hub and travel destination, and Westerners came in droves.¹¹ When they arrived, they found a divided city, with a British (Western) colonial society governing a much-larger, local Chinese (Eastern) society. This essay contemplates segregated Western enclaves as well as “contact zones”, a term Mary Louise Pratt uses to describe social spaces “where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination”.¹² As one might expect, Hong Kong’s contact zones included busy retail and entertainment districts. Westerner travelers, however, also crossed paths with Easterners, in closer encounters, when they used various modes of public transportation.

“The Orient is Hong Kong”

Tourism images are cultural relics and social statements, which use beautiful packaging to transmit disturbing messages about relationships of power. The Australian Oriental Line (“A. O. Line”) was a passenger and cargo shipping company that operated between Sydney and Hong Kong (1912 – 1961). An A. O. Line tourism poster produced in the 1930s urged travelers to come “See Hong Kong: The Riviera of the Orient” (Plate 1). The image shows two

¹¹ Westerners had many motives for venturing to colonial Hong Kong: a few were missionaries; others were entrepreneurs or social elites on their ‘Eastern Grand Tour’; many were simply tourists. For those who could not afford the trip, European and American newspapers like *The New York Times*, regularly published serial reports about ‘around the world’ travelers and their complex itineraries, allowing readers of every economic station the opportunity to vicariously visit the Far East. See, for example, *The New York Times*’ World Tourist on Way to Manila after Flight from Siam to China <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=9C03EED6143DE33BBC4C52DFB667838D629EDE>> [cit. 8 June 2017]; Surgeon Plans to Circle Globe in 19 Days: Other World Tourists Book Air Passages <<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1937/04/18/96741561.html?pageNumber=43>> [cit. 8 June 2017]; and Traversing Indo-China: The Trip from Yuntani-fu to the Gulf of Tonkin is Full of Surprises <<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1937/10/24/94445617.html?pageNumber=185>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

¹² Pratt looks at colonial mindsets in Victorian travel writing. She analyzes how “travel and exploration writing produced ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships at particular points in Europe’s expansionist trajectory”, creating, what Pratt calls, “the ‘domestic subject’ of Euroimperialism” (PRATT, M. L. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, pp. 4–5).

barefoot Chinese laborers arduously toting a dapper Western passenger in a covered sedan chair up a steep hillside. They are going from the Central business district below (a “contact zone”) to a posh residential area called “the Peak” above (which was segregated). Viewers today might be troubled by the obvious social/class distinctions and by how the labourers were treated and portrayed as beasts of burden. In colonial Hong Kong, however, there was a strict social demarcation: the British rode up top, while the *oriental* Chinese walked down below. This social microcosm on the Peak will be discussed later in more depth.

The notion of “the Orient” was created in Europe. Europeans have used the term since antiquity to describe Asia (including East Asia, where Hong Kong is situated), as “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories, landscapes, [and] remarkable experiences”.¹³ The Orient, of the East, has always been contrasted with the Occident, of the West.¹⁴ The influential teacher and writer Edward Said considered “the Orient” and “the West” to be arbitrary concepts and referred to “Orientalism” as a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”.¹⁵ Said argued that “European culture [and American culture by association] gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient”.¹⁶ Orientalism was not simply a potent means to justify colonialism, it was also a powerful tool used to develop ethnography and the travel trade.

Applying postcolonial theories to the A. O. Line poster reveals the persuasive power of this largely contrived contrast of East and West.¹⁷ The Western passenger riding in the sedan chair is enjoying a “remarkable experience”, thanks to the brute strength of the “exotic” Eastern “beings”. The

¹³ SAID, E. *Orientalism*, p. 9.

¹⁴ The term orient comes from the Latin words for ‘rise’ (*orior*) and ‘east’ (*oriēns*). The Orient was where the sun rose, to the east of Rome. The term occident comes from the Latin words for ‘fall’ (*occidere*) and ‘west’ (*occidēns*). The Occident was where the sun fell, or went down, to the west of Rome.

¹⁵ SAID, E. *Orientalism*, p. 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ As defined by Homi Bhabha, “Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the [modern] contest for political and social authority” (BHABHA, H. *The Location of Culture*, p. 171). Hong Kong’s “uneven forces” have been written about extensively. Gene Gleason, for example, wrote, “Hong Kong is ... the East intermixed with the West; fantastic wealth and chilling poverty; supersonic jets and superstitious beliefs; fortune tellers and fortune hunters; rickshaws and sports cars; Oriental festivals and Occidental hangovers; Christianity and tree-worship; aureomycin and acupuncture; social snobs and goatish gobs. These disparate elements make Hong Kong the most colourful place a traveller is ever likely to visit...” (GLEASON, G. *Tales of Hong Kong*, unpaginated, Introduction).

image leaves no doubt which of the three figures has the authority, who dominates, as they ascend the steep pathway through a romantic landscape. A postcolonial vantage point ‘problematizes’ the travel advertisement, and suggests many unasked questions. Why were certain motifs (like sedan chairs and rickshaws) and certain terms (like “Orient” and “Riviera”) used to define Hong Kong? What messages did they convey, and why?

