

Voice of Gom-Benn

1987



CHINA : DREAMS REALIZED

BY ANNA WONG

March 25, 1986 : It had been a very long journey and we had lost an entire day in Japan due to an unexpected snowstorm. But finally, we were on the train and on our way into China- my homeland. As the train made its way down the tracks, I began to recognize the familiar landscapes that I had seen for the first time only two-and-a-half years ago. However, in this journey, I was sharing it with my family, as well as my husband David. The rice fields had a beautiful early morning mist engulfing them, and I found myself excitedly telling David that I had seen it before and that this is where, and how Baba and Mama had worked so hard to get to the Gold Mountain- America.

As we left the train station in Guangzhou, I was amazed to see the changes that had occurred in such a short time. There were high-rise buildings all around us and a traffic jam of cars in front of us! This sight was both shocking and amazing to find. Only 2½ years ago, cars had been few and far between. The streets were now filled with cars, buses, bicycles and people.

As we entered the China Hotel, where we were to stay, I could not believe how beautiful it was with all the beautiful crystal chandeliers sparkling above us. As we looked out of our hotel room window, we had a bird's eye view of all the changes that the city had been through. I told David of all the places that I had seen and places that I had visited during my first trip. David and I decided right then, that we would be returning to China for a longer visit and a chance to see more very soon.

March 26, 1986 : Baba, Mama, my sister Linda, David, and myself, piled into the van which was to take us to Taishan. As we left the city of Guangzhou, it was raining lightly and we made our way slowly

towards Taishan, the town where I had so anxiously waited to see again. David asked Baba and Mama if China looked like what they remembered it to be many years ago. Baba replied "some things are familiar but the paved roads did not exist as they do now."

At mid-day, we stopped at the China Travel Service for lunch of chicken, noodles, fish and vegetables. We strolled through the gardens, and David and I took many pictures both in our minds as well as our camera. We would bring a part of the beautiful Chinese gardens home to the Gold Mountain with us. Trees and flowering bushes hung over the lake and surrounded the red, green and gold tiled pagoda-like buildings. At 2:00 p.m., we finally pulled in at the Taishan Garden Hotel. I exclaimed to David, "we stayed here the last time I came!" This time, our relatives, aunts and uncles did not know when we were arriving, so they were not gathered at the hotel waiting for us. We quickly unloaded our luggage and began to explore the gardens.

That evening, we were honored at a banquet given by the China Travel Service. As we walked in, I told David that I recognized many faces. I met the Vice-Chairman, C.K. Wong, whom I had had dinner with 2½ years ago. As dinner was served, I knew I was truly back home again! It was a grand banquet with shrimp, aquab, spinach, crab, Taishan's number one fish, oysters, chicken, roast pork, mushrooms with bok choy, and much much more. As I began to eat the sweet shrimp with my chopsticks, Lung Sue said " you have to jump in and eat the shrimp with both hands and both feet!" Liang Hung Gee (Liang Bingshen) and Lung Sue (Wong Pak Lung) both made David feel at home and told him stories about the food.

as well as Taishan. David had remarked how familiar many of the dishes were as we had eaten them often at Baba and Mama's home.

March 27, 1986 : Today we were going to Baba's village- Gom Benn, Lo Toont. As we approached the village, I looked out the window and saw a crowd of people gathered together to greet us. As we drew closer, that great sense of belonging came over me again, as it had 2½ years ago. I told Baba " look there's uncle!" as I recognized my Gom Benn family. As we got off the bus, relatives came and took our hands and exclaimed " They're here! They've come back home!" My family and relatives from Gold Mountain and Gom Benn united together again. I introduced my husband David to all the aunts, uncles and cousins that gathered around us. From a distance, I saw my great aunt (Thay-Poa) coming to greet us. I was so excited to see her. Being the oldest of my relatives in Gom Benn, I wanted to hear more of the stories about Baba and Mama while they were growing up in our homeland.

We slowly walked up the dirt path to Baba and Mama's house. Cousins asked me " Do you remember the way?" I was proud to say that I did. The path "home" had been ingrained in my memory forever.

