

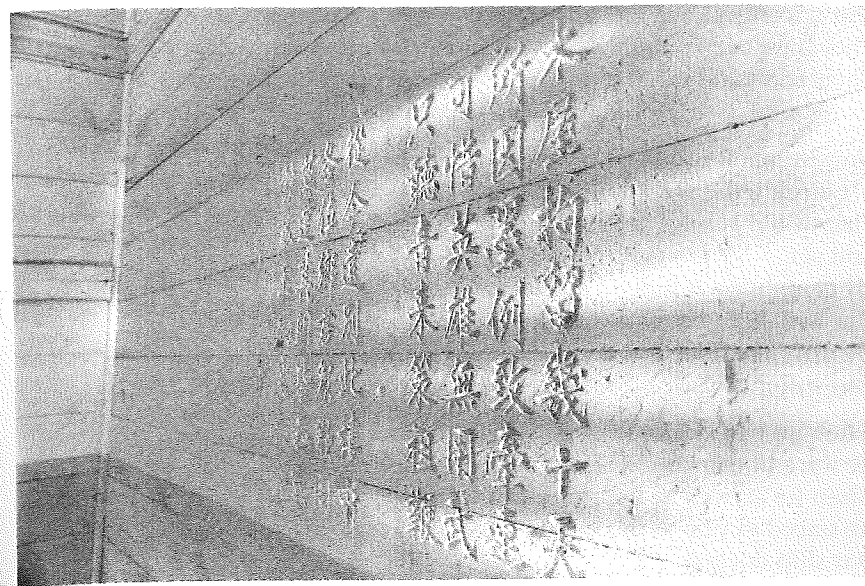
Detention in the Wooden Building (1910)

In 1910 a new immigration station was built at Angel Island in San Francisco Bay expressly to accommodate Chinese and other Asians immigrating to the United States. For the next thirty years, until a fire destroyed the station in 1940, approximately 175,000 Chinese immigrants passed through Angel Island, where they were singled out for long detentions and intense cross-examinations to prove their right to enter the country according to the Chinese Exclusion Act. A number of the Chinese detainees left poems that they wrote or carved into the barrack walls, recording their journey to America, their longing for families back home, and their outrage and humiliation at their mistreatment in the muk-uk (wooden building).

The following poem was not written on the barrack walls but sent by a Chinese detainee to the *Chinese World* newspaper,¹ where it was published on March 16, 1910. It is the earliest and longest extant poem expressing the Chinese response to their detainment at Angel Island. Similar to other poems that have been found at Angel Island, it was written in the classical style and rich with references to heroic figures who had overcome adversity. Reflecting the strong feelings of Chinese nationalism at the time, the newspaper exhorted its readers to help restore China's wealth and glory and thereby wipe out the humiliation suffered by the Chinese at Angel Island. Interestingly, fifteen lines that advocated the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and restoration of Han Chinese rule were deleted from the poem, most likely because the newspaper supported reform, rather than obliteration, of Qing rule.² A year later, the same poem in its entirety

1. The *Chinese World* newspaper was founded as the weekly *Mon Hing Boi* in 1891. It was given its English name, *Chinese World*, when the Baohuanghui, or Chinese Reform Party, gained control of the newspaper in 1899. It began publishing daily in 1901, and its Chinese name was changed to *Sai Gai Yat Po* in 1908.

2. The Manchus conquered China in 1644 and ruled as the Qing dynasty until they were overthrown by Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Party in 1911.



One of many Chinese poems still visible at Angel Island today. (Photo by Chris Huie)

appeared in the *Xinning Magazine*, which was intended for the emigrant community in Taishan District. According to the editor's note at the end of this version, the poem was published to arouse the sympathy and appreciation of the sons of overseas Chinese so that they would not squander their fathers' hard-earned money. There were also minor textual differences between the two versions. We have chosen to translate and reprint the *Xinning* version here.

My mind often recalls Su Wu who, in maintaining his unyielding
loyalty to the Han Dynasty, would rather endure the biting
snow in the freezing frontier,³
And the King of Yue who, in reminding himself to seek revenge
against the State of Wu, would sleep on firewood and lick the
bitter gall bladder.⁴

3. During the Western Han dynasty, Su Wu (140–60 B.C.) was sent by the Chinese government as envoy to the Xiongnu, a nomadic people north of the Chinese empire. Detained there for nineteen years, he refused to renounce his loyalty to the Han emperor.

4. Goujian was king of the state of Yue (in the present province of Zhejiang). In 494 B.C. he was ignominiously defeated by King Fucha's armies from the state of Wu. Two decades later, Yue recovered and returned to defeat Wu. During Yue's recovery period, it was alleged that King Goujian slept on firewood and tasted gall bladder in order not to forget the bitterness and humiliation of his defeat.

Our ancestors have met adversities;
They have overcome hardships;
Their trials and tribulations are duly recognized in the history
books.

Showing their might before the barbarians,
Calming the anxiety within themselves—
That would resolve my life-long yet unfilled ambitions.
And yet,

My generation is indeed unlucky;
Our lives have been most unfortunate.
We drift like tumbleweed in a foreign country;
And suffer the fate of detention as in Youli.⁵

When we bade farewell to our village home,
We were in tears because of survival's desperation.
When we arrived in the American territory,
We stared in vain at the vast ocean.

Our ship docked
And we were transferred to a solitary island.
Ten *li*⁶ from the city,

My feet stand on this lonely hill.
The *muk-uk* is three stories high,
Built as firmly as the Great Wall.
Room after room are but jails,
And the North Gate firmly locked.

Here—
Several hundreds of my countrymen are like fish caught in a net;
Half a thousand Yellow Race are like birds trapped in a mesh.
As we lift our heads and look afar,
The barbarian reed pipes all the more add to our anguish and
grief.

As we cock our ear and try to listen,
The horses' neighing further worsens our solitude and sorrow.

During the day, we endure a meal of crackers and cheese,
Just like Yan Hui eating rice and water;⁷

5. King Wen (ca. 12th century B.C.), founder of the Zhou state, was held captive at Youli because the last Shang king regarded him as a potential threat to his rule. His son, King Wu, later defeated the Shang and established the Zhou dynasty.

6. One *li* is approximately one-third of a mile.

7. Yan Hui (521-490 B.C.), the poorest of Confucius's disciples, ate very simply and yet was content.

At night, we wrap ourselves in a single blanket,
Just like Min Qian wearing clothes made of rush.⁸
We wash in the morning in salty tidal water;
We drink murky water to quench our thirst.⁹
In this newly open facility
Neither land nor water is in harmony with us.
Drinking the water makes many cough;
Eating the meal causes many to have sore throats.
A hundred ailments come about;
Our pain and sufferings are beyond words!

At times the barbarians would become angry with us,
They kick and punch us severely.
By chance, in their sudden cruel moment,
They would point their guns at us.
They scrutinize us like Prince Qin inspecting his soldiers;¹⁰
They trap us with schemes like Han Xin's multiple levels of
encirclement.¹¹

Brothers cannot share words, separated by faraway mountains;
Relatives cannot comfort each other, divided by the distant
horizon.¹²

Inside this room—

Neither Heaven nor Earth answers my cries.

