

## Abstract:

Luyin Chen recounts his colorful and fruitful life that straddles two continents through nearly one century. From the humble beginning of a postal clerk, he became one of the pioneer photojournalists in Taiwan, founding “Photographic News”, the first photo-centric news agency there, which he left behind to migrate to American so that his son and daughter could receive better education. He rose from being a waiter to a successful restaurateur. Now in retirement, he enjoys the company of 3 generations of high-achieving offsprings while surrounded by his beloved state-of-the-art sound and video systems. He is also an avid user of social media. This collection of stories are culled from his mid-night chats with family on We-Chat.

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## Childhood Home

I grew up in a house on 49 Dongda Road of Fuzhou City in Fujian Province of South China.

Dongda Road was once named Qixia Street. (Qi means “banners”. Qi People is a term used to label those Northerners who were primarily Manchurian but also mingled with the Hans and the Mongolians. Their settlements outside of the North are known as “Qixia”, or Under the Banners.) I was born in Beijing. At age six, I returned to our ancestral land in Fuzhou with my family. Qixia Street was where we settled at first. That was ninety years ago!

Dongda Road ran East to West, and was connected to the East Boulevard to the South by West River (He Xi) Road. My wife Shiming spent her childhood in her family home, the Wang Scholars Estate, on Xiaoyi Lane, just off of East Boulevard. We later realized that she and I had practically grown up in the same neighborhood. My father was a Tui-Shi, a municipal judge. I had many siblings and the family was very poor. Many times our electricity was cut off because we were late paying bills. When money was tight, I often got sent to the pawnshop. Because I was short, I had to stand on tiptoe at the counter to listen to the pawnbroker barking, “Getting a loan, or selling?”

The power company in Fuzhou was privately owned by a Mr. Liu, also known as Light Bulb (Dian Guang)Liu whose grandfather, Liu Gongyun was once the president of Central Bank under the Nationalist Regime. Years later a daughter from the Wang Clan, whom we called Third Aunt, was married into the Liu’s in Taiwan.

Small world, won’t you say?

## **My Romance**

I was quite a mischievous and romantic young man. Before I met my wife, Shiming, I had chased several girls. One of them was also a nurse like Shiming. She worked at a hospital ran by the missionaries in Cangqianshan District. I could only recall that the hospital was neither Chaijing (Shibai) nor Union.

I was really into writing love letters, and I wrote a lot of them which never brought any replies. At that time, I was working at the Bureau of Postal and Savings on Cangqian Road. One day, my boss walked in with a stack of letters and told me, "Stop harassing that lady!" I later heard that my boss was himself quite a lady's man.

How did my love letters end up in the hands of my boss? I learned afterwards that some of those nurses were known to form intimate relationships and harboring feelings of jealousy, almost like lesbians. So one of such intimate friends must have swiped my letters and tried to turn me in. Of course these all happened before I met my future wife. That was surely a colorful time.

I passed an exam to enter the service at the Postal Bureau in 1940. As a lowly clerk just one level above letter carriers, my job was to deal with such transactions as selling stamps. In 1941, not long after I started the job, a friend of my father's came to visit. He was asked to match me up with the daughter of a relative who offered me some acres of farmland as the dowry. If I had accepted the offer, I would have become a landlord who would have been targeted by the Communists to strike down and sent parading around town in disgrace. Lucky me to have escaped that fate!

I had pulled out all the tricks up my sleeves when courting Shiming. One time, to get near her, I checked myself into Union Hospital where she worked as a nurse. To make sure I get her attention and tender care, I put the thermometer in a cup of hot water to fake high fever. You see, my hot pursuit had worked.

## **Narrow Escape from Execution**

This is no sensational headline. It is a true story. In 1945, I managed to get to Taiwan by escorting some military parcels there. Once there I sought out a former coworker, Yuan, who then rose to become the executive secretary to the Mayor of Keelung, Shi Yanhan, who was hand picked by Chen Yi, the Commander in Chief of Taiwan. Lacking academic credentials, I landed a clerical job in the Civil Affairs Office. One of my tasks was to handle street names.

