

Last Week's Proceedings – 14th June, 2006

Today's meeting was held on 2nd Floor of Excelsior when Chinese food was served. Such a variety of choices for food! The room was small but cosy.

Acting President Paul started the meeting at about half past one. This was very civilized timing because members and guests could have sufficient time to chit chat and get into their food.

Lawrence introduced our guests who were Miss Mimi Lau and Miss Fanny Man of Rotaract club of HKIS.

Fanny gave us a brief talk on their recent activities. Firstly, they organized an event for the students of Victoria Park School for the Deaf at a restaurant in Causeway Bay. There was a sumptuous buffet and cookie-making class. They also went to Kuala Lumpur for a Rotaract gathering with members of district 3030. They got to know how rotary clubs developed rotaract activities within universities. They also went on an expedition at sea.

Rudy then announced donation to be HK\$800.00.

Then came the highlight. Dr. Tony Loy gave a talk on "Da Vinci Code" the very famous and controversial book which was recently made into a film.

Dr. Tony firstly announced that he had neither read the book nor watched the film. However, this did not in any way affect the quality of his talk which was based on internet research.

His talk is reproduced as follows:

THE DA VINCI CODE: ITS FACTUAL SOURCES.

The book, *The Da Vinci Code*, is a fiction. It was first published in 2003 by American author Dan Brown by Doubleday Fiction. It has become a worldwide bestseller of more than 40 million copies sold by March 2006, and was translated into 44 languages.

It is a very interesting detective mystery story with sequential murders, codes, word play, symbols, cryptographs, riddles etc. and is well written, and quite well informative. It involves a conspiracy by the Catholic Church to cover up the "true" story of Jesus, with the Holy Grail legend and the role of Mary Magdalene in the history of Christianity. Da Vinci was pulled into the plot mainly because his fame, intellectual achievement, and his famous paintings of the Last Supper and Mona Lisa. None the less, it is still a fiction (much, much far fledged than the *Journey to the West*) rather than a historical novel. The movie that came out recently had a lot of publicity, advertisement and attention. Comments were mainly that it is too short (solved the plot in one night), too dark (mainly in the night), too fast to follow for people who have not read the book, and not able to capture the more intellectual part of the novel eg riddles, cryptographs etc. In other words, it is regarded as much inferior to the book.

The book, and the publicity of the recent film, caused a lot of reactions to refute it. The Catholic Church and its Opus Dei were upset. The Christian historians found a lot of errors and out-raged conjectures, and some 10 books have been written to refute it. The Da Vinci historians are unhappy because of the non-existent "codes" and the errors about Da Vinci's life and integrity. And a few French books with very good research were written to prove that the source of the story started with a hoax in modern France.

Mary Magdalene (from Magdala, a town in Galilee), was one whom Jesus casted out seven demons from her body, and was the first person to see Jesus resurrected. She was a disciple of Jesus, but not the woman described as a sinner from the city. This nameless woman wept when standing behind Jesus and wet his feet. She then wiped them dry with her hair, kissed them and poured perfumed anointing on them. This was recorded in Luke 7. Mary Magdalene was a different person recorded in Luke 8. In the book, and in some middle ages teaching, the two were confused and lumped together as one.

The Opus Dei, (Work of God) portrayed as a villain secret society which committed murder in the book, was actually an organization founded in 1928 in Spain by a Catholic priest.

They emphasized holiness in daily living, with corporal mortification, and community life, often giving a large portion of their work income to the society, making it quite rich (has 15 universities, 7 hospitals, 11 business schools and 36 primary and secondary schools, and 97 vocational-technical schools world wide).

The most revealing is probably the Priory of Sion, which the book portrayed as the guardian of the secrets and thus persecuted and hunted down by the Opus Dei. This turned out to be a well know hoax in France, well researched and documented. The Priory of Sion was founded in 1956, in a small town in France by Pierre Plantard and 3 other men. Mont Sion is a popular local feature, and has nothing to do with the Mount Zion in Jerusalem. They published journals (12 altogether) dealing in tissues like the political position in the local Council elections and low cost housing (Plantard was working as a draughtman). The office was in Plantard's council flat. The association was dissolved after October 1956 but intermittently revived for different reasons between 1962 and 1993. In the 1960s, they managed to deposit a series of forged documents, called Dossiers Secrets (Secret Dossiers) in a Paris library institution. Plantard put out two lists of Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion. The first one in 1967, including 28 people, like Da Vinci, Robert Boyle, Issac Newton, Victor Hugo, Claude Debussy and lastly, himself. Soon after that, the Secret Dossiers were exposed as a forgery by French researchers and authors, and Plantard acknowledged that it was a fraud. In 1989, after falling out with Lincoln and company, he put out another list of Grand Masters of 16, without Da Vinci, Boyle and Newton, himself still at the end of the list. He had further troubles with the law, and died in obscurity in Paris in 2000, a broken man. Plantard was known as a high school drop-out, twice jailed con man, anti-semitic, anti-masonic, and claimed himself to be the last of a line of French kings and the last descendent of Jesus Christ.

