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# MCAO Newsletter

## Philip Ah-Chuen... Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Educator

By Joyce Leung



### Who is Philip Ah-Chuen?

A recent biographical book<sup>[1]</sup> about him, *Philip Ah-Chuen*, by Dr. Ibrahim Alladin, describes him as:  
*Entrepreneur, Philanthropist and Educator.*

Born in Port-Louis, in 1949, he is indeed a man of many hats.

But under the many hats, who is this figure who is well-known on his native island, and elsewhere?

During my visit to Mauritius last month, I had the pleasure of meeting this multi-talented individual. His answers to my questions will reveal not only his many talents and skills, but also someone who is considered by many to be a visionary. The following is the first half of an interview I had with this iconic personality.

### Q: *How and why a biography on you?*

**A:** *Dr. Ibrahim Alladin, author of a biography on Sir Anerood Jugnauth in 2013, met with me during a visit to Mauritius to offer his apology after he unfortunately quoted me without my permission, using an extract of an interview I gave to Joseph Rodriguez of the National Geographic Magazine. It ensued from this meeting, which took more than an hour instead of the expected few minutes, that Dr. Alladin expressed the wish to write about me for his next biographical project. My son Jonathan who had originally intended to write this biography upon the completion of his medical studies at King's College, London, gave his permission to Dr. Alladin to proceed, subject to two conditions: (i) that the writing*

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*of my biography be supervised by Jonathan, and (ii) that my itinerary should be part of the whole story of Chinese immigration to Mauritius, so that the younger generation becomes aware of its roots.*

### 1. *The Educator:* *(Childhood and Youth):*

**Q:** People know you as a multi-faceted person: the book written by Dr. Alladin about your life and career clearly indicates this.

Let's begin with your youth.

Raised in a Chinese family, your journey begins as a young helper at the family business and a student at the Royal College in Port-Louis. How important a role did your Chinese Hakka roots play in your upbringing?

**A:** *Dad was born in Mauritius whereas Mum came from Meixian and did not speak a word of Creole. I was the eldest of six children. Mum always talked to me in Hakka and assigned me at an early age to look after my younger brothers. I had to perform household duties and Mum always told me to share with my brothers and very often, I had to be content with less. Unlike most of my school friends, I was never spoilt and had to serve others, instead of being served.*

*Moreover, all my school holidays were spent in the ABC shop (opposite the "Bazar Central"), which was managed by Dad while Uncle Jean Moilin was very active as a member of the legislative council/assembly. I worked like*

[1] *Philip Ah-Chuen, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Educator.*  
Ibrahim Alladin. Rukmani Offset Press, Coimbatore, 2014

*a full time employee from Mondays to Saturdays and earned 50 cents for my six days' work. With my 50 cents coin, I could watch the children's cinema Sunday show @ 9am, after mass. Any absences at work would reduce my pocket money and Mum would not give me the shortfall, thus depriving me of my cinema. My parents hence inculcated in me the values of caring, sharing, respect and hard work (all considered to be typical Chinese/Hakka values).*

**Q:** In the 1970's, you obtained your two Business and Management degrees in the U.K. (Bachelor of Technology from Brunel University and M.Sc. in Industrial Administration from Aston University, Birmingham).

Your family encouraged you to choose medicine but from the outset, after graduating, you chose to be an educator. What made you choose this career?

**A:** *On returning to Mauritius in 1976 after my university studies, I did not want to join the ABC family business, which was still managed by Dad (who had completed schooling at the primary level only). Upon the advice of my cousin, Professor Donald Ah-Chuen, I applied for my first job as lecturer in Management Studies at the University of Mauritius. I enjoyed sharing my knowledge with both young school-leavers as well as in-service personnel from both public and private sectors plus supervising end-of-year dissertations on practical business or management issues.*

**Q:** In your career as an educator, you have always promoted "Mauritianism" in the education of the young on the island. Can you elaborate?

**A:** *As a nation of immigrants from Africa, Asia and Europe, Mauritius is uniquely blessed with a rich diversity of cultures and languages making up the cosmopolitan melting pot or a United Nations in miniature. Our religious tolerance and our peaceful co-existence should be an example to the world.*

*Together with Claude Obeegadoo, a founding member of the Rotary Club of Port-Louis, who introduced me to the Port-Louis Club in 1989, I have initiated the "Culture Sharing for Peace and Unity" project in the schools of Mauritius with the help of parents and teachers. The traditions of our different cultures are celebrated with songs, dances, poems and cooking demonstrations. With the academic support of the Mauritius Institute of Education, these cultural facets are now incorporated in school textbooks.*

**Q:** You have greatly encouraged Arts and Culture to be

infused in the school curriculum. You have also promoted sports.

Why do you think that such matters are important for the youth?

