

Finding the Way

Over the weekend I was thinking about the annual Sports Day last Thursday and the excellent performances of our students, teachers and parents in a full range of track and field events. There were many personal best times and distances achieved with six new records set. In short, it was a fine day matched only by the weather.

What we did take for granted, however, was that all these fine accomplishments were based on clearly defined markings and directions. The track sprint lanes were accurate to the centimetre, as were the jump boards at the end of the run-up lanes. The discus, shot and javelin events were held using prescribed markings. Every event on Sports Day was carefully controlled, apart from the confusion experienced by some of our competitors at the relay interchanges where finding your lane proved to be a little challenging.

All competitors and officials relied on these markings in order to find their way. I would like you to think for a moment about what it would have been like if you could not have seen those markings. Finding your way in the dark would cause great confusion and no small measure of apprehension. Thus, there was no doubt that a highlight of Sports Day was the participation of two of our visually impaired boys. They found their way thanks to the assistance of other boys but in their minds knew the direction they wished to take. Theirs was a wonderful achievement and I thank spectators and competitors alike who understood their accomplishment and gave such warm encouragement and applause.

Last week also witnessed another fine achievement by four of our old boys. I refer to the Form 5 graduating Class of 1966 whom once again completed the gruelling Oxfam Trailwalker along the McLehose trail in the New Territories. Their path was clearly defined with distance markers every 500 metres. Day and night, teams of walkers and runners followed the trail, eagerly counting the markers from 1 through to 200. The achievement of SPC66, as the team of four old boys was called, was commendable given that each member was over 60 years of age. Two years ago they completed the hike in 47 hours. This year their time was 37 hours. Every weekend they trained for this event, spending many hours on sections of the McLehose Trail. They came to know the path like the back of their hand and had no difficulty in finding their way.

The same could not be said of my efforts to drive in Kowloon. I have no difficulty negotiating the roads of Hong Kong Island. Unfortunately, my

navigational skills decline rapidly once I emerge from the cross-harbour tunnel at Hung Hom. What a difference two kilometres can make! Left behind is the familiarity of Hong Kong for the unknown landscape of the Kowloon Peninsular.

Yesterday, I drove to Kam Shan Country Park to see the monkeys. An hour spent studying a road map prior to leaving my apartment ensured that I arrived at my destination without a mistake. With my confidence high, the return journey was effortless. I had, of course, nothing to be concerned about as the road to Kam Shan Country Park was well marked. I would suggest that we all experience a degree of apprehension and nervousness when it comes to finding the way, particularly for the first time.

If you had been observant you would have noticed some small changes in the Hall today. The stage behind me has been raised in preparation for Speech Day this Thursday. I am speaking at a new lectern, one that matches the new wood tones of the rest of the Hall. However, the College badge on this lectern and on the smaller one in the balcony came from the original lecterns that were made in the 1960s.

If you entered the Hall downstairs from the rear you would have seen the watchwords Justice, Honour, Truth and Virtue over the doors. This will serve as a constant reminder to all of the precepts we hold so dearly. Only the boys sitting downstairs and toward the front, however, would have noticed what is written on the wooden panel of the balcony. My original idea was for a saying from the Bible, written in Chinese. The Chaplain, however, suggested instead a saying by Confucius and with this new idea I asked the Chinese Department for an appropriate educational saying by Confucius.

What is now written in Chinese across this panel could not be more appropriate.

志於道 據於德 依於仁 遊於藝

In English it reads: "I set my heart on the Way, base myself on virtue, lean upon benevolence for support and take my recreation in the arts".

Confucian and Christian teachings have a commonality in that we are all looking for the Way. Finding the Way applies not only to the Sport's Day or to the McLehose trail or to driving in Kowloon but also to something far more important in our lives and in the world to come.

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