

# Celebrating the history and cultures that shape our future

20 Bronze plaques installation completed in 2006

## Walk your way through Old Town Chinatown's history

- Designed by Suenn Ho as a part of Old Town Chinatown Streetscape project which also added the festival streets (Flanders and Davis), with assistance on botanical research by Nevue Ngan Associates.
- Plaques were made by a foundry in Xian, China. Huo Bau Zhu was diagnosed with cancer and life extended 6 yrs. by treatment in US and as a Thank You he wanted to donate a gift to each state. OR received a 6-ton bronze elephant located in the north Park Blocks. Only 6-7 gifts given.
- Each plaque features one or more botanical elements related to the history of the area & mixed cultures.
- Botanical elements' name include Chinese, Japanese, Greek, and/or Hebrew depending on the culture(s) being highlighted on each individual plaque.
- The design includes cultural and historical symbolisms related to the botanical elements and cultures.
- The quotes are part of the Old Town History Project directed by Jacqueline Peterson.
- Many of the quotes are by descendants.
- Each plaque has foundry symbol in the upper left and designer symbol in the lower right corner.
- Grand Opening was in the fall of 2006 in conjunction with the Under the Autumn Moon Festival.

## Old Chinatown – SE Pine & SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.

### A Gift to City of Portland

Historically, downtown Portland had many diverse ethnic communities that contributed to its economic vibrancy. Many physical traces of the past have given way to modern development. The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A) Portland Lodge commissioned urban designer Suenn Ho to design a plaque in commemoration of the original Chinatown (south of Burnside). It was designed in a style similar to the 20 ornate plaques.

It was dedicated in Sept 2017, pictured with members of the C.A.C.A.

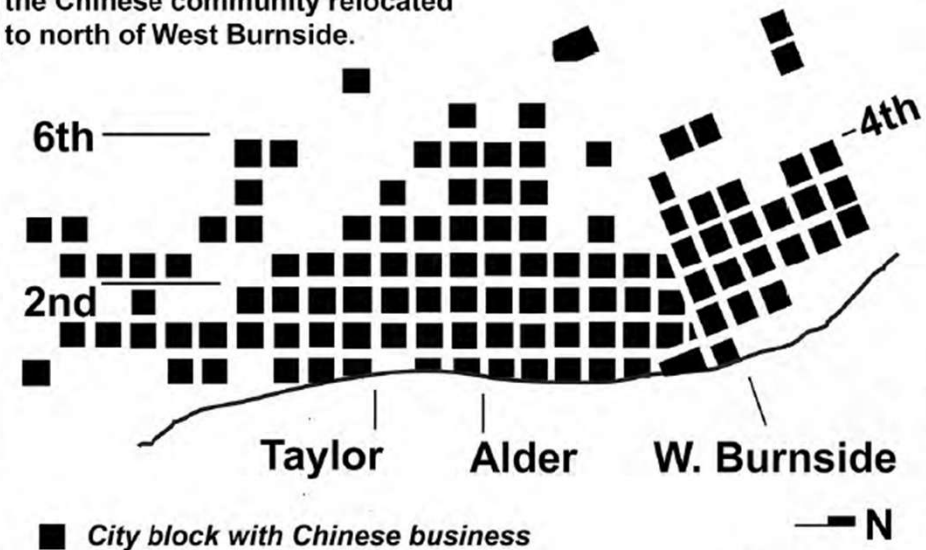


**Dedication Sep 2017 – pictured are many C.A.C.A. members**

## Old Chinatown Plaque

### Old Chinatown 1863 - 1900

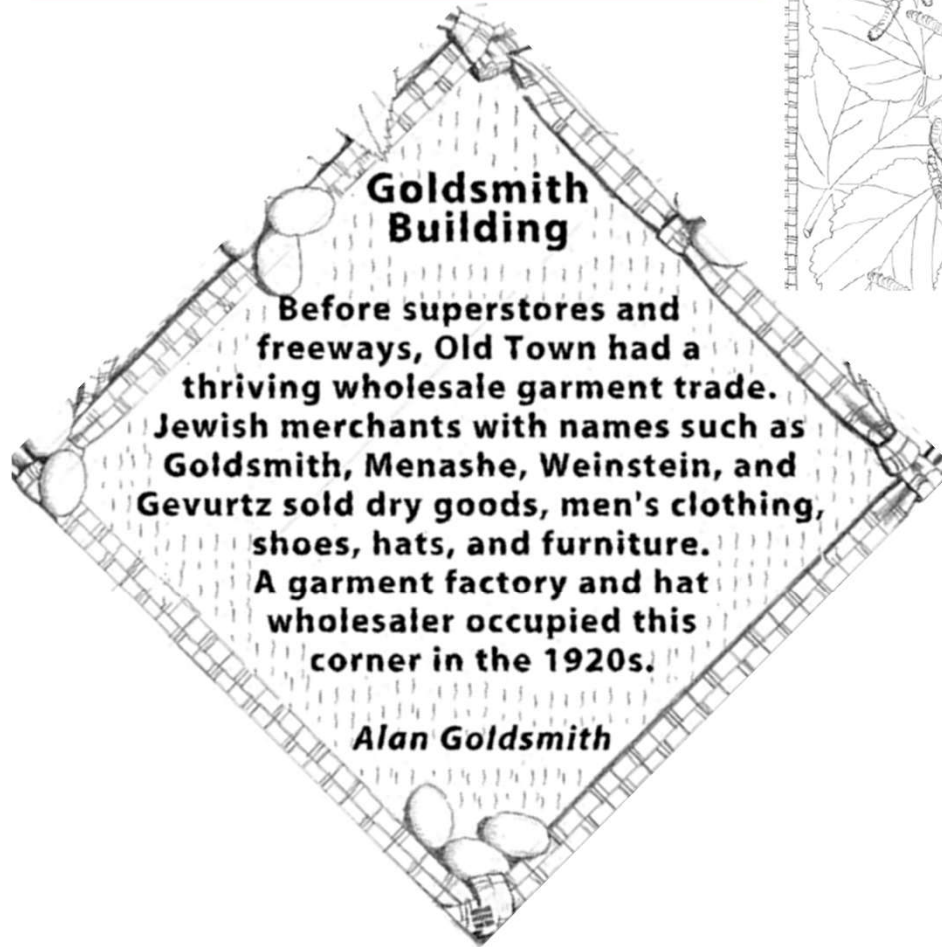
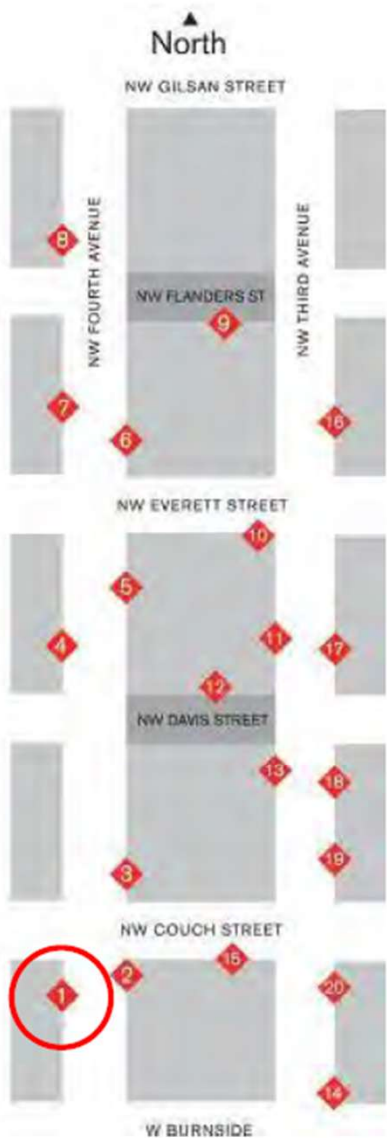
More than 5,000 Chinese lived and worked within this bustling waterfront neighborhood. SW 2nd and Alder was considered the Heart of Chinatown. There were Chinese businesses, Joss Houses, theaters, restaurants, retails, Tongts / Family Associations. Eventually, due to fires, floods, economic and political changes, the Chinese community relocated to north of West Burnside.



