



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

September 2012

Forty First Issue

Welcome

A sizable number of China's Olympians, mainly of the gold medal variety, visited Hong Kong towards the end of August to much public acclaim. Our lone Hong Kong bronze medallist, however, was not forgotten, nor were all those who took part. Hong Kong did much better in the Para-Olympics, bagging 12 medals. Roll on Rio.

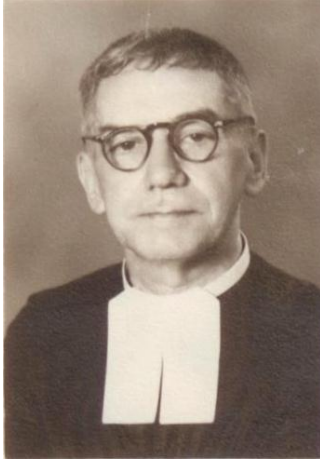
After the usual long, hot, humid summer, interspersed with typhoons, the students are back in class. Schools have now completed the first year of the 3-3-4 system which comprises 3 years of junior secondary, 3 years of senior and 4 years of university. The Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) at the end of secondary 6 has replaced both the School Certificate and A Level examinations. Liberal Studies has been introduced for the first time as a core subject, alongside English, Chinese and Mathematics. There are some teething problems but, by and large, things are shaping up well.

Our Brother of the Month was a cheerful, optimistic person. Just reading about him and his adventures is a tonic to the spirit. He reminds us to have a good laugh every now and then.



Brother of the Month

Brother Honorius Dupont 1885-1963



Basile Dupont was born in France on the 23rd January 1885. He joined the Juniorate of the De La Salle Brothers at Nantes in 1899, entered the Novitiate and took the Brothers' Habit in 1900 and received the name Brother Honorius. He completed his initial further studies at the La Salle Training College, Nantes, in 1903. He also took out a Teachers' Diploma from Rennes University.

He must have had missionary blood in his veins because in 1905 we find him en route to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to begin his lifelong commitment to missionary life. We are fortunate that we have his personal account about his early days in the East. The self-deprecating humour of the man is plainly seen.

"I bade adieu to good old 'Oceanien' which had brought me from Ceylon to Singapore, and here I was at St Joseph's Institution, that ever-memorable January day in 1906. I had been through a six months' initiation into the intricacies of the English idiom in Ceylon, but the course had not been an intensive one.

I felt awed by the gigantic proportions of St Joseph's Institution; and Brother Director Michael, an American, had to be known to be truly appreciated. As ill luck would have it, that very afternoon, I went all on my own, and without permission, to the Convent, a stone's throw away. In the evening I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of the Sub-Director, Brother Aimar, with whom, in later years, I was to spend glorious years in Hong Kong.

Good Brother Aimar was heading for our country house where he was to stay overnight. I asked to go with him and he naturally referred me to the Brother Director. It was then 6 p.m. and the Spiritual reading had begun. The large Community of 20 or so were around a long table under the gaslight. In fear and trepidation I went in on tip-toe, behind the Director. Just then he swung round, and before I could utter a single word, he demanded to know where I had been all afternoon and why I was late for the spiritual exercises. Every face wore a grin but like a greenhorn I read no signal and haltingly said that Brother Aimar was willing to bring me to the country house. The Director jumped up and asked how I dared, a young Brother just out of

the Novitiate, to give scandal to his Community. With a withering look and in an indignant tone, he told me to go straightaway to the chapel and recite the seven penitential psalms!

That was the end of my country house pipe-dream. Instead of going to the chapel I went to Brother Aimar who had known what the result would be and he burst out into uncontrollable laughter. I was absolutely baffled. Later I learned that Brother Director Michael had enjoyed himself immensely on my account and that if I would pluck up sufficient courage to beard the lion in his den, he would appreciate it. I did so and discovered that 'the lion' was a very hoax. We remained fast friends thereafter.

