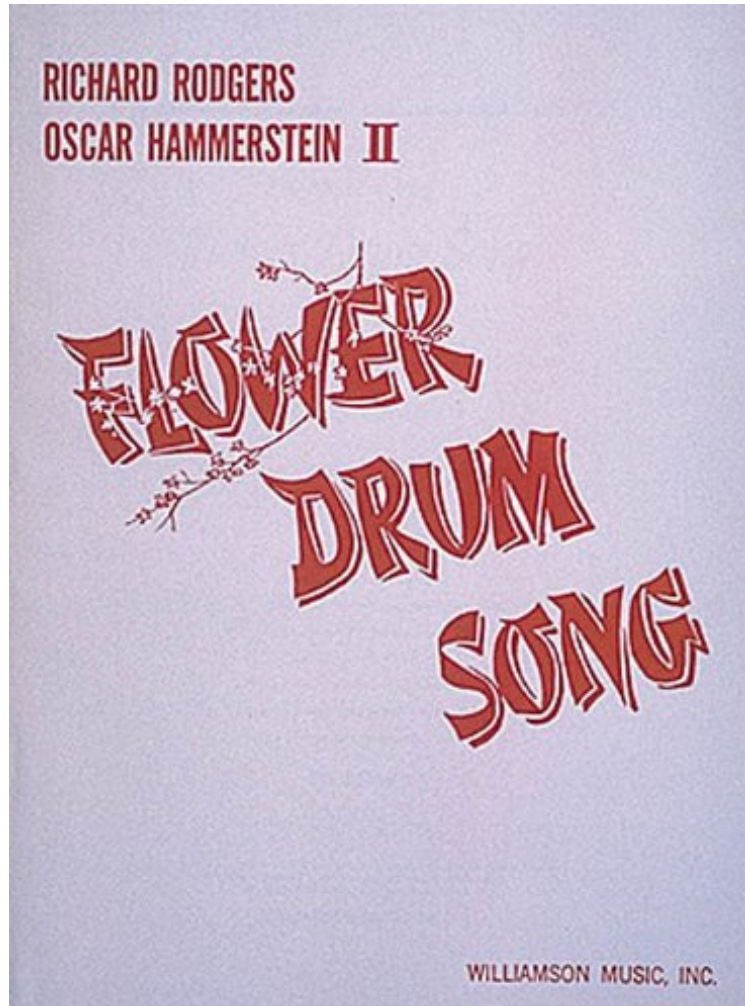


(Mobile book) Flower Drum Song (Score)

## Flower Drum Song (Score)

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**From Hal Leonard : Flower Drum Song (Score)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Flower Drum Song (Score):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding Work of Asian Literature, Too Often IgnoredBy Sharon E. CathcartHaving been a long-time fan of the Rogers Hammerstein musical based on this novel, I was surprised to learn of the book's existence. For some reason, when great Asian authors and literature are discussed, C.Y. Lee's "Flower Drum Song" is not part of the equation.This is a pity, really. Lee takes an honest look at Chinese-American cultural mores in San Francisco's Chinatown (where he lived at one point), including the problems caused by immigration quotas and anti-miscegenation laws. He writes frankly, for example, about Wang Ta (the eldest son in the story) consorting with prostitutes, thus breaking a barrier I have never been able to understand -- the idea that Asian men are somehow asexual.At the time Lee's novel takes place, immigration quotas had resulted in there being six

Chinese men for every woman. Anti-miscegenation laws prevented those men from marrying outside of their ethnicity. Thus, when Lee writes about Linda Tung (this character became Linda Low in the musical) and her "brothers" competing for her attention and her playing them against each other to obtain gifts, he is talking about a cultural reality. Women could be, and were, quite particular. The book also describes the immigrant experience in detail. Anthropologists know that immigrants cling to their old culture while the first generation born into the new culture assimilates entirely and is embarrassed at their elders. It is not until yet another generation is born that the cultures meld. The clashes between Old Master Wang Chi-yang and Young Masters Wang Ta and Wang San are frequent, and serve as splendid demonstrations of the situation. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommend it highly. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Arthur Bernstein Far better than that modern garbage by David Henry Hwang. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "Flower Drum Song Is a Pleasure to Read!" By djgirl63 I never knew that this was a novel, although I have seen the musical, which I love! I am so glad that I had the opportunity to order this light-hearted and fun book. The book arrived in perfect condition, and I am absolutely thrilled with it. Thank you!

(Vocal Score). The complete vocal score with 15 songs: Chop Suey \* Don't Marry Me \* Fan Tan Fannie \* Finale \* Flower Drum Song \* Gliding Through My Memoree \* Grant Avenue \* A Hundred Million Miracles \* I Am Going to like It Here \* I Enjoy Being a Girl \* Like a God \* Love, Look Away \* The Other Generation \* Ta's Dream \* You Are Beautiful.

