

**ON THE BANKS OF HUDSON RIVER  
—MY AMERICAN JOURNEY—**

**Chungchin Chen**  
陳仲欽

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## Preface

In March 2008, my wife Heidi and I returned to Taiwan during the presidential election. I paid a visit to my uncle, Po-Ta Chen (陳伯達) in my birth place and hometown, Hsinchu. At age 95 now, he is the only surviving elder among the relatives of my father's generation. Unexpectedly, he handed me the original hand-written copy of our family genealogy when we met and asked me to be its custodian. He said, "You are the one with the highest level of education in our family and capable of safe-keeping this valuable book of Chen's family history." I was very grateful for his words of praise and encouragement.

This family genealogy was written in hand brush and edited by my grandfather in 1933 based on the early version written by my great-grandfather in 1882. It was passed down to my father for custody. My father had updated it a bit until he passed away in 1973. However, I intend to turn this valuable book over to my family in Taiwan eventually. I believe that it should be kept in Taiwan since very few of my own descendants who grew up in the U.S. would be able to comprehend Chinese writing, especially the classic Chinese.

I feel a great sense of responsibility to make good use of this family registry to tell our children and posterity thereafter about their ancestry and whereabouts they came from. Therefore I made a special effort in this memoir to trace the origin of the ancestors in mainland China and how they passed down from generation to generation until the present. As the one who was born and grew up in Taiwan and now has been living in the U. S., I believe that I am the best bridge between the relatives living in both sides of the world. I hope this memoir, in both English and Chinese, will help them all connect to one another better.

More importantly, I want them to know also about my early years in Taiwan

and how I made the journey to the United States. Like the ancestors who sailed across the swift “Black Current” (黑水溝) of the Taiwan Strait from Fujian Province, Southern China to Taiwan in 1770s, I sailed across the Pacific Ocean from Taiwan to North American Continent 190 years later. Despite the differences in distance and time, the audacity of both voyages was similar. There were also more relatives who migrated to the U. S. after me. These were the testimony of the long journey in our family history to seek a better life and opportunity in better places within the global village.

Over the past 60-plus years, I have met many people of various different backgrounds in Taiwan as well as different cities of America. I have lived and traveled to many places within the U. S. and abroad. Human history is the records of people intersecting with time and place. Everyone will leave some traces on the earth where he or she has walked through. There were some significant events as well as interesting anecdotes that I happened to witness and encounter during my life. I described them in this journal to reflect where I was when they occurred.

I started to write this memoir in 2010. With frequent interruptions, I finally completed the English draft in early 2013. It was about ten years after retirement from my full-time job. For the benefit of those relatives living in Taiwan, I spent one more year to complete the Chinese version and to assemble the photo pages. These were time-consuming and cumbersome tasks, especially typing Chinese characters with personal computer. The Chinese edition in book form is scheduled to be published in Taiwan in May 2015. I am glad that I have finally finished this important and the final project of my life at age 80.

**Chungchin Chen**

**Spring of 2015, Latham, NY, U.S.A.**

# 1. MY ANCESTORS

## **Ancestors in Fujian Province, Southeastern China**

Based on the family registry, I can trace the ancestral lineage for over seven centuries: five hundred years in Fujian Province, China (1250-1770) and over two hundred years in Taiwan (1770-1963). In the fall of 1882, my great-grandfather, Su-Pao Chen (陳叔寶 1848-1890) went to Zhuengchou (泉州), Fujian Province (福建省), China, to take part in a local civil service examination (鄉試). On his way back, he visited the ancestors' hometown in Huian County (惠安縣) to search for the Chen's family records there. Huian County is located north of today's Zhuengchou City (泉州市). He was able to trace the ancestral records back for 18 generations, up to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century in the Southern Song Dynasty (南宋 1127-1279). In older times, most residents there were farmers and fishermen. The area was famous for stone and wood sculpturing.

The origin of our ancestors prior to that time is unknown. They might have originally migrated from Henan Province (河南省) of Central China during the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Tang Dynasty (唐朝 607-908). Historical records indicated that there were a severe draught during the early Tang Dynasty in Henan and social unrests: the "Rebellion of An-Su" (安史之亂 755-763) and the "Rebellion of Huang-Zhau" (黃巢之亂 874-875). A great number of Han people (the main Chinese race) were forced to migrate to southern Fujian and intermarried with local native people Pai-Yuh (百越). Recent scientific studies based on DNA analysis by Dr. Mary Lin (林媽利) of the McKay Memorial Hospital (馬偕紀念醫院) in Taiwan has proven that most people of southeastern China were actually

native Pai-Yuh assimilated by Han people. They are different from the Han people of Northern China in terms of blood relationship.

It all began with ancestor named Chieh (覺 1253-1332), the first generation, who died at age 79. He and his wife, Ms. Chang (張氏), had two sons: Shih-Pao (世寶) and Shih-Hsien (世賢), the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation. (It is noted that in many cases, the exact year of birth and death of the early ancestors in China were not recorded in the family registry.) At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1573), the oldest son of Shih-Hsien, Sou-Zen (守仁, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation) who resisted against and was killed by the rebelling force named Tong Chen (陳同) in 1371. As a reward for his fealty, he was bestowed with a huge tract of land by Ming's Emperor Yuan-Zhang Chu (明太祖朱元璋). A daughter was also married to a royal family. His son Yean-Zheng (元正, the 4<sup>th</sup> generation) and grandson Sung-Zong (順宗, the 5<sup>th</sup> generation) continued to serve a hereditary military commander position by decree. Ancestor Sung-Zong had three sons: Yeng (淵), Hau (浩), and Jun (濬). We are the descendent of Hau (the 6<sup>th</sup> generation.) By tradition, we could assume that the decedents thereafter were mostly landlords, educated literates and the elites in local communities.

Ancestor Hsien (賢祖 1723-1776) and wife Si (細 1723-1808) were the 18<sup>th</sup> and the last generation of our ancestors in Fujian, China. They had three sons: Shiang (祥), Hsu (旭), and Ying (嬰). Hsu was the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of our ancestors to migrate to Taiwan. The list below, in lineage order, shows the ancestors' first names of eighteen generations in China and those of past seven generations in Taiwan. I am the 7<sup>th</sup> generation in Taiwan.



Ancestor Hsu (旭 1750-1824), the 2nd son of Hsien (賢) and Ms. Hsu (徐氏 1758), was the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the Chen family to migrate to Taiwan. They left Fujian for the island in about 1770s soon after the prohibition decree was lifted. It was about the same time of the U.S. independence (1776) and ninety years after Taiwan had become part of China in 1686 under the control of the Imperial Qing.

They settled in Hsinchu, then a fenced settlement and a trade and government center. (Hsinchu means “new bamboo” in English.) It was called Chu-Chien (竹塹) or Bamboo City 100 years ago. The early bamboo fence was erected in 1733 and the earth city wall was built in 1806 to protect Han residents from attack by native aboriginal people. (It was the same as American western frontiers in erecting wooden forts to protect themselves from attack by native Indians.) A much stronger brick wall was constructed in 1829. There were four city gates. The East Gate is the only one being preserved up to now. Hsinchu is strategically located in northern Taiwan, about 40 miles south of Taipei. Not too far in the northwest of the city was a nice fishing/trading port called Chu-Chien Harbor (竹塹港), today’s Old Harbor (舊港). Cargo junks sailed from Fujian directly across the Taiwan Strait could easily anchor here.



The East Gate today (2010 photo)

Ancestor Wen-Hsi (文試 1793-1874), the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation in Taiwan, was the fourth son of Hsu (旭). He and his first wife Ms. Ching Lin (林氏金) had one son named Yu-Hen (玉衡 1828-1887) and two daughters. He remarried three times.

His second wife Ms. Pei Lin (林氏捌) had one son named Yu-Kuan (玉光 1832-1879) and two daughters. Yu-Hen and Yu-Kuan were the third generation.

According to the family registry, my great grandfather Su-Pao (叔寶 1848-1890, the 4<sup>th</sup> generation) who was a scholar (秀才) and the oldest son of Yu-Hen, served as the Counsel of Hsinchu Garrison (武營師爺). (The position was equivalent to the counsel of today's city police department). The post was a low-level local government position. Nevertheless, it was still a highly respected and influential public service job in that era. As a child, I saw some old portraits of them in colorful court uniforms hanging on the wall of the central hall of the family mansion. I believe that it was most likely the earlier generations of our ancestors in Taiwan before my father were well-to-do landlords and intellectuals. I remember that the family still owned some tracts of land surrounding our house even until the early 1960s.

My great grandfather Su-Pao and wife Ms. Kui Cheng (鄭氏貴) had three sons: Peng-Chen (鵬程 1870-1942, the 5<sup>th</sup> generation and my grandfather), Peng-Chung (鵬翀 1874-1935, Sue Cheng's grandfather), and Yeng-Shi (延熙 1885-1931, uncle Po-Ta's father), and a daughter Ying-Chao (鸞嬌). My grandfather and two grandaunts were still alive when I was in elementary school. Both granduncles had already passed away before my birth.

Our house, where I was born, was located in a small hamlet called Sang-Kah-Lag Village (三甲六莊), meaning a village of 3.6 hectares. It is less than one mile north of the city business center. Our house was the only red-roof, Chinese traditional-style mansion in the entire village. According to uncle Po-Ta, it was built by my great-great grandfather Yi-Hen (玉衡) and his son Su-Pao (叔

寶) in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Before World War II, there were more than 20 households in the village; about half of them were tenant farmers. The village was surrounded by rice fields. Our house had a gated courtyard in front and a fruit/flower garden behind. There was a large open space right outside the walled courtyard which became the popular playground of children during the day time. Many adults would sit inside the courtyard to cool off and chat during hot summer nights. The courtyard gate was closed after mid night. I had to climb over the gate to get in when I returned home too late during my high school years. All of my grandfather's siblings and their children lived in this family estate complex. It was a noisy place as three generations all living together and taking care of each other. Of course, there was little privacy.

Near the end of World War II, the government extended new broader streets from the inner city to the suburbs. They cut through the back-yard of our house. My brother and I loved to play pitch-and-catch baseball in the middle of the streets behind the house when I returned home from high school. Modern urbanization finally arrived in Taiwan after World War II. All the houses in the village were torn down after I left for the U.S. in 1963. In place now is a busy city block of 3- and 4-story, mixed-use buildings with shops downstairs and residential units upstairs. Fast urban growth during the past half centuries has greatly changed Taiwan's cityscape. I was no longer able to recognize many places and streets when I returned to visit.

## 2. MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS

### Grandfather

My grandfather Peng-Cheng Chen (陳鵬程 1870--1942) was the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of our family in Taiwan. He and my grandmother, Ms. Deng Lin (林氏等 1874-1922) bore two sons and three daughters. My grandmother passed away rather young at age 49, many years before my birth. I still have vivid memories about my grandfather. As the oldest son, my grandfather was the patriarchy of the entire Chen clan. An intellect of the older generation, he missed the opportunity of civil service examination when Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895. Yet, being a scholar well versed in classic Chinese and the Book of Changes (易經), he was well known in Hsinchu as a geomancer (風水先生) and a fortune teller. He had a desk at the entrance of the City Guardian Temple (城隍廟). I remember he would often bring me with him to go up to the hills to investigate burying sites for the clients.

Like many well-to-do men of his time, he smoked opium and got addicted to it. Opium could be an effective medicine in those days. When we got sick from common cold, he would blow the opium smoke into our mouths to cure the illness. Each afternoon, he would lay down on the bed to lit and puff opium, and carried conversations with visitors. His bedside became a popular gathering place of many elderly men from the village and visiting friends.

My grandfather didn't have the business and financial acumen as I was told by the elders. I heard that our family used to own some commercial properties in the city center near today's City Guardian Temple. Those properties were sold in order to pay for a friend's debts guaranteed by my grandfather. By the time I was

born, the family fortune was mostly gone and holding on to only a few tracks of rice land being tilled by tenant farmers in the village. He died from kidney infection caused by kidney stones in 1942 at the age of 72. I was only eight years old. (Such a disease could be cured easily through simple surgical treatment today.)

One year before he passed away, grandfather wrote down sixteen Chinese characters in the family registry. Each character should be used as the middle name of each generation from my father down. (My father's middle name character is Po, mine is Chung, followed by Ying, Ming, Ting, Yung, etc.) I believe it is a good system to understand one's relative standing in the family tree.

## **Parents**

My father Po-Hsun Chen (陳伯壘 1897-1973) was born 2 years after Taiwan had been ceded to Japan from China in 1895 as the result of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (馬關條約) after the Sino-Japanese War. He was the eldest of five siblings; had three sisters and one brother. He received private tutoring and was one of the few in the family and the entire village who was literate in classic Chinese. Many neighbors would ask my father to write and read letters for them. In the evening after dinner, many people would sit in the courtyard or inside the large central room of the house to listen to his reading of popular novels of ancient Chinese history. This was then the best recreation to pass time for most people living in the countryside, in addition to gambling. He wrote to me often after I came to the U.S.

He was a gentle and hard-working person, never argued with people. He went to Taipei to learn the trade of jewel making with the masters as a young man. After completing the required 4-5 years of apprenticeship, he returned home to

open a jewelry store, Li-Kuen Silversmith Store (麗崑銀樓), on today's Chung-Yuan Street (中央路) in downtown Hsinchu in the 1930s. Because of his artistic talent, my father became one of the best jewelry makers in town.

But I also witnessed the hard times endured by the family during World War II when trading of gold and silver materials was totally forbidden by the government. The jewel store was forced to close. Father would make wedding rings with copper coins at home or



secretly remake gold jewelry for customers. 1930s site of Li-Kuen Jewel Store (2010)  
He also worked as a laborer pushing light-rail cart at a nearby sugar cane plant to support the family. The store reopened soon as the War was over. The family financial condition recovered. The jewel store continued to be run by my brother and aunt for more than twenty years after my father's retirement.

The last time I saw my father was in July 1973 when I returned to Taiwan for a family visit for the first time in ten years after I came to the U. S. Suffering from a stroke, he was paralyzed and bedridden. He could not speak, but still recognized me. Knowing that it would be the last time that I might see him, I sat on his bed-side with watery eyes. I returned to the U. S. at the end of the two-week vacation. He passed away five months later on December 12th age 76. Deeply saddened, I was not able to return home for his funeral.

My father and my mother were married in 1921; he was 24 and she 19. My mother Yeng Ko (柯妍 1902-1952) was born into a relatively wealthy family on the west side of Hsinchu. Her father, Tong-Yang Ko (柯東洋) and my

grandfather were good friends. She was adopted by the Chen's family as an infant. Under a mutual understanding and following the old custom of that era, she and my father would get married to each other later when they both grew up. My maternal grandfather and grandmother both had died before I was born. My mother kept a very close relationship with her relatives of the Ko family and frequently brought the children to visit the Ko's old estate. My mother was a very warm, kind and frugal housewife. She loved her children and was very protective of them. She was the magnet of the family and well respected by all relatives. With a gentle demeanor, she seldom argued with others or raised her voice.



My Father



My Mother

She was in poor health during the last three years of her life. She became very ill and her health deteriorated from a liver problem when I was a high school freshman. For the entire summer of 1952 during the school vacation, I was home all day to take care of her. I still vividly remember the desperate moments of our family during the last hours of her life. Her body was eventually removed from the bed room to the central living room of the house. All family members were gathering in the room. I was crying and held her cold hands. I called her, but she

had no response. She peacefully passed away at 2:00 PM on August 2, 1952 at age 51. My heart was broken and felt very lonely. I was 17 years old.

I still have deep impression about my maternal step-grandmother. My mother treated her like her own mother. She lived with her only daughter (my mother's step sister) on an alley in the city's west side. My mother used to bring us children to visit them. She had a loud voice and visited our home whenever there were some special celebration events. Her voice was ahead of her steps. My aunt's only son, Meng-Puh Lee (李明圃, photo below), who lost his father at a very young age, was brought up by his widowed mother, a cloth maker. With self-motivation and hard work, cousin Meng-Puh graduated from Hsinchu Normal School and further completed a degree from the provincial teacher college. Rising from teaching at elementary schools, he became the Principal of San-Ming Junior High School (三民國中) of Hsinchu, rated one of the best in the city. He was an accomplished educator and an excellent artist. We have kept in close touch and made sightseeing together during my visits to Hsinchu.



With Cousin Meng-Puh Lee (2012)

## **Uncle and Aunt (adopted father and mother)**

Soon after my mother passed away, my uncle and aunt resumed their request to adopt me because they only bore a daughter and no son. Such requests in the past were always declined by my mother. At the urging and encouragement of relatives, I agreed to be adopted. But I still stayed at the old house of my parents

in the outskirts of the city most of the time during the rest of my high school years. I moved into the city later after I began going to college.

Uncle Po-Kai Chen (陳伯愷 1907-1986) was ten years younger than my father. As the youngest of the siblings, he was somewhat spoiled and easy-going in his entire life. He attended Japanese public school and learned silversmith craft from my father, but was less skillful in the trade. He was proud of my coming abroad to the U.S. and visited us in the spring of 1977 and stayed with us in Latham, NY for six months. The entire family toured many historic and scenic places in the State and on the East Coast.

Accompanied by my cousin Rui-Jin (his daughter), my uncle visited the U. S. for the second time in May 1986. He suffered a fatal stroke at noon time on July 3 at the home of my niece Karen and her husband Jerry Kiang in Queens, NY, just two days before their scheduled return to Taiwan. He was rushed to the nearby hospital emergency room. I received a phone call about the bad news that afternoon from Karen. Heidi and I drove to New York City immediately. He passed away one week later in the hospital at age 80. I arranged for a simple Christian funeral service at a funeral home in Flushing. My cousin and I carried his ashes back to Hsinchu in August and a formal extravagant funeral service was arranged by family members at home. It was a very sad and distressful trip.

Aunt I-Chu Chuan (莊愛珠 1910-1973) was born and brought-up in a wealthy merchant family. Her father Jong Chuan (莊榮) owned a store named Kung-Mao (崑茂行) on the west side of Hsinchu. She was married to my uncle in 1930. My aunt was a very kind woman with business acumen. She actually managed the family jewel store created by my father and dealt with customers. She accepted the Christian faith in her 40s and was the first Christian (Protestant)

in our family. She learned to read the Roman-phonetic Taiwanese Bible. I accompanied her to the Tong-Men Christian Church (東門聖教會) a couple of times during my college years.

Aunt suffered from diabetes and died from an accidental fall at home on July 27<sup>th</sup> of 1973 at age 63. The accident happened just a few days after we were visiting Taiwan from the U.S. and vacationing at a beach resort in northern Taiwan arranged by a good friend and college classmate. After receiving the bad news, we rushed back to Hsinchu and spent most of the days taking care of the funeral and dealing with other family matters thereafter. She was given a Christian funeral. We managed to spend the last few days of the trip visiting the Sun-Moon Lake resort area in Central Taiwan where Heidi and I spent our honeymoon 12 years earlier.

## **Soul Partner**

Her original Chinese first name was “Shiu-Ying” (秀英) and changed to “Wen-Hua” (文華) after coming to the U. S. She adopted the English name “Heidi” to be closer to her Japanese name pronounced as ヒレ “Hiere”. I didn’t know that she lived on Dong-Meng Street (東門街), only a few blocks from my uncle’s home in the city before we met. Actually, her cousin was my classmate at junior high school. She and my cousin Sue Cheng were high school classmates.

Born in the family of Su (蘇), Heidi was adopted by the Wei family when she was only six months old. They extremely loved and protected her; she was seldom seen alone outside the house. Her adopted father Van-Te Wei (魏萬德 1914-1989) was a respected businessman with an impeccable reputation and owned a successful hardware and paint store in downtown Hsinchu near the East

Gate. Her adopted mother, Wang-Lang Chen (陳婉蘭 1916-1998) was a generous, diligent, and intelligent woman. Her father, Fu-Chuen Chen (陳福全), was a scholar/calligrapher and an expert in Chinese medicine well known in my hometown Hsinchu.



Ron with grandma (1992)

We met in the early summer of 1961 not long after I had been discharged from the ROTC military service and taught English at a high school in my hometown. Arranged by a mutual family friend, we glanced at each other for the first time in a movie theater. (I went alone and she came accompanied by her parents.) I had a very good impression with her graceful appearance and shy beauty. It was almost love at first sight. We started to exchange letters to understand each other more. I found that she was very bright and an excellent writer. Naturally I dated when I was in college, but had never been so serious. She was the one whom I was deeply moved by and attracted to. I told her that I was preparing to go abroad for my graduate study and might not stay home for long. She didn't mind, an indication of her tacit consent.

After only a few months of dating and courtship, we were engaged in August 1961 and married on Sunday, December 31 of that year. She was 22 years old and I was 26. Sunday was chosen for the wedding because it was the only non-working day of the week for most invited guests. About 350 family members, relatives, friends, classmates and local dignitaries attended the wedding ceremony and banquet. My cousin, Mr. Tzu-Yi Ko (柯子餘), MC the ceremony and introduced us to the guests. (His son, Chien-Ming Ko (柯建銘) has been the a

leader a Democratic & Progressive Party (DPP) and a member the Legislative Yuan of the Central Government of Taiwan.) We spent our honey-moon at Sun Moon Lake, Kuanziling--a hot spring resort, and ended up in Kaohsiung where we stayed at the home of my sister.

Heidi has natural talent in art and received a Master of Art Diploma from the International Correspondence Schools of Pennsylvania. Being a thrifty person and a dedicated home maker, she manages our family affairs. She loves to read and is artistically creative. She was skilled in egg paintings and making ribbon flowers, small pins, and earrings for sale at craft shows for many years. During her retired years, she designed and printed book marks for donation to many charity organizations.



Engagement (1961/8)



Wedding (1961/12/31)

It was very common then that many Taiwanese male students would get married in Taiwan before they left home for graduate studies abroad. But they were not allowed to bring their spouses and children with them while they were pursuing the advanced degrees abroad even they were capable in supporting the family financially. For political reason, the government authorities of Taiwan

prohibited students to bring their families with them before they had finished their graduate studies.

## Children

We are extremely blessed to have three smart and filial sons; all having good character and completed college education in the U.S. To have college degrees is essential for new immigrants to enter into the main-stream society of America.

Our oldest son Raymond (Ying-Min 英明) was born in Hsinchu in November 1962. He was only 50 days old when I left Taiwan for the U.S. He came to the U.S. at the age of three. Ray has been distinguished himself as a smart, earnest, dependable, caring person since his boyhood. He started to work after school at an apartment complex near our home when he was only 14 years old. As a student athlete, he was on the high school baseball varsity team. He graduated from Northwestern University with a BS Degree in Chemical Engineering (1985) and two years later received a master's degree from Columbia University in the same field. Financially supported by his employer, Morton International Co., he further received a MBA degree from the University of Chicago.

He met Miss Peihuang Lu (呂佩璜 1963-) in Chicago and they were married at the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Albany in the summer of 1991. She is the second daughter of Mr. T. K. Lu (呂德寬) and Ms. Chung-Chai Huang (黃瓊彩) of Taoyuan (桃園), Taiwan. Peihuang graduated from the National Chao-Tong University (in



Raymond and Peihuang's wedding (1990/6)

Hsinchu) and received a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Northwestern University. They have two children. Eric (明皓) was born in May 1995 in Chicago and Emily (明怡) in May 2000 in Singapore. An outstanding student with extreme talent in music, Eric is a sophomore at Rutgers University. Emily is a high school freshman interested in art and science. She plays piano and is a member of the school gymnastic team.

Ray started his engineering career in 1985 with the Chicago-based Morton International. In March 1999 he was promoted to Site Manager to run the company's production plant in Singapore and the family lived there for three years. (Heidi and I visited them in Singapore in May 2000.) Subsequently he held senior engineer jobs with other companies including Philadelphia-based Rohm & Hass and Dow Chemical. In early 2009, he started his current job with the New Jersey-based Lubrication U.S.A., a subsidiary of British Petroleum. The family moved from Chicago to Wayne, New Jersey in the summer of 2010. Wayne is only 137 miles south of Albany and less than two and a half hour drive from our home. They are devoted members of Fairlawn Taiwanese Community Reformed Church.

Our second son, Robert (Ying-Tze 英哲) was born in Kansas City, Missouri in November 1966. He was on the high school baseball and volleyball varsity teams. Bob graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a building science degree in 1989. After working briefly for a local architecture firm, he held executive jobs in the YMCA system for a few years. He has been working as project manager for a construction company in central New Jersey. He lives in Neptune, New Jersey, about three and a half hours from Albany. Very sociable, he loves sports and enjoys his bachelor life.

Our youngest son Ronald (英立) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana in September 1968. He graduated from Princeton University in 1990 with a BS Degree in Psychology and also holds a Master Degree in Education from the State University of New York at Buffalo. As a talented student athlete, he played soccer and baseball in his youth. He especially excelled at track in high school and later in college. He was a member and the captain of Princeton University's Track & Field Team.

After teaching high school and coaching track for two years near Princeton, NJ, he went to Taiwan to learn Chinese and teach English in Taipei. In late December of 1993, he was suffered from severe headache and alertly took a flight back home from Taiwan. He had blurred vision when he stepped down from the plane. The result of MRI showed that there was an infection of the pineal gland (松腺) in his brain, which was fatal and required emergent treatment. He was rushed to the Albany Medical Hospital's emergency room and gone through surgery by a neurosurgeon to save his life. Fortunately, he fully recovered and regained his health after several months of radiation treatment.

He returned to Taipei again in November 1994 to resume his Chinese language study and teaching English. Subsequently he met his future wife, Hsin-Hui Huang (黃心慧), who graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master's Degree in Marketing. She is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Cheng-Chun Huang (黃正忠) of Kaohsiung. They were married in Taipei in October, 1995 and operated an English tutoring school. For the sake of education of the children, Ron brought his two sons home to attend local public school in 2008 after staying in Taiwan for 14 years. They have been staying with us in Latham. He is waiting for the opportunity to resume teaching in the Capital District. Both Jonathan (明

侄 1998/3), a junior and Jeremy (明佞 2000/5), a freshman, were both born in Taiwan, therefore hold dual citizenships of the U.S. and the R.O.C.

## Siblings

I was the youngest among my siblings. I had two sisters and two brothers. I was especially close to my two sisters after my mother passed away when I was only 17. From my adopted parents' side who were my uncle and aunt, I have one older sister and one adopted younger brother.

