



25 Notable Chinese-Americans

Marvell Technology's Mobile Connector

Russell Flannery, 08.09.10

Weili Dai arrived in Silicon Valley from China at age 17 in 1978, coming of age at the same time as the U.S. tech hub. She moved in with her grandparents before going on to study at the University of California at Berkeley. Today Marvell Technology, the semiconductor design company she went on to cofound 15 years ago with her Indonesian-Chinese husband and his brother, employs 5,000 worldwide and trades on the Nasdaq with an \$11 billion market cap. The trio donated the funds for a building named after them at Berkeley.

Yet she's not done. She is intent on bringing U.S. business to China--foremost Marvell, which has a staff of 800 on the mainland to get its chips into the world's biggest mobile-phone market. "I love both countries," she says. "China is my motherland and the U.S. my new land. The two most powerful nations are going to accomplish the next big innovation mission" of increased mobility, she predicts.

Technology is a hot spot among the members of our second list of notable Chinese-Americans in business, following our inaugural report in 2008. More than half of the 25 have tech backgrounds, an indication of the influence immigrants and foreign students have in that field. Most of those earning doctorates in computer science and electrical engineering in the U.S. weren't born there. Like it or not, Americans rely heavily on this talent for the gadgets they love.

Dai, 49, has engineering in her genes. Her father was the chief engineer at one of China's largest shipbuilding companies and survived the country's Cultural Revolution during the 1960s, when many outstanding scientists and entrepreneurs suffered. Her grandparents had moved to the U.S. before the onslaught of the Mao-era chaos. The parents had wanted to follow but "the door got shut."

It wasn't so much U.S. culture that was a test when Shanghai-born Dai arrived in the U.S. "Shanghai in some ways is very similar to San Francisco because of the international culture," she says. "You get a little flavor of everything." Rather, it was language that was a hurdle. She took up with geek friends in college, she recalls, and met her husband among them. Eventually, they got the Silicon Valley urge to start their own business. "When you start your own company, you have a blank sheet of paper. You have a lot of freedom. I thought, 'Great!'"

Marvell, where Dai now works as the leader of the consumer and computer business, is a kind of one-stop shop for electronics manufacturers and ships more than 1 billion chips annually, including some used in BlackBerrys. A "fabless" company, it designs chips for its customers yet outsources the manufacturing. Profit for the latest January fiscal year climbed to \$353 million, compared with \$147

million a year earlier, on revenue of \$2.9 billion. The U.S. has been its core market, but China, with its big mobile phone usage, is coming on strong. In July Marvell changed its Chinese name to "Beautiful Harmony."

Still, Dai and Marvell haven't been able to avoid disharmony back in the U.S. Dai individually and Marvell paid fines to the sec in 2008 over an options backdating investigation, though they admitted no guilt. The company also settled tens of millions of dollars in shareholder class-action suits. Marvell's stock has since recovered except for a dip in the 2008 Wall Street panic.

Dai has moved on. She was in Shanghai in June with San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and a 50-member delegation from his city to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the sister-city relationship between the two. She delivered inspirational talks to high school students.

With wireless innovations exploding, Dai's story offers a living example. "Look at me," she told them. "I went to the U.S. at around your age and spoke very little English. If I could do it, all of you can."

Charles Chang, 61

Topline Products

Birthplace: China

U.S. headquarters: Wayne, New Jersey

Founded Topline Products in 1975, a supplier of cosmetics and accessories to companies that include L'Oréal, P&G, Estée Lauder, Avon and Mary Kay. Holds more than 25 patents.

John Chen, 55

Sybase

Birthplace: Hong Kong

U.S. headquarters: Dublin, California

Chief executive officer helped to turn Sybase into one of world's largest business software companies, leading to its \$5.8 billion acquisition by SAP this year. Now chairman of the Committee of 100, a New York nonprofit organization that promotes U.S.--China exchanges. Trustee of Cal-Tech, where he received a graduate degree. Undergraduate degree from Brown University. Board member at Walt Disney and Wells Fargo.



Steve Chen, 32

Birthplace: Taiwan

Cofounder of YouTube; sold out to Google in 2006, stayed on as chief technology officer. Last year invested in RethinkDB, a Silicon Valley database-management company.





Tei-Fu Chen, 62
Sunrider International

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Torrance, California

With wife, Oi-Lin Chen, cofounded herbal products supplier Sunrider International. From headquarters in California sells through a chain of 7,000 franchise stores in Asia. Also owns hotels in China and Taiwan. Tei-Fu has his image on a stamp in China.

