

A glimpse from the past: Hong Kong University Medical Unit in 1928

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The group photograph of the University Medical Unit on the opposite page was probably taken in the Government Civil Hospital at Sai Ying Pun in the early half of 1928. Seated in the centre front row is Prof John Anderson, who joined the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in 1923 as its first full-time professor in Medicine.¹ The chair was established following donations by the Rockefeller Foundation. Prof Anderson graduated from Glasgow University in 1907 and was in private practice near Liverpool. During the First World War he served as a surgical specialist in the army. Later, in Egypt, he became interested in bacteriology and pathology. Prior to his arrival in Hong Kong, he spent time in the West Indies as a member of the Filariasis Commission organised by Sir Patrick Manson and the Seamen's Hospital Society. He became Dean of the Medical Faculty in 1927 but left the University in 1928 to join the new Henry Lester Institute for Medical Research in Shanghai where he died in 1931 at the age of 52. He bequeathed £250 to the University to establish the John Anderson Gold Medal, to be awarded to the student who attained the highest aggregate of marks in all the professional examinations.² To his right is nursing sister Dorothy Lewis who joined the government service in 1926.³ At that time, all nursing sisters in government hospitals were from the United Kingdom.

In 1928 the University Medical Unit had only three full-time medical staff to assist the professor. The Unit was allocated 42 beds and 4 cots among the total of 212 beds in the Government Civil Hospital. The Unit also ran the medical out-patient clinic of the hospital that had over 5000 annual attendances.⁴ At the time, the population in Hong Kong was estimated at around 1 million. Seated to the left of Prof Anderson is his assistant Dr Li Tsoo-Yiu (MB BS 1924). He joined the unit in 1927 after studying in Europe and America under a Rockefeller Travelling Fellowship that included about 6 months' study of paediatrics at the Glasgow Royal Sick Children's Hospital. He was responsible for lectures on Paediatrics and Syphilology⁴ and was probably the first full-time lecturer in Paediatrics at the Medical Faculty. He was elected President of the Hong Kong

Chinese Medical Association in 1932, the forerunner of the Hong Kong Medical Association. He left the University in 1933 to join the Henry Lester Institute in Shanghai.⁵ A scholarship in memory of him was set up by The Li Tsoo Yiu Memorial Fund Committee, to be awarded for academic merit to a student in any year of the medical curriculum at the HKU.

Also seated in the front row (far left) is Dr Tu Teng-Pang (MB BS 1927), the house physician. The other ladies in the front row were medical students. Male medical students who represented different ethnic groups and diverse backgrounds stood in the back row.

Seated to the far right in the front row is Dr Hua Tse-Jen (MB BS 1927), clinical assistant of the Unit. Dr Hua came to Hong Kong in 1923 from Tientsin as a Hopei Provincial Scholar—a scholarship established by the provincial government in 1914 to send students to study at HKU. After a short stint in the Government Civil Hospital, he returned to North China in 1929 and worked as medical officer to the Kai Lan Mining Administration until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937. He returned to Hong Kong in 1938 and was appointed Superintendent of the Lai Chi Kok Hospital that has now been revitalised as the Jao Tsung-I Academy. As Medical Superintendent of Kwong Wah Hospital during the Japanese occupation, he worked under very difficult circumstances. He was awarded the O.B.E. in June 1946 “for maintaining services at the Kwong Wah Hospital during hostilities and the Japanese occupation and for assisting prisoners of war and internees in spite of his own illness and even after release from detention by the Japanese”⁶

Sir Selwyn Clarke, the then Director of Medical and Health Services wrote in his memoir, *Footprints*, about the courageous acts of Dr Hua:

“Supplies of food, vitamins, soap and other articles for the camps in Kowloon were stored for me nearby by Dr T J Hua, in charge of the Kwong Wah Hospital, who was to be repaid for his staunch co-operation by a spell of imprisonment after my own arrest, but finally and more fittingly by the award of the OBE.”⁷

After the war, his concern for poor children led Dr Hua to open The Shanghai Street Children's Centre in 1952 with the Rev Smith and Mr Peterson, Principal Probation Officer of the Government. In 1974, the Society's name changed to the present name—Society of Boys' Centre. Today the Society has a residential unit and a school that bears his name.

On the medical side, Dr Hua was a founder of the Anti-tuberculosis Association. He also had the distinction of serving as President of the Chinese Medical Association (1949-50) and the Hong Kong Branch of the British Medical Association (1951-52). In 1968 Dr Hua was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa by his alma mater for contributions to medicine and society.

