

# My Eighty Years

CHEUNG CHUN KWOK



# BIOGRAPHY

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- Principal, Cognito Matriculation Evening Institute (1961-62)
- Supervisor, Cognito Matriculation Evening Institute (1961-95)
- Principal, Cognito College (1962-70)
- Principal, Cognito College (Kowloon) (1970-99)
- President, HK Private Anglo-Chinese Schools Association (1975)
- Chairman, HK Association of Heads of Secondary Schools (1984-89)
- Member, Board of Directors, Centre for the Promotion of Chinese Culture in HK (1985-92)
- Member, Consultative Committee for the Basic Law (1985-89)
- Also served in various committees in the Hong Kong Education Department, Hong Kong Examinations Authority and Co-ordinating Committee on Rehabilitation Services



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## EARLY YEARS

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I was born in December of 1937, the year of full-scale Japanese invasion. My family had high hope of me when I was born but their expectations were dealt a severe blow when I was infected with polio (infantile paralysis) at the age of 3. As a result, my left lower limb became totally not functional and my right lower limb perhaps 50% functional. Later on in life I found that it affected my upper limbs as well to a lesser degree. My hands are shaking all the time. That is why I was sometimes called “Shaking Hands” by my friends. My hand and eye co-ordination is bad and I suspect I do not hear the full complement of sounds. Whenever I try to sing, I go out of tune. But I love art and music nonetheless.

I do not remember much of my early days. At the age of 6 possibly, I went to school. Yes, I went to school during the Japanese occupation because my mother was a teacher in one of the schools that were still open. The school was not far away. My mother carried me on her back and my older sister and brother walked along beside us. One day a woman was paraded in the street for some heinous crime, allegedly using human meat in the porridge she sold. Life was hard for everyone and very humiliating. For us young kids, it was a little better because the grown-ups bore the brunt. The fight for survival was very real. A boyhood friend 10 or more years older who used to tell us stories full of imagination

which fascinated us also told us how after the death of his mother he had no means to bury her. He could only drag her body out and left it some distance away in the street.

After the war, the school was closed because the principal was supposed to be pro-Japanese. The teachers of the school, my mother included, grouped together and established their own school in make-shift premises, very make-shift indeed, in vacant tenement flats, one-flat one classroom with old-fashioned no-flush toilet at the back. I don't remember learning much from my primary school. However, we did have history lessons. From these lessons, we learnt how we were humiliated by the western powers (Russia and Japan included) in the past 100 years and how when the students and the people protested they were suppressed by their government. We also learnt of course about the Japanese invasion and Japanese cruelty and the heroic fight of the Chinese people. We were very patriotic at the time. After the Japanese surrender, a large contingent of Chinese soldiers did arrive fresh from their victory in Burma against the Japanese. There were stories that they might stay to take over Hong Kong. I was among those who cheered them marching down Nathan Road. How I wished they had stayed.



One Year Old

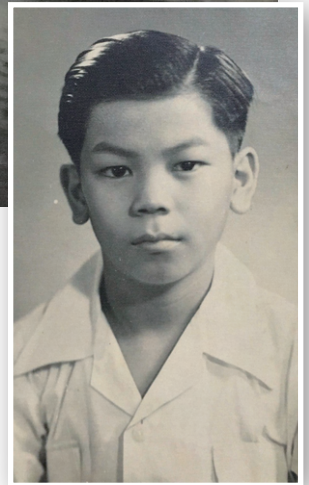


Two Year Old





Primary school days



## SECONDARY SCHOOL

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After Primary 6, I failed to gain admission to any government secondary school. My parents decided to send me to a private English school Pooi Sun English College in Lai Chi Kok Road, Shamshuipo. I was interviewed by Mr. Lai the Principal. He asked me to say the 24 letters of the alphabet and I could not. I was admitted all the same. I do not think anyone was ever rejected. I started with Class 8, the equivalent of Primary 5, the lowest class. Because of the disruption of the War, the school adopted a speed-up system. From Class 8 to Class 5, promotion was half-yearly so that when I switched to La Salle College F.3 in 1952 I was able to recover the 2 years I had lost.

Pooi Sun was also housed in vacant tenement flats with hardly any equipment and no laboratory. The senior classes starting from Class 4 were housed in another building in Portland Street, Mongkok. The classrooms were still tenement flats but there was probably a sort of a laboratory. I remember we could buy popsicles during recess time from street vendors. We did not have to go down. We only had to throw our money down and the popsicles or other kinds of food would be thrown accurately up to the veranda in front of our classroom.

When I was in the Shamshuipo campus, a cousin still carried me to school. But I could walk well enough in school. I often tried to walk a bit on my way home. Going to the Mongkok campus, I did all the walking on my own. I was more serious about my study at Pooi Sun. First I was attracted by the books, especially the history books with their beautiful colour pictures. I had no trouble with my studies. I was either the 2nd or 3rd boy in class. The first always went to an older boy who later became a senior government official. I was happy to see his name and signature on the deed of sale of our King Fuk Street school site, representing the Government. There was a wide range of difference among the teachers in Pooi Sun. Some were very bad, some very good. One teacher in my first year prided himself in teaching us to pronounce a very difficult English word “refreshments”. He said there were 7 sound bits “wu-re-frer-rer-s-mun-s” and urged us to remember them. Some teachers were very good. One teacher introduced to us the American method of diagrammatic analysis. It illustrated the basic structures of the English sentence very clearly and effectively. I later used that in my own English teaching.

In my first 2 years in La Salle I was grilled with a big grammar book called High School English Grammar with many, many exercises. It was a chore, unnecessary and time wasting. Only the basic things should be taught in grammar. English teaching in La Salle was rather old-fashioned. Besides High School English Grammar we also had a book called First Aid in English. We were asked to learn the many idioms and proverbs and similes. I would not say it was entirely bad because the idioms, proverbs and similes, etc came in useful in later times. Our course book was called



Fundamental English, the same course book used by schools in the UK. I remember one chapter in F.4 was the speech by Mark Anthony in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Some may think Shakespeare in F.4 was too early. In actual fact, that was the only chapter in the whole course that I remember. I liked it so much that I voluntarily memorized the whole speech. So long as the language was good and the substance interesting, some textual difficulty was not a problem. The speech might have some influence on my choice of English Literature as my major at the university.

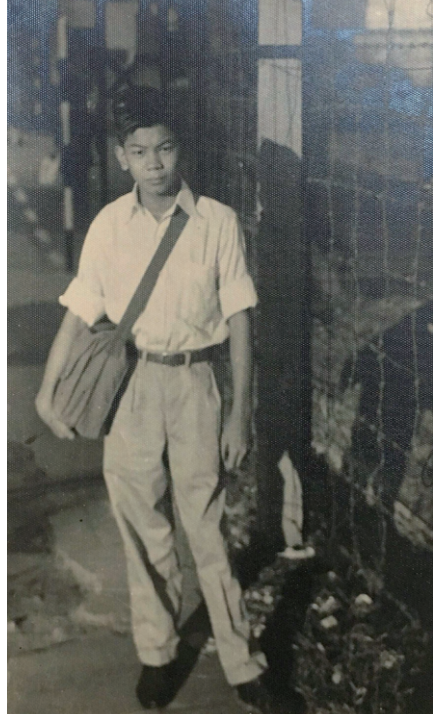
La Salle at that time was housed in temporary premises in Perth Street in Homantin because Old La Salle was still used



Secondary school days

as a military hospital by the Government. We were housed in rows of wooden classrooms separated by rows of grass. No air-conditioning but it was cool enough. We had a football field, two basketball courts and a big hall and four laboratories.

To go to school I had to take a bus. The nearest bus stop was a number 6 bus stop at the junction of Tai Po Road and Nathan Road. In the 1950s, boarding a bus was no easy thing, especially a No. 6 bus. We had to fight our way in. This of course was impossible for me. So I ended up walking to Prince Edward Road to take the number 1 bus to Tsimshatsui bus terminus. There I changed to a No.7 bus to reach school. It was an indirect and long ride. School I think began at about 8. So I had to leave home quite early.



When I was admitted to La Salle, I told myself I had to work harder. Promotion was not automatic as in Pooi Sun. I had to pass English, Chinese and Mathematics. It was rumoured I had to pass Biblical Knowledge as well. It turned out that I did not have much trouble with my lessons. I was quite balanced in both the arts and the science subjects. It was also fortunate that my weakest subjects: Physical Education, Art

and Music were not counted as examination subjects. So in all the F.3 and F.4 examinations, I was able to come out first. In F.5 because students took different subjects, there was no ranking. The F.5 Examination was at that time called the School Leaving Certificate Examination. The majority of students took the English version of the Examination. In La Salle, students were given the freedom of entering whatever subjects they liked for the Examination, even subjects not taught in school. I entered 11 subjects: English Language, Chinese Language, Chinese History and Literature, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biblical Knowledge, History, English Literature and Civics. The last 3 subjects were not taught in school. At first, I also wished to enter Biology, but I could not even draw the picture of the cross section of the broad bean from the microscope. So I had to give up. I received some help from the Principal Bro. Patrick in the poetry section. He printed some very good notes on the poems. When the results came out, I was a little disappointed that I obtained only 2 distinctions and 4 credits. My bad handwriting might have been part of the reason. It might also be fair to say distinctions and credits were not so easy to come by in those days. 2 distinctions and 4 credits were not a bad result at all. I did not get any government scholarship but I was able to obtain 2 years of full maintenance grant of \$2,400 each year for my 2 years in F.6. The results also convinced me that I could not go far in the science stream and I decided to opt for English Literature as my future major.

