

MARCH 2021

CHINATOWN CONVERSATIONS: FACING CHALLENGES

A community panel moderated by Eugene Moy

What's going on in Chinatown today? Is it safe? How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted local business, schools, museums, families, and seniors? Are people getting food and health care? Should we worry about violence against Chinese and Asian Americans? Why did my favorite pho restaurant get torn down and what will be built in its place? A 27-story building? Can I afford to live in Chinatown? Drop in on a discussion panel with some long-time community leaders who are very much involved in projects and in advocacy that address the community's needs and concerns. Ask questions about our community and how it has been responding to the many challenges we have faced this past year.

PANELISTS:

Education, Museums, and COVID-19



Gay Q. Yuen, Ph.D., immigrated to Los Angeles at the age of 6. She learned English well enough to teach in CA public schools for the next 45 years, spanning kindergarten to university level. Along the way, Dr. Yuen became a community activist and an advocate for immigrant parents and community educational initiatives, including for bilingual and multicultural education. She has been an influential leader in the field of education, nationally and internationally, is a founder of and serves on numerous community and educational boards, and is presently the President of the board of directors of the Friends of the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles. Gay will discuss how educational institutions have responded to the challenges forced by the pandemic's health threats.

Health and food access, and community organizing:



Phyllis Chiu is a native of Los Angeles and retired from teaching at Castelar Elementary School. After years of community activism, she and King Cheung in recent years became co-founders of Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED), an all-volunteer, multi-ethnic, intergenerational organization based in Los Angeles Chinatown that builds grassroots power through organizing, education, and mutual help. Phyllis will discuss community access to vaccines and testing, and mutual aid food deliveries.

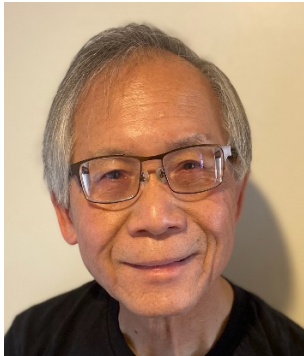
(Registration and panelist information continued on page 2)



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Affordable housing and community health advocacy:



King Cheung immigrated to L.A. in 1966 and retired from the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, working to ensure compliance with California's labor laws. King Cheung and Phyllis Chiu both have long been involved with Chinatown community initiatives, including fighting for tenant rights and against rapid gentrification and displacement. They organized community activists to advocate for saving a hospital and health clinic in Chinatown, and to protest unfair rents that forced markets to close.

King will discuss gentrification, tenant displacement, and securing a site for affordable housing and a cultural and community center in Chinatown.

Networking to confront hate and discrimination



Rick Eng is a native of Los Angeles and has served in executive leadership positions for the Alhambra Education Foundation, OCA-GLA, Asian Pacific Community Fund, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (L.A. and National), the El Pueblo Park Association, and is a former board member of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Currently he is the program manager for Special Service for Groups, Inc., a non-profit health and human service organization in downtown L.A. dedicated to building and sustaining community-based programs that address the needs of vulnerable communities. He coordinates the Rapid Response Provider Network, part of the LA vs. Hate program, which is a community-centered, artist-driven initiative of the L.A. County Commission on Human Relations. Rick will

report on recent hate, discrimination, and bullying incidents in the area.

CHSSC Meeting will be online on Zoom:

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Program: 7:00 PM

To register, go to chssc.org.



Reflections on an Immigration Story

After reading her new children's book, *I Dream of Popo*, our February speaker, Livia Blackburne, discussed her life journey from Taiwan. In Taiwan, *Popo*, her grandmother, was an important person in her life. Popo lived a few blocks away and came over often to cook for her and take care of her. However, as a young child, her family changed cultures when they moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico for new business opportunities. The book speaks to the memories of Livia's separation from *Popo*.

During Livia's grade school and high school years, there were very few Chinese in her classes. However, twenty-five per cent of the college students were of Asian heritage so she had more Asian friends. When she entered Harvard, and later, M.I.T., her circle of friends widened due to the international student body.

As she grew, the question of identity arose. Following the example of her parents, Livia was always very studious. She speaks Chinese with her parents and considers herself Chinese American. Although she didn't experience racism as a young person, she spoke of the implicit bias of the American culture that expects Asians to excel in school. Her Chinese side believes in doing things for the common good rather than following the individualistic focus in America.

