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Wahyanites

18 May 2005
Volume 17
Issue 3

Announcements

Annual General Meeting

Date: Monday, 13 June 2005

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Venue: The Chinese Club, 14th Floor, Chinese Club Building, 21-22 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong

There will be a dinner gathering right after the AGM. The dinner is charged at \$250 per person. For reservations, please contact **Wallace Yiu** (Mobile: 9125-2225)

Keep Contacts While Looking North

As more and more Wahyanites are now residing, studying or doing business in China, the PSA desires to initiate a drive to connect Wahyanites in China. Co-operating with our Kowloon brothers, we would like to generate contact lists for Wahyanites in different cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong). We may organize a preliminary gathering in late May and a better organized gathering in June/July. Please spread this message and ask interested parties to contact the following persons. Details of the gatherings will be announced ASAP.

Beijing: Patrick Pang

Email: patrickpang@pmintl.com

Mobile: 13911688883

Shanghai: Samuel Kuk

Email: samkyc818@netvigator.com

Mobile: 13901748058

Guangdong and other parts of China: Daniel So

Email: skk@synergie.com

Mobile: (852)9424-1659, 13910404631

Students: Kevin Lee of Peking University

Email: kevinleehc@yahoo.com

Mobile: 13910333229

Creating Summer Jobs for Wah Yan Students

Two different appeals have been made to old boys through the PSA to help create summer jobs for Wah Yan students. If you are in the position to help, you may contact either of the following:

- **Mr. Lo Wing Sun** (wslo@wahyan.edu.hk), Assistant Principal of WYCHK, who has been known for his kindness in helping students to secure summer jobs through members of the PSA in the past few years; or

- **Mr. Paul Siu (WYK '69)** (phs355@yahoo.com) of The Wah Yan One Family Fund (WYOFF), which initiates its own summer-job scheme for students of both WYK and WYHK this year. WYOFF is an organization independent of the PSA and is chaired by Mr. Ng Tin Hoi, Stephen (WYK69). Please visit its website at <http://www.wahyan.edu.hk/onefamily/> to learn more about it.



Pun U Wah Yan Primary School Concert

番禺會所華仁小學音樂會

Pun U Wah Yan Primary School will hold a fund raising concert in the City Hall Concert Hall at 7:30 p.m. on 30 May 2005 (Monday). Funds raised will go to the Wah Yan College Hong Kong School Development Project. You may support the concert by buying a ticket to attend it, making a donation or placing an advertisement in the souvenir programme. For ticketing, please visit Leisure and Cultural Services Department's website at <http://www2.lcsd.gov.hk/cf/search/culture/details.cfm?lang=b5&id=34933> or our PSA website for details.

Wah Yan Open Day

The boys have done it again - an impressive display of originality, industrious planning, and scientific execution and flair. Within 8 hours, the school had entertained thousands of guests. Many of them visited the new SIP Wing for the first time. The lawn and our Lady's statue have been beautifully re-done. For the unfortunate ones or the forgetting ones who did not make it to the event, the webmaster of PSA has taken a few shots to stir up good old memories. Some other albums are available at http://www.wahyan.edu.hk/pta/Photo_20050305_OpenDay2005/page_01.htm (with courtesy of Simon Chan, '75 & PTA Chairman) or <http://imageevent.com/wahyan1974/wahyanopenday> (with courtesy of Chairman Daniel So).



Our Student Ambassadors in Canada



22 March 2005 Edmonton

News from the Edmonton Chapter

It was our great honour to host the 2005 Wah Yan Student Ambassadors. Many of us attended the Welcome Dinner at the University of Alberta Faculty Club on the evening of March 22 to welcome Student Ambassadors, Peter Lee (WYCHK) and Michael Tsang (WYK), to Edmonton. We all agree that the meal arranged by Francis Yeh was delicious and that Peter's and Michael's Powerpoint presentations were fascinating. We were all grateful to feel so close to our mother schools once again.



