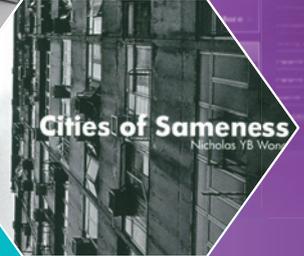




P.1 Experimental study of the conceptualisation of quantification enhances understanding of universal grammar



P.11 InnoCarnival showcases students' creativity



P.18 Early Success of MFA in Creative Writing Programme

## Experimental study of the conceptualisation of quantification enhances understanding of universal grammar

Quantification is an area of study in linguistics with important implications for the nature of human language and cognition. The target properties of quantifiers are extremely complex, involving the structure of quantified phrases and syntax-semantics mapping, and seem to be impossible to be acquired by children at their early age simply through their highly variable and limited linguistic experience.

A research project entitled "Prominence and Locality in Grammar: An Experimental Study of the Conceptualisation of Quantification Scope in Chinese" led by Professor Pan Hai-hua of the Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics at CityU, the principal investigator, together with Dr Cecilia Chan Yuet-chung, Associate Professor of the Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics at CityU, the co-investigator, and Professor Yang Xiaolu from Tsinghua University, the external investigator, has investigated conditions that constrain children's representation and interpretation of quantification structures and the knowledge that children have in connection with their production and comprehension related to additive particles and universal quantifiers in Chinese, which are the meaning equivalents of also and every/all in English, respectively. Professor Pan's research team found that children as old as 7 years of age still have problems in their comprehension of additive particles in Chinese, though they can produce them correctly as early as 2 years of age. Professor Pan's team has argued that children fail to comprehend these particles because they have not fully mastered the relevant knowledge of discourse prominence and the interaction of these particles with information structures as regulated by factors such as locality and prominence.

Professor Pan's research project is another good example of close research collaboration between Hong Kong and mainland China. "Our theoretical exploration was conducted in Hong Kong, whereas experiments were carried out in Beijing," said Professor Pan. Their study contributes to the current linguistic endeavours by reshaping and refining existing theories on the semantics and syntax of Chinese quantifiers and examining Chinese-speaking children's acquisition of quantification from the perspective of locality-prominence interaction at the linguistic interfaces. It shows how syntax, semantics, and discourse may interact to determine the ways that information is packaged and partitioned in natural language.



A little girl participates in the linguistic experiment in Beijing.



Professor Pan Hai-hua

Professor Pan's research project "Prominence and Locality in Grammar: An Experimental Study of the Conceptualisation of Quantification Scope in Chinese", which provides a window to explore issues such as the development of language and cognition, was commended as a "highly productive project with significant results" in a recent Research Grants Council (RGC) report. Besides this project, Professor Pan is also the Principal Investigator of 6 other research projects supported by the General Research Fund under the RGC, with a total funding of over HK\$5 million. ◆

*Office of the Vice-President (Research and Technology)*

## CityU delegation visits Xi'an Jiaotong University

A CityU delegation led by Professor Gregory Raupp, Vice-President (Research and Technology) and Dean of Graduate Studies, visited Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU) on 19 December 2011 to facilitate implementation of the newly established joint PhD programme with XJTU and explore research collaboration opportunities between CityU and XJTU.

During the visit, Professor Raupp and the delegation met with Professor Zheng Nanning, President and Dean of Graduate Studies of XJTU, and were also received by the associate deans of ten schools at XJTU.

At the meeting with Professor Zheng, Professor Raupp noted that CityU has been fully supportive of the development of close relationships with renowned universities on the mainland. The signing of the agreement with XJTU on the recruitment and joint supervision of PhD students was only a first step, and the programme would allow for more research collaborations to be promoted.



Professor Gregory Raupp (third from left) leads a CityU delegation visiting Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU) and is received by Professor Zheng Nanning (second from left), President of XJTU.



Professor Gregory Raupp (left) presents a souvenir to Professor Zheng Nanning, President of Xi'an Jiaotong University.

Professor Zheng remarked that "our schools will be enthusiastic in publicising this joint PhD programme to their colleagues and students and in nominating outstanding students to join this programme. In future, CityU and XJTU faculties working on the same research projects will be able to apply jointly for grants offered on the mainland to obtain more resources for their projects."

Staff from the CityU Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS) also met with representatives of the Graduate School of XJTU to discuss matters relating to student recruitment and management under the programme. The joint PhD programme is aimed at capitalising on both universities' research strengths to cultivate research talent for the benefit of society. The first intake of students will be admitted in 2012-2013.

Accompanying Professor Raupp in the delegation were Professor Xue Quan, Associate Vice-President (Innovation Advancement and China Office), Professor Hui Yer Van, Associate Dean of SGS, Ms Millie Mark, School Secretary of SGS, and Ms Adelaide Lau, Executive Officer of the Office of the Vice-President (Research and Technology). ◆

*Office of the Vice-President (Research and Technology)*

# CityU antenna research team receives State Technological Invention Award

Researchers from the State Key Laboratory of Millimeter Waves at City University of Hong Kong (CityU) have been conferred with a second-class honour at the 2011 State Technological Invention Award (STIA).

The award is in recognition of their outstanding achievements in advancing millimeter wave technologies and applications. The presentation ceremony took place on 14 February 2012 at the annual National Science-Technology Award Ceremony in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

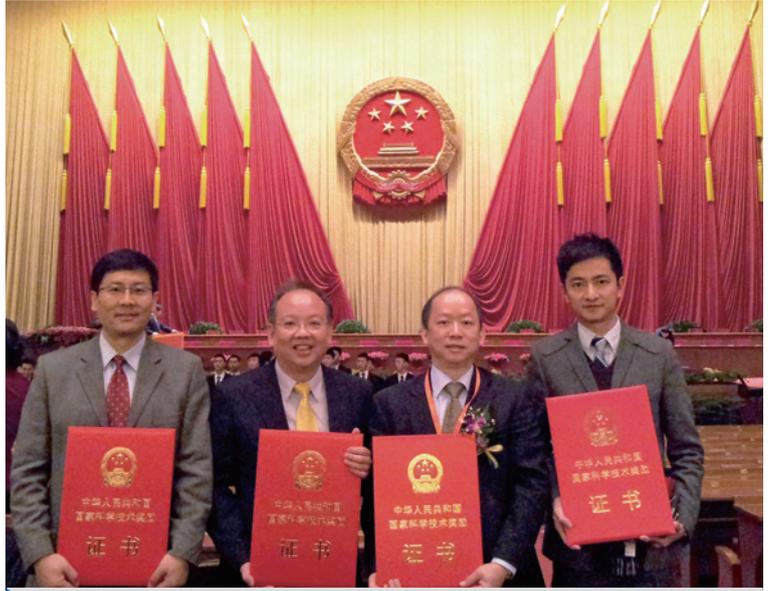
The team is led by Professor Luk Kwai-man, Director of the State Key Lab and Chair Professor in the Department of Electronic Engineering (EE). The other three scholars in the team are Professor Chan Chi-hou, Chair Professor in EE, Professor Xue Quan, Associate Vice-President (Innovation Advancement and China Office), Deputy Director of the CityU Shenzhen Research Institute and Professor in EE, and Dr Steve Wong Hang, Senior Engineer in the State Key Lab.

Their winning project is entitled "Invention, Theoretical and Experimental Investigation and Applications of Some Novel Antennas."

The team has invented five types of novel antennas: the wideband patch antenna, the magneto-electric dipole antenna, the compact circularly polarised patch antenna, the differentially fed wideband patch antenna, and the folded-plated-fed small wideband patch antenna.

"Antennas used in wireless communication have to be small and thin, but maintain a high level of efficiency, such as high gain and wide bandwidth. Researchers have to come up with innovative ideas," Professor Luk said.

One of the disadvantages of the traditional patch antenna is its narrow bandwidth. The CityU team made a breakthrough by changing the shape of the antenna, resulting in bandwidth increasing from less than 2% to more than 30%.



CityU research team has been conferred State Technological Invention Award.

This new generation of wideband patch antenna is called the L-probe patch antenna. "It can be deployed by many new generation wideband patch antennas, such as mobile communication base station antennas, wireless network base station antennas, and radio frequency identification (RFID) reader antennas," Professor Chan said.

The tailed-slot patch antenna is used by the Beidou system, a global positioning system developed by China to help emergency teams identify their position and enable smoother communication in rescue work following the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

"We are deeply honoured to receive the STIA," Professor Xue said. "It is one of China's most prestigious awards in the nation's science and technology sector, and there are many outstanding scientific researchers in China nowadays."

In addition to their application in the navigation and communication areas, advanced antennas can also be used in providing medical treatment, said Dr Wong, currently Acting Assistant Professor at Stanford University. "CityU is working with Stanford on the biomedical applications of wireless signal transmission and reception technology," he said.

