



香港大學

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BULLETIN

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QUEER IN CHINA

What it means for rights, health and identity

New Weapons to Beat an Age-Old Killer

HKU Microbiology scientists have made breakthroughs that change the face of influenza treatment



A Place in History for a Musical Tradition

Tracing the *qin*'s long history instigated new ways for studying Chinese music





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Students Shape Dialogue Between World University Leaders

Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge held a dialogue with HKU Vice-Chancellor Professor Lap-Chee Tsui and students at the University.

The event, titled 'Dialogue with World University Leaders - From Cambridge to Hong Kong', was guided and directed by three HKU student panelists who came from very different cultural backgrounds: Sam Wong Ming-sum, a year one LLB student admitted through the Early Admissions Scheme; Kshitij Tiwari, a year one BEng (EcomE) student born and brought up in India; and Alyson Han Yu, a year two BBA (Accounting and Finance) student from Beijing.

Together, they helped build an engaging and enthusiastic discussion between the Vice-Chancellors and with the audience on the ideals and relevance of university education in the 21st century, by examining Cambridge and HKU - one over 800 years old, and one just celebrating its centenary.



Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz (fourth from left) and Professor Lap-Chee Tsui (centre) with three HKU student panelists.

Professor Tsui thanked Sir Leszek for joining the University's Centenary celebrations and the insights he brought to the Dialogue.

Sir Leszek, as the 345th Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, shared his views on the mission of universities to provide education, develop new knowledge and interact with society. He said that having a forward-looking attitude would be

of the utmost importance, and that universities should embrace change to thrive in research, and to get better in the work they do for tomorrow, which includes training students for the future.

"HKU and Cambridge are great institutions but we can never afford to look backwards. There is no resting on your laurels in a competitive world of higher education," said Sir Leszek. ■

2011 ACU Conference Brings Executive Heads to HKU

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Conference of Executive Heads 2011 was held in April at the University.

The three-day conference, titled 'Higher Education in Hard Times - Risk, Reputation, Reform: Developing new business in a changing environment', was organized by the ACU and co-hosted by three local ACU member universities including HKU, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK).

Over 150 vice-chancellors and representatives from 127 universities and institutions, representing 22 countries and six continents, attended the event.

HKU Vice-Chancellor Professor Lap-Chee Tsui extended his warm welcome to participants on behalf of fellow local members.

Professor Jamil Salmi, Tertiary Education Co-ordinator of World Bank, shared in his keynote speech, 'Higher Education in the 21st Century: Opportunities and Challenges', his views on the future of higher education, elaborating on issues including the importance of knowledge, changing education needs and practices, and the implications to developing countries. Another 16 speakers from UK, Hong Kong, Australia, Malaysia, South Africa and India also shared their thoughts on issues such as creating and retaining global identity, rankings, university management, strategic partnership with business and industry and its objects and challenges. The second and third day of the conference were held at CUHK and OUHK respectively. ■



Celebrating 100 Years at HKU

With Nobel Laureates and International Figures

Nobel Laureates and distinguished scholars from a wide range of disciplines have been sharing their expertise, experience and world-class scholarship with the University community and the public.

Poetry in life

Professor Sir Andrew Motion, former Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom (1999-2009), delivered the first lecture of 2011.

Andrew Motion is an English poet, novelist and biographer. He has published 16 collections of poems, four biographies, and three novels. His autobiography, *In the Blood: A Memoir of My Childhood*, was published in 2006.

The title of his lecture, 'Poetry in Life', gave him an opportunity to speak about the way that poetry came into and continues to form a central part of his experience (as a writer and a reader), and also to reflect on the ways in which poets

transform the details of their experience to make their work. He also spoke about the way poetry should form a central part of individual and social life. The lecture was a mixture of the personal and the public, and looked in particular at his own practice as a writer. He also spoke about the writers who have meant most to him (and about whom he has written most about) - John Keats and Philip Larkin.

Improving the quality of life worldwide

Also in March, **Professor Kurt Wüthrich**, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2002, spoke at the University. Professor Wüthrich is the Cecil H. and Ida M. Green Professor of Structural Biology at the Scripps Research Institute in California, USA, and Professor of Biophysics at the ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland.

He spoke on 'The Protein Universe and Daily Life'. The determination of the human genome carries

great promise with regard to improving the quality of life worldwide, and new advances are expected in agriculture, nutrition and healthcare. However, the realization of these advances must be based on detailed knowledge of the proteome and other gene products of the organisms of interest, in addition to the genomic DNA sequences.

Professor Wüthrich's research team specializes in the use of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy for studies of the molecular structure of proteins. Currently the team uses NMR alongside protein crystal structure determination in the recently developed field of structural genomics. His lecture presented strategic aspects and selected results from the exploration of the protein universe using these techniques.



Professor Wu Jinglian



Professor Elinor Ostrom (centre)



Professor Sir Andrew Motion (second from right)



Professor Kurt Wüthrich

Smooth sailing for the Chinese economy?

On March 30 one of China's most renowned economists, **Professor Wu Jinglian**, a Research Fellow of the Development Research Centre (DRC) of the State Council, Deputy Director of the Advisory Committee for State Informatization, and Professor at Beijing University, explored the *Prospects for China's 12th Five-Year Plan*, the theme of which is to accelerate the transformation of the economic development pattern.

He said this theme is very appropriate and extremely important. The constraints on China's development - such as natural resource shortages, environmental damage, a surplus in money supply, an imbalance between investment and consumption, the emergence of asset bubbles, and increasing inflationary pressures - stem from an extensive growth pattern that relies too much on an input of resources and exports.

Whether China's economy can develop smoothly under the 12th Five-Year Plan depends mainly on progress in the transition to an intensive growth

pattern driven by technological advancement and efficiency improvement.

Professor Wu is a co-founder of Comparative Institutional Analysis in China. He has made important contributions to the theoretical foundation for the development of a market economy and the transformation of the economic development pattern on the Mainland. He advocates that the reform should establish a market economy, limit the business territory of state-owned corporations, develop private enterprises, and encourage multiple forms of ownership to compete and develop simultaneously in an economy with the rule of law and a democratic political system.

Collective action: citizens coping together

In May, **Professor Elinor Ostrom**, Distinguished Professor and Arthur F. Bentley Professor of Political Science Indiana University, Bloomington, USA, spoke on *Rethinking Environmental Protection and Politics*.

Professor Ostrom's research has revolved around how institutional rules affect the structure of action situations within which individuals face incentives, make choices, and jointly affect each other. During her lecture she explored the presumption that citizens will not cooperate to reduce the environmental externalities they produce, and that only governments can act on climate change. However, evidence shows that citizens are not always helpless and are able to cope effectively with many problems related to efficient use of water, forests, and other resources.

Slowly, a new theory of collective action has been crafted. Instead of always recommending external governmental action, the importance of developing a polycentric governance arrangement on several levels - from neighbourhood and local community, to national or international governments - has been highlighted. Her lecture contrasted the conventional theory of collective action with a new theory being developed in light of extensive new evidence. ■

Growing Stronger, Reaching Further The Fifth Inauguration of Endowed Professorships at HKU

The University celebrated its Fifth Inauguration of Endowed Professorships on April 12, 2011.

Endowed Professorships are established to support the scholarship or research endeavours of distinguished professors. They are the most significant awards given to academics within the University.

"We are proud that, since they were first established in 2005, we have 54 Endowed Professorships at the University. We aim to create 100 Endowed Professorships and I am grateful to the community for its support of the University's goal," said Vice-Chancellor Professor Lap-Chee Tsui.

At this year's ceremony, a total of 12 new Endowed Professorships were established, including the Sin Wai-Kin Distinguished Visiting Professorship in the Humanities, a university-wide scheme in support of the appointment of distinguished visiting scholars in the humanities.

Also announced at the Inauguration was the establishment of the Zhou Guangzhao Professorship in Natural Sciences from the Zhou Guangzhao Foundation. It is the first time that an Endowed Professorship has been named after an academic on the Chinese Mainland. The occasion was also a milestone for the Foundation as it marked the first time it has given an award to a Hong Kong recipient. ■

For more about HKU's Endowed Professorships, please go to <http://www3.hku.hk/ephku/>.



'Nature Publishing Index 2010 China' Puts HKU in Top 10



The Nature Publishing Group (NPG) presented on May 12 the first 'Nature Publishing Index 2010 China' and ranked the University seventh among its fellow research institutions in China.

The rankings are based on the number of research papers published in 2010 in Nature journals, including *Nature* and the 16 Nature research journals covering broad areas of basic research. The index is generally taken as an indicator of the strength of research institutions in high quality basic research.

HKU Vice-Chancellor Professor Lap-Chee Tsui was delighted that HKU has been ranked among the top ten institutions in the Index, and was pleased to see the rise of China in publishing in top scientific journals. He said government support would be crucial to the development of research institutions. "The Hong Kong government

should consider drastically increasing the funding to support scientific research of local higher institutions, which will surely help Hong Kong develop into one of the nation's leading city in scientific research. The Nature Index has clearly pointed to the strength and potential of Hong Kong in the area," said Professor Tsui.

Over the years, HKU has cast its net wide and attracted funding, talents and international collaboration, enabling the University to produce numerous important discoveries. According to ISI Essential Science Indicators, HKU has 110 scientists who rank among the top one per cent in their field. International recognition has enabled the university to attract high-calibre researchers, teachers and students - not only from Hong Kong, but also Mainland China and around the world. ■

Hank Paulson discusses the Global Economic Outlook and China-US Economic Relations at HKU

Henry M. Paulson, Secretary of the Treasury under President George W. Bush, shared his views on China-US relations at HKU in April.

A guest of the Faculty of Business and Economics and the HK Institute of Economics and Business Strategy, Mr Paulson is perhaps best known for the decisions made during the height of the financial crisis in 2008.

He spoke to an audience of over 1,000 people, including the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, Chairman of Council, The Hon Leong Che-hung, government, business and community leaders, alumni, and faculty and students. The session was moderated by Victor Fung, Chairman of the Li & Fung Group.

On the current and future state of US-China economic relations, Mr Paulson stressed that the success of the US and China are dependent upon



From left: Dr Victor Fung and Mr Henry M. Paulson.

each other. "I think there will always be differences, but the key is to build up the shared interests."

Asked what would be a potential wish list from the US business community, he said, "Opening up for investment and not as heavy regulation, and I always explain that every businessman loves competition unless it's in his market."

"Each country needs peace and stability in order to prosper, terrorism is an enemy for both of us, and there are both strong interests in national security. I think we need to build on the shared interest and common interests, and work through areas where there are differences," he said. ■

HKU Computer Centre Wins Best Green ICT Gold Award

The University's Computer Centre was honoured with the Best Green Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Gold Award in the Hong Kong ICT Awards 2011.

The Hong Kong ICT Awards 2011 was organized by the Green ICT Consortium to honour companies in the industry for the environmentally friendly initiatives demonstrated in their operations which made contributions to the ICT industry as a whole.

The Cloud Computing, Server and Storage Virtualization and HPC and Grid Computing System developed by the Computer Centre of HKU has been commended by the Judging Panel for demonstrating good cost effectiveness in deploying the cloud computing solution. The need for data centre space and the consumption of electrical power have also been reduced with the virtualization of servers and storage, as well as the adoption of cloud technology.

Over the years, the Computer Centre has introduced a number of innovative Green ICT measures to maximize system performance and



From left to right: HKU Computer Centre members Mr Geoffrey Dengate, HKU Director of Information Technology Services, Mr Frankie Cheung, Senior IT Manager, Cloud Computing, Mr Peter Li, Associate IT Director (IT Infrastructure), and Mr Walter Li, Senior IT Manager, Operations.

to reduce electricity and cooling requirements. Since 2002, the Centre has initiated and implemented more green solutions, including duplex printing, electronic forms and recycling of toner cartridges and obsolete equipment. In recent years, the Centre has been undertaking major developments in cloud computing infrastructure, which has generated good savings in power and space requirements, while reducing

carbon emissions. Additionally, the High Performance Computing (HPC) and the largest Grid Computing systems in Hong Kong developed by the Centre have proved to be vital in supporting cutting-edge computer-intensive research projects. ■

HKU Computer Centre homepage:
<http://www.hku.hk/cc/>

A Vision of Excellence Comes Full Circle

This article marks the beginning of a series that looks back over the University's first 100 years and finds that HKU can celebrate its centenary much as its founders intended: as a regional academic centre that adheres to world-class standards.

In 1908, the then Governor, Sir Frederick Lugard, laid down the gauntlet for a new university for Hong Kong - and thus, articulated the beginnings of a vision for HKU.

"I believe that Hong Kong should be the Oxford and Cambridge of the Far East I believe myself in the awakening of China and the opportunities for reciprocal benefits which that awakening will give to us and I believe that we must either now take these opportunities or leave them to others to take."

Although the Oxbridge model for HKU would change, the ambition has remained: to create a university of the highest standards that serves the needs of the region.

The region in the early 1900s was on the brink of profound change. China was about to become a republic and, like today, there was a growing

demand in the country for higher education and training.

In Hong Kong, momentum was also building among local leaders to establish a full university here. The Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese had been teaching Western medicine since 1887 and it seemed fitting to develop the University from this core.

International standards

Lugard agreed to pursue this goal with a condition: "[I]n my opinion no degree should be issued which is not fully up to the standards of degrees granted by Universities of the United Kingdom or America."

The pursuit of excellence, therefore, was a driving force from the University's earliest days.

The first students were admitted in 1912 and during the pre-war period typically consisted of a majority of students from China and Southeast Asia, thus underscoring HKU's regional purpose. There were three faculties at first, Medicine, Engineering and Arts, and the latter had the

specific goal of providing training for the higher grades of the Chinese civil service (although this would almost immediately be thwarted by the crumbling of order in China).

The arrival of the Second World War and the Communist takeover in China further disrupted the University's regional goals, but there was little time to look back because Hong Kong now desperately needed a university to serve its own citizens and address its own problems. The city had been damaged by war and inundated by refugees, and HKU provided it with expertise in medicine, engineering, teaching, social welfare and other fields so it could rebuild.

