

NOVEMBER 2017

## Island of the Blue Dolphins: the Lone Woman at the Crossroads

*Presented by Linda Bentz*

Wednesday, November 1, 2017  
6:30 pm

*Castelar Elementary School  
840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012*

Free parking - enter via College Street  
This event is open to the public.

Join us to hear the latest research about the true story behind the *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. This award-winning book, written by Scott O'Dell, has fascinated children for over fifty years. The book describes the life of an American Indian girl who lived alone on San Nicolas Island for 18 years. The heroine of this story, known in historical literature as the Lone Woman, was taken off of the island in 1853. Through recent archaeological, ethnographic and historical research, a new story of the Lone Woman has emerged. She was witness to commercial activities such as otter hunting, whaling, maritime trade, and was likely witness to Chinese abalone harvesting on San Nicolas Island, as well. This research examines early California ethnic, commercial and maritime history. It explores disparate life experiences, yet illuminates the commonalities of individuals living on a remote Pacific island.

Special thanks to my colleagues/historians Susan Morris and Robert Schwimmer for their contributions to this project .

Linda Bentz is an historical archaeologist who has studied four historic Chinese communities: Ventura, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, and Cambria. Working with the National Parks Service and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, she investigated the presence of Chinese abalone harvesters on the Channel Islands. Chinese fishermen, California-built Chinese junks, and Chinese American women and families are among her research interests. Linda researched and wrote the script for the documentary, *Courage and Contributions: the Chinese in Ventura County* and has published essays in books, journals, and newsletters. She is currently on the CHSSC Board and the historian for the Ventura County Chinese American Historical Society. In 2012, she and co-author William Gow completed a book about Chinese communities in Ventura County, *Hidden Lives: A Century of Chinese American History in Ventura County*. Mrs. Bentz has four sons and lives with her husband in San Pedro.

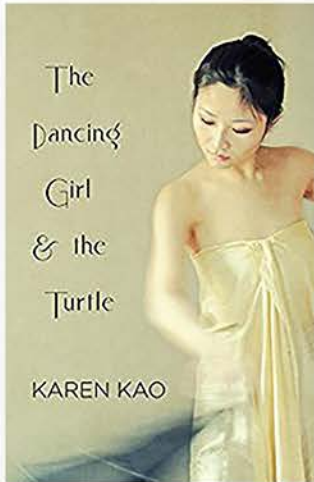






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## The Dancing Girl and the Turtle



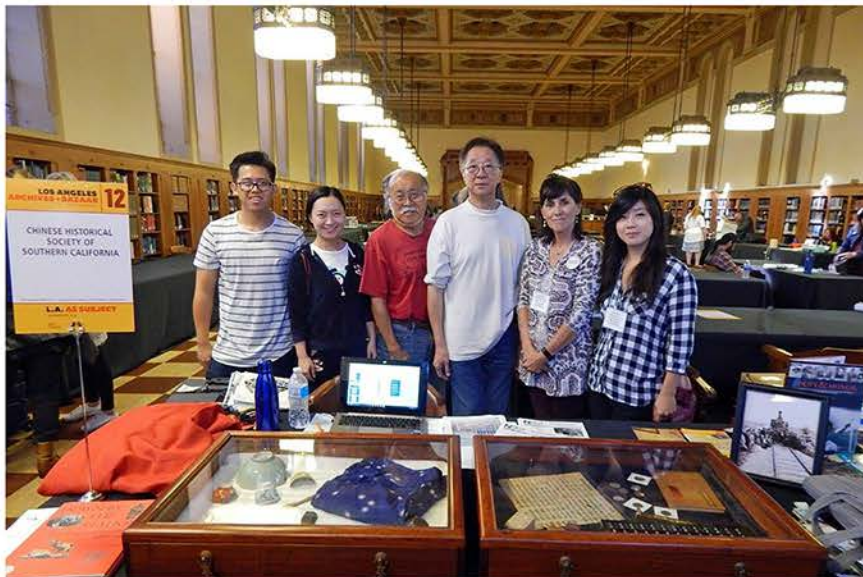
In our October monthly meeting, we were joined by author, writer, and poet Karen Kao to promote her new book *The Dancing Girl and the Turtle*. In this presentation, Kao previews the book by exploring the decadent culture of Shanghai in the 1930's, especially the treatment of women, through the eyes of a strong female protagonist. Kao uses her book to expand the overall conversation on the responsibility of Asian writers and women to speak out and preserve these stories that are often forgotten. Her presentation was followed by a Q&A and a book signing.

