

# Daily Giving Service

A History of the Diocesan Girls' School,  
Hong Kong

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# Foreword

The Most Reverend Andrew Chan  
Chairman of the Council of the Diocesan Girls' School

History is a great teacher, and *Daily Giving Service: A History of the Diocesan Girls' School, Hong Kong* is a significant publication that has given me much insight into how a great school based on sound Christian principles came to be. DGS is regarded as a leading school for girls within the Hong Kong SAR, and I must say that I derived great pleasure and satisfaction upon reading this remarkable book.

The book offers us a written tour of the School's immense history, from its spiritual life to the diverse scholastic activities, its music and sports, and the sense of community and collegiality that binds all girls and staff together. All these reflect the underlying Christian concept of education through the holistic development of girls, for the glory of our Heavenly Father.

All contemporary education institutions emphasise the claim that they provide a "holistic education", but what does this actually entail? Some may fall under the idea that holistic education merely requires a list of boxes to be checked: that as long as there are morning assemblies, there is moral education; that a high academic achievement is proof of intellectual education; physical education inevitably arises from the encouragement of sports activities; community education is achieved through inter-class collaborations; aesthetic education is accomplished via the visual arts classes; and religious education takes place through spiritual activities. The idea is that by presenting a long list of activities, we can claim that we have achieved the goal of holistic education. This idea, however, is very far from the truth.

So what exactly is holistic education? This review of the development of DGS over the past 160 years may give us some indication.

In terms of overall planning, this book reveals how DGS places great emphasis on the healthy development of students through the promotion of a school wellness plan. Healthy development does not merely refer to the absence of illness, as the plan encourages students to maintain a wholesome approach towards the body, the mind, and the school community. Career planning is greatly emphasised as through it, students reason why they should study hard, strive for excellence, and dare to dream and plan their future. The school also places strong emphasis on integrating the latest innovation and technology into the

students' learning curriculum. Such ideals go beyond the achievement of better results in academic courses, extracurricular activities, or systemic procedures. In effect, the school has applied its ideals of holistic development in all its teaching and activities, and for this we give praise and thanks to our Heavenly Father for DGS. Through Him, we are able to appreciate the staff, teachers, and our predecessors for their tireless toil and intellectual acuity in achieving these lofty ideals.

As a church school, and especially an Anglican school, we always believe that the human body, mind, and spirit are each and all part of a complete unit. The education we provide allows the next generation to fully attain balanced growth physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Life has its own cycle of completeness, and it is a continuous entity. From the moment a person comes into being, he or she never ceases growing. For human life, like any other life forms, growing is the only way forward. This book documents the process of growth and maturation of the DGS family. Through the book, we can appreciate the hard work of our students, while recognising that this family has greatly benefited from the support and dedication of countless parents, teachers, and friends. Through such nurturing from parents, teachers, and fellow peers, growth is made possible. Hence, we can visualise the life of each DGS girl as a gift from countless people: their lives have become blessings, as they recognise the importance of paying forward the blessings they have received. This vitality also propels them to strive for excellence in whatever they do. The nature of successful growth is such that it leads to a successful life of accomplishments and fulfilment. Long may these lives pass on their blessings to new cohorts that come afterwards, for it is in giving that we receive.

DGS family members, let us pray that the Lord will continue to lead us in the days to come, so we may bring direction and meaning to our lives through holistic education. Give us the true knowledge that can only come from our Heavenly Father, that we may embody the spirit of our school song, that the flowers of our DGS life may bloom ever more splendidly.

They reap not where they laboured;  
We reap what they have sown;  
Our harvest may be garnered  
By ages yet unknown.  
The days of old have dowered us  
With gifts beyond all praise;  
Our Father, make us faithful  
To serve the coming days.

# Foreword

Mrs Doris Ho

School Supervisor, Diocesan Girls' School and Diocesan Girls' Junior School

DGS is a school like no other, one that evokes very strong feelings of pride, camaraderie, and sense of belonging among all who have passed through its gate. There are few educational institutions in the world that can claim to celebrate their one hundred sixtieth anniversary in 2020. I wholeheartedly commend the collaborative effort of the many past and current members of the DGS family from all walks of life spanning different continents who, tasked with the onerous responsibility of condensing these 160 years of history into one book, generously shared their memories to distil the essence of what school life at DGS was like over the years, from a twenty-first-century perspective.

A tremendous debt of gratitude goes to the numerous pioneer members of the DGS family, many of whom remain unnamed, who were either school leaders, members of staff, or past students of the school. Through their visionary zeal and dedication, our predecessors went against the convention of their day and proved that, given the right environment and opportunity, girls could excel academically and contribute meaningfully to society in a professional capacity.

From its humble origin as a small school for girls in 1860, DGS has evolved to become one of the top girls' schools in Hong Kong. All the while, the school went through the countless challenges and events that took place in Hong Kong over the passage of time. These included the First and Second World Wars, the territory being administered under British colonial rule for one-and-a-half centuries, the return to Chinese sovereignty to become a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, as well as other major events. Through it all, the school has always stood by its Christian principles and beliefs, producing hundreds of thousands of women of excellence in every field, from loving mothers to a wide range of professionals, caring and contributing to the society with a worldwide vision.

I cannot but feel an overwhelming sense of pride and satisfaction at how far we have come over the many years as a school and, indeed, as a family. The key to this continuous success is, in my opinion, the school's unwavering commitment to excellence as well as the utmost concern for our students' psychological and physical harmony, based upon the provision of an all-round Christian education.

At the same time, one cannot deny that many challenges will continue to confront the school in the future. At the time of writing, the world is coping with the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which inevitably has impacted school life, necessitating the adoption of online-based learning for much of the time. Thankfully, the redevelopment of the school campus from 2009 to 2011 has equipped it with the latest IT networking infrastructure, which has greatly facilitated the delivery of blended learning during the pandemic. And like other places in the world, Hong Kong has had its share of complexities to contend with, partly due to its historical backdrop and significance.

But if the lessons from the long and illustrious history of our school is any guide, it is that through God's providence, members of the DGS family have been gifted with the calmness of heart and mind, as well as the wisdom to plan ahead and thrive amidst the ever-changing landscape. As the pandemic subsides, there are plans afoot to offer places for up to sixty boarders at the newly established boarding facility within our campus, thus rekindling our roots as a boarding sanctuary for girls.

I hope that the essence captured in this history book will serve as a useful reminder of how we came to be where we are today as a school, and as a family. We will continue to uphold our fundamentals of education through keeping to our precious and dearest Christian values, which give us an incomparable source of strength and serenity. With this energy and direction, we will forge ahead with renewed vigour and confidence to fulfil our mission of delivering educational excellence to girls in Hong Kong, China, and the world.

Finally, I wish with all my heart that the school will continue to prosper, hold fast to the DGS legacy, and strive to reach new heights over the next 160 years.



# Foreword

Mrs Stella Lau  
Headmistress of Diocesan Girls' School

As we celebrate the one hundred sixtieth anniversary of Diocesan Girls' School, it seems appropriate that a book that provides an account of our school's long and illustrious history should be published to mark this milestone of our journey. Being one of the oldest girls' schools in Hong Kong, DGS has played an important role in the education of girls in the city. Over the years, the school has adapted to the changing needs of society whilst retaining its core ethos and traditions of providing a well-rounded Christian education to girls. Because of the tremendous support from school members and members of society, old girls, parents, and friends over the years, the school remains internationally recognised as a leading girls' school in the region. Yet, to date, there has not been a comprehensive record of our rich tradition and the people that have shaped the school. A history book such as this would be a tribute to the institutions we have been, and pays homage to all students, teachers, staff, friends whom we are blessed to have as members of the DGS family over the past decades and century. Such a book would help readers to understand how DGS has evolved over the years to become this happy and thriving school today.

The idea of this book began to take shape when we realised we had, in our midst, an accomplished old girl and an eminent medical professor, who happens also to be an excellent writer and historian, Professor Moira Chan-Yeung. However, no one could have imagined the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Air travel was severely disrupted and restrictive quarantine measures were imposed by nations throughout the world to contain the pandemic. As Moira is based in Canada, it was unlikely that she could be enlisted to take on such a project, since neither she, nor others we hoped to invite to help, would be able to visit archives in Hong Kong to research documents related to the history of the school. Nor would they be able to confer or visit the school during the production of the book because of the pandemic. In spite of the difficulties, we invited her to take on the project in early April 2020, and she readily accepted.

While Moira was to deal with the main narrative of the history, others were enlisted to deal in greater details with the different facets of student life. A team of contributors was assembled, comprising old girls from different walks of life, and a few members of staff. Among the contributors, many old girls were based overseas in different parts of the

world. Because of this, most of the work and coordination for the production of the history book was done remotely using a cloud-based archive to share scanned information like documents, photographs, copies of past school magazines, etc. Despite the difficulty of not being able to be physically present together to discuss the project, work progressed smoothly. What you have before you is the fruit of their combined labour, which, I feel, offers the most complete history of our school to date.

As headmistress, I know that this book has enriched my understanding of our school's history, particularly the chapters on the work of my predecessors. I am in profound admiration of our past loyal and dedicated teaching staff who have served tirelessly for the betterment of our school throughout its long history. I hope that in some small way this book can serve as a fitting tribute to them, as well as to all past and current stakeholders, including current and old girls, parents, friends of the school, and members of society who have dedicated themselves to furthering the cause of DGS education in Hong Kong.