One problem that confronted me was that there was only one 6th form class in La Salle and it was a science class. Fortunately even in the science class Chinese Language &



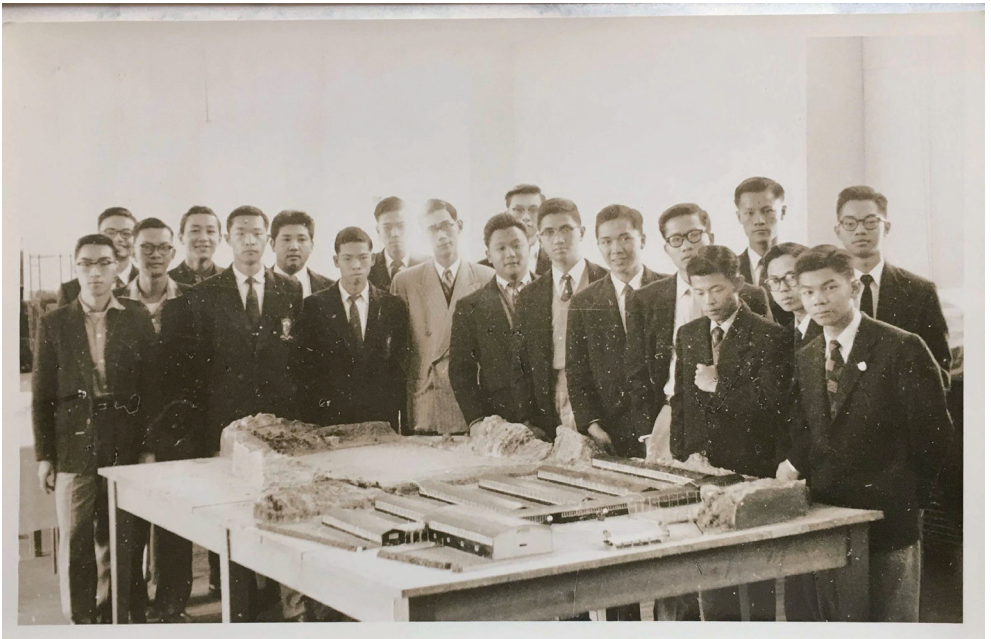
Literature was taught and Geography was taught. The 6th Form Examination at that time was called the Hong Kong Matriculation Examination. I believe it was introduced together with the 2-year 6th Form system in 1954. To become matriculated you needed 2 Advanced Level and 3 Ordinary Level subjects (English Language included). Students usually took OL subjects in F.6 and A L subjects in F.7. But it was quite flexible. You could take AL subjects also in F.6 if you could handle it. So I took AL Geography together with 6 or 7 OL subjects (including some science subjects) in F.6 and in F.7 I took AL English Literature, History, Chinese History, and Chinese Language & Literature. When the results came out, I was greatly disappointed and partly surprised that my English Literature was downgraded to an OL pass (which I already had). But I had 4 AL subjects in total and admission was not a problem. I still chose English Literature as my future major.

My 5 years in La Salle were 5 happy years. Teachers did not press too hard on home work so that we had time to read books outside the curriculum, China after the Opium War, the rise of communism, etc. I also read novels, books on friendship, on ethics some of which in modern standard may be regarded as didactic. The school was rather liberal. We could even enter subjects we liked for public examinations even though they were not taught in school. On the whole, it offered a free and healthy environment for us to develop our mind and to build up our little ideals.

1957 was La Salle's 25th Anniversary. An Exhibition would be held. Though it was our Examination Year, our class as the top class in school, decided to contribute 2 big exhibits:



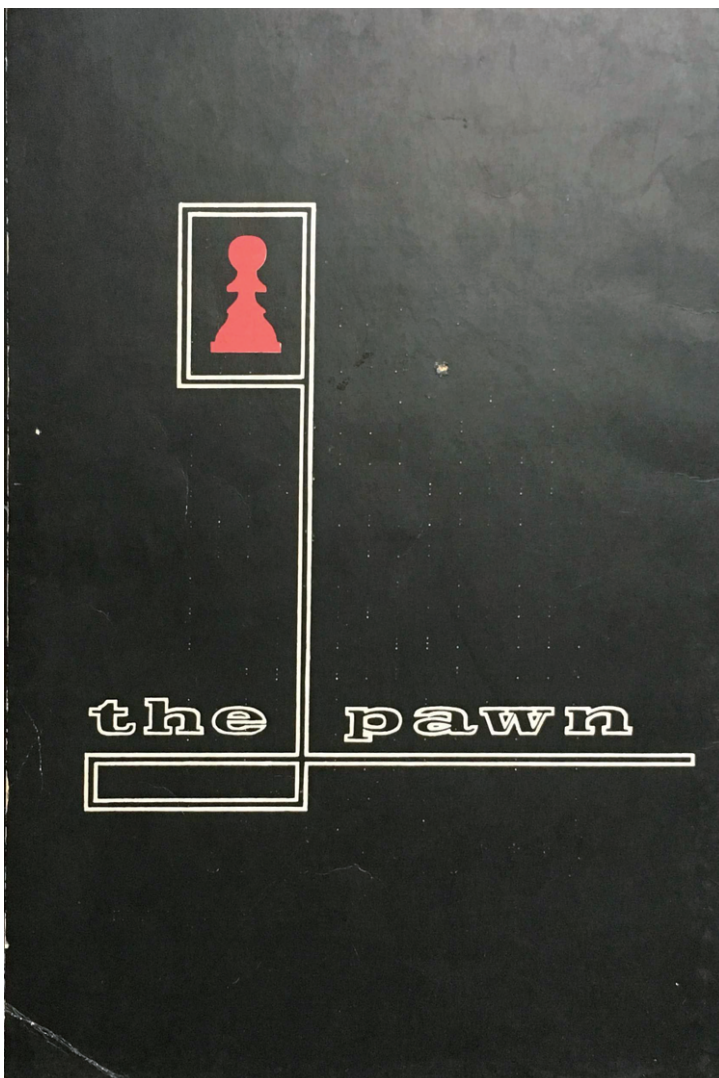
HK relief map completed in Form 6 (1957)



School Model completed in 1957

a large relief map of Hong Kong and a large model of our existing school. The relief map was similar to the relief map we had in Cognitio College at 36 Electric Road. Cardboards were cut according to the contour lines of a set of relief maps published by the Government. The layers were then stuck together on a large base which represented the whole of Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories. There was nothing complicated, but the cutting, the sticking together and the spraying of colours took quite a lot of work. The school model did require some sort of skill because it involved a little surveying, etc. I was involved in both exhibits but it was limited to some manual work such as cutting the cardboard, sticking the “trees” to the school model, etc. I was more involved in another work – the publication of our “graduation magazine”. No graduation magazine had ever been published in La Salle before. We knew our limitations but we also valued our friendship. So we decided to go ahead. The first thing was money. We obtained donations from 3 teachers of \$50 each and we had 3 half-page advertisements. I could not remember the price for each advertisement but it could not be much. The next thing was to collect photos and articles which again was not easy. With the \$300 to about \$500 that we had, we began to search for a printer who was willing to take up the job for the money. Proof-reading was another very difficult part because of the old type-setting method. In the end we could not produce the magazine according to the scheduled time but it did come out and we had something to hold our memory together. The 2 exhibits and the magazine did show us that despite all kinds of difficulties we could do something together. We named the magazine “The Pawn”. The pawn is the least significant piece in the game of chess.





Cover design of Graduation  
Magazine in Form 7 (1957)

But if it keeps pushing forward until it reaches the bottom line of the chess board, it will become a queen and success is assured. We hoped everyone in our class would be this pawn-turned-queen.

In the magazine, I talked about the Spirit of La Sale, I would quote some lines which may be relevant here: “We simply want to be what we are, young, open, nascent, active, daring and rebellious. .... We are independent because we must be independent to be free. .... We are not prejudiced because there is nothing to block our view. .... We are ambitious because we see there is so much to be done. .... We love light and brightness because our eyes have not been closed. .... We love the arts of beauty for we can see and we can hear. .... We love nature because we live not in artificiality.” For me personally, I could add “I am independent despite my handicap. I am confident I can do something.”

Meanwhile my life began to open up. I made friends with my classmates. There was also a sudden influx of relatives with the imminent takeover of government in the mainland. Overnight, I had nearly 20 new cousins. There was so much activity outside the family when there was almost none before. I went rowing and swimming and fishing with my cousins. I was no good in any one of these but it was great to be out. I at first went into the water with the help of a buoy. Later I found I could float without a buoy. So I began my own style of swimming. Backstroke best suited me and breast stroke was the complement. I could swim a fair distance though slowly and swimming became my main form of exercise.



