【昔日鄉市共生留下的文化記憶】

翻開荔枝窩逾百年的歷史文獻，逐段細閱橫跨千年的曾氏族譜，再與數十位村民和沙頭角人回首往事、細說人生，點滴猶如蒼穹繁星，百年光陰也若轉眼一瞬。透過他們述說從前日常，尤其在這片從清代到近世始終處於邊陲的地區，每段個人記憶其實都是地域隨大時代變遷中的獨特印記，既是小我在歷史洪流中走過的身影，也映照出時代變遷如何深植於普通人的生命軌跡。更重要的是，這些敘事讓我們看見荔枝窩村人在自然中積累的生存智慧，可說是未被發掘的非物質文化遺產；也看見沙頭角區接壤內地，早早就盡得立足自由經濟與背靠廣大市場之利，在夾縫間游刃有餘。雖未算波瀾壯闊，都值得細味咀嚼，這也肯定了他們的獨特文化身份，邊界社群的生活其實有不一樣的界限。

Cultural Memories from a Shared Past

The century-old records of Lai Chi Wo, the Tsang clan's thousand-year genealogy, and stories from villagers and Sha Tau Kok residents together reveal a rich tapestry of memories—moments that make a hundred years feel like a blink. In this long-marginalised borderland, each personal story reflects how local identity has shifted over time, showing how history leaves its mark on everyday lives. These accounts also uncover the villagers' deep survival wisdom rooted in nature—an intangible cultural heritage still waiting to be fully recognised. Meanwhile, Sha Tau Kok's position at the mainland border helped it thrive early on, balancing free-market access with strong cross-border demand. Though not dramatic, these stories affirm the distinct cultural identity of border communities, shaped by boundaries of their own.

具體總結是次研究的發現重點，可歸納為以下數項：

【從族譜看族群延續】

荔枝窩村的人口結構相對簡單，主要由曾、黃兩大姓氏的家族結盟共居。這兩姓在華人社會中不僅規模龐大、源遠流長，更可追溯至三千多年前的夏商周時期，具有深厚的歷史淵源。兩姓族譜保存相當完整，其中荔枝窩曾氏族譜可追索至第 51 代紆公房系，相當於公元 1112 年（北宋政和二年）。從族譜編纂方式可見，其記錄以長子為主軸，其後的兒子按出生次序排列，妻、妾及繼配之名均予以記錄，女兒則未見記載。

族譜內容高度精煉，聚焦於記錄各代人的出生與安葬地點、配偶與兒子的排序、遷徙原因（如有），以及家族重大事件。例如，從族譜中可得知，第 69 代祖先的四兄弟中有一人分家離鄉，其餘三人因而成立「三培堂」，以踐行追遠報本之義——該組織隨後演變成「三育堂」及「培成堂」，前者是曾氏跨村的組織，維繫曾氏家族，距今已有約 300 年的歷史。

此外，據村民所述，村中較常用的「人丁冊」，除了記錄男丁外，也計未婚女性及媳婦，但不計入外嫁女兒。這做法很可能與昔日農耕社會的村內實際勞動人口紀錄相關。人丁數不僅反映家庭勞動力，也關係到村務集資的份數分配——每一個勞動人口視為一份，類似現代稅制中以勞動人口作為納稅人的概念。

由此可見，人丁冊是當代實用的人口登記，族譜則是維繫族群延續與文化認同的載體，重點在於整個氏族的延續性。它不僅記錄血脈傳承，更是宗族的歷史、遷徙軌跡與集體記憶。族譜把家族世世代代的人口系統地記錄，是子孫後代氏族歸屬感之所依，並在時間長河中建立起一代代的連續性。

說起三培堂的歷史，有村民覺得 300 年前的第 69 代祖先距今不遠。這種時代相近的錯覺，正源於他自幼多次從父親口中聽說過祖先的名字。亦正好說明，系統性的歷史紀錄與梳理，無形地強化宗族連續性與後人的歸屬感，讓數百年時光恍如一瞬。

The key findings of this study can be summarised as follows:

Lineage and Cultural Continuity

Lai Chi Wo's population is shaped by two major clans—the Tsangs and the Wongs—who have long lived together through family alliances. Both surnames are prominent in Chinese history, with roots tracing back over 3,000 years to the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties. Their genealogies are well preserved, with the Tsang lineage in Lai Chi Wo traceable to the 51st generation of the Yu branch, dating to 1112 AD. The records follow traditional patriarchal structure: the eldest son is listed first, followed by younger sons in birth order. Wives, concubines, and subsequent wives are recorded by name, whereas daughters are not included.

