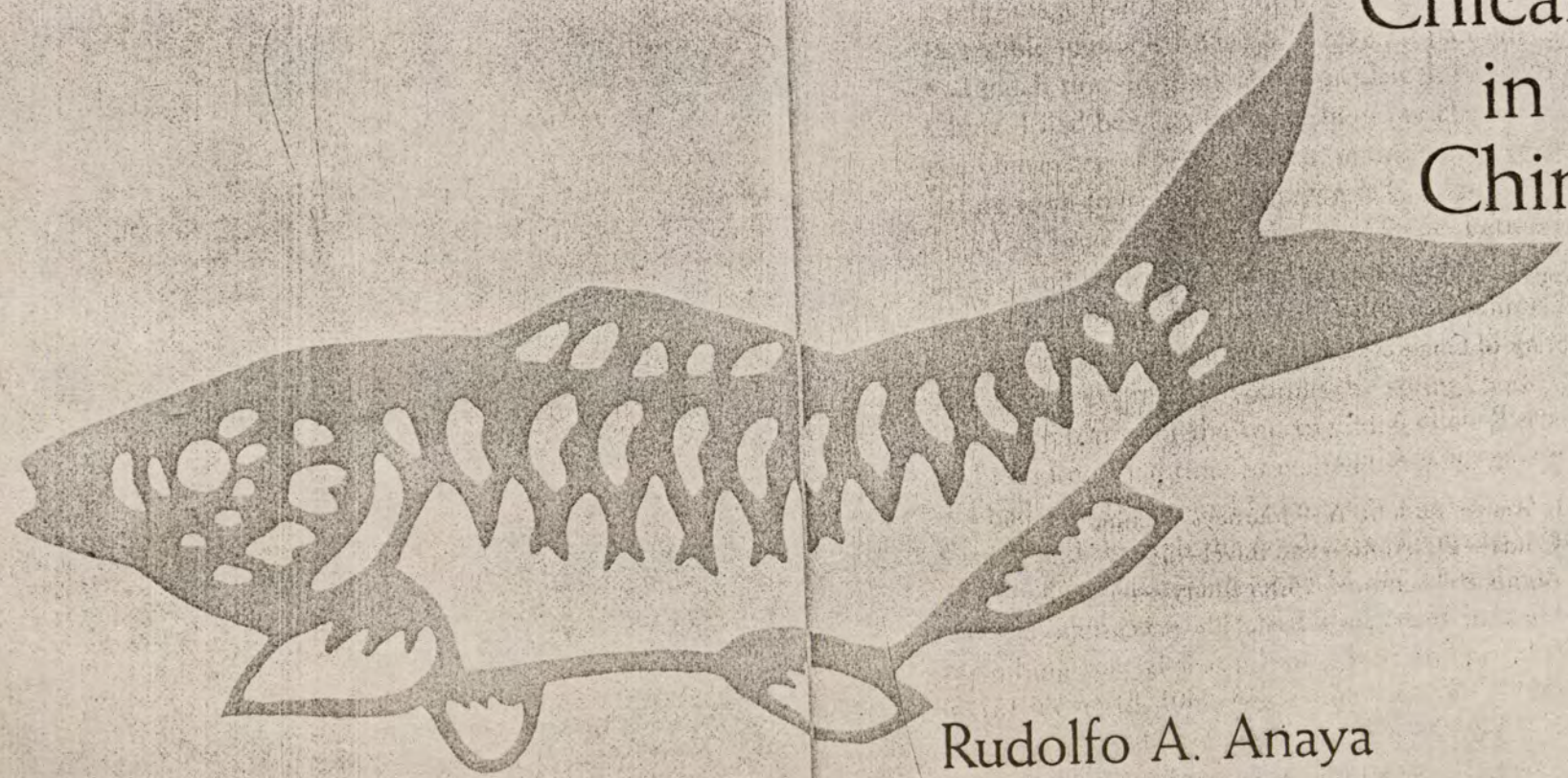


PS  
3551  
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# A Chicano in China



Rudolfo A. Anaya

University of New Mexico Press  
Albuquerque

*Design by Milenda Nan Ok Lee*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Anaya, Rudolfo A.  
A Chicano in China.

1. Anaya, Rudolfo A.—Journeys—China.
2. China—Description and travel—1976—
3. Authors, American—20th century—Biography.
4. Mexican Americans—Social life and customs.

I. Title.

PS3551.N27Z463 1986      818'.5403 [B]      86-11259  
ISBN 0-8263-0888-0

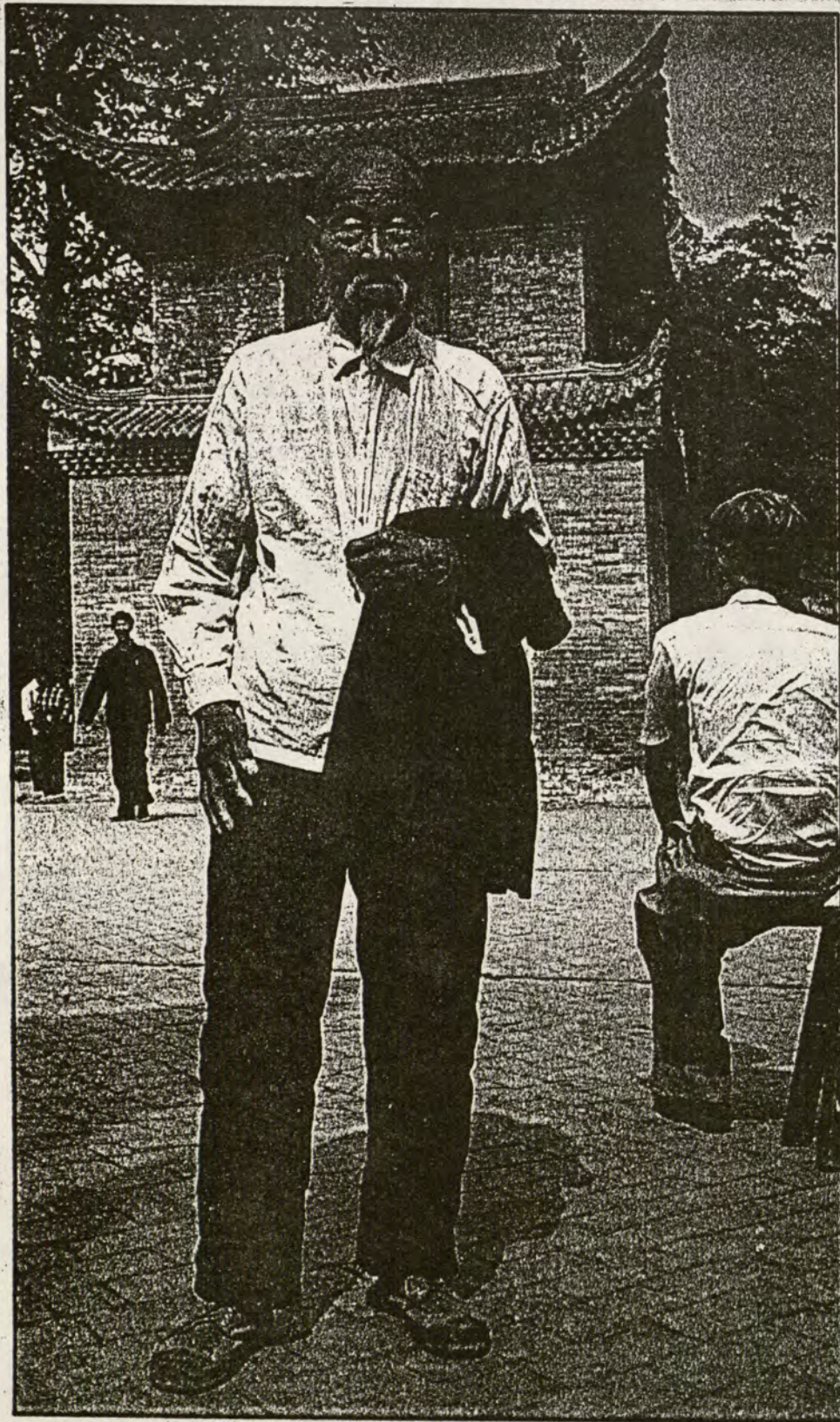
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First edition.