26 March 2005 Calgary

A report by Tony Wong (WYHK '64) from Calgary

It was our greatest honour to entertain the two Student Ambassadors from 26 to 28 March, though Calgary is not the host chapter. For example, we can still recall the happy times we went to Drumheller, Banff and Lake Louise.

Spring Dinner - 14 March 2005



Some Thoughts On The Education And Manpower Bureau's Policy On The Medium Of Instruction In Secondary Schools.

Over the last month or so, a large number of principals in Hong Kong representing various types of secondary schools, have been in close discussion with the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) regarding the EMB's new policy on the Medium of Instruction (MOI). I have been party to these discussions as Chairman of the Grant School Council and as a committee member of the Association of English Medium Secondary Schools.

I feel you, as Wah Yan stakeholders, should be kept up to date on this important and emotive issue as it will directly or indirectly affect you perhaps in the near future. The Government's MOI reforms are important because they have a direct link not only to Wah Yan's English Medium of Instruction (EMI) status but also to our long term plans to establish a "through train" for our students from Primary 1 to Secondary 6 . It is thus linked with our long term plans to expand the school to five streams of classes for each form. My aim in writing is therefore to share my perspective of this issue and invite you to comment or to be engaged in the debate if you wish.

Without turning this into a long history lesson, I should highlight, in a few words, the immediate background of the current MOI policy. You may remember that in 1998, the EMB changed the MOI policy. Among other things, for the first time they defined schools as either English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) or Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI) schools. Previously this distinction had not been formalized although it was well known which schools were EMI or CMI. In 1998, many schools were forced to switch their status and adopt CMI status while some 114 were formally defined as EMI and permitted to continue teaching in English. Wah Yan was one of the 114 schools which were permitted to continue teaching in English as an EMI school. There was quite a lot of concern about this policy at the time with some commentators seeing the move mainly as political rather than educational. Since then, some CMI schools have gradually switched back to EMI in higher forms. The EMB has also gathered research data which firmly indicate that teaching in the mother tongue produces enhanced examination results for many types of students. In the past few years, many CMI schools reported enhanced HKCEE and A Level results apparently vindicating the EMB's policy of forcing schools to switch to CMI teaching.

I am not going to try to argue the pros and cons of EMI or CMI here. In fact, I am not even going to try to contest the hypothesis that mother tongue teaching is in many cases the better medium in which to teach the majority of young people. That said, the School Management Committee, the staff, and most stakeholders including yourselves, have said they wish Wah Yan to remain an EMI school. Your reasons are varied and I think valid. You feel that the standard and family background of our students can cope with the increased and increasing demands of being taught through English. You feel that in the long run, living, working and interacting in an English speaking environment will be far more beneficial to Wahyanites, who are very likely to go on to a university using English as MOI in Hong Kong or abroad. I genuinely feel that the real advantage is a long term advantage which is only realized after school in later life. Examination results are of course important but it is the long term benefit of having lived and studied in an EMI environment that we want to pass on.

(to be continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

The EMB have presented schools with a number of MOI related proposals which on the surface appear to be only minor adjustments to the policy, but will in fact bring radical changes to all schools including Wah Yan. The main proposal is that the school's EMI status will be determined by the school's intake. If 85% of the intake are determined to be capable of learning through English, then the school will be allowed to retain its EMI status. This seems reasonable enough but unfortunately, no aided schools have control over their enrolment as allocations are made by the Government in the Central Allocation System. There is no guarantee that their intakes allocated to schools will be up to the EMI standard even if the Government did its best to allocate the strongest students to EMI schools. Thus, if this policy were adopted, Wah Yan's future as an EMI school would be linked to the quality of the students allocated to us by the Government and by the ability of Pun U primary school to produce high-standard P6 graduates. This is clearly not a position we wish to be in. We have tried to persuade the EMB to be more flexible on this issue but they appear to be standing firm and that makes some principals conclude that the EMB is engineering this policy to force all schools, by default, to become CMI in the long term. In fact, there is another alternative. This could be a ruse to force us to switch to Direct School Subsidy (DSS). This is entirely a different issue but one which we might have to return to in the future.

