

Timeless Bonding

This antique clock, manufactured by Ansonia Clock Company in Brooklyn, N.Y., accompanied Peter Tsui, the founder of Wah Yan, for the greater part of his life since the Robinson Road days. Still ticking on the wall today, it has become a symbol of the timelessness of the bonding between Wahyanites.



A HISTORY OF TIMELESS BONDING

Recollection of Wah Yan - alumni ties since 1919

Dr. John K. Tan (Class '81, WYHK)

1. Preamble

During the first year of Jesuit administration of Wah Yan College, Robinson Road, the Jesuit editor of *The Star* wrote the following in the magazine:

... we appeal to all Old Boys to help us to write the history of their Alma Mater. Wah Yan is interested in each and every one of them – they are her representatives in the world outside the classroom, and she is ever proud of her children. (The Star, Christmas 1933)

Fr. Editor was not asking the old boys to write a book. Instead, he was requesting them just to send in their recent news to be published in the magazine. Actually, news of individual old boys, most of whom had not even been taught by members of the new Jesuit administration, accounted for 10% of the contents pages of this issue of *The Star*. The Jesuits treated the history of Wah Yan's old boys as part of the School's history, their post-graduation life as part of the life of Wah Yan.

Congruent to the theme of this Conference, this article is an attempt to portray the history of bonding between Wah Yan and her sons throughout the decades. Similar to the 'Past' section in *The Star 1933*, the real authors of this article are many of Wah Yan's old boys, plus a smaller number of Jesuit and lay Teachers. My role is merely the collection and organization of relevant primary materials from documentary and verbal sources, questionnaire replies from some 150 old boys (81 from WYHK, 69 from WYK) in summer 2004, and some analytical work. Though the quotations appearing in the following pages are accounts from individual alumni, I believe a lot of them represent the voices of many. ('Anon.' quotations come from alumni who have identified themselves to the project team but prefer to remain anonymous in this publication.)

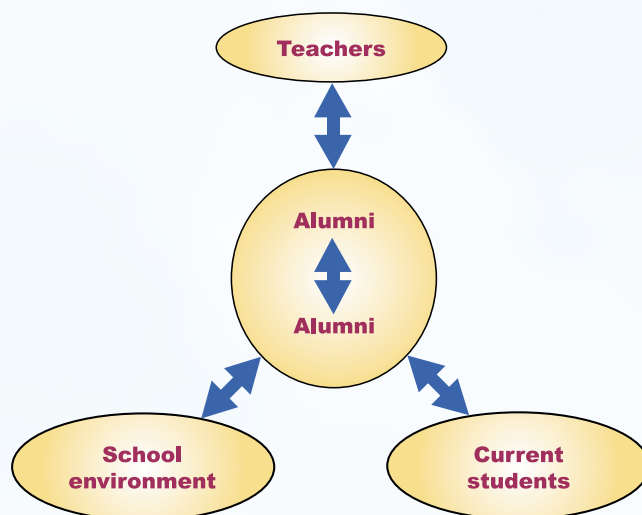
This article is not a comprehensive study of Wah Yan-alumni relations since 1919 because of several constraints: 1) This 'research' project began rather late this year and had to be completed by September, 2) there was difficulty in accessing some of the non-electronic sources, and 3) relevant accounts from the alumni perspective about the pre-Jesuit era were almost non-existent. Furthermore, this article does not consist of an exhaustive summary of PSA activities within and outside Hong Kong. Instead, it is an exploration of the core values behind some of these events and other memories which established, sustained and strengthened the bonds between Wahyanites and their *alma mater* throughout the decades.

I would like to thank the following people for their support offered to this project: Fr. Deignan, Mr. Norman So, Mr. George Tam, old boys including Stanislaus Keung, Jonathan Ho, Lo Wing Sun, Cheung Tai Chiu, Paul Wong, the Editors of this publication, the two WYPSAs in Hong Kong and all old boys who have contributed towards our questionnaire or interview findings.

A note on the term 'Wah Yan': when this term is used in the singular form (except in contextualized quotations), it means the collective family of both Wah Yans which share a common educational mission, and not one of the two Wah Yan Colleges.

2. Four Elements in School-Alumni Bonding

The school-alumni bonding usually includes four kinds of relationships: connections among alumni, relationship between alumni and the school environment, alumni-teacher bonds and ties between past and current students.



1. *Bonding between alumni and school environment:* For most old boys, Wah Yan's physical and pastoral environments have been conducive to their learning and have left pleasant memories. In return, many gave financial support to maintain or improve the school environment for the benefit of future generations of students.
2. *Alumni-alumni bonds:* Such bonds exist among graduates of the same year and that between senior and junior graduates. This type of bonding is very common in most schools it is natural for teenagers, who have gone through similar socialization processes of adolescent maturity, to maintain their fraternity in the decades after their graduation.
3. *Alumni-teachers bonds:* 'Teachers' here also include the principal, clerical and technical staff, janitors, and, in the Wah Yan context, Fathers in residence but who are not on the staff roll. If bonds are to remain between a teacher and a student after graduation, such bonds are invariably voluntary, and usually require a good impression that the teacher has made on the student, and sometimes, but not necessarily always, vice versa. The continuation of such personal relationships provides the only medium by which the school's mission for alumni can be implemented. For a Jesuit school, it has a special mission to her alumni that may not be shared other schools:

... a Jesuit school has a special responsibility to them [former students]. As far as resources permit, the school will offer guidance and ongoing formation so that those who received their basic formation in the school can be more effective in putting this formation into practice in adult life and can continue to deepen their dedication to the service of others. (The Characteristics of Jesuit Education, No.135)

Even during the days when the two Wah Yan Colleges were managed by lay people, there was already a ‘prelude’ to this Jesuit mission:

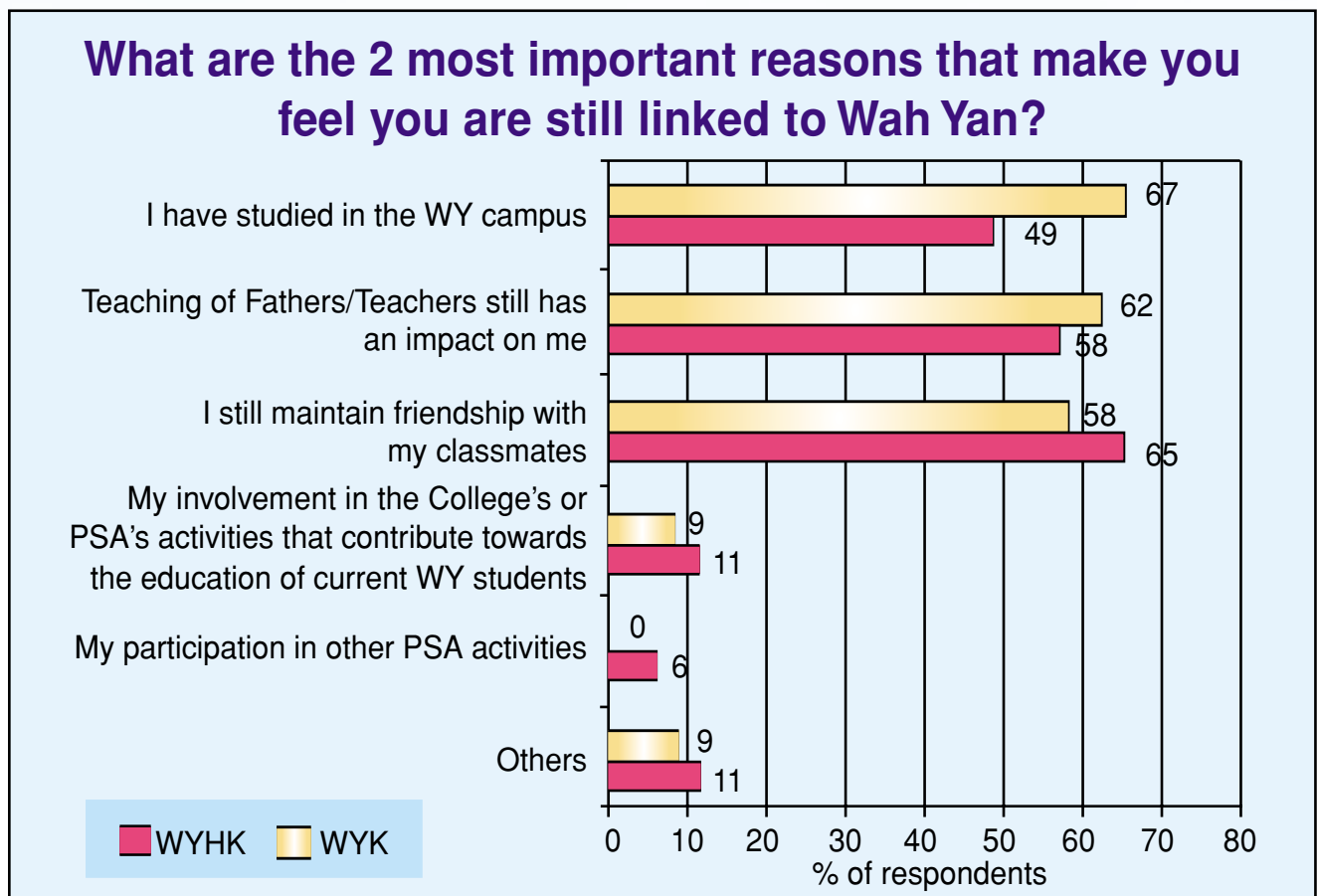
We make it a point to follow the careers of our old boys and to give them whatever encouragement and assistance lie in our power. (Mr. Lim Hoy Lan, WYHK’s Headmaster 1926-32 (WYK’s Headmaster 1933-52), addressing graduating students on the annual prize presentation day, 23rd May 1929 – from the School log book)

4. *Bonding between past and current students:* when bonds between alumni and their *alma mater* are strong, alumni develop affection towards the school as an institution which prompts them to support current students in various ways. Sometimes, this support is reversed when current students, as representatives of the school, inform alumni of the school’s latest developments or stimulate reunion activities among alumni circles.

Interactions between the two parties in each type of bonding take place via or outside alumni bodies. The arrangement of Sections 4-9 of this article follows the above framework: bonding between alumni and school environment (Sec. 4), alumni-alumni bonds (Sec. 5-6), alumni-teacher bonds (Sec. 7-8), bonding between past and current students (Sec. 9).

3. What Links Wah Yan to the Hearts of Old Boys

In our questionnaire, old boys are asked “What are the **two** most important reasons that make you feel you are still linked to Wah Yan?” The results are as follows:



Reasons behind Bonding to Wah Yan in Each Generation by Decade

Most important reasons (two) that make you feel you are still linked to Wah Yan	% of respondents graduated (F.5) in the decade group choosing this reason (H: WYHK, K: WYK)											
	1940 & 1950s		1960s		1970s		1980s		1990s		2000s	
	H	K	H	K	H	K	H	K	H	K	H	K
I have studied in the Wah Yan campus	60	n/a	45	52	40	77	48	64	55	63	42	67
The teaching of a/some Father(s)/Teacher(s) still has an impact on me	70	n/a	55	59	67	64	40	64	55	50	63	33
I still maintain friendship with my former classmates	50	n/a	55	33	60	16	80	32	68	38	74	33
My involvement in the College's or the PSA's activities that contribute towards the education of current WY students	10	n/a	18	7	27	18	0	0	4	13	11	0
My participation in other activities of the PSA	0	n/a	27	0	0	0	8	0	4	0	0	0
Others	10	n/a	0	15	7	9	24	9	13	0	11	33

'Others' and elaborations of the choices include (Class year indicates year of F.5 graduation):

- It was the Jesuit fathers that keeps me linked to Wah Yan. WYPSA is important, but was bureaucratic. It's better now with more young people in. (Wong Che Wai Raymond, Class 1960 WYHK)
- Pressure-free atmosphere and sport-oriented environment. (Anon., Class 1961 WYK)
- I have been teaching at WYK for over 20 years. (Stanislaus Keung, Class 1975 WYK)
- I have been a scout leader for many years. (Anon., Class 1978 WYHK)
- While I cannot say that nothing unpleasant ever happened while I was at Wah Yan, the memories only contribute to the overall tapestry of my formative years on which I still look back fondly from time to time. (Etienne Wong, Class 1981 WYHK)
- My participation representing WYK in interschool competitions like athletics and soccer. (Anon., Class 1986 WYK)
- I know and befriend with past students both from WYHK and WYK. Very often we don't know each other are from WY at the beginning, but when that moment comes, we can feel a very special warmth rising from our hearts! (Li Wing Chung, Class 1989 WYHK)
- If I had not studied in Wah Yan, I might have been another person. I can say my personality and living style today were developed by my classmates, teachers and Fathers. (Hau Kong Kin, Class 1996 WYHK)

From the survey, it can be seen that the campus, teachings of Teachers/Fathers and the classmates are the most important factors bonding Wah Yan and her sons. The campus factor is significantly more important among WYK boys and WYHK boys, while participation in PSA activities that do not contribute towards the education of current students is irrelevant to all WYK respondents.

4. Alumni and School Environment

There is no record of Wahyanites' memories of the earliest campuses on Hollywood Road. For the Robinson Road campus, which began at No.2 and later expanded to include Nos. 4, 6 & 8, Lau Shing Cham (Class 1 [equivalent to F.6] 1940, WYHK) had this recollection:

Very often, I cherish the memory of all the teachers in the mother school and I amuse myself in visiting the old campus at No.2 Robinson Road. I usually also walk down to the Cathedral where I was baptized by Fr. Gallagher. (Questionnaire contribution)

Paul Tsui Ka Cheung (1928-31 & 1934-35 WYHK, 1931-34 WYK) recalled:

(on WYHK) One memorable aspect of life in Wah Yan College Hongkong in those days, which still stuck in my mind, was that we enjoyed an unobstructed view of the Victoria Harbour. We could see very clearly, shippings coming in, via the main fairway from Lyemun. By the different shapes of hulls and superstructures, and by the flags they flew, we were able to identify readily the respective country of registry and owner of the ship. We loved watching Men-of-war of different countries coming into the Harbour from Lyemun, firing their guns in salute, as they inched their ways in, to be followed by returning saluting guns from Black Head Hill at Tsim Sha Tsui.

