



Part 3

The International Scene



The Core of Medicine

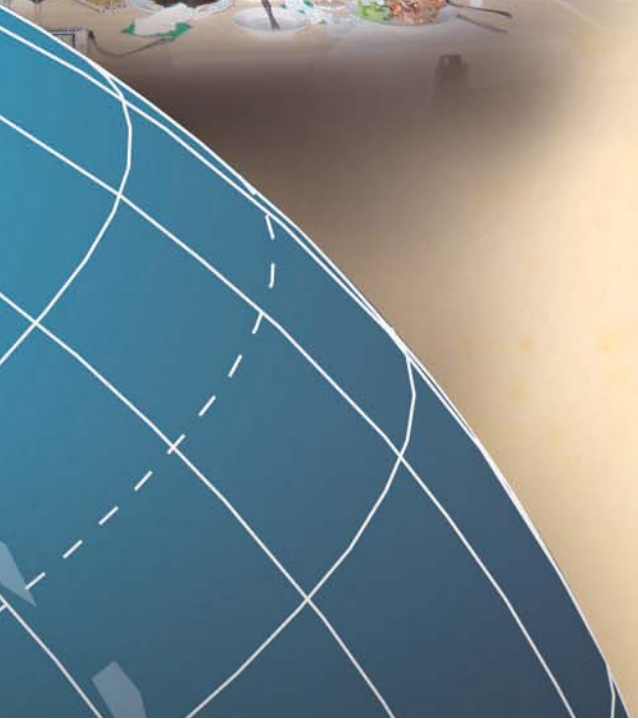
(Quoted from *The Hong Kong Practitioner* 2002; 24:354-361)



There is no ideal system of health care. The specific format which any single country selects and implements needs to reflect its particular historical, cultural, political and economic circumstances. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that the health and related needs of society are best served through the development of a strong primary care sector, built around a generalist family practitioner acting as the leader of a multi-disciplinary primary care team and with selective referral to specialists. This is entirely in keeping with the growing recognition that "... the expertise of the generalist is complementary to that of the specialist and the two are profoundly interdependent". Nevertheless, with the trend towards greater specialization it is more important than ever to preserve the role of the generalist.



Robin C Fraser



Collaboration with

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)



Dr Stephen K S Foo

President, 1992-1998



The Hong Kong College of General Practitioners was inaugurated in 1977. The College Conjoining Fellowship Examination started in 1984 and was conducted for a brief period of three years.

In 1986, Council decided to seek support from overseas colleges to establish a fully fledged College Conjoint Fellowship Examination as a means of gaining universal recognition of the standard of assessment. Our game plan was to seek assistance from the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP). We made use of the occasion of the 11th World WONCA Conference held in June 1986 in London to discuss the possibility of holding a conjoint examination with the RCGP. At that time I was the Chairman of the Board of Examinations and was delegated the task of meeting the relevant officials of the RCGP to explore the chances of co-operation in this exercise. Accompanying me in the discussion at Barbican Centre where the Conference took place was Dr Peter C Y Lee, then President of the College. However, the RCGP wished merely that our College help organize a centre for the MRCGP in Hong Kong to facilitate doctors from the Asia-Pacific region sitting the MRCGP examination, and left the issue of a conjoint examination on the table for later discussion. In view of this, Dr Lee and I lost no time in raising the issue with the president of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). The reason why we felt comfortable in approaching the RACGP was that the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners (HKCGP) had been formed subsequent to a 1975 decision by the Hong Kong Medical Association to send a delegation to the RACGP to study the feasibility of forming a college of a similar nature in Hong Kong. We therefore requested the RACGP to assist us in setting a standard of local examination on par with that of the RACGP. The President of the RACGP was very receptive to our proposal and promised to send two official visitors to observe our local fellowship

examination to be held in the latter part of 1986. Dr Wesley E Fabb, National Director of Training, and Dr Lindsey Knight, an RACGP censor, were appointed official observers to observe the third local examination of the College in Hong Kong. Their brief was to recommend to the RACGP Chief Censor, Dr Clarke Munro, whether it was feasible for a conjoint examination of the HKCGP and RACGP to be held in Hong Kong. At a meeting following the local examination, Dr Fabb agreed that the local examination was up to a standard acceptable for a conjoint examination, but Dr Knight was not satisfied with the standard of the examination and suggested that we would have to improve our examination for a few more years before a conjoint examination could be considered. The College council was thus at a loss and I was advised to contact the chief censor of the RACGP for assistance. The Chief Censor of the RACGP was responsible for the setting of standard of the RACGP examination and his recommendation to the RACGP was crucial to any possibility of holding a conjoint examination with the RACGP.



