



東風



TUNG FENG

香港東區扶輪社週報 THE ROTARY CLUB OF HONG KONG ISLAND EAST

Last week's Proceedings -

21st September, 2005

Our President Eddy, having just returned from Thailand on business trip, started the meeting at 1.10pm. IPP Rudy was asked to introduce our visiting Rotarians and guests and they were President Boey Lau of Rotary Club of Hong Kong North, Rotarian Benny Ratnani of Rotary Club of Hong Kong North East, Rotarian Tony Luce of Rotary Club of Princeton Corridor from the States and also Rotarianne Cynthia Leung, wife of our PP George who was also our speaker of the day.

Acting SAA Laurence, also our Hon. Treasurer, was asked to announce the Red Box Collection of the day being HK\$800.

Then President Eddy gladly inducted our new Rotarian, Norman Lee, son-in-law of PDG Uncle Peter, to be our new member. Norman was immediately asked to share with us his feeling and he revealed that he was attracted to Rotary already 12 years ago and was glad to have finally made his decision right at this moment.

Incidentally Norman's birthday also fell in a few days after his induction and therefore he was presented a birthday gift by President Eddy who was then asked to lead the singing of the birthday song to Norman.

President Eddy then invited our PP George, who we all knew very well without any introduction, to tell us about the "Hebei Educational project for underprivileged girls" and below was his speech followed by some concluding remarks by President Eddy.

Speech of PP George on "Hebei Educational project for underprivileged girls":-

Background

It happened during the fall season of 2004 in Beijing. I was attending a dental symposium in the University of Beijing. [[slide 1]]

While I was there in Beijing, I met my cousin Tao Jian who is an officer of the Education Department of the province of Hebei. She is my relative from my mother side. Most of the Hong Kong Island East members would remember my late uncle PP Edwin Tao who was the elder brother of my mother. Jian's late father was a brother of PP Edwin and my mother. [[slide 2]]

One day through my conversation with Jian I found out in the lines of her duties when she visited the poor mountain towns and villages of Hebei province. There were many female students from the poor local farming communities not able to complete even their primary school education for numerous reasons. One of them being the traditional concept of the male gender is more important than the female. Therefore when resources are limited, the boys of the family would have preference over the girls in receiving education. As a result, these girls were deprived of their right to receive education which they are entitled to enjoy.

My first reaction after learning such incidents was "there must be something we can do; no matter how little it would be to rectify this situation." [[slide 3]] At the same time my good friend PP Hubert Chan of our Rotary Club was also in Beijing attending to some business. So I invited Hubert for dinner and introduced my cousin Jian to him and told him the story of these unfortunate girls. Hubert immediately agreed that we should do something about it and we have decided to bring this to the attention of our Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island East.

The Project

Upon our return to Hong Kong, I submitted the Hebei underprivileged female student project to our board of directors for their consideration and action. It was at the end of last year our board approved my proposal and we started to raise money for this project.

At the very first beginning of our plan, we have decided that this would be a hands on project with us raising the money here in Hong Kong and Tao Jian taking care of the distribution of the money and making sure that every cent of the money raised would go directly to the students' needs.

With such an arrangement, we would not only ensure a direct channel to our donation. Also we would be able to cut the administrative cost to zero. In order to carry this plan, the Hebei education department had selected two counties which are "below the national poverty line" and they are Fu Ping and Lai Yuen counties. And from the primary schools of these two counties 150 female students ranging from primary one to primary five with most needs were selected to be recipients of our donation. [[Slide 4]] on the name list of students)

Tao Jian was to set up an independent bank account under her name for this purpose. Upon receiving our fund and before school starts on early September, she would pay into the accounts of different schools for these 150 girls within the education department so no one else

would be able to touch the fund. And because of this arrangement our money would be able to go a much long way in helping these girls. Over here in Hong Kong, our members from the club had supported this project with generous contributions. (Slide 5), contributors list) The average tuition fee for the student was only about 300 Yuan per annum. And we were able to raise \$140,000 within a matter of weeks. This amount would be sufficient to meet most of the tuition expenses for the girls in the next 5 years. We may have to top it up a bit in view of inflation and the future appreciation of the RMB.

