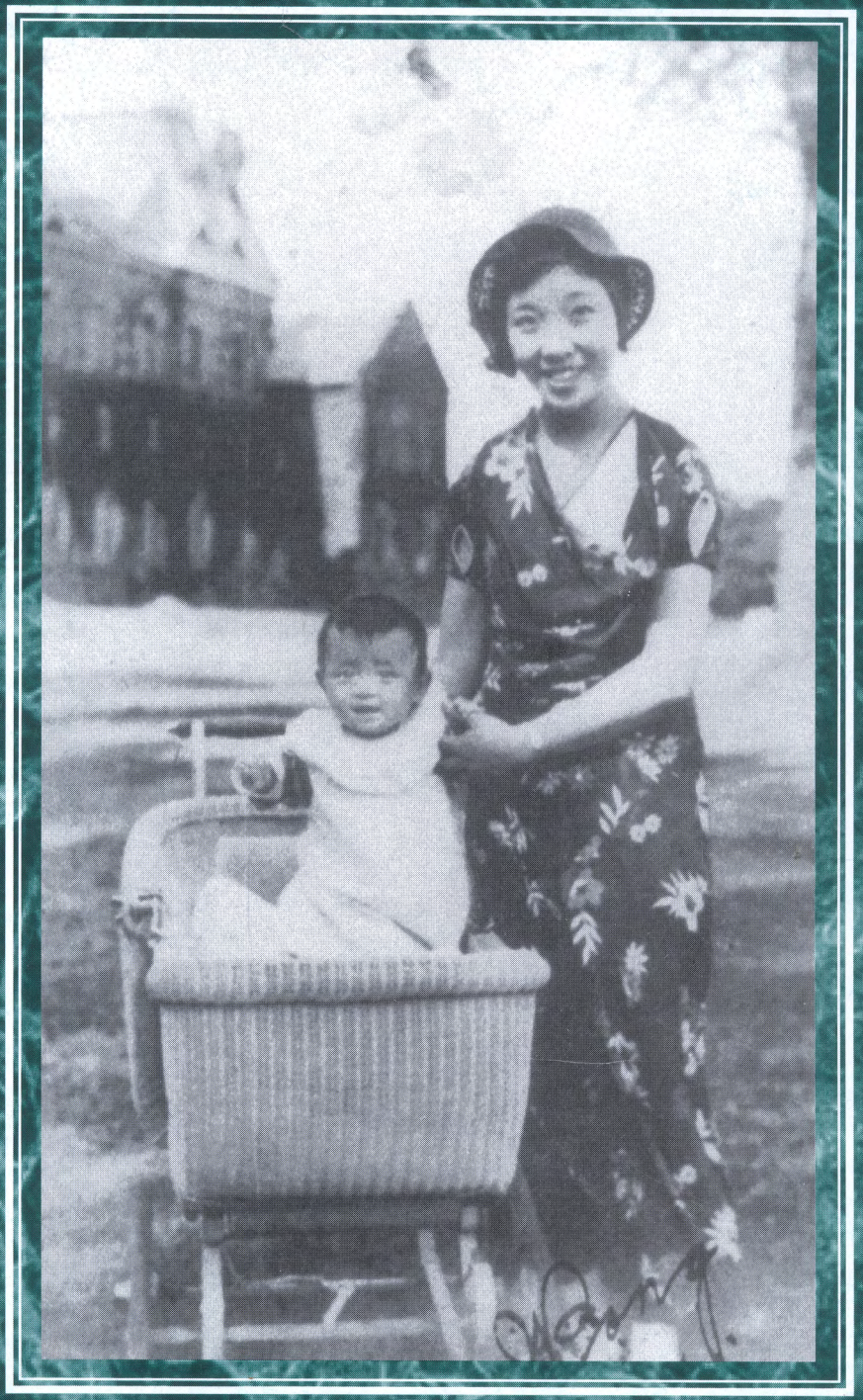
Polyphony

THE CHINESE IN ONTARIO



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Multicultural History Society of Ontario

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Cover: Mrs. Wong, Toronto. 1931. Courtesy of Agnes Lor.

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The Multicultural History Society is a non-profit educational institution created in 1976 by the late Professor Robert F. Harney, assisted by a group of scholars, archivists and government officials.

The Society works to increase understanding of Ontario's ethnic and immigrant history and publicize the contribution by all ethno-cultural and ethno-racial groups to the development of Ontario.

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The Society is particularly grateful to those Directors of the Board who, recognizing the immense value of a journal that gives voice to the many and varied cultural groups in Ontario, insisted that the Society revive **Polyphony**. The group includes Alberto Di Giovanni, Mike Dang, Jean Forde and Dora Nipp.

Contents

Preface

As a writer chiefly interested in exploring Chinese-Canadian experiences, I heartily welcome this edition of **Polyphony** on the Chinese in Ontario.

For too long, the written history of the Chinese in Canada has focused on British Columbia and Vancouver. Certainly, in the pre-1967 period, the majority of Canada's Chinese lived in the Pacific province, and the saga of Chinese Canadians there had been made dramatic through pioneer industries, anti-Asian legislation, and ugly reactions from the host society. However, at the dawn of the next millennium, we find substantial Chinese settlement in Ontario (and Alberta) with its own unique historical roots. A closer look at Ontario experiences helps us all see how Chinese people are living there today.

Recent writing on Chinese Canadian history has pointed to the need to know more about the homelands of recent Chinese immigrants to Canada. That is, we need to learn about contemporary Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam and the People's Republic of China, in the same way we learn from history books about peasant life in mid-nineteenth century China, when the first major migrations to North America started. While many writers acknowledge the diversity of homelands within the contemporary Chinese-Canadian community, the literature still lacks connections to places such as South East Asia and South America and the emigrants they produce. It is exciting, therefore, to see two pieces about the Caribbean Chinese in this volume.

Thematically, the main issue addressed in the writing of Chinese Canadian history has been racism. Indeed, this focus was important because racism had a profound impact on all individuals and clearly illustrated Canada's reaction to the Chinese. But the story of racism is not the only framework in which to study Chinese Canadians. Other analytic tools involving class/gender studies and political process (for examples) can expand our views of immigrants and racial minorities, while studies on cultural entities such as language and food in Toronto open new and accessible windows on the dynamics within our communities.

In sum, what makes this a compelling volume of histories is how it embraces a new geographic area of study, taps into writers from both academic and community perspectives, and examines topics previously not addressed.

Paul Yee

Introduction

Fatima Lee

Improved ways of observing group ethnicity may lead to more comprehension of the nature of personal ethnicity so that immigrants may come to be seen neither as simply the pre-articulate masses of Toronto, nor as Italians, Finns, Poles, etc., but as specific kinds of Torontonians -- Italian, Finnish, Polish Torontonians -- who underwent individually and as groups a variety of urban experiences, met a variety of receptions which affected their strategies for living here and contributed in a variety of ways to the city's growth.

> Robert Harney, "Ethnicity and Neighbourhoods" in Robert Harney (ed.), *Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834 - 1945.*

This issue of **Polyphony** is devoted to the Chinese in Ontario. While "China" for the most part is a geographical-political term, "Chinese" embraces a variety of meanings, from the political, historical, cultural, to the ethnic. In this volume, "Chinese" is used in the sense of ethnicity. An ethnic group, as opposed to a racial group that is socially defined on the basis of physical characteristics, is one that is "socially defined on the basis of cultural characteristics."[1] "Chinese in Ontario" thus denotes the group of people from Ontario who are of Chinese heritage, and who share in some way the cultural characteristics of the group.