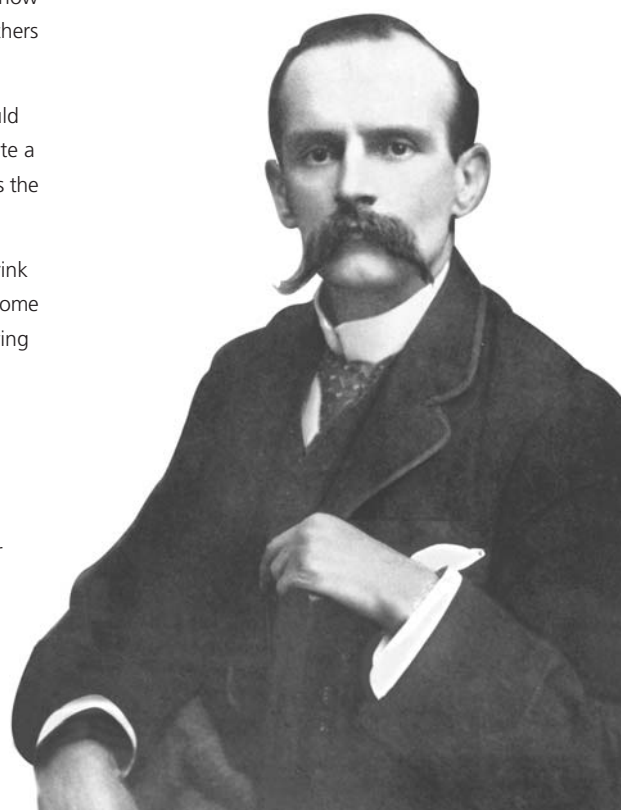
Looking north again

The rebuilding process took many years but by the 1980s, after China started opening its door, the University began to turn around full circle to face north again. This has led to academic and internship programmes with leading Mainland universities, a study centre in Shanghai and keen interest from students in China.

The University today admits only one in 24 non-local undergraduate applicants (including China) and attracts applications from 84 countries. It is ranked the best university in Asia and among the top 25 universities in the world*.

HKU therefore continues to be guided by the ambition of its founders, a goal that has been formalized in the University's re-articulated vision statement of 2009: The University will strive "to attract and nurture outstanding scholars from around the world through excellence and innovation in teaching and learning, research and knowledge exchange, contributing to the advancement of society and the development of leaders through a global presence, regional significance and engagement with the rest of China."

*HKU was 21st in the 2010 Times Higher Education World University Ranking and 23rd in the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Ranking.



Sir Frederick John Dealtry Lugard
Chancellor 1911-1912 and Honorary Graduate (Doctor of Laws) in 1916.



Main Building, 1912.



The first Degree Congregation, 1916.



A shot of the roofless Main Building, taken after the World War II.



HKU boasts a highly internationalized student body: 40% of its students are from 78 nations around the world.



The HKU Coat of Arms comprises a shield and a motto, and was granted by the UK College of Arms in 1913. The full armorial bearings shown here were granted in 1984.

Vision

The University of Hong Kong, as a leading international institution of higher learning in Asia, strives to attract and nurture outstanding scholars from around the world through excellence and innovation in teaching and learning, research and knowledge exchange, contributing to the advancement of society and the development of leaders through a global presence, regional significance and engagement with the rest of China.

Excerpt from the 2009-2014 Strategic Development document



The Mace bears the University's coat of arms and is carried in University processions as the symbol of authority.

Dr SUN YAT-SEN

Dr Sun, who played a central role in the founding of modern China in 1912, had a soft spot for HKU. He was one of the first two graduates of the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese (the forerunner of HKU) in 1892, graduating with a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery. In 1923

he visited HKU's campus where he proclaimed: "I feel as though I have returned home because Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong are the birthplace of my knowledge." A statue of Dr Sun is by the University's lily pond.



Dr Sun Yat-sen visited the University on February 20, 1923 and gave a speech at the Great Hall (Loke Yew Hall).



The Sun Yat-sen Statue at the Lily Pond, unveiled on November 12, 2003.

SIR HORMUSJEE NOWROJEE MODY

Sir H.N. Mody was a Parsee merchant who stepped in to provide financial backing for the proposed HKU when it seemed on the brink of being abandoned. He worked closely with Governor Lugard to steer the project forward and at the ground-breaking ceremony, presented the

Governor with a golden trowel. The Governor, in turn, proceeded to announce that Mody had been appointed a Knight Bachelor. A bust of Sir H.N. Mody is outside Loke Yew Hall. ■



The stone laying ceremony of the University Foundation Day on March 16, 1910.



The Foundation Stone of the Main Building was laid with this trowel by Sir Frederick Lugard on March 16, 1910.



Sir Hormusjee Nowrojee Mody.

Queer in China

There are different shades to being gay and Chinese, and the ambiguous status has implications for human rights and public health, as HKU scholars have found.



Dr Travis Kong

“There is no universal meaning to being gay.”

Dr Travis Kong

What does it mean to be a gay Chinese man? Dr Travis S.K. Kong, Assistant Professor of Sociology, who has interviewed gay men in London, Hong Kong and China and studied the issue since the 1990s, says it all depends on where you are.

Gay Chinese men in London are often regarded by their white Western counterparts as adolescent, asexual, or effeminate 'Madame Butterfly' types, so their identity as gay men gets mixed up with race issues, he says.

Gay men in Hong Kong tend to be defined along economic lines - how much money they have, what clothes they wear, the languages they speak and their social class. They tend to express their gayness through their consumption habits, and their identity is complicated by a lack of space in which they are often confined by a family setting that makes it difficult to come out.

Gay men in China are caught in a tangle of pressures, from traditional values that demand they marry and have children, to inconsistent government policy that encourages open talk about sex, but also links homosexuality to HIV/AIDS

infections and discourages the celebration of a gay identity. There is also an urban-rural divide in which gay migrant workers are looked down upon by their city counterparts.

"There is no universal meaning to being gay," Dr Kong says. "Same-sex desire may be innate, but your identity is socially constructed, that is, when you pick that identity for yourself, it is subject to history, society and culture. In Hong Kong it relates so much to colonialism, family and space. In China it relates to the state and Chinese traditional culture."

Traditional expectations

That culture as it is followed today is conservative and pins men down to partnering with women, yet the traditional ideal of Chinese masculinity has a place for homosexuality.

Professor Kam Louie, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and author of a seminal book on Chinese masculinity, says "There's a lot of gayness in traditional Chinese culture and it's taken for granted. It's often explicit in popular culture. The more elite, refined novels tend to shy away from

that, but you will still find that when two men sleep together, there are jealousies and possessiveness," he says.

The shying away continues today. Although men openly hold hands and live together, it typically does not even cross people's minds that they might be homosexual, says Dr Kong. This enables men to lead a double life, with a family and children on one hand and male lovers on the other.

"But if you want to articulate that same-sex desire and declare yourself as gay and live a gay lifestyle, that's a problem."

Some gay men are comfortable with a double life because they feel they have obligations as Chinese men to marry and have children, he says, but even then, their gay identity remains hidden. That has repercussions for public health.

“Yunnan province has the highest HIV infection rate in the country”

Health risks

HIV infections among 'MSM' (men who have sex with men) is increasing at a rapid rate in China and Hong Kong, but the reluctance of men to admit they engage in MSM behaviour makes it difficult to contain the infection, according to Dr Chen Zhiwei, Director of HKU's AIDS Institute. The men are often diagnosed when they go to the doctor for other treatment.

"The epidemic is hidden," he says. "We can't clearly define who is homosexual and who is bisexual. People who practice risky behaviour risk their wife's or girl-friend's health as well, so this

is why we see a lot of infections initially for MSM, followed by more heterosexual infections and a larger epidemic."

Dr Chen says the problem is exacerbated by a tendency among some MSM to have multiple sex partners and a reluctance to use condoms even when they are provided for free, and there is a need for more education on the fact that there is still no cure for this deadly disease.

Antiviral therapies can slow down the virus's replication and make it harder to infect others, though. Dr Chen would like these therapies given to all HIV carriers, but Hong Kong has so far been

cool to the idea and China lacks the infrastructure to distribute the treatment on a widespread basis.

There is also a problem in China of reaching patients. Yunnan province has the highest HIV infection rate in the country, but many people live in rural areas, far from hospitals and clinics. Dr William Wong Chi-wai, Clinical Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Primary Care, has been working there and says farmers come to towns on market days and slip off to the woods or public toilets for unprotected MSM.

He was involved in a trial project to reach this group by setting up a gay bar in Dali in 2007 that had a mission to promote HIV prevention. The project went well and was taken over by the province's Centre for Disease Control (CDC), but the angry reaction this provoked - national media commentaries and irate emails and letters accused the government of going too far - offered a sad commentary on the difficulties of being gay in China and of containing HIV infections. (The CDC director and mayor in Dali stood their ground and kept the bar going.)

"The stigma attached to MSM means that when patients have a simple problem like flu or gastroenteritis, they don't like to tell their doctor they are HIV positive. As a result, they are not getting the optimal treatment," says Dr Wong, adding that, "Unless we are more positive and look at this disease as a chronic disease like diabetes or hypertension, we will create a lot of problems in controlling its spread."



Many bars in China may be tourist-traps, but they are open and welcoming.



Dr Kelley Loper

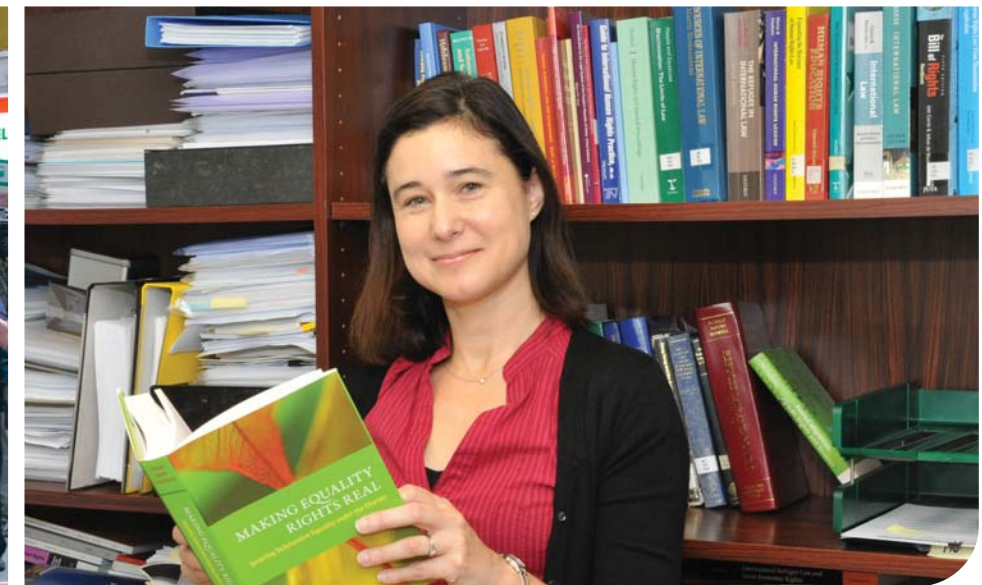
Rights constrained

Yet gay men face a lot of obstacles in being open about their sexual orientation. Dr Kong tells of attending an LGBT (lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender) film festival in 2009 that was held in a remote village outside Beijing to escape the harassment and last-minute cancellations by authorities that had plagued previous festivals.

"The police still came and hassled people. That was really LGBT without the camouflage of HIV - people with same sex desires and attractions," he says.



In contrast, gay bars in China are often low-key, but are still raided by police.



Dr Kelley Loper

"In China there's this contradiction. The Chinese government has allowed open sex forums and talk shows, but it still has a conservative and moralistic undertone. Police raids of gay places are very common, that's why gay bars and clubs in China are so transient. On the one hand you are told, be who you are, on the other hand, there are constraints, sanctions, limitations, controls."

Even in Hong Kong, the LGBT community has problems with official acceptance, although there have been two enlightened court judgements in recent years ruling that certain provisions in the Crimes Ordinance related to homosexual sex violated the right to equality under the law, according to Kelley Loper, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law. She is researching sexual orientation discrimination in family law and also helped organize a conference at HKU last year with the UN Development Programme and HKU's Emerging Strategic Theme on Diversity Studies on human rights and HIV prevention among MSM in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ms Loper points out that Hong Kong does not allow civil unions between same sex couples, which means they do not have such rights as decisions on medical care when one partner is sick or claims on insurance benefits or inheritance. Sexual orientation is also not included as a prohibited ground in Hong Kong's anti-discrimination laws.

"It's still legal to refuse to hire somebody because of sexual orientation," she says. "I do think discrimination against the LGBT community is a big problem in Hong Kong. It's a problem in many societies, but there is a lack of legal protection here."

These issues muddy the meaning of a gay identity. In Hong Kong, the gay community kept a low profile in the past, although it has started to take rights issues more seriously, as evidenced by the organizing of International Day Against Homophobia since 2005 and gay parades since 2008. In China, the men have higher ideals but they are hard to attain.

Dr Kong says: "The gay scene in China is heavily dominated by the AIDS discourse and the economic divide [between urban and migrant or rural MSM]. A lot of Chinese gay men are trying to make sense of their desire. They may have an idea of a gay utopia where we are all 'comrades', but they don't realize initially how hard it's going to be. Being a man is tough, no matter if you are straight or gay." ■

Chinese Male Homosexualities: Memba, Tongzhi and Golden Boy by Dr Travis Kong is published by Routledge.

Chinese Masculinity

When Professor Kam Louie, M.B. Lee Professor in Humanities and Medicine and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, was studying in Australia some years ago, the 'he-man' concept was popular. Men like James Bond and Rambo were the ideal, while Chinese men were seen as geeks and nerds.

As a Chinese man, it got him wondering, what attracts women? And what qualities define the ideal man? This led to a groundbreaking book, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*, that draws on literature, opera, film and other cultural vehicles from the past and present.

Chinese masculinity is structured by two archetypes: the scholar (*wen*) and the warrior (*wu*). Confucius is the model *wen*, a refined intellectual of the gentry class, while the god of war Guan Yu embodies *wu*, which is associated with physical prowess and the lower classes.

"The ideal man is supposed to be someone who has both qualities. So in leadership, the emperor sits in the middle. He is not as good a fighter as a *wu* man, and not as good a scholar as a *wen* man, but he has the quality to lead both," Professor Louie says.



Professor Kam Louie



Guan Yu, the God of War (right), in an illustration from an 1890 edition of the 14th century Chinese historical novel, *Sanguo Yanyi*.

Wu, wen and women

Chinese women are typically portrayed as being attracted to *wen* men, who as scholars would have status and security. *Wu* men prefer the company of other men and dislike women because they see them as a distraction. "It's loyalty to the brotherhood. You don't betray your men," he says.