## Introduction

In May 1984 I embarked on a journey to China, a pilgrimage that turned out to be one of the most incredible journeys I have ever taken. I had not had much time to think about or plan this trip to China. I had been so busy finishing my classes at the University of New Mexico, returning a week before from Iowa, where Marycrest College conferred an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters on me, and returning home the week before that from a tour of the San Joaquin Valley of California. Also, I had been engrossed in a series of other lectures I had presented during the spring. Suddenly the reality of the trip to China was upon me and I had not had time to really anticipate it.

I had traveled abroad before, to Europe, into Greece and through the Mediterranean to Istanbul, to Canada and many times to Mexico. But there was something singular about going to China, something special that prompted me to keep a journal of my daily impressions. My response to China was highly personal. I felt that during my travels important answers would be revealed to me. What answers? What revelations did I seek? To be truthful, I did not know exactly what I sought. I would be a traveler in search of symbols

# impact



The Journal of a

## Chicano in China

New Mexico novelist  
Rudolfo Anaya searches for  
symbols of his Native  
American soul.

Albuquerque Journal Magazine

# impact

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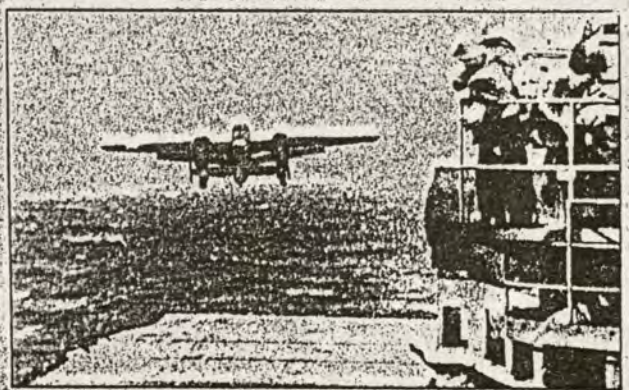
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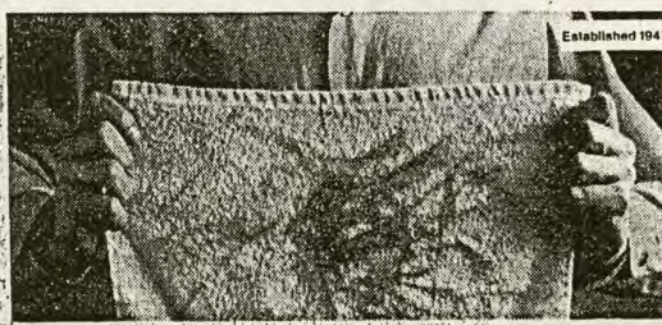
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*"There is a friendly feeling to the masses of people who throng the streets."*

The Journal of a

# Chicano in China

**I**n May 1984, I embarked on a journey to China, a pilgrimage that turned out to be one of the most incredible journeys I have ever taken. I had traveled abroad before, but there was something singular about China, something special that prompted me to keep a journal of my daily impressions.

My response to China was highly personal. I felt that important answers would be revealed to me. What answers? I did not know exactly. But I would be a traveler in search of symbols that could speak the language of my soul. I would be a traveler in a country that was the birthplace of the Asiatic people who, thousands of years ago, wandered over the Bering Strait into the Americas. What were the symbols of those people? And what do they communicate to me across the millenium of time?

I call my notes the *Journal of a Chicano in China* for specific reasons. First, I am a native son of the Mexican community of the United States, and I proudly identify with that community. And, second, as a Chicano, I also take pride in that part of me that is a Native American. I seek out the history and thought of the Americas because by understanding that past I understand better my present.

My trip to China was sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The foundation fellowships encourage growth in new and multidisciplinary ways. Certainly, travel is one of the ways in which we gain knowledge about the integrated earth on which we live. So in mid-May, 19 Kellogg



*Anaya, wife Patricia, the Great Wall.*

Story and Photographs  
By RUDOLFO A. ANAYA

fellows — some of us accompanied by our spouses — set out for China. Our Chinese sponsor was the Chinese Athletic Association. Why the association? Our group was such a diverse mixture of scholars that it was the only agency that dared to sponsor us.

In China, I visited the holy mountains and temples, I prayed at ancient shrines, I walked the polluted streets of the cities, I mixed with the people, I pulled them into my dream. I walked in their factories, prisons and hospitals, I toured their markets and I sat in their homes. I went to communicate and these are my impressions of that communication.

May 11, 1984, San Francisco

I am going to China today. Where do I find the beginning, the desire, for this pilgrimage? A family story whispers that our grandfather, when he was a young man, visited China. I asked my mother, "Did Grampa go to China?"

She rapped my head. "Mind your manners, Boy. Don't speak ill of the dead. Yes, your grandfather could speak Chinese when he had a cup or two, but he never went to China."

I remember my grandfather, farmer of the Puerto de Luna valley, a landlocked Chicano in the llano of New Mexico. He never saw the sea; he never saw China.

So, I am going to China for Grampa and for myself. A visit to the origin. The origin that does not belong to Spain. I go to find an understanding of that other half of my nature.