"Flower Drum Song comes roaring back as if it were brand new... Always entertaining, frequently affecting... relevant without getting weighed down by political correctness... It is a work of bravery and intelligence and real faith in the possibilities of musical theatre" Time; "Part fashion show, part night-club act, part hymn to Asian American diversity, Flower Drum Song's intelligence may be rooted in Asian American cultural contradictions, but its heart belongs to Broadway" John Lahr, New Yorker" --John Lahr, New Yorker About the Author C. Y. Lee arrived in the United States in 1943 and graduated from Yale in 1947 with an MFA in playwriting. He has been a contributor to Radio Free Asia and an editor at Chinese World and Young China. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. PENGUIN BOOKS THE FLOWER DRUM SONG Chin Y. Lee was born in Hunan, China, in 1917. He received his B.A. from the National Southwest Associated University, Kunming, China, in 1940. He came to the United States in 1943 and attended Yale University, graduating in 1947 with his M.F.A. in playwriting. In San Francisco, he worked as city editor for the newspapers Chinese World and Young China, as well as a feature program writer for Radio Free Asia. The Flower Drum Song, published in 1957, was his first novel, and was the basis for a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical that ran on Broadway and subsequently became a film. Lee has published a number of other novels, and his stories and articles have appeared in The New Yorker, Theatre Arts, Writers Digest, and Ellery Queens Mystery Magazine, among others. He has worked as a scriptwriter for Twentieth Century Fox. His honors include a California Commonwealth Club Gold Medal Fiction Award, a San Francisco Press Club and Union League Annual Award, a Writers Guild Annual Award for Writing Achievement, a Box Office Blue Ribbon Award, and the key to the City of San Francisco. A C. Y. Lee Archive has been established at Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library. Lee lives in Alhambra, California. David Henry Hwang was awarded the 1988 Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics, and John Gassner awards for his Broadway debut play, M. Butterfly, which was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His other plays include FOB, which won a 1981 OBIE Award, and Golden Child, which received a 1998 Tony nomination and a 1997 OBIE Award. He co-wrote the book for the Broadway production of Aida; his libretti include two for composer Philip Glass; and he has written screenplays for M. Butterfly, Golden Gate, and Possession. Hwang wrote a new book for the revival of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical Flower Drum Song, which premiered in 2001. He lives in New York City. The Flower Drum Song by C. Y. Lee Table of Contents Authors Note In the late forties, Chinatown in Los Angeles was a roofed bazaar the size of two football fields. I moved there after escaping China during the Second World War on a student visa and subsequently finding that the Masters in Fine Arts I had from Yale wasn't helpful in making me a successful playwright or getting a job at the U.N. as an interpreter. One morning, as I was having my daily 25-cent bowl of noodles, I read an announcement in the Chinese World that would turn my life around. The paper was preparing to publish an English section and needed a columnist. I went home and wrote two sample manuscripts, naming my proposed column So I Say. A week later, I received a check for ten dollars and a letter from the editor asking me to submit five columns a week, for which he would pay me \$5 each. I calculated on my fingers: \$25 a week would buy a lot of noodles. I threw my arms into the air and cheered. For the first time in my life I could make money from writing. I wrote about life, love, and emotions to appeal to the younger generation who could read English, and my column became quite popular. I was promoted to assistant editor and, in addition to my regular column, began translating some news stories from the American papers. The paper was based in San Francisco, and I could move there if I was interested. I moved immediately. Mr. Li Ta-Ming's Chinese World occupied a large upstairs room on Grand Avenue in San Francisco. It was crowded, busy, and noisy. My duties now included searching for some city scandals from the English papers and inventing a few if necessary. I rented a little room above a Filipino nightclub on

Kearney Street, a short walk from the office. The room was cheap because of the noise from the club. I settled into San Francisco life and began my first novel. One afternoon, just as I finished that days column, I received a call from a man with a gravelly voice. He started asking me all kinds of questions, and I immediately thought he was from the Immigration Service. Officer, I said, Im all packed. Deport me any time. The caller didnt know what I was talking about. It turned out he was the editor of Writers Digest informing me that I had won first prize in their short story contest. He wanted to make sure I was the right Lee before he sent me the prize money of \$750. When the editors formal letter and check arrived, I brought them to the Immigration Service to apply for an extension of stay. The pokerfaced officer studied my case, shoved some papers at me and told me to fill them in and sign. They were papers for permanent residence. If approved, I could become an American citizen in five years. I finished my novel and found an agent, Ann Elmo, to represent it. Ann called one summer day to give me an update: my novel, *The Flower Drum Song*, had been turned down by almost every major publisher in New York. She hinted that after one more rejection, she would return it and I should think of another line of occupation. A week later she called again and said, Keep writing, Lee. A highbrow publisher, Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, has bought your book. She added that the publisher liked it because it was quaint and episodic the very reasons the other publishers had turned it down. A month later I took a trip to New York and had a chance to meet John Farrar, my editor and a senior partner at the publishing house. He told me that my manuscript of *The Flower Drum Song* had first landed on the sick bed of an eighty-year-old reader who worked for the publisher screening submissions. The elderly gentleman, having finished the book, didnt have enough energy to write a detailed critique. With his last bit of strength, he scribbled on the dog-eared cover, Read This, and died. I especially enjoyed retelling this story when *The Flower Drum Song* climbed onto *The New York Times* bestseller list. Radio Free Asia soon offered me a job. I took it and resigned from the newspaper, but I still kept that cheap room on Kearney Street. One late afternoon Ann Elmo called me from New York with some good news. There were quite a few nibbles for *The Flower Drum Song*, and two of them were very promising. A Broadway producer had offered \$3,000 to option the book for two years to make a stage play, and an independent Hollywood producer had offered \$50,000 to buy all the dramatic rights outright, including film. Ann wanted me to choose one of these two offers. I promised my agent that I would give her my answer the next morning. That night I didnt write. I returned to my room to think things over. If I took the \$3,000 I could collect future royalties from the play. If the play failed, though, I wouldnt get anything but the \$3,000. If I accepted the Hollywood producers money, I would be quite rich for a while. I could move to Nob Hill, take a trip to Europe, and come home with plenty of money left in the bank. For a while I lay on my squeaky bed and stared at the ceiling. For the first time I didnt mind the roof-shaking music; it gave my room a festive mood. I could have jumped at the guaranteed big money, and yet, something seemed to hold me back. My frugal nature and my desire for instant security were pushing me one way, but something else, maybe a gambling gene telling me to throw the dice, was pulling me the other way. Finally, I decided to get a drink. I went downstairs and bought a Budweiser, the best in the Filipino nightclub. Sipping my beer from the bottle, I began to relax, then I began to feel good. I even forgot I had a problem to solve. I dont know what happened to me that night. I might have gotten drunk and dozed off or made some drunken disturbance that was safely covered by the worse noises from downstairs. The next morning I woke up with a hangover, a little ashamed that only one beer could have conked me out. When I remembered my dilemma, the phone rang. It was Ann Elmo, calling to congratulate me on having made the right decision.

