



Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation
P.O. Box 29237
San Francisco, CA 94129-0237

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In the News

SAVE THE DATE: AIISF ANNUAL DINNER OCTOBER 21

AIISF will hold its annual dinner on Thursday, October 21, at the Empress of China restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown. This year's theme, "The Lotus Club...where dreams unfold," will capture the enchantment of a 1930s nightclub experience. We will celebrate the launch of the Immigration Station's restoration and honor those who have led the way in preserving the site and its legacy. We hope our supporters will join us at this special event.

NEW ANGEL ISLAND ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation

(AIISF) is pleased to announce the launching of the Angel Island Oral History Project (AIOHP) in partnership with Pacific Regional Humanities Center (PRHC) based at UC Davis. The goal of the Project is to record and preserve the experiences, recollections, and impressions of immigrants who came through the Angel Island Immigrant Station during its 30 years of operation, between 1910 and 1940. The interviews will be catalogued and archived for public access, as well as for possible use in scholarly research, site exhibition and interpretation, and public outreach publications. If you know anyone who came through Angel Island and is willing to be interviewed, please contact Erika Gee, AIISF Director of Education, at (415) 561-2163 or egee@aaisf.org. Interviews will begin in the late fall. Please help us preserve these community member's experiences.

GATEWAY EXHIBITION ON VIEW

AIISF's traveling exhibit "Gateway to Gold Mountain" will be on display at the National Geographic Theater at Hearst Castle State Historic Park throughout the summer. The exhibit remains through Labor Day. There are no admission or parking fees. The exhibit is on view during visitor hours from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The exhibition of "Gateway" at the National Geographic Theater at Hearst Castle is made possible in part by funds from Friends of Hearst Castle. This fall, Gateway will be on view at its permanent home at California State University, Hayward.

PASSAGES

AIISF CONTINUES EFFORTS FOR FEDERAL FUNDING



Jimmy Park Li

Lynn Woolsey and Katherine Toy at the press conference in Tiburon on May 25.

Representative Lynn Woolsey introduced The Angel Island Immigration Station Restoration and Preservation Act to Congress on May 20. If passed, this bill would allow for federal dollars to support the restoration and preservation of the Immigration Station without changing the site's status as a state-owned property. While this bill itself does not contain any appropriations dollars, it is an essential first step in opening the door for up to \$15 million in federal funding down the line.

"Passage of this bill would be a major step forward for the restoration and preservation of this important historical landmark," said Rep. Woolsey. "In the future, visitors will board

the Tiburon Ferry, and after landing on Angel Island, become immersed in the hopes and dreams and sorrows of the more than one million immigrants who landed there. This is their monument."

More than 45 bi-partisan representatives joined Congresswoman Woolsey as co-sponsors of the bill, including House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi. Pelosi remarks "The Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, the State of California, and many dedicated individuals have been working to stabilize the buildings and raise funds for their restoration. Plans for the site include use of the Immigration Station hospital as a center for education and genealogy research. H.R. 4469, introduced under the leadership of Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, will authorize the use of additional federal funds to ensure that the Station, which is a historic site of national significance, can be preserved for future generations."

On July 15, former executive director Katherine Toy traveled to Capitol Hill to testify before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands of the House Committee on Resources. The hearing allowed members of the House of Representatives to learn more about the Immigration Station and the potential role of the federal government in restoring the property. Five members of the Subcommittee and the three members whose bills were being discussed, were present at the hearing.

AIISF is pleased that the legislation has progressed to this stage. The bill will need to pass out of the Subcommittee and the larger Resources Committee before moving to the full House for a vote. Most likely, a decision will be made in the late summer or early fall. The support of federal legislators in helping to preserve the Immigration Station continues to validate the importance of the Angel Island story as a part of the nation's larger history.

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FAREWELL TO KATHERINE TOY

By Forrest Gok
President, Board of Directors

AIISF bids a fond farewell to Katherine Toy, our executive director for the past four years. Katherine resigned at the end of June to move on to new and exciting challenges. Katherine first joined AIISF as a board member in July 1998 with a background as an educator who had a keen interest in genealogy and immigration history.



AIISF

Katherine Toy addressing a crowd at the Immigration Station.

When the opportunity arose for AIISF to establish an office with a staff, Katherine was appointed our organization's first executive director in April 2000. Under Katherine's leadership, AIISF has grown from an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff to an organization of three staff with many accomplishments under its belt.