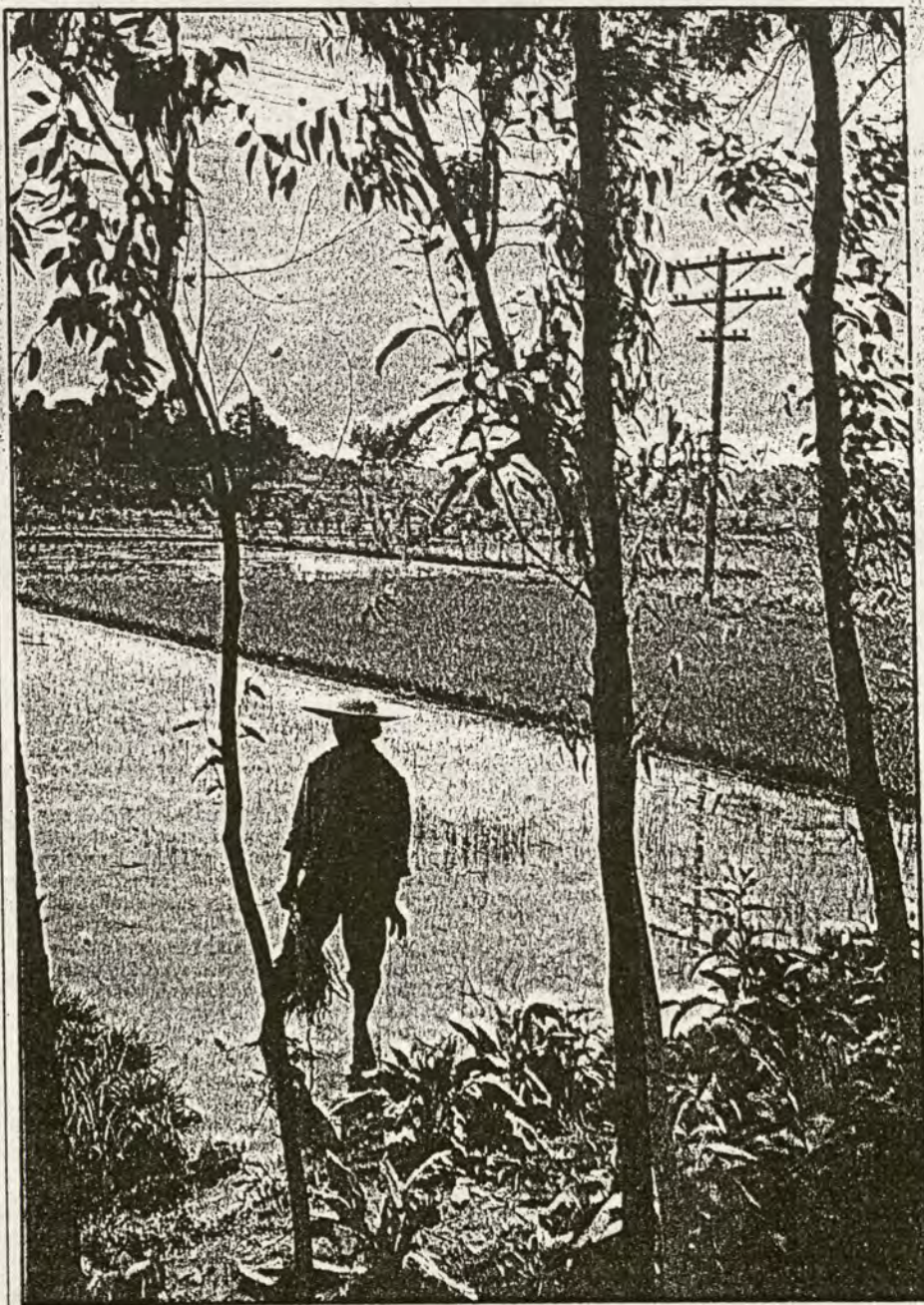
My wife, Patricia, and I spend the day in San Francisco. All trips to China should begin in San Francisco, city of the Orient, city that gazes into the setting sun. The Spaniards came into your bay in the 16th century. But Chinese voices had lingered in your air centuries before. In Portsmouth's Square Park, the old Chinese men of the neighborhood gather to take the sun (as I imagine today in some village in Northern New Mexico, the old men gather in the chill of a spring morning to take the sun). The Chinese gentlemen play cards, gamble, play dominoes. Feisty old men. Brown like me. Wrinkled. In heaven, Grampa plays checkers with old Chinese gentlemen.

May 14, Beijing

¡El Tercer Mundo! He llegado, con una canción en mi corazón. Peking, land of my grandfather's dreams. I rush to embrace the Chinese. Brown brothers, Raza! Can you imagine a billion new souls for La Raza? We could rule the world.

Peking/Beijing does not surprise me. On the bus ride into the city, I have a vague feeling I have been here before. The streets are busy with construction, a new subway. It's like Mexico City, but with less color, fewer cars, more people. We pass the shops that line Beijing University, the gates of the Summer Palace, the Empresses' Pagoda on the hill and come to rest in northwest Beijing. Our hotel is a beautiful one in the foothills. The Fragrant Hills Hotel. A fitting name.

Our room has bathroom marble, a sliding glass door that looks down on a pond of the golden carp, grass, Chinese pine trees. There is a swimming pool where the hardy of the group swim before dinner. I drink Five-Star Beijing beer, make friends with the old pine trees outside my window and sleep. At night, the full moon of New Mexico peeks over the garden. The breeze through the open door is cool. The golden carp in the pool sleep.



"All around us as far as I can see in the haze, farmers work the valley."

May 15

Today we will tour the city, camera in hand. We are ready to see China. We are ready to see the reality of *El Tercer Mundo*.

The ride into Beijing is bucolic, with a hard edge. People on the way to work fill the narrow streets. Peach tree orchards line the roads. There are fields of tomatoes, onions, vegetables. Rice paddies. Farmers are at work everywhere. Grampa's folks. An occasional fisherman sits by the side of the canal, bamboo pole over the water. Lots of trucks are on the road. Chinese trucks loaded for work.

Our destination is the Forbidden City, the old Imperial city of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, now a museum. Gold Chinese roofs, pastel red

walls. The crowds are thick. The Chinese do not smile. And yet, there is an air of gaiety. Workers, families with their children, have come to see the glory of the old dynasties, the ancients who created such opulence and glory. This is an old civilization. Perhaps the oldest on earth. No wonder they have called outsiders barbarians. No wonder, throughout their history, they have been wary of the West. Modernism has just come to China.

In the palace grounds, the dragon abounds, carved into roofs, carved into bronze. Something about the vast courtyards between buildings reminds me of Teotihuacan in Mexico. The walls, the smell, the sprigs of grass and weeds on the grounds. The dragon is

everywhere, the flaming Quetzalcoatl of Mexico. The face of the fierce dragon looks out at me from walls, from gargoyles, from decorative pieces, almost exactly as the serpent head in the pyramids of Mexico. This is my first clue. This is the door. I seek.

The dragon means supreme power, the emperor's wisdom. Quetzalcoatl means supreme power. In what dream in Asia, millions of years ago, did he have his beginning?

In the faces of the people is written the migrations from Asia crossing the Bering Strait, down into the Americas, bringing their dragon dreams. On the face of our guide, Mrs. Wang, I see a woman from Laguna Pueblo.

I am reminded this is the Chinese Year of the Rat. The rat is well liked for its witty, crafty character. To be born under its sign is propitious. Rats are also a delicacy: a home deer. The rats, like the cucarachas of the Southwest, will survive. In the narrow street, surrounded by a billion brown faces lost in a rippling sea of Chinese bicyclists, I sing to my brothers, "La Cucaracha, la Cucaracha, ya no quiere caminar."

