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“I believe that USP graduates are introspective and open-minded individuals who are capable of questioning fundamental global issues and finding solutions through various means.”

CRYSTAL LIM, UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS PROGRAMME
Participating in thought provoking seminars, meeting peers from other disciplines, leading student community projects and taking part in an overseas exchange in Netherlands. These are some of the exciting activities that make up third year Business undergraduate, Crystal Lim’s NTU experience, thanks to the Lee Foundation University Scholars Programme (USP).

Crystal is one of the recipients of the Lee Foundation USP Bursary. The programme provides an intellectually stimulating curriculum for exceptional students at NTU. Supplementing the core coursework of the undergraduate, the USP curriculum curates a broad selection of modules, specially designed to evoke critical thought and develop interdisciplinary knowledge. The Lee Foundation USP Bursary was made possible by the generosity and support of the Lee Foundation.

As a recipient of the Lee Foundation USP Bursary, how has it made a difference to your student life?

On top of my coursework as a Business undergraduate, I’m given various opportunities to explore interdisciplinary academic programmes, as well as to immerse in intercultural experiences with USP. The Lee Foundation USP Bursary has not only eased my family’s financial challenges but also enhanced my educational pursuits in various ways.

What were your initial thoughts and feelings when you learned that you had been awarded the bursary?

I felt extremely privileged and thankful to be able to alleviate my family’s financial burden with the bursary. My parents were not as fortunate because they did not have similar opportunities back then to pursue higher education which in turn further limited other opportunities in life. Being confronted with financial challenges while growing up has however helped me to realise the inherent value of a university education, and to appreciate the significance of this bursary.

How was your academic journey like prior to studying at NTU?

I was a Science stream student at Anderson Junior College where I also belonged to the college’s Alpha Programme for the top 5% of the cohort designed to develop students in the areas of leadership, communication and critical thinking. The Alpha Programme was significant to my Junior College experience as it cultivated life skills beyond the academic curriculum.

What do you think is unique about the USP and USP graduates?

The USP’s core curriculum strives for multi-disciplinary learning across a diversified range of modules. This programme has developed my critical thinking, as well as the ability to deconstruct questions and identify inter-disciplinary links. USP’s exclusive modules such as The Great Ideas, Ethics and Philosophy encourage me to engage in thought experiments to evaluate arguments and form individual thesis, which has definitely enhanced my learning in Business.

By interacting with a diverse group of individuals, a USP student is introduced to different perspectives that will encourage a comprehensive and informed worldview. I believe that USP graduates are introspective and open-minded individuals who are capable of questioning fundamental global issues and finding solutions through various means.

What was your parents’ reaction when they found out that you had received the bursary?

My parents were unequivocally happy for me upon hearing the news. My mum, in particular, was deeply relieved that the bursary will be able to assist me through university, and enable the family to allocate more funds towards my two younger brothers’ educational pursuits.
Tell us about the campus activities you’ve been involved in.

I took up the role as Director of Special Projects at USP to give back to the programme. Some of my activities included leading the Special Projects Committee to create an Incubation Hub where scholars are able to propose and test new ideas. I also encouraged fellow peers to provide feedback on their experience in USP in order to enhance the programme for future students.

In addition, I have completed a 6 months exchange at the University of Groningen in Netherlands where I worked on projects with my Dutch counterparts, and even participated in weekly trainings sessions with the track and field team. I also took the opportunity to travel around Europe to broaden my perspectives and meet new people.

As an NBS student, what is your view on the business sector in Singapore and how do you hope to contribute to the field as a professional in the future?

I am interested in Singapore’s capability to maintain and improve our competitiveness within a rapidly developing Southeast Asia. Having a knowledge-based economy, Singapore is emerging as a global creative city in growing a strong marketing and communication services sector. This makes Singapore an attractive location for consumer businesses to manage operations and boost growth regionally. More multinational corporations are setting up consumer businesses in Singapore as they recognise the need for product and service innovations in Asian markets.

I am thus captivated by opportunities that enhance Singapore’s position in the global arena as an ideal location for Asian marketing. I aspire to join an MNC specialising in consumer businesses and after gaining a couple of years of professional experience, pursue a Masters in a relevant area.

What are your dreams?

I plan to enhance my skills in marketing and communications and hone other relevant interdisciplinary skills along the way. It’ll be ideal to accumulate as much practical experience as possible, and at the same time create social impact through the ventures I partake in. I wish to stay inspired and empowered by connecting with others, and by following my passion.

