

# 支持中大的亞洲英雄

## TIME Asian Heroes 2003

BY BELINDA GUNN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY LING LI

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A MORE DEMANDING OR DANGEROUS JOB THAN CARING FOR SARS victims at Hong Kong's Prince of Wales Hospital. Yet Dr. Yim Lai-shan volunteered for the assignment, joining a remarkable band of doctors and nurses who call themselves the "Duty Team." Suited up each day in their surgical armor—mask, goggles, gloves, protective hat and two layers of gowns—they form the front line in the war against the killer disease. "At first I was afraid of dying," says Yim, 34, who just recently married. "But now I worry more about patients in the ward who aren't getting better or are steadily getting worse." At last count, the hospital's SARS patients included about 50 of her co-workers.

Amid all the suffering and fear that has ensued, nothing is as heartening as the quiet courage of those treating the disease—regular people like Yim who know the risks but do not shy away from them. In this special issue of TIME, we celebrate them, as well as a dazzling assortment of other heroes—Asian famous and unknown who remind us what the human spirit can achieve even in the darkest of situations.

In these treacherous times of war and plague, we look to their bravery as an example and an inspiration. By refusing to succumb to quills or despair, they give us the will to forge ahead when we might otherwise lose heart. Of course, not all of the heroes we profile in the following 45 pages are selfless Samaritans. But they are all, in their own way, purveyors of hope.

Norio, perhaps, has achieved more hardship—or triumphed more stunningly—than Satoshi Fukuhara. Losing his sight at age 19 and his hearing at 18, he flung himself plucked into what he has described as "falloosian solitude." Yet Fukuhara has since transformed himself into a renowned author, a professor at Tokyo University and a powerful agitator for the rights of the handicapped. Like him, most of our heroes boast extraordinary resources of determination, and are undaunted by what might seem like overwhelming odds stacked against them. Kim Sang Hoon, a 70-year-old South Korean, for example, has spent his retirement years successfully masterminding the escape of some 100 refugees from North Korea. "He is a very nice person," marvels one of them. "He risks his life to help us."

Many of the heroes we've singled out are better known, yet some seemed inausurably destined for such fame and glory. Heikki Mäkelä, Japan's exalted power hitter and fledgling Noodle, is held aloft by author Robert Whiting as "the progenitor of a Japanese Everyman." Basketball star Yao Ming, who grew up playing on courts so cold that the ball wouldn't bounce, now faces impossible odds as the most famous Chinese on earth. Yoko Ono, long revered as the woman who broke up the Beatles, has finally, at the age of 70, won her due as a groundbreaking artist. And Stephen Chow, so dear that he used to wear platform heels to auditions, at last stands tall as the comic hero of Hong Kong's funniest movies. As a local fruit-juice vendor remarks, "He can really cheer you up."

And that, ultimately, is the quality that all of these heroes share: They sustain our good humor and our faith and our hope even when the cause might seem all but lost. As the news crisis deepens, such inspiration is an especially rich supply. From the "Duty Team" at the Prince of Wales Hospital to the unsaluted health-care workers at Singapore's Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Filled with admiration, Singaporeans have created a spontaneous shrine in honor of Tan Tock Seng's staff, covering the walls of a nearby subway station with expressions of gratitude. As one well-wisher wrote: TO OUR HEROES, YOU WASH YOUR STAFFS. We couldn't have put it better ourselves. —Reported by Carmen Lee/Hong Kong and Belinda Gunn/Singapore



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