Conjoint Fellowship Conferment Ceremony in 1984



11th World WONCA Conference in 1986

To our surprise and joy, I received a letter from Dr Munro saying that the RACGP would be prepared to allow the College to hold the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination as soon as 1987. Meanwhile he not only advised us to prepare the content of the conjoint examination for approval

by his Council, he also volunteered to come over to Hong Kong to discuss the logistics of organizing the first examination. With the assistance of Dr Natalis C L Yuen, we set the content of our examination based mostly on the format of the RACGP examination. The examination contained a written part consisting of multiple-choice questions, modified essays, case commentaries, and clinical interpretations, and a clinical segment containing diagnostic interviews, management interviews, oral examinations, and physical examinations.

In September 1986, to further consolidate our preparations for the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination, the College sent a delegation of four, including Dr Donald Li, Dr Maxwell Tse, Dr Paul Lam, and Dr Kitty Chan, to Melbourne to attend the RACGP Examination Seminar, which was an annual event for all national RACGP examiners for the purposes of standardizing the examination. The College is indebted to them for their input in the successful running of the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination.

A pre-examination course on examination techniques for potential candidates for the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination as well as for other members of the College was held in March 1987 at Sheraton Hotel. The course was conducted by Dr Fabb who at the time was the Director of the Examination, Research and Development Centre, RACGP.

On 25 March 1987, Dr Munro, Chief Censor of RACGP, visited Hong Kong and spent an evening meeting with the panel of examiners focusing on the various techniques for conducting the clinical and oral segments of the clinical examination.

The written segments of the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination took place on Sunday 7 June 1987 at the Federation of Medical Societies. The clinical segments lasted three afternoons, from 29 to 31 August 1987, at the General Practice Unit of the University of Hong Kong and at the College's premises in Wanchai. The examiners from the RACGP were Dr Munro and Dr Fabb, those who made the most significant contributions in establishing the Conjoint Fellowship Examination.



Welcoming dinner for Visiting Examiners from Australia in 1990

Dr Munro took up the post of senior lecturer in the General Practice Unit at Hong Kong University from 1988 to 1990 and Dr Fabb was Professor of Family Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong from 1993 to 1997. Both distinguished doctors served as Chief Censors of the HKCGP during their tenures in Hong Kong.

This year the College is holding the 20th Conjoint Fellowship Examination. Our relationship with the RACGP has been amiable. Each year, the RACGP sends two visiting examiners, usually Chief Censors or state censors, to participate in assessing the Conjoint Fellowship Examination, and the input from these visiting examiners has been extremely helpful in upgrading the standard of the examination. The Hong Kong College of Family Physicians is grateful to the Royal Australian College of

General Practitioners for its close collaboration in holding the Conjoint Fellowship Examination over the last 20 years. The recognition of the FHKCFP as a quotable postgraduate qualification by the Hong Kong Medical Council paved the way for the discipline of family medicine as a distinct clinical specialty when the Hong Kong Academy Medicine was founded in 1993. And while paying tribute to our Australian counterparts in running the conjoint examination, we must not forget the local family physicians who have sacrificed so much of their own time to facilitate the standard-setting and supervision of the examination over the years.



Left to right: Dr Stephen Foo, Dr Vasantha Preetham (RACGP President), Dr John Chung and Dr Hung-chiu Chan at the RACGP Annual Scientific Convention in 2006

HKCGP/HKCFP and WONCA



Professor Wesley E Fabb

WONCA Hon Secretary-
Treasurer, 1980-1993

WONCA Chief Executive
Officer, 1993-2001

*M*y more active involvement with WONCA began at the 5th WONCA World Conference in 1972 (hosted by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners-RACGP) in Melbourne, Australia, when Dr David Game was Chairman of the Organizing Committee, and I was one of the Committee members. As it happened, at three successive WONCA World Conferences between 1974 and 1978, David Game was repeatedly elected WONCA Hon. Secretary-Treasurer, and I was also repeatedly elected RACGP Representative on the WONCA Council. When David Game became WONCA President-Elect at the 9th WONCA World Conference in 1980, I was elected to take over his job as WONCA Hon. Secretary-Treasurer. I held the position until 1993 when the permanent WONCA Secretariat was established, and I became its first Chief Executive Officer.

It was thus that Dr David Game and Dr Peter C Y Lee had known each other since the early 1970s when Dr Lee was travelling around the world to rally support for the Hong Kong Medical Association's (HKMA) application to be a full member of the World Medical Association (WMA). It was during this period of his international travels that he and Dr Game had many occasions to meet. This frequent liaison between the two developed into a close friendship which played an important part in the establishment of the HKCGP itself and in subsequent world events in family medicine.



WONCA World Conference in 1985

As soon as the HKCGP was founded in 1977, the HKCGP applied for and was accepted as a full member of WONCA. The College, represented by its Founding President, Dr Peter C Y Lee, and one of its Council Members, Dr Emmanuel Chang, attended the 8th WONCA World Conference the following year (1978) in Montreux, Switzerland.

