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BULLETIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

**Seeking a
Cure for the
Incurable**





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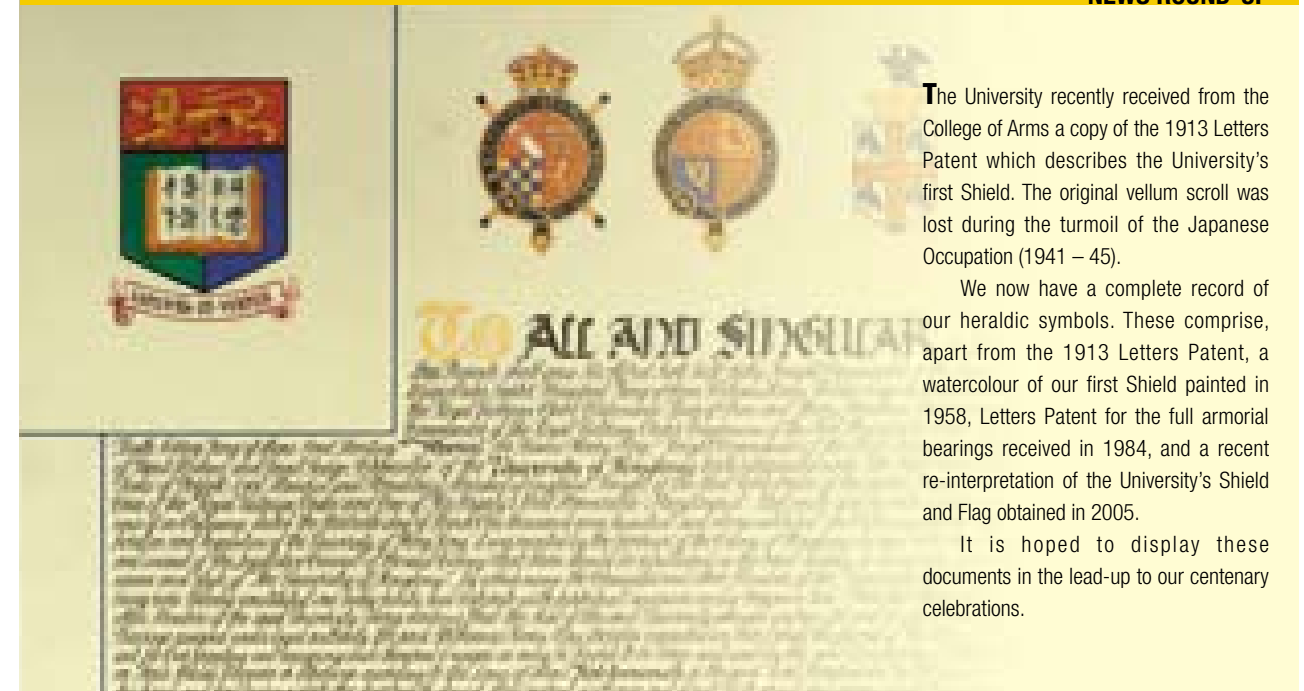
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The University recently received from the College of Arms a copy of the 1913 Letters Patent which describes the University's first Shield. The original vellum scroll was lost during the turmoil of the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 45).

We now have a complete record of our heraldic symbols. These comprise, apart from the 1913 Letters Patent, a watercolour of our first Shield painted in 1958, Letters Patent for the full armorial bearings received in 1984, and a recent re-interpretation of the University's Shield and Flag obtained in 2005.

It is hoped to display these documents in the lead-up to our centenary celebrations.



University of Toronto Names 'Giants of Biomedical Science'

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, has been named one of ten 'Giants of Biomedical Science' by the University of Toronto.

Professor Tsui was honoured in recognition of his outstanding achievements in biomedical science and joins the ranks of University of Toronto luminaries such as Sir Frederick Bating, who won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1923, and Dr Wilfred Bigelow who developed the first artificial cardiac pacemaker.

A bronze sculpture, dedicated to Professor Tsui, has been unveiled in the University of Toronto's Giants of Biomedical Science Hall, in the Terrence Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomedical Research. The Centre will also dedicate a floor to Professor Tsui.

The ten 'Giants' either began, or made their mark, at the University. Professor Tsui held the H.E. Sellers Chair in Cystic Fibrosis at the University of Toronto before taking up his position as Vice-Chancellor at The University of Hong Kong in 2002.

He said: "I am delighted to receive such an honour from the University of Toronto where I established my academic career and scientific pursuits. Looking ahead to the future, I will continue to contribute to science and education in Hong Kong and to build the bridge between East and West."

Modernising Chinese Medicine

In an unprecedented collaboration between six local tertiary institutions the government has awarded \$10 million towards modernising Chinese medicine techniques.

The funding, provided by the Innovation and Technology Fund and secured by the Hong Kong Consortium for the Globalization of Chinese Medicine, will be used to investigate patient rehabilitation after a stroke and a safe and effective cure for insomnia.

In a two-year project the team, which includes researchers from our University, Hong Kong Baptist University, City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, will conduct clinical trials on the use of Chinese herbs in treating post-stroke victims and sleep disorder patients, and determine their quality control and biological activities.

The recruitment of volunteers has already begun at the Prince of Wales and Queen Mary Hospitals, and an innovative new herbal formula, which has already been developed, will undergo further development.

Stroke remains the second biggest cause of death in the world and although Chinese herbal medicine has been used for decades in the treatment of neurological diseases no comprehensive research exists on its safety, or efficacy.

The team has already conducted evidence-based trials on the efficacy of its own new herbal formula, which differs slightly from the traditional form, and it is now looking forward to establishing comprehensive research through clinical trials at local hospitals.

The herbal formula will be developed as a supplementary medicine and is not expected to replace prescribed western medicines.

Meanwhile, insomnia may be one of modern society's commonest complaints but it is poorly understood and a successful treatment for it remains elusive.

Sufferers have been increasingly turning to alternative medicines but the safety of these alternatives has raised concern. The team believes that traditional Chinese medicine could provide the answer.

Chinese, and other forms of botanical medicines, are now being used by nearly one third of the world's population and continue to grow as a form of therapy. Although Chinese medicine has evolved over the last four thousand years, and there is evidence to show that many of its herbal formulations possess therapeutic value, clinical and scientific evidence is frequently lacking.



