

# Spring Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2025

<https://tungjung.nz/newsletters/>


## 新西蘭東增會館

### Tung Jung Association of NZ Incorporated 1926

#### Presidents Update:

Dear Members

It seems that our news these days have been marked by the passing of our seniors. We have obituaries for a few in this season's newsletter. We are saddened also to hear about the passing of Sui Jung Thompson (77), Jack Foh Chan (95), and Ruby Wong Nam (103). As always, we are happy to receive obituaries to publish so we can keep their memories and histories for the descendants.

Our committee remains busy participating in the wider Chinese community including the planning of the National Day dinner, next year's Lantern Festival and of course our centenary book.

As we get older, many feel the need to return to their ancestral villages. For some there is a more pressing need ... Guangzhou's development is turning some of those villages into industrial areas.

For those who have been to their villages, it would be useful to collect from you the way there to make it easier for others to follow. For myself, it was easy enough to get to Sek Haa (石下), just take the metro to SanTong/XinTang (新塘) and my cousin's son picked me up from the hotel there driving the 20 minutes or so to the village.

So, if you have been to your ancestral home, write to us and we will include the itinerary on our website so others can follow in your steps.

Best Wishes  
Dr Graham Chiu, President

#### In this newsletter:

---

2025 Committee

---

Social Update

---

Mahjong –  
family, friends  
and culture

---

Illiteracy in a  
Chinese World -  
2

---

Obituaries

---

Protecting  
Karori Cemetery  
and its natural  
surroundings

---

Por Pors  
Cookbook

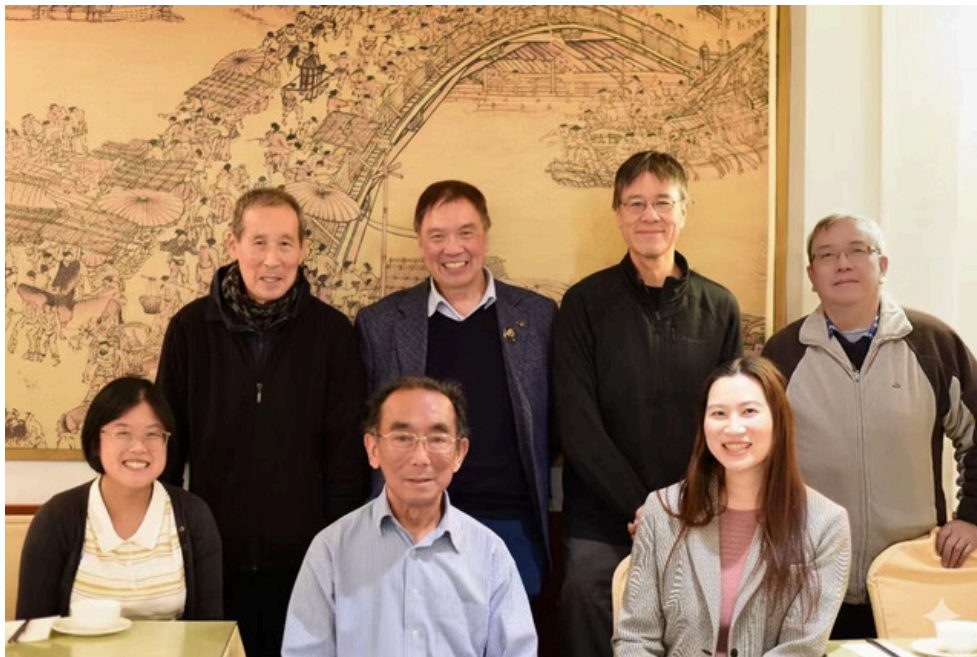
---

---

## Committee 2025-2026

Congratulations to the new committee appointed at the AGM on 24 August 2025

- President: Graham Chiu 趙世榮
- Vice President: Rayward Chung 鍾振威
- Treasurer: Lucinda Chiu 趙潔蘭
- Membership: (Vacant)
- Property: Thomas Chong 吳永華
- English Secretary: Helen South 楊雪梅
- Chinese Secretary: Kevin Zeng 曾凱文
- Social: Peter Moon 歐偉權



Back: Peter Moon, Rayward Chung, Thomas Chung, Kevin Zeng  
Front: Lucinda Chiu, Graham Chiu, Helen South

---

# Mid-Autumn Festival Dinner, 12 October 2025

By Peter Moon

The Tung Jung Association recently held its Mid-Autumn Festival dinner at Dragons Restaurant in Wellington, bringing together members and guests for a night of celebration and tradition. Guests enjoyed a banquet of Cantonese dishes, including Peking roast duck, steamed fish, stir-fried vegetables, and seafood, followed by sweet treats and traditional mooncakes — symbolizing unity and harmony. The evening reflected the spirit of the festival: reunion, gratitude, and the warmth of community.