With class basketball Team

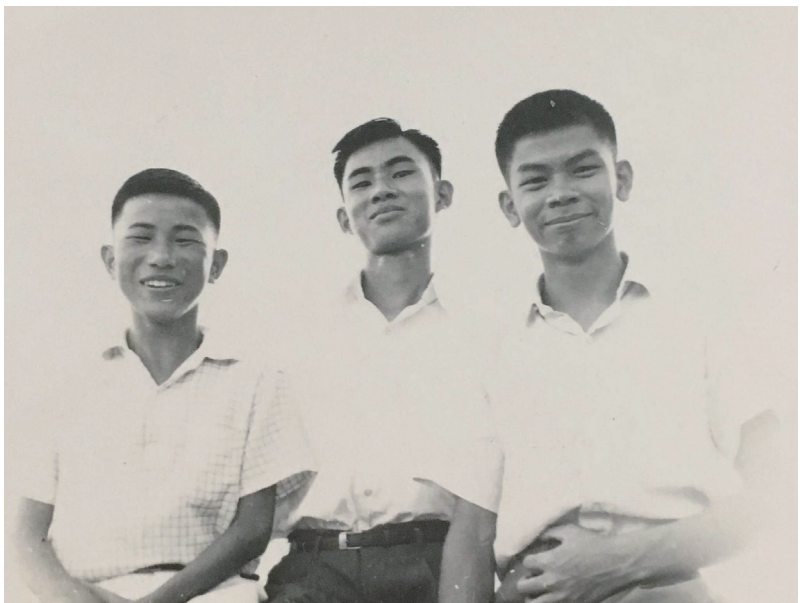


Photo with cousins

# UNIVERSITY

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My matriculation results did not qualify me for any form of scholarship and my application for a bursary grant also failed because my sister had graduated from the University and started working. My 6th Form maintenance grant left me enough money to pay for my university fees but I could not afford to stay in a hostel. So I had to travel every day from Kowloon to the University. We were living at 30 Boundary Street, 3rd Floor (without lift), right at the edge of Shamshuipo. I took a bus to Jordon Road Ferry Pier to take a ferry to Hong Kong. From the HK bus terminus I took a bus (No. 3 bus ?) to the University. Hong Kong University was built on a hill. There was a lot of slope and a lot of steps and there was hardly any facility for the handicapped. The Arts Faculty was housed in the Main Building. We usually entered through the grand granite steps leading to the Loke Yew Hall. There was no railing at all for these steps in those days. It was a hard time to do all the travelling and I had to carry some heavy books as well. But it was all good exercise and I was glad I could do it.

In my first year I took English Language, English Literature, History and Translation. I had no trouble with these subjects. English Language was a compulsory subject and everyone must pass the subject to proceed to the 2nd year. My performance at the subject should be quite good because one of the emphases was to read a fairly long article and

then to sum up the main points of the article. I was quite good at that. A number of students from the Arts Faculty did not pass the subject and had to sit for a supplementary examination. My English tutor asked if I could spend some time to help them. I gladly agreed. So I started giving my own tutorials to these students. I did not think I could help them very much but the English Department certainly did not want to require them to repeat a year. So they all got through in the end. Among my teachers there were 2 world famous scholars. One was Prof. Edmond Blunden of the English Literature Department. He was at the time Poet Laureate of England. That meant he was the person chosen to write poetry for the Queen and the royal family. The other was James Liu our translation teacher. He was a world renown translator. I did not learn any special skill or technique from them. They impressed more as a person. Prof. Blunden was a very mellow person. He was more than willing to give students more room for their own development. In the Shakespeare paper he taught he allowed students to answer either 2 or 3 questions in the examination. Mr Liu was very warm and approachable. He married a French wife and often invited us to his home. Because of the tutorial system, we became very friendly with some of the teachers. Taking only 4 subjects gave us plenty of time to spare, so I also took Beginners' French for interest. But I found that I was no good at all in learning languages, especially in the pronunciation aspect. In my second year I chose 9 papers in English Literature. The second year was often described as "honey moon year" because there was no examination to prepare for. In our second year, it was particularly so because many lecturers were on leave and only 3 of the 9 papers were taught. We



only had 6 hours of lecture time and 1 hour of tutorial. So in addition to repeating the “Beginners' French”, I also took “Beginners' German”. The teacher was typically German, very meticulous about details. Once we went to his house, he complained about a piece of glass furniture, saying that it was a few mm short.

Having time to spare also enabled us to join activities. I became a member of the Chinese Society and joined some of the activities the Society organized. Later on, the Students' Union organized fund-raising activities for needy students and staged in succession 3 drama performances “Song of Eternal Sorrow”, “Yang Ngo” and “Peach Blossom Fan”. To stage such a large-scale drama for public performance required a lot of resources, especially people. The cast were two people for the same character, A and B, who took up the role on different days. To save money, amateur students turned seamstresses and carpenters to make costumes and sets for the performances. I helped in the front stage work (publicity, publication, ticketing, etc.) We could not forget the hectic time during the performances and even more so the happy time we enjoyed during the celebrations of our success after the performances, and the many outings, campings, etc, in between. However, my main engagement in university activities was with the Astronomy Club.

In October 1957, the Soviet Union launched its first satellite the Sputnik into space, followed 3 months later by the successful launch of the US Explorer. It sparked a lot of interest in astronomy. I read a number of popular science books in which I learnt for the first time about the infinite



After successful performance of 'Yang Ngo' at Luk Yau Hall

vastness of the universe, the different kinds of suns, the possibility of space travel, etc. Besides, I was fascinated by the stories associated with the constellations and the poems written about them. Our mind could not be complete without some knowledge of our universe. A small group of astronomy lovers began to gather together. They began with star observation using home-made telescopes. One member of the group was Kong King Wan who was very good at making telescopes. He wrote some very good notes about the process of making telescopes, the usual type was a 6-inch reflector telescope. HK at that time had a flourishing ship-breaking business. So we could buy pot-hole glasses as materials for our mirrors. We would grind the glasses with carborundum powder to get to the right curvature. I also tried and failed even with help from others, but Kong King Wan and quite a number of others succeeded. So we had our own telescopes in our observations. We started preparing to form our own club. In January 1959, the HKU Astronomy Club was officially established. Kong King Wan was the first chairman. We offered quite a number of activities to our members: observations, talks and small scale exhibitions. We published a monthly magazine called *The Astronomer*. With each publication, we put in a star chart of the month and I put in some stories for some of the month's constellations and some interesting facts about some of the stars. Others contributed other articles. Then we thought of spreading the interest of astronomy to the schools. We decided on holding an exhibition and invited schools to come. That was a daunting task because though we had a good number of members there were not many actually working for the club. We took up the challenge nonetheless. Actually we wanted to go one step farther. We wanted to publish a magazine to go



Pedalling in Repulse Bay



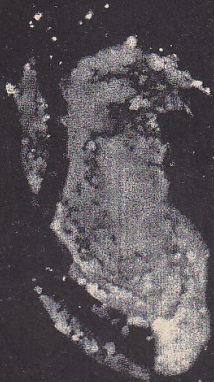
Picture with friends



Picture with friends and some future school founders.



# ASTRONOMY EXHIBITION 1961



HONGKONG UNIVERSITY ASTRONOMY CLUB



# 投寄郵走歹

弱點，乃穿插在人叢中，偽裝好心，自告奮勇，上前向婦孺輩代填姓名地址及貼郵票，婦孺輩見其盛意可感，不疑有詐此等歹徒將其中一

是歹徒們專在米店門口附近窺伺，看到有女人跟蹤，直至買主家門，



目的。火。有探究太空的科學儀器。港大之施放火箭，適在本年十一月廿八日東南亞科學會議在港大開幕之前後，此次之試驗，無疑對會議具有極大意義。圖為在港試放的三階段火箭，圖為該火箭的「模型」。

## 第七期在修

(本報)

歐定今晚管弦樂，

**天氣**

度為華氏十八點八，至上午八時，始升。六十度。時為六十七度。十七度。

合午間報告：強烈之大陸性反旋風籠罩中國日本及鄰近海域。

今日上午，室氣低氣溫為華氏五八度，正午為六八度，濕度百分之五。

with it. I was responsible for the publication. We printed a number of posters and we went from place to place and from office to office in the Central to ask if the owners would like to put up one and also if they would sponsor a quarter page to a full page of advertisement. We did get a page from a German company because they had a planetarium they wanted to sell. On January 29, 1961 in Loke Yew Hall the Exhibition was opened. On the eve before the Exhibition we had to work through the night to put in the last touches but it was a great success. The Hall was packed from morning to evening. Visits from schools were non-stop. It was hailed as the greatest student exhibition held in the HKU so far. Even the Vice-Chancellor of the University visited the Exhibition and enrolled as a member. Later on he invited the Chairman and a few of us to his lodge to have tea and a chat. Buoyed by the success we held another exhibition in late 1961 with equal success. And we also published another magazine to go with it.

I also gave private tuition and taught in some private evening school and institution and saved enough money to stay in a hostel for my final year. I chose St. John's College because some of my very good friends stayed there. However St. John's was on top of a hill and there were about a hundred steps to reach the foyer and the lift. It was also a little distance from the Main Building. I had to take a bus for about 2 stops. All in all, I did save a lot of time. Above all I enjoyed one year of hostel life. I lived on the 4th floor, the Floor of the Knights of the Round Table. Kong King Wan was King Arthur. I was knighted by him without having to go through any ragging, which was prevalent in some hostels like Morrison Hall. I also had some quiet time in St. John's

when I would sit alone in the Common Room and listened to some long-plate discs of classical music. Concerts were often held in Loke Yew Hall at that time. I was a member of the School Music Society and I could buy tickets at half price. Occasionally I also attended concerts outside. The most expensive concert I attended was a performance by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (or, was it the Berlin Philharmonic?) conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

The Degree Examination came and passed. Our teachers gave us a little party and told us the results before they were published. Nobody got 1st Class Honours. A few got 2nd Class A'. I got 2nd Class B. The teacher who told me the results said that I did not work hard enough. That might be true. But even if I had more time, I might not have done better because I was not the type who could work hard on the details to get better results. I fully deserved what I got.

My 3 years at the University was happy and fulfilling. The University provided a free and friendly environment. At our time, HKU was very small and elitist. The Arts Faculty was about 200 plus students in all. The whole University was about 1000. The University was on a plan of expansion. With help in the form of bursary grants, etc. the first batch of grass root students were able to get in. There were of course differences between the elite and the grass root but never bitter enough to split the students. We all enjoyed our life in our different ways. The attempts to raise money for the needy students helped to bring the University closer to society. The Astronomy Club's attempts to bring astronomy to the schools also drew the University closer to the schools. They were simple acts to serve the community. When I look



St. Johns' College Open Day



Picture with family at the Open Day

at what HKU students are doing today, I cannot help feeling how much they have been misguided.