While Katherine was AIISF's executive director, the organization was able to complete its Master Plan for the restoration of Angel Island Immigration Station. The first phase of restoration has already begun. We have brought the story of the Angel Island Immigration Station to legislative leaders in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C., to garner state and federal support. Our traveling exhibit, *Gateway to Gold Mountain*, has traversed the country

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Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation is a non-profit organization whose primary goals are:

- a) to lead the effort to preserve, restore and interpret Angel Island Immigration Station, a National Historic Landmark, as the Pacific gateway for U.S. immigration; and
- b) to promote educational activities that further the understanding of Pacific Rim immigration in American history.

President's Message

Dear Friends and Supporters:

We hope that you are all enjoying a great summer. There are a number of changes at AIISF that we wanted to report to you as we prepare for a national visibility campaign in the near future.

First of all, our executive director of four years, Katherine Toy, resigned at the end of June to move on to new challenges. Katherine was AIISF's first Executive Director and was instrumental in transforming our organization from a small all-volunteer operation to an office of three. With Katherine's leadership AIISF has made great strides in transitioning the organization to one that is national in scope, working diligently with California State Parks on the restoration planning, and continuing to reach out to the public with the messages and lessons of Angel Island immigration through its curriculum and its traveling exhibit. We are in the midst of Phase I of the restoration and are moving towards a national fundraising campaign to finance the remaining phases. We have taken giant steps under Katherine's leadership and we are all sincerely indebted to her for her myriad contributions as both our executive director and a former board member.

Before we conduct a national search for a new executive director, we are happy to announce that we have hired Charles F. Greene as AIISF's interim executive director. A graduate of Harvard University, Chuck has had vast experience in the non-profit sector in the San Francisco Bay Area having previously served as the executive director of the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund and the executive director of the Volunteer Center of San Francisco.

We are also in the process of contracting with a nationally-known consulting firm to step up our philanthropic support throughout the country. As the Angel Island Immigration Station is one of America's 11 most endangered landmarks, we are going to have to recruit more donors and friends throughout America to ensure that the preservation process will continue.

As we expand our fundraising throughout the country, we also plan to recruit more board and advisory committee members from the various communities across America so that there is truly a broad base of support for this significant project.

On Thursday, October 21, we will be celebrating the accomplishments of Katherine Toy and

others at our annual fundraising dinner, "*The Lotus Club...where dreams unfold*," at the Empress of China restaurant in San Francisco. We hope you can all join us for this fun and festive event. Invitations should be in the mail soon.

Finally, we are working towards securing federal appropriations to the Angel Island Immigration Station restoration project which is now estimated at over \$40 million. We are going to need your support to help us write letters to your congressional representatives and senators to preserve the legacy of Angel Island.

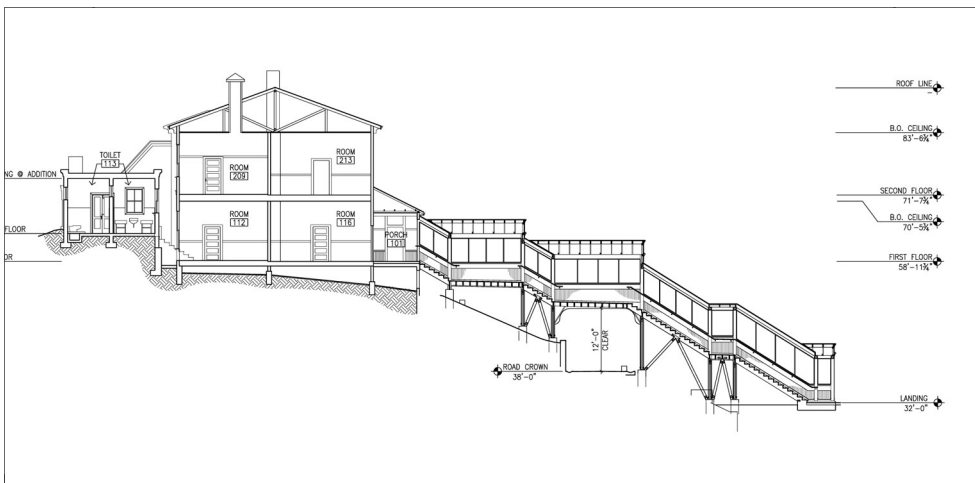
We will need at least an additional \$300,000 in 2004-2005 to maintain our administrative operations above our existing base support. Thank you for continuing to contribute your time, efforts and dollars towards the preservation of Angel Island Immigration Station. As we expand our efforts in the next few months, we hope you will join us more actively to preserve the poignant legacy of the over 1 million people who passed through the immigration station's carved walls.

