

Agreement No. SLO 10/2020

Cultural and Historical Studies of Pui O, Shui Hau and Neighbouring Areas on Lantau



CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES OF LANTAU MOUNTAIN CAMP IN YI TUNG SHAN CONSERVATION STRATEGY PLAN (June 2022)

The Sustainable Lantau Office (SLO) of the Civil Engineering and Development Department commissioned consultants to conduct preliminary baseline studies on the culture and history of different villages on Lantau Island, to propose conservation recommendations. These reports are for reference only. For any enquiries, please contact SLO (email: enquiry@lantau.gov.hk).

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Introduction

Lantau Mountain Camp as Hong Kong's unique highland eco-cultural landscape

Perched between the saddle of Sunset Peak (869m, the third highest peak in Hong Kong) and Yi Tung Shan (749m, the ninth highest) on Lantau Island, Lantau Mountain Camp was established in 1925. It consists of a string of 19 rough-hewn single-story stone cabins and some amenity structures originally intended for multi-national, inter-denominational missionaries in South China and Hong Kong.

The origin of Lantau Mountain Camp can be traced back to some western Protestant missionaries and their families, who were engaged in evangelical and social development (such as establishing and operation schools and hospitals) endeavours around Guangdong in early twentieth century. They set up a summer camp on the mountain near Guangzhou as a spiritual and health retreat. By 1922, political unrest and deteriorating social order made it unsafe for the missionaries to spend their summer in the hills. They turned to the then British Hong Kong for help.¹ After several reconnaissances around Hong Kong's highland and negotiations with the government, they purchased twenty-odd land lots on the ridge between Sunset Peak and Yi Tung Shan at a government land auction in 1924, and built sturdy stone cabins here to form Lantau Mountain Camp to spend their summers here.

Over the century residents of Lantau Mountain Camp had diligently kept the camp and the cabins in decent condition. They also constructed and took care of the trails to the camp. The absence of electricity supply and municipal water and accessibility only on foot had kept life on the mountain reminiscent of a quaint village notwithstanding modernisation and changes of the society.

Lantau Mountain Camp and its environs feature pristine highland environment and unique cultural landscape. The surrounding natural environment where it situates is designated as country park area (bordering both Lantau South Country Park and Lantau North Country Park, as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the northwestern slope of Yi Tung Shan). The architectural compound is the highest in altitude of its kind in Hong Kong. The choice of location, characteristics and development of Lantau Mountain Camp are closely associated with the geographical attributes and surrounding environmental conditions. A conservation strategy plan for Lantau Mountain Camp is hence much needed.

¹ Morgan, Carter. "An Informal Sketch of Laantau Mountain Camp", 1979.

1. Principles of Conservation for Lantau Mountain Camp of Yi Tung Shan

1.1 Connectivity with neighbouring areas of South Lantau and beyond

Accessibility and interaction of Lantau Mountain Camp with neighbouring areas of South Lantau are taken into consideration in formulating the strategy plan for its conservation. These include the physical hiking trails to Sunset Peak and Yi Tung Shan area (there is no vehicular road access; trailheads are at Nam Shan, Tung Chung and Pak Kung Au), involvement of local communities in the establishment and operation of Lantau Mountain Camp (mainly Tung Chung, Mui Wo and Pui O), as well as visitor experience (hikers territory-wide of Hong Kong) in the area.

1.2 Synergy between stakeholders

The conservation for Lantau Mountain Camp are pertinent to cabin owners/users (and their related organisations), hikers, villagers in the neighbouring areas and so on. The strategy plan addresses the concerns and needs of the stakeholders, creates synergy of different parties to leverage knowledge and resources for preservation and enhancement of the area, and strikes a balance between heritage conservation and respect for private property rights.

1.3 Awareness towards natural environment

Lantau Mountain Camp and its vicinity features highland environment, diverse natural habitat at different altitude ranges, as well as environments designated for nature conservation such as Country Park and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Historical use and human interaction of these natural landscapes and resources are looked into for conservation considerations.

