

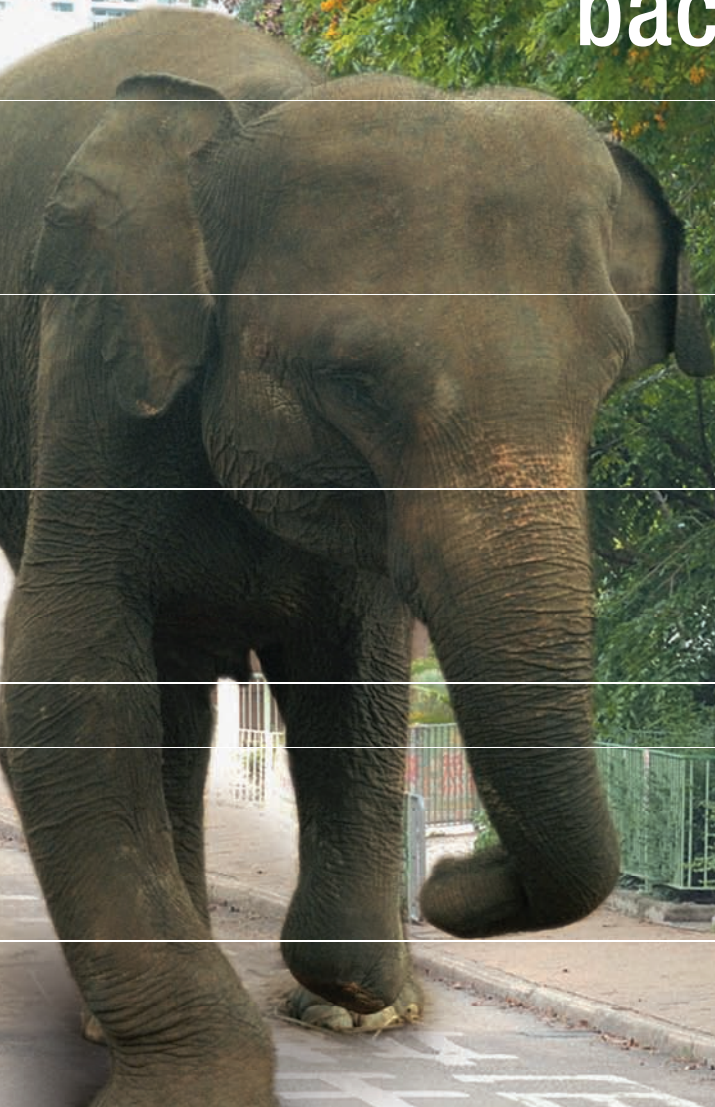
VOLUME 7 · NUMBER 3 · June 2006

BULLETIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Hong Kong on the Trunk Route

Ideas for bringing
back the elephant





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Items for publication in *The University of Hong Kong Bulletin* or suggestions for subjects which might be included should be addressed to the editorial board, Knowles Building, telephone number: 2859 2229, fax number: 2559 9459 or e-mail: bulletin@hku.hk.

Items should include the author's name and University contact details. If you have any comments or suggestions to make regarding the content or format of *The University of Hong Kong Bulletin*, please direct them to the editor for consideration by the editorial board.

Printed on recycled paper.

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Striking the Balance

Professor C. Duncan Rice, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, delivered the second Ian Davies Distinguished Lecture at The University of Hong Kong on March 15, 2006. The guests at this well-attended event included Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, the former governor of Hong Kong and present Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen. Professor Rice was introduced by our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-

Chee Tsui. In a thought-provoking, stimulating and witty address, Professor Rice discussed the tensions between the traditional idea of a university as an institution of learning and the more modern view that its main business is to serve the demands of employers. He argued that every university must constantly be trying to strike the right balance between these competing imperatives and that solutions would doubtless vary from university to university and from country to country.



Left to Right: Lord Wilson, Professor C. Duncan Rice, Professor Ian Davies, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui.

New Student Village

The Jockey Club Student Village II was opened by Hon. Ronald Arculli, Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club on May 2, 2006. The Village

consists of three halls, Morrison Hall, Lee Shau Kee Hall and Suen Chi Sun Hall. It is home to 900 local and international students from 23 countries.



Medical Faculties Form Alliance

An alliance of medical schools from around the world has been set up with the University's Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine at its core, to combine forces in researching cancer and stem cells, infection and immunology, and ageing and imaging.

Research will also focus on making findings more readily accessible to doctors in the field through knowledge transfer and translation.

The East-West Alliance was formed at the instigation of the Faculty, to link nine institutions that are all beneficiaries of the Li Ka Shing Foundation.

Cambridge University, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Toronto are part of the alliance's executive together with our University, which is also providing administrative support.

Other members include The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Stanford University, Shantou University, University of Manitoba and the Institut Pasteur.

Deans from each of the universities will be personally involved, including Professor Lam Shiu Kum of our University.

"These are very eminent institutions and there are common things we are all working on, although our niches are different," Professor Lam said.

"We want to encourage research that draws on the talents and resources of the nine universities. The idea is synergy – through synergy you make more progress."

The first annual meeting of the Alliance will be held next spring when academics from each of the partner universities will meet at a conference to be held in Hong Kong.

New Fellow of Royal Society Joins Ranks of World Greats

Professor Malik Peiris, Professor: Chair of Microbiology, was one of the 44 scientists recently elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society, the UK national academy of science, in recognition of their exceptional contributions to science, engineering and medicine. Professor Peiris was honoured for his research into the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and other human viral infections that cause respiratory disease.

As a Fellow of the Royal Society, he follows in the footsteps of Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Stephen Hawking, David Attenborough and Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the world wide web.

The Royal Society's election process is extremely rigorous. It involves 113 Fellows plus 21 Council members and hundreds of referees, and is based upon the scientific system of peer review. The annual cycle begins on September 30 each year. A final list of 44 candidates for the Fellows and 6 candidates for Foreign Members is confirmed in April and Fellows attending the Annual Meeting for the Election of Fellows and Foreign Members in May vote by secret ballot. Only Fellows attending the meeting are allowed to vote. A candidate must secure at least two-thirds of the votes. Candidates do not attend the meeting.

Professor Peiris will be admitted to the Society at the formal Admissions Day in July when he will sign the Charter Book and the Obligation of the Fellows of the Royal Society.

Japanese Studies Enters Its Third Decade

The Department of Japanese has gone from strength to strength over the last 20 years.

The Department of Japanese Studies continued its celebration of its 20th anniversary with Japan Month, in April.

Events included a speech by the Consul-General of Japan, Mr Takanori Kitamura, on *Japan and China: Working Towards a Mature Relationship* and a workshop on Japanese traditions such as kimono wearing and flower-pressing demonstrated by female managers of ryokan (inns).

The celebrations marked the evolution of the Department into one of Asia's major centres of research on Japan, outside the country itself. To date its teachers have produced over 30 single-authored or edited books, as well as many journal articles and book chapters.

"We are particularly strong in research on modern Japan, focussing especially on modern Japanese society," said Head

of the Department Dr Peter Cave. "And in recent years we have attracted postgraduate research students from top-level universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, Peking and UCLA. Last year we hosted the 16th Japan Anthropology Workshop conference, a major international event attended by over 100 presenters from 18 countries."

It has also developed the largest and most comprehensive undergraduate programme in Japanese Studies in Hong Kong, one that combines high level Japanese language training with in-depth study of Japan's society and culture, and which has now produced over 1,000 graduates – a quarter of whom attended an alumni dinner in 2005.

"There are two distinctive features of our Department," said Cave. "The first is our language-intensive courses, which enable students to study Japan using the Japanese language itself - so they write essays about literature, film, and so on in Japanese.

