



Non-Fiction

Group 1

Pearl River Delta

Western Academy of Beijing, Chiang, Angela - 8

The Pearl River Delta which is located at the south-eastern tip of China is one of the fastest growing areas in Asia. It is an area that has a lot of wealth, diverse population and rich history. Home to the cities like Hong Kong and Macau, it is a mix of European ideas and Chinese culture. Most importantly, Hong Kong acts as an international center of finance, culture and history.

Hong Kong has lived through many major events. For example, starting from the 1800s to the 1930s, the British traded clocks with the Chinese in exchange for tea. Unfortunately, there was a large fight over the opium trade, which led to the First Opium War and Britain taking over Hong Kong. During this time, the British made several changes to the city and Hong Kong developed greatly. Christian missionaries built many schools and churches, thus introducing Christianity into the community. During the Japanese occupation in World War II, Japanese troops invaded the city and created a new government. Fortunately, Britain took back Hong Kong at the end of the war and restored peace to the city.

From the 1950s until the 21st century, Hong Kong grew to become a city full of opportunity. When the communist revolution of 1949 turned China into a battlefield, thousands of Chinese immigrants fled to Hong Kong, creating many cheap workers. Several foreign businesses also moved their offices from Shanghai to Hong Kong, creating many new jobs. Several decades later, the economy continued to expand as the manufacturing industry employed more workers. Hong Kong created the right for men and women to have equal pay.

Today, Hong Kong continues to expand as a port city and an international financial center. For example, Hong Kong has hundreds of multi-national companies headquartered within the city. From 1982 to 1997, Hong Kong had an unemployment rate of only 2.5%. Unfortunately, during the Asian Financial Crisis from 1997 to 2002, Hong Kong's unemployment rate rose up to 6%. However, Hong Kong's strong economy recovered quickly and unemployment rates average at only 3.3% as of 2014. Hong Kong still remains as a city with a mixed cultural population with the number of foreigners increasing from only 14,384 in 1996 up to 26,881 in 2010.

Hong Kong's diverse cultural heritage can also be clearly seen through its various attractions. Although Hong Kong has many Chinese temples, it also has a variety of other religious buildings. For example, St. John's Cathedral, the Jamia Mosque and the Happy Valley Hindu Temple all serve as examples of how Hong Kong's diverse population celebrates many different religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism as well as Buddhism.

As you can see, Hong Kong is a global center of business, a multi-cultural location and a site of great history, supporting its amazing development and growth in the Pearl River Delta.



Non-Fiction

Group 2

The Pearl River Delta

Peak School, Kong, Ree Nie - 10

The Pearl River Delta: Introduction-

The Pearl River Delta (or named in Chinese- ‘Zhu Jiang San Jiao Zhou’) is in the Guangdong province of South China. It is named the ‘Pearl River Delta’ because of the pearl-like shells at the bottom of this magnificent river. The Pearl River Delta is the third longest river in China. It covers an area of 2,900 square miles (7,500 square kilometres). It stretches from GuangZhou (Canton) to the Special Administrative Region of Macau. The Pearl River Delta is a large area consisting of a number of streams and canals in between rice paddies. It is a large urban district made of a continuously built area. It has a stable economy and is now one of the major exports and manufacturing areas at global levels. They supply us with rice from paddy fields, they help grow crops and help us in economy as well. The Pearl River Delta consists of a provincial capital city (Guangzhou), two special economic zones (Zhuhai and Shenzhen), nine cities, sixteen county-level municipalities, and the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau. Consequently, most of the cities that make up the Pearl River Delta area are in the Guangdong province, although there is a section of the Fujian province that is also part of this active economy hub.

