

## Academic and Interpersonal Growth through Joint PhD Studies

Being a Joint PhD candidate between HKU and King's College London (KCL) gives me the opportunity to pursue international research at two world-class universities. I spent my first year at HKU in the School of Humanities (Comparative Literature), and have been continuing my research at the Film Studies Department of KCL since last summer.

The unique programme structure enables me to develop interdisciplinary insights for my project on Hong Kong martial arts cinema and strengthens my academic network. I have participated in numerous conferences across the UK, receiving invaluable advice for my papers. With support from my experienced supervisors - Dr Aaron Magnan-Park (HKU) and Dr Victor Fan (KCL) - I published one of my chapters in a peer-reviewed journal last month. This has been made possible through the abundant resources offered by the comprehensive Joint programme.

Apart from research, my experience in London has been extremely fruitful. As a humanities student,

I believe that social and cultural diversity is the source of revolutionary ideas. At the newly built Garden Hall offered by the University of London (UoL), I have made friends with undergraduate and postgraduate students of not only KCL, but also other UoL colleges such as University College London, London School of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, and Queen Mary.

I have also been attending kung fu classes in London's Chinatown, which has increased my appreciation of the traditional art and further developed my identity as a local Hongkonger. After class, my 'sifu' (master) often invites students to eat together in a Cantonese restaurant, fostering the bonding between students and demonstrating the significance of the 'master-disciple' relationship in traditional kung fu learning.

In addition to 'Chinese connections', I have made friends in a local evangelical church. Sunday services and small group meetings have helped me learn more about everyday life in London and British culture at large. In short, I have been enjoying every moment of my time in London as it helps me grow both academically and interpersonally.

I hope the HKU-KCL partnership will continue and more students of both world-class universities will benefit from this high quality comparative degree.

**Wong King Tung**

*HKU-KCL Joint PhD Candidate*

*School of Humanities (Comparative Literature)*

*At the Martial Arts Studies Conference 2016*





## Prize for Thesis on Social Justice and Equity Issues

Dr Nutsa Kobakhidze - a 2016 HKU PhD graduate and current Post-Doctoral Fellow in Comparative Education in the Faculty of Education - has won the Gail Kelly Award 2016/2017 from the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) for her PhD thesis 'Teachers as Tutors: Shadow Education Market Dynamics in Georgia', completed under the supervision of Professor Mark Bray and Professor Ora Kwo in the Faculty of Education. The Award is for an outstanding work that addresses social justice and equity issues in an international context, and demonstrates academic excellence, originality, and methodological, theoretical, and empirical rigour, as selected by an international committee. Dr Kobakhidze received the award on March 7, 2017 during the CIES annual conference in Atlanta, USA.

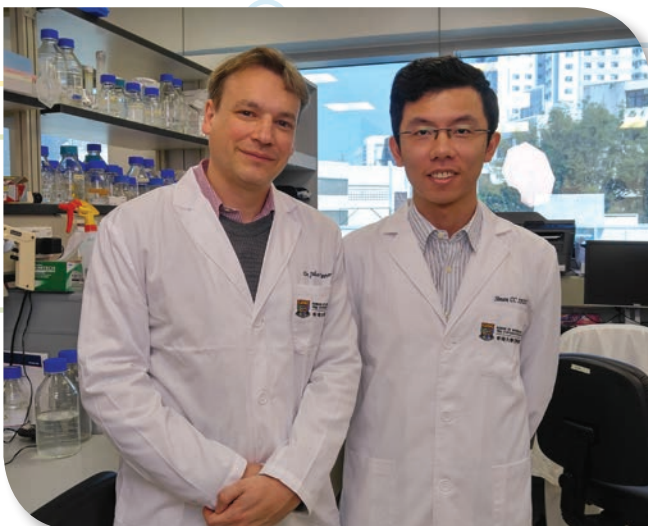
Dr Kobakhidze's research interests include the privatisation of education (focusing on private supplementary tutoring), comparative and international education, teacher professionalism and identity, the sociology of education/economic sociology, and the methodologies of large-scale international assessments. She has published articles in international peer-reviewed journals and books, and serves as a reviewer for prestigious international journals in comparative and international education. Dr Kobakhidze's thesis will be published as a book in the series *CERC Studies in Comparative Education*, which is a joint venture of Springer and the Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) at HKU.