(on WYK) The custom-built Kowloon Branch of Wah Yan College was located at the corner of Tung Choy Street and Nelson Street - two blocks away to the east of Nathan Road, and one block away to the south of Argyle Street in Mongkok. When the school was built, it faced a wide open space in front, as by then none of the buildings which now stand to the east of Tung Choy Street up to the railway, and none of those buildings to the north of Nelson Street up to Argyle street had yet been built. Even the north side of Argyle Street was partly built. (Paul Tsui Ka Cheung's Memoirs, 1989)

Peter Hall Kam Ping (1933-41 WYK) recalls scenes from the tuck-shop in Nelson Street premises:

Red bean soup was sold at one cent a bowl, ice cream one cent a cup, five cents would allow you enjoy a really big lunch! Every Friday was fasting day, and a fish-shape notice board carrying the words 'Fish Day' would appear in the tuck-shop. (Interview in September 2004)

A return to the Queen's Road East campus aroused great reminiscence in Lam Kui Po (Class 1963):

... sixteen years ago, I bid farewell to my most beloved school Wah Yan for studies in the University of Southern Australia. After graduation, I secured a good job there and decided to stay on. Now my children are already seven and eight years old, there has not been a single year during which I did not miss my alma mater. How are her teachers? The Fathers whom I remember very clearly, are they well? Do they know that even in faraway lands, there are old boys thinking of them?

Around Christmas last year, my whole family returned to Hong Kong for a two-month holiday. I took the chance to go back to my mother school. With an exciting mood and joyful steps, I returned to my mother school's winding avenue on Queen's Road East. The parking lot and the grassy slopes on both sides welcomed me as in the old days! I approached the school office ... two minutes later, my F.5 Form Teacher Fr. McCarthy came down with a smiling face. It had been 18 years since F.5, and his face looked the same! No change at all! We shook hands passionately, exchanged greetings, and began our 'tour'. Those stairs leading to 2/F and 3/F, weren't we waiting here to enter the classrooms before the bell rang? I looked north, the same old banyan tree was still there! Fr. McCarthy led me to the classroom which used to be the F.5A homeroom. "This is where I used to punish you to stand!" It's funny when I look back because though his punishment was very horrifying then, yet without his strict teaching, we wouldn't have had our achievements today!

Then we strolled westwards, and I saw a new block behind the labs. Fr. Lawler, my former U6S Form Teacher who designed these labs, had returned to Ireland because of ill health. Think about it: how many scientists have these labs nurtured in the past decades! Returning to G/F, Fr. McCarthy and I walked past the playground, through the chapel, and entered the hall. There is always a unique scent inside this hall, and all Wah Yan students recognize this odour. This scent and the visual image of the hall had been imprinted in my memory, even after a long time, I could still recall the past experiences in this hall: so many badminton and table-tennis tournaments, verse-speaking competitions, Shakespeare drama, debates and the graduation dinner! The piano on the stage is a new one, not the black one that I used to play. Oh, the black piano is still there in the music room. During my L6 and U6 years, I spent so many hours in front of this piano! My dear old friend piano, you haven't grown old a bit, and you sound as you did in the old days!

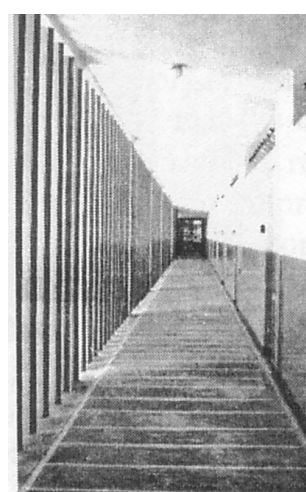
I said goodbye to Fr. McCarthy and thanked him being my tour guide and for his stern teaching. During my seven years in Wah Yan, I lived most happily and as given the best teachings I have ever received. Mother school, I will be grateful to you forever! As I walk down the avenue, I boarded a bus at the bus-stop with which I was most familiar. Every time I see students in the Wah Yan uniform, I whisper in my heart, "Do you know we belong to the same School? Do you know I envy your light blue blazer very much, and feel extraordinarily proud of the lovely school badge you are wearing?" (translated from Chinese, The Star 1982)

Some other old boys share their memories of the campus in visual form. Class 1980 of WYK posted campus pictures in their on-line gallery 'Shadows of Wah Yan'.

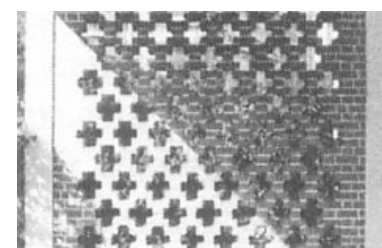
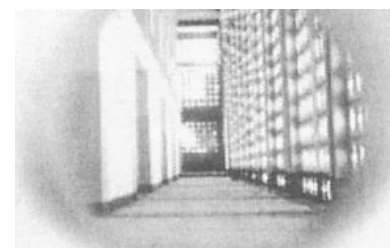
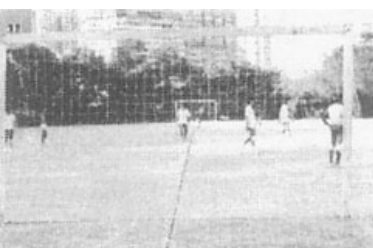


After graduation, whenever I travel along Waterloo Road or along the railway, a feeling of having been a Wah Yan student will come up when I see the Wah Yan campus. (Anon., Class 1980 WYK, questionnaire contribution)

Our school buildings have not undergone major facelifts since they were erected. This has preserved their original exteriors and brings back memories and homecoming sentiments to old boys each time they return to their mother school. Many old boys come back during holidays, sometimes even with their families, to visit Fathers and recollect the old days. Because of this, we still maintain this tradition of opening the premises to old boys during holidays. (Interview of Mr. George Tam, WYHK Principal, September 2004)



Pictures from 'Shadows of Wah Yan' Gallery



The physical environment of Wah Yan not only triggers memories, but when deteriorating in quality it also prompts old boys to help. Though the quality of teachers is the most important factor influencing the implementation of Wah Yan's educational ideals, the hardware is crucial in facilitating this mission, and donations from old boys to maintain and improve the hardware are a very concrete way of reflecting their bonds with Wah Yan.

The early campuses of Wah Yan were rented. The first major fundraising drives to improvement the schools' physical environment were those related to the construction of the Waterloo Road and Queen's Road East campuses in the late 1940s and early 1950s. On 16th July 1947, the Council of the Wah Yan Past Students' Association (WYPSA), then a joint WYHK-WYK body, met full for the first time during Fr. Bourke's rectorship (in those days the Rector was also the Headmaster), to discuss ways and means of getting money for the building of the new Wah Yans (WYHK Log Book).

In 1951, the Society of Jesus decided that the Waterloo Road campus would be opened in the following year, though they still needed \$580,000 (c.f. the price of *The Star* in 1951 was \$3) to raise enough funds to construct the main classroom block (the auditorium and the chapel had to wait for several years owing to the economy downturn prompted by the outbreak of the Korean War – *The Shield* 1953). 'WE MUST FIRST BUILD IT', declared Fr. McAsey in *The Star* 1951. The new school was urgently needed because students in the crowded Nelson Street premises and in the P.M. section in the Robinson Road campus needed more space to be available in this new school, so that the quality of their education can be improved, and the A.M. boys in Robinson Road could revert back to whole-day schooling. The Fathers were confident in their fundraising appeal probably since the erection of the new school at the Waterloo Road site was God's will, the money would come anyway. Apart from grants from the government (\$1 million) and the Jesuit Order (\$400,000), numerous old boys helped (notably a \$3,500 donation came from the 'Bangkok Old Wah Yan Boys' – many Thais studied in Robinson Road during the 1930s), alongside with generous contributions from non-Wah Yan parties (tycoons, and girls of French Convent School, now St. Paul's Convent School). In the work of collecting funds among alumni, the Jesuits gave particular thanks to Chan Kam To, Cheung Chi Kwong, Paul Lim How Ping and Yu Kwai To, all WYHK old boys, for their active and successful efforts (*The Star* 1951). As promised, WYK was opened in 1952.

Jesuits in the early 1950s must be very vigorous men, since immediately after the opening of new WYK, they embarked on another fundraising exercise to construct WYHK's new campus. Perhaps because of experiencing the severe drawbacks of operating a Jesuit school without an auditorium and a chapel in Waterloo Road, the Queen's Road East campus would open with these two facilities.

"To the ordinary school facilities for teaching and study are added the means for promoting spiritual and cultural growth, without which even well-instructed pupils cannot be called truly educated."(*The Star* 1954)

WYHK's new chapel and hall increased the budget. The new WYHK was to be opened in 1955, but by the end of the 1953-54 academic year, only \$259,435, about one-tenth of the total budget, had been raised. The government donated a grant of \$750,000 to match an equal amount of sum that "for twenty years the Jesuit Fathers in Wah Yan have saved and collected to the limit of their meagre resources". Again, many old boys contributed, though the list of benefactors was much shorter than the WYK list in 1951, which is

understandable because of a second appeal within a short time. Notable donors included the Wah Yan Dramatic Society (which raised \$2,637.20), 'Past Students in the Treasury' (\$138), and many non-Wah Yan donors (including relatives of Jesuit Fathers, such as Mrs. V. M. Lawler and Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Carroll). However, there was still a deficit of \$400,000. The last remaining debt of the building fund were eventually paid off in 1973 by an old boy who entered Wah Yan 42 years earlier, in memory of his father after whom WYHK's library was consequently named (*The Star* 1953, 1954 & 1973).

As the two 'new' campuses grew older, alumni continued to offer their financial support for renovations, replacement and addition of equipment (e.g. lockers, furniture, computers), construction of the swimming pool in WYK, and notably the erection of new wings in both Colleges (Wayne Wang's [Class 1966 WYHK] first major movie 'Dim Sum' was used by the WYPSA to raise \$376,270 in 1986 for WYHK's new wing). A major alumni source of the recurrent subsidies on hardware purchase and maintenance was the annual balls organised by the two local PSAs. In WYHK, a general fund has been set up to receive donations for similar purpose (and student activities) (interviews of Messrs. Norman So and George Tam, Principals of WYK and WYHK, September 2004). The latest major construction and redevelopment plans need no elaboration here. It is obviously inappropriate to highlight selected old boys who were major donors to these campaigns in these pages, though we thank all of them for the environments from which Lam Kui Po, Class 1980 of WYK and the rest of us have benefited so much. However, one alumnus benefactor must be mentioned because of the publicised controversy related to his efforts to help his *alma mater*. He is Gordon Wu.

Sir Gordon Wu Ying Sheung (Class 1951 WYHK) is well known among WYHK circles for his donation of the new wing Gordon Wu Hall, which he officially opened in 1987, after having given other forms of support to improve the school's hardware in previous years. When WYHK was contemplating a partial redevelopment of the campus in 1994, Gordon Wu, being a member of Project Management Committee and Fund Raising Committee, counter-proposed a phased redevelopment of the entire campus (*The Star* 1995). At the school's 70th anniversary dinner, he made the offer to match each dollar raised from other sources by a dollar from his own pocket. He later paid for the professional investigatory services which were required to start off the redevelopment plan (WYHKPSA website). In October 1995, "after considering the implications of total redevelopment and the future annual maintenance of the premises", the Society of Jesus decided that "it would be best not to go ahead with the total redevelopment and that we should seriously consider a partial redevelopment on the line of the Wong and Ouyang's plan and a major refurbishment of the existing wings." (*The Star* 1996)

In 2001, a newspaper reported that Gordon Wu was volunteering to take up the work of demolishing the existing WYHK premises and constructing a new campus which he was then designing (*Ming Pao*, 16th September 2001). Two years later, he was reportedly very disappointed by the outcome of his efforts to redevelop the campus:

As a Wahyanite, seeing my mother school becoming old and under-equipped, I suggested to the Fathers that rather than making patches here and there, there should be a total redevelopment. Since my desire was to show my gratitude to my alma mater, I made the offer of matching the amount raised by fundraising by an equal amount from me, that is, you raise \$200 million, I will donate \$200 million, and pay all the works expenses. Who knows ... [the journalist continues: Who knows there were conspiracy theorists gossiping, criticizing Wu that behind his zeal for the redevelopment project was an intention to make profits from the piece of land ... The Fathers believed this

theory and politely turned down Wu's offer, making him feel disappointed ... After further analysis, the Fathers no longer believed this lie and approached Wu again.] ... *By then, I had gone deaf! (translated from Chinese, Hong Kong Economic Daily, 9th September 2003) "Thinking it over and over again, I am still angry: I have contributed my money and efforts, why are there such gossips? My money was hard-earned money."* (translated from Chinese, Sing Tao Daily, 10th October 2003)

Three days later, a newspaper reported that WYHK definitely did not believe that Wu's participation in the redevelopment project involved private interests, and there had been some misunderstanding. Mr. George Tam hoped Gordon Wu would change his mind. (*Sing Tao Daily*, 13th October 2003)

The fact that Sir Gordon Wu has accepted the two WYPSAs' invitation to be the Honorary Chairman of this International Conference and to address participants may signal the beginning of a 're-bonding' process and a breakthrough in the redevelopment project. After all, it is all too natural for a Wahyanite architect to express his care for Wah Yan and his desire to improve her quality through his professional expertise.

5. Role of Alumni Bodies in Bonding among Old Boys

The oldest alumni body of Wah Yan was the Old Boys' Union, formed at the beginning of 1927. Mr. Lung Ting Tong (entered WYHK 1921) was the first president and the membership then was over 120. WYHK's Headmaster Mr. Lim Hoy Lan gave much importance to the Union. Since its foundation, when Mr. Lim spoke at the annual prize presentation, he frequently appealed to all graduating students to join the Union to "take an interest in the work of their *alma mater*", "so that ties that bind them to their *alma mater* may not be broken" (WYHK Log Book). On the 10th Anniversary of the College, a special banquet was held for the Old Boys on 15th December 1929, before the main banquet to follow the next day (Wah Yan was founded on 16th December 1919) ((*Paul Tsui Ka Cheung's Memoirs*, 1989).

Despite Mr. Lim's repeated appeals, it seemed that membership of the Old Boys' Union later did not increase significantly or even dropped. It might have been disbanded around the early 1930s, since after Wah Yan had been handed over to the Jesuits (December 1932), Rector Fr. Gallagher invited old boys to discuss his "idea of forming a Wah Yan Past Pupils' Association" on 12th January 1935. He sent out an invitation "to as many old boys as we could find" and the response was "most gratifying: 49 of those invited came and a letter of apology was received from the remaining one". This new organisation was to be more formal than the Old Boys' Union, with rules and constitutions being drafted by an advisory committee (WYHK Log Book).

Under Jesuit guidance, the alumni body immediately became the channel through which lifelong education, as we call it today, was delivered to the old boys. Even before the official foundation of the new Wah Yan Past Students' Association (WYPSA), Jesuit Provincial Fr. Byrne had already given a lecture to the would-be members of WYPSA on 'The Most Remarkable Peace in the World'. Thirteen days later, on 20th March 1935, the first General Meeting of WYPSA was held, with Ko Fook Sun (entered WYHK 1927) elected President and Fr. Gallagher made an ex-officio Vice President.

