

## *Welcoming the Dragon - 4th February 2012*

The evening of February 4th saw the members and guests of PAA (NSW) enjoying yet another peranakan-style Chinese New Year dinner. The Pennant Hills Community Hall was once again the venue for this glittering affair which saw some 120 people attend to enjoy the ambience, friendships and mouth-watering peranakan dishes and kuehs.

Obviously such a celebration of this nature requires plenty of planning and hard work. So we thank the Committee members for their 'labor of love' and the helpers who planned and executed the function. PAA (NSW) President Evelyn Tian addressed the crowd, welcoming everyone to the second CNY dinner and noting that the Peranakan Association Australia NSW Inc. is also celebrating its first anniversary.

Nyonya food was, of course, the main reason for us to get together and thanks must go to the members whose efforts resulted in a good variety of savoury and Nyonya sweets. The food is typical of traditional Nyonya fare at any home for Chinese New Year so it would have been familiar to many, creating some sense nostalgia.

Many of the nyonias were dressed in traditional 'sarong kebayas' and 'kasut manek' which brought much colour to the event. As for the blokes, not wanting to be left out, came in their colorful batek shirts as well.

The almost mandatory Nyonya 'chap chai' was present with a delicious 'babi pong-teh', 'tau ewe-bak' 'ayam curry', 'sambal sotong' a 'sayur lemak' and plenty of 'mee-siam' and 'cha-mee' that goes well with sambal telor, sambal blachan. There were plenty of 'sambal's with one version that was 'yumily' hot.

As is usual in a PAA event, there was entertainment provided by Baba Jerry Tan who showed us his prowess with a guitar when accompanying the sing-alongs. One highlight was Nyonya Hawa, a recent arrival from Melbourne (and a member of the PAA in Melbourne) who quite spontaneously joined Jerry at the stage with her violin, giving an excellent rendition of the haunting melody of 'Danny Boy'. And this was completely unrehearsed!

Jerry continued to entertain when he was requested to sing a few Chinese songs, which he completed to the crowd's delight. Quite remarkable when you realise Jerry's command of Cantonese/Mandarin is somewhat limited. Another request was for some 'joget' music which was provided by a lap-top attached to a couple of speakers. It wasn't long before

the crowd started 'joget-joget' with various style to entertain the crowd. This was a moment of delight, fun and letting go of oneself to the rythm of great music.

A peranakan meal must always be accompanied by its mouth-watering kuehs. The sweets consisted of various Nyonya cakes – agar agar, kueh bengah ubi, kueh bengah durian, seri muka, and peanut puffs to ensure the theme for the evening was adhered to.

Of course the evening had to end but a straw poll carried out by yours truly determined that the night was a success. Much praise was levelled at the excellent food and the lively, friendly atmosphere. The PAA's second Chinese New Year dinner was a success and there's no doubt members are looking forward to other events through the year.

Cheah Phee Huat  
Editor  
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