At 3 o'clock on a cool January morning in 1906, the S.S. Kinta from Singapore cast anchor three miles from the muddy mouth of the Malacca River. The evening before,

I had had a harrowing experience when, as a 'padre', I found myself seated next to the Captain at dinner. There was a goodly company, homely and kind. I was greatly perplexed at the array of cutlery - bread-, butter-, meat- and fish knives; and of course it was always the wrong ones I handled. I could see the smiles on every face; but the Captain was a good soul who had seen much in his long career and was shock-proof. He gently guided my faltering hands through the intricacies of the protocol.



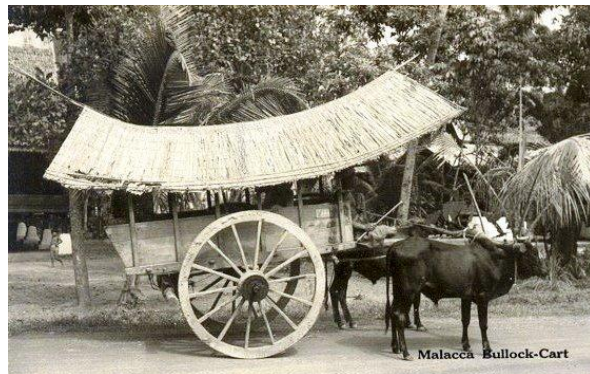
Worse was soon to follow, when after dessert, glass bowls were handed round, for the guests to dip their fingers in. Nothing daunted, and already unnerved by previous mishaps, I seized my bowl with both hands and downed the contents at one gulp! I was a goner but the long-suffering Captain on my left and the lady on my right deftly created a diversion. The meal was over at last, and I beat a hasty retreat into my cabin.

In this frame of mind I was taken to the Brothers' house in Church Lane and left all alone at 3.30 a.m. facing a closed door. Evidently I was not expected. Subdued fits of coughing issued from the most unprepossessing house I could imagine – a rickety shop-house known to be 'haunted' and now in full possession of rats, cockroaches, bugs and innumerable spirits of darkness. For obvious reasons it was dubbed 'Rat Villa'. I knocked and waited; shouted out and waited again, but there was nothing stirring. In a louder tone I shouted, 'Open, please! It's a Brother from Singapore'. At

last I heard the shuffling of feet and shutters were pushed open, as a sleepy voice growled, 'Who's there, this time of night?' I stepped out into the street to reveal myself in full regalia. 'Alright, I'm coming down' and that was my first encounter with the famous Brother Matthew whose fame as a practical joker was common knowledge in the District.

Upstairs I made the acquaintance of the grand old Brother Dositheus, at the time the victim of violent spasms of asthma. To relieve this he would inhale strong vapours, and this was the cause of the fits of coughing I had heard. As there was an hour to go before the morning bell he gave me a long chair and a jug of water and advised me to lie down.

One bright January day in 1907 there was an array of bullock-carts in front of our house. The great occasion was our transfer to brand new premises. It was an imposing two-storeyed U shaped building facing the Straits of Malacca, in Banda Hiler Road. Ours was a rather humiliating exodus, for such was the quality of our belongings that, as in the case of St La Salle, we ran no risks of their being pilfered!



Our transfer to Banda Hilir marked a turning point in our history. We were now in a position to accommodate 400 boys on an ideal site. The more favourable living conditions certainly encouraged better work though it was not without a pang of regret that we left 'Rat Villa.'



My first 'Class Trouble' was the product of over-zeal. Among the 50 boys I had in Standard 1 was a sprinkling of Muslims. They were a decent lot. The first morning they marched in wearing their 'songkoks' (headgear) I felt outraged and went on the warpath. After reading the 'riot act' I threatened to lay about with a stick unless they removed the obnoxious caps. That

afternoon Brother Director received many complaints but he wisely calmed the troubled waters and drew attention to my youth, inexperience and well-meant zeal for discipline.

