



Historical and social research of Mo Tat Wan, Lamma  
Island  
模達灣歷史及社會研究計劃

導賞團 | Guided Tour  
2021.12

# Introduction 2 mins

- I have experience my friends who want to visit me end up taking the wrong ferry to Yung Shu Wan.
- There're much less research about the south Lamma.
- Even there is, those are mostly archaeological studies, not much would talks about its modern history, especially the post-war transformation, nor non-indigenous residents.
- I've been living here for more than twenty years. I love this place and want to record its history.
- This tour will not just introduce you historical facts, but an overview of its cultural landscape, and a reflection about island.

島 | Island

島 = 鳥 + 山



# 島 | Island 3mins

- Vikings considered islands which could connect with the mainland ONLY by boats.
- An ancient Chinese dictionary of etymology refer island as “hills found in the sea that provide rest stops”
- Place that can only be reached by flying birds.
- 例：大嶼山(古稱大奚山) Lantau MOUNTAIN



Pok Liu Chau (baak3 liu4 zau1 舶獠洲) | Lamma Island | 南丫島 (Naam4 Aa1)

# Lamma Island | 南丫島 5mins

- Anyone knows why Lamma is called Lamma ?
- Lamma was called Pok Liu Chau (baak3 liu4 zau1 舶寮洲), meaning “foreigners’ docking place. This saying is trustworthy because it has been laying on the trading rout since the Tang dynasties (618-907)
- Lamma started to appear on Western NAUTICAL CHART since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by mistake.
- “Lama” means mud in Portuguese, and it is just a note written on the map by its owner.
- When the British hydrographer, Alexander Dalrymple read the map, he then put down Lamma as its name.
- The modern Chinese name 南丫, is a result of transcultural encounter. And it helps to explain, islands have always been the place for encounter of difference, be it the land & the sea, culture and nature, or culture and culture.

# 茅笪 Mau Tat | 模達 Mo Tat



# 茅簷 Mau Tat | 模達 Mo Tat 2mins

- There're quite a few rural places also called 茅 cogon grass/ straw, including Mau Ping in Sai Kung, and also Mau Tat in Shatin.
- Just like we have two places call 銅鑼灣, and many more places call 禾-坑、犖。It's a generic name for mountain villages.
- Mau Tat literally means straw hut.
- The name continued to appear in government records till around 1960s.
- But a more elegant word choice also appear in the façade of the old school (found 1932)

# 本地人 | The locals ?



# 本地人 | The locals ? 3mins

- The “indigenous” – is a problematic term for most of the Chinese are in fact coming from the north. Apart from the earliest settler, so call the five big clans in the NT, most of the latter settlers, though still claim themselves as “Han ethnic” “indigenous” are in fact Hakka.
- Hakka were encouraged to migrant to the Sun On County after the Qing government uplifted the “great clearance law” along the south China coast in 1683. They were only able to settle on less fertile land, like in Lamma, i.e. the ancestor of our land lords.
- The Chans and the Chow have been here for about five generations. They are “indigenous”, because they settled just early enough before the British.