"The second is our effort to give students opportunities to work with Japanese firms. Our summer internship programme allows students to work for Japanese companies in Hong Kong. And our Project in Japanese Business course lets students develop year-long projects with Japanese companies. This illustrates how we try to combine intellectual development, language training, and practical career-related skills," he added.

The Department is also playing an increasingly active role in building bridges between Hong Kong and the Land of the Rising Sun. One of the biggest events it staged during its Anniversary Year was a public Roundtable Forum on China-Japan relations, with invited experts from Mainland China, Japan, Hong Kong and Europe, combined with a teach-in allowing local secondary school students to interact with the experts.

The Department's vision for the future includes increasing its strength in research on Japan-China relations – embracing social, economic, cultural and political ties. "We believe that the Department is ideally positioned for leadership in this increasingly important area," said Cave. "In terms of teaching, our vision is to further enhance our undergraduate programme to produce leaders for Hong Kong and the region. We plan to expand our exchange programmes with Japanese universities and also introduce more exchanges with universities teaching Japanese Studies in mainland China."

One of the Department's priorities is to raise funds for scholarships for study abroad opportunities as well as to further diversify and raise the curriculum level to take advantage of the four-year degree from 2012.



Croucher Senior Research Fellowships

Two of our academics were honoured to receive the Croucher Senior Research Fellowship award this year, Professor David Lee Phillips, Reader of the Department of Chemistry and Professor Yuen Kwok Yung, Professor: Chair of Infectious Diseases of the Department of Microbiology. The scheme, inaugurated in 1996, offers full financial support for senior scientists to devote a year to full-time research, releasing them from heavy teaching and administrative duties.

Time for Research

The Croucher Senior Research Fellow intends to spend his time researching the bird flu virus and discovering new viruses that infect humans and animals.

Professor Yuen Kwok Yung, a graduate of the University and Head of the Department of Microbiology, said he greatly appreciated the award "as I used to spend half of my time seeing patients and teaching which left very little time for research.

"I will try to utilize this break to focus on my current research activities," he added.

That research thrust him into the international spotlight in 2003 when the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak swept through the region. Yuen, who has the rare distinction of being a microbiologist, surgeon and physician, played a key role in the discovery of the coronavirus causing SARS, which was crucial to containing the outbreak of this disease.

He also led his team in the discovery of the novel Human Coronavirus HKU1, the bat SARS coronavirus and *Laribacter hongkongensis*. Yuen published the first clinical and laboratory diagnostic paper on Influenza A H5N1 (the virus that causes bird flu) in *The Lancet* in 1998.

His expertise in emerging infectious diseases saw Yuen appointed as Co-Scientific Director of the HKU Pasteur Research Centre in 2000. Last year the University appointed him as the Henry Fok Professor of Infectious Diseases and he was also appointed the first director of China's Ministry of Science and Technology State Key Laboratory of Emerging Infectious Diseases, established at the University. This is the first State Key Laboratory outside the Mainland.

Yuen explained that his research strategy starts at the bedside by targeting patients with an obscure disease syndrome. After which he moves to the laboratory to identify the novel microbe in clinical specimens. The animal source of the new microbe is then identified in the field and with these research data he can help the government contain outbreaks by controlling the epidemic centre.

Yuen serves on the editorial board of two medical journals, *Clinical Infectious Disease* and *Chest*. He has published more than 300 papers in peer reviewed journals including *The Lancet*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Science*, *Journal of Virology* and *PNAS*, with over 5,000 citations.



One Year to Focus on Research

Recipient of this year's Croucher Senior Research Fellowship, Professor David Lee Phillips said he is 'very happy' with the award.

"It is a great honour and recognition for the research we have done," he said. "The award also provides an opportunity to strive for better research into problems one wants to deeply focus on during the year of the Fellowship and that is also very exciting and important to me."

Phillips, who joined the University in 1993, is Head of the Department of Chemistry and Director of the Ultrafast Laser Facility at the University. He currently spends fifty to sixty per cent of his time on teaching and administrative duties.

"The fellowship," he agreed, "will provide me with a substantial amount of time to devote to developing research into chemical reactions relevant to problems like chemical and photochemical damage of DNA.

"During the next year, I plan to focus on the further development of our experimental and theoretical investigation of chemical reactions relevant to these areas."

In explaining the chemical reactions and specific areas of research he intends to pursue Phillips said: "Carcinogenic aromatic amine compounds have been observed in automobile exhaust, tobacco smoke, fermented fish and as trace products in various industrial processes.

"When these aromatic amines are metabolised by animals and humans, they can damage guanine bases in DNA that then leads to an increase in the probability for tumour formation and cancer. Arylnitrenium ions are the key reactive intermediates in the metabolism of several typical carcinogenic aromatic amines that selectively react with guanine in DNA.

"These are short-lived and difficult to study in room temperature solutions.

We recently reported the first transient vibrational spectrum obtained for a photochemically produced aryl nitrenium ion in a largely aqueous system more relevant to biological conditions."

And although sunlight is essential for life, it is now common knowledge that it contains harmful ultraviolet (UV) light that can cause both skin damage and skin cancer.

"UV light can excite the nucleobases in DNA and induce photophysical and photochemical reactions that are responsible for some of the most serious DNA photo-induced damage," explained Phillips. "While the major products of these chemical reactions have been identified and characterized, the underlying events and molecular level mechanisms leading to the photo-damage of DNA are still unclear. Thus, there is much current interest in understanding the photo-physics and photochemistry of nucleobases in either a single base form or within oligonucleotides and DNA to establish a link between the photo-excited states and subsequently formed photo-damage."

The team will use their newly-developed ultrafast time-resolved spectroscopic techniques in conducting their research. "This work will provide important new experimental evidence that can lead to a better understanding of how UV light absorption leads to damage of nucleobases, oligonucleotides and DNA," said Phillips.



Brain Function Restored with Nanotechnology

Hamsters hold out hope for reconnecting brain tissue.

A team of scientists from our Department of Anatomy and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has successfully reconnected brain tissue in hamsters using nanotechnology, holding out hope that human victims of brain injuries can regain some functions.

The team used nanomaterial that was injected into the brains of hamsters that had been surgically blinded in one eye. The substance created a permissive environment that allowed the re-growth of neural connections in damaged areas, restoring partial vision.

Significantly, re-growth occurred in both young and adult animals. The scientists thought they would need to add an extra factor to promote growth in the adult animal brains, similar to fertilising a plant, but this turned out to be unnecessary.

Dr Rutledge Ellis-Behnke, a neuroscience researcher in the Department of Anatomy who divides his time between our University and MIT, carried out the research with Professor So Kwok Fai, Head of the Department of Anatomy, and five other scientists. He said the substance not only created a permissive environment for re-growth, but was biodegradable and was not rejected by the hamsters.

“What we are trying to do is reconnect areas that may have died back. Once the [injected] substance has helped connections to regenerate, we want it to disappear or be used as a building block,” Ellis-Behnke said.

The substance is a clear liquid made up of amino acids that self-assemble into a comb-like gel structure when immersed in a saline solution. This both stimulates cells to re-grow and provides a scaffold on which neural connections can be made from one part of the brain to another.

Ellis-Behnke said they targeted visual areas of the brain because it was easy to test whether there was a return of function and, hence, re-growth.

Within 24 hours of surgery, the brains of hamsters injected with the amino acid solution started healing and within six weeks vision started to return. Ellis-Behnke said brain function was achieved with as little as 42 per cent re-growth.

The results could potentially be repeated in other areas of the brain besides vision to help patients regain lost abilities. Victims of severe stroke and brain injury are often unable to feed or look after themselves, or to communicate or understand what others say.

“We hope that our work will ultimately restore quality of life to people,” he said.

