

The

July 2014

gateway



issue

53

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(Cover) This statue of St. John Baptist de La Salle stands in the foyer of the Brothers' Quarters on the 4th floor of St. Joseph's College.

The gateway

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issue

53

Welcome

There is much history in Gateway 53. St. Joseph's College, approaching its 140th anniversary, is naturally rich in history, but, in this issue, we try to bring everything up to date.

More history, this time set in Malaysia during the last world war, takes centre stage with 'In Our Hearts Forever'. Brother James Dooley, the author, had a flair for the dramatic twists and turns of life and he is building up the tension nicely in this piece.

The final piece of history is the somewhat extraordinary story of the last days of Brother Cyprian Gendreau, the first Brother that we know of to die in Japan. It is a somewhat sad but inspiring story.

Living history returns with our 'Family Updates'. We are never short of material for this section. Our problem is usually deciding what to omit for lack of space.

The summer holidays beckon and most schools will be out as of mid-July. Loads of school summer holiday activities and programmes, however, are preparing for takeoff. There is hardly a day when the schools fall silent.

Happy Holidays! ■

**The Gateway
Hong Kong
Lasallian Family
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July 2014
Fifty Third Issue**



Our Pathways

St. Joseph's College Wartime and Beyond

The Journey Continues

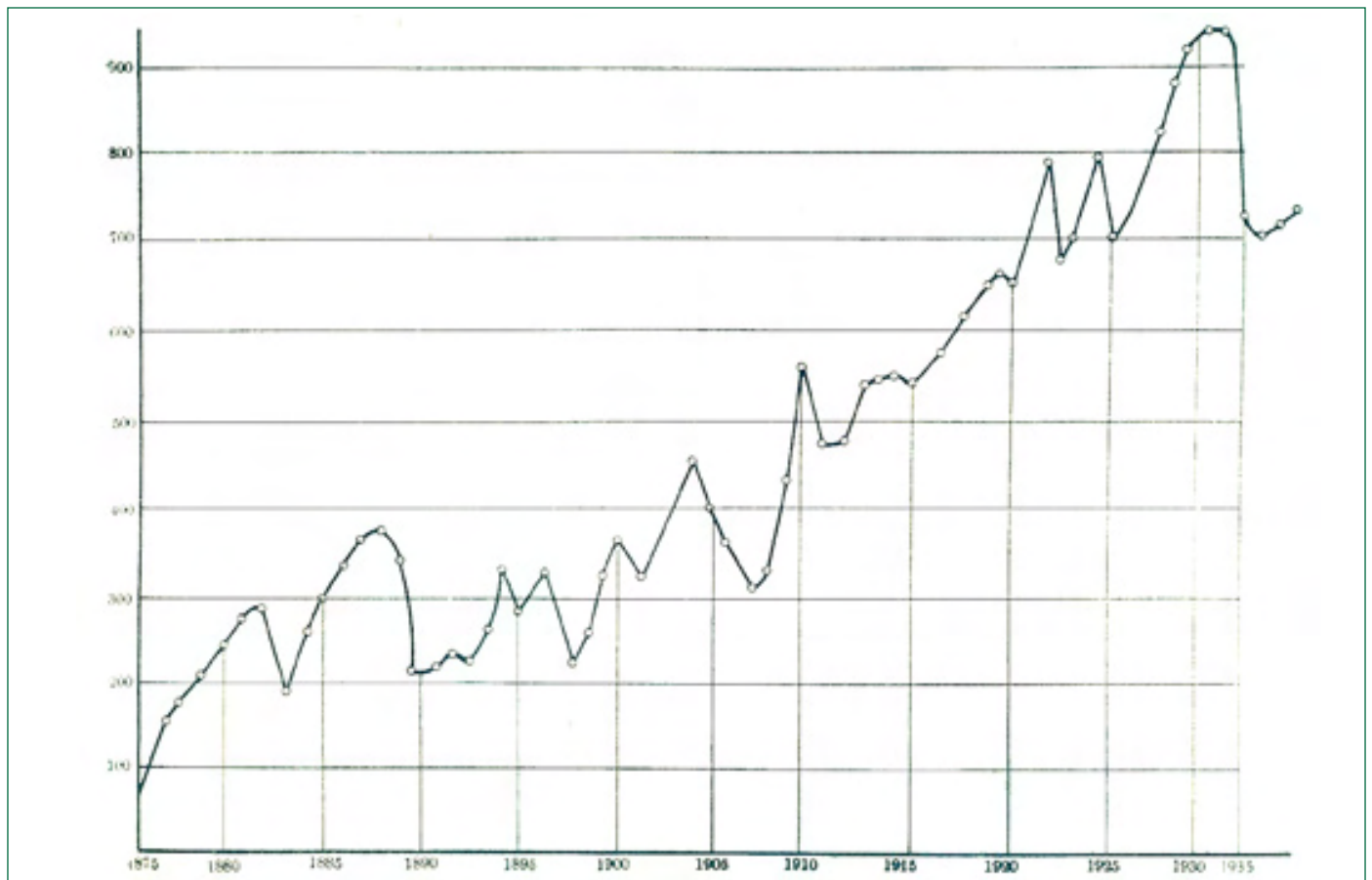


Records of St. Joseph's College
Annual Average Attendance
1875-1935

The peaceful period of time in the history of St. Joseph's College did not last long. The Pacific War and the chaotic political development in China had brought tremendous change. The Brothers worked hard and established St. Joseph's College as one of the top schools in Hong Kong; they also paved the development of other Lasallian schools here.

Pre-war

The graph shows the annual attendance of the College from 1875 to 1935. The sharp decrease in the early 30's was a result of the opening of La Salle College in Kowloon in 1932, when students from the Branch School were enrolled there. Before the war, the number of students in the College was steadily maintained between 700 and 800. Future prospects looked bright.