At the first social function ('At Home', see more below) of the WYPSA held on 4th May 1935, President Ko Fook Sun spoke about his hopes on the Association in consolidating fraternity among old boys:

...I remember when I returned from abroad five months ago, I was extremely anxious to meet those Wahyanites who had spent with me the early days of their boyhood under the same sheltering roof of the Alma Mater. Some of their names are always in my mind and their faces are still familiar, but I had not the opportunity to chat with them about the good old days when our school lives were so interesting. However, I am not the only one who clamours for this opportunity and I believe many are in the same boat with me. Fortunately, the Rev. Fr. Rector of the College, who has in his heart the warm esteem of every Old Boy, proposed to establish the Wah Yan Past Students' Association, and it is due to his kind help, generosity and encouragement that this Association was ushered into the world about a month ago ... I earnestly appeal to all past Wahyanites to join this Association. I must make it clear that it is not a mere association in name. It is not merely a question of giving the annual subscription fee and feeling that an appeal has been responded to; it is much more than that ... For, by supporting the Association we are supporting ourselves. No matter what may happen to us after leaving school, of this I am sure, that each one is proud of knowing the other and wishes that he is worthy of the Alma Mater, the dear fountain of knowledge and shrine of all our youthful hopes and ambitions.

In his reply to the President, Fr. Gallagher spoke about the ideal of the WYPSA:

...The ideal of the Association is to forge a chain binding not a few but all past students of Wah Yan. The College in which their early years were spent and in which they were prepared for the battle of life is to be the capstan round which the chain is wound ... The ideal is expressed in another way in the preamble to the Rules and Constitutions: The aim of the Association is to bring the past students into closer touch with the College; into closer touch with one another; to interest the past students in works of social value ... Very many pass the [School Leaving Certificate] examination, but some do not. That is why I wish the Association to link up not merely those who have brought honour and fame to the College, but those who are perhaps unknown. It is an Association which should aim at being a benefit to all who have ever sat upon the benches of the College. (The Star 1935)

Mr. Ko was later re-elected President for 12 more terms, "though each year he absolutely refuses to take the position again, the combined vote of the Association makes sure that he does." By the end of May 1935, WYPSA's membership rose to 130. The last WYPSA function held before the outbreak of the Pacific War was the general meeting held on 6th December 1941, two days before the Japanese forces began to attack Hong Kong. Then alumni activities stopped until 28th January 1946 when the first post-war old reunion was held at Ying King Restaurant (now Tai Yau Arcade) in Wanchai (WYHK Log Book).

In 1952, membership of the WYPSA rose to 600 (*The Star* 1953). The organization's membership was open to graduates of both Wah Yans, though most members came from WYHK. Fr. Dargan, then Rector of WYK, emphasized the unity of both Wah Yans at the 1959 WYPSA Annual Dinner Dance:

"Both Wah Yan Colleges are one, not only in name but in our spirit, our ideals and our methods. Not only students but teachers change from one to the other with comparative ease. The people of Hong Kong use the term 'Wah Yan boy' irrespectively of the students of both our Colleges and expect to find the same ideals in all. Hence I think it is an excellent thing that there is but one Past Students Association for the two Wah Yans and I hope that in future more boys from Kowloon will become members." (The Star 1959)

For some reasons, the WYPSA apparently became inactive from 1964 to 1968. This was the only period during which it gave no reports in the school's publications. A meeting attended by representatives of various Class Clubs (see below) was held on 18th January 1969 to discuss ways of reactivating and developing

the WYPSA. It was decided that the organization would be divided into two, WYHKPSA for WYHK old boys and WYKPSA for WYK: "This [change] was thought advisable as each year the number of graduates increases and there is obviously a close bond between graduates of the same school. However there will always be a close link between Wah Yan Hong Kong and Wah Yan Kowloon and we hope in fact that many joint functions will be organized" (*The Star* 1969). Peter Hall Kam Ping studied in WYK from 1933 to 1941, but since he lived on Hong Kong Island, he was elected to be WYHKPSA's Chairman (interview in September 2004).

Social functions were major activities of the WYPSA. From 1935 to 1960, the WYPSA and the Jesuit Headmaster hosted the annual 'At Home' on the WYHK premises. Fr. Rector sent out invitations each time, and noted carefully the numbers of those replying coming and those not attending in the log book. The name 'At Home' captured the essence of this function. The first 'At Home' was held in the 'Great Hall' (it was actually quite small even by 1930s standards) of the Robinson Road campus on 4th May 1935. Among those present were Fr. Gallagher and eight other Jesuits (including Mr. J. Garland who spent his last years in WYHK before passing away in 1997), seven teachers, many old boys and some current students. The function began with speeches quoted above, continued in the form of a light supper, a mini-concert and a short act of Robin Hood. (*The Star* 1935 and WYHK Log Book)

The WYPSA also organised many other social activities. The Annual Dinner Dance in the early years, later called the Annual Ball, became a tradition which has survived until today. Sports have consistently been a feature in the PSA activities. The first WYPSA Sports Meeting was held at the Caroline Hill sports ground in April 1938. It became an annual event until the war. For many decades, the annual ping pong tournament allowed old boys from WYHK, WYK, Wah Yan alumni in Ricci Hall, current Wah Yan students, and later Pun U Wah Yan boys to compete with fun. Basketball and soccer matches were very popular among old boys of both Wah Yans, and have evolved respectively into the very well organized Wah Yan League and 7-a-side tournaments in recent years. Very recently, WYHKPSA initiated 'Interest Groups' of various sorts (e.g. English, golf, hiking, movies, table-tennis, wine-and-dine) to foster interflow among old boys who share the same hobbies and render support to current Wah Yan students in their area of interest.

Hiking picnics were common in the early days. The picture on this page shows PSA members and friends, after a hiking picnic to climb Lion Rock Mountain from Kowloon Tong (a popular route repeated



several times in later years), were entertained to dinner by President Ko Fook Sun in his Tsim Sha Tsui residence on 12th February 1939. Ko showed his hospitality again by inviting PSA members to a picnic party at his bungalow in Shek O in 1973 (*The Star* 1939 and 1974).

Other social events included launch picnics (often to Silvermine Bay), cuttlefish gatherings (very recently), spring parties (which were organized both in school and in restaurants), and even a trip to Macau (1978). The WYPSA's swimming shed in South Bay served many generations of old boys from 1954 to the early 1990s, during which an opening party with flag-hoisting was held at the beginning of the swimming each year.

The Jesuit Fathers utilized their intellectual strength in nurturing their young graduates. Series of lectures on philosophy and Catholic ideals for all old boys were initiated by them in the pre-war years. Intellectually enriching luncheon meetings were prominent events between 1948 and 1951 and attracted large crowds. They were revived by WYHKPSA between 1969 and 1971, and by WYKPSA from 1994-96. Some of the speakers and themes were:

Speaker	Theme
Fr. T. F. Ryan SJ, Superior of SJ in HK	Plans for a future building of Wah Yan College
Mr. Bowes Griffin, Attorney General	Rule of law
Mr. T. Y. Li, GM of Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industry Ltd.	The history of Chinese motion picture industries
Mr. K. Ashdowne, Commissioner of Chinese Customs	Experiences as Commissioner of Chinese Customs
Sir Shousan Chow	Student days abroad
Mr. R. D. Rule, Squadron leader, Royal Air Force	'Spit-fire': in view of the arrival at our borders of conquering Red armies
Sir Arthur Morse, "one of the greatest patron of sport in the Colony"	The Sport of a lifetime in Hong Kong
Lt. General F. Festing, Commander-in-chief, HK	Modern weapons
Fr. T. J. Sheridan, SJ	My American roundabout; My world tour
Mr. D. W. MacIntosh, Commissioner of Police	Security problems in Hong Kong
Sir Alexander Grantham, Governor of HK	Colonial governors
Mr. L. Starbuck, Royal Observatory	Typhoons
Dr. Bunje	Euthanasia
Mr. K. Y. Lau, President of China Fine Arts Association	Chinese painting
Mr. A. Moss, Director of Civil Aviation	Development of Kai Tak
Fr. Cooney SJ	Past students' support for school development plans of Jesuit Colleges in the U.S.
Dr. George Choa (WY old boy)	Modern developments in surgery
Mr. Lim Hoy Lan	My recent trip to Indonesia
Fr. J. Carroll SJ, new Rector of WYHK	Living in the Past
Fr. K. O'Dwyer SJ, authority on food production	Food and people
Mr. Kwan Man Wai (WY old boy)	Accountancy
Mr. Paul Lim How Ping (WY old boy)	Industry and its development
Mr. Li Fook Shiu	Hong Kong real estate and investments
Mr. Wan Tak Wah	Rediffusion and Television in Hong Kong (the only TV broadcaster in HK then)

It was very likely that many senior government officials listed above were invited through the Jesuit Fathers to whom the colonial government should be grateful for what they have done during the eighteen days of fighting before the Fall of Hong Kong, and their role in helping the reconstruction of post-war Hong Kong. From 18th to 25th December 1941, the Irish Jesuits practically ran all Catholic charities in Hong Kong since the Italian Fathers were interned by the British authorities. Fr. Ryan, a close associate of the Governor Grantham (and rumoured to possess the keys of Government House), accepted the Colonial Secretary's invitation to become the Director of Botany and helped setting up the Department of Agriculture (1945-47) at a time when British government administrators were unavailable. (*Jesuits Under Fire in the Siege of Hong Kong* (1944); *Sunday Examiner* 12th February 1971)

Welfare schemes in the WYPSA have never been attractive to its members. A scheme launched in 1951 in which several doctors were prepared to give free medical counsel to members who needed it resulted in a poor response and "depressed the enthusiastic Welfare Secretary whose only consolation was the thought that all our members were so healthy and sound that none of the welfare schemes could be of interest to them". Another health scheme introduced in 1961 allowing members and their families to get medical and dental care at "a very moderate charge" from consultants designated by the WYPSA was also short-lived. (*The Star* 1952 and 1961).

Most of the communication between the PSAs and their members in the early years took the form of publications. WYPSA's journal *The Bridge*, first published in July 1939, was claimed to be the first magazine published by a Past Students' Association in Hong Kong. The first issue contained a full history of the Association, short biographies of the members, sections dealing with politics, commerce, economics, literature and education as well as a special section on school life. Governor Sir Geoffrey Northcote sent to the editor a personal letter of congratulation on the publication of this first issue (WYPSA (1939) *Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended October 31, 1939*). The second edition received a very favourable review in the *South China Morning Post*:

It is much more than a school magazine: there are articles of high literary quality and of topical interest, contributors including Fr. T. Ryan, S.J., Fr. E. Bourke, S.J., Dunsford Hill, and Lowe Chuan-hua, on subjects as varied as the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, Chungking's foreign residents who are subjected to bombing raids, and the famous Burma Road. There is an appreciation of the late Dr. Chang Shan Tse, the well-known painter of tigers ... It is a journal that should have a wider circulation among former students as well as the older boys of the present collegiates. (*The Star* 1941)

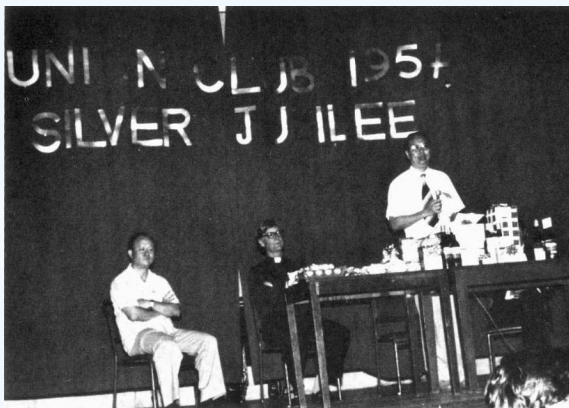
This high quality publication ceased with the outbreak of the war. In later decades, membership directories were published intermittently. WYHKPSA published a *Who's Who Directory* in 2000. Newsletters, later called *Wahyanites*, carried news from the Colleges and the PSAs for many years. During some years, school newspapers published by students were sent by PSAs to old boys. With the birth of the internet, the websites of the PSAs gave instant updates to old boys. The on-line 'Find a Wahyanite' search machine at the WYHKPSA website has even helped old boys to locate long-lost schoolmates according to the information the latter supplied to the database. From 1995 to 1999 I published and distributed the unofficial *WYHK Electronic Update and Review*.

The PSAs were not the only alumni bodies ever existed. (PSAs overseas will be mentioned later.) In the late 1930s, there was a group of Swatow (Chiuchow) Wah Yan boys, past and present, that held a reunion every year (WYHK Log Book). This is likely the only dialect-based Wah Yan alumni group that has ever existed. Wah Yan began to run a private Chinese section called Wah Yan Middle School (華仁中學) in Robinson Road immediately after the Pacific War in 1945, producing its first senior secondary graduates in 1946. On 12th February 1948, 25 old boys from this Chinese section formed an alumni body called the 'Gan House' (幹社). Gan House's mission was to maintain links among graduates from the Middle School, and it placed emphasis in its publication section which was responsible printing and distributing monthly newsletters among its members scattered among different universities in China and HKU, local English secondary schools (including Wah Yan's English section), foreign universities and various professions in Hong Kong. Gan House received strong support from their Chinese Teacher Mr. Wong Tak Fai and remained active at least until 1960.

For many years, upper secondary classes in WYHK had the tradition of forming class clubs with specific names. Many of these clubs continued to maintain bonds among schoolmates after graduation. The first class club on records was 磊社 which was established by Class 1 students in 1935. Then followed the Sword Club (Class 3A [today's F.4] 1937), 旭社 (1949). 1950 saw the formation of a very large number of clubs: Sunshine Club (Class 1), Evergreen Club (Class 2A), Palm Club (Class 2B), Torch Club (Class 3A), Oak Club (Class 3B), Galaxy Club (Class 3C), Zephyr Club (Class 3B of p.m.), Excelsior Club (Class 5A) and 弼社 (Senior Middle 3 of the Chinese Section). Later the clubs consisted of students of the entire form. The Union Club was formed by F.5 graduates of 1954. Class 1963 called themselves Fraternity Club which issued a bimonthly bulletin called 'Fraternity Courier'. This club aimed 'to bring the members of the club into closer contact with one another; to foster a spirit of mutual help among the members; to interest members in works of social value' and these aims were "successfully carried out" as of 1966 (*The Star* 1966). Later F.5 graduating groups included the Loyola Club (1964), Progressive Club (1969), and the Jubilee Club (1970). Since 1976 such groups were called 'F.5 Club' or 'Club of Graduates'. Some of the recent graduation years have created their websites for e-chatting and posting information of upcoming activities. Class 1974 of WYK even once had an on-line system through which members can register for upcoming reunion activities and supply the latest information of their classmates.