After fifty years as Japanese colony, Taiwan was returned to China after WW II in 1945. It was decided that a way to signify the change was to convert street names from the Japanese systems. The Civil Affairs Office got the assignment, and I was told to carry out the task by following a simple set of guidelines: Use the grid of eight virtues (Loyalty, Filial Piety, Charity, Love, Trust, Justice, Harmony, and Peace.) and numbers. So each road is given a two-character name with the first character being a

virtue followed by a number. Hence there goes Zhong Yi Lu(Loyalty First Road), Ai Ba Lu(Love Eighth Road) and so on.

In my youthfully ignorance, I was completely oblivious to the subtlety of political correctness of the time. I was unaware that Eighth Road was homonym with Eighth Regiment, code word for the Red Army. At the height of political tension when General Chiang Kai-Shek was in battles against the Red Army, and later retreated in crushing defeat to Taiwan in 1949, it could not have been a worst moment to have a street named, “Love the Red Army.”

None of my superiors caught this glitch until the street renaming document travelled all the way up the chain to the highest authority. That’s where someone caught the red flag and issued an order to investigate. Under the Martial Law (also known as the era of White Terror), the offender, if found guilty, could easily have been executed. For some reason, the investigation didn’t go very far. Another lucky break for me!

## **Home to Propose Marriage**

I arrived Keelung, Taiwan in 1945. A year later, Shiming travelled there with her best friends, Jiang Xiuying from middle school, and Liu Yajuan from Union Medical College. She soon landed a job and stayed, and I proposed marriage. Shiming insisted doing it the proper manner by asking her hands in person from her father in Fuzhou. So in 1947, we both quit our jobs and returned to Fuzhou.

In honor of my future in-laws, we brought with us two major gifts: a five-tube radio for my future father-in-law, and a new fangle bicycle needing no inner tubes for my Qing-Jia-Jiu (brother-in-law) Shikeng, the youngest and only sibling of Shiming’s who is still in school in Fuzhou. However we found out that the voltage in Taiwan was 110 but in China it was 220. Guess what happened when we plugged the radio into the wall socket!

After granting us the permission to marry, Shiming’s father took us to Huiying Photo Studio on South Boulevard to get a portrait taken. This would be the first and only photos the three us ever had together.

## **Early Married Years in Taiwan**

Upon returning to Taiwan, we held our wedding at Zhongshan Hall, then the largest auditorium in Taipei. The wedding party took one group shot after the ceremony. No fancy photo sessions like the elaborate staged shots of today.

At our wedding, presiding as the head of the Wang Clan was our only elder relative in Taiwan, Fifteen Uncle Wang Xiwu. Our witness was Mr. Yan Jiali, an old acquaintance of Shiming’s father.

I remained unemployed for quite some time after the wedding until later in 1947 when Shiming's first younger brother, Shizheng traveled from Shanghai to stay with us to recuperate from tuberculosis. He offered to connect me to two of his acquaintances in Taipei. One was Ye Mingxun, who was a teaching assistant in Shizhen's freshman year at Fujian Union University. Another was Xu Zongchang, who was the General Manager of the State-owned Taiwan Cement Company and was related to the Wang Clan by being the brother-in-law of Wang Shixian, Cousin No. Seventeen.

At first I paid a visit to Ye, who headed the official news agency of the Nationalist Party in Taipei. However, after learning his view that Shizheng's political leaning was too far left, I knew this trip was in vain.

Then I went to see Xun. We hit it off right away, and I landed a job at the Cement Company.

The job lasted five years. Although my work was mostly pushing papers, the compensation package was pretty decent. Employees were allotted a generous ration of rice and issued a bicycle for transportation. We were also assigned a stand-alone house with two bedrooms, a study, a living room and kitchen. Moreover we were granted the telephone privilege which was considered special prestige at the time. Having installed our telephone, I went on to buy a van and learned to drive.

Speaking of driving, I have a few interesting tales to tell: Not long after I bought the van, I was approached by a guy who owned the Taipei Funeral Service. He offered to buy the van for use as a hearse. Thinking I was doing a good deed, I sold him the van. Afterwards, I bought a used jeep which was an army surplus from WW II.

One day my wife's sister, Shizhiao, was about to give birth. My brother-in-law, Wu Youjen asked for a ride to take her to the hospital. My daughter Mao-Mao (Suzie), age five then, insisted on joining us for the ride. I couldn't take her along due to the limited seating. She kept on crying and throwing a tantrum until I spanked her with my slippers. Mao Mao never forgets to remind me of this incident to this day!