Culture , however, is not static. Rather, it has been defined as the "tool kit" of symbols for mapping out strategies of action.[2] For immigrants in particular, who are faced with a strange new environment, this "tool kit" is what they relied on to find new ways to organize individual and collective action. Others believe that "[ethnicity has] much more to do with the exigencies of survival and the structure of opportunity in [the new] country".[3] Harney, in describing the experiences of immigrants to Toronto, also highlighted these dynamics. In his footsteps then, we propose to examine the ethnicity of the Chinese in Ontario through revisiting the experiences they encountered, their strategies for living here, as well as the contributions they made.

While history is often regarded as synonymous with events and incidents, it is more. History is about the life of the group, as well as its process of development. Since the 18th century, when the first known Chinese immigrated to this land which we call Canada today, successive waves of immigration not only boosted the number of Chinese in Canada, but they changed essentially the nature and composition of the group. Every Chinese, newcomer or Canadian-born, participates in the life of the group, benefits from the struggles and successes of those before them, and in turn, contributes to the life of the group. To cite an example, the right to citizenship, which so many of us hold dear, and yet have taken for granted, was hard-earned through the courage, generosity, and perseverance of the Chinese war veterans of the Second World War. It is through them that all Chinese benefited. The life of the group continues through the commission and omission of each and every member.

It should be borne in mind also that "Chinese" is not a homogenous group. The Chinese in Ontario, and for that matter, those in Canada, came in different waves and from different source societies. They may have come from mainland China or other Chinese communities, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Caribbean, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, South America or South Africa. For those who came from outside mainland China, very often it is their parents' or grandparents' generation who, for economic or political reasons, had left China in search of a better life. While these Chinese have maintained in varying degrees a Chinese ethnicity and identity, they have almost always assumed consciously or unconsciously the culture and

values of their respective source societies. After their migration to Canada, they are again mapping out new strategies of living, forging a new Canadian identity, and at the same time living out their Chinese ethnicity in its many expressions, such as Caribbean, Hong Kong, or Taiwanese. These expressions could be so distinct and unique that sometimes they are referred to as sub-ethnicities.

This volume comprises three sections. The first section begins with an article by Anthony B. Chan. His reflections on the historical eras and watersheds of Chinese immigration to Canada are unique in many ways. It provides a background for our study of the Chinese in Ontario. He has coined the term *Chinese Canada*, as we would speak of *Italian Canada*, *Polish Canada*, *English Canada*, or *French Canada*. Each of these is like a precious gem, different in colour and shape, and together forming the cultural mosaic that is Canada.

Next, Jeff Watson describes the early history of Chinese settlement in Toronto; Paul Levine discusses the political organizations of Toronto's Chinese community in the 1950s; and Tam Goossen traces the political and community activism in Toronto from the 1970s down to the present.

In the three articles that follow, our focus shifts from a chronological examination of history to various social groups within the community. Concentrating on the role played respectively by women and restaurant workers in Ontario are the articles by Dora Nipp and Winnie Ng. An essay on the war veterans in Ontario is included, with photographs courtesy of Sgt. Tom Lock of *Operation Oblivion*.

Each of these articles in the section have in some way attempted to describe the experience of the Chinese, their strategies for living in this land which they called home, and whenever relevant, contributions they have made in the development of the group as well as towards the growth of the larger community.

The second section is on sub-ethnicities. The heterogeneity of the Chinese in Ontario is a reflection of the diversity of their source societies as well as period of immigration. Language and food being the two most important ethnic markers, they become a good testing ground for various sub-ethnicities. Bernard Luk examines the varieties of Chinese language used in Toronto, while Fatima Lee finds in the history of Chinese restaurant food in Toronto a reflection of the characteristics of each successive wave of Chinese immigration. The third and fourth articles in this section concern Caribbean Chinese immigrants to Toronto. Jean Forde gives us an overview of the Caribbean Chinese, starting with a brief history of Chinese migration to the Caribbean, to a discussion of their identities as Chinese, Caribbean, as well as Canadian; while the article by Tony Wong is a personal account of the history of migration of his family from China to Jamaica to Canada.

The final section concludes our volume with the article by Diana Lary. She offers a comparative perspective on Chinese immigration to Canada, reminding us that, while each immigrant group may be unique and distinct, very often the problems that it faces are shared by immigrants of other ethnicities as well.

True to its name **Polyphony**, this volume is a collection of many voices: the academic, the journalist and the community activist, the experienced researcher and the aspiring student, the younger as well as the older. Such voices come in the form of analysis, commentaries, or discussions. Whatever means each author employs, and whichever facet of the life of the community he/she chooses to examine, it is hoped that together they will throw some new light on the group experience of the Chinese in Ontario: the nature of group, the receptions they received, their strategies for living, as well as their contributions -- to the group, the city, the province, as well as the country. **Polyphony** provides a forum for these different voices. We feel that it is important to let all voices be heard.

Many of the topics treated in this volume have seldom before been written about in a systematic fashion. The views expressed are not meant to be definitive. Rather, if they kindle more research, generate more discussion, and bring about a better understanding of the Chinese in Ontario, then our goal is fulfilled.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the immense contributions of Carl Thorpe, Dora Nipp and Carolyn Braunlich, without which this project could not have been accomplished. Initially conceived by Dora, the volume was brought to its completion by the collective effort of all of us.

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[1] Norman Yetman (ed.), *Majority and Minority: The Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in American Life* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991), 3.

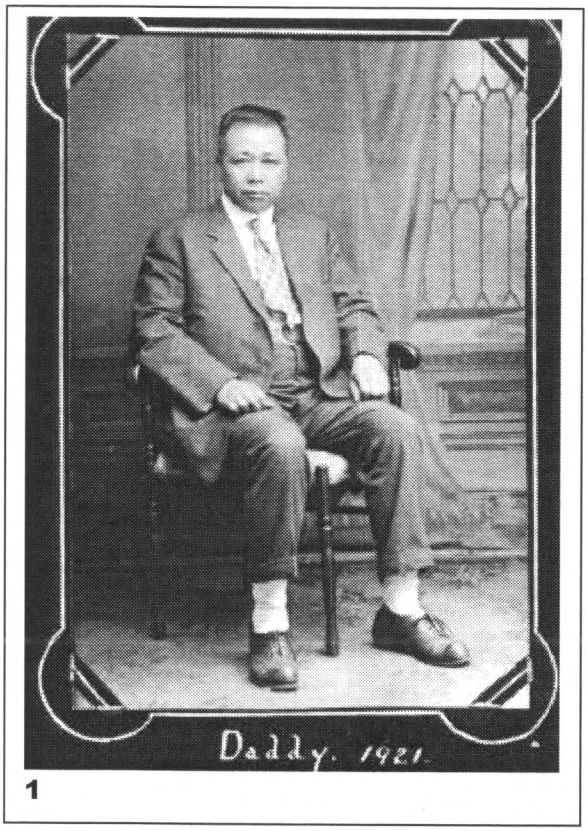
[2] Such as Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 278.

[3] William Yancey et al, "Emergent Ethnicity: A Review and Reformulation," *American Sociological Review* 41 (1976): 400.

A note about the transliteration of Chinese words: In general, all Chinese words in this volume are spelled in Hanyu Pinyin, except for words that are conventionally spelled in a different manner, such as "Hakka" or "dim sum."

Non-English words, other than proper nouns, will be given in italics unless they have entered the English language as loan words.

