

Charlie Wong Hing 和他未曾謀面的兒子的故事 Charlie Wong Hing and the Son He Never Met

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Charlie Wong Hing 在 Clear Springs Station, 大约摄于 1940 年代。
Charlie Wong Hing at Clear Springs Station, 1940s, private collection.

Charlie Wong Hing 的故事

他在澳洲 Wagga Wagga 的名字叫作 Charlie Wong Hing, 但我們並不知道這是否就是他的真名。據說他是在 19 世紀末在雪梨跳船走到 Riverina 地區, 用一個死去的華人的身份留在澳洲的。他在某一段時間裡回過中國, 我們不知道那是哪一年。只知道他娶了妻, 但兒子還沒有生下來就又回到澳洲謀生, 所以 Charley 從來沒有見過兒子的面。

Charlie 在 Wagga 種菜為生。他經常在 Fitzmaurice 這條街上來回走, 拉著他的馬車送菜。他的顧客中有一個人是開一家收音機小店的艾力克 (Eric Roberts)。三十年代大蕭條時艾力克沒有生計, Charlie 經常給他家送菜而不要錢。後來有一天, Charlie 告訴艾力克說他不能再給他送菜了, 因為他的馬死了。艾力克二話不說就買了一匹馬給 Charlie。這兩個人從此成為生死之交。Charlie 是艾力克的家庭成員, 家裡人說, “Charlie 要什麼就有什麼”。

我們不知道 Charlie 識不識字, 但他一直與廣東家裡有聯系。這裡發表的幾封信都是他在廣東的兒子寄來的。這些他所珍藏的信在他去世后由艾力克的養女溫蒂 Wendy Hucker 保存。最近她將這些信捐獻給 Wagga 博物館, 使得我們可以窺見二十世紀一個普通的華人 Charlie 與他在廣東農村從未謀面的兒子關讓之間的故事。征得 Wendy Hucker 的允許, Wagga 博物館授權我們在這裡發表其中的幾封以饗讀者。

我們這裡發表的第一封信寫於 1963 年 9 月，正當所謂的“三年困難時期”。全文如下：

父親大人膝下、敬稟者，久未上稟問候，至今有幾月矣。定卜大人在外福體安康，凡事皆吉，男所遠望也。

現時在家大小各人托佑粗安，請勿尊念。對於瑞和讀書之事，前在捌月時考中學，但因考試人多，收取學生很少，所以未能考入，現時仍在小學讀書，至明年再考中學。所以將此情形告上大人得知。

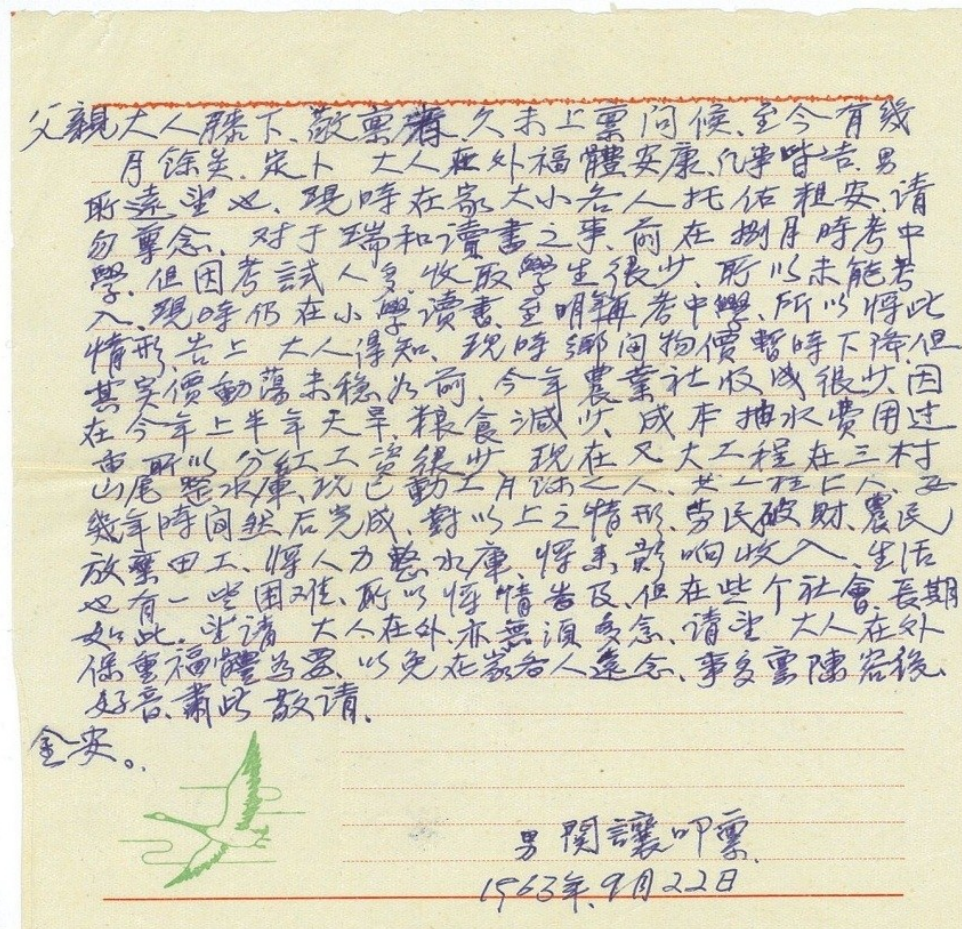
現時鄉間物價暫時下降，但其實價動蕩未穩如前。今年農業社收成很少。因為今年上半年天旱，糧食減少，成本抽水費用過重，所以分紅工資很少。現在又大工程在三村山尾整水庫，現已動工月余之久。其工程巨大，要幾年時間然後完成。對以上情形，勞民破財，農民放棄田工，將人力整水庫，將來影響收入，生活也有一些困難，所以將情告及。但在些個社會，長期如此，望請大人在外，亦無須多念，請望大人在外保重福體為要，以免在家各人遠念。