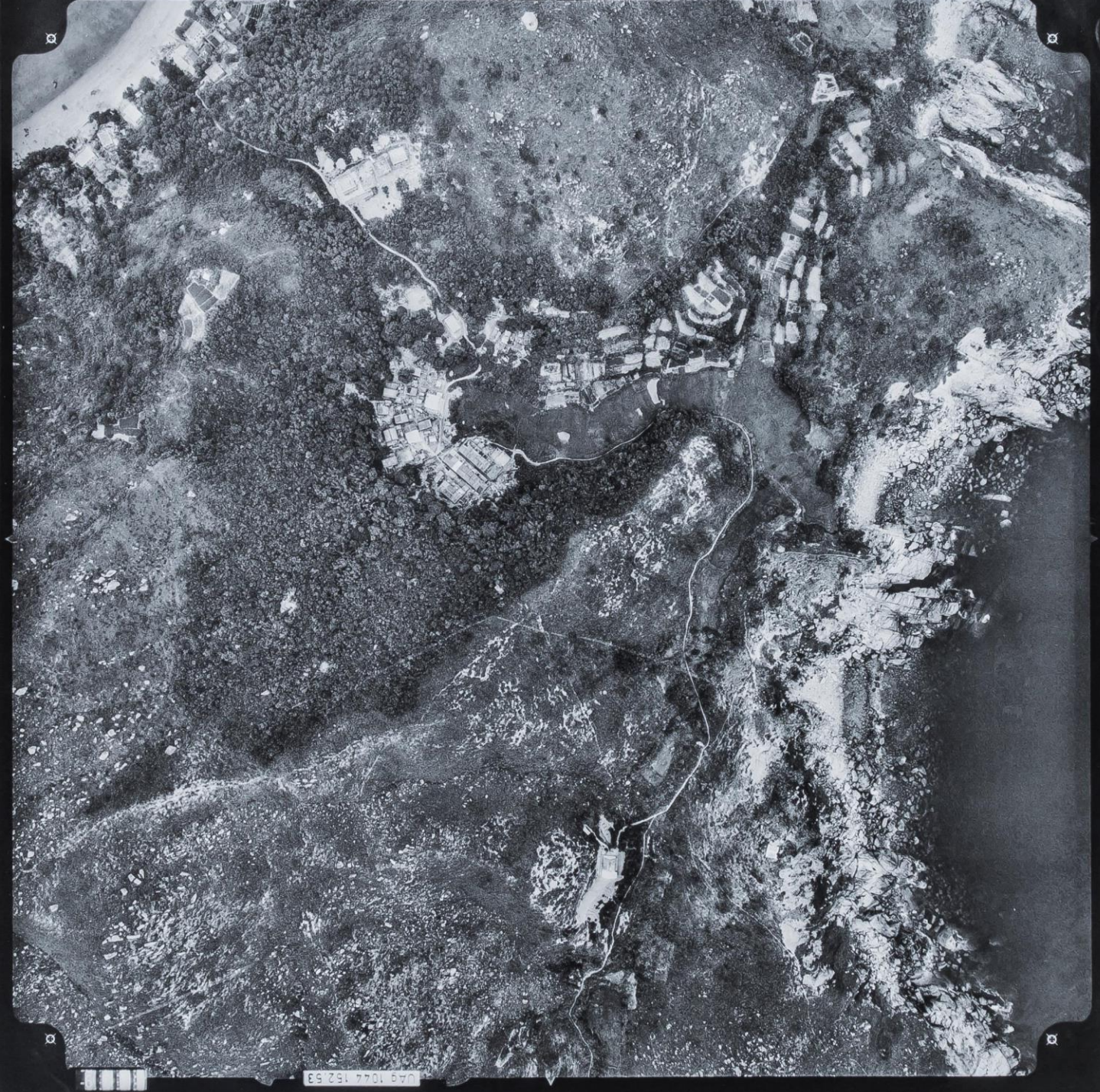
# The Chans and the Chows | 陳、周二姓



# The Chans and the Chows | 陳、周二姓

## 5mins

- The Chans are said to have settled earlier than the Chow. Moved from 南頭 scatter to various location including Po Fu Lam.
- Unlike the typical rural villages, we don't have an impressive ancestral hall here. First, because they were poor; second, because the root is considered be somewhere else.
- Chan's ancestral hall in Tai Wan, Yung Shu Wan.
- The Chow is and extension from 香港圍 in Wong Chuk Hang. The most famous member, apart from Chow Yu Fat, is Sir Shouson Chow – he was part of a group of Qing sponsored students that studied in the USA. Founder the Bank of East Asia. He was the first Chi legco councillor. And a member of the Chi Cooperative Council during Japanese Occupation. – simple put, a comprador and a Chinese leader.



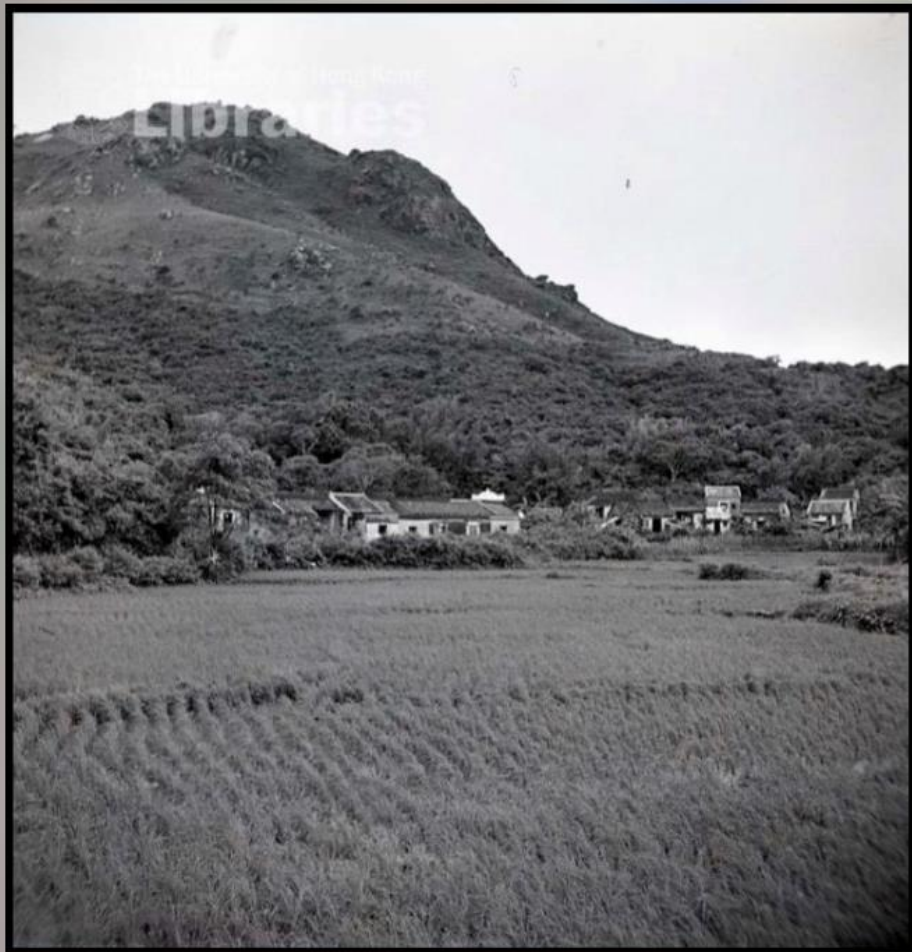
# The village | 村－ 圍 (wai2)

