



香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

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## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

### A Leader and his Rocker

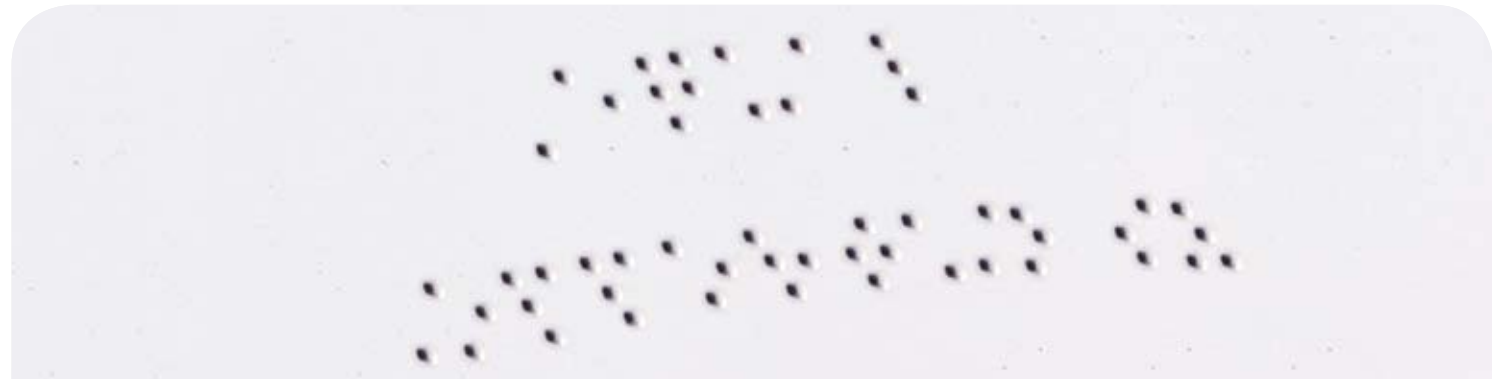
The new Deputy  
Vice-Chancellor/  
Provost discusses  
his role at HKU



### A Dental Solution to Sleeplessness

More access to treatment  
for obstructive sleep  
apnoea patients





Cover photo: 'Equal Opportunities' written in Braille

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## Lectures and Lunches: Nobel Laureates Help Celebrate HKU's Centenary



Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi



A group of secondary school students and HKU undergraduates joined the 'Lunch with a Nobel Laureate' to discuss various social issues with Professor Gary S. Becker.

As part of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2011–2012, the University will be holding a series of Centenary Distinguished Lectures. The first inaugural lecture delivered by 1992 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences Laureate, Professor Gary S. Becker, titled 'Causes of the Worldwide Boom in Higher Education, Especially of Women' was held on September 20, 2010.

Speaking about Hong Kong's higher education development, Professor Becker emphasized the need to have a competitive higher education system. He would like to see strong competition among the public universities, and the development of private universities competing against the public ones.

He cited the example of the United States, where up to 25 to 30% of young people go to higher education, among them 75% are in public universities, the rest going to private institutions.

"You need to continue to increase the number of students getting into higher education, continue to have competition among the universities here and in the mainland in particular," said Professor Becker.

2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine Laureate Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi delivered the second Centenary Distinguished Lecture 'HIV/AIDS – a Scientific and Human Adventure in Response to an Emerging Epidemic' on November 22, 2010.

After outlining the emergence of HIV in 1980's and how scientists and society tried to fight this quick spreading disease, Professor Barré-Sinoussi also reviewed the advancement of research in HIV prevention and treatment. In the lecture, Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi reminded us that HIV ranks second in the list of deaths caused by infectious diseases. She noticed that there is less information about the disease

now than in the past, and called for more public education on AIDS, which would help increase public awareness, and as a result, help prevent the spread of the disease.

To further promote these knowledge exchange activities beyond the University, the 'Lunch with a Nobel Laureate' activity has been specially arranged for each of the visiting Nobel Laureates to 'meet and eat with' both HKU undergraduates as well as local secondary school students. The lunches, which are held in the Vice-Chancellor's residence, the University Lodge, provide a rare opportunity for the young students to meet the Nobel Laureates face-to-face, outside of a lecture hall. In the two-hour sessions, students are expected to initiate discussions of various issues with the Laureates, who in turn, share their own stories and observations, and expertise and experience with the students.



## Reason to Smile: HKU Dean of Dentistry Named IADR Distinguished Scientist



Professor Lakshman Samaranayake (right) received the 2010 Oral Medicine and Pathology Research Award at the 88th General Session and Exhibition of the IADR in Barcelona, Spain.

Professor Lakshman Samaranayake, Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry and Tam Wah-Ching Professor in Dental Science, has received the 2010 Oral Medicine and Pathology Research Award from the International Association for Dental Research (IADR), the world's largest non-government dental research organization.

Presented on July 14, 2010 at the 88<sup>th</sup> General Session and Exhibition of the IADR in Barcelona, Spain, the Oral Medicine and Pathology Research Award came with the title of IADR Distinguished Scientist, and is one of only 16 discipline-specific awards granted annually by the IADR.

The IADR regards the Oral Medicine and Pathology Research Award as one of the highest honours it can bestow. Supported by Unilever Oral Care and awarded by an international selection committee, the IADR Distinguished Scientist Award for Oral Medicine and Pathology recognizes 'outstanding and sustained peer-reviewed research that has contributed to the

understanding of the mechanisms governing the health and disease of the oral cavity and associated structures, principally encompassing skin, bone, and the oral soft tissue'.

"I'm proud to be the first Asian from Asia to receive this coveted prize and Distinguished Scientist title," says Professor Samaranayake. "For scientists from this part of the world to be recognized globally for dental research achievements is perhaps long overdue, so this award sends a clear message of encouragement to dental researchers all over Asia to keep striving to advance research to improve oral health."

Over the past three decades, Professor Samaranayake has contributed to the scientific literature on oral infections caused by *Candida* yeast, infection control in dentistry, and oral microbial diseases in general, including more than 300 original, peer-reviewed research and review articles.

Hailing from Sri Lanka, Professor Samaranayake is considered a pioneer

clinician-scientist in oral mycology and clinical microbiology, and is named the world's foremost expert on oral candidiasis in [www.Biomedexperts.com](http://www.Biomedexperts.com). He was the first to describe the adhesion of the fungus *Candida* to oral appliances and tissue surfaces of the mouth, "leading to the currently fashionable candidal biofilm era of research in mycology", the IADR notes.

Professor Samaranayake has also been honoured by the University of Hong Kong with an Outstanding Researcher Award in 2001, a Research Output Prize in 2009, an Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award in 2001, and the Tam Wah-Ching Endowed Professorship in Dental Science in 2010, the first endowed university Professorship in dentistry in Hong Kong. In 2005, his *alma mater*, the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, honoured him with a Doctor of Science *honoris causa* degree, making him the first Sri Lankan dental professional to have received this award.

## HKU Launches First Cultural Leadership Programme in Asia

In view of the urgent demand for cultural leaders in the region, the University is pioneering the first cultural leadership programme in Asia, in association with the Clore Leadership Programme in the UK. The Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme (ACLP) aims to nurture young talent and equip those in senior positions with the skills needed to become outstanding cultural leaders and transform the region's artistic landscape.

HKU Hung Leung Hau Ling Distinguished Fellow in Humanities, Professor Lung Ying-tai, who will teach in the programme, said that Hong Kong had very good potential in its cultural development, owing to its internationalized environment and sophisticated management skills. There is, however, a discrepancy, in that many of those well-versed in culture do not have the corresponding level of management

skills, and conversely, there are decision makers who do not understand culture. The programme has been designed to fill this gap.

Around 20 students will be admitted annually and the tuition fee is \$160,000. About seven scholarships will be set up. Programme Director and HKU School of Humanities Head, Professor Daniel Chua, said that the faculty would conduct intensive learning sessions with the participants, and that the group would also go to Shanghai and Suzhou to explore critical issues in preservation, conservation and urban regeneration.

The ACLP is a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural programme which provides world-class training without losing sight of the local sensibilities. Faculty and participants of the ACLP will form a growing network, which will stand as a long-lasting asset that will support the region's cultural aspirations.



From left: Professor Daniel Chua and Professor Lung Ying-tai.

"Cultural leadership is the ability to transform a society. To achieve Hong Kong's aspiration to be a world-class cultural hub, only cultural leadership can act as a transformative force that can energize and renew the meaning of arts and culture and have an effective impact on society," said Professor Chua. A total of 100 cultural leaders are expected to be trained over the next five years to meet the urgent demand in the region, and a number of full and partial fellowships will also be available for dedicated cultural leaders who want to make an impact.

## HKU and China's 'C9' Come Together



Provosts and Vice Presidents from nine top universities in China (called the 'C9' on the Mainland) have joined HKU at a symposium to examine issues and concerns about undergraduate education in the midst of change.

Hong Kong will switch to a four-year undergraduate curriculum in 2012 from three years at present, while the Mainland has released a blueprint for higher education development from 2010–2020.

The symposium, entitled 'Re-envisioning Undergraduate Education' and hosted by HKU in September, aimed to identify common issues among the universities and explore ways to better prepare undergraduate students to take on the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The participants revisited the undergraduate curriculum, looking at such things as desired graduate attributes (in terms of both professional and disciplinary competence

and personal qualities), general education or common core, curriculum structure and teaching quality and development.

They also considered strategies for improving teaching and learning, covering such topics as student evaluation of teaching, pedagogical evaluation, and student learning experiences.

The participants lauded this first ever attempt to bring together the senior management of ten top Chinese universities to deliberate on teaching and learning issues. They enthused about the future prospect of this platform for collaboration and have agreed to work together on four areas: general education/the Common Core curriculum, student evaluation of teaching, a student learning experience survey, and pedagogical innovations. Several universities have offered to host the next symposium to be held in a year's time.



## Chemistry Professor Vivian Yam Named Laureate of the L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science Awards 2011



HKU Professor Vivian Yam Wing-wah, Philip Wong Wilson Wong Professor in Chemistry and Energy, and Chair of Chemistry, was named Laureate of the 13<sup>th</sup> L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science Awards 2011 for her contributions in light-emitting materials and innovative ways of capturing solar energy.

Each year, five outstanding women scientists – one per continent – are honoured for their research contributions, the strength of their commitment and their

impact on society. Professor Yam is the laureate of the Asia/ Pacific region. The awards ceremony will take place in March 2011 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

Professor Yam felt deeply privileged and greatly honoured to receive the award.

"It shows that Hong Kong has strength and talent in scientific research and development," said Professor Yam, adding that she herself is a typical Hong Kong educated scientist.

She was thankful to the community and donors like Dr Philip Wong and Dr Wilson Wong, and HKU and the government for their wide support given to scientific research. She urged young scientists to follow their interests, and demonstrate passion and commitment in their professions.

"I firmly believe that regardless of one's gender, as long as one has the passion, dedication and determination to pursue research wholeheartedly, one can excel and produce results of world-class quality."

HKU Vice-Chancellor Professor Lap-Chee Tsui was delighted that Professor Yam won the award, which he said was well-deserved recognition for her tremendous contributions to academia and research.

Professor Yam's main area of research is in inorganic/organometallic syntheses and photochemistry related to luminescence and solar energy conversion. Professor Yam's seminal works on luminescent polynuclear metal complexes and clusters, and light-emitting carbon-rich organometallics have gained her international recognition.

## Eight Distinguished Individuals Presented with Honorary University Fellowships

HKU held its Honorary University Fellowships presentation ceremony on September 14, 2010 which was presided over by Dr the Hon David K.P. Li, Pro-Chancellor of the University.

Honorary University Fellowships were presented to eight distinguished individuals, in recognition of their contributions to the University and the community. At the

ceremony, HKU Vice-Chancellor Professor Lap-Chee Tsui extended his gratitude on behalf of the University community to the fellows for their contributions to the University and society.

Professor Tsui said: "They are true examples of commitment, determination, generosity and leadership, because they themselves lead by example."

The Honorary University Fellowships were established in 1995 to reaffirm the University's link between town and gown.