Andrew Cherng, 63
Panda Restaurant Group

Birthplace: Yangzhou, China

U.S. headquarters: Rosemead, California



With wife, Peggy, runs America's largest Chinese food chain, Panda Express, with sales of more than \$1.3 billion in 2009. Dabbles in other Asian cuisines, too. Cherng's Japanese-style Hibachi-San chain has 28 locations in 13 U.S. states.

David Chu, 55
DC Design International

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: New York

Designer who arrived in New York as college student has enjoyed repeat success in fashion. Cofounded fashion lifestyle firm Nautica; firm sold in 2003. In past few years has breathed new life into New Jersey's Tumi luggage as creative director and part owner. Started his own lifestyle brand, Lincs, and signed agreement last year to work with golf legend Jack Nicklaus on apparel and lifestyle line.

Weili Dai, 49
Marvell Technology

Birthplace: Shanghai

U.S. headquarters: Santa Clara, California

With husband, Sehat Sutardjia, and his brother cofounded semiconductor design company Marvell. Moved on from options-backdating controversy and aiming at China market (*see introduction,*



opposite).



Ming Hsieh, 54

Cogent

Birthplace: Shenyang

U.S. headquarters: Pasadena, California

In 1990 founded Cogent, one of the largest U.S. fingerprint-recognition businesses. Earned 2 degrees from the University of Southern California before entrepreneurial plunge. Long U.S. customer list includes: the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and the U.S. Marines.

Larry Hsu, 61

Impax Labs

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Haywood, California

The cofounder and chief executive of Impax Labs arrived in the U.S. en route to the University of Illinois Medical Center before moving on to the University of Michigan to receive a Ph.D. in pharmaceuticals. He worked at Abbott Laboratories for 15 years before cofounding Impax in 1994. Revenue increased to \$287 million in 2009 from only \$96 million a year earlier, in part from sales of Adderall, a drug that treats attention-deficit disorders.



Ta-Lin Hsu, 67

H&Q Asia Pacific

Birthplace: Chongqing

U.S. headquarters: Palo Alto, California

Active in pushing investment and exchange of technology between the U.S. and Asia in the past quarter-century. Founder of investment firm H&Q Asia, which has invested in more than 300 companies. Numerous institutional affiliations, including the Council on Foreign Relations. On 2009 [FORBES Midas list](#) highlighting venture investors.

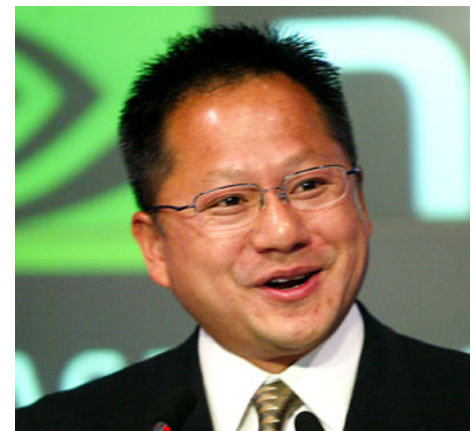
Jen-Hsun Huang, 47

Nvidia

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Santa Clara, California

Founded in 1995, Nvidia produces chips that allow interactive graphics to appear on devices ranging from notebooks computers to tablets. Huang graduated from Oregon State University and received a master's from Stanford. He worked for AMD and LSI Logic before setting up his own business in California.





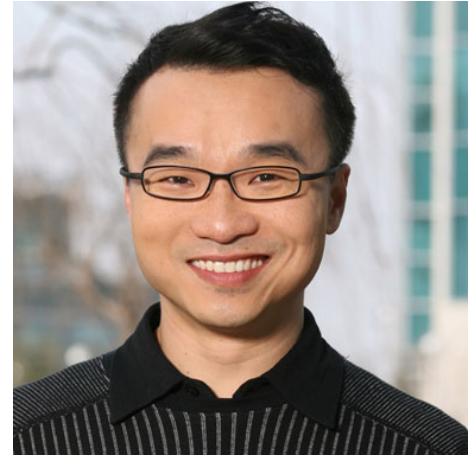
Raman Hui, 47

DreamWorks Animation

Birthplace: Hong Kong

U.S. headquarters: Glendale, California

Employee at small advertising agency in Hong Kong in the 1980s has gone on to bring laughs to millions as the supervising animator for the first 2 Shrek movies at DreamWorks Animation and codirector of the third one. Currently codirecting *Scared Shrekless* for TV distribution ahead of Halloween this autumn.



Yue-Sai Kan

Birthplace: Guilin, China

U.S. headquarters: New York

In the year of the Shanghai Expo has been bridge between the U.S. and China, winning plaudits among Americans for her support for the financially strapped U.S. pavilion and helping to shepherd visiting American VIPs. She is honorary chairman of L'Oréal China and is an author, bon vivant and TV celebrity.



Min Kao, 61

Garmin Corp.