- Aerial map 1972

# The village | 村 – 圍 (wai2) 5mins

- Mau Tat consists of three settlements: the Old Village ('wai'), the Beach ('sa lan') and the New Village.
- Legend has it that the earliest settlement was found at '榕樹公' (Grandpa Banyan) at the end of the paddy field at the bottom of the hill, which can no longer be traced. There are two reasons for the relocation:
  - 1. It was prone to the attack of pirates because it is too close to the sea.
  - 2. A fungshui master saw lights at the foot of Ling Kok Shan at night. Meaning the place is inhabitatble.

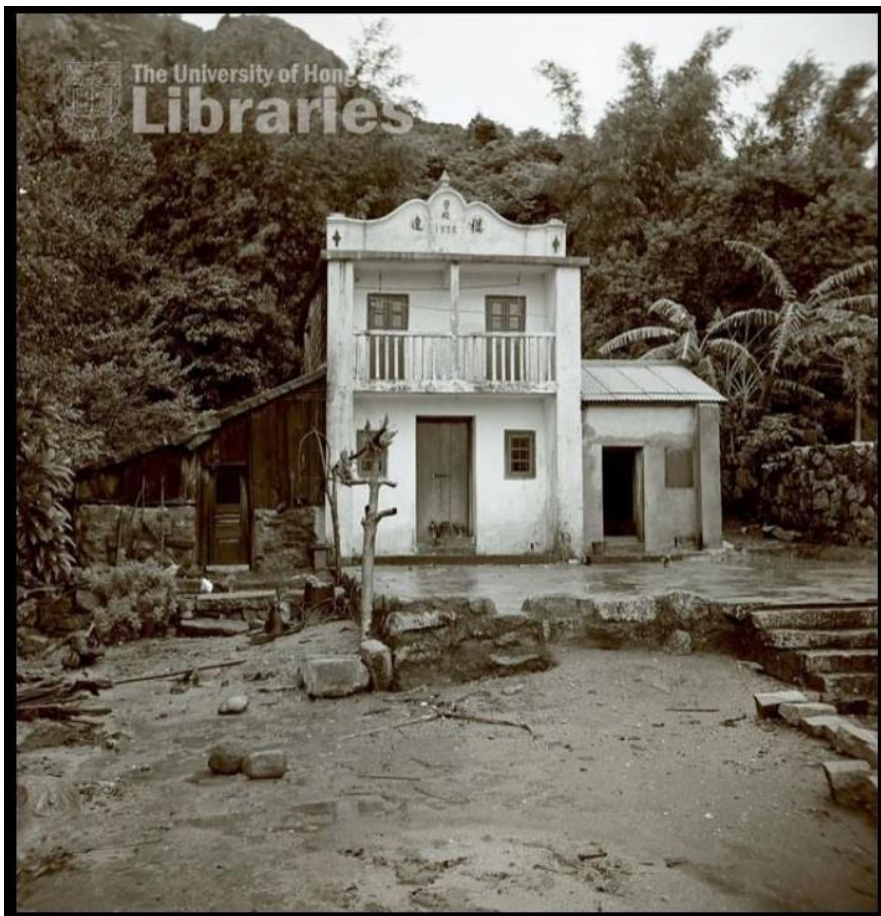
# The village | 村－圍 (wai2)



# The village | 村 – 圍 (wai2) 5 mins

- It is a typical Hakka village faces east and is surrounded by hills and waters, with paddy fields in the front and fungshui woodland at the rear. (whereas the incest trees used to stand)
- What is atypical here is, all the houses are entirely composed of granite. This is kind of unusual. Traditionally, only graves would be built entirely by stone. Houses in Lo So Shing, Tung O and as remote as Luk Chau, used bricks to cover their façade, at least.
- That shows two facts: 1. Lamma is famous for its granite; 2. Mau Tat was really very poor.
- The three rows are called: 屋頭(head of the house); 同心巷(double heart-symbolizing the alliance); 下底巷 (the lower ally)
- For the dividing wall, it's all made of clay.

# 由卜卜齋到公立學校 | From home school to public education



## 由卜卜齋到公立學校 | From home school to public education 5 mins

- The first traditional private school on Lamma was set in the Chan's ancestral hall in 1921. The one here was also built by the Chan. It is believed to be the highest pre-war modern architecture in southern Lamma, besides the castle in Luk Chau.
- Education was tradition, teachers are educated man from the city. Old folks older than 70 all received their basic education here.
- Without any other public space, the school forms a public square for events, including wedding banquet, film screening, registration of identity cards. Villagers would also be called upon and gather here for inspection during the Japanese occupation.