In the A. O. Line poster social status is suggested in various ways, including, quite literally, by who is on top. The slim, elegant Western man wearing a sporty linen suit sits on a lofty perch – both seen and free to see the lovely landscape – undistracted by the two hired men in tattered britches drudging along below. Similar depictions of servants carrying kings and nobility are found throughout centuries of British art, and even in ancient Egyptian carvings.¹⁸

Another poster, produced for Pan American Airways in the late-1930s, sends a similar message (Plate 2). The latest ultramodern innovation in world travel, an American ‘flying boat’ (Martin M-130), with “USA” emblazoned proudly on its underside, descends majestically over Hong Kong’s Victoria Harbour, congested with quaint, Chinese vessels of a bygone era: junk boats and sampans. The composition distinguishes Western modernity from Eastern traditions. It is easy to imagine the airline passengers riding in comfort as they look out their windows with curiosity at the ‘primitive’ scene below. Photographers produced countless similar photographs throughout later decades showing jets landing at Kai Tak Airport just above gritty tenement buildings.¹⁹ Such juxtapositions send troubling messages about Hong Kong’s social structure, suggesting both a comparatively wealthy, advanced Western society able to travel, up above – and a relatively poor, old-fashioned *oriental* society – forced to labour, down below.

There was still a clear dividing line between the East and the West when these posters marketed Hong Kong to Australians and Americans in the 1930s. The posters underscored an East-West dichotomy. They also reassured Western sensibilities, showing travelers they could survey the Chinese harbour from the

¹⁸ See, for example, William Darton’s *City Scenes: Or a Peep Into London* (1828) <<http://freepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wakefield/history/38612-h/38612-h.htm>> (no. 58) [cit. 8 June 2017], and the wall carving *Ramses III Carried on Throne* from the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu (ca. 1100 BC) <<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-ZxWkFGv58aI/UJhKbj7BxI/AAAAAAAAACQ0/n7f1BtPnIX4/s640/sphinx-thronemedynetaou.jpg>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

¹⁹ See, for example, an AFP photo showing a Cathay Pacific jet’s dramatic landing during the 1980s: <<http://www.ejinsight.com/20150213-kai-tak-an-enduring-legacy/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

“roomy comfort” of “marvelous” American flying boats,²⁰ or, if they felt more adventurous, be toted around the city in sedan chairs by stereotypically-represented local people.

Orientalism, which is present in these travel posters, depends on “flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand”.²¹ The poster images convey *visual positional superiority*, by literally placing Westerners on top (in sedan chairs and airplanes), and impliedly, by demonstrating superior modern Western technology (flying boats, rather than fishing boats), insinuating a more advanced society. This message appealed to Hong Kong’s colonial visitors and continues to resonate with certain audiences who collect these posters today.

The Grand Tour

The city “view” is a traditional genre in European and American art.²² View paintings and prints depict important urban landmarks, and often identify members of different social groups by their distinctive costumes, behavior, and modes of transportation. When wealthy, young Englishmen began taking “Grand Tours” across continental Europe in the 17th century, they collected artworks showing famous locations they visited and the transports they had used or seen.²³ One such print is Jacques Rigaud’s 1729 etching *Autre Vue Particulière de Paris depuis Notre Dame, Jusques au Pont de la Tournelle*.²⁴ Rigaud portrayed magnificent horses pulling ornately decorated carriages across a Parisian bridge with the majestic Notre Dame Cathedral in the background. Foreign dandies poke their heads out of carriage windows to catch glimpses of manual laborers using long poles to push old-fashioned barges down the Seine River. The A. O. Line and Pan Am posters analyzed above carry on this Grand Tour iconographic tradition, but speak specifically of an *oriental* cityscape and a 20th century British colonial order.

²⁰ GELLHORN, M. *Travels with Myself and Another*, p. 23.

²¹ SAID, E. *Orientalism*, p. 7.

²² The best-known “view” paintings are *veduta* by 18th century Italian artists called *vedutisti*. Giovanni Antonio Canal, or Canaletto (1697 – 1768), was the European Grand Tour’s most popular Italian view painter and was renowned for his precise and detailed *vedute* of Venice.

²³ Professor Ueli Gyr’s *The History of Tourism: Structures on the Path to Modernity* offers a concise, informative overview of the tourism and travel trades in Europe, including the “Grand Tour” phenomenon.

²⁴ See <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/53.600.1175/> [cit. 8 June 2017].

During the colonial period, Hong Kong was a popular stop on Westerners’ Grand Tours of Asia. The next section of this essay will take the reader on a miniature grand tour of the city’s most popular tourist destinations to show how tourism writing and imagery reinforced the Orientalist view of exoticism and colonial superiority.

