

Dear Boys

It is a true honor to address you all this morning as the 10<sup>th</sup> Headmaster of the Diocesan Boys School.

I would like to thank our former Headmaster, Mr. Chang and the School Committee for appointing me as Dean to serve the school in IB, ECA, Music and Student Support. Above all, I must Thank Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Lai, my Headmasters when I was a student and teacher. I want to reiterate this morning that any good you see in me is because I have been blessed with wonderful role-models and father figures.

I will never tire of telling you about Mr. James Lowcock: That he had the incredible wisdom to discipline a boy and lift him up at the same time. That without fail, he would care for his students with a wonderfully selfless heart. Most of all I want to tell you how he always inspired his boys to follow their hearts and seek their true calling in life.

I would also like to salute Mr. Jacland Lai. During his tenure, he always exemplified a noble consistency of a Chinese gentleman; and did things for the school that no one saw. For example, finding ways to fix the sewage, or mending the roof. He always maintained a low profile and served the school's greater good. We were at a period of time when our funding is no more than a normal sized school; but Mr. Lai somehow managed to utilize this money prudently. We did not have first class equipments and facilities, but we all loved this place because we could grow up here and call it our home.

Someone once said this: 拔萃 是一輩子的事.

Yes, our school is worth a lifetime of dedication. These words never rang as true as this past February when Mr. Lowcock passed on and went to Heaven. During the memorial service, boys came back, fully dressed in their school uniform: With blazers, school ties and shirts in tact. The hall was filled like it is now. Except the boys were grown men, in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s. Their love for Mr. Lowcock never faded. The kinship these men forged and the brotherhood they built with each other lasted a lifetime.

For those who are new to our school: I can tell you that DBS is a wondrous place. But I will leave it to you to discover why and how.

As you all know, DBS is an institution that has to fight battles on many fronts.

In sports we have a different archenemy in every sport but in every sport we are everyone's archenemy. It is the same in music and other competitions. In academics we are one of the first schools to offer 2 curriculums and we expect that we do equally well in both.

## **Encouraged about the New Year**

Gentlemen, I have a good feeling about this new year: Not because of a blind optimism but from what I see from the teachers and the students alike. When I passed by various departmental meetings. I sensed a renewed fervor and energy to achieve something outstanding this year.

During the summer, when most students were resting and doing nothing, our boys have been hard at work. I saw students attending classes in the summer tutorial sessions; I saw Mr. Cheng and Mr. Ho leading the Athletics team training; Mr. Woo and the Fencing team convened to find the best way forward for their team; Mr. Cheung, and Mr. Lau leading the football team and the basketball team to intense preparations. The musicians won a record 4<sup>th</sup> world Championships in 3 continents and went undefeated for the past 6 years.

The administrative staff in the school took very little rest during the past two months. And of course, the new Deans and the curriculum coordinators have been at work since march trying their best to plan efficiently for the new year.

**This year, we are asking you to do more. Not less.** We will ask you to give your best efforts not only in the competitions, but also in the training fields and in the classrooms: Because especially with the load that we all have, you must do the majority of your learning during class time.

We are also asking you to plan your life in advance and do everything to the best of your ability. This year at DBS we have many unfinished business to settle and we will need every ounce of your energy to fight through all the challenges. Boys who are taking the NSS, you know how the DSE has changed the nature of the game. A score of 332222 simply will not cut it. And the two languages, Math and LS have now become more important than ever. Boys you only have 65 days in the first term and only 98 days till your DSE mock exams.

This is the nature of DBS boys. We must do many things at the same time and we must do them in an excellent manner. We must not make the same mistake as some young people do, wasting their time in meaningless activities. We are called to fight giants and to slay dragons. The road is tough, but I assure you that the process is just as rewarding.

## **Many of you also asked me about our stance in Moral and National Education Issue:**

This is our position: The Diocesan Boys School will not adopt the MNE curriculum and outline as recommended by the EDB in the year 2012-2013, or in the near future. Our school, along with the Sheng Kung Hui Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong will convene and design our own teaching material that contributes to our collective goal of training our students to be upright citizens of our nation, citizens of the world and citizens of the Kingdom of God.

I hope that you will agree with me that some vital elements must be in place to serve as a foundation before asking loyalty from people.

There is no short cut to this. We believe that the integrity of a nation lies not only in her ability to rejoice in the glorious pages of her history; It also lies in her willingness to face and make amends of the dark chapters of her life.

Before we ask our citizens to pledge allegiance to their country, the people must know that their voice and right to opinions are safe guarded. That discourse is not an act of treason but a way to reach consensus. The strength of our nation must be measured by our willingness to protect the right of those who hold dissenting views. In short, **we must protect your right to disagree with me.**

As the lone bastion of Democracy in the People's Republic of China, the citizens of Hong Kong cannot take this responsibility lightly. We completely understand and appreciate the complexities of running a vast country with a diverse population. But Hong Kong also has her role to play. We must make a stand.

As the leading education institution in Hong Kong, We must do our best to present an open platform for our boys to understand the full spectrum of our nation's history. Our goal is to empower our boys to be independent thinkers - utilizing their full knowledge and discernment, to decide for themselves how best to serve their country.

We believe that there are more ways than one-way to express one's patriotism: And that the adoption or the rejection of the MNE is no measuring stick by any means.

For 10 years, Diocesan Choristers have lifted their voices to the hoisting of our national flag (at the Bauhinia Square on National Day and July 1). Our National Anthem was played on the world stage at least 5 times as our students brought glory to Hong Kong and the great nation of China. In the London Olympics, one of the 4 sprinters of the 4x100 relay is a former DBS boy. I do not know of anyone who does not express pride in being the citizens of our great country.

I can tell you that our teachers have been doing a great job in providing us with a healthy education in character building, in our views of the family, our nation and the world. Mr. Wong, Mr. Im and Mr. Lau, the RS and LS teachers, in their respective subjects have tried their best to present our nation's history in the most comprehensive view possible.

In the greater scheme of things we are not as concerned about which side you are on – whether you lean to the right or to the left. **We are more concerned that you do not cease seeking for the truth.** It does not matter to me if you are a Christian or an atheist as long as you keep searching. Because I believe that the Truth can stand up to scrutiny and Truth will set you free. The greatest theologians and Christian writers: the Apostle Paul, The great modern Christian Thinker: C.S. Lewis and the very Patron Saint of our school's Chapel: St. Augustine were once dissenters of the gospel.

As exemplified by the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life in the 1940's we must not tire in seeking the Lord's will for our lives. **Our goal is not merely to ask you to take a side, or merely to think critically, we are asking you to do the right thing in this convoluted world where everyone claims to have the monopoly on absolute truth.**

I quote from from Mr. Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* "We have learned ... that action springs not from thought but from a readiness for responsibility." Let us take up the responsibility of our individual calling.

So this is the great commission of the DBS to you, the citizens of this great institution. That whether you play the part of a compliant citizen, or a civilized contrarian; or a revolutionary thinker like Dr. Sun:

May you set sail on your journey with Dignity, Honor and Courage.

God bless you all. And God bless the Diocesan Boys School.