During the evening, a band provided background music, starting with the song "May we be blessed with longevity" 但願人長久 as an appropriate choice for this important tradition. The lyrics were written in 1076 during the Moon Festival by the Song Dynasty poet Su Dong Po lamenting his young brother's 7 year absence.

For those who purchased raffle tickets and were lucky enough to win some great prizes including \$100 grocery voucher, \$50 Dragons Restaurant vouchers, boxes of mooncakes, and several more. However, you do need a little bit of Chinese luck! A fantastic evening enjoyed by all!



Lily Zhang on Vocals and Eva Wong on Keyboard









---

## Cheung Yeung, Sunday 2 November 2025

To honour our ancestors, we gathered in front of the Tung Jung Stele at Karori Cemetery. This year we were joined by several members of the Seyip community including President Keith Chin. Traditionally Chrysanthemum tea and wine are de rigeur but strangely the supermarket didn't have the wine in stock! Roast pork is also traditional and Graham Chiu's air fryer pork quickly disappeared.

Following the rituals, we reconvened at the Regal Restaurant for a delicious yum cha lunch, with a few staying on afterwards to enjoy a friendly game of mahjong.





## Reminder: Christmas Yum Cha 2025

**Venue** Dragons Restaurant

**Time** 12.00 noon

**Date** Wednesday 3 December

Non-members \$25

Members \$15

Christmas Yum Cha food puns to make you laugh!!

- "You win some, you dim sum!"
- Great job take a bao
- Why did the char siu bao blush? Because it saw the other buns steaming
- Har gow: Why did the shrimp dumpling go to therapy? It had too much baggage.
- Siu mai: What did the siu mai say to the shrimp dumpling? "Hey, har gow-ing?"
- Cheung fun: Why are rice noodle rolls so bad at keeping secrets? They're too transparent.
- Egg tarts: Why did the egg tart break up with the pineapple bun? It just wasn't his "tart."
- Dim sum dumplings always fill the room with joy.
- Dumplings rise to every occasion.
- How long does it take to brew Chinese tea? An oolong time
- If at first you don't succeed, chai, chai again."
- What's the best policy? Honest-tea."

Don't miss out see you all here!!

Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas and all the best for 2026

From Tung Jung committee



---

# Mahjong – family, friends and culture

By Bobbie Bosman (family name Lai Kee-Sue) September 2025



While cleaning out my mother's house, I came across a mahjong set hiding in the back of a cupboard. What a find after 50 years! Growing up we didn't know how to play but we would have great fun piling up the tiles into a tower and seeing how many we could stack before they came tumbling down. Old school Jenga.

My grandparents Laie Kee Sue and Wah Hee left China (Loo village of Dai Dun 大墩) for New Zealand in the early 1900s, not long after the game of mahjong had reached the Western world. They immigrated from Canton and spoke Cantonese. My mother, aunts and uncles (twelve in total) would speak a mix of English and Chinese which was referred to as Chinglish – racist nowadays but somehow acceptable back then. The family was raised in a two-story building in Patea which housed the fruit shop downstairs. I am told on a Sunday afternoon mahjong games were played as a preferred way to spend their one day off from work as greengrocers.

Anyway, back to the mahjong set. I grew up believing the mahjong tiles were made of ivory. Thankfully it turns out they are made of Chinese bakelite (like plastic). During the 60s, many countries were trading/buying from China and owning "imported" goods was very "chic". My grandparents imported some sets that were passed down to their children and now me.

