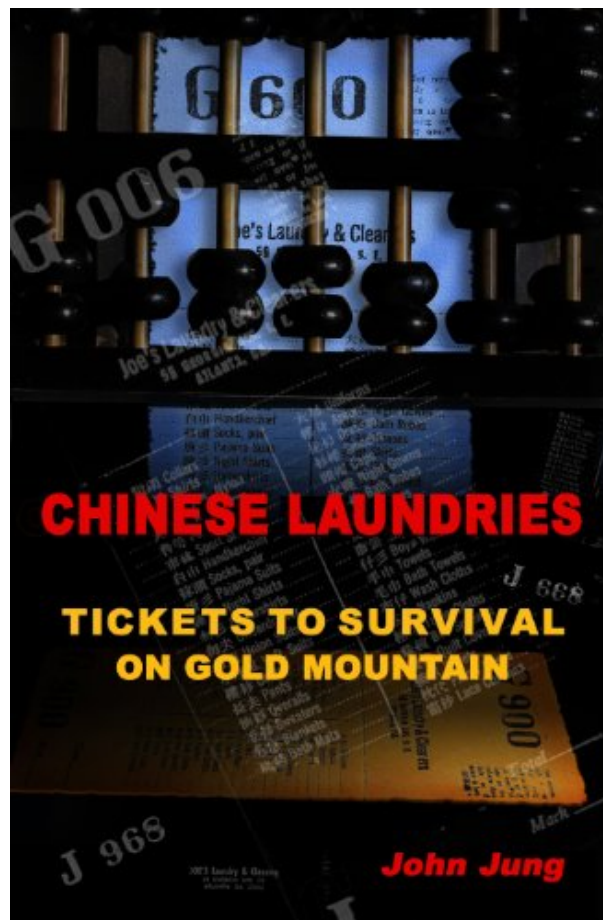


CHINESE LAUNDRIES: TICKETS TO SURVIVAL ON GOLD MOUNTAIN BY JOHN JUNG



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Review

... a comprehensive historical study of the Chinese laundries in the United States, a profound analysis of the psychological experiences of the Chinese laundrymen in America and their families in China; and above all, written by someone who has intimate experiences with the Chinese laundry...Renqiu Yu, Asian Studies Program, SUNY, Purchase

Prof. Jung's book has made a significant contribution to the history of Chinese laundries in America. The story is best told by someone like Jung who experienced a 'laundry life,' and understands its psychological impact on the Chinese laundrymen and their families.Murray K. Lee, San Diego Chinese Historical Museum

... An academically solid effort that is much enhanced by several personal narratives from other "Children of the Laundries." This rewarding study ... is a long overdue analysis of a familiar experience hidden in plain sight. Mel Brown, Chinese Heart of Texas, The San Antonio Chinese Community, 1875-1975

The personal life stories, with their inner thought,feeling, values, attitudes, work experiences and survival hardships, are skillfully presented with penetrating insights and observations. These perspectives present an overall picture of the history and the life and work of the laundrymen. ... BanSeng Hoe, Ph.D.

I never thought much about the common threads until your books. Thanks for the education and the enlightenment!.... Get Moy It is amazing to learn how others grew up with similar experiences...the excerpts made me both laugh and cry. Elwin Xie. Thank you so much for preserving this part of history. Ken Lee.

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Many years later when I retired from a long career as a professor of psychology, I wrote a memoir, "Southern Fried Rice: Life in A Chinese Laundry in the Deep South," about the lives of our family in Georgia (and our later move to San Francisco).

In the course of researching background material for the memoir, I became aware, for the first time, of the important historical factors that led Chinese to be so prevalent in running laundries, a business that was critical in the economic survival of Chinese all across the U. S. (and Canada) for several generations. This discovery was the impetus for this book, "Chinese Laundries: Tickets to Survival on Gold Mountain." I wanted to pay tribute to the thousands of Chinese immigrants and their families who toiled for decades in their laundries to provide better futures for their children.

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Born in Macon, Georgia, where his immigrant parents from China, the only Chinese in the city, operated a laundry from the late 1920s to early 1950s. After moving to California, he majored in psychology at U. C. Berkeley and went on to earn a Ph.D. at Northwestern University. Author of several academic textbooks, including a second edition in 2010 of *Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Behavior*, he is Professor of Psychology Emeritus at California State University, Long Beach.