As we walked into the house that Baba and Mama had lived in, I saw that the new pictures we had sent back to them since our first visit had been added to the collection hanging on the wall. We sat and drank tea and ate dumplings as we all talked at once about events that had taken place since we had returned to Gold Mountain.

Later, we gathered together to "walk mountain" (han-san) carrying roast pig, dumplings and cakes to offer to our ancestors. I was anxious to walk mountain again so that I could tell my ancestors that I had returned home again. All too soon, my day at

Baba's village was over.

March 28, 1986 : We awoke with great anticipation this morning. Today we were going to Mama's village- Hat Lo Hant- Thai Yaun Lei. Mama had been instrumental in the establishment of a school library in her village. A dream she had had since she left her homeland to go to Gold Mountain had finally come true. To be able to give something back to the village she had grown up in. Something to show that she had walked those worn paths, had labored under many many hardships, and had survived it. And so appropriate, that what she gave to them, was a place to promote learning and to hold the books of knowledge which would help to mold the minds of the young, to work towards establishing a world of peace. Mama and Baba had both impressed upon my sisters and myself the importance of the aquisition of knowledge and mental cultivation as we were growing up in Gold Mountain.

My very special friend, Wong Jung Teep of the Ju Zheng Monthly Magazine and his son, Kong Gua had taken time out of their busy schedules to join in our celebration and helped us inaugurate the creation of the library. I had met Jung Teep 2½ years ago during my first trip to Taishan. We had shared many stories about Taishan and Gold Mountain.

With light rain falling around us, we made our way slowly down the muddy road towards Mama's village. As we approached closer and closer, we began to hear faint chanting. In the distance, as we approached the village, we saw the children lining the road with bouquets of flowers chanting the familiar "welcome, welcome!" As we stepped out of the van, the overwhelming feeling of pride came over me. I wouldn't have missed this experience for anything in

the world.

There, in front of us, stood the library decorated with red banners and long strings of firecrackers. As we walked in, hanging on the wall were pictures from our first trip home, and a plaque inscribed in marble.

The sun shone through the clouds as the ceremonies began. It was as though our ancestors knew we had come home but once again and they embraced us with the warm sunshine. I turned to David and said "Grandma (Po Po) is here", and it was such a warm feeling to feel the presence of my ancestors of the past and my family of the present- together.

Throngs of people had come from all over Taishan and gave us the honor of their presence to witness the ribbon cutting of the library in this little village of Hant Lo Hant. Mama and Baba spoke of the days growing up in the village and thanked all the people who helped to make this dream come true. After the officials had spoken, the big ribbon was unraveled and the actual ribbon cutting was to take place. My husband, David was honored to be one of the nine people to take part. The ribbon was cut, the firecrackers exploded, and the dragon danced through the crowds. Mama's dream had indeed come true!

All too soon, the banquet was over, toasts had been made and it was time to bid our farewells until we come back again.

March 29, 1986 : Today was our first chance to really explore Hoisen. Kong Gua was so gracious to take us through the gardens which made Hoisen so unique. As we walked along the lakes which revealed mirror images of the trees, bridges and pagodas which lined it, we spoke

of traditions and customs of both countries. We talked about what it was like to grow up in two different worlds, yet many of our family traditions remained unchanged from many hundred years ago.

Later that day, we piled into vans which took us to the steps of City Hall, then to the Federal Building in Sui-Bo-Huey for tea and finally to the Dedication Ceremony of the Bing Tew Wong Memorial Library.

More than 15 vans drove in procession down the dirt roads leading to Gom-Benn village, which had become such a familiar sight to me. As we disembarked from the vans, we again heard the chanting of school children saying "welcome, welcome." But today, I felt a sense of sadness in my heart. The first time I had walked through these same roads was about 2½ years ago with uncle Bing leading the way to dedicate the Gom-Benn school which so many of my relatives including Baba and Mama had worked so hard to make a reality. Today, uncle Bing's name would be immortalized.

