

Chinese Voice 26 March 1998 issue

Contributed by Lachlan
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- Chinese Association's Easter Tournament

Chinese Eliza at Porirua Markets?

Steven Young

Go to the early morning Saturday market in the Porirua City carpark to participate in one of the most colourful multi-ethnic gatherings in Wellington. "It's becoming more popular by the week," says Ji Young, one of a number of Chinese growers who bring their produce down from Otaki and points north on Friday night. With the traditional fruit and vegetable auctions now largely abandoned, supermarkets are negotiating directly with growers to buy big lines of staple vegetables, leaving smaller growers in the cold. The Saturday market provides an alternative outlet for specialised lines of traditional Chinese vegetables such as bok choy, Chinese broccoli, bitter gourds and watercress. It has become an important source for Wellington's Chinese restaurants and takeaway food bars whose operators come late Friday evening to pick up bulk supplies ahead of private buyers who start crowding the carparks as early as 5.00am Saturday. By then the other stallholders are ready to trade. People from Hong Kong and south China sell roast pork, fish balls, tofu; Malaysians and Cambodians sell their versions of satay and kebabs. Greeks and Italians sell fish by the truckload, Kiwis sell eggs and fruit; most interestingly Samoans with surnames like Ah Koi and Ah Wong sell fried rice, chop suey and steamed roast pork buns alongside coconut bread and raw fish salads. Unlike other markets that are daylong affairs, this is all over by 9.00am so the buying and selling is very business-like and brisk.

((Although trade is the focus of the market, it is also interesting in other ways. Here, new Asian immigrants (many in the older age bracket) perhaps shut out of their professions, are expressing their enterprise and determination to improve their lot - by preparing a variety of foods using traditional ingredients, methods and recipes, or selling produce. They are well supported by the wider Asian community eager to experience again the noise, variety, haggling and general atmosphere of a wet market.))) Here also members of the Chinese rural community are finding a new opportunity to socialise, among themselves as well as with cityfolk, late Friday night as well as Saturday morning. And it is not only the young people finding each other interesting - a professional photographer attending the markets to collect faces for a computer images library has already discovered one or two potential Asian models among the casually-dressed young women selling vegetables and flowers. Professor Higgins, Lorraine Mexted and other interested parties should hurry out there next Saturday.

Chinese Association's Easter Tournament

This year, from 10-13 April, the Wellington Chinese Association will be hosting the NZ Chinese Association's annual Sports Tournament and Cultural Concert in which hundreds of young Chinese and supporters will participate. Apart from competing for trophies this is a great opportunity for Chinese people to renew old friendships and make new ones. The Cultural Concert provides a nice balance to the sporting activities by helping to preserve Chinese culture by showcasing it to a big audience.

The NZ Chinese Association is the long established stronghold of the "original" Chinese community and this year marks the 50th Golden Jubilee of an annual event which has rotated among the four main centres since 1948. Special arrangements have been made to cater for the sporting aspirations of veterans many of whom have been involved since the year of inception.

Apart from the matches, social events include an informal veterans' reunion supper, a semi-formal dinner and dance and a Chinese banquet. Local Chinese restaurants will also be fighting for windfall patronage over this weekend.

President Allan Chang promises that the event will be a long weekend of fun, enjoyment and reminiscences but is concerned that despite the huge effort by the organising committee, people may not have received details of venues and times and where to buy tickets. (Contact Stephen Lau 025 443 570).