Over the years, these clubs received support from Wah Yan's staff. The Headmaster often witnessed the foundation ceremony of the clubs in the classroom or hall (sometimes with other Fathers), and Fathers and Teachers attended their reunion functions frequently (*The Star* of various years and WYHK Log Book). In recent years, representatives of each graduating year were frequently invited to Class Reps. Dinner hosted by the PSA.

To date, the most enduring of all these clubs was the Union Club. Apart from holding their reunions piously every five years (they are going to celebrate their 50th anniversary in November 2004), they organized talks given by members returning from overseas, retreats for Catholic members, and ball teams for sport-loving ones. A club member Gabriel Lam Cheuk Wai decided to enter the seminary after graduation (and later became a Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese). In 1963, the Union Club organized a function to visit Br. Lam in the Aberdeen seminary and to play football against the seminarians there. They later confessed that "after bidding farewell to these blessed souls and the holy place, two minutes later found the club members indulging in their daily vices in Tai Pak Restaurant – playing Mah-jong!" (*The Star* 1963).



Union Club celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1979



Reunion of Class 1975 WYK in 1998 (from Class 1975 website)

From the above accounts, it can be seen that though the efforts of Wah Yan old boys were crucial in keeping their alumni bodies alive and often successful, the contributions made by the Jesuits cannot be underemphasized. The first WYPSA would not have been founded in 1935 without Fr. Gallagher's strong support. Its fruitful developments in later decades, especially in areas related to intellectual and spiritual growth of old boys, owed much to the Jesuit Fathers, notably Fr. McAsey, who acted as adviser in the Council for many years. Fr. McAsey was present at every WYPSA Council meeting and acted as a bridge between the school, the PSA and the evening school (interview of Cheung Chi Kwong [Class 1, 1938 WYHK], June 2004).

Not many schools in Hong Kong have such a long history of professed interest from members of the school sponsoring body in the organizational development of alumni. We have really been fortunate. After all, after teaching boys for five to seven years during their rebellious adolescence, if you volunteer to continue accompanying them in their journey of life, this requires total and lifelong commitment to education. And occasionally, the headache of teaching Wah Yan boys who always break the rules carries on even many years after their graduation. When the School Certificate Examinations results were published on 25th August 1947, "mobs of willing students, Pappas, Mammass, brothers, Sisters, Uncles, Aunts, cousins to the nth degree" appealed to Fr. Bourke (Rector), Fr. Gallagher (Headmaster of the Chinese Section) and Fr. O'Brien ('*de facto*' Headmaster) for Class 1 places on behalf of their family member who took the exams as Class 2 students. The chaos was so great that each of the three capable priests were said "to have the gift of miracles" on that day. The biggest problem, however, noted Fr. Bourke, "is Past Students who demand 'priority' for anybody, who is the pang yau of a pang yau of a pang yau of theirs". The Fathers had to resort to telling the WYPSA Council in a meeting that only "close relatives of past students" would get priority, provided that they

had passed the exam. After this communication, Fr. Bourke still commented that “close relative seems to be anyone who had Adam as a common parent” (WYHK Log Book).

6. Fraternity in faraway lands: Wah Yan alumni overseas

Among Wah Yan old boys of all generations, many left Hong Kong for studies or work overseas. The first alumni body formed outside Hong Kong was the Wah Yan Old Boys Association inaugurated in Lingnan University, Canton (now Guangzhou) in 1946. This association welcomed past students of WYHK, the junior section of WYK at Nelson Street and the senior section of WYK at Austin Road (the latter existed only from September to December 1941) (*The Star* 1947). The life of this only Wah Yan alumni body ever existed in mainland China was obviously short. Most Wahyanites left Guangzhou after 1949. One of those who remained was Fr. Dominic Tang Yee Ming, S.J. (entered WYHK 1920). He was later appointed the Bishop of Guangzhou and spent 22 years in prison, seven in solitary confinement. He was released to Hong Kong in 1980, and was able to pay visits of consolation to his ailing teacher, Mr. Peter Tsui Yan Sau (Founder of Wah Yan), and officiated Tsui's funeral mass months later (*The Star* 1981).

During the decades between the demise of the Lingnan alumni body and the appearance of the next overseas WYPSA, most interactions among old boys overseas were informal. Cheung Chi Kwong (Class 1, 1938 WYHK) recalled his frequent interactions with his old Thai schoolmates during his 3-year stay in Bangkok to cater for his business (interview, June 2004). When Patrick Wu Po Kong (Class 1958 WYHK) was studying in Sydney, Fr. McGovern introduced his Malaysian students there to him. In the early 1980s, Wu helped the incorporation of the Sydney chapter of WYPSA (questionnaire contribution).

We all know that whenever Jesuit Fathers visit their past sons overseas, Wah Yan old boys often welcome them with great hospitality. Actually, the Irish Fathers of Wah Yan did this to Wahyanites abroad long before the latter were able to do so. Fr. Peter Dunne S.J., who had spent several years teaching in Hong Kong before returning to Dublin, presided over the birth of Wah Yan, Dublin in 1961. He noted that

Life in a strange city for Chinese students was rather lonely. They did not mix much with the other students and had few facilities for suitable recreation. There was the danger that they would learn little of western culture and so the opportunity they had for valuable experience would be wasted. Neither had they anyone they could turn to for help and advice in difficulties. Finally, these students did not mix much even among themselves because they had no centre where they could meet. (The Star 1963)

After getting help from his Dublin friends and both Wah Yans in Hong Kong, Fr. Dunne acquired a house in a quiet road in Dublin (Wah Yan House, 19 Waterloo Road), comparatively near the city centre and the various institutions of learning which Chinese students attended. He had this house decorated and furnished comfortably. The residential accommodation at this centre was not large – it could cater for only eleven residents, including Wah Yan graduates and other Chinese students. It had a large lounge with TV and radio (see picture on this page), a library (open to non-resident Chinese students too), a dining room, a small coffee shop, kitchen facilities and a small chapel. A special effort was made to create a homely and friendly atmosphere and to make the various rooms warm and comfortable for those unaccustomed to the rather



Lounge of Wah Yan House, Dublin

uncertain Irish climate. Through informal activities and lectures organized by this centre students were introduced to many Irish groups and therefore their culture (and introduced Chinese culture in return). Students who wished to consult Fr. Dunne approached him at the centre. It sounds like a mini Ricci Hall.

Tang Kwok Hong Peter (Class '78 WYHK) fondly recalled his first encounters with Wahyanites overseas as a new arrival:

It was a great honour for me to meet with members of a local chapter. I then realized how important the alumni were. By way of ideas exchange and guidance from someone that you didn't

know before, the warmth kept me up and cherished my life in times when the need really came up. That was the time when I first felt the Wah Yan spirit shone throughout the world. (Questionnaire contribution)

Lau Shing Cham's (Class 1 1941, WYHK) bonding with Wah Yan was more focused:

I have lived outside Hong Kong for 40 years, but I have maintained [contact] continuously with only one classmate, Tsang How Leung, up to his death in Nov. 2003. (Questionnaire contribution)

Old boys living abroad occasionally wrote back to the Fathers in Wah Yan, sometimes with articles for publication in the school magazine to inform their juniors about studies and life overseas. Aloysius Sum Ka Yim (Class 1953 WYHK) reminded Wah Yan students in 1969 the importance of faith in God when one faces new challenges in a faraway land:

My dear friends of Wah Yan,

This article is specially written for all of you who might be contemplating leaving Hong Kong for Canada in the near future.... Whether or not to emigrate to a new country is a big decision, but do not be over worried. Use your judgement wisely. But I do believe you will like this new place [Canada] because one's own initiatives and efforts will not let oneself down. May you always have a strong faith in God: your innocent love for God be maintained. During the challenges you might come across in your new life, your spiritual health, your strong faith in God and in yourself will see you through many obstacles which otherwise would dash your ideals and hopes. May you have every success in the New World and may your new life aid to strive for and remember your real purpose in life – to love God and to save your own soul and the soul of others. (The Star 1970)

Francis Lui (Class 1969 WYHK) was happy to send Fr. McGaley photos to show him that the activity of 八方風雨會中洲 (mah-jong, two tables), taken place in his apartment, was important in maintaining friendship among his gang of old schoolmates during his studies in the University of Chicago (*The Star* 1973).

The late 1970s saw the beginning of the mushrooming of WYPSAs overseas. Old boy Robert Chung, former P.E. teacher of



Reunion activity in Chicago

WYHK, founded the Sydney chapter in March 1977 with 25 members, mostly students (*The Star* 1978). By 1984, there was already a good mixture of senior, middle-aged and young generations (*The Star* 1984). The membership expanded to 204 in 1994. In Ontario, Canada, WYK boys started their Alumni Association in 1978 and by 1996 had over 200 members. The WYHK old boys in Ontario held its first general function with a dinner honouring Fr. Barrett's (WYHK Principal, 1956-62, 1970-82) visit on 30th September 1982. Its membership in 1996 was 300. WYHK's 1989 Student Ambassador Raphael Lo, whose hosts were his seniors in Ontario, commented that "Wahyanites in Canada may be far away from their school, but they are still united and loyal to it." (*The Star* 1989). Ontario is the only place where there are two separate bodies for WYHK and WYK old boys. Wahyanites in Vancouver began their Alumni Association also in 1982, with the great help from veteran WYPSA member So Shiu Kwan who had just emigrated there. The old boys in Los Angeles had the first inauguration of their chapter attended by Fr. Barrett in 1983, only to be founded again in 1992 as a L. A.-Southern California chapter, having 80 members in 1996. The San Francisco-North California chapter was founded in 1987 and had 150 members in 1996. The Edmonton Chapter was born in 1987, the Calgary and Melbourne chapters in 1990. 1991 saw the birth of the New York chapter. The latest newborns were in Singapore, Houston and Michigan. Membership of the United Kingdom chapter has frequently been unstable because most members were there for further studies and returned back to Hong Kong afterwards. Correspondence with Wahyanites in Bangkok, almost all of whom were graduates from the pre-war period, was made through Francis Wu in the 1990s, but as of 2004, Tana Bamrungtrakul (Class 3, 1940 WYHK) saw himself as the only surviving Wahyanite from that generation in Thailand (interview, September 2004).

This sharing from old boys in Edmonton may reflect the typical path leading to the birth of overseas WYPSA:

There was a day, for all of us here, when we walked through the portals of our school to begin our studies in Wah Yan. Little did we know, that sojourn of our lives would bring us together in this fashion today. In the intervening years, we have dispersed, many of us now overseas ensconced in our own niches, pursuing our own dreams or simply embroiled in daily struggles. Yet in the back of our minds rested the indelible mark of Wah Yan – a sense of belonging, a fond memory of our formative years nurtured under the fold of the Alma Mater. Often, in the hustle-bustle that is everyday, the harmonious, idyllic environment of Wah Yan which fostered our development, gave us a sense of purpose, came back to mind. Many a time, when Wah Yan was mentioned, pride stirred and swelled from within. And as we grew older, more individualistic, there was this urge to share in fellowship, to belong again and to make something out of this unique experience that we went through. It was in this light that the call went out in 1987, in Edmonton, for Wah Yan boys to rally together. (Presentation from WYPSA Edmonton Chapter, 3rd Wah Yan International Conference 1992)

Behind the chronicle of WYPSA births listed above there were not only recollections of old memories, but also practical help offered by old boys who have been long-time residents of their adopted countries to new arrivals.

Since I left WYK in 1991, I pursued my undergraduate and graduate degrees in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. In my initial months there, several Wah Yan alumni who had been studying there helped me a lot on many facets of living and studying in a foreign country. Later on, I tried to do the same thing to fresh graduates from Wah Yan who continued their education there. As time goes on, I got more involved in helping new students and ended up

spending a year as the president of Hong Kong Student Association there (Franklin Peter Wong Pui On, Class 1989 WYK, questionnaire contribution).

To some overseas Wahyanites in managerial positions, the Wah Yan label itself is a guarantee of quality, especially quality of graduates decades ago. Geoffrey Leung Kin Yuen (Class 1951 WYHK), who has worked as a laboratory technician in Wah Yan for many years, got his job in Hang Seng Bank, New York, after emigrating there, because “of the name Wah Yan in his resume. The resume got the attention of Mr. Patrick Leung, a graduate of '59 HK, who was more than delighted to hire a fellow alumnus in New York.” (Presentation by WYPSA New York-U.S. Eastern Chapter at International Conference 1994).

The successful establishment of Wah Yan alumni bodies in the past fifteen years had much to do with the work of the Wah Yan College Alumni Association International Networking Committee (INC). Established in 1990, it has strengthened bonds between old boys overseas and their *alma mater* by selecting and sending Student Ambassadors from both Wah Yans to visit a nominated overseas chapter every year, co-ordinating residential arrangements for Jesuits visiting alumni overseas, encouraging hosting chapters of international conferences to invite Fathers and retired Teachers to attend with passages paid, and facilitating overseas chapters in making their financial contributions to enhance the quality of education in both Wah Yans (e.g. scholarships, donations for buildings). The INC has also strengthened bonds among old boys around the world, by fostering the establishment of new PSA chapters mentioned above, reinvigorating less inactive chapters, facilitating inter-chapter visits, making good use of e-mail and websites to communicate between chapters, and sustaining the convention of holding biennial international conferences (correspondence from the founder of INC, Philip Ching, Class 1954 WYHK, September 2004).

