



Supervisor Chu was elected to the Board of Supervisors in November 2008 to serve as the city's representative to the Sunset/Parkside District. Currently, Supervisor Chu serves on the Board of Supervisors' Budget & Finance Committee, is the Chair of the Plans and Programs Committee of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) and serves as a Director with the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District.

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## Guest Column by Carmen Chu, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

As one of the largest and oldest Asian American civil rights and community empowerment organizations in the United States, I am both honored and humbled to be able to contribute a guest column to the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, San Francisco Lodge.

For many, 2009 will be remembered as a monumental year. In 2009, this country swore into its highest office, the first African American President of the United States, Barack Obama. National appointments of individuals like Steven Chu and Sonia Sotomayor, continue to underscore the impressive contributions of our diverse communities. And for the first time in history, San Francisco, a City with over 30% Asian American residents, elected three Chinese American representatives under district elections to San Francisco's legislative branch of government, the Board of Supervisors.

As much as there is to celebrate, it is important to take the time to remember that minorities and, in particular, Chinese Americans weren't always able to participate fully in this country. With the 66 year anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act coming upon us this December, it is timely to remember anti-Chinese laws were pervasive at all levels – federal, state and local. Federal exclusions on immigration, state laws against ownership and marriage and even local legislation restricting work opportunities and commerce all sought to discriminate against the Chinese community.

While many of these discriminatory laws have since been repealed, we are just beginning to publicly acknowledge and reverse this history. Recently, California Assembly member Paul Fong passed landmark legislation that apologized for the State's history of supporting racist laws and recognized the significant contributions of Chinese Americans in the State of California.

In September 2009, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed a resolution acknowledging the City's own history in advancing discriminatory policies. In fact, San Francisco's influence carried to the federal level when a San Francisco congressman authored and passed the Geary Act, setting the stage for the extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act beyond 1892. This policy was finally repealed on December 17, 1943, around World War II, when the United States and China became allies. Now, December 17<sup>th</sup> is recognized annually in California as a "Day of Inclusion" and of appreciation for the immigrant community through the work of Assembly member Mike Eng.

Indeed, we do not need to look further than our own experiences and the stories of our families to remember that we still have work to do. Reflecting back, I can still remember neighbors shutting their doors and drawing close their curtains as my sister and I approached with fresh take out menus for our family restaurant. It was a time after the Rodney King verdicts, after a Korean American store owner was sentenced for the shooting and killing of an African American youth, and after many days of rioting, looting, and arson. Some checked to make sure we weren't Korean before accepting a menu – that was as recent as 1992.

Remembering our past reminds us that our common experiences are always taking new shape and more instructively, that each one of us are responsible for adding new pages to our history books. At a memorial this year, we gathered to celebrate the life and work of Ronald Takaki. As a student I never forgot how much it meant to me to read *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* and to see experiences like that of my family written as part of American history. We know that the richness of the Chinese community is not found just in museums or in Chinatown. It's also found in the rainbow of businesses lining Geary Street and the early morning Tai Chi and dance groups that exercise in our parks. Just imagine where we can be in another 66 years...

## 朱嘉文市參事的感想

胡慧兒譯

*Translated by Faye Woo Lee*

大埠同源會是亞裔社會中歷史最悠久，規模最大的爭取民權和授權社會的團體。我感到很光榮，也感到受寵若驚，能為大埠同源會的季刊貢獻一篇稿。

許多人認為2009年是令人難忘的年份，因為今年我們有第一位非裔總統奧巴馬就任，他又委任了像Steven Chu和Sonia Sotomayor等的官員。更加顯出不同民族偉大的貢獻。三藩市的居民，有三分之一是亞裔。今年有史以來第一次選出了三位華裔市參事，在本市立法部門，即市參事會，來代表不同的選區。

雖然今年有許多值得慶祝的事，但是我們不要忘記少數民族，尤其是華裔，並不是一直以來，都在美國各方面有平等的機會參加。廢除排華政策的六十六周年將在十二月來臨，我們應該在這日子，回憶以前的歧視人種法律。別忘了那些法律曾經存在每一層政府。聯邦政府的移民法律限制移民，州政府的法律禁止通婚和置業，市政府的法律限制就業和經商的機會。這都是用來針對華人社會的。

雖然這些法律很多都已經廢除，但我們現在才剛開始當眾正色承認它們是歧視人種的法律，開始走和以前歷史相反的方向。最近州眾議員方民忠提議及獲通過了歷史上重要的提案，那是加州政府為以前支持歧視人種法律的行為向華人道歉，同時承認華裔美籍人對加州偉大的貢獻。

在二零零九年，九月，三藩市市參事會通過了一條提案承認本市曾經幫助過歧視人種法律的成立。在1892年代表三藩市的聯邦眾議員Geary提議和獲通過了一條提案，把排華移民例延到過了1892年。這例終於在1943年，十二月十七日廢除。那是第二次世界大戰的時期，中國和美國是同盟。現在因為州眾議員伍國慶的努力，州政府指定每年的十二月十七日為“包含日”。

其實我們不必向遠處看，只想想自己的經驗和我們家人的故事，就知道我們還有許多要做的工作。我記得我和我的姐妹年輕時去拍門派我們餐館新出的外賣餐牌，很多人見了我們就把門關上，窗簾放下。那時正是一個朝鮮裔的商店主人殺了一個黑人Rodney King被判罪之後，跟著有了好幾天的暴動，搶劫和放火。有好些人要查明我們是不是朝鮮人，然後接收我們的餐牌。這只是1992年的事。

記得過去就是提醒自己，我們共同的經驗是常常會變化和有教益的。每一個人都有責任在我們的歷史上加上頁數。今年為了紀念Ronald Takaki，讓我們一起來慶祝他的生命和成就。我永遠都不會忘記學生時期讀過他的杰作Strangers from a Different Shore和A History of Asian Americans，和看到像我的家庭一樣的故事，寫成美國歷史的一部分是何等的感動。我知道華人社會的興盛，不僅在華人博物館和華埠可以看到，從Geary街一系列的各式各樣的生意和早上在公園打太極拳，跳舞，運動的人也可以看到。大家試想一下，再過六十六年後，我們將會到了什麼境界呢？