Leonie Ki  
(BA 1970)  
Managing Director,  
New World China Enterprises Projects Ltd  
Leonie Ki is also author of Going North: the Last Ten Years, 1992 - 2002, published by HK Economic Times.

"I like the average Hong Kong born person, my parents were immigrants from China, and I grew up being very sceptical and fearsome of Communists and the People’s Republic of China.

Unfortunately, in the mid 80’s, when Hong Kong signed the Joint Declaration with China for the return of sovereignty in 1997, there was an anti-spiritual movement in Mainland where advertising was being condemned as a tool of capitalism. Then the June 4 Incident started a brain drain from the territory. I joined the flight and was accepted to move to Canada. I landed for 4 days and decided I didn’t want to become a second-class citizen. I returned to Hong Kong and went straight to China to set up my advertising agency there in 1992. Instead of running away, I wanted to see for myself the real face of China.

The country had then just gone through a metamorphosis from a planned economy to a market economy. Things were looking up, even though people were still very poor and material goods were meagre and scarce. I felt great empathy for everything I saw, for it was like going back through a time tunnel to the Hong Kong of the 60’s. I also felt it was the land of tomorrow, and that there were a lot of opportunities. For the past twelve years, I witnessed the growth and development of

Wilfred Wong  
(BScSc 1975)  
Vice-Chairman, Shui On Holdings Ltd  

"I first started business relations with the mainland in 1992 when I left the Administrative Service of the Hong Kong Government and joined a transnational real estate development corporation as its Deputy Chief Executive. It was exactly the time Mr Deng Xiaoping made his historic tour to the south - what followed was what keen China watchers would describe as an affirmation of the country’s commitment to developing a market economy. My task was to explore business opportunities in Shanghai, and there I was at the airport, with only a suitcase and bewilderment in hand, feeling more foreign than I would have felt in any given European or North American city.

Numerous business deals and a number of political appointments (including being elected Deputy to the National People’s Congress) have given me opportunities to gain in-depth understanding of the evolving business environment in China. Although I now shuttle between Hong Kong and the mainland, my base remains in Shanghai. I often see international visitors looking amazed amidst the city’s landmarks like the Bund, the Pudong financial district, or the Shanghai Museum, marvelling at the sophistication and the prosperity. Indeed, many cities on the mainland have modernised at what seems like lightning-fast development in areas like telecommunications, transportation and real estate, all closely linked to improving the quality of life. In the meantime, the government has improved its efficiency and transparency, while new laws and regulations conducive to business and economic development have been enacted. Go to any city and you will see a much better educated younger
Falk Kagelmacher
(MArch 1996)
Falk Kagelmacher is an architect and urban designer living and working in Beijing. He has a Diploma in Engineering Degree in Germany, a Master of Architecture from HKU in 1996, and a Post-Grad in Architecture at the ETH-Zurich, Switzerland. After receiving his Masters’ Degree from HKU, he returned to Germany for more professional experience, and after several years of working as an architect, received his registration to the Chamber of Architects.

Why did you decide to come to China and when?
After living in HK for some years, I always wanted to return to China, but before doing so, I wanted to get more experience in Germany first. In 2001, I received an offer to work as a project manager here in Beijing, which I accepted and completed after roughly one year. During that time, I organised my First International Architecture Conference in Beijing, bringing in several professionals from China and abroad to give lectures. Through this conference and my assignments I have made a lot of valuable contacts, and through my work with the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design (CAUPD), I established my current position as a Foreign Expert.

What do you do now in China?
As a Foreign Expert I am a consultant to the CAUPD, which is the design institute of the China Ministry of Construction. I am sponsored by a ministry of the German government. My work involves technology-transfer in the building industry in resource efficient technologies and sustainable systems. The area covers urban planning as well as architecture.

What role do you see HKU playing in the future of your profession in China?
I can see great opportunities for HKU, which has a mixture of Chinese and foreign influences. This mixture will serve it well. China is opening up and developing at tremendous speed, and HKU has a history of combining two worlds. I think of Hong Kong as an international place, and – especially in my area – some big developers have experience from both Hong Kong and other countries. These influences now act as trendsetters in the building industry. These internationally educated and experienced people are shaping the future face of Chinese cities.