Outside this prison

A hundred birds chirp in grief in the mournful woods.
A thousand animals run in fright among gloomy clouds
and mist.

This is indeed living with nature, amidst trees, rocks, deer, and
wild boars!

Alas! Heaven!
So desolate is this sight

8. Min Ziqian (536-487 B.C.), or Min Sun, a disciple of Confucius, was treated cruelly by his stepmother when he was young. She used to clothe him in rushes, which failed to keep out the winter cold.

9. At the time, the immigration station did not have any freshwater tanks. Drinking water came from a spring, which at one point contained traces of fecal contamination (letter from Acting Commissioner L. C. Steward to the Commissioner General of Immigration, December 19, 1910).

10. Li Shimin was a general before he became the second emperor of the Tang dynasty (A.D. 627-649).

11. Han Xin (d. 196 B.C.) was an important general who served the first emperor of the Han dynasty.

12. Chinese detainees were not allowed visitors for fear of collusion before the immigration interrogation.

It is disheartening indeed.
 Sorrow and hardship have led me to this place;
 What more can I say about life?
 Worse yet,
 A healthy person would become ill after repeated medical
 examinations;
 A private inspection would render a clothed person naked.
 Let me ask you, the barbarians:
 Why are you treating us in such extreme?
 I grieve for my fellow countrymen;
 There is really nothing we can do!

All the tall bamboo from Zhongnan Mountain cannot inscribe
 our words of frustration.¹³
 All the water in the Eastern Sea will not cleanse our sense of
 humiliation.
 Perhaps, we can be—
 Like Emperor Min of Jin who didn't reject the shame of wearing
 a blue garb and serving wine,¹⁴
 Like Li Ling who pounded his chest in agony for his Han army
 surrendering to the Huns.¹⁵
 Our ancestors have encountered such misfortune—
 Why does our present generation endure the same?
 In a moment of desperation,
 What more can one say?
 In waiting with concealed weapons for the right moment to
 arrive—
 It is nothing but pure fantasy.

Alas,
 Such tyranny of the White Race!
 Such tragedy of the Yellow Souls!
 Like a homeless dog forced into a confining cage,
 Like a trapped pig held in a bamboo cage,
 Our spirits are lost in this wintry prison;
 We are worse than horses and cattle.

13. This idea is taken from a proverb, which alludes to crimes so numerous they will not fit on slips made from all the bamboo in the Zhongnan Mountains. The ancient Chinese often wrote on bamboo slips.

14. In A.D. 316 Emperor Min of the Jin dynasty was captured by the Xiongnu and forced to perform such humiliating acts as serving wine to the victors.

15. Li Ling (d. 74 B.C.), a Han general, led an army of foot soldiers against the Xiongnu. After fighting against great odds, he was forced to surrender.

Our tears shed on an icy day,
 We are less than the birds and fowls.

In my exile to the ocean's end,
 I have found enjoyment in reading newspapers.
 It is said that
 My old country, my native soil—
 Split apart like pea pods
 Cut up like melons.
 I mourn that
 My motherland, my native culture—
 Swallowed by wolves,
 Digested by the tigers.

It is my wish:
 Someone like Chen She will drop the ploughs on the field,¹⁶
 Someone like Tian Heng will raise the righteous banner,¹⁷
 And pick up the weapons—
 Leveling the State of Qin,
 Wiping out the State of Wu.

Just take a look at China today:
 We the Han people must take over.
 Otherwise—
 We will be butchered;
 We will be enslaved;
 We will be subjugated.
 There is a difference between the true ruler and the imposter.¹⁸

How can we bear witness:
 Four hundred million Chinese people, again, enslaved by other
 nations?

16. Chen She (d. 208 B.C.) led the first large-scale peasant rebellion recorded in Chinese history, against the Qin imperial government in 209 B.C. His forces soon expanded from nine hundred to several tens of thousands as he proclaimed himself a royal sovereign. However, he was defeated by a Qin army and subsequently assassinated by his chariot driver, who chose to surrender to the foe.

17. Tian Heng (d. 202 B.C.) was a descendant of the nobility in the state of Qi that was absorbed into the Qin empire. Toward the end of the Qin dynasty, he and his cousin led many former soldiers of Qi in a revolt to reestablish the state of Qi. However, he was defeated by the Han and fled with five hundred followers to an island. Soon afterward, the Han emperor summoned him to Luoyang, where he killed himself. When his followers on the island heard the news, they all committed suicide.

18. This is a critique of the inept rule of the Qing government in power at the time.

Five thousand years of civilization, like in India, obliterated?¹⁹
 We feel grievous,
 How can we suppress our cries?

SOURCE: *Xinning Zuzhi* 28 (1911): 76-78. Translator: Marlon K. Hom.

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Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940* (San Francisco: HOC-DOI, 1980).

19. During this period when China was threatened by foreign powers, Chinese patriots often used India, which was then ruled by the British, as an example to alert their countrymen to the threat of foreign aggression against China's sovereignty.

Letter Asking for Support to Build the Sunning Railroad (1911)

Chin Gee Hee

In 1911, when the following letter was written to the Chinese Six Companies for help, Chin Gee Hee was halfway to completing a railroad line in Sunning, now Taishan District, that was to bring industrial and commercial prosperity to the region. It was a dream born and nurtured in Seattle, Washington, where Chin had become a successful businessman and labor contractor. A native of Taishan, home province of most Chinese who had immigrated to America, he had hoped that the Sunning railroad would facilitate transportation and trade within Taishan and eventually connect the region to the rest of China, Southeast Asia, and Europe.

Chin Gee Hee was born in Langmei Village in 1844. Although he came from a poor family, he found a way to emigrate to the United States as a young man. Settling in Port Gamble, Washington, he worked as a laborer, launderer, and cook at a lumber mill before moving in 1873 to Seattle, where he started the Quong Tuck Company, a general store that recruited laborers for the railroads. As a labor contractor and general agent for all the Pacific steamship companies, Chin took an active part in helping to develop the transportation system in Washington. Thus, he came to understand the importance of modern transportation to the development of China.

In 1904 Chin Gee Hee founded the Sunning Railroad Company with fellow Taishanese Yu Cheuk. The two men were successful in raising \$1.4 million by selling shares at \$2.50 each to overseas Chinese in North America, Australia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. He returned to Taishan to oversee construction of the railroad in 1906. Within three years, he managed to lay thirty-one miles of tracks, linking Doushan to Taishan City and Gongyi, at a cost of \$2.7 million. Needing another \$1.3 million to complete the second section from Gongyi to Jiangmen, he sent the following letter of appeal to the Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco.

Dear Sirs:

Our company is undertaking the construction of the Jiangmen extension of the Sunning Railroad. Survey work began during the eleventh lunar month



Chin Gee Hee at
work in Seattle,
Washington.
(University of
Washington
Libraries, Special
Collections,
A. Curtis 1281)

of last year. To date foundation has been laid up to Fenshuijiang, and, in another seven miles or so, we will reach the city of Xinhui. Tracks are currently laid up to Dawang City. The stretch from Gongyi to the Niuwan coast is already open to construction vehicles. The Xinhui City segment will probably be finished before the year is over or by next spring. As for the segment from Xinhui City to Jiangmen and Baishi, the plan is to begin survey and testing at the beginning of the seventh lunar month. The entire line will be completed around the Duanwu Festival [5th day of the 5th lunar month]¹ next year and open for trains.