Lord Lugard's Legacy

Burnished by time the perfect solid silver model of the University's Main Building sits beneath an ornate Chinese table in a large rambling house in London's Camden Town.

The priceless artefact was made to mark the opening of The University of Hong Kong in 1912 but the remarkable story of its survival across 90 years more than matches its august origins.

It is indeed fortunate that this model and the original plans of the Main Building passed down her family into the care of Shelagh Meade, the great niece of Lord Lugard, the man who became governor of Hong Kong and founded the University.

Mrs Meade, now a sprightly 83 year old grandmother, is an archaeologist with a keen sense of history and a fierce guardian of her great uncle's reputation and legacy.

Without this winning combination the architectural model would almost certainly have been lost to the University.

The model was presented to Lord Lugard, who was soon due to end his five year spell as governor, by Mr N.M.N. Mody, the son of Sir Hormusjee Mody and key sponsor at the University's inception.

Mrs Meade's earliest memory of the silver model was that it took pride of place in Lord Lugard's drawing room (the Chinese Room) in his house at Little Parkhurst, Abinger, Surrey.

Along with her sister, Mrs Meade had returned to the UK from Africa in 1934 after their coffee-farming parents decided to place them in a boarding school.

Holidays would be spent at Abinger with Lord Lugard, by then retired and a childless widower.

She said: "We used to have tea with him in front of his fire in the study.

"He used to keep a shotgun beside his desk to shoot the squirrels because he preferred watching the birds. He was a good shot."

Following the death of Lord Lugard in 1945, his brother Major Edward Lugard, Mrs Meade's grandfather, was responsible for 'winding-up' Lord Lugard's estate.

Little Parkhurst was a large house as befitted Lord Lugard's standing and he had on display many priceless items from his service in the Far East and Africa.

It was clear to Edward that Lugard's collection would have to be broken up as no member of the family had a house large enough to accommodate the entire collection.

Some pieces were given to museums, others distributed amongst members of the family.

Edward kept a small collection of those pieces he considered should remain in the family. Inevitably some items were stored in

the attic of his much smaller house including the silver model and plans of the University's Main Building. On his death the property passed to Mrs Meade's father.

In 1971, Mrs Meade with her three children moved in with her by then widowed mother when Mrs Meade's husband died suddenly.

The model and plans were still in the attic. Mrs Lugard was concerned about the condition of the model and said something had to be done. Mrs Meade agreed to supervise the repair.

Through her archaeology contacts at the British Museum, Mrs Meade arranged for one of the conservators to undertake repairs. The original glass case which had been broken was replaced by a perspex one and silver of the same age was used to repair a damaged cupola.

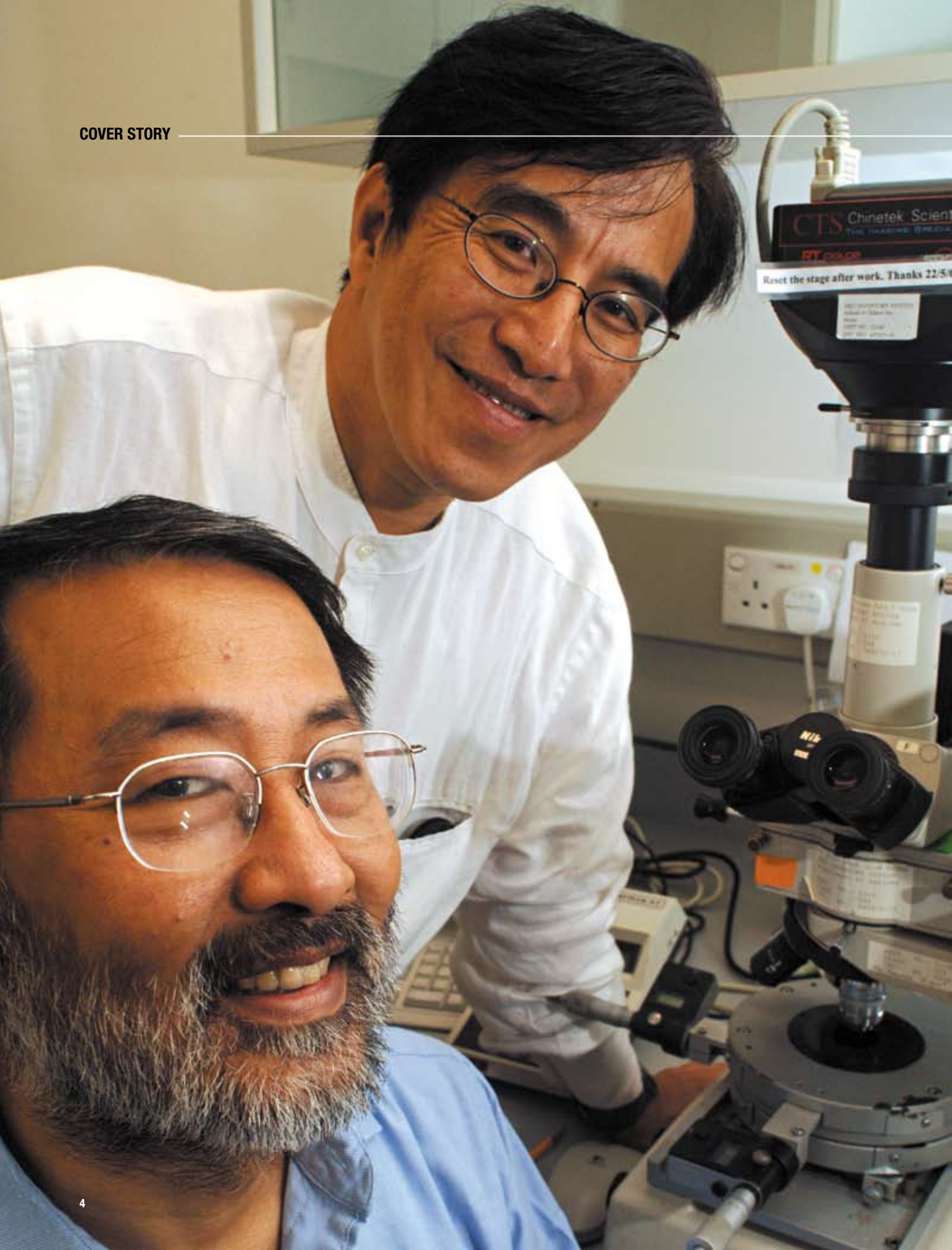
"He did a beautiful job and ever since then I have displayed it prominently."

