George Ashmore Fitch

Aid Mainland Refugee Chinese Intellectuals to Taiwan

By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

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Christmas 1952 - George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生) with wife Geraldine (extreme left and right) and President Chiang Kai-Shek (蔣中正總統) with Madame Chiang (center) in Taiwan, Republic of China

In the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (中華人民共和國) in 1949, many intellectuals and professionals sought refuge from the communist regime. The United States, amidst the Cold War tensions, initiated the Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals program (ARCI) to support these individuals, recognizing their potential value in the ideological battle against communism.

The ARCI program offered a broad definition of "intellectuals," including anyone with at least two years of university education. This inclusivity allowed many ex-military and ex-police personnel to register, leveraging their training in military academies or similar institutions. The United States government provided substantial funding to the program, indicating its significant role as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.

Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc. (美國援助中國知識人士協會) (1952-1970)

Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc. (ARCI) was born as a "non-profit, non-political, non-partisan, non-sectarian voluntary relief agency" with four aims: (1) to aid in the "resettlement and rehabilitation" of refugee Chinese intellectuals; (2) to distribute aid without discrimination (any form of anti-Communist politics was acceptable); (3) to increase public awareness of the "oppressed and imperiled people in Asia" and thereby facilitate aid; and (4) to raise and disperse the funds necessary to achieve these goals. It was founded in 1952 by a group of Americans under the leadership of Dr. Walter Henry Judd, M.D. (周以德醫生), United States Congressman. The purpose was to restore new life and hope to refugee Chinese leaders, including highly qualified educators, engineers, physicians, agronomists, accountants, and other. During the civil war between the Nationalist Party (KMT) (中國國民黨) and the Communist (中國共產黨) in China before 1950, hundreds of thousands refugees flooded into the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港) via the Kwangtung (*Guangdong*) Province (廣東省). Thousands of the then homeless Chinese intellectuals had been trained in the United States and still had friends or family there. A survey of refugees conducted by the American

University Club of Hong Kong suggested that thousands had graduated from universities in the United States or from U.S.-affiliated church schools, colleges, universities in China. There was the urgent need to help saving this great human resources from not to be lost. In 1951, Eugene K. Moy (梅其駒), a pillar of the Chinese American community and a man with close ties to KMT officials, recruited John Leighton Stuart (司徒雷登), founding president (1919-1945) of Yenching University (燕京大學創始校長), China, to chair a new Committee for Emergency Aid to Chinese Intellectuals. After premature publicity, the original ad-hoc committee enlisted the aid of Walter H. Judd to lead a new organizing drive. Judd was a doctor and a Congressman. Before being elected, he had lived for years in China as a medical missionary. He was an ardent supporter of China's President Chiang Kai-Shek (蔣中正總統) and the KMT and during his tenure in the United States House of Representatives was always out front on any issue that involved anti-Communism and China. Initially, Judd and the new committee had no trouble finding prominent Americans to support their work, and they sent a survey mission to Hong Kong to investigate the situation.

Despite claims of being non-political, ARCI from the outset openly presented itself as an asset for the Free World in the Cold War, a stance visible even within its stated rationale for its limited scope. Chinese intellectuals not only had scientific and technological know-how that the West wanted to deny to the Communist government, but they would ideally also be at the heart of rebuilding efforts in China after the collapse of the Communist regime—an event presumed to be just over the horizon.

Although the literary project and development corporation both became major projects for ARCI, its primary work—the part that had the most unqualified access to government funds—was always focused on facilitating the relocation of stranded refugees. ARCI spent the next few years trying to find overseas jobs, housing, and transportation for Chinese intellectuals, supported by USEP grants. Unlike similar projects in Europe, however, most of the potential destinations for the Hong Kong refugees had long, sometimes storied, histories of denying entry to Chinese migrants. As a result, ARCI personnel initially were overly sanguine about the possibility of a positive reception for Chinese refugees overseas, suggesting there location of registrants in Taiwan (臺灣) and across Southeast Asia.

Over the next few years, the practical tasks involved in moving intellectuals and their families to Taiwan became a significant portion of ARCI's work. Once ARCI made the difficult decision to focus on Taiwan repatriations, it looked past transport to scouring the island for potential work and housing. At the height of the resettlement operations, ARCI even took responsibility for building housing units, including a block of temporary apartments outside Taipei that became known as "Juddville" (以德新村) and housed refugees in transition. ARCI also distributed milk to children; offered job counseling; and explored building a clinic in Taipei (臺北), Taiwan.