After 1960, I went on to do 1 more year in the Diploma of Education. I was of course fully engaged in the University's activities. There were the 1961 Astronomy Exhibitions and the 1961 Performance of the Peach Blossom Fan. I also enrolled as a candidate for a master degree in English Literature under my favourite lecturer Mrs. Mary Visick. Besides, we were looking for a site to establish a matriculation evening institute.





With Lau Bik Sheung and Cheung Wai Ping at Graduation

# COGNITIO MATRICULATION EVENING INSTITUTE

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After graduation, we should be going our separate ways. Then someone came up with a most brilliant idea of doing some meaningful part-time work together. The idea was to establish an evening institute for matriculation classes. Matriculation education was in great demand at that time and teaching was a profession that many of us had chosen. We had very limited financial resources but we were used to that. So early in 1961 we began to look for a school site for Cognitio Matriculation Evening Institute. At last we found one at 144 Austin Road, Kowloon, the primary school site of St. Jude's College. It was a 3-storey residential building overlooking Austin Road. Two flights of granite steps from both sides led up to it. It was quite an impressive building as a residence but as a school it was not so convenient, especially when it was used as a primary school in the day time. We rented the first two floors and had about 6 classrooms. The 3rd floor was still used as a residence and later we learnt that a deranged woman lived there. We also rented the laboratory of St. Jude's College at Woodhill Road connected to the Austin Road building by a passage way. We put up advertisement early, perhaps too early. We waited for students to come to enroll but very few came in the early period. Many of our friends did come to give us support. The most welcome person was Pho Ie Gwan (Fu Wai Yuen) who often came with buns from Cherikoff Bakery nearby because we often delayed our meal until after work. We were not discouraged because we were prepared not to take any salary ourselves to keep the Institute going. Things became

better when school opening day approached. In the end we had about 240 students. Despite the unfavourable environment, we tried our best. We gave free tutorials whenever possible. Many of our students actually became friends. Soon the name of the Institute spread and students kept coming. I worked full-time as supervisor, principal and teacher. Yau Shar Noon also worked full-time in charge of general matters and laboratory work. We employed a part-time clerk who worked in the evenings Monday to Saturday. That was all the administrative staff we had at CMEI at the time. After Cognitio College was opened, I became the principal of the day school and Cheung Wai Ping became the principal of the evening school assisted by Sung Siu Wai in the Kowloon branch of CMEI.

The Evening Institute did help to ease the lack of 6th form places for a good number of years. It also helped to ease the financial difficulty of the day school. In later years, it sponsored overseas trips to founders of the Institutes. Some friends also joined so that we could always form a fairly large group for each trip and that would add to the fun.



Picnic with CMEI students in 1961





First CMEI sponsored trip, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, December 1981.



Sea World. Sydney, Australia. 1986.





Mediterranean tour, July, 1991.



Macau Tour

# COGNITIO COLLEGE

## (GOLDEN COURT AND MONMOUTH PATH)

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The success of CMEI gave us the confidence and the ambition to go one step further. Why not establish a day school and run a secondary school and an evening institute at the same time? This led to the establishment of Cognitio College.

However, confidence was one thing. Actual work was another. After we had committed to rent the first floor and a part of the ground floor of Golden Court at 36 Electric Road, Causeway Bay as our future premises, the hard work began. The whole first floor had to be partitioned into 13 classrooms, a laboratory, offices, etc. Before we could start work, we had to submit plans to the Public Works Department for their approval and upon their approval, we still needed the further approval of the Education Department. Then the two very important things: enrollment of students and the recruitment of staff. Everything was new: equipment lists, textbook list, school rules and regulations, time-tables, school uniforms, etc. Our only experience was our 1 year with CMEI. At the same time, CMEI Hong Kong was also opened at the same site and this made our work even busier. We worked very hard and many friends came to help and worked with us. I did not know how we got through but got through we did. It was almost next to a miracle that we got a new school with everything in place in less than a year. It helped us a great

# 文理預科夜校擴校招生

科目：文科：英文、英國文學、歷史、地理、中文、中史

(高初級兼備)

理科：純數、應數、物理、化學、生物。(高初級兼備，設有完善之理、化、生實驗室)

報名日期：即日開始  
香港校址：上午九時至下午七時  
九龍校址：星期日上午九時至一時  
下午六時至九時(星期六照常)

開課日期：香港校址：九月一日  
九龍校址：經已開課，上課時間如下表：

校址：香港：銅鑼灣文理英文書院  
九龍：尖沙咀柯士甸道一四四號

## 九龍校址時間表

(一) 物理 地理 純數 英文 (高、初) (高、初) (高、初) (高、初)	(二) 生物 化學 中文 應數 英文 (高、初) (高、初) (高、初) (高、初)
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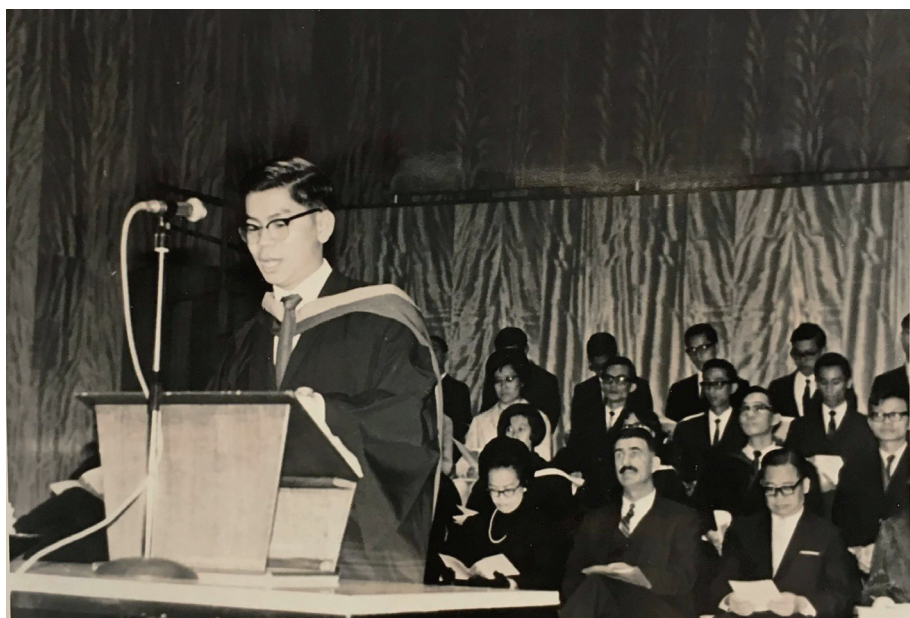
deal that we recruited two very capable and devoted office staff, first Tam Bik Kin and later on Leung Tsim Kai who was also in charge of the CMEI HK office. Both were fully devoted to the school and worked as hard as anyone else if not more. They both became part of our pioneering group ever since. We had two more people to thank. One was our Supervisor, Mr Cheung Wing In, brother of Cheung Wai Ping. Mr Cheung was a well-known solicitor who had his own law firm. Despite his heavy commitment to his own business, he agreed to support us and led a group of young inexperienced new graduates to embark on their new career. He never interfered with our school business but gave us timely advice and legal advice whenever needed. His presence brought the social connections that we lacked and added much weight to our cause. The other person was Prof. Henderson, Head of the Education Department, HKU. His support added weight and prestige to our cause. His advice “A school is not a building ..... A school is a society of persons learning from each other. A school consists of people, not of stone walls and wooden desks..... it is the character and quality of the people in this school that make it, not the bricks and mortar!” was brilliant. His speech was not only encouraging but also pointed the direction our school and perhaps all schools should develop.

Cognitio College was opened officially by Prof. Henderson on September 7, 1962 in a Ceremony in the City Hall of Hong Kong with 1017 students and 34 members of staff. In my speech, I said on behalf of all founders, “We were roused to meet the challenge of implementing the educational ideas propounded by great educationalists, of formulating new principles and solving new problems as





Inauguration Ceremony officiated by Professor Henderson on September 7, 1962



Inauguration Speech



mankind advances and reaches new heights of developments.” I also said “We welcome and take in as our colleagues teachers who regard education as a vocation. Our teachers are not mere employees. They are members of the same school, bound together by one common purpose and working for the same ideals.” We were fortunate that all through the years, we were able to recruit many such teachers. On hind sight, I should have mentioned about the important role of the students as well. Prof. Henderson's idea of a school as a society of people learning from each other included the students. This fact dawned on us when our teacher-student relationship developed and we started building Cognitio and its fine traditions together. Our close relationship with our students and our frequent meetings with our graduates could testify.

Our aim of founding Cognitio was to work together to serve society. Hong Kong was badly in need of school places. Our school's establishment served that purpose. Our early years were devoted to making our school worthy of that mission.

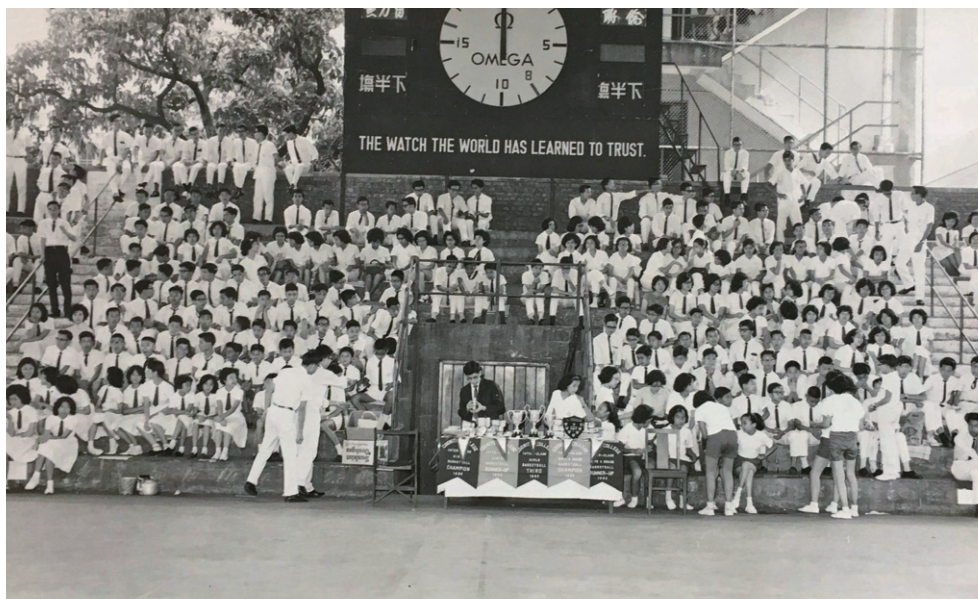
Year	Number Who Sat	Number Who Passed	Pass Percentage
1964	40	19	47.5
1965	43	36	83.7
1966	45	44	97.8
1967	93	92	98.9

Our first concern was of course students' academic accomplishment. In this respect, our success was outstanding. The above table spoke for itself.

