

The Helena May: a haven safeguarding women for 100 years now needs protection and is generously supported by a charity auction to be run by renowned agarwood collector Professor Paul Kan



Standing strong and proud in Hong Kong for the past 100 years, witnessing the history and changes of Hong Kong, The Helena May main building was officially declared a monument by the Antiquities and Monuments Office of Hong Kong in October, 1993. Having the need to be preserved and protected, The Helena May associate member and renowned agarwood collector Professor Paul Kan is to help raise funds for the renovation of the building by hand-picking four meaningful pieces from his agarwood collection for a charity auction that will be held in September 2014. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the preservation of heritage and culture including the renovation and maintenance of The Helena May.

The Helena May was founded by Lady Helena May, wife of Sir Henry May, the 15th Governor of Hong Kong, and was largely funded by two generous local philanthropists, Sir Ellis Kadoorie and Mr. Ho Kom Tong CBE. Building started

in 1914 and it was opened in 1916, and although it has withstood changes and challenges over the years it has graced Garden Road, Central ever since. It is perfectly sited – close to the Peak Tram Station, which is within walking distance to the city centre, but at the same time, not surrounded by the busy CBD and provides a relaxing and peaceful environment for Club members and residents. It is safe to say that The Helena May was built with love and passion, and the spirit continues to touch more hearts in the 21st century.

The Club originally aimed at providing accommodation and a place to socialise for single women coming to work and live in Hong Kong. During the Second World War, the graceful building was requisitioned by the Japanese forces to be used as a billet for soldiers. Soon after the War, the Club reopened and now has membership for both female and male members to enjoy its facilities including an extensive English language library. The Helena May is now doing a lot more than helping women from the European countries. Upholding its mission statement and contributing to the Hong Kong community, the Club continues to serve as a welcoming and affordable place for women and men of all nationalities and from all walks of life.

In order to preserve The Helena May's historic building, which is such a good example of living history into the next century, Professor Paul Kan, a devotee of preserving cultural and historical heritage, will donate a part of the proceeds from the auction to the maintenance and restoration work on the building. Professor Kan has been putting all his heart in supporting the preservation of local history and culture. The charity auction to be held in September will be auctioning four agarwood pieces from his precious collection, as to help fund the renovation of The Helena May, as well as other heritage in Hong Kong. Through this auction, Professor Kan hopes to arouse the public's interest in conserving our city's history and culture, and to keep alive the spirit of "peace and harmony".

Agarwood pieces donated by Professor Paul Kan to be auctioned

The Auspicious Dragon

This agarwood piece resembles a dragon head with horns standing out vividly, staring eyes and wide-opened mouth. It symbolises blessings from heaven, fulfilment of wishes and the arrival of good fortune.



H18 x W41 cm, approx. 610g

Over the Dragon Portal

Much like a sleek fish racing through turbulence to the sky, this fine piece of agarwood symbolises good fortune, promotion, great wealth, honour and fame.



H62.5 x W11.5 cm, approx. 390g

The Giant's Causeway

This densely overlapping, tapered, cylindrical structure resembles the Giant's Causeway located northwest of Belfast in Northern Ireland. The causeway was formed by more than 40,000 interlocking hexagonal basalt columns from volcanic eruption. It makes a wonderful spectacle as it stretches over eight kilometres of coastline and was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. "Giant's Causeway" is also the name of a world famous horse which has been a Champion Grade 1 winner in several of Europe's legendary races.



H33.5 x W29.5 cm, approx. 250g

Mountain of Treasure

Shaped like a lofty mountain range, this piece of agarwood demonstrates the magnificent beauty of nature. One can imagine that deep inside the mountain range lie vast treasures of gold, symbolising prosperity, abundance, longevity and good health.

H25 x W12 x D11 cm, approx. 388g



About The Helena May

The Helena May is a Club for women which also welcomes male associate members. It was established in 1916 by Lady Helena May who was the wife of the Governor, Sir Henry May, with the object of promoting the welfare of women and girls in Hong Kong. Apart from Club facilities The Helena May also offers accommodation and it is centrally located in a gracious heritage building on Garden Road, Central.