



MCAO Newsletter

www.chinesemauritiusanassociation.com

The Uncharted Journey of Sister Cecile Leung: Nun, Scholar & Educator

By Joyce Leung



Here we were in Mauritius, just a few months ago, at a lunch hosted graciously by Philip Ah-Chuen. And there she was, after several decades, with the same gracious and kind smile. Not that I had known her well in our youth. Being in the same circle as my older

cousin, she had been at the time a figure of inspiration to us: we had heard that this pretty girl was to become a nun! And later on we had learnt that she was going to be a missionary in a faraway land (Taiwan seemed so far and so "exotic" to us, young Mauritian teenagers!). She had not changed much: her cheerful, generous and discrete nature was still dominant (even as one of the guests of honour, she spent her lunch, in a quiet way, thinking of the well-being of the other guests). However, I knew that behind this tranquil demeanour, there was a remarkable character, having heard of her exceptional achievements over the years. After lunching with this visionary figure, I thought: Why not "share Soeur Cecile" with the whole world! Hence this interview which she graciously granted. The following is the first half of the interview I had with this inspiring personality.

Q: Everyone who has had the honour to meet you knows that you are a multi-faceted person. To encapsulate all these facets in a gist will be a challenge. But let's hope a few questions will give us a good idea of who Cecile Leung is!

A: *Joyce, thank you for your kind words. I would say that one facet of my life sustains the rest: the call to follow Christ comes central.*

1. Childhood and Youth:

Q: Where were you born? Where did you spend the first

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Uncharted Journey of Sister Cecile Leung: Nun, Scholar & Educator	1
Look back with nostalgia ... a voyage through the 1960's	4
毛島情懷 (2)	7
Yearning for Mauritius (Part 2)	8
Learning Chinese, my challenges and tribulations ...	9
Hakka Sayings	9
MCAO News	10
Upcoming Events	11
Laughter...the Best Medicine	12
MCAO Sponsors	12
MCAO Membership	12
Contact Us	12
Picture Gallery	13
A Word from Our Sponsors	14

few years of your life? When and why did you leave your birthplace?

A: *I was born in Deep River Bel Air Rivière Sèche (district of Flacq, Mauritius) in my parents' shop, delivered probably by the village midwife Madame Mimi. I spent the first years of my life in that shop which catered to the laborers and workers of the "moulin". Life was punctuated by the planting and harvesting of sugar cane and the production of sugar during "la coupe".*

I remember going to the primary school in Olivia (maybe 2 miles away) sitting "en amazone" on a pillow/cushion attached to the "cadre" of my father's bicycle with "la corde coco". When there was police in sight, my father quickly climbed down and walked with the bike. When later I traveled to Asian countries and discovered in awe that whole families of three or more plus live chickens could be transported on one bike, I understood that British regulations as applied to colonies were overlooking the skills and needs of the population. The best part of going to school for me was the bike ride, it was my open-air "Cadillac".

Q: What are the events or incidents from your early childhood that marked you the most?

A: *Halfway through primary school, my mother had surgery, and my aunt gave me hospitality in Rivière du Rempart with the greatest kindness and my life of peregrinations started at the tender age of eight! Next I went to a Chinese school in Port Louis. I cried every day afraid of the foreign language teacher's big "robin bazar".*

Finally an elderly auntie suggested: "Why not send her 't'ouc fan sou" (western education as opposed to the Chinese school)?" Thus began accidentally my association with Loreto, first as pupil and later as teacher, until I left Mauritius at the age of 22 for the novitiate of the Réparatrices (sisters of Montmartre Mauricien, Rose Hill) in Normandie, France.

"La Boutique":

Weekdays I was a Loreto girl, some weekends and holidays I was "derrière comptoir" in our shop in Deep River, handling "poisson salé (cinq sous ène morceau), spices such as "til'anis, gros'l'anis, safran, laïti, girofles, piments secs..." (cinq sous ène cornet). On paydays when la "cambise" was crowded, I served "groggs" and "cari ourites lors feuilles rouges" or "divin rouge Oxenham".

We knew the customers by name, mostly Tamils and Hindus, besides a few "Chrétien" as the others called themselves. For them, my sister and I were "Ahmoye"; my mother, "Madame"; my father, "captan". Later when I returned to Deep River as a nun, I visited some families, kids were sent to "la boutique" for Pepsi and I was the distinguished guest. One day I was stranded in Montagne Blanche when suddenly appeared someone familiar, "Missié Clair", with a "cornet" of "ti-gâteaux piments so-so" saying, "Massere longtemps pas fine manze ça?". The best I ever tasted! "Missié Clair" still cared though we had not met for decades. Relationship "à la campagne" was genuine and the interracial connections brought a richness beyond words.

Solidarity in the Chinese Community:

Commuting from Deep River to school "en ville" was impossible, so families in town offered hospitality. Among others, the Leung Hows and Lioong Pheows opened home and heart to the primary school pupil, later the Leung Shings integrated the adolescent in their large family. The fact that aunties of multiple families adopted me wholeheartedly gave me extended kinships and thrust me into mainstream Chinese community. Every single "nudge" received during my early years to adulthood contributed to forming the person I am today. I remain immensely indebted to all those who helped build my "Mauritian" years.