The 1966 Pass % was the 2nd highest in Hong Kong. The 1967 Pass % was the 4th highest. All the time the average Pass % of all schools in Hong Kong was between 55% to 56%. After 1967, the School Leaving Examination became the School Certificate Examination and students were no longer classified as “passed” or “failed”. Only grades were recorded.

Yet I would say our achievements were much more than merely academic. First, we got together a truly dedicated staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Second, we reached an understanding with our students that the school was also their school and we should work together to make it a good school. Hence there was very good interaction between teachers and students. Third, despite the physical handicap, we introduced a lot of activities to our students because we aimed at giving our students an all-round education: moral, intellectual, physical, social, aesthetic.

Our Help-the-Poor activities deserved special mention. We began with our own students. Hong Kong was not rich at that time. Some students had difficulty paying their fees. The school contributed what it could. Teachers also contributed. Some donated part of their salaries. Students played their part selling food and drink in the school tuck-shop and selling exercise books in the school stationery shop. The profits went to the bursary fund. It was not much but the students did play a part. Hong Kong in the 1960s was subject to disasters like flooding, landslides, squatter fires



Prize-giving Ceremony of Extra-curricular Activities in Southorn Playground in 1968

and destructive typhoons. Whenever such disaster occurred, teachers mobilized students to collect money, clothing, text-books, etc. and to visit the victims to distribute what we had collected. The experience was very beneficial to the students. Many of our earlier students when I met them later in life still cherished that experience and how it had bound them together with one another and with society.

On the cultural side, we organized two art exhibitions in the City Hall gallery and put up two variety performances in the City Hall Theatre. In sports, our table tennis team and our football team both won overall championships in inter-school competitions. We also held essay competitions, bulletin board competitions, debating competitions, etc. Life in Cognitio was not just studying.

With staff and students united in a common good cause, we began to lay the foundation for some good Cognition traditions which would characterize the school. It is difficult to define exactly what the traditions are and they do develop with time and are expressed in different forms. It is a kind of spirit that urges us on. It all started with care for one another.

As principal, I had to take up responsibility for external affairs and administrative work but I also took up teaching of 2 classes of English and some English Literature lessons. We all had to work very hard. At the time I was doing an English Literature M.A. Course in HKU because my interest originally was in tertiary teaching. But I hardly had any time to give to it. So I decided to give it up. That was a right choice. A career with Cognition proved much more rewarding and fulfilling.

We spent the first 5 years at Golden Court with only a 10,000 sq. ft. floor with 13 irregular classrooms. In 1967, we had the opportunity to move to a building designed for school at Monmouth Path, Wanchai. It was an improvement, but still only 1 laboratory, no playground and no assembly place.

We also bought a site of 22,000 square feet earmarked for a secondary school in Sanpokong, Kowloon. The moving of the school and the project of developing the Kowloon school site fell in with the troubled period of riots in Hong Kong and the effects of the Cultural Revolution. Repercussions were also felt in our school. However with the same spirit that we overcame all other difficulties, we





Campus at Causeway Bay (1962-67)



Campus at Wanchai (1967-73)



Founders of Cognitio College

2nd row Choy Kam Yuen, Lee Chik Fong, Chow Chor On, Sung Siu Wai,  
Yau Shar Noon, Lau Chun Wah

1st row Cheung Wai Ping, Pho Ie Gwan, Cheung Wing In,  
Cheung Chun Kwok, Mark Yuen Yee

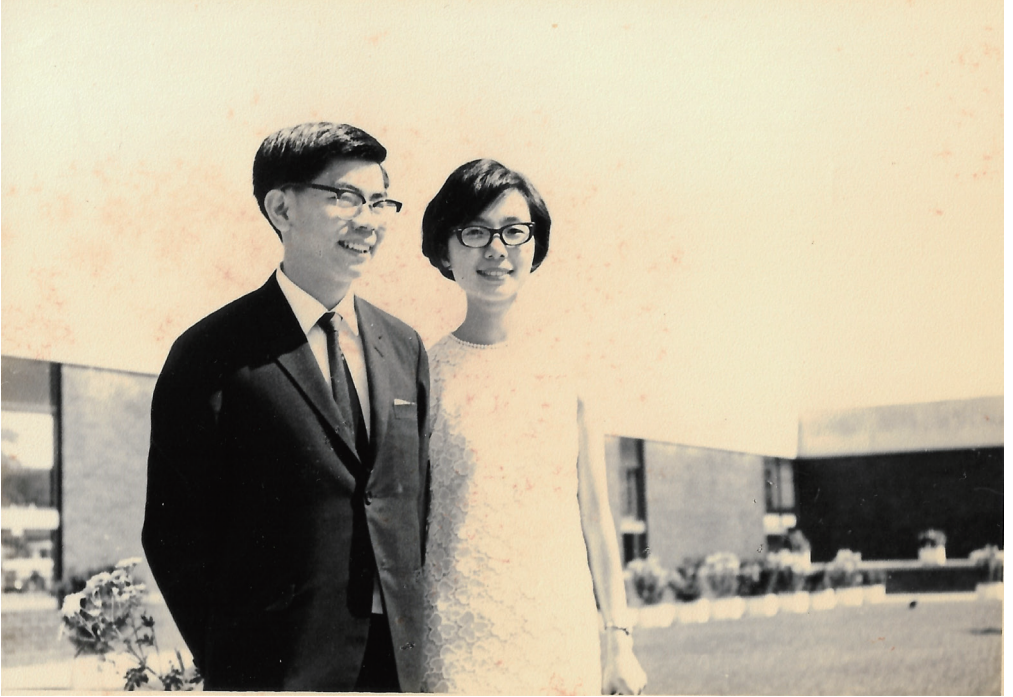


Staff Football Team 1969

came through this difficult period with successes in public examinations, in student activities, and particularly in laying the foundation for some fine school traditions. When things began to calm down, we were ready to embark on our next stage of development.

During this early period, we not only worked hard but also played hard. We had outings, camping, swimming, fishing, etc, together. We also had a ladies' basketball team and a men's football team and table-tennis was the favourite sport. We all enjoyed the activities. After some years' working, marriages began among quite a number of young colleagues. It was not surprising because we spent so much time together. I married Wong Mei Mei a member of our teaching staff in July, 1968. We did not have any honeymoon. After a few days' stay away, we came back to the flock again.





Wedding day, Hong Kong City Hall, July 16, 1968.



## COGNITIO COLLEGE (KOWLOON) – 2-SCHOOLS PERIOD

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Work with the new school began with drawing up of the school plan. We were fortunate to be able to employ a good architect Mr. Chan Hung Yip. The school site of 22,000 sq. ft. was big compared with what we had in Golden Court or Monmouth Path but still a small site for a school. It was in fact the last plot of land intended for a factory. We don't know why the government changed its use. It might be because of demand. Or, the government might want to use our school as a buffer zone. Separated by a narrow lane, one side of the school was the industrial area, the other side residential and commercial. Mr. Chan managed to design a school with 30 classroom size rooms and 10 large special rooms plus a school hall, a basketball court and covered playground with adequate car parks and lavatories. We were also fortunate that our building contractor was Ngo Kee a very good construction company. Their price was very competitive. At first we intended to leave the school hall to the next stage but the price was low. If I remember correctly, the total building price was only about 1.2 million. So we decided to complete the whole project at one go. Piling was awarded to Golden Gate (Kam Mun) Company. Building began in 1969. Every week, the architect, Mr. Pho and I visited the site. After the visit, we discussed changes or amendments that we thought might be necessary or Ngo Kee thought necessary and the architect would issue orders

of amendment. Mr. Kwong Kwok Lee, an Honorary Member of the School Council, himself engaged in property development and construction business, also came and offered his advice. He was quite impressed with the work of Ngo Kee. During the process, Mr. Pho and I learnt quite a lot about construction work. Later on, it became useful in school maintenance. And later in the building of our Chaiwan School, Mr. Pho's knowledge also was useful.

The building work was completed on schedule in May, 1970. The school was opened by Sir Cho-yiu Kwan on July 24, 1970. In September, Cognitio College (Kowloon) opened its door to our new batch of students.

Preparation for the opening of the new school was nearly as hectic as preparation for the opening of Cognitio College in 1962. There were 4 laboratories to equip, a big library, geography room, art room, etc. And there was the big school hall with the sound and lighting system, the curtains and the back stage controls to equip. Above all, when we started enrollment of students, queues began to line up, both for the day school and particularly for the evening school. All in all, over 10,000 students applied for Forms 1-4 in our day school alone. The students had to be screened by a series of entrance examinations and interviews. We employed only a few additional staff but they all gave their utmost. I must mention Mr. Mok So, a janitor staff we employed to take care of the new building. The construction workers at the site commended him on doing the work of more than 2 persons. When we decided to put up an exhibition to introduce our school to the neighbourhood and a variety show to celebrate the occasion, it of course added to our

workload. The existing staff was split into 2 groups, one for each school. Those remaining in Hong Kong took up as much work as possible from those going to Kowloon so that they could spend as much time as possible with the new school. And what a hectic schedule it was. We often had to take the last ferry home. Our efforts were rewarded with a satisfactory intake of students and a very satisfactory intake of staff.

