

We wish to offer our condolences to Moy Moy and family in the passing of everyone's good friend, York Moy. York passed away on Jan. 7th.

The family wishes to thank everyone who attended the services and/or offered their condolences.

NEW YORK

RE: **NYC Chinatown Oral History Project**

The NYC Chinatown Oral History Project began at the 2008 Chinatown Reunion in Las Vegas, inspired by the enthusiasm of those interested in capturing and preserving the many memories, stories, and experiences of those of us growing up in the 40s-50s-60s in NYC Chinatown. This built on an earlier effort by Daniel Lee, Gladys Chin, Jim Yuen, and James Moy together with those in 2010 Lai Chu, Eugene Lee, Hon Lee, Willie Lau, and myself. Many wrote stories which are now housed on a private Facebook Group <http://www.facebook.com/groups/NYCChinatownOralHistory/>.

At the 2012 Chinatown Reunion in Las Vegas, we thought to expand our efforts with group events and individual telephone interviews to record these stories. One event is to plan a 50s Party in 2013 in the New York City area before the next 2014 Reunion in Las Vegas. This would enable us to socialize and record the stories in group discussions prompted by questions such as: Do you remember when?

I am writing to **ask of your interest, and to have you provide feedback** to those of us planning the project. All of you have some rich stories and perspectives about where you are now as well as a network of friends and family with whom you share a history in NYC Chinatown growing up during the 40s to 60s.

We have an Organizing Committee for this collaborative effort, and are planning a local NYC meeting in NYC Chinatown to develop the project further. We are talking \$20 for a dim sum lunch at Chatham Sq. Rest in NYC Chinatown. Here are some ways in how you can participate:

- Feedback to the Organizing Committee
 - What would interest you in this project?
 - What themes or topics about NYC Chinatown would be important to capture in these stories?
 - Send your feedback to me at: ceoservices@yahoo.com before 02/28/13

- Participate in the 50's Party in 2013 which will be supported by OCA-LI to socialize with old friends, and share your stories in a group discussion which will be recorded.
 - Be a “coordinator” to reach out to your networks and friends to participate in this event
 - Contact me if you are interested or go to: <http://www.facebook.com/NycChinatownOralHistoryProject>

- Convene a “mini-50s reunion” of your own to record your stories and send them to me. Contact me for details.

- Write a story
 - Share your stories, photos and videos with us by posting to Facebook or send to me
 - Join the NYC Chinatown Oral History Facebook: A word about Facebook: It is not for everyone, but a *private* Facebook Group has been created to provide access for those who want to post stories and/or read those posted by others. This is a private, closed group. You can read and post to it only if you are a member; it is searchable on Google only if you know it exists. If found, all you see is the name of the group unless you are a member. If interested, go to: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/NYCChinatownOralHistory/>
 - There is also a public Facebook Page which means anyone can post, read, like, etc. It is searchable and intended to enable members to find us. No stories will be posted here. Go to: <http://www.facebook.com/NycChinatownOralHistoryProject>

- Interview or Be interviewed to record your story
 - Send me a list of names (including yourself) with their contact information of those you think have a story to tell and why

- Participate in an event with us at the 2014 Reunion to view and share our stories.

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The organizing committee of the **NYC Chinatown Oral History Project** has set the **date of May 4, 2013, 11AM-4PM for the 50s Party in NYC Chinatown** to kick off the project and collect group stories/memories for the project. You will have an opportunity to hear more about the project and to participate in a small group Oral History discussion with your friends. We will tape these discussions to capture your stories and your memories of growing up in Chinatown. This is an exciting and important project to capture the experience of NYC Toisanese Chinese growing up during the 1940s-1960s before this history gets lost to future generations.

The purpose of this project is:

- Many lived within the 1 mile radius of New York City's Mott Street of Chinatown in 1940s-1960s. Others came from the boroughs, from greater NYC, and from New Jersey for Chinese School or social networking. Today, many have had successful lives and productive careers despite the discrimination and poverty that surrounded us, and the limited opportunities and access to the mainstream. Our Chinese value system and Chinatown community kept us strong.