That loyalty gives rise to 'homo-sociality' in which the men have significant emotional and physical relationships with each other. In contrast, Western masculine icons such as James Bond tend to operate by themselves and do not mind giving in to the temptations of women.

The Chinese brotherhood also is characterized by a strict hierarchy.

"In English you have the roundtable, where nobody is boss and everyone is equal. But in Chinese, even in the structure of the language it's not an equal relationship. In Hong Kong crime movies, *dai lo* or *lo dai*, means boss, the person who controls you. Even if you say 'older brother' in English, it doesn't have the ring of the triad leader," Professor Louie says.

Changing views

Nonetheless, the traditional bounds of *wen-wu* have been changing and modern consumer culture is altering the ideal of Chinese masculinity.

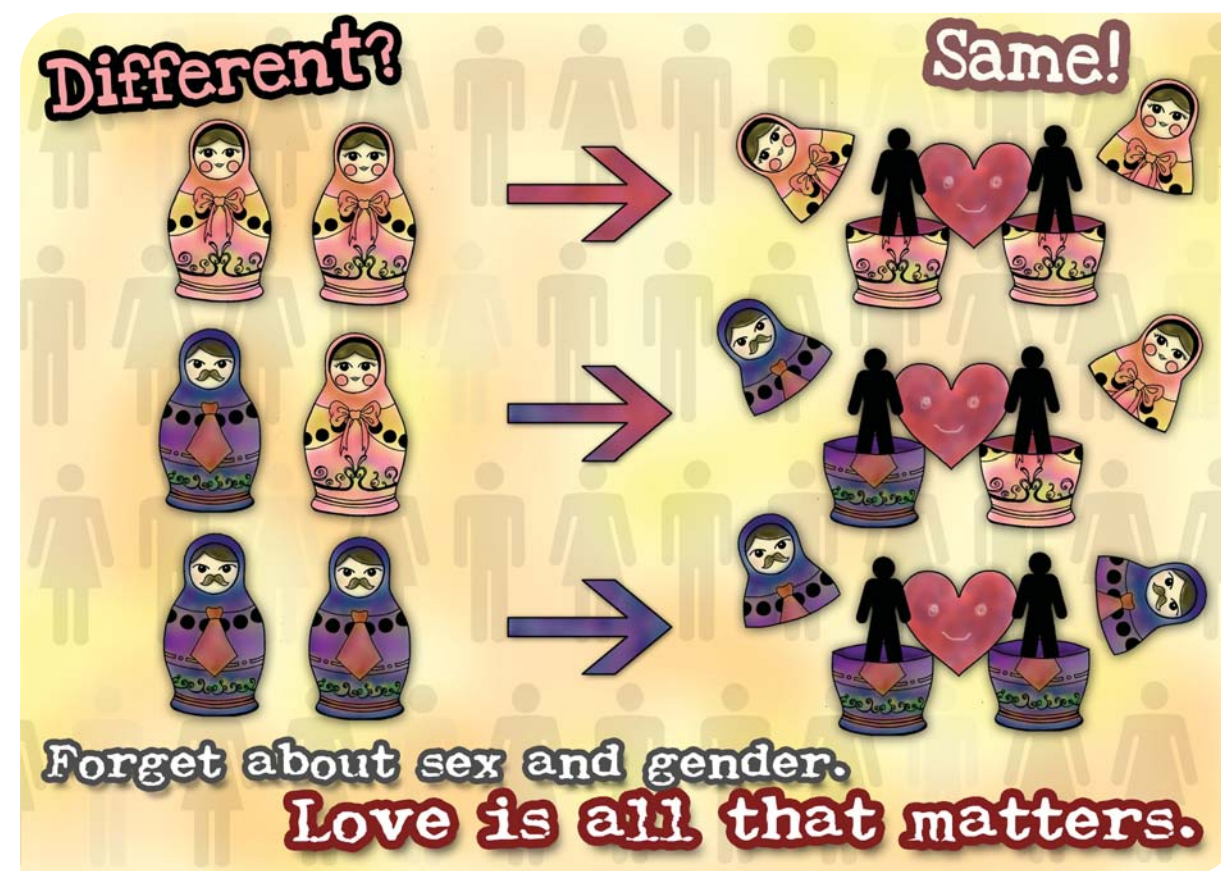
"For centuries the cultural ideal explicitly excluded money, so the merchants traditionally were in the lowest position in status, even lower than peasants in theory. But what's happened now is money is everything. It's quite desirable to have money, and if you get that through your education, that is fine and proper."

Notions of who can possess *wen-wu* are changing, too. Foreigners in the past were deemed incapable of possessing *wen-wu* but now they are celebrated for their poetry readings and martial arts skills. Even women can have the necessary qualities as evidenced by their acceptance in the halls of power. The *wen-wu* ideal is also travelling overseas through martial arts films and computer games.

Professor Louie sees these changes as integral to Chinese culture. "Chinese society is always full of dilemmas and ambiguities that it can't resolve, so it tolerates them. Because it's not so strict, at one time you can say the merchant is the lowest class and at the next, that it's glorious to make money. The ambiguity enables things to change." ■

Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China by Professor Kam Louie is published by Cambridge University Press.

Transgenders Caught in Limbo



Poster made by students in Dr Sam Winter's class.

Transgender people are among the most marginalized people in society. They experience a mismatch between their minds and their bodies, but if they act on how they feel - for instance, presenting themselves as female though they inhabit a male body - they face intense discrimination.

People label them as homosexual, even though they may not be. They get physically and sexually abused, are often denied jobs that match their qualifications, and get pushed into the sex trade where they are at high risk of HIV infection.

In Hong Kong, their identity has even been denied, at least legally. Although transpeople can get publicly funded gender reassignment surgery, the courts recently upheld a government decision not to allow a transwoman, 'W', to be regarded as female for marriage so she could marry her boyfriend.

The case has attracted much interest at HKU. Dr Sam Winter, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, who has been studying transgenders in Asia, was called in as an expert witness and Kelley Loper, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law, has written on the decision.

A question of rights

Ms Loper says the court decided to duck the issue by considering whether there was a societal consensus on whether a transgender woman could be considered a woman for the purpose of marriage.

"I see it as a minority claim. Transgender people are marginalized and face a lot of discrimination and problems accessing their rights. Rather than essentially deferring to the majority, the courts could have made a more robust decision to



Posters made by students in Dr Sam Winter's class.

protect the rights of members of this particular group," she says.

Dr Winter says prejudice against transpeople is rooted in the mistaken idea that they are mentally ill. This is reinforced in psychiatric manuals, which say transgender people have a 'gender identity disorder'.

"The diagnosis pathologizes their identity," he says. "Transpeople feel they are ordinary people who grew up in a way that is discordant with their body. They don't feel mentally disordered, nor does their condition merit being regarded as such, but they have to submit to being labelled by a disease."

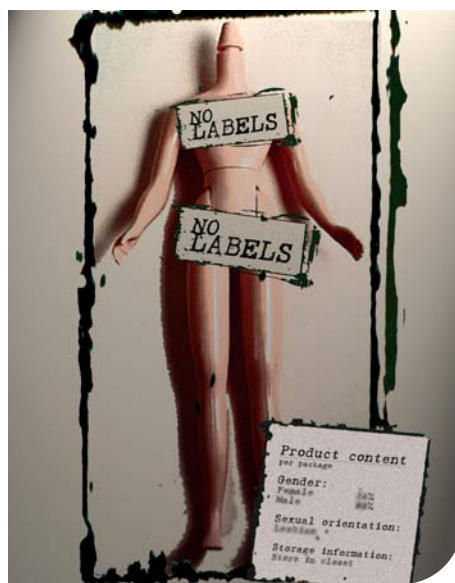
The diagnosis is a necessary step to getting gender reassignment surgery, but this fails to acknowledge the fact that many transgender people do not have or want the surgery. European studies suggest one in 30,000 males seek the surgery and one in 100,000 females, but Dr Winters believes the number of transgender people could be many times higher than that.

Gender on the brain

"For some transwomen, their sense of being a woman doesn't come from what's between their legs, and they feel removing their penis won't make them any more of a woman," he says. In fact, "there is increasing evidence that people may be biologically hard-wired to identify as male or female." This possibility, 'brain sex', may explain why transgender people feel they have a mix up between their mind and their body.

Getting acceptance of that concept remains difficult, though. Unlike Hong Kong, some countries in Asia, such as China, Japan and Singapore, do allow transpeople to legally change their sex, but only if they have gender reassignment surgery which in effect sterilizes them. "They have to submit to a diagnosis of mentally disordered and they have to submit to the knife," he says. Some European countries allow the legal change without the surgery.

Dr Winter is working to alter attitudes here. He offers a Common Core course on sexuality and



diversity that covers transgender issues and includes talks by transgender people. The hope is that among undergraduates at least, some of the prejudices will be broken down. ■



Dr Sam Winter

A Journey Towards Equal Protection Under the Law



Mr Michael Lam

On January 1, 2010 the government launched new legislation to cover domestic violence in same sex relationships. But how effective is it?

If asked to consider the issue of domestic violence, most people think of conflict between a husband and wife. But a lesser known concern is violence in same sex relationships. Yet one survey suggests it is remarkably prevalent, running at a staggering 49.9 per cent of the homosexual population. In comparison heterosexual domestic violence is thought to stand at around ten per cent.

Last year the Hong Kong government introduced legislation to extend legal protection to victims of violence in same sex co-habitation. Faculty of Law postgraduate student, Michael Lam, has been considering its effectiveness and finds that very few people are even aware of its existence.

"For my research I am not just looking at the law itself because now that the law has been changed everyone has equal treatment, everyone in theory is now protected under that legislation. But for legislation to work, you need complementary policies, so that's why my research is looking at the surrounding areas of the law and not just the law itself," he says.

Ways of raising awareness

Ways of raising awareness of new legislation include running a marketing campaign or holding

workshops. These measures are adopted in promoting a victim's rights in general domestic violence but are not extended solely for same sex discord.

"I was at a workshop recently and was horrified by what they were talking about," says Mr Lam. "It was billed as a workshop on same sex domestic violence but the audience was made up of elderly women, housewives and children. It was organized by Harmony House and their view is that they can educate the public by simply talking about it, which I think is a great idea, but the problem is that the workshop was organized more like Homosexuality 101, with questions like 'Is homosexuality contagious?' This was completely irrelevant to that particular audience and this is why the gay community is unaware of what the legislation is about."

"So awareness is a problem, and then we also have a lack of support services. There are only one or two centres in Hong Kong that cater for male victims of sexual violence. Yet one study conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong found that 49.9% of 1,000 respondents had experienced violence in the gay community. US figures are slightly different, citing 45 per cent for both sexes. But what this research shows is that domestic violence in same sex co-habitation does exist and is a problem."

Lack of funding

"The government's view is that the law is now in place so they need not publicize it. You can see that government funded agents and NGOs have worked towards promoting the legislation, like the Harmony House workshop, but their problem is a lack of funding. They can't afford to concentrate solely on same-sex violence, so they are trying to use the same funding to cover both areas."

As domestic violence legislation is a civil law remedy leaving no criminal record, it is difficult to say how effective the legislation has been or, indeed whether it has been utilized at all.

"In fairness it's really too early to say. It can take up to ten years before new legislation takes effect. But then you have to also look at the progress that has been made so far which is, frankly, pretty much zero."

"I have no doubt that in five years time, awareness will be higher. These organizations are doing the best they can with the funding and resources available to them. My research is really to reflect that people shouldn't be satisfied with the fact that the legislation is there. It's not finished yet, it's a journey that should continue." ■



Students subjected to sexual abuse seem to speak up more at school.

Child Victimization in China

More than 30,000 teenagers and parents were interviewed in a massive study to determine the extent of child victimization in China, including child sexual abuse.

The effects of child victimization are well-known – depression and other mental health problems, difficulty concentrating in school, even poor physical health. But until now, the extent of the problem in China has been largely a matter of speculation.

Dr Edward Chan Ko-ling, Assistant Professor of Social Work and Social Administration, has been in-charge of a huge study to plug the information hole. He oversaw a small army of interviewers who went into the field to survey 3,321 15-17 year olds at home, 18,341 of them at school and 8,945 parents to determine both the prevalence and risk factors of child victimization in China.

They found that large numbers of teenagers had been subject to victimization such as conventional crime, maltreatment, bullying and witnessing violence or victimization, although the responses varied among each of the three responding groups.

Some 50.1 per cent of teenagers surveyed at home reported they had been subject to victimization and 71.7 per cent surveyed at school reported the same. Parents only reported 35.1 per cent.

In terms of sexual abuse, 3.1 per cent of teenagers surveyed at home said they had been subject to sexual victimization, against eight per cent of

teenagers surveyed at school and only 1.3 per cent of parents. By comparison, the rate in the US is reported to be more than 10 per cent.

Under-reporting or reality?

"Under-reporting could be possible because of the cultural shame or stigmatization attached to sexual abuse, but we still see the possibility that the results may be reflecting reality," Dr Chan said, particularly as supervision of children tends to be stronger in Chinese society than in the US.

Dr Chan said the discrepancies between teenager reports and those of their parents may be because parents did not want to record any abusive incidents they knew of, or because they simply did not know about such incidents. All questionnaires were completed in private, but teenagers at school may have felt freer to respond because they faced less psychological burden from having their parents nearby, he said.

Apart from the prevalence of abuse, the findings also highlighted how other types of family violence increase the likelihood of child victimization.

Violence between parents increased the risk 1.5 times, violence between in-laws increased the risk 2.6 times, and violence against elderly people in the home tripled the risk that children themselves would be victimized.

Boys, rural residents more affected

Boys were more likely to be victimized than girls, and people living in rural areas were more likely to be affected by violence and child victimization than those in urban areas (the study was carried out in Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuhan, Xi'an and Hong Kong; results for Hong Kong were similar to those of other Mainland cities).

"It may be that the extended family [in rural areas] interacts more and so gives rise to more conflict. You also have a more patriarchal structure, which is heavily associated in other studies with partner violence and child abuse. You can't conclude that the nuclear family is free from that, but the subculture in rural areas is more supportive to the use of violence," Dr Chan said.

He added that the findings underscored the value of screening for multiple types of violence when one type was detected. The results also offer a baseline for tracking changes in child victimization in future.

The project was funded by the UBS Optimus Foundation, which is supporting child abuse research after UN studies found global data on violence against children was unrepresentative and highly variable. The first surveys being funded are Dr Chan's China study and a similar project in Switzerland. ■



Dr Edward Chan



Parents could be doing more to break the burden of silence.

