The Recent Immigrant Chinese Families of the San Francisco-Oakland Area*

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The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act on December 17, 1943, heralded a new era in our treatment of Mongoloid minorities. The Chinese were the first to benefit from the amendments removing some of our prejudicial and discriminatory immigration and naturalization laws. An annual quota of 105 was established for persons of Chinese ancestry and the right of naturalization conferred.1

In accord with our new policy of "promoting family unity," the Immigration Act of 1924 (often called the Second Exclusion Act) was amended in August, 1946.2 Alien wives of citizens were made admissible on non-quota basis, while alien wives and alien children of resident aliens were given preferential treatment within the quota limitations. Hence, many families, separated for decades by legal technicalities, were reunited here.

On July 22, 1947, the racial restrictions embodied in the "Brides Act" were lifted.3 Some 6,000 men rushed to China by every mode of transportation, got married, and brought back their wives before the Act expired on December 30, 1949 (Table I). Two thousand more effected their families' settlement here under the laws mentioned above. Families are continuing to arrive but at a decreasing rate.

Research on these two types of new families, hereinafter called the war wives and "separated" families, coincided with the heaviest influx of Chinese women the United States has even seen.4 The established families of native-born or mixed parentage were used as bases of comparison, but detailed data concerning them are omitted.5 The primary aim of this paper is to document (1) the social effects of female immigration on the demographic characteristics of the Chinese population, (2) the nature of the courtship process and marital relations, (3) incorporation of prevailing behavior patterns, (4) parent-child relations, and (5) identifying the areas of interpersonal relations as to whether these had roots in China or were developed in this society. It is hoped that other researchers of Chinese family life in this country will supplement the data so that a knowledge of the various subgroups within the Chinese population will be available.

Demographic Changes

One of the attendant consequences of the relaxing of our immigration laws was to bolster

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1 Before 1882 each state exercised its own jurisdiction over citizenship; after this date federal laws were enacted to insure uniformity. Early Chinese pioneers acquired citizenship and passed it on to their sons and grandsons; also native-borns are citizens and children of citizens born abroad may become citizens. Sons often migrated, but daughters seldom took advantage of their derivative status.
2 Subdivision a, Sec. 4, Immigration Act, 1924: 45 Stat. 1009; 8 U.S. 204 and Act of May 19, 1948 (Public Law 538, 80th Congr.).
3 Public Law 271.
4 At considerable expense, English and Chinese schedules were prepared and some 200 circulated. Returns from immigrant families were scant due to the "subjects'" limited education and lack of research orientation. Many refused to impart information, fearing the study was conducted for an official agency, like the immigration service or police department. Interviewees and respondents were either introduced by "key persons" in each community or through friends, relatives, and cooperating organizations. Often the "key person" accompanied the researcher to the place of interview or where schedules were left. Other interested individuals took time to help the less literate complete schedules. Interviews, rather than schedules, however, supplied most of the data.
5 Schedules returned for the San Francisco group totalled 23 and for Oakland, 44. Of these 16 were from the war wives group (male and female). As expected, the established families had the highest returns: 15 for San Francisco and 17 for Oakland. To supplement the data, interviews were conducted with 15 ex-servicemen, their wives, or relatives. Nine "separated" families granted interviews and a like number returned schedules. Ten established families and twice this number of personnel connected with private and public agencies working with these new families were interviewed. Schools, Americanization classes, international institutes, hospitals, baby welfare clinics, veterans' organizations, churches, recreational centers, club groups, clan and family association headquarters, and so on were visited and activities documented.
TABLE I. CHINESE IMMIGRANT ALIENS ADMITTED INTO THE UNITED STATES, 1945-1953*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>3,574</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>1,317</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2,490</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,979</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12,151</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10,837</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service.

1 Between 1941-1944, 20 males and 104 females (124) were admitted.

the declining Chinese population. Within a four-year span, 1946-1950, a natural increase of 12,265 persons was recorded for the entire country (Table II). During the two and a half years the "Brides Act" was in force, 5,635 women entered through the port of San Francisco alone. Each month thereafter, about 150 more arrived with the majority settling within the San Francisco-Oakland standard metropolis area. As a result, the area's Chinese population rose by 49.7 per cent between 1940 and 1950 while that of San Francisco and Oakland, by 40.1 and 42.1 per cent, respectively (Table III). In 1950, a third of the country's total Chinese population resided in the metropolitan area and a half of the country's total was in California.