**A:** *In an increasingly materialistic world dominated by passive consumption, I strongly believe in the promotion of arts, culture and sports. Our children should be exposed to things of beauty and creativity plus physical exercises and participation in team sports for their holistic development.*

*I have always been involved financially in all the stage productions of Father Gerard Sullivan because our local artists have so much talent, which needs to be tapped and encouraged. These local productions (e.g. Les Misérables, Sister Act) are as good as the ones shown in London West End or New York Broadway .*

*At my premises in Réduit, we offer facilities for art and sculpture expositions, book launches, floral displays, opera and music concerts by both Mauritian and foreign artists. Our fine gourmet Chinese restaurant, Opium, supplements our mission to democratize arts and culture to every Mauritian, given our accessibility and facilities for free parking.*

*Unfortunately, we do not get any support at all from the Ministry of Arts and Culture.*

**Q:** What are your views on the subject of education in Mauritius? What are the problems you detect in this system?

**A:** *The public education system in Mauritius is too academic and exam-oriented, based on rote learning without any consideration to critical thinking and team building. Not only have teaching standards gone down but the cancer of private tuition has become widespread mass tuition run on revenue maximization. Fluency in both English and French (oral and written) has also declined in quality, compounded by absence of reading and exposure to current affairs. Values as courtesy, punctuality, respect, sharing and hard work are hard to find.*

*With the focus on academic achievement, technical and vocational education has no value and becomes an option for the weaker students. Consequently, industries suffer and cannot recruit the best. Poaching is widespread.*

*The education system has created a highly stratified society. Those who are wealthy have more options and end up getting better jobs. Those who drop out are at risk and fall by the wayside - a few are saved by the*

*"Maison Familiale Rurale" of which I am the National President.*

*The country cannot excel in sports as children cannot practice sports because of private tuition. For example, my two nephews, Jason and Kenny, who were both National Junior Tennis champions and represented Mauritius at African tournaments, had to stop playing further once they reached Form V.*

**Q:** What is, according to you, the biggest challenge in education in Mauritius in this first quarter of the 21st century?

**A:** *Will the education system produce the trained manpower required to manage all our institutions and ensure that the country achieves the competitive edge for our products and services? This requires coordinated manpower planning right now by the various ministries.*

## **2. The Entrepreneur:**

**Q:** You are an entrepreneur - a well-known figure on the island.

We all know about your family's prominence in the world of business on the island: did you choose to get into business because of your family legacy?

**A:** *As mentioned earlier, I chose not to join the family business on my return from England. In early 1985, A.G. Nabee & Co, the distributor of Nissan and Datsun vehicles was in the hands of liquidators and the family assigned me in March the responsibility of preparing a market report, outlining our proposals to take over the distributorship, for submission to Nissan Motor Co. Ltd, Japan.*

*One month later, we got a telex inviting us to come to Tokyo to discuss our proposals. James Ngan (Head of the shipping division of ABC Group) and I were designated to travel to Tokyo to defend our proposals. Sometime in June, we received the excellent news from Nissan Motor Co. Ltd appointing ABC Motors Co. Ltd as the sole distributor for Mauritius with effect from 1 September 1985. It was time for me to give my three months resignation notice to De Chazal Du Mée and joined the family business as Executive Director to set up ABC Motors Co. Ltd and very quickly achieve market leadership position.*

**Q:** What has your involvement in the Mauritian Institute of Management been?

**A:** *My involvement with the Mauritian Institute of Management (MIM) dates back to my return from England in August 1976. As lecturer at the University of Mauritius, I was first called upon as a resource person for a MIM residential seminar on "Innovation" in November 1976 at La Pirogue hotel. As resource person, all I got was free accommodation and food but no payment. I gave my time for free to the MIM (established in 1974 to promote professional management standards in both public and private sectors) because I believed in what MIM was doing. I was later invited to join the MIM council, first as Secretary and then elected as Chairman.*

*In the mid-1980s, the University of Mauritius abolished all part-time middle management courses that were offered to the private sector. The MIM took on the opportunity to run an Advanced Certificate in Business Management. This course was delivered part-time every Thursday afternoon and Saturday morning at Cerné House in Port-Louis. I was contacted to teach Marketing Management and Corporate Strategy and given my passion for sharing and teaching, I could not refuse. So all my Saturday mornings were devoted to MIM. Inevitably, I was also appointed Chairman of the Board of Examiners to ensure rigorous high academic standards, which motivated the University of Surrey to work with the MIM to run distant learning Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs in Mauritius at the MEF Management Centre. Local tutors were needed and I was one of them.*

*Today, many of our MBA graduates occupy senior management positions, both locally and overseas. Without the MIM/University of Surrey MBA programs, many Mauritian managers would not have been able to resign their positions, leave their family behind and afford the exorbitant fees abroad. The MIM/Surrey partnership made it possible and I am proud to have contributed to upgrading management talent in the economic development of Mauritius.*

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*Note: The second half of this interview will appear in the next (Spring) issue of this newsletter. Please stay tuned.*

## Niet Kwong Kwong...

By Philip Wong Too Yuen



**Niet kwong kwong**

**Siw choi long**

**Khi bhak mah**

**Kwoh lien tong...**

### Hakka:

Niet kwong kwong

Siw choi long

Khi bhak mah

Kwoh lien tong

### Chinese

月光光

秀才郎

骑白马

过莲塘

### Lit. translation:

Under the moonlight,  
imperial scholar  
riding a white horse  
crossing the lotus  
pond.

