

FEATURE

IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER'S FOOTPRINTS

By Saiman Hui

Photo of Historical Significance

Never had I seen Bernard so excited when he told me about his effort of locating a photo of his father being aboard USS Missouri to witness the end of World War II.

His father, Chiping Chu (1915-1993), majored in journalism and was a reporter of Ta Kung Pao, a renowned Chinese newspaper, during China's AntiJapanese War period. In March 1945, Chiping became a war correspondent accredited to the US Pacific Fleet to cover the war in the Pacific theatre for Chinese readers.

After attending the Japanese surrender ceremony aboard USS Missouri, he wrote a feature story entitled "Sun Capitulates", which was widely circulated by newspapers in China and overseas. (the entire story is on page 17) It was considered a classic piece in Chinese journalism and also selected as a model news story for teaching materials in Chinese universities. For Bernard and his family, USS Missouri and that article have become symbolic mementoes of his father's indelible accomplishments.

During his trip to Honolulu of Hawaii in April 2002, Bernard visited the Battleship Missouri Memorial. Looking at various exhibits, he was trying to find some clues to his father's footprints. From the enlarged photos on display here and there, he could see the historical event with his mind's eyes and even feel the solemn and dignified atmosphere on the Surrender Deck. He imagined the scene of his father busy with his notepad amid hundreds of newsmen and officers. But the figures in the photos were too small and indistinct to discern who's who. After spending hours without a definite clue, Bernard left the museum somehow disappointed.



Chiping Chu (1915-1993)

On his flight back to San Jose, California, looking through portholes at floating clouds and the blue ocean, Bernard could not help but think of USS Missouri and his father. For nearly six months in 1945, Chiping lived with American GI's on the sea and in the battlefields. He even took rides with American air fighters to attack enemy's strongholds. He experienced all kinds of danger and risked his life several times under Japanese gunfire. He sent back one after another battlefront reports from Guam, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and the US aircraft carrier USS Ticonderoga. Each of his feature articles was filled with upbeat spirit and deep patriotism together with profound Chinese and Western wisdom. These articles inspired hundreds of millions of Chinese people throughout the country in their protracted fight against the Japanese invaders.

The more Bernard thought of the remarkable life of his father, the more eager he felt something should be done. He wrote a letter to the Battleship Missouri Memorial and enclosed newspaper clippings of Chiping's writings as

well as a portrait photo of him. He hoped that the Memorial staff could spare some time to search its photo archives and find a photo with his father in it on the day of the Japanese surrender ceremony. Before long, to his great delight, Bernard received a reply from Michael Weidenbach, Curator of the Memorial, who highly evaluated the contributions made by Chiping to WWII. His vivid and detailed eyewitness account of the surrender ceremony, Weidenbach said in his letter, was of historical significance and should be preserved permanently. He promised Bernard that they would do their best to look for such a photo.

On the eve of Father's Day in 2002, Bernard was overjoyed at the good news from Weidenbach. "While most photos under magnifiers showed various delegations and high-ranking officers in focus, it was hard to identify your father from the out-offocus newsmen and camera crew in the background," wrote the Memorial Curator. "Yet, after an extensive search of the Memorial's Surrender Ceremony photo collection, one face caught the attention of our curatorial staff – a young journalist standing with notepad in hand, smiling as Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz arrived and strode past him on the veranda deck..." Came together with the letter was an enlarged copy of the photo, taken 57 years ago, which brought tears to Bernard's 80-years-old mother and other family members. The Chu family was deeply touched by the curatorial staff's painstaking effort in locating the photo. *(reprinted from their website on page 16)*

On behalf of his family, Bernard thanked Weidenbach and the Memorial staff for their help. Since then, they have become friends and Bernard provided more materials about his father

to Weidenbach. In September 2009, the Battleship Missouri Memorial's website published a story about writings by Chiping Chu and how they had located the photo requested by his family.

English Translation of *Sun Capitulates*

In February 2012, Weidenbach sent an email to Bernard, requesting an English translation of the article *Sun Capitulates* written by his father 67 years ago. He wrote, "...We are now receiving an increasing number of visitors from China and I thought it would be very important to make sure your father's story is

known by our tour guides and told to them." Being a computer software engineer and fluent in both spoken and written English, Bernard felt it would be a task too tough for him to fully convey the spirit and meaning of his father's story. So he asked me to help.

I first met Bernard 40 years ago in Beijing. His mother Teresa and I were colleagues working for *China Reconstructs*, a monthly published in English. I gradually got to know the Chu family more and better as time went by. After the end of WWII, Bernard's parents got married on June 10, 1946 in Shanghai. Two weeks later after wedding, they moved to New York as Chiping had been assigned as a special correspondent covering the UN and the United States for *Ta Kung Pao*. During their stay in New York, Teresa received her MA degree in English literature

from Columbia University. In January 1949, the couple returned to Hong Kong (where Bernard and his twin brother Chris were born), and finally settled down in Beijing.

