# The AACP Newsletter

Since 1970

70Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc.January 2007AsianAmericanBooks.com - The Most Complete Nonprofit Source for Asian American Books

## AACP's January 2007 Poetry Selection

## About the Following Poem and the Golden Gate Poetry Club

By Leonard D. Chan

Last fall when I was conducting an interview with historian Judy Yung, I asked Prof. Yung about some of the sources for her book San Francisco Chinatown. She directed me to several interesting websites including an immense archive created by the Berkeley Digital Library sponsored by the UC Berkeley Library and Sun Microsystems, Inc.

At this site, I made a serendipitous discovery of a book published in 1924 by an organization called the *Golden Gate Poetry Club*. The Berkeley Digital Library had scanned the entire book and placed it on their website.

This book caught my attention because it was written by early twentieth century Chinese immigrants that, to this day, are not often view as being educated or even literate. Chinese American historians are knowl-edgeable of the hidden literary talents of early Chinese immigrants. Historian Marlon Hom even wrote a book called *Songs of Gold Mountain*, which contains translated Chinese American poems written even earlier than the Golden

Gate Poetry Club's volume. Prof. Hom describes how San Francisco Chinatown was actually teaming with lots of poetry clubs, newspapers, and bookstores. During the early 20th century, Chinatown had at least two daily newspapers, ten bookstores, and even a poetry club with over 150 members. So the book I had found on the Berkeley Digital Library site was just one piece of evidence left behind from this era.

The Golden Gate Poetry Club's book was in Chinese, but fortunately for me, its prologue had been translated into English. The part that intrigued me the most states, "The club will collect manuscripts and compile a book. The sole purpose of doing so is to leave something refined for the Chinese American." The term "Chinese American" is a fairly new term and perhaps this part of the translation was slightly off, but their intent was unmistakably. They wrote it for all of us and they wanted us to forever know of their thoughts, feelings, and existence.

Thanks to the help of our volunteers Jone and Austin Djang, at least one of the poems will live on for English readers.

Long may the Golden Gate Poetry Club live!

## To Celebrate Spring at Golden Gate

A Poem by Huang Zi Cai (also spelled Wong Sun Choy) Translated by Jone Djang with help from Austin Djang Golden Gate Poetry Club Collection of Poetry p10-11

Flying flower petals follow the sweet-smelling earth, The feeling of late spring overwhelms me as I visit the Golden Gate, Canaries sing a sad song outside the pavilion while a flute is played inside, Visions of roadside willows remind me of a person in my dreams.

A song at the Golden Gate is accompanied by a *plucket*<sup>1</sup> playing three times, Inviting the moon to have drinks in the golden valley, I moan an endless sorrow, knowing that I must part some day, Minds of heartache are where-ever *cuckoo birds*<sup>2</sup> weep aloud.

One might sigh at how time passes by while being a guest, At the ending of spring, one will always treasure the time that has passed by. The fantasy of *Perilla*<sup>3</sup> Fairies has disappeared with the flowing water,  $Du Mu's^4$  passing has been embodied by the sadness of falling flowers.

At the end of the golden tread song, one cherishes the fading makeup on a woman's face. The *Pi Pa's<sup>5</sup>* song cries a river on the blue gown. These memorable scenes will be viewed again next year,

When the time is right, young flower buds will sprout again.

1 plucket: an ancient Chinese stringed musical instrument

2 cuckoo bird: this bird is often related to sadness in Chinese poetry

3 Perilla: A type of plant

5 Pi Pa: an ancient Chinese stringed musical instrument (similar to the banjo)

(Continued on page 3)

<sup>4</sup> Du Mu: A famous ancient Chinese poet (A.D. 803-852)

## **Give Us Your Feedback**

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at accpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