Lien tong poy

Choong kiw choi

Kiw choi fah

Kiet tsin kah

Tsin kah moon teyw 亲家门头

莲塘背

种韭菜

韭菜花

结亲家

Behind the lotus pond  
grow Chinese chives.  
With chive flowers,  
In-laws are formed.  
In front of in-laws'  
house,  
lies a pond.

Yit khéw tong

Kioong ke li ma

Pat tsak tsong

Tsong eh na loi

Chou chiw set

Ton eh na loi

Kao koo niong

一口塘

生个鲤妈

八尺长

长的拿来

煮酒食

短的拿来

交姑娘

Carp is raised,  
eight feet long.  
Cook the long ones  
in wine for a meal  
Keep the small ones  
as dowry for a bride

### Vernacular:

kao eh koo niong ai tut tut

tien tien hong eh ta si foot

ta keh si foot mian paw paw

na poon keh yeh set eh kaw kaw kaw

na poon app eh set eh zon tien law

The above is an old familiar children's rhyme that Hakka kids, from Meixian to Mauritius, have learned and recited over the ages. Many of us, especially of the older generations, would have heard it when we were small. These lines are deeply seated in our minds. Those who have visited Meixian in recent times will recall that visitors to the China Hakka Museum can hear and see these rhymes illustrated on a television screen at the entrance to the Museum.

### **Rhyme Story**

The story is set in a peasant setting familiar to our

forebears in Meixian. It talks about an imperial scholar riding a white horse to cross a lotus pond. At the back of the pond, there grow Chinese chives, and their flowers lead to the union of two families. In front of the in-laws' residence lies a pond where they raise carps, eight feet long. The long ones are cooked in wine and the short ones become the wedding dowry.

The vernacular portion is somewhat unpolished... it will therefore remain untranslated.

### **Cultural Significance**

It seems a good place to mention how much education is highly prized in China, even more so in Meixian. Parents will make great sacrifices to find funds for schooling a promising child. The whole community feels inclined to help. Even poor families will be willing to dip into what little they have.

It is the dream of Hakka families to have their children become imperial scholars (秀才, Pinyin: *xiucai*), which brings prestige and honour to the family while opening doors to a highly sought-after and enriching life in the imperial palace or in the government. If we bear in mind the imperial examinations passing rate is less than 1%, we will understand why becoming an imperial scholar is such an achievement. Note that the imperial examinations comprised of many levels, starting with the preliminary selection exam, the Yuan Exam (院试), followed by the County Exam (乡试), progressing to the Country Exam (会试), before culminating with the final Palace Exam (殿试). The successful *xiucai* who manage to clear this final stage are rewarded with the prestigious Jin Shi (进士) title and appointments in the royal court or government.

The Hakkas of Meixian can justly be proud because at one historical point this relatively small geographical area recorded five scholars in one year. In recent history we see that Hakka Marshall Zhu De (朱德) was a *xiucai*. However, Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全), the Hakka leader of the Taiping Rebellion, made three unsuccessful attempts before giving up.

## Why I am studying Chinese

By Andrew Wang

A few years ago, we and a few friends went on a China trip. At that time, I could not speak nor read Chinese.



Fortunately we had a good friend to translate for us what our Tour guide was saying. Buying stuffs were also difficult as me and my wife did not speak a word of mandarin.

After we came back, I got interested to study Chinese. I told myself that in a few years, if I study seriously, I should be in a position to speak and read Chinese.

Now after more than three years of self-study, I find that it was an illusion. I am no nearer to mastering the language, let alone understand and communicate in Chinese. Indeed, Chinese is not an easy language to learn. Especially for me, I am finding it difficult because of several reasons.

Firstly, my memory is not as good as when I was younger. Whatever I learn today, by tomorrow I forget. A Chinese character is composed of so many strokes, and remembering them is not easy. A missing stroke or a dot in a character can give rise to a new character.

Secondly, there are so many characters to remember and a character can have several meanings. When combined with other characters they produce new meanings.

Thirdly, Chinese people speak so fast that for a beginner, it is difficult to understand. I am told that to be able to read articles in a Chinese newspaper and understand them, one needs to know at least 5000 characters, which looks like an impossible task for me. After three years of study, I can only recognize approximately 1200 characters, which is a far cry from that goal. Although my progress is very slow, I am not in a position to stop because that would be a greater shame than not succeeding.