Another day the Director of Education himself, on a tour of inspection, unexpectedly strode into my class. He asked me what I did with the boys from nine to twelve. Assuming my best accent I answered, 'The big boys make operations, while the others read'. Like the gentleman he was, he gently checked me, 'You mean they do sums?' I was completely upset. I had never heard the expression before, so I countered with, 'No, sir. I make them count'. The big man turned to the Brother Director and said, 'What part of France does this young Brother come from?' Catastrophe! There, despite my desperate attempts at disguise, I stood exposed to the public gaze!

Another time, during a reading lesson, we came across the sentence, 'The woodman fells the trees'. Seeing a chance to vindicate myself before the class, I solemnly declared there was a misprint and 'fells' should read 'falls'. I had never seen 'fell' used as a transitive verb and insisted on their correcting the 'wrong' spelling in their reader. The next day came complaints from the parents, and once more I had to swallow the bitter pill.

I confronted the afternoon class with some composure. I began with Dictation, a sure subject. I had chosen a passage dealing with chemistry. The vocabulary was familiar. The passage began: 'The chemist...' Unhesitatingly I blurted out; 'The sheemist...' I was halted by an uproar of protests and one of the class leaders said sharply, 'In English we say 'kemist'. That threw a damper on the other lessons and at 4 o'clock I promptly went to bed with high fever.

We come now to the year 1911. A new Brother Director, Edward Lewis, had taken over. It was about this time that Malacca experienced its first attack by a swarm of locusts. They made their unwelcome appearance on a Saturday night at about six and left the following morning. Never did we have such dreaded visitors. Attracted by the many lights in the school they invaded the premises: study rooms, dining rooms, the dormitory and oratory, playing havoc with everything and leaving an unsightly mess everywhere.



The field was alive with them to a depth of three to four inches. The trees were actually bending under the weight of the loathsome creatures. By the time they had done their work of destruction, there was not a blade of grass on the ground, not a leaf on the gaunt,

desolate trees. Instead there was the sickening stench of millions of crushed bodies which lay in mounds in the sweltering heat of the tropical sun.

In face of the ever increasing demand for education, we had perforce to consider the addition of a new wing to St Francis Institution. I was invited by Brother Director to be his companion on a begging tour. Our purpose was to secure funds to enable us to put up the present boarders' dormitory. A concert marked the formal opening in 1914. Meanwhile I had gone on leave to attend the Second Novitiate and while on board I had a very pleasant dream during which I heard echoes of the concert wafted across the Indian Ocean.

On my return in 1915, I was transferred to Kuala Lumpur. I returned to Malacca only in 1933 and at year's end I was sorry to leave on transfer to Hong Kong."

So ends the interesting reminiscences. One of his Malacca old boys says that Brother Honorius was the most unforgettable character, "short, plump, forever bubbling with humour. He was never a dull teacher and always unbiased."



From 1922 to 1932, Brother Honorius found himself back in St. Joseph's Institution, Singapore. He was in his element, putting on school concerts and plays. As usual, something that couldn't go wrong just did go wrong for the heck of it [in line with Murphy's Law] and at the worst possible moment. Where he was counting on glory he came unstuck! But he took it all in good part.



LA SALLE COLLEGE STAFF 1936

His arrival in Hong Kong took place on the 8th February 1934 and he was assigned to teach in La Salle College, Kowloon. Although sad to leave Malacca after so many years, he came to regard Hong Kong as 'Paradise Regained.' He straightaway entered into the life of the school. His flair for organizing dramatic productions was soon evident and Brother Cassian was able to write

in his diary how Brother Honorius had directed a stage production for the Feast of St La Salle in 1935 with a “splendid display of youthful talent.”

He was Form Master of the Matriculation Class, organizer of dramatics and spiritual director of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin. His lessons continued to be well taught and inspiring.

Of course the humorous incidents associated with his name continued. The old boys would often recall the day he had to go on stage and say a few words. On stage, he tripped and fell, much to the amusement of the boys. It was not every day they would see a Brother, in full regalia, falling on stage. Brother Honorius took it all in good part.

Some people believe that Brother Honorius wrote the words of the La Salle College song, much beloved by students and old boys. There is, however, strong competition and we will have to bide our time before final pronouncement.