"Our relationship with society is an important part of the University's heritage and the Fellowships are an enduring symbol of this partnership," added Professor Tsui.

## International Recognition for HKU Members



Professor Anthony Yeh

Professor Anthony Yeh Gar-on, Chair Professor of the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS), which is an autonomous international organization, founded in 1983 by a distinguished group of scientists and officially launched by the United Nations in 1985. The Academy is currently composed of 999 of the most distinguished scientists worldwide.

Only scientists who have attained the highest international standards and



Professor Yang Dan

made significant contributions to the advancement of science can be nominated as Fellows or Associate Fellows. Fellows are scientists who live and work in developing countries and who have made contributions to their fields of science that meet internationally accepted standards of excellence.

Professor Anthony Yeh is the third Fellow from HKU elected by the Academy after Professors Vivian Yam and Che Chi-

ming, who were elected in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Professor Yeh is a pioneer in the development of advanced GIS methods and models for the planning of sustainable development, especially in the development of cellular automata urban planning models. He is also internationally known for his studies of urban spatial structures in Hong Kong and China.

Professor Yang Dan, Morningside Professor in Chemical Biology of the Department of Chemistry has been awarded the 2011 TWAS Prize in Chemistry, in recognition of her significant contributions to the development of novel methods for the synthesis of bioactive natural products and probes for biomedical research.

Each year the Academy awards eight prizes of US\$15,000 each to individual scientists who have been working and living in a developing country for at least ten years. The Prizes are given in the following fields of science: agricultural sciences, biology, chemistry, earth sciences, engineering sciences, mathematics, medical sciences and physics.



Back row from left: Mr Richard Hui Chung-yee, Mr Lam Chiu-ying, Mr Alexander Law Kai-yui, Mr Lee Man-ban, Mr Edwin Leong Siu-hung, and Mr Edmund Leung Kwong-ho.

Front row from left: Mr Chan Wai-nam, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, Dr the Hon David Li, Dr the Hon Leong Che-hung, and Ms Mabel Cheung Yuen-ting.



# The Journey Has Just Begun!

Upcoming two years will be a celebration of Knowledge, Heritage and Service.

HKU's Centenary Celebrations officially started with a Kick-off Ceremony on January 9, 2011 and will span the coming two years.

The Celebrations will feature a wide range of events – from lectures by distinguished academics to events involving the general public – that reflect the University's ongoing dedication and commitment to Knowledge, Heritage and Service.

One hundred years ago, this University was born.

In 1911, The University of Hong Kong was incorporated by Ordinance. A group of visionaries founded the first university in Hong Kong from which generations of leaders across the region could come forth. For the past century, The University has lived up to its promise, growing with Hong Kong and intertwined with its destiny as it re-defines its position on the global landscape of education. The University of Hong Kong was to be for China and the World.

Professor Lap-Chee Tsui  
Vice-Chancellor



Above: On a crisp, clear, sunny Sunday, over 4,000 students, staff, alumni, together with their families, residents from the neighbourhood and community centres joined the Kick-off Ceremony at the Stanley Ho Sports Centre.

Left: Officiating guests literally kick-starting the celebrations; a parade of 2,000 students, staff and alumni; getting into the Centenary spirit.

For more about the Centenary Celebrations, please visit: <http://100.hku.hk/>



**Knowledge.** HKU is committed to the creation of knowledge through pioneering research and scholarship, to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and learning, to Knowledge Exchange activities that will benefit the community, and to creating lifelong-learning opportunities for the community.

**Heritage.** HKU is proud of its history. The HKU Family spans generations, and it cherishes its ties with its alumni, retired staff, and its supporters and donors, just as much as its values its current colleagues and students.

**Service.** HKU has produced many successful graduates and leaders in the past Century, and its sense of commitment to service is shared by the entire HKU Family. HKU believes in global citizenship and the value of service to a worldwide community.



# A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

The University may be acclaimed for breaking new ground in research and teaching but its rarely-acknowledged record in equal opportunities is also ahead of the pack.

Cultural diversity has been a cornerstone of the University of Hong Kong's identity since its beginnings almost a century ago. Launched with the aim of educating students from across Asia and drawing teachers and administrators from across the globe it has always been a melting pot of ideas, cultures and opportunities.

Today that diversity flourishes on our campus and is promoted and protected by the Equal Opportunity Unit and its attendant Committees. While we lead the territory in research and teaching we can also lay claim to pioneering in the area of equal opportunities.

Thanks to a group of proactive individuals HKU was the first University in the territory to establish an Equal Opportunity Unit. Furthermore, in 2003, it amended the policy on equal opportunity to prohibit race discrimination which preceded the enactment of the Race Discrimination Ordinance by five years and, in 2009 launched the first Halal food outlet on a university campus in Hong Kong to increase the choice of food available to our Muslim staff and students.

Professor Joseph Lee Hun-wei who recently stepped down as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing) and Chairman of the University's Equal Opportunity Committee (EOC) in October, after serving since 2005, reflected on its success and the ongoing challenges facing a University of this size and complexity.



"HKU, being what it is, is well-positioned to take the initiative in equal opportunities because it's a comprehensive university in all fields and so diversity is more focused here than it is at other institutions. We have ten faculties, so diversity is our concern and also our asset," he says.

## A Diverse Campus

That diversity presents its own problems. "Gender issues are always a challenge. We differ from European universities in this respect. In Germany, for example, when advertising for staff universities will explicitly state that they will recruit in areas that are underrepresented, for example women scientists.

"But we are far from that, and we have a certain inertia to even move in that direction, although I have to say that some Deans are very proactive. But in some faculties the ratio of men to women can be much greater than 60-40. However, I don't think this is wilful discrimination. In the Faculty of Medicine, for example, we have many women scientists and researchers."

In other areas, he says, HKU is ahead of the pack, providing a nursing room for new mothers and full-pay paternity leave. Complaints about an all-male Senior Management Team were fortuitously answered with the appointment of Professor Amy Tsui who took up the position of Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President for Teaching and Learning in 2007.

"You can't really enforce these things, you can just promote an attitude by example and by policies and activities designed to raise awareness," says Professor Lee.

## The Challenges of a Hilly Terrain

Another issue is disability which has proven a challenge on campus thanks to the exceptionally hilly terrain. There have been complaints of a dearth of lifts and poor accessibility for wheelchair users. However, according to Professor Lee there is a limit to what can be achieved.

"We have made progress, we now have a very active disability committee who forward their suggestions to the EOC. If you walk around you will notice that there have been improvements – more lifts and wheelchair ramps, we are developing a point-to-point search map for wheelchair users, we have Braille guide paths and we are promoting a web accessibility campaign now at this moment. We would like every department's web page to be accessible and have provided them with guidelines. In principle every department has an EO advisor, and this year we have rejuvenated this network."



The Hala Food Corner was launched in 2009 to increase the choice of food available to Muslim staff and students.





Mr So Wa-wai, six time Paralympics Gold Medallist, shared his experiences at this year's Equal Opportunity Festival.

The annual EO Festival is a softer means of raising awareness. In the past, minority students from local schools have been invited to perform – sometimes an ethnic song and dance, other times a play. This year comedian, Vivek Mahbubani, an Indian who grew up in Hong Kong and is fluent in both Cantonese and English entertained guests, while six time Paralympics Gold Medallist, So Wa-wai shared his experiences.

“This annual festival is quite a lot of work,” confesses Professor Lee. “But we continue to do it every year because even if only 30 people show up it’s still worth it because it raises awareness. Occasionally you hit on something that influences a person, they might not know they have been influenced until years afterwards. But sometimes it can be life changing. Students and staff may come along to the EO festival events and pick up some seeds that may blossom years later, you never know.”

### Action on Disability

The Disability Action Committee is a sub-committee of the EOC. Its Chairman, Professor Cecilia Chan, Si Yuan Professor in Health and Social Work says, “We are very dedicated in promoting equal opportunities for all. This Committee consists of University teachers, staff members and students to discuss the overall planning and interpretation of policy to make HKU a truly accessible campus, and to emphasize that we respect people who are differently abled, and to make sure that the policy procedures are followed properly, so that no-one will be disadvantaged in the process.”

She cites the University's systematic plan of upgrading buildings, by installing lifts and ensuring wheelchair and web access, as examples.

“Not only are we promoting all these measures to come into line with the international expectations of a good employer and a good university, we are also taking the lead in all of Hong Kong higher education.”

“I think the socially inclusive environment, and the respect for individuals that we are promoting, are values that are of utmost importance in the holistic education of the University.”

### Special Efforts

“Many of our departments make a special effort to hire people with a disability. The Library hires quite a number of people with hearing impairments, the Department of Social Work and Social Administration has hired a chronically ill member of staff, my office has also hired people who are chronically ill and I have a staff member with hearing difficulties,” she says.

Furthermore, students with visual impairment are allowed to complete their exams in a dedicated room with a computer adapted to their needs and extra time to complete questions. The Examination Unit may also provide student Specific Learning Disabilities with a quiet or separate examination venue.

“There are also students with learning difficulties who may not be able to respond to multiple choice questions, so the questions can be modified into essay

form or, if they can't write essays, it can be converted into multiple choice format,” says Professor Chan.

Two funds help further promote this philosophy of inclusion – the HKU 81 Inclusion Fund (founded by the Class of 1981) with a donation of \$1 million, and the Henry Chan Inclusive Education Fund, both of which are dedicated to supporting staff and students in launching programmes and activities to raise awareness and promote social inclusion on campus.

The university has also set up a working aid fund to allow departments to modify their workplace for people with different forms of limitations.

“I am very proud that HKU is dedicated to promoting disability action. As you can see we call ourselves the Disability Action Committee, which means it is a Committee focused on doing something instead of talking about it. The members are very enthusiastic staff and students and we have been very proactive in social inclusion, awareness and prevention and in helping to foster a sense of pride and personal growth,” she adds.

And looking to the future she says, “I think we are going to encounter new challenges as we increase the size of the student and staff population. The new campus should be a universal design, so we should design it to be friendly to all sorts of users within practical constraints. “We are moving towards an international campus where the diversity will be greater and the culture will change and we will have to deal with new issues.”



The Disability Action Committee promotes equal opportunities in the University.



Professor Cecilia Chan, Chairman of the Disability Action Committee.

## “ We are very dedicated in promoting equal opportunities for all. ”

*Professor Cecilia Chan*

However, on the positive side she adds, “The University is quite supportive, whatever you propose it seldom says no. On this front the University is very open to suggestions, definitely.”

### Promoting Inclusiveness

Some of these issues are already raising their heads. As the student population increases new forms of diversity are being encountered. Dean of Student Affairs, Dr Albert Chau says we have long provided support we provide for students with visual or hearing impairment or other disabilities but it is streets ahead in its services for those with learning difficulties.

“The focus at other institutions in Hong Kong still lies in the area of physically disabilities but we have moved on to deal with learning disabilities,” he says.

“We are certainly the first institution in Hong Kong to employ a full time staff member to work on accessibility services, to support students with physical or learning disabilities.”

Indeed in May 2010 the Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities (HKASLD) and the Hong Kong Society of Child Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics (HKCNDP) wrote to HKU's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, to commend “the professional support provided by the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS)...their dedication, effort, leadership, capability, solidarity, comradeship and passion for helping students with disabilities, as well as the achievement they have accomplished to date.”

CEDARS goes to the effort of ensuring that sign language is used at the welcoming ceremony for new students and also that

all its web pages are in compliance with the requirements for the visually impaired.

### A New Service

Dr Eugenie Leung, Director of Counselling and Person Enrichment, says the new accessibility service is a consolidation of a number of services CEDARS has been providing for several years.

“HKU has been supporting students with visual impairment for three decades so this is nothing new, we have also been supporting students with mobility issues for decades too. I won't say that we have the perfect service but we have been doing a lot in terms of providing them with assistance related to basic necessities such as hall placement, accessibility on campus, commuting and issues related to their study, like library services.”

However, in recent years the landscape has become more complex. “Now we are encountering students with disabilities such as severe hearing impairment because of all the advances with hearing aids and new technology, more and more students can enter university. This is a new challenge for us because we have only come across students with these kinds of needs in recent years, before it was just mild hearing impairment but now we have students with more severe impairment,” she says.