Therefore, since I have started to learn, I must continue on that path, because stopping would be an acknowledgement of failure on my part.

So I am on a one way road. No turning back....

### Chinese Translation:

With my limited database of 1200 Chinese characters, let me express the above thoughts in my newly-learned tongue:

为什么我现在学中文

几年前，我们和几个好朋友去中国旅游。那时候，我不会说和读中文。还好我们好朋友帮我们翻译导游说的话。买东西也不容易，因为一字话我们不会说。

回来以后，我决定开始学中文。我对自己说，如果我

认真真学，几个年后我觉得已经可能会说和读中文。但是，现在三四年后，我发现是个幻觉。学中文不容易，是很难，可是有几个原因。

首先，我的记忆比我年轻的时候很差。今天我认真真读，写中文，到明天都已经忘记了。中文字有很多笔画，如果少一笔画或一点，那字的意思变成别的字。所以记得它们不容易。

第二，

特别有很多中文字要记得。一字有几个的意思。尤为，一个字伙别的字都有几个的意思。

第三，

中国人说的话是很大速，所以开始学中文的学生不容易懂他们的说话。每个学生要认识5000字以上，可能看报纸和了解读什么。看起来，对我来说，没有能力成功。学中文是一个大事不容易成功。现在，三年后从开始学的时候，我可能认识1200字以上。所以，进步很慢，我的目标很远。如果我停止学，是大问题了，是丢面子。我觉得这方法，毕成功不到，会做我很害羞。

所以我不能停，要继续学，要不对我是一个大失败了。

我现在要走这一条街道，不能后回，要前进。

## 毛島情怀 (1)

By M. How

前言：

多年的好友CL还是要我写一些小品在MCAO季刊搞笑，娱乐朋友们。但我绝对不会舞文弄墨的人，写得不好請多多包容。在日常生活中阅读是我的习惯，精神的寄托，学问的來源，讀了一个好文章我總會反復再看几次，細細品味，甚至收藏。我喜欢上至天文下至地理的作品。目前的生活状态都是用美好的心情去做，盡量天天享受无压力的時光去讀好更多有意思的好文。很慚愧我写几行字的速度非常慢，可能是生活里琐事杂事兴趣爱好都大多，经常被打断，还好自己不是靠这行來吃飯的，要不我早已饿死了。多谢本会的季刊主持CL，他從來对我都包涵也很耐心。我写稿又遲交了，功課怎样完成还没有好好思索。我有点慌了！

## 毛島情怀 (1)

正文:

每个毛島人回毛里求斯都有不同的想法.大部份人都一石多鳥:拜訪親人朋友,旧地重游,全島走馬看花.擁抱擁抱久别的印度洋-去沙滩,有蓝天碧海,雪白的沙滩陪伴.晚上總是一顿又一顿丰富晚餐,吃香喝辣.好不惬意.

我离开毛里求斯岛将近半世纪了,虽然也回去过很多次,不知道什么原因心里總是摆不脱有想念这块小土地的情怀.每三年五年都有想回去的冲动,是不是重温我快乐的童年生活还是想念我孤軍奮斗的戰場?不管怎样每次回毛島都会感到有很舒服的感觉,原因主要是大家有共同语言,对故乡有深厚感情,更不要说亲朋好友无微不至的款待,熱情,真是回到家的感觉!感恩无限.一下飞机就東跑西走,大街小巷碰到久没見面的朋友或熟人都会哄堂大笑也有点哑然失笑,失笑的原因可能是大家都發現对方老了白发多了,成熟了很多,不過昨天的友情也有点變成今天的親情,互問家人近况,互祝大家身体健康,也都期待有下次的聚会.

回忆五十年代末六十年代的坡累市,生活在华人聚居的咧咧命街(La rie Remy Ollier) / 拉北街(La rie LaPaix) / 拉斯难街(La rie Arsenal) / 拉奄街(La rie Larampe),对我來說就是黃金時代.物質不算很丰富,精神生活可算是一流.同龄朋友三三五五双脚踩着顶架,人字拖鞋(savatte léponge),身穿短裤,CoCo背心,玩着呼拉呼(hulahoop),水渠打canette(麻帝)和lastique(松紧带),其他小街坊玩破旧旧單車輪.女孩子呢?呼拉呼,拉馬恩-Lamarelle,沙包-titine,踢毽子-sapsiwai

老一輩的人很多在家打偏金(penn-kim),跌头子,跌状元.比較專業的中老年人就偏爱去麻將館打麻將,边打牙啥(聊天)边打牌.小小坡累市一有新聞都很快就能传到大街小巷,满城风雨,非常熱鬧,这样的一情一景,有時感到非常有趣.

