

# Dr James Ng

Contributed by Lachlan  
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Ng Fon and his family in New Zealand.  
James Ng.

## The early arrivals.

After the Cantonese goldseekers came to Otago-Southland and the West Coast in the late 1860s and 1870s, a new generation of male sojourners arrived from Guangdong province, China, in the 1880s and early 1890s. They were sons and kin (&quot;ting take&quot;;) of the goldseekers and also independent new immigrants, since the entry polltax to New Zealand for Chinese was only £10. About 1100 arrived between 1886-96,(1) before a new £100 polltax drastically reduced their coming for several years. They originated especially from the counties of Panyu, Taishan and Zengcheng in Guangdong province. Included was an unknown number - perhaps one to two dozen - of the Ng clan from Taishan county (which was part of the county grouping known as &quot;Seyip&quot; or &quot;Four counties&quot;). The Ngs arrived from the north, east and south of Taishan, of whom those from the south around Shen Jacka (Sheung Chak) market town in the Onn Foonb (Duen Fun, Duanfen) district (jung) came in the largest number over time. Prior to their coming, very few Taishan Ngs were in the New Zealand goldfields.(2) In Chinese, our &quot;Ng&quot; is written like &quot;Five&quot;; in English, &quot;Ng&quot; was probably the American spelling of the Cantonese pronunciation of our name, but &quot;Ng&quot; and its Mandarin equivalent &quot;Wu&quot; are also used for similarly sounding other clans.

Since small-claim goldmining was in decline, it appears that most of the new Taishan Ng immigrants first gathered in Wellington where they joined other Cantonese in the laundry trade(3) and other work. This was at the time when Wellington was replacing Dunedin as a main port and as the chief base of the Chinese in New Zealand. It was also at the beginning of Chinese laundry work in New Zealand, because the first four Chinese laundrymen were recorded in the census in 1891. They probably followed the Cantonese laundry example set in California, which had a substantial immigration of goldseekers and other workers from Guangdong. The earliest known Ng laundry in this country was named &quot;Fon Lee&quot;, which was almost on the left corner of the harbour side of Taranaki St. as it reaches Courtenay Pl., Wellington. Fon Lee was first mentioned in Wise&quot;s New Zealand Post Office Directory in 1898;(4) in the 1900s it shifted across Courtenay Pl. to 59 Taranaki St.

Another early Ng laundry in Wellington was named &quot;Jim Lee&quot;, at 128 (later 151) Willis St. A Wellington laundryman named &quot;Jim Lee&quot; was naturalised on 15 December 1893 and he probably represented this laundry. However, the Jim Lee laundry was not mentioned in Wise&quot;s till 1902, although the directory had listed Chinese businesses in Willis St. from 1892-93. Indeed, in 1896-97, 128 Willis St. was occupied by &quot;Long Yung&quot;, fruiterer, and in 1900 by &quot;Sing Chong&quot;, another fruiterer. Therefore Jim Lee probably existed in another street in its earliest years. Evidently the founder of Jim Lee was Looi (Loie, Louis) Garr Jim, who was from north Taishan county and related to Ngs there.(5) This must have predisposed him favourably to the Ng clan. At an unknown date he sold to Ng Yee Tollc (birth name Ng Loong Toon [Ng Lung Tong], from Wing Ond village, south of Taishan city close to Shen Jack town in the Onn Foon district). In all, Ng Yee Toll and three of his four brothers came to New Zealand, of whom Ng Yee Foone (birth name Ng Loong Thui) and Ng Yee Himf have thriving descendants in Wellington (and a grandson of the other brother Ng Yee Ben has recently arrived in New Zealand). Ng Yee Toll was the youngest (fifth) brother; he had a son and grandson who went to America.(6) The brothers opened two branch laundries in Willis St., one of which was called &quot;Wing Kee&quot; at 119 Willis St., and the other, &quot;Wing Hing&quot; at 241 Willis St.(7) The latter branch was later bought by Ng Yee Jemg (birth name Ng Wing Fook, of Gim Jeong village, east of Taishan city in the Thee Guell [Sia Kau, Sijiu] district); in 1947 he changed it to the &quot;Wing Hing&quot; store and in the next year shifted to Vivian St. This was the only Ng merchant shop in New Zealand. Ng Yee Jem&quot;s father was working in Sydney but could not get his son into Australia. He met Ng Yee Toll who suggested Wellington instead. Upon landing there in 1920, Ng Yee Jem went on to market gardening at the Sue Lee garden in Timaru for a year or two before returning to Wellington to work in the Jim Lee laundry. In 1935 he returned to China where he opened a factory making cane furniture but in 1937 he came back to Wellington because of the onset of the Sino-Japanese war.(8)

Other Ng arrivals to Wellington had to explore openings in laundering or market gardening in Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, Gore and Invercargill, a movement which occurred about the turn of the 20th century(9) and is traced in Rev. A. Don&quot;s Roll of Chinese, 1883-1913.(10) The circumscribed range of Chinese businesses (chiefly market gardens, fruitshops-cum-groceries and the newly emergent laundries) meant that the new openings caused harsh competition between Chinese - usually from different county groupings. It was not easy to open up new businesses either, &quot;for few Chinese could or would [readily] lend

capital&rsquo;. (11) The Christchurch, Oamaru, Dunedin and Invercargill ventures failed in so far as they did not lead on to a continuity of work for other Ngs. But until the 1950s, the Taishan Ngs were still chiefly to be found in Wellington, Ashburton, Timaru and Gore - and one new centre, Gisborne. (12)

Gore has the best known story so far of Ng involvement. The town itself is near to the Waikaia and Waikaka goldfields and had a long history of Cantonese itinerants who sought gold in nearby streams, or worked on surrounding farms or in the town itself. (13) Perhaps as far back as the 1880s, a Chinese market garden was established near the Mataura River in Bury St., south Gore, by members of the Chin clan from Taishan, principally from in and about &lsquo;Sui Nam&rsquo; township in the Nam Tang district west of Taishan city. Rev. Don&rsquo;s Roll reveals that the Chins from Siu Nam came to the Otago goldfields and sought gold particularly in the Macetown, Arrowtown, Teviot and Orepuki areas. They left the exhausted goldfields to work in Invercargill, Gore and Dunedin in market gardens and laundries. Chin Lim (birth name Chin York Lum or Chan Yuk Lam; adult name Chin Chee Ark or Dakh; father of Chin Bing Fooni [adult name Chin Chung Yip] of Dunedin) was the head of eight gardeners in the Gore garden. (14) In 1902-03, there were known to be three other Chinese in Gore; a fellmonger, a (?hotel) cook and a cabinet maker named Chung Yung, plus 20 Chinese men working south of Gore at the Edendale estate, (15) besides the mentioned garden. Don&rsquo;s Roll indicates that there also may have been another Gore market garden run mainly by men from Panyu county, but it appears to have closed about 1909 or 1910.

Then in 1905, two Taishan Ngs arrived in Gore from Wellington and opened a laundry named &lsquo;Jou Lee&rsquo;, in the northern part of Main St. on the corner of Irwell St. (16) One of the two left for China in 1910 and was succeeded by my grandfather, also from Wellington. (17) His birth name was Ng Tong Fonj (meaning &lsquo;Pine Joy&rsquo;, as Don recorded him) and his adult name Ng Yee Gunn, k but he was usually known as Ng Fon. The &lsquo;Yee&rsquo; of his adult name was a generational indicator of the Ngs of Taishan, just as &lsquo;See&rsquo; was for the next generation (according to the generational sequence, represented in New Zealand so far: Moon, Hok, Yee, See, Shang, Say and Soo).

Ng Fon in New Zealand.

Ng Fon (c.1868-1927), was naturalised as &lsquo;a labourer&rsquo; in Wellington in August 1905, possibly while working in the Fon Lee laundry. Unfortunately, his papers are missing from the naturalisation files in the National Archives. We believe he worked in this laundry and owned a third share in an unidentified Wellington laundry. Perhaps he might have even been a founder and shareholder of Fon Lee. Naturalisation meant that he should have been freely able to bring his family to New Zealand, but uncertainties existed regarding immigration practicalities for naturalised Chinese. For example, European officials at the turn of the 20th century were suspicious as to whether the Chinese wives who immigrated were actually married as was claimed. They had to each pay the enormous polltax of £100, which was refunded after another marriage ceremony here. But the refund usually required legal help and a long interval. The China-born children were only included in the naturalisation process if they came to or resided in New Zealand during infancy (increased in 1910 to residence at 12 years or older). The Ah Lum v. the Crown case, 1915, reveals more difficulties regarding Chinese naturalisations. It seems, therefore, that Ng Fon chiefly used his status as a non-alien to purchase land for the market gardens he was later involved with (in Gore and Allenton). (18)

Like Ng Yee Toll and his brothers, Ng Fon was born in or near the village of Wing On (nicknamed &lsquo;Ox Horn Dragon&rsquo;), one of the cluster of Ng villages near the Shen Jack and Shane Mul market towns in the Onn Foon district of south Taishan county, west of the town and district named Towshan (Tau Shan, Doushan). Shen Jack was the older and more prosperous mart of the two; it was based on the local Chin clan and situated at the entry point of many villages, whereas closeby Shane Mu appears to be a newer mart founded by the Ng clan in a less favoured locality. (19) Ng Fon&rsquo;s father (Ng Hok Yee), m and mother were peasants who were so poor, &lsquo;they lived in a shack in the fields&rsquo; (which signified that they had very little, so even robbers passed them by). But they had four fine sons and the mother&rsquo;s brother of the Chin clan in Kee Shan village had returned from the United States. At that time, a major career option for Cantonese young men was to seek earnings in sojourns overseas with periodic returns home. For many, it was the only way they could accumulate capital. The story goes that the uncle in Kee Shan loaned Ng Fon, the fourth son, the passage money to emigrate. This was around 1880, when Ng Fon was about 12 years old. That Uncle Chin&rsquo;s own family was represented in New Zealand by Chin Meng Yee, n a fruiterer and leader of the Chinese in Gisborne. (20)

Ng Fon&rsquo;s eldest brother, a bachelor whose name is now forgotten, went to the United States and returned home at the end of his life. His second brother, Ng Yee Depo (birth name, Ng Tong ?Thui), went to the United States and then came to New Zealand; he had four sons (the &lsquo;King&rsquo; brothers). The third brother, Ng Yee Gnamep, stayed home and died young but had an adopted son (Ng See Coonq, birth name Ng Gnoon Shing, Charlie King). Ng Fon did the best overseas and it was he who enabled (&lsquo;haw&rsquo;) Ng Yee Dep and a first cousin, Ng Yee Choonr (who had gone to Singapore; his father and Ng Hok Yee were brothers), to come to New Zealand. (21) Their sons, and the son of the third brother, followed them here.