# The village – earth god | 村 – 伯公

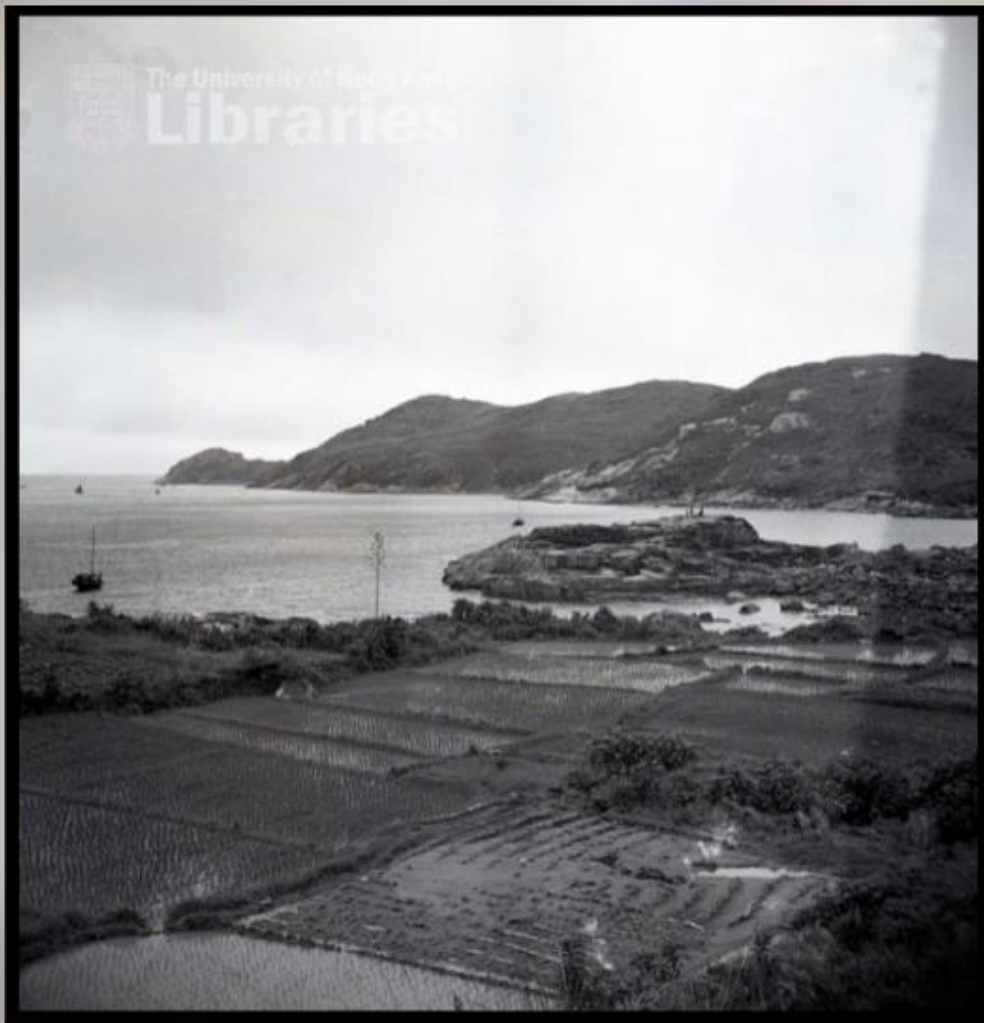


# The village | 村 – Earth god 伯公

## 2 mins 移去大王爺

- Earth god define the boundary of village and we have four of them.
- They are all 伯公 earth gods manifested in different forms, especially stone and banyan trees that symbolize longevity and good fortune.
- They are rendered in hierarchy. The highest one is this one and that's where the light come from and is preserved in its primitive form without any letters.
- The lowest would be the household 土地 set besides the door in red.
- We shall take a look at the others when we pass by later.

# Paddy | 禾稻



# Paddy | 禾稻

## 10mins walk to the toilet

- We are now looking at the paddy fields and Mau Tat used to have extensive farmland, north to 崖頭, south to the end of this road before turning into 榕樹下.
- Rice was harvested twice a year on Lamma Island.
- Some villagers would bring their harvest to the rice merchants in exchange for more broken rice for food. While for those who have surplus, would be brewed into rice wine. That's how Martin & Eva's landlord would do in the old days.
- Distilling utensils can still be found amongst the rubble in the Old Village. I think Mr Chow has a set now serving as fish tank in front of his house. The illegal distiller were welcomed by the fishermen community.
- However, the rural economy has gone bankrupt in the 1960s due to several drought (as said in the sing board). But I will argue it's more because of the social change generally in HK, villagers aspirated to modern city life, and demand "real money" than a self-sustain lifestyle.

