



The University of Sydney Alumni

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, CHINESE STUDIES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

8 OCTOBER 2007.

This Association was founded in 2002 and held its first meeting in December that year. In the last five years it has worked closely with the Department of Chinese Studies to reach friends and graduates of the Department, to help them to keep in touch with the Department, to publicise Departmental achievements in the wider community and to support the work of teaching and research in Chinese Studies at this University.

In February this year, Shirley Chan and I represented the Alumni Association as speakers in a University public event at the Macleay Museum called "Day of the Dragon in the Year of the Pig". In July the Association held a most enjoyable Picnic Day at the Somersby farm of one of our alumni, Dr Lily Lee and her husband, Chung Hou Lee, attended by more than 20 alumni and friends and their families. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their hospitality and support to the Association.

Unfortunately, the Association's social activities can only appeal to a small number resident in Sydney. Since graduates are scattered across Australia and overseas, particularly in China, Taiwan and SE Asia, since our inception we have considered how to improve our outreach and provide meaningful services to interstate and overseas members. I feel that up to this point we have not been very successful and I hope that the incoming Association Council will find ways to address this issue.

In the last year we have received strong support from the University Alumni Office in our work, particularly in developing our website. The Office also helped us improve our newsletter, which now appears in full colour. The newsletter is sent out to more than 600 addresses as an insert in the University's Alumni Magazine. The Office also maintains our address list as part of their University alumni database.

Most importantly, in April-May this year, the Alumni Office guided us in planning and delivering a campaign to raise funds to support student exchanges between the Department of Chinese Studies and Chinese universities with which the University has exchange agreements. The campaign raised \$4,000, which was added to the Bursary Fund to make a total of \$25,807. This is now available to be drawn on by the Department as opportunities arise.

The School of Languages and Cultures has provided strong support to the Association since its inception, particularly by funding the cost of producing our newsletter and by administering our two accounts. Thanks to the Head of School and to Finance Officer Helen Feng for this assistance. Without it, our work would have been much more difficult. I have mentioned the Bursary Fund account. Our other account is a general Association account, the balance of which stands at \$1,279. (We used to ask for annual membership fees but discontinued this practice on the advice of the Alumni Office.) No deposits or withdrawals have been made to this account during the past year but it generated \$31 in interest.

The Council of the Association has helped in many ways to plan activities and keep the Alumni Association alive. I have mentioned Jane Zhang, who has been Treasurer for the last 5 years. Shirley Chan likewise has ably served as Secretary for 5 years. She continued in this role even during maternity leave this past year. Congratulations to her on the birth of a second adorable daughter! Other Council members have all contributed in various ways. I note particularly the important contributions by Departmental representatives who in the past year have been first Helen Dunstan and more recently David Bray. Our constitution states that the Council should always include a representative of the Department but I acknowledge that it is not easy for staff to find time for our activities, which take place in the evenings and weekends, outside office hours. My thanks to everyone for their assistance. I myself have been on the Council and have been elected by the Council as President each year since 2001. I have had some health problems in the last year that have affected my ability to lead the Council as I would have liked, and I feel that after five years it is time to hand over to someone else. I leave the Council with some regret and offer the incoming office bearers all the best for the new year.

A highlight of our activities has been the number of guest speakers at Annual General and other meetings, all themselves graduates of the Department. The fact that we have been able to call on so many scholars and successful practitioners says more than anything else to verify the distinction of the Department of Chinese Studies and its contribution to academic and professional life in Australia and abroad. I would like to list these speakers and acknowledge their contributions before concluding the AGM and introducing tonight's guest speaker.

Prof. Chiu Ling Yeong, University of Hong Kong (2002 AGM)

Prof. Kam Louie, ANU (2003 AGM)

Prof. John Fitzgerald, La Trobe University (2004 AGM)

Dr Antonia Finnane, University of Melbourne (2005 AGM)

Prof Mabel Lee, University of Sydney (2006 reunion gathering)

Rory Macpherson, Beijing PR representative (2006 AGM)

Thank you for coming tonight and for supporting the work of the Department of Chinese Studies in this University.

Jocelyn Chey

President