Meanwhile, the overseas remittances and savings taken home enabled Ng Fon&rsquo;s parents to begin building a new home and around it a new village arose named &lsquo;Wing Loong&rsquo;s (nicknamed &lsquo;Cheap Chicken Sellers&rsquo; after a sales mistake by Ng Hok Yee), no more than a few hundred metres from Wing On. From Wing Loong, the first tower we come to in Wing On belongs to Ng Yee Toll&rsquo;s family. With the addition of the new village, there are a line of Ng villages named Wing Loong, Wing On, Wing Lokt (nicknamed &lsquo;Pineapple&rsquo;) and Wing Sing, with a few others nearby including I Lim Lee, Hi Lo E and Lai

Toon. Three of these villages - Wing On, Wing Lok and Lai Toon - are called the 'Thum Yik' cluster. In the 1940s, Wing On and Wing Lok were the biggest two local villages (Wing On with about 60 families), and the total population of Ngs in all their villages in the vicinity was about 2000. By then Wing Loong had nine families. Presently the villages have called upon their overseas members to contribute to concreting their portion of the local main road and to enlarge and further modernise their combined primary and secondary school at Shane Ma mart. The school is already rated among the top ten Taishan schools. The villages are best known by their nicknames; when Guangdong Television was asked to help the filming of New Zealand Television's 'Legacy' programme in 1985, we were told that there were thirty three villages in Taishan named 'Wing Loong' but only one 'Cheap Chicken Sellers'. Ng Fon also had a sister who married into the Chin clan in Lo See Kwong ('Nest of Mice') village, but none from that village came to New Zealand. My first cousin, Ng Sik Kwun (Richard [Dick] Eng) remembers her, our 'goo por', with 'lily feet'.

First, Ng Fon went to Thursday Island, the busy first Australian stopover for ships from the East bound for Sydney. He became a hotel boy on that island. A family story goes that he found a gold coin and returned it, thereby earning the trust of the proprietess. At about 16, he went to Darwin, where it is recorded that for five years he attended the Methodist mission of Timothy Fay Loie,(22) a north Taishanese evangelist who later (1897) came to Dunedin. Here, he was assistant to Rev. A. Don and may have heard of Ng Fon again and mentioned him to Don. In late 1910, Don himself met Ng Fon in Gore and wrote highly of him.(23) Don recorded that Ng Fon had been back to China three times.

One of these returns (possibly his first, when he married Moy Thee Nuiv) may have been around 1894 or 1895. Ng Sik Kwun remembers the bamboo carrying pole Ng Fon brought back from Darwin and displayed in our village hall. Ng Fon probably first landed in New Zealand in 1896 before the imposition of the £100 polltax in October that year. Our family's memory is that he only paid the £10 polltax. The reasons why he came to New Zealand, it is said, were because of re-entry difficulties to Australia, and because 'he knew Ngs in Wellington'.(24) They were recent arrivals who had re-entry difficulties into America - or so it is believed today. Whether they had any links with Ngs in the Otago and West Coast goldfields is unknown - probably not in the main, according to my father. In any case - as already indicated - Don's Roll recorded less than a handful of Taishan Ng goldseekers.

Ng Fon's first child, a son, died in early childhood. My father, Ng Sair Gnuiv (born December 1899; adult name Ng See Artx; scholar's name Ng Eng Kwongy; but he usually signed himself in New Zealand as Ng Gnuiv) aged three, was adopted in his place and was known as Ng Fon's second child. This probably meant that Ng Fon went back to China in 1902 or 1903 to adopt Ng Gnuiv. The latter must have been adopted from a displaced, starving family passing through Wing Loong, because my father could not trace his blood parents.

My eldest brother Ng Tak Kwongz (adult name Ng Shang Toon, Norman Ng) experienced a similar occasion in Wing Loong in 1948, when a passing family urged him to take their daughter as his second wife in order to save her from starvation. Ng Gnuiv was followed in the family by Ng Sair Kewa1 (born 1905; adult name Ng See Thoonb1; usually known in New Zealand as Ng or Eng Kew) and then by two daughters Ng Nguet Yanec1 and Ng Qoon Yaned1. The girls married into the Chin and Moy clans respectively and eventually went to the United States (Houston and New York) where they live to this day. Ng Gnuiv helped with their initial overseas fares, an early hurdle for them.

In going to Gore in 1910, Ng Fon may have just come back from a third return to China. On his return he may not have had a place in Wellington because it is remembered that at some period 'he made his Wellington laundry share over to Ng Yee Dep'. Wise's, 1909, noted another Chinese laundry in Gore named 'Chin Kuong', situated next to the Town Hall in Mersey St. It had been started by Chin Tak Yuet in 1908 and sold to Stanley Chin Horn (Chin Yu Hon, Chin Hon Yip) in 1912.(25) However this may be, Mrs Lacey's 'Gore Laundry' had closed in 1906, leaving the trade for a time to the two Chinese laundries. Mrs Joyce Donald (b.1921) of Gore told me that early European laundrywomen either went to homes to do washing, or collected it for washing at home or shop. Mrs Donald recalled that in my father's time, Mr and Mrs F. Sinclair's laundry and dye works in east Medway St. did not do starching, which seems to have been acknowledged as a special field of the Chinese. On the other hand, Chinese laundries seldom did dyeing.

The Jou Lee laundry burnt down in 1913(26) and evidently was re-established by my grandfather alone,(27) almost opposite Chin Kuong in Mersey St. Probably Ng Fon was instinctively carrying out a dictum of business, which is to get as close a proximity as possible to a rival. At his old site, or at least on a corner of Irwell St, Agnes Duncan opened a laundry and dye works but closed it in 1916.(28) The Chin Kuong laundry closed in 1917.(29) The Chins' market garden in Gore also suffered disaster in 1913 by being flooded out.(30) Consequently the Chins either abandoned or sold the garden and dispersed to Invercargill and Dunedin, and a new 'Jou Lee' garden, affiliated to my grandfather's laundry, was opened either on the Chins' garden site or near it. At all events, it was 'near the river and abbatoir' on river silt land - the abbatoir was near Bury St. This new garden filled up with Ng clansmen. They came and went (to a large extent because of the sojourner's need to return to China) but Gore gardeners of that generation still remembered were Ng Yee Choon, Ng Yee Feee1 (nicknamed 'Deaf Woon', from I Him Lee village), Ng Yee Dep (for a time) and Ng Hok Jeungf1 (also from I Him Lee). Ng Fon held a dormant share in the garden and observed the rule that only active participants were paid. This garden was never recorded by Wise's or Stone's directories but the Register of Aliens, 1917, listed its six men as follows: Ching

Tee (?Yee Ching or Choon), 48; Yee Fee, 49; Yee Ooo, 59; Emen King (?King or Ng Yee Men), 24; Ching Fong, 40; and Jou Lee, 51.

Other Taishan Ngs had gone to the 'Saltwater Creek garden' ('Harm Sue yun') or 'Sue (Water) Lee (Good Fortune) yun (garden)' in Timaru, despite the competition of perhaps three other Chinese gardens serving that city at Fairview (owned by the Taishan Ma clan), Sandietown and possibly Wilson St.(31) The Ngs at Timaru had bought their garden from Lo Flo, a Panyu man,(32). The first group of Ng owners were chiefly Ng Moon Jem's people (q.v.) from north Taishan, followed in the early to mid-1920s by a second group of Ngs mainly from our Onn Foon district, Taishan. The reason, it is thought, is that with the exception of the pioneer Ng Sar Foo and Ng Moon Jem and perhaps one or two others, the Koon Yat men did not or could not bring their sons and kin to New Zealand. The garden was on the coast by the mouth of Saltwater Creek, which served as the southern boundary of the city. When the writer was a boy, the Sue Lee men's rough dormitory, huts and garages were fronted by a half-dead macrocarpa fence and the whole complex was an eyesore, being on the south side of the creek where the main south road crossed it.(33) By then the garden's land was exhausted and lowered by repeated cropping. By the 1960s, Sue Lee had only three men left(34) to work the property and leased land of the garden, which closed in 1964. But when vegetable prices were high in two or so years in the early 1920s,(35) this Timaru garden reputedly was the most profitable garden in the South Island, earning £300-£400 per year per man for seven shareholders. That may have been the time when Sue Lee had three horse and cart hawking rounds. Thus the stage was set in Gore and Timaru for the coming of the next generation after shipping was normalised following World War I. Much of this information is in Don's Roll of Chinese, directories and the New Zealand Register of Aliens, 1917. Although naturalised, my grandfather and other naturalised Chinese were included in the aliens register, in his case as 'Ing Fong', aged 49.

The sons of Ng Fon.