After the outbreak of war, Brother Honorius was interned with the other Brothers until February 1942. As the Community had no means of livelihood he left, together with Brother Aimar, for French Indo-China (Vietnam) on the 1st March 1942. For four and a half years he taught English in the La Salle College, Saigon. He returned to Hong Kong in September 1946 and left for a holiday home in the summer of 1947. Before he left, the old boys hosted a dinner in his honour. While at home he received instructions to return to the East - back to Malacca! This was in 1948.



By now he was 63 years old but he continued to teach for some time and only left Malacca in 1957, finally retiring to St Patrick's School, Singapore, where he died on the 20th September 1963.

Mention Brother Honorius and those who knew him recall his gentle, gifted, humorous and dynamic personality. He was of a sunny disposition. He was forever smiling.

Posting of Brother Honorius

Nantes, France	Juniorate	1899
Nantes, France	Novitiate	1900
Nantes, France	Training College	1901-1903
Colombo, Ceylon	English Studies	1905
St Francis Institution, Malacca	Teaching	1906-1914
Rome, Italy	Second Novitiate	1914-1915
St John's Institution, Kuala Lumpur	Teaching	1915-1921
St. Joseph's Institution, Singapore	Teaching	1921-1932
La Salle College, Kowloon	Teaching	1934-1942
La Salle Saigon, Vietnam	Teaching	1942 –1946
La Salle College, Kowloon	Teaching	1946-1947
St Francis Institution, Malacca	Teaching	1948-1957
St Patrick's School, Singapore	Retired	1958-1963



Bro: Honorius
19/9/46

Family Updates

Sir John Joseph Swaine RIP

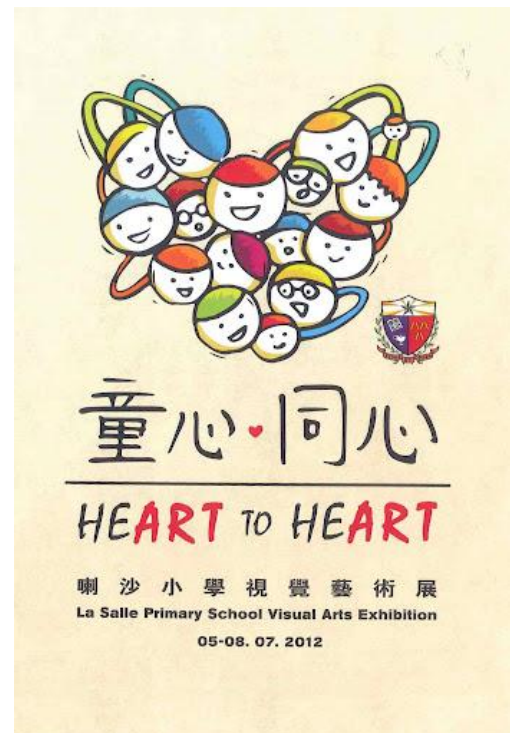
The Hong Kong Lasallian Family mourns the loss of Sir John Swaine, a prominent Old Boy of St. Joseph's College. He came to Hong Kong from Shanghai and after graduating from St. Joseph's, took his first degree at Hong Kong University followed by a degree in Law from Cambridge. He worked his way up to become one of the most renowned barristers in Hong Kong.

Sir John was the first President of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to be elected by and from the members of the Legislative Council in 1993-1995. He worked tirelessly in and for the legal profession, as well as on behalf of numerous civic and public organisations for more than 40 years. Throughout his career, Sir John was recognised for his remarkable achievements, and was acclaimed as a trustworthy man who worked diligently and scrupulously in the best interests of the entire community.



Heart to Heart

For the first time in Hong Kong Lasallian history, La Salle Primary School exhibited the artwork of its students in the grand Cultural Centre. The Committee of the Visual Arts Club of the school was the driving force. The preparation process involved the whole school community – students from Primary 1 to 6, teachers and parents. Splendid and highly imaginative and creative works were displayed in the exhibition gallery. The Opening Ceremony was on the evening of the 5th July and the exhibition ran until the 8th July. “Every child is an artist” said Picasso. Judging by the exhibition it certainly looked that way.