Now, however, the model is set to make the return journey to Hong Kong as Mrs Meade has decided to donate the model – along with the original architectural drawings – to the University.

She said: "I felt it was important that Hong Kong should recognise Uncle Fred's contribution because the University was, I think, his greatest achievement.

"The irony was he was better known for his work in Africa but I think he was very proud of helping set up the University. It was his greatest legacy."





Seeking a Cure for the Incurable

Renowned researcher has high hopes for spinal cord injury victims.

One of the world's leading researchers into spinal cord injuries has based himself at the University to carry out groundbreaking clinical trials that hold promise of finding a cure.

Wise Young, Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Anatomy (pictured far left), is overseeing final preparations for the trials which will test a combination of lithium and stem cells from umbilical cord blood. Research on animals suggests combined treatments offer the best hope of a cure.

Preliminary trials now underway at Queen Mary Hospital are testing the effects of lithium alone on spinal cord injuries and the combined treatment will be tested on 400 patients in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan next July.

"To me a cure is when someone can't tell you have a spinal cord injury if they don't know you. It doesn't mean returning to pre-injury status, it means getting rid of the affliction," Professor Young said.

The trials are being carried out under the auspices of the China Spinal Injury Network (CSIN), which Professor Young helped to found two years ago to carry out cost-effective, international-standard clinical trials using The University of Hong Kong as a base.

Funds are still being raised for the full-blown trial which will cost US\$12 million, against \$50 million and upwards for trials elsewhere. But the CSIN has already trained doctors on the Mainland, established 20 centres in the region, set up a web-based network and other infrastructure, and secured support from the Central Government.

Our Department of Anatomy and Clinical Trials Centre are helping to organise and oversee the work of the CSIN, and ensure trials meet international best practices.

"The University of Hong Kong has embraced this concept whole-heartedly and made a very unusual commitment, not just raising money but donating substantial amounts of faculty time

and effort to it. What is going to happen is that Hong Kong will become the leading spinal cord injury clinical trials centre and the leading discoverer of therapies as a result of this commitment," Professor Young predicted.

One prerequisite for a successful trial is that doctors and patients establish a close relationship to support long-term follow-up. Data is already being collected on patients at regular intervals to assess each centre's ability to maintain this relationship.

This approach also opens the door for patients' participation in future trials should the combined lithium and stem cell treatment not take hold.

"I want patients to know that these clinical trials aren't like going into a casino and throwing the dice, it's not a gamble. We will try the best available therapies on them until we get the best combination," he said.

Professor Young, who was born in Hong Kong, grew up in Japan and is Richard H. Shindell Chair in Neuroscience at Rutgers University, is well placed to find that magic bullet. He began searching for a cure for spinal cord injuries in 1979 after treating a young wrestler who had broken his neck. His investigations resulted in the current standard treatment for spinal cord injuries, high-dose methylprednisolone, which saves up to 20 per cent of function if administered soon after an injury occurs.

Apart from his scientific achievements, Professor Young has also befriended many victims, including the late actor Christopher Reeve, and set up a website for victims and their carers, *CareCure Community*. His compassion and tireless research efforts saw him named one of *Esquire magazine's* 'best and brightest' last December.

"The reason I do this is that I have many, many friends with spinal cord injuries. This is a population of people who deserve better. For so many centuries they were told nothing could be done. The problem is not a scientific one, it's a political and funding one. I'm convinced we could have had a cure for spinal cord injuries 10 years ago," he said.

Children at Risk

Hong Kong's worsening air quality has been implicated in a whole host of medical conditions but now scientists have shown that children with asthma are particularly at risk.

In tracking schoolchildren for six years researchers in the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, found a significant increase in the prevalence of severe asthma symptoms in six and seven year-olds.

Further research on daily hospital admissions and outdoor pollution levels revealed a spike in the number of admissions for severe asthma attacks on the days when the levels of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, ozone and particulates were especially bad.

This is the first study to show a significant association between the two. Chair of Paediatrics Professor Lau Yu Lung, who led the team, said: "Although the impact of the study appears to be small, the risk implied to the whole population is substantial."

During the six-year period, the average daily admission count for asthma in children was around 12. Increased levels of air

pollution, however, raised those admission by 13 per cent.

Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental pulmonary toxins because they have an immature immune system and their bodies are less efficient at detoxifying pollution.

They are also more active, more likely to play outdoors and have smaller peripheral airways. Add to this the fact that children are prone to breathing through their mouths rather than their noses – thanks to large adenoids and tonsils – and they become particularly vulnerable.

Although no threshold for any of the air pollutants could be established for asthma admissions Professor Lau believes there is an urgent need for health policy makers to develop more stringent air quality objectives that will take high risk groups – like the young, the old and those with chronic respiratory illness – into consideration.

"If ambient levels of these pollutants were reduced by an average of fifty per cent it could have cut the number of hospital admissions during the study period by around 3,400," he said.

Do You Understand?

Teaching vulnerable populations about disease prevention.

With the threat of avian flu looming over Asia and fears that we might see a re-emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) there has been a clear need to educate vulnerable populations about disease avoidance.

With this in mind Professor Terry Au, Chair Professor of Psychology, conducted two studies recently – one in primary schools, the other in elderly homes – to teach cold and flu prevention.

"I thought it would be interesting to see how much biology third and fourth-grade children can learn and I wanted to get them thinking about infectious diseases, like colds and flu but also SARS and avian flu," said Au.

"The starting point came because I was not very happy with the general health education – it's a laundry list of do's and don't, which is very boring and hard to keep track of. Sometimes people don't understand the rationale behind the instructions. And the general finding in psychology is that if you don't understand something it's very hard to follow.

"So the nagging do's and don'ts approach is not very effective. People in general are very interested in 'why' and 'how' and that's especially true for young children. I wanted to appeal to people's natural curiosity to get them to think about why and how we get sick - getting them to understand why some behaviours are safe and some are not. We taught them very simple biology."