Portraits of Ontario's Peoples: *Moving Images*



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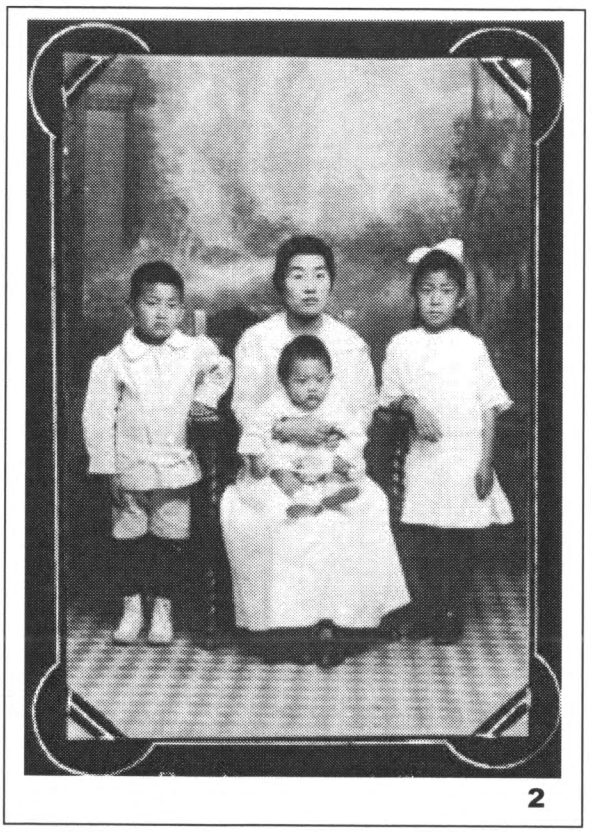

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1.Quan Lock; 2.Lucy Lock, Roy, Tommy, Lillie, 1921. Courtesy of the Joan and Tom Lock Collection. 3. c. 1930s. Courtesy of the Ing Look Family Collection.

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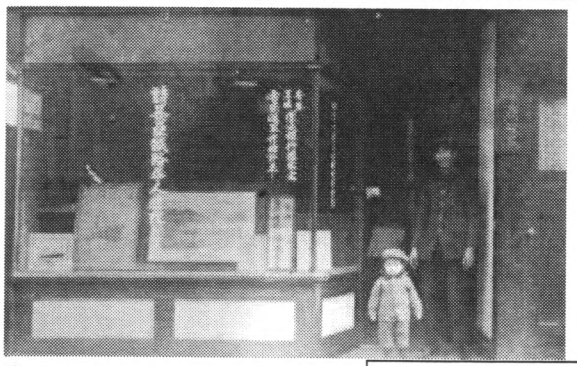
1. Tot Ying Lee and Peter Quan, Toronto, 1921; 2. Tot Ying Lee and Peter Quan, with son David, 1922. Courtesy of the David Quan Collection. 3. Peter Quan at the "Ex", 1927. City of Toronto Archives, *Globe and Mail* Collection. 4. Lor Leip and Agnes Young, 1930. 5. Lor Family, Brockville. Courtesy of Agnes Lor.



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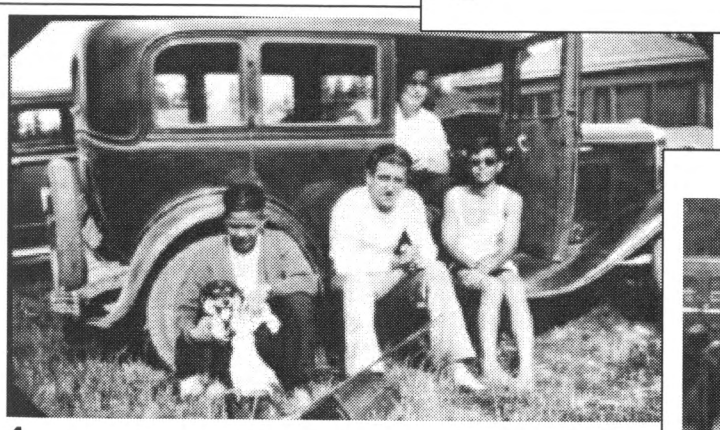

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1.Ivan Mark and Mr. Ma, Courtesy of the E.C. Mark Family Collection. 2/3. Courtesy of the Ing Look Family Collection. 4. Gordon Bay, 1934. Courtesy of Agnes Lor. 5.Courtesy of the E.C. Mark Family Collection.

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1. Toronto, 1941. Courtesy of the E.C. Mark Family Collection. 2. Centennial Procession, Toronto, 1941. City of Toronto Archives, *Globe and Mail* Collection. 3. Sudbury, 1940s. Archives of Ontario, Harry Young Collection. 4/5. York University Archives, *Toronto Telegram* Collection; *Mid-Autumn Festival, 1969*.

Chinese Canada: Reflections on Historical Eras and Watersheds

Anthony B. Chan

They both came on ships that landed in Nootka Sound off the shores of Vancouver Island. Crossing the unpredictable waters of the Pacific Ocean, the Chinese inhabitants of these ships sought out the promise of Canada with its abundance of land, water and jobs. They were fleeing the relative poverty and deprivation of China. Most came from the southern provinces of Fujian or Guangdong. But that was where the similarities ended.

Since July 1999, four tramp steamers from Fujian have carried 560 Chinese immigrants, men as well as women and children to Canada.[1] Two hundred and eleven years before, the two ships commanded by Captain John Meares in 1788 bearing fifty Chinese artisans and craftsmen were in the service of Britain.[2] While the Chinese in 1999 were passengers, the artisans and craftsmen under Meares' command were part of an expedition to help develop the trade in sea otter pelts between Guangzhou and Nootka Sound. Their task in 1788 was to build a trading post.

After the Spaniards who were seeking a trade monopoly on the west coast drove Meares and the British out, many of the Chinese crew settled in the area and some married native women. Reports from American sailors on the *Jefferson*, which arrived in Nootka Sound in 1794, and from the inhabitants at Fort Nisquallie of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1834, corroborated that these 18th-century Chinese immigrants were mixing well as settlers in First Nations society.[3]

While the results of the first Chinese immigrants in 1788 were well documented, the fate of the 1999 immigrants continues to be considered. The major difference between 1788 and 1999, moreover, was the fact that whereas the First Nations people welcomed the Chinese artisans and the British sailors, the Canadian government today is less hospitable to ships landing on Canadian shores without Ottawa's permission. Now, the Fujian Chinese, according to Rob Johnston, a British Columbian manager of immigration enforcement, are part of the "largest smuggling operation ever experienced in Canada."[4] In 1788, it was simply a matter of trade (as Britain sought to expand its empire) that brought the Chinese to Vancouver Island.

THE CHINESE ERA, 1788-1923

The arrival of Chinese immigrants to Canada[5] in 1788 was the initial watershed in the history of *Chinese Canada*. It marked the beginning of the first era in Chinese Canadian history: an era that was thoroughly influenced by China's economy, politics and social fabric. Thus, this period can be appropriately called the *Chinese Era*.