The Pearl River Delta: Features-

The Pearl River Delta covers an area of almost 3000 square miles while it flows in its tranquil pace. But sometimes, the Pearl River Delta isn’t always as calm and smooth, instead it can be violent and rough as the water laps around the sides of the confounding river. When the wind viciously whirls the water into turbulent waves, overlapping bridges, cliffs and bridges, the Pearl River Delta cautiously makes its way into the South China Sea. Unfortunately, now, the Pearl River Delta is now moderately polluted. Twigs, plastics, aluminium cans, mould, dirty bags of plastic from landfills, animal droppings and even sewage water contaminates the water. The polluted area is slowly becoming full of rubbish and dirty objects floating around. The sewage water is getting rancid and smelly, the dirty objects are gradually rotting. Luckily, people sometimes organise beach clean-ups as well as

sea clean-ups to get rid of these foreign substances that damage the water quality and make the water undrinkable and very dangerous for organisms around the area to live in. But on the other hand, some waste can dissolve in the water and be broken down into pieces and eventually dilute, or they can be dispersed. Or, they can even be recycled as food for plants and microorganisms. Obviously, the Pearl River Delta has formed positive and negative issues to discuss, debate and consider on.

The Pearl River Delta: Economy-

The Pearl River Delta is an incredible economic zone and have been regarded as one of the growth engines that contributes to the general development in Southern China. The Pearl River Delta domestic companies, as many foreign countries concentrate on targeting its rapid economic development. They have a stable supply of food (rice, vegetables, corn, etc.)Guangdong and in particular, the Pearl River Delta has seen a massive growth since it's revolutionary change in economy. The profiles of industries along the banks of this delta are electronics, IT and household appliance products. In fact, the success of China's manufacturing industry can be attributed to the growth of this

The Pearl River Delta: History

The Pearl River Delta initially seems to be an entirely, modern aged city, dominated by the wealthy Hong Kong, and the economic-minded Shenzhen

Back in the 1980s, Deng XiaoPing's (a Chinese revolutionary and statesman) visionary ideology was the reason the Special Economic Zones were created to bring a phenomenal change to a free- market (tax-free economic zone). The rapid development of the Pearl River Delta also marks the end of the industrial revolution in Hong Kong, it was during this time when thousands of operations have moved their offices to the delta. At the beginning, most of the companies concentrating on the Pearl River Delta are mainly light-industries (for examples: toys, pottery, shoes). It was only during the 1990s when the area began to attract more resourceful and heavy-based companies, to employ more skillful and high technology-based employees.

The Pearl River Delta: Culture

The Pearl River Delta itself holds many cultural beliefs and values which are influenced by the Cantonese (Guangzhou) Culture. The delta has included different Chinese groups, such as Teochew (Chaozhou) which is one of the most commonly found clan in this area. Other clans which live around the area are Cantonese, Fujian and Hakka.

These different cultural backgrounds are also influencing the types of cuisines found in this area. However the majority are Cantonese style dishes which are stir-fried or steamed. Roasted meat such as barbecued pork and chicken are also the most popular food.

Fast Fact Files:

- The Pearl River Delta leads into the 'South China sea', which is part of the Pacific Ocean.
- A delta is an area when the mouth of a river meets an ocean, sea, estuary or reservoir.
- As the river flows into the sea, it picks up lots of debris and residue. All of that gets carried right at the mouth of a river, where it is finally carried by the ocean's current, waiting for it to be found, thrown away, or recycled.
- Deltas are normally triangular. Due to the waste and residue blocking the river, not

allowing the water to slide past, small slits are formed to

- The surrounding population (including Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Macau border, Shenzhen, western Zhuhai, Dongguan, Fujian, Foshan, Zhongshan) is almost as large as Germany (100 million).
- Millions of Chinese have left their homes to earn a living at GuangDong.

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New Tales of the Pearl River Delta

Po Leung Kuk Hong Kong Taoist Association Yuen Yuen Primary School, Choi, Nick - 11

The Pearl River Delta (PRD), also known as the Golden Delta of Guangdong, is formed by three major rivers, the Xi Jiang, Bei Jiang and Dong Jiang. The PRD has been one of the most economically dynamic regions of the People's Republic of China since the launch of China's reform program in 1979. The abundance of employment opportunities created a pool of wealthy, middle-income, consumers with an annual income which puts them among China's wealthiest.

