

Chinese students tell of new life back home

By Frank Giorno

China is a nation everyone is talking about. The recent outbreak of democratic expression before the Hsi Tan democracy wall has been chronicled in the major dailies as front page news. The push towards modernization, establishing diplomatic relations with the United States and its support of Cambodia have made China the object of wonder. In order to provide the York community with a better perspective Excalibur contacted five students from the People's Republic of China. The five are Chin, Yen, Wang, Lee and Tang. They arrived at York on the 6th September, 1978 to study English.

The students agreed that the move towards democracy is connected with China's drive towards modernization. Democratic rights have been protected under China's Constitution. "However," Chin said, "if the individual expression taking place before the Hsin Tan Wall had occurred five years earlier the participants would have been punished."

The present move towards democracy has the support of the Chinese government. They believe it to be a genuine and permanent movement. Having achieved greater internal stability, China today, is able to support democratic freedoms.

Previous flings with freedom of expression like the period in the mid - 1950's known as the 100 Flowers, were short lived. This was so, Lee said, "because in the 1950's the revolution was still young and power not firmly established." The times have changed.

Newspaper articles received from home encouraged people to express themselves. In some cases this has proved difficult because the Chinese people had to become used to developing their own views. The students applauded the trend towards more democracy.

"It's what we've been waiting

for", Chin said.

Today China is committed to improve its standard of living by modernizing its economy. The modernization campaign hopes to develop four areas of the Chinese economy. The four areas are heavy industry, defence, agriculture and science and technology. The diplomatic relations with the Americans established on January first indicates that China will rely on the importation of U.S. technology to achieve its goal.

Within China the modernization campaign has meant the introduction of material incentives to encourage maximum output by

The group offered a realistic appraisal of the late Chairman Mao Tse Tung. They believe that he is better than the 70-30 expressed in a recent wallposter. In China it is customary to evaluate a persons worth by comparing the portions good and bad in terms of a percentage. Chin said the people in China respect Mao as a great leader, but he was also a human being who made mistakes.

Mao should not be worshipped as a god. Preserving Mao's body in the hall built in his honour he admitted could be seen as a form of idolatry, however it was designed for the purpose of educating the young.

possible Teng's re-emergence in the Chinese government.

During their brief rule of China the gang of Four purged Teng from his position as vice-premier. Teng is considered to be a capable leader long experienced in the art of government. In the future the students would like China to adopt an orderly method of succession to avoid the conflict that arose between Hua and the Gang of Four after Mao's death.

The views held by the students on the cultural revolution reflect the line adopted by the current leadership. It was good because it raised the consciousness of the

East Asia. The Vietnamese were described by the group as the Cubans of Asia acting as proxies for extending Soviet hegemony over Cambodia. Despite China's condemnation of the Vietnamese takeover they do not expect China to intervene militarily. China still however, continue to support Pol Pot's resistance financially and morally.

The five exchange students are enjoying their stay at York University. They did experience cultural shock when they first arrived in Canada. China is still a very conservative society. They don't like Canada's permissive society. Yen felt that permissiveness creates problems that cause much pain. "I don't like to see unwed mothers of 16 or 17 years old. They are too young to handle such responsibility."

The family remains strong in China, much stronger than in Canada. Yen got the impression that marriages were not taken seriously in Canada. "Its odd that a couple gets married but only stays together for a short time." In China divorce is permitted only with great difficulty. Divorcees are looked upon with disdain within Chinese society.

Their impression of Canadians were mixed. They thought Canadians to be friendly but difficult to know. They have heard that it is common for people to live on the same street and not know their neighbours. "This is unheard of in China" Yen said, "in Shanghai if a husband and wife are having an argument their neighbours would drop by to see what was wrong. In Canada they are more likely to mind their own business."

The major complaint against York was that they found it hard to meet their classmates because they rush out after classes at their conclusion. But the residents of Founder's Maclaughlin and Vanier Colleges, the temporary home for these five students, have been very friendly and helpful.



Five from China at York: (l-r) Chang Tai Lei, Shu Yun Wong, Hsiao Ming Chin, Jun Hsiao Ming, and Chao Tang.

the labour force. The students summed up the situation with the slogan "Moral encouragement and material rewards:"

The students were keen to see China develop material wealth. They would like a standard of living comparable to Canada's but without the accompanying problems. The two things they could live without are the class division between the rich and the poor and advertising. The Chinese students were sickened by the clutter of advertisements.

On the question of the current leadership in China the students disagree with the western appraisal putting Teng in command. They believed China was governed by a collective leadership.

In the official hierarchy Hua Kuo-feng holds the number one and two positions being both the Chairman and the Premier. Teng Psiao-ping as the vice-premier is officially listed as number three. Lee and Chin expressed admiration for Chairman Hua because he smashed the Gang of Four making

people but at the same time China suffered because its economy was disrupted. The disruptions, Chin and Lee believed, were caused by the agents of the Gang of Four. Would they like another cultural revolution? Not if it was a repeat of the last.

