Message from the Master

Azalea Shrubs

With the help of the Estate Office, some azalea shrubs  (杜鹃花) have been planted along the slope last year. I hope you have noticed that the azalea shrubs are now blossom revealing that spring has already arrived. While we are busy with our work and research, I recall a Chinese poem: 尽日寻春不见春，芒鞋踏破垄头云；归来偶过桃花下，春在枝头已十分。This poem reminds us that we have been searching for something that we long for all the time, but it is indeed just around us day by day.

In today’s high speed society, we tend to overlook what is happening around us – a friendly smile from your neighbour, the care from your friend and/or family, and what’s more? Is this something you have been longing for? If so, just stop for a little while and feel it.

By the way, do you know azalea is the flower of our University?

Thomas Ng (Dr.), Master of Graduate House
Farewell Message from Resident Tutor

On February 28, I had my last day in Graduate House.

Being the resident tutor here was a wonderful experience. Although it had only been a year, the life in Graduate House was so memorable. Here I met and chatted with many excellent scholars from different parts of the world and this exposure really broadened my horizon. What impressed me the most was our management team and supporting colleagues. For the first time, I realized the immense effort in running an organization smoothly. Thomas (Master of GH), Jennifer (resident fellow), Helen (ex-resident fellow, 2002-2008) and Dick (manager of GH) sacrificed much of their private time to counsel students and handle different hall matters. Their hard work makes the Graduate House being one of the most attractive resident halls among the University. In addition, I appreciate our fellow residents in resident committee, who had channeled the voice from our residents and made valuable suggestions to the Management team. I am thankful for the effort put by the management team as well as the fellow residents for the best of the hall. I have learnt to view from different aspects for the ultimate goal to provide a harmonious and finest environment for our residents.

Finally, I wish to take this moment to thank all of you for the friendship and support you have given me during my stay at the Graduate House. I enjoyed my tenure here and I appreciated the opportunity to work here and live with you all. Thanks again for everything.

Dr. Jack C. M. Wong,
ex-Resident Tutor (Feb 2008-Feb 2009)

New Sofa Set at P104

With the generous donation of Anterra, a brand new L-shaped Ligne Roset sofa set has replaced the defective old sofa set in our Common Room P104, where our residents usually gather for meetings and activities.

The new sofa set (photo attached) not only carries a prestigious French brand name “Ligne Roset” but itself is a state-of-art furniture offering extraordinary comfort and sense of nobility to our residents who use it. Our residents really do appreciate the enjoyment of this new sofa set being made possible by the donation.
VRV System (Variable Refrigerant Volume System)

With the generous donation of HK$500,000 by the Arthur Samy Memorial Fund, the air-conditioning system in the Student Lounges has been replaced by the VRV system (photos attached), which is a very efficient system providing our student residents with a comfortable environment all year round. Our residents do appreciate the air-conditioning of this sophisticated system being made possible by the donation.

Components of the VRV system being installed

1. VRV System – core part
2. Control Panel at Student Lounge
3. Motion-sensed Control

4. Motion-sensed Control – closer view
5. Cool Air Outlet - 3 outlets
6. Cool Air Outlet – closer view

Advantages of the VRV System:

1. Variable refrigeration – changing frequency according to demand;
2. Combining individual machines together to multiply the electricity power;
3. More energy efficient and saving;
4. Cooling condition more stable;
5. Easy for repair
High Table Dinner

The first Graduate House High Table Dinner for the 2008-09 residential year was held on 6 Nov 2008 at the Joseph’s restaurant (P3, Graduate House, University of Hong Kong). We were honored to have 96 residents, 5 tutor fellows and 7 guests attending this High Table Dinner.

We appreciate our invited speaker Ms. Fok, the chair lady of the Graduate House Committee of Management for delivering a speech titled "Engaging Gen-Y Employees in Today's Multinational Workplaces". The residents were very impressed and attracted by Ms. Fok’s talk, which benefited them in many facets of their lives.

Thank you all for joining us in this gorgeous event and we look forward to seeing more residents at the next High Table Dinner.
Tutor Fellow’s Gatherings with Residents

With the support of our Tutor Fellows Dr. C.M. Si (Faculty of Arts) and Dr. Li Hui (Faculty of Education), two gatherings were organized for the residents in their own faculties. From their heartily smiles flashing on the photos, we can certainly share their joys of a memorable time getting together with their tutor fellows and faculty mates.

For the upcoming gatherings to be organized by tutor fellows of other faculties, we will continue to update you in our next issue of newsletter.

Informal Dinner Gatherings

Five informal small group dinner gatherings with residents were hosted by our Master at the Resident Common Room P104 between 17 February and 3 March 2009.