## Discovering Innovative Diagnostic Strategy in DNA Nanotechnology

DNA can be used to build three-dimensional objects at the nanoscale – this is the field of DNA nanotechnology. Such DNA nanostructures can have applications in diagnostics, therapeutics delivery, and even emerging electronics. PhD student Simon Chi-Chin Shiu, mentored by principal investigator Dr Julian Tanner in the School of Biomedical Sciences, has developed

DNA nanotweezers for the diagnosis of malaria. The DNA nanotweezers are able to close in the presence of a malaria biomarker that would be present in the blood of infected patients, leading to a colour change. This is a highly innovative diagnostic strategy that has never been used before. This research opens the future direction of creating novel DNA nanostructures for various purposes including diagnostics. Because of the novelty and impact of this work, it has been selected for the cover of the inaugural issue of *Advanced Biosystems*, a new biologically focused journal of the prestigious *Advanced Materials* interdisciplinary journal series. The paper also brought Simon the Outstanding Poster Presentation Award in the 2016 Hong Kong Inter-University Postgraduate Symposium in Biochemical Sciences. He received a travel grant from NeoVentures Biotechnology Inc. to support the presentation of this work in an international aptamers conference at the University of Oxford in April 2017.



Dr Julian Tanner (left) and Simon Chi-Chin Shiu



# Graduate School Award Presentation Ceremony 2016



To celebrate the remarkable achievements of our research postgraduate students, the Graduate School held its annual Award Presentation Ceremony on December 16, 2016.

Professor Andy Hor (Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)) gave the opening address. Dr Max Hui-Bon-Hoa (Honorary President of the HKU Foundation) then presented University Postgraduate Fellowships (UPFs) to 50 PhD students with excellent academic records. The UPFs are generously supported by the HKU Foundation, the Jessie & George Ho Charitable Foundation, Dr Lee Shau Kee, and the Philip K H Wong Foundation.

Ten students received Outstanding Research Postgraduate Student Awards from Professor Mee Len Chye (Dean of the Graduate School) for submitting theses of exceptional quality and demonstrating outstanding academic performance.

The Li Ka Shing Prizes were presented by Professor Hor to two MPhil and four PhD graduates who have submitted the best MPhil and PhD theses in the Humanities and the Science Faculty Groups to recognise their distinguished achievements and research studies.

In addition, Professor Mai Har Sham (Associate Vice-President (Research)) acknowledged the achievements of RPg students who have won external prizes, including the Hong Kong PhD Fellowships and Croucher Foundation Fellowships/Scholarships, together with the winners of the HKU Three Minute Thesis Competition 2016.

Congratulations to all our awardees.



List of prize winners:

## UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS (2016-17)

### HKU Foundation Postgraduate Fellowships

#### Faculty of Business and Economics

Miss WEI Xing (*School of Economics and Finance*)

Mr ZHANG Yupu (*School of Economics and Finance*)

#### Faculty of Education

Miss BI Xin

Ms LI Xiuhan

Miss RUAN Nian

#### Faculty of Engineering

Mr WAN Hanlong (*Department of Civil Engineering*)

Mr CHEN Guanying (*Department of Computer Science*)

Miss HUANG Wanjun  
(*Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering*)

Mr LI Mengmou  
(*Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering*)

Mr LIU Chenyang  
(*Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering*)

Miss WU Muyan  
(*Department of Mechanical Engineering*)

Mr ZHOU Zhiwen  
(*Department of Mechanical Engineering*)

#### Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine

Mr HUANG Enyu (*Department of Medicine*)

Miss YAO Qiumei (*Department of Medicine*)

Ms ZHOU Yawen (*Department of Medicine*)

Miss CHEN Pin (*Department of Microbiology*)

