



DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING

SEMINAR

**The ancient Shanghai water sluice dating from the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368):
Ren Renfa 任仁發 (1254-1327), hydraulic engineer and painter**

Professor Albert Koenig

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Date: October 18, 2019 (Friday)
Time: 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Venue: Room 632C, Haking Wong Building
The University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

In 2001, a huge ancient water sluice was accidentally discovered about 9 m below ground in the middle of Shanghai, to the great surprise of everybody. Further research revealed that it was built during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). The purpose of the sluice was to prevent the inflow of sediments and saltwater to the Wusong River from the nearby sea. This talk will discuss the discovery, background, structure and function of the sluice as well as present a short biography of its presumed builder Ren Renfa (1254-1327), a kind of Chinese Leonardo da Vinci because of his fame as hydraulic engineering expert and great painter. His experiences and theories on water control are summarized in the still influential work "Shuiliji" [A collection of essays on water conservancy]. In 2012, the Shanghai Yuan Dynasty Water Gate Museum was opened on top of the archaeological site. The talk will be richly illustrated with contemporary and current documents as well as selected paintings of Ren Renfa.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Professor Albert Koenig obtained a BSAE degree from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, followed by an MS and PhD from Cornell University. He has worked for more than thirty years in academia, industry and government in various countries, always in the area of environmental engineering. In 1992 he joined the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Hong Kong. After his retirement in 2009, he held visiting positions at the University of Padua, Italy and the University of Hong Kong where he is currently an Adjunct Professor. Since 2018, he also serves as visiting professor at Chuhai College of Higher Education. He is a member of several professional associations, including HKIE and the International Water Association (IWA), Specialist Group on Water and Wastewater in Ancient Civilizations.

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