



Name in English: Joe Shoong
Name in Chinese: 周崧
Name in Pinyin: Zhōu Sōng
Gender: Male
Birth Year: 1879-1961
Birth Place: Dachong Town, Zhongshan County, Guangdong Province, China
Philanthropy: Yes

Founder of the National Dollar Store chain

Profession(s): Businessman, Philanthropist

Education: No known US education.

Awards: No known awards.

Contributions: Born in a village in Guangdong China, Joe Shoong immigrated to the U.S. when he was 20 years old. Starting out as a garment worker, Shoong became a self-made millionaire through his entrepreneurial spirit and hard work, founding the once widely known National Dollar stores. He was one of the wealthiest and most well-known Chinese American businessmen in the U.S. in the early 20th century. A year after he arrived in 1901, Shoong opened his first store selling dry goods with three partners in Vallejo, California. In 1903, he bought out his partners, moved the store to San Francisco, and renamed the store “China Toggery.” Over the next few years, Shoong built more stores, selling retail and dry goods, and renamed them the National Dollar stores in 1928. The official first branch was built in Sacramento in 1916. In 1928, there were 16 branches and expansion continued until 1959. In a 1938 article, the New York Times cited Shoong as one of the highest paid executives in the U.S. By the time of his death in 1961, the enterprise had grown into a \$12 million chain (worth approximately \$70 to 100 million in 2007 dollars) employing 700 employees with 54 stores in the US. At a time that Chinese were perceived as incapable of holding management positions by American society, Shoong had each National Dollar store headed by a Chinese manager. The National Dollar stores continued operations until 1996. Despite the Chinese Exclusion Act and anti-Chinese legislation, Shoong defied the odds, becoming a millionaire many times over, created well-paid jobs for Chinese Americans, and gave back to the community at home and abroad through his philanthropic efforts.

The Joe Shoong Park in Clark County, Nevada is named in his memory.

Philanthropy: Shoong was a noted philanthropist. In 1931, he paid the construction debt for Chinese Central High School in San Francisco. In 1937, he donated \$24,000 to the Chinese Hospital in San Francisco and \$15,000 to the Chinese War Relief Association. In 1938, he donated \$70,000 to the University of California to create scholarships for needy students. After the war, he created the Joe Shoong Foundation, endowing it with \$1,000,000. The foundation continued his good works with

scholarships for needy students, academic fellowships, financing the restoration of a theater in Oakland, and contributions to Bay Area churches, charities, and cultural and community organizations.

Shoong donated money in 1928 to have a school built in his ancestral village near Guangdong, China. Over the next two decades he gave over \$200,000 for the school's operating costs, and the school still bears his name today. In addition, he also donated money annually to run the Longdu Middle School.

External Links:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,759404,00.html>

<http://www.oaklandnet.com/parks/news/040703d.asp>