

The following objects are symbols of connection given by diverse residents of Manawatū who share Southern Chinese ancestry. They have many ancestries and affiliations including Māori, Cook Island Māori, Samoan, Cambodian, Fijian, Kiribati, and Burmese. This booklet includes their brief stories of connection in relation to their objects.

1.



## **The Mck-Joe's Whānau:**

We are a blended family coming from a mixture of nationalities. Māori, Chinese, Cook Island Māori and NZ European.

### **Food Platter**

A dish with a variety of foods on it.

This fruit platter is a good representation of all of our family's ethnicities mixing as one. An integration of different cultural practices, each maintaining their separate identities. Each piece of fruit adding value and flavour. Each equally delicious with different tastes and textures. A diverse masterpiece.

Diversity is beautiful, it gives us strength and keeps life interesting.

2.



**Z.Foon:**

My heritage is a mix of Chinese & Fijian descent who are living in Fiji. I think I am blessed to be a mix of two different cultures and to have some knowledge of my history from both sides of my family. I enjoy listening to stories from my elders or grandparents about my heritage.

When we were kids back in Fiji, we would help my grandmother fold these gold/silver/copper paper to take to the cemetery. We do this every year with my nana's side of the family, they would clean their parents\* graves and place new fresh flowers & we would burn the paper on the grave. I wonder if my grandparents would want us to do this practice for them when they pass, I think I would travel home every year to do this.

I love & respect my grandparents so much, they've given us everything. I would only want to give back to them.

### 3.



#### **Florence Molimau Malama:**

Growing up, rice was always my food staple to eat with everything. As a Samoan family consisting of my parents and my 4 brothers, taro and green bananas were the go-to staples to eat with everything. However, for me I just loved rice and wanted to eat it with all my meals so my dad always made sure I had a pot of rice for dinner and Sunday koga'i after church. Reflecting on this made me think this may have been my Chinese heritage coming through.

4.



**Matthew Faumuina Malama:**

I've always loved cooking and steaming was my go-to. I started a pork and lamb bun business over a year ago; I use the steamer for my buns and have always had a connection with this convention of cooking.

5.



## **Andrew Tse (謝子安):**

There is a well known Chinese proverb that outlines the essentials of life, of which food or sustenance is one. Hence in Chinese the words for rice and food are sometimes used as the same to show that importance. In Cantonese, "Sik Fan" means to "come to eat" or "eat rice".

The rice bowl is a very important piece which can be found in every family. Like the traditional Chinese cleaver, rice cooker, chopsticks, etc., it is normally an item that is gifted when you leave your family home, and stays within your possession for your entire lifetime.

There are many designs, but there is one which is found commonly in NZ; it is the blue design with a Dragon or Chrysanthemum flower which has translucent sections which depict rice grains.

The traditional rice bowl is made to fit within your hand, with a recessed base which you secure with your fingers. Not only used to hold rice during meals, but to hold offerings for honoring the gods "Bai Sun", and also as a "measure" quantity for Chinese baking, similar to a "cup".

The Chinese porcelain spoon allowed you to consume hot soup, without the typical transfer of heat normally exhibited by the western style metal spoon. It was also the go-to for eating Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) soups, Tofu Custard "Tofu Fa", everything from sweet to savoury.

6.



## **Gerry Lew (劉鴻安):**

Ngā mihi ki ngā tangata katoa, ngā iwi ngā hau e whā, me te tangata whenua o Aotearoa.

Ko **Lau Hung An**, tōku ingoa hainamana. Ko **Gerry**, tōku ingoa pākeha.

America is the land of my birth. However, I didn't grow up amongst people of my heritage, but instead, grew up in an African American neighborhood. However, I recognized that I was different early on, as my parents spoke to me in the Cantonese language, cooked southern Chinese dishes, and had many Chinese cultural objects around the house, and, of course, I looked different from all my playmates. Amongst the household items that I remembered fondly were a pair of lions that I would dust as a child. I was pleasantly surprised to see Chinese lions beside the marae ātea at the entrance to the whareniui at Te Hotu Manawa marae. Besides the lions, I also felt connected to my people via the beauty, simplicity, yet intricate carvings, one of which I gifted to my father before he passed away.

Like many indigenous people growing up in a westernized setting, my siblings and I were not encouraged to learn our language. In fact, the society of the day mocked our language, our physical features, our customs, and made little mention of Chinese civilization or the history of Chinese in America. It has been an honour and blessing to live in Aotearoa, wherein the indigenous language is officially recognized, heard daily, and all have the opportunity now to learn it, and where many Māori taonga are visibly seen throughout the country. And they remind me of the common hardship and struggles of all our tīpuna, and the wonders of our ancient cultures.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.