New Weapons to Beat an Age-Old Killer

Two groundbreaking studies could change the way lethal flu viruses are combated in the future.



Scientists in the Department of Microbiology have made two major breakthroughs that could change the face of influenza treatment.

In a study, published in *Nature Biotechnology*, the team led by Professor Yuen Kwok-yung, discovered that an important viral structural protein - influenza nucleoprotein (NP) - can be used as a target to kill flu viruses, including H1N1, H3N2 and H5N1. This is the first time that research work from the HKSAR led by local researchers has been published in *Nature Biotechnology*, the top journal in this field.

Yuen, Henry Fok Professor in Infectious Diseases, Head of the Department of Microbiology, HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine says, "From conceiving the idea, designing the study, to carrying out the experiments, almost everything was done here in Hong Kong by local researchers. It shows that Hong Kong has the capability to develop and lead world-class basic science research. The research was not surveillance type work but a conceptual breakthrough. We are truly proud of it."

Fighting flu head-on

With the alarming rise in resistance of flu viruses to anti-viral drugs this new discovery provides fresh hope that the medical establishment can continue to fight flu and severe influenza pneumonia head on.

Professor Yuen explains, "For many years, antiviral drugs have often been directed towards viral enzymes which catalyse the viral life cycle so as to reduce the viral load in patients. By reducing the number of viruses produced, for example in influenza, by administering antiviral

drugs, the immune system will sooner or later control the infection."

"Alternatively, some antiviral drugs act on the surface proteins of the virus to stop it from attaching or entering the host cell. This is also another important way to control viral infections. But our *Nature Biotechnology* paper shows for the first time that an internal (non-surface) structural (non-enzyme) protein of influenza virus can be effectively targeted by a novel antiviral compound. That is, we are attacking the heart (nucleoprotein) of the influenza virus."

"If this can happen for influenza viruses, then antiviral agents can be found for any virus with an internal nucleoprotein. This represents a very important breakthrough in our concept of antiviral targeting and opens up a new arena for antiviral discovery. This can help to address the problem of antiviral resistance by creating a new class of antiviral compounds."

He was assisted in his research by co-principal investigator Dr Richard Kao of the Carol Yu Centre for Infection in the Department of Microbiology and in collaboration with Professor Yang Dan, Morningside Professor in Chemical Biology of the Department of Chemistry.

Reducing mortality

In another study, also led by Professor Yuen, it was found that treating patients with convalescent plasma from donors who have recovered from swine flu can reduce the mortality rate in the most severe cases.

From April to December 2009, more than 30,000 patients were found to have contracted the human swine influenza H1N1 in Hong Kong. Among

them, one per cent shows symptoms severe enough to require hospitalization and respiratory support. Eighty-five of those patients eventually died.

That same year the large-scale human swine flu vaccination programme targeting high-risk sections of the population was launched by the Department of Health in Hong Kong, but uptake rate was unfortunately very low due to a reported case of Guillain-Barre syndrome following vaccination in a health care worker.

Also, a significant proportion of the patients infected with swine flu were healthy young adults with no apparent risk factors, and therefore not candidates for vaccination. Many of these severe cases were late presenters who failed to receive treatment within the optimal 48-hour period for successful treatment with antiviral agents like Tamiflu.

Working with Dr Ivan Hung Fan-ngai, Clinical Assistant Professor of the Department of Medicine, Professor Yuen treated these severe cases with convalescent plasma.

Neutralizing antibodies

Professor Yuen says, "Anti-flu drugs like Tamiflu or Relenza are quite effective in treating flu within two days of the onset of symptoms. However, patients with severe influenza pneumonia often come to the hospitals after five days, so antiviral treatment is not very useful in this group of late presenters."

"The neutralizing antibodies in the convalescent plasma of recovered patients do not suffer the same shortcomings seen in Tamiflu and Relenza. We found that the survival rate of patients given convalescent plasma is double that of patients not given such treatment."

"The treatment effectively reduces the viral load and dampens the pro-inflammatory cytokine response, resulting in reduced mortality. It also overcomes the problems of the emergence of resistant strains and of late presenters."

Professor Yuen says they will continue to investigate exactly why antibodies appear to be superior to antiviral drugs in young late-presenting patients.

The results of this project were published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. ■



Professor Yuen Kwok-yung



Falling Through the Cracks

The shocking rise in suicides amongst young men can be blamed on a severe lack of social support, says one HKU expert.



Professor Yip Siu-fai

Hong Kong's suicide rate amongst men aged between 15 and 24 has risen by a staggering 30 per cent since 2008, yet the government is doing little to curtail the trend according the Director of our Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention.

Professor Paul Yip Siu-fai says Hong Kong's suicide rate is 20-30 per cent higher than countries like the UK, the US and Australia, yet we lag behind those nations in promoting suicide prevention measures.

"In England, the US and Australia they have a national strategy," he says. "In Hong Kong we have nothing like that. Our Centre has been trying to play a quasi-role in promoting suicide prevention, the government has recently awarded us a grant of \$5 million for research into suicide

prevention. But you need to have a co-ordinated holistic approach to tackling this problem, at the moment it's piecemeal, the government reacts to cluster suicides rather than being proactive in preventing them."

The group of cluster suicides last year, when six people on one public housing estate committed suicide in a three month period prompted a public outcry. But Professor Yip says these deaths were preventable.

A fatal disconnection

"All were young people and most were unemployed, or not in school. This leads to a disconnection which is at the root of all these problems. If young people are in school, even if they hate it, they still have friends and schoolmates. Once they are out of the school system, if they are not employed they become disconnected."

"We have found that it is the unemployed youths that drive these figures up. Also they are male and males are not good at seeking help. Most of the Post-80s youths spend their time on the Internet and playing Internet games, and often do not see real people. It could be that this virtual connection is not benefitting them and they become unable to relate to people and society in general."

"They feel they don't belong, so whether they commit suicide or not doesn't matter because they feel nobody cares. They drop out of school because no-one cares whether they do or not, they don't get a job for the same reason." They are frustrated and depressed and see no hope in sight."

Family dysfunction and lack of family support increase the risk of young people engaging in so-called deviant behaviour, for example, suicide, drug abuse, smoking, or compensation dating.

High-risk factors

Professor Yip says, "Those who commit suicide usually have low self esteem, and they do not have a good social support system. Being unemployed or out of school increases the suicide risk considerably. One thing we are trying to do is either keep them in school happily or give them something they are interested in doing. If they have nothing to do then they just get more depressed."

He suggests vocational training. "But one problem is that our industries are not increasing as fast as the number of graduates, so there's a discrepancy between supply and demand. The available jobs in Hong Kong are limited to a small number of industries like the financial or service industry, if you're not good at these two things then it's very hard to get a job."

"There are very few jobs for bakers, electricians, plumbers, or car mechanics. Also there is a prejudice amongst young people that these are not good jobs and that you have to be dumb to do these jobs. We (especially parents) should not have this attitude."

He sees suicide prevention as a two-pronged approach of education and employment. "These two are the so-called up-stream problems. If you can solve these problems then you can lower the suicide rate."

"If you can put a dollar sum on the human capital that is wasted through suicides annually we estimate it to be around \$1.6 billion a year. Spending just a fraction of that on prevention will help."

A solvable problem

So why is so little being done? "Prejudice and stigma," he says and cites the funding available for cancer research, and cancer prevention campaigns.

Every year in Hong Kong 1,000 people kill themselves. Suicide ranks number seven as a leading cause of death and number four in terms of years of life lost. Roughly 150 people die in car accidents each year but how much money do we spend on accident prevention, how much money do we spend on suicide prevention?" Preventing suicide in Hong Kong has not received sufficient concern from the community and the Government compared to other illness like Cancer, HIV and AIDS.

"Those who commit suicide are mentally distressed but it's very fixable, early intervention could save these people."

Professor Yip cites two factors necessary to lowering the rate. "We need to make school a more interesting place for young people so they stop dropping out. Then we need to give them a decent job, with a decent salary, not let them

work in a job without any prospects for a pittance. If this was my job, I would be wondering what life was all about."

He suggests adopting the prevention strategies common in western countries, like the US, the UK and Australia. "They accept suicide prevention as a national strategy, adopting a public health approach to involve all stakeholders in the community. They have a lot of campaigns, there's a lot of public awareness, less stigmatization of suicide and also they value support services for vulnerable members of society much more than we do in Hong Kong. Preventing suicide involves multilayer intervention from community stakeholders. We need to build a consortium in the community to connect the disconnected. We need a concerted holistic approach to solving this problem. We need to win their hearts today, otherwise they will break our hearts tomorrow." ■

A \$5 million Boost to Research

A new \$5 million grant from the Lotteries Fund will boost the University's research into suicide prevention.

The grant, approved with the endorsement of the government's Social Welfare Department (SWD), has been awarded to the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention in the Faculty of Social Sciences. It will allow scholars to undertake a three-year community-based project on suicide prevention (2011-2014) in a selected geographic area of Hong Kong.

Jointly initiated by the University and the SWD, the project reflects a joint commitment to tackling Hong Kong's worrying suicide rate.

"We are delighted with this grant," said the Centre's Director, Professor Paul Yip Siu-fai. "It is an example of how knowledge exchange can benefit the community. We are ready to make a difference."

A New Approach to an Old Subject

Sexing up the history curriculum is paying dividends.



Professor Xu Guoqi

Those who think of History as a fusty, dusty subject best relegated to the pages of ... well, history, may be forced to think again. For the Department of History has unveiled a series of common core subjects that has had students scrambling to sign up. And it's not hard to see why, with titles that could have been plucked from the pages of this morning's paper: *'Catastrophes, Cultures and the Angry Earth'* sounds more like news than history, given the recent earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Sendai, Japan.

Such was the attraction of the Department's common core submissions that it remains the only Department in the Faculty of Arts to have all five contributions accepted. Alongside the aforementioned *'Catastrophes'* are *'Battles for Bodies: Public Health in the Modern World'*, which promises to explore the position of governments in managing the most intimate aspects of our existence, from the food we eat to our sexual behaviour; *'Making History: Engaging with the Powerful Past'*, which asks why we should care about the past and what relevance it might have to our future. It also poses the question, 'Is there such a thing a 'true' historical account?' Meanwhile, *'Contagions: Global Histories of Disease'* seems particularly apt in the age of swine flu and regular doomsday warnings of influenza pandemics. It investigates the ways in which epidemics have shaped the modern world and wonders how globalization has contributed to the spread of disease. Finally, *'Sports and Chinese Society'*, to be offered from next year to coincide with the London Olympic Games, will deal with the body, mind and spirit.

Fun and interesting

Undergraduate co-ordinator, Professor Xu Guoqi, who will be teaching *'Sports and Chinese Society'*, says it was the overall attraction of the five subjects that led to every one being accepted.

"The standard criteria for common core subjects are that they be attractive to the University's general community. Secondly they must be exciting, and all of our history courses are based on cutting edge research. A lot of what we do in this Department is new, nobody has covered it before. So we make history interesting, exciting and relevant based on our research. You cannot take these types of courses anywhere else in the world, because each of us is an authority in the area we are teaching.

"For us, teaching and learning are complementary. Everything that we offer is relevant to students' lives - the human body, the powerful past, natural disasters. They're all very topical. Everyone thinks History is boring, but for us it's so relevant to reality. We make it fun and interesting."

Another course Professor Xu has been teaching explores China's relation to the wider world since 1600. "It's a very popular course," he says. So popular, in fact, that it was oversubscribed.

"Students assume History is all about memory, but we tell them we don't have exams, we emphasize critical thinking in writing and research skills. This is important for any career. We force students to go beyond conventional wisdom and to think creatively. We have leading scholars in their field here and for us it is both a teaching and a learning process. I learn from the students too."

Diverse in scope

While writing a major book on Sino-American relations for Harvard University Press, Dr Xu is offering a research seminar for undergraduate students starting this spring and titled 'Chinese and Americans: a cultural and international history.' In this course, he asks his students to choose a subject for research and then inform the rest of the class of what they have found.

"One student researched the role of Korea in China-US relations, another talked about Chinese prostitutes in San Francisco in the 19th century, and another looked at the image of Japan in US-China relations. I didn't know anything about these subjects. It was the students' job to convince me of what they had learned. They find it very exciting, and it also makes it more interesting for me as a teacher."

For a small Department of just eleven regular academics, the courses on offer are remarkable diverse in scope. Those eleven academics hail from nine different countries.

"We all bring something unique," says Dr Xu. "This concentration of international expertise is not available anywhere else in the world."

And he argues, "It could be said that no-one else in the world can do what we are doing here, because of the unique mixture of international expertise and our location on China's doorstep. We are the only University in Asia to have launched a Centre focusing on Humanities and Medicine, for example. I believe that what we are doing here can really stand out globally." ■



Icon for the Course: *'Catastrophes, Cultures, and the Angry Earth.'*



A Modern Assessment of a Historic Church

The Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican Church) has had a presence in Hong Kong for more than 160 years. The church plans to redevelop part of the site, but first sought out conservation advice from the Faculty of Architecture.



The compound of the Sheng Kung Hui Church is a repository of Hong Kong's social and religious history, containing one of the only buildings to have survived a major fire in the city in the 1870s.

The Housing Society and St James' Settlement were founded there, Chung Chi College was based there for a while, author Han Suyin was rumoured to have written *A Many-Splendoured Thing* in its guesthouse, and 19th century explorer and writer Isabella Bird made a stop at the Bishop's House.

The Faculty of Architecture is now playing a role in preserving the church's rich legacy after being commissioned to draft a conservation management plan for the site, which is about to undergo major redevelopment.

Four buildings are earmarked for conservation - the Bishop's House, the old Kei Yan Primary School, the Church Guest House and St Paul's Church - and Masters students in the Architectural Conservation Programme (ACP) have conducted detailed surveys of the buildings under the supervision of academic staff, Dr Lee Ho-yin.

"The Anglican church is part of the Hong Kong government's 'Conserving Central' project. This is the first voluntary heritage impact assessment to be carried out in Hong Kong and hopefully the work we have done will set an example for future," says Tris Kee, Director of the Faculty's Community Project Workshop (CPW) which has helped to oversee the students' work.



Assessing the buildings

The students took measurements and surveyed the condition of the buildings, and examined everything from the windows, ceiling features, mosaic floors, staircases and stone carvings, to the type of paint used and the addition of structures such as enclosed balconies. All of this was photographed.

They also carried out historical research which included archival searches and interviews with people who had used the buildings over the years, and they attended planning meetings with the architects of the redevelopment project.

