

DCs Gain Legislative Recognition in Hong Kong

CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL FORMED

Editorial Staff

On February 10, 1993, the Hong Kong Legislative Council passed a Chiropractic Registration Bill despite what was termed "intense medical opposition and skullduggery, including lies, innuendos, and eight attempts at prosecution."

The new bill mandates the local government to set up a Chiropractic Council to register and regulate the profession of chiropractic in Hong Kong.

The initial draft of the bill, reported Dr. Bruce Vaughn, D.C., president of the Hong Kong Chiropractors Association (HKCA), was unacceptable to the Hong Kong chiropractors. The bill stipulated a Chiropractic Council comprised of three medical doctors, three chiropractors, and an independent chairman. The wording of the bill did not allow the chiropractors to choose the chairman, thus setting up the real probability of the DCs on the Chiropractic Council being outvoted on important matters. The chiropractors were also unhappy with the selection of the three medical representatives on the council: one from the Hong Kong Medical Association, one representing the Hospital Authority, and one from the Medical Department of the government.

The HKCA leadership, Dr. Vaughn, Dr. Edward Lee, vice president, and Dr. Thomas Wong, secretary, spearheaded negotiations with the government. The chiropractors queried the role of the Hospital Authority on the Chiropractic Council, as no hospital in Hong Kong employed chiropractors.

After protracted negotiations, the government agreed to a Chiropractic Council consisting of five chiropractors, four nonchiropractors, one government official, and a chairman elected by the council.

The most hotly contested question became one of semantics. In Chinese, the title "doctor" is *ysang*, and was "claimed" by allopathic medicine as being a designation of their exclusive domain. Dr. Vaughn noted that Chinese history does not support this claim, as the title *ysang* has been used in China since the Tsui dynasty, hundreds of years before Western (allopathic) medicine reached the shores of China.

Because of medicine's political clout, recounts Dr. Vaughn, the medical establishment had assumed that their sole claim to *ysang* would not be questioned. Indeed, eight chiropractors calling themselves *ysang* were "visited" by the Hong Kong police. Two cases went to court, with not guilty verdicts rendered; the police did not pursue charges against the other six.

"It was a traumatic experience for young chiropractors to be raided by police, often with an agent provocateur posing as a patient trying to lure them into saying or doing something that could give cause for arrest," said Dr. Vaughn.

The government supported the medical viewpoint on the *ysang* matter, and held out to the end. An ad hoc committee of the Legislative Council formed to debate the word usage. At first the committee was dominated by six MDs, but with a good deal of lobbying by the chiropractors, the

committee grew to include 21 of the 60 legislators.

Drs. Vaughn, Lee, and Wong attended a full session of the ad hoc committee. The Hong Kong Medical Assoc. (HKMA) was called to testify just prior to the Hong Kong Chiropractic Association. The legislator representing the Medical constituency who led the attack on chiropractic, it was later learned, was the president of the HKMA.

Dr. Bruce Vaughn presented the case for chiropractic before the ad hoc committee, and then underwent what he described as a grueling 60 minutes of questioning by the committee.

The final result, Dr. Vaughn said, was "as good as we could have ever imagined." The ad hoc committee made a clear statement that the medical profession did not have exclusive right to the title ysang.

Thus the Hong Kong chiropractors fulfilled two missions: free the Chiropractic Council of medical domination, and secure the title of ysang.

Dr. Vaughn says the formation of the Chiropractic Council is underway and its rules and regulations are being set. Once this is accomplished, a date will be set to register (license) DCs. There are no examinations envisioned at this time. The standards suggested are graduation from a CCE school (or equivalent college), and state or country licensure.

"Hong Kong needs good quality chiropractors to help seize this opportunity to make Hong Kong the chiropractic showcase of Asia," declared Dr. Vaughn. "This is the first such law in Asia and other Asian countries can look to Hong Kong as an example in the future. For this reason the HKCA is anxious to get on the right track and stay there."

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