

"Back in England, in 1992, things had not gone well for Chris Patten. He was personally out of a job. They said, you can do this or that, or you can be Governor of Hong Kong, believing he wouldn't want to be that but we'll throw it into the mixture. Much to everyone's surprise including Patten's own, he said, 'yes, that is what I want.' So David Wilson, the Hong Kong Governor was kicked up to the House of Lords and Patten who was completely unprepared for the job, came here and turned out to be phenomenal. It was like a master class on how to be a political leader. He loved it. His wife loved it. His kids loved it."



The 28th and last British Governor of Hong Kong, Christopher Patten, arrived in 1992 without a knighthood or a ceremonial uniform, and left at midnight, July 1, 1997 aboard the British yacht, HMV Britannia.
- historical Museum Hong Kong

"British colonial rule overall had not been particularly impressive or popular, but by 1997, when they had to give it up, here was this charismatic governor, and he swept the colony all the way. The Brits left on quite a wave of good feeling. It was an amazing day. It also poured rain the whole day. There was a big ceremony in the British garrison headquarters, with Prince Charles and Patten and no Chinese representative. I was covering the story all day and it was such a great story."

Steven Vines
journalist
columnist,
TV host

and caterer,
including a university
halal food counter.



"Following that we went up to the border to watch the Chinese troops come in at midnight. Only the Chinese could orchestrate this. They got Northern Chinese, who tend to be quite tall and pale-skinned, all standing bolt upright on flatbed trucks, coming through the border in the heavy rain, looking

totally bewildered but standing rigid.
"With the handover of power, the only thing that didn't change was the bureaucrats. Despite that there is a genuine free market in wide areas of the economy and it is very competitive."

Allen Youngblood, Jazz pianist at the Foreign Correspondents Club.



"Been here twenty years. Here at the FCC they see you doing something you love. Photojournalists, correspondents, writers. Craft makes you artful. Here we're playing in the best place in town, without doubt.
"I came to Hong Kong at the right time in retrospect. Otherwise I might be working at burger King, still playing at night. I'm not kidding."

The government and private foundations are pouring money into the arts. One example is shown here on this subway poster. Yo-yo Ma's musical project is to study the artistic, cultural and intellectual traditions along this ancient trade route. Hong Kong is becoming a major art center for the Asia Pacific region.



Imperial commissioner Lin Zexu arrived in Guangzhou in 1839 with instructions from Emperor Daoguang to enforce a ban on the importation of opium. He was unsuccessful, and tensions led to two opium wars.



Historical museum Hong Kong.

"What happens when China exports goods today? China has a profit tax of 40% on all activities. Hong Kong doesn't tax activities that do not take place in Hong Kong. So Chinese manufacturers export at bare minimum profit to Hong Kong. The goods go directly to the port, but the paperwork takes another route, and along the way takes on about 25% more value before it goes back to the ship. This is all profit in Hong Kong, and the boxes are never opened."

"Things have been going this way a long time and there's a saying in China, 'the mountains are high and the emperor is far away.' It's not black money, just a bit grey around the edges."

"China was paid in silver. There was soon a depletion [of the British silver supply] going into China. China's currency has always been based on silver, not gold. The Chinese word for bank is silver company."

"The Brits started selling them opium (in the early 18th century), grown cheaply in India. Opium addiction took off. Silver then left China. Word got to the emperor - far over the hills. He sent a commission to say, 'this must stop.' It didn't. A few British vessels were seized, British took a few shots. Chinese fired back and the opium war was on. First opium war, the Hong Kong island was taken. Twenty-odd years later, second opium war, they took the southern part of Kowloon peninsula."

"In 1898 they took the New Territories on a 99-year lease. All we had to give back was the New Territories, but since that is where water, power, plants and industry are located you can't give that back and expect the rest to survive. About 1982 [Prime Minister] Maggie Thatcher said, 'let's make a deal. We'll cede it all back to you provide you give us another 50 years to run it.'"

"[President] Deng Xiaoping replied, 'Yes, that's a wonderful thing. We will take you up on that,' and it became the deal. 'Deng Xiaoping took over when Mao Zedong died and his whole line was, 'I don't care if the cat's black or white as long as it catches mice.' He was quite willing to reduce the traditional communist principles to allow China to become wealthy. All that soon moved from Hong Kong to China. All of a sudden Southern China was open to become the biggest everything manufacturing center. The question now is what is Hong Kong to do? 'If the government leaves it alone, it could be an art center at some time because freedom of expression is very important here.'"

Jake van der Kamp columnist for the South China Morning Post (SCMP)



50 years is a LONG time - 200 quarterly statements! - will he notice?

50 years is just around the corner. Does she realize this?



The win-win situation