

Graduate School Award Presentation Ceremony 2015



The annual Graduate School Award Presentation Ceremony was held on December 10, 2015 at Rayson Huang Theatre. Mr Tse Sik Yan (Honorary President of the HKU Foundation), Professor Andy Hor (Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)), Professor Ian Holliday (Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)), Dr Steven Cannon (Executive Vice-President (Administration and Finance)), Professor Paul Cheung (the former Associate Vice-President (Research)), Professor Nirmala Rao (Dean of the Graduate School), Associate Deans of the Graduate School and research student supervisors gathered to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our research postgraduate students.

Following the opening address delivered by Professor Rao, Mr Tse presented the University Postgraduate Fellowships (UPFs) to 50 elite PhD students. The UPFs are generously supported by The University of Hong Kong Foundation for



Educational Development and Research ("HKU Foundation"), the Jessie & George Ho Charitable Foundation, Dr Lee Shau Kee and the Philip K H Wong Foundation to give due recognition to PhD students with excellent academic records.

Ten students who have submitted theses of exceptional quality and demonstrated outstanding performance in other academic aspects received the Awards for Outstanding Research Postgraduate Student from Professor Rao. Professor Hor presented the highly competitive Li Ka Shing Prizes to two MPhil and four PhD graduates who have submitted the best theses in the Humanities and the Science Faculty groups.

We were also delighted to celebrate at the ceremony the achievements of 54 students who have won external prizes, including the Croucher Foundation Fellowships/Scholarships, HKU-Cambridge Hughes Hall Scholarships, Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Research Scholar Award Programme and Hong Kong PhD Fellowships, together with the winners of the HKU Three Minute Thesis Competition 2015.

For the complete list of award recipients, please visit <http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/events/graduate-school-award-presentation-ceremony-2015>.

Our heartfelt congratulations to all of the award winners!



List of prize winners:

LI KA SHING PRIZES (2013-14)

Best MPhil thesis in the Faculties of Architecture, Arts, Business & Economics, Education, Law and Social Sciences

Mr YUEN Ho Yin (*MPhil, Department of Politics and Public Administration*)

Thesis Title:

Rawlsian Justice and Welfare-state Capitalism

Supervisors:

Dr Y. Chiu, *Department of Politics and Public Administration*

Professor W.F. Lam, *Department of Politics and Public Administration*

Best MPhil thesis in the Faculties of Dentistry, Engineering, Medicine and Science

Miss LO Jessica (*MPhil, Department of Pathology*)

Thesis Title:

Functional Characterization and Therapeutic Implication of CD47 in Sorafenib Resistance in Hepatocellular Carcinoma

Supervisors:

Dr K.W. Lee, *Department of Pathology*

Professor I.O.L. Ng, *Department of Pathology*

Best PhD theses in the Faculties of Architecture, Arts, Business & Economics, Education, Law and Social Sciences

Dr TSE Heung Wing (*PhD, School of Chinese*)

Thesis Title:

A Philological Study of the Excavated Texts of *Zhouyi* Included in the Third Volume of the *Compilation of Warring States Chu Bamboo Slips Housed at the Shanghai Museum*

Supervisors:

Dr C.M. Si, *School of Chinese*

Dr S.F. Chow, *School of Chinese*

Professor C.Y. Sin, *School of Chinese*

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Dr ZHOU Feifei (*PhD, School of English*)

Thesis Title:

System, Order, Creativity: Models of the Human in Twentieth-century Linguistic Theories

Supervisor:

Dr A.M. Pablé, *School of English*

Best PhD theses in the Faculties of Dentistry, Engineering, Medicine and Science

Dr LIANG Qingning (*PhD, Department of Medicine*)

Thesis Title:

Fibroblast Growth Factor 21 as a Novel Stress-responsive Hormone during Starvation and Physical Exercise

Supervisors:

Professor A. Xu, *Department of Medicine*

Dr Y. Wang, *Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy*

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Dr ZOU Taotao (*PhD, Department of Chemistry*)

Thesis Title:

Anti-Cancer N-heterocyclic Carbene Complexes of Gold(III), Gold(I) and Platinum(II) : Thiol "Switch-on" Fluorescent Probes, Thioredoxin Reductase Inhibitors and Endoplasmic Reticulum Targeting Agents

Supervisor:

Professor C.M. Che, *Department of Chemistry*



AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE STUDENT (2013-14)

Ms CHEN Rongrong (*MPhil, Department of Psychology*)

Dr CHEN Xiaoming (*PhD, Department of Mechanical Engineering*)

Miss CHENG Bing Qing (*MPhil, Department of Mechanical Engineering*)

Dr HAMAMA Hamdi Hosni Hamdan Eldesouki (*PhD, Faculty of Dentistry*)

Miss LI Wing Yi Vivian (*MPhil, Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*)

Dr LI Xuanhua (*PhD, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering*)

Dr WANG Weixin (*PhD, Department of Biochemistry*)

Dr XIA Yifei (*PhD, School of Business*)

Dr YANG Ying (*PhD, Department of Civil Engineering*)

Dr ZHU Jiafeng (*PhD, Department of Politics and Public Administration*)

Persistence Pays Off –

Alumni interview with Dr Cheung Ching Lung

It took a while for Dr Cheung Ching Lung, Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy, to find his niche in academia. As an undergraduate at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University he took a summer job at HSBC. That experience helped him realise he was not a commercial person and so he decided to stay in the biotechnology field.

