Time to Reperiodize History, Says Wei Lun Visiting Professor

Prof. C. Warren Hollister, professor of history, gave a lecture at the University in his capacity as Wei Lun Visiting Professor on 28th March.

Entitled 'The Decline and Fall of the Middle Ages: Reperiodizing European History', the lecture reexamines the periodization of European history and its imposition on Asian history. Prof. Hollister points out that the idea of a thousand-year era dubbed the 'Middle Ages' is increasingly at variance with historical research on Europe. Research by recent historians has resulted in a new periodization which runs thus: Classical Antiquity (c. 500 B.C. to 500 AD), Late Antiquity (c. 500-1050), Early Middle Ages (c. 1050-1150), and Modern Europe (c. 1750-present, or 1789-1945, followed by Postmodern Europe). The newly reordered civilization termed 'Traditional Europe' saw the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the beginning of the French Revolution.

Whether or not this new periodization is adopted in postsecondary curricula in Europe and the United States, Prof. Hollister believes that changes to the periodization of Asian history should be seriously considered.

A distinguished historian and medievalist of international repute, Prof. Hollister obtained his B.A. in history from Harvard University and his Ph.D. from UCLA. His list of offices includes chair of the University of California Press Editorial Board, president of the Medieval Association of the Pacific Coast, and president of the American Historical Association (Pacific Coast Branch). Prof. Hollister has received many honours in the United States and from international institutions for his teaching and writing. His 12 books have been translated into a number of languages and he has published over 45 scholarly articles on medieval history.

Telling the Poison from the Pill

The University's Chinese Medicinal Material Research Centre (CMMRC) has developed two methods to distinguish the poisonous herb *Solanum melongena* (commonly known as *Solanum nigrum*) from the genuine herb. Dr. Paul But, director of CMMRC, disclosed that two reagents had been developed for spot check of *Solanum melongena*. The two reagents can be used at home, in schools, and hospitals.

Great care has been taken to ensure that the two reagents are non-toxic and can be handled by non-technical personnel. The reagents can be stored in portable cans and are stable for up to four months.

The reagents are currently being distributed to schools, hospitals, and public health centres. The Centre is also developing an automated system for large-scale production of the reagents.

The project has been supported by the Commission of Education and the Health Department. The Centre is also collaborating with the National Institute for the Control of Pharmaceutical and Biological Products in China to develop a national standard for *Solanum melongena*.

Nine-year Compulsory Education under Probe

An academic conference on 'Politics and Religion in Ancient and Medieval Europe and Asia' was held on campus on 26th and 27th March. The theme of the conference was 'Studies in Translating into Chinese'. Forty papers and seven scholarly articles were presented at the conference.

Concurrent with the conference, a book fair of translation and bilingual publications from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong presented over 1,000 titles. The book fair was sponsored by the Translation Society of Hong Kong, Commercial Press (HK) Ltd, Longman Asia Ltd., Oxford University Press (China) Ltd., and Reader's Digest (Far East).

Close Relationship between Politics and Religion in Ancient and Medieval Times

An academic conference on 'Politics and Religion in Ancient and Medieval Europe and Asia' was held on campus on 26th and 27th March. The conference was the first of its kind in Hong Kong. Scholars from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong presented over 100 topics. The chief investigator is Prof. Ambrose King, pro-vice-chancellor of the University, who presented a keynote speech on 'Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance'.

In his speech, Prof. Hollister examines the background and causes of the outburst of historical writing by monks, often on the deeds of their own religious orders, during the twelfth-century Renaissance in Western Europe. According to Prof. Hollister, this not only demonstrates the intellectual vigour of the period but also the symbiosis binding monasticism and the ruling secular order. He moreover attributes it to the intellectual movement in twelfth-century Western Europe which viewed the cosmos as a rational order created by a rational god, and therefore open to human intellectual exploration.
A Taste of Another Culture for Students on Yale-New Asia Exchange

In its third year now, the undergraduate exchange programme between New Asia College and Yale University adopted 'Urban Issues' as this year's theme to enable students of both cultures to have a better understanding of issues such as housing, medical care, and employment in the host country.

The programme comprised two parts. From 9th to 22nd February, eight New Asia students visited Yale University where they presented papers on Hong Kong's urban issues. They also toured New York City and Washington, D. C. Then from 10th to 20th March, six Yale undergraduates repaid the visit. Besides visiting the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the Mai Po Natural Reserve and other scenic spots, they went sightseeing in Shenzhen, and presented their reports on different urban issues in their home country at a symposium on 19th March.

Students may think that their teachers' problems aren't any of their business, not in the classroom anyway, and their teachers will probably not disagree. But the seven CUHK architecture students who attended a Problem-Based Learning workshop conducted by Prof. Edwin M. Bridges — professor of education from Stanford University and visiting professor to the Department of Educational Administration and Policy — may think otherwise.

