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## Before and After Hong Kong's Reunification with the Motherland

The transition to Hong Kong's reunification with the Motherland began with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's visit to China and the start of Sino-British negotiations. Following the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the promulgation of the Basic Law, Hong Kong residents experienced the Mainland's concern for the well-being of the Hong Kong people and its commitment to protect the interests of Hong Kong, the vision of preserving the previous capitalist system and way of life through the Basic Law, and the promising blueprint for a better Hong Kong in the areas of political system, economy, fundamental rights, culture, education, and so on.



*Prominent national leaders attended the Handover Ceremony. (Photo courtesy Wen Wei Po and China News Service.)*



*At 4:20 pm, 30 June 1997, Governor Patten bid farewell to Hong Kong at Government House. Picture shows Patten receiving the British flag from a military police officer. (Photo courtesy Wen Wei Po.)*



After being elected as the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR on 16 December 1996, Tung Chee-hwa formed his team of senior officials. On 20 February 1997, he announced the principal officials of the first administration appointed by the CPG. They were:

The Chief Secretary for Administration:	Anson Chan
The Financial Secretary:	Tsang Yam-kuen
The Secretary for Justice:	Leung Oi-sie
Secretary for Home Affairs:	Suen Ming-yeung
Secretary for Broadcasting, Culture and Sport:	Chau Tak-hay
Secretary for Transport:	Siu Kwing-chue
Secretary for Constitutional Affairs:	Ng Wing-fui
Secretary for Housing:	Wong Shing-wah
Secretary for Health and Welfare:	Fok Lo Shiu-ching
Secretary for Financial Services:	Hui Si-yan
Secretary for Education and Manpower:	Wong Wing-ping
Secretary for Security:	Lai Hing-ling
Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands:	Leung Po-wing
Secretary for the Treasury:	Kwong Ki-chi
Secretary for Trade and Industry:	Yue Chung-yee
Secretary for the Civil Service:	Lam Woon-kwong
Secretary for Economic Services:	Ip Shu-kwan
Secretary for Works:	Kwong Hon-sang
Commissioner of Police:	Hui Ki-on
Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption:	Yam Kwan Pui-ying
Director of Immigration:	Ip Lau Suk-yee
Commissioner of Customs and Excise:	Li Shu-fai
Director of Audit:	Chan Yin-tat

The 23 principal officials comprised 17 Directors of Bureaux and four Heads of Departments who served in the same positions before 1997, Mrs Yam Kwan Pui-ying who was newly promoted to Commissioner of ICAC and Ms Leung Oi-sie, who was invited to join the Hong Kong Government as Secretary for Justice. Ms Leung was the first Chinese to hold this post. The Hong Kong media was positive about this line-up. For example, it was reported that “it is beyond the expectation of the general public that the senior officials will all stay, and this means that the Central Authorities have kept the promise of not intervening”. It was also reported that “the fact that all senior officials at the Director of Bureau level will stay on in the new government shows that

the Chinese side has kept the overall interests of Hong Kong in mind and has given due consideration to the needs of the British side in maintaining good governance over Hong Kong in the last months before the handover”.



*At 7:45 pm of 30 June 1997, the British and the Hong Kong colonial flags were lowered, signalling the end of British colonial rule over Hong Kong. (Photo courtesy Wen Wei Po.)*

*Picture shows the advance elements of the People's Liberation Army entering Hong Kong at Lok Ma Chau at 9 pm on 30 June 1997. ©*



*North District residents braved a heavy downpour to greet the People's Liberation Army troops on the morning of July 1 and presenting them with a plaque inscribed with the words "Brave and Civilised Army". ©*



*At midnight on 1 July 1997, the PLA Garrison in Hong Kong took over from British troops at Tamar. (Photograph by Wang Jianmin, courtesy Xinhua News Agency.)*



*PLA craft cruised under Tsing Ma Bridge on the morning of 1 July 1997. ©*



*A People's Liberation Army vessel entered Hong Kong harbour on the morning of 1 July 1997. ©*



*The Coat of Arms of the British Hong Kong Government was removed from the Central Government Offices. ©*

*The Coat of Arms of the British Hong Kong Government at the Government Secretariat was replaced by the emblem of the People's Republic of China and the emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Government Secretariat was renamed the HKSAR Government Secretariat on July 1. ©*

*About 4000 guests from around the world gathered in the new extension of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre to witness the Handover Ceremony at midnight on 30 June 1997. ©*





*The national flag flew over the Court of Final Appeal building in Central. ©*

As 1 July 1997 approached, the CPG undertook all preparations to resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong in an orderly and systematic fashion. The eyes of the world were on Hong Kong to witness “One Country, Two Systems” and “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong” with “a high degree of autonomy”.



*The Union Jack and Hong Kong flags were lowered, signalling the end of 156 years of British rule in Hong Kong. ©*



*The national flag of the PRC and the HKSAR flag were raised. ©*



*Representatives of the Chinese and British governments posed for a photograph at the end of the Handover Ceremony. ©*



*HKSAR Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee Hwa, took the oath before Premier Li Peng. ©*



*Picture shows the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Anson Chan, leading Principal Officials of the HKSAR Government in taking the oath. ©*





*Judges of the Court of Final Appeal and High Court were sworn in. ©*



*Members of the Provisional Legislative Council were sworn in. ©*



*Members of the HKSAR Executive Council were sworn in. ©*

The ceremony marking Hong Kong's reunification with the Motherland was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 1 July 1997. The five-star national flag was slowly raised while the national anthem was played. Witnessed by the national leaders, the first Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, principal officials of the first Hong Kong Government, Executive Council Members, Provisional Legislative Council Members, and members of the judiciary were sworn into office in accordance with the Basic Law. Hong Kong's reunification with the Motherland was completed.



*The HKSAR Executive Council. ©*



*National leaders took a group photo with the principal officials, members of the Provisional Legislative Council and officers of the judiciary. ©*



*The Provisional Legislative Council met on 1 July 1997. ©*

*The Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Ma Yuzhen, proposed a toast to the HKSAR at the opening ceremony of the Office of the Commissioner on 1 July 1997. ©*





*The Provisional Legislative Council held its first meeting in the Legislative Council building on 9 July 1997. ©*



*The city was festooned with decorations. ©*



*Crowds in Lan Kwai Fong, a popular entertainment area in Central, celebrate the establishment of the HKSAR counting down into the new day on 1 July 1997. ©*



*The "Forever Blooming Bauhinia", a gift from the Central People's Government to the HKSAR . ©*