Ng Gnuai (1899-1982) especially remembered his Ng grandmother (who was a midwife and lived into her nineties) and the uprightness of Ng Fon. The former was blind in her old age and a special bond grew between her and the young, helpful child. He finished secondary school and married Tso Liu Oih1 (married name Ng Tso Shee) of Liu On (Liu On Lee),i1 a village near Di Tong mart, when both were 17 years old. He soon left for Hong Kong. There he studied several months for the reading test (the 'how see' or examination introduced in New Zealand as another immigration barrier in 1907), which was additional to the £100 polltax required for entry into this county. In late 1918 he had just begun the reading test at the quay when the smiling New Zealand Customs examiner clapped him on the shoulder and said he passed. It was a brief time of national goodwill towards Chinese, because China from 1917 had sent 'not far short' of 250,000 men in labour corps to the Western Front and thousands of others to the Middle East war sector.

Two cousins of Ng Gnuai had come before him to the Sue Lee garden in Timaru. They were Ng Yee Dep's two older sons - Ng See Thakj1 (birth name Ng Kane Thun) and Ng See Kwoonk1 (birth name Ng Kane Ngoon). Ng Gnuai arrived in Gore with two other cousins - Ng Hok Jeung's son Ng Sew Nam1 (adult name Ng Yee Ngan, Stanley Nam) and Ng Yee Choon's son Ng Sane Boem1 (adult name Ng See Jem, George Boe). These latter cousins of Ng Gnuai were two of my favourite uncles; Uncle Ng Sew Nam was a tall, calm, fair person despite the fierce image of his father, and Uncle Ng Sane Boe was a happy, kind man. They were joined in Gore in 1919 by Ng See Coon, son of Ng Yee Gname and probably c.1920 by Ng See Bourmen1 (birth name Ng Kane Bor, Jimmy King), the next oldest son of Ng Yee Dep. I have used the self-preferred name of each person; some used their childhood name and others their adult name. The scholar's name was usually used on important occasions.

At Gore, Ng Gnuai principally worked in the Jou Lee market garden. He got 15s and keep each week initially and 30s weekly when he was considered fully able to take up Ng Fon's garden share. Probably the leader of the garden was Ng Hok Jeung, who may have worked in the Fon Lee laundry in Wellington. My father told us how fierce Ng Hok Jeung was. He harnessed the young men to plough the land - because they did not compact the soil as much as the horses, he said - but probably he did this to teach them discipline. Ng Hok Jeung belonged to a generation that did not beat young men but nonetheless had a clear ranking system; he himself is said to be from a well-off family in Taishan.

Ng Kew (1905-83) came in 1920 like Ng Gnuai on the same terms of entry as other Chinese newcomers. Possibly he came earlier than planned because the very favourable exchange rate then prevailing for Chinese money (because of the high price of silver) lessened the impact of the polltax; and because of apprehension about an impending immigration law change later in 1920. The two brothers had gone through the usual immigration procedures because they had lived in China during their childhood, and because Ng Fon had not wanted his sons to enter under privilege for fear they might be conscripted in the future.

Ng Kew was a gentle, contented man who would have been happiest as a scholar. When he departed from Gore he left behind a small number of English books which I used to pore over. He minded his own business. He always regarded my father as his older brother. He lived in the laundry and was the first of the young Ng arrivals in Gore to go to school (to the Gore Primary School, for three years), although he had to work in the laundry before and after school. His close friend was Ng See Gaino1 (birth name Ng Kane Yau; Young King) the youngest son of Ng Yee Dep who was 12 when he came in 1923. Ng See Gain also stayed in the laundry and went to school, while Ng Kew continued learning English with a male European tutor and Mrs Ada Alice Porter, who taught all the young Chinese newcomers in Gore. I still have several of their bilingual dictionaries and phrase books. Ng See Gain wept so at Ng Kew's funeral in 1983. He remembered the tales the young men told each

other; of the uncle who swiped at the lads' chopsticks whenever he felt they were held or used improperly (to pick up food outside the part of the dish facing the person), and another who always became angry whenever someone lifted the lid of the rice pot to see the progress of cooking, 'because this lets the flavour out'. The youngest amongst them was sent to the abattoir to buy pigs' liver, heart, trotters and stomach which otherwise had no sale, and was told to reply 'dog'; whenever the abattoir men asked what they were wanted for. He also recalled an old Chinese miner from Waikaia who visited the Gore Chinese occasionally (he could not remember the name, but it possibly was Lai Kee Hing [or a contemporary named Lai Lung King], another Chinese known as Charlie King), and the hoary (pre-1911) story of my grandfather Ng Fon chasing a European right to the Post Office for pulling his pigtail. This was remembered as a notable event because the constant advice to newcomers (including me) was to put up with jibes and taunts, since actively responding against them usually worsened the situation. Uncle Ng See Gain died in Ashburton in 1989, the second last Ng male of the post-World War I arrivals in the South Island, New Zealand.

The Jou Lee laundry was resited at 22 (west) Medway St. in 1920. Originally this property was rented from Mrs Pullar(36) who may have earlier leased to (or bought from) Mr W.C. Leishman, a bootmaker. In 1939, the small house at 20 Medway St was sold by Mrs Leishman to Roy Turvey, another bootmaker whose son and I became friends. Mr Turvey sold to E.J. Harris, who sold in turn to my father Ng Gnui (under the name Eng Ting - how he got this name is unknown but it seems to have been a version of Ng [Eng] Eng [Ting] Kwong) for our arrival in late 1941.(37) Ng Gnui told me that 'Chinese were able to buy shops [businesses] but not land'; this wartime rule for aliens was introduced in 1942 and rescinded in 1945, so he had bought 20 Medway St. in time. An antique dealer later visited the house and offered a good price for a round dining table left behind by one or other of the previous owners, much to the wonder of my parents. Being of peasant background, they appreciated new, rather than old possessions. This same background, one supposes, underlaid their dislike of having too many trees and high shrubbery. The laundry and house gave us a combined property of half an acre; in the middle of the property was a mature, prolific plum tree and around it we grew potatoes and Chinese vegetables. Today, this land is part of a carpark.

As the sons learnt the skills of market gardening, the fathers departed permanently one by one to China. Ng Yee Choon and Ng Hok Jeung probably were the last two old gardeners to go. Ng Fon himself went back to China for the last time in 1922, leaving his two sons in charge of the laundry. He wished to return to New Zealand one more time to earn enough for the marriage of his second daughter, but Ng Gnui gave assurances he will see to the matter. Ng Fon died in c.1927, after a lit paper balloon, considered an ill-omen, landed on our village property during a festival. Before he left Gore, the laundry was grossing some £8 weekly and £5 net. This was very good income for an one-man laundry (with the after-school help of Ng Kew), but it was possible only because there was no other Chinese laundry in Gore. It had improved to £10 gross around 1925, and once past the Great Depression, to about £20 gross and £10 net. These figures were in the top Chinese income brackets according to the 1936 census. Indeed, the average Chinese employer earned something like £3 net per week in the late 1930s and the sum of £5 net weekly was generally reached only in the early 1940s. The profit was split between the brothers except when one was away in China (again because of the usual rule of our forebears in New Zealand that only working partners were paid).

Ng Fon is remembered as saving half his income (presumably his business income after tax). He was so frugal, Ng Gnui said, he smoked his cigarettes down to the butt and collected these to roll into another cigarette. His principal preoccupations would have included the sending of remittances home (say, £10 per quarter plus one-off or unexpected expenses), the helping of others to and within New Zealand, and saving a sum to take home. Probably these three preoccupations were common to sojourners of his social level the world over; certainly they remained as central life factors in Ng Gnui's generation. There seemed to be a code or ethic that they had to provide loans to kith and kin if they could do so, usually at no interest.(38) However strong the reluctance to part with one's money, there had to be a special reason for not lending to family and relations or calling in loans. It reminds me of their apparent gambling code; that a winner had to stay at the table awaiting fate's outcome. In the small Chinese networks in New Zealand, it was difficult to keep secrets about income.

Generally, Chinese earnings increased after the Great Depression but the aspirants for loans continued coming to Ng Gnui into the 1950s, before I lost touch with much of our family affairs by going to university. Presumably the postwar rise in income and the reunification of families lead to new business plans and the need for more capital - and even then, who else would led to a Chinese? The market gardens, fruitshops and laundries were still good business prospects and Chinese restaurants and takeaways had fast become another line of work. Indeed, Chinese restaurants and takeaways dominated the foreign foods market in New Zealand from postwar till the late 1990s when other Asian food and eating places - Thai, Japanese, Cambodian, Korean and Indian - made an increasing appearance. That aside, the New Zealand Chinese Association from 1937-45 had levied every Chinese earner for war funds to be sent to China. Every employer or person working on his own account was (optimistically) assumed (even in the late 1930s, unless otherwise informed) to earn £5 net per week and was levied 10s weekly on the basis of this income. An employee was assumed to earn around £3 and was levied 2s in the £1. Once past the wartime levy and the buying of Chinese and New Zealand war bonds, Ng Gnui and my father-in-law Wong Gum Jookp1 (Wong Jook, a Zhongshan county leader and fruiterer in Newmarket, Auckland) aimed for savings of one third of their business income after tax. In the late 1940s, the Ngs and others in New Zealand had achieved the peak of their sojourner attainments in China because in 1949, the Chinese communists took over national and village life and introduced ideological

policies inimical to them. As an example of sojourner success, matched by numerous others, Ng Fon and his two sons had over time built a house and a tower, helped to build the Wing Loong village hall, contributed to the purchase of 40 acres (16ha) of wooded commonage behind the village and the construction of the pond in front, acquired 40 shek of land (400mu or c.27ha) compared to the average need of about two shek per family (or two or three mu of reasonable land per person) in the district, and owned a shop for rental in Shane Mu mart. Ng Sane Boe's family owned a tower in Wing Loong and 30 shek of land; Ng See Gain owned a tower with his brothers and 20 shek; and Ng See Coon (who lacked a father's life-time contribution and liked horse racing as well) owned a two-storied mansion and one shek.

