

# A Final-year Medical Student's Voice

Professor J.B. Gibson, April 24th, 1975.  
Dean of the Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Hong Kong.  
Dear Professor,

I am a final-year medical student writing to you on the eve of my final examination to voice my opinions on medical education and staff-student relationship in the Faculty of Medicine. I write now, because in a few weeks' time I will, hopefully, no longer be a medical student. And I want to express my views as a student rather than in retrospect of my experience as a student. I sincerely hope that I will offend no one in the faculty. I express only my personal feelings and do not represent any other students or student bodies although I do have in mind the interest and welfare of my fellow students and those after me. I must admit my own inexperience in the field of medical education but I hope something fruitful may come of my wild suggestions.

Firstly, there seems to be quite a lack of communication between the staff and the students. Students often feel 'persecuted' by the teaching staff especially in the clinical years and this combined with the enormous pressure from academic overload have led students to 'cram' for examinations, to study for the degree rather than for the sake of interest. This inevitably encourages memory work without reasoning which in turn, as the famous Chinese saying goes — 'To study without thinking invites confusion', is followed by a lack of clinical or even common sense. In my opinion, relationship between staff and students should resemble that between fathers and sons, with mutual understanding and care. I would like to suggest that we might have some staff-counsellors who would take care of groups of students. There could also be more staff-students functions like chats or luncheons to improve this relationship. Perhaps less spoonfeeding of material would encourage students to think and question more. With more feedback and fostering of independent individual reasoning, we may even have among us, great figures like Forgary who invented the embolectomy apparatus while he was just a medical student.

I feel that two qualities of a doctor should be stressed. The first is a sound clinical sense and the second, which is just as important, integrity. As clinical sense requires more than academic knowledge, I suggest that less emphasis should be placed on

the academic aspect, and more time should be spent in wards and outpatient sessions rather than in lecture theatres. I feel also that the intelligence of students in Hong Kong is too often suppressed by exam-phobia and an academic overload. I propose that there should be more rotations in the tutorial system to allow for continuous assessment of students. This seems a better alternative than the traditional examinations. Furthermore, this rotation may be beneficial too towards the improvement of the staff-student relationship. I think that instead of repeating a whole school year for failing a class test, it may be a better idea to allow those students to go on to the next course provided that they must find time to come back for extra lessons in order to fulfil the standard that is expected of them at that stage of their studies. In other words, a supplementary test or tests would be more reasonable. This would help to train more dependable doctors ready to serve the society, which I believe is the first and foremost aim of medical education, rather than a selected few from the vast majority to become specialists or even expert specialists engaging in research work.

As regards the integrity aspect, I feel that it is good if not essential for medical students to have a fair knowledge of medical ethics. An acquaintance with sociological and philosophical approaches to values in life and of life may also help. It may seem a good idea for the medical staff to talk of their personal experience and feelings towards their profession so that students can come to a better understanding of the career they are about to embark on for life.

I do realise that nothing is perfect but I believe that there is always room for improvement. I come to you with this problem and my personal opinions because I sincerely believe that you are a most understanding character and one who is always on the look out for ways of improving the faculty. And may I emphasize again, I am saying all this now because I want my views heard as those from a student. I thank you again for your patience with me and hope that this may spell a better education and training for those after me.

Thanking you with all my heart,  
Yours most obediently,

**Robert H.K. MAK**  
Final year medical student  
(This is published with the consent of both the writer and recipient of the letter.)

# A Letter to

## K. L. and.....

18th May, 1975.

Dear K. L.,

Now that you are going into the clinical years, I think it might be of some help if I tell you some of my personal feelings:

It has always been idea that a doctor should be considerate and kind towards his patients. A doctor-to-be should in no way be less so. Try to be nice to your patients; say a few words to them before examining them. Your aim is to gain their confidence, for many a time it works like magic. Most patients are co-operative and will treat you as doctors but remember that you are learning from them and so treat them nicely. You may be eager to learn, but be considerate and don't exploit them.

Over and over again you will hear people say — 'Go to the wards; you learn in the wards.' Indeed you really do. You may know a thousand and one causes for an enlarged spleen but you'll never think of them unless you have felt it. Moreover, one disease may present itself in many ways and it's through your experience in the wards that you become aware of them.