---

Mahjong dates back to the mid-1800s in Southern China towards the end of the last imperial dynasty, the Qing Dynasty. An earlier version or “ancestor” to mahjong can be traced back a Chinese card game called kun pai, which existed as early as the 1700s. Like mahjong, kun pai consists of three varied suits and a goal of making matches or runs but was played with paper cards. Interesting fact is that this is also cited by game historians as being the catalyst for the standard decks of cards as we know them today. For this reason, mahjong resembles other card games that may be familiar to you like rummy and bridge.

The word "mahjong" means "hemp sparrow" in southern Chinese dialects, and likely refers to the bird-like clacking sound the tiles make during reshuffling. It is widely believed to be derived from the ancient Chinese card game madao. The word "mah-jongg" is also used to refer to the tile-based game originally from China. The name of the game in dialectal Chinese (Shanghai) is "ma chiang," which literally means "sparrows".

There are as many ways to play mahjong as there are languages, and within that there are regional dialects. I joined the mahjong group run by Lucinda Chiu about a year ago. Talking to someone about the way they approach a game can open up a conversation about family history, immigration, and diaspora. I learnt pretty quickly to keep an eye on the older Chinese ladies playing mahjong as they would quickly change the rules to “Taiwanese rules” or “Hong Kong rules” as a way of winning. The twinkle in their eye could not be hidden by their poker faces!

Mahjong isn't just a game—it's a reason to gather, laugh, learn, and connect.



Bobbie rekindles a family tradition at the Wellington Mahjong & Chinese Chess Club



---

## Illiteracy in a Chinese World - 2

By Graham Chiu

In the last newsletter (Winter 2025) I had written that I had started to learn how to read Chinese simplified characters, and had learnt 500 characters having started in June 2025. I wish I could write that I had made consistent progress but the difficulty does increase with time. You have to remember not only what you learn on the day but also distinguish words with similar english meanings with totally different hanzi. What makes things even more tricky is that everything seems to have the same pronunciation! These are called homophones. In fact one poet 胡明復 or Hu MingFu, being the wag that he was, published a poem in 1916 of 92-94 characters entirely using only words pronounced as *shi* ! The poem was named 施氏食獅史 (*Shīshì shí shī shǐ*) or *The story of Mr. Shi eating lions*. It's incomprehensible when spoken in Mandarin as it only uses 4 syllables in Mandarin, but better understood in Cantonese as the poem then uses 22 syllables.

So, why does Mandarin have such a restricted number of tones and syllables? One explanation is that Cantonese and Mandarin are both descended from Middle Chinese but when the Jurchen Jin invaded China, the Song court fled south to escape and formed the Southern Song Dynasty. Northern China was then subject to language pressure both from the Jurchen Jin, then by the Mongols and the Manchu reducing the number of tones in Mandarin, and creating a more logical grammar so it was easier for the invaders to learn. Cantonese was much less affected by these evolutionary pressures with their speakers living on the coast, and it remains a highly conserved descendant of Middle Chinese keeping the tones, final consonants, and phonological richness of Tang-era Chinese

So, this leads to situations where a spoken word in Cantonese might be one word but needs to be two words in Mandarin. For example the word for shoe is usually spoken as 鞋 (haai4) in Cantonese but 鞋子 (xiézi) in Mandarin.

When you learn to read hanzi you often will write the character out in the air using your index finger. Sometimes you do this to show someone else what character you are talking about. You don't do this in English!

And this has led to a very interesting observation. At medical school I learned that Wernicke's area in the left temporal lobe was the main region to do with the understanding of the written word. But Chinese is very different. To read Chinese you also need to use your right hemisphere! Chinese characters are logographic with intricate strokes and spatial layouts. Your right hemisphere is required for visio-spatial processing. And functional MRI studies show that even the motor cortex is activated in some people as they subconsciously start to write the characters out with their mental fingers! This occurs even when reading silently.

So, all of the above is to explain why I have only learned 600 more characters in the last 3 months. Oh, and my family have asked me to become an expert Mahjong player so that I can play against the neighbours but that's another story for a later newsletter,

---

# Obituary for Lai Lo King and Eva Lai

By Helen Wong, September 2025

Dargaville's most known Chinese fruiterer, L K Lai and Co, opened in Victoria Street in 1957.

