

## Missionary makes Martyr

Brother Francis was facing a huge challenge in faith: with the great exploitations of Christopher Columbus the Church was interested in spreading the word of God to the so-called "New World". "So His name and grace could reach the end of the Earth..." The calling of the Pope kept ringing in his ears. After a sleepless night, which was spent with constant prayers, Brother Francis made up his mind the next morning to join the coming exploring crew.



Unfortunately not every voyager possessed the luck and the navigation skills of Columbus, Brother Francis' and fellow explorers had their ship wrecked in a storm. May be he was truly blessed and charged with a holy mission, Brother Francis survived the shipwreck and reached the shore of an nameless island. He was saved by a tribe that lived on the island, and he gave thanks to God for the miracle. During that time, the tribe was actually facing a plague that had claimed many lives on the island. Coincidentally, Brother Francis was an apothecary by training, and he knew the right kind of herbs that could treat their symptoms. He figured out that the plague might have come from the eating habit of the tribe: eating animal raw and drinking from contaminated water. So Brother Francis also taught them how to start a fire and cook. Soon after these, the tribe recovered from the sickness and was happy to have Brother Francis among them.

"Thanks be to the Lord, and your plan is mysterious! You brought me here with a storm but with Your grace and preparation You turned me into a right person who could complete this mission! And now these people shall hear your words!" Said Brother Francis, when he gave thanks to his God after all that had happened.

But the god that the tribe worshipped would not have heard from Brother Francis. The chief of the tribes brought up an interesting idea, he body of man. Since he is the god of fire, let's return him to the Nirvana with fire!"

While Brother Francis was still in his sweet dream, the tribe people seized him and tied him up to a pile of wood. Then they set the wood on fire. Brother Francis shouted in agony, "I healed you people, and I taught you how to set fire and cook. How dare you people turn against me? Lord, haven't you sent me here to preach your words? And why you reward your faithful servant with this tragic death? Have mercy on me! Have mercy on me!" Brother Francis continued to scream for some moments until his last breath: he was burnt to death and made a martyr as a missionary.

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Clinical Pharmacy does not just happen to be established in the Western World, because everything happens for a reason. With a group of hospital pharmacists having certified by the Board of Pharmacy Specialty last year, we have already proved ourselves in terms of credentialing. However, as discussed in the last story, developing clinical pharmacy in Hong Kong will take us something more than knowledge, skill, proper need assessment and determination or dedication of clinical pharmacy practitioners. May I humbly suggest that the possible missing pieces are a competency framework for career development of pharmacists, the spirit of sharing, and most importantly leadership of clinical pharmacists?

History is our best teacher. With reference to the rapid growth of clinical pharmacy practice in the UK in the past ten years or so, we may declare that the reason behind is an well-established competency framework starting from junior rotational pharmacists who gain exposure to different specialties of practice, to the rank of specialist pharmacists who may be more focused in one or two streams, and to the top, lead pharmacist of a clinical specialty or an administrative personnel. The path is clear, and opportunities are for those who are prepared. Apart from this, a new breed of pharmacists emerges: pharmacist with special interest in teaching and education\*. These people may not be the best of the UK pharmacists in terms of clinical knowledge, but they are equipped with the skills of practice supervision, plus an appreciation of supporting educational theory and standards. They develop their trainees not only by making themselves available to discuss problems; nonetheless, they also work collaboratively with fellow pharmacists to contribute to a work-based learning culture and foster the trainee's learner autonomy. Through use of appraisals and meetings, they ensure the trainees are making the necessary practice-based and educational progress.

We have been quite preoccupied with the idea that we do not have clinical pharmacy because



we do not have the necessary knowledge, just like the tribe in the story was only obsessed with fire. However, we did not really touch into the issue that development of clinical pharmacy demands a new pharmacy culture. Soft skills like communication, teamwork, leadership may be more important than knowledge to foster a clinical pharmacy service that is still in its infancy. The trick may be as simple as just being helpful, humble and friendly with the people you work with. After all, what we are asking for is to be recognised as a member of a multidisciplinary team that could maximise the efficiency of patient care in a holistic approach - just like Brother Francis wished to be accepted by the tribe and open their ears and minds for the words of God. We have now more and more overseas-trained pharmacists working among us, and they are great ambassadors of the different pharmacy cultures of the western world. Let us have an open mind and let them speak to us what they have witnessed in the "New World"! Since they have been trained and brought up in a culture that promotes clinical pharmacy, we may be enlightened by their experience in how we should develop our strategy for the quest ahead of us.

Whatever the reason that brings you back here with us, my salute to all overseas-trained pharmacists who choose to join us in the quest for a better pharmaceutical care for the people of Hong Kong.

**Trailblazer**