My oldest sister Chin-Yeh (清月 1922-2002) was adopted by my parents when she was an infant. At age 18, she was married to Zhing-Chin Chang (張錦清 1919-1988), then a policeman in the Town of Houlong (後龍). He was sent by the Japanese government to Hainan Island (海南島) in 1945 during the height of World War II. My parents brought her home with the two infant children for caring when he was away. Luckily, he survived the War and returned home in 1947 after the surrender of Japan. They had seven filial children, three sons and four daughters. My sister passed away on September 13, 2002 at age 81. I returned to Taiwan to attend her funeral service.

Nieces Mei-Ching (美琴 1953) and Mei-Chueng (Amy 美娟 1965) both passed the advance civil service tests for government jobs. Amy currently serves as Assistant Director of Personnel Bureau of the Interior Ministry. She and her son David visited us in



With nephews & nieces in Hsinchu (2007/5)

the summer of 2005.

My oldest brother Chung-Chie (仲吉 1925-1944) was adopted by my parents from a family friend. A born-athlete with steel-like body and kinetic energy, he joined the youth corp. He had progressive thoughts and made a secret trip to Japan at age 18, trying to join the Japanese socialist movement. His adventure attracted the attention of Japanese authorities and policemen visited our home to investigate. In August 1943 at age 19, he was drafted by the Japanese army and was sent to the island of Rabaul, New Guinea in the South Pacific. I remember that our entire family saw him off at the rail station. According to the notice sent to our home by the Japanese authorities, he died from tropical disease in Rabaul the following June. What a waste of valuable life!

New Guinea is very close to Australia. It was captured by Japan in 1942 and became the main staging base of Japanese military and naval activities in the South Pacific. Many POW's of China and the Allies captured by Japanese army were sent to hard-labor camps on the island and tortured. Over 200,000 Taiwanese youths were sent to the South Pacific, China and Indo-China to fight; 30,300 of them never returned home. In our village, four young adults were drafted, two never returned and two came home, including my uncle Po-Hua (伯華) and cousin Chung-Tsan (仲燦, Susan's brother).

My 2nd sister Rui-Yung (瑞雲 1927-2010) was eight years older than me. We were very close to each other. She was a pretty, intelligent and very likeable woman with big heart. When I was fourteen years old she gave me a nice Japanese-made harmonica as a birthday gift which I still keep and occasionally play even today. My brother-in-law Ting-Shung Peng (彭燈順 1929) was an entrepreneur in several businesses, including house construction and steel wire

manufacturing. They moved from Hsinchu to Kaohsiung, the southern port city of Taiwan in 1957. (I was a sophomore in college.) Their homes in Hsinchu and Kaohsiung were my favorite places to visit whenever I was out of school. They enjoyed traveling and visited us in Latham in the fall of 1980.

Their son Peter (傳宗 1957) graduated from National Chiau-Tong University (交通大學) in Transportation Administration and Yang-Ming University (陽明大學) with a MBA degree. He worked in the import/export business in Hong-Kong and Taiwan. His daughter Jessica (薇如) graduated from UC-Irvine. Niece Jennifer (淑玲 1961), graduated from Wen-Chao Junior College (文藻五專) majoring in music. She gave private piano lessons.

My sister suddenly became ill in August 2010 and was hospitalized. She passed away on October 14 from acute liver cancer. Heidi and I booked a flight to go to Taiwan in the hope that we would be able to attend her funeral service. Regrettably, the funeral date was moved up a few days earlier before our arrival. But we were able to attend the installation ceremony of the urn containing her ashes into to a grandiose pagoda near I-Ta (義大) on the outskirts of Kaohsiung. I really miss her very much.

Four years older than me, my 2nd brother Chung-Yao (仲堯 1931-2011) was a quiet and low-key gentleman. He and I got along very well. As kids during the summer time, we would run to the horse racing track in the outskirts of the city and sneak into the track ground to watch the races. We both loved baseball and used to play pitch-and-catch in the backyard of our house when I was home from school. He was a life-time Yankees fan and loved to watch the games from cable TV at home. My brother followed the foot-steps of my father to become a skillful jewelry maker and managed the family jewel store for some years after my father

passed away. He died on June 29, 2011 at age 81 after a long illness. I flew home to attend his funeral service. He and my sister-in-law Yeh-O Tzeng (曾月娥 1932-2014) have three sons and one daughter: Ying-Chieng (英堅 1953), Ying-Chiang (英強 1954), Ying-Hui (英輝 1955-1996), Ying-Su (英淑 1959).

Three years older than me, cousin Rui-Jin (瑞錦 1932) is the only daughter of my uncle and aunt. She was married to Ching-Yung Yang (楊鏡榮 1930-2014), a businessman. She accompanied my uncle to visit us in Latham, New York during the summer of 1986. She bore two sons: Houg-Chang (宏章 1956-1976), Jay (宏洲 1962) and two daughters: Shirley (淑如 1955) and Karen (淑玲 1958). The older boy Houg-Chang died from acute liver infection at age 20 during his military service. All of other three children are living in the U.S.

Karen arrived in New York in the summer of 1983 to join her fiancé Jerry (江志華 1955). A few months later, they got married at the Colonie Town Court in Latham. Heidi and I invited a few friends to celebrate their wedding at a Chinese restaurant. Jerry and Karen both completed graduate studies at St. John's University; Jerry in MBA and Karen in library science. They have two sons: Justin (平逸 1988) who graduated from SUNY-Binghamton and Aaron (平安 1997), a high school senior. They live in Valley Stream, Long Island.

Jay (宏洲) met Elizabeth Rose O'Brien (依麗莎白·奧伯林) in Taipei when she taught English there. Graduated from Washington State University, she is of Irish descent. In July 1991, Heidi and I attended their wedding in Seattle, Washington. Jay works for a forwarding service company and Liz is a bank executive. They have one boy Joseph (仁杰 1998) and one girl Ava (念竹 2002). They are the only and first offspring with mixed blood among our relatives.

Niece Shirley Yang (楊淑如) and her husband Kuan-Fu Lee (李光溥 1953) immigrated to U.S. in 1998. They have one son Kevin (之瀚 1988) who graduated from UC-Berkeley and is attending medical school in Long Island, New York and one daughter Michelle (之淋 1992) who is a senior at UC-San Diego. They live in San Diego, California.

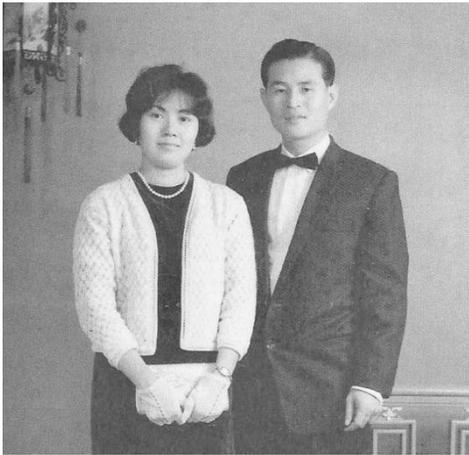


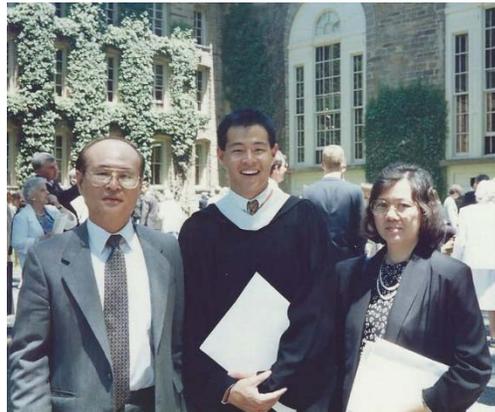
Photo before leaving for the U.S. (1962/12)



Family reunion in K. C. Mo. (1965/11)



Ray's graduation, Northwestern Univ. (1985)



Ron's graduation, Princeton Univ. (1990)



Family portrait (1986)



Family portrait (2011)



Hsin-Hui, Jonathan & Jeremy (2001)



Family vacation, Sun-Moon Lake (2007/5)



Sister Rei-Yung & husband, Niagara Falls (1980)



With niece Shirley Yang, San Diego (2013/9)



With Niece Amy Chang in Taipei (2012)



With Uncle Po-Ta, 93 in Hsinchu (2012)

### **3. THE GROWING-UP YEARS (1935-1955)**

#### **Innocent and Happy Country Boy**

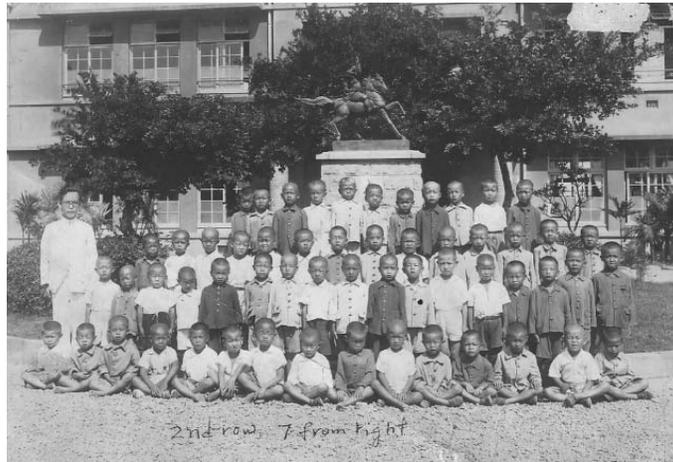
I was born in February 1935 and the youngest with two older sisters and two brothers. I enjoyed a lot of happy playing time as a young country boy. Life was quite simple and full of fun. I would play with other older kids in the village. On Sundays and during school vacation months, we often would sneak into the city's public zoo which was not too far away from our home. We roasted sweet potatoes with heated rock soils in the rice field, and swam in the creek near home during the summer time. During the death nights, we would sneak into the fenced garden of a wealthy neighbor just across from our house to pick peaches--a typical mischief behavior of kids growing-up.

It looked like that I was quite adventurous even at very young age. I was told by the adults that I was rescued from a small shallow creek near our home when I was merely a two years old toddler. I remember one day when I was only five years old, my mother took the train alone to visit my married oldest sister Chin-Yeh (清月) in Houlung (後龍), about 70-minute train-ride south from Hsinchu. I quietly followed her to the rail station and sneaked onto the same train without her noticing. To my mother's surprise, I appeared myself before her as soon as the train reached the destination. She had no choice but to take me along.

I entered the North Gate Elementary School (北門國小) at age 7. It was about 30-minute walk from our home. Like most children in the village, I walked barefoot to school even in the winter time. Actually barefoot was more practical when passing through the muddy and narrow paths across the rice fields. I remember the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher was a gentle mid-age Taiwanese who happened to

be an acquaintance of my grandfather. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher was a young Taiwanese woman of Hakka heritage, a disciplinary type with quick temper. She would punish the students for even minor misbehavior or for answering questions incorrectly. Most students were afraid of her. Mr. Yamasaki (山崎), a nice Japanese young man was our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher. As a naturally athletic boy, I was very good in wrestling; even though I was not big among my classmates. I was a favored rider on the shoulder of older boys participating in horse war on the school yard during the recess.

By the summer of 1944, Japan was losing the World War II as the allied forces launched a counterattack. U.S. Grumman fighter bomber taking off from the air carriers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet, started to bomb Taiwan.



My 1<sup>st</sup> grade class, R-4 2<sup>nd</sup> row (1942)

Hsinchu was a major target because there was a large military air base at its outskirts. Every time hearing the sound of warning siren, we all would dash out for shelter inside the makeshift covered trench dug behind our home's backyard. Sometimes I would bravely stay outside the trench to watch the bombers flying by over the sky at low attitude looking for factories and military installations to bomb.

A year earlier, to protect Taiwan from the invasion of American forces, the Japanese military authorities started to prepare the defense of the island against the Allied forces. Each family was required to send an adult or two children to

dig defense tunnels into the “18-Peak Hills” (十八尖山) on the eastern outskirts of the city. To meet the requirement, my brother and I substituted for my father to perform the compulsory labor duty for several months. The traces of a few tunnel entrances are still visible today. Fortunately, American forces leapfrogged over Taiwan and instead, invaded the island of Okinawa. Taiwan was spared from the serious calamities.

Near the end of the War when the situation turned worse, our family along with many neighbors took shelter in the mountain area called Pao-San (寶山), about 3-hour walk from our home. Our family rented a small room of hut house with a dirty floor from a local Hakka farmer. Very often my brother and I were left behind to stay there for many days when our mother had to go down to the city alone. But we were not afraid and learned how to cook a simple meal by ourselves. I was only 10 years old, and my brother 14. In retrospect, I learned the survival skills to be independent at very young age.

My 4<sup>th</sup> grade year was postponed almost entirely because of the War. The War finally ended when Emperor Hirohito of Japan announced an unconditional surrender to the American-led allies on August 15, 1945. The school resumed soon after. The Nationalist Chinese troops under Chiang Kai-shek began landing on Taiwan in late October and arrived in our city by train in early November that year. (In fact, the island was only to be occupied by Chiang’s army on behalf of the Allied Powers under the order of General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander. Its future status was supposed to be decided by the six million inhabitants under international law.) All students started to learn Chinese from scratch. But there were very few Taiwanese teachers who could speak Mandarin; the teachers themselves had to learn Chinese first. It was even harder for students

to learn the new language correctly. My Chinese was not good until I got to high school.

There was a near-fatal accident when I was 11 years old in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. It was a day of heavy rain during the summer typhoon season. On the way home from school, I passed through the row houses of families working for the sugar plant - a familiar route that I walked to school very often. In front of the row houses was a concrete drainage ditch. But the entire area was covered by flood water above ankle height. I tried to cross the 2-3 meters wooden bridge over the ditch. Not realizing that the bridge had already been washed away; I stepped into the ditch and was quickly swept away by the strong current with my head barely above the water. Hearing my cry for help, a man rushed out from a house and dragged me up from the swift-running storm water. No doubt that I would have drowned without the man's quick action. The savior happened to be the parents of one of my classmates. Water seemed to be a dangerous natural element to me.

## **The Young Teacher Who Lifted Me Up**

Most of my ancestors were educated intellectuals according to the family registry. But the scholastic tradition of the family seemed to end after my grandfather's generation. My grandfather missed the traditional civil service exam of the Manchu government when Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895. Unfortunately, he didn't catch up with the changing time. Only my father received a few years of traditional private tutor and was able to read and write Chinese. Women were ignored as far as learning literature was concerned in the old society. All of my aunts never attended public or private schools and were illiterate. But because of my family's social status and reputation, they were all married to local rich families. Although all of the younger family members in my generation attended regular public grade school, education seemed no longer a

high priority in my family during my father's generation because of economic hardship right before and during the World War II.

I started to learn Chinese in my fourth grade year. It was hard for me and my grades in the last few years of the elementary school were just average. There was no role model to follow and I had no desire or motivation to pursue a higher level of education after the grade school. After graduation, I happily started the apprenticeship at my father's store to learn the skills of jewel-making. I seemed to be quite good in learning the trade. I could make simple chains and rings.

A few months later, I met an older classmate, Ken-Tung Wang (王根棟). He told me he was attending the special preparatory class offered by my former elementary school for off-school students who were interested in taking the exam to middle schools or vocational schools. The class already started a few months ago. My friend urged me to try the class and I did. My life took an unexpected turn.

When I showed up at the class, the teacher hesitated and would not accept me right away. Reluctantly, he told me to try the class for a few days first. The young teacher named You-Hui Chen (陳有淮), was a recent graduate from the Provincial Taichung Normal School. During the math class on the first day, he wrote a simple math question on the black board and asked if any student could answer. No one of more than 50 students in the class responded. Somehow I bravely raised my hand and gave a correct answer. The teacher looked at me with great surprise and decided to accept me at the end of the day. I also excelled in other subjects. Highly impressed, he appointed me the row captain a few days later and eventually promoted me to the class head a few weeks later.

I was one of the top students in the class at the end. I suddenly discovered myself that I was somewhat smarter than most of my classmates. My self-confident got a big lift and my interest in learning increased. I decided to pursue the middle school for higher education. I passed the entry exam to the prestigious Provincial Hsinchu High School in 1949. It was the early turning point in my life. In the summer of 1953 when I just finished my freshman year in high school, I paid the teacher a visit at the elementary school where he was teaching to thank him for what he had done to inspire and lift me up.

## **The Change of Dynasty Again**

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the U.S. airplanes dropped an atomic bomb over Japan's industrial city--Hiroshima and a second one over Nagasaki three days later. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Emperor Hirohito announced that Japan would surrender unconditionally to the Allies. World War II finally ended. The Taiwanese people were very excited that Taiwan would be re-united with the "Motherland". On an early November day of 1945, many citizens and students (I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade) lined up in front of the Hsinchu rail station to welcome the arrival of the Nationalist army from mainland China. It was quite astonishing and disappointing to see the weary and unkempt soldiers, many of whom were merely boys. (Most of them were dragged into joining the army against their wills.) They wore ragged, yellow cotton uniforms and cloth or straw shoes. On each one's back was a military bag with a paper umbrella. Some carried cooking utensils on their shoulders with bamboo sticks. Pretty soon, people would discover that these Nationalist soldiers were poorly trained and lacked of any discipline. They would take residents' properties without permission and steal whatever they could find.

Chinese mainlanders soon occupied most of the mid- and high-rank local and provincial government posts, as well as the managers of public enterprises

confiscated from the Japanese people. They viewed themselves as the victors and rulers. The economy of Taiwan collapsed with high inflation. There was a shortage of food and daily necessities. The originally delighted Taiwanese people quickly became disillusioned when they discovered how corrupt the Chinese government was.

## **Witnessed the 2.28 Mass Shooting**

The so-called “2.28 Incident” finally occurred on February 28, 1947 in the capital City of Taipei. Two custom policemen tried to confiscate illegal cigarettes from a widowed street vendor. She cried for mercy, but in vain. Some people came to her help. The two sides started to argue and a man was fatally shot by the police. The shot angered the crowd of people who chased the policemen to a nearby police station and surrounded the station. The incident sparked a citizen uprising and it started to spread from north to south like a wild fire. It soon reached Hsinchu a few days later. All schools were closed. I was 12 years old then and in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

One afternoon in early March, I happened to walk home located on the city’s outskirts from my father’s jewel store in downtown. When I passed the bridge near the city hall, I saw a mob of young adults surrounding an open truck carrying Chinese military police. Apparently the demonstrators tried to disarm the soldiers. Instinctively sensing some dangerous thing might be happening, I quickly ran away from the area and hid behind a low brick wall not far from the bridge. Moments later, I heard a burst of gun shots; the soldiers had opened fire indiscriminately at those demonstrators. A few minutes after the gun shots ended and the truck speeded away, I returned to the bridge and witnessed the aftermath of a horrible massacre. I saw many people (at least a dozen) lying dead in a heap at the opposite end of the bridge. Some were shot in the head; their bloody brains

exposed. A young man was killed lying on the side of a large tree not far from the bridge. Apparently he was shot by a sharp shooter when he tried to take a peek at the soldiers. The gruesome image of killings remains indelibly imprinted on my mind even today. One of my 5<sup>th</sup> grade classmates was also killed. The exact number of deaths and their names were never published by any newspapers. Their families and friends all kept silent for fear of being implicated.

So far I haven't read any report on the "228 Incident" ever published the killings took place in Hsinchu. The reason might be that Hsinchu was relatively quiet in comparison with other cities during the citizen uprising and ensuing government crackdown. Because Army Lt. General Su Chao-Wen (蘇紹文), then the Commander of the area's Security Brigade (新竹地區警備司令), was a native of Hsinchu, it was spared from further repression by the KMT government.

During the chaotic days following the mass shooting, I followed the demonstrators to break into the official residency of the mayor named Sao-Chun Ko (郭紹宗) who had ran away in hiding. The furniture and household belongings were thrown out into the court yard and set fire by the demonstrators.



A heap of dead bodies shot by soldiers in Hsinchu in March 1947 (2010 photo)

It was estimated that more than 18,000 people were killed, some just disappeared, during the uprising. Ever since the 2.28 Incident, the Nationalist Government would rule Taiwan with an iron grip and “White Color Terror.” Taiwan would be under martial law for 38 years until 1987, the longest in modern world. Over 30,000 people, including many intellectuals, community leaders, and elites, were killed or sentenced to long jail terms by secret military courts without due process. However, I didn’t become fully aware of the political persecution that had taken place in Taiwan during the four decades of KMT rule until I came to the United States, because it was always taboo to talk about such matters.

## **Junior and High Schools**

I successfully passed the very competitive entry exam and was accepted to the junior division of the Provincial Hsinchu High School (省立新竹中學) in June 1949. When the news of my acceptance to the junior high arrived, the entire family cheered and was proud of my achievement. I was the first one in my family as well as in the entire village to receive a formal education beyond the grade school level. In fact, I was even became the first one in the family to attend college and to study abroad later.

The school was one of the few star high schools in Taiwan with a very good reputation. One of its famous alumni was Dr. Yen-Che Lee (李遠哲) who won the Noble Prize in chemistry in 1986 and became the President of the Central Academia Seneca of the ROC. He went to UC-Berkeley for his Ph. D. two years earlier than me. The school Principal, Mr. Chu-Ping Hsin (辛志平), was an excellent educator. He stressed for comprehensive education as the school treated

equal importance to “virtue, knowledge, sport, arts and good behavior.” For instance, each student must be able to swim at least 25 meters in order to graduate.

The school was about 3 miles (5 km) and at least 30-minute walk from my home. A bicycle was a luxury item then and my family couldn't afford to buy one for me. I was very often tardy to school and struggled in my studies. I didn't study hard and just got the passing grade in most subjects. Without seeking help, my most fearful subject happened to be English. My English improved only after I got into high school. To master English was the most important basic qualification that could have led me to be successful in my job later in the U.S.



Field trip to Mt. Arli, L-3 standing (1951)

I met several classmates who became my life-time close friends. Ming-Kue Chao (Mark 趙銘珪) who stills live in Hsinchu was one of them and we have maintained contact until today. Another good friend was Jing-Fei Chang (Frank 張錦輝 1934-2008). Frank was one year older than me, a very smart student and excelled in math and sciences. His mother passed away when he was very young. We often studied and ran on the track together after school. He graduated from National Taiwan University majoring in Chemistry and came to the U. S. one year later than me. He received his Ph. D. in Chemistry from the Catholic University in Washington D.C. His wife Susan is a very supportive Korean nurse and they have two children; a daughter and a son. Heidi and I visited them at their home in

Houston a couple of times. Frank died in October 2008 after long illness at age 74. Another mutual good friend and high school classmate Dr. Huei-Tse Chang (張輝哲) and I flew to Houston to attend his funeral service.

Not too happy with the school environment of Hsinchu High School, both Frank and I decided to go to Taipei for a change. Frank and I both passed and enrolled in the then Affiliated High School of the Provincial Normal College (省立師範學院附中) in Taipei. The school was much liberal as compared to the conservative HHS. (The College was renamed the National Normal University later.) It was another star high school in Taiwan. The school's principal, Mr. Cheng Huang (黃徵), was an excellent educator. The faculty members were outstanding and many of them later went to teach at the college level. The students were vivacious, naughty and loved to play, but smart enough to go on to college. Most of my classmates came to the U.S. for graduate studies.

One significant character of this school was that the majority of its student body was the children of the so-called Mainlanders. (Only 4 of my class of 35 students were native-born Taiwanese.) Many of their parents occupied high positions in the government, civilian or military. One of my classmates, Li-An Chen (陳履安), was the son of the then Governor of Taiwan—Cheng Chen (陳誠), who later became the Vice President under Chiang Kai-Shek. Another famous alumna was Lien Chang (連戰), two classes ahead of me. His father was the Interior Minister of the ROC. These favored-children enjoyed special privileges. For instance, they were able to study abroad without completing the 2-year mandatory military service and returned home to Taiwan to assume high positions in the government. Because of their family connections, Chen became the Minister of Defense and the Chair of the Control Yuan. Lien became the

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vice President under Teng-Fei Lee and the Chairman of KMT. Both ran for the presidency but failed.

Since the school did not have a student dormitory, Frank and I rented a small room from a local farmer in Ku-Ting District (古亭區) near the National Taiwan University during our freshman year. It was about 30-minute walking distance to the high school. Sleeping, studying, cooking, and eating were all taken inside the same room with a hard soil floor. The room was only a few feet away from a pig pit. The foul smell was very strong during hot summer days. We woke up in the early morning to cook breakfast on a primitive wood charcoal stool before going to school and prepared dinner in the evening after school. Occasionally we would swim in the nearby Xin-Dian Creek (新店溪) after school or on weekends.

I remember on several nights of that first winter in late December when the temperature plunged to near freezing of 4-5 Degree Centigrade. We kept warm by covering our bodies with newspapers on top of the blanket and burned wood charcoal beneath the bamboo bed. We woke up a few times during the night since the charcoal fire lasted only a couple of hours. Despite living in such a Spartan setting, we studied hard. It was an early life-hardening experience that taught both of us to have the perseverance to overcome any difficult condition in our lives. It's not by accident that Frank and I both came to the U.S. for our advanced education eventually. We moved to a different boarding house in Wan-Hua District (萬華) before the end of freshman year. We shared a room with Frank's older brother who was attending college. He went to Japan later and worked at the Office of Taiwan's Delegation in Japan after receiving his Ph. D in Economics from Tokyo University.

My favorite sports were volleyball and baseball. I was on the school's track and field team and represented the school in the provincial annual field and track competition of high schools and colleges. In my sophomore year, a routine chest x-ray text discovered a small dark spot on my lung. It was an indication of early tuberculosis, possibly caused by malnutrition and inadequate rest. I was so scared and stopped running and all other sports. Fortunately, the dark spot disappeared several months later. Because tuberculosis is a contagious disease, all students who came to the U.S. before 1970s must carry with them X-ray films to prove that they were healthy.

Through concerted self-study, my English improved considerably. I managed to maintain an average in other course subjects. I was particularly good in writing Chinese essays on contemporary political issues and received high marks from my Chinese teacher. He would say that it was very commendable for a Taiwanese student to write such good Chinese. The Chinese class teacher, Tzen-Chi Lu (陸徵琪), was a gentle old scholar and used to be on the faculty of Peijing University. He wore a Chinese long gown all year round.

I have a particular memory of my home-room teacher, Mr. Chen-I Kim (金承藝). A tall and slim bachelor in the early thirties, he was of Manchu descent and graduated from Peijing University in political science. He taught the world geography course and occasionally would comment on political events in China and Taiwan. He was a strong advocator of democracy and justice. My interest in political and international affairs was greatly influenced by him. He would praise me before the entire class on my excellent writing commenting on contemporary political issues in the student weekly journals. Mr. Kim was also an editor of the famous political magazine, Free China Fortnightly (自由中國半月刊). He was

forced to exile to Austria to avoid persecution after the Magazine was cracked down and its publisher Cheng Ray (雷震) was jailed by the KMT government in 1960.



