



## Glad to see the great changes of my homeland

Anna Wong

March 25, 1986

It had been a very long journey and we had lost an entire day in Japan due due to an unexpected snowstorm. But finally, we were on the train and on our way into China— my homeland. As the train made it's 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 both 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 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.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Marian, and his five children; Brian, Leslie, Lester, Glenn and Stacey and their spouses, and also two grandchildren. Brian delivered the eulogy at his father's funeral in which he described how their father took over the family business after their grandfather's death in the 1950's. He also told the audience what a good and caring father and friend he was to his own children and a very thoughtful husband to their mother.

The standing room only chapel was filled to capacity with well wishers paying their last respects to Ging. Burial was at Forest Lawn in Hollywood. Ging will be sorely missed by his many, many friends and business associates. Contributions in lieu of flowers sent to the Ging Ching Wong family were turned over to the Gom-Benn Assn. as follows: Gom-Benn Assn. \$500, Gom-Sing Magazine, \$636 and the Scholarship Funds, \$3,285. Along with that, the family also contributed \$200 to the Assn., \$130 to the Gom-Sing Magazine and \$100 to the Scholarship Funds. Thank you very much, Marian.

Another sad loss to the nursing profession and her many friends and relatives of Bell and Whittier is the untimely passing of Beverly Gin on April 1, 1988. Services for Beverly were held at the Rose Hills Mortuary and Cemetery April 9, 1988. Her many business associates, nurses and doctors and many acquaintances were on hand to pay their last respects to Beverly. A very touching and emotional eulogy was delivered by a very good friend of Beverly's of Huntington Memorial Hospital. Beverly is survived by her daughter, Aimee Christine, an older sister, Susan Jung, and two younger brothers, James and Leo and her mother, Mrs. Hon Jin Wong and her grandmother. We will miss you, Bev.

## SPPING FESTIVAL '88

On March 6, 1988, the Gom Benn Village Association held its annual spring festival at the Golden Dragon Restaurant.

This year, we celebrate the year of the Dragon. It will be a year of prosperity and health. New born babies will be more aggressive, wise and will represent all the good things that is to come in the future.

At the celebration, there was a special award given to Mr. Bing S. Wong, founder of the Gom Bien scholarship foundation. A plaque was given to him as a token of our appreciation for his many years of hard work and struggles to make the scholarship foundation a success.

Mrs. Ging Ching Wong, owner of Kwong Hing Lung Grocery store, donated \$3,285 to the Gom Bien scholarship foundation, \$636 for the Voice of Gom Bien magazine, and \$500 for the Gom Bien Association in honor of her late husband, Mr. Ging Ching Wong. This generous donation is much appreciated and the children of the Gom Bien will certainly benefit from it.

The celebration was honored by the presence of a very special guest, the first General consular of Los Angeles.

Those who attended the celebration was entertained by chinese music, Er Her, played beautifully by Lily Yu and had the chance to see a fashion show displaying Sue Wong's colorful outfits. Sue Wong is one of the affluent designers in the fashion business. Her outfits were modeled by our very own Gom Bien young ladies and friends.

Mr. Si Chue, president of the Gom Bien Association, said in his speech at the celebration dinner that the Gom Bien financial status is sound and may the younger generation participate more in of the Gom Bien Village Association activities.

A dedication of the Chinese Pavilion in Riverside was held on 10/6/87. History was written about Riverside Chinatown as a lot of Chinese had settled in that area during the turn of the century. The city named a street GEORGE LEUNG street as he was one of the many many people who had made that city their home for many, many years.

Mr. Bing Tew Wong and Mr. Voy Wong ran the Chungking Restaurant in Riverside from 1941 to 1975. Bing T. Wong moved to the Los Angeles area in 1954 and Voy Wong continued to operate the business until 1975. Mrs. Voy Wong still resides in Riverside and she made a generous donation of \$1,000 to the Pavilion.

The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent of Education went to Gom-Benn High School and visited with the principal of the school. The visitors were very impressed with the cleanliness and organization of the school system, and of the many green thumbs of the students as the shrubbery and plants were well-manicured.

Mr. and Mrs. Wing Yow Wong again gave a month-old banquet celebrating the birth of their grandson, Brian Yen, son of the Ken Sam Wongs on January 16, 1988. The 6:00 P.M. dinner at the Kin Hing Restaurant in Alhambra was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone in attendance. The Gom-Benn Assn. was recipient of a \$100 donation from the Wing Yow Wongs, and the Gom-Sing Magazine and the Scholarship Funds are enriched by \$50 each through their generosity. Many, many thanks folks.

