

7) Women Officers – How the Force Achieved Equality

The proportion of women in the HKP is one of the highest among major police forces in the world.

Before 1949, however, Hong Kong Police did not have any female police officers, though at many police stations women were engaged as ‘searchers’ on an informal basis. These female searchers conducted body searches and took fingerprints of female suspects and arrested persons. By 1949, there were 44 female searchers in the Force.¹

In 1949, a Malaysian Chinese, Ms Hui Kam-to, alias Kimmy Koh, was appointed as the first woman sub-inspector of the Force². Without receiving any formal training, Ms Hui was quickly deployed to the Criminal Records Bureau. After three months, she was redeployed to the Central District where she became the first woman detective. She was promoted to Inspector of Police in 1952. Ms Hui left the Force in 1962.³

In 1951, persuaded of the need to recruit a contingent of female officers, Force management directed Ms HUI to select the first batch of women constables to replace the female searchers, marking the beginning of policewomen in Hong Kong police history.⁴ The first intake of 10 (9 graduated)⁵ women constables (WPCs) underwent a 6-month training course at the Police Training School, with the syllabus focusing on the ordinances that dealt with the protection of women and children. There were regular guest lectures from Hong Kong’s early social workers.⁶ There was no training squad specifically for women officers and they were arranged to receive training, such as foot-drill, together

¹ 何家騏，朱耀光，《香港警察：歷史見證與執法生涯》(香港：三聯書店(香港)有限公司出版，2011)，頁 103。

² 陳效能，何家騏，《香港女警六十年》(香港：商務印書館有限公司出版，2015)，頁 24。

³ 陳效能，何家騏，《香港女警六十年》(香港：商務印書館有限公司出版，2015)，頁 159-163。

⁴ Lawrence K. K. Ho and Yiu-Kong Chu, *Policing Hong Kong 1842-1969 Insiders’ Stories*, City University of Hong Kong Press, 2012, p. 179-180; 陳效能，何家騏，《香港女警六十年》(香港：商務印書館有限公司出版，2015)，頁 23-24。

⁵ 陳效能，何家騏，《香港女警六十年》(香港：商務印書館有限公司出版，2015)，頁 161-162。

⁶ Lawrence K. K. Ho and Yiu-Kong Chu, *Policing Hong Kong 1842-1969 Insiders’ Stories*, City University of Hong Kong Press, 2012, p. 180.

with their male counterparts.⁷

The first infusion of women in 1951 quickly proved its worth. Out on the streets, they soon stopped being a novelty and became a necessity. In times of crisis, like the great exodus from the Mainland in 1962, women played a crucial role. During that period when tens of thousands of people swarmed over the shallow Shenzhen River, every one of the 273 women in the Force was rushed to the frontier. They helped calm the panic and assisted in stemming the human tidal waves.

In 1950s and 1960s, the Force also realised the value of women officers in handling major public order situations. During the 1967 riots, unarmed women police officers were regularly deployed to key confrontations – particularly at Government House – to deal with females in the crowd, defuse tension and to generally present a less aggressive image.⁸ The presence of women officers often brought calm to situations that were potentially explosive.⁹

The Force was ahead of much of Hong Kong society in recognising the worth and rights of women. Equal pay for male and female officers was introduced in 1974.¹⁰

After the 1967 disturbances, female officers no longer took the role of just supporting their male counterparts but began to take more important roles in crowd management and many other duties.¹¹

To help deal with the forced repatriation of Vietnamese migrants, the first all female PTU platoons – ‘Tango Coy’ – were formed in 1992. In order to allow female officers to perform as many ordinary constabulary duties as practicable,

⁷ 何家騏，朱耀光，《香港警察：歷史見證與執法生涯》(香港：三聯書店(香港)有限公司出版，2011)，頁 104-106。

⁸ Lawrence K. K. Ho and Yiu-Kong Chu, *Policing Hong Kong 1842-1969 Insiders' Stories*, City University of Hong Kong Press, 2012, p. 187.

⁹ 陳效能，何家騏，《香港女警六十年》(香港：商務印書館有限公司出版，2015)，頁 26。

¹⁰ 陳效能，何家騏，《香港女警六十年》(香港：商務印書館有限公司出版，2015)，頁 35-37。

¹¹ Lawrence K. K. Ho and Yiu-Kong Chu, *Policing Hong Kong 1842-1969 Insiders' Stories*, City University of Hong Kong Press, 2012, p. 189.

all newly recruited women officers were required to attend mandatory firearms training and were armed in the same way as their male counterparts from 1995.

From 1995 onwards, selected women officers were required to undergo Police Tactical Unit (PTU) training.¹² Like their male counterparts, female PTU officers continued playing a pivotal part in major internal security or public order event management operations.

Nowadays, women officers are serving on equal terms with their male counterparts in every formation of the Force. There are females working in Marine, Police Dog Unit, riding motorcycles in Traffic and doing almost every operational job in the Force.

¹² Lawrence K. K. Ho and Yiu-Kong Chu, *Policing Hong Kong 1842-1969 Insiders' Stories*, (City University of Hong Kong Press, 2012), p. 189.

'Firsts for Woman Officers' in the Hong Kong Police

The First Woman Sub-inspector of Police	Kimmy Koh	1 December 1949
The First Woman Senior Inspector of Police	J Panter	21 June 1963
The First Chinese Woman Senior Inspector of Police	Lui Che-ying, Lee O'lin	1 April 1967
The First Woman Assistant Superintendent of Police	Margaret Mary Patrick	1 April 1958
The First Woman Superintendent of Police	Marjorie Elsie Lovell	8 December 1963
The First Chinese Woman Superintendent of Police	Lui Che-ying	1 August 1971
The First Woman Senior Superintendent of Police	Marjorie Elsie Lovell	23 June 1971
The First Chinese Woman Senior Superintendent of Police	Wong Leung Kam-shan	1 October 1981
The First Woman Chief Superintendent of Police	A H Calderwood	14 May 1977
The First Chinese Woman Chief Superintendent of Police	Wong Leung Kam-Shan	10 June 1987
The First Chinese Woman Assistant Commissioner of Police	Wong Leung Kam-sham	21 January 1995
The First Woman Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police	Chiu Wai-yin, Winnie	17 September 2014
The First Woman Deputy Commissioner of Police	Chiu Wai-yin, Winnie	8 July 2017



The first batch of Hong Kong Women Police passing out from the Police Training School at Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen.

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3. Kevin Sinclair. *Asia's Finest*. Unicorn Books Limited, 1983.
4. Lawrence K. K. Ho and Yiu-Kong Chu. *Policing Hong Kong 1842-1969 Insiders' Stories*. City University of Hong Kong Press, 2012.