The 9th WONCA World Conference in 1980 was held in New Orleans, USA. The HKCGP was represented by its President, Dr Peter C Y Lee, and two Council members, Dr Henry F K Li and Dr Natalis C L Yuen. Hosted by the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Conference was held in conjunction with the Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Academy. Even though the number of WONCA delegates to New Orleans was under one thousand, the convergence of some 6,000 members of the American Academy made the occasion very impressive. It was at this World Conference that Dr Lee's WONCA career was launched when he was elected WONCA 'Independent Member-at-large', and thus also a member of the governing body of WONCA – the WONCA Executive. Thus began the long period of involvement by the HKCGP with the top-level decision-making processes of this world body, and Dr Lee was subsequently elected WONCA Regional Vice-President for the Asia-Pacific Region at the 10th WONCA World Conference in 1983 in Singapore.

A 'strong' Hong Kong delegation attended the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Melbourne in 1984 to take part in the Scientific Meeting as well as to promote the forthcoming 1987 WONCA Regional Conference in Hong Kong to be hosted by the HKCGP.

The 11th WONCA World Conference in June 1986 was held in London. At the Conference, Dr Peter C Y Lee of Hong Kong was elected Chairman of the WONCA Council.

The following year the HKCGP hosted the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference at the City Hall. The occasion was attended by over 500 delegates from 35 countries in the presence of many local and foreign dignitaries, earning tremendous praise and goodwill for the HKCGP, and placing the HKCGP firmly on the world map of family medicine.

At the 12th WONCA World Conference held in Israel in May 1989, Dr Peter C Y Lee of Hong Kong became WONCA President-Elect. At the same Conference, Dr Eddie T Chan was elected to the powerful Nominating Committee, and the College won its bid to host the 14th WONCA World Conference in Hong Kong in 1995.



Dr Nang-fong Chan represented the HKCGP at the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Research in Family Medicine held in Singapore in 1989. In 1990, the HKCGP sent a large delegation led by Dr Natalis C L Yuen and Dr Stephen K S Foo to attend the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference hosted by the Indonesian College of General Practitioners in Bali.

The 13th WONCA World Conference was held in Vancouver, Canada. During the Conference, Dr Peter C Y Lee was installed as World President of WONCA. At the same conference, Dr Eddie T Chan of Hong Kong was elected WONCA Regional Vice-President for the Asia-Pacific Region.



WONCA Regional Conference in 1993

One of Dr Lee's first actions on becoming WONCA President in 1992 was to establish a professional secretariat for WONCA in 1993, and I was appointed WONCA Chief Executive Officer (WONCA CEO) and my wife, Marian, WONCA Administrative Officer (WONCA AO).

Under the leadership of Dr John T N Chung, the HKCGP's Chairman of the Host Organizing Committee for the 14th WONCA World Conference, efforts to promote the Hong Kong event were actively pursued and two delegations, led by Dr Stephen K S Foo and Dr John T N Chung respectively, were dispatched overseas to drum up support for the World Conference in Hong Kong in 1995.

Held concurrently with the WONCA European Regional Conference in June 1993 at the Hague, the WONCA Executive Committee met to approve a proposal to co-sponsor with the World Health Organization (WHO) a *Strategic Action Forum* entitled, 'Making medical practice and education more relevant to people's needs: the contribution of the family doctor', to be held in Canada in November 1994. The Strategic Action Forum convened in London, Ontario, Canada in November 1994. Keynote speaker at the opening ceremony, Dr Peter C Y Lee, stressed that 'community-based training of medical undergraduates should form a substantial part of the clinical curriculum to be consistent with the increasing emphasis being placed on primary health care by WHO, by WONCA, and by enlightened governments all around the world'.

The Final Report of the WHO/ WONCA Strategic Action Forum was ready in early 1995, and at the meeting of the World Council of WONCA held in Hong Kong ahead of the 14th WONCA World Conference, the Report was discussed by Council members and unanimously

adopted. In this way, the Final Report became a joint WHO/ WONCA Working Paper which was then sent to all 189 WHO member-governments and to all 1,500 medical schools worldwide, as representing the conjoint views of WHO and WONCA on the subject. I am sure the HKCGP was proud to have played such a vital role in this important exercise.

Long before WONCA was recognized as an international body, general practice movements in Europe on both sides of the 'Iron Curtain' had been under the umbrella of a loose organization – the Societas Internationalis Medicinae Generalis (SIMG). As WONCA expanded its influence into Europe, its activities came into direct competition with SIMG. After protracted negotiations, SIMG finally agreed to merge with WONCA and invited all members of the WONCA Executive to the SIMG General Meeting in Portugal in May 1994 to finalize the concluding terms of the amalgamation. Thus the HKCGP played a major role in WONCA becoming the one and only voice to represent general practitioners/ family physicians and the discipline of general practice/ family medicine in the world of medicine.