As Britain sought to expand its empire to include China during the 18th century and more importantly to reduce the deficit in silver payments that it was paying to the Chinese in exchange for tea,[6] Qianlong (reign: 1736-1796), the monarch of the foreign Qing empire (1644-1912) wrote to George III of Britain in 1793:

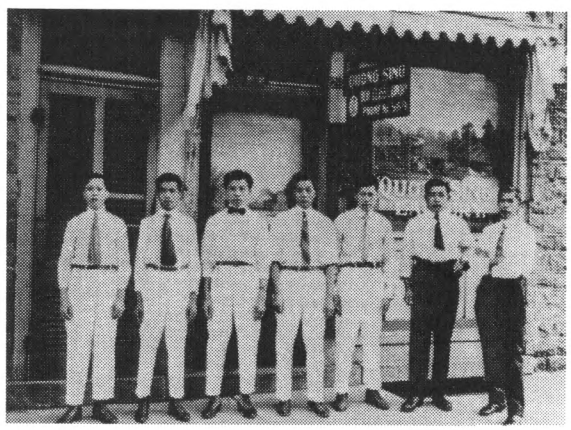
> We have never valued ingenious articles nor do we have the slightest need of your country's manufactures. Therefore, O king, as regards your request to send someone to remain at the capital, while it is not in harmony with the regulations of the Celestial Empire we also feel very much that it is of no advantage to your country.[7]

The fact that Britain was rebuffed in its attempt at ending its monetary disadvantage with China had far-reaching repercussions for North America and the Chinese who would emigrate there.

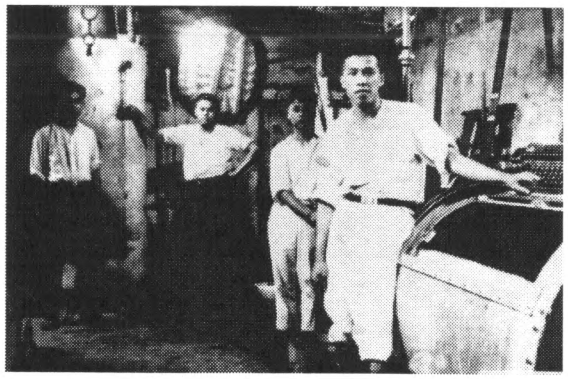
The Opium Wars

In order to eliminate the deficit of silver taels entering Manchu-led Qing China, the British shipped opium from their Indian colony to China. The power of this drug was so intense that opium completely replaced silver taels. Addiction among the Chinese became widespread. The result was catastrophic for the Chinese as the import of opium increased from 200 chests (one chest equalled 130 to 160 pounds of opium) in 1729 to 600 chests in 1750, 1,000 chests in 1773, 7,082 chests in 1823 to a high of 23,570 chests in 1832.[8]

This opium business that brought immense riches to British and American entrepreneurs finally culminated in war. Experienced in global empire-building while relying on its seafaring power, the British navy smashed the Chinese war junks in 1839.[9] The Qing government capitulated.



Quong Sing Laundry, Brockville, 1919.



Brockville, 1923. Courtesy of Valerie Mah.

Following the Qing defeat and the opening of China to the world capitalist system,[10] between 1848 and 1852, thousands of Chinese labourers and peasants began to leave China through Hong Kong for the United States. What spurred them to California was the discovery of gold in 1848 at John Sutter's Mill along the Sacramento River. While these Chinese miners searched for the promised land in the new world, another type of Chinese began searching for a new way in old China.

The Taiping Rebellion

A failed Confucian scholar, Hong Xiuquan claimed that he was the second son of God and, therefore, the younger brother of Jesus Christ. His new paradigm of Christianity, concomitant with gender equality and a land reform connected to military recruitment, was an obvious threat to the Qing government that was attempting to reinvent itself after the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 which ended the Opium Wars. Although many foreigners were initially sympathetic to the Christian elements in Hong's teaching, their governments sided with the Qing because they had already extracted stringent treaty concessions from these Manchus.

Eventually developing into the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), this new movement was crushed by the firepower of the Qing-foreign forces. The demise of the Taiping Rebellion devastated the countryside in Guangxi, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Fujian, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu. More than twenty million people died in this protracted civil war. More rebellions followed and the Chinese people, particularly in the southern provinces, began looking elsewhere for their livelihood.[11]

Although the Taiping Rebellion was smashed, it spawned a ferocious and permanent anti-Qing sentiment that would go underground, as secret societies and other outlaw organizations swept into Southeast Asia

and into the new world where overseas Chinese communities thrived. With the Treaty of Nanjing opening China to the world, the Qing edict of 1672 banning Chinese emigration overseas would be rescinded. In an 1859 edict, the Guangdong governor-general, Lao Chongguang, legalized the right of Chinese to travel and seek their fortune elsewhere.[12] This was a boon to foreign entrepreneurs anxious to staff their enterprises: China's vast reservoir of cheap human labour was there for the asking.

The Gold Rush of 1858

With the decline of Qing China under the onslaught of western imperialism and the attendant domestic rebellions that left the countryside poor and ravaged, thousands of Chinese labourers, peasants and merchants looked to Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, South America and North America for a better future. During the final years of the Taiping Rebellion, when the worst excesses were being perpetrated by Chinese troops and foreigners alike on the common people, it was not a coincidence that many Chinese began leaving for the gold fields of the Fraser River valley in Canada.

Chang Tsoo and Ah Hong were the first 19th century Chinese immigrants to arrive in the Canadian gold fields in 1858. They had not come directly from China--the California gold fields had already beckoned them. Because they had left China before the 1859 edict, they were considered illegal emigrants. But with the Qing government in disarray and China slowly moving into a semi-colonial position, the legality of Chinese emigration was irrelevant. The entrance of Chang Tsoo and Ah Hong was the second watershed in the history of *Chinese Canada*. The development of Chinese Canadian capitalism also began in 1858 with the establishment of the Victoria franchise of the Kwong Lee Company, owned by a San Francisco merchant, Ching Lee.[13]

The Canadian Pacific Railway, 1880-1885

Since Canada (British North America) was a colony of Britain, all treaties made between Britain and other nations affected Canada profoundly. Therefore, the Treaty of Nanjing, with its most-favoured-nation clause, automatically gave Britain all the rights in relation to China that any country had negotiated. When the American diplomat Anson Burlingame negotiated an immigration treaty with a Qing official on July 28, 1868, the Chinese were forced to recognize:

> ... the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance, and also the material advantage of the free migration of aliens and subjects respectively from one country to another for the purpose of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents.[14]

Burlingame's treaty not only sanctioned legalized Chinese emigration to the United States to build its railways, but also gave the Canadian Pacific Railway an opportunity to amass a large contingent of cheap labourers from China for its west coast construction project. This resulted in the contract labour system that provided potential labourers with the opportunity to choose their destination. This was totally unlike the "coolie" (from *kuli*, bitter strength) labour system. Essentially a forced labour system in which Chinese workers were kidnapped or purchased by Chinese compradores or their agents, coolie labour was used to replace slaves as low-cost labourers to harvest sugar cane, coffee and other crops in the West Indies and South American plantations.[15]

"Boss" Onderdonk

The mastermind behind the use of Chinese labourers to complete Canada's Canadian Pacific Railway was Andrew Onderdonk. He

argued that Chinese muscle was essential because "99 per cent of the Chinese here are industrious and steady" and that "the development of the country would be retarded and many industries abandoned" if Chinese workers were not allowed to work in America.[16]

Between May 14, 1880 and July 29, 1885, 15,000 Chinese labourers completed the British Columbia section of the CPR and saved the company three to five million dollars. The trans-Canada railway enabled Chinese communities to develop across the entire nation. Thus, the completion of the CPR was a watershed in the history of the Chinese in Canada as the railway provided access to almost every part of the country. That meant the dissemination of information about China and the Chinese in Canada through the development of a vast social network of Chinese Benevolent Associations and such provincial and dialect societies as the Taishan huiguan.