■ City block with Chinese business

Sponsored by:  
Chinese American Citizens Alliance Portland Lodge and National Lodge

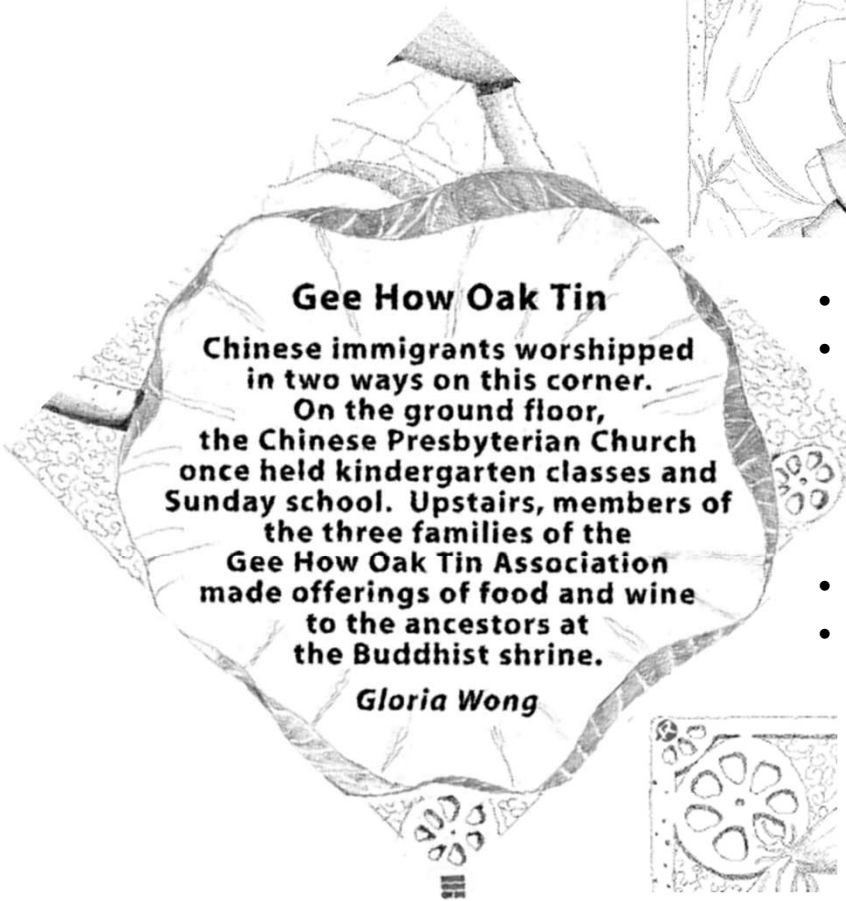
# 1 MULBERRY



- Mulberry was chosen to represent silk works and textiles.
- Pictured are silkworms and cocoons in the corners.
- Border is Japanese cloth with knots at each corner.
- Words in Chinese & Hebrew.



## 2 LOTUS



- This was the 1<sup>st</sup> plaque designed!
- This plaque was air freighted to be sure it could pass the “slip test” which it didn’t so texture adjusted! Hence the reason for the backgrounds having tactile design.
- Notice the lotus root shape in the design’
- Upper left has symbol of the foundry, lower left has symbol of Suenn the designer. Seen on all plaques.



### 3 LILY | LING ZHI | PERSIMMON



#### Hung Far Low Restaurant (Apricot Blossom Pavilion)

Wong On, successful Chinese poet, scholar, and businessman, established Hung Far Low Restaurant in 1927. According to family tradition, he made his fortune recruiting Chinese cannery and railroad workers. He lost it by lending worn-out workers passage home to China.

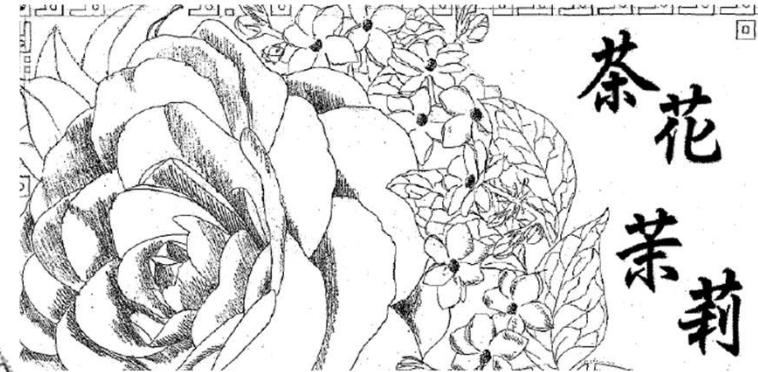
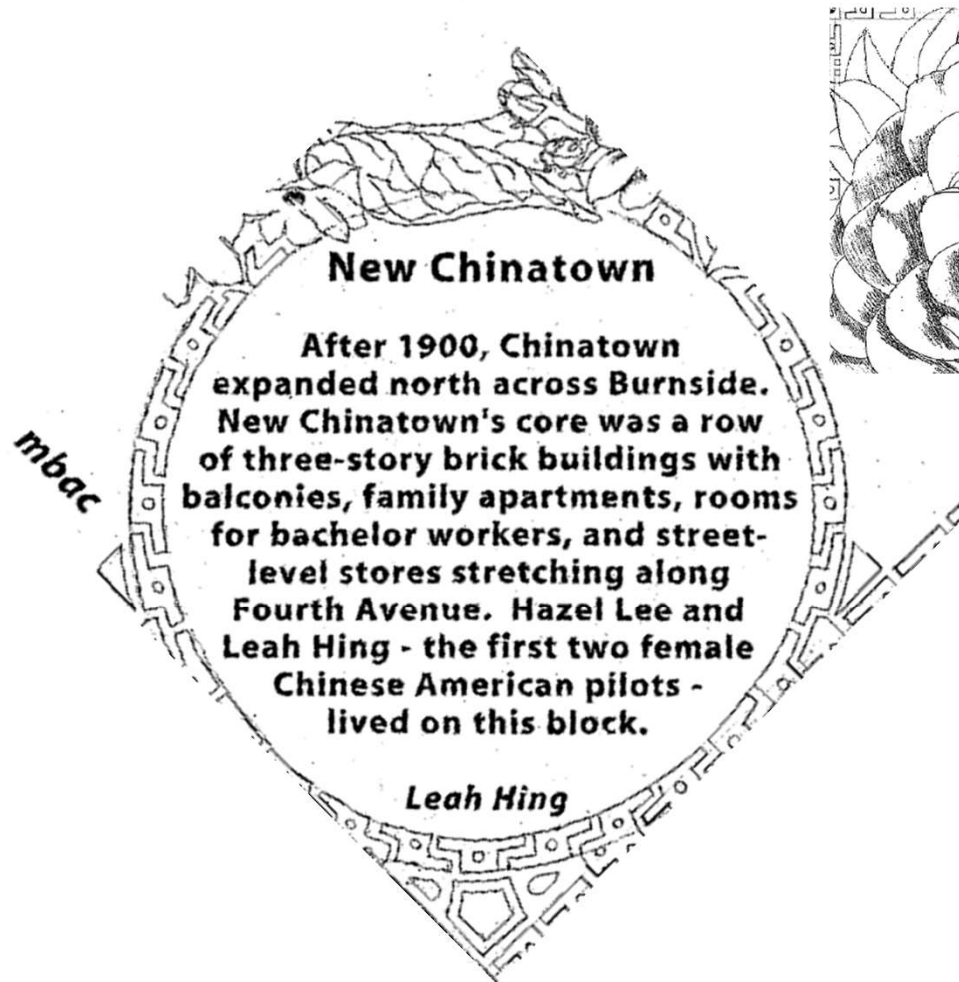
*Bruce Wong*



- Ling Zhi was thought to cure cancer.
- The restaurant is now located in the Jade District, on 82<sup>nd</sup>.
- All drawing were done in pencil.
- Bldg now owned by Bruce Wong family.
- This one is special, in that it has a poem etched on the back as a gift to designer, Suenn.
- Bat design in the corners.