As I sat and listened to Baba's speech about how he and uncle Bing grew up in Gom-Benn, I thought of the many times we had gone to uncle Bing's house in Gold Mountain when we were growing up and listened to how they wanted to do something special for their Gom-Benn village. Uncle Bing had been instrumental in setting the wheels in motion. Today, the Gom-Benn school is one of the biggest in Taishan Town.

Following the speeches, the big red ribbon was cut which officially opened the Bing Tew Wong Memorial Library. We then gathered inside and toured the two story library, drank tea, ate cakes and oranges.

Again, the day came to a close much too quickly. As we walked to the vans which would take us back to Hoisen, I turned and had my last glimpse of the Gom-Benn School and Library. Uncle Bing Tew Wong would certainly live on, in our hearts and minds forever.

March 30, 1986 : Today we completed our exploration of Hoisen with Kong Gua. He took us to special places where we shopped for souvenirs to take back to Gold Mountain with us and ate at a local restaurant.

That night, we went to Sui-Bo-Huey for a dinner in our honor. We partook in the local delicacies and talked and laughed for hours, trying to make our time in Taishan last forever.

March 31, 1986 : It seems as though we had just arrived in Taishan. But already, it was time to leave. Following breakfast, we gathered outside the Taishan Garden Hotel with all of our relatives and new found friends. Everyone was talking at once, trying to share as much as we could before our vans would pull away. We took pictures and promised to keep in touch. After the third call to board the vans, we reluctantly said our last goodbyes and got in the vans. As we pulled away, we waved through the windows and took with us, a lifetime of memories. Memories that would last us until our next journey to our homeland.



Andrea Wong, daughter of the Vice-President of the Gom-Benn Assn., Bing Wong, and Peter Young were married on February 15, 1986. Andrea and Pete started the trend of the many marriages of offsprings of Gom-Benn villagers throughout the year.

Andrea and Pete recited their marriage vows 2/15/86 at the United Armenian Congregational Church in Hollywood in the afternoon as witnessed by several hundred people. A reception was held after the wedding and a wedding banquet was held that night at the Golden Palace Restaurant. The following week-end another banquet was held at the Ocean City Restaurant in San Francisco where alot of Pete's friends and relatives reside.

Prior to all the excitement of the wedding, a bridal shower was held at Andrea's aunt's house, Mrs. Bing Tew Wong, in West Covina hosted by her three cousins -- Margery Tam, Shirley Hoskin and Cynthia Toy. Attending the shower were her bridesmaids, maid of honor, matron of honor, two sisters-in-law, Dorothy Wong and Jennifer Wong, her niece, Dorenda and numerous cousins. Everyone in attendance had a ball watching Andrea opening up her gifts.

The Gom-Benn Chinese New Year's celebration dinner was held on March 9, 1986 at the Golden Dragon Restaurant. Over three hundred people turned out to help us welcome in the New Year of the Tiger. Mary Wong was the mistress of ceremony for the evening. She also enlightened us with the rendition of a couple of songs she learned as a child.

On March 22, 1986, eighteen of us from the Los Angeles area accompanied Mrs. Bing Tew Wong back to the Gom-Benn Village for the dedication of the Bing Tew Wong Memorial Library, which dedication took place on March 29, 1986.

Mr. and Mrs. Yam Yan went back to Singapore for a visit before joining us in Toishan. That was their first visit back to Singapore since they left there in 1970. They noticed alot of changes since they left there seventeen years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Lung Chun Lam met us in Kwangtung as they, too, had left earlier to go to Hong Kong to visit with their relatives before joining us. The group that left Los Angeles on 3/22/86 were: Mrs. Bing Tew Wong, Shirley and Rick Hoskin, Raymond and Edna Gin, Mr. and Mrs. William Wong and their daughter, Linda Wong, Anna and David Weinrieb, Sui Ching Lau, who joined her husband in Hong Kong, John Gin Wong, Mrs. Park Kam Wong and Mrs. Nam Gee Wong.

The library dedication was a big event in that many of the Toishan and Gom-Benn dignitaries participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Henry H. Wong, husband of Evelyn Chin Wong, and father of Curtis and Christine Wong, succumbed to cancer of the liver at the age of 53. The Memorial Chapel at Rose Hills was filled to capacity by mourners paying their last respects to Hank and with burial at the Rose Hills Cemetery on 4/26/86. The community has lost a very valuable citizen and his many many friends will miss his smiling face.