The genealogies are concise and focused, recording birth and burial places, the order of spouses and sons, reasons for migration (if any), and major family events. For instance, the records show that one of four brothers in the 69th generation left the village, prompting the others to form "Sam Pui Tong" to honour their roots. This later evolved into "Sam Yuk Tong" and "Pui Shing Tong"—the former becoming a cross-village Tsang clan association that has helped maintain family ties for nearly 300 years.

The register, villagers explained, recorded men, unmarried women, and daughters-in-law, while married daughters were excluded. This likely reflected the realities of farming life, where the register tracked actual labour capacity. Each working individual counted as one share, which also determined contributions to village affairs—similar to how modern tax systems assess based on working population.

This highlights the different roles of village records: the population register served practical needs, tracking residents and labour capacity, while the genealogy preserved clan continuity and cultural identity. More than a record of bloodlines, it documents the clan's history, migration, and shared memory. By systematically recording generations, it gives descendants a sense of belonging and builds continuity over time.

When talking about Sam Pui Tong's history, one villager feel the 69th-generation ancestor from 300 years ago isn't that distant. This sense of closeness comes from hearing his name often from his father growing up. It shows how structured historical records and storytelling quietly strengthen clan continuity and a sense of belonging—making history feel close at hand.

【農村社會的家庭角色及客家婦女】

農村社會中「男主外，女主內」的家庭分工模式，在是次研究中有更細緻的理解。原來「女主內」的「內」，範圍遠比想像中廣泛，其職責除煮飯、洗衣、育兒等家務，更延伸至田地耕種——事實上，研究中不少男性因少小離家或不參與農事而不諳耕種，反證了農耕常被歸為「女性的家務」。

荔枝窩的男性作為家庭經濟支柱，少數人在村內經營農場、果園及銷售農產品，也有人早於二十世紀初便已經遠赴海外謀生，這種地域上的分隔，使他們不得不缺席家庭日常運作。於是，留在家中的女性便承擔起絕大部分維持家庭運作的責任。

當然，在傳統宗族社會中，婦女並非完全獨自應對這些挑戰。對外銷售農產品、收取海外匯款等事務，通常由宗族內的「堂口」或父老代為處理。同姓聚居的社會結構形成了一個有效的支援網絡，彌補了現代核心家庭概念下的功能缺失，也分擔了丈夫缺席所留下的家庭支援。

儘管如此，女性在家庭中承擔其餘一切事務，從煮飯帶孩子、劈柴耕田，到飼養牲畜等大小事務都由母親肩負，其餘如放牛、撿柴、餵雞等勞動則可以由小孩補上。荔枝窩的小孩成長在資源緊絀的年代，從小習慣勞動，就連娛樂也充滿生產力——他們捉魚摸蜆，在嬉鬧中為一家大細補充食糧，也練就一身在大自然中討生活的謀生技能，傳承着代代相襲的生活智慧。

這種「全民皆兵」的分工模式，既是生存壓力下的集體應對策略，也體現出農村家庭在有限資源中的適應力與韌性。依靠宗族與鄉土鄰里為基礎的互助模式，為村裡每個家庭提供了重要的支持。不過，這種傳統支援網絡在現代社會已逐漸式微，核心家庭在面對各種挑戰時，也往往顯得更加孤單與脆弱。

當然，在對岸的沙頭角墟，也有婦女選擇「梳起」不嫁，以「先生」為稱呼，在商界與男士並肩立足，這也正好反映鄉村系統與城墟系統的生活方式截然不同。

Family Roles and Hakka Women in Rural Life

This study offers a deeper insight into rural labour roles, traditionally framed as “men as breadwinners, women as homemakers.” In reality, women’s domestic responsibilities extended well beyond cooking, cleaning, and childcare—they also worked the fields. Many men had little farming experience, having left home young or not engaged in agricultural work, underscoring how farming was often seen as part of women’s domestic duties.

In Lai Chi Wo, men were seen as the main breadwinners. Some ran farms or sold produce locally, while others had already gone overseas to earn a living by the early 20th century. Their absence from daily life meant women at home took on most of the responsibility for keeping the household running.

Of course, women didn’t face these challenges alone. Tasks like selling produce or handling remittances were often managed by clan elders or communal groups. Same-surname communities formed strong support networks, filling gaps seen from the modern nuclear family model and easing the strain of a husband’s absence.

Despite the support network, women still carried most of the household burden—cooking, childcare, farming, tending livestock, and chopping firewood. Children helped with tasks like herding oxen, gathering wood, and feeding chickens. Growing up in times of scarcity, they were used to hard work from an early age. Even their play contributed to the household: catching fish and clams helped feed the family, while they picked up survival skills and passed down generations of practical wisdom.

