



Mainland visitors contribute a lot to HK economy

According to the 2012 work plan of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), as announced yesterday, there will be some 5.5% growth in visitor arrivals this year from last year's 41 million. For Hong Kong's tourism, visitors from Mainland China have become the major source of tourists and growth support

It is necessary and timely for HKTB, tasked to plan, promote and supervise on tourism, to make projections and plans. Especially, as it is well known, when global economic recovery seems still beyond vision this year, tourism as one of Hong Kong's four traditional economic pillars should not wait for gains without pains by sitting there idle to wait for visitors to arrive. Instead it must strengthen planning and go out to lure more tourists to Hong Kong. Good planning requires grasping the current situation to **see which way the wind is blowing**. Surely, we should not abandon the traditional European and American markets. But emerging markets obviously have much greater potentials, awaiting Hong Kong tourism practitioners to find out, approach and cultivate, so as to bring more business opportunities and broader prospect for Hong Kong tourism.

Seeing last year's figure of 28 million visitor arrivals from the Mainland, Hong Kong tourism sector and citizens in general must feel **a world of difference** between the present and the past. Just ten or so years ago, it was still harder than climbing up to the sky for a Mainland resident to come to Hong Kong to visit his families or relatives. For them to come shopping here was even more like a story in the Arabian Nights. For, at that time, most of Mainland people had very limited incomes, so much so that even when some of them could walk across the Lo Wu Bridge and arrive in Hong Kong, they would simply feel embarrassingly short of money upon seeing **a great variety of** dazzling consumer goods on display. But today, inside the Sogo department store in Causeway Bay, one could often overhear (Mainland tourists say) "Wrap it up" or "Not expensive at all!" In name-brand shops in Tsim Sha Tsui and the Central, salespeople are occupied with counting money in renminbi (RMB) everyday...

According to figures from the tourism industry, **short-haul** visitors now mainly come from the Mainland, whose per capita spending reaches \$7,000 on average. With 28 million arrivals, Mainland visitors last year brought Hong Kong an income of about \$200 billion.

As a matter of fact, Mainland residents coming to Hong Kong for sight-seeing or shopping in large numbers started in 2003. At that time, Hong Kong's economy sank to its lowest ebb amid the Asian Financial Crisis and the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic. The society was in panic making it difficult for the government to govern. It was at such a most difficult moment for Hong Kong that the Central Government announced to gradually open the door for Mainland residents to make individual tours to Hong Kong. To pioneering the opening, resident in five cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou were the first to make individual travels to Hong Kong. Since then, the opening has been extended to more and more cities. As a result, Mainland visitor arrivals have grown in double-digit every year, their consumption power growing even more dramatically. During his Hong Kong visit in August last year, Vice Premier Li Keqiang unveiled another 36 measures to support Hong Kong, including allowing residents in more non-first-tier cities to travel individually to Hong Kong.

内地旅客為活躍港經濟貢獻良多

香港旅遊發展局昨日公布新年工作計劃，預計今年訪港旅客人數將會在去年四千一百多萬人次的基礎上再增加百分之五點五，而內地客已成為本港旅業的主要客源和增長支撐。

旅發局作為本港旅遊業的策劃、推廣和監管機構，作出預期和部署是必要和及時的。特別是人所共知，今年全球經濟難望好轉，而旅遊業作為本港經濟傳統四大支柱之一，絕不能「守株待兔」，坐等旅客上門，而是必須「請進來、走出去」，要加強部署、作好規劃。但規劃也得要認清時勢、找對門路。傳統的歐美市場固然不能放棄，但新興的內地市場顯然有更巨大的潛力。等待着業者去認識、去爭取和去發掘，從而為本港旅遊業帶來無限商機和廣闊前景。

面對去年訪港達二千八百萬人次的內地旅客，本港旅遊業界和市民都有「仿如隔世」之感。僅僅是十多年前，內地居民赴港探親尚且難於登天，赴港旅遊購物就更是「天方夜譚」，而當時絕大部分內地民衆收入有限，就是有機會踏過羅湖橋頭、到了香港，看見琳琅滿目的商品，也只能有「阮囊羞澀」之嘆。但曾幾何時，時移勢易，今天，銅鑼灣「崇光百貨」內一片「包起來」、「不貴嘛」之聲，尖沙咀、中環一帶的精品名店，店員數人幣幣數到手軟……