These students had to design a new house for Prof. Bridges as his old one had been development, but that takes a long time.'

He explains that a department may be continuously producing work, exploring new ideas and developing research, but unless one is within that department one cannot really know what is going on in it. He finds that very often the research goals of the University are set too high, given the time and capabilities of a new department. While he admits that research is important, it can be an uphill task for his department.

To illustrate his point, he gives the following analogy: "It is like planting a seed, providing it with water and nutrients, and thinking that nothing is happening while in actual fact, under the ground, a lot is — the soil is changing, roots are growing, etc. This is because looking from afar, you are not aware of the subtle changes taking place in the plant. It is only when the bud and flower appear that you can see the development, but that takes a long time.'

Dr. Robinson would like to see more people from the Senate Committee on Physical Education or from the Faculty of Education visit the department so that their difficulties, as well as accomplishments, can be fully explained and better appreciated.

A Fledgling Sports Science and Physical Education Department Seeking to Establish Itself

The Department of Sports Science and Physical Education is small in terms of staff strength. Including Dr. P. D. Robinson, chair of the department, there are only nine staff members — six of lecturer rank or above, and three instructors. Their major task is to train graduate teachers of physical education for local schools.

Programmes in Great Demand

"We probably get some of the highest number of applicants relative to the number of student places available," says Dr. Robinson. Last year, 208 JUPAS Category A Students (i.e., those who opt for the programme as one of their first three choices) applied for a total of 20 places in the full-time undergraduate programme. In fact the programme was the first choice for 91 of them. As for the part-time undergraduate programme, there were also over 110 applicants, of whom 102 were eligible and only 20 could be accommodated.

According to Dr. Robinson, such over-subscription shows not only the great demand and popularity of their programmes, but also an apparent oversight in government planning. 'The big question mark is whether the government is really interested in producing thinking physical education teachers who are university graduates,' he says. 'At the moment the majority of PE teachers in the schools come from teachers' colleges and cannot be classified as specialist physical educators. They simply have not had enough training. This is why so many of them apply to do a part-time degree.'

Currently the department also runs an M.Ed. and an M.Phil. programme, both of which started in 1994, the same year as the full-time undergraduate programme was introduced. Prior to that only part-time degree programmes were offered. In fact the department itself is only four years old, having been created in 1992 after the reorganization of the former Physical Education Department.

Hurdles to be Overcome by a Young Department

How does he evaluate the growth and development of his department in the four years? 'I am very pleased with our progress. But if somebody looks at us from outside the department, the distance will give a different perspective, a perspective that may be erroneous,' Dr. Robinson replies.

He explains that a department may be continuously producing work, exploring new ideas and developing research, but unless one is within that department one cannot really know what is going on in it. He finds that very often the research goals of the University are set too high, given the time and capabilities of a new department. While he admits that research is important, it can be an uphill task for his department.

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Initial Lack of Equipment Has Delayed Research

One such difficulty, Dr. Robinson explains, was the initial lack of laboratory equipment needed for research. Since the equipment involved was costly, the process of procuring it had to be gradual. 'We have received a sizeable amount of criticism for not having published much', but you cannot publish unless you do research, and you cannot do worthwhile research unless you have the equipment to do it with. But I am happy to say that now much of our research is yielding results, and the work of staff members is coming to the fore. So I have no worries about the department's research and publication. It is just a matter of giving people the time and the opportunity to do it,' he says.

A primary area of the department's research is children's health status, and the amount of physical education knowledge they need to maintain fitness and good health. Research is underway to evaluate the impact of heavy school satchels on the posture and back of school children. There is also a project to study how respiratory muscles can be trained to improve performance. Dr. Robinson himself is working with the University's Centre for Environmental Studies to study the effects of environmental pollution on the immune system and the fitness level of school children.
Teaching and Learning Infested with Language Problems

Prior to coming to Hong Kong, Dr. Robinson has worked in the UK, Canada, Ireland and Singapore. In his opinion, the most dedicated students are those in Singapore, who incidentally are far more fluent in English than students in Hong Kong. One of the reasons for this is that Robinson has worked in the UK, Canada, Ireland and Singapore. In his opinion, the most dedicated students are those in Singapore, who incidentally are far more fluent in English than students taught in Hong Kong.

This makes learning difficult, particularly for students with a weak science background. They need to grapple not only with the new, science-related terminology, but also its expression in English. This has affected teaching too. Teachers find it difficult to cover the curriculum in full because students are unfamiliar with not only the scientific contents of the course but also the medium of instruction. Dr. Robinson says, “It is difficult to find out whether these students have understood or not, since they are not very forthcoming in either asking questions or answering them in front of all their friends. This is a problem I am sure all English-speaking lecturers have to cope with. Considering that the students need to have attained a certain level of language proficiency in both Chinese and English at the time of admission to the University, the problem needs to be addressed either in the evaluation of the required level or its implementation.”

