

Officiating at the end of the relay, the Chief Secretary for Administration, Henry Tang Ying-yen said it was “truly a journey of harmony”, which had made Hong Kong proud. “Every member of our community who defied the rain and took part played an indispensable role in creating this ocean of red that has washed over Hong Kong today.”

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department was largely responsible for collaborating efforts with various government departments and organisations in ensuring such a great turnout. Various ceremonies/community involvement programmes were held to promote the event and to cultivate a strong Olympic atmosphere in the community.

The Olympic torch arrived in Beijing on March 31, a prelude to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay. It was not the first time Hong Kong had hosted a leg of the relay, the first being 44 years ago.

The May 2 Olympic Torch Relay will no doubt be remembered for years to come as a joyous, yet dignified, celebration of the Olympic spirit and Hong Kong's pride that our country is at long last hosting the Olympic Games.



An RTHK film crew shooting behind the scenes.

Behind the Torch Relay

Forever Sze Wing-yuen,
Acting Assistant Director of Broadcasting (Radio),
Radio Television Hong Kong

■ THE Olympic Torch has since made its way to Mountain Qomolangma, but its presence is still felt at Radio Television Hong Kong — the Video Editing Section is working on full-length and highlight versions of the event; the Arts Services Section is preparing a commemorative DVD pack; and on my desk lie copies of appreciation letters I do not want to file away yet, as I feel that words are still not sufficient to convey my gratitude.

The stunning scenes of the Torch Relay linger in the minds of all in Hong Kong; behind the camera, the excitement was felt even more deeply by the broadcasting team. The 25-kilometre route through Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories showcased Hong Kong's unique scenery, but the different terrains also posed transmission challenges to engineering staff of seven local broadcasters, who combined their efforts and wisdom to push aside all obstacles to make the unprecedented nine-hour continuous live television (TV) broadcast a success.

to be made and contingency measures set up accordingly. As for unpredictable situations, it required the ability to meet an emergency, the successful execution of which brought great satisfaction. Thanks to the professionalism of the shooting team and their skills in putting into place contingency operations, TV pool signals were transmitted in time despite the early arrival of the plane flying in the tinder lamp and the shooting team's hold-up by security check procedures — the team arrived at the apron with just 10 minutes to spare.



Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Executive Vice-President, Yang Shu'an handing the Olympic Flame to Mr Tsang.

Starting in March, the whole party conducted endless trial runs to make adjustments, from using a helicopter for signal relay to employing a diversity reception system. To ensure secure signal transmission, we also utilised mobile surveillance techniques using the 3.5 gigabit network provided by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department for backup



Shooting of the Torch Relay by helicopter.

Another set of challenges lay ahead following the arrival of the tinder lamp: the unexpectedly shortened ceremony at the airport necessitated immediate adjustment of the arrangements in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre; the early morning rain initiated the rainy day contingency

signals. When asked by the Chief Executive, Donald Tsang Yam-kuen, on April 18 about anticipated problems in the live broadcast, we could only say trial runs were still under way to find the best system, given the complex and unpredictable nature of the task where every test conducted was based on assumption.

measures; the low clouds struck out aerial shooting by helicopter, and the humidity negatively affecting the video transmissions had rendered it necessary for the immediate use of stand-by signals...
Embracing the many unpredictable challenges beyond our control, we broadcasters acted like magicians who could produce miracles in a flash. I was greatly moved to see the Olympic Flame beginning its first solemn journey across Chinese soil and by the joyful cheers of the large chanting crowds along the streets, and much gratified by the efforts of the broadcasting team.

In preparation for such a large project, we looked at various hypothetical situations so that we would be prepared for different contingencies, such as disruption to live broadcasting in TV House, or inclement weather. Every assumption had

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