Rotarian George Ashmore Fitch

Dr. George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生) (1883-1979), born in an American missionary's family at Soochow (*Suzhou*) (蘇州) of the Ch'ing Empire (大清國), who was an active member of Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) since 1920, and the Club's president in 1930-1931. During the Imperial Japan's full scale aggression to the Republic of China (中華民國), he moved to China's War-time Capital Chungking (*Chongqing*) (重慶) in 1939, and George became the President of Chungking Rotary Club (重慶扶輪社社長) in 1942-1943, with his profession carrying on as the Fraternal Secretary to China of the Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association) International Committee since 1909. George was famous in the Second World War history. When the Nanking Massacre (南京大屠殺) occurred in 1937-1938, George, who was head of the Y.M.C.A. there, served as administrator of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone. He witnessed the tragedy and compiled a diary and filmed some of the atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese Army in Nanking (*Nanjing*) (南京) in December 1937.

After the World War II, in 1947, George served the Y.M.C.A. in Seoul of Korea. Prior to his next move to Taipei, Taiwan (臺灣省臺北市), in the 1952, George as a Seoul Rotarian was decorated the highest Order of the Republic of Korea by President Rhee Syng-Man (大韓民國李承晚總統) in recognition of his many years of distinguished service in the fields of education, culture, and welfare, and for his unselfish sacrifices. The Fitch couple moved their service to Taiwan in 1952-1963. George as a Taipei Rotarian was the "Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc. (ARCI) Far East Representative".

Excerpted here below is George Ashmore Fitch's memoirs on his work with ARIC:

It was January 12th, 1952, when we landed in Taiwan.

It was during this week in Taipei that I received a long distance call from Dr. Walter Judd in Washington, who wanted to know if I would be willing to return to Taiwan after a brief furlough and serve as Far East Representative of the Committee to Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI). The object of this organization, of which he was the Chairman, was to save as many as possible of the well-educated and skilled Chinese, pouring out of Communist China by the thousands, for the future of a free China and the free world. An unusually large proportion of these refugees were men of education and ability, but most of them could find no employment in crowded Hong Kong and were now destitute, living in extreme poverty in hovels on the hillsides of that city. This challenge naturally appealed very strongly to both my wife and myself, and knowing Dr. Judd and also Dr. Garside who was in charge of the New York office, I accepted immediately. A Hong Kong (香港) office and staff had already been organized under the direction of my old friend David Au (歐偉國, a Hong Kong Rotarian). They were busy registering all those who could be classified as "intellectuals"---that term being interpreted to mean all who had had the equivalent of two years' college education.

It was agreed that there was no immediate urgency at the Taiwan end that I should have time for our planned visit to India and Europe and a summer with the family at home before returning. Accordingly, we flew to Hong Kong on January 21 for a couple of days to acquaint ourselves with the work there.

....

All too soon came the time for my return to Taipei. On September 11, 1952, I flew to Hong Kong and, after a week with our office there, on to Taipei. Gerry had speaking engagements in Florida and elsewhere so did not come out until the latter part of October. In my absence Hong Kong had registered some 28,000 refugee intellectuals, and had already arranged for the placement of a few of these, mostly in Southeast Asian countries. As rapidly as I could I organized the Taipei office, and was fortunate in securing three very able Chinese to head up the different departments. For office space we secured the top, or fourth, floor of a new YMCA annex building. The Y did not have sufficient funds to finish this floor, but by our paying a year's rental in advance, they were able to do so. Three rooms at one end were made into a flat for my wife and myself, five other rooms were used for the office. The location was ideal but the conveniences were hardly what one could wish---no heat, an outside walk-up, and limited living space. A year later we had to find another quarters, both for ourselves and the office.

It was during this period that we built a small village on the outskirts of the city by way of a relocation center for refugees coming to Taiwan, and named it Juddville. There was a demand for teachers in Taiwan, but frequently schools and colleges needing them did not have funds for their immediate support, so Juddville was the place where we could care for them until the schools were able to take them on. Four years later, when it came to closing our program, we disposed of this property to the Ginling Alumni Association for the girls' middle school which they were organizing. (Ginling College (金陵女子大學) was a Christian college for women in Nanking (南京).)

