

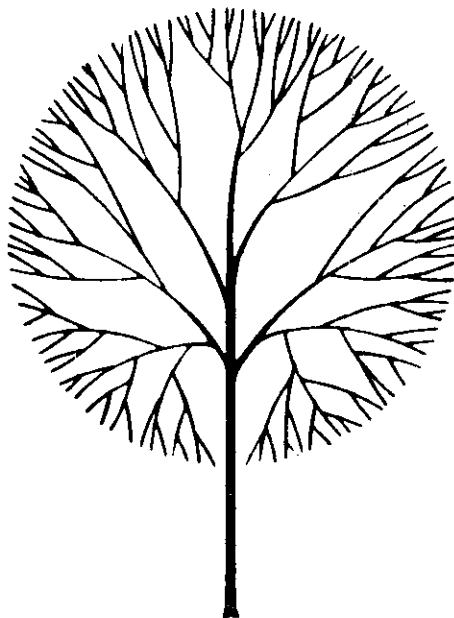
# Hong Kong Map

## Hong Kong and Vicinity



FHC  
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Sources

MICROFORMS - LEVEL 4



MAJOR GENEALOGICAL RECORD SOURCES  
IN HONG KONG

BY  
THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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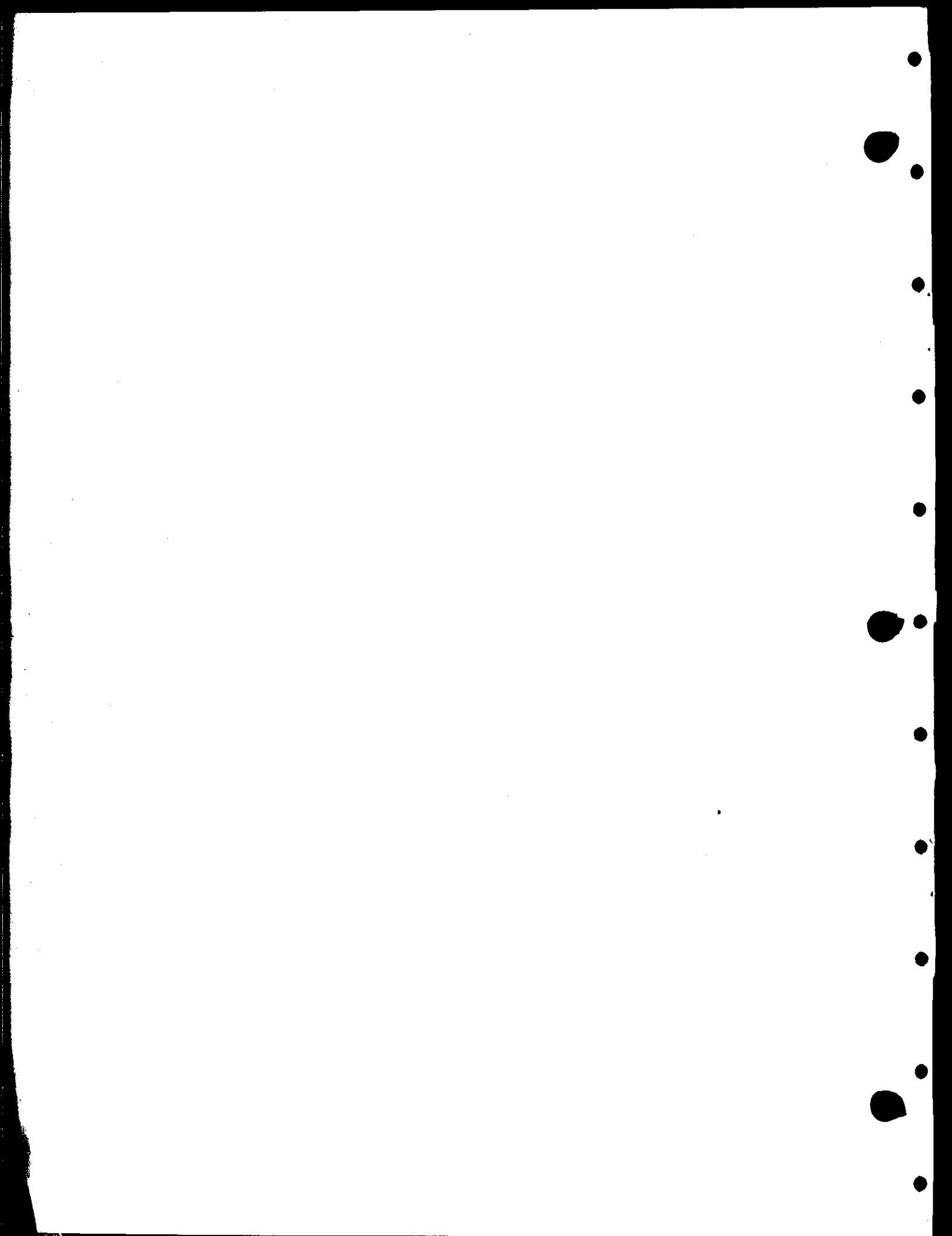
THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, INC.

