

## Japan & Hong Kong: Perfect partners in academic collaboration

With world renowned universities, well-established student exchange programmes and reputations for nurturing some of the brightest minds on the planet, Japan and Hong Kong are ideal partners for education and research collaboration.

Together, Japan and Hong Kong have a total of nine universities ranked in the top 20 of the QS Asia University Rankings 2018. Currently, there are more than 100 active collaboration projects between universities in Japan and Hong Kong, with research areas ranging from food and agriculture, to music and weather forecasting to medicine and elderly care.

One such collaboration involves the Tokyo Institute of Technology and Prof. Jean Woo who is currently the Director of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Jockey Club Institute of Ageing. The research collaboration has led to the successful introduction and use of PARO (Socially Assistive Pet Robot) in Hong Kong. The use of PARO as a robotic/animal-assisted therapy is a recent trend in the treatment of dementia patients. The PARO seal, created by Dr Takanori Shibata of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, has since been adopted by Shatin Hospital and some non-governmental organisations in treating dementia sufferers.



*A Socially Assistive Pet Robot (PARO) seal is presented by its creator Dr*

*Takanora Shibata of Tokyo Institute of Technology (front row, second left) along with Prof. Jean Woo, Director of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Jockey Club Institute of Ageing (front row, third left).*

Other joint initiatives include the collaboration between Dr Bertha Du-Babcock of the Department of English at City University of Hong Kong with Professor Hiromasa Tanaka at Meisei University, which involves the study of cross-cultural communication. The collaboration between Dr Esther Lau of The Education University of Hong Kong with Tohoku University investigates Sleep and Risk-related Decision-making in Adolescents and Young Adults.

### **Investing in the next generation**

The HKSAR Government invests heavily in fostering education and nurturing young talent. In terms of expenditure, the latest 2018-19 Budget earmarked HK\$84.6 billion (approx. US\$10.8 billion), or 20.8 per cent of total government recurrent expenditure to education, the highest for any single policy area. An additional HK\$3.4 billion (approx. US\$436 million) recurrent funding is reserved for the continued implementation of quality education, further highlighting the current term Government's emphasis on education.



*Four Hong Kong universities are ranked in the top 10 of the QS Asia University Rankings 2018.*

In the 2017/18 academic year, the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) received about 6,400 incoming exchange students and sent about 6,500 students on exchange programmes lasting at least one semester. Amongst these exchange students, 234 students studied in Japan, while 101 Japanese students studied in Hong Kong UGC-funded universities.

Hong Kong also welcomes short term student exchanges, including those under the Japanese Government's programme, Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS). These exchanges provide a valuable opportunity to promote deeper academic as well as cultural understanding between Japan and Hong Kong.

### **International learning environment**

Currently, more than 50 international schools from around the world operate in Hong Kong, offering a range of curricula, including British, American, Australian, Singaporean, French, German, South Korean, Canadian, the International Baccalaureate, and, of course, Japanese.

A well-established fixture in Hong Kong's education system is the Hong Kong Japanese School set up in 1966 and the Japanese International School established in 1997.

The international school sector provides expatriate families from around the world with quality education for their children, enhancing Hong Kong's reputation as a great place for expatriate families to work, live and learn.



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