Wah Yan International Conferences		
YEAR	LOCATION	Theme
1988	Hong Kong	Wah Yan Family Around the World
1990	Vancouver	Unity Is Strength
1992	Hong Kong	Wah Yan Spirit
1994	San Francisco	Towards A Global Wah Yan Community
1996	Hong Kong	Wah Yan Towards Year 2000
1998	Calgary	New Wave of Wahyanites
2000	Los Angeles	The Wah Yan Spirit In The New Millennium
2002	Toronto	Beyond Nostalgia
2004	Hong Kong	Timeless Bonding

The internationalization of Wah Yan's alumni has not distanced them with their mother school, but has allowed them to disperse the knowledge, skills and values they acquired in Wah Yan in their adopted communities. Fr. Coghlan, returning from a post-retirement (as WYHK's Principal) trip to Canada and the U.S. in 1996, made this observation:

"I was bewildered and humbled by the gratitude to and affection for Wah Yan expressed by the alumni I met. ... Wah Yan can be proud of its alumni overseas. I met many dedicated, professional men. Generous and competent past students do a lot for the societies in which they live. They are good fathers who love their families very much. Many Wah Yan alumni have reached the top of their professions. Religiously, many Wah Yan alumni are leaders and mainstays of the parishes in which they live or the organizations of which they are members." (The Star 1997)

7. Bonds with Fathers and Teachers

Teachers in the pre-Jesuit era

Cheng Tung Choy (1929-1931 WYHK) remembered clearly the changes brought about by Wah Yan's teachers in the pre-Jesuit days:

Before I entered Wah Yan, I had already had seven years' schooling in a vernacular or Chinese school ... Once inside the school premises we were not allowed to do anything but to go straight to our desks. There we were not supposed to move unless we had the teacher's permission to do so. The curriculum was very narrow ... The teachers were invariably stern old scholars who knew very little outside the Classics and who never dreamed of improving their traditional teaching methods. Thus, day in and day out I spent seven years cooped up in rather unsanitary premises, trying to commit to memory long passages most of which I could not understand at all. I remember on one occasion, I summoned up my courage and asked the teacher to explain again a certain difficult passage. His reply was that I was, in any case, too young to understand or appreciate fully the passage concerned and it would be a waste of his time to repeat the explanation. When I further asked why I should try to commit to memory passages that I did not understand, he became very angry at my brashness and rebuked me sharply by saying, "Although you do not understand it now, you will understand and appreciate it one day when you grow up. As a teacher, I know what is best for you and so it is your duty to learn the passage by heart". This pretty well sums up the attitude and the teaching methods of the old teachers of that time as well as their theory of education. ... I began to hate going to school, to dread or even shun the so-called learning, and to have nothing but fear for the teachers.

I remember very vividly that it was with such a mentality that I went to Wah Yan at Robinson Road in the year 1929 at the age of 12. I had two elder brothers who were already studying at Wah Yan. One the morning when I accompanied them to Wah Yan, I was a little scared and reluctant. As soon as I entered the school, I was absolutely bewildered and dumbfounded. I found that I was in a different world. The school was big and airy, and unbelievably, there were many happy faces shouting and running around in the playground. On my way to the school office, I passed the tuck-shop and there I saw healthy and contented boys having tea, pastries and even noodles. I could never have imagined finding such wonderful amenities in a school. I was then brought in to report to Mr. Wong Tuen Po who was then the senior teacher [and who was in charge of the Wah Yan hostel later]. He was so kind, genial and soft-spoken, and so very different from my old teachers that at first I just could not believe that such a kind and sympathetic person could ever become a teacher.

In brief, I fell in love with Wah Yan at first sight, and soon participated happily in as many school activities as possible with all my heart and soul. In no time, I was a changed boy. Through the encouragement of my school friends and teachers, especially the sportsmaster, Mr. Mauricio, I lost no time in taking up games and sports. As a result of these physical exercises, my health greatly improved ... Inside the classroom, my experiences in Wah Yan were again very different from those in my former Chinese school. The teachers were friendly, human, sympathetic and conscientious. They tried to know us, the pupils, individually, never forced upon us anything that we could not master or understand, or talked above our heads. They encouraged and helped us to think and reason for ourselves. (WYHK Speech Day 25th November 1971)

The high quality of teaching experienced by Cheng, a future an education professor and Pro-Vice Chancellor in the Chinese University, was not without reasons. The Headmaster Mr. Peter Tsui had always insisted on paying high salaries to obtain good teachers. After Wah Yan became the first Chinese-run secondary school in the colony to receive grants from the government in 1922, the high salaries Tsui paid to his teachers forced the government to change salary scales in government schools to match that in Wah Yan. The three teachers that Stephen Tsui Sai Cheung (WYK 1935-39, WYHK 1939-41, son of Peter Tsui) remembered most, Mr. Peter Dragon (English and Geography), Mr. A. J. Mauricio (P.E.) and Mr. W. A. Youngsaye (Mathematics and Science), were the most highly paid teachers in Wah Yan as they were 'European' teachers (this phenomenon was common in Grant Schools in those days). When the Great Depression hit Hong Kong in the early 1930s and Wah Yan's student enrolment (hence income from fees) dropped, Mr. Peter Tsui was given the advice to dismiss these "expensive" gweilo teachers, which he refused, because they were good teachers (interview of Stephen Tsui Sai Cheung, May 2004).

Stephen's elder brother Paul Tsui Ka Cheung (1928-31 & 1934-35 WYHK, 1931-34 WYK) remembered his teachers in his memoirs. Mr. Lim Hoy Lan (Headmaster of WYHK 1926-32, Headmaster of WYK 1933-52) was "very effective in teaching English to Chinese students". Mr. Lui Sun lu (Assistant Headmaster) "had a reputation of being a genius in mathematics". Mr. Bill Youngsaye "made the teaching of Physics and Chemistry as interesting and enjoyable as if he were telling a story". Mr. Peter Dragon "could draw free hand a map of the world on the black board within a minute" and could "illustrate graphically the structure of a complex English sentence with adverbial or adjectival clause in addition to a principle clause on the black board". He learnt a lot in the Amateur Photographic Society under the tutorship of Mr. Dragon, who later gave up teaching to become a professional photographer. There he learnt how to organize the frequent outings for photo-taking safari (in which he had to ascertain the personal interest of the participants, as well as ensuring of their having the free time available), the geography of Hong Kong especially the New Territories, the patience required in mounting enlargements of photos for an exhibition, and the tactfulness required in dealing with people and the resourceful use of materials in organising exhibitions. All such skills prepared him to organize the Field Intelligence Group for the British Army Aid Group in War Time China. Paul Tsui conceded that had it not been such down to earth practical trainings under Mr. Dragon, he could not have made the grade of an Intelligence Officer during World War II, which eventually earned him an MBE at the young age of 28. He was also grateful to his Jesuit Teachers:

Collectively the Jesuits have raised the status and the reputation of Wah Yan to a new height, a height which neither my father nor his partner Mr. Lim Hoy Lan, with the best of their intentions and efforts, could have attained. Their ways of teaching have certainly broadened my horizon and enhanced my expectations in my career and in

my life. They brought to my mind a new meaning in religion and a new dimension in religious practices. They impart upon my mind, a new set of values, which not only rendered my life so much fuller and richer, but also gave me a great deal of self confidence. For all these I am forever grateful. (Paul Tsui Ka Cheung's Memoirs, 1989).

Teachers in the Jesuit era

Routine practices and golden words from Wah Yan's teachers and their teaching were imprinted in the minds of some Wahyanites for decades:

When 'Tiger Lim' (「老虎林」, Headmaster Lim Hoy Lan) walked pass, the classroom immediately became absolutely quiet ... (Peter Hall Kam Ping, 1933-41 WYK, interview in September 2004)

Mr. Robert Chung: "De 你 tention"; Fr. Daly: "Knock 你個 head". (Peter Wong Pak Heung, Class 1958 WYHK, from WYHKPSA website)

Words of wisdom mentioned by the late Mr. Lau Kai Yip (during the academic year 1972/1973) such as "勢不可用盡，話不可說盡，凡事應留餘地" are still deeply impressed on my memory. (Lam Wing Ling Wilfred, Class 1975 WYK, questionnaire contribution)

I remember Fr. O'Rourke walking along the corridor and some naive students would gather behind him trying to make a knot tie with his robe. Mysteriously, Fr. seemed to have back eyes and would always catch them and gave them a good treat. (Simon Chan, Class 1975 WYHK, from WYHKPSA website)

The F6 and F7 classrooms were in the secluded area below the canteen. Very so often Father Chan, the discipline master then, charged down the stairs in order to catch those naughty students for their disruptive behaviour, but always in vain because they were very alert and acted innocently when he arrived. I feel very sorry for Father Chan, and I understand his feelings and perhaps frustration as I myself had also been a discipline master some twenty years later. (Member of Class 61 WYK, WYK 61 Grads website)

I was sitting in my final examination in Form 3 ... And suddenly I saw a chocolate bar in front of me and I looked up and saw Father Sullivan. So I said, "Is it for me?" and he said, "Yes, it is for you." I said, "Thank you very much, Father. I'll eat my chocolate bar during the recess." "No", he said, "Eat it now!" I said, "What, Father? This is an examination." "Well, I am not the invigilator," he said, "Eat it now!" So I ate it and as a result thereof, I came first that year ... It occurs to me that there is some philosophy, hidden somewhere (in this incident) ... It is this – we should always try to find joy in our work. (Martin Lee Chu Ming, Class 1955 WYK, from an issue of The Shield)

I used to switch on Radio 4 and listen to classical music while working. This habit was developed in the school days in Wah Yan. At that time, one or nights a week, we were invited by the Fathers to go back to school to enjoy classical music at 8:00 p.m. with them. They explained the meaning to us while listening. Sandwiches and tea were prepared so that we could eat while listening. In this way, we always spent a lovely evening together. Through these sessions, we developed an interest in classical music. (Michael Suen Ming Yeung, Class 1961 WYHK, The Star 1993)

Some memories are of a spiritual level as the teacher touched the heart of the old boy:

From the point of view of evangelization, I don't think the Jesuits were successful. At least, I haven't become a Catholic, have I? But since I joined the journalist profession, for more than twenty years I have been emphasizing justice ... didn't I learn this from Wah Yan? Didn't my transition from adolescent radicalism [Ed.: later in his article the author mentions his participation in the student rallies in 1971, which was neither encouraged nor discouraged by his teachers, and he becoming the only 'child' arrested by police] to liberalism as I grew older spring from the Jesuits' charisma embedded in my heart? ... The Jesuits' educational philosophy was the creation of a liberal environment to let children grow in freedom. Their students may not achieve full marks, but must possess common sense and would master whatever jobs they would engage in society. (Tsang Hing Biu Class 1971, 12th June 2004 Hong Kong Economic Daily)

I left Wah Yan 30 years ago. Vividly in my mind remain the dedication and scholarship of Fr. Lawler, the discipline and holiness of Fr. Daly, the encouragement and gentleness of Fr. Reid and the wit and theatre of Fr. McCarthy who taught me English and ethics, to name just a few of my teachers. (Donald Tsang Yam Kuen, Class 1962 WYHK, on Speech Day WYHK 1993)

I was one of the lucky few who became the last class of P.5. I spent 3 years in the same classroom with Madam [Mrs. Agnes Ng] as our classmaster. She was one of those exceptionally warm and caring individuals who love to teach. I remember that prior to Wah Yan, I was in a Chinese school with only one course in English. When I first arrived, I couldn't understand a thing the teachers were saying as all courses were conducted in English, except Chinese History. When the first time I managed to recite the poem of "Jack and Jill went up the hill, to fetch a pail of water...", Madam gave me a big hug. I was so moved that I cried. From then on, I made it a point to excel in English. I am proud to say, thanks to her encouragement and subsequently Mr. John Fung's kind words, I now am a professional writer. That is one of my fondest memories at Wah Yan. (Lam Hon Kee Patrick, Class 1967 WYHK, from WYHKPSA website)

Fr. Reid was an open-minded Principal who totally entrusted affairs of the Student Association to the students, granting them real autonomy, genuinely benefiting their all-rounded development. This was due to mutual trust between the staff and the students: the Principal might need to bear the responsibilities resulting from the students' mistakes. But Fr. Reid did not misplace his trust on them. (Leong Kah Kit Alan, Class 1978 WYK, translated from Chinese, The Shield 2001)

We also have all reached the age of 60 and we still need your advice about this life and afterwards. I want to say how grateful I am for all the Jesuit fathers I have met in Wah Yan. (one of the on-line greetings members of Class 1961 wrote to Fr. Farren, former Headmaster of WYK, on his retirement to Ireland in 2002, from WYK61 Grads website)

I still remember Fr. Brosnan's teaching about his interpretation of "Wah Yan" - "Wah" as beautiful, and "Yan" as kindness and love. He was referring to the "beautiful kindness and love" that God extends to all of us. Being past students of this school, we should likewise extend our love and kindness to people and matters that we come across every day. Besides, no one would forget Fr. O'Rourke's "personal touches" during his English lectures, nor Mr. K.K. Kan's excellence in Chemistry teaching. (Kwok Yiu Bun, Class 1988 WYHK, questionnaire contribution)

Students must have one time or another experienced the dissatisfaction that the return of their written exercises has been long overdue. But those who had studied under Fr. Ryan were given no opportunity of having such an

experience. We were all amazed at the remarkable speed with which he corrected our written exercises. Our essays, with complete corrections and detailed comments, were always returned to us one day after we had handed in our work... The news of Fr. Ryan's death saddens everyone who had been taught by him. In his death we had lost a devoted teacher, a helping friend and a wise adviser. Yet his death cannot sever the ties that bind him and us. Nor can it erase the fond memories of him we cherish in our hearts. In fact, no gratitude on our part can ever pay the debt we owe him. (Michael Cheng Po Hong, entered WYHK 1934; The Star 1971)

... suddenly Fr. Ryan got a stroke. I think this was due to his hard labour throughout his life (and also because of teaching a naughty student like me). This ailment confined him to absolute bed rest. He could not even say Mass. For such a talented and serious scholar, this stroke must have hit him hard. Since then, I have been away from Hong Kong twice, and each time I would bid him farewell. I held his hands, with tears in my eyes. I understood his feelings very well, but could not offer any comforting words ... Last year I came back from the U.K. and attended the Speech Day in Wah Yan. I intended to visit him that afternoon, but was then told that our Union Club would hold a meeting before the ceremony, so I did not climb up to 3/F to see him. I missed the chance then and now I can never see him anymore! As I am writing this obituary, I still blame myself deeply ... (translated from Chinese; John Lam Jor Hon, Class 1954 WYHK; The Star 1971)

I was working in Hong Kong in the winter of 1999 and went to the Catholic Cemetery in Happy Valley with some of my old classmates; we wanted to pay respect to many of the passed away Jesuit Fathers. My classmate Francis So took his son with him and related the story that he wasn't doing well in the Form 5 year and Fr. Barrett, then Principal, made accommodation to allow him to repeat F.5. Francis was able to continue his matriculation and gained acceptance into HKU; later landed a position with the government. Francis wanted his son to always remember that. (Ken Eng Class 1971 WYHK, Wah Yan College Alumni (Vancouver) Association 20th Anniversary Annual Ball souvenir publication, 2001)

Thus this bonding between the Wah Yan teacher and student began in their first lesson, carried on until graduation, matured into lifelong friendship when the old boy was thrown into the battle of life and when his teacher went into retirement, reached the end of the pilgrimage on earth, and is remembered by his former student and his offspring. This is timeless bonding.

Mutual care in timeless bonding

Our survey shows that since our old boys finished their studies in Wah Yan, 65% of the respondents (from both Wah Yans) have been keeping in touch with their former teachers (Jesuit or non-Jesuit). For some of them, the alumni-teacher bonding has been expressed in concrete ways of care and assistance.