7.



**Ung Siv Leang (黃秀俚):**



My paternal grandparents, standing in front of a studio backdrop of Angkor Wat in the 1950s. They were the first generation of Teochew Chinese born in Cambodia. My grandmother was still wearing traditional Chinese attire, while my grandfather is dressed in the modern Western fashion of that era. At the time, Cambodia was still part of the French Indochina colony.

During the late 1800s, my ancestors fled Southern China. They were Teochew Chinese; also known as Chao Zhou in Mandarin or Chiu Chow in Cantonese. In the 19th century, the aftermath of events such as civil wars during the Taiping Rebellion (1850 - 1864) and the forced ceding of port towns to Western powers after the Treaty of Tientsin (1858) led to struggling and suffering. Like many Chinese families at the time, sons were sent away to find better opportunities.

My great-grandfather together with his older brother left their village in the coastal region of Chaoshan in Guangdong province (Canton) and made their way across the South China Sea into Vietnam, before crossing through to Laos. Armed with resilience, they followed whatever work was available and finally settled along the Mekong River in Kampong Cham province, Cambodia (Kampuchea). Even though times were tough for them, they continued to send support back to China in the form of letters accompanied with remittance ("kieu poi" - 僑批) for their families that were still worse off.

My grandparents had a general grocery store and my grandfather was a tailor. My father was one of seven children and received a good education in Chinese and Khmer. In his twenties, my father married my mother. She is also of Southern Chinese descent, with Hokkien and Dai Chinese ancestry. Her family had been established in Kampuchea many generations before. They made their living by selling petrol for Shell and latex from their rubber plantation to the French. The family's future was bright until civil war erupted in 1970,

dividing the nation. When the American B52 war planes were dropping bombs near our hometown, we became displaced. By 1975, the war ended and gave way to the Khmer Rouge era, led by Pol Pot. People of Chinese descent and other minority ethnic groups were badly treated and killed, their languages were banned. Many people died, including my two sisters.

My family escaped to Thailand by foot and found a new life as illegal migrant workers, before being rounded up into refugee camps. Fortunately we were given the opportunity to resettle in other countries. Having a family member already residing in New Zealand helped speed up the process for our residency application here. My family of eight arrived in New Zealand in 1981.

Like our ancestors, we too, came to the new land with only the clothes on our backs. We quickly learned to adapt, assimilate and integrate in our new society. My parents and sister worked in the factories 12 hours a day and 6 days a week to get more money, so that we could buy a house and a car. Also to send some to our struggling relatives, living in Thailand and Vietnam refugee camps, and those still left behind in Cambodia. Eventually some of them were granted residency in New Zealand, including my grandmother. Many of our relatives went to the USA, France and Australia. Meanwhile, my siblings and I studied hard at schools and we have graduated from nursing, teaching and engineering.

My name is Ung Siv Leang (黃秀俚), I am of the Teochew diaspora. I am the third of eight children and the third generation of Teochew Chinese born in Cambodia, but sadly I was not taught the language. Still my husband and I, who is also a Teochew, maintain our unique identity and continue to practice some of our customs, culture and cuisine. I am happy to see my two children are doing the same.

After more than 4 decades of living here, where my children and grandchildren are born, I feel my family has rooted deeply to be moved to anywhere else. My grandmother lived to see five generations, and was 95 years old when she died. I not only feel connected to New Zealand and the people I love here, but also I feel connected to my ancestors in Chaoshan, a coastal area with an abundance of seafood and home-grown vegetables, similar to what I have now.

I am hopeful that my mixed race grandchildren and future generations will continue to be proud of their heritage no matter where they live.



8.



# Mike Lowe 劉冠雄

## Moon Cake Mould

The moon cake mould is symbolic of our mother's exceptional cooking skills. The creation of many mouth-watering kitchen delicacies for her family was her forte that could not be excelled. No delicacy was too much effort, and when we were old enough, we children gradually stepped-in to assist.