2. The Nun:

Q: Who and what inspired you to become a nun?

A: I responded to a call from Jesus which I felt when I was sixteen. In the deepest recess of my being, I had the

conviction that I had only one life and I should better make the most of it. Following Jesus and dedicating my life to others seemed my best bet. I love Blaise Pascal's rationale: if we live as if God exists and He does exist, we gain eternal life. If He does not exist, we do not have much to lose. I stand by my bet!

The Loreto sisters were role models. Their Love of God permeated the environment in which they educated us with the highest standards. Moreover the Chinese Catholic Mission nurtured in us a sense of belonging. It could have been any other group or for that matter any "gang"! However we were lucky it was the Catholic Mission because Christian faith not only makes you "feel good" as a son/daughter of God our Father, it offers more as Pope Francis explains: Jesus preaches love for the marginalized, the down-trodden, the victims of wars and the displaced. To those searching for the meaning of life, such an appeal offered plenty to be passionate about. (BTW: we were the "displaced", our parents/grandparents were economic refugees from Mexian, and European missionaries/educators gave us the "nudge" to help us reinvent our immigrant trajectory.) Moreover the Mauritian born clergy: the then Father Jean Margeot (later Bishop and Cardinal), Fathers Raoul, Souchon, Boullé, and others led the way to consolidate a multi-ethnic Mauritian Church where we felt at home.

Q: Have there been any challenges in your journey to becoming a religious person, a Catholic nun, with vows of chastity and poverty?

A: The hardest challenge was my parents' objection. At the time, religious life was regulated by strict discipline. You could not go home even in the event of a parent's demise and could not share a meal with others. On the other hand, Confucianism wants offspring to provide for the needs of parents and most important of all, procreate so that the genes of the clan can live on. The vows of chastity and poverty run counter to these expectations.

It is hard to be torn between two cultures each with its own absolute values. I broke my parents' heart by choosing to go against our century old traditions.

Vow of chastity:

My students could not believe that one could live happily without being sexually active. In my literature class I taught a French short novel: "L'éternité n'est pas de trop" by François Cheng, a Chinese-born member of the prestigious Académie Française. The story is placed in ancient China when boys and girls could not socialize freely. The male protagonist, a musician, glanced at the

young woman of the house where he was performing; they fell in love. The story evolved for thirty years without allowing any physical intimacy. The protagonists died within minutes of each other still passionately in love in a quasi-mystical experience. My students rebelled: "Thirty years, no sex, still in love, you must be kidding!".

Contemporary cultures are skeptical about the concept of "chastity". Nuns make the vow of chastity in their humble pursuit of the Absolute Love of God. Suffice to say that being called by Jesus is an immense blessing in spite of the sacrifices it entails.

Vow of poverty:

It is contrary to our Chinese mentality not to build some fortune to assure the financial security of our parents. I walked away from my duty believing firmly that "le centuple" would be granted to Jesus' followers as He promised. Relatives and friends adopted my family and assured their welfare for half a century! It is a fact that "mon voeu de pauvreté a coûté cher aux parents (relatives) et amis"! The Chinese side of me is embarrassed and wonders: "How am I going to pay back this huge debt?" The Catholic side replies in a timid voice: "Dieu y pourvoira". My dual identity as usual generates uncomfortable contradictions! "Il faut assumer", and I remain eternally indebted to MANY.

3. The Scholar:

Q: Besides being a nun, you are a scholar. Tell us about your research on Etienne Fourmont (1683-1745), the Proto-Sinologist.

A: I was transferred on my own accord from the Réparatrices of Rose Hill to the Society of Helpers. The latter invited me to come to Asia. Hereafter I was posted in Taiwan where only 4% of the population was baptized as Catholics, and the only way to meet young people would be through teaching (at least in my case). Hence "de fil en aiguille", I found myself doing research in Paris for a doctoral dissertation for the University of Chicago (USA) where I was granted a full scholarship for a PhD in Comparative Literature. I fell into academia by accident!

My Doctoral Dissertation:

Etienne Fourmont (1683-1745), Parisian, member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres was librarian at the Bibliothèque Royale in Paris. There he saw the Chinese Classics and Encyclopedias brought back by French missionaries as gifts from the Chinese Emperors to the French Kings. Fourmont felt they contained tremendous scholarship but he could not decipher the characters. Next

he started to learn Chinese language and developed a Chinese grammar based on Latin. He directed a team of French craftsmen to carve out Chinese characters on wooden blocks which enabled him to print a grammar illustrated with Chinese characters. The Royal Treasury funded his initiatives for decades.



Retreat of a group of "Christian Life Community" in the 1980's in Taiwan.

Besides teaching at Fujen University, Sr Cecile assisted Jesuit Fathers in the chaplaincy of a few CLC groups. Sr Cecile left Taiwan in 1985 after 17 years of ministry.