I was given an audience with President Chiang shortly after my arrival, and then on Christmas Day my wife and I had dinner with the President and Madame Chiang, the family and a few close friends.

In February, 1953, I made another trip to Hong Kong, and together with Bill Howard of our staff there, went over to Macao (澳門) to see the Portuguese Governor with regard to the possibility of settling refugees in Portuguese Timor. We were most courteously received and given a letter of introduction to the Governor of Timor. It was just before noon when the review of guards took place and I was asked to receive the salute with him from balcony of his office. It was quite an impressive affair.

To get to Dili, the capital of Portuguese Timor, we had to fly to Singapore and Djakarta, thence by Indonesian Airlines to Surabaya at the east end of Java, over Bali and the Flores chain of islands, finally landing at Kupang, the western tip of Indonesian Timor. Here we were met by the Governor's private plane and flown to Dili, a distance of about 200 miles. There was no hotel in Dili but we were quite comfortably accommodated in a guest house and the next day very courteously received by the Governor. He put a jeep at our disposal (we saw no evidence of any cars) and sent us on a tour of the central part of the island.

As we had heard, Timor is a veritable Garden of Eden with an equable climate, no heavy winds or storms, regular rainfall, and a most fertile soil. It is governed as a province of Portugal, not as a colony. The people, save for a very small Chinese colony, who transact most of the retail business of the island, are easy-going Polynesians and only a small percentage of them are educated in the Catholic schools. For infractions of the law they are made to work on the roads, but we were much impressed by the kindness with which they were treated by the Portuguese overseers. The population was parse---we were not told it was---and we were favorably impressed by the possibilities for the resettlement of industrious Chinese refugees. Many thousands could easily be absorbed and they would greatly enrich the economy of the island. We discussed the matter with members of the Chinese community who entertained us at dinner, and they promised their full cooperation.

Unfortunately the Governor felt otherwise. His argument was that the natives were the wards of the Government, and that to bring in Chinese would result in infringing on their rights and make for serious complications. He agreed, however, on our taking the matter up with the Colonial Office in Lisbon, and some months later this was actually done. As we feared, Lisbon upheld the opinion of the Governor, so nothing resulted from our visit. We returned empty-handed by the same route we had come. We had beheld the Garden of Eden, but we had been driven out, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by the Governor's pilot.

....

Another interesting and more-or-less fruitless trip, in search of possible locations for our refugees, was to Manila, Labuan and Jesselton in North Borneo (now Sabah) and Kuching in Sarawak, returning via Bangkok and Hong Kong. In each of these places there seemed to be no outlet for our refugees intellectuals. The governments did not want them as they had too many problems of their own. I also made a flight to Saigon in 1958 to attend the Southeast Asia Rotary Conference, as the elected representative of the Taipei Rotary Club. ....

On one occasion in Taiwan, we were invited to travel by a Chinese Navy minesweeper from the eastern port of Hwalien (花蓮) to Green Island (綠島) where the government had a correctional school for Communists, principally those taken prisoner on the island of Quemoy (金門), when the Communist Army launched an invasion in 1948 but were badly beaten by the Nationalist Army. The treatment accorded the prisoners on Green Island was thoroughly humane and commendable. On graduating from training school, they were given the choice of settling in Taiwan, with a small farm to cultivate, or returning to the mainland. If they chose the latter, they were given a hundred silver dollars and conveyed across the Straits of Formosa to the mainland. Most of them chose to stay. During our first

night a storm blew up and our minesweeper was swept from its moorings and wrecked on the rocks. This was the very spot where the "President Hoover", the Dollar Line's largest passenger ship, was wrecked several years earlier. We were in a small inn at the time, and knew nothing of the catastrophe until the next morning. The captain of the minesweeper, true to tradition, refused to leave his ship until very last member of his crew was rescued by the islanders. The Navy very kindly sent another ship, a small cruiser, to take us back to the port of Keelung (基隆).

