



Chinese  
Heritage  
Association of  
Australia

澳洲華人歷史文物會  
Exploring and Sharing

the History and Heritage of

Chinese who have come to Australia

# Enlarged up to Life Size

As the newly rich of the Australian Colonies established their own stately homes in the late 1860s, their numbers appear to have outstripped the capacity of colonial artists to paint the grand portraits appropriate to their status. Some Sydney photographic studios had the option of enlargements done in-house, but others sent their clients' photographs to Singapore or Hong Kong for reproduction by Chinese artists. It is perhaps no surprise that local Cantonese migrants would also be employed as contractors in this particular art form.

Ah Hing arrived in Sydney in 1877. Although described as a carpenter in his 1883 naturalization application, he was literate in both English and Chinese. Having been raised in a wealthy Chungshan (Zhongshan) household, he had also been taught to paint well enough to get work with the George Street studio of photographer Charles Kerry: they offered portraits "enlarged up to life size in Oil or Water colors to order." He continued with this side-line for the next twenty years or more, in Sydney and Parramatta.

In the early 20th Century, as Henry (Cheng) Fine Chong, he would become the 'in-house' painter for the Sydney branch of the Chinese Empire Reform Association. Several of his works remain in the Powe family's hands.

Brad Powe's talk on the Chinese-Australian contribution to the tradition of life-size portraits painted from photographs will be CHAA's contribution to this year's Australian Heritage Festival in April.



Above: Ah Hing at work in the studio of Charles Kerry, circa 1883.  
Below: Ah Hing at work (detail)  
The Powe Family Collection



DATE: Saturday, 2nd April, 2022  
TIME: 2.30 – 4 pm  
VENUE: Sydney Mechanics School of Arts,  
Henry Carmichael Theatre,  
280 Pitt St Sydney NSW  
COST: \$10 CHAA members, \$15 non-members  
BOOKINGS: Kathie – 4861 3078 or [dblunt@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dblunt@bigpond.net.au)  
ENQUIRIES: 0401 209 093

*Light refreshments included*