The State Key Lab is widely recognised for its research capacity. It won a RMB5 million research grant from the China National Astronomical Observatory to develop a new terminal antenna for its global positioning system, and \$14 million from the Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Commission and Comba Telecom Systems (Guangzhou) Limited for a new wideband smart antenna system for mobile communication. ●

*Adapted from CityU NewsCentre*



Professor Luk



Professor Chan



Professor Xue



Dr Wong

## CityU scholar elected Fellow of the National Academy of Technologies of France

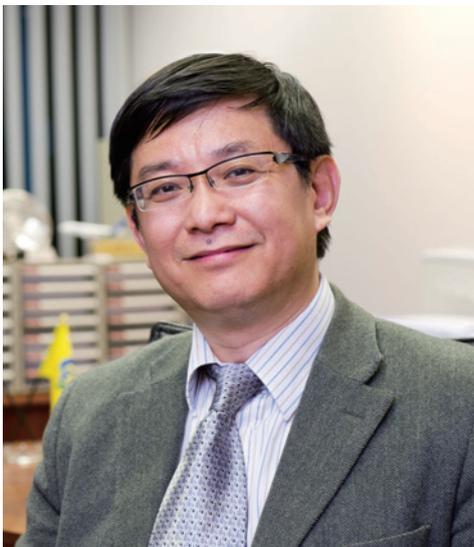
Professor Jian Lu, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering and Chair Professor of Mechanical Engineering at City University of Hong Kong (CityU), has been elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Technologies of France (NATF) in recognition of his contributions to the fields of materials science and engineering, mechanical engineering and mechanics. This brings the number of national academicians at CityU to 12.

Professor Lu stands at the forefront of innovation in the study of the behaviour of mechanical structures. He is mainly engaged in areas such as material mechanics, experimental mechanics, residual stress, surface engineering and computational simulation. His work focuses on both scientific advances and applications.

His papers on mechanical system prestress engineering, surface nanocrystallisation and nanomechanics, biomaterials and mechanical properties have captured widespread interest among scholars, and have had a profound impact in their respective fields.

After obtaining his doctorate in 1986, Professor Lu began conducting fundamental and applied research on residual stress at the French Technical Centre for Mechanical Industries. Residual stress refers to stresses existing within a body in the absence of external loading or thermal gradients.

Professor Lu was interested in how residual stress is generated, the role of residual stress in the work cycle of materials, and how to make use of prestressing force in product design to produce airplanes, high-speed trains and cars that are lighter, safer, more energy-saving and more environmentally friendly.



Professor Jian Lu

In addition, Professor Lu has enjoyed remarkable achievements in the field of surface engineering. The surface nanocrystallisation technology he invented can greatly enhance the low temperature diffusion ability of materials. For instance, traditional vascular stents made from nickel-titanium alloy often release nickel ions which are not conducive to the growth of cells in the human body. Using this new technology to treat a nickel-titanium memory alloy surface can make vascular stents that release fewer nickel ions. He has also designed and developed a type of strengthened energy absorber for cars using a novel surface nanocrystallisation technology.

Commenting on his election as an NATF Fellow, Professor Lu said "I am most delighted and proud to be elected, as all NATF Fellows are outstanding scholars in their own right or renowned experts in different areas of science and technology, and I am the first NATF Fellow of Chinese origin ever elected."

Professor Way Kuo, President of CityU, congratulated Professor Lu for reaching this academic pinnacle. "It is a great honour for CityU to have another prestigious academic member on our faculty," he said.

Last year, Professor Lu founded the Centre for Advanced Structural Materials at CityU to conduct research into innovative materials such as structural materials providing ultra-strength and ductility. These materials can be applied in transportation vehicles to reduce their weight and fuel consumption.

In recognition of his distinguished achievements, Professor Lu has been presented with numerous awards including the French Knight Order of National Merit and the Gold Medal with Mention at the 56th World Exhibition of Innovation, Research and New Technologies at the Brussels Expo.

Professor Lu is also a Fellow of the Society for Experimental Mechanics in the US, an Overseas Assessor of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and has served as a Member of the International Experts Group of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology.

As a body that evolved from the Council for Applications of the French Academy of Science (CADAS), established in 1666, the NATF is a public establishment founded in 2000. It reports to the Minister for Higher Education and Research in France.

Fellows of the NATF strive to analyse the major challenges confronting mankind and to propose solutions to meet them. The NATF has 265 Fellows, including Professor Jean-Marie Lehn, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry; Professor Albert Fert, Nobel Laureate in Physics; Professor Pierre-Louis Lions, winner of the Fields Medal (The International Medal for Outstanding Discoveries in Mathematics); Professor Joseph Sifakis, winner of the Turing Award; Professor Jean-Lou Chameau, President of the California Institute of Technology in the US; and Professor Alice Dautry, Director General of the Pasteur Institute (Institut Pasteur), a world-renowned research organisation in France.

Professor Lu and the other eight newly elected Fellows were welcomed at an inception ceremony held at the NATF Headquarters in the Great Palace (Grand Palais des Champs Elysées) in France on 30 January. ◆

*Adapted from CityU NewsCentre*

# Seminar briefs faculty on 2012 National Natural Science Fund applications

About 80 faculty members and research staff attended a seminar organised by the Office of the Vice-President (Research and Technology) on 3 February 2012 to learn about the 2012 National Natural Science Fund application guidelines and procedures.



Professor Gregory Raupp encourages the faculty to apply for funding offered on the mainland.

The National Natural Science Fund, which is managed by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), is aimed at promoting basic and applied research and financing research projects in China. Since 2009, members of the university's faculty have been able to apply for grants from the Fund through the university's strategic platform on the mainland, the CityU Shenzhen Research Institute (CityUSRI), after it registered with the NSFC as an eligible unit.

In delivering his opening address, Professor Gregory Raupp, Vice-President (Research and Technology), highlighted the significant increase in the amount of research funding provided in China over the past few years, and encouraged faculty members to apply for funding through the CityUSRI.

Professor Xue Quan, Associate Vice-President (Innovation Advancement and China Office), then gave a 30-minute presentation on the major programmes/funds offered by the NSFC, their application criteria and application procedures. The presentation also focused on how to complete and submit the application form and a research proposal.

Professor Ma Jian, Professor of the Department of Information Systems, and Professor Liew Kim Meow, Head of the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering, both recipients of grants made by the National Natural Science Fund in 2011, shared their experience of successful applications, especially in terms of how to write a good qualifying proposal and draft a manageable budget.



Professor Ma Jian (left) and Professor Liew Kim Meow (right) share their experience of successful applications.



Professor Xue Quan leads the question and answer session.

The seminar ended with a question and answer session in which Professor Xue, Professor Ma, Professor Liew and Mr Tony Chen, Administrative Officer of the CityUSRI, answered questions raised by the participants.

In 2011, CityU achieved outstanding results in bidding for grants from the Fund, with 13 projects being awarded more than RMB5.8 million (equivalent to about HK\$7 million). Through the seminar organised, a greater number of academic and research staff have learnt about the Fund, and the number of applications made to the National Natural Science Fund has increased by 79% this year. ◆

Office of the Vice-President (Research and Technology)



# External grants

Funding Body	Project Title	Principal Investigator	Amount
<b>University Grants Committee/Research Grants Council</b>			
France/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme 2011-2012	Stability Analysis of Systems with Random Time-varying Delays: A Small Gain Approach	Professor Chen Jie Department of Electronic Engineering	HK\$61,200
	Green Technology for Commercial Building Applications - from the Hong Kong and France Perspective	Dr Chow Tin-tai Division of Building Science and Technology	HK\$30,600
	Wave Propagation in Carbon Nanotubes based on A New Nonlocal Cylindrical Shell Model	Dr Lim Chee-wah Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering	HK\$30,600
Germany/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme 2011-2012	Micro-vision Based 3D Tracking for Biological Cell Injection	Dr Li You-fu Department of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering	HK\$60,000
	Engineering the Oxygen Mobility of High Performance Catalysts for Preferential Oxidation of Carbon Monoxide (CO-PrOx)	Dr Teoh Wey-yang School of Energy and Environment	HK\$29,500
	Nonlinear Size Effects of Micro- and Nano-Structures	Dr Lim Chee-wah Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering	HK\$59,200
	Mimicking Anisotropic Magnetic Metamaterials with Dielectric Composites	Dr Li Tsan-hang Department of Physics and Materials Science	HK\$29,500
	Atomistic Simulations of Nitrogen Oxides Adsorption on Metal Oxides Nanoparticles for Photocatalysis	Professor Zhang Ruiqin Department of Physics and Materials Science	HK\$30,400
	Textual Revision in Second Language Writing	Dr John Lee Sie-yuen Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics	HK\$60,000
	Side-Channel Resistance of Secure Processor Architecture	Dr Cheung Chak-chung Department of Electronic Engineering	HK\$59,200
	Energy Efficient Schedules for Multi-Core Architectures with Voltage Islands	Dr Li Minming Department of Computer Science	HK\$59,200
NSFC/RGC Joint Research Scheme 2011-2012	Advanced Signal Processing for Target Enumeration and Localization in Multiple- Input Multiple-Output Radar	Dr So Hing-cheung Department of Electronic Engineering	HK\$815,100
	Investigating New Methodologies in Transportation Service Procurement between Shippers and Carriers	Professor Andrew Lim Leong-chye Department of Management Sciences	HK\$468,000

