Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會
Preserving Locke's history and legacy

lockefoundation@frontiernet.net Spring 2022 www.locke-foundation.org

Chopsticks Etiquette

By Eileen Leung

Around 3000 BC, food was cooked in pots that rested on 3 squat legs set directly over a fire. After the food was done, it took over an hour for it to cool. Those too hungry to wait would grab a pair of twigs, poke at the steaming food and pick out the best morsels. The last emperor of the Shang Dynasty (1500 BC) is believed to have used ivory chopsticks and by the Chou Dynasty (1028-480 BC) chopstick usage was common. However, chopsticks are not used everywhere in Asia. In India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Central Asia most people have traditionally eaten with their hands.

Capable of reaching deep into boiling pots of water or oil, early chopsticks were used mainly for cooking. It wasn't until A.D. 400 that people began actually eating with the utensils. This happened when a population boom across China sapped resources and forced cooks to develop cost-saving habits. They began chopping food into smaller pieces that required less cooking fuel—and happened to be perfect for the tweezer-like grip of chopsticks.

Throughout history, chopsticks have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with another staple of Asian cuisine: rice. Naturally, eating with chopsticks lends itself to some types of food more than others. At first glance, you'd think that rice wouldn't make the cut, but in Asia most rice is of the short- or medium-grain variety. The starches in these rices create a cooked product that is tender and chewy, unlike the fluffy and distinct grains of Western long-grain rice. As chopsticks come together to lift steaming bundles of sticky rice, it was a match made in heaven.

Chopsticks and food have accompanied the development of Chinese civilization. As extensions of fingers, chopsticks insulate our hands from the heat and keep them clean while we eat. Using chopsticks to share food from the same bowl is healthier than dipping one's fingers in the bowl. Eating from the same dish (family-style) fosters a sense of community. Sharing food with others requires rules of etiquette or socialization passed from one generation to the next. Some of these rules include:

1) Children should not play with chopsticks, but must treat them with respect; they cannot tap chopsticks against an empty bowl. This implies begging for rice.
2) There is only one correct way to hold chopsticks; other ways reflect poor upbringing.
3) It is impolite to pick up food with chopsticks positioned parallel to the plate with the wrist facing down. You must take whatever is on top and not dig through the dish for the best pieces.
4) When eating rice, the bowl must be raised to the lips with one hand while using chopsticks to put the food into the mouth with the other hand. (It is extremely insulting to a host if a guest picks up lumps of rice or food from a bowl resting on the table.)
5) Chopsticks should have minimal contact with the mouth. It is poor table manners to suck on the tip of the chopsticks.
6) After you have picked up an item, it is yours. You should not put it back in the dish. (So set your aim before raising your chopsticks.)

Confucian family values are taught to children at an early age at the dining table as children are always included in family meals:

Children should find the best piece of chicken or vegetable and offer it to their elders.
If there are diners of different ages at the table, the younger ones must wait until the elders pick up their chopsticks before eating.
Children should never gobble up all the food from any dish; they must leave enough on each dish for others at the table.
It is impolite to take the last piece of food from the dish; it should be left as an indication the host has provided ample portions.
Children should never show dislike for any dish at the table to avoid offending the host.
Never stick chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice because a funeral ritual involves placing a bowl of rice with upright chopsticks at the family altar to honor the deceased.

Unlike the European practice of serving guests' food on individual plates before eating with a knife and fork, the Chinese share food from serving dishes. Chopsticks allow a diner to take a small or large portion with dexterity and precision. Food is served in bite-sized pieces for easier manipulation so knives are never used. Although forks were used as early as the 10th century, they were not readily accepted by the Chinese. Forks are made of metal and stiff; they rely on a more aggressive act of piercing or puncturing food. They conduct heat and they can inflict pain. A vegetarian, Confucius believed that sharp utensils at the dinner table would remind eaters of the slaughterhouse. He also thought that knives' sharp points evoked violence and warfare, killing the happy, contented ambiance that should reign during meals. Everyone is expected to share in all the dishes at the table. The concept of family and society is reinforced; the role of the individual is de-emphasized.

As a tool through which a society reveals itself, chopsticks require the delicate manipulation of wrist and fingers as required in Chinese calligraphy and brush painting. Both chopsticks and paint brushes are made of slim, smooth bamboo to fit the hand. Because of their simplicity and versatility, chopsticks have become not only a common universal eating utensil, but a symbol of East Asian civilization. It has undergone very little evolution despite advances in technology and science.