High sch. classmates & teacher Mr. Kim  
L-1 (1954)



High sch. field & track team, L-1 standing  
(1953)



Class weekend field trip, L-3 (1953)



Class weekend field trip, L-1 seating (1953)

## 4. COLLEGE—THE GOLDEN YEARS

### The National Cheng-Chi University

In the summer of 1955, I took the joint entry exam of five public colleges/universities. Lucky I passed and was accepted to the National Cheng-Chi University (國立政治大學) or Cheng-Ta (政大). We were the first class of the reopening of the University in Taiwan and only first-tier 102 students were admitted through the competitive entry exam. (A few of the standing-by were admitted.) Of the entire student body of 180, only 30 students of our class were native Taiwanese. About 40 were from Hong-Kong and South Asia through special admission treatment. It was part of the cold-war strategies financially supported by the U.S. The rest were those drop-outs from the three military academies. As expected, the students who passed the formal joint college exam were much better prepared academically and studied much harder in school.

I didn't have any clue about the historical background and political orientation of Cheng-Ta when I checked my choice of school on the application form of the entry exam. Cheng-Ta was established by the Nationalist Party (Kuo-Ming Tang or KMT) in 1927 in Nanjing, China as the party training school. Chiang Kai-Shek served as the first president of the school. Its name has been changed several times: The Central School of Party Affairs (中央黨務學校, 1927); the Central Political Academy (中央政治學校, 1928), a four-year college under the direct supervision of the Department of Education of the Central Government; the Central Functionary Academy (中央幹部學校, 1944); and finally the National Cheng-Chi University (國立政治大學, 1946). The

University was temporally closed at the end the civil war when the Nationalist Government was forced out from Mainland China. It was reopened in Taiwan in 1953 with a small number of graduate students. From the school names one would recognize that Cheng-Ta was closely tied with the KMT from the beginning. For many years, most of its faculty members and administrative officials were senior KMT members. I was recruited but declined to join the KMT during the years at Cheng-Ta.

Over the past 40 years, Cheng-Ta gradually made transformation from a pro-KMT university to become an independent higher educational institution. Many leaders of the opposition party—the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), such as Sing-Lian Hsu, (許信良) Chin Yi (尤清) are all Cheng-Ta alumnus a few years behind me. Wen-Hsuing Huang (黃文雄) was an alumna who tried but failed to assassinate Jing-Ko Chiang, then the most powerful man and the facto intelligence chief of Taiwan, at Plaza Hotel in New York City in June 1970. (I just started my new job in Albany, New York Capital, that January.) Unthinkably, Cheng-Ta honored him an outstanding alumni in 2012. Majored in Journalism, he was a fellow Hsinchu native and one year behind me. I met Dr. Joseph Wu (吳釗燮) at the 2013Taiwanese American Conference. He graduated from Cheng-Ta 19 years behind me. He taught at Cheng-Ta and was the representative of Taiwan in the U. S. during the era the DPP government. He is now the Executive Secretary of DPP and the Party's representative to the U. S. This shows that Cheng-Ta has broken away from the political influence of KMT.



Dr. Joseph Wu (2013/7)

The campus was located in the Town of Mucha (木柵), an outskirt suburb of Taipei, just below the hillside of Mt. Chu-Nang (指南山). Back then, there was no public transportation between the bus station in Mucha and the campus. The one-kilometer unpaved road became very muddy and hard to walk when it rained. Our freshman class didn't start until mid-November of 1955 due to delay in the completion of school buildings. The campus had only a few 2-story buildings for school administration and classrooms. They were all constructed with unattractive gray color cement blocks. Even the roofs were gray color tiles. There was no dormitory for undergraduate students until the following spring. All students from out of Taipei were housed in nearby temporary dwellings. There was no library, indoor gym or outdoor track during our freshman year. Part of the student dining hall was converted to a gym on rainy days. The University library building was built later. The construction of an auditorium large enough for 600-700 students was just completed four years later when our class graduated in June 1959. Climbing up to the Temple near campus became the routine exercise of outdoor physical education classes when weather permitted. One could imagine how bad the financial condition of the government was during that time.

There were very few facilities for after-class and week-end recreational activities. To save utility bills and to keep the dormitories quiet, all of the lights were shut off after 10 o'clock at night. Many students would just stay outside in the small court yards of the dormitories and chatted. The campus life was extremely dull. However, occasionally on Saturday nights, I and some close friends would go out to a Taiwanese restaurant just outside the campus to entertain ourselves and even get drunk with cheap wine. We also arranged short field trips on weekends.

Despite such poor facilities and lack of campus social life, most students were

just very happy and proud for being the college students of a national university. (There was only one other national university in Taiwan at that time—Taiwan University.) In fact, many of Cheng-Ta's faculty members were excellent in their special fields. The President was a 77 years old Japan-educated scholar Ta-Chi Chen (陳大齊), a former President of Peijing University in China. I took his Logic class in my freshman year.

In retrospect, I started my college life full of curiosity, enthusiast, and determination to succeed. The four years that I spent at Cheng-Ta were the pivotal moment and the happier time of my life. I became much more self-confident and aware of my own ability. I was popular and well-respected among my class peers. I was able to make many friends; some of them became life-time close buddies. I was elected the class representative and active in campus activities. I participated in several student study clubs and was elected club presidents. Because of my athletic ability, I became the captain of the track and field team to compete at the annual provincial games. As the class president, I accepted the diploma from the President on behalf of my department classmates at the commencement ceremony (June 18, 1959). I was associated with many life-time good friends.

## **Never Learned to Play Guitar**

One interesting incident occurred on the first day of my reporting to school in November 1955. (The opening day of the school was postponed for more than two months due to delay in construction jobs.) On the bus from Taipei train station to Mucha, I sat next to a shy young man with a thin body and speaking with a heavy accent of Shangdon Province, China. We chatted and found both of us would be in the same department. When we arrived at the campus, he quietly told me that he was short of cash to pay for the tuition and asked me if I could

loan him some. It happened that excluding the money enough for paying the registration fees for the first semester, I had more than \$100NT in my pocket. I earned and saved them from working summer job at the building construction site of my brother-in-law. I prepared to buy a guitar that I eagerly wanted for with the money. Without hesitation, I agreed to loan him \$70NT. He promised to pay me back very soon. It was not a large amount of money. But he was only able to pay me back a few dollars each time during the course of the year. At the end, I was no longer able to accumulate enough money to buy a guitar and eventually gave up learning to play such instrument. But I had no regret in what I had done.

I learned later that he was an orphan. He was evacuated to Taiwan with the nationalist government and sent to the Provincial Yenlin Experimental High School (省立圓林實驗中學), a special school for Mainland Chinese students whose parents were killed during the Sino-Japanese war and the subsequent Civil War. He was one of the hardest working students in our class and received a Ph.D. in Political Science from Cheng-Ta. He became the department head of Political Sciences as well as the dean of the College of Laws later. I was his house guest one day when I visited Cheng-Ta in 1985. He mentioned and thanked me for coming to his help in paying the tuition during the lunch. After retirement, he moved to Vancouver, Canada to live with his son. We became very good friends and continued to keep in touch.

## **Stand Up for Campus Free Speech**

In early May of 1957 during my sophomore year, I went to the residence of Associate Prof. Hai-Kuan In (殷海光) in Taipei to invite him to be the guest speaker of the Life Philosophy Study Club. I was the Club president and it would be the Club's major activity to have Prof. In as speaker. He was referred to me by his friend who happened to be the Club advisor, Instructor Yung Chen (程運).

I introduced myself and stated my purpose of visiting. He was quite surprised of my invitation as a student of Cheng-Ta, an institution known for its pro-KMT sentiment. Nevertheless, he accepted my invitation without hesitation and gave me a non-political topic for his speech: “An Anatomy of Love”. The speech would be open to all students. He was an associate professor in the Department of Philosophy of the National Taiwan University. Professor In was well known for his champion of democracy and liberty and the famed chief editor of the “Free China Fortnightly”. His essays commenting on the policies of Chiang Kai-Shek’s nationalist government were very logical and persuasive. They were well like and resonant among many readers, especially the intellectuals.

Without knowing that Prof. In was on the black list of the KMT and a persona-non-grata of Cheng-Ta, my invitation of Prof. In to speak at Cheng-Ta became a major political head-ache issue to the school authorities. A few days before the public speech were going to take place, I was summoned to the Director of the Office of Student Activities (課外活動組), Mr. Chin-Kai Chang (張慶凱). He said that the event of having Prof. In to speak in the campus would be inconvenient to the school. He advised that I better called off the speech activity. I asked why? He offered an unconvincing excuse to say that the university’s new library nearby was undergoing construction and very noisy; it wouldn’t be respectful to the speaker. Then I ask why was the speech event of another student association allowed to be held one day earlier at the same classroom? He finally revealed the real reason by saying that Prof. In had written many articles appeared on the Free China Fortnightly to sharply criticize the government. He said, “Cheng-Ta has its special political background and his appearance in this campus will have unpleasant consequence. I hope you can understand the school’s position.” I responded by saying that the invitation letter to Prof. In had been sent out already and the announcement had been posted. “It

will be very difficult for me to explain to the students of the sudden cancelation. This is a pure academic event nothing to do with politics. If cancelled, this might give outsiders a good reason to criticize the school.” He said he was in agreement with me and promised to discuss this matter further with the Club advisor and the Dean of Student Affairs (訓導長), his immediate supervisor.

The following morning, a roommate told me that someone had torn down the speech poster. I was very angry and received the support from many classmates to protest to the school. I first went to see the Club advisor, Mr. Yung Chen and I asked him about the result of his discussion with the school authorities. The answer was the same; Prof. In was not welcome to speak in the campus and that I better abandon the whole thing. I told him that I would not give up and explained to him my reasons which I gave to Mr. Chang. Then, I went to see Mr. Chang again. He repeated his earlier statement and even assumed that I was a KMT member and should understand the Party’s position better. “If it were not you but another student, the school might take some extreme measures”, he said, a covert implication of threat. I told him again that I would not cancel the event. Sensing my persistence and intransigent attitude, he finally said it was all up to the Dean of Student Affairs, his immediate supervisor, to make the decision. I asked why the poster which had received permission earlier was torn down. He said he didn’t know that it really happened and then summoned the campus maintenance worker to his office. The man said that he assumed a poster was allowed for only for a few days on the panel. Mr. Chang censured the man for his mistake and apologized to me.

During the lunch break, I went to see the Dean of Student Affairs, Prof. Wang Cheng-Huan (王震寰) at his residency which was adjacent to the campus. Professor Wang happened to be the instructor of my German language class. He

was a respectful Germany-educated, former President of the National Wu-Hang University (國立武漢大學) in central China. He reiterated the same excuse given to me by Mr. Chang earlier. I repeated my argument I had with Mr. Chang. He finally gave the real reason and said, “As a key editor of Free China Fortnightly, Mr. In has criticized the government and is regarded as an anti-KMT and anti-government dissident. It is not proper for the school to have him speak in the campus. It will be too much for the school to bear the responsibility in case that he criticizes the government during his speech.” I assured him not to worry that absolutely no political subject would be brought up in the speech. I further explained, “A cancelation will be a bad scandal and detrimental to Cheng-Ta’s reputation. Conversely, it will be very beneficial to Cheng-Ta to invite him to speak. People may say that Cheng-Ta is now a truly higher educational institution independent from KMT influence.” My argument seemed to work. He promised to give the matter a serious consideration and to give me an answer after consultation on the matter with the President. During our meeting, he lamented, “When we were in the Mainland, people talked about academic freedom and democracy. And we lost the Mainland. Why do we still talk about them now?”

I waited for Prof. Wang outside his office after the end of the German class. Finally, he walked out from the President’s office and told me that President Chen had given his approval. He reminded me again that I should advise Professor In to avoid any political statements in his speech. I was totally relieved. My persistence and efforts paid off. I realized that even a well-respected scholar and university presidents like Wang and Chen were not immune from outside political interference. Sadly, Prof. In never received a permanent tenure from the National Taiwan University and his teaching contract was discontinued in 1966. He passed away the following year at age 50.

Professor In was the first anti-KMT dissident ever to make a public speech in Cheng-Ta when I was a student there. The event was a great success and attracted huge audience which spilled over the largest 100-seat class room. His speech was excellent and humorous. He applied psychological analysis to the mood of young people in love. I noticed that two of his good friends in the faculty of Cheng-Ta didn't show up to meet him openly at first when he arrived. I guessed that they were afraid of being implicated. I had to introduce the guest speaker as the Club president. It was my first direct encounter with the KMT operatives and to understand their mentalities. They deepened my bad feelings toward the KMT.

## **Two Influential Mentors**

I was extremely lucky in having two professors at Cheng-Ta who became my mentors and influenced my future the most. One was Prof. Wen-Hai Chou (鄒文海教授) who taught me about the modern basic political concept of democracy, justice and freedom. He also indirectly helped me in completing my graduate study at UC-Berkeley. (See 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, page 54.) The other was Prof. Shen-Liang Lee (李先良教授) who introduced to me on the knowledge of modern city planning and encouraged me to pursue study of urban planning in the United States. I must attribute much of my success in the U.S. to both of them.

Prof. Chou was the Chairman of the Department of Political Science as well as the Vice-Provo when I entered Cheng-Ta. He was a graduate of the London Political and Economic College, a well-known scholar of Western political thoughts. I attended his Political Science class in my freshman year and his History of Western Political Thoughts class in my junior year. Suffering from a stroke, his voice was feeble and unclear when he was lecturing. One had to sit on the few front rows of the class room and listened very carefully in order to fully understand what he said. He never brought a note to the class. However his

lectures were well organized and touched on all of the key elements. I was particularly interested in these courses and kept good notes. I would often see him after class to ask questions. He encouraged students to read English reference books and to think more. His introduction of the concept of freedom and Western democratic government systems inspired me profoundly. In my freshman year, I wrote an essay on the evolution of British democracy which was published on the first issue of the University's student journal—Cheng-Ta Youth (政大青年).

For the mid-term and the final tests, he usually would give four or five questions. But because of time limits, I was able to select only three or four of them and provided them with lengthy and thoughtful answers. Yet I still received the highest mark among the entire class of 40-50 students. He knew that I really had studied very hard and provided my own thoughts, not simply parroted the written notes. His famous words were: "It's easier to draw a picture of ghost than that of a human being." Indeed, most politicians would make out a rosy and bloated platform in their election campaigns, but very few of them would be practical for implementation.

His lecture on "The History of Western Political Thoughts" in my junior year deepened my belief in democracy and the rule of law. In my senior year, I wrote a brief reader-opinion article which was published by the "Free China Fortnightly" (自由中國半月刊) under an assumed name. The article commented on the negative aspect of majority rule at the KMT-controlled legislature of the central government. It immediately drew rebuke in a pro-government newspaper from a KMT supporter. I was invited to meet with the publisher of the magazine, Mr. Cheng Ray (雷震) in his office in the summer of 1958, the end of my junior year at Cheng-Ta.

Mr. Ray was arrested in September 1960 by the KMT authorities under a false accusation and received a 10-year sentence in jail. The long sentence was actually ordered by President Chiang himself. The real reasons for Ray's being arrested were his opposition to Chiang' reelection for the 3<sup>rd</sup> term and his attempt to organize an opposition political party with some Taiwanese elites. The magazine was forced to close in December 1960. I learned the news of his arrest when I was in the ROTC military service. The news worried me because the government might discover that I wrote the anonymous letter published by the magazine in 1958. As a young person full of idealism, I was unaware of the so-called "White Color Terror" pervasive during that era. Taiwan had the longest martial law in modern world; from 1950 to 1987. Had I not come to the U.S. for my graduate study, I most likely would have participated in street demonstrations as a dissident.

Prof. Chou wrote reference letters for me when I applied for admission to several U. S. universities for graduate study. In December 1962 just before I was about to leave for the U.S., I paid him a visit to say farewell at his residency. He immediately wrote two brief hand letters to introduce me to two faculty members at UC-Berkeley. They were good friends and old colleagues at Ton-Gii University (同濟大學) in Shanghai, China. One was Prof. Sheng-Sen Chen (陳省身), a world-renown mathematician of geometry and a member of Chinese Central Academic Seneca. The other was Prof. Hsu-Hsiang Chen (陳世驥), a professor of Chinese literature and the Director of Oriental Library. It was Prof. Hsu-Hsiang Chen who helped me find a part-time English typing job at UC-Berkeley. This job allowed me to have enough income to get through two and half years of graduate study at Berkeley.

Just before I nearly completed my graduate study at Berkeley, I wrote Prof. Chou to ask for his advice about job prospect in Taiwan. He didn't encourage me to return to Taiwan right away. He indicated that job opportunity for city planners in Taiwan, either teaching or practice, was rather limited at that time. In contrast, there were abundant of planner jobs in the U. S. I decided to stay in the U.S. to gain some practical work experience at least for a few years first and then to consider job prospects in Taiwan. Unexpectedly, I have stayed in the U.S. for the rest of my life.

In June 1970, I traveled from Albany to New York City to attend a conference of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (I just changed my job to become the Chief Planner of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, relocated from Indianapolis, Indiana to Albany, New York six months earlier.) During the lunch break, I went to the Midtown office of the ROC Press Bureau to read Chinese newspapers from Taiwan. I came across an article written by Dr. Fei-Rong Ray (雷飛龍), one of Prof. Chou's doctoral students at Cheng-Ta, in memory of Prof. Chou. It was then that realized that Prof. Chou had already passed away a year ago. I felt very sad that I didn't have a chance to thank him personally for what he had done for me. I owed tremendously to Prof. Chou for his teaching and help.

Many friends often asked me why I chose city planning as my life-time career. Actually I was interested in the study of municipal government and city planning from my years at Cheng-Ta. During the summer recess after the end of my sophomore year, I participated in the Study Group of Municipal Government, part of the Summer Youth Activities sponsored by the National Youth Salvation Corp (救國團). There were 27 students in the group led by Prof. Meng-Hau Lou (羅孟浩), an authority in local government study. I was elected the student

captain of the group. We visited five cities from north to south within Taiwan for three weeks.

City planning is a very important part of municipal government operations. After listening to the official briefings in each city, I realized there was such profession of city planning and I became very interested in this special field.



Summer study tour of city govt. L-4 (1957/7)      With Prof. Shien-Liang Lee in Taipei (1985/8)

It was not until my senior year (1958) when the courses of municipal government and city planning were offered for the first time by the University. Both subjects were taught by Prof. Shien-Liang Lee. In 1958, Prof. Lee just returned from the U.S. after completing his graduate study at Columbia University in New York City with a master's degree in city planning. It was the first time that I came across the knowledge of modern urban planning in the U.S. Both courses were selective ones and not popular among the students. They attracted only 6 or 7 students. But I was so excited like a fish in the water and studied very diligently. I was able to spend a lot of time with Prof. Lee in and out of the class room to ask questions and to discuss various planning subjects with him, especially the theory and practice of city planning in the U.S. He was so

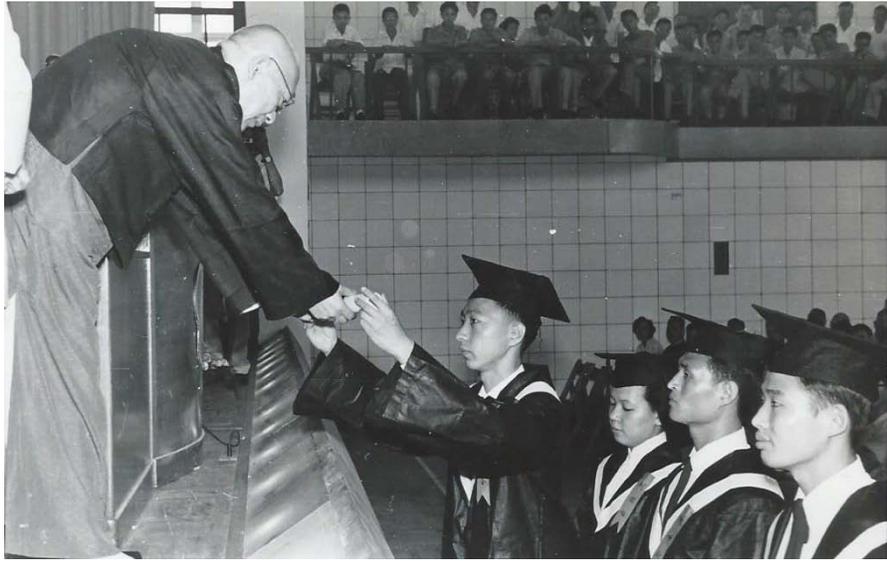
happy to have an enthusiastic student to learn from him. Naturally, I received the highest marks in the class.

Prof. Lee encouraged me to pursue graduate study in the U.S. It was the first time that I was exposed to the idea of pursuing advance study abroad in the field of urban planning after graduation from Cheng-Ta. Years later, he would visit me in the cities where I was working every time he came to the U.S. Because of his recommendation, I was invited to attend the Conference of National Development (國建會) in the summer of 1985 in Taiwan. In the very competitive job market of the U.S., I had worked in the field of city and regional planning for thirty-eight years with some accomplishments. I attributed my success partially to my own hard work and lucky. But when drinking water, one must think its source. I should thank Prof. Lee for his enlightenment and introduction of urban planning to me at the beginning.

Prof. Lee was a legendary person. He was a 1928 graduate of the KMT's Party Affairs School, the predecessor of Cheng-Ta in China. He was appointed the mayor of the City of Tsingtao (青島市), Shandong Province (山東省) in 1930s, prior to the Sino-Japanese War. Tsingtao is a beautiful port city on the northeastern coast of China. It was originally built by Germany after the city was ceded to Germany in 1897 and returned to the control of China in 1914. During the Sino-Japanese War in 1940s, Lee led a guerrilla army in Mt. Lao (勞山) of Shandong Province against the Japanese occupation. He arrived in Taiwan after the defeat of the Nationalist Government by the Chinese Communists in 1949. Despite his outstanding achievement as the mayor of a large city, and fighting against Japan and his loyalty to the party, he was purged by Chiang Kai-Shek due to factional fights within the KMT. He had no job and lived in seclusion in Taichung, central Taiwan, for many years. Eventually he was granted a special

permission by Chiang to leave Taiwan for study in the U.S. in 1956. He was already in the mid-fifties when he enrolled at Columbia University to pursue graduate study in urban planning.

Prof. Lee was a very kind and friendly person. Even after his retirement in 1974 at age 70, he continued to do research and writing. His books, “City Government Administration” was published in 1975, and “City and Regional Planning” in 1984. Both publications became basic text books of college students and practitioners in Taiwan. His writings have contributed greatly to the quality of Taiwan’s urban development. Prof. Lee passed away in 1993 at the age of 88 at the home of his youngest son, Eugene Lee, in Edmonton, Canada. Eugene is also a professional planner and a good friend of mine.



Receiving diploma from the University President, R-2 (1959/6)



Native-born Taiwanese students, the Class of 1959, R-4 front row

## **5. THE LAST THREE YEARS IN TAIWAN**

### **ROTC Military Service (1959-1961)**

I graduated from the National Cheng-Chi University in June 1959 with B.S. degree in Political Science. As required under the ROTC program, all college graduates must complete the compulsory 2-year military service as reserved officers. I passed the special examine to enter the Military Police Academy and received 8 months of basic training. (The length of basic training for other military services lasted only 4 months.) The Academy was located in the Town of Sanchung (三重鎮) south to the City of Taipei. Due to limited number of MP reserved officers allowed, only about 120 each year, each county and municipality was limited to two or three residents to be selected to the Academy, except for the City of Taipei. Because they were not going to be sent out to the dangerous outpost islands of Kinmen and Matzu across from the Communist-controlled Mainland China for service, some would try to get into the Academy through the back door by bribes or nepotism.

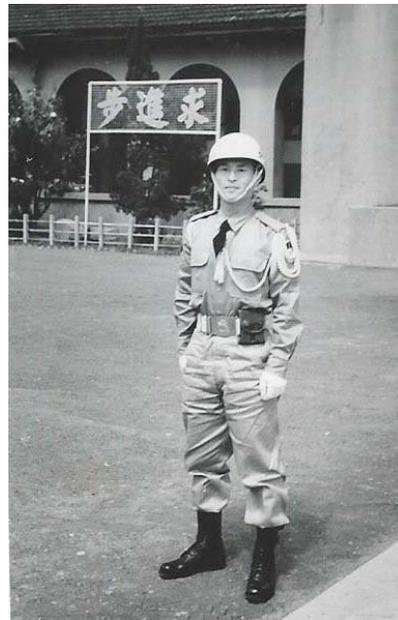
After completing the 8-month basic training at the end of April 1960, I was given the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant. I was assigned, through raffle, to serve in the MP battalion attached to the 10<sup>th</sup> Army with headquarter in Kuantong Chiao (關東橋) near the City of Hsinchu, my hometown. (Many of my classmates in the army were sent to the outpost islands of Kinmen and Matsu). As a young college-graduated officer with fine-looking athletic body, I was appointed one of the two flag carrying officer during the daily morning flag-raising ceremony at the Army headquarter. Because of the Army headquarter was not too far from Downtown Hsinchu, I was able to visit home on some weekends. As a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, I got

paid NT\$160 (or less than 4 US dollars) and 4 bags of free cigarettes a month. It was increased later to NT\$240 a month, or less than US\$6.

Military Police was considered the elite group among the armed forces. Unlike the conscripts in other arm services, even low ranking members of MP had at least completed junior high education. MP received much respect and feared by soldiers and even officers of other armed service groups when it came to the enforcement of military regulations. For example, an officer was not allowed to drive a military jeep. When getting caught, he would beg the MP for lenity and asked not to report the violation since such a report would affect his promotion. An MP even could enjoy free train rides.



With good friend Jing-Fei Chang (1960)



MP 2<sup>nd</sup> lieut. (1960)

An unhappy incident happened one morning. I was leading a platoon of soldiers to go down to the city for a meeting. I didn't salute to the captain before giving my order to the soldiers to get on board the waiting truck. He yelled at me in anger and ordered them to come down from the truck. When returned, I went

to his room and complained to him for bursting at me in front of those soldiers. I told him I was new to the job and still learning all of the military routines. He apologized to me and we became friends.