In college Livia became interested in how the brain processes language. Although she received a doctorate in cognitive neuroscience from M.I.T., she took a different career path. Midway through her eight years of graduate school, she began writing and sold her first book a year before she graduated. Livia uses her analytical side to learn the techniques that authors use. Her advice to aspiring writers is to write a lot and get feedback from people with similar tastes who are at the same writing level.

Livia's next book will be published in November. She has been working for Disney to write a book about Mulan after Mulan has become a princess. Her interest in this book project is to show that Mulan's selfless motivation resulted from her filial piety.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November 1975. The purposes of the Society are:

1. to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in southern California;
2. to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history; and
3. to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multicultural society of the United States.



Comparative Discussion of Pre-modern Chinese and Western Books

BY SUSAN DICKSON

The China Society of Southern California, our community partner, hosted Devin Fitzgerald, curator of Rare Books and History at the UCLA Library of Special Collections, for their January program. The university library's Special Collections includes books from all over the world.

Dr. Fitzgerald discussed printing in the 16th and 17th centuries. He compared 3 major aspects of printing in pre-modern China and Europe: paper, scripts, and technology. Chinese developed the process of making paper around 100 A.D. using raw plant material so everyone could make paper. Originally, Europeans used parchment (animal skins) for printing. Although papermaking was imported to Europe as early as 800 A.D., it was not popular. The European process for making paper used rags as their raw material. European paper was stiff making it possible to print on both sides. Chinese paper was easier and cheaper to make while making European paper was time-consuming and expensive.

Before Gutenberg invented the printing press in Europe, the major scripts were not legible over time. Different locations used different scripts. After the invention of the printing press, Times New Roman became the standard font in Europe. Prior to the usage of woodblocks to print books, Chinese calligraphy was similar to later scripts so old texts could be read. At that time there were 3 main Chinese scripts: Ou style, Yan style, and the Liu style. After woodblock printing, the Song style became the standard script. Since it was small, square, and could be carved quickly, printing a book became cheaper.

Chinese printing used woodblocks which made printing cheap and easy. In China, printing required a lower investment and little training. The woodblocks could be repaired and used indefinitely. On the other hand, European printing was costly to set up and required more steps to accomplish, but it was mobile. The technology of the printing press spread rapidly throughout Europe.

According to Dr. Fitzgerald, both China and Europe developed printing. One process is not better than the other. Both have their strengths.

I Ching: Working with Magical Symbols in Ancient Chinese Divination

BY CINDY FONG

February 8th saw a stimulating presentation by Dr. Hyong Rhew, Professor of Chinese at Reed College, on the Chinese divination manuscript, the *I Ching* (Book of Changes). Presented by the University of California, Irvine, and the China Society of Los Angeles, Dr. Rhew began with a demonstration of the divination sticks and how they are grouped, using the left hand to represent heaven, and the right hand to represent earth. Yijinh, Old Classic Layers (Graphs and Words), Commenting Layers ("Ten Wings"), and Old Classic Layers Interpreted, are devices used for interpretation. From the Old Classic to Commentaries, you have Justifying the Divination, Crediting the Sages, and Building a System of Synchronicity.

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The Commentaries created new meaning for old class layers. It allowed for the imagining of the beginning of Chinese civilization. However, the original meaning of the old classic layers became obscured by the creativity of the commentary layers. Later commentaries are more useful, but earlier commentaries remain important.

Dr. Rhew continued with examination of Graph #11 from the Han Dynasty's Wang Bi Commentary. A "pre-mordial reading: (earliest commentary) necessitates a wide perspective. There must be narrative unity and clear historical references. Dr. Rhew continued the examination of Graph #11 with the positioning of the lines. Further information and explanation can be found at <http://www.reed.edu/yijing/>.

Recommended sources include starting with commentaries such as *Ten Wings*, because the *I Ching* is very dense. Richard Lynn has authored an I Ching with Wang Bi Commentary. Steven Field has written *The Book of Chou Changes*.

It was a fascinating and detailed introduction to the *I Ching*. Thank you to Dr. Rhee for his careful preparation and stimulating Power Point lecture.

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Margie Lew \$1,000 In honor of Susan Dickson for her continuous dedication to the ideals and purposes of CHSSC.

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