



## **MRI FORUM 05**

### **Continuity & Change in Intercultural Relations among Chinese in the Americas: Understanding the Present through Selected Experiences of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

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I would like to select several issues related to work with the 19<sup>th</sup> century presence of Chinese in the Americas, and what this topic can teach us for present research on the subject. A study of ethno-historic tracks can offer directions for understanding their culture and history at home and abroad. Permit me to share with you what I have learned from this research. While many persons in this audience are well acquainted with past and present issues concerning the Chinese in Western North America, particularly California, I wish to focus on aspects of the presence of Chinese in Latin America and the American South. We often present the experience of migration of Chinese to Latin America and to California as two distinctly separate stories. This evening, I want to highlight aspects of those accounts which show that the emigration of Chinese to the Americas was and continues to be a single story. The challenge for us is to understand the interlocking connections of migration to the Americas, past and present.

I was born in Costa Rica, Central America. I first started to study some issues about the history and settlement of Chinese who had come to Panama in the Nineteenth Century with the hope that this research would complement work on other available accounts regarding the Chinese in other Latin American areas such as Cuba and Peru. I began to work on what I viewed then as a brief account of Chinese known to have been brought to Panama in 1854, to work on the Panama Railroad. In my judgment, although this was a short story, it

was an important historic event. At that time there was no direct transportation between the Eastern and Western U.S. The Gold Rush to California in the late 1840s highlighted the need for faster routes from the Eastern United States to the West rather than to depend only on covered wagons, or ships around the continent. The American Company which promoted construction of a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama hoped to shorten the route between Eastern and Western North America. Construction of the railroad began with the assistance of immigrant labour from the Caribbean, Irish labourers from the U.S. and Black labourers from Northern Colombia and Jamaica. The plan was made also to introduce 2000 Chinese directly from China. In 1854, the first clipper ship arrived from Swatow with 705 Chinese. The voyage had taken sixty-one days.

Efforts to introduce Chinese to build the Panama Railroad, however, were not successful. Many became ill. Others were reported to have committed suicide. The remaining 175 of this first group were sent back to the poorhouse in Jamaica. Reports suggest that these early Chinese in Panama disappeared from the scene.

**M**y interest in the story of these Panama Chinese focussed on psycho-cultural factors associated with the suicides of the Chinese as newcomers and the physical and psychological stresses associated with their work and the environment. My reflections about this case led me to broaden my research interests to related migration movements of Chinese in the Americas. This led me to examine sources available to study their migration patterns focussed on as North and Central America, and the circum-Caribbean area.

As I reviewed the literature, it seemed to me that there was an assumption that the movement of Chinese to Central America and the Caribbean had taken place either through California or the Caribbean. Yet, there was an extensive commercial movement of peoples and goods between the Southern U.S. and the Caribbean. I wondered whether any Chinese had travelled through this route, or whether, there were any Chinese settlements in the U.S. South. I asked myself: Why couldn't Chinese have come to Central America through the U.S. South? But then, who had talked about Chinese in the American South in the 1850s and 1860s? I began to do research on the topic assuming that what I learned would become a paragraph about transportation routes for my work in Central America.

I investigated the topic and by the time I finished, the quest for a paragraph had become a book manuscript with the title: *Chinese in the Post Civil War South: A People Without a History*. I learned much from this study. A major consideration was that we could not view the culture and history of Chinese who had come to the Americas as a "straight line problem." This history was

embedded in a network of connections which interfaced diverse interests and peoples.

Permit me to illustrate this interconnectedness. In the study of the dissemination of knowledge about the Chinese, one of the questions I had asked was: What images did the U.S. South have about the Chinese? I began, first, with a study of the American Protestant missionary presence in China and its literature about Chinese missions and missionaries in the U.S. focussing, in particular on two groups: the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Southern Baptist denominations to China. I chose these because of the notable early presence of Protestant missionaries from the South in the early American missionary initiatives to China. For example, fourteen of the first sixteen ordained ministers of the American Episcopal Mission to China were from the Southern U.S. When some of these missionaries returned to visit the South, they brought back Chinese who were presented to their congregations and local communities. Such was the case of Bishop William J. Boone. He returned on visits to the South in the early 1840s. (Note that these visits took place before the California gold rush with its subsequent presence of Chinese in the West).