1.4 Linkage of people, history and cultural heritage

The history and development of Lantau Mountain Camp is interwoven with Christian ministry by overseas missionaries in South China and Hong Kong. The study of its historical development and conservation of built heritage should reflect, apart from relationship with neighbouring communities, the religious activities in the area and related organisations beyond South Lantau.

Methodology

A. Desk-top research

Several government working papers provide the backbone of the content of this report. The above principles are formulated with reference to:

1. “Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021 Progress of Implementation” (ACE Paper 9/2021), Advisory Council on the Environment, Environmental Protection Department (EPD), HKSAR Government, September 2021

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2. “Summary Report of the Country Parks Committee” (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/6/2020), Country and Marine Parks Board, Country and Marine Parks Authority, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), HKSAR Government, May 2020
 3. “Initial Ideas of Strategy Plan for Conservation and Rural Revitalisation”, Sustainable Lantau Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), HKSAR Government, September 2021

The first two working papers provide the background and direction for conservation of Lantau Mountain Camp, as well as Lantau and designated areas of Hong Kong as country parks and their vicinities on the whole. In drawing up the principles of conservation for Lantau Mountain Camp of Yi Tung Shan, considerations are given to the recommendations and initiatives stipulated in the papers, which include the assessment on the suitability of incorporating Yi Tung Shan enclave into Lantau South Country Park (LSCP) for its conservation value, landscape and aesthetic value, and education and engagement opportunities, improvements to visitor facilities on the hiking trails leading to Lantau Mountain Camp, preservation of the Lantau Mountain Camp with the owners of the stone chalets, and the possible designation of a camping site at a suitable location near Lantau Mountain Camp.

The third working paper outlines the values and guiding principles to be accentuated in the conservation for South Lantau. These involve understanding the uniqueness of South Lantau and the significance of its natural and cultural heritage, identifying and responding the needs and interests of both local communities and visitors, and sharing of these valuable stories territory-wide and beyond.

B. Archival study

Findings from archival study conducted during the investigation for *Cultural and Historical Studies of Lantau Mountain Camp in Yi Tung Shan* are made reference with in this strategy plan whenever appropriate.

C. Engagement with cabin owners, campers and stakeholders

Interviews and meetings were held with past and present cabin owners (both individual and society owners²) and campers, and stakeholders of Lantau Mountain Camp such as Lantau Mountain Camp Residents Association and volunteers. Throughout the project period, the research team had regularly kept them informed of the progress of the research, asked them for feedback on the findings of the study, and consulted them in formulating the conservation strategies for Lantau Mountain Camp and its vicinity.

² Please refer to “Report on Cultural and Historical Studies for Lantau Mountain Camp in Yi Tung Shan” on the definition and details of individual and society owners of Lantau Mountain Camp

2. Summary of Conservation for Lantau Mountain Camp of Yi Tung Shan

Conservation objectives	Strategy Plan	
Lantau Mountain Camp as Hong Kong's unique highland eco-cultural landscape	S1	<p><i>Historical & cultural significance</i></p> <p>Magnify the historical and cultural value of Lantau Mountain Camp in terms of cultural heritage, social development and international cultural exchange</p>
	S2	<p><i>Architectural value</i></p> <p>Accentuate the architectural characteristics of Lantau Mountain Camp, and how its configuration on adapts to altitudinal and environmental attributes</p>
	S3	<p><i>Eco-cultural Engagement Opportunities</i></p> <p>Engage stakeholders of Lantau Mountain Camp in planning, management and education of natural and cultural resources of the area</p>

