Nantah Spirit comes alive in new book

The photographs in “A Pictorial History of Nantah” represent the most comprehensive collection of visual records on the former institution.

A new 143-page book tracing the history of the former Nanyang University (Nantah) through a series of rare photographs has just been published by the Chinese Heritage Centre. *A Pictorial History of Nantah* arose from the Centre's interest in collecting historical documents and artifacts relating to Nantah – the world's first Chinese language university outside China.

The book was inspired by a collection of old photos found in the storeroom of the Hokkien Huay Kuan, many of them collected over the years by the Singapore Association of Nanyang University Graduates. Photos from the editorial library of the Singapore Press Holdings were later added to the collection. From there, the photo collection, and book, grew.

Organised into eleven chapters, the book, with minimal text in both English and Chinese, contains 138 photographs depicting the foundation, growth, and final merger of Nantah with the University of Singapore to form the National University of Singapore. The pictures show the unprecedented groundswell of community support for the University when Mr Tan Lark Sye proposed its establishment, the construction of the new campus, and many facets of campus life and student activities, reviews of the institution, and debates surrounding its merger with the University of Singapore.

The publication of the book has received international media attention, which has, in turn, inspired a number of donations of rare artifacts from Nantah graduates and others associated with the University. The book costs $28 and is sold at the Chinese Heritage Centre Bookshop (tel: 790 6177).

Book enriches Chinese Heritage Centre collection

*A Pictorial History of Nantah* has not only caused a stir among the Nantah community but has also stirred a string of generous and valuable donations from them. For example, from the family of the late Prof Hsu Yun-Tsiao came the original copy of his appointment letter from the former University's Department of History and Geography. Others have donated examination results slips, library loan cards, sports medals, and even paintings of Yunnan Garden. The Lee Kong Chian Museum at NUS, which originally belonged to Nantah, has returned to the Chinese Heritage Centre a gold-plated Tan Lark Sye Sports Trophy and academic gowns worn by former Vice-Chancellors. These artifacts have been on display at the Centre's Nantah Gallery since 7 October 2000 (NTU Alumni Day). You can also get the real picture on Nantah at the ongoing Nantah History Photographic Exhibition. “We hope to further expand our permanent collection of exhibits,” said Prof Kee Pookong, the Centre's Director. “There is no better place to preserve and interpret this important episode of our history,” he added.
For their excellent R&D contributions to the science and technology scene, four NTU researchers recently received the 2000 National Technology Award which is the highest form of recognition in Singapore accorded to research scientists of the local R&D community.

The National Technology Award, which aims to encourage researchers to apply their technology in industrial processes, was presented to Assoc Prof Lee Sing Kong, Dean of Graduate Programmes and Research, National Institute of Education, for the successful commercialisation of his aeroponic technology, and Assoc Prof Shi Xu, CEO of Nanofilm Technologies International Pte Ltd, Prof Tan Hong Siang, Director of Research, and Assoc Prof Tay Beng Kang, School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, for the commercialisation of a new thin film deposition technology that can be used to coat and protect a wide variety of substances.

As a result of Assoc Prof Lee’s pioneering work, temperate salad greens like butterhead lettuces and subtropical vegetables like the Hong Kong kailan can now be successfully farmed in the lowland tropics without the need for costly external cooling. Two commercial farms in Singapore and Malaysia (marketing salad greens and vegetable products under the brand name of “Aerogreen” and “Sime Fresh” respectively) are using his technology to produce fresh, high-value vegetables for local and overseas markets. Assoc Prof Lee is currently adapting his aeroponic technology to grow medicinal plants for the extracting of beneficial drugs.

The three-man team jointly won the award for their outstanding contributions in R&D on a new Filtered Cathodic Vacuum Arc technology, the success of which is seen in the establishment in May 1999 of a university spin-off company – Nanofilm Technologies – and a multi-million dollar OEM agreement with a Japanese MNC.

Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Tony Tan, presented the awards to the outstanding researchers at the TechMonth Awards Presentation Dinner on 1 September 2000.

Big plans for the life sciences at NTU

The Task Force on Life Sciences recommends the development of a College of Life Sciences comprising a School of Biological Sciences, a Graduate School of Medicine and a Bio-Medical Research Institute

How will NTU venture into the life sciences? After six months of deliberation – including two study trips to world renowned institutes in US and Israel such as the Whitehead Institute of Biomedical Research at MIT, University of Washington (UW) in Seattle, and Technion in Israel – the high-level Task Force on Life Sciences headed by President Cham Tao Soon submitted an interim report to Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Tony Tan, on 21 July 2000.

And these are their tentative recommendations for the University: the development of a College of Life Sciences comprising a School of Biological Sciences, a Graduate School of Medicine and a Bio-Medical Research Institute to be jointly developed with the Singapore Health Services Group (which includes the Singapore General Hospital, National Heart Centre and National Cancer Centre).
Getting smarter and smarter

Intelligent classrooms are sprouting up at NTU, starting with the NTU Smart Classroom, recently launched for the prestigious Singapore-MIT Alliance (SMA) distance-learning collaboration.

The 27 top students on the SMA Masters course – Innovation in Manufacturing Systems and Technology – which began in July 2000, can now talk, interact and conduct virtual meetings with their MIT professors and other students thousands of miles away in Boston.

And they have the revolutionary NTU Smart Classroom, featuring 50 “smart” PCs, to thank for it. To ensure high levels of interactivity unhampered by the physical divide in distance learning, the classroom was tailor-made to facilitate intellectual exchanges, discussions and debates. According to the Centre for Educational Development, which is spearheading the e-learning initiative at NTU, more of such facilities will be planned in the future.

What each student gets is a PC equipped with a video conferencing card and a digital video camera. To answer a question during a live video conferencing lecture, the student merely needs to press a button and speak into a low-profile microphone. This immediately activates the tracking camera which sends a close-up video of the student to his professor in MIT. Presentations can be directed to every monitor in the classroom while videos are shown on a large screen display at the front of the classroom. This smart system makes it easy for professors to review individual student work, share it with the class in NTU and MIT, and facilitate student-to-student learning.