Sr Cecile second row second from right.

Research:

I spent two years in Paris looking into 18th century documents at the Bibliothèque Nationale (as the Bibliothèque Royale is called today) and digging in the archives of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. I had to piece together the manuscripts to understand how Fourmont guessed at the meaning of the characters by putting side by side Chinese classical texts and early translations by missionaries. Fourmont forced the comparison between Latin and Chinese which in fact do not share the same grammatical structure. Though the voluminous grammar he published did not help much in the study of Chinese Language, yet he brought sinology into mainstream scholarship in 18th century France.

No need to say that the research and the writing of the dissertation were arduous. I did not give up because I was Chinese and I was a nun!! I remember Sr Chantal leading us - young sisters spending time in France for a workshop - to tackle a mountain far more imposing than "Le Pouce". "Un pas devant l'autre, on est sûr d'arriver", she proclaimed perceiving the fear on our face. We did reach the summit! So the survival secret in the dissertation challenge was one step at a time: never go to bed without having pushed a little further.

Our immigrant parents/ancestors did that: they advanced step by step though they could not see the destination; it was for many "la galère", but they found contentment in the flow and pushed forward.

Q: Your book - derived from your thesis - was granted the Hirayama Award in 2003 from the prestigious Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Paris). Can you tell us about its importance in the academic world?

A: *"Publish or perish" is the mantra when you teach at the tertiary level, so the dissertation on Etienne Fourmont (1683-1745) was abridged and published. It received the Hirayama Award because the work brought to light the contribution of a member of the Académie to the important field of sinology. The book is available in the libraries of major universities in the US and the world. Etienne Fourmont is "incontournable" for anyone interested in early sinology and this modest publication provides invaluable references.*

4. The Educator:

Q: You are a nun and a scholar, but you seem to have been mostly a teacher. Can you tell us why?

A: *As a matter of fact, the first "scholars" in Western Civilization were monks in charge of copying and commenting the Scriptures. To date there are still religious scholars promoting knowledge through their research and writing. I am not in that category!*

My passion was not research but mission/education among young people. My students were individuals to be given a holistic view of life besides being taught a subject matter. I worked at a public university where professors were not allowed by law to speak of religion. My students knew that I was a nun. Was my approach to language, literature and culture colored by my identity? I never heard any complaint, in fact students were always eager to reflect on the fundamental questions of the meaning of life, they did want to build a better world. We found common grounds.

Q: And when you teach: do you tend to put the emphasis on the academic or the human values?

A: *Teaching French at Winthrop University in South Carolina meant opening the mind of young Americans to something other than what they knew. I always insisted on the idea of respect for the one different from us.*

I established an official exchange program between Winthrop University and the University of Burgundy in France to enable our students to see Europe. They were encouraged to take one further step: see African Francophone countries too. One of my former students volunteered for Peace Corps in Côte d'Ivoire, another one visited Senegal. The latter became a teacher in a local school in South Carolina and invited a Francophone African teacher to talk to her students. This could appear as "no big deal" but in light of what we hear everyday about racial discrimination this was a step in the right direction especially in the "Deep South".

One student went on to teach English in South East Asia and Japan. Later from Asia I received a message from Jason mentioning a useful advice he heard in one of my classes: "There are many cultures out there, that you do not know them does not mean that they do not exist. Go, explore." He was very happy to have ventured that far!

BTW: before coming to the US, I had also taught French at Fujen University in Taiwan. One memorable extra-curricular activity of the French club was a visit to the village of lepers. The sight of the victims of leprosy provoked such a shock that one of the students started vomiting. However Fujen University is a Catholic University founded by missionaries on Mainland China. Our activities, as "extreme" as they were, were never frowned upon by the administrators! To the students I said: "Once you graduate you will live in your own bubble. Let us see some places which will remain forever invisible to you."



Retirement party for Sr Cecile at Winthrop University, South Carolina, USA. On the left of Sr Cecile (centre front row) the dean of the Department of Romance Languages, on the right the student who went to Africa for Peace Corps engagement

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

Look back with nostalgia ... a voyage through the 1960's

By Philip Wong Too Yuen

Rose-Hill: Population 35,000 (circa 1960). Life here was simple. In the morning I would ride my bicycle to go to school on Ambrose Street. By the time I got there, I was ready for a whole day of new things. School was my fun road to discovery. I got to meet with people from Rose-Hill and further afield. Soon it was time to go home. By about 2:00 PM I would be back home. In my mind those days seemed to be always sunny.



One of my chores was to go to the market. The bazar was within walking distance, so I went there on foot. In the fish section, the catch of the day would be on display directly on a plain board. There was no bed of ice to keep the fish fresh. It was a simpler time. The daily cargo of fish usually arrived in the afternoon. “Cordonier, maquereau, capitaine” are the colourful names of some of the fish species. “See how fresh the fish is!” the fishmonger might call out. If I cast a glance in his direction, he would immediately lift the gill plate of the fish and urge me to look. That was how I learned how to check for freshness in fish. Buyers were expected to bargain. The posted price of “Cateau vert” fish was Rs1.00 per pound, and occasionally I could get it for 90 cents. After weighing the fish the vendor would drop it into my open “tente bazar”. Since that time I always had a liking for fish and fishing. I even enjoyed gutting it and cutting it into steaks. Flies buzzing around! No problem! They did not bother me!