Au's approach was developed in Los Angeles where she taught children about HIV Aids prevention.

"I chose to pursue cold and flu prevention in Hong Kong because it's easier to observe the change in children's behaviours," she said.

Soon after SARS, Au sent her team into a number of schools to see if children were engaging in preventive behaviour. What they saw was misunderstanding of the do's and don'ts.

"They were going through the motions without understanding why. There was a lot of emphasis on washing your hands frequently, but from a young child's point of view it's not clear what frequently means – three times a day or once a minute.

"What was most worrisome was that they wore masks for the whole day, but took them off for PE lessons. These masks were highly contaminated, and taking off them contaminated the children's hands, and then in PE they would throw a ball to each other which also became contaminated and so on."

So Au and her team took her *Think Biology* course into two local schools and got up to 40 children to imagine the flu virus being alive and in the environment.

"We told them that the virus can stay alive outside the body for several hours, so there's a big window of opportunity to pick it up. We taught them about the point of entry – the eyes, nose and mouth and we taught them the biology and how we can kill the virus, by using disinfectant or hot water. So hot cooked food is safer, and using alcohol or bleach solution to wipe down things, and wash your hands, is safer."

Then she tested the children by showing them video clips and asking them to spot anyone engaging in risky behaviour.

"Children who went through the *Think Biology* course had better detection than those in the control group. They were also better at explaining why certain behaviours are risky.

"What was most encouraging was that when they were tested individually, by being asked to handle food, they spontaneously cleaned their hands first.

In both schools the team found that the pupils' understanding of detecting bad behaviour had increased. She took the same course into elderly nursing homes and achieved similar results.

"We now hope that this knowledge can be activated if avian flu hits Hong Kong," said Au.



Paradox of Obesity

New research shows that obesity is bad at any age.

We all know that being overweight is bad for our health. But what is surprising is that the theory only appears to apply to the young. Studies have shown that being fat poses no threat to the old.

In fact, some researchers suggest that obesity is apparently protective in older people and that having a low Body Mass Index (BMI) may be associated with a shorter life expectancy.

If you are confused by this data, then you are not alone. And with this in mind a team of researchers, in the University's Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, set out to explain this strange paradox and investigate its implications for healthcare in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Researchers from the Department of Community Medicine and School for Public Health teamed up with the government's Elderly Health Services to conduct an innovative study to analyse the effect of BMI on mortality in older people. The idea was that BMI in older people might be an indicator of poor health and low fitness, in which case the relationship between BMI and mortality would vary with differing states of health.

Chair of Community Medicine Professor Lam Tai Hing and his team traced 54,088 adults of age 65 and older, who enrolled in the 18 Elderly Health Centres, run by the Department of Health (Dr W.M. Chan), between July 1998 and December 2000.

Research Assistant Professor Dr Mary Schooling and Professor Gabriel Leung analysed the data by dividing the subjects into different health states, using an index of health problems including chronic illness, frailty, health service use, unintentional weight loss and smoking status.

What the team found was that physical activity was usually protective but also that subjects with a higher BMI had a lower risk of death. However, these results changed substantially when each health status group was examined in turn. Obesity was then found to have a very different effect on each group.

For those in the healthy group, who had never smoked and suffered no other health problems, being obese posed a 54 per cent higher risk of death, compared to people of normal weight.

However, in the poor health group obese people had a 45 per cent lower risk of dying compared to people of normal weight.

Dr Schooling concluded: "Research suggesting that being overweight is not a risk factor for mortality is biased. Fatness is always detrimental to health and increases the risk of death. But BMI may represent not only fatness in older people but also the severity of a disease and closeness to death.

"This might mask the true relationship between fatness and mortality in older people, which cannot be understood without considering their underlying health state".

Dr Chan of the Department of Health emphasized: "On the other hand physical activity is beneficial to health and reduces the risk of death even for older people in poor health."

So in an older person BMI is difficult to interpret. Alternative body fat measurements such as waist circumference or waist-to-hip ratio may be more reliable, and some previous studies might be flawed, according to Professor Leung. In terms of public health, Professor Leung said, intervention to combat obesity at all ages is urgently needed.

"Obesity could become an overwhelming problem in Hong Kong and Mainland China," Professor Lam added. "So this research is of particular relevance to the Mainland with its rapidly ageing population. We have only a narrow window of opportunity in which to take action before the obesity epidemic spreads, and before the costs associated with obesity-induced illness overwhelm scarce healthcare resources."

The study's results were published in the international medical journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*.



Coral Colonies Farmed in Tanks

Breeding innovation could reduce pressure on wild coral and restore damaged habitats.

University scientists have successfully bred coral in tanks, a development that could lead to the rehabilitation of degraded coral habitats and reduce pressures on the species by providing safe and steady supplies for research and the aquarium trade.

Currently coral is harvested from the wild, which can quickly deplete colonies in relatively small habitats such as Hong Kong waters. It also limits the possibilities for carrying out multiple and repeat experiments on coral.

Dr James True, Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Ecology and Biodiversity, has developed a system whereby coral harvested from the sea is attached to aragonite, made from an aragonite sand which has a crystal form as coral skeletons, and kept in large outdoor tanks. Clean, recycled seawater is pumped through the tanks and light exposure is controlled. The corals are also given plankton to supplement their diet.

Since the system was set up earlier this year the 22 harvested coral fragments have thrived, defying common wisdom that coral is difficult to grow without the infrastructure available to large aquarium operators.

"It's always been said that coral is hard to keep, particularly in Hong Kong, because of water quality issues and the need for spectral lamps to help photosynthesis. Shops in Mongkok sell coral but maybe one in 10 can survive a year," Dr True said.

"I'm hoping to dispel that myth. We're taking an unusual approach by combining fairly high-level science with low technology and energy use to achieve a minimum sustainable footprint, and we're getting good results."

The parent colonies form coral in his tanks, propagate new coral clones that can be used in experiments.

In one experiment Dr True has placed corals in two tanks, one filled with seawater that is filtered through toxic mud from Tolo Harbour and another filled with clean, fresh seawater. Some of the Tolo coral started to bleach after about four weeks, a sign they were having difficulty coping with the toxic environment.