Building plans had to be carefully combed through because there had been a number of changes to the buildings and their use. There were five different versions of plans, making it a headache to determine the original purpose of different rooms.



Recent MSc(Conservation) graduate Inaciso Chan Ping-chi, who is now Research Assistant in the CPW, was the co-ordinator. "In the end, we generated a management plan and assessment for the compound, which was in quite good condition because it had had regular maintenance. Our recommendation at the moment is that they don't need to do any major intervention."

Stories in the bricks

The students also uncovered fascinating information about the church's history, much of which had been dormant for decades, through documents such as public records and personal accounts written by people like Isabella Bird, whose visit to the Bishop's House helped to date the building because she arrived just after the 1870s fire that destroyed most of the city's structures.

Han Suyin describes the church guesthouse in her book, although the students found no independent record of her staying there. They had better luck with tunnels that were dug during the Japanese occupation: records of these finally came to light after a meeting between the students and the church, when an engineer in attendance was able to track the records in the Lands Department.

The final report was submitted to the church in April and will be a reference for not only the current redevelopment, but also any future projects. Ms Kee says they are also in talks with the church about doing oral histories of the buildings, including people who work there and the architects of the redevelopment.

Inaciso says: "Conservation is all about people. If people don't understand the history and architectural value, it doesn't make sense to conserve the buildings." ■



Award Presentation Ceremony for Excellence in Teaching & Research 2010

The 10th anniversary of the Award Presentation Ceremony for Excellence and Research was held on February 17, 2011, to recognize the outstanding achievements of the University of Hong Kong's academics.

Awards were handed out to 24 recipients, including a team of teachers, who were selected for their dedication and innovation and the high quality of their work. Ten prizes were also awarded for individual research output.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, praised the recipients and said the significance of their work extended beyond the academic world to the wider community.

"Their research and innovations bring about important scientific discoveries, technological advancements and new intellectual horizons. More important is perhaps their contributions in teaching and training our next generation of leaders, who hold promise in furthering our knowledge and enriching our society and humankind," he said.

These contributions help to underscore HKU's legacy, which has been training leaders and playing a leadership role in academic affairs in Hong Kong for nearly 100 years.

The Guest of Honour, Council Chairman, Dr the Honourable Leong Che-hung, noted that the University had weathered many changes over the years and relied on the dedication of its members to face challenges and realize its aspirations. This was true even today as HKU transformed its campus and curriculum to meet the demands of the new four-year undergraduate curriculum.

"The significance of the developments is not the increase in headcounts and square footage - it is the expansion of a community of learning and knowledge advancement dedicated to both leading the community and responding to local and global needs," he said.

The recipients of this year's Awards embody that commitment through the achievements described in the following pages. More photos from the event and video presentations of the recipients can be seen at www.hku.hk/award/.

Award Presentation Ceremony for Excellence in Teaching & Research 2010

University Distinguished Teaching Award

Distinguished teachers demonstrate their commitment to teaching excellence both in the classroom and in their contributions to the development of teaching and learning at the Faculty and University levels.

Dr Tsing Nam-kiu

Department of Mathematics

Dr Tsing has a passion for mathematics and the unsolved problems it poses that is matched by his passion for teaching and helping students overcome challenges. He brings his two interests together through his energetic efforts to promote mathematics to a wider audience and show its applicability in the real world.

One of the key factors of his success as a teacher is his ability to re-think and re-assess, and his willingness to move in new directions. He has done this in the classroom and with the curriculum at both the Faculty and University level.

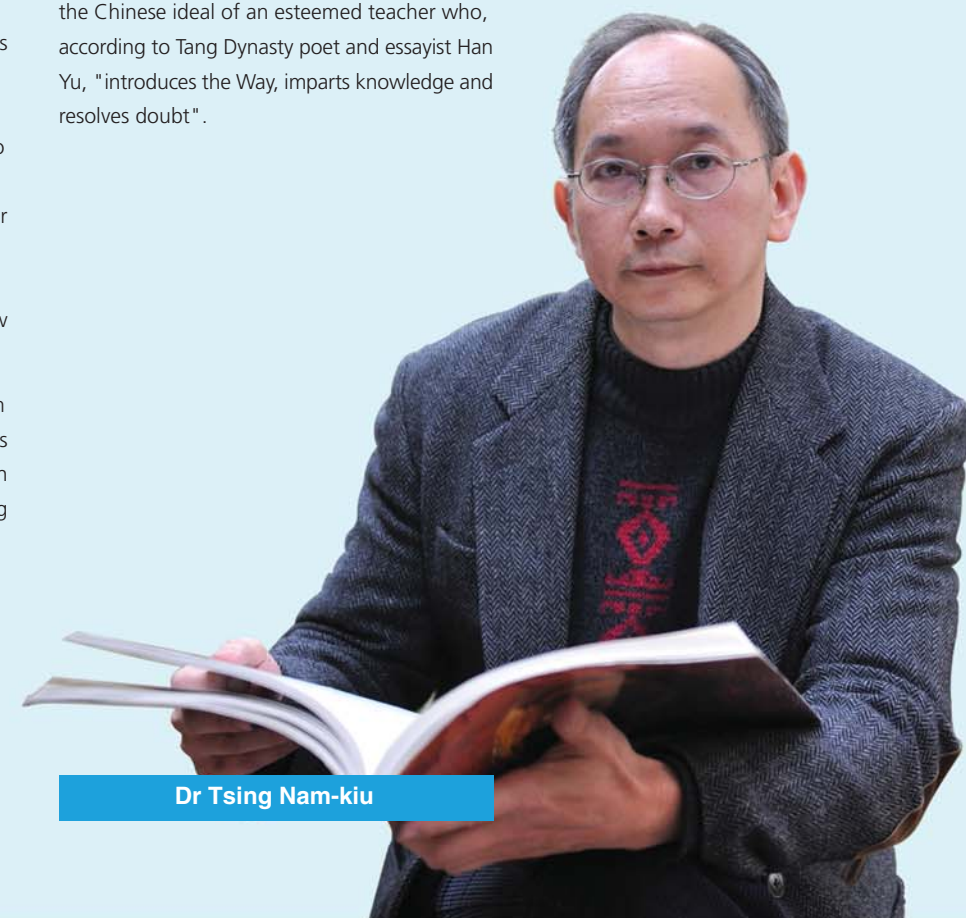
A major influence on his approach with students has been American anthropology professor, Rebekah Nathan, who taught at university for 15 years then used her sabbatical to go back to school as a freshman to better understand the challenges students face in the 21st century. Her observations inspired Dr Tsing to look anew at students as individuals, to seek more feedback from them on his teaching and to reconsider how he could address weak links in their learning.

That devotion to helping students learn led him to develop foundation and Common Core courses for science and non-science students, and to run the Junior Science Institute which nurtures young

scientists in secondary schools and universities. He has also played an active role in reforming the BSc curriculum, after being appointed Associate Dean in 2007, and has also organized opportunities for undergraduate research through local and overseas fellowships and the Undergraduate Research Colloquium. At the University level he has been part of the planning team for the new four-year curriculum, which includes the Common Core.

Dr Tsing's teaching has evoked much praise from students, who have described his teaching as infectious and his character as kind, patient and caring. He is seen as an embodiment of *laoshi*, the Chinese ideal of an esteemed teacher who, according to Tang Dynasty poet and essayist Han Yu, "introduces the Way, imparts knowledge and resolves doubt".

Dr Tsing's approach has had a long-lasting impact on his students. Cheuk Hon, his former undergraduate and MPhil student who now chairs a mathematics panel at secondary schools, says Dr Tsing taught him deeper lessons beyond theoretical knowledge and application. "I attribute my teaching career to *laoshi*. ...His personal integrity, his scholarly disposition, his erudition, and his cultured outlook have been and will continue to be a source of inspiration for the rest of my life."



Dr Tsing Nam-kiu

Award Presentation Ceremony for Excellence in Teaching & Research 2010

Outstanding Teaching Award

This award signifies the University's commitment to recognizing and promoting excellence in teaching. This year a new Team Award category was added to recognize and promote collaborative teaching.

Mr John Lin Chun-han

Department of Architecture

Great teaching is marked not by a desire to teach, but by a desire to learn, says Mr Lin. This was true of the great teachers who have taught him and it is a goal he aspires to.

"The few clarifying moments from my own education, when the excitement I felt for my newly chosen discipline was at its height, are all moments where I distinctly felt that no one, not the teacher nor the other students, had any idea of where we were heading," he says.

"In looking back it was in these rare experiences of finding myself put in a position to peer into unknown territory that ultimately filled me with immense desire to be an architect."

Mr Lin says the teacher's role in this is not simply to transfer knowledge to students, but to create conditions where students can acquire their own knowledge. Experiential learning provides opportunities to do this, particularly through the community projects that architecture students engage in, such as building bridges or schools in rural communities.

"Often the problems we face in the real world are not ones that students have already encountered in the classroom setting. More importantly, they do not have pre-existing solutions. It becomes far more important to teach students how to engage and define the problems before seeking solutions."



Mr John Lin Chun-han

Dr David Martin Pomfret

School of Humanities (History)

Dr Pomfret sees teaching as a collaborative process of learning with his students and he uses highly modern tools to bring the past alive.

Videos, podcasts, wikis and websites all feature in his classes where he aims to link together events and trends to show students how history informs our lives today.

"Wherever it takes place, the pursuit of history involves making the unfamiliar familiar, fashioning order from chaos, the study of a subject which is no longer even present. In Hong Kong the pursuit of history is doubly challenging. For here, in a city defined by not being part of the nation that it has recently joined, and where 'the sense of the temporary is very strong', an ambivalence toward the practice of professional history, with its deep roots in nation-building, lingers on," he says.

"The transformative breakthroughs which come from studying history make the pursuit of the past potentially more powerful here."

Indeed, Dr Pomfret says learning about the past has had a cathartic effect on students, and this makes teaching history especially rewarding. Students also learn there is no right answer.

"Through the assessment methods that I have devised, they begin to see the ability to reflect and connect their own lives with past lives as a learning target," he says.



Dr David Martin Pomfret

Professor Bennett Yim Chi-kin

School of Business

Professor Yim believes strongly in the value of experiential learning. He quotes Confucius: *I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand*. That means not only offering students varied approaches to learning, but also using his marketing research in the classroom so students can learn from the latest, field-based knowledge.

"I bring research into my teaching to help students see how academic study and the practices of the business world can be engaged," he says.

Professor Yim says effective teachers need to explore, experiment and keep revising. He has reflected on his own successes and failures and says they helped him to continually improve his teaching.

As a teacher, he is most inspired by the opportunity to have a positive influence on his students.

"An excellent teacher must truly care about his student's learning. He should be an inspiration that motivates students to learn, a fair judge that offers them sincere feedback, and a caring friend who is available to listen and understand their problems both in and outside the classroom.

"I have been most fortunate to have learned from many great teachers and all my students, they are the inspiration, reward and motivation that keep my passion alive in my continual pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning," he says.



Professor Bennett Yim Chi-kin

Team Award

Mr Peter Lee Kai-kwong (Leader), Professor Leslie George Tham, Professor Albert Kwan Kwok-hung, Dr Su Kai-leung, Dr Guo Dajiang and Dr Huang Yuping

Department of Civil Engineering for the Mingde Projects



Dr Huang Yuping, Dr Su Kai-leung, Professor Albert Kwan Kwok-hung, Professor Leslie George Tham, Mr Peter Lee Kai-kwong and Dr Guo Dajiang

"All engineering projects require teamwork," says Professor Tham, and so it is with engineering teachers. Working as a team, these six Civil Engineering academics have helped to develop a project that offers students real-world practice in a setting where they are also helping those in need.

The *Mingde Projects* began in 2005, after an alumnus approached the department with his concern that children had difficulty getting to primary school in Guangxi. He suggested Civil Engineering students could help to offer a solution, and the department jumped at the chance.

Students involved in the first project had to take on all aspects of project development, such as interviewing the local villagers, carrying out site surveys, drafting building plans, securing approval from the authorities and monitoring progress.

The teachers went with them, but took the view that their role was to offer students guidance and to let them get on with the work. The programme was so successful that it was continued, so as to provide students with ongoing experiential learning and fill a community need.

Adrian Lai, BEng(CivE) 2005 and a PhD 2010 graduate, was part of the original group that went to Guangxi.

"The project gave me a unique opportunity to apply theories learnt in the classroom, and also broadened my engineering knowledge. Throughout the project there were a lot of people helping and teaching us voluntarily. I understand that they are all busy people and I greatly appreciate their enthusiasm in serving society. From them, I have learnt how to become a better person," he says.

Sharon Wong, BEng(CivE) 2009 and an MPhil student, has also participated in the *Mingde Projects*, helping to build a dormitory there.

"In my first site visit, when the students took us to their temporary dormitories, I was shocked by the crowded living conditions and saw the urgent need for a new dormitory. After the completion of Gewu Luo, I re-visited the site and stayed in the new dormitory. The experience was really exciting. Gewu has no air conditioning, hot water system or other luxuries, but it has a comfortable and warm living environment. I was amazed by what we had achieved in such a short period of time!" she says.

Dr Su says the experience was also valuable for teachers. "In the classroom, you may only discuss the radical aspects of a subject, but at the site, we have time to talk about the things of daily life and so on - we can share our experiences with them," he says.

Award Presentation Ceremony for
Excellence in
Teaching & Research
2010

Outstanding Researcher Award

Scholars who produce exceptional research of international merit are honoured with this award and receive \$250,000 to further their research.

Professor Christopher Mark Hutton

School of English

Professor Hutton's research is concerned with the politics of language and linguistics and the history of linguistics, in particular the relationships between linguistics and race theory, colonialism and fascism. More recently, he has been working on language issues in the law, and how lawyers and linguists go about solving difficult problems of definition and interpretation.

Professor Hutton has a longstanding interest in slang, jargon and underworld language, having for many years taught a course in which students do project work on special 'sub-languages', such as the special vocabulary used by taxi drivers, criminals, prisoners or restaurant workers. He was the principal editor of a dictionary of Cantonese slang and has an ongoing project on prison language. One of the advantages of this research area, he says, is that you can collect data whilst watching television or reading gangster comics.

"It gives me a sense of the complexity of Cantonese linguistic culture," he says. "I like to think historically and sociologically about language. You really have to be driven on by a sense of not accepting the world as it presents itself to you."