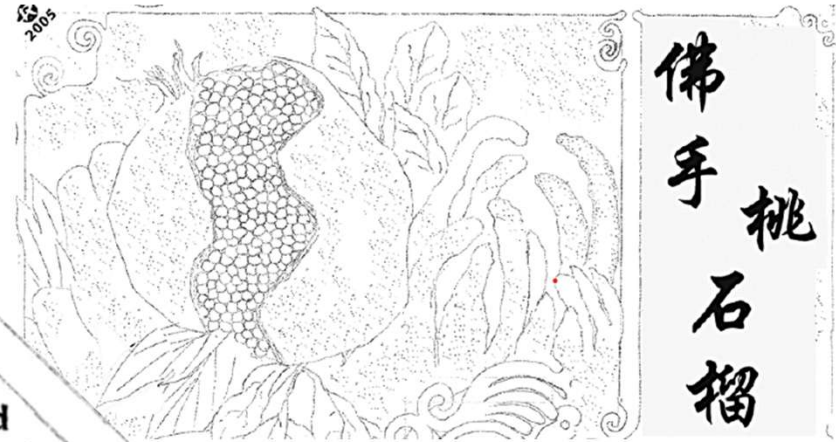
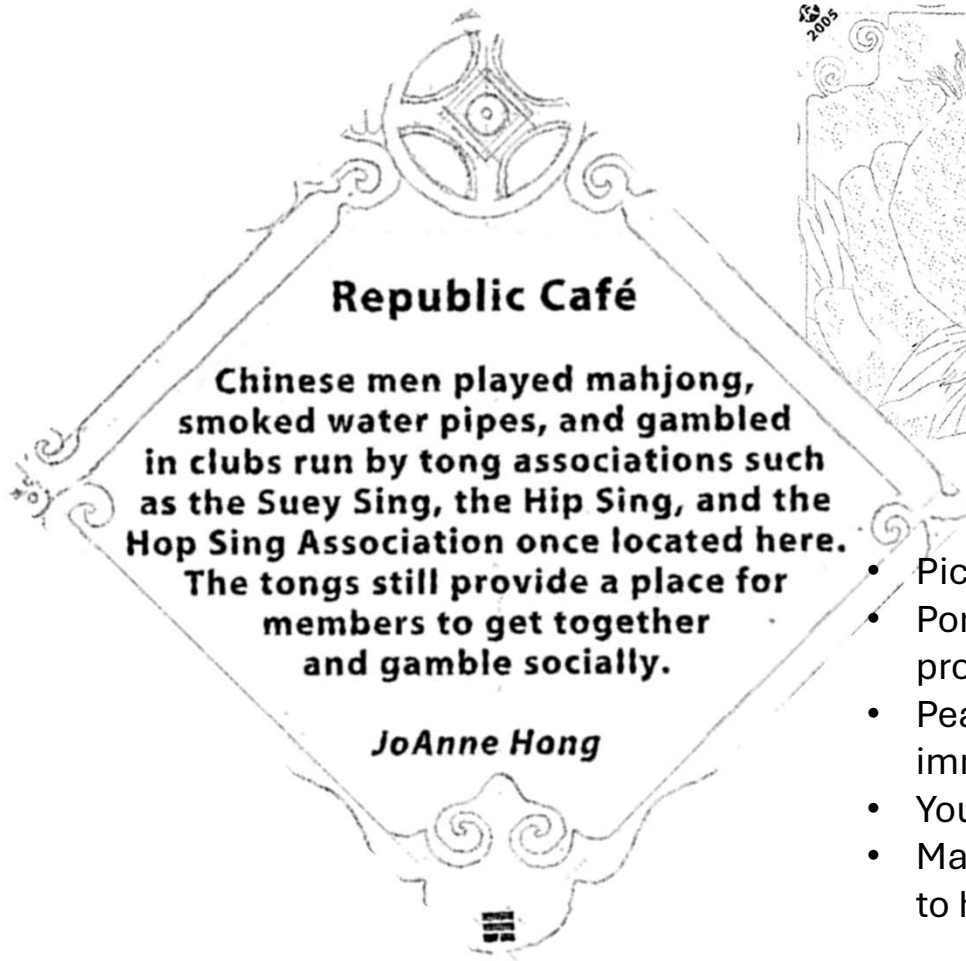


## 4 CAMELLIA | JASMINE



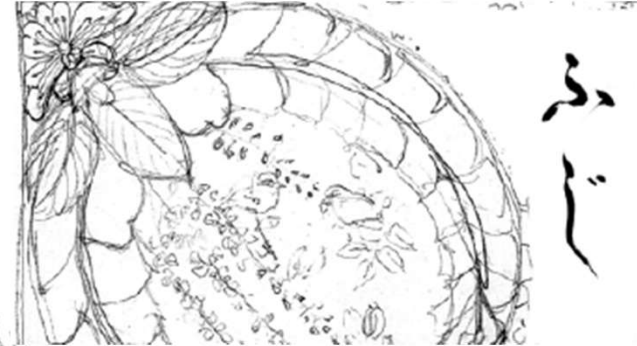
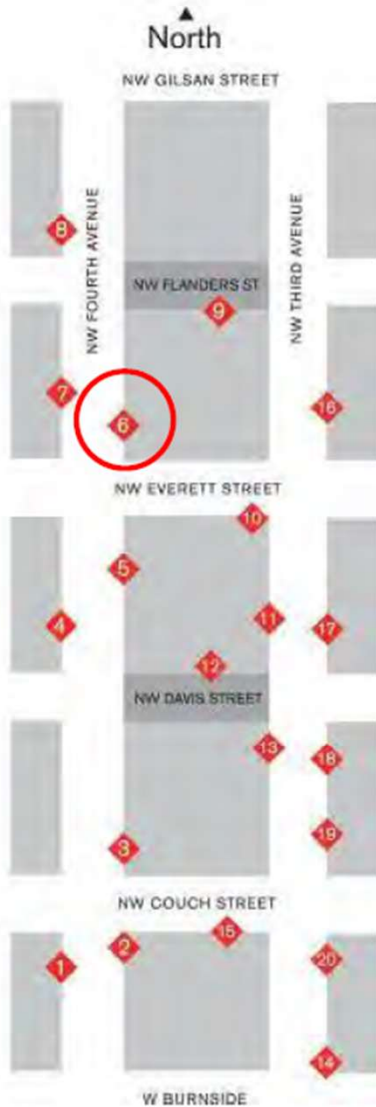
- The borders represent Chinese architecture motif.
- This was the last plaque designed.
- You may notice that some of the quotes are in circles and other in squares.

## 5 BUDDHA'S HAND | PEACH | POMEGRANATE



- Picture depicts an open pomegranate.
- Pomegranate symbolizes abundance, prosperity and lots of kids!
- Peach symbolizes longevity, immortality, and prosperity.
- You can do rubbings of these plaques.
- Many Chinese restaurants were known to have gambling in their back rooms.