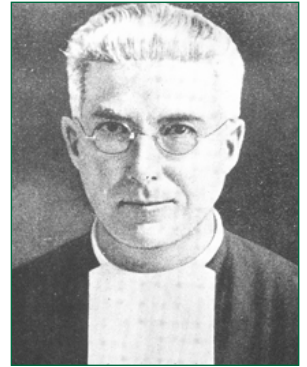
The Second World War

The Beijing Incident in 1937 triggered a whole-scale war between China and Japan. Though Hong Kong seemed to be relatively safe at the time, the tension was rising.

On the 7th December 1941, Japan invaded Kowloon and the New Territories. On the morning of the 8th December, when students of St. Joseph's College were waiting for the start of school at 8 a.m. they heard the sound of air-raid sirens and saw from Kennedy Road the Japanese planes bombing Hong Kong's Kai Tak aerodrome. They thought it was a practice by the colonial powers but it was the real thing. All the British air planes were destroyed and Hong Kong was at war.

Brothers in St. Joseph's College were in little danger except when the Japanese planes bombed the Masonic building, headquarters of the Air Raid Precautions (A.R.P.), and the Married Quarters of the British Army, all within 100 yards of the College. The Colony surrendered on Christmas day. A Japanese officer turned up at lunch on the 26th December and informed the Brothers that the College would be taken over as a depot for hospital stores.

Brother John Lynam, Director, Brother Martin Kelleher and Brother Paul O'Connell were given lodging by Father Burke at Wah Yan, a Jesuit College, while other Brothers were given food and housing by the Dominicans at Seymour Road.



Brother John Lynam

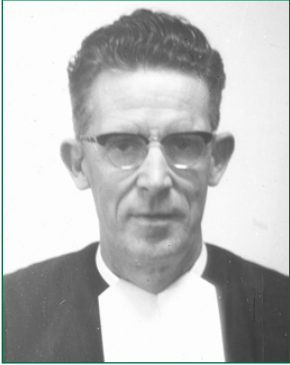


The first casualty of the War among the Brothers was Damian Peter Whealan from the USA who had volunteered to drive a Red Cross Ambulance on the first day of war. On the 23rd December 1941, his ambulance was ambushed by the Japanese troops in Happy Valley, Brother Damian Peter and his crew were bayoneted to death. His body was identified by the black robe he was wearing at the time.

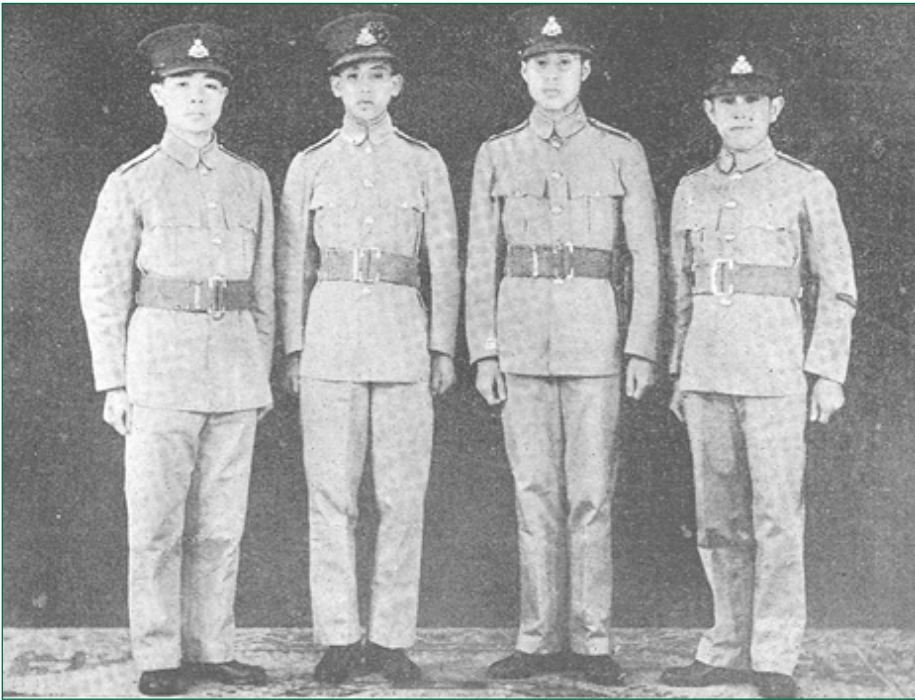
Two American Brothers, Brother Anthony Kilbourn and Brother Cornelius Peters were interned in Stanley Prison on the 20th January 1942. Brother Anthony was a big man. In the camp, he contracted



