



土沉香與「香港」之得名

土沉香 *Aquilaria sinensis* (Lour.) Sprengle 又名牙香樹、白木香，還有一個美麗的名字叫做「女兒香」。原產於華南各省，屬常綠喬木，有平滑及淺灰色的樹幹、卵形及葉脈幼細的葉片和黃綠色的小花。在夏天，可看到一個個綠色的果實掛在樹上。土沉香的用途廣泛，它的樹脂可製成香料或供藥用，木材可製線香，而樹皮可用來造紙。

土沉香與我們現居地的名稱有甚麼關係呢？根據羅香林教授撰寫的《一八四二年以前之香港及其對外交通》及其他有關資料，自明朝至清初，東莞一帶及現今香港瀝源（沙田）及沙螺灣（大嶼山西面）等處大量種植土沉香，每年區內「莞香」的貿易總額達銀錠數萬兩。至今，沙田大圍香粉寮仍保留有關地名。香農將土沉香的产品——琥珀狀、半透明的香塊（又稱「莞香」）——從陸路運到尖沙頭（又稱香埗頭，即今日的尖沙咀），再用舢舨運往石排灣（即今日的香港仔），再轉運至廣州和蘇浙等地及東南亞，甚至遠達阿拉伯。因此，石排灣這個販運香品的港口被稱為「香港」，即「香的港口」，後來「香港」更成為整個海島的名稱。

但到了清朝初年，朝廷為了清剿海患，勒令東南沿海居民向內陸遷徙50里（約30公里，包括現今香港全境）維時二十多年（約1662 – 1684），種植土沉香的農業因此受到很大的影響。

現時香港已沒有出產土沉香作經濟用途，然而香港的氣候及水土適宜土沉香生長，因此土沉香已成為本地郊野常見的樹種。

香港這個名稱的起源，雖然有多種說法，但普遍認為香港即「香的港口」。

Despite various explanations for the origin of the name of Hong Kong, it is widely believed that Hong Kong derives its name from “Fragrant Harbour” or “Incense Harbour”.

由於國際貿易市場對沉香木的需求甚殷，威脅到它的可持續利用。瀕危野生動植物種國際貿易公約已將土沉香屬各種植物的國際貿易納入管制；而在香港則受香港法例第586章《保護瀕危動植物物種條例》管制。在中國內地因遭砍伐，成林的面積銳減，只剩下零星的分佈，土沉香已被列為「易危物種」。因此，國務院將它列入為「國家二級重點保護植物」，予以保護。✿



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Aquilaria sinensis and Origin of the Name of Hong Kong

Aquilaria sinensis (Lour.) Sprengle, with a common name “incense tree”, is an evergreen tree species native to South China. Its trunk is smooth and light grey, leaves are oval-shaped with fine veins, and flowers are small and yellowish green. In summer, plenty of oval-shaped green fruits can be seen hanging on it. It is a useful plant as the resin naturally formed or extracted from wood can be used for making incense and Chinese medicine, its wood for joss sticks, and its bark for paper.

What is the relationship between this handsome tree and the name of the place we are living in? According to “*Hong Kong and Its External Communication before 1842*”, a book written by Professor Lo Hsiang-lin, and other reference materials, incense tree was planted in large numbers in Tung Koon (Dongguan) District and the New Territories of Hong Kong, particularly at Lik Yuen (Shatin) and Sha Lo Wan (the west of Lantau Island) during the Ming (1368 – 1644 A.D.) and till early Qing Dynasty. Annual trade volume in the region amounted tens of thousands tael of silver. Local place nowadays still retains related name, such as Heung Fan Liu (literally means Incense Sticks Workshop) in Tai Wai, Shatin. The products of incense tree, pieces of incense each shaped like an amber, were transported through land routes from the production areas to Tsim Sha Tau (now Tsim Sha Tsui) and then by sampan to Shek Pai Wan (now Aberdeen), where incense products were finally exported to destinations in the Mainland China including Guangzhou, Suzhou, Zhejiang, Southeast Asia and places as far as Arabia. Shek Pai Wan, the harbour

在香港，近來亦有發生非法砍伐及偷竊土沉香的案件，情況令人關注。

Illegal exploitation of the species has spread into Hong Kong recently – and so the situation of *Aquilaria sinensis* in Hong Kong calls for our attention.

exporting incense, was therefore named “Fragrant Harbour” (“Heung Harbour”), to the extent that the whole island was later known as Hong Kong.

However, during the early Ching (Qing) Dynasty (c. 1662 – 1684 A.D.), in order to counter the coastal attacks by Ming relicts, all coastal habitants were evacuated to inlands by 50 li (about 30km, which include the whole territory of modern Hong Kong) for more than two decades. Therefore, the planting industries of incense tree were seriously affected.

Today, the harvesting of incense tree for economic uses has disappeared in Hong Kong. However, as the climate and soil conditions in Hong Kong are suitable for the growth of incense tree, it has become a common tree species in our countryside.

High demand in the trade of the fragrant, resinous wood (agarwood) of *Aquilaria* spp. makes the harvest unsustainable. Therefore the import and export of all different species of *Aquilaria* including the native *Aquilaria sinensis* are regulated internationally under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and locally under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance Cap. 586. The species is considered vulnerable in mainland China due to over exploitation there and, therefore has been listed as a Wild Plant under State Protection (Category II) in China owing to the decline in its distribution. In Hong Kong the species is common in lowland forests and fung shui woodlands. ✿