Hong Kong Lasallian Facilitators' Camp



The Lasallian Volunteers are composed of the young graduates of Lasallian schools in Hong Kong. Among other things, they help in the organization of school orientation programmes and run an annual Lasallian Leadership Camp. This year, in order to prepare for the leadership camp, they decided to train the

facilitators. This was done through workshops and seminars on the 18th and 19th of August. The facilitators were exposed to various practical skills, including the development of a sense of belonging, responsibility and interpersonal relations, all in the context of enhancing the Lasallian spirit of Faith, Service and Community.

Brothers on the move

During the month of August, we witnessed the arrival at La Salle College of Brother Richie Yap from the Sector of the Philippines and the transfer of Brother Jeffrey Chan from La Salle to St. Joseph's College. Br Richie will do some teaching, will be the administrator in the LEAD Provincialate Office and at the same time, will pursue a Masters degree in Education. Br Jeffrey will teach in St. Joseph's and be a facilitator for the formation of the Hong Kong Lasallian Family. We wish both Brothers the very best in their new assignments.



Br Jeffrey Chan



Br Richie Yap

The Elusive Double



On Saturday night in front of a packed crowd at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai, La Salle College Chinese Debating Team won the Inter-School Chinese Debating Championship against

Queens College. La Salle debated the affirmative on a motion about nations pursuing universal values rather than national agendas on the global stage. Team Leader and Student Association President KO Jason, was awarded the 'Best Debater.' It has been 10 years since La Salle College last won and it now holds the record of 10 Championship titles for this competition. The icing on the cake is that the school's English Debating Team had also clinched the championship – a double of the first class as it were.

International Lasallian Days for Peace

Once again, the International Lasallian Days for Peace is approaching. The actual dates are from the 21st September to the 21st October 2012. This event invites us to reflect on and promote peace in our lives – peace among communities, peace in our schools, peace within our family, and inner peace.



This invitation strikes a sympathetic chord in many hearts. The absence of peace in so many parts of the world and in so many lives is brought home to us every day, especially through the media. By means of our Lasallian Peace Days, we are given the opportunity to play our personal parts in building up the human community. All our Hong Kong Lasallian schools are strongly encouraged to promote peace in our world in creative ways, suited to their circumstances.

Birthday Brother

Brother Steve, Principal of La Salle College, Kowloon, barely had time to celebrate his 51st birthday on the 6th September 2012. But school staff ensured he took a little time off from his busy schedule to enjoy slices of a lovely mango birthday cake. We wish Brother Steve many happy returns of the day.



Opening and Blessing

A rather special event was held on the 5th September 2012 in Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School when there was an Opening Mass and Blessing of the school's newly renovated chapel. The celebrant was Fr. Matthew Chan, S.D.B. The chapel designer, Mr. George Hung, was also in attendance. Catholic students and parents participated and sang beautifully. The school Supervisor, Miss Loretta Yu, remarked that this event was the culmination of one of the dreams of the school's founder, Br. Herman Fenton.



Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD) Council Meeting

The most recent LEAD Council Meeting was held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The day prior to the actual meeting, 24th of August, was given over to an exposure programme. First off, of course, was a visit to the two campuses of La Salle College where the Principal, Mrs. Julia Jok, and Board Chairman, Mr. Ho, showed Councillors around. Both the Lower and Upper Secondary sections are in good shape and in good hands and were left in no doubt that this is a Lasallian school..

Councillors were then taken on a number of visits to learn about local human development and community organizations. Perhaps the most touching visit was to a site for stateless children and their parents. Conditions, to say the least, were basic. The children have no rights to attend regular schools. They have to make do with a makeshift classroom constructed of a few wooden posts and planks. The 'blackboard' is a piece of plywood. There are no desks or chairs. The La Salle Brothers, the Good Shepherd Sisters, a Christian Missionary and a volunteer teacher do their best to bring life, joy and knowledge into this setting.