Brother Michael Curtin



Brother Felix Sheehan



Mr. Lim Kim Huan (second left),
Mr. Quah Cheow Cheang (far right)

malaria, beri-beri and pellagra and he lost 50 pounds during his internment.

Owing to the shortage of food, the Japanese encouraged foreign civilians to leave the Colony. Among them were Brother Felix Sheehan and Brother Michael Curtin. They were allowed to board a Japanese vessel going to Kong Chow Wan, where they planned to go to Chungking. But upon arrival, they found that the cost of transportation to Chungking was exorbitant. They then planned to join the Brothers in Vietnam but passenger boats to Indo-China were packed with bookings months ahead and they simply did not have enough money. But luck was with them. A veteran Norwegian Captain put the Brothers in the cabin of the ship's doctor (who had just quit his job) and the Brothers could travel free to Haiphong to join their fellow Brothers there, paying the Chief Steward only for meals.

St. Joseph's lost a good many lay teachers who belonged to the Hong Kong Volunteers or to the Royal Hong Kong Regiment. Casualties among the volunteers were very high. Among the victims were four with the surname Lim. They were Lim Siang Teik, Anthony Lim, Lim Kim Huan and Percy Felix Lim. Quah Cheow Cheang was left with a permanent limp.

At the outset of the war, St. Joseph's College was used by the British as a centre for refugees from Kowloon and as a Medical Depot. On the 27th December, two days after the surrender of Hong Kong, the Japanese came and ordered the evacuation of St. Joseph's and the Brothers were given no opportunity to save their personal belongings. The Japanese did a thorough job in looting or destroying furniture during their occupancy. In 1942, the College was run as a hostel for

Malaysian students stranded in Hong Kong. After one year, the hostel was closed and the College was "handed over to looters who made short work of the hinges and fastenings of the doors and windows".

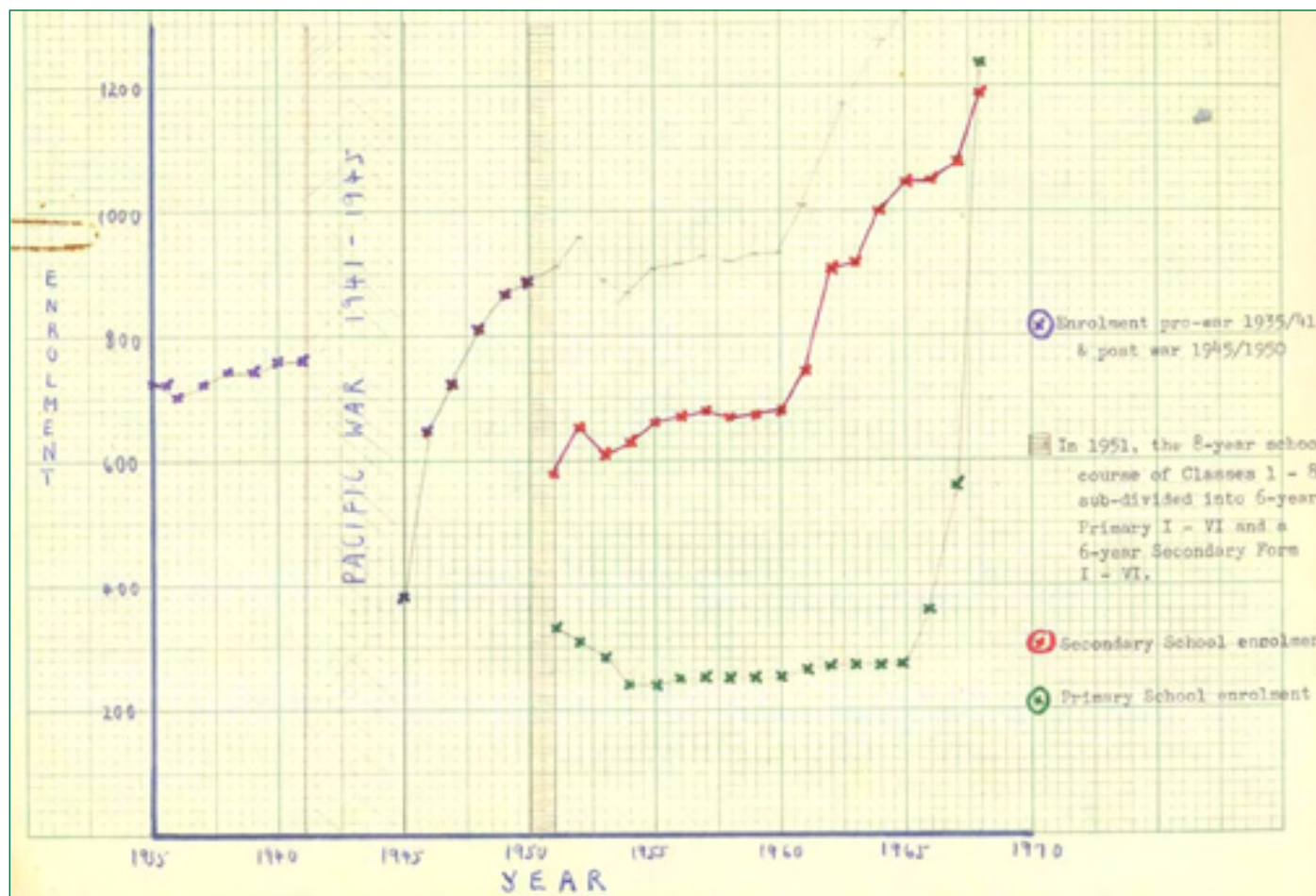
In October 1944, the Japanese decided to use St. Joseph's as a hospital. The Hakuai Kai, 博愛會, an organization like the Red Cross, took possession until the Japanese surrendered in 1945.