## **The Extended Wang Clan in Taiwan**

A dozen or so members of the Wang Clan had moved to Taiwan by then. They held reunions from time to time, often at the home of aunt Wang Xiaoying, who was one of the few female legislators in the National Government's Legislative Council. Her husband, Li Dachao, was also a well known figure. When I was preparing to move to America in 1962, I asked him to write me a few letters of recommendation. He told me there is no need to write anything. Just mentioning his name would do. That goes to show how well connected he was.

[The Wang Clan had followed the tradition of using the same character as a part of the names for each generation.] A member of the Xiao generation is Wang Xiaoxiang, Fifteenth Uncle, or known to us as "Shiwu Jia". His alias is Wang Xiwu, Xiwu

being fifteen in Fuzhou dialect. Having received medical training in Japan, he was a prominent hospital administrator and had been the Chief of the Air Force Hospital in Taiwan.

My wife, Shiming, was of the Shi generation. Her father, Wang Xiaoquan, was ranked sixth of the Xiao generation. Therefore in family gatherings we were introduced as Sixth Uncle's daughter and son-in-law. Others of Shiming's peers included Shicheng, Shiliu, Shixun.

Several of the Wang's also held prominent positions. Fourth Uncle Xiaoji of Beijing had several descendants in Taiwan: his second son, Shiqi, was Deputy Bureau Chief of Highway Administration. He was the seventh brother in the Clan. His wife (the seventh sister-in-law) was even more highly placed as the secretary of Madam Chiang (wife of Chiang Kai-shek), and a member of the Nationalist Government's Supervisory Council.

A cousin, Shixian, was a member of the Legislative Council, and Chairman of the Board of the Social-Democratic Party. His wife Shi Ying was a well-known translator. Several others in the Shi generation also held esteemed posts in various organizations.

It occurred to me that, while in the Taiwan Cement Company, I received a letter from my wife's second brother, Shizhang, asking about job prospects as an engineer in Taiwan. I went directly to the Administrative Office to speak with an assistant manager, Wen Buyi who had a PhD from Germany. He instantly picked up his telephone to call a contact, the head of a steel factory, who offered an engineer position to Shizhang on the spot. However correspondence at the time took much longer than it does now. By the time news of the job reached Shizhang, he was already deeply in love with his soon-to-be wife and no longer wanted to leave. Well, if he had left for Taiwan, their children Xiaobao and Xiaoling would not have existed.

## **Founding the Photo News Agency**

For many years I had been a photo enthusiast. During my early years at the Cement Company, I started attending workshops and studied under the internationally renowned art photographer Lang Jingshan. I also frequented outings and exhibits to hone my skills, including the Central Mountain Range hike sponsored by the National Youth Corps in 1952. I trekked across the highest mountain peaks that ran from East to West on the island and encountered many excellent photo ops. In 1953, I submitted one of the photos I took on the mountains to the International Photo Contest in San Francisco. I was very fortunate to have won the second prize in the landscape category.

Still my greatest aspiration then was to enter journalism. The Martial Law imposed by Chiang Kai-shek upon his retreat to Taiwan in 1949 came with many restrictions, such as travel abroad, telephone installation, and the establishment of

news agencies. However, I was able to uncover a loophole in the publication laws which permitted the printing of photographs with captions by a news agency. So in 1955, through my elder sister's former boyfriend, Lin Zhilie, who used his connection with some persons of influence to get me a license for a news photo agency.

In 1956, "Photographic News" came into being. There was hardly any competition so business was booming. Since the birth of this news agency I had no time for the Cement Company job, and felt awkward to continue drawing my salary. Hence I asked to retire. The Company gave me a generous pension. In addition, owing to the shortage of phone privilege, I was also able to sell my telephone right back to the Company for a handsome sum.

Many years later, in 2013, a Taiwanese photojournalist, published a book, "They Are Witnesses of History" in which there is an account of my "Photographic News":

*"Chen Luyin, Founder of the First and Only Private Photojournalistic News Agency in the History of Communication in Taiwan。 Chen Luyin, a devotee in journalism, founded the daily "Photographic News" in 1956. Apart from himself, other photojournalists working for the agency included: Fu Zisheng (killed in the August 23 artillery battle) and Zhou Chao (a cinematographer in the Taiwan Film Studio). Also joined them were Yi Menglan (the first female photojournalist in Taiwan), Yuan Da (nicknamed Atomic Bomb) and others.*

Most of the cameras they used were Leica... The Agency had among its facilities a typesetting room, a plate making room, and a plate-assemble machine. There were two editors, two copy editors, and three interviewers. His wife oversaw the darkroom. At first they outsourced the printing job...it lacked quality. Later, they imported lens and steel plates from Japan... and saw much improvement. The Agency was self-funded by Luyin Chen with some investment from Chairman of the Board Luo Kedian and editor-in-chief Chen Shi'an. Every night, Luyin stayed up until one or two AM when the plates were finalized before going home. The cut-off time for the articles was ten PM, and the print-out was due at seven or eight the next morning.