RESEARCH PAPER

## P R E F A C E

This paper is intended to supply as accurately as possible a general overview of the major genealogical records of Hong Kong which may serve as a guide to intensive research. It is not intended to catalog in detail the various historical records available there. This approach was taken to prepare a general guide of useful source materials to meet the needs of all educational levels.

With sincere appreciation, we acknowledge the assistance of Mr. James Hayes and Mr. Carl Smith in the compilation of this paper. Their freely-given suggestions and knowledge of source materials in Hong Kong have been invaluable in the preparation of the paper. These scholars are in no way responsible for errors that may be found in the paper, and such errors should be brought to the attention of the Research Department.



## IMPORTANT DATES

- 1842 . . . . . Cession of Hong Kong Island in perpetuity recognized by the Treaty of Nanking.
- 1860 . . . . . Kowloon and Stonecutters island ceded to Britain in perpetuity by the Convention of Peking.
- 1860-1880 . . . Settled conditions brought an increasing migration of Chinese families into Hong Kong.
- 1898 . . . . . New Territories and islands around Hong Kong leased to Britain for 99 years.
- 1911 . . . . . Hong Kong University founded.
- 1937 . . . . . Following Japan's invasion of China many thousands of people fled to Hong Kong, where the population soon exceeded 1,500,000.
- 1941-1945 . . . Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. Population reduced to 600,000.
- 1946 . . . . . British civil government re-established.
- 1949 . . . . . Establishment of the People's Republic of China. Huge influx of refugees.
- 1950 . . . . . Immigration restrictions made necessary by the situation in China came into force.
- 1971 . . . . . Census gave population as 3,936,000.

MAJOR  
GENEALOGICAL  
RECORD  
SOURCES IN  
HONG KONG

In identifying ancestors, genealogical researchers need the answers to four key questions regarding sources:

1. What records exist that will aid in the identification process?
2. What periods of time do the existing records cover?
3. What genealogical information appears in those records?
4. What is the availability of the records for research?

The two tables which follow contain answers to the above questions for the major genealogical sources of Hong Kong. The major sources are listed, together with the period covered, the type of information given, and source availability, along with pertinent notes.

Table A shows at a glance the sources available for a research problem for a particular period of time.

Table B provides more detailed information about the major records available. For example, if a pedigree problem is in the late 19th Century, a quick indication can be obtained from Table A of the sources available for that period. Reference to Table B will then provide more complete information.

