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On Gold Mountain: The One-Hundred Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family. By Lisa See. New York: Vintage, 1995. xxi + 394 pp. Maps, illustrations, and sources. \$14.00.

What might a nineteenth-century Chinese immigrant's family look like over the subsequent one hundred and thirty years? Lisa See provides us with one portrait. Beginning with her great, great grandfather Fong Dun Shung's emigration from Canton, she examines the See and Fong families in Los Angeles, California, and to a lesser extent in Dintao village in China, seamlessly interweaving the impact of historical events throughout.

The book helps fill a void in Chinese American history, spanning 1911 to

1943; but its major strength is as an account of an early interracial Chinese American family. Married in 1898 through a legal contract in spite of California's anti-miscegenation law, great-grandfather Fong See and Lettie Pruett had five children and built an empire from dealing in Chinese art and antiques. See carefully renders this family as more privileged than other Chinese American Angelinos but not nearly as privileged as whites. She traces the "choices" the "Eurasian" descendants made. Her father, Richard, lived a "triple life" in the 1940s, "partly in the white world, partly in Chinatown" (p. 281) and partly in the artistic Bohemian culture inherited from his father, Eddy. Four generations away from full Chinese predecessors, the author does not "look Chinese" but identifies as "Chinese in my heart" (p. xx). Her invitation to ponder the meaning of "Chinese" is inescapable.

Faults are minor. I was confused over the use of "native born Japanese" for what the Census calls "foreign born" (pp. 254, 255); distracted by two chapters on two nonfamily members; and irritated by the "oriental" lettering on the maps and family tree.

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