

May 17, 2017 Taiwanese American Historical Society Exhibit

Revised February 2021 Keynote Talk accompanying 18 Power Point Slides

Part 1: Introduction

Slide 1 – Title Page

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai

Good Morning.

My name is **Peter Tsai** and I am the youngest child of the late Rev. Ai Chih Tsai. I am here with my daughter Whitney Tsai and my sister Bilin Tsai.

On behalf of Rev. Tsai's children, grandchildren, and other family members, I want to express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Franklin P. Cheng, the Taiwanese American Historical Society, and Mr. David Chou for making this exhibition possible, and to all of you who are here today. My family and I are profoundly moved and honored by your recognition of Rev Ai Chih Tsai's life.

This morning, we will provide a brief biography of my Father since the exhibition presents a much fuller understanding of his life and many contributions. Then we will talk about four values that guided his life and that he and my Mother, Ryo Morikawa Tsai, passed down to their children and grandchildren.

Part 2: Biography

Slide 2 – Biography 1

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai at Doshisha H.S. in 1930

Ai Chih was born in November 1913 in Tainan Province, the 8th of 10 children of whom 9 survived into adulthood. After attending Presbyterian High School in Tainan for three years, he moved to Kyoto and graduated from Doshisha High School (1932), Preparatory College (1935), and Theological School (1938). This is a photo of my Father at age 17 at Doshisha High School.

Slide 3 – Biography 2

PHOTO of Ai Chih and Ryo Tsai in 1985

He continued his education in the United States, earning an MA (1940) and BD (Bachelor of Divinity, 1941) at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He then served as the pastor of the Chicago Church of Christ (Japanese) in downtown Chicago where he was ordained in November 1942.

In 1942, Father met Ryo Morikawa, a Japanese-American woman whose family was forced to leave their home in San Diego by order of the U.S. Government after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The Morikawa family settled in Chicago and was invited to attend services at

Father's church. My parents married in December 1942 and their first child, BiHoa, was born in 1944. This is a photo of my parents in 1985.

Slide 4 – Biography 3

For the next two years, my Father worked for the U.S. Navy and U.S. War Department (Map Division and later the Strategic Bombing Survey) assisting the U.S. government in the war and post-war efforts. In May 1946, he accepted a position with UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). He was assigned to the Shanghai Office and spent several months in Taiwan as a Reports Officer.

Slide 5 – Biography 4

PHOTO of Tsai Family in 1957

Following his UNRRA assignment, he returned to the US and was called to the Seattle Japanese Congregational Church in 1948. In Seattle, the Tsai family added three more children, Bilin, Bisim, and me, Peter. This is a photo of the Rev. and Mrs. Ai Chih Tsai and their 4 children in 1957. This is me and this is my sister, Bilin. Father served the Seattle church for thirty-one years. After his retirement, he and Mother enjoyed watching their children marry and start their own families, playing with their grandchildren, traveling, spending time on Puget Sound, and enjoying their siblings, nieces, and nephews. Father died in August 1998.

Part 3: Guiding Values

Slide 6 – Title Page: Guiding Values: Faith, Family, Education, Service

Now we will to share four of Ai Chih Tsai's **strongest values**; he lived these values and even as young children, we saw him adhere and conduct himself according to them. Father started writing *My Life Begins* in 1992 and also a letter to a friend in 1983. During my remarks, we will share excerpts from his writings so you can hear his voice. We also have letters from a number of individuals with whom he worked. We will read portions of these letters as well.

My daughter **Whitney** will continue this talk.

Hello, my name is Whitney and I am the youngest grandchild of Reverend Ai Chih Tsai. I would also like to thank the Taiwanese American Historical Society for inviting us here today. I will be sharing grandpa's values on Christian faith, family, and education before my Auntie Bilin discusses his service.

Slide 7– Christian Faith and Ministry-1

PHOTO of gathering after Ai Chih Tsai’s 1942 ordination

Christian Faith: Grandpa’s Father’s conversion to Christianity at age 18 resulted in his being rejected by his Tainan Province village neighbors and fleeing to Tainan City. There, he studied medicine with Dr. James Maxwell, the first Presbyterian missionary doctor in Formosa. Grandpa’s parents were devout Christians serving their community with much needed medical care and food for the needy. They raised their children in the Christian faith.

Grandpa wrote: “Father was a very devout Christian and every Sunday he took his entire family to church where we spent the whole day.”