The visit

On August 21 2004 President Eddy Wong together with my family traveled to Beijing to visit the schools and meet some of the girls we would sponsor. [[SLIDE 10]] We were met in the airport by Tao Jian and were taken to the city of Bao Ding which was about two and a half hours ride from Beijing to spend the night.

The next morning, we were met by the officials from the education department of Fu Ping County and were taken to visit a school in the mountain. The trip took half a day and together with us, we brought along some gifts for the children. We have asked Jian to purchase on our behalf school bags, stationeries and crayons for these 150 girls as gifts from the Rotarians of our club. (Slide 11 etc). As you can see from these pictures, the environment which these students are in is less than ideal to say the least. But they were happy and grateful to have a chance to go to school. The students were still having their summer holiday, so only a handful of them who lived nearby the school were summoned to meet us. A simple but touching ceremony to hand over the gifts as well as the money for the first year of the tuition was carried out. And the school principal, the officer from the education department as well as President Eddy delivered their speeches. (slide 16 etc)

Before we left the school, we met with the teachers and students in the school playground which was just a small port of clay ground and took some pictures. We were particularly touched by the teachers there who work in harsh environments and make very modest salaries. But we can see they were happy with their work and they love their students. On behalf of our club I have thank those teachers for their fine efforts and they invited us to visit them again in the future.

Fu Ping is essentially an agricultural county which produces various kinds of fruits like apple and peaches. But the most important fruit they produce is the dates which claim to be one of the best in China. Almost all the parents of the students we assist are farmers in Fu Ping.

After the school visit, we were met by the officials of the second county and taken to Lai Yuen County to stay for the night. Lai Yuen was about 3 hours ride from Fu Ping and we were taken to an extravagantly decorated hotel to stay for our first night in the mountain. We were surprised that even in a remote area such as Lai Yuen they would have a nice hotel like that. It just shows that while the market economy is improving the livelihood of some businesses, people with low technical skill such as the farmers have not benefited from this economical transition. The main economic activity in Lai Yuen County is coal distribution. Due to its proximity to San Xi Province which produces the most coal in China, orchards had been cleared to store coal from San Xi. We have seen the destruction of the environment because of the coal distribution business along the way.

The second school visit was similar to the first one and the school kids lined up the clay drive way to welcome us. A simple ceremony of presentation of funds to the education department officials and gifts to the children were carried out. President Eddy was also interviewed by the TV crew of the Hebei television station. And naturally, he took the opportunity to promote the good will of Hong Kong and the Rotary International. (slide 23 etc)

After we have completed the two days school visit. We were taken back to Beijing where Eddy took the evening flight back to Hong Kong and I stayed behind for a couple more days with my family to tour the cities of Beijing and Tienjin. (slide 32 etc)

My fellow Rotarians, I am sure you would agree with me that this was a meaningful project and a fruitful trip for Eddy and my family. Since this is an on going project for the next 4 years. I encourage our members to participate and join the school visit in the coming years. You would not only see the progress of these children but also gain new experience in values and perception in life.

For our future consideration, we may consider getting our Rotaracters involve and send them to conduct computer or English lessons for the teachers as well as the students. There are endless opportunities for our service and at the end of it all, we would find that we the Rotarians are going to be the ones who would benefit most from our service. Because we all know our motto in Rotary "He who profits most who serves best"

Thank you very much and I would like to invite President Eddy to give us a few words on his impression of this meaningful visit.

After a big round of applause from the audience the following ~~concluding remarks were given by our President Eddy about the "Hebei Educational project"~~:-

Visiting Hebei was indeed another meaningful experience to me. It was not a simple sight seeing trip because actually we didn't have time to do so. The money we sponsored to all these underprivileged school children may be very little to us but it would be very useful for them to get proper primary education. A Rotary Luncheon plus a small red box donation is equal to one-year tuition fee for these underprivileged children. The more education a child can have, the more independent and self-sufficient he or she can be after they grow up.