## **Teaching High School English (1961-1962)**

The ROTC program was unexpectedly cut short from two years to 20 months due to shortage of fund. (The program was supported and totally funded by the U. S.) As soon I had completed the ROTC military service in April 1961, I stayed home and started teaching English full time at the 1<sup>st</sup> High School of Hsinchu County (新竹縣立一中). Actually I had been moonlighting as a part-time teacher for a few months before I was discharged from the active military duty. The school principal was Mr. Fu-Shen Lo (羅富生), a graduate from the prestigious Waseda University (早稻田大學) in Japan. Mr. Lo was Assistant Principal of the Provincial Hsinchu High School when I was a junior high student there. A Hakka, he had a large figure and was a good drinker.

The starting salary of high school teacher was only NT\$800 (about 19 US dollars) a month plus 20kg (or 45pl) of rice. (The official exchange rate was \$1 to NT\$42 and the black-market rate was NT\$46 to one US dollar.) There was no any other benefit. In order to earn extra income, I gave after-school English tutoring for a dozen students at home.

Teaching jobs seemed to be relatively easy once you had gone through the first year and gained some experience. Teaching English was the most ideal job for me as I could also polish my English before going to the U.S. This job ended in December 1962 just before my departure for the U.S.



High School English Teacher (1961)

As an English teacher who must prepare the regular student tests, I spent NT\$800 to purchase a used Underwood English typewriter and learned typing myself. It turned out to be a very valuable investment; a skill I eventually used to self-support myself financially at UC-Berkeley. During the fall of 1961, I started to apply for graduate school admission to several U.S. universities, including Georgetown University in DC and the University of California at Berkeley. Back then, only a dozen U.S. colleges offered graduate program in city planning.

## **6. JOURNEY TO AMERICA**

By the spring of 1962, I received the graduate school admissions from both UC-Berkeley and Georgetown. The decision wasn't very difficult. I chose UC-Berkeley because it was closer to Taiwan and a few classmates from the Hsinchu High School were there already. The final hurdle was to pass the interview by the Counselor officer of the American Embassy, which I did and received the U.S. visa. I was supposed to register for the fall semester starting in September 1962. (Heidi's brother left for the U.S. earlier in August that year to pursue his Ph. D. in Chemical Engineer at the University of Minnesota.) But I decided to postpone my departure to the U.S. until the end of 1962; waiting for the birth of our first child. I requested and received permission from the City Planning Department of UC-Berkeley to postpone my registration for one semester until the following January. Our first son, Raymond was born in November that year.

### **Financial Help from Relatives and Friends**

Unless one had received a scholarship from the university abroad or the government of Taiwan, the biggest challenge to study abroad was to have enough money to pay for the costs, including travel, tuition, and living expenses. Like most liberal-arts programs, city planning in American universities rarely offered full scholarships to foreign students. I had barely any savings from the meager salary of a high school teacher. (It would take at least 10 years to earn enough money from the teaching job to pay, assuming no spending on food, clothing and anything.) The financial support from my aunt and uncle would be very limited. Without getting discouraged, I managed to borrow enough money for the expenses from several other relatives and a friend. I promised them that I would return the money as soon as I settled in the U.S. and found a job. (I was told by

friends that it was relatively easy to find a part-time dish-washer or waiter job in a restaurant. It turned out to be true then.

Each foreign student without full scholarship must have a certificate of deposit of \$2,400 in a bank before the U.S. Consulate would issue the visa. (The amount was estimated by the U.S. government to be enough for a foreign student to pay for living expenses for two years.) I borrowed \$800 from a high school classmate who was from a wealthy family in Taipei. He arrived in the U.S. two years earlier and studied at RPI in Troy, New York. Heidi's brother, who already had arrived in U.S. the previous fall, also loaned me \$400. Once I arrived in the U.S. the money would be immediately returned to them. It was a very common practice of most students to study in the U.S. to borrow from friends or relatives who had arrived earlier for the required certificate of deposit. To make up the shortage, Heidi sold some of her jewelry. Her parents gave me NT\$12,000, enough to cover the one way ship ticket costing NT\$9,000.

One relative whom I appreciated most and would never forget in my life was aunt Hong-Chao (紅棗姑). She loved me very much since I was a tot. When she learned that I was short of funds for my trip to the U.S., she immediately gave me a few of her gold rings to sell without hesitation. I always made an effort to visit her every time I went back to Taiwan. The last time I paid a visit to her was in the Provincial Hsinchu Hospital in 2002. Cancer had already spread over her body and she was in coma. She passed away shortly of liver cancer. I was very sad.

## **Voyage across the Pacific Ocean**

I decided to travel by sea instead of air in order to save money. The boat ticket cost about \$200, only half of the airfare from Taipei to the West Coast. I

went to a shipping company in Taipei in September 1962 and reserved a bed on a cargo ship going to America. The sailing date was set on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1963, just 10 days before the Lunar New Year Day.

The day for my departure from Taiwan finally arrived. Several relatives, including my father, Heidi's parents, my oldest sister and brother-in-law, accompanied us on a train to the port city, Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan a day ahead of the departure date. We all stayed at my sister home. It was a chilly late afternoon with cloudy sky when we got to the pier of Kaohsiung Harbor. I bid good-bye to everyone and Heidi with the baby on her back. Our son Raymond was only two months old. The ship started to move away slowly from the dock toward the ocean for Hong Kong. My heart was sinking and my mind was completely empty. With sheer determination and expectation, I left Taiwan for the totally strange land of America. The future was uncertain and the outcome unpredictable. Although I had the intention to return to Taiwan after completing my studies, it was hard to tell how long our family reunion might have to wait.

The ship, named "Hong Kong Importer" (香港商船號), was a 12,000-ton cargo ship. It had 12 small cabins for 24 passengers. This was a day-and-night contrast to the 130,000-ton luxury ship that Heidi and I took on the Eastern European trip in 2008. Except for a 3-member family, a mother with her two daughters who was going to join her doctor-husband in the U.S., all the rest of the passengers were college graduated students to pursue advance studies in America. The sea was relatively calm and smooth all the way. The ship arrived in Hong Kong in the late evening of January 16th. It would make a stop there for a couple of days to pick up some cargoes. Being notified by me in advance, a few classmates of Cheng-Ta waited for me on the dock the next morning. They entertained me with a lunch at a restaurant.

One classmate gave me a guided tour in the afternoon to see some of the special attractions, including a cable ride up to a high hill top with spectacular overview of the Hong Kong harbor below. Hong Kong, “The Oriental Shining Pear” (東方明珠) gave me a good impression. With so many modern skyscrapers and high-rise apartments for more than four million residents, the streets of this port city were very crowded but clean. The residents of Hong Kong had much higher income than Taiwanese back then. Foreign imported goods were abundant and much cheaper because Hong-Kong was a duty-free port.

The ship departed Hong Kong for Japan in the evening of January 19<sup>th</sup>. It sailed north and passed through the Taiwan Strait the following two days. The blue mountain ridge of Taiwan was clearly visible far away during day time. By-by, “*Ilha Formosa*” (Beautiful Island), so called by Portugal sailors 500 years ago! In the early morning of January 24<sup>th</sup>, the ship entered the harbor of Kobe (神戸), Japan to pick up more cargo. Once there, we all went onshore to visit the famous Golden Temple (金閣寺) in the nearby city of Kyoto, the old national capital of Japan. . There was thin white snow on the ground and on the roof tops; the first time I’ve ever seen and touched snow in my life. We were invited to a dinner by the parents of a young Japanese diplomat stationing in Taipei.

The next three ports of call after Kobe were Osaka (大阪), Nagoya (名古屋) and then Yokohama (橫濱). Instead of staying on the ship, I took the train alone from Osaka to Tokyo on January 16<sup>th</sup> to visit my college classmate and good friend Chia-Yen Lin (林嘉言). Majored in Journalism and born in Portzu, Chiayi County (嘉義縣朴子), he left Taiwan for Japan in early 1962 to study at the famous Kayo University (慶應大學), one of the top private higher educational institutions in Japan. (He received his Ph. D. from Kayo in Political Science and

became a full professor there.) I stayed at the home of his older brother for three days, he gave me a guided tour of some famous places of this prosperous modern metropolis, including the Imperial Palace and the commercial center--Sinjuku. He also brought me to the coffee shop he was managing to support himself financially. His other part-time job was a Mandarin broadcaster for the Japan's public radio and TV station—NHK. I deeply admired his versatility and ability. He introduced me to meet his girlfriend and future wife Tzuyuko (靜子). I also met a friend Jung-Cheng Chen (陳榮成) from my hometown in Tokyo who was studying at Tokyo University.

After a 3-day sojourn in Tokyo, I finally rejoined the group on the ship that was picking up more cargo at the harbor of Yokohama (橫濱). Yokohama is the largest harbor of Japan. The ship was ready for crossing the Pacific to complete the last leg of the long journey to America, the New Continent. My friend Lin saw me off at the pier. It was two weeks since the ship sailed out from the harbor of Kaohsiung. The water within the broad harbor was very calm in the late afternoon of January 19, 1963 when the ship slowly sailed out toward the Pacific Ocean. The final destination was Long Beach, Southern California.



With C. Y. Lin in Tokyo (1963/1)



Yokohama Harbor pier (1963/1/19)

The sea became rougher and choppier as strong northeast winds began to stir up the waves. In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, they reached as high as an 8-story building hovering above the ship. One day, trying to tighten the rope that secured the stack of woods stored on the ship outside deck, a young Taiwanese intending sailor just graduated from the College of Oceanography in Chilung, Taiwan was almost swiped off the deck by gusting waves. He saved himself from falling to the ocean by holding onto the ship rails. He cried hysterically and his body with wet clothes was shaking when rescued by other sailors. The 12,000-ton cargo ship sailed forward in the vast ocean like a tiny leaf. Seagulls flew nearby along the vessel. Without getting seasick, I was able to enjoy the spectacular seascape by standing at the portside rails. I pondered on the thought of how the human body was really so tiny and helpless in the vast dark ocean.



On the high sea of  
Pacific Ocean  
(1963/2)

Meals on the ship were opulent as all passengers and officers ate in the same dining room and were treated alike. For recreation, we played “mahjong” (麻將); I learned the game for the first time. We celebrated Lunar New Year on the ship.

A couple of students fell in love during the long journey even they had lovers waiting eagerly on the U.S. shore.

The cargo ship finally reached Long Beach, southern California in the evening of February 13<sup>th</sup> after 15 days of long journey. It was like a dream when I finally stepped on American soil. There were several students from Taiwan already waiting for us at the pier. One of them happened to be my high school classmate Pao-Ching Wang (王寶青). They drove us to their apartments in Los Angeles to stay overnight.

The following morning, Wang drove me to the Greyhound bus station in Los Angeles. I took the bus to Oakland--the city boring Berkeley on the south. It was an 8-hour ride for the 400-mile bus trip. Mid-way to Oakland, the bus stopped at a rest area coffee shop next to the bus station at noon time to allow passengers to have lunch and a coffee break. I ordered a hamburger. When the waitress brought the meal to me, I stared at the plate without knowing what to do because there was no fork and knife. Seeing my hesitation, a white American sitting next to me raised both hands and showed me to pick up the hamburger to eat. I was so embarrassed since such ordinary living custom was not explained in the guide book for students studying abroad. (McDonald's didn't reach Taiwan until 1984.)

## **The Taiwanese Hall at UC-Berkeley**

There is a Chinese saying: "Rely on your parents when you are at home and on your friends when you are outside." The roommate of my classmate at Hsinchu High School picked me up at the Oakland bus station. I arrived in Berkeley on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1963. I was able to find a room in an apartment on 2452 Bancroft Way, which was very close to the distinctive southern main gate to the campus--the Sather Gate. The apartment had already been occupied by nine

graduate students from Taiwan, seven upstairs and two downstairs. Many students from Taiwan dubbed it the “Taiwanese Hall” (台灣寮). Three students older than me were also from Hsinchu High School. They were Yeh Sun (孫昱, double E-major, a high school classmate of Heidi’s uncle Shieh-Yao Chen (陳學堯); Ching-Ling Wang (王慶麟, physics major); and Tsian-Yang Chuang (莊燦陽, botany major) who happened to be a distant relative. Both Sun and Chuang were also married in Taiwan and left their spouses and children behind at home.

I shared a room with an older student from Taipei. His name was Yun-Ho Hsu (許永和) majoring in civil engineer. He was the chief engineer of Taipei Water Plant before coming to the U. S. Similar to my situation, he left his wife and children in Taiwan. The small room was actually converted from the attic, without any windows and a very low ceiling. It was very hot during the daytime. However, it was the only and cheapest room available. We split the monthly rent of \$30. The rent was reduced to \$25 since we both agreed to be responsible for the weekly house cleaning. Hsu left Berkeley in 1964 in a hurry as soon as he had completed the graduate study just in one year and found a job for a private water engineering company in New Jersey on the East Coast. We didn’t see each other for 30 years until we accidentally encountered each other during a party of Taiwanese Americans in New York City.

Chuang moved out from Bancroft Hall when his wife Fui-Mei (惠美) arrived from Taiwan to join him. They left two daughters in Taiwan to stay with her mother. Chuang was three years older than me. I remember he was a pitcher on the varsity baseball team at Hsinchu High School when I was in the junior division. Fui-Mei’s mother happens to be the older sister of my aunt, the wife of uncle Po-Chuan (伯川叔). What a small world! Chuang graduated from the

Provincial Normal College (省立師範學院) in Taiwan and eventually became a professor at the Central Illinois University. Receiving his Ph. D. in Botany from UC-Berkeley, he was an expert in plant classification. One day he felt chest pain during a ping-pong game and was tested to have acute liver cancer. He quitted the teaching job immediately and moved to the Bay Area of California for treatment. He died four months later in May 1994 at age 62. In 1998 during a conference trip to California, Heidi and I visited Fui-Mei's in the City of El Cerrito which was not too far north of the Berkeley campus. She led us to Chuang's grave site at a nearby cemetery. The cemetery is on the flat top of a small hill with the Golden Gate Bridge clearly visible in the far distance across the San Francisco Bay. His on-the-ground grave stone faces the direction toward hometown Taiwan on the other side of Pacific Ocean. Emotions ran through my heart. I kneeled down to touch the grave stone with my hands and could hardly control my tears.

The eight students living upstairs of the "Taiwanese Hall" shared dinners together. Seven of us would take turns to prepare for one dinner each week. The oldest one, Mr. Wang, who owned a \$50 Ford-model used car, was responsible for driving to the grocery store to buy food. We learned how to cook and our cooking skills became good enough to entertain visiting guests occasionally. All Taiwanese students were very frugal. Many would send money back home to support their families in Taiwan. My total living expense, including meals and room, was about \$40 a month, less than half of the living expense of American students.

After Hsu had left, I moved to a bigger two-bed room with windows. The room rent was \$35 a month. My new roommate was Yang-Tang Chung (鍾楊堂) from the City of Chiayi, majoring in civil engineering. He also left his wife with

two sons behind in Taiwan. He had just transferred from the University of Missouri at Rolla to Berkeley. As soon as he completed his degree in 1967, he moved to Albany to work for the State Government of New York as a civil engineer. In 1970, we eventually met again in Albany and both families became permanent residents of the Capital Area.

Among the Taiwanese students who lived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Taiwanese Hall, only two were unmarried. The rest of us all were married with their wives and children left behind in Taiwan. My American classmates were very curious about why I would separate from my family for such a long time. They thought I was unmarried because I didn't have a wedding ring on my finger. It was not the custom for a married man to wear wedding ring in Taiwan. The U.S. government and the universities did not prohibit foreign students to bring spouses and children with them to the U.S. while they were in school. It was the policy of Taiwan's government to do so even they had financial capability to support the family. In addition, each student must have two shop owners as guarantors in order to receive a border-exiting permit and the passport. The underlying purpose behind such policy was to prevent those students from participating in the Taiwan's independence movement and any other anti-KMT government activities when they were studying abroad. These measures had the effect of holding students' families hostage through threatened punishment to them, as well as to their guarantors by association.

## **Other Taiwanese Students at UC-Berkeley**

UC-Berkeley was one of the popular American public universities chosen by students from Taiwan to pursue advance studies in the 1960's. When I arrived in 1963, the campus had more than 100 graduate students from Taiwan. Most were in the fields of science and engineering with teaching- or research-assistantships.

Only a few, including me, were in liberal arts and social sciences. There was an active Taiwanese Student Association at the campus. The TSA sponsored summer picnic and Lunar New Year's dinner party. The Taiwanese government intelligent agencies would keep close eyes on most Taiwanese Student Associations as well as local Taiwanese Associations abroad because of their pro-Taiwan's independence tendency.

One of the leaders among Taiwanese students was Yen-Tze Lee (李遠哲), then a graduate student pursuing his Ph. D. in Chemistry. Lee was a native of Hsinchu and an alumna of Hsinchu High School. He arrived at Berkeley two years ahead of me. He was very enthusiastic in helping new students from Taiwan and volunteered to pick them up at San Francisco International Airport. In fact, he drove Heidi and Raymond to the SF International Airport when they made a stop in Berkeley on their way to join me in Kansas City, Missouri in late October 1965. Lee was the first Taiwanese to receive a Nobel Prize (Chemistry - 1986).

He returned to Taiwan in 1994 to become the Dean of the Central Academia Seneca (中央研究院) of the Republic of China at the invitation of President Teng-Hui Lee (李登輝). His older brother, Yen-Chuan Lee (李遠川), was a post doctorate in bio-chemistry at Berkeley when I was there. He was also elected a member of the Central Academia Seneca later. Their father was a famous water color artist. When Mr. Tong-Lang Chang (張棟蘭), a renowned educator of Hsinchu, visited Berkeley from Taiwan in October 1964, several alumni of the Provincial Hsinchu High School gathered at the home of Dr. Yen-Chuan Lee to welcome him.

Graduated from the Provincial Taichung Agricultural College in agricultural chemistry, Tsung-Ming Tseng (曾俊明) from Taipei was another brilliant and promising Ph.D. candidate of the Department of Chemistry at UC-Berkeley. I helped type his doctoral dissertation. One year older than me, he accidentally died in 1966 from penicillin shock administered by his own younger doctor brother. The sad incident occurred one year after I had left Berkeley. His wife and college classmate, Grace Lin (林泳雪) from Taichung, is the oldest sister of Mang-Hui (滿慧), the wife of Heidi's brother, Chin-Cheng Wei. A widow at the young age of 30, she never remarried and moved to Minneapolis with her three children.

A graduate of the Provincial Taichung Agricultural College in Agronomy, Teng-San Weng (翁登山) was a bright Taiwanese student in biological statistics at Berkeley. Born in a farmer's family in the Town of Yichu (義竹鄉), Chiayi County, Weng was a down-to-earth guy and knew a lot of ethnic jokes. He went back to Taiwan after two years at Berkeley because of his scholarship contract with his employer, the Central Academia Seneca. Several of us sent him off at the pier of Oakland Harbor in October 1964. He later returned to the U.S. to complete his Ph. D. in Statistics at the University of Connecticut after fulfilling his employment obligation in Taiwan. He and his family resided in the Capital District for a few years when he worked for a pharmaceutical company. Weng eventually retired from the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) in Washington, D.C. He volunteered to serve as the secretary of Dr. Ming-Min Peng (彭明敏) when Peng was the President FAPA based in D. C. His wife, Joyce Huang (黃娟), is an accomplished Taiwanese American writer and has published seventeen Chinese novels. She has received literature achievement prizes from many organizations. I invited her to speak at the annual meeting of the Taiwanese

American Cultural Society (TACS) in September 2007. Our two families have been close friends.

Professor Cheng-Jong Hsu (許振榮) was an older Taiwanese I met at UC-Berkeley. He was then a visiting scholar at the University. Graduated from Taiwan University and completed his Ph.D. at Hokkaido University (北海道大學) of Japan, Professor Hsu had served as the Chair of the Mathematics Department of Taiwan University. A real gentleman and kind person, he mixed well with younger Taiwanese students. He later immigrated to the U.S. and taught at Kansas State University located in Manhattan, Kansas. His daughter-in-law, Carole Yang (楊遠薰) is a graduate of Cheng-Ta in journalism. A very talented writer, she interviewed and wrote many articles on distinguished and successful Taiwanese Americans. I invited her to come to Albany to speak at the Fall Cultural Seminar sponsored by TACS in September 2006.

When young people arrived in America, they were able to enjoy not only political freedom but also freed from family restrictions and old social traditions back home. One example was the marriage of a young couple Mian-Chang Wang (王綿昌) of Tainan County and Clara Lin (林聰玲) of Chiayi. They were lovers in Taiwan but their marriage was objected by her parents. She arrived in Berkeley with Wang against the will of her parents in the summer of 1964. Since Clara and I were the only two persons graduated from the same university, she would come to me for advice when she arrived in Berkeley. (Clara graduated two years behind me from Cheng-Ta, majoring in education.)

At the encouragement of many fellow Taiwanese students, they got married by a judge at the county court in Oakland a few months later. I served as one of the two witnesses. The celebration was attended by a dozen of friends at a

Chinese restaurant. Wang, received his BS Degree in Civil Engineer from Cheng-Kuung University and Ph.D. in Soil Mechanics & Foundation Engineering from UC-Berkeley, became the Distinguished Professor of Geotechnical Engineering (大地工程) at Pennsylvania State University. He retired at the end of 2011 after 45 years of teaching and research. A talented pianist with business acumen, Clara owned and operated the International Market grocery store near the university campus in State College for 27 years which catered to the need of foreign students. She received Citizen Award from the city government of State College for her endeavor. Our two families have become close friends and we toured Northern New York and Vermont together to see the foliage in early October of 2012. They moved to Columbus, Maryland in 2011.



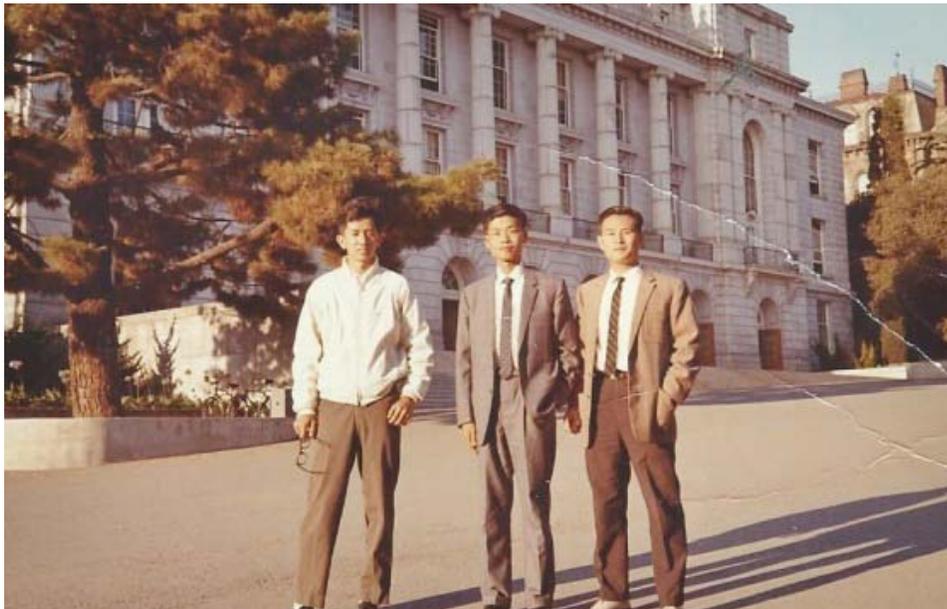
The Wangs' court wedding (1964/9)

Sherry Chuang (莊文玉) is a native of Hsinchu and the daughter of a good family friend of Heidi's parents. She is also a cousin of my good friend and high school classmate Frank Chang. She arrived at Berkeley for graduate study a year after me and stayed at the International House for Foreign Students. There were a few pursuers from Taiwan, but she fell in love with an undergraduate student two years younger. Chung-Yen Liu (Edward 劉中原) was an American Born Chinese (ABC). His parents were early immigrants from Canton, China and owned a Chinese grocery store in Oakland. Sherry's parents had some concern over her marriage with an ABC and asked for my opinion. My good words assuaged them. They finally got married in Oakland's Chinatown.

Edward eventually graduated from the Law School of UC-Berkeley and practiced law in the Bay Area. He became famous as the defense attorney of Li Na (李娜), a talented Chinese tennis player who sought political asylum in the U. S. He was also the defense attorney for the Taiwanese government involved in the so-called Toxic Rice Wine Case (毒米酒案). The rice wine produced by the Taiwan Public Winery Bureau and exported to the U. S. was accused of being toxic. He won both cases. They had a son and a daughter; both attended UC-Berkeley as well as its Law School and practice law in their father's law firm. In 1990 when Heidi and I went to the Bay Area during my business trip, we were their house guests in their beautiful hill-top mansion located in Mountain View, south of San Francisco.



With Y. T. Chung at Sather Gate (1964/5)



With Yen-Tze Lee & Y. F. Chen (1963/8)



Alumni of Hsinchu High School, R-1 (1963/10)



Summer picnic of Taiwanese Student Association, L-2 standing (1963)

## Passing-Through Guests

Since the San Francisco International Airport was one of the major entry gates of Taiwanese students touching on the American soils and not too far from Berkeley, some friends and relatives from Taiwan would ask me to meet them at the airport and visited Berkeley for a few days. Yung-Chuan Chen (陳永全), a high school and college classmate of Heidi's brother, was one of them to stop by on his way to the Midwest in June 1964. He received Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University. His wife was also from Hsinchu. He was very active in Taiwanese community affairs in the Los Angeles' area. He passed away in 2007 at age 72.

In February 1965, my cousin Rei-Chai Chen (Susan 陳瑞釵 1938) left Taiwan for America and made a few days sojourn in Berkeley. Since I didn't own a car, I asked Sherry's boyfriend Edward Liu to pick her up at the airport. I gave her a guided tour of Chinatown and the Golden Gate Bridge. Susan was the first female of the Chen family to attend college, the Provincial College of Law & Commerce (省立法商學院), and to study abroad in the U.S. She was on the way to Atlanta, Georgia to meet her fiancé, Yao-Ming Cheng (鄭耀明). They got married in Atlanta City. Born in Hsinchu City, he graduated from the Taipei Technical College (台北工專). He received Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Georgia Tech. They have been living in New Brunswick, NJ since the 1970s, only a three-hour drive from Albany. They



At the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco (1965/2)

have a daughter Nancy and two sons, Howard and Steven. All married and live in New Brunswick area and Princeton, NJ. Our two families met and toured together very often.

