

# 322 READER PART 3

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**GING HAWK CLUB ESSAY CONTEST:  
"DOES MY FUTURE LIE IN CHINA OR AMERICA?"**

Ging Hawk Club

*EDITORS' NOTE: In 1936 the Ging Hawk club of New York sponsored an essay contest on the theme; "Does My future Lie in China or America?" This was a burning question—more pragmatic than philosophical—that many second-generation Chinese Americans had to confront at the time. China was in the throes of civil war and under attack by Japan. The country needed all the overseas Chinese support and talent it could muster. Their immigrant parents had instilled in them the belief that they owed their allegiance to their motherland. At the same time they were well aware of their limited opportunities for gainful employment or meaningful integration into American society, given the racist climate and depressed economic times. The possibility of a good job and the opportunity to serve their ancestral motherland thus drew many Chinese Americans to consider going to China. But because they were American-born and had lived their entire lives in the United States, many questioned whether they could adjust to life in China.*

*The winning and second-place essays, originally published in the Chinese Digest on May 15, 1936, and May 22, 1936, reflect this dilemma of being caught between two countries. We are reprinting them here, along with a response from Jane Kwong Lee, and the running debate between Robert Dunn, the winning essayist, and his detractors, the Chinese Students' Club of Stanford University. Ironically, Dunn, who argued that he could serve China best by remaining in America, did work in China in the 1940s, becoming secretary to one of China's top delegates to the United Nations Conference. After the 1949 revolution, Dunn returned to the United States, where he worked as senior reference librarian at the Library of Congress until he retired. Kaye Hong, the second-place essayist who had expressed the intention to serve China, chose to remain in the United States after all and is now a retired businessman living in San Francisco.*

## WINNING ESSAY

Robert Dunn, Somerville, Mass.  
(Harvard University)

Throughout the early years of the life of any American-born Chinese, he or she is constantly confronted with an important problem, the decision of which will inevitably influence, if not determine, his or her future happiness and success. The problem has been well-expressed in the question: "Does My Future Lie in China or America?"

Having been born in America (Roxbury, Mass., 1915) I, too, have been haunted with this problem. Which road should I choose? Which is more advantageous? Which road would lead to more happiness and greater success?

After having given this fundamental problem some thought, I have found that it really resolves itself into four minor problems: First, that of allegiance, or patriotism, or race; second, that of service; third, that of employment; and finally, that of civilization, or culture. Without a consideration of these four significant problems, I believe an answer to the main problem is quite incomplete and inadequate. I propose, therefore, to discuss them as fully as the limited length of this essay will permit.

In determining whether my future is to be in China or America, I have naturally come to ponder the question: To which of these two countries do I owe allegiance? Which country am I obliged to serve?

Ever since I can remember, I have been taught by my parents, by my Chinese friends, and by my teacher in Chinese school, that I must be patriotic to China. They have said: "You should be proud of China's four thousand years of glorious and continuous history, of her four hundred million population, and of her superior culture and civilization. You must be thankful for the traditions and customs you have inherited as a member of the yellow race. What is more, you would not be living if it were not for your ancestors and parents who are Chinese. Most certainly, then, you are obliged to render service to China, especially in these days of need and stress and humiliation. Don't you realize that the Chinese are mocked at, trodden upon, disrespected, and even spit upon? Haven't you yourself been called degrading names? Have you no face, no sense of shame, no honor? How can you possibly think of staying in America to serve it?"

Now, I do not wish to contradict or oppose these assertions as being unsound. Somehow, however, I feel there is another side to the picture. I owe much pride and gratitude to America for the principles of liberty and equality which it upholds, for the protection its government has given me, and for its schools and institutions in which I have participated. Without them, I certainly would not be what I am now. If Americans have called me names, so have the Chinese who speak of me scornfully as being a "native" (*t'oa jee doy*) and as knowing nothing of things Chinese. True, many regard me highly because I am a junior at Harvard; but I can say without ostentation that my American friends also respect me as a student. In fact, they give me more respect because I am Chinese. Whatever I do in school and college in the way of extracurricular activities or of attaining high grades, I am given much more credit and popularity than an American would receive if he did the same things. Being a Chinese among American friends, then, is a sort of advantage. There are, then, two sides to the picture: I am certainly as much indebted to America as I am to China.

If this is true, then I should serve both equally; but is this possible if I choose a future that lies here in America? Certainly, one cannot help China by building a bridge or opening a factory in America; one cannot serve China by curing American patients; one is not aiding China by practicing his principles of government, sociology, or economics in America. It is true, however, that almost every overseas Chinese who has entered college is studying in one of these fields. They all evidently are planning their futures in China; but could we justly condemn them as showing no allegiance to China if they later decided to stay in America to put their studies into practice? I think not, provided they serve China in some other way.

I mean to say that even though one practices his profession in America, he can still serve China by building up a good impression of the Chinese among Americans, by spreading good-will and clearing up misunderstandings, by interesting the Americans in the Chinese through personal contacts or otherwise, and, if necessary, by contributing generously to the financing of worthy enterprises in China. These are services of inestimable value. These are services which may be even more worthy than the services of those who do their life work in China. It is possible, then, to pay the debt one owes to China and show one's allegiance to Chinese even while living in America.

What of those who would like to find a life-work in America? What are the opportunities for employment? Is it to be contended that a Chinese will be

welcomed into American employment as cordially as into positions in China? The facts seem to indicate the opposite. Chinese students have indubitably found it difficult to get employment, to say nothing of getting the more elevated and higher-paying positions.

My brother, a graduate of M.I.T. last year, failed to receive a single favorable reply from different companies to which he sent letters of application for employment. He has returned to China and now has a position with the Nanking government. What shall I say to this? I can say my brother was merely fortunate, as he himself admits in his letter. He was lucky to have a sister who is married to someone connected with the government. In other words, he was given a "pull" up the ladder, a necessary force which most overseas Chinese do not have.

In his last letter, my brother warned me that positions are so few that even men with Ph.D.'s and M.S.'s and M.A.'s are without work. It is evident, then, that employment is hard to get anywhere; in America, perhaps, because of the color line; in China because jobs are scarce. The color line, however, does not entirely prevent the American-born Chinese from getting jobs. The chances are small, to be sure, but as in China, there are some opportunities open to certain fortunate people. It cannot be said, therefore, that it is impossible for Chinese-American youths to obtain remunerative positions in either China or America.

If there are possibilities for profitable employment in both countries, then I see no reason why I should not choose a future for myself in America if it happens that I like it better here, or if I happen to be acclimated to the modes of life and social environment here. True, if I receive employment in China, it would almost surely be one of the large coastal cities where there are modern conveniences such as electric-lights, running water, quick transportation, and means of sanitary and healthful living. The two civilizations can hardly be said to be conflicting in the material sense, except in minor details. The real harmful conflict is between the two different cultures, the two different outlooks upon life, which, together with the language difficulty, will tend to bring social estrangement to the returning overseas Chinese, whether boy or girl.

If I am to spend my future in China, there must come a time when I shall have to make contacts there. Years of lonesomeness will intervene before I shall be able to speak Mandarin or Cantonese with considerable fluency. Even then, I am afraid my endeavors to make real intimate friendships will fall short of their goals and will merely end in casual acquaintanceships. I have been brought

up to live by Christian ideals, by liberal attitudes, and by an optimistic outlook on life.

I think I shall be able to make a few close relationships with the young men and women of China, for their background is of utilitarian ideals, of conservative attitudes, and of a fatalistic outlook upon life. When these two cultures conflict and clash, the inevitable result is either social estrangement, or a yielding of one culture to the other, a process which is sure to engender much happiness, discontent, and despondency.

I have not, perhaps, expressed this point clearly but I can say that I feel the clash of cultures within me even now, because I live with my father and I contact many Chinese friends who represent the pure Chinese culture. My relatives are also of a different background than myself, and they all advise that I make friends, not for friendship's sake, but with a hope that they will help me get a job sometime. They object openly or become suspicious when I am seen walking with a girl. They pour contempt upon religion, especially upon Christianity, and fail to see the preciousness and value of the individual life. This culture and attitude is contrary to mine, and I fear that I shall be unhappy in the process of yielding to it.

With the conclusions, then, that I owe America as much allegiance as I do China; that it is possible to serve China while living in America; that remunerative employment, though scarce, is not impossible for me to obtain in either China or America; and that I would avoid the unhappiness and social estrangement due to conflicting cultures by staying in America; I think no one could justly accuse me of being unwise if I chose a course of life whose future lies here in America.

## SECOND PLACE ESSAY

Kaye Hong, San Francisco, California.  
(Formerly University of Washington, Seattle)

When the conquest of new territory in the United States had stretched to the limits of the Pacific, the old adage of "Go West, Young Man" no

longer became applicable to the American Youth. Through necessity the modern generation concentrated on the intense development of natural resources and greater industrialization. As the population multiplied, competition for jobs increased, and when the world depression set in the unemployment situation grew acute resulting in the accentuated distaste for Oriental rivalry in every type of work. As a result the present generation of American-born Chinese absorbed a bitter diet of racial prejudice.

I have learned to acknowledge that the better jobs are not available to me and that the advancement of my career is consequently limited in this fair land. As I express my desire to return to China to create a career, however, I am constantly being reminded that I am as American as American can be, that I shall deplore China's lower standard of living, that the chaos of China's government offers me no promise of economic security. In other words I shall be leaping from the proverbial frying pan into the fire, for in the United States I am at least assured a decent livelihood. As proof of this contention they bring to my notice numerous cases of American born Chinese who have the spun the wheel of chance in old Cathay and have returned to the States sadly disillusioned. These arguments have been impressive, but somehow I refuse to be convinced. And, it is for me — "Go Further West, Young Man". Yes, across the Pacific and to China.

What then constitutes the lure that beckons me to return, for I'm certainly not a vagabond of impractical hankerings? It is certain that I'm not planning to return just for the pleasure jaunt, for I'm not financially equipped to tour the Orient. Again, I'm not an idealist who responds to the hue and cry of the propagandist, for impassioned slogans, such as "Make the world safe for Democracy," "Your country needs you," etc., leave me coldly unresponsive.

You may condemn me as lacking in patriotism. From one viewpoint, yes. From mine, no, for I am of the belief that I can be of greater service to China by being methodically practical instead of resorting to oratorical displays of vehemence or meaningless pledges of unflinching loyalty. After all, words are cheap.

My patriotism is of a different hue and texture. It was built on the mound of shame. The ridicule heaped upon the Chinese race has long fermented within my soul. I have concluded that we, the younger generation, have nothing to be proud of except the timeworn accomplishments of our ancient ancestors, that we have been living in the shadow of these glories, hoping that these arts and

literature of the past will justify our present. Sad but true, they do not. To live under such illusions is to lead the life of a parasite.

No, I'm not the reactionary youth who is going to say, "I came, I saw, I conquered." No, I'm not such an egoist to think that my mere presence in China would change its history. In fact I'm not even aspiring for political prominence as thousands of American trained graduates have hoped, only to be disappointed to the degree that henceforth they could only find fault with the Nationalist government. I, for one, do not intend cynically to denounce the policies of the Republic. I must confess that the more I learn, the greater I'm aware what a pittance is my knowledge. Numbered among my shortcomings are the intricacies of diplomatic strategy. I'm a layman, and a layman has no business in politics.

You might ask, how are you going to help save China? My policy is not sensational. My deeds will not be heralded in headlines, and my name will not go down in history as a hero of China. I merely intend to become a good citizen of the great Republic. I shall support the Nationalist government, which is now gaining strength with each succeeding day. I shall accept the national policies as being the best moves for China as a whole. I shall place the welfare of the nation above my own. In other words, I shall do my part.

To be more concrete in my theory, I must explain that I believe a nation is as strong as she is economically progressive. In this measure of value, China is relatively destitute. Her industries are unborn, her resources are yet underground. Her people are jobless and starving. This must all be changed, for China can never arouse from her lethargy without constructing a stable economic foundation. It is impossible for a nation to rise politically when she stands upon an economic base of quicksand that sucks her down instead of holding her up.

I realize that China cannot be changed from an agrarian populace to that of an industrialized state within a decade, not even a lifetime. It will take many lifetimes. It follows that neither I, nor any other person, can singly bring about any impressive progress. It will take hundreds of thousands, millions, of young men with vision to build for the future, to start the wheels of industries, to weave a cobweb of railroads and highways across the expanse of all Cathay, to educate everyone in a common language, to send out a fleet of trading vessels, to develop the internal resources, to build a richer life for one and all. Then and only then can the present generation of Chinese really "save their faces." Then and then only will China be truly powerful and respected. It matters not whether capital-

ism, socialism, or communism provides the means of motivation. It only matters that the goal, China's salvation, is accomplished.

I am willing to accept an inconspicuous part in the construction of a new nation. To me and those oversea Chinese with an American background, an American spirit of aggressiveness, an American "go-getter" enthusiasm, China is the land of opportunity. Every vocation is an open field; indeed, every vocation is a "gold mine" for those who have the courage to dare pioneer the industrialization of China.

Perhaps I've been speaking too optimistically in vague generalization. Perhaps I have neglected to emphasize that one must specialize in some distinct field, that one must have a command of the Chinese language, that one must be brave enough to triumph in the hour of adversity. Perhaps I have not made clear that pioneering is no playground for weaklings, especially in the present predicament of having imperialistic Japan as a cutthroat neighbor. China's bed of roses also promises many thorns.

Space will not permit a detailed dissertation on a subject on which volumes can be written. We cannot treat here effectively the various phases of life in America or life in China. It is a greater subject than can be discussed in such restricted space. I can only be dogmatic in my viewpoints and hope that they are coherently comprehensive. And so, it is for me, "Go Further West, Young Man."

[The following letter in response to Robert Dunn's essay was published in the May 22, 1936, "Firecrackers" column of the Chinese Digest.—ED.]

#### Chinese Students at Stanford University

According to the 1935-36 directory of Chinese students in America there are twenty-three China- and American-born Chinese students attending that institution. The courses which these students are taking include political science, economics, English, education, social sciences, civil, mechanical, and mining engineering, history, medicine, biology, and chemistry. Several of these students are San Francisco youths.

Mr. Robert Dunn,  
Somerville, Mass.

Dear Robert:

Your prize-winning essay, which was awarded first place in the contest sponsored by the Ging Hawk Club of New York on the question "Does My Future Lie in China or America?", roused a great deal of interest among the Chinese Students of Stanford University when it was published in the May 15 issue of the *Chinese Digest*. We, the Stanford Chinese Students, congratulate you for your frank opinion on this pressing problem common to all young Chinese in America and for your talent which enabled you to win first honors.

As a group of students composed of both Chinese born in America and Chinese born in China, we could not help feeling disappointed, yes, even indignant, in reading your essay. Your fallacies in reasoning, your ignorance of China's needs, your misconceptions of Chinese culture and civilization, your biased viewpoint, all reveal how poorly qualified you were to correctly evaluate the factors involved in this great problem that confronts the second generation Chinese in America.

We do not intend to be disrespectful to you, Robert; but in fairness to thousands of second generation Chinese, whose environment makes it tempting for them to follow the line of least resistance that you advocate, and whose inaccessibility to pertinent facts about China and her needs makes it difficult for them to make the correct decision concerning their future lives, we must point out the delusiveness of your essay as a policy for them to follow in determining their lives before them. More than that, we must, in effect, counteract that pathetic and misleading philosophy that you and other uninformed Chinese youths so easily formulate.

Our reactions to the opinions expressed in your essay are not without good grounds. We have said that your reasoning is fallacious. For instance, your assertion that it is possible for a Chinese while residing permanently in America to serve China even better than he can while working in China bears out our contention. You admitted that some of the older Chinese consider that you know nothing of things Chinese. Yet, you say that you would remain in America and "serve China by building up a good impression of the Chinese among Americans, by spreading good-will and clearing up misunderstandings, by interesting the

Americans in the Chinese thru personal contacts or otherwise...." Would this be possible when you yourself do not know much more about China and the Chinese than the average American? Following your line of reasoning, may we ask if you consider the relative merits of building American good-will for China greater than those of building, for example, schools for China's masses?

Again, in speaking of opportunities for gainful positions open to Chinese in America and in China you say "that remunerative employment, though scarce, is not impossible for me to obtain in either China or America." By this statement we understand you to believe that your opportunities for high positions are as good in America as they would be in China. Our observation has shown us that such belief is fantastically erroneous. Given two college graduates of equal ability and training, one a Chinese and the other an American, can you unblushingly lead us to believe that the Chinese has an equal chance against American competition? What fanciful illusions of equality were you dreaming about when you tell us that "the color line, however, does not entirely prevent the American-born Chinese from getting jobs." If not the "color line"—the racial prejudice—what is keeping Chinese out of American industries and governmental offices? Surely not the lack of ability.

Your fallacies may be directly traced to your ignorance of China and Chinese affairs. Perhaps this ignorance may be excused for the reason that you have not had an opportunity to live in China. Don't you think, then, that it is all too easy for one to issue misleading statements when one does not have the full facts at hand? What can you know about China's conditions and China's needs when you say that "a 'pull' up the ladder" is "a necessary force (for obtaining employment) that most overseas Chinese do not have"? How do you think, for example, that many of China's influential men have reached success if not through personal effort? Or most great men of any country? You say that jobs are scarce in China, but you fail to consider that China's need is not more people to fill jobs but more people to make jobs. With the education and specialized training that students can obtain in America, who would be better equipped to help open China's undeveloped industries and natural resources than they? Find jobs? The motto should be "make jobs!"

Your lack of information is not only limited to Chinese conditions and needs. Your vague and distorted ideas of Chinese culture and Chinese civilization show an equal lack of knowledge. Hundreds of second generation Chinese, including many of our personal friends, have returned to China, have adjusted

themselves readily to their new environment, and have found life there more enjoyable and satisfactory than in America. You imply that you have never been to China, but if you had ever lived in China among the real Chinese you would begin to understand the greatness of that Chinese civilization that has been China's heritage for four thousand years. You will understand and sympathize with our people for their "utilitarian ideals, conservative outlook, and... fatalistic outlook upon life", factors which have preserved the Chinese as one race from the beginning of civilization to today. Then, and only then, would you be able to see China's culture in a true light and to formulate new ways to combine the old with the new. Chinese culture is not irreconcilable with western culture; it is only a matter of modification—selection of the good and the rejection of the bad.

Besides your misconceptions of the Chinese character, you have set forth your arguments in an entirely one-sided viewpoint. Having been born and educated in America you cannot be blamed too strongly for your American point of view. You see our problem through the eyes of an unsympathetic American who has never lived in China. You judge China by American standards—political, economic, and moral. We have reason to believe that your contacts have been restricted to Cantonese, who are by no means representative of the whole of China's people. Because some of these contacts have conflicted with your American sensibilities, you have associated the Chinese with unpleasant things. You go so far as to declare that the Americans who call you names (because they despise your color) are no more offensive than older members of your own race who call you "t'oa jee doy" (because they wish to remind you that you are forgetting your race). You may not know it, Robert, but there are some enlightened Americans who have a greater appreciation for things Chinese than you have, and you are a Chinese at that!

If you have become Americanized in spirit and in thought you still have missed that great American trait—the pioneer spirit, the determination and the courage to win an empire out of the wilderness. Instead of having the will to go to China and battle with China's problems there and now, instead of having the courage to help China's millions fight for the right to live, you propose to shirk, to avoid conflict, to "talk up" China. Show us the nation that has not been built with labor, sacrifice, and determination! Show us the nation that has been built with the mere strength of words! And you tell us of your fear of a little hardship,

saying "years of lonesomeness will intervene before I shall be able to speak Mandarin or Cantonese with considerable fluency."

After all, Robert, are you positive in your belief that your future lies in America? You do not seem to be too certain. You tell us you owe allegiance to both America and China. You say: "It cannot be said, therefore, that it is impossible for Chinese American youths to obtain remunerative positions in either China or America." You express the desire to make America your home, but yet you want to help China. Do you really know what you want? For one thing we know you do want happiness, and you have tried to delude yourself into believing that you will find it in America. You say that "being a Chinese among American friends . . . is an advantage," but you have never tasted real sympathetic Chinese friendship with which to make a comparison. You declare that "pull" is necessary for a job in China, but you do not mention anything about the necessity of "pull" in America. You tell us that you will avoid cultural conflicts and "social estrangement" by staying in America, but how do you know you will have cultural conflicts in China when you have never met the real Chinese culture? Furthermore, the possibilities that you will ever be accepted into American society as an equal are remote.

It sums up to this, Robert: You have produced a well-written essay. It appears very convincing to those who are not well informed and who are not fully conscious of the forces at work in America and in China. But a person who has the background can readily see that there are many fallacies in your reasoning. He will note immediately your lack of knowledge of Chinese conditions, needs, culture, and civilization. He cannot help seeing your Americanistic viewpoint of your unwillingness to surmount obstacles.

Our object in writing this letter is to show that your contentions are narrow and faulty. We hope that the opinions we have expressed will stimulate analytical thinking on the part of second generation Chinese who may or may not have read your article. We sincerely believe that only through intelligent research and self-improvement may we Chinese in America realize China's salvation through personal achievement.

Yours fraternally,

Chinese Students' Club,  
Leland Stanford Jr. University

[The next essay appeared in the "Firecrackers" column on June 5, 1936.—ED.]

