



# News & Notes

## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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October 2003

### ❖ PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Enclosed with this *News 'n Notes* is a flyer announcing our Fall Fundraising Dinner on Friday, November 7th at Empress Pavilion Restaurant. Our Guest Speaker will be writer and UCLA public health professor, Dr. Virginia Li, author of the recent *From One Root Many Flowers*. I was privileged to interview and speak with Dr. Li several times recently and she delighted me by mailing a copy of her book to my home! It is a fascinating read and I thank Dr. Li for her generosity. Please remember our twice-yearly dinners are an important source of funding for our operating expenses, and give our Fall 2003 Dinner your wholehearted support!



On September 24th, thirty CHSSC members attended a very special performance of Byron Yee's *Paper Son* at Culver City's Gascon Theater, in the historic Helms Bakery Building. The play is a humorous and moving retelling of Byron Yee's family history. After the show, our members lingered in the foyer, enjoying superb tea and light snacks, and took a group photo with Byron. It was a most enjoyable evening, and Byron generously donated the Society's ticket sales back to CHSSC. Thank you so much, Byron! If you haven't seen *Paper Son*, I suggest that you owe it to yourself.

To expand our circle of friendship and community participation, CHSSC recently attended several organizations' fundraisers. On September 19th, along with Tom Eng, I attended the Chinatown Service Center Banquet at Empress Pavilion Restaurant. Two days later, CHSSC sponsored a table at the Chinese American Museum's Historymakers Banquet at the Hilton Hotel in Universal City, where, among others, CHSSC member and past president, Munson Kwok, was honored. Most recently, on October 2nd, our VP of Programs, Eugene Moy, and I attended the Organization of Chinese Americans of Greater Los Angeles Image Awards.

I look forward to seeing you at our Fall 2003 Dinner!

Linda Wong Smith, President

### ❖ NOVEMBER PROGRAM

**Wednesday, November 5, 2003, 7:00 p.m.**

**Castelar Elementary School**

Multipurpose Room

840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, Chinatown

(Park on playground, enter on College Street between Hill and Yale Streets)

**Guest Speakers: Will Gow and Sharon Lee**

#### **MORE TO THE CHINESE SIDE**

Filmmakers Will Gow and Sharon Lee will screen *More to the Chinese Side*, the documentary of the Chinese American Gow family, at our November General Meeting. How the family negotiates its ethnic identity in a diverse Asian American community is the subject of the film. We meet Will Gow's parents and aunt and uncle, both mixed Asian-Caucasian couples, and Will's brother, Max, who states: "I identify more to the Chinese side of myself." Max expresses his identity through his love of cars, like many Asian American youth, and shares this preoccupation with his father, Bruce, a used car aficionado. The film balances its light-hearted moments with issues of adoption and bi-racial identity.

*More to the Chinese Side* debuted at the 2003 Visual Communications Film Festival at the Director's Guild of America and was recently picked up for distribution by the National Asian American Telecommunications Association. The film was written, produced, and co-directed by Mr. Gow and Ms. Lee.

A San Francisco native, Will Gow majored in Cinema Studies and History at New York University. His Master's thesis explores the use of Asian and Asian American caricatures in a line of tee shirts marketed by Abercrombie and Fitch department stores. Sharon Lee is a second-generation Korean American from Southern California and is completing her thesis on the Los Angeles Tofu Festival and its historical and social significance.

### ❖ ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **October General Meeting Refreshments**

Thank you to Susie Ling, Ruth Lung, Ben & Doreen Nakayama, Julie Raskoff, Sylvia Soo Hoo, Dolores Wong, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Yee, and Donna Young for the tasty refreshments at CHSSC's October 1, 2003 General Meeting.

#### **CHSSC Chinatown Tour Docent Training - Part II**

We will hold a second docent training session on Saturday, October 18th at 2:00 p.m. Eugene Moy will lead a mock tour.



or "dry run." The CHSSC Docent Manual will be distributed. If you are interested in our docent program but could not attend the October 4th training, we strongly invite you to attend this follow-up session.

### Condolences

The Society expresses its condolences to Maureen and Randy Bloch on the passing of Maureen's father, Salvatore Benelli, on September 17, 2003.