The young gardeners leave Gore.

In 1921, the Jou Lee garden in Gore closed. The reasons for the closure were another flood near the abbatoir, a shift to less satisfactory ground (also bought in Ng Fon's name) closer to the Gore-Mataura road, and the cold southern climate for growing vegetables. Thus the Gore garden was not an easy business and no Chinese has since attempted another garden in that town (or indeed south of Balclutha and nearby Stirling). (39) The Ng gardeners sold vegetables by horse and cart in the district, and brought back soiled clothing for the laundry. Uncle Ng Jim Kwong<sup>1</sup> (adult name Ng See Cheong, son of Ng Yee Fee; Jimmy Kwong) told me this. When he came to New Zealand, aged 16, he first worked in the 'Jim Lee's' laundry in Wellington. Then he became one of five shareholders in the new market garden by the Gore-Mataura road, and there must have been one or two employees as well. Besides Ng Jim Kwong, the young members of the new garden remembered today were Ng See Coon, Ng Sane Boe, Ng Sew Nam and the latter's younger brother Ng Sew Poyr<sup>1</sup>. Both Ng See Gain and Ng Sik Kwun thought Ng See Thak was in Gore for a time too, in the earlier and/or second Jou Lee garden. The new garden was windswept and only six acres (2.4ha) were cultivated for vegetable growing; the rest of the 36 acre (14.6ha) property were sown in oats. The young men built a house plus stables for three horses. Jim Kwong was paid 30s weekly. He did the Wyndham hawking round of about 38 miles (61km), leaving at 3am, arriving at the Wyndham hotel for breakfast and returning at or after nightfall, having sold some £5-£6 of vegetables. Ng Sane Boe did another hawking round.

The Gore gardeners transferred to Allenton in north Ashburton, where at least three Taishan men including Ng Moon Jem<sup>1</sup> (birth name Ng Fook Sau; European name Eng Gooe Jim, who was baptised by Rev. R. Jackson in Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Timaru c.1903) had earlier established a garden in c.1911. (40) Ng Moon Jem was from the Koon Yat (Kung Yik, Gongyi) district in north Taishan. He and his brother Ng Moon Gaint<sup>1</sup> (birth name Ng Jem Lum) and possibly another younger brother had worked at the Sue Lee garden. Probably the Allenton garden had not done well because it struck strong competition from a Zengcheng Cantonese market garden at Tinwald in south Ashburton. (41) The latter was still a five-men garden in 1917, but the former was not mentioned in the Register of Aliens of that year. This was a sure sign that it had closed, the second Seyip Cantonese garden in Ashburton to do so because Rev. Don in 1883 had recorded another garden there of six men apparently headed by two persons of the Yee clan. (42)

Earlier in 1921 (when there was not enough work for them in Gore) my father and Ng Sew Nam had gone to Allenton and reported on its good potential for a garden despite the previous closure in that suburb. As a result, land was bought in Allens Rd., Allenton, again in Ng Fon's name, and the transfer from Gore proceeded. It appears that the young gardeners from Gore combined with veteran Allenton gardeners including Ng Moon Jem. Ng See Thak became the leader of the garden - or at least the leader of the young ones. The new venture was named 'King Bros.', the 'King's'; being an approximation to the popular European pronunciation ('Ning's') of Ng and also 'Kane's', the middle part of the birth names of the four sons of Ng Yee Dep. Eventually all these four went to Allenton and took shares in King Bros. The only Gore gardener who did not go there was Ng Jim Kwong, who went to Wellington and China and was called back to both King Bros. and the Sue Lee garden in Timaru because he knew enough English to go on hawking rounds and drive a truck. A truck could take bigger loads further, say to auction markets, than a horse and cart which were best suited for hawking rounds on the flat). Ng Jim Kwong chose Sue Lee. At the time Sue Lee was being reorganised with new Ng shareholders as already mentioned. (43) He stayed at Sue Lee for the rest of his working life and was a quiet, hardworking man scarred by smallpox (one of two such Chinese I have seen in New Zealand) and noted for his reliability. He was also the last Ng male of the post-World War I arrivals in the South Island, New Zealand; he died in Timaru in 1994, aged 93.

However, the laundry was regarded as a good business even without the country collecting component. The brothers Ng Gnui (who was recalled from Allenton) and Ng Kew stayed in Gore, saving for, and alternating their trips to China which they took every five years or so. Usually a Ng or Seyip man was hired as a replacement hand, and as business grew, as a 'permanent' hand - or as permanent as their trips back to China permitted. They often became family friends. Two whom I knew were Ng Yee Hornu<sup>1</sup> (birth name Ng Thoon Wah or War from Wing Lok village; Willie Goon, who was from Wing Lok village and had worked at Sue Lee), and Ng Sair Gainv<sup>1</sup> (adult name Ng Yee Wei, from Wing On village). The employees were paid £2 per week and keep in the 1920s and early 1930s, and £3 rising to £3,10s per week plus keep thereafter. They worked long hours, outside New Zealand union rules. Most of the work was done by hand until the 1930s, when machinery was used more. The laundry had several washing machines when we arrived in 1941, used electric and flat irons, and had a drycleaning room at the back. Recently a patient told me of seeing his Dunedin Chinese laundryman using his mouth to spray water on to clothes for ironing, but the Gore laundry used a bottle sprayer like those available today (only bigger, using 750ml or larger bottles).

Occasionally a young relative or friend arrived to learn the trade. In this way the old New Zealand-Chinese passed on methods of work, which explains why their laundries, fruitshops and market gardens all looked so similar in each trade. The special skill of Chinese laundries was in ironing the shine into the starched collars and the fronts and cuffs of the 'stiff' (dress) shirts, which respectively were universal daily and formal wear until the 1950s. Other starched work included smocks and tablecloths. Dry cleaning was a skilled procedure which developed in the 1930s, requiring care since the liquids used were inflammable and dangerous even in the designated outsheds of the Chinese laundries. Dry cleaning, though, was less time-consuming work than starching and yet higher fees were charged for it. Chains of European laundry firms like Preens specialised in dry cleaning and dyeing and took much of the former procedure's lucrative side of laundering from the Chinese. One difference was that their cleaned suits did not have a petrol-like smell for a few days like those of Chinese dry cleaning.

The highlights of the brothers' lives were their trips back to China, of which Ng Gnuai totalled three - 1923-24, Ng Tak Kwong born; 1929-30, Ng Tak Wan<sup>1</sup> born (adult name Ng Shang Kin; Ivan Ng); and 1935-36, when I was born (Ng Tak Ming<sup>1</sup>; adult name Ng Shang Ming; James). Ng Gnuai said that one was lucky to be financially able to go back every five years; others took intervals as long as ten years or more. Ng Kew took his first return in 1924-27 when he married Moy Mee Laney<sup>1</sup> (married name Ng Moy Shee) and Ng Sik Kwun was born (1925). His second trip was in 1931-32 and his third in 1937-38, when Ng Sik Shanz<sup>1</sup> (Allen Eng, born 1938) and Ng Sik Kana<sup>2</sup> (Ken Eng, born 1939) were added to his family.

In Gore in 1920 a fire destroyed the laundry wash-room and its contents, but insurance covered the loss.<sup>(44)</sup> My father feared that Chin Fooib<sup>2</sup> (Chin Shue Fooi, adult name Chin Jung Yip), the Dunedin laundryman (who had three laundries in that city including his main one in busy Rattray St.), might open in Gore, especially since Chin Hon Yip of the old Chin Kuong laundry in Gore was his older brother. But Mr Chin knew of the friendships between the Taishan Chins and Ng Gnuai (such as with Chin Buck Uc<sup>2</sup> [adult name Chin Yep or Yip Fon], Chin Yu Kwong<sup>2</sup> [birth name Chin Chung Hong] and others in Invercargill and Dunedin) and did not do so. In this regard, Dr Roy T.S. Law observed when he was in Dunedin from 1937-47 that the Seyip Cantonese in Dunedin, Gore and Invercargill 'all knew and visited each other.' As well as this, Ng Gnuai once mediated in a row between Chin Fooi and Chin Buck U.

Life did not appear too hard - or shameful. However, my brother Ng Tak Wan thinks that laundrywork was the most labour intensive of the three main occupations of the New Zealand-Chinese of the generations of Ng Fon and Ng Gnuai, for the least return per item in terms of labour. To my generation, laundrywork is odious; nevertheless, the old Chinese regarded it as an acceptable means to an end and an honest occupation. Ng Gnuai looked on his starching work with pride and repeatedly said that he earned his money by the sweat of his brow. The Chinese laundries did not suffer as much during the Great Depression as did the market gardens and fruitshops - possibly because of the need for their starching work. In whatever spare time Ng Gnuai and Ng Kew took (usually Sunday from noon), a half-European friend and temporary employee, Victor (Wong) Meechang from Waikaka, sometimes took them eeling and shooting rabbits. They developed an interest in cars, and one day, Ng Gnuai ran over and killed a sheep dog which rushed his car. The shepherd cried but did not blame him. Occasionally they took provisions to Charlie King, the last Chinese man at Waikaia. In addition, Ng Gnuai went to the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin in 1925 or 1926. He also told us several times he was in the crowd that met the aviator Charles Kingsford-Smith when he landed, and the great man shook his hand. That must have been in 1928 or 1933. Chinese relations and friends arrived on visits, especially from Invercargill, and they reciprocated - not frequently, usually on national holidays. But the highlights of their lives were their trips back to China.