Cateau vert
Parrotfish



Tente Bazar
Shopping bag made from locally grown Vacoas plant leaves.

A weather event was about to disrupt the peace. When a cyclone comes in the vicinity, it usually brings water to replenish our reservoirs. Strong winds rid our fruit trees of nuisance bugs. This time it was a high intensity cyclone. Cyclone Alix arrived in January 1960, bringing wind gusts of 200 kilometres an hour. She caused extensive damage to the country. Older people compared Alix to the serious cyclone of 1945. One month later Cyclone Carol came along. She was even bigger, registering 280 kilometres an hour winds. The bad weather raged all day. Safely indoor we watched what was going on outside. We saw the torrential downpour and heard the howling winds. A chance sheet of corrugated iron would abruptly fly by. An occasional police patrol car drove past our shop. To pass our time we listened to the MBC radio, our only source of information. While Alix came to within 30 kilometres of Port-Louis, Carol went right over the island. When the eye of Carol was directly overhead, there was bright sunshine. The winds died down, and everything was motionless. It was eerily quiet. Even the birds behaved strangely. Soon after, the strong winds picked up again, this time they blew in the opposite direction.



After the Cyclone - Carol - 1960
Shared by: Jean-Maurice Paturau

Carol left its mark right at the centre of Rose-Hill. The flood water was visible from a short distance away. People could not walk along Royal Road at the railway crossing. It had rained so much the night before and all the water had collected into pools. Rose-Hill Stadium (renamed Sir Gaëtan Duval Stadium) was filled like a reservoir. Under so much pressure one of the walls gave way. Water rushed out. The stream running alongside could not cope. A torrent of muddy water went all the way into the Grand River North West downstream.

Rose-Hill Stadium was designed primarily for football. Soccer matches took place there during the weekends. In the evenings the basketball court was floodlit for tournaments. Teams from other towns came here to compete. I got to see teams such as Dragons and Attila

play against Dodo Club. Among the outstanding players there was a man called Ah Sao, who shot the ball into the ring with great accuracy. The other name I remembered well was Tung Ghee of Attila. He had a haircut that reminded me of a cock's crest.

CSA (Chinese Students Association) held a sports day at the stadium at one time. We invited many clubs to participate. I believe we managed to gather nearly all the Chinese youth in one single venue. Now when I look back, I think it was quite brave of us to attempt this endeavour. The most exciting part was undoubtedly the opening ceremony. So many athletes gathered in the parade. Not quite an Olympic size display, but our little group was quietly pleased with our efforts. Some clubs had a banner carrier running in front of the pack. The CSA team's flag was red and white, as I recall. I also came face to face with Murphy's Law. Things that could did go wrong.



Rose-Hill Stadium

The sports day was held here.



Jardin Balfour

From this spot people could walk down to the river below.

The latter half of the 1960s was a period of uncertainty for the Chinese community. Mauritius was entering the period leading to its independence from Britain. People were not sure what would happen. The economy was depressed. Business climate was bad. How bad? As an example, a local electronics store was rumoured to have sold just one pack of batteries for the entire trading day. Jobs were scarce. If we managed to obtain a temporary position in the civil service, we felt lucky to be receiving Rs7.00 per day (\$0.25 CAD in 1960's currency!). There were many public holidays, and on those days we did not get paid.

In Rose-Hill, Père Ah Kong was a familiar figure. Under the guidance of Père Souchon, a group of Chinese youth leaders, mostly CSA people, organised a seminar at St Mary's College. This was very timely. The Chinese community was quite apprehensive. We did not know what was in store for us. Scary rumours were rife. The seminar addressed many of our concerns, and helped us figure out how to survive. What was going to be our place in the independent country? How do we handle the new situation? Organized into small teams, our task was to discuss many pertinent questions. We shared our ideas and looked for a sense of direction. At the grand assembly, each group leader took turn to voice the views of their respective teams. Towards the end of the session Père Souchon made a beautiful "synthèse" of the findings. A few political leaders present for the closing ceremony asked to address the gathering. We heard their different and opposing views. Through these exchanges I gained a deeper appreciation of the wider community.