Lai Lo King came to New Zealand in 1952 from the village of Cha Gau in Dung Goon county. By 1957 he was working with his father Lai Jun Wei aka Lai Ah Wei, in Rotorua. Lai Jun Wei had joined in a partnership with Chan Woy Chong and Chan Tong, with Chan Fat Bow and Chan Kai Fong as silent partners, to run Rotorua's first Chinese restaurant, the Canton Café, at 1296 Tutanekai Street. Lai Lo King was employed as a cook, even though he knew nothing about cooking Chinese food.

On 30 April 1957, Lai Lo King married Eva Chan, aka Chan Lai Yun, the only daughter of Chan Woy Chong of Har Gee, Jungseng, and Lowe Kun Day of Tong Mei. Eva, then worked in the restaurant as the cashier. However it wasn't long before Lai Jun Wei and his wife Lee Yuk Kum decided to retire to Whangarei. Lo King and Eva had also relocated to Whangarei.

The fruit shop was at 100 Victoria Street and was owned by a Chinese man in the 1940s. It was then bought by Mr Soole and he renovated the shop in the mid 1950s. The Lais bought it in 1957.

Lo King and Eva have 3 children, all born and bred in Dargaville, Kevin, Susan and Perry. The Lai family lived in Gladstone Street, just around the corner from their shop.

The shop was open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Mondays to Thursdays with a late night until 9.00 pm on Fridays, which was the busiest day. The shop also opened on Saturdays from 8.00 am to 12 noon. Lo King recalls, "Most Fridays the shop was full of farmers and locals socialising. Our shop was like a meeting place." Eva said that there were two times a month that they knew they were going to be extra busy. The ladies of the Country Women's Institute came to town all dressed up in their best dresses and hats, for their monthly meeting and that's when they bought their fruit and vegetables from us. And then every fortnight we got bust because the local Māori came to town to buy their groceries.

Initially, twice a week, Lo King ordered supplies of fruit and vegetables from Radley & Co and Turners & Growers Ltd, in Auckland. The produce was then sent to Dargaville. Then Lo King bought a van and went to the auction markets at Whangarei run by Turners & Walder Ltd. Turners & Walder also had a depot at Dargaville and the Lais made use of this service.



---

Lo King says business was really good for the first 20 years. There was little opposition in town and they maintained the quality of produce sold. "We made enough money to pay off the mortgage and buy ourselves a house, within 9 months of buying the shop." However, with the opening of Woolworths supermarket in 1977, business slowly dropped away. They carried on for another ten years, before deciding to close the shop in 1987.

(Page 578 The Fruits of Our Labours. Chinese Fruit Shops in New Zealand.)

Eva Chan came to Auckland with her Mother Lowe Kun Day, and Cousin Francis Mun Sei Chan, in 1939, as war refugees.

Eva recalls what it was like growing up in a fruit shop on Karangahape Road during the 1940s and 1950s.

"We lived above the shop, and as it was during the war, there was nothing doing. We just opened the shop every day. We didn't go anywhere as you didn't have much money in those days and we had no transport. All I did was go to the movies, the only place to go, as there was no other entertainment. Sometimes I would walk to the library in Wellesley Street about once every two weeks, to get some books. There were a few children on the street, but not many."

"It was not until I was nearly ten before I went to school. I think during the war we didn't go anywhere because of the black outs. I went to St Benedict's School. The school's gone, but the church is still there. It was too far to walk – about half hours walk. I went with Mungee (Mun Sei) and them. They were Catholics. They enrolled me with them. After a year or two we went to Beresford Street School which was just down opposite K Road. Mungee and I went to that school for about 3 years. There were not many Chinese at the school then. There was Gladys Wong, Pearl On Kee, Mungee and me. I was 14-15 when I finished. I left school to mind the shop."

"We used to open at 8.00 O'clock, when we got everything out. Then we closed at 6, always at 6. At 6 o'clock every night we had dinner. Mum cooked the dinner. You had to close at 6 pm or you had trouble. Sometimes the inspector was there, waiting for you. From half past 5 to six there were never any customers anyway."