Towards the end of the Japanese occupation, there was a rice crisis. Teachers of Wah Yan Chung Hok (as it was called then) were hitherto paid in catties of rice according to the number of dependents in their families, not their qualifications or seniority. In December 1944, all dependents of the teachers had to be cut off the rice ration. Fr. Bourke, the Rector, had to appeal to parents and past students for rice donations. Another option was to increase the fees by "3, 4 or 5 catties if possible" but Fr. Bourke insisted that "no student was to leave because of fees". Among the list of "best workers" recorded by the Headmaster in helping him through this crisis were several old boys (WYHK Log Book). Cheung Chi Kwong's (Class 1, 1938) father

worked as treasurer in the company in charge of rice rationing, and Chi Kwong worked there too, along with several employees who had been his classmates in Wah Yan. When Fr. Bourke went there for rations, he often saw Cheung Chi Kwong at the door and whispered to him what he was lacking. Chi Kwong would then turn to the head of the distribution division for help. After the successful plea, Chi Kwong would say to Fr. Bourke, "Don't tell anybody." (Interview of Cheung Chi Kwong, June 2004)

In early 1945, the Japanese authorities compiled a report stating that of all the schools in Hong Kong, Wah Yan was the worst in the lack of teaching of the East Asia spirit, and ordered the school to be closed, which was done on 31st July 1945, feast day of St. Ignatius. It was a Wah Yan old boy who discovered this report from a wastepaper basket and handed it to Fr. Bourke (WYHK Log Book and *South China Morning Post*, 21st September 1945). Had it not been the prompt action of this old boy, the closure of Wah Yan would have come to the Jesuits more suddenly.

Unlike their counterparts in Ireland, Jesuit Fathers in Hong Kong do not have a nursing home. During the last days of Fr. Barrett in the late 1980s, a nursing fund was established by the old boys to reimburse costs of operations, hospitalization and nursing care needed by the Fathers. This fund is still in active operation today, reimbursing medical bills and receiving donations.

Fortunately, some forms of support shown by old boys, made out of benevolent intentions, were not needed. Amidst the anxieties related to the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, some old boys in North America wanted to help:



For 64 years, Lau Shing Cham (3rd row, 3rd from left) has kept this photo of Class 2A, taken on 16th May 1940 at South Bay. Back row 2nd from left was Mrs. Millard, his Form-master. 3rd row, 2nd from left was Francis Chan Fuk Wai who later became a Jesuit.

Since the PRC has to say the least, not been very friendly towards Jesuits, we should seriously prepare a fail-safe plan for Wah Yan. Perhaps Wah Yan funds can be parked offshore and then funneled back to Hong Kong as needed. I heard that some Wahyanites are even talking about setting up a Wah Yan in Canada if anything happens to Wah Yan in Hong Kong. (Presentation by WYPSA Southern California chapter, Wah Yan International Conference 1994)

The care involved in this timeless bonding is two-way. Wah Yan's Teachers often continue to show care to their former students after graduation. Recorded in the school log book (by Jesuit Headmasters) was the moves in studies and career, marriages, baptisms, illness and deaths of old boys, matters which were unrelated to the 'normal running' of a school. Other testimonies include:

I often met Fr Bourke. He was much concerned about my future, and he introduced me to work in the Treasury in 1940. I kept communication with him up to 1950, and the last time I saw him was in 1949. Mr. Lo Kwok Yuen introduced me to get a job as a private teacher in 1949. I kept communication with him for the last few years. (Lau Shing Cham (Class 1940, WYHK), questionnaire contribution)

Mr. Lo Kwok Yuen, my former translation teacher, before he died, he often visited me. (Wai Kee Haw, Class 1955 WYHK, questionnaire contribution)

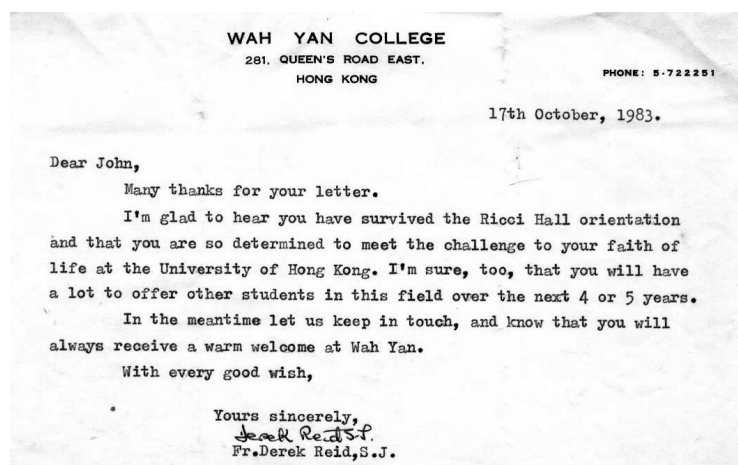
Immediately after retiring from principalship in WYHK, Fr. Barrett embarked on a world trip to visit old boys in Australia, Ireland, United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, to show them how important they



Fr. Barrett with old boys in Brisbane, 1983

were to Wah Yan. In his hectic trip, he officiated baptisms of the children of some past students and the marriages of some old boys. He even spent 10 hours on bus traveling alone to visit just one old boy who was studying in a small town 150 miles from Brisbane (*The Star* 1983).

After surviving the Ricci Hall freshmen orientation in HKU, the toughest challenge I had ever come across up to that moment, the following note from Fr. Reid (WYHK Principal 1982-85), despite its simplicity, gave me tremendous support and consolation:



When Fr. Barrett was critically ill, every time I visited him I saw sheets of letters all over the floor around his bed. Those were all his letters to be mailed to old boys around the world. Each of these letters bound him to the heart of the old boy who would receive it. (George Tam, Teacher during Fr. Barrett's Headmastership, interview in September 2004)

These accounts bear witness to the Jesuit mission of offering ongoing guidance to their past students mentioned in *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* (Section 2 above).

Spiritual bonding with the Jesuits

The spiritual well being of alumni is close to the hearts of the Jesuit Fathers. While the continuation of spiritual care of graduated Wahyanites by individual Jesuits took place throughout the decades, it was carried out in a very organized manner from the 1940s to the 1960s.

The Wah Yan Fathers organized catechumen class for past students as early as 1940. With the encouragement from the Fathers, the Wan Yan Catholic Society for past students was founded in 1948, with Paul Lim How Ping (entered WYHK 1933) as its first President and Fr. Doody as the Spiritual Director. It had four divisions, the Information Service, the Catholic Service, and a committee organizing social events, a Sodality of our Lady (pre-cursor of the Christian Life Community today). The Catholic Information Service was a religious knowledge correspondence course with bulletins sent out to three hundred Catholic past students each month. The Catholic Service offered a course through which Catholic teachings were explained in twenty sessions within five months (after which the course was re-run). The most popular programmes offered by the social committee of the Catholic Society were dancing parties. The Christmas Eve Dance of 1948 was very successful, at least to Fr. Doody since “it was especially gratifying to see so many young Catholics winding up an evening’s enjoyment by going off to midnight Mass and Holy Communion”. Other socials organized were monthly parties (with tombola and film shows) and picnics (*The Star* 1949). Through the social activities, “a few couples have been joined in wedlock and it is our [the Fathers’] earnest hope that more will take advantage of these means, endeavour to know one another better and eventually serve God together” (*The Star* 1952)

The Sodality deserves a special mention. A Sodality for past students existed before the war, and it was reorganized by Fr. Ryan after 1945, meeting monthly at the Catholic Centre in Central (later in WYHK on Sunday mornings). Its monthly meetings included prayer, benediction and a talk led by the Jesuit director on topics such as communism, marriage, black market, smuggling (*The Star* 1947). The Sodality flourished under the direction of Fr. Daly, whereas members carried out visits to 600 to 800 Catholic past students each year. The main purpose of the visits was to “encourage Catholic past students to continue practice their faith and to render them assistance if they had difficulty in fulfilling their duty” (*The Star* 1964). Sodality members visited non-Catholic old boys, too. Members of the Sodality for Past Students “are often seen carrying out their duty in Kowloon City or in Shaukiwan. They are also seen climbing up to seventh or eighth floor of tall buildings without elevators, even though it may be a hot summer day and they are covered with sweat” (*The Star* 1961). On one occasion, a non-Catholic past student who had left the School six years earlier met a Sodality member, on a no.2 bus to Shaukiwan. After listening to his account of the aims and contents of a Sodalists’ visit to past students, the non-Catholic said “From what you have told me, it is evident that the Fathers of Wah Yan remember their past students and are concerned about their spiritual welfare. Though I am not a Catholic, I have not forgotten the ideals and the religious instruction which the Fathers gave me when I was a student in Wah Yan. For some reason, at present I am unable to become a Catholic, but I hope that one day when I am in a more independent position, I shall respond to the appeal of the Sodalists.” (*The Star* 1961) (Parental opposition was one major reason delaying baptisms until adulthood among Wahyanites

in those days.) With only 15 members (including WYHK Teacher Michael Cheng Po Hong) left in 1963, the Past Students' Sodality was still able to visit 700 past students in 1963-64. It ceased to exist in 1965.

For a number of years, mass and breakfast for Catholic past students in the school on 1st January was a convention. Fr. Rector sent out the invitations. In 1948, after the mass and a European breakfast (with fruits, bacon, eggs, coffee, bread and butter) in the Teachers' Room and Rector's Office, all went to the Hall and formed a big circle. Fr. Bourke got each one to stand up and spoke about each one, had him introduced to the others. Then the old boys made suggestions about social events and committees were formed to draw up plans. "The scheme was a very great success," commented Fr. Bourke. "I think that future Rectors should make the Mass on Jan 1st a yearly event" (WYHK Log Book).



Alumni retreat in Cheung Chau. Participants arrived Saturday afternoon and left by the first ferry Monday morning. Back row 4th from left: Fr. Bourke; 1st from right: Fr. Dargan.

The Catholic Society became less active towards the late 1950s and ceased functioning in the early 1960s. In the mid-1990s, retreats were again organized for past students, this time by WYPSA, under the guidance of Fr. Coghlan.

The Jesuits' investments in spiritual formation of students can be measured in terms of number of priests assigned, hours of religious instruction given, etc., but the fruits of the investments are not easily measured. Perhaps the following accounts represent some of the 'profits' they have made:

Jesuit Fathers through their work and their words sparked off my interest in the quest for the meaning of life, and in appreciating the beauty God's creation. (Ho Ka Man Edmond, Class 1977 WYK, questionnaire contribution)

The teaching [of Wah Yan] is still consciously and subconsciously guiding me along life's path, especially when important decisions are made as to whether I should sacrifice some personal time or gain for the public good and pursuance of higher goals. (Leong Kah Kit Alan, Class 1978 WYK, from questionnaire contribution)

One of my old classmates planned to emigrate and his wife intended to supply false information to the authorities so that the application would be more easily granted. However, this classmate could not accept this behaviour of lying. His classmates gathered together and discussed this matter. All the old boys supported their classmate, opposed making shortcuts, but his wife still could not understand why he held this attitude. Refuse to tell a trivial lie and to make shortcuts, this is the Wah Yan Spirit. (Mr. Lau Chun To, Class 1981 WYK and an editor of Ming Pao, translated from The Shield 1998)

We have just welcomed back to Wah Yan the Rev. Joseph Tai, S.J. ('49) who has just completed several years of his earlier studies as a Jesuit in the Philippine Islands. Years ago he was a vigorous athlete in Wah Yan, the soul of a choir, and a very energetic Sodalist. As we older Fathers are quietly moving towards Happy Valley it is

cheering to see young men of Wah Yan coming along to take our places. May an increasing number follow his footsteps – not immediately to the Philippines Islands but to Cheung Chau [where the Jesuit novitiate was located then] ... and later from there ...to the four corners of the earth. (The Star 1959)

Among Wahyanites who responded to religious vocations, many, like Fr. Tai, entered the Society of Jesus, where the bonding with their former Jesuit Teachers was strengthened. Among the non-Jesuit Wahyanite priests, a Thai maintained a special connection with the Wah Yan Fathers. The news of his ordination took up two pages in the school magazine:

He is a Siamese lad who has spent 3 and a half years at the H.K. University. At Wah Yan, besides matriculating with distinctions in English and Mathematics, he has played a very full part in the life of the school. He is among the first group there to help run a free school for poor children; he has been prominent in sports; has been Secretary of the Photographic Society, and written three charming articles for the STAR of his day. At the University he has studied with success for a degree in Law and Commerce ... has organized several big days for the Siamese Association of which in the Colony he was President ... has represented the U in football ... He is a very strong character, admired by all students at the U ... What would you advise this lad to take up? His father has one of the biggest firms in Bangkok and is looking forward to his son ... taking over the management of the firm. The Government offered him an important job suitable to his talents and training ... Ratna Khutrakul [later Ratna Bamrungtrakul, Class 1 1937, WYHK] had other intentions. Like other U students he must often have reflected on the many possible lines he could take up, any one of them with success. He believed, however, in getting down to fundamentals till he had a clear conviction that he had been created by God, that all his gifts came from God and that it would be sheer injustice to use these gifts in any other way but in the interests of God. That of course he could do in almost any profession but for him it became clear that God wanted him as a priest, the vocation in which he considered that he could do most for God and his country. With that quiet determination which was always characteristic of Ratna, he went ahead towards his goal, overcoming every obstacle – the indignation of his relatives, the luring offers of his Government – until finally he presented himself before a Bishop in South Siam with the idea of consecrating his gifts in the service of God as a priest. (The Star 1949)

Fr. B. Kelly represented the Jesuits at Fr. Ratna's ordination, along his Wahyanite classmate Kevin Prasert (both old boys were baptized after leaving Wah Yan). Fr. Ratna was made a bishop in 1969 and returned to Wah Yan that year for the Golden Jubilee. The following photos were kept by a Jesuit Father until his very end.



Ratna Khutrakul in Class 1, 1937; and Bishop Ratna in 1969.

8. Some Fruits of Teacher-Alumni Bonding: Service and Education

The teaching of Wah Yan has borne fruits in many areas of life among its alumni. While the work of Wahyanites in many professions reflects the values inculcated in the Jesuit-student interactions, social service and education are highlighted here because of their closeness to the concerns of the Jesuits and because of the limitation of space.