## 由卜卜齋到公立學校 | From home school to public education

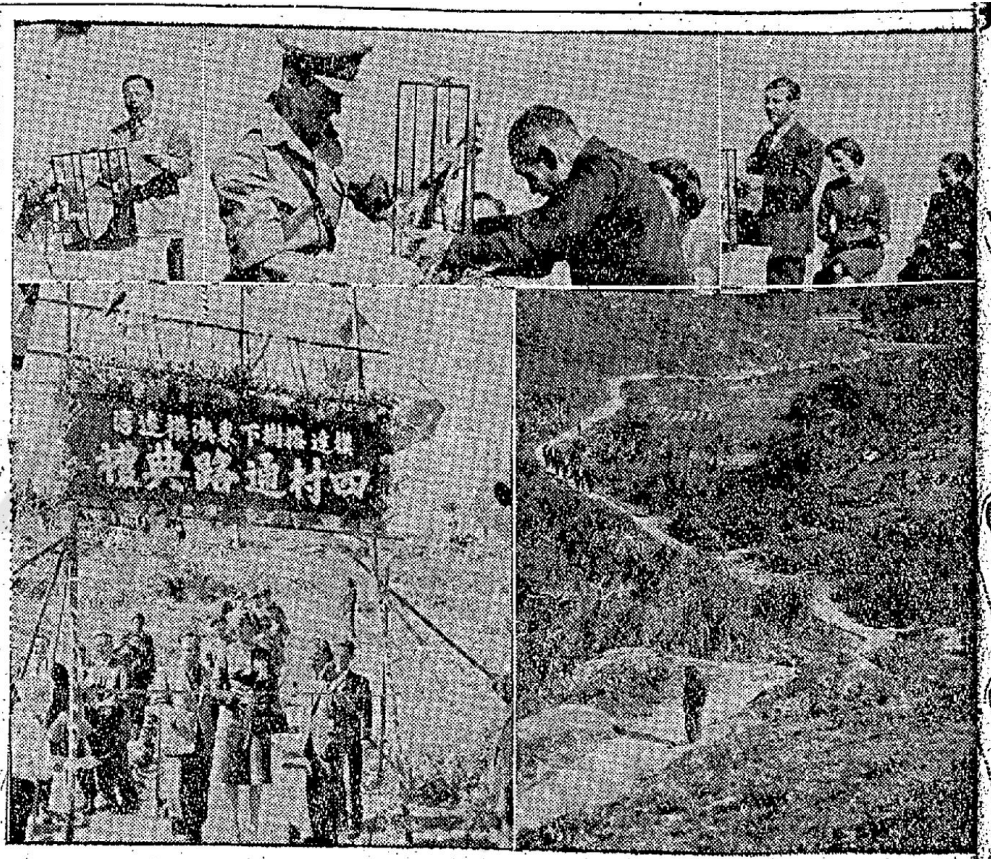


## 由卜卜齋到公立學校 | From home school to public education 10mins in front of the school

- Folks who are above 40 went to the South Section Primary School which was found in 1960. Five years later than the Lo So Shing School.
- This school is typical village public school among others built during the school building boom in 1950s. The method is, government subsidize half of the construction cost, and the rural committee raise fund locally. The DC was responsible for the design. So it is kind of generic.
- With this new premise, the capacity of the school raised from 24 to 45. Classes were conducted in mixed mode.
- When interviewing the old folks, they'd always claim themselves as the first runner up in their form. Just because there are only a handful of students in each class.
- By mid-1980 less than 10 students remained at the school. Principles and teachers tried to recruit students from the Southern area but in vain. The school finally closed down around 1990.
- We are fortunate to be able to get in touch with the school principle. You may find out more in the book.

# 四村通路 | Road for four villages

類，更可引致本區農識，俾能增進普遍性。九、諸君協助，以救車，則醫局設於安惠至九已，而安惠及救車也。



〔特訊〕駐澳英軍在本澳省了島南化

自於近日天氣非常炎熱，尤其是中午

直通距離該村一里之學校

## 協助村民築路

英軍在南丫島



哥振 下捐社實誠陸天

# 四村通路 | Road for four villages

## 5mins

- Before walking up again. Let me briefly introduce the history of this road.
- In 1951, a rural committee was established in the Southern part of Lamma Island. They immediately demanded the government improve the local infrastructure. They first succeeded in fighting for the main road that connected the four villages of Mo Tat Wan, Mot Tat, Yung Shue Ha and Tung O.
- In the summer of 1962, the District Office allocated materials and with the aid of the 29 Battery, 4th Regiment Royal Artillery, groups of ten took turns to level the rocks and build concrete footpaths. Bringing together the efforts of villagers and school children who carried sand and water, it took more than two months to build the main road with a total length of 19,642 feet.
- Surprisingly, the road connecting Mo Tat to Sok Kwu Wan came rather late in the 1970s.

# 四村通路 | Road for four villages



## 四村通路 | Road for four villages 2mins

- We'd not go further down, and you may take notice of a cement plaques. It reads,
- 「 3 Platoon, A Coy, 1.R.Warwick, Sept 1961 (1st Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 3 Platoon, A company, September 1961) 」
- In the 1960s when the regiment stationed at Stanley, similar stone plaques were left behind. We are not sure if it is to mark the operation of the road.