MY CHINA DREAM |

There is a rural village in Guangdong where even a 4-year-old can fluently respond to an English greeting. And as Xu Jingxi, of the China Daily discovers, it's all thanks to the efforts of a retired Chinese-Malaysian. In part, this is what she has to say.



When David Liao turned up in Changjiao village 10 years ago and announced that he would teach the children how to speak English for free, the villagers in this tiny hamlet in Meizhou, Guangdong Province, all thought he was just a “mad foreigner”. Liao, now 67, spoke only English and a smattering of Mandarin, and the people in this mountain community were puzzled by his attention, and intentions. “We couldn’t figure out why he chose to come to our remote village to teach English. And as a man who was almost 60 at that time, he was still single. How strange!” villager Chen Cuixiang recalls. But Liao was no stranger, as they thought. “I was born in Malaysia but Changjiao village is my ancestral home. I decided to come back to help the village after I retired as an English teacher and a high school principal in Malaysia,” he explains. He had visited Changjiao village twice before, in 1996 and 2001. “The village was an abandoned, dying village, with only old people doing a little farming work. The young people were all going to the cities to earn money. There were only mud and gravel roads,” Liao’s first impressions of his ancestral village were dismal. “The village head complained that it was difficult to find an affordable English teacher who would agree to come to the mountain village to work,” Liao recalls. He thought about it and decided to volunteer for the job. It was not easy-going, and Liao found his intentions questioned. Villagers were suspicious and students played tricks on him —puncturing his bicycle tires and stealing his laptop. Instead of getting discouraged, Liao decided to work at it, studying the local Hakka dialect so he could communicate better. After classes, he would ride to tutor two private students, one-on-one. He had one student in the village and the other in Dabu county about 7 km away. “No matter what you do, there is always someone who supports you, someone who is against you and another who would wait and see. I must do it well even if there is only one in a hundred who supports me,” Liao says. It was this commitment that started to change the general perception

David Liao’s teaching skills have quickly spread by word of mouth, and more and more people from the surrounding country and cities heard of this experienced teacher with nearly 45 years of English teaching under his belt. The media has also helped spread his reputation to as far away as Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Huizhou.



There are now many parents eager to send their children to his classes during weekends and school holidays. In their eyes, Liao's classes offer their children a chance at a better future. "Because of the lack of qualified English teachers, kids in rural areas lag far behind their peers in urban areas in terms of English proficiency. It is often the subject where the biggest gap in scores

lies," Liao says. Since Liao started teaching English in Changjiao, more than 20 young people from the village have gained admission to college. Before that, there were very few. Liao also sponsored those college students who had difficulty paying tuition, and the subsidies ranged from 3,000 yuan (\$472) to 10,000 yuan per year per student. But he has also been plagued by the principles of diminishing returns. There are now too many students for him to handle. "I never thought of gaining fame with teaching. Some parents also think I can improve their children's English with just a weekend course, or a week of lessons. "Also, I believe in quality education. The number of students in a class shouldn't be too big," Liao adds. David Liao not only established the English tuition center, he also funded the building of the cement road leading into the village, set up street lamps, bought nearly 10,000 pomelo saplings for an orchard and established a pig farm for villagers. Liao explains his commitment.

"My father passed away when I was 13 years old. A kind-hearted principal sponsored my education. I decided that I would also help people in need when I grew up. My father's sudden death made me realize life could be fragile. He passed away in his sleep without any warning, right beside me in the bed. "I should live every day to the full. For me, it means devoting myself to helping people."

It is this spirit of giving that is even more important than the English lessons, he says, and he hopes now his students in the village can also pay it forward. In fact, his efforts have shown fruit — Changjiao village is now known as the "English" village where even the young children you meet on the streets can greet visitors with a, "Good morning" and, "How do you do", in English. Villagers who used to quarrel over trivialities have been moved by David Liao's generous spirit, and they have learned to help each other. "I may leave the village five years later," says Liao. "The English learning center doesn't belong to me. It belongs to the village and I'm confident that they will maintain it with the farming projects I helped establish. And my students will be the new teachers."



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