Warm Regards,
Forrest Gok
President, Board of Directors

IMMIGRATION STATION RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATE

The Immigration Station is poised for construction of Phase I of the restoration project. The design drawings are complete after being prepared by a team of civil and structural engineers, architects and landscape architects. These drawings illustrate the designs and details that will stabilize the site and make it more accessible for people with disabilities, as well as enhance and interpret the historic character of the site. With the

approval of the California State budget and the necessary agency reviews, California State Parks will start taking bids for a general contractor for the project who will execute the scope of work. For a look at other drawings and project specifications, visit the AIISF web site (www.aiisf.org). More details will be covered in future issues of *Passages*.



Architectural drawing of the covered walkway that will be reconstructed during Phase I of the Immigration Station restoration.

PASSAGES

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To join AIISF's monthly e-bulletin email
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AIISF is a non-profit organization fully qualified under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions (including Friends payments) are tax deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. For those wishing to make larger gifts or contributions, please contact AIISF for more information.

Thank You

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Friends level determined by total amount donated from April 16 through June 30 2004.

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H.R. 4469, THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION ACT INTRODUCED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON MAY 20, 2004

Author: Rep. Lynn Woolsey [CA-6]

Co-sponsors as of 7/21/04:

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Rep Baca, Joe [CA-43] - 6/16/2004
Rep Becerra, Xavier [CA-31] - 5/20/2004
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Rep Towns, Edolphus [NY-10] - 5/20/2004
Rep Waters, Maxine [CA-35] - 6/16/2004

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"If we are to deal respectfully and rationally with the increasing clashes of culture in a shrinking world, we must not forget the humanity that we share. Not only our children, but all Americans have something to learn from Angel Island's immigrants," said Rep. Woolsey.

It is essential that the federal legislators know that Angel Island Immigration Station is important to their constituents.

AIISF encourages its supporters to write their representative and urge him or her to sign onto the bill, or to say thank you for having already done so. For a sample letter, contact AIISF at info@aiisf.org, or call (415) 561-2160

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including memorable stints at Ellis Island and at the Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building. We have developed curriculum guides and kits for instructors to use to teach the untold Angel Island story. We have increased our list of donors and friends more than ten-fold under Katherine's watch.

AIISF will be forever indebted to Katherine for her years of service as both a board member and its first executive director. Thank you and good luck, Katherine. You will be sorely missed.

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incorporated into future tours and exhibitions at the site, where the poetry will be illuminated by light and audio. It is these voices of these poets – the voyages they traveled, the hardships they tasted, the torment they endured, and the mementos they left to encourage fellow lost souls – that personalizes and humanizes the experience of the detainees at the Angel Island Immigration Station.

This article is based on "Poetry and Inscriptions: Translation and Analysis" by poetry consultants Charles Egan, Wan Liu, Newton Liu, and Xing Chu Wang, and interpretive consultant Dan Quan. Funding for this project was provided by California State Parks and a Save America's Treasures grant received by AIISF from the Department of Interior, National Park Service.

A COMMUNITY OF VOICES:

STUDYING THE POETRY AT ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION

The walls of the detention barracks at Angel Island contain a wealth of inscriptions that convey a sense of the Pacific Coast experience. The poems collectively represent a valuable source of insights into the inner world of immigration station detainees almost a century ago. A team of poetry scholars has recently completed a new report translating and analyzing the poetry and inscriptions. This report is one component of the larger, multilayered project to rehabilitate and restore the immigration station. This article summarizes the work of the poetry scholars and conveys a few of the findings about the poetry and inscriptions.

About the Poetry Study

Historians Him Mark Lai and Judy Yung, along with poet Genny Lim, were the first to study the poetry on Angel Island. Their research looked at the manuscripts provided by former detainees Smiley Jann and Tet Yee, as well as documentary photographs of the poems, individual rubbings and translations provided by other community members. The culmination of their work was published in the book *Island: The Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*. This groundbreaking research has provided our basis for understanding of the poetry at Angel Island Immigration Station.

In 2000, work began on a new series of feasibility studies to prepare for major rehabilitation of the site. Architectural Resources Group (ARG) was commissioned to produce a poem conservation report that provided initial documentation and assessment of the poems. This report revealed what appeared to be a number of new poems not previously translated in *Island*. This discrepancy led California State Parks to commission a new poetry study continuing the work by Lai, Lim, and Yung.