Table A

TYPE OF RECORD	960 (Sung)	1368 (Ming)	1644 (Ch'ing)	1842	1945	Present
1. Civil Registration						
2. Registration of Immigrants						
3. Probates and Wills						
4. Land Records						
5. Newspapers						
6. Christian Church Records						
7. Tombstone Inscriptions						
8. Clan Genealogies and Family Registers						
9. Local History						
10. Ancestral Tablets						
11. Family Records						
12. Examination Rosters						
13. Miscellaneous						

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
1. CIVIL REGISTRATION <sup>1</sup>	1873 to present          1945 to present	<p><i>Registration of Births.</i> When and where born; name, if any; sex; name and surname of father; name and maiden surname of mother; occupation or profession of father; signature, description and residence of informant.</p> <p><i>Registration of Deaths.</i> When and where died; name and surname; sex; age; profession or occupation; nationality, cause of death; signature, description and residence of informant.</p> <p><i>Registration of Marriages.</i> When married; name and surname; age; occupation or profession; residence at time of marriage; father's name and surname; profession or occupation of father.</p>	Available to close relatives upon application to Births and Deaths, the Registrar General; or to the Registrar of Marriage.
2. REGISTRATION OF IMMIGRANTS (Registration of Particulars) <sup>2</sup>	1945 to present	Name; place of birth or origin; age; names of spouse and children; date of entry into Hong Kong; other facts of genealogical importance.	Available to close relatives upon application to the Registration of Persons Office for a Certificate of Registered Particulars.

<sup>1</sup>Registration of births and deaths actually began in 1842, but was not required by law until 1883. Records prior to 1873 have been lost. After 1883 registrations for Chinese are incomplete and are generally for Europeans only. Marriages were not registered by law until 1971, and marriage records prior to that date are incomplete and mainly for Europeans, all pre-war marriage records having been lost.

<sup>2</sup>All immigrants and refugees are required to register upon arrival in Hong Kong. British subjects, those born in Hong Kong or married to British subjects do not register with this office. Changes in particulars such as births, marriages, etc., should be reported but seldom are. Therefore, these records are accurate only for the time of registration and not necessarily complete for later dates.



TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
3. PROBATES AND WILLS	1843 to present <sup>3</sup>	Name of testator; residence; occasionally place of origin; heirs; description of land or property; date of will and probate; signature, witnesses; English translation of Chinese wills; other facts of genealogical importance. Some wills include detailed information on ancestry.	Public Records Office of Hong Kong. Available to close relatives upon application to the Archivist, Public Records Office, 2, Murray Road, Hong Kong.
4. LAND RECORDS	1644 to 1898	<p><i>Chinese land deeds.</i> Names of people involved in the transaction; location and description of property; date of sale or transfer; amount of tax payable to government or rent payable to landlord; sometimes includes names of parents or relatives.</p> <p><i>British Land Records:</i></p> <p><i>Schedule of Crown Leases.</i> Result of land survey. Includes name of owner in Chinese and romanization; location and description of property; address of owner; crown rent; remarks.</p> <p><i>Deed Register.</i> Name of lease holder; number of memorial; date of deed; date of registry, remarks.</p> <p><i>Memorial Guard Book.</i> Includes memorials for any transaction, i.e., sale, inheritance, division, Land Court cases, successions, deceases, etc.</p>	<p>Very few located in libraries or collections; mostly in private hands. Mainly pre-British period but continued to be used in New Territories village transactions into the post-1945 period.</p> <p>District Land Offices (New Territories) and in Hong Kong Land Registry, Registrar General's Department. Available to owners, heirs or legal representatives. No search fee, but fee charged for copying documents.</p>

<sup>3</sup>All pre-war probate records in the Public Records Office are for persons having property in Hong Kong, but who died outside the colony. All pre-war probate records for those who died in Hong Kong and had their wills probated there have been lost.