I became the principal of the new school and Choy Kam Yuen the Vice-Principal. Cheung Wai Ping became principal of the Hong Kong school and Lau Chun Wah the Vice-Principal. Though the 2 schools remained very closely connected and guided by the same principles, my experience from then on would be more associated with the Kowloon school.

Meanwhile with the help of our Honorary Member of the School Council Mr. Fong Yun Wah, we were able to purchase another school site of about 38,000 sq. ft. in Chai Wan. Construction was started in a hurry but it could not be completed before our lease for the Monmouth Path building expired in 1973. So for a good part of the 1973-4 school year, the junior forms of our Hong Kong school had to be housed in make-shift commercial buildings right opposite to the new school being built. The senior forms had to go to the Kowloon school for their lessons in the afternoon. It was a big challenge but as usual we did our best and overcame the problems at the end.

Better facilities helped the development of activities in our Kowloon school, especially in sports. We did very well in



Campus of Cognitio College (Kowloon) in 1970



Campus of Cognitio College (Hong Kong) in 1974





First trip to Toronto, Canada.  
Many Cognitioites were pregnant with their first children. August 1977.



Get together with old students and families in 1978

table-tennis, in girls' gymnastics and in girls' basketball. Some of our athletes represented Hong Kong in Asian Games and in Commonwealth Games. In 1981 we were awarded the Omega Rose Bowl for being the most progressive co-educational school in inter-school competitions

Our activities were not confined to sports. There were the cultural and recreational clubs like the music club, art club and dance club, etc, and academic clubs like the English Club, Chinese Club, Mathematics Club, etc. There were also organizations like the students' union, the prefects, and form associations to promote students taking charge of their own discipline. True to our traditions, service clubs like the Red Cross, Scouts, Girl Guides, School Road Safety Patrol, Community Youth Club and Junior Police Call Club were the largest clubs. At the beginning, we even had tuck-shop and stationery group and even hair-cut group as in our Golden Court days. Eventually these groups were phased out because of the different needs of time.

When Government introduced 9 years of free and compulsory education, they bought places from private schools to make up the shortfall. Later on, the government planned to extend subsidized education to F.4 and F.5, they planned to provide that only in government and assisted schools. This meant that even if we did well with our F.1-F.3 students, they would go to a government or assisted school if they wished to obtain government subsidized education.

As profit-making was never the aim of establishing Cognitio, the school management decided to apply for non-profit



Participants of Commonwealth Games Ms Chin Hang Mui and Lee Mei Mei

status in order to obtain government subsidy. In 1978, our application was accepted in principle by the Government. In 1979, we were invited to join a 3-year conversion scheme to become fully-aided subsidized schools on 1st September, 1982.

One immediate benefit of becoming a subsidized school was that we could begin phasing out the bi-sessional system to become a full-day school. Another benefit was that all our staff could enjoy a good retirement system. Merit of course had to be given to the owners of the College, especially those who were not on the payroll of the College like our late Supervisor Mr. Cheung Wing In, for accepting the sacrifice.



## SUBSIDIZED SCHOOL PERIOD

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Physical conditions were much better than our early days but there were new challenges. Society had changed. There were new challenges like the TV and later the computer. Compulsory education was introduced. We had to educate all children instead of just the elite. Parents often did not have sufficient time to care for their children. Children had different aspirations. The society required somewhat different graduates. Things had changed. The school had to adapt to these challenges.

We used to be very strict about student hairstyle and student uniform. This served the purpose in the early days. But eventually the rules had to be relaxed and it was not worth the effort to carry out regular checking on it. Some teachers liked to ask students to stand up in class when they were not attentive. Some even asked students to stand outside the classroom when they were found to be disturbing. This practice of asking students to stand outside the classroom was brought to an end after discussion in a meeting because the student would feel that he was abandoned by the teacher. For some years, the school practiced a system of keeping a record of every student in class. Merit or demerit would be recorded for each good or bad act. Demerits could be cancelled out by merits. There might be a reason for it but it was too cumbersome and time-consuming for the teacher. And students could not be educated by the recording of little acts of good or bad.

For quite a long time we made very strict demands on



discipline. On the whole, the students behaved well enough, especially inside school. However, we began to hear more complaints about our students' behaviour outside school such as use of foul language, rudeness in buses, loitering in game stalls and so on. We gave the situation some hard thought and decided to place more emphasis on the positive side of education.

We relaxed a little our rules on hair-style and uniform. Before we punished a student, we would listen to his side of view. We might even ask him what the punishment should be. We wanted every student to feel respected and that no one had abandoned him. Meanwhile the Education Department introduced the school social worker scheme. Every 2 schools would share 1 school social worker. Counselling was good and necessary. But it was not enough. Once a teacher told me how he interviewed a problematic student every day after school and counselled him on his day's behaviour. I commended on his effort but told him that it might have been more fruitful if he had spent part of his time to help the student to develop an interest in something or just a hobby. After devoting more time in doing the more positive, discipline did not deteriorate. It actually became better. Complaints about our students' behaviour outside school died down.

In the 1990s, it was hotly debated whether English or Chinese should be used as the medium of instruction (EMI or CMI). The majority of teachers used Chinese to teach an English textbook preparing for an English examination. Some put this as the major fault of the Hong Kong education system. In 1994 the Education Department initiated a scheme to begin teaching in English starting in F.1. It was sponsored by the Hong Kong Bank and the Longman Publishing Company. Our school joined the

scheme. Hung Cheung Hoi was appointed the Teachers' Co-ordinator. After 3 years, our school was assessed as one of the two best-performing schools and was highly commended. Our school did well because the teachers tried their best. Their efforts were well co-ordinated. I observed lessons of every teacher in every subject in every form. We also held weekly meetings to monitor the situation. At first teachers were afraid that using English might delay the curriculum. After two years' trial, it was found that covering the curriculum was not important. Getting the right start was. Our 1994 F.1 students did very well in the 1999 English School Certificate Examination. We thought we were well qualified to use English as the medium of instruction.



Photo with teacher and students

But the Education Department introduced a new method of deciding which school could use the EMI. They lay down 3 criteria: (1) the ability of the teachers to use English in teaching; (2) the school having a proper system to handle this; (3) the intake of F.1 students to reach a required level. Our school had no problem with the first 2 criteria but fell short on the 3rd though not by much. I thought the Education Department was determined to push the CMI. So we did not apply to use English as the medium of instruction. It was of course my mistake and I should have sought more consultation. Some schools that did not meet the criteria applied nonetheless. When rejected, together with parents they demonstrated. The Department accepted the appeals and granted a number of schools the status of EMI. My decision not to apply was a mistake of judgment but it was also a little prompted by the idea that using CMI might be helpful in promoting student-centred education.

The student-centred approach has always been the correct approach. In this age of computers and information super highway, it is especially so. The explosion of online information and data has changed the role of the teacher. The teacher is now more a facilitator than a provider of education. The student must know he is responsible for his own education. At school, he will have guidance. After school he is on his own and education is a life-long practice. To bring in this new concept about education is difficult, both with the students and especially with the teachers. In my last few years as principal, I tried without much success to make the teachers realize that their role had changed. I requested students should be more active than passive in class. When I observed lessons, I always made it a point to show how the student could be led to make some independent thinking and judgment rather than just taking in what the textbook said and what the teacher explained. As

for the students, their first 2 years in secondary school would be a good time to form a good learning habit. I put into practice that the same teacher should be the form-teacher for both F.1 and F.2 and the teachers should be so chosen as to be best able to promote the student-centred approach.

The student-centred approach is not confined to study. The same approach should be applied to discipline and activities. The student's voice should always be heard. Students should always be involved in their discipline, even in the drafting of school rules. In activities, the teaching of skill and technique of course is necessary, but the student's voice must be heard in the planning and the direction of development and so on. In short, if we want to make students believe they are responsible for their education, their voice must be heard in everything and their involvement is a must. To put this effectively into practice is not easy but we must persist in doing so. It is important that we put first thing first. I firmly believe that the student-centred approach is the first thing to be put first. I understand that Cognitio College (Kowloon) is pursuing this approach. Their experience is valuable. We should learn from the experience and keep on making progress with it.

I retired in 1999 because the student population had shrunk dramatically and the Government wanted to give more chances to younger people. I also reached the stage when physically I might not be able to perform some of the functions of a principal.





Prize-giving Ceremony for Civic Education Competition by Tin Tin Daily Post



Prize-giving Ceremony for Historical Cultural Trip Report Competition



Trophies of basketball and table-tennis won in the year 1997-98. Because of the excellent results we were also awarded the Omega Rose Bowl for the Most Progressive Co-educational School in Hong Kong



Prize Presentation Ceremony of the Omega Rose Bowls Awards



## INVOLVEMENT IN INTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

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With the completion of Kowloon school and the first stage of the Hong Kong school, the expansion of the College came to a temporary halt. We were well established and well recognized by both government and society. It was time we could go outside our own school. In 1975, I attended the Annual Meeting of then the Private Anglo-Chinese Schools Association and was unexpectedly elected the President. I was totally unprepared and neither was the College. However, true to our nature, what we took up we tried to do our best.