The initial findings were published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (available free to the public) and apply to acute brain injuries, such as surgery to remove a brain tumour. The researchers are now investigating whether the same can be achieved with chronic injuries, such as strokes that occur several weeks or months before treatment. The idea would be to make a new cut in the stroke-affected area of the brain to encourage re-growth.

Ellis-Behnke expects human trials of their findings could start for patients with acute injuries within three to five years, and for chronic patients, in about 10 years. So far the amino acid substance has shown no toxic side effects but further study is needed.

Apart from Ellis-Behnke and So, the research team includes Teaching Consultant Dr David Tay and Research Assistant Dr Liang Yuxiang of the Department of Anatomy, Professors Shuguang Zhang and Gerald Schneider of MIT and Professor Si-wei You of Mainland’s Fourth Military Medical University.

Mind Body Harmony Aids Conception

Women undergoing fertility treatment could have their chances of pregnancy boosted by using relaxation techniques like tai-chi and massage.

Evidence from a recent study shows that women receiving in-vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment have an almost 13 per cent greater chance of falling pregnant if they undergo anxiety-reducing treatment.

The pioneering study, conducted between 2000 and 2006 by the Faculty of Social Sciences and our Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, explored the effectiveness of Eastern Body-Mind-Spirit (EBMS) intervention on Chinese women.

A total of 227 women, undergoing their first cycle of IVF treatment were recruited, of which 69 (the intervention group) received four sessions of EBMS while the control group of 117 women received no intervention at all. Anxiety levels were monitored at three different periods during the IVF course.

The EBMS approach was based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Chinese philosophy with the goal of encouraging patients to re-examine the meaning of childbearing, family and life.

Professor Cecilia Chan, Director of the Centre on Behavioural Health, said these reflections can enhance a patient’s holistic health and ‘build up personal competence and resilience to reduce anxiety and other psychological distress, and subsequently help them to let go of unrealistic expectations for the outcome of treatment’.

The therapy included lectures on adopting a healthy lifestyle based on TCM, which promotes health as a state of mind-body harmony; relaxation techniques like acupuncture, massage, tai-chi and meditation; group sharing activities like singing and journal keeping and reflections on inspirational excerpts from ancient Chinese texts on suffering and the meaning of life.

The intervention group reported a ten per cent drop in anxiety and a higher pregnancy rate in comparison to the control group. A full 27.7 per cent of the intervention group fell pregnant compared to just 14.8 per cent of the control group.

Professor Chan said: “The results recognize the value of psychosocial intervention for people undergoing IVF in medical settings, which helps in enhancing whole person well-being by maintaining a state of harmonious balance between the internal and the integrated whole of the person in the aspects of body, mind and spirit.”

And she added: “We are excited and happy to see such promising results. Though we are quite confident that people will experience the anxiety reduction after intervention, we are

encouraged by the increased pregnancy rate.

“The results can be certainly used in developing local psychosocial support service on infertility and assisted reproduction technologies, especially on the aspect of facilitating fertility potentials. The outcome of the study contributed to better insight into the effectiveness of psychosocial intervention group for women undergoing IVF. The results of this study are of direct relevance for the implementation of counseling services and we recommend on the role of counseling for the benefit of infertile women and thus contribute to more tailor-made services,” she said.

BMS intervention has already been applied to different populations such as divorced women, bereaved families and various kinds of cancer patients, all of whom have had traumatic experiences throughout their lives.

Chan said: “We are happy to see that most of the participants experienced personal growth and life transformation after the intervention. This is also a way of living and so we hope people can maintain their mind-body-spirit harmony in daily life.”

The results of the survey were recently published in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*.



Replacing Lost Species

An ecologist suggests measures for reintroducing Hong Kong's lost species.

The reintroduction of elephants to Hong Kong may sound like an outlandish idea but interest in replacing lost species to our Country Parks is gaining momentum.

The Asian elephant once roamed freely in forests from the Yellow River down to Borneo and must have formed a major part of Hong Kong's ecosystem. There are still about 200 living in the wild in Yunnan but they are gradually being eliminated.

However, mention reintroducing the elephant to our Country Parks – as Dr Richard Corlett did recently – and you're likely to be met with howls of derision.

Corlett, Associate Professor of the Department of Ecology and Biodiversity, has been trying to raise awareness of the need to start thinking about the future of Hong Kong's forests and to consider the possibility of reintroducing animals and plants that have been lost over the last few centuries.

Once home to a diverse family of animal, bird and plant life including tigers, leopards, rhinos and gibbons Hong Kong's almost total deforestation over the last millennium has seen a marked drop in ecological diversity.

The territory is still host to barking deer, wild boar, porcupines, pangolins and civets but Corlett believes there is now room to reintroduce some of the mammals and birds that once called Hong Kong home – albeit less controversial ones than elephants.

Top of his list are 20th century extinctions like the Large Indian Civet, a strikingly marked carnivore, and the Red Fox, both of which prowled the territory up until the 1950s.

"Something like the Large Indian Civet would not be too controversial," he said. "There's no evidence of it attacking people, only chickens and ducks."

He also suggests releasing the Yellow-bellied Weasel and the Yellow-throated Marten. The most attractive bird species reintroduction could be the stunning silver pheasant – a spectacular creature that still occupies almost all suitable habitats in Guangdong, including the nearest large forest areas to Hong Kong.

"It is fairly easy to breed in captivity, so the direct translocation of wild individuals would not be essential.

"Part of the problem with reintroduction," he said. "Is that there are virtually no historical records for what was here before the 19th century.

"We need to extrapolate from historical records for Guangdong and the South China region to have any idea of what has been lost. Those records suggest we had lost monkeys, gibbons, elephants, rhinos, squirrels, flying squirrels, pheasants and woodpeckers by the 19th century."

It may be a depressing list of mortalities but it is not all bad news. Corlett gives some grounds for optimism by pointing out that existing species, like the barking deer and civets, are actually increasing in Hong Kong thanks to the removal of hunting pressure and better control of hill fires.

The time is ripe, he said, to begin seriously contemplating the future of Hong Kong's Country Parks. "We see the same pattern throughout the region of species being gradually eliminated. None of these species are globally extinct yet, but everything is in retreat. So it's important that we learn how to re-establish species in areas which are properly protected.

"Hong Kong is one of the few areas where things are getting better so it makes it an ideal place to reintroduce species that have become extinct in the past. We are never going to be able to prove what was here so it will involve a big leap of faith.

"But we have to learn how to do this because virtually every large animal in Asia is in danger, as well as many smaller ones. Everything is in decline so we really need to learn how to reintroduce things before it's too late. It would be massively educational."

Reintroduced species can also play an important ecological role. "The introduction of some species to Hong Kong would be

premature but it will always be premature if we don't even think about it. It's a long process. You need to think ahead and if we don't plan now what we want to do in 30 to 40 years' time it could be too late."

Getting back to the elephants Corlett points out that there are 11,000 domesticated Asian elephants in the world.

"Many have been trained for logging but are no longer used. That means there's a surplus of elephants but there's virtually nowhere in the region to home them."

He has suggested isolating a section of the Sai Kung peninsula with electric fencing which could provide a home for a small herd of female elephants, which are less aggressive than the males.

Sadly, his enthusiasm, at least where elephants are concerned, is likely to remain little more than a dream. "I don't think it will happen in Hong Kong," he concedes. "Governments all over the world like the idea of reintroducing species because it's one of the very few positive conservation actions. It's usually the ecologists who are against it." So the elephants will have to remain off the list for the time being.

But, he said, it would be educational for China to learn how to do reintroduction properly, instead of the current situation where Buddhists in Hong Kong release thousands of alien birds and turtles into the environment every year.

"We should learn how to do it properly now," Corlett insists, because, "As the Joni Mitchell song says 'you don't know what you've got till it's gone'."