After reading this book, I begin to realise how far the school has come since its early days and how, over the years throughout its history, the legacy of DGS has always been synonymous with the pursuit of excellence, whether in academics, sports, music, or other domains. The quest for excellence continues to this day. As I write this, the world is captivated by the defiant display of athletes from all over the world during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which is now taking place in the summer of 2021, delayed for months because of the pandemic. I feel particularly proud that two of our old girls made history by capturing the Bronze Olympic medal in the women's Table Tennis Team Competition, a first for DGS, and a first for the Hong Kong SAR. Their journey to overcome the odds and realise their dreams by standing on the podium amongst the world's elite exemplifies that pursuit of excellence amongst DGS girls, and validates the extra support given by the school to our athletes over the years.

On behalf of the school, I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to all members of the DGS history book project for their insight, hard work, and contribution. Together, they have amply demonstrated through their action our school motto *Daily Giving Service* as they volunteered their valuable time and talent in writing this history of our school.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this history book to Our Father in Heaven. Through Him, all things are made possible.

# Foreword

Mrs Annie Lee

Headmistress of Diocesan Girls' Junior School

History always lends us a multi-dimensional view on the details and turns of events as these are slowly carved along the spectrum of time. Since 1860, nineteen years into the history of Hong Kong growing from a fishing village into the metropolitan city we see today, Diocesan Girls' School has been a witness and participant of this miraculous and blessed journey.

Despite the destruction and sufferings of the Wars, and in the midst of the successive challenges that have continued till this very day, the School has stood securely and never failed to grow and bear fruit because Father God is with us all along, fully prepared to calm our storms and bless us abundantly.

As we turn the pages and savour the very first history book of the School, let us also give thanks for all the faithful school heads, teachers, parents, old girls, and friends who have helped weave this beautiful fabric of excellence in perseverance, joy for learning, service to the community, and love for one another. Let us recount these moments of significance and relive the vivid memories that touch us personally.

“We love because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

“For the Lord is good, and His love endures forever;

His faithfulness continues through all generations.” (Psalm 100:5)

# Preface

There have been two attempts to have a history of DGS: “Diocesan Girls’ School, Kowloon. A Brief History 1860–1977” written by Dr C. J. Symons, which was published in a booklet in 1978, and a manuscript on “Diocesan Girls’ School 1, Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong: A Brief History 1860–2006”, which was prepared by a brilliant Form 6 student, Lo Yee Sum, but was not published. Towards the end of the summer of 2019, Mrs Stella Lau discussed with me her wish to have a school history book which was long overdue. I am a DGS alumna, but I was reluctant to take on such a huge project on my own. When she opened up the project to involve other DGS alumnae, I agreed to prepare the chronological part of the school history. A talented team of alumnae, including Amy Ng, Vanessa Leung, Wun Tsz Sum, Janice Tsang, Grace Chiang, Robyn Lamsam, Andrea Lai, Yvonne Chan, and Sheilah Chatjaval, was formed to write on the various aspects of the school and its development. Mrs Stella Lau acted as our most efficient coordinator and Professor Jane Lai our wise counsellor to the project.

The information in this book came from the following sources: (1) information on the Diocesan Native Female Training School from the annual reports and minutes of meetings of the Society of Promoting Female Education for Girls in the East, covering the period from 1834 to 1879 and from 1880 to 1939. This information was found in the Church Missionary Society Archives, in the Special Collections of the Hong Kong University Library; (2) minutes of the School Committee Meetings of the Diocesan Home and Orphanage, with references to the Diocesan Native Female Training School from the book written by the Reverend W. T. Featherstone entitled *The Diocesan Boys’ School and Orphanage, Hong Kong. The History and Records 1869 to 1929*; (3) minutes of the School Council meetings and general correspondence, 1945 to 1999, from the Bishop’s House Archives; (4) minutes of School Council meetings, 1999 to 2019, from the School Archives; (5) records of the school’s correspondence with the government, 1911 to 1960, from the Hong Kong Public Records Office; (6) historical newspapers: *South China Morning Post*, *China Mail*, *Hong Kong Daily*, *Hong Kong Telegraph*, *Kung Sheng Daily*, and *Wah Kiu Yat Po* from the University of Hong Kong Library and the Electronic Resources of the Multimedia Information Service of

Hong Kong Public Libraries; and (7) the school magazine *Quest* from 1941 to 2016–2018 and the Speech Day Booklets available after the war from the School Archives.

Because all the pre-war records of the school had been destroyed during the Japanese Occupation when the school was used as the headquarters of the Japanese Gendarmerie, the story of DGS during this period was reconstructed from the above resources and supplemented by several books written about the school during the pre-war era, some of them by DGS alumnae: *The Private Life of Old Hong Kong: Western Women in the British Colony, 1841–1941* by Susanna Hoe; *Lady Victoria Jubilee Lo* 中西融和：羅何錦姿 by Leung Hung Kei; *Intercultural Reminiscences* by Irene Cheng; *Eastern Windows, Western Skies* by Jean Gittins; *My Memories* by Florence Yeo; *Looking at the Stars: Memoirs of Catherine Joyce Symons* by C. J. Symons; and two books by Frances Wong, *China Bound and Unbound: History in the Making* and *The Lost Schools*. In addition, the reports of the two headmistresses, Miss Elizabeth Skipton and Miss Dorothy Sawyer, to the *Outpost*, an interim newsletter of the Diocese of Victoria, Hong Kong and South China, and interviews of alumnae of the school in the 1930s by the members of the DOGA were used as source materials.

While most of the materials from the Hong Kong Public Records Office, Bishop's House Archives, HKU Library Special Collections, and Hong Kong Public Libraries were collected by myself when I was in Hong Kong, the rest of the materials were made available through the modern world of technology to overcome the inability to travel as a result of lockdown of cities by the COVID-19 pandemic. The minutes of the School Council Meetings after 1999, the school magazines *Quest* and the Speech Day Booklets, old photographs, and other materials from the School Archives were uploaded by Mrs Carmen Ho of the IT Department onto the school computer drive to be accessed by myself and contributors who are living in Hong Kong or in other parts of the world. Other materials were sent by various people through emails, and Professor Nicholas Chan has been most kind in this regard. Interviews of past and present headmistresses, current and past teachers, and alumnae were carried out by telephone or through the internet. In fact, the research had been carried out much more expeditiously than by one person alone.

In recent years, some of us have become aware of the modest origin of DGS, the Diocesan Native Female Training School (DNFTS), founded in 1860 by Mrs Lydia Smith, wife of the first Bishop of Victoria and South China of the Anglican Church. The story was first told by Professor Nicholas Chan, a DBS alumnus, in a lecture which was aired in October 2020 and more recently by Professors Nicholas Chan (陳煒舜) and Fong Wing Chung (方穎聰) in their book *A Brief History of the "Female Diocesan School", Hong Kong, 1860–1869 and Beyond* (女仔館興衰：香港拔萃書室的史前史, 1860–1869) published by Hong Kong Open Page Publishing Company Limited (香港中和出版有限公司). Their latest research revealed that Mrs Lydia Smith also established the Day Girls' School in 1858/1859 in the same building as DNFTS at Albany Terrace, and it was likely the precursor

of DNFTS. The Day Girls' School was referred to as the Bishop's Diocesan Girls' School by the Rev. Ernest John Eitel, the Inspector of Schools of Hong Kong at that time. Because of the success of the Day Girls' School, Mrs Smith turned it into a boarding school to enable the girls to have more opportunities of learning the English language and Anglican Church customs, before their marriages to St. Paul's College graduates who were becoming ministers to spread the faith. We believe that the one hundred sixtieth anniversary of the school should be celebrated earlier in 2019 rather than 2020. This school history book therefore pauses the chronicle at the end of the academic year 2018/2019, in July 2019.

In writing the chronological part of the school history, I was constantly reminded that mistakes might occur. Thus, the manuscript was reviewed for accuracy by a number of people: the current and former headmistresses including Mrs Stella Lau, Mrs Elim Lau, Mrs Rebecca Yip, Mrs Emily Dai, and Mrs Annie Lee, Professor Jane Lai, Mrs Paulina Hui, Ms Yvonne Chan, and several old boys of DBS including Professors Fung Yee Wang and Nicholas Chan. While the participation of alumni of DGS and DBS might give the impression that the preparation of the school history is a family enterprise, we are very fortunate to have a distinguished panel of advisors—two of them are not our alumni—to keep us on the right path: Professor Chan Lau Kit Ching, retired Professor of History at HKU, and Dr Li Yuet Ting, former Director of Education. Professor Elizabeth Sinn, a DGS alumna and a renowned historian of Hong Kong, was the third advisor. They offered invaluable advice.

The first part of the book is a chronicle of the development of DGS in the context of the cultural, social, political, and economic settings of the community of different eras and how the school responded over the years to the needs of society and to various challenges. During each one of these challenges, the School Council, the headmistresses, and the teaching staff fought hard to keep the tradition and ethos of the school alive and to adhere to the school's original aim—to provide a well-rounded education based on Christian principles.

The second part of the book addresses the development of various aspects of the school, including the campus, spiritual life, scholastic, musical and sports activities, school life, the Diocesan Old Girls' Association, and the DGS Parent Teacher Association. The details in these chapters are inevitably linked to the main narrative, and we tried hard to avoid repetition in the two parts.