What if complex formulas or equations have to be written? A pen-based input tablet comes to the rescue! As the professor writes – as naturally as he would on a piece of paper – his markings instantaneously show up on each student’s monitor.

In the SMA programme, live video conferencing lectures are beamed across 12 time zones between Singapore (NTU) and Boston (MIT) via the high bandwidth Internet2 connection. If a break in this connection occurs, an audio conferencing link is instantaneously established to minimise interruptions to lectures, while an alternative ISDN connection is used to resume video transmission. MobiTalk handsets sponsored by Motorola Inc and ST Advanced Radio, key components in the crisis management system, have reduced the disaster recovery time substantially – from 30 minutes to a mere 30 seconds – making e-learning at NTU virtually effectual and efficient.

Who’s who in the task force on life sciences

The 12-member task force looking into the development of the life sciences at NTU is headed by NTU President, Dr Cham Tao Soon. The other 11 members are from NTU, the Singapore Health Services, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Economic Development Board.

- Prof Lim Mong King, Deputy President, NTU
- Prof Er Meng Hwa, Deputy President, NTU
- Prof Tan Ser Kiat, Chairman, Medical Board, Singapore General Hospital
- Prof Lim Yean Leng, Director, National Heart Centre
- Prof Soo Khee Chee, Director, National Cancer Centre
- Mrs Tan Ching Yee, Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Education
- Mr Wee Heng Tin, Director–General of Education, Ministry of Education
- Dr Chen Ai Ju, former Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health
- Mr Willie Tan, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Health
- Ms Chu Swee Yeok, Deputy Director, Life Sciences, Economic Development Board
- Mr Teo Soon Hock, Principal Administrative Officer, President’s Office, NTU (Secretary)
Breakthrough motion estimation technology world standard for MPEG-4

Soon: the NTU “stamp” on third-generation mobile phones and personal digital assistants

After three years of active R&D, Assoc Prof Ma Kai-Kuang and his research student from the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering have developed a more effective way of compressing digital video, achieved through a significant improvement in motion estimation technology.

In March 2000, their stunning breakthrough was adopted as part of the MPEG-4 world standard for multimedia applications by the Motion Picture Experts Group (MPEG) – the body which develops world standards for digital audio and video compression.

The MPEG-4 standard will become the world standard for digital video in hand-held wireless devices like third-generation mobile phones and personal digital assistants. Other familiar, earlier standards include the MPEG-1, used in VCDs and Internet video streaming, and MPEG-2, used in DVDs.

So, what makes this NTU research a technological gold mine – and international winner? In digital video applications such as video-conferencing, video streaming over the Internet and DVD playback, large amounts of data have to be compressed, transmitted and stored. Motion estimation, a critical component in digital video compression, has to be done quickly. Previous fast motion estimation techniques have been developed – but at the expense of video quality. The NTU technique fills a technological gap by even more quickly and accurately (showing less distortion) estimating the next picture in a video sequence, based on the previous one. This enables highly effective realisation of almost any wireless visual communications applications that indispensably require real-time performance, small VLSI real estate and low power consumption, besides achieving reasonably good video quality.

As expected, major communications players like Motorola and Ericsson are now using this superior motion estimation technique to shorten their product development cycles. They are also testing the technology to see how it can be incorporated into new MPEG-based commercial products.

Besides digital video compression, Dr Ma and some research students have been working on improving image and video indexing and retrieval for MPEG-7, which is currently in the process of being standardised.

Over 700 Nantah alumni at 7th global reunion

Alive and well: the Nantah Spirit, which recently brought together more than 700 kindred spirits from various parts of the world – including Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the United States and Canada – for the biennial reunion of the former Nanyang University (Nantah) graduates in Vancouver, Canada.

The reunion dinner was held on 16 June 2000 at the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Vancouver. Joining the Singapore delegation led by Mr Chia Ban Seng were two members of the NTU Students’ Union – Ms Lim Joo Lee, its President, and Mr Ang Wee Seng, the outgoing Honorary General Secretary.

Ms Lim was impressed by “how strong the flame burns”. She said: “I am very thankful for this opportunity I had… the opportunity to experience my first snowfall, to be awe-struck by the beauty of the Rockies and appreciate the beauty of Canada. But most of all, I am glad I had the opportunity to know my roots and be inspired by the Nantah Spirit.”

For most of the alumni and their families, the gathering ended on a freezing, but scenic, note – with a seven-day cruise to Alaska. The first Nantah global reunion was held in Toronto, Canada in 1992. It was an annual affair up to 1996, after which it became a biennial affair.
Seven top Stanford professors visit

The NTU-Stanford collaboration, recently reinforced with the Clean Water Forum, may lead to the establishment of a regional Stanford-NTU environmental engineering centre here.

From 25 – 30 June 2000, faculty members from NTU’s School of Civil and Structural Engineering (CSE) were able to draw on the expertise of seven top professors from Stanford University, among them, several members of the prestigious US National Academy of Engineering. Prof James Leckie, Director of Stanford’s Environmental Engineering and Sciences (EES) Programme, led the team's visit here.

The visit arose out of the close association that NTU and Stanford University have enjoyed for many years, with the most recent research and education collaboration in environmental engineering just formalised this March. While at NTU, Prof Leckie expressed hopes for a regional Stanford-NTU centre to be set up here to train a new breed of environmental engineering leaders. According to Prof Cheong Hee Kiat, NTU Deputy President and Dean of CSE, this could well materialise within the next few years.

During their visit here, the Stanford professors discussed research collaboration arrangements with faculty members from CSE’s Division of Environmental and Water Resources Engineering and shared their expertise in a series of public seminars. They also made presentations in a Clean Water Forum jointly organised by NTU, Stanford University, the Public Utilities Board and the Ministry of the Environment. Held on 28 June 2000 at the Shangri-La Hotel, the forum provided a platform for important and constructive discussions on Singapore’s water issues. Participants included top public service leaders and CEOs from water-related industries.