Among interesting visitors to Taiwan was Henry Luce, of 《LIFE》 and 《TIME》, with whom we traveled to see the Palace Treasure, then stored in a mid-island cave; and to Tunghai University (東海大學) in Taichung (臺中) where he was planning a chapel in memory of his father who had been a missionary educator in China. It was also there that I stood with Vice-President Nixon a few years earlier when he broke the ground for that same university. In 1960 President Eisenhower made a short visit to Taiwan but I was away at the time. The Communists on the mainland gave the off-shore island of Quemoy special bombings in his "honor". Congressman Judd, Chairman of our Committee, visited Taiwan a couple of times, once with Congressman Zablocki and again with Dr. B. A. Garside of our New York office. President and Madame Chiang included me in their dinner for Dr. Dan Poling, famous editor and preacher. I was also included in the dinner party given by General J. L. Huang for Lord and Lady Killearn. Other VIPs were too numerous to mention here, but I do want to recall the visits of four of our children when I was afflicted with a cerebral thrombosis in 1961 and my life hung in the balance for a while: Edith, then in Tokyo, Albert from Singapore, and Bob and his wife who happened to be in Japan, all came to see me. Marion phoned from America, offering to come. Once when in Hong Kong for ARCI I met Helen Keller, whose birthday reception and a private luncheon I had attended in New York, and another time I met Eleanor Roosevelt at a reception for her at the American Club.

11 June 1955 – Dr. Walter Judd (left) and George A. Fitch visited the Judd Village (以德新村) located at Erchongpu, Taipei County (臺北縣二重埔).

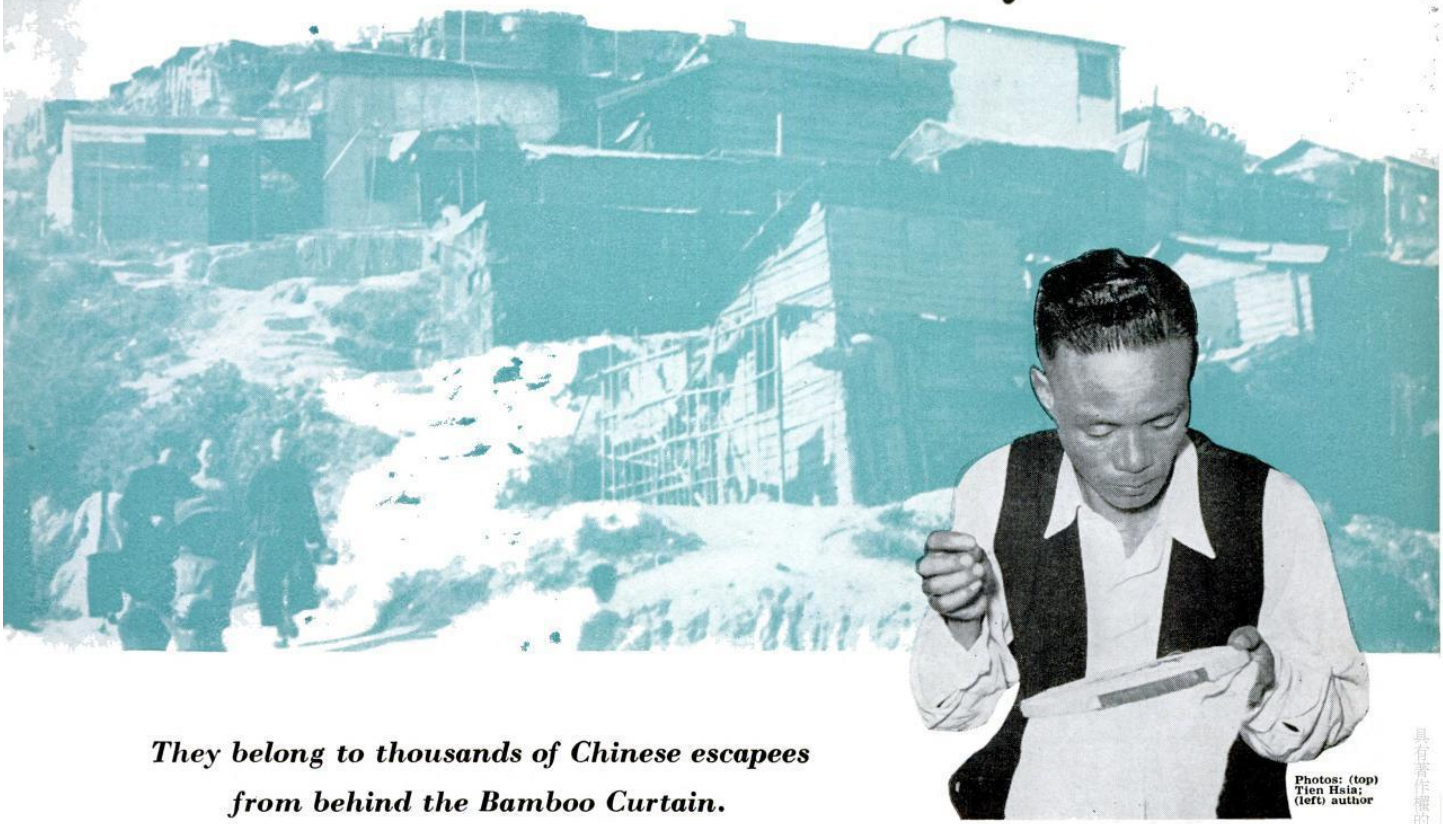
In the meantime, at the end of 1956, I closed our ARCI office in Taipei, for the remaining job openings for refuge were for teachers, doctors and nurses, engineers and others in technical fields, and these were beginning to be in short supply in Hong Kong. We had placed several thousands, who were not so well qualified, with friends and relatives in Taiwan who were able to guarantee them a livelihood and housing. Thus class, too, was dwindling to the near vanishing point. In Hong Kong, however, the office was still busy processing men and some women to go to America under the recently passed Refugee Relief Act. In this our Government was giving help with loans to pay for transportation, or such part of it as the refugee might require, from Hong Kong to America. It was necessary, therefore, for that office, under the very able direction of Mr. Travis Fletcher, to remain open for some time longer. When they finally closed they had sent 2,300 to the United States and advanced nearly a quarter-million dollars in transportation costs. It is worthy of note that of this considerable sum no less than 95% had been returned by the borrowers to the New York office up to the close of 1965. This is indeed an indication of the fine character of these men and women who had chosen freedom from Communism and managed to escape, not without great suffering and hardship, from Red China. Those who were resettled in Taiwan numbered 13,500, while a further 350 were settled in Malaysia and other Southeast Asia countries.