Stop One on Hong Kong’s Grand Tour: Kai Tak

Visitors to Hong Kong typically arrived either by sea or by air, their first impressions being the harbour or the bustling masses below. When Rudyard Kipling arrived on board the steamer S.S. *Nawab*, Hong Kong’s population was around 250,000, with a small fraction being Westerners. By the time Martha Gellhorn wandered its streets looking for material for her *Collier’s Weekly* article the population had ballooned to more than 1 ½ million, making Hong Kong one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Kipling’s early description of the busy port already suggested Hong Kong’s characteristic congestion:

The harbour is a great world in itself. Photographs say that it is lovely, and this I can believe from the glimpses caught through the mist as [my ship] worked her way through the lines of junks, the tethered liners, the wallowing coal hulks, the trim, low-lying American corvette, the *Orontes*, huge and ugly, the *Cockchafer*, almost as small as its namesake, the ancient three-decker converted into a military hospital... and a few hundred thousand sampans manned by women with babies tied on to their backs.²⁵

Like many Hong Kong tourists just before World War II, Gellhorn landed in a flying boat on water near the Kai Tak Airport (on the Kowloon peninsula). Seaplanes needed only a short stretch of water to land, rather than a runway. Soon after Gellhorn’s arrival, during World War II, the occupying Japanese Imperial Army used prisoner of war laborers to construct Kai Tak’s first concrete runways. The runways were extended perilously out into the harbour during a 1950s land reclamation movement (which continues unabated). Thereafter, pilots considered Kai Tak one of the world’s most dangerous airports.²⁶ When landing, planes rapidly descended at a precipitous angle in a

²⁵ KIPLING, R. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*, Vol. I, p. 290.

²⁶ During its seven decades of operations, Kai Tak suffered 12 air disasters and 270 fatalities. To get a sense of the airport’s inherent dangers see Sara Smyth’s *Duck! Incredible pictures show EXACTLY why the world’s most dangerous airport in Hong*

continuous 47° right turn to avoid Kowloon's mountains. Pilots called this challenging maneuver the "Hong Kong Turn". Planes then skimmed just above building rooftops, before landing on concrete strips surrounded by churning saltwater. Airplane passengers often feared they were going to experience a "Kai Tak Heart Attack".²⁷

Upon arrival, many travelers went directly from Kai Tak to the Star Ferry terminal and continued their journey across Victoria Harbour to Hong Kong Island; others took a motor coach or taxi to one of a handful of luxurious international hotels in Kowloon, such as the Peninsula Hotel.

Stop Two: The Peninsula Hotel: Grande Dame of the Far East

The Peninsula Hotel opened in 1928, and was the first destination for certain Western visitors when they came to Hong Kong.²⁸ The hotel was conveniently situated a block from the docks where ocean liners arrived. It was also near the Kowloon-Canton Railway Terminus, the final stop on the trans-Siberian rail system that linked London to Hong Kong in 14 days. Though the Peninsula Hotel was built "in the tradition of the great railway hotels of Europe" (such as The Ritz, in London), during the 1950s major airlines had offices around the lobby of the Peninsula, which became "the hotel of choice for [wealthy members of] the early jet-set".²⁹

The Peninsula Hotel was built by the Hong Kong Hotel Company, Limited ("HHK, Ltd."), which also operated the Peak Hotel and Repulse Bay Hotel on Hong Kong Island. Jewish-Iraqi brothers and business tycoons,³⁰ Ellis and Elly Kadoorie were HHK, Ltd.'s major shareholders, and they intended the

Kong was shut down 15 years ago <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2356942/Incredible-pictures-airplane-near-misses-EXACTLY-worlds-dangerous-airport-Hong-Kong-shut-15-years-ago.html>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

²⁷ BAILEY, S. *Exploring Hong Kong: A Visitor's Guide to Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories*, p. 136.

²⁸ In 1967, Gene Gleason wrote, "The enormous cocktail lounge in the Peninsula lobby, looking out on Salisbury Road and the harbour, has long been 'the' place to meet a business acquaintance who is receptive to luxurious surroundings. It can carry even greater weight with an impressionable girl-friend, but it is well to remember that this is a place where everyone observes everyone else" (GLEASON, G. *Tales of Hong Kong*, pp. 115–116).

²⁹ KADOORIE, M. Forward. In YIM, B. W., HO, J. Y. H. (eds.). *Early Hong Kong Travel 1880 – 1939*, unpaginated.

³⁰ Elly Kadoorie's gravesite is in the Song Qinglin Memorial Park, in Shanghai, China. Very few Jewish gravesites survived the Cultural Revolution. See Dan Levin's *Cultural Exchange: Preserving the Relics of Shanghai's Vanished Jewish Population*.

Peninsula to be the Grande Dame of the Far East, and the finest hotel east of Suez, in another former British protectorate, Egypt. The Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong, Thomas Southorn, presided over the Peninsula’s lavish opening ceremonies, and the hotel and its ornate lobby quickly became an stylish gathering place for the city’s colonial ‘high society’ and prestigious visitors.

An early luggage label, showing a rickshaw arriving at the front door of the Peninsula Hotel (or *The Pen* as it was affectionately known), suggests the establishment’s typical clientele (Plate 3). The illustrator filled the image with social contrasts signifying the characters’ relative prosperity and social standing. For example, the rickshaw driver’s face is hidden under a traditional conical bamboo hat – called a *dōuli* (斗笠) by the Chinese, or a “coolie hat” by some British – that differs from his passenger’s fashionable, floppy-brimmed orange fedora and broad violet hat band. The barefoot driver pulls a rickshaw fitted with pneumatic tires to insure his passenger enjoys a gentler ride.³¹ A well-dressed character stands on steps in the background behind a sporty MG roadster (signifying his wealth), waiting for the passenger, perhaps his date for afternoon tea. The local driver provides the labour and the others – whether they be British Hong Kongers or well-heeled visitors – benefit from his labour as they enjoy their leisure activities.

