

# Notary Public

## History

“The office of a notary public has its origin in the civil institutions of ancient Rome”. This is the opening sentence in N.P. Readys’ Brooke’s Notary. In Romani times there were public officials called scribes and tabellio. They first perform the duties of copiers and subscribers, who eventually rose to the rank of a learned profession with technical knowledge and skill.

They were appointed by the European emperor and popes. The English notariat was first established in 13<sup>th</sup> century when the pope authorized the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint notaries. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the profession gradually come to acquire its present structure.

Before 1997, all Hong Kong notaries were appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The appointment system is now replaced by examination. Hague Convention 1961 abolished the requirement of legislation for foreign public documents and set out the requirements for the proof of documents intended to take effect in foreign countries.

However, unlike UK, PRC is not a party to the Hague Convention but diplomatic steps have been taken to ensure the continued application of the Hague Convention to Hong Kong.

The practia of a notary public in Hong Kong remain the same after 1997.

## Services

By the signature and official seal of our notary publics , we offer services of certifying the execution of documents, some facts or things or of which we have acknowledge.

1. witnessing the execution of documents and give certificate

2. drafting a full juridical instrument and witnessing the execution of documents
3. giving full probative act for countries which fully and automatically recognize notarial acts

In short, we attest documents for Hong Kong in foreign countries by witnessing signatures only or for probative value.