Professor Sun Hongzhe

Department of Chemistry

Professor Sun's research interests lie in the frontier of inorganic chemistry and biology/medicine. He has recently focused on the structural biology of metallo-proteins, and on metallomics and metalloproteomics. By using chemical biology and metallomic approaches, his research team has identified several key metallo-drug binding proteins and characterized selected metallo-transport and storage proteins in microorganisms that provide a basis for mechanism-based drug design.

Of his research he says, "We don't know the answers in advance so we have to find all sorts of ways to uncover them. As a good researcher you have to have strong training in your particular area, but because of the nature of today's interdisciplinary research, you have to have knowledge of other areas too. For me, it's not just chemistry, but biology, and even medicine. You have to learn and explore new things. Often the more exciting it is the more difficult, and the more exciting things are interdisciplinary."

Professor Sun appreciates colleagues both in and outside the University for their collaboration and particularly values the importance of teamwork involving his group members. He would like to dedicate the award in part to his family.

Professor Christopher Mark Hutton

Professor Ed Wu Xuekui

Professor Sun Hongzhe

Professor Richard Yuen Man-fung

Professor Ed Wu Xuekui

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Professor Wu has turned the expression 'seeing is believing' on its head. His belief that we can see more than we think has led him into the field of in vivo biomedical engineering - essentially, taking pictures of the cells and activities inside the body - where he has made significant contributions.

Professor Wu's research has concentrated on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) methodology and advanced biomedical applications. He has explored MR characterization of neural and heart tissues, the development of novel MRI contrast agents, molecular imaging, and preclinical MRI for investigating brain functions.

His efforts to blend engineering and medical investigations underscore his belief in interdisciplinary research, which he regards as the gateway to the future in the modern scientific world.

That belief has been put into practice throughout his career. Professor Wu is founding Director of the Laboratory of Biomedical Imaging and Signal Processing (7T MRI Lab) at HKU; he was Director of the NMR Microimaging Laboratory at Columbia University prior to joining HKU in 2003; he is currently the Asia Pacific Regional Editor of *NMR in Biomedicine*; and he is Programme Director of the Medical Engineering BEng Programme at HKU.

Professor Richard Yuen Man-fung

Department of Medicine

Professor Yuen is regarded as one of the world's leading experts in chronic hepatitis B. He has made important research contributions on the prevention, natural history, molecular virology and treatment of chronic hepatitis B infection and published more than 220 research papers.

Professor Yuen has received recognition locally, regionally and globally for his achievements. In 2005 he received the Outstanding Young Researcher Award from HKU, in 2006 the JGH Emerging Leader Lectureship Award from the Asian Pacific Gastroenterology and Hepatology Associations, and in 2008 he was named the Young Scientist of the Year (in medicine) by the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning. He is also ranked as one of the top one per cent of scientists by the ISI Web of Knowledge in clinical medicine.

Professor Yuen's career has advanced quickly. He received his academic degrees from HKU, earning an MBBS in 1992, an MD with the Sir Patrick Manson Gold Medal in 2001, and a PhD in 2005, and joined the HKU Faculty of Medicine as an Associate Professor in 2004. He was promoted to Professor in 2007.

Award Presentation Ceremony for Excellence in Teaching & Research 2010

Outstanding Young Researcher Award

Outstanding academic staff under the age of 40 and ranked Associate Professor or below are honoured with this award. Winners receive \$150,000 annually for two years to further their research, along with a research postgraduate studentship.

Dr Barbara Chan Pui

Department of Mechanical Engineering

Dr Chan's research centres on tissue engineering and regenerative medicine with the ultimate goal of developing biological substitutes for defective tissues. She focuses her efforts on developing platform technologies, such as microencapsulation, photochemical crosslinking and multiphoton prefabrication, and on improving understanding of the interactions between cells and their microenvironment.

Dr Chan obtained her BSc in Biochemistry and PhD in surgical science at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and received her postdoctoral training at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School. She joined HKU as a Research Assistant Professor in 2003 and is currently Associate Professor, as well as the Associate Programme Director of the Medical Engineering Programme.

Dr Chan regards research as a challenging but rewarding process of searching for truth. She has dedicated her award to her students and team members and hopes they will discover and improve their inner selves through the research process.



Dr Barbara Chan Pui

Professor Cecilia Cheng

Department of Psychology

Professor Cheng is a social and health psychologist who focuses on understanding real-life problems, such as stress and coping, psychosomatic disorders, emotional disorders, and health-risk behaviours. She advocates a balanced approach that emphasizes both symptom prevention and health promotion, and her results have been published in high-profile international journals.

Professor Cheng received her PhD from HKU in 1997 and she is currently Professor of Psychology. She is a recipient of the Fulbright Senior Scholar Award and received the Early Career Research Award conferred by the International Council of Psychologists. She is also currently Associate Editor of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Recalling her early days as a researcher, Professor Cheng says she was like a newborn calf with no fear of tigers (obstacles). Her courage has been sustained by the support of her family, to whom she dedicates her award.



Professor Cecilia Cheng

Dr Cui Xiaodong

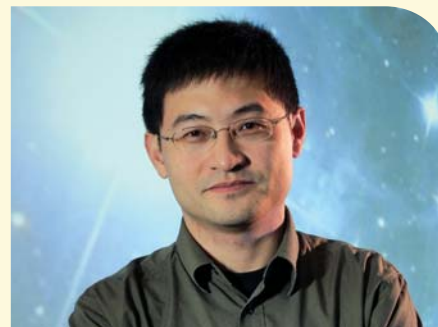
Department of Physics

Dr Cui's research focus is on the experimental approach to the electrical and optical properties of solid state matters, particularly carbon nanotubes and low dimensional semiconductors. He has developed a well-recognized method of measuring the electric conductance of single molecules and revealed the role of electric contacts in carbon nano-tube field effect transistors.

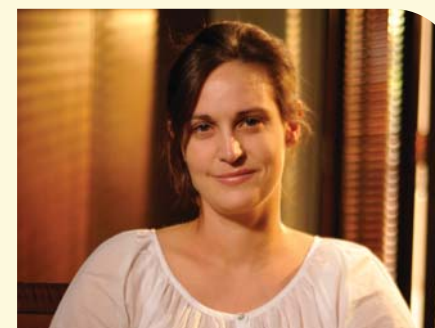
Recently, Dr Cui and his HKU colleagues conducted a series of experiments, for the first time, to quantitatively evaluate the strength of spin currents in a two-dimensional electron gas system, which has been an important but challenging topic in spintronics research.

"If I am a Young Researcher it just means I have a long way to go," he laughs. "My research in physics satisfies my curiosity very much because it tells me how things work, it shows me the rules of daily life."

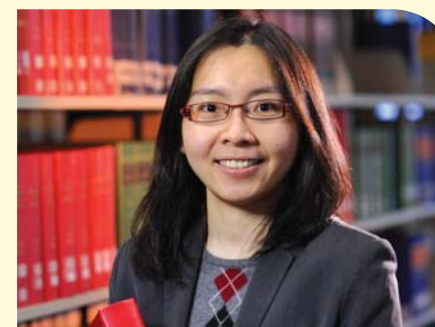
"Science is something that you can't predict the result of, particularly for fundamental science. My ultimate goal is to contribute to physics."



Dr Cui Xiaodong



Dr Julia Christine Kuehn



Ms Rebecca Lee Wing-chi

Dr Julia Christine Kuehn

School of English

Dr Kuehn's research interests lie in the English literature and culture of the 'long nineteenth century', with particular expertise in popular and travel writing. Dr Kuehn is currently completing a monograph on representations of exoticism in canonical and popular women's writing published between 1880 and 1920.

She is a Director of the Man Asian Literary Prize – the Asian brother of the Man Booker Prize – and an Editorial Board Member of *Victoriographies: A Journal of Nineteenth Century Writing 1790-1914*.

Dr Kuehn believes that her research excellence is the result of a healthy work/life balance. "I love what I'm doing," she says. "Ten years of research has taught me that you will get there in the end. You will always find something interesting when investigating culture and literature."

She says she greatly appreciates the generous funding and supportive research environment provided by HKU, and especially the encouragement, advice and cooperation of her colleagues in the School of English, without whom work would be half as much fun.



Dr Eric Tse Wai-choi



Dr Wang Yu

Ms Rebecca Lee Wing-chi

Department of Law

Ms Lee's research interests lie primarily in equity and trusts, and related aspects of Chinese law (including comparative trusts and non-profit law). Her research focuses on theoretical and conceptual understanding of concepts such as 'trust' and 'fiduciary duty' in private law, as well as fundamental issues about the Chinese reception of trusts and other equitable concepts. Ms Lee is both excited and humbled by this award.

She says: "I enjoy puzzles very much. Doing puzzles and doing research has a lot in common. When you start a puzzle you just focus on it until you have the whole picture. You start with the edges and then assemble the inner pieces. Sometimes you know the legal framework and therefore your job is to put the different pieces of work together by assigning them different places in the legal framework and finding the connections between them in the hope that a clearer and better picture will emerge."

Dr Eric Tse Wai-choi

Department of Medicine

Dr Tse's research has focused on the understanding of the biology of cancer, and translating his research findings from bench to the bedside. His research on arsenic trioxide transport in leukaemia will potentially extend the application of this drug to a wider spectrum of cancers. Through the study of intracellular signalling and cell cycles, he has also identified potential therapeutic targets for the treatment of liver cancer. In addition to basic research, Dr Tse is conducting clinical trials on the treatment of cancers.

As a clinician scientist, Dr Tse has enjoyed both the excitement of laboratory research and the satisfaction of patient management.

He says: "Haematology is a unique medical specialty that integrates classical and laboratory science. Being a haematologist enables me to enjoy both the satisfaction of patient management and the excitement of laboratory investigation. It's not easy to be a researcher. One has to face many frustrations, but I think if one perseveres, then the experience of research is still interesting, exciting, rewarding at the end of the day."

Dr Wang Yu

Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy

Dr Wang has published widely in the field of obesity-related metabolic, vascular and cancer diseases. Her team was the first to report the structural features of the anti-diabetic and anti-inflammatory hormone, adiponectin, and pioneered work on the liver-protective functions of this molecule.

Their contributions to adiponectin biology have been widely recognized and cited. In addition, the team has successfully applied modern proteomic technologies to identify a number of biomarkers with significant importance in the pathophysiology of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, resulting in the issuing of three US patents and the filing of three more.

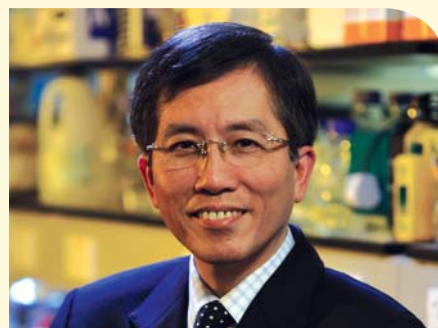
She says, "We are mainly focusing on obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular dysfunctions. Our research is very translational; everything you discover ultimately has to be applied to the clinical aspects. I hope my own experience can help my students to be open-minded and to never give up."

Dr Wang believes that the spirit of collaborative teamwork involving her enthusiastic research students makes research rewarding and enjoyable.

Award Presentation Ceremony for
Excellence in
Teaching & Research
2010

Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award

Research student supervisors, who help their students to achieve excellence, are honoured with this award. They receive \$25,000 to further their research and a Type B research postgraduate studentship.



Professor Chan Ying-shing

Professor Chan Ying-shing

Department of Physiology

Professor Chan is an accomplished neuroscientist who has been honoured internationally for his efforts to promote this field of study.

In 2008, he received a First Medallion of the Australian Neuroscience Society for his services to neuroscience in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in promoting excellence among young investigators. He also received the Medical Faculty Teaching Medal in 2001.

Professor Chan aims to understand each student's background and strengths and encourages them to draw on his expertise.

"They are able to extend the things they have acquired in my research laboratories into their own field of research and this is something I appreciate and treasure," he says. His research focuses on developmental attainment of the adult pattern of spatial information and recognition.

A 2010 PhD graduate, Ng Ka-pak, says Professor Chan always asks 'why' and 'how' when she proposes an experiment to ensure there is a goal and a means to achieve it. "He also provides us with valuable discussion and through that process new ideas are generated," she says.



Professor Mohan Maheswaran
Kumaraswamy

Professor Mohan Maheswaran Kumaraswamy

Department of Civil Engineering

Professor Kumaraswamy believes one of the most important qualities for researchers is an open mind. One way he fosters that is by organizing industry events where students are exposed to different professionals and points of view.

"I believe that diversity brings lots of added value to what we are doing," he says, having himself had a diverse career that includes working with industry in Sri Lanka and Nigeria and acquiring his PhD in the UK.

Postgraduate candidate Kelwin Wong Kar-wai says Professor Kumaraswamy's approach helps broaden their learning. "He gives us a lot of opportunities to take part in conferences and workshops where we're able to hear different professionals give their perspectives on the industry. It's something that we can't just learn from reading books," he says.

Professor Kumaraswamy also believes in the value of teamwork both in learning and research. Together with his students, he has contributed to knowledge and improved practices for procuring, designing and constructing physical infrastructure in a cost effective way.



Dr Yeung Yuk-fung

Dr Yeung Yuk-fung

School of Chinese

Dr Yeung believes researchers reap what they sow, and sowing requires a commitment to keep reading and reflecting.

"Doing research is not just about doing a thesis. It is a lifetime's work," says Dr Yeung, who has devoted his own research to modern and contemporary Chinese literature, Chinese women's literature, and Nanshe studies.

The role of the teacher for young researchers is to try to help them build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses.

"Through the process of teaching, you pass along your own knowledge and research experience to your students and save them from walking down paths that go nowhere. I get great satisfaction from this," he says.

Dr Yeung approaches the task with a light touch which is much appreciated, according to 2007 PhD graduate Dr Ge Liang.

"He gives you a great degree of freedom in doing your own research. For a young researcher, this kind of conceptual space is very important because it allows for more academic creativity," he says.

Research Output Prize

The best pieces of research published or created in each faculty in the last calendar year are honoured with this reward. Recipients receive \$120,000 to further their research.

Architecture

Sick Building Syndrome in apartment buildings is contrasted with occupants' evaluation of the quality of their indoor environment in a study led by Dr Wong Siu-kei, 'Sick Building Syndrome and Perceived Indoor Environmental Quality: A Survey of Apartment Buildings in Hong Kong'. The results were published in *Habitat International*.

Arts

The creation of new or restructured grammars in Monsoon Asia, the Malaysian-Indonesian region and southern China is explored in a book by Dr Umberto Ansaldi, *Contact Languages: Ecology and Evolution in Asia*, published by Cambridge University Press. The study explores the social and structural dynamics that underline and drive the formation of new grammars.