You may be perplexed by the astronomical amount of details presented to you, but don't panic. You are just required to know the basic principles in the common entities — the rest are for experts not MBBS's. It's equally important that you understand why something is done rather than how it's done.

The above are what I've observed and concluded and it is up to you to find out any truth in them. This letter is written just to bring up a few points you are likely to encounter in your coming years.

God bless you!

Yours,

Human — E

# 畢業試占滿

不業生

(一) 試前  
應付考試是香港學生習以為常的一件事。但醫科畢業試，對我來說，就像泰山壓頂，透不過氣來。同學們中雖有些口說「乎碌」，但又有誰不全力以赴呢。有人深潛「拉記」窮經典，有人閉門苦讀念筆記，亦有人終日奔走於病房與門診部，仿似趁墟一樣，為求是多得臨床經驗。正是睡的時間少，讀書的時間多，鑽研成爲許多同學的良藥；腰酸頭痛成爲一時的通病。無它，大家都有同一目標：齊過、齊過。

(二) 試後  
筆試過後，大多數同學都認爲不太差，當然有人會沾沾自喜，更且滔滔不絕，談論如何作答，更有指出人家的錯處等等。亦有同學憂心忡忡，信心盡失，更因而影響臨床口試的表現。我認爲這是其中的一個，抱着患得患失的心情，面對着臉孔嚴峻的主考官，腦子總是打了結一樣，應對緩慢，更兼亂「爆」一通。自問最笨拙的一個時刻，便是對着主考官的那一刻。

全部考畢後，謠言處處，有人因而白白的憂心一場，亦有人空歡喜一場，更有人全無 insight，那要看榜才知生死死了。

### (三) 放榜——喜、怒、哀、樂

那最緊張的一刻，終於來到了，我是最先看榜的其中一個。笑了，興奮的大叫了——(喜) 出望外！一位隨着我笑，叫的同學突然臉色轉了，原來他雖是三科齊過，可是兒科補考不及格。人人都爲他不平，那有什麼用呢，還不是敢(怒)而不敢言。那些不合格同學的心情，我相信所有考畢業試的同學都會體會到的。那幾位取得優良成績的同學，尤其是那對在班中的「小夫妻」當然是一(樂)也。

### (四) 考試秘訣？

我從來不信命運，現在我却有些信了。有幾位同學平時表現良好，出人意料的不合格了。有些同學抽到難的 Case，有些却抽到了較易的，那不是運氣因素的存在嗎？雖然說能否正確斷症，並非關鍵問題，最重要的是能作一



### (五) 制度問題

「運氣」與「人緣」的因素，無可否認是存在的，無形的考試壓力，更令同學在精神上，負擔重重。在這種種因素下，考試是公平嗎？這個問題是值得各同學正視和討論的。

### (六) 是終點還是起點？

畢業了，醫學生的階段是終結了，那當然是值得高興的。但把目光放遠一點，這是一個新的起點。醫學生搖身一變，成爲了醫生。醫生所要肩負的責任，同學們有沒有細心的去想呢，現在我們的學識能否使我們有效地去履行我們的責任呢？其實現在我們是走上了一條艱苦的道路，一方面要不斷學習，另一方面，在現時社會的種種醫療服務問題，醫生的出路等等問題是需要我們不斷奮鬥和摸索的。以這未來幾十年所要走的道路，與現時的畢業試比較，當然是小巫見大巫，但是以一般同學來說，畢業試是當前最重要的問題，及格了的同學，希望他們在狂歡之餘，能靜靜的去想想將來的問題。失敗了的同學，和及格的同學，其實只是「一綫之差」，希望他們能把目光放遠一點，心情相信是會好一點的。

# 新生之路

周榮祖

座落在黃竹坑南朗山道這條斜坡上，有三幢建築物——南朗山痲病醫院，安老院，和瑪灣女童院，在暮氣沉沉中發出一點青春的氣息。

該女童院是一綠色的建築物，包括有學校和宿舍，員生分為宿生和非宿生，她們每逢星期一至五，早上九時至下午四時在學校上課，下課後，非宿生便返回家中（大多是在附近地區）。

