

midwest peace and quiet contrasts with teeming taiwan

by john ortmann

When he goes back to teeming, overcrowded Taiwan, Richard Hsueh said he will remember the peaceful, small-town atmosphere of Lincoln.

Hsueh, vice president of the Free China Students Association, said the peace and quiet was one of two important reasons he had for coming to the American midwest for graduate work in industrial engineering. UNL's strong engineering program caused him to settle in Lincoln, he said, for the training he hopes will allow him to set up his own systems analysis company in Taiwan someday.

Wen Ting, the association's president, had similar feelings. The horticulture graduate student said studying in an agricultural area was important in her field of study. She also had another reason.

"My father had been here and liked the people, so he agreed with me to come here," she said.

Ting said she too liked the people, because "basically people are the same, good and bad, two types."

Hsueh agreed, but said American aggressiveness sometimes intimidates Orientals. He suggested that Americans show more patience with foreigners unable to express themselves in English, rather than giving up and ignoring them.

Ting, who has traveled widely in the United States, said she tries not to judge Americans from a few bad experiences.

"I think Americans should have this feeling, too," she said. "They should try to understand totally and not judge from the first view."

Hsueh said the association tries to minimize cultural shock by picking new students up at the airport, helping them set up bank accounts and telling them how the university system works. This is important because the educational systems in Taiwan and the United States are different, he said.

American students have an easy time advancing through the levels of education," Hsueh said, compared to Taiwan, where students must pass exams before advance-



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Richard Hsueh (left) and Wen Ting agree that American aggressiveness sometimes intimidates Orientals and that students should show more patience.

ment to the next level. Americans are fortunate in other ways, he said.

"American young people are too lucky to be born in the United States," he said. "You don't understand fear and death. You don't have the pressure. You must appreciate what you have."

He explained he once lived on a small island near mainland China where he knew fear daily.

Hsueh said he doesn't think mainland China ever will launch a military attack against Taiwan. However, he said, if the United States begins full diplomatic relations with the mainland, the communists may persuade the United States to curtail trade with Taiwan. He explained that Taiwan could not compete with the mainland in the marketplace because of what he called "unpaid labor" used by the communists. He went on to say that Taiwan has no natural resources and depends on manufacturing and international trade for survival.

Taiwan is overpopulated, he said. Government planners say the economy must be industrialized fully within five to 10 years if the country is to survive.

To accomplish this the government is working on 10 key areas of economic development, he said. These include highways and railroads, port improvement, airports, steel making, ship building and nuclear power.

Taiwan's economy is planned, he said. The government controls vital industries. This eliminates the inflation and unemployment which plague unplanned economies, he said.

The government in Taiwan is open to criticism by the public and press of anything but its anti-communist policies, Hsueh said. However, the Chinese are reluctant to criticize public officials because they are taught to respect authority.

"The traditions of Chinese and Americans are different," she said. "We respect our parents and elders." She said she worries about President Carter's feelings because of all the criticism leveled at him.

life in hong kong westernized, adjustment easier

by john ortmann

Life in the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong is Westernized, so there is little cultural shock experienced by UNL students from there, according to Aldrich Lau.

Lau, coordinator of the Chinese Cultural Club, is a chemistry graduate student. He said American foods, such as bacon and

eggs and hamburger, are fun at first, but that some Chinese students, hungry for a taste of home cooking, have traveled as far as Chicago's Chinatown to get it.

The club has 30 to 35 members, he said. Most of them are from Hong Kong, Lau said, but the membership includes some Americans and students from Third World countries who are interested in learning about China.

The club features speakers on Chinese agriculture and economics who have recently traveled to either mainland China or Taiwan, Lau said. Although the politics of mainland China and Taiwan are in opposition, he said, the traditional cultures of the two countries are nearly the same. So it is correct to speak of Chinese culture without defining countries.

Formerly a student at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Lau said he came to UNL because it has a good electro-chemistry program.

Lau said that after he receives his doctorate he will return to Hong Kong. He said he would like to go to mainland China, where he was born, and work in the developing petrochemical industry.

Working under a communist regime would not bother him, he said, because communism truly represents the Chinese people and is good for them.

Hong Kong eventually will be taken over by the communists, although he does not know when, he said. It will not be a military take-over, he said, but a long process of winning the people over to the communist side.

Although Lau said the press is free in Hong Kong, the colonial government only tolerates a certain amount of criticism. Hong Kong residents are British subjects but not citizens of the United Kingdom, Lau said. Most government officials are appointed.

Lau said the people are not happy with the colonial form of government but there is no independence movement.

Housing and transportation also are problems in Hong Kong, where 4.5 million people are crowded into about 400 square miles, Lau said.

Enough employment is available in such blue-collar occupations as factory work, Lau said, but white-collar jobs for college graduates are scarce and pay little if any more than blue-collar jobs.

Since few Hong Kong students can get into the colony's two universities, many travel to Great Britain, Canada or the United States to complete their educations.

Lau said he has made some good friends in the United States, although he has encountered some discrimination.

"I will have some bad memories about the racial thing," he said. "You feel some sort of social pressure, for example, when you go to a bar."

Better relationships between foreign and American students could be developed if both groups participated in joint activities, he said.

"In the Midwest, students are not so exposed to the outside world as students on the East or West coasts," he said. "I think one of the reasons why American students can't understand foreign students is because of the language gap."

Lau said that while most Chinese students can read and write English well, they cannot speak it fluently. In Buffalo, the state university offers college credit to American students who teach foreigners conversational English, he said.

A similar program here would be beneficial to both groups and should be established at UNL, Lau said.