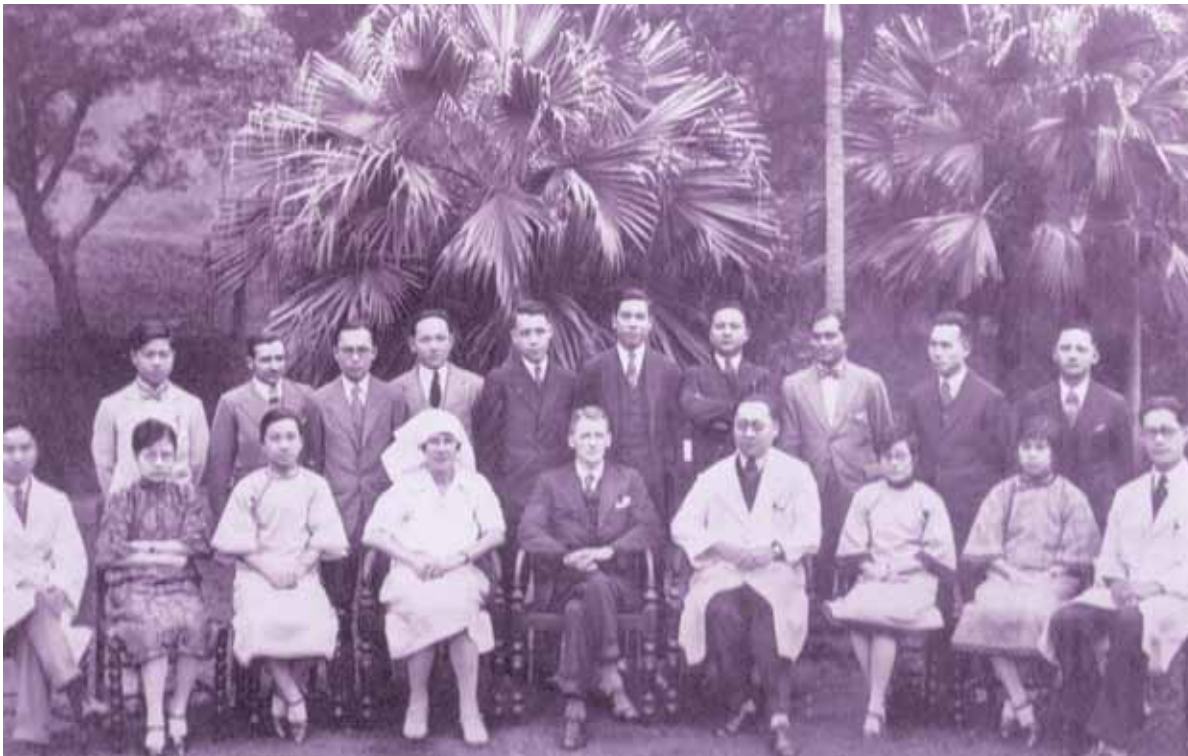


FIG. Photograph of the Hong Kong University Medical Unit taken in 1928: donated by Dr Andrew SP Hua (son of Dr TJ Hua) to the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences in 2012

Names of persons in the photograph from left to right (with year of graduation from HKU where applicable):

Front row

- Dr Tu Teng-pang, house physician (1927)
- Leung Chum-ha 梁枕霞, medical student (1930)
- Tong Lai-yee, medical student (unknown)
- Dorothy Lewis, nursing sister
- Prof John Anderson, head of department
- Dr Li Tsoo-yiu 李祖佑, assistant to the professor (1924)
- Pau Choi-chue, medical student (1930)
- Cheng Sui-yue 鄭兆如, medical student (1931)
- Dr Hua Tse-jen 華則仁, clinical assistant (1927)

Back row

- Lim Po-thye 林寶泰, medical student (1929)
- Fezally Hiptoola, medical student (1934)
- Lee Chuen-sing, medical student (unknown)
- Tan Tiong-lam 陳忠南, medical student (1930)
- Chan Ping-in 陳炳賢, medical student (1930)
- Loh Seng-poh 羅承寶, medical student (1935)
- Jap Boon-koe 葉文貴, medical student (1931)
- Chitoor Aroohasiramony Sunderaj, medical student (1928)
- Teh Hui-seng, medical student (unknown)
- Carlos Francisco Xavier Da Roza, medical student (1928)

References

1. News and Comments. *Caduceus* 1923;2:158.
2. Manson-Bahr PB. Obituary of John Anderson. *BMJ* 1931;3666:647-8.
3. Hong Kong Government. *Civil Service Establishments*; 1928.
4. *Annual Medical Report of 1927*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government.
5. Notes and Comments. *Caduceus* 1933;12:53.
6. Hsieh A. Citation for Dr Hua Tse Jen at the 69th Congregation of the University of Hong Kong.
7. Selwyn-Clarke S. *Footprints*. Hong Kong: Sino-American Publishing Co; 1975.