



Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

Preserving Locke's history and legacy

www.locke-foundation.org

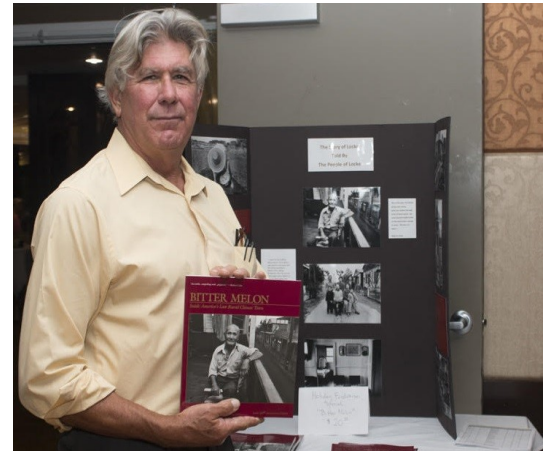
Winter 2017

lockefoundation@frontiernet.net

Star Theater Photo: Mark Hedlund

Locke Fundraiser Surpasses Goal

Locke Foundation held a fundraising dinner on Saturday, October 29, 2016, at the HK Islander Restaurant in Sacramento. Former and current Locke residents, friends and supporters gave generously to pay for a bronze marker with Chinese text to be installed at Main Street Park in Spring 2017. The marker will match the one already installed with English text. The 9-course dinner was accompanied by raffle prizes and silent auction.



Clockwise: (1) James Motlow, co-author of Bitter Melon. (2) LF Board: Darrel Woo, Honey Lum, Deborah Mendel, Stuart Walthall, Eileen Leung, Clarence Chu and Dustin Marr. (3) Eileen Leung and Anita Lowe. (4) Kate Guggenheim drops raffle tickets at prize table. (5) Norm Spalding, Nora Williams, Deborah Mendel, Flora Spalding, Kim Peterson, DR Wagner, Kim King and Susie Wilson. (Photos courtesy of Joe Chan.)



Why Don't the Chinese Just Celebrate New Year on January 1 like the West?

Chinese New Year is never on January 1 because Chinese have a different traditional date for New Year. Though China has a day off on January 1, and some fireworks are let off then, **most attention is focused on the traditional date** of New Year, according to China's lunar calendar. Chinese New Year falls in the period from January 21 to February 20. The Chinese get no time off for Christmas (except those in HK, Macau, and Taiwan). Instead of earlier in winter, the Chinese have their much-needed winter break in mid to late winter. The holiday time was **chosen for farmers**. It's a good time for them to get together, relax, and pray for the next year of farming, as it's the slack time before spring ploughing etc. begins.

Why Does the Date for Chinese New Year Change Every Year?

Firstly, China's lunar calendar is according to the moon. New Year always starts with a **new moon** for the Chinese. Secondly, it is according to the sun. Chinese New Year is always 1 to 2 months after China's shortest day of the year (the winter solstice, December 21 or 22). The Chinese lunar date is always 21-51 days behind the corresponding Gregorian (international) calendar date... except when they add a month.

Why Do the Chinese Call Chinese New Year 'Spring Festival'?

Chinese New Year always falls within half a month of 'Start of Spring' (beginning February 4), the first of the 24 solar terms of China's traditional solar calendar. As '**Start of Spring**' begins the '**farming calendar**' it is logical that New Year should be celebrated then, with a "spring" festival.

'Start of Spring' is an **oddly-named** solar term, because spring is still a month or more away in China's cold north, and wintry weather still lingers in temperate south China. However, Chinese still celebrate (the coming) spring with the Spring Festival.

To distinguish between "international" New Year

(January 1) and Chinese New Year, instead of using 'New Year' (新年, usually meaning CNY in China), Chinese call January 1 'first dawn' (元旦) and Chinese New Year 'Spring Festival' (春节).

Why Is Each New Year Associated with a Different Animal?

Since ancient times, Chinese people have been using the Chinese Zodiac animals to represent the years. Each lunar year is related to a zodiac animal, beginning at Chinese New Year. The 12 zodiac animals recur on a 12-year cycle.



Why Are There Not Enough Trains at Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year is the most important time for family reunions. No matter how far Chinese are from their homes, they do whatever they can to get back for a family reunion dinner on New Year's Eve, which results in the **world's biggest annual migration of people** (over 200 million in China).

Even with the rail network at capacity, train tickets are the first to sell out.

Why Do the Chinese Set Off So Many Firecrackers?

For the right vibe: Chinese New Year is a happy and lively festival, so for Chinese people lots of noise is a must to heighten the festival atmosphere, and firecrackers (and fireworks) are the cultural way to do it.

In ancient times, it was believed that the explosive sound of firecrackers scared away evil spirits, who might otherwise bring bad luck.