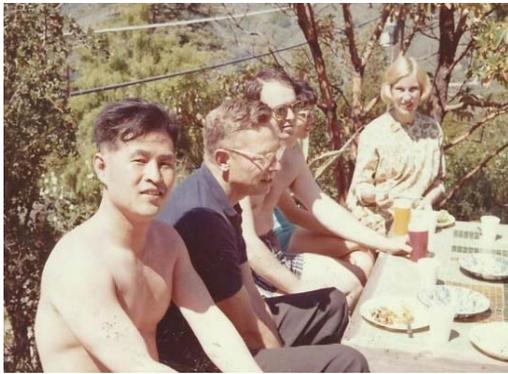
## **City and Regional Planning Department at UC-Berkeley**

When I reported to the Department of City and Regional Planning on February 18th for the 1963 Spring Semester, school classes had already started three weeks earlier. I was afraid that I might not be able to catch up with my class, especially when having a language handicap as a new foreign student. I had considered asking the Department to allow me to postpone the enrollment registration for another semester. Perhaps I could find a job to earn some money first. I had already asked for and received the permission once from the Department to postpone my enrollment registration for the fall semester of 1962.

My advisor was Prof. T. J. Kent, who was the founder and the Chair of the Department. A graduate from MIT, he was a pioneer of modern city planning and well respected in the planning profession nationwide. “The Urban General Plan” he authored was a must-read classic text book by all students and practitioners in city planning. He also served on the City Council of Berkeley, a municipality with “Council-Manager Government System.” When I met with him for the first time, he told me that he had already registered for me. I was very grateful for his kindness and help, but dared not to ask for postponing my registration for another semester. Since I was the first foreign student from Taiwan to enroll in the Department, any excuse for further delay would give a bad impression to the Department faculty. I had no choice but to begin my studies. Of course, it was very hard at the beginning; so many new subjects to learn and so many textbooks to read. Due to the long hours of reading, I began to wear eye glasses for the first time.

Established in 1948, City and Regional Planning at UC-Berkeley was a 2-year graduate program offering Master degree only before 1965. (The Ph.D. program didn't start until 1965, the year when I left the school.) It required more credit units than other Master's degree programs (33 credits vs. 24 credits). There were about 20 students in the first year class. Students came from a variety of undergraduate backgrounds, including architecture, civil engineering, law, political science, public administration, economics, history, sociology, and archeology. A couple of them were already in the city planning field as city planning commissioner and zoning administrator. They enrolled in the program to obtain formal advanced training.

In addition to myself, there were two other foreign students; one from Brazil (civil engineering) and another from Japan (architecture). The two failed to complete the program and quit after one year.



Weekend picnic, Prof. T. J. Kent, L-2 (1964)



The College of Environmental Design (1965/4)

In addition to taking some common courses, students could choose from three “Fields of Concentration” or specialization in their studies: Land Use and Urban Design; Community Development and Housing; and Transportation Planning. I choose the second option.

When I arrived at UC-Berkeley, the Department was housed in a nice old wooden building on the north side of the campus. In the spring of 1965, it was moved into the newly constructed Wooster Hall which housed the College of Environmental Design. In addition to the Department of City and Regional Planning, there were two other departments under the College: The Department of Architecture and the Department of Landscape Architecture.

## **Unique Features of American City Planning Profession**

City and regional planning was a relatively new profession in the U.S. It gained recognition and popularity when suburbanization and metropolitan growth took place across the nation as the result of popular use of automobile, improved highway transportation and the national home-ownership policy of the Federal government after the end of the World War II. American urban centers were experiencing decline with the exodus of white middle- and upper-class residents to the suburbs, the so-called "White Color Flight". City planning is not just dealing with the physical aspects of urban settlement, architectural design and engineering construction, it also involves many political, social, economic, and environmental issues. Back in 1960s, there were less than a dozen universities in the U.S. to offer degree in urban planning. Harvard University, MIT, Columbia University, Cornell University, UC-Berkeley, Ohio State University, Washington State University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Tennessee, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute were the few which offered formal advance degree in urban planning. The Department of City Planning At UC-Berkeley was established in 1948.

City planning profession in the U.S. leans toward comprehensive urban system planning. It covers short- and long-range city plans involving land use, zoning and subdivision regulations, public housing, public infrastructure,

transportation system, environmental protection, demographic and economic analysis and forecast, information system, etc. In the planning process, it must address issues of social justice, equity, ethics, sustainable development, public participation, group decision-making and effective administration. Regional planning is the extension of city planning with multi-local jurisdictions within a larger geographic area. Its functions include the promotion of cooperation among different independent self-autonomic government jurisdictions, including county, city, town and village. It must also maintain communication with State and Federal governments. Regional planners require possession of considerable knowledge on local government systems and communication skills.

## **Seeking Part-Time Job**

After completing registration and joining the class, I made appointments to visit the two Chinese professors at Berkeley introduced to me by Prof. Wen-Hai Chou, my mentor at Cheng-Ta. I first visited Prof. Shiing Shen Chern (陳省身) at his office. Prof. Chen was a world-renown mathematic scholar, a member of the Central Academia Seneca of the Republic of China and U. S. National Academy of Science. He warmly received me and inquired the recent situation of his good friend Prof. Chou in Taiwan. He then asked me if he could be of any help to me. Since I was not a student in pure science and I didn't want to bother him, so I politely declined his offer.

A few days later, I visited Prof. Shyh-Shian Chen (陳士驥) at his office inside the Oriental Library. He was a professor of Chinese literature and the Chair of the Oriental Library. His large desk was covered entirely by books and documents. He asked about Prof. Chou and then asked me if I needed any help. I told him I was looking for a part-time job since I was a self-financed student. He

asked whether I could type. I told him I learned typing as a high school English teacher in Taiwan. (I bought a second-hand Underwood typewriter to learn typing at home. Very few English teachers in the high school had mastered this skill then.) He said he had a post-doctor student of Chinese literature and was doing English translation of old Chinese classical books. The student could use some help in English typing. He offered me the job immediately and asked me to go to see the post-doctor student whose name was Robert Plummer. I was so elated and thanked Prof. Chen for his help.

I went to see Dr. Plummer for the details in his basement office inside the brown-stone building called Durant Hall. He was a tall scholar-type person in the mid-30s and spoke some Mandarin. The job was 15 hours a week at \$1.25 per hour. (The legal minimum wage in California was \$1.00 an hour at that time.) The working schedule was flexible to fit my class time. It was a perfect job that I had never dreamed for. The work load was so light that I was able to study full-time. The earning was enough to pay for my living expense and tuition. I had this job for more than two years until I finished my master's degree in the summer of 1965.

To earn extra income, I also tried out a part-time job at an American restaurant near the campus. It was a floor-mopping and dish-washing job every Sunday, paying \$1.00 per hour. The work started from the early morning at 6:00 AM and ended at 12:00 Noon. The 6-hour labor job was so tiresome that I quit after a few months.

To earn extra money, many graduate students from Taiwan, who even had scholarships as research or teaching assistants, would spend the summer vacation time to seek summer jobs outside the campus. Some would work in fruit farms to pick peaches and pears. Some even traveled to New York City to work in

restaurants or resort hotels in the nearby Catskills Mountain area. Most of them went to work at the Reno's casinos on Lake Tahoe, Nevada. (Lake Tahoe is about 230 miles northeast of Berkeley.) The job was to sweep the casino floors. In addition to earning hourly pay at \$1.00 per hour, they might be able to pick up chips dropped on the casino floor when working on night shift.

Out of curiosity, in the mid-summer of 1964, I followed them to spend my 2-week vacation time there and found a job at one of the casinos. Since I arrived late in the summer, all the better floor-sweeping jobs had been filled by the early arrivers. I was offered a job cleaning toilets and mopping restroom floor. I didn't let the foreman know that I would work for only a couple of weeks during the job interview. I had no feeling of humiliation at such labor. In a capitalist society, a job is a job. To receive compensation, one must work to earn it. All Taiwanese students helped each other at the casino resort site. I was able to squeeze in and share a bed with fellow Taiwanese students for the night. I earned just enough money to pay for the trip. Unlike most Taiwanese students after the 1980s, the earlier students in the 1960s were very frugal and would send money back to Taiwan to help their families.

## **Assassination of President John F. Kennedy (1963)**

In my first year in the U.S., a national tragedy in American history happened. Its president was assassinated. On November 22, 1963, the 35<sup>th</sup> U.S. President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) was shot during a trip to Dallas Texas while riding in a motorcade with his wife. The youngest and first Catholic President in the history of the U.S. was only 46 years old and less than three years in his first term of presidency. The entire nation mourned the loss of their much loved president. All classes at the University were suspended for the afternoon. The entire campus was dead quiet and many students had tears in their eyes. As a new comer to

America, I was stunned by such a terrible tragedy and could not imagine how it could have happened. I will always remember JFK's famous words: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

The assassination of JFK shocked the world. One of the conspiracy theories of the killing was that he was killed by people who opposed his liberal stand. The incident and the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King would provide a good climate for JFK's successor President Lyndon B. Johnson to complete the unfinished work of JFK's New Frontier. The new era of the so-called "Great Society" began. Many liberal domestic programs were enacted by Congress during Johnson's term: War on Poverty, Medicare, Aid to Education, Air and Water Quality Act, Civil Rights Act, Anti-racial Segregation, School Integration, Voting Rights Act, Omnibus Housing Act for low-income families, National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, raising safety standards for consumer products. Promotion and enforcement of civil rights and racial equality has been the historical achievements of President Johnson admired not only by American people, but by people all over the world. Many Taiwanese students, including myself, were the beneficiaries of the 1965 Immigration Law that allowed the admission of more Asians to become American citizens.

### **Student Free Speech Movement (1963-1964)**

All large scale automatic civil disobedience movements were resulted from the accumulation of citizen discontent again the society and government policies. An unexpected incident would spark mass uprising. Because students were young, enthusiastic, simple-minded, and singles without family burden, they became the front-line fighters of the movements. Such social movement must not be ignored and require careful measures to dissolve. It may end in bloody revolution if the authorities try to crack down by force. In March 2014, there was a so-called

“Sunflower Movement” in Taiwan which was organized by students and young adults to protest the government action to pass the Service Trade Agreement with Community China. Such mass demonstration was very similar to the Student Free Speech Movement that I witnessed at UC-Berkeley campus 50 years ago.

The 1960s were the great time of American prosperity which dominated the world economy. There were plenty of jobs available. But it was also the era of social turmoil. The liberal movement of anti-Vietnam War and anti-authority sentiment was on the rise in the early 1960s, especially on university campuses. The anti-racial discrimination and civil rights movement was ascending. The deepest impression I had when I first entered the Cal’s campus through Sather Gate was the long-haired and shabbily-dressed hippy students strolling in the campus plaza right before the school’s administrative building, the Sproul Hall.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was shot to death in Dallas, Texas. President Lyndon Johnson expanded the Vietnam War the following August, using the so-called Tonkin Bay incident as an excuse. Those events further fanned the anti-war emotion of college students. Students set up desks with anti-war flyers and made anti-war speeches outside the restricted area of the campus. They demanded the University authorities to end the restrictions on freedom of speech within the campus and allow students to participate in political activities out the campus. Back then, most universities took a very conservative attitude toward student political activities. It was a reflection of the afterward shadow of the extremist right-wing “Anti-Communist and Red-Scare” era of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy.

The school authorities finally interfered and tried to restrict those student activities. On October 1, 1964, a University police enter the Sproul Plaza to arrest a protest leader, an ex-graduate of Cal. About 3,000 students surrounded a police

car until the charges against him were cancelled. But the confrontation between the students and the school escalated. More students gathered to demonstrate and some liberal faculty members openly expressed their sympathy and support. Most foreign students were just bystanders and afraid to participate.

On December 2, 1964, about 2,000 students and a few non-students, occupied The University's 4-story administration building—Sproul Hall and started a peaceful sit-in. Some read books, some sang, some watched movies, some listened to speeches, and a freedom class was given by teaching assistants. At mid-night the following day, California governor Edmund Brown gave the order to expel those students. State troopers and county police were summoned to surround Sproul Hall around 4 o'clock in the morning and started to evict students, who were sitting or lying down on the floor, out from the building. Each arrested student was given the choice of walking or being dragged. A few walked; most went limp and were dragged. It took almost 12 hours until mid-afternoon for the combined force of 635 polices from the City and County Police Departments, University Police Department and State Highway Patrol to clear the building. It took 12 hours for the police to carry 800 demonstrators out from the building and put into the waiting police wagons. They were sent to several detention centers. The entire process was peaceful. No excess force was used by police and no student was injured. It was the largest mass arrest in the history of California.

Some more vocal students called for a class strikeout and all class activities were temporarily suspended. A group of University faculty members raised about \$8,500 for bail bond fees. All of the arrested were released to return to Berkeley on bail the following day. This incident sent a strong wave to other campuses across the nation like a wild fire. After two weeks of negotiation, the University authorities finally conceded to allow freedom of speech to students. More space inside the campus was allowed to set up tables for displace materials. And

students were free to say what they wanted to say and could participate in outside campus political activities. No disciplinary action was taken by the school against those arrested students. Classes were finally resumed after more than two weeks of turmoil. But the University Chancellor Edward Strong was forced by the Regency of the University of California to resign. For Taiwanese students who grew up in a totalitarian country under long-term marshal law, such peaceful “civil disobedience” was astonishing and a big culture shock.

## **7. 38 YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL CAREER**

I finally completed all of the required graduate courses and finished the final dissertation by June 1965. There were many planner job openings in the U.S. due to promotion of urban planning by the Federal Government. Under the Metropolitan Planning Act of 1965, the Fed would offer financial assistance to local governments to prepare and adopt master plans. The initiation of comprehensive planning process was the prerequisite to receive Federal grants for local public housing projects, sewer and public water improvements, park and open space preservations. There was a shortage of trained urban planners nationwide. It was estimated that for each newly graduated planner, there were two jobs available.

I wrote to Professor Wen-Hai Chu of Cheng-Ta for his advice if I should go back to Taiwan for employment. His response was somewhat negative. He thought that job opportunities in Taiwan were rather limited, either teaching at college or working in the government. In contrast, there was a shortage of qualified planners with formal training in the U. S. I decided to stay in the U.S. thinking I could obtain a few years of practical work experience, and then probably go back to Taiwan. However, California State law required citizenship or permanent resident status to qualify for public employment. Although private consulting jobs were generally exempted from the PR status requirement, the opportunity was somewhat limited. I decided to seek jobs in other states outside California.

### **Kansas City, Missouri (1965-1967)**

In early August of 1965, I applied for an Assistant Planner position at the City Planning Department of Kansas City, Missouri. I was quickly invited to go

to Kansas City for a personal interview. The City would reimburse the air fare. Without understanding the normal personnel practice and unable to reserve quickly a regular ticket seat, I booked the earliest flight available with a first-class seat. It was the first time I had ever flown on an airplane in my life. When I showed the ticket receipt to the Department personnel officer, he was a little surprised that I took a first-class flight for the job interview. The interview was successful and I was offered the job right away. I started the job in late August 1965. The starting annual salary was \$6,700, more than 20 times of the high school teacher's salary in Taiwan. The Assistant Planner was the first level position in the hierarchy of the Department. Above, there were associated planner, senior planner, chief (or principal) planner, assistant director, and director. I passed the writing test and was promoted to Associate Planner with salary adjustment upward the following year.

The Planning Department had two divisions. The Advance (or Long-Rang) Planning Division was responsible for preparing long-range plan and conducting various special planning studies. The Current Planning Division was responsible for zoning permission and administration. I was assigned to the Advance Planning Division. My immediate supervisor was the Division Chief Mr. John Anderson, a nice gentleman graduated from the Planning Department of the University of Tennessee. With a secure full-time job and regular income, the first thing to invest was to buy a car. Automobiles were a living necessity in the U.S. I spent \$700 for a used car, a Ford Galaxy, and learned how to drive.

After being separated for almost three years, our family finally united. Heidi and son Raymond left Taiwan for Kansas City on October 25, 1965. They stopped in Tokyo and Berkeley on the way and arrived in Kansas City five days later. Our family added another new member the following year. Our second boy Robert was born in November 1966.

Only a few planners in the Department had received formal training in city planning with graduate degree. As a graduate from UC-Berkeley, one of the top universities in the nation, I was treated by my colleagues with much respect. I met an old gentleman about 60s years old named Water Blucher who was hired by the Department as a consultant to work on the city's zoning issues. He was a well-known urban planner in the country and was the past President of the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO). He gave me an advice and said, "In his experience, no one planner is perfect. But each one may possess certain special knowledge and skills. Do not fire the person just because of some mistake." I kept his advice in my heart when I reached the position with the authority to hire and fire employees.

Created in 1853, Kansas City is a major urban center in the Midwest, located at the confluence of Missouri River and Kansas River. It has land area of 314 sq. miles with a population of one half million in 1960s. It is 540 miles southwest of Chicago and 250 miles west of St. Louis. The City is very pretty. Guided by architect George Kessler, Kansas City became the forefront example of "City Beautiful Movement" in the U.S. during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It developed a network of boulevards, parkways, and parks around the city. There are a total of 200 fountains in the city. The innovative Country Club Plaza, opened in 1925, was the pioneer of suburban shopping centers in the U.S. We spent a lot of our leisure time at parks, zoo, museums or the Liberty Memorial, a spacious landmark on top of the flat hills overlooking the downtown on the north.

The city was one of the few major municipalities in the U.S. to adopt the reformed Council-Manager Government System in 1940s after the end of the corruptive Tom Pendergast Machine. Under such system, the elected city council is the governing body and the council's president becomes the mayor. The city manager is a professional administrator hired by the city council and responsible

to the city council. Some cities and counties in the U.S. also adopted such form of government.

The Planning Department occupied the entire 15<sup>th</sup> floor of the 20-story City Hall built in 1930s, the tallest landmark in the city. But it didn't have air conditioning. All employees were allowed to leave whenever the temperature outside hit 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the afternoon during the pick summer time. My first assignment was to conduct a neighborhood economic analysis as part of an urban renewal project. I also participated in the planning for new development of the city's southern section.

There was another new Assistant Planner hired by the city almost the same time when I was hired. Sandy Chang (張德善) was a Chinese born in Shanghai, and grew up in Taiwan. He graduated from the Planning Department of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1965. His wife, Grace Hsei, was a Taiwanese native from the Town of Tongshau (通霄鎮), about 30 miles south of Hsinchu. Our two families lived in the same apartment building and became very good friends. They had a girl, Jennie, at the same age of our oldest son Raymond. To supplement our salary from the city employment, Sandy and I found part-time printer jobs at the famous Hallmark Card Company not far from our apartment. We drove together to work at the company's printing plant at night as machine operators after our regular jobs at City Hall. The 4-hour, 5-day-a-week moonlight job usually ended at midnight. Although not a hard labor job, standing continuously for 4 hours was really very tiresome. We both quit the jobs after a few months.

We both worked at the City Hall of Kansas City for only two years. I accepted a new job in Indianapolis and he moved to Washington D.C. to work for the Prince George County Planning Department. He quitted the job there a few

years later to run a Chinese restaurant in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. The co-owner was a retired Chinese movie star Mei Li (李媚).

There were only a couple of Taiwanese families living in Kansas City then. A graduate of the National Taiwan University and Kansas University, Dr. T. K. Liao (廖宗凱) and his wife lived there many years before us. A strong supporter of Taiwan's independence, he worked for the Midwest Research Institute as a chemist. Another person was C. T. Yang, (楊宗昌) a civil engineer. Yang was one of the founders of a group calling for Taiwan's independence by revolutionary means. Many Taiwanese students studied at two universities not too far from Kansas City. One is Kansas University (KU) in Lawrence and the other is Kansas State University (KSU) in Manhattan. Our apartment became a popular gathering place in the city for many students. Occasionally, we would attend some of their activities on weekends. KSU was known as the "Huang-Pu of Kansas" (堪薩斯的黃埔) because there was a strong Taiwanese independent movement in the campus. (Huang-Pu was the place in southern China where the original military academy of the Nationalist Government located.) One night in early 1967, we went to KSU to listen to the speech by the author of "Formosa Betrayed", George Kerr, a former U.S. diplomat to China. This book had detailed reports on the 1947 "2-28 Incident" in Taiwan. The event was sponsored by the Taiwanese Student Association. The gathering at the university auditorium was tense as the event was closely watched by pro-KMT student spies in the campus. I recognized one who happened to be a Cheng-Ta graduate under the Chung-San Scholarship Program of Taiwan.

It was very common for Taiwanese students in social science and liberal arts to change fields to science and engineering when they arrived in the U.S. because of better job opportunities. Wu-Hsiun Chen (陳武雄) from Kaohsiung was a

Cheng-Ta graduate in Diplomacy and one year behind me. He enrolled as an undergraduate to study chemistry at KU and continued on to finish his Ph.D. His classmate, Joseph Lee (李賜隆), also changed his field to computer science at Wichita State College. (His wife Susan Cheng 鄭淑適 also graduated from Cheng-Ta majoring in Education, two classes behind me.)

There was no oriental grocery store in the city. We had to drive almost hours to Chicago for Chinese groceries. We learned how to make tofu at home. Heidi's parents often sent dried rice noodle, dried mushroom and fried pork sliders from home. It would take more than one month to ship the items from Hsinchu to Kansas City.

## **Indianapolis, Indiana (1967-1969)**

In April 1967, I went to Houston, Texas to attend the annual national conference of American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO). One of the sessions of the conference was the so-called "Job Market" where open recruitment of planners by agencies across the nation took place. I was interviewed by Mr. Michael Carroll, a principal planner on the Metropolitan Planning Department of Marion County in Indianapolis, Indiana. I was offered a senior planner position and decided to accept the job offer. The starting salary of \$9,500 was much higher than the salary of \$8,000 I had at Kansas City at that time.

In America, it seemed that to move up at the early stage of your career, one should change jobs whenever opportunities arose. The so-called employee "iron bowl" (鐵飯碗) with life-time job security was not part of the concept of Western capitalism of free market economy. The employer-employee's relationship is simply a contractual nature. The employee needed only a two-week notice to the

employer to quit the job. In the U.S. it is unusual to hear that one has never changed the job in life time. In the US today, an average person changes jobs five to ten times during his or her career.

We moved to Indianapolis in late July 1967 after living in Kansas City for 23 months. We packed all our essential household items into a 12-foot U-Haul and drove to Indianapolis, only a 500-mile journey. On the way, our car ran out of gas on the highway and I had to call for emergency service.

Indianapolis is one of the major metropolises in the U.S. Midwest. It is the economic, cultural, and political center of the State of Indiana. The staff size of the Metro-Planning Department was much larger than that of KC. The Department was responsible for not only the planning functions of the city, but also the entire Marion County in which the City of Indianapolis is located. But all other departments were separated between the City and County. They were all housed in the same 20-story office building. Mr. Richard Luger was the then Mayor of the City of Indianapolis when I arrived. In 1968, the Republican Party gained control of both the Executive and Legislative branches of the State Government. Sizing up the opportunity, Mr. Luger successfully pushed for the adoption of a State legislation in 1970 to unify the governments of Indianapolis and Marion County. Mr. Luger became the first Mayor of the Unigov, name adopted by the city of Indianapolis to describe its consolidated city-county government.

Indianapolis was elevated overnight to national status as one of the “Big-Ten Cities” of the U.S. Consolidation of local government was an important movement of government reforms as a cure of urban problems in the U.S. during the 1960s. Although many places attempted to consolidate city and county governments to reduce public spending and tax-payers’ burden, such total

structural consolidation have rarely been successful. In New York State, even the consolidation of small village and town has been rare because of strong Home-Rule tradition. The alternative approach was regional planning and sharing of services among local governments.

In addition to draft a project-process system for the Master Plan, my major assignment was to write a training handbook for the non-professional members of the Planning Commission. It was a project funded by the Federal Housing and Urban Department under the so-called “701 Program”. The “701 Program” was a major initiative of the Federal Government to improve the quality of urban planning in the U.S. in the 1960s. Urban renewal, curbing urban sprawl and coordinated regional development were the major elements of the Program.

I eventually completed a 15-chapter Training Handbook that covered all important basic elements of city planning such as: basic planning concepts, the general plan, land use, zoning and subdivision regulations, public facilities, housing policy, and urban renewal, etc. The Training Handbook was intended as a textbook to improve the knowledge of the members of the lay-man planning commission in dealing with many planning issues and development proposals. The Handbook was even translated into Chinese by the Interim Regional Commission of the Executive Yuen (行政院區域計劃籌備委員會) of the ROC in Taiwan in 1969 as a reference publication.

The successful creation of Indianapolis Unigov was not accidental. It was preceded by the establishment and operations of the Metropolitan Planning Department many years earlier. Mr. Luger, the creator the Unigov and its first mayor, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1976 and has been reelected for consecutive 9 terms spanning over 36 years. He served as the powerful Chairman the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations of many years when the Republican

Party was the majority. But in 2012, he was defeated by a conservative candidate in the Republican primary when he sought reelection for the 10<sup>th</sup> term.

Mr. Michael Carroll was a close colleague and acted as my immediate supervisor at the Department. A graduate from the Geographic Department of the University of Minnesota, he had a good reputation and was well respected in the planning profession circle within the State of Indiana. He later became the Executive Director of the Lilli Foundation, a major non-profit charity organization established by the pharmaceutical giant headquartered in Indianapolis. Unfortunately, Mike died in an airplane accident at relatively young age in 1992.

Prof. Shien-Liang Lee, my mentor at Cheng-Ta, visited Indianapolis and stayed at our home for a few days in the early summer of 1968. Our youngest son Ronald was born in September 1968.

We first lived in an apartment on the city's east side for about one year. We later moved to a small 3-bedroom single house on the west side of the city. It was not too far from the Indianapolis Speedway where the famous "Indi-500" car racing took place each May. We visited Chicago several times to shop at the Chinatown since Chicago is only a 3-hour drive north from Indianapolis. We also frequently visited my high school classmate Tony Chien (錢越男) who lived in Skokie west of Chicago. Tony was born in China and grew up in Taiwan. We became very good friends. Unfortunately, he died of liver cancer in his early 40s. I really missed him very much. His young wife remarried soon later.

