

IPA- HONG KONG SECTION  
FRIENDSHIP WEEK  
OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 7, 2010

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“A journey of  
friendship in the  
mystic Orient.”

**IPA – Hong Kong  
Friendship Week**  
**31 October – 7  
November, 2010**

The Chinese philosopher Confucius was quoted to say “When you are labouring for others let it be with the same zeal as if it were for yourself” and the IPA Hong Kong section typified this sentiment. I felt the embrace of friendship from the greeting at the airport to the lavish farewell dinner.

I left Toronto at 10 a.m. on October 30<sup>th</sup> and arrived at the modern and expansive Hong Kong airport at 1:30 p.m. on the 31<sup>st</sup>. I didn't really enjoy the 15 hour flight, but at least it was uneventful and direct. Tired and bedraggled I was met by a cheery Hong Kong section ambassador who quickly and efficiently ushered me to the transport that was to take me to the City Garden Hotel, my home for the next eight days.

The official program was to start at 7 p.m. with the Welcome Banquet and Registration at Police HQ, this timing allowed me to settle into my room.

Headquarters for the Hong Kong Police is a 42 story edifice that houses all the things you would think of in police building as well as an elegantly appointed restaurant on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor!

On registration we all received a bag of goodies as well as a limited edition windbreaker jacket proudly displaying the flag of Hong Kong and the IPA Logo.

We were graciously welcomed by Francis Ho, President of the Hong Kong section and entertained by a band comprised of serving officers: with a special vocal performance by the lovely Frances Ho, wife of the President.



***Chinese Calligrapher at work***

The banquet consisted of

several courses of authentic Chinese food and delicacies, very different from the Canadian Chinese take-away food I was familiar with. As an added attraction a Chinese calligrapher personalized hand fans, a gift from our hosts.

The Opening ceremonies started on day two with the daily flag raising ceremony in the Golden Bauhinia square at the Hong Kong Convention Centre. This is the location where the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China, which took place on 1 July 1997.

IPA member Officers from all over the world, some currently serving and others that have retired, proudly donned their uniforms and represented their respective countries and organizations. Officers from the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Monaco, Russia, Peru, Australia, Canada and the United States were all resplendent in their finery.

The flag raising of the flag of China and of Hong Kong was performed by the Hong Kong

Police drill team to the musical accompaniment of the Hong Kong Police Pipes and Drums and the Hong Kong Police Brass Band. After this stirring event we were ushered into the auditorium of the Headquarters and warmly welcomed by Commissioner Tang King Shing.



***Flag raising ceremony in the Golden Bauhinia square at the Hong Kong Convention Centre***

As a point of interest, the Hong Kong Police Force was formed on May 1, 1844, with a strength of 32 officers. Queen Elizabeth II granted the Royal Charter to the Hong Kong Police Force in 1969 for their handling of the Hong Kong 1967 riots, renaming the Hong Kong Police Force as the Royal Hong Kong Police Force. Following the transfer of sovereignty over Hong

Kong, the Police Force dropped the term Royal and reverted to its previous name. It has an authorized strength of over 32,000 employees, 28,000 of whom are sworn and are supported by 4,500 Auxiliary officers.

A small reception came next where there was a buzz of photographic activity around the officers in uniform and our hosts.

Our cadre of participants, 87 strong, were then treated to a tour of the organization’s command centre and the Hong Kong Police Souvenir shop. A short time later we returned to the Hotel so uniforms could be shed and a more comfortable form of dress adopted.

Lunch was the next item on the itinerary, so our bus convoy headed to Paramount Banquet Hall in Causeway Bay. The Causeway Bay area sits on the north shore and includes some of the most

heavily commercial property of Hong Kong Island. We were treated to a delicious Dim Sum lunch. Dim Sum means “touch the heart” in Cantonese and was originally a snack rather than a full meal, but we had more than ample and walked away stuffed.

To assist in the digestion of our repast we walked the Central and Sheung Wan area of the city, the oldest quarter of Hong Kong and often this is the area of the city portrayed in the movies. We walked the laddered streets and weaved our way in and out of little curio shops that dot the landscape. The Man Mo temple, dedicated to the deities civil god Man Cheong and the martial god Kwan Ti, is also located here on Hollywood Road and a visit here was a must.