宿舍有四層，每層分作一組，每層約住上十四至廿人，女童的年紀由十至十六歲，除每兩星期回家一次外，其他時間都要在組裏共同生活。每組有一個導師和一個組長負責照顧組內的女童，然而主要的日常起居生活都由女童自己負責。

該院的女童大都沒有良好家庭環境，而由於種種不同原因由社會福利處或其他機構介紹進來。大致上看來，她們和其他女孩子一樣天真活潑。如能多和她們相處，更會發覺她們各有可取之處，倘若經過循循善誘，不難成為可造之材。

醫學院同學所參與的義務工作主要對象為宿生。經過這三年來的活動，大家都很喜欢和這些天真活潑的女童們一起玩耍、傾談，當然最重要還是希望通過這樣的一種教育使她們將來能成為社會的棟樑。

談起來容易，做起來亦有實在困難，先是大部分女孩逗留院內的時間不多，而義工們却只能每兩星期探訪一次，能夠在這短時間內得到她們的信任已是很成功的了，所以很多義工在她們離開後仍繼續和她們保持聯絡，希望在需要時可給予援手。

至於非宿生，能夠多接觸的時候是在暑假，那時將會舉辦一連串的活動，譬如露營，參觀等。

總括來說，在「瑪利灣」內的工作是多采多姿而富有挑戰性的。每一個參與的同學都能在與女孩們接觸後，分擔她們的痛苦和快樂，眼見她們能步向正軌，心中的愉快，非筆墨所能形容。

在最近我們將會為她們舉辦很多活動，包括露營、訓練營、天才表演、球賽、旅行等，這些活動都需要很多同學參與，你願意來幫助她們嗎？

一直以來醫學生給外界人士的印象是只知讀書的閉門秀才。事實上，因為地理上的分隔和繁重的功課，參與學生會及屬會活動的同學都不多，另一方面，一部份同學可能仍抱著書中自有黃金屋和顏如玉的想法，而對於任何活動都不感興趣。

但是，隨著近年來學運的發展，很多同學都開始關心社會的要求，每年都有灌輸健康知識的展覽會，各班亦有舉辦一些社會服務活動如：訪問孤兒院、康復中心及修橋起路的工作。

然而，這些活動都沒有持續性，每每被喻為只有五分鐘熱度，更由於缺乏週詳的計劃，往往未能發動更多的同學參與，幸而有些同學亦覺醒到問題的徵結，近一年來，漸漸組織一些比較長期性的社會服務工作，就以本期所介紹的一些社會工作就可見一斑，其中以瑪利灣女童院的歷史最悠久，觀塘社康計劃義務工作

目前來說實在有急切需要，就以該院來說，輪候入院的不凡幾，由此亦可反映現今社會的一個病態。所謂預防勝於治療，社會人士應對青少年身心健康的培養更積極下點功夫。

## 社 論

### 與參與瑪利灣工作同學的一席話

### 幾個小火頭，變成一把熊熊烈火

瑪利灣女童院的義務工作，開始的情況可追溯到七二年間當時一年級的同學組織了社會工作小組，在一次偶然的機會下安排了一次到該院的訪問，得知該院極需義務幫助。訪問完後，一部份同學覺得做義工很有意義，便決定參與，協助籌備一些暑期活動如旅行，參觀等。在隨着的一年中，斷斷續續的舉辦了一些活動，期間因第一次學位試，而停頓了一段時間。

去年初，同學們因為功課壓力的加重，參與的同學日見稀少，只得幾位同學苦撐下去，到了暑假，該幾位同學決定舉辦一個夏令營，着手籌備時開始吸收其他班的同學，參與的人亦有十多之後，同學的興趣似乎又大為低減，義工的數目幾乎等於零。

經過幾個月慘淡經營，在今年的第一次學位試後，在一部份熱心同學的推動下，總算動了十多位二年級的同學及幾位一年級的同學參與。最初的工作，範圍比較狹窄，不外旅行、遊戲等，同時亦沒有系統。到後來，大家都覺得除康樂活動外，都需要注重女童們身心的均衡發展。事實上該院的女孩不少是很有潛質的，然而由於於家庭及社會因素，令她們未能得到適當的照顧而漸漸地喪失自信心，甚至產生自卑感。所以義

