

LCQ16: Reunification gifts presented by motherland to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Following is a question by the Hon Judy Chan and a written reply by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, in the Legislative Council today (February 21):

Question:

When Hong Kong returned to the motherland in 1997, the Central People's Government and the nation's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government presented gifts to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) to celebrate SAR's establishment. At that time, the SAR Government indicated that the gifts would be housed in a museum in the future. However, the SAR Government changed the arrangement one year later, with the various gifts separately housed in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, various museums and government buildings, etc. Some members of the public have relayed that as the locations for housing some of the gifts are not commensurate with the value of the gifts, and the SAR Government has not provided text introductions next to the gifts, the public has no way at all to know the historical backgrounds of the gifts, and there is a lack of respect. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the current locations for housing the various gifts, the respective numbers of gifts housed in the various locations, and the criteria for determining the locations for housing the gifts;
- (2) of the reasons for not housing all the gifts in a museum as indicated in 1997;
- (3) of the number of exhibitions organised by the authorities to display the reunification gifts since Hong Kong's return to the motherland, and the number of reunification gifts displayed in each of such exhibitions; and
- (4) given that the Government is committed to promoting Hong Kong as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, and is reviewing the future development plan for museums, whether the Government has plans to gather up the various reunification gifts afresh, and set up a brand new permanent exhibition in a museum for displaying the gifts, so that members of the public can appreciate in one go these modern Chinese art treasures of superb craftsmanship, and feel the great affection and profound generosity of the Central People's Government as well as the various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(1) and (2) The Central People's Government and the nation's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the Central Government presented a total of 33 reunification gifts to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in 1997. On June 12, 1998, the Government announced the arrangements for display of reunification gifts. As pointed out in the press release issued at that time (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/199806/12/0612135.htm), in considering the display arrangements of these unique gifts, the Government has taken into account factors such as security, public exposure and proposed venue's size and floor loading, etc. These gifts are currently placed at various locations including the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Central Library, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and a number of Government Offices as well as Departments' Headquarters, etc. The information and locations of these gifts are shown in the Appendix for reference.

(3) and (4) The Government displayed 31 reunification gifts at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from July 3 to 4, 1997, and exhibited 16 reunification gifts at the Sha Tin Town Hall from June 13 to July 15, 1998. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum also organised an exhibition to display some reunification gifts from June 20, 2012, to February 25, 2013. The gifts are currently placed at different locations in the territory and most of them are openly displayed to facilitate public viewing. The Government will continue to display the reunification gifts to the public in suitable ways.