"One thing we want to find out is whether there are some genetic or physical limitations on coral forming reefs in Hong Kong. There are no reefs here but at this latitude you have reefs in a lot of other places in the world," he said.

"By exploring the best ways to grow and propagate coral under controlled Hong Kong conditions, we can gain significant insight into ways to rehabilitate or improve degraded habitats."

Dr True said his findings and success in breeding coral could be repeated in experiments elsewhere in the world, and he has already initiated a collaborative experiment with Thai researchers. Shopkeepers in Mongkok may also benefit by being able to secure a more reliable, ecologically safer source of coral for their customers.



Faking It

Is he or isn't he? A team of psychologists hopes to expose the malingerers from the genuinely sick.

The ability to accurately detect whether a person is lying or not is a challenge that has occupied scientists for decades. And not just scientists either. Law enforcement agencies, Central Intelligence Agencies and suspicious spouses are just some of the parties concerned with lie detection.

A simple Google search throws up more than eight million hits for lie detection and perhaps reveals how preoccupied we are with seeking the truth. But the fact remains that most of us make very poor lie detectors. Which is where the scientists come in.

The development of functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) has provided new insight into the way the brain processes information and has thrown some light on the neural pathways involved in attempts to deceive.

Now a team in the Department of Psychology has conducted groundbreaking work in this area. Professor Tatia Lee, a neuroscientist and a clinical neuropsychologist, has been collaborating with researchers in the Mainland, US, and Taiwan to detect malingering among medical patients.

She said: "Attempts to feign memory problems are especially common in clinical settings, where successfully faking a sickness can lead to attractive rewards like large financial settlements.

"So we conducted a very simple test, using functional MRI, back in 2000, to see if there was a difference in the brain activity pattern associated with people simulating a memory problem and those making a genuine recall.

"In this lab setting we were able to see a specific pattern of brain activation when a person is simulating a memory problem

compared to someone who is making an accurate recall. In particular, relative to making an accurate recall, simulation of memory difficulty involves stronger activity in the prefrontal-cingulate-parietal neural network, which suggests that the subjects might use additional cognitive strategies for making calculated and goal-directed responses."

Two other teams, one in England and another in America, were carrying out similar projects at the same time, and although they were focusing more on forensic work all teams achieved similar findings.

"That motivated us to do the second study, published in 2005, which looked at the generalizability of our findings," said Lee.

"In the first study we took a small group of subjects, all male and Chinese speaking. Then in the second we looked at male and female and people speaking Chinese and English and explored a different test format to see if there saw consistency with the original findings. Again we saw a very similar pattern.

"It's very fascinating and very encouraging and, of course, we acknowledge that this is still at a very experimental stage. There is no way we are advocating that this is the way to detect liars. At this point it is still a scientific research question, there are more things we need to bridge the laboratory setting with the real world.

Although Lee is still treating the results as preliminary findings she considers it a very good start and wants to continue with the same line of research by exposing subjects to more difficult tasks. She believes this will become an important part of her team's research.

"We have been very encouraged by the results so far and we are looking forward to moving on to the next stage," she said.



Genes On and Off Buttons

Scientists discover a new mechanism in the cause of hereditary colon cancer.

The groundbreaking discovery that malfunctioning genes could be at the root of hereditary cancers, like colon cancer, could have major implications for future drug design, according to scientists in the Hereditary Gastrointestinal Cancer Genetic Diagnosis Laboratory, Department of Pathology.

The team, led by Professor Leung Suet Yi, made its discovery by studying a single family in which multiple members had developed hereditary colon or uterine cancers.

The rate of colon cancer in Hong Kong has risen dramatically over the last 20 years, with 3,200 new cases being diagnosed every year. This makes it the second most common cancer in the territory. It mostly affects the over-50s and is largely attributed to diet and environmental factors.

However, around ten to 15 per cent of all cases have a hereditary basis, the most common being hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC) which accounts for four per cent of colon cancer cases.

Patients with HNPCC show no symptoms until the cancer develops. The most important clue is the occurrence of colon or other specific types of cancers in multiple family members, or the onset of cancer at an early age.

Most HNPCC cases are caused by inheriting a mutation that switches off one of the DNA repair genes. This can be detected by a simple blood test.

However, in some HNPCC families, the DNA codes of their repair genes are completely normal, making the defect hard to detect.

What the research team found was a new mechanism for HNPCC, which involves a heritable methylation of the repair gene's promoter.

A promoter is like a switch that controls the gene's 'on' and 'off' button. Methylation 'locks' it into a permanently 'off' position,

leading to a loss of the gene's function and eventual cancer.

Although scientists were of the view that methylation could not be passed from one generation to the next, the team found it in multiple members of the family across three generations it tracked, including three members who have developed cancer. Moreover, the methylation was prominent in colon cells, but difficult to detect in blood cells.

Professor Leung said the findings, published in *Nature Genetics*, had revolutionised their understanding of hereditary disease.



"The case shows that methylation patterns can be inherited and cause heritable diseases including cancer.

"Since we need special techniques to test for methylation, and the test needs to be performed on colon instead of blood cells, our findings may change the way that genetic diagnoses and research is performed."

"Increasing our understanding of the way that methylation is regulated will have huge implications in the development of anti-cancer drugs," she added.

Leung said the importance of genetic diagnosis is in prevention. "If a cancer patient's family members know they have inherited the same malfunctioning genes and have regular screening checks, there is a high likelihood that cancer can be prevented by treatment at the early benign phase".

Interestingly, Hong Kong's young population has a uniquely high incidence of colon cancer and through DNA testing Leung and her team has been able to trace the source of the faulty gene. One-fifth of the local HNPCC families have inherited the same form of mutation from a common ancestor, estimated to have lived around 550 to 2,575 years ago in Guangdong Province.

So the findings could also have serious implications for the genetic diagnosis of hereditary colon cancer in Southern Chinese populations worldwide.

The research project is supported by the Hong Kong Cancer Fund and the Michael and Betty Kadoorie Cancer Genetics Research Programme.

Keeping the Records Straight

Archivist appointed to preserve and document the University's history.

The University's first archivist, Stacy Gould, has travelled from the quiet rural charms of Virginia to the cramped urban bustle of Hong Kong. Yet her first impressions are of the sometimes disturbing similarities between the two places.