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Funding Body	Project Title	Principal Investigator	Amount
<b>Government or Related Organisation</b>			
Innovation and Technology Commission — Innovation and Technology Fund	Prediction of Solid Deposition in Building Drainage System by Computational Fluid Dynamics	Dr Lee Wai-ming Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering	HK\$829,485
	A New Generation Smart Inverter for PV Application	Professor Henry Chung Shu-hung Department of Electronic Engineering	HK\$1,147,274
Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases (RFCID)	Towards the Understanding of Gene Regulation in Multiple Drug Resistance <i>Pseudomonas Aeruginosa</i>	Dr Lau Chi-kong Department of Biology and Chemistry	HK\$927,008
	Development of Efficient and Adaptable Simulation Models for Pandemic	Professor Tsui Kwok-leung Department of Systems Engineering and Engineering Management	HK\$968,335
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)	Carbon Footprint Management at Home for Sustainable Low-Carbon Living	Dr Michael Leung Kwok-hi School of Energy and Environment	HK\$1,001,200
Hospital Authority	Building Resilience through Positive Psychology Program for HA Staff	Professor Samuel Ho Mun-yin Department of Applied Social Studies	HK\$2,290,646
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	Provision of Services for the Technical Review and Statistical Analysis of the Datasets of Waterbird Monitoring Programme for the Deep Bay Area and Baseline Ecological Monitoring Programme for the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site	Professor Paul Lam Kwan-sing State Key Laboratory in Marine Pollution	HK\$793,500
Department of Health, HKSAR Government	Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards (HKCMMS) Phase VI Project - Abri Herba [ 雞骨草 ]	Dr Cheung Hon-yeung Department of Biology and Chemistry	HK\$605,890
<b>Others</b>			
Jubilee Diamond Instrument Ltd.	Automatic Measurement of Gemstone Size	Dr Peter Tsang Wai-ming Department of Electronic Engineering	HK\$343,675
Vecor Building Systems Ltd.	Structure, Mechanical and Thermal Properties of Polyolefin- and Polyamide-based Composites Reinforced with Recycled Aluminum Silicate Particulates	Professor Tjong Sie-chin Department of Physics and Materials Science	HK\$347,799
Hong Kong and China Gas Co Ltd	Use of an Ultrasonic Guided Waves System for Inspecting Embedded Gas Pipe in a Flat of a Building	Dr Peter Tse Wai-tat Department of Systems Engineering and Engineering Management	HK\$120,000

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Funding Body	Project Title	Principal Investigator	Amount
<b>Others</b>			
Greenpeace East Asia	Policy Analysis on the Electricity Consumption in Hong Kong's Buildings	Dr William Chung Siu-wai Department of Management Sciences	HK\$125,000
Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation	Centre of Reliable Power Electronics (CORPE)	Professor Michael Gerard Pecht / Professor Tommy Chow Centre for Prognostics and System Health Management	DKK\$750,000
ITUC/GUF Hong Kong Liaison Office (IHLO)	Comparative Case Studies on Collective Negotiation in China	Dr Chris Chan King-chi Department of Applied Social Studies	HK\$50,000
SAP Corporation	BizLink: Massive Project Matching and Management Portal for Worldwide Business Collaboration Networks	Professor Leon Zhao Jianliang Department of Information Systems	HK\$1,500,000
Samsung Electronics Co Ltd	Broadband Acoustic Metamaterials for Transformation Acoustics	Dr Jensen Li Tsan-hang Department of Physics and Materials Science	US\$116,500
Academy of Korean Studies	Korean Philosophy in Comparative Perspectives	Professor Philip J Ivanhoe Department of Public & Social Administration	KRW1,443,858,000
Vmax RF Technology Ltd	Design of Microwave Amplifier Module for Ku Band Applications	Dr Tsang Kim-fung Department of Electronic Engineering	HK\$100,000
Google Research Award	Disaster Resilience and Availability Prediction (DRAP) for Clouds	Dr Wang Jianping Department of Computer Science	US\$34,800
Jacobs Foundation	Universal and Culture-Specific Antecedents of Civic Engagement - Who Grows Up to be a Volunteer?	Dr Yue Xiao-dong Department of Applied Social Studies	EUR3,500
Hong Kong Baptist University	Test Plan for Removal Efficiency of Toxic Chemicals by Sewage Treatment Works	Professor Paul Lam Kwan-sing State Key Laboratory in Marine Pollution	HK\$400,000
AECOM	Environmental Governance Process Decision-making Tool for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions in Hong Kong	Dr Maria Del Mar Francesch Huidobro Department of Public & Social Administration	HK\$89,385
EMD Chemicals Inc	Nano-doping in Silicon Nanowires	Dr Johnny Ho Chung-yin Department of Physics and Materials Science	US\$2,000

# China Hi-tech Fair

Research projects conducted by CityU researchers were on display at the 2011 China Hi-tech Fair held in the Shenzhen Exhibition and Convention Centre from 16 to 21 November 2011. CityU was the winner of five Excellent Products Awards recognising the university's research capabilities.

The winning projects were as follows:

◆ *Flexible organic RFID tags and smart sensors for food safety*

Principal Investigator: Dr A L Roy Vellaisamy  
Department of Physics and Materials Science

By applying thin film transistor technology, the research team developed RFID tags and amine sensors made from inexpensive molecular materials. The sensors and tags can be printed en masse.

◆ *Low-cost polymer nanocomposite solar modules*

Principal Investigator: Dr A L Roy Vellaisamy  
Department of Physics and Materials Science

The research team managed to fabricate environmentally friendly and recyclable photovoltaic materials by using polymer nanocomposites.

◆ *3G real-time video surveillance cloud service system*

Principal Investigator: Professor Jia Weijia  
Department of Computer Science

WeZOOM is a software tool that connects 3G mobile networks, WiFi and the Internet. With WeZOOM, video surveillance recordings are accessible via 3G phones, PDAs and laptops.



◆ *Constructed mangrove wetland as a sewage treatment technology*

Principal Investigator: Professor Nora Tam  
Department of Biology and Chemistry

This bioremediation project is aimed at using mangrove plantations to alleviate water pollution in Shenzhen Bay, thereby creating healthy and sustainable wetland ecology.

◆ *Research on energy-use strategy and mangrove construction costs*

Principal Investigator: Professor Nora Tam  
Department of Biology and Chemistry

The project compares the energy demands of alien and native mangrove species in the Shenzhen Futian Nature Reserve to evaluate the invasive potential of alien species.



Staff and students pose in front of the CityU booth.

In addition to the Excellent Product Awards, the university also earned an Excellent Organisation Award and an Excellent Display Award.

As a member of the Shenzhen Virtual University Park, CityU was invited to attend the Assembly of Shenzhen Virtual University Park, one of the events organised in conjunction with the China Hi-tech Fair. Representing the university were Professor Xue Quan, Associate Vice-President (Innovation Advancement and China Office), and Mr Wong Hon-ye, Associate Vice-President (Knowledge Transfer).

The projects on display are listed below in alphabetical order by title:

Project title	Principal Investigator	Department
A novel ozone catalytic oxidation-based dyeing wastewater treatment technology	Dr Oscar Hui	System Engineering and Engineering Management
A rapid identification kit for meat ingredients to enhance food safety	Professor Cheng Shuk-han	Biology and Chemistry
Aerial holographic projection	Dr Peter Tsang	Electronic Engineering
Bias-free magnetoresistive sensors	Dr Antonio Ruotolo	Physics and Materials Science
Enhanced dissolution and bioavailability of Western or bioactive components from herbal drugs by molecular encapsulation technique	Dr Cheung Hon-yeung	Biology and Chemistry

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Project title	Principal Investigator	Department
Flexible organic RFID tags and smart sensors for food safety	Dr A L Roy Vellaisamy	Physics and Materials Science
Industrialisation and application of superhard nanocomposite coatings and their preparation technique	Dr Lawrence Li	Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering
Low-cost chemosensing approaches for clinical, food and environment testing	Dr Michael Lam	Biology and Chemistry
Low-cost polymer nanocomposite solar modules	Dr A L Roy Vellaisamy	Physics and Materials Science
Low-cost smart power quality and continuous waveform compression meter for smart metering infrastructure	Dr Norman Tse Dr Ricky Lau	Building Science and Technology/ Electronic Engineering
New technologies for the application of advanced materials in structural engineering	Dr Wu Yufei	Civil and Architectural Engineering
Plasma-assisted catalytic oxidation (PACO) technology for indoor air purification	Dr Oscar Hui	System Engineering and Engineering Management
Replacement lamp driver with universal compatibility	Professor Henry Chung	Electronic Engineering
Smart picogrid demand response solution for world-class cities	Dr Tsang Kim-fung	Electronic Engineering
Solar heat absorbing window	Dr Chow Tin-tai	Building Science and Technology
3D sound	Dr Peter Tsang	Electronic Engineering

Knowledge Transfer Office

## Knowledge Exchange Conference

To promote the exchange of knowledge between academia and the wider community, the eight local universities organised a two-day conference involving the participation of scholars, policy makers, community and industry leaders, technology transfer professionals, and students from Hong Kong, the US, China, Japan, Australia, the UK and the Netherlands. The conference, held from 5 to 6 December 2011 in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, was sponsored by the University Grants Committee (UGC).