據旅遊業界數字，短途客主要是內地客，在港人均消費約為七千元，以二千八百萬人次計算，去年內地客給本港經濟帶來了將近二十億港元的收益。

事實是，大批內地居民到港旅遊購物消費，主要是從二〇〇三年開始，當時，香港正經歷金融風暴和「沙士」疫情打擊，經濟跌



▲香港大商場受惠內地遊客成為新年「贏家」

備，就是市民大眾和社會輿論，面對越來越多的內地客湧至，也有一個如何正確認識和調整好心態的問題。

首先，毫無疑問，大批內地旅客訪港，在港期間的生活、經歷和與本港市民之間的相處，總體上來說是愉快和融洽的，最顯著的是莫過於越來越多的市民、店員、司機學會以普通話對答，一些市民還戲稱他們為「財神」、「米飯班主」。但更重要的是，通過大批內地旅客訪港，港人和內地人之間的距離拉近了、隔膜打破了、猜疑減少了，以至在一些場合，如國慶節日的維港兩岸同觀煙花、大除夕蘭桂坊齊聲倒數的互道Happy New Year，過去內地人和港人之間那一道明顯的界線是已經越來越模糊以至最終不存在了。

所謂「過門都是客」更何況本來就是一家人的港人歡迎內地居民更多來港旅遊觀光和消費購物，為本港帶來更多經濟收益，大家更要共同努力締造和推動「一國兩制」下兩地民衆的和諧新局面。

2012/01/12 大公報社評

Today, when the number of visitor arrivals from the Mainland is approaching 30 million, not only should the HKTB, relevant sectors, the two theme parks and Ngong Ping 360 make better planning and preparations, but citizens and public opinions also face the problem of how to view the development correctly and adjust their mental attitude accordingly.

First of all, it is without doubt that great numbers of Mainland visitors in general are happy during their stays in Hong Kong and get along well with Hong Kong people. This is evident that more and more Hong Kong citizens, salespeople and drivers are able to converse with them in Putonghua, with some citizens even jokingly call Mainland visitors as "gods of fortune" or **"our daily bread"**. More importantly, with more and more Mainlanders visiting Hong Kong, the distance between Hongkongers and Mainlanders is being narrowed, estrangement ended and suspicion reduced. So much so that at certain occasions such as watching together the National Day wireworks display or greeting to each other with "Happy New Year" on the New Year countdown at Lan Kwai Fong, the once clear-cut demarcation between Mainlanders and Hongkongers becomes increasingly blur or even disappears.

As the saying goes that every passerby is a guest, not to mention that Mainlanders and Hongkongers belong to one and the same family in origin. While Hong Kong people welcome more and more Mainland visitors to come for sight-seeing and shopping to bring in some economic benefit, all of us must join hands to foster and promote the harmony between people in the two places under "one country two systems".

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WORDS AND USAGE

① **See/know which way the wind blows/is blowing** (idiom) – To understand what is happening in changing circumstances and to be able to anticipate the future. (把握動向，找對門路)

Examples: 1. Look and see which way the wind blows before you commit yourself. 2. We studied the whole situation to see which way the wind was blowing and decided to avoid any conflict at that time.

② **A world of difference (between A and B)** (idiom) – A lot of difference (between A and B) (天壤之別)

Examples: 1. There's a world of difference between seeing a film on video and seeing it in the cinema. 2. The rains made a world of difference to desperate farmers.

③ **A variety of** (phrase) – Many different types of things or people. (各種各樣的)

Examples: 1. He does a variety of fitness exercises. 2. The equipment could be sued for a variety of educational purposes.

④ **Short/long haul** (idiom) – A short/long distance. (短(長)途)

Examples: 1. It's only a short haul from Hong Kong to Guangzhou. 2. They started on the long haul back to the camp.

⑤ **One's daily bread** (idiom) – The food or money that you need to live. (生計)

Examples: 1. I need to earn my daily bread by myself, this is why I'm working. 2. He earns his daily bread as a tourist guide.