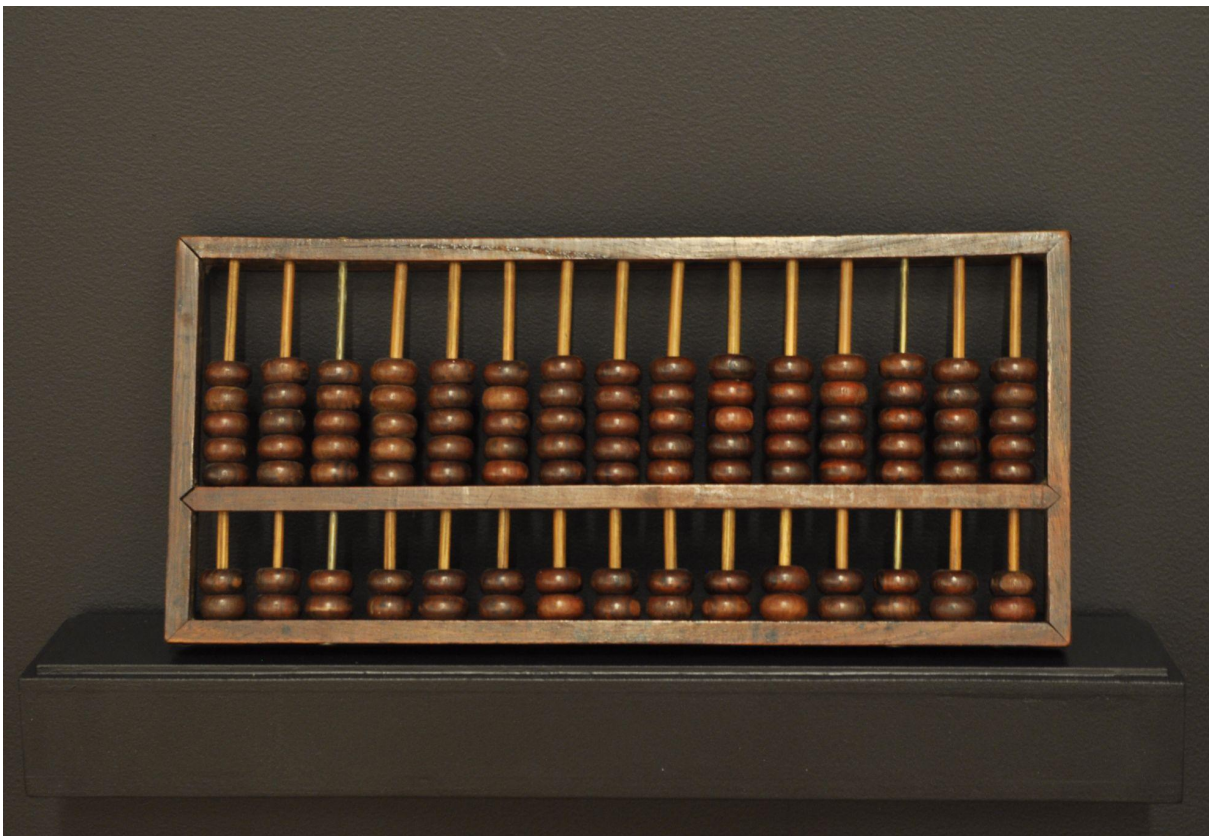
Most delicacies were created from scratch, and she often took pride in gifting them to her friends and clansmen. Little did they know that they only got to see her successes. The burnt, misshaped or otherwise failures were fed to her family, who did not care because they still tasted fantastic.

Mooncakes are a Chinese pastry item or dessert made and consumed to celebrate the Mid-Autumn (also Moon Festival and Mooncake Festival). Traditionally the festival celebrates the end of the autumn harvest which is linked to the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar.

The festival is celebrated among friends and at family gatherings, and mooncakes are shared between those who are gathered. They are extremely energy dense and should be treated as just a sweet treat.

There are a variety of filling flavours, but two of the more popular ones are red bean paste, and lotus seed paste combined with a salted duck egg yolk. Rounded moulds which symbolise the moon are lined with handmade pastry, after which the filling is pressed. A pastry topping which has a Chinese character imprinted into it competes the case, which is then washed with beaten egg and baked.

9.



# Mike Lowe 劉冠雄

## Abacus

The abacus is a calculating tool that was used by **Lowe Kuo Yow** to maintain the family business's financial records. Such information was then periodically passed on to a professional accountant for the preparation of financial statements.

It has its origins in ancient times and is still in use today in some cultures. It is used to carry-out mathematical functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, as well as square and cube roots.