**Up Coming Events** 

#### Here are some events that AACP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events. Date/Time Event Location Jan. 13 3rd Annual Poetry In San 529 E. 3rd Ave. 1pm Mateo Day San Mateo, CA A Beginning of the Year Poetry Celebration With Poet Genny Lim College Terrace Lib. Jan. 31 Children's Author Cynthia 3:30pm Chin-Lee will read 2300 Wellesley Ave. A is for Asia Palo Alto, CA Children's Author Cynthia Berkeley Cen. Lib. Feb. 3 Berkeley, CA 10:30 am. Chin-Lee will read Almond Cookies and Dragon Well Tea Betsuin Bud. Church Feb. 18 The 27th Annual San Jose 5:30pm Day of Remembrance 2007 640 N 5th St. In Good Conscience San Jose, CA Feb. 24-25 Reading the World IX USF 2350 Turk Blvd. San Francisco, CA Mar. 2-4 California Council for the Marriott Oakland Social Studies Conference City Center Oakland, CA Mar. 4 Chinese New Year's Stockton Civic Aud. 11am-5:30pm Celebration 525 N. Center St. Stockton, CA Mar. 24-25 127th Bok Kai Festival, 3rd & D St. Parade, and Bomb Day Marysville, CA Mar. 24-25 The Chinese American 232 1st St. 10am-5pm Museum of N. CA Grand Marysville, CA Opening Lectures and discussion with Profs. Gordon Chang. Ling-chi Wang, Judy Yung, Gregory Mark and others Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend Jan. 20 If They Came For Me SF Main Lib. 2pm Today: The Japanese San Francisco, CA American Internment Project Reception and Exhibit Feb. 8 Author Willian Poy Lee Kepler's Books Menlo Park, CA 7:30pm introduces his new book The Eighth Promise: An American Son's Tribute to His Toisanese Mother Feb. 10-Chinese New Year Chinatown Mar. 4 Celebration Events in SF San Francisco, CA Feb. 18 Vietnamese Spring Festival 180 Park Ave. San Jose, CA 10am-6pm & Parade Parade 11am-1pm Parkside Hall Mar. 3 Chinese New Year Parade San Francisco, CA 5:30pm

## **Editor's Message**

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year!

First of all, a few announcements –

If you are reading this on or before the morning of Saturday January 13th and are in driving distance of San Mateo, please come to our 3rd Annual Poetry in San Mateo Day. We have author, poet, and performer Genny Lim scheduled to make an appearance. Plus we will have a discussion about the Golden Gate Poetry Club and read from their book in a public setting for perhaps the first time in over 82 years. All poets and poetry enthusiast are also invited to share your poetry and favorite poems.

Authors Cynthia Chin-Lee and William Poy Lee are having readings and signings. See our schedule for details about the time and place for their appearances.

SF-based nonprofit arts organizations Galería de la Raza, Kearny Street Workshop, and Intersection for the Arts are seeking applications for the *4th Intergenerational Writers Lab 2007* literary program for emerging writers. The program consists of over 27 hours of workshop sessions to help budding writers become more proficient and to allow them networking opportunities and exposure that could further their careers in writing. The application deadline is January 19, 2007, so hurry.

The Chinese American Museum of Northern California in Marysville is having a grand opening on March 24th and 25th. Our February newsletter will contain more details about this exciting event.

Thank you Judy Yung, Genny Lim, Marisa Louie, Florence, Hongo, and William Greene for your help with research on the Golden Gate Poetry Club.

Thank you very much Garrett Hongo, Jone and Austin Djang, Philip Chin, and Sophie Wong for your contributions to this newsletter. It couldn't be done without you.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor



Photo by Gerry Stewart

## **Bugle Boys**

A Poem by Garrett Hongo Author, Poet, and Prof. of Creative Writing at the Univ. of Oregon

As I am Kubota's voice in this life. chanting broken hymns to the sea,

So also am I my father's hearing,

55 now and three years shy of his age when he died, My ears open as the mouth-shells of two conchs, drinking in a soft, onshore wind.

