

# Medical Education in Hong Kong (excerpt)

Lindsay Ride, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine

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I have chosen this subject to-day for a number of reasons. Firstly because it is important that students, especially new students, should have a general idea of the courses of studies which lie before them for the next six years; secondly, because it is desirable that you should all have some knowledge of the history and aims of the institution that you have joined and thirdly because I welcome the opportunity of giving publicity to a subject which I consider should be of definite interest to the general public of Hong Kong. I should like to introduce my subject with the second of these points, namely, a brief consideration of the history of medical education in this colony and before I have finished I feel sure you will agree that it is a history of which any country of this size might well be proud.

## The Hong Kong College of Medicine

As far back as the eighties of the last century, public-spirited men in Hong Kong were moved to give expression of their realization of the importance of medical education to the welfare of this colony, and on the 30th of August, 1887, a meeting was held in the then recently opened Alice Memorial Hospital and at this meeting it was decided to establish a “College of Medicine for Chinese in Hong Kong.” Those present were, the Rev., Dr. Chalmers (in the chair), Dr. Wm. Young, Dr. (later Sir Patrick) Manson, Dr. (later Sir James) Cantlie, Dr. (later Sir Kai) Ho Kai, Dr. Jordan, Dr. Gerlach and Mr. W. E. Crow. Just let us consider those names for a moment. One is that of a versatile scholar who served his generation as the acclaimed leader of the Chinese in this city; another is that of a member of a prominent firm of European doctors in this colony whose great help and interest in medical education here we will commemorate by the Jordan Scholarship given every six months in the University. Two further names are of those who were members of a British firm of doctors, which firm has continued to this very day to render the same type of self-sacrificing service both to the public and to the cause of medical education in Hong Kong. I refer to the names of Cantlie and Manson. His work is known and revered in all countries and climates and commemorated in not a few, excepting the one place that gave him his opportunity. In Hong

Kong we have no Manson Memorial Chair of Public Health, no Manson Lectureship in Tropical Medicine, no Manson Research Institute or even Scholarship in Tropical Diseases, not even a bust or a plaque or a photograph to remind us that he who helped so largely to found the modern science of tropical medicine, also laid the foundation of medical education in this colony. Next year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this foundation and we in the Medical Faculty are already considering how this may be done most appropriately. I need only add “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Dr. Manson was appointed the first Dean of the Medical College and on the 1st of October of the same year he delivered an inaugural address in the City Hall at a largely attended public meeting presided over by His Excellency Major-General Cameron, C.B., the Officer Administrating the Government.

### **Sun Yat Sen**

In the proceedings of the Senate of the College held on the 16th July, 1892, there occurs the following, a minute which time has surely invested with interest and importance undreamt of when it was penned by its writer. It reads:

“It was resolved to recommend Sun Yat Sen and Kong Ying Wa, who have passed all the Professional Examinations, to the Court for the Licence of the College, Sun Yat Sen to qualify ‘with high distinction.’”

These were the first diplomas to be given by the College and thus to the accompaniment of those prophetic words “with high distinction” became the future leader of the vast Chinese Republic, the first fruits of organized medical education in Hong Kong. These diplomas, a copy of which you may all see hanging on the wall of the vestibule of the present Anatomy and Physiology building, were presented at a public meeting in the City Hall on the 23rd of July, 1892. Already I hope you are beginning to realize that a heritage you have made yours by coming to Hong Kong for your medical education.

The College then entered on a period of quiet and unobtrusive work and the next important event in its history was that in 1907 it was decided to alter the name to “The Hong Kong College of Medicine” since it was found that students of nationalities other than Chinese desired to avail themselves of the opportunities of medical education in Hong Kong.

