



Rescue Jude Shao

By Meihuey Huang, Staff Reporter

STANFORD – Concerning the impending Olympic torch relay in San Francisco, some welcome it, some prepare to protest it. But a group of Stanford MBA alumni hopes that their quiet but unrelenting efforts, by requesting that San Francisco Mayor Newsom, through private and public channels, raise the issue of Jingzu Shao (Jude Shao), a Chinese American citizen imprisoned in China, with Chinese officials when welcoming the Olympic flame, would be more effective in winning Shao’s prompt release on parole under Chinese law.

The classmates of the 1993 Stanford MBA class, rallying around five people including Chuck Hoover and Cynthia Dai, have been actively pursuing the release of their classmate Shao, who has been incarcerated in Shanghai Qingpu prison on “tax evasion” charges. On April 7, according to Cynthia Dai, they sent emails, faxes and made follow-up calls to Zhangshen Gao, Consul General of the People’s Republic of China in San Francisco, to request a meeting, for which they have only received a reply saying the Consulate would be very busy on the 8th and 9th because the Olympic flame is coming.

As to Mayor Newsom, says Cynthia Dai, since San Francisco is the city in which Shao founded the company to export medical equipment; is a sister city with Shanghai; and is the only city in all of North America to welcome the Olympic flame; they all feel it is quite logical to ask mayor Newsom for help in pressing Chinese officials to free an American citizen who has significant ties with San Francisco.

The last time Shao’s name was mentioned by high U.S. officials was in February of this year, when Secretary Rice of the State Department made a swift, 24-hour visit to China, where she met Chinese foreign minister Jiechi Yang and brought up three names in the discussion of human rights: Hu Jia, Shi Tao, and Jingzu Shao.

Born in Shanghai, Shao came to America to study in 1984, received an MBA from Stanford University in 1993, and became a naturalized American citizen in 1997. He registered a wholly foreign owned company in Shanghai Pudong area, and was later given a 16-year sentence in May, 1998 on charges of “falsely issuing VAT receipt and tax evasion”, a sentence his family and classmates believe was unjustified and was given without due process.

On May 2, says Cynthia Dai, Shao’s Stanford MBA classmates will gather again to celebrate their 15th year reunion. Five years ago at their 10th year reunion, in which they finally learned the plight of Shao through various channels, five classmates, dubbed as the “gang of

five” by the others, began to concentrate their efforts to rescue Shao. In the years following, serious attempts have been made, including President Bush’s personally inquiring about Shao’s status with Chinese leaders during the APEC meetings, the efforts of Senators and Secretaries of State, and this time the torch relay of the Olympic flame in San Francisco. “We have done everything possible, but have not been able to secure American citizen Shao’s freedom.”

A person who has served half of his sentence is eligible to apply for release on parole within several months. Shao had reached his mid-sentence date long ago in May 2006, and while all other similarly eligible prisoners have been released, Qingpu prison today still has not even submitted Shao’s parole petition to the court. In Beijing, the response is that a parole petition must be initiated by the prison in Shanghai.

Two years ago, Chinese leader Hu Jintao visited the U.S. at the time when Shao just became eligible for parole. “We felt we were so close to the point that Jude would be released, but they only gave him a 1-year sentence reduction. Recently it is said that he is eligible for sentence reduction, but that he still can not be paroled.” His classmates’ only wish, with the arrival of the Olympic flame in San Francisco, is that the event will also bring a ray of hope for Shao’s freedom. They want to know, “In prison, can Shao still see the Olympic games?”