就在这些年代,我个人生活条件也像不少同龄孩子们差不多;坡累市上学;星期五下午放学后到拜日都要上山顶(乡下)店里幫工.星期一早又返回坡累市上学,大人们不愿看到你游手好閑,遊山玩水,不務正业.学坏了的孩子家人就会给你一个臭名“百家望鬼”....我的親人也寄以厚望長大了我能成为一个好店员!合格“哥尾”.

毛島华人社團最兴旺的時代可能就在當時,街头巷角都有各形各色的,聯誼会,协会,氏族,每姓都有自己什么什么館等等.全島百分之95%的唐人後裔都是從广东梅县去的;所以经常可以從同胞们口中听到不少熟耳的地名:

- 梅江橋,大浪口,松口,丙村,蕉岭,书坑,金盘橋,長沙,太蜜,古塘坪,丰顺等等.街上碰到的每个人不是鄰居,就是朋友,还有親人.就是这样的情况下先輩人來到这个孤岛为了生存.有了很多的聯誼会是有必要的.

在記憶中的这些俱乐部有:- 大風,飞龍,白鷹,行軍,中中校友会,新中校友会,健美....后来又有了新二代青年俱乐部:-野草,Real, Rovers, Attila, CSA,巨人,四海等等.我呢?什么社團都没有参加.每晚就去拉奄街朋友服装店,寄脚聊天或去La rie Ti Montagne 街,張家館对面跟朋友每晚聚会,后来因为朋友多了我们就起了这样的一个名 - 梯牌聯誼会 (Club Peron).新华学校左則石梯牌就是我们一群人的“家”,因为朋友们都没有钱租一个会址.

看! 我们也曾经是“弄潮人”. 哈哈!

(下刊继续)



(See below for English version)

## A Yearning for Mauritius

Translated by M. How & Clifford Lam

My long-time friend CL keeps telling me to write something for this newsletter to share a laugh and if possible, to enlighten our fellow friends. Definitely I am not the kind of guy who usually plays with pen and paper. So, if my writing is not up to standard, just give me a chance! In my daily life, reading has always been an unbreakable, some may even say, obsessive habit for me. It is a source of spiritual support and above all, an infinite source of knowledge and wisdom for me. Reading is something to be enjoyed and to be savoured in my mind. When I come across a good article, I will often cut it out, save it and then go back and read it over and over again to fully savour its literary richness and beauty. My reading interests have no bounds, stretching from the heavenly to the mundane of this earth! I am just enjoying my daily life at the present time, always in search of a good essay or book to read.

Unfortunately, if I have to write, I am extremely slow. Maybe I have too many distractions in my daily life such as hobbies, sports and the occasional passionate discussion... On the other hand, I consider myself lucky not to have to depend on my writing for a living! My thanks to CL for his patience with me... I am already late

for this assignment and I do not even know what to write about. I am panicking...

## A Yearning for Mauritius (Part 1)

Everybody goes back to Mauritius with different aims and intentions but most of us will try to use one stone to hit as many birds as possible, from visiting family and friends to re-visiting old places and neighbourhoods to reconnecting with people and things from a nostalgic past. We specially enjoy visiting the island again, warmly embracing the soothing waters of the Indian Ocean, with nothing but blue sky, white sands and an emerald ocean to keep us company. At night, there are the lavish sumptuous dinners to welcome you home. At times, you may even feel guilty about how good life can be on this idyllic island!!

I have left Mauritius for about half a century now and I have gone back several times. I do not know why but I cannot somehow shake off my love for this little piece of land. Every three to four years, I have an uncanny itch to want to go back again. Is it because of my early struggles there? Is it because of the good times or the hard times I had there? It does not matter. Each time I go back, I have the warm feeling of everybody being on the same wavelength, sharing the same intimacy, especially my family and the incredible way they treat me with love and attention. I truly feel that I am at home and I really appreciate that.

The moment I step off the plane, I have right away the urge to go and visit the places I know. Whenever I meet friends and acquaintances, we have first a good laugh but after the euphoria, when I think about it, we have all aged quite a bit. We are all getting more mature but somehow yesterday's friendship has morphed into more of a family feeling. We ask about each other's family, the kids, the parents, etc. We wish each other good health and we express a genuine wish to meet again before long.

Thinking back to the late 50's and 60's, I was living in the Chinese quarter of Port Louis, with street names such as "*la rie Remy Ollier*", "*la rie lapaix*", "*la rie Arsenal*", "*la rie larampe*"... For me it was a golden time. Materially, it was not very rich but our lives were fantastic, "1<sup>st</sup> Class" as the saying goes! Youngsters of my age, dressed in "*caleçon-¾*" and "*tricot-coco*" and wearing "*savate léponge*" or "*tanga*", would play "*canette*", "*lastique*" or "*hulahoop*". Other kids would run around playing "*la roue bicyclette*" (recycled old bicycle tires)! How about

the girls? They would play "*hulahoop*", "*lamarelle*", "*titine*", "*sapsiwai*".