However, the whole extension measures eighty to ninety miles, and up to

1. Also known as the Dragon Boat Festival, the day is rooted in fertility rites to ensure abundant rainfall in South China and is celebrated with dragon boat races and offerings of *zongzi* (rice wrapped in bamboo leaves) in honor of China's renowned poet and patriot Qu Yuan.

\$1.2 or \$1.3 million is needed. The stock offering this time, which began in the eighth lunar month last year, only netted slightly more than \$300,000, and that included out-of-town sales. The shortfall is quite large and our need for money is desperate. Previously when we sold shares to raise capital for the Sunning Railroad, we amassed over \$2 million in a few months. What is the reason for the earlier enthusiasm and the current apathy? I wonder if it is because the overseas Chinese are unfamiliar with China's way of conducting business and might have been deceived by false rumors, or been led astray by mischief makers, and, as a consequence, a lot of misgivings are keeping potential shareholders away.² That would indeed be most unfortunate. Yours truly, who is in charge of the project, has taken on a heavy responsibility, and, without the necessary capital, is like the proverbial good wife who cannot produce a meal for the lack of rice. Earlier this month I traveled to Hong Kong for a fundraising meeting. Fortunately, the various [Taishanese] business leaders stationed in or visiting Hong Kong, who understood what was at stake and who were interested in the public good, each offered a loan of \$5,000. In a few days we had pledges of over \$100,000. Once again construction materials could be purchased. This was a favorable development for the railroad project, for which I am eternally grateful. However, the money is really a loan, with an agreed-upon interest rate of 8 percent per month, to be repaid at the end of one year. Those who would like to convert their loans into shares can do so if they wish. Other ways of securing loans and soliciting contributions would invariably involve all kinds of complications. That is why this enthusiastic response by our Taishan compatriots is rare, like a piece of perfect jade. However, this is a stopgap measure and by no means perfect. We still need to intensify our efforts in getting enough shareholders to meet our goal of \$1.2 or \$1.3 million. Only then can we rest assured.

I am hereby forwarding to you the agreement reached in Hong Kong to be made available for public perusal, and to be sent to other associations. And I am including a serious plea to all you gentlemen to publicize in the newspapers the fundraising efforts for this present project to extend the Sunning Railroad to Jiangmen, in the hope that our overseas clansmen will be moved to come forward and help. Everyone knows the benefits the railroad will bring, and if we can clarify the misunderstandings so that everyone will work together, it will not be difficult to build a mountain from earth, and form a river from streams. Our problem lies in our lack of leadership to dis-

2. Rumors had been spreading among the local Taishanese that the railroad would harm the natural environment and the people's livelihood. In addition, Chin Gee Hee had been criticized for poor management and not keeping his word to rely only on Chinese capital to build the railroad. However, he had not anticipated the hefty bribes he had had to pay government officials for permission to build and run the railroad; as a result, he had been forced to borrow from foreign banks.

pel the existing misconceptions. My company has proposed that as soon as we raise \$4 million, the old shares from the Sunning Railroad included, we will stop issuing any more stocks. We hope that you gentlemen will do your best to help advance this project and persuade your clansmen to buy shares now so as to avoid disappointment when they are no longer available.

We wish you gentlemen at the Chinese Six Companies good health and success.

Your humble servant,

Chin Gee Hee

Tenth day of the sixth lunar month [1911]

After receiving Chin Gee Hee's letter, the Chinese Six Companies responded by encouraging overseas Chinese to invest in the Sunning Railroad. The railroad, totaling eighty-two miles and costing \$4.8 million, was completed in 1920. Although it did shorten traveling time and lowered shipping costs, it failed to bring prosperity to Taishan. Throughout the 1920s, the operation was plagued by bandits, unpredictable foreign markets, political wars, and extortion. In the end, Chin was unable to raise the necessary funds or political support to connect the Sunning Railroad to China's other railroad lines, and thereby realize his dream of transforming Taishan into a commercial center. Moreover, in 1926 the Nationalist regime in Guangzhou, using labor-management disputes in the company as a pretext, ousted Chin from the management and took over control of the railroad. The ousted Chin suffered a partial mental breakdown and died in his birthplace, Langmei Village, in 1929. A decade later, with the onset of war, the Chinese government ordered all local railroads, including the Sunning Railroad, be dismantled to stop the advancement of Japanese troops. It was never rebuilt, but in 1984, a statue of Chin Gee Hee was restored in the town square of Taishan City to commemorate a native son's loyalty and contribution to his homeland.

SOURCE: Liu Pei Chi, *Meiguo Huaqiao shi, xu bian* [A history of the Chinese in the United States of America, vol. 2] (Taipei: Liming Wenhua Shiye Gufen Youxian Gongsi, 1981), pp. 266-67. Translator: Ellen Yeung.

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Admission of Wives of American Citizens of Oriental Ancestry (1926)

Chinese-American Citizens' Alliance

In response to growing nativism and anti-Japanese agitation, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924. Also known as the National Origins Act, it was aimed at excluding "undesirable" immigrants, namely Southern and Eastern Europeans and all aliens ineligible for citizenship—a category that applied only to those of Asian descent. Thus Chinese alien wives of both U.S. citizens and merchants who had previously been admitted into the United States were deemed "undesirables." Not only were Chinese men having a hard time finding wives in America because of the skewed sex ratio and prohibitions against interracial marriages between Chinese and whites, but now those who already had wives in China would not be able to send for them.

Upset by this turn of events, the Chinese community challenged the new restrictions in court. On May 25, 1925, the Supreme Court ruled that Chinese alien wives and minor children of noncitizen Chinese merchants would be allowed into the country, whereas alien wives of American citizens would be excluded. This decision was particularly disturbing to the Chinese-American Citizens' Alliance (CACA), a fraternal organization that was established in 1895 to improve the sociopolitical status of the American-born Chinese. As CACA argued in the following pamphlet, all men, Chinese included, have the natural and legal right to the companionship of wives. Moreover, why should alien Chinese merchants have more rights than U.S. citizens of Chinese descent? Finally, CACA attempted to put to rest the question of assimilability of Chinese Americans by pointing to evidences of Americanization among their second-generation peers. As a result of CACA's efforts, Congress amended the law in June 1930 to permit the entry of Chinese alien wives of U.S. citizens, but only those who were married prior to May 6, 1924. It was not until after World War II, with the passage of the War Brides Act, that immigration of Chinese women increased; and not until the Immigration Act of 1965 put every nation on an equal par that sex parity among Chinese Americans was finally reached.

Hospital because of a stroke. On March 8, at three o'clock in the afternoon, she passed away peacefully, holding onto my hands. She was seventy-seven.