3. Conservation for Lantau Mountain Camp of Yi Tung Shan

3.1 Conservation Strategy (S1) — Historical & Cultural Significance

<i>Magnify the historical and cultural value of Lantau Mountain Camp in terms of cultural heritage, social development and international cultural exchange</i>		
Short-term (ST) recommendation	Medium-term (MT) recommendation	Long-term (LT) recommendation
<p>A. Investigate the establishment, operation and evolution of Lantau Mountain Camp, including but not limited to reasons of its establishment, persons and organisations involved, building process, maintenance and operation, interaction with local communities, regional and international connections by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk-top research • Site visit • Interview with campers, cabin owners, and stakeholders <p>(Completed in the Report on Cultural and Historical Studies for Lantau Mountain Camp in Yi Tung Shan)</p>	<p>A. Consolidate the research findings in <i>SI ST</i> into various formats of information decks and the proposed Lantau Cultural and Historical Database, such as brochure and cultural map (see Plates 1 & 2)</p> <p>B. Disseminate the findings in <i>SI ST</i> with the proposed media in <i>SI MT (A)</i> such as brochures and cultural map to various target audience, such as local communities of Lantau, outdoor enthusiasts and hikers territory-wide, and church and missionary organisations</p> <p>C. Coordinate with relevant governmental departments and/or organisations, for instances Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), as well as neighbouring communities of Lantau Mountain Camp to disseminate raised awareness on cultural and historical resources of Lantau Mountain Camp, and to explore any appropriate heritage conservation guidelines for such unique eco-cultural landscape</p>	<p>A. Conduct further research on religious (in particular Christian — both Protestant and Catholic) landscape on Lantau, and explore its religiosity in relation to social and cultural development in Hong Kong and even in China and parts of Asia</p> <p>B. Explore the potential and feasibility of a heritage trail (physical and/or virtual) of Christian (both Protestant and Catholic) history and development on Lantau, for instance from Lantau Mountain Camp of Sunset Peak area to the Trappist Monastery of Hung Shui Shan area. (See Plates 3, 4 & 5)</p> <p>C. Provide conservation guidelines of cultural heritage and funding support to the potential sustainable conservation management project(s) for this eco-cultural landscape</p>



Plate 1: Brochure of Boat Tour of the Northeast New Territories by Hong Kong Geopark, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)