### Learning Disabilities

“Another area that's giving us big challenge is students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder. Previously these students may not have entered university because of the barriers inherent in the competitive system but because of the inclusion policies in the secondary education system, these students are now placed on a level playing

field to gain a university education. We can facilitate their adjustment to university studies by providing them with learning support and liaison with faculties about reasonable adjustment for studies and examination. We want them to come forward and tell us what their unique needs are, so that we can tailor our support service to them.”

“I have clinical psychologists in my team who have work experience with students with these types of disabilities. Quite a number of these students are exchange students because all these services more developed overseas, so when they come here they hope that have the same first class service as our international counterpart so we feel this is time for us to step up and meet their needs.”

The new Senior Student Advisor (Accessibility Support) will incorporate work that formerly fell under the auspices of several sections in CEDARS, including the Campus Life section (for housing, mobility support, scanning service, volunteer help), the Student Development section (for inclusive educational funds), as well as the Counselling and Person Enrichment section (for counselling, assessment, specialist advice, support for students with chronic or psychiatric illness). She will now work together with Dr Leung and the clinical psychologist on her team in assessing students, meeting their needs and liaising with the Faculty concerned.



Dr Eugenie Leung, Director of Counselling and Person Enrichment.





## An Academic and Advocate

HKU has come on in leaps and strides since Professor Stevenson Fung was a student in the 1970's.

One indication of how far the University has come in terms of accepting individuals with a disability is reflected in the astonishing story of Professor Stevenson Fung.

Having experienced discrimination first-hand the blind scholar, who suffers from retinitis-pigmentosa, has thrown himself into advocacy on campus, and was one of the 16 founding members of Hong Kong's own Equal Opportunities Commission, in 1996.

"I was there for seven years, helping the Government and the Commission implement legislations. Then I heard about the Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) at HKU so I offered my service."

Although Faculties today are more open to accepting students with a disability

Professor Fung's experience in the 1970s was quite different.

"I was never admitted to HKU," he says.

### A Passion for Physics

In his youth, before the days of integrated education form three was the highest level a blind pupil could reach, and although he was top of his class academically he was forced to leave school and train as a telephone operator. But his passion for physics and mathematics led him to pursue further study in his own time.

"I was very interested in mathematics and physics so reading those books was like reading a novel for me. It was entertainment, so it just came naturally and I taught myself my O and A levels."

*Professor Stevenson Fung, one of the 16 founding members of Hong Kong's own Equal Opportunities Commission in 1996.*

Through a friend in England he was able to borrow brail books from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (as it was then called) there being no equivalent in Hong Kong. Then, armed with his new qualifications he applied to HKU to study physics.

"I saw a couple of professors and they simply laughed at me. They had never heard of a blind person going to university. This was 1972. It was only 30-odd years ago but it was a very different world in Hong Kong," he says.

So he raised enough money to study in England for six months where he took the subjects he was unable to take in Hong Kong.

"I got straight A's so my headmaster (at Worcester College for the Blind) encouraged me to sit the Oxford entrance examination."

He passed and was admitted to the University of Oxford on an Open Scholarship, but despite that success his problems were not over.

### The First at Oxford

"The professor who interviewed me said I was academically sound but in their nearly one thousand year history they had never taken a blind person to read physics, so I had to beg him to give me a chance. He gave me one term to prove myself."

However there were no brail books for a student at that level. "So I had to advertise for readers to come and read the text books to me and I would record them. Working in the laboratory was a little more difficult. But the difference between Hong Kong and England in those days was that in England they had this 'can do' attitude. So the laboratory technician would adapt the equipment to suit my needs."

As experiments were conducted in pairs, Professor Fung was able to find himself a sympathetic partner to share the work.

Both went on to earn first-class honours and later his partner, Professor Chris Beling, (who sadly passed away in June 2010) joined him at HKU, where they continued to conduct research together for 23 years.

### Returning to Hong Kong

"When I came back to HKU after getting my doctorate the head of Physics at HKU was a newcomer with a very positive attitude and he secured funding from the Croucher Foundation to sponsor a post-doctoral fellowship position."

Today, Professor Fung says part of his success was down to the fact that he knew early on what he wanted to do.

"I had already identified my goal. Physics is not the easiest subject for someone like me, but I was very determined and HKU has allowed me to develop."

Now he can look back on a career in which he has trained over 60 PhD/MPhil students and has published around 300 papers.

Although academic life has got easier for him, thanks to a talking computer and better Web accessibility, he feels more resources could be made available for students with a disability.

"There's never enough money for technology because it's not cheap. We are already doing quite a bit but more could do more. For example, I have been trying to help students get assistance, like paying part-timers to look for library materials for them and read for them. But HKU has definitely progressed," he says.



*Professor Stevenson Fung and his life-long partner in the quest for knowledge, Professor Chris Beling.*

## HKU from an International Perspective



Second-year Engineering student, Hamza Farrukh, originally from Pakistan, says he was delighted with the welcome he received at HKU.

Now on an undergraduate exchange programme in the United States he says of his experience at HKU, "It was everything I hoped for and probably more."

He did not come across any racial discrimination and feels the University met his needs as a non-local student, in terms of providing support and facilities.

However, he would like to see more seminars and student societies in English. Although he feels the standard of education at HKU is "probably a bit better" than what he has experienced in the US, "the campus life is much more different as there are more student organizations and activities for international students to join," whereas at HKU, "Almost all groups are in Cantonese or Putonghua so we are unable to join."





## Accessibility for All

Professor T.H. Tse, who has worked at HKU for 39 years, has seen many changes on the campus and beyond.

An active campaigner in the community, he has served on the government's Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, and chaired its Sub-Committee on Access.

Over the years he has seen enormous improvements at HKU. As an alumnus he started work at the Computer Centre and has taught in the University since 1979.

"It is much more accessible now," he says. "More importantly, people are much more positive towards people with a disability. I remember in the early days some potential students were interviewed about their disability and then rejected."

"Even when the Disability Action Committee was first launched, a learned member wondered why people with a disability didn't go to another university where access was easier, rather than trying to negotiate the hilly terrain at HKU."

"My argument was that, as HKU is the best university in the Hong Kong, it should accept the best and provide the best facilities. Of course, things have changed since then. People are much more open now. Well, wheelchair access is not exactly barrier-free, but I'm hopeful that the new campus will be much better.

**“Universal access is key to integrated future.”**

*Professor T.H. Tse*

"I believe we should educate people and raise awareness rather than relying on the law. It's natural that everyone should be given an equal opportunity."

Having contracted polio at the age of two, Professor Tse gets around campus with the use of crutches.

"Previously there was no alternative to stairs," he says, "And these often did not have hand rails. These days, handrails have been installed but even then there are buildings where access is not easy. For example, there's a lift in the Main Building now but for many years it was inaccessible to people in wheelchairs," he says.

Professor Tse favours universal access over special access for people with a disability, and cites the ramp between Knowles Building and K.K. Leung Building as an example.

"Most able-bodied students use the ramp instead of the steps because it's more convenient. So universal access works for everybody. The same goes for web pages – some people design a text version and an ordinary version. Why don't we have one

version that is fully accessible? It's quite easy technically to have a universal version that is fully accessible."

"There is still a feeling that graduates with a disability work for a certain category of jobs, such as social workers. I am not against social workers, but our graduates with a disability may work in any profession. For example, I toil as a professor and some of my friends with a disability are IT professionals, accountants and school principals. They work in multinational companies, SMEs, universities and local schools. We have to educate employers to give up their preconception. Likewise, people with a disability should not screen themselves out of a particular category of jobs."

"When I attended conferences in the mainland a few years back, people were quite surprised that I was doing so well despite my disability. These days, they don't raise an eyebrow. It takes time to change people's mindset.

"Companies talk about social responsibility when employing people with a disability. I would suggest not to emphasize 'responsibility' because it means company expenses. We should sell the ability of people with a disability. They work just as well, and better in some cases. They tend to be more loyal. People with hearing or visual impairment tend to be less distracted. International surveys have found that people with a disability have less absenteeism from work. So it makes business sense to employ these individuals," he adds.



*Professor T.H. Tse*



## An Extra Pair of Eyes

Buddies and volunteers can make a world of difference to the campus experience of a student with visual impairment.

For first-year Arts Faculty student, To Shuk-yi, volunteers have made studying and travelling around campus that much easier.

"In September some volunteers helped me in orienteering so it's not too difficult to find my lecture theatres and classrooms," she says. "My teachers are also very helpful. When I ask them they are happy to help me transform my notes into a readable format. In addition, my classmates have been willing to be my buddy and help me find resources and necessary information from the Internet and also to scan textbooks."

She has also found Web accessibility to be easy and efficient. "When I went to CEDARS colleagues helped me in the library where I have a resources room with a computer and software to read emails and e-books."

One drawback however, is the dearth of volunteers to help out. "I find that studying here is not too difficult, but I want to find some more volunteers to help me transform my files into a readable format because not all the files are readable, but it's quite difficult to find volunteers," she says.

"CEDARS may consider offering more volunteers because the student helpers at the moment don't have enough time."

Dr Eugenie Leung Director of CEDARS' Counselling and Person Enrichment Team admits that more volunteers would ideal, but agrees that students are so busy with their own studies and extra curricula activities recruitment is often difficult.

"Students these days have so many activities that they often don't have time to volunteer as well," she says.







## Queer Straight Alliance

CEDARS' inclusion policy extends beyond students with learning difficulties and physical disabilities to members of the Queer Straight Alliance (QSA).

"This is a group that advocates for and addresses issues related to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons," says Dr Eugenie Leung, Director of CEDARS' Counselling and Person Enrichment Team. "I have set up my office to be gay friendly and we make sure students are aware of this."

Indeed, Michael Lam, a postgraduate student in the Faculty of Law and a member of QSA, says CEDARS has been very supportive of all their events. "But we are still facing problems. I think there's still a fear, maybe people fear telling others that they are gay or lesbian because they fear bullying or discrimination," he says.

Moreover, he finds the culture at HKU quite different to that of the UK where he studied for seven years.

"In the UK, the attitude to safer sex is much more open because they know that students nowadays have sexual contact and not talking about it or not providing the sexual tools they need is counterproductive. On UK campuses they have a corner with the leaflets and condoms so people know where to get them if they need them. But here there's no place for that and the University clinic refused when we asked them to set up a similar corner."

"What we are trying to do is something that needs to be addressed. We are not talking about promoting sexual behaviour, but trying to pass on the knowledge and the tools for people to be more careful. In promoting sexual inclusion and diversity we

need to start with the university community because students are still a little bit cautious of revealing their own identity to other people and if the university can perhaps talk about it and make it clear that they are supportive of sexual identity this might help. It's true that CEADRS is very open but I think you need more than one department to reach out."

With over a hundred members in Hong Kong the QSA's objectives are to provide a safe social platform for members to communicate with each other and to educate the public on sexual identity and sexual diversity.

"Last year we had a pride week on campus but this year our objective is to focus more on career and personal development for our core members," says Michael.



## Students' Campaign for Wheelchair Diners

HKU students have long enjoyed a reputation as proactive campaigners on all sorts of issues ranging from democracy to human rights. Now a team of students from Social Work and Social Administration are taking up the battle for a barrier-free environment.

Hong Kong may be regarded as the culinary capital of Asia, boasting more than 11,000 restaurants, but not everyone gets to enjoy the delights of hassle-free dining out.

For those restricted to wheelchairs the choices are rather limited thanks to a woeful lack of consideration for individuals with a disability.

Recently a team of students from the Department of Social Work and Social Administration launched a research project to highlight the difficulties encountered by the physically handicapped when dining at local fast food restaurants. The research resulted

from a skills laboratory project during which the students, working with the people with a physical disability, encountered these inadequate facilities first-hand.

They assessed 70 fast food outlets for accessibility and convenience and found not one of them met the requirements laid out in the Buildings' Department's Design Manual 2008.