Gay Hoi Lum, Living the Pioneer Spirit

Interview by Honey Lum
Article by Honey Lum, Carol Lee and Corliss Lee

Gay Lum in Locke for interview. 6/2021. Courtesy of OHP

Gay Hoi Lum was born in 1927, Sui Yun Village, Zhongshan, China. At 94, he is a cheerful man who loves to tell funny stories and easily opens doors with his big smile. His longevity and appreciation for living are a reflection of his humble beginnings. In 1939, at age 11, Gay and his cousin, who had claimed to be his brother, arrived at Angel Island through his father's sponsorship.

Living on Angel Island was new, so different, and exciting. He enjoyed American dishes, (beef stew, mash potatoes, but especially Jello!!) which were tasty compared to dishes served in China. He was detained on the Island for three weeks awaiting his hour-long interrogation. His father and uncle had coached him earlier so their answers matched. Gay recounted his experience. "Not too bad. Three meal a day. Just waiting. Ridiculous questions. What was your school uniform? Did you belong to the Boy Scouts? Where did your mom put the rice bowl?"

The boys joined his uncle and father (Lum Chew) in Locke. His father had rented a small room in the basement of Locke Inn Hotel. (The hotel burned down in the 1960s). The four shared an 8' X 9' room that included a kerosene stove, a kerosene lamp, and four foldable cots that were stored against the wall when not in use. There was a shared kitchen and toilet. Since there was no bathroom, they would take sponge baths in the evenings. The faucet was located outside between two building and a partition was set up to hide the little laundry tub that was also used for "baths".

His father worked and stayed on the farm during the week and returned on weekends to give the two boys $5 for a weeks worth of groceries. The boys purchased vegetables and 15 cents each of pork and beef at Yuen Chong Market that they cooked themselves. To supplement their meals, Gay caught fish from beneath the packing shed. In the summer he gathered the ice that was used to preserve the packed pears stored in rail cars. "To make Jello! It was a wonderful thing! That what ice for. To make that you got to have cool."

Gay laughed as he told a story about being a young boy making mischief in Locke. "When we are kid, we know there are whorehouse. We push doorbell and ran. One day she caught us. We thought we smart. This time we put a toothpick in there so stay ringing. The Madam caught us and ask us come back. She gave us each 5 cents to keep and 50 cents to go buy ice cream." When the boys returned, "She invite us in! The ice cream for us, never mention ring doorbell. So we never do that again." Sometime people ask, "How you know what a whorehouse look like?" I say "I been there! I'm the youngest guy actually invited into whorehouse!"

Gay did not speak English, and at age 11 was placed with kindergarteners in the segregated Walnut Grove Elementary School. A poor student of English, Gay enhanced his English by watching movies at the Walnut Grove Theater. *Hop Along Cassidy, the Lone Ranger,* and *Roy Rogers* had an easy storyline to follow since the bad guy wore a black hat and the good guy wore white. Having no money (admission cost 10 cents) Gay collected ("stole") empty milk and soda water bottles to redeem for money at Yuen Chong Market. He would also wait for the confusion of admission and intermission to sneak in. If his father knew he would have disapproved. It wasn't necessarily the sneaking in that bothered Dad. It was the kissing shown in the movie that might "give a young boy ideas". Gay acknowledges that to this day he has never lost his "Chinese accent."

He experienced some cultural tensions and language difficulties in those first few years. The English language and its subtleties were confusing. Once during class Gay asked for permission to use the "toilet". The teacher denied his request insisting he wait till class break because he should have used the word "restroom". English was very challenging. The Chinese language seemed so simple with no gender distinction in pronouns, no words in plural form, and verbs were only present tense. "The bathroom for take bath. No?" While walking to school along the railroad tracks, the Japanese boys in Walnut Grove threw rocks at the Chinese. Chinese boys carried rocks in their pocket in

defense. Gay did allude to the sentiment that the Japanese occupied China so the two groups were enemies. Gay experienced ridicule and bullying from the Chinese Americans as well. Native Chinese kids who had already assimilated would use the derogatory term "FOB", fresh off the boat. He was often harassed and in fights. Gay's father had several lessons and one was to "walk away…never fight". As he continued to get beat, he received different advice from an old Chinese laborer on the Thomas Ranch. He was instructed to fight back. "Even if you can't win, fight back". The next time Gay was determined, fought ferociously, and was never harassed again. Although he was a mild-mannered boy, he learned a lesson that day, "Sometime you got to fight back".

