

Ipoh's Virtues in Danger

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The Clock Tower where Ipoh's virtues stand guard

As a young boy in UK I was brought up to try and live by the seven virtues, which my parents always assured me, the world cannot survive without. These are of course: faith, hope, charity, justice, loyalty, patience and fortitude. These seemed marvellous words to me and I could recite them whenever I needed to, but what exactly they meant I was not sure.

Anyway the other famous seven, the seven deadly sins, sounded far more interesting to me. However, about 50 years ago I arrived in Ipoh for the first time and it was no surprise to me that the British Colonial Government (as we love to call them) had made sure that our citizens would always have four (known as the cardinal virtues) of the seven to look up to every day:

Justice, Loyalty, Patience and Fortitude.

No doubt they hoped that, like this small boy was supposed to, the people of Ipoh would be outstandingly virtuous in everything they did and not fall into the ways of that other seven!



However, it is my duty to report that today, Ipoh's Justice is slipping downwards and is likely to crash to the ground at any moment. Not only that but the city's Fortitude is also showing major cracks and this does not bode well for the future. Surely **Fortitude** cannot be allowed to follow **Justice** down the slippery slope! Having made these observations I am happy to tell you that locally, loyalty and patience are both standing firm for the *rakyat*, but there is no forecast as to when that may change. So what can be done about this appalling situation in our city? Maybe Datuk Bandar (The Mayor of Ipoh) or Menteri Besar himself could step in and put things right but of course that would be a political solution and in this case would not fit the bill. What we need is for a skilled monumental mason to be contracted to view the problem at close quarters and advise how the deterioration in our virtues can be halted and then put right

Now I fear that some of you will wonder why a mason is preferable to a politician and in this case it is quite clear for the four virtues are statues at the top of the **J.W.W. Birch Memorial Clock Tower** and if one or more comes crashing down it might just kill one of the council workers currently renovating the surrounding garden. Worse still, it might hit a tourist or even our beloved tourism Exco if she is destined to reopen the gardens and tower.

So what to do? Well it is quite clear that we do need our politicians after all – to promptly demonstrate their virtue by placing an immediate contract on that monumental mason as a matter of extreme urgency. It will be inexcusable if someone dies through administrative inaction. And all of Ipoh's virtues die with it.

Postscript. The week after this was published, Datuk Bandar did visit the clock tower to see the damage for himself, and within a few days the two figures were stabilised, by the Works Department. Justice and Fortitude will still be an Important part of Ipoh's daily life.