"Head Tax"

Just before the completion of the CPR, there was deep concern among the general non-Chinese population, including such powerful officials as the secretary of state, J.A. Chapleau, that the country would be threatened by thousands of unemployed Chinese workers who were likened to a "plague of locust." The public cry was for exclusion or a prohibitive tax.[17] The result was the 1885 *Act to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration* and its "head tax" system. This Act stipulated, among other requirements, that Chinese immigrants had to pay ten dollars for the right to land in Canada. This was directed at future Chinese immigration as well as Chinese workers already in Canada. Politicians were profoundly afraid that Chinese residents would bring their wives and children to settle permanently in Canada. The tax was later raised to $50 in 1896, $100 in 1901 and finally to $500 in 1903.[18]

The "head tax" was even more notorious because the Chinese were the only group ever assessed such a fee based purely on race. The Qing government lodged protests to Canada through the British embassy in Beijing.[19] Replying to China's displeasure, William Lyon Mackenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour, stated that the "head tax":

> ... stood, to appearance, as a mark against the Chinese. The tax, however, had been imposed not with this object, but to affect the restriction of a certain class, without going the length of exclusion. As the number paying the tax increased, it became a considerable revenue, but the tax was never intended as revenue.[20]

Despite Mackenzie King's proclamation that the "head tax" was never intended as a source of federal revenue, $4,381,550 filled Ottawa's coffers as a result of 47,342 Chinese immigrants arriving from January 1, 1885 to August 31, 1908. In 1897, 2,447 Chinese immigrants paid the $50 "head tax". Compared to a mere 211 Chinese immigrants in 1886, this tremendous growth of more than 2,200 demonstrated clearly and profoundly that the Chinese wanted to settle in Canada.[21]

Margaret and Arthur Young, North Bay. 1929. Courtesy of Agnes Lor.

The "Sojourner"

A myth perpetrated by certain white politicians and settlers that the early Chinese in Canada never wanted to remain in the country gave rise to the perception that the Chinese were

"sojourners". John A. Macdonald argued that the Chinese were unlikely to remain as permanent settlers because they brought neither wives nor children.[22] Common assumptions in newspaper stories, church socials and street talk depicted Chinese men as diseased, drug-addicted, indolent, morally bankrupt, unclean and unlawful, while Chinese women were considered prostitutes or concubines. These almost daily character assassinations encouraged many non-Chinese in believing that the Chinese were not suitable as potential Canadian citizens.[23] Moreover, exclusionists pointed to the large donations the Chinese made to political causes
in China.

Marg Ko, 1947. Courtesy of Marg Ko

Almost unnoticed in the zeal to eliminate the Chinese from the Canadian landscape were the official statements from such Chinese diplomats as the San Francisco-based Huang Cunxian, who argued:

> It is charged that the Chinese do not emigrate to foreign countries to remain, but only to earn a sum of money and return to their homes in China. There are quite a number of foreigners in China, but few of them have brought their families. You must recollect that the Chinese immigrant coming to this country is denied all the rights and privileges extended to others in the way of citizenship; the laws compel them to remain as aliens. I know a great many Chinese will be glad to remain here permanently with their families, if they are allowed to be naturalized and can enjoy privileges and rights.[24]

That the Chinese were not in Canada merely to "sojourn" was indicated by the growth in immigration even during the period of the "head tax". When federal officials finally realized that such a poll tax did not deter the Chinese from entering Canada, they enacted the noxious *Chinese Immigration Act* on July 1, 1923 (the "Exclusion Act"). While Canada celebrated that date as Dominion Day, many Chinese to this day acknowledge it as National Humiliation Day.

THE CANADIAN ERA, 1923-1967

The completion of the CPR followed by the head tax was significant to the Chinese in Canada. It provided the transitional period from the *Chinese Era*, when China's impact on the Chinese in Canada was profound, to the *Canadian Era* in which Canadian policies and actions affected the Chinese in Canada. Isolated in Chinatowns across Canada, the Chinese population began to erode. Despite the decline in population, from 27,139 in 1931 to 21,740 in 1936, in British Columbia where most Chinese lived[25], there remained a vital and dynamic Chinese community.

Chinese Canada

While the Exclusion Act effectively barred Chinese immigration to Canada, what developed in the remaining Chinese communities across the country was a distinct *Chinese Canada* with its own unique allegiance, culture, economy and politics. Indeed, *Chinese Canada* was able to evolve because of the 1923 Exclusion Act. Between 1923 and 1947, only eight new immigrants emigrated to Canada.

Because of this lack of new blood, the indigenous Chinese settlers in Canada began carving out a place of their own within a Canadian context.

Certainly, they retained customs and mores from their provinces of origin. But because many Chinese settlers did not personally experience the social and political upheaval of the Chinese revolution of 1911, the subsequent civil wars of the warlords (1912-1928) and the profound changes and revolutionary fervor of Mao Zedong's communist state, their customs and mores were frozen in time in Canada.

The Confucian patriarchal system of relationships, especially in marriages, retained its dominance in *Chinese Canada*. Marriages were based on the union of two families, with political implications sometimes being the deciding factors. In fact, the politics of China, as seen in the rivalry between the Qing reformers and the revolutionaries, captured the imagination, and sometimes the pocketbooks, of many.

As the Chinese in Canada developed their own social structure of voluntary associations and societies, a merchant class evolved making possible a highly centralized infrastructure of businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities.[26] Capitalism in *Chinese Canada* was alive and well with such firms as Sam Kee in Vancouver and Wing Chang in Victoria. They offered both old country and western goods to Chinese Canadian settlers and by extension to non-Chinese inhabitants as well.[27]

In the 1930s, *Chinese Canada* flourished in Vancouver with 133 greengrocers, twenty-six laundries, nine cafes, six Chinese schools, four Christian churches, six hotels, one theater, six butcher shops, two authentic Chinese restaurants, eighteen tailor shops, twelve barber establishments, twenty-four variety shops, two gallery stores, one antique business, one

A delegation from across Canada with Prime Minister Diefenbaker, lobbying for fairer regulations to allow family reunification, Ottawa. 1956. Courtesy of Jean Lumb.

physician's office, a Chinese-language branch of the Bank of Montreal, branches of the CPR and the Blue Funnel and Admiral lines servicing Chinese passengers, the office of the *Chinese Times* and two cabaret halls.[28]

While the Chinese settlers of the 19th century carved out a living in *Chinese Canada*, their children, born in Canada, adapted to a post-1923 community that was often cut off from a China that was now plagued by Japanese aggression, and a Canada that was still under the influence of Britain. These events were to affect the Chinese born in Canada during the early 20th century.

The Chinese raised in the exclusion era became more Canadian than their parents. Many attended English-language schools and worked in businesses that were open to non-Chinese customers. The intermingling of these young Chinese with the wider western culture resulted in their adaptation of a Chinese Canadian culture. One example was the *Celestial Gents,* a Chinese Canadian clone of a Benny Goodman jazz band that entertained at weddings and dances in *Chinese Canada*.[29]

Many of the men and women who attended the celebration of *Chinese Canada* at weddings and dances were also the ones who enlisted in the Canadian armed forces. More than 500 Chinese Canadian soldiers fought for the Allied forces in Asia against fascist aggression. After the war, the returning soldiers established the Chinese Veterans Organization that helped achieve full citizenship in 1947. While these soldiers certainly demonstrated their allegiance to Canada, their presence brought Chinese Canadians into a global arena. Their work in such places as Borneo, India and Malaya expanded their world view. In fact, they helped move *Chinese Canada* from an isolated inward looking community to one brimming with possibilities. In 1957, the election of Canadian war veteran Douglas Jung to Parliament further demonstrated that the exclusion generation could adapt to the Canadian polity. The soldiers of *Chinese Canada* inaugurated the transition from the *Canadian Era* to a *Global Era*.