The students do not see peace with the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future. Their attitude reflects China's belief that Soviet policy has caused turmoil in the Middle East, Africa and now South

We rarely hear the term "Women's Lib" anymore, and if we do, we may smile and think of burning bras. Maybe we have changed in a decade or two as a result of the Women's Movement.

The key issue used to be liberation.

It was an ambiguous concern because it did not automatically infer what women might be liberated from. It did not include the other sex, unless one assumed that women were oppressed by men. Might it be about liberation from a myth concerning sex roles and values? Nevertheless, what exists now is a mixture of feelings, varying in degrees. We have now begun to deal with a political issue which enters into everyday relationships on any level.

The Women's Movement has affected us all (male and female) either consciously or latently. To some it has offered a chance to follow a way of life which would otherwise have been impossible. It has given many women confidence and encouragement to participate actively in the community and be appreciated for such efforts. At the personal level, many women feel that they are now allowed to reassess their sexuality and overall, acquire a very positive self-awareness.

However, many are living within the confines of a myth which causes personal conflicts.

Lack of understanding of one's own and one's friends' goals and values causes confusion. People may be easily led into the misconception that a women's role is as the traditional housewife unless she is a radical feminist. Many aspects of a woman's life-

Harbinger's Column

by Hazel Aitken



have been glamorized and put out of proportion with reality — both from sexist and non-sexist sources. Many women feel inadequate or unsure of themselves because they do not fit into the model.

Much emphasis is put on being "someone" professionally as opposed to doing worthwhile and satisfying activities. This brings up the question of self-worth. There can be only two positions:

either the woman can feel responsibility for herself and confident for the future, or, she may feel locked into a situation which though potentially rewarding, may be disappointing because she does not feel it is an avenue which she has consciously chosen. A self-conception will inevitably enter into relationships with others and may be the cause of misunderstandings.

Men may also feel insecure. They have to come to terms with the often confusing and ambiguous values which pervade. Women have been given a chance to be

more responsible for their lives and this has affected the male-female relationship such that reciprocation is emphasized over domination/submission.

We must ask ourselves what it means to be male or female. We seem to be approaching the notion that there is no set rule for femininity or masculinity. This may not be easy to deal with. Self-awareness and self-respect is necessary before one can respect others without passing judgement. This would help clarify one's potential in relationships and one's role in society.

letters

All letters should be addressed to the editor, Excalibur, Room III Central Square. Letters must be typed, triple-spaced, on a #6 stroke line. Letters are limited to 300 words (seven column inches). Name, address, or phone number must be included or the letter will not be published. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for grammar and length.

Deadline Monday 4 pm

Faculty head criticizes administration stand

Vice President Farr is quoted in Excalibur, January 11, as saying: "I think that both parties' interests must have intersected along the way, otherwise the contract wouldn't have been accepted. They (Y.U.F.A.) accepted it. If it were so inadequate, then they shouldn't have accepted it."

Y.U.F.A. did not accept the contract as an adequate one. The only statement the Vice President can infer from the evidence is that Y.U.F.A. was not willing to be as irresponsible as the Administration in provoking a crisis. The costs to the York community of a strike would have been high, especially in the light of the earlier Y.U.S.A. strike, which was brought about by the Administration's intransigence. We will be back at the bargaining table

soon, to take up where we left off in December.

Michael Copeland
Chairperson, Y.U.F.A.

Rainbow's End more than a business

In response to the letter "Central Square is a 'Rip-Off'" "I would like to, as the manager of "Rainbow's End" (formerly "Food & Plenty" correct a number of errors in the letter.

Now I don't know when the letter was written but as of Jan. 1/79 our eatery has been called "Rainbow's End". The new name reflects our change in menu and service. We are moving away from a predominately junk food diet to a natural food one.

This change will take time, but we are working long hours to make the change work.

The writer of the letter states that his

comments are made to benefit management, but they are in effect negative rather than constructive. As far as our eatery being a "Rip-Off" we rob no-one, our prices reflect our operating costs and the quality of the food we serve. Our prices also reflect the fact that we must pay a percentage off the top to the university. It's not right, but it's true.

We have a number of serving areas, each catering to a different need. At each beverages are served and at each there is a cashier happy to take your money at all times.

If you do encounter problems there is a manager on hand at all times. As I stated earlier I don't know when the writer of the letter was in the "Rainbow's End" but I assure him all the employees know the managers' names, if they didn't before, they do now.

A the "Rainbow's End" we are in business to serve our customers. We

are also here to make money, to earn a living not to get rich. We are in the business because this is what we love to do.

Marlene Orzech
Manager, Rainbow's End

Correction

Last week on page seven there appeared a letter from the Stong College executive committee, entitled Response: Open letter in defence of Stong College, signed by William Petrie, the committee's chairman. There was a typographical error in the first sentence which gave a very regrettable impression. The letter 'r' was left out of the word 'friends', in the phrase "members and friends of the gay community here at York."

We apologize to Stong and all our readers for this error.