The residents enjoyed chatting with each other in a very relaxing and friendly atmosphere. They have also shared valuable suggestions with the House management. About 10-15 residents attended each session of the gathering.
House Activities

Ping Pong Competition

The Graduate House Resident Ping Pong Competition was organized by the Resident Committee in Oct-Nov 2008. In total, 10 female and 14 male residents participated in this competition. The grand final was held on 30 Nov 2008. Around 30 residents joined and cheered for the competitors. The audience appreciated the amazing techniques of the players. After fierce competitions, Ms. Bai Xue and Mr. Wu Dan won the championship.

Friends, before competition

Audience anticipating the war to start

Fierce war

That’s the umpire

(The photos and information above are provided by RC member Li Ying, PhD student in Faculty of Social Sciences)

Taekwondo Demonstration

While dedicating to your study and research at HKU, do you also leave some time for leisure and sports? Come, escape for your daily routines and take a break with us in our sport events.

On 28 November 2008, the HKUSU Taekwondo Club was invited by the management to Graduate House for a Taekwondo demonstration at P4 foyer. The team has demonstrated their fantastic skills. The participants were also invited to try it out with the instructions of the coach.

Do you know there are 24 sport associations/clubs at HKU? It may be easy for you to find a sport which fits your taste, talents, and lifestyles. So, do not hesitate. Check their website and pick up your sport recipe today! http://www.hku.edu.hk/students/sports.html
House Activities

Research Talk
- Making the most out of your PhD journey

We were honored to have the privilege of inviting our ex-resident and alumnus Dr. Esther Goh to give the captioned research talk on 5 December 2008 at Wang Gung Wu Theatre. This event was co-organized by the Graduate House Management and the Graduate House Mandarin Bible Study Group (GHMBSG). This talk has attracted around 100 audiences, including HKU students (both Graduate House residents and non-residents) and also some HKU faculty members.

The speaker, Dr. Esther Goh, who is currently an Assistant Professor in the National University of Singapore, has shared interactively with the audience about her experiences of making a successful, fruitful, and meaningful PhD research journey. Her talk, with many practical suggestions and examples on the various stages of a PhD program, has deeply attracted and inspired the audience. After the talk, over 30 audiences still stay around for some individual discussions with Dr. Goh.

We appreciate Dr. Goh for her willing heart, time, and efforts for preparing and delivering this excellent research talk for HKU student community. We hope she can come back to visit us again in the near future.

Halloween Party

I celebrated the Halloween 2008 with my lovely friends from the Graduate House. In the picture are (left to right) Wilson Woon, Jason Buhi, Li Ying and Annie Wang (me). The picture captures the moment to remember. Flashlights from the cameras and the smiles on our faces celebrated for the happiness of friendship. Under the roof of the Graduate House I have made friends that will stay in my life forever. This is what this picture is meant to tell you. :)

- Annie Wang
Mphil student, Faculty of Arts
RC Mid-term Election and New Members

In January, 2009, four residents ran for and were elected to the Graduate House Residents’ Committee. Together, they will assist planning RC activities, working with the management, and acting as a liaison between the residents and the administration. I am very pleased to introduce the new members below. - Brian Cashin, RC Chairman

I am Li Yuanyuan, a new RC member since the beginning of this year. It is my honor to take the responsibilities in organising activities in RC. I come from Sichuan province, during the earthquake, I worked as a volunteer. And I was the monitor in my class before, and we were the national excellence class.

Hey, this is Li Ying. I am studying public policy as a research postgraduate in HKU. I come from Jiangxi Province of China where the soil is red. I had a lot of fun here in Graduate House last year, knowing friends and joining the activities. Therefore, I decide to join the RC and produce more fun for the residents this year.

I am Elaine Pang- the RC’s new publicist. I look forward to talking with my fellow residents and plan activities that interest them. For the past two years, I have been studying as a postgraduate student in the faculty of education. In my spare time, I volunteer, play the piano and enjoy the great outdoors.

Hello, I am Eva Qi. I have learned playing piano and folk dance for almost 10 years, and once organized some evenings when I was a member of Student Union during the period of my undergraduate degree. Now as far as I know, there are at least two residents here who can play piano, and several professional singers. So I think whether the RC may organize some party for singing and dancing, or some game for karaoke, or the other form of entertainment, to active the lives of the residents here. I think it would be a wonderful opportunity for me to polish my leadership style and build experience in teamwork and organization. Through our contribution, the Graduate House would become not only a place to dwell and study, but more importantly a place to make new friends and to experience a true sense of community.

Exclusive discount for Graduate House Residents and Staff Dining at Joseph’s at the Graduate

Effective immediately, Joseph’s at the Graduate is pleased to offer a 20% discount for Graduate House Residents and Staff dining at Joseph’s at the Graduate. Offer is good for all regular menus including lunch, afternoon tea and dinner (Not valid for special functions/event).