Another addition to the Chinese population stemmed from the residue of migration. Between 1945-1953 inclusive, 12,151 immigrant aliens entered and few departed. Of this total, 89 per cent were female immigrants and it was not until 1953 that the male entries showed a gain (Table I).

The settlement of families was followed by the highest birth rate the country has ever known. From 417 for San Francisco and Oakland in 1946, 1,195 were recorded by 1947, or a 286.5 per cent increase. An all-time peak came a year later, to continue through 1950. Although the number of births dropped by 1953, the increase was 265 per cent over 1946.

The crude birth rate for the Chinese in San Francisco was 36 per 1,000 in 1953, as contrasted with 19.6 for the city as a whole. Moreover, this tendency was observed for the entire country and during the years 1951 and 1952, 7,288 Chinese babies were registered (Table II). The crude birth rates for these years were 39 and 36 per 1,000, respectively. Births will remain high for some decades as the majority of the foreign-born females were in the 20-39 age ranges.

In summary, from 1945 to the present, the birth and death rates have been reversed.

Age offers further evidence of the growth of population. The two cities mentioned had three times more persons in the "under 5 years" category than a decade earlier. Those in the 20-44 and 35-44 age brackets doubled. The arrival of older "separated" wives caused a two-fold increase of the 45 and over age ranges, when compared with 1940.

Other demographic changes by 1950 included: (1) a drop in the sex ratio from 3 to 1 to 2 to 1; (2) a lower median age; (3) an

* State of California, Department of Public Health, Vital Statistics Records and City and County of San Francisco, Department of Public Health, "Chinese Births and Deaths, 1953." Note: the crude death rate was 12 per 1,000.

* A course specially designed to impart contraceptive information to immigrant females had not a single enrollment. It was abandoned by the church organization sponsoring it. However, subsequent and private sources indicated sporadic inquiries by fathers who believed they were too old to raise a large family and by young wives overburdened with frequent births. There are many instances of children less than a year apart.
TABLE II. BIRTHS AND DEATHS OF THE CHINESE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940 AND 1950

(Rates per 1,000 estimated midyear population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Births</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>4742</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>4870</td>
<td>39.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5138</td>
<td>43.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>5062</td>
<td>42.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>4210</td>
<td>44.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>2170</td>
<td>25.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1534</td>
<td>18.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1382</td>
<td>17.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1301</td>
<td>16.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1364</td>
<td>17.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>14.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>14.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>14.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


a Births for 1947-1950, based on population excluding armed forces overseas; for 1940-1946, on population including armed forces overseas.

b Deaths: exclusive of stillbirths and deaths among armed forces.

c Estimated.

enlargement of the labor force through three times more women being gainfully employed, and (4) a higher proportion of married persons. As to the latter, there were 7,155 married females and 25,790 married males in 1940. A decade later, the totals rose to 18,341 and 36,484, respectively and a third of these persons were in the San Francisco-Oakland standard metropolitan area. (See Table IV).

With the high concentration of Chinese in the area, housing facilities were overstrained. Many families were forced to live in one hotel room or hastily converted bachelor’s quarters with limited kitchen and bath facilities. The influx of newcomers initiated the dispersion of older Chinatowners to better residential districts within San Francisco and an invasion into North Beach and westward into Nob Hill. The more affluent moved across the Bay to Oakland, Berkeley, San Mateo, Alameda, Richmond, and other cities. Fortunately, the relaxing of restrictive covenants preceded the dispersion. In 1940 some 15,000 Chinese lived within one third of a square mile, known as Chinatown. Ten years later some 16,000 crowded into this space and it is predicted that by 1960 some 24,000 will be residing there.