Let’s follow along with the luggage label’s Western travelers as they go on a hypothetical, though entirely typical, tour around Hong Kong Island. We will call them our *Pen Pals*.

Stop Three: Central: The *Real* Contact Zone

After enjoying their afternoon tea in The Pen’s sumptuous lobby, the travelers would be off to the Central district’s famous sights and shops. Tourist agencies in Hong Kong assumed, and statistics verified, that anyone who could afford “the sizable fare necessary to reach the colony from America or Europe [would] probably be a fairly liberal spender after [he or she] arrived”.³²

The Pen Pals would journey across picturesque Victoria Harbour on the Star Ferry (Plate 5). The Star Ferry was, for approximately a hundred years, the primary way to travel from Kowloon Peninsula, part of the Chinese Mainland, to Central on Hong Kong Island. Central’s environs were home to colonial Hong Kong’s government, most important financial institutions, and the city’s

³¹ For an overview of the changing design of Hong Kong’s rickshaws and their role in public transportation, see Fung Chi Ming’s *In Search of an Improved Industrial Design – The Hong Kong Rickshaw over Time*.

³² GLEASON, G. *Tales of Hong Kong*, p. 106.

busiest shopping district, especially along Queen's Road Central. Central also was (and is) Hong Kong's main "contact zone", where Western and Eastern cultures intermingle, and sometimes clash.

Martha Gellhorn stayed at Central's Hong Kong Hotel in 1941, and described the area as a busy, smelly, noisy place.

[It] seems like a combination of Times Square on New Year's Eve, the subway at five-thirty in the afternoon, a three-alarm fire... a country fair with the calliope playing. ...800,000 people live [on] Hong Kong [Island] and most of them live eight or ten in one room. The city smells of people. It smells also of Chinese cooking and of old sweaty clothes, of dust, of refuse in gutters and of dirty water in drainless houses. ...But you have to hear Hong Kong to know what it is like. There is always a Chinese funeral going on. The brass bands that accompany the coffin and the jolly parade of mourners play Chinese tunes, occasionally breaking into Happy Days Are Here Again, Yankee Doodle and other cheerful selections. Coolies shout and grunt to clear the way as they pull their rickshaws. People argue in shrieks at food stalls, shouting for ten minutes over the purchase of a Chinese cabbage.³³

Michael Argyle, the prominent English social psychologist, explored "inter-cultural communication" and how tourists visiting foreign lands often shield themselves from local conditions by seeking refuge in "the international hotel culture". Martha Gellhorn escaped from Hong Kong's tumult and sensory overload in one of Central's most venerable establishments. The Hong Kong Hotel (built in 1892) was like the Astor House and many others, catering to Western tourists who frequented neighbourhood restaurants, theaters, and markets. Central was the "heart of European economic, political and cultural activities", and Central's hotel restaurants and bars were places where tourists could "strengthen their social ties".³⁴ In colonial Hong Kong Western tourists tended to keep to "social circles [they felt] befitted their identity and status".³⁵ Sequestered pockets of like-minded foreigners transformed Central's hotels into distinct expat "microcultures".³⁶

The attitudes of hotel microculture denizens can be sensed in two postcards sent back home by American tourists describing their experiences in Hong Kong. One was mailed to the United States in August 1949, just weeks before Mao Zedong declared the creation of the People's Republic of China, and says:

³³ GELLHORN, M. Time Bomb in Hong Kong. In *Collier's Weekly*, June 1941, p. 31.

³⁴ YIM, B. W., HO, J. Y. H. *Early Hong Kong Travel 1880 – 1939*, p. 41.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁶ Anthropologist David W. McCurdy has defined "microcultures" as groups within larger complex societies that "have specific cultures of their own".

“Hong Kong is one of the most beautiful & wonderful places in the world. You can live like a king and buy anything from French perfume to Siamese & Ceylon diamonds. It is full of refugees from Shanghai, most of whom are bloody Britishers. Am flying back 27/5/49 so don't worry about the Reds – Tot.”³⁷ The sender's written depiction is reminiscent of the A. O. Line poster's visual depiction discussed earlier. Again, a Western traveler enjoys a “remarkable experience” in a romantic cityscape populated by “exotic” beings and filled with choice souvenirs to bring home.

Another postcard is from the “The Den” (not to be confused with “The Pen”), a famous nightclub, then discothèque, at the defunct Hong Kong Hilton, an American chain.³⁸ The Den's original name was the Opium Den Bar, even though the Hong Kong Police would not allow opium pipes on the premises.³⁹ In vaguely Orientalist terms, the postcard described The Den as a “basement hideaway that has become Hong Kong's rendezvous. Turn-of-the-century China coast decor and service by the lovely Cheongsam girls”. The Hilton's kitschy hideaway created a buffer between tourists and the ‘real’ Hong Kong, based on dark fantasies from Western popular culture, television, and movies. The Den was the seedy, fictional world of Charlie Chan and Fu Manchu, a sumptuous, smoky lair populated by slinky, alluring seductresses. Western culture generally, and American microcultures specifically, “gained in strength and identity by setting [themselves] off against [fictitious portrayals of] the Orient”.⁴⁰ Orientalism helped develop ethnography and the travel trade.