Looking around for opportunities he answered an advertisement for a research assistant at HKU. Someone else was selected, but Dr Cheung was offered a post as a technical assistant. He applied for a number of studentships but for whatever reason, he was always passed over. One professor, who could not offer him a job, was sufficiently interested in his application to circulate his CV and, finally, Professor Annie Kung (who has since left HKU) offered him a student place at HKU.

Dr Cheung laughs when he recalls his first year. “I didn’t know what I was doing, or what she was doing either! But I worked very hard to catch up and after two years I transferred to do a PhD, which I completed in three years (usually it takes four years).”

While attending an international meeting, Dr Cheung applied to Harvard Medical School and was accepted for post-doctoral training in the area of epidemiology, genetic epidemiology, molecular genomics, and bioinformatics at the Institute for Aging Research, Hebrew SeniorLife.



Dr Cheung (right) with his students

half a page, but they showed great initiative and did a lot of background reading to provide full answers. They are interested in many non-academic issues and they pay more attention to society. I think this is good. A university is more than an academic institution: we are preparing students for the world.”

The University of Liverpool (UK) provided more eye openers for Dr Cheung

during his time as an honorary research fellow in the Department of Molecular and Clinical Pharmacology, Institute of Translational Medicine. “My understanding of spoken English is not good and the Liverpool accent was a challenge. Later, at the Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS) I had an equally hard time with the local accent.” Despite the accent problems, Liverpool and Singapore indeed offered Dr Cheung important opportunities for his research career.

“Research is my only interest. That sounds nerdy, but it’s true. I’m married to my work. Occasionally when I have spare time I like to go out to pubs and clubs. I thought I could drink a lot until my Liverpool landlord introduced me to binge drinking – beer, red wine, Champagne. It was crazy and I have become more careful after that experience!”

Dr Cheung’s special interest is precision medicine, a tailor-made strategy for clinical use. It’s a new term only introduced in recent years. “Current practice is one-size-fits-all. But we know that some people don’t respond well to this approach. Precision medicine needs a broad knowledge base as it involves a number of disciplines – statistics, biology, clinical medicine and computer skills.”

HKU’s facilities compare favourably with what is found elsewhere in the world’s best universities, says Dr Cheung. “But it doesn’t really feel like a university elsewhere: the atmosphere and lifestyle are very different. In the UK and the US, students lie on the lawns in summer, reading and studying, but you rarely see that at HKU!”

Singapore is often regarded as competing with Hong Kong, and Dr Cheung believes Singapore performs better in some ways. “The Hong Kong government should give more resources to research. The GIS has a whole building, whereas HKU has only one floor for genome studies. Singapore has attracted a lot of biotechnology companies by helping with resources, incentives and tax concessions. Hong Kong should do something similar. We can’t rely on tourism and financial business for ever!”



Looking back, Dr Cheung says his time at Harvard was an eye-opening experience in many ways. “Hong Kong students are generally passive and very goal oriented. They only want to pass exams and are not interested in knowledge for its own sake. The strategy is to focus only on information for the exam and ignore anything else, regardless of how useful it might be.”

“Harvard students are brilliant. I taught some of them: I would give a short question that could be answered in

A Stimulating Academic Visit to Yale

My research at HKU focuses on sub-Saharan African women traders and their networks in Guangzhou, China. In 2015, I was a Visiting Assistant of Research at Yale University, Department of Anthropology.

The idea for this trip to Yale emerged in the context of an exchange with Professor Helen Siu, Yale Professor of Anthropology and Honorary Professor at the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HKIHSS). In the last ten years, Professor Siu has expanded her research interests from China into a broader Asia context and China-Africa diaspora. This research is closely related to the Inter-Asia Initiative at the Yale MacMillan Center, a highly innovative research programme marked by a strong focus on Asian transregional connections.

I wanted to learn more about the Inter-Asia Initiative, so I started to explore the possibility of becoming a visiting postgraduate student at Yale. The Yale Visiting Assistant of Research programme seemed perfect for this purpose. It enables postgraduate students worldwide to stay at Yale for a short period of time to develop their research projects. My application to this programme was only possible because I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Lee Hysan-HKIHSS Fellowship at HKU. This Fellowship helps HKU postgraduate students and senior undergraduate students to undertake research training in other institutions worldwide.



