

## Marist China

Hong Kong was at one time the beginning of the expansion of the Chinese Province, and it was easy enough to go back there to continue our daily apostolate of teaching. In fact presently we have two great schools in full operation in Hong Kong proper. One is St. Francis Xavier College in mainland Kowloon, which has been operating for years as one of the official schools of the country. There is also another St. Francis School that is situated in Tseun Wan in what is known as the New Territory. The Brothers also have another house intended for young candidates called Chanel House. All of these were approved by the Hong Kong government. I was invited to attend the graduation a few years ago and marveled at the organization. It was a pleasure to be invited and to be with our Marist Brothers.

In Taiwan we had a large high school complex in the city of Kaohsiung at the southern tip of the island. Over the years of our presence there, we built the various levels of education needed and everything was going smoothly. At the head of the Diocese is a Dominican Bishop who invited us to work there, and we had three or four Marist Brothers there most of the time. Our Chinese Provincial, Bro. Philip Wu, retired there before he died, and shortly after, the last Marist there also died. The operation of the school was then turned over to the Bishop.

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Another very large educational compound is that at Ipoh, where we have been for years. In many of these schools the Marist Brothers were mostly the administrators and we employed qualified teachers from the area. There were some schools that we ran for a short while and then later closed. It was particularly helpful in this country to find the large hospital run by religious Sisters who readily helped us when our Brothers in that country were aging. It is important to underline that in the small village of Mattantingui there was a devoted Pastor who dedicated his life to finding religious vocation candidates for the religious orders of Sisters and Brothers of the area. Father Chin was so dedicated to youth and education that we finally made him an affiliated member of the Marist Brothers congregation. One of his candidates for the Marist Brothers became our Provincial for a full term. There were other foundations that eventually closed for lack of vocations.

Singapore, mentioned earlier, has been an asset due to its strategic position, which makes it a wonderful stopping place on the way to Asia. From the start of the Chinese flight from the mainland, a good number came to settle in Singapore. We started a few schools that we later had to close, but the basic one, which was built completely by our Brothers with the help of their Marist alumni from the mainland, was Marist Stella in Singapore. The present complex is really a credit to the memory of one of our Marist Brothers whose vision was ahead of his time. Not far away we also have a unique Marist kindergarten that is also quite special and has been supported mostly by our many Marist alumni who remain very loyal to their former teachers. The founder of the kindergarten is still alive and active at this writing and quite appreciated by his confreres. Another contribution of the Singapore foundation was that among the natives who became Marist Brothers, one of them recently became the Provincial Superior of the entire China Province.

Finally, Sibuan Sarawak, the youngest sector of the China Province, was established over thirty-five years ago. So many mainland Chinese settled in East Malaysia at a place called Sibuan Sarawak that they built a school. The only problem was that few of the Chinese Marist Brothers were available at the time, so they asked for help from America. The American Marists came to their aid. Recently, the alumni of that school decided to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of their foundation, wanting to thank the Lord for this fantastic growth, and they invited the Americans who had helped to found this educational building to the festivities. A great time was had by all.

The story of the growth of our China Province is one of basic incredible brotherhood where one helps the other. It was started by missionaries from various countries on May 18, 1891, and enjoyed a fantastic response from the local Chinese who joined the Marist teachers. They had exceptional results with their alumni, and when the

troubles started in the country and foreigners were obliged to leave in many instances, they still remained loyal to their schools in China and continued to help. There were also the heroic dedicated young Chinese who gave their lives for the cause of education during the persecution. Their blood has not been shed in vain. The future of China is incredible in its possibilities as the most populated country of the world. We pray that part of that future success which is still ongoing with the label "Made in China" will eventually once more have the attached FMS label to grace its success.