As the school's function is to provide education to girls in the community, and it has received consistent financial and moral support from the community since its inception, we feel that it would be appropriate to describe how DGS graduates contributed to Hong Kong in return. In Chapter 9, we presented the career paths of some DGS alumnae. Because the school did not keep an archive of its graduates until recently, the result of our attempt to track the career of our graduates was only patchy. The list of alumnae who made their mark in various professions was compiled by a number of alumnae including the headmistresses,

current and past. We know that there are many who contributed to society both locally and overseas, many of whom we have lost touch with, or we have no knowledge of. Since no list is exhaustive to encompass them all, we have chosen to name a few to show the diverse domains that our alumnae have worked in, and apologise for the many omissions. We have also approached all surviving individuals on the original list for their permission to name them in the history book; not surprisingly, a few modest but very worthwhile alumnae declined.

We hope the book will offer the general public some insights of how the school interacts with the community. For teachers and staff, both past and present, parents, and friends, the book marks traces of their efforts, their generosity, and their love. For the alumnae, the book may bring back some happy memories of their school days and help them understand the education they received in their formative years. For the current students, we hope to bring them an understanding of the tradition and ethos of the school and to remind them of Mrs Symons' speech during the school's centenary celebration:

We have inherited an old and revered school, we have been given magnificent buildings, but with them, we have been handed the future of this school. You have grown to admire and love these buildings, but you are the school. Remember our motto, "Daily Giving Service".

Moira M. W. Chan-Yeung

Vancouver

April 2022

## Chapter 1

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# Historical Background: 1859 to 1898

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.

—Matthew 28: 19–20

Over the centuries, Christians have responded to the spiritual injunction to become missionaries. Overseas missions began as early as the late seventeenth century and blossomed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when a dynamic combination of three elements in the Western world—university education, personal Christian awakening, and the call to missionary service—conjoined in the English-speaking world.<sup>1</sup> In England itself, the evangelical revival coincided with the imperialistic expansion of the British Empire, leading to a proliferation of overseas missionary activities. Because of its vast population, China presented both a challenge and an opportunity for Christian missionaries; and because of its mystique, it was also a source of fascination for missionary societies.

The missionaries aimed to teach people about Jesus Christ and His great commandment to love God and to love others. In achieving this aim, they needed to overcome the prejudice and suspicion of local people from a completely different culture and to gain access behind closed doors by practising “love in action” through service to the community. It was thought that medical missions might be the best way for missionaries to show “love in action” by healing the sick while simultaneously spreading the gospel in hospitals and clinics. Yet they were not highly successful in winning converts to Christianity. Most of the time, medical missionaries found that they spent all their time healing with no time for evangelical duties during their brief contact with people. Moreover, in some countries,

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1. Robin Boyd, *The Witness of the Student Christian Movement* (London: Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), 1.



especially in China, local people did not consult them because of their distrust in Western medicine.

Education, on the other hand, provided opportunities for the missionaries to teach the love of Christ through prolonged contact. There was also a demand for the locals to learn English for trade. The missionaries established schools mostly for boys in the beginning. At that time, girls were not given an education in many parts of the world. In China, women had no legal rights and were confined in their homes. The task of educating girls was problematic and indeed impossible for male missionaries. Nevertheless, the missionaries believed that by giving girls education, they could eventually improve the position of women in society. This unenviable and difficult task fell on the shoulders of wives of missionaries and female missionaries, who contributed greatly to the development of girls' education not only in Hong Kong and China but also in other parts of the world.

Diocesan Girls' School (DGS) was founded in the mid-nineteenth century by the wife of the first Bishop of Victoria and South China who believed in "love in action" by serving others. Her work was subsequently continued by other female Christians, equally enthusiastic in giving service to others despite multiple trials and tribulations throughout DGS's long history. They all enacted the school motto, "Daily Giving Service".

### **The Sociocultural and Political Backdrop: When East Meets West**

In the mid-eighteenth century, Britain's Industrial Revolution proved to be the catalyst for the nation's expansionist policy, resulting in the establishment of dominions, colonies, protectorates, mandates and territories across the globe; by the nineteenth century, Britain was the largest and most powerful empire in the world. In 1842, Hong Kong Island became a colonial administration under Britain after the Chinese Qing empire lost the First Opium War.

At that time, China was facing a number of problems even before the Opium War. The population surged from 200 million to 400 million between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, which was not accompanied by an increase in agricultural production. By the nineteenth century, the food shortage had become evident. The Opium War was not just a political upheaval; it also had economic and social repercussions. Together with the destructive Taiping Rebellion, which started in 1850 and lasted till 1864, the Opium War led to the disintegration of what remained of the Qing empire.

In its early days, Hong Kong had only about 7,000 people, mostly farmers and fishermen. As the British began to build the City of Victoria, more Chinese arrived from the hinterland looking for opportunities to make a living. The majority of this immigrant influx comprised labourers, coolies, stonecutters, builders, hawkers, and others attending to such a pioneering population (cooks, fortune tellers, and entertainers, for example),

mainly from the lower strata of society, all hoping to make a future for themselves and for their families. The two races were encouraged, and at times forced, to segregate, with the Chinese crowded in the Tai Ping Shan, or the steeper, western area where running water and proper sewage were lacking, whilst initially the Europeans mostly tended to live on the east of Pottinger Street and gradually moved along the Mid-Levels to the west. As the population in Hong Kong increased, the European population moved to the Peak, where the Chinese were forbidden unless they were servants of the European residents.

From the outset, the mercantile community had a clear vision for the purpose of Hong Kong's establishment as a colonial outpost. It was to facilitate and control trade into China. At first, the colonial government instituted a small, but effective, administration to transform Hong Kong into the "Emporium of the Far East"; however, this enterprise failed to materialise in the early years partly because of rampant piracy in the nearby waters around Hong Kong as well as competition from several Treaty Ports, such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, Ningpo, Foochow, and Amoy in China that opened up at the same time. Another reason was that wealthy Chinese merchants found it advantageous to live in Guangzhou.

With Hong Kong established as a free port, the government received little revenue, while public works expenses towards developing infrastructure from scratch were huge. British merchants in Hong Kong believed that their government should bear all such development expenses and that they should be free from governmental interference. Although the British government did give a small grant, the financial aid was discontinued in the 1850s, and as a result, there was little to spend on any public service, let alone medical or education services for the native population.

Shortly after the establishment of Hong Kong as a colonial administrative region, missionaries from various societies arrived, intent on introducing Christianity to China, combining the Christian ideals with educational and Western medical services, which the Chinese communities sorely lacked. At that time, most missionaries regarded Hong Kong as a stepping stone to a wider conversion objective in China, but some stayed in Hong Kong and contributed greatly to the territory's system of education by founding missionary schools, introducing Western medical services, and building hospitals and clinics, and even establishing the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese, which later became the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hong Kong. The first missionary society to arrive was the Morrison Education Society, which transferred its school from Macau to Hong Kong in 1842. The Catholic Church, the London Missionary Society (LMS), and the Anglican Church followed.

Foreign missionaries were not the first to introduce the concept of schooling to the Chinese in Hong Kong; a few small private schools called *sishu* (私塾) were already in operation before their arrival. A *sishu*, along the lines of traditional Chinese village schools, typically consisted of one teacher tutoring about a dozen boys on a curriculum of basic

literacy and Confucian classics, with some form of mathematics and general knowledge taught, but no physical education or music. At that time, girls did not attend school, and their learning was restricted to housework, embroidery, and crafts taught by elders at home. Unsurprisingly, the first two schools founded by missionaries were for boys only: the first was founded by the Rev. James Legge of the LMS, who moved the Anglo-Chinese College from Malacca to Hong Kong in 1843, later known as Ying Wah College; the second was St Paul's College, founded by the Rev. Vincent Stanton of the Anglican Church in 1851 to teach Chinese boys English, with the aim of training them to spread the gospel among the Chinese people. The establishment of St Paul's Convent School in 1854 by the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres followed but was limited to educating girls who grew up in their orphanage.

In Britain, before the 1850s, few children, apart from the upper classes and clergy, received a formal education. Most boys who went to school were educated to become teachers, lawyers, or clergymen. By contrast, most girls, if they went to school, received only a general education, which was deemed sufficient as they were expected to be married, serving men as wives, with no greater role to play in society. If a woman without independent means remained single, she would become a nanny or governess or teacher of young children. But, as industrialisation gave men increasing opportunities for work in many new areas, such as engineering, medicine, sciences, and trade, the role of teaching was, by default, left to women. As a result, girls required a higher level of education to support a system that enhanced men's superior academic and professional positioning in the patriarchal British society at the time. However, by 1868, universities opened their doors for women, and by 1880, education became compulsory for all children aged five to ten.

By contrast, in Hong Kong and China, women had virtually no legal rights and were relegated to an inferior role, confined in their households. Their social position was constricted by the Confucian concept of a woman's role in the family. They were expected to follow the doctrine of "Three Obediences": to obey their fathers in childhood, their husbands when married, and their sons when older. Female subjugation even extended to the blotting out of the personal given name by the use of the woman's familial role in much social discourse. She bore her husband's surname and was addressed as "the wife of [X]" or "the mother of [Y]".