Persons showing “consciousness of kind” are prone to settle here as there are many Chinese grocery, merchandise, herb, and service establishments operated by Chinese-speaking personnel. The “ghetto” has the largest number of important national and local clan and family associations whose functions of dispensing

* Despite the predominantly rural origin of the Chinese who migrated here, 94 per cent lived in urban centers by 1950. Only 1 per cent was rural.

TABLE III. THE SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND METROPOLITAN AREA CHINESE POPULATION BY NATIVITY, SEX, AND PER CENT INCREASE, 1940-1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nativity and Sex</th>
<th>Metropolitan Area</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Oakland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Per Cent Increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23,215</td>
<td>34,794</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>14,024</td>
<td>22,022</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>9,191</td>
<td>12,772</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15,837</td>
<td>21,409</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>8,494</td>
<td>12,910</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>7,343</td>
<td>8,584</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7,388</td>
<td>13,277</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>5,530</td>
<td>9,109</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>1,858</td>
<td>4,168</td>
<td>124.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Per Cent Increase, United States, 1940-1950, was 51.8.
TABLE IV. MARITAL STATUS OF CHINESE POPULATION, MALE AND FEMALE, THE UNITED STATES AND THE SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND STANDARD METROPOLITAN AREA, 1950*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status*</th>
<th>Metropolitan Area</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>6,383</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>10,071</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed and divorced</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17,267</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


14 years and over.

mutual aid and protection to the needy were revived through new families bolstering their declining membership and deflated treasuries. The only Chinese hospital, staffed by Chinese personnel and filled to capacity with mothers and newborn babies, is located here. There are proportionately more Chinese schools, churches, restaurants, shops, recreational centers, and social clubs than elsewhere. In fact, a person wishing to avoid contacts with the larger society, or Chinese elsewhere, can "bury" himself here and yet satisfy all his needs. The comparative ease with which this may be attained has attracted Chinese from other regions of the United States, too.

War Wives Families

The war wives were at least ten years younger than the "separated" wives, with the majority being 20-22 years old. However, there was as wide an age range as 17-25. They were born and reared in rural villages of Kwangtung Province. Nine of the respondents and interviewees had attended schools for four years in the nearest town, but the majority studied in village schools and some were self-educated. By traditional criterion, they were "modern" and more emancipated than the "separated" wives. Most had one dominant aim in life: to marry and rear children.

None had any formal occupation. Belonging to families who received their support from fathers, brothers, or male relatives resident in this country, they were on a higher economic plane than other villagers. Some of these women had the right of derivative citizenship but had not availed themselves of it. Rather, they remained with their mothers who were barred from entering the country until 1946. In some instances, mothers came as "separated" wives while daughters entered on their derivative as well as "bride" status. Since women had had difficulty in gaining admission, it was believed that a dual legal status acted as a safeguard.

Their husbands were mainly alien-born derivative citizens and were between 25-38 years of age. Taking advantage of their citizenship they migrated here during their teens to join fathers, brothers, or relatives to work toward economic betterment. The majority had less than the median years of education possessed by others of the prevailing society. Most attended for a time special English classes sponsored by churches, missions, or the board of education. Despite the best of intentions many did not complete more years of Chinese education here so that many were deficient in both types of learning.

12 In 1940 the median years of school completed by Chinese males 25 years and over was 5.6; for the foreign-born, it was .3 lower. In 1950 the median was 8.8 for the Western Chinese male 14 years and over.

13 Few could take advantage of the G.I. educational benefits.

14 One interviewee said, "Many can't work as managers
All interacted primarily with other Chinese, living either in Chinatown's bachelor's quarters or sharing similar arrangements with their kinsmen. In brief, they experienced a sudden interruption of normal family life and reached adulthood without too much womanly concern for their welfare.

Their fathers worked in restaurants or laundries in various capacities. A few owned and operated small businesses with son's or relative's help. Others clerked in Chinese grocery stores, curio shops, or service establishments. A few performed semi-skilled labor for uptown enterprises. Their sons, by comparison, engaged in more specialized occupations: delivering merchandise, driving trucks, waiting on table or cooking in larger restaurants. Others managed concessions in bars, taverns, and hotels. The more enterprising worked in factories or offices, or operated stores outside of Chinatown. Before entering the armed forces some had been employed in defense industries during World War II.

