

Mission Hills: Profits for the Family, for the People, for the Nation

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The first article on Dr. Ken Chu demonstrated how much his father and family relationships meant to him. The diligence and order Ken puts into Mission Hills reflects well on his upbringing. Not only did he pledge to help his father at age six, that's also when he began working for his pocket money: polishing shoes, washing the dishes, doing household work. Ken tells us, "That's when I learned the value of money, discipline, the meaning of 'No pain, no gain'."

Still a young 40-year old, Ken is already implementing every component from his Three Ps – profits, people, and planet – into his business and personal life. There's another 'P' that fits: philanthropy. Along with monetary donations, Ken Chu frequently gives motivational speeches to students; as the Mission Hills Chairman and CEO told us, charity isn't just about donating money; "Inspiring the young to do their best, offering advice on how they can run a business – these are equally vital." Ken points to his family background as a critical ingredient to his own success: his father, David Chu, was a famed disciplinarian who never went easy on his son. The Chus had their first car when Ken was six, and that's when he realised the magnitude of the sacrifices his father made for the family's sake. Ken's response then? "I told my father I'd help him with his business – he was very

pleased when he heard that.” Ken’s business training started with the weekends spent at David’s office; though the younger Chu didn’t understand what his father was doing, it allowed Ken to witness David’s work ethic, and that left an indelible mark on him.

His mastery of time and efficiency is on full display during three days of the year: his birthday, New Year’s Eve and Lunar New Year. Ken had his birthday recently, and this is how he celebrated – by 9.30am, he’d run 10km, eaten breakfast and travelled to three cities. Most mortals would struggle to do all that in a week, let alone a morning.

He’s known as China’s “Mr. Golf,” but you’ll be surprised to hear he didn’t appreciate the sport as a youngster. “As a student, I played a lot of vicious sports; I thought golf was a retirement game,” Ken remembers. Upon returning from Canada to help his father, he discovered what the green fairways represented: “It’s a business language, it’s a social networking tool, it’s an extension of the office.”

Thrust into the limelight at age [32], Ken took the reins of the world’s biggest golfing facility when the elder Chu passed away from nasal cancer. Helped by a smooth transition, Ken and younger brother Tenniel have planted their own vision in the company; today, Mission Hills caters to the entire family, from grandparents to small children.

Ken states, “Golf in Asia is still male dominated, but I’m not a believer of the ‘golf widow,’” referring to golfers who leave their wives behind. Mission Hills’ array of sporting and recreational facilities guarantees their customers’ families experience Dr. Chu’s ‘3 Hs’: Happiness, Health and Harmony.

SHOWCASING CHINA

Guiding Mission Hills as a commercial operation isn’t Ken’s only preoccupation – his enthusiastic promotion of Hong Kong-China links has benefited legions of young business people and artists from both sides of the border. Mission Hills works with the Chinese government and advises Hong Kong entrepreneurs on how to handle the PRC’s business registration, taxation, and customs regulations; the company has assisted more than 190 Hong Kong businesses to find a foothold in mainland China. In September, Mission Hills Shenzhen hosted “MH Maker,” a creative platform for Chinese artists all over the world. “Our company helps youth from Hong Kong achieve their dreams in China,” Ken says. These activities demonstrate the influence of the ‘Super Connector’ role Dr Chu relishes.

There's precedence for Ken assisting the fledglings, the rookies, so to speak. After overcoming the prejudices Chinese children frequently encountered in Canadian schools, he became a force for protecting new Chinese students; he was integrated into Canadian society after a couple of years, so Ken took on the responsibility of helping recent Chinese arrivals and those who were being picked on. "It helped I grew bigger and stronger – I even played American football and rugby! I became the 'Big Brother' among the Chinese community."

With its sporting ambitions, Ken believes Mission Hills has a role in fostering the next generation of professional and amateur Chinese athletes. Chinese footballers train at MH Hainan to take advantage of the island's year-round warm weather; during winter, they're joined by their sporting rivals South Korea and Japan, who also send their football teams down south. Dr Chu hopes to encourage aspiring golfers as well:

"We have three golf courses where customers under age 18 can play for free any time during the year. That helps promote the game in China." After a century-long absence at the summer games, golf reappeared at the Olympics this year; it's a sport the Chinese have a realistic shot at scoring gold in the future.

Why does this matter to the Mission Hills CEO? Ken reminds us of his Three P – profits, people and planet – "I work for my company, for the people, and for the country." His understanding of China's history leads him to conclude the Chinese want four things: status, confidence, respect and wealth. Across multiple fronts – recreation, sports, and philanthropy – Mission Hills is doing an exemplary job in helping our compatriots achieve these dreams.

Golf. Spas. Innovation. Entrepreneurship. Leadership. Mission Hills has grown from strength to strength during the past decade; financial crises, luxury crackdowns – none have derailed Ken and his 'family' team from taking China's world-class recreational outfit to greater heights. With Dr Ken Chu at the helm, we wouldn't bet against Mission Hills for decades to come.