What were the brothers' relations with Europeans like? It was mainly a shopkeeper - customer relationship. A few European families in Gore were more friendly to Chinese - the Porters, Chamberlains, Grahams, Donalds, Browns and others now unknown. Young King mentioned the Porters, a Mrs Staples and 'a clergyman'. He had joined a lodge for health benefits, the first of the Ngs in Gore to do so. The brothers sometimes went to European homes for a cup of tea. These were major occasions for them. European social visits to us were even rarer; I remember only one, by Mrs Joyce Donald and her older sister Miss Eva Graham. On that occasion, my parents gave them a glass paperweight, which Joyce Donald gave back to me upon Eva Graham's death in 1992. She later returned a vest made by the 'Min Keung' factory in Hong Kong (q.v.) which Ng Gnuai had given to Mrs Samuel Graham when we left Gore.

When Ng Gnuai met Mrs Porter's daughter (Mrs Clara Hood) again in 1973, the meeting was friendly, pleasant - and short, presumably because their acquaintance had little in common apart from a superficial friendliness. Reflecting this, the brothers' mastery of spoken English was fair at best; they could barely read the local newspaper and could only write a short letter in English with the aid of a Chinese-English dictionary or phrase book. Their primary language and thought remained Chinese. And this would have applied to nearly all their generation in New Zealand. When our mothers came, they went into this separatist environment so that nearly all of them could only speak a few English words, if any. There was no effort to incorporate them into the wider community like the English classes and church sponsorships do for refugees today.

There was another acquaintance who later befriended my wife Eva and I. On occasion, a fostered northern Chinese girl named Kathleen Pih took the Mirams family washing to Ng Gnuai. Her foster mother was Mrs Margaret Russell nee Reid from Dunedin, who brought her back from Antong (modern Lienshui) in Jiangsu province, China, where Mrs Russell was a missionary in the China Inland Mission station there. The two sometimes holidayed in Gore with the Mirams. Those few moments when Miss Pih handed the clothes across the

counter to Ng Gnui were impersonal, yet an unspoken bond grew between the two. Both recognised in the other a fine person of a type they 'had never met before', who was living in but not part of New Zealand. Dr Pih graduated from Otago Medical School in 1929 and in the next year she trained in Oamaru Hospital before joining the Presbyterian Canton Villages Mission. Possibly my father had been alerted by newspaper reports that she was leaving for China at the end of 1930; perhaps the Mirams (who had invited him for afternoon tea) had told him; anyway, on the last occasion she went to the laundry, he handed her a brooch, 'with both hands, without a word'. When she was dying in 1991, Dr Chang nee Pih gave the brooch to my wife to give back to me and told her its story; she had carried it as one of her two most precious possessions throughout the Japanese war and the communist takeover of Shanghai.

Reunification of family.

The first of Ng Gnui's sons, my eldest brother Ng Tak Kwong, came out on a student's visa in 1932 when he was nine. He was followed to Gore by a young cousin (Ng Garr Yime; Thomas Carr Yam Ng) whose father was Ng Yee Horn. The two boys made an enormous difference to the life of their respective father. The student's visa was the only way they could have come to New Zealand, under a student scheme for Chinese introduced in 1930. Because it was a temporary visa, it did not attract the poll tax. A European sponsor was necessary and the Catholic Church in Otago and Southland offered to sponsor and give free education to such Chinese children. They were also less hesitant in accepting older Chinese children into their junior classes. So Ng Tak Kwong and Ng Garr Yim went to the Catholic Primary School in Gore, and a number of their Chinese peers in Dunedin attended a Catholic school in that city. One of the latter was Ng Tak Kwong's friend, Chin Tung Hiuf (Eddie Chin), son of Chin Fooi (who was actually a baptised member of the Dunedin Chinese Presbyterian Mission Church).<sup>(45)</sup> During the war the students' visas were extended for its duration and the students were eventually granted permanent residency in 1947. Ng Tak Kwong never forgot the kindness he received in his Catholic school. It is said that many Catholic families in Gore still remember him and one recalled 'the crack' of his leg when he broke it at rugby. In later life he returned to a school reunion and told me he was amazed at how warmly he was greeted by ex-teachers and others. Before he died from cancer, he put down his religious affiliation as Catholic, and a young priest returned him to the Catholic faith. Ng Garr Yim bought the 'Shanghai Cafe' in Courtenay Pl., Wellington, during the postwar boom in Chinese restaurants. Upon the death of his wife, he too turned to Christianity, and joined the Chinese Anglican Church in that city. Chin Tung Hiu was a special friend to the Dunedin Chinese Presbyterian Church (though not a member) and to Father Jose Maria Gosano from Macao, who used to walk past his Rattray St. café on his way to and from the Dunedin Catholic Cathedral.

In 1939-41, New Zealand's racial attitudes softened and allowed 249 Chinese wives and 244 children 16 years and under to enter as war refugees. The distant Taishan county was occupied by the Japanese later (in 1942) than other Cantonese counties in the Pearl Delta, and the wives of Ng Gnui and Ng Kew felt safe. They were reluctant to come to New Zealand as it meant leaving my paternal grandmother (Ng Fon's widow), their relations on their maternal side, and all the Ng property for entry permits which were then only for two years residence. In addition, my mother wanted to build a new house in Wing Loong and she thought that travel to New Zealand would deplete the savings for this. But Ng Gnui urged her to flee with her two other boys (Ng Tak Wan and myself) and we made it to this country in 1941. En route we stopped over in Sydney as usual to transfer to another ship, and stayed at the Gim Nam Jung in George St., a Chinese hotel which catered for transit Chinese passengers to and from New Zealand.

We were too late for the refugee scheme but were allowed temporary entry since my grandfather Ng Fon was naturalised. Nor did we need to post the £200 bond per refugee family to ensure passage back to China after the war. Subsequently, the refugees' and our permits were extended during the war and permanent residency was granted to all of us afterwards (in 1947, at the same time as those on student permits). There seems to have been many ad hoc variations like that of our family throughout the history of New Zealand-Chinese immigration, so after naturalisation and New Zealand citizenship were reinstated for Chinese in 1951, my father was advised to have all of us who were born in China to undergo naturalisation - to start afresh, as it were. So when our older family members were all convinced that New Zealand had become our home and country, we were naturalised in 1962. Before then, we registered yearly with the police as aliens. Like any big decision, the main direction of naturalisation was taken but consequent details and self-questions emerged which had to be resolved. The chief of these was the place of our Chineseness within the context of national allegiance, a question which now has a clear answer in the concept of multiculturalism.

To return to Ng Kew's wife and three sons, they stayed in Taishan and suffered from the Japanese occupation from 1942. This occupation was inevitable because of Taishan's private railway which connected with the important river port of Kongmoon (Jiangmen) in adjacent Sunwei county. Our Ng villages in Onn Foon were just outside the Japanese perimeter because the railway terminated in Taishan at Towshan, about 10km distant. Shane Mu mart became a county centre of resistance, but deprivation and famine aggravated by drought ensued throughout Taishan. Even salt was hardly procurable, according to the recall of a Dunedin family. Auntie Ng Kew's family difficulties multiplied when my grandmother Ng suffered a dense hemiplegia in 1943. It would have been only natural if they had developed resentment towards us about being 'left behind' to cope with Grandmother Ng and the home situation, but if so, this feeling rapidly dissipated when they arrived in New Zealand in 1947, after the death of Grandmother a year earlier. They were able to come postwar because their papers had been granted about the same time as ours. They related how my grandmother Tso, my mother's parent and a widow, had survived by turning up weekly 'to clean

our tower and take away small items for sale. No-one questioned or stopped her. When we were about to arrive in Gore, Ng Kew, among other reasons, must have foreseen that we needed space - and indeed this was so when my sister Ng Mee King<sup>2</sup> was born in 1942. Ng Kew left the laundry in 1941 and went first to the Allenton garden and then in 1942 to Paekakariki in the Wellington region to open a laundry serving American troops in the vicinity. The troops had created a minor laundry boom there and in Wellington (and incidentally, also in Auckland). In 1946 Ng Kew bought the long-established laundry then named 'Chan Foon'; at 5 (now advertised as part of 7) Majoribanks St. from Chin Wah Foon<sup>2</sup> (who had married my Uncle Ng Sane Boe's sister), and kept it as the last Chinese laundry (1981) in New Zealand. The laundry dated back to the 1910s (46) and was mentioned in 1917 in the Register of Aliens. The shell of the little wooden building still exists. After 'Chan Foon' closed, Ng Kew's elderly European landlady instructed her family that he and his wife could live there as long as they wished. He died in the laundry in 1983, courageously accepting death and refusing medication. Auntie Ng Kew in her quiet, strong way stayed on in the shop alone till 1987, when she went into a nursing home. The laundry was then filmed and some of its gear transferred to the Porirua Museum. It had been left much as it had been in 1981.

Ng Kew's family has put down firm roots in Wellington, where another son was born. But the eldest son (Ng Sik Kwun) and the next (Ng Sik Shan) lacked the advantage of coming at an early age and thus gaining a good New Zealand education. For a time they stayed with Ng Yee Toll at 'Jim Lee'; and learnt the laundry trade from him; they were among the last of a long line of Ng arrivals in New Zealand who did so. 'Jim Lee' was especially suitable for this because it had an upstairs room which could accommodate four or five persons, plus another bedroom downstairs. In 1948 my mother, sister and I visited Wellington and Ng Yee Toll. What a kind old man he was. He had a fascinating advanced cataract in one eye, and an air of moral authority as doyen of our clan. I marvelled at a stone placed before his washing tubs as a step; it was scalloped with wear. Both Ng Sik Kwun and Ng Sik Shan told me how Ng Yee Toll talked of the past and related the Chinese classics as they worked. His wife later came to join him. The old New Zealand-Chinese custom was to learn at least two trades, and so Ng Sik Kwun and Ng Sik Shan did not open a laundry but shared a fish and takeaway business in Kelburn, Wellington. Their next brother, Ng Sik Kan, is a pharmacist; and New Zealand-born David (Ng Ate Weii<sup>2</sup>) took up his father's recommendation to enter the insurance industry. It was David who got the laundry recorded for posterity - with uncollected parcels of clean clothes still on the racks (there were always such forgotten parcels) and coke and coal in their bins.

