



Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown

Victor Nee, Brett De Bary

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Beginning with the immigrants who left poverty-ridden villages in China to try for a better livelihood in America, the narratives and extensive interviews of *Longtime Californ'* tell the true story of the Chinese in America. A young Chinese girl tells of being sold into slavery, brought to America, and rescued by a missionary; men of Chinatown recall the awful conditions and long waits on Angel Island before being allowed into the country, and remember the backbreaking experience of building the railroads that opened the West. The young Chinese are also here: some are angry and frustrated, spending their time on street corners and in gang fights; other are Marxist radicals trying to create social, political, and economic change in Chinatown ghetto. And there are the workers who go back and forth each day to the garment factories and the shops, each with his or her own story to tell, each contributing his or her share to the country that is San Francisco Chinatown.

Throughout these and other stories the intricate patterns of Chinese life emerge as Chinese traditions and American customs combine to create the unique experience of Chinese-Americans, *Longtime Californ'* goes beyond the hand laundries and restaurants with which Americans often associate the Chinese and unveils the secret societies, the powerful family associations, and the daily lives of the people of Chinatown.

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