

FOCUS:
Who are law students



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Law Association

University of Hong Kong

A Word From Our Chairman — Mr. Roy Yu

The new ex-co has been elected in the A.G.M. in Nov, 1977. But the proposed cabinet then comprised six members only; the remaining officers were immediately co-opted by the ex-co. And thereby a full cabinet is finally established.

The proposed cabinet (6 members only) was formed in a short period. Someone may query : what made it so difficult to form a full cabinet? Well, I guess the answer is the want of helping hands.

For an association to be effectively administered, there must be sufficient number of call-members who are willing to assist in organization work. An ex-co, though composed of talented and competent administrators, without the help and encouragement of call-members, could hardly attain its desirable goal.

We all know that the course of organizing a good association could never run smooth if you remain lukewarm. And if you refuse to lend us helping hands, either physically (organizing work or participating in functions) or spiritually (advice and comments), there is a latent fear that the forthcoming session will be a complete fiasco.

I foresee that the tasks of the Law Association are fraught with difficulties. Yet, I am both delighted and enlivened to see that the functions lately organized by us (namely B. B. Q., the forthcoming Christmas Party and The Inter-Yr Sports Meeting) have aroused quite a number of call-members who show their fervour and enthusiasm in planning and arranging each item. And here I would like to extend my warmest regards and thanks to all of them.

The Ex-co finds it extremely encouraging to have about 60 law student participated in the B.B.Q. (everyone was thoroughly entertained) That means a success for all of us. Nonetheless, I do hope such spirit and impetus can be maintained throughout the year.

Traditionally, only one half students of the Law Department joined the Association. This year is no exception. I think the main reason is that non-members can also enjoy the facilities provided for the members (e.g. drinking and telephone facilities). Again, one may ask: Why be a member?

The Ex-co has no intention to make a demarcation between members and non-members. But we are only an association and the scope of service is quited limited. Therefore, we have to give priority of our service to the members and reduce all subsidies towards non-members in functions. Hence, I hope that all of you will join our Association so as to widen the spectrum of our service. Remember that we would like everyone to share the fun and happiness that we prepare and it is our pleasure to work for all the students.

Besides, we sincerely invite all past students to join us as associated members for there is a close link between the present law students and the legal practitioners or alumni and it is our wish to foster our relationship in a better position.

Finally, intent on maintaining again or emulating the success of the part. Ex-cos, we cordially welcome your help and criticism; and we will strive for our best to achievement. Let us hope the spirit of our Association and the Law Department is always unflagging and unfailling.

I sincerely wish everyone good luck in the years to come.

FOCUS

WHO ARE WE ?-----

Although the Law Department has been established for a number of years, the establishment on the 5th floor of the Knowles Building seems to remain a mystery to many other University students. Law students are reported to be conjured up as misanthropic hermits, upholders of justice as prospective lawyers, or even Law Encyclopaedia. Who, actually, are we in the eyes of non-Law students? And more fundamentally speaking, who are we? These and other similar issues have been reflected upon in previous issues of the Law Media. However, this Editorial Board is of the opinion that a more systematic and a letter-organized attempt is needed to deal with the issue. This article has been written with aim of tracing the image of law students from opinions and personal view points held by Law and non-Law students, which are acquired by way of informal interviews and personal contact. This general survey cannot be said to be entirely comprehensive, but it seeks to convey an undistorted and objective picture.

Appearance proud, polite gentlemen and
intelligent, attractive ladies

It is generally recognised that law students are among the most polite students in the University. However, a few interviewees describe our politeness as 'cold politeness'. (Well, how many degrees below the freezing point?) Our boys are said to be well-dressed gentlemen and our girls are described as 'eye-catching and attractive ladies and noticeable users of make-up'. However, some of these ideas are over-generalised. Many law students would prefer to be described as 'decently dressed'. In fact, most of us prefer to dress casually. One of our girls, in response to the comment on the use of make-up says, 'I think many girls appreciate the usefulness of light make-up because it covers up those tired lines and our pale complexion which result from constant hard work and insufficient sleep. This is especially true when examinations approach. But generally we feel a girl should make an effort to make herself look pleasant and tidy. I can see no reason why a girl should sit all day in the library and sweat away at her work, looking sloppy when she can take the trouble to dress up slightly making life a little less dull.'

The writer is of the opinion that one of the most prominent features in a university is that students have a considerable degree of freedom and personal discretion in choosing to follow their own life styles, both in the academic and non-academic aspects. Jeans, safari, suits of excellent cutting, make-up may well contribute to the variety and diversity of university life, which we respect and enjoy.

It seemed that previously students with average or poor matriculation results were able to enter the department if their interviews had been successful. However, some of us feel that the A-level results of students entering the department are higher now. In fact a first year student said that before she entered the department, she thought that students studying law only did so because no other faculty would accept them and that they were not really interested in studying law at all.

But now that she is in the department, she realises that these people only form a small percentage.

As for those whose matriculation results were disappointing, they may be glad to know that many of us feel that A-level results are unreliable and often students of poor results do quite well in the department.

