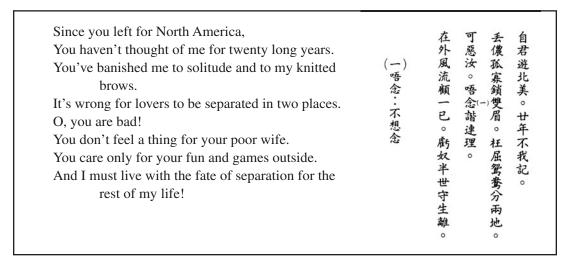
19TH CENTURY FOLK SONGS FROM "GOLD MOUNTAIN"

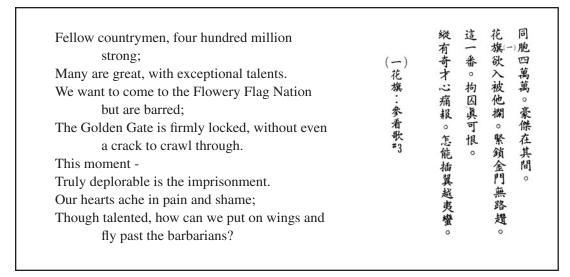
The following folk songs were collected and first written down by a literary society in San Francisco's Chinatown. The songs reprinted here express two common themes, the Chinese immigrants' longing for those left at home and frustration with their treatment in the United States.



What is the tone of the narrator in this song?

What "fun and games" does she think her partner has chosen instead of returning to his family in China?

Would you wait for someone for "twenty long years"?



Why does the narrator refer to the Golden Gate as being "firmly locked"?

Who are the "barbarians" mentioned in the last line?

How long do you think the author of this folk song expected to stay in the United States when he arrived?

What may have prevented him from going home?

What are some of the obstacles he might have encountered?

What are the complaints he is sending home to China?

After we wed,
I am laquer and husband glue.*

At sixteen my life is in full blossom;
A hundred delights fill us to our hearts' content.
Sadly I am forsaken,
Living for a long time in solitude.
The way parents-in-law behave is hard to explain.
O, what can I do but live through these days of prolonged delay?

The way parents-in-law behave is hard to explain.

From whose point of view is this song written?

What do you think this "forsaken" narrator's prospects are for a happy future? What options are open to her?

Why does she mention her "parents-in-law"?

From Marlon K. Hom, *Songs of Gold Mountain: Cantonese Rhymes from San Francisco Chinatown*. University of California Press, 1987. Reprinted by permission.

^{*&}quot;Glue and lacquer" is a conventional metaphor used for an ideal marital relationship.