This study enlisted Charles Houston Egan, associate professor at San Francisco State University; Wan Liu, assistant professor at Stanford University; Xing Chu, poet and editor of the *East West Forum* and columnist for the *Sing Tao Daily*; and Newton Liu, editor of *The*

Chinese Community Forum and vice president of *The Bridge to Asia Foundation*. The project team, along with project manager Daniel Quan, Angel Island State Park Superintendent Nicholas Franco, interpreter Darci Moore, and AIISF executive director Katherine Toy, formed a core group that met together for over a year.

This project investigated the Angel Island inscriptions in their physical environment, looking only at what was visible on the walls without modifying or removing any surface finishes. The scholars' research included site visits to the island, group discussion sessions, and individual study using photographs as resources. Members of ARG photographed the walls of the barracks; these photographs were then digitized, enhanced, and enlarged for maximum readability. The scholars' research consisted of three main tasks. First, they set out to find the locations of all the poems previously published in *Island*. The authors of *Island* had access to 1930s' era manuscripts, which they checked against each other and in some cases against material from the walls. They did not actually take most of the texts from the walls, with a few exceptions, nor did they know of the poems' locations. The research team managed to locate and map over 80% of the *Island* poems, which at times was extraordinarily hard. Many layers of paint covered most of them, in some places the degradation the wood had degraded due to water damage and dry rot, and architectural changes to the building had removed portions of text. After finding poems, the scholars then checked the wall texts against the published *Island* texts; there were frequent differences. Also noted were additional lines of text associated with the poems, such as signatures. Many of these additional lines had not made it into *Island*. At the group discussions, the scholars went over their findings to discuss differences in translation and identifying characters.

Second, the scholars hoped to find, transcribe, and translate new poetic inscriptions in Chinese that had never been published before. Because

of the poor physical condition of many of the wall poems transcribing these inscriptions was often very difficult, and the report often provides only portions of some poem text. The scholars also hoped to find, transcribe, and translate every non-poetic inscription visible in a variety of languages. The final report maps the inscriptions of every wall in every room of the barracks, and color code them by ethnicity and type of inscription (i.e., poem vs. non poem).

Third, the group studied the found inscriptions to try to draw conclusions about the poems. They also analyzed the literary style and meaning of individual poems, poem groupings, and speculated about their authorship.

Chinese Poetry

In China, poetry is traditionally a means of self-reflection or expression for educated people. If a literate person wanted to convey his or her thoughts and feelings to friends and relatives, writing a poem would be considered a spontaneous expression, much as making a telephone call is today. A Chinese poem is usually occasioned by one or a number of events that occur in nature, in history, or in one's personal experience. Although inspired by real life events, a poem is not a literal biographical or historical record. Poetry is a style of lyrical expression that is generally indirect, suggestive, and sparingly explicit in expression or direct statement. A poet often presents in poetic form a number of images and short-hand references, especially if he or she is writing in a pre-established verse style.

The poems on Angel Island are mainly written in the style of classic Chinese poetry. The main formats are pentasyllabic (five characters per line) or heptasyllabic (seven characters), with lines of four or eight characters, and the occasional a variation of ten lines. Pentasyllabic and heptasyllabic are two common forms of the *shi* genre, the leading type of Chinese poetry until the modern era. Other writings on the walls include free verse, couplets, and corresponding poems; in one poem, there is even a hidden message. Some of the poems meet strict rhyming patterns, couplet requirements, and regulation of tune. A few of the poems are cast in a sophisticated regulated genre known as *Lüshi* regulated verse, a form popular among educated poets from the seventh century onward. Poems of this form contain eight lines to each poem, with five or seven characters per line, following a pattern of regulated tonal variation. This command of the technique required to write such elaborate

poetry, combined with a broad scope of historical references in the verses, demonstrates the poets' high level of education. The level is equivalent to that of a liberal arts education of college today.

Poem 21 in *Island* is an example of a pentasyllabic regulated verse poem. This poem is located on the north wall of room 105 in the Barracks, the main room currently open to visitors.

Poem 21

The west wind ruffles my thin gauze clothing.
On the hill sits a tall building with a room of
wooden planks,
I wish I could travel on a cloud far away, reunite
with my wife and son.
When the moonlight shines on me alone, the night
seems even longer.
At the head of the bed there is wine and my heart
is constantly drunk.
There is no flower beneath my pillow and my
dreams are not sweet.
To whom can I confide my innermost feelings?
I rely on close friends to relieve my loneliness.