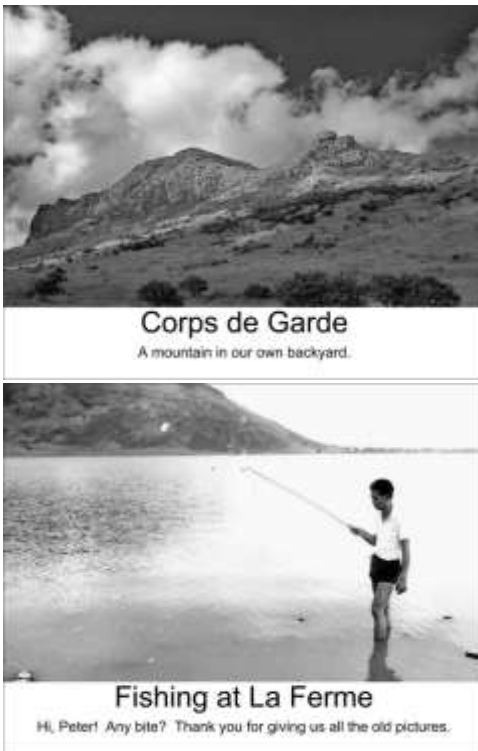
St Mary's College

Photo taken many years after the seminar.

I rode my bicycle everywhere in Rose-Hill and beyond. I would go fishing for Tilapia at La Ferme Bambou. Sometimes we would use the dirt track and go past the foot of Corps de Garde Mountain. At the point where the track went down steeply, we could observe the lake in the distance. We sometimes chose the more pleasant route via St Martin Road. I remember seeing a row of weird looking Baobab trees. Amidst all this fun and laughter, a tire puncture could cause us to change course. Then, we had to walk and push our bicycles all the way home. I loved the fact that Rose-Hill was centrally located. On a whim, I could just bike to Jardin Balfour. If we wished to do some mountain climbing, we could go to the Corps de Garde right in our backyard or else venture further away to Le Pouce, St Pierre.

Playing badminton became quite popular at one time. Just about everybody was playing it. In the evenings we met at St Patrick's Church for a game or two. We drank ice cold Coca-Cola to quench our thirst after sweating so

much. Soccer was on Saturdays (Père Ah Kong) but I was not keen on it. I had my shin kicked so many times, and the bruises were very painful.



The construction of Rose-Hill Commercial Centre was a project initiated by the municipality of Beau-Bassin/Rose-Hill. The net effect was a striking change of the landscape of the town centre. There was open space nearby where political rallies could be held at Gare de Rose-Hill. On warm evenings we walked around the place. We were just curious. We did not pay too much attention to the political speeches. A few speakers told funny or crude jokes.

In Mauritius the only public broadcaster at the time was MBC radio. It was later on that we had our first television station. Of course, it showed black-and-white pictures. Since Rose-Hill was on higher ground, a few people here installed a modified antenna to capture television signals from Reunion Island. It certainly helped us broaden our horizons. There was a popular quiz program called, "Le compte est bon", which everybody watched regularly.

The population of Rose-Hill began to change. There was a noticeable exodus to other countries. The door to Australia had just opened. A number of people chose to emigrate to Australia. Others opted to go to England. As Mauritius was still a British colony, it offered a loophole to get round the immigration difficulties. The rules were eventually tightened. The decade was slowly coming to a

close. In the meantime I had worked and saved enough to make my way to the United Kingdom. Nearly all my friends had already gone abroad to further their studies.

毛島情懷 (2)

By M. How

毛島小學讀書的時候在教室裡向MissAnnie老師背了很多這樣的一段句子" Mauritius is the star and the key of the Indian Ocean!" - 毛里求斯是印度洋的恆星和鑰匙! 移民來到加拿大不久又好像在報上無意中看到一個旅遊廣告:"If you cannot go to Mauritius please come to Florida!" - 如果你沒可能去毛里求斯請來佛羅里達! 聽人說, 美國名作家-Mark Twain 寫道:"God created Mauritius then Heaven!" - 上帝先造毛里求斯後造天堂! 想着, 想着..... 我真的感到有點麻木了! 上帝, 已然毛里求斯比天堂還要天堂, 為什麼你又把我們移到加拿大來呢? 你真的愚弄我們也! 不, 我相信每個人的內心都有自己的聖地和天堂。

我在毛島的生活可以說是如魚得水, 遊山玩水, 隨風漂泊的小伙子, 工作也可寫意. 幾乎每晚我和朋友們都在 Club Perron 談天說地, 上至天文, 下至地理, 哈哈打打. 當然我們的話題也離不開個人日常生活, 家庭, 工作, 學業, 分享Parties等等... 也追求理想, 憶苦思甜. 其實現在我想起來我們都是一群好玩的好仔. 非常享受朋友之間的稚氣和簡朴. 在這裡我也要向我的Perron Club 朋友們真誠的說聲謝謝, 因為你們都是一群非常優秀的朋友. 真的向你們學習了很多很多. 感恩無限!!

今年八月中我又想回毛里求斯一趟. 我們的Club Perron 已有快五十周年了, 那些石坎可能早都找不到了, 朋友們準備再重聚一起慶祝一番. 希望盡量找回我們童年的回憶..... 那些傳奇人物" Marc Charlot" 和" Piques-Paques" ; Alix 和 Carol 台風.....; 華人參政事蹟.....; 和毛島爭趣獨立政治風雲.....; 還有英軍來毛平靜回人, 土人鬥爭撕殺; 這是當時毛島人的黑暗歷史. 這次大家重聚是非常難得的, 可能沒有以前那樣激情熱舞, 60 年代浪漫抒情流行歌曲一定深深印在我們的心里. 當時的歐美名歌經典, 不管英法歌詞都背得爛熟. 記得有英語的Elvis, Cliff, Frank Sinatra, Beatles, Rolling Stones and Shadows. 法語也有很多感人肺腑, 抒情動聽名曲, 記憶中有: Aznavour, Becaud, Brel, Vartan, Hallyday, Dalida, Mathieu, Piaf, Adamo 更不能忘記 Joselito 和 Soeur Sourire.