Any words of thanks to the donors (Lee Foundation) of your bursary?

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the Lee Foundation for their generosity in establishing the Lee Foundation USP Bursary. Not only has the bursary eased my parents’ financial burden, it has also facilitated many activities such as the student exchange programme, allowing me to gain valuable experiences and exposure.

It is my hope to epitomise the values that Lee Foundation stands for and by which it has attained its highly-regarded reputation.

“I wish to stay inspired and empowered by connecting with others, and by following my passion.”
September 12, 2016 marked the 100th birthday of the late physician and author Han Suyin. Han, whose works are beloved by readers both from the East and the West, was best known for her sweeping novel, A Many-Splendoured Thing. Drawing heavily from her biography, the tale of a love affair between a Eurasian doctor and a married British foreign correspondent propelled her to international literary attention, and would later become a Hollywood hit.

The daughter of a Chinese father, and a Belgian mother, Han was born and raised in China. Her studies, career, and three marriages, brought her into a globe-trotting life journey across Brussels, London, Hong Kong, Malaya, Cambodia, Bangalore, and Lausanne. During her time abroad she would make regular trips back to China, and spent a lifetime reconciling the Eastern and Western identities within her.

Han wrote primarily in English and French, often setting her works against the social and political backdrop of the East that unravels and demystifies the Chinese worldview for Western audiences. In a review of Han’s novel The Crippled Tree in 1965, the late British philosopher and Nobel Laureate Bertrand Russell wrote: ‘During the first of many hours I spent reading it, I learnt more about China than I did in a whole year spent in that country.’

Born Rosalie Matilda Guanghu Zhou in 1916, at Xinyang, a Province of Henan, Han later changed her middle name to Elizabeth, and chose the pen name Han Suyin – ‘Han’ was intended to be a homage to the majority ethnic group of Chinese, and ‘Suyin’ meant ‘a common voice’.
Han led an extraordinarily diverse life. She completed her medical studies in London, and embarked on a career in medicine across Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Although a practising physician, Han was a prolific writer who published a panoply of novels, non-fiction books, memoirs, and essays. It was until the 1960s when she decided to stop practising medicine, preferring to concentrate on writing and lecturing.

Her novels, in particular, were deeply rooted in her personal experiences, of which, she produced her most famous work A Many-Splendoured Thing in 1952. It was later adapted into a film titled Love Is a Many-Splendoured Thing starring William Holden and Jennifer Jones as ill-fated lovers. The film received several nominations in the 1956 Academy Awards including Best Picture, and eventually won for Best Song, Musical Score, and Costume Design.

While Han was widely recognised as a bestselling and outspoken writer, little has been mentioned on her time in Singapore from 1952 to 1964 where amongst a number of endeavours, she opened a medical clinic in Tanjong Pagar, and served briefly as a physician and lecturer in the then newly established Nanyang University.

Ina Zhang Xing Hong, a writer and journalist, who has recently published a book chronicling Han’s 12 year stay at Malaya, said, “Malaya has been an underemphasised but significant place for Han Suyin.”

Han came to Malaya as an unknown but the astonishing success of A Many Splendoured Thing which she had written earlier in Hong Kong, would unleash and hurtle towards her, casting Malaya as the foremost place she anchored to as a famous writer.

Singapore similarly unfolded without delay for Han, she was one of the earliest to learn from prominent business man and philanthropist, Tan Lark Sye, the plans to build Nanyang University. Tan would later lead the Hokkien Huay Kwan in donating the site in which NTU now sits on, and also made a personal contribution of $5 million.

From the beginning, Han strongly rooted for the establishment of Nanyang University. She recalled passionately in her autobiography, My House Has Two Doors, the fervent dedication and efforts of the local community in making the school a reality:

“Everyone gave money; the millionaires some millions, the peddlers of the Singapore food market a week’s earnings every month. How many oyster omelettes, sliced crab, noodles of all kinds went into Nanyang University? The trishaw peddlers of Singapore and Malaya pedalled for three days and turned in all they earned for Nanyang University, and theirs was the greatest sacrifice, for they were so very poor. Rubber tappers flocked to give; they knew that their children would never have a chance to go to university; but it was a gesture of cultural identity. It was incredible and magnificent, and it must be remembered.”