Perhaps after visiting their American friends at the Den, the Pen Pals would have continued on their journey to Hong Kong Island's South Side (or resort side), and the Repulse Bay Hotel, “the leisurely, vacation-time equivalent of the Peninsula, high-priced and prestigious”.⁴¹

Stop Four: Repulse Bay: “The Riviera of the Far East”

If not traveling by water, tourists could only reach the hotel by taking one of Hong Kong's oldest bus routes over a craggy gap in the rocky, interior highlands. The Repulse Bay Hotel (built in 1920, demolished 1982), sat on an expansive, curving, sandy beach and offered the finest lodgings outside the Central district.

³⁷ <<http://www.oldpostcardmessages.com/old-messages/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

³⁸ <<https://www.terapeak.com/worth/vg-postcard-vintage-chrome-the-den-hong-kong-hilton-basement-club-gold-black/261989048896/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

³⁹ HAMBLIN, D. J. In 19 Lands Instant America. In *Life Magazine*, August 1963, p. 70.

⁴⁰ SAID, E. *Orientalism*, p. 11.

⁴¹ GLEASON, G. *Tales of Hong Kong*, p. 116.

A tourism brochure used throughout the 1930s listed the resort's Western-style amenities: "Repulse Bay Hotel offers every facility expected in a modern resort hotel – sea bathing on its private beach, boating, fishing, golf, tennis, motoring, afternoon tea service, tea and dinner dances, cool, airy sleeping chambers, and a table that is unexcelled. It is a gem of the Orient's hotels."⁴² Members of Hong Kong's 'high society' considered the hotel's Sunday afternoon concerts and summer dances to be "the talk of the town."⁴³

The Repulse Bay Hotel advertised its relatively isolated location as "The Riviera of the Far East". The French Riviera (or Côte d'Azur), along the Mediterranean Sea, was one of the first modern Western resort destinations and catered to British and European upper-class travelers from the early 18th century onward; it was part of The Grand Tour. Though the British often take credit for "invent[ing] the Côte d'Azur as a leisure facility",⁴⁴ British tourists did not always enjoy the company of the French locals from Nice and other towns along the Riviera. The Scottish poet Tobias George Smollett, for example, wrote: "Ever since my arrival in Nice, I have breathed more freely ...my spirits have been more alert," but lamented, "the Niçois are such dirty knaves that no foreigner will trust them in the way of trade."⁴⁵

Given that Smollett enjoyed the healthy, foreign environment much more than the local people, he would have probably appreciated the Repulse Bay Hotel. The Repulse Bay was less a *contact zone* than a *no-contact zone*, a secluded, social oasis. When Martha Gellhorn grew weary of overcrowded, chaotic Central, her husband Ernest Hemingway moved them to the "country hotel" in Repulse Bay. Gellhorn recalled the hotel "was as near English as possible, set in lovely gardens and done up in chintz. Self-footed servitors bore pink gins around the place. No spitting and no smells, no visible poverty". Although Hemingway teased Gellhorn about "her contentment in this clean non-Oriental enclave", Hemingway "was quite happy himself".⁴⁶

If the Pen Pals, like Gellhorn and Hemingway, wanted to visit a truly "non-Oriental enclave" during their travels in Hong Kong, then, after sunning themselves in Repulse Bay, they would have probably headed to the city's

⁴² YIM, B. W., HO, J. Y. H. *Early Hong Kong Travel 1880 – 1939*, p. 163.

⁴³ KADOORIE, M. Forward. In YIM, B. W., HO, J. Y. H. (eds.). *Early Hong Kong Travel 1880 – 1939*, unpaginated.

⁴⁴ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/france/cote-d-azur/articles/Britains-150-year-love-affair-with-the-Cote-dAzur/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁴⁵ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/france/cote-d-azur/articles/Britains-150-year-love-affair-with-the-Cote-dAzur/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁴⁶ GELLHORN, M. *Travels with Myself and Another*, p. 32.

definitive tourist attraction: the “enchanted and breathtaking” Victoria Peak.⁴⁷ Rudyard Kipling called it Hong Kong’s “great view-place”.⁴⁸

Stop Five: The Peak—Socially, Geographically

Victoria Peak (“The Peak”) is a mountainous area rising nearly 2,000 feet over subtropical Central into cool, temperate hilltops. Martha Gellhorn provided a colorful description:

The island of Hong Kong rises in green peaks straight from the smooth blue-gray sea. ... Halfway up ... the city’s solid mass of gray stone and cement gives way to a band of green foliage. Above this, bursting out of the mountain or outlined against the sky, are the vast white palaces of the rich. The Peak dwellers can see all the beauty of their harbour and their terraced city, but they can neither hear it nor smell it.⁴⁹

The Peak began as an elite residential development, with ‘higher classes’ living at higher elevations. The loftiness of a person’s residence indicated his or her social position (and racial identity). Chinese neighbourhoods and Central’s “contact zone” were down at sea level, middle-class homes were half way up the mountain in the “Mid-levels”, and the colonial gentry surveyed the entire scene from up top. The colonial governor, Richard MacDonnell, built a summer mansion, which he called his “Mountain Lodge”, on the peak of the Peak.