Shot in the Arm for Human Rights

The Faculty of Law welcomes a new expert in Human Rights.

Human rights expert, Professor Hurst Hannum, has succeeded Professor Yash Ghai as the Sir Y.K. Pao Chair of Public Law.

Hannum, who has a wide range of practical experience in human rights, has focused his research primarily on minority rights, humanitarian intervention and human rights in emergency situations. He is also interested in the role of self-determination, constitutional law and international organizations. He has served as legal counsel in a number of cases brought before the European, American and United Nations (UN) human rights forums.

Formerly of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Hannum has served as a consultant to the UN Higher Commissioner for Human Rights on issues ranging from minority rights to the troubles in Afghanistan, East Timor, Western Sahara, Aceh, Sri Lanka and Kashmir.

He said: "It is an honour to follow in the steps of the first holder of the Y.K. Pao Chair, Professor Yash Ghai, and

I believe that my appointment is further evidence of the strong commitment to human rights and public law that has characterized the Faculty of Law at HKU for many years.

"I look forward to continuing my research in the areas of autonomy and minority rights in Asia and I hope that the coming years will see continuing advances in awareness and protection of human rights in the region."

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Johannes Chan, added: "Professor Hannum's arrival is an excitement for the Faculty. His impressive expertise and ongoing research on human rights and international law will definitely further strengthen the Faculty's strength in the areas of public law and human rights."

Professor Hannum received his AB degree with High Honours in Political Science and a French Juris Doctor (JD) degree from the University of California at Berkeley. He was honoured by Tufts University for outstanding faculty achievement in 2001 and was a recipient of the Allan McLeod Cormack Award for collaborative student-teacher research in 1995.

Keeping Hong Kong's Financial Sector Competitive

A team of scholars publish a new book

Hong Kong is one of Asia's leading financial centres, but it needs to take a closer look at its competitiveness if it is to maintain that position, suggests a new book by a multi-disciplinary team of scholars.

Financial Markets in Hong Kong: Law and Practice tackles the complexities of the legal and regulatory systems supporting Hong Kong's financial markets, from both a legal and market viewpoint. It also aims to provide the first comprehensive explanation of the workings of these markets.

"We all feel that finance is very important to Hong Kong's future. It's one of the areas where Hong Kong has the competitive advantage not only in China, but in the region," said Dr Douglas Arner, Director of the Faculty of Law's Asian Institute of International Financial Law (AIIFL) and one of the book's four co-authors.

"Our single biggest point is that despite an obligation in the Basic Law to periodically look at Hong Kong's competitiveness and especially its legal and regulatory system, the Hong Kong Government has only taken a piecemeal approach."

The authors say a simplification of the regulatory system, corporate governance and human resource development are key issues for the city's future.

The complexities of the financial regulatory system have meant businesses must deal with several different government organisations, as well as self-regulatory agencies, the authors say. This makes it complicated and expensive for operators to comply and increases the chance that some issues may fall through the cracks.

Corporate governance is also a concern, even though Hong Kong's legal system is strong, particularly in comparison with Mainland markets. This is because there is still the risk a company here could suffer major problems that would undermine confidence among other listed companies and global investors. Better disclosure and management practices would minimise this risk, the authors say, especially as more companies from jurisdictions with less robust regulatory systems, such as the Mainland, list in Hong Kong.

Human resources also need attention, they say. Financial centres are hubs for accountants, lawyers, bankers and similar professionals. Hong Kong needs to ensure these people continue to stay and cluster here, as well as provide an appropriate educational system.

"Hong Kong has a number of idiosyncrasies in its economy, politics and legal system. This book is in some ways an attempt to do something we wish someone else had done before, to make it all a little more understandable," Arner said.

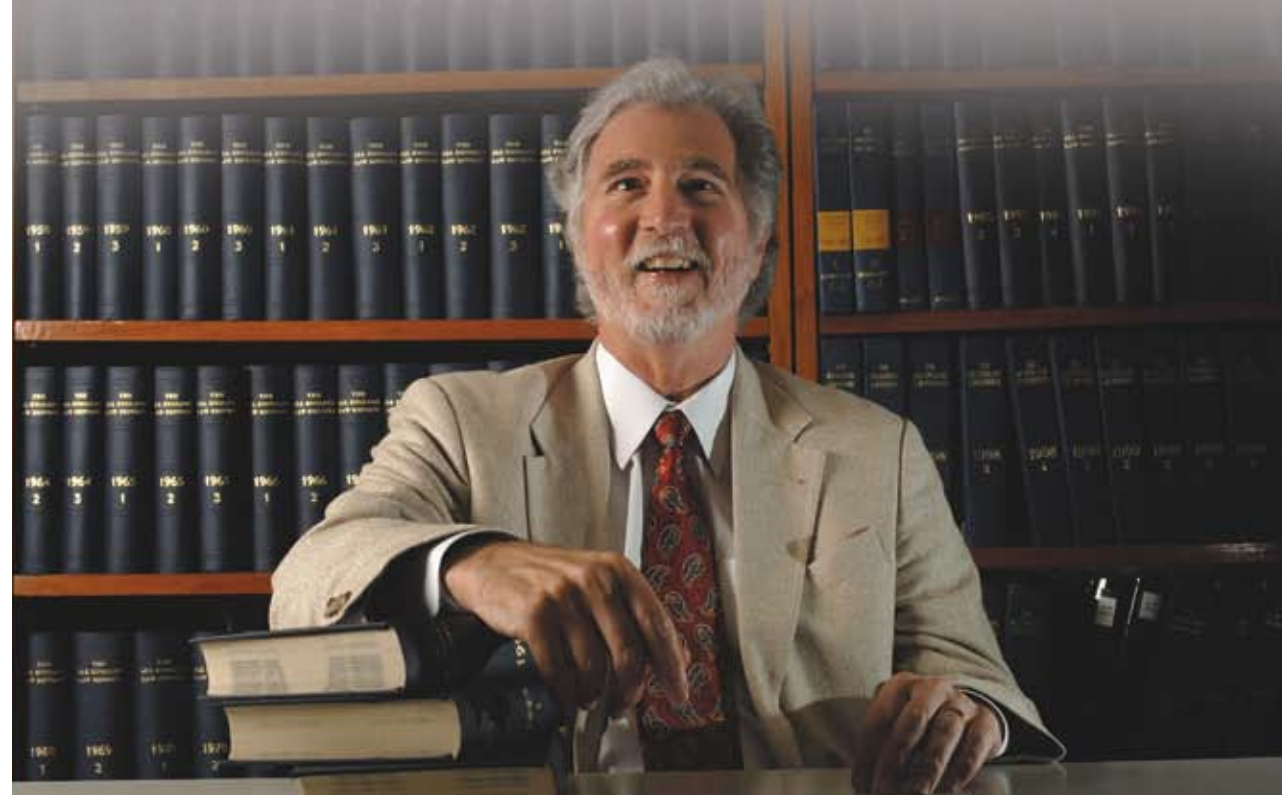
Apart from Arner, the book's authors include Dr Berry Hsu Fong Chung, AIIFL Deputy Director and Associate Professor in the Department of Real Estate and Construction, Dr Maurice Tse Kwok Sang, Associate Professor of the School of Economics and Finance, and Syren Johnstone, an experienced finance lawyer now an AIIFL Visiting Fellow.

In addition, two consulting editors from the business world were also brought in – Laurence Li, former Director of Corporate Finance at the Securities and Futures Commission, and Paul Lejot, also an AIIFL Visiting Fellow who has 25 years of investment banking experience.

"The laws and regulations in Hong Kong change rapidly. We hope the reader will have come away with enough background to understand these regulations or, if they are changed, cope with the change," Hsu said.