This time, we purposely selected to sponsor female children because we knew that the poor family would still try their best to support a boy's education by all means though still very difficult. However, we anticipated these poor families would definitely scarily their daughters' education if they were facing financial difficulties. This is some how the traditional Chinese's thinking. However, by doing so, it would create an even worse problem in the future. Should these female children not receive any proper education at their young age, how can they become competent parents when they have their own children twenty years later? In a Chinese family, "Mothers" always play an important role in bringing up children. Mother taught the children about value system, ethical standards and common discipline and protocol in handling people around them. If most of the mothers in the future are with no or little education, how can we anticipate them to properly transfer all these important life survival knowledge to their next generation?

Thus, fellow HKIE members, the scale of our project may not be very large and it only can cover two different Counties in Hebei. However, the purpose behind this project is really significant. We are doing something good to our mother country. We hope we can

extend our influence or project coverage more extensively with proper support by fellow members and the public. To promote the project, we need to have the cooperation with all members to spread around the spirit of this project and asks for more support from the people around us or even the mass public if we can plan in more details in the near future. It definitely can help improve the female literacy standard of Mainland China but we still have a lot of room to improve.

In the coming 5 years, those underprivileged female children under our financial support will still be taken care of by our existing fund raised if they are still studying in their primary schools. Should more funds be available, we can consider extending our work on the following areas, e.g.

- To support more needy female children in the same counties or in other counties
- To provide English or other related training to the children in these schools by our Rotaract Club members during their summer holidays
- To provide training to the teachers of all these Primary Schools
- To help improve some School premises conditions
- To work closely with the Education Department there in order to find out some more meaningful ways to provide our assistance other than financial support

Last but not the least, I should whole-heartedly thank all the Rotarians who have rendered support to this project. Without your contribution, this project cannot be realized in such a short time and without your participation these children may have lost their right to receive proper primary school education. I should also send my thanks to PP George in coordinating all the necessary details for this project with his cousin Ms Tao. She has been our backbone for success in this project. Her contribution should be duly recognized and let's have our usual Rotary manner to give all these contributors a round of applause. Should anyone be interested in helping in following up this project, please feel free to let me know so that we can plan ahead for a better future in order to make it more successful.

Thank you very much!

After a big round of applause to the speech of President Eddy our PDG Uncle Peter was asked to announce and to present the PHF pin with 3 stars, contributed by IPP Rudy, to our Director Jason. A warm greeting and applause were given by us all.

Finally the meeting was adjourned at 2.10pm by President Eddy with a toast to RI coupled with Rotary Clubs of Hong Kong North, Hong Kong North East and Princeton Corridor of the United States. The next week's program would be announced later.

Rotary Information

More about Poliomyelitis

Before going to attend the Foundation Seminar in November this year, the following excerpt from the SCMP serves a good piece of material about poliomyelitis.

"Not many people remember the polio outbreaks of the 1950s, but those who do won't forget how much the disease, which crippled children and ended the lives of many young adults, was feared.

Some who were around then say the terror of infection experienced in Hong Kong during the Sars outbreak was similar.

Once the polio vaccine was found, that fear evaporated. So non-threatening did polio become that we stopped thinking about why the vaccine was given. And then people began seeing the vaccine itself as a threat.

That attitude wasn't common. Other childhood vaccines, particularly the measles/mumps/ rubella vaccine, were the ones seen as a threat.

But in Nigeria, the polio vaccine came under attack from religious leaders who regarded the mass polio vaccination campaigns funded or carried out by western non-government organizations as an attempt at mass sterilization.

Enough people believed this to make child polio immunization fail in parts of Nigeria and polio broke out in the northern part of the country. By March last year, Nigeria recorded its highest rate of wild polio virus, with 85 confirmed cases.

Isn't Hong Kong safe from what happens in Nigeria? Not any more. Indonesia is now experiencing its worst outbreak, thanks to the virus imported from Sudan - country near Nigeria.

On March 13, a 20-month old boy in Sukabumi district, West Java, was diagnosed as paralysed by polio. Tests of the virus found it was likely to have been brought into Indonesia from Sudan.