You can now get connected on the Internet face to face – for free, thanks to a new free videoconference directory service – iVCnet – which has just been deployed for the world Internet community. To initiate a real-time video chat, plug in your video camera and surf to http://www.ivcnet.singaren.net.sg

Developed at the Network Technology Research Centre and sponsored by the Singapore Advanced Research and Education Network (SingAREN), this videocommunication application was demonstrated at the International Grid (iGrid) special event at this summer’s INET 2000 Conference in Japan by the system’s chief architect, Assoc Prof Lee Bu Sung from the School of Computer Engineering. iVCnet has been endorsed by two major organisations – the Asia-Pacific Advanced Network (APAN) and the Coordinating Committee of Intercontinental Research Network (CCIRN).

The other NTU demonstration at iGrid was MediaZine, a joint project between the Centre for Advanced Media Technology and Fraunhofer Institute Graphische Datenverarbeitung (IGD), Darmstadt, Germany. This true web-based multimedia virtual environment – a combination of television, WWW, telecommunication and 3D computer graphics all in one application – enables groups of people to interact seamlessly with one another.

Organised annually by the Internet Society, INET was held this year in Yokohama, Japan from 18 – 21 July 2000. Applications from Singapore were streamed to the exhibition floor in Yokohama via the SingAREN-Japan 4 Mbps high-speed link.

NTU’s environmental engineering research well regarded by Stanford

According to the Stanford University team, a collaborative visit of this nature involving such a large group of its professors is unprecedented in the University’s history, and signals Stanford’s strong commitment to its environmental engineering partnership with NTU. Stanford University has the top-ranked environmental engineering programme in the United States, and has held this eminent position for many years.

Top brains: (left to right) Prof Stephen G Monismith, Prof James O Leckie, Prof David L Freyberg, Dr Sandy Robertson, Prof Cheong Hee Kiat (NTU), Prof Michael C Kavanaugh, Prof Tay Joo Hwa (NTU), Prof Craig S Criddle, Prof Martin Reinhard and Prof Richard G Luthy

Two NTU applications at international Internet demo

Two NTU applications at international Internet demo
Today, we begin the first of our ten ceremonies in which a total of 4,550 will receive their degrees. As compared to our first Convocation held eight years ago, which awarded 1,355 degrees, the number of graduates from NTU has more than trebled. This is an indication of the growth experienced by the University and its important role in human capital development. The increase in the number of higher degrees is even more significant. Eight years ago it was 10. This year, we are awarding 938 higher degrees, an increase of more than ninety times, which is good evidence of NTU’s contribution to R&D and a knowledge-based economy.

This convocation is special in two aspects. Firstly, it is the first convocation of the University in the new millennium, an age of challenge with many advancements in technology and knowledge. Secondly, it is the first occasion our convocation is held within the campus in this grand new Auditorium. The resulting ambience is more intimate and welcomed by many graduates.

However, the most important features of the convocation is the opportunity for the families and friends of the graduates to celebrate this very special day together in the campus. So, let me extend my heartiest congratulations to the graduates and a warm welcome to all our guests.

An important development for the University was the recently completed review of University Governance and Funding, which recommended more autonomy for the University together with systems of accountability emplaced. More emphasis will be given to the quality of people, systems of accountability emplaced. More attention will be given to the recruitment and retention of administrators. The University will pay close attention to the recruitment and retention of good quality staff by having a rigorous appraisal system, a market-driven remuneration scheme and a responsive reward and recognition scheme.

The success of this review would finally depend on how effectively the recommendations are implemented. The University will make a careful study over the next few months and consult all relevant parties before implementation on 1 January 2001. Ownership of and commitments towards the new scheme at all levels is critical to its success. When well implemented, it offers a unique opportunity for the University to realise its mission, goals and objectives.

Will the above change the whole character of the University? Although everything seems to point to the future, it cannot be denied that the university is one of the world’s most ancient institutions, older than many of the countries which host them. Many of the ancient foundations continue to grow and prosper. Although they have changed, they have not changed beyond recognition. Some of the old traditions and values are still important in the present day context and must be upheld.

The modern university on the other hand must adapt quickly to the external conditions where necessary or it would become irrelevant. It has to bring its teaching and research up-to-date in order to meet the challenges of global competition.

Academic standards and quality learning will always be the hallmark of this University. New programmes are introduced on a timely basis in response to the demand for trained manpower for the industry and business. New Masters degrees are now available in Communications Engineering, Communication Software & Networks, and Microelectronics. A unique double MBA (International Business) has been arranged with St Gallen’s University in Switzerland. Together with SGH, a new Masters degree in Biomedical Engineering is offered.

In order to bring about a better learning process, some organisational changes have been made. The most notable is that of the National Institute of Education. Instead of being organised into Schools, NIE is now based on a matrix structure driven by programmes which are classified into Foundation Programmes and Graduate Programmes. In the Jurong Campus, the former School of Applied Science is now re-organised into the School of Computer Engineering and the School of Materials Engineering, thereby enabling each discipline to develop a distinct identity. The new Schools will be able to be more focused in their teaching and research activities.

As we strive to achieve world-class standing, one of the key indicators is the quality of our research programmes, and to a large extent, this is reflected in the quality of the theses our graduate students have produced. As a measure of the quality, we have found that for the engineering schools, a PhD thesis (taken as an average over 86 theses) produced 3.9 papers in international research journals and 3.3 papers in international conferences. These figures compare well with the international norm of 3 papers in international journals per thesis.

The University continues to forge more alliances with major universities to propel NTU into the forefront of international academic excellence. The School of Civil & Structural Engineering was given a boost with the beginning of an education and research collaboration with Stanford University in environmental engineering. Research projects identified include developing novel ways of treating water and wastewater, and improving air quality. Similarly, the School of Communication Studies has struck an alliance with the Missouri School of Journalism, reputed to be the oldest in the world in journalism and one of the best in the US.

The Nanyang Business School is collaborating with the University of Illinois to develop new instructional approaches to undergraduate Accountancy education. The aim is to move students away from mere content learning to process and continuous lifelong learning. The Nanyang Business School has gained such a worldwide reputation as to be able to attract 25 students annually from the Norwegian School of Management for a one-year attachment.