The underlying research for the book was supported through an Research Grants Council Competitive Earmarked Research Grant on *Hong Kong as an international financial centre* and as part of the University's Strategic Research Theme on *Corporate and Financial Law and Policy*.

The book went through 11 external reviews before being published by Oxford University Press and has received good feedback from market professionals. There is talk of a second print run, despite a hefty price tag – \$2,000 per copy – and Hsu said he hoped they could in the future produce a cheaper edition for students.



A Haven Amid the Neon

International design award for architectural student

An inspired idea to build glass retreats behind the neon lights of Hong Kong's streets has won an international design competition for architects.

The design was created by Ricky Lee, who graduated from the Department of Architecture's undergraduate programme last year.

The competition was organised by the World Architecture News (WAN) and the Architecture Programme at Britain's Royal Academy of Arts, on the theme *Urban Eyrrie*. Designers were asked to create a place where people could find personal space amid the energy of the city.

"The winning design... was an exotic solution integrated into the vertical neon advertising that flanks the classic Chinese street. By choosing such a frenetic location for his 'haven', Lee

had captured the essence of the brief," according to the WAN website.

Lee's concept is a single-reflective-glass signage box that sits alongside neon signs. The outside of the box can display neon messages while the inside provides a private space to rest and observe the streetscape.

"I was surprised I won because this is a Hong Kong vernacular type of urban scene. It's great that this image of Hong Kong, with neon signs spanning across the street, has international appeal," he said.

His entry also underscores the threat to that image. It is illustrated with a line drawing of an historic Western District street that has since been re-developed.

Lee is completing an internship in London before undertaking further studies in September, either in Hong Kong or Britain. He received £1,250 for winning the *Urban Eyrrie* competition.



Living in the neon is complete disarray. It is a uniquely complex environment. Thanks to light-polluted street corners and large signs, those environments, signs measuring a few stories tall or several blocks, lanes are commonplace. Like trees competing for light, signs compete for exposure to public eyes in a frenetic and out-of-control city.

City dwellers receive information from the signage, either actively or passively, interpret them, and exhibit freedom to choose (distractions, beverages, job opportunities, etc.) gradually changing the urban physical setting as a whole. Putting it in practical terms, individual citizen exhibits freedom within the constraints of the present system, be it free-market, democracy, etc., in turn changing the system itself collectively.

The urban eye is put into the anonymous individual to the system's top, becoming one of information contributors and disseminators. At a very unique point over the street, camouflaged in the single-reflective-glass signage box, the now elevated individual could enjoy the useful bliss of spying public life and propagandizing his/her agenda with the visible LED neon signs.

On a sadder note, for those who get lost or fed up with over-stimulated and chaotic, the urban scene screens reality by an individual with it while others neither know any more about it, providing the opportunity to see reality from a different perspective. One of the many possible havens in the city.

L.E.E. of WAN



Hong Kong in the Middle of Two Empires

The new Chair of English looks forward to extending his research on post-colonialism into issues regarding China relationship with the US.

Professor Bill Ashcroft, widely regarded as one of the founders of postcolonial theory, has been appointed as Professor: Chair of English.

Ashcroft joined the Department of English which will become the School of English in July 2006 from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, where he served as Head of English.

His 1989 book *The Empire Writes Back*, co-authored with Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, has become the standard text in post-colonial studies and he hopes to continue his research in the field by exploring China's relationship with globalization.

"The reason I took the job," he said, "is that it provided me with another way of extending my research into issues to do with China and, particularly, China's relationship with the United States.

"I suppose what attracted me to this position was Hong Kong as a place where west and east meet, and west and east are pretty much embodied in China and the US. So you have two empires with Hong Kong in the middle.

"I'm interested in that because I think the humanities, and cultural discourse in particular, have a lot to say about global issues."

Globalization, he said, has been appropriated by economic theorists and political scientists but the humanities continues to have much to say about the ways in which global relationships operate, 'particularly in the area of understanding how countries and local communities engage with globalization but also in explaining and analysing how populations have flowed around so rapidly'.

And he explained, "One of the dominant themes in post-colonial studies is the relationship between the local and the global. I think that is where the humanities has a lot to offer.

"We have a situation in Hong Kong where Chinese and English come into contact and that, I think, is the most important engagement of the 20th century."

Ashcroft will continue to teach postcolonial studies introducing students to writers from Africa, India, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and will also offer courses on Diaspora.

"I really like the Department here because in most English Departments you have a big dividing line. There are always two groups – the conservatives and the reformists. For the

conservatives Shakespeare, Milton, the canon, is what literature should be about. But the reformists say that English Studies is a kind of explosion of cultural study, theoretical study and post-colonial study. So you always have the canon versus the contemporary.

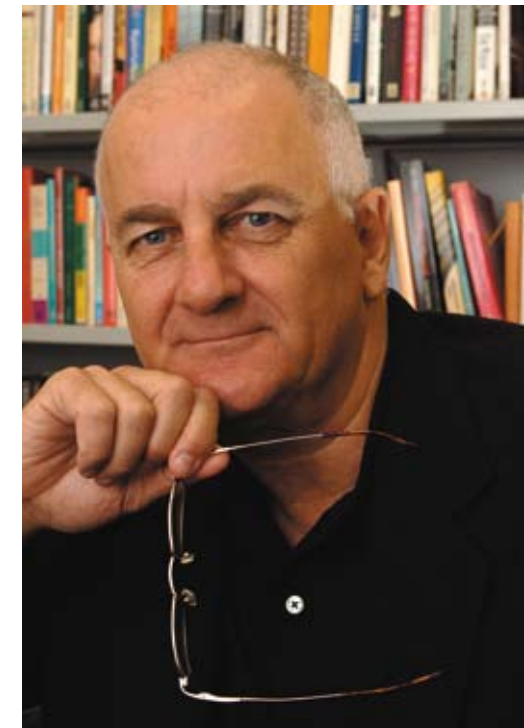
"The good thing about this school is that distinction is not made, probably because it's a language school situated in a very cross-cultural situation. It's a very culturally-diverse school."

One thing Ashcroft will be doing is encouraging collaborative research that looks at post-colonialism in the context of China. He's interested in the sorts of strategies that are used by local communities to engage with global forces.

"Issues of appropriation and transformation are fundamental to globalization, and at the local

level globalization is transformed. I want to explore some of these things in the relationships with China, extending it to look at practices of cultural production like film, art and music and literature.

"Collaborative research will enable the School to pit its skills in combination to maximize our impact in this area. Most humanities research has been very monastic and that limits the effects of the research. When you collaborate with others there's an exponential rise in the quality of research. I've written a number of books collaboratively and it's a very exciting process," he said.



Running on Green Power

A new hybrid car joins the the University fleet.

The University has become the first tertiary institution in Hong Kong to purchase a hybrid car for its vehicle fleet, which will save on petrol and be kinder to the environment.

The 1,500cc Toyota Prius, which operates on both batteries and petrol, consumes 50 per cent less petrol than a conventional petrol engine and emits 50 per cent fewer polluting emissions. It is also quieter.

The Prius cost \$70,000 more than a conventional Toyota 1,500cc, but Paul So, Senior Assistant Director of Estates, said the purchase had symbolic importance.

"The University wants everyone to know that we need to protect the environment and we thought we should set an example here," he said. "Hopefully when other departments need to replace a vehicle, they will buy one like this."



Gold Extraction that Helps the Environment

Scientists work with industry to extract gold.

A collaborative project between University scientists and industry has resulted in a process that improves the removal of gold and silver from industrial wastewater, and helps the environment.

The process is at least 10 times more effective than current technologies and leaves the water clean enough to be discharged into sewers.