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Olathe, Kansas

Garmin is one of the biggest winners from the boom in global market for global-positioning systems with a \$5.8 billion market cap. He ranks No. 616 on the 2010 [FORBES billionaires list](#) with net worth of \$1.6 billion. Holds M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Tennessee. Worked for NASA, the U.S. Army, Teledyne and Magnavox before cofounding Garmin, where he is chairman and CEO.



Charles Liang, 53

Super Micro Computer

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: San Jose, California

Super Micro Computer, which he founded in 1993, may not be a brand name to most but supplies computer hardware to better-known customers such as Juniper Networks. Liang employs 1,000 globally. Sales climbed to \$520 million in the 9 months to March of the year, compared with \$382

million a year earlier, owing to international growth. Liang holds a master's degree in engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Dominic Ng, 51

East West Bancorp

Birthplace: Hong Kong

U.S. headquarters: Pasadena, California

East West Bank, which Ng chairs, is a survivor in shakeout among Chinese-American banks that cater to immigrants in the aftermath of the 2008 U.S. financial crisis. Company took over former rival United Commercial Bank of San Francisco in a Federal Deposit Insurance-assisted transaction last year.



David Sun, 58

Kingston Technology

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Fountain Valley, California



John Tu, 69

Kingston Technology

Birthplace: Chongqing

U.S. headquarters: Fountain Valley, California

Cofounders of Kingston, largest unlisted manufacturer of computer memory in the U.S. Sales in 2009: \$4.1 billion. The 2 were tied at No. 374 on our FORBES billionaires list this year with \$2.5 billion each.



Vivienne Tam, 52

Birthplace: Guangzhou

U.S. headquarters: New York

China-born fashion designer has melded U.S. and Chinese culture. Of late is aiming to increase her presence back in booming China but still going strong in the U.S., where her clothes are sold in about 140 stores. Partners with Hewlett-Packard to design computers aimed at women.





Cyrus Tang, 80
Tang Industries

Birthplace: Jiangsu Province

U.S. headquarters: Las Vegas

Low-key Tang generates sales of more than \$1 billion annually from a business empire that includes steel, property and aluminum. Has donated \$150 million to charity in the U.S. and China.

William Wang, 46

Vizio

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Irvine, California

Taiwan-born Wang has shaken up the U.S. TV market since cofounding value brand Vizio in 2002. Hiring Beyoncé Knowles as spokesperson with a role in a Super Bowl spot this year helped company pull in 17% of the U.S. LCD-TV market in the first quarter of 2010. Sales totaled \$2.5 billion last year. Expanding into Canada this year. Holds engineering degree from the University of Southern California.



Jason Wu, 27

Jason Wu Studio

Birthplace: Taipei, Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: New York

Fashion designer has catapulted into top ranks in U.S. thanks in part to exposure of an especially influential fan: First Lady Michelle Obama. Got started outfitting dolls as youth. Has expanded from dresses into eyewear. Collection is sold in upscale shops such as Bergdorf Goodman and Nordstrom. Won Swarovski Award for Womenswear at Council of Fashion Designers of America show in June.



Ken Xie, 47

Fortinet

Birthplace: Beijing

U.S. headquarters: Sunnyvale, California

On his third software startup in the U.S., the latter 2 big winners: Netscreen, which was acquired by Juniper for \$4 billion, and now Fortinet, which listed on Nasdaq last year. Holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in engineering from Tsinghua University in China and attended Stanford. He is a member of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Bay Area Council.



Ellis Yan, 56



TCP

Birthplace: Shanghai

U.S. headquarters: Aurora, Ohio

Graduate of Cleveland State University cofounded TCP in Ohio. Today it's one of the world's largest producers of energy-saving lightbulbs. Won Energy Star award from in 2010 from the U.S. Department of Energy. Runs business with Shanghai-based brother.



Jerry Yang, 41

Yahoo

Birthplace: Taiwan

U.S. headquarters: Sunnyvale, California

On the outs with investors still unhappy with Yahoo's failure to sell to Microsoft when approached 2 years ago, yet still one of Taiwan's most notable exports to the U.S. Yahoo continues to reign among the world's most popular websites and cofounder Yang still a brand in himself. Ranked No. 773 on the FORBES billionaires list this year with net worth of \$1.3 billion--up from \$1.1 billion in 2009 but way down from \$2.3 billion in 2008.

Additional reporting by Chloe Chen, Elaine Mao and Alex Ngoi.

Methodology: For our list of the most notable Chinese-Americans we surveyed bankers, investors, business associations, scholars and entrepreneurs. To qualify the founder had to be born in Greater China--mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong--and to have U.S. citizenship (second-generation not included). We looked at the scale of economic success--such as wealth and jobs created--but also considered industry and community leadership.