The HKCGP hosted the 14th WONCA World Conference in June 1995 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. During the Conference, Dr Peter C Y Lee, the incumbent WONCA President, handed over the WONCA presidency to his successor, Dr Goran Sjonell of Sweden, and became the Immediate Past President of WONCA.

In August 1997, the President of the HKCGP, Dr Stephen Foo, led a strong delegation to the Regional WONCA Conference in Seoul, Korea. He also led the College delegation to the 15th WONCA World Conference in June 1998 in Dublin, Ireland, where he was elected a member of the WONCA Nominating Committee.



WONCA Regional Conference in 2000

The HKCGP sent a delegation in June 2000 to attend the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in New Zealand, during which it was decided to publish a WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Journal. Dr Tai-pong Lam, Editor of the HKCGP Journal, was appointed the Chief Editor of this international journal.

International Classification of Primary Care (ICPC-2) is an important disease classification code for research in primary care, and was WONCA's major contribution in this field during the 1980s and 1990s. In August 2000, the HKCGP formally signed an agreement with WONCA to translate and produce this code in Chinese. Dr Yuk-tsan Wun of HKCFP was the editor. The translation of this classification into Chinese was made possible by the support and contributions from Professor Gu Yuan and her colleagues in Beijing, and its publication has greatly facilitated research in general practice in China.

In April 2002, the President of the HKCGP, Dr Donald K T Li, led a delegation of College members to attend the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and in June, Dr Li led a further delegation to attend the WONCA European Regional Conference in London, during which the delegation met the President of the Royal College of General Practitioners, Dame Lesley Southgate, to exchange viewpoints on Family Medicine and standards. The possibility of the accreditation of HKCGP's examination credits towards MRCGP (International) was also discussed.



In conclusion I can say that the HKCGP has been ably represented on the WONCA Council over the years by a number of its members, including Dr Peter C Y Lee, Dr Eddie T Chan, Dr Stephen K S Foo, Dr Donald K T Li, Dr John T N Chung, among others, with many others serving on various WONCA Committees and Sub-committees.

I can also say that the HKCGP has been most supportive and has made substantial contributions to WONCA over the past 30 years, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region, and more specifically in China, where its influence has been profound. To say that I am most impressed is a gross understatement.

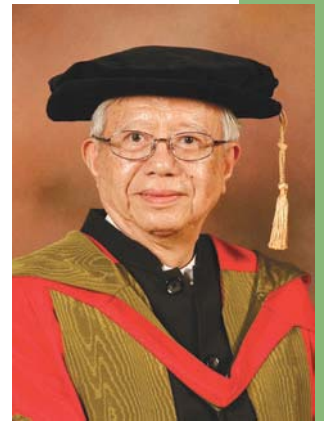
Introduction of

General Practice/ Family Medicine into China –

The role of HKCGP/ HKCFP in the early years

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the political landscape in China changed colour and the country became a closed society. Communications between Hong Kong and our counterparts in the Mainland were not re-established until 1979 when the Chinese government gave permission for the Hong Kong Medical Association to pay an official visit for the first time to the Chinese Medical Association (CMA) in Beijing. Dr David C T Wong, the then HKMA President, led the Hong Kong delegation which included Dr Peter C Y Lee, Founding President of the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners (HKCGP). Dr Lee took the opportunity to introduce their hosts to the new medical discipline of general practice/ family medicine, and to brief them on the international promotion of this discipline by the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA). Officials of the CMA expressed considerable interest since this new medical specialty was virtually unknown in China.

Following further contacts, the CMA invited the College (HKCGP) to pay an official visit to Beijing in 1986. The college delegation was received by the Minister of Health, the late Professor Chen Minzhang. Dr Peter C Y Lee, the College President and leader of the delegation, took the opportunity to publicize the concepts and principles of general practice/ family medicine as the most cost-effective method of delivering healthcare to the people in China.



Dr Peter C Y Lee

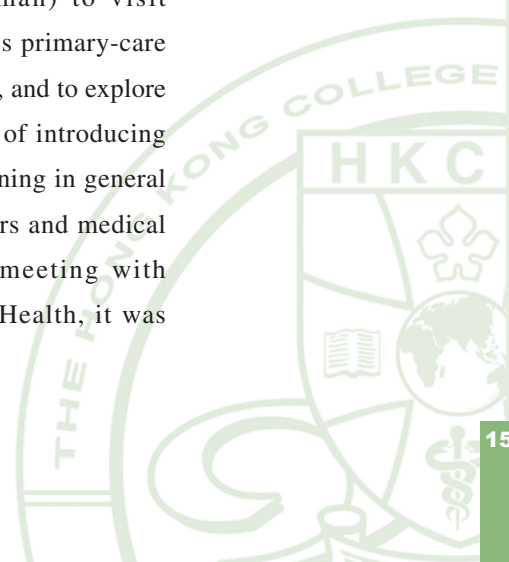
Founder-President, the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians, 1976-1988