Luyin modeled Photographic News after the "Illustrated Daily News" of America, featuring photographs supplemented with texts, which was unprecedented in Taiwan in the 1950s. It left an important mark about communications during the Martial Law Era. The News was rich with quality images and well written texts. 4-Kai (521 mm x 375 mm) in size, the one page paper was published daily...It covered highlights about current events, films and theater, home lives, photography, comics, art and literature, and so on.

In those days, media were either owned by the government or the party. Photographic News was one of the handful of privately owned news agency. Resources were extremely slim and reporting was under tight control. To sustain the operation, it had to depend on limited channels like subscriptions and advertisements. It was tough to make ends meet, and at one point Luyin had to sell two of his own houses. After five

years, he had to transfer ownership to a fellow photographer Chen Yanbin, the owner of Mei-Er-Lian (Rose Marie) Cafe. Not long after that Luyin's wife convinced him to immigrate to the United States."

## **Coming to America with 26 Alphabets**

I had bought three properties in Taipei, and each time I had to sell them for a loss. In those days, they were located in some so so neighborhood. Today these have all become the hottest commercial or high-end residential districts filled with high-rises. Well, I had good eye but not so good in timing.

The last property I had to sell was on Dunhua South Road. It was considered pretty high-end at the time. I needed telephone service for my news agency. The phone company was not going to make it easy. They claimed that no telephone wires could go up in that district, so to install a service would require ten new poles, which will be charged to me. I had no choice but to bite the bullet. For a while, ours was only house with a telephone in the neighborhood of thirty some families. When they later got their phone lines connected, utilizing the polls I paid for, I was actually the benefactor.

In the summer of 1962, after I lost a fortune and transferred my news agency to Chen Yanbin, a constant friend and supporter, I decided to take a trip to America with Jin Dezhong, a reporter from Taipei Chinese News. At that time, I simply wanted to take a break from my failed business ventures. I had no intention to stay abroad. It was only after my wife Shiming wrote repeatedly, asking me to try find a way to stay for the sake of the future education of our son and daughter that I began to make serious plans to immigrate.

The American Consulate in Taipei was known to be quite strict about visa cases. However when Jin Dezhong and I went in, as members of the media, they actually treated us with courtesy and granted us our visas in a matter of minutes. We bought our airline tickets. Our first stop was Manila, to pay a visit to some friends, then to Hawaii via Hong Kong.

A funny incident happened in Hong Kong. Before going sightseeing, I went to draw a bath at the hotel. Not knowing there was water rationing and the supply was shut off at that moment, I turned on the faucet, saw no water, then turned around to leave, forgetting to switch the faucet off. We did not return until late at night. No need to tell you what happened in that room. What a disaster!

After departing Hong Kong, we stopped over in Hawaii for a few days, and then flew to Seattle. The stated reason for our Seattle visit on the visa application was to visit the World Expo, which already ended by the time we arrived. So we paid a visit to Eleventh Cousin, Wang Shiyi. Her husband Vicent (Youzhong) Shi was a professor of philosophy at the University of Washington. He was a respected scholar known for his fine English translation of the classic, Wenxin Diaolong, The Book of Literary Minds.

After two days in Seattle, we travelled to San Francisco where we spent \$99 on a Greyhound bus ticket to New York. Four days and four nights later, we arrived Port Authority in Manhattan. My companion and I decided to go stay at the cheap YMCA hostel. Not knowing that the Y was just a block away, we hailed down a taxi. Seeing that we spoke hardly any English, the driver pointed to the meter, shook his head, and stuck out two fingers, meaning two dollars. In 1962, five cents could buy you a cup of coffee, twenty cents a gallon of gasoline. The taxi driver collected two dollars from us, turned the block, and dropped us off at the curb. We two country bumpkins were taken in!