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A social history of the role of the Chinese laundry on the survival of early Chinese immigrants in the U.S. during the Chinese Exclusion law period, 1882-1943, and in Canada during the years of the Head Tax, 1885-1923, and exclusion law, 1923-1947. Why and how Chinese got into the laundry business and how they had to fight discriminatory laws and competition from white-owned laundries to survive. Description of their lives, work demands, and living conditions. Reflections by a sample of children who grew up living in the backs of their laundries provide vivid first-person glimpses of the difficult lives of Chinese laundrymen and their families.

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Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

To Do Laundry is to Believe in Tomorrow

By Kathy W.

After reading Dr. Jung's personal and brilliantly written accounts of the blood, sweat, and toil that Chinese Americans endured in the development of the laundry empire in America, you will never feel the same way about the mundane chore of loading and unloading your washer/dryer again. This book doesn't just take you through the historical trajectory of the occupation oft-times associated with Chinese immigrants; it's the story of a people--of families who believe in the value of hard work and determination, and the undying hope of a brighter future. This book is an absolute must-read for anyone of Chinese decent; more importantly, it is for anyone who has a dream.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A thoroughly researched and readable account of the history of ...

By Grant

A thoroughly researched and readable account of the history of the Chinese laundrymen in North America. I say 'readable', yet at times it was hard to read of the hard lives and insults that they endured to scratch out a meagre living. A serious work for the student of the history of the overseas Chinese, it documents a trade now gone, but which was still around in living memory, so that it may strike a real chord for some.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Must Read For ALL!!!

By Irving D. Moy

John Jung's two books, "Chinese Laundries- Tickets to Survival on God Mountain", and "Sweet and Sour-Life in Chinese Family Restaurants" have important relevance to our understanding of the immigration story of our country at a time of polarizing political discourse regarding the closing of our national borders, racial profiling, and the deportation of undocumented immigrants. America has always been seen as a land of opportunity to better oneself. Abraham Lincoln called it..."the last hope of earth"; the Chinese called it "Gumshan" or Gold Mountain, and many other names spoken by those seeking freedom and opportunity from political and economic oppression.

The Chinese first entered this country in 1842 lured by dreams of quick riches from the California Gold Rush, but as Professor Jung points out, California passed discriminatory legislation similar to the "Black Codes" enacted by other states against blacks to deny Chinese the right to a decent livelihood. They had no alternative but to accept low-paying menial work; they provided cheap labor whenever there was work others did not want to or needed to do. As both books point out, it was first laundry work and later restaurants. It was both amusing and a sad commentary when I read Stephen E. Ambrose's book, "Nothing Like It In the World", the building of the transcontinental railroad, that when the Chinese began to settle in California, white men compared them with another subordinate group in the 19th century, white women. Like women, Chinese men were small, had delicate hands, no facial hair, and wore their hair in long braids and, as women, were only good to do laundry or become domestic servants.

My father also entered the United States as a "paper son", as many who told their stories in these books, and operated a laundry. We lived in a loft about the laundry with no bathroom. My father provided a large galvanized bucket filled with water and disinfectant for us to use at night; in the morning he carried it down the stairs to empty. I cannot tell you the number of times people would enter the store to say, "No tickee... no laundry". My sister and worked in the laundry growing up until we graduated from high school. It was hard work, sorting out dirty, smelly laundry, starching shirts, collars and ironing. My father did this every day except Sundays from the time he entered this country until he closed his laundry in 1978. My parents were hard workers and never complained at least not openly, as I did whenever I felt we were being taken advantage of because we were Chinese. Years later I asked my father why he had come to the United States despite opportunities denied him because of his race. His answer was, to find a better life for himself and for us, and that America was "the land of opportunity".

Professor John Jung's books interweave historical and sociological facts of the Chinese immigration and experience in America, their struggles to survive to find a niche in society even if menial, with personal stories of laundry and restaurant owners, to tell a poignant story of how generations of Chinese would toll 24/7 under conditions that would have broken many people's bodies and spirits in order to provide for their families and a better future for their children. Isn't this what all immigrants to this country hope for if given a chance?

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