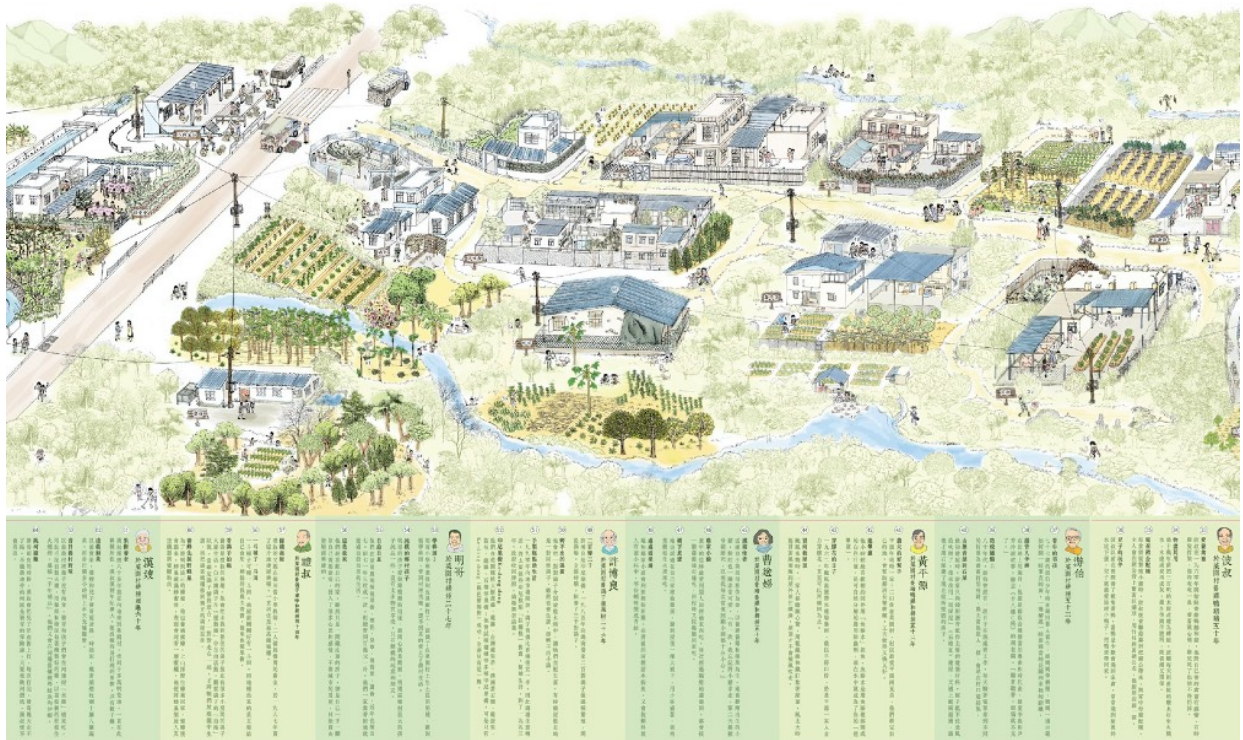


Plate 2: Cultural map of Choi Yuen Village, Hong Kong by School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

鄉郊保育資助計劃
Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme

鄉郊保育辦公室
Countryside Conservation Office

古蹟行

教區「古道行」工作小組
Diocesan Working Committee for "Following Thy Way"

followingthyway

http://thyway.catholic.org.hk

再踏先賢路 永續傳教心

西貢天主教教堂及
鄉村文化古道建設計劃

來一趟洗滌心靈之旅

由十間教堂連成，揉合生態，歷史，文化，心靈及建行等原素
現代修行方式，由「古道」開始

黃毛應玫瑰小堂

西灣海星小堂

赤徑聖家小堂

大浪聖母無原罪小堂

水路

陸路

古蹟行

一起來漫步西貢!

歡迎大家來到「西貢天主教教堂及鄉村文化古道建設計劃」中期研究發展報告。「鄉村文化古道」是一條位於西貢半島上的傳統路徑，連繫了十間歷史悠久的耶穌天主堂小堂，這條古道今天成為了大型郊遊郊遊徑，其間更串連了多個郊遊景點的巴士，以方便鄉間居民在假期難得的郊遊。今天，讓我們以腳步成為新點，而另一條與眾不同的路上西貢「鄉村文化古道」。

(請點擊以下圖示以進入展覽廳)

再踏先賢路 永續傳教心

立即捐款

古道行動態

東平洲朝聖之旅

今年的平安夜，我在東平洲過了一個平安和感恩的一夜。
[.....]

Plate 3: Conservation and restoration of Catholic Churches in Sai Kung and connecting them with a heritage trail, steered by the Catholic Diocesan Working Committee for “Following Thy Way”



Plate 4: Use of photogrammetry and augmented reality in self-guided tour mobile apps for heritage trail, by Experience Heritage, Association of Independent Museums, UK

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE EXPERIENCES PRESENTS

Virtual Christian Heritage Trail

Come join us on a Virtual Trail and listen to stories of the early missionaries who came to Singapore in the early 19th century!