Private schools at that time provided the bulk of secondary education with little government assistance. We put out a paper how quality secondary education could be rapidly expanded if Government would adopt the voucher system, a system which was increasingly used in the United States and used later by the Government in the direct subsidy system. The Government did not trust private schools (the private independent schools) and did not accept the idea. To prove ourselves, we organized a lot of activities among ourselves to promote unity and encourage teacher and student participation. There were at that time some private schools which though small would like to do well. The activities were successful and many teachers participated. The high point of the activities was a Joint School Gala Performance by teachers and students in our Kowloon School Hall. Mr. Topley, Director of Education, attended the Performance.

Though I did not seek another term of office, I remained an active member in the Executive Committee of the Association until our school became a subsidized school in 1982. During the period, the inter-school activities continued. We also sent school teams to Aquatic Meets and Athletic Meets of other schools and they sent their teams to ours. More Joint School Gala Performances were also held. Principals and teachers of the schools did get on very well. Even today when I go back to Hong Kong, a lunch or dinner reunion would always be arranged. However, the Government was decided to expand secondary education without the help of private school unless they turned non-profit-making. And private schools would no longer be a dominant part of Hong Kong education.

During our 3 years of conversion from non-profit-making private schools receiving per capita government assistance (caput schools), I was the Hon. Secretary of the Caput Schools Association and worked to make the conversion smooth and to settle some details during the process.

I was Hon. Secretary of the Hong Kong Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools in the year 1983-84. I became the next Chairman and stayed in the post for 5 years (1984-89). HKAHSS was a rather exclusive association of school heads established in the early years of elite education by Arthur Hinton and some others. I asked the question whether it was meant to be an association of heads of elite schools, the answer was no. So I looked up the constitution and made some changes and opened membership to all secondary schools including private schools and Chinese schools. The activities were intended for the school heads, not for the schools. Some activities were open to teachers as



well. The most significant activity was an International Conference on “School-based Innovations – Looking Forward to the 1990s” held in 1989, jointly organized by the H.K. Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools, the H.K.U. Faculty of Education, and the Centre for the Promotion of Chinese Culture in H.K. The Conference was very forward-looking. A good number of world leading scholars in the field came to the Conference and a considerable number of papers were published. The Government should have made better use of its findings.



Opening Speech at International Conference on “School-based Innovations: Looking Forward to the 1990s” organized by Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools



Before one of the sessions of the “Looking Forward to the 1990s” Seminar.



Cake-cutting at HKAHSS Silver Jubilee



Variety Performance of the Hong Kong Private Anglo-Chinese  
Schools Association 1976





At the Retirement Ceremony







At the dinner organized by  
the Alumni Association



My role as School Manager after retirement



School Management Committee (1999)



At Open Day Ceremony of 40th Anniversary of Cognitio College (2002)





As Guest of Honour at The Inaugulation Ceremony of  
Parents Teachers Association

## PUBLIC SERVICES

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I served in a number of committees in the Education Department, in the H.K. Examinations Authority, in the Co-ordinating Committee on Rehabilitation Services and in a number of other committees at the district level. The time I had with the Education Department was mostly during the time when I was with the private schools. I was for some years in the Executive Committee of the Examinations Authority and witnessed some major changes in the examination system. My work in the Rehabilitation Co-ordination Committee was mainly with facilitating the mobility of the handicapped in Hong Kong. I am glad that Hong Kong is among the places that grant most privileges to handicapped drivers because in a place like Hong Kong people with disability should be encouraged to drive instead of being discouraged.

I was a member of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Promotion of Chinese Culture in Hong Kong from 1985-92. The Centre was sponsored by the Henry Fok Foundation. During the 7 years when I was a Director a number of large scale performances were held including Lao She's Tea House and Sin Sing Hoi's Yellow River Cantata. The late Governor Sir Edward Youde attended the Gala Opening of the Tea House. There were also exhibitions of



art work by famous calligraphers, painters and other artists of contemporary China. Some of the best Chinese artists were introduced to Hong Kong through the Centre. The Centre also organized local cultural activities and its fine facilities could also be used for local events.

I was a member of the delegation to witness the signing of the Joint Declaration on Hong Kong in Beijing in 1984 and later became a member of the Consultative Committee for the Basic Law (1985-89). I joined 2 main groups, one on education and other social issues, the other on political issues involving the future government.

Together with some other representatives from the education circle, we formed a Group of 38, giving our views on education issues and political issues. In education, we succeeded to ensure that the SAR Government would continue to use public money to support private organizations to run schools. This had been a very unique feature of Hong Kong education. In most other places, public money would only be used in government schools. During our discussions, some did raise the point that public money should come with government control. We pointed out that in education, the school must have a good degree of autonomy. We should also have variety. That was why schools should have different backgrounds and different traditions. On political issues, there was of course much more controversy. Our group's proposal was middle of the line between the proposal of the liberals and that of the more conservative Group of 80. The drafting committee did accept some parts of our proposal, such as the Nominating Committee for the Chief Executive and the inclusion of

representatives from all walks of life in the Legislature (though we proposed an additional group of “others” to include all not already included). We also proposed a gradual process to eventual universal suffrage.



Interviewed by RTV English Channel on the role of private schools when I was President of The Anglo-Chinese Schools Association.

## FAMILY AND FRIENDS

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We often say Cognitio is a big family. Indeed we felt we were in a big family when we were in Cognitio. Nevertheless the young graduates from HKU began to get married and formed their own families round about the mid-1960s.

I was married in 1968. My first daughter Yu Fay was born in 1972, my second daughter Hoi Fay in 1975, and my third daughter Ying Fay in 1978. The other families also had 2 or 3 children, mostly 1 boy and 1 girl. CMEI's monthly meeting was the occasion that brought the families together. CMEI also sponsored an overseas tour every 5 years or so. The first trip was to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, then Australia and New Zealand, Japan, India, Cruise & Land Tour of the Mediterranean, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and South America. These tours brought the families closer together and helped to broaden the views of the children. Some friends also joined us and we could form a tour group of our own. The trips were very enjoyable. CMEI also organized local trips for its staff and we also enjoyed these trips.

My daughters all attended kindergarten in Ling Liang Church Kindergarten, and then Primary School in St. Stephen Girls' Primary School and then went on to St. Stephen Girls' College. Yu Fay completed F.6 and then left to study systems engineering in the University of Virginia in

the US. In 1992, the family immigrated to the United States. In that year Hoi Fay completed F.4 and continued to study in Grade 11 in the US. Ying Fay completed F.1 and went on to study in Grade 8.

With the uncertainty hanging over the 1997 changeover and fueled by the Tiananmen Square events, many families chose to immigrate to places like Canada upon retirement. Some families immigrated to the United States because relatives sponsored them. My sister applied on my behalf when there was rumour that the siblings category might be scrapped. When my sister submitted the application, the chance of going was very remote because there were so many applications in line and the quota for Hong Kong was so small. Then came 1997 and the US separated Hong Kong from China and dramatically increased its quota. Then our turn came and it was decision time. Yu Fay was already studying in the University of Virginia and the two other children also welcomed a chance to study abroad. In the end it was decided that the family would immigrate to the US but I would return to work for a longer time.

We bought a house, a bungalow type of house on a half acre site in Bethesda Maryland which has remained our house today. It was in a good school district and our children could attend good public schools there. In 1993, Mei Mei got a job in the Foreign Service Institute as a language and culture instructor in Chinese (Cantonese). It was a job that suited her and she was happy teaching Cantonese to adults. She was also able to make new friends. In 1994 Hoi Fay was admitted to MIT to study Computer Science and Electrical Engineering. In 1987, Ying Fay was admitted to





Celebrating birth of  
second grandchild Clara



Our backyard in winter

North-Western University to study Music Technology. Yu Fay graduated in 1994 and started to work. She was able to stay at home to keep Mei Mei company while Hoi Fay left for Boston in 1994 and Ying Fay left for Chicago in 1997. So the family seemed to have settled well. I visited Maryland every summer for about a month. Mei Mei would come to Hong Kong in December during her term break. Sometimes, she came with her students for a study visit.

We missed our friends who immigrated to other places. Mei Mei enjoyed reunion with old friends when she visited Hong Kong. Occasionally relatives and friends might pass through Maryland and Mei Mei cherished the chance of seeing them. Occasionally we might also go to weddings of the children of our friends and relatives just as quite a number attended the wedding of our daughter Yu Fay in 2000. Naturally we also planned shorter trips of our own.

In 1999 I retired after working 37 years in Cognitio or 38 years if we counted the year with CMEI. I continued to stay in Hong Kong because my mother was still living with me. She passed away in late 2000. After settling everything, I rejoined my family in 2001. Mei Mei also retired in 2013 after working in the US for a little more than 20 year.

All our children were married. Yu Fay had 2 children and her family lived in Virginia about 30 minutes' drive from our place. Hoi Fay lived in Jersey City next to New York. She had 1 child. Ying Fay lived with her husband in Logan Utah. We saw Yu Fay and family often enough, Hoi Fay several times a year and Ying Fay once or twice a year.



40th Cognition Anniversary Alaska Tour.

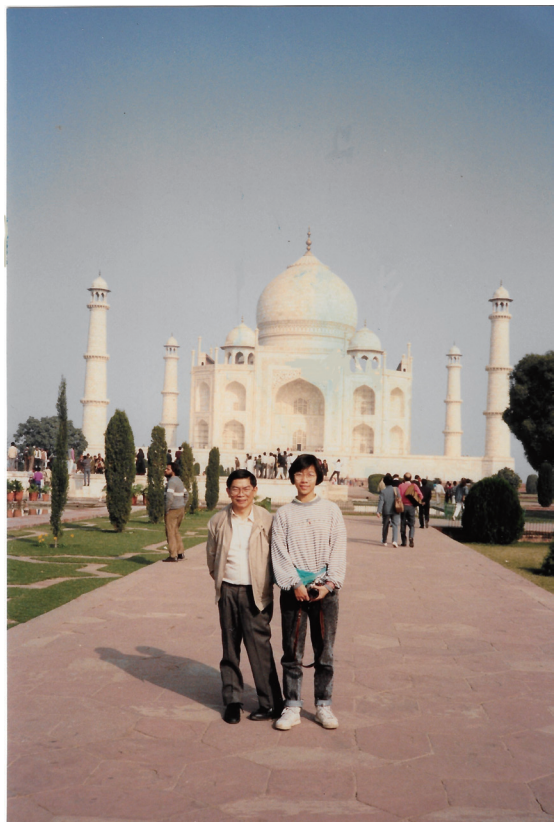




By the side of the Canadian Expo. 1983.