In late 1947, my brother Ng Tak Kwong returned to Taishan to marry Chin Lai Mee<sup>2</sup>. He also carried out Grandmother Ng's exhumation (her 'rising up') and second burial in a cemetery site, 'near Ng See Kwoon's wife'. It lacked a gravestone, however, and as nearly all the Wing Loong families emigrated away over the years, her grave site was almost forgotten. The omission of a gravestone had occurred because the original intention was to later find her a propitious site for herself alone or rebury her with Ng Fon (as she wanted) - but either wish remained unfulfilled. No one returned to Wing Loong from overseas for the next 37 years, because of safety reasons. But in 1996, her New Zealand descendants commissioned local villagers to verify and erect a gravestone on her present grave site. (47)

To Dunedin.

Ng Tak Kwong, a popular young man, wanted to become a fruiterer, then the most desirable of the three main trades of Chinese. In those times, the New Zealand Chinese judged a person not by their occupation but by their character; nevertheless, frittering was regarded as close to a white collar job as they could get. But there was already a Zengcheng Cantonese fruiterer (Loo Sik Geek<sup>2</sup>; Loo Thak Kee in the Seyip dialect; William Gee; whose refugee family had also arrived) in Gore and another (Lowe Oi Dong<sup>2</sup>; Billy Lowe, whose son Hubert was with him) in nearby Maitai. Nevertheless, Kwong (or Norman<sup>(48)</sup> as he was often called, even by my father) had trained as a fruiterer under Chin Yu Kwong in the 'Central' fruitshop in Princes St., Dunedin. He bought a European's small fruitshop near the bridge end of Main St, though he really wanted to shift to Dunedin. Partly this was because Mr Loo had made known his hostile thoughts about Kwong entering into competition with him, even with Kwong at the other end of the street. Consequently Mr Loo cut off relations with us. In addition Kwong felt uncomfortable in Gore since he did not don New Zealand uniform and go to war. He was ambivalent about this move due to the treatment of the Chinese in New Zealand as aliens. I remember a family conference about going to war, when both my father and Kwong spoke. My father then believed that the Europeans will never let us settle in this country. Ng Gnui also wanted Kwong out of Gore because he was mixing with a gambling set of Europeans.

Because of these factors, the laundry (which had been renamed 'Joe Lee' in 1941) and our adjacent house were sold for £1000 in 1945 to a young European couple, Mr and Mrs Raymond A. Brown. Ng Gnui stayed behind to help and teach laundry techniques to them and their employees. The Browns later (in 1950) sold to E.A. Looser who sold (in 1953) to Lee See Keem<sup>2</sup>, who had stayed with my father when young. He named the laundry 'Yee Lee', following the designations 'Brown's Laundry and Dry Cleaning' and 'Looser's Southern Dry Cleaners'. Ng Gnui bought the 'Grand' ('Ko Shang') fruitshop business in George St., Dunedin, in the same block as the 'Pacific' ('I Peng Young') and 'Wing On' Chinese fruitshops between Frederick and Hanover Streets. The previous owners of Grand were Henry Shum and Wong Chak Cheen<sup>2</sup> (Percy Wong), the latter a fine Zengcheng man who stayed on as an employee. The 'Sunshine' and 'On Chong' Chinese fruitshops were in the next block going south. In the next block going north was the 'Civic' Chinese fruitshop. Thus there was stiff

competition for Grand; an interesting but coincidental feature of this competition was that the George St. Chinese fruitshops were all on the east side of the street.

At the time the 'Wing On' and 'Sun' fruitshops (the latter in Rattray St.) were reputed to be at the top of their trade in Dunedin. Grand tried to do better with service and got cut-price vegetables from Ashburton, where our Ng relations now had a thriving market garden of 81ha still named 'King Bros.' near the Ashburton River north-west of the suburb of Allenton. In the 1940s, many Chinese market gardens in the South Island were much bigger than their North Island counterparts due to the different climate and crops, although King Bros. leased out well over half of its land to neighbouring farms. Its living quarters however, were still on its previous smaller garden in Allens Rd., Allenton. The King Bros. gardeners hawked fruit (bought from produce auction firms in Christchurch) and vegetables by horse and cart and truck throughout Ashburton township and county.

Our family shifted to Dunedin and we lived above the Grand shop. I remember this period chiefly as one in which I pined after my friends in Gore, and spent time with Mr and Mrs George Yee (Mr and Mrs Yee Cheung Shau, who had a small general store), helping in a child's way on Mr Yee's fruit and vegetable hawking rounds by truck. He was the last Chinese hawker in Dunedin. It was about now when I was introduced to Mr Ng Buck Limp2 (Norman Lim), a fine Zengcheng fruiterer in Caversham, Dunedin, who was of our clan but from another county. He was like Uncle Ng Sew Nam in physique and manner, and he treated our family with friendliness as a fellow Ng.

However, Ng Gnui soon realised that his wife and two younger children were out of place in the Grand's busy city business. In 1946, therefore, my parents went to Ashburton and bought a Seyip laundry in Victoria St. from Percy Chin and his European lady-friend, and took Kim and I to be closer to King Bros.

The sons of Ng Yee Dep formed the core of the workforce of the King Bros. garden. But in 1935, Ng See Kwoon, after a spell in the Phillipines, returned to Hong Kong and founded the 'Min Keung Knitting Co.' with over 100 shareholders. My father, who was on a trip home, helped in its establishment. This successful factory became the main rendezvous for the Ngs from the Onn Foon district in that port, before it was ruined by the Japanese war and sold soon after. The Taishan Ngs from the Koon Yat district are said to have established a similar factory named 'Min Gnai' in Hong Kong.

In 1946 Ng Moon Jem was still alive and lived with his son, Ng Thoan Hok, (birth name Ng Don Shong) who had taken over his share in the garden. In 1941, Ng Moon Jem was on board our ship to New Zealand, escorting his son's family and helping others like us. One or two male relations of Ng Moon Jem had died at King Bros. before we shifted to Ashburton - one was a man named Looi, brother of Mrs Ng Thoan Hok - but he still had two contemporaries and old employees at King Bros. They were Willie Loong (Yep Long, Yee Yep Long, the oldest man at King Bros. [b.1868] and an ex-goldseeker) (49) and (James) Lee Shong (Lee Puc Mun or Moon) who was from Sunwei county. Long before, Mr Lee had worked with Ng Moon Jem in the Sue Lee garden in Timaru. All three were given the respect of old age, and in addition Ng Moon Jem and Mr Lee were looked after by their respective families in housing (two small bungalows on long half-acre sections) across the road from the King Bros quarters in Allens Rd.

The shareholders of King Bros. were Ng Yee Dep's sons (in order of age, Ng See Thak; Ng See Kwoon [with a dormant share]; Ng See Bourne [who had an extra but dormant share because he had taken the risk in buying the new riverside land to lease to King Bros.] and Ng See Gain); Ng See Coon; Ng Sane Boe; my father (whose share was also dormant); Ng Thoan Hok; and Ng Fook Ying2 (Ng Yee Thooe, son of Ng Hok Eann2 from Wong Lok village). Ng Hok Eann was a deceased contemporary of Ng Moon Jem; his younger brother, Ng Hok Tane, (birth name, Ng Gnui Jem), also worked in King Bros. and for a time held his brother's share, but died in 1956. Like several of those mentioned here, he was buried in Ashburton cemetery. Willie Loong may have worked with the father of Hok Eann and Hok Tane in the goldfields. Ng Fook Ying's deceased first wife was a second cousin to my mother, being from the same village.

For some reason Ng Sew Nam did not have a share, or he may have sold it long before. I knew him during two periods in King Bros. and in an Oamaru laundry not long before he died. Evidently he was filling in for Ng See Thak at King Bros., once when he was away and briefly after he died. Ng See Thak had chosen to stay in China to be with his wife during World War 2, and he returned to New Zealand sometime after this. A stern looking tallish man, he was the recognised head of King Bros. and after him, Ng See Coon. Ng Gnui was respected as the one with the most learning and was reputedly fairly well-off as well. In relation to the 'face' (respect, approbation) Ng Gnui received, this was also extended to all members of our nuclear family. I got special treatment and fuss everywhere. In King Bros., for example, Ng See Coon as paymaster gave me a few shillings more each week than the other boys. In those postwar years, despite generally rising incomes, wealth still generated respect and sometimes near obsequiousness from the many New Zealand-Chinese poor to the fewer rich. The reason was because the former could need alms or loans from the latter in the future, say with an emergency in China or New Zealand. Added to this, the rich often had greater knowledge - in Chinese literacy (useful for writing letters home for the poorly literate and for sorting out Hong Kong and Chinese procedures as, for instance, in the sending of remittances) and in the English language and ways such as required by officialdom here and general interpretation.