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
4. LAND RECORDS (Cont.)	1941 to 1945	<p><i>Crown Rent Roll Section.</i> Name and address of owner; lot number; area; annual rent; transfers of property, etc.</p> <p><i>New Grant Register.</i> (All new claims to land after completion of the initial land survey.) Name and address of purchaser; description and use of property; date of auction, etc.</p> <p><i>Title Deeds.</i> Issued by the Japanese government during the war-time occupation. Includes owner; address; description of property; attached documents.</p>	Public Records Office of Hong Kong. Text in Japanese.
5. NEWS-PAPERS	1889 to present <sup>4</sup>  1822 to present	<p><i>Chinese Language Newspapers.</i> Obituaries; birth, marriage and death notices; other facts of genealogical importance.</p> <p><i>European Language Newspapers.</i> Same as above.</p>	<p>University of Hong Kong Library; Hong Kong City Hall Library.</p> <p>Various public and university libraries. Most complete collection at the Public Records Office of Hong Kong.</p>
6. CHRISTIAN CHURCH RECORDS	1838 to present <sup>5</sup>	<p><i>Christenings or births.</i> Date and place; name of child; parent's name and residence.</p> <p><i>Marriages.</i> Names, date and place of marriage.</p>	Local churches. Available to family members.

<sup>4</sup>Early newspapers include no personal news or obituaries and very little local news. Obituaries begin to appear in Chinese language newspapers from about 1911.

<sup>5</sup>Beginning dates vary from church to church, with some records having been lost. The earliest, beginning in 1838, are the records of St. John's Cathedral (est. 1849) which include registers originally brought from Macao.

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
6. CHRISTIAN CHURCH RECORDS (Cont.)		<p><i>Death and burials.</i> Name, date and place of death or burial. Sometimes age at death, name of spouse or parents.</p> <p><i>Memberships.</i> Name, date of baptism; sometimes parents' names, names of spouse or children.</p> <p>Details concerning family and occupation are also included in some church records.</p>	
7. TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS 墓 碑 墓 表 墓 誌 銘	1842 to present <sup>6</sup>	<p>Name, wife's name (often including given name); date of burial; ancestral place of origin; often children and grandchildren's names, birth and death dates. Sometimes includes names of living sons and grandsons who set up the gravestone with the date. Occasionally includes longer inscriptions describing movements and migration of ancestors with more extensive genealogical information. European-style tombstone inscriptions have much more abbreviated information.</p>	<p>Local private and public cemeteries. Some Chinese inscriptions collected in the inscription sections (金石) of local histories and in many literary collections (文集).</p>

<sup>6</sup>Except for some old graves in the New Territories, few tombstone inscriptions and cemetery records begin before 1843, and there are no pre-1898 cemeteries as such in the New Territories. In the urban areas separate cemeteries are usually maintained for permanent and temporary Chinese burials, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Parsees and Moslems. Cremated remains of Buddhists can also be found with abbreviated information in pagodas attached to Buddhist temples, monasteries or convents.

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
8. CLAN GENEALOGIES AND FAMILY REGISTERS  宗 譜 族 譜 家 譜	Sung Dynasty (960-1279) to present	Name (surname and given names); place of ancestral origin; place of residence; generation number; name of clan, lineage or branch family; dates of births, deaths, burials and occasionally marriages; surname of wife or wives; places of ancestral origin; names of children; birth order; sex; spouses of children; official titles and ranks; dates and degrees obtained from civil or military examinations; name changes and adoptions; biographies of prominent ancestors; portraits; genealogical tables, pedigree charts; family history; clan rules and regulations; movements and migrations of family or clan; locations of gravesites; maps and diagrams of family burial grounds, ancestral halls and ancestral places of origin	Some at the University of Hong Kong Fung Ping Shan Library as well as some libraries in the United States, Japan and China. Some at the Genealogical Society. Many more privately-owned by individuals, family organizations, and clan groups in Hong Kong and in villages in Mainland China. Privately-owned genealogies usually available to family members.
9. LOCAL HISTORY  地方志	Early to 1898 <sup>8</sup>	Genealogy of local clans and families; biographies and biographical sketches; lists of "chaste widows," famous women	Various public and university libraries. Some at the Genealogical Society.