The 2011 Knowledge Exchange Conference (KEC) built on the success of the same event last year, and a significant emphasis was placed on non-technology-related KE issues. The 2011 conference also featured a series of symposia focusing on the “3+3+4” education reform. Other major themes addressed by the conference were KE impact assessment, knowledge partnerships, and China’s 12th Five-Year Plan.



Representatives of local universities and speakers gather at the opening ceremony. CityU President Professor Way Kuo is third from the right in the front row.

Officiating at the opening ceremony, Professor Tsui Lap-chee, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, acknowledged the far-reaching influences of knowledge transfer. He said in his welcoming remarks that “knowledge changes how we do things, and universities need to work closely with society.”

World-renowned technology transfer professionals and scholars, as well as policy makers, were invited to speak at the event. Among them were Professor Eugene Wong, Professor Emeritus of UC Berkeley, Dr Alan Paau, Vice-Provost for Technology Transfer and Economic Development at Cornell University, Professor Teck Seng Low, Managing Director of A\*STAR in Singapore, Professor Warren Bebbington, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, and Dr Stephen Merrill, Executive Director of the Board on Science, Technology and Economic Policy of the US National Academies.

Ten CityU scholars attended various symposia as chairpersons, speakers or discussants, speaking on a wide range of topics including technology transfer, business partnerships, school partnerships, ageing, green building, work-integrated education, and arts and cultural development. ●

Knowledge Transfer Office

# InnoCarnival showcases students' creativity

Research projects conducted by CityU staff and students were on display at the InnoCarnival organised by the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC). The InnoCarnival was held at the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks from 5 to 13 November 2011 as a key event of the ITC's InnoTech Month 2011. The InnoCarnival is an annual event aimed at promoting innovation and technology to the general public.

Local universities and organisations promoting science and technology were invited to showcase their innovative inventions at the InnoCarnival. Most CityU projects on display were in fact undergraduates' final-year project assignments, covering fields such as civil engineering, nanotechnology, energy conservation, biotechnology and environmental conservation. To qualify for graduation, CityU undergraduates enrolled in most programmes have to undertake final-year projects under the supervision of academic staff.

One example of prototypes produced by CityU students was a climbing robot for inspecting cables on suspension bridges. The climbing robot was the brainchild of Simon Tsui, Michael Leung, Peter Chu and Chloe Cheng, who were enrolled in the mechatronics (BEMTE) programme under the supervision of Dr Luk Bing-lam of the Department of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering.

When asked how the climbing robot could be distinguished from other climbing robots on the market, Simon Tsui said "Our robot is specifically designed for inspecting cables on suspension bridges. It is low-cost, compact and easy to set up, and may be the first of its kind in Hong Kong. To realise the advantages I have mentioned, we adopted a multi-robot cooperation strategy. Actually, we were inspired by the social behaviour of ants, which always work together as a unified entity to achieve difficult and complex tasks."



Young children show great interest in CityU exhibits.



Inventors of the climbing robot (from left to right): Michael Leung, Simon Tsui and Chloe Cheng (Peter Chu absent).

The most difficult part of the research process, according to Michael Leung, was coming to an agreement over robot designs.

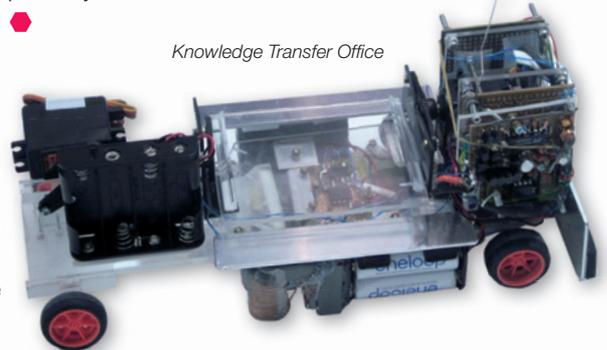
"We had to try our best to listen to one another's views, and I'd say communication played a key role in our research process," Leung said.

The team experienced a steep learning curve over the past year. One of the challenges the young inventors had to overcome was budgetary constraints. On top of a tight budget, the students also had to create their own substitutes for out-of-stock software and hardware parts.

Like the climbing robot, a future electric vehicle was the successful result of an undergraduate's final-year project. The vehicle was developed by Poon Hung-piu under the supervision of Dr Robin Li of the Department of Electronic Engineering. A major feature of the electric vehicle is its ability to stabilise itself when travelling or swerving at high speed. The batteries that power the vehicle can be recharged in wireless charging mode. Mr Poon said he was intent on inventing technologies that put passenger safety and comfort first, and would continue improving his invention after graduation.

InnoTech Month 2011, which started on 21 October 2011 and ran until 3 December 2011, featured roadshows, exhibitions, conferences, seminars and workshops. Last year's InnoTech Month attracted over 130,000 participants. ◆

Knowledge Transfer Office



Future electric vehicle

## Getting to know CityU's technology licensing officers

Technology licensing, an effective vehicle for knowledge transfer, is popular among many well-established universities, with CityU being no exception. At the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO), a technology licensing team has been set up to provide assistance to CityU inventors interested in taking their innovative technologies to the wider public.



▶ Mr David Cheung

At the helm of the licensing team is Mr David Cheung, Associate Director of the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO). Mr Cheung, a veteran business executive, has extensive experience in technology licensing, technical management in R&D, and strategic business development for high-tech companies. Before joining CityU, Mr Cheung was Chief Technical Officer of Chung Nam Electronics Co Ltd. On top of overseeing KTO's licensing activities, he is also responsible for the licensing of telecommunications and electronic technologies.

Mr Tomson Lee, Senior Technology Transfer Officer, has had a varied career in engineering, sales, marketing and business development in the electronics industry. He worked as a Business Development Executive for IBM Research prior to taking up his present position at CityU. Mr Lee looks after the licensing of technologies related to IT, computers and electronics.



▶ Mr Tomson Lee



▶ Dr Victor Lau

Dr Victor Lau recently joined the university. A specialist in materials science and chemistry, Dr Lau has over 10 years' experience in flexible electronics manufacturing. In addition to flexible electronics, Dr Lau is also interested in molecular electronics, printed electronics and biomedical engineering. At the KTO, he is responsible for a range of fields including coating and materials technologies, electronics and biotechnology.

"I am extremely delighted to have such a line-up of talent working at CityU. Together, the trio bring over 80 years of industrial experience covering a wide spectrum of technology areas. Technology licensing requires a variety of skills and a diversified knowledge base. Technology licensing professionals have to understand and appreciate the technology to be licensed. They also have to be conversant with the patent enforcement process and the preparation of contracts. Last but not least, they have to have good marketing and business negotiation skills. Because the diverse nature of technology licensing makes it a very challenging task, a resourceful technology licensing team with a wide range of backgrounds is essential," said Mr Wong Hon-ye, Associate Vice-President (Knowledge Transfer). ◆

*Knowledge Transfer Office*

# Forum promotes Hong Kong as IP trading hub

The Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum (BIP) was held on 2 December 2011 in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, attracting an audience of over 550 participants. The event was organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and the Hong Kong Design Centre with the support of the Hong Kong Intellectual Property Department.

IP trading can take various forms including copyright trading, the franchising of trademarks, design services, and the licensing/assignment of patents. BIP Asia aimed to focus attention on Hong Kong's potential as the region's leading IP trading hub by bringing together business executives, IP professionals and government officials to discuss current trends in IP trading.

Its proximity to China and sound legal and financial infrastructure lend support to Hong Kong's development as a marketplace for both mainland global IP owners and users. IP trading is expected to gain popularity in China as science and technology is given greater priority in its 12th Five-Year Plan outlining the nation's development from 2011 to 2015. ●

*Knowledge Transfer Office*



# IP training workshop

The Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) organised its fourth intellectual property (IP) training workshop on 16 December 2011, attracting about 40 CityU students and staff. The IP workshop series is designed to support the KTO's strategic plan for knowledge transfer. The workshop covered topics such as reading and drafting patents, patent search and patent landscaping, research planning and avoiding infringements.

Most participants appreciated the quality of the workshop and its relevance to their field of work. Felix Lam, a freshman enrolled in the Information Engineering programme in the Department of Electronic Engineering, said "I will probably be designing products such as mobile applications and software packages in future, and a good understanding of IP will therefore be essential to my professional development."



▶ Mr Felix Lam

Jenny Hung, another attendee, was particularly impressed with the module on patent landscaping, a tool for identifying technology trends. "Patent landscaping provides important insights into technology research and development. IP-related issues are relevant to both my work and my studies, and what I learnt in the workshop has heightened my sensitivity towards them," said Hung, a first year student in the Master of Science programme in Organisational and Change Management.