Since their contacts with the larger society as well as with the native-born Chinese were limited, their knowledge of appropriate behavior patterns was rudimentary. For example, many had virtually no experience in dating and courtship behavior. What they knew they gleaned from mass media, observation, or hearsay. The more adjusted and Westernized said they "dated some" before they went to China to marry. The shortage of girls deterred dating and marriage, moreover. On the other hand, the native-born girls found them "dull" dates as they were shy, awkward, and ill-at-ease when moving outside of Chinatown. Many informants flatly stated that these men would not have found wives here, had the laws remained unchanged.

They served on various war fronts—even China—but did not bring back war brides in the same manner that servicemen of other ethnic or racial groups did. Save for a dozen instances, those serving in China found the local dialect as difficult as a foreign tongue, or the local belles were disinterested. Hence, the overwhelming majority returned to the United States, were discharged, and then went to China to marry after the racial restrictions were lifted from the "Brides Act." Courship patterns. The manner in which the ex-servicemen selected their wives is of sociological interest. Many went to China loaded with letters of introduction to daughters and relatives of men resident here. Prospective fathers-in-law and others made certain that their female members were not overlooked. It was rumored that for miles around belles preened and primped with the hope of being chosen by one of the aspirants from the "land of gold." Informants claimed that the "better looking girls, especially those with nice figures and legs" were "snatched up right away." In many instances the men played "hard to get" and surveyed the field.

The final decision was motivated by various considerations. Said one young man when asked how he determined whether the intended bride would be suitable:

"I took her out a few times. (Accompanied by her friends and relatives and he had his own supporters.) I asked her a few questions. She could answer them so I decided that she would be all right."

Said another, who disappointed a few eager prospects and left them in tears:

"I was frank with the one I didn't pick. One was too fat. Another was too dark. Then, there was one I didn't like because her father didn't tell me the truth. Before I left for China, he invited me to...

or bookkeepers of Chinese stores because their Chinese isn't good enough. They can't do much in American firms because their English is bad."
a big dinner and praised his daughter to the sky . . . said she was well educated, good looking, and all that. This was not so. I had more letters of introduction so I took my time. I finally found the wife I wanted."19

As to why more of the boys seeking mates did not marry a native-born Chinese girl, many declared "they want too much and are too independent." Others feared the girls would not "stick it out" and might resort to a divorce. Should this occur, the men feared being on the short end as our legal procedures and practices contain greater safeguards for the "weaker" sex.

There is little doubt that the ex-servicemen created a great stir in the villages and shattered many old-world customs by insisting on the substitution of so-called "Western" practices. Parents and elders may have misgivings about these new innovations (requiring girls to parade before them like the "Miss America" contests, for example) but they also had no basis for refuting them. Some demanded that the bride-to-be go to Hong Kong and be married by some American or church dignitary.20 Since proof of marriage was a prerequisite to the bride's entry into this country, many parents acquiesced and accompanied their daughters to the big city.21 Moreover, many grooms were pressed for time while their savings were diminishing. The most publicized case of "getting married quick" was of the ex-soldier who enplaned to China, selected his bride, was married, and landed at the San Francisco airport the evening before his month's leave of absence expired. His bride came later, a practice applying to many others whose admission papers could not be processed rapidly.

In attempting to determine if parental influences were entirely overridden, the respondents were asked how they selected their mates. "Own choice" was checked by all, rather than "parental choice" or "arranged by go-between." The former implied that the grooms made the final decision concerning their mates' personal, social, and emotional attributes.

Despite these protestations, the majority indicated, in rank order, that they married to "please parents," "have a home," and "raise children." Hence, parental and traditional influences were not wholly negated.

Interpersonal relations. Given the fact that the courtship period was brief and an intimate knowledge of each other's personality traits was scant, what effect did this have upon interpersonal relations? Does the accommodation-integration-adjustment process take longer or does the desire for marriage, home, and children compensate for whatever personal difficulties the spouses experienced? Two main patterns of adjustment were discernible.