(Malaya: 1954 – 1956, My House Has Two Doors)

In the autumn of 1956, Nanyang University opened its doors to its first batch of students. Han was initially invited to teach English Literature but she declined, preferring to serve as a college health physician. She believed that every student admitted should be entitled to a medical examination. Han was also less interested in teaching the works of nineteenth-century English writers, and instead, saw a need to cultivate and develop Asian Literature to greater prominence.

Han’s humility and warmth towards the students were reflected in her description of her encounters with them as a college health physician:

“[…] Nanyang University students came to my clinic to hand me short stories and poems, to confide their dreams of writing major novels, and sometimes to borrow money. Most of them returned the money scrupulously, even when the situation was very trying for them.”

(That Other Life, Outside China, My House Has Two Doors)
Her unreserved generosity and advocacy for education reached out unabatedly beyond her proximate and familiar circles of family, associates, and students — after she learnt the plight of a girl who was taken out of school at age twelve to work at her father’s pottery shop. Han paid a visit to the shop at 236 Beach Road offering to pay for the girl’s school fees and would later adopt her. To Han, ‘all the world’s children, in a sense, are one’s own.’

Today, Han’s adopted daughter, Madam Chew Hui Im, is a retired Singaporean teacher, and married with two grown-up sons and four grandchildren. In a 2013 interview, Madam Chew told The Straits Times, “I didn’t know who Han Suyin was then, but she was a beautiful and elegant woman in a cheongsam who talked to my father about supporting me in school.” Madam Chew’s widowed father, being the sole breadwinner of six children, was struggling to make ends meet. But Han’s serendipitous entrance charted the trajectory of Madam Chew’s fortunes for the better. She paid for Madam Chew’s school fees, visited her at school regularly with pocket money and goodies, and continued to support her with gifts for her wedding and honeymoon.

After Han left Malaya, she carried on producing several auto-biographies, novels and non-fiction work, and travelled around the world extensively to lecture. Together with her third husband, Mr Vincent Ruthnaswamy, an Indian engineer, Han finally settled in Lausanne, Switzerland.

On 2nd November 2012, Han passed away at the age of 95, leaving behind a remarkable collection of literary works that documents the social, cultural, and political diversities and conflicts between the East and West of her time.

To honour Han’s literary legacy and deep generosity, Madam Chew, together with the support of friends, established the Han Suyin Scholarship Fund (in Translation Studies) at NTU in 2013, marking the anniversary of the passing of the writer and former Nanyang University lecturer.

The scholarship aims to develop, promote, and support Chinese-English literary translation.

Madam Chew said, “It was my mother’s wish all her life to see good Chinese-English translation in Singapore as well as China.”

Literary renown and social status were tools Han leveraged upon in a variety of ways to drum up ground support for and fuel attention to the creative undertakings of needy students and emerging artists. Opening exhibitions, attending showings, writing forewords and signing books. “I bought pictures more to help the eager executants (most of them young and some very poor) than for art’s sake,” Han wrote.

In 1959, Han fulfilled her earlier wish to pioneer the study of Asian Literature by teaching Contemporary Asian Literature twice a week at night at Nanyang University. She designed the course with the aim to illustrate the value and impact of literature in society, and to develop an understanding and appreciation for diversity in cultures and languages. She was not paid.

About the Han Suyin Scholarship Fund

An award of $8,000 will be given annually to an outstanding NTU undergraduate doing translation as a minor at the Division of Chinese in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The School has plans in the future to extend the scholarship to students on the master’s degree programme in translation and interpretation, and hopes to realise this goal by further boosting the fund with donations.

To support the Han Suyin Scholarship Fund in its purpose to cultivate Chinese-English literary translation, please contact Susannze Lee-Chia at 65927516 (DID) / susannzelee@ntu.edu.sg
Mr Hochstadt has named the fund in honour of his father, Mr Henry David Hochstadt who had dedicated his entire working life to the service of education in Singapore – first as a primary school teacher, then school principal and concurrently lecturer at the then Teachers’ Training College, and later as an inspector of schools before finally serving as a senior Ministry of Education official in which capacity he retired in 1963. Mr Henry David Hochstadt was also a founding member of the Singapore Teachers’ Union.

ECSE AG has identified the topic of early years educational transition as the foremost issue to focus on because of the increasing recognition of the importance of successful transition in empowering children in their educational journeys. In July 2014, ECSE AG held the inaugural Henry David Hochstadt Early Childhood Symposium with the theme ‘Transitions: Building Bridges for Children’ which was well-attended by 300 participants.