The content and delivery of the workshop were provided by Isis Innovation Limited, a technology transfer company owned by the University of Oxford. ●

*Knowledge Transfer Office*



# Forum on optical fibre technologies

The CityU Business and Industrial Club (CUBIC) of the KTO hosted a forum on optical fibre technologies on 12 January 2012, with two renowned experts in the field being invited to present their experience in research and industrial applications.

## International submarine cable construction – physical, political and technical challenges

By Professor Peter Yu

Professor Peter Yu is Board Director and Senior Technical Advisor to Telemedia Pacific Limited, and Adjunct Professor of CityU's Department of Electronic Engineering. His first lecture started with a quick survey of international submarine cable networks in Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific region. Using a specific submarine cable project in the South China Sea as an example, Professor Yu outlined all the key processes in submarine cable system construction. The complexity of desktop study (i.e. research into various databases) undertaken for cable route design and to protect against all potential physical risks was described. Political complications in license applications in the South China Sea, with territorial disputes and numerous commercial considerations in crossing oil/gas exploration zones, were highlighted. Technical challenges that need to be overcome in marine surveys and marine installations, together with their corresponding mitigation techniques and technologies, were also identified. Professor Yu summarised the contents of his first lecture with a short video on the subject.

## Latest technological developments in submarine fibre optic cable systems

By Professor Peter Yu

In his second lecture, Professor Yu started with a brief history of technology deployment in submarine cable systems. He pointed out that it was only a few months ago that a commercial trial of a 100Gbit/sec submarine fibre optic cable system was demonstrated to be successful across the Pacific. A single fibre at this speed can simultaneously support 15 million telephone calls or transfer the contents of 255 DVD disks in a second. Wide technical gaps that need to be bridged in this latest technology advancement were highlighted. Professor Yu then focused on the six latest technologies operating together that enable a long-haul submarine fibre optic cable system to transmit at a speed of 100Gbit/sec. These include: (i) Polarization Multiplexing, (ii) Quadrature Phase Shift Keying, (iii) All Raman Amplification, (iv) 3rd Generation Forward Error Correction Code with soft decision decoding, (v) Transmission Impairments Equalization in Digital Domain (instead of in analogue/optical domain) and (vi) Digital Coherent Detection. Looking to the future, Professor Yu concluded his lecture with an introduction to "3M technologies," which some speculate will be the main drivers of the next wave of technological innovation in fibre optic transmission.



Professor Peter Yu



Professor Chiang Kin-seng

## Optical printed circuit boards

By Professor Chiang Kin-seng

The second speaker, Professor Chiang Kin-seng of CityU's Department of Electronic Engineering, shared his views on the latest developments in optical printed circuit boards (PCBs) and their commercial viability. An optical PCB is an electrical PCB that incorporates optical fibres or optical waveguides to provide chip-to-chip transmission of optical signals. Optical PCBs can overcome bottlenecks experienced in conventional PCBs in high-speed data transmission, and contribute to miniaturisation, higher signal quality, and less interference, among other advantages. Professor Chiang led an Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) project in which he explored the development of a cost-effective process for the mass production of optical PCBs. He also talked at length about the characteristics of fibre- and waveguide-embedded PCBs. ●

Knowledge Transfer Office

## Granted patents

### Source radiation

US patent number: 7999624

**Principal Investigator: Professor Xue Quan**  
**Department of Electronic Engineering**

This patent proposes a novel way to produce a radiation source for use in phased antenna arrays, in which the relative phases of signals feeding the antennas are varied to steer the direction in which beams are transmitted. The invention is made up of a series of voltage-controlled oscillators, phase shifters and phase locked loops. By changing the phase of the phase locked loop's reference signals, the signal phase can be altered indirectly. The frequency of the reference signals should then be lower than that of the output signals, and phase shift control can therefore be achieved cheaply and easily. This invention can be used to provide either radio frequency signals for a phased antenna array or a single radio frequency signal with a highly controllable phase.

### Ultra-hard multilayer coating comprising nanocrystalline diamond and nanocrystalline cubic boron nitride

US patent number: 8007910

**Principal Investigator: Dr Zhang Wenjun**  
**Department of Physics and Materials Science**

Dr Zhang has developed an ultra-smooth, ultra-hard coating material in the form of a multilayer coating (MLC) made of nanodiamond (nanoD) and nanocrystalline cubic boron nitride (nano-cBN), the hardest and second hardest materials in the world, respectively. The MLC is a composite material with novel and extreme properties surpassing those of its constituent materials, i.e. nano-cBN and nanoD. The new coating can chemically and mechanically protect product surfaces, and can increase chemical and mechanical resistance and promote heat dissipation. The nanoD layers can be prepared by chemical vapour deposition (CVD) methods, whereas the cBN layers can be deposited by either ion-assisted CVD or physical vapour deposition.

### Method and apparatus to grade the colours of diamonds

China patent number: 200810086577.3

**Principal Investigator: Dr Cheung Ho-fai**  
**Department of Physics and Materials Science**

Diamonds are graded according to their colour, but inspections have been carried out manually to date and are therefore somewhat subjective. The university has developed a novel method and apparatus to measure the colour of diamonds that are scientific, measurable and reproducible. The diamond to be tested is illuminated with a white light, which is decomposed into its colour components. The colour components are measured and the colour strength of the diamond is computed. The colour intensity of the diamond is evaluated based on its colour components with the help of a suitable mathematical formula. ●

## CUBIC Shenzhen tour

On 9 December 2011, a tour to Shenzhen was organised for the Manufacturing Interest Group of the CityU Business and Industrial Club (CUBIC). The group visited the Millimeter Wave and Broadband Wireless Communication Key Laboratory and the Future Networking Centre housed in the CityU (Shenzhen) Research Institute Building (CityU SRIB), as well as Huawei, a global ICT corporation based in China.

The Millimeter Wave and Broadband Wireless Communication Key Laboratory was set up in 2009 with RMB21 million of funding support from the Shenzhen government to promote research into green wireless communication technology. The lab is led by Professor Xue Quan, Professor of the Department of Electronic Engineering and Associate Vice-President (Innovation Advancement and China Office). The Future Networking Centre, under the leadership of Professor Jia Weijia of the Department of Computer Science, engages in R&D work on real-time surveillance software tools such as its award-winning 3G real-time surveillance cloud service system. Users of mobile phones and flat panel or personal computers can access the video surveillance system via fixed-line networks, WiFi and 3G communication networks. ◆

*Knowledge Transfer Office*



Mr Francis Li (right), Chairman of CUBIC's Manufacturing Group, presents a souvenir to Mr Tim Chung (left), Head of the Channel Business Department (Enterprise Business Group) of Huawei.



Participants gather outside the CityU (Shenzhen) Research Institute Building.



## Record licensing income for 2011

Three licensing deals signed in the fourth quarter of 2011 brought in a gross licensing income of US\$2.04 million (about HK\$15.8 million). In one of these deals, a portfolio of patents was exclusively licensed to an IP acquisition company. The other two licensees were an RFID solution provider and a jewellery equipment company, which respectively licensed CityU's RFID library system and pattern recognition technology.

The agreement with the IP firm yielded the highest revenue yet for a single licensing deal. According to Mr David Cheung, Associate Director of the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO), this success was due in part to the FEEDS strategy the licensing team has adopted since the KTO's five-year Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 was launched. FEEDS stands for firm institutional commitment, education programmes for staff, enhance IP licensing channels, develop strategic collaborations and partnerships, and spread out to China. FEEDS is expected to open up new avenues for IP licensing and bridge the gap between research and application.

Mr Wong Hon-ye, Associate Vice-President (Knowledge Transfer), said "The record-breaking licensing income once more affirms the commercial and application potential of CityU's innovations. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon CityU researchers interested in commercialising their IP to seek early protection by lodging invention disclosures with the KTO before publicising their inventions." Upon receipt of an invention disclosure, the KTO's technology transfer officers will assess the patentability of the invention. A favourable assessment supported by positive reviews by external assessors will lead to financial assistance in applying for a patent. ◆

*Knowledge Transfer Office*

## CityU Professor received the Highest Civilian Honour in France

Professor Philippe G. Ciarlet, University Distinguished Professor in the College of Science and Engineering, was elevated to “Officier” in the “Order of the Legion d’Honneur” by a Decree of the President of the French Republic. The “Order of the Legion d’Honneur” is the highest civilian honour in France. This promotion has been awarded to Professor Ciarlet in recognition of his contributions to France, especially in the area of enhancing relations between France and academic communities in Hong Kong. Professor Ciarlet has been “Chevalier” since 1999, and “Officier” is a rare promotion in the rank of distinctions.