"We opened 5 ½ days a week. Saturday was a ½ day – from 9 to 12. When we closed at 12 we would have to wash the wooden floors and flush the water out onto the street. After that I went to the movies as there was nothing else to do. We would go to the matinees at the Vogue or the Tivoli. The Vogue was the closest, just past Mungee's place at 362, where Norman Ng's is now. You go in there and get in the back. The Tivoli was near Grafton Bridge, where the Sheraton is now. We used to go there sometimes, depending on what was on. We had to walk all the way there."

---

"I did play basketball for a while after I left school. We used to go to Mt Eden. We never won – used to play for the fun of it. I played for a year or so."

Eva left Auckland in 1955. She married Lai Lo King in Rotorua on 30 April 1957. The couple then moved up north to Dargaville and were there for 30 years. (Page 64 Har Gee Chans in New Zealand 2014)

Lai Lo King died in Auckland 18 December 2022

Eva Lai (born 7 December 1933) passed away aged 91 years, 7 months, 12 days on 19 July 2025.



Lo Kwing LAI

Chinese name: 黎盧炯

Village: Chajiao 槎滘

Dongguan, Guangdong Province

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Zbxh35GUITUSpTAY8>

Eva CHAN

Chinese name: 陳麗容

Village: Har Gee 下基

Zengcheng District, Guangzhou,

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/iDcBBITZLPYXZh7R8>



---

# Obituary for Percy Kai Fong 4 July 1934 to 20 February 2025

By Helen Wong, September 2025

Percy Kai Fong 陳玉麟 was the oldest son of Chan Kai Fong (aka Harry Kai Fong) and his wife Winnie Wong (aka Wong You Jung) The third of five siblings. On 12 September 1959, Percy married Iva Hing 吳愛華, a daughter of Ng Yoi Hing and Lilly Hing.

Percy loved his sport—soccer in his youth, then squash, badminton, and table tennis in later years.

In 1972, he relocated from Rotorua to Auckland, to give his five children the opportunity for a university education.

Over the years, he ran several businesses, including a car wash, supermarket, and coffee lounge.

Deeply committed to the Chinese community, he served for many years on the ACCC Committee and was honoured with Life Membership for his contributions.

He was known for his legendary cheesecakes, scones, shortbread, and afghan biscuits.

Tuesdays were sacred “Seniors Day” at the ACCC and he always looked forward to the events hosted by the Women’s Club.

He embraced languages from across the Pacific— Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Indonesian, and Mandarin—traveling to China following Iva’s passing.

He enjoyed travelling, both overseas and within NZ – visiting family and engaging with friends he had made.

Percy loved singing and dancing and in the last year winning chocolate fish (at the Edmund Hilary Retirement Village).

He is survived by five children, twelve grandchildren, and one great-grandchild, with another great grandchild on the way.

Birth registration 1934/22205, Percy Fong was born to Winnie Kai and Kai on 4 July 1934. "Births, Deaths & Marriages Online" [digital index] - New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs

Birth 1934 Death 20 Feb 2025 (aged 89–90) Burial  
Purewa Cemetery and Crematorium  
Meadowbank, Auckland Council, Auckland, New Zealand

GPS: 36°51'58.7"S 174°49'54.5"E  
Plot MEMORIAL WALK EXT LEFT/LEFT/ 520 Memorial ID 286627482



Percy with his legendary Cheesecake – NZCA Christmas December 2013



Fellow Har Gee villagers, Auckland. Eva Lai (Nee Chan), Lai Lo King, Percy Kai Fong, Moo Jing Wong (Nee Chan)

---

# Protecting Karori Cemetery and Its Natural Surroundings

By Philippa Parsons, Friends of Karori Cemetery

Many Chinese graves throughout Karori Cemetery are among the best maintained and most frequently visited, with families taking great care to honour their ancestors.

However, the Friends of Karori Cemetery, along with Plastic Free Urupa and the Zealandia led, Sanctuary to Sea project are concerned with the health of the Kaiwharawhara Stream, and have observed a growing issue: a large number of plastic flowers are being blown from graves and ending up in nearby waterways. These artificial flowers do not decompose and can persist in the environment indefinitely, contributing to pollution and harming local ecosystems. We invite grave owners and visitors to help protect this sacred space and its surrounding natural environment by reducing the use of plastic decorations. Please consider choosing sustainable or biodegradable alternatives when honouring loved ones.

Together, we can show respect for both our heritage and the land that holds it.

