THE HAUNTED DBS

The grounds of DBS have a very remote air about them. They are nearly all bounded by thick growths of trees and bamboo, which serves to keep out the rest of the world. The structures, with their pre-war architecture, seem so permanent, so solemn. At night, only occasional howls or cries of some strange creature break the eerie silence. If one is alone on the campus, the scenery surely quickens the pulse – the dark corners, corridors and entrances are filled with mystery and intrigue that seems so “beyond” us. Thought the air is still, it sometimes feels highly charged with “things” and one’s thoughts would undoubtedly drift into the realm of ghosts, spirits or other superstitions.

Reports of encounters with ghosts have long existed in DBS. Ask any boarder: he would surely tell you one or two ghost stories thought they may only be handed-down accounts. Even educated grownups like duty-masters who have lived on the campus have experienced events that they could not explain. Just for interest’s sake, here are some of the tales told by residents of our school. The names of some of these persons have been withheld.

Twenty odd years ago, a teacher moved into his new flat on the school premises. To his surprises, he found 2 bottles of milk delivered to his doorstep every morning. He was very grateful and tried to find our who had sent them. He asked everyone, but nobody knew and the question of the anonymous milkman remained unanswered. Time went on but the delivery never ceased. Rumors began to circulate that the milk was delivered by ghosts. Some believed it, but there was no definite explanation. To add on to this the teacher involved had an accident. He was not badly hurt, but he claimed afterwards that the accident was not because of carelessness, bad judgement or any fault in the car. He described the incident as being “willed by spirits”…

A senior boarder was studying for his exams until very late. At about 3:00 a.m., he was an amah soundlessly collecting all the dirty clothes inside the laundry box just outside the toilet. He could clearly distinguish her features despite the poor light. He was rather surprised at how late she had come, but decided he had more important things to do. The next morning he work up feeling uneasy about the old amah and told the other boarders about her. His description of her exactly matched that of a female amah, who had died many weeks before…

A boarder was lifting weights in the Sports Room. From nowhere a gust of wind brought a heap of rubbish to his feet. Noticing something special in the trash, he picked up a piece of paper and looked carefully at it. It was a sheet of devil’s money used for sacrificing to the spirits. He felt ridiculous, threw the paper back, and forgot about the whole thing. He then went to the dormitory and fell asleep. Suddenly he woke up and found the room pitch black even though it was only afternoon! He noticed a rectangular patch of light hanging in mid-air. It seemed to be the devil’s money! He ran out of the room and went back to the Sports Room to look for the piece of paper he had thrown
away. He was sure that he had thrown the devil’s money back amongst the pile of rubbish, but it was not there now, nor was it anywhere in the room…

In the middle of the night a new Fourth form boarder was awakened by the sound of a ping pong game in the Covered Playground. This itself was not scary, but the boarder never heard the ball being missed. On top of that the lights in the covered Playground were off! The incident was regarded as a joke and everyone thought the boarder had a nut loose somewhere. Then the next morning, another boarder claimed that he had heard sounds of a mysterious tennis game during the night. He said that he had suddenly woken up and had heard the thuds and bounces of a tennis ball on the tennis courts. The odd thing was that whenever he tried to listen carefully to the noise, it faded out, but when he tried to listen carefully to the noise, it faded out, but when he tried to go to sleep there was the sound of the tennis ball bouncing around again. He claimed that the sounds he heard were so crystal clear that he had even heard the swishes of some unknown tennis racquets striking the ball to and fro. This story was backed up by that of another boarder, whose experience that night was exactly the same; even more he heard the scratching sound of a tennis racquet as it chipped the found! (At least we know that one of the ghosts was not a good tennis player.) The news of this incident was no longer greeted by skepticism, but by fearful belief. A senior prefect who did not believe in ghosts scolded the boarders for their apparent silliness. That night, the prefect turned believer when the ghosts "protested" to him and put on a grand tennis match. He was so scared he just could not help waking up half the boarding school. A few years later some boarders living in the same dormitory had the same experience. This time the noises were also heard by the Warden…

Late one night, one boarder could not go to sleep and was half awake. In his drowsiness he was a figure standing beside his bed. He asked who “it” was and the figure expressionlessly gave a name. Eventually the boarder dozed off. The next morning he recalled the incident and on sudden impulse, he went to the memorial plaque outside the office which honors DBS heroes who gave their lives in protecting the colony during World War II, and there, on the plaque, was the name the strange figure whispered to him…

Here is another account of a mysterious event, as told by our Former Headmaster, and which is closely associated with a famous Hong Kong legend. In 1841, when the British took over Hong Kong, a Chinese Fortune teller foretold that a sacred tortoise would climb up and reach Victoria Peak in exactly one hundred years. According to him, that year a great disaster would take place in Hong Kong. In 1941, Hong Kong fell into Japanese hands. People considered this to be the tragic fulfillment of the prediction made 100 years before; Hong Kong was no under the curse of the tortoise. The curse was said to be lifted in 1945 with the end of World War II, and very little was said about the tortoise incident from then on. Then in 1956, a strange thing happened. The school was at the time undergoing construction of the laboratories. The present junction of the Form 1 corridor and the stairs leading to the New New Wing (Form 4 corridor) was a dead end wall . That year the wall was torn down and fresh cement was laid to form a new floor. The morning after the cement was put in, a tortoise was found stuck in the cement. It was thought that the creature had wandered up to school overnight and had been trapped in
the wet cement, but when people tried to free it, the tortoise suddenly vanished into thin air, leaving behind only its foot-prints in the cement. The mark can still be seen on the floor today…

Not long ago, a boarder rounded the corner near the toilet late at night As he went round, a Japanese soldier in full military dress charged at him with a deadly expression on his face and with his sword raised, prepared to cut the unfortunate boarder into pieces. The poor fellow fainted without a scream and was found lying on the ground the next morning. When he told his friends what had happened, a few believed him but most of the others laughed at him…

There have been many reports of Japanese soldiers seen sitting in corners, even in the corridors of the boarding school. Many past students have also caught fleeting glimpses of dismembered heads of Japanese soldiers hanging in midair outside windows. The sounds of some strange march, of boots, of unknown soldiers clicking in perfect unison have often been heard in the boarding school.

It should not be new to most of us that DBS was a hospital in World War II during the Japanese occupation. Many a person met a painful death here. The present garage was a morgue; many corpses were buried in the field. These may be the reasons why so many ghost sightings in our school have been associated with those who suffered or died in that terrible conflict – World War II. If for nothing else, these ghost stories remind us of one of the darkest period in the history of mankind; when there seemed to be no light at the end of the dark tunnel – the war.

One last note: Prior to 1968, there had been numerous sightings of a figure dressed in white, standing motionless in front of the tap outside the garage. In 1968 when the swimming pool was under construction, two sets of skeletons were found together with some Japanese swords (they are now on display in front of the office) the skeletons were not found lying flat but doubles up, certainly not the proper way to bury bodies. The bones were removed and since that time, there have been no more reported sightings of the mysterious white figure.

To comfort the superstitious amongst us, there has been an appreciable drop in the number of ghosts seen. So these are the ghost stories, preserved for posterity’s sake lest they be forgotten. They are a part of our tradition, a part of our heritage. And the rest is up to your imagination. DBS ghost stories: believe it or not…