**Angel Island Poetry**

*The following poems were written on the walls of the Angel Island Immigration Station and Detention Centre. Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act, (1882), Angel Island, unlike Ellis Island, served more as a detention and deportation center. Immigrants, predominantly Chinese, Japanese, and Indian, could be detained for weeks, months, or even years, being interrogated and living in crowded, prison-like conditions.*

There are tens of thousands of poems on these walls
They are all cries of suffering and sadness
The day I am rid of this prison and become successful
I must remember that this chapter once existed
I must be frugal in my daily needs
Needless extravagance usually leads to ruin
All my compatriots should remember China
Once you have made some small gains,
you should return home early.

In the quiet of night, I heard, faintly, the whistling of wind.
The forms and shadows saddened me; upon
seeing the landscape, I composed a poem.
The floating clouds, the fog, darken the sky.
The moon shines faintly as the insects chirp.
Grief and bitterness entwined are heaven sent.
The sad person sits alone, leaning by a window.

America has power, but not justice.
In prison, we were victimized as if we were guilty.
Given no opportunity to explain, it was really brutal.
I bow my head in reflection but there is
nothing I can do.

I am distressed that we Chinese are
in this wooden building
It is actually racial barriers which cause
difficulties on Yingtai Island.
Even while they are tyrannical they still
claim to be humanitarian.
I should regret my taking the risks of
coming in the first place.

I thoroughly hate the barbarians because they
do not respect justice.
They continually promulgate harsh laws to
show off their prowess.
They oppress the overseas Chinese and also
violate treaties.
They examine for hookworms and practice
hundreds of despotic acts.

This is a message to those who live here not
to worry excessively.
Instead, you must cast your idle worries to
the flowing stream.
Experiencing a little ordeal is not hardship.
Napoleon was once a prisoner on an island.