The Pearl River Delta is slowly growing into a megapolis. But back in 1978, it was mainly agricultural, occupying only 0.45% of the area of China. Since then, it has seen some of the most rapid urban expansion in history. In about 30 years, it has become the heart of the Chinese economy and accounting for nearly one tenth of the whole country's economy. During that time, its urbanization rate increased drastically from 28% to 83%, making it one of the most densely urbanized regions in China.

The Pearl River Delta has become a workshop and is a manufacturing headquarters for products such as electronics, toys, and a range of other products. Because of this, the Pearl River Delta has been nicknamed "the workshop of the world". The "Made in China" tag has become famous because of the Delta which provides so many products to the world.

Privately owned companies has developed very quickly in the PRD Economic Zone and are playing an important role in the region's economy, especially after 2000, when the development environment for private-owned companies had been greatly relaxed. Nearly 5% of the world's products were produced in the Pearl River Delta in 2001, with a total export value of USD \$289 billion. Over 70 000 Hong Kong companies have factories there.

Although the Pearl River Delta is very successful in the business department, it is notoriously polluted by sewage and industrial waste. Much of the area is frequently covered by a brown smog. A large part of the pollution is brought by factories run by Hong Kong manufactures in the area. The pollution is also a great danger to the Chinese White Dolphins which live in the Pearl River Delta.

In 2007, the World Bank approved a \$96 million loan the PRC government to reduce water pollution in the Pearl River Delta. In 2008 it was announced that ¥48.6 billion was spent on the river to clean up the river.

In a city as money-centric as Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta megacity's influence on our economy seems a natural place to start. Even with the rapid emergence of the Mainland over the last 30 years, Hong Kong remains the financial stronghold of China. But, it isn't, according to some, a foregone conclusion that Hong Kong will remain as the power centre of a future PRD megacity.

Cities of the Pearl River Delta

Singapore International School, Siauw, Peter Theodore - 10

The Pearl River Delta is a gargantuan area of the Guangdong Province that surrounds the Pearl River estuary, the last part of the enormous Pearl River, where it finally ends and empties into the South China Sea. It is a rapidly developing area, with a whopping population of approximately 57 million people. After the economic liberalisation of the 70s, the once sleepy backwater has now become a principal economic and manufacturing region. Many well-known major cities of China call the Pearl River Delta home. A handful of them are shown below here:

Hong Kong (香港)

Our home sweet home. It is a bustling metropolis officially named Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), a special area of China that has its own government. With a minuscule area of merely 1104 km², it is known as one of the most densely populated areas on Earth, with around 7.23 million people residing here! Boasting an expansive and picturesque skyline and a deep natural port, it is celebrated for its relatively stable society and for being one of the world's best and most influential international financial centres with a strong and powerful free trade economy. With hundreds of shopping malls, Hong Kong is a shopping haven, known for its minimal taxes on luxury goods, sending flocks of people making a beeline for the city. Hong Kong also has numerous heavenly, beautiful landscapes such as the vibrant and lively Hong Kong Island and the scenic view from the Peak. However, it has also been plagued by many problems, such as soaring astronomical property prices and the recent Occupy Central movement, which disrupted and sent ripples throughout society.

Hong Kong did not attain its success easily. For a long time, it was in the hands of the British. Hong Kong Island became a British colony in 1842, after the defeat of the Chinese in the First Opium War and the signing of the Nanking Treaty, which ceded Hong Kong Island to China. In 1858, after the Chinese defeat in the Second Opium War, they were again compelled to cede Kowloon to the British. In 1898, the New Territories were granted to the British for a 99 year lease, lasting until 1997. In 1984, the Sino-British Convention was signed, securing the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 and its future with a special

status as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) for 50 years, until 2047. Three cheers for our fantastic Hong Kong!