At home, some people play "*penn kim*" or "*tiet chong ngian*" while others would play "*mah chiok*". They play and chit-chat at the same time. In a small town like Port Louis, news travel fast and every now and then, there would be some headline-grabbing news or scandal that would become the talk-of-the-town for days on end! The excitement and gossip that would follow is definitely something to behold!

In those days, just like many other kids of my age and similar family background, we would live in Port Louis during weekdays for schooling purposes and then head out after school on Friday afternoons to remote rural places to help our parents in their local stores (*saan-tang tiamé*). Then early on Monday mornings, we would travel back to the city to go to school again. The main purpose of this routine was to make sure we (the kids) do not become idle and fall in with the wrong crowd if left unsupervised. When we do not behave, they will call us "*pakavong kwee*"... As for my own family at that time, they expected me to grow up and be a good shopkeeper!

In their heyday, the Chinese in Mauritius had a lot of social clubs, associations and organisations. In many street corners, you will find locales where members of those groups would gather for social, sports and other purposes. Most prominent in those days were the Chinese clan clubs (*kwoné*) where Chinese of same clan names (*siang*) would join to socialise and maybe reminisce about their days in the old country (a bit like what I am doing now). 95% of Mauritian Chinese have their roots from *Mòì-yen*. Every so often, we can hear our parents talk about places such as "*Moy Kong Khiow*", "*Thai Long Kaiw*", "*Chiao Liang*", "*Piang Tsoon*", "*Foong Soon*", etc.

In the street, when you meet somebody, it seems that he or she is a neighbour's neighbour. Relatives are like your relative's relative. Everyone is somehow linked in some way in this closely-knit community. And again, when I think about the area where I used to live, there are lots of social or sports clubs with names such as "*Typhoon*", "*Dragons*", "*White Eagles*", "*Hang Kioon*", "*Chung-Chung Alumni*", "*Sin Chung Alumni*", "*Khien Mee*", etc. Later on, a newer generation of clubs would arise such as "*Réal*", "*Rovers*", "*Attila*", "*CSA*", "*Giants*", "*Four Seas*", etc.

As for me, I never joined any of them. Every night, I would head down to "*La rie larampe*" to visit a good

friend whose family owned a local tailor shop. I would hang around there for a while or I would head over to “*la rie Ti Montagne*” to meet another group of friends in front of the Chinese *Sin-Fah* school. This group of friends had adopted one of the stone steps (“*Péron*”) in front of the school as (pardon the pun) the “seat” of this pseudo-club. Being of limited size, we would often take turns to sit on it to rest our sore legs! O the good times! So much so, we ended up naming ourselves “*Club Péron*” in tribute to this unique meeting place! “Why?” you may ask. The sad truth is we could not afford anything better!

Ha..Ha.. You see, we were once also “*dans le vent*” ...

## Hakka Sayings

By Mike How & Clifford Lam

### *Foo Li Fah Miow* (狐狸花猫)

Describes somebody who is not telling the truth or is a tricky person. Literally translated, the expression means “being confused between a fox and a cat”.

### *Téyw Tung, Mee Tung* (头动尾动)

Describes someone who is very sharp, on the ball all the time and has a good sense of needs and urgency. Literally translated, the expression means “moving head, moving tail” conjuring an image of an active body ready to act.

### *Koo Lin Chin Kwai* (古灵精怪)

Describes someone who has a bizarre, unsociable, or dysfunctional character. It applies to objects or behaviour of a person.

### *Hee Hong Hee Hah* (气行气下)

Describes the condition of someone who is breathless e.g. after an exhaustive exercise such as running or climbing.

### *Ham Choy Lao Tchao* (咸菜佬槽)

Describes a bad mixture or a combination of things that do not go well together. Literally translated, it means “mixing mustard green with red fermented rice”.

Note that in today’s cuisine, this analogy may not be quite true anymore and such a combination can make quite palatable dishes!

### *Law Law Saw Saw* (唠唠嗦嗦)

Describes someone who likes to nag a lot!

## MCAO News



### MCAO AGM 2017 & Executive Committee Elections

The 2017 Annual General Meeting of MCAO took place on September 2, 2017 at the North York Memorial Community Hall (Burgundy Room) together with the holding of biennial elections for a new Executive Committee (EC) for 2017-2019.

Eleven candidates were nominated by members, from which nine new EC members were selected by secret ballot by the general membership.

The turn-out for the elections was excellent with almost two-thirds of eligible voting members casting their ballots.

The new Executive Committee members held their first meeting on September 5, 2017 to determine their individual roles in the new committee. Details are as follows:

President:	Allan Wan
Vice-President (Youth):	Jean Claude Li Fun
Vice-President (Seniors):	Monique Li Siong
Vice-President (Women & Communications):	Suzanne Chan Kin
Secretary (English):	Joyce Leung
Secretary (Chinese):	Mike How
Social Officer:	John How
Treasurer:	Priscilla Lam
Assistant Treasurer:	Margaret Wan

Congratulations to the new Executive Committee members! MCAO would like to thank once again all its members for their keen interest and participation in the election.