Girls did chores in the family or worked to contribute to the family income. Even those from well-to-do or genteel families who did not have to work were, for the most part, not spared a role in supporting a male-dominated society. Under the Song dynasty (tenth century AD), the cruel practice of foot-binding began among court dancers and courtesans. The long, torturous procedure began early in a girl's life when her toes were bent, forced under her foot and bound, so that her feet were permanently disfigured and maimed to enhance her figure, movement, and gait for the purpose of satisfying what was considered

## Chapter 3

# Coping with Social Changes: 1925 to 1938

During the first part of the twentieth century, China's political turmoil continued relentlessly despite the founding of the Republic of China. The country rapidly fell into the chaos and degeneracy of the warlord period, during which more immigrants settled in Hong Kong, increasing its population and need for education. In the meantime, Hong Kong flourished as a trading post. Under British colonial administration, it used English for its governance and also for business communication. The Eurasians in the territory were of assistance to the relatively small number of British expatriate officials; and those with English and a little Chinese, as well as those Chinese with some knowledge of the English language, were in great demand. English therefore became an important school subject, and an English education much desired. DGS's original purpose of providing an English education thus supported demands from all social classes, not just those who could afford it, but also those of modest means.

From its founding as a colonial administrative region, Hong Kong was China's main gateway to the West, and it prospered during the First World War in particular. After the war, inflation and a rapid rise in the cost of living caused the poorly paid working class a great deal of hardship. The early 1920s were plagued by a series of labour strikes for better wages, which, happily, were resolved in favour of the workers. The 1922 Seamen's Strike led to a general strike, with 120,000 workers taking part. Although this almost paralysed Hong Kong, it was the 1925–1926 strike-boycott that almost destroyed the economy. Early in 1925, a Chinese labourer was killed by a Japanese foreman, and on 30 May, the British Shanghai Municipal Police opened fire on Chinese students who protested against the killing. This shooting sparked nationwide anti-foreigner demonstrations and riots. In Hong Kong, anti-British sentiments further escalated after another incident of police violence took

place: on 23 June, in Shameen, Guangzhou, the British opened fire on demonstrators and killed scores of workers and students. The workers responded with a strike-boycott, which continued until May 1926 and bankrupted many individuals and companies. DBS and St Paul's Girls' School both went into serious debt as a result of subscribers' inability to come up with funds for the new school buildings that were being constructed. DGS and other schools were also affected by low enrolment as many families could not afford to send their children to school.

After testing their aggression against China in the 1920s, when the country was still fragmented and constantly at civil war, the Japanese finally invaded the country in 1931 and eventually took control of Manchuria. Soon afterwards, Japanese forces gradually penetrated into North China. In 1937, after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, when the Nationalist Army fired at the Japanese troops as the latter moved close to the bridge which is not far from Beijing, China declared war on Japan, marking the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Imperial Japanese Army marched southward and very quickly took over the coastal areas of China. By 1938, Guangzhou had fallen into the hands of the Japanese. As Britain was not at war with Japan, the Japanese Army halted at the border of Hong Kong in Shenzhen. However, although Hong Kong had not yet been invaded, many British felt that war was imminent and therefore left the city or sent home their families.

In this bleak scenario, one movement seemed to gain support from many different sides—the change in perspective on gender roles. The suffragette movement in the West had led to positive change in the perception of women's rights, and women's issues received attention as part of the new thinking in China. In Hong Kong, women's social status also improved. Physical education rose in popularity among the Westernised Chinese: the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), founded by missionaries, provided facilities for young people to engage in physical exercise and helped instil awareness of its importance. This change of perspective on women's rights was a significant turning point.

### **DGS under Miss H. Dorothy Sawyer**

Miss H. Dorothy Sawyer, who acted as Headmistress when Miss Catherine Ferguson was ill, was appointed to the headship of the school when Miss Ferguson passed away in 1925.<sup>1</sup> Miss Sawyer, like Miss Elizabeth Skipton, was dedicated to the school but was extremely overworked because she was given no clerical assistance; she often worked in her office late into the night. Miss Sawyer believed in discipline. When presenting her school report in 1935, she urged parents to have absolute confidence in and to offer total support to the

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1. "School Prizes: Diocesan Girls' School's Annual Function", *South China Morning Post*, 15 March 1926.



**Figure 3.1:** Miss H. Dorothy Sawyer (Headmistress 1925–1938). Source: School Archives.



**Figure 3.2:** DGS staff and students, 1926. Source: School Archives. Note: School uniform was not mandatory then. There were 222 students in 1926.

school staff. She likened the parental acceptance of school discipline to the private relationship between parents and their child: the child's views should not take precedence over school authority any more than her mother's views should prevail over the authority of her father.<sup>2</sup> Although this might sound like the last blast of Victorian authority, discipline was what the public expected during this era.

Miss Sawyer was tall, austere, and had “yellow” hair. While her appearance might have been formidable for many young children, at times she showed moments of softness. In 1930, Patricia (Patsy) Fenton (née Kotewall) was the youngest in her class in DGS. She recalled occasions when she sat on her teacher's lap while Miss Sawyer was reading or reciting. One form of punishment handed out by Miss Sawyer to offending students was

2. “Diocesan Girls’ School. Headmistress’s Outspoken and Interesting Report. Lady Southorn’s Tribute”, *South China Morning Post*, 12 July 1935.



## Chapter 6

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# The Great Expansion: 1953 to 1985

### Historical Background

#### 1953 to 1970: From Poverty to Prosperity

When Mrs Catherine Joyce Symons became Headmistress of DGS in 1953, a ceasefire had occurred in Korea. The United Nations embargo had speeded the change in Hong Kong from a city that was dependent on entrepôt trade into a manufacturing centre. Among the large numbers of refugees from China, the entrepreneurial Shanghainese brought capital and technology, while the rest brought a seemingly endless supply of cheap labour. Within a few years, manufacturing industries such as textiles and clothing were blossoming. In the 1960s and 1970s, employment in industries grew at an annual average rate of 13 per cent. Wages began to edge up noticeably for skilled workers starting in 1957, followed by those of the semi-skilled.<sup>1</sup> By the late 1960s, Hong Kong was transformed into a regional manufacturing centre, and its gross domestic product (GDP) was rising at a rate of about 10 per cent per year.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, the population in Hong Kong rose from 2 million in 1951 to 5 million in 1980, owing to the post-war baby boom and the influx of refugees, and this posed great challenges for all social services, including housing, education, and medical and health services. Even though wages had increased, poor housing, abominable

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1. L. C. Chau, "Economic Growth and Income Distribution in Hong Kong", in *25 Years of Social and Economic Development in Hong Kong*, ed. Benjamin K. P. Leung and T. Wong (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1994), 494.

2. *Hong Kong Annual Reports, 1960–1970*.

working conditions, and widespread corruption, especially in the police force, bred social discontent and unrest.

On the morning of 4 April 1966, a 27-year-old man began a hunger strike at the Star Ferry Terminal in Central District, protesting against a 5-cent increase in the ferry fare. He quickly drew a crowd of supporters and riots ensued. The subsequent Commission of Inquiry of Kowloon Disturbances reported that the causes of the riots were the underlying sense of insecurity and distrust of government among young people, compounded by economic recession, high unemployment, and a shortage of housing.<sup>3</sup> The Commission concluded that the excessive energy of young people contributed to the unrest and recommended that more activities should be provided to keep them occupied.

In the spring of 1967, the Cultural Revolution spilled across the border to Hong Kong. Leftist workers and students from “patriotic” schools orchestrated street demonstrations and planted both real and fake bombs to paralyse the city. For six months, violent protests and riots occupied the streets of Hong Kong. Public confidence in Hong Kong’s future plummeted and many residents emigrated.<sup>4</sup> The 1966 and 1967 riots led people to question the legitimacy of the colonial government.<sup>5</sup> The government had remained conservative in its financial and economic policies, allocating less than 10 per cent of its budget to all social services combined, despite economic improvement since the late 1950s. This policy resulted in overcrowding and the proliferation of squatters’ huts in many parts of Hong Kong,<sup>6</sup> tremendous congestion in hospitals and long queues in outpatient clinics, and a social welfare system funded largely by local and international volunteer agencies. Growing international hostility toward colonialism and local social discontent compelled the government to place resources on improving living and working conditions and social services.

### 1971 to 1985: Building up of “Hong Konger” Identity

Throughout the 1970s, the economy of Hong Kong continued to grow with its GDP rising at a remarkable annual rate of 18 per cent per year.<sup>7</sup> The booming economy of the 1970s enabled the reform-minded Governor Crawford Murray MacLehose to spend generously

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3. Kowloon Disturbances 1966, Report of Commission of Enquiry, Hong Kong Government, J. R. Lee Acting Government Printers, 1967.

4. Kate Whitehead, “Witnesses to Anarchy: The 1967 Riots in Hong Kong, by Some of Those Caught Up in the Violence”, *South China Morning Post*, 22 April 2017, accessed 15 May 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/long-reads/article/2089195/witnesses-anarchy-1967-riots-hong-kong-some-those>.

5. Ian Scott, *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989), 236–239.

6. M. Castells, *The Shek Kip Mei Syndrome: Economic Development and Public Housing in Hong Kong* (London: Pions Ltd, 1990), 136.