“I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Professor Ciarlet on the occasion of this great honour,” said Professor Way Kuo, University President. “We are very proud of all his achievements at CityU, both as a renowned scholar and as a vital link between CityU and France.” ◆

## Award in the Natural Science from the Ministry of Education

Professor Paul Lam Kwan-sing, Vice President (Student Affairs) and Chair Professor of Biology, and Dr Wallace Tang Kit-sang, Associate Professor of the Department of Electronic Engineering, received the 2011 Second Class Award in the Natural Science category at the Higher Education Outstanding Scientific Research Output Awards (Science and Technology) from the Ministry of Education. Professor Lam won the award with his project title “Geochemical characteristics of per-fluorinated compounds and risk assessment of southeast coastal waters in China”. Dr Tang’s winning project was “Modeling and optimal control hyperchaotic nonlinear system and its application”. ◆

## Distinguished lecture on organisms develop resistance to drugs

On 21 March 2012, Professor Robert H Austin from Princeton University delivered an enlightening lecture on “Why do organisms develop resistance to drugs? A physics perspective” at CityU. The resistance to antibiotics by bacteria, and the resistance to chemotherapy by cancer cells are the greatest problems faced by modern medicine. In this lecture, Professor Austin presented his ‘Death Galaxy’ experiment, which simulated the complex environment that bacteria face in the human body. He further suggested that there is a fundamental mechanistic connection between the rapid evolution of resistance to antibiotics in bacterial communities. Professor Austin proposed that this evolution is the result of a programmed and collective stress response performed by interacting cells. Professor Austin’s lecture attracted CityU faculty and students and resulted in full house attendance at Lecture Theatre 14. ◆

## Nobel Laureate delivers distinguished lecture at CityU

Professor Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, world-renowned physicist and 1997 Nobel Laureate in Physics, delivered a lecture titled “Advances in Atomic Physics From Optical Pumping to Quantum Gases” in the France-Hong Kong Distinguished Lecture Series, co-organised by the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, the Legion d’Honneur Club, the College de France, the French Academy of Sciences and CityU. The lecture, on 13 January 2012, reviewed a few breakthroughs in the evolution of atomic physics during the last few decades.

Professor Arthur Ellis, then-Acting President, and Professor Gregory Raupp, Vice-President (Research and Technology) welcomed the guests, staff and students participating in the lecture. Mr Arnaud Barthelemy, Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, delivered an opening speech to thank CityU for co-organising the France-Hong Kong Distinguished Lecture Series since 2005. A book launch and a tea reception were held after the lecture at Connie Fan Multi-media Conference Room. ◆

## World renowned sociologist delivers enlightening lecture at CityU

Professor Robert N. Bellah, Elliott Professor of Sociology Emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley, delivered an enlightening lecture entitled “Can We Imagine a Global Civil Religion?” at CityU Distinguished Lecture on 12 December 2011. In the lecture, Professor Bellah discussed whether a global civil religion is possible or even desirable and further argued for the necessity of some kind of global civil society.

Apart from delivering the distinguished lecture, Professor Bellah also attended a conference organised by the Department of Public and Social Administration titled “Confucianism: A Habit of the Heart” from 13 to 14 December 2011. ◆

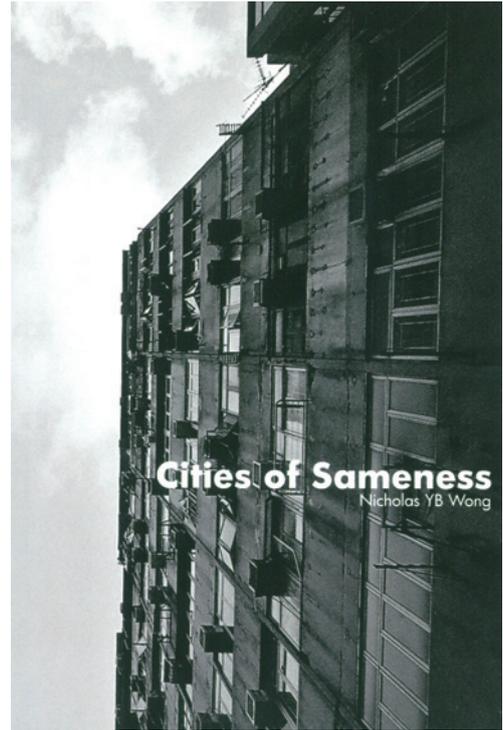
## Early Success of MFA in Creative Writing Programme

In 2010, the Department of English enrolled the first cohort for the Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing. This is an innovative programme for Asia: its “low-residency” format couples brief, highly intensive “residencies” of classes and writing workshops with individualised, distance mentoring by an international faculty of writers. Also, its specific focus on Asia is unique for this discipline, and serves a largely untapped market. The MFA in Creative Writing, a terminal degree that does not lead to a PhD, is relatively new outside the United States. The course at CityU is a two-year part-time programme, although students may take up to four years to complete all requirements. Students focus on one of three literary genres: creative non-fiction, fiction or poetry and must complete both a critical and a creative thesis.

The MFA enrolled 47 students in the first two, highly international cohorts. The students are resident in 12 countries – approximately 50% live in Hong Kong – and comprise 15 nationalities. They are from many professions and backgrounds, including teachers and professors, mothers, lawyers, editors, journalists, business executives, engineers, freelance writers, dancers, singers and business owners. They range in age from early twenties to sixty-plus and are extremely diverse. To date, one transfer student has graduated with distinction and received the degree, and 13 more are on track to graduate in 2012.

Early outcomes have exceeded the department’s expectations. Two students received book contracts, **Nicholas Wong** (Hong Kong) for a first poetry collection and **Amanda Skelton** (Australia) for a memoir. Two have won literary fiction prizes – **Lavanya Shanbhogue** (India) won the Commonwealth Short Story Prize and **John Francis Smith** (Hong Kong) took first place in the RTHK/SCMP Short Story Contest. Several others have either published their work or were finalists for writing contests at prestigious international journals, such as *The Iowa Review*, *Missouri Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *Asian Cha*, *Drunken Boat*, *Indiana Review* and *The New Guard Literary Review*. ◆

by Xu Xi, Writer-in-Residence and MFA Programme Leader



*Cities of Sameness* written by Nicholas Wong, MFA student, his first poetry collection.



MFA students at Summer 2011 residency.

# Writers Teaching Writers: The Story of CityU MFA

In 2009, when Professor Kingsley Bolton, Chair Professor of English and currently Acting Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS), first mentioned the idea of a creative writing programme at CityU, my response was: you won't get enough quality candidates if it's only for local students. Three years later, I can look back and say I was probably both wrong and right. Given time, Hong Kong could produce enough English language creative writers with the talent, discipline and drive to successfully complete a MFA. Yet I am extremely glad the department chose to propose and establish a "low-residency" programme, one with an Asian focus, that draws students from all over Asia and beyond. After all literature, the end-product of creative writing, is part of the humanities, and the reason we read and study literature is, above all, to try to understand what it means to be human. The CityU MFA is an international programme, and if early success is any measure, this can motivate and encourage Hong Kong citizens to consider creative writing in English a meaningful pursuit.

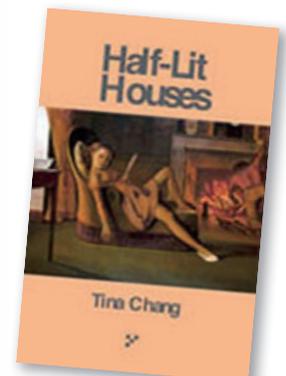
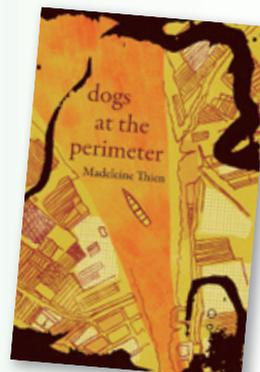
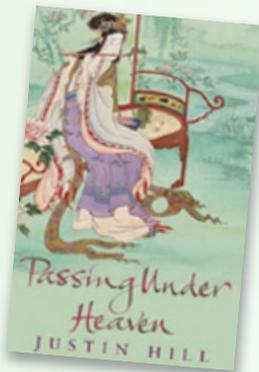
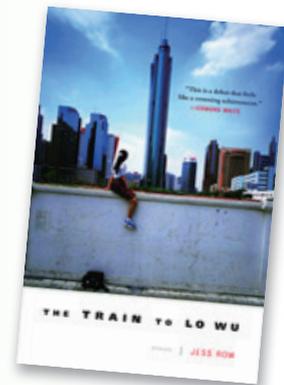
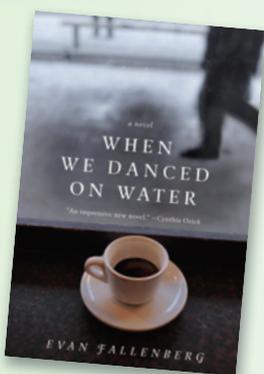


MFA international faculty and visiting writers enjoyed a dinner at Tin Hau. Front row seated (from left to right): Mr Robin Hemley, Mr Ravi Shankar, Ms Madeleine Thien, Mr Luis Francia. Back row standing (from left to right): Mr Junot Diaz (Pulitzer Prize author), Ms Xu Xi, Mr James Scudamore, Ms Sybil Baker, Mr Shawn Wong (Visiting Writer), Ms Marilyn Chin and Mr Lau Kin Wai (proprietor of the restaurant).