C.Y. Lee Introduction

As a child growing up in Los Angeles during the 1960s, I developed a somewhat curious practice: if I heard that a particular movie or television show featured Asian characters, I would go out of my way not to watch it. I would not have been able to articulate a reason for my behavior, other than the fact that the images made me feel icky. This was a time when Asian characters in American popular culture could be generally characterized as inhuman, either inhumanly bad (e.g. Fu Manchu; evil Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese soldiers, take your pick) or inhumanly good (e.g. Charlie Chan; the plethora of Asian women who died for the love of a white B-movie actor). Some of these odd creatures who looked like me served as the butt of derisive humor, due to their grotesque mannerisms, bizarre customs, and an endlessly amusing inability to distinguish between the letters r and l. Yet one work stood as an exception: I cant recall the first time I encountered *Flower Drum Song* not the novel or the Rodgers Hammerstein stage musical, but the 1961 film version of that Broadway show. It was no doubt on some late-night television movie, and I was pleasantly shocked: here were Asians who spoke without an accent, in a love story between Asian men and Asian women, singing and dancing up a storm to beautiful, relatively hip music. For Asian American baby-boomers like me, this portrayal was, for its time, nothing short of revolutionary. By the time I attended college in the late 1970s, campuses were buzzing with artists and activists representing Americans whose voices had been ignored or marginalized by mainstream society. We sought our own revolution, to shake up a literary establishment that considered, for example, the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald to be true literature, while those of Toni Morrison were merely ethnic works of limited appeal. We agitated for the right of Asian American writers to define our own identities and communities, rather than permitting these images to be drawn by the dominant (i.e. Caucasian) society, which had done such a poor job of portraying us in my youth. As part of this movement, we condemned (rather simplistically) virtually all portrayals of Asian Americans that had been created by non-Asians. So I ended up protesting *Flower Drum Song*, which had become associated almost exclusively with the movie and musical, as

inauthentic. But even at such political gatherings, if I took a protester aside privately, he might well reply, Actually, I sort of like it. The movie remained a guilty pleasure for many of us, even at our most politically extreme. By the early-1980s, the few who did recall that Rodgers Hammerstein had drawn upon source material by an immigrant Chinese American chose to ignore it. As I began discovering my own voice as a writer, Asian American Studies classes were springing up around the country. We were searching for our own literary history, works neither white American nor foreign Asian, but specifically Asian American. Writers and scholars rediscovered John Okada's *No No Boy* (1957) and Louis Chus's *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (1961). C.Y. Lee's *The Flower Drum Song* (1957), however, was neither reclaimed nor celebrated. A new generation of scholars began to compile what would eventually become an Asian American literary canon, but omitted this prominent Chinese American novel. The omission was deliberate, I believe, resulting from two realities of that period. Foremost was the novel's association with the musical and movie. To the extent that we discredited the musical *The Flower Drum Song* as inauthentic, the novel became tainted by association; the unsophisticated politics of that period could not accommodate such a distinction. Second was a reverse-snobbery whereby the very success of the novel in the general marketplace rendered it suspect as an example of true Asian American literature. This sort of prejudice is not limited to ethnic studies scholars. It often happens in mainstream circles that a critically acclaimed artist is abandoned by his allies after achieving popular success: if the masses like it, how artistic could it be? Similarly, Asian American critics might have argued that if white readers had liked *The Flower Drum Song*, how authentic could it be? By the mid-1990s, when I began to consider writing a remake of the musical *The Flower Drum Song*, the novel had more or less vanished from both mainstream and Asian American consciousness. A few scholars, such as the late Amy Ling of the University of Wisconsin, were brave enough to buck the tide of fashion by writing about author Chin Yang Lee, but by and large his first novel and his subsequent ten works were ignored by both English Literature and Asian American Studies departments. (An exception was Boston University, where a C.Y. Lee Archive was established at Mugar Memorial Library.) Lee's body of work as well as his literary reputation have long been secure in Taiwan, but when I looked for the novel that had inspired Rodgers Hammerstein here in America, I found it virtually impossible to obtain a copy. Luckily, through a mutual friend, I obtained a used copy from the invaluable Seattle bookseller David Ishii. I pulled the well-preserved hardcover from its mailing paper and sat down to investigate this forgotten novel with the world-famous title. With the turn of each page, I grew increasingly moved and excited. I had not experienced a feeling like this since I first picked up Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976) as a college student. Here were characters, cultures, and situations that I knew well but had never expected to encounter so intimately on a published page. Yet there were differences between my Lee and Kingston experiences. In the 1970s, I was a young aspiring writer at a time when any Asian American work was still a rarity. By the late 1990s, I had become a middle-aged playwright, and in the intervening years had witnessed a blossoming of Asian American writing, much of it to critical and popular acclaim. My experience with *The Flower Drum Song*, therefore, was like discovering a long-lost ancestor, a forgotten branch of my family tree, a missing piece of literary history for which I felt particular affinity. I sought out the author, who was by then in his seventies and living in southern California. Spry, affable, and sporting a mischievous smile, C.Y. Lee met me for lunch in the Los Angeles suburb of Monterey Park, home to a large and growing Chinese community. Over dishes of the type featured in the novel, he described the humorous and providential manner by which this novel came to be, stories he had no doubt recounted most of his life, but which still seemed fresh. Lee had come from China as a foreign student and graduated from Yale Drama School. Upon the advice of an agent, who told him plays about China would never sell, Lee switched to prose, and lived in a small room above a Filipino restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown, eking out a living editing a Cantonese newspaper and waiting for immigration to deport him when his student visa expired. It was the *Writers Digest* short story prize that allowed him to stay, and the sale of his novel to a New York publisher that was a turning point in his life. Lee's stories of the mainstream success following publication felt familiar and touching to me. Playwright and screenwriter Joseph Fields, author of works such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *Wonderful Town*, optioned the book, and then persuaded the A-team of the American musical theater, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, to adapt the work with him for the stage. Lee was shepherded around Hollywood, where Edward G. Robinson met him with the pitch, I want to play the Chinaman. Lee was in his early forties when his novel was published, about the same age as I was on the occasion of our first lunch. I felt I was meeting a father figure in more ways than one. A strong case can be made for *The Flower Drum Song* as the first Chinese American novel to be released by an established publishing house. Works by Chinese American authors in English had been published prior to *The Flower Drum Song*'s appearance in 1957, and some, like Pardee Lowe's *Father and Glorious Descendant* (1943) and Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1950), had attracted substantial readerships. But these were memoirs that, as noted by scholars such as Jeffrey Paul Chan, essentially followed the form established by a single antecedent, Yung Wing's *My Life in China and America* (1909). While it is fair to assume that elements of Lee's work are autobiographical (an assumption reasonably applied to many works of fiction), his is clearly a novel, and it predates the publication of *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. As such, whether by design or happenstance, *The Flower Drum Song* represents the birth of a new literary genre, one which has since blossomed into a vital and prospering form. Add to this the fact that it became a bestseller and was translated into a popular dramatic form, and the impact of this work