Mr LUK Tzu Tsun (*School of Nursing*)

Miss XIE Chenyi (*School of Public Health*)

#### Faculty of Science

Mr WANG Fuzerong (*Department of Chemistry*)

Mr WANG Zhenggang  
(*Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science*)

Mr YOU Jia  
(*Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science*)

Mr CHEUNG Wai Yin (*School of Biological Sciences*)

#### Faculty of Social Sciences

Miss LIN Yi (*Department of Geography*)

Mr TSOI Ka Ho (*Department of Geography*)

### Jessie Ho Memorial Postgraduate Fellowships

#### Faculty of Architecture

Miss FU Yafan

(*Department of Real Estate and Construction*)

#### Faculty of Education

Mrs GHOSH Pubali

#### Faculty of Engineering

Mr LI Xiaodong (*Department of Computer Science*)

#### Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine

Miss IU Ho Ting Venice (*Department of Microbiology*)

Miss LIU Hei Man (*Department of Pathology*)

Mr MAK Chi To (*School of Public Health*)

#### Faculty of Science

Mr CHENG Yu Hong (*Department of Chemistry*)

Mr CHUN Ka Him (*Department of Chemistry*)

Mr ZHENG Yufen (*Department of Chemistry*)

#### Faculty of Social Sciences

Mr KWONG Ying Ho

(*Department of Politics and Public Administration*)

### Lee Shau Kee Postgraduate Fellowships

#### Faculty of Architecture

Miss LIN Jie

(*Department of Real Estate and Construction*)

#### Faculty of Arts

Mr OUYANG Kaibin (*School of Chinese*)

#### Faculty of Business and Economics

Mr YUAN Hongjie (*School of Business*)

#### Faculty of Engineering

Mr YAO Xin (*Department of Computer Science*)

Mr HASSANI ETEMAD Reza  
(*Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering*)

Miss WANG Xun  
(*Department of Mechanical Engineering*)

#### Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine

Ms OENTARYO Marilyn Janice  
(*School of Biomedical Sciences*)

#### Faculty of Science

Mr LEUNG Ka Ming (*Department of Chemistry*)

Mr LIU Jun (*Department of Chemistry*)

Miss WANG Cece (*Department of Earth Sciences*)

Mr XIAO Ke (*Department of Physics*)

#### Faculty of Social Sciences

Miss LAM Lok Man (*Department of Psychology*)



## Philip K H Wong Foundation Postgraduate Fellowships

### Faculty of Architecture

Mrs DEWUNDARA MAHA GALAPPATHTHI  
ARACHCHIGE Nipuni Madhubhashi Sumanarathna  
(Department of Real Estate and Construction)

### Faculty of Arts

Mr LAU Ting Kwong (Centre of Buddhist Studies)

### Faculty of Engineering

Mr WANG Peihua (Department of Mechanical Engineering)

### Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine

Mr HUNG Ting Ngai (School of Biomedical Sciences)



## LI KA SHING PRIZES (2014-15)

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

Mr WAN Morton Teng  
(MPhil, School of Humanities (Music))

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

Mr LAI Kit Ho (MPhil, Department of Pathology)

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

Dr CHEN Peng (PhD, School of Business)  
Dr FLEMING Kara Kathleen  
(PhD, School of Humanities (Linguistics))

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

Dr CHAN Kwun Wa (PhD, Department of Chemistry)  
Dr LEE Siu Po (PhD, Department of Pathology)

## AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE STUDENT (2014-15)

Dr CHAN Chee Hon  
(PhD, Department of Social Work and Social Administration)

Dr EIZENHOEFER Paul Reinhold  
(PhD, Department of Earth Sciences)

Miss HE Xinjie (MPhil, Faculty of Education)

Dr JU Feng (PhD, Department of Civil Engineering)

Miss KWONG Hiu Tung  
(MPhil, Department of Earth Sciences)

Dr LI Jun (PhD, School of Biomedical Sciences)

Dr SHEN Jun  
(PhD, Department of Mechanical Engineering)

Dr SOTO Pineda Carlos Enrique  
(PhD, Faculty of Education)