毛島雖然是個小島. 可有不少土生土長名人歌星. 我最喜欢的有Jacques Cantin (Sugar Time) Serge Lebrasse 和Ti-Frère. 當地報祇L'Epee,Dimanche都会出版歌詞. 大家玩得精精樂道.MBC廣播電台点唱節目更是很多人的娛樂天地.

時光飛逝,朋友們都各散西東,不少也過埠了,早已成家立業;兒女成群了.到時.一定會聽到很多精彩人生,感人肺腑的故事.期待有個愉快的重游和聚會.昨天的友情一定会有点變成今天的親情.我喜歡重溫旧事,旧地重游.以候有机会我還會在这季刊寫些小品,記憶60s – 70s 年代的細街,小巷,小人物在小社區內之日常.我實在喜欢这样來滿足我這種平實感.

文/侯少思

A Yearning for Mauritius (Part 2)

Translated by Mike How & Clifford Lam

When I was in primary school in Mauritius, one of the common phrases that my teacher used to have us recite endlessly was to describe Mauritius as the *"Star and Key of the Indian Ocean"*. After coming to Canada, my mind was jolted one day when I saw in a tourist ad this catchy phrase: *"If you cannot go to Mauritius, please come to Florida..."* And then, I remember that other great quote by American novelist, Mark Twain, who wrote that God created Mauritius first and then Heaven. That got me thinking... I think and I think and I think... to the point that I am getting numb. Is God fooling me? If Mauritius is really heaven on earth, why did He let me go to Canada? "God, I think you have to send me back to Mauritius!" Come to think about it, paradise is a state of mind and everyone does have a piece of paradise somewhere inside one's heart and soul...

"L'île Morice mo zoli pays..." how true these words by our national *"ségatier"*, Serge Lebrasse! We can be just like a fish in a warm bathing sea at one moment, or be up a lofty mountain the next or down to a tumultuous river flowing to the sea: life was so free and easy in Mauritius, free like the wind blowing through the corners of my mind right now... Almost every night, I would join my friends at the *"Perron Club"* to shoot the breeze, talk about heaven and earth, about mountain and sea. The conversation always centred around our daily lives: we shared our philosophy, our history, our ideals, our dreams, typical of

a young generation growing up in a world that was a-changing! As a matter of fact, we were a bunch of good kids after all and I want to thank all of you guys who sat with me on that hard stone step. I have learned a lot from you all and I am very grateful for that.

Later this year, maybe sometime in August or September, I am thinking of making another nostalgic trip to Mauritius to celebrate our 50 years of friendship and hopefully to relive some of those magic moments of a half-century ago! The *"perron"* may be long gone but the memories will still be there. We will likely gather together again and reminisce and recount those old stories of the time, such as the nights cyclones Alix and Carol came to town, goosebump-raising tales of the legendary Charlot or Piques-Paques. We will remember the great old songs of the 60's, English and French, from Elvis to Cliff, from Beatles to Rolling Stones, from Becaud and Brel to Vartan and Hallyday, from Piaf and Mathieu to Dalida and Aznavour, not to mention Joselito and Soeur Sourire! Let's not forget our own Jaques Cantin, Serge Lebrasse and Ti-Frère. We will talk of the weekends when we would buy the local papers *"L'Epée"* or *"Le Dimanche"* just to cut out the lyrics of the hits of the day. We will certainly remember the postcards people used to send to our radio station (MBC) to request songs on the popular program *"Faites Votre Choix"*!

How time has flown since those innocent and carefree days! Some of those friends have left for distant shores, while others have stayed behind, families have grown, life has gone on.... We will surely hear a lot of wonderful and heart-warming life stories. I look forward to having a pleasant visit and rekindle the good memories of old and hope to see the friendship of yesterday turn into enduring affection of today.

I like to relive old times and revisit old places. In my next instalment, I will reminisce about the experiences of the 60's and 70's. Just thinking and reliving those nostalgic moments of days gone by brings me immeasurable satisfaction and fulfilment that are hard to describe.

Learning Chinese, my challenges and tribulations ...

By Andrew Wang

Learning Chinese by oneself is not an easy task and coupled with an advancing age, the task becomes even more difficult due to our declining memory. It is not like living in an environment where one gets a constant input of the language.

I remember the time my uncle, born and raised in China, immigrated to Mauritius. He came to stay with us in the shop that my father was running. He started helping out in the shop and not too long after, without much effort, he started to learn creole from the customers. As time went by, without much effort, he became more and more fluent.