The students chose to highlight the issue in a press conference. "Barriers encountered by wheelchair users when they dine out, became the focus of our press conference," says Kelvin Lai Kwok-kin, who recently graduated from the Department.

They found the most common barrier was the cashier and food counters were far too high while the fixed nature of tables and chairs made it virtually impossible for people in wheelchairs to eat in the restaurants.



Although 35 restaurants at the main entrance 80 per cent of them did not provide ramps for wheelchair users.

"What we learnt from this is not to underestimate or overlook our influence in society," says Kelvin. "Although we were only undergraduates, we found we could still promote change if we had a mission."

"At first, we did not consider writing up and publishing a full research report but with good feedback from the other parties we decided to organize a press conference presenting the officially published research report."

"Since its publication we have continued working with the co-operating organization and have held further meetings on negotiating with the fast-food corporations and also trying to involve the governmental parties in providing a barrier-free environment for wheelchair users."



## Game Play with a Purpose

The number of Hong Kong children who are overweight is growing. HKU researchers are considering whether more active video games can make a difference.



Dr Alison Mary McManus (middle) and Robin Rochelle Mellecker (right) received the 2009 Research Output Prize presented by the then Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Wong (left).

Ask a child to jog around the block and chances are they will moan, groan and drag their feet. But sit that child in front of a video game where they can jump, kick and fight Ninjas, and the response will be quite different. You may have difficulty making them stop.

That obsessive attraction of video games and the potential to get children exercising without even realising it has led to a study on energy expenditure and video games by Dr Alison McManus, Associate Professor in the Institute of Human Performance, and PhD student Robin Mellecker.

The study, one of the first in the world to look at this issue, hooked children aged six to twelve to a heart monitor and a calorimeter to measure oxygen consumption as they played games on a Japanese XaviX console.

The games came in five-minute bursts and consisted of a bowling game, a running game involving Jackie Chan on a chase through Hong Kong's streets, and a traditional seated game. The Jackie Chan game saw children expend energy equivalent to jogging.

"Children do not easily sustain five minutes of moderate activity so what was surprising

here was that when they did hit that high level of energy, they wanted to do it again. The game took over. This might be a valuable alternative for children who don't want to do traditional exercise," Dr McManus said.

Further work with colleague Dr Cindy Sit showed that girls were just as attracted to the game as boys, although they were less intensive in their play.

However, while the results have encouraging implications for battling excess weight gain in children (obesity among boys in Hong Kong has nearly doubled over the past decade from 14 per cent to 27 per cent), there is another factor to take into account: energy intake.

The scholars separately tested the interaction between video games and energy (food) intake and found a much less positive outcome.

Children in this experiment played X-Box games, either sitting or walking on a slow-moving treadmill, and were given free access to snacks while they played. They ended up snacking throughout the game play, whether walking or seated, with one child eating 1,000 calories worth of snacks in an hour.

"A lot of literature says that if children have a controller in their hand, they will snack less. We now know that is not true. I was in the room the whole time. Nobody missed a beat when they were playing even the more complex games and snacking," Ms Mellecker said.

Still, despite the caveat on snacking, having children play active video games is better than no exercise at all. "The appealing thing about these games is they can be played safely at home and they can build some energy expenditure into each day. It's easier than getting parents to take children out of their apartment to exercise facilities," Dr McManus said.

And getting children more active through whatever means has public health benefits. "Just look at what's happened in the US, where overweight adults tend to have overweight children. The cycle is hard to break and there's a huge cost in terms of health care," Ms Mellecker said.

This work has been published in *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, *International Journal of Pediatric Obesity and Appetite*.







## The Generation Gap in the Digital Age

Children today are 'digital natives' and far more savvy about computers and the Internet than their parents. That can put parents at a disadvantage when computer use gets out of hand.



Dr Wong Yu-cheung

Hong Kong is an affluent city where more than 90 per cent of families with a child have a computer at home. And yet computer and Internet skills within families can be very uneven. Children can easily spend hours online while their parents peer over their shoulder and wonder if this is a good thing.

Dr Wong Yu-cheung, Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, has found the divide is particularly sharp among families in Hong Kong where parents have lower education levels. About half of parents with junior secondary education or below in his study had never used a computer.

"If parents don't know how to use a computer and the Internet and how to supervise their children's use, then they can't help their children make the most of it," he said.

They also may not know how to keep their children from harm.

Dr Wong and his team interviewed more than 2,500 parents of children aged six to 17, and almost 2,300 children aged 10 to 17. They found older children tended to be more involved in 'risky' behaviour, which meant visiting websites without restrictions

and downloading materials without checking copyright status (although only about 0.8 per cent arranged to meet with people they met online).

About 60 per cent were aware of the risks of cyber-bullying, identity theft and Internet addiction but tended to play them down.

The average child spent two to three hours a day online on weekdays and four hours a day on weekends, but about 10 per cent of children spent virtually all their free time at home in front of the computer.

These were 'Internet addicts', who showed typical addictive behaviour such as building up tolerance, having cravings and withdrawal symptoms, and risking relapse. The figure is at the low end compared to other Asian countries, but still a worry, Dr Wong said.

Internet addicts had little physical contact with their peers and those friends they had tended to be mainly online and not in the real world. Older boys were more likely to be addicts and spent a lot of time playing online games, but girls could be addicted, too, and spent more time on social networking sites.

This posed a challenge to parents, as nearly one-third said they were not satisfied with

their ability to help and protect their children when they were online. However, Dr Wong said Internet addiction could be mitigated by parenting style.

"If the parents used an authoritative style, in which they made demands on their children but had a warm emotional relationship with them, then it was less likely the children would develop an addiction.

"But if they were authoritarian and emotionally detached from their children, you saw high levels of symptoms. It wasn't necessarily cause and effect because it may be that parents see their children become addicted and so they become authoritarian," he said.

No relationship between addiction and parenting style was found when parents who had a permissive, indulgent approach.

Dr Wong said educating parents about the Internet, particularly those in the lower-income range, could help them better understand what their children were up to and enable them to monitor them more effectively.

The study was commissioned by the government to provide input to policies on computer and Internet access. Dr Wong next hopes to explore the extent of the digital divide in Mainland China.

*Photos on left and top of this page: Courtesy of Information Technology Resource Centre, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.*





Dr Mirana May Szeto (fourth from right) joined the Blue House Community Participatory Planning Workshop Screening and Discussion in December 2009.

## Giving Voice to the People

Research-led advocacy is empowering local communities and garnering some surprising results.

In recent year Hong Kong has seen a flourishing of grass roots campaigns set up to save cultural landmarks or overturn policy on redevelopment. As the city reinvents the clashes between old and new, between grass roots and government have grown more

vocal, and out of this has emerged a new branch of research-led advocacy.

In the Department of Comparative Literature, Dr Mirana May Szeto, has been involved in several projects, including the recent Blue House revitalization in Wan

Chai, the express rail link and relocation of Tsoi Yuen villagers, and the controversial West Kowloon Cultural District project.

Working as part of an interdisciplinary team that includes local planners, architects and social scientists Dr Szeto conducts research, consults the parties concerned, and makes policy suggestions to government.

As a core member of the People's Panel for West Kowloon, an NGO, she helped organize focus groups, and participatory sessions, and advised concerned community members.

"We put our research into a brochure and after lots of focus groups from different constituencies we came up with the design principles that Hong Kong people actually wanted and then we submitted it to the government," she explains.



The Blue House, courtesy of Laurence Lam.

"Nobody agreed with the original government plan, it was a top down process and educators and cultural leaders and the young people who would be using the facilities did not agree, so the government shelved the plans and restarted the entire process with more consultation."

"We co-operated and did a lot of participatory research on what people actually wanted. Of course we write research papers, but at the same time we generate news, and we talk to the government, we talk to the people."

"We are impartial. Our research work is on three levels: with the government, with the professional class and the developers, then with the local people."

Dr Szeto says their position as researchers is to ensure that the best ideas are adopted. "We keep the community constantly informed, this is very, very important as public intellectuals. We don't just want to write academic papers, we want our research to have a real impact."

Out of the various consultations on the West Kowloon Cultural District sprang the idea of a literary museum, as literature was the only art not represented in the new development.

To remedy the oversight Dr Szeto and a group of local writers, literary critics and

professors, formed the Hong Kong Literary Museum Initiative, spurred on by the belief that literature in Hong Kong has been badly neglected. A petition gathered hundreds of signatures from renowned writers, professors and critics around the world in its favour.

"We need a literary museum that provides a public space for the discussion and dissemination of Hong Kong literature and culture. We looked at whether it would work in West Kowloon and also looked at an alternative."

Plans for the Museum include interactive exhibitions, performances and activities that

interact with the other arts, as well as research, translation and global cultural outreach.

"There's definitely a growing interest in literature in Hong Kong, just look at how successful, the annual Hong Kong International Literary Festival has become," says Dr Szeto. Entries in creative writing competitions are also rising.

As Hong Kong continues to redevelop at break neck speed this new, research-based advocacy is finally giving voice to the communities that have gone unheard for so long.



Dr Szeto and writers proposed a Hong Kong Literary Museum at West Kowloon Cultural District at the Hong Kong Book Fair Forum 2009.



The Tsoi Yuen Tsuen Community Planning Studio meeting in November 2010.





# The Rise and Fall of China's Versailles

The looting and destruction of one of China's grandest palaces throws new light on 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe's preoccupation with the exotic.

Outside of China few people may have heard of the palace at Yuanming Yuan but in China it stands as a symbol of western aggression, a humiliating reminder of the Opium Wars and the country's failure to protect its assets against foreign aggression.

Built during the Qing Dynasty, between 1709 and 1772, Yuanming Yuan, often translated as the Garden of Perfect Brightness, was looted and destroyed by invading British and French armies, 150 years ago, in 1860.

The palace complex included hundreds of wooden buildings, pagodas and pavilions in the classical Chinese style, vast gardens, lakes and artificial waterways and a set of western style buildings, designed by Jesuit missionaries working for the emperor Qianlong. The modern Summer Palace was also part of the complex, although that was also burned down and later rebuilt.

Standing twenty kilometres northwest of Beijing, Yuanming Yuan became the official seat of government and at times was used more often than the Forbidden City.

Dr Greg Thomas, Associate Professor in the Department of Fine Arts, has been looking at the ways in which the Chinese and Europeans interacted at the palace.



Dr Greg Thomas



A painting of Yuanming Yuen (圓明園), often translated as the Garden of Perfect Brightness.

## Jesuit Influence

"The site is very rich in that way," he says.

"For example, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit missionaries were living and working in Yuanming Yuan, they were painting, building and making scientific instruments, so they designed for the emperor a famous set of western-style palaces in one corner of the garden and because these were made of stone they didn't burn down completely."

"That little corner now has all these stone ruins and to a lot of people that is Yuanming Yuan, but actually it's only one small corner, all the rest was Chinese style architecture."

Dr Thomas is looking at what the Jesuits were doing at Yuanming Yuan and the ways in which the Chinese emperor absorbed western styles in architecture and gardening techniques. At the same time the Jesuits were writing about China and describing the palace and the gardens and this had a major influence on European garden design.

Although few pictures remain of the original palace – frequently referred to as the Versailles of China – in the 1740s the emperor Qianlong commissioned a set of

40 paintings to commemorate its opening when he enlarged it.

"He wrote 40 poems to accompany them and these were bound together into an album which is now the main source of images for the Yuanming Yuan complex," says Dr Thomas. "Interestingly, it was stolen by a French officer during the looting. He took it back to Paris, tried to sell it at auction, but failed, and ended up selling it to the national library, the Bibliothèque Nationale. As the only detailed visual record of the palaces as they appeared originally this is a very, very precious object."

Another soldier involved in the looting described Yuanming Yuan as a 'veritable palace from the Thousand and One Nights' and further descriptions tell of diamonds and gold statues, a bronze Buddha standing 70 feet high, and white marble buildings covered in dazzling coloured tiles.

Dr Thomas views the looting and subsequent display of these objects as an illuminating form of intercultural transmission and says, "I believe the looting acted to appropriate Chinese imperial culture as a way of reinforcing France's own imperial ambitions."

