

Hong Kong resident jailed for contracting bogus marriage and illegal transfer of passport

A Hong Kong resident was jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts today (March 28) for contracting bogus marriage and illegal transfer of his passport.

During an investigation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) on a case of illegal transfer of a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport, a man aged 43 admitted under caution that he sold his passport and that he had arranged to contract a bogus marriage with a Mainland resident through a middleman for monetary remuneration in December 2007. Immigration officers then contacted the Mainland woman concerned, aged 44, for further investigation.

The Mainland woman was charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud on March 19. After trial, she was convicted and was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. The man was charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts today with one count of conspiracy to defraud and one count of transferring a travel document to another without reasonable excuse. He pleaded guilty to all charges and was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment on each charge. All charges are to run concurrently.

"Under the laws of Hong Kong, it is an offence to transfer any travel document to another person without reasonable excuse. Offenders are liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty will be a fine of \$150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years," the ImmD spokesman said.

"The Immigration Department will continue to spare no effort in combating bogus marriages and other related illicit activities. For people who have obtained their residence in Hong Kong by fraudulent means, their Hong Kong identity card and residence status will be invalidated according to the laws of Hong Kong. They will also be subject to removal back to their place of origin," the spokesman said.

The spokesman urged the public not to defy the law by participating in activities related to bogus marriage and not to make a false oath before immigration officers for the purpose of procuring a marriage in Hong Kong. Those directing others to contract a bogus marriage may also be guilty of the offence of conspiracy to defraud. Anyone who commits the offence of conspiracy to defraud is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years.