May 16

A Chinese magpie lives in an old pine tree near our window. Early in the morning he awakens me with his complaints. He is a beautiful bird, large with shining black feathers and spots of white. He brings the gossip from the village below. The people do not know what to make of the members of our group who jog in the morning. These men with hairy legs are the barbarians of old. The women joggers: ladies of little decorum.

In the morning, our group tours a market where farmers sell their excess crops. It is nothing more than a good old-fashioned Mexican *mercado*. Patricia and I smile. We have probably been in every *mercado* in Mexico. I buy a small print of a buck and doe from an artist. Patricia also buys a print. Chinese themes for adobe walls in New Mexico.

Later, we tour Haichain, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Beijing. A wonderful place, quiet, clean. We see people at work, small-shop owners, a woman carrying mail on a bike, the local women washing clothes at the neighborhood water pump. If you have ever walked in a *colonia* in a Mexican city or a poor man's *barrio* in the Southwest, you know what a typical neighborhood in Beijing is like. Clean, swept *barrio* streets, some vendors, lots of people, a horse-drawn cart. Only the language is different.

In the afternoon, we tour the Summer Palace. There is a lake, and I imagine the old emperors in their colorful garb walking the breezeway along the lake, escorting their concubines. Outside the masses toiled. Of such things are revolutions made. One empress, the Empress Suchi spent a fortune building a marble boat. The boat still sits on the lake. It goes nowhere. Tourists clamber aboard.

During the Chicano movement of the '60s, a few of the more radical Chicanos thought they would go to war against the United States to make their grievances known. In California, a group of activists formed the Royal Chicano Air Force and built airplanes of adobe. The Royal Chicano Navy, when launched into a flood-swollen ravine in Los Angeles, sank. Adobe submarines. Let that be a lesson to you, Raza! Next time, we build the fleet of marble.

May 20

When I was a child in school in Santa Rosa, we studied China. We read about the Great Wall of China. We looked at the huge globe of the world Mr. Gold had in his room. We knew that China was on the other side of the world. Later, in the dusty playground of the school, I scooped out a small hole. Better watch out, somebody said, you'll fall into China.

Each village here is composed of communes. So was the village of Puerto de Luna, my grandfather's home. In Puerto de Luna, the farmers owned their land, they nourished their families from the earth, they sold their produce, but they led a communal life. At the heart of the village was the family, but at the heart of the commune was the church. Other

*'How simple it is to relate to these brown men and women bent over rice fields or vegetable gardens.'*

aspects of village life created the sense of community. The system of irrigation that the farmers used, for example. The main irrigation ditch, *la acequia madre*, brought water from the river. Caring for that ditch was a communal responsibility. The most friendly feelings of community and the most vociferous arguments took place around the delegation of cleaning crews and the choosing of the ditch rider, *el mayordomo*. Was *el mayordomo* the cadre's leader? A leader in the commune, a man on horseback who rode the ditch and saw that the source of life was kept clean. He assigned watering days. The men of the village gathered in the evenings or around the post office and made rules for governing themselves and decided who to give power to. How simple it is for me to relate to these brown men and women I see here, bent over rice fields or vegetable gardens. I have seen them before, there where I began to dig my hole to China.

Today, on the road north to the Great Wall, we pass through farmland. Small ditches are everywhere, carrying water from the main canal. Water pumps rush the water to the fields. Men and women stand by the pumps, working and talking. *Mayordomos* of the water. The life spirit of the commune flows into the fields, and all around us, as far as I can see in the haze, the farmers work the valley.

About an hour and a half north of Beijing, we come to the Great Wall, the tourist part of the Great Wall. I feel awe at my first sight of the massive wall. Built on the back of a mountain slope, it is like a serpent that crawls up and down the hogbacks.

I am reminded that when the Anglo-Americans first swept into New Mexico, the Great Wall of resistance was the Hispanic culture they found there. That wall of culture has been battered and bruised, but it's still in

place. Will it disappear or will it always be there, like the Great Wall of China?

A month ago, Reagan was at the Great Wall, our guide says. He promised to build 10 nuclear plants in China. Will they become the new symbols of China? Dragon breath, dragon fire. Does the new dragon feed on plutonium-U32? Along the wall, Chinese families pause to eat their lunches: boiled eggs, bread, cakes, soft drinks and beer. In the future, will Chinese families visit the nuclear reactors? Will they sit in the shade of the nuclear power plants to eat their picnic lunches?

May 21

This morning, Patricia and I do not join our tour. One group is going to the site where Peking Man was discovered, the other to a steel factory. But my bones are still weary from yesterday's excursion. I sleep, and in my fitful sleep, a dragon enters my body. China is entering me. The dragon settles itself in me, its eyes-breathing fire through my eyes, its breath the life in my lungs, its serpentine body settled along my spine and heart and liver and stomach. The tail of the dragon spreads to my feet. Finally, it has entered me completely. Finally, I have made my peace with this giant country and its billion people.

When I awaken, I feel refreshed, a new man. A dragon man. Or a man carrying the potential of the dragon within. The Yin and Yang. The opposites, the polar forces waiting for me to use them as I wish. Patricia serves me hot Chinese tea. I say something in Chinese, a language I do not understand. My Oriental eyes look out the window. The pine trees are wet. It is raining again. Looking at the pines, I do not know whether I am in the western hills of Beijing or in Taos. Some of my happier moments have been spent in Taos.

I had a friend at Taos Pueblo, the commune of the Taos Indians. Cruz, an old man, taught me to hunt. Cruz, old man of the pueblo, governor, hunter, farmer, communal man, man of power. Now I know the power he carried within him. He was a dragon man. He knew how to balance his energies. Those thousands of years separated from the Orient, thousands of years since the migration from Asia, and still he carried the supreme sense of the dragon in his soul.

Now, I hear him call from the forest. He calls in the language of Taos Pueblo, but to me, it sounds like Chinese. So now I have Cruz and my grandfather to guide through China. I am a new man. A Chicano Chinaman.

May 22

This evening is our last in Beijing. Earlier in the day, we visited the Mao Dedong Memorial, the central prison at Beijing and Beijing University. Now, we gather at a hotel restaurant for a feast of Peking duck. What a fiesta. Mai tais flow freely. Toasts are made. Patricia toasts Chairman Mao. I toast my grandfather. We all toast the beautiful Chinese people. Peking duck is broiled whole, then sliced. The slices are put into thick, round, rice tortillas, garnished with plum sauce and green onions. Delicious. Peking Duck Taco. I could make a million dollars selling them at sidewalk stands in Albuquerque. Forgive me, Mao.

May 24, Xi'an

Our first day in Xi'an, the countryside is bewitching. Fields of rice spread into the morning mists. The country is alive with

# THE GREAT WALL SOUVENIRS STORE

THE QINQI AUTOGRAPH

## A tourist shop along the Great Wall.

people. There is color to their dress. There are small shops, family operations. Mercados. A sense of excitement. How unlike Beijing. Policemen wear white jackets and salute smartly. The dull blues and grays of Beijing have disappeared.