## Re-building the Palace

After 1860 the emperors attempted to rebuild some of the palace, concentrating mostly on what is now known as the Summer Palace. But that was destroyed during the 1900 Boxer Rebellion and was later rebuilt again.

"I found that what makes Yuanming Yuan so rich is that it has so many types of visual culture and was a main source of influence on Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century," says Dr Thomas. "It seemed to me like a case study that brings together a great deal of the history of European interactions with China and opens up into a lot of different areas, because in addition to all these different arts and visual culture it was also important in diplomatic history, in military history, and in the history of Chinese emperors, and it was an important site for China's own architectural and artistic heritage."

"So it has an interesting relationship to the rise of modern China and to international relations between China and the rest of the world today."





## Stagnation vs Depression

Stagnation syndrome, not to be confused with depression, is a unique concept in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

The concept of stagnation in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is proving a useful entry point for the treatment of various psychological disorders, according to one scholar in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration.

Assistant Professor, Dr Ng Siu-man, says that because the social stigma relating to stagnation is low, patients are more likely to seek medical help. Although the condition, considered a mind/body syndrome for over 2,000 years in TCM, may present itself as physical symptoms, it will involve psychological issues, such as anxiety.

Repressed emotions, especially anger, will lead to liver qi stagnation, according to the five elements theory of TCM. This will affect the liver meridian which, in turn, affects the spleen meridian, triggering digestive problems.

"So it seems to be somatic, but it's related to the emotions, you can't separate the two. But, because the symptoms are somatic, rather than psychological, a patient is more likely to seek help – that is the beauty of the whole concept. The treatment for stagnation syndrome is to get the qi flowing, through herbal intervention, or acupuncture, or traditional exercise, like tai chi.

"So stagnation syndrome is actually a very useful concept for the Chinese people to seek help. It's quite normal to have stagnation syndrome and do something about it," says Dr Ng.

Quoting prominent psychiatrist, Professor Arthur Kleinman, Dr Ng says cultural factors play a strong part in mental disorders. In the case of the Chinese, the most important characterization is the so-called somatization, or mind/body aspect, and to seek help in the somatic domain."

He disputes the Western translation of stagnation as depression, saying they are two completely different concepts

with different symptoms. "In the case of stagnation, people are even more conscious of making an effort with their appearance, which is quite different to depression. People with stagnation will feel extremely exhausted, so it may look similar to depression, but the mechanism is totally different, and that will call for different intervention."

According to research, the prevalence of depression is surprisingly low in Hong Kong, running at about two per cent. "This does not mean that the Chinese are free from psychological distress," says Dr Ng. "It just means that it takes another form. We have a higher prevalence of anxiety disorders and also more so-called functional disorders.

"Stagnation is more common than depression among the Chinese people. This is related to our collective bias culture, in which we tend to have some expectations of ourselves to restrain ourselves, to avoid being sick and to endure suffering, and to remain productive for as long as possible – all these will lead to stagnation."

Stagnation syndrome presents itself in three behavioural clusters – body-mind obstruction, over-attachment, and affect-posture inhibition. "We can provide treatment but we can also provide some psychosocial intervention. The initial objective is often symptom relief and this part is relatively easy to deal with," he says. "The most problematic part is "over-attachment" because that's not just a cognitive dysfunction, it is something further up in the meaning domain. Fear is strongly associated with over attachment. In contradiction with conventional Traditional Chinese Medicine my data suggests it is fear, not anger, that is the issue. If the anger is repressed it becomes stagnation, and according to the five elements theory fear is generative of anger. Anger rooted in fear is more likely to be repressed than expressed."

"If you have fear you will "over-attach", and if you are over-attached to something you will fear losing it. So this is very problematic. From a psychotherapy point of view helping a client work on anger is very easy but fear is quite problematic. My findings show that if you want an ultimate cure you have to work on the fear domain when the patient is ready, otherwise the problem will just recur."

Backed by funding from the RGC General Research Fund, Dr Ng has conducted a study of stagnation syndrome in a random community sample, in Aberdeen, and has found that the prevalence of stagnation syndrome runs at about 6.1 per cent, in adults aged between 18 and 60. Anxiety disorders are even higher, running at over 10 per cent.

"The most significant thing is that stagnation syndrome is acceptable to the Chinese," he says. "They do not feel any shame or stigma in admitting to it, so they will seek help. But when they have depression they may hide the symptoms and feel quite isolated and feel like a failure. So you can consider stagnation syndrome as a functional disorder, meaning it's a useful channel for seeking help."



Dr Ng Siu-man





## Obstructive Sleep Apnoea Patients Get Free Treatment

A new grant has allowed surgeons in the Faculty of Dentistry to extend their service to the economically deprived.

Obstructive sleep apnoea is an under recognized and under diagnosed medical condition, characterized by abnormal pauses in breathing, or instances of abnormally low breathing, during sleep. Each pause in breathing, called an apnoea, can last from a few seconds to minutes, and may occur five to 30 times or more an hour. It can lead to serious conditions such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, stroke and even sudden death during sleep.

Traditional treatments rely on the use of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) or oral appliances during sleep both which are uncomfortable and inconvenient.

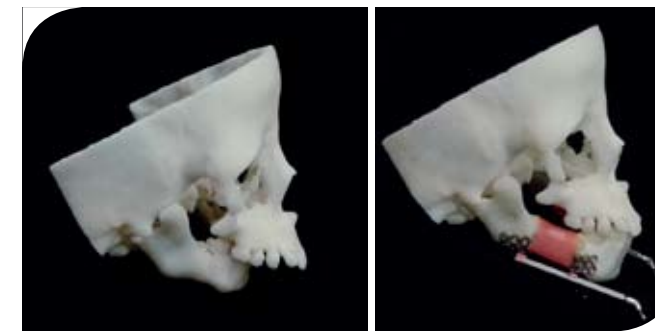
With that in mind, in 2000, the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Discipline in the Faculty of Dentistry began employing corrective surgery as a permanent solution.

As obstructive sleep apnoea is often caused by an underdeveloped mandible, lengthening the mandible can result in corresponding enlargement of the oro-pharyngeal airway. The jaws can be lengthened by surgical methods that include orthognathic surgery and distraction osteogenesis.

Thanks to a grant from the S.K. Yee Medical Foundation, a number of patients from lower income families are now receiving the treatment free of charge. This kind of surgery can also be extended to children and infants suffering from this debilitating sleep apnoea problems.

Professor L.K. Cheung, Chair Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery explains, "Distraction osteogenesis is a biological tissue engineering method, by stretching a divided bone segment slowly and progressively, and by creating tension, new bone will spontaneously form. This technology involves a device fitted into the jaw to gradually lengthen the jawbone to correct the dental occlusion and simultaneously enlarge the airway.

*Distraction simulation surgery for mandibular advancement in a child with OSAS*



*Pre-operation distraction*

*Post-operation distraction*

### A History of Correcting Facial Deformities

"This method was developed at our University based on our experience of distraction osteogenesis in correcting facial deformities in non-apnoeic patients. Our experience of distraction of the cranio-maxillofacial skeleton dates back to 1995 and our research and clinical experience have been extensively reported in about 30 publications."

Although the application of internal distractors has been practiced on adults for some time, the method is more difficult when applied to children because their bones are softer and smaller, and there are developing permanent teeth inside the jawbones.

One child that Professor Cheung has operated on has such severe sleep apnoea from micro-gnathic jaw that he required a tracheostomy (an opening on the windpipe for air to bypass) to breathe. To ensure that the apnoea can be resolved, Professor Cheung aimed to move the child's jaw forward by 40 mm.

"The distraction process is not painful for the child," he says. "But it requires the involvement of parents and child to turn the distractors every day to lengthen the jaw which can be done at home."

"The reason it's called distraction osteogenesis is because we cannot simply force the jaw forward by 40 mm, because we will tear the nerves and blood vessels inside the lower jaw. This process involves gradual lengthening of not only the jaw bone but also the nerves and vessels. In most cases, distraction is applied to the lower jaw, although it may involve the upper jaw or a combination of both."

It moves one millimetre a day and, if it goes smoothly, should take 40 days to reach the target. During a period of consolidation bone will spontaneously form inside the stretched fibrous soft tissues.

Once the jaw has been extended, the patient is assessed by a sleep study to ensure he or she can breathe unaided with no, or few, apnoea events. The distractors, which offer a permanent solution, are usually removed after three to six months.

The sponsored treatment is only available to those diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnoea, who are unable to tolerate the CPAP or oral appliance, or those hoping for a permanent cure of their apnoea.

"The distractor devices are very expensive. Unfortunately many patients and child sufferers are from poor families and they can't afford to pay for the distractor devices which cost \$20,000 each. In sleep apnoea patients, we need two for each side of the jaw.

"We applied for a grant from the S.K. Yee Medical Foundation and they acknowledged our efforts by giving us slightly less than \$900,000. Unfortunately we originally applied for \$2.7 million, with which we hoped to pay for 120 devices for 60 patients. With only one third of the requested funding, we will try to treat as many patients as possible by appealing to other charities and research foundations, as well as trying to request the company that supply these devices provide a substantial discount. We would appreciate anyone generous enough to donate funds to complete the project."

Professor Cheung has also applied for the government's Matching Fund for what he sees an extremely worthwhile charity project.



*Professor Cheung Lim-kwong*





## Nurturing Young Research Talent

Research at the undergraduate level offers a valuable learning experience and an opportunity to develop the skills of potential academics.



Professor Chan Lung-sang



Left to right: Andy Lau Kam-seng, Medical Engineering; Carmen Chong Ka-man, Speech and Hearing Sciences; Evelyn Wan Pui-yin, Social Sciences (Government and Laws); Simon Leung Chung-yin, Dental Surgery; Professor Chan Lung-sang of Earth Sciences, and Sally To Kit-yan, Biology.

Undergraduate research requires students to apply their intellectual and analytical skills to an unknown outcome. Those qualities are increasingly in demand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in graduates of HKU, where we recently announced a new Undergraduate Research Fellowship (URF) Programme to identify the best and brightest potential young researchers.

While research is a component in many undergraduate programmes, the URF will provide outstanding students from across the University with training in research methodology and opportunities to pursue a research project, either individually or as part of a team.

They will also be supported with internships, mentoring, courses on research and other initiatives to strengthen and enhance their research abilities. The fellowships will be offered from the 2011–12 academic year.

“The skills required in undergraduate research will be valuable to students in their future careers, whether these are in the corporate or academic arenas. Enhancing undergraduate research will also contribute to nurturing the next generation of researchers and scholars,” says Professor Amy Tsui, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), who headed the University’s Task Force on Undergraduate Research.

### Building on Current Experience

The focus on undergraduate research builds on various efforts across the University to encourage students to do original research.

Several faculties have been running dedicated undergraduate research programmes for several years, such as the Faculties of Science and Medicine. Most other faculties also offer courses with assignments or projects with explicit research goals. Students in some fields, such as Engineering, also participate in external competitions that require original research.

The URF will also offer recognition to student efforts, such as allowing them to attend or present their research findings at international conferences. Recent experience shows this exposure can offer learning opportunities.

Five HKU students were selected to attend the U21 Undergraduate Research Conference in Melbourne in July, at which they presented their work to more than 50 top research undergraduate students from around the world.

The HKU students, who majored in Medical Engineering, Social Sciences, Speech and Hearing Sciences, Biology and Dental Surgery, had produced research on such topics as laser micro-surgery techniques, female genital cutting from a feminist political perspective and overcoming speech and language deficits.

### Communicating to Non-experts

Evelyn Wan, who attended the conference right after completing her BSocSc(Govt&Laws), did the project on female genital cutting and said the conference was

an invaluable experience because it forced her to consider how to present her subject to people outside her discipline.

“It’s important to be able to communicate your ideas clearly and succinctly to facilitate intellectual exchange. After chatting with some of the delegates during the social programmes at the conference, I realized that it would be difficult for the many science and engineering majors there to understand the theories and jargon that I used, so I almost re-wrote my entire script the night before my presentation,” she said.

Professor Chan Lung-sang of the Department of Earth Sciences, who accompanied the students to Melbourne, said the experience also exposed students to the high standards of undergraduate research underway at other universities and the different research methods and approaches being used.