Scientists in the Department of Chemistry have developed the process in collaboration with Kenlap P.C.G. Manufacturer Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of Ocean Grand Chemicals

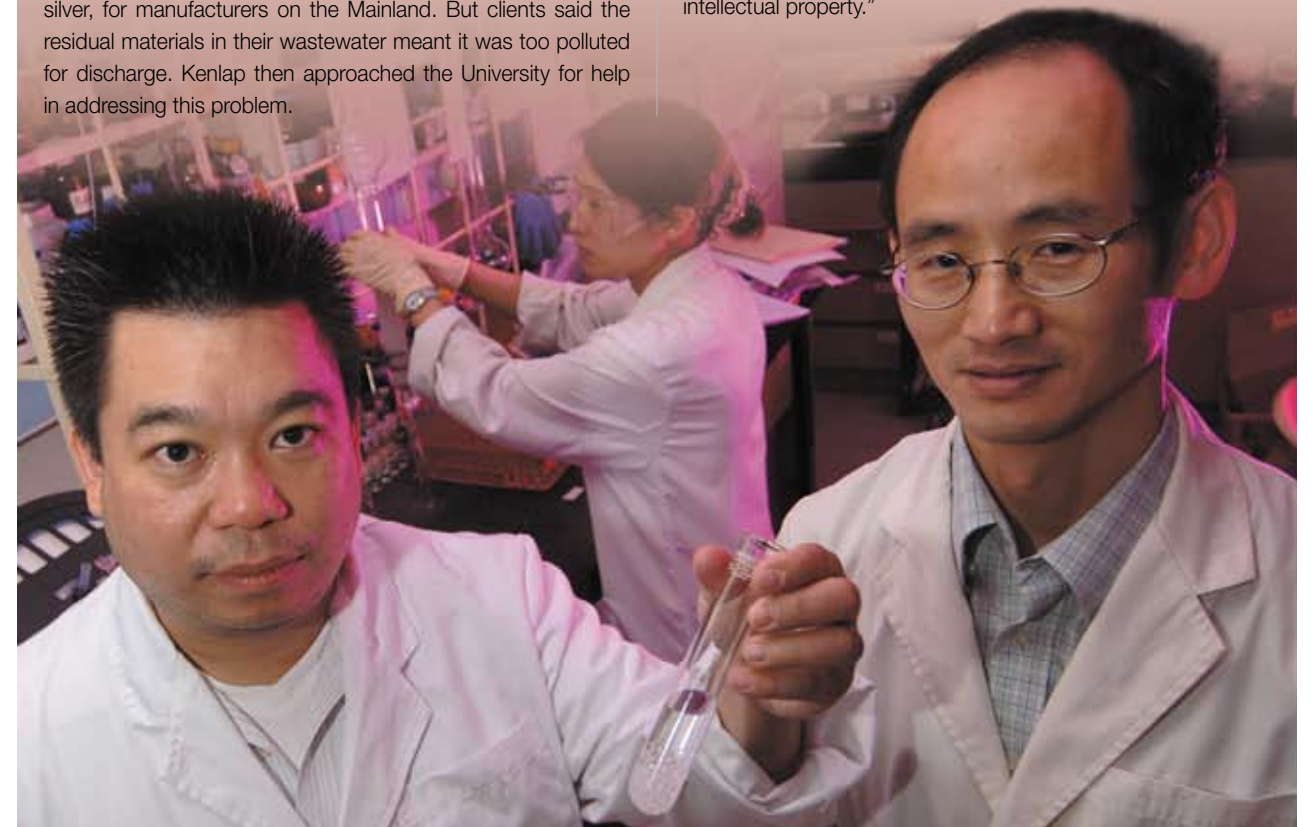
Holdings, under the University-Industry Collaboration Programme. The company is contributing \$900,000 and the government is providing matching funds through the Innovation and Technology Fund.

Kenlap produces electroplating salts, such as gold and silver, for manufacturers on the Mainland. But clients said the residual materials in their wastewater meant it was too polluted for discharge. Kenlap then approached the University for help in addressing this problem.

The process developed by the Department of Chemistry involves adding a polymer to the water, which traps the metal and can then be separated from the water. The results have come only a few months into the 18-month project, which began last November. The process will next be reproduced on a large-scale and metal residues will be extracted from the polymer, so they can be re-used. This is called reverse extraction.

Professor Chan Kwong Yu, a Reader in the Department and leader of the project, said they would avoid burning the polymer, as in current reverse extraction methods, providing a further environmental benefit. They also expected the polymer, which was developed by Assistant Professor Dr Patrick Toy, could be re-used.

"We feel strongly that we can do this once we extract a sufficient amount of gold from the wastewater," he said. "At the end we expect to have an industrial-scale process and some intellectual property."



Hong Kong International Literary Festival

Asian Writers Advance on World Literature

A new prize to promote Asian writing was announced at the University in March.

The sponsors of Hong Kong's annual International Literary Festival used The University of Hong Kong as a platform to announce a new prize of Asian writers.

The Man Group – which also sponsors of Britain's Booker Prize – launched the Man Asian Literary Prize, in March, at the Rayson Huang Theatre. The University has long been a supporter of the festival and every year hosts a number of speakers.

This year Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney and 2005 Booker prize winner, John Banville, gave lectures.

The aim of the new prize is to bring the work of Asian writers to the attention of the world literary community, to facilitate

publishing in Asia and to highlight the region's developing role in world literature.

As a joint project with the Hong Kong International Literary Festival, the prize will be awarded to unpublished works in English and will include those translated from other languages. The first winner will be announced in autumn of next year.

Matt Dillon, managing director of Man Investments Hong Kong, said: "There is a wonderful synergy between our Group's sponsorship of the Man Booker award and the Hong Kong International Literary Festival.

"We are very aware of the Festival's ambitions to develop regionally and to encourage Asian writers. Through this prize we aim to foster the publication of new Asian voices in English and to help make those voices more widely heard."



Passion Shared

Members of the Faculty of Arts have been sharing their passion for music with listeners of a local radio station.

A series of Saturday morning radio programmes exploring artistic trends in music, theatre, poetry and the visual arts has proved a runaway success.

Arts...Talk...Music, aired on Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) throughout April and May, saw members of or Faculty of Arts considering issues such as 'The Unknown Schubert', 'The Ballad in Folk Song and Poetry', and 'Music, Power, Love and Evil in the 20th Century.'

This series was intended to promote the arts in general and, more specifically, our Faculty of Arts, according to Dr Manolete Mora, Associate Dean of the Faculty and Associate Professor of the Department of Music.

"Hong Kongers have relatively little contact and dialogue with professionals working within the Arts and Humanities, so this initiative was envisaged as one of several Arts Faculty efforts to reach out to the public, to showcase the Arts and Humanities, and to highlight the importance of the Arts and Humanities disciplines in a progressive, open-minded society," he said.

"Some programmes presented music as well as profiles of artists and examined arts issues and trends in music, theatre, poetry, visual and multi-media arts, as well as culture, art history, language, literary criticism, philosophy, and history," he added.

With contributions from staff in several departments the series has proved a bit of a hit. In contributing to the project, staff have been able to share their intellectual and artistic interests with the general public.