Guangzhou City (广州市)

The vast city is the capital of the Guangdong Province (广东省), a province situated in southeast China. Formerly named Canton by the British, the city is a major transport hub for the nation and has a gigantic trading port. It is not as densely populated as Hong Kong, with only around 14 million residents in a city of about 11300 km². Similar to Hong Kong, it owns an impressive skyline and a vibrant community, and also has a spectacular view of the Pearl River (珠江), which flows through the city. In the late 1990s, there was an influx of Africans into Guangzhou, causing the African population to increase constantly, crowning it as the city with the largest African population in the whole Asia! The city has also been host to numerous global events, such as the 2010 Asian Games. It is also the hometown of the well-known Canton Fair, a biannual trade fair held in Guangzhou. The city is associated with a unique myth related with goats, thus earning it the nickname of “Goat City”

(羊城). It has numerous attractions. In the middle of the Pearl River, there is an island – Shamian (Shameen) Island (沙面岛), which was once a concession to the British and French governments. They have since returned it to China, but they left behind numerous pieces of Western architecture, creating a relaxed atmosphere reminiscent to Victorian Britain – utterly peaceful, with magnificent granite buildings lining the quiet streets. However, Guangzhou is not just filled with artefacts dating back from the bygone era and yesteryear – it has numerous pieces of modern architecture and amusement parks, the most famous of all definitely being Chime-Long Paradise and Chime-Long Water Park. Both owned by the same group, they boast a safari park filled with exotic creatures, a gobsmacking circus with performers performing all sorts of interesting tricks and shows. It also contains tens of attractions using state-of-the-art technology, such as roller-coasters, slides and tunnels – you name it, they have it! The city is full of life and is astounding.

Zhuhai City

It is famous for its tranquil and marvellous coast. A famous tourist destination, it is sometimes nicknamed the Chinese Riviera. It is a bustling city but is also tranquil, and was found to be the most liveable city among the hundreds of thousands of cities in China! Adjacent to Macau, the city is known for the vast expanses of its Gongbei Underground Shopping Mall, which interestingly is right next to the Gongbei Border to Macau. The New Yuanmingyuan (Summer Palace) was built here, to recreate Yuanmingyuan, once the famed and distinctive Summer Palace of the Chinese Emperor. The Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, an ocean-themed amusement park similar to its counterpart in Guangzhou can also be found here. The coast of Zhuhai is also a well-known landmark, known for its breathtaking views of the Pearl River Delta. It does not have a multitude of attractions, but is a very wonderful place.

Dongguan City

A prominent industrial city full of factories, it produces and exports numerous goods. It has been known respectively as some of China’s and the world’s most innovative and dynamic city. The manufacturing hub mainly manufactures electronics and communication equipments, and once produced the majority of the world’s shoes. However, the tourist attractions are few, if any.

The Pearl River Delta is truly a significant area of the Guangdong Province and China!



Non-Fiction

Group 3

The Power of Things Past

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Introduction

The Pearl River Delta is one of the most successful regions in China. Indeed, its achievements, against unfavorable odds, are unparalleled within the country and the world. It represents a model which others can follow in times of complicated and delicate circumstances. However, as shown by recent events in the delta, this success is belied by persistent disharmony. This disharmony is manifest in myriad ways, from the structure of government and politics to the disconnect between its neighboring communities. One need not look further than history to find the cause of the conundrum. As we shall see, this fabric of history stretching some five thousand years is littered with splits and tears and is a reflection of the state of the delta today: a collection of regions whose connections are also marked by deep disconnect. However, as we shall see also, answers lie in that same history.

The Past of the Pearl River Delta

Astonishingly, the history of the Pearl River Delta did not start in Pearl River but in the fertile plains of yet another river, Yellow River. There, the Huaxia, the ancestors of all Han Chinese, formed a civilization. Centuries passed, and the Huaxia migrated throughout China with some heading south. Along their journey, the Huaxia encountered peoples of many indigenous ethnicities. When they arrived at the mouth of Pearl River in the southern coast of China, they were no longer the same people who left the valley of Yellow River. They were a melting pot of diverse ethnicities, varied cultures and manifold histories. There are in fact no “locals.” Already, this sowed the dynamism and diversity still manifest in the Pearl River Delta today.