“The cream of the crop of students from other universities was there and I was impressed with the high calibre of their presentations. Our students did very well and demonstrated really remarkable work,” he said.

“Many universities are talking of research-led learning and encouraging students to engage in research in a non-trivial manner because they can learn more this way.”



## A DVC on His Rocker

The new Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Provost, Professor Roland Chin, talks about his role at HKU and what it means to be a world-class university.



Professor Roland Chin must be the only person in Hong Kong to have an old maple rocking chair in his office. He recovered it from a farmhouse in the US and refurbished it himself and he likes to sit there, rocking, when he has a quiet moment to think. The chair is supposed to remind him to take it easy, but there is little chance of that happening any time soon.

Professor Chin is a renowned computer scientist, member of numerous educational and technology public bodies, including chairman of the Research Grants Council, a keen cyclist and now Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Provost. He was formerly Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Deputy President at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST).

"I was surprised that I was approached by HKU and I was surprised that I said yes. But it was a quick decision. I am the type of person who doesn't drag things out: it's either yes or no. So within a few hours, I said sure, I'd love to accept this position," he said.

### The Attractions of HKU

What persuaded him was the chance to take on a much larger, more complex challenge. HKU has a long history, ten faculties to HKUST's four, and some very high expectations to live up to locally and globally. The University has traditionally been the training ground of Hong Kong's leaders

and in recent years it has been ranked best in Asia and among the top 25 universities in the world.

"When I think about HKU, there are five distinct features that always come to mind. One is that HKU is international. Two, HKU is world-class, or if not yet it should be world-class."

"Three, HKU is a research-intensive university, meaning we continue to innovate."

"Four, HKU is comprehensive, meaning we are strong in most of the major areas of study."

"And five, HKU is closely tied to the community. We produce most if not all leaders in Hong Kong and the region and we get tremendous support from the community, which means we have to continue this tradition of producing the next generation of leaders."

"I don't want to get into justifying whether HKU is world-class or top in the region, but I think we could do even better. And doing better means moving towards these five characteristics and moving towards world-class."

Professor Chin measures world-class by whether HKU attracts the brightest students and the best academics in the world, not just Hong Kong or the region.

"World-class means top people want to come here," he says. "Are the best students from around the world coming to HKU? Are all our professors the best in their disciplines?"

### A Rare Opportunity

He sees tremendous progress towards this goal and a window of opportunity. HKU's advantages include its strong articulated vision of being a world-class, international, research-intensive university; a new curriculum featuring the innovative Common Core, which is attractive to both local and international students; and globally-renowned research strengths in such areas as medicine, law and many others that it is developing strategically.

"[Higher education] is a growing sector in Hong Kong, while in places like the US and Europe, it is shrinking in terms of funding, hiring freezes and lay-offs."

"So now is a good opportunity for not only HKU but Hong Kong to recruit world-class professors and the best and the brightest students, who might not have a chance to get into their university of choice elsewhere."

"This opportunity might last five years, it might last longer. But it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With additional funding from government and support from the community, we can move ahead, we can move up, while other parts of the world are contracting."

Professor Chin's role in capitalizing on this opportunity is to 'drive academics', meaning he will oversee academic planning, programmes, student admission, staff recruitment and the achievement of those world-class standards over the coming years.

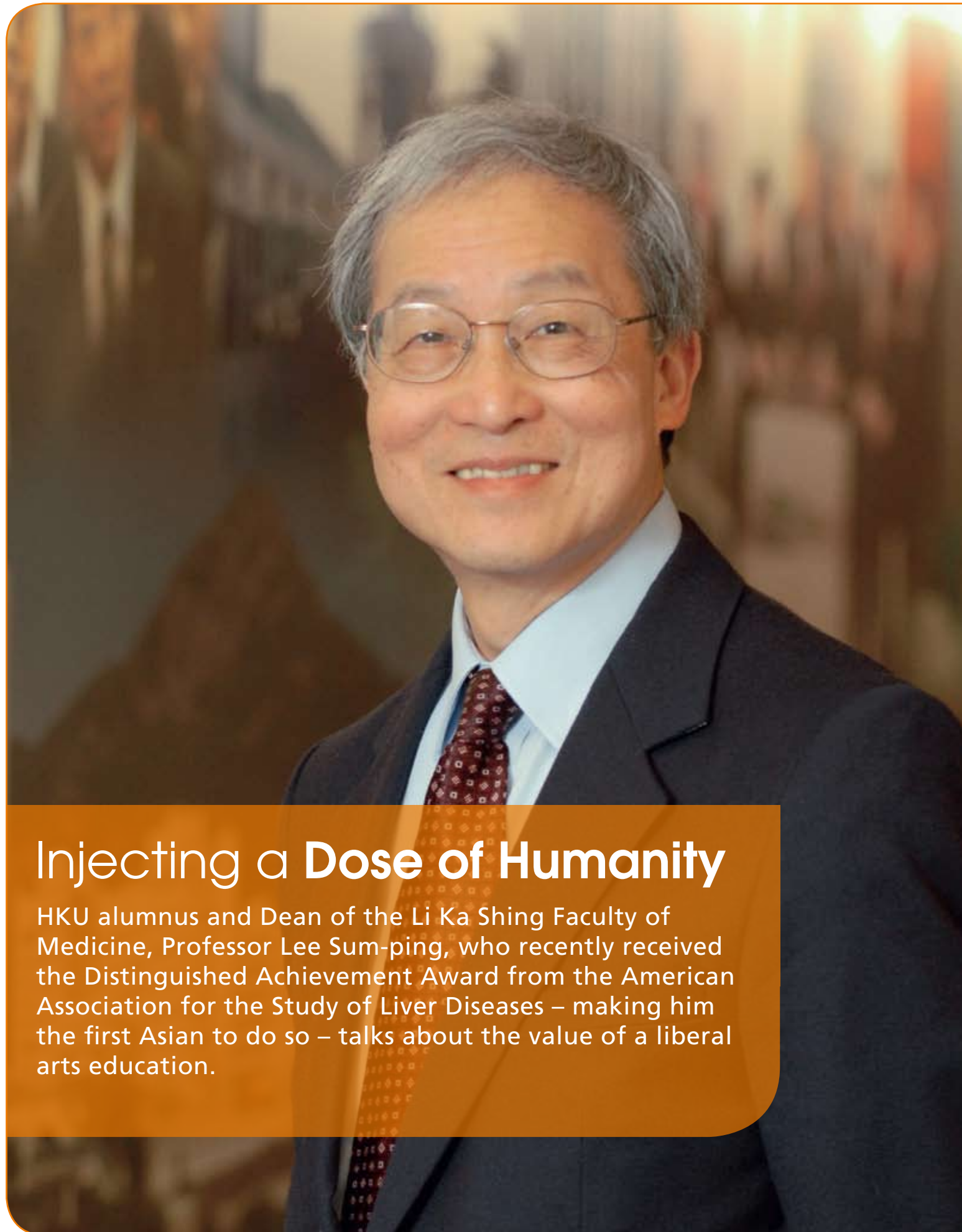
His first priority?

"I have to learn the HKU system and find the bathroom and the canteen," he jokes, adding: "Knowing the people is most important. In order to further excel, it will be essential to have a collective strategy, a well thought out plan of execution, and a team of colleagues who share the same conviction."

Which is why the chair, which he has dragged across the ocean and kept close at hand for more than 20 years, will keep rocking.







## Injecting a Dose of Humanity

HKU alumnus and Dean of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, Professor Lee Sum-ping, who recently received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases – making him the first Asian to do so – talks about the value of a liberal arts education.

“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?” asks Professor Lee, quoting T.S. Eliot.

And well he may ask, given the enormous advances in medical knowledge and technical know-how in recent years.

“There’s been an information explosion not only in technology, but in diagnostics, in imaging – an x-ray has turned into an ultrasound, has turned into a CT scan, has changed into an MRI and so on and students are being bombarded with ever-increasing information and technical details,” he says.

“Students want to learn as much factual information as possible because they feel this is the way to become a doctor. I do not agree, this has been inculcated into their minds a long time ago and I think this is almost universal, but in Hong Kong it is intensified.

“Kids from a very young age are encouraged to study, listen to their teachers, do their homework so they can earn high scores and go to good schools and good universities and get a good job. They are spoon fed in an almost pressure cooker environment and don’t learn how to question, not just scientific questions, but philosophical questions.”

“Because of the demands of the curriculum and advances in technology the younger generation of doctors run the danger of practicing like robots,” he adds. “There is an erosion of their humanitarian qualities, their compassion for patients. We don’t listen to patients very carefully anymore, we stare at the computer screen and type on the keyboard instead of looking into the patient’s eyes and asking caring questions.”

And he confesses, “I think this has reached an unacceptable level. We process patients almost like commodities. We are but prescription machines and triaging technicians for diagnostic tests and procedures. This is my fear and I feel that a dose of humanities, ethics and mindfulness would make our students into more mature,

“Because of the demands of the curriculum and advances in technology the younger generation of doctors run the danger of practicing like robots”

*Professor Lee Sum-ping*

better human beings, and it is my belief that better human beings make better doctors.”

He believes today’s students are too young to become doctors, “That is not a derogative or negative term, they *are* young,” he says. “With the early admission scheme some are around 17 and how do you train a 17-year-old to become a doctor? They don’t quite understand human suffering, the hopes and fears of a patient, or what dying is. Their life experience is not quite adequate and therefore I think a good education in the liberal arts would strengthen that part.”

The new, modified curriculum offers a terrific opportunity to remedy this with medicine taking six years instead of five to complete.

“In the first two years I would require to have a 25% distribution of subjects which are non-medical, and which cover the humanities. In year three I will require them to take an elective exchange. They need to move away from Hong Kong because this is global medicine and to be global you have to be physically immersed in the culture.

“These students can go to the high-tech medical centres in Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard or Stanford, or they may choose to go to South America, India, Africa. The village is a wonderful ward and clinic and they can witness human suffering in a totally unfiltered way. I hope this will be a life changing experience for them.”

In the fourth, fifth and sixth years medical ethics, law and integrity will be introduced as well as mindfulness, death, dying and bereavement.



*Professor Sum-ping Lee being awarded the 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.*

The students will be further provided with selected literary texts, including *Wuthering Heights*, *Middlemarch* and *Macbeth* and a range of writings by physicians.

“So that would be the curriculum,” says Professor Lee. “But I think there’s nothing more powerful than leading by example, and whenever I get a chance to chat with the students I read them a poem. One year I wrote them a poem entitled *Sunset at Sassoon Road*.”

Reflecting on his two years as Dean he adds, “There has been positive, spontaneous feedback that has charged my faith in what we are doing. Change is always painful. But an organization, whether it’s a business or a university, must from time to time reinvent itself. This is a terrific opportunity for us to do so and for the medical profession it is timely. It’s not only important I think it is essential to add humanity back to medicine.”





A field study trip to Kenya in 2009.

## Conserving the Future

Education is the key to preserving the natural environment says one scholar.

Billy Hau believes his commitment to conservation may be payback for the brutality he unleashed on a whole host of unsuspecting creatures during his youth.

Now an Assistant Professor in the School of Biological Sciences, and formerly a conservationist with the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong (WWF), Dr Hau grew up in a remote rural village in the New Territories, where he thoughtlessly slaughtered snakes, tortured frogs and stole countless birds' eggs.

"It may be because I did so many bad things in my childhood," he says, "that I now have to spend the rest of my life protecting them," he says, wryly.

Indeed, he believes he is one the last generation of children in Hong Kong to have grown up in a truly rural setting. "Children no longer have the opportunity to run around in the countryside, catching snakes and things like that. Young kids now go to the mall, and they don't have time to play in the fields after school because they're all going for private tuition or piano lessons. I think my upbringing was healthier."

Although he's not sure how much that influenced him his career choice, he showed an interest in conservation early on, obtaining a BSc in Environmental Life Sciences from HKU before joining WWF, in 1991, where he focused on the impact of urban development on Hong Kong's natural environment.