Legal statutes mandated racial segregation.⁵⁰ Hong Kong’s Chinese residents could not legally buy homes on the Peak until well into the 20th century.

⁴⁷ *Around and About Hong Kong: The Official Guide Book of the Hong Kong Tourist Association*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ KIPLING, R. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*, Vol. I, p. 292.

⁴⁹ GELLHORN, M. Time Bomb in Hong Kong. In *Collier’s Weekly*, June 1941, pp. 13, 31.

⁵⁰ The Peak Reservation Ordinance, in effect between 1904 and 1930, legally established racial segregation, allowing only “non-Chinese” to buy, lease, or reside on Peak property. Exceptions were made for Chinese servants living with non-Chinese residents and “licensed chair coolies and jinricksha coolies plying for hire” in the Peak. See <<http://oelawhk.lib.hku.hk/items/show/1219>>. The Ordinance was passed during the Third (Bubonic) plague pandemic, which began in southwest China’s Yunnan Province in the 1850s but spread to more densely populated coastal areas. Approximately 60,000 people perished in Canton in just a few weeks in 1894. Many thousands died in Hong Kong soon thereafter in a few months. The plague continued to be endemic in Hong Kong until 1929, the year before the Peak Reservation Ordinance was abolished. The Governor of Hong Kong during the 1890s, William Robinson,

Segregation was part of the British global, colonial order. In *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), Jules Verne noted, “in some things, [Hong Kong] was like Bombay, Calcutta, or Singapore ... there is ... a track of English towns all around the world”.⁵¹ Because of its homogeneity, some British Hong Kongers called the Peak “Little England”.⁵²

While only a few (British) families could afford to actually live there, the Peak was always popular with tourists visiting Hong Kong because it offered unobstructed views of the cityscape, harbour, and surrounding islands. Alexander Findlay Smith opened the Peak Hotel in 1888, hoping to lure tourists to the temperate climate and panoramic vistas; the hotel’s advertising brochure explained the “summit is reached by a ten-minute ride on the funicular tram line, show[ing] the busy harbour and the city of Kowloon in a view of vast extent and surpassing grandeur”.⁵³ Kipling was an early passenger on the Peak Tram, and described being hauled backwards with a rope up a very steep incline, the tramcar “[standing] on its head and wav[ing] its feet in the mist”.⁵⁴

As mentioned earlier, some visitors did not take the Peak Tram, preferring, rather, to ride up in stylish, and expensive, sedan chairs (Plate 4). Tourist advertisements and photographs often showed sedan chairs, because they were an enduring symbol of colonial Hong Kong even before the rickshaw.⁵⁵ The 19th century Scottish geographer and traveler, John Thomson, wrote that sedan “chair-stands” were omnipresent in Hong Kong, “at the corners of the chief thoroughfares, as well as on the wharves, where the eager chair-coolies [pounce] upon each freshly-arrived stranger as he land[s] at the port”.⁵⁶

declared “the filthy habits of life amongst the 210,000 Chinese who reside here have rendered Hong Kong liable to the invasion and development of the germ of the bubonic plague” (see PRYOR, E. G. *The Great Plague of Hong Kong*. In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, Vol. 15 (1975), p. 65). Fears of disease may have provided a convenient pretext for enacting the racial zoning ordinance.

⁵¹ VERNE, J. *Around the World in Eighty Days*, p. 155.

⁵² COURTAULD, C., HOLDSWORTH, M. *The Hong Kong Story*, p. 46.

⁵³ YIM, B. W., HO, J. Y. H. *Early Hong Kong Travel 1880 – 1939*, p. 163.

⁵⁴ KIPLING, R. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*, Vol. I, p. 290.

⁵⁵ See <<http://forgotten-transport.blogspot.hk/2011/09/from-sedan-chair-to-jumbo-jet.html>> [cit. 9 June 2017], which includes a film shot in 1898 by employees of Thomas Edison’s company showing sedan chairs in Hong Kong. For more information regarding the Edison Company’s activities in the Far East, see <<https://www.loc.gov/collections/edison-company-motion-pictures-and-sound-recordings/articles-and-essays/history-of-edison-motion-pictures/overview-of-the-edison-motion-pictures-by-genre/>> [cit. 9 June 2017].

⁵⁶ <https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/john_thomson_china_03/ctgallery1/pages/ct1018_1128689.htm> [cit. 8 June 2017].

There were clear distinctions between Hong Kong’s social classes, and only “the affluent could afford the luxury of being carried in this manner”.⁵⁷ Just as living on the Peak indicated the social status of the resident, riding to the Peak in sedan chairs indicated the social status of the passenger (and carriers). People even rode in sedan chairs for short distances – such as between the Mid-levels and Central – to avoid the embarrassing “loss of face” that walking might entail.⁵⁸

By the 20th century, sedan chairs became much more affordable and Westerners of even modest means put riding in one to the Peak on their itinerary when visiting Hong Kong. In *The Travelers’ Handbook for China, Including Hong Kong* (1921), the American writer Carl Crow described a form of exercise that was very popular with Hong Kong’s visitors: going to the top of the Peak in sedan chairs, enjoying the magnificent view, and then walking (unaided) down the hill to Central. Though some newcomers were initially disturbed by the sight of local laborers carrying people up sharp hills, temporarily “affected with a sentiment of compassion towards the unfortunate men [bearing them] about on their shoulders”, such feelings apparently soon wore off.⁵⁹ Tourists, it seems, could not resist being carried – like a king – to the top of the colonial city on the top of a sedan chair. When traveling in (and to) a foreign land positional superiority has a powerful allure.

