

R. A. Stegemann

Hong Kong, November 25, 2001

Mr. LEUNG Kam Tim
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Re: Training Course update

Dear Mr. Leung,

Two weeks have past since I first spoke with you, and I can firmly state that things have become, with the exception of one day, progressively worse. Not only do children and their mothers continue to populate the course while I am training, but now the children are arriving in larger numbers often accompanied by their fathers. Today, it was so congested that I could not move from one training activity to the next without having to ask a parent, parents, child, children, or parents and children to move. Children continue to play very near to where I am working out, and today one child fell and hurt itself, while I was admonishing another child several activities distant to remove her presence from the matted area where I was training.

Simply it is not correct that children must be sacrificed due to negligence on the part of their parents and the Ma On Shan park administration. Moreover, it is not right that I must become an enemy of the entire Ma On Shan community, to say nothing of your own staff, as a prerequisite for my making proper use of a park facility provided for the adult general public. So far, I have been called a "troublemaker", accused of "terrifying children", and told to leave the course because "foreigners have no right to tell Hong Kong children what to do in Hong Kong". Today my training exercise finished with four teenagers seated on the benches opposite me, smoking cigarettes, and complaining about my presence on the course.

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As I have already explained to you a physical training course is suppose to provide adult users with a place to engage in sustained, vigorous exercise for prolonged periods without interruption. The object is to achieve an aerobic "high", which improves one's overall health and physical condition and relieves social stress. Under current conditions my physical workouts are becoming increasingly stress-inducing. When I first began using the training course on November 1 there was hardly anyone on the course but me. Only after two weeks had past, and people began to notice that someone was using the course on a regular basis, did it start becoming congested. Now, not only are children repeatedly found in the activity areas, but entire families have begun picnicking on the training benches.

Although it may not be your intention, your lack of cooperation in this matter can be easily viewed as an attempt to drive me from the course through public ridicule, harassment, and humiliation. I have spent the past 10 years overseas and have sorely learned not to surrender to petty racist and nationalist sentiments on the part of the general public. Notwithstanding, success in these matters can only be truly achieved with the cooperation of public management. Your general failure to police the training area is slowly becoming a public scandal for which I and Ma On Shan children are the principal victims. Unfortunately, things can only become worse until you take action and enforce your own park rules.

Finally, today, as has already happened on more than one occasion this week, several of the mats in the activity area were wet and slippery, thus providing still another hazard for serious users. A quick look at a Hong Kong weather report will tell you that there was no rain.

Sincerely,

R. A. (Hamo) Stegemann

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