11 June 1955 – Dr. Walter Judd (left 2) visited a refugee family in the Judd Village (以德新村).

The ARCI program reflects the complex dynamics of humanitarian aid, geopolitical strategy, and the politics of refugee assistance during the mid-twentieth century. It underscores the multifaceted roles that refugee programs can play, from supporting individuals in need to advancing a nation's foreign policy objectives and strategically managing migration flows.

The ARCI resettled some 13,500 on Taiwan, 2,300 to U.S.A., and several hundred in other parts of the world. Mrs. "Gerry" Geraldine Fitch had 4 years in Taiwan as Consultant Editor of the Republic of China's Government Information Office. In supporting the work of ARCI by George, Geraldine wrote the stories and appealed for supports from Rotary clubs by contributing an article《Brains at a Bargain – They belong to thousands of Chinese escapees from behind the Bamboo Curtain》in the December 1956 Issue of《The Rotarian》Magazine. The article is reprinted on the following pages.

Brains at a Bargain



Photos: (top) Tien Hsia; (left) author

One of thousands of trained Chinese now working for low pay at unaccustomed tasks. This man, a tuberculosis victim, does embroidery piecework. . . . The photo in color shows refugee huts on Hong Kong hillside.

They belong to thousands of Chinese escapees from behind the Bamboo Curtain.

By GERALDINE FITCH
Author and Lecturer; Wife of Rotarian

"NEXT!" the soldier with bayoneted rifle shouted.

The long queue waiting at the border where Red China touches free British territory moved up one step as Mr. Yang took his place before the scrutiny of the Chinese Communist officer and extended his exit permit.

"Name?"

"Yang Yen-chi."

"Age?"

"Forty-two."

The ferretlike eyes of the officer measured him from head to foot.

"Why do you want to go to Hong Kong?"

"To call on my aged father's friend, and ask for the money he owes." (Yang had rehearsed this reply in his mind many times.)

"His name?"

"Chow Ta-chun."

"What is his business?"

"An import-export company called Ta Wah."

"How much does he owe your father?"

"Five thousand Hong Kong dollars, Comrade."

The penetrating eyes gave him one more searching look. Since his exit permit was in order, the officer made a sign to his deputy, one step behind him, and the aide scratched something on a piece of paper.

