

**LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**WASHINGTON, DC**

**Oral History Interview**

**with  
LANCE TRAN  
by  
DAN KERR**

**CHINATOWN  
January 26, 2020**

**LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

NARRATOR: Lance Tran  
DATE: January 26, 2020  
INTERVIEWER: Dan Kerr  
PLACE: Chinatown

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

chinatown, community, chinese new year, immigrants, parade, happy new year, culture, combating, refuge, family, dc, gentrification, areas, chinese, future, missouri, tran, celebrate, workers, grew

**Dan Kerr** 00:05

Today is Chinese New Year's January 26.

**Lance Tran** 00:08

Happy New Year!

**Dan Kerr** 00:09

Happy New Year! We're in Washington, DC in Chinatown. Could you tell us your name?

**Lance Tran** 00:14

Sure, my name is Lance Tran.

**Dan Kerr** 00:16

And what brings you out today?

**Lance Tran** 00:19

Well, I just wanted to find a way to celebrate. I'm new to DC. So I always love finding Chinatowns or communities wherever I am. So I want to try and see the parade here and celebrate Chinese New Year.

**Dan Kerr** 00:31

Yeah. Do you tell us a little bit about what the meaning of Chinatown is and why you like to travel to different Chinatowns?

**Lance Tran** 00:38

Yeah, definitely. So I am Chinese American and I grew up in Missouri. So really not around too many other Chinese Americans. So I never really grew up with that broad sense of community where I could speak the language a lot and have extended family all near me. It was just mostly me and my family, my cousins. So I remember the first time I went to, I think, San Francisco Chinatown or Toronto, because I have family in both areas. I heard Cantonese spoken, which is what I speak with my family. And I remember just being feeling so struck Wow. This is something I've only heard at home. But there's an old community of this. So I think Chinatown has always meant for me a way to connect with my culture, whether that's food or talking with people or actually hearing and seeing my culture all around me. So I think in a place where you might, it might be hard pressed to find that kind of community. It's always kind of place of refuge for me.

**Dan Kerr** 01:39

And so what about Chinese New Year and the parade? Is that I mean, obviously, you're here, so that's important. Have you been to many New Year's parades before?

**Lance Tran** 01:50

I haven't. So like I mentioned in Missouri, you probably would be very, very hard pressed to find something like this. So I think it's great it's happening here. I think to me, Chinese New Year has always just been like a big dinner with family. So I've always wanted to see bigger parades. I've always wanted to see bigger gatherings of people actually going in public and doing this kind of thing for sure.

**Dan Kerr** 02:15

There's there's a lot of concern about the future of Chinatown. In your opinion, where would you like to see Chinatown, Washington, DC or other Chinatowns in the future?

**Lance Tran** 02:30

I would like to see Chinatowns strike a balance. I think, obviously, we want people to come to Chinatown and enjoy our culture and be open and welcoming place for everybody in the community. But I think we also have to be mindful of issues like gentrification, and make sure that people who have been here for generations, maybe new workers and immigrants who come fresh from China or other areas, they can still have that place of refuge and community and they won't be pushed out. Trying to talk over the sirens. But I think I think we should also keep in mind the people who are historically settled in Chinatown. Those are workers, those are immigrants who can't afford to go anywhere else. They've been forced into

these areas. So, to me, if we can keep that in mind in terms of community development, combating gentrification, making it affordable to live for immigrants, I think that'd be amazing.

**Dan Kerr** 03:30

All right, thank you so much. Happy New Year.

**Lance Tran** 03:32

Happy New Year. Thank you.