The *Canadian Era* did not immediately move into the *Global Era* of *Chinese Canada* because even with the repeal of the *Chinese Immigration Act* on May 14, 1947, only wives and unmarried children younger than eighteen could emigrate to Canada. Canadian racism still contained the flow of Asians to Canada. It was not until 1967 that Asians, and especially the Chinese, fell under the general act of immigration that was also directed at European immigration. In that year, Ottawa amended the 1952 *Immigration Act* thus admitting immigrants based on education, job qualification and experience and a proficiency in either English or French. By 1969,

8,382 Chinese from such places as India, Jamaica, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa and the United States as well as the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan arrived in Canada, especially Vancouver and Toronto.[30]

THE GLOBAL ERA, 1967- NOW

The new immigration law of 1967 was central to the inauguration of the *Global Era*. The law, coupled with the riots in Hong Kong that year which threatened the colony's political stability, prompted a sizable migration of the people of Hong Kong to Canada.

In April 1975, when Vietnam was liberated from the United States and many Chinese Vietnamese fled, thousands sought refuge in Canada. A network of Chinese Canadian organizations helped settle these new immigrants into Canada.[31] These networks would later provide the expertise and organization as ad-hoc committees against television network station CTV.

Anti-W5, 1979

By 1979, *Chinese Canada* was itself a multi-layered cultural entity with Chinese immigrants from Africa, the Americas and Europe as well as Asia. These new Canadian inhabitants spoke with varying accents from the streets of Harare, Mombasa, Lima, Mexico City, Amsterdam, London, Calcutta and Ho Chi Minh city. While their global experiences reflected the countries of origin, their facial appearances were distinctly Chinese.[32] By 1979, *Chinese Canada* was thoroughly global and multidimensional as artists, cooks, film-makers, intellectuals, journalists, merchants, physicians, social workers and writers moved into the country. These men and women were firmly committed to Canada.

With such a wide spectrum of experience and knowledge, it was not surprising that a huge protest ensued over the airing of a twelve-minute segment called "Campus Giveaway" on CTV's W5. In this story, Chinese Canadian students were depicted as foreigners taking university admissions places in the professional schools at Canadian universities and depriving European Canadians of their "rightful" place. Anti-W5 ad-hoc committees in sixteen cities across Canada protested this blatantly racist programme. While it was important that CTV eventually issued the semblance of an apology and the Chinese Canadian National Council resulted from this civil rights movement, the anti-W5 campaign was one of the most politically significant events in the history of *Chinese Canada*. It was a contemporary watershed demonstrating to the world that the public culture of the Chinese in Canada was now one of activism, marketing, organization, public relations, strength and unity.[33] *Chinese Canada* was, in fact, fearless, having re-discovered a latent political identity. It became confident of its destiny and was ready to defend its rights and privileges in a Canada that boldly espoused freedom and equality. Accentuating this new Chinese Canadian sense of political power was the growing international power of China and the new diplomatic initiatives between Ottawa and Beijing. *Chinese Canada* was now connected to its old homeland and especially to Guangdong where family ties were reconnected.[34]

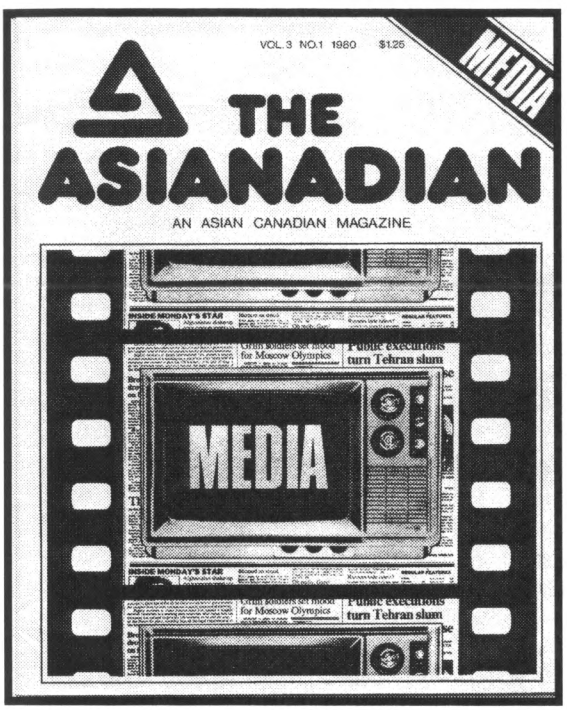
Hong Kong, 1984

While *Chinese Canada,* in the aftermath of the successful anti-W5 campaign, celebrated its newly emerged political liberation from a century of relative historical anonymity, lack of voting rights, overt racism in employment and education and government head taxes and exclusion, Hong Kong was bracing for its own liberation from colonial rule. This was the Joint Declaration between Britain and China which moved the unification of China and Hong Kong to its logical completion.

The Declaration stipulated : "The Government of the United Kingdom declares that it will restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China with effect from 1 July 1997."[35] While the Chinese in China saw this as a final victory over British imperialism and colonialism, many Chinese in Hong Kong did not. After all, they or their families had fled from the excesses of communism. Some decided to flee again.

In 1981, 6,451 Hong Kong inhabitants emigrated to Canada. In 1987 alone, 16,170 left the British colony. In 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993, respectively, Canada welcomed 29,261,

22,340, 38,910 and 36,576 immigrants from Hong Kong.[36] In the evolution of *Chinese Canada*, the Hong Kong exodus was now the defining watershed in the *Global Era* as these new immigrants brought professional expertise, industrial and manufacturing knowledge, international marketing links, plenty of cash, and a Confucian-based value system of family and business relationships. They were the ultimate capitalists who moved *Chinese Canada* from a local service-based economy of greengrocers, laundries and restaurants to an international market-oriented economy that not only included the Chinatowns of Canada, but all of Canada itself.



The billionaire who personified the new Chinese entrepreneur in Canada was Li Ka-shing. His purchase of Alberta's Husky Oil and Gas in 1987, the Expo '86 lands in 1988 and the extent of his global investments staggered the Canadian entrepreneurial imagination.[37] Hong Kong capitalists like him, and there were many in Canada, demonstrated that *Chinese Canada* not only had political clout, but also the financial power that could bend political will.

By 1993, about 700,000 people of Chinese ancestry lived in Canada with much of the immigration arriving from Hong Kong. From 1988 to 1993, 170,276 Hong Kong immigrants settled in Canada with Ontario (50.57%) and British Columbia (26.71%) receiving the bulk of these new Canadians. By 2010, it is estimated that there will be more than a million Canadians of Chinese ancestry.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the new Hong Kong immigrants reinvigorated *Chinese Canada* and effected its change from an isolated, insular community to one of global proportion fueled by extensive monetary investments. Yet, that was not the only development in *Chinese Canada.* There was now a cultural flowering.