Before dinner, I set out alone to walk the streets of Xi'an. The boulevard is packed with people. My walk up the street is rewarded. I discover the small shops. Here a man sits in a cubbyhole and mends shoes. The bicycle repair shops are numerous. There is a toilet and plumbing supply shop, groceries, clothes. Most are hole-in-the-wall entrepreneurs, but happy and thriving. All greet me with awkward stares and some surprise. I pause to talk to a man at work repairing a bike. He speaks Chinese. I speak the Spanish of New Mexico. We part on good terms.

I disappear in the crowd, I flow, become one with the crowd, dare to lose my identity. I join the flow of the masses and for a while, I am no longer a Chicano in China, I am no longer American. I am a dark man walking in twilight in the streets of Xi'an. There are no lights, no garish neon, no loud music blasting, only the sound of the people. China is people. A sea of people, a sea rippling against the shore of the world, a wave bursting with energy on our dreams. I start — become me again, find myself again — leave the sea, a strange piece of driftwood from the llano of New Mexico, cast on the shore of Xi'an. The faces smile again, watch as I pass, do double takes; I am a Chicano in China again. Alone.

### May 25

This afternoon we visit a commune, with about 20,000 members. It is larger than most of the towns I know in New Mexico. We visit a small factory and a nursery, where the children sang songs for us. But the real treat is being taken to the house of a woman who volunteered to speak to us. Her courtyard is small, but spotless; plain, but cool. Two trees shade it. She invites us into her house. The floor is brick. Sprinkled and swept, it resembles a packed-dirt floor of the old village homes of New Mexico. She lives with her son and daughter, takes care of the grandchild. She has a television set and a sewing machine. Her early life was full of poverty and suffering, so she now praises the liberation of 1949. I look at the wrinkled face of the woman and feel at home. I am back in my childhood and the woman is a neighbor who has come to visit my mother. Only this woman's kitchen is different. A clay oven with two hot plates for

cooking. Comales. Plain and primitive. I remember the cast-iron, wood-burning stoves of the ranches I knew as a child. Tortillas browning on the comales.

### May 26, Chengdu

Our plane to Chengdu is an old prop model, a dragon sans jet power, but smooth and reliable. Below us spreads the most fertile valley in China, the rice bowl of the country. From the air we can see miles of rice paddies.

Each new region produces surprises. On the ride into town, we see the peasants winnowing wheat along the road. They use the pavement to beat the wheat. Then they stack the dry wheat stalks, all cut by hand, by the sides of the road. I see my first water buffalo, a huge animal used to plow the rice fields. Everywhere the farmers are at work, planting new fields, knee-deep in water and muck.

The Chengdu Hotel is new, the young attendants eager. We taste our first Szechuan food, hot and spicy rice, pork tongue, cucumbers baked in a spicy sauce, seaweed soup, other tidbits. For the first time in weeks, my tongue burns. "More chile," I say, a pleasant smile on my face, my forehead sweating.

After dinner, Patricia and I walk down the street to a free market to buy oranges. The crowds turn to watch us walk by. Everywhere we go, we draw the attention of the people. After all, how many Chicanos have walked the streets of Chengdu on a June evening? How many have argued over the price of six oranges. The salesman calls the price in Chinese, and I answer in Spanish, then in English, enjoying the bartering. The old women at the gate of the hotel smile at the barbarians who enter the Chengdu Hotel carrying a bag full of oranges.

### May 28

Chengdu, city of 2.5 million people, a sprawling city, a polluted city. Today the smog hangs like a thick dirty gauze over the skyline. The factory smokestacks belch like dragons of industry. Buses and trucks rattle back and forth, and, as always, the constant stream of people fills the streets.

After dinner we attend the Chengdu opera. In a back street, midst the hole-in-the-wall shops and homes, stands the opera house. The play tonight is a comedy. The greatest comedy for me is to watch the people. Attendance at the opera is an informal event. Men come in undershirts. This is really operetta for the masses, a kind of entertainment that might have taken place in the Old West a hundred

years ago in the Red Dog Saloon. A famous opera star from the East comes to town, the miners and cowboys and Mexicans pack the hall. Opera in the provinces.

The Chinese have a habit of clearing their throats and their noses. They have developed this ritual into an art form. What a cacophony of sound begins when the first man clears his throat and spits into the aisle or in front of him. Then another follows suit until it seems the entire theater is busy clearing their throats and spitting in the row in front of them. Nauseating to some of our more sensitive Western foreigners, quite natural to the Chinese operagoer.

### May 30

In the afternoon, we drive to the train station. Hundreds of people are there, but foreigners are whisked into the first-class facilities. The train to Zhongqing (or Chungking) is on time. It is a pleasant ride in the night. It rains.

On the train, our Chinese guide, Mrs. Wang, reveals part of her history. Her father was a rich man. He sided against Chang Kai-shek and was killed. When the Japanese invaded in 1939, Mrs. Wang, then a girl of 18, escaped by walking across three provinces of China. She lived with the peasants, a life of extreme poverty and brutality. The old feudal warlords and the old village bureaucrats kept the people enslaved. The rich got richer and the poor were treated like animals. An intelligent, young woman who had studied English in Hong Kong, Mrs. Wang saw the reality of China. She wanted to help her people and so she joined the Communist Party. It offered a hope where there was no hope. Today, people complain, "There is no free thought." But the masses still remember the conditions before 1949, and they know they are better off now.

### May 31, Zhongqing

I awaken to greet the sun and to sing his song so the day may dawn. I look outside the train window. The train has stopped on a bridge that spans a river. All is silence. Below us, the river rushes mad and raging. It has rained all night, the mist and clouds hang close to the green hills, the yellow, muddied water rushes down to the river. We are suspended in space — suspended in time. I forget I have to go to the bathroom and sit by the train window, drinking in the beauty of the wet morning. The train jerks forward. I awaken.

"Grampa," I say, "where am I?"  
"You are where I always thought you would



be," my grandfather answers. "In the center of your heart."

Zhongqing train station. Gray. Dirty. I have seen many like it. Zhongqing, city of Chang Kia-shek. Capital. You are gray and dirty. I do not like you. City of the Yangtze, you spew smoke from your factories.

Now I admit to myself, I am tired of China, I am sick of China, I only wish to return to my land, my earth. I wish to ride to Taos and see the mountains. I wish to see the Sangre de Cristo of Northern New Mexico. I want to fish in the small, blue stream of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. I do not wish to fish the raging waters of the brown, powerful Yangtze.

There is no privacy in China, no beauty, no creative imagination to be engendered and nourished and made to produce. Only the dull gray of the people, the streets, the polluted sky, the grime that hangs everywhere.