Having arrived New York, we must first find a way to make a living. My friend landed a job as a typist in the Chinese language department of the United Nations through his uncle. The friend gave me a lead to a gift shop for a store clerk job. The owner told me I was too short for them.

Then I thought of trying for a photo studio. So I went and rented a storefront in Chinatown and bought some equipment. Chinatown in Manhattan at that time was not very lively and had few Chinese around, so the business was sluggish. After a few months, I closed the shop and lost money again.

After the photo studio failed, a friend took me to New Haven, Connecticut, where Yale University was. Half the city was Yale campus and it was quite a cultured town. I found a job as a waiter in a small Chinese restaurant. I was now ready to turn my focus on getting my wife and children from Taiwan.

Professor Vincent Shih, husband of Eleventh Cousin in Seattle sent the necessary paperwork as sponsors for them to obtain passports. When they went to the U.S. Consulate for visas, they were turned down.

When there is a will there is a way. An elder in the press circle in New York suggested that it might be easier if they took a circuitous route, by getting to Spain first, where living expenses were relatively low. I followed his advice and helped my family obtain visas to Spain. After getting them the airline tickets to Madrid via Hong Kong and the Middle East, I joined them there to arrange for lodgings.

This was a high risk plan. If their visa application to the U. S. was rejected again, we would have been stuck. So I asked my family to stay put and wait for the right timing.

One day I joined a few journalist friends to interview the China Military Delegation at the United Nation. The head of the delegation was the famed General Flying Tiger, Wang Shuming, for having shot down a number of Japanese aircrafts in aerial battles during WW II. He had been the commander-in-chief and chief of staff of the Taiwan Air Force. When he asked if there was anything he could do for me, I told him about my family's situation in Spain. He gave me a letter addressed to the Taiwanese Ambassador to Spain, Zhou Shukai requesting his assistance.



My wife took the letter and brought our children with her to the Taiwanese embassy. The ambassador had his executive secretary escort my family to the U.S. Embassy and saw to it that their visa applications were accepted. Six months later their visas were issued.

After having cleared this hurdle, we were finally reunited in the United States. However, soon after we opened our restaurant, a rival in the same line of business reported us to the immigration office (for owning a business without proper status). The whole family could have faced deportation and all previous achievement thrown to the wind. Misery! Misery!

As luck would have it, a Congressman from New Haven, Robert Giaimo, submitted a motion on our behalf to suspend the deportation order. Subsequently we applied for and were granted the Permanent Resident status.

## **The Life of Immigrants: From Rags to Riches**

For seventeen years I lived in Taiwan and fifty-eight years in America. Everywhere I lived I had encounters with different characters and experienced many stories.

In May of 1964, my wife reached the U. S. with our son and daughter. At that time, my son was in high school (10th grade) and my daughter was in the first year of junior high school (7th grade). After having settled them in their schools, we decided to start a business to support the family. One day a friend told me about a sandwich shop that had long been shuttered was available for lease. He asked if I was interested. It was located in a rather seedy neighborhood, but came with some basic equipment, and the monthly rent was \$100. I said okay. That was the beginning of my life as a restaurateur that lasted 20 years.

Although located in a seedy part of town, the shop was right across from a small office building in the front, and a building of medical offices in the back. To its left was a large hospital jointly owned by the City and Yale University. In the early days, our customers were mostly doctors, lawyers and insurance brokers. The former sandwich shop had a large counter that took up most of the space, leaving a space for few tables. So I had it remodeled to remove the counter to make room for more tables, so as to appear more like a restaurant. When the heat came, I installed a commercial-grade air conditioner. The restaurant generated excellent business, and we applied most of the profits to continue refurbish the shop. Shiming was the chef, and I was the manager/waiter. At dinnertime rush, my son and daughter would come to help do dishes.

Let me add here: My wife Shiming had extraordinary natural talents, excelling at anything she set her mind to learn. When I launched Photographic News, I taught her photo development from the start. She not only grasped the techniques quickly but also became a first-rate darkroom technician. She took over the tasks of film

development all by herself, and pulled all-nighters every single night to meet the demand of our daily publication. She was the hero behind the scene in the news agency.

She was never much into cooking, but when we decided to open a restaurant, she decided to train as a chef and labored in sweat in the kitchen day in and day out. At the end I believe her skills can compare to any Michelin-starred chef, attracting numerous customers far and near. In addition every night after closing time, she refused to rest until she had scrubbed the kitchen spotless from top to bottom. Her absolute dedication, diligence, and unconditional support were the main reasons behind our success.