事多稟陳，容后好音。肅此敬請

金安

男關讓叩稟

1963 年 9 月 22 日



Letter from Charlie Wong Hing's son in China, 22 September 1963.

關讓第二封信寫於他的第三個孩子出生之后。可知 Charlie 一直在給兒子寄錢，而兒子一家卻一直處於貧困之中。關讓捉襟見肘的經濟狀況、他萬不得已向父親張嘴要錢時的左右為難和他對遠隔重洋的父親的關注都通過這兩封信流露出來：

父親大人膝下、敬稟者，自從三月份付來之銀至今有五個月之久，未知大人在外福體安康否。男非常挂念。但因現時男在本月九日又添生下一小女孩，所以今特上稟，望大人以小女孩命名為盼。

長女瑞和現考中學，杰佛在本學期讀書，所以將這情形告及一二，而望大人資助，以解目前之需。

現時在家大小各人平安，請勿尊念。萬望大人在外保重福體為盼。前月也曾有信付上，未知得接否。若得信后，請賜回音，以免挂念為盼。事多稟陳，容后再上。肅此敬請

金安

男關讓上稟

1964年8月10日

通信處廣東新會縣崖西橫水鄉麥田里



關讓夫婦攝於廣東新會縣崖西橫水鄉麥田里家門前。

Charlie Wong Hing's son and wife in China, 1970s, private collection.

二十世紀五十年代前還有很多華人在 Wagga 謀生。他們大多住在市中心，當時 Wagga 還有番攤。但冷戰和這之后新一輪的經濟發展成為一種合力，華人漸漸都從 Wagga 消失了。這之后的 Charlie 可能幾乎沒有華人朋友住在附近。他偶爾會坐火車去雪梨，會會朋友，講講廣東話，玩玩番攤。每次回來必定會買些糖果給艾力克的孩子們。下面這張照片是 Charlie 抱著艾力克夫婦所抱養的女兒坐在涼台上，攝於 1959 年。



Charlie Wong Hing 和 艾力克的养女 Kirsty Hucker, 大约摄于 1959。
Charlie Wong Hing with Kirsty Hucker at Clear Springs Station, about 1959.

1968 年。此時 Charlie 年邁，其子關讓寫信給 Charlie 的叔父請求他勸 Charlie 回唐：

禮香翁台尊前，敬稟者，昨得接來函教導知悉我父親近況得到翁台幫助，甚為快慰，感激非常，並祝翁台福體安康為慰。

前月侄孫接到所寄給父親之掛號信的回頭簽字條紙，知道該信得收，但未見有來信述及內情，未知他近來思想如何，或者年老，對精神上有多少模糊，實為挂念。

現適翁台來信雲及他遲日到貴府問候，煩請翁台指教及解釋。因為我父親年高在外，請勸他多與家中來信聯系，以免家中各人懸念。現時家中兒孫滿堂，請勸他旋唐為好。現時侄孫兒女逐漸長大，家庭負擔可能減輕一點，請勸他無論錢銀多少，無須顧慮，年老亦應回鄉，與家人團敘為盼。