upon American culture, as well as on a nascent Asian American consciousness, can hardly be overstated. What of the work itself? Lees novel strikes me as an amazingly daring and evocative portrait of Asian American sexuality during a critical period of fundamental transition in the Chinatown community. For historical context, we should go back to 1882, when the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited immigration to America from China. Originally intended to lapse after ten years, in 1904 the legislation was extended indefinitely. This represents the only instance in American history when a group of people was denied entry to this country based solely upon a formulation of race. Those Chinese already living in the United States were prohibited from bringing in their wives and families and were subject to numerous anti-miscegenation laws around the country, which made intermarriage nearly impossible. A historical accident arising from the destruction of immigration records during the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 enabled the admission of a small trickle of Chinese, who in subsequent years entered as paper sons or paper daughters, most claiming to be children of some individual who had successfully established American citizenship after the records were lost. In the main, however, these and other racist policies turned American Chinatowns into bachelor societies, where males far outnumbered females. When China became American ally in the war against Japan, the Chinese Exclusion Act came to be viewed as a diplomatic embarrassment. This and other factors led Congress to modify the legislation through a series of laws, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act of 1943. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Act established a system of quotas, through which national origin was established as the basis for immigration, a policy that continued to discriminate against non-whites. By the time this system was abolished by the Immigration Act of 1965, the total annual quota from all Asian countries stood at 2,990, as opposed to 149,667 from Europe and 1,400 from Africa. The Flower Drum Song takes place in the mid-1950s, when the bachelor society was just beginning its long transition into a more demographically normative community. (The balance of females to males in American Chinatowns would not equalize until the 1980s.) Its story of traditionalist patriarch Wang Chi-Yang and his culturally conflicted sons, Ta and San, can be read against the backdrop of a society where new immigration had not been seen in substantial numbers for many decades, and where Chinese male sexuality had been suppressed, even demonized, by mainstream Americans around them. To some extent, this attitude continues even in the present day; whereas Asian females have long been considered a desirable, exotic sexual commodity by the larger culture, Asian males have been viewed as effeminate, unassertive, and sexually undesirable, a stereotype which has only begun to change in recent years. It is all the more surprising, then, that this novel should concern itself so honestly with Asian male sexuality. In this sense, it shares a thematic bond with *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, a work enthusiastically embraced by early Asian American scholars. The quest of the decent but confused Wang Ta to find a wife constitutes one thread of Lees book. As we follow his journey, we continually encounter the consequences of racist American policies since 1882. At several points in the story, most notably when Old Master Wang and his sister-in-law Madame Tang hatch a scheme to bring in a foreign-born bride for Ta, draconian quota restrictions foil their plans. Furthermore, the demographic legacy of the bachelor society, which created a severe imbalance between males and females, practically functions as a character in the story. Tas philosopher friend Chang invokes the imbalance to explain the undoing of all their romances, a rationalization we are probably not meant to take literally, but which nonetheless underscores its importance in their lives. To say that Lees novel focuses on male sexuality is not to diminish his portrayals of Chinese women, who are drawn with thrilling authenticity. In mainstream American culture, Asian female characters are often limited to the lotus blossom or dragon lady stereotypes. Similar to the Madonnawhore dichotomy, the good Asian woman is portrayed as dutiful and submissive, whereas the bad woman is crafty, manipulative, and overtly sexual. The women in Lees novel, however, transcend such restraints to emerge as complex, fully human characters. Consider May Li: as a new immigrant from China, devoted to her father, she might be a perfect candidate for the lotus blossom stereotype, and as translated for the stage by Rodgers, Hammerstein, and Fields, she did come much closer to that image. In the novel, she is a young woman quick to speak up for herself, whose first words upon arriving at the Wang household to the cranky servant Liu Ma are, We are strangers in Chinatown. We shall go when we are ready, you do not have to show so many of your teeth and growl. Far from a shy and sexually retiring butterfly, she stays out all night with Ta without feeling embarrassment or shame. Similarly, the character of Miss Tung, who became the flashy showgirl Linda Low in the musical, here emerges as a much less skilled sexual player; the last thing we hear about her is her pathetic desire to be admired for her supposedly Greek nose. Perhaps the most fascinating female in the novel is Helen Chao, representing a type rarely portrayed: the unattractive Asian woman, rejected even by men of her own society. In his kaleidoscope of meticulously observed men and women, Lee captures a community, disfigured like Helen by the ravages of history, awkwardly struggling to rediscover its fundamental life force. Some Asian American critics have accused the novel of glorifying white American culture at the expense of Chinese customs; they argue that the struggle between Old Master Wang and Wang Ta portrays the Chinese as foolish and backwards, thus reinforcing rather than challenging popular opinion. Such a reading strikes me as superficial and simplistic. Though Old Master Wang is a harsh, flawed figure, his deficiencies are not specifically the result of Chinese customs. On the contrary, characters such as May Lis father, while traditional in their outlook, come across as highly admirable. Conversely, Madame Tang, while open to American ways and generally sympathetic, unwisely opposes Tas romance with May Li. I feel Old Master Wang and