Space a Constraining Factor

Housed on the ground floor of the Kwok Sports Building, the department is “very tight for space, and bursting at the seams.” There are only six offices for staff members, one classroom, and three laboratories. Though they have the use of other classrooms within the University, their own facilities have to serve as multi-purpose rooms whenever necessary. Furthermore, as the building was purpose-built as a squash center, all three laboratories are actually conversions. The sports psychology laboratory, for example, serves as a laboratory-cum-classroom. The biomechanics laboratory was originally intended as a viewing gallery for one of the squash courts. And the equipment in the ‘full to bursting’ exercise physiology laboratory cannot be spaced out as it should be: the bicycle ergometers, the treadmill, the plastic bags and all other specialized equipment are all cramped together in a most dissatisfying manner.

Dr. Robinson hopes that the space problem can somehow be resolved to ease teaching, research, and administration.

One-line Budget May Breed Insularity of Departments

Last but not least, Dr. Robinson is worried that while the one-line budget is good in some aspects, it may result in increased insularity in departmental spending. Departments will tend to spend resources on their own programmes and not on projects or courses that benefit students of other departments. Very often student quotas placed on courses are filled by students of the department offering the course. “I am not sure how this is going to develop,” he says, “but it does not bode well for either joint courses or greater interaction between different departments.”

How will this insularity affect the department’s development plans? “We don’t just want to produce physical education teachers; we want to produce people who, after doing a sports science degree, can move into all sorts of fields in Hong Kong, such as the health sciences, recreation, management, etc. In the long term, we would like to be able to offer not only B. Ed. degrees, but maybe a B.Sc. in sports science or a B.A. in sports studies. All these require inter-departmental cooperation and the pooling of resources. For instance, if a student is studying sports sociology, it would be beneficial if he could take courses in the psychology department or the sociology department.”

Dr. Robinson concludes, “It is unlikely that any new programmes can be implemented unless other departments are willing to support and underpin the courses we offer.”

Shalini Bahadur
CUHK Newsletter 4 No. 87 19th April 1996

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Professorial Appointment

The University has appointed Professor Lam Kwok-wai, who already holds a joint appointment as Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Pittsburgh, to the post of professor of Ophthalmic Biochemistry at the University Health Service.

Announcement

New Rates of PTA with Retroactive Effect from 1st April 1996

The Hong Kong Government has announced the following new rates of PTA with retroactive effect from 1st April 1996:

(a) staff newly joining the scheme on or after 1st April 1996, irrespective of when the tenancies commence; and
(b) staff already on the scheme whose tenancies commence on or after 1st April 1996, such tenancies include fixed term new or renewed tenancies and existing tenancies extended on a month-to-month basis under the protection of the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance.

Private Tenancy Allowance (PTA)

From the Acting University Barman

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In planning the University's facilities and physical development, input is sought from different sources, and the needs and operational modes of different units are considered. It was through such efforts that facilities like all-weather track and tennis courts were set up. In view of the increased student body size and the need for more space, the University Health Service decided to upgrade the physiotherapy department. The new department will be situated in the Sino Building. The theme this year is 'Gender and the Media'.

Response 2

The physiotherapy department of the University Health Service was established in 1980 with one part-time therapist to offer services to clients with sport-related injuries. In 1985 it began employing a full-time therapist. With an increase in the University population, the demand for physiotherapy treatment has risen in the past 10 years. We have also had increased referrals from staff and students from the specialist clinic of the Prince of Wales Hospital. Hence the department was strengthened in November 1991 with two full-time therapists. However, with the introduction of outpatient benefits for retired staff in 1993, the department is again placed under stress as we have to accommodate more clients with the same resources.

The increase in the number of clients, therapists and equipment would inevitably make the treatment room much more congested than desired. We appreciate the suggestion that an increase in manpower and facilities would help improve our services. This, however, is only possible if you have extra resources and funding from the University. In the meantime, we will monitor the situation very closely, and upgrading the physiotherapy department will remain one of our top priorities.

Letter to the Editor

Unruly among many international universities, CUHK has not paid enough attention to the physical well-being of its staff and students. The sports facilities are either insufficiently equipped or insufficiently serviced. With the increase in student numbers, more physical facilities are needed. The inadequacy of sports facilities results in the higher incidence of physical problems among students and staff, especially the latter. Although swimming is usually command low priority in the UGC and the University's allocation of resources. We have, on our part, exerted more effort in extending or improving existing facilities than is apparent.

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Information in this section can only be accessed with CWEM password.