I had many sleepless nights after she passed away. In our fifty years together, it was my wife who constantly encouraged me to move up. Sometimes because of financial problems, I would become so frustrated that for no reason I would yell at her just to vent my frustration. She would take all that abuse with a smile. I remember one Saturday when I came home earlier than usual. When I entered the house, I saw her holding a duster, about to punish one of the children. When she saw me walk in, she stopped, turned to me with a smile, and fetched me my slippers instead. I felt so bad that she had to keep up with disciplining the children and with making me happy at home. But I have thought it over. Had I died before her, she would have had a more miserable time than I am having now. With that thought, I feel a bit more relieved and can close my eyes to sleep.

During the spring and autumn festivals, I get some flowers and go to the cemetery; I wipe her tombstone clean with a white handkerchief and talk to her: "Wait for me, I am coming. We will be together again in our next life."

SOURCE: Gong Yuen Tim, "A Gold Mountain Man's Memoir," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1992, pp. 211-37. Translator: Marlon K. Hom.

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"I was the only Chinese woman in town"

Reminiscences of a Gold Mountain Woman (1982)

Helen Hong Wong

The voices of Gold Mountain women are finally entering the public record. Judy Yung met and interviewed Helen Hong Wong in 1982 while researching the history of Chinese women in America. A petite and spry woman of seventy-four years, Wong immigrated to the United States as a merchant's wife in 1928. During the interview she spoke quite openly about her detention experience at Angel Island, her hardworking life in the Midwest, where she was often the only Chinese woman in town, and her struggles raising a family of four children during the depression years. Although she never realized her Gold Mountain dream of a life of wealth and leisure, she nevertheless found fulfillment in her work, family, and community. Wong made her home in Chicago, where she passed away in 2001 at the age of ninety-one. Her story is one of the few first-person accounts we have of life in the Midwest, where Chinese immigrants such as her husband went to start small businesses in the 1920s.

A HARD LIFE IN CHINA

I was born in Hom Gong Village in Sunwui District [in 1909]. My *goong* [grandfather] and father owned a hemp business in the nearby town of Nam How. The Chans and the Lums were feuding and we were caught in the middle. As a result, our house was burnt down in a fire and we had to run to *jo poh's* [grandmother's] home in Ngui Hoi. We didn't have much money. Just put some bedding and clothes in some large baskets—the kind with handles that you pull rope through to carry things—and had some hired hands help us carry them to *jo poh's*. I was only eight months old and my brother was four.

After four years of hiding there, we went to Gong Moon [a seaport] to live. Then when I was seven we moved to Hong Kong. We had a hard life then. There was no work for women or children. My father worked at a fur-



Helen Hong Wong in
Hong Kong, 1928.
(Courtesy of Helen
Hong Wong)

niture store. He only made a few dollars a day, so we could only afford to rent one room for the four of us—my father, mother, brother, and me. Then came my baby sister, so I had to help my mother wash clothes, cook meals, and carry the baby. My brother got to go to school and he eventually became a carpenter at sixteen. They were just starting to educate girls, but my mother wouldn't let me go to school. There was no time and no money. If there was any money, we would have bought some *mui nui* [slavegirls] to help us out. After dinner, we would make rattan chairs. Since my mother had bound feet and couldn't go out, I had to do all the shopping as well. So there was no time to play, hardly any time to sleep.

I lived in Hong Kong from seven years old until I got married and left for America. It wasn't an arranged marriage or a modem marriage. A friend of my old man [husband] introduced us. My father knew this friend. He was a

gamsaanhaak [Gold Mountain man] and had a restaurant business in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He sold it to a cousin for \$20,000 and returned to China. But he spent a lot of money coming back. Bought a house in Hong Kong for a few thousand Hong Kong dollars. Got sick and had to pay medical bills. Spent all his money. Then they needed him to go back to help with the failing restaurant business, so we left soon after we were married.¹

DETAINED AT ANGEL ISLAND

Where we lived in Hong Kong we could see the harbor where many of the big ships docked. Every time we heard the tooting of the ship, we would watch all the *gamsaanpoh* [Gold Mountain women] get off the ship, wearing all their jewelry and followed by their *mui nui*. We would dream about going to Gold Mountain. So when I had the chance to make the trip, I was overjoyed.

We [she and her husband] came together on the ship. It took twenty-one days. I wasn't seasick at all. Ate six meals a day—breakfast in our room at six, a second breakfast in the dining room at eight, lunch at twelve, tea at three, dinner at six, and evening snack at nine. It was a Japanese ship. We had second-class tickets, so we were allowed to go on deck. There were many Chinese but most were in steerage.

When we got to San Francisco, they were originally going to interrogate us on the ship. But it was a Saturday, so we had to go to Angel Island.² He [husband] stayed in the men's barracks with his friend's son while I stayed in the women's barracks. Both he and the boy answered wrong. They were very strict then and we had not prepared for the interrogation.³ They asked all kinds of questions, about the type of stove we used in the village, how many tiles on the floor, even how many steps in the stairs. I had lived in Hong Kong all those years and didn't remember anything about the village. They asked where you lived, where is the kitchen, and your lineage going back generations. How could anyone remember all that?

I answered wrong and they would not let me land. So we had to appeal the case. I was stuck there from the beginning of October to the beginning of January the next year. I still remember the Jesus woman⁴ bringing us each

1. According to her daughter, Nellie Leong, there was a big age difference. Helen Hong Wong was eighteen, while her husband was in his fifties.

2. Between 1910 and 1940 newly arrived Chinese immigrants were processed at the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay, where they were locked up for weeks and sometimes months and subjected to intense cross-examinations to prove their right to enter the country.

3. In anticipation of the interrogation, most Chinese immigrants memorized coaching books that had been sent to them by relatives in America. The books provided questions and answers about one's family background that immigration inspectors might ask.

4. Deaconess Katharine Maurer (1881–1962) was appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1912 to administer to the needs of immigrants at Angel Island.

a parcel at Christmas: cloth, toothbrush, towel, and other toiletries. There was a woman from Heungshan [District] who had to stay here for three years with her son and daughter. Her husband made the mistake of mentioning his first wife's name. When she saw the Christmas tree again, she said she had seen it three times. Three times, can you imagine that?⁵

The women's barracks was one big room with three tiers of beds. We only used the bottom two tiers. Young children generally stayed with the mothers and slept in the bottom bed. Everyone got along. There were people from Sunwui, Heungshan, Sunning [Districts]. There were very few women then, but there was always someone coming or going.⁶ Every ship always had a few that failed the interrogation. We weren't allowed visitors. Couldn't talk to anyone or receive any mail or packages directly. They were afraid of coaching notes being sneaked in. Every time we went to the big dining hall to eat, a foreign woman would stand by the door to watch, afraid that the [Chinese] kitchen staff might sneak you coaching notes. The kitchen staff was known to hide coaching notes under the plates of food. If you weren't caught, you would take the note upstairs and read it in the bathroom. Then you would light a match, burn it, and flush it away. I never received any coaching notes, but I saw others.

[About the food,] there was a long table with two dishes of food, one at each end of the table. Do you know what it was? Pork steamed with *gum jum* [a vegetable] in a basin. Or bok choy and pork in soup. People could add their own dishes. Fried ham and eggs cost twenty-five cents. Or your friends might send some canned fish or food down [from San Francisco].