工的的最大目標就是排除自卑感，盡量發掘她們個人的特長，從而使她們重獲自信心，變成一個能夠獨立自主的人。要達到這個目的，在活動安排上就要更有系統。在最近正企圖推行一個 Target Training Programme，內容分戶外及戶內，就他們個人興趣和潛質而參與。

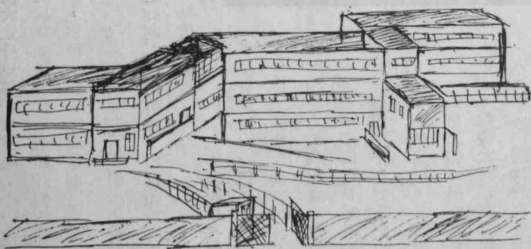
雖然義務工作已展開了三年，但實際的工作成果尚未能估計，因為該院的女孩逗留時間不長（約一年），而院方又未有對離開的女孩做甚長持續性工作的。事實上時間的短促，往往增加了工作的困難，因為人與人之間的信賴，是需要時間去建立，在如此短暫的相處時間，要達到互相溝通和瞭解實在不容易，幸而通過一些康樂活動，在融洽的氣氛下，那些女孩們漸漸地消除了芥蒂，願意接受我們的幫助。

在參與這項工作之後，大家都覺得無論對人生和社會都加深了認識，譬如以前認為人間慘事只是小說家或製片家搬出來，現在才知道社會上真實存在著很多問題，不少人在痛苦的邊緣中掙扎著，回頭一下自己，才發覺原來自己實在很幸福，因而更確定了自己將來要為大眾服務的決心。

在參與這項工作之後，大家都覺得無論對人生和社會都加深了認識，譬如以前認為人間慘事只是小說家或製片家搬出來，現在才知道社會上真實存在著很多問題，不少人在痛苦的邊緣中掙扎著，回頭一下自己，才發覺原來自己實在很幸福，因而更確定了自己將來要為大眾服務的決心。

在參與這項工作之後，大家都覺得無論對人生和社會都加深了認識，譬如以前認為人間慘事只是小說家或製片家搬出來，現在才知道社會上真實存在著很多問題，不少人在痛苦的邊緣中掙扎著，回頭一下自己，才發覺原來自己實在很幸福，因而更確定了自己將來要為大眾服務的決心。

瑪利灣



# SOME THOUGHTS ON INTEGRATED TEACHING IN PRECLINICAL YEARS

Samuel H.H. Chan, Department of Physiology

*\*\*The interpretations and expressions presented in this article are strictly personal.*

One "new" approach to the teaching of science in general that has been mentioned quite frequently by educationists in recent years is the so-called integrated teaching. For instance, the traditional subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics are now taught in Hong Kong as a single subject known as "integrated science" at Form One to Form Three level. This same approach has also been extended to medical education of late in many foreign Universities, or to put it more appropriately, integrated teaching has been re-vitalized in the teaching of medical students.

This article attempts to review this subject of integrated teaching in the context of preclinical curriculum. Particular reference is given to the teaching of neuroscience, one which the author is more familiar with.

Broadly speaking, any instruction which incorporates two or more of the traditional preclinical subjects, viz. anatomy, biochemistry and physiology, in some sort of logically intermingled manner can be called integrated teaching. To one extreme, there are medical schools which design their preclinical curriculum according to an "organ" system. Within a stipulated amount of time, individual functional systems, e.g. reproduction, circulation, CNS . . . will be covered in terms of anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology, even pathology and medicine. This interdisciplinary approach is usually adopted by more newly developed medical schools, an example being the University of California Medical School at Davis. A more moderate format which is quite popular in many U.S. medical schools is to teach the "born-pair" (in the words of Professor J.E. Randall of Indiana University), neuroanatomy and neurophysiology, in an integrated fashion. This is usually done by a

## A Commission For Reviewing our Curriculum

Two visitors from England have been invited by the faculty to investigate (in the coming October) on the possibilities of improving our curriculum. On enquiry by the Dean, the Medical Society has set up a commission to collect opinions from the students. So, don't hesitate to voice your opinions! If you have any good ideas, please direct them to the Ex-co. as soon as possible.