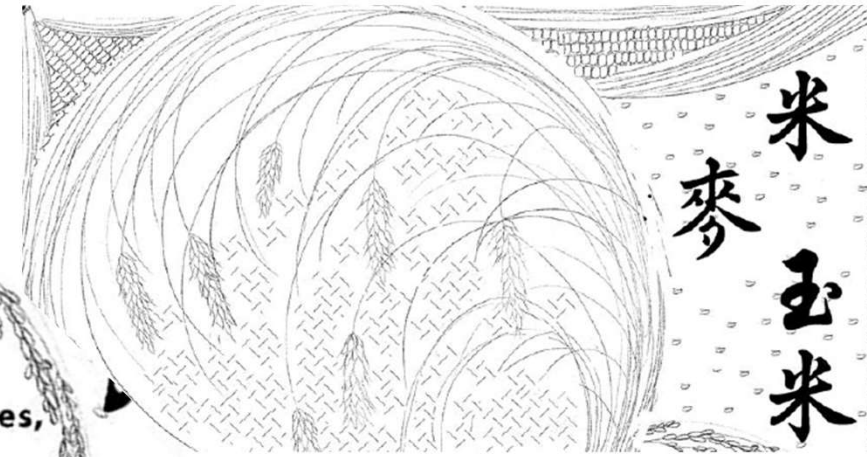
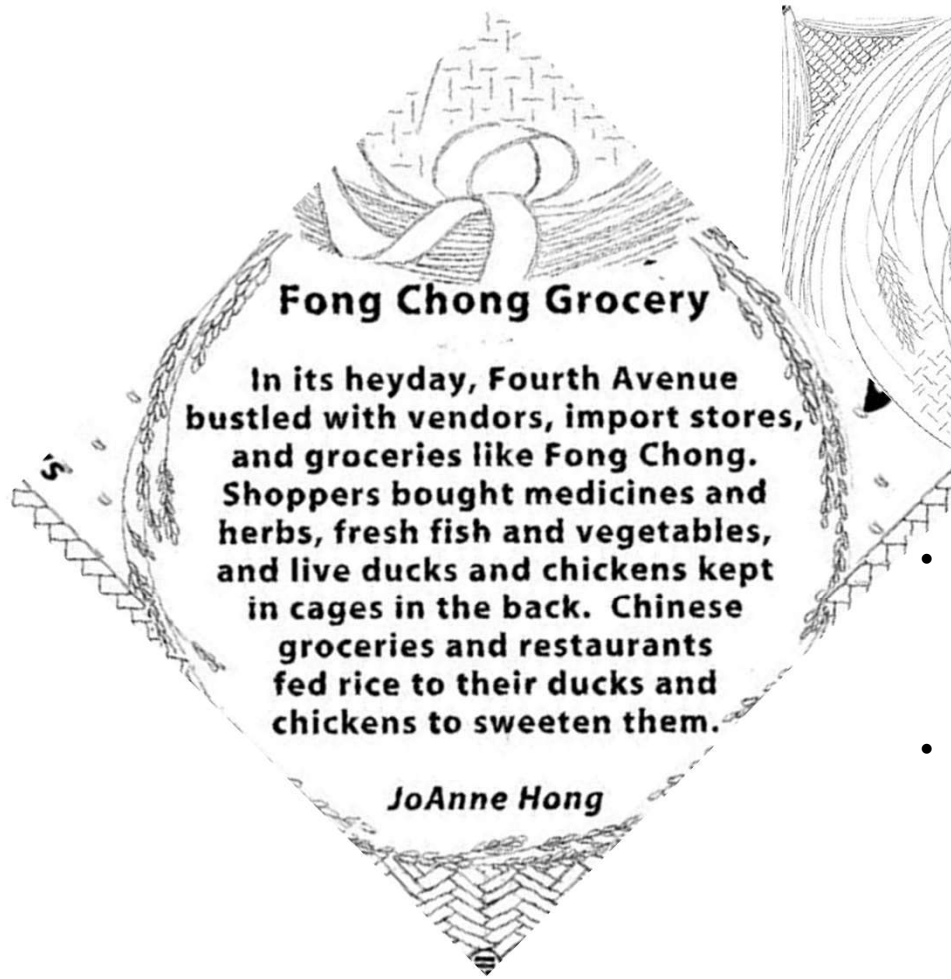
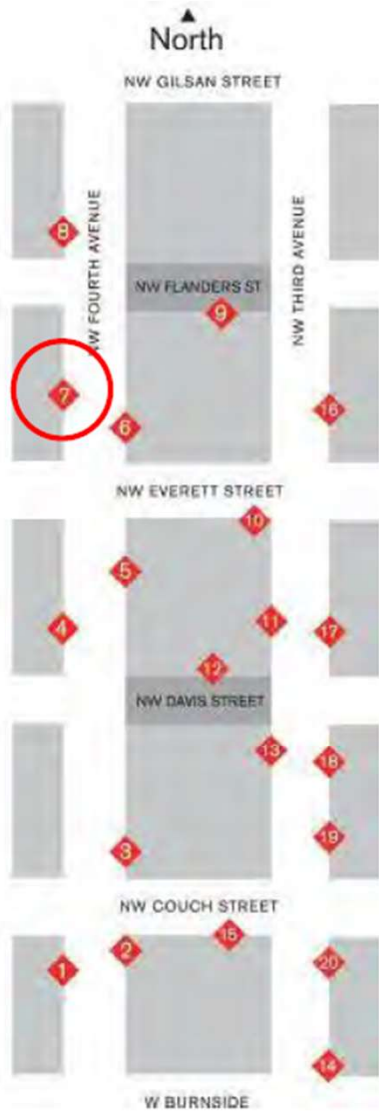
# 6 JAPANESE WISTERIA



- Wisteria associated with longevity, love, and resilience. Also symbolize intelligence, good luck, and prosperity.
- The plant's ability to climb and thrive, contributes to it's association with endurance.
- Note the butterflies in the corners symbolizing Japanese family crest.

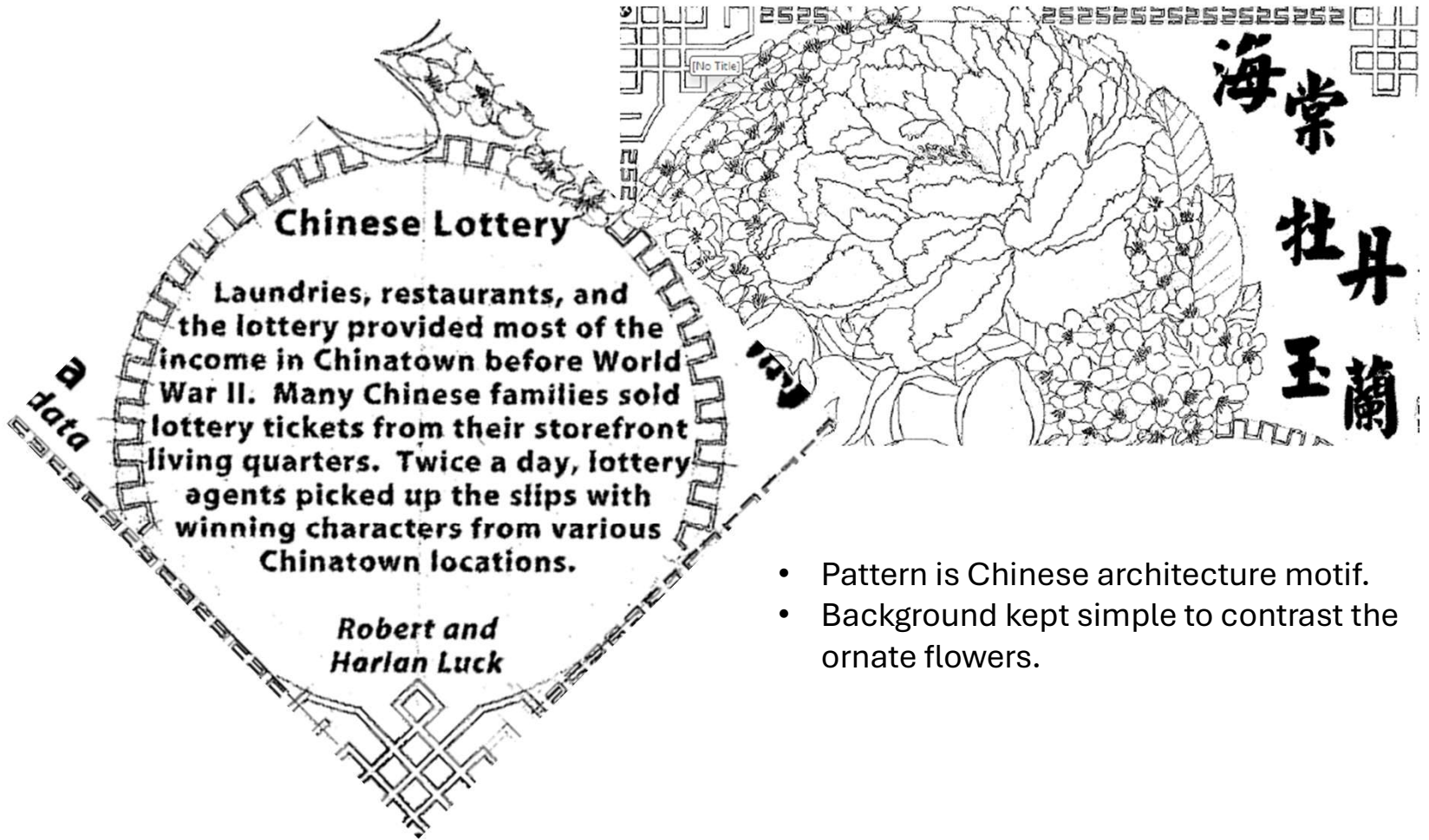
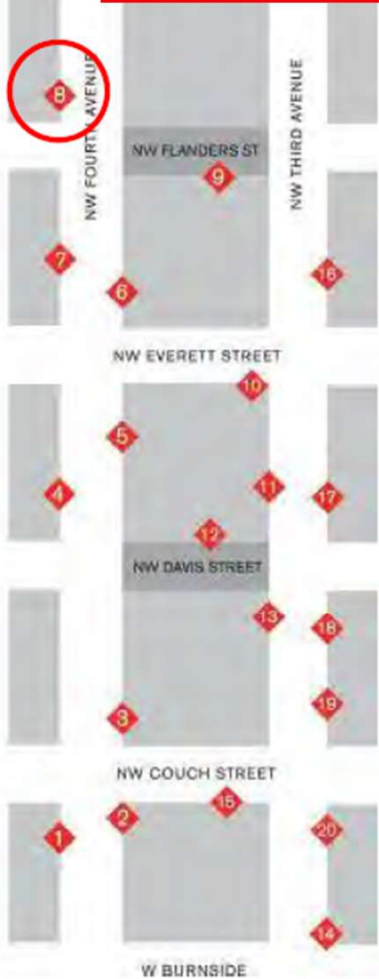