"THE FUTURE OF SECOND GENERATION CHINESE LIES IN  
CHINA AND AMERICA"

San Francisco, California

May 31, 1936

All young people in the whole world have their future before them. Their future is destined mostly according to their natural intelligence. Our sages told us that there are three grades of people in the world: the highly endowed who find no difficulty in attaining future success, the average people whose future depends largely on environment, and the deficient who are likely to be defeated under any kind of circumstance. This classification has not yet been proved to be false, therefore it also can be applied to the second generation Chinese in these United States of America. The brilliant young Chinese will find their future anywhere in the world. The only questionable future to be considered is that for the average.

The controversy between those who say that their future lies in America and those who say that their future lies in China has brought up a few interesting points. In the first place, Mr. Robert Dunn in his winning essay has shown the good result of American education. As an American citizen any Chinese should feel as Mr. Dunn feels toward America. If, after high school and now in college, a citizen still feels that he is not a part of the population, American popular education has failed utterly. Fortunately, this is not the case. On this point, any foreigner should congratulate America for her efficient education for her citizens.

Secondly, the knowledge about China and her civilization as indicated in Mr. Dunn's essay shows the inefficiency of Chinese education for her overseas citizens. The people to whom Mr. Dunn looks up as examples are untrained as leaders for the younger generation. If China has many intelligent, trained, and understanding educators constantly informing the overseas young Chinese about their mother country and her civilization, the view points of these youngsters will gradually but surely be formed toward the desired direction.

Unquestionably, Mr. Dunn's half cooked ideas about China are the result of the lack of opportunity to learn about China. It is a pity!

Thirdly, Mr. Dunn's opinion is practically the opinion of the majority of second generation Chinese. Statistics show us that out of the number of Chinese born in America only a few actually go back to seek for their careers in China. Those gone back are the exceptions. The majority of American born Chinese will stay in and stick to American soil. Mr. Dunn is frank to express himself, and at the same time, to unveil for us the true scene of the future of American Chinese. All should congratulate him for his courage to exercise his freedom of speech in its fullness.

In the second place essay, Mr. Hong shows that he is not so sure of his own future. Because of the racial barrier in America, Mr. Hong feels that he should avoid it by going back to China. Once in China he is not sure what he will do. Here he also shows his lack of knowledge about China. Also, if Mr. Hong is a person of average ability, we doubt whether he could disregard "the many thorns in China's bed of roses." From his pessimistic outlook in China is shown the weakness of China. If China is only strong and safe for her citizens, why should her overseas citizens worry for their future? If China is safe to live and to work in, all overseas Chinese could just pack up and go home whenever they meet discrimination anywhere.

Since China is weak and not a comfortable place to live, all Chinese, including American-born Chinese, should try to make her strong and rich. This is the point brought out by the open letter from the Stanford Chinese Students' Club. The Stanford students are kind-hearted, enthusiastic, but too idealistic. To hope that all second generation Chinese will go back to China is very satisfying. Yet, actually how many Chinese have gone back? Practical life tells us that only a small percent has gone and will go back, while an overwhelming percent will stay in the countries in which they are born. The "utilitarian" idea set forth in the open letter is a little too harsh for the average American Chinese.

In conclusion, let us look at the problem with an eye on facts. Facts are telling us that the majority of American Chinese have their future in America instead of in China. Facts also tell us that a minority is constantly going back to China. There are just as many hardships in China as in America, only in different forms. The top of the population always wins a place in the world whereas the bottom of the population always find life a burden. If Chinese want to get rid of this fatalistic force, they should meet every challenge with foresight and

preparation. America has done her part in equipping the main body of her citizenship. It is up to China to do her duty if she feels she wants to reclaim her overseas citizens. If China is not able to do her duty, it will be up to the older generation to do its part to educate the young; otherwise, the majority of these citizens will be lost to China forever.

Jane Kwong Lee

[Robert Dunn's reply to the Stanford Students appeared in "Firecrackers" on June 12, 1936.—ED.]

Somerville, Mass.  
May 30, 1936

Members of the Chinese Students' Club,  
Leland Stanford Jr. University,  
California

My dear sirs,

May I begin complimentarily by commending the wideawakeness and the spirit of patriotism that you Stanford Chinese students have manifested in your letter to me published in the *Chinese Digest*, May 29. I firmly believe that it is the duty and the right of Chinese students to seize upon any piece of literature which to their minds is detrimental to either China or the Chinese people, and to criticize it and refute it to the best of their ability. The fact that you students picked my essay to pieces is a sign that you are mentally agile and wide awake to any article which you consider to be propaganda against China. Surely, if this alertness of mind is common to all Chinese students, then we need not fear for the future of our beloved country, China.

Your letter certainly showed vigor of mind and spirit, but I am afraid it also showed some unthoughtfulness. I know that you did not intentionally wish to

cast aspersions upon my personal character; but directly or indirectly, that is what you did, and being sensitive as I am, I actually blushed with, you had the word for it, "indignation." You must have had your tongue in your cheek when you said that you did not "wish to be disrespectful" to me; for fully one half of your letter was devoted to a description of my supposed personal defects. I do not believe that any of you have ever met me or known me personally, and yet you carp at me in five different ways. You accuse me of ignorance. You charge me with narrowness and one-sidedness. You taunt me for lack of the pioneer spirit. You brand me with unpatriotism, making others to believe that I do not appreciate things Chinese; and, to top it all, you claim my arguments to be fallacious. Perhaps I deserve this condemnation, but I shall not accept it without first defending myself. In self-defense, then, I would deny each and every one of these accusations.

In the first place, you claim that I am "ignorant of China and Chinese affairs." You call my ideas of Chinese culture "distorted"; yet within the next few lines, you quote my very words and assume them to be true: You admit my description, "utilitarian ideals, conservative attitudes, and fatalistic outlook upon life," to be true of Chinese culture, adding only that these factors have preserved the Chinese race to today. May I ask which you mean to say: that my ideas of Chinese culture are distorted, or true? Moreover, if I am ignorant of Chinese culture, how is it possible that I am able to frame these words which describe Chinese culture with considerable accuracy? Again, you judge that I have never been to China and that my contacts have been restricted to Cantonese. Here you are twice wrong. You say that I "do not know much more about China than the average American"; and far be it from me to boast about my knowledge of China. However, I shall not be so modest as to admit your charge. I have studied China to the best of my ability. (What more can you ask?) I have attended Chinese night school for some ten years. I can read Chinese fairly fluently; I learn about China every day from friends, relatives, and parents.... But you say, I admitted in my essay that "some older Chinese consider that I know nothing of things Chinese." Yes, I did; but if you will read my essay more carefully, you will find it implicit in this statement that I meant these older Chinese accused me of ignorance unjustly. In order that I may avoid the same misinterpretation by you twice, let me state explicitly this time: I think you also accuse me of ignorance unjustly.

If your first accusation was unjust, your second was very unjust. You make the assertion that I "have set forth my arguments in an entirely one-sided viewpoint," and that my "contentions are narrow." On the other hand, you yourself have presented only one side of this controversial question. Yet I shall not accuse you of narrowness, for I know that you must have weighed both sides of the question carefully before you concluded that yours was the correct one. Let me inform you of the purpose of the essay contest and of the method employed in organizing my essay; then, I think you will realize that after all, my narrowness, if it may be called that, is justified. In the letter which invited me to participate in the contest, there appear these words, "The essays will be judged on their originality of thought." The purpose, then, was to bring out originality of thought; not the mere customary and conventional type of thinking that most of us are subject to, but rather critical thought that searches into the validity of the ordinary ideas and assumptions that we entertain every day of the week. The method that I used in organizing my essay, I have described in my introduction to the essay, which was not printed. In this introduction, I wrote words to this effect: "I spent two weeks in jotting material on both sides of the question. Then, when I sat down to write, I immediately and instinctively chose the side favoring a future in China. On second thought, however, I found that the originality of the essay might be enhanced by choosing the other side. Upon choosing this side, I naturally wished to make my arguments as convincing as possible." If you have found these arguments contain a tinge of radicalness and unconventionality, I apologize to you for it. However, I will say that if you will examine my essay once more, you will find evidences of thinking on both sides of the question. For this reason, I think you cannot justly charge me of narrowness or even one-sidedness.

As for your third accusation, that I lack the pioneer spirit; here again, I think you are mistaken. Without being ostentatious, I thought I was doing quite well in the "pioneer thinking" manifested in my essay. But perhaps you do not mean pioneering in that sense of the word. You mean to say that I "fear a little hardship," that I am "unwilling to surmount obstacles," and that I "propose to avoid conflict." Well then, show me a sane, prudent, and unimpulsive man who, other things being equal, does not propose to avoid conflict. Perhaps you have read of Aristotle's triads of virtues and vices. One of them is this: cowardice, courage, rashness. In other words, courage is the virtue sandwiched between its attendant vices of excess and defect. To my mind, you confuse rashness with

courage or the true pioneer spirit.... I am willing to admit that I would avoid conflict; but when you who do not know me say that I fear a little hardship or obstacles, then I deny your charge vigorously, and I know that people who have known me personally will stand behind my denial.

Fourthly, you have branded me with lack of patriotism. I cannot blame you too much for this, for my essay surely does not show much patriotism for China. I myself practically predicted that someone would speak to me of my supposed unpatriotic spirit when I wrote my letter of thanks to the Ging Hawk Club, requesting that my introduction be printed with the essay in order to prevent any misunderstanding. I added, "I should dislike very much to have anyone accuse me of unpatriotism for China, because of it (the essay). Miss Anna Lee, president of the Club, wrote back, "Sorry—it's too late to insert your little introduction for the press. But . . . stick to your guns and you'll never be accused of anything but your original intentions." She was evidently wrong, as I have been accused of everything but my original intentions. May I, therefore, vindicate myself by making the following denials of several of your accusations. I deny that I see "our problem through the eyes of an unsympathetic American." I deny that I "have associated the Chinese with unpleasant things." I deny that I do not appreciate things Chinese; and above all, summing it all, I deny that I am essentially unpatriotic to China.

A fifth and final criticism that you have made is that my reasoning is fallacious. You say in your concluding remarks that there are many fallacies in my arguments; yet upon examining the examples you have given, I find that the difficulties all lie in your misinterpretation of the meaning of my statements. You take certain sentences out of the context of the essay and read into them certain meanings which you believe you can refute. I have already shown how you misinterpreted my implicit meaning in the following sentence when you took it out of its original context: "The (older) Chinese speak of me scornfully . . . as knowing nothing of things Chinese." In a second case, you quote my words, "that remunerative employment, though scarce, is not impossible for me to obtain in either China or America." Then you proceed to state that "by this statement we understand you to believe that your opportunities for high positions are as good in America as in China." Actually, I harbor no such belief, for I realised the inequality of opportunities in the two countries when I admitted that "employment is hard to get in America . . . because of the color line." You will note that I meant exactly what I said concerning "remunerative employ-

ment": The opportunities for work are perhaps less in America; but still I believe that such work is not impossible for me to obtain in America. In asserting this, I have five individual cases in mind, wherein my personal friends have been able to obtain very good positions in America. If these Chinese friends can, I believe there is also a chance for myself.

You have accused me then of five defects. Perhaps I deserve them. God only knows. I hope, however, that I have at least proved that your charges are not wholly warranted. Before I conclude, I should like to answer two questions and refute two of your arguments. You pose the question, "Do you consider the relative merits of building American good-will for China greater than those of building schools for China's masses?" I answer that it all depends on the quantity and the quality of the good-will or the schools. The good-will certainly might be more meritorious. In fact, American good-will has resulted in the financing of these very schools in China. I do not deny that building schools is a very fine thing, and I think you will have to admit that one may also serve China by building up good-will abroad, which was the point I made in my essay.

Another question you have asked is, "If not the color line, what is keeping Chinese out of American industries and governmental offices?" You add, "Certainly not the lack of ability." My answer is this: I admit that the color line is a major factor against the Chinese, but I also say that the lack of ability is another such factor. In a competitive economic system such as that of the United States, the capable man is bound to be recognized and utilized, no matter what his color or creed. I must add, however, that jobs do not fall into one's lap. One must take the initiative to go out in search of a position. I would challenge you to show me an able Chinese who has conscientiously searched for remunerative employment and yet has not found it.

Concerning employment, you make a statement which I wish to refute. You say, "Find jobs? The motto (of students) should be 'make jobs.'" Here, I think you are demanding the impractical. To make jobs, one must first have the capital and the resources; yet how many students have capital which is available to them? No, our motto should be, "Find a job first, then make more jobs if you can." The job of making jobs for the second generation belongs to the first generation.

A second statement of yours, with which I heartily disagree, is this: "Chinese culture is not irreconcilable with Western culture; it is only a matter of modification—selection of the good and rejection of the bad." To me, the two

cultures are quite contrary and opposite. I have described American culture as of "Christian ideals, liberal attitudes, and an optimistic outlook on life." Chinese culture, on the other hand, is of "utilitarian ideals, conservative attitudes, and a fatalistic outlook on life." Can two opposites be reconciled? Also, by what criterion of judgement are you to select the good and reject the bad? Which is good and why? Even suppose the two to be reconcilable, by such merging, you would no longer retain your two distinct cultures; you would instead destroy the old cultures, and a new and different culture would emerge. Is this what you desire? Will you also deny that unhappiness is engendered in the process of yielding from one culture to the other?

In conclusion, may I say, as you did, that I hope the opinions I have expressed will stimulate analytical thinking on the part of the second generation Chinese. Contrary to your statement, however, it is my belief that the choice of a future in China is really "the line of least resistance" for all Chinese youths; and it has been my purpose to stimulate their critical thinking by presenting the other side of the question. I myself, as I have explained, instinctively chose a future in China when the question occurred to my mind, but I have found that the other side also has its arguments. These arguments, to me, are interesting and rather potent, and I proposed in my essay to merely present them as convincingly as I could.

To you students of Stanford, I would add this further word: I hope I have not been too vigorous in my language. I apologize if I have been offensive or antagonistic. I mean to be friendly, for I know that your letter of criticism was written in all friendliness. If you would like to continue this amicable public discussion, I should be very happy to participate. My only hope and wish is that I shall not again "be accused of anything but my original intentions."

Yours sincerely,

Robert Dunn

*[The following response appeared in the July 3, 1936, "Firecrackers" column.—ED.]*

Mr. Robert Dunn,  
Somerville, Mass.

Dear Robert:

We have read your answer to our letter about your essay on the subject of "Does My Future Lie in China or America?" We are given to understand that your own idea really favors a future in China, but in order to display originality of thought, you have chosen, just for argument's sake, a future in America which is really contrary to your own wish. Being ignorant of your intention, we are sorry that we have passed judgment on your essay on its face value. It seems that our criticism has hurt your personal feelings. But, Robert, this is not our fault. Had we known that you did not mean what you said, we would not have even taken the trouble of offering you any criticism. The facts are that you have written on a topic so vitally important to the thinking youth; that you have presented some false arguments (as you know); and that your essay, studded with these false arguments, has won the prize of a contest which had as its aim the finding of a solution to the problem.

In view of these facts, we feel it is our duty to point out the delusiveness of your arguments in order to discuss the problem in its true perspective and to prevent thousands of our second generation Chinese from being misled by your conclusions. Now that you have clarified the point as to why you were induced to write the way you did, we cannot criticize you too severely. To be fair to you, we have to explain our position.

Before we begin, we want to assure that in our discussion, there is nothing reflecting on your personal character. What we felt indignant about at first was the thought behind your writing. After all, since none of us know you or have met you personally, it would be unpardonable if we should attempt to pass opinion about your personal character.

1. We did not bluntly accuse you of being ignorant about China. We realized that you had been endeavoring to acquaint yourself with Chinese culture and civilization. Now we appreciate that you have attended Chinese night school

for some ten years. But from your essay, you could not show that you were not "ignorant of China's need." We felt that there was in your essay the lack of pertinent facts about China's conditions and needs which is indispensable for deciding our present question, "Does My Future Lie in China or America?" Furthermore, to decide our problem we must not only know the present conditions but we must also be able to predict future trends. China is now in a stage of transition. Though affairs may look pessimistic in China, we do not expect them to stay that way. If jobs are scarce in China at present, it does not necessarily mean that they will be scarce forever. At this point, you may say that conditions in America are not permanent either. But you must realize that conditions in China may be improved in short time, can racial prejudices disappear in America in a few years? When you fail to take cognizance of these facts in your essay, you cannot blame us for accusing you of lack of information.

2. As to your one-sidedness, we felt that in your essay, you did not weigh the arguments on both sides. Let us point to you that at the Chinese Young People's Summer Conference held at Lake Tahoe, California, 1935, the same question had been raised. After prolonged debate, the question was put to vote. The balloting showed that 75 percent of the participants favored a future in China. And many insisted that the second generation Chinese not only should go back to China, but that they must go back to China. This will give an idea of what other young Chinese are thinking.

You said that your arguments are original, but that cannot be very original because many other people have thought of them before. You said that your arguments are critical, but such critical arguments at best can only serve to show the other side of the picture. They cannot be used as a guiding principle for your fellow youths.

3. Your essay gives conclusive and undeniable evidence that you choose to lead an easy life. You did not define what is meant by your future. Reading between the lines, one cannot help but conclude that what you want is just a "remunerative position," or "profitable employment" and to live with "modern conveniences such as electric lights, running water, quick transportation, and means of sanitary and healthful living." You do yearn for a decent mode of living, do you not? As a matter of fact, we all like to have that, but we do not hope your ambitions will end there. If one's future is to hope for a mere decent mode of living and nothing more, we need not discuss it further. In that case we strongly advise such a person to stay here, in fact to stay anywhere. The standard

of living in China is low and it will be hard for him to live there. And China is already an over-populated nation, we do not care to usher in any more live-to-eat type of person to the already crowded field.

However, we believe that a majority of our second generation Chinese, especially these with higher education, have higher aims in life than to preserve their mere existence. If one has some object in life and wants to accomplish anything, he must go through hardships, surmount obstacles, and not avoid conflict. As our old sage Mencius said: "Thus, when Heaven is about to confer a great office on any man, it first exercises his mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger, and subjects him to extreme poverty. It confounds his undertakings. By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies." (Tell us if Mencius is so fatalistic!) Your essay shows a psychology of fear, fear for "social estrangement," fear for the lack of "pull," fear for the "the years of lonesomeness" before you can adapt yourself to your mother country.... Whether these reveal your true self or not, we do not approve of such pathetic attitudes.

Granting that not all of the young Chinese are ambitious and granting that a decent mode of living is the object to be sought, you still can have that in China. You admitted that "remunerative employment, though scarce, is not impossible to obtain in either China or America." You admitted that in the Chinese coastal cities, you can still enjoy electric lights, running water, and so forth. If the two countries should offer the same opportunity, or the same lack of opportunity, then the question naturally resolves into "where do I have better opportunity, qualitatively and quantitatively?" Any man in the street can tell you that opportunities are better in China both qualitatively and quantitatively. You believe that there is a "color line" in America, yet you think that "in a competitive economic system such as that of the United States the capable man is bound to be recognized and utilized, no matter what his color or creed." And you want to challenge us to show you "an able Chinese who has conscientiously searched for remunerative employment and yet has not found it." Well, Robert, we admire your high idealism and your optimistic outlook of life. But we are afraid that you are either too young to know the practical world, or you do not know many of your fellow men. Do you know that there are thousands of Chinese in California now on relief? Do you mean that none of them have any ability to merit them a little job? Will you please read Professor E. G. Mears' "Residential

Oriental on the American Pacific Coast," which will give you an authoritative account of the employment opportunities of the second generation Chinese.

4. As to your patriotism, here again it is not a personal question. We did not exactly say that you are unpatriotic to China, although judging from your essay you do show a stronger inclination in your allegiance to the United States. We do too. We know you are grateful to America, but we regret that you do not show any loyalty to your mother country. If you really do, you would not have made a false statement that you do not.

5. Robert, ask yourself, if your arguments are not fallacious. If you meant to advocate a future "instinctively," then you know that your arguments in your essay which advocate a future in America must be fallacious. In your letter you deny this emphatically. Now we are totally at a loss! We really do not understand you. If you favor a future in China, then we are standing on common ground and aside from explaining your real motives, there is no need to write us a letter of rebuttal. If you still favor a future in America then why "stick to your guns" as you were told to?

In the conclusion of your letter you have brought out two interesting questions. The first relating to the opportunity of employment in America has been adequately answered in previous paragraphs. The second question regarding the reconciliation of civilizations deserves a word of mention. You said that the American culture and Chinese culture are directly opposed and cannot be reconciled. You described American culture as "Christian ideals, liberal attitudes, and optimistic outlook on life." Let us ask you: Are not Christian ideals a reconciliation of Roman, Greek, and Hebrew ideals? Is not the blending of cultures the essence of Hegel's philosophy of history? Don't you know that the theme of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's principle of psychological reconstruction is centered upon the preservation of China's old morality and the acquisition of Western material advantages?

In short your essay shows that you did not gather sufficient information pertinent to this problem. You did not weigh the argument on both sides. You failed to define clearly what is your future. You have misinterpreted our meaning. And all in all your arguments are fallacious. Your letter again shows that your thought is inconsistent and your reasoning illogical.