Other workers at King Bros. included a son (Ng See Gnim, birth name Ng Sair Gnow) and grandson (Ng Kai Kwong, Peter Kai) of Ng Yee Foon, before they left in 1949 or 1950 for Wellington. There were four to six other Seyip Cantonese employees and three European employees. Two of the Europeans were brothers and being

taller and better built than the Chinese, they did the heavy work for European wages and hours; the third European was a part-time mechanic. I worked for short spells in the garden. Looking back, I cannot remember anyone ordering us about. Whoever knew of what had to be done must have quietly made it known to the seniors of our work group of youths, and the Chinese childhood teaching of 'getting on with the job' ensured the completion of the task. In my memory King Bros. seemed to run like clockwork; it was not an especially happy place but it was not a glum or regimented one either. The men knew much about each other but minded their own business. The 'bosses' and men ate together for all their meals. The Sunday after-dinner discussions were spirited but they rarely argued - I remember only one spat between two men about whether a bullet heated up in flight. And my observation of equanimity applies equally to other gardens I visited, the Sue Lee garden and the Oamaru gardens of Yee Tongy<sup>2</sup> and Yee Tang Kweez<sup>2</sup>. As well as the families of Ng Thoan Hok and Mr Lee, Ng See Coon had his wife with him. She was my Auntie Lee Sim Larna<sup>3</sup> from Sunwei county (and related to Lee Puc Mun, whose wife matched her with Ng See Coon) who had no offspring and was very good to me. She and the families of Ng Thoan Hok and Lee Shong had come to New Zealand under the refugee scheme. Ng See Coon's son by his first marriage was a teacher in Shane Mu School, an honoured post, but he died, it was said, after eating a bowl of snake meat. Fortunately he had an infant son (Ng Thek Wing<sup>3</sup>; Wing King) whom Ng See Coon got to New Zealand with the lad's mother after the war. I was happy too, to hear that Auntie Sim Larn before she died had got ('li shung', 'to give life') a young relation of hers to New Zealand. Chinese women like her probably saved dollar by dollar of her universal superannuation in her later years for his passage and that of his family.

The later years at King Bros.

Once settled in Ashburton, Ng Gnui summoned his two older sons to sell the Grand fruitshop (back to Wong Chak Chee and his Zengcheng clansman, Wong Sew Kay, whose family is known as Ming Wong) for Kwong to take up his garden share and establish a fruitshop for King Bros. in Bennett St., Ashburton. This became the main fruitshop in town (from 1947), although there was already a Zengcheng Cantonese fruiterer (Lee Wong Dinc<sup>3</sup>) around the corner in the main street. It took some years after the new fruitshop opened before Mr and Mrs Lee Wong Din again accepted invitations to Sunday meals at King Bros. There was no other fruitshop in Ashburton, although some dairies sold fruit and vegetables. Every Monday, Uncle See Coon had driven his truck loaded with vegetables to the fruit and vegetable markets in Christchurch and returned with fruit for the hawking rounds and public stall at the King Bros. quarters. When the fruitshop opened he went to Christchurch on Thursdays as well, to bring back produce and flowers for its busy Fridays. The railways took King Bros. to court for using a motor vehicle for the purpose instead of rail, but King Bros. won. More families arrived in Ashburton around 1950 (1949-52) and the total number of reunified families (including Lee Wong Din's) reached 14. The notable exception was the family of Ng See Thak, who had died from a massive stroke before his arrangements were finalised to bring them out. His family remained in Wing Loong as our only close relatives remaining in the village, until they left in the late 1980s for Guangzhou and Hong Kong. But the arrival of families did not change the men in King Bros. from seeking security to seeking social integration or assimilation. Indeed, they cautioned the young against placing too much trust in the European and losing our Chineseness. They insisted upon us speaking Chinese, and I am sure they would have been very happy to support a Chinese school in Ashburton (as in Gisborne) if they had found a teacher. They were badly shaken by the loss of China to communism in 1949 and by the accompanying revelations of corruption and incompetence in the Kuomintang, (50) but they looked - at least half-heartedly - to establishing a home base again in Hong Kong.

All this was contrary to the developing thoughts of the younger children, who were growing up in the schools as New Zealanders. Yet, despite the men's conservative mentality, the early 1950s were a relatively happy settling-in period in King Bros. Those were prosperous years both for New Zealand and in the market gardening industry. Apparently good prices were nearly always assured for whatever was grown, and the fruitshop thrived too. The cooperative business structure of King Bros still worked and the men were in their prime and still unchallenged by their young children. How we children loved the weekly Sunday pig roastings in the Chinese oven and the associated feasting for all the Chinese families around. Willie Loong was in charge of killing and preparing the pig (which was bought from a farm) and Richard Yee (Yee Onn Git's second son, Yee Kee) and other youths heated up the oven with old timber from boxing etc., before raking the embers out prior to lowering the depilated, marinated and splayed out porker in. The oven openings at the top and bottom were then closed with cut corrugated tin panels for the roasting. As a special treat we children were given hot pork ribs before the sit-down meal. Uncle Ng See Coon was the best cook and head chef; he used huge woks heated by gas and was helped by Uncle Ng See Bourne and others.

However, these feasts were for Chinese only. Basically, King Bros. remained as a Chinese enclave in Ashburton, self-contained and with little interchange with Europeans except in business. And perhaps because of their past years when each year brought the same toil with no prospect of a major change of direction, the men of King Bros. did not plan ahead. The crucial need was to plan for the future of the 20 or so sons, most of whom had arrived postwar. If King Bros. was to continue in a prosperous state, then it was essential to progressively and gainfully incorporate as many of them as possible. But the men were reluctant to hand over the 'plum' jobs (like tractor and truck driving) to their sons, whom they exhorted to just listen to the 'old heads', the 'lo bund' ('old band' or veterans). There was no indication that anyone was contemplating retirement. No-one was thinking how to expand the garden or fruitshop.

Instead, with increased income from the fruitshop and garden, a minority of them took up gambling after Sunday feasting, called their friends from Christchurch, Timaru and Oamaru and introduced fantan, which could lead to quick, big losses.(51)

Thus King Bros. passively reached and then exceeded its capacity in employment. When King Bros. could not provide adequate income for the sons, the solution of the men was to close the cooperative (in 1964) and each go their own way - mainly into takeaways and small restaurants in Ashburton, Christchurch and Timaru. Ng Sane Boe and members of his family took over the Shangahi Café in Wellington. Although mention has been made of the easy relationships between the King Bros. men, yet their control of family was based on traditional authoritarian practice and this was still strong enough to direct some of their children (especially the girls) to help in establishing their new work. No-one continued gardening in Ashburton but Ng See Gain and his sons stayed with the King Bros. Fruitshop and opened a branch in Allenton. The progression from the arrival of families to breakup (but without the gambling) also happened in the Sue Lee garden (in 1964 too) and other long-established Seyip gardens in Oamaru. Of course, this alleged lack of foresight is only my opinion.(52)

In the late 1960s, however, the King Bros. men in their new role as heads of small family enterprises were entering old age. Now or a few years more and inevitably their aging loosened their control of family. Meanwhile their immigrants' need for security had become sated, with most fairly well-off. Now they could pause and look about them and compare Chinese families. What they saw throughout New Zealand were examples of Chinese integration successes. Included were myself and two sons (Edward and David) of Ng Thoan Hok who made it to university, a girl (Jean) of Lee Shong's family who went to Training College and my sister who took up nursing. From our example and others, the lesson for all New Zealand-Chinese was clear - that our future lay in New Zealand and that apart from a few commercial highlights, our social mobility and integration best lay in advanced education and the professions. And we could trust the European in New Zealand. Our family in Ashburton.

My sister and I grew up in Ashburton in the 'George Ting' laundry in Victoria St. One side of Victoria St. was active with working shops and the other side had several empty ones. At first our laundry was in the small shop bought from Percy Chin and we lived in an empty shop across the street. Mr and Mrs Lee Wong Din and their daughter Joyce lived in the adjoining empty shop. Then Ng Gnui bought an old empty two-storied shop with upstairs accommodation across the street and our business and we shifted there. My father and mother worked together and only for relatively brief periods had an employee. They were Gin Doo Nuid<sup>3</sup>, followed by Arthur King (Ng Gan Chee, e<sup>3</sup> eldest son of Ng See Bourne) who came to learn the trade. Later, my brother Wan and his wife Tso Mee Harf<sup>3</sup> also learnt laundry work from my parents but, like Arthur, soon transferred back to King Bros.

None of us young people liked laundering. My sister Kim was too young but I had to help - serving customers, stamping the laundry tickets, marking the clothes with the ticket number in indelible ink, hanging up the washed clothes to dry and ironing simple items like handkerchiefs and towels. This meant that I could not play sport since I had to go home early from school and stay home on Saturday when sports competitions were played. It was a major disadvantage for me (and for other Chinese adolescents like me) because rugby and cricket figured so prominently in high school. Kim and I seldom invited friends home either, because of the drabness of our laundry. I suppose the only laundry work which fascinated me was the sight of Ng Gnui, clad in singlet and in a sweat as he rolled the gas heated iron mangle with great noisy circular movements of the handle, to press the initial shine and curve into the collars. These he finished off with hot flat irons heated on the sides of the Scottish (Smith and Wellstood) coke stoves in the drying room. My mother, Kim and I gathered around Father at nights, either in the still-warm drying room or in bed, when he read the Chinese classics to us. Monkey was a family favourite. But he gave up teaching me Chinese writing because I was totally disinterested.

I won on that project but generally the strong Chinese tradition of parental and elder authority applied between my parents and my sister and I, though by the time we had become teenagers, they had much softened their discipline. By then they tolerated New Zealand youthful features like girls wearing shorts and going out on dates. Between themselves my mother observed Chinese custom, such as addressing Ng Gnui as 'Kwong's father', and he reciprocated with calling her 'Kwong's mother' (later changed to 'Mummy'). Typical of her Chinese peers, she always ate the least or poorest morsels like chicken heads and feet, and she always gave the choicest pieces to my father, besides pressing the rice down in his bowl so he got the most. As I write, I remember her saving string and later, strong boxes and cartons which crowded out the garage; she never just sat, she would sit and knit in the favoured colours of her female generation - red, orange, green and even purple. When she died I took a suitcase of her unused knitted cardigans to China to give away, and they were much appreciated the older ladies. This brings back the memory of how she and other New Zealand-Chinese women bought our clothing two or three sizes bigger, so we would grow into them. Then there was their talk of sickness as "hot" and "cold", and my mother's constant admonition of not going to sleep with wet hair. Ng Gnui had a reputation as a fair man (he was called on by other Chinese as a go-between and a mediator) and my mother was widely known as a kind person, but when I was young I was surprised how warmly and generously they greeted the young folk of Chinese friends, and contrasted this with how strictly my parents treated us. This contrast was common in New Zealand-Chinese families.