25 JULY 2020
3.30 - 4.30 PM

Sign Up Here:

Registration closes:
24 July, 12pm

Organized by: **IBEX** INTERNATIONAL BIBLE EXPERIENCES

Supported by: National Integration Council **100** Together in 2020

Plate 5: Virtual Christian Heritage Trail by International Bible Experiences, Singapore

3.2 Conservation Strategy (S2) — Architectural Value

<i>Accentuate the architectural characteristics of Lantau Mountain Camp, and how its configuration adapts to altitudinal and environmental attributes</i>		
Short-term (ST) recommendation	Medium-term (MT) recommendation	Long-term (LT) recommendation
<p>A. Survey the architecture attributes of the cabins and amenities of Lantau Mountain Camp, for instances the structure, materials, layout, renovation and repair, use of space for an overall architectural appraisal</p> <p>B. Encourage NPO(s) to work with residents of Lantau Mountain Camp to conduct conservation management plan (including maintenance manual and guidelines) for the management, maintenance, conservation and adaptive reuse (if required) for the cabins and the supporting facilities of the Camp</p>	<p>A. Compare and contrast the findings in <i>S2 ST (A)</i> with studies on other mountain camps of similar historical and cultural background, such as those in mainland China and parts of Asia, for further evaluation on the heritage value of Lantau Mountain Camp (see Plates 6 & 7)</p> <p>B. Through design thinking approach consolidating the opinions of the residents of the Lantau Mountain Camp and other relevant stakeholders, explore the possibility and contrive plans of renovating a cabin or amenity at Lantau Mountain Camp for conservation purpose, such as a ranger station</p> <p>C. Study and explore the possibility of adaptive reuse of other built structures at and around Lantau Mountain Camp, for instance, restoring the disused Caretaker’s Hut as a ranger station</p>	<p>A. Engage owners and custodians of cabins of Lantau Mountain Camp to formulate management agreement on the property for built heritage conservation as well as public education</p> <p>B. Develop training programmes with NGOs (e.g. Raleigh Hong Kong, CACHe, Kaifong Tour) for individuals in neighbouring areas and/or from territory-wide to collaborate in the conservation and public engagement initiatives</p>



Plate 6: Da Lat (ca. 1925) in Vietnam is a hill station set up by French settlers in 1900s