Business and Economics

The 'fit' effect between consumer goals and their decision-making strategies are investigated in a study led by Dr Echo Wan, 'The Effect of Regulatory Orientation and Decision Strategy on Brand Judgements', published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Certain strategies, such as accuracy or progress, may best suit certain goals, such as achievement or safety.

Dentistry

The human mouth hosts both beneficial biofilm organisms and pathogenic ones that can cause uncontrolled oral infections and have profound negative effects on health. A survey of the literature, led by Dr Nipuna Bandara Parahitiyawa, has found strong links between odontogenic infections and related systemic infections. The study, 'Microbiology of Odontogenic Bacteremia: Beyond Endocarditis', was published in *Clinical Microbiology Reviews*.

Education

A study by Dr Alice Wong Siu-ling and Professor Derek Hodson gives voice to scientists on the nature of science (NOS), with results that have implications for science curricula and NOS-focused research. 'From the Horse's Mouth: What Scientists Say About Scientific Investigation and Scientific Knowledge' was published in *Science Education*.

Engineering

A new model to predict real 3-D earthquake motions has been developed by Dr Yang Jun and Ms Yan Xiaorong, in the wake of recent massive earthquakes that raised questions about the traditional view of vertical ground motions. 'Site Response to Multi-directional Earthquake Loading: A Practical Procedure' was published in *Soil Dynamics and Earthquake Engineering*.

Law

A case challenging the identification of refugees under Hong Kong law was analysed by Mr Oliver Richard Jones, who suggested a new approach that was placed in argument before the Hong Kong Court of Appeal. 'Customary Non-Refoulement of Refugees and Automatic Incorporation into the Common Law: A Hong Kong Perspective' was published in *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*.

Medicine

Dr Gao Bo's research team illustrates the molecular mechanism involved in a mutation that alters the action and function of Indian Hedgehog (IHH) proteins causing BDA1, a disorder affecting digit joint formation. Their findings offer information for future therapeutic strategies of common joint defects. 'A Mutation in *Ihh* that Causes Digit Abnormalities Alters Its Signaling Capacity and Range' was published in *Nature*.

Science

Research on secretin, the oldest known hormone, has changed the generally accepted understanding of pituitary hormones. A team led by Dr Jessica Chu Yan-shuen show how secretin regulates renal water re-absorption, with implications for treating X-linked Nephrogenic Diabetes Insipidus. 'Secretin as a Neurohypophysial Factor Regulating Body Water Homeostasis' was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Social Sciences

Dr Cheris Chan contributes to the debate on social embeddedness in economic activities through ethnographic observations and interviews that highlight the meaning of social ties and their interaction with Chinese *guanxi* networks. 'Invigorating the Content in Social Embeddedness: An Ethnography of Life Insurance Transactions in China' was published in the *American Journal of Sociology*.



Nobel Laureate Joins Outstanding Individuals at Honorary Degrees Congregation

Honorary degrees are conferred on those who have made valuable intellectual, social and cultural contributions to society and the world. In March of this year, at the 184th Congregation, the University had the pleasure of awarding honorary degrees to seven outstanding individuals, including the 'Father of Fibre Optics', Professor Sir Charles Kao Kuen, in recognition of their distinguished service and commitment to the University, to the community, and to academia.

They were awarded by the University's Pro-Chancellor Dr the Honourable David K.P. Li, at Loke Yew Hall.

The Honourable Mr Justice Patrick Chan Siu-oi

Doctor of Laws honoris causa

Mr Justice Patrick Chan Siu-oi is one of the three Permanent Judges of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong SAR. He has made important contributions to the implementation of a bilingual court system in Hong Kong and has worked tirelessly to introduce and propagate a bilingual legal system aimed at rendering the law and court proceedings understandable to both English and Chinese speakers.

He has also been deeply involved in legal education, working closely with this University's Law Faculty, supporting its development and

providing opportunities for students to better understand the discipline.

He has served on many HKU committees, including the University's Council from 2000-2009, and was awarded an Honorary University Fellowship in 2003.

His lifetime ambition, he says, has always been to become a social worker and he has been driven through his legal career by a strong social conscience and powerful patriotic sentiment. Although social services have been deprived of a great potential servant, Mr Justice Chan has been able, through his legal work, to provide great service to the community.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and to Hong Kong, Mr Justice Patrick Chan Siu-oi was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.



Professor Sir Charles Kao Kuen

Doctor of Science honoris causa

Professor Sir Charles Kao Kuen is internationally renowned as the 'Father of Fibre Optics' and a Nobel Laureate in Physics. Every time we use the Internet we should give thanks to him for making the service more readily accessible.

We should be similarly grateful every time we make an international telephone call. These facilities, which we now take for granted as an indispensable part of our every-day lives, owe much to his brilliance of mind and his dedication to research.

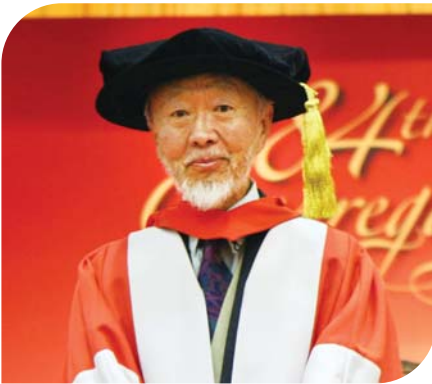
Born in Shanghai in 1933, Sir Charles went on to graduate with a degree in Electrical Engineering

from the University of London in 1957, and then worked as an engineer for Standard Telephones and Cables, and its research centre, Standard Telecommunications Laboratories (STL).

While working at STL, he began his pioneering work in the realization of fibre optics as a telecommunications medium. He later served as Corporate Director of Research at the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, and was its first Executive Scientist.

From 1987-1996 he was Vice-Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2009 and a Knighthood and the Grand Bauhinia Medal in 2010.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and Hong Kong, Professor Sir Charles Kao Kuen was conferred the degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*.



Professor John Leong Chi-yan

Doctor of Science honoris causa

Professor John Leong Chi-yan is the President of the Open University of Hong Kong, and at HKU, an Emeritus Professor and an Honorary Professor of its Departments of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, and Biochemistry.

Professor Leong is one of Hong Kong's most eminent medical practitioners. He has been with the University for 38 years, during which time he has served as Director of the Faculty of Medicine's School of Postgraduate Medical Education and Training, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Chief of Service of the Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology at Queen Mary Hospital, and

Professor and Head of the HKU Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

When asked why he chose to remain in academia for so long, he replied that he derived great satisfaction from academic life because it allowed him to devote his attentions to complicated medical problems while continuing to conduct cutting-edge clinical research. He also enjoyed the stimulation and challenge of teaching and research in the context of his vibrant and rapidly developing medical speciality.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of Edinburgh and England, was elected as an Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2001, and was awarded an OBE in 1996 and a Silver Bauhinia Star in 2009.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and Hong Kong, Professor John Leong Chi-yan was conferred the degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*.



Dr John Chan Cho-chak
Doctor of Social Sciences honoris causa

Dr John Chan Cho-chak is renowned and respected for his lifetime of contributions to many different sectors in Hong Kong. He has enjoyed a distinguished career as civil servant, business tycoon and community leader. His contribution to the prosperity of Hong Kong has been immense.

He has served the Hong Kong Government in many posts, including as Private Secretary to the Governor from 1973-1975. He also served as Director of Information Services, Secretary for Trade and Industry and Secretary for Education and Manpower.

After retiring from the civil service in 1993, he devoted himself to a new career in commerce, immediately assuming the post of Managing

Director of Kowloon Motor Bus Co, while at the same time serving as a Council Member of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. In 1994 he was appointed Chairman of the Hong Kong Securities Clearing Company, a post he held until 2000. He has also served as Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Court and Council.

Dr Chan was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1994, awarded a Gold Bauhinia Star in 1999 and an Honorary University Fellowship from HKU in 2000.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and Hong Kong, Dr John Chan Cho-chak was conferred the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.



Mr Jack So Chak-kwong
Doctor of Social Sciences honoris causa

Jack So Chak-kwong is known as a man of innovative ideas and decisive action. He has led the development of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the International Finance Centre, the International Commerce Centre, the Airport Express, and he has also been responsible for the introduction of Octopus cards and NOW TV - all of which have had an enormous impact upon the everyday lives of Hong Kong residents. Closer to home, he has also played a significant role in our Centennial Campus Development.

He is the Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and the Film Development Council.

After graduating from HKU he joined the civil service, and served in the former Resettlement

Department (now Housing Department), then the ICAC, and subsequently as Executive Director of the HKTDC.

He has also served in Sun Hung Kai Securities, as Chairman and Chief Executive of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation, and as Deputy Chairman and Group Managing Director of PCCW.

At HKU, Mr So has been Chairman of the Campus Development and Planning Committee and was made an Honorary University Fellow in 2001.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and Hong Kong, Mr Jack So Chak-kwong was conferred the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.



Mr Christopher Cheng Wai-chee
Doctor of Social Sciences honoris causa

Mr Christopher Cheng Wai-chee is both an eminently successful businessman and energetic public servant. He is the Chairman of Wing Tai Properties Limited and Winsor Properties Holdings Limited, and is also on the Board of Directors of many corporations in Hong Kong and abroad.

He has played an active role in promoting the development of Hong Kong as an international trade, commercial and financial centre, particularly as Chairman of the Governance Committee of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee and former Non-Executive Director of the Securities and Futures Commission.

He says he is especially proud of two achievements - first, as President of the Federation of Garment Manufacturers' Association, when he worked closely with the Government in

negotiating numerous international textile agreements, which played a significant role in enhancing Hong Kong's prosperity. And second, whilst serving as Chairman of the Staff and Finance Committee of the Trade Development Council, when he was responsible for introducing one of the earliest performance-based pay schemes amongst statutory bodies in Hong Kong.

Mr Cheng has provided support and leadership to the higher education sector in Hong Kong, and has served as a member of the Council of HKU and Chairman of its Human Resource Policy Committee.

He was awarded an OBE in 1992 and a Gold Bauhinia Star in 2004.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and Hong Kong, Mr Christopher Cheng Wai-chee was conferred the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.



Dr Tin Ka-ping
Doctor of Social Sciences honoris causa

Dr Tin Ka-ping's name is synonymous with philanthropy, especially in the arena of education. Indeed his remarkable acts of generosity are now part of Hong Kong's folklore.

He is founder of Thians' Plastics Industrial Company Ltd, Tins' Enterprises Company Ltd and Tins Chemical Corporation Ltd. He is also a generous philanthropist and founder of the Tin Ka Ping Foundation.

Dr Tin is an advocate and supporter of education, and over 20 Hong Kong schools, 80 universities in China, more than 170 secondary and vocation schools, 48 primary schools and kindergartens, 1,450 rural libraries and countless other education facilities in China have been beneficiaries of his philanthropy.

He is a Founding Honorary Patron of the HKU Foundation. His own Foundation supports the endeavours of the Faculty of Education through the K P Tin Visiting Fellowship Scheme and the Tin Ka Ping Education Fund.

Dr Tin was awarded an MBE in 1996, a Grand Bauhinia Medal in 2010 and an Honorary University Fellowship from HKU in 1997, and has also received honorary degrees from many other higher education institutions in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the PRC.

In recognition of his contributions to academia and Hong Kong, Dr Tin Ka-ping was conferred the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*. ■



A Globetrotting Volunteer

Dr Albert Ko, who oversees service learning at HKU, is an extraordinary example to others of what a volunteer can achieve.

Dr Albert Ko has a target: 24 months of his life to be spent volunteering for humanitarian purposes, not including short sojourns during his holidays. Since he got off to a late start, he has been making up for lost time.

Over the past decade he has accumulated 13 months in Sudan, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Tibet and Pakistan with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) (also Gansu and Sichuan, which he doesn't count because they were only for a couple of weeks each). His volunteering began after he completed his undergraduate studies in engineering in the US and returned to Hong Kong, where he was lonely and bored.

"When I was in the US, a lot of my friends from Taiwan and other countries had to do military service. In Hong Kong we don't, so I thought, what if everyone spent two years doing something that we think is important? I wanted to do humanitarian work," he says.

The work is not easy. He arrived in Sudan in 2000 when the country was in the midst of a civil war and he had to look after all non-medical needs, from accounts and construction to making sure teams did not enter areas where there was gunfire. Living conditions were grim, with temperatures hitting 48 degrees Celsius and no air-conditioners or fans.

A comfortable life in Uzbekistan
By comparison, his next stint was a luxury. "Uzbekistan was almost like a gift, we had running water, natural gas, electricity. And if you had water and natural gas on the same day, you could have a hot shower."

His time there straddled September 11, 2001, and there was talk of Uzbekistan being used as airspace for US action against Afghanistan. People in Hong Kong worried about his welfare. "They thought Uzbekistan was dangerous, but we were more worried about people in cities because they'd bombed the twin towers," Dr Ko says.

The experience stirred his interest in applying his knowledge to something tangible in the field and he enrolled at HKU to do a PhD developing a search and rescue robot.

In the midst of his studies, the 2004 tsunami struck in Southeast Asia and he set off to Indonesia to lend a helping hand. The next year Pakistan was rocked by an earthquake and, again, Dr Ko offered to help with emergency relief. He still managed to complete his PhD in 2006, which he celebrated by organizing a cycling trip from Qinghai to Tibet, which raised \$200,000 for MSF and was the subject of a book he wrote of his experiences.

The breathless pace continued in 2007 when he joined MSF as a staff member in Hong Kong to help them develop a regional emergency supply hub here, researching such things as how to charter a plane, organize logistics and work within budget.

That job was completed in 2008 and he was in the US on holiday - a pure pleasure trip - when the Sichuan earthquake happened. Dr Ko hurried back to Hong Kong to help co-ordinate the MSF mission from here, later going to Sichuan and Gansu, which was also affected.

Passing on the torch

He then returned to HKU to continue his research, where he learned about the HKU 512 Roundtable; he applied for and received funding to help rebuild a village in Gansu. That link-up with the University led to his present position as the Senior Student Advisor of the Centre of Development and Resources for Students, a role he took up at the end of 2009.