## AROUND CHSSC

### OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING - FINDING CHINESE FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

Pure fun would be an apt description of our October General Meeting with author Carl Chu (*Finding Chinese Food in Los Angeles*), were he not so serious a scholar of the history, trends, and sociology of Chinese regional cuisine. *Finding Chinese Food in Los Angeles* - in the form of a handy guidebook - is actually a treatise so multilayered and highly researched that it probably will remain the authoritative text on Southern California Chinese cuisine for years to come.



>> Carl Chu Holds Certificate of Appreciation Presented by VP of Programs, Eugene Moy - CHSSC October General Meeting

Mr. Chu, a transportation consultant by profession, opened his remarks saying: "I took the same approach to studying food as I did transportation - it always goes back to the way people live." He then described four regional divisions of Chinese food, gave examples of their distinctive features, and described how they manifest themselves in the Southern California culinary and restaurant landscape.

Listening to Carl Chu's descriptions, and watching the colorful slides of regional dishes, the audience's attention eventually wandered to when and where it would eat its next meal. Finally, one member wondered aloud: "Where are we going for dinner tonight?" Mr. Chu immediately answered: "What are you planning to spend?"

At the meeting's close, Eugene Moy presented Mr. Chu with a certificate of appreciation for his generous presentation. Eugene then warmly invited the entire assemblage to convene, along with him and other regular post-meeting diners, at a local Chinatown restaurant. Many heeded the call.

-RB-

## THE QING DYNASTY, HUANG FAMILY HOUSE COMES TO AMERICA

By Roberta Greenwood

One of the most dramatic displays of Chinese life, culture, and architecture opened in June 2003 at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The entire late Qing dynasty house of the Huang family was disassembled with great care in the rural village of Huang Cun in Anhui Province as part of a cultural exchange. It has been installed at the Museum with two additional new galleries dedicated to the family, the house, its history, Chinese architecture, and rotating exhibits of Chinese art.

The house was built about 175 to 200 years ago by the 28th or 29th generation of a merchant family. In the common practice of naming a house, it was called Yin Yu Tang, suggesting both the hope that it will shelter many future generations, and that their descendants will become high officials. Eight generations of the Huang family lived here for two centuries, often three generations at the same time. Built around a traditional courtyard, the complex contains two stories with 16 bedrooms, one storage space, and a reception hall on each floor. Excluding the kitchens, the footprint covers a space of 47 feet 6 inches by 52 feet 5½ inches.

By the mid-1980s, the house stood empty as family members have dispersed for work opportunities, and they voted to sell it. The Xiuning County Cultural Relics Administration was seeking an American cultural institution to increase international awareness of the region's traditional architecture, and the Peabody Essex Museum agreed to conserve and interpret the house. As the house was disassembled for transit, its construction was carefully analyzed and documented, and Chinese stonemasons, carpenters, and other experts assisted in the reconstruction. The family was pleased that their ancestral home will not be lost, and generously contributed a wealth of household objects, documents, tools, and photographs for display in the adjacent galleries, adding an enriched perspective of the daily life of an average Chinese family.

For those of us who can't get there in the near future, there is an incredibly detailed and informative web site to be enjoyed at: <http://www.pem.org> (click on the "Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home" link at the bottom of the site's home page). In rich color and sound, the many links provide not only a comprehensive look at the architecture - for example, each bedroom is shown along with photos of its occupants, their possessions, examples of their correspondence, details of the rich lattices, etc. - but also the history of the family and the building. Details of the exterior and interior construction, joinery, and framing are provided in this highly recommended presentation.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS Will You Have Tea Or Coffee?

By Dr. Betty C. Gaw

Both tea and coffee are the most popular beverages in the world, so when you dine out, your hostess or waiter will usually ask, "Tea or Coffee?"

Tea comes from the tea leaves of the plant, *Camelia sinensis*, and the coffee bean is derived from the berries of the plants, *Coffea arabica* or *Coffea canefora*. The beverages





are both aromatic and contain caffeine - the central nervous system stimulant which coffee has more of - and give great pleasure to the taste, sight and smell. Tea and coffee have been imbibed for centuries, and it is the health benefits of tea which have generated so much research from nutritionists.