By the 1990s, Chinese Canadians could be found in many occupations including classical dancers, jazz musicians, novelists, police officers, politicians, symphonic composer, and television reporters, as well as in the traditional careers of educators, merchants and scientists. In the media, North American editions of such Chinese newspapers as the *World Journal Daily News,* the *Sing Tao Daily* and the *Ming Pao Daily News* are flourishing. By 1994, each paper sold more than 30,000 copies daily. With 72 to104 pages, these newspapers attract much advertising from the Chinese Canadian community as well as from mainstream businesses. Chinese television has also developed in the major cities with Cantonese and Mandarin situation comedies, news and movies the daily fare.[38]

During the 1980s and 1990s, culture in *Chinese Canada* began to develop not as a reflection of China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, but within the experience of the Chinese in Canada. Major writers influencing the evolution of an indigenous literary tradition include Denise Chong, Wayson Choy, Larissa Lai, Evelyn Lau, Sky Lee, Fred Wah, Rita Wong, Jim Wong-Chu and Paul Yee. Such film-makers as Mina Shum, Tony Chan, Richard Fung, Karin Lee, Brenda Joy Lem, Keith Lock, Colleen Leung, Dora Nipp, Margaret Wong, Michelle Wong and Paul Wong, have been in the forefront of a new cinematic tradition conditioned and infused with the experience of the Chinese in Canada.[39]

Despite anti-Chinese sentiments which may surface from time to time, *Chinese Canada*

continues to evolve into a unique Canadian community fortified by an energetic entrepreneurial spirit, an emphasis on education as a vehicle of upward career mobility, strong family values and an attachment to the important Canadian values of equality and democracy.

From the early Chinese artisans and craftsmen in 1788 to the gold seekers and merchants in 1858 and now the influx of Chinese immigrants globally, *Chinese Canada,* like *English Canada* and *French Canada*, has evolved into a vibrant, living organism with its own internal Canadian dynamic and logic and external pressures. Of course, historical connections have tied it to China. But as China evolves globally and the international movement of Chinese continues, *Chinese Canada* looks beyond Canada. It is an international community with links to the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Pacific.

The people of *Chinese Canada* now come from many countries of the world including the usual places like China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. But whether they are from Fuzhou, Harare, Lima, Kingston or London, they bring their own special experiential view of life, their dialects, their cuisine and their ambitions to Canada. Because *Chinese Canada* has many centres and no discernible boundaries except for the geography of Canada, its people can flourish in any part of the community. But as they step foot on Canadian soil, they automatically become part of a history that began in 1788, ascended in 1858 and consolidated in 1885. They also become part of an era that excluded the Chinese in 1923 and in spite of this exclusion reinvented itself into a unique community.

There was partial acceptance in 1947 and 1957. But *Chinese Canada* did not really flourish with new energy until 1967 with the new immigration and during the post-1984 period when an influx of international Chinese money created new respect and a growing capitalist class. Thus, all the present and future Chinese in Canada become part of the eras and watersheds of what is known as *Chinese Canada.*

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[1] Gordon Hoekstra, "Immigrants Won't Go To Prince George," *Calgary Herald*, 29 October 1999, A19; Gabriel Yiu, "Why The Latest Boat People Should Go Home," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 August 1999, A19; James Brooke, "Vancouver is Astir Over Chinese Abuse of Immigration Law," *New York Times*, 29 August 1999, 8.

[2] John Meares, *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789 from China to the Northwest Coast of America* (Amsterdam: De Capo Press, 1967), 99.

[3] Anthony B. Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World (*Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983), 33, 98; Li Donghai, *Jianada Huaqiao Shi [History of the Overseas Chinese in Canada]* (Taibei: Haidian, 1967), 60; *San Francisco Globe,* 16 May 1858; Stan Steiner, *Fusang: The Chinese Who Built America* (New York: Harper & Row), 154.

[4] Rob Johnston, quoted in James Brooke, "Canada Detains Illegal Chinese Immigrants," *New York Times,* 1 October 1999, 2.

[5] Although Canada did not become an entity and was not known as Canada until 1867, all references to the land and territory before 1867 will be called "Canada" for the sake of clarity.

[6] The amount of silver taels (1 tael = 1.208 British pound of pure silver= $11.03) flowing into the Qing dynasty coffers exceeded 3.0 million during the 1760s, 7.5 million in the 1770s and 16 million during the 1780s. Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 129.

[7] Qianlong, quoted in Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 122-123.

[8] Hosea Ballou Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (Shanghai and London, 1910-1918), vol 1 of 3 volumes, 173, 209; Chang Hsin-pao, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1964), 223.

[9] Admiral George Elliot commanded the British navy against the Chinese. It consisted of sixteen modern warships with 540 guns, four state-of-the-art armed steamers, twenty-eight transports, 4,000 armed sailors, 3,000 tons of coal and 16,000 gallons of rum for the crew. Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 184.

[10] Edgar Wickberg, "Localism and the Organization of Overseas Migration in the Nineteenth Century," in *Cosmopolitan Capitalists: Hong Kong and the Chinese Diaspora at the End of the 20th Century*, ed. Gary G. Hamilton (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 35.

[11] For more details on the impact of the Opium Wars and the Taiping Rebellion and Chinese emigration to Canada, see Anthony B. Chan, "Social Roots of Chinese Immigration to the New World," *Asian Profile* 10, no. 5 (October 1982): 421-432.

[12] Harley F. McNair, *The Chinese Abroad* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1924), 15-16. The edict of 1672 was passed because the Qing government knew that people outside the pale of its dynasty were often defeated rebels and political enemies of the state. Why else, the reasoning went, would anyone want to leave the greatest civilization in history if they were not enemies? For more details about the edicts of 1672 and 1859, see Chan, *Gold Mountain,* 37-46.

[13] For a description of the Kwong Lee Company, see Chan, *Gold Mountain,* 49. How Chinese capitalism developed in California and by extension in British Columbia is the study contained in Yong Chen, "The Internal Origins of Chinese Emigration to California Reconsidered," *Western Historical Quarterly* 28 *(*1997): 521-546.

[14] Quoted in Tyler Dennett, *American Policy in China, 1840-1870* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1921), 137.

[15] The United States and Britain abolished slavery in the mid-nineteenth century.

[16] Andrew Onderdonk, quoted in *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1885), 84-85; Gustavus Myers, *A History of Canadian Wealth* (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1972), 270. For more details on the Chinese role in the CPR, see Chan, *Gold Mountain*, 47-73.

[17] Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigration, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), 59.

[18] W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 36-42; Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 132-140. The "head tax" was cumbersome from the beginning as it exempted diplomats, merchants, scientists, students and tourists from payment.

[19] Rodolphe Boudreau, "Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency, the Governor-General on 31st August, Great Britain, Public Records Office (London), Peking Legation Papers, FO 228/2237.

[20] William Lyon Mackenzie King's interview with the acting president of the Waijiaobu, March 9, 1909, FO 228/2237.

[21] Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown,* 60.

[22] John A. Macdonald, *House of Commons Debates* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1882), 1476.

[23] Ward's *White Canada Forever* demonstrated throughout the concerted efforts of the white population to eliminate the Chinese as settlers. The 1923 Immigration Act was the culmination of these efforts.

[24] Huang Cunxian, quoted in *Royal Commission, 1885*, 41. The idea that the Chinese were sojourners has been perpetuated by such contemporary writers as Roy, *A White Man's Province,* J. Brian Dawson, *Moon Cakes in Gold Mountain* (Calgary: Detselig, 1991); Wing Chung Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-80* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999). But recent scholarship has demonstrated that the idea of the Chinese as sojourner is indeed problematic and a mere myth. See Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown,* 49, 55, 60; Timothy J. Stanley, "'Chinamen, Wherever We Go': Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911," *The Canadian Historical Review* 77, (December 1966): 484, 501-502.

[25] Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown,* 141.

[26] For the development of capitalism in Chinese Canada, see Rebecca B. Aiken, *Montreal Chinese Property Ownership and Occupational Change, 1881-1981* (New York: AMS Press, 1989); Richard H. Thompson, *Toronto's Chinatown* (New York: AMS Press, 1989); Harry Con et al. *From China to Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).

