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Wah Yan College, Hong Kong

「Wah Yan At War - The Wartime Stories of Wah Yan
College, Hong Kong 1937-49」

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Learning on Hong Kong's History and Culture**

WAH YAN COLLEGE, HONG KONG

***Wah Yan at War - the
Wartime Stories of
Wah Yan College,
Hong Kong 1937 – 49***

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Abstract

The Second World War was arguably the most challenging period in the history of Hong Kong. During these turbulent years, Hong Kong fought, succumbed, and re-emerged. Amidst the chaos, stories were left untold and heroes unsung. Wah Yan College, Hong Kong was one of the very few schools that managed to survive the Japanese occupation almost uninterrupted, despite heavy losses.

This paper investigates the war time stories of Hong Kong through the lens of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong. It will be divided into three periods, namely (1) 1937 – 41: the looming war, (2) 1941 – 45: the Japanese occupation, and (3) 1945 – 49: post-war reconstruction.

Before exploring the primary sources, the paper includes a short introduction and a literature review of the historical background. In the main part of this paper, we focus on the primary sources in the hope of constructing a coherent narrative of the Wah Yan story during the three periods mentioned above. The primary sources include (and are not limited to) the Principal's logbook, the Star (Wah Yan's school annual), Japanese and British official documents.

In Part (1), the stories of Wahyanites supporting the Chinese war effort will be explored. In Part (2), the focus will be on the tremendous challenges Wah Yan faced during the Japanese occupation. Finally, Part (3) will focus on how Wah Yan expanded after the Japanese occupation and adapted to the ever-changing political climate in China.

The final part of this paper is a discussion of how the Wah Yan experience reflects the wartime story of Hong Kong as a whole. We would argue that the experience and the involvement of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong aligned with Hong Kong's historical development, and that it is an indispensable case study. As Hongkongers and Wahyanites, we believe it is our duty to honour our predecessors' great deeds by telling their stories, whether at war or not.

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