# 7 RICE | WHEAT | CORN



- Fong Chong was also a restaurant that featured Dim Sum. On weekends, there would be a line to get in to eat!
- Parents told us to eat all our rice or your spouse will have a pock marked face! Also, there are starving people in China or save some for your ancestors.

# 8 CRAB APPLE | TREE PEONY | YULAN MAGNOLIA



**Chinese Lottery**

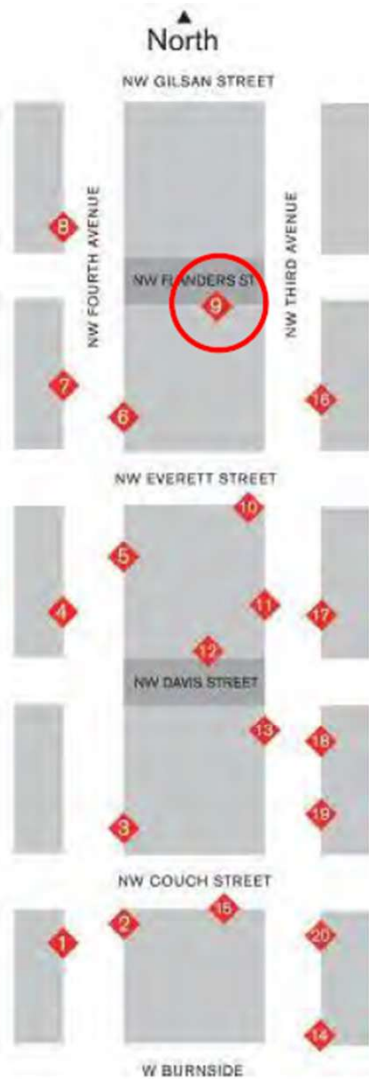
Laundries, restaurants, and the lottery provided most of the income in Chinatown before World War II. Many Chinese families sold lottery tickets from their storefront living quarters. Twice a day, lottery agents picked up the slips with winning characters from various Chinatown locations.

*Robert and Harlan Luck*

海棠牡丹玉蘭

- Pattern is Chinese architecture motif.
- Background kept simple to contrast the ornate flowers.

## 9 PEANUT



### Royal Palm Hotel

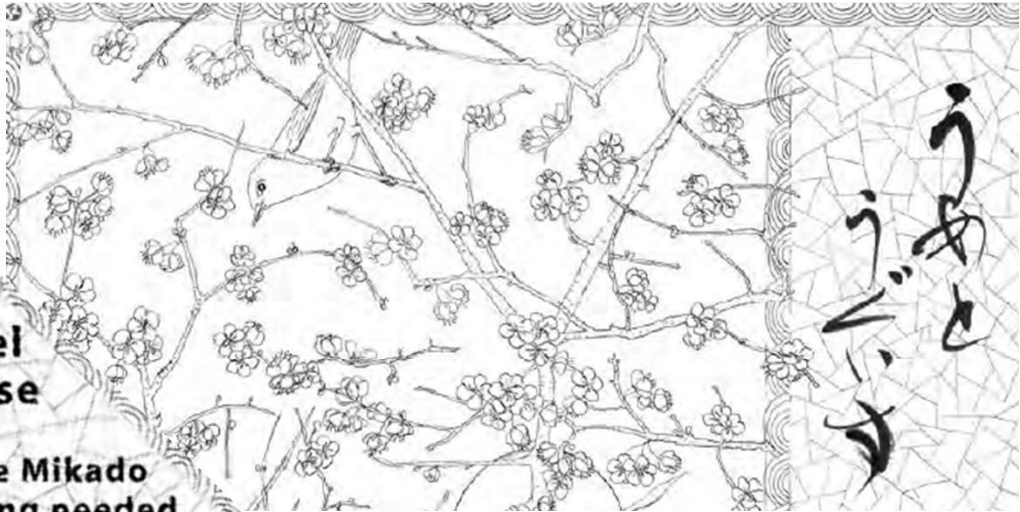
When my father managed the Royal Palm Hotel, people called it "high tone." It had a mixed crowd, mostly African American railway porters, cooks, and brakemen. I remember one Caucasian man who always brought French bread. That was a treat for us because we ate only rice. And, there was a Finnish steam bath in the basement!

Yoichi (Cannon)  
Kitayama

- Peanut is found in both Chinese and African culture.
- Royal Palm is the only place recorded historically with African travelers.
- Note the peeled peanuts in the corner and shelled peanuts around the quote.
- Dotted background represents the ground. The Chinese believe that you put things in the ground to grow, analogy old go away and descendants take their place.



# 10 PLUM



- Can't talk about plums without including warbler birds are always associated with the plum (in the upper left).
- Moon is at the upper corner of the quote.





# 11 GINKGO



- Ginkgo has references to the Japanese culture and symbolizes longevity. Also, part of Chinese culture.
- Ginkgo trees planted as a part of Streetscape project.
- Borders also has abstract cranes.
- This is now known as the Society Hotel, a boutique hotel.