• And yet, this story of the NYC Toisanese Chinese is missing in our history. The early immigrants in the 1900's and their offspring, "The Jook Sing generation", are generally invisible to the American public and to our children. What was it like growing up in America? What was going on in our families in the 40's, and 50's? How did we survive? What were our challenges? How did our parents make it, and more importantly, what are the contributions of our generation?

- As time moves on, we need to capture these valuable memories and stories of survival and success for our children, ourselves, and for history. Each of us has had some life altering experience; each has had some fond memory that sustained us. We were all ordinary Chinese immigrants; yet, together we made extraordinary strides as a community. What was it that brought us together? We want to hear your stories.

I am writing to see if you are willing to be a team captain to invite and organize 5-10 people to attend this 50s party. These would be friends and family who grew up in NYC's Chinatown during the 1940s-1960s. Please contact me with your questions and let me know if you will help to organize a group to attend; my email is: ceoservices@yahoo.com

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Dear Friends and Asian American Arts Centre supporters,

During this Holiday Season our wishes for renewal go out to you, especially to you who have experienced difficulties or tragedies that has touched your neighborhood, this region or this nation this Winter.

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Of all the holiday messages I've received it's the one about the wilderness that resonates for me, the mountains. It said the wilderness is where we learn to live with awareness, intention and authenticity. Perhaps because I can recall walking through the trees whether a chill was in the air or the sun peaking through the leaves, I recall the stillness I felt, how it nourished me.

* * *

An artist to mention here is Lily Yeh. Her art, rather the art she brings people to make together, enables them to find their own creative capacity midst their living conditions, whether in Haiti, Rwanda, Palestine, Kenya, Damascus, Ghana, Ecuador, Ladakh India, Daxing China, or Salt Lake City. She practices her art with poor communities around the globe, demonstrating that creativity and beauty are powerful agents for healing, self-empowerment and change. A most gifted artist, I urge you to support her and her film project, so that others can know about her, and realize what culture and the arts can do, even in the midst of great difficulties.

www.barefootartists.org

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In wishing you deep renewal and inspiration for 2013, you are welcome to contribute to AAAC, see our Blog or check out the changes to www.Artasiamerica.org.

With Kind Regards,
Bob Lee

Thank you for your loyal support and we look forward to serving you in 2013.

Happy holidays and best wishes for the New Year!

Lily Yeh, Co-Founder & Executive Director
of Village of Arts & Humanities since 1986, founder Barefoot Artists in 2002

Angel Alley, Village of Arts & Humanities, Philadelphia 1991

The Painted Labyrinth, Hualien, Taiwan 2011

City Soleil, Haiti Awakening Creativity Workshop 2010

Turtle Park, Village of Arts & Humanities, Philadelphia 2003

Asian American Arts Centre

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New York NY 10002
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Web: www.artspiral.org

NEW JERSEY

Please join us for our CHINESE NEW YEAR
CELEBRATION on January 26, 2013. Click on the
following link for full information.

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=n6qpg4bab&v=001bHw_LhcjpQq6QHhFbJtVYNsMRYvBOcaN48JYIb8JBsPA-6eM6DmwyGKIBUfChQMVycHdTQN-YiMA_Yw0Fpg1hj-YEbkc8vYI8TKoKZ960LPZut-gfd5N0H4_9gp8BVHxgbK9eO4a-UQ%3D

SAN FRANCISCO

Chung: Chinese 'peasant' dialect redeemed

WRITER TAKES PRIDE IN EARTHY TOISANESE

By L.A. Chung, Mercury News , Posted: 12/22/2007 05:31:46 AM PST

[Click photo to enlarge](#)

William Poy Lee reconnected with Toisanese in a memoir that delves into the roots...
(Traci Bartlow)

Related Stories

- **Dec 22:**
- [Toisanese glossary \(You have to check this out\)](#)

In unraveling his family history, writer William Poy Lee had no idea he'd wind up making a declaration of respectability for Toisanese across the America. Yet there he was on stage, in the hoity-toity Asian Art Museum in San Francisco this month, publicly singing out salty, gritty Toisanese set to music, with his mother Poy Jen in the front row. He turned Toisanese - from household names to cuss words - into a performance.