“Asia’s World City”

The posters, postcards, and other tourism materials mentioned in this essay reflect disconcerting social attitudes, but they leave out even darker issues that vexed Hong Kong during the colonial period. There were dingy (real) opium

⁵⁷ YIM, B. W., HO, J. Y. H. *Early Hong Kong Travel 1880 – 1939*, p. 191.

⁵⁸ See: <<http://industrialhistoryhk.org/glimpses-old-hong-kong-sedan-chairs/>> [cit. 8 June 2017]. Attitudes gradually changed over time. In 1967, Gleason wrote, “Sixty years ago a government official or business taipan who rode about in a sedan-chair considered it essential to his station in life. Short of walking, which simply was not done, the chair offered the only practical means of getting over steep, bumpy, narrow paths. With the paving of roads and footpaths the chair lost a large part of its usefulness. Moreover, the social climate of the colony has changed so markedly that any Caucasian riding in a sedan-chair today would feel like a pretentious ass, and he would be regarded by his friends as exactly that. Thus the sedan-chair, which antedates the rickshaw by centuries, virtually disappeared from the Hong Kong scene.” GLEASON, G. *Tales of Hong Kong*, p. 93.

⁵⁹ <https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/john_thomson_china_03/ctgallery1/pages/ct1018_1128689.htm> ct 1018 [cit. 8 June 2017].

dens where patrons fondled teenagers “as part of the services”, dismal brothels charging “\$2.00 a night per man per girl”, dim basement factories where small children endlessly carved tourist trinkets, and hordes of people suffering from “the most cruel poverty”.⁶⁰ Stifling, overcrowded conditions exacerbated the problems.⁶¹ These sad realities were also part of Hong Kong,⁶² though, obviously, they never appeared in official tourist enticements; instead, quaint illustrations of poor, hard-working “coolies” represented local culture. Tourism advertisements portrayed Hong Kong as the exhilarating crossroads of a mysterious, *oriental* world and a familiar British social order. As the British Empire faded, nostalgic, romantic longings for the past attracted Britons and other Westerners to the city,⁶³ searching for a safe glimpse of the East.

Hong Kong’s identity has changed recently. The United Kingdom transferred sovereignty over Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1997, ending the city’s colonial period and, in the eyes of some, ending the British Empire.⁶⁴ Hong Kong is now a “Special Administrative Region” of the PRC, and, in theory, the PRC will permit Hong Kong’s residents to retain certain personal and economic freedoms until 2047.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board, a government-subsidized entity, is now in charge of promoting the city as a travel destination, through its campaign called “Hong Kong: Asia’s World City”. The motto has become ubiquitous:

⁶⁰ GELLHORN, M. *Travels with Myself and Another*, pp. 30–31.

⁶¹ The crowded conditions disturbed Gellhorn. “There was no space to breathe,” she wrote. “These crushed millions were stifling each other” (GELLHORN, M. *Travels with Myself and Another*, p. 31). The same conditions intrigued Carl Crow. “Close to the business streets are located the Chinese residences. They are not packed together on narrow streets as in the cities of China proper, for the streets of Hong Kong are fairly wide. Instead, the residences are high tenement-like structures, containing many small rooms and a population almost as dense as in the crowded cities of the mainland. These rather squalid buildings afford an interesting contrast to the fine residences of the foreigners, on the Peak” (CROW, C. *The Travelers’ Handbook for China, Including Hong Kong*, p. 287).

⁶² Negative characteristics rarely define cities. There is an interesting recent body of literature concerning how cities are defined and the characteristics people assign to specific cities. See, for example, BEVAN’s *What Makes a City a City – and Does it Really Matter Anyway?* and MALIK, A., HAGEN, J.’s *What Defines a ‘City’?*

⁶³ SUM, Ngai-Ling, SO, Mei-Chi. *The Paradox of a Tourist Centre: Hong Kong as a Site of Play and a Place of Fear*, p. 106.

⁶⁴ There is no consensus on a single event or moment that represents the “end of the British Empire”. During the 1960s 27 former British colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean gained independence. However “it took until 1997, when Hong Kong was handed back to China, for the process of imperial liquidation to be completed” <<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-10740852>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

emblazoned on the sides of local trams and taxis, in international travel magazines and internet pop-ups, and on the noses of Cathay Pacific jets flying near and far (Plate 5).