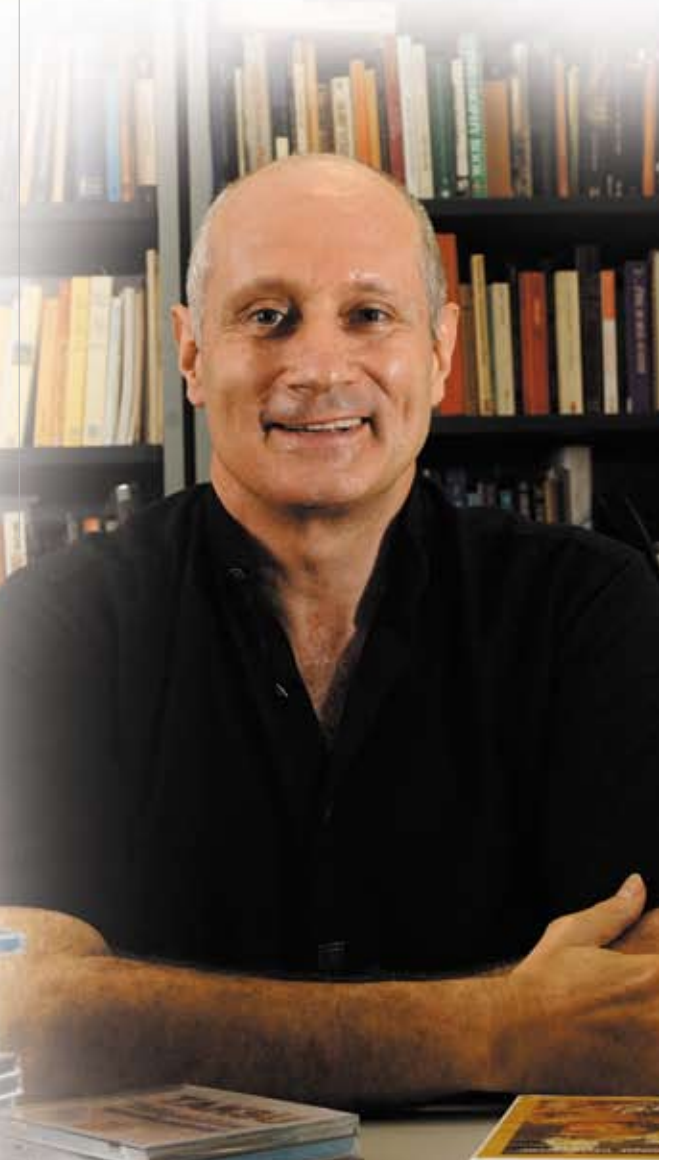
The radio series not only gave Arts colleagues an opportunity to present various types of music and share their scholarly background and thinking about a broad range of social and intellectual issues, it also helped give a more public face to the Faculty of Arts and show their enormous diversity. "A characteristic which all progressive and leading universities share," said Mora.

"The feedback from radio professionals has been enthusiastic and the members of the public who have responded have done so positively. Indeed, someone from Princeton University heard the programmes and would like to broadcast them through Princeton University radio, although this is yet to be confirmed," said Mora.

And although there has not been any formal decision to run another series, both Arts faculty members and RTHK staff

are interested in presenting another, different set of programmes sometime in the future.

Staff and topics included: Stephen Matthews, Giorgio Biancorosso, David Clarke, Page Richards, Wayne Cristaudo, Manolete Mora, Peter Cave, and Chad Hansen covered diverse themes and topics including: 'The Unknown Schubert', 'Film Music Without Film', 'Music and the Encounter with Cultural Difference', 'The Ballad in Folk Song and Poetry', 'Music, Power, Love and Evil in the 20th century', 'The Latin Tinge', 'Music in Japanese Life', and 'Is Musical Value Relative?', respectively.



Penwork, Prizes and Perspective

Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney opened the Hong Kong International Literary Festival with a lecture at the University.

Irish poet and Nobel prize-winner Seamus Heaney delighted audiences at the Loke Yew Hall in March when he structured a reading of his poetry around the title *Penwork, Dreamwork, Fieldwork*.

"I come on," he said. "In the persona of what James Joyce called Shem the Penman in *Finnigan's Wake*."

And went on to explain why he uses the term penwork. "From the moment I started to go to school, we were called scholars and the penwork was literal, in learning to use the pen, and it was respected by the men herding cattle along the road.

"An old fellow called John McGrogan used to say 'The pen's a lot lighter than the spade, son. Stick to the books.' Of course this is literally true but one thing that has happened to me is to have learned the counter truth; that the pen is not always lighter than the spade. It can have its own weight of responsibility attached to it. Its own burden of awareness."

He went on to say that a lyrical poet is a very strange thing because "what generates the poetry can be very secret and very odd stuff and yet there's some responsibility to link to the world of common concerns. Ted Hughes was a great educator about poetry and he has written about it very beautifully.

He says your first duty is to your gift."

The burden of awareness, however, led him away from the early pastoral writing of *Digging*, and his first collection of poems in *Death of a Naturalist* to a desire to 'say what happened'.

"After 1969 in Northern Ireland," he explained. "There was an eruption of violence, increasing polarization, increasing distress and solitude for people of goodwill on both sides, increasing solidarity and prejudice for people of ill-will on both sides."

Inspired by Robert Lowell's poem Epilogue and the lines 'Yet why not say what happened' he appeased himself for a little while of being involved in matters in Ireland by saying what happened.

"And I wrote a poem about a second cousin of mine, Colum McCartney, who was shot in a random sectarian assassination. He was coming from a football match south of the border, driving into Northern Ireland on a Sunday afternoon and he was just shot. He had no connection with the IRA or any subversive organization. He was just picked because he was known to be part of the Catholic crowd."

Heaney was moved to start *The Strand at Lough Beg* when he discovered a passage in *Dante's Purgatorial* where Dante comes out of the underworld of hell into the Easter morning.

"It reminded me of the little lake beside which my cousin grew up, near Lough Beg," he said. In a later poem he allowed his cousin to talk back to him in a book called *Station Island*.

Heaney concluded his talk by saying that the given subjects of the 'distressed country' had preoccupied him but there had come a point where he allowed himself to write poems of sheer joy "and also I think of sheer wisdom."



Fiction and the Dream

Booker prize winner John Banville was at the University in March to deliver the Man Booker Distinguished Lecture as part of the Hong Kong International Literary Festival.

In a talk entitled *Fiction and the Dream* John Banville, who scooped the 2005 Man Booker prize with his novel *The Sea* spoke about the synergy between dreaming and writing.

"Literature is not as fashionable as it used to be," he said. "It doesn't do anything in the world... it doesn't make people any less greedy, any less quarrelsome, any less violent.

"But it does, perhaps, give us some kind of insight into other lives, even if the other lives are imagined. Sometimes it seems to us that Emma Bovary and Natasha Rostov or Leopold Bloom are more real than even ourselves. This is a remarkable phenomenon and people still continue to write fiction. And my talk today is just to give some practical perspective on why the thing is done and how it's done."

He went on to describe a man retelling a dream to his bored wife. "I can think of no better analogy for writing than this," he said. "The novelist's aim is to make the reader have the dream. Not just to read about it but actually to experience it."

In this post-religious age, he said, the writer seems priest-like. "The unceasing commitment to an ethereal faith, the mixture of arrogance and humility, the daily devotion, the confessional readiness to attend the foibles and fears. The

writer goes into a room... and remains there for hour after hour in eerie silence.

"With what deities does he commune in there? What rituals does he enact? Surely he knows something that others do not. Surely he is privy to a wisdom far beyond theirs. These are delusions of course. The artist, the writer, knows no more about the great matters of life than anyone else. Indeed he probably knows less."

We write, he said, about the inner organization of human affairs. "But I know nothing about life, only about art."

"The writer is not a priest, not a shaman, not a holy dreamer... I have no grand psychological theory of the creative process to offer you.

"When I began to write I was a convinced rationalist. When I began a book I knew where I was going. Before I wrote the first line I had the last line planned... I became obsessed with proportion in my work."

But after his parents died he found 'a new way of working', letting his consciousness dictate what was on the page. "The dream world is a strange place. Everything there is at once real and unreal. The most trivial or ridiculous things seem to carry a tremendous significance. A significance which... the waking mind would never dare to suggest or acknowledge. In dreams the mind speaks the truth through the medium of a fabulous nonsense and so I think does the novel."