### MCAO Mix & Mingle Meetings

Regular bi-weekly club meetings have resumed at the Parkway Forest Community Centre.



These gatherings are scheduled as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month                      Boardroom "C"  
2:30 PM to 5:30 PM
- 3rd Saturday of month                      Arts & Craft Room  
4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

In addition, Line Dance sessions will be held, when applicable, in the Dance Studio from 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM. More details of dates and times will be confirmed by email in due course.

Also, the monthly potluck get-together will be held on the 3rd Saturday of each month in the Arts & Craft Room from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Note that the above schedule is applicable until June 2018.

In addition, supplementary meetings will be scheduled on an as-needed basis at the Alexandra Park Community Centre in Chinatown (Dundas/Spadina). Stay tuned for details of these meetings.

Please make time and join us for a few hours of social chit-chats, fun and games or even some Karaoke singing for budding stars!

### **MCAO's Annual Mid-Autumn Festival Luncheon**

This annual event took place on September 30, 2017 at the Sky Dragon Chinese Restaurant in Chinatown. The luncheon was attended by about 120 members and guests, who were treated to a sumptuous 10-course meal.



MCAO President Allan Wan welcoming guests at the Mid-Autumn Festival Lunch



Guests at the Mid-Autumn Festival Lunch

### **Diabetes Workshop**

A workshop on "Diabetes Prevention & Management" was presented to MCAO members on October 7, 2017 by Naema Sharma from The Canadian Diabetes Association as part of the club's "health promotion" activities.

The presentation was excellent and very informative and was well received by an appreciative audience



Attendees at the Diabetes Workshop (Oct 2017)

### **Wills & Powers of Attorney Workshop**

A workshop on "Wills & Powers of Attorney" was held for MCAO members on November 18, 2017. It was presented by Toronto Hakka lawyer, Ms. Jennie Pei-Chun Lin.

A very informative and well-presented talk was greatly appreciated by the large and interested audience that was present for this important subject.



Attendees at the Wills & Powers of Attorney Workshop (Nov 2017)

**Cost:** Adults: *Either:* Bring a dish,  
Or: \$10 per person  
Kids: Free

### Chinese New Year Banquet 2018



MCAO is organizing a Chinese New Year dinner dance to welcome and celebrate the Year of the Dog.

Please buy your tickets early, as space is limited.

For tickets, please contact:

Peter Fong ([mountpouce@rogers.com](mailto:mountpouce@rogers.com))

John How ([john.how@mail.com](mailto:john.how@mail.com))

Priscilla Lam ([priscilla.lam@sympatico.ca](mailto:priscilla.lam@sympatico.ca))

Monique Lisiong ([mltklisiong@gmail.com](mailto:mltklisiong@gmail.com))

**Location:** NKS Banquet Hall  
8360 Kennedy Rd, Unionville,  
ON L3R 9W4

**When:** Saturday, March 3, 2018

**Cost:** Adult: \$55 or \$500 for table of 10  
Child: (5-12yrs): \$25 (separate table)  
(under 5 yrs): Free

## Upcoming Events

### Future Workshops

A workshop on "**Hearing Loss**" will be presented on December 2, 2017 by the Canadian Hearing Society. The 1-hr presentation will start at 2:30 PM in Boardroom "C".

### MCAO Christmas Party 2017



MCAO members, families and friends are invited to a potluck Christmas Party on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 to celebrate the holiday season.

**Location:** Parkway Forest Community Centre  
Multi-Purpose Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
55 Forest Manor Rd,  
North York, ON M2J 1G3

**When:** Saturday December 16, 2017  
4:00 PM to 9:00 PM

## Laughter...the best medicine



*physical condition?*

*'I'm Italian and I am a cyclist ....' says Mario, 'and that's why I'm in such good shape. I'm up well before daylight and out cycling up and down the highways. I have a glass of vino and all is well.'*

*'Well....' says the doctor, 'I'm sure that helps, but there's got to be more to it. How old was your father when he died?'*

*'Who said my father's dead?'*

The doctor is amazed. *'You mean you're 80 years old and*

Mario, an 80-year-old Italian, goes to the doctor for a check-up.

The doctor is amazed at the shape the guy is in and asks, *'How do you stay in such great*

*your father's still alive. How old is he?*

*'He's 102 years old,' says Mario. 'He cycled with me this morning, went to the beach for a walk, had a little vino and that's why he's still alive. Italian ..... Cyclist.....'*

*'Well....' the doctor says, 'that's great, but I'm sure there's more to it than that. How about your Father's Father? How old was he when he died?'*

*'Who said my Nonno's dead?'*

Stunned, the doctor asks, *'You mean you're 80 years old and your grandfather's still living? Incredible!! How old is he?'*

*'He's 123 years old,' says the old Italian cyclist.*

The doctor is getting frustrated at this point, *'So, I guess he went cycling with you this morning too?'*

*'No, Nonno couldn't go this morning because he's getting married today.'*

At this point, the doctor is close to losing it. *'Getting married? Why would a 123 year-old guy want to get married?'*

*'Who said he wanted to get married.... He had to!!!.....THE GIRL GOT PREGNANT!!'*



An elderly man is in the operating room waiting for a critical operation.