This small restaurant made us some handsome profit. I bought a spacious three-bedroom house with large living and dining rooms. One year, Wu Youjen, my brother-in-law, passed through New York spending his sabbatical at Purdue University. I went to pick him up at JFK. Since I had an early start, I swunged by Chinatown to pick up some grocery. It was a brand-new 1967 Mercedes-Benz 4-door sedan that I drove. I made a mistake of turning left at a No Left Turn sign, and was tailed by a police car. The policeman signaled for me to follow him and stop in a narrow alleyway. After inspecting my paperwork, he raised ten fingers while taking out a pad, then shook his head without uttering a word. I understood what he meant, so I pulled out a ten dollar bill. He mumbled, "Roll it up and hand it over." This was my personal experience. It really did happen.

Two years after our success with the small restaurant, I bought a building in central New Haven, converted a small grocery store on the ground floor into a fifty-seat Chinese restaurant. By then we served dinners only. From here I retired in 1984, ending my twenty years in the restaurant business.

## **Achievement in Education and Career of My Offsprings**

I abided by my wife's wish to travel a long distance to America in order for our son and daughter to have better opportunities for a good education. Our children were well aware and did not disappoint. To our great comfort, they were outstanding in schools and have excelled in their careers.

My son, Edward, after getting a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Massachusetts, earned an M.S. in Quantum Applied Physics from Yale University. After graduation, he had a career of thirty years at Bell Laboratory of AT&T, later as AT&T Research Laboratory, before retiring as the department head of Consumer Electronics. Then he worked for Science and Technology Associates (STA) in Arlington, Virginia as a program manager, doing consultation work for the Defense Advanced Research Program Agency (DARPA) for 6 years. Then, he returned to Taiwan to teach at Taitung University for several years.

Daughter-in-law Han-Tee Hsi Chen, after finishing her B.S. in Chemistry from Tsinghua University in Taiwan, she came for graduate school in the U.S. and earned an M.S. in chemistry at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Massachusetts. She worked as a biochemist for the Biochemistry Department of Rutgers Medical School for several years before joining AT&T and Lucent Corporation where she worked for 20 years before retiring as a supervisor in its software development. They have one son and one daughter: Daughter Yilan Lazarou, has a B. S. in English from Rutgers University, New Jersey and is now working in a pharmaceutical company. Yilan's husband, George Lazarou, has a B. S in Environmental Science, also from Rutgers University and now works in the field of cyber security. Their son Yibin Chen has a B. S and a M. S. from Yale University before earning his M.D. from Harvard Medical School. He is now a physician in Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Yibin's wife, Julie Vanderklish, has an M. S. in nursing from Northeastern University School of Medicine, and is now a nurse practitioner at Massachusetts General Hospital.

My daughter Suzie Chen Wise, graduated from Trinity College in Connecticut, and earned her PhD in Genetics from Einstein College of Medicine in New York. Before retirement in 2020, she was a professor and Chair of the Chemical Biology Department, and professor of Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, and Susan Lehman Cullman Laboratory for Cancer Research in Rutgers University. Throughout her career, she has won many scientific research awards. At retirement, she was awarded the honor of Distinguished Professor by Rutgers.

My Son-in-law, Leigh Wise, received a PhD in Biochemistry from Harvard University, was a postdoctoral fellow at MIT. Having taught at Rutgers University School of Medicine for several years, he decided to switch career and invested in a nursery school, devoting himself to early childhood education for 24 years before retirement. They have a daughter, Abigail Wise, who earned a law degree but decided to go into business. In recent years, she left her job to dedicate her time to her two young children. Her husband, Matthew Rotchford, is a firefighter in Florida and teaches at the Fire Academy.

I now have a total of six great-grandchildren, the oldest just finished junior high school, and the youngest is in kindergarten. For decades, our annual Thanksgiving dinner has been an occasion for the extended families to gather. Over forty or fifty people from different ethnic backgrounds assembled under our roof, like a mini United Nations. It has always been such a joyful festivity!

My wife Shiming passed away on June 17, 2017. Her ashes are resting under the canopy of the big tree on our daughter's property in Florida.