Ng Gnui and his wife also developed a cottage industry in deer tails and antlers, which they prepared (the hair of the tails - but not the antlers - were scrapped off after immersion in hot water) and dried to send to the merchants Ng Yee Fow, Mak Kwong Kee and others in Hong Kong. They were the first in New Zealand (from 1942)

to carry on a regular, commercial trade in these products.(53) They also bought deer pizzles and tendons for drying, but fewer shooters sent these, as they did not fetch much. The shooters knew him by word of mouth and sent the smelly goods by rail, or more usually by the post office, where the supervisor Mr George Cant was very understanding. He left the parcels out in the post office courtyard for my father or I to collect. His son Barry, Barney Mowat and I went from Ashburton to medical school together and we graduated together. Last year (2000) we met again at our 40th year class reunion - a just-retired neurologist and two old GPs on the verge of retirement.

Ng Tak Kwong and his wife brought up their six children in Ashburton too, in later years as a poultry farmer before he died in 1980. Kwong bought land in Allens Rd. and became the first known Chinese poultry farmer in New Zealand, using modern systems like the battery hen method for egg production. Initially (from 1952) he chiefly bought hens from farms for slaughter, when poultry was just becoming popular as a New Zealand food. Other poultry and egg sellers tried to freeze him out in the course of competition, but he had a good European friend in Christchurch who acted as his outlet.

Ng Tak Wan took over Kwong's share in King Bros. after the latter took on poultry farming. In 1958, Wan placed this share in abeyance and shifted back to Otago-Southland. He settled at Totara, Oamaru, on the rich black Waiareka soil that then supported 16 (later 25) Chinese gardening families, during a general market gardening boom. There he eventually established his own market garden ('United Garden') and he and his wife brought up their five children. They stayed in Oamaru till 1999, when they retired to Christchurch. By then the wheel had turned full circle; Chinese market gardening was in decline because supermarkets (introduced into New Zealand by Tom Ah Chee, a member of a longstanding New Zealand-Chinese family) caused the near disappearance of Chinese fruitshops. In turn, the loss of fruitshops caused the marked ebb of the produce auction system, an ebb which disadvantaged small multi-crop market gardeners who were mostly Chinese. Nor could the small family market gardens supply the supermarket chains which favoured large, often one-crop producers - and bypassed the auction system by direct contracts with the growers. Another simultaneous blow occurred because the public significantly changed its preference for fresh produce to packaged or frozen vegetables. Wan had to walk off his land, which was unsold although situated in the most fertile part of Totara which is famed for the quality of its brussel sprouts and early carrots and potatoes.

I was lucky to arrive in New Zealand at five years of age and received a full, free education - in part because my parents were pre-occupied with the future of my two older brothers and I was left studying. By the time they turned to me, my mind was made up to continue education. I went to Otago University and graduated as a doctor in December 1959. Thereafter, except for one training year in Rotorua away from Dunedin, my wife Eva (Wong Ee Wahg3, oldest daughter of Wong Gum Jook) and I have resided in that city, which has been very kind to us. My sister Mee Kim trained as a nurse in Dunedin Public Hospital. She married Dr Leslie Ding (Ding Garr Noone)h3, son of a notable Taieri gardening family, and went to live in Sydney and Christchurch.

Our Ashburton laundry was sold in 1954 to Yee Onn Giti3, who left King Bros. where he was a valued employee. When his family arrived, Mr Yee thought like many other New Zealand-Chinese that he had to have his own business. He stayed several years in laundering but in retrospect, the 1950s spelt the end of Chinese laundries generally. In that decade, stiff collars and shirts went out of fashion, the average home had acquired a washing machine and new easy-wash clothing materials were introduced. Only dry cleaning remained viable commercially. But the young Chinese were not inclined to start or stay in the laundry business.

My father and mother built a home at 102 Allens Rd. and continued their trade in deer products, but by now several New Zealand-Chinese had entered into competition with them. The preparation techniques and knowledge of Hong Kong outlets had diffused to other (mainly Seyip) families in Ashburton, Christchurch and Oamaru. However, we seemed to have dominated the market even when significant rivalry appeared in the mid-1960s, especially by Yee Tong in Oamaru and in his 'Nanyang' or 'South Seas' merchant shop in Christchurch. It was a lucrative way to earn scarce foreign exchange in order to succour relatives, buy a car, or even buy shares or a property in Hong Kong. My parents bought two 'lau' (buildings) in Hong Kong from their proceeds - which, alas, they sold at the bottom of the market in the 1960s. But as it turned out, their really serious rivalry in deer products appeared from overseas. In the early 1960s, Hong Kong and Korean businessmen entered New Zealand and steadily took over the deer products trade by organised buying on a much bigger scale, through introductions via the Deerstalkers Association and others. Agent firms soon appeared to supply them. They merely froze the goods to send to the East for processing. Their contracts encouraged the establishment of deer farming but signalled the end of this New Zealand-Chinese cottage industry. My parents said their busiest years in deer products were between 1963-67 but the supply thereafter sharply diminished, and they gave up the trade in 1971.

Closing years and successors.

Principally because of the closure of King Bros. my parents retired to Oamaru to be among the many Seyip gardeners and shopkeepers there, and ended their lives in Dunedin next door to us, both dying in 1982. They and their circle of Ngs, and their relations before them, had witnessed remarkable times in New Zealand and China and had lived in two cultural heritages, yet they successfully fulfilled their family duties. These duties aimed for the survival of family by remittances and savings and by ensuring the continuity and sharing of work with kith and kin in order to maintain the vital flow of money. They had survived and accomplished their goals overseas by their cooperative groupings based on family, clan and county, and by pride of race. The last time I saw Uncle Ng Kew alive, in 1980, was the last time my father and he met also. Both men knew the other had failing health but greeted each other in the undemonstrative Cantonese way. They clasped hands

briefly and Uncle asked Father to sit and drink tea. Ng Tak Wan and I met Auntie Ng Kew again when Uncle died, and as always she was quiet and modest and self-controlled. In Wellington she had brought up her two youngest sons in the laundry, whilst working in the shop. Like my parents, Ng Kew and she ran the laundry by themselves. My mind cast back to my own laundry days, of a parent getting up before dawn to stoke up the copper and stoves, of the heat of the stoves and irons and mangle in summer, of the wet washing room, of the cold when hanging up washed clothes outside in winter, of raining days when all the clothes had to be dried inside in the drying room before they could be ironed, when better business meant more dirty, sometimes flea-infested clothes and their labelling and sorting into piles of differing dirtiness, when clothes were worn dirtier than now. All this she bore, and her boys honoured her in the remaining years before her death in 1995. In the weekends they went to the nursing home to feed her Chinese food and make a fuss of her. She and Uncle epitomised the solid, patient qualities of our forbears, upon which we have built our successes in New Zealand today. The 'Say' generation of Taishan Ngs are virtually all New Zealand-born. Most are living north of Otago-Southland and a few are abroad in Australia, Britain and Singapore. They and their offspring (the Soo generation) show a distinct move into tertiary education and the professions, as is common now among the long-established Chinese families of New Zealand. As Chinese New Zealanders, they are well integrated and progressing steadily in assimilation in New Zealand society. Nowadays, they are lucky if they even get a Chinese name. In fact, adult and scholars' names in addition to the birth name were going out of usage even in my generation; Ng Kew, for instance, did not give his sons adult names. Chinese gravestones are becoming inscribed only in English because younger family members do not have or use a Chinese name, or do not know their parents' Chinese names (particularly the name of the mother) and/or cannot find anyone skilled in calligraphy to write the Chinese inscription. The family members themselves are dispersing here and there in and outside of New Zealand like the rest of the population. This feature, together with the fact that both husband and wife often work, has seen older kin being placed in nursing homes instead of being cared for at home. Nonetheless, significant respect for parents and elders still persists, as confirmed by Professor S.K. Ng of Victoria University.

Our family is like that of other New Zealand-Chinese in becoming increasingly mobile. Until the turn of the 21st century Ng Tak Wan's youngest son was studying in the Otago Medical School and one of his daughters had a restaurant each in Dunedin and Queenstown. By 2001, however, Ng Tak Wan had gone to Christchurch and so had his son and daughter, and I am left in Dunedin to look after the graves of Ng Gnui and Ng Tso Shee. With my impending retirement and possible shift, the family links I still keep with Joyce Donald in Gore and the Chin clan in Dunedin will probably be lost.

But not all the Taishan Ngs are gone from 'the far south'. Ng Fook Ying's son Stanley Ng is a gardener in Oamaru and Ng Fook Ying's widow and two of her children (Anne Yee, a takeaway proprietress and Jack Ng, a steeplejack) are in Dunedin. Ng See Bourne's youngest daughter, Frances Wong (a home science graduate) is also in this city, and one of his grandsons, Robin King, was until recently an accountant in Oamaru. In Dunedin too is Ng See Gain's daughter Betty Wong, the proprietress of one of the last two Chinese fruitshops in Dunedin and a racehorse owner. And so the movement of the Ngs southwards begun long ago and in which Ng Fon participated, still persists to this day.