We could stay in the breezeway [sitting area adjacent to the sleeping area]. The younger ones could play ball outside. We really couldn't go anywhere. Besides, we had to be available in case they phoned to call us to go downstairs for the interrogation. The Jesus woman was willing to go shopping for us. I had her buy me some material so I could do some sewing by hand. Time passed quickly. We had our meals every day. Then we would watch the people play outside. We just had to wait to hear when we would be landed.

[About the poems on the walls,] not many. But people said the person who wrote one of the poems in the bathroom committed suicide.⁷ What did we know? At that time, only one out of ten knew how to read. There were always people arriving and leaving. Those who answered right could go to

5. The average stay for Chinese immigrants at Angel Island was two to three weeks. Those who failed the interrogation and chose to appeal their cases through administrative channels in Washington, D.C., usually had to stay locked up at Angel Island for another three or four months. For those whose cases went through the court system, their stays could be prolonged up to two years.

6. There were anywhere between 200 and 300 Chinese men and 30 to 50 Chinese women at Angel Island at any one time.

7. To vent their frustrations and express their feelings of loneliness, anger, and humiliation, Chinese immigrants wrote poetry on the barrack walls. Unfortunately, the administration

the city; those who answered wrong couldn't. Some stayed years, like the woman who said she had seen the Christmas tree three times. During the time we were there, there was a woman who got deported. That was considered very sad because so much money had already been spent.

After Helen Hong Wong was allowed to land, she stayed with her husband in San Francisco for one week at a cousin's home. Then they took a train to Chicago, stayed there for one week, and went to live in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

LIFE DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

When you heard people talk in China, you wanted to come. But when you actually arrived, you usually wouldn't like it. There were very few Chinese women in Fort Wayne then. Just a few dozen Chinese in town, two restaurants and two laundries run by bachelors. I was the only Chinese woman. Even in [Chicago] Chinatown, when we lived at this hotel above the Universal Restaurant for a week, I would look out and never see a Chinese woman walk by. No one for me to socialize with, I felt lonely.

We lived upstairs above the restaurant and I would come down to help. Peeled potatoes, cut vegetables, washed the rice, helped with the dishes, everything. I was young then and didn't feel it was hard work. When I had free time I took my daughter [Lilly], who was a little over a year old, with me and went browsing in the dime store. No one bothered me. Fort Wayne had an open marketplace on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. So at night, I would go there and walk around. When I had the second daughter, Nellie, I didn't go out as much.

When we first arrived, the restaurant business wasn't bad. We made \$200 during lunch time. But come 1930 it was difficult. People had no jobs and no income. Then we made only \$2 during lunch time. The department store business was slow too. In 1932 we closed the restaurant because we couldn't pay the rent.

We moved to Chicago for a year. We had nothing to eat. The government was giving out corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, and bread to needy families, but my old man was afraid to go stand in line. Instead, he borrowed money from gamblers in Chinatown. Rice only cost 80 cents for one hundred pounds.

We rented a flat with six rooms for \$19. But there was no electricity, even when my son [William] was born, because we couldn't pay for it. During the winter the windows were all frosty and we closed all the doors and stayed in

building where the women were housed was destroyed in a fire in 1940, so no records remain of women's poetry. There are also very few documented cases of suicide, but many of the detainees remember hearing stories of suicide.



Helen Hong Wong
after her arrival in Fort
Wayne, Indiana, 1930.
(Courtesy of Helen
Hong Wong)

one room. Wrapped the two girls with blankets. We could only afford one bushel of coal for the week, which cost 90 cents. It got to be 40 degrees in the house.

No one in Chinatown had any money, just a quarter or a half dollar in their pockets, no dollar bills. A year later, a friend opened a laundry and we moved to Anderson, Indiana, to work for him. That's how we got into the laundry business.

THE LAUNDRY BUSINESS

We lived above the laundry in two rooms. [Their fourth child, Betsy, was born in Anderson.] I helped out with the wash, pressing, and ironing. It was hard work, long hours. We did everything ourselves. We hardly slept. There was no time for anything else. We worked Monday through Saturday, even Sun-

day if we didn't finish on time. Or I would clean house on Sunday. We did this for four years. Then the nephew came from Hong Kong and caused trouble. So we left and went to Kokomo, Indiana, to open our own laundry.

Kokomo was a small town about one and a half hours away. We lived on the premises again. Business was so-so. We started making \$20 a week and that grew to a \$100 a week. It was still hard work from morning to night, washing and ironing four hundred shirts a week. If we got behind, no Sunday off, nor time to sleep. I helped at the front when someone came to pick up laundry. Even though I couldn't read, I knew how to find the package by number. There was no time for anything else, only time to go get my hair cut. Again, we did this for four years. It was always four or five years and we would move again. Then their father died. It was wartime and there was no one available to hire. I couldn't do it alone, so I moved to Chicago, where I had friends.

WORKING AT A COOKIE FACTORY

I found a job working for relatives at the Dong Kee Bakery. Only made \$20 a month working over ten hours a day. After work, I had to do all the cooking and housework, but the kids helped out. Stayed there about three years, from 1944 to 1947. It wasn't a better or a worse job, just a matter of having enough to eat and a place to live. There wasn't anything to put in the bank. I wanted to send money to my brothers in Hong Kong, but I couldn't.

I left the bakery to go work for Nabisco cookies, folding boxes, packing cookies. My Italian landlady's daughter found the job for me. I was the second Chinese to be hired. Everyone was good to me, called me Mama, Mama. They asked me why I never complained to the union. There really was no reason to. I took the bus to the west side at 5:10 A.M. in the winter; 5:30 A.M. in the summer. I had to take three buses. Worked until 3:15 P.M. The hours were better. It was only 75 cents an hour when I started, but the foreigners [white employers] always have better working conditions—raises, insurance, vacation benefits. But by the time I got home and had dinner, I was tired and went straight to bed. Besides, there really wasn't much going on then. Not like now. I retired in 1977.

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE IN AMERICA

There are advantages to being a woman in America. There were hardly any jobs for women in China and it was considered a loss of face if girls went to work. Now, [Chicago] Chinatown has more people, businesses, and activities. The churches have English classes and job training. Women who come from China today can find a job within a month or two even if they don't speak English. The sewing factory, shoe factory, bobby pin factory will hire them, although they pay Chinese less than the other workers.

Women have more rights in America. They can run the household, not like in China where the mother-in-law dictates. Even when the husband sent money home, the mother-in-law kept it. But I must admit that my Gold Mountain dream was not fulfilled. Instead of becoming a rich *gamsaanpoh*, I ended up working like a slave. When I came in 1928, things were cheap. String beans were 2 cents a pound; pork chops were 25 cents for three pounds. But no one had any money to spend and there was no food in the house. We didn't know any better at the time, only that we saw these *gamsaanpoh* with all this jewelry, fine clothes, and *mui nui*. So we assumed life was easy in Gold Mountain. But there was no gold to be picked up. Instead, we all had to work hard.

SOURCE: Helen Hong Wong, interview with Judy Yung in Chinese, Chinese Women of America Research Project, June 17, 1982, San Mateo, California.