The first MFA was established over seventy years ago as the Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa, which remains one of the top residential MFA programmes. Low-residency MFA's have a shorter history – approximately forty years – beginning with programmes at Goddard and Vermont College of Fine Arts. In Asia, only universities in the Philippines have a significant history of teaching post-graduate creative writing – over 50 years at the Silliman Writers Workshop – and offering MFA. Elsewhere, the UK has similar programmes, but are only offered as MA; the earliest was established around 30 years ago at the University of East Anglia. Today there are hundreds of MFA or MA in creative writing programmes in the US and the UK, and the growth in low-residency has given rise to around 50 programmes in both countries, the majority having been established in the past five to seven years.

When CityU explored the establishment of a MFA, two important criteria determined the final programme structure.

First, as Hong Kong has no significant reputation as a literary centre in any language, it was important that this be a high quality programme with a credible curriculum. Benchmarking was set against the top US residential and low-residency programmes with track records, such as those at the Universities of Iowa, Michigan, Massachusetts (Amherst), Columbia, Vermont College of Fine Arts, Warren Wilson, etc., as well as against UK



▶ Books written by MFA faculty.

(continued on next page)

and Asian models such as East Anglia and Silliman. The best decision we made was to attract an international faculty of published literary authors, comprising both universities teachers and independent writers, since the best programmes all insist on writers teaching writers. Indeed, when the MFA was still a new degree, many programmes, at Iowa and Massachusetts for example, were taught by published authors who did not have a higher degree or even a BA. This has since changed as MFA programmes were established.

Second, as Hong Kong is a limited market for likely candidates for an English creative writing programme, the low-residency model was selected due to its reach – students do not need to live in Hong Kong thereby increasing the target market – and flexibility for working professionals. We also developed an Asian focus, which no other MFA programme in the world offers, as this would brand the degree with a USP that made sense for a city in Asia.

It has not always been easy trying to fit this very polygonal peg into the round hole of CityU's existing systems. For example, ideal residencies are highly intensive and brief, and to suit older students, best scheduled longer in summer when people take holidays and shorter during the academic year when people do not (especially those with children). Also, weekends are easier for working people than weekdays. The MFA "academic year" was set from summer to summer, straddling two academic years at CityU, which created scheduling issues. Moreover, our students are part-time, and half do not even live in Hong Kong, so issues of student visas and enrollment required special consideration. Perhaps the most heartening aspect for me of setting up this program at CityU was to discover how progressive and open-minded colleagues in our administration were. Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies, Mainland and External Affairs Office, Finance Office and Computing Services Centre colleagues, among others, listened to our requirements and created innovative solutions to make this unusual programme work. It would have been easier for them to say "oh, that can't be done", because everyone is extremely busy and one new Taught Postgraduate Programme is tiny compared to what must be done to serve the wider university community. It was impressive how much cooperation we got from all the other departments at CityU who helped us launch this programme as smoothly as possible.

I am not an academic. For much of my life, I was a writer and a marketing/management professional, and had an 18-year career at various multinationals in Asia and the US. In 1998, after my third book was published, I left corporate life. I started teaching only by chance, initially, as a one-semester substitute for an ill faculty member at Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2002, and later continued in what was only a part-time position. I certainly do not have a traditional academic background.

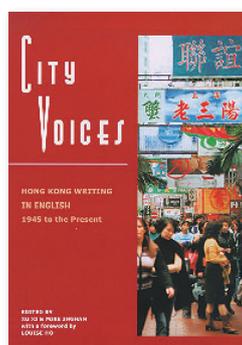
It was a leap of faith for me to come to CityU full time to oversee this programme, and at first, I was worried that I would not fit in well in a university community. Though I have visited universities as a writer, and taught part-time at several, I am a writer, and writers are distinctly odd in any university, even at those with long established MFA such as Iowa, where I taught for one semester as their Bedell Distinguished Visitor.

Now, I know this was the right decision. CityU has proven to be a progressive institution and the programme has exceeded my wildest hopes. The students' publishing achievements are, of course, gratifying. More important, however, I am excited to have contributed to the birth of a creative writing culture at CityU. My hope is that long after I am gone, CityU will be THE centre in Asia for global English creative writing with an Asian focus. If I too have a dream, it is perhaps more modest than Martin Luther King's. But it is a vision for a space that can be an ongoing international center of creative writers and literary endeavors that are truly all about Asia and Hong Kong, and where the rest of the world may discover just how much it is we have to offer. It will be one small way of giving back to the city that gave me birth and my life as a writer in the world. ●

#### Author's Biography

Xu Xi is the author of nine books of fiction and essays, most recently *Access Thirteen Tales* (2011), the novel *Habit of a Foreign Sky* (2010), which was a finalist for the inaugural Man Asian Literary Prize, and *Evanescent Isles: from my city-village* (2008), an essay collection about Hong Kong. She is also editor or co-editor of three anthologies of Hong Kong writing in English. She earned her MFA in fiction (1985) from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

*by Xu Xi, Writer-in-Residence and MFA Programme Leader*



Books written by Xu Xi, CityU Writer-in-Residence and MFA Programme Leader.

## Interview with Hong Kong PhD Fellowship CityU recipients

The Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) established by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC) in 2009 is aimed at attracting the best and brightest students from all over the world to pursue their PhD studies in Hong Kong institutions. The fellowship provides a monthly stipend of HK\$20,000 and a conference and research-related travel allowance of HK\$10,000 per year for awardees for a maximum of three years. For fellowship awardees admitted to a 4-year PhD programme in 2012-13, CityU will provide a monthly studentship at the same level as the fellowship awarded by the RGC for their fourth year of study. In this issue, two of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship recipients, Mr Roberto Spiezio and Mr Zheng Ronghao, share their learning experience at CityU.

“ I am from Italy. I have a background in journalism, having studied it in London and at a postgraduate level. Over the past few years I have had the opportunity to study in mainland China at Xiamen University, where I obtained an MPhil in Chinese Culture and Anthropology. My interest in China has been longstanding and is part of the reason I am here in Hong Kong. I have also been a freelance journalist for a period, writing mostly about science and technology. I am currently enrolled into the PhD programme in media and communication at CityU.

My decision to study at CityU was the result of a relatively long period spent comparing different programmes in different universities around the world. While I was trying to find a balance between my research interests and the academic offer, I would say that the most important factor that made me decide to apply to CityU was the reputation of the staff in my department. They are highly renowned scholars in the field, and the opportunity to work with and learn from them was too good to pass up. I have to say that because I did not have first-hand knowledge of CityU, having never been to Hong Kong for long enough, I was not exactly sure what to expect from the environment. However, when I arrived here, I was pleasantly surprised by the standard of facilities and the rather lively academic life of the university. This has definitely reinforced my enthusiasm and reassured me that my choice was the right one. On the other hand, being a “laowai” in China is not always easy, because the mindset and values of foreigners are different from those that prevail in China. This definitely had an impact on me at the beginning, but I have to say that in addition to my keeping an open mind, several people around me have made tangible efforts to create a friendly environment, starting with the staff in my department and colleagues, who have always been quite approachable and available to talk to and give me guidance when needed.

My research is currently focused on the media representation of China in the Italian national media. However, my research interests are broader, including global communication, citizen journalism and its relationship with the mainstream media, and more recently, communication theory.

The programme in the Department of Media and Communication has proved to be quite demanding. While I have the opportunity to be exposed to a wide range of theoretical ideas and to benefit from other scholars’ experience, the programme also offers me an invaluable opportunity to develop myself, not only as a scholar in communication, but also as a person, by challenging me to elevate my thinking to new, higher levels and to see any given issue from several points of view. I cannot hide from the fact that this programme is quite intense and requires ongoing dedication, and it also demands a certain amount of time to shape an entirely new mindset. Being a first year student, I cannot say I have already achieved this, but at least I have started what I consider a lifelong process that I hope will allow me to become a good scholar, a good all-round professional and a better person.

Being a doctoral student requires intense and constant dedication, and it challenges you to change most of your conventional way of thinking. This hasn’t been easy, nor did I expect it to be, and it may take you through moments of discouragement. Fortunately, I can count on a great supervisor whose advice and mentoring has always been precious to me. Speaking of the happy moments, right now I am working on a few projects to present at conferences, and hopefully later to submit to academic journals. I am quite excited about that, and I really hope my proposals are accepted.

Although I was hoping to obtain a fellowship, I didn’t quite expect to do so, so my excitement and happiness on hearing the good news were even greater when I received the letter informing me of the award, especially because I knew how competitive it was. On one hand, this has definitely boosted my confidence, because it made me realise there are people willing to take a chance on me and my skills. I would like to express my gratitude once again to the University Grants Committee (UGC) for the opportunity it has given me. On the other hand, this award invests me with the responsibility of giving my best during my time at CityU. If I had to summarise my feelings about the award and the whole process, I would say I felt grateful, happy and even a little proud!