"One more question. Are you coming back?"

"Of course, Comrade," Yang replied without hesitation. "As soon as I get the money, I'll bring it back to clear the debt my father owes the Tax Bureau."

The officer wrote the date on the permit and returned it to him.

AN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FEATURE

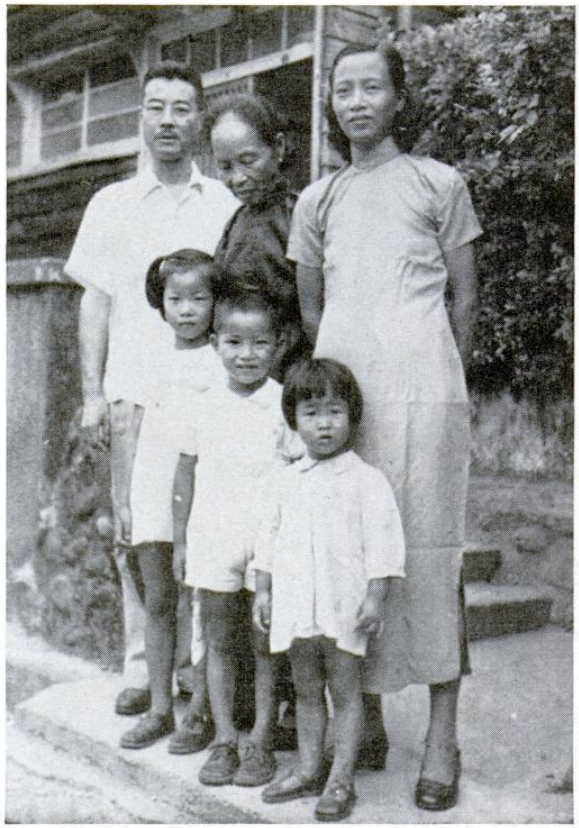
Pocketing it, Mr. Yang proceeded, not too fast nor yet too slowly, to the bridge spanning the river between mainland China and the British New Territories.

At the bridgehead he turned to take one long last look at his homeland.

He did not expect to see it for a long, long time—if ever.

So one of China's mainland millions cast his vote against the Red regime in the only way he could —with his feet. The path from Communist China, like other paths from other satellites the world over, is well worn. Millions from Bamboo and Iron Curtain countries where elections are a farce cast their votes against tyranny by their flight to freedom.

This modern refugee from Communist tyranny in Asia happened to be an engineer. Trained in



The Sius—a Case in Point

One of the nearly 12,500 technically trained Chinese whom Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc., has resettled is Henry Siu, an engineer, shown here with his family. He is now plans manager of a chemical-fertilizer plant in Taiwan. . . . Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc., is a private, philanthropic, and nonpolitical organization founded in 1952 by a group of Americans under the leadership of Walter H. Judd, U. S. Congressman. The purpose: to restore new life and hope to refugee Chinese leaders, including highly qualified educators, engineers, physicians, agronomists, accountants, and others.

two universities of the U.S.A., Mr. Yang was a prime target for liquidation unless willing to capitulate completely to the new regime. But Yang chose freedom.

What reception awaited Engineer Yang beyond the border of Red China? What job would he find after leaving all and risking his very life in flight? Where would he live in overcrowded Hong Kong unless in those squatter villages which disfigure many hillsides in the Crown Colony? Could he get to America, where he had achieved his engineering proficiency, and if so would Americans be interested in his plight?

Yang Yen-chi found his father's friend living in poverty. There was no glimmer of hope from him. For weeks he sought employment as an engineer. For other weeks growing into months, he walked the streets seeking any kind of work that would fill his rice bowl. The last I could learn about this technically trained engineer who chose freedom, he was working intermittently as a stevedore on the Hong Kong water front. Because of malnutrition he had contracted tuberculosis.

Out of the million and a quarter Chinese who have escaped the Bamboo Curtain into Hong Kong and Kowloon across the bay, some 20,000 registered with Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc. (ARCI), organized to preserve the educated Chinese for the benefit of the free world. How many perished from disease and destitution before ARCI was organized, no one can say. Among the registrants were 77 alumni of Columbia, 57 from the University of Michigan, 43 from New York University, 15 from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and scattered others from 69 American colleges and universities. There were 3,855 educators among them, 521 journalists, 369 engineers, 178 agronomists, 177 doctors, 172 physicists, to tabulate the leading professions.