吐蕃的蕃讀藩還是讀播 可按文字源流考證一番

十二月十七日，收聽香港電台《古今風雲人物》，聽得主持人講到馬嵬，把鬼字讀成頽；講到吐蕃，把蕃字讀成藩。有幾位該台的聽眾打電話給我，認為鬼應讀危，而蕃應讀播。我同意主持人馬嵬的鬼字讀頽，不同意主持人吐蕃的蕃字讀藩。篇幅所限，今天只能談吐蕃的蕃。

吐蕃的蕃讀藩，由來已久，且有舊辭典和《現代漢語詞典》為據。初時，只有專門研究藏文藏史的學者才認為讀播，拿漢藏文字讀音比對。

吐蕃一詞雖屬漢文，卻是蕃文漢譯。今天既然稱「蕃」為「藏」，就要說是藏文漢譯了。對照漢藏史料，吐是大的意思，蕃是蕃(藏)人自稱，就像漢人稱漢(民族名)，唐人稱唐(國名)那樣。公元八二三年立於拉薩的《唐蕃會盟碑》，唐人自稱大唐，蕃人自稱大蕃；大唐用長慶年號，大蕃用彝泰年號；大唐皇帝和大蕃贊普，合稱「陛下二聖」。這些都說明雙方是平等的國與國的關係(漢文

寫的正史也證明這一點)。漢人歷來有大漢族主義思想，唐初國勢正盛，更難避免，當時只許自己稱大，諱言對方稱大，以大的同音字吐代之，把大蕃寫成吐蕃。隨着大蕃比大唐更加強盛，到會盟碑建立前後，唐朝被迫在外交文書上稱大蕃，但在境內依然寫作吐蕃。

大字在唐時讀成吐，有杜甫《天狗賦》的押韻為證。這種讀法，當時乃不送氣，保留到今天的潮州話；後來變成送氣，則保留在今天的順德話。蕃字本寫成番，重唇音有藩、盤、婆、播等讀法。讀播原指獸掌(此字後來繁化為蹠)。唐蕃雙方君主既成親戚(文成公主、金城公主先後嫁入吐蕃)，乃加草頭而寫成蕃，當時解作屏藩或形容草木繁茂，讀法不變。這可使對方能接受。蕃字用於會盟碑有此淵源，但兩位公主入蕃時，未有輕唇音，藩、翻等讀法未出現。後來輕唇音出現了，此字讀藩、讀翻，還是與吐蕃無關。

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Flower Market

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The annual Chinese New Year's Eve Bazaar, better known as the "flower market" (花市), is open now at Victoria Park. I visited it the day before it opened for business. The stall that impressed me most was the one selling balloons with words. I am not going to copy the words here for copyrights reasons. But the words are funny. Some of them look like the names of bus stops.

When I was there, the owner of the stall was talking to someone, perhaps a journalist. "I love buses..." he said.

His idea has a selling point. Many people in Hong Kong are fans of buses. Recently I travelled on a bus and heard two secondary school students, in their uniforms, talking about different models of buses.

However, what really attracted me there were the words on the balloons. Words are free of charge. If one knows how to use them to poke fun, one can

make people laugh. That is what visitors in the flower market need.

For those who visit the flower market every year, they might have noticed that, year after year, many stalls there have been trying hard to attract people by ways of playing with words, especially with the zodiac animal of the upcoming year.

As the year to come is the year of the dragon, the word "dragon" is everywhere in the flower market. In China, dragon is the symbol of imperial power. So the word dragon is always connected with emperors. Even the outfits of the ancient emperors were called "dragon gowns" (龍袍). In the imperial days, it was a taboo to make jokes with the word "dragon". If some stall owners at the flower market a little more than 100 years ago did what people do now, they would have to face very severe punishments.

通識記憶體

内地「自由行」助港年賺 2000 億

個人遊就是我們口中常說的「自由行」，這是一個容許中國大陸居民以個人旅遊的方式前來香港和澳門兩地旅遊的計劃。計劃自2003年7月28日推行，一般情況下，只要在計劃範圍內的城市便可經簡單的簽證手續前來港澳地區，最多可逗留一星期。

2011年及2010年的內地訪港旅客人次明顯上升，為香港帶來的經濟收益也顯著增加(見表)。另外，與2003年約5235元的人均消費相比，也有明顯差別。

年份	內地訪港旅客人次	人均消費	本港經濟收益
2010年	2270萬人次	約7400元	近1700億元
2011年	2800萬人次	約7000元	近2000億元