It's enough to make a self-respecting Chinese cringe. Toisanese is a Chinese dialect, but it is pure peasant-speak, in all of its graphic, roiling, diphthong-laced glory. "Everyone said Toisanese was such an ugly language. Everyone," said Lee, who dreamt up the idea of a jazz-like improvisation performance, based on ordinary words of his childhood tongue. Lee reconnected with the dialect while writing his memoir, "The Eighth Promise," delving into why America's first Chinese immigrants were such tough people.

Most of the first Chinese immigrants to the United States hailed from Toisan, one of four districts in the Pearl River Delta outside Guangzhou, known before as Canton. Once, 95 percent of the Chinese in the United States, from former Washington Gov. Gary Locke to Sunnyvale Councilman Dean Chu, traced back to Sze Yap, the four-district area where Toisan is located. Many of the people who inhabited San Jose's early Chinatowns and built the Ng Shing Gung Temple in Kelley Park come from Sze Yap.

Up to the 1970s, you could speak Toisanese, also pronounced Hoisanese, to almost any Chinese-American from New York to Mississippi to San Jose and be understood. Try to find "Toisan," on the map, however, and you will only find "Taishan," which is the word in Mandarin.

Unlike the most well-known big city, major dialects of China, Toisanese exists only on the tongue. "There are no Toisanese novels or opera," Lee observes. "Bruce Lee never slipped into Toisanese."

It sounds rough, as though you have pebbles in your mouth. "In truth it is a shout," Lee said, one that might "include some finely sprayed spittle."

Mandarin-speaking people cannot understand Cantonese, and frequently claim it hard to listen to. Cantonese-speaking people pronounce Toisanese inferior and hard to listen to. Therein lies the crux of it.

As he delved into his book, Lee delved into feelings of embarrassment about the dialect. As a kid growing up on the streets of Chinatown, U.S.A., Toisanese or any Chinese got him benched at school. Even in Cantonese teachers rapped his knuckles for speaking Toisanese.

Then he began to think about Toisanese attributes for what they were: a hard-honed language that is inseparable from the land, unpretentious and tough-skinned. The words come "wrapped up like clods of dirt embedded with stones."

As he thought about it, "Toisanese can arc over the rice paddies, go through a flock of noisy geese, cut through a stand of bamboo, and go around a hill," he wrote. In short, it was designed for survival.

Yet, it had a musicality. The famous Tang Dynasty poetry, when read in Cantonese - or Toisanese dialect - rhyme, unlike in Mandarin.

Lee took a page from jazz to riff Toisanese words off of percussion and wind instruments to enliven his book readings. He collaborated with Layton Doung of Yellow River Drummers, and flutist Haley Wong to come up with an improvisational performance based on a "word score" of four parts: onomatopoeia, household words, salty cuss words and food-related words.

Some, like cable car, is onomatopoeia, invented here, and translated as "dang-dang car."

"One guy said, 'Hearing you guys doing it publicly with so much fun makes me feel me better about my language,' " Lee said. "It was an 'Oprah' moment - healing in front 130 people!"

Here **are** some **videoS** to watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uma5doGDNs8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBU-G7BqAfw>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_kCBV2u9-E

<http://asiapacificarts.usc.edu/wapa/showarticle.aspx?articleID=14599&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

http://www.theeighthpromise.com/ToiZounZ_Performance_Reading.html

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Go to this link for another story of our Chinese heritage.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs9_Jflu_98

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A Glimpse Into Yosemite's Chinese History

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=4kdyrfXGz90

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To access any links in the newsletter , hold the **CTRL** button down and left click on your mouse, you will see the prompt when you glide over the link address.