Gay's first job was weeding in the tomato fields alongside his father. The heat was extreme so he placed a wet towel over his head. After finishing one row, the towel was dry. His dad was paid $1 per day and Gay was paid 50 cent for the same work. Gay remembers his father as kind and humble. Dad's perspective in life was to work hard, earn money then return to China. Just learn enough English to send money home. Dad arrived in the US in the early 1900's wearing the Ching Dynasty style – a pigtail and coolie clothing. A woven jute basket served as his luggage. Because his father did not speak English, he was doomed to work as a farm laborer, picking pears, irrigating, and pruning.

After one year at the Locke Inn, Gay moved to the JB Thomas Ranch in Ryer Island, where he was the houseboy for the next six years. His accommodation was a small room in the barn. "No one to take care of you. You on your own." There were chores before and after school. Winter mornings before school, he fueled the fireplace so the family would awaken warm. Other responsibilities included "housekeeping, feed chicken, tend garden, mow lawn, wash window and car… typical houseboy. Only room and board. No pay except for fieldwork in the pear orchard on Sunday."

At 18 years old, the Ranch owner helped Gay defer military service by claiming Gay was the Foreman. His Rio Vista High School the art teacher recognized his exceptional artistic talent and was his biggest advocate for a scholarship to attend the San Francisco Academy of Advertising. The other scholarship recipient could not complete the program so Gay received two scholarships. "I was lucky."

Gay soon transferred to San Francisco State College where his professor was so impressed with his talent that he hired Gay as his Teacher's Assistant and as a Production Manager for the school. He also earned $20 a month as a houseboy and received free room and board. His expenses were covered. "I was lucky."

In 1953, just shy of his 26th birthday and 2 units short of graduation, Gay was drafted into the Korean War and selected for Army Intelligence. Recognized for his language skills he was directed to the Osaka Military Language School to study Mandarin for a year. He was then sent to the 38th parallel – Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea where he was stationed at headquarters. Surrounded by Officers, he served as an Interpreter for Chinese defectors, assisting with interrogation, and drawing diagrams from aerial photos tracking ground movement. Service in Korea was an interesting experience, but more than anything he wanted to be home.

Gay Lum stationed in Korea in 1955.

Once discharged, Gay returned to Sacramento State College to complete the remaining units for his degree. Good news came during mid-semester when he was informed that his military school credit fulfilled the requirements for his Bachelor of Arts degree.

Gay had met his future wife, Katie, a few years earlier at the Ranch. Katie's uncle was Foreman there and quickly recognized Gay's potential. "Gay is a nice boy, a college boy. Be friends with him." They were married upon his return from the service.

Gay Lum on furlough visiting Dad in Locke in 1955.

Life was not easy. When they tried to rent an apartment in Sacramento, he experienced discrimination. Several owners said the vacant unit was rented. One manager admitted, "The owner does not rent to Chinese or Blacks." With that, Katie and Gay decided to purchase a home. However, when asked the price Gay paid, a neighbor quickly pointed out that Gay had paid significantly over market value.

In 1957, Gay was the first Chinese hired by the Sacramento Bee . The qualifying exam for employment was to retouch a photo. Compared to his competitor, Gay's work was unparalleled, considerably faster and better quality. He was hired as the Editorial Illustrator. This was life altering. A union job meant equal pay, benefits, and retirement. " I was lucky."

Gay received many accolades for his work. Capitol Nursery contracted with him to produce their yearly calendars. He specialized in botanicals and some of his favorite works are in his home. Gay designed the cover pages for the California Life Magazine, an insert in the weekend newspaper featuring flowers, trees, na-

ture, arts, and food, etc. He did illustration work for the "Book of Trees in Sacramento". For his lifetime contribution in the profession, Gay received the highest honor in Journalism. In 1996 the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) acknowledged Gay with the Pioneer Spirit Award for "Leading the Way for Asian American Journalists".

Gay retired in 1992 after working 35 years, but not before sponsoring his mother to the U.S. Gay was able to fulfill his father's dream, reuniting them after 25 years apart. They lived together happily for 11 years in their own home before his father's passing.