In the fall of '63, at the end of our first year in Gardena, south of L.A., electrician that he was, he built his own home hi-fi-

Speakers out of parts from Scandinavia, an amp kit ordered through the mails, The glittering turntable, brushed gold aluminum, a drivebelt, and an inboard motor--Each component meticulously laid out on a bedsheet soon after it arrived, Jigsawed cabinet boards with serrated edges, yellow capacitors and rectifiers black as tar,

shining and glossy as aquarium fish under living room light,

And the miniature crystal towers of vacuum tubes,

steel pins scaly as aged platinum,

Erector sets of grey plates and haloed getters intricate as space stations under sparkling glass.

In shapes like Coke bottles, potato mashers, and -- my favorite-the tiny rockets with arrowed heads

He called "Bugle Boys" for the labels of white-line cartoons, anthropomorphized tubes

blowing trumpets stamped on each of their sides. "They make electric sound come sweet," he said, "Like no can b'lieve..."

He'd spend evenings in the garage, soldering circuitry and studying schematics-Blue zigzags and squiggles on grey paper that folded like army mapschecking his work.

Once the speakers were set in their walnut cabinets

and the amp out of its gold-mesh cage,

He asked me to listen while he balanced the stereo channels--a marvel--And swapped input tubes, pulling pairs from the sagging pocket of his aloha shirt,

The glass of them making a gentle clatter like tea or sake cups As they knocked softly together when he dipped and swirled his fingers in, pulling them out like fancy fish from a bowl.

He couldn't hear.

Or, rather, he couldn't quite hear, losing it from a lifetime of cumulative, small misfortunes:

A fever as a child in McCully, guns and canons while away at war at 17, The job holding down a jackhammer, the job under jet engines at Kaneohe Marine Base. I knew every reason, though he never gave one himself.

"Sit here," he'd say,

Pointing to the carpeted floor in front of the beige sofa we never used. He'd throw me a zabuton to sit on, tell me to concentrate, And I'd hear measure after measure of Big Band tunes filling the room Like airy clouds of brass cotton lofting around the lamps, ashtrays, and coconut curios around me.

"American Patrol," "Ciribiribin," and "Shake Down the Stars" took turns With lush vibraphones and strummed ukes--50s hotel music from the islands.

"Tell me whatchu hearing," he'd say, and I would, my father taking notes, Smiling over our evenings of pleasurable work, string basses and horns in my ears, Kickdrums and toms reverberating through the floorboards, Sinatra swaggering a tune, just behind the beat.

What did I know of travail or passion then? My father trying to beat the clock, Hastening to hear or not hear each spinning A-side he ever danced to at the Black Cat in Honolulu

Before the world closed its cave of cotton around him, Cymbals become a silent splash of metallic light, snare rolls a strobe of sticks with no sound.

A song only a murmur without scale,

and music a birthplace he could never return to.

"No ka ipo lei ... manu," sang the Sons of Hawaii, and so I said they did, My father jotting it down, Bugle Boys jousting in the pocket of his shirt.

### **Poems by AACP** Our Annual AACP staffs' Attempt at Writing Haiku and Tanka

#### Haiku and Tanka

by Philip Chin

#### Someday

Quietly ends the year Winter night alone my love Someday happy Spring

#### **Together Again**

Shy smile in my mind Gracefully turning to me Many many miles away Together again smiling Next year's Happy New Year Day!

#### Haikus and Tanka

By Leonard D. Chan

#### The Promise of Today

Beautiful cool day A promising beginning Peace and love for all

#### The Promise of 67

Forty years Since summer of love Still no peace

#### Get Up

A warm bed Birds and sun beckon Rise and live

#### Share the Journey

Friends and relatives Who've shared my freeway of life Journey some further Please, take no off ramps this day Enjoy now with those we love

#### Haiku

By Sophie Wong

#### Lunar Halo

Night air crisp, sky clear A ring around the full moon -A sign of world peace?