西風吹動薄羅裳，
山坐高樓板木房。
意好子娘雲欲遠，
月明偏受夜更長。
床頭有酒心常醉，
枕底無花夢不香。
一幅幽情何心寄，
全憑知己解淒涼。

1 原作“常”

Poems such as this one use a pattern of regulated tonal variation, as well as rhetorical parallelism in two inner couplets. To illustrate this parallel structure, a word-by-word translation of the 3rd couplet would read:

head of bed	has wine	heart constantly drunk
Beneath pillow	without flower	dream not sweet

The first position, “head of bed” in line 5 corresponds to its counterpart “beneath the pillow” in line 6; “having wine” is antithetical to “having no flowers;” “heart” matches “dream,” and “often drunk” parallels “not sweet.” Neither the tonal pattern nor the rhetorical parallelism can be expressed in English. But in Chinese, both features add to the eloquence and elegance of the poetic expression.

Themes in the Angel Island Poems

Traditionally, Chinese intellectuals emphasize that poetry reveals one's heart, aspirations and

feelings. The barracks poems suggest that a group of young men with considerable education came across the Pacific Ocean, holding very high expectations of a good life in the America. Many had no idea what the experience of being detained on Angel Island would be like. All the poems reflect the lived experience of the immigrant detainees, their hopes and despair, their joy and pain, and their personal concerns. The situation they found themselves in triggered disappointment, anger, depression, and homesickness that are prevailing sentiments in the poems. Some of the common themes expressed in the poems are missing the home village, unfulfilled aspirations, the status of China its people compared with those from other countries, hopelessness and pain, hatred, life in detention, and traditional stories, legends and historical figures.

One of the remarkable features of the poems on Angel Island are their use of allusion. For example, poem 64, located on the east wall of room 105 on the first floor, makes reference to the legendary “*jingwei* bird” in the last line.

Poem 64: A Crude Poem Inspired by the Landscape

The ocean encircles a lone peak.
Rough terrain surrounds this prison.
There are few birds flying over the cold hills.
The wild goose messenger cannot find its way.
I have been detained and obstacles have been
put in my way for half a year.
Melancholy and hate gather on my face.
Not that I must return to my country,
I have toiled like the *jingwei* bird in vain.

感景拙詠
滄海圍孤峯，
崎嶇困牢籠。
鳥疎寒山綴，
鴻使莫尋踪。
留難經半載，
愁恨積滿容。
今將歸國去，
空勞精衛功。

According to myth, the “*jingwei* bird” was one of the most poignant symbols of self-expression. According to a Chinese folk tale, the daughter of the legendary king Yandi drowned while playing in the Eastern Sea. Her soul changed to a bird called the *jingwei*. As the story goes, the *jingwei* bird resented the fact that the ocean

took her life, and decided to fill it by carrying pebbles in her beak from the Western Mountains and dropping them into the ocean. Though tinged with sadness, the story symbolizes deter-

mination. This story seemed to have particular appeal to some reform-minded, late-Qing intellectuals at the turn of the 20th-century. The comparison of the poet's hardship while detained at Angel Island and the bird's effort to try to fill the ocean to little avail convey a sad sense of futility. Charles Egan remarks that this poem “sums up the Angel Island experience in a particularly poignant and elegant way.”

Graphic Images & Other Inscriptions

The report also notes drawings, objects, and scenes associated with the poetry. Birds are found in several places on the walls. Other images include horses, houses, flags, and ships. The largest image is thought to be dedicated to prosperity or ancestor worship. It depicts a marker, monument, or altar surrounded by a butterfly, flags, and numerous slogans. This drawing is located on the second floor and is several feet high and a few feet wide.

Japanese inscriptions are the second most visually prominent writings found in the barracks. Mostly located on the second floor, the majority of these were written by Japanese nationals repatriating to Japan between the close of World War II and the end of 1946. A smaller number of the inscriptions were written by Japanese prisoners of war during World War II. Other inscriptions on the second floor were written by Koreans, Russians and South Asians. These inscriptions tend to be accompanied by names and, in some cases, dates.

Taken as a whole, the poems help define a community of voices whose relationships are not always clear on the printed page. Poems likely written by the same author or organization are often located side by side on the wall. Adjacent poems sometimes share the same subject, match each other in every rhyming word, and are similarly refined in style. By translating and interpreting all the inscriptions on the barracks walls, the poetry scholars gained a better understanding of Angel Island poets and their poetry. Through the poems readers can gain a sense of the strong cultural identity, intellectual perceptiveness, and personable character of the detainee poets. The results of the poetry study will inform the next steps of the restoration process. Future plans include restoring the barracks and grounds, recreating the footprint of the administration building, as well as developing the next generation of interpretive programs at the site. The findings from this report will be

continued on page 5