President, World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA), 1992-1995



The Hong Kong College of General Practitioners (HKCGP) delegates visiting the CMA in Beijing in 1986 (Left to right: Dr Hon-hoi Chan, Dr Paul Lam, Dr Peter C Y Lee, Dr Stephen K S Foo and Dr Maxwell Tse)

In May 1988, the PRC Ministry of Health (MoH) and the CMA jointly invited Dr M K Rajakumar (WONCA President) and Dr Peter C Y Lee (WONCA Council Chairman) to visit Beijing to discuss primary-care services in China, and to explore ways and means of introducing teaching and training in general practice to doctors and medical students. At a meeting with the Minister of Health, it was





HKCGP Visiting Team with Dr Zhi-sui Li, (Vice-President of the CMA), seated third from right in between Dr Peter C Y Lee and Dr Stephen K S Foo at the CMA Building in 1986

decided to recruit overseas experts in general practice/family medicine as part of a pilot-scheme to train a small nucleus of teachers in this discipline. A donation of CAD25,000 was solicited from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to finance Dr Brian Cornelson from Toronto and Dr Meng-chih Lee from Taipei to lecture, at the Capital Institute of Medicine (forerunner of the Capital University of Medical Sciences – CUMS), for succeeding periods of 6 months and 3 months respectively. Dr M C Lee's lecture tour was particularly significant because he spoke Mandarin and brought with him from Taiwan many textbooks in Chinese on general practice. The scheme was highly successful and was responsible for CUMS being

recognized today as the main centre for the teaching of general practice, and for its academics, Professor Gu Yuan and her colleagues, becoming pioneers in general-practice education in China.

These introductory activities by the HKCGP and WONCA were contributory factors which led to the inauguration of the Beijing Society of General Practice in January 1989. In his capacity as WONCA President-Elect, Dr Peter C Y Lee was invited to attend as Guest of Honour and the Keynote Speaker.

In November 1989, encouraged by WONCA and actively supported by the HKCGP, the Beijing Society of General Practice held its 'First International Conference on General Practice' in the Chinese capital, with Dr Lee as the Keynote Speaker. Readers may recall that following the tragic 'June 4 Incident' in Tiananmen Square, an attempt was made to boycott this conference. This move was quashed by the late Dr Donald Rae of Canada, the then WONCA President, who decreed that WONCA, as an academic and professional body, should not play politics. As a result, this First International Conference on General Practice in Beijing was well attended by all members of the WONCA World Council and members of many colleges from around the world, especially the Asia-Pacific region. Credit for the success of the conference must go to Dr Rae who made a wise decision. Subsequently, the Beijing Society of General Practice was accepted as an associate member of WONCA, and Dr Peter C Y Lee was appointed Honorary Professor in General Practice by the Capital Institute of Medicine in Beijing.

In 1992, Dr Yong-chang Huang, the Director of Medical Education of the PRC Ministry of Health, led a delegation of three from China to attend the 13th WONCA World Conference in Vancouver. Dr Huang approached Dr Lee, then the newly-installed President of WONCA, with the request that WONCA send a team of experts to China to investigate its system of medical education, and to advise his department on how to incorporate the concepts and principles of general practice/ family medicine into the curricula for different grades of medical schools in China.

At its pre-world-conference meeting in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada in May 1992, the WONCA World Council received Dr Lee's report on developments in China, and resolved: 'That WONCA promote not only the specialty of general practice/ family medicine, but also the concept of general practice/ family medicine as being applicable to all primary health care workers'; and 'That a Task Force comprising a group of four experts go to China for a month to study the curriculum there, and produce curricula for the four levels of "doctor" which currently exist in China'. It then voted to contribute the sum of US\$10,000 towards the project.

The four-member WONCA Task Force on '*Medical Education and the Development of General Practice/ Family Medicine in China*' was in China for one month in late 1992 and early 1993, during which period each member, accompanied by senior officials from



HKCFP Visiting Team, on an invitation to lecture in Guangzhou, with Chinese Doctors in 1992

both the Chinese Medical Association and the Ministry of Health, toured remote rural villages in four different provinces. Their report, submitted concurrently to the Ministry of Health and WONCA Secretariat in March 1993, was published in both English and Chinese in booklet form, made possible by a donation from the Chan Tat Chee Memorial Fund, and was distributed by the HKCGP in China and overseas.

The Chinese (national) Society of General Practice was established in 1993. The Minister of Health, in the company of the WONCA President, Dr Peter C Y Lee, officiated at the Inauguration Ceremony held in Beijing on 1 November that year. The 'Second International Conference on General Practice' was concurrently held, with Dr Lee being invited to give the Keynote Address. Subsequently, the Chinese Society of General Practice applied for full membership of WONCA, which was granted at the WONCA World Conference in Hong Kong in 1995.