Kao's book is available on Amazon at:  
[www.amazon.com/Dancing-Girl-Turtle-Karen-Kao/dp/0993599702](http://www.amazon.com/Dancing-Girl-Turtle-Karen-Kao/dp/0993599702)

Our next monthly meetings will be  
Wednesday, November 1, 2017.  
See you all there!

## 12th Annual Archives Bazaar

On Saturday, October 21, 2017, CHSSC volunteers and staff participate in the 12th annual Archives Bazaar organized by LA as a Subject. This year will mark our 10th year in participating in the Archives Bazaar as one of many chosen exhibitors who come together to give visitors a taste of the rich culture and history of Los Angeles. This event provides us with a chance to show people a sampling of our different archival resources, as well as, attract new researchers and people who are interested in our history. At USC, we proudly displayed our artifacts from our extensive collections for curious onlookers and fellow organizations. It was a wonderful time connecting with everyone, and we look forward to next year's Archives Bazaar. We would like to thank the volunteers who showed up and helped with our display and table: Linda Bentz, Karen Chao, Jeannie Chen, Susan Dickson, Rick Eng, Gordon Hom, Don Loo, Eugene Moy, and Helen Quon.



## Board of Directors

### Officers

Gordon Hom, President  
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## 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, multicultural society of the United States.



高以翔  
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TSAI CHIN

馬泰  
TZI MA



LOVE AND LOSS IN AMERICA

L.P. LEUNG PRESENTS

# THE JADE PENDANT

唐人街 1871

Please join us on Friday, November 3, 2017, for the premiere of L.P. Leung's The Jade Pendant.

Longtime CHSSC member and Golden Spike Award Honoree, L.P. Leung produced the movie based on his novel.

The Jade Pendant is a tragic love story set in the backdrop of a historical event, the Chinese Massacre of 1871 in Los Angeles.

A limited one week engagement at: AMC Atlantic Times Square 14450 N Atlantic Blvd Monterey Park, CA 91754

Please come and show your support!





## *Memories of My Father by Marian Chew*

### Wah Ying Chew

July 20, 1929 – October 14, 2017



My father, Wah Ying Chew, worked hard all his life and wanted to be remembered for his talents, ingenuity and accomplishments. Since a young boy, he was conscientious of how he presented himself—always well-mannered, tidy and clean. He especially had reverence towards the elderly.

Wah was born on July 20, 1929 in Canton, China. He always told my family and me the story of his father coming to America by ship, and winning a lottery while in New York. His father returned to China with the winnings and bought a bakery and land.

After graduating high school, my father received his English education at China's Lincoln Canton School. Afterwards, he became a teacher and taught subjects such as physics, woodshop, music, and English. His students considered him strict, but appreciated that it taught them discipline and respect.

In 1951, Wah married So Har Chew. The couple had a son, Paxton and a daughter, Michelle. Eventually, the family moved to Hong Kong and had two more children: Clifton, my brother, and me.

Known for his meticulous penmanship and skilled calligraphy, my father worked on handwriting the text for educational books, which were then printed. He later owned a small business manufacturing metal rods for stems of artificial flowers.

In 1967, my father's younger brother, Jack Chew, sponsored my family and me to immigrate to America for a better life. In America, my father worked various arduous jobs and long hours to support our family. He always wanted to be his own boss, and down the road, owned businesses such as a restaurant and a garment factory. In his latter years, he worked as an office manager for my brother and his wife's garment manufacturer, and volunteered in the community as Vice-Chairman for the Lung Kong Association, and Consultant for Bow-On Tong Association.

In 2006, when my father retired, he and my mother volunteered for the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC). He looked forward to going to CHSSC every morning to work on packing and labeling the Portraits of Pride books—he enjoyed being productive and felt CHSSC was his second home.