"In a way I was trapped there (at WWF) because I entered a profession that fitted my personal values," he says. "But I had to work very long hours for very little pay. On many occasions I had meetings with my boss until 11 pm and sometimes in the meetings I asked myself whether I would work such long hours if I was employed by a bank. The answer was 'possibly not'. Then I realized I was not doing the job for myself, it was for the greater good. My personality is that I need to work for something over and above my personal interest. That is my character.

"So, after that meeting I decided that I would stay in this field, and I worked for WWF from 1991–1995. That's when I decided to do a PhD. After I graduated from the PhD, in 1998, I worked at Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden in Tai Po, in the New Territories,

where one of my projects was to study the biodiversity of Southern China, which I did for three and a half years."

It was a dream job. "The Farm has a high status and a good reputation and I was spending over 200 days a year in the field in China. It was tough, but I enjoyed it."

However, fate had something else in store for him. An opening in the then Department of Ecology and Biodiversity led Dr Hau's former supervisor, Professor Richard Corlett, to send an email to a group of graduates asking them if they would consider returning to train the next generation of conservationists. They refused.

"We all replied saying we were happy where we were. And he got really mad. He wrote back and said when we professors in the Department retire who will teach the next generation of students? Consider the future of Hong Kong. So, the group of graduates got together and decided that I was the most suitable one to go back to teach."

So, since 2001, Dr Hau has been coaching students and conducting research. "At first, I found it hard to believe that I had become an academic, because I still felt strongly that I was a conservationist. Well, there should be no contradiction between the two and now conservation is my ultimate goal in teaching and research."

Although the University is now moving towards experiential learning Dr Hau says this has always been the chosen method of teaching in Ecology and Biodiversity.

"You can't understand what's happening in terms of conservation if you only study books, you have to go into the real environment and study the species and see the real conflict between humans and habitat.

"We have been sending people into the field for years, it's a major part of our programme, a major part of the way we teach."

One lucky group of students has recently returned from a field trip to Kenya, where they conducted a project that involved writing a nature diary, documenting the species they observed and taking photographs. Their work was later exhibited at the K11 shopping mall in Tsim Sha Tsui, which sponsored the project.

What Dr Hau has seen in the last ten years is a remarkable change in the attitude towards the natural environment, particularly from large corporations. "A lot of them are trying to improve their image. We do a lot of environmental education training for organizations in Hong Kong.

"Each month I run a two-day training course for 30 staff members of HSBC. It's basic training about how we depend on the environment and about endangered species,



A slope greening research project in the Climate Banker programme run by Dr Hau for HSBC staff.

like certain seafood species for example. We teach them which fish to avoid in restaurants or in the market. To my surprise HSBC's staff are very interested, we run weekend courses and their staff cannot claim this time back, they have to sacrifice their own holidays, it's also not part of their appraisal, so it shows they are genuinely interested. We've received very good feedback."

Doesn't he ever get depressed by habitat and species loss? "This is why education is so important," he says.



Dr Billy Hau



A field study trip at Khao Yai National Park, Thailand in 2008.



# The Hybrid Revolution

Auto technology innovations offer energy efficient alternatives for the environmentally conscious driver.



Professor Chau Kwok-tong and his electric vehicle.

Although developing an electric car may seem an ironic choice of career for a man who doesn't drive, creating a fuel-free form of transport is exactly what Professor Chau Kwok-tong has devoted his working life to achieving.

His love affair with electric vehicles began as an undergraduate, when he was inspired by the work of Professor C.C. Chan (later to become his PhD supervisor), who established HKU's International Research Centre for Electric Vehicles, in 1986.

At that time there were no electric vehicles available on the market and the only way to conduct research was to build their own car. Together they went on to write a book, in 2001, summarizing their work and Professor Chau has published more than a hundred technical papers.

Since Professor Chan's retirement Chau, a Professor in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, has remained passionately committed to advancing the technology of different kinds of electric vehicles.

"Right now I'm focused on hybrid-electric vehicles, how to co-ordinate the driving force from the engine and the electric motor," he says. "There are two major families right now in electric vehicles; one is battery electric vehicles, the other is hybrid – this means it has an engine and also an electric motor."

"At the moment the commercially viable one is the hybrid vehicle. The popularity of pure electric vehicles (EV's) is hampered by the price of the battery, which can often cost half as much as the vehicle itself, and only last half as long."

"On the other hand in hybrid vehicles, the battery is only about one third, or one fourth, of the cost, making them far more attractive to the consumer."

Although his research covers all electric vehicles, at the moment Professor Chau is working on hybrid power propulsion. "In hybrid vehicles the power comes from a motor and the engine," he explains. "But

how do you co-ordinate them to ensure that the fuel economy is the highest, or that the emissions are the lowest? This is our aim."

Professor Chau, who recently delivered a seminar on the history of EV's points out that the electric vehicle was first developed in 1834, almost 50 years before the conventional car, but its performance was rated poorly and was abandoned in the 1950s. Later, the energy crisis of the 1970s and increasing air pollution resurrected the dream of a clean and efficient form of transport, but EVs remained poor performers.

All that changed in 1997, when Toyota made its momentous breakthrough with the hybrid car. "Previously," Professor Chau explains, "hybrid vehicles had been very complicated – combining the engine and motor was a very complicated task that no-one was able to solve, until Toyota provided a new method – the hybrid synergy drive. After that, other car makers used similar methods – Ford and General Motors also produced hybrid vehicles," he says.

"This system is very good but it still has some problems. It's based on mechanical gears which combine two driving forces, one from the motor and one from the engine. My research right now is trying to use electrical means to combine them, rather than mechanical gears. The mechanical gear definitely has a disadvantage, there's wear and tear from friction. So I am exploring two alternative methods; one is by electrical means rather than using gears, because

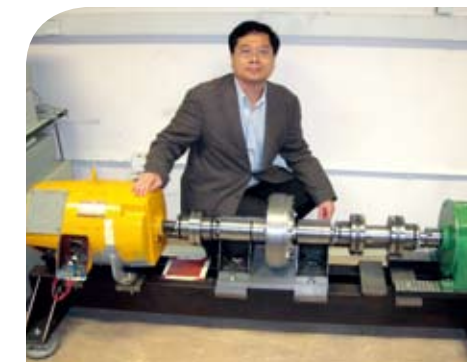
with electrical machines the rotating part and stationary part have no physical contact, so there's no wear and tear, so less maintenance. The other method, which is a new idea, is using magnetic gears. It's based on the mechanical gear system, but there's no contact at all, just the use of magnets."

Despite the setback experienced by the Toyota Prius, hybrid vehicles are likely to become mainstream within the next five years, says Professor Chau. "In the last five years the development of hybrids has been very fast and public acceptance is very high, people use hybrids because the oil prices have increased."

"The major reason hybrid vehicles are so successful, compared with EVs is that they are not so expensive, also EV's need a place to recharge and each car needs eight hours, this is not feasible."

"With hybrids the entire charging is done by the motor itself, it also works as a generator to charge the battery. However, this is not so efficient so the new family of hybrids, the plug-in hybrids, allow you to use the plug to charge it whenever possible."

Hong Kong has long been open to using alternative energies for public transport. Our tram network dates back more than a century, while our MTR system is the envy of cities across the globe. And, with scholars like Professor Chau beaver away in the lab perhaps we can look forward to a greener cleaner future on our roads as well.



Professor Chau Kwok-tong and his invented magnetic gear setup.



Electric motors invented for electric vehicles.





Ching Lin Terrace.

## Rejuvenating an Old School

A new student hostel is being created out of a disused school block, thereby preserving the building and its unique environment.



Artist's impression of the new student hostel.



The old Hon Wah Middle School site.

The Lo Pan Temple - A Grade 1 historic building.

Ching Lin Terrace is an ideal place for young scholars, a tranquil oasis tucked between busy Pokfulam Road to the north and bustling Kennedy Town to the south. It was once home to a middle school and is now preparing to house HKU postgraduate students.

HKU acquired the old Hon Wah Middle School building after the school relocated to Siu Sai Wan and is planning to convert the nine-storey block into 140 much-needed places for postgraduate students.

The decision to renovate rather than rebuild was the University's first choice because the site is in a tight spot with little road access, and the University wanted to preserve the look and feel of the neighbourhood.

"This building has been an important part of the collective memory of this neighbourhood," says HKU Senior Manager in charge of community relations, Henry Ho, who helped to steer consultations on the project with the local community and the Central and Western District Council.

"The District Council unanimously supported preservation of the school, including several

Councillors who were teachers and students of the school. We also talked to people in the neighbourhood and they supported us, too. They were worried about the noise and dust if the building were demolished."

There were some stumbling blocks to overcome. The school building dates back to 1965 and in the 1980s the area was zoned residential, meaning a change of use required special permission from the Buildings Department and Town Planning Board. The Buildings Department initially insisted that the school should be demolished.

However, the University and its architects offered a plan that included knocking out a small part of the building at the back to create a courtyard. Floor plans were devised with apartments sharing common areas.

Support from the community and District Council helped the case, as did the need to minimize disturbance to three historical buildings that share the terrace with Hon Wah. The Lo Pan Temple is a Grade 1 historic building built in 1884 and there are also two Grade 3 blocks nearby.

The Buildings Department finally gave support to the plans in the summer and the Town Planning Board approved the project in October. More detailed plans are now being drafted and will be submitted to the Buildings Department for further approval.

Having overcome these hurdles, the University still faces a serious housing challenge. Some 1,900 student hostel places need to be found to meet demand when the new four-year curriculum starts in 2012. This is in addition to the 140 places created by Hon Wah and the 1,800 places to be provided by Lung Wah Street Hostel, which is under construction.

Suitable sites for hostels are rare in the HKU neighbourhood and those that do come up also tend to attract developers with deep pockets. HKU paid about \$60 million for the Hon Wah School building.

"This has been a hard won battle but fortunately we had people's support. I think the District Councillors and others in the neighbourhood appreciate our efforts to rejuvenate the local community," Mr Ho said.



# Painting in the Dark

Art in the Cultural Revolution was supposed to represent and serve the state. One underground group of painters, including HKU academic Wang Aihe, worked in the shadows to challenge that perspective.



*Moonlit Night by Dr Wang Aihe, 1974.*



*Dr Wang Aihe (front, third from left) and the No Name painters at Beidaihe in 1975.*

In the twisted logic of the Cultural Revolution, being apolitical was a political statement. So when Dr Wang Aihe and her fellow artists decided to paint still-lives and landscapes that reflected the perspective of the individual rather than the state, they had to do so under a cloak of secrecy.

Dr Wang, who is now Associate Professor in the School of Chinese, was one of the 'No Name' painters who formed their group in 1973 and painted together until the end of the decade. She has recently compiled their work into a 13-volume publication and online database, offering a rare insight into the fragile and dispersed underground culture that existed during the Cultural Revolution.

"There were probably many groups like us operating in these heavily controlled areas, but there is not a single database I know of for that period. Primarily what exists are poetry and literature and most of it was published after Mao's death [in 1976]," she said.

Dr Wang wanted to show how it was possible for people from the grassroots to meet up and paint against the orthodoxy of the day. Freedom of association was not allowed during the Cultural Revolution and those accused of forming counter-revolutionary cliques faced severe punishment.

"Our group formed spontaneously in Beijing at a time when other forms of community – of family and neighbourhood – were being dismantled and individuals were becoming isolated."

"We were in our teens and 20s, alone in the city. We would pick up and go painting, meet someone else who was doing the same, and the next time we'd go out together and meet another painter and it snowballed."

Many of them shunned the social realist style of the day in favour of Western styles of painting.

"The dominant ideology at that time was that art served politics. We clearly saw art as something for its own sake and we went underground because this statement could not be made publicly."

This was a radical view and the group had to make sure it did not draw too much attention to itself. Their materials, for instance, were kept to a size that could fit easily into their bags and so were not conspicuous to others. They met in isolated places away from other people and sometimes in each other's homes, where they would talk about literature and listen quietly to music. "Basically we were a cultural group," Dr Wang said.