Yet being the opening of a main river in the southern coast of China, the delta was an obvious attraction for travelers from around the world, especially those traveling through the South China Sea to destinations in northern Asia. Indeed, the delta was a strategic location for establishing trade routes between mercantile countries of Europe and resource-rich countries of Asia. During the first half of the 16th century, Portuguese merchants and sailors gradually settled in Macau on the western side of the mouth of Pearl River by paying rent to Chinese officials. But fewer than three hundred years later, through less amicable arrangements of the two Opium Wars, the British acquired Hong Kong on the eastern side and the Portuguese further expanded their territory. Both Hong Kong and Macau became European colonies, separating them from the rest of the delta. Despite the split, this secured the delta's indelible mark on the map of global commerce by making seafaring cheaper and safer.

In the tumultuous first decade of the 20th century, the dynastic system that ruled China for two thousand years was toppled by a revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his political party, the Kuomintang. Overnight, China, the Middle Kingdom, was a kingdom no more. However, the inexperienced party lacked political and military power to fill the shoes of the dynastic system. By 1916, opportunistic warlords carved up China into smaller regions and ruled with violent force. China saw endless and bloody infighting between warlords. Yet during the same time, the Kuomintang made the city of Guangzhou in Pearl River Delta as the capital of China. With its labyrinthine channels and mountainous countryside sheltering the young government, the plans of the successful reunification of China in 1928 were drawn and started.

Yet the peace was cut short as the Japanese occupied Guangzhou and surrounding regions in 1938 at the dawn of the Second World War. By 1939, Japanese forces had captured almost all strategic points along the South China coastline. The Kuomintang government, and thus the capital of China, retreated to Shaoguan north of Guangdong, and Hong Kong, a British colony, became a safe-haven for activities supporting the resistance against Japan. Before long, this precarious situation ended when even the colony succumbed to Japanese forces on Christmas day of 1941. The occupation of most of Pearl River Delta, except for Portuguese Macau, continued until the surrender of Japanese forces after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed on August, 1945. China and the Pearl River Delta were liberated but Hong Kong and Macau remained under foreign rule, the delta as splintered as before the war.

The end of the Second World War did not bring peace to China but led to yet another war. After fighting the Japanese together, the Kuomintang and the Communists fought among themselves. After more bloody battles, the Communists triumphed and the Kuomintang went on exile on the island of Formosa, now known as Taiwan. Hong Kong saw an exodus of a million people from the Pearl River Delta Region, Shanghai and other commercial centers of China fearing persecution by the Communist. The sudden migration and defection of huge numbers of people into the colony only forced tighter border controls, intensifying the colonies isolation. Hope for the reunification of the delta returned when the Communists implemented the “Open Door Policy” in the late 1970s to free the economy of Shenzhen, Hong Kong’s neighbor, to foreign entities. Less than a decade later, China and Britain agreed on Hong Kong’s return to China in 1997, further strengthening the reunification of the Delta.

The year arrived and Hong Kong was reunited with China becoming a Special Administrative Region; likewise, Macau in 1999. Yet this reunification is merely symbolic. The deep split within the Pearl River Delta still exists and cannot be undone by mere paperwork. More radical changes have to be done to solve the conundrum the Pearl River Delta presents.

The Future of the Pearl River Delta

Indeed, the future of the delta is characterized by the need to tie loose ends borne out of its past. It would mean uniting three separate regions each with its own culture, history, language, lifestyle, forms of government and politics. In other words, the three different governments, with the help of the central government in Beijing, must integrate regions that for hundreds of years were separate, indeed, worlds apart. As the Pearl River Delta reunited China in the past, in future, China will reunite the Pearl River Delta.

To that goal, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge is under construction and is due to open in 2016 while the proposed Shenzhen-Zhongshan Bridge is scheduled to be completed in 2021. The two projects will bridge the opposite side of the mouth of the Pearl River Delta

at both upstream and downstream regions. These projects makes cross-border transport much faster and cheaper leading to greater integration of the different communities of the delta in several ways, cultural, economic, political and so on.