Among the Baptists, Reverend Jehu Lewis Shuck and his wife Henrietta Hall Shuck, the pioneering Baptists had resided in Macau before moving to Hong Kong in the early 1840s. Both were from the Southern state of Virginia. They were pioneers in the establishment of missions in China under the auspices of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and, after 1845, under the Southern Baptist Convention. After Henrietta Shuck's death in Hong Kong in 1844, Reverend Shuck returned to the U.S. with his children. He was accompanied by a Chinese young woman who cared for the children and by a gentleman known as Yong Seen Sang. While in Richmond, Virginia, a portrait of Yong Seen Sang was painted which is still at the University of Richmond.

Yong Seen Sang accompanied Reverend Shuck in his tours of Southern communities. He answered questions and created positive images which nurtured the enthusiasm for the missions in China. People in local Southern communities enthusiastically responded to Yong Seen Sang and the questions that he answered.

While the fervour for support of the Chinese missions continued in the South, by the mid and late 1850s, Southern planters became concerned increasingly with the opposition to slavery and its impact upon labour for their cotton and sugar plantations which were worked by slaves. They searched for alternative sources of labour. For example, they studied the circumstances of the Caribbean islands in which British and Spanish planters had begun to use Chinese workers for sugar plantations. At some of their commercial

conventions, planters discussed the possibility of introducing Chinese as alternate sources of labour.

However, by the 1860s when the Civil War began, their concerns appeared to be forgotten. The South was defeated in the Civil War, and slavery was officially abolished. After the Civil War, in 1865, Southern planters faced the need for alternative models of labour. The idea of bringing Chinese to the South was introduced once again. Various labour plans were considered including the use of well-known Chinese labour agents, or companies to recruit Chinese.

Interestingly, the early groups of Chinese who were introduced to Louisiana in 1867 did not come through arrangements with experienced companies or agents from California, or China, The first Chinese who entered came from Cuba where they had been introduced from China under 8 year contracts. They were recruited by a physician from Natchitoches Parish, in Northwest Louisiana who had spent time in business in Havana. He probably hired them at the end of their eight year contract with Cuban planters. He brought them for work on the cotton plantations in the region. I was able to identify these early Chinese through the study of ship passenger lists. The lists did not reveal Chinese names. The Chinese came with Spanish names adopted in Cuba. The first Chinese in the list had a full name, while others had only a single name: Hilario Rivas, Leo, Crispino, Balthazar, Carlos and so on. Their names were placed at the end of the passenger list, a custom followed in these ships.

In the communities where they settled, their names could be found in census or in church records. Their names reappeared, sometimes with the French spelling characteristic of Louisiana at the time and in some cases, with adapted last names of the planters for whom they worked. Hialario Rivas, for example became Hilario, Hilaire or Eli Hongo. Carlos became Carlos Telsis, or Telsede, which was a last name associated with a plantation family in the area.

**F**ollowing these early efforts to bring Chinese from the Caribbean, others were brought to Louisiana from California. Such was the case of the Chinese who were brought to the Millaudon sugar plantation in 1869. This plantation was close to New Orleans. When the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, some of the extra Chinese laborers were hired to come to the South and part of a group was brought to the Millaudon Plantation. These Chinese had three or four year agreements. They earned between fourteen to sixteen U.S. dollars a month for 26 days monthly work. (The illustrations we see here were done by Alfred R. Waud a British artist who was sent to the South to make sketches of the defeated region after the Civil War).

An effort was made also to bring Chinese directly from Hong Kong to New Orleans. Captain George W. Gift who had fought for the South in the Civil War promoted the idea to bring Chinese directly from Hong Kong. He went to Hong Kong under the sponsorship of the Arkansas Immigration Company which he had organized. (He left for Hong Kong from San Francisco on September 4, 1869 and arrived in Hong Kong on October 7). Another agent also went to Hong Kong, sponsored by a wealthy Louisiana plantation family. Upon his arrival in Hong Kong, Captain Gift had difficulties with his recruitment efforts because of the approval required by the U.S. Consul in Hong Kong. Each labourer recruited needed certification that he was travelling of his own will, voluntarily, rather than by force. There was great discussion about the difference between a voluntary emigrant and a "coolie." A coolie was the term, designated for emigrants who travelled against their will (or under coercive recruitment). After the Consul secured approval from authorities in Washington, Captain Gift was able to recruit 200 Chinese to bring to New Orleans. Most of them went to work on the cotton plantations in the state of Arkansas. Captain Gift also helped the agent of the second ship in the recruitment of Chinese who were brought to work in the Louisiana sugar parishes.