Wah Yan has ambitions to expand our Jesuit mission and add one class per form. Our new SIP annex is built with this in mind. This broadly means we have been considering expanding the school by 200 students or 40 students per form level. If the EMB's proposed MOI policy is imposed on us, it will be even harder to reach the 85% figure particularly as we are approaching significant demographic dips in school populations across Hong Kong.

What do we want?

Perhaps I should rephrase this question to "What do we think we want"? The Grant School Council principals, all of whom are EMI principals, are more than just dissatisfied with the policy that is being proposed. We feel that we should return to the far more flexible and open pre-1998 policy. We accept that defining schools as CMI and EMI can be elitist and divisive and thus acknowledge the dissatisfaction that some CMI principals have. We think that we should discontinue the defining of schools as EMI or CMI. We feel we should leave the whole language policy in the hands of the School Management Committee allowing them to define their own MOI policy in detail. In fact, today's School Management Committees are even more transparent and their composition much more representative and democratic. This would allow all stakeholders, or potential stakeholders, to see the policy in school handbooks or on school websites. We are essentially asking that the policy should give us even greater flexibility of providing the kind of MOI policy that the stakeholders desire. We do not want to be further restricted and we certainly do not wish to have an MOI policy forced on us. Some view the whole proceedings from a Machiavellian stance. Some feel that the EMB is trying to force us to become CMI or DSS.

In this short article, I have only touched on a few aspects of the MOI policy. I would welcome your thoughts on this matter and encourage you to enter the fray! The School Management Committee is facing a dilemma. Please give us your views preferably well before the end of the EMB's MOI consultation period which ends on 2nd July 2005.

George Tam
Principal

Wah Yan Dramatic Society in Foshan Museum

A group of Wah Yan PSA PPs and other Wahyanites has visited Foshan and Guangzhou recently. A special visit was paid to the Guangdong Cantones Opera Museum where exhibits of Wah Yan Drama Society were on display in the English Drama Section. Among the PPs and fellow Wahyanites were, in alphabetical order, Casey Chan, Chamson Chau, Philip Ching, T.K. Chow, Hugo Hung, K.K. Lam, Daniel So. Peter Tam, Raymond Wong, Patrick Wu and Raymond Yu.

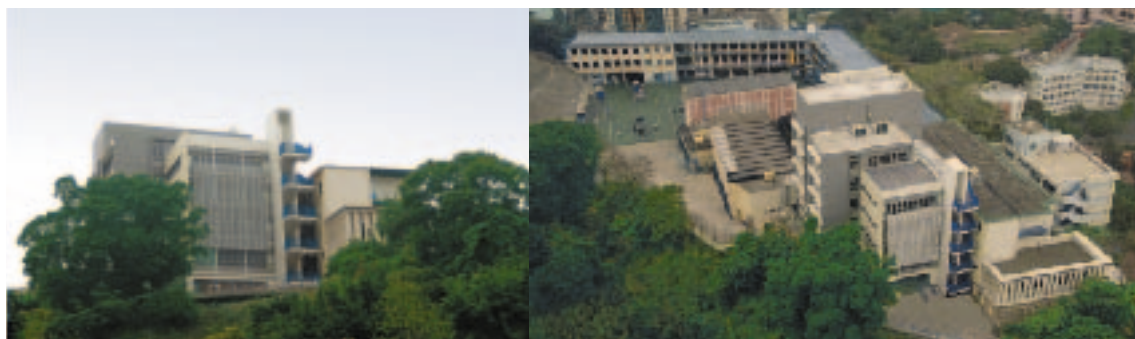


Section on Wah Yan Drama Society

Manuscripts and relics

A New Face for Our Mother School

Check out the School Development Project's website at <http://www.wahyan-psa.org/sdp/sdp1.htm> for further information.



Wah Yan Scouts Triumph Again!