# Dermovate

is clobetasol propionate  
the new topical steroid  
from Glaxo

leaders in topical steroid research

Four good reasons why you should try Dermovate

- \* **Fast and effective**  
the preparation most likely to achieve rapid resolution of psoriasis and the stubborn eczemas
- \* **The logical alternative**  
the dependable choice when other steroids have failed to produce a satisfactory response
- \* **Simplified prescribing**  
available as a versatile, cosmetically acceptable cream for the moist and most of the dry dermatoses (also as ointment for scaly, lichenified or fissured lesions)
- \* **Minimal sensitisation risk**  
neither preparation contains lanolin or parabens

**Dermovate**

(clobetasol propionate 0.05% w/w)

is available as cream or ointment in tubes of 25 grams

Further information is available on request from:

Glaxo Hong Kong Limited  
9th Floor, Block B,  
Watson's Estate,  
North Point,  
Hong Kong  
Telephone: 5-719261

**Glaxo**

The Editorial Board wishes to thank the special support of Glaxo Hong Kong Ltd.

selected few from different departments who form a neuroscience group, or by a Department of Neuroscience. Still other medical schools teach the preclinical subjects independently but in a remotely integrated mode, i.e. individual departments attempt to fit into the schedules of one another.

Theoretically, integrated teaching will provide the students with a "complete" picture of the subject because of the broad exposure. For example, the nervous system can be dealt with, in total, by the teaching of neuroembryology, neuroanatomy, neurochemistry, neuropharmacology, neurophysiology and psychology. In some medical schools, like Howard University in Washington, D.C., introduction to clinical neurology, neuropathology and psychiatry is also being delivered at this stage. Students should, as maintained by advocates of this interdisciplinary teaching, therefore be able to grasp fully what they should know about the particular subject concerned.

It is exactly with such diversity of approaches to a single subject (e.g. the nervous system), which inevitably has to be delivered in a rapid pace, that some students found it difficult to cope with. Unless a student is able to absorb fast enough, he/she will be running a good chance of falling behind. This drawback could of course be remedied by an alteration of study habits. And in fact, medical schools that emphasize such teaching method usually set aside free afternoons in the time-table for the students to catch up with their reading assignments.

One side that is often overlooked is that serious drawback in integrated teaching can actually come from the teachers. Unavoidably, in an individual department setting, teachers will be more or less tied to the traditions of teaching in his own department (methods, philosophy, etc.) that may differ from others. Furthermore, each teacher is liable to his/her own views and concepts that may or may not be easily compromised by his/her colleagues. An integrated curriculum, therefore, may often appear only on paper without being executed in the true sense of the practice. Professor Randall, who became very "cool" towards integrated teaching after witnessing its pros-and-cons at Northwestern University and Indiana University, commented that "unless all staff involved can truly co-operate and agree on materials to be covered as well as concepts to be used, there is not going to be a successfully integrated course".

The Department of Neuroscience at the University of Florida may have solved this human factor by assigning each teacher a series of lectures on the CNS, e.g. special senses, motor system. This particular staff will then have to be responsible for teaching all aspects, anatomy, physiology, and so forth, in his assigned topics, regardless of whether he was trained primarily as a neurophysiologist or even a neurochemist. In such a way, the students will receive, hopefully, a more uniformly integrated course.

Will integrated teaching in preclinical years work in this University? With regret, the answer at this point is "not likely". With the present practice of individual papers on anatomy, biochemistry and physiology during the First M.B.B.S. examinations, and with the clear lines drawn between departments in terms of teaching and administration, the development of a truly integrated teaching programme seems to be very remote. Barring the difficulties, however, interdisciplinary teaching appears to be the approach to be adopted in preclinical curriculum. Towards this end, Professor D.R. Wilkie of the University College London rightly mentioned that genuinely integrated teaching depends a great deal on the personal capacities of the teachers organizing the courses, and the elimination of lines separating individual departments. Perhaps this is something that all of us should give a thought to during this period of reform of medical curriculum in this Faculty of Medicine.