According to Brother John, the Japanese “quit in the usual Japanese fashion (no notice). The looters had the run of the place for some twenty-four hours until we arrived on the scene and even for several days it proved a herculean task for us to keep them out.”

Post War

St. Joseph’s opened its doors again with almost nothing, no furniture and no teachers. With the help of Brother Martin Kelleher, who was a very patient and resourceful man, lessons resumed quickly. In a very short time, Brother John found that the Brothers and lay teachers had gradually reported for duty and the number of students was also increasing.

With the addition of new Brothers from Ireland and Malaysia and the return of many lay teachers, the College recovered quickly after the War. The number of students wanting to enter the College increased so rapidly that many of them were put on long waiting lists. The vast majority of the students were Chinese, many of whom were children of refugees who came to Hong Kong because of the civil war in China. At the same time, many Portuguese migrated to Brazil and other countries in South America after the war. The Brothers and staff managed to maintain the good tradition of providing an all-round education to the students entrusted to them.





Expansion

In the years after the war, the demands for admission became so insistent that the Brothers planned to demolish the Club Germania and erect a modern school building on the same site. Brother Raphael Egan (Director, 1949-1958) and Brother Brendan Dunne (Director, 1958-1964) were the catalysts and an imposing, well-appointed and very practical structure was erected, with the main entrance along Kennedy Road. On the 14th June 1962, the Superior General, Brother Nicet Joseph, laid the foundation stone of the new building and it was blessed by Mgr. Lawrence Bianchi. In October 1963, Governor Sir Robert Black officiated at the opening of the main block and the Li Shek Pang Hall. A new era had begun.

The Present

Since then the School has celebrated its Centenary (1975) and is now approaching its 140th anniversary.

St. Joseph's was now roughly rectangular in shape and very centrally located. The North and West wings of the College have already been declared Historical Monuments. This has the advantage of attracting Government subsidy but restricts further expansion.

A significant development was the appointment of a lay Principal in 2002 and, for the first time, a female Principal in 2010.

The College received another significant boost in 2009, when one of its old boys, Charles Kao Kuen became a Nobel Laureate for Physics. He became known as the “father of optic fibre.”