Gay Lum's illustration in Sacramento: City of Trees, by George Dobbins, 1980, p. 42.

Since retirement he and Katie have traveled extensively throughout Asia. He was able to fish to his heart's content with friends. His home is decorated with a few of his prized oversized fish taxidermy catches, including a striped bass and black bass.

These days Gay's passion is tending his garden, a reminder of his humble beginnings on the Ranch. His yard is filled with Chinese vegetables, grafted fruit trees (peaches, pears, apples, citrus), and a huge prickly pear cactus. Most noticeable is the abundance of flowering and fragrant plants reminiscent of a childhood day spent surrounded by the heavy scent of perfume…in a "whorehouse".

Today Gay and Katie celebrate 63 years of marriage and are proud of their family of two daughters, Suelene and Milene, grandchildren Daniel and Victoria Choy and great grandchildren Phin and Selah Choy. His life's gems would be to get an education and to be humble. Gay has a notable Chinese saying, "If you never taste bitter, then you don't know sweet."

On display at the Locke Boardinghouse Museum (LBM) are personal items of Gay's father, Lum Chee: 1) Woven jute basket, used as luggage on his journey from China. 2) Kerosene stove for heat. 3) Kerosene Lantern. 4) Hand saw to prune trees. (Graciously donated from the Gay Lum Collection).

2022 Scholarship Opportunities for High School Students

The principal mission of the Locke Foundation is to educate the public about the rich historical and cultural legacies of the town of Locke and to inform the public of the compelling immigrant experiences which played such significant roles in the development of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, California and the nation. Another mission of the Locke Foundation is to bring benefit to Locke and surrounding Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta communities.

The Locke Foundation, a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation, is resolute in its responsibilities as an educational and benevolent organization. The Foundation places particular emphasis on lending a helping hand to students.

For these reasons the Locke Foundation is pleased to announce the availability of six $500 cash scholarships to be awarded to graduating seniors from Delta High School and Rio Vista High School. Deadline for applying is April 8, 2022. The scholarships will be awarded virtually. Information and application forms can be accessed at: www.lockefoundation.org/scholarship

The Locke Foundation is the only organization solely dedicated to the preservation and advocacy of the town of Locke - the largest, most complete example of a rural agricultural Chinese American community in the United States.

Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival Is Back!

Saturday May 21, 2022

Main Street Locke

11 am-4pm

Arts and Crafts

Talks and Demonstrations

Lion Dance

Cultural Entertainment

Food Vendors

Music

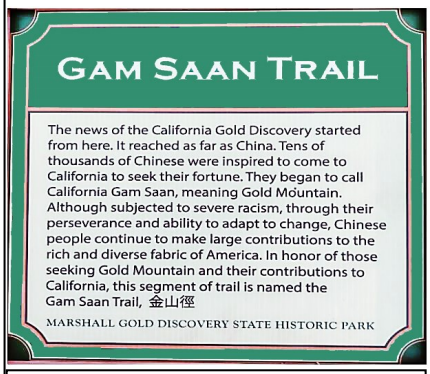
Free Admission and Parking

Www.locke-foundation.org

Historic Trail in California dedicated to Chinese Pioneers

Article contributions by Douglas Hsia, Capitol Radio, and State Parks

News of the gold discovery in Coloma, California, in 1849 reached as far as China. Tens of thousands of Chinese were inspired to come here to seek their fortune and began calling California "Gam Saan", meaning "Gold Mountain". Although subjected to severe racism, through their perseverance and ability to adapt to change, Chinese people continue to make contributions to the rich and diverse fabric of America. In honor of those seeking Gold Mountain, this trail segment in Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park is named the Gam Saan Trail."



Permanent plaque erected by State Parks.

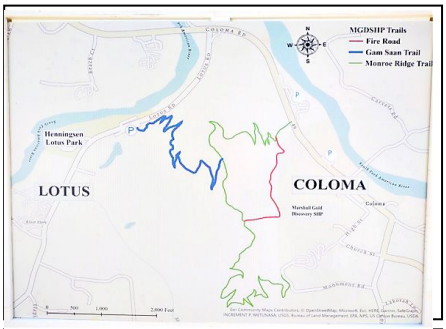
California State Parks and the Locke Foundation in partnerships with the County of El Dorado, the Chinese American Council of Sacramento, the American River Conservancy, the Chinese Benevolent Association of Stockton, the Gold Discovery Parks Association, and the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs came together to honor and celebrate the Gam Saan Trail's dedication on February 11, 2022.

