

FOREWORD

Conductive Education, a practice originated in Budapest by Prof. Andras Petö for education and training of children with cerebral palsy and other motor disorders some half a century ago, has been spreading all over the world. Now, one can find special educators and rehabilitation personnel applying the practice in about thirty countries and places in Europe, North America and Asia. While everyone in their countries focuses on adapting this unique practice to their own social and cultural environment, a question always crops up: "What is the theoretical basis of Conductive Education?" Everyone knows Conductive Education is effective, but why? It seems to most of us that "Conductive Education is low on theory, but high on practice," as the late Dr. Erik Kvan said, the former Chairman of the Spastics Association of Hong Kong.

Conductive Education was brought to Hong Kong in the early 1980s, when a special child care centre of the Spastics Association of Hong Kong and a special school, the John F. Kennedy Centre, started pioneering the practice after the study visits to England and Budapest by Dr. Kvan and the late Dr. Marion Fang (first Principal of the John F. Kennedy Centre and Honorary Conductor). Ever since using the new ideas and methods to give the best quality of service to the children, different professionals in the field responded positively to the pioneering work. Mrs. Ester Cotton's Hong Kong training programmes in 1984 & 1986 also gave extra impetus to our work.

Today, the Spastics Association of Hong Kong has succeeded in developing a Hong Kong model of Conductive Education which is characterized by the trans-disciplinary teamwork approach and covers the whole human range from infancy to old age. Though the success of our application has gained worldwide recognition, not much progress has been achieved in addressing the issue of theory. Dr. Kvan remarked many years ago: "We have to explain Conductive Education in terms which can be generally understood and with a rigour which is acceptable to academics and professionals with different perspectives." Of course, the book, *The Conductive Learning System as used in the Spastics Association of Hong Kong – A Systematic Exposition*, by Mr. Ivan Y. W. Su, the Association's Programme Coordinator (Adult Services), published in 1998, is a brave attempt in that direction. However, it still cannot satisfy people's thirst for the knowledge about Conductive Education.

Anita Tatlow's book, *Conductive Education for Children and Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy: Enquiry into Theory and Practice*, is like spring water to relieve this thirst. It is the first publication which gives, in one single volume, a comprehensive exposition of Conductive Education from theory, and methodology, to application, drawing on research and related material published in various professional books and journals. There are many photographs and illustrations to help readers enjoy reading it.

Being one of the biggest special education and rehabilitation service providers and the advocate for the use of Conductive Education in Hong Kong, we are honoured to have Mrs. Tatlow's permission to publish her book under the name of the Spastics Association of Hong Kong. The book will make an immense contribution to our current work of promoting Conductive Education – The Hong Kong Model in Mainland China as well.

Dr. H. H. Ho, *Chairman*
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