In modern China, people set off firecrackers and fireworks during festivals to express their happiness, and invite good luck (all firecrackers are the lucky color red).

Why Do the Chinese Eat Dumplings on New Year's Eve?

Dumplings are a traditional Chinese New Year food, especially in North China. As they are the shape of old silver and gold ingots (an old form of currency), Chinese believe that **eating dumplings will bring prosperity** in the coming year.



Why Do the Chinese Hand Out Red Envelopes at Chinese New Year?

For luck: In Chinese culture, red is a lucky color, so giving money in a red envelope is a way of giving best wishes, as well as a financial present. It's like sending a greetings card with money inside in the West. Red envelope money is called "lucky money", though it's really the red envelope that's lucky.

Demon suppression: Traditionally red envelope money is called 'suppressing years money' (压岁钱). According to many New Year legends, evil spirits are scared of red, so red envelopes were originally used to suppress or ward off demons while giving money.



Chinese New Year, like Christmas in the West, is "**the season of good will**" in China, so most people receive a red envelope from someone, whether employer or family. There are lots of customs about who gives who how much in a red envelope. Red envelopes are handed out to younger generations by their parents, grandparents, relatives, and even close neighbors and friends during Chinese New Year.

Why Do Chinese Wear New Red or Colorful Clothes at CNY?

Wearing new clothes from head to toe symbolizes **a new start and fresh hopes** for the New Year. Chinese believe that New Year's Day sets the tone for the rest of the year, so everyone tries to dress well. **Red** is China's good luck color, believed to scare away spirits of bad fortune. Chinese usually wear red or other **brightly-colored clothes** on New Year's Day, to go with the festive and upbeat mood. Black or white, symbolic of mourning and death would not be appropriate..

Why Do Chinese Have Dragon and Lion Dances at Chinese New Year?

Dragon dances and lion dances are traditional performances for joyous festivals and auspicious occasions to enhance a festive atmosphere. Performing dragon or lion dances (during the Spring Festival) is a way **to pray for good luck and drive away evil spirits**.

How is Chinese New Year celebrated in North America?

Since Chinese New Year is not a national holiday in the US, modified celebrations include family dinner on New Year's Eve, putting up CNY decorations (red lanterns, couplets), sending greetings to friends and family, visiting relatives, giving red envelopes to children. Major metropolitan areas with vibrant Chinatowns like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto and New York City sponsor lion dances, parades, and cultural events. 2017 Year of the Rooster begins on January 28, 2017. Chinese New Year is celebrated for at least one month thereafter.

Celebrate Chinese New Year in Locke on February 4, 2017 (Free Museum Day)

The Boarding House joins an elite list of Sacramento area museums in hosting Free Museum Day on Saturday, February 4, 2017, from 9 am-5 pm.

On the same day, Chinese New Year of the Rooster will be celebrated with snacks and coloring activities for children in the Boarding House and Chinese calligraphy demo in the Chinese School by Anita Lo.

Chinese couplet translation:

Left: May you have the energy of a dragon and horse

Right: May everything be successful



The Buddha, Dagger-Clawed Pygmies, and the Leaf

Article and photos by Stuart Walthall



2500 years ago a young man sat beneath the spreading branches of a tree and opened his mind to the universe ... and into himself. Seven days later he stood and walked away fully realized. Siddhartha had become the Buddha.

Today Buddhism is practiced by an estimated half billion people, which represents approximately 8% of the world's population. And though The Buddha lived and taught in India, China is the country with the largest population of Buddhists: a quarter of a billion. Buddhism has developed into the most important religion in China. Since I am a Locke resident, and because Locke has a Chinese heritage (the largest, most complete example of a rural, agricultural Chinese American community in the United States), I thought it might be interesting to discuss an icon of Buddhism.

However, this article won't be discussing the history or philosophy of the many denominations of Buddhism currently being practiced throughout China and the rest of the world. In fact, Locke had little historical and cultural connection to traditional Chinese Buddhism. From the 1920's to the late 1950's Locke had a thriving and well attended Baptist church (Locke Walking Tour #48). Nearby Walnut Grove does have an active Buddhist church whose congregants are primarily of Japanese descent.

So what *is* Locke's connection to Buddhism? Answer: *The Tree*. I will elaborate on that connection in a moment. But first, here's a little information regarding the tree under which the Buddha attained His enlightenment.

That tree is called The Sacred Bodhi Tree. Bodhi means *awakening* or *enlightenment*, and the original tree was located in Badh Gaya, Bihar, (central-eastern) India. A Bodhi tree is actually a species of fig (*Ficus religiosa*), but instead of the deeply lobed fig leaves which we are so familiar, the Bodhi has heart-shaped leaves, often prominently displayed as religious icons.