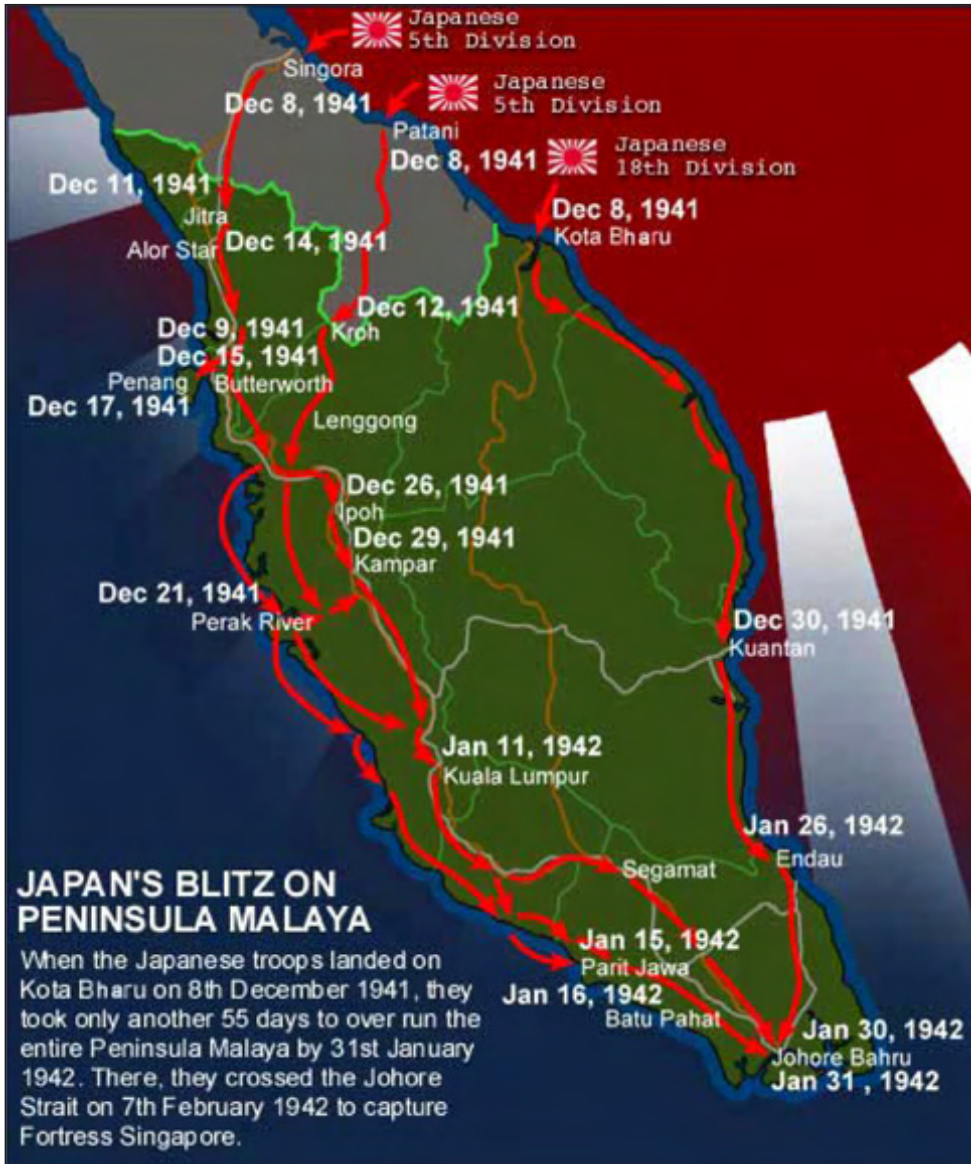
St. Joseph’s remains an all-boys school and currently has a student population of about 1000. ■



In Our Hearts Forever

— by Brother James Dooley

We Were Kept Prisoners



It was the last day of 1941. After evening prayer we chanted the Miserere to ask God's pardon for the shortcomings of the previous year and the Te Deum to thank him for his many graces and blessings.

We decided we would arm ourselves against looters wandering about in the hills and we assembled a collection of curtain poles, pokers and chunks of firewood. We still had some tinned food and several jars of homemade rhubarb jam. We chose a bedroom, removed a few floor boards, stored the food, replaced the planks and pulled the bed over the spot. We wished each other a very happy new year and went to bed.

I shared a room with Brother Gaston Trembley, a French-Canadian, a man about my

own age. I fell asleep almost at once but not for long. Gaston woke me shouting, "Get up, James, there's someone outside. Jap soldiers, I think." He was right. A soldier started battering our room door with the butt of his rifle, shouting all the time.

I did something, instinctively which, I learned later, was instrumental in saving our lives. Had we resisted, we would almost certainly have been executed. I opened the door and was immediately grabbed by my pajama front and dragged out into the yard.

A soldier held a revolver to my head, all the time repeating the same word which I did not understand until the translator came up.

The word was, "Ingrisu-ka!" "Are you English?" "No!" "Are you a soldier?" "No" ... all this through the translator.

When the soldier grabbed me, he had caught my profession crucifix which was entangled in my pajama coat. He examined it closely, let it drop gently and said, "Katoriku-ka?" which I took to mean, "Are you a Catholic?" "Yes," I replied. He pushed me away but kept me covered with his gun.

