



# The University of Hong Kong

Centre for Comparative and Public Law

Faculty of Law

4/F KK Leung Building, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong

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## Press Release

10 July 2006

### **Basic Law Drafting History Online (BLDHO)**

The Centre for Comparative and Public Law and the University of Hong Kong Libraries are pleased to announce the launch of **Basic Law Drafting History Online (BLDHO)**.

The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is the most important law in Hong Kong. It has profound implications in all of our lives and touches upon almost every facet of society. Its 160 articles and three annexes form the foundation for Hong Kong's current political, social, economic, cultural, and legal systems. It also confers fundamental rights and freedoms, many of which did not exist prior to 1997. As Hong Kong's constitution, the Basic Law is the supreme law in the Region, and other laws inconsistent with it can be invalidated by the courts.

As we near the first decade of the HKSAR, the interpretation and application of the Basic Law is evoking considerable interest. It is increasingly relied upon in litigation and has found application in a wide range of cases including criminal, civil, property, and administrative law cases. While the Hong Kong courts have demonstrated a generous and purposive approach to interpretation of the Basic Law, mainland interpretations have shown a greater affinity for the original meaning of the words. Different views on interpretation highlight the inherent tensions within the Basic Law, which exists as both a Chinese law and a constitution in Hong Kong's common law system of justice.

The Centre for Comparative and Public Law and the University of Hong Kong Libraries have developed a new online resource to allow members of the public to gain a deeper understanding of the drafting history of the Basic Law. **Basic Law Drafting History Online (BLDHO)** provides free public access to a collection of almost 900 documents prepared or used by the various official bodies from 1985 to 1990, when the Basic Law was drafted and promulgated, and from 1990 to 1997, when preparations were made for the resumption of sovereignty. This collection of primary materials is scanned from documents publicly available in Hong Kong. BLDHO can be accessed from the HKU Libraries' Digital Initiatives webpage (<http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/bldho/>) or from the Centre for Comparative and Public Law webpage (<http://www.hku.hk/ccpl>).

Future releases of BLDHO (expected in 2007) will allow users to access information from relevant newspaper articles and from the Hong Kong Legislative Council debates in the period 1984-90. We also aim to provide a database that analyzes the history of each of the articles in the Basic Law.

BLDHO is a research output of the Constitutional Law Project funded by the University of Hong Kong's URC Strategic Research Areas and Themes initiative. Previous outputs include the *Hong Kong Basic Law Bibliography* and *Hong Kong Human Rights Bibliography*, both published by Hong Kong Law Journal Limited (<http://www.hklj.com>).

We welcome your comments on BLDHO. Please send them to Simon NM Young at [snmyoung@hku.hk](mailto:snmyoung@hku.hk).

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