The term "Bodhi Tree" is also widely applied to currently existing trees, particularly the Sacred Fig growing at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya. This tree, plant-

ed in 288BC, is often cited as a direct descendant of the original tree. The tree is a frequent destination for pilgrims, being the most important of the four main Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Bodhi trees are planted in close proximity to every Buddhist monastery.

Another Holy Bodhi tree with great significance in the history of Buddhism is located in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. It too is believed to have been propagated from the original Bodhi tree. It is this tree that I am going to be addressing.

Not long ago I was walking to the back of town to check out the Locke community gardens when Justin Cairns approached me holding something in his right hand. Justin and his girlfriend Julie are Locke residents who live on Main Street above a retail shop. He is a professional archeologist with expertise in archeological sites located throughout Delta.

Justin was born in Lodi and raised in nearby Walnut Grove. He attended Walnut Grove Elementary and graduated from Delta High School in Clarksburg. After attending community college he earned a degree in archeology from CSU Sacramento, from which he will soon also receive his master's degree.

To support himself during his education he worked for many familiar Delta businesses, including: Wilcox Pears, Hotel Del Rio, Kay Dix Inc., the Ryde Hotel, and Heart Nursery. He is also a historian of the early Locke Ranch, grows Chinese vegetables, and has a big brown lab whom I consider the coolest dog in Locke.



Justin Cairns

"Check this out". Justin lifts a flat dried leaf to my

gaze. "It's from the tree that Buddha sat under and became enlightened.... Well, a tree grown from a cutting of the original tree", I checked it out closer. "You get this on eBay?". "No. I got it from the tree.... the actual tree!"

Until our initial conversation I was only vaguely familiar with the story of The Buddha and His lengthy resolute repose into enlightenment. So, on a whim, I started gathering information from Wikipedia. Then whenever Justin walked past my porch on the way to his truck parked in the back of town I would asked him questions regarding his travel adventures, the Bodhi Tree, and that leaf. Our discourses continued in dribs and drabs over the course of several weeks.

"In 2014 Julie and I flew to Colombo (Capital of Sri Lanka). We traveled through what they call the cultural triangle: Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, and Anuradhapura. This is the interior of the island (of Sri Lanka). Spice and fruit trees everywhere. The main reason I went through was to visit the Vedda people (indigenous people of Sri Lanka), genetically isolated for 40 thousand years. They lived in caves until the 1970's. I went to interview the leader of the Vedda about stories related to the Nittaevo, a small bodied hominid that (according to numerous reports but not yet scientifically verified) lived on the island until the 1800's".

"The Nittaevo communicated with bird chirps, stood about 4 feet tall, and were covered with hair. They ate meat raw, preferred entrails and organs, and supposedly would sneak into villages to steal food and kidnap children, which they would eat. The Vedda believe they killed the last group of Nittaevo in the early 1800's by running them into a cave, building a fire in front of it, and burning the fire for three days to ensure that all of the Nittaevo died from smoke inhalation".

"The Vedda Chief told me that he believed there were no more Nittaevo still living on the island. However, he did say that his great-grandparents encountered the Nittaevo while walking in the jungle surrounding their village. That means there were still Nittaevo alive on the island after their reported extinction".



Vedda Chief Uruwarige Wannila Aththo

{Authors note: During my vetting process of this

article, I found that Justin's account of the Nittaevo people and the legends surrounding them were spot on. However, Justin failed to mention the powerful claws so frequently referenced in eye witness accounts. Numerous scientific investigations have been done and continue regarding the Nittaevo people of Sri Lanka}.

(Justin and Julie now motoring through Anuradhapura) "We were told by our driver about an important place for Buddhists. Our driver parked and told us to enter the gates into a sacred place. When we approached the large gates at the end of a long path we were approached by a man and a woman. They stopped Julie and told her she could not enter unless her shoulders were covered. There was a pile of scarves at the gate for this purpose. The woman handed Julie a scarf to wrap around her shoulders. We entered and continued to walk down a paved pathway for another 200 meters".

"We approached a building with people chanting (inside). Visitors were coming and going everywhere. It was a very busy place. When I walked around the building I saw how it was built around a very large Bodhi tree. I had heard of the Sacred Bodhi tree located in India. There was a path that went along a large glass window where the trunk of this tree was visible. Offerings, mainly flowers, were left all over the vicinity of this viewing window. I stepped back and looked upward to see the size of this tree. Branches extended far out from the building. At that moment I noticed a leaf fall from a branch. I looked around to see if anyone was watching. I picked it up and put it in my Eyewitness Travel Guide".

"I didn't realize the significance of this site until afterwards. I found out how old the tree was: Over 2000 years, dating to the arrival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka".

"That's probably more than you needed to know".

I am not exactly sure what I needed to know, but I certainly want to thank Justin Cairns for accommodating my frequent questions and for his more than thorough, and somewhat circuitous, elaborations on the subject of his leaf.

