

A Man of Compassion



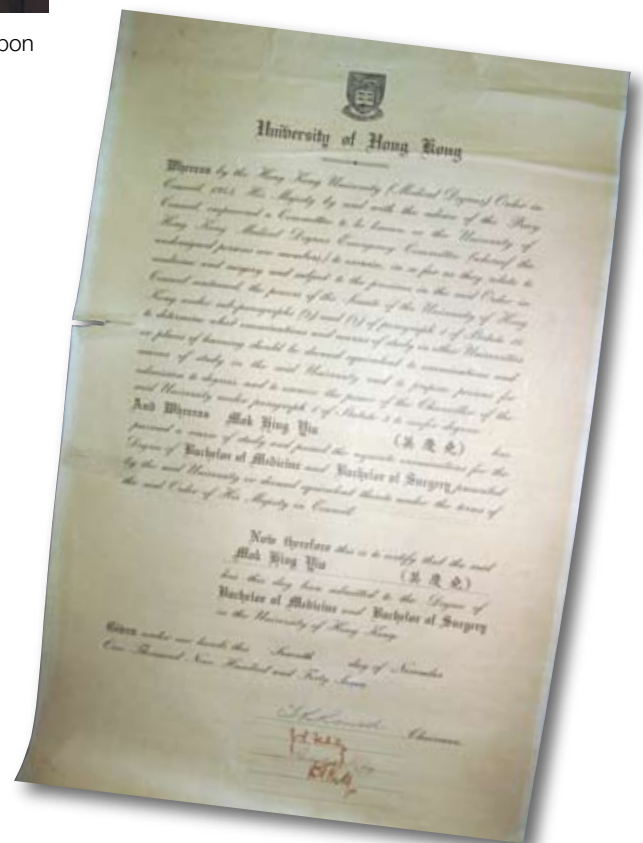
Dr Mok Hing-yiu in the vestibule of Loke Yew Hall in front of a special plaque upon which the names of King Edward VII Scholars have been inscribed.

The definition fits **Dr Mok Hing-yiu** 莫慶堯 (MBBS 1947) like a glove. For more than half a century, the octogenarian, now 85, has epitomised that definition with feats of selflessness towards others. From volunteering with the Air Raid Precaution corps and Auxiliary Medical Service during the Second World War to acting as a Tung Wah Hospital pro bono consultant physician on a regular basis, the octogenarian has been a tireless promoter of good for Hong Kong.

The King Edward VII Scholar

At the tender age of 16, Dr Mok entered HKU as a King Edward Scholar and was awarded an annual allowance of £40. But, as in 1939 a steak dinner would set one back around 15 cents, so his allowance was a generous one! After the fall of Hong Kong, Dr Mok went to Lingnan University to further his studies in 1942 through the good offices of Professor Gordon King, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, who helped place HKU medical students in various tertiary Chinese institutions to continue their studies during the hostilities. In 1946 he returned to HKU and received a wartime degree in 1947.

What deeds must one undertake to be honoured as a philanthropist? The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘philanthropist’ as an individual who is ‘a benefactor of humankind; one who behaves benevolently towards others; a practitioner of philanthropy’.



Dr Mok's original HKU wartime graduation degree, 1947.

A Ragging by Hall Seniors

Recalling with fondness his university years, Dr Mok regaled with tales of ragging by St John's senior hall mates to be endured by new ones. These might include a requirement to greet seniors with a 'Good morning, Sir' or singing. But, in particular he remembered two; one was going to a cemetery at night, finding a particular tombstone and copying the inscription. Those who set the task would have already gone to the cemetery, chosen a particular tombstone and copied the inscription so there was no chance that an initiate could make up something in this ostensible test of courage and bravado. The second required somewhat less courage; being thrown by St John's seniors into the long-gone pool that once graced the forecourt of the Hall!

A Man Wedded to His Profession

Leaving his university days behind, Dr Mok went to work at Queen Mary Hospital before furthering his studies in the United Kingdom. Upon returning, he took up a posting at Kowloon Hospital as a consultant physician, but while also working as a consultant physician at Queen Mary Hospital where he was for a time the Acting Medical Specialist.

This he explained was because there was a dearth of doctors in Hong Kong at that time, thus he wore many hats, in different medical facilities, including that of a doctor in paediatrics. Then, doctors were also generalists, as opposed to the later trend towards specialisation. Somehow, the energetic doctor even found the time to assume the duties of Chief Editor of the Chinese Medical Journal between 1951 and 1953!

Dr Mok, a Member of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh was a HKU Honorary Lecturer in the Department of Medicine in 1951. Among his students was Professor Rosie Young 楊紫芝 (MBBS 1953; MD 1959; Hon DSc 1995), one of the early protégés of one of the University's most senior medical alumni. Dr Mok recalled with fondness how she was always eager and swift to offer a response to his questions. Later, Dr Mok was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1971.

The London School of Tropical Medicine Duncun medal, 1948, awarded to Dr Mok upon receipt of his Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.



Dr Mok's official stamp of registered medical practitioner, number 47, and a sample vaccination card. The card was required for all travellers going abroad as well as a stamp by a certified physician.

Education and Faith

Not until he was in his seventies did Dr Mok decide to hang up his stethoscope. But, over the years he acquired a reputation for being a tireless and generous supporter of particular areas close to his heart – education, religion and social welfare. He has supported educational institutions from primary to tertiary and also Christian organisations, as well as public welfare organisations, believing that it is good and right to return to the community a portion of the bounty he has reaped during his own lifetime. As for services to his *alma mater*, Dr Mok was President of the Hong Kong University Alumni Association from 1981 to 1983.

Perhaps, it was inspiration from his father, a Tai Koo comprador like his father before him. Dr Mok's father, Mok Kon-sang 莫幹生 donated \$50,000 to the University in the early 1920s to establish four scholarships and quite likely sowed the seeds of philanthropy in his young son and also reinforced the message of giving back to the community. He was carrying on this precedent of service that his great grandfather had established by being the first Chairman of the board of directors of the Tung Wah Hospital. ■

Some of Dr Mok's philanthropy to his *alma mater*:

- 1972 – A donation to establish the Mok Hing-Yiu bursary, HKU
- 2007 – Establishment of the Mok Hing-Yiu Professorship in Respiratory Medicine, HKU
- 2008 – Establishment of the Mok Hing-Yiu Distinguished Visiting Professorships. This permanent endowment so established will benefit all ten of HKU's Faculties and is intended to attract at least one Distinguished Visiting Professor of the highest calibre each year who is at the forefront of his or her particular field of expertise