However, reunification of the Delta does not only mean to connect Hong Kong, Macau and the rest of the delta. Massive disconnect are also present between coastal urban and rural areas of the delta in economic development and quality of life. The Guangdong government plans to merge towns and cities to form “city clusters” by streamlining local governments and constructing infrastructures to distribute wealth into the inner rural regions of the delta. The goal is for even economic development to prevail by 2020, with every region of the delta developing at the same pace and complementing each other.

Unsurprisingly, the push towards greater integration and development of the delta is not without harm. Construction over and reclamation of the sea deals a huge blow to marine life as seen in the 60% population decline of Chinese White Dolphins alone. The land does not fare any better as 28% of the soil in the delta region is affected by heavy metal production. This means that some places, they couldn't plant crops because of the pollution. Some areas had problems with cadmium-polluted rice, such as provinces of Hunan and Jiangxi. The latest report says 50% of the land in Guangzhou has been polluted. The amount of smog is only testament to the state of the air.

Conclusion: Present Actions

However, the future sketched above only goes so far. Physical connection of the delta is necessary but not sufficient. This essay represented the history of the delta not only to show the cause of the splintering of delta but to also offer a simple alternative view of that history to provide the much-needed social connection. While history has separated the Pearl River Delta, isn't that history nonetheless singular? Then, don't we all belong to one and the same history? This becomes even more urgent as history also shows that everyone in Pearl River Delta today is migrants from either another river, from another town or from another country. It is that history that binds the delta, not geography, not ethnicity.

Then we are only as separate as we believe.

Inspirations

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Non-Fiction

Group 4

New Tales of the Pearl River Delta

Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School, Lee, Vincy - 17

When you spot a Zǒu Mǎ Dēng on a traditional Chinese folk craft market, you will not be able to resist admiring the delicate, gleaming lantern adorned with revolving images. Imagine if the lantern featured The Pearl River Delta, you would be taken on a virtual journey that involves modern cities packed with towering skyscrapers, contrasted by quaint seaside villages with a touch of nature and picturesque landscapes, separated merely by a narrow creek.

The junction of the Xi, Bei, Dong, and Pearl rivers in southern Guangdong province gave rise to the extensive low-lying and second largest delta in the nation, which covers an area of 2,900 square miles, criss-crossed by a network of tributaries and distributaries of the Pearl River. It may not be ranked first in terms of size, but its favourable geographical location which opens the gateway to the Southeast region, has earned it the title of the “South Door of China”.

The large expanse of territory of the river delta is home to over 50 million people of diverse ethnic groups who embrace different dialects, be it Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka or Hokkien. The Pearl River Delta witnessed the constant alternation of generations, in the ever-changing history of the rise and fall of dynasties, revolutions and colonial rule. The region today continues to be sufficed with traces of its rich cultural and historical traits. Across the bustling, dynamic cities of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, lies the pleasant Cuiheng Village in Guangdong, with attractions not limited by its scenic and mountainous location, but is also renowned for being the birthplace of the Republic of China’s first president Sun Yat-sen. The Dapeng Fortress in Shenzhen preserved temples and mansions constructed in the Ming Dynasty and showcased the architecture by our wise ancestors and the religious culture of China. The glow of the prosperous city Guangzhou cannot shield the elegance of Chikan Town near it. Wandering in the European Street, one would be intoxicated with admiration of the architecture. Houses with a gentle touch of western style embody the fusion of Chinese and European culture when western trends were brought to China in the late 19th century. These are just a few reasons on how the Pearl River Delta appeals to tourists and backpackers from around the globe, trying to catch a glimpse on its unique blend of culture.