Alumni in social service

Since “to interest Past Students in Works of Social Value” was one of the aims of the WYPSA founded in 1935, the Council began to discuss ways to carry out works of social value the next year. The rapidly changing war situation in China prompted all efforts to be directed to help refugees in the mainland. WYPSA founded the Wah Yan War Relief Association in 1937, and their efforts were joined by Wah Yan students, girls of Sacred Heart School (neighbours on Robinson Road) and families of WYPSA members. In the first three years of its existence, the War Relief Association raised \$20,993.36, which was converted into medical supplies delivered to the Chinese National Red Cross to help refugees in bombed parts of China. Many old boys connected with charitable organisations in Hong Kong worked in refugee camps in the colony (*Hongkong Daily Press*, 13th March 1939). Old boys also offered help to Class 1 boys of WYHK to run their own camps in Fanling in 1939 (*The Star* 1939).

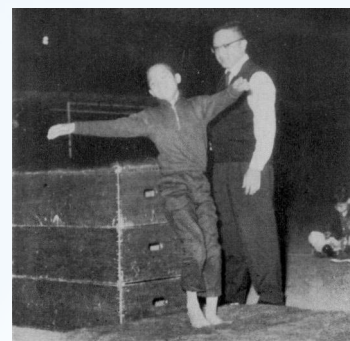
In the *Rules and Constitutions of the Wah Yan Past Students' Association* (1935), it was suggested that to attain WYPSA's aim of social service, a School for Poor Children could be formed. This suggestion materialised in an informal way with the Poor Boys' Club. Fr. Howartson began this initiative by picking up shoe shiner boys from the streets, offering them programmes two to three nights a week in the premises of Wah Yan. In 1954-55, four out of six staff members (volunteers) of the Club were Wah Yan old boys. A routine of a night of the Club included physical training and showers, class (story-telling, singing, moral training), games (Maurice Lee Mui Sang and Andrew Wong Wang Fat were recruited to help here for their skills in basketball and football – *The Star* 1963), supper, and roll-call. A camp and a party (usually around Christmas) were held every year, often with sponsorship from and attendance by WYPSA. The WYPSA also ran a stall in the Wah Yan Bazaar (held inside the Robinson Road premises) to raise funds for the Club. Many Fathers worked together with old boys in the Poor Boys' Club during its thirty years' of existence: Frs. Egan, McAsey (organizing raffle ticket sales for the Club), McGaley, Tarpey and McGovern. In those days before compulsory education was introduced, the objective of the Club was simple:

These boys spent their days in shabby, dingy surroundings. As members of the club they are given an opportunity to have healthy outdoor exercise, they get a wholesome meal, in the cold season they get extra warm clothing, and we hope that the club training puts them on the road to becoming useful citizens. (The Star 1961)

There was even a 24th HK Scout Group within the Club. For thirty years, Joseph Cheung Chok Tang (Class 1940 WYHK) was the leader among the old boys in this ministry. “Although a busy man, he [Cheung] continues to come three times a week to the Club” (*The Star* 1957). He was assisted by other old boys, and later, by past members of the Club who had grown up and wanted to carry on the mission. He was awarded

an MBE in 1967 for his good work. With the introduction of compulsory primary education in 1971, needs for the Club's work changed (it took the form of 'Boys' Club' and 'Children's Club' among WYK old boys, led by Ho Pak Tsuen (Class 1988 WYK) until 1998).

The Wah Yan Dramatics Society, founded by Fr. Sheridan and led by Wong Chin Wah (Class 1939 WYHK), staged its first performance at the French Convent Theatre in May 1946. This show and those in the following decades, apart from introducing Chinese operatic culture to the English-speaking public, also raised funds for many charitable purposes. Organizations that have benefited from the performances include (just to name a few) Hongkong T.B. Association, Wah Kiu Yat Po Funds for Underprivileged Children, Sing Tao and Tiger Standard Kung Hei Fat Choy Drive, HK Society for Rehabilitation, Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association, HK Society for the Blind, HKU and of course, the two Wah Yan Colleges and Ricci Hall.



Joseph Cheung and a happy member of the Poor Boys' Club

Overseas WYPSA chapters displayed their Wah Yan-taught charity through participation in various works that benefited their communities. WYPSA Sydney has organized visits to disadvantaged children wards and nursing homes, participated in the Dragon Charity Walks to raise funds for the Chinese welfare communities and organised charity dinners. WYKPSA Ontario worked with the Dramatics Society to raise funds for the Chinese Cultural Center of Toronto in 1995. WYPSA Edmonton decided in 2002 to switch donated funds from their annual scholarships to current Wah Yan students to local charitable organisations, such as a foundation for the construction of nursing home for the Chinese elders in Edmonton (Presentation from various Chapters in International Conferences). Of course, many other alumni carried out social service on an individual capacity. On this topic, Fr. Coghlan had a reflection:

A couple of weeks ago I had lunch with five other people in a restaurant not too far from here (WYHK). The purpose of the meal was to establish contact between a voluntary organization which had money to give away and another voluntary organization which wanted to get some money to fund a hostel for men in need. The middle men, the contact men, were two Government servants. How proud I felt when introductions revealed that, of the five present, three were past students of either Wah Yan, Hong Kong or Wah Yan, Kowloon. One was a school principal, one was Acting Director and one was Assistant Director of the Social Welfare Department. How did these competent men become engaged, either voluntarily or professionally in the less glamorous and less rewarding areas of Hong Kong life? I wonder what early satisfying experiences put these men on their way of service. (Fr. Coghlan, WYHK Principal, on Speech Day 1988)

Old boys in the teaching ministry

The earliest Wahyanite on record entering the teaching profession was Cheung Wan Fui (Class 1922 WYHK) who became the Headmaster of the Government Middle School in Haiphong in Guangdong. The first Wah Yan student (whose registration number was 1), Cheung Yan Shung (entered WYHK 1919), also taught in WYHK until 1947. In the early years, after the completion of their senior secondary examinations, many Wahyanites immediately returned to their mother school as 'pupil teachers', of whom only some were

undergoing teacher training. (Joe Ng Tsun Fan, husband of Mrs. Agnes Ng, was once a pupil teacher first in Nelson Street, later in Robinson Road.) In 1940, out of the 40 staff members in WYHK, 7 were Wah Yan old boys, and “more are in the Teachers’ Training College preparing to carry on the good work in their alma mater” (report by Fr. Gallagher, WYHK Log Book).

There were other old boys who opened their own schools after graduating from Wah Yan in the mid-1930s. The first educational institution mainly run by Wah Yan old boys was Wah Yee College. This primary school was run by Class 1A graduates of 1935, with Mr. Lim How Ping (1933-35 WYHK, much later a prominent industrialist) being the headmaster. The school was already in operation by October 1935. The Jesuit Fathers seriously discussed how to assist Wah Yee College with a great hope of its becoming a feeder [school] for Wah Yan, boys being trained on Wah Yan lines. David Lin Chung Sau (entered WYHK 1933), Teacher of WYHK from 1949 to 1961, first taught in Wah Yee College. (WYHK Log Book and *The Star* 1962).

In 1936, four other past students of Fr. Gallagher started the Universe Night School in Kowloon. Another called International Night School was also founded and taught by old boys. Across the border in Canton, a school entirely run by Wah Yan old boys reached an enrolment of 170, only to be closed down later because the old boys could not get the school registered (WYHK Log Book). Kevin Cho Kai Yin (Class 1955 WYHK) was congratulated by *The Star* (1960) for his enterprise and courage in founding St. Medard’s English Tutorial Evening School.

Kevin was never a person content just to keep to the beaten track when other ways, even though these entail considerable difficult and personal hardship, promised better results. And so Kevin decided that specially prepared notes using local backgrounds and touching on current events would be more beneficial to the students than following the antiquated practice of just reading through text-books. This method has brought very fine results and more than 300 students are now enrolled in his school... While the emphasis is on English, moral training and spiritual development is also provided through Father Daly, S.J., who gives special talks on Friday nights. There is a special library for Catholics student and those interested in Catholic doctrine.

Undoubtedly Cho’s work was to continue the knowledge and values he had learnt in his *alma mater* through teaching skills he had also learnt, at least in part, from his Wah Yan Teachers.

Between 1939 and 1941, even the non-yet-graduated Class 2 boys ran and taught a Night School, five to six days a week, in the Robinson Road premises, but this school was a free school for poor children, under the direction of Fr. Donnelly. The curriculum was similar to what was then taught in vernacular schools, with the addition of English language and religious instruction. It is difficult to image a Form 5 boy today talking to young children in the way the Night School’s headmaster (a Class 2 boy) addressed his ‘students’ on a prize-giving day: “You must be careful in your speech and must not use bad language in your daily conversation or at your games. I hope you would eradicate your bad habits during your school days. The Night School is intended to form good habits as well as to give instruction” (*The Star* 1940). The educated students of the Night School was so successful that Fr. Bourke, at the second anniversary of its foundation, welcomed the ‘graduates’ to join the WYPSA, and incidentally congratulated them on the formation of their own “night-clubs” (he meant Night School’s Class Clubs) (WYHK Log Book).

This Night School can be described as a forerunner of the Wah Yan Night School (later called Wah Yan English Evening School) founded in 1949. The latter was initially also taught by volunteer boys from the senior forms of WYHK, but later by paid staff who mainly were Wah Yan Old Boys (among whom was Lam Ying Wai Oliver of Class 1957 who much later became the Principal of Pun U Wah Yan Primary School) because of the expansion of classes. The Evening School was intended for young men or boys who for one reason or another had no other way to learn English. At the beginning there were 140 students, and classes taught were Primary 5 & 6, later up to Form 3 and gradually to Form 5. One third of the students were young men working in factories, shops or offices, one third school boys of some day schools, and the remaining one-third were small and poor boys. A Father observed that

When the Evening School is on, you can see a very rare spectacle in the classroom. You can see a middle-aged man sitting beside a small boy, learning the same lesson. When the whole class is reading aloud, there is indeed a really wonderful polyphony. (The Star 1959)

And from there it continued – the entry of Wah Yan alumni into the education profession, within or outside Wah Yan. In 1999, 24 out of 64 Teachers of WYK and 10 out of 55 in WYHK were old Wah Yan boys.

In our survey, out of the 19 respondents who have been/are teachers, 12 replied that their experience as a student in Wah Yan had influenced their lives as teachers. Some of the reflections are:

- Respect their [my students'] thoughts as we were in Wah Yan. (Chan Yu Leung, Class 1975 WYK)
- Almost everything. The most influenced thing is my philosophy as a teacher. "No matter how hard difficult it is until I try my best" which is in the school hymn. (Leung Ka Yin Paul, Class 1985 WYK)
- Everyone is unique. It is the duty of a teacher to let his student's character flourish. (Lee Kwan Kit Bernard, Class 1987 WYHK)

9. Bonding with Current Wahyanites (and fresh graduates)

Among the four elements of school-alumni bonding mentioned in Section 2, the bonding between past and current students is usually the weakest. The school's physical environment, classmates and teachers are all parts of the alumni's first-hand experience in schooling. Except for fresh graduates, current students of the *alma mater* are remote persons. Only when the bonds between an alumnus and the school environment/classmates/teachers are strong enough to form a sense of belonging to the school as an institution (that carries an ethos which permeates the three types of direct bonds), the bonding between past and current students can occur. In our survey, old boys are asked "Since you finished your studies in Wah Yan, have you been in any way in touch with students studying in or fresh graduates from Wah Yan?" 45% of the respondents answered 'yes' and 55% 'no' (percentages the same for both Wah Yans). This figure is not bad at all, given the various kinds of pressure related to time and energy that educated adults have to face in this contemporary world.

There are three domains of policies and practices that influence the schooling experience of students: learning and teaching, extra-curricular support and school ethos, and management. The involvement of Wah

Yan alumni in their individual professional capacities in the teaching of current Wah Yan students has been mentioned above. The remaining two domains are examined here.

Connection through extra-curricular support and school ethos

In the 1930s, the kind of alumni support for students that the Headmaster would like to see was a practical and important one:

I should like members [of WYPSA], in accordance with the aims of the Association, to give a helping hand to boys who graduate from the College each year by employing them if they have vacancies themselves or by informing us of such vacancies as come under their notice. We, on our part, undertake to present only such students as are suitable. The task of finding work for our boys is always a big one. It will be made easier through the cooperation of the past. (Hongkong Daily Press, 13th March 1939)

In later decades, career talks given by old boys to current students were organised. Examples included Lim How Ping (1933-35 WYHK) has spoken on Hong Kong industry, Chau Cham Son (Junior Sec 3 1947, WYHK) on town planning, Patrick Wu (Class 1958 WYHK) on banking, Ng Bun (Class 1958 WYHK) on law and John Lam Jor Hon (Class 1954 WYHK) on librarianship (*The Star* 1970 & 1974). Numerous old boys gave guidance on career or further studies by writing articles for the school magazines, often at the invitation of their former Jesuit Teachers (another Jesuit link between the young and old).

The involvement of old boys in the students' extra-curricular activities has a long history. Activities of the Photographic Society of pre-war WYHK were open to past students. The Dramatics Society and the matriculation class jointly presented plays in the School in 1947. There were debates between the past and the present, with the Fathers as adjudicators (*The Star* 1934 & 1974 and WYHK Log Book). A student who took part in a 1972 Dramatics Society production reflected: 'My acting role and other minor duties in this production allowed me learn outside textbooks' (*The Star* 1973). The recent 'Interest Group Scheme' (covering sports, cultural interests and language) of WYHKPSA prepares an organizational framework through which old boys can support students through the corresponding extra-curricular activities.

Of the various kinds of extra-curricular activities, scouting (including air-scouting) has the longest tradition of being led by old boys and is indeed the main form of connection (some old boys had weekly commitments in their *alma mater's* scouting activities) between some alumni and their juniors (Wu Po Kong Patrick, Class 1958 WYHK; Tong Yee Hong Terence Class 1999 WYHK, from questionnaire contributions [same below]). The values behind this connection are evident:

- Being Scout Leader of Wah Yan, such connection is valid and provides opportunities for me to appreciate Jesuit education philosophy. (Ngan Sau Fung Joseph, Class 1975 WYHK)
- I want to relay what I have learnt to these students. (Billy Chan, Class 1990 WYHK)
- Through my association with the Air Scouts Group... I thought through the participation it would be my modest way of repaying what I gained and learnt from the school. (Anon., Class 1968 WYK)

The Wah Yan Student Ambassador Programme, started by WYHKPSA in 1988 and joined by WYKPSA in 1991, was not just an extra-curricular activity. Out of the three F.6 students in each College selected as

Students of the Year (by School and PSA representatives), one was chosen each year to represent the school in visiting an overseas WYPSA chapter. The programme has broadened the horizons of the Ambassadors, especially in the context of the global Wah Yan community, and strengthened the bonds between overseas alumni and their mother school.