Historical context:
The land between the historic towns of Lotus and Coloma in El Dorado County near the Gam Saan Trail has been used by many diverse populations through time, beginning with local Native American groups of the Nisenan, Maidu and Miwok people.

Through historic research, and a historical report completed in 1991 for a real estate sale in the area, it was revealed that a Chinese miner by the name of Toy Kee purchased a few acres near the project area in 1875 for a $55 gold coin. A few years later in 1881, the Lin Hing and Man Lee Companies purchased additional acreage and operated businesses, stores, a bank, and mining companies in the area from the 1870s through the early 1900s.

The lands purchased by these Chinese individuals served a greater purpose. Combined with the American River's west flowing waters and a hillside facing towards the setting sun, the "feng shui" landscape elements important for directing the spirits of those that have passed were ideal. Many of the Chinese in early California feared that when they died, their spirits would not rest until their remains were buried in a proper grave in China. This property served to provide a path for the spirits, while temporarily holding the mortal remains of the deceased until they could be exhumed, packaged and sent home to China.

Once this historical significance of this land was understood and shared with the local Chinese American communities, State Parks worked with the Locke Foundation and its partners to complete the 3 mile Gam Saan Trail to honor everyone who contributed to the rich fabric of California's history.



Site of trail between Lotus and Coloma in El Dorado County.

American River Conservatory was instrumental in purchasing the property on which the trail is situated and provided some funding to help with environmental compliance for the trail project. Funding from El Dorado County for its project led to connecting the trail Henningsen Lotus Park to Marshall Gold State Discovery Historic Park in Coloma The trail and connector have been in the works for years, and the community is very happy to see all of the partners collaborate to bring this project to fruition.

Douglas Hsia explains contributions of Chinese pioneers to California history. Photo courtesy of Vaneesa Lam.

Gam Saan was the historical name given to the gold fields of California by Chinese 49ers and miners. Douglas Hsia from Locke Foundation collaborated with Chinese American Council of Sacramento and Chinese Benevolent Association of Stockton to petition State Parks for a permanent Chinese name "Gam Saan Trail, meaning Gold Mountain Trail. He said "The mining of gold was the beginning of the economic development of the state, and the Chinese played a big part of it, but we were never written about and never talked about before."

"State Parks is honored to pay tribute to the Chinese miners who were a significant part of California's gold rush era that saw the greatest voluntary migration of people in the world," said California State Parks Director Armando Quintero.

Lion dancers from Eastern Ways and a blessing by Fo Guang Shan Bodhi Temple opened the trail to the public. Representatives of the Locke Foundation who attended include Douglas Hsia, Honey Lum, Corliss Lee, Carol Lee and Mark Miller.

History of Chinese organizations in US

By Eileen Leung

Early Chinese immigrants were mostly men who lacked the services that their families and kinsmen in China would normally provide for them. In addition, they tried to bypass or avoided contact with American government agencies because of mistrust or misunderstanding. Consequently, the immigrants formed their own mutual aid organizations to provide self-governance, resolve disputes among them, care for the needy and infirm, and act as liaisons with the greater community. These organizations included the family associations, district associations, Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) and tongs. Their influence on today's Chinese communities is considerably not as great as it was in the past but a brief review of their histories helps to understand the foundation of Chinese in America.

Family associations (huiguan or gongsuo) derived from familial origins in Southeast China, formed by grouping immigrants with the same family name or surname. According to Chinese culture, everyone with a common surname presumably descended from the same ancestors. Family associations formed the basis of social control in Chinese communities, commanding and getting loyalty from their members regardless of whatever other organizations they may belong. Family associations often maintained clubhouses which doubled as social centers and places of residence. Members went there to sit, chat, hail new arrivals, exchange news and gossip, cuss each other in jest, or join in a game of mahjong or pai-gow. There were sleeping and cooking facilities for those who were temporarily out of work or came from out of town. The larger associations built altars for worship, conducted council meetings, and transmitted letters to and from their members' villages. If there was a death and the family of the deceased was poor, and there were no immediate kinsmen, the associations would pay the funeral services. The associations also would send the deceased's remains back to China if there were no family or relatives in America. If there was a quarrel between its members, a panel of elders would sit and straighten out the differences. There was no force behind their decisions, only moral persuasion, but the decisions were generally accepted and adhered to. Members always tried to keep a quarrel or difference within their own group because a public quarrel would constitute a serious loss of face. At Chinese New Year, the associations provided elaborate banquets for their members. Expenses of the associations were defrayed by assessment on their respective members.