To sum up, let us assure you again that nothing in our discussion is intended to reflect on your personal character. We fully realize that you really think the future of the second generation Chinese is in China. To show that your thoughts

are "original" and your viewpoint "analytical," therefore, you have deliberately written an essay favoring a future in America. We have criticized your essay on its face value without knowing your real intention. You must understand that our motives are sincere and earnest. After all, the subject on which you wrote is such an important one that it ceases to be a plaything.

Fraternally yours,

Chinese Students' Club,  
Leland Stanford University.  
Yung Wong, president.

[The following appeared in the July 17, 1936, "Firecrackers" column.—ED.]

July 11, 1936  
Editor of the *Chinese Digest*  
San Francisco, California.

Dear Sir,

I have, after much deliberation and contemplation, decided not to answer the second open letter to me from the Stanford students, printed in the July 3 issue of the *Chinese Digest*. By so doing, I sincerely hope you will not think that I am arrogantly ignoring their letter or that I am retreating, admitting defeat, from this friendly battle of words and ideas with them. May I explain myself in this way:

My participation in this column, "Firecrackers," has been to me like taking part in a debate. I have upheld the side favoring a future in America, while the Stanford students have volunteered by open letters to defend the other side. We have each had two says; and though in a real debate, he who speaks first also has the last word, I shall not avail myself of that opportunity, for I think it

appropriate to consider the debate already at a close, so far as the Stanford students and I are concerned.

The Stanford students have indeed set forth many potent arguments; and their letters, together with the opinions expressed upon this subject by Jane Kwong Lee and George Grace, have worthily presented the reasons why we second generation Chinese should choose a future in China. I have been somewhat alone in the contentions I have made in support of a future in America, a fact which seems to indicate the unpopularity of this latter side of the question. However, I still believe that the question is a debatable one and that one should always face it open-mindedly, feeling and knowing that it has two sides, not one.

I believe, therefore, that one should not and cannot say dogmatically that one country or the other is "the only place where our real future lies." After all, for each individual overseas Chinese, the problem is different. Each differs in character, in capabilities, in likes and dislikes, in opportunities, and in the degree of Americanization. Thus, merely because a future in China holds good prospects for me in my particular case does not mean that those prospects will be the same for every overseas Chinese. There is a certain relativity about the problem which we must not neglect; and because of this relativity, it seems to me that we certainly have no right to generalize to such an extent as to insist that all second generation Chinese, without exception, should and must return to China, or stay in America.

When each overseas Chinese is faced with the problem, he must decide for himself; and in my opinion, at least the following questions must be answered and weighed carefully if an adequate decision is to be reached:

1. Prejudice. Am I sensitive to American race prejudice? Am I willing, for the rest of my life, to live with people in America who in general do not consider me their social equal?
2. Employment. In my own case, are the opportunities of obtaining remunerative employment better in China or America? Is it possible for me to find the work I am best fitted to do in America or in China?
3. Patriotism. To which country do I owe the greater obligation? Which ties are more binding and why? Which country is it my desire to serve?
4. Service. To which country would I be of greater service in my profession? Which country would be more appreciative of my labor? Which needs me the

more? Can I serve, say, China, adequately and sufficiently by remaining in America?

5. Culture. Is my background different from that of the Chinese whom I shall contact in China, if I make my future there? Am I adaptable to a change in culture, environment, and language?

6. Life aim. Is the end of my life the preservation of mere existence: to have a mere decent mode of living? Or have I higher aims of life, to accomplish great things, such as helping "China's millions fight for the right to live"?

Of course, one may place more weight and emphasis on one of the above factors than another. One may desire so much to serve China that personal sacrifice by a change in culture and environment has no significance. Another overseas may have a disinterested sort of patriotism, and think only of the question where he can get a high and satisfactory position. Still another may feel that American race prejudice is too much for him; and even though he knows he has enough contacts in America to secure him remunerative employment, still he would much rather work in and for a country where he is appreciated. Many other possible cases may be built up and cited here. It needs only a little imagination. Is it not sufficient to say, however, that the answer to the question, "Does my future lie in China or America?" depends entirely upon the individual. There is no law, either natural or artificial, which states that the second generation must make its future in China and China alone. If this is so, then no matter what future an overseas Chinese may choose, we must try to understand him: we certainly should not consider him unwise merely because his choice is contrary to the choice that we think is better.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Dunn  
Somerville, Mass.



# BU GAO BAN 佈告板

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## The Chinatown Literary Movement: 1940s

Marlon Hom  
San Francisco State University

The 1940s were fascinating years in the literary development of Chinese America. Native-born Chinese Americans had come of age. As seen in the autobiographical accounts of such young Chinese Americans as Pardee Lowe and Jade Snow Wong, this second generation asserted their Chinese American upbringing and at the same time, articulated their American values and ideals. Such grassroots publications as the Chinese Digest and East Wind reflected the views of the American-born generation. Among the immigrant population, there too existed a phenomenal development. Similar to their native-born counterparts, young immigrants actively participated in American society, perhaps most notably in the military service and various other war-related activities. And significantly, they expressed themselves in various forms of creative writing.

Before the 1940s, the San Francisco Chinese community was the largest and oldest in the U.S., and had the most widely circulated and influential newspapers. Almost all Chinese organizations--political, social, clan, district, whatever--established their headquarters in San Francisco Chinatown. Many had media organs to champion their interests and influence. For example, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance published the Chinese Times and the Guomindang or Nationalist Party had its Young China Morning News, just to name two. By the 1940s, San Francisco-based Chinese mass media was well under the control of more conservative community organizations.

In 1937, residents in Chinatowns across the United States witnessed, from the American side of the Pacific, the rapid Japanese conquest of their motherland. A campaign to save China from the Japanese invasion was launched. In the early forties, the war had reached the villages in Guangdong Province from which most Chinese in the U.S. originated. Communication was cut off between families. It was a time of frustration and fright as Chinatown residents wondered about the fate of their families and loved ones.

The China Daily News, which began publication July 1940 in New York City, was the first daily Chinese-language publication that challenged the established power structure of Chinatown. Translating reportage from the New York Times and other American sources, they reported a different story of the war than that of the official

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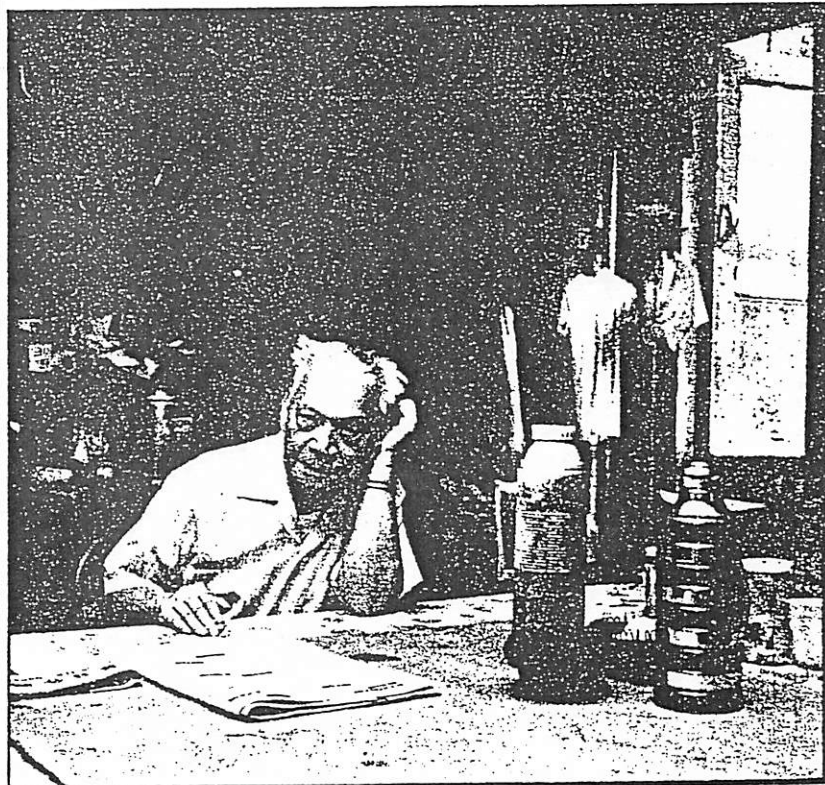
## 四十年代的華埠文學運動

譚雅倫(舊金山州立大學)

在美籍華人的文學發展史上，四十年代是一個令人著迷的年代。土生華人已長大成熟。如當時的年青美華作家劉裔昌及黃玉雪在他們的自傳中所說，第二代的華人既認知自己的美華成長背景，同時又表達他們的美國價值及理想。《華人文摘》及《東風》這類的草根出版物反映了在美出生的這代人的觀點。在第一代的移民中，也有了相當顯著的變化。與土生華人一樣，年輕的移民也積極地投入美國社

會，最為顯著的也許要算他們的參軍服役，及參加其抗戰活動。很重要的一點是，他們以各種方式進行創造性的寫作活動，表達自己。

一九四〇年之前，舊金山的華人社區是美國最大、最老的華人社區，擁有發行最廣、影響最大的大華人報紙。差不多所有的華人組織——政治性的、社會性的、宗族性的、地域性的，等等——都在舊金山的華埠設有自己的總部。許多組織有自己的喉舌，以保護其利益、擴大其影響。例如，土生同源會有《金山報》，國民黨則有《少年中國》  
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"Bachelor" apartment, 1982. (Robert Glick, NYCIP Archives)

「寡佬」柏文，一九八二，林慮筆攝

## Project Perspectives

The China Daily News: Pioneers of the Chinatown Literary Movement

John Kuo Wei Tchen

*As editor of Bu Gao Ban, I'm quite pleased to introduce the pioneering literary work promoted by the China Daily News of New York in the 1940s. CDN editor Eugene Moy led and nurtured younger Chinese New Yorkers to write about everyday life and work—a bold and daringly democratic initiative in an era of Chinese journalism which ignored the un-rich and un-famous. Moy's efforts sparked groups of writers, first in New York, then across North America, to creatively express their experiences and viewpoints. Perhaps most importantly, far-ranging debates were stimulated over the role of literature and cultural expression for modernizing the Chinese and Chinese Americans.*

*We are especially fortunate in having Professor Marlon K. Hom of San Francisco State University as guest editor of this issue. Professor Hom's research and scholarship has demonstrated the significance and range of Chinese cultural expression in the United States. By making available and analyzing this neglected literature, we now have much greater insight into the anger and frustrations, hopes and joys of earlier generations. [I highly recommend Hom's Songs of Gold Mountain: Cantonese Rhymes From San Francisco's Chinatown (University of California Press, 1987) and his introduction and translation of "Chinatown Literature During the Last Ten Years (1939-1949)" by Wenquan, Amerasia Journal, 9:1 (1982). Both are available at the History Project Bookstore.] With the research help of New York journalist Wai-Wah Chan, Dr. Hom has selected and translated five stories by Lao Mei (Eugene Moy's pen name), six poems, and six short stories.*

*These poems and short stories are written by bright, sensitive, young writers who spent most of their time eking out a living in laundries, restaurants, Chinatown stores, or other racially limited "Chinese" occupations. These stories represent their view of work and life in New York City. In a sense, they can be understood as emotional maps which communicate seldom articulated feelings of loneliness, frustrated dreams, fascination, melancholy, little pleasures, intense desperation, and sexual longings. We can each gain different insights from this collection. They are open texts for us to explore, discuss, and debate.*

*For myself, I primarily gained a sense of the male "bachelor" enclave created by the Chinese Exclusion Acts. "Grudges and Hate" is certainly the darkest work of this collection. It recounts the unfolding of a laundry man's suicide. Other writings are less dramatic, but also convey a sense of confinement and limits. Louis Chu's classic novel about 1940s New York Chinatown,*

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## 研究社觀點

### 華埠文學四十年代及當今

陳國維

作為這次「佈告板」特別三期合刊的編輯，我非常高興地向讀者介紹紐約《華僑日報》在四七年代所扶植的最初的美華文學作品。《華僑日報》的編輯梅參天，領導和培育了在紐約的一批年青的美籍華人去描述他們的日常生活和工作。這在當時——那個華文報刊忽視一般民衆的年代裡——是非常勇敢、極富民主創新精神的。梅參天的努力，先是帶動了紐約的一批作家，後來全北美洲其它地方的作家也參加進來，去創造性地表達他們的經驗及觀點。更重要的或是這一文學運動引發了意義深遠的關於文學及文化表現，怎樣去促使中國人及美籍華人現代化的爭論。

我們感到特別榮幸，邀請到舊金山州立大學的譚雅倫教授為本期佈告板的特邀編輯。譚教授的研究、著述揭示了華人在美國的文化表現的重要性及廣闊性。通過獲得並分析這些過去被忽視的作品，我們現在便對前代人的憤怒和挫折、希望和歡樂有了更深的了解。（我鄭重推薦譚教授的《金山歌謠》一書及他在《亞美學刊》上發表的對溫泉《過去十年（1939-1949）之華埠文學》一文的介紹和翻譯。本研究社書店出售上述譯著書、文。）在紐約記者陳葦華的幫助下，譚博士選擇及翻譯了老梅（梅參天的筆名之一）的五篇，以及其它作者的陸首詩和六篇短篇小說。

此處選刊的詩及小說是幾位聰明而敏感的年青作者寫的。他們的大部份時間，花在衣館、餐館、雜貨店及其它華人因受種族歧視而被迫選擇的行業中打工謀生。這些小說表現了他們在紐約市工作和生活的感受，在某種意義

上，這些小說可以被理解為情感之園——它們說出了很少被表達出來的種種情感：孤獨，受挫之夢想，迷惑，悲哀，小小的喜悅，極度的絕望，以及性的渴望，從不些作品裏，我們每個人都會獲得不同的感受，我們可以對它們進行探索、討論、和爭論。

我自己，則主要是從這些作品中獲得了對排華法案所造成的男性「寡佬」居留區的一些體認。《冤和恨》無疑是這輯作品中最動人心魄的。它描述了一個洗衣工自殺的故事。其它的故事不像《冤和恨》那樣有戲劇性，但亦能使人感受到受禁錮、受限制的氣氛。如把雷庭超描繪四十年代紐約華埠的經典性小說《吃碗茶》（一九六一年出版）和蕭振鵬的《華人洗衣工：社會孤立之研究》一書中的大量對話記錄與這些小說放在一起讀，則可對當時的生活情況有更進一步的了解。

其次，我還從這些作品中了解到當時的家庭生活及男女關係。《母親節》一詩，可與現代派畫家朱沅芷具震撼力的畫《我媽在何方？》相媲美。遠方的親人，活在男性社會的記憶之中。這些記憶天長地久，對人們的日常生活有強烈的影響。或使人奮發，或令人沮喪。《生活》及《三千塊錢》與《吃碗茶》中的一些篇章相應，加深了我們對於處於變動中的男女之間、兩代之間的價值觀念的了解。

最後，我特別感到為《街頭散記之七》及《紐約之夜》二詩所震撼。這兩首詩的主題並不是華埠之中或週圍的生活，而是對華埠之外的生活的觀察。它們對紐約的都市人流的自由性、對其公衆文化的令人陶醉的興奮，表示驚奇及神往。在這裡，生活沒有被描繪成純樸的園景；紐約（對詩人來說）曾是那樣的瘋狂而又那樣的具有誘惑力！

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**Eat a Bowl of Tea (1961) and Paul Slu's extensive conversations recorded in The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation (1987) can be read with these stories to give us a fuller portrait of what life felt like at this time.**

*Secondly, I gained a sense of the family and gender relations of everyday life. The "Mother's Day" poem parallels modernist painter Yun Gao's powerful "Where is My Mother?" (1926-27). Loved ones back home lived in the memories of the male society. These memories were hardly ephemeral—they had a powerful impact on what motivated and shaped daily life. "Living" and "Three Thousand Dollars" echo sections of Eat a Bowl of Tea and reinforce our understanding of the changing values between men and women, and between generations.*

*Finally, I was particularly struck by "Street Scene No. 7" and the "New York at Night," two poems in which the central subjects are not about life in or around Chinatown, but give glimpses of life outside of Chinatown. Both convey astonishment and attraction to the liberating anonymity of urban crowds and the intoxicating gaiety of New York City public culture. Here life is not portrayed as pure or simple. New York was both maddening and seductive!*

*It would be a grave error to only view the '40s bachelor society experience as one of pure oppression and racial intolerance, or as one of great eagerness to assimilate—mistakes of interpretation that are easy to make. The redemptive gesture to "keep the change" in "A Quick Sketch" appeared alongside the lament of the "Ballad of Laundry Work." Hardships and possibilities coexist uneasily in these writings to create a world full of contradictions and ironies. This growing body of literature helps us to break past simple pastboard caricatures toward reclaiming a more complex and a more human understanding of what life was like.*

*Historian Renqiu Yu's brief, but keen, insights into the special contributions of the CDN to Chinese America help us appreciate the importance of these writings all the more. A newspaper begun by "eight pound livelihood" intellectuals promoting the expression of fellow workers and immigrants was an innovative and tremendously egalitarian impulse.*

*Some people have argued, and may continue to argue, such writing is not worthy of being called literature. They say the voices are rough, the phrases are unpolished, the quality is uneven. From a strict high literary view, these opinions may have some validity. However, if the writing still has meaning and resonance today, genuine feelings and insights have been successfully communicated—a basic criteria for good literature. From a historical point of view these pieces are part of the real gold of Gaam Shaan. Without their publication we would all be poorer in our knowledge and insight into the lives of those who came before us. ■*

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如果僅僅把四十年代華僑社會的經驗看作是**完全受壓迫、受種族歧視的經驗**，或是把它看作是要同化於主流社會的**欲望的反映**，將會犯極大的錯誤。很容易就會導致這樣的誤解，《生活速記》中的救贖式的‘多餘的收下吧’的示意，與《衣館勞作吟》中的哀傷同起而並存。在這些作品中，苦難與希望不諧地共存，創造出一個充滿了矛盾和諷刺的世界。這些仍在發展的作品可幫助我們擺脫過去那些簡單的漫畫形象的影響，從而對過去**的真實生活有更為多方面、更具人情味的了解**。

歷史學者于仁秋關於《華僑日報》對美籍華人社會的貢獻的簡要概括，可以幫助我們了解這些文學作品的重要性；了解那些曾是洗衣工人，後來成了報紙編輯、積極推動華人工友寫作運動的先輩的**創新意識和強烈的民主精神**。

有人說（也許還會繼續說），這些作品稱不上是文學作品。他們說這些作品用字粗鄙，詞句欠雅，質素參差不一。按嚴格的、高層次的文學標準，這些意見或許是有道理的，但是，如果這些作品今天還有意義的話，那麼，它們就已經是表達了真實的感受和觀察——而這是符合好的文學的最基本標準的。從某種歷史觀點來看，這些作品才是金山的真金。不知道這些作品，我們對前輩人的了解和認識將是貧乏。■

致朋友們：

親愛的朋友們：

約九年前，我和陳國維共同創辦了歷史研究社。現在，史研社已從一個甚少人知，只有兩個人的小機構，發展成為全國矚目的文化組織。作為一個收集、整理社區歷史資料的典範，一個創辦各種有創意的展覽、大眾文化節目及公共活動的製作者，史研社如今受到廣泛讚揚。而最重的是，史研社已深深植根於華埠生活之中。

史研社的目的，是要確保我們前輩的歷史和經驗永不被忘卻。我們把前輩艱難謀生、追求希望、充滿自豪的故事告訴社區，使其流傳下去。那些長期以來使華埠蒙羞、使華埠與外隔絕的偏見，現在終於被更接近真實的理解所逐漸取代。

在領導史研社進入現在的工作之後，我必須告訴朋友們，我已決定於今年十二月卅一日辭掉社長一職。我是懷著史研社將保持穩定，具有迎接未來挑戰的能力的充分信心而離職的。感謝許多朋友和支持者的幫助，我們已準備創建一座華裔美人博物館。雖然我將不再是史研社工作人員，但我已加入史研社董事會，並將繼續和你們一起工作，去實現我們的共同夢想——建立華裔美人博物館。

我們的第一步，就是要找到一位新的社長，領導史研社並把它發展到華裔美人博物館。很清楚，這一工作需要多才多藝、精力充沛的人來承擔。請向我們推薦候選人。

對各位始終不渝的友誼及支持，謹致謝忱！

黎重旺

社長 黎重旺

### A Profile of Eugene Moy

Eugene Moy was born in Toishan District, Guangdong province in 1903. He attended four to five years of grade school and by the age of 18 had joined his father who lived and worked in a Boston hand laundry. He moved around to Buffalo, Washington D. C., and various towns in Massachusetts working in laundries and restaurants and learning about the Chinese experience in the eastern U.S.

Despite his modest rural background, his English-language abilities proved quite remarkable. He read prodigiously, wrote, and gave speeches in English. He attended some English-language courses taught by Christian Sunday school teachers, but he mainly was a self-taught writer and journalist. His favorite author was Lu Xun, the leading progressive writer/activist of struggling young China.

With the founding of the *China Daily News* in 1940, Moy came to New York as its first editor and shaped the pioneering direction of the independent publication. In 1951, the U.S. Department of Treasury chose to investigate and file suit against the *CDN* for publishing \$300 worth of advertisements from the Bank of China and the Nanyang Bank in its pages. Oblivious to the 100-year-long tradition of overseas Chinese sending remittances back to China, the government prosecutors claimed these ads constituted trading with the "enemy." Once the accusation was made, the ads were pulled, but the damage had been done.