若要瀏覽本部分的資料，
請輸入中大校園電子郵件密碼。
學術課程

聯合書院於學術課程方面，特別強調語文教學。早年聯合書院的學生來自世界各地，語言背景各異，因此語文能力差異很大。該書院曾舉辦師生書法聯展，得一位日籍學生報讀，惟有取消，非常可惜。常教授透露，他們會從學生興趣入手，設計新活動及課程，重新宣傳推廣，讓學生有更多機會參加。

學術服務

書院設有中文及英文優秀學生獎學金，以及「大學語文」、「大學英語」兩科。目前，大學只讓同學「自求多福」是不夠的；要為全體學生著想，必須考慮同學的需要。

學術反思

學生應當學會如何提高自己的語文水平。學術課程應當讓學生對語文的價值有所認識，尤其在大學時期，語文水平的高低決定著學生的工作表現。學生應當學會如何提高自己的語文水平。
提高學生語文能力
四所書院費盡心思

大學去年九月額外撥款四百萬港元，供成員書院籌辦活動
改善學生的語文水平。四所書院各得一百萬元，自行決定運用方式。

聯合書院語文委員會秘書兼教授司馬振強教授表示，今次活動旨在鼓勵學生
增進語文水平，特別是英語。他表示，活動將以多種形式進行，包括
講座、研討會、實務訓練及生產實習等。

四所書院將會舉辦各種活動，包括語文競賽、語文工作坊、語文講座及
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研究計劃

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增進語文水平，特別是英語。他表示，活動將以多種形式進行，包括
講座、研討會、實務訓練及生產實習等。

四所書院將會舉辦各種活動，包括語文競賽、語文工作坊、語文講座及
語文研討會等。這些活動將由書院自辦，或者與其他機構合作舉辦。
中古史權威
重劃歷史年期
著名中古史權威 Prof. C. Warren Hollister
在最近一次偉倫講座為「歐洲中古」平反,
並建議重新劃分歐洲歷史年期。

Prof. Hollister 上月以偉倫教授身份到訪
本校,並於三月廿八日假祖堯會議廳主講
「中古的衰落與覆亡：歐洲歷史分期新
探」。

Prof. Hollister 在講座上說,被稱為「黑暗時
代」的歐洲中古除有日耳曼野蠻民族和維
京海盜外,也有光輝的一面:牛津、劍橋和
巴黎大學都在該時期誕生,近代自由和憲
法傳統之源的「大憲章」也在那時簽訂。

他建議將「歐洲中古」由五至十四世紀
改為十至十八世紀,包含文藝復興、科學
革命和啓蒙運動,至法國大革命止,並改
稱為「傳統歐洲」;自法國大革命開始到現
在,則稱為「現代歐洲」;至於「傳統歐洲」
之前的古代歐洲,則可細分為古希臘羅馬
時代(Classical Antiquity)和後羅馬時代
(Late Antiquity)。

他認爲新劃分方法雖然未必會為歐美學
校普遍採用,但歷史學者應該檢討,把亞
洲歷史依照西洋歷史分期,是否恰當。

Prof. Hollister 為美國聖巴巴拉加州大學
歷史及中世紀學講座教授,其《西洋中古
史》是修讀中古史者的重要參考書。他也是
英國中古帝王掌故的專家,為《大英百科全
書》撰寫英皇亨利一世事蹟,又著有《諾曼
英倫帝王與豪紳》。

Prof. Hollister 於訪問期間,曾應歷史系
和新亞書院邀請,出席於三月廿六及廿七
日舉辦的「古代、中世紀之政治與宗教」學
術硏討會,並以「諾曼英倫的政治文化與十
二世紀文藝復興」為題,作專題演講。參與
硏討會的學者逾三十人,來自中國大陸、
台灣及香港,發表論文共十八篇。

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外文中譯研究
翻譯系於四月一至三日假祖堯會議廳
舉辦「外文中譯硏究與探討」學術會議,逾
四十名中、港、台、美著名翻譯家和學者
出席,發表論文達三十篇。

會議由翻譯系金聖華教授主持;余光中
教授任主講嘉賓,發表其「論的的不休」的
見解。與會者有中國翻譯工作者協會會長葉
水夫教授,台灣林文月教授、齊邦媛教授,
海外翻譯名家高克毅先生和蔡思果先
生等。

大會特於四月二日下午舉行翻譯
出版專題座談會,讓中、港、台主要
出版人交流,推廣翻譯出版業。此
外,又於會議期間假邵逸夫堂舉辦書
展,有二十家出版社參展,世界名著
中譯本紛呈。

會議及書展由新亞書院協辦,贊
助機構包括香港翻譯學會、商務印書
館(香港)有限公司、朗文出版(亞
洲)有限公司、牛津大學出版社(中
國)有限公司,以及讀者文摘(遠東)
有限公司。