What about studying law itself? Does it change a person's personality and outlook? Most of us feel that studying law develops our minds and logical thinking. A few of us think that it makes a person very pragmatic. One student said, "This is a very subjective opinion, but it seems that some of us tend to be critical and analytical, often we cannot accept ideas or opinions at face value, always thooming doubt on what others have to say, "some find the work challenging and thought-provoking, but express pity that there seems to be so little time for other activities.

Some students find that there is a 'drive' within them which makes them want to do well and improve. This 'drive' spurs them on and makes them accept hard work more readily. The reasons for the existence of this "propelling force" may be the interest of the student in the subject, or the way in which the lecturer explains the topic. But sometimes this 'drive' wears off and many students experience a period of time during which they feel they can no longer work and must go out and enjoy themselves, forgetting all about their work for the time being.

To conclude.....

The writer would like to conclude the focus with:

"Almighty God, the giver of wisdom, without whose help resolutions are vain without whose blessing study is ineffectual; enable me, if it be thy will, to attain such knowledge as may quelify me to direct the doubtful, and instruct the ignorant; to prevent wrongs and terminate contentions; and grant that I may use that knowledge which I shall attain to thy glory and my own salvation, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen"

Samuel Johnson

"Prayer before the study of Law"

AND SO THE FIRST TERM HAS PASSED AWAY

This is going to be one of the shortest essays I have ever written. For here I am writing not to tell how much I can tell about something, but to explain why I have so little to tell.

The first term of my first year as a law student has slipped away peacefully and silently. It has been a new experience, of course, but not an exciting or a very memorable one. And it has been so short, so transient, that it seems difficult to grasp and to feel its full impact. Perhaps I have not been sensitive enough. Perhaps emotional insensitivity is an element in the atmosphere of a place of learning and intellectual height. I do not know. All I know is that it has been like a dreamy and muted piece of music, and that it has now come to a little pause.

Have I been very happy? I do not think so. But neither have I been unhappy. Up to this point, I am still fortunate enough to say that the law is not too bad a choice for me, and I have nothing to regret. Certainly it is a different field, dissimilar to all that I have studied before, but I think it is a challenge I can accept. Happy are those who find it more

interesting than anything they have studied in secondary school. Two subjects in the University — Law and Architecture — are very remote from Matriculation syllabuses. I know people who find these more suitable for them than anything they have known before. One cannot but feel happy for them.

The fear of study discontinuance is a shadow that looms before us, first year students. But what can one do but accept it as a fact to live with and face it the best way one can? I am not a firm believer in predestination, but I believe destiny does play a determining role in our lives. One cannot be what one is not. Life is a mystery and it is full of hidden paths. Who really knows where he is going to? I shall go my way today, as I see it today, and I shall go my way tomorrow, as I see it tomorrow.

Time passes so quickly when one works and concentrates. Day in the Library come and go. Many a morning I chase the sun and try to catch its morning warmth as I walk up the sloping path to the Knowles Building. In the cold light of the street lamps I follow my shadow home. The sun rises and the sun sets. And a day in my life has passed in the midst of books. This kind of life can be said to be monotonous. But it is not sour, neither is it sweet. And so we live, and so we breathe, and so we spend our beautiful days. Quietly and courageously, we are sailing forward into the boundless future. We create and write the stories of the days of our lives in diligence and in hope.

And so when I look into the past two months and find that I have not much to remember except a little portion of law, I do not think it matters. Yet there is something I am still trying to find. Here we are, a faculty of law, concentrated at the fifth floor of the Knowles Building. Is there any common identity among us? Friends and acquaintances, lecturers and students — is there anything they share in common, other than the familiarity with the subjects of law? There we are, brought together by the forces of circumstance, but there is the meaning behind this? Where is our common goal and where is our common destiny? Where lies our bondage to one another, and where lies our unity? This I want to find. This I want to feel.

So this is all I want to and can write about my first term. Here I look forward to the

Personality *Life Style* prospective upholders of Justice, diligent and industrious students constantly burning the Mid-night oil

Law students are regarded as hermits and avid readers of law books. This is to a large extent true; in fact, law students would like to make full use of the library facilities available at our Law Library – one of the best-equipped Law Libraries in Far Eastern Universities Law Schools. However, some of our schoolmates do like to pursue their studies elsewhere. Law students, like most of the other University students, are avid readers of books. In fact, it cannot be denied that reading of text-books and other reference materials remain the most important method by which knowledge is acquired.

One interviewee expresses the opinion that Law students are 'aloof, snobbish and self-assertive'. These certainly are very subjective views and the writer hopes that no true malice is meant. Law students are trained to develop their abilities in analytical thinking and objective reasoning, taking every material fact into consideration. This training, valuable both as a purpose for university education and as tools for future professional practice, has been incorporated into our personalities. In any real life situations, law students are therefore objective observers and, to their best, impartial judges. Hence, law students are critical of subjective views and reluctant to commit deeply into any doctrine or ideology.

In the Law Department, all students share an equal status and the idea of 'seniority' is not prominent among them. There is no sharp distinction drawn between 'serious' and 'greenhorns'. In fact, a first year student says that she has not yet met a Law Student who has been snobbish and domineering. Let's hope it stays that way.