It is believed that for many countries, the key to the economic future is in entrepreneurship. As we migrate to a knowledge-based economy, the individual with good ideas is often the powerhouse of a company.

Dr Cham Tao Soon

To provide a world-class infrastructure for teaching and research, the University continues to upgrade its facilities. An Executive Centre at Orchard Road was opened to facilitate continuing education for working professionals. New programmes are introduced on a timely basis in response to the demand for trained manpower for the industry and business. New Masters degrees are now available in Communications Engineering, Communication Software & Networks, and Microelectronics. A unique double MBA (International Business) has been arranged with St Gallen’s University in Switzerland. Together with SGH, a new Masters degree in Biomedical Engineering is offered.

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Dr Cham Tao Soon
bring NTU technologies to the market through technology licensing and the formation of joint ventures. For the last academic year, the University received a total of 66 technology disclosures from academic and research staff, with a total of 26 new patents being filed. Six new spin-off companies were started last year jointly by staff members in partnership with the private sector.

One of the most successful spin-offs to-date is the one with an innovative process in thin amorphous diamond coating. It has secured a multi-million exclusive OEM contract with a Japanese MNC, Shimadzu Corporation.

The Innovation & Technology Transfer Office has another role in developing students to be more entrepreneurial. Technopreneurship courses are structured to provide students with the necessary training in starting up, running and growing a business, and the various exit options opened to entrepreneurs. It is anticipated that with the exposure to various technopreneurship activities, interest will be generated so that at some point in their working life, some of our graduates will venture into starting new enterprises that will form the next wave of economic growth for Singapore.

During the year, NTU students again did us proud by winning many international prizes and recognition through their activities. For example, at the International Festival of Band Music in Norway, the NIE Symphonic Band won a gold medal. In June, the NTU dragon boat team won the inaugural Annual Dragon Boat Race for the Kolh Chok Tong Challenge Trophy, beating the NUS team by an impressive margin.

The University has done well in the past years. We must continue to work hard to maintain our excellence. We need also to look ahead to widen the educational role of the University. In this respect, a Task Force has identified the life sciences as an area for development in NTU.

Life sciences are widely recognized to have a key role to play in the next major technological revolution after the Internet. Technology and resources generated by the human genome and molecular biology research will have a major impact on healthcare and the life sciences industry.

Some of the major technological universities like Technion of Israel, Imperial College, MIT and Caltech, have gone a big way into the life sciences. They have found that their existing strengths in engineering and computing are critical to the success of the new biology. Conditions in NTU are also favourable to our development of the life sciences. We hope to realise our plans in the near future.

Today is a special day indeed for the inaugural Annual Dragon Boat Race for the Kolh Chok Tong Challenge Trophy, beating the NUS team by an impressive margin. The University has done well in the past years. We must continue to work hard to maintain our excellence. We need also to look ahead to widen the educational role of the University. In this respect, a Task Force has identified the life sciences as an area for development in NTU.

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Today is a special day indeed for the graduates present here. You have earned a degree of high standing and a passport to a good career. However, the future is dependent on the demonstration of your worth to your employers and to yourself. As you leave to seek your fortunes, we hope you will maintain strong ties with the University and build up a tradition of networking with your fellow alumni.

Another piece of advice relevant for our young graduates is that life-long learning will be an important feature for the rest of your life. Knowledge increases so rapidly that you will soon be out of date unless you make a conscious effort to keep up. With a strong foundation in learning, you will be able to meet all the challenges posed by the ever-changing environment.

In conclusion, let me congratulate all of you on your academic success. I wish you a bright future ahead.
The pioneer batch of MSc (Fin Eng) students are happy – their experiences on the MSc programme have not only served them well, intellectually, but have also helped them to advance their careers. For Dr Koo Wai Ming, it has been a clean sweep; he got not only his degree and a new job at a top bank, but also the MAS Gold Medal and Reuters Gold Medal for being the top student.

After completing five seven-week terms at NTU, the students stopped in New York City before proceeding to Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) in Pittsburgh to complete the final seven-week term there. In New York, they visited the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Salomon Brothers, Citigroup, Merrill Lynch, Reuters and CIBC, where they interacted with senior executives and obtained first-hand views on financial issues. At CMU, they were taught by some of the best faculty there. CMU’s Prof David Heath, a world leader in term...
Nantah steals the show

For two hours, the spotlight was on “A Nantah Story”

For the first time, the Chinese Society Drama Group brought the history of Nanyang University alive on stage at the World Trade Centre Auditorium on 4 and 5 August 2000. The two-hour play in Mandarin convincingly depicted the Nantah Spirit of self-help, endeavour and enterprise. It sent the audience travelling through five decades – witnessing the establishment of the University, the heartbreak of its closure, the birth of NTU and, finally, the crossover to the new millennium on the Yunnan Garden Campus. The play’s producer, third-year engineering student, Ms Sin Puay San, was touched by the generous support rendered by Nantah graduates during the preparation of the play. She said that the University had a unique past which many current NTU undergraduates were not aware of, adding that this was the reason behind the staging of the play.

New skills, new careers

The MSc (Fin Eng) programme has helped our graduates to achieve their career goals. While some have changed careers, others have taken on new and enlarged responsibilities. For example, Dr Koo Wai Ming, a former research scientist, is now working in the area of risk management in a top regional bank in Singapore. His peer, Mr Lee Wee King, formerly an Internet engineer, has become a derivatives analyst in the product specialist group of a major US bank. For Mr Lee Teck Kiang, his new job as a risk management software consultant is a vast change from his previous one as a chemical engineer. Yet others like MAS scholar, Ms Carolyn Sim, have taken on new responsibilities at work. Some graduates have gone overseas; two of them are now working in IT and technology companies in Silicon Valley.