One was where the respective spouses "hit it off" from the start and developed intimate, friendly, and frank interaction in matters pertaining to mutual friends, recreation, child rearing, finances, home management, and so on. Husbands and wives called each other by their given names. Not infrequently, wives did their best to pronounce husband's American name and referred to him thus in conversing with friends. The wives, in turn, were given American names by their husbands and children became known by their Western rather than Chinese names.

In their conscious effort to become a part of the prevailing society, wives relied upon husbands' knowledge of home furnishings, modern child rearing practices, and personal adornment. Wives waited until husbands' "day off" to go uptown and accepted husbands' choice and taste in coats, dresses, shoes, and other items. Wives so attired are conspicuous for their glaring and unharmonious color schemes, fancy shoes, and dresses or blouses and skirts selected from counter or rack displays. Without exception, wives had bobbed their hair, had it permanented but not styled. Few wore hats

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19 At his mother's insistence, the bride remained in China.
21 Traditional marriage ceremonies are performed by the groom's father or oldest male relative. Marriages were not registered.
or carried gloves but handbags and coats were standard necessities. Another earmark was the lavish display of eighteen or twenty-two carat gold jewelry. It is not unusual to see a woman bedecked with her bright jewelry while wearing a cotton house dress and high heel shoes.

Children wore Western style clothes and it was not an uncommon event to see the father or mother holding one while urging the slightly older child to walk faster. As seen from the statistics, children were not spaced, or planned, and parents follow the old-world custom of taking children along when visiting friends, going to a movie, or shopping.

Wives looked up to husbands because of their "superior" knowledge of American behavior patterns and customs. Husbands enjoyed their protective roles and not a few declared they gained satisfaction in being accorded status both inside and outside the home. Husbands often brought home the groceries and performed work around the house which in the village would be unthinkable. In fact, many husbands taught wives how to cook. They had been forced to learn after their arrival when living with kinsmen who were too busy to tend to their meals. Moreover, many husbands were employed as cooks or kitchen helpers.

Although husbands wanted their wives to learn English as rapidly as possible and many enrolled in classes, the wives dropped out when children arrived. Others preferred to work in factories (sewing rooms) located in Chinatown where manufacturers sent in dresses, aprons, or outer garments to be finished. Others were employed as kitchen helpers, packers of food, vegetable or seafood sorters. Many wives worked to supplement husbands' incomes. Few realized the cost connected with supporting a family in an urbanized, industrialized society. Many bemoaned the "good old days" when food could be picked from their own rice fields and vegetable patches in China. Since most of the families owned their homes, rent was never a matter of concern.

The second pattern of interpersonal adjustment was more akin to the traditional form, predicated upon the belief that "love follows marriage." This presupposes that common goals—children and the perpetuation of the family line—forge lasting bonds between the spouses. Through attaining these objectives, mutual affection develops. This feeling flows from each spouse to the child (or children) who are the active agents generating and bringing it to full fruition. This may take years to develop and would be somewhat analogous to the prevailing belief here that romanticism should be replaced by sympathetic understanding, emotional interlocking, sexual compatibility, common interest, and so on. Since many of the spouses under study had barely known each other and many married with the "love follows marriage" concept in mind, their interpersonal relations were affected accordingly.

It was reliably reported by one informant that each had little to say to the other during the first days and months of the marriage. Each was shy in the other's presence and, at times, embarrassed because of intimate sex relations. Once the first-born arrived, they found a topic of continuous interaction: the offspring and his welfare. He further said that he seldom addressed his wife directly as he was taught this was impolite, especially when outsiders were present. Custom forbade the use of her given name and she had no Western counterpart. After the child's birth, he addressed her as "my child's mother" and he became "my child's father." The arrival of more children initiated a new form of address and identification. A given child's name is used routinely, as "Chew's father" or "Chew's mother." This may be varied by referring at random to each child's name to avoid the appearance of favoritism. Such references are employed when speaking of either spouse to friends or strangers, too, so that parents gained status, respect, and emotional satisfaction through their offspring.

