

Wood Rock Cloud Water

Remarks by Hanson Y Huang '68 at the dedication of the Rock and Water Feature at DBS

3 February 2008



The rock and the water feature that we dedicate today originated with the construction of the DBS Primary Division.

A large well-formed rock was excavated during site formation and Martin Tam '63, the project manager, proposed that it be saved. To memorialize this rock, which embodies the current surge of building for the future, I offered a couplet: 建校有賴木石，治學若修雲水 ("Building a school depends on the permanence of wood and rocks; educating our students is as ethereal as shaping clouds and water.")

“木石雲水” (“wood rock cloud water”) is now a motto for the school.

By happenstance, Richard Leung '71, planned to donate a memorial to honor his late mother, who was instrumental in getting him to attend DBS. A committee consisting of the above-mentioned individuals, Y.W. Fung '55, Thomas Chow '75, as well as staff members and senior boys was thus formed to choose a design that would capture the DBS spirit using the four elements of the motto.

The final selection achieves that goal while paying tribute to the two sources of strength that underlie all of DBS' endeavours since our founding, namely, the Chinese and Anglican traditions.

The water feature is a square pool, with inward-inclining sides of dark-green stone, imparting a sense of serene stability. Curved wood insets immersed at each corner describe a virtual sphere in space. This captures the ancient Chinese belief in 天圓地方 ("heaven is spherical; earth square"). The wood insets also incorporate by reference a cross, an acknowledgment of our Anglican roots. Gleaming in the sun are the motto and dedication inlaid on the northern and southern sides of the pool, while the gently undulating water playfully mirrors trees in the surroundings and the clouds above.

The rock itself is left in place, unadorned and with no pedestal, a blank template pregnant with possibility, quite symbolic of the immense potential of education.

The primary boys, with an abundance of creativity befitting DBS, graced the rock with a free-form mosaic that bursts forth from its base in a blaze of blue. The

motif is, appropriately, the Genesis story, and, not coincidentally, the Chinese creation myth of 盤古開天地 (Pan'gu parsing heaven and earth).

I urge all alumni and friends to come and visit: this is an oasis of tranquility set amongst the rush and excitement of school life. Caress the rock: despite its solid appearance, it is actually quite tactile and warm in the afternoon sun. Kick it, as many of our boys certainly will, to vent frustrations or simply for kicks. Even spray graffiti, if you must; just be original. Then look around and relish the thought that the rock has been with us ever since Featherstone moved the school to our present site 80 years ago.

The rock will stand proudly for a long while yet, as will DBS.