“I was impressed by this group,” said management School, said: “We are delighted to see that our collaboration with Carnegie Mellon in offering this new Masters programme has produced graduates with the skills and state-of-the-art knowledge to respond to the new and dynamic changes of the financial industry in Singapore and beyond.” Congratulations to our pioneers!
Reputed geneticist sheds light on a complex problem

No genetic makeup is too complex for the 53rd Lee Kuan Yew Distinguished Visitor, Prof Tsui Lap-Chee

“Understanding the Basic Defect in Disease by Gene Cloning – Cystic Fibrosis and Other Human Genetic Diseases” was the title of the public lecture by esteemed molecular geneticist, Prof Tsui Lap-Chee, at the National Institute of Education on 8 August 2000.

In Singapore as the 53rd Lee Kuan Yew Visitor, Prof Tsui explained during his lecture how the etiology of many diseases could be traced to specific alterations in each patient’s genetic blueprint, or DNA. Using cystic fibrosis as an example, he showed that a disease gene could be identified by tracing its inheritance in families. Such study of genes and their functions could lead to new medical treatments being devised for genetic diseases. Himself living proof of the high value in genetic research, Prof Tsui was the one who discovered the gene that causes cystic fibrosis – the most common genetic disease among Caucasians that kills roughly one out of every 2,000 Canadians. With his discovery came better treatment for the fatal disease.

Shanghai-born Prof Tsui, 50, who obtained his PhD (Biological Sciences) from the University of Pittsburgh in 1979, is a University Professor at the University of Toronto and Geneticist-in-Chief of the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. He is also the current President of the Human Genome Organisation. While at NTU on 8 August, he called on NTU President, Dr Cham Tao Soon, and visited three research centres including the Biomedical Engineering Research Centre.

Prominent biophysicist is new Nanyang Professor

The new Nanyang Professor at NTU, Prof R E Burge, 67, has had a long and illustrious academic career. At the mere age of 30, he was made a Professor of Physics and Head of Department of Physics at King’s College, University of London.

He is currently the Wheatstone Professor of Physics at King’s College. Prof Burge will be spending two months in NTU – between August 2000 and August 2001 – helping faculty members of the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) in the area of nanofabrication for various photonic applications, including applications in the life sciences. In August and September 2000, he gave three interesting public lectures on new methods in microscopy and recent applications in materials science, and molecular and structural biology.
New research lab poised to commercialise robotic and mechatronic technology

The intelligent vehicle research team at NTU has great dreams. Not the kind that comes only with sleep, hopefully...

In fact, at the new Advanced Intelligent Mechatronics (AIM) Laboratory jointly managed by NTU and ST Kinetics (Singapore Technologies Kinetics), sleep is the last thing on the minds of the research team headed by Assoc Prof Xie Ming. Not when the next phase of development – growing spin-off companies for robotic and mechatronic technology – is feverishly being pursued. The potentialities are immense. Think household robots, military and anti-terrorist automatons, and even toys!

AIM aims high. If the time frame of the research collaboration between the School of Mechanical and Production Engineering (MPE) and ST Kinetics is anything to go by, five years is all they’ve got to fulfill their common dream. Over this period, ST Kinetics will contribute $200,000 annually while MPE will provide equivalent value in terms of research manpower, equipment and space. ST Kinetics, the land systems arm of Singapore Technologies Engineering (ST Engg), provides design and engineering services for military vehicles, weapon systems and munitions.

The AIM Laboratory will be equipped with the necessary state-of-the-art facilities such as networked computing stations, high performance imaging systems, powerful design software, user-friendly testing and experimental devices. “There are strong aspirations and expectations, judging by the enthusiasm of researchers on both sides,” said Prof Yue Chee Yoon, Dean of MPE, at the signing ceremony on 13 July 2000.

So, when will the first commercial products – the stuff of dreams and movies – roll off the production line? Just imagine that wonder machine that will mow your lawn and perhaps also compose love songs for your beloved. Who says “Electric Dreams” are only the stuff of reel life?

Optical success

Cheaper CD, VCD and DVD players in the future? Yes, no optical illusion, thanks to a new partnership between NTU and HongGuan Technologies

Partners and winners in technology are NTU and HongGuan Technologies (S) Pte Ltd, with HongGuan investing $1.5 million in an R&D partnership with the Precision Engineering and Nanotechnology (PEN) Centre of the School of Mechanical and Production Engineering. Their goal: to design and develop a series of objective lenses for CD and DVD players.

Fabricating and manufacturing ultra-precision micro-lens cavity inserts for the fabrication of CD/DVD microlens

HongGuan and NTU will also set up a Joint Venture Company in one to two years’ time, with the hopes of capturing 10% of the world market share in plastic objective lenses for optical pickup units. HongGuan already has 5% of the world market share.

In Singapore, the data storage industry – a critical area of development in the Internet age – was worth $19.4 billion in 1999. The present collaboration, established on 24 August 2000, will certainly enhance the overall international competitiveness of Singapore’s optical data storage industry.
SCS hosts major international conference

A major biennial conference on communication was recently held in Singapore for the first time, hosted by NTU’s School of Communication Studies (SCS) and the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC). The International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Scientific Conference and General Assembly was held from 17 – 20 July 2000 at the Mandarin Singapore. It was opened by Mr Lee Yock Suan, Minister for Information and the Arts.

This was only the third time in IAMCR’s 43-year history that the conference was held in Asia. Truly an international event, there were 351 participants from 43 countries. Prof Eddie Kuo, Dean of SCS and Co-Chair of the Local Organising Committee, noted in his welcome address that such diversity “fully reflects the rich intellectual tradition and the global character of IAMCR.”

Verdict at banking conference: Singapore’s in the pink of health

Singapore will continue to enjoy healthy economic growth, so say two top economic forecasters from the Nanyang Business School (NBS) – Assoc Prof Chen Kang and Assoc Prof Tan Khee Giap. They presented their sectoral forecast for the Singapore economy (2000 – 2001) at the Pan Pacific Hotel on the second day of the 6th Annual Nanyang Asia-Pacific Central Banking Conference. According to their widely watched and reported econometric-modelling forecast, Singapore is expected to experience robust economic growth of 8.4% in 2000 and 7.1% in 2001.