# 12 PINE | BAMBOO | PLUM



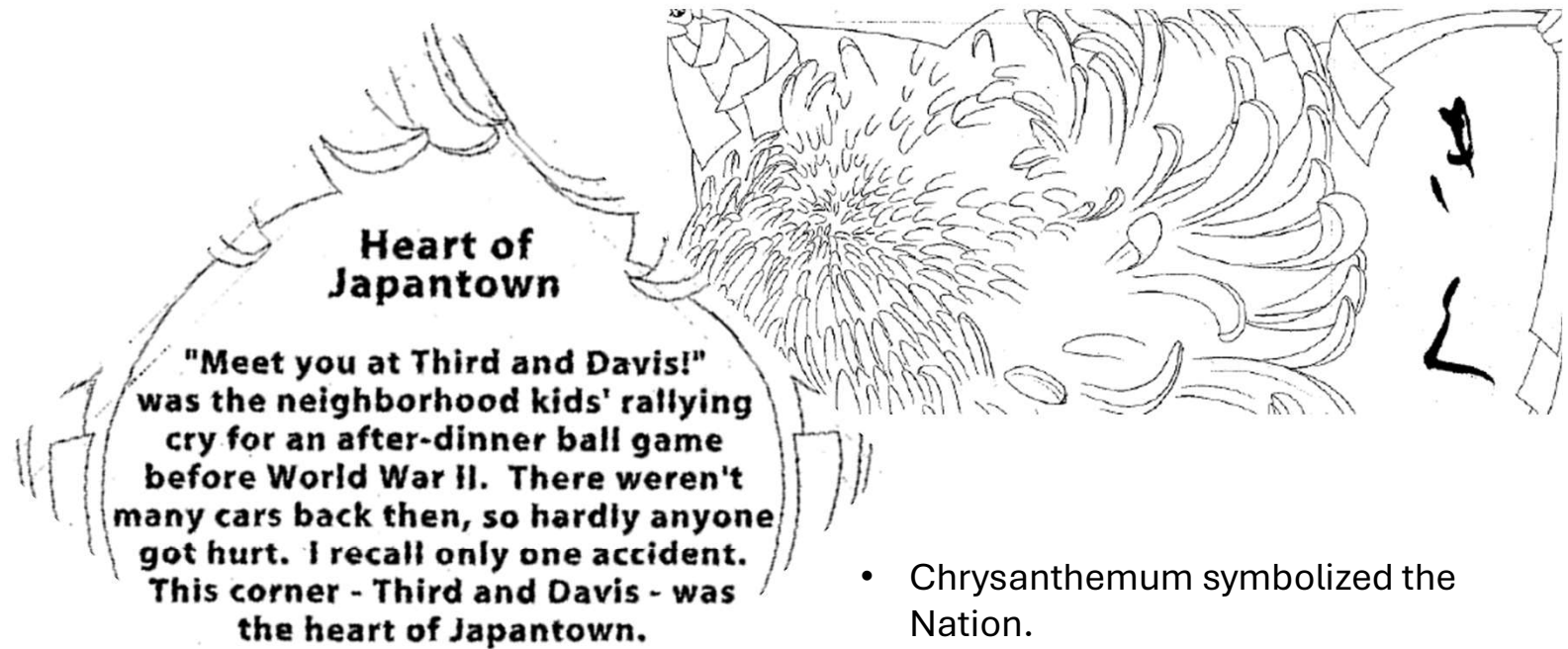
## Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association

The Association formed to settle disputes between member associations, fight discrimination, and promote Chinese culture. Its building, financed and built by Chinese merchants and laborers in 1911, anchored New Chinatown's development. The Chinese Language School held classes five nights a week before WWII.



- Elders of CCBA asked to have “the 3 friends of winter” as the design. Famous expression that represents the fraternal relationship of their members.
- There are starbursts also depicted.
- The borders are bamboo.
- CCBA was built in 1911. Language school is now in the Jade District.

# 13 CHRYSANTHEMUM



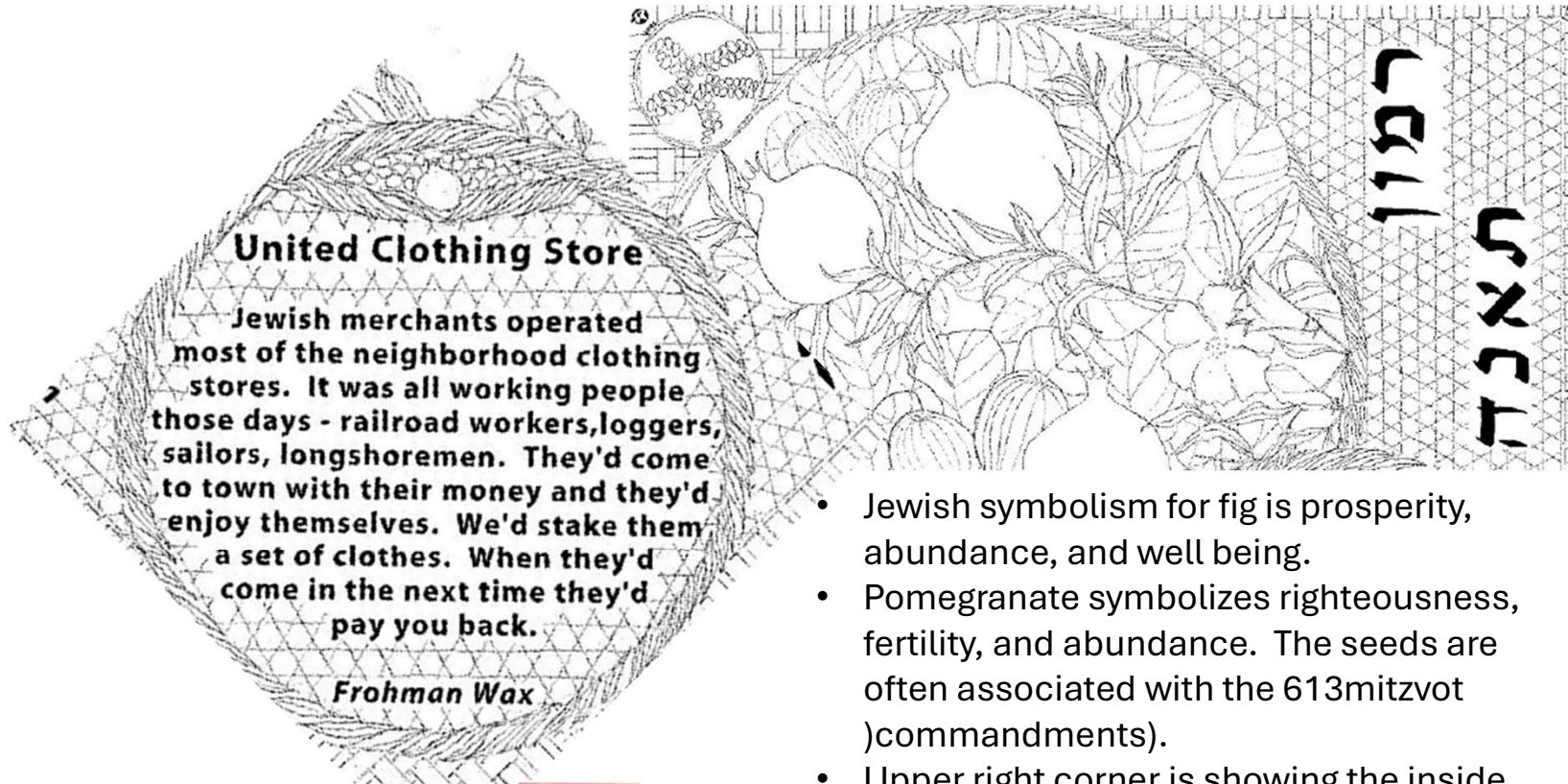
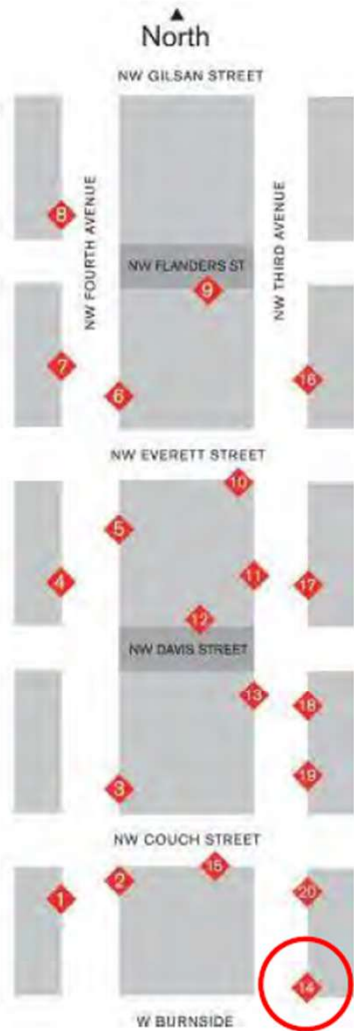
*Alice Inouye Sumida*



- Chrysanthemum symbolized the Nation.
- The borders are paper foldings and tied knots that symbolizes blessing to their ancestors and tied onto trees.