In the five months since that first case was diagnosed, 225 children have been paralysed by polio in Indonesia, initially in two provinces on Java island, but more recently in Sumatra and central Java.

What's important to know is that most cases of infection show few, if any, symptoms. Most people have little more than a mild cold or flu for a few days.

As the virus is most likely to infect children under five (who are prone to runny noses or mild viruses or infections) polio is hard to detect. Of those who do get sick, the most devastating form of the disease is paralysis.

When one case of paralysis occurs, infectious diseases experts estimate there are another 100 cases of undetected infection. This means that there are thousands of cases in Indonesia right now. Because of these high numbers and the fact the disease is spreading from province

to province, the World Health Organization is now worried.

The exact words they used were "concern is high" that it will "spread across Asia including countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia and China".

So are we going to see polio back in Hong Kong ? I wouldn't expect to see a huge outbreak. Our public health systems are strong and most parents are very committed to having their children immunized against polio. But not all of us have life-long immunity, and the number of people coming and going in Hong Kong makes it difficult to track and protect those at risk.

Lastly, this outbreak teaches us that we can never relax when it comes to infectious disease.

Immunization was and still is one of our greatest weapons against disease but is only effective if everybody at risk is immunized. The microbes that need to live in human systems are constantly on the outlook for new homes, so if a group choose not to protect themselves from a virus, it will target those people.

The anti-vaccination movement grew up in an era when we were at relative peace with the microbe world. Sadly, they've declared war on us again and we need to shield our bodies, particularly those of children.

Joke

The Indian Post and Telecom Authority is responsible for mis-interpretation crap like this:

TELEGRAM #1 >A daughter sends a telegram to her father on her clearing B.Ed exams, which the father receives as: "Father, your daughter has been successful in BED."

TELEGRAM #2 >A husband, while he is on a business trip to a hill station sends a telegram to his wife: "I wish you were here." >The message received by wife: "I wish you were her."

TELEGRAM #3 >A wife with near maturing pregnancy goes to railway station to return to her husband. At the reservation counter, while her turn came, it was the last ticket. >Taking pity on a very old lady next to her in the queue, she offered her berth to the old lady and sent a telegram to her husband which reached as:"Shall be coming tomorrow, heavy rush in the train, gave birth to an old lady."

TELEGRAM #4 >A man wants to celebrate his wife's Birthday by throwing a party. So he goes to order a birthday cake.

The salesman asks him what message he wants put on the cake. Well, he thinks for a while and says: let's put, "You are not getting older you are getting better".

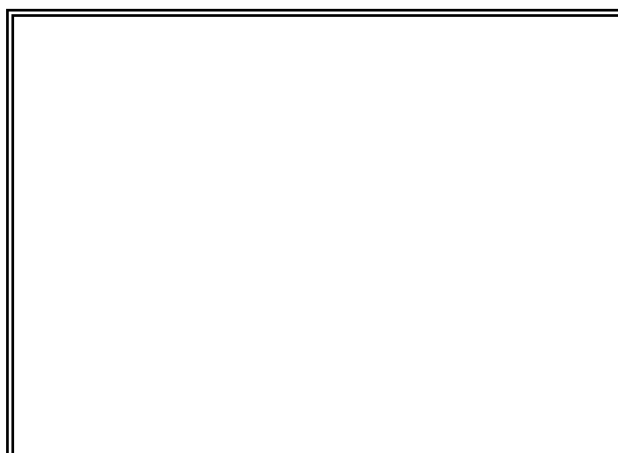
The salesman asks "how do you want me to put it?" The man says, Well put "You are not getting older", at the top and "You are getting better" at the bottom.

The real fun didn't start until the cake was opened the entire party watched the message decorated on the cake: "You are not getting older at the top, You are getting better at the bottom".

Photographs of our meeting

on

21st September , 2005





PP George giving us information on our Hebei children project.



(L to R) PDG Uncle Peter, speaker PP George and Pres Eddy.