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Second-Generation Dilemmas (1930s)

Pardee Lowe

George Cooper Pardee Lowe, born in 1904 in San Francisco, was named after the governor of California at the time. He has the distinction of being the first Chinese American to write a full-length book, *Father and Glorious Descendant* (Little, Brown, 1937). The autobiography introduced readers to Chinese American life by telling the story of the author's relationship with his father, whom he loved and respected. Good-humored in tone, the book nevertheless firmly criticized racial prejudice in America and recalled critical moments of anti-Chinese discrimination in this country. *Father and Glorious Descendant* was a commercial success and went through several editions. Lowe's work was also published in major publications, including *Asia*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Survey Graphic*, and *Yale Review*.

Pardee Lowe had prepared well for his writing efforts. He graduated from Stanford in 1930, where he studied Chinese, English, history, and public speaking. He was a star member of the university debating club and completed a thesis on the history of anti-Chinese prejudice in the United States. After graduation, he went to Harvard, where he received an MBA in 1932. He also had many friends among college-educated Chinese Americans and was personally familiar with the Chinese communities because of the family business and his own church activities.

After finding that his MBA opened no doors, Lowe returned to San Francisco and began to conduct extensive sociological research on the Chinese community, completing a major study of its demographic, economic, social, historical, and cultural features. His efforts included extended personal interviews and firsthand reports of living conditions. He completed much of this work for the State Emergency Relief Administration, but his efforts were never published. He apparently hoped to include his work in a later collaboration with a Stanford sociologist, but it too never materialized.

The following "case histories," as he called them, are a few of the fascinating human-interest accounts Lowe completed as part of his research efforts. They offer poignant insight into depression-era Chinese American lives. Lowe's own candid personal com-

Chinese Women's Association Condensed Report for the Years 1932-1936

The Japanese attack on China drew women from all walks of life into the public arena to do their part for the war effort. Soon after Japan occupied Manchuria in 1931, women's organizations formed across the country—in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Seattle, and Portland—to do fundraising, propaganda, and Red Cross work. One of the earliest and most effective groups was the Chinese Women's Association (CWA) in New York. As early as October 14, 1931, it fired off letters to newspaper editors who had been advocating that the United States stay out of the war in China. Calling this stance "immoral" and "cowardly" in view of Japanese war atrocities in China, the women argued that the United States should uphold its earlier pledge to help settle all international disputes by peaceful means. The organization was successful in mobilizing Chinese women in New York to raise over \$30,000 for the relief of war refugees within a year's time.

As this rare report of Chinese women's activities indicates, CWA also played a major role in helping immigrant women and their daughters adapt to life in America, promoting better relations between Chinese Americans and the larger society, and providing social services to the Chinese community in New York City. The modern, middle-class aspirations of the group reflected the background of its leaders. Theodora Chan Wang, the chairwoman who wrote this report, held a master's degree from Columbia University and had served as the general secretary of the Chinatown YWCA for ten years prior to founding CWA. Moreover, the stated purposes and activities of the organization speak to the changing gender role and increased political activism among Chinese women in America that were inspired by the war and the times.

The record of this Association's steady increase in membership to over 350 together with its great activities during the last five years speaks for itself. For the sake of clarity, I wish to divide this report into three parts: (I) The purpose, (II) The activities and (III) The future plans of this Association.

PART I—THE PURPOSE

New York Chinatown, with a population of almost 10,000, is the second largest Chinese community center in the U.S.A. With a Chinese population of about 16,000, San Francisco already can claim to have two organizations for Chinese women. But here in New York, at the time when this Association was formed, there was not even a single club room being provided for Chinese women. When the Gen. Sec'y of Chinese Y.W.C.A. in San Francisco sent me a beautifully engraved invitation card announcing the grand opening of its new 6-story "Y" building with its spacious auditorium, dormitories, gymnasium and swimming pool,¹ I immediately sent her the following telegram, "HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES ON THE GRAND OPENING OF YOUR NEW BUILDING." It was such a beautiful women's club building located at 965 Clay St., San Francisco, Calif., that it was no wonder they felt very proud of their new headquarters.

According to the law of supply and demand, surely there must be some good reason for a beautiful building like that to come into existence. In order to prove my point, I will take New York Chinatown as a concrete example. We have here, as I mentioned above, a total Chinese population of almost 10,000. But, due to the U.S. Immigration restrictions, out of this total, we have here only about 250 Chinese families—with an average of about four children in each family. You will thus notice that the male and female ratios amongst the Chinese are all out of proportion. Then again, due to a peculiar trait of the Chinese race as a whole, they do not mingle with people of other nationalities as readily as they should. Furthermore, as we all know, the figure on illiteracy among the overseas Chinese is rather high. According to a statement issued recently by the Chinese National Association of the Mass Education Movement, the percentage of illiterates was over 85 percent. For these and various other reasons, the Chinese are somewhat forced to live closely by one another, and to try to be self-sufficient unto themselves. With most of our elder residents in Chinatown, although they are living right in the heart of this great metropolis, yet they know so very little about American home life and its higher standard of living that they might as well be still living in a village back in China.

Although we have here quite a few men's clubs, societies, etc., nevertheless, there is in the whole of Chinatown not one social organization for Chinese women and their children. The elder people, being used to suffer solitude, may be content to remain at home most of the time. But with the young people of the second generation, they positively refuse to tolerate such con-

1. The new Chinese YWCA building in San Francisco, designed by Julia Morgan and built with funds from the local YWCA and Chinese community, did not have a swimming pool, but the girls were allowed to use the swimming pool at the Chinese YMCA.

ditions any longer. Yet, due to a lack of social and club facilities in Chinatown, the boys can only amuse themselves with an occasional picture show or else they will patronize undesirable pool rooms. As for the girls, the only diversion they can have outside of dish washing, house cleaning and other family drudgeries, is for them to follow the boys to movies. As a consequence, they oftentimes fall into bad company. To safeguard these youngsters' moral as well as their physical well-being, and at the same time, to improve their mothers' standard of living, is what this Association has been laboring so hard to accomplish. In the club room of this Association, the Chinese mothers and these young persons of the second generation are provided with a place where they may exercise, amuse or try to improve themselves socially, mentally, spiritually and physically—and under wholesome conditions.

In brief, the particular purposes for which this Association is formed are as follows:

- (a) TO PROMOTE, CREATE AND MAINTAIN SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP AND COMPANIONSHIP AMONGST THE OVERSEAS CHINESE WOMEN AND THEIR FRIENDS;
- (b) TO PROMOTE, STIMULATE, CREATE AND MAINTAIN BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHINESE AND THEIR CUSTOMS, HISTORY AND PROBLEMS, AND TO THAT END TO PROVIDE A PLACE OF MEETING AND ENTERTAINMENT;
- (c) TO ARRANGE AND CONTRACT FOR OUTINGS, PICNICS AND EXCURSIONS FOR THE MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS;
- (d) TO PROMOTE CLOSE COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING AMONGST ITS MEMBERS AND THOSE OF SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS;
- (e) TO RENDER PRACTICAL SERVICES TOWARDS THE WELFARE OF CHINA AND THAT OF THE OVERSEAS CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

PART II—THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

A. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:

1. On Sept. 1st, 1934, at Port Arthur Restaurant, 7 Mott St., New York City, an elaborate testimonial dinner was given by members of this Association in honor of our greatest modern hero, General Tsai Ting-kai. Gen. Tsai, as is well known, was the commander of that famous 19th Route Army, who so successfully repulsed the Japanese from Shanghai in 1932.