In the meantime, the other Brothers had been rounded up. They came armed with sticks and poles convinced the looters had come. Brother Finan Ryan from Tipperary, made a rather belated entry, armed with a brass curtain pole. A soldier rushed forward and snapped the pole out of his hand. The ghost of a smile flitted across his face as he placed the pole out of Finan's reach.

Brother Gaston tried explaining things in French but without success. When we had been lined up and counted, the leader addressed us through the translator.

"You need not be afraid, the Japanese Military Authorities wish to know how many people they have under them ... " and there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus ... "So", he continued, "you must come with us and after checking you can return here again. You may eat something if you wish. We leave in ten minutes, bring nothing with you but a change." ... which we were to learn later, meant a towel and a tooth brush.

"There is a lot of looting going on in this area." I ventured, "Could we leave one or two Brothers here to mind the house?"

"If the looters come, send for our tanks."

"But it would be impossible to bring tanks up here."

At this the translator lost his temper and shouted his ever memorable order: "Don't talking! Eating rice!"

A command was given in Japanese and soldiers who were hiding in the shadows ran out and motioned us back into the house. We were given no time for the 'eating rice' part, just five minutes to pack a few things. I managed to tuck the thirty local dollars Brother Dennis had given me earlier, in between the sole of my foot and the sock.

We were bundled and bullied out of the house and lined up. The first to step out in front of us was a Malay in native dress wearing a white headband acting as guide, whether willingly or unwillingly, I do not know, but I was to meet him again in very different circumstances after the war.



Following the Malay, came a Japanese soldier, with a flag attached to his fixed bayonet, then the Brothers, some in black robes, some in white, interspersed with soldiers and the officer with revolver bringing up the rear. It was approaching midnight and the moon was bright, so this stage of the journey was comparatively easy.

The translator caught up with me and asked bluntly, "Where is your wife?" "I am not married."

"Your father and mother? Are they alive?"

"Yes, in Ireland."

"In Ireland? Don't be afraid."

A halt was called at the next bungalow. The kicking and banging at the door started all over again but this time with very different results. The occupants, four bungalow staff, thought the callers were looters and they refused to open up. When a soldier pushed his hand through the partially broken door, one of the occupants split the back of his hand with a piece of firewood. Punishment was swift and drastic.

The four were dragged into the open, tied together, each facing out and in this barbaric manner and with blows and abuse, were forced to struggle, stumble and fall along the many miles of jungle path to the foot of the Hill. While we were watching this repulsive spectacle, the translator came over and said, "A Happy New Year, or rather a very unhappy new year ... war is always bad" ... an expression, 'Senso (war) taihen (very) warui (bad) desu' I was to hear very often during the course of war.

We were ordered to move again and this time the strict crocodile-style procession broke up. The path grew darker and Gaston and I even contemplated escape but thought better of it. The occupants of the next bungalow – our former base camp – **offered no resistance**. We were now about fifty people in all.

It was morning when we reached the foot of the Hill after almost eight hours of the most difficult and terrifying decent we had ever experienced, especially for the four Chinese moaning, crawling and stumbling along the dark jungle path. Two Japanese army trucks awaited us. The Brothers and the trussed up Chinese were bundled into one lorry; the remainder, about forty in number, was sandwiched into the second.

IT WAS NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1942.

We were paraded around the town but not with the success the Japanese may have expected. The streets were deserted, not a soul in sight, closed doors with Japanese flags pasted on them. The only

sign of 'life' was an upturned fire engine with its four wheels on fire – a fire engine on fire.

The lorries pulled up outside the Electrical Department. We were ordered to alight, lined up in single file, counted and led into the Electrical Department and ordered to sit on the floor.

The place was teeming with Japanese soldiers who waddled around in unlaced boots and dirty uniforms, unshaven and generally very fierce-looking. The order to move was given and this time, we were pushed into a garage and the door closed behind us. When I got used to the dim light, I noticed a group of Europeans at the back of the shed. They were soldiers, practically naked, skin and bone. "We were captured early," a boy soldier whispered, "they are starving us, beheaded one of our mates – but what are you doing here, Padre, you people are not in the war?" "Eh, Padre, another broke in, 'any chance of a match? We have a few fags but the monkeys took our matches.'" A Brother had matches.

The door opened again and a group of Japanese soldiers with fixed bayonets came towards us across the yard. We were ordered out again and as we left, one of the soldiers shouted after us, "Thanks for the matches, Padre. I hope the – bleep – will release you soon. Good bye."

We were lined up two by two and marched along the public road by a mob of grunting, uncouth sentries to the entrance of the Government School field – the King Edward VII School. Our school, St. George's, was only a few hundred yards further along the same road. We were arranged in a straight line in front of a platform and ordered to bow low to the Japanese sitting bolt upright on chairs. Here the Brothers were separated from the rest of the group and hustled across the playing field and made to stand in front of a long, magnificent table with a single, equally magnificent chair on the other side – taken from some rich board room, I surmised.