All manner of bottlenecks have been broken by the voluntary organization ARCI, spark-plugged by United States Congressman Walter H. Judd, and directed in the Far East by a veteran Rotarian (who has probably organized more Rotary Clubs in Asia than any other one man) George Fitch —yes, my husband.

In three years ARCI has resettled nearly 12,500 of these technically trained Chinese in the free world at the amazingly low per capita cost of $91. This feat appears a near-miracle when one realizes that it involved finding jobs and housing for them, and covers the overhead of the three offices in New York, Hong Kong, and Taipei. No other refugee work in the world can match this record. The secret is that most of the jobs have been found on near-by Formosa.

But there is a limit to resettlement and job possibilities on the overcrowded Isle Beautiful. Besides the 8 million Taiwanese (Formosans) and 150,000 tribespeople of the island, 2 million refugees came there with the Nationalist Government when the mainland fell to the Reds. Since then 30,000 internees from Indo-China, 6,000 guerrillas from Burma, 14,000 Chinese POW's from Korea, 18,000 *évacués* from the Tachens, and 2,000 from Nanchi Island, plus more than 11,000 "intellectuals" resettled by ARCI,

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have almost upset the applecart of Free China's economy. American foreign-aid experts say the island is now supersaturated from a population standpoint. And babies are born every day as in other countries. Professional positions are as scarce as teeth in Taiwan's turkeys.

Here is where Rotary comes in. With its "Service above Self" motto, Rotary was once known all over China. Among the educated registrants listed in ARCI's files there may indeed be refugee Rotarians from Shanghai, Hangchow, or Chungking. Certainly there are many like Engineer Yang in whose technical education America has made an investment totalling millions. All of them decided at great personal risk to leave homes and business behind them, and cast in their lot with the free world. There are places where they are needed. It is only a matter of finding them.

How sorely the technician is needed the world around! Here in these highly educated Chinese it has a pool many nations can draw from. You, Mr. Rotarian, in whatever continent you dwell, ask if there is an answer here for you and an opportunity for a person much deserving one.

Photos: (pp. 18-19) Daisy Atterbury

Madame Chiang Kai-shek at Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals relocation center at Taipei, Taiwan. With her: American Ambassador Karl Rankin (center), an honorary Rotarian, and George Fitch, husband of author and ARCI Far East representative.

Before ARCI was formed, Yang Yen-chi chose freedom—and found only destitution. Last year a resettled registrant wrote ARCI, "Without your help, we could obtain *nothing but waiting!*" Too many, risking their lives for liberty, voting against Communism with their feet, have obtained "nothing but waiting." Rotarians can help save this invaluable pool of talent by helping a deserving refugee and his family obtain a foothold in the free world.

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Letter to《The Rotarian》Editor – February 1957

A Tale of the Tan-hua

Emil K. Aarsheim, Clergyman,

Rotary Club of Keelung, Taiwan, Republic of China

(中華民國臺灣基隆扶輪社)

In her《Brains at a Bargain》[《The Rotarian》for December] Geraldine Fitch tells of the thousands of Chinese who have escaped from behind the Bamboo Curtain. As I read the article, I recalled a scene of not so long ago.

Thousands of people had gathered in the public park. They were waiting for the Tan-hua (cereus) (曇花) to blossom. The blooming of the Tan-hua is very rare, and the Chinese believe that its flower brings luck and happiness to their country. Now young and old were patiently waiting for the buds to break open. First it was announced that it would blossom about 10 o'clock that evening, but later the gardener said that maybe it would not blossom before about mid-night.

Meanwhile people walked around and made friends, smiled and offered sweets and peanuts to one another, and talked about the future---sure, now that the Tan-hua was going to blossom, happiness was waiting around the corner. Expectancy shone in everyone's eyes. The air was pregnant with hope and gladness. Minds and thoughts were set on going back to the mainland.

Suddenly as if by magic and the plant was in full bloom. One, two, three, four big snow-white buds burst forth. All chatting ceased; everyone's eyes well fixed on the beautiful flower---spell-bound. Through the immense silence one could feel a sad sound---a sigh. Was it the silent prayer of all the millions of homeless Chinese, the prayer for freedom for their beloved country and their kin on the mainland, and for the "going back home"?

