

## MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL: TO MARK THE 60<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Teachers and Students

1<sup>st</sup> of October will be the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China. On 30<sup>th</sup> September, we shall be gathering solemnly and respectfully to have our flag raising ceremony in commemoration of the founding of our nation. The purpose is for us to appreciate that a "nation" does not only exist as a large community of people being in a particular territory under one government, it also symbolizes certain expectations and ideals of its entire populace.

Sixty years ago, these ideals, broadcasted through loudspeakers, did move every Chinese at Tiananman Square. When we read the lyrics of the national anthem, we will understand what Chinese people hoped for and inspired to at that time. The lyrics go like this:

Arise, ye who refuse to be slaves;  
With our flesh and blood  
Let us build our new Great Wall!  
The People of China are in the most critical time,  
Everybody must roar his defiance.  
Arise! Arise! Arise!  
Millions of hearts with one mind,  
Brave the enemy's gunfire,  
March on!  
Brave the enemy's gunfire,  
March on! March on! March on, on!

Sixty years have passed. Today, after the toils of several generations of the billions of people in China, there are no longer any thundering guns strained at us from all around; there are no aggressive powers really capable of invading our territories; and even Hong Kong and Macau have returned to and become part of China. After China's entry into WTO, countries of the world are hoping to trade with China and to open up this market. Chinese leaders are now equals of their counterparts in other nations on the arena of international politics. China is by now a strong country. We, Chinese are no longer "slaves"?

The truth is we can also be our own slaves. This is because we can be the slaves of our bad habits. We can be enslaved by riches, if we pursue the accumulation of wealth as the only goal of life; enslaved by vanity, if we strive for just others' applause and praises; enslaved by power, if we participate only to control and manipulate people and things; enslaved by material commodities, if we indulge in the acquisition and possession of worldly goods; enslaved by prejudice, if we cocoon ourselves in narrow-mindedness and do not engage in self-reflection; enslaved by hatred, if we are always looking for others' faults and waiting to avenge ...

At the beginning of this school year, I would like to share with you a poem of an Indian poet, Tagore. In the following poem, he expressed his expectation and ideals he had for his country:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit.

In the present time, information technology flourishes, and media influence is extensive. But amid of all are proclamations and perspectives, which often leave us even more lost than before. Hopefully, the wisdom handed down from our predecessors can open up a new universe in our minds.

These are my hopes on the anniversary of the founding of our Nation. I hope all of you would allow yourselves some space on the National Day holiday so you may ponder: What are my hopes? Thank you very much!

September 15, 2009