Dr XIANG Zheng  
(PhD, Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine)

Mr YAU Tak Wai David  
(MPhil, Faculty of Dentistry)



# Medicinal Soup Pack May Ameliorate Chemotherapy Side Effects

A research team led by Dr Chen Jianping, Associate Professor of the School of Chinese Medicine (SCM), has developed a medicinal dietetic soup pack for ameliorating the side effects of chemotherapy. The soup pack was developed based on the theory of “homology of medicine and food”, an ancient prescription, and a series of laboratory

experiments and clinical trials. Ingredients include black soybeans, coarse cereals and phycomycetes, all of which are processed into medicinal food. Preliminary results from clinical trials and laboratory experiments show that the soup pack may improve symptoms such as chemotherapy-induced alopecia, nail and skin discoloration, and reduced white blood cell count. Through ameliorating the toxicity induced by chemotherapy, the soup can improve patients' quality of life and reduce fatigue without affecting the efficacy of chemotherapeutic drugs. The sweet-tasting soup is particularly suitable for cancer patients suffering from chemotherapy side effects.



Photos courtesy of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, HKU

Alongside Dr Chen, the team includes Dr Victor Lee Ho-fun, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Oncology; Dr Wu Jun-mei, Assistant Professor, SCM; Ms You Jie-shu, PhD student, SCM; Ms He Yanhua, Research Assistant, SCM; and Dr Jessie Chan Suet-mui, Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Social Work and Social Administration. The team is now recruiting more cancer patients to participate in the project to further verify the safety and effectiveness of the medicinal dietetic soup pack.

(This article is adapted from [http://www.hku.hk/press/news\\_detail\\_15932.html](http://www.hku.hk/press/news_detail_15932.html).)

## Tackling Territorial Dispute in Asia



HKU PhD student Melissa Loja – studying in the Faculty of Law under the supervision of Professor Simon Young – recently had an article published in the *European Journal of International Law (EJIL)*, one of the world's top journals in public international law. Melissa says she feels privileged to be part of this

issue of *EJIL* alongside some of the 'rock stars' of public international law: Professors Philippe Sands, Jean d'Aspremont, Enzo Cannizzaro and Simon Chesterman.

In the article, entitled 'Status Quo Post Bellum and the Legal Resolution of the Territorial Dispute between

China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands', Melissa applies the idea of status quo post bellum as an alternative to the usual approach that relies on historic title and ancient maps. The work is related to her dissertation on the formal ascertainment of international legal rules.

Melissa is from the Philippines and works hard to prove that Filipinos in Hong Kong are not only good domestic helpers but also good scholars. She believes that scholarship knows no race, religion, gender or age. Melissa has experienced discrimination in Hong Kong, but she is grateful for the mechanisms in HKU that allow her to push back and continue her work under an atmosphere of academic freedom. HKU's research support has enabled her to publish five articles so far as a PhD student.



# Hunting Hijackers

## *Alumni Interview with Dr Wong Chak Lui Carmen*

Like many Hongkongers who spend time abroad, Dr Wong Chak Lui Carmen was often homesick during her student days in Canada. She graduated (BSc in Microbiology and Immunology) from the University of British Columbia at the height of SARS when many people would have stayed away from Hong Kong. But the resilience of local people during the epidemic strengthened her long-standing ambition to make a career in her home town. She studied for her PhD at HKU, graduating in 2009. Now Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology at the University, she leads a research project on liver cancer, a disease that is particularly common here.

During her academic career, Dr Wong has received many prestigious awards. The most recent, announced early this year, is the Croucher Innovation Award for her work in *Identifying the Metabolic Vulnerabilities of Liver Cancer*. Her current research focuses on understanding the molecular changes that confer metabolic advantages on cancer cells. "This award gives me the opportunity to do more adventurous experiments and to establish advanced experimental platforms in previously uncharted areas of liver cancer metabolism," she says. "I believe it will be a very exciting five years for my research team."