The latter help direct the affectional relationship from themselves toward and between
the parents, whereas in our society mutual affection between spouses is present before the child enters the scene. Hence, the child may have to compete with one parent for the affection of the other; he is constantly threatened with the knowledge that his parents' love for each other may be so inclusive that he receives none of it. In contrast, the children of parents who uphold the traditional concept of "love follows marriage" feel greater emotional security, if all goes well. Parents' affection for them supersedes that between the spouses.

Outwardly, these families show many of the adaptations the war wives exhibit as they become established. The mother may feel compelled to fulfill more exactly her mother-wife roles and withdraws from outside activities. That the Chinatowners recognize both family patterns is heard by such terms as "old fashion" or "modern" wife. The latter may be seen walking in the parks or public thoroughfares holding her husband's hand, or with her arm linked through his. The "old fashion" spouse may go out with her husband but does so more infrequently; moreover, she is apt to walk with the children while her mate goes ahead or walks beside the older offspring.

Spouses who do not develop "love after marriage" are not unknown. Having no sentiments, loyalties, and mutual experiences to cement conjugal ties, antipathies and hostilities permeate and distort every phase of family living. In disappointment and self-pity, the mother-wife turns to her son and creates in him the "substitute husband" image. She confides in him, uses him as an agent to extract favors and support from the husband, and may reject the rest of the children. The son rather than the daughter is the object of fixation for the Chinese family's lineage and perpetuation is through the male. The wife's status is insured, so long as she plays her mother-of-a-son (or sons) role.22 The father provides the monetary rewards commensurate with the wife's devotion to the upbringing of his son, or sons.

The father, with his greater social, economic, and sex freedom need not localize his frustrations, anxieties, and hostilities within the family. Among the older families in China, one or more concubines were brought into the home to supply husband's affectional and sexual needs while the first wife retained her social position. Here, other forms of escapism are manifested: alcoholism, gambling, extramarital relations, or prolonged absence.

One notable case came to light, illustrating the last course of action. Husband and wife quarreled regularly and bitterly after their settlement in San Francisco, a fact known to the neighbors and others. Husband was on the verge of abandoning the wife when he learned of her pregnancy. He tarried, saying he would remain and support his family if the first-born is a son. If not, he would head for an undisclosed destination. There is little doubt that the husband's threats heightened the wife's fears and generated further animosities. Her marital, personal, and social status was inextricably bound with her production of a son.

The incidence of such discord constitutes a major research. Suffice it to say that such cases occur more frequently than is generally acknowledged by Chinese writers and researchers who concentrate upon formalized rather than personal roles and how the latter are acted out. Distorted conjugal relations are seldom related to the bitter mother-in-law and daughter-in-law conflicts which are conveniently attributed to "custom."23 In the writer's opinion, these antipathies are manifestations of overidentification between mother and child. Poorer families resort to feeding children gruel. A mother-wife who has no desire to resume sex relations for a given length of time extends the feeding period. As a convenient and socially accepted form of rejection, it manifests hostility between spouses as well as symbolizes her intentions to identify more closely with a given son. In recent decades women have adopted formulas for the same purpose as wet nurses; at the same time they demonstrate husband's higher economic plane.

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22 Many women in China believe in the superstition that breast feeding interferes with husband's sexual satisfaction and endangers his sexual powers. Wet nurses are employed for the newborn so that the 'stay away' period (six weeks) after parturition need not be prolonged. Thereafter, wife is
23 Lee, op. cit.
and son and the daughter-in-law’s usurping of the mother’s position and son’s affections. It is ironical that the son marries—frequently at mother’s insistence and arrangement to satisfy a social and family expectation—but the marital relations of the son and his wife are continuously fraught with mother’s fears of rejection. Should this happen, the mother experiences two traumatic rejections: from her spouse and her son. When the former rejected her, she turned to her son. Since no real affection developed between husband and wife, the first instance was less traumatic. When her son rejects the mother, the daughter-in-law is subjected to unbridled hostilities.

In the current study, interpersonal conflicts were laid at the door of the spouse’s unsympathetic disposition, discontent with the “new world,” and unsatisfactory sex relations. The true reasons include: parental pressure to marry a China-born rather than a native-born girl; dislike for family responsibility after a bachelor’s existence; the discovery that wives’ motive for marriage was to get into the United States;24 the mores forbidding a union with a girl of a similar surname (analogous to incest);25 and loveless unions.