Virginia, like Hong Kong, experiences wide fluctuations in temperature and humidity, a nightmare for preserving documents. There are also plenty of bugs in both places that like to nibble away at paper and binding.

More pleasing, though, is the similarity of her mission here at the University and at her previous employer, the College of William and Mary. Ms Gould is starting from scratch as the first archivist since the University was founded in 1911. At William and Mary she was only the second archivist in the College's history, which dates back to 1693.

"When I decided to take this job, I thought what a wonderful opportunity this is going to be because I could draw on all the things I'd learned over the past 15 years about how to and how not to do things. We all tend to learn more from our mistakes than our successes," she said.

The most important thing she has learned is to discern what is worth keeping. Ms Gould will save only about four per cent of the records that the University produces and she will be developing guidelines so each department knows what to send to the Archives.

"One of the most important parts of my job is appraisal. This isn't the process of saving things up, like a storage service. It's preserving and protecting the documentation of the past and the present, and making it accessible for the future," she said.

She intends to make the archives available to all members of the University and, eventually, the general public. Along the way, a purpose-built structure will be needed to hold all the material collected and keep the temperature and humidity under control as well as providing security.

"This is a huge job but you have got to start somewhere. It is really heartening that many people at the University have helped to make this happen," she said.

Records from our early history have already been collected by the University Libraries, the Registry and Dr Peter Cunich, a historian in the School of Humanities.

There are also a lot of modern-day documents that could give future researchers insight into the University and Hong Kong. Some issues that have caught Ms Gould's eye include greater Americanisation with the change to a four-year undergraduate curriculum and five-day week, and the importance of public health in the wake of bird flu and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Yet many papers have also been lost. She would dearly love for the University to have Sun Yat Sen's papers. At William and Mary College, many documents vanished over the centuries due to wars and other calamities, a situation she sees being repeated in places like Kosovo where the archives were burned. Matching Ms Gould's passion for archives is her anguish when she sees them destroyed.

"It's deliberately destroying the culture of others, the intellectual and emotional equivalent of genocide," she said.



Passion for Global Citizenship

A new Dean unveils his plans.

The first executive Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences hopes to instill a passion for social innovation and global citizenship in his students.

Professor Ian Holliday, formerly chair professor of Policy Studies and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at City University of Hong Kong, acknowledges that the Faculty is facing many challenges with the proposed four-year curriculum and the policy to attract more local and regional fee-paying students.

But he said, "HKU is in a great position for that because it has a strong international profile. So the opportunities are enormous for bringing in undergraduate, postgraduate and research postgraduate students."

Many of these students will be expected to acquire a global perspective and a clear social awareness during their studies.



"Social innovation is not an unusual notion," said Holliday. "Many corporations now talk about corporate social responsibility, and I feel that it is essential for all our undergraduate students to do something innovative for their society in the course of their three-year programme or, after 2012, their four-year programme.

"I would like to see all our students doing something that gives something back to the society that funds us, like a compulsory internship or community-based programme."

Although the plan is still up for discussion Holliday feels it would be enormously beneficial for students.

"There are going to be many graduates with very good degrees, and I think increasingly employers are going to be looking at what our students have done beyond a decent performance in class, which is taken for granted," he said.

"Over time I would like this Faculty's brand, at HKU, to be identified with these things so that students coming out of here are known to be globally aware and socially responsible.

"We must be increasingly outward-looking and that's the same for all sorts of institutions around the world. More and more businesses are building relationships with the communities in which they are imbedded. So we will be following the initiatives that have been taken by all sorts of organizations in all walks of life. I think it would be remiss if we didn't do it."

The Faculty has, for many years, enjoyed exchange relationships with other campuses, ensuring that students enjoy a degree of social exposure. Over the summer one group of students worked on ethnic minority issues in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

"We are lucky to have donors who believe in this, and who have created scholarships for our students. We will be seeking more of that because we think it's a good investment for our students, and it will therefore benefit Hong Kong in the longer term."

Holliday's own research has concentrated on public policy, public management and comparative healthcare systems in the region. But his recent interest has focused more on Myanmar.

"A lot of my research focuses on problems of transition in that country, but in my fieldwork research I'm moving into human security. There are two million Burmese living in Thailand, some of them legal some of them illegal, many of them working in garment factories or even the sex industry.

"There's increasing interest at the UN and among key global players in human security, and in ensuring freedom from want and freedom from fear," he said.

Artistic Reverence Explored

A new exhibition explores the cultural roots of China's art.

In the Western world the concept of imitation tends to be a negative one, ranging in meaning from a sincere form of flattery to outright plagiarism. But in China the history of artistic expression is peppered with examples of artistic reverence that could well be considered acts of imitation.

China's long and unbroken cultural tradition has encouraged artists, calligraphers and craftsmen to draw on the great works of the past as inspiration for new works of art. So much so that the practice of emulating the great masters has, in itself, become a traditional practice, making the broad concept of 'imitation' one of the most fascinating areas of study in Chinese art.

An exhibition, presented by the Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong and our University Museum and Art Gallery explores this tradition. Featuring over 200 pieces from the private collections of members of the Society and institutional contributors, many of the objects are on view to the public for the first time.

It was during the Northern Song Dynasty (960 – 1127) that the artistic traditions central to China's culture were established. The Huizong emperor – a great collector of art – laid the foundations of imperial attitudes to art that were to take hold in the coming centuries.

His love of the art of the past was translated into objects of the day with ancient bronzes and jades being imitated to bolster the emperor's links with the legitimacy of the past.

While this archaism may represent a conscious development in Chinese cultural traditions, the exhibition also reveals how non-Chinese motifs, forms and ideas, like Indian Buddhism were assimilated into the country's art.

The exhibition includes ritual bronzes from the Shang period (c.1600 – c.1050 BCE), and later archaic examples, ceramic vessels and sculpture, works of art in jade, cloisonne, glass, wood and bamboo, as well as ink and oil paintings. Contemporary art is also included to show the influence of twentieth century art on post-1989 artists.

Art & Imitation in China runs at the University Museum and Art Gallery until December 17, 2006.



Rare Books on Display

The University Libraries displays its unique collection.