My problem with learning Chinese is that I do not have that constant input. So I try to read and learn new words to increase my vocabulary. I read short articles, short stories, short jokes and especially those that have an accompanying Chinese audio to which I can listen and repeat.

Below I am reproducing a funny joke that I have recently come across. It is written in Chinese and came with its English translation. I am reproducing the original joke in Chinese after the translated version of my article below.

Our...

On the night they got married, the bride told her husband: "From today on, we don't say 'my' anymore, we should say 'our' instead. That's because my life and your life has become our life as of today."

The groom nodded in agreement. Then he went to have a shower, which did take a bit long.

The bride was a bit worried, then she asked, "Dear, what are you doing?"

The groom answered, "Honey, I am shaving our beard."

Chinese Translation:

Note: In Andrew's own words, here is the Chinese version of the above article.

学习中文，我的挑战和困难

我现在自己学中文。看起来这事有一大的问题，是有几个原因，比如因为我们越来越变老，记住也越来越

差。所以学中文不容易。如果住的地方哪儿有人们都是说中文，我觉得很容易学口语。

我记住我叔叔从中国来毛里求斯移民的时候，他呆在我们的家，帮助我爸爸在商店工作。没有努力学习 creole 但是他很快知道怎么说它。

现在我的问题是没有机会练口语。所以我网上找小文章，小故事，笑话。如果它们有语音，我会听和跟一起读。

最近我读了一部笑话，很开玩笑的笑话。我想流传你们看。

我们的

结婚的那天晚上，新娘对新郎说：“以后我们不要再说‘我的’，要说‘我们的’因为我的生活和你的生活，从今天开始，就是我们的生活了。”

新郎点头同意，然后去洗澡，好长时间没有出来。

新娘有点急，就问：“亲爱的，你在干什么哪？”

新郎回答说：“亲爱的，我在刮我们的胡子哪。”

Hakka Sayings (客家俗語)

By Mike How & Clifford Lam

Bhi Si Ngai Sai (皮西艾晒)

Describes someone who is not generous (cheap), and is always counting pennies.

Tiao Li Long Tong (钓离郎當)

Describes someone with a loose personality, poor physical appearance, posture and body language.

Soon Kwee Tao Kee (循规蹈矩)

Describes someone who is straightforward, obeys and follows the rules i.e. someone with good principles.

Tchon Téyw, Tchon Kok (轉頭轉角)

Describes the action of someone who is evasive, not straightforward or forthcoming in his intentions; someone with a 'slippery' personality and difficult to pin down on what he wants to do, especially when dealing with people. Translated literally, it means: "Turning head, turning corner".

Tohr Nai Tai Souye (拖泥帶水)

Describes someone who likes to procrastinate, unable to do things on time. Translated literally, it means: "Dragging mud while carrying water."

Tchit Toong, Pat Thiet (七銅八鐵)

Describes a collection or mixture of insignificant, unrelated, random things; can also be applied to a group of random people with nothing in common. Literal translation is “7 copper, 8 iron”.

MCAO News



Chinese New Year 2018 Banquet

The MCAO Chinese New Year banquet was held on March 3, 2018 at the NKS Banquet Hall in Unionville. The event was well attended by over 400 members and friends, who were welcome by a traditional Chinese lion dance and treated to a sumptuous 10-course Chinese dinner.

A special thank-you goes to the entire organising team and to all the members and guests for their support.



Chinese New Year 2018 Banquet

Fall Prevention Workshop

A workshop on “**Fall Prevention-Simple Tips for the Elderly**” was presented on March 21, 2018 by George Chung as part of the club’s “health promotion” activities.

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



Fall Prevention Workshop (March 2018)

Presentation on Travel & Cruises

A general information session on Travel and Cruises was given to MCAO members by Robert Chung from Expedia CruiseShipCentres on April 7, 2018.

The informative presentation was greatly appreciated by the interested audience that was present.



Travel & Cruises Presentation (April 2018)

Heart Health Workshop

A workshop on “**Heart Health**” was held at the Parkway Forest CC on April 21, 2018. It was presented by MCAO member Jean Paul Li Cheong Man.

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



Heart Health Workshop (April 2018)

Movie Event @ Parkway Forest

Members of the Toronto Hakka Heritage Association (THHA) were invited to MCAO’s Mix & Mingle gathering on May 5, 2018 at the Parkway Forest, where a screening of the recent documentary, “Finding of Samuel Lowe” took place with the support of the THHA. The movie which depicts the quest of an Afro-Chinese(Hakka)-Jamaican family from Harlem to seek out their Hakka-ancestral roots

in China was well appreciated by the large audience that attended the event.



Movie Event @ Parkway Forest

Seniors Community Grant Program 2018-19:

We are pleased to announce that the Government of Ontario has approved funding to MCAO under the Seniors Community Grant Program for 2018-19. MCAO received funding approval to a maximum amount of \$9,600 with MCAO co-sharing the balance of \$2,400 under the grant funding formula.