Visiting postgraduate students at Yale are provided with full access to resources and facilities. At Yale, like at HKU, one often finds students from very different countries, cultural backgrounds, mother tongues, and ages sitting in seminars and academic events, and this works magically. In one of the seminars that I sat in, discussions often expanded into inspiring interdisciplinary brainstorming with contributions of perspectives from Indians, Chinese, Vietnamese, African Americans, Germans, etc. One realises hence how easily people are internalising ideologies and take for granted the unilateral value system they are living in. At Yale, thinking critically and open-mindedly is one of the things that matters the most.

XIE Xin

MPhil candidate

Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Rising Star in Asian Pharmacoepidemiology Network



Miss Wong Yun Sum (fifth from left) and other delegates at the 9th ACPE.

The Asian Conference on Pharmacoepidemiology (ACPE) emphasises pharmacoepidemiological research in Asia and enhances future international research collaborations between academic institutions, government organisations and the pharmaceutical industry. In recognition of outstanding research achievement, junior researchers (non-professoriate with less than 5 years' post-doctoral research experience) are eligible to be selected as Asian Pharmacoepidemiology Network (AsPEN) Rising Stars. Miss WONG Yun Sum, currently a third year PhD candidate from the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy, received the AsPEN Rising Star Award at the 9th ACPE in 2015. Her awarded work investigated the association between the use of clarithromycin-based *Helicobacter pylori* therapy and acute neuropsychiatric events using the self-controlled case series study design.

Peer Talks @ NURSS: A Platform Where You Can Learn from Your Peers

A group of enthusiastic PhD students in the Department of Urban Planning and Design (DUPAD) of the Faculty of Architecture recently organised a series of presentations, which proved very popular among research postgraduate students.

These presentations, called Peer Talks @ NURSS, aim to enhance mutual communication among research postgraduate students and broaden their technical capabilities. At each talk, the organiser invites one senior PhD student within the University to share his or her publishing and research experience, as well as research findings, during a round-table discussion.

"It is fun and has excellent intellectual research benefits! I feel relaxed and inspired," said Wenbo Guo, a PhD student who is about to take his probation examination. Guo attended a talk on how to respond to reviewers' comments in the publishing process. "Our supervisors and mentors are excellent and provide a lot of support to us. But sometimes there is a gap between what they teach us and what we need. Some essential knowledge and experience are not in the books. You have got to learn from your peers to know what to do first and what not to do."

Teng Zhong, the Coordinator of the NURSS Committee and also a PhD candidate in DUPAD, said that the idea of the Peer Talks originated from a small study group held by some senior RPs in the Faculty GIS Lab two years ago on the training of technical skills. But later the

organisers realised that expanding such practice to all research students with different research backgrounds would be beneficial, enabling everyone to learn from each other. This helps to reduce the obstacles and stresses of research students who are mostly doing research on their own.

The Peer Talks are organised by the New Urban Researcher Seminar Series (NURSS) Committee. NURSS (<http://fac.arch.hku.hk/upad/cusup/nurss/>) is a seminar series organised by DUPAD's research students under the Department's research arm, the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning (CUSUP). As a next step, the Peer Talks @ NURSS plans to invite research students from outside the department to share new techniques and insights. "Join us, share with us, and get inspired!" said Zhong.

Liu Jianzheng

PhD Candidate

Department of Urban Planning and Design

He is the principal organiser of Peer Talks @ NURSS and can be reached at jlzliu@connect.hku.hk



PhD Candidate Awarded Fellowship for Research at the Kennedy Library



Mr Reed Heywood CHERVIN, *PhD Candidate in the School of Humanities (History)*, received the Marjorie Kovler Research Fellowship to spend one month at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in 2015 for his research on the causes and implications of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, using archival materials from the JFK Library and Museum. Mr Chervin's research examines how the international community perceived and responded to this war and how countries invoked alliances and used propaganda, as well as the ways in which regional geopolitics changed afterwards.

The fellowship is administered by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation from funds provided by the Marjorie Blum Kovler Foundation, one of Chicago's most prominent philanthropic organisations.

Mr Chervin is currently at the East China Normal University in Shanghai as part of the HKU-China 1000 Exchange Programme.

Swire Scholarships for Research Students in Residence at Robert Black College

The Swire Scholarships were established, through the generous donation by the Swire group, to provide a learning opportunity for young members of the University's academic community to reside in the Robert Black College, and thereby mix with international scholars. Swire Scholars are provided free accommodation with breakfast at the College. They are expected to actively interact with the visiting academics residing in the College, so as to enrich their learning experiences, and to offer the visiting academics good company.

All full-time research students who are registered for an MPhil or a PhD degree at the University are eligible to apply for the Swire Scholarships. Applications are usually called for, via bulk email and the Scholarships website, in September every year.

The selection process for the 2015-16 Swire Scholarships concluded in December 2015. The recipients of the Scholarships are:

Mr HOANG Andrew Pau

PhD student,

Department of Social Work and Social Administration

Miss YIU Sze Wan Rachel

PhD student,

School of Biomedical Sciences

Miss CHAN Wing Yan

PhD student,

Faculty of Education

Congratulations to the three recipients on their achievements!

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