

Department of Anthropology,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Summer Internship 2015

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Institution: The Hong Kong Museum of History

I am grateful that the department of Anthropology has offered me a great opportunity to work in the Hong Kong Museum of History in this summer. I am assigned to the ethnography unit. This unit is responsible for the daily check of the permanent exhibition of "The Hong Kong History" in the museum. Ethnography unit is also responsible for the maintenance and the updating work of the sections which are related to the local ethnography and culture. Besides, the Law Uk Folk Museum is also administrated by this unit.

During the internship, I have many chances to walk out from the office and visit the daily running of the museum. I recalled that I am invited to go to Tuen Mun with my two supervisors on the third day of internship to help them to collect some donations from donors. Donors' father was a craftsman of gold. He has left many special tools such as hammers, mould, worktable and so on. Before collecting items from donors, we have to search from the online database of existing collection to see whether there are some similar objects. Then, supervisors would decide whether the items from new donors should be accepted by the numbers and variety of the existing collections. During the process of collecting the objects from new donors, we would count the numbers of items precisely. Meanwhile, we would talk with the donors and ask them the details of the items. It is important to ask as much details as possible since the information is useful for the follow-up research. A simple talk with the donors is a good way to understand their culture from their point of view.

Although there was some maintenance work in the office of the museum and we have to move to the office in Kwun Tong, I often have the chance to go to the museum in Tsim Sha Tsui in order to visit the running of the museum. For example, I joined the archaeology unit to help the organization of the new exhibition about Han Dynasty. I have the opportunity to do the checking work of the captions. Although this might a minor work, it is important to double check for even check it for three, four and five times to ensure there is no mistake in the captions since they are the bridge to tell visitors about the story of the collections. Organizing an exhibition is a tough work. Besides reorganizing the information and details of the items, the supporting facilities such as lighting, the space and security of the location are crucial, too. When I walked into the exhibition

area, I saw a group of scholars from mainland China and they were busy in discussing the details of the objects. Also, there were group of workers loading the items carefully. There were also some designers adjusting the lighting and the decoration in the exhibition area. Some staffs from the conservation unit were putting the objects very carefully since some of them are very fragile. It is difficult for us to imagine that there are so many people working so hard behind the scene.

Moreover, I have visited Law Uk Folk Museum during the internship. There is a regular maintenance for the displayed objects once a month. The staffs would clean the objects and see whether they are damaged. Also, they would check the quantity of the items to ensure there is no missing items. I have also visited the laboratory in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. Since there might be some invisible insects in the objects, it is a must for the staffs to take them to the laboratory and kill the insects (焗蟲) by some machines before putting the objects into storage.

Although I seldom sit in the office and work on the paper work, I am happy to have the chance to visit many places with my supervisors. It is a precious opportunity for me to have a deeper understanding of the daily running of the museum.