

Helene Wong

Contributed by Steven Young
Thursday, 16 August 2007

HELENE WONG

A graduate of Victoria University of Wellington with a BA Honours (First Class) in Sociology, Helene worked in the Public Service for nine years, including a period 1978-80 in the Prime Minister's Department as social policy adviser to Prime Minister Sir Robert Muldoon.

In 1981 she travelled to the United States where she studied and practised theatre in Boston and San Francisco.

On returning to Wellington, she became involved in both the practice and administration of the dramatic arts, working as an actor and theatre director before moving into film and television in the mid-80s.

After two years as Development Consultant with the NZ Film Commission she became a freelance script consultant, working on a variety of television dramas and short and feature-length films, including Leon Narbey's *Illustrious Energy*. She also worked as Programme Manager for Television for New Zealand on Air.

Helene has written and directed documentary for television, including Footprints of the Dragon, about Chinese in New Zealand, for the series An Immigrant Nation. That particular episode was among the 10 top-rating documentaries of 1995.

She has taught at industry seminars and tertiary institutions on scriptwriting, film criticism, and cultural identity and the media. She has been a judge for numerous awards as well as serving on the jury of the Asia-Pacific Film Festival in Auckland in 1996, and is a member of various industry organisations.

She is currently a member of the Board of the New Zealand Film Commission, and was a former Chairperson of the Board of the Moving Image Centre.

Helene is now a full-time writer. She has been a film critic for the NZ Listener since 1996 and is writing feature film screenplays, a book on New Zealand Chinese cultural identity, freelance articles and book reviews.

HELENE WONG

Research/Publication
Database

Audiovisual

material

Wong, Helene, Footprints of the Dragon, VHS Pal, 46 min. Top Shelf Productions,

P O Box 9101, Wellington, NZ
1995.

Wong, Helene, Unbearably Beautiful, VHS Pal, 46 min. July Productions 1992.
Contact: Ann Andrews, H/5
Parliament Street, Auckland
Central.

Wong, Helene (as Script Consultant), Illustrious Energy, (Dir. Leon Narbey),
Feature film, 35mm, 98 min. Challenge Film Corporation 1988.

Contact:
NZ Film Commission, P O Box 11-546, Wellington, NZ.

Exhibitions

Wong, Helene, Footprints of the Dragon, VHS Pal, 46 min. in New China, New Zealand, 1996 NZ International Festival of the Arts,
Wellington, NZ, March 1 - 24.

Wong, Helene, Footprints of the Dragon, in Brian Brake, China in the 50s, Fisher Gallery, Pakuranga, Auckland, NZ, September 1996.

Articles/papers

Wong, Helene, Ching Chong Chinamen: When Friends Become Strangers, in Clinton Roper Peace Lecture Series "Celebrating the UN Year of Tolerance", Sept 26, 1995.

Foundation for Peace Studies, Aotearoa/New Zealand, P O
Box 4110, Auckland,
NZ.

Wong, Helene, NZ Listener film
reviews, March 16, 1996 - Dec 31, 2003; October 16, 2004 -

Wong, Helene, Essay on New Zealand Chinese Artists in catalogue of "Golden Prospects" art exhibition, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, March - April 1998.

Wong, Helene, Development Hell, feature on NZ filmmaker Vincent Ward, NZ Listener, November 21, 1998.

Wong, Helene, Hong Kong Revisited, travel feature in Pacific Wave, July 1999.

Wong, Helene, outandabout.co.nz / xtra.co.nz film reviews, 1999 - 2002

Wong, Helene, Dark Night, Dark Mind, feature on Chinese poet and Waiheke Island resident Gu Cheng, Weekend Herald, October 9-10, 1999.

Wong, Helene, book reviews, NZ Herald,
November 1999 -

Wong, Helene, Old Fools, feature on Victoria University capping revue reunion, NZ
Listener, December 11, 1999.

Wong, Helene, Planet Bollywood,
feature on screenwriter Ayub Khan-Din (East is East), NZ Listener,
April 29, 2000.

Wong, Helene, Queen of Tracks,
travel feature in Pacific Wave, September 2000.

Wong,
Helene, Muldoon
and the Advisory Group, in Muldoon
Revisited,
published papers from The Fifth Parliamentary Conference "Revisiting Muldoon After
Gustafson's Biography", May 2002. Edited by Margaret Clark, Dunmore
Press, 2004.

FOOTPRINTS OF
THE DRAGON

Footprints

of the Dragon looks at three families: the Kwoks of Wellington, and the Changs and the Jens, originally from Taiwan, in Auckland.

Among them are doctors, politicians, artists, and students. They have in common their Chinese heritage, as well as the fact that even though a century separates their arrivals, they all came invited by a country that wanted their energy and ability to create wealth.

Today, the Kwok family is respected as a contributor to the community in many fields. The newly-arrived Changs and Jens, however, are still trying to find their place. Their struggles often echo those of the Kwoks, but as they relate their feelings we also sense the same determination to succeed against the odds.

CHING CHONG CHINAMEN - WHEN FRIENDS BECOME STRANGERS

Examines the effect of the new wave of Chinese immigration on both the host society and the descendants of the early immigrants: the revival of prejudice, and the questions that such prejudice raises in the minds of the longstanding settlers.

Suggests ways of countering this: the role of politics and the bureaucracy, education, the media, and personal relationships, as well as individual reflection.