However, Chiping's journalism career was terminated in 1957 as he advocated for a free press. Denounced as a "Bourgeois Rightist", together with numerous intellectuals who dared

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to speak out against the totalitarian regime, he was sent to a labor camp near the Sino-Siberia border. Doing hard labor in sub-zero weather with little food, Chiping witnessed many of his fellow sufferers died of cold, fatigue and starvation. He was lucky to have survived only because he could be used by the government to teach English when China broke with the Soviet Union in 1960. He was assigned to be a teacher hundreds of miles away from Beijing. "My life was saved by A, B, C," he told his children years later when he had a chance to briefly reunite with his family.

During the decade-long "Cultural Revolution" launched by Mao in 1966, Chiping was nearly beaten to death just because he had been a "Rightist". His home was ransacked and his family was sent to various parts of the country to do manual labor. After Mao died in 1976, China gained a chance to open its doors and began reforms. Chiping's sufferings came to an end in 1978. He resumed his work as a journalist for Ta Kung Pao in Hong Kong. After a forced separation of 20 years, the Chu family finally reunited. Chiping retired in 1985. In 1990, the family immigrated to the US. Chiping passed away in 1993, Teresa outlived him for 18 years and passed away in 2011.

Through his life story, I admire Chiping's personality and integrity of a journalist. He set an example for us to learn from. He was deprived of the right to publish anything for 20 years in China. He preferred silence if he could not write the truth. He said, "To be a journalist, the most important thing is to provide the best and sincere service to the public, never tell lies or show off oneself. To achieve this is extremely difficult. It may even cost one's life." When he was critically ill in 1993, he said to his family, "I have no regret in my life. I have done all I should do and achieved all I could achieve. Both China and the United States are great

countries. Be faithful to them and help them prosper."

Bernard delivered the original piece in Chinese as well as its translated version to Weidenbach in late March. It is believed that, when visitors tour the Battleship Missouri Memorial later this year, Chiping's "Sun Capitulates" in both Chinese and English will be displayed.

Herewith is an article written by a Chinese-American friend of mine in the San Francisco area that I think would be quite suitable for the Chinese American Forum. The author is a journalist who was one of the first students to be sent by China to the United States for advanced journalistic training after the Cultural Revolution ended. He remained here and worked for many years as an expert for one of the American companies that publishes reports about computer developments throughout the world. Recently he sent me an article that he wanted me to edit and, during my phone conversation with him, I suggested that he write the attached article for the Chinese American Forum. I have also enclosed the newspaper article Sun Capitulates, published in 1945, that his article refers to. If you decide to publish his article, you might also consider publishing this 1945 article along with it.

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Saiman Hui was born in Hong Kong, He got a BA in English Language and Literature from Peking University in China. He worked as translator/interpreter and editor of China Reconstructs in Beijing 1970-1980. Then he left China and in 1982 received an MA in Journalism from University of Missouri in the US. In 2005, he retired as a consultant to the Chairman of the Board of International Data Group.

Journalist Chiping Chu's Account Remembering the End of World War II and How the storm of war abated in the calm of morning

By Chiping Chu

September 2, 1985

"Forty years ago, I witnessed the formal surrender of the Japanese aboard the USS Missouri in a peaceful Tokyo Bay.

As a war-time correspondent for Ta Kung Pao with the US Pacific Fleet, I boarded the USS Missouri at 7 a.m. on September 2, 1945.

The 45,000 ton flagship of Admiral William F. Halsey resembled a closely guarded island from a distance. Its tower and guns stood erect against the cloudy sky and its new coat of grey paint added even more solemnity to the occasion. Even the band was silent as the Japanese delegation arrived in a light boat. Only the sound of flags whipping in the wind overhead broke the silence.

[Foreign Minister Mamoru] Shigemitsu lurched forward dragging his stiff left leg. He set down his hat and cane, seated himself at the table, removed his gloves and picked up the documents. He scanned them for a minute or so, pulled out his fountain pen and affixed his signature on both documents on behalf of the Japanese Empire and government...

The ceremony concluded at exactly 9:18. The time struck me as exceedingly ironic. For the Chinese, the number had come to signify the (September 18) Shenyang incident of 1931, when Japan overran Manchuria.

For more than 1000 years, friendship has been the dominant theme in Sino-Japanese relations. The war between the nations was an unfortunate digression from that lasting



friendship. History has taught us that friendship benefits both nations and hostility brings only misery to both. The governments and peoples of both countries should cherish this lesson."

More about War Correspondent Chiping Chu

Chiping Chu was a war correspondent for the Chinese newspaper Ta Kung Pao. After the end of the War, Chu moved to New York and continued working as a correspondent covering the UN. In 1949, he and his family returned home to China, settling in Beijing. His journalism career was cut short in 1957 when he advocated for a free press. He was sent to a labor camp on the Sino-Siberia border but was eventually allowed to work as a teacher. During the Cultural Revolution he and his family were sent to different provinces to do manual labor. After 18 years of separation, Chiping Chu was returned to his family and resumed his work as a correspondent for Ta Kung Pao in Hong Kong. In 1990, the Chu family immigrated to the US. Chiping Chu passed away in 1993.

From the USS MISSOURI MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
<http://www.ussmissouri.com/page.aspx?pid=408>