Yet there is one redeeming feature to Zhongqing: We have arrived at the Yangtze River. Through the fine mist of the morning rain, we catch our first glimpse of the dragon river, the center of China. It is boiling and muddy, full of spring runoff. The third largest river in the world, it cuts from the mountains of Tibet to empty into the Sea of China at Shanghai. Here in Zhongqing we will board a river boat for a three-day journey to Wuhan.

I remember growing up in Santa Rosa and playing every day along the banks of the Pecos River. I grew up along that river. I knew its seasons. In the spring the floods came. Then the quiet river, swollen with water, brought with it sediment and debris — the history of

the northern part of the state. We swam in those flooding waters, as Mao once swam the Yangtze. Symbolic endeavors. For us, it was coming of age; for Mao it was a return to the mother river of China, a symbolic act to draw China together. Smart man. Smart politics.

#### June 1, the Yangtze

Early in the morning we board the ship, the East is Red No. 45. Nearly 800 Chinese board with us. Intelligent, wise and traveled professors board together with Chinese peasants who carry their bundles. First class and fourth class. Even in the socialist state, the distinction remains. You get what you pay for.

I have dreamed of sailing down this magic river. Who has not? It is a river of the imagination. It is the blood of China. In the morning light, the water is the color of Chinese chocolate, the same color as the spring water of my childhood river, the same color as the Rio Grande. The Yangtze is China's past, present and future, all in one.

We have begun our journey into the heart of China. For three days, we will live on the river. Mile after mile, we stare at the Chinese in their sailboats, their ancient sampans, the faces of the people, the huts on the slopes of the hills, the meager fields of corn beautifully cultivated on the terrace slopes.

The day is a dream. The people whose pictures we take and wave to on the banks live in another reality, another time. The lesson is that parallel streams of time can exist side by side. I know why I am here: to connect the streams of time, to connect the people. To

connect and connect and keep making connections. I did not come to measure or count. I came to make love to China. Today I enter her blood and mix my dreams and thoughts with hers. For the day on the river, my faith in the people is renewed.

We dock at Wanxian for the night. After dinner, we go into the city, a city of more than a million people, and yet to us, it is only a river city. After the trip to the city, Patricia and I host a party in the lounge of the boat. We break out peanut butter, Kraft cheese spread, crackers and a bottle of Chinese brandy. I bought in Zhongqing. The brandy makes me forget I am docked in Wanxian on the Yangtze in another time in another place.

#### June 3

Today I stare at the wide Yangtze and remember images of China:

□ In the middle of the wide river, we pass a small sampan. There is one man rowing, guiding the boat. In the middle of the boat sits an elegant, old woman dressed in black. She holds a bright purple umbrella over her head. She sits as if she is a lady of refinement going to an evening performance.

□ A Tibetan appears in the thick crowd we have drawn as we board the bus in Chengdu. He is dressed in his traditional dress. I say hello. His eyes are flat, menacing. He wears a long blade under his tunic.

□ At the Qing terra-cotta exhibition a young

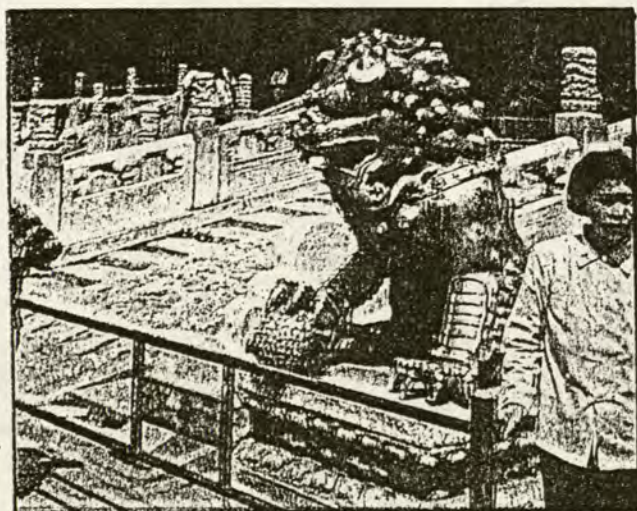
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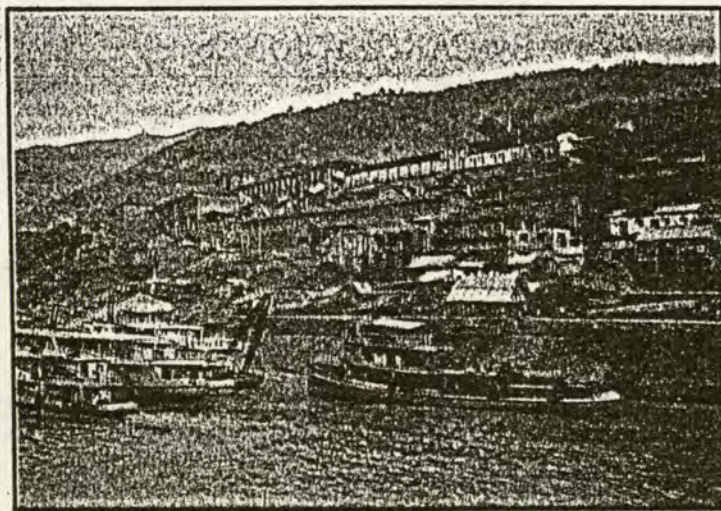
"In the faces of the people is written the migrations."



*"The faces smile again, watch as I pass, do double takes."*



*"The dragon means supreme power."*



*"I have dreamed of this magic river."*

land, none had taken off from the deck of a ship. Doolittle had told the men that two B-25s had lifted off safely from the Hornet, but he had not attempted the feat. Doolittle would be the first pilot to launch, and he'd have the shortest length of deck.

As the crews climbed aboard their planes, storm waves broke over the deck of the Hornet. In his book, *Target Tokyo*, James M. Merrill describes Doolittle's takeoff:

"The signal officer on the bow gauged the waves to put Doolittle's plane at the end of the runway just as the Hornet surged up to the crest. The colonel pushed his engines to full throttle. The roar shook the deck. Chocks were pulled from the wheels. Doolittle got the flag. Brakes were released... the plane rumbled down the deck. 'He'll never make it,' hollered a naval aviator. Waves reached for the wheels. *Zoom!* As the Hornet's bow crashed down, Doolittle was airborne."

Doolittle's plane climbed, leveled off, circled and headed for Japan. During the next hour, the remaining 15 pilots joined their leader. To stay out of the clouds, Dick Knobloch's crew flew about 25 feet above the water in formation with two other planes. About noon, they spotted the Japanese coastline and decided they were too far north. They turned south.

Many of the pilots encountered anti-aircraft fire as they drew closer to their targets. Knobloch's plane climbed to 1,500 feet to avoid being hit, then dropped to release its bombs over a Japanese naval base.

Three groups of Japanese fighters pursued Doolittle's plane about 10 miles north of Tokyo. As he reached the center of the city, there was intense anti-aircraft fire, but neither his plane nor any others were damaged seriously. Most of the crews found their targets — an aircraft carrier in dry dock, machine shops, aircraft manufacturers, oil and gasoline storage facilities, refineries, power plants and steel mills. Inevitably, a few bombs damaged residential areas near the Raiders' intended military and industrial targets. However, Doolittle had instructed the crews not to drop bombs on civilians intentionally. Still, post-raid Japanese propaganda claimed the American planes focused on schools and hospitals.