In the '50s era of McCarthyism, the case was tried in New York District Court for three years. The judge finally ruled that Moy should be sentenced to two years in prison and the *CDN* should pay a fine of \$25,000. Moy went to jail as a *cause celebre*. Huge banquets were given in his honor and a non-Chinese American "Committee of Eugene Moy's Friends" was formed. The judge only gave the *CDN* two weeks to pay the fine. Appeals in the paper's editorial page brought in an unprecedented \$28,000—all from small donations of workers in the U.S., Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe.

In 1956, Moy's sentence was reduced to one year and he was released. He returned as editor of the *CDN*, but poor health led to his unfortunate death at the age of 55 in 1958. ■

Renqiu Yu & John Kuo Wei Tchen



Eugene Moy translating an article for the *China Daily News*, ca. 1940s. (Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance Collection)

梅參天，一九四〇年代，美國紐約華僑衣館聯合會

### 梅參天的寫照

于仁秋  
陳國維

梅參天，一九〇三年生於廣東台山，十八歲時來美，先在波士頓他父親的洗衣店裡做幫手，然後在美東的數個城市的中國餐館或洗衣店打工謀生。因此他對美東各地的華人生活情況很熟悉。

梅參天在中國只上過幾年小學，來美後曾得到主日學校的英文教師的一些幫助，而主要是通過刻苦自學大量閱讀，他熟練地掌握了中英兩種語言。他的文章、演講活潑明快，深受歡迎。他最景仰的、竭力師法的是中國近代大文豪——魯迅。

華僑日報一九四〇年創刊以後，梅參天即在該報任編輯。他為該報堅持獨立的立場，做出過重大的貢獻。一九五一年美國財政部漠視華僑百年來匯款養家的傳統，以僑報登載香港中國銀行和南洋銀行的廣告為由，指控僑報違反“與敵通商法”。僑報的兩項廣告收入只不過三百來元；受調查後，僑報立即取銷了這兩項廣告。

此案在法庭上打了三年官司，最後法官判決梅參天人獄兩年；僑報罰款兩萬五千元。在遭受嚴重打擊的時候，僑報發表社論，呼籲僑胞護報。兩星期之內，僑報即收到從美國各地、拉丁美洲，加勒比海各國華僑寄來的三萬多元捐款，終於度過了難關。

梅參天終於次莫須有的罪名坐牢一年。出獄後，他覆主僑報筆政。因健康在坐牢期間受到損害，他於一九五八年逝世，年僅五十五歲。 ■

### Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Good Friends,

Since I co-founded the History Project some nine years ago with Jack Tchen, I have watched the organization grow from a little-known, two-person team into a nationally-recognized cultural organization. Today, the History Project enjoys widespread acclaim as a model for community documentation, and the producer of innovative exhibitions, media productions, and public programs. But most importantly, the History Project has established itself firmly within the life of New York Chinatown.

We are here to ensure that the history and experiences of our forebears will not be forgotten. Their story—one of survival, hope, and pride—is being told and being passed on. The stereotypes, which for so long have defined and confined Chinatown, are finally giving way to some true understanding.

After shepherding the History Project into its present phase, I must now share with you my decision to step down as Executive Director on December 31st of this year. I leave the History Project with full confidence in the organization's stability and readiness to meet its next major challenge. Thanks to you, our many friends and supporters, we are on the verge of creating a permanent Chinese American museum. Although

I will no longer be on staff, I have joined the Board of Directors and will continue to work with each one of you in realizing this collective dream.

Our first step in this direction will be to find a new Executive Director who can lead the organization to this new level. Obviously, the job requires a wide variety of skills and lots of energy! Any suggestions of candidates would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks to everyone for your unwavering friendship and support!

Most sincerely,

Charles Lai Executive Director

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news of the Guomindang newspapers. Such a bold, independent stance provided some elbow room for the expression of alternative viewpoints. Some young Chinese immigrants, also in tune with ongoing protests and political organizing in Depression-era America, became increasingly active in creating a Chinatown-centered literary movement in New York.

The China Daily News soon became known as the cradle of immigrant literary expression. The supplement "Xin Sheng" or "New Life," edited by Lao Mei, pioneered the way. Editor Mei regularly contributed sketches of everyday life from the perspective of a Chinese worker in New York City. As many young Chinese began to use the supplement as a forum to express themselves, other writers also contributed poetry, prose, essays, short stories, and other writings. Their content vividly reflected the livelihood of Chinese who had to work hard, withstanding great emotional suffering, to survive in what was considered the most glamorous city in the U.S.

As did intellectuals in China during the war, young Chinese immigrants in America formed literary organizations and utilized creative writing as a vehicle to campaign for the war effort against the Japanese. As a result, young writers from both coasts were united under politically active literary groups. Again, the China Daily News was instrumental in this movement. Lao Mei and others not only provided a forum for these young activists, but also tried to nurture their creative expression. Some groups published their pieces in the daily supplements, others published independently. Later, the induction of many Chinese Americans into the U.S. military service brought the demise of many of these groups. However, the supplement continued to play an active role as a literary base for young immigrants.

By the mid-1940s, young writers within the China Daily News network created a literary movement in Chinatown communities across the nation. They advocated reforms in both the form and content of writing, advocating that writers should produce works relevant to the social and cultural reality of Chinatown life. On May 4, 1945, an essay appeared in the supplement declaring:

*America's Chinatown has a history of nearly one hundred years. Throughout these years, our ancestors have endured a humble existence, and at present we are confronted with more struggles. Soaked with blood, sweat, and tears, the outer surface of this place may seem barren, but beneath it all, there must be an underground current that can sufficiently nourish the sprouts to grow into tall trees with exuberant green leaves, and later, flowers and fruits....*

A few days later, another essay appeared in the paper to further define the meaning of this local movement of Chinatown creative writing:

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《晨報》。到了四十年代，以舊金山為基地的華人傳播媒介已被較保守的社團組織所控制。

一九三七年，在美國的華人看到大洋彼岸的祖國被日本人蹂躪，發起了一場抗日救國運動。四十年代初，戰火延至大多數美籍華人的家鄉——廣東省。家庭之間的聯絡遂被切斷，那是一個令人倍受折磨和痛苦的年代，華人為他們的家人和親友的命運而擔憂。

一九四〇年創建於紐約華埠的《華僑日報》，是第一家向華埠傳統勢力挑戰的中文報紙。該報對祖國戰況的報導，往往譯載紐約時報及其它美國報刊的消息，使僑胞得知不同於國民黨官方宣傳的真實戰況報導。僑報採取這一勇敢的獨立立場，鼓勵人們發表不同的意見。一些年輕的華人移民，與當時處於經濟大蕭條期的美國社會中政治組織活動相呼應，越來越積極地參加到華埠文藝運動的創作活動中去。

《華僑日報》很快成為移民文學作者的搖籃。由老梅主編的《新生》副刊，為此作了開創性的努力。編輯老梅常以一個紐約市華人工人的觀點，寫一些描述日常生活的小品，許多年輕的華人以此副刊為園地，發表他們的見解言論，其他的作者則投來詩歌、散文、小品文、短篇小說及其它體裁的稿件。這些作品的內容生動地反映了華人的生活，顯示出他們必須努力工作，忍受巨大的感情痛苦，在這座人們認為是美國最有魅力的城市裏掙扎謀生。

在抗戰中，如同身在中國的知識份子一樣，在美國的年輕華人移民也組織了文學團體，並以創造性的寫作活動作為抗日戰爭的一種武器，因而，在東西海岸的年輕華人作家便在政治上甚

活躍的文學團體中團結起來了。《華僑日報》又一次成為這一發展的媒介。老梅及其他一些人不僅為這些年輕的積極份子提供了一個園地，還努力培育他們的創作活動。一些文學團體在報紙副刊上發表其作品，另一些則單獨出版自己的刊物文集。其後，由於許多人參加美軍，許多文學團體因而消亡。然而，僑報的新生副刊依然作為新移民的文學基地而起著積極作用。

到四十年代中期，《華僑日報》週圍的年輕作家們在全美範圍內的華人社區中發起了一個文學運動。他們主張在寫作的形式和內容兩方面都進行改革，並提出作者們應創作與華埠的真實的社會及文化生活有關的作品。一九四五年五月四日新生副刊登出一篇文章，其中說道：

美國華埠已有近百年的歷史。百年來，我們的前輩艱難謀生，而現在我們正面臨更多的鬥爭。這片土壤浸透了血汗淚水，即使是地面層像是枯瘠，地下層必然暗流著一道涓涓的水源，足以產生出一些華僑文藝的根苗，以後並能長出花朵，結下碩果……

數日之後，新生副刊登出另一篇文章，進一步探討華僑文藝的意義：

簡單地說，華僑文藝應有它自己的特質，這特質是反映華僑的生活，發揚華僑的精神。‘華僑文藝’這道水源，也不是限於華僑社會之中，更應該是四通八達的連貫著我們周圍的更廣大的美國社會的源泉，去吸取美國文化的精神，特別是它在文藝上那種大眾化的姿態，但自然不是生吞活剝，而是要加以‘華僑化’。

一年之後，老梅寫道：

華僑文藝應該反映華僑社會的情況和精神。文藝的功能是通過描寫社會的

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*In short, Chinatown literature ought to have its own unique features, to illustrate the lives of the people in Chinatown, and to bring to light their philosophies. ... It connects with the streams and springs of the larger American society that surrounds us. We must, therefore, absorb from America her cultural essence and, in particular, learn from her role to popularize literature and art. ... We must Chinatownize them. ...*

A year later, Lao Mei himself restated the following:

*Chinatown literature should illustrate the shape and spirit of the Chinatown community. ... The function of literature is to illustrate a whole society through the depiction of a segment. A short narrative pertinent to a living reality is not inferior in value, as long as a writer can show artistically and appropriately his keen experience and observation.*

This local movement also encompassed the philosophy of social realism, as one essay declared in the daily paper's supplement on June 18, 1946:

*The Chinatown community and its livelihood are rich and fertile land for creative writing. Just look at the hustle and bustle of the community: the joys and sorrows, the unions and separations, the changes in families, the frustrations of sojourning overseas, the prejudices and discriminations that people must endure, the love and mutual assistance among them ... even their cheating and backstabbing against each other. ... These are all excellent materials for writing about real life. We live here and we have acquired a keen experience from this place. Naturally, writings on such subjects will be far more realistic and lively than those created out of sheer imagination.*

The China Daily News championed this movement. Unfortunately, however, this literary explosion was short-lived. By the late 1940s, Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed evidence of a communist conspiracy in the U.S. and all deemed Marxist, pro-Communist, or "fellow travelers" were targeted. Chinese Americans were especially hard hit. Independent publications by Chinatown leftist literary groups were wiped out and most of their published works were not preserved. Luckily for us, those published through the China Daily News survived.

Here are some samples of writings by the young immigrant writers published in "Xin Sheng." They are the writings of ordinary Chinese workers on their life in the U.S. They might not appear to be as sophisticated as the writings of highbrows, but they are works devoid of falsehood and pretense. The narratives are direct and at times didactic. They reveal the writers' earnest attempts to capture the life of ordinary people in their daily struggle to survive. ■

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一個部份來反映整個社會。只要作者能够藝術地恰當表現出他的經驗和感受,就是只寫一篇描繪生活的短文,也很有價值。

這場文藝運動還討論了社會現實主義。一九四六年六月十八日的新生副刊上的一篇文章這樣寫道:

華僑社會生活是創作的豐饒之地,看看這個社會中種種景象:悲歡離合,家庭變遷,海外遊子之惆悵,必須忍受的偏見和歧視,人們之間的愛和相互幫助……甚至他們的彼此欺騙和殘殺……這些都是描寫真實生活的絕好素材。我們生活在這裡,對這些有真切的感受。很自然的,寫這些題材的作品,遠要比完全虛構出來的作品真實得多,生動得多。

### Contributions of the China Daily News

Ranqiu Yu  
New York University

The founders of the *China Daily News*, and many of its readers, were a group of young immigrants from Guangdong working as restaurant and hand-laundry workers in New York City. They were idealistic, enthusiastic, and more educated than the generation before them. One of them, Eugene Moy (Lao Mei), worked for almost 20 years in restaurants and laundries. Educating himself over the years, he earned the reputation as a journalistic genius.

The *CDN* served as a forum for these young activists to express themselves through various types of writing. Taking a Chinese American stand, they supported both China's and the U.S.'s war efforts against Japanese aggression, they defended the rights and interests of Chinese Americans, and they promoted progressive causes in Chinese communities in the U.S. The paper encouraged ordinary Chinese Americans to express their opinions via the newspaper. It vigorously fought for the freedom of speech and protected the development of an overseas Chinese literary movement. The *China Daily News* made a unique and long lasting contribution to the shaping and development of Chinese American consciousness.

(Excerpt from "Overseas Chinese and the *China Daily News*" by Ranqiu Yu, *CDN*, 7/7/88)

《華僑日報》推動了這一華僑文藝運動。不幸的是,這一運動為時短暫。四十年代末,參議員麥卡錫宣稱發現了共產黨人在美國從事陰謀活動的跡象,並攻擊那些被認為是馬克思主義者,親共份子、以及其「同路人」的人。美籍華人尤其遭受打擊。華僑左翼文藝團體的獨立出版物遭到清洗,他們的大多數作品被摧毀。所幸的是,在《華僑日報》上發表的那些作品被保存下來。此處所選載的是在僑報新生副刊上發表的年輕移民作者的幾篇代表作。這些作品,是在美國的華人自己所寫,表現自己生活的作品,它們固然不像大作家的作品那麼精湛,但它們不粉飾,不矯作。那些敘述性的文字是直截了當的,有時甚至是說教式的。它們顯示出,作者們在誠實地努力,要表現在日常生活中掙扎求生的普通人的生活。 ■

《華僑日報》的創辦者及多數讀者是一批有理想、有熱情、又受過一定教育的來自廣東的青年移民。該報編輯梅參天(老梅)曾長期在餐館,洗衣店打工謀生,全憑刻苦自學,成為華文報界之奇才。

這批青年以僑報為陣地,站在美籍華人的立場上,支持中國和美國的抗日戰爭,維護美籍華人的權益,促進華人社會的進步。僑報通過倡導華僑言論及堅持言論自由的原則,扶植華僑文藝的成長,最早探索了「美籍華人」的概念及立場,對美籍華人意識的形成和發展,作出過獨特的貢獻。

引自于仁秋,《華僑和華僑日報》,《華僑日報》一九八八年七月七日第三頁

華僑



日報

# CHINA DAILY NEWS

*Speaking My Mind* by Lao Mei

Street Scene, No. 7

New Year's Eve is really a pain in the neck for all restaurant workers. It is the busiest day and they can't celebrate freely like everybody else. For me, it has been like this for ten frustrating years.

I shouldn't miss this year again! Although living an impoverished lot, one still has his mind and wishes. Besides, because of poverty, one needs all the more to have some excitement in life. When you see everyone celebrating at this time of the year, don't you want to have some fun for yourself also?

We, a party of seven, went straight to Times Square, the most exciting place in town. You could notice that whenever a subway train stopped at the 42nd Street station, it would unload its jam-packed passengers like flood water rushing through a busted dike. Men and women, all dolled up, looking nice and different, would all hurry in this direction. There was nothing unusual about this place, if it were any other time of the year. But, tonight was different. The place was exceptionally crowded, and it was exceptionally exciting!

It was almost twelve midnight by the time we got there. As we were walking out from the subway tunnel, we saw the Times Square building flashing its message in big letters: HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES! We, like thousands of those who were there, cheered and clapped our hands to welcome the arrival of 1941.

From where did all these people come? No one seemed to be bothered with this trivial question. In this crowd, we could really sense that the people of this country were indeed happy-go-lucky people. Everyone in the crowd wanted to do the same thing. Everybody was inching toward the Square. After a while, I noticed that we only moved less than ten feet! "I felt someone tapping my shoulder. I grasped the hand--a warm, smooth, soft and lovely hand. A woman smiled at me and said, "Happy New Year!" I replied with the same and heard her greeting everyone around her.

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想說什麼便說什麼——老梅

街頭散記之七

除夕在做餐館工的人看來，簡直是個使人頭痛的日子，那是最爲忙碌的一天，誰也沒有機會自由自在地去慶祝新年，我就是那麼厭煩地過了近十個年頭！

這次的機會難道也要輕輕錯過麼？雖然所謂潦倒窮愁，一樣地積着心頭，惟其如此，所以更需要強烈的刺激，眼看見人人這般熱鬧，年節這日子，不是大可以趁時痛快一頓的麼！

我們一行七個人直打泰晤士方場去，理由是只有那地方最熱鬧。瞧，地道車一載載的塞滿搭客，每次到了四十二街車站時，便像決堤似的倒瀉開來。打扮得怪好看的男男女女，總是爭先恐後趕這條路來。這裏和平時本來沒有什麼異樣，不同的是今晚聚集的人格外多，格外高興彩烈！

抵步時恰近交正午夜，剛從車站出來便看見泰晤士樓上面映出一行電光大字：“紐約時報敬向列位恭賀新禧”我們就這樣地在萬人鼓掌喝彩聲中一脚踏入一九四一年。

是那裏來的這麼人多？誰也沒有空閒討論這個無聊的問題，不過從這裏可以看出這個民族是何等活躍可愛。到

人叢中去，大家都是同樣要求。於是你推我攘，可是行了許久了，回顧一下經過的路程還不及一丈。這時才覺得有誰在後面不斷拍着我的肩背，我趁勢拉住了那隻手，呵，是多末可愛的一隻嫩白溫的手呀！那位姑娘卻笑着向我打招呼：“恭賀新禧”，我也用同樣的日語回答她的好意，同時聽見她向鄰近的人不停的祝賀。

到了一間戲院，點一點人數，發覺我們的隊伍少了一個人。這位愛看熱鬧的朋友，無疑的是被那熱烈慶祝新年的人羣吸引到什麼地方去了。

《華僑日報》一九四一年四月一日

一點悲悽的回憶

是兩年前的事，我們餐館裏的同伴，在幾個月內，接連死去了兩個人，而且，死的又是那般快！臨終時我都沒有機會親見他們一面。交情雖不見得怎樣深，但這突然的決別，此後有時想起這件事，心裏總覺得有點難過。

兩人的死都有點相像，兩人所患的也好像是同樣的病症，在未死的前幾天，還好好的返工，不過精神之疲乏，是可以看得出來的，而康健的損傷，和他們那蒼白的臉色，則是數月以來工伴們異口同聲地談論過了。但兩人的性格都一樣的倔強，尤其是後死的那一

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By the time we got to the front of a theater, we noticed one member of our party missing. Undoubtedly, this fun-loving friend of ours was distracted and disappeared into this exciting crowd celebrating the arrival of the New Year.

(January 4, 1941)

### Memory of Something Tragic

It was sometime two years ago. Two co-workers in our restaurant died, one after another, within the span of a few months. Their deaths were so unexpected; I didn't even have an opportunity to visit them. We were not the best of friends, but I always felt badly whenever I thought of them. It was a sudden, yet eternal farewell.

Their deaths were similar. Both seemed to have the same illness. They appeared in good spirits at work the few days before they passed away. They just looked tired; everybody noticed that. For several months, the co-workers were commenting that the two were in poor health and that their faces looked pale. However, they were stubborn people; the second was especially so. Whenever one asked if he was sick or something, he would always reply, "Not at all," or else he would shake his head and dismiss it.

I observed their behavior closely and noticed that they drank a lot of water. I was puzzled. Drinking water is good for one's health in America. Even doctors suggest that one should drink twelve cups of water every day. However, these two men drank more than that. During mealtimes, they would drink over five cups of water before finishing the food.

What sickness did they have? I am ignorant of any medical knowledge. Even today, I still don't know what was wrong with them. But, one thing is sure: we overseas Chinese live in a coop twenty-four hours a day. We work long hours. Our physical body takes the toll, and we must also deal with a dry and boring emotional life. This kind of living can easily lead to all kinds of sickness. I think all Chinese workers share this feeling with me!

Those thin and shaky silhouettes, those tired and exhausted expressions, those bony and pale faces . . . Oh, I don't want to be reminded of them anymore!

(August 16, 1940)

### R Chapter of Life, No. 2

It was raining all night last night. Some random memories of days past were popping up in my mind again.