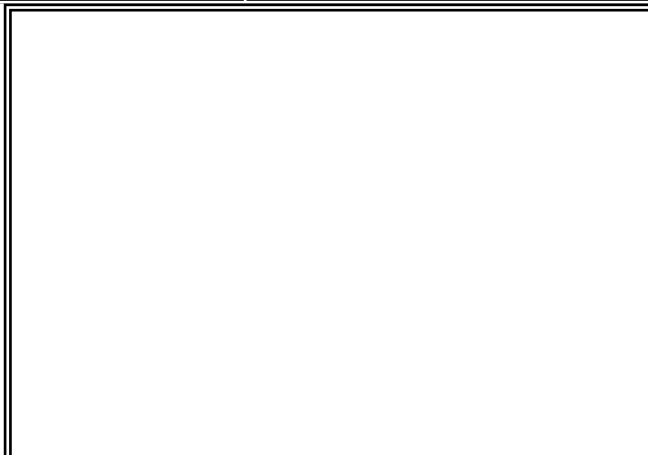
(L to R) Hon Sec Andy, Rtn Benny Ratnani (HKNE) and Pres.Boey Lau (HKN).



Pres. Eddy inducted another member into our club who is Norman Lee.



Pres. Eddy welcoming Rtn Norman, handing him all reading materials.





By coincidence today happened to be Norman's birthday. Pictured here receiving his birthday present from Pres. Eddy.



PDG Uncle Peter presenting Dir Jason with his 3-star PHF pin being upgraded one star by generosity of IPP Rudy.



Rotaryann Cynthia Leung graced our meeting in support of PP George's speech sitting next to PP Henry.



(L to R) PP John IV, Rtn Ray, PP Tim, Hon Tres Laurence, Visiting Rtn Tony Luce (Princeton Corridor) and Mr. Norman Lee just before his induction into our club.

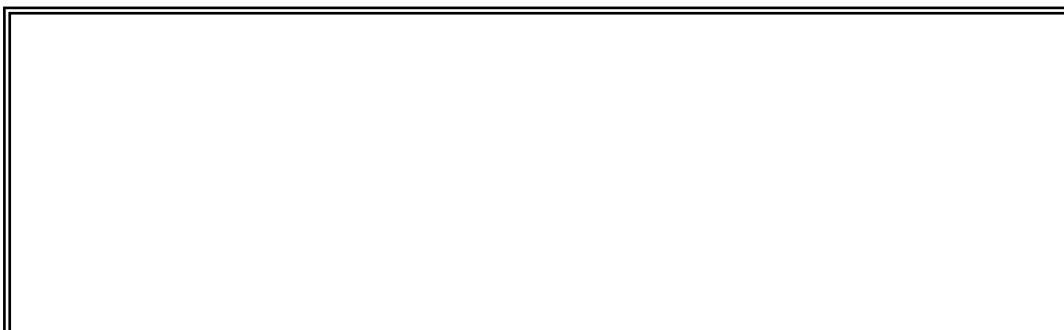


(L to R) Dr. Tony, PP's CY Fu, Stephen and IPP Rudy.



Group Photo of our meeting with PDG Uncle Peter, Pres Eddy and guest and Visiting Rtns and our members on 21st September, 2005.

[Our Hebei Educational project for underprivileged girls](#)





Pres Eddy presenting an envelope of money donated by our club members to the principal of the school, looking on is PP George and Ms Tao Jian.



Pres. Eddy presenting our club banner to Ms Tao Jian who introduced us to this worthwhile project. She will handle all monetary transaction between our club and the school.



One of the student thanking us for our donation and gifts to the students.



Pictured here are the happy students with their school bags. (backrow L to R) the school official, Pres. Eddy, Rmne Cynthia Leung, PP George and Ms Tao Jian.



The gifts to the students being distributed by Ms Tao, PP George and Pres. Eddy.



The second school in Hebei receiving their gift of money from Pres. Eddy with PP George looking on.



PP George giving the Principal our club banner with Pres Eddy looking on.



The second school's students holding our club banner and an envelope of money given to them by our club. Looking on are Pres. Eddy, PP George, Rtne Cynthia and Ms Tao Jian.

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