April 19, 1986 was the day chosen by the daughter of the Gin Keong Wongs, Beverly and Andrew Lee for their wedding. The couple tied the knot during the afternoon ceremony at the Glendale Community Church followed by a banquet at the Golden Dragon Restaurant. Over 800 well-wishers joined the couple and their families to a sit-down scrumptious dinner and to wish them a very blissful life together.

Our annual Mother's Day buffet luncheon was held at the Gom-Benn Assn. 5/4/86 from 12:00 to 3:00 P.M. We had quite a gathering at the buffet as participants munched on chow mein donated by Kam Wah Restaurant, oranges from Ying Chong Lung, "ling foon tay" made by Mrs. Bing Wong, wife of our vice-president, apple pies from Marie Callendar's donated by Bing S. Wong of San Bernardino and roast pork, soy-sauce chicken, pork buns and various other tea cakes, compliments of the Assn. After the luncheon, the men folks played mahjong.

Nga Fong Lam, the daughter of the Lung Chun Lams, and Hong Cheong Yue, who married in Hong Kong the previous year, was finally united in Los Angeles on June 1, 1986. The family of couple hosted a party for them and 250 of their friends and relatives to wish them a happy and long union. The party was at the Golden Dragon Restaurant that evening, and the family donated \$25.00 to the Gom-Sing Magazine.

Another June wedding was that of Patricia Luey, daughter of the Kung Sun Lueys and Dr. Peter Tom, son of the You Hong Toms. The couple recited their marital vows on June 29, 1986 during an afternoon ceremony at the St. Peter's Church. A wedding party was held at the Golden Palace Restaurant that evening.

Ricky and Virginia Wong added another son to their family with the arrival of Kimberland to join older brother, Ernie. The baby was born on April 20, 1986 and a month-old party was given by the parents and grandmother on May 31, 1986 at the Kam Wah Restaurant. The menu for the buffet consisted of fried chicken, roast pork, pickled pig's feet, red eggs, fried rice, "guy dill" and jello.

The eldest son of Doris Toy and Dr. Robert Toy, Jeffrey Curtis, and Grace Iwamoye, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Iwamoye, were married at the 4:00 P.M. nuptial at the Knox Presbyterian Church July 26, 1986. Following the wedding, all the guests congregated at the Proud Bird Restaurant for a reception. The bride and groom led the first dance of the evening and were joined by the other celebrants for a fun-filled evening.

Adam Spencer Wong, second son of the Benjamin Wongs, entered the world on August 7, 1986 tipping the scale at 7 pounds 14 ounces. He joins the household in West Covina with big brother, Justin, and sister, Courtney. A month-old party for Adam was given by his parents and grandparents at the Great Wall Restaurant on September 7, 1986. Many friends and relatives were on hand to help celebrate Adam's coming into the Ben Wongs' household.

The Gom-Benn Assn. Moon Cake Festival was held from 12:00 .

to 2:30 P.M. on September 14, 1986 at the Assn. Office. Teacakes from Mrs. Bing T. Wong, chow mein from Kam Wah Restaurant and oranges from Ying Chong Lung Co. complemented the menu of the afternoon.

The First Baptist Church of Alhambra was the setting of the marriage between Derrick Lai, son of the Heartley Lais of Cerritos and Kathryn Yee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Yee on September 20, 1986. Their wedding banquet was also held at the Golden Palce Restaurant that evening at 6:00 P.M.

Mary and Harold Wong went to mainland China on 9/26/86 as guests of the Chinese Government. They flew directly to Peking at the start of their trip to spend some time with the parents of their daughter-in-law, Loretta, before continuing on their trip. They reported they enjoyed the trip tremendously.

Mary and Harold were not the only ones to make a trip back to their homeland in September, Karl Lee and his family, sisters, and several cousins and friends also went to China. In fact they went at about the same time as the Harold Wongs, although, their paths did not cross during the trip.

