HKU Faculty of Dentistry acquires rare book to celebrate HKU Centenary

The HKU Faculty of Dentistry has purchased a first edition of an important book on dentistry to mark the HKU Centenary and HKU Libraries Centenary. The HKU Dean of Dentistry, Prof Lakshman Samaranayake, represented the Faculty to officially receive the rare classic at a special HKU presentation ceremony.

Published in London in 1771, the landmark publication *The Natural History of the Human Teeth: Explaining Their Structure, Use, Formation, Growth, and Diseases* was authored by John Hunter (1728-1793). Hunter was the first to study human teeth and jaws using a scientific approach, thereby revolutionising the practice of dentistry and earning him the nickname the Father of Modern Surgery. The 128-page book contains 16 pages of detailed copper-plate illustrations.

All 10 HKU faculties were each invited to nominate a special purchase to celebrate HKU100 and the HKU Libraries Centenary, using HK$1 million from an endowment fund.

“The Faculty’s choice of book represents a significant piece of world and medical history, and is timely since this year also marks the Faculty’s Pearl Jubilee,” says Prof Lakshman Samaranayake. “We thank the HKU Libraries for making the purchase of about HK$35,000, as well as the HKU Dental Librarian, Mr Sam Lee, and the team in charge of special acquisitions for the Dental Rare Book Collection in the Dental Library, who performed a worldwide search for a volume still in good condition.”

Prof Samaranayake was presented the book at the “Ten Celebratory Acquisitions for HKU’s 10 Faculties” ceremony by Mr Peter Sidorko, HKU University Librarian (pictured, left and right), on 8 November 2012. The ceremony showcased the 10 centenary purchases made by the HKU faculties, as part of an international library conference, themed Academic Libraries Today: Our Future is Now, held at the HKU Wang Gungwu Theatre to commemorate the HKU Libraries Centenary.

The Faculty’s choice of Hunter’s *The Natural History of the Human Teeth: Explaining Their Structure, Use, Formation, Growth, and Diseases* is accessible online via: [http://lib.hku.hk/denlib/rarebook/gen/gen3.html](http://lib.hku.hk/denlib/rarebook/gen/gen3.html). Details of the 10 faculties’ centenary book choices can be seen at [http://lib.hku.hk/hkul100/ic/10acq.html](http://lib.hku.hk/hkul100/ic/10acq.html).

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