# 14 FIG | POMEGRANATE



\*\*Note that the bronze picture in Suenn's pdf is incorrect.



- Jewish symbolism for fig is prosperity, abundance, and well being.
- Pomegranate symbolizes righteousness, fertility, and abundance. The seeds are often associated with the 613 mitzvot (commandments).
- Upper right corner is showing the inside of the fruit and shaped like the Star of David.

# 15 ACANTHUS



## Greek Coffeehouses

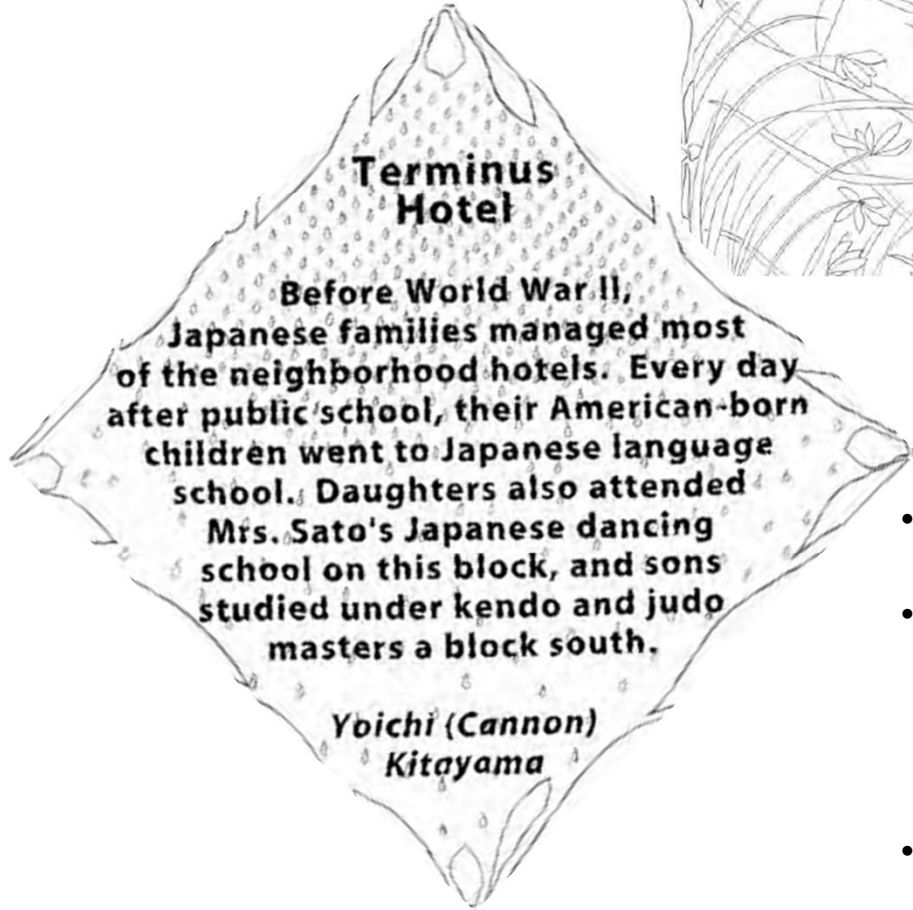
The neighborhood was full of immigrant workers living in tiny hotel rooms. Many of the Greeks never married, sending their money home to pay their sisters' dowries. They spent their leisure time at nearby Greek coffeehouses, reading Greek newspapers, gambling, and arguing politics. Women weren't allowed.

*Nick Bolos  
and  
Vasiliki Vlahakis*

- Acanthus is what you see on Greek Corinthian columns.
- The borders are also the plant.

Ἄκανθος

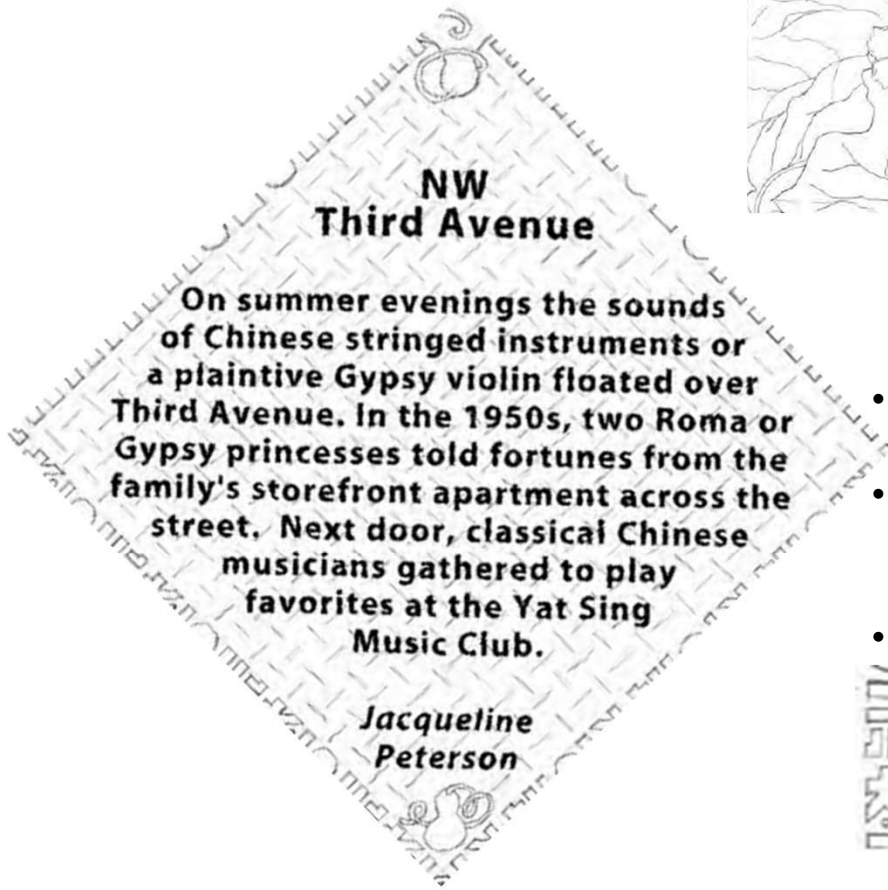
# 16 ORCHID



- Humble, simple yellow and green flowers but with a beautiful scent.
- It's a homage to the designer's mother. Mother would say "if you grow up you should not be noticed but people can sense your presence."
- Background has raindrops.



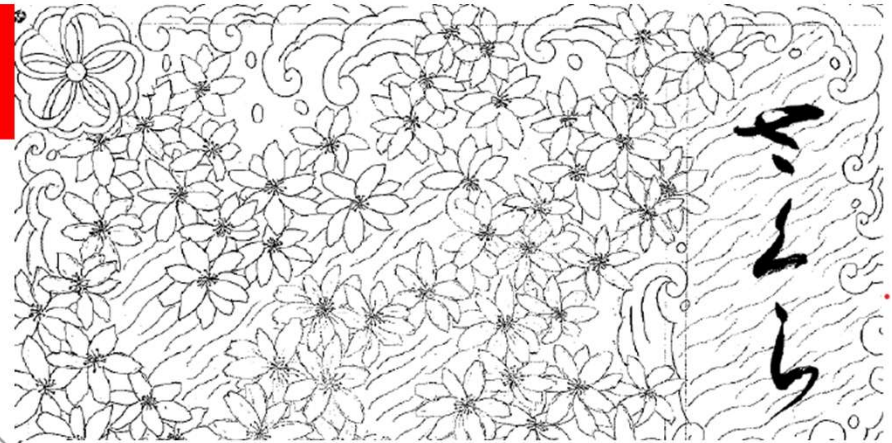
# 17 GOURD



- The gourd is thought to hold the universe.
- Note that sides don't have a border to symbolize "no boundaries" because you cannot contain the universe.
- Also hidden in the border is the designer's 2 daughters' names. That translate to "the beginning" and "the end".