現時鄉間情形很好，物價穩定，現在附上家信一封，煩請代轉為盼。此復，敬請

金安

侄孫關讓上稟

1968 年 8 月 13 日

然而 Charlie 終究沒有回唐。他於 1969 年去世於艾力克夫婦所建的老人院裡。當時，由于華人均早已離去，Wagga 的華人公墓已經關閉許久。艾力克要求重啟華人公墓并將 Charlie 以天主教儀式下葬，遭到一些人的反對，因為 Charlie 從來也沒有入過教。但最終艾力克說服了眾人。Charlie 就這麼下了葬，孤零零地埋在了他勞作一生的 Wagga。



Charlie Wong Hing 之墓, 麥歐文攝。
Charlie Wong Hing's grave, Wagga Wagga Chinese cemetery, photo by Barry McGowan.

Charlie Wong Hing's Story

Occasionally very strong and genuine relationships were formed between Chinese people and Europeans. One of the most heart-warming stories concerns a Wagga Wagga based market gardener, Charlie Wong Hing. His origins in Australia are mysterious. The most likely story is that he jumped ship at Sydney Heads sometime in the late 1800s and made his way to the Riverina district, where he later assumed the identity of a deceased Chinese man. He went back to China at some stage, for he had a son there but left before the boy was born. In Wagga he took up market gardening, often plying his trade along Fitzmaurice Street with his horse and cart. One of Charlie's customers was Eric Roberts, the founder of Wagga's first radio station, 2WG. In the early 1930s Eric had very little money left after expenses and Charlie often gave him his vegetables for free. Later, when Charlie's horse died Eric bought him another one. After that the two men were inseparable.

In World War II, Eric obtained Charlie a job as a market gardener at the air force base at Uranquinty. After the war Eric employed him as a gardener, cook and general help on his farm at Clear Springs and he became part of the family – "whatever Charlie wanted he got". Often he would go to Sydney, mingle with the Chinese community and play fan tan, always returning with some lollies or chocolates for the children. In the post war period there were very few Chinese people left in Wagga. Charlie sent money to his son in China through a contact in Melbourne, and his son wrote to him several times, including the difficult years of the Cultural Revolution, when contacts with overseas people were discouraged and sometimes punished. Writing in 1968 the son expressed concern that his father was in a foreign land with no family to care for him and urged him to return to China, but he never did. Charlie's final years were spent at an old people's home "The Haven", which had been built up gradually by the Roberts family.

Charlie died in 1969 and was buried in the Chinese section of the Wagga cemetery. Because it had been many years since a Chinese person had been buried there, his Wagga friends had to approach Wagga Council to get special permission to re-open the Chinese section of the cemetery. The last battle was with the Church of England, which at first refused to bury Charlie because he was not a Christian. The church eventually relented, however, and he was buried with Christian rites as Charlie and his friends had wished. Charlie's portrait can be seen at the Museum of the Riverina, Wagga. Wendy

Hucker, an adopted daughter of the Roberts family, was executor of Charlie's will and later visited his family in China.

Below is a letter sent by Charlie's son to him in 1963 from Guangdong, China. We are grateful to the Wagga Wagga Museum for the permission to publish this letter in this volume (see page 166 for a reproduction of the letter). The letter was translated by Li Tana.

Guangdong, 22 September 1963

My dear father, we are on our knees to write to you. It's been several months since we reported and sent our greetings to you. We trust that you are healthy and happy and everything has been smooth with you in the outside world. This is what your son is hoping from afar.

With your blessing, at present all the families are doing fine, please do not worry about us. About the issue of [your grandson] Ruihe's entry to high school, [we report that] he took the examination last August but because the candidates were too many and the admissions were few, [Ruihe] failed to get into the high school. At the moment he is still with the primary school and plans to take the examination next year.

At the moment the prices in the countryside have been temporarily down, but in actual fact it is still volatile as before. The yield of the cooperative this year is very poor because there was a drought earlier this year, which caused food reduction. [Furthermore, the drought] caused a high cost of pumping station [for water] therefore there was a very limited income when the [cooperative] divided the income among the members. Now another big project is on the way at the tail of Mount Sancun. [They are] building a dam there which has already started. This is a huge project which needs several years to finish. Such a situation tires the people and drains the treasury [wastes money and labour?]. The peasants have to give up their work in the fields and work in the dam; this will affect the income and bring hardship to our lives.

We report this situation to you as above. But such is the society we live in and it has been this way for a long time. So please, father, do not worry about us. Do take good care of yourself so that we will not worry about you.

There is so much to report to you but let us keep it for future correspondence. Meanwhile we hope to hear good news from you [as always].

[We] pray for your good health.

Your son Guanrang