Wang Ta represent a subtler dynamic: the conflict between growth and stagnation. By actively striving to construct a new identity for himself in America, Ta continues to engage life, struggling with the contradictions before him, making mistakes, yet ultimately evolving to a level of understanding which is neither white-American nor traditional-Chinese, but uniquely his own. When Chang finally settles upon a wife, she is neither Chinese nor Caucasian, but of Mexican origin. Characters like Ta and Chang are working to create the future of America. Old Master Wang lives in a condition of stasis and alienation; as a speaker of Hunan dialect who cannot even converse with the largely Cantonese population around him, he remains isolated even from other Chinese. He seems incapable of pleasure, whether from a dancing girl or from Chinese delicacies at mealtime, he does no meaningful work, and his primary activities include counting money and cultivating his cough; this latter habit, in particular, establishes him as a man essentially waiting to die. His relationship with his older son pits a mentality that values life in opposition to one that affirms death. Old Master Wang's decision at the end of the novel to have his cough examined by a Western doctor (significantly, a Chinese American doctor), rather than affirming the superiority of American medicine, shows instead that he has accepted the inevitability of change, and consented to be part of that future. As Wang Ta and Old Master Wang discover, the future can indeed be filled with surprising turns. More than forty years ago, C.Y. Lee wrote a novel that became world-famous when it was translated to the stage and screen. Ten years later, a group of writers and scholars began fighting for a re-evaluation of the American literary canon to include all Americans, but rejected the first Chinese American novel based primarily upon those subsequent adaptations. Largely because of the efforts of those agitators, however, the genre which Lee pioneered has grown into a popular and respected form, a fact which now contributes to the reissue of his novel. In my view, *The Flower Drum Song* represents a major achievement in American literature: it is an Asian American classic. I am thrilled it will once again grace the bookshelves of our land, for new generations to discover, evaluate, and enjoy, in an America whose changing landscape C.Y. Lee first captured decades ago.

David Henry Hwang

PART ONE

To the casual tourists, Grant Avenue is Chinatown, just another colorful street in San Francisco; to the overseas Chinese, Grant Avenue is their showcase, their livelihood; to the refugees from the mainland, Grant Avenue is Canton. Although there are no pedicabs, no wooden slippers clip-clapping on the sidewalks, yet the strip of land is to the refugee the closest thing to a home town. The Chinese theatres, the porridge restaurants, the teahouses, the newspapers, the food, the herbs ... all provide an atmosphere that makes a refugee wonder whether he is really in a foreign land. And yet, in this familiar atmosphere, he struggles and faces many problems that are sometimes totally unfamiliar. Wang Chi-yang was one of those who could not live anywhere else in the United States but in San Francisco Chinatown. He was from central China, speaking only Hunan dialect, which neither a Northerner nor a Cantonese can understand. His working knowledge of the English language was limited to two words: yes and no. And he seldom used no, for when people talked to him in English or Cantonese, he didn't want to antagonize them unnecessarily since he had no idea what they were talking about. For that reason, he wasn't too popular in Chinatown; his yes had in fact antagonized many people. Once at a banquet, his Cantonese host claimed modestly that the food was poor and tasteless and begged his honorable guests pardon, a customary polite remark to be refuted by the guests, and Wang Chi-yang, ignorant of the Cantonese dialect, nodded his head and said yes twice. But Wang Chi-yang loved Chinatown. He lived comfortably in a two-story house three blocks away from Grant Avenue that he had bought four years ago, a house decorated with Chinese paintings and couplet scrolls, furnished with uncomfortable but expensive teakwood tables and chairs, and staffed with two servants and a cook whom he had brought from Hunan Province. The only impure elements in his household were his two sons, Wang Ta and Wang San, especially the latter, who had in four years learned to act like a cowboy and talk like the characters in a *Spillane* movie. At thirteen he had practically forgotten his Chinese. Wang Ta, the elder son, was less of a rebel. Quiet and unhappy at twenty-eight, he was often embarrassed in his father's company. But he was reluctant to correct the old man's old habits and mistakes, for Wang Chi-yang was a stubborn man. In his house he was the lord; his words were the law. His servants still addressed him as Old Master Wang and worked for him seven days a week at ten dollars a month. They were loyal to him and respected him, although his stern looks, his drooping mustache, his large frame, his loose gown of blue satin, his constant cough, his unyielding demands and orders would have been very unpleasant to any servant hired in America. The only person who refused to be awed by him was Madam Tang, the widowed sister of his late wife. Madam Tang came often to give him advice. She regarded her sixty-three-year-old brother-in-law as extremely old-fashioned and backward. Aiyoo, my sister's husband, she often said, please put your money in the bank. And buy yourself a suit of Western dress. In this country you truly look like a stage actor in that satin gown. But Madam Tang's advice went into Old Master Wang's one ear and promptly came out of the other. Not that Old Master Wang didn't trust the banks; he just couldn't compromise with the idea that one's money should be kept in strangers' hands. In China, his money had always been in the hands of his close friends, and it had always been safe even without a signature. And his friends had always brought him profit and interest twice a year and he had accepted them without a question. He believed that banks in this country would probably do the same, but in a bank everybody was a stranger. Money, in his opinion, was like one's wife; he just couldn't let a stranger keep it for him. As for Western clothes, wearing them was out of the question. He had always worn long gowns, silk gowns in the summer, satin gowns in the spring or autumn, fur gowns or cotton-padded gowns in the winter. It would be unthinkable for him to