WYK launched a mentorship programme in recent years. Very senior alumni and recent graduates both came back to be mentors of current students (Interview of Mr. Norman So WYK Principal, September 2004). A less formal kind of mentorship took place in the Student Members Committee of the PSAs. (Student members of the alumni bodies consisted of F.6-7 students of the Wah Yans (and elsewhere) and old boys in universities.) This Committee, headed by old boys studying or recently graduated from universities, organized activities more appealing to the youth such as mid-summer carnivals and Christmas parties. The transfer of the work of organising the F.6-7 members of the PSA from senior old boys to those still in or just leaving university has strengthened the sense of belonging of the PSA's youngest members to the organisation, and has empowered old boys in their twenties with a leadership role in providing mentorship based on updated information and prepared themselves for greater roles in the PSAs.

Interactions with current students have brought mixed feelings among old boys:

- I feel young being with them! (Chung Ka Leung, Class 1970 WYHK)
- My feeling is that the current students are no different from us when we were students! (Sung Nee, Class 1972 WYHK)
- So far so good. But, some students are not dressed properly! Ties not fixed well, shirts not dressed well. (Anon., Class 1973 WYHK)
- I helped in PSA activities so that I get in touch with the elder and younger people. This helps to widen my view on things. The younger generation does not necessary mean they are inferior and in fact I can learn from them what I have not learnt before. (Tang Kwok Hong Peter, Class 1978 WYHK)
- I have been helping out the Catholics in Wah Yan to organize activities. I am happy that Wahyanites are still enthusiastic in religious activities and their thoughts and deeds are mature. (Francis Lee, Class 1994 WYHK)
- [keep in touch with current students by] Acting as one of the judges in selecting the Student Ambassador; giving talks to students... (Chan Jo Chak, Class 1959 WYK)
- Sons of my classmates, even my nephew is a student of WYK and we both have been taught by Fr. Naylor and Francis Kong. This is the tie and link. No communication gap at all. (Anon., Class 1971 WYK)
- I feel the Wah Yan Spirit is still alive and kicking amongst the younger generations of Wahyanites. (Leong Kah Kit Alan, Class 1978 WYK)
- From time to time I see Wah Yan boys on the MTR and I'm glad to see that they behave as young gentlemen and not like some rowdy teenagers to typical of secondary school students in Hong Kong nowadays. (Eric Tsang, Class 1984 WYK)
- I formed an interflow programme called 'Wah Yan Perspectives' with some former classmates, enabling us to chat with current students and exchange experiences. (Wong Min Hon Thomas, Class 1992 WYK)

Connection through management and scholarships donations

Scholarships are a direct way of supporting students. WYPSA first offered scholarships in the late 1930s for students who wrote the Best Chinese Essay, showed the Best Progress in English Debate and showed the Best Progress in Chinese Debate. (The focus on 'value-addedness' showed remarkable foresight.) For decades, Fr. Barrett worked tirelessly for scholarships to enable capable but financially handicapped students to continue their studies. In 1959, he appealed to past students:

The present students, too, can share in the benefit of the Past Students' Association, if, in gratitude for your own success in life, you, past students, were ready to support a scholarship fund to help the many clever but needy boys at present studying at Wah Yan. Each year we witness the difficult struggle of boys who are handicapped financially as they try to study and to earn money at the same time. A little assistance to each in the form of free textbooks or cash grants would see them through school and give them a fair chance to achieve success in life. If such a programme as has been outlined above were put into practice, then the Past Students' Association would be able to achieve fully the purpose of its existence, namely, to unite all Wah Yan students together for their mutual benefit and the service of the community. (The Star 1959)

The WYPSA responded to Fr. Barrett's appeal almost immediately by putting forward a scheme: \$360 for full scholarship for one year; \$240 for free tuition for a year (it was 19 years before the introduction of compulsory education in secondary schools); books or uniform scholarships \$60 per annum. Scholarships amounting to a total of \$3600 were eventually raised by old boys for needy students in both WYHK and WYK in response to Fr. Barrett's appeal (*The Star 1959 & 1960*).

More and more scholarships were donated by past students in later years, often in memory their former Teachers (beginning the Fr. Ryan Scholarship, Fr. Sheridan Scholarship, and followed by many others). Some WYPSA chapters overseas (Edmonton and San Francisco) have also established scholarships for current Wah Yan students. Fr. Barrett especially noted the gratitude of some recipients of the scholarships:

A past student ... donated some \$1000 to the school for laboratory equipment. He did this because of the school scholarship he held during the years at Wah Yan. He has not yet completed his higher studies.
(The Star 1974)

Seeing the severe lack of tertiary education places in Hong Kong in the 1970s (only 2% of the relevant age cohorts had access to the two local universities), Fr. Barrett launched the Wah Yan Post-secondary Trust Fund in 1981, of course with the kind help of many alumni. Annual dividends arising from the Trust Fund in the past two decades have sent many capable Wah Yan students abroad for university studies. Old boys also helped in the management of the Trust Fund and acted as trustees (Interview of George Tam, WYHK Principal, September 2004).

For more than a decade, both Wah Yans have had old boys in their school management committees. Other aspects of school management such as construction of new wings and installation of air-conditioning systems also benefited from the professional contribution of old boys who acted as consultants. With more sons of old boys studying in the schools, alumni participation in school management through the parent-

teacher association became more and more frequent (interviews of Mr. Norman So and Mr. George Tam, September 2004).

The growing ties between Wah Yan old boys and their juniors, via direct or indirect channels, in recent years reflect a certain kind of success in the education of earlier generations of Wahyanites. The values behind Wah Yan's education, disseminated by teachers, shared by classmates and fostered by the school environment, have contributed towards a school ethos that old boys would like the current students to share and identify with. The current students – future alumni – may then carry on this ethos forward to future students of Wah Yan.

10. Hopes of Wah Yan and Her Old Boys on the future

People bonded to each other have expectations on each other. A timeless bonding points to the future. When asked the open-ended question “**What are you most concerned about your mother school and/or her current students?**”, Wah Yan's alumni give the following responses. (The percentages reflect proportion of old boys of the school giving responses that fall into the relevant category. Each response may fall into one or more categories.)

Responses from WYHK alumni

Category of concerns	%
The moral and whole-person development of the students	21
Academic standards and public examination results	21
Quality of education provided / teachers	16
Quality of Students	15
Possible weakening of Jesuit character of the school	12
Reputation of the School	12
Maintaining the Wah Yan Spirit and school ethos	12
Improvement of the school premises	11
Impact of government's educational policies	4
Including the underprivileged in its admitted students	0
Others	17

Some of the responses are as follows:

- The outstanding results of Wah Yan students achieved in school leaving (Form 5) exams and reported in the community each year. (Chau She Wan Stephen, Class 54)
- I am not worried at all. (Wai Kee Haw, Class 1955)
- Standard and standard. The school campus is very much below standard. There is room for improvement of the standard of the students. (Patrick Wu Po Kong, Class 1958)
- Nothing in particular. They are fortunate to be in the good hands of the Jesuits. (Chiu King Sum Bernard, Class 1958)
- Character building, sportsmanship and languages. Be a gentleman. (Gilbert Sze Yiu Tan, Class 1967)
- First, whether or not the Wah Yan spirit is still being passed on. These used to be exemplified in person by the Jesuit fathers – who are simply great and wonderful people, and inspire by their personal examples. I notice we no longer have priests as teachers anymore. Second, the quality and standard of education delivered. Are we still upholding high standards in academic AND extra-curricular activities? Are we still concerned as students' development as a whole person? Are we concerned about their spiritual developments? Are we attracting the best teachers who are well qualified in their respective subjects, and can teach with love and care? (Wun Kam Hoi, Class 1967)
- With virtually no Jesuits on the teaching staff, the school management approaches education in a fashion quite different from my times. Through interaction with some of the teachers and members of the management I was left with the impression that they are preoccupied with conformity of the Education Department and job security. Particularly disturbing is the attitude of "no news is good news" among teachers towards the discipline problem of students. In some cases, willful blindness opted out to be the feasible solution. "Passing grade" instead of "values" is often preached as the core objective of education. The current drive for a new structure very much reflects the management's desire of hardware monument in place of better software at teaching classes. I believe the school is in a long term decline and only when F.1 applications fall short of capacity will they ever wake up. (Cheung Tin Chung James, Class 1970)
- The current academic performance compared to DBS and La Salle (Anon., Class 1977)
- Acceleration of the reform progress to prepare the students well for the New Economy. (Christopher Chan, Class 1979)
- My feeling is that the whole Wah Yan has changed since the retreat and loss of the Fathers. Something we can do nothing about. Current Wah Yan is out of my concern. The 'Old' Wah Yan was lost. But I still try to contribute to current Wah Yan because I feel I owe Wah Yan something in the past, and contribute for the past. (Anon., Class 1985)
- Whether students know what is meant by 'men for others'. (Ng Chi Ho, Class 1997)
- WY have sufficient funds or not (Ho Chuck Fung Alex, Class 1998)
- The quality of the Graduates. It seems that when I saw some Wah Yan Boys on the street, they act differently compared with the past. (Anon., Class 1999)
- The quality of education. Particularly, does the environment still foster love, mutual respect, diversity, freedom, "men for others", etc. these various Wah Yan qualities. (Kwok Keng Fai, Class 2000)
- The school's public image, students' behaviour within and outside campus. (Tsang Ho Man, Class 2000)
- Heard that football team's not doing well. I hope the situation will get better. (Anon., Class 2000)

Responses from WYK alumni

Category of concerns	%
Academic standards and public examination results	29
The moral and whole-person development of the students	19
Quality of education provided / teachers	19
Maintaining the Wah Yan Spirit and school ethos	17
Quality of Students	13
Possible weakening of Jesuit character of the school	10
Reputation of the School	10
Improvement of the school premises	12
Including the underprivileged in its admitted students	4
Impact of government's educational policies	3
Others	16

Some of the responses are as follows:

- Our mother school does not have a primary school so it cannot start training students the spirit of Wah Yan early on in life. With complicated system of allocation, our school might not select the right types of students. I am not concerned with academic ability. I am more concerned with the attitudes of our students, their values in life and self initiative in learning both academic subjects and life skills. More important do they have the mind set to serve the society. (Albert Lee, Class 1980)
- That she is able to maintain the usual high standard of education not only academically but more importantly in Personal Growth and developing self-confidence in the students. In addition, how to live with principles as well as other beings amicably The enthusiasm of the teaching staffs and care for their students reinforces the true meaning of education and thus preparing/maintaining better human beings (Kipling Chang Hak Ping , Class 1975)
- Whether the school is putting the formation of godly characters in students a top priority, and whether the students are living up to the expectations of those who share the vision of Wah Yan. (Ho Ka Man Edmond, Class 1977)
- I am concerned if the school is still getting students from all income levels, which is one of the major differences (and strength) between Wah Yan (Kowloon at least) and other “famous” schools. (Michael Hung, 1989)
- To maintain its character as a school rooted in the community that generates the elite of society, but does not become itself a school for the elite. (Chan Wai Kwan, Class 1975)
- I am most concerned of the image and reputation of Wah Yan, and the upkeep of the campus. For current students, I am concerned that they are still having the humble, righteous, balanced spiritual

ways of thinking and life. (Fu Tsun Yin, Class 1973)

- The threat from Communist China, and the HK SAR Government, on the freedom of speech and thinking in Hong Kong. All these years, I am very proud of being graduated from Wah Yan, one of the very few secondary schools in Hong Kong that encourage different points of view and provide students the liberty to pursue their goals. (Franklin Peter Pui On Wong, Class 1989)
- Keep up with the all rounded education on students, not emphasizing only on academic results (yet not neglecting academic results) (Anon., Class 1973)
- To maintain the quiet and peaceful environment especially the soft landscape within the campus and to attain better academic standards (Chung Yu Kwok, Class 1966)
- The campus to remain intact and not to be pinched by property developers – especially the Football Field – 草場. For sure all WYK boys will miss it. (Anon., Class 1971)
- Academic achievement of the students, the public's recognition that Wah Yan is still amongst the best school in town (Hui Siu Ting Martin, Class 1988)
- The education atmosphere of Wah Yan still maintains the “Spirit of Wah Yan”, i.e. liberal education, education of the whole person. (Po Kam Cheong, Class 1978)
- Jesuits as models / figures of inspiration are less available (Chan Yu Leung, Class 75)
- Whether the school will be adversely affected by the educational policies of the SAR government and lose its uniqueness as a Jesuit school or even close one day (Eric Tsang, Class 1984)
- The standard is dropping. We used to be one of the top schools in HK. We need to maintain our previous position. (Chung Kam Fai Raymond, Class 1968)
- Maintaining academic excellence balanced with sports, socio-religious and moral teaching. Maintaining good school facilities. (James Ho-Piao Chuang, Class 1960)

Wah Yan's hopes on her old boys

And what are Wah Yan's hopes on her old boys? Even in the pre-Jesuit era, the Jesuit intellectual emphasis and emphasis on values were evident in the hopes of Wah Yan, as seen below in Mr. Lim Hoy Lan's address to WYHK students on the Prize Giving Day on 27th March 1928:

On leaving school boys are apt to think that their education has been completed, whereas they have just begun to learn in the greater and more important school of life, where they have to solve far more important problems than any they can find in their algebra and geometry textbooks. I earnestly hope that they will develop the habit of reading good books and that they will take up new studies so as to make their lives fuller and richer as they advance in years and prosperity. A well-educated man should take an interest in what is going on around him. A man's place in society is part of the essence of his existence. We must not become mere money-earning machines but should endeavour by social or public service to become useful citizens. It is true that we cannot all climb to the top rung of the ladder of success or of fame, but we can all do our duty, and do it well. (WYHK Log Book)

The Jesuit Fathers in the pre-war days had high expectations on Wah Yan's graduates to become leaders working for the needs of their country:

It is a source of joy to see so many who have benefited by what we have to give them. Young men who have a philosophy founded on the supernatural brotherhood of all men, who have the highest ideals enshrined in their

hearts, and who intend to imitate in their lives the Model which the Creator has given them for imitation, are the men the world needs today. They are China's need, as such Wah Yan tries to provide. (Fr. Bourke's speech on Speech Day, 21st December 1940, The Star 1941)

To end this article, I think Fr. J. Foley's (WYHK Principal, 1962-68) words to his graduating students in 1962 reflect the hopes of Wah Yan on her sons of all generations:

You have, I trust, benefited from a well-rounded education that has helped to form your characters, make you young men with strong moral courage and deep convictions as to what is right and what is wrong; young men of integrity and loyalty. You have still a great deal to learn; what we have taught you here has been very little – in content – compared to what you will learn in later life. You will go on learning, we trust, guided by the good principles we have tried to instill into you and fired by the high ideals we have put before you. We wish you every success! (The Star 1963)

- End of Article -