## **Resources for this Newsletter**

#### **Golden Gate Poetry Club**

- Golden Gate Poetry Club Collection of Poetry Book
   http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/flipomatic/cic/brk4251
- Prologue to book http://sunsite3.berkeley.edu/cgibin/flipomatic/cic/brk4251@Content?item=47
- Golden Gate Poetry Club Poem Used in this Newsletter http://sunsite3.berkeley.edu/cgibin/flipomatic/cic/brk4251@Content?item=8

## **Poetry Links**

## **General Poetry Link**

• Scholastic Inc. Poetry Writing Page for Kids (grades 1-8) http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/

#### Haiku Links

- Haiku for People
   http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/
- Jane Reichhold http://www.ahapoetry.com/haiku.htm
- Keiko Imaoka http://www.ahapoetry.com/keirule.htm
- Gerald England
   http://www.nhi.clara.net/gepm002.htm

## Tanka Links

- Jane Reichhold on Tanka http://www.ahapoetry.com/tanka.htm
- American Tanka, Inc. http://www.americantanka.com/
- Richard MacDonald What Is A Tanka? http://home1.pacific.net.sg/~loudon/rick.htm

The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end February 10, 2007.

CALIES OF Plan Perme by Certry Line	Child of War
	Poems by Genny Lim 2003, 78 pages, Paperback.
	"Genny Lim is passionate in her grief at the loss of her daughter, passionate in her sorrow and rage for the world, and yet her touch is so skillful and light, her language so tender and fierce and patient, that it reads like a book of prayer. These poems are luminous, simple and full of
	grace." -Aurora Levins Morales, poet, essayist, community historian and activist, and poetry commentator for Pacifica Radio's <i>Flashpoints</i> on KPFA-Radio in Berkeley.
	Item #3436, Normally \$10.00 for newsletter subscribers <b>\$8.00</b>
Enception	Babaylan An Anthology of Filipina and Filipina American Writers
	Edit by Nick Carbó and Eileen Tabios 2000, 336 pages, Paperback. Babaylan is a collection of over 60 Filipina and Filipina American writers' works of short stories and poetry. The subject matter range is quite diverse and is sure to pique your interest for many hours.
	Item #3438, Normally \$16.95 for newsletter subscribers <b>\$13.56</b>
THE BOOK OF PERCEPTIONS	The Book of Perceptions
	Poems by Truong Tran Photographs by Chung Hoang Chuong 1999, 73 pages, Paperback.
	<i>The Book of Perceptions</i> is a fascinating book that combines poetry with pictures. Snap shots of life in Vietnam are displayed like frames in a movie while the poetry text flows free form without any punctuation marks.
	Item #3437, Normally \$20.00 for newsletter subscribers <b>\$16.00</b>
	Haiku
	Asian Arts & Crafts for Creative Kids By Patricia Donegan
	2003, 64 pages, hardback.
	A favorite returns to the AACP newsletter!
	Patricia Donegan's <i>Haiku</i> book is a great introduction for young and old to the poetry form known as haiku. It explores the seven keys to writing haiku and provides instructions for five haiku projects, including creating haiga, or illustrated haiku.
	Item #3273, Normally \$12.95 for newsletter subscribers <b>\$10.36</b>
I S L A S L	Island Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940
	By Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung Fifth printing 2002, 174 pages, paperback.
	Another returning favorite AACP featured book!
	Island is one of the most compelling books on the subject of the Angel Island immigration and detention center. The book is comprised of poems, both in English and Chinese, left behind on the wells of this facility. Included with these poems are interviews with surviving immigrant
	the walls of this facility. Included with these poems are interviews with surviving immigrant detainees and a short history chapter with pictures. Island is a revealing snapshot of the Chinese immigration experience in America during the early 20th century.
	Item #1264, Normally \$19.95 for newsletter subscribers \$15.96

© 2005 by Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc. (a non-profit organization since 1970) Visit our website at AsianAmericanBooks.com

> 529 East Third Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401 Tel 650-375-8286 or 800-874-2242