7. Revenue and expenditure for each year obtained from Hong Kong Annual Reports of respective years, 1970–1980, Hong Kong Government.



on various public projects. In 1972, he announced the ambitious Ten Years Housing Programme to resettle 1.9 million people. New towns were established in remote sites in the New Territories and city slums were cleared. Infrastructural projects such as the first cross-harbour tunnel and the mass transit railway system were initiated, linking the new towns with the city. Medical and health services greatly expanded. Extra funding was allotted to social welfare.<sup>8</sup> Long-term plans were developed for education, medical and health services, and social welfare.<sup>9</sup> Established in 1974, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) quickly won a reputation for probity. All these measures improved the quality of life and inspired confidence and social stability. It was during the MacLehose era that the people of Hong Kong developed their own identity and called themselves “Hong Kongers”.

US President Richard Nixon’s 1972 visit to Beijing signified China’s emergence from isolation. In 1979, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) initiated an open policy and economic reorientation and modernisation. Factories from Hong Kong began to move into South China for cheaper labour, while the city gradually transformed itself into a global service and financial centre, supported by a young and well-educated population. In 1984, the Sino-British Agreement was signed when Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader of the PRC, devised a practical formula to preserve the spectacular success of Hong Kong based on an ingenious policy of “One Country, Two Systems”, which was meant to last for fifty years following the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997 at the expiry of the lease of the New Territories.

## Educational Development in Hong Kong: The Great Expansion

### 1951 to 1970: Expansion of Primary Education

In the 1950s, Hong Kong’s Education Department (ED) grappled with two major problems—on the one hand, a predominantly young and rapidly growing population and, on the other hand, increasing pressure from the new Labour government in Britain to provide universal access to education for all children. The department implemented a policy of expansion of primary education and teacher training in order to rectify the shortcomings of the system.<sup>10</sup>

Ambitious government school-building programmes were launched in the 1950s, and at their peak 45,000 primary school places were added each year. To accommodate the

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8. *Hong Kong Annual Report*, 1968, 10.

9. Hong Kong Legislative Council Debates Official Report. In the session of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong which opened 17 October 1973 in the Twenty-Second Year of the Reign of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

10. K. W. J. Topley, Secretary for Education, “The Hong Kong Education System”, June 1981, Government Secretariat, Hong Kong Government.

## Chapter 8

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# The Turbulent Modern Era: 1999 to 2019

The first two decades of the twenty-first century were far from peaceful in Hong Kong. Although the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in July 1997 went smoothly, the city was dogged by a series of economic downturns, outbreaks of epidemics, and political upheavals. All these challenges affected the school's operation.

The Asian financial crisis began soon after July 1997 in Thailand, wreaking havoc in the Asian markets. Although Hong Kong came out relatively unscathed, its economy took time to recover. In 2008, the financial crisis caused by the bursting of the housing bubble in the United States sent shock waves through the global financial markets with widespread, devastating effects. Hong Kong was no exception and was plunged into recession for more than a year, only starting to show signs of recovery by the end of 2009.

Since 1997, Hong Kong has faced several outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases. In December 1997, Avian Influenza (H<sub>5</sub>N<sub>1</sub>) hit Hong Kong. In 2003, a mysterious and serious pneumonia known as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) began in South China and spread to Hong Kong, affecting thousands and killing 300 people. The financial loss owing to SARS was estimated to be around \$40 billion in Hong Kong alone.<sup>1</sup> In 2009, the swine flu (H<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub>) epidemic, originating in the United States, arrived in Hong Kong.<sup>2</sup> Having learned its lesson from SARS, Hong Kong was well prepared. Although some schools where students had the disease were closed, the virus caused only a mild illness. The epidemic ended without seriously affecting the economy or school activities.

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1. Moira Chan-Yeung, *A Medical History of Hong Kong 1942–2015* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2019), 154–163.

2. Chan-Yeung, *A Medical History of Hong Kong*, 164–166.

During the past two decades, political unrest has grown in Hong Kong as the people have begun to fear that they will lose the freedom and high degree of autonomy that were promised by the Sino-British Agreement under “One Country, Two Systems” and the Basic Law. Peaceful demonstrations demanding universal suffrage for election of members of the Legislative Council and the Chief Executive have been a consistent theme and a regular occurrence. In 2019, fuelled by the strong antipathy created by a widening wealth gap, the growing population below the poverty line, and unrealistically high real estate prices, the government’s proposal for the Extradition Bill set off a series of events: a sit-in at the government headquarters on 15 March 2019, massive peaceful demonstrations, and finally ugly violence that caught the world’s attention. The protests and violence persisted throughout the long, hot summer of 2019. When the school opened in September 2019, it entered its one-hundred-and-sixtieth year in a completely different era, facing much greater challenges than ever before.

## **Educational Development and Reforms**

Despite the recurrent political turmoil, educational reforms in Hong Kong did not slow down. The second wave followed the international movement towards marketisation, accountability, and quality improvement in education. It began with the publication in 1997 of the Education Commission Report no. 7 (ECR7) entitled “Quality of Education”,<sup>3</sup> and the reforms proposed were implemented soon afterwards. In addition, the Education Department (ED) published a number of other proposals from 1999 to 2002, such as the curriculum development proposals to be implemented simultaneously, intending to reach the targets in a very short period of time.

In 2003, the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications proposed that teachers be required to pursue professional development activities for no less than 150 hours during the three-year period between 2003 and 2006. The cycle of 150 hours every three years became the standard in the future. The government organised courses, seminars, and workshops so that teachers could obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to implement planned changes. These included school-based curriculum, school-based assessment, new curriculum subjects, School Management Initiatives, school self-evaluation, language proficiency for English medium for instruction, Putonghua (PTH) teaching, use of IT in teaching, learning, and management, and a number of other activities, all in addition to ongoing teaching. The seemingly endless increase in professional development activities and training soon became a serious burden. Overloaded with stress

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3. Education Commission Report no. 7, Handbook on Education Policy in Hong Kong, accessed 26 September 2020, <https://www.eduhk.hk/cird/publications/edpolicy/27.pdf>.

and fatigue, some teachers resigned.<sup>4</sup> The Hong Kong Institute of Education organised a number of staff development days that included conferences and workshops. One of them was on “Teacher Burn Out”,<sup>5</sup> but this regrettably failed to prevent two teachers committing suicide in the territory.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of the downward spiral in Hong Kong’s birth rate, the reduction in the number of classes, and laying off of teachers, and even closure of primary schools, mounting pressure was created on teachers and schools, culminating in a protest by those involved in the teaching profession at the beginning of 2006.<sup>7</sup> Realising the serious repercussions the reforms had on the mental health of teachers, the government established a committee to study the work pressure on teachers, to investigate the causes, and to recommend the solutions. In 2007, the Secretary for Education was replaced. The new Secretary began to implement policies to improve the working conditions of the teachers, such as smaller classes, increasing salaries, establishing vice principal posts at primary schools, and slowing the speed of education reforms.<sup>8</sup> In the year 2008/2009, the government finally granted twelve years of free education to all school-age children.

The most drastic change to secondary schools was the implementation of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum (NSS) in 2011/2012, reducing secondary education from seven years to six years to be in line with Chinese and US secondary schools. The examinations, the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations (HKALE), which were taken at the end of Forms 5 and Upper 6 respectively, were replaced by the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination at the end of six years of secondary education. University education became four years instead of three. Consistent with advances in education internationally, liberal studies and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programmes were introduced, as were the other learning experiences (OLE).

Education reforms during this period greatly impacted on the development of DGS in many aspects, including the physical, financial, and administrative structure of the school, the curriculum, and teaching and learning methods. However, the school embraced these changes readily, as can be seen in the following pages. It continued to expand during these

4. Yin Cheong Cheng, “Hong Kong Educational Reforms in the Last Decade: Reform Syndrome and New Developments”, *International Journal of Educational Management* 23, no. 1 (2009): 75–76.

5. Cheng, “Hong Kong Educational Reforms in the Last Decade”, 76.

6. “Teachers Protest following Stress-Related Suicides”, *Education International*, 23 January 2006, accessed 28 June 2020, <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/detail/54/hong-kong-teachers-protest-following-stress-related-suicides>.

7. A. S. Yeung and W. P. Liu, “Workload and Psychological Well-being of Hong Kong Teachers”, paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education, Fremantle, November 2007, accessed 29 September 2020, <https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2007/yeuo7421.pdf>.

8. Cheng, “Hong Kong Educational Reforms in the Last Decade”, 81–82.

Part II

An Interlude: Metamorphosis  
in Bricks and Mortar

Vanessa Leung (1986)

The Campus

1913–1928

- In 1913, DGS moved to its new quarters in Kowloon at 1 Jordan Road, its present site.
- The school added an extension in 1918 to cope with increasing enrolment.
- In 1928 a covered playground in a “Greek Temple” style was constructed for use for school activities.



**Figure I.2:** DGS, 1913. Source: Mr Bob Tatz, old boy of DGS.



**Figure I.3:** DGS with extension, 1918. Source: The National Archives, UK.



**Figure I.4:** The covered playground, 1928. Source: School Archives.



**Ground plan I.1:** Campus development map 1913–1928. Source: Drawn by Vanessa Leung.

## Chapter 11

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# Scholastic Activities

Janice Tsang (1992)

This chapter gives an overview of the scholastic activities of DGS since the time when it was first established as the Diocesan Native Female Training School (DNFTS), when girls were trained to be wives of graduates of St Paul's College until today, when DGS has evolved to become a prestigious school offering holistic girls' education in Hong Kong, preparing women leaders of tomorrow. The curriculum and pedagogy of the school have also undergone a series of transformations, with the objectives of the teaching and learning being constantly reviewed and redefined in response to curriculum changes, education reform, changes in society and the world at large, while upkeeping the vision, mission, and tradition of the school.