Less than a year after the introduction of these Chinese, however, reports appeared in local papers of Chinese who had left the plantations. The planters took them to court for breach of contract. The Chinese, however, had several complaints. In some cases the planters had not followed the exact terms agreed upon. Chinese rebelled also at the sight of violence against their fellow labourers by foremen in charge. Furthermore, the Chinese began to discover other types of work where they could earn higher wages than the \$16.00 a month offered on plantations. I did not find cases in which the planters were successful in their efforts to bring charges against their Chinese workers.

After they left the plantations, the Chinese disappeared from the records of Southern history. They no longer resided as large groups in plantations. One issue was that there were few "Chinatowns" in the South during this period. Chinatowns were associated with urban settlements rather than rural areas. Many of the Chinese who came to the South during this period remained in rural areas. Similarly, in Latin America they remained in provincial towns rather than capital cities.

The "disappearance" of Chinese from the historical record is associated also with the classifications used to enumerate them in census records. In the United States, up until 1860, all Chinese were classified as Whites. In 1860, there was a special census of Chinese limited to California. The classifications of Chinese and Indian appeared in the U.S. census for the first time in 1870 and it was used again in the 1880 census. In 1882, however, the Chinese Restriction Law was approved in the U.S. which prohibited Chinese from

coming into the United States. A consequence of this legislation was that Chinese who resided in the U.S., were unable to bring relatives or even a spouse to the country.

An outcome of this policy was that in the South, Chinese who settled in small local areas married into diverse ethnic communities which surrounded them. Some married White women, others married Black women, while others chose women of mixed ethnic backgrounds. In the Lower South, the children of these families were first classified as Chinese. In 1900, however, there was a shift. The same children who had been classified as Chinese in the 1880 census were reclassified. If they lived in a White community, they were now called White. If they lived in a Black community, children with a Chinese father were no longer called Chinese; they were classified as Black. The "disappearance" of Chinese in these small rural communities, therefore, reflected local classifications and the judgment of census enumerators.

Within these contexts, what was the memory which remained of the Chinese heritage? This question has been of interest to me not only for the South but also in the Chinese communities in Latin America. The literature tends to examine Chinese heritage by focussing on Chinatowns. I have suggested that these tend to be located in urban areas and not in rural areas or small communities. And the problem with this Chinatown depiction is that in the Southern United States and certainly in Latin America, most Chinese, settled in smaller communities "en las provincias" (in the provinces). That was one issue.

There are problems also with the depictions of the classic Chinatowns in the Americas. For example, the historic Chinatown in San Francisco, California, did not develop because the Chinese wanted to live close to one another. Some Chinatowns grew because of residential segregation patterns. In communities such as San Francisco the law did not permit Chinese to live in certain other areas of the city. While Chinatowns may have contributed to strengthened ethnic ties, these settlements also reflected the anti-Chinese sentiments of the time.

As I looked retrospectively at these studies, my work about Chinese in Central America and Panama led to search for possible connections with the U.S. South. The Chinese who came to the South, drawn from diverse locations, settled in local communities but they continued contacts with other areas and on occasion, with those in New Orleans. Over time, the Chinese Presbyterian Church in New Orleans became a stopping point for Chinese merchants who travelled from Cuba to China. This enabled Chinese in the lower South, to establish interconnections between those in the Caribbean, those settled in the U.S. and those who maintained contact with China itself. They visited on

occasion, and some also attended services at the Chinese Presbyterian Mission in the city.

The one central theme that persisted was the memory of the Chinese medical practitioner. To begin with, as part of the contracts drawn up in China, the Chinese came accompanied by a Chinese medical practitioner. Among those who first came to Natchitoches, Louisiana, from Cuba, Hilario Rivas was the only Chinese listed with a full name, (see picture). In Natchitoches, he became known as Hilario Hongo. (Also known as Hilaire or Eli Hongo) As a Chinese medical practitioner, he became well-known for his medical skills among the general population. His cousin, Carlos, who became known as Carlos Telsede was also a medical practitioner. When their descendants, the Hongos and the Telsedes described memories that were handed down about their Chinese background, they had clear memory about the original Chinese medical practitioners and the descendants who had also practiced the learned skills which had been handed down from the Chinese ancestor.