### • The History of Tea

Tea drinking dates back to the legend of emperor Shen Nung, who tasted the first accidental tea when a few tea leaves fell into his cup of boiled water, as he rested under the shade of a tea tree. Refreshed and invigorated by this brew, he named it "Ch'a". The Sui Dynasty in 589-620 used bricks of tea as trading currency. Lu Yu in 780 wrote the classic, "Ch'a Ching" on the growing, preparation and cultural enjoyment of tea. In the 1500's, the Ming Dynasty produced elegant ceramic tea pots and cups to enhance the tea ceremony and to grace the honorable tea leaves.

Tea pots come in multitudinous shapes, sizes and designs, becoming collectors' items all over the world. By the 1600's, China was the world's sole exporter of tea, to countries like Japan and the United Kingdom which have glorified the delightful brew in their traditional tea ceremony or high tea served with sandwiches. Serving tea in China symbolizes respect for your visitor, togetherness and cultural sharing of a healthful and refreshing beverage. Proper tea preparation first requires boiling purified water and pouring it into ceramic tea cups and teapot. After a few minutes the water is discarded to be replaced by more boiled water, into which tea leaves are added. Proper preparation enhances the flavor of the tea, which may be embellished by adding Jasmine flowers, herbs, or Ginseng to enrich its nutrient value or aroma.

### • The Health Benefits of Tea

- The duration of steaming, fermentation or processing of tea leaves determines its flavor and nutrient content: the longer it is processed, the darker the leaves, and the darker the brew gets. White tea, followed by green tea, is the least processed, whereas oolong is a black or brown tea.
- Anti-oxidant value is highest in white or green tea.
- Caffeine content may be regulated by the duration the leaves are steeped in boiling water, but tea generally contains about 50-80% less caffeine than coffee.
- Tea contains polyphenols. These aid digestion by acting as potent anti-oxidants that deter aging by neutralizing damaging free radicals. Polyphenols are said to protect against cancer.
- Tea contains healthy flavanoids and phytoestrogens but coffee does not.
- Tea helps prevent dental cavities and gingivitis by promoting normal oral bacteria. Coffee does not have this attribute.
- The flavanoids in tea help reduce weight by increasing fat metabolism, reducing cholesterol, raising beneficial HDL, reducing bad LDL and helping to reduce lipid oxidation, the precursor of atherosclerosis. All these factors mean that tea lessens cardiovascular risks.
- Coffee may increase cholesterol and blood pressure in people who are sensitive.
- Tea helps prevent bone fractures by increasing bone density, whereas high daily intake of coffee promotes osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and bone fractures. Coffee is also a potent diuretic, excreting vitamins, minerals and nutrients, together with water through the urine, dehydrating the body.
- Tea enhances the immune system by priming special

blood cells to engulf and destroy invading bacteria, viruses and fungi, when more than five cups of tea a day are consumed. Coffee does not have these immune enhancing effects.

- Tea heals minor cuts, acne, sunburn and athlete's foot. Coffee does not.
- Tea has anti-inflammatory properties, reducing the pain and swelling of arthritic joints or other inflamed areas. Atherosclerosis of the arteries is initiated by inflammation, as is Alzheimer's disease.
- The anti-clotting properties in tea lessen platelet clot formation and the risk of heart-brain attacks.
- Tea is anti-allergic and relieves itching, watery eyes, noses and throats caused by allergies. Dr. Hirofumi Tachibana, researcher and associate professor in Japan, advises treating allergies through tea-drinking. Strong coffee may relieve mild asthmatic bronchitis.
- The Epigallocatechin gallate/EGCG in tea reduces cancer risks of the skin, lung, mouth, esophagus, stomach, colon, rectum, urinary tract, and breast, when a few cups of tea is imbibed daily.
- According to the company, *In Pursuit of Tea*, to decaffeinate tea, one should steep the tea in hot water for 45 seconds, and then pour off the water, followed by another steeping in hot water. The resulting tea contains only 20% of the original amount of caffeine, as you have discarded 80% of the caffeine infused by the initial water. This is helpful for caffeine-sensitive tea lovers.

The health benefits of tea far outweigh those of coffee, but as a twenty-year convert from coffee to tea, I occasionally enjoy an aromatic, sweet, delectable soy latte (with Stevia, a non-caloric plant sweetener). My daily tea brew consists of nine ingredients, including green tea, chamomile, honeysuckle, chrysanthemum, Chinese jujube/red date, longan, kei chi, jamaica (red hibiscus), and astragalus. Caffeine-sensitive individuals are advised to finish their tea by 3:00 p.m. if they plan to retire by 10:00 p.m.