### *Lowe Kuo Yow (b 4 June 1911 – d 27 June 1983)*

Our father, Lowe Kuo Yow, was born on 4 June 1911 to Lowe Shew Sam and Mei Fung, in the village of Sek Har in Jung Seng County, Guangdong, China. In his early adult life, he worked at various labouring jobs and studied accountancy in Canton (Guangzhou) City. It was difficult for him to find sustained employment and relied heavily on remittances sent to him by his father. In 1940, aged approximately 29 years old, his father arranged for him to immigrate to Aotearoa New Zealand, where he most likely worked in his father's fruit and vegetable business in Avondale, Tamaki Makaurau Auckland.

Lowe Shew Sam arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1919, aged about 35 years from Guangdong, and paid the £100 Poll Tax. He purchased the

shop in 1937 and died in Tamaki Makaurau in 1953. Lowe Kuo Yow gained ownership of the shop when Lowe Shew Sam died.

***Wong Tsui Mei (b 22 December 1920 – d 10 August 1998)***

Our mother, Wong Tsui Mei, was born on 22 December 1920 to Wong Lum Hing and Loo Peng Shung, in the village of Gwa Leng in Jung Seng County, Guangdong, China. She was educated in her village school and Canton City. When she completed her education, her duties were domestic where she assisted her mother at home. Sometime after the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), her mother, brother and three sisters became refugees in their own country. They were forced to flee from place to place to avoid Japanese aggression, eventually finding refuge in Hong Kong.

Wong Tsui Mei's father, Wong Lum Hing (Tien Gun), arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1907 as a 19-year-old. He arranged passage for our mother to join him in Tamaki Makaurau Auckland, in 1941. Wong Tsui Mei worked in different fruit and vegetable businesses until 1951, when she married our father. She assisted our father in the day to day running of the family business, Sam Lowe Fruiterer.

Three children were born to the marriage: Michael (Lowe Gwoon Hoong), Alwyne (Lowe Cheel Gwung) and Sandra (Lowe Lay Gwung).

***Connections Between Southern China and Oceania***

The strongest motivator for my parents to emigrate to Aotearoa New Zealand was simply survival. At the time of their decision to depart

China, their homeland was being ravaged by imperial Japan. Amongst the death and destruction, there was no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow if one was a war refugee. It was only at the intervention of their respective grandfathers that they were offered a chance to escape the turmoil and begin a new life that hopefully would allow them to survive and take advantage of new opportunities.

My parents were far from the earliest immigrants from China. Those were the goldminers who came in 1866 to extract the hard gold; the easiest pickings had already been taken. When finally, the gold ran out, some miners moved on to grow vegetables in market gardens or ran small family businesses in fruit and vegetable shops and laundries.

These immigrants were almost entirely from Southern China, however, the area was so geographically large, that although they could be described as being mostly Cantonese, there was a big variation in the language dialects spoken.

At the time of my parents\* arrival and all through our childhood, it would be fair to say that they contributed a lot to the economy of Aotearoa New Zealand. Market gardeners and fruit and vegetable shop owners provided a product that was in great need during the war years and beyond.

They worked very hard and long hours, often involving children as part of the enterprise. Apart from statutory holidays and Sundays, there were no days off. They kept their heads down and did not want to create a

fuss. I think Pākeha New Zealanders who thought about it would have realised that the Chinese perhaps deserved the fruits of their labours.

Our mother somehow was able to grasp more than a basic ability to speak English, and more so than our father. She was very sociable and was perhaps more Westernized than some of her friends. Mostly through her personality, our family was able to develop close friendships with pākeha who we came into contact with in the shop. Her relative ease at moving between the Chinese and pākeha worlds was instrumental in helping to increase understanding between the two cultures. Without this I believe our interactions with our customers would have been just transactional, rather than transformational. The majority of our pākeha business and social contacts were neutral to our presence. Although instances of open prejudice were largely gone, there was a sense that our family's presence in the community was tolerated but rarely overtly welcomed.

We were encouraged to join pākeha sport clubs like tennis, rugby and football, and bring our friends home to share in sumptuous food that they had never experienced before.

In the early 1970s, supermarkets began to exert a more dominating presence in the food and grocery sector. My father in particular had a drive to send my sisters and I back to China to complete our education. We were not keen on the idea of going to a foreign country. My father also offered the business to me to take over the reins, but I was not keen on the long hours and hard work, so declined. With the writing on the

wall, our parents recognised that my sisters and I had sadly lost our Chinese identity. We had become kiwis, and so with that they sold the business and retired.

That momentous decision paved the way for we three to forge our own lives and raise families in the dominant western culture, all the while helping to continue breaking down barriers between the two cultures by taking opportunities to increase understanding; in short working to become rangatira in our communities.