change into the Western clothes with only two or three buttons and an open collar. Furthermore, a piece of rag tied around ones neck seemed to him an outrage, besides being ugly and an indication of ill omen. He would never dream of tying one around his neck. The Communists in Hunan Province had tried to discard the long gown and make everybody wear the Lenin uniform, which, in his opinion, was more formal than the Western dress since it had more buttons and a closed collar. To him, even that was too much of an undesirable change; and it was one of the reasons why he had escaped the mainland of China five years ago. No, he would never wear anything but the long gown. He was going to die in it and be buried in it. And he didnt think that his long gown would bother anyone but his sister-in-law. He had often walked on Grant Avenue in it and nobody had paid much attention to him. Even the American tourists seemed to regard him as a natural phenomenon on Grant Avenue. Old Master Wang loved to walk on Grant Avenue. Every other evening, after dinner, he walked down Jackson Street, turned south on Grant Avenue and strolled for six blocks until he reached Bush Street, then he crossed Grant and turned back. He regarded the section beyond Bush as no longer Chinatown but a foreign territory. At the border of Chinatown he stopped and looked at the brightly lighted Chinatown thoroughfare for a moment, at its skyline with the pagoda roofs, at the lantern-like street lights, the blinking neon signs of English and Chinese in red, blue, yellow and green. He looked at the cars which crawled endlessly into the heart of Chinatown, then he took a deep breath and started the journey back. The street was gay and noisy, and yet it had its tranquil quality, as no one seemed to be in a great hurry. He strolled down the street and studied every poster and advertisement that was written in Chinese. During the New Year festivities he loved to read the orange couplet banners posted on the door of each shop. If he found the poetry on the banners well composed and the calligraphy having character and strength, he would read it aloud twice or thrice with his head shaking rhythmically in a scholarly manner, and then grade it. He graded all New Year poetic greetings on Grant Avenue, memorized the best ones and wrote them down when he came home. He also enjoyed the articles displayed in the shop window the exquisitely carved furniture, the brass and earthenware bowls, the straw hats and bamboo baskets, the miniature trees, the lacquer, the silk, the tiny porcelain, the jade, the silk brocade of gold and lavender.... His great favorite was an intricately carved eight-foot tusk in a large gift store near California Street. He went in and inquired the price. The owner of the store, who spoke some Mandarin, managed to make him understand that it was a rare mastodon tusk that had been buried in Siberian ice centuries ago. The carvings, which told a story of a festival at an emperors palace, took twenty-five years to complete. The price, therefore, was \$15,000. For three weeks Old Master Wang stopped in front of the window, admired the tusk and wondered whether he should buy it. Finally he made up his mind. He could enjoy the tusk on Grant Avenue as much as he could enjoy it privately at his home; why should he own it? Besides, it would be an act of selfishness to deprive others of the pleasure of looking at it by removing it from Grant Avenue. He was glad of the decision; for four years now he had enjoyed the tusk every other evening as much as if it were his own. He didnt find much pleasure walking on upper Grant Avenue, for it smelled too much of fowl and fish. When passing Washington Street, he would take a quick trip to the Buddhist church that was being constructed a block down, make a five-dollar donation and then return to Grant. He seldom went farther to Kearny, for he regarded it as a Filipino town and he had no desire to go there. He always walked past Grant on Jackson and went home through Stockton Street or Powell Street, avoiding the chicken and fish marts on upper Grant. Back home, he always sat comfortably in his rattan chair and waited for Liu Lung, the deaf manservant, to bring him tea, water pipe and the four Chinese newspapers. He subscribed to all the Chinatown newspapers for many reasons, the main reason being to see if there was any political fight among the editors. He always followed an editorial war with great interest; occasionally he would take sides and write an anonymous letter to the one with whom he sided, praising his reasoning and his fluency of composition. He always read all the papers from page to page, including the advertisements. He had no strong political convictions. He disliked communism for one reason only, that it destroyed Chinese traditions and turned the Chinese social order upside down. After he had enjoyed his tea, the water pipe and the four newspapers, he was ready for his ginseng soup. Liu Ma, the fat, talkative woman servant, who was Liu Lungs wife and Old Master Wangs information bureau, brought in the soup, eased the Old Masters cough by beating his shoulders with the palms of her hands for five minutes, and in the meantime supplied all the household information of the day. The cook had a visitor today, she said confidentially in Hunan dialect. A crooked-looking man. I did not know what they talked about, but they talked for a long time in the cooks bedroom. Old Master Wang grunted. Has Young Master Wang San studied his lessons in his room this evening? he asked. Yes. I saw to it that he studied. Are you sure he went to school instead of a motion picture? he asked. He came home with many books this evening, Liu Ma said. And went straight to his room and studied. Old Master Wang grunted. Has Young Master Wang Ta come home yet? No, not yet, said Liu Ma, then she lowered her voice and confided, Old Master Wang, when I cleaned Young Master Wang Tas room this morning, I found a womans picture in his desk drawer. A picture with five colors, the very expensive kind. On it were some foreign words I did not understand. I told Liu Lung this morning, No wonder Young Master Wang Ta has always come home late recently. Old Master Wang grunted. What does this woman look like? he asked. She is a foreigner, Liu Ma said emphatically. Old Master Wang stiffened. What? Are you sure? She has silk-colored hair, blue eyes and a large nose. She is a foreigner. Ask Young Master Wang Ta to see me when he comes home. Yes, Old Master Wang, she said beating his shoulders more energetically. Do you want to talk to the cook too? I suspected that visitor of his is a bad

