NEXUS OF VILLAGES BY UNICORN DANCING TEAMS

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It was chilly, cloudy and rainy on Sunday, January 27, 2002 in Hoi Pui Tsuen, Pat Heung. This village is inhabited by the Fan, the Cheung and the Kan. This area was quite inaccessible before the construction of the Tai Lam Tunnel and recently the West Rail Station.

Some 60 people, mainly young men and some leaders of the village, have been gathered in front of the village office since 2:00pm in a jovial manner. Inside the village office, a temporary altar was set up facing the entrance of the building with a tablet of hand written characters on it. Some seven unicorn dancing teams arrived by 5:00pm. All teams were first greeted by the unicorn team of the host village and then each team proceeded to the two ancestral halls (Fan’s and Cheung’s) to pay tribute to the ancestors. A banquet of basin meal of 120 tables was served in the evening.

The organizer of this celebration was Nam Shing Tong. This celebration has been held every year after the Handover. The reason for doing so was that this Tong has had some extra money left, every year.

At first one might have no idea why unicorn dancing teams from some apparently unrelated areas would be invited to come. 1. Yuen Long, well, it is reasonable to have a team from Yuen Long. Hoi Pui Tsuen is in Yuen Long. 2. Shatin, it is quite the other part of the Territory, and 3. Sai Kung, it is obviously very far away. Later, I was enlightened by being told that they were from the same instructor, Master So. The unicorn dancing team from Sai Kung was particularly able to draw one’s attention - it was known as Pak Kei Lun (Northern unicorn), which was black, as different from the unicorns commonly seen in Hong Kong, which were bright and colourful. The Pak Kei Lun had two small horns, which might, ironically, make it no longer qualified to be a unicorn, in a Western sense. The ordinary unicorn had five colour strips around the neck: red, yellow, blue, white and black, resembling the five directions: south, centre, east, west and north.
which link villages together, apart from blood, land and money: there should also be a category of the same source of acquiring a particular skill. In this case of Hoi Pui Tsuen, it is the skill of unicorn dance. If this element does not exist, then one can hardly figure out why these villages from afar would send their own unicorn dancing teams all the way to Hoi Pui Tsuen on that day.
The altar and tablet for unicorn dancing teams.
The Pak Kei Lun from Saikung
Two unicorns welcoming the Pak Kei Lun
A unicorn 'biting the green' (choi ching) in front of the Hoi Pui Tsuen village office
The Fan's ancestral hall