The scholastic activities of DGS are divided into five periods according to the tenure of the headmistresses, and not according to the education system.

### **The Early Years, 1860–1892**

The school was initially inaugurated as the DNFTS in 1860 for Chinese girls. It closed down in 1869 and became a co-educational institution for the reasons described in Chapter 1. The co-educational Diocesan Home and Orphanage (DHO) accepted boys and girls in the beginning for boarding. Later, it only accepted day girls, and in 1892, it ceased to accept any more girls.

## Aims

The purpose of the DNFTS was “to introduce among a somewhat superior class of native females the blessings of Christianity and religious training,” as stated in its first annual report.<sup>1</sup> The students were prepared either to become wives of graduates from St Paul’s College who would become clergy, or school mistresses.<sup>2</sup>

## Curriculum

From the beginning of the DNFTS, Christian values were the main focus of its education, and there was no formal curriculum. At that time, the three main “subjects” were “Christian values”, “English language”, and “basic life skills”, including both social and daily life skills. Students were trained to be socially well-behaved young ladies through Christian conduct and etiquette. They learnt the English language through direct interactions with the mistress and through reading the Bible, which was their main “textbook”. Students were obliged to attend Sunday School at St John’s Cathedral. In 1863, when Miss M. A. W. Eaton took over as Superintendent, the curriculum was expanded to include English reading, writing, geography, and needlework, in addition to religious and moral education. There were no official textbooks apart from the Bible. The schoolmistress served more as a motherly matron and a mentor. At the beginning of 1866, Miss M. J. Oxlad was appointed to serve as both teacher and matron while the school was renamed the Diocesan Female School, but scripture and preparing students for baptism still formed the backbone of teaching and learning.

When the DHO was inaugurated in 1870, there were more boys than girls because young men who were bilingual were greatly needed in the business sector. There were only three teaching staff: Mr W. M. B. Arthur, the Headmaster; his wife, the matron; and a Chinese teacher. Mr Arthur probably followed the curriculum of Miss Eaton, concentrating on reading, spelling, writing English, and simple mental arithmetic. In 1878, when the learning of English was declared important by the Education Conference in Hong Kong, students were given five hours of compulsory English lessons with two-and-a-half hours of optional Chinese study each day.

## Student Achievements

The DNFTS was an institution with the aim to prepare girls as marriage partners for graduates of St Paul’s College who would be going into ministry to spread Christianity to the

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1. Entry 2950, Minutes of Committee of FES, 11 March 1858.

2. C. T. Smith, *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207–208.



inhabitants in China. It was considered a great success when a DNFTS graduate married a minister who had graduated from St Paul's.<sup>3</sup> When the DHO was established and became a grant-in-aid school in 1873, the examination results of students were used to assess its achievements.

### Developmental Years, 1898–1941

In the early twentieth century in the Western world, more opportunities became available for young women to become teachers as young men took up medicine, engineering, and business as their careers, leaving education of the next generation to women. In male-dominated societies, schools and universities began to open up for women. In Hong Kong, in 1898, the Anglican Church re-established the school for girls as the Diocesan Girls' School and Orphanage, and in 1900 it was renamed the Diocesan Girls' School (DGS). The school was initially for European and Eurasian girls, and all subjects were taught in English. Chinese girls were admitted in 1922. During this period, the school was successively under the headship of Miss Elizabeth D. Skipton (1899–1921), Miss Catherine A. Ferguson (1921–1924), Miss H. Dorothy Sawyer (1925–1938), and Miss Elizabeth M. Gibbins (1939–1941, 1945).

### Aims

The aim of re-establishing a girls' school in Hong Kong was described by the Bishop of Victoria:

That it is desirable to establish in Hongkong a boarding and day School for girls, more especially for Eurasian children, such school to aim at giving a liberal education according to the doctrines of the Church of England, and that this meeting pledges itself to do all it can in support of that scheme.<sup>4</sup>

### Curriculum

Under the headship of Miss Skipton, there was no formal curriculum or pedagogy. In the beginning, there were very few textbooks except for the *Royal Reader*. The normal school day started with a half-hour of scripture for all classes; this was taught by Anglican clergy. Once DGS had joined the grant-in-aid scheme in 1900, it was able to expand, and

3. *Female Missionary Intelligence* (1 August 1864): 159–160.

4. Diocesan Girls' School and Orphanage Under the Patronage of Her Excellency Lady Blake, Hong Kong, March 1899, Hong Kong Public Record Office (HKPRO), HKMS94-1-06.

## Chapter 13

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# Sports

Robyn Lamsam (1994)

Throughout its history, DGS has been renowned for cultivating a unique environment of excellence, hand in hand with the school's emphasis on the all-round development of each individual student. Much of the school's strong reputation stems from its long-standing and successful sporting heritage that has produced outstanding athletes and stellar sporting achievements. From rudimentary beginnings, guided by the firm hands of forward-thinking and inspirational leadership, the physical education (PE) curriculum and sporting programmes have developed exponentially. DGS girls have gone on to represent the school and Hong Kong, winning multiple accolades at all levels of domestic and international sporting competitions including the Olympics, Asian Games, and World Championships.

During the nineteenth century, girls were discouraged from being active, and there were very few opportunities, if any, for them to take part in sports or other extracurricular activities. In 1913, however, the newly built DGS campus at 1 Jordan Road boasted coveted facilities including a tennis court and a playing field, which allowed more girls to take up sports at school, an uncommon privilege at the time. As the Hong Kong government began to promote physical exercise for the sake of the overall health and well-being of students,<sup>1</sup> the school grounds were simultaneously expanded. In 1929, DGS employed its first PE mistress to focus on the school's PE programme which mostly consisted of drills that took place on the newly built covered playground.<sup>2</sup> At a time when most Chinese girls were discouraged from playing sports for fear of neglecting their academic studies, DGS was one of the first

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1. W. T. Featherstone, *The Diocesan Boys' School and Orphanage: The History and Records, 1969 to 1929*, 41.

2. "New Pavilion. Diocesan Girls' School Building Opened", *South China Morning Post*, 13 December 1928.



**Figure 13.1:** Rope climbing in the old gymnasium, 1955. Source: *The Quest* 1955, 20.

progressive girls' schools to actively promote them.<sup>3</sup> Gymnastics with small apparatuses including vaults and benches, ropes, softball, rounders, and various forms of Scandinavian, English, and Scottish folk dancing were later incorporated into the curriculum.

Given the influence of the early expatriate PE mistresses, tennis, hockey, and netball are the sports teams with the longest histories at DGS. During Miss Ferguson's tenure, six classes competed for the Lady Ho Tung Challenge Cup in tennis.<sup>4</sup> After the Second World War, rehabilitation of the tennis courts fuelled greater interest in the sport, which led to the institution of the Grace Lo Tennis Cup in 1949.<sup>5</sup> The following year, thirty-two girls took part in the school's first tennis championship in which Margaret Elena (Mussie) Fincher was the Champion in Singles and in Doubles, partnering Margaret Fernanda (Nana) de Carvalho.<sup>6</sup> In 1980, only five years after the establishment of its official tennis team, DGS prevailed in its first interschool championship, and has since won a record thirty-one overall championships. Several DGS tennis players have also represented Hong Kong at the Fed Cup Level, and have triumphed at numerous CRC Hong Kong Open Championships.

DGS has always been very fortunate to have its own playing field, and by the 1930s, school sports days and interschool hockey matches for the Brawn Cup were organised on school grounds.<sup>7</sup> In 1941, led by Captain Eva Churn, the DGS hockey team competed in the Ladies League against some of the strongest professional clubs in the territory.<sup>8</sup> DGS girls upheld the school's strong hockey tradition in the late 1960s, with Barbara Winyard and

3. *The Quest* (1941): 10.

4. "Diocesan Girls' School Annual Prize Giving", *South China Morning Post*, 8 March 1924.

5. Speech Day Booklet, 1949, 6.

6. *The Quest* (1950): 18.

7. "School Sports: Diocesan Girls' School Annual Meeting List of Winners", *South China Morning Post*, 10 April 1936; "Brawn Cup Matches", *South China Morning Post*, 10 February 1936.

8. *The Quest* (1940–1941): 19.

Kim Fenton the only schoolgirls selected for the Colony XI to play international matches against the Australian National Team. They were later joined by Pamela Baker against the Japanese National XI Hagaromo Team. In 1969, the DGS Team A XI won the Hong Kong Ladies' League Seven-A-Side Tournament and Gremlin's Cup.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, despite efforts to promote the sport and continued participation in the Hong Kong School Sports Federation (HKSSF) League, interest in hockey appears to have waned considerably.

