

Association of Chinese Soil & Plant Scientists in North America

北美华人土壤和植物科学家协会

ACSPSNA History

The Association was founded on November 30, 1981 in Atlanta during the annual meetings of the American Society of Agronomy (ASA). The organization of an association had been in the minds of several of us who witnessed the growing number of soil and crop scientists of Chinese origin coming to the ASA meetings. Whenever we saw an oriental face with a name tag bearing a Chinese spelling, we felt that we should meet him and get acquainted with him. Efforts were made but contacts were limited to a few individuals who might or might not be seen next time at the ASA meetings. However, opportunity presented itself at the 1980 ASA meetings in Detroit. The hallways outside the meeting rooms of the hotel led to a cafeteria at the end of the hall where coffee was served during the breaks. At one meeting recess, several of us invited a few mainland visiting agricultural scientists for coffee whom we had just met. We talked about mainland situation and its agriculture. The group grew larger with each passing minute. At one time, the number reached about twenty. Some had to return to the meetings, others remained. There was a strong feeling that such gatherings were needed at future ASA meetings among those who resided in North America to get acquainted with one another and perhaps one day as a group or individuals we could do something for our motherland. Therefore, a meeting was held later in one of those meeting rooms to discuss the possibility of organizing a formal group of Chinese soil and crop scientists. I was given the responsibility to make a survey of potential members in the United States and Canada as well as plans and preparations for the meeting of this organization. Although a formal planning committee was not elected, I did enlist the help of Dr. H.H. Cheng of the Washington State University, Dr. P.H. Hsu of the Rutgers University, and Dr. George H.L. Liang of the Kansas State University.

The informal committee went to work immediately after the meeting. A survey form was sent to all potential members. Other names were added. A directory was put together which has been revised every year. The name, Association of Chinese Soil and Plant Scientists in North America, was proposed and purposes of the organization were suggested in my open letter of January 1, 1981 to all potential members. In the meantime, Dr. Liang was asked to draft a constitution of which copies were distributed for review. Comments were received and summarized for presentation at Atlanta where the 1981 ASA meetings were to be held. News of the Association's first meeting was advertised in the September/October issue of ASA Agronomy News.

The Association's rounding meeting took place in the Ambassador Room of the Atlanta Hilton. Twenty-six people attended including Dr. Chang Tze-Chou of the National Taiwan University and a delegation from mainland's South China Agricultural College (now changed to University), Dr. Li Pei-Wen, vice president, and two professors who came to attend the ASA meetings. After introduction and a report on preparation for the meeting, it was declared that the Association was officially formed. A business meeting was followed and officers elected. I was installed as the Association's first president, Dr. George Liang the vice-president and Dr. P.H. Hsu the secretary/treasurer. The constitution was discussed, amended, and adopted. Dr. H.H. Cheng was asked to prepare an English version of the constitution to facilitate the business with other organizations. After all business was taken care of, Dr. Li of the South China Agricultural College and Dr. Chang of the National Taiwan University were asked to give respective reports on agricultural progress in mainland and Taiwan. Dr. Liang was also asked to make comments on his recent trip to the mainland.

During the first year of the Association's existence, a newsletter was issued as specified in the constitution. It contained news of some Association members, two articles, one on Soil Science Department of the Reading University in England and the other Agricultural College Education in Mainland, and items on Accomplishments in Biology and Agriculture in Ancient China (before 771 to 221 B.C.), as well as revised constitution of the Association both in Chinese and English. I often felt that the newsletter would serve a very important purpose in our Association, particularly because not all members will be able to attend ASA meetings and meet people. Through newsletters they will learn news of Association affairs, agricultural developments here, there, and everywhere, and activities and accomplishments of our members. I sincerely hope the newsletters will be resumed soon.

The above is a brief account of how the Association was started. This coming December we shall meet in Chicago for our fifth meeting. During the last four years, the soil and plant scientists of Chinese origin are no longer strangers at ASA meetings. Through the efforts made by Drs. George Liang, P.H. Hsu, Paul Sun, and others, every year we have an opportunity to be together and have a good time. In addition, our members not only have made significant contributions to the field of agricultural sciences but also given their time, knowledge, and efforts for the advancement of agricultural science and education in our motherland including both Mainland and Taiwan. It my hope that our Association will become more and more prosperous and successful and be recognized as time goes on.

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