This year's grant was approved for the delivery of workshops and activities to support health, wellness and safety issues related to seniors and includes topics such as dental health, mental health, osteoporosis, fall prevention, fire safety for the elderly, low-risk alcohol guidelines, fitness dancing as part of the active lifestyle activities and a summer picnic in an Ontario Park with younger families as part of intergenerational social interaction and recreational activity.

The workshops and related social networking activities will be delivered at least once a month, and will run until Spring 2019. Stay tuned for details of upcoming workshops as they become available.

Members and friends are invited to join us in the workshops and social activities.

Special thanks go to Priscilla Lam and Joyce Leung for their dedicated efforts in bringing this year's grant application to another successful end!

Congratulations and well done!



Hakka Wall Project

The TORONTO HAKKA HERITAGE ALLIANCE (THHA), in partnership with the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto (CCCGT), is creating the first historic Hakka Exhibit in Canada! THHA is very proud to be presenting this permanent exhibit to the community and the public at large. The display will depict and illustrate the unique migratory history and culture of the Hakka people.

We are currently asking for any typically Hakka objects/artefacts which you from the Mauritian diaspora could possibly donate or loan out to us for either the permanent exhibit at CCCGT or any of our satellite exhibits at diverse universities (University of Toronto, York University, Ryerson University).

We thank you in advance for your kind support.

For inquiries and donations, please email:

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

Upcoming Events

MCAO's Annual Dragon Boat Festival Lunch

Venue: Sky Dragon Chinese Restaurant
280 Spadina Ave, Toronto,
ON M5T 1H2

When: June 23, 2018 at 12:00 PM

Cost: \$25 per person (members and immediate family members)

\$30 per person (non-members)

Ticket reservation required through Margaret Wan (mmlamsincho@gmail.com) or Joyce Leung (jmcleung@yahoo.com) by June 18, 2018.

Summer 2018 Schedule @ Parkway Forest CC

MCAO's Mix & Mingle sessions will take place on the first and third Saturdays of July and August.

Location: Arts & Craft Room

Time: 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM (note new time)

Program details will be provided in due course.

Laughter...the Best Medicine

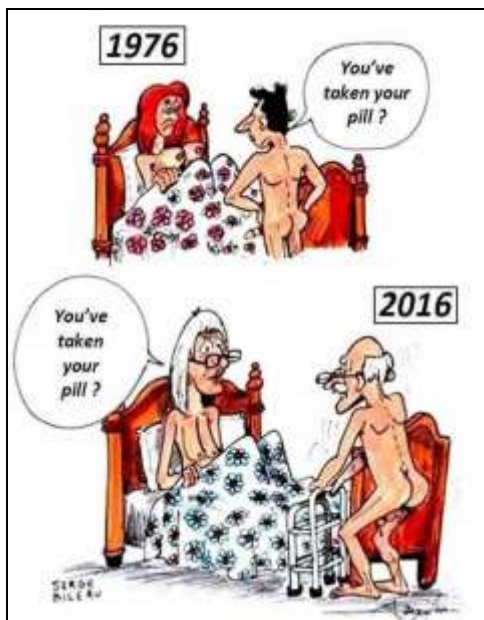


No English Dictionary has been able to explain the difference between the two words "COMPLETE" and "FINISHED".

Some people say there is no difference between "COMPLETE" and "FINISHED", but there is.

When you marry the right woman, you are COMPLETE and when you marry the wrong woman, you are FINISHED.

When your wife catches you with another woman, you are COMPLETELY FINISHED and when your wife loves shopping more than you, you are FINISHED COMPLETELY!



The human body was debating about who is the boss. The heart says: "It's me! I make the blood circulate throughout the whole body!"

The brain says: "No, it's me. I control every function in the body!"

The liver says: "No, it's me. I cleanse and nourish everything!"

The anus says that he is the boss!

They all burst into laughter....

So, very upset, the anus refuses to open for 7 days.

The liver explodes. The brain is in a mess and the heart stops.

Moral of the story: Even an ass-hole can be the boss...

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) or
Allan Wan (647-824-3343).

MCAO Membership

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

Joyce Leung (jmcleung@yahoo.com)

Contact Us

If you have any questions or comments, please email us at: clubmcao@gmail.com

You can also visit our website at:

www.mauritiuschineseassociation.com/

Picture Gallery



MCAO Chinese New Year 2018 Banquet

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 street grid with Wilson Ave running horizontally. To the left of Wilson Ave is Humber River Hospital, marked with an 'H' in a square. Vertical streets shown include Jane St., Keele St., Northgate Dr., and Dufferin St. A red arrow points to the pharmacy location at 882 Wilson Ave, with the I·D·A· logo below it. HWY 401 is labeled at the bottom of the map.



SUPPLY & DEMAND
PRINT COMMUNICATIONS

STATE OF THE ART PRINTING SAME DAY PRINTING AVAILABLE IN-HOUSE DESIGN TEAM WIDE FORMAT PRINTING

200-388 CARLAW AVE TORONTO, ON M4M 2T4 INFO@SUPPLYANDEMAND.CA WWW.SUPPLYANDEMAND.CA SUPPLYANDEMANDCA