Netball was always one of the most popular ball games at DGS. It was taught in PE lessons so that girls of all abilities were able to master the rules of the game. By 1941, in addition to interhouse and interclass competitions, the school had a flourishing interschool netball team captained by Patricia Kotewall, which won the Silver Cup and Joint School Knockout Tournament.<sup>10</sup> Today, interest in the sport holds steady in both the Senior and Junior schools, as well as amongst old girls. The Diocesan Old Girls' Association (DOGA) Netball Team was established in 2000 and has since competed in the Hong Kong Ladies Open League for twenty consecutive years, winning three championships. For the past two decades, the DOGA has also hosted the popular annual alumni netball tournament.<sup>11</sup>

## The House System

Upon entry into the Junior School or the Senior School, every student was assigned to a house, which gave them a strong sense of identity and solidarity. Initially, the four houses were designated according to colour: Green, Blue, Red, and Yellow.<sup>12</sup> The houses were later renamed after the school's headmistresses—Smith for Red, Skipton for Blue, Sawyer for Green, and Gibbins for Yellow.<sup>13</sup> Then in 1960, Smith House was renamed Hurrell House.<sup>14</sup> As the number of DGS students increased, the school eventually unveiled its fifth house, Symons, in 1987.<sup>15</sup> As house activities played an integral part in school life, girls had a feeling of purpose when called upon to compete as representatives of their houses. Students were encouraged to take part in all interhouse activities, not only with the goal of winning championships and accolades, but also to reinforce house spirit, cultivate sportsmanship, and embrace the underlying notion that every individual's participation was for the overall benefit of the house.

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9. Speech Day Booklet, 1969, 8; *Quest* (1968), 19.

10. *The Quest* (1941): 20.

11. Personal communication with Anna Wong, January 2021.

12. *The Quest* (1947): 31.

13. *The Quest* (1949): 30.

14. "Hurrell House Report", *Quest* (1960): 29.

15. "Symons House Report", *Quest* (1987–1988): 48.

## Chapter 16

# Diocesan Old Girls' Association

Yvonne Chan (1980) and Andrea Lai (1990)

### The Founding Years

The Diocesan Old Girls' Association (DOGA) was founded in 1926 by an enthusiastic group of old girls, who were dedicated to building an alumnae body under the guidance of Miss H. D. Sawyer.<sup>1</sup> While no official records for the first year of DOGA are available, nine letters replying to a tea invitation on 12 July 1926 formed the first informal records of the association's activities. They revealed that Miss Irene Ho Tung (Class of 1917),<sup>2</sup> in the true spirit of DGS fellowship, had undertaken the recruitment of DOGA members over a tea gathering in Shanghai. The letters also disclosed the existence of an inaugural booklet that Miss Maria Kacker (Class of 1920) had circulated to old girls.<sup>3</sup>

Correspondence from 1927 onwards indicated that Miss E. D. Skipton assumed the role of DOGA president from April 1927 to 1929 after her retirement to London.<sup>4</sup> Although the identities of the other officers of its General Committee (GC) could not be confirmed, archives of meeting minutes from May 1929 showed that DOGA was well served by an elected GC of ten. This included a president, a DGS Headmistress as the first vice-president, a second vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and an associate member, who was a member of the DGS staff responsible for arranging DOGA activities at school. Convenors

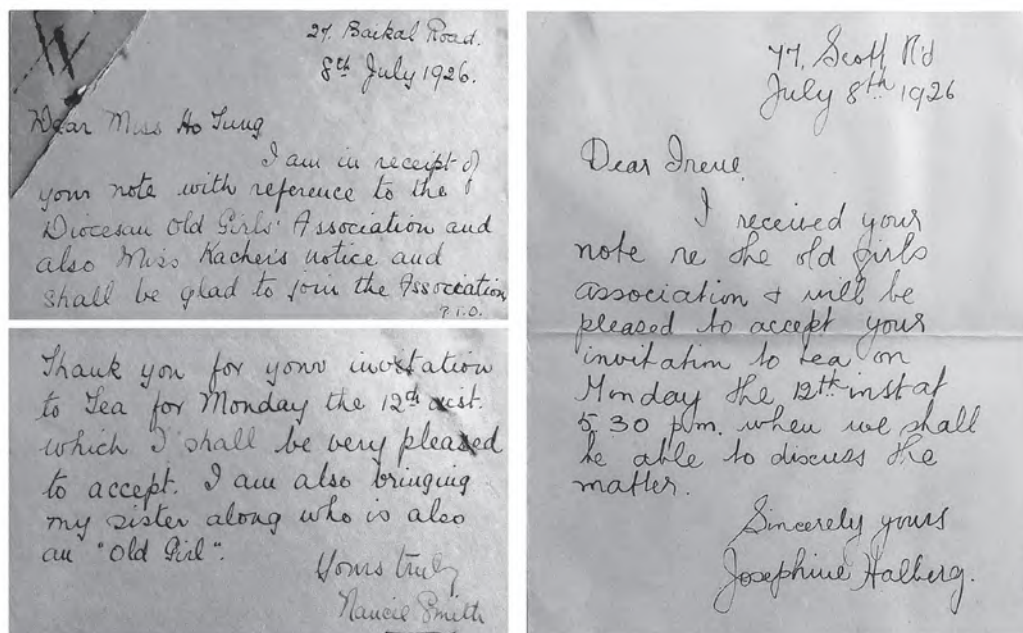
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1. "The Diocesan Old Girls' Association Section", *The Quest* (1941): 21.

2. 鄭宏泰、黃紹倫，《三代婦女傳奇：何家女子》（香港：三聯書店，2010），180.

3. "Old Girls' Section", *Quest* (1964): 92.

4. Letter to Miss E. D. Skipton from the DOGA Hon Secretary, 30 April 1927, DOGA Archives; Memorandum from Mrs A. E. Matthews to Miss M. Kacker, 9 May 1928, DOGA Archives.



**Figure 16.1:** Letters from alumnae in Shanghai to Miss Irene Ho Tung, 1926. Source: DOGA Archives.

for sports, entertainment, and catering were also appointed from members to assist in the organisation of events.

The association's inception years were preoccupied with increasing alumnae membership through the organisation of activities. With fifty-eight members on board by its second year, DOGA's GC sought support for its first social function in 1927—a dance held at DGS on 27 May, with mah-jong and bridge available beforehand. Sporting activities, being at the heart of DGS culture, became the focus of the committee's efforts. Tailored blue sports blazers, badges, and brooches were made for sale, and a full range of sports activities were offered. These included tennis on DGS courts on Saturdays, hockey on Fridays and Saturdays, bathing launches (boating trips) leaving once a week on Thursdays from Queen's Pier at 5:20 pm, and physical culture (physical fitness) classes with instructors on request. An ambitious project was explored by the committee in August 1927—to build a members' clubhouse, modelled on the same lines as the Kowloon Football Club, which had a wooden structure with a veranda around it.<sup>5</sup> The pavilion was to be located on the new school playground, with permission from DGS. However, government grants in 1928 partially funded a new sports pavilion for the school on the same playground. This might have caused DOGA to eventually abandon its clubhouse project in April 1928.

5. Letter to Miss Grose from the DOGA Honorary Secretary, 16 August 1927, DOGA Archives.



Giving back was a priority of the association, and the annual school bazaar was an opportunity for old girls to raise funds through serving tea and selling handicrafts at the DOGA stall. However, astute investment of the association's reserves was seen as the best way of ensuring long-term support for the school. Under the stewardship of Miss W. Robinson, the president of DOGA, the association's reserves grew sufficiently in 1931 to allow a \$2,000 investment in 6 per cent yielding Hong Kong Government Bonds. This funded the establishment of a DOGA scholarship in 1932, which enabled an award of \$60 each year to a Class IV (equivalent to Form 3 from 1951 onwards) student of merit, as well as further donations towards sports shields and school activities.

To forge a closer bond with existing students, DOGA welcomed graduating classes as guests to annual dinners, and invited Classes I to IV (equivalent to Lower 6 to Form 3) to participate in "At Home" (events held at DGS) socials and sports matches. To further prepare them for life beyond graduation, DOGA offered extracurricular classes to students in cookery, hygiene, physical culture, science, and the arts. Moreover, alumnae members answered to appeals from the Headmistress, Miss H. D. Sawyer, for help towards DGS orphans and to train as Guide officers. Support was also pledged to the new kindergarten in Kowloon Tong, which would be opened to reduce the large class sizes on the Jordan Road campus.<sup>6</sup> As a testament to the service of the association, Bishop R. O. Hall remarked at a School Council meeting that the school was at a loss without a representative from DOGA on its committee. This led to the president of DOGA being invited to become a permanent member of the School Council from 1938 onwards.<sup>7</sup>

## The Post-war Years

The Diocesan Schools were badly damaged during the Second World War and had to appeal for funds in the newspapers. Although DGS was able to restart classes quickly, funding was needed for a new concrete roof and the upkeep of thirty-one orphans.<sup>8</sup> In order to help the school get back on its feet again, Miss A. W. Hurrell, the DGS Headmistress, expressed a strong wish for DOGA to be restarted as soon as possible. Aside from re-equipping classrooms, her requests included support towards reviving the school magazine and sponsorship for school orphans. A special appeal was made to DOGA to seek replacement photographs of Bishop J. C. Hoare (Bishop of Victoria and South China 1898–1906), who revived the Diocesan Female School as the Diocesan Girls' School and Orphanage in 1899, the Rev. N. C. Pope and the Rev. G. R. Lindsay; three former headmistresses, Ms

6. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of DOGA, 27 April 1933.

7. Letter to Mrs A. E. Matthews from Miss H. D. Sawyer, 21 June 1938, DOGA Archives; Miss A. E. Matthews's acceptance letter, 22 June 1938, DOGA Archives.