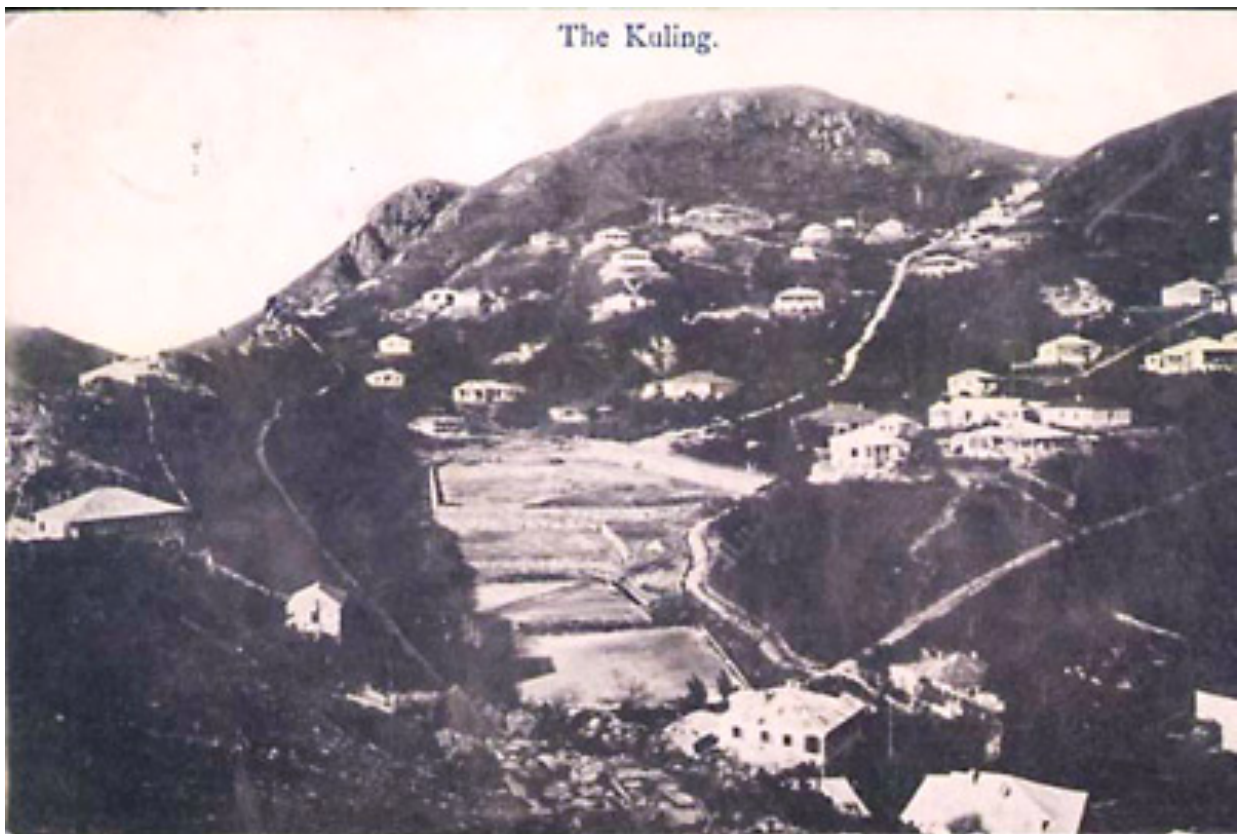


Plate 7: Kuling (ca. 1930) in a valley of Mountain Lu, Jiangxi Province, China was established in 1895 by Western missionaries as a sanatorium and resort.

3.3 Conservation Strategy (S3) — Eco-cultural Engagement Opportunities

<i>Engage stakeholders of Lantau Mountain Camp in planning, management and education of natural and cultural resources of the area</i>		
Short-term (ST) recommendation	Medium-term (MT) recommendation	Long-term (LT) recommendation
<p>A. Conduct field studies on ecological interests around Sunset Peak and Yi Tung Shan, and recommend representative and less sensitive species, ecosystems and/or topographies for public education</p> <p>B. Conduct visitor impact assessment (such as hiking and camping activities) on geographic use and behaviour patterns around Sunset Peak and Yi Tung Shan, and outline spatial, temporal patterns as well as intensity of the impacts</p> <p>C. Co-create and conduct thematic prototype activities (such as star-gazing, history and cultural walk, wildlife appreciation and mountaineering training) with professional NGOs and/or interest groups (e.g. Astrolink, CACHe, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, China Hong Kong Mountaineering and Climbing Union) that make use of the natural and cultural heritage of Sunset Peak area, evaluate the potential of various activity themes and develop activity guidelines for interested members of the public (see Plates 8 & 9)</p>	<p>A. Consolidate the findings in S3 ST (A) and formulate designs and measures for visitor management and natural conservation of the area, for example more appealing information panel and warning signs, and develop information decks and other innovative and agile tools such as mobile phone apps (see Plate 10)</p> <p>B. Consolidate the findings in S3 ST (B) & (C) and develop prototypes of outdoor safety and educational facilities, such as shelters, pavilions and observation decks, to improve safety of hikers and visitors, and raise their heritage awareness to protect the built heritage and respect the residents' privacy of Lantau Mountain Camp (see Plate 11)</p> <p>C. Explore the feasibility of diversifying points of interest in light of the rich natural, cultural and historical resources of Sunset Peak and Yi Tung Shan, and raise conservation awareness of hikers and visitors towards Lantau Mountain Camp, such as small art installations that are consonant with the natural environment or cultural heritage of the area using eco-friendly materials</p>	<p>A. Coordinate with relevant governmental departments and/or organisations, for instances Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Civil Aid Service (CAS) and China Hong Kong Mountaineering and Climbing Union (CHKMCU), to review and enhance hiking routes and facilities in the area for better conservation of this unique eco-cultural landscape</p> <p>B. Develop web-based virtual learning database platform on natural and cultural assets of Sunset Peak area for the general public, and explore opportunities to consolidate the educational materials to fit school curriculums at different levels (see Plate 12)</p>