"Cancer cells are very smart – they hijack all the nutrients to support their rapid growth, and they rewire their metabolic pathways to generate metabolites that are beneficial to their survival," Dr Wong says. "The metabolic network is even more complicated than the subway network in a metropolitan city. My team focuses on the identification of the 'subway driver' or the molecular deregulation that causes the metabolic reprogramming in cancer. We believe that understanding the metabolic reliance of cancer cells would enable us to identify the vulnerability of cancer cells for therapeutic targeting."

Dr Wong's interest in cancer research started during her time on the MSc Programme at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. After graduation, she decided to continue to work on liver cancer and pursue her PhD study in Cancer Biology at HKU. Subsequently, the Croucher Foundation Fellowship 2009-2011 supported her post-doctoral training at the Johns Hopkins University in the United States.

After experiencing a number of different universities both here and overseas, Dr Wong views HKU as world-class in terms of facilities and general ambience. It is also where she developed her passion for cancer research.



Dr Wong views her student days as the honeymoon period of her academic life when she handled only one or two research projects and had time to explore different research areas and learn various experimental techniques.

"Nowadays, as a faculty member I handle about 10 research projects and I have to manage teaching, research and administrative work. I really need to multi-task! I work hard for my team, my department, and my university. I have to take care of my students and plan what's best for them. But I really enjoy mentoring as every student is unique. I learn new things from them and I enjoy the reciprocal interaction."

The most useful advice from her own mentors was to think big, says Dr Wong. "My mentors taught me to go against the current and be a thinker. It's important for scientists to build upon existing findings or models. But, it's also important that we question current models and create new paradigm-shifting concepts."

"I always encourage my students to read beyond their projects and research areas. This is the best way to integrate knowledge of various disciplines and make new, important findings. I also encourage them to make the most of their surroundings. We tend to stick with familiar techniques. But I encourage them to leave their comfort zone, explore the newest facilities in our school and try to employ new techniques in current projects. Make friends with labmates and your neighbours as they might be the people who best understand the nature of your job."

Science is a true vocation for Dr Wong. She says successful research requires effort and dedication, but the job satisfaction is immense. "I don't really feel I am working when I am in a lab. I always appreciate that I get paid for doing something fun and enjoyable."

"I owe a great deal to my mentors for their guidance and encouragement all the way through my career journey. And I am very grateful to my parents for giving me the confidence to pursue what I find meaningful. I am also thankful to have a very supportive husband who gives me courage when I doubt myself. Life cannot be more rewarding than to have such companions on my journey of scientific exploration."

# Dialogues between Veteran and Aspiring Researchers

This series of lunchtime dialogues aims to provide opportunities for informal interactions between research postgraduate students and visiting professors. Through these exchanges, prominent researchers share their extensive experience and insights into success in academia and beyond, and students can ask questions about preparing for their academic career or alternative paths.

The Graduate School is very grateful to the professors who have contributed to these sharing sessions, which have been inspiring and useful for participants. Since the launch of the series in November 2016, the following four sessions have been held.

**November 18, 2016**

## **Professor Jeremy Jackson**

*Senior Adjunct Scientist  
National Museum of Natural History,  
Smithsonian Institution, USA*

## **Professor Nancy Knowlton**

*Sant Chair in Marine Science  
National Museum of Natural History,  
Smithsonian Institution, USA  
HKU Visiting Research Professors,  
Faculty of Science*

**December 2, 2016**

## **Professor Garth Cooper**

*Professor in Discovery and  
Experimental Medicine  
Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences,  
University of Manchester, UK  
HKU Visiting Research Professor,  
Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy*

**January 10, 2017**

## **Professor Robin Lovell-Badge**

*Group Leader and Head of the Division of Stem Cell  
Biology and Developmental Genetics  
The Francis Crick Institute, UK  
HKU Visiting Research Professor,  
School of Biomedical Sciences*

**March 3, 2017**

## **Professor Timothy Oakes**

*Director, Center for Asian Studies  
Professor of Geography  
University of Colorado, USA  
HKU Visiting Professor,  
Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and  
Social Science*



Produced by:  
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