We are proud to dedicate the Memorial Gate plaque in memory of Yuek Lee Moy and Yem Sue Yee. Thank you to everyone who donated to their memory and to the memorial gate project:

Kelly & Barbara Chan	Winifred Lew
Pedro Chan	Don Loo
Ken Chan & Miranda Hoh	Wing & Joyce Mar
Albert & Yvonne Chang	Eugene Moy & Susan Sing
Su Chen	Ben & Doreen Nakayama
Marian Chew	Jack Ong
William Chun-Hoon	Helen & Darryl Quon
Victor B D'Agostino	Francine Redada
Alexandra Delgado	Gerald Shue
Susan Dickson	Sandie Sing
Mon Fong	Sylvia Soo Hoo
Cindy Fong & Charles Wong	Jerry Tan
John & Joy Gault	Walter Tan
Anna Gee	Robert Verre
William Gow	Angi Ma Wong
Gilbert Hom	Edgar Yuen Wong
Gordon & Rose Hom	Elizabeth O.C. Wong
John & Phyllis Jung	Chuck M Woo
Munson Kwok & Suellen Cheng	Kyra Woo
Collin & Susan Lai	Cynthia & Gary Young
Helen & Kenneth Lee	Donna Young
Ella Leong	Gay Yuen
LP & Bobbi Leung	William Yuen
Margie & Albert Lew	







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## Notes on Chinese American History

*A monthly column about Chinese American History by CHSSC member, William Gow.*

I had the pleasure of attending the international conference of the Chinese Historical Society of America in San Francisco on October 5-8. This was the second Chinese Historical Society Conference I have attended, having also presented at the last one held in 2007. The 2017 edition of the conference featured three days of panels and plenary sessions preceded by a pre-conference symposium held at UC Berkeley featuring the various archival collections that related to Chinese American history and Overseas Chinese research on campus. At the conference, I joined a roundtable discussion organized by current CHSSC board member Kelly Fong, that also featured Linda Bentz, Eugene Moy, Laura Ng, and Rosalind Sagara discussing our experiences with Chinese American public histories. One of the more interesting topics that the conference raised for me was the tension between those scholars who saw themselves as doing Chinese Overseas research within the context of the broader Chinese Diaspora and those who saw themselves doing Chinese American history within the framework of comparative Ethnic Studies.

While these two frameworks certainly overlap in interesting ways, these two foci present us with fundamentally different ways to understand and approach the study of Chinese in North America. Generally speaking scholars from China and those who are trained in Asian Studies prefer to see their focus as being on Overseas Chinese history while those who are trained in Asian American or Ethnic Studies, who are often third, fourth or fifth generation Chinese Americans, tend to see their focus as Chinese American history. While I certainly believe that there are benefits to approaching the study from both vantage points, I do believe strongly that those of us who do Asian American Studies within a comparative Ethnic Studies framework need to insure that our interests and research topics are not diluted or submerged into the field of Chinese Overseas study.

As a mixed race person of Chinese descent, I was originally attracted to the field of Asian American Studies because I wanted to study race and social power within the United States. Having negotiated my own racial identity growing up in San Francisco, Asian American Studies gave me an

opportunity to study race and its intersections with class, gender, and sexuality within the context of US history. As someone who does not look phenotypically like most other Asian Americans and who does not speak Chinese, I would never identify myself as an Overseas Chinese. While my research does often deal with issues of Chinese Diaspora, I do this through a framework that is primarily interested in understanding the experiences of Chinese Americans as people of color in the United States. As such, my research is motivated by a larger commitment to understanding Asian American racial formation with a goal of advancing social justice.