Everyday Life in Hong Kong 1942–1945

The University Museum and Art Gallery held a photographic exhibition of one of the solemnest periods in Hong Kong history.

Hundreds of visitors flocked to the University Museum last month (May) for an exhibition of photographs depicting the fall of Hong Kong and everyday life in the territory under Japanese Imperial Administration, from 1942 to 1945.

The display, entitled *Hong Kong During the Japanese Occupation*, is the fourth in a series of exhibitions on local history to be held in collaboration with Mr Cheng Po Hung.

Previous displays have included historical photographs of Hong Kong eateries, brothels and tramways. This time the collection of nearly 70 black and white pictures presents a vivid depiction of the traumatic wartime period.

On December 7 and 8, 1941 Japanese forces conducted a series of attacks on Pearl Harbour, the Philippines, Malaya and Hong Kong in an attempt to

cripple the United States Pacific fleet and seize the South East Asian colonies.

The battle for Hong Kong, which began eight hours after the attack on Pearl Harbour and ended after 18 days of resistance, was part of Japan's mission to conquer East and South East Asia and thus make it a power equal in dominance to Europe and America.

Hong Kong's position as a centre of Chinese resistance to Japan's imperial ambitions also made it more vulnerable to attack.

By Christmas Day 1941 it had become clear that further resistance was futile and Governor Mark Young surrendered in person at the Japanese Headquarters at The Peninsula Hotel (later to be renamed the Toa Hotel), making this the first occasion on which a crown colony had surrendered to an invading force.

When the Japanese established the Governor's Office in Hong Kong in February 1942, the administration made clear that the primary purpose of the captured territory was 'as a centre of supplies for troops'.

They renamed roads, made structural alterations to Government House (the tower of which still stands), built war shrines to dead soldiers and began work on extending Kai Tak Airport.

They also carried out a severe repatriation scheme in the name of self-sufficiency. Millions of people were repatriated to the Mainland, many dying of starvation on the journey. When the Japanese entered Hong Kong in 1941 the population stood at 1.6 million. When they left in 1945 it had dwindled to about 500,000 people.



A Forgotten Wartime Tragedy

A Hong Kong-based author recounts a wartime tragedy that cost the lives of nearly 2,000 men.

A new book, detailing one of the costliest American on British friendly-fire catastrophes of the Second World War, was launched by the Hong Kong University Press in May 2006.

The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru: Britain's Forgotten Wartime Tragedy, by Tony Banham, reconstructs the fateful voyage of the Japanese freighter, which was torpedoed by an American submarine, in October 1942.

On board were two thousand British prisoners of war being transported from Hong Kong, where they had been captured, to Osaka when the freighter was hit off the Zhoushan Islands, south of Shanghai.

During the fall and occupation of the territory (from 1942 to 1945) some 4,500 members of the Hong Kong garrison perished. But a full one thousand of them died directly, or indirectly, as a result of this sinking.

Banham, an authority on the battle of Hong Kong and author of *Not the Slightest Chance: The Defence of Hong Kong 1941*,

chose to write about the incident because he said "It had been shamefully neglected."

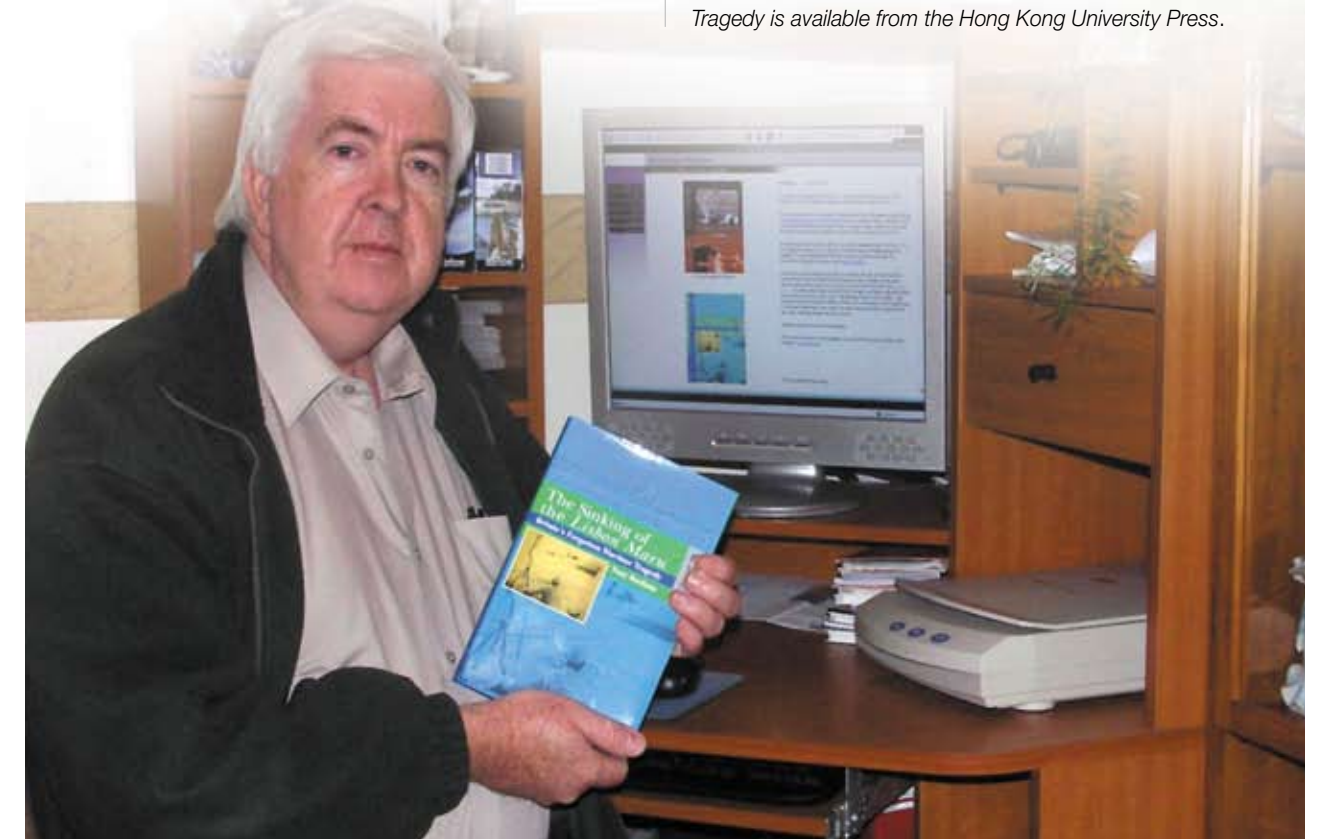
"Apart from that it was such a powerful story in its own right: a three-act drama encompassing the fighting and the surrender of Hong Kong, the sinking of the resulting Prisoners of War (POWs) on the ship, and the survival of those tough or lucky enough to come through."

Only around 750 of the 1,834 POW's survived the sinking and Banham has consulted American, British and Japanese sources to give a gripping account of the tragedy and the experiences of the captives, the captors and those abroad the submarine that sunk her.

The book took three years to write, although Banham spent much more time researching his subject.

"It has been very satisfying to write," he said. "As it has meant so much to the survivors to have their story told for the first time. Those whose fathers, or grandfathers, were on board have been equally pleased that their experiences have finally been acknowledged."

The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru: Britain's Forgotten Wartime Tragedy is available from the Hong Kong University Press.



Ian Inglis, whose father John Inglis (a Bombardier of the Royal Artillery) was a survivor of the Lisbon Maru, reads the web page dedicated to this tragedy.