We were then subdivided further. Brother Finan, Gaston and I remained in front of the table; the Asian Brothers were moved a few steps to one side.

(To be continued)

Brother James Dooley was Principal of St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong, from 1964 to 1970 after which he taught in La Salle College until called to Rome in 1977.

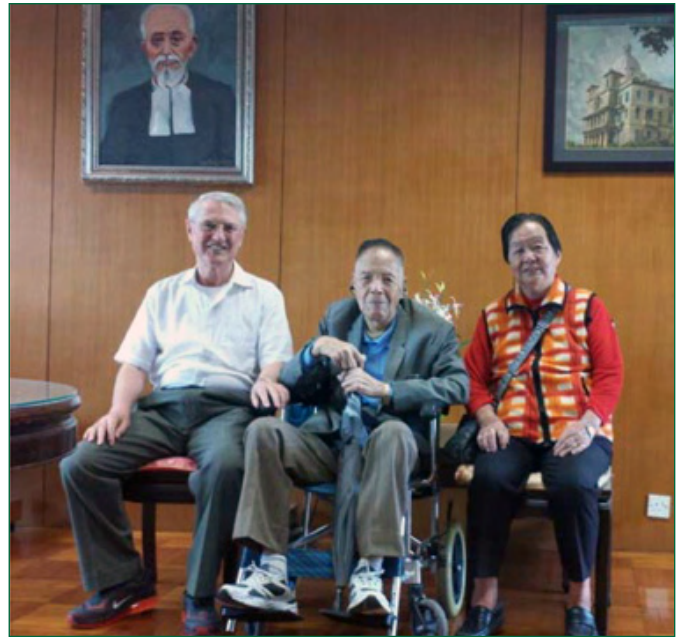
For more about Brother James, please read our Issue 6 at <http://www.lasalle.org.hk/pages/docs/TheGateway06.pdf>



Family Updates

Salt of the Earth

During the pre and post war days, there existed a class of men who worked in our schools for years on end and who were like school icons. They tended to work in or around the school office. They ran messages, met visitors and kept an eye on maintenance. They were general factotums and seemed to live forever. One such, in La Salle College, was Moi Cheung. He worked from 1940 until his retirement in 1997 (apart from a few years enforced absence because of the war). Moi Cheung, now over 90 years old, is still hale and hearty and, together with his wife, paid a nostalgic visit to the school on the 4th May 2014.



Primary Debating Tournament

The inaugural Hong Kong Primary School Debating Tournament was hosted by St. Joseph's Primary School on the 10th May 2014. The participating schools were Marymount Primary School, St. Francis Canossian Primary School, La Salle Primary School and St. Joseph's Primary School. After two rounds of competitions, the champion was Marymount and the first runner-up was St. Joseph's. The boys and girls had great fun that day and learnt a lot of debating skills from the three adjudicators. The tournament was brought to a close with an address by the Guest of Honour, Mr Hugh Davies Jones, former chair of the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools in the United Kingdom.



Versus



Every year, Chong Gene Hang College, courtesy of its native English teacher, Mr. Stuart Mead, presents a musical drama. The offering this year, on the 9th May, was a comedy entitled 'Versus'. Since Chong Gene Hang is now an all-boys school, girls are 'borrowed' from a neighbouring school for the occasion. A packed hall enjoyed the lively performance which consisted of singing, dancing, music and funny situations. The performers spoke their lines clearly and their acting skills were of a high order. The 'versus' was taken out of the equation by the end of the drama when boys and girls danced happily together.

Living Tradition

The Past Presidents of the Old Boys Association of La Salle College is an inspiring group. Some years back a tradition was established for the Past Presidents to have an annual dinner with the Executive Committee members of the day, to be hosted in turn. Appropriately enough, the gathering always takes place around the feast of St. La Salle. This year it was held on the 16th May, at Club Lusitano, and it was edifying to see both the older and younger generations mixing so easily and so well. Advantage is taken of the occasion for the Principal to deliver an update on school matters.



Keeping in Touch

A lunch is hosted every quarter by the Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council (HKLEC) and the Alumni Associations. School leaders are invited on a rotation system. La Salle College and Primary School Principals were the guests at the latest gathering. Besides enjoying the social dimension, the occasion is used for informal sharing on the progress of the schools involved. It is a timely occasion for congratulations and encouragement as the case may be.



Greenhills Visit



Administrators and parents from our Lasallian Greenhills School in Manila paid a visit to La Salle Primary School recently. Here is their response to the visit: “We wish to convey our appreciation, for the Lasallian warmth and hospitality that we experienced during the official benchmarking held on the 10th May 2014. The interaction between the two parent groups was the highlight of the activity, giving more fire to *the spirit of collaboration and partnership*. Suffice it to say that the group was enriched and the delight of the strength of the Lasallian family in making an impact in Christian education is prevalent. Thank you for truly making this arrangement possible.”