Locke is known for its quirky and interesting residents and Justin Cairns fits right in. And his Sacred Bodhi Tree leaf? It's now properly protected in a handsome display case. But before the leaf was mounted I did get to hold it in my hand. So I've got that going for me.



Leaf from The Bodhi Tree



In Memoriam : Jeff Gillenkirk 1949-2016

Bitter Melon immortalized Locke



The town of Locke lost a good friend when Jeff Gillenkirk, co-author of Bitter Melon, passed away unexpectedly on November 22, 2016. He was 67 years old.

Jeff Gillenkirk and James Motlow co-authored Bitter Melon, a book that documented the largely forgotten story of the Chinese pioneers who came to California during the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act. It became an instant classic with its dramatic preservation through oral histories and photographs of the experiences of three generations of Chinese pioneers in America's West. Its vivid historical and contemporary photographs and poignant oral histories with the residents of Locke became legendary. In 2015 the town of Locke celebrated its 100th anniversary, an inspiring testament to the stamina and perseverance of California's Chinese pioneers. The text has been updated for this 6th authorized edition to celebrate the town of Locke's 100th anniversary as America's last rural Chinese town.

Born in Rochester, N.Y., Jeff graduated from Georgetown University in 1972 and pursued a career in journalism — first at Psychiatric News in Washington, D.C., and later as a freelance writer in Los Angeles and San Francisco.



James Motlow, Jeff Gillenkirk, Darwin Kan and Connie Chan celebrate latest printing of Bitter Melon. June 1, 2015. Photo by Cleo Appleton.

He had been a speechwriter and communications strategist for New York Governor Mario Cuomo, New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer and other major political figures, CEOs and heads of non-profit organizations. He was also a news writer for KTVU-Channel 2's Ten O'clock News (SF Bay Area), a magazine and newspaper writer for The Nation, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and other publications, and founding editor of Working Assets' pioneering online news-

magazine, News Bytes.

Jeff served as CEO of Your Message Media founded by with Katie Kleinsasser, he had more than three decades of experience as a media strategist and expert writer to a wide variety of clients and causes, providing a full-range of communications services including analysis of your organization's media capacity, strategic media planning, spokesperson training, online and direct mail fundraising, and preparation of deliverables such as press advisories and releases, reports, brochures and web site content. He recently completed a three year stint as Communications Specialist for First 5 Alameda County, where he pioneered the agency's social media presence and helped establish the Alameda County Fathers Corps.

Jeff was a friend to many former Locke residents who have passed on or moved away. He was able to capture the pathos and humanity of a humble community. He visited Locke often to attend festivities and to reach out to residents.



On October 29, 2016, Jeff Gillenkirk, James Motlow and Stuart Walthall greet guests at LF fundraiser at HK Islander Restaurant in Sacramento. Photo by Joe Chan.

A Celebration of Life for Jeff will be held on

Sunday, January 29, 2017, 11 am - 3 pm
Jan Ying Association Building
13947 Main Street, Locke
Reception to follow
Remembrances may be made to
Locke Foundation

Make a Charitable Gift to the Locke Foundation

Here are several ways you can honor Locke's legacy through the Locke Foundation:

1. **IRA Gift:** For those aged 70.5 and older, you can make a gift directly from your IRA to meet your required minimum distribution without paying federal income tax on the withdrawal. This provision may be attractive to retirees who don't need all the current income from their IRA to meet current living expenses.
2. **Leave a gift to the Locke Foundation** through your will or living trust without reducing your current income. Gifts of retirement plan assets can provide tax advantages and can be given to LF by naming us as a beneficiary.
3. **Have books, photos or artifacts relevant to the Locke experience?** Donate them to Locke Foundation to preserve and share for future generations.

For more information on arranging a planned gift to LF, please send email to lockefoundation@frontiernet.net



Community Service Award from
Asian Pacific Bar
Association of Sacramento



National Historic Landmark Plaque from
U. S. Department of the Interior

Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Tel () _____ Fax () _____

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

Volunteer docent _____ Donor _____ Visitor Center Volunteer _____

Contributor to newsletter _____ Media contacts _____ Landscape maintenance _____

Membership Dues: circle one

_____ \$25 Individual Annual/\$200 Lifetime

_____ \$50 Family or Non-Profit Organization Annual/\$300 Lifetime

_____ \$100 Business Annual/\$500 Lifetime

Make check payable to Locke Foundation. Please return this form with check to Locke Foundation, P. O. Box 1085, Walnut Grove, CA 95690. Contributions are tax deductible to extent allowed by law. Tax ID: 20-0364281.

Office use only:

Date application received _____ Membership Year _____ Renewal _____

Locke Foundation
P. O. Box 1085
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

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