I’m sure that everyone has heard of Peking Duck, but have you heard of Beggar’s Chicken? Beggar’s Chicken is stuffed chicken wrapped in lotus leaves, covered with mud and baked, the chicken is so moist and

tender it literally falls off the bone. Legend has it that a homeless, starving beggar had a chicken, but didn't have a stove to prepare it. Desperate for food, he came up with an idea. He killed the chicken and covered it with mud and baked it in a fire. A Qing-dynasty Emperor passed by and was attracted by the aroma of the baked chicken; he stopped and dined with the beggar. The Emperor loved the Beggar's chicken so much that it was added to the list of dishes served at the Imperial court. Hence, Beggar's Chicken.

Dinner was held at the Peking Garden restaurant where both regional specialties were tasted. I participated in the ritual of breaking the chicken's mud casing with a mallet, great fun.

Hong Kong has had a Tramway since 1904 and was one of the earliest forms of public transport. Trams operate on electricity that is conducted through an

overhead wire grid and travel on fixed steel rails embedded in the roadway; the Trams on the streets of Hong Kong are all double-deckers and great for the sightseer. Our hosts took us on a short tour from the Whitty Street depot on



*Night-time ride on a historic Hong Kong Tram*

Tram cars that were reserved just for us.

This concluded a jam packed day, so exhausted, we returned to our hotel and settled in for a sound nights sleep.

Hong Kong is divided into three main sections, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. Day three entailed a tour of some of the New Territories. On our way

we stop and gazed on the Tsing Ma Bridge, a bridge that resembles San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. It is the world's seventh-longest suspension bridge and it spans the Ma Wan channel. The uniqueness of this bridge, aside from its length, is that it carries vehicular traffic on the roadway level and rail transport on a level below.

After that amazing feat of engineering our next stop was at the walled village of Lo Wai, a site declared as a monument by the government and the near by Tang Chung Ling Ancestral Hall, the main ancestral hall of the Tang Clan of Lung Yeuk Tau. The village can only be seen from the outside as tourists within the walls would disturb the inhabitants, but the Ancestral Hall is freely accessible.

More history was to be seen as we passed by the Tai Fu Tai Mansion and the San Tin Village on our way to the police station at Lok Ma Chau.

The significance of Lok Ma Chau has faded somewhat since the dismantling of the Bamboo Curtain, it is the frontier between mainland China and Hong Kong and a stopping point for immigrants absconding across that boundary. Thanks to Chief Inspector Brian Kwan, we were treated to the view from the Lok Ma Chau police station, high up on a hill, which surveys “no man’s land” and the border check point. We can clearly see across the river to the other side and over the vibrant booming city of Shenzhen, China.

To say my goose was cooked was an understatement; it was in fact well roasted. We lunched at ShamTseng and sampled their famous roast goose. Roasted geese of high quality have crisp skin with juicy and tender meat and what was offered to us was very high quality.

We had time for a little prayer after lunch, so off

to the Yuen Yuen Institute in the Tsuen Wan district we went. The Yuen Yuen Institute is the only temple in Hong Kong that is dedicated to all three major Chinese religions; Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Ornate temples and burning incense abound in this place of worship where people come and speak to their God of choice, asking for health, happiness and good



*Yuen Yuen Institute at Tsuen Wan*

fortune.

After a brief stop at the hotel to freshen up, we attended a BBQ at the Disciplined Services Sports and Recreation Club. Dinner included barbequed chicken, pork and beef and

accompanying vegetables as well as a liberal amount of libation from the Budweiser girls.

A tour of the southern part of Hong Kong Island was the focus of Day four. Aberdeen, a one-time fishing village, was the first stop and a sampan ride through the harbour which contrasted the humble and worn, age old fishing junks and their way of life with the gleaming new multi-million dollar yachts of jet-setters moored in their slips. Aberdeen harbour is also the home to Jumbo Floating Restaurant; an ornately Chinese style decorated huge floating restaurant that boasts royalty and Hollywood stars as past patrons. Then off to Repulse Bay.

Legend has it that Repulse Bay was not named for any action that repelled an enemy, but rather for the British ship, the HMS Repulse, that patrolled within its waters. Repulse Bay is one of the most expensive housing areas in Hong Kong and its



### *Repulse Bay Beach*

attractive sandy beach is popular with the locals.

In the eastern end of the beach is Kwun Yam Shrine, with prominent statues of goddesses Kwun Yam and Tin Hau. Adjacent to Kwun Yam, the Chinese Buddhist god of compassion, are statues of Tin Hau and other deities, including some very beautiful mosaic statues. Most of the statues are fabled to bring a positive change in life to those worshipers who take a certain action, and that includes the brightly coloured red "Longevity Bridge", which fable states adds three extra days of life to every person who crosses it.

A visit to the famous Stanley Market concluded the tour of the Southern section of Hong Kong Island. We were let loose in this labyrinth of tiny stalls and shops for the afternoon where you can purchase almost anything.