The village | 村 - 石屋



# The village | 村 – 石屋

10 mins – in front of Martin's place

- This impressive row of village houses is a new settlement since the late 1960s.
- Each of these two-story house is built of 3,000 pieces of stone, costing \$2.2 dollar each. In those days, grandma can earn 0.5 by carrying one pack of cement up to the mountain. Otherwise, they would have to relay on remittance to improve their living condition.
- Stone were mined locally. Villagers will call the Hakka stone breakers to come and stay for a period. Apart from that, they would have to carry sand from the beach to build those houses.
- All these houses is transformation from nature to culture, and made locally.

# The village – earth god | 村 – 伯公

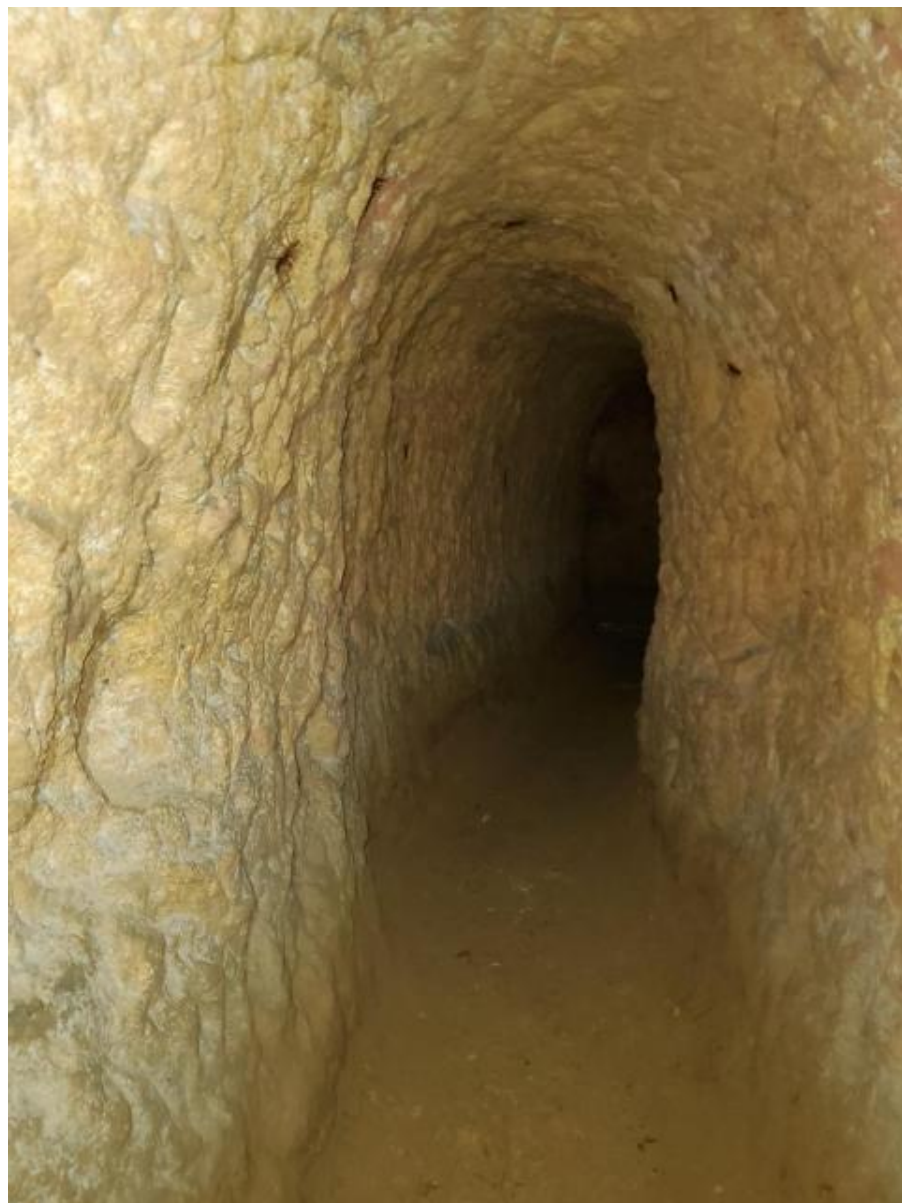


# The village – earth god | 村 – 伯公

## 5mins

- The one in the New Village was set up when the village was built. It was originally erected at the doorstep of Martin and Eva's place and is relocated after they built the house. Without any letter and in a primitive form, 'Pak Kung' is now formally named by So si-fu who is originated from Guangzhou, as 土地公公. "cultural transformation" could happen just by accident.
- When we are walking down to the beach, I'd like you to take notice of the other 伯公, manifested in the form of banyan tree. It is said that there were villagers who swore loyalty with the tree when they were small in exchange for blessing.