Sydney Opera House. Sydney, Australia. 1986.



Taj Mahal, India. 1988.





Welcoming Mr. and Mrs. S. K. Li  
at Great Falls, Maryland.  
September, 2004.



Visit by Lee Ming Tsun



Visit by Tse Mei Sheung  
and daughter

## AFTER RETIREMENT

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With the retirement of the founders beginning in the 1990s, I began to reduce my outside school involvements. When I retired I only maintained my position as a manager of Cognito College. I returned to Cognito College (Kowloon) often enough, reading newspapers, chatting with former colleagues just like the old time. I bought my first computer. Lau Shu Wei and Hung Cheung Hoi taught me how to use it. I began to use my email, which has now come to occupy a fairly large part of my time. I offered to help some F.1 students to learn English with confidence. Tam Siu Bing arranged to send some of her students to me. I could not claim any observable success or progress in the rather short space of time but I believe a way could be found to help our students to learn English happily with confidence and interest.

My mother passed away in late 2000 and I rejoined my family in Maryland in 2001. My life of retirement really began. I went to the library and borrowed books. You might be surprised that the first books I borrowed were all books for children, including books which were good for adults just as well like the Harry Porter series and books even more suitable for adults such as Lord of the Ring. Later on I borrowed action novels like Clear and Present Danger, the

Law Firm, etc. I also began to get acquainted with Mei Mei's friends. We had weekend lunches and dinners, meaningful meetings at one and others' homes, travelled together to nearby places of interest and went as far as cruises to Europe and the Caribbeans. My in-laws (Yu Fay's side) lived nearby. I also had one of my cousins living very near us. Relatives came by from time to time. I also found a HKU friend. Friends and students came to visit though not so often. I would go out for lunch, driving my own car and I drove around a bit to learn about the neighbourhood. Then I found out some TV programs that I liked, such as CCTV 9, a free English international channel provided by CCTV. There were also a lot of documentary channels like the National Geographic, the Discovery, the History channels, etc. I subscribed to a cable network and it opened to me over a hundred channels and hundreds of programs. I enjoyed the sports channels, especially the soccer games. When I



Attending wedding of Mr. Choy's son

gained access to CCTV 4 (the Chinese International Channel of CCTV) and when I had access to news and other information through surfing of the web, I found that I did not have too much time left. I might not actually have enough time to do everything. When Mei Mei had her summer break, we often went to a cruise or we travelled to visit friends and relatives or to attend weddings of the younger generation. During the winter break, we usually went back to Hong Kong. When Mei Mei retired in 2013, the whole year could be travel time to us, but we would take care to travel only when the weather was right.

Though it was unfortunate I contracted polio so early at the age of 3, I have never been bitter with life. I might be a little jealous that others could ride a bicycle, could play soccer, could swim so well, could play ping-pong so well, but that is all. In my conditions, I count myself lucky that I have maintained an active life right up to my 80th year. I count myself very, very fortunate indeed to have become associated with Cognitio. I could not find any other place where I could have worked so happily with friends and could claim to have achieved something. I would not say I made no contribution to Cognitio but I owed Cognitio much, much more. I was surrounded by so many good friends, especially those founders who worked with me from the very beginning right through our Cognitio College (Kowloon) days: Choy Kam Yuen, Chow Cho On, Sung Siu Wai and Pho Ie Gwan. And there were so many others from our staff and from our students. Only a working environment created by an institution like Cognitio can produce so many people caring for each other. I am happy I can still maintain close contact with Cognitio and can continue to witness its



progress and to be able to contribute a little help when I can.

My very good friend Choy Kam Yuen once remarked to me: “We have lived through a Great Era.” I cannot agree more with him. If *Cognitio* is a source of comfort and joy to me, China is the other. Some young people in Hong Kong may not understand because they have no idea of the old China. They could not feel the tremendous changes that have taken place, which almost seem impossible.

Since the Opium War, China sank gradually into a poor, backward and defenceless country, at the mercy of the powers. The Japanese invasion further aggravated the situation. I lived through the Japanese occupation in Hong Kong. The population at that time was reduced to only a fraction of a million and still food was insufficient. Those who could go walked back to the interior. Those who remained suffered hunger, poverty and humiliation. Everyone had to bow to a Japanese soldier when he saw one. Hong Kong people had to change all their HK dollars to Japanese military bank notes which became worthless after the Japanese surrender.

The situation did not improve in China after the Japanese defeat because the civil war started in 1946. I visited my relatives in Canton in early 1949. Buses carried a large bag of combustible gas on the top because gasoline was almost non-existent or buses might use charcoal as fuel. That year it was my turn to go to Canton to collect my *laissez* but it turned out that all the *laissez* money was only good enough to buy one book from a book store. When it rained, the roads became muddy and difficult. I did not enjoy my trip at all.



Basilica Sagrada Familia. Still under construction after more than a hundred years. Barcelona, Spain.



Magnificent buildings by the roadside en route to Barcelona, Spain. March, 2014.



The Thousand Islands, Canada. July, 2014.



It was not hard to imagine the difficulties faced by the new China. The American writer Edgar Snow wrote a book called *The Other Side of the River* in which he described in detail how the new government mobilized the people to clean up places to maintain good hygiene, to grow enough food to feed the people and to produce enough goods for the basic needs. Meanwhile in 1950 the Korean War broke out and China became involved. Despite the handicaps, China emerged 10 years later in 1959 firmly established and presented itself to the world as a nation ready to march forward.

The first 10 years was a period of hope and promise. The next 17 years was a period of doubt, mistrust and violence. First came a series of political strifes, the Great Leap Forward and the 3 Years of Famine, and lastly the disastrous Cultural Revolution. I do not intend to defend any of these but that might be a period that historically a new revolutionary government had to go through. A good example was the French Revolution. The Cultural Revolution provided a lesson that the Chinese Communist Party did learn. From then on there was no longer any class struggle movement in China. Instead, it was reform and opening up. The Tiananmen Square events seemed a step backward. At first my sympathy was all with the students, but after seeing how the student leaders behaved after escaping overseas and after seeing how China progressed rapidly afterwards, I had second thoughts. Stability was what China needed first and foremost. Some people liked to use what happened in the past as criteria to judge the present government. This was wrong, very wrong.

We should judge the present government by what it is doing now. And we should look at the big things, not individual incidents. The present government has vowed to move all people above the poverty line by 2020. If that is accomplished and I believe it will, all discussion on the merits and demerits of the government could end: it is a good government.

Internationally from the Sick Man of the East, China is beginning to lead the world, not just by trade and by its strength as the world's second largest economy, but by its forward-looking ideas and by its implementation of those ideas. Some examples. History has demonstrated that when a new power emerges, it will try to displace the old power and that means war. China has introduced new ideas about relationship between big nations, about relationship between emergent powers and existing powers, demonstrating that war is not inevitable. This new concept about international relationship of big nations has won the approval of many countries including the US. China has also introduced the idea of sustainable progress based on co-operation, mutual benefit, reasonable use of resources and conservation of environment. China has also introduced the idea of common human destiny. In other words, China is saying we should progress together. When a country has become rich, it has the duty to help the less rich, the poor, to help them to make progress together. Only in this way, the world can have sustainable progress. China is proposing this in political summits like the G20, the BRICS\*, and is trying to put the ideas into practice in projects like the One Belt One Road Initiative.

\* BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, an association of 5 emergent countries

It gives me joy to see the once sick China is now full of life, full of energy, united in one common dream - the revival of the Chinese people. It gives me joy to hear new accomplishments of China almost everyday, either technical, economical, cultural, or sports.

I count myself lucky to have led so far a fairly active life but since my last return from Hong Kong in December, 2016, I found that my body machine might have started to wind down. My legs and arms were further weakened. I had to



November 2018 at Wong Yu Yeun 's home

give up walking because it was not steady and I could easily fall. I could still stand up from my wheelchair, but now only with a little help. I could still shift from my wheelchair to a chair, to a toilet, etc. But if the height difference is 2 and a half inches or more, then I cannot. I have been giving ground over the years gradually, first driving, then walking over some distance, and now no walking at all. The ability to stand up and the ability to transfer from wheelchair to chair and back would be the very last things I had to keep to give myself the privilege of keeping myself independent. However, I know sooner or later I will be more and more dependent on others. Perhaps, I simply have to adjust to this. My student and friend Wong Yu Yuen is a good example for me. She has been coping with her disability for years. I have to learn from her example.

So long as I can follow the progress of Cognitio and China, it will be a source of joy for me. And I will certainly try my best to do so.

Cheung Chun Kwok

December 2018





Gathering in Vancouver



Reunion in Toronto



Toronto Reunion. Toronto, Canada. Jul 11, 2004.



European tour with friends



Sending off the old year





At the Reunion Dinner for the Celebration of the 55th Anniversary of Cognitio College.



55th Cognitio College Dinner Celebration



Officiating at the 2018 Annual Speech Day







Three Principals of Cognitio College (Kowloon)



Campus at San Po Kong (1970-2019)





At Kai-Tak New Campus Fund-raising Kick-off Ceremony 2018



New Campus at Kai Tak in 2019