The evening dinner was held in the swank Member's Box of the Sha Tin Jockey Club, where we were treated to a scrumptious buffet of Chinese and traditional Western cuisine. I must admit that I did have a flutter on the horses and through skilful picking or it could have been blind luck, I was up modestly at the end of the night.

Day five provided us with choices; we could opt for a relaxing day of exploring by yourself, a tour to Lantau Island to see Big Buddah (the world's tallest outdoor seated Buddah) and the tiny fishing village of Tai O or a morning harbour cruise that culminated at the firing of the Noon Day Gun.

I decided on the Harbour tour where I was able to view the immensity and compactness of the towering buildings of Hong Kong and right on time the firing of the Jardine Noonday Gun. The gun firing grew from a 1860's tradition where the Jardine company would fire a small cannon when people of prominence arrived in the harbour. Over time it became a tradition to fire the gun once a day at noon and on New Years Eve to usher in the New Year.

Oh, my gosh! The week is almost over, we are on Day six and a tour of the Hong Kong Police College was scheduled. Although rain was prevalent, it really had no effect on the professionalism of the recruits as they were put through their drill paces on the, thankfully covered, parade square. I have seen some excellent facilities in my time for scenario based training, but I have never seen as realistic a mock up of a subway car, platform and

station before. I'm not sure that there is a situation that can be faced in policing that cannot be replicated in their Tactical



**Training Mock-up of a Subway platform & Train**

Training Complex.

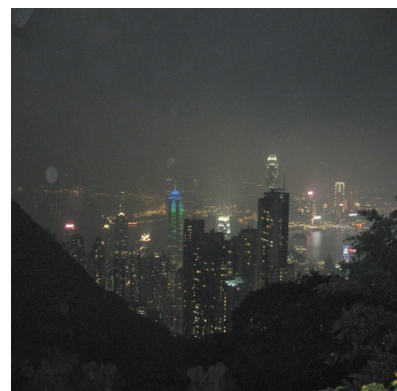
While there we met a class of new senior officers, that is to say they joined at the Inspector rank even though they have not had any policing experience. Their hiring is based on academic achievement and the ability to speak English. It was interesting to note that of a class of twenty-five senior officer recruits, two thirds were women.

Kowloon was our next stop where we shopped up a storm at the Jade Market and the Ladies Market. Bargaining is obligatory

along with the histrionics of walking away from a deal only to be called back to continue the bargaining.

Dinner was at a fresh seafood restaurant that sits by the water's edge on Lamma Island. Lamma Island is the third largest of the Hong Kong islands and is located to the Southwest of Hong Kong Island across the East Lamma Channel. The 25 minute channel crossing on our small Ferry was rough to say the least, but everyone was no worse for wear at the end.

Well, it's all over tomorrow, far too short by my estimation, but tonight we party at the Farewell Dinner at a restaurant on the Peak. The Peak, or Victoria Peak as its also called, is the highest mountain on Hong Kong Island, rising to an altitude in excess of 550 metres. Once on its lofty heights you indulge in the most spectacular sights of the city and its harbours.



**The night view of Hong Kong Island from the "Peak"**

The trip up the mountain on the Peak Tram, built in 1888, is also awe inspiring. The Peak Tram is, funicular, a cable railway in which a cable attached to a pair of tram cars on rails. A winch operated by an electric drive working on the pulley moves them up and down a steep slope; the ascending and descending vehicles counterbalancing one another.

The Farewell Dinner featured another delicious spread and presentations were made to the Hong Kong Section by many of the grateful participants, friendships were cemented and thanks given all round to hosts and guests. Entertainment was provided by the

police band that we enjoyed so much at the Welcome Banquet and everyone danced up a storm.

Thank you Hong Kong Section, you have set the bar of a successful and enjoyable Friendship Week, very high for those that follow.

The foregoing was just a snapshot of the wonderful week I had in Hong Kong. I have many a thank you to make to show my sincere appreciation for the care and friendship I received during my stay.



*A token of thanks presented to Jack Tam, Secretary General, IPA—Hong Kong Section*

Thank you to Commissioner Tang King Shing for your gracious hospitality, to Hong Kong Section Organizing Committee for all of their hard work, each of the Ambassadors that graciously gave up their free time to interpret for us, accompany us on our wanderings and keep us out of trouble, each of my new friends from Hong Kong and beyond for making my visit more memorable and last ,but not least Norman, Glory, Grace and Veronica of PC Tours and Travel for always being pleasant, smiling and professional, never getting flustered and truly knowing your business inside and out.