

LCQ1: Promoting religious and cultural tourism

Following is a question by Hon Yang Wing-kit and a reply by the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, in the Legislative Council today (January 15):

Questions:

There are views pointing out that Hong Kong's religious culture has a long history and is all-embracing, with traditional temples and monasteries such as Wong Tai Sin Temple, Chi Lin Nunnery, Man Mo Temple and the Kwun Yum Temple in Hung Hom which have preserved the beliefs and customs of different religious denominations, in addition to religiously sacred sites such as the Big Buddha, Po Lin Monastery and Tsz Shan Monastery which have even become renowned tourist attractions in Hong Kong and attracted a large number of tourists and worshippers year after year. The Government should therefore leverage the local religious and cultural heritage to promote the development of tourism. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will explore drawing up a religious and cultural map of Hong Kong in collaboration with the tourism industry, local temples, monasteries and religious institutions, so as to promote Hong Kong's diverse religious culture to the public as well as Mainland and overseas tourists through practical guiding information on religious tourism itineraries;

(2) whether it will step up publicity on activities organised by local temples, monasteries and religious institutions, and promote the cultures of meditation and vegetarianism, etc; and

(3) whether it will consider producing online and offline games related to local religions, such as presenting badges to participants who have completed a visit to a religious attraction and unlocking the next visiting task for them, thereby offering lively and interesting ways for participants to visit all the religious attractions in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is an open and inclusive city in which religious freedom is the fundamental rights enjoyed by Hong Kong residents as protected by the Basic Law and other relevant legislation. The HKSAR Government has been maintaining close liaison with religious groups and attends events organised by them with a view to promoting the communications with them and understanding their needs.

In consultation with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), I give the consolidated reply to the Hon Yang Wing-kit's question on behalf of

the Government as follows:

The Government has leveraged the diverse assets in town to promote tourism, including Chinese and Western cultural activities and festivals, the great outdoors and outlying islands, as well as traditions and customs of various religions and beliefs. On tourism experiences with religious elements, we showcase the traditional customs and attractions with authentic local characteristics to visitors and invite media and trade representatives to visit attractions with religious elements in person, including the Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island, Tin Hau Temple in Nam Chung, Che Kung Temple in Sha Tin and Tin Hau Temple in Lam Tsuen of Tai Po, and many more. We also produce TV shows and roll out thematic promotions to attract visitors to Hong Kong, especially among visitor source markets that share the culture of temple visits and traditional culture.

Separately, the Culture and Promotion Working Group of the Chinese Temples Committee (the Committee) formulates publicity and promotion strategies and identifies key promotion activities on an annual basis, with a view to promoting Chinese traditional culture related to Chinese temples. In 2024-25, the Committee has been working with organisations such as the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre in organising talks, guided tours and workshops on Chinese temple culture. The Committee has also been organising recurrent promotion activities, as well as funding and facilitating festive celebrations by organisations to promote Chinese temple culture to residents and visitors.

In the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 promulgated in end December 2024, it is mentioned that the Government will focus on diversified development of religious tourism to enrich Hong Kong's tourism offerings, including engaging with religious groups to explore opening up religious venues as tourist attractions on a limited scale without affecting religious activities. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau will assist in liaison with relevant religious groups to explore the feasible arrangements and actively collaborate with the CSTB's work.