There were more Chinese and Taiwanese families living in Indianapolis than Kansas City. Several families would get together to play mahjong and enjoyed potluck dinner on weekends. Hong-Tu Ong (Daniel 翁鴻圖) and his

wife Jane Lee (李秀瑾) were the first Taiwanese couple we met. Born in Houlung (後龍), Taiwan, he was an electrical engineer graduated from the Provincial Tainan Technical College (became the National Cheng-Kuon University later) and received his Master's degree from Purdue University. His wife Jane was from Tainan. Our two families became good friends and still maintain contact today. We became the god-parents of their youngest daughter Jennifer, who was the same age of our youngest son, Ronald. They moved to Orange County, California in the winter of 1969. Recently we visited them in California for the second time in September 2013.

Another family was Dr. Li-Ming Lu (呂理明) and his wife with two little boys. A graduate from the Medical School of the National Taiwan University, he was receiving his resident training in psychology at the Indianapolis-based Medical Center of the University of Indiana. We visited them in Boston in September 1969 when he was an attending doctor at the famous Massachusetts General Hospital. Heidi's parents were with us on the trip. He later moved to Virgin Island to practice there, and the two families lost contact ever since.

Dr. Wen-Cho Liu (劉文徹) and his wife Yen-Yin Chen (陳燕鶯) was a couple we met in Indianapolis and became close friends. He was born in Tachia (大甲), Taiwan and his father was also a doctor. A graduate from Kaohsiung Medical College (高雄醫學院) in Taiwan, he was a pathologist resident at the Medical Center of the University of Indiana. We asked him to come to our house to babysit our two boys when I rushed Heidi to the hospital in the middle of the night to prepare for the birth of Ronald. They eventually settled in Altus, Oklahoma, a small town southwest of Oklahoma City. He was employed as chief pathologist of the hospital and also served as the county's legal medical examiner. They have one daughter (a medical doctor) and two sons. Heidi and I visited

them in June 1998 when I attended the NARC annual conference in the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma. They visited us in Latham in October 2002.

On a late December day in 1968 just before the Christmas, our whole family went to Minneapolis, Minnesota by car to attend the wedding of Heidi's older brother, Ching-Cheng Wei (魏清政). Our car didn't have winter snow tires because there was no such need in Indiana. The following day after the wedding, a heavy snow storm swiped the area. It was the heaviest snow fall I ever had experienced before and the visibility was extremely poor. But I decided to leave Minneapolis in the morning, hoping to reach Chicago that evening for a reunion of my high school classmates at Tony Chien's home in Skokie, Illinois. We saw several cars slipping into the snow banks along the icy interstate highway. Not long later, I lost control of the wheel and the car slammed into the thick snow bank. Fortunately, a police patrol car showed up shortly and called a towing truck to pull our car out. Too scared to continue the journey with three young children (Ron was only three months old), we checked into a motel for the night to rest and never reached Skokie for the Christmas reunion.

Heidi's parents visited us in August 1969 and stayed with us for more than a month. Cousin Susan's whole family came up from Georgia to visit us and to meet Heidi's parents. I took out a two-week vacation time off and we toured Chicago, Toronto, Montreal, Albany, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. We stayed at my former Berkeley roommate Tom Chung's house when we stopped in Albany for a day. I was quite impressed with the small city environment of Albany, one of the reasons I moved to the Capital District of New York soon after the visit.

## **The Assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy in 1968**

Two prominent Americans leaders were assassinated during 1968. The incidents let me wonder: Could democracy and a peaceful society coexist? As a Baptist preacher and peace activist, Dr. Martin Luther King (馬丁路德·金 1929-1968) advocated nonviolence and racial brotherhood in the struggle for racial equality. In the spring of 1963, he led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world. A major organizer of March on Washington, D. C., he delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech before 250,000 people on August 28, 1963. At the age 35, King was the youngest man to have received the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. He was assassinated on the second floor of a hotel in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968 at the age 39. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1983 President Ronald Reagan signed on the bill creating January 15<sup>th</sup> as a national holiday to honor him, the first private citizen to receive such honor in the U. S.

Robert F. Kennedy (羅伯特·甘迺迪 1925-1968) was the younger brother of President John F. Kennedy. He served as the Attorney General in his brother’s administration and became a U.S. Senator representing New York State. In 1968, he entered into the primary race of Democratic Party for the Presidential election. I saw him when his campaign troupe came through Indianapolis in April 1968. On June 5, 1968, he was shot in a hotel lobby of Los Angeles by a Palestinian Arab. He died the following day at age 43. It was quite a shock and puzzle for me that in five short years, three prominent American leaders were assassinated.

## **The First Man on the Moon**

In his inauguration speech on January 20, 1961, President Kennedy declared that America would land on the moon within the next 10 years, and it really

happened. Astronaut Neil Armstrong, Commander of Apollo 11, landed a space craft on the moon on July 20, 1969. It was the first human being to set feet on the moon. “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind,” said Armstrong as he stepped on the moon.

## **8. THE CAPITAL DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

### **The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (1970-2003)**

In early November of 1969, I applied for the newly created Chief Planner position with the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) in Albany, New York. The job opening was advertised nation-wide through the job market news of American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP, formerly the ASPO). The ads attracted many applicants. I was soon invited for a personal interview in Albany. I took a flight in late November to the old Albany County Airport where the Commission's office was located then. I was interviewed by Mr. Louis Lex, the Executive Director of the Commission and it went very well. A week later, I received a call from Mr. Lex to offer me the job. He asked me to report to work as soon as possible. Without hesitation, I immediately accepted the offer and submitted my resignation to the Metro-Planning Department in Indianapolis.

Both position and salary were too good for me to turn down. The salary scales and benefits of public employment in New York State were among the best in the nation. The starting annual salary of \$13,000 was 30% more than what I received in Indianapolis. The Commission also provided good benefits, including agency-paid family health insurance and a generous retirement pension. The number of working hours of public employees in New York State was set at 37.5 hours a week. The new job would expand my professional experience to the whole range of planning, from city to county and to metropolitan area. It was the salient turning point of my long 38 years of professional career in the U.S. The path began at U.C. Berkeley on the West coast, passed through Kansas City and

Indianapolis in the Midwest, finally settled in Albany on the East coast of America.

All of our household items, measuring over 8,000 pounds, were packed and moved to Albany by a moving company this time. Unlike the previous two jobs, the Commission reimbursed the entire moving cost and travel expenses. We left for Albany by car right after the Christmas of 1969 with the hope that I could report for work at the beginning of the following January. However, a snow storm was sweeping over the Midwest and the Northeast when we left for New York State. There was record heavy snow exceeding 7 feet in Albany during the last week of December. It took us almost one week to complete the 800-mile journey because of poor road conditions. I finally reported to work on January 7, 1970.

Regional boundaries in the U. S. are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau based the economic and social interaction of people living within a proximity geographical area. The Capital District of New York consisted of four counties with an area of 2,200 sq. miles (5,690 sq. kilometers, or 15.5% the size of Taiwan) with a total population of 838,000 (2010 Census). Albany is the largest of three central cities that include also Schenectady and Troy. The Region ranks number 100th in term of population size among the “Metropolitan Areas” in the U.S. (“District” 區 is an administrative or political term and “Region” 區域 is an economic geographical term.)

The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) was established jointly by the four counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady in September 1967 under the State enabling legislation. The Commission had 12 non-paid board members, 3 from each county and appointed by respective county legislature when I joined. (The number of board members

was increased to 20 in 1984.) The Mayor of Albany, Erastus Corning 2<sup>nd</sup>, was the Commission's Chairman in 1970. The Commission's Board held monthly meetings, usually at the evening right after a dinner. Such practice of having a dinner before the meeting was abandoned a few years later as members were supposed to serve without compensation or benefits.

When I joined CDRPC, the office had a small staff of only seven employees—the executive director, four professional planners, a draftsman, and a secretary. The Executive Director, Mr. Lex in the 40s, was a lawyer by training from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He was very familiar with the legal aspect of planning and somewhat weak in the knowledge and technical skills required for performing comprehensive planning. The other three planners were less experienced without formal advance training in urban planning. Second in command, I was the only trained planner with full credentials among the staff. (A certified professional planner in charge of the agency's planning programs was a requirement by the State government for receiving State and Federal grants. I met such requirement.) A Criminal Justice Planner and a Senior Planner named Paul Phur (潘克正) were added to the staff a year later. Both had master's degrees. Paul, an ethnic Chinese, was born in Singapore and educated in England.

Regional planning is the extension of traditional city planning in scope. It became popular in 1960s and was aggressively promoted by the Federal Government under the Metropolitan Planning Act of 1965. To receive Federal grants for projects such as public housing, water and sewer projects, open space and recreation facilities, all local governments must conform to the area's Regional Plan. As the Chief Planner, I was suddenly exposed to the complexity of regional planning and American local government structure. As a home-rule state, New York local governments enjoy complete decision-making power on

local land use controls. The plans and recommendations made the by CDRPC were only advisory in nature and lack of binding power. The agency must use persuasion rather than applying enforcement to implement its plans. There were over 70 local government units (county, city, town, and village) within the Capital District. It was quite a challenging job to coordinate local plans and decisions. To be effective, a regional planner must have a good understanding of American local government structure and possess basic communication skills.

Due to the need for more space, the Commission's office was relocated from the Albany County Airport, for which it did not have to pay rent, to a country club office for free in the suburban Town of Clifton Park, Saratoga County in May 1970. It was a poor decision of the Executive Director and the mistake hurt the perception of the agency. The free rent arrangement was on a verbal basis without a written agreement. But the landlord changed his mind and requested all back rentals later. It caused a big financial hardship for the Commission to settle. In the U.S., it is necessary to have a written agreement for various business transactions.

A bigger turmoil erupted in the agency in August 1972. Mr. Lex was forced to resign under the pressure from the State Office of Planning and Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. They criticized him of delinquency and poor management of some State and Federal planning grants before my arrival. The other cause of his downfall stemmed from his verbal confrontations with a few Commission members. They felt he was the protégé of the Chairman, Mayor Corning of Albany, and did not treat other members equally.

The Commission decided to start a nation-wide search for a replacement immediately. I was appointed the Acting Executive Director. I decided not to apply and compete for the top job as I felt that I had not have enough experience

and not ready for the job yet. But I was willing to help the Board in its recruitment effort. The Commission finally appointed S. Thyagarajan (Thyag) as the new Executive Director from more than 30 applicants in early 1973. Thyag had impeccable credentials. Born in Bombay, India with a bachelor's degree in architecture, he had a Master of City Planning degree from Ohio State University. He had 12 years of regional planning experience in the U.S. and Europe. Under his leadership, the staff size was expanded to 20 people with increased annual operational budget of more than \$400,000. The office was soon relocated from suburban Clifton Park to a more urban central location, Stuyvesant Plaza in the Town of Guilderland, and then Downtown Albany.

I was promoted to the Deputy Director in January 1974 with annual salary of \$18,800. Another Chinese-born planner, Mrs. Joyce Tien Wang (田介純) joined the staff as a Principal Planner that year. She was an architecture graduate of Cheng-Kong University (formerly the Tainan Technical College) in Taiwan and received her Master's Degree of City Planning from MIT. Her father was descendent of ethnic Manchu (滿族) and a medical doctor. Her husband, Dr. Daniel Wang (王汝梁) was a professor of civil engineer at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, an expert in earth quake studies. I heard that he was a candidate of the presidential post of Cheng-Kuon University in Taiwan, his alma mater. She moved to Cambridge near Boston after the death of her husband. We still keep in touch.

The preparation of the "Long-term General Regional Development Plan" was one of the primary projects under the stewardship of Thyag. Three years in preparation, the Plan was finally completed in the summer of 1976 at the total cost of more than \$100,000. Other major planning programs included Regional Aviation Plan; Port of Albany Development Plan; Area Public Housing Plan--a

controversial program to allocate low and middle-income housing in among cities and towns; Fiscal Impact Analysis of Residential Development; Urban Infill Study; and technical and information services to localities.

## **Pursuing the Top Job**

In June 1980, Thyag resigned his job with the Commission to take a much higher-paid job as the Deputy Executive Director of the Tri-State Regional Planning Council headquartered in New York City. The agency was jointly created by the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York and responsible for the planning of the New York Metropolitan Area. With more than 150 employees, it was the largest regional planning organization in the whole country. But the agency was dissolved two years later because it was too difficult for the three States to agree on many planning issues and policies for such a large metropolis. I was appointed again as Acting Executive Director to oversee the continuing operations of the Commission. The Board appointed a recruitment committee which advertised the vacant job nation-wide. By then, I felt I was ready and decided to apply for this top job.

The competition was very keen; about 40 people responded to the job ads. Among them were a few individuals with very high profiles, including senior-level planners with former New York State Office of Planning and a former professor and cabinet member of the State. After initial resume screening, I was one of the final three candidates to be invited for personal interview by the full Board. I had received favorable recommendations from many influential persons I had known, including my advisor at UC-Berkeley and a few former chairmen of the Commission. Some Board members also supported me. This was the most challenged time as well as the best opportunity of my professional career. If failed, I might have to find another job somewhere else.

In a cool evening of mid-September in 1980, a special full Board meeting was called to conduct interviews of the three final candidates. It was held at the City Manager's office in Downtown Troy, a politically neutral location. The atmosphere was quite intense. Since I knew all the members, the interview went through smoothly. Anticipating that one question in their mind was my communication ability in English. I told them that it was quite nature that my English had some accent. "But I spoke Chinese with an accent too, even though I had learned to speak Chinese for more than 20 years since the grade school." This humorous strategy seemed to disarm their concern and bias over the language issue.

After the interview, I came home to wait for the final decision by the Board. It was really a very anguished time with a sinking feeling in my heart. The moment finally came; I received the phone call from the Board Chairman that I was selected for the \$34,000 top job. I finally reached the pinnacle of my professional career of my life at age 45 -- a dream come true! The whole family cheered and cerebrated together with my sister and brother-in-law who happened to visit us from Taiwan at that time. Two Commission members, Mr. Tom McGrath and Mr. Bruce Johnson, who strongly supported my appointment, stopped by at our home shortly to deliver their congratulations personally. I thanked them with a toast of Mao-Tai (茅台).

To reach a high position with high salary may not be the final purpose of one's life. But you must have the proper platform in order to fully utilize your knowledge and ability to serve the society. There is a saying that "opportunity awaits for a person who has prepared." How true it is!

There were about 360 regional planning boards in the entire nation. Less than

a dozen of foreign-born planners ever occupied the top post of these public agencies. To assume the top supervisory planning position of the Capital District of the “Empire State” certainly drew much attention within the professional planner circle.



At the Executive Director desk (1982)

The Commission had an annual budget of one half million dollars with a staff of 19 when I took over. Federal and State aids made up two-thirds of the budget. It was not a big agency, but it had very high profile. In 1990s, there were cuts in Federal and State aids which forced a reduction in staff size and budget. The financial gap must be filled up by the four counties.

Soon after I assumed the ED position in 1980, I began to invest considerable financial and staff resources to build the agency’s computer-based technical capability. The Commission’s Geographical Information System (GIS) was one of best among peer agencies. In the 1970s, the advance of military satellite image technology and its civil application greatly changed the way of planning by professional planners. The Commission used to have up to 6 draftsmen and spent several months to create a regional land use map. Now it needs only one planner to create more accurate maps in only a few months.) The widely use of computers by every employee reduced the secretary positions from to four to only two.

Some said “regional planning is the art of possibility”. There are variety of regional planning activities and programs in different areas of the U.S. based on different demands and local political environments. Some of the programs and initiatives are beyond the traditional scope of urban planning. Below are a few

special unconventional regional projects that I strived for and accomplished during my term.

## **Establishment of “Economic Development District”**

With increasing mobility gained through popular usage of personal cars, the daily economic and social activities of people do not recognize the artificial administrative boundaries of local government. Economic development projects on regional basis become more effective. “Economic Development District” has been a program promoted by the U. S. Federal Government since the 1960s. It encourages the corporation of local governments within the region to pursue economic development on a regional basis. The program was administered by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. It would provide Federal grants to local governments and regional planning councils for economic projects.

After years of my persistent effort and persuasion, leaders of the four counties finally agreed to allow CDRPC to seek Federal designation of the Capital District as an Economic Development District in 1983. To receive the approval by the EDA for the designation, certain requirements must be met. One of them was to prepare and adopt an Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP). The Plan established regional economic development goals and identified economic development projects. The other requirement was sufficient minority participation in the policy-making body of the organization.

For many years, the CDRPC’s 12 Board members were all white and later, only one was non-white minority. Obviously, the Board composition would not meet the Federal requirement. To overcome the deficiency, I recommended

enlargement of the size of the Board from 12 to 20 members to allow more minority members to be appointed. The 1967 4-County Agreement which created CDRPC had to be amended first. It was not an easy task to do that. One county ignored the fair-share principle and adamantly refused to appoint any minority members to the Commission. There was a pervasive resistance to accept racial equality in many areas of the U.S. But CDRPC's petition was finally accepted by the EDA and the Capital District was officially designated as an Economic Development District after enough number of minority members were added to the Board.

As the result of the successful effort in getting the designation, many units of local government within the District have received EDA grants worth tens of millions of dollars in assistant funds for various economic development projects, such as improvement of industrial parks and access roads, construction of buildings, and purchasing of heavy equipment, etc. CDRPC has also received annual planning grants from the EDA.

## **Creation of “Foreign Trade Zone”**

The Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) program was enacted by U.S. Congress in 1934. The original purpose was to promote U.S. shipping industry and to stimulate international trade. A FTZ is a U.S. secured customs-sanctioned location in the United States, in or near a U. S. Customs Port of Entry, where foreign and domestic merchandise is generally considered to be in international commerce. Foreign merchandise may enter a FTZ without a formal Customs entry or payment of Customs duties or government excise taxes. The payment of customs duties was deferred until the merchandise is moved out from the Zone and into Custom's territory. If a product is exported, no U.S. Customs duties or excise taxes are levied. If a FTZ is located in a warehouse building where

imported or domestic goods can be stored, inspected, relabeled, repackaged, displayed, or distributed; such Zone is called “General Purpose Zone” or “Magnet Site”. Deferred Customs duty payment can give the user support with cash flow benefits.

During the 1960s, the FTZ program was expanded to allow Zone to be designated outside a Customs Port of Entry. The program was further expanded later to allow manufacturing and manipulating activities to take place in the Zone and became a popular tool for job creation, hence economic growth. The FTZ Board may approve a manufacturing or processing plant for operation under the FTZ program where foreign parts are assembled or mixed with domestic parts to become finished products. Such Zone is called “Subzone”. The user of Subzone can enjoy the benefit from paying lower Customs duties on the imported components of the finished products. In fact, all automobile manufacturing plants in Detroit and elsewhere in the U.S. are operated in Subzones to reduce production costs.

Other benefits of the FTZ program include duty exemption for scrap or goods destroyed in the zone, merchandise processing fee reduction, streamline logistics, quota avoidance, and better inventory control and security resulting in lower insurance costs. There are currently a total of 290 General-Purpose Zones (or Magnet Sites) and 576 Subzones in the U.S.

After I was appointed the Executive Director, I personally visited a few FTZs to observe their operations when I attended out-of-state conferences. I made a recommendation to the Board to pursue the FTZ program for the Region. The proposal also received strong support from the four counties and business community. CDRPC submitted a formal application to the FTZ Board of the U.S. Department of Commerce in October 1983 to seek a grant of authority for the

creation of FTZ within the 4-county Capital District. A special legislation requested by CDRPC was also passed by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor. The grant of authority was approved by the Federal FTZ Board in 1984 and the zone became the “No. 121 FTZ” in the nation. CDRPC was the first regional planning agency in the nation to establish and administer a FTZ. The area of its authorized jurisdiction was later expanded to 10 counties in Upstate New York. As the Zone Administrator, CDRPC has received annual fees from the authorized zone operators.



Signing agreement for Special FTZ operation (1987)

## **The Capital District Juvenile Secure Detention Facility**

This project was the most difficult but the most rewarding one during the latter part of my professional career. From initial feasibility study to groundbreaking to the final dedication for facility operation, the project involved many complex political, land use planning, architectural design, legal, financial, and administrative issues. It required problem-analytical ability, negotiation skills, patience, and determination in order to execute successfully. The Facility (or Center) initially had a total building space of 24,000 square feet on a 4-acre site.

The facility scope was not big, but it included 16 beds (was expanded to 24 beds 3 years later), administration offices, class rooms, a half size basketball court, recreation rooms, kitchen and dining area. It was the first multi-county juvenile secure detention facility ever been built in New York State and in the U.S. During the 6-year period, from 1992 to 1997, the project demanded most of my energy and full-time attention.

The completion of this project demonstrated that a regional planning organization is capable of carrying out other functions beyond the traditional “planning” work without changing its original charter. To do that, the agency must be creative and prepared to take new challenges and risks. The project received national attention. CDRPC received the top national achievement award given by the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) for providing local government services using a regional cooperative approach. The award was presented at NARC’s annual conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma in June 1998.

A juvenile secure detention facility is a short-term holding center to keep juveniles aged between 10 and 16 who have committed serious crimes and are waiting for adjudication by family court judges. The construction and operation of such a facility was very expensive because of strict State and Federal regulations. In the U.S., most states including New York, counties are responsible for providing secure detention services for juvenile offenders. Each county may either operate its own facility or arrange with other counties for such services under contract. Before 1997, there were six county-owned and operated juvenile secure detention centers across New York State, with a combined total of 430 beds. These facilities are located mostly in large metropolitan areas of the State.

Following the national trend of rising crimes committed by youth, the Region's demand for secure and non-secure juvenile detention services experienced a steady increase during the 1980's and early 1990's. It had become increasingly difficult for the four counties to find vacant beds at the State's six secure detention centers at distances ranging from 130 to 280 miles away, as those centers were often operated at full capacity. The four counties incurred a substantial financial burden in terms of transportation and manpower costs. Not to be discounted were the intangible social costs associated with the emotional suffering of juveniles being transported to places far from their homes, and the inconvenience involved in visitation by family members or guardians, and counseling by social workers or legal counselors.

The situation rekindled the interest of county officials of the Capital District to have its own local facility. They approached CDRPC for a long-term regional solution. In August of 1992, CDRPC's Board established an eight-member Special Committee and directed the staff to conduct a feasibility study. The Committee was chaired by Mr. Paul O'Brien, a politically well-connected former Albany County legislator who was particularly enthusiastic in building such a facility. As the staff director, I provided necessary research and planning support. The initiative received strong support from both executive and legislative branches of the four counties and all Family Court judges. It also gained extensive media coverage.

I personally completed an in-house feasibility study the following spring. The study concluded that a 16-bed facility would meet the current and near future needs of an 18-county catchment area, covering the four-county Capital District and the 14 surrounding counties. (The facility was expanded to 24 beds three year later.) The report outlined five possible implementation options: (1) One county

to construct and manage the facility, and to lease available bed spaces to other counties; (2) One county to construct the facility, and to contract with a private company for management; (3) A private company to construct and manage the facility, and to lease bed space to user counties. (4) A 4-county consortium to construct and manage the facility; and (5) A 4-county consortium to construct the facility and to contract a private company for management.

Option #1 would have been the easiest to implement under existing State regulations, as it was the model in which all existing facilities had been built and operated. The major drawback of this option is that the hosting county has priority use of the facility and can dictate the terms of access by all other counties. No individual county in Capital District expressed interest in taking the lead because of high overall construction and operation costs and the administrative headaches associated with such a program.

To my surprise, Option #5 was favored the most by county leaders and the CDRPC Board members. Under this proposal, the regional entity could be a new regional authority created by special State legislation or an existing regional agency, such as the CDRPC. A new regional authority was ruled out because most county elected officials opposed the proliferation of independent regional authorities which might weaken local government rights. The counties were much more comfortable with the concept of the CDRPC taking charge. (The CDRPC was created and financially supported by the counties. All of its Board members were appointed by the counties.) In the fall of 1993, all four counties passed resolutions to authorize the CDRPC to pursue the project further under Option #5.

Most of the actual responsibility for project implementation now fell on my shoulder, because I was the author of the report. I faced tremendous challenges to

carry out the assignment. To complete the project, the following issues had to be dealt with: Organizational authority and State regulations, construction financing and operational capitals, suitable building site, architectural design and construction, personnel and operation. Those were the issues I had learned very little at the graduate school or had actual experience before. It required creative thinking and quick learning. I learned a lot of new things from the result of this project.

### **A. Organizational Authority and State Regulations:**

Under the 4-county agreement that created CDRPC, the agency had no authority to barrow funds or to incur debt. With the help and advice from an Albany law firm, a not-for-profit public benefit development corporation permissible under IRS Revenue Service Code was created. The Capital District Youth Center, Inc. (CDYCI) became a subsidiary organization of CDRPC and had the authority to issue tax-exempt bonds.

Accepting my recommendation, five of nine members of the Board of Trustees of CDYCI were appointed by CDRPC from its members. Each county would appoint one of the remaining four. The CDYCI Board was directly responsible to CDRPC. I was appointed the non-voting Chief Administrator of CDYCI to handle all administrative matters. I carried two titles simultaneously and assumed the executive duties of both agencies.

In New York State, all youth services of local government were under the supervision of the Division of Family and Youth Service (DFYS), an executive office of the Governor. The State would split the costs for youth services with counties. It was soon discovered that the existing State law and regulations on social service programs had little room for regionalism. DFYS officials insisted

that only the county government could become a “Social Service District” to qualify for receiving State reimbursement for capital and operating expenses for youth services. The Division staff feared that such new concept of multi-county regional organization and operation would create a bad precedent. It was obvious that those State government officials were very conservative and behind the time in new regional development concepts. Only after contentious negotiations and CDRPC petitioned the State Legislature to introduce a bill to change the laws and regulations, the Division finally changed its position. It recognized CDYCI as a responsible legal agency for the administration of a regional juvenile secure detention program and would be qualified to receive State reimbursement.

## **B. Construction Financing and Operational Capitals:**

It was estimated that the total cost of construction and furnishing of the facility would be \$4 million. CDRPC lobbied key local representatives on the State Legislature to seek a \$2.0 million State grant to pay 50% of the eligible construction and furnishing costs. The grant was approved as a special legislature-initiated item and included in the 1994 New York State Budget. The State grant would substantially reduce the debt service costs of facility construction and the per-diem rate of using the facility. It boosted the confidence of CDRPC and CDYCI and provided a strong incentive for the counties to support the project. It was decided quite early on that facility construction would be financed through tax-exempt revenue bonds. For the revenue bonds to be marketable to lending institutions and investors, the four counties had to commit to use and pay for a minimum number of the facility beds annually.