The symposium, which was co-organised by the Association of Early Childhood Educators (Singapore), served as a sharing and learning platform for academics, practitioners, families, and all with the well-being of children at heart. The event was graced by Guest-of-Honour, Mr Chan Chun Sing, then Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minster for Defence, and Professor Tan Oon Seng, Director, National Institute of Education.

Two world-renowned experts in the field of early years transition, Professors Bob Perry and Sue Dockett from Charles Sturt University, Australia, gave the keynote addresses. In addition, experienced practitioners and professionals presented best-practices from their respective fields of work in five different workshops.

After the symposium, in January 2015, a follow-up resource package publication which documents the significance of early years transition and local best practices presented at the symposium, was produced to widen the impact for the field beyond the symposium. Titled ‘Early Years Transition: Building Bridges for Children’, the resource book has been well-received by and benefitted both early childhood and early primary years practitioners in Singapore.

Currently, the endowment fund is supporting a second follow-up research project by the ECSE AG to deepen understanding of transition issues in our local context. The aim is to produce a transition position statement which takes into account salient influences in the Singapore context in order to inform transition practices which best support our children.

The gift represents the Hochstadt family’s vision and passion for the nurturing of young minds in Singapore through quality education and research.
Despite the hardships and uncertainty in Daryl’s life, he does not harbour any anger or envy towards his peers who did not have to go through what he did. Daryl said positively, “In life, nothing is ever certain. Being rich today does not guarantee that we will be rich forever. What is more important is our ability to adapt to the different situations in life, learn from past mistakes and being able to rise again no matter how hard we have fallen. I probably would not be what I am today if not for all the hardships that I have had to endure throughout my teenage years up till this point in time. When life gives us lemons, we make lemonade out of it, don’t we?”

Daryl is currently working part-time as a communication coach at NTU’s Language and Communication Centre, where he helps students to improve their writing and presentation skills. “Being a communication coach allows me to reach out to students who are in need. The passion for teaching and the fulfilment from it motivate me to continue being a coach. I am also encouraged by the positive feedback from students that I have taught and would continue to reach out to and help more students during my remaining time in NTU,” said Daryl.

When asked about his aspirations, Daryl shared, “I aspire to be a person of values, character, personality, ideals and vision. No matter which career path I choose to take in the future, I hope to be able to make a difference to the lives of others in one way or another. I want to make the world a better place for everyone to live in.”

Appreciative of the Bursary, Daryl has this to say to AKC: “I truly appreciate your kind gesture in awarding me the Bursary. It gave me the extra motivation to do well in my studies. I do hope that one day, instead of being on the receiving end, I am able to do my part for society by emulating your example and become a bursary donor to help those in need. Thank you.”

Many students in NTU rely on the generous support of donors to stay in the University. Many continue to work part-time and juggle study and work, not to have extra money for entertainment, but for living expenses for themselves and their families.

The generous support form donors such as Absolute Kinetics Consultancy Pte Ltd provide these students with opportunities and possibilities, by giving them access to a quality tertiary education that will change their lives.

Poised for Success:
The AKC Endowed Bursary Fund

Daryl Chew, a third year student at the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has had a rough start in life, and from a young age he has had to persevere and overcome the difficulties life hurled at him.

Daryl’s childhood was not an easy one due to the constant uncertainty in his father’s career, and the situation became dire when his father left the family when he was a teenager. No longer a child, yet still not old enough to be the man of the family, Daryl was nonetheless forced to grow up and mature earlier than his peers to become the pillar of support for his family.

It was an especially difficult period for Daryl and his family, and they had no one to rely on except themselves. As young as he was then, he was the eldest son in the family and had to ensure that his family had enough to make ends meet. At the same time, Daryl was equally, if not more determined to complete his studies because he believed that a good education was essential for his future and that of his family, and for his overall development as an individual, both in terms of character development and knowledge building.

Thanks to the AKC Endowed Bursary Fund established by Absolute Kinetics Consultancy Pte Ltd with a generous gift of $111,000 in 2013, Daryl was given a much needed helping hand to ease his financial burdens by helping to defray his daily living and school’s expenses. More importantly, the Bursary has allowed Daryl to focus more on his studies and less on his finances, and to enjoy a fuller and richer university experience.

It was with mixed feelings of happiness and disappointment when Daryl’s family received the news of the bursary. Happiness because someone out there sympathised with Daryl’s situation and acknowledged the hard work that he has put in thus far, and disappointment felt by Daryl’s mother, with herself, because she could not provide for her son’s education. It is his mother’s hope that one day Daryl can make his mark in life despite all the challenges that he has had to face.