This time our juniors, the Pun U Cub Scouts shone at the bi-annual HK Chief Commissioner's Shield Finals on 27 Feb. Out of over 500 participating Scout Groups and after 3 rounds of competitions, our Cub Pack came out on top. This is our 6th championship and 3rd in a row over 2001, 2003 and now 2005. The competition consists of sports abilities such as manoeuvring a football through slaloms, quizzes on general knowledge, typical scouting skills like knotting and special interactive problems such as raising a can of 7-up above a man's height using only news papers. 3 Cheers to the lads.



All is well...

While spending a lot of time traveling to China and being the type of person that never sleeps, I have a special privilege to be able to watch late night TV programs on these trips. My favorite topics are history, biography, geography and cultural documentaries which happen to flourish in those non-commercial late hours. The Jesuits and their contributions were often highlighted or mentioned in these programs. It was so surprising that even I was educated in Jesuit Wah Yan, I hardly remember much of the vivid history of the Jesuits, nor their interactions with China being taught in my school days.

Recently I have learned from one such program that there are two most significant episodes in Sino-foreign cultural interactions in Chinese history, one is the introduction of Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty and the second the introduction of Christianity and western cultures to China by the Jesuits during the late Ming/early Ching Dynasty. The Jesuits wished to turn China Christian, but still Chinese. Yet the Chinese rulers are far more interested in technology than religion while the conservative Church in Rome was rather not interested in new breed of liberal evangelism. Yet, amid the difficulties, the Jesuits flourished and planted deep roots in China. For the 190 years of Jesuits service to China before the order was banned in 1773, a total of 472 Jesuits were sent (i.e. an average of 2.5 Jesuits per year) but the impact has been so tremendous both in the cultural and technology sides, Chinese Scholars often speculate that if the Jesuits inspired modernization and their introduction of Chinese culture to the West had continued for a little longer, the whole recent Chinese history could have taken a different course and China could have opened up and embraced the world much earlier. On the evangelistic side, while the number of Catholics has never been big in China, at least one late Ming dowager empress (Helena) was converted along with many top officials and royal family members throughout this period of history. The Jesuits were actually not too far from converting China in a top-down fashion.

The Jesuits returned to China in 1842 and the Emperor returned all church properties to them in 1846. The Jesuits established universities in Shanghai and Tianjin in 1903, three years after the Boxer Rebellion. The American Jesuits founded secondary schools in Nanjing and Shanghai in 1931 while the Irish Jesuits took over Wah Yan in 1932. All Jesuits' work on the mainland were stopped a few years after New China was founded while work in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan continued. Despite all the set backs, the Jesuits, the renowned missionary and mandarins, as they were known to China, kept their dedications and passions to the Chinese people. When Hong Kong returned to the motherland in 1997, Wah Yan became one of the few Jesuits' presence in China. As a devout Catholic and occupying Hong Kong's top post, Wahyanite Donald Tsang will become the closest tie between the 1.3 billion Chinese and the 1.1 billion Catholics. In this age of dramatic transformation, nothing is impossible. For example, a couple months ago, we were talking about the possibility of a war across the strait, and suddenly that seems so distant.

Next year is the 500th birthday of St. Francis Xavier, the Jesuit Saint who passed away in 1552 on a remote island not too far from Hong Kong, 5 miles short from landing on the mainland after traveling the globe. Taking this historic opportunity, a group of Wahyanites is initiating an effort to examine and document the Ignatian values in education and its relevancy to China. If you are interested to help, please contact PSA Past President Peter Tam at peter@astoria.com.hk (Mobile: 9195-9040).

The ending phrase 'All is well' of the song 'Death - is nothing at all', which was sung during the late Father Shield's funeral, suddenly came to my mind. We thank you for the courage and dedication, may God bless all the Jesuits and may God bless China!

Daniel So
Council Chairman

Wahyanites

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You may contact Janis Lam, our Executive Secretary, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9:00 am and noon at 2893-9290 for membership affairs. You may also leave your message via fax at the same telephone number. Alternatively, the Secretariat can be reached by electronic mail at this address: wyhkpsa@netvigator.com.

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