I have been to many cities and have worked in several large restaurants. Since I have always been

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個。你若問他是不是生病，他總是回答說：“沒有什麼病”，或者單把頭連搖幾下算數。

我曾細心地觀察過他們的舉動，每天看見他們飲那麼多的水，心裏不期而然的生出一種疑惑。在美國飲水本來是很合衛生的，據醫生說，每人每天都要飲十二杯水（通常餐館用的水杯），才能配合全身。可怪的是他們每天飲的水量，卻多過這個數目好幾倍，食一餐飯，也得要五六杯水，否則便不能下咽。

他們究竟害的什麼病？我對醫學常識十分幼稚，所以到現在還不大明白。不過，華僑在海外的生活，一天到晚困在那個地方，工作時間那麼長，除了肉體之辛苦，還有精神的枯燥。就很容易會生出各種疾病了。這，我想凡是華工，同俱此感：

那顛顛撲撲的瘦長身影，那疲乏枯槁的神情，那露骨蒼白的臉相……呵，我不願再想下去！

《華僑日報》一九四〇年八月十六日

### 生活的斷片(二)

昨天一夜下着雨，又使我記起了往日生活中一些零零碎碎的事。

我到過很多個埠，而且在好幾間大餐館做過工，因為自己的職務向來祇做到“偉特”，所以對於偉特們的生活習慣，特別知道得清楚。

我們有許多對於中英文有相當的程度，常識比較豐富，由於那種送往迎來的日常工作，每天服侍很多不同性格的客人，因而對於所謂人情，也比較的練達。但似乎是環境與風氣所關，我們多數人幾乎都染有幾種不良的習慣。



Beneath the elevated tracks on the Bowery, ca. 1930s. (NYCHP Archives)  
高架鐵道，包厘街，一九三〇年代，紐約華埠歷史研究社

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a waiter, I know the life of being a waiter particularly well.

Some of us have a pretty good command of English. And, we know quite a few things. Well, our job is that of serving a wide variety of customers who have different characters; we seem to be able to adapt to different things easily. However, because of the environment in which we work, most of us have also picked up some bad habits in life.

Usually, after the lunch crowd or the dinner crowd disappeared, we would gather around, with a cup of tea or coffee, and shoot the breeze. One would say something; another would respond. Everybody would be yapping to his liking, freely and naively. There wasn't an agenda of topics; but it usually covered quite a variety of subject matters—from national news to world affairs. The subject of sex was the most talked about. Everybody was particularly interested in that and everyone had his story to tell. Nobody was shy about expounding his grand theories.

Before the War of Resistance\* went full-scale in China, there would always be arguments whenever Chinese politics was mentioned. Sometimes, when one side, or both sides, got short with words (well, no one was a true debater or a theorist; no one was really knowledgeable), they would end up pounding at the table and screaming at each other. Those listening would become the mediators and calm them down. After a short while, everybody would drop the topic and amicably turn to another subject.

This democratic spirit is indeed admirable and rare! Even now, I still have very fond memories of those days.

(August 27, 1940) \* The national struggle resisting the 1937 Japanese invasion of China. Ed.

### On Mother's Day

It was a bright and clear day. The sky was so blue and peaceful. A few patches of white clouds lingered leisurely in the distant sky, as if the bustling mortal life was none of their business.

The spring breeze was warm and the weather was mild. Unlike the fearful and violent shakes before an imminent storm, the leaves on the tree branches were swaying in gentle waves, welcoming the warm sunlight and showing their joy.

In such a beautiful day, he was strolling along the wide street not too far from the park. He felt the cheerful spirit in the scenery. It seemed the emotional burden inside him for the past few days had lightened quite a bit! Even his placid, expressionless face showed the signs of a smile.

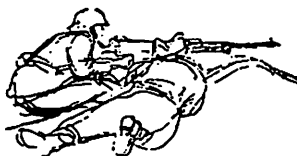
However, all sorts of things were whirling in his mind. It was strange why he, who had been used to the life of a wanderer, should become so besieged with nostalgic thoughts of home!

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大約每在“餐期”之前或做完了一個“餐期”之後，我們通常是你一杯茶，我一杯咖啡的叙集起來，有唱有和，大家開始談天，根據各人的個性與趣味，很自由很天真的講。談話雖然沒有次序，內卻是非常廣泛。除了互相戲謔及富有幽默性的故事而外，包括到國事，世界時事等等，而兩性問題，則尤為衆人所樂道。大家對於這方面的興趣格外濃厚，材料也特別豐富，各人毫無忌避的發揮偉論(?)。

在全面抗戰尚未開始之時，談到祖國的政情，每每發生劇烈的爭論，有時遇到一方或兩方都是辭窮理屈的時候(因為大家都不是雄辯家或理論家，知道的當然也不多。)便拍桌謾罵起來，這時聽衆變成了魯仲連，立將各人勸開，歇一會大家把問題擱下，又非常要好地談起別項事情。這種值得稱贊的民主精神，確是難能可貴！我到現在仍保全着很好的印象。

(華僑日報)一九四〇年八月二十七日



He was thinking about his invaded home village. He was thinking about his seventy-year old mother. In this vast universe, he could never forget, so deep in his heart, the purity of his mother's love.

"What had become of her now?" he was wondering. But what could he do anyway? The more he thought about it, the less that smile appeared on his face. He stared into the horizon, hoping to see his mother's appearance among the cracks between the clouds. He begged his mother to forgive him; he wished his mother could comb through his messy hair with her hands, soothe him, and give him new encouragement to take on the challenges of life.... "How about a fresh flower for your mother on Mother's Day?"

He was startled, as if someone had discovered his inner secrets. Standing before him was an old woman with a basket full of fresh flowers. She asked him pleasantly, "What would you like? A red one or a white one?"

### 寫在慈母節

天色晴朗，蔚藍而清靜的太空，遠遠處抹上了幾筆白雲，一塊塊的貼在那裏，毫沒半點移動的意思，就那末悠閑地，好像人間鬧着的一切與它無關。

春風和煦，氣候溫祥，只見樹葉些微蕩漾張揚，但那不是暴風雨前的驚懼，而是爲了迎接和暖的陽光而表示歡欣的模樣。

他，在這樣優美的氣圍之下，漫步在離公園不遠的那條廣闊的街道上，領略着這一切景象，日來或沉重或緊張的心情，這時好似輕鬆了許多，而那像死水一般冷靜的臉孔，也現出笑意來了。可是，他腦子裏卻不斷地發出毫無邊際的冥想，奇怪，慣於流浪的生活的他，竟也難免有懷念家鄉之感！

他懷念着曾經淪陷過一次的故鄉，他懷念着他的七旬老母，在這茫茫的人海中，祇有他慈母所給予的那真純的愛，永遠印有心上，永遠不能忘卻。

她現在怎麼樣呢？他想：怎麼樣又有什麼辦法呢？他繼續的想。他把先前的微笑立刻收回了，凝神地望着天際，想從雲縫裏見到他的母親底顏容，祈求她諒諒兒子一身的過失，伸出兩手力撫摩着他那零亂的頭髮，再給他以新的慰勉和鼓勵，在這人世間堅持着生活下去！

“買朵鮮花紀念你的母親啊！今天就是慈母節。”

他驚疑地以爲有誰窺破了他的心事，立在眼前的卻是一位提着滿籃鮮花的老婦，笑嘻嘻地向他發問：“你要紅的還是白的？”

他沉吟了一會，摸出兩個銀毫，買一朵紅的和一朵白的，夾起來插在襟上，又漫步向公園那裏去。

(華僑日報)一九四一年五月十五日

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He paused for a short while and took out two dimes for a red one and a white one. He pinned them together on his lapel and walked towards the park.

(May 15, 1941)

### The Worries of Ole Chan the Fifth

By the time Ole Chan the Fifth put down the iron, it was close to twelve midnight.

The laundry was located in a long and narrow street uptown. The street lights were dim. There were hardly any people; it was extremely quiet.

He sat down in despair, letting out a soft and lingering sigh. It was a sigh of his extreme fatigue; but mostly it was a sigh of the frustration cooped up in his chest. Slowly, he picked up a match and lit a cigarette. He inhaled deeply while his eyes were fixed on a calendar hanging on the wall. This calendar was not a gift from some company to advertise itself; Old Chan the Fifth bought it in Chinatown before the New Year. It had the drawing of a very sensuous woman. However, right now, he felt different about it. He didn't notice the lovely girl's cute smile; he kept staring at the dates on the calendar and counting the days in his mind, murmuring: "There's only a little over a week left and I have to get seven hundred dollars ... to send home. Otherwise, no one will survive ..."

His laundry had about two hundred dollars of business a week. Usually, he hired a black woman to help out in order to keep up with the work. This time, because he needed the money, he let her go and worked by himself, bearing the grinding routine on his own. Although he was in his fifties, he was still a strong man. Nevertheless, the man was not made of steel. He barely made do by himself in the first couple of weeks. As days passed, he couldn't last any longer. Yet, there wasn't any other way to make the money other than to sweat it out. Gambling? He tried numerous times before; never once had his hopes been fulfilled. Furthermore, it was precisely his gambling habit that led him to this situation. He wouldn't dare resort to gambling again.

"Seven hundred dollars ... I got to have seven hundred dollars."

He collapsed in a chair. He knew he must wake up early in the morning, but he couldn't sleep. The more he thought, the more frustrated he became. He reached out to the side of a cushion and took out a letter sent to him recently from his wife. He was in a daze, staring at the following lines:

"Conscription is ablaze like a house on fire. Our son was fortunate enough to escape to Hong Kong. However, we must have someone to take his place. We need one thousand two hundred Hong Kong dollars for this purpose. Please send the money within a month. Please don't delay. It's urgent, very urgent ..."

(May 31, 1948)

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### 陳老五的煩惱

陳老五放下了熨斗的時候，已近午夜十二時了。

衣館是在埠尾的一條狹長的街道中間，這時街燈黯淡，行人幾乎絕跡，顯得非常靜寂。

他頹然的坐了下來，微微地放出一聲低沉而牽長的喟嘆。這喟嘆，很像帶幾分疲勞過度的神情，然而大半還是舒發一下胸中的鬱悶。接着，他慢慢地拿了火柴燃起一枝香烟，用力吸着，眼睛注視掛在壁上的月份牌。這個月份牌，不是什麼公司為要賣廣告送贈給他，而是陳老五在將到新年的時候，親自到唐人街選購的。日曆紙的上頭繪的是一幅頗為肉感的美女圖畫。可是，他此時的心理有點“反常”，對於那幅很有神氣，笑靨迫真的美女圖畫，似乎完全不曾看見，眼光死死釘住日曆，心裏在計算着，一會兒自言自語道：



“祇有個把禮拜，一定要整夠七百銀……寄返家去，唔係就死唔得過……”

他的衣館每個星期將近有二百元生意，往常是僱用一位黑人女工幫忙，工作才打得通的。為了宜銀緊急，月初便把女工辭掉，祇好咬實牙關獨自拚命的做。他雖然已是五十多歲了，也還具有幾斤力氣，畢竟一個人不是鋼鐵做成的，起初三兩禮拜尚覺勉強捱得過去，跟着下去就有些支持不住了。但不捱工是沒有第二條路賺錢的，賭博嗎？他已經嘗試過不知多少次了，從未從心所欲，而且正因為好賭的原故，才弄到急來無辦法，這回連想也不敢想了。

“七百銀，……一定用整夠七百銀……”

他斜傾地躺在椅上，明明知道又要早起，卻是無法人睡，越想下去越覺得煩惱，伸手到枕畔取了近日收到的一封信，對着下面幾句話發呆：“……鄉間徵兵火急，兒子幸能逃避香港，但須請人替身，需款港幣一千二百元，見字至遲一個月內如數付來，千萬勿延，至緊至緊。……”

《華僑日報》一九四八年五月三十一日

Kuo Leong Chan, Canal Street, 1983. (Paul Calhoun, NYCHP Archives) 周國棟，堅尼路，一九八三，高保廉攝

A Wanderer's Autumn--A Stroll  
Along Riverside Drive

Zhang Yan

A gust of wind peels open the suffering  
cries of falling leaves.  
One by one, leaf by leaf, they descend in  
drifts.  
Wild grass, thin and pale as if recovering  
from an illness,  
Turns yellowish in desolate despair.  
Thinned trees alongside the street  
Feel the sorrow of autumn.  
A bird's chirping  
Losing its delicacy in the chilly air.  
In the horrid, grey, dim universe  
Only bored seagulls gliding above the sea,  
once in a while, in their sorrowful  
cries report on my barren hometown  
in their chaotic flight.  
Desolate echoes of a wanderer's footsteps.  
Slowly, disappear in the distant and silent  
journey.  
Alas! Autumn--  
Cruel Autumn!

(November 18, 1944)

Living

Mingzhong

It was raining all day. Puddles of water reflected  
sparkles of light from the yellowish street lamps  
along the sidewalk. There was not a trace of a  
passer-by; the street appeared desolate.

A young man in his thirties, wearing a grayish hat  
and raincoat, walked slowly along the dark street  
under the dim lights. He raised his head and looked  
ahead. It was an endless darkness with street lights  
flickering like fireflies in the silent, lonely night.

He lowered his head. His face revealed gloom with  
not a trace of happiness. His brows were tightly  
knitted, as if he had an unbearable burden on his  
mind. He didn't want to think about it anymore.  
An empty life and a cruel society were but an  
unspeakable pain, like a dagger repeatedly stabbing  
at his soul. He had lost his courage; he lived like a  
corpse day and night. "Why should I live like this,"  
he pounded at this question in his mind; but no  
answers came.

From the lit street he turned into a dark alley with  
no street light. Blackness filled the air. He walked  
this way often enough though, knowing just how to  
get to his place.

He opened the door and walked in. He saw the  
frosty cold face of a woman who was in her  
twenties.

"You got paid tonight. Well, where's the money?  
Give me some. Hurry!" she demanded the moment  
she saw him.

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遊子的悲秋—漫步海旁道上

長燕

狂風掀起了落葉的呻吟，  
片片紛紛的下墜飄飄。  
野草如同病後的瘦削，  
枯黃呈現着頹喪蕭條。  
道旁的疏林。  
已感到秋天的憂鬱了。  
小鳥底漚歌，  
已給寒氣捲去了溫柔。  
太空灰暗得多麼可怕；  
只有海鷗無聊地在海面上翱翔，  
久久唳出悲哀的聲韻，  
惶亂地報告家鄉的淒涼！  
遊子底蕭瑟的步調，  
人於漸遠而沉默的里程。  
唉，秋—  
無情的秋！

(華僑日報)一九四四年十一月十八日

生活

鳴鐘

落了一整天雨的街，在街旁射出淡黃  
色的街燈映照下，有一片一片的水痕  
晶瑩地反射着，街上沒有一個行人的  
影子，顯得格外靜寂淒涼了。

有個卅來歲的青年，穿着一件灰白  
色的雨襖，頭上戴着一頂和雨襖一樣  
顏色的毡帽，在黑暗包圍中黯淡的燈  
光照射下慢慢地走着。他抬頭向前望  
去，又是一片無底深淵的黑暗，只有像  
螢火一樣閃着似的燈光，在那寂寞，淒  
涼的黑幕籠罩下的夜街上亮着。

他把頭低下去，臉上沒有一點愉快的  
表情，陰沉鬱悶的神色，皺着眉頭，仿  
佛有千鈞的重擔，壓上了他的心頭。  
像不再想什麼了，但人生的空虛，社會

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Columbus Park, 1982. (Paul Calhoun, NYCHP Archives)  
雨中的哥倫布公園，一九八二，林處筆攝

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He didn't seem to hear her. He sat down on the sofa exhausted.

She rushed over and stood in front of him. Her face red with anger, she continued with her demand.

He took an envelope from his pocket and gave it to her. "But, Jade, I didn't eat yet tonight...."

"That's your own business. You want to eat, you go cook your own. Why tell me about it... I'm going to a mahjong game at Saampo's place...." Before he could finish, she took the pay envelope, and left.

As he sat on the sofa, the pain of living ached again inside his heart. His eyes stared at the dark night outside the window, as if he was in search of something. Suddenly, a flame raged inside him. He remembered when they first arrived in the United States seven years ago, she was a frugal and diligent wife. She took care of the household chores during the day, and worked at a sweat shop in the evening. They worked together to maintain their family—a happy home. What happened now? Four years ago, she changed. She just went through the motions of housekeeping. What made her change? He tried to trace the roots of it. There was not a clue. He was in a daze. Suddenly, his eyes brightened as if something had jumped right before them, telling him: "love." He seemed to have found the answer in this search in the dark. But then, he asked himself seriously, "We're still the same as before, aren't we? Now because of my work, I can't be home all the time with her. Can this be...." He was confused. His head ached. He couldn't think about it anymore. His eyes became blurry and sleepy. His tired soul seemed to have found peace and solace in his sleep.

"Bang!" the door shut with his wife hurriedly walking in. She threw the umbrella into a corner. As soon as she saw Yatsan, she screamed at him hysterically, "You, you're bad luck, you dead man!

Why do you always have this sad face around?... No wonder I don't have any luck. It's all because of you that I lost forty chips today!... You... you're...."

Yatsan was woke in a fright by her cursing and realized that he had fallen asleep on the sofa. Her curses bombarded him again: "You're a...."

He wanted to calm her down, but was worried that her inevitable talking-back-grudges might disturb the neighbors downstairs. So he held back and told himself: "Let her be."

Finally, she stopped cursing and scolding. An eerie silence reigned over the living room. There was not a sound, except for the throbbing of their heartbeats.

After a long pause of silence, Yatsan finally said, "Jade," but he felt something stuck in his throat and couldn't say anything else.

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的冷酷，一種無名的苦痛，像利刃一樣的尖銳向他的心靈亂刺，他早已沒有了勇氣了。他感覺成天成夜像死屍活着，為什麼一個人要這樣活着，他像在心裏叫了出來，但沒有人回答他。

他走出一條較亮一點的街道，穿入橫巷的小街，裏面沒有一盞路燈，一閃的黑暗把它填滿着，因他是走熟了這條路，雖然是這麼黑暗暗，他也能摸索到他要去的地方。

他把門一推，向裏面走進去，一個森嚴冷酷的面龐，上了廿餘歲的女人，出現在他的面前。

“今晚‘出櫃’的錢呢？快些拿來給我吧！……”那婦人一見了他，便急切地向他追問。

他像聰不見的樣子，賴洋洋地向沙發坐下。

她立即走過去站在他的面前，漲紅着臉加緊向他追問。

他從衣袋裏取出一個信封交給她，並說“玉娟，今晚我還沒有吃飯……”

“你的事，沒有吃，就自己動手去煮，講給我聽有什麼用！……我要去三婆處打牌……”那女人接過那摺包，不理三七二十一，不等他說完，搶着說了這幾句，就向門外走了。

他坐在沙發上。生活的痛苦，又在他的心頭動盪着，他的眼睛通過窗戶，凝神地望着外面的黑夜，像要找出什麼東西似的。心頭怨憤的火，突然升起來了。他記起與她初到美的那時，已是七年前的事了，她不是一個慳儉，勤苦的妻子嗎？日間在家裏料理家務，夜裏還要到車衣廠去車衣，大家通力合作維持這小家庭，那時的生活，是多麼痛快啊！但現在呢？已不是四年前

的她了。家裏的事務得過且過敷衍了事，究竟是什麼使她變到這地步？他追根索底的逐一逐一分析着，終於沒法找出頭緒來。他正在沉思之際，覺得眼前一亮，像有什麼東西跳到他的面前，告訴他說：“愛情。”他像在黑暗中摸着了路似的。但他又認真地想：“現在不是和從前一樣的嗎？不過因做工的時間不能經常和她一起在家，難道這樣，她就……”他的思想又亂起來了，頭腦有點脹痛，他覺得不能再想下去，他的眼睛模糊了，朦朧地睡着，疲倦的精神，像找着唯一安慰休息了。

門外突然砰的一聲響了，他的妻子倉倉忙忙的走了進來，把雨傘隨便的丟到一個角落，見了一新，便氣喘喘地罵着：“你這隻不招財的死佬頭，成晚都是苦頭苦腦，……怪不得我總是那樣沒彩，使我今天又輸了四千牌，……你……這隻……”

一新給這罵聲突然驚醒，才知道自己是睡在沙發上。她又轟轟地繼續罵着：

“你這隻……”

當時他想向她勸解幾句，但又恐怕反惹起她不斷的怨言，會驚醒樓下的人們，只得忍耐着，心裏想：任由她吧！

她的怨恨責罵，停止了，一種恐怖的靜寂空氣又佔據了這個客廳。他倆呼吸的口氣和心跳的速度，幾乎可以聽見。

經過許久的沉靜，一新終於忍耐不住開口說了。

“玉娟，”他剛叫了她的名字，立刻就像有什麼東西把他的喉嚨梗塞着，以後的話無法說出了。

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She ignored him. She was talking to herself, "It's getting late. I'll go to sleep."

Yatsan shook his head, heaved a heavy sigh, and followed her into the bedroom.

He sat by the edge of the bed. He thought for a while and wanted to speak to her. However, she was already sound asleep.

"How can you sleep so quickly?" He looked at her, with frustration inside him.

He paced back and forth in the room. He sat down before a desk. A portrait of a newlywed couple was right before his eyes. He seemed to be in the picture. He looked closely; it didn't seem to be his image at all. He couldn't believe his eyes. He held on to the portrait for a closer look. It was indeed a picture of him and Jade. But now, were they still the same, like the good old days? Definitely not! She had lost all her sense of humor and patience! She lived in another world then. He felt painfully empty. He returned to the edge of the bed; he wanted to wake her up and talk with her. But, he didn't have the courage to do so.

Another kind of frustration and conflict was whirling inside him: "Does she still love me? ... Not anymore. She's ... Let's get a divorce ... Can't do that ... Shame ... Besides, the baby ... But, how can one live like this any longer? Torturing oneself like this everyday? Living like a walking corpse? What's the use of it all? Might as well ... But, she doesn't really ..." He twisted and turned inside the blanket, unable to sleep. Beside him, she was sound asleep in her sweet dreams.