The AKC Endowed Bursary Fund supports up to two awards of $5,000 each per academic year, in perpetuity, and is open to students in the first and second year of Bachelor in Engineering [Civil Engineering] degree programme at the School of Civil & Environmental Engineering at NTU.
Empowering Students in Need: The OG Department Stores - Mr Tay Tee Peng Education Fund

The OG Department Stores - Mr Tay Tee Peng Education Fund was established in 2014 to provide Science Bursaries, Travel Bursaries and Distinguished Undergraduate Student Awards. The Fund provides financial support and opportunities to Science students experiencing financial hardship and also recognises passionate Science students who embark on projects that give back to society.

Made possible by donations from several parties including Madam Tay Pik Un, Mr Tay Chwan Yi, Mr Tay Chwan Shih, Madam Tay Pik Gisk, Mr Woo Tsung Chwen and Mr Woo Tsung Yao, the education fund was set up in honour of Mr Tay Tee Peng, Chairman and Founder of the OG Department Stores.

We speak to two recipients of the OG Department Stores - Mr Tay Tee Peng Science Bursary, Ms Meghan Tan and Ms Tran Thi Thu Huong to find out more about how the bursaries have impacted their lives.

Meghan Tan is a Year 3 Chemistry undergraduate at the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. She is interested in baking and enjoys outdoor activities. Meghan aspires to work in R&D focusing on creating innovative food products that are healthy, sustainable and affordable to all consumers.

How crucial was the bursary to you and your family in relieving the financial burdens?

The bursary definitely meant a lot to us as both my parents earn low wages. My father has to bear the medical bills of my grandfather who is suffering from poor health, while my mother had to take up two jobs: one as a full time kitchen assistant and the other as a part-time service crew member then to support my sister and me. I also took up weekend jobs and provided tuition to reduce the financial burden on my mother. But this also meant less time for my studies.

What was your family’s reaction when they found out that you received the bursary?

My mother was really surprised and deeply grateful. She suffered a leg injury back then which added on to the stress on having to keep up with work to maintain the income. Fortunately the bursary afforded her the necessary breathing space to take on one job instead of two thus allowing her to rest more.

What has the bursary done for you in terms of your student life?

Now that I no longer need to take on part-time jobs to supplement the household income, I have more time to balance my studies, social life and extra-curricular activities. My GPA improved too. I’m now serving as an assistant business director in my faculty club and I’m also involved in the Welfare Services Club as a business manager. In addition, I plan to participate in the Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) programme and the Food Innovation Product Award supported by the Singapore Food Manufacturers’ Association.

Is there anything you wish to add for this interview?

I would like to thank all the donors who established and supported the OG Department Stores - Mr Tay Tee Peng Education Fund. My mother and I are greatly touched by the generosity that we’ve benefited from. The bursary reduced our financial worries significantly and has inspired me to contribute back to society.

Than Trí Thị Huong is a Year 3 Physics undergraduate at the School of Physics and Mathematical Sciences. During her free time, she enjoys watching movies and cooking up new dishes. Since young, she dreams of becoming a scientist and hopes to continue pursuing her passion in Physics in the future.

How crucial was the bursary to you and your family in relieving the financial burden?

Being awarded the bursary has been the best thing that happened to me.

I come from a low-income family in Vietnam. My mother became the sole breadwinner of the family after my father was blinded by an accident. Because she could not afford my living expenses in Singapore, I had to take on several part-time jobs to support myself here.

My first year as a freshman was a period of anxiety. Every weekend and even on some weekdays, I was working. I had to manage every single cent to make sure that I’d have enough money until the next pay check.

Thanks to the bursary, I no longer need to take on as many part-time jobs as I’d done in the first year. Having more time to focus on my studies improved my GPA significantly. I’m also no longer stressed up with the financial demands of an education.

What was your family’s reaction when they found out that you received the bursary?

My family was overjoyed upon knowing that I’ve been awarded this bursary. My parents were particularly relieved that I’ve more time to focus on my studies now.

What has the bursary done for you in terms of your student life?

With the time to participate in other student activities, I’ve joined a research program to help me understand more about conducting research activities.

Is there anything you wish to add for this interview?

I would like to convey my gratitude to all the donors who made the OG Department Stores - Mr Tay Tee Peng Education Fund possible. This bursary made a difference to my life and the future certainly looks a lot brighter now.

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