While I certainly study Asian American history within a global framework, I fear that labeling what scholars like myself do as Overseas Chinese Studies would shift the focus of our field away from its primary emphasis on understanding racism, sexism and homophobia as it relates to Chinese Americans and other people of color in North America, and instead emphasize issues of Chinese nationality and culture and their dispersal around the globe. This emphasis on understanding the Chinese American experience alongside that of other people of color is more important now than ever. As we witnessed a resurgence of overt displays of white supremacy in this country and as anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies seem to gain more traction everyday, there is an increased need for a history that foregrounds the Chinese American experience as part of a larger history of people of color and other marginalized immigrants to the United States. At our particular moment in history, a Chinese American history grounded in a comparative Ethnic Studies framework can provide us a means of contextualizing the increased xenophobia we are witnessing across the United States. While I appreciate the growing number of scholars studying Chinese people in North America, and welcome those who enter the field from Overseas Chinese Studies, I am personally proud to continue my own work in Chinese American Studies, not as a scholar of Overseas Chinese, but as a scholar of comparative Ethnic Studies.

*William Gow is currently a doctoral candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley where he is writing a history of Los Angeles Chinatown and its relationship to Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s. He has been a CHSSC member for more than a decade. He invites feedback, suggestions, or questions about this column and his academic work. William can be reached by email at [wgow@outlook.com](mailto:wgow@outlook.com)*





# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

*Please help us save paper and postage,  
email us for your online newsletter at [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)*

## Community Calendar

**Wednesday, November 1, 2017, 6:30pm**

***Island of the Blue Dolphins: the Lone Woman at the Crossroads* presented by Linda Bentz**

Linda Bentz examines the latest emerging research about the true story behind the award winning book, Through recent archaeological, ethnographic and historical research a new story of this woman has emerged. She was witness to commercial activities such as otter hunting, whaling, maritime trade, and was likely witness to Chinese abalone harvesting on San Nicolas Island. Castelar Elementary School 840 Yale Street, L.A., CA 90012 Free Parking- enter via College Street Refreshments will be served. This event is free and open to the public.

**Friday, November 3, 2017**

***The Jade Pendant* by L.P. Leung, Movie Premiere**

The Jade Pendant novel is now "The Jade Pendant" movie. A tragic love story plays out against the backdrop of the Chinese Massacre of 1871.

AMC Atlantic Times Square 14

450 N Atlantic Blvd, Monterey Park, CA 91754

**Now through Sept. 28, 2018 - *Building a New California* exhibit**

Chinese immigrants helped build California from the mid-19th through the early 20th century through their significant contributions to the state's economy and culture. Although the Chinese community of San Francisco is better known, the Chinese played major roles in the development of Los Angeles and were integral to the growth of Rancho Los Cerritos. This exhibit highlights the experiences and contributions of Chinese immigrants in the Los Angeles region between 1850 and 1930.

Rancho Los Cerritos, 4600 Virginia Rd, Long Beach, CA 90807  
(562) 206-2040

**Sunday, November 5, 2017 - 10:00am – 11:30am**

**Riverside Asian American Walking Tour "Downtown Edition" by Save Our Chinatown Committee, Japanese American Citizens' League (Riverside Chapter), and the Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies at UC Riverside**

Discover Downtown Riverside's hidden Asian American gems and history. Along the way, you will learn how the city's first Chinese quarter vanished, how one family's children helped them prevail in a landmark civil rights' case, and how the first organized Korean American settlement site came to be in Riverside. Pioneering Asian American immigrants struggled to belong, while maintaining their cultural identities.

Downtown Riverside Pedestrian Mall at Main and Ninth Streets, 3834 Main St, Riverside, CA 92501

For more info: contact Rosalind Sagara at [mrsagara@gmail.com](mailto:mrsagara@gmail.com)  
Buy Tickets:

[www.eventbrite.com/e/riverside-asian-american-walking-tour-downtown-edition-tickets-37479194279?aff=es2](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/riverside-asian-american-walking-tour-downtown-edition-tickets-37479194279?aff=es2)

**November 12, 2017 – March 11, 2018**

**Empress Dowager Cixi: Selections from the Summer Palace**

This exhibition is the first of its kind in the United States to explore the empress dowager's roles beyond politics. Cixi not only led politics, but also art of China at the crossroads of tradition and innovation. The exhibition reconstructs the matriarch's everyday life in the Summer Palace, presenting her multi-faceted roles of politician, matriarch and connoisseur of various arts through four different sections and over 100 objects that have never before been seen in the United States.

Bowers Museum, 2002 N Main St, Santa Ana, CA 92706