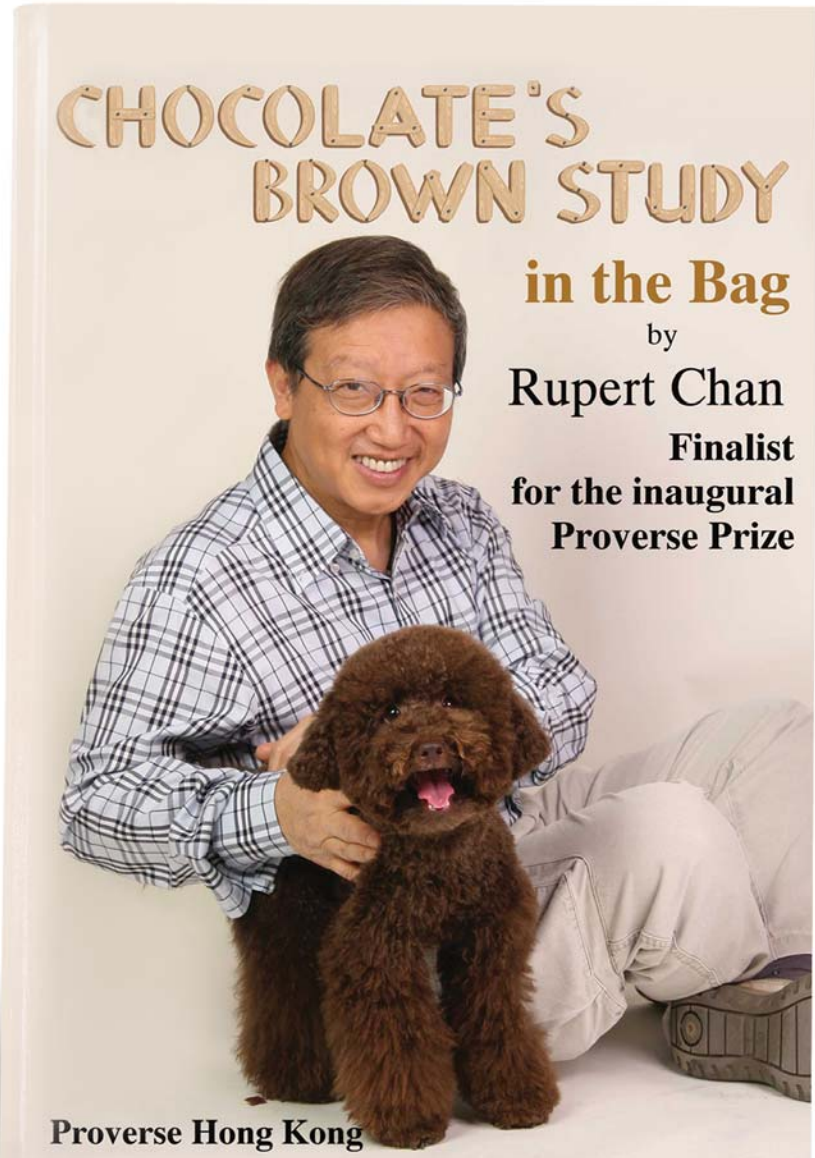
His present job on campus may seem disconnected from his previous globetrotting humanitarian efforts, but Dr Ko feels they serve a similar purpose. During the recent Japanese earthquake, for example, while work obligations kept him in Hong Kong, he was still able to offer advice to volunteers, donors and business people on what they could, and should not, do to help.

"My main job is to help students find or develop projects that are important to local communities and that have good opportunities for learning through service."

"When we talk about global citizenship and professional ethics, it's very difficult to teach these in the classroom. My feeling is if I put students in a rural village to build a bridge, they will understand why it's important to be an ethical engineer. They will look at all the people around them and not want them to be harmed."

Added to his goal of 24 months of service is one another: to help provide every student at HKU with at least one opportunity to do service learning. ■





Music and Chocolate

HKU senior administrator and literary figure, Mr Rupert Chan, who retires this year, talks about his passions.

Politicians do it, military leaders do it, even actors and celebrities have been known to record their exploits in memoir form. But rarely are those exploits narrated by a toy poodle.

But that is exactly what prize-winning dramatist and lyricist, Mr Rupert Chan, has done.

Chocolate's Brown Study in the Bag, is a delightful memoir told from the point of view of his family's three-year-old toy poodle, Chocolate.

Mr Chan, who also happens to be Deputy Registrar and former Faculty Secretary in the Faculty of Dentistry, clinched a publishing deal with Proverse after his book made the finals in their inaugural prize.

The memoir, his second book in English, was prompted by the joy of owning his first dog.

"I genuinely feel that it's a blessing that we have Chocolate in our family, so I wanted very much to write about him and this Proverse Prize provided a good incentive."

"Toy poodles are the most intelligent small dogs and I am beginning to learn from him," he says. "I am fascinated by the fact that he's always so happy."

A dog's life

He takes inspiration from his friend Lydia Chan, a columnist for the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. "She keeps a cat but as a pet owner she wrote once about how some people lament the short life of a dog. But, as she says, the dog is very happy, so it more than makes up for the relatively short life. They know how to keep themselves happy all their life while human beings spend much of their time trying to find happiness and more often than not failing."

After agreeing to care for a friend's poodle while she was overseas he and his wife were hooked. "We fell in love with the dog. So our children made us a gift of a dog for our 30th wedding anniversary. They were very thankful too because after we got the dog we stopped nagging them!"



Mr Rupert Chan (right) as guest speaker of HKU Students' Union's English Society Academic Forum on March 15, 2011.

In his spare time, when he's not walking the dog, Mr Chan - Chairman of Directors of the Chung Ying Theatre Company - translates plays and operas. He began in the 1970s when he was asked by opera producer/director Lo King-man to write the Chinese subtitles for an Italian opera.

"He said that without Chinese subtitles the local audience just wouldn't catch on. Then the expatriate audience protested that there were no English subtitles. So, in a way, I think Hong Kong took the lead in using sub-titles for opera."

"There has been resistance to it in the west but I like to think that I made a contribution in popularizing opera in Hong Kong."

A clutch of awards

In 1990 he received the Hong Kong Artists' Guild Playwright of the Year Award. He wrote also the lyrics in Mandarin of *Nine Regions Singing As One*, for the 1997 Hong Kong Reunification with China, which won the Most Performed Original Local Serious Work Award from the Composers' and Authors' Society of Hong Kong.

He has translated over 50 operas and over 50 plays for the Hong Kong stage and wrote the subtitles for the 1998 film *City of Glass*. But he considers the challenge of translation to be cultural rather than linguistic one.

"It is not just moving from one language to another but from one culture to another. I once taught drama translation and the funniest thing I remember was a student translating an Australian play. It started with a stage direction 'the female lead is ironing clothes with her right hand and

with her left is brushing away flies'. It came out in the Chinese translation as 'she is brushing off the buttons from the trousers.' I asked why the student had complicated something so simple and she said 'I don't think there are flies in such an advanced and clean place as Australia. So I looked it up in the dictionary and found the slang word flies to mean the fastener on trousers so assumed it meant buttons.' That's because the girl had never been to Australia and wasn't aware that there were so many flies there."

Finding the right setting

Two of his translations - *Tuesdays with Morrie* and Steve Martin's *The Underpants* were staged in April. "*The Underpants* is a German play translated into English by Steve Martin. I've moved the whole thing to Hong Kong in the 1960s and turned the original Jewish character into a Communist."

"The challenge is always to find the right Hong Kong setting to fit the story. I have adapted several of Shakespeare's plays into Chinese settings. In 1986 I translated *Twelfth Night* by moving it to the Tang Dynasty, which worked because it's such beautiful poetry. Using modern Chinese would have defeated the whole purpose."

On June 30 Mr Chan retires after 23 years at HKU. Formerly Head of the then-External Relations Office he says, "I am proud to say that I was Head of a large office in those days and now it's broken up into three or four independent ones."

"But what am I most proud of is my gift as a talent scout; I have selected staff at interviews and have always made the right choice. For example I picked Isabella Wong who is now Director of China Affairs, and Esther Kwok, her second-in-command."

"I may not have done a lot but I have done this, and when I was head of External Relations I told the staff 'you are going to do all the work, I will do nothing because I am Head. When you have done the work well I will get the glory because I am the Head of the Department, and when you have done something wrong I will get the blame because that is only fair. I have tried to support my staff because they supported me. I give my staff a free hand and I trust them to do their work, I don't interfere. I think they appreciate that." ■



Mr Rupert Chan (middle of the second front row) and colleagues of the then External Relations Office in 2001.

A Place in History for a Musical Tradition

Every scholar should play the *qin*, Confucius said. That statement has drawn politicians to use the instrument for their own ends and led a HKU researcher to trace the *qin*'s long history.

The refined music of the stringed *qin* seems hardly the place for political point-scoring. Yet it was used to undermine China's place as the home of traditional Chinese culture.

During the Qing Dynasty, Japanese agitators claimed that since China was being ruled by Manchus, it could no longer be the base of authentic Confucian leadership, including on such matters as music. Instead, Japan should take up that role.

Part of the evidence presented was the fact that Japan was home to the two oldest scrolls notating *qin* music. The scrolls, dating to the seventh and ninth centuries, are the only surviving samples of prose notations telling players where and how to place their fingers, and they were brought to Japan by the Japanese missions from the imperial Tang court no later than the 9th century.

These scrolls have been the subject of research by Dr Yang Yuanzheng, a Research Fellow in the Department of Music.

"The two scrolls in Japan were used to demonstrate the cultural superiority of Japan. One of the main political thinkers of the early 18th century even claimed the cultural authenticity of ancient China existed only in Japan. This helped to turn Confucianism from something sinocentric to a Japan-centered ideology, and it had a profound impact on the 20th century," Dr Yang says.

Dissecting scrolls and instruments

Dr Yang became the first person since that period to examine the scrolls side by side and to show that they were two separate manuscripts of music prepared by different persons in different eras, when he went to Japan in 2004 as part of his MPhil research at HKU.

He worked with experts from Europe to digitize the scrolls so they could be studied by other musical scholars - an exercise that required highly specialized equipment and that uncovered the sketches of a piece of ancient Japanese *saibara* music, written on the back of the 9th-century scroll and covered with another layer of paper.

In addition to notation manuscripts, Dr Yang has also been tracking the *qin*'s physical evolution, starting when he was at Princeton University on a fellowship in 2006-07.

He began doing CAT scans of antique *qin* instruments held in US museums, which offered a picture of the belly of the instrument, even showing the grain of wood and revealing a hidden chamber in the surface board. This ongoing project has enabled researchers to see how the structure of the instrument has changed over the years.

"I am interested in building connections between intellectual history and the transmission of the Chinese *qin* system, and how this reflects changes in patterns of thought. If you look at the CAT

scans, the change of musical instrument structure leads to an observed change of musical aesthetics," he says.

Authentic performances

Having instigated research into the notations and the instrument, the next logical step is performance. Dr Yang and Dr Chan Hing-yan, Associate Professor of the department, received \$1.2 million from the HKU Culture and Humanities Fund for the HKU *Qin* Project and have organized several concerts of traditional *qin* music, including one in April featuring Master Yao Gongbai.

The two scholars are also putting finishing touches on a recording of *qin* music based on Song Dynasty poems and notations, for which they have sourced authentic instruments with silk strings.

Dr Chan says the research instigated by Dr Yang has opened doors for studying Chinese music. "I hope his work will be a point of departure in the study of Chinese musical manuscripts. China has such a long history and so many other manuscripts that need to be digitized and studied in depth," he says.

Funds permitting, it is hoped to extend investigations to music of the Tang-Dynasty Silk Road, where Chinese music picked up influences from the Middle East, Central Asia, India and other cultures across Eurasia. ■



A qin performance in the HKU Museum and Art Gallery.



Dr Yang Yuanzheng examining a qin dated 968 CE.

Hong Kong as a Haven for Outcast Women

Prostitutes and other female outcasts from China found protection for their wealth in Hong Kong's legal system during the city's early years.

Women in traditional Chinese society were highly dependent on their parents, husbands and sons to look after their welfare, and it was nearly impossible for them to own property. So how was it that many of them became property owners in Hong Kong?

That question intrigued two researchers at the Hong Kong Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Victor Zheng Wan-tai, and Professor Wong Siu-lun, who combed through the records of the Probate Court during Hong Kong's first century. They found 98 women's wills - one-quarter of all Chinese wills - and the property they owned outright was passed down to their children, adopted children and women friends.

Dr Zheng said they were likely prostitutes at a time when prostitution in Hong Kong was legal (it was not outlawed until the 1940s) and along the way they had acquired significant assets that they wanted to protect. Some women owned several flats or lots.

"Of course not all of them were engaged in prostitution. Some did normal business such as running grocery stores and even a printing business. Some were principal wives, some were concubines. But a large number of them were single women."

"This leads us to think that they may not have been able to enter the formal marriage system [and thus have their wealth distributed among relations], and because of that they had to use a will to transmit their wealth."

Property holdings

Their property was concentrated in areas that are now part of Central, such as D'Aguilar Street, Cochrane Road, Tai Ping Shan near Man Mo Temple, and Stanley Road, as well as former European enclaves near Hollywood Road, Caine Road and Square Street. Only women could own brothels in Hong Kong so they likely bought property to set up shop. In the peak year of 1871, there were 188 registered brothels in the city.

The European connection may have helped the women to understand the British legal system, and Eurasians often helped them to draft wills, such as Robert Hotung's brother, Ho Fook. Dr Zheng said the women probably built their wealth by serving mainly Chinese clients, soldiers and seamen, since there were too few wealthy Europeans in Hong Kong at the time to account for their accumulated holdings.

Apart from recording their wealth, the wills highlight two important qualities in the women: their bonds with their female friends and their business acumen.

"A lot of the wills had women as witnesses or named as caregivers for the children in case of death. I feel this was a women's community - the attachment between women friends was very strong and their relations with their natural families were cut off, presumably because they were prostitutes," Dr Zheng said.

Financial independence

On the business side, the women not only managed to accumulate property, but also to oversee the construction and management of brothels, which would have included ensuring triad societies did not affect their business.

"This is one of the first instances where Chinese women had some financial independence. And although they may have been poor and had bitter feelings, once they got financial independence, they could live quite a decent life. They could have *mui tsai* [girl servants] and live in a big home and arrange a decent funeral for when they died. Many of them mentioned the funeral in their wills."

"From this perspective, you can see legalized prostitution gave them a chance to earn money and have economic independence," he said.

The results of Dr Zheng and Professor Wong's research are contained in the book, *Women's Wills, Property and the Early Hong Kong Society*, published by Joint Publishing (Hong Kong) Limited. ■



Sample of a woman's will dated 1875.



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