The Board retained the service of a bond counsel to handle the revenue bond matter, which was a very complex legal procedure. I developed a fair-share formula based on past usage data and future need projections. The proposed

formula was finally accepted by all four counties in September 1996 after extensive give-and-take negotiations. I criticized one county executive by saying he was, “burying his head under the sand” in the media when he tried to negate the commitment. He was furious and I apologized. A letter of credit was given by the Albany-based KeyBank and guaranteed by the four participating counties. The Chase Bank in New York City agreed to lend \$5 million for the project. The amount was enough to cover construction costs and operational capitals. Because it would be a revenue bond self-financing project, not one dollar of county funds was needed to front-end the facility construction and operation.

### **C. Suitable Building Site:**

Because of the pervasive “Not-In-My-Backyard” or “NIMBY” syndrome, finding a suitable site for the facility was a big challenge which could derail the project entirely. Quite early during discussions of the project in 1993, three counties made it clear that they would not host such a regional facility within their jurisdictions. Only Albany County, that has one-third of the Region’s population with the most number of youth offenders, expressed a willingness to accept the facility within its jurisdiction. Several potential sites within Albany County were quietly investigated by Mr. O’Brien and me. However, as soon as certain local communities with potential sites were informally approached, they sent discouraging messages to CDRPC and CDYCI through their county representatives to express that the facility would not be welcome in their communities. Without a suitable building site, the project seemed to be going nowhere.

Fortunately, a breakthrough came in May 1995 when Albany County offered a 4-acre woody site behind the 800 cell County Correctional Facility. The visionary newly-elected County Executive Mr. Michael Breslin, a West Point

graduate, was willing to lease the land to CDYCI at a nominal charge of \$1.00. It is located in the geographical center of the Region and easily accessible from major highways. This site was several hundred feet from the County jail and would meet the regulatory requirement of “No Sight, No Sound”.

#### **D. Architectural Design and Construction:**

Once the problems of construction capital and suitable building site were solved, an architectural firm was chosen to design the facility in January 1996. Through an open competitive bidding process, a local civil engineering company was retained to do the construction. A qualified On-Site Manager was also hired to watch over the construction to make sure that all building materials met the specific standards, all construction jobs were done properly and on schedule.

#### **E. Personnel and Operation:**

As soon as the architectural firm was hired to design the facility, and a construction engineering firm was selected for the facility construction, the CDYCI Board also selected a reputable private nonprofit youth service corporation to be the operator of the detention facility. Using my knowledge about the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations on office overhead cost rates, I was able to negotiate a reasonable annual service fee payable to the company. According to State regulations, the Facility required a total staff of 26. The company was responsible for all personnel matters. It hired a very capable and experienced person to be the Facility Director. He was a former employee of DFYS. The CDYCI Board would maintain policy and financial oversight of the operations.

A ceremonial ground breaking was held in March 1997. I served as the MC. More than 100 guests attended the event, included elected state and county officials, legislators, family court judges, the county sheriff, probation officers and youth service personnel. The entire building construction was completed at the end of the year. A jubilant dedication and grand open-house ceremony was sponsored jointly by the CDYCI and CDRPC boards. The actual operations of the facility started in January 1998, six long years after the initial proposal to build the facility.



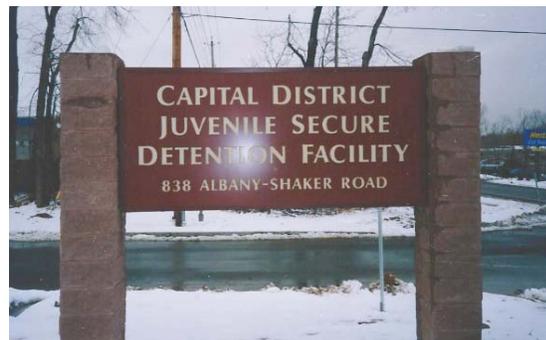
Groundbreaking (1997/3)



Outside view of the Detention Facility (1998)



With some CDYCI trustee members (2003)



Entry sign to the Detention Facility (1997)

## **9. RETIREMENT FROM EMPLOYMENT**

### **Announcement of Retirement**

In New York State, employees of all local governments and regional agencies are required to enroll in the State Retirement System. CDRPC's employees are no exception. In 2002, the State offered incentive to encourage early retirement of senior and higher paid employees. Each year of service would receive additional one month of service credit up to additional 2 years in retirement benefits. Many public employees took advantage of the offer. I was on the Tier One of the System which offered a better benefit package. Including the State incentive, I would have a total of over 36 years of service credit. My annual State pension would be 72.3% of the average of the last three years of my salaries. No State income tax and less Federal income tax would be required to pay after retirement. Adding State pension with Social Security benefit, my total annual net income would be no less than what I had got before retirement. There was no good reason to continue to work.

I started my working life since 1961. At age 68, which already exceeded the normal retirement age at 65, I decided it was time to step down and to enjoy the rest of my life. In March 2003, I expressed my intention of retirement to the Board. The news received wide media coverage. I let the Board know that I would stay until the end of June to allow the Board enough time to find my replacement. In early June, I formally submitted my resignation to be effective on July 4<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Independent Day.

The Board held a retirement party in my honor at Marriott Hotel. More than 130 guests attended the dinner banquet and 20 guests gave commendatory remarks. No any other Taiwanese American in the area received such honor when they retired.



Thanking the guests (2003/6)

The major change in life after retirement is that you no longer have to worry about and take care of the daily office business. You are free to do what you want to do and are interested in doing. Heidi and I started to do more recreational travels. Tennis and golf have been my favorite recreational activities and I was able to play more often after my retirement. But I continued to make myself available to volunteer for a few non-profit organizations. I have been a member of the local Rotary Club since 1982, served on the boards of trustees of New York Council of Non-Profits and Shaker Heritage Society for 12 years until 2014. I have coordinated the annual Taiwanese Heritage Week Celebration and helped on other cultural activities sponsored by the Taiwanese community in the area.

## **Searching for Successor**

Executive succession is always a difficult matter of many organizations. A Search Committee was appointed by the Board to start the process of searching for my replacement after I announced my retirement in March 2003. The Commission decided to launch an open recruitment for a qualified professional. Competition for the post was very intense. More than two dozen people submitted resumes. The field of outside applicants included a high-profiled former mayor and a local city planning director.

Oddly, a female member on the CDRPC Board also applied for the position. She was then the Deputy Commissioner of the State Office of Family and Children Services. She pursued the job vigorously despite her lack of credentials, including actual city and regional planning experience. But she was very active in her County Republican Party. Her State job was a political appointment not too secured due to up-coming change in governorship. She enticed the powerful Majority Leader of State Senate, a Republican, to influence the selection process. His office called all Republican members on the Board on her behalf. Succumbed to pressure from the office of the Majority Leader, a simple majority of the Board members reluctantly voted to select her as my successor. There were negative comments in the public and the planning profession circle. Some members told me that they had no choice because of the political pressure from the office of hard-balling Senate Majority Leader.

Privately, I gave my strong endorsement to my long-time assistant to succeed me. He joined the Commission as Principal Planner in 1984 and was promoted to the Director of Planning Services in 1998. He had an advanced graduate degree in city planning with more than 20 years of planning experience and was very familiar with the Commission's programs. No question that he was the most qualified candidate for the job among the applicants. Most Commission members also agreed with my assessment. I was stunned and dismayed by the initial vote. The selection of a political appointee instead of a qualified professional planner to head the Commission staff certainly would destroy the agency and its well-established good reputation as a non-partisan entity.

Since the Commission's selection process was interfered by outside political influence, it required a political solution as the last resort. Frustrated with the vote, I took my own initiative and quietly made an appointment to meet with the Albany County Executive, Mr. Michael Breslin. I explained to him the serious

consequence of the Commission's vote which was influenced by outside political force. I appealed to him to speak out in strong opposition of the Commission's selection. He agreed to send a letter to all members of the Commission and to request the Board to rescind the early vote. In addition to stressing the importance of maintaining staff professionalism, the letter which I drafted, also threatened that Albany County would withdraw its financial support to CDRPC if the appointment was carried through. Since Albany County was the largest financial contributor to the Commission, his voice carried substantial weight.

Sensing the lack of support from many Board members, county officials, and the business community, she finally withdrew from the appointment. The Board made another vote to select my assistant, Mr. Rocky Ferraro, to succeed me. I should also give credit to the then Commission's Chairman, Mr. David Vincent, an articulate former county legislator and the owner of a small business. He persuaded her to voluntarily withdraw behind the scene. Due to hiring of qualified staff, the Commission continues to function very well today after 48 years of existence. Perhaps my actions might not meet the strict professional ethical standards; but this was the last resort in order to avert the agency's destruction by a conspiratorial political force.

With Jane Harris  
and Rocky Ferraro (2003)





Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CDRPC with the staff (1987)



Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CDRPC with elected officials (1992)



The "1992 Citizen of the Year" award by Chinese American Alliance



Special recognition by the State Division of Human Rights (1997)

## **10. NOTABLE PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS**

The following narratives were not directly related to my professional jobs. However, they may be treated as interesting anecdotes which I actually observed or encountered over the past forty years. I wrote them down to share with the readers and to refresh my memories.

### **Erastus Corning 2nd—the Mayor of Albany for Life**

Erastus Corning 2nd' "the Mayor of Albany for Live", was the most remarkable American politician I ever met. He was a legendary figure in the history of American local government. Corning reined the City Hall of Albany for more than 42 years (1941-1983), the longest among all major cities in the United States. He was continuously reelected for 10 terms. He died in office in Boston University Hospital at age 73.

Born on October 7, 1909, the first son of Edwin and Louise Maxwell was sent to the boy-boring school Groton in Connecticut at age 13, one of elite private high school in America. He attended Yale at age 17 in 1928 and entered the insurance business set up by his father after his graduation from Yale in 1932. At age 27, he was elected as a Democrat to the New York Assembly, one of the youngest members in the history of the State Legislature. He was elected to State Senate in 1937. Four years later, he was sworn in on December 31, 1941 as the 70<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Albany, 107 years after his great-grandfather who was the 39<sup>th</sup> Mayor.

The reason that I knew him well was that he was one of the founders and the most influential leaders of CDRPC. He was the Commission's Chairman when I arrived in Albany to start my job with the agency. My first impression of him

was that this man, with over six-foot tall lean body and very handsome, was a well-bred and highly educated intellectual gentleman. He made people feel at ease. As a board member of CDRPC for 17 years (1967-1983), he commanded great respect from other members. When he spoke, everyone listened. He always arrived at the monthly meetings on time and his attendance records were better than most of the rest. He understood and supported the bipartisan nature of the Commission as a regional entity and was willing to share the power with the minority. Upon his recommendation, there was always a Republican member representing the suburban towns of Albany County on CDRPC.

Corning was born in a prominent family of rich and powerful. His great-grandfather Erastus Corning (1794–1872) was a sixth generation Corning originally from England. He struck it rich in the iron and banking business and was the founder of the New York Central Railroad in 1853, which stretched from Albany to Buffalo. He served as the 39<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Albany (1834-1837), a New York Senator (1842-1845), and a member of U.S. Congress (1857-1859/1861-1863). Because of his business acumen and political influence, he was already a millionaire in the late 1830s when he was only in his early forties. The Mayor's grandfather Erastus Jr. (1883-1934), was an easy going gentleman without much political ambition like his father. In 1880, he was a founder and the first president of the men-only Fort Orange Club in downtown Albany. The Club has been the bastion of WASP ascendancy and the powerful until today. I did meet and dine inside the Club several times. His father, Edwin, a Yale graduate, became successful in business and politics. He was the Chairman of State Democratic Committee and the Lt. Governor of New York in 1927 under Gov. Al Smith.

There were several factors of Erastus' fast raise in political arena and holding on power for so long not simply because he was born in a well-connected influential political family and a well-groomed, educated elite. There was the

birth of a new local political force, the so-called “Albany County Democratic Party Machine” in early 1920s. His uncle, Parker and his father, Edwin were both Yale graduates. Together with the O’Connell brothers, they defeated the Republican candidate in a race of Albany’s Congressional seat in 1922 when Parker was elected to Congress. He was reelected for seven terms. This powerful “Democratic Party Machine” was an unusual coalition of upper-class Corning of Anglo descent with the blue-color working-class O’Connell of Irish new immigrants. The machine controlled Albany city and county politics for almost seven decades until the 1980s. The opponents often accused the Party for vote-buying and breaking other election laws. Despite special investigations of corruption launched by Republic governors, they all failed in the courts.

Corning was a fascinating and conflicting man. He willingly played second fiddle to Dan O’Connell, the behind the scene de-factor boss of the Democratic Party Machine, for 36 of his long 42 years as the Mayor of Albany. He finally became the party chairman and boss when O’Connell died in 1977. Some political pundits said he was a big fish in a small pond for not seeking higher public office than the Mayor of Albany. He had the opportunities for other higher public offices: Governor, Congressman, State commissioner, and cabinet member of the Federal government. He turned his back on all of these.

He was one-man City Hall, controlling the minute details of municipal affairs. His door at City Hall was always open and very accessible. An ordinary citizen would see or call him to complain about street cleaning or to ask for financial help. He would personally answer the phone calls and letters of the citizens. He had a genuine empathy for those troubled and helpless people. I recall that I was in his office one morning waiting for him to sign Commission’s checks (he was also the Treasurer of CDRPC then). An old woman called and asked for some little cash. The Mayor picked up the phone and said, “I remember

your name. I did loan you a cash of \$5 not long ago but you haven't paid back the money yet. I can't give you any more money until you have paid back the first loan." He showed incredible deftness in handling the request.

When I was a college student in Taiwan, I read some papers referring to "Party Machine" in American politics. But I didn't fully understand how it really worked until I arrived in Albany. The O'Connell-Corning machine controlled the City and County of Albany and stayed in power by spreading around and controlling an enormous amount of political patronage in the City and County. Their control actually reached beyond City Hall and Albany County government, and touched the State government. A letter or phone call from the mayor could mean the difference between being hired or fired, promoted or demoted.

One afternoon when I was in his office, a caller from the Governor's State personal office asked for reference about a middle-level engineering supervisor in the State Department of Transportation. The man, whom I happened to know very well, was seeking to move up to a higher position in the department. The mayor went to a large file drawer behind his desk and checked over the engineer's personal records and then told the caller that the guy was OK for promotion. Once a while, he would refer to me someone who had asked him for his help for a job with the Commission. But I always declined politely based on the person's professional qualifications. The mayor respected the non-partisan nature of the Commission and high-professionalism of its staff. He did his job as a politician and I did mine as a professional. I never hired anyone referred by him based on the lack of qualification.

Because of his close ties with the O'Connell's Democratic Party Machine, many said his administration was corrupt and ineffective. Republican Governor Thomas E. Dewey launched an investigation into Albany political corruption in

1943. The investigation ended after two years and \$1 million without substantial indictments. Corning's reelection was seriously challenged only once in the 1973 election by a Republican opponent. The Party Machine tried to hang on to power at any cost to maintain the status quo. Its mentality of total control and autonomy was said to affect the City negatively by preventing major public renewal projects during his term.

The Corning's City Government was greatly overstaffed and the salaries of its employees, including the mayor's own, were kept very low. The average salary among City Hall employees, including department heads, in the 1970s was between \$7,000 and \$8,000. By spreading out the large number of patronage low-paying jobs (many were older people), the measure would provide more votes for the Democratic Party. (The Mayor was making only \$12,500 in 1973, a pittance in comparison with the salaries of mayors of other major cities.) Actually, the Mayor didn't need to rely on the mayoral salary; he had other major sources of income. The insurance company he wholly owned, the Albany Associates, handled most of the insurance policies of the City and County of Albany and many private contractors. The policies generated lucrative premiums to the Albany Associates. In addition, a couple of Albany-based financial institutions, in which the mayor was a shareholder or board director, were the depository banks of huge government funds. These seemed to have the appearance of conflict of interests, but all were legal then.

He disliked unions and modern gadgets. His desk was a gray metal one. He preferred to schedule all his own appointments with a pencil on his small desk calendar. His office never used computers for typing and he refused to have AC in his office and office car. But he never abused the perk of the mayor office. For instance, he would not use the office car and the driver for his personal businesses.

In the fall of 1982, he was hospitalized in Boston for respiratory illness caused by heavy smoking over the years. Yet he would never delegate his mayoral and party duties to others until his death the following May. His chief of staff visited him at the hospital in Boston once a week to ask him to make decisions on important city business. I remembered I received a personal short note from him one day concerning a CDRPC matter.

Below are his words in a Christmas letter to his daughter in 1982:

“We are not perfect by a damn sight and in politics that’s very clear. Politics is the art of compromise, and politics and life in general are much the same. In politics, a modest amount of corruption is helpful in getting along. The word is not corruption in day by day existence, but it means pretty much the same.” (Note)

His successor was a respectful lawyer. Thomas Walden was the long-time City Council President in the Corning Administration. He also succeeded Corning to represent Albany County on CDRPC’s Board. Walden was a gentleman and spoke softly. His style of administration was very different from that of Corning. He modernized the city hall operation to become more transparent and discarded much of the political machine that had existed under his predecessor. He was elected the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Albany Law School, his Alma Mater, one of the oldest law schools in the nation. Unfortunately, Walden died in a car accident in 1993 near his home. Mr. Gerald Jennings, the Assistant Principal of Albany High School and a City Council member, succeed Mr. Walden as the 72th Mayor of Albany. Under his helm of over 16 years in 4 terms, the City undertook many further reforms to move itself into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(Note: Paul Grondeld. *Mayor Erastus Corning, Albany Icon, Albany Enigma*. Washington Park Press Ltd. 1997)

## Congressman Michael M. McNulty

I have known Michael McNulty (preferred to be called just ‘Mike’) for more than 40 years since as soon as I arrived in the Capital District in 1970. He was an aspiring young politician and would occasionally attend the Commission meetings as an observer. At age 22, he was the Mayor as well as the Town Supervisor of Green Island, a small Village and Town on the west bank of Hudson River in northern Albany County. He was from a political family quite influential in Albany County Government. The family runs a funeral home in the town and virtually controlled the government affairs of the village and town. I also knew his father, Jack, very well. Jack served as the elected Albany County Sheriff for years and was an influential member of the Albany County Democratic Party.

Mike was elected to the State Assembly in 1983 and the U.S. House of Representatives in 1988. He climbed through the ranks and served on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee as a ranking member. I organized several fund-raising breakfasts and lunch parties of Taiwanese American community to support his election campaign. We became good friends. As the result, he had the best voting records in supporting bills concerning Taiwan’s interests in the U.S. Congress. Mike recommended me as a full delegate to attend the 2004 Democratic National Convention held in Boston. He retired from the U.S. Congress at the end of 2008 after



U.S. Congressman Michael M. McNulty (1994)

after serving 10 consecutive terms over 20 years.

## **Dr. Ming-Min Peng 彭明敏博士**

Since the summer of 1982, I was in charge of the annual 2-day Taiwanese East Coast Softball Tournament held at the campus of the State University of New York in Albany on July 4 weekend. The annual event would attract more than 200 players and family members of a dozen Taiwanese softball teams representing many communities in the Northeast, including Albany, Mid-Hudson, Ithaca, Syracuse, Rochester, New York City, North and South New Jersey, Boston, Ottawa and Toronto (Canada). The tournament existed for about ten years and most of the games were held in Albany because of its central location and availability of softball fields. The championship was named Peng Ming-Min Cup (彭明敏杯) in honor of his contribution to Taiwan's independent movement. Dr. Peng came to Albany to watch the 1986 games and presented the championship cup himself. We had a nice dinner together after the games.

In September 1964, Dr. Peng and his two students at the National Taiwan University co-authored the "Declaration of Formosan Self-Salvation Movement" (台灣人民自救運動宣言). They were arrested by the KMT government and Dr. Peng was put under house-arrest in 1965. With the help of foreign friends, he made a gallant escape to Sweden in January 1970 and received political asylum. He arrived in the U.S. in September that year. Many people called him the father of the Taiwanese Independent Movement. One of his two students who co-authored the manifesto, Tson-Min Hsieh (謝聰敏), became a friend of mine. He received his Master's Degree in Political Sciences from Cheng-Ta. When I visited Taiwan, he and I and another mutual friend Mr. Chia-Ming Hsu (施嘉明)

had lunch together several times. Hsieh loved to share the stories about the public corruption in Taiwan. As a Legislative member, he did investigation of the murder case of navy colonel Ching-Fuon I (尹清楓案). Also a graduate of Cheng-Ta's Graduate School in Political Science, Hsu served as the Minister of Examination and Selection Department (考選部) and a member of the Examination Yuen (考試院)

In December 1987, I attended the annual meeting of the Central Committee of the Formosa Association of Public Affairs (FAPA) in Washington D. C. as the President of Albany Chapter. The forty-some members of the Committee debated pugnaciously over the restructuring of the organization and its policy directions. The election of FAPA's President was also on the agenda. Dr. Peng was running for reelection to be FAPA's President. But his leadership was challenged by two younger competitors: Tong-Rong Tsai (蔡同榮) and Tang-San Chen (陳唐山). Tsai, a student of Peng, even drove from New Jersey to my home in Latham to lobby for my support earlier. Since I had great respect of Dr. Peng, I casted my vote for him and he was successfully reelected. However, I greatly admired Tsai's efforts in lobbying U.S. Congressional support of Taiwan and his contribution to Taiwan's democratic movement and independency.



Presentation of Peng MM Cup at the Annual EC Taiwanese Softball Tournament (Albany, 1987)

## **Albany—the Oldest City of America**

Hsinchu is my hometown where I was born and grew up. But I lived in Taiwan for only 27 years in my entire life. In comparison, I have lived in the greater Albany area of New York for more than 45 years since 1970. Our house is located in the hamlet of Latham within the Town of Colonie, north of the City of Albany. The total population of Colonie being at 85,000, is only second to Albany. The City of Albany is the political, economic, educational and cultural center of the entire Capital Region. There is a saying, “A place where you have lived long enough becomes your hometown.” (他鄉住久是故鄉). No doubt that Albany is my second hometown. It deserves a brief introduction.

In 1609, Henry Hudson, engaged by the Dutch East India Company, sailed the Half Moon from New Amsterdam (today's New York City) up north 150 miles to reach today's Albany. A few years later, a group of Dutch traders built Fort Orange on the west bank of the Hudson River in 1624 as a fur-trading and farming outpost. By coincidence, in the same year another fleet of the Dutch East India Company, headquartered in Batavia, now Jakarta, Indonesia, landed in southern Taiwan. The Dutch constructed a Fort Orange, later changed to Zeelandia (熱蘭遮城) at present-day An-Ping, Tainan in southern Taiwan, as a trade post and colonial administration center. The Dutch controlled Taiwan for 38 years until 1662 when it was ousted by Chinese Ming-dynasty general Chen-Kuon Cheng (鄭成功) also known as Koxinga. If the Dutch had persevered, who knows what Taiwan would be today?

Albany is located about 150 miles (240 Ks) north of New York City on the west bank of Hudson River. It was chartered as the first city of America by the British Colonial governor Thomas Dongan in 1686. Albany was chosen as the

State Capital of New York in 1797 because its location promised safety from attack by water and also gave access to new farmlands to the West. Transportation networks—turnpikes (toll roads), navigable rivers, the Erie Canal and then the railroads, deep water in-land port—pushed Albany into commercial and industrial prominence. Politically, Albany often provided a springboard into national prominence for ambitious and commendable officeholders. Six governors of New York became U.S. presidents or vice presidents.

The racial composition of Albany is much diversified today. The major nationalities are British (Yankee), German, Irish, Italian, and Pole. A large number of Asian immigrants arrived since the 1960s. In the heyday of 1950s, Albany's population reached over 135,000. However, like most other older cities in the U.S., since the 1960s, Albany suffered from urban decline caused by “white-flight”. Many of the middle- and upper-income white families moved out to the surrounding suburban area. The 2010 Census showed that its number of residents was clinging at 100,000 and about 31% was non-white. There is no single department store left in the Downtown Albany today. Despite efforts in Federal-sponsored urban renewal programs, many derelict buildings are still standing in the inner-city neighborhoods.

As the capital of the state and county government seat, public employees are the most important employment sector of the City. Albany is also the center of higher education, health and financial services. Higher educational institutions include the State University of Albany, College of St. Rose, Russell Sage College, Albany Law School, Albany Medical School, and Albany College of Pharmacy. Three of the largest hospitals in the Northeastern region of the State are all located in Albany: Albany Medical Center, the VA Hospital, and St. Peter's Hospital.

It is worth to introduce here the most noticeable Downtown Albany landmark,

the State office complex called “The Empire State Plaza”. It was originally named the “South Mall”. It is a unique architectural masterpiece on a 98-acre site and integrated with the old State Capitol built in 1899. To obtain the 98-acre site, the State acquired through eminent domain and demolished 1,300 units of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century old houses and commercial buildings occupied mostly by working-class poor families. Over 9,000 residents and 350 businesses were displaced. It was said that Nelson A. Rockefeller, then the Governor of New York, was inspired by the visit of Princess Beatrix of Netherland in 1958. He was embarrassed by the poor condition of the neighborhood as she was given a driving tour of the South End area. He characterized the area as a slum.

The construction of the Plaza began in 1962 and completed in 1976 at a total final cost of \$1.7 billion. Today, the complex of 10 buildings house 13,000 employees and offer a world-class modern art collection: New York State’s Museum, Library and Archives, a distinctive performance arts center (The Egg), Convention Center, and more. The exterior of each building was covered with marble. In 1974, when CDRPC’s office moved to Downtown Albany from a suburban location, I could hear the cranking, booming sound coming from the construction site a half mile away.

The financing of such massive public project was a very interesting intrigue story. The constitution of New York State required that all major State public projects must be paid by State bonds and approved by the Legislature and then voted by the people in a statewide referendum. The original estimated cost was only \$350 million. Although New York was a wealthy big state, yet it was nearly impossible to find a financing for the new construction at such cost. There was no possibility that the new State office complex would be supported by Democratic-controlled downstate New York City at that time. Rockefeller sought help from Albany Mayor Corning despite each belonging to different party; Rockefeller a

Republican and Corning a Democratic. Actually the two were good friends since boyhood. Both families had summer houses in the State of Maine. Corning was credited for coming up with a very creative funding scheme that utilized Albany County bonds instead of State bonds. The deal was that Albany County would issue the bonds to finance the construction and become the property owner. The State, as the tenant, would lease the property from the County. The State would guarantee the repayment of principal and interest over 40 years in exchange for regular payments in the form of rental for a plaza that was officially county property. Because the Albany County government was under the full control of the O’Connell-Corning “Democratic Party Machine”, and the bonds were easily approved by the County Legislature. In 2001, the bonds were fully paid off and the ownership was transferred to the State under the so-called lease-purchasing arrangement.