## **A Peaceful Life in Retirement**

After retiring in 1984, I sold my property in Connecticut and moved to South Salem, New York, where my daughter lived. It was a lakeside cottage. Several of our relatives had visited, including my wife Shiming's younger sister Shichao and her

husband, my wife's elder sister and her husband, as well as her first younger brother's ex-wife.

A few years later, my wife and I bought a house in Palm Coast, Florida. The house was just across the street from the beach. We could hear the sound of the waves all the time and had enjoyed a tranquil life there. Families who had paid us a visit included my wife's first brother Shizheng, his son Dunxiong and daughter-in-law Guangxia, as well as my wife's second brother Shizhang and sister-in-law.

As we aged and began to feel the need to be near our children under their care, we moved in with our daughter in New Jersey, whose home is not far from our son Edward. After my daughter's upcoming retirement, she plans to move to Florida to be with her daughter and grandchildren. When that happens, I plan to stay in New Jersey and move in with my son. He already had a chair lift installed and ready for me.

## **Always Living Life to the Fullest**

I have indulged myself in a wide range of hobbies since long before retirement. First, about the sound system. In 1945, I bought a floor-standing sound system from a Japanese in Keelung. The top was a turntable that could fit two types of stylus: one made in steel and the other in bamboo. The stylus need to be replaced after each use. At the center was a receiver, and at the bottom was a 12-inch speaker.

After coming to America, I became an audiophile. Starting in the 70's, I began collecting sound equipment and speakers. By chance I met Mark Levinson, the godfather of Hi Fi's, who was also a customer in my restaurant and only ate seafood. For all the equipment I bought from him, he only charged me half of the wholesale price, and traded the other half for food at the restaurant. For seventy-five years I have been an audiophile. I have also collected pens and watches, which are too trivial to worth telling.

Next are cars. No one could have guessed how crazy I have been when it comes to cars. In my life I have owned 36 cars, among which only two were second-hand, the rest were bought brand-new. They included five Mercedes Benzes, three BMWs, one Lincoln, and a number of four-wheel-drive jeeps.

When I first arrived America, I wanted to get a driver license, and went to the Department of Motor Vehicles. When they gave me a written test, the test monitor handed out the test and walked away. The woman next to me was very helpful and showed me her test. I thought I'd try my luck and copied all her answers. I ended up with a zero in my score.

Three years ago, on my way to a supermarket, I drove the car up the traffic island and pierced the tires. Another time I drove onto the sidewalk. That's when I realized that I was getting on in years and decided to give up driving.

Now about my video: Over the years I have collected the whole range from videotapes, to Laser discs, followed by DVD, and then Blue Ray discs.

As to my TV sets: Skipping the square box, my first flat-screen was a 42 inch plasma TV which cost me \$5,000 when it first came out. Now the same LCD TV can be gotten for \$300. Now I have an 80-inch LCD screen and the latest OLED 55-inch in my room. My next goal is an 80-inch OLED (which I recently got.)

In my indulgence I may seem a weirdo. Well, only the money you get to spend is yours.

## Acknowledgement

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2. Mr. Lin Buying, The Deputy Head of Finance of Fujian Postal Bureau, later the Head of Taiwan Postal Administration Bureau;
3. Mr. Lin Zhilie, former boyfriend of my eldest sister and Editor-in-Chief of the People News in Taipei;
4. Mr. Mao Shuqing, a media elder, U.S. Bureau Chief of United Daily News of Taiwan;
5. Mr. Yang Wenpu, a former reporter for the United Daily News of Taiwan.

## Family Tree

Luyin Chen, Shiming Wang

Son: 陳一 Edward Chen

Daughter-in-Law: 席涵悌 Han-Tee Hsi Chen

Granddaughter: 陳怡嵐 Yi Lan Lazarou

Grandson-in-Law: George Lazarou

Great Grandson: Demetri Lazarou

Great Granddaughter: Evangeline Lazarou

Grandson: 陳怡斌 Yi Bin Chen

Granddaughter-in-Law: Julie Vanderklisch

Great Granddaughter: Taylor Chen

Great Grandson: Andrew Chen

Daughter: 陳憐 Suzie Chen Wise

Son-in-Law: 魏力 Leigh Wise

Granddaughter: 魏雅比 Abigail Wise

Grandson-in-Law: Matthew Rotchford

Great Granddaughter: Kayla Rotchford

Great Grandson: Derek Rotchford