Robert Lee, the son of the Garfield Lees of San Francisco, and Ellen, was married in the bay city where the marriage ceremony and banquet was attended by over 600 people. The Garfield Lees gave contributions to the following organizations: Chinese Hospital in San Francisco, \$100, Gom-Benn Assn., \$100 plus 9 other organizations each receiving \$100.

T. Din Wong, beloved father of Dorothy Wong Teja and Bill Wong, died at the Barlow's Sanitorium after a short illness. The funeral on 5/30/87 at the Chinese Mortuary on North Broadway was followed by burial at the Chinese Cemetery. Gom-Benn Assn. received \$100 from the family of the deceased and the Gom-Sing Magazine and the Scholarship Funds each received \$50.

Six months after the death of their father, Dorothy's and Bill's mother passed away at home after a long illness. Her services were also handled by the Chinese Mortuary and she was buried alongside her husband at the Chinese Cemetery. The family also contributed the same amount of money to the treasury of the Gom-Benn Assn., Gom-Sing Magazine and the Scholarship Funds as above.

Hong Sam Wong, father of Bing Wong and the late Bing Tew Wong and Kenneth Wong, succumbed on January 25, 1988 after living to a long life of 99 years. Services for Hong Sam Wong were held at the Rose Hills Memorial Chapel on 1/30/88 with burial at Lupine Lawn, Rose Hills. The family contributed \$100 to Gom-Benn Assn., \$50 to the Gom-Sing Magazine and \$50 to the Scholarship Funds.

Ging Ching Wong, long-time resident and businessman in Los Angeles died suddenly on February 19, 1988 of a heart attack.

October 3, 1987 was the day selected by the parents of Elina Lau and David Chu, the Tat Ming Lau and Mrs. Chung Kei Chu, as the day to "pon ban" deliver wedding cakes and a roast pig to the Lau residence in preparation for Elina's and David's wedding the week after. Wedding cookies, chicken and roast pork were given to everyone who attended. Guests included the future bride's sister and brother-in-law, her three older brothers and their spouses and her younger brother, Bill. Several of Elina's aunts and cousins were also on hand to share in this happy event.

Well, Elina's and David's wedding day is here. The couple exchanged vows during a 1:00 P.M. wedding ceremony at the Santa Anita Church in Arcadia, witnessed by their many friends and relatives. A banquet was held that evening at the Casa De Oriente in Alhambra.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jung added another grandchild to their list of grandchildren when their son, Dennis, and his wife became parents of little Corbin Tyler, born October 1987. A month-old party was hosted by the Edward Jungs on the 27th day of November at the NBC Seafood Restaurant in Monterey Park. The many many friends and relatives of the Edward Jungs and Dennis Jungs joined in the celebration. The grandparents generously donated \$100 to the Gom-Benn Assn. and \$50 to the Gom-Sing magazine.

China's Toishan Day was celebrated by our northern friends in Canada when several officials from Toishan went there for a cultural exhibition and a showing of different goods for various businesses.

At the conclusion of their business in Canada, they visited Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. A dinner was given in their honor at the Miriwa Restaurant on 7/25/87 by NACA. Members of the Gom-Benn Assn. who attended the dinner included Mrs. Boy Jin Wong, Lui Wong, Mrs. Virginia Wong, Bing Wong, Tung D. Wong, Mrs. Park Kam Wong, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Gin and Roland Wong.

September 27, 1987 marked the 38th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. A dinner that evening for the occasion was attended by many many friends in the Los Angeles area, at the Golden Palace Restaurant. Mrs. Boy Jin Wong, Bing Wong and Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Gin represented the Gom-Benn Assn. as several of our members were on a trip to their homeland.

Jennifer Toy, daughter of Mrs. Doris Toy, participated in the Chinese Youth Education Program this past summer in China. During her stay in that country, she was able to go back to Gom-Benn Village and visited the house where her oldest aunt, mother and two uncles were born, and where her grandparents had lived before they came over to the United States.

Jennifer's first trip to the orient was the summer of 1986 when she and a group of friends went to Taiwan for about six weeks. She learned to speak fluent Mandarin and learned alot of her Chinese customs. She wrote her mother a lengthy letter about the trip and signed her Chinese name at the end, which surprised and enlightened her mother alot.

The bride's family donated \$50.00 to the Gom-Benn Assn. and \$50.00 to the Gom-Sing Magazine. Many many thanks to the donors.