## Por Pors Cookbook By Carolyn King

Due to popular demand, Por Pors Cookbook has been reprinted.

On sale now. \$49 per book. \$59.80 with postage.

Orders taken directly by Carolyn via email [kingcarolynz@gmail.com](mailto:kingcarolynz@gmail.com) and you can collect in Wellington via Justine Kohing (phone 021 403 667)

## POR PORS COOKBOOK



Carolyn King

*Home cooking through the generations since Chinese Women  
settled in New Zealand over the last 100 years*

## Community Notices, Articles & Advertising

If you would like to submit a community notice, article, or advertisement for a future newsletter, please contact [lucinda.chiu@tungjung.nz](mailto:lucinda.chiu@tungjung.nz). Local businesses are welcome to promote their services, with advertisement rates starting at \$20 for a quarter page, \$40 for a half page, and \$80 for a full page. Printed copies are in black and white, with the online version in full colour.



---

## Thank you for reading

This newsletter content is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), unless otherwise noted by the authors.

Please note a full colour edition is available online  
<https://tungjung.nz/newsletters/>

Please contact the [secretary@tungjung.nz](mailto:secretary@tungjung.nz) if you wish to access photographs taken at community events.

## Bequests

If you've joined us for dinners or yum cha over the past year, you may have noticed something great—lower prices! No, it's not because food costs have dropped. Thanks to the TJA paying off its mortgage last year, we've reduced our fixed expenses. So, your committee decided to pass those savings on to you by subsidizing event prices.

While these gatherings now run at a loss, we're still maintaining a positive cash flow overall. But we'd love to do even more—like offering scholarships or expanding member benefits.

If you've ever considered leaving a legacy or making a tax-deductible donation, supporting the Association in your will would help us keep building a brighter future together. Every contribution makes a difference!

## We're looking for enthusiastic helpers!

Interested in event planning? Join the social subcommittee to help organise upcoming social events or our Centenary Celebrations in 2026.

We're also seeking people to take on key roles, including Membership and Newsletter Editor – perfect for those who are organised, creative, and community-minded.

Email [secretary@tungjung.nz](mailto:secretary@tungjung.nz) for more info.

## Committee 2025-26

President	Graham Chiu 趙世榮	Property	Thomas Chong 吳永華
Vice President	Rayward Chung 鍾振威	English Secretary	Helen South 楊雪梅
Treasurer	Lucinda Chiu 趙潔蘭	Chinese Secretary	Kevin Zeng 曾凱文
Membership	Vacant	Social	Peter Moon 歐偉權

To sign up as a Full or Associate member, fill in an online form here:  
<https://tungjung.nz/about/#full-membership>



新西蘭東增會館

Tung Jung Association of NZ inc.

PO Box 9058, Wellington, New Zealand

<https://tungjung.nz>, [secretary@tungjung.nz](mailto:secretary@tungjung.nz)

**Membership form to 31 March 2026**

Name 家姓名

Spouse/partner 丈夫/妻子/朋友

Family (seniors over 70) 長輩

Family (younger generations) 家人

Family (younger generations) 家人

Family (younger generations) 家人

Village ancestry paternal 男鄉下

Village ancestry maternal 鄉下

Email

Phone 電話

Address 地址

**Membership registration**

Please send your membership form and fee, if applicable, to:

- Tung Jung Assoc, P.O. Box 9058, Wellington
- or email the form to [secretary@tungjung.nz](mailto:secretary@tungjung.nz) and pay via internet banking: 01-0505-0178453-00 with your name as a reference

☐

\$20 single

☐

\$30 household

☐

Free for seniors 70+

☐

Donation  
\$\_\_\_\_

*All donations are tax deductible*

☐

Members only: please send me my newsletter in paper form.

If your postal address is different to the one you've given above, please write it below

\_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for your support!***

*We collect your name/s and contact details to communicate with members. You have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected. Please email [secretary@tungjung.nz](mailto:secretary@tungjung.nz) to do so.*



Tung Jung Association of NZ Inc, P.O. Box 9058 Wellington, N.Z  
新 西 蘭 東 增 會

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

Tung Jung Association of NZ, incorporated 1926

If undelivered, please return to PO BOX 9058 Wellington