

Building Bridges – the Chinese community in the UK

by William Ong

COLLEGE PUBLICATION WINS AWARD FOR MEDIA EXCELLENCE

LCTA has been awarded the prestigious Pearl Award for Media Excellence for its magazine, Dragons Tale. The Award for Media Excellence recognises individuals or groups who are either Chinese or concerned with issues relating to the Chinese community and who have exhibited excellence in any area of the media. The Award, presented at a ceremony on Thursday 28th September 2006 at the Shaw Theatre in London, acknowledges the Dragons Tale's contribution to the promotion of Chinese medicine and responsible best practice in the UK.

“We are delighted and proud to have won this award,” comments Dragons Tale editor, Bonny Williams. “Dragons Tale intentionally sits on the fence between qualified Chinese medicine practitioners and the interested lay person. Whilst we draw on the expertise and knowledge of innovative practitioners who push the boundaries of their profession, we also ensure that what we publish is interesting and relevant to a wider audience.”

As well as providing crucial information on advances in the various Chinese medicine disciplines, Dragons Tale offers a balanced view of its teaching, learning and practice with expert opinion, insightful case histories and cutting edge approaches to common ailments and conditions.

“LCTA has worked hard to promote Chinese medicine in the UK through Dragons Tale – something which was long overdue,” commented William Ong of The Pearl Foundation. “Many congratulations to all at LCTA on receiving this award.”

About Dragons Tale

Dragons Tale was created in 1998 as a newsletter for LCTA staff and students. Initially designed to keep students and staff up-to-date with College matters; it was re-assessed and subsequently re-launched in June 2003 as a forward-thinking quarterly magazine. Dragons Tale is designed by Roy Platten of Eclipse and sponsored by Balance Healthcare. It is distributed free-of-charge each quarter to a readership of 8,000 that includes students, teachers, registered acupuncturists, Chinese herbalists, physiotherapists and Tui Na practitioners and interested lay people. It is a highly respected, ‘must-read’ for an ever-increasing number of subscribers in the UK and as far afield as South Africa, the USA, Israel and Australia.

Dragons Tale – the content

Dragons Tale aims to provoke thought and inspire practitioners on a wide range of topical – but not political – issues. It also provides a snap-shot of life as a Chinese medicine practitioner to those considering training. Each edition has a theme and often tackles a condition or issue from a number of perspectives, drawing on the expertise and experience of specialists in a variety of Chinese and western medical disciplines. Subjects tackled in past editions include IBS, building a practice, treating children, fertility and back pain.

Dragons Tale – the authors

The editor of Dragons Tale, Bonny Williams, is well known within the field of Chinese medicine in the UK and commissions articles from amongst the country's leading practitioners. All contributors write voluntarily.

THE PEARL FOUNDATION – HIGHLIGHTING CHINESE ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the last four years, the Pearl Foundation and its sister publication Chinatown – The Magazine have given a platform for the UK Chinese community to be heard and to 'shout' about their work. The Pearl Foundation and Chinatown – The Magazine are the brainchild of social entrepreneur William Ong, who has sought to raise the profile of the Chinese who are often described as Britain's "hidden minority". Ong says, "The Pearl Foundation was set up to dispel the myths and prejudices that unfortunately, in this day and age, still exist. Not all Chinese are kung fu experts, own or work in a takeaway or restaurant! The Chinese community are totally absorbed into British mainstream society and are working in professional occupations in the media, business, finance, law, medicine, etc".

Launched from a back bedroom in 2002, the first issue of Chinatown – The Magazine was just 16 pages long. Today it is an award-winning 80 page glossy publication recognised as Britain's only Chinese Business & Lifestyle magazine. It is a bimonthly publication, in English, that reaches out to the new generation of British born Chinese who want to know more about the culture of their parents and grandparents. It is for the new Chinese migrants who want to understand more about the Chinese Community in Britain. And it is also for people from other cultural backgrounds who have an interest in East Asian culture.

With a mixture of light-hearted and more serious content the magazine covers a wide range of topics that include society, culture, arts, business, cuisine, entertainment, lifestyle, travel, and conservation issues. Distributed throughout the country, and sold in selected bookstores including Borders and WH Smiths, the magazine has encouraged the Chinese community to speak up and highlight their work, aspirations, ambitions and concerns about their lives and roles in UK society.

The Pearl Awards

According to Ong, "Chinatown – The Magazine was shortlisted for various awards and I noticed that, besides ourselves, there was hardly any significant Chinese presence at these awards events, even though we know that there are many very talented UK Chinese individuals and organisations in the UK. As a result we decided to start The Pearl Awards to address this issue". The only awards ceremony of this kind in the UK, the Pearl Awards is a long overdue platform to

recognise Chinese achievements. The inaugural event in London in 2004 generated tremendous media excitement in the UK, Hong Kong and China. Going from strength to strength, this year's event opened with a message of support from international celebrity and action film actor Jackie Chan. The 2006 Pearl Awards brought together around 400 people from diverse communities, including entrepreneur David Tang of Shanghai Tang fame, and celebrity chef Ken Hom who presented the Promotion of Excellence in Chinese Cuisine Award. Twenty-seven finalists in nine award categories were invited to attend the event, acknowledging the breadth of contributions the Chinese community are making in all professions. As well as highlighting the successes of the Chinese community in business, media, arts and community services, performance interludes also showcased the creative talent of Chinese musicians and dancers.

Sponsors for the event included organisations such as The Metropolitan Police, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Arts Council England and Photolink Creative Group. Reflecting on the impact of the Pearl Awards to date, Ong said, "we have had a tremendous response to the Pearl Awards and we hope the awards will make a contribution to Chinese life in Britain. At present when you compare Chinese profile to that of other ethnic minorities such as African Caribbean or South Asian, it remains very low. The Pearl Awards hope to provide inspiring role models for the Chinese and bring the efforts and achievements of certain individuals and organisations to the notice of a wider public".

Upcoming Events

The Pearl Foundation also produces a wide range of events promoting Chinese culture and lifestyle. Upcoming events include Chinese Showcase, Manchester, scheduled for 21st February 2007 – an evening of Chinese classical, contemporary and hip hop music.

The Pearl Cuisine Week will take place from May 25-31 and for the first 3 days, cooking demos and stalls promoting Chinese and Asia Pacific foods and drinks will be held in Covent Garden. The event promises to offer an authentic experience of the tastes and flavours of China and Asia Pacific.

To find out more about The Pearl

Foundation events or Chinatown – The Magazine, call William Ong on 07747774059 or Amber Stevens on 0161 245 3252.

Or visit the following websites:

www.chinatownthemagazine.com

www.thepearlawards.org.uk

www.thepearlcuisineweek.org.uk