Sports Prize-Giving

On Tuesday, the 3rd June, La Salle College held its annual Sports Prize-Giving Ceremony for 2013–14. The Guest of Honour was Dr. Trisha Leahy Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Sports Institute. Dr. Leahy has also previously been engaged as Senior Psychologist at the Australian Institute of Sport where she worked with Australia's elite athletes at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

In her address she spoke of three tips she has learnt from supporting elite athletes over the years; (1) There are no failures – only learning experiences; (2) Excellence is a habit; (3) Ask for help – find an adult who will listen. Prizes were given for Inter-class and Inter-school Sports and Colours were awarded to the best sportsmen of the year.

Raffle Draw

The first ever Raffle Draw in connection with tickets sold for the Hong Kong Lasallian Mission Fund was held on Tuesday the 13th May 2014. It was the first time that all eight Hong Kong Lasallian schools joined together in a common fund-raising effort. The Lasallian Education Council operates the mission fund and one of its members, Mr. Paul Woo, was in charge of the raffle process. This year, some of the proceeds will go to De La Salle Secondary School, N.T., to the La Salle Study Centre, China and to the formation of Brothers in Myanmar.



Hitori Tabi (Solitary Journey)

“The romantic journey is usually a solitary one”



Hitori Tabi (Solitary Journey) is very popular in Japan. At some stages in our life, we would like to find time to travel alone without a tight itinerary, and that we can change plan and destination at our own will and mood. The feeling that no one on earth knows where we are perhaps adds some romantic elements to the journey as well.

127 years ago, a Hong Kong La Salle Brother made a solitary journey to Japan and he ended up at a destination that he himself could never imagine: Mount Futatabi in Kobe.

Brother Cyprian Gendreau, a French Canadian born 1845 in Quebec, was the second Director of St. Joseph's College in Hong Kong. He came to Hong Kong on the 20th January 1880. In 1881, the College moved from a rented house in Caine Road to a grand and spacious building in Robinson Road. Brother Cyprian devoted with great fervent for the students' as well as the school's development. Under his directorship, the College grew rapidly and the number of students kept increasing. He also earned a great sympathy from the clergy, parents and students due to his character and soft manners.

Brother Cyprian was sent to Rangoon community on the 18th April 1884 but was called back to Hong Kong on the same day in 1885. He was put in charge of the finance and boarders and he fulfilled the task entrusted to him zealously.

Unfortunately, he acquired a harmful dysentery at the beginning of March 1887. The doctors and Brothers did their best to secure all necessary treatment to him but his health worsened gradually. By the end of April the doctors believed that he might need to change the environment and suggested to send him to Japan.

So Brother Cyprian started his solitary journey on the 2nd May 1887, embarked for Yokohama aboard the 'Tanais'. However, he never made it to Yokohama where better medical arrangement



Tanais

might have been waiting for him. Brother Cyprian was so weak that the Captain of Tanais ordered to have him landed at Kobe by boat in the evening of the 7th May 1887.

Father Chatron, MEP who was missionary at Kobe, got information of the landing of a sick Brother. He rushed to visit Brother Cyprian and brought him to the European hospital after consulting the local doctors. Unfortunately, Brother Cyprian's life journey ended on the 10th May, at the age of 42 and in a very unexpected place.

His funeral was held on the 13th May and he was buried in Kobe Municipal Foreign Cemetery 神戸市立外国人墓地, which is situated in a beautiful forest in Mount Futatabi 再度山.

It was only until the 15th September 1991, more than 100 years after Brother Cyprian was buried, a marble tablet was set at Brother Cyprian's tomb by Brother Marcel Petit, former Aux. Visitor of Japan and Brother Ramon Bereicua, Marist Brother and former Director of Kobe Marist International School.

Brother Ramon wrote in October 1991:

"His cross tomb-stone is standing over the century in this cemetery for foreigners as a lone symbol of the presence of a teaching Brother at Kobe and in Japan. The Brothers of the Christian Schools only started their mission in Japan in 1932 and The Marist Brothers at Kobe in 1951, so that a close friendship has connected the two orders based on this historical monument."

The Hong Kong Lasallian Family is thankful to Brother Ramon for his great care and prayers to Brother Cyprian. ■



The origin of the name Mt. Futatabi

It is said that Kobo, Buddhism Great Teacher, had climbed the sacred place of this mountain and trained himself before he studied Buddhism in Tang (present China) more than 1200 years ago, and he came back to climb again ; that's why we call the mountain Mt. Futatabi (futatabi means "again").



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