

On My Honour ...

by Hoàng Diệp Tố Quyên

*“It’s not what the world holds for you,
it’s what you bring to it...”*

Upon arriving back from a grand holiday in the USA and after having completed seventeen years of education at the beginning of nineteen ninety five, I was but a bud in the wake of bloom. Wielded by spiritedly ambition, it was my intention to career myself through the management program, for which I had been accepted. I did not think then that anything could have stirred me from such worthy cause - I was wrong...

About three months before, my sister, who was twelve, had joined the 2nd Bankstown Scout Troop. The Troop was a part of a Vietnamese Scout Group, which was located about forty minutes drive from our house. She would come home on Sunday mornings after their meetings full of excitement and “talk us all crazy” about the morning’s activities.

To me, Scouts were boys in khaki with cute caps who knocked on our front door occasionally, selling lolly bags and asking for odd jobs. I had never paid much heed, only searched my wallet for a couple of dollars in exchange for favours when previously asked. I never even realised that girls could be Scouts, so it was quite a surprise to me that my sister could be so excitable over such things.

Both my parents seemed to be most supportive of my sister's new found delight. I was rather indifferent.

It was during a Lunar New Year’s celebration that I had my first real encounter with the Scouts. I can’t recall exactly how or when it happened, but only that within a couple of weeks of that new year, responding to the Troop’s plea for a female leader, I found myself uniformed on a Sunday morning attending parade singing the national anthem. When I first joined, it was only with the intention of chaperoning my baby sister until she outgrew Scouting. I did not know then that the commitment was to be life long

and that I would teach and be taught some of the most valuable lessons in life.



For one who had been a creature of comfort all her life, my first camping experience at Arcadia, sleeping in a tent, cold showers, cooking on open fires, was never going to be easy. It may have been the enthusiasm that never wavered, amongst twelve young Scouts that lifted my spirits on that miserably cold, wet Easter weekend in Autumn. I saw in them a unified energy, a thirst to learn, a joy in achievement and a pleasure in just being together, and that was somehow contagious.

I recall clearly the large sheet of blue tarpaulin strung, perhaps only a meter higher than their heads under which they started their fires, using damp twigs, ready to cook their meal. Twenty or so meters away, in a warm Scout Hall, cubs sat before tables to a deliciously warm meal which had been prepared by their parents. The rain was as relentless as a full moon; two gas lanterns and fluorescent rays escaped through the windows and wooden cracks of the Scout Hall and became their only sources of light. It is a very romantic picture to paint; however, not quite so romantic, was being there, hungry, cold, wet, watching your chicken nuggets sizzle in a pot of oil, spitting at you, as drops of rain intruded.

I watched, as their leader taught them how cook rice equipped with the bare essentials. One is not to underestimate the significance of this achievement. If you have ever tried to cook rice before, you will know that it has everything to do with timing - the correct water to grain proportions, when to apply

constant heat, when to removed from the heat - in our culture it is an art form to be mastered. I, who had used an electric rice cooker all my life, found myself truly awed. To this day, rice has never tasted quite as good as it did that night! Arcadia was to become a memory embedded amongst those with the sincerest of affections, for it was there that I realised that this was a movement I wanted to be a part of...

Scouting transcends national, racial and cultural barriers. The movement is non-political. The Scout Laws are Laws that should guide the development of our teenagers towards being caring, considerate, courageous young adults. Adults who respect all human life and value the nature which nurtures our very existence.

The Scout section is for teenagers between the ages of ten and a half to fifteen and a half. The Scouts learn in a Patrol environment. There is a systematic Award scheme that allocates badges for competencies achieved in a broad range of areas from first aid and construction to such things as navigation and environment. All these activities challenge the young individuals and equip them with the basic survival skills that have been sacrificed in the technology explosion of remote control and dial-a-pizza. In a world where Mech Warrior reigns supreme, where Graffiti has become an art form, where smoking is cool and the anorexic waif is the pinnacle of beauty, Scouting provides an alternative.

Our Troop has only Vietnamese members although we exist as a part of and under the Scout Association of Australia. Allowing minority Scout Groups within Australian Scouting assists the successful integration of the second generation into the Australian way of life.

As a multicultural melting pot, Australians come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. In the third millennia, the world will experience not only the globalisation of trade, commerce and technology but also culture. That is to say, plurality of race and culture within "one nation" will be a reality. We must teach each other to accept one another's differences and embrace the diversity of our heritage. Co-existence is the key to national solidarity.

For the second generation of immigrants, it can be very difficult to combine the old ways with the new. The struggle is the old chestnut "identity crisis". Some find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place--neither "Australian" enough nor "Vietnamese" enough to fit in anywhere. Those who cling to the old ways find themselves isolated. Those who quickly abandon it, often later regret. In my experience, Scouting is a very effective environment in which these young adolescents may be gently guided towards finding a practicable balance for themselves in their new homeland.