character. Perhaps the cook is trying to find another job again and the crooked-looking visitor is trying to help him. No, I don't want to talk to him, Old Master Wang said. He is permitted to receive visitors. It is enough beating. You may go now. After Liu Ma had gone, Wang Chi-yang thought more of the foreign woman in Wang Ta's drawer than he worried about the cook. He knew that the cook wouldn't leave him again. A year ago his cook had been lured away by a Cantonese cook who made three hundred dollars a month in a restaurant. But two months afterward his cook returned, saying that he had been unhappy working in a restaurant as an assistant. He didn't understand their dialect and he had been pushed around; furthermore, he couldn't save any money although he had made two hundred dollars a month. The chief cook, who gambled, had often borrowed money from him. Now he realized that he had really been very happy in the kitchen in the House of Wang, where he was the chief. And he had always saved at least ten dollars of his fifteen-dollar monthly pay and during the past three years he had saved almost five hundred dollars. But he had lost all of his savings at the gambling tables during the two months when he was making two hundred a month. With tears in his eyes he had begged Old Master Wang to take him back. Wang Chi-yang remembered the cook's predicament and was sure that he wouldn't be so foolish as to work elsewhere and try to make two hundred dollars a month again. But the foreign woman in Wang Ta's drawer bothered him. He waited for Wang Ta to come home but his son did not come. When the old clock on the marble mantel struck twelve he went to bed; he tossed under the huge square mosquito net, unable to fall asleep. He had brought the mosquito net from China and had slept peacefully for twenty years under it. He would feel naked without it. But tonight he felt disturbed as though hundreds of mosquitoes had been humming in his net. Was Wang Ta in bed with that foreign woman in some cheap hotel room now? He thought of it and he shivered. The next morning he got up as soon as the clock struck eight, had his ginseng soup and inquired about Wang Ta. Liu Ma told him that the Young Master had come back very late and had gone out again early this morning. Old Master Wang was relieved, but he was still slightly disturbed by the fact that the younger generation was not obedient any more. His son should have at least waited and come to see him as ordered. Feeling a bit crabbed he dismissed Liu Ma and attended his miniature garden beside his bed. The garden was built on a huge Kiangsi plate, with a magnificent emerald mountain rising high above the water. There were caverns, roads, bridges, paths, pagodas and a monastery in the garden, with tiny goldfish swimming about in the lake. He fed the fish, watered the moss and the miniature trees in the mountain. He felt better. The beauty of nature always cured him of his bad mood. Then he went to his large red lacquered desk beside the window and practiced calligraphy for an hour. He wrote famous poetry on his fine rice paper with great care and deliberation, his head moving slightly with the brush. Then he wrote the poetry all over again in grass style, his brush flying swiftly and smoothly on the paper. He was not satisfied with his grass style. For practice sake, he wrote casually some folklore sayings on top of it: Tight lips catch no flies, Waste no time quarreling with women, Loud bark, no good dogs; loud talk, no wise man ... Then he suddenly remembered it was Monday, the day for his weekly trip to the Bank of America on Grant Avenue, not to deposit money, but to have a hundred-dollar bill changed into small bills and silver. He put his stationery away, put on a black satin jacket over his long gown, took a brand-new hundred-dollar bill from his locked iron trunk in the closet and went out. The teller in the bank knew what he wanted and, with a smile, she changed the money for him without a question. He wrapped up the small bills and the change in his handkerchief, and with an anticipation of the pleasure of counting the money, he hurried home. Counting money had become almost a hobby to him, and he enjoyed it as much as he did attending his miniature garden. After he had counted the total sum, he sorted the bills according to their denominations, then sorted them once more according to their degree of newness, putting the brand-new ones on one pile, the newer ones on another and the old ones on a third. He treated the silver coins with more deliberation, taking pains to examine them under a magnifying glass to see which was the newest. He would spend the old ones first and the new ones later; as for the brand-new ones, he would save them in an exquisitely carved sandalwood box locked in one of his desk drawers. When he had nothing else to do, he would sometimes bring the box out and enjoy counting the shiny half dollars, quarters and dimes until their luster began to fade, then he would spend them to make room for other brand-new ones. He counted the money until Liu Lung, the deaf servant, came to his bedroom to announce his lunch. After lunch he took a nap. He was awakened by an itch in his throat and he coughed. He had been coughing for years and now he even began to enjoy that too. So he lay in his bed and coughed mildly and sporadically for an hour or so, then he heard his sister-in-law's voice calling for Liu Lung. Has the Old Master waked up yet? she shouted. Enh? I said, has the Old Master waked from his afternoon nap? she shouted louder. Oh, said Liu Lung after a moment, I don't know. I shall look. Go wake him, I have something important to tell him! Wang Chi-yang lay in his bed waiting for Liu Lung to come in to wake him. The servant shuffled in quietly, opened the square mosquito net and called him cautiously, as though afraid of startling him. Old Master Wang opened his eyes slowly and grunted. What is it? he asked. Madam Tang has come, Liu Lung said. Ask her to wait. He seldom asked his sister-in-law to come in to talk in his bedroom where he received most of his guests. He always received her in the large living room furnished with the uncomfortable straight-backed teakwood chairs which often discouraged the visitor from staying long. Madam Tang had advised him to buy a few sofas and some soft chairs; he had said yes many times, but never bought them. He disliked sofas; sitting on a sofa often made him feel as if he were sitting in the arms of a fat woman. He struggled out of the bed, took his water pipe and went to the living room where Madam Tang was sitting on one of the tall hard chairs waiting, her bright-colored umbrella and