<sup>7</sup> Family registers exist for individual branches of a clan settled in one area, and since these records usually served as the source material for the compilation of more extensive clan genealogies, the information included in both is essentially the same. Few genealogies were kept before the Sung dynasty, and many include information from legendary periods. Most genealogies available in Hong Kong are for the period of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912), but many include information for the Ming period (1368-1644), while few include accurate information for earlier periods. Each clan genealogy or family register varies greatly in style, generational depth, number of entries and detail, but may be considered accurate from the date of its earliest preface.

<sup>8</sup> Prior to 1842 for Hong Kong and Kowloon and 1898 for the New Territories, the geographic area of Hong Kong belonged to Hsinan-hsien, Kuangchou-fu, Kwangtung Province (廣東省 廣州府 新安縣). Before 1573 the whole area belonged to Tungkuan-hsien (東莞縣). A limited amount of information can thus be found in the traditional-style local histories of Kwangtung Province, Kuangchou-fu (Canton), Hsinan-hsien and Tungkuan-hsien. The modern name for Hsinan is Paoan-hsien (寶安縣), to which it was changed in 1913.

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
9. LOCAL HISTORY (Cont.)		and their husbands; lists of the elderly; collections of tombstone inscriptions and epitaphs; rosters of local officials with biographical sketches; civil and military examination rosters; miscellaneous information on geography, place names, and local history.	
10. ANCESTRAL TABLETS 神位 神主	Early to present <sup>9</sup>	Name; place of ancestral origin; generation number; name of clan; lineage or branch family; birth and death or burial dates; names of spouse and sometimes children; other facts of genealogical importance.	Clan temples, ancestral halls, household altars, and some Buddhist temples. Usually restricted to family members and descendants.
11. FAMILY RECORDS 家傳	Early to present	<p><i>Marriage Contracts.</i> Names of bride and bridegroom, birth dates, and several generations of ancestry for both.</p> <p><i>Adoption and Heirship Agreements.</i> Includes name, adoptive and natural parents' names, other facts of genealogical importance.</p> <p><i>Birth Records (生時簿).</i> Name, exact time of birth.</p>	<p>Privately owned by individual families.</p> <p>Same as above.</p> <p>Same as above.</p>

<sup>9</sup>The oldest ancestral temples in the New Territories probably date to the Sung dynasty, but the present structures are usually 18th or 19th century. Only a few of the older ancestral halls of major clans contain numbers of individual tablets of past generations. Most tablets contain information for the Ming and Ching periods, but some include information for earlier periods.

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
12. EXAMINATION ROSTERS <sup>10</sup> 登科錄 選舉表 科目表	Early to 1905	Surname and given names; place of origin, age, year of examination; degrees received; names of relatives and parents; official positions and titles; some with up to ten generations of ancestry. Sometimes includes other important dates such as the date of death, etc.	Various public and university libraries. Some at the Genealogical Society. Many rosters included in the local histories.
13. MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES	Early to present	<p><i>Chronological Biographies</i> (年譜). Name; parents, spouse, children and grandchildren's names; birth, death and marriage dates; ancestry (up to ten generations); titles and official positions; other facts of genealogical importance.</p> <p><i>Autobiographies, Diaries, Journals and Correspondence.</i> Various facts of genealogical importance.</p>	<p>Various public and university libraries. Some at the Genealogical Society.</p> <p>Various public and university libraries; many privately-owned; some at the Genealogical Society.</p>

<sup>10</sup>Include civil and military examination rosters for several types of degrees mainly for the Ming and Ching periods, but in rare cases also for earlier periods up to the abolition of the examination system in 1905. Some rosters for Kwangtung Province include material on degree holders in the New Territories.

## **Other Resources Hong Kong**

Hong Kong Genealogy Forum

<http://genforum.genealogy.com/hongkong/>

Rootsweb Hong Kong Mailing List

<http://lists.rootsweb.com/index/intl/HKG/HONG-KONG.html>

Wikipedia Article on Hong Kong

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong\\_Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong)

Cyndi's List Asia Links

<http://www.cyndislist.com/asia.htm>