The teaching was carried out in the Alice Memorial Hospital, the Nethersole Hospital, the Ho Miu Ling and Tung Wah Hospitals, and accommodation for special lectures was provided in various places such as the Government Civil Hospital, Queen's College, the Sanitary Department, the Public Mortuary and the Bacteriological Institute with the headquarters of the College at the Alice Memorial Hospital. For many years the teachers in this College gave both in size and in value it is readily understood why, sooner or later, it became necessary to consider the requisition not only of permanent buildings but also of permanent staff. In 1905 the Government reserved on the Tai Ping Shan area a site suitable for the purpose of a medical building and it was offered to the College. Two years later Ng Li Hing — a generous benefactor whose memory is perpetuated by scholarships in Anatomy, given annually in this University — donated \$50,000 and Tang Chuk Kai donated \$10,000. With this sum of money at their disposal the Senate of the College proposed to make an appeal for funds sufficient to erect buildings and engage a small permanent staff.

### **The University of Hong Kong**

In 1905, the “China Mail” and others advocated the establishment of a University in Hong Kong, and in December 1907 at the prize-giving at St. Stephen's College, the then Governor, Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard expressed the hope that this ambitious project might before long take shape. Later Sir Frederick wrote, “Shortly afterwards Mr. H. N. Mody intimated to me privately that he had read my remarks with great interest, and was prepared to erect the necessary buildings at a cost of \$150,000 and to give \$30,000 towards an Endowment Fund.”

You will note that the offer of Mr. Mody was made about the same time as the benefactions of Mr. Ng Li Hing and Mr. Tang Chuk Kai were made to the College of Medicine, and Sir Frederick, realizing that these two projects might be advantageously combined, consulted the College authorities who welcomed the larger scheme of a University in Hong Kong and offered to amalgamate their College therewith. Although realizing that if a University were established, one of its most important faculties would be that of Medicine, Sir Frederick with characteristic prescience considered that the Tai Ping Shan site would be all too small for a university as he envisaged it, and it was

then decided to obtain the views of the benefactors and the past and present students of the College on the suitability for the larger University scheme, of another proposed site in Bonham Road. These views proving favourable, the Court of the College decided to abandon their building scheme and devote their appeal to the endowment of the University.

On the 18th of March, 1908, His Excellency convened another public meeting at which he stated that the revenues of the colony could not undertake any responsibility for carrying this project through, but he would readily recommend to the Secretary of State the gift of an adequate site for the purpose, and, if successful, the Government would necessarily be closely connected with its control. The University must in fact be “financially independent though the Legislative Council might not improbably approve of a grant in aid of its revenue.”

At this meeting it was decided to appoint a sub-committee to report on what would be, in their opinion, a minimum staff and its cost for two faculties, one of medicine and another of engineering; how far local assistance, to aid the professorial staff could be required for maintenance and endowment. Amongst the names of those sitting on this sub-committee it is interesting to find that of the Hon. Mr. (now Sir Henry) Pollock, and though unnecessary, surely it is fitting here to draw attention to one of the many valuable services Sir Henry has rendered the public life of this colony.

A period of tremendous committee activity followed during which scheme after scheme was submitted, discussed, rejected or modified, until in January, 1909, through the generosity of the Chinese of Hong Kong and various other places, of the Viceroy of Canton, of Messrs. Butterfield. A document was drawn up between the University of Hong Kong on the one hand and the Hong Kong College of Medicine on the other, whereby amongst other things it was agreed “When the University is opened the Faculty of Medicine shall be simultaneously inaugurated and no other Faculty shall be before it.”

I must ask you to bear with me in this long historic preamble but I want you to understand that the history of medical education in Hong Kong began long before the University was brought into being and that we in the University are in duty bound to preserve our inheritance and uphold the prestige of medical

education so ably begun by our parent foundation, “The Hong Kong College of Medicine.”

At the opening of the University in 1912, the teaching staff of the College of Medicine became lecturers in the Faculty of Medicine and the students were transferred to the University. The next event of vital importance to the Medical Faculty was the record in the minutes of that body of the receipt in September, 1913, of a letter the Registrar of the General Medical Council in Great Britain announcing “that the Council had decided to recognise the degrees in Medicine and Surgery of this University, granted after examination, for the registration in the Medical Register.”

\*Read before the Medical Society on the 24th September, 1936.