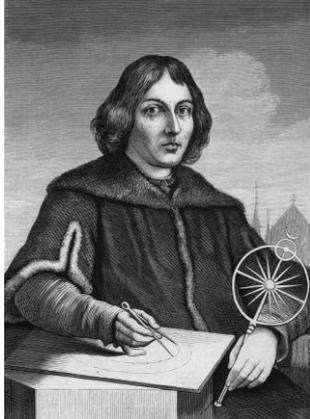


Assembly (2016 04 20): Copernicus, Self-centredness and Maturity

Today I would like to introduce this guy and his theory of the universe!



Do you know him?

His name is Nicolaus Copernicus (19 February 1473 – 24 May 1543) and he was a Renaissance mathematician and astronomer. The publication of his book *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* just before his death in 1543 is considered a major event in the history of science. It triggered the **Copernican Revolution** and made an important contribution to the Scientific Revolution.

So what was the Copernican Revolution?

Before this time, people's general concept of the universe was that the earth was at the centre of the universe and the planets as well as the sun orbited around us. This is called a "Geocentric" view of the universe.

However, based on observations, Copernicus proposed that actually the earth is not the centre of the universe and that we revolve round the sun instead. This is called the "Heliocentric" view and it states that the sun is at the centre of the universe. Today, we know that this is not true too. While we revolve round the sun, the sun is not at the centre of the universe. No matter. As least the Copernican revolution was a breakthrough.

This breakthrough marked the beginning of the scientific revolution which paved the way for ever more rapid development of openness and human knowledge. With this came social, political and economic progress. This represents a coming of age of human beings. Being like adults, HBs were able to better master their own destinies.

This famous story surely carries a lesson in scientific history as well as history in general. But what lesson can we, as adolescents, draw from this story? How about the relationship between self-centredness and maturity?

By giving up our self-centeredness, we are able to open ourselves to others in the community and become more mature. With maturity, we are free from our ignorance and become better at managing our lives, real "masters" of our own destinies. On the other hand, with self-centeredness, we think we are the king of the universe...when in fact we are just immature kids!

What are self-centred behaviours? They could be:

- Lack of manners / politeness (e.g. do we greet Fathers, teachers and fellow students with a "good morning" / "how are you?" when we meet in the corridor? Or do we just walk by pretending other human beings do not exist?)
- Lack of respect (e.g. when we don't agree with another person, can we still be respectful towards him/her? When we enter the chapel, do we behave respectfully whether we are a Christian or not?)
- Inconsiderate behaviours (e.g. Would we keep talking while we are walking past other classrooms with lessons going on?)
- Self-righteous - (e.g. Would we be open-minded enough to try seeing others' points of view instead of seeing all views different from ours as evil?)
- Selfish - (Would we always put our own interests first, ignoring the interests of others?)

But if we **put others at the centre**, we would be:

- polite**
- respectful**
- considerate**
- open-minded**
- selfless**

And in this way, we become real Wah Yan gentlemen. We are no longer childish! We are then "men for and with others"!

So do check our worldviews often! Are we still in the dark ages of geocentrism or have we matured to the level of being able to see that we are not always at the centre?

Thank you!