Books that offer a rare glimpse into a long-lost world formed part of a fascinating exhibition held at the University over the summer.

The valuable tomes, some once owned by literary and historical figures, such as Lu Muzhen, Sun Yat-sen's first wife, Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China and essayist and novelist, Hsu Ti-shan, revealed the wealth of material held at the University.

As the oldest and largest academic library in Hong Kong – dating back to 1912 – it has placed special emphasis on its collection development over the last few years. And its printed collection has grown to over 2.4 million volumes, some of which are extremely rare and quite unique.

Equally remarkable is the growth of the Libraries' e-book collection. In 2000 it became the first library in the world to

start acquiring web-based books, and in just seven years it has accumulated one million e-volumes.

The exhibition, entitled *Books and Their Stories*, jointly presented by the University Libraries and the University Museum and Art Gallery, celebrated the launch of the Libraries' one millionth e-book, and recounted how it built up its collection.

Among the highlights were a beautifully produced 1798 edition of George Staunton's *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to China*. This is a genuine and copious account of Lord George McCartney's mission to the court of the Qing Emperor Qianlong between 1792 and 1794 and is the only copy that exists in the world. It is this volume that the libraries has chosen to digitize for its one millionth e-book.

Also on display was a rare copy of the *Si ku quan shu*, a collection of reference works up to the 18th century, which is believed to have originated in the collection of the Wenyuange at the Yuanmingyuan, or the Old Summer Palace.



Our Man in Peking

An adventurous Australian's unique photographs of a changing China are published for the first time.

The Australian medical doctor and journalist, G.E. Morrison, led a life of extraordinary adventure that took him across four continents and won him the moniker 'Chinese Morrison'.

Born in Victoria, Australia, Morrison showed a fearless passion for travel that saw him walk 600 miles from Geelong to Adelaide before he was 21. That fearlessness also made him the first white man to penetrate into the depths of New Guinea where he was almost killed by spears in a native attack.

Returning to Australia, his father sent him to a surgeon in Edinburgh to have the arrow head removed and whilst there Morrison read medicine, graduating as a doctor from Edinburgh University in 1887.

After his studies the young adventurer travelled extensively in the United States, Europe and finally the Far East where he became *The Times*' man in Peking. His reports attracted enormous attention in both London and Paris.

During the Boxer Rebellion he became an acting-lieutenant during the siege of legations and was severely wounded. Reports of his death reached London and allowed him the pleasure of reading his own laudatory obituary in *The Times*.

During his 20 years on the Mainland, from 1897 to 1920, Morrison witnessed the extensive change the country underwent with the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republican period.

With the revolution of 1911 Morrison took the side of Sun Yat-sen and, the following year resigned his position at *The Times* to become political advisor to the new Republic of China. In 1919 he attended the peace negotiations at Versailles as China's representative.

Now thanks to the Australian painter, Shen Jiawei, a selection of Morrison's photographs – three thousand of which are stored at the State Library of New South Wales – have been brought together in a stunning triple box set.

Old China Through G.E. Morrison's Eyes, distributed by the Hong Kong University Press, provides a unique view of a country on the cusp of modernization. During his travels Morrison recorded the lives of both the great and of the oppressed.

His unique photographs of the Boxer Rebellion show the siege of Peking, and record the Empress Tzu Hsi's funeral.

For almost a century Morrison's dispatches and diaries have formed an important historical link to the past. His remarkable

library, which contained the largest number of books on China ever collected, was sold to Baron Iwasaki of Tokyo in 1917.

Morrison's passion for China has not been forgotten in his native Australia where, in 1932, the inaugural George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology was delivered at Canberra, with a fund established by Chinese residents to provide an annual lecture in his memory.

On his death in 1920 *The Times* wrote that his telegrams showed 'the prescience of a statesman and the accuracy of an historian'.

Old China Through G.E. Morrison's Eyes is published by Fujian Education Press and is available through the Hong Kong University Press.



Rita Dove

An audience with poet Rita Dove is akin to an evening of fine wine and good company. It is all too easy to get drunk on her words, carried away by the stories she tells and pass through the world with a smile, repeating snippets of her poems to yourself for days afterwards.

Students and staff at the University were treated to two such evenings Dove in October, first at the Edmund Blunden lecture, and the following day at a question and answer session.

Dove who is the Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, served as US Poet Laureate and Consultant to the Library of Congress from 1993 to 1995 and as Poet Laureate of the Commonwealth of Virginia from 2004 to 2006.

During the Blunden lecture she tracked for the audience how she arrived at the title for the evening, *The Poet at the Dance*.

"First comes a confession," she said. "My husband and I have been ballroom dancing for about eight years, before it became all the rage in the States, before we had dancing with the stars and all sorts of things like that. And many of our friends looked at us askance, as if a poet should shut herself in away from life in order to write a poem.

"So I began to muse about the ways in which music was important, artistically and personally, in my life and as I thought about the poems I realised that it was there all along.

"For me poetry has to sing, if the words do not sing then it's not poetry. Historically poets have always been the celebrants of life. It was really a natural progression for me from music, playing the cello, to writing." And she began by reading her poem *Sing Song*.

Music, she said, had always been a part of her childhood

home. "All kinds of music – my father would play blues and jazz, but he would also play Corelli flute sonatas. And we could gage his mood by what music it was. If it was Corelli you were in trouble, if it was Jack White he was in a good mood.

"So it was the kind of music that all of us have around us, and I was interested in the music of language. You can hear it when you go to another country. You hear the music of another language more clearly than your own, I think.

"The music of language came when I was a child through story-telling. And in that ancient art of telling stories we know that it's not the facts we're interested in, we're interested in the way the story is told. There's a music to the language that makes you sit up and listen and that's what made me want to be a poet because I wanted to make words do that too."

As a child she spent hours in the public library and was awed by the experience. "The idea of going into some place and having the world there seemed incredible to me – that you could actually go into some place and gather up all that knowledge, and there was a certain type of dancing amongst the books. That library was heaven for me."

So much so that she wrote *Maple Valley Branch Library 1967* for librarians everywhere. She went on to read from many of her collections and, the following evening, answered questions on

the process of writing, emphasizing again the influence of music on her work and the importance she places on making words sing.