A baby shower was given for Cindy Toy at the residence of her sister-in-law, Debbie, and her brother. The party was hosted by Cindy's two sisters, Margie Tam and Shirley Hoskin and Debbie. This will be the first grandchild for Doris Toy and Bob Toy and the second grandchild for Mrs. Bing Tew Wong in two months.

Amanda Kimberly Toy arrived at the Huntington Memorial Hospital on October 11, 1986 where she weighed in at 7 pounds 2 ounces. She will take up residence at the home of her parents, Cindy and Joel Toy.

To welcome Amanda into the world, a month-old party was given in her honor by her grandparents, Doris Toy and Robert Toy. Approximately 400 people gathered at the Golden Palace Restaurant on December 14, 1986 to meet her and to dine on winter melon chicken soup, har gow, sui my, crispy chicken, beef broccoli, a barbecue plate, egg rolls, fried meat dumplings, special chow mein, baked char shui bows, duck salad and chinese custard tart. Pink balloons were in evidence everywhere marking the occasion of her arrival.

Since foregoing our annual summer picnics in 1982, we started the Moon Festival celebration at the Assn. Office. The celebration this year was on September 14, 1986 where we indulge on fried chicken, moon cakes, apple pies, the ever famous chow mein from Kam Wah Restaurant, more teacakes and oranges from Ying Chong Lung Co. Young and old gathered at the Assn. Office for the event and we also had our monthly meeting after that.

We wish to acknowledge the following people for their donations of goodies to the buffet: Ying Chong Lung - 2 boxes of moon cakes as well as 2 boxes from the Golden Dragon Restaurant. Bing Wong, our vice-president, also donated a box of moon cakes; Kai Wah Wong donated 2 bottles of booze, Kam Wah Restaurant, their ever famous chow mein; Mrs. Bing T. Wong, 50 pieces of teacakes; Lui Wong,

3 boxes of Chinese cookies,; Harold Wong, 100 pieces of a different variety of teacakes and Ling Jue Wong presented the Assn. with a table model radio that transmits music from China.

It was a very sad day for the many friends and relatives of the Sam Hong Wongs when they learned that Kenneth K. Wong had drowned while snorkeling in Tahiti on 11/7/86. We have lost a very valuable member of the community. Services for Kenneth were held on 11/15/86 at Rose Hills Cemetery, where over 200 people gathered to watch Kenneth laid to rest. He had just graduated from UCLA a couple of years ago and had started to work for a computer firm in Orange County before the tragedy.

Our Thanksgiving Day buffet this year was held at the Assn. Office again where the turkey along with all the dressing and trimmings were furnished by Ray Gin; Soon Yet gave us dim sum; Kai Wah Wong, a bottle of whiskey, Bing S. Wong, 2 apple pies from Marie Callender's; Tung D. Wong, 40 pieces of teacakes, Mrs. Lai Fong Wong, chinese homemade tea cakes, 30 pieces, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Wong, 50 pieces of teacakes, Kam Wah Restaurant, a big pot of chow mein; Wing Yow, 2 boxes of "sai kay ma" almond cookies; Sam Sing Market, 2 crates of oranges.

It doesn't seem possible, but Lindsey Wong, daughter of Art and Jennifer Wong recently celebrated her 1st birthday 8/2/86 with a birthday party hosted by her parents at 1938 Del Paso Avenue. Many of her young friends were present to help her celebrate the occasion, along with her many aunts and uncles.

Harold Wong's sister and brother-in-law, the Engs from Lima, Peru, paid us another visit to the Assn. during their annual visit to Los Angeles. The following assn. members decided to make their visit more enjoyable with a dinner at the Kam Wah Restaurant on 2/4/87--the Lui Wongs, Ray Gins, Bing K. Wongs, Mrs. Bing T. Wong, the Harold Wongs, the Karl Lees, the Tung D. Wongs, Mr. and Mrs. Chew Hoi, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Wong, Harry Wong and Yuen Chew Wong. The Engs reciprocated by inviting us to a dinner at the Kam Wah Restaurant a few weeks later before they returned to Lima, Peru. They are very dedicated people who have helped the Gom-Benn Assn. tremendously by their generous donations to the Gom-Benn School and Gom Sing Magazine.