Carolyn graduated from UCLA on June 14, 1987 with a double degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Electrical Engineering. The parents of the bride gave a party honoring the event at the Fortune Restaurant in Chinatown, owned by the bride's sister and brother-in-law.

The son of the William Lim Wongs, Dr. Kenneth William Wong and Dr. Dorothy Evelyn Chui, were married at the 1:00 P.M. wedding at the First Evangelical Church of Glendale June 19, 1987. A wedding banquet followed that evening at the Golden Dragon Restaurant where over 600 people attended the affair, including the mayor and some councilmen from the city of Arcadia. The parents of the bridegroom are owners and operators of the Moon Palace in Arcadia. William Lim Wong was one of our former presidents of the Gom-Benn Assn. and also of the Wong Family Benevolent Assn.

Mrs. Doris Toy, mother of Jeffrey Toy, gave a one-year anniversary party for Jeff and his bride, Grace, at her home July 18, 1987. It is hard to believe it has already been a year since their marriage. Everybody at the party that evening had a lot of fun indulging in all the good food and the many games that were played. Doris gave a similar party to her other son, Joel, when he and Cindy celebrated their first year of marriage in 1985.

Hayley Michelle Wong, daughter of Jennifer and Arthur Wong, arrived on 7/21/87 joining in the household of big sister, Lindsey. She was a bouncing 6 lbs. 14 ozs. when she made her debut into the Wong residence. A month-old party for Hayley was held at the Golden Palace Restaurant at 12:30 P.M. Hayley's maternal grandmother arrived from China during the luncheon and Jennifer introduced her mother to all of the people attending the party. This was Jennifer's mother's first visit to this country and she arrived at an opportune time to meet all of the Wong cousins of Jennifer's.

Jeffrey Wong and Regina Frances Quon selected August 22, 1987 as the day for their marriage at the Westwood Hills Christian Church. The son of the Ock Yuen Wongs and Regina Quon became one at the 1:00 P.M. ceremony. There was a reception immediately following the wedding and a banquet that evening at the Golden Palace Restaurant. About 400 people attended the wedding and banquet to wish the couple a lifetime of happiness. A generous donation of \$100 was made to the Gom-Benn Assn., \$50 to the Gom-Sing Magazine and \$50 to our scholarship fund by the Ock Yuen Wongs. Thanks a lot for your generosity.

September 11, 1987 was the date of departure for approximately 30 people from the Los Angeles area for China. President Lui Wong and Lila Jue Wong headed the tour accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Park Kam Wong, their two daughters, Anita and Freda, this being the first trip for the latter two to their parents' birthplace. The two sisters - Anita and Freda - came back from their trip on 10/12/87 while the rest of the tour stayed on longer. The girls' parents had decided to stay in China for about three to four months, but decided to cut short their vacation to a month. This was also the first trip for the young Joe Wongs' son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and nephew, Walter. A good time was had by all.

A very Happy New Year of the Hare to each and everyone of you. This year, as in previous years, weddings, baby births and baby parties were a-plenty.

Heading the category of baby parties was the month-old party of Ryan Gin, hosted by his paternal grandmother, Mrs. H. J. Gin. Ryan's parents met when James was under contract to Hughes Aircraft in Seoul, where his mother also worked. The red egg and girer party was at the Golden Palace Restaurant on 1-10-87.

The first wedding of the year was bestowed on June Yung and Nicky Lai who exchanged vows at the Lakewood First Presbyterian Church. The afternoon wedding on January 24th was followed by a banquet that evening at the Golden Palace Restaurant. The following week, the couple had another banquet at the Ocean City Restaurant in San Francisco where many more friends and relatives of the bridal pair gathered to dine on delicious foods and to wish the couple a lifetime of marital bliss. This is the second big event for the Heartley Lais in six months as their other son, Derrick Lai and Kathryn Yee, were married the previous September. Their daughter, Lonnie and Benny, was married three years previously.

Our New Year's celebration banquet was held at the Golden Dragon Restaurant this year with over 300 people attending the party. Three door prizes were given away that evening, all donated by the Gom-Benn Assn. Mrs. Boy Jin Wong, Raymond Gin and Mrs. Jim Wong all donated two bottles each of spirits, Mrs. Lai Fong Wong, Mrs. Fay Hong Wong, Mr. and Mrs. Ling Jue Wong, Roland Wong and Ging Wong all donated wrapped gifts. Mrs. Nam Wong also donated four bottles of booze.