Also of interest was news about the setting up at NBS of a new ASEAN Monitoring Unit (AEMU) which will provide economic forecasts based on econometric models being constructed on the ASEAN-5 (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Singapore). Assoc Prof Gillian Yeo, Vice-Dean of NBS, announced this in her welcome speech.

Conference participants received first-hand updates on the latest official rules and regulations, and the implementation aspects of the latest policy initiatives and reforms. Central banking policies in China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand were also discussed.

SCS Dean elected Vice-President of IAMCR

SCS Dean, Prof Eddie Kuo, is the new Vice-President of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) for the period 2000 – 2004. Elected to this post at the recent conference, his main task will be to develop the international relations of IAMCR. Founded in 1957, IAMCR is the largest international professional organisation in the field of communication research serving as a focal point for communication scholars from around the world.

WISE to keep tabs on information studies education in the region

Fifty-one educators and librarians from around the world convened at NTU on 29 April 2000 to explore issues in information studies education in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region. They were at the Post-CONSAL (Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians) Workshop on Information Studies Education (WISE) organised by the Division of Information Studies, School of Computer Engineering. To facilitate an online dialogue and to engage a growing community of information studies educators in the region, a website has been set up at http://islab.sas.ntu.edu.sg:8000/WISE/ (where papers presented at WISE can be found). A listserv is also being planned.
Snapshots of the future

Technopreneurship projects involving the creative juices of over 1,400 second-year engineering students from the Schools of Mechanical and Production Engineering (MPE) and Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) were exhibited at NTU from 26 – 27 June 2000. They were the culmination of the Technopreneur-21 (T-21) Programme and EEE Technopreneurship Competition organised for the second time as part of the In-House Practical Training programme for MPE and EEE students respectively.

A snapshot of the future according to T-21

You had a sporty weekend and broke your leg. You hobble around in a 3-in-1 Crutch. One-legged or not, you need to eat and you have run out of food, so you go to the supermarket. But this will be quick with the new Cableless Shopping. What you can’t get in the supermarket, like the latest Transparency Cleaning Device, you go to the Internet for. With the E-application Customer service, you get what you need in no time. Finally, when all is done, you are just in time for your prayers. You whip out your Qiblah Finder, locate your direction, settling into position for a quiet time.

If investment in the future included the development of the products and services of T21, then the snapshot above, featuring the five winning MPE innovations, would be close to reality. Here’s more about two of the projects:

3-in-1 Crutch
This medical aid combines features that allow it to be transformed from an underarm crutch into a forearm crutch, and then into a walking stick. Detachable parts make it a flexible companion for the injured and handicapped. Other comfort features see to the needs of the user.

Qiblah Finder
This palm-sized device marries the latest GPS (Global Positioning System) technology with the digital compass to find the direction of qiblah (the direction all Muslims must face when they pray). Using the (currently available) digital compass with GPS, this direction can be found with just one position rather than two if only GPS receivers are used. This method provides the most accurate way of finding qiblah.

Future snapshots according to EEE invention
The EEE championship this year went to a project titled Web Enabled 3D Shape Measurement. This features a revolutionary digital camera based on structured light technology that will propel Internet interaction to a higher level. A built-in micro-projector projects a light beam of grating lines with known geometry onto an object. Using simple geometric principles, the 3D image of the object can easily be generated for different applications.
A fresh brew, anyone?

NTU staff, students and visitors can now opt for speciality coffee, tea, thirst quenchers and much more – right on campus at the newly-opened Coffee Club Xpress. Located just opposite the Nanyang Auditorium, at a central part of the main academic complex, the café has been doing brisk business since it opened on 1 September 2000 just before the start of the NTU Convocation held at the Auditorium. The idea for a café on campus was first mooted by the NTU Students’ Union.

Afro magic

A little piece of Africa recently stomped its way into the hearts of NTU staff and students. Colours flared and hearts skipped a beat as 6 energetic ethnic African dances got underway outside Canteen B on 18 August 2000. A mix of traditional and modern instruments, including traditional drums, pipe horns, electronic keyboards and guitars, set the dancers in motion. The lunchtime performance was brought to NTU by the Cultural Activities Club.

Triple tie-up with industry

The Centre for Graphics and Imaging Technology (CGIT) recently signed three independent Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Silicon Graphics (SG), Intergraph Systems South East Asia, and Anime International Company. Silicon Graphics Pte Ltd will sponsor US$8,000 for research in Interactive Improvisational Synthetic Actors. Intergraph Systems South East Asia Pte Ltd will sponsor US$7,000 for a project to develop practical and novel animation methodologies and theoretical models of generating realistic motions of characters for computer-animated films. Anime International Company Inc will sponsor up to S$20,000 for the production of an episode of a 30-minute computer animated TV series. For the two-year duration of the MOU, Silicon Graphics, Intergraph, and Anime International have also agreed to sponsor R&D activities and events organised by CGIT. Both Silicon and Intergraph will establish an annual award for the Best Student Research Project in their respective areas of focus.

Floored but what fun!

This is floorball? New to the game, these participants finding their feet on the court gave the game a shot and emerged the better for it – they’ve now learnt a new indoor sport. The introductory course on floorball was organised by NTU in conjunction with the Singapore Learning Festival (SLF) initiated by the Ministry of Manpower. Over 40 learning activities organised by staff and students from various NTU schools and departments were held from 28 August to 10 September 2000 at the Yunnan Garden Campus, Bukit Timah Campus and the NTU Executive Centre. NTU also participated in the SLF Exposition held from 1 – 3 September at Suntec City.
The University welcomes the following new staff members:

**Nanyang Business School**

- Assoc Prof Sudhir Swamy
- Assoc Prof Len Yong Joo
- Assoc Prof Lim Cher Yew
- Assoc Prof Tung Feng Fang
- Mr Benjamin Kartono
- Prof Larry Neil Kilgour
- Prof Ronald Lynn Jacobs
- Dr Lee Yong Sin @ Lee Yin
- Dr Lionel Yen Dyne
- Dr Louis Mata Rajaguru Calingo
- Dr Nilanjana Sen
- Dr Sam Long Choo
- Miss Maria C. A. Ballother