Japanese fighters pursued nine of the bombers as they flew west away from Japan. All managed to escape. As fuel supplies dwindled, the pilots feared they might not make it to China before their tanks emptied.

An unexpected tail wind helped the bombers across the stormy China Sea. Most of the planes were over land before they ran out of fuel. Knobloch and his crew members had flown 100 miles beyond Chuchow airfield before they bailed out into what they feared might be the ocean.

Lost and out of gas, 11 of the pilots instructed their crews to bail out. Four planes crash-landed along the coast. The crew in plane No. 8, which was burning fuel at an alarming rate, realized it couldn't make it to China and headed for Russia. Though Russia was an ally in Europe, the Soviets were not at war with Japan and did not want American bombers landing in their country. The Russians confiscated the B-25 and held the crew for a year.

The crews bailing out in the darkness landed in rice paddies, hillsides and small villages. Only one man died in the blind jumps. The Chinese found a number of the pilots and



Doolittle pins a medal on a bomb to be used in the raid.

protected them from Japanese patrols. Fed, sheltered and provided transportation, the Americans slowly made their way to Chuchow.

Knobloch and the men from his plane made it to Chuchow eight days after the raid. They found Doolittle, his crew and eight other crews already there.

The Japanese captured crew members of one plane after they parachuted into Japanese-held territory. Two men were killed in one crash landing, and the three others were captured. Another crash landing severely injured four of the five crew members, but Chinese villagers smuggled the men to a hospital and later to Chungking.

Eight crewmen from two planes captured by the Japanese were imprisoned and tortured. Three Americans were executed, one died in captivity and four others were freed.

Outraged over the aid the Americans had received, the Japanese retaliated by massacring thousands of Chinese peasants in a three-month rampage. Thomas and Jablonski estimate that 250,000 were killed.

Doolittle was disconsolate after the raid. He'd lost all of his planes and several of his men. He expected a court martial. Instead, America called him a hero. The military promoted him to the rank of brigadier general (skipping the rank of full colonel) and ordered him to report to Washington where President Roosevelt presented him with the Medal of Honor. Doolittle reportedly told Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall that he would spend the rest of his life earning it.

THE FIRST OFFICIAL reunion of the Doolittle Raiders took place in April 1946. During the war, groups of fliers had gotten together on the anniversary of their mission, but this was the first time a large number of them could be together. Doolittle hosted the event, which took place at a Miami hotel. The general paid for everything.

"Doolittle had promised us before the raid," says Knobloch, "that if we made it out of there he would throw us the biggest and best party

we'd ever attended. And he did." After that, the Raiders regrouped annually.

"I must say that originally the purpose of getting together was basically to have a hell of a good time," says Knobloch.

Gradually, however, wives began coming and the party calmed down a little. The Raiders started a scholarship fund for a student studying a field related to flight or space in the host cities. This year's recipient is Fusun Susan Keller, 24, a University of New Mexico junior majoring in engineering.

Knobloch says an especially solemn moment was added to the festivities a few years ago when officials from one host city presented the Raiders with 80 silver goblets. Each goblet is engraved twice with a Raider's name — once right side up and the other upside down. During the year between reunions, the goblets are on view at the Air Force Academy in Boulder, Colo. Goblets inscribed with the names of Raiders who have died are displayed upside down. Every April, the goblets are sent to the reunion. During a private ceremony, cognac is poured into the silver goblet in front of each man. All rise, and the chairman for that year lifts his glass. "Gentlemen, I propose a toast to those who gave their all in the success of our mission in 1942 and to those who have since joined them — our fondest memories, sincere appreciation and gratitude. May they rest in peace." The rest lift their goblets and answer, "To those who have gone."

Then, says Knobloch, his eyes welling with tears, the goblets of those who have died during the past year are turned upside down.

Forty-six raiders are still alive, and about 30 are coming to Albuquerque. The only Raider who has never missed a reunion is Jimmy Doolittle. This year, he will have a fourth star on his uniform to show off to his old command. In what Dick Knobloch calls an unprecedented act, Congress approved Doolittle's promotion even though he has long since retired from the Air Force Reserve.

Carolyn Jones is an Albuquerque writer.

# Here's one for the books

fiction, non-fiction, national, regional. — *Impact Magazine's* REVIEW OF BOOKS debuts April 23, bringing you the only major book section in New Mexico. Look for reviews and literary news every fourth Tuesday of each month.



*Impact Magazine*

# Review of Books

Beginning April 23 in the Albuquerque Journal.

## Chicano in China

Continued from Page 8

woman comes up to me and says hello in a provocative way. All she wants to do is practice her English.

□ In Beijing a young woman in a bright western suit and red shoes rides her bike in the flow of traffic.

□ We drink our water from Chinese thermos bottles, large bottles far superior to anything made in the United States.

□ The Chinese hotels in the provinces have a most civilized custom: The hot water runs only at certain times during the day, usually in the evening. I find it an admirable practice. Think of all the energy saved by stoking up the hot-water heater only once a day and how happy are all the guests splashing away in unison. Of course, very often when the hot water begins to run, the cold water stops. Some consider this an inconvenience, a technical deficiency in the Chinese. One learns to shrug in China. *Pacencia*, my grandfather would say.

□ The face of a little girl who pauses to rest and look up at me. She is carrying a shoulder basket of coal. Its weight is easily 70 pounds. She is to carry it up to the peak of Green Mountain.

□ Kneec-deep in the water of a rice field, a young girl looks at me. She has the most exquisite face I have ever seen.

□ I have seen only two dogs in China. Extra mouths cannot be fed. There are not flies.

□ An orange telephone that does not work.

□ A Chinese spider on a white wall.

□ A statue of Mao always saluting me.

□ No ice.

### June 4, Wuhan

After dinner, the group hires a bus to take us downtown. Wuhan is really three cities on the banks of the Yangtze; its population is nearly 5 million. A hotel downtown sells Coca-Colas. Served in a glass with ice. We have not had ice in weeks. No cold soda or beer.

The streets are packed with people. It is a hot and humid evening, and it seems that all the people have poured out into the streets for fresh air. There is no fresh air, but there is a friendly feeling to the masses of people who throng the streets. They sit on stools or chairs in front of their shops or houses. Parents buy popsicles for their children; there is a long line at the soft-drink shop. I buy three oranges and a white hat for Patricia. Walking the streets is an enjoyable experience. After a day's rest and much needed solitude, one can return to the man-swarm. This is the China I will remember in my future dreams. The hot, humid streets, the masses of people, the quiet, the few neon lights, people at their shops, the well-stocked depart-

ment stores that we enter in awe, the fires where people are cooking rice, the end of the day, a feeling of community.