The Edmund Blunden lecture series was founded in 1985 in honour of First World War poet, Edmund Blunden, a Professor at the University from 1953 to 1963. Previous Blunden speakers include Frank Kermode and John Carey.



Bound Feet and Queues

A new book explores the diary of one of the first American woman to live in China.

If 19th century diarist Harriett Low were to visit Macau today she would hardly recognize the place. The sedan chairs and sampans of her day are long gone and the Catholicism that dominated the colony in her time, has been largely overtaken by the new religion of gambling.

But in 1829 when Low, a 20-year-old unworldly American, arrived in the former Portuguese enclave, she encountered women with bound feet and men with queues.

While travelling with her aunt and uncle, a trader from Salem, Massachusetts, Low spent five years in Macau and kept a detailed diary of a life filled with balls, picnics and operas.

At the time, Macau was the only permitted gateway to Mainland China and, as such, formed the centre of life for

foreigners trading with the Mainland. The wives of foreign merchants, however, were forced by the Chinese government to remain in the enclave, where they led constricted lives, while their husbands traded tea and opium in Canton.

It is this diary that forms the heart of Rosmarie Lamas's new book, *Everything in Style: Harriet Low's Macau*, published by the Hong Kong University Press.

Steeped in the exoticism of the Far East, this engaging memoir details the Chinese customs of the period, explores the power of religion, the problems of inter-cultural relationships and the daily life of 19th century women on the south China coast. In so doing it offers a peek into a lost world.

Lamas, based in Lisbon, Portugal, is a social anthropologist by training and is a former associate professor at the Institut for Tourism Studies in Macau.



Project SEE Inspires an Off-shoot

New programme motivates students to help the region's needy.

A programme to send our students to developing countries during the summer months has provided the impetus for a new student-led voluntary organisation to help children in Cambodia.

Humanity in Focus was formed by five local students who joined Project SEE (Students for Equality and Equity), a programme launched this summer by the General Education Unit to bring together local and international students at the University to work on such issues as gender, AIDS, the environment and children's rights.

The students initiated their Non Government Organisation (NGO) after experiencing the hardships of Cambodian village life where preparing a meal required a two-hour trek to market, the local hospital was less equipped than their first aid kit and children in the nearest town begged for food.

"The situation in the village where we stayed motivated us to set up Humanity in Focus," student Wendy Choi Wae Yee said. "We were eating only eggs and rice and we thought that was simple enough, but the children there ate rice with nothing on top."

Ms Choi and her colleagues, Agatha Wong Chi Lai, Yves Wan Yau Sum, Georgina Lam Kit Gee, Wong Chi Lai and Canadian exchange student Ali Manek organised English and hygiene classes in the village and made connections with local NGOs who were trying to improve life for children there.

Ms Wan said many of the local volunteers were Cambodian university students. "They really motivated us because they are students, too, and they're trying to do something for the children in the village."

Humanity in Focus aims to raise \$12,000 to build a simple village school and a water tank and train 25 volunteers to become teachers. So far the students have organised a fund-raising dinner and designed a calendar using photographs they took in Cambodia.

In future they hope to involve students from other universities and secondary schools, and send volunteers to Cambodia. If the current projects succeed, they also hope to take on more on-going work involving children, gender and drug addiction prevention.

"Project SEE was a good experience because the University gave us a lot of freedom to contact the local NGOs and make our own plans," Ms Choi said. "Now we are helping to empower our Cambodian partners. We're committed to making this project work."

Project SEE also sent another 34 local and non-local students to India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines during the summer.

The Director of General Education, Dr Albert Chau, said the purpose of the programme was to engage students in dealing with social issues of global concern. "We ultimately want them to become active advocates for equality and equity in the world around us," he said.



Building for the Future

Engineering students help build schools in rural China.

A hiking expedition by an engineering alumnus into the hills of rural Guangxi provided the inspiration for a unique project that is benefiting both Guangxi villagers and undergraduate students.

Dr Nicolas Yeung decided to support the construction of schools in the area after witnessing the impoverishment around Da Lang Village. But he added a twist to his donation – Hong Kong engineering students had to design and build the schools so they could put their classroom skills to work and widen their horizons.

“A lot of my friends had been complaining that everything is too good and too easy for young people in Hong Kong, but the fact is this generation really hasn’t had the opportunity to see what life is about. I thought, why not take this opportunity to show them,” he said.

Twenty-one civil engineering students from the University helped to build a primary school in Da Lang Village that opened last year and a new group is being recruited to work on a student hostel for a vocational training school in the county.

The students’ input on the projects helps them to fulfil compulsory industry training requirements for their studies and offers them a very different experience from that they would receive on most local placements.

For the primary school, the students had to interview villagers about the facilities they needed, conduct land surveys, design building plans, work out construction details, secure approval from Mainland authorities, prepare tender documents and ensure the project did not exceed its budget, as well as monitor construction.

They also had to learn about Mainland building codes for such things as earthquake resistance, lightning rods and drainage. An architecture alumnus, Mr Joseph Tang, who runs a Hong Kong architectural firm, advised them on their designs.

Students also fulfilled Dr Yeung’s goal of exposing them to other ways of life. During site visits to Da Lang Village they saw the star-filled sky, the brilliant colours of a village in seasons from spring to autumn, and experienced electricity blackouts.

Anthony Kam Yuet Wang, who graduated this year, said the project helped him to appreciate the simple things in life.

“Most people in Hong Kong are focused on how to make more money. However, after I stayed in Guangxi for about a month, I realise money is not a very great concern. The most important thing is to enjoy living. The people in the village would go to look at the autumn leaves during their free time and they shared their food with each other. People there are closer to each other and they enjoy the little things around them,” he said.

Dr Guo Dajiang, Honorary Lecturer in Civil Engineering and tutor for the project, said the experience was a valuable one for students, both professionally and personally.

“A project like this means they can complete their compulsory training on the one hand and serve society on the other. It’s very exciting for them because it’s a real project, it’s not just on paper, and they are able to help poor people,” he said.

The primary school in Da Lang Village was named Ming Tak Lau, whose meaning is derived from the University’s motto *sapientia et virtus* – wisdom and virtue. The name and the calligraphy were provided by eminent HKU-based sinologist Professor Jao Tsung-I.