Indeed, on June 26th, 1882, Dr. Eli Hongo presented an affidavit which was recorded and approved by the Parish of Natchitoches and the state of Louisiana in which he declared that he had been practicing medicine in the Parish of Natchitoches and the State of Louisiana since January 19, 1867( date of his arrival from Cuba). This affidavit grandfathered long established practitioners with a license to practice. Dr. Hongo practiced as a physician until he died. Several grandchildren and great grandchildren, who practiced herbal medicine, associated their knowledge and skills to what had been handed down from Drs. Hongo and Telsede. They only wished that they would have learned more.

Chinese medical practitioners were present in most communities with Chinese settlements in Latin America as well. They served not only as practitioners but as linkages to the larger society. In communities with dispersed settlements, they were curers as well as advisors and representative for their respective settlements.

Chinese and their descendants in outlying provinces and communities should be of interest to us. As an illustration, I would like to close my talk this evening with a brief discussion of the life and heritage of Dr. Hilda Chen Apuy, a native of Puntarenas, Costa Rica (Central America). This distinguished Costa Rican scholar was born in Puntarenas, the daughter of a Chinese father and a Costa Rican mother. Puntarenas, the port on the Pacific Coast is what she calls the provinces. She is "de la provincia (from the province). This is a depiction of oneself as "marginal" not from the "center" (the capital city). Dr. Chen Apuy and her sister were the first women to graduate from the University of Costa Rica. She was invited subsequently to

study in the United States. She also studied in Mexico at the time that the center for the study of Asian studies was established. She was also awarded a UNESCO fellowship to study in selected sites in Asia. She visited Kwantung Province, the home of her ancestors. She studied also in India, and in Japan. Upon her return to Costa Rica, she was invited to introduce a specialization in the study of Asian societies and cultures. Today, she is renowned not only in Costa Rica but also in other parts of the Americas.

This is the case of a Costa Rican scholar of Chinese descent who drew on her background as well as the formal study of Asian societies to develop an appreciation of Asian societies. Over her life time, she has made major contributions to the intellectual life of the country. She offers an example of a descendant of the Chinese who brings back heritage knowledge herself (picture) I am happy to report that one month ago, the President of Costa Rica presented the Magon award to Dr. Chen Apuy for her contributions to the advancement of culture in Costa Rica. The Magon award is the highest honour the country gives to its citizens. When I talked to Dr. Chen Apuy on the telephone, before she received the award, she said: "Well, it shows you, that a Chinese from the province can make it...."

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with you some aspects of the topic of Forgotten Chinese communities in the South and Latin America. I would add that Dr. Chen Apuy reminds us of the resurgence of interest among members of Chinese communities themselves to recapture aspects of the cultural history of ancestors and its continuity.

Thank you very much.

[Question and answer period]

Question: Would you elaborate on the relationship of these historic events to the present and particularly to Macau?

LMC: The short reference of the Panama Chinese in 1853-1854 which led to my interest in transportation routes and Chinese in the South re-conceptualised my views. I decided that we need to understand the connections or linkages among Chinese in the Americas and Macau. Macau was often mentioned in British Parliamentary papers and related documents. I found, however, that this literature often presented fixed stereotypes about Macau society and culture. This led to my decision to come to Macau to study its literature first hand. I was encouraged in this pursuit by Him Mark Lai, from San Francisco, California, who had visited Hong Kong and Macau. He encouraged me to consult the Arquivo Historico in Macau which was well

organized but not many people were reading the Portuguese sources. To prepare for my visit, however, I decided to study Portuguese rather than to rely on my Spanish or French. I also went to Portugal to acquaint myself with types of documents about Macau. Finally, I made arrangements to come to Macau.

As a result of my work here in Macau, I re-conceptualised my focus on Chinese in the Americas and their connection with Macau. I decided that the story ought not to concentrate only on the migration of Chinese and the circumstances of their travels. This is one aspect of the story. Another is to study intermediaries - the labour agents. There were different kinds of agents and they represented various nationalities. I am now interested in agents from Latin America. Several of them lived in Macau and they moved in the Macau society of the time. Some wrote about their impressions and experiences in China and Macau. At present, I am working on the writings of a labour agent from Colombia and the written records of his stay here. His conceptions of the people and the depiction of images of Chinese are important.

Permit me to say that part of what we have been talking about is not a story about the Chinese but a story about how we deal with the globalization and intermingling of peoples as the nature of work and society changes. The Chinese in the Americas were active participants in a period of history when the nature of work was changing. Plantations were changing. It was not only that "we need labourers." The owners faced the challenge and threat of the evolution of plantations and labour arrangements. These issues continue to the present. We now have a world wide challenge with migration, globalization and the changing nature of work.