## RESULTS OF INTRAFACULTY COMPETITION

		1st	2nd	3rd
Men	Badminton	2nd yr.	4th yr.	
	Basketball	2nd yr.	1st yr.	
	Hockey	4th yr.	3rd yr.	
	Lacrosse	3rd yr.	4th yr.	
	Squash	3rd yr.	4th yr.	
	Soccer	4th yr.	3rd yr.	
	Softball	3rd yr.	4th yr.	
	Table-tennis	2nd yr.	1st yr.	
	Tennis	4th yr.	1st yr.	
	Tug-of-war	3rd yr.	2nd yr.	
	Volleyball	2nd yr.	4th yr.	
Ladies	Badminton	1st yr.	3rd yr.	4th yr.
	Netball	3rd yr.	4th yr.	
Overall Results	1st	3rd yr.	(108 pts.)	
	2nd	4th yr.	(106 pts.)	
	3rd	2nd yr.	( 86 pts.)	
	4th	1st yr.	( 75 pts.)	

Sincere thanks to all referees and all those who helped in making the Competition a success.

Sportsman of the year (1974-75) — Mr. Koo Ping Kwong, (4th year)  
Sportswoman of the year (1974-75) — Miss Kwan Kit Wah, Joyce, (3rd year).



**Die Frau**



**the woman  
la femme  
kvinden  
a mulher  
frun  
la donna  
nainen  
la mujer  
femeie  
žena  
de vrouw  
a nō  
kobieta  
kadın**

**女性**

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

The Caduceus is fully aware of 1975 being proclaimed International Women's Year. But as far as we can observe, there has been little cry for re-establishing the status of women in the society of Hong Kong concerning the medical profession. If the readers are interested, they are encouraged to read May, 1975 issue of the Caduceus on Mackay's thesis on "Women in Medicine in Hong Kong" in which a detailed discussion was given. Two years has lapsed but has there been any change in the situation and, in particular, how do the female medical students think about this? We admit we know little.

The editors were not aware that they have addressed their latest survey to all the registered doctors in Hong Kong by beginning with "Dear Sir". The reason can hardly be explained and the editors apologize to all those who letter has mis-addressed to.

We would like to thank Dr. J. M. Longstaff for her letter which has made us realize our mistake and also for her advice concerning the "International Women's Year". In reply to this, the editors would like the readers to appreciate the meaning in the following extracts taken from "World Health", the magazine of the World Health Organization January 1975 issue on "International Women's Year". You may not totally agree with the writer's criticism and, if that is so, please do not hesitate to voice your opinion through the Caduceus.

## To the Editors,

Dear Editor,

Having contributed a thesis on 'Women in Medicine in Hong Kong' during the year 1973, I am perpetually dismayed that you continue to discriminate against women, even by addressing your latest Caduceus survey to 'Dear Sir.'

You continue to ignore the albeit low percentage of women doctors and medical students in Hong Kong by perpetually referring to the doctor or student as 'he', and deal with the psychological problems of obviously male students without a thought of the female.

As 1975 has been designated International Women's Year by the United Nations, I would have thought it highly appropriate that Caduceus would have commented on the discrimination that women face in medicine, ranging from the small percentage allowed into the Medical School, to the differing terms of service offered by Government itself towards its married women doctors.

I trust that you will rectify this omission,

Yours faithfully,

Dr. J.M. Longstaff, M.B.Ch.B.

### Editorial Board

Hon. Advisor	: Prof. M. J. Colbourne	
Editor-in-Chief	: Lau Pui Yau	婁培友
General Editors	: Lam Yung Chee	林容賜
	: Kwan Yuk Lin	關玉蓮
Managing Editor	: Mak Chun Kee	麥振基
Section Editors	: Leung Tung Lok	梁桐樂
	: Yu Tak Sun	余德新
	: Ho Wing Yee	何穎頤
	: Hung Leung Kim	熊長儉
Artist	: Lai Cheuck Seen	黎卓先
Past Board Representative	: Cheung Suk Yee	張淑儀
News Editor	: Loo Wan Tin	羅聞天
Circulating Editor	: Lam Jo Hing	林祚興

## ALL IN THE MIND

By Irma Kurtz, Freelance journalist

Ever since men claimed to be made in God's image and women merely in the image of man, the legend of female inferiority has persisted.

