

Overcoming one's fears



SAMIR

Samir, transferred in his freshman year, had stayed in the previous school for only two months. 'I couldn't understand a bit there because most of the subjects are taught in Chinese, and I was the only Pakistani kid in the class...' Samir said, with a bit of shyness, but now Samir, in his fourth year of his secondary school life, is totally capable of conducting the interview in Cantonese, 'Things have got much better now coz my Chinese teacher has been working on me for a few years; I do speak in Chinese now.'

We are telling a story of overcoming one's fears.

Samir went to an international primary school where their classes are mostly conducted in English - they only had Chinese class once a week. Samir's family had to move back to Pakistan for a while because of family emergency. He had missed the best time of getting into a compatible school, so he then went to a mainstream CMI school where he faced bullies and found it difficult to fit in.

But how is Salesians of Dons Bosco Ng Siu Mui Secondary School, SDBNSM, different from his previous school, since it's also a CMI school? How did he make it at last? Samir then explained, 'Since my classmates are non-Chinese students (NCS), and our teachers has been adjusting the program, they all just make my life easier. And I am going to take DSE, some of the subjects like Biology and Chemistry, in English so the teachers are conducting the classes, with both NCS and local students, in both Chinese and English in order to cater for everyone.' Thank the teachers in SDBNSM for promoting diversity and inclusion.

Speaking of overcoming difficulties, people from Pakistan are always facing different challenges in their life. Even though some of the programs by RTHK are with Urdu subtitle, people like Samir only watch English clips instead since they couldn't read Urdu at all - Samir said his primary entertainment now was online digital media during the epidemic.

Speech Festival

Samir is proud of his English proficiency. With the supervision of Ms. Ko, our school teacher, he has already won three speech contest awards, in which the contestants have to interpret and develop stories with the outline provided by the contest organisers - there was one time the topic was about how a boy is afraid of dogs; Samir then has developed a story about how he got to the market by taking a detour with his quick-wit. 'The judges said my language was expressive and emotionally persuasive - probably because I do afraid of dogs in real life! I guess a detour is just a band-aid solution, but I do believe that even the dog, a Mally, is huge and the boy is little, he would grow into a man and overcome his fears one day.'



English Teachers have guided and encouraged Samir to read more books.

Obviously he was telling a story of his own - taking a detour from the Chinese language at first but then deciding to face it and overcome it one day.

Ms. Ng has been helping Samir and other NCS with their Chinese proficiency for several years. 'Ms. Ng is a very thoughtful teacher who always raises our interest by both still and moving images.' Samir then took out a book, 'A Learning Guidebook: One Word/Phrase a Day', designated for them, with a Chinese dragon and tiger on it's cover designed by Samir. He said they represented the Chinese culture - he said he could totally sense it.

Plant seeds in his heart every single day

Samir's teacher then encouraged him to participate in Chinese period drama, besides English drama even though English is easier to him - just because we have to face our weaknesses head-on. Samir had to wear a Changshan while some of his schoolmates had to play a female role since SDBNSM is a boy school. Samir was cast in the part of the leading male's father. The story starts with the King summoning a few young talents in town in order to find his successor, he then gave them some seeds and said, 'The one who grows the best and prettiest flower from these seeds will be my successor.' The male lead brought home the seeds and



Samir designed the covers of the Chinese Revision Booklets.

planted them into rich soil, however, none of them sprouted no matter how he poured water on them - he got anxious and cried out because he has heard about how good his opponents are. Samir, cast as his father, then comforted him, 'Wipe your tears and just keep going; you are just as good as others if you try and just tell the King the truth.' Then all the candidates went back to the palace with their pots - with fabulous flowers like bragging about themselves - but the male lead only brought a pot without any plant. The King then said, 'I actually have given you all fake seeds - so those who have grown something from the fake seeds are liars. I now appoint the young man without any plant as my next throne's successor because honesty is always the key to run a country well.' Then the male lead has inherited the crown and made contributions to the country.

Honesty is the key - this is what Samir learnt from the play in order to deal with his challenges. Samir never wanted to hide the fact that his Chinese proficiency is less than satisfactory and never wanted to escape from it; then he is now trying to overcome it. 'Our teacher treats us with patience and teaches us with baby steps so now we finally get to pick things up slowly - this is something I have never experienced in the previous school.'

Samir also appreciates how SDBNSM does to them - NCS are all arranged in the same class but they also have chances to fit in while having classes and interactions with other Chinese students.

Settled down well

As a Pakistani, Samir is a Islam who preserves their traditions - he goes to Masjid with his father and brother every week. He might not be able to do the four daily routines because of the classes, but the important Friday afternoon's prayer is held in a classroom arranged by the school as their little Islamic center. Other than the prayer meeting, the participants also get to chat with the Father. Since SDBNSM is a Catholic school, isn't it kind of controversial? 'Not really, the Father tells us about some words of wisdom - it's actually funny and not forceful at all. I appreciate how we all embrace different religions and thoughts.' He then said.

It's so embarrassing that I mistook him for an Indian because of the complicated relations between two countries. 'The two countries don't do well with each other, but when their people meet in Hong Kong, probably because we are all in a foreign land, they actually put aside all the deputies and reach harmony.' Samir said.

Samir couldn't do strenuous exercises because of asthma, so he is a rather indoorsy person - he spends lots of time in the school library. Our school teachers pay more attention to him, like asking him to stay warm, probably because he's a quiet person.

Samir is a science student with a great ambition - he plans to apply for a medical school even though he knows it's a long shot; he is also interested in other science-related careers. He now has been working on his eloquence and confidence as a MC, which is inspired by the English Speech contests he has joined.

'My grandpa came to Hong Kong in 1975 and worked as a security guard. He speaks Chinese very well, but he still went back to Pakistan after his retirement. My father came after 1975 and worked in the logistics industry. I was born in Hong Kong, I will probably just stay here for school, for work, or even for my retirement.'

He's totally put down roots here in Hong Kong.

Honesty is the best policy

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Classmates' Addresses