8. Minutes of a General Committee Meeting of DOGA, 8 January 1947.

## Appendix 1

# Chronicle of Major Events

Year	External	DGS
1842	Ceding of Hong Kong Island to the British	
1843	Ying Wa College moved to Hong Kong	
1858		Founding of <b>Day Girls' School (DGS)</b> by Mrs Lydia Smith in Albany Terrace
1860	Convention of Peking; cession of Kowloon	<b>Diocesan Native Female Training School (DNFTS)</b> founded by Mrs Lydia Smith with Ms Wilson as superintendent
1862	Central School founded	
1863		Miss M. A. W. Eaton took over as superintendent of DNFTS; DNFTS moved to new premises on IL831, corner of Bonham Road and Eastern Street
1864		Miss Eaton attacked
1865		Miss Eaton resigned
1866		Miss M. J. Oxlad became the superintendent; name of school changed to <b>Diocesan Female School (DFS)</b>
1869		DFS closed due to funding problem
1870		<b>Diocesan Home and Orphanage (DHO)</b> , coeducational, established in January 1870 in the same premises with Mr W. M. B. Arthur as headmaster
1873	Grant-in-aid Code introduced	



Year	External	DGS
1878		Mr Arthur left; crisis in DHO; attempts to reorganise as the DFS under the Female Education Society failed; the business community faction of DHO School Committee gradually changed DHO to a boys' school; DHO joined grant-in-aid scheme
1879		Mr G. H. Piercy became headmaster. Only day girls in DHO
1886	Cambridge Local Examinations introduced in Hong Kong	
1889	Oxford Local Examinations replaced Cambridge Local Examinations	
1892		All day girls transferred to Fairlea School; DHO renamed <b>Diocesan School and Orphanage (DSO)</b> and subsequently became Diocesan Boys' School
1894	Bubonic plague hit Hong Kong; First Sino-Japanese War	
1898	New Territories leased to the British for 99 years	
1899		<b>Diocesan Girls' School and Orphanage</b> founded at Rose Villa West; Miss E. Skipton as headmistress
1900		Diocesan Girls' School and Orphanage renamed <b>Diocesan Girls' School (DGS)</b> ; DGS became a grant-in-aid school
1901	Education Committee appointed to review education	
1903	1903 Grant Code introduced	School expanded to include Rose Villa East
1911	HKU established	
1912	Republic of China founded	
1913	First Education Ordinance passed; all schools with 10 or more pupils had to be registered; Subsidy System introduced for vernacular schools	DGS moved to new campus at 1, Jordan Road, Kowloon
1914	First World War began	
1918	First World War ended	New extension completed
1921		Miss Skipton retired, succeeded by Miss C. A. Ferguson; two DGS girls entered HKU for academic year 1921/1922
1922– 1924		School motto “Daily Giving Service” and extracurricular activities introduced
1924	School Health Programme: medical examination of students and inspection of premises	Miss Ferguson left for England due to illness; Miss H. D. Sawyer as acting headmistress

Year	External	DGS
1925	Strike-boycott began and ended the following year	Miss Ferguson died, and Miss Sawyer succeeded as headmistress
1926		Diocesan Old Girls' Association formed; the land west of the school was granted to the school as playground
1928		A pavilion (covered playground) for PE built
1931	Japanese aggression in Manchuria	
1932		Bishop Ronald O. Hall, Chairman of School Council, arrived in Hong Kong
1933		Off-site DGS kindergarten founded in Kowloon Tong
1937	China declared war with Japan; School Certificate Examinations at the end of Class 2 and Matriculation Examinations end of Class 1	Business course introduced for those who passed the School Certificate Examination and did not wish to enter university
1938	Fall of Guangzhou to Japan	Miss Sawyer retired at the end of 1938
1939		Miss E. M. Gibbins succeeded as headmistress
1940		1940 Wing built; Chinese introduced to the curriculum
1941	1941 Grant Code enacted; Second World War broke out; fall of Hong Kong on Christmas Day; Japanese occupation began	First volume <i>The Quest Magazine of the Diocesan Girls' School (The Quest)</i> published; Miss Gibbins interned in Stanley Camp; the school taken over as headquarters of Japanese Gendarmerie
1945	Liberation of Hong Kong	Miss Gibbins repossessed the school and left for England; school reopened on 1 October 1945 by Miss C. J. Anderson, acting headmistress until December; Mr J. L. Young Saye acting headmaster until March 1946
1946	1941 Grant Code amended	Miss A. W. Hurrell arrived in March to be headmistress; house system started; covered playground converted to a dormitory
1947	Amended 1941 Grant Code implemented and further amended	DGS separated into Senior School and Junior School
1948		Semi-permanent Junior School built
1949	PRC founded; Hong Kong Schools Music Festival began; Joint Primary 6 examination implemented; expansion of primary education began	No more small boys admitted to DGS
1950	Korean War began, UN embargo on China	Modern stream introduced; 1950 Wing built; school divided into an academic stream and a modern stream

Year	External	DGS
1951	Fisher's Report published on government expenditure on education; Anglo-Chinese primary schools changed to 6 years instead of 4	Junior School reorganised to 6 years; Parent Teacher Association formed; Miss Hurrell retired; Miss M. Fisher as acting headmistress
1953	Upper 6 form added to secondary schools	Mrs C. J. Symons became headmistress
1954		New kindergarten in the Green hut
1956	All grant schools to have 30%–35% of Form 1 places for "outside" students who passed the Joint Primary 6 Examination	Senior School increased from 2 to 3 classes per form; old 1913 building to be replaced
1959		Centenary Building, Assembly Hall, and Gymnasium completed; Junior School became a private school from September 1959
1960		Centenary celebration
1962	Joint Primary 6 examination renamed Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE)	
1964		The kindergarten was abolished
1965	White Paper on Education Policy in Hong Kong published	Swimming Pool built
1966	Bishop Hall retired, succeeded by Bishop Gilbert Baker; Star Ferry Riots; Cultural Revolution in China began	
1967	1967 riots in Hong Kong	Sex education introduced; expansion of the Junior School to 2 classes per level for all levels
1968	Compulsory SSEE for all primary 6 students	Junior School students started taking SSEE
1969		The Council of the Diocesan Girls' School Incorporation Ordinance (Chapter 1124) enacted; lectures on civic responsibilities and political theories introduced
1971	Compulsory free primary education	
1972	President Nixon's visit to China; Sir Murray MacLehose announced 10-year housing programme	Sixth Form Centre opened
1973	Unified Code of Aid	Closure of boarding school
1974	White Paper on Secondary Education in Hong Kong over the Next Decade; expansion of secondary education; ICAC established	
1975		New Junior School built. Mrs R. Benton became Junior School headmistress (half-time); Junior School officially known as DGJS

Year	External	DGS
1976		Senior School increased from 3 to 4 classes per form, admitting “outside girls” to 50% of Form 1 places, in anticipation of the introduction of Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA)
1978	SSEE replaced by Academic Aptitude Test and students allocated secondary places by SSPA System. In grant schools 50% of Form 1 places allocated to “outside” students by 1982; compulsory free nine years education; White paper on Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education	Mrs Benton retired; succeeded by Mrs D. Blomfield (full-time)
1981	Junior Secondary Education Assessment (JSEA) examination for Form 3 students for places in senior secondary schools	Form 3 students began to participate in JSEA
1982	Llewellyn Report of a review of education in Hong Kong	Edmund Cheung hut and China Light and Power hut added
1983		School celebrated Dr Symons 30th anniversary as headmistress
1984	Sino-British Declaration signed; Education Commission formed; seven Education Commission reports (ECR1-7) published between 1984 and 1997	
1985		Dr Symons retired; succeeded by Mrs Elim Lau as Senior School headmistress; Mrs Doris Ho appointed supervisor of both Senior and Junior Schools
1989	Tiananmen Square Incident	Mrs Blomfield retired; Mrs Rebecca Yip succeeded as Junior School headmistress
1990		DGS 130th anniversary celebration
1993		Extension Phase I completed; <i>VA magazine</i> published for the first time
1994		Science class per form increased from 1 to 2 from Form 4 upwards; computer literacy programme and development of information technology (IT) began
1996		Extension Phase II completed; Junior School increased from 2 to 3 classes per level
1997	Hong Kong returned to China; Avian influenza; Asian financial crisis	
1999		Mrs Elim Lau and Mrs Rebecca Yip retired. Mrs Stella Lau and Mrs Emily Dai took over as headmistress of Senior and Junior Schools respectively

Year	External	DGS
2000		140th anniversary celebration
2001		DOGA Place built
2003	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) pandemic	School closed for a period between March and May because of SARS epidemic.
2005		SIP Building completed; Senior School changed to Direct Subsidy Scheme; Junior and Senior schools in “through train” mode; Senior School increased from 4 to 5 classes per level
2006		DGS became an “Affiliated Member” of the Anglican (Hong Kong) Secondary Schools Council Limited (Anglican Council)
2008	Global financial crisis	DGS <i>Kaleidoscope</i> first published
2009/ 2010	Hong Kong education system to become 6-3-3-4 by 2011/2012; introduction of New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum	School Redevelopment Project began; both Senior and Junior schools moved to “hotel schools”; NSS curriculum began
2010		150th anniversary; DGS’s first comprehensive review by Education Bureau
2011/ 2012	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination replaced Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination	Moved back to redeveloped campus at 1, Jordan Road in July 2011; Junior School increased enrolment from 3 to 4 classes per level, starting from Primary 1
2014	Occupy Central or Umbrella Movement	
2016		Mrs Emily Dai retired in December 2016
2017		Mrs Annie Lee succeeded as headmistress of the Junior School in January 2017

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