Also in 1993, in his dual capacity as President of WONCA and Trustee of the Chan Tat Chee Memorial Fund, Dr Lee established and financed the first-ever Chan Tat Chee Primary Care Centre under the overall direction of Professor Gu Yuan. This primary-care centre located at Capital University of Medical Sciences (CUMS) in Beijing has been the main venue (and at that time the *only* venue) for the teaching of family medicine in China ever since.



Leaders of the Hong Kong medical profession in a group photograph taken with Mr Zhang Junsheng (Former Vice-Director of Xinhua News Agency) in a Refresher Course in 1997

In 1997, Dr Lee was appointed WHO Consultant in general practice/ family medicine by WHO (the World Health Organization) and jointly commissioned as Specialist in the same disciplines by the Department of Science, Technology and Education of the PRC Ministry of Health. In his dual capacities, Dr Lee toured and lectured in Heilongjiang Province for one month in April/ May 1997. And on 9 May, Dr Lee was appointed the first Visiting Professor at the new Jiamusi University in Heilongjiang. At the end of the Consultancy, Dr Lee submitted a Mission Report to the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office in Manila and a similar Mission Report to the Ministry of Health in Beijing. The Mission Report strongly recommended that, for the health-care situation in China to improve, the entrenched hospital-based health system must be transformed into, and be replaced by, a cost-effective community-based system. This could only be achieved if health-care providers in the four different tiers of medical institutions throughout the country were to be educated and trained in the concepts and principles of general practice/ family medicine.

On 15 October 1998, our President, Dr Stephen K S Foo, and WONCA Past-President, Dr Peter C Y Lee, were invited by Dr Dai Yuwei, President of the Chinese Society of General Practice, to Beijing for a one-day visit to discuss the possibility of China holding a WONCA World Conference. The consensus was that China should gain more experience before embarking on a world-level event, and decided that China should first bid to host a WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference. Dr Foo gave the assurance that a number of College members would be persuaded to serve on China's Host Organizing Committee. Given such encouragement and offer of assistance, the China Society of General Practice subsequently applied for and was granted the bid to host for the first time in Beijing the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference scheduled to be held from 3 to 9 November 2003.

On 29 October 1999, Dr Lee was invited to give the keynote address in Beijing to the '**China-Canada Joint Forum on Best Practices in Hospital Management**' co-organized by hospital managers from all over China and Mount Sinai Hospital University in Toronto, Canada. Dr Lee made use of the occasion to lecture and promulgate the principles and concepts of general practice/ family medicine to the large gathering of managers and senior executives of major hospitals in China. The forum was held at the Xiyuan Hotel and was attended by nearly 400 persons (at least 300 of whom were hospital managers and senior hospital executives) including senior officials of the Ministry of Health and the Chinese Medical Association. The title of Dr Lee's address was: '*Concepts of General Practice as a Model of Quality Patient Care*'.

In 2002, Peking University Health Sciences Centre celebrated its **90th Anniversary** by inviting the Presidents and Deans of major medical schools and universities from all over the world to attend its "**Presidents and Deans Forum**" held in the Report Hall of its Third Affiliated Hospital on October 25 for **an international seminar** to exchange views on the topic: "*Globalization of Medical Education*". Hong Kong was highly honoured when Peking University invited Dr Peter C Y Lee to be the Keynote Speaker as well as to launch and declare open this prestigious Forum in the presence of a galaxy of international dignitaries and experts in general practice/ family medicine. To do justice to the occasion, Dr Lee brought with him to Beijing 1000 copies of specially printed booklets (A4-size) in both Chinese and English, incorporating not only the full text of his speech (in two languages) entitled: "*Thoughts on Medical Education – Tough Choices, Hard Thinking*", but also two dissertations on:-

- (i) A Pilot Scheme to transform China's Health Delivery from its existing Organ-Centred, Specialist-Oriented and Hospital-Based System to a Patient-Centred, Primary-Care-Oriented, and Community-Based System; and
- (ii) A report on the radical reform of medical curriculum and teaching methodology of The University of Hong Kong – an exemplar of medical undergraduate teaching in the 21st Century.

These activities represent the main thrust of the College's activities in China in the early years of the College, works which are being continued in recent years by Dr Lee's able successors (please refer to the following chapters).

Relationship with China in Recent Years

The Hong Kong College of Family Physicians (HKCFP) was established 30 years ago with the mission to establish family medicine (FM) and upgrade general practice in Hong Kong. And it was as early as 1986 that, following the vision of our forefathers, the HKCFP started to introduce the concept of FM into China. At that time, community health care in China was provided by 'bare-foot doctors', many of whom had never completed full medical training.