We now face a technological revolution as well. The images of the Chinese have changed. There is no Yong Seen Sang type portrayed today. There are no workers in the sugar cane or cotton fields portrayed. Images of Chinese have changed radically in the last one hundred and fifty years. Images represent idealized conceptions of those portrayed as was the case with Yong Seen Sang and the Chinese workers. Dr. Guillen who is present today can discuss the challenges of depictions and interpretations in art. I believe that Yong Seen Sang was painted by an artist who also portrayed North American Indians who came to visit authorities in Washington in the 1840s. The Indians had to be depicted as Chiefs with their headdresses on just as Yong Seen Sang was depicted as a scholar.

Our interpretations have to depend on historic periods. At present there has been a significant change with regard to the Chinese presence in the United States and some parts of Latin America. In the United States, the second largest immigrant group today is a category called "Asians". This category

covers a broad group of immigrants. Missionaries today have special activities for the diverse groups such as Mandarin speaking Chinese or Cantonese speaking Chinese. New communities have also developed their own churches or temples. It is a great change.

Question: I was curious about the Chinese communities in Latin America and I say that because, for example there are the Chinese Cubans.

LMC: Over one hundred thousand Chinese were introduced to Cuba in the Nineteenth Century. I was lucky to be able to visit Cuba several years ago at a meeting of Chinese in the Americas. A small Chinatown remains in Havana. The influence of the Chinese in Cuba is much stronger than what most persons realize. For example there are some famous Chinese artists. Some of you, for example, may know the art of Wilfredo Lam.

Panama has had a good sized community of Chinese. The Chinese in Peru are well-known particularly because of their connections with Macau. Among the Macaenses here, there are some who are intimately connected with Peruvian relatives. Dr. Beatriz Basto da Silva, the well known historian of Macau and of Chinese emigration, showed me the sites where some of these families lived.

There is a Cuban Chinese émigré community in the United States. Their restaurants in Miami, New York and other sites are well known. These are the Chino-Cubano restaurants. The food is "comida chino-cubana." The owners are descendants of the Cuban Chinese. They are very popular.

Question: I was interested in your comments about Chinese medical practitioners overseas. I don't know whether you would like to say anything about what materials they used. I mean, did they bring the materials they used in their medical practice with them, or did they use local materials?

LMC: Thank you for this wonderful question. I do not know what material Dr. Hilario Hongo brought with him when he left Havana Cuba for New Orleans, Louisiana, and as he proceeded all the way to Natchitoches, Northwest Louisiana. My hunch is that he made very good use of the local flora. We must keep in mind that these Chinese had been transplanted from China to Cuba and he had lived there for eight years. In addition to the local plants, however, once these Chinese medical practitioners established themselves in new settings as central figures among the Chinese and their host societies, they may have established connections with people who provided desired herbs and related types of material.

Question: Thank you Professor Cohen. A couple of colleagues from Macau Polytechnical Institute and I are here. This is the first time that we attend the MRI forum. We are glad for the opportunity to be here.

Thank you for the very informative talk and your thoughts on issues. I am interested in your connection between globalization and the sort of disappearance of the Chinese into history. But now we claim that History. Wonderful work I sometimes call this archaeological work. It is very important to dig into the Archives and to bring back new information and also forgotten history, the images and so on. I am very impressed. One of the things I would like to raise is: In literary circles (that is my background), in America, lots of Chinese Americans, though sometimes they do not like to be called Chinese Americans, some say, "I was born in America, I grew up in America, I am an American, not really Chinese American."

LMC: What some call hyphenated...

Question: Yes, hyphenated. But they try to re-write stories. In a way, they try to represent the Chinese. They way they think and how they should be represented. Like Maxine Hong Kingston - *The Woman Warrior, China Man, and Tripmaster Monkey*, more about the past. I am not very familiar with this ... kind of work as you are as a cultural anthropologist. I don't know how many other people are doing the same kind of work that you do? What is the kind of impact they might have? Say, Chinese reclaiming part of the history they make. . . ?

LMC: I had some hesitation when I finished the Southern research and this was for the following reason. When I work with Latin America and the Chinese persons there and their descendants, there is one way of looking at this material. In my work in the United States, and in the South, in particular, I had to consider my identity as a cultural anthropologist. I worked in the American South in a period of history which was a problematic stage in our history. I asked myself: "What am I doing here?" I considered that I was in a period where the historians have typically written about the leaders, the generals, and "big people." I was studying persons who had "disappeared from history." A well-known History Professor who was a specialist in this area said to me: "Continue, we need those kinds of local histories..." I was encouraged and pursued my study.

