



Name in English: Ng Poon Chew
Name in Chinese: 伍磐超
Name in Pinyin: Wǔ Pánchāo
Gender: Male
Birth Year: 1866-1931
Birth Place: Guangdong Province, China
Philanthropy: Yes

Journalist, Civil Rights Activist

Profession(s): Journalist, Civil Rights Activist, Newspaper Publisher

Education: 1892, San Francisco Theological Seminary

Awards: 1913, Litt.D. Honorary Degree Conferred, University of Pittsburgh

Contribution(s): Known as the “father of Chinese journalism on the West Coast,” Ng Poon Chew immigrated to California in 1881, where he started one of his first jobs as a houseboy in San Jose. Befriended and inspired by a local Sunday school teacher, Ng started studying for the ministry in San Francisco. In 1892, upon graduating from the San Francisco Theological Seminary, Ng was ordained as a pastor and became America’s first Chinese Presbyterian Minister on the Pacific Coast. He served as a pastor to the Chinese Presbyterian Church in San Francisco and also in Los Angeles, but soon decided he wanted to help the Chinese American community be informed about issues affecting them through the written word.

In 1899, he founded the “Hua Mei Sun Po,” a Chinese weekly newspaper in Los Angeles. A year later Ng moved the paper north to San Francisco, renaming it the “Chung Sai Yat Po,” a paper that would last until 1951 and was the first Chinese language daily newspaper to be printed outside of China with arguably the largest circulation in the U.S. for much of its existence. As a minister and advocate for Chinese Americans, Ng used his paper to support reform and progressive ideas, speaking out against customs like foot-binding and polygamy, promoting education and assimilation to American society, and advocating equal rights for Chinese Americans. He also used his paper to cover issues important to the Chinese American community at home and abroad including the revolutionary activities then going on in China with the pending collapse of the Qing Dynasty.

With the boycott of American goods by China in 1905 and anti-Chinese sentiment escalating throughout the country, Ng embarked on a national speaking tour in 1905 to educate the Americans about China, the Chinese, and discriminatory anti-Chinese laws. Ng addressed the House of Representatives, met with President Roosevelt, and spoke at schools and forums. He brought the problems of Chinese Americans to the country’s attention and became the public face of opposition to the Chinese Exclusion Act. Dubbed the “Chinese Mark Twain,” Ng was a popular and respected speaker, respected

for his keen wit, mastery of the English language, and passionate deliveries lambasting discrimination against Chinese Americans, and many public speaking engagements. Involved with the community and US-China affairs, Ng was adviser to the Chinese consulate general in San Francisco from 1906 to 1913 and vice-consul for China from 1913 until his death in 1931.

Philanthropy: Supported Sun Yat Sen's efforts in reforming China by raising money for the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and to support the new Nationalist government. A dedicated philanthropist, Ng was a member of the Freemasons, one of the oldest and largest fraternities in the world involved with philanthropy. He was the first Chinese to become a Shriner, an organization connected to Freemasonry that is committed to community service and philanthropy.

Publications/Patents:

1905 Co-authored "A Statement for Non-Exclusion"

1908 "The Treatment of the Exempt Classes of Chinese in the United States"

External Links:

<http://www.inn-california.com/articles/biographic/ngpoonchewbionotes.html>

Kim, Hyung-chan. (1999). *Distinguished Asian Americans*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.