Plantard's Secret Dossiers were "discovered" by Henry Lincoln, a British actor, and with two others (Baigent and Leigh, of NZ and US) they authored the book The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail in 1982, incorporating further anti-semitic material. These authors sued Dan Brown for plagiarism but lost the case. But there is no doubt that Dan Brown's book based the main source of information from Plantard and Lincoln et al.

So, the book The Da Vinci Code started off as a fiction, with fraud and dubious sources of information and research. And a fiction it remains.

Anyone who wish to explore this topic further can visit the following websites:

www.wikipedia.org

www.historyvsthedavincicode.com

Following the talk, there was a lively Q&A session. The overall view is that the book and the film are fictions, albeit very entertaining fictions, and should not be mistaken as fact.

Rotary Information

Change of Guards

The 2006-2007 new Rotary year is approaching pretty soon. As from 1st July 2006, our new leader and his team of assistants and deputy assistants are listed hereunder for ready information.

District Governor - Tony Wong (Rotary Club of Happy Valley)

Area 1 (5 clubs) Guia, Hou Kuong, Macau, Macau Central, and Macau Islands

AG - Gwennie Tam (Hou Kuong)

DAG - Fatima Ferreira (Macau)

Area 2 (6 clubs) Admiralty, Hong Kong, Metropolitan Hong Kong, Queensway Victoria, and Wanchai

AG - Eddie Leung (Hong Kong Harbour)

DAG - Tobias Doeringer (Hong Kong South)

Area 3 (6 clubs) Happy Valley, Hong Kong Harbour, Hong Kong Island East, Hong Kong Northeast, Hong Kong South, and Quarry Bay

AG - Gary Cheung (Hong Kong South)

DAG - Eddy Wong (Hong Kong Island East)

Area 4 (6 clubs) Bayview Sunshine, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong Bayview, H.K. City North, H.K. North, and Peninsula Sunrise H.K.

AG - Stephen Hui (Causeway Bay)

DAG - Stanley Cheng (HK City North)

Area 5 (5 Clubs) City Northwest HK, Mid Level, HK Island West, HK Northwest, and The Peak

AG - Jason Chan (The Peak)

DAG - Roger Lee (HK Northwest)

Area 6 (8 clubs) Channel Island, HK Sunrise, Kwai Chung, New Territories, Tai Po, Tolo Harbour, and Tsuen Wan

AG - Vincent Ng (HK Sunrise)
DAG - Wendy Lee (Shatin)

Area 7 (6 clubs) Kowloon, Kowloon Golden Mile, Kowloon North, Peninsula, Peninsula South, and Tsimshatsui

AG - Thomas Wong (Peninsula)
DAG - Ian Petersen (Kowloon North)

Area 8 (7 clubs) Kingspark HK, Kowloon East, Kowloon Northeast, Kowloon Northwest, Kowloon West, Kwun Tong, and E-Club

AG - Rainbow Li (Kwun Tong)
DAG - Johnson Tsung (Kowloon West)

Area 9 (7 clubs) BayanZurkh 100, Gobi, Khuree, Niislel, Tuul, Ulaanbaatar and Zuunmod

AG - S Bekhbat (Ulaanbaatar)
DAG - Ch. Enkhtuya (Khuree)

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District Secretariat – 2006-2007

District Secretariat Advisor	PDG Peter Hall (HK Island East)
District General Secretary	Claire Mak (Tai Po)
District Secretary (Communications)	C.F. Wong (Tolo Harbour)
District Secretary	Albert Poon (Kowloon East)
District Secretary (District Affairs)	Albert Poon (Kowloon East)
District Secretary (Club Affairs)	Rebecca Kwan (Happy Vallley)
District Secretary (Macao)	Nelson Lo (Hou Kuong)
District Secretary (Mongolia)	R. Erdenechat (Niislel)
RIC Executive Supervisor	Rotaryanne Mary Hung (Taipo)
Executive Secretary (RIC)	Connie Yu of R.I.C.
District Legal Advisor	Arthur Luk (Happy Valley)
District Protocol	PDG Anthony Hung (Tai Po)

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LAUGH FOR THE WEEK

3 Old Guys

"Sixty is the worst age to be," said the 60-year-old man. "You always feel like you have to pee and most of the time you stand there and nothing comes out."

"Ah, that's nothin," said the 70-year-old. "When you're seventy, you don't have a bowel movement any more. You take laxatives, eat bran, sit on the toilet all day and nothin' comes out!"

"Actually," said the 80-year -old, "Eighty is the worst age of all."

"Do you have trouble peeing, too?" asked the 60-year old.

"No, not really I pee every morning at 6:00. I pee like a racehorse on a flat rock; no problem at all."

"So, do you have a problem with your bowel movement?"

"No, I have one every morning at 6:30."

With great exasperation, the 60-year-old said, "Let me get this straight.

You pee every morning at 6:00 and poop every morning at 6:30. So what's so bad about being 80?"

"I don't wake up until 7:00.