Many students comment that law students feel themselves to be 'superior'. The writer would prefer the word 'confident'. As university students, both law students and non-law students should feel confident as in their academic pursuits and in extra-curricular activities. Perhaps, the prospect of entering into a socially reputable and stable profession gives them a greater sense of achievement in their academic success towards that particular goal.

Sports defeats give impetus to fresh Effort

Most interviewees are of the opinion that law students are generally not very good sportsmen. This is understandable; our heavy work load and the great pressure of examinations discourage frequent participation in sports and similar physical exercises.

However, the 'truth' is the days when we lose entirely and notoriously are gone. A glance through our recent issues of Bulletin sports results will lead to a realization of a contrary view. Most of us have taken note of recent improvements and 'new blood' of the first year strike flashing success occasionally. In fact, some of our boys and girls are first-rate sportsmen and are well-known in the university sports ground. Of course, they form a minority in the law Department.

The present situation is still one of difficulty of finding people to participate in the events, being aggravated by the problem of finding people to cheer for our teams. Usually, during the 1st and 2nd terms, the 1st year and 2nd year students are enthusiastic and often form cheering teams. But gradually it means off and our teams are left to play without an audience. The problem again is due to our heavy workload and the age-old reluctance in sacrificing our time.

Other Extra - Curricular Activitieslukewarm

The Law Department used to be situated at Caine Road, as a result it existed more as a separate entity and was segregated from the Students' Union. But now that we are right in the centre of Campus, there is greater opportunity for interaction between our department and the Union. Yet all of us know that response is still poor. Most of us feel that mainly it is due to our work, which makes great demand on our time. Perhaps it may be our lack of interest in participating in Union activities which are organized by students with a different trend of thinking. Some feel that the Law Department is so small that it will have no influence within the Union even if more of us participated, whereas others adopt a frank approach and admit that they prefer to relax and enjoy themselves in their leisure time, rather than to indulge in discussion of topics such as 'life in China' or related issues. Moreover, because of our studies in law, most of us view matters from a different angle and tend to adopt a legal point of view which makes it difficult to communicate with students of other faculties.

However, students of other faculties may also find it difficult to communicate or converse with our students because very often, we incorporate legal terms and jargons into our conversations, e.g. damages, consideration, G.B.H. etc. These terms which are meaningless to other students give them a feeling that we are using them to impress others and to assert our superiority as potential lawyers. Therefore although we may derive great enjoyment from saying these terms, they may be quite offensive to other students.

Most of us find that we are more attentive to legal issues in the current news than to other areas. This is only natural; however it also leads to the result that gradually we lose touch of areas of social concern and our scope of general knowledge is narrowed down.

Studies industry and perseverance

All of us realize there is great pressure and competition in the Department. This is particularly true in the 1st year, where freshmen bear repeated stories of how previous students have failed their exams and have been discontinued. Although the lecturers insist that there is no fixed quota of students failing each year, most students work very hard, with the fear of failing lurking in the back of their minds.

second term, and, indeed, to our whole future in HKU. I hope I can be part of it, and not just use it, and be a university student, not just a law student. If only we can join together in search of the depths and riches of life, as well as the heights and treasures of knowledge

Aeon
8-12-1977.

路 松柏

每人都在那條爲他而設的路上走着，
一年前，我會告訴你
我要克服這條崎嶇的山路，
一年後，我發覺是那條路克服了我，
天仍是那麼的灰暗……

× × × ×

一年前，我告訴一個在路上遇見的陌生人，
我們對人要坦白，
一年後，如果你問我，
我還要坦白嗎？
我仍會告訴你這是應該的，
但無奈我知道我所說的
已不是真話……

× × × ×

一年前，我或會加入你們其中的一行列，
但現在
我學會了站在路邊，
做一個冷眼的旁觀者……

× × × ×

一年前，那條路是多麼富有挑戰性，一年後，發覺自己
原來躲進了那美麗的象牙塔，
一陣捲風吹起無數的紙屑……
一年前，我可以停下來，爲你做種種的傻事，
一年後，我祇會聳聳肩，笑一笑，
繼續我的旅程，
那些乾枯的樹葉一堆堆被掃到小渠旁……

一年前，你應該相信我寫的東西，
一年後，我仍希望你相信我的感受。
如果你不介意歲月給我戴上的面具。

鄉愁 仙人掌

鄉愁是母親口裏的外婆，
和一枚枚八分郵票，
寄來一張張黃黃的面孔，
說着零零落落的簡體字，
相見不相識。

夜

一靜就靜成個夢，
陪着千萬個靈魂，
忘掉
迫人的生活迫人的
慾望，
逃入一窪無聲無味的黑水裏。

感情

感情一束的散在地上，
一眨眼好像很苦惱的亂，
但抽起來還是沒有結的一條直線，
只輕輕折了一兩下。

鄉愁是
那革命的孫中山，
扭斷了泥菩薩的手，
血一流，就大半個世紀，
全放在牆角，
那賣不去的歷史書裏。

悶

生活像一隻密紋唱片

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