All patrons please present your University Card for verification upon checking out. Advance reservation is required. Please feel free to call us at 2547 8999 if you need further information.

Thanks.
Joseph’s at the Graduate
Residents’ Corner

Mabuhay! Welcome to the Philippines!

Wilson Woon, PhD student, Faculty of Engineering
thwoon2002@gmail.com

Last summer Jason and I came up with an idea of organizing a trip to South-East Asia (SEA) which eventually became one of my manifestos for the Residents’ Committee (RC) Election. We thought of kicking off the trip by going to the Philippines because it is a beautiful country with lots of stunning white beaches. It was a last minute arrangement and we managed to get Brendon to come along. I have never been to the Philippines and was eagerly looking forward to it.

We arrived in Manila in the evening and were greeted by one of Jason’s friends, Ruth, who was kind enough to arrange our accommodation and showed us around Manila. Manila Airport was extremely busy with people waiting anxiously for the return of their loved ones. After going through some hiccups at the immigration, there was no stopping us from exploring the beauty of the Philippines.

Metro Manila was interesting because it has a blend of modern and historic sites for us to visit. The latter comes in the form of Intramuros located on the Southern side of Pasig River. Intramuros was a fortress city (just like the Forbidden City in Beijing), for the elite Spanish. Spread around the city was some churches, hospitals, houses, schools, and so on. In present time, part of the city has been modernized with Starbucks and McDonald’s sit alongside a prestige educational institution. There was even a golf course in the city! Intramuros is definitely a must-see in Manila. Besides that, we went to Rizal Shrine, Fort Santiago, and SM Mall of Asia, the second largest mall in the Philippines, all by jeepneys, a local transportation.

Farewell to Manila and Hello to Bohol, a paradise island near Cebu and the hidden treasure of the Philippines. We spent about three days there and loved every minute of it. We were thankful to Ricky, who drove us around the island with his tricycle. Among the amazing places that we visited include Chocolate Hills, Tarsier (world’s smallest monkey), Alburquerque church, white sand beach in Panglao, and Tagbilaran City.

Knowing from words of mouth that Cebu is famous for dried mango, we headed to the island to get them as souvenirs. Along the way, we stopped at Basilica of Santo Nino, one of the oldest churches in the Philippines which was built in 1565. Next to the church was Magellan’s Cross, which symbolizes the arrival of the great explorer, Ferdinand Magellan in Cebu in 1521.

We left this country with only sweet memories. We will definitely return to explore the remaining 7000+ islands in the Philippines.
Residents’ Corner

Learning, Research, & Life Balance

Li Kai Qi, MSc (Eng) student, IMSE, Faculty of Engineering

vicki2007@gmail.com

It is unavoidable that learning & research are our main works in our daily life in HKU campus. It is stressful, but more meaningfully, it is a life of so much fun as we are living at the Graduate House, which is exactly a family of students from all over the world. I would like to say my life at Graduate House is about Learning, Research and also Life Balance.

Actually, lots of applicants desire the outstanding conditions embraced by Graduate House, which is standing in the main campus. As a resident here, I think the most important advantage here is the communication platform provided in our daily life, for example, the student lounge in each floor, P104 gathering lounge and etc. During the weekend, friends could be there to share their experience with each other, it is really interesting. With days going on, lots of valuable friendship could be set up as a foundation for future life development in the society. More interesting things I enjoyed are the High Table Dinner, Informal Gatherings and Ping Pong Competition organized by Graduate House Management and RC. I really appreciate their efforts in making our residence a more colorful life at Graduate House.

For me, Graduate House is really a wonderful stay and memory during my academic life in HKU. I appreciate the opportunities provided by GH Management and RC. Really with their efforts, we residents could enjoy a more valuable life and live as a family in Hong Kong University.

Chatting with Manager

Stagnant Social Mobility versus Next Generation

Dick Chow (House Manager)

Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Li Ka Shing, etc.

What do you think of when these names come into your mind?

To me, these names signify the seemingly miraculous life journeys from the poor to amongst the richest in the world. Why these people turn out to be amongst the most successful and richest entrepreneurs in their contemporary times. There is a social context in which these successful stories can come true. Besides these people’s diligence and effort, a vigorous upward social mobility in their own societies in their own times have helped them surf over the waves.

I remember when I was young, I was always told to study hard in order to get into the University, get a degree, find a good job, and then hopefully get rich. I have seen examples that Hong Kong people got rich in the 80’s and 90’s irrespective of how much they were educated because the society was full of opportunities at that time.