There were present at our welcome banquet more than 200 of our members and friends, who seemed to represent the whole female Chinese community here in the East. Gen. Tsai was ushered in by Mrs. Chun Doshim, Chairman of the Reception Committee. He made such

a rousing speech, which was full of meaning and inspiration, that all those present seemed to be deeply touched. In consideration of the huge crowd waiting patiently outside, his address had to be broadcast by loud-speakers installed on Pell and Mott Streets. He was accompanied on this occasion by his secretary, C. S. Mark, Esq., and General Tom Kai Shau, who so bravely defended the Woo Sung ports during the combined Japanese Army and Navy attack. . . .

Upon his arrival in the city from Europe aboard S.S. "Olympic," Gen. Tsai was met down the bay by a delegation from this Association in the company of that of the seven largest local Chinese organizations. Three planes flown by members of the Chinese Aviation Association also went along to circle around his ship at quarantine in his honor.

At the West 14th St. Pier, there were thousands of residents from local Chinese communities together with more than two hundred automobiles bearing reception committees waiting there to greet our "Saviour of Shanghai." With a motorcycle police escort, we finally managed to reach Mott Street, where a crowd estimated at between 7,000 to 8,000 people gave him another rousing reception. The streets were so crowded that all automobile traffic, with the exception of cars carrying the reception committees, was kept off Chinatown.

2. Another Reception Committee was sent only recently to welcome Dr. C. T. Wang, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, upon his arrival in this city on June 13th, 1936. Due to the fact that this Association is the only Chinese women's organization in existence here in New York, we have often been called upon to participate in all receptions of importance. Ever since we succeeded in raising that record sum of \$30,000 during the year 1932 for the relief of Chinese war and flood refugees, the importance of this Association has grown considerably, and its name is known far and wide.
3. In order to make the mothers and their children feel more at home, many kinds of indoor games have been introduced in our clubrooms. They all seem to enjoy the games very much. At times, we also have on hand high school girls reading to them aloud the current events of China.
4. Your Association has been acting as hostess to club members of many other nationalities, such as Italian, Greek, Russian, etc. Large delegations from out of town have also come to visit us from time to time.
5. Arrangements have often been made for our members to visit, as guests and in small groups, some of those refined American and Chinese homes. In this way, many of our members get their first glimpse of a real American home life. As a result of these visits, classes have been formed for them to study table manners, interior decoration, etc.
6. The Chinese Mothers' Club celebrated its 16th Anniversary last year

on April 11th. Among those present were many American friends and other celebrities.

7. During the last few years, our Girls Boxing Teams were frequently being called upon by American clubs to give sword and shadow boxing exhibitions. From the many letters of thanks which we have since received, we are pleased to learn that our friends always seem to enjoy seeing this, our national art of defense.
8. Our last Double-Tenth Anniversary Party was quite a picturesque affair. There were present more than 100 mothers together with their children. Members from our "Girls Dramatic Club" presented a charming play in costume.

B. INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Being a member of the Chinese National Association of Mass Education, this Association was fortunate in securing the service of several volunteer leaders to teach some of our elders simplified Chinese characters. It is hoped that some day there will be less illiterate mothers left in our community.
2. During the last few years, frequent sightseeing trips were made by club members to visit different museums, art centers, expositions, telephone exchanges, great industrial factories, etc. These trips have always proved to be very popular and educational.
3. Reading Clubs have been formed by several groups. Members often bring their own books, magazines, etc. to serve as reading and discussion material.
4. Several religious and semi-religious institutions have invited members of our different clubs to hear lectures and to review their educational and artistic exhibits held in their auditoriums. We shall always welcome such invitations from other institutions.
5. Public relationship departments of two industrial concerns were kind enough to have several short and informative motion pictures shown, free of charge, to our members. We shall always appreciate such courtesies.

C. SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES:

Introducing those who wish to join churches, Sunday schools, etc. without discrimination as to denomination. Being free from all rivalry and partiality in our recommendation, this Association is in an admirable position to act as a "Central Religious Clearing House."

D. PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES:

1. One fine day last summer, a group of our younger members drove out to Port Washington for deep sea fishing. Although their catch was not

very big, still they all managed to have a wonderful time. Through the kindness and generosity of friends of this Association, both the motor boat and the automobile were placed at our members' disposal free. Hiking, picnicing and camping in different parts of the country also have been indulged in by our members from time to time.

2. Due to lack of space and facilities, we have not much opportunity for outdoor sports. Our younger members have been wanting for some time to form a C.W.A. Basket-Ball Team and a Tennis Team so that one day they may be in a position to compete with other teams. If the service of competent instructors can be secured, we feel confident that strong teams can result from the materials we have on hand. The young ladies are also very fond of swimming, dancing, etc.

E. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES:

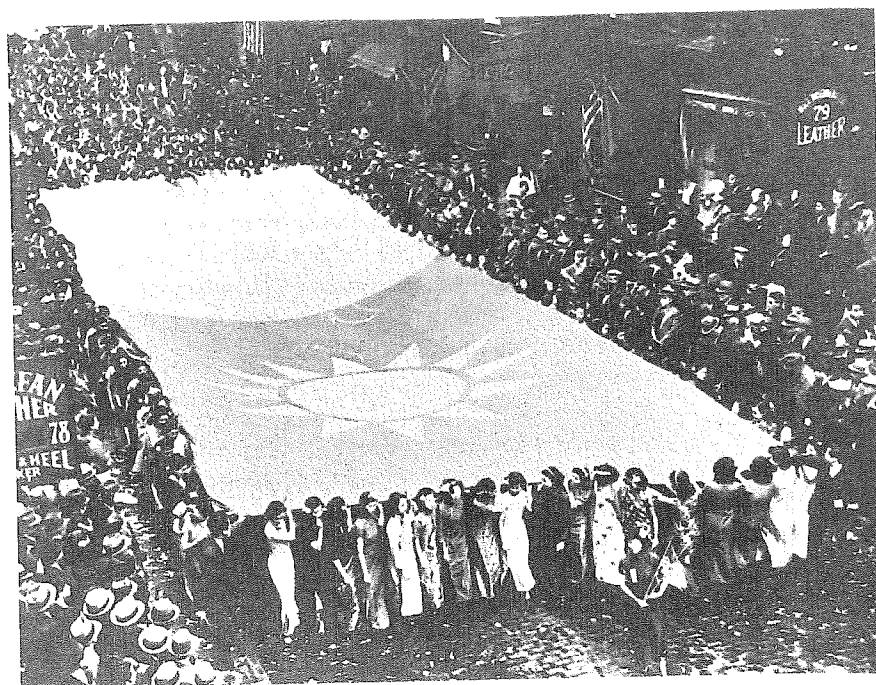
During this prolonged depression, there has been much destitution in New York Chinatown. This Association has been trying to do its duty in cooperating with other charitable organizations in the distribution of food tickets. At the present writing, we still give out entirely free about one hundred food tickets every week. From time to time, our members also sell flowers and give boxing exhibitions towards the relief of suffering from hunger and cold. Other similar works are: visiting Chinese patients in hospitals, interpreting for members unacquainted with the language of their country, helping to solve unemployment problems and to adjust immigration, housing and renting troubles, etc.