Lila Wong was in charge of the drawings with the first prize of a color television set going to the Ock Yuen Wongs, the second prize of a video was won by Mrs. Sook Yee and the third prize of a table radio went to Ying Chong Lung Co.

March 3, 1987 was the day we had our Mother's Day luncheon at the Gom-Benn Assn. office. A good time was had by all. The following people donated goodies for the occasion: Tung D. Wong, 40 pieces of tea cakes, Mrs. Lai Fong Wong, chinese home-made tea-cakes, 30 pieces, another 50 pieces of teacakes from the Harold Wongs, a big pot of delicious chow mein from the Kam Wah Restaurant, the Wing Yow Wongs gave two boxes of "sai kay ma" cookies and Sam Sing Market honored us with two crates of oranges.

A banquet for Chairman Yang Shangkun was held at the Bonaventure Hotel California Ballroom on 5/25/87. Over 700 people attended the event sponsored by the Chinese Community in Los Angeles. Chairman Yang is on a state visit to the U.S.A. by delegation of the People's Republic of China. The Gom-Benn Assn. was represented by Mrs. Boy Jin Wong, Mrs. Park Kam Wong, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Gin, President Lui Wong and Tung D. Wong.

Carolyn Wong, daughter of the William B. Y. Wongs, and Leland Tse Joe, son of Mrs. Walton C. Joe, were married on August 8, 1987 at the St. John's Presbyterian Church. There was a reception following the wedding and a banquet that evening at the NBC Seafood Restaurant in Monterey Park. Several hundred people were on hand for the festivities and to wish the newlyweds a long life together.

mountains. Dad had taken us places on our vacations- Yosemite, New York City, Expo'67, Crater Lake... yet our family snapshots show a posed stern looking man. Yes, Dad took on the responsibility of raising five children with a certain seriousness.

Dad had a sharp critical nature about him perhaps from his own frustration at not being able to achieve his full potential. He had been a sickly child and many of his academic pursuits had been curtailed by illness. He developed a determination that was to be his strength. Through perseverance and hard work he was able to accomplish more than he ever dreamed he could. He was a successful restaurant owner and an upstanding citizen in the community. He instilled the value of education in us and provided each of us with a college education.

Dad was the last of a generation of pioneer Chinese who had come to America to seek their fortunes and perhaps realize their dreams. When he went back to China to bring his wife to America, he had made a decision. He would come back as an immigrant, not as a sojourner. This was the land where he would raise his children.

Linda Wong was born September 18, 1952. She is the second daughter/ fourth child of Voy and Fay Wong. She lives in Los Angeles and works for IBM Corporation as an education administrator.

Voy Wong was born August 8, 1913 in Gom Benn, Toisan, Kwangtung, China. He brought his wife to the United States in 1947. He died in 1975 after operating the Chungking Restaurant in Riverside, California for 32 years.

This article first appeared in the publication, Wong Ho Leung, an anthropological study of Riverside, California's Chinatown. The book was published in 1987 by the Great Basin Foundation.

Gambling was Dad's one indulgence. When planning our family vacations, Dad always tried to include a side trip to Las Vegas, or Lake Tahoe. He justified the trip for us by taking us to see Hoover Dam, or Emerald Bay. One summer we learned to play mah jong from our Canadian cousins. Dad was amazed we had learned to play what he considered a complicated game. He was secretly pleased because now he would have someone to play with. During our next family vacation to San Francisco, he bought the family a mah jong set. But, he also lectured us about the potential dangers of becoming addicted to this game thus neglecting our studies. We were amused at Dad's seriousness because the game to us seemed as innocuous as gin rummy. Knowing how to play mah jong gave us an opportunity to interact with Dad on a social level. He used to get impatient with our novice playing skills and tap his tile loudly on the table to hurry us along.

Since Dad was so reticent about his personal past, most of what we know has been from my mom, a natural story teller, and an old shoebox full of old letters and photographs. We found the shoebox from exploring in Dad's old desk. The contents were from the period when Dad was in his 20's. He was in the United States at the time separated from my mom. It was quite a revelation to see a completely different side of Dad. We saw a youthful person not much older than us laughing, having a good time. He had gone to the historic 1939 San Francisco International Exposition on Treasure Island. There was a photograph of him on the Berkeley campus. Some of us had attended U.C. Berkeley. My dad had mixed feelings at the time. Berkeley was a prestigious school that was ranked one of the best in the country, yet we would be so far from home and exposed to the radical activities going on at the time. Dad would have to deal with our struggles in becoming Asian Americans. There were photographs of Dad in Vancouver and the San Bernadino



one's condition. He did not believe in looking back. He believed in progress and the advanced technology the future had in store for us. Dad had always wanted me to learn to fly an airplane because that was going to replace the car as the future mode of transportation.