So, when I'm asked, "Tea or coffee?", my answer is, "Tea, please!"

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**October 18, 2003, 2:00 p.m.**

### **DOCENT TRAINING II**

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

**CHSSC Office**

323-222-0856

**October 18, 2003, 11:00 a.m.**

### **AUTHOR JEANIE LOW PRESENTS A WORKSHOP BASED ON HER BOOK, CHINA CONNECTION: FINDING ANCESTRAL ROOTS FOR CHINESE IN AMERICA**

The California (Genealogical) Conference

**Holiday Inn, Crowne Plaza, Foster City, California**

Information: [http://users.lmi.net/catch/ca\\_conf](http://users.lmi.net/catch/ca_conf)

**October 20, 2003, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

### **FRIENDS OF CHINATOWN LIBRARY PRESENTS BOOK DISCUSSION OF THE LOST DAUGHTERS OF CHINA**

**L.A. Chinatown Branch Library**

213-620-0925

**October 24, 2003**

### **ASIAN YOUTH CENTER BANQUET**

**Westin Bonaventure Hotel**

626-309-0622



**October 24-25, 2003**

**THE CONFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND SCIENCE:  
CANCER IN AMERICA'S ASIAN COMMUNITIES  
(Seminar)**

Asian American Network for  
Cancer Awareness Research Training

**Omni Los Angeles Hotel**

Information: 310-794-7760

**October 25, 2003 (All day event)**

**FREE WORKSHOP ON HISTORICAL  
ARCHIVING SKILLS**

**St. Vincent's Medical Center Historical Conservancy**

Information: 323-222-0856

**October 25, 2003, 7:30 p.m.**

**VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS FUNDRAISER:  
"PAST/FORWARD"**

**Japan America Theater**

244 San Pedro St., Los Angeles

213-680-4462 x 59

**October 30, 2003, 6:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.**

**ASIAN PACIFIC WOMEN'S CENTER BANQUET**

**Argyle Hotel**

8358 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles

213-250-2977

**November 7, 2003, 6:00 p.m.**

**CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA - FALL 2003 DINNER**

**Empress Pavilion Restaurant**

Los Angeles Chinatown

Information: 323-222-0856

**November 16, 2003, 2:00 p.m.**

**TANYA HYONHYE KO READS POETRY FROM  
YELLOW FLOWERS ON A RAINY DAY**

**Pacific Asia Museum**

46 N. Las Robles, Pasadena

626-449-2742 x 20

**November 28, 2003, 7:00 p.m.**

**YU HUA DISCUSSES AND SIGNS TO LIVE &  
CHRONICLE OF A BLOOD MERCHANT**

**Pacific Asia Museum**

46 N. Las Robles, Pasadena

626-449-2742 x 20

**Through December 28, 2003**

**WAH MING CHANG AND TYRUS WONG: TWO  
BEHIND THE SCENES (Retrospective)**

**Chinese Historical Society of America Museum,  
San Francisco**

415-391-1188

**Through February 28, 2004**

**"THE HEATHEN CHINEE" - STEREOTYPES OF  
CHINESE IN POPULAR MUSIC**

**Chinese Historical Society of America**

415-391-1188

**Ongoing**

**CHINESE AMERICAN PORTRAITS OF PRIDE  
(CAPP) EXHIBIT**

**Los Angeles Harbor College (Library)**

1111 Figueroa Place, Wilmington, CA

310-233-4000 or CHSSC Office: 323-222-0856

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November, 1975. The purposes of the Society are: 1) to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California; 2) to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history, and 3) to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multi-cultural society of the United States.

**2003-2004 CHSSC Officers**

Linda Wong Smith - President

Pete Chinn - Vice President

Eugene Moy - V.P. Programs

Ben Nakayama - Membership Secretary

William Chew - Treasurer

Franklin Mah - Financial Secretary

**Board Members**

Dr. Betty Gaw, Gilbert Hom, Gifford Hwa,

Susie Ling, Dr. Wing Mar

News 'n Notes Editor, Randy Bloch

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