"Separated" Families

Husbands averaged five years older, had some Chinese education but knew virtually no English, and had been here between 15-25 years. Among them were the native-born who either because of (1) parental pressure, (2) an unbalanced sex ratio, (3) unrequited love, or (4) personal predilections had gone to China to marry. The majority of the marriages were arranged by parents or elders. The more affluent and thrifty made periodic trips to China to visit their families. When their sons reached their teens, their fathers effected their entry into this country as derivative citizens. As was true of the mothers of war wives, these husbands belonged to a generation who adhered to traditional norms and behavior patterns.

The "separation" period varied. After the Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, family members could not communicate with nor expect visits from those overseas. Enforced separations of 18-25 years were reported by many of the older wives. Husbands had been unable to save enough to return home or they could not abandon a thriving business. They, too, were prevented from traveling after war broke out.

These families had children whose ages were either close together, if father stayed home for a length of time, or there may be ten and more years between the oldest and the next child. Even though the amendment of our laws permitted the admission of unmarried children under 21 years, many did not elect to migrate. The affianced remained behind, for example, while others did not want to interrupt their education. The case illustrating the effects of legal technicalities is of the unmarried son, twenty-two years of age, who was denied admittance. Father and son had never seen each other, and may never do so. Instances of teenage children meeting father for the first time, and vice versa, are frequent.

Interpersonal relations. These families had the greatest adjustments to make. "Separated" wives had been married for years but barely knew their husbands, who either migrated to this country shortly after marriage or had known them briefly during periodic visits.26 Love had not always followed marriage and mutual affection did not flower. Where personality conflicts arose during these times, each "put up" with the other, knowing that these anxiety-producing situations need not be continuously experienced. So long as husbands supported the family and wives reared children, the separation engendered no real hardship.

24 Over a dozen marriages were disrupted by wives divorcing husbands, remarrying, or becoming economically independent.
25 In China this custom was relaxed during World War II but it has gained little acceptance here.
Once thrown together on a continuous basis, spouses complained of incompatible behavior, divergent value systems, and non-cooperative-ness in goal-seeking. Dissatisfaction was often localized around "unreasonable" sex demands by wives. One wife flatly declared that her husband was a stranger with whom she co-habited but five months and whom she did not see for the next eighteen years. Her eighteen-year-old son had never seen or met his father until he and his mother arrived at the former's place of business. She was unwilling to raise another child, was at a loss as to how to satisfy his sexual demands, had a return plane ticket, and would leave if he did not sell his business at once and re-establish himself in China.

Money was a source of consistent irritation and tension. Wives had been accustomed to large but periodic remittances from husbands which they spent as they deemed best for household expenses, support of relatives, children's tuition, and investments. When asked, husbands gave "a few dollars" and wondered why more was needed when they paid the rent, grocery bills, and provided other items. Overwhelmingly, wives and husbands alike confessed they did not know how much it cost to maintain a family here.

Many wives expressed keen disappointment in their husbands' employment and the type of businesses they operated. Imbued with the age-old conception that a proprietor is a man of leisure, directs the work of others, and earns a big profit, they could not accept the long hours and physical labor which their husbands invested in their undertakings. Moreover, husbands were accused of exaggerating the nature of their employment and enterprises. When female help was utilized, wives did not always approve of the friendly and often frank relationship existing between the sexes. Some of the more disillusioned wives returned to China.

Age and ingrained habits militated against rapid acculturation of the older wives. They complained of the impersonalness of the urbanized Chinese here; in China, kinswomen and neighbors could be relied upon during emergencies. On the whole, the younger "separated" wives adjusted better as they more readily found employment or had young children to raise.

Parent-child and sibling relations were often strained. Fathers had not experienced the rapid social change taking place in China since 1937 and failed to comprehend children's fears, political leanings, social life, and desires for higher education and occupational mobility. Sibling relations were impaired when another set of children arrived; the foreign-born felt dethroned and rejected as parents developed closer ties to the younger ones. In time, two sets of children whose ages, value systems, and behavior patterns are far apart will be found in many homes.