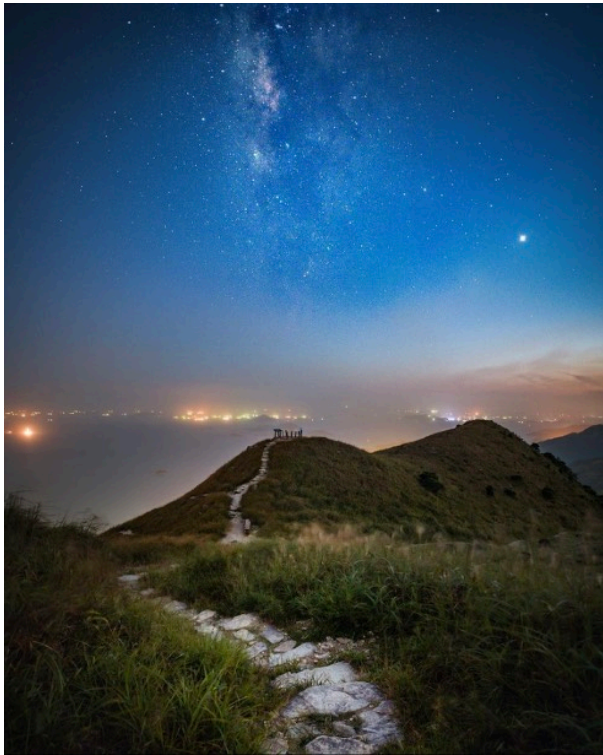
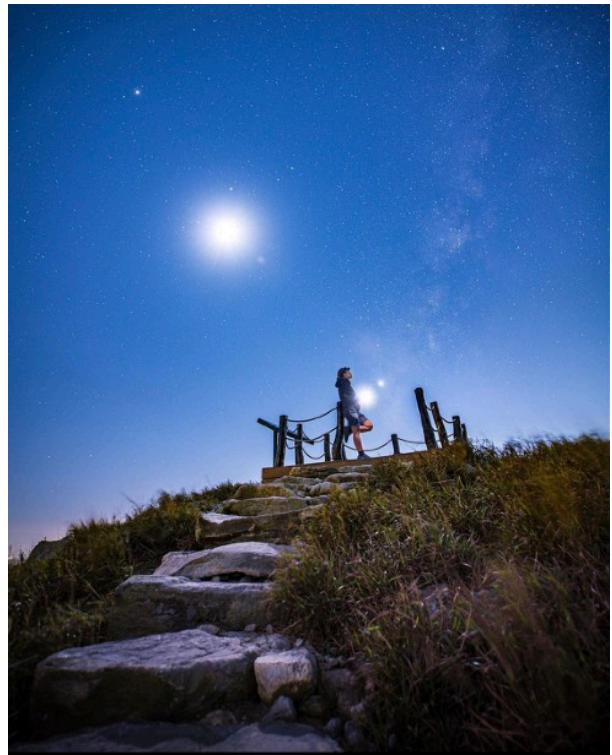


Plate 8: Star-gazing opportunities at Sunset Peak (photos by Jessica Li)



12

甚麼是山藝 (Mountain Craft)

- 沿自英國及英聯邦等地的攀山訓練專稱。

英國山藝天書·初版於1969

13

山藝訓練的宗旨

- 戶外之樂
- 團隊精神
- 登山訓練
- 山野知識
- 愛護環境

山藝課程方針

- 有系統的訓練課程
- 推廣登山運動
- 提高參加者技術水平及安全意識
- 安全登山·觀賞大自然

Plate 9: Contents of mountaineering training course by China Hong Kong Mountaineering and Climbing Union