He has insisted that his son-in-law, a renowned surgeon at the hospital, perform the operation.

Just before he is anaesthetised, he asks to speak to his son-in-law and tells him: *'Don't be nervous, do your best. And, if things do not go as planned and should something happen to me, remember that your mother-in-law will be moving in with you...'*

Talking about pressure!



## Food for thought...

A Father left 17 ducks as asset for his three sons.

When the Father passed away, his sons opened up the will.

The Will of the Father stated that the Eldest son should get

half of his asset; the Middle Son should be given one third; the Youngest Son, one ninth.

As it is not possible to divide 17 into half or 17 by 3 or 17 by 9, the sons started to fight with each other.

So, they decided to go to a wise man that lives in a cave.

The wise man listened patiently about the Will. The wise man, after giving it some thought, brought one duck of his own & added it to the other 17. That increased the total to 18 ducks.

Now, he started reading the deceased Father's will.

Half of 18 is 9. So he gave 9 ducks to the eldest son.

One third of 18 is 6. So he gave 6 ducks to the middle son.

One ninth of 18 is 2. So he gave 2 ducks to the youngest son.

Now add this up:  $9 + 6 + 2 = 17$  and this leaves 1 duck, which the wise man took back.

**MORAL:** The attitude of negotiation & problem solving is to find common ground between parties i.e. the 18th duck in this case. Once a person is able to find the common ground, the issue can be resolved much more easily. And that is the difficult part.

To reach a solution, the first step is to believe that there is a solution. If we think that there is no solution, we won't be able to reach any!



## Recipe Corner

### Hummus

(courtesy Priscilla Lam)



#### Ingredients:

1. 1 can chick peas: drained & washed
2. ¼ cup lemon Juice (can be less or more depending on taste)
3. ¼ cup tahini (sesame seed paste)
4. 2 tablespoons olive oil
5. ½ cup chopped cilantro
6. 1 clove garlic – chopped finely



7. ½ teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
8. ¼ teaspoon salt (optional)
9. 1 roasted red pepper (optional)
10. 2 to 3 tablespoons water (added at end to make Hummus smooth)

**Directions:**

- In a blender, blend lemon juice with tahini
- Add other ingredients (re. 4 to 9 above) & one half of the chick peas & blend until smooth
- Add other half of chick peas & blend again until smooth
- Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of water & blend to required smoothness.
- Transfer to a serving bowl and refrigerate for at least 1 hour
- Drizzle with more olive oil (or chilli oil) and paprika, before serving
- Enjoy!



## MCAO Sponsors

MCAO wishes to extend a deep and sincere thank-you to all its sponsors and members for their generous financial and in-kind contributions to help the association deliver on its mission objectives. Their generosity and support are truly appreciated.

**Please support our Sponsors with your business!**

For donations and sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

Joyce Leung ([jmcleung@yahoo.com](mailto:jmcleung@yahoo.com)) or

Allan Wan (647-824-3343).

## MCAO Membership

New members are most welcome! For new membership enrolment, please contact:

Joyce Leung ([jmcleung@yahoo.com](mailto:jmcleung@yahoo.com))

## Contact Us

If you have any questions or comments, please email us at:

[clubmcao@gmail.com](mailto:clubmcao@gmail.com)

You can also visit our website at:

[www.mauritiuschineseassociation.com/](http://www.mauritiuschineseassociation.com/)

## Picture Gallery



Annual General Meeting 2017 (Sept 2017)



MCAO Gathering (Nov 2017)



## A Word from Our Sponsors...

**PHARMCARE I.D.A. PHARMACY**

**Jean-Paul Li, B.Sc. Phm.**  
Pharmacist/Owner

Tel 416-245-1221 Fax 416-245-1448  
Pharmcarecentre@rogers.com  
**882 Wilson Avenue, Toronto, ON M3K 1E7**

Mon-Fri 09:30am - 6:30pm | Sat 10:00am - 3:00pm



The map shows a grid of streets. Vertical streets from left to right are Jane St., Keele St., Northgate Dr., and Dufferin St. Horizontal streets from top to bottom are Wilson Ave. and HWY 401. A red arrow points to the intersection of Wilson Ave. and Northgate Dr., with a red '#882' above it and the I.D.A. logo below it. To the left of this intersection, between Jane St. and Keele St., is a box with an 'H' and the text 'Humber River Hospital'.