The sky gradually became bright; darkness hid away. The streets were still quiet. The dim yellow street lights had disappeared long ago.

Yatsan got up from bed, dragging his tired body to the kitchen for some breakfast. Defeated, he opened the door and went outside. ■

(March 14 & 15, 1945)

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她像全不理他，自言自語地說：“時候不早了，睡吧！”便向睡房去了。

一新搖一搖頭，用力地鬆了一口氣，也跟著向睡房人去。

他坐在床沿上，沉思一下，便想喚她，可是她底鼾聲卻已呼呼地響着了。“怎麼就會睡得這樣快？”一新朝她一看，鬱悶地在心裏說。

他痛苦地在房間踱着，在書案前的一張椅子坐下。一只年青的新婚夫婦拍的相片在他的眼前幌動，好像是他自己，他定神看去的時候，好似又不是，使他當時無法相信他的眼睛。他便順手把它拿過來，果然又是他與玉娟攝的。然而現在，還是和從前一樣的嗎？不，完全不同了，完全變了，從前她那副含忍，幽默的個性，已不再現了，她那時像生活在另一個世界。他痛苦地感到孤獨，他又回去坐在床沿上，想動手去推醒她，把想好的話向她儘說個明白，但他又沒有那勇氣。

突然另一種苦惱的，矛盾的思潮在他底腦海澎湃起來：“她現在還愛我嗎？……不，她現在已……向她提成起離婚吧！……不能……名譽……況且……亞毛……不過像這樣生活，又怎能忍耐下去？天天受着這樣的刑罰……像死屍的一樣活着，究竟還有什麼意義？不如……但她到底好似又是……”他在被窩裏翻來覆去，總是睡不着。可是躺在他旁邊的她，卻已經甜蜜地睡着了。

天空漸漸地亮了，黑暗快要躲到光明的背後去。街上依然是一樣的靜寂，那淡黃的街燈光，早已熄滅了。

一新疲倦地下了床，到廚房煮好早膳，就頹喪地踏出門外去了…… ■

(華僑日報)一九四五年三月十五日

## New York at Night (Random Recollections)

Yun

High-rise, one hundred thousand feet in height, reaches the sky.  
Clouds by the window;  
Moon against the walls;  
Hundreds and thousands of jade palaces in a circular embrace.

Down below: ten thousand people mill along;  
Right around: numerous stars pay their respects.  
With elevators, one needs not climb up on foot;  
In an instant, one returns to earth in no hurry.

Lights shine like it is daytime;  
Festive is the night.  
Merry music and happy songs are everywhere in all directions.  
Dazzled and intoxicated by the gaiety of wine and dance,  
Slowly, gradually, revealing her unsteady steps—

She is troubled by the hankering of amorous hornets and butterflies,  
And the persistent pursuits of stubborn wolves and sly hares.

Linger no more!  
This is not a palace in Heaven.  
This is a mortal, madding crowd.

(July 27, 1943)

## 紐約之夜—偶憶

筠

萬丈危樓齊天  
雲浮窗外、月斜牆邊  
千百座璇宮玉宇拱環  
府視萬人攢動、四顧衆星倒懸  
憑機昇降何勞步、落地輾轉不摩眉  
燈如畫、夜似年、八而笙歌樂管絃  
紙醉金迷酒後舞、絲絲畢露步蹒跚  
怕見癡蜂狂蝶紛擾、頑狼狡兔糾纏  
休留戀！不是天上宮闈  
卻是混濁人間

(華僑日報)一九四三年七月二十七日

## Grudges and Hate

Fan Guo

## 1.

Late at night, the sky was as dark as a black gauze covering one's face. The moon was not visible. There were only a few stars with dim sparkles not caught by the black.

It was already May, but the weather was quite different from past years. The sea breeze was rather chilly.

As the night wore on, the streets of Chinatown had slowly calmed down from its usual bustle.

Still, there were people and automobiles on the streets. Many stores had their lights on, bright and shiny. However, the sounds of *mahjong* and *paigow* tiles and the players' clamor had since died down, giving way to a quiet tranquility.

This quietude was the work of Gongtau A-sam and his gang during the last few days. Their activities had brought frowns to the faces of many shop owners.

Among these shop owners was the boss of Hing Lung Store. At this time of the night, there were still several people sitting around in his shop. Once in a while, a couple of customers would come in and buy some miscellaneous items. These sales slightly eased his discontent. He sat behind the cashier's counter; it was not time to close the shop and go to sleep yet.

Someone opened the door and left. Another person walked in, unsteadily, singing an operatic tune to himself.

That person, Lei Fook-lam, was a young man in his mid-twenties. The people sitting in the shop gave him a disapproving look as he walked in; some clearly indicated their disgust.

Lei ignored them. He walked in and looked around. He didn't see anyone there, no sound of *mahjong* or *paigow*. He turned and walked out, unsteadily, singing that same operatic tune.

"What's with him now? He was such a hard-working fellow before!" He didn't even smoke a cigarette! In just a few months, he's completely changed into another person! Gambling, womanizing, drinking, smoking, everything!" Uncle Chyun watched Lei's back disappear out the doors, shaking his head and sighing.

A voice among the shop sitters echoed, "Yeah, people change all the time. There's nothing you can do if you have friends who are bad influences."

## 2.

The night passed ever so swiftly and quietly.

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## 冤和恨

奮戈

夜深了，天空烏暗暗的一片，有如一人大黑紗，籠罩在一張大臉上。看不見月亮，只稀疏的幾顆星星，藏在那黑紗裏，閃爍着慘淡的光芒。

雖然已到了五月的季節，但今年的氣候和往年的不同，所以在這時候，那由附近的海面吹來的海風，也一陣寒似一陣。

在唐人街上，剛才那種熱鬧的情形，現在也隨着了夜寒的加深，而漸漸的冷淡下去了。

然而，在街道上，依然的還有來往的行人，和來往的車輛；大多數的店舖裏的燈光，也還一樣的輝煌閃耀。但平時那些熟悉的骨牌的拍撲聲和呼喝聲，這時卻靜悄悄地，一絲的也聽不到了。

這便是近幾天來，江頭阿三們活動的功績，也是一些店舖的老板們，所以要皺眉的事情。

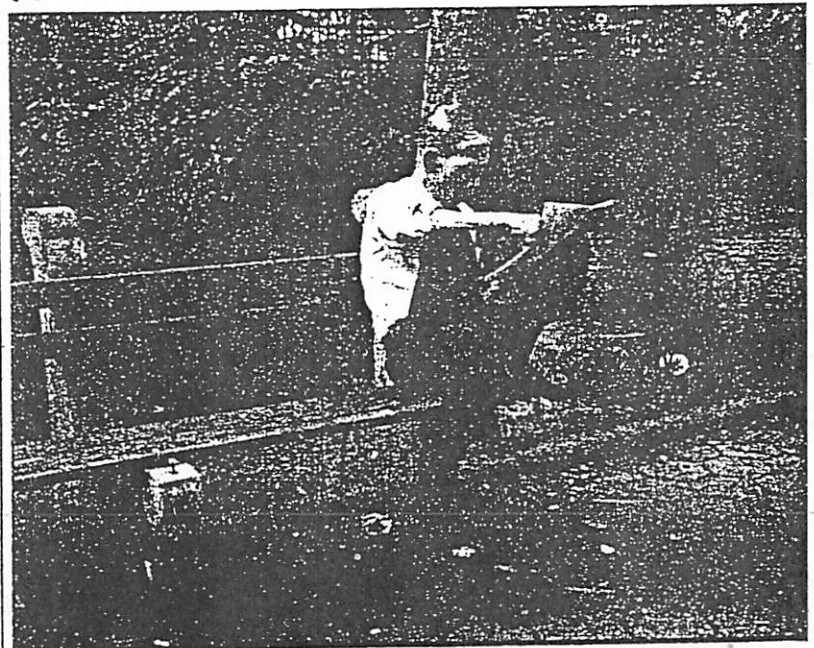
在這些老板們中，'興隆'店的老板，便是其中的一個。但這時候，在他那裏，卻依然還有幾個人在閒坐着，知不時的有一兩個顧客，走進來購點零星的東西，所以他才支持着那不大痛快的情緒，坐在那櫃面裏，未曾閉門去睡覺。

'呀'的一聲，一個人剛走出門去，便又有另一個唱着戲文，醉醺醺地踉蹌的踏進了來。

那人便是李福林，一個廿多歲的青年。坐在店內大那些人，大家見他進來，都投給他一個怪異的眼光，有的甚至顯出了厭鄙的樣子。

但福林他不管這些，走進了內間，看一看，見沒有人，聽一聽，也聽不見有人

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哥倫布公園，一九八二，林慮筆攝 Columbus Park, 1982. (Robert Glick, NYCIIP Archives)

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It was noon the next day. Lei Fook-lam was leaning against a table, staring into a mirror: a thin haggard, jaundiced face. He thought "I'd better do something about this; or else I'm going to die soon." The mere thought of it made him mournful and shiver in fright.

Just then, another thought sped into his mind like a dagger in his heart. He was in pain. Heaving a sigh of anguish, he talked to himself with anger, "I may as well die instead of living this kind of life!"

His eyes were fixed on a photograph; his mind counted the days: one month, two months, three months, . . . For crying out loud, it's been more than two years without any news from the folks at home!

Half a year ago, he was still asking himself the question: "Are they still alive? How are they making do with life?" He had recently come to believe that they were no longer alive.

Like water bubbles, his once beautiful dreams had all burst. The only hope he had now was to die soon, in peace.

His way of looking at things had changed; so had his behavior. Before, he was hard-working and diligent, a well-disciplined man without any vice. Now, he had quit his job and was spending all his waking minutes in dark basements drinking and gambling.

Gradually, the people's good impression of him shifted. Those who praised him in the old days were cursing him now. As days went by, his health also worsened.

3.

One day, Lei's good friend, Wong Jung-ying, dressed in military uniform, appeared in front of Lei. He looked at Lei earnestly and reprimanded him in the tone of friendship and sympathy, "It's only been a year. What has happened to you?"

Lei was silent. He lowered his head to avoid any contact with his friend. Inside, a tremendous pain was aching in his heart. It was a mixture of appreciation, sorrow, and shame.

"Any letters from home lately? How's Little Wah getting along?..." Wong inquired casually as usual.

Before he could finish, Lei interrupted, "Drop it!"

The room was silent. The two friends' eyes looked at each other—one with friendship, the other with a troubled heart.

Finally, Wong broke the dense silence, "So, this is what it's all about! Don't you ever become so negative! There are lots of people who are in the same situation as you! Look at me! Am I an exception?"

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聲或牌聲，於是便掉轉了身子，重新唱著了戲文，蹣跚地走出了門去。

‘這人真奇怪，前時勤做動作，連紙烟也不多吃一口，只數月的時間便變成了另一個人，嫖賭飲吹，幾乎樣樣都學齊……’老金伯望着福林的背影，消逝在門口後，便不禁地搖頭慨嘆起來。

隔座隨即又飄起了另一個聲音，應和地說道：

‘人是隨時隨地而變的，若交上了壞朋友，不想變壞也不得！’

二

一夜的時間，悄悄地溜過去了。

這是第二天的午間，李福林支着頤，覆在桌邊，眼望着鏡子裏所現出的自己底那枯削瘦黃得可怕的臉孔，心想：這樣子，若不早點補救，不久便要去見閻王了！想到這裏，心裏不禁的起了一種無名的傷感和顫慄。

但接着，便又有另一件事，侵進了他的心裏，刺痛了他的心，使他痛苦地長嘆了一聲，悲憤地說道：

‘這樣的生活，倒不如死了痛快！’

這時，他的目光，不自主地停在桌上的一幅相片上。在那相片上，有他底慈祥的母親，年青的妹妹，還有自己的嬌妻和愛兒。

他一邊望着那幅相片，一邊在心裏計算着：一月，二月，三月……不接到他們的訊息，已是兩年多了，天呀！

半年前，他還只這樣的自問着‘她們還活着嗎？又活得怎樣呢？’但是近來，他卻已經相信她們已不在人間了。

一切美麗的希冀，都人水泡的一樣，一個一個的破碎了。現在，福林他所剩下的唯一的希冀，便是自己能夠早點靜靜地死去。

他的思想改變了，他的行動也改變了：前時潔身自愛，動作儉用，現在則不但已沒有去工作了，且還日夜的在那些飲賭等黑暗的地窟裏出入。

因此，從前他所給予人家的良好印象，不但是逐日地消滅了，就是從前那些讚美他的人，現在也轉過來，在他的背後怪責罵他了。他的身體也一日一日

三

一日，一個身穿戎裝的好友，王仲英，站在福林的面前，耿耿的目光，緊緊地釘着福林的臉孔，用友愛、憐憫而帶責備的口吻說道：

‘想不到只別離一年多，你便把自己弄得這個樣子！唉……’

福林默然不語，規避地微微低下了頭來。但他的心裏卻痛楚得很，這痛苦，是感激，是悲傷，是慚愧的結合。

‘近來有家信到嗎？小華長得怎樣了？……’仲英不經意地如平常一樣的慢慢說着，但他的話還沒有說完，福林便痛苦地說道：

‘勿再談它吧！……’

房子裏沒有人說話了，兩人的眼光，痛苦地電視着，一個爲了友誼，一個爲了心事。

最後，還是仲英打破了沉悶的氣氛：

‘唉，原來是爲了這事！其實，也用不着這樣消極呀！現在好像你這樣的人

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He looked at Lei's face, noticing a easing of his sorrowful wrinkles. He continued, "Actually, I feel good now. Germany is defeated. Now I am ordered to go overseas; I'll naturally be sent across the Pacific. The day of revenge has finally come. . ."

Lei was listening to Wong. Now he began to notice Wong's healthy physique under his impressive military uniform. He looked at himself, and slowly his face radiated.

Wong sense his excitement and suggested, "Well, why don't you do the same? If I must die in obscurity, I may as well go to the battle front and get a few of those SOBs. That's the only way to go!"

"It's too late! With this poor health of mine, I'd be dead soon. They aren't going to take me!" Lei murmured in resignation.

"The hell it's too late! Beginning today, you start taking good care of yourself. You'll be back in shape in a few months! Why won't they take you then?"

Lei listened to Wong this night. He didn't drink. He didn't go out. He ate his meal early and went to bed.

4.

A week passed. Lei lived a disciplined life. His health and spirit responded quickly. He was happy with himself, figuring that he would follow Wong's footsteps in no time.

One morning after breakfast, Lei was sitting at home listening to the radio. A postman delivered a weather-beaten airmail letter addressed to him. He glanced at the envelope and was immediately shaken, something ominous was about to be learned: it was a family letter from China.

With shaking hands, he hurriedly opened the envelope and read:

*Toishan was occupied and the enemy took control of the village. Your younger sister was missing as everyone tried to escape. We have not yet found her. Your mother died three months ago because of fright and worry. Your son, too, died five days ago because of malnutrition and from an epidemic. Your wife is with us now, but gravely ill. She is my own daughter, but what can I do to help her since I can't even survive myself? As for my own tragedy, I'll spare you the pain and sorrow because your family tragedy is more than enough for you to bear. By and large, everybody is in the same sad situation here. If you ever receive this letter, please send some money home! Otherwise, it'll be tragic! Your family said they have not received a cent from you for over two years and that you haven't answered any of their letters! What happened? Were they lost in transit? Have you changed? . . ."*

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正多着呢！就以我自己來說吧，又何嘗例外？’

他看一看福林的臉孔，見剛才的那種痛苦的條紋沒有了，才又接續下去：

‘不過，我倒感痛快。現在德國已經倒了，這時出國，自然向太平洋方面去，清算的日子到了…’

福林初時只靜靜地聽着仲英的話，現在他卻忽然看看仲英底壯健的穿着軍服的身體，又回過眼來看一看自己，臉上漸漸的露出一種異樣的色彩。

仲英發覺了，便說道：

‘你爲什不也像我一樣的呢？自己靜悄悄地死去，倒不如走到戰場上，殺掉他媽的幾個，這才是有價值的呀！’

‘可是現在已經遲了！我這個樣子，離去拜閻王的日子不遠了，那還會被取錄呢？’福林懊喪地喃喃自語般說着。

‘遲什麼呢？只要你從今天起，好好地調養自己，過幾個月，就會復原了！到

四

一星期過去了。在這一星期中，福林的生活是那樣的有條序，使得他的精神和身體，日見好轉，他在心裏也暗暗的歡喜：不久便可以踏上仲英的道路了！

這天早餐後，福林正坐在住所開着收音機消遣，郵差送來一封破舊的航空信。他看一看信皮，心裏就不知怎的突然顫抖了起來，好似預料不幸的事件將要發生的一樣：那是一封由祖國寄來的家信。

他用顫抖的手，急速地把那封信拆開，讀着：

‘……台境淪陷後，你的家鄉，便已給敵人佔據了。你的妹妹，在逃難慌亂之際失蹤，至今未知下落。你的母親，因驚慌和憂愁過度，已于三月前去世。你的兒子因營養不足，又染上了時症，夭折也有五天了。至于你底妻，現又病倒在我這裏。她雖然是我的女兒，但我現在自救不暇，無法幫助她。至于我自己底悽慘，我不想再在這裏告訴給你，因爲你自己的事，已夠你傷心了。總之，現在大多數人的處境，都是一樣悲慘。若你接到此信後，要即速匯些款回來，不然，禍事又到了！但據你的家人說，兩年多來，不但沒有接收到你一文，且屢次寄給你的信，也得不到一隻字的回覆，究竟是你變了，還是因交通的阻滯而遺失呢？……’

福林越讀越痛心，終於不能再支持下去了。眼淚也已淹沒了他的眼睛，字句也看不清楚了。他抓着那封信，痛楚地盡力的將它擲在地上，站起了身來，掉頭向房內四顧，勿哈哈地狂笑起來，聲音慘厲得有如鬼哭；淚珠更如自來水似的，不停的從他的眼簾裏淌出來，浸濕了他的臉孔和衣襟。

‘家鄉淪陷，母親死亡，妹妹失蹤，妻病倒，兒夭折……禍事又來了……’如告狀的一樣，他一句一句地數落着，沉痛地數落着。

突然，他掉轉了身來，走到桌子邊，瘋狂地把櫃桶抽出來，抓起了一小束中國銀行的收據，緊緊地握在手中，叫道：

‘兩年多沒有接收到你一文……究竟我這三萬銀到那裏去了？那裏去了？……’

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Lei was furious as he read on. Tears flooded his eyes and he could no longer see the words and sentences clearly. He grasped the letter and threw it to the floor in anger and pain. He looked around the room, and laughed madly, like the cries of haunted ghosts. His tears streamed down soaking his lapel.

"The village invaded, mother dead, young sister missing, wife ill, son dead ... again, disaster coming..." He recited sentence by sentence from the letter, as if he was filing a complaint in a court of law.

Suddenly, he turned to his desk and pulled out the drawer. He took out a small bundle of receipts from the Bank of China. He held it tightly in his hands and continued reading, "They have not received a cent from you for over two years' ... Where did my thirty thousand dollars go? Where???"

He banged at the desk hysterically. His face changed steel gray; his eyes burst with flames of anger and hate, wanting to raze the world and turn it into ashes.

5.

The next day, in an obscure corner of the newspaper, it was reported that Lei Fook-lam had committed suicide. That obituary also carried his last words:

*"I have suffered enough pain and bitterness in this world. I cannot live in this world anymore. Besides, there is neither anything nor anyone for me to live for in this world anymore.*

*"Yes, I want to die now. But my death will not make me forget those corrupt government officials and bureaucrats—undisciplined soldiers and cruel Japanese bandits—they are the cause of my suffering. I cannot do anything about that in my mortal life. But, in the underworld, I shall remember; I shall seek revenge!*

*"May God be my witness. Don't forget these grudges and hate!"* ■

(June 25-28, 1945)

My Awakening

Xlandai Yugong (Modern Fool)

Before I came to the New Continent, I witnessed the deterioration of the Chinese society as days went by. The livelihood of the Chinese people became worse and worse. I heard about the affluence in the United States and her rather comfortable life style. Everybody called her a "paradise island." I decided to leave my warm family willingly to become a stooge laborer and embarked on the distant journey across the ocean for this "paradise."