In 1986, our college's inaugural visit was made by founder president Dr Peter C Y Lee and council members. The delegation held meetings with the Chinese Medical Association (CMA) in Beijing, sharing experiences on how to develop general practice in China.

On 23 January 1989, the Beijing Society of General Practice was established. Dr Peter Lee, in his capacity as chairman of the WONCA (World Organization of Family Doctors) council, attended as guest of honour and delivered the keynote address.

China then began to participate internationally in meetings and events related to general practice and FM. History was made when visitors from China attended the first tripartite meeting held on 1 April 1989 in Hong Kong, co-organized by the newly inaugurated

Beijing Society of General Practice, the Chinese-Taipei Association of Family Medicine, and the HKCGP.

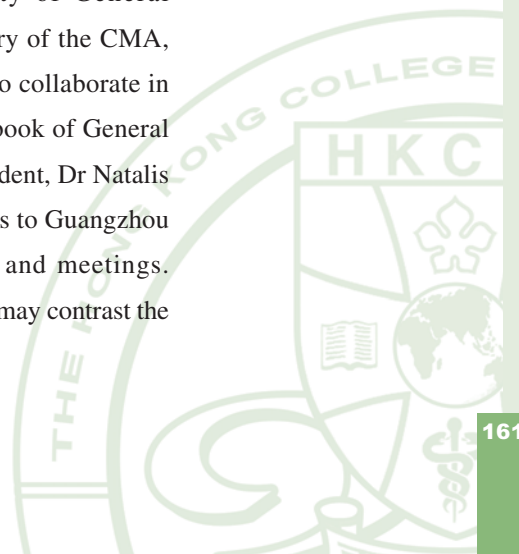
Meanwhile, activities in the Pearl River Delta also began to accelerate. Also in 1989, the newly formed Guangzhou Society of General Practice, a subsidiary of the CMA, invited our college to collaborate in developing a 'Handbook of General Practice'. Then president, Dr Natalis Yuen, led delegations to Guangzhou to attend seminars and meetings. Those who attended may contrast the



At Chung Shan Hospital with Professor Yang Binghui when he was medical superintendent. Professor Yang is now President of the Society of General Practitioners of the Chinese Medical Association



Dr Donald K T Li
President, 1998-2004
Regional President,
WONCA Asia Pacific
Region, since 2007



poor conditions in the medical establishments in those days with the abundance of luxurious hospitals and health centres seen nowadays in the Guangzhou neighbourhood.

In the 1990s, the director of Health Dr S H Lee was very supportive of developing FM on Hong Kong. Under his encouragement, the HKCGP hosted a second 'tripartite' meeting in March 1991. This consisted of a symposium on the 'Training of General Practitioners/ Family Physicians in Primary Health Care'. The meeting became a regular four-party cross-straits meeting, as Macau also joined in. Representatives from Singapore also attended the meeting.

Representatives from Beijing attended the WONCA Asia Pacific Regional (APR) Conference hosted by Hong Kong in 1987. Discussions were initiated to adopt a 'one country, two memberships' system for China and Hong Kong in WONCA. The CMA's Society of General Practice was keen to become a full member of WONCA but was considerate in not compromising Hong Kong's existing membership.

In June 1995, Hong Kong successfully hosted the WONCA World Conference, which saw a larger number of delegates from China. China also expressed interest in hosting a WONCA APR meeting. During the regional WONCA conference held in Taiwan in 1999, the CMA's Society of General Practice was successful in its bid to host the WONCA APR in 2002. Hong Kong representatives were invited to join the Host Organizing Committee (HOC) of the 2002 Beijing WONCA regional conference.

The HKCGP developed relations with the Capital University of Medical Science (CUMS) as early as 1994 when Professor Gu Yuan visited the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Later

on, family-medicine academics from CUMS were sent to the Family Medicine Unit of Hong Kong University for further training. After ten years we could see that true academic units in FM were evolving. Many of these self-taught family physicians were quite accomplished. English textbooks on FM were translated into Chinese. In 2000, in view of the high quality of work, the HKCFP granted funds to the FM faculty of CUMS for translating the International Classification of Diseases into Chinese.

Hong Kong was handed over smoothly to China in 1997. Dr Donald Li and Dr Eileen Tse joined many Chinese delegates to attend a pre-handover Macau Family Medicine Symposium in 1999. Many of our Portuguese friends, who had grown to be



Signing MoU with Beijing Health Authorities in 2004, HKCFP agreed to provide support for the development of FM in China through the Beijing authorities and Ministry of Health

close friends over the years with the regular academic exchanges with Hong Kong, bade farewell to us at a nostalgic meeting. The Beijing WONCA HOC was also formally established during the meeting in Macau.

