

▲Augustus Wong Ting Kon
28-10-2010

Title: Tourism has often been criticised for damaging the environment and undermining local cultures. To what extent is this true in Hong Kong? You should give both the advantages and disadvantages of Hong Kong's tourist industry but your essay should support one side only.

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. It has become a popular global leisure activity, which is of vital importance for many countries, due to large intake of money for businesses with their goods and services and the opportunities for employment in the service industries. This rapid expanding industry shows both positive and negative effects.

Hong Kong is an attractive and vibrant city that worth tourists' travelling as we can see many tourists in some tourist spots every day, for instance, Central, Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and so on. However, tourism in Hong Kong has long been criticised for damaging the environment and undermining local cultures.

First and foremost, tourism can promote job opportunities. ▲ good example is the operation of the Hong Kong Disneyland. It attracts more fresh graduates and young adults to find jobs and work there, and hence increase employment rate of Hong Kong.

Undeniably, under the background of rising job opportunities, tourism can stimulate economic growth. ▲As more and more tourists around the globe visit Hong Kong, this

increases foreign exchange earnings and boost sales of shops. To cater for tourists' needs, there will be improvement of facilities or infrastructure such as roads, buildings, airports and communication systems, which may be improved to meet growing demands.

▲Although tourism can bring us benefits, its drawbacks cannot be disregarded.

Tourism may damage traditional culture. Tourists visit to Hong Kong will focus more their attention on shopping than seeing some popular tourist spots related to traditional cultures. ▲Although economic growth is stimulated, Hong Kong will soon become a consumer society.

Tourism could cause pollution. The non-biodegradable rubbish left behind by many tourists often ends up being dumped into landfills, rivers and the sea.

Furthermore, young people will grow up in a deteriorating environment and be affected by what they see tourists do and then follow their behaviours such as drunkenness, drug abuse and gambling. In some serious cases of crimes, the relationship between two countries may be worsen because of the records of criminals.

In my view, tourism has often been criticised for damaging the environment and undermining local cultures. When you walk on the streets and beaches, you can see a lot of waste and litter on the ground, even though local citizens throw some of them on the floor.

Moreover, the reason why tourism undermines local cultures is tourists enjoy material comfort more than spiritual satisfaction. They realize that there are lots of cheap goods in Hong Kong and then rush into the shops and buy whatever they can without consideration. This forms a consumer culture. When they find something they have bought is useless, they will throw them away immediately. This definitely damages the environment and becomes a vicious cycle as time goes by.

To remedy the problem, the local government should implement some effective measures to make tourist industry more traditional and environmentally-friendly, for example, holding more traditional activities so as to attract tourists and let them know more about local culture. Education of tourists to be a responsible person in their home countries is extremely important. Although different countries have different rules and laws, 'When in Rome, do as Roman do', tourists should strictly follow the rules when they are traveling to Hong Kong or even other places. If they do not obey the law, they would receive heavy penalty and even imprisonment, no matter they are tourists who visit Hong Kong.