F. PATRIOTIC ACTIVITIES:

Whatever may be the world's pronouncement on Japan's aggression against peace-loving China, humanity cannot regard its wanton bombing and killing of Chinese civilians—men, women and children—without feeling a sense of horror and repugnance.

Doubtlessly, you have often read in your newspapers and magazines of such atrocities and massacres committed by the Japanese militarists in China. Generally, a squadron of Japanese bombing planes suddenly appears in the air, skimming over a village, town or city, and without the least bit of warning, showers bombs on its inhabitants. At first, the American press reported such cases in some detail; as these cases of shameful wasting of human lives occurred regularly, they have since ceased to be interesting topics for news columns. But we Chinese, who read in almost every mail from our people in China of these outrages, naturally resent such barbarous actions in our innermost hearts.

During the last few months, the zone of this "unofficial" war has widened considerably—farther southwest and westward. Consequently, more and more war refugees have fled from their homes located both



Chinese women participating in a parade in New York City to raise money (thrown into the Chinese flag) for war relief in China. (Courtesy of Museum of Chinese in the Americas)

within and without these bombarded zones. To a great extent, all such refugees have been taken care of by charitable and philanthropic organizations in China. However, the combined resources of these institutions did not prove adequate to cope with this dreadful situation. That they have not been adequate may be testified to by the many urgent cable appeals addressed to this Association as well as to many other Chinese organizations throughout the world.

To raise funds to meet these urgent appeals, members of this Association held on Feb. 28th, 1932, a dragon parade and street dances in which our symbolic lion was made to appear several times. Due to the spontaneous and generous response on the part of our compatriots as well as of American sympathizers, we succeeded in raising the record sum of \$7,694.46 in one day. With this sum in hand, we immediately transferred by telegraph \$31,000 in Shanghai local currency to the Shanghai Consolidated Benevolent Association and Shanghai Emergency Hospital for the relief of the wounded and maimed war refugees.

Because of further urgent appeals from China and entreaty from the seven most influential local Chinese organizations, this Association decided to hold a GRAND CHARITY BAZAAR for the relief of China's war refugees. Thanks to the generosity of our Elders, we were allowed free use and access of the entire 3-story Chinese Public School Building for this occasion from Mar. 27th to April 3rd, 1932, inclusive. The main features of the Bazaar included exhibitions of articles of Chinese arts, paintings and crafts. For its stage program, there were Chinese Opera given by our "Girls Dramatic Club" members, fencing and shadow boxing, dramas and plays as well as numerous other entertainments. There were, of course, the usual dragon parades and street dances with our mythological lion always at the head of each parade. . . . During this Bazaar, thanks to the wholehearted cooperation from all conceivable Chinese Associations, Tongs, Clubs, Leagues, Societies and many American organizations, we succeeded in raising a grand total of U.S. \$19,189.33. As soon as the receipts were audited, in the solemn presence of both our governmental and local representatives, several cable transfers of a total of \$75,486 in Shanghai currency were rushed to those trustworthy representatives in China above mentioned for relief works.

Encouraged by previous success in our money-raising abilities and for such a worthy cause as flood relief, we once again inaugurated a Financial Campaign from April 15th to 23rd, 1933, inclusive, for funds towards the relief of China flood refugees. We raised during that week a total of \$3,804.76, equivalent to \$10,000 in Shanghai currency.

A recapitulation of funds raised by this Association on the three occasions mentioned above follows:

DATE	OCCASION	U.S. DOLLARS AND/ OR SHANGHAI DOLLARS	
2/28/32	Dragon Parade	\$ 7,694.46	\$ 31,000.00
3/27-4/3/32	Grand Charity Bazaar	19,189.33	75,486.00
4/15-4/23/33	Financial Campaign	3,804.76	16,000.00

Grand total \$30,688.55 and/or \$122,486.00

PART III—OUR FUTURE PLANS AND ASPIRATIONS

A. FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE:

From the above, it will be noted that in order for this Association to properly carry on the activities enumerated, it will need the wholehearted support and cooperation of every one of our members as well

as of our friends. Unless these are assured, a great many worthy causes, no matter how urgent their appeal may be, would inevitably have to be neglected or sacrificed due to lack of assistance, means and facilities. Furthermore, we are constantly in need of all kinds of club leaders, and volunteer instructors in arts and crafts. We sincerely hope that we may continue to merit your support.

B. FOR THE NEAR FUTURE:

I hope I have succeeded in a small measure to prove to your satisfaction that there really is need for such an organization as the Chinese Women's Association working on behalf of the Chinese Community in New York City. Since it was organized five years ago, through the generosity of our Elders, we have been allowed to make our headquarters in the Annex Building of the Chinese Public School. In order for us to expand in the not too distant future, we will want to have an association building of our own somewhat similar to the ones which San Francisco Chinatown already possess. In regard to this tentative plan, which I have had in mind for a long time, I had since had several occasions to discuss the same with a few of our influential and patriotic Elders. They all agreed with me that we should have a 5-story Association Building of our own containing:

- (a) One dormitory large enough to accommodate from 20 to 25 people;
- (b) An auditorium with seating capacity for about 500 people;
- (c) A modern gymnasium;
- (d) An entire floor for offices, play rooms, reading rooms, club rooms, library, etc.

To erect such a building on a plot of 60 × 120 feet will cost something in the neighborhood of \$30,000. To this will have to be added another \$20,000, as endowment fund—the income derived from such an investment ought to be sufficient to meet both running and overhead expenses. With regard to this sum of \$50,000, we have already received from several influential and public-spirited Chinese organizations as well as our Elders' assurances to the effect that they will help to raise the first half of \$50,000, i.e. \$25,000, on the condition that we, the Executive Committee and members, will agree to raise the second half of \$50,000, from some American philanthropists. The Chinese Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. in San Francisco were fortunate in securing quite a substantial contribution from such philanthropical American friends as Captain Robert Dollar of the Dollar Steamship Lines, Mrs. Marshall Hale, etc., which encourages me to hope that we too here in New York may one day be blessed with some such financial help towards the building of our own larger headquarters from such well known philanthropists as perhaps the Rockefellers, Mrs.

Andrew Carnegie, Gen. James G. Harbor, William M. Chadbourne, Esq., etc. Offhand, this may sound like a large order, but with faith, love, hope and hard work, which members of this Association do possess in great abundance, let us hope that this expansion program of ours may soon get started, if possible, before these depression prices for building materials and labor costs go up. Incidentally, such building activity like ours will contribute in no small measure towards the relieving of the present unemployment situation.

Respectfully submitted,
CHINESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC.
[Signature]
Theodora Chan Wang
Chairman, Executive Committee

SOURCE: *The Chinese Women's Association Fifth Anniversary Special Issue* (New York: Chinese Women's Association, 1937), microfilm, New York Public Library, pp. 59–62.

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