# Cave | 山洞

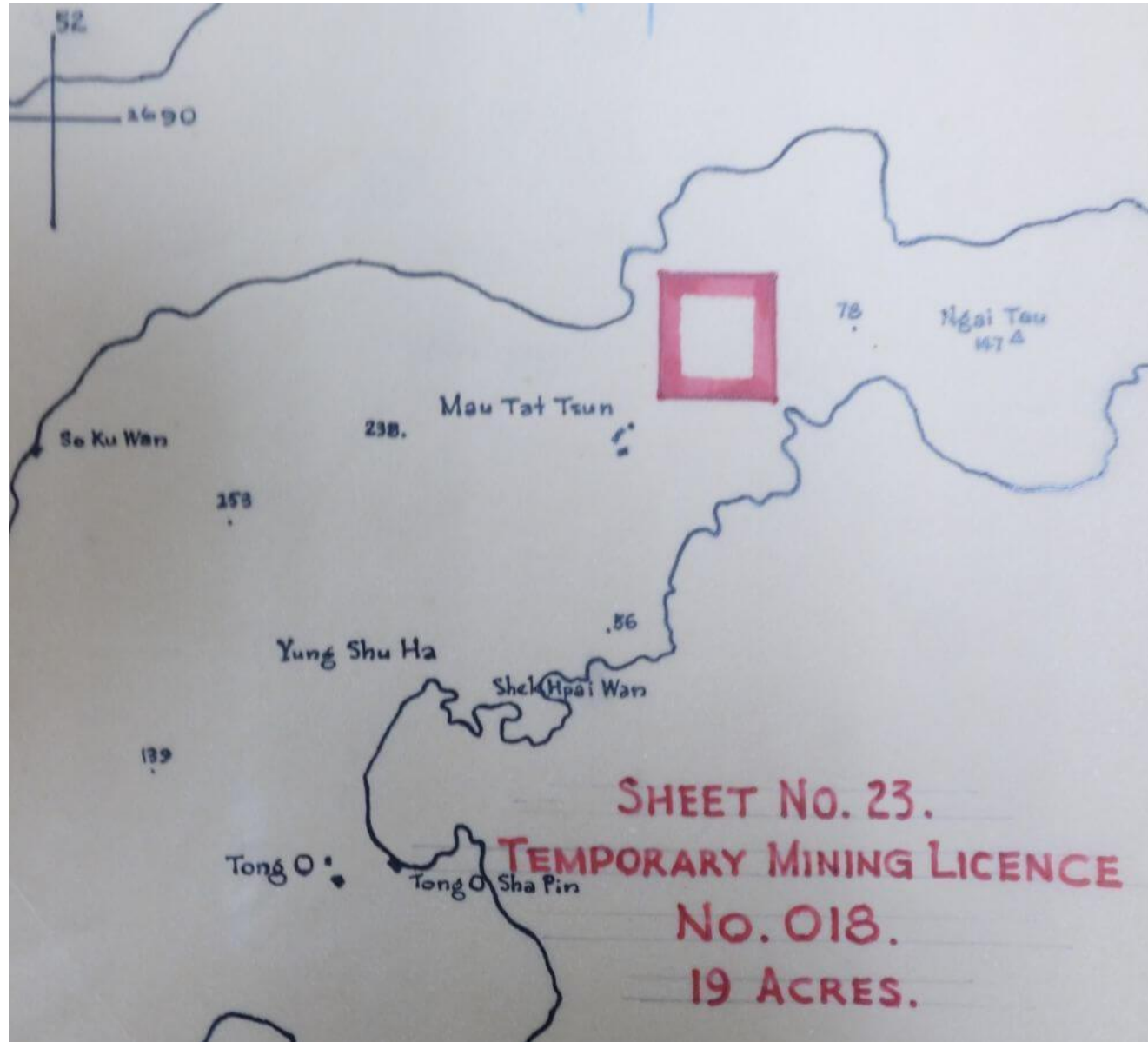


# Cave | 山洞

## 3 mins- 路口

- I know there are experts of cave in the group. We are not going to visit them today. I just want to highlight the nature of these caves.
- All coastal areas, including Mau Tat Wan, Sok Kwu Wan and Lo So Shing were designated as military ports during the Japanese occupation, where the villagers were prohibited from entering.
- Those who used to live by the beach like Kam ling were forced to leave. While extended family members, like my grandma's family would retreat from the city and stay in the village. During food shortages, children would be sent to the restricted areas to dig sweet potatoes under cover of the night.
- The villagers were assigned to dig tunnels and transport supplies in exchange for food rations.
- They recall that when the Japanese surrendered in 1945, two naval fleets took the Japanese troops away. Despite the jubilation, they had not forgotten to rush to the garrison to grab supplies.