As Chinese immigrants moved throughout the United States in search of work, particular family groups established themselves in various cities. Ong was the most common surname in Phoenix, Moy and Chin in Chicago, Lee in Washington, D.C., Yee in Pittsburg, and Fong in Sacramento. The Wong, Lee, and Chin families were predominant in San Francisco. After a family member or kin established himself in a locality, he sent word urging his kinsmen, often called cousins, to join him. The practice of nepotism as well as pressures to aid one's own kinsmen resulted in an immigrant bringing over his nearest relative, then later more distant ones. Moreover, the one who did the most good by helping his relatives received status and recognition, while at the same time increasing his sphere of influence and power by calling on those he benefited. In time, some small Chinatowns became dominated by one family association. To counter the power of large family associations, several smaller associations may combine; for example, Lau, Kwan, Cheung and Chew families.

Another group of Chinese organizations were district associations. (A district is equivalent to a county in US). Membership was extended to those who came from the same district in China. Generally those who belonged to district associations did not have strong family association in the city where they resided. The district associations served similar functions as family associations, but the scope of their activities was much more extensive. They were in contact with new immigrants from the moment of arrival, greeting them at the pier, easing problems related to their admission, transporting their luggage to the proper destinations, providing for initial room an board, and finding employment. Associations protected their social and economic interests by controlling specific enterprises, occupations and business sites. The Young Wo District Association controlled virtually all the fruit industry in the Sacramento Valley. The Sam Yup people did most of the tailoring, repairing and mending. The Sze Yup dominated laundry, restaurant and small retail. Like family associations, district associations served as arbitrators on settlement of disputes, avoiding the need to bring cases to the American court system. Members needed association's clearance on exit permits to homeland China. Organized under merchant leadership, the associations became so powerful that an immigrant who refused his allegiance faced ostracism in the community.

The Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Association established in 1852 was originally named Six Companies because its charter members included members from six districts: Sam Yup, Yeung Wo, Kong Chow, Ning Yuen, Hop Wo and Yan Wo. It offered legal and physical protection when anti-Chinese sentiment increased. Authorized to speak on behalf of Chinatowns across the US, it also exerted vast political power. The CCBA board of directors became increasingly powerful as it consisted of wealthy merchants and businessmen. The board had many dealings with local and federal governments, exerting influence in a variety of methods. One method was the use of a Caucasian attorney, who was also the spokesman of the organization, which likely helped reduce the push-back and challenged unfavorable rulings.

The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 thrust the CCBA into the position of leader and spokesperson for the Chinese community in the nation. Its overarching power gave it jurisdiction over most aspects of the lives of working Chinese. Some workers who accepted merchants' credit for ship passage from China were compelled to work off the debt at high interest rates. Small business owners bought partnerships in merchant stores so they could send for wives to enter as passengers exempt from Chinese Exclusion Act provisions.

In response to the merchant oligarchy, another organization known as Tongs emerged which attracted members according to a set of beliefs rather than family or district associations. ("Tong" is translated literally as a "Hall" as in meeting hall.) As fraternal organizations, tongs were especially attractive to those without money, power or support of Chinatown's major groups. As Professor Kolin Chin of Rutgers University asserted, many of the tongs did not have the financial ability to fund community events or look after

their members, those that did tended to focus inward and provide help only to their members. As a result, many tongs with little or no financial assets had to either disband or operate illegal activities. This transformed them from benevolent associations to providers of illegal services. Breaking the law-smuggling, contraband, graft, and vice were not an uncommon way to get ahead when legitimate means of acquiring wealth were thwarted by racism and laws.
Gambling houses, opium dens needed protection from thugs who raided them. Some of the first tongs formed in the second half of the 19th century among the earliest immigrant communities. Many were outcasts or lacked clan or family ties to join more prestigious Chinese family organizations, merchant guilds or legitimate enterprises. By necessity they banded together to form secret societies for mutual protection. Those first tongs modeled themselves after the Triads, underground organizations in China dedicated to overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, and adopted their codes of brotherhood, loyalty and patriotism.