An important aspect of this story had to do with ethnic interconnections. In Latin America, it is very common to write about ethnic background such as Dr. Hilda Chen Apuy. Her father was Chinese, and her mother was a Costa Rican lady. In the United States, there had been limited discussion in the literature by Chinese or by others about these "little communities" where the Chinese have not been the solid group. In the communities I had studied in Louisiana, Chinese intermarried with whites, with blacks, and so on. Their community formation became as it was in Latin America. But this was not Latin America; it was the United States... The subject had not been discussed

much at all. It is still not a subject of much discussion. And yet, it is part of reality. There has been some shift however. A major California filmmaker, who has done beautiful films about the historical experience of Chinese and other Asians overseas, became interested in the subject. We have been to some of the sites I studied and she is preparing a documentary film. I do not know if I have addressed part of your question.

Question: I just wondered, with your interests in psychology too, the thing that really makes me curious is that the Chinese communities that live in Chinatown, in San Francisco, London - or such places, they have been segregated. They are always looked on as Chinese, ethnically Chinese. Everybody will see them as Chinese. Yet now and in the past, they had very tenuous connections with China itself. They are in this sort of cultural and psychological sort of "no man's land".

LMC: I became interested in the introduction of Chinese to Panama in 1853-1854. The question of their high rates of suicide as part of their adaptation to a new setting was important. My focus quickly expanded. Your question is an interesting one. My focus is on what I would like to call heritage. We may not be from Beijing, but in a sense, it is very appropriate to know about our heritage. We should learn about our heritage. And others should learn about our heritage. And that is why I think that when Dr. Chen Apuy took the course, she expanded her knowledge about her heritage. When she was awarded the national honour for her contributions to an understanding of civilizations of Asia, she said to me: "The girl from the provinces has arrived." That was not false modesty. What she had done was to learn about her heritage to share it with others. It was, in a sense, to contribute to an understanding of that heritage not only in Costa Rica but in other parts of Latin America. Today there is much more known about this heritage. With new communities of Chinese, heritage must be understood as part of the larger world in which Chinese new immigrants and their long established descendants have settled. I do not know if this answers part of your question

Question: I just think it must be quite a strange position in which to be mentally- that is, to try to live with this constructed idea of what is China's culture. I am not really quite sure where your culture comes from what it really is.

LMC: Of course, it depends on our conceptual background. It is in vogue now to talk about the construction of culture. That is one viewpoint. But I go back to say that maybe I do not know about all of that. If you grow up in Puntarenas, Costa Rica, or even in Colon or Panama City, Panama, there is more that you may want to learn about China, whether you are Chinese or not. And to me the issue really becomes not whether you are Chinese or not

but the issue is: If you can become a conduit as Dr. Chen Apuy has become by learning and enhancing her knowledge about history and culture in a professional way, she also enhances her own understanding of this heritage. That is good enough for me. This type of knowledge has a double role.

With regard to the construction of knowledge, there are different perspectives on it. Perhaps we can take the viewpoint that in the end, there is some knowledge that should be transmitted. You and I can argue perhaps about how we put it together.

Question: It is such a struggle...

LMC: Yes. Let me end by saying that some concepts change. For example, in the United States and in Latin America today, you cannot think of Chinese as minorities. The Chinese are part of the large world; they always were, as a matter of fact. Persons such as Dr. Chen Apuy have contributed to the perspective needed on this larger world.

Question: I was wondering about the Chinese who disappeared from history and how this must be related to the fact that as soon as they get into small groups you have intermarriage. Instead of bringing the other element into the Chinese community you seem to dilute into the other community. Like you were saying, if they get married with a black person they are labelled as being Black, or they are labelled as being White. You very seldom have the opposite situation where for example, the person gets to be part of the Chinese community; as soon as they separate they seem to be sort of absorbed.

LMC: I brought this topic to our attention because it was a problematic part in the United States... Now this has changed. But at that time, in the South, you became part of the community that you joined. There were no Chinese large communities into which the Chinese men could marry. As I mentioned Census enumeration contributed to this type of classification as well.

There are changes now but we need to continue to give attention to these issues as we study the history and culture of Chinese and their settlements across time.