The river delta has been an important contributing factor of China's economic developments and advancements throughout its history, with its role as the starting point of the famous Maritime Silk Road which dates back to the 13th century as proof. However, the story of the river delta as one of the leading and fastest-growing economic regions had not unfolded until The Chinese government adopted the policy of Reform and Opening in the late 1970s. The government designated the Pearl River Delta region as the experimenting area for the initiative which aimed to promote economic liberalisation. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were formed in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou and Xiamen, along with the introduction of taxation benefits, such as tax breaks and preferential tax rates. Regional governments in these cities were granted more powers to make its own decisions in terms of tax, labour and the allocation of resources. These privileges were viewed as a golden opportunity for many foreign investors who saw the prospects of China's resourceful and immense market. They brought along capital, technology and management skills to open factories and corporates, sowing the seeds to the thriving of China's manufacturing industry, entrepreneurship and financing. The GDP of the river delta region climbed from US\$8 billion in 1980 to over US\$200 billion. This figure, along with the reputation as the "Golden Delta of Guangdong", bears testimony to the economy successes of the Pearl River Delta.

The country continues to make its endeavors to maintain the region's competitiveness economic-wise. Apart from the privileges empowered by policy initiatives including the accession to the WTO in 2001 and the signing of CEPA between the Mainland and Hong Kong in 2003, cross-boundary infrastructure developments are drawn into the blueprint for the prospect of the Pearl River Delta. Large-scale construction projects under the spotlight such as Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Guangzhou-Shenzhen-HK Express Rail Link are being carried out at full steam to improve the transport network and regional integration.

The story of the Pearl River Delta might strike as plain sailing, but there are clouds on the horizons. The rapid pace of development has placed great strains on the river delta. Industrial activities, which demands the consumption of a great amount of fossil fuels, are the major source of air pollutants including carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. These pollutants are responsible for environmental problems such as acid rain and toxic photochemical smog, posing threats to people's health. Heavy metal wastes produced by factories wind up in the oceans and rivers, polluting the soil and thus the agricultural produce. According to official data from the government, land suitable for the growing of uncontaminated crops only takes up about a 60%. Moreover, wind and water blows and flows as nature intended, spreading the pollutants across borders, turning the local problem into a regional, even global one.

Marching in the direction of economic development, regional governments are motivated to achieve the goal by exploiting every inch of land for new and grand development projects. Meanwhile the central government is setting up urban development offices in different cities, with the aim to renovate the "three olds"- old towns, factories and villages. As a result, many traditional country cottages with tile roof top and shrine for the ancestors, are replaced by uniform street planning, neat buildings. Behind the prosperity of these modernized elements, lies the pity to witness the fading of the culture endemic to the Pearl River Delta.

As China creates the new tale of the Pearl River Delta, the government has expressed its awareness of the urgency and severity of the environmental challenges. To retrieve the blue sky and clean air that are being concealed by soot and dust, the Pearl River Delta Regional Air Quality Management Plan was introduced. It set up viable and progressive carbon emission reduction targets. The amount of air pollutants released by factories is restricted

and reliable data of the air pollutant level is released, so that environmental groups are able to monitor the air quality more accurately. Besides, governments of the mainland and Hong Kong combined their efforts to alleviate the problem. The Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection convenes annually to report the progress and construct a work plan for the coming year. In addition, the Environmental Protection Department of Guangdong and Hong Kong collaborated in 2008 to establish a water quality data model for the Pearl River region. The environmental problems are getting under control, with a decrease in pollutants in recent years.

To preserve the valuable cultural elements in the Pearl River Delta, the government has begun to take it under consideration during city renovations and development projects. Shawan Town, in Panyu, Guangdong, is an example to show the effort and determination of the government. Under its method of “Taking preservation as the main lead with partial renewal”, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics was strictly enforced. The renovation improved the internal road network, infrastructure, entertainment facilities for tourism, while keeping the ancestral halls of different families untouched. Museums such as the Shawan Ancestral Hall Cultural Exhibition and the Memorial Hall of Academician He Binglin were established to showcase the valuable cultural and historical heritage. In this way, old towns can benefit with increased revenue of tourism and better living standards, while keeping its original local customs intact.

With the resolute will of the government, determined spirit of the strong nation resembling an awakening lion, new tales of the Pearl River Delta can be composed, preserving the everlasting, breathtaking beauty and dynamic captured in that precious lantern.