The inferior status of women on earth, which to our minds must imply their innate inferiority, has been evident in our laws, in our churches, in our customs and in the secret persuasions of our empirical hearts. That women are constitutionally different from men is evident from a glance, for women carry all the machinery of parturition. Some psychologists point to infants in a nursery and tell us that from the beginning the girls are passive and cautious, the boys demanding and bold.

The qualities of femininity, they say (these very qualities which in a male are called weakness), must obviously be assigned by hormones, by biology, they are external and immutable. Women (they may as well be saying), in an existence that demands strength of will and courage, are therefore congenitally inferior to men.

"Different but equal" is the cliché underlying all the scientific jargon, though experience suggests there is never equality in difference but only domination and submission. What psychologists and biologists usually fail to notice is that from the moments their sex is made known to the waiting parents, female babies are assigned a different destiny from the one their brothers will enjoy. The psychology of the inferior is to some extent instilled in every female born to a male-dominated society.

It is the tender female physiology which makes women different, makes them important, makes them unimportant, makes them women and makes them the objects of male protection. Protection, like pity, emanates from a position of power and is degrading to the recipient. Protection from what? Some women are beginning to ask.

Women have connived at their inferior status because they have mistaken protection

and paternalism for privilege; fathers commit their young sons to courage, to life, while genuinely loving mothers sentence their daughters to the pleasure of men and the demands of the next generation.

And since the "natural" women have been designed and defined to complement men, there must perforce be something wrong with the majority's idea of "natural" male behaviour. Their territory stretches from river to river, from earth to moon, and not merely from the bed to the kitchen sink, yet men too play restricted roles, for the fact is that any community that subjects half its number to servitude and condescension cannot be free and cannot offer liberty to any of its members. The oppressor, particularly if he is born to the role and does not even pretend to choose it, must be victimized by his victims. In imposing a sex role on females, albeit one that most women try eagerly to play, men too are forced into roles that many of them do not especially want or are not equipped for the power of strength, the provider, the warrior, the wage slave, the disciplinarian.

Strong political activity by women all over the world is gradually bending mis-shaped laws and customs into fairness to the sex. Inexorable outside forces therefore appear to be altering that "immutable" feminine psychology, hormones are being diluted by education, the "naturally" modest female show signs of growing bolder, and necessity is inventing a new kind of mother. Within womanhood, however, and within each woman, there are still the remains of the stubborn belief that all women are inferior to any male; and within each male, an ancient voice still agrees.

Until that myth and that voice are silenced, until we have faith in our deep, true sameness and not in our superficial differences, until women too are allowed the male prerogative of comradeship, we cannot possibly have a world where each human being is free to learn and be, who he — or she — really is.

## Half of Humanity

By Helvi Sipila

(Note on the author: Helvi Sipila, a Finnish lawyer, was designated by UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim as Secretary-General of International Women's Year 1975, and of the International Women's Conference, to be held in Mexico, 23 June — 4 July 1975).

**Equality between men and women does not exist. It is still often a great disadvantage to be born female. As part of the struggle to get the whole word behind the effort to change laws and traditions that discriminate against women and to take positive action to redress the existing imbalances in all fields, the United Nations have proclaimed 1975 International Women's Year.**

We hope to achieve two goals during the year. First, we want to raise international consciousness of the need to promote equality and change traditional attitudes. This goal, difficult and intangible, is nevertheless a prerequisite to any improvement.

The second major goal is to give women their full share of the benefits of development and a possibility to participate fully in the development effort, including planning, and policy-making in all fields and at the local, national and international levels.

Women, a good half of the world's population, have not been able up to now to make a full contribution. As a group, they remain the most underdeveloped of all human resources because of lack of opportunity to play an equal part with men in all areas of life, and because of the stereotyping of male and female roles.