

ACTIVITIES OF THE HONG KONG STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Hong Kong Student Association (HKSA) has always been a well organized and active organization at Iowa State University. This is in large part due to the high calibre of students recruited and the fact that they are mostly undergraduates with youthful energy and enthusiasm. While active on campus for many years, the students from Hong Kong weren't officially registered as a separate organization until 1979 when the Overseas Chinese Friendship Association (OCFA) was formed to include other Cantonese speaking students from S.E. Asia as well. Prior to this time the Hong Kong students were rather lost in the umbrella Chinese Student Association made up of predominantly Mandarin speaking Taiwan nationals. With their very own organization, the OCFA began to fulfill the traditional functions of any international club: to serve as a support group, to welcome new students and help them adjust to life at ISU, and provide opportunities for personal growth. Beyond this, the association sought to reach out in friendship to the Ames and university communities to increase their understanding of Hong Kong, China, and events affecting relations with the U.S. In 1985 the name was changed to Hong Kong Student Association.

One may well ask at this point what sort of activities the HKSA has engaged in. The public is probably most familiar with the very successful annual banquet which has continued now for eleven years. Besides providing Ames with a consistently high quality dining and cultural treat, the affair gives members invaluable hands-on experience in planning, budgeting, organizing, marketing and working together toward a common goal. While a profit may or may not be realized, the main purpose is upholding a tradition, providing a unique opportunity for leadership and growth, and enhancing cultural interaction and understanding. In 1987 the HKSA began sponsoring an annual five-event Asian Sports Tournament among the groups from Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia, with a trophy, the "Dennis Wendell Shield" awarded to the overall winner each year (unfortunately not yet won by the sponsoring group!). Since 1986 office space in the Memorial Union has been used to establish a library of Chinese books, periodicals, and musical recordings for use by members and others.

Considerably less familiar to the public are numerous other activities through the years such as:

- * tutoring local 'Boat People' in English
- * raising funds for Cambodian refugees
- * helping SPAN students prepare for a summer study abroad in HK
- * taking field trips, camping trips and canoe trips
- * sponsoring annual Dragon Boat Race
- * providing new student orientations in Hong Kong and Ames
- * hosting welcoming and graduation receptions
- * studying modern Chinese history
- * publishing newsletter with special annual issue devoted to creative writing
- * sponsoring "China Week" and "Hong Kong Today" (lectures, films and exhibits)
- * showing Cantonese films regularly and co-sponsoring "China Film Week"
- * sponsoring concert of traditional Chinese music by the Silk and Bamboo Ensemble
- * participating in Friendship Fairs and providing programs for area schools and churches
- * participating in International Food Fair
- * donating items to the International Resource Center culture kit
- * sharing cost of selected Chinese periodical subscriptions with Parks Library
- * organizing joint lunar new year celebration with Taiwan and PRC groups
- * rallying in support of PRC students after the Tiananmen Massacre

During the past ten years the number of Hong Kong students at Iowa State has tripled to 90 this past semester. Hong Kong students have perennially upheld their tradition of high scholastic achievement as evidenced by honor rolls and honor societies. In campus work environments, Hong Kong students employed by the university have become renowned for their strong work ethic. The impact of this group on the Ames and university communities has obviously been in far greater proportion than their numbers would suggest.

Let's join together in wishing the HKSA and each HK student every success in the lunar Year of the Horse!

Dennis Wendell
Advisor 1979-1988

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