These seemingly innocent gatherings still attracted suspicion. Twice during a beach trip the police called on them, once sending two of their members home and another

time demanding a letter of introduction that would explain why they were gathering together. Older members of the group, who were in their 30s and had already lived through the excesses of 1960s China, managed to placate the officers.

Dr Wang's project is as much about the circumstances under which they painted as the paintings. The 13 bilingual volumes include more than 1,000 paintings and writings by the artists, including Dr Wang, on the historical and social contexts in which they were produced. An online database with thousands more paintings and documents is also being compiled.

"This project provides historians with material to evaluate the history of art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was not only social realism in China, there was also a counter culture."

"We were trying to project life, art, aesthetics, poetry, a way of living that was different from what was prescribed for us, in which we love nature, have a community and search for individual harmony with what we think is spiritual. We tried to remove art from politics."

*Wuming (No Name) Painting Catalogue* is published by Hong Kong University Press.



*Peach Blossom and a Small Bowl by Yang Yushu, 1973.*



## Mapping the Changes in Culture

A new book of essays attempts to pin down Hong Kong's slippery identity.

More than a decade on from the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty the Dean of the Faculty of Arts has gathered together in a new book the thoughts of a group of world experts on Hong Kong culture.

*Hong Kong Culture: Word and Image*, edited by Professor Kam Louie, explores the territory's unique culture – neither British before the handover, nor entirely Chinese since – in 13 essays from experts as far afield as London, Sydney and California.

The book sprang from a conference in 2008, organized to explore how much Hong Kong had changed, if at all, since the handover.

"We used word and image as themes for the conference so the discussions would be more focused," says Professor Louie. "We asked people to talk about Hong Kong culture ten years after the return to China but as they talked they kept having to go back to before 1997, so the changes were already happening before this time. As it turns out, even now, changes, though very subtle, are continuing. China is changing very fast so it's hard to say this is Chinese, this is Western, this is Southeast Asian, because all these ingredients make up Hong Kong and what was considered American yesterday is probably very Chinese today."

Indeed, Gina Marchetti's essay, *Departing from 'The Departed': The 'Infernal Affairs' Trilogy*, explores the borrowing and re-borrowing of celluloid style and image between Hong Kong and Hollywood, she points out that "John Woo has observed that when Hollywood directors look to Hong Kong films for inspiration, they end up imitating



themselves, since Hong Kong has poached from American cinema for decades".

"Yes," agrees Professor Louie. "Hong Kong is very open to borrowing, I'm sure it happens everywhere but in Hong Kong it's more conspicuous. This is a culture in transit: it seems nobody's from here, everybody's on their way somewhere else."

"It's easy to see that process at work, but now you also see it in other places like Canada, America, Europe and Australia, where people come in and out all the time and there's borrowing and re-borrowing and return and so on."

Certainly, in any conversation on Hong Kong culture cinema plays an important part. "That's because for a long time the rest of the world was aware of Hong Kong

through people like Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee," says Professor Louie.

And while interest in Hong Kong culture is growing this fascination has not been formalized into a major at any of the city's universities.

"Hong Kong culture should be studied a lot more," says Professor Louie. "There is a lot of material available. For example, Hong Kong has been the base for many writers who write in both Chinese and English. There are literally hundreds of books and articles on Eileen Chang alone. There is a lot of material in Chinese but relatively little on Hong Kong bilingual writers or its Anglophone writings. As HKU is an English-language university we should be making that material accessible worldwide."

Conferences are an important part of exploring and understanding that culture.

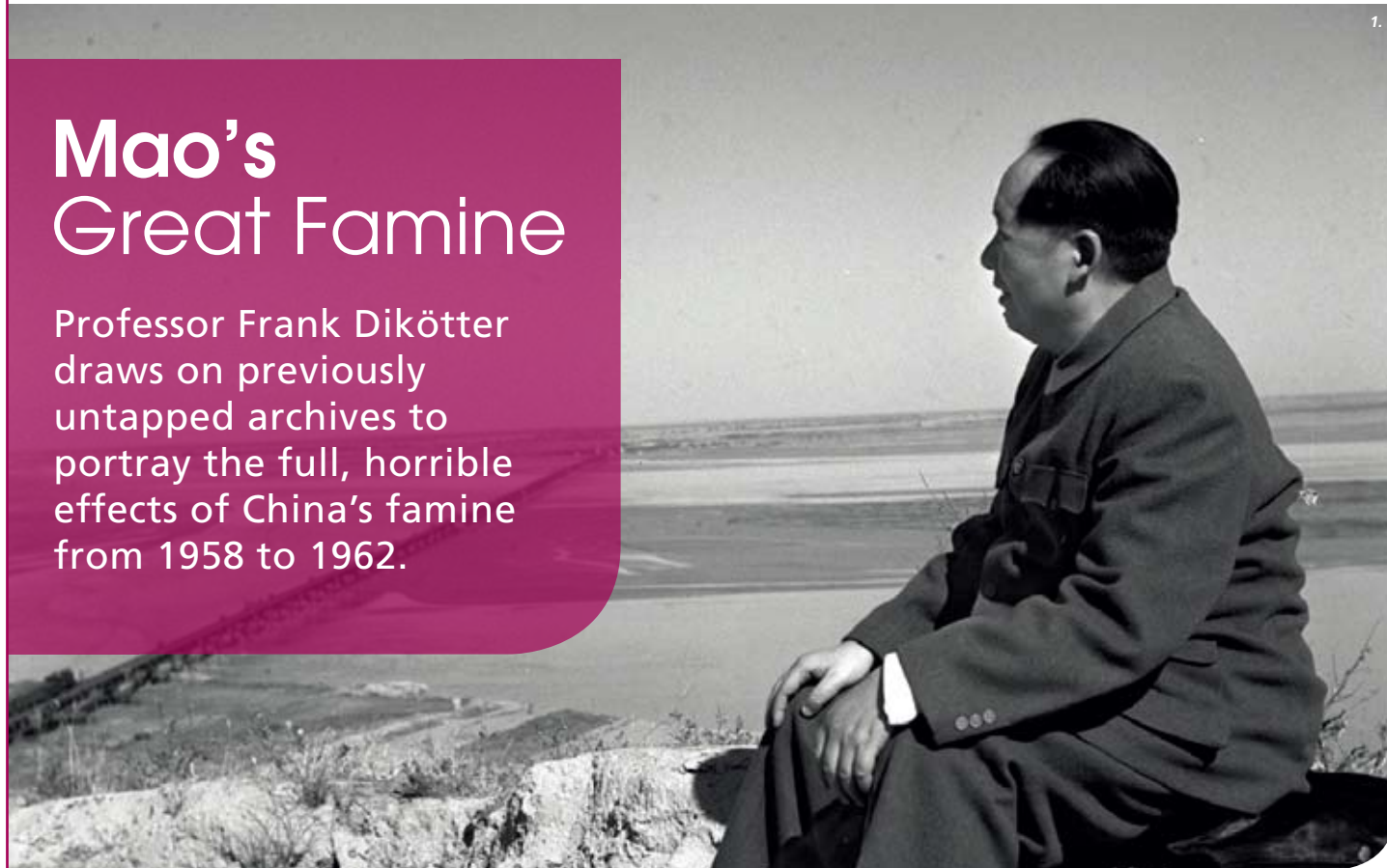
"We hold a lot of academic conferences in the Faculty and what we try to do is bring in experts from overseas, mostly from other Anglophone regions such as America and the UK, and let people see what we do. Such gatherings also allow international scholars to interact with our academics here, so that both parties have a chance to explore different ways of thinking and do research," he adds.

***Hong Kong Culture: Word and Image*, edited by Kam Louie, is published by HKU Press.**



# Mao's Great Famine

Professor Frank Dikötter draws on previously untapped archives to portray the full, horrible effects of China's famine from 1958 to 1962.



1. Chairman Mao pensively overlooks the Yellow River in 1952.
2. Mao and Khrushchev at the Kremlin in November 1957.
3. On May 25, 1958 Chairman Mao galvanised the nation by appearing in front of the crowds at the Ming Tomb Reservoir; the original photo also showed Peng Zhen, the mayor of Beijing, but he was later airbrushed out of the picture.

You don't see people wearing Hitler or Stalin T-shirts, and you'd likely be ostracised if you did. So why is it fashionable to wear Mao?

That phenomenon perplexes Professor Frank Dikötter, Chair Professor of Humanities in the Department of History, who has just published a highly-regarded book on the vicious and tragic consequences of the Great Leap Forward, *Mao's Great Famine*. He sees a parallel in the reluctance of historians to tackle this subject in depth.

"It's simply not fashionable to write anything critical of modern China – there's such willingness to tiptoe around major historical matters like the great famine."

"It's hard to imagine how historians got away with it when you compare it with the literature on the Holocaust and the Gulag. Yet it was one of the worst mass murders in human history," he says.



Professor Dikötter takes the known outline of the famine and fleshes it out with newly-available documents from provincial and county archives that provide a detailed account of the effects of the famine and its causes.

At least 45 million people died – most from starvation but 2.5 million from torture or summary execution and one million to three million by suicide. These are incredible figures considering that 95 per cent of the famine was man-made, he says.

Mao's 'Great Leap Forward' forced people to give up private property, join collective farms and toil incessantly in the belief that this would help China overtake Britain in iron, steel and other industrial output and enable the country to repay debts to the Soviet Union far earlier than they were due. Anyone who opposed it was sidelined or worse.

Large quantities of food were shipped out of the country, some of it as food aid, leaving little for China's populace. In desperation people ate anything they could find, from leaves, soil and roots to poisonous berries and leather. Children were sold and the old and sick who could not work were literally discarded and left to die.

Professor Dikötter's book describes the big picture and the individual stories of the famine, with particular concern for the fate of rural populations who suffered the most.

"Again and again these farmers have been overlooked," he says, almost to the extent that their existence has been forgotten in China. "By some strange twist, the efforts of the PRC not to write about this huge catastrophe has had an effect on the archivists in China themselves. They tend not to know about the great famine."

4. Building a cofferdam of straw and mud to divert the Yellow River at the Qingtong Gorge in Gansu, December 1958.
5. Chairman Mao inspecting an experimental plot with close cropping in the suburbs of Tianjin in August 1958.
6. October 1958, Breaking stones for the backyard furnaces in Baofeng county, Henan.
7. Li Jingquan, leader of Sichuan province where more than 10 million people died prematurely during the famine, shows off a model farm in Pixian county, March 1958.
8. Li Fuchun meets several cadres in the suburbs of Tianjin, autumn of 1958.
9. Peng Dehuai at a meeting with party activists, December 1958.





Liu Shaoqi tours the countryside in his home province of Hunan in April 1961.



January 1962, from left to right, Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, Liu Shaoqi, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping at the party conference dubbed the Seven Thousand Cadres Assembly at which Liu openly blamed 'human errors' rather than nature for the famine.

He worked that ignorance to his advantage in his research, digging up as much material as he could when the archives opened in the more liberal atmosphere prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"I've been trained not to assume that when there is an opportunity, that it's part of a gradual opening up. I remember very distinctly when I was applying for grants for this project that this was a rare moment, a window of opportunity that had to be seized. I'm glad I jumped in then rather than wait for it to open more."

"I've been back to the archives in the past year and in nearly all cases, a certain amount of the material has been reclassified. The whole atmosphere is very much changed and it's no longer as easy to get access. I don't think it would be possible to research the book now. The willingness and openness that culminated with the Olympics have gone downhill ever

since, including [Nobel peace prize winner] Liu Xiaobo being put behind bars."

More public knowledge of the famine may not necessarily spell bad news for China's rulers, though. "Oddly enough, ordinary people tend to think of the regime today in a rather positive way in comparison. It's not uncommon to hear people say it's so much better now. So through some very bizarre twists, that catastrophe gives the party some credit today."

Professor Dikötter's book has received enthusiastic reviews around the world and he was invited to give 16 talks and numerous media interviews during an autumn tour of Europe and the US. He is now working with his colleague, Zhou Xun, to dig deeper into the Communist Party's history of the early 1950s and offer a similar account of the repercussions its policies had on ordinary people.



***Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe is published by Bloomsbury and Walker Books.***

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