As the CCBA failed to effect promised changes in Exclusion laws, the tongs rose in prominence and began to start protection rackets for illegal activities by paying for friends in law enforcement to look the other way. They were notorious for extortion, women trafficking, gambling, narcotics smuggling, murder, blackmail, and property destruction. Only in large Chinatowns could two or more tongs prevail, and even they fought for territory. When disputes arose among tongs could not be settled, fighting took to the streets. In small cities, a shooting war often broke out when another tang tried to encroach.

Profits from illegal activities provided the economic base for tongs. As Chinese communities became more familial, resulting in fewer single male immigrants, and as tong members aged, their influence gradually declined. Eventually some tongs transformed into charitable activities providing clubhouses for fraternization and recreation.

While some of the traditional tong activities were legal in China, they were absolutely illegal in North America. Because the Chinese Exclusion Act severely limited immigration, tongs attempted to corner the market on criminal activities, especially anything that would bring in a nice profit, such as prostitution, opium, gambling, and forcing Chinese merchants to pay "protection fees." One interesting aspect of the tongs was that each organization had two to three fluent English speakers who served a variety of functions such as skimming local newspapers for articles of their group, so they could inform their fellow members. They also dealt with the "foreigner" lawyers and Americans if the need arose. Membership numbers varied from as few as 50 to as many as 1,500 members in 1887. It was common for a tong to splinter when it accumulated too many members. One problem that was common throughout the period that would aid in the breakout of wars between the tongs was that some members could be a member of six tongs at any one time, so that if that member was killed by another tong in a war, one of the other tongs he was a member of would, and sometimes did, seek revenge by declaring war. Many women did not come to America by choice, and some were deceived and forced into prostitution by procurers. Prostitution proved to be highly lucrative. During the 1850's to 1930's many "tong wars" were waged over territory and profits in importation of women,

Hatchet men were hired killers employed to fight street battles over business turf and women. The hatchet men, or "boo how doy" were also known to outsiders of the Chinatown as *highbinders* (so called as they would bind their long queue on top of their heads to prevent them from being grabbed by an opponent), were the salaried soldiers of the tongs. These soldiers most likely were from the Chinese lower classes, as many were uneducated and less "motivated" to become law-abiding citizens of any country.

After settling in San Francisco and other California cities, Chinese workers faced continuing hostility from their American peers who felt threatened by their willingness to work for lower wages and less than ideal working conditions. As labor unions and angry white workers became more aggressive, many Chinese felt pressure to leave California for other geographical area where life would be less dangerous. They moved to New York, Philadelphia and Boston. Today these cities also have large enough ethnic communities to sustain Chinatowns. They have also been joined by new immigrants in the 20th century.

It is a testament to the early immigrants to have developed such a sophisticated system of self-governance in a land where the local laws could not help or protect them.

Locke's Jan Ying Benevolent Association dates back to the founding of Locke in 1915. The Jan Ying building at 13947 Main Street was the social center and informal headquarters for the single men from the Zhongshan District of Guangdong, China. Jan Ying Assn used to be known as Jan Ying Tong, and was an organization for mutual benefit and defense for immigrants. The men could mingle with people from the same geographical area who perhaps knew mutual relatives and friends, to read newspapers and converse in their local dialect. The field workers received mail and assistance in writing and translation. They read Chinese newspapers, played games of chess, dominoes, fan-tan, and mahjong. They enjoyed tea and sweets, and played musical instruments. Such was how they relaxed and killed time between jobs. Messages could also be left at the Jan Ying, friends located, and labor contracted for.

Photo: Courtesy James Motlow

In 1990 the San Francisco headquarters of the Jan Ying Association decided to close down the Locke branch when the town's Chinese population was decreasing at a rapid pace.

In 2011 building owner Clarence Chu reopened the Jan Ying building as a museum, dedicating it to the memory of the original Jan Ying Benevolent Association and its once thriving membership. The building has been restored artfully and depicts life in the early 1900's. Visit this museum to get a glimpse of how they relaxed and passed time after a hard day's work.

By Stuart Walthall

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Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name _____First Name _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____Tel ( )_____Cell ( )_____

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

Volunteer docent _____ Donor _____ Visitor Center Volunteer _____

Contributor to newsletter _____ Media contacts _____ Landscape maintenance _____

Donation: _____ Designated purpose (if any) _____

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

2022 Board

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Secretary:	Douglas Hsia
Treasurer:	Eileen Leung
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