It became obvious that FM training was becoming more organized and structured nationwide. During the Kunming four-party meeting in July 2002, we saw how different provinces were making tremendous efforts to develop an effective community-based care system through training family doctors or competent general practitioners. Courses were organized all over the Mainland to help the former bare-foot doctors, now called 'rural practitioners', to upgrade their knowledge and skills to provide quality primary care.

As we passed the millennium, our college explored further opportunities in the neighbouring Pearl Delta Region. Practical sessions in the HKCFP SPACE Certificate Ultrasound course were held at the Guangzhou Chinese Medicine Hospital in November 2001. HKCFP members benefited tremendously from the opportunity to practice on patient-volunteers arranged by our Mainland partners. We were also amazed by the high technology available, not to mention the luxurious environment of the hospital.

In March 2005, through the introduction of FM consultants from the Department of Health, Dr Donald Li, then president of HKCFP, was invited to deliver an address on the development of FM in Hong Kong as well as the international scene by the Society of Teachers of Medical Science. The occasion also marked the inauguration of the Society of General Practice of the Society of Teachers of Medical Science. The Society's key members were mostly leaders from the FM faculty of CUMS. This group differed from the Society of General Practice of the CMA in that it was more academically orientated, focusing on organizing FM courses rather than developing international relations. Close relations between the Society and HKCFP developed thereafter, which led to the organization of FM teaching courses in China in subsequent years.

The HKCFP celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2002 and was honoured by the presence of minister of health Dr Zhang Wenhong and a delegation from the CMA at our celebration ceremonies. Unfortunately, however, the SARS epidemic broke out in the same year. Not only were many lives taken and our normal lives disrupted, but the attendance at the Beijing WONCA APR meeting was drastically affected. Nonetheless, Dr Donald Li was able to lead a delegation from our college to Beijing to support the function.



Delegates from Hong Kong with the Minister of Health of the PRC in 2006

To follow up on the relationship, Dr Li paid a visit to our friends at CUMS in Beijing in May 2004 and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Health (MoH) as well as the Beijing Health Authority committing HKCFP to assist MoH in the training of family physicians in the Mainland. Following this, a first FM course was organized in Shenzhen in 2003.

These activities were followed by another FM training course in Shenzhen in August 2004, as well as a 'Train-the-trainers' course in Beijing in April 2005. Dr Donald Li and the then president, Dr John Chung, visited the MoH during this visit and was received by vice minister Jit-fu Wong. The FM training in Shenzhen continued in 2005 but was by then run independently by Mainland teachers led by professors from CUMS. Nonetheless, Hong Kong teachers were also invited to act as visiting professors. Their courses ended with a visit to Hong Kong to visit our general-practice units.

In March 2006, Dr Donald Li re-activated relations when he co-chaired a WONCA/ WHO event in Beijing with the president of the CMA, Zhong Nanshan, to launch a Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD).

The Society of General Practice of the Society of Teachers of Medical Science held a China-Taiwan-Hong Kong-Macau four-party meeting in Beijing from 14 to 17 April 2006. HKCFP sent a delegation headed by the then president, Dr John Chung.

Representatives from the MoH paid a visit to the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) in 2005 and held discussions with HKCFP representatives on FM training. Our college emphasized the importance of structured vocational training, standardization, and assessment.



Dr Donald Li at his Shanghai Health Club Clinic in Huashan Hospital in Shanghai

Meanwhile, our neighbours in the Pearl River Delta region were also developing their FM training programmes. In August 2006, visits were organized by more than 200 Guangzhou colleagues involved in FM teaching and training to visit our private and public general-practice clinics. Again we witnessed the determination of health authorities all over China to upgrade their standards of community-based care.

In September 2006, past-president Dr Donald Li was invited by the secretary of health and welfare, Dr York Chow, to accompany him to visit minister of health Ge Xiang. The commitment of the Chinese authorities to developing nationwide quality community-based care was once again affirmed. HongKong was also recognized as the appropriate expert partner in the field to guide China in her development in this area.

Medical professionals of all specialties as well as primary-care providers face tremendous challenges from rapid economic growth, growing populations, rising patient expectations, changing disease patterns, and the emergence of exotic infectious diseases. Escalating medical expenditure and the financial implications prompted the Chinese premier to once comment that it was 'difficult to seek medical care and expensive to get medical care'. Administrators became concerned with the over-reliance of high technology in hospital-based care and realized the need to shift the emphasis to community-based primary care. Training general practitioners to acquire the skills of a family physician continues to be high on the agenda of health-care reform.

I think it is important for China to develop a co-ordinated nationwide FM training programme. What is also needed is an authority empowered to perform professional assessment, standardization, and accreditation. The MoH signed an MoU with the HKAM in 2006, and the HKCFP, as a founding college of the Academy, is expected to play an important role in the area of community-based medical care. In this regard, the HKCFP is more than willing to share its experiences in propagating FM over the past 30 years.



Doctors attending the Scientific Meeting in Beijing in 2006