### June 5

China is not for the weak. Our tour has been strenuous. Today we don't leave for the airport until 10 a.m., an easy morning, but our 12:20 p.m. flight to Shanghai is delayed. For three hours, we sit in an unbearably hot, humid waiting room, packed with Chinese travelers. When we are finally loaded on a bus, we drive out to the runway where three planes sit. We have to wait again in the boiling bus while someone decides which plane will take us to Shanghai. Our plane is an old, converted cargo plane. The smiling hostess hands us fans when we enter. We sit in the boiling sun while the plane is fueled. We say our prayers. The plane can fly, but just barely. It groans. It creaks as I have never heard a plane creak before.

### June 6, Hangzhou

After a tiring train trip, we arrived in Hangzhou last night. This morning, we drive through the tree-lined streets of Hangzhou to go to West Lake, a huge park within the city. We board a boat and cruise the lake. The breeze is cool. The water of the lake is clear. There are boaters out, even three wind surfers, one on water skis. All is quiet and peaceful, the green park surrounds us. In the distance, the green hills. Chinese families also enjoy the park, a perfect place for lovers. The trees are sculptured, the bushes neatly trimmed, the grass cut, the pavilions placed throughout the walks. Small bridges span the waters.

At the end of our walk, we come to an area on the lake that is full of golden carp. They are swimming on the surface, their golden bodies glistening in the bright sunlight. The people feed them bread crumbs.

Long ago as a small boy growing up in Santa Rosa, I saw these golden carp. I wrote a legend of the people who were turned into golden carp and the god who came to live with them. Now, I see the man-swarm in the water, the same man-swarm I have seen in the rice fields of China, on the packed streets, in the train stations of Hangzhou, and in their midst I see a huge golden carp. This is as close as I came to saying that a god lives in our midst.

In the evening, we dine at a seven-course banquet given for us by the Chinese Sports Association. It is one of the best meals we have had. The food is delicate here, not harsh and greasy. We are served a red wine made of rice, slightly sweet. It is exquisite. I drink wine. I make a lot of toasts. We eat lotus seeds served in a sugared water. The lotus seeds are like soft kernels of hominy. The lotus is the plant of the Buddha. To eat lotus seed is to eat soul food — a delicacy we have not

encountered before. Like eating posole for Christmas in New Mexico.

After dinner, we wander around the grounds of the hotel, here called a "guest house for foreigners." We stumble into a ballroom where a dance is going on, 50 cents cover charge. The band reminds me of a Mexican *conjunto* — saxophone, accordion, drums, guitar, violin. In fact, the first melody we hear is like a Mexican *ranchera*. It is like being back home at a wedding dance or in some small village dance hall. Patricia and I waltz out onto the dance floor and do a fast *ranchera*, hips swinging to the good old *ranchera* tune. We are the only ones on the floor.

Later, we waltz. I am not a dancer, but in China, I can dance anything. Red rice wine rhythm. The Chinese do not dance much. Again, the Cultural Revolution hangs over us. A whole new generation must be taught to dance. What a pity. The letting go of the spirit of the dance is necessary for joy, for creativity, for renewal of the spirit. China! Learn to dance! Here, I will clap for you!

*Allá en el rancho grande,  
Allá donde vivía  
Había una rancherita,  
Que alegre me decía ...*

Too much red wine, but I am full of joy again. A Chicano singing in Spanish in Hangzhou. If there is one thing we could transport to China, I would take them our idea of fiesta: letting go, dancing, a good time. China, let your hair down. Sometimes I fear the Marxist doctrine is such a heavy load to carry. It needs a heavy infusion of our fiesta.

June 7

This morning it is raining and we make our way in the cool, refreshing rain to visit a tea brigade. The commune is large, 10 of the 12 brigades raise tea, the famous Longjing Tea. (The dragon-well tea.)

The brigade leader, a striking man, gives us an excellent lecture on the composition of the commune, a unit of government that is in the process of becoming something akin to a township. Units, brigades, township, commune, ruled by a party unit, an economic or production unit, all overseen by an appointed governmental unit. It seems the politics of the commune, such as they are, are not so difficult to understand when broken down into small parts. The missing ingredients are free choice, votes, initiative.

We sit and drink the aromatic tea. Outside the rain falls. I think of home, I wish rain for my garden. I think of the wall I must build. A wall around my home, as China built the wall around her borders. Fear of foreign ghosts? Is that why we build walls?

The afternoon is still cloudy, but the fine mist only serves to enhance the green hills and stream that surround the Monastery of the Spirit's Retreat, a Buddhist temple. Here resides a giant sta-

tué of the Buddha and his four guardians. The most interesting statue is a giant rendering of the Goddess of Mercy standing on the head of a golden carp that comes out of the waters. Around the goddess are sculptures of a young boy approaching a master in 53 different positions. Ming tells us that the Buddha, as a young boy, went to 53 masters, seeking the true path. All refused to teach him. The goddess took mercy and taught him. Looking up at her sculpture, I am reminded of altars I have seen in Mexican baroque churches. The Goddess of Mercy looks very much like La Virgen de Guadalupe standing on her moon. The babes in limbo surround the feet of the Virgin Mary, the 53 young Buddhas surround the Goddess of Mercy. World religions

meet at these archetypal points of reference. I make the sign of the cross on my forehead. The worshippers of the Buddha burn incense sticks and kowtow, clasping their hands and bowing to acknowledge the Buddha.

After our spiritual trip we take tea at Jade Stream, a lovely teahouse in the Botanical Gardens. What a treat it is to drink tea and eat a sweet, delicate paste made of lotus roots. We order ice cream, the first we've had in weeks.

But the marvel of the teahouse is its small pool. It has two or three dozen large, golden carp swimming in it. We sit in wicker chairs and drink our tea and enjoy the graceful ballet of the golden fish. Yes, I have returned to the land of the golden carp. I have

returned home. My pilgrimage is complete.

Suddenly, right before me, the largest of the carp, a yellow fish well over 3 feet long, dives to the bottom of the pond and then comes up, leaping out of the water into the air, splashing the spray in a lunge of joy. Showing off. I like to think his jump is for me.

June 10, Shanghai

In the afternoon, I wander alone in the people's park. It is full of people. But still it is a respite from the packed streams of people in the streets. I love people, I need the security of their dense numbers, I need to feel with them, to become part of them. But I need to breathe, to assert myself. I was raised in the tradition of the independent Hispanic, the *ranch-*

*eros* and *vaqueros* who are part of the community but have a big streak of independence. Order for us creates anarchy in our hearts. Mao would have had a hard time organizing the Chicanos.

I seek solitude in the park. I watch families and their children, young lovers, the old sitting in the shade of towering trees. I smile at all. They smile at me. I wave. I am going home in a few days. Good-bye, they wave, we are glad to have had a Chicano in China. ■

Rudolfo A. Anaya is the author of *Bless Me Ultima* and other novels. He lives in Albuquerque and teaches at the University of New Mexico. An expanded version of *The Journal of a Chicano in China* is forthcoming from UNM Press.



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