Sons were even more disillusioned than mothers with fathers' business or employment. Reared on a higher socioeconomic plane than the average village male, most of their youth had been spent acquiring an education in private schools. They had fine clothes, ready cash, and leisure; a goodly number had lived years in big cities and felt hemmed in by the limited confines of San Francisco's Chinatown. It must be remembered that these are the grandsons of early immigrants and sons of fathers who migrated here to labor long and hard to raise the family's economic and social status in China. Sons and daughters lived on a much higher income, by comparison, than their fathers did here. Before coming here, their fathers' businesses and occupations did not interest them. Many saw fathers for the first time without their "Sunday best," ample cash, and leisure, a picture contrary to what they

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27 Mother and son had flown from China with husband's business address written on a slip of paper. Due to unfamiliarity of schedules, they arrived early and husband was not at the airport.

28 Wives were in the habit of calculating amounts in Chinese dollars, thus making every item six times more costly.

29 One wife found a snapshot taken at a picnic of her husband and his female employee. Despite lengthy explanations she was unconvinced that arms around each other's shoulders was a friendly gesture.

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presented on their visits to China.

Some refused to engage in laundry work and other menial tasks but found their occupational opportunities proscribed by lack of English, work specialization, and prejudicial employment practices. As a result, a large number of idle and malcontented youth roamed the streets, sulked at home, or disturbed the community with their antics and unsocial behavior. Of marriageable age, they had difficulty finding suitable mates. Those affianced cannot effect the entry of their fiancées without returning to China and marrying them, as required by our laws. They do not want to return to a hostile political regime.

Teenage girls seeking escape from fathers' authoritarianism and domination were frequently reported. Their fathers' adherence to old-world norms caused eruptions in family unity. Like their brothers, these girls had enjoyed considerable freedom and status among their peers. Most were better educated and sophisticated than their parents. Many left home to avoid family tensions; and the more fortunate received aid from social agencies, which were instrumental in their finding employment and residence in American homes or hostels.

Other types of family problems stem from serious illness of husband or wife, husband’s unemployment, overcrowded living quarters, and inability to face realistically the changes needed to adapt to this society. However, the majority of these families are happy to be here and to have avoided what they consider to be the tyranny of the Communist regime in China.

A study is being made of 1,000 China-born teenagers. Community leaders fear the maladjusted may drift into greater anti-social behavior. The findings will be utilized in devising programs and measures which will help them integrate better into our society.

During the height of family settlement, one social worker reported handling each month about 125 family cases of various kinds.

1956 Annual Meeting in Boston

Next August is an ideal time to combine a family vacation in New England with attendance at the annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations in Boston. An outstanding program is being prepared by David B. Treat, Program Chairman, and his program committee. The Theme is, “Mental Health, Marriage and the Family.” Send your suggestions for speakers for the general sessions to David B. Treat, 302 W. 2nd Ave., Flint, Michigan. If you have research you would like to report, a project you would like to describe, or if you know of someone who is doing outstanding work in some area, get this information to the program chairman or to the chairman of the section where it would fit best. Write soon, the program committee plans to have the tentative program completed by March 1. Section Chairmen: Robert Blood, Dept. of Sociology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Family Living in the Colleges; Dale L. Womble, Education for Marriage and Family Living in the Schools, Stephens College, Stephens, Missouri; Fay Moeller, Family Life Education in the Community, Extension Service, University of Conn., Storrs; Bruce Thomason, Marriage and Family Counseling, University of Oregon, Eugene; Wallace C. Fulton, Mass Media, 397-7th Avenue, New York 1; David Rauch, Parent Education, 345 Lakeville Rd., Great Neck, New York; Katherine Whiteside Taylor, Cooperative Nursery Schools, 2418 St. Paul Street, Baltimore 18, Maryland; Albert Rosenberg, Housing and Family Welfare, Area Councils Project, 184 Salem Avenue, Dayton 2, Ohio; Paul H. Engstrom, Family Law, 2801 Wooddale Ave., Minneapolis 16, Minnesota.

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