ATTENDING THE GRAND OPENING CEREMONY OF GOM-BEN SCHOOL
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ANNA WONG

October 16, 1983

This was it! The day of the dedication and grand opening of the School. Excitement was in the air as we Pinned our red ribbons to our clothes and gathered around to board the vans which would follow more vans carrying the government officials of the Toishan Province.

As I was traveling in the last van, I was able to see the entire procession of cars. There were more than fourteen vans carrying over-seas Chinese as well as government officials, reporters and media all to this little village called Gom-Ben. This was one of the biggest if not the biggest event that Gom-Ben has ever experienced.

When we got close enough, the vans stopped and we got out to complete the trip to the school on foot. With our yellow Gom-Ben Overseas Chinese Flag leading the way, we started up the hill. We heard some chanting but could not quite make it out. As we approached closer, we saw many of the students enrolled in the Gom-Ben School dressed in their blue and white uniforms lining the entire road up to the school. They were holding flowers and red flags and chanted welcome to us. I felt like they were treating us like royalty.

As we got to the top of the hill, we caught a glimpse of the school. It was four stories high with colored flags decorating the top of the building, and traditional red streamers with words of celebration hanging on each side of the building. There were also two long streamers of fire crackers that were the height of the building, ready to be set off to chase the bad spirits away. The architecture was modern, and the school looked majestic sitting up at the top of the hill.

As we got to the entrance we saw two dragons performing the traditional dragon dance "Mow Thoo" as the drums were beating. Gathered around were people from all the surrounding villages in Toishan Province. Toddlers to seniors came out to see this special event. We were given chairs to sit and watch the "Mow Thoo".

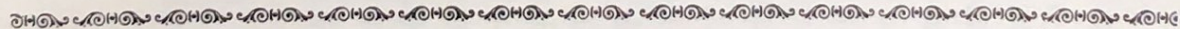


As the dragons finished their dance, we moved our chairs to the front entrance of the school where the speeches, dedication and ribbon-cutting would take place. The officials and the speakers gathered to begin the dedication and grand-opening ceremonies. As my name was read aloud to be acknowledged, I stood up and felt extremely happy and proud that I was able to help make this school a reality.

Following the speeches given by officials, there was the ribbon cutting that meant the actual opening of the school. Fire crackers exploded and colored bits of paper fell down all around us. Finally, before we went in to examine the school, we exchanged flags. We presented the people of Gom-Ben Village with the yellow flag which followed us throughout our long journey which told who we were and where we were from. And Gom-Ben Village in turn gave us two flags commemorating this memorable occasion. These flags would be brought back to Gold Mountain and then would be displayed at the Gom-Ben Benevolent Association Building in Los Angeles for all our other friends and relatives who did not make the trip, to see.

Above each of the classrooms were plaques telling who helped finance the building of each of the rooms. As we climbed to the third floor, we saw the plaque that carried our family name. There it was carved into marble. And there it would stay long after our return to Gold Mountain.

After examining the classrooms, we went to yet another banquet to conclude the celebration. All too soon it was over, and we had to board the vans to go back to the hotel. As we were leaving, I turned around and drank in one last look of Baba's village, the school sitting on top of the hill and all the people I had met from the village during my all too short visit. I knew that these last two days would be etched in my memory forever!



### 黃天恩翁

#### 喪禮榮哀

(羅省訊) 工程師黃公天恩于四月十六日在西人醫院病逝，積閏五月廿七日午一時假座玫瑰崗殯儀館禮堂舉行出殯禮，到場弔祭中西親友四百餘人。黎比得牧師主持，誦經祈禱，陳夏利先生致哀悼詞，黎比得牧師宣讀黃公行狀，並代表孝眷致哀謝，隨即依次敬禮辭靈，發出殯，執紼素車數十輛，備極哀榮。孝眷節約喪禮，捐助黃氏宗親會、甘邊同鄉會每五十元。並在阿罕布拉市建興酒家設素菜十餘席，致謝親友。