(to be continued…)
Although Hong Kong at that time exhibited a very clear-cut social stratification, the vigorous social mobility still allowed people to move from one social class, hopefully, up to another. This “hope” drove Hong Kong people to dream, to try and adventure, to meet challenges bravely, to work very hard and finally some did succeed. However, now, whilst Hong Kong’s Gini Coefficient is still amongst the highest in the world, which means Hong Kong society is very seriously stratified and the gap between the rich and the poor is very wide, what is different from the past days is that Hong Kong’s social mobility is no longer vigorous but in fact stagnant! What a pity! Now, one could not get rich through University education when the tertiary education of Hong Kong has been greatly expanded since mid 90’s. A university graduate could earn as less as a few thousand per month. Recently, it was reported that secondary students massively took drugs, misbehaved and seemingly lost self control on the street. According to social workers, this phenomenon is actually only the tip of the iceberg. Generation Y is characterized by loss of vision, “hope” and “upward mobility”. Perhaps, although they may not realize, what they could actually experience is that despite any effort, they now could hardly surf upward to a higher social class when the society is approaching stagnant mobility. In addition to worrying the future of Hong Kong society, we being the adults should care this “lost generation” as their life will be much more difficult than what we experienced before!

I, being father of a son 8 months old (see photo), inevitably concern the growth, development and future of the beloved son. Whilst knowing it is the societal and time context that really matters, I should guide him to one where I think he could excel and succeed in the most if not all the facets of his life.

Superpowers fall one by one in the arena of human history. Who knows the United States finally takes a U-turn falling from the crest during the current financial tsunami. Will USA be weakened just like those past superpowers in the path of human history? Will China survive the financial tsunami and become a new superpower dominating the world in human world in human history?

Will the 21th Century be that of China as commented by contemporary sociologists? Will China duplicate the drastic economic growth trend of Japan from 1964 (Tokyo Olympic Games) to early 90’s, or that of Hong Kong from 1984 to 1997, in the upcoming years? China being mother of Hong Kong is a country that is one or even the only one country in the contemporary world having the social and time context resembling that of past USA (where Warren Buffet and Bill Gates succeeded) and past Hong Kong (where Li Ka Shing succeeded). More and more foreigners now learn Chinese and Putonghua. China could be a desirable destination that the next generation aims at (before they equip themselves accordingly).

(P.S. The author does believe the history is guided by God the Creator of the world. China could be amongst the last superpowers or dreamlands at this most rear part of human history. According to unofficial estimates, China’s Christian population had been drastically increased from some millions during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution to a recent figure of around 130 millions, one tenth of China’s population, in 2008. Beyond the account in this article, the author believes the genuine richness refers not only to material but also spiritual, not only to what one has but also what one is.)
Catching up with our Old Friends

Vous Cherchez? Vous Trouverez! (You search? You will find!)

Helen Law (ex-Resident Fellow 2002-2008)

In a blink, I have already left Graduate House for 5 months and lived in Paris for about 3
months. I am still adjusting myself to this new environment … Life has not been easy
but it has been a great learning experience for me and here are some anecdotes to
share …

(1) Learning new technologies – Institut Pasteur is a very famous
Institute for infectious diseases research. My current job involves
the use of many State-of-the-art research technologies and I need to
learn the techniques from different countries. Since I love learning
and travelling, I enjoyed this job very much!

(2) Learning about different cuisines – The French are famous for
eating everything, such as frogs and snails … I am surprised that
even Kangaroo steaks were available in our cafeteria. Not knowing
enough French, I ordered something which I thought was veal … yet
my stomach started to turn when the chef put a socket and a flip of
ear on my plate … the menu was “tête de veau” … “Head of calf” … I
quickly learned more vocabulary before the next lunch.

(3) Learning to be patient - The word bureaucracy stemmed from the
French word “Bureau” so the French are very good at this sport.
Here is a picture taken at my visit to the Police office where I waited
for 5 hours at -2°C outdoor to submit an application for my identity
card. Worst of all, the government departments do not talk to one
another … so I have left my footprints outside many offices!

(4) Learning to accept different attitudes – A colleague said to me
one day, “I am not wrong … I just haven’t done it the right way!”.
The same colleague told me to avoid the word “Sorry”. She said
French people do not like to apologise and if I keep apologising, I
make them feel uncomfortable. Oh! I didn’t know that! Sorrr …
oops!!

(5) Learning to appreciate – It is when things are missing that I
started to appreciate what I used to have. I miss my Mom’s
cooking, the GH attendant’s weekly cleaning … and I even miss the
GH washing machines whenever I dragged my laundry around the
block to the Laundromat … Extra care is need to avoid dropping my
laundry on the dog shit on the road.

(6) Learning to have courage and confidence – The Manager of my
Centre is a very confident lady, who knows what she wants and how
to get things done her way. From her, I learned that if there is a will,
there is a way.

Since the majority of the GH residents are non-local students, I am sure you have
similar experience when you first move to Hong Kong. Don’t be depressed by the
frustrations. If you search, you will find your happiness in your new environment!