black leather handbag properly placed in her lap. She was fifty, but looked a few years younger in her blue silk gown with the short sleeves. She used no make-up except a little lipstick, and her hair was combed back and tied into a little bun, neat and well-oiled. My sisters husband, she said as soon as Wang Chi-yang came in, I have something very important to tell you. And she opened her handbag and fished out a little newspaper clipping in English. Wang Chi-yang sat down next to her and smoked his water pipe, knowing that there was nothing very important. Here is a piece of news I cut off from a foreign paper, Madam Tang went on, brandishing the newspaper clipping importantly. I shall read it to you and translate it for you. It will serve as a good warning and make you realize that my advice concerning your money is sound. She cleared her throat and, with difficulty and her individual pronunciation, she read the news aloud. Lum Fong, manager of Sam Sung Caf on Stockton Street, told the police how a well-dressed man came into the caf, ordered a meal, and when it came time to pay, slipped Lum Fong at the cash register this penciled message: Give me all the money. I have a gun. The Chinese went blank. So sollee, he said, I no savvee. You monee, whispered the bandit, trying to make the manager understand. You monee! I have gun, I have gun! But the manager was still puzzled. So sollee, he said. No savvee. The bandit, frustrated, started for the door. So sollee, Lum Fong called out. Checkee please! The thug paid eighty-five cents and left! When she finished reading she looked at Old Master Wang significantly with her lips tightly pursed. What does it say? Old Master Wang asked. A bandit robbed a Chinese restaurant on Stockton Street, Madam Tang said. The bandit had a gun; he almost shot Lum Fong, the owner of the restaurant. Fortunately Lum Fong had only eighty-five cents on him. The bandit robbed the eighty-five cents and escaped. She paused for a moment for emphasis, then went on, My sisters husband, I have always told you to put your money in the bank. You will regret one day when a bandit comes in with a gun and robs you of everything. This piece of news will serve you as a good warning. I hope you will consider my advice and do as I have repeatedly told you. Old Master Wang grunted and smoked his water pipe. He was only slightly worried. Nobody knew that his money was locked in an iron trunk in the closet. If a bandit came in, he would just yield to him the contents of his sandalwood box. No, he was not going to let any strangers in the bank keep his money. Nevertheless he grunted and said to his sister-in-law, I shall consider your advice, my wifes sister. Nobody knew how much cash Old Master Wang had hidden in his apartment, not even Wang Ta. All Wang Ta knew about his fathers finances was that two years ago his late uncle Tang had remitted money to America from Hong Kong several times. Since his uncles death, his father had not received any money from China. But his father never seemed to worry about money, and he seldom talked about his finances with anybody. When in a good mood, he was as quick with a hundred-dollar bill as a bandit with his pistol. During his four years studying economics in the University of California, Wang Ta was often puzzled by his fathers economic system. He had never received any checks from his father. Whenever he wanted money, it was always a brand-new hundred-dollar bill. He paid his tuition in hundred-dollar bills, paid his meals and lodging in hundred-dollar bills. Sometimes the bills embarrassed him. But his father never tried to spoil him with money. The old man demanded a monthly account from him while he studied in the university. His pocket money was limited to a hundred-dollar bill every two months. He had to itemize all his spendings in his monthly account, not in great detail, but they must be honest. Once, out of curiosity, he spent five dollars on a streetwalker recommended by a Filipino student. He hated the experience and it troubled him for days; besides, he didnt know how to itemize it in his monthly account. Finally he entered it as A practical study of the sex life of the American college students from an economic point of view \$5.00. His father had never questioned it. After four years of American education, Wang Ta adopted many American ideas, and being independent was one of them. He felt ashamed to receive money from his father after he graduated. This attitude puzzled his father considerably. In China it was either the father who supported the son or the son who supported the father, depending on who had the most money. They handed each other money as a matter of course, nobody should feel ashamed of that. What do you intend to do? his father asked him after he graduated. I shall find a job, he told his father. And armed with the brand-new college degree he paced California Street, Montgomery Street and Sansome Street for weeks trying to find a job that had something to do with his field. After more than thirty short interviews with potential employers, only an insurance company showed some slight interest in him. But when they discovered that he could not speak the Cantonese dialect, they decided not to use him. Knowing the odds against him, he made up his mind to broaden his scope and forget about his economics. So he landed a job as a dishwasher in an American restaurant at Fishermans Wharf. When he went home to declare his independence his father was so shocked by the nature of the job that he almost fell down in a fainting fit. I forbid you to take that job! he shouted. Nobody in my family shall wash somebody elses dishes ... For more than two months Wang Ta hunted for a desk job, but his efforts were of no avail. Finally, through the mediation of Madam Tang, his aunt, he went back to school. He enrolled in the Medical School of the University of California. He wasnt too happy with the new field, but at least he wouldnt have to look for another job for five or six years. His father was contented. To him, being a doctor wasnt too bad a profession, although he didnt have a high opinion of the Western medicine. At the University of California Medical School Wang Tas major problem was love. He had fallen in love before and one love affair was more damaging than the other. He didnt know why, but he hadnt thought of love too often when he had studied in Berkeley. Perhaps living in San Francisco provided more social life. Or perhaps he was taking life more seriously as he became older. Or was it that he was reaching the age when his desire for women was the strongest? He didnt know.

He liked American girls; they had a strong appeal for him, especially physically. Some American girls had given him pictures taken in sweaters, and he loved them, but he knew that his father would not allow him to marry an American; and he also knew that many American parents would not allow their daughters to marry Chinese. He had dates with many American girls without serious intentions; he had enjoyed their company tremendously and thought they were gay and appreciative, different from most of the Chinese girls he had dated. The Chinese girls, especially those from China, were usually stiff and polite; some were downright conceited, knowing that the ratio of Chinese men to Chinese women was to the women's great advantage. Wang Ta knew that the six men to one girl situation was a social problem and he always held his horses whenever he met a girl from China. He had taken out a girl newly arrived from Formosa. But when the news got around, all the old bachelors, including a flock from Monterey, flooded to San Francisco to date her. The girl, whose gown of blue cotton had cost her an equivalent of about two American dollars, now found herself wearing six-dollar flowers and going to concerts and operas. Wang Ta wondered if she would accept an invitation to a movie now, after being spoiled by so many anxious bachelors. Then he met an American-Chinese girl, born in Stockton. She studied music at the City College. They went out many times. Wang Ta found her delightful, gay and appreciative like an American girl. After four months Wang Ta became serious. He was sure that his father would not object to his marrying an American-Chinese. She was from a good family; her father owned a supermarket in Stockton and all her sisters and brothers had gone to college. She was the youngest and the prettiest in the family, with large sparkling eyes and long wavy black hair. One Saturday evening they had dinner in Chinatown. Mary, Wang Ta said as they ordered a family dinner in a private booth in the Far East Restaurant on Grant Avenue, let's not go to a movie tonight. Let me take you home and introduce you to my father.