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五

第二天，報紙的新聞欄內，在一角不大顯著的地方，登載了一篇關於福林底自殺的新聞。在那篇導報裏，還有他這樣的一段遺字：

‘在這個世界上，我已受夠了一切的酸苦，我已不能在這個世界上繼續的活下去了，而在這個世界上，也沒有任何的人和物，再能夠使我繼續的活下去了！’

‘是的，我現在是要死了！但我死了也不會忘記那些給與我這種痛苦和這種結局的貪官污吏、不守土的軍吏和殘暴的日寇。在陽世裏，我是對他們無可如何了，但在陰府裏，若然我尚有知，這個仇我一定要報！’

‘上帝做我的見證，請莫忘記了我的冤和恨呀！’ ■

(六月十一日于威明頓)

《華僑日報》一九四五年六月二十五日

我底覺悟

現代愚公

當我來到新大陸之前，眼見中國的社會，日壞一日，中國人謀生的困難，也日甚一日；但聞得美國富裕，生活頗好，人皆目之為“幸福之島”。於是我便決意離開我底可愛的家庭，不惜賠錢賣身為豬仔，踏上那悠遠的征途，乘風破浪來到了“幸福之島”。

抵美之初，滿以為這個黃金之國，確是“幸福之島”；我雖然絕對沒有希望做富翁的野心，但私心所要求的，願好好地過着人的生活，誰知飄流十載有餘，由美西流亡到美東，什麼農笑的生活，學徒的生活，賣手的生活，堂倌的生活，以至什麼苦販的一切都是非人的生活，有時連牛馬的生活都趕不上，世態炎涼的滋味飽嘗了，饑寒凌辱的苦況歷盡了，傷痕滿體，我是深深的失望了。

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Immigration documents, ca. 1920s. (National Archives)

移民文件，一九二〇年代，美國國家檔案資料

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When I first arrived in the United States, I really thought this nation of gold was indeed a "paradise island." I never had the ambition to become a millionaire, but I did harbor the personal wish of making a good living as a decent man. Who would have expected that I would become a drifter for over ten years, wandering from the West Coast to the East Coast? I have worked as a farm laborer and as an apprentice. I worked with my hands; I worked as a waiter and a peddler... all were the life of an inhumane existence. Sometimes such a life was worse than that of a horse or an ox. I have been snubbed; I have experienced hunger, cold, and all sorts of humiliation. I am deeply wounded and totally disappointed.

As I look back at my ambitions, they have all disappeared like mirages. What I see before my eyes are layers of darkness encircling me, wrapping around me. Yet, the darkness cannot bury me away. In darkness, I refuse to be intimidated. I struggle. I fight back to break open a way for my search of brightness. I have no regrets about anything. Instead, I take everything as lessons to understand life better, to recognize what's good and what's evil. I won't compromise myself and I'll fight till the very end. I'll be standing at the front line of our time, to materialize our great hope! ■

(October 14, 1940)

### Three Thousand Dollars

Lao Zhu

There was a grocery store in Chinatown named King Du, located at a rather busy street that was not that wide. Its owner Ying Mau-si and his wife were troubled by something that had recently developed in their family: Phoebe was no longer the same Phoebe anymore!

Many years ago, the venerable Mr. Ying bought this not-too-old-yet-not-too-new grocery store with all his savings, savings earned with sweat. At that time, his two sons were attending middle school and his darling daughter was in elementary school. Mr. Ying and his wife, with the help of his nephew, took care of the grocery store. After school, the children would also lend a helping hand with the chores. Mr. Ying took care of the books, while his two sons kept track of the inventory and orders. The work may have been strenuous, but all the earnings went to the family's savings account. He was a diligent grocer and very patient with his customers. Therefore, the business improved tremendously.

By the time the business was in fine financial situation, the older son had already completed his Master's degree in business and was about to return to expand the grocery's operation. His daughter was a young lady in high school. Good old Mr.

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回想以前一切的期望，好似幻象一般的破滅了。到如今觸動眼簾的，只有重重黑暗，黑暗雖然籠罩着我，卻不能埋沒我；在黑暗中，我絕對沒有半點懼怯，只有掙扎，只有奮鬥，以期打開一條出路，追求我底光明。我又沒有悔恨，反而加強了我底人生的認識，憎其所憎，愛其所愛，願為社會奮鬥到底。我更不肯墮落，反要站在時代的前線，要實現我們一個偉大的理想！ ■

《華僑日報》一九四〇年十月十四日

### 三千塊錢

老竹 (上)

在中國城的一條不算闊大而很繁盛的大街上的一家叫做京都的西式雜貨舖子裏，邢謀時先生跟他的老伴兒心頭肉近來長了一個想起來便痛透了的乞答(從廣)：斐璧這個妮子變了質了！



Sam Kee Co., 36 Mott Street, 1981.  
(Paul Calhoun, NYCHP Archives)

三記公司，勿街，一九八一，高保廉攝

因為邢老先生在若干年前將他用勞力換來的血汗錢買了一間半新舊的舖子——這間京都雜貨店。那時候，兩個人兒子在中學和最小的寶貝斐璧在小學唸書，這麼着邢老先生夫婦倆和一個大侄子管理了這舖子，孩子們放學回來後便多幾隻手脚幫忙，邢老先生操持賬目的銀子事務，兩個孩子便管理貨物往來的外交事項。因為是自己的買賣，即使多流幾滴汗，賺回的錢到底往自己的銀行存摺上添的。這麼着辛辛苦苦的苦心經營，他又能低心下氣的受主顧們的脾氣，所以他的買賣很有起色，到這起色的時候，那個兒子已讀完大學，獲了個商業碩士回來預備擴大規模了，女兒卻還是中學時代的小姐哩

邢老先生夫婦倆看着這個買賣做得不錯，一家大小都平平安安的，而且那個兒子又找個頗為合意的對象，很快便可以喝媳婦茶了，這不開心才怪。可是娶媳婦要花筆款子，擴大生意這件計劃也不是說說就成事的。雖然銀行存款的數目很為可觀，然而東一把西一把的開支，剩下來的零星等於舖子開張後的第二年，這不是全為兒女債而白流汗嗎？雖然跟老伴兒的棺材本另有準備金，但他有他更大的著望。自己的年紀六十差不遠了。可幸身體還算強壯，那麼再過十多年，不難親眼看到自己手創的舖子多分幾處支店，這麼着，他腦子裏的算盤響了幾次後，便響到女兒的身上來了。

‘振的爸’，商量了好半天，老伴兒的皺皮臉也喜形於色了，‘我看，五千塊是不多的，至少要這個數目！’

邢老先生聽了，連忙取下嘴上的雪茄，頭點了幾下，但忽然有所悟似的提議他的意見：

‘本來，多點呢，我也要的，不過……’

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Ying and his wife were quite happy; the business was in great shape; everyone in the family was fine; their son already found a rather ideal and steady girlfriend and they would be married soon. However, their wedding would cost Mr. Ying a bundle. Besides, more than talk was needed to expand the grocery business. Although Mr. Ying had sizeable savings in the bank, all the expenses would set him back to an impoverished lot, just like during the second year after he took over the grocery store. Why waste all his money just on the kids with nothing left for himself! Of course, he had put aside a sum for funeral expenses for his wife and himself. Nevertheless, he was an ambitious man. He was close to sixty years old, but he was still very strong and healthy. He figured that in ten years, he would be able to witness the branch openings of this grocery store—a store founded by him single-handedly. With this ambition in mind, he kept thinking over and over how to accomplish this. At last, he figured he could do so through his daughter.

After a discussion with his wife for half a day, she too was delighted. "Yes, my son's dad," the woman said. "I don't think five thousand dollars is too much. We should at least ask for that amount."

Mr. Ying took the cigar from his mouth as he listened to his wife. He nodded his head in agreement. He seemed to have come up with an idea and said, "Well, I would like to ask for more. However..."

"What?"

"Well, this is America! The younger generation talk about love, not money!"

"But we are the parents; we should decide," said his wife righteously.

Mr. Ying got up from the sofa and paced the living room. His wife followed him with her bespectacled eyes. He hoped that the demand for five thousand dollars as betrothal money wasn't too ridiculous. Nevertheless, he hadn't decided on it immediately. Instead, he tried to rationalize the situation.

"This is a civil country. We can't tie a rope around their legs all the time. Besides... well, we would sure like to find a good husband for our daughter. A young man should not lean on his elders to impress people... I think five thousand dollars is not a large sum for an older man. But I sure don't like to see my daughter marry to someone as old as we are!"

"So what are you saying? Just give her away without getting back a penny?" The wife seemed disappointed, for she knew in her own experience that one must work on her hands and knees to earn a living. Still, it took a lot to raise a daughter too: "No matter what," she insisted "we should be compensated for raising her."

Finally, after much discussion, they reached a forty

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‘不過什麼?’

‘不過，這是在美國呀，青年男女們，動不動講愛情，老大不看重金錢的。’

‘但是，我做父母，當然由我做主。’老伴兒直截了當地說。

邢老先生離開了沙發，在廳中踱了一回，老伴兒的近視眼跟著他來回走着，希望她要五千塊錢禮金這個價目並不太過火，但是邢老先生沒馬上同意，後來，祇得再來個辯證法：

‘在這文明的國家裏，是不能整天的用繩子縛住他們的脚的，而且……而且，我們總希望我們的女兒找到個有作為的丈夫，一個小伙子不能單靠父兄的錢來充排場……所以，照我看，五千塊嗎，對有點年紀的人也許不算多，可是我們不希望自己的女兒嫁給個像我這樣的老頭子啊！’

‘照你說，乾絕的送給人家，一個銅仙也不要？’老伴兒有點氣餒了，她畢生的經驗叫她知道胼手胝足的賺錢是不容易的，而且養大一個女兒不是容易的事，‘無論如何，總要有個代價呀！’

商量到最後，到底打了個六折。

邢老可先生費了這些唇舌，便吩咐老伴兒去弄點咖啡來潤潤喉嚨，老伴兒的嘴裏還不時的咕嚕着‘三千元太便宜呀，哼！三千元！’

恰巧大兒振東和女兒跑回來了，問這三千塊是什麼，做媽的說小孩子追長問短的幹嗎，後來還說：

‘又到那兒逛來啦？……以後別跟別人家到處亂跑了，你不再是不懂事的丫頭了，得正在經經點個……’

‘跟羅勃去看電影來，沒有什麼正經不

正經呀，媽，二哥同密斯陳去玩滾球戲，大哥也和他的女友玩呢！……’做女兒的才不管你想怎樣去束縛她，她有她的理由哩。

振東瞧着這個光景，知道其中一定有點什曲折了，他可不能含糊，就問他的爸說：

‘爸爸，你說是不是，男女朋友交際是很平常的，我駐軍在重慶時，看到的情形也很公開，只要不太過胡鬧便是了。你們剛才說的三千塊是什麼來的？’

‘生意事，你們別管！’

邢老先生乾脆的答。

(下)

過了幾天，街坊上的人們居然曉得了京都雜貨店的一件值三千塊錢的貨色了：老板的女兒！

可是，許多好管閒事的人便把這件事作新聞似的傳播了：

‘要是我有三千元呢，我也會作買賣呀！’

‘我不會回祖國去選一個麼，何必要買這獨市貨？哈！’

甚至有人一股兒的跑到門前去看個究竟，而打起吊膀子的油腔來：

‘這樣的娘兒也值三千元嗎？哼！……’

‘就使貼我三千元，我也不要呢！’

但是，‘百貨中百客，爛貨自有爛人客’呀，要是單憑不如己意的便任意挖苦別人，這是幹嗎？可是這個烏世界就是這樣的！

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percent discount from the original asking price.

Mr. Ying felt exhausted from the discussion; he told his wife to make some coffee to soothe his throat. She was still murmuring: "Only three thousand dollars! Too low! What's three thousand dollars!"

At that moment, their son Jang-dung and daughter Phoebe returned home. The daughter heard it and asked what this business of three thousand dollars was all about. The mother said it was none of her business and instead, she said to her: "Where have you been? Don't you ever run wild with other from now on! You are not a little girl anymore! Behave yourself!"

"I just went to a movie with Robert. What's so bad about that? Mom! Second Older Brother goes bowling with Miss Chan! And First Older Brother goes out with his girlfriend too!..." So much for her mother wanting to restrict her behavior. The daughter had her way of looking at things.

Jang-dung realized that there must be something going on behind that lecture. He wanted to make sure, so he asked his father, "Dad, dating is a normal social activity, don't you think so? When I was stationed in Chungking, I saw that all the time. As long as one doesn't go too far, it's all right. What's that three-thousand-dollar matter all about?"

"It's about business and it's none of yours!" the father cut him off.

A few days later, everybody in the neighborhood heard that there was a merchandise available in the King Du Grocery Store worth three thousand dollars: the owner's daughter!

Many a busybody spread the word around like it was a news item: "If I had three thousand dollars, I'd go for it." "Hell, why should I go for this one-item-only deal? I'll go back to the old country and choose one from many instead!"

Some people would even show up at the grocery store to take a look and get fresh: "You're kidding! Her? Three thousand dollars? Wow!" "I wouldn't take her even if you give me a thousand dollars!"

Well, everyone had his own taste; some people like things that others don't. Why pick on something which you yourself have no appreciation for? This world is ridiculous indeed!

In fact, Phoebe was not at all that bad a young lady, although she was not too intelligent nor was she very pretty. Besides, she was not willing to be sold like a merchandise to a customer without her own consent. She had a steady boyfriend, Robert Chang! Well, Robert's family background was not as good as hers; therefore, her mother was rather snobbish towards him. Hence, her parents decided to restrict her activities; she must be working at the grocery store right after school; when the store closed, she must go home together with everybody

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本來，斐璧小姐是沒有什麼壞心眼的，她不算不漂亮，也不算不聰明；她倒不願自己像商品一樣無主無意的賣給顧客呀！她有她的情人：羅勃張那個青年，因為羅勃張的家世比不上邢老先生他們的，她的媽便奚落他了。這麼着邢老先生夫婦便對女兒限定時刻起來了，放學後依時回店幫忙，收市時得一定一起坐車子回家休息，只准星期六出去看電影，但也得陪着母親或有振東的女友同去才行。

這樣，過了那麼的三個月，邢小姐沒有從前那股活潑愉快的勁兒了，她的臉色也像她們的鋪子裏賣剩的蕪某那樣了！然而邢老先生夫婦打的如意算盤響得還挺有意思呢！……

羅勃張也曉得這個，他來到店裏探望邢小姐的時候，在兩老的目光監視下就不能像在公園那樣歡心暢意的談笑了，有時在電話裏也只能簡短的說幾句，他才不敢多闖亂子，因為他曉得他倆斷絕來往，那時是會更糟糕的。

可是，終於在一個黃昏，斐璧小姐假托要找一位女友而跑出去了，她找到了羅勃，便坐單車到起家離中國城很遠的咖啡店去——

‘羅勃，我悶極了，父媽他們氣得我幾乎要自殺了！……’，她一面說，一面流着淚，怪可憐的，羅勃也嘆着氣，他沉吟了一會兒，才安慰她說：



Lunch break, 1983. (Paul Calhoun, NYCIP Archives)

午膳，一九八三，高保廉攝

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by car; she was allowed to see a movie only on Saturday, chaperoned by Mother or Jang-dung's girlfriend.

In three months, Miss Ying lost her youthful spirit; her complexion turned the color of those unsold, leftover apples at the grocery stores. Still, Mr. and Mrs. Ying were full of anticipation for a good offer. . . .

Robert Chang also heard about all this. He went to the store to see her. Under the watchful eyes of her parents, they could not say as much as they would like, like when they were alone in the park. Sometimes, their conversations over the phone were cut short. He didn't want to cause trouble and infuriate the old folks because things could get worse should her parents refuse to allow him to see her.

One evening, Phoebe sneaked out with the excuse that she was going to a girl friend's place. She got hold of Robert and they rode the streetcar to a coffee shop far from Chinatown.

"Bob," said Phoebe. "I have had enough! I'm so mad at my parents; I want to kill myself." She was crying. It was pathetic.

Robert sighed. He was deep in thought. Then he comforted her, "Phoebe, it'll be all right. We have to fight against the feudal Chinese family system. Yes. This is America. . . . We love each other. We shouldn't let our parents treat us like merchandise. . . . Don't be silly and cry like this in public. It's embarrassing."

He helped her wipe off her tears. She took a deep breath and said, "Yes, Bobby my love. I don't want that to happen to us—unless the world collapses on us. . . ."

Her tears streamed out again. Robert held her tightly around her waist and looked straight at her, "I'm not from a rich family. . . . but I'll find work after I graduate. I'll have an income then. But now, there's nothing we can do."

"But darling, I'm told that there's this middle-aged man who suddenly got rich and that he has talked with my parents about me! What should we do? . . ."

More tears flowed from Phoebe. This sudden development caught Robert entirely by surprise. He was furious. Elope? Well, he didn't have enough money. Borrow some money to get married? Impossible!

A few days later, the neighborhood seemed to be buzzing with the latest news: the word was that Miss Ying was now used merchandise; she was not worth the three-thousand-dollar price tag.

It was shattering to the old couple's eardrums. They almost fainted! Immediately they summoned their son to take care of the shop, and went to grab their daughter from school and drive her home.

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‘斐璧，別傷心啦，古舊的中國家庭，我們是要起來反抗的，是嗎？我們是在美國呀，……我們愛着，彼此都不願由家長做主作買賣，……別傻啦，這兒大庭廣眾的流淚怪不好看的！’

又替她拭去淚，她吁了口長氣，然後繼續說：

‘羅勃，我的愛呀，誰願有那一天，除非是地裂天崩！……’

淚水又湧出來了，羅勃的手挽緊了她的腰，脫住她說：

‘我的家境不富……但我唸完書後找了事，是有人息的，現在焦急也不是辦法……’

‘可是呀，我的寶貝，聽說有一個中年人的暴發戶跟爸媽他們說着我了！怎，怎麼辦呀？……’

斐璧小姐的淚珠落得更多了，這突如其來的事真教羅勃措手不及，他也幾

Once home, they interrogated her. In tears, she confessed that she was not a good little girl anymore. The old folks hit the ceiling; their wrinkled faces turned blue and their wrinkled hands trembled violently.

The daughter didn't care. She added fuel to their anger: "Mom, Dad, you may as well accept me for what I am. I love him. You can't buy love with money. It isn't that I want to do this before we're married and it isn't Bob's fault either. . . . I'll say the same before a judge in court; it's not a crime! . . ."

The father kept shaking his head; the mother cried and choked. Phoebe hugged her mother and told her to calm down. In tears, the daughter still insisted that they would eventually get married; "He's an ambitious young man. He may be poor now; but he'll have a good future! . . ."

Well, this was the problem that was bothering good old Mr. Ying and his wife. They finally realized that their stupid idea had ruined their good daughter. Now, they must face several new crises as a result: their daughter, money, Robert's future, and the neighbors' talking! . . . ■

(September 25 & 26, 1947)

乎給氣死了！帶她一塊兒出去走嗎？手頭上沒多大的錢！借錢馬上結婚嗎？也不成！

再過了幾天，街坊上的人們彷彿都是順風耳，千里眼似的，於是又盛傳着這京都老板的女兒更不值三千塊錢了，因為已經變了質了！

這麼着很快就傳到邢老先生夫婦倆的耳鼓裏了，不知尤可，一曉得便幾乎昏過了去，馬上吩咐兒子們照料舖子的事，匆匆忙忙的把女兒拖進車子裏，駛向家中去。

在嚴詞的詰責下，做女兒含了淚地招認她已不是全毛全尾的小姐了！這叫老人家氣得說不出話來，皺皮的臉孔發青了，皺皮的手兒也抖索起來了！

做女兒的可不管死活，索性預先多給老人點顏色看看，她說：

‘爸，媽，你們得原諒我，因為我愛着他；真的愛情不是用金錢能買得來的！不是我願意在未正式結婚前做下這種事，更不是羅勃的罪過……即使在法官的面前，我也要這麼說，不會有罪的！……’

做爸的老是搖頭，做媽的只哭得透不過氣來了，做女兒的到底是女性，也禁不住的抱着她的媽，叫媽不可那麼傷心，她的哭聲裏還說明遲早總得跟羅勃結婚的：‘他是個有出息的青年呀，現在雖窮，可是他是有希望的呀！……’

這麼着邢老先生夫婦倆的心頭肉便長了一個疼透了的乞答(從廣)了，他倆現在才知道那使壞主意就糟塌了一個好好的女兒了！然而現在，有幾個新的問題在他倆的的心坎裏打着筋斗：女兒金錢，羅勃那小子的前程和街坊人們的嘴巴！…… ■

《華僑日報》一九四七年九月二十五日

### Laundry Trilogy

#### Ballad of Laundry Work

Li Yang

Toiling in a laundry:  
Sweat pours like rain.  
Day after day, year after year.  
Still stranded in a faraway sojourn.

Toiling in a laundry:  
Profits almost nothing.  
After putting up a capital sum,  
When will you break even?

Toiling in a laundry:  
You may get a mean, lousy customer.  
He won't speak a word of reason,  
He'd sue you instead!

And sue you, he will.  
You get heartburn and anxiety,  
You've wasted all the money.  
Can anyone take that kind of abuse?

Toiling in a laundry:  
Just keep on ironing, keep on washing!  
Eighteen hours a day;  
Not enough time for any decent sleep!

Not enough time for any decent sleep;  
Illness will come and you'll be besieged.  
You lie in a hospital; no one comes to visit.  
How lonely can a person be?

How lonely can a person be?  
O, who will take care of the family for me?  
I only wish medicine will make me well.  
Give me back my strength and my vitality.