What has impressed me most about CityU has been the level of diversity. CityU is a large university with a very wide range of people from diverse backgrounds who have varied interests and ways of thinking. I strongly believe that this diversity is one of the strengths of CityU; it makes it a humanely and academically richer institute, and I hope this path towards diversification and integration will be pursued even more energetically and with greater conviction than before.

It does not matter where people are from and what education background they may have. It does not even matter what life plans people may have. Pursuing one’s own education is always worthwhile, not only in terms of the “cultural baggage” people can build up, but most of all in terms of personal development. Education opens up people’s minds and make them better. I would therefore strongly encourage people at any level, from prospective undergraduates to research students, to take up the challenge and face their studies with enthusiasm and dedication. Believe me, it will eventually pay off. ”

Mr Roberto Spiezio



“ I received both my Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in electrical engineering from Zhejiang University in China. I worked as a research assistant at the Technical University of Munich in Germany for six months before coming to CityU. I am now a PhD student at the Department of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering at CityU.

The reasons I came to Hong Kong were that Hong Kong is an open international city and the institutes here are in a free academic environment. Although CityU was established only comparatively recently, it has become one of the top universities in Asia and occupies a high place in world rankings. In addition, being a native of Guangdong, I thought I would be able to get used to the life in Hong Kong very quickly. My trip to CityU for my PhD interview was actually not the first time I visited the university. I had previously come to CityU to visit a university friend studying computer science at CityU. That’s partly why I chose to come to CityU to pursue my PhD studies in Hong Kong.

My first impression of CityU was that although it was small in comparison with Zhejiang University, it was very well organised. Someone told me that CityU had about 15,000 students. I thought it would not be easy to accommodate so many students in such a small campus. However, CityU manages to do it, and does it well.

My current research interest is cooperative control of networked multi-agent systems with applications to autonomous robots, which is also the research field of my supervisor, Professor Sun. This is one of the most important factors that attracted me to CityU. One of the purposes of this research is to control a system of networked agents, e.g. robots, sensors and satellites, along with aerial, ground and underwater vehicles, to complete a task together using only simple and local strategies. This research has a wide range of potential applications, such as military surveillance, rescue missions, space and ocean exploration, intelligent transportation systems, mobile sensor networks and other automated collaborative operations. However, there is still a lack of knowledge about the mechanisms governing how local strategies at the individual level lead to desired global behaviour at the group level. One reason is that rigorous analysis of emergent behaviour is generally a very challenging task. My objective is to explore such systems and develop a better understanding of how collective behaviour emerges from local interactions.

During my research studies at CityU, I have been trained to become an independent researcher and have learned how to identify new problems, define and formulate them, and to try to solve such problems without someone holding my hands. For PhD students (and maybe all researchers), the “real” moment of happiness comes when their work is published. Unfortunately, I am still waiting to have my work accepted for publication here. However, I have made many new friends here and really enjoy working and playing sports with them.

I was very happy and honoured to receive a Hong Kong PhD fellowship. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor and other staff who supported me and helped me obtain this honour. However, I think securing a Hong Kong PhD fellowship is just the beginning, and it will continue to encourage me to work hard in my PhD studies.

Apart from the support I have received from my supervisor and research team, what has impressed me the most is that CityU provides very good services for its students. Both the department and the university organise many lectures and seminars for their students. These lectures and seminars cover a wide range of topics ranging from scientific to social issues. The speakers are not only from Hong Kong and China, but come from all over the world, not just from academia, but also from government and industry. Some of the lectures and seminars are given by world-famous researchers such as Professor John Nash. Although most lectures and seminars are irrelevant to my research field, they have broadened my horizons and enlightened me to think from different viewpoints when faced with problems. Moreover, CityU’s Library and English Language Centre offers many useful workshops. I find they are very useful and save me a lot of time in learning new skills and new tools by myself. CityU is a rapidly growing university, and I feel proud to be part of and growing with it. ”

*Office of the Vice-President  
(Research and Technology)*

▶ Mr Zheng Ronghao

## 2012 Universities Exhibition Taiwan – Taipei Station

The Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS) participated in the Universities Exhibition Taiwan for the first time in 2012. The event was held in the Sports Hall of National Taiwan University. During the two-day event from 25 to 26 February 2012, thousands of high school graduates and their parents visited the exhibition. The CityU booth was swamped by enthusiastic enquirers who were interested in knowing the requirements for studying in CityU. Among the staff and students manning the booth, one of the students was admitted from Taiwan the year before through educational talks in Taiwan high schools organised by Mainland and External Affairs Office (MEAO). She was able to give first-hand experience on studying at CityU from a Taiwanese perspective. Many parents and students found the information useful and inspiring. Miss Candy Chou, External Liaison Manager from MEAO, presented a talk on studying at CityU and life in Hong Kong, and received positive comments from the audience.

## CityU's First Solo Information Day in Shanghai

With the aim of facilitating student recruitment and the promotion of postgraduate studies at CityU, the Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS) participated in the first solo Information Day organised by the CityU Mainland and External Affairs Office (MEAO) in conjunction with CityU's Liaison Office in Shanghai on 18 February 2012. The event, with booths set up and talks delivered by representatives of the SGS, different colleges/schools and the MEAO, was successful in attracting more than 500 students, teachers and parents from Shanghai and the neighbouring provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, who showed their interest in undergraduate or postgraduate studies at CityU. Through a briefing session entitled "On the way to graduate studies at CityU," the SGS took the opportunity to highlight the attractiveness and characteristics of CityU programmes, and offered advice on general regulations and procedures for the submission of postgraduate study applications. The briefing session was well-received by more than a hundred visitors.

Academics and administrators were impressed and encouraged by the number of visitors, and considered the event to have been effective in building connections and promoting the university's image across the relevant areas of mainland China. It is expected that CityU will continue to attract high-quality mainland applicants for postgraduate studies via its strategic promotional campaign in mainland China. ◆

*Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies*



Parents and students attend CityU's first solo Information Day in Shanghai.



Participants listen attentively at the Information Day.

## Macau Education Fair 2012

The Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS) is always exploring opportunities to promote the university and recruit high-calibre students from around the world. In an effort to promote CityU postgraduate programmes in Macau and the Pearl River Delta region, the SGS joined the Mainland and External Affairs Office (MEAO) in participating in the second annual Macau Education Fair held from 24 to 26 February 2012. Co-organised by the Tertiary Education Services Office of the Government of the Macau SAR and The Venetian Macao, the fair was aimed at providing students in the region with an opportunity to gather information on educational opportunities, while also providing a platform for educational institutions to meet prospective students. This year, nearly 100 tertiary institutes and educational bodies from around the globe participated in the fair, including representatives from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the USA.

The CityU booth drew visitors keen on continuing their studies in Hong Kong due to the city's close proximity to Macau and the Pearl River Delta region, and many expressed interest in specific postgraduate programmes. Seminars were held throughout the fair, attracting students interested in learning more about the educational opportunities available at CityU. The overall response from potential students and visitors was both positive and encouraging. ◆

*Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies*





## Christmas Party and Hong Kong Glamorous Night Tour

CUPA organised a Christmas Party and a Hong Kong Glamorous Night Tour held on 17 December and 24 December 2011, respectively, to celebrate Christmas and New Year with CUPA members. The Christmas Party was held in a café and featured delicious food, drinks and games. On the Hong Kong Glamorous Night Tour, the Vice-President of CUPA took our members on a wonderful night trip from Mido Café at Yau Ma Tei to the revamped historical compound "1881 Heritage" at Tsim Sha Tsui. CUPA members enjoyed the marvellous view of the enchanting Christmas light decorations blended with colourful neon signs. ●

## Joint University Party – "Run into Crush"

On 11 February 2012, CUPA, together with the postgraduate associations of The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Baptist University, organised a Joint University Party for members at Tsim Sha Tsui to celebrate Valentine's Day. Around 120 members came from the four postgraduate associations and enjoyed the delicious food, drink and games on offer. They also had the chance to meet members of the other postgraduate associations and develop new friendships. Most of them exchanged their contact details, and boys were encouraged to present "blue ribbons" to girls, while the girls were encouraged to present "red ribbons" to boys. ●



## National University of Singapore GSS visit to CUPA



The Graduate Students' Society (GSS) from the National University of Singapore (NUS) visited CUPA and CityU on 20 February 2012. The GSS is the official student group representing more than 10,000 graduate students at the NUS. The friendly visit began with a speech delivered by Mr Bruce Lee, the President of CUPA. Mr Lee extended a warm welcome to the GSS delegation on behalf of CUPA, and gave a brief introduction to the structure of CUPA, especially its executive committee. The Vice-President of GSS also delivered a speech and expressed thanks for CUPA's hospitality. During the meeting, Ms Millie Mark, School Secretary of the Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and Miss Karen Kwok, Supervisory Executive Officer of Student Development Services (SDS), shared the backgrounds and roles of SGS and SDS, respectively. The GSS and CUPA exchanged opinions on various issues relating to the development of postgraduate organisation and cross-organisation events. The official meeting ended with a pleasant tour of the campus. ●

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