

THE LOVE AND ESSENCE OF AN ALMA MATER

The word **Alma Mater** is a Latin word which means dear mother. Today, we use the word to refer to the School or College or University where one studied or graduated. We sometimes refer to it as the official anthem of any given school or university. Chuka University is refining its anthem. In September 1962, I joined University of Redlands in California. The School was established in 1909. Its alma mater anthem was:

*Oh that dear old University of Redlands
Thy Children near and far
Will sing of thee and all thy glories tell
Where the orange blossoms grow
And waters gently flow
That dear Old University of Redlands we love so well*

This Alma Mater tells you of the love the child has for his/her mother. Since 1909, the University of Redlands from where I graduated in 1966, the University has never been closed because of riots by students, except during the First World war when the U.S.A government used the facility briefly to recruit soldiers. The same happened during World War II before the United States joined the Second World War in 1939.

In our country, we have witnessed so many demonstrations and destruction of university facilities. These repetitive occurrences cannot be justified. It is what Albert Einstein refers to as insanity. According to this famous Scientist, “Insanity is doing the same thing over again and over again, and expecting different results” Let us ask ourselves; how many times have we experienced demonstrations in our universities? What lessons have we learnt from these demonstrations? The answer to these questions lies in a warning against the “Seven Social Sins.”

In 1947 before he was assassinated, Mahatma Ghandhi gave to his grandson Arun a list of these seven social sins:

1. Politics without principles
2. Wealth without work
3. Education(knowledge)without character
4. Pleasure without conscience
5. Commerce without morality
6. Science without humanity
7. Worship without sacrifice

We shall peruse through these seven social sins after another. You my grandchildren will assist me to go through them and learn to avoid damaging property under the pretext of demonstrating. Remember that I do not have a monopoly on knowledge. But as Peter Drucker said; “Knowledge is the only instrument of production that is not subject to diminishing returns. The more of it you have the more of it you want and the more of it other people want from you.”

I thank you young people because you have taken your time to listen to me.
But as they say –Time and Tide waits for no man.

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