



Two Ears But Only One Mouth

Lessons from Yunnan; Insights from Proverbs

By Dr Tan Poh Kiang, Editorial Board Member

jog. At a bend, there gathered a group of official photographers, shouting at him to smile for an official picture.

The following excerpt is hilarious:

But at that moment, tired as I was, I noticed that a middle aged lady, who was a head shorter than me, was about to overtake me. There I was looking quite athletic in my running gear and there she was in her loose knee length shorts and wearing shoes made of cloth (without any arch support) and she was overtaking me. To make matters worse, she was carrying an open umbrella while she ran (Yunnan ladies don't like the sun).

My immediate response was, "Oh no! Don't take pictures of me being overtaken by her!"

My ego could not stomach that. What a loss of face if the newspapers or some website show pictures of me being overtaken by a stout woman running in baggy shorts with an open umbrella in her hand.

Well, I could pretend to tie my shoelaces. That quick thinking would save me from embarrassment or that quick action would allow self-pride to once more overcome me.

Lai Yong crossed the finish line of the ten-kilometer race, or what was supposed to be the finish line as the judges had packed up and left for lunch! Only his friends were there to invite him to lunch and remind him not to take the race too seriously. In his final analysis, he had this thought:

The Lord tears down the proud man's house but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact. Proverbs 15:25

I thought about running the race again and would probably come in among the last few, but I felt assured as the medical tent was still maintained for the humble rearmost runners. We will have the honour of eating a humble meal with the first-aiders while the important people will eat with the winners of the race.

If being last teaches me not to be proud and to be in the Lord's tender care, so be it. Better that than be torn apart by pride.

It is a small book but wit and wisdom come through virtually every story told by one who has been tutored by life as it is lived in Yunnan. I would strongly encourage you to order one for yourself and a few as gifts for your family and friends. It is a worthy cause as the proceeds go to the funds of the two schools that support the continuation of community services by KCPSS and CHIJ KC students in Yunnan. **SMA**

For orders, please email Dorothy Tay at dorothy_tay_wyn_hui@kcpss.moe.edu.sg



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Dr Tan Lai Yong is a good friend and when he requested that I write a review for his latest book – so that *SMA News* readers will enjoy his anecdotes and support a worthy cause – I was more than happy to oblige. Since 1996, he and his wife, Lay Chin have ventured from the comforts of Singapore to Yunnan province where they immersed themselves and their two kids in the local way of life. Over those fourteen years, Lai Yong has accomplished much – trained numerous village doctors, served many of the locals in big and small ways, received a number of awards, and published a few books. It is the publication of this latest book by two schools, Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School (KCPSS) and CHIJ Katong Convent, that I realise one of the gifts Lai Yong has given these students is the unique opportunity to serve in Yunnan as part of their Community Involvement Projects (CIP).

Wonderfully weaved into each interesting story is a precious gem of wisdom, gleaned from Lai Yong's insightful observations of life in China, and his careful reflection from the Book of Proverbs from the Bible. One story that made me laugh came from section three regarding the loss of face: He was invited to participate in "Race to the Source of the Pearl River" as a special guest. At the eight kilometer mark as the gradient became considerably steep, he slowed down to a