# 18 CHERRY



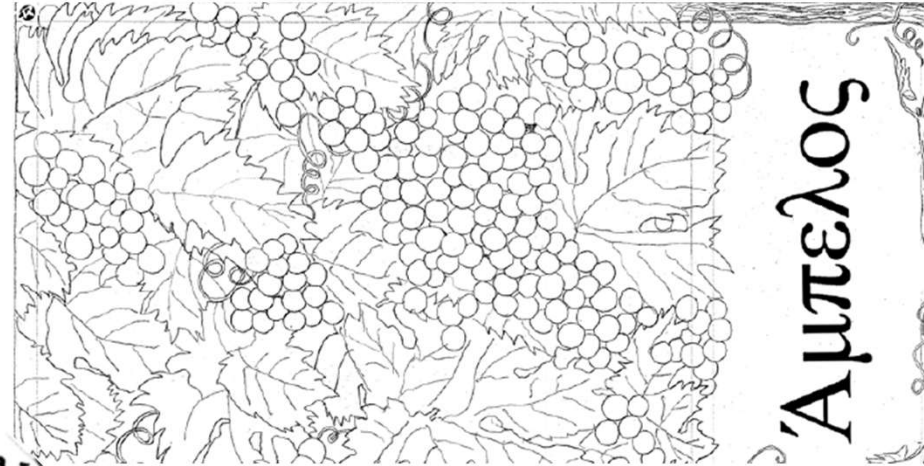
- This one “glows” and is the designer’s favorite!
- Background represents the first sign of spring as swirling of water and then the sloshing waves in the border.
- Depicts the transition from winter to spring.

# 19 GRAPE

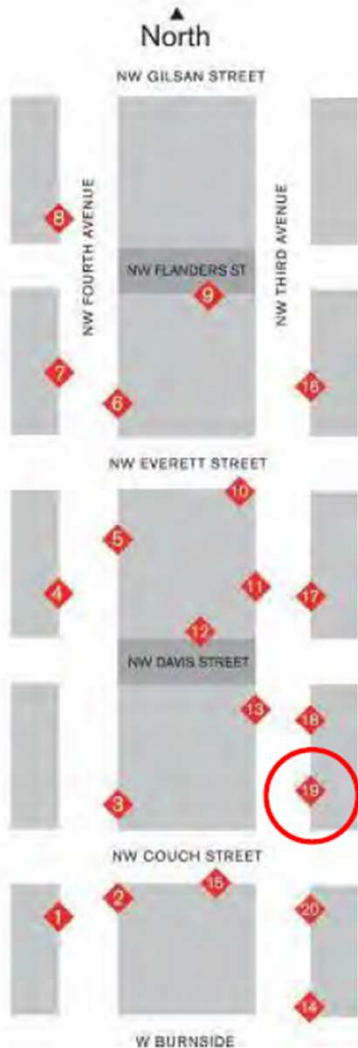
## Maletis Family Grocery

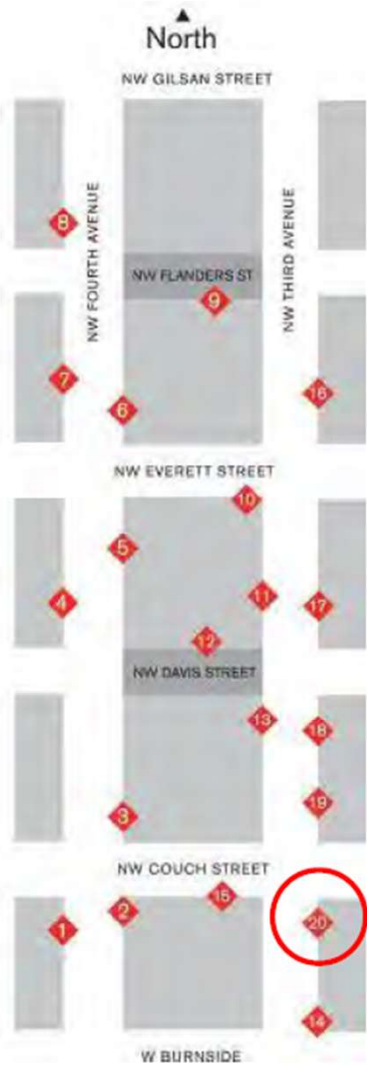
This was a working man's area - many Swedes, Norwegians, Asians - which is why we carried all sorts of food - dried fish, smoked salmon, olive oil, cheeses, pasta in bins where you'd scoop it out with your hands. We were a neighborhood store that served all the people. But we were also the first Greek grocery store in Portland to sell feta cheese.

Mary Maletis

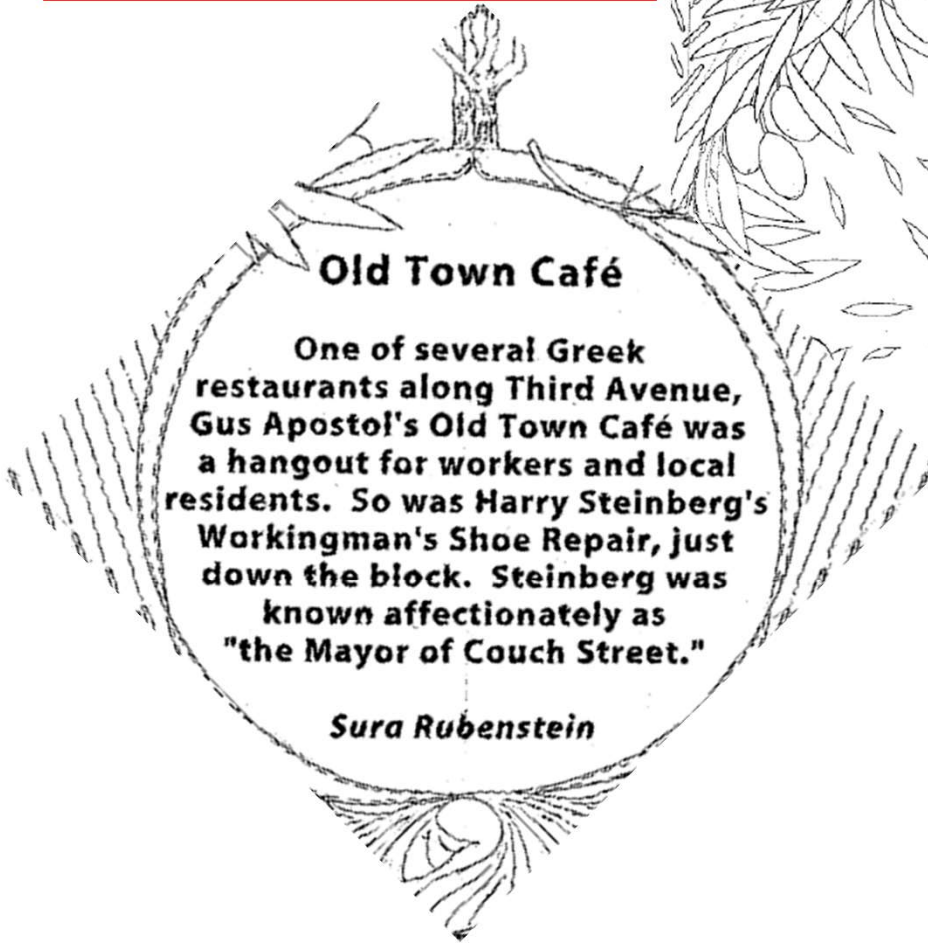


- Greek cultural reference for prosperity and abundance.
- Grapevines make the border.
- Dionysus is the Greek god of wine and fruitfulness, vegetation and pleasure.
- Again, no upper borders to symbolize abundance.





20 OLIVE



- Hebrew and Greek characters.
- Olive tree for Greek culture.
- Athena's gift of the first olive tree to Athens, symbolizing peace and growth.
- Doves symbolize peace found at the top left and right bottom.