Grandpa also wrote: (A) p 3

“.. During that time, God had given ten children to my parents... My parents wanted one of the daughters and one of the sons to become ministers as gifts to God. The eldest daughter was married to a minister [and Grandpa became a minister] ... My father was always busy [but] he took time to care for his children... My mother was rather quiet and always helped her husband and took good care of her children... My mother helped the needy people and distributed the fruits from our garden to the people. She was a very religious person and early in the morning she prayed for our safety and before we went to bed she prayed for God’s grace. That attitude gave us the deep impression that we should be grateful to God.”

This is a newspaper article about my Grandpa’s ordination – a Formosan minister in a Japanese congregation.

Slide 8– Christian Faith and Ministry – 2

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai speaking in 1979

In 1948, he was called as the minister of the Seattle Japanese Congregational Church where he served faithfully for 31 years. This is a photo of Grandpa speaking to a group of ministers in Seattle. In 1969, he helped establish the Seattle Formosan Christian Church.

In 1983, he wrote: (B) p 4 “Presently in Seattle, there are over 300 Taiwanese. There is a Taiwanese church where my nephew... is pastor.”

Slide 9 – Family-1

PHOTO of Tsai Family in 1990

Love of and Devotion to Family: Grandpa’s love for his immediate and extended family was incredibly strong. This is a 1990 photo of Grandpa, Grandma, their four children and their spouses and their seven grandchildren. This is me, my Dad and my Auntie Bilin. Grandpa’s deep devotion to us was evident in his interest in our lives, his concern that we were eating

enough or warm enough or safe enough, and the way he modeled for and instilled in us how a family cares for and treats each other. He shared with us the things he enjoyed most outside of his ministry and community – his great cooking, clam digging, hunting for wild mushrooms (matsutake), playing bridge, spending time on Puget Sound – and we grew to love these activities and still do.

Grandpa was the first of his siblings to come to the U.S. Once he was settled with his family in Seattle, he sponsored many of his nieces and nephews making it possible for them to come to the U.S. to study. He also sponsored some of his own siblings and helped them settle in this country. One of our Tsai relatives said that Grandpa was the “Moses of the Tsai Family”.

Slide 10 – Family-2

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai and Formosan students play mah jong in the 1950's

Starting in the 1950's, Grandpa helped many students, including some of his nephews and nieces, from Formosa settle in Seattle and other parts of the U.S. Many of them settled in the U.S. and started families. Grandpa also sponsored some of his siblings to come to the U.S.

This photo shows Grandpa playing mah jong with some of the Formosan students in Seattle.

Grandpa wrote: (B) p 3

“In the early 1950's students from Taiwan were coming to the U.S. to study. My niece... and her husband came to study in 1949. [Another] nephew also studied, graduating from Seattle Pacific College. At that time, there were about ten students from Taiwan and my home was a meeting place – their home away from home. But in the 1960's and 1970's there were many students [from Taiwan]. Many married and established households of their own. Gradually there were so many that it was not possible to know them all.”

Slide 11 – Education **PHOTO of 1971 newspaper article about my Father's (Peter) graduation from high school – the 4th Tsai Top Ten Scholar**

Education: Education was highly valued by Grandpa's parents and this love of learning was connected to their Christian faith and service to God.

Grandpa wrote: (A) pp 3-4

“My father educated ten children ...The people of the village told my parents it was foolish to spend so much money to educate children... But my father sent his children to higher education to universities in Japan and China. All his boys graduated from the university and all his girls graduated from high school or college... [He, Grandpa's father]

wanted his children to be able to work for God and the community so he sent his children to school. His children served society and the Church. We all followed our parents' faith."

Not only were Grandpa and all of his siblings educated, but nearly all of his siblings' 38 children completed higher education and married college graduates. The educational accomplishments continued among the next generation of the extended Tsai Family including my first and third cousins, my sister and me. Here is a newspaper article about my Dad graduating from high school in the Top Ten. His three older sisters also graduated in the Top Ten.

Now, my **Auntie Bilin** will complete this presentation.

Slide 12 – War Years: Service to the U.S.

Love of and Service to his Birth Country and his Adopted Country:

Ai Chih Tsai sailed from Japan in 1938 to study in the U.S. because war in Asia seemed imminent. He always intended to return to Taiwan after completing his ministerial education. His dream was to help establish a college or university in Taiwan with a Christian mission to expand educational opportunities for the Taiwanese young people and to spread the Christian faith.