Years later, after Dad's death my Uncle who used to take Dad to Las Vegas told us that my dad actually had a great sense of humor. He never revealed that side to us because he felt in order for us to respect him he had to maintain the serious father image. Once in awhile we would catch a glimpse of Dad's real personality. He loved watching westerns on television, or at the movies. When he took us to the movies, we always scrambled towards the middle seats while he sat almost in the last row.

One particularly fond memory I have of my dad was when he occasionally let me drive home from the restaurant. It was two blocks in distance and late at night so there weren't too many cars around. Barely being able to see over the dash, I would slide in close ~~next~~ to Dad and he would let me take the steering wheel. It was a lot of fun, but the car seemed hard to steer as I remembered my dad having to correct the wheel several times.

Dad loved to talk about politics. When we got older his lectures turned into discussions about China's history and current events. It was through these conversations that I started to know my dad as a person. He was proud of his Chinese heritage. Much to our liberal protests, he voted to re-elect former President Nixon only because he was instrumental in reopening the doors between China and the United States. If he ever talked of the past, it was of the corruption, the injustices, and the imperialism that China had suffered in this century.

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Once we were seated and served tea, my dad would perform his "tea ceremony". He poured a little tea into one of the cups and gently swished it around and then poured the tea from that cup into the next cup until all the cups were rinsed out. Next was the sneaky part. He would try to find an unused receptical to pour the dirty tea into. It was usually the ashtray. In later years I realized this was a common practice in China where the standards of cleanliness were not always the same as ours.

Although today I would never ruin a good cup of Chinese tea by adding sugar, we used to love unwrapping the sugar cubes, plunking them into the tea-filled cups, and using our chopsticks to smash the desolving cubes. Our favorite part though, was when the waiter brought out the huge tray of dim sum. Fresh and steaming, the tidbits were usually served in threes on small dishes. We could choose what we wanted by pointing, or by trying to remember the Chinese name. My favorites were the Char Sieu Bows, (pork buns); Sieu Mais, (pork dumplings); and Bak Tang Gou, (glutinous rice cakes). To this day I have never tasted dim sum as delicious as back then. As we finished each plate we would stack them up. This made it easier for the waiter who calculated our bill by counting the number of dishes we had.

Dad never let these tea parties get too boisterous, or out of hand. One stern look from him kept us in line. When we were growing up, Dad always maintained his role as the strict authoritarian father. He believed strongly in the Confucian ethic that each member of the family had their proper role. If everyone adhered to their position, there would be harmony in the family. Dad was a moralistic no-nonsense type of person. When we tried to have a conversation with him, he would end up lecturing us. He was an intellectual who believed that education and hard work were the only ways to improve

I REMEMBER THE TEA PARTIES WE USED TO HAVE

WITH MY DAD

I remember the tea parties we used to have with my dad. He ran a Chinese restaurant, the CHUNGKING, in Riverside, California, about 50 miles east of Los Angeles. If the Chinese produce wholesalers from Los Angeles didn't deliver, Dad would have to drive into Los Angeles to pick up the Chinese food stuffs for his restaurant. We, his children, there were five of us, hated going into Los Angeles. The drive made us sleepy and there wasn't much to do in the produce district of Los Angeles. Dad, wanting company for the long drive, would try to bribe us with a tea party. He always managed to snag a few of us because Chungking didn't serve tea cakes, (dim sum), and we had the only Chinese restaurant in town. We loved the tasty "bits of heart" and delighted in my dad's "tea ceremony".

On the road, we tried to entertain ourselves with sign games, or got slightly car sick from reading our comic books. Once we spotted the City Hall though, we perked up because we knew it wouldn't be too long before we would be playing with our chopsticks and eating dim sum.

Exiting the freeway, we would wind through the busy downtown area that seemed dirty and foreign in comparison to Riverside. The people thinned out and the streets became more desolate looking as we headed towards our destination, YING CHONG LUNG, the Chinese wholesale grocery store. It was located on San Pedro street across from the City Market. Next to Ying Chong Lung was the NEW MOON RESTAURANT where we had our tea parties. It was newly built so it had a clean modern look almost like an oasis in that run down part of town. Inside, the dining area faced a patio garden separated by glass that created a cool serene atmosphere.