- Assoc Prof (Adj) Chan Kim Yin
- Mr Lye Chee Tong
- Mr Thomas Ghare

**School of Computer Engineering**

- Assoc Prof Alexey Seurin
- Assoc Prof Man Li Yean
- Miss Chia Wan Mui
- Mr Tan Sy Lin
- Prof Thomas Loy Hart
- Dr Sun Chengtung
- Dr Subrahman Krishnamurthy
- Dr Zhou Suiping
- Mr Cyril Reginald Jatughaese
- Mr Saurav Bhattacharyya

**School of Materials Engineering**

- Assoc Prof Subramanian Venkataraman
- Assoc Prof Sun Yong
- Assoc Prof Mao Xing
- Assoc Prof Ooi Chiu Ping
- Dr Indrand Mannu
- Dr Xue Zeliang
- Miss Lee Ling Song, Michelle

**School of Civil & Structural Engineering**

- Prof Wen Wong Kam
- Prof Richard James Jasmin
- Prof Serge Lemoine
- Dr Tan Cheung
- Dr Hendry Othrik Hasan
- Dr Li Wei
- Dr Liu Xin
- Dr Qiao Shichang
- Dr Rajath Prasad Dhalak
- Dr Sankhaan Tripathy
- Miss Toh Suat Kiat
- Dr Zhou Zhenzhao
- Miss Hong Yue Yuen
- Miss Wong Chin Lian, Shirley
- Miss Wong Hwee Yi

**School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering**

- Assoc Prof Lee Aiyun
- Assoc Prof Tang Dongyuan
- Assoc Prof Yum-Yen Tien Hua
- Assoc Prof Zhu Lei
- Assoc Prof Fan Weiping
- Assoc Prof John Ngo Quoc Nam
- Assoc Prof Seg Eon Chin, Kenneth
- Assoc Prof Sun Tong
- Mdm Ho Woan Yee
- Prof Martina N Sweating
- Prof Uni Shaked
- Prof Lionel George Mason
- Prof Rajamani Doraiswami
- Dr Anjan Kumar Ghosh
- Assoc Prof (Adj) Lum Kai Yew
- Dr Stavlamini Ramakrishnan
- Dr Yao Ssu
- Dr Yuen Shuang
- Dr Zhou Jie
- Mr Feng Guoyun
- Mdm Giam Haining
- Miss Kong Zhi Hui
- Mr Li Changhong
- Mr Lim Euyong
- Mdm Lim Ying
- Mr Lu Doweii
- Mr Ooi Min Sieung
- Mr Qian Weizi
- Mr Sim Kun Song
- Mr Wu Dajun
- Mr Wu Xianqin
- Mr Xu Yong
- Mr Yang Fan
- Mr Yu Zheling
- Mr Yu Niel
- Mr Mheit Sundhawan
- Mdm Lek Hwee Boon

**School of Mechanical & Production Engineering**

- Assoc Prof Hauk Jang-Hung, Joe
- Assoc Prof Simnoothay Thiravanudsuk
- Assoc Prof Chau Chen Kiong, John
- Assoc Prof Ng Ba Chin
- Assoc Prof Madugram Pohkhand
- Assoc Prof Vasili Borisovitch Novotelnov
- Mdm Hui Hui
- Dr Ahmad Hamid
- Dr Guan Jun Goo
- Dr Huang Yingting
- Dr Jie Rongfeng
- Dr Tek Ling Yeong
- Dr Wang Weiwei
- Mr Mchevy Shelly John
- Mr Ye Jiansheng
- Mr Cheng Ping Leong
- Mr Khor Lian C.W
- Mdm Wang Xiaojie
- Miss Chiang Ling Ying, Grasnia

**School of Communication Studies**

- Assoc Prof Maria Pieter Aquilla
- Miss Yoo Ai Hoe
- Miss Lee Shu Hui
- Prof Keverel M Rogers
- Prof John V Pavlik
- Prof John C mirror

**New Appointments**

- Assoc Prof Sahr Bash Hock Soon – Five-Year, School of Computer Engineering
- Assoc Prof Yow Yin Kiong – Sub-Dean, School of Computer Engineering
- Assoc Prof Freddy Beoy – Five-Year, School of Materials Engineering
- Assoc Prof Heng Huay Hoon – Sub-Dean, School of Materials Engineering
- Assoc Prof Phua Silberschmidt – Head, Division of Information Systems, School of Computer Engineering
- Assoc Prof Goh Eek Sago, Angela – Head, Division of Software Systems, School of Computer Engineering
- Assoc Prof Lu Chiew Teng – Head, Division of Intelligent Systems, School of Computer Engineering
- Assoc Prof Hu Xiao – Head, Division of Materials Technology, School of Materials Engineering
- Assoc Prof Ou Jun Tiong – Director of Materials Science, School of Materials Engineering
- Assoc Prof Simon Yu Chong Man – Principal Staff Officer, President’s Office
- Assoc Prof Yeeh Chon Chye – Director, General Studies
- Assoc Prof Dennis Ong Chai Swee – Sub-Dean, Nanyang Business School

**NATIONAL DAY HONOURS**

Congratulations to the following staff who are recipients of this year’s National Day Awards:

- **The Distinguished Service Order**
  Prof Lim Chong Yah, Chairman, National Wages Council (Director, Schools of Accountancy & Business Research Central)

- **The Public Service Star**
  Prof Brian Lee, Chairman, MacGen CCC (Director, International Relations Office)

- **The Public Administration Medal (Silver)**
  Assoc Prof Quek Jun Jong, Principal Officer, Director’s Office, NIE

- **The Efficiency Medal**
  Mrs Wong Tham Tham Yok Heng, Sonjas, Management Support Officer (Grade IV), School of Computer Engineering
  Mrs Neo Siew Chee, Senior Technical Officer, Management Support Office, School of Computer Engineering