During World War II, individuals fluent in Japanese, Taiwanese, and English and familiar with Taiwan and Japan were needed to translate various documents in support of the U.S. war effort. Father was one of a handful of people in the U.S. who could do this. His professors and mentors at the University of Chicago encouraged him to accept the government's translator job offer because his unique skills and "...knowledge could contribute to the successful conclusion of the war and to make the occupation of Taiwan go smoothly with little loss of life and property." (B) p 2

Slide 13 – War Years: Service to the U.S.

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai and Lt. George H. Kerr in @1944

In 1944, having been in the U.S. for only six years and after much soul searching, he accepted positions in the U.S. Naval Military Government and Administration Office at Columbia University under Lt. George H. Kerr's supervision and also the U.S. Naval Military Government Translation Unit under Lt. James T. Watkins, IV. His supervisors attested to Grandpa's loyalty to the U.S., his strong work ethic and integrity, and his many excellent contributions. In 1945, he

was recruited by the War Department Military Intelligence Committee to work on highly classified projects in the Map Division outside of Washington D.C.

The following are excerpts from letters of recommendation by two of Father's U. S. Naval supervisors. First Lt Kerr is shown on this slide.

Lt. George H. Kerr, Naval School for Military Government and Administration (May 1944)

"In addition to having unique language abilities for the work which we are undertaking at the direction of the Chief of Naval Operation, Mr. Sai represents a source of information to us which we can find nowhere else in the United States of America.

We have every reason to believe that Mr. Sai's services to us in his present capacity represent the highest possible contribution that he can make to the war effort of the United States."

Slide 14 – War Years: Service to the U.S.

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai and Lt. James T. Watkins, IV in 1946

Lt. James T. Watkins, IV, Naval Military Government Research Unit (December 1944)

"Everyone whom I have known to have been associated with Mr. Sai has held him in the highest esteem for his honesty, uprightness, reliability, gentlemanly qualities and Christian kindness. They have uniformly had the utmost confidence in his loyalties to the cause of the United Nations and his democratic political views. In this esteem and confidence my colleagues and I wholehearted concur."

Slide 15 – Post-War Years: Service to the U.S. and UNRRA

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai, Allan Shackleton and two UNRRA nurses in Heito

After the war ended, he was asked to join the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey team to analyze and report on the damage caused by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and also the firebombing of Tokyo and Shikoku.

In 1946, UNRRA asked him to accept an assignment as a Reports Officer to report on how UN relief supplies were being distributed in Taiwan and on the status of the Taiwanese people. Father was eager to go to Taiwan to see his family after eight years in the U.S. He was committed to helping the Taiwanese people recover after the war. And he still wanted to return to the country of his birth with his wife and young daughter. As a UNRRA officer, he worked closely with Allan J. Shackleton, a New Zealander, also working for UNRRA in Taiwan as an Industrial Rehabilitation Officer. This photo and the next one were sent to me by Allan

Shackleton's son, Colin, who published two of his father's books and who lives in New Zealand. This 1946 photo shows my Father, Mr. Shackleton, and two UNRRA nurses in front of the UNRRA jeep near the Sin Sin Hotel in Heito.

Slide 16 – Post-War Years: Service to UNRRA

PHOTO of Ai Chih Tsai, Allan Shackleton and other UNRRA team members in Taiwan

This is a photo of several UNRRA offices and staff members. Here is my Father and here is Allan Shackleton.

Our Father always dreamed of returning to Taiwan. He wanted to help establish a Christian-affiliated university in Taiwan so young people could continue their education in their native country. Given his experience in Taiwan in 1946-47, he realized that he could not take his young family back to Taiwan in the near future. In their books, George Kerr, Allan Shackleton and others have so powerfully shared their experiences about the events in Taiwan in February and March of 1947.

Slide 17 – Grateful Acknowledgments

Slide 18 – Thank You and Questions

I hope you have enjoyed learning about our Father and Grandfather, the Rev. Ai Chih Tsai. He was an extraordinary man with a generous and loving heart. In keeping his faith, family, country, and learning at the core of his life, he touched so many lives and made many contributions to his local, national, and global communities. We hope you enjoy the exhibit. Again, my family and I thank the organizers for making this exhibit possible and to you for coming today.

Thank you for joining us today. We would be happy to answer your questions.