The Tourism Board seemed intent on publicizing Hong Kong as a global city without directly referencing its colonial past. 20th century Westerners struggled in their characterizations, and often resorted to comparing Hong Kong to locations that were more familiar. Gellhorn said the city was like “Times Square on New Year's Eve” or a New York City subway at rush hour. The Repulse Bay Hotel envisioned itself as the “Riviera of the Far East”; others saw Hong Kong as the “Pearl of the Orient” or “Europe in China”. These slogans clearly do not work in the postcolonial era. What, though, is the precise meaning of “Asia's World City”, and is it more progressive than the colonial-era descriptions? Perhaps the Tourism Board simply wanted to propose that Hong Kong is a uniquely *Asian* World City, rather than an Asian version of Western cities.⁶⁵ The struggle to situate Hong Kong in a globalized world and encapsulate its essence is clearly an ongoing process.

This essay spoke of a divided colonial society, yet rifts remain in the postcolonial period. The city is no longer a distant outpost, where a Western society strived to maintain dominance over a much larger Chinese populace, but Hong Kong's relationship with Western cultural values is still a divisive issue. Some on the Chinese mainland are wary of Hong Kong's British-based political system and global culture. Pressure builds every day on Hong Kong to fully assimilate into the PRC, and one can only speculate about the city's changing identity. There are indications that despite their complicated past, certain symbols, like sedan chairs and rickshaws, will continue to represent Hong Kong internationally in the future.

The “Sedan Chair Challenge” has been a popular recent event attracting tourists to Markham, Canada (another former British colony). In an age of increased mobility, Markham transformed from a sleepy British village into a teeming city, and “the most diverse place in Canada”. A third of its people are of Chinese descent, and many are from Hong Kong.⁶⁶ Here, the sedan chair race symbolizes Far Eastern traditions within a context of modern Canadian multiculturalism.⁶⁷ This summer in nearby Toronto, the Hong Kong Tourist Board will join the Consulate General of the PRC in supporting the International Dragon Boat Race Festival.⁶⁸ In the past, the festival also held its

⁶⁵ <<http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1939520/hong-kong-liche-europe-asia-asias-world-city>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁶⁶ <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/markhams-rapid-change-into-canadas-most-diverse-city/article15087829/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁶⁷ <<http://www.tccsa.on.ca/old/sedan/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

⁶⁸ <<http://dragonboats.com/>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

own sedan chair race, with teams competing for a vacation package to Hong Kong and a free guided tour of the city's "most popular tourist spots".

The world's most flamboyant, kitchy sedan chair race, however, is held annually atop Hong Kong's own Victoria Peak. Teams of superheroes, Pokémons, and Neanderthals carry the chairs and compete for the best costume award.⁶⁹ A majority of the participants are expatriates,⁷⁰ and many are British. Similarly, for the past 20 years, Hong Kong's association of accountants has hosted a raucous Rickshaw Race through the streets of Central, reclaiming a historical icon without the problematic connotations of before.

Sedan chairs and rickshaws may forever be associated with Hong Kong, even after the colonial era has ended and many people have forgotten the troubling ways the travel industry used them to symbolize Hong Kong's rigid, colonial society. It will be up to future Hong Kongers – living in Hong Kong or abroad, living after the colonial period and before full reunion with mainland China – to decide what truly represents their city.

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⁶⁹ The Matilda International Hospital established the Sedan Chair Charities Fund in the 1970s and raises "money for needy charities in Hong Kong mainly through [their] annual October Sedan Chair Race and Bazaar. ...The fund[s] raised go to support charitable organizations that are lesser known and have very limited resources to do fundraising themselves – none go to the Matilda International Hospital". See <http://www.sedanchairrace.org/fund_background.html> [cit. 8 June 2017].

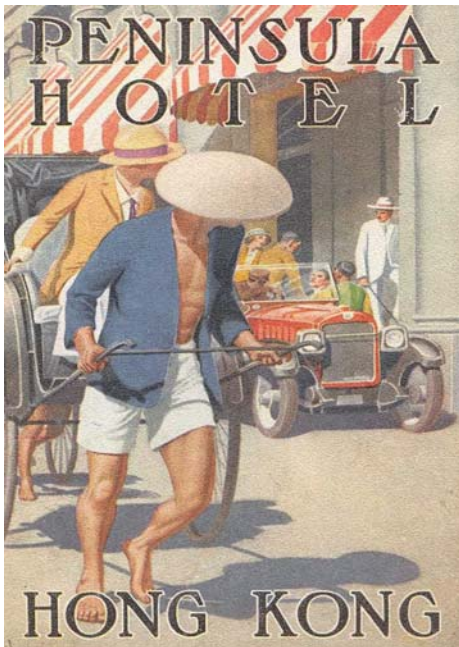
⁷⁰ <<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1625355/colourful-pharaohs-rule-annual-sedan-chair-race-peak>> [cit. 8 June 2017].

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Ellis, Plate 1. Reproduction Detail of Australian Oriental Line Poster, ca. 1930s.

Ellis, Plate 2. Reproduction Detail of Pan American Poster, ca. 1930s.

Ellis, Plate 3. Reproduction Detail of Peninsula Hotel Luggage Label (Postcard), ca. 1920s.



Ellis, Plate 4. Photograph of Hong Kong Sedan Chairs and Rickshaws, ca. 1930s.



Ellis, Plate 5. Photograph of Star Ferry Decorated with “Asia’s World City” Brand, 2000s.