

1926: The cleanness of Chinese restaurants in Chicago (and New York)

Written by Amy Gwilliam

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In the same vein as the 1892 description (see above) is a comment by T.C. Fan 樊廷秋, a Chinese sociologist who in 1926 wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on Chicago's Chinatown. The dissertation is the first study of Chinese-Americans to have been produced by a Chinese, rather than European-American, researcher.

"The success in the restaurant business is chiefly due to the cleanliness with which the Chinese [of Chicago] prepare their food and keep their kitchens. The investigation made by a reporter of the New York Daily News recently gives out more definite ideas of how these Chinese restaurants and their kitchens are kept. The report contains these statements: 'Of the restaurants so far investigated, the Chinese restaurants are by far the cleanest. The kitchens, without exception among those investigated, were found immaculate. The utensils were shining, the metal work shone and the tables were scrubbed. Even the scraps looked clean.' "

Tin-Chiu Fan, Chinese Residents of Chicago, 1926. Ph.D. Dissertation, U. of Chicago.
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T. C. Fan's name in pinyin was Fan Dingjiu. He got his B.A. from the University of Nanking and his Ph. D. from the University of Chicago. He later became Dean of Hangchow Christian College in Zhejiang province. He seems to have lived until at least 1984. For further information on him, click on: <http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu/biography/view.aspx?biographyID=1653>