



SEMINAR

Legal Issues affecting the Future of Hong Kong, 1978-79

Honorary Professor Peter Wesley-Smith

Friday, 15 October 2010, 1:00 - 2:00 pm
Room 419 Knowles Building,
The University of Hong Kong

In 1978 the British perceived an opportunity to approach the Chinese government in an attempt to secure the future of Hong Kong from 1997 onwards. The immediate concern was the expiry of leases to land in the New Territories and the loss of investment and confidence as 1997 approached. Various solutions were discussed, including changing leases from a fixed to an indeterminate term. Could this be done without local legislation? Was a new Order in Council required? And could legal changes be made for Hong Kong without overt approval from China? A subtle mix of law and politics and international relations determined British decision-making on what was a crucial initiative for the future of Hong Kong.

Peter Wesley-Smith came to Hong Kong in 1970 to undertake research for a PhD (resulting in his book *Unequal Treaty 1898-1997*) and began teaching in the Department of Law in 1973. He has been Editor and Editor-in-Chief of the *Hong Kong Law Journal*, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor of Constitutional Law, and more recently Honorary Professor. His writings include books on the Hong Kong legal system and constitution. Upon departure on resignation in 1999 he has been living in rural New South Wales, engaged in gardening and creative writing (lyrics, libretti, plays), and for some years has taught an intensive course in international law at the University of Macau.

Please email Flora Leung at fkleung@hku.hk to reserve a place.