(November 14, 1945)

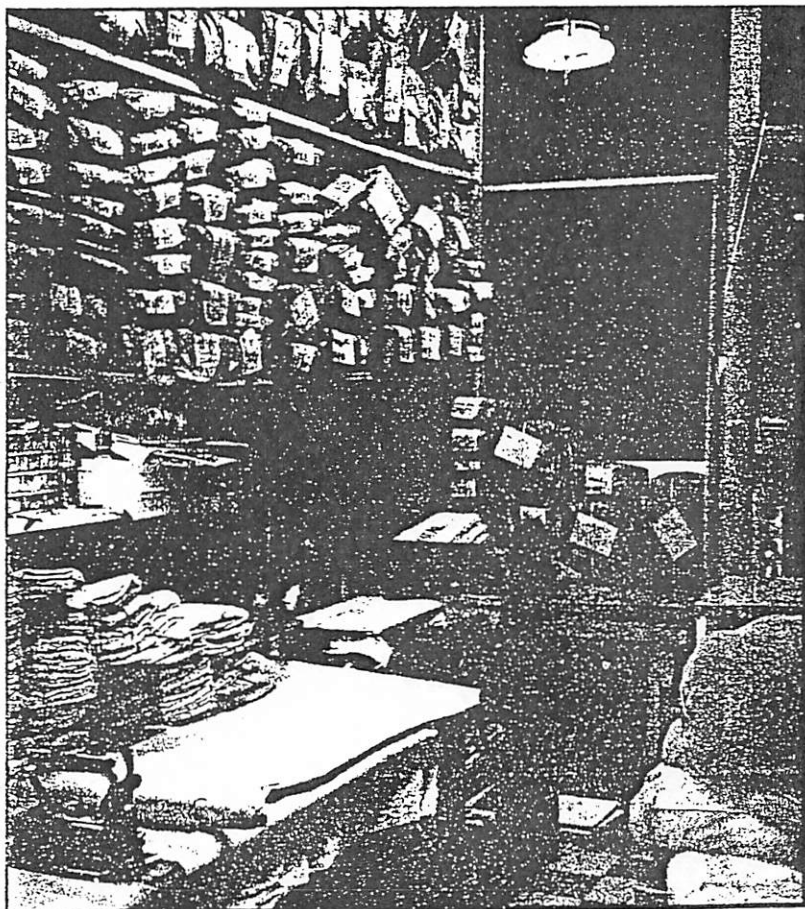
#### Laundry Pain

Xu Yan

Laundry work is a thankless lot.  
You work day and night; you work round  
the clock.  
You work with your hands; you work on  
your feet.  
Ironing, washing, it's full of anxiety and all  
fatigue.  
You miss your meals; you don't have  
enough sleep.  
Everyday, every year, that's the way it is  
indeed.

You work yourself to poor health; you hurt  
yourself at work.  
Alas, it's a hell of a way to work for a lousy  
living!

(December 14, 1946)



Chin family laundry, South Bronx, 1982. (Robert Glick, NYCHP Archives)  
陳氏給衣偈，布朗士，一九八二年，林慮筆攝

### 衣館勞作吟

李揚 《華僑日報》一九四五年十一月十四日

衣館勞作！  
汗如雨落，  
日過一日，年復一年，  
依然天涯淪落！

衣館勞作！  
獲利微薄，  
用去一注本錢，  
何時得歸囊橐！

衣館勞作！  
有時遇着扭紋客仔惡，  
三句兩句唔講理，  
便興鼠牙雀角！

鼠牙雀角！  
訴訟真焦灼，  
錢也用空，  
不堪其虐！

衣館勞作！  
努力熨，努力濯，  
每日捱到十八個鐘頭，  
可憐唔夠時間睡覺！

唔夠時間睡覺，  
病魔竟來縲縛，  
而今卧病醫院無人問，  
不勝寂寞！

不勝寂寞！  
回憶家人究誰託，  
只望樂到回春，  
恢復精神鑠置！

A Presser --  
A View on the Life of Overseas Chinese

Hanguang

Night--dark, still:  
an endless black curtain  
tightly  
wrapping around the vast earth.

Wintry winds  
carrying a chilly  
refreshing air,  
gently  
drift around.

A silent universe.

The bustling noises of the day,  
where are they now?

The night wanderers  
slowly dissipate  
and disappear without a trace.

They must have  
gone home in search of a wonderful dream.

The whole wide world wants to sleep.

Even the dim street lights  
appear drowsy and sound asleep.

And yet,  
why at this late hour of the night  
in that low and narrow

run-down building  
lights are still so bright?

This is the time to rest, to sleep.

Why are they still hard at work?

Everybody else with their dragged and  
their tired bodies  
are sound asleep in bed.

Why aren't these people tired?

On the contrary!

Look at them: they keep  
gowning, rubbing their eyes.

One careless move and  
they will fall down and fall asleep!

Why are they so diligently grasping at  
the red hot iron  
and pressing on and on?

It's life, you say.

Yes! What a sorrowful, horror-filled life it  
is!

Is life a tragedy?

Is life at its youth really such a worthless  
thing?

(May 16, 1947)

熨衣者——華僑生活的一角  
寒光

夜，深沉的  
有如一張無邊的黑幕，  
緊緊地  
籠罩着廣闊的大地，  
寒風，  
夾着了那清涼的  
鮮潔的空氣，  
輕輕地  
到處的飄流着。  
多靜寂的大地呵！  
日間底那些喧鬧聲  
到那裏去了呢？  
夜遊的人們  
已漸漸的疏稀了，  
終於絕了行蹤，  
他們，  
是回家去找尋那美麗的  
夢去了。  
廣闊的世界  
充滿了睡意的呀，  
連那暗淡的街燈  
也昏沉沉的似睡着了。  
但，  
爲什麼在這個時候，  
那低狹的  
破陋的屋子裏，  
電燈光還這麼的輝煌呢  
這是休息、睡眠的時候  
呀，  
爲什麼他們還這麼的辛  
苦地工作呢？  
其他的入們  
都帶着丁疲倦的身心，  
在床上睡着了，  
難道他們卻不感疲倦麼？  
不！  
你看：他們不是頻頻的  
打呵欠，擦眼睛嗎？  
只要一不小心

他們便會跌倒下去睡着  
了！

但是爲什麼他們還這麼  
的緊緊地握着  
那熊熊的熨斗，  
一刻不停地熨着，  
又熨着呢？  
你說：這是生活，  
但，這是何等的淒涼的  
可怕的生活呵！  
人生便如此悲慘的麼？  
青春的生命便真的如此  
無價值麼！？

《華僑日報》一九四七年五月十六日

衣館苦嘆  
叙燕

衣館工業，時間無斷，  
日做夜做，手動腳動；  
或熨或洗，勞心努力。  
水氣受濕，火烘汗流，  
食不依時，睡不依刻。  
日日如常，年年若此；  
或者做病，或者做傷！  
捱工獲錢，艱苦極矣！

《華僑日報》一九四六年十二月十四日



Shirt press worker, 1982. (Paul Calhoun, NYCIIP)  
余先生，給衣熨，一九八二年，高保廉攝

## New Year's Eve Dinner -- A Sketch

Wei Ling

"Click . . . , bang . . . ." The noise reached out to the streets from a shop in a single story building somewhere uptown. This was a shirt-press shop whose owner was Chinese. It was already after ten o'clock at night. Everyone was still busy at his own work station: pressing and pressing, folding and folding. The cook was busy preparing the supper. They were getting along happily; they chit-chatted as they worked.

"Hurry up with the pressing. The wok is sizzling!" said a tall, middle-aged Chinese.

Instantly, the rhythm of the press machines quickened. The clamoring sounds of the irons running on the ironing boards synchronized with the spatula scraping the wok. The rush of work lasted for almost an hour, as if they were carrying out an urgent military order.

"Press and fold in an instant. What a good pace!"

"Yeah! It's getting late, already past ten."

"It sure is! We don't have to work tomorrow, so it's all right to work a bit late. If we have to work on New Year's Day, it won't be fun."

"In the past, we worked on Chinese New Year. So what if you don't like it!"

The workers who were either folding or pressing the shirts talked as they got ready to finish the day's work. Some wiped their sweaty wrists against the wash cloths wrapped around their head; some laid down on chairs for a puff of a cigarette; some walked by the stove, hungrily inspecting the dishes being prepared. . . .

## 團年宴

微玲

‘格——’，‘崩——’的聲音，不斷地在埠上某區那座單層樓的舖戶內頭傳出街外來，這是一間華僑的熨衣公司。大約在晚上十時以後的光景，舖內各人都忙幹各人的工職：裝衣的裝衣，挾衣的挾衣（即管理機器熨衣）；打雜的已在烹弄着餐。大家都是在樂融融的情景下彼此一邊談笑，一邊工作。

‘快一點，拈住“竭頭”（註：即裝衣者能迫及機器出產的衣之意）罷，鍋仔已經着者響了。’這是裝着衣的其中的一位高長壯年僑胞的說話。

頓然，挾衣的機器聲急促了起來，熨斗壓熨床之聲和鍋鏟扣鍋之聲交雜密密可聽到。那時，工場的工作緊張，猶如執行着‘軍令’似的。如是者經過數十分鐘。

‘挾起即裝起，真爽！’

‘嘿，不早吧，已過十點鐘了。’

‘當然咧，明天不開工，做夜一點，有什麼要緊，如果明天——年初一去做工，那就不爽啊。’

‘在往時，那怕你爽不爽，也一樣地在唐人新年開着工嗎？’

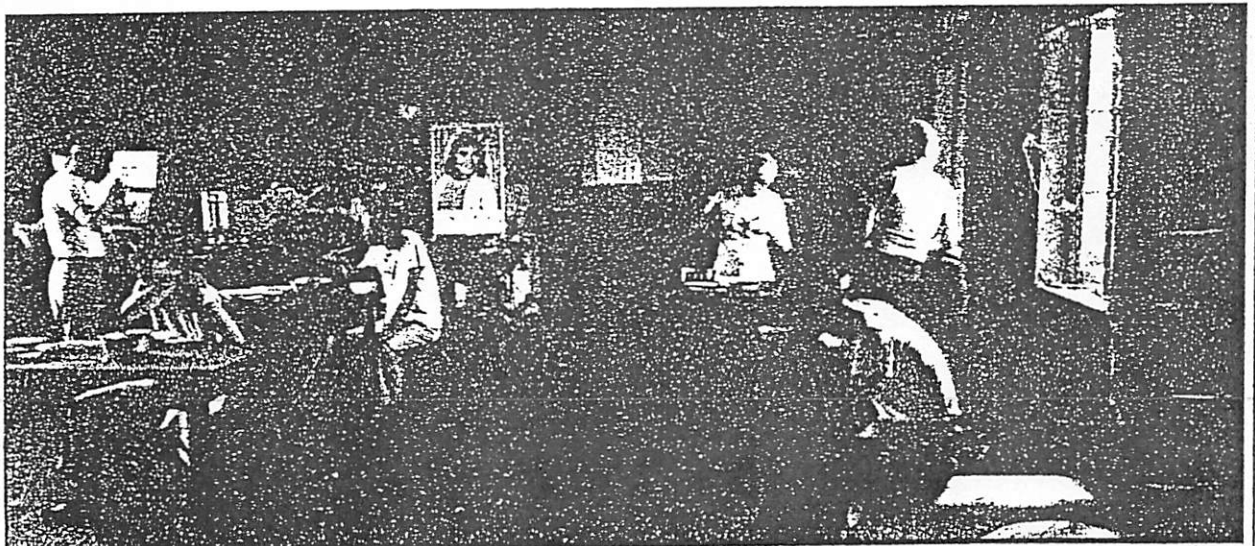
一羣裝衣、挾衣的工人，一面互相扳談，一面在整妥他們收工要做的‘手尾’；有的搔着頭上的布塵，有的卧坐在椅上吸着烟，有的走靠近爐灶邊吞着口沫貪看菜式的巡邏着……

‘大家算算數，出了糧才團年吧。’這是一位頭髮蕭疏狀似疲乏的三人一面跑去關門和熄了不要用的燈火，一面這樣呼喚着。

‘吃了餐，然後出糧吧。’另一位坐着憩息的工友這樣回答。

‘肥牯張、鐵拐李他們還沒有來，等一等他們吧，’弄着餐的陳老二插進說：‘今晚團年，橫豎鬼混過夜，何必這樣着急呢。’

那時，熨衫公司的主人，已經抽了一大堆的銀紙放在熨床，逐一發薪。



午膳，給衣僑，一九八二，高保廉攝

Lunch break at the shirt press, 1982. (Paul Calhoun, NYCHP Archives)

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"Let's add up the tags and get paid before the New Year's Eve dinner," the tired, balding owner yelled out as he ran to close the front door and turn off some lights which were no longer needed.

"Let's eat first and pay later," said a worker who was resting on a chair.

"Fat-Stooge Cheung and Limpo Lee aren't here yet. Let's wait for them," interrupted the cook, Ole Chan the Second. "Besides, it's the reunion dinner at New Year's Eve tonight. We'll all be goofing off tonight. No need to rush anything!"

At that moment, the owner of the shop put a bundle of cash on an ironing board and started to pay everyone.

"Hey, Jew-guy Wah, wanna deal a few hands before dinner?" the tall, middle-aged man suggested.

"Deal nothing. You wait for Fat-Stooge Cheung if you want to play." Jew-guy Wah answered as he counted his money.

"When Fat-Stooge Cheung comes, Limpo Lee will be here too. They'll probably play *paigow*. Well, are you going to the theater instead?"

"Nope. Not tonight. I always spend New Year's Eve in the hotel."

"Quiet down!" Ole Chan the Second interrupted. "Someone's knocking at the door. Go see who's out there."

"All right, I'll get the door," replied Jew-guy Wah. He opened the door. Limpo Lee and Fat-Stooge Cheung walked in cheerfully.

By the time everybody gathered around, it was exactly midnight. At the reunion dinner, they drank and toasted each other. "Happy New Year! May the New Year be much better! Cheers!"

"I'll drink to that! Cheers!"

(March 1, 1946)

## A Quick Sketch

Anonymous

One day, three men in military uniforms came in: a lieutenant and two sergeants. They sat at the table not too far away from my cashier counter. I could clearly hear what they were talking about; I observed their behavior.

As they sat down, a sergeant said loudly, "But I only got a quarter!"

The lieutenant was deep in thought. Casually he scratched his head and, in a moment of fancy, he asked them: "Well, what would you like?"

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‘趙鬼華，“拍莊”才食餐，好嗎？’那位高長壯年僑胞這樣問。

‘拍什麼，你等肥牯張來跟你“拍莊”吧。趙鬼華一面在數着自己的人工錢，一面這樣回答那位壯年僑胞。’

‘肥牯張來時，一定鐵拐李也來，那我們大約還要炒兩手牌九的。那末，你去看幾間戲院嗎？’

‘不，一間都不去，我年年都是在旅館裏過年的’。

‘不要嘈！’陳老二打住了他們的會話：‘外面有人敲門，快看是誰。’

‘是的，我來。’趙鬼華跑去開了門。鐵拐李偕肥牯張一道迎笑進來。

各人齊集，正交除夕十二時了！他們在大伙特伙的叙餐當中互相說着‘恭喜發財！今年好過舊年。’

飲啊！飲啊！……’

《華僑日報》一九四六年三月一日



Lower Mott Street, ca. 1940s.  
(NYCHP Archives)  
勿街，一九四〇年代，  
紐約華埠歷史研究社

## 生活速記

無名氏

一天，來了三個武裝客人，一個少尉，兩個軍曹，坐在離我收銀的櫃位不遠的桌子，他們的說話和動作，我看聽得清清楚楚。

他們剛剛坐下，一個軍曹嚷着：‘我袋裏只有一個“錢八”。’少尉卻在沉思，毫不經意地用手掃掃頭皮。突然，幻覺地微笑着對軍曹說：

‘你們要什麼？’

‘請先來三樽啤酒，跟着三盤雞炒麵。’

飲着，吃着，很快就杯盤狼藉，女侍上前問他們還要什麼。

‘再來兩樽啤酒。’

‘一杯咖啡。’

過了一刻，女侍送上一張清單，少尉望了一眼，手兒提了咖啡，慢慢兒一口一口呷着，好像在想什麼似的。那兩位軍曹，卻在沉默中，但也似乎有點躊躇不安。

約莫又過了一個鐘頭，客人漸漸少了，只有幾張桌子，還坐有三五個吃未完的。然而，那三個穿着戎裝的客人，看來已像有幾分坐不安穩的樣子。

忽然，一隻小蒼蠅從桌子上飛過，少尉偶爾靈機一動；一下子就把那隻小生命撲在手裏，偷偷地放在盤上，便像鬆了一口氣似的。

‘走吧！’

他執着那張清單，一面用手作勢地叫下轉第廿六頁

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"Let's have three bottles of beer and three orders of chicken chow mein."

They drank and ate, and in no time they consumed everything in sight. The waitress asked them what else they would like to order.

"Two more bottles of beer."

"And a cup of coffee."

Later, the waitress gave them the bill. The lieutenant glanced at it. He held the coffee, sipping slowly, as if he was in deep thought about something. During that moment of silence, the two sergeants became uncomfortable.

And hour passed. The dining crowd had thinned out. There were only a few customers at a couple of tables. The three customers in their military uniforms were not at ease sitting there.

Just then, a small fly buzzed by their table. The lieutenant suddenly was inspired. Instantly he cupped the tiny life into his hands. Without anyone noticing this, he put it on the plate. Relieved, he said, "Let's go."

He picked up the check and signaled me to go over to their table.

"Look! What's that? You want us to pay for that?" He pointed at the dead fly on the plate, accusingly.

"I'll get another order for you."

"No thanks. I'm full."

He gave me a silent glance. I nodded and said, "Lieutenant, it's on me. I don't mind working for free for half a day. I'll be delighted as long as you'll come back again."

The lieutenant seemed to be moved—moved by embarrassment. I watched them walk quietly out of the shop.

A few days later, the lieutenant returned. He came with a blonde. When he walked in, he glanced warmly at me and smiled. I nodded as I walked over to his table and asked warmly, "Lieutenant, what would you like?"

"Chicken chow mein."

Before he left, the lieutenant put a five-dollar bill on the counter and smiled, "Keep the change."

I nodded and thanked him. In return, I smiled and said warmly, "Please come again." ■

(June 15, 1945)

上接第廿五頁  
我行近前去。

‘看！這是什麼？要我們付錢？’少尉指著那隻躺在碟子上的小蒼蠅，裝腔作勢地說。

‘炒過一盤吧？’

‘不！我吃饱了。’

(.....)

他默然向我瞟了一眼。我會意，毫不遲疑地說：

‘少尉，我替你付這回的錢吧，白做半天工也不要緊的，只要你們下次再來，我便歡喜了！’

少尉似有點兒感觸——一陣怪難為情的感觸，我目送他默然地踱出了店門。

過天，少尉果然來了，還借着一位金髮女郎來；入門時，他微笑地向我瞟一眼，我會意，走到他跟前，對他一樣地溫和：

‘少尉，要什麼？’

‘我要鷄炒麵！’

臨走，少尉把一張五元鈔票，輕輕地放在櫃台上，依然微笑着，只說多一句：

‘多餘的收下吧！’

我會意，回了他一句多謝，還一樣地微笑而帶着溫和的態度：

‘請君再來！’ ■

(華僑日報)一九四五年六月十五日

As Su Geo Ben #7 is going to press we have learned of History Project's friend, Professor Paul Bock's 9 day fast outside the University of Connecticut-Storrs' student union protesting the administration's lack of responsiveness to Asian American concerns and campus racism.

A longtime professor of civil engineering and the son of a Baltimore laundry man, Bock's goal was to "send a message to the president and administration: We Asian Americans want to be treated as equals." Inspired by Hindu social activist Mahatma Gandhi, Bock only consumed water and juices. His fast ended on August 20th.

Our admiration and support is with you! ■

正在本期佈告板出版過程當中，我們得知了康州大學托爾斯分校白碧璇教授決食抗議該校對亞裔學生人權漠視的事件。

白碧璇在康州大學教水利學已久，他是一位巴的摩爾洗衣館工人的兒子。他舉行長達九天的決食抗議行動乃是要引起校方關注亞裔學生的人權平等。我們對他的抗議行為在此表示欽佩與支持。 ■

## Life's Whip

Huang Hun

Life's whip  
Without mercy, whipping.  
So many young men,  
Banished to the edge of the horizon,  
Drifting, toiling,  
Rushing about.

Wounded flesh and blood,  
Mixed sweat and tears,  
Poverty, loneliness,  
Monotony!  
I don't seem to gather enough courage;  
I can't finish this mountainous journey.  
Alas,  
This is a world without spring!

But  
To survive,  
One must work hard  
And shoulder  
The duty of this turbulent time.  
March forward!  
Gear up our very last strength,  
Let's remove the thorns blocking our  
future!  
Let's welcome  
The dawning of a warm spring.

(September 3, 1940)

## 生活的鞭子

黃魂

生活的鞭子，  
毫不留情地驅策着，  
多少年青人  
流落在天涯，  
飄零，勞碌，  
奔波！

血與肉的傷損，  
汗和淚的交流，  
貧窮，寂寞，  
枯燥！  
我好像沒有勇氣  
去走完這崎嶇的旅途，  
我不禁嘆息着，  
世界沒有了春天！

然而

爲了生存，  
就該苦幹，  
還要擔負起  
大時代的重任，  
努力向起！  
鼓起最後的潛力，  
去毀掉前途的荊棘巴！  
期待着  
一個柔和溫暖的春天。

《華僑日報》一九四〇年九月三日

廚房工友，一九八三，高保廉攝 Kitchen workers, 1983. (Paul Calhoun, NYCHIP Archives)