This “all hands on deck” approach was both a survival strategy and a sign of rural families’ resilience. Clan and village networks offered vital support, filling gaps left by absent husbands. Yet this traditional support network has gradually faded in modern society, leaving the nuclear family more isolated and vulnerable when facing challenges.

Across the water in Sha Tau Kok, some women chose to remain unmarried, adopting male titles and working alongside men in business. This highlights the stark contrast between rural village life and the more urbanised market-town lifestyle.

【鄉野是自學與自由的學堂】

以今日的標準來看，當年的鄉村學校所能提供的教育相當有限，村民也常常自謙「讀書不多」，甚至笑談有家長為了讓孩子繼續放牛，主動要求學校安排留級。在那個年代，讀書識字，彷彿就只為了「識多幾隻字」。

然而細聽他們描述往日生活——尤其是生計與遊戲的細節，便會發現他們早已擁有一種難能可貴的觀察與自學能力，近乎當今教育界所推崇的「體驗式學習」。提起捉蝦，他們說要用「射」的，若直接撈捕，漣漪反而會嚇走蝦群；杜魚也不必四處奔走，只需「守株待魚」，因魚群自會游向淡水所在。這些智慧，一部分源自代代相傳的鄉土知識，更多則來自日常中的「試錯」實踐 (trial and error) ——從錯誤中學習，在觀察中領悟。他們更擁有今天小孩所缺乏的大無畏精神，與大伙兒同輩認同的動力，跟着跟着就放膽做，從而摸索出自己的一套方法。

沒有固定的課程綱要，也沒有完整的方法論，但這種在鄉村幾乎無師自通的學習能力，恰恰是今天世代被吹捧的「未來能力」(Future Skill)。這種從大自然中滋長出來的生活智慧，展現出制度化教育之外，最為寶貴的求知天性或本能。

The Countryside as a Classroom of Self-Learning and Freedom

By today's standards, rural schools offered limited education, and villagers often described themselves as "not well-read." Some even joked about parents asking schools to hold children back so they could keep herding ox. At the time, learning to read seemed to just to pick up basic literacy.

Listening to their stories—especially the details of work and play—reveals a sharp instinct for observation and self-learning, much like today's "experiential learning." To catch shrimp, they would flick rather than scoop to avoid scaring them off; for fish stunning, they would wait by freshwater, knowing the fish would come. This wisdom came partly from local traditions, but mostly from trial and error—learning through mistakes and keen observation. They also had a fearless spirit and strong peer support, diving into tasks and gradually figuring out their own way.

There was no set curriculum or formal method, yet villagers developed a strong ability to learn on their own—now praised as a key "future skill." This everyday wisdom, shaped by life in nature, reflects the true essence of learning beyond the classroom.

【自然、風水與環境保育】

除了孩子在嬉戲中學習自然與生物規律習性之外，農村其實也承載着數百年來積累的生活智慧與生態傳統。簡單如風水，它不僅是一種空間佈局的信仰，更無形中成為一種可持續的土地管理方式。村民依據風水觀念保護「風水林」，實質上維持了森林生態的完整性，成為物種棲息與水土保持的緩衝區。同時，傳統社會注重人與耕地之間的合理比例，避免過度開墾並合理分配資源，維持農業的穩定性。

在沒有現代冷藏技術的時代，村民對捕獵採集有其節制之道，取用自然資源均以自用為限，當日夠吃便停止。放學去釣魚加餸，釣到幾條便回家，天然資源耗損有限。這種生活方式背後，雖未如現代保育觀念般系統與理性，卻實質維持着一種與自然共生、有限度開發的天人合一態度。這並非「完全不干預」，而是追求一種動態平衡的可持續狀態。事實上，村民有說不盡的農村生活小知識，都是他們多年生活經驗的總結和累積，是他們與自然相處過程中學到的處事方式和生存智慧。

Nature, Feng Shui, and Environmental Conservation

Rural life offered more than playful encounters with nature—it held centuries of ecological wisdom. Feng shui, for instance, was not just about spatial harmony; it shaped sustainable land use. Villagers protected feng shui woodlands, which helped preserve biodiversity and prevent soil erosion. Traditional communities also respected the balance between people and farmland, avoiding over-farming and keeping agriculture steady.

Before modern refrigeration, villagers practised restraint in using natural resources—taking only what was needed for the day. After school, children might fish for an hour to help provide dinner, then head home, keeping environmental impact low. Though not guided by formal conservation ideas, this way of life maintained a practical balance with nature. It was not about leaving nature untouched, but about using it sustainably. Villagers also carried a wealth of everyday rural knowledge, shaped by years of experience and a sharp, intuitive grasp of the natural world.