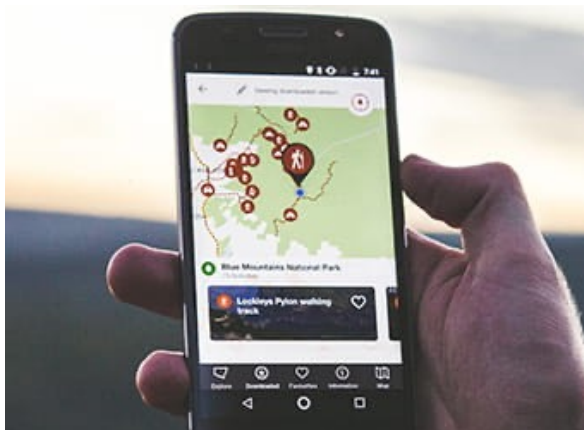
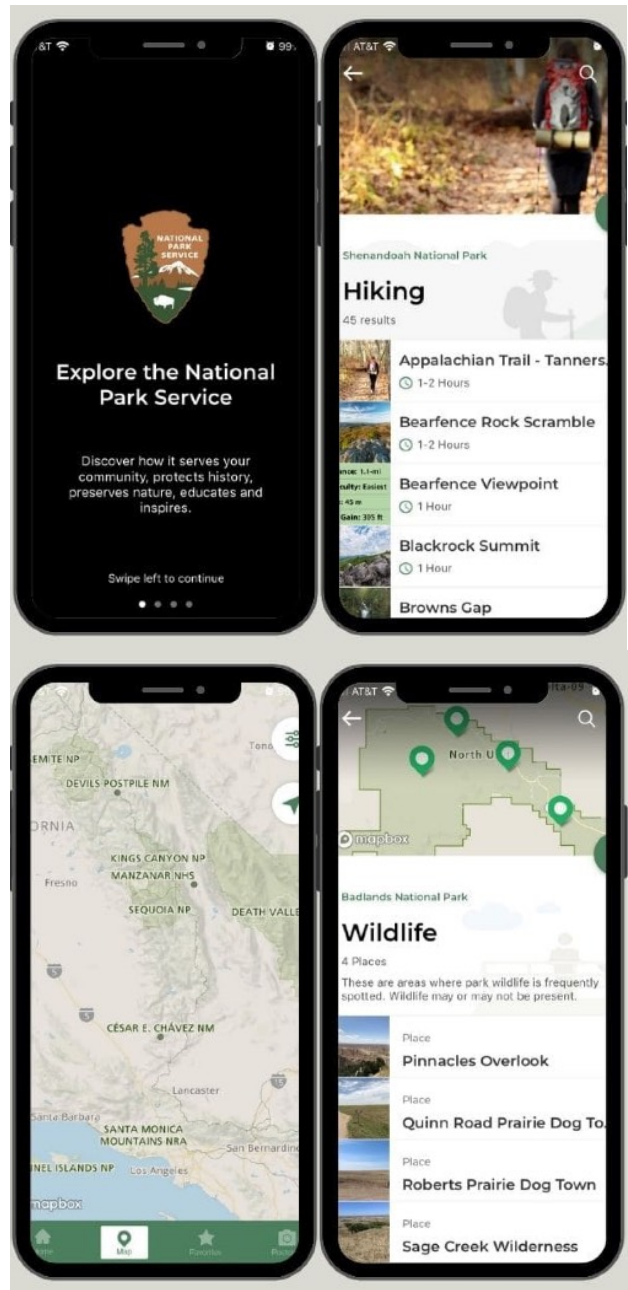


Plate 10: (clockwise from top left) Poster of visitor safety in the countryside by Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department; National Park Service app of USA for trip planning, educational information and alerts; National Parks mobile app of New South Wales, Australia for trip planning and augmented reality experiences.



Plate 11: Installations and shelter for the Near to Nature trail, Crinan, Scotland that use only materials sourced and found on site.



Plate 12: Example of web-based virtual learning database platform on natural and cultural assets of Hong Kong