I, too, stood looking at the blossom.

In my heart, too, was a prayer that all their prayers and hopes may come true and their future blossom and prosper like the beautiful Tan-hua.

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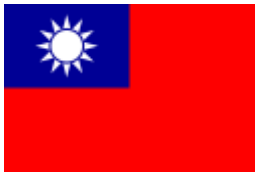
《APPENDIX》



1963 年費吳生博士 80 歲華誕

中華民國第三任行政院院長何應欽一級上將

賀　詞

Congratulatory Speech

delivered by Prime Minister General Ho Ying-Chin

Republic of China

on Dr. George Ashmore Fitch's 80th Birthday (1963)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today is the 80th birthday of the dearest friend of China, Dr. George A. Fitch. Meanwhile, it is the ninth anniversary of Freedom Day, the 23rd of January. Since we celebrate the birthday for such a great friend of China on such a great day, our feelings of rejoicing and excitement can hardly be expressed in a few remarks.

As we all know, Dr. Fitch is the Westerner who has lived in China with five generations. The contributions made by his family in the field of education as well as medical and relief service are known to almost every Chinese. In the eighty years since his birth in Soochow on this day in 1883, Dr. Fitch has spent most of his time in China and dedicated most of his effort for the benefit of the Chinese people.

During this period, China was in a state of chaos and revolution. Thus Dr. Fitch not only eye-witnessed the commotion of the despotic rule, but also suffered the depredation of Japanese invasion. Now he is still living together with us in this anti-Communist base, Taiwan, and trying his utmost to assist us in fighting for our freedom and democracy. From his contributions made to our Chinese people, we may say that the entire life of Dr. Fitch has been closely attached to the history of China and the life of all our Chinese people in these dozens of years. It is hardly possible to tell during the past several decades how many people have been benefitted by Dr. Fitch, either directly or indirectly. Though we cannot give an exact figure in this regard, fragmentary material tells us that at least 250,000 Chinese refugees have received his care and protection during the massacre perpetrated by the Japanese invaders in Nanking in 1937.

Later, at the request of Dr. H. H. Kung and with the help of the Industrial Cooperation Association, Dr. Fitch successfully made some 150,000 evacuees from the front turn out innumerable products to meet the civilian and military demands in the rear. When Dr. Fitch took up his work at the YMCA, millions of Chinese soldiers received the kindest service from the workers under his direction. This is the deepest impression I have had of Dr. Fitch, and it was the period I should be most gratified to him for his noble service. As at that time there were no such organizations as the War Area Service Corps and the Friends of Armed Forces Club. Dr. Fitch did solve for us many war area services which formed a serious problem really hard to find a satisfactory solution. During recent years Dr. Fitch, through the ARCI program, has provided adequate resettlement for more than 12,000 people in Taiwan and arranged to resettle more than 2,000 people in the United States and other free areas. These figures represent only a portion of Dr. Fitch's generous service for the Chinese People. However, we can see that Dr. Fitch has rendered the services most urgently required by the Chinese people. Therefore, it is most appropriate to call him the dearest friend of China.

From Dr. Fitch's whole life, we know that his friendship and service to the Chinese people are not only innate. This spirit can be said to be the materialization of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's philosophy, "the purpose of life is for service." It is also the realization of human ideals as set up in our Chinese ethics.

From the religious point of view, it is the true development of Christianity. This is the good virtue which deserves our respect and imitation.

Dr. Fitch loves China as well as her people. Thus he is also loved by our Chinese people. I trust that on his 80th birthday not only do we invoke blessings for Dr. and Mrs. Fitch here today, but also other Chinese people who know or have been favored by Dr. Fitch, even though they are still left behind in the Communist area are certainly praying for this esteemed couple. We earnestly hope that after their planned trip to Australia, they will come back and continue to serve our Chinese people. We particularly hope that since Dr. and Mrs. Fitch have personally eye-witnessed the birth of the Republic of China and fought for the survival of our country, they will see with their eyes the accomplishment of our anti-Communist national recovery and rehabilitation. These are the unanimous wishes of our Chinese people for our dearest friends, Dr. and Mrs. Fitch.

Now may Dr. and Mrs. Fitch together with the Republic of China enjoy the pleasure of longevity!

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