【繁華沙頭角，是周邊農村對外的窗口】

昔日沙頭角作為周邊農村對外交易的重要窗口，甚至面向內地更廣大的市場，為荔枝窩及鄰近村落提供了關鍵的支援。它不僅是農產與漁獲的集散中心，市場供求達一定規模，有效支撐了本地生產與社區經濟的運作。沙頭角與荔枝窩之間距離適中，規模相稱，兩者在空間與經濟上達至一種合理的平衡，從而實現了真正的「鄉墟共生」——農村依靠市集對外聯繫，市集則依賴農業產物維持活力，彼此互補，共築繁榮。直至近半世紀，隨着內地實行改革開放，沙頭角更成為內地與香港間的一道橋樑，從而為這地區擁有特殊身份的沙頭角人提供了千載難逢的發展機遇。

香港近年興起的鄉郊保育熱潮，探討「城鄉共生」、「城鄉共融」等概念；但時代不同、經濟環境不同，要農村延續一種維護自然環境的運作模式，如何再藉鄰近市場提供足夠經濟支撐；沙頭角作為周邊鄉郊村落最接近的已發展社區，可以接通內地，又如何可以更好發揮等問題，都有待思考。事實上，今天社會對香港偏遠鄉村的期望及實際運作層面，已經與昔日大不同。

Sha Tau Kok: A Gateway Between Village and Market

Sha Tau Kok once served as a vital link between rural villages and the outside world, even connecting them to broader mainland markets. It supports Lai Chi Wo and nearby communities as a key hub for trading farm and fishing goods, with a market large enough to sustain local production and the village economy. Its distance and scale were well-matched with Lai Chi Wo, creating a balanced relationship—villages relied on the market for outside exchange, while the market thrived on rural produce. This mutual support built shared prosperity. In recent decades, as China opened up, Sha Tau Kok found itself at the crossroads between Hong Kong and the mainland. This unique position gave locals with special residency status rare economic opportunities.

Rural conservation has gained traction in Hong Kong, with ideas like “urban-rural symbiosis” and “integration” becoming popular. But times and economic conditions have changed. For villages to continue protecting the natural environment, we must ask: can nearby markets still offer enough support? And how might Sha Tau Kok—being the closest developed area and a gateway to the mainland—play a stronger role? Indeed, today’s expectations of remote villages, and how they actually operate, are already very different from the past.

【荔枝窩古村的獨特性】

最後，荔枝窩作為一座擁有超過三百年歷史的客家圍村，其價值不僅體現於自然與人文景觀的原真性——依山臨海、水源包圍的圍村屋地，與田區及山林的井然佈局；更承載了與土地共生，和家族歷史源遠流長的文化傳統。是次研究，我們從歷史文獻的整理中看見，過去現金貧困中折射出的經濟現實，到鄉野自學中蘊藏的教育啟示，再到培成堂所體現的公共資源管理機制，呈現的不是靜止不變的歷史遺產，而是動態延續的文化載體。這帶給我們的，遠不止於對一個村落的認識，更是重新思考何為真正生活的養分。荔枝窩所實踐的資源循環使用、集體共享與適應性學習，在當今追求永續與社區價值的時代，顯現出驚人的前瞻性。這些智慧，既回應了過去那個年代的生存策略，更映照出面向未來生活的種種可能。

傳奇之所以為傳奇，從來不只是因為古老，而是因為它持續為不同世代提供參照與啟發。荔枝窩的故事，正因這些深埋地下頗堪細味的環境生態文化元素，顯現了它作為永續發展模式的文化價值。這種人與自然、城與鄉之間的和諧關係，不僅保存、延續了記憶與傳統，更開啟、激發出新的對話和生活激情。

The Distinctiveness of Lai Chi Wo

Lai Chi Wo, a 300-year-old Hakka walled village, is remarkable not just for its authentic natural and cultural setting—nestled between mountains and sea, with a well-planned layout of homes, farmland and forest—but for its deep-rooted traditions of living in harmony with the land and honouring ancestral heritage. This study reveals more than a static past. From the economic realities of cash scarcity, to the self-taught lessons of rural life, and the shared resource model seen in Pui Shing Tong, Lai Chi Wo emerges as a living cultural system. It offers not just insight into a village, but a fresh lens for rethinking our values. Its practices—resource recycling, collective sharing, and adaptive learning—once born of necessity, now feel strikingly ahead of their time in today’s push for sustainability and community resilience. These traditions met survival needs then, and continue to inspire future possibilities.

A legend endures not because it is old, but because it continues to guide and inspire. Lai Chi Wo’s story, rich in cultural depth, strengthens its case for long-term rural conservation. It preserves memory—and invites dialogue.