

Open Letter to Staff and Students of the University

Dear colleagues and students,

I believe all of us are extremely worried about the recent outbreak of war in Iraq and atypical pneumonia in Hong Kong. In fact both incidents have had their tremendous impact felt on our campus. A few days before the start of the contentious war, a war without the full endorsement of the United Nations, I made the decision to postpone the University Presidents' Global Forum from March 2003 to 2004. It was a tough decision to make, one which entails as much disappointment on my part as on the part of many of our colleagues who have diligently prepared for the Forum over the past 12 months. But many university presidents across the world who were invited have expressed their support for my decision. Next year's Forum, to be hosted by a new Vice-Chancellor, will certainly carry a special meaning for The Chinese University.

The outbreak of atypical pneumonia is indeed a very grave matter. Our Faculty of Medicine at the Prince of Wales Hospital was pressured into a state of acute emergency right away. As the virus associated with the disease is a brand new strain, combating it in the initial phase was as difficult as fighting an enemy in pitch darkness. Since the outbreak, the number of those afflicted has risen significantly, among whom 16 are students of the University (14 have been cleared and discharged; the two who were in more serious condition are being given effective treatment, and one is now on the way to recovery). All this while, colleagues at the Faculty of Medicine (as well as doctors and nurses at the Prince of Wales Hospital) have been fully engrossed in the provision of urgent medical care for the patients. They work around the clock to save lives, struggling against shortages of resources and manpower. Thanks to them all, order has been maintained throughout the crisis and a great majority of patients are out of immediate danger. Their high level of professionalism, their selfless courage, and their dedication to their duty truly deserve our respect and salutation. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Sydney Chung, dean

of medicine, and Prof. Joseph Sung in particular for the exemplary leadership and medical ethics they have displayed.

In the tough battle against atypical pneumonia (now named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome — SARS), Prof. Tam Siu Lun of the Department of Microbiology and his colleagues successfully identified the nature of the virus (of a genre called *paramyxoviridae*) on 20th March. The discovery posed a glimmer of hope in the fight against the disease and was affirmed and lauded by the World Health Organization. On 22nd March, the University of Hong Kong also discovered the virus and came up with a method of test for it. This is indeed another piece of encouraging news. I believe Hong Kong is on the way to the eventual conquest of the virus. However, we cannot afford to loosen our grip on the situation, as SARS is still rampant in Hong Kong and other parts of the world. We should in fact be more vigilant. On 21st March, a CUHK Campus (SARS) Task Force was set up with Prof. Jack Cheng, pro-vice-chancellor, as chairman, and Dr. Kenneth Pang, director of the University Health Service, as member/secretary. Other members of the Task Force include representatives from staff, students, and the Committee on Safety. The group has started work immediately. I rely on all staff and students of the University to give the Task Force their full support and cooperation.

Dear colleagues and students, the University is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. For the many tasks that await to be done, let us tackle them one by one decisively, overcoming whatever hurdle that may come our way, as has been the case in the past. Wind or rain, let us forge ahead determined and fearless. United, we shall sail into fair weather on our way forward.

Wishing you health and all the best.



Ambrose Y.C. King
Vice-Chancellor

校長致大學全體員生公開信

各位同事、各位同學：

最近發生的伊拉克戰事和非典型肺炎，相信大家都感到十分困惱。其實，這二樁事對中大都產生了很大影響。在這場不合情不合法的伊拉克戰火爆發前，我已決定把原定三月二十三至三月二十五日的「全球大學校長論壇」推延到明年（2004）三月舉行，這是一個很困難的決定，許多為此準備經年的同仁與我一樣感到十分失望，但世界許多被邀參加的校長都表示贊同我的決定。我覺得明年這個論壇由新校長來主持，對中大會另有一番意義。

非典型肺炎之襲港，是一樁非同小可的事，中大的教學醫院（威爾斯親王醫院）更在第一時間進入嚴峻狀態。非典型肺炎的病毒是一種全新的病毒，初時對抗它猶如如在黑暗中與敵作戰，艱辛非常。其間，本港得病者大有增加，而本校有十六位同學亦受到感染（幸而十四位無礙，其中受感染的二位同學已受到有效治療，其中一位正康復中）。這段時間中，中大醫學院的不少位同仁（還有威院的醫師與護士等）全身投入緊急的醫病工作，面對一波之後又一波的病患者，他們日以繼夜，廢寢忘食，在人手資源緊絀中，他們苦撐硬挺，專志一心地搶救病人，此威院之所以危而不亂，而絕大多數病患者所以有驚而無險。中大醫學院同仁（還有醫院醫師與護士等），所表現的高度專業精神與勇於承擔的情操，實在值得我們敬佩與感激，我們特別要對鍾尚志院長和沈祖堯教授所展現的人苦己苦，以身作則的領導才能與醫業倫理加以表揚。

在與非典型肺炎（醫學名稱為SARS）艱苦作戰中，中大談兆麟教授與其同仁在三月二十日發現了這個病毒的性質（屬於副黏液病毒），這個發現在攻克非典型肺炎的戰爭中露出了曙光，得到了世界衛生組織的肯定與讚揚，而三月二十二日港大教授也找到了這個病毒，並提出快速測驗患者是否得此病的方式，令人高興，我相信香港正走在戰勝這個疾病的路上。不過，此時此刻，我們一點也不能懈怠，非典型肺炎在香港，在世界還在肆虐中。我們應該更提高警覺，三月二十一日，中大已成立了「中大校園（SARS）專責小組」，由副校長、中大醫學院教授鄭振耀教授為主席，大學保健處處長彭國雄醫生為委員兼秘書，委員更有教職員與學生代表與安全事務委員會的負責人。這個小組已劍及履及地展開工作，我希望全校師生能給予他們最大的合作與支持。

各位同事、各位同學，今年是中大四十校慶，而擺在我們面前的有許多要做的事，我們應一如既往，認認真真，一樣一樣地去做好。我們風雨同路，一無畏懼，一無顧瞻，只要同心協力，定能走出一個朗朗晴日！祝大家健康進步！

金耀基

二零零三年三月二十四日