Within our Group we try and maintain "traditional" celebrations, like the Moon festival and the Lunar New Year. Remembrance of these days is important in giving the Vietnamese Scouts a sense of where they have come from. And yet participation in activities such as the Scoutaroo, Area Camps, Patrol Leaders Courses, Scout Job week and the celebration of days like Baden Powell's Birthday allow the Scouts to interact with their other Australian Scouting brothers and sisters, assisting the healthy integration into the traditional Australian way of life.

As has been said, Scouting is a non-political movement. And yet with upsurge in racism as a result of the Hanson debate, *the Australian Scout*, Australia's only official Scouting magazine was faster to take a position of condemnation than any politician. "Scouting has shown that multiculturalism can and does work in Australia".

Scouting is all about standing together irrespective of race, creed and political orientation. What better values could we hope for in the next generation than those promoted by the Scout Laws and Promises?

A Scout is trustworthy
A Scout is loyal
A Scout is helpful
A Scout is friendly
A Scout is cheerful
A Scout is considerate
A Scout is thrifty
A Scout is courageous
A Scout is respectful
A Scout cares for the environment

Perhaps it is true to say that millions of people worldwide, Scouts or not, recognise the benefits of Scouting; however, the problem confronting the movement at present is twofold: leaders and parents. Both because in a world where time is lacking, it is very difficult to make the commitment that is required of you as a Scouter and Scouting Parent.

It is inevitable that as we grow older, we become more practical in both our outlook and approach to life. Ideals that once defined our aspirations all too quickly dissipate as we join the ranks of the employed and assume the responsibilities of adulthood. It is very difficult when you are on a growth track working ten-hour days, not to become myopic and self-focused. Whilst career oriented

pursuits are necessary to sustain life, they do not define it. There must be a bigger picture.

That picture begins with a small stroke. Through Scouting, I have discovered an inexplicable joy that has enriched my life. It has been said that ours is a world which has “achieved brilliance without conscience”. I can only hope that with my small stroke, I am bringing something towards making this world a place of both **“brilliance and conscience”**. It is with much pride that I identify myself as a Vietnamese Australian Scouter.

Hoàng Diệp Tố Quyên

Tin Buồn

Được tin trẻ, **Trưởng Mathew Maria Nguyễn Phước Bảo Khải**, nguyên thiếu Trưởng **TĐ Bạch Đằng, Nha Trang** đã tạ thế ngày 6 tháng 18 năm 2003 tại Nha Trang.

Sự ra đi của Trưởng Khải là một mất mát lớn lao đối với toán Alpha, Delta và cho Đạo Khánh Hòa, Nguyễn xin Thiên Chúa Toàn Năng và Mẹ Maria sớm đưa Linh Hồn Matthew Maria về nơi hằng sống.

Nguyễn Đức Dziên, Linh Mục Nguyễn Hoài An (toán Alpha, Nha Trang)
Nguyễn Công Trứ, Linh Mục Đaminh Nguyễn Đức Bình, OP.

Em Vào Hướng Đạo

(Bài của một Thiếu sinh kể lại đời Sói Con thời còn ở trại tị nạn Phi Luật Tân)

Khi vào HĐ, em chỉ nghĩ vào để được đi chơi, không nghĩ sẽ học hỏi thêm. Nhưng vào một cuộc xuất du, có thi về chuyên môn, mọi người đều hăng hái nhận. Nhưng chỉ riêng mình em không biết nhận. Từ đó em mới quyết tâm học.

Mỗi buổi tối là học, cho đến khi ngày chủ nhật, đi sinh hoạt, có tổ chức chơi để kiểm lại những gì mình đã học trong một tuần. Cứ thế mà chúng em rất tiến bộ và đã xin trưởng cho mở mắt.

Sau đó ngành Ấu có tổ chức cho bốn Đàn thi đua với nhau để đạt giải. Từ đó bắt đầu có hứng thú. Bốn Đàn thi nhau học để đạt được giải. Tổ chức học chuyên môn mỗi buổi tối, trồng hoa, đi sinh hoạt, họp

rất đông đủ. Cuối tháng công bố kết quả, thì Đàn Nâu là Đàn được giải trong đó có một lá cờ danh dự và 20 đồng pesos.

Về sau đoàn nghèo, không có tiền để tổ chức những cuộc xuất du, nên chúng em mỗi người góp 2 đồng pesos để mua hành và mướp về trồng. Khi hành và mướp lớn thì nhổ, cắt để đi bán dạo lấy tiền gây quỹ. Khi em lên làm Đầu Đàn Nâu, thì có một nhóm mới vào HĐ, chúng em đã dạy chuyên môn cho mấy sói mới và mấy sói cũng xin mở mắt. Khi chúng em lên Thiếu thì mấy sói ấy đã lên thay thế những trách vụ của chúng em.

Sau thời gian sinh hoạt ở sói giúp cho em tiến bộ rất nhiều và biết kiếm được nhiều cách để gây quỹ sinh hoạt. □