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支持中大的亞洲英雄

TIME Asian Heroes 2003

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A MORE TERRIFYING—OR HEROIC—JOB THAN CARING FOR SARS victims at Hong Kong's Prince of Wales Hospital, but Dr. Lam Lai-shan volunteered for the assignment, joining a remarkable band of doctors and nurses who call themselves the "Dirty Team." Inside a room that is their toilet and shower, masks, 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 Lam, 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 SARS has caused, nothing is as heartening as the quiet courage of those treating the disease—regular people like Lam 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 heroes 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. In refusing to succumb to apathy 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.

None, perhaps, has endured more hardship—or triumphed more stunningly—than Satoshi Fukuhara. Losing his right eye at age 19 and his hearing at 18, he forced himself plunged into what he has described as "subzero solitude." Yet Fukuhara has since transcended himself into a renowned author, a professor at Tokyo University and a powerful advocate for the rights of the handicapped. In his line, most of our heroes have 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 engineering 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 none seemed inescapably destined for such fame and glory. Hideo Kobayashi, Japan's exiled power hitter and fledgling baseballer, is held aloft by author Robert Whiting as "the paragon of a Japanese Everyman." Basketball star Yao Ming, who grew supplanting 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 short that he used to wear platform heels in 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 restore our good humor and our faith and our hope even when the cause might seem all but lost. As the song often says, such inspiration is its especially rich supply—from the "Dirty Team" at the Prince of Wales Hospital to the embattled health-care workers at Singapore's Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Filled with admiration, Singaporeans have created a spontaneous chorus in honor of Tan Tock Seng's staff, covering the walls of a nearby subway station with expressions of gratitude. As one well-wisher writes: IN OUR TIME OF HEROES, YOU WARM OUR HEARTS. We couldn't have put it better ourselves. —Reprinted by Common Knowledge Hong and Executive Williams Singapore



SARS patients at Hong Kong's Prince of Wales Hospital. From left and right: Hong Kong, epidemiologist Stanley Ho (left), Dr. Lam Lai-shan, South Korean Professor Kim Sang Hoon, and Dr. Yoshiyuki...

他們
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你
也能聆聽他們嗎？

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