- **The Long Service Medal**
  Mdm Leong Choon, Operations Support Officer (Grade IV), Development & Estate Dept, NIE
  Mr Tan Boon King, Corporate Support Officer (Grade IV), Finance Dept, NIE
  Mr, Neo Siew Nju, Corporate Support Officer (Grade IV), Student & Academic Services Dept, NIE
  Mr Tan Teh Cheang, Corporate Support Officer (Grade IV), University Volunteers, NIE
  Mr Rambly Bin Hameen, Operations Support Officer (Grade II), Development & Estate Dept, NIE
  Mr Hussain Bin Sadaid, Operations Support Officer (Grade IV), Graduate Programmes Office, NIE
  Miss Lim Lay Hoon, Corporate Support Officer (Grade III), Community Services Dept, NIE
  Mr Toh Wee Chong, General Education Officer (1A2), Seconded Staff for Mother Tongue Programme, NIE

**APPOINTMENTS**

- **Professor** John E Kesbshinglou – Visiting Professor
- **Professor** LuoS Willnoat – Senior Fellow
- **Registrar’s Office**
  Miss Ong Huei Suen – Administrative Officer
- **Centre for IT Services**
  Mr Ong Chong Sheng – Analyst Programmer
- **Alumni and Endowment Office**
  Miss Tan Lay Yen – Administrative Officer
- **Centre for Chinese Language & Culture**
  Mr Tang Shuiping – Research Fellow
- **Network Technology Research Centre**
- Dr Ma Lih Yicheng – Project Officer
- **Institute of Defence & Strategic Studies**
- Dr Ng Hung Hong – Postdoctoral Fellow in Asia Security
- **Miss**
- **Director’s Office**
  Mdm Teo Lek Hong – Administrative Officer
- **Foundation Programmes Office**
  M’s Albert Ali – Trainer
  Mr Lam Yew Choon – Trainer
- **Policy & Management Studies Academic Group**
  Prof Shlomo Moran – Visiting Professor
- **Specialised Education Academic Group**
  Prof Gilliam Kaye Porter – Assistant Professor
- **Psychological Studies Academic Group**
  Miss Jessica J Lottchmann – Lecturer
- **Instructional Science Academic Group**
  Assoc Prof Camranin Richard – Assistant Professor
  Assoc Prof Myrset Sve Khine – Assistant Professor
- **Institutional Research Office**
  Mr Philip Alexander Towndrow – Teaching Fellow
- **Languages & Cultural Studies Academic Group**
  Mdm Sylvaine Marielle Wetasaghe – Assistant Professor
- **School of Electrical & Sports Science Academic Group**
  Assoc Prof Joan Marian Fry – Assistant Professor
- **Natural Sciences Academic Group**
  Dr Chan Chee Yen – Senior Fellow
  Mr Wee Leong Chuen – Assistant Professor
- **Science & Technology Education Academic Group**
  Miss Tan Soon Hock – Head
- **Academic Computing & Information Services**
  Miss Wee Ching Lim – Administrative Officer
- **Centre for IT in Education**
  Mr Mitch Rambolt – Chief Information Officer

**Staff News**

15
NTU squashes all

Trouncing their opponents with nifty strokes, the NTU Staff Squash Team prevailed through nine matches to secure NTU a smashing victory in the 16th Inter-Statutory Board Games.

There was no question NTU was the strongest team on paper, but we had difficulty getting our best players for all the matches. In the end, our strength in depth prevailed,” said Assoc Prof Tan Ming Jen of the NTU Staff Squash Team.

Twice runners-up in the two previous Inter-Statutory Board Games (ISBG), the NTU squash team proved third time lucky – beating HDB, Singapore Sports Council, JTC, LTA, Singapore Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Polytechnic, amongst others, over nine matches during the months of June to August to take home NTU’s first ever ISBG title since the advent of the Games in 1978.

And from start to finish, the NTU team was a force to be reckoned with. Assoc Prof Helen Wright, Asst Prof Alan Chng and Assoc Prof Tan Ming Jen won all the matches they played, with Assoc Prof Tan not just playing in every match but winning all in comfortable 3-0 margins, including beating an ex-England under-18 player fielded by the defending champion Ngee Ann in the finals. NTU won the finals 3-2, but had to play a second finals against the same opponents as Ngee Ann had only lost once in the “Double Knock-out” tournament. The final score? A triumphant 5-0, with Asst Prof Yap Fook Fah and Assoc Prof Ho Hiang Kwee both overturning earlier results with great come-from-behind victories!

The win in the traditionally hard-fought ISBG tournament was especially satisfying as the ISBG was the only title that had eluded the team in the last five years in which they claimed two Civil Service (Inter-Ministry) and two Inter-Tertiary Institution Sports-NUSS titles. They’ve now completed the “grand slam” of squash!

More than 4,300 participants from 31 statutory boards participated in this year’s ISBG which saw a total of 23 sports and games being played from April to August 2000. NTU was one of the four organisers of the biennial event.

During the period July to September 2000, the University received the following distinguished visitors:

13 Jul Prof Atta-ur-Rahman, Minister for Science & Technology and IT, Pakistan
1 Aug Dr K Sakamoto, President, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan
3 Aug Prof Ngo Van Le, Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
8 Aug Prof Tiui Lap-Chee, Lee Kuan Yew Distinguished Visitor
10 Aug Prof Liu Haifan, Vice-President, Central Party School of the Communist Party of China
14 Aug Prof Dr-Ing Gunter Pritschow, Rector, Universitaet Stuttgart, Germany
16 Aug Prof Pan Yunhe, President, Zhejiang University, China
21 Aug Dr Edilberto De Jesus, President, Far Eastern University, Philippines
24 Aug Prof Sir John Arbuthnott, Principal, University of Strathclyde, UK

During this period, the University also received visiting delegations from the AIA Foundation, Hong Kong; Anhui University, Wuhan Technical University of Surveying and Mapping, and the Central Academy of Communist Party, China; Kwangju Polytechnic College, Korea; Institut Teknologi Bandung and Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia; Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training; and the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Members of the Association of Commonwealth Universities getting the “big picture” of NTU