This largest State building complex in the U.S. is a cultural art piece and has attracted hundreds and thousands of visitors each year. Most people agree that the Empire State Plaza was the brainchild of and testimony to Nelson A. Rockefeller, whose determination, deep appreciation of the arts, and vision brought about its creation.



The Empire State Plaza



The Egg--the State Performing Arts Center

## **The First Visit to Mainland China**

In April 1983, I participated in an Environmental Planning Delegation to visit the People's Republic of China. The 16-day trip (from April 25 to May 11) was organized by a Seattle-based non-profit organization called "People-to-People Program" to promote international exchange of professionals. The Chinese hosting organization was "China Association for Science and Technology". About 25 urban planners from many parts of the U.S., who were members of American Institute of Certified Planners, formed this professional exchange team. Each delegate member had to prepare a particular planning topic for presentation in China. The group consisted of 33 people, 8 of them were spouses. Heidi accompanied me on the trip and we were the only ones who could speak Chinese.

The U.S. and China established formal diplomatic relations in 1978 after President Nixon's ice-breaking visit to China in 1972. China just began to implement reform and a more open policy. Our delegation was one of the earliest American professional groups to visit China. The cost of the trip was not cheap at close to \$3,500 per person.

We gathered together at the Four Seasons luxury hotel in Seattle overnight for a briefing by the team leader before taking a flight to Tokyo the next day. The American Airlines plane landed at the Shanghai Airport for a transfer flight to Beijing, our first destination in China. The service attitude of the airport employees and the communication systems were very poor. Our flight from Tokyo to Shanghai was delayed and missed the transfer flight to Beijing. The Chinese airline requested our group to pay for taking a different flight to get to Beijing, in spite of the fact that it was not being our fault for the delay. After

much protesting and negotiation, we were finally allowed to proceed without paying extra fees.

The Beijing Airport building seemed to be relatively new and modern. The strait two-lane road from the airport to the city, with wafting willow trees along both sides, was quite inviting and smooth. We stayed in Beijing for three days and spent a 2-hour meeting with city planners from the Beijing City Government for briefing. A few members of the delegation presented their prepared papers. We toured many historic places, including Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, Ming's Tomb, the Temple of Heaven, the Lama Temple, the Imperial Gardens and few other sites.

We saw many dilapidated buildings in the city, but there were also new high-rise apartment projects under construction. We were told that elevators would be provided only in apartments above seven stories. Many sections of the old city wall were being torn down to accommodate the construction of new highways that would circle the city. At the time, the streets had only a few automobiles but were full of bicycles. People were dressed in only three colors—white, black, and blue. Large billboards with the “One Family One Child is Just Fine” (一家一孩剛剛好) slogan were everywhere around the public places in the city. There were very few outdoor public toilets available, a headache for tourists.

We took a flight to visit the 2<sup>nd</sup> stop, the City of Shengyang (瀋陽市), the political, economic, and industrial center of Northeastern China (or Manchuria), with over 8 million in population. (Under Chinese local government system, a city has several counties under its jurisdiction.) Shengyang was also the initial capital of the early Qing Dynasty. There was a noticeable trace of Japanese culture left in the City since Japan occupied the entire Manchuria in 1932 until the end of World War II. Many people above middle age could still speak Japanese.

We heard the singing of some old Japanese songs at the performance theater because the City attracted many Japanese tourists. There were many buildings built in a distinguished Japanese style. Shengyang was a steel mill center of China and the ground soil color was red. We visited the Old Imperial Palace that was much smaller in scale than the one in Beijing. We went to a resort hotel to take a hot spring bath which used to be the resting house of the warlord named Tzo-Ling Chang (張作霖). We also visited an ancient temple located on the hillside of nearby Chien Mountain (千山).

Our tour guides and translators were an English teacher at the Foreign Language College of Beijing and his student assistant. When we returned to Beijing from Shengyang, the young assistant was suddenly dismissed. I learned later that he had spoken something negative about China to some of the American members on our team. Without much formal education and appearing rustic, he had jumped from junior high school to the language school because of his youth activities and poverty ridden family background. During the Cultural Revolution, China's education system was destroyed, causing a large educational gap of one generation.

From Beijing, we proceeded to visit the 3<sup>rd</sup> city, Hangzhou (杭州), the capital of Zhejiang (浙江) Province. We stayed in a luxury hotel on the bank of the famous West Lake (西湖). It was a short walking distance from the hotel to the lake shore. It was very pleasant to take a stroll along the winding paths under willow trees. There were very few tourists.

Our official engagement during the visit to Hangzhou was to meet with some local urban planners at the University of Zhejiang (浙江大學). Some of American delegates presented papers on specific planning topics in one afternoon.

I presented my paper with the title of “The Concept and Practice of Zoning and Subdivision in the U.S.” The subject seemed to be somewhat new to Chinese planners. As evidence, we visited the coffee shop on the top observation floor of a 16-story newly completed luxury hotel. As we looked down from windows, the hotel was surrounded by old residential dwellings as well as manufacture plants.

While at the West Lake hotel, a few of us asked for taxi drivers to take us to a nearby place to join our spouses, none of the drivers at the hotel were willing to do so even though they could earn some extra dollars. The reason for their refusal was that it was dinner break time. This was the result of the so-called “eating the big rice bowl” syndrome that all workers were public employees with fixed salaries under the system of Communism. There was no incentive for individuals to work hard and the concept of customer service was not existed at all.

Our fourth stop of the trip was Nanjing (南京), the historic capital of many dynasties, including the Republic of China under the KMT. We visited the burial monument of Sun Yet-Sen, the founder of modern China. The 392 steps to the hill top where the tomb was placed required some strength to climb. The group made the final presentation of papers before a group of Chinese city planners at Nanjing University.

The last stop of the 16-day trip was Hong-Kong. In addition to sightseeing, I managed to have a lunch with some classmates from Cheng-Ta. The weather was very hot and humid even though it was only May. Heidi and I did not return to the U.S. directly and took the opportunity to visit Taiwan. Fearing trouble at the airport customs in Taiwan, we mailed from Hong Kong most of the gift items we bought in China and photo film directly back to the U.S. Our second visit to China was 29 years later in 2012.

## **The Visit to Albany by Taiwan's Governor Teng-Fui Lee**

In early August of 1983, the then Provincial Governor of Taiwan, Dr. Teng-Fui Lee (李登輝) visited Albany. He was accompanied by his wife and several cabinet members of his administration. The purpose of the visit was to meet with New York Governor Mario Cuomo. They stayed at the Hilton Hotel in Downtown Albany for almost four days to wait for an appointment with Cuomo. But Cuomo declined to meet him. It was a very awkward and embarrassing situation caused by the poor staff work of ROC's Consulate office in New York City.

As the President of Taiwanese American Association that year, I organized a welcome party with the presidents of Chinese Community Center and the Taiwanese Student Association of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). The dinner party was held at the Student Center of RPI campus and attended by about 200 local Taiwanese residents and students. Lee made his first public speech in the U.S. with his favorite topic: "Hundred Thousands of Armed Forces in the Farming Villages" (農村十萬大軍). He was very impressed by the reception given to him. Before leaving Albany, he invited a few of us to have a dinner at the hotel. Surprisingly, he spoke in Taiwanese to carry the conversation most of the time. Apparently, he was more fluent and comfortable in speaking Taiwanese than Chinese Mandarin.

He soon became the Vice President of ROC under President Jing-Kuo Chiang (蔣經國) after his return to Taiwan. In July of 1985, I attended the Conference of National Development (國建會) in Taipei sponsored by the central government. Without knowing the proper protocol, I called the Vice President Office to make an appointment to see him. His office secretary said that I had to

write a letter to request for the appointment. I didn't do that because I didn't have time for the back-and-force correspondence. But the mayor of Taipei and a Lee's close associate, Mr. Shue-Teh Hsu (許水德) made a call to Lee's office on my behalf. I was invited to see Lee at his office in the Presidential Hall. However, the message was too late as I had already had a prior lunch appointment with Mr. Meng-Ling Chen (陳孟鈴), the Minister of Civil Affairs Administration in Chungshin New Village (中興新村) in Taichung, the site of the Taiwan Provincial Government. I politely declined Lee's invitation. Mr. Hsu was an alumna of Cheng-TA and had accompanied Lee on his visit to Albany. He later held various important government positions, including the mayor of Kaohsiung and Taipei, the Minister of Examination, ROC Ambassador to Japan, and the Secretary General of KMT when Lee was the Party's Chairman.

Lee was hand-picked by Ching-kuo Chiang as the Vice President in 1984 and succeed Chiang as the President when Chiang died in 1988. He was elected the President by the KMT-controlled National Assembly in 1990 and won the first-ever popular Presidential election of Taiwan in 1996. Lee democratized Taiwan's political system during his 12-year helm and has become a strong advocator for the island's independency.

In June 1995, Lee, then the President of Taiwan, was invited as the keynote speaker at the commencement of Cornell University, his alma mater. He delivered a very impressive speech with the title of "My heart is always with the desire of the people" (民之所欲常在我心). Unlike the subdued visit to Albany in 1983, the 1995 visit attracted huge media coverage and drew strong protest by China. Several hundreds of Taiwanese Americans and students from Taiwan went to Cornell to welcome him and listen to his speech. I also attended the

event. However, the U.S. State Department didn't give him the official welcome normally offered to the visiting head of a foreign state.



The visit to Albany by Taiwan's Governor Dr. Teng-Fui Lee (1983/8)



Cabinet members of the Provincial Government



Lee's first speech in the U.S.

## 9-11 Terrorist Attack on World Trade Center Towers

My wife and I attended a lunch gathering of Cheng-Ta classmates at a Chinese restaurant in Manhattan Mid-Town in July 2001. After the lunch, we strolled to the World Trade Center in Lower-Manhattan and took an elevator to the top observation floor of one of the two towers. It was the first time that we

had ever been to the top of the WTC. The view was an eye-opener for us as we looked down at the magnificent sight of New York City and its surroundings from the top of one of the world's tallest buildings. But we never expected that the two skyscrapers would be completely destroyed by terrorists two months later.

I was in my office about 8:50 AM, Tuesday, September 11, 2001. A staff member alerted me and cried out that one of the WTC towers had been hit by an airplane. I rushed into the conference room to watch the live coverage on TV. Heavy smoke was bursting out from the top floor windows of the North Tower. A few seconds later, another passenger jet approached and hit the South Tower. Nineteen terrorists from the Islamist militant group al-Qaeda hijacked four passenger jets that morning. Two of the planes took off from Boston and crashed into the 110-foot WTC towers in New York City. All the other lower buildings of the Center were also seriously impacted or destroyed. Terrified and crying people were running away from the Center. Ear-screeching sound of sirens from fire-engines and police cars could be heard. It was an extremely horrible scene to watch on the TV screen. This famous landmark of New York City totally collapsed and suddenly disappeared from earth's horizon within a short two hours.

According to the government investigation later, the inexperienced terrorists, who had received only brief flying instruction, hijacked the two passenger jet planes departed from Boston's Logan International Airport. They flew the planes eastward by following Interstate Highway 90 to reach Albany. Then they flew south-ward by following the Hudson River to New York City. It was very easy for them to make direct hits at the WTC's two toll towers because the two buildings were erected on the east bank of the Hudson River.

The 9-11 suicidal attacks were planned and carried out by the anti-Western al-Qaeda. The well-coordinated terrorist attack killed over 3000 people, including

2606 people at the WTC (including 400 firefighters, paramedics, and police officers). Meanwhile, a third jet airplane, took off from the D. C. airport, slammed into the Pentagon in the National Capital. A total of 125 military and civilian personnel were killed. The fourth hijacked plane, taken off from Newark International Airport in New Jersey, crashed at a farm site in Pennsylvania that killed 45 passengers and the four hijackers. Only six people in the WTC towers survived at the time of their collapse. Almost 10,000 people were injured and treated, many in serious condition. The destruction caused serious damage to the economy of Lower-Manhattan and had a significant impact on global markets. The Dow Jones felled 1,669 points (14.3%), the largest one-week lost in American history. U.S. stocks lost \$1.4 trillion in valuation.

Since the 9-11 attack, travel by air has become very cumbersome as the governments across the world tightened airport security. It has also caused extra delays in boarding time. People entering most public buildings in the U.S. are subject to electronic scanning and personal searches. The Islamic terrorist attack sparked the reprisal attacks on Afghanistan led by the U.S. and three other allies (British, Canada and Australia) in September 2002 and eventual toppling of the Taliban regime. It was followed by the U.S.-led NATO invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Lasting over more than ten years, they were the most costly wars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is obvious that regimes can be changed and military forces can be defeated. But it is infinitely harder to eliminate traditional culture and religious belief.



On the top of World Trade Tower (2001/7)



New WTC: The Freedom Tower, 1774 ft (2014/10)

## **The 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston**

The 2004 National Convention of the Democratic Party was held on July 26-29 in Boston. The main purposes were to elect Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates, and to finalize Party's rules and platform which spelt out its key national policies. In March that year, I received a phone call from Mr. Charles Diamond, the Chief of Staff of the Albany Office of Congressman Michael R. McNulty. He informed me that the Congressman had decided to nominate me as one of the full delegates in his 21th Congressional District to attend the Democratic National Convention. I was completely surprised by the call and informed him that I enrolled in the Democratic Party only over a year ago. (Because of my position as the Executive Director of the non-partisan Regional Planning Commission, that it was not proper for me to enroll in any political party.

I enrolled in the Democratic Party only after my retirement from CDRPC in support of the Party's direction and national policies.) But he said never mind and a staff of the State Democratic Committee (SDC) in New York City would contact me for the details. I agreed to accept the nomination out of my respect to Congressman McNulty and my curiosity over such a national political event. A few days later, I received the phone call from a senior staff of the SDC and was asked to fill out a form for personal data he was going to send.

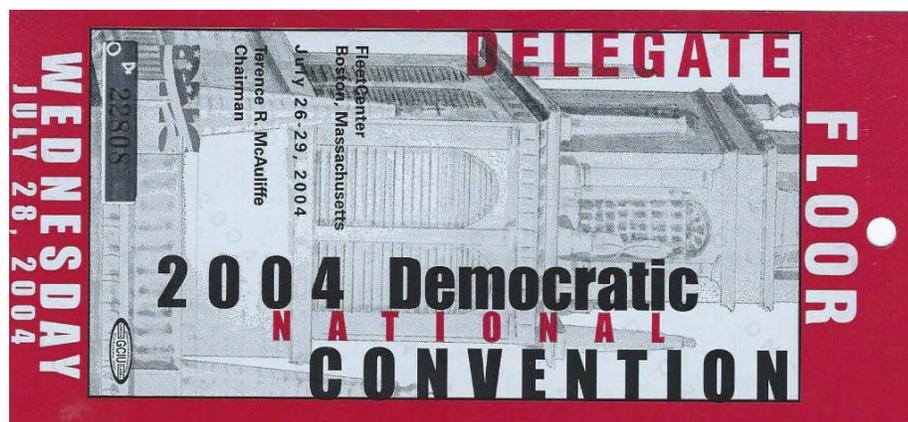
Very few new immigrants had such opportunity to be inside the Convention floor to observe the U.S. presidential election process first hand. I was one of the 20 some full-voting delegates from his congressional district. Of the total of 4,600 full delegates, only about 5% were Asian Americans.

Boston is only 170 miles from Albany and only three hours of driving time. Heidi and I arrived a day earlier at Langham Boston Hotel where most of the members of New York State delegation were staying. It was an expensive luxury hotel located on Franklin Street in Downtown Boston. The 4-night room charges and parking fees totaled about \$1,200.

The Convention attracted more than 30,000 visitors to Boston, including thousands of reporters and foreign observers from all over the world. Hotels and related businesses all took advantage to make a killing. The Convention was held at the Fleet Center with a total seating capacity of 17,000. There were a total of 4,300 Full Delegates and several hundred Alternates. New York had the second largest number of delegates second to only California. I found that New York State Delegates consisted mostly of elected officials including congressmen, state legislators, county party chairmen, county executives and mayors. As one of the very few Congressional designated private citizens, I drew some curious eyes from others.

Starting July 26<sup>th</sup>, breakfast rallies were held each morning at the hotel's conference room and some distinguished politicians were invited to speak. One person among the speakers who attracted the most attention was former First Lady Hilary Clinton. She was running for U.S. Senate from New York with aspirations of the White House. Her picture badges and fliers were on the tables in the lobby of the conference room. (Hilary ran against Barak Obama for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2008 but lost.) There were many parties and receptions in town sponsored by big corporations and lobbyists.

The big shows of the Convention were held inside the Fleet Center each evening. Starting at about 4:00 PM, all delegates and alternates along with their family members/friends were taken to the Fleet Center by shuttle buses to be ready for the evening's events. Security was very tight. To enter the Convention Center, each attendee had to show an ID pass hanging in front of the chest and passed through an electronic gate. Different magnetic ID passes were issued each day. Helicopters hovered above the Fleet Center. Inside, the facility was brightly decorated and banners were everywhere. All of the New York State delegates sat in one designated section. The NY delegation was led by the State



Identification Pass of Convention Delegate

Assembly Speaker. There I met Mr. John Liu (劉逸醇), a young Taiwanese American who was then a City Councilman of New York. We introduced each other. He told me he was born in Taichung, Taiwan. He was considered a rising political bright star. Liu later became the elected Controller of New York City and ran for Mayor in 2013, but lost.

Speaker after speaker would take to the podium to extol the Democratic Party's program and candidates and to criticize the Republican Party's failures. Bands loudly played patriotic music to fill the recesses. The prime time (from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM) was reserved for the keynote speakers of the day. One of the keynote speakers was the young Illinois State Senator Barack Obama, who was running for U.S. Senator. He delivered a very impressive and inspirational speech and set the tone for the party platform. He proclaimed, "There's not a liberal America and a conservative America—there's the United States of America." His performance led to much speculation as to his place in the Party and the nation's future. Indeed, he ran and won the presidential election four years later.

The National Convention reached its climax on July 29, the final day of the four-day event, to nominate candidates for the President and the Vice-President. It was to nominate Senator John Kerry from Massachusetts as the Party's presidential candidate and Senator John Edwards from North Carolina as the vice presidential candidate. The nomination was a perfunctory action since Kerry already won the nation-wide primary and Edwards was his hand pick to be his partner in advance of the Convention. By Alphabetical order, a representative of each state reported the number of votes the state would cast for each candidate. At the end, it was unanimously approved and the floor explored. The Convention was the nation's biggest political show built for maximum media coverage.

Most of the polls predicted that Kerry would win the election. But the result was the opposite; the incumbent Republican George W. Bush won by a total of 3 million votes nation-wide. Bush won 286 electoral votes vs. Kerry's 251 electoral votes. Foreign policy was the dominant theme throughout the election campaign, particularly Bush's conduct of the war on terrorism and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.



Yosemite National Park (1999/5)



Yellow Mountain, China (2012/5)



Hawaii (2013/9)



Northern European cruise (2008/9)



St. Thomas, South Caribbean (2014/1)



Costa Rica (2011/9)



Buckingham Plaza, London (2008/9)



Vermont fall foliage w/ the Wangs (2012/10)



NY Adirondack State Park (2012/10)



West Lake, China w/ Sue & Yaoming (2012)



May Flower, Plymouth (2014/10)



On the west bank of the Hudson (2014/10)



50<sup>th</sup> Cheng-Ta classmate reunion (2009/5)



Cheng-Ta classmates in NJ (2014/7)



Mr. wen-Cheng Lin of Pacific Times (2013/9)



Dr. Michael M. Tsai at WTC in Hawaii (2013)



Mr. Vincent Y.S. Chi of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taipei, Taiwan (2012/4)



Rotary Christmas "ring the bells" for the Salvation Army (2014/12)

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1935 Born in February 1935 in Hsinchu City, Taiwan.
- 1942 Entered the North Gate Elementary School at age 7.
- 1947 Witnessed the bloody shooting of protestors by Chinese military police in Hsinchu a few days after the eruption of the so-called “2.28 Incident” in Taipei.
- 1951 Graduated from the junior division of Provincial Hsinchu High School.
- 1952 Mother passed away on August 18th at age 51.
- 1954 Graduated from the Affiliated High School of the Provincial Normal College, Taipei, Taiwan.
- 1959 Graduated from the National Cheng-Chi University, Taipei, Taiwan; B.A. in Political Science.
- 1961 Discharged from the ROTC military duty in March and started teaching English full-time at Hsinchu County High School.
- Married Shiu-Ying (Heidi) Wei on December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 1962 Son Raymond was born in November in Taiwan
- 1963 Left Taiwan for the U.S. onboard the cargo ship “Hong Kong Importer” on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Arrived in Long Beach, California on February 13<sup>th</sup>.
- 1965 Received Master’s Degree in City and Regional Planning (MCRP) from the University California at Berkeley in June.
- Started employment with the Planning Department of Kansas City, Missouri as Assistant Planner in August.
- Heidi and son Raymond arrived in Kansas City for family reunion in late October
- 1966 Second son Robert was born in Kansas City, Missouri in November.

- 1968 Joined the staff as Senior Planner of the Metropolitan Planning Department of Mario County in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Youngest son Ronald was born in Indianapolis, Indiana in September.
- 1970 Joined the staff as Chief Planner of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) in Albany, New York.
- 1971 Created the Taiwanese American Association (formerly Formosan Club) of the Capital District with other Taiwanese residents in the area.
- 1973 Being promoted to the Deputy Executive Director of CDRPC.
- Visited Taiwan in July for the first time in ten years. Aunt passed away on July 26th at age 63. Father passed away on December 18th at age 77.
- 1980 Being appointed the Executive Director of CDRPC in October.
- 1983 Visited the People's Republic of China in May as a member of profession planners delegate sponsored by the People-to-People Program.
- Organized a welcome dinner party in August for the visiting Governor of Taiwan, Dr. Teng-Fui Lee.
- 1984 Established the 4-county region as an Economic Development District and Foreign Trade Zone No. 121.
- Being baptized by Rev. Kurt Morgan at the Loudonville Community Church in Colonie.
- 1985 Being elected the President of Latham Rotary Club.
- Attended the National Development and Consultation Conference in Taipei in August.
- 1986 Uncle Po-Kai passed away in Flushing, New York on July 10th after a stroke. His ash was brought back to Taiwan for funeral service.
- 1989 The entire family returned to Taiwan in May to attend the funeral of Heidi's father, Mr. Van-Te Wei at age 76.

- 1989 Son Robert graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.
- 1990 Son Ronald graduated from Princeton University. Son Raymond and Miss Peihuang Lu married in Albany on June 30.
- 1991 Attended the wedding of nephew Jay Yang and Liz Rose O'Brien in Seattle on July 26. Toured Mt. Rainier National Park.
- 1992 Received "Citizen of the Year Award" from the Chinese American Alliance (華聯) of the Capital District in March.
- 1994 Established the Capital District Youth Center, Inc. to build the Capital District Juvenile Secure Detention Facility. Served as the Chief Administrator of the non-profit public benefit corporation.
- 1995 Son Ronald and Hsinhui married in Taiwan in October.
- 1997 Dedicated the \$4-million 16-bed Capital District Juvenile Secure Detention Facility in December.
- 1998 Received the Outstanding Regional Achievement Award from the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) in Tulsa, Oklahoma in June.
- Family returned to Taiwan in November to attend the funeral service of Heidi's mother, Ms. Wang-Lang Chen at age 82.
- 1999 Vacationed at the magnificent Yosemite National Park in June on the way to Monterey, California for NARC's Annual Conference.
- 2000 Visited son Raymond's family in Singapore where granddaughter Emily was born in May.
- Attended the Annual Conference of the National Association of Foreign Trade Zone in San Juan, Puerto Rico in October.
- 2001 Attended NARC's Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska in May and toured Rushmore National Memorial and nearby national parks.
- Toured the World Trade Center in New York City in July. The WTC twin towers were destroyed on September 11 by Muslim terrorists.

- 2003 Retired from CDRPC on July 4<sup>th</sup> after 38 years of professional planning career in the U.S.
- 2004 Attended the Democratic National Convention held in Boston on July 26-29 as a full delegate.
- Took a 10-day cruise trip to Alaska in August.
- 2007 Returned to Taiwan to attend the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Cheng-Ta at the Grand Hotel in Taipei on May 20.
- 2007 Took an 11-day land-tour (10/3-10/13) of Eastern Europe covering seven countries.
- 2010 Returned to Taiwan in October for the memorial service of sister Rui-Yung who passed away at age 84.
- Toured many scenic places near hometown Hsinchu for the first time with cousin Ming-Puh Lee and his wife Mei-Yeh.
- 2011 Returned to hometown Hsinchu in July to attend the funeral service of brother Chung-Yao in June at age 81.
- Attended the World Federation of Taiwanese Associations in Costa Rica and toured the Panama Canal in September.
- 2012 Made the second visit to China in April, a 10-day trip to the Southeast region.
- 2013 Retired from the Board of Trustees of New York Council of Non-Profits (NYCON) after serving 12 years on the Board.
- Attended the World Federation of Taiwanese Associations in Hawaii in October. Stopped over in San Diego and Los Angeles to visit relatives and friends.
- 2014 Took a 2-week cruise tour of Southern Caribbean from New York City in January. Took a 14-day Northeast US/Canada cruise trip in October.
- 2014 Took a 2-week land and cruise tour of Northeast US/Canada in October.

**(Cover Photo):** Coming to America onboard cargo ship “The Hong Kong Importer”, January 1963

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**Author:** Chungchin Chen 陳仲欽

**Birth:** 1935 in Hsinchu City, Taiwan

**Education:** National Chengchi University, Taiwan  
BA in Political Science (1959)

University of California at Berkeley,  
Master of City and Regional Planning (1965)

**Employment:** Assistant Planner (1965-1967), City Planning Department, Kansas City, Missouri

Senior Planner (1968-1969), Metropolitan Planning Department,  
Marion County, Indianapolis, Indiana

Principal Planner (1970-1973), Deputy Director (1974-1979),  
Executive Director (1980-2003), Capital District Regional  
Planning Commission, Albany, New York

Chief Administrator (1994-2003), Capital District Youth Center,  
Inc., Albany, New York

**Contact:**

**Address:** 4 Flicker Drive, Latham, New York 12110

**E-Mail:** [cchen35@verizon.net](mailto:cchen35@verizon.net)

**Telephone:** (518) 785-5964 (h)

(518) 389-5911 (c)