# Cave | 山洞

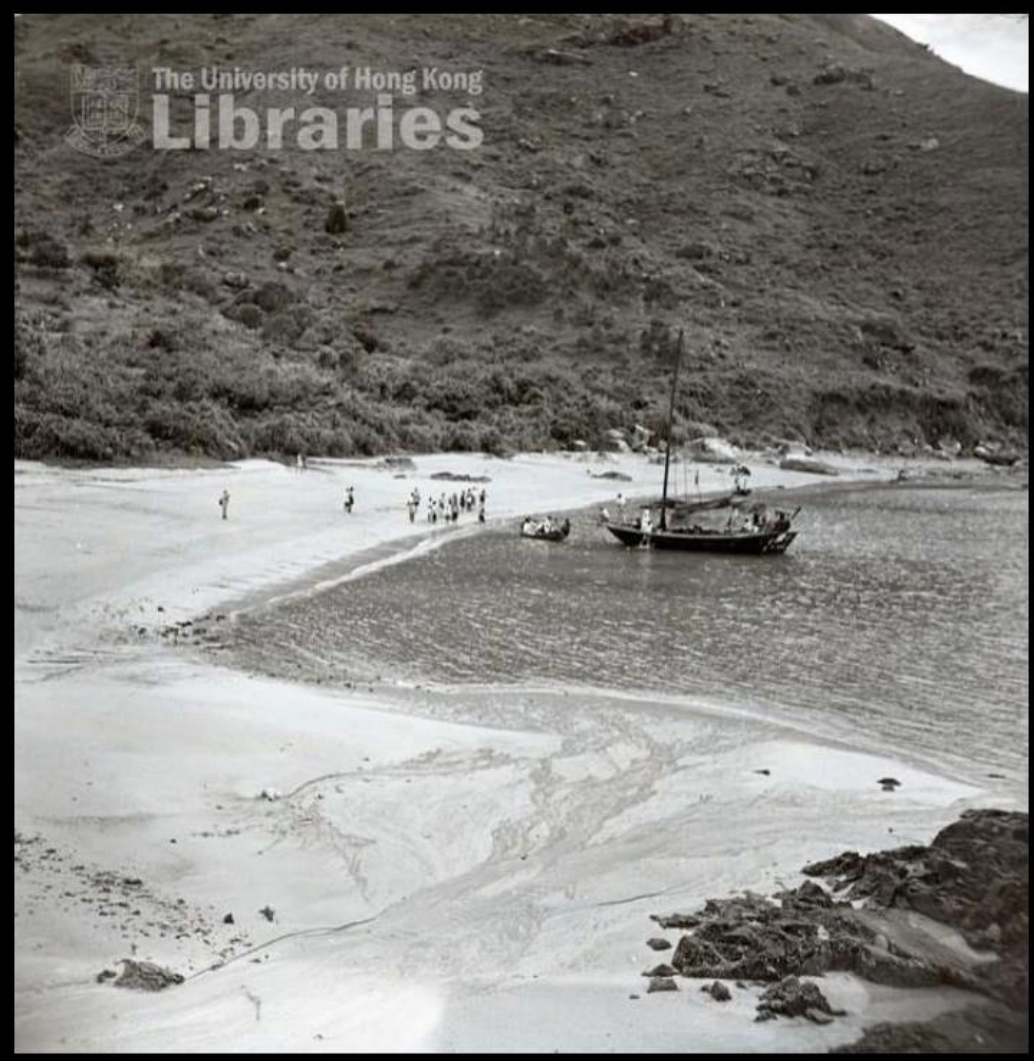


# Cave | 山洞

## 3 mins- 路口

- Apart from military use. There are another purpose of these caves.
- There were small-scale mining operations both before and after the war. In the 1950s, a mine proprietor named Chen invested HKD3,000 at that time dollars and applied for government permission to develop a magnesite mine around Mo t Tat. According to the official documents, the license application was not renewed after 1954. Excavated differently from the Japanese tunnels, the insides of these caves remain rugged. People are warned against entering without professional guidance.

# Pier | 碼頭



## Pier | 碼頭 10mins

- Here we come to our last stop for this tour. There are two place I'd like to highlight. First is the pier that is easy but crucial to be overlooked.
- By 1962, the government had a public piers in Sok Kwu Wan to fit for the Yaumati Ferry.
- The pier in Mo Tat was built rather late in 1986. Before that, human and livestock cargo could only be loaded and unloaded on the beach with the aid of a plank.
- Unfortunately, as the waters were too shallow, it was not only impossible for the ferries to dock during ebb tide. The current north pier was thus built in the 1990s
- Location is selected by Chuen Kee Ferry, extends 25 metres into the sea from the reef's edge 'Shek Kok', and is shielded from the strong northeast monsoon winds, ensuring the safety of the passengers.

# The Social Club | 酒家



# The Social Club | 酒家

- This is the last spot that I'd like to highlight its transformation.
- The elderly villagers call it 酒家. The premise was first adapted into commercial use in the 1970s as a seafood restaurant. Grandpa of Leo was one of the owner. After the seafood restaurant closed there was a *cha chaan teng*, but business was again poor.
- A chance for total transformation came in the late 1990s. Director Stanley Kwan filmed *The Island Tales* and looked for a location on Lamma Island. The film tells the story of several individuals from different backgrounds who arrive at a small island for different reasons. A plague breaks out in the city, and, suspected to be the source, the island is suddenly under quarantine. The strangers meet in a bar, speaking Cantonese, English and Japanese against the exotic setting.
- They remade the *cha chaan teng* completely. Other than the wooden door, the chandelier and the wooden railings, the most iconic was the long bar counter, where the characters intoxicated themselves with alcohol and marijuana. When shooting was done, the cha chaan teng owner asked that the film setting be kept, and the common *cha chaan teng* was transformed into a Mediterranean restaurant.
- There is no need to mention the rest, when the local takes it over from the Cococabana.