[27] The Sam Kee company was especially inventive in its capitalism. For example, it expanded outside of Chinatown by buying two Gastown sites and a lot in the downtown core at Pender and Richards. Hotels and apartments later constructed on these lots were leased to non-Chinese entrepreneurs. Paul Yee, "Sam Kee: A Chinese Business in Early Vancouver", *BC Studies* nos. 69-70 (Spring-Summer 1986): 92-94.

[28] Quene Yip, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Vancouver Golden Jubilee, 1886-1936* (Vancouver: Pacific Printers, 1936), 9; Halford Wilson Papers, *Provincial Archives of British Columbia* (Victoria: Provincial Archives, 1939), vol 1/19; Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown,* 147.

[29] Chan, *Gold Mountain,* 157.
[30] J.L. Elliott, "Canadian Immigration: A Historical Assessment," in Jean Leonard Elliott, ed., *Two Nations, Many Cultures* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 164, Table 2.
[31] Many Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians helped settle these new refugees with resettlement associations. For the Saskatoon Open Door Society, see Anthony B. Chan, "ESL for Refugee Learners," *Adult Education* (December 1983): 249-251; Anthony B. Chan, "Programme Planning for New Immigrants and Refugees," *Indian Journal of Adult Education* (March, April, 1983): 15-22.
[32] This idea of a multiethnic community within an ethnic community accentuates the federal government's policy of multiculturalism as naive and simplistic that attempted to placate French Canada at the expense of other etnnic groups. For a revealing discussion of the official policy of multiculturalism, see Reva Joshee, "Canadian Multiculturalism as a Creature of Contraction and Expansion," *New Scholars-New Visions in Canadian Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 3-28.
[33] A recent analysis of the anti-W5 movement and other anti-racist activism is Hayne Wai, "Vancouver Chinatown 1960-1980: A Community Perspective," *New Scholars-New Visions in Canadian Studies* 3, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 27-32.
[34] Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver,* 106-107.
[35] Quoted in Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, David Newman and Alvin Rabushka, *Forecasting Political Events: The Future of Hong Kong* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 163-164.
[36] Wing Chung Ng, "Canada," in *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas,* ed. Lynn Pan (Singapore: Archipelago Press, Landmark Books, 1998), 235, 243.
[37] For a recent biography of Li Ka-shing, see Anthony B. Chan, *Li Ka-shing: Hong Kong's Elusive Billionaire* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996, Toronto: Macmillan, 1996).
[38] Anthony B. Chan, "Citizen Aliens: Television and the Hong Kong Chinese as Sojourner," *Asian Profile* 18, no. 2 (April 1990): 117-125.
[39] Wai, "Vancouver Chinatown," 37-38; Anthony B. Chan, "Born Again Asian: The Making of a New Literature," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 57-73; Karlyn Koh, "Speculations and (Dis)identification: Notes on Asian Canadian Women Writers," *New Scholars-New Visions in Canadian Studies* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1996): 3-30; Lien Chao, *Beyond Silence: Chinese Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1997); Laura K. Larson, "Expert Reflections and Enriched Listeners: A Review of Chinese Canadian Women's Narratives," *New Scholars-New Visions in Canadian Studies* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 40-45.

An Early History of the Chinese in Toronto: 1877 to 1930

Jeff Watson

While many assume the origins of Chinese Torontonians are linked to contracted labour brought from China to help construct the Canadian Pacific Railroad, the first settlers actually appeared in the city several years before Chinese labour forces began work on the railway.[1]

The first recorded Chinese in Toronto were found in the 1877-1878 City Directory -- two laundries by the names of Sam Ching and Wo Kee. Sam Ching and Co. was located on Adelaide Street East, between Yonge and Victoria, while the Wo Kee laundry was found on Yonge close to Gerrard.[2] The proprietors of these laundries appear to be the only permanent Chinese residents living in Toronto at the time. Even though Sam Ching's laundry is named 'and Co.', census information of the time assessed the occupancy of the building as 'one', making him the solitary resident.[3] Most of these pioneer laundrymen worked and lived in the same building, thus the laundry was not only a business but a residence as well.

It is reasonable to assume that these first Chinese laundrymen in Toronto were settlers from the gold rushes that occurred in California and British Columbia, who then migrated east across the provinces or north from the United States. (Chinese migration from the US into Canada during the gold rush began around 1849.) Lee, in his essay on Chinese hand laundries in Toronto, assumes that due to the number of Chinese laundries existing in the US at the time, "it would not be surprising" if Toronto's first Chinese pioneers entered Canada from the United States instead of directly from China.[4]

Within the next few years, four other Chinese laundries opened in Toronto: Sam Lee, Sam Sing, Sam Kee and Tan Gee.[5] These laundries were all found within the boundaries of the St. Patrick's Ward, a working class locale populated by new immigrants to the city. St. Patrick's Ward provided an optimal location for the Chinese hand laundry, where the proprietor could rent low-cost immigrant housing -- many of which were already condemned to be torn down -- and at the same time maintain a lucrative location close to his customers in the blue-collar neighbourhood.[6] In 1890, the number of Chinese laundries grew to make up 43% of all laundries in Toronto, reaching 60% by 1900.[7]

Some researchers deduce a link between these early pioneers in terms of family and background, especially since, when written in the traditional Chinese way, the name *Sam* could be interpreted as a surname. While it is logical to assume these laundrymen did know and support one another, the assumption that there was an 'extended family' relationship due to a similarity in surname is unlikely. Thompson, in his study of Toronto's Chinatown, explains the prevalence of the name *Sam* among the early Chinese in Canada.

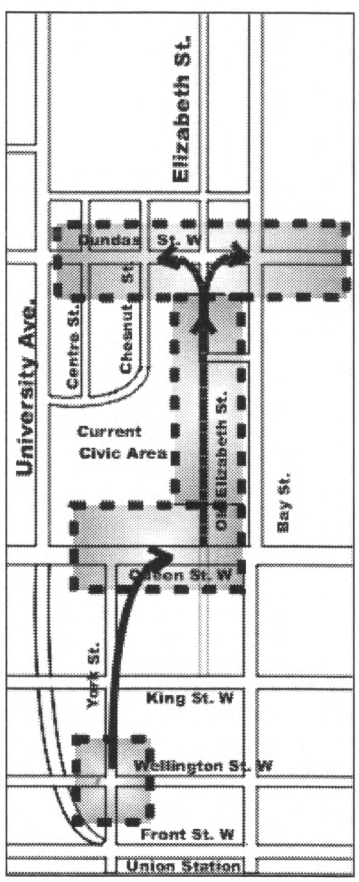
> "Sam" was a common euphemism for Chinese in British Columbia and many Chinese who worked for whites as domestics and washermen adopted the name. They were, of course, addressed as "Sam" by their white masters (or customers, for those who owned laundries).[8]

While these first Chinese washhouses hold the key to the origins of early Chinese settlers in Toronto, they leave a void in terms of the origins of the Chinese quarter -- the community in terms of residential

proximity and business concentration. In order to minimise competition, the first Chinese laundries were spread out over working class Toronto, intermingling in other immigrant communities, keeping the Chinese diffused throughout the city without a distinct social identity. Chinatown did not exist in terms of a residential neighbourhood or an ethnic identity.

To understand the origins of the Chinese quarter (what may be referred to as Toronto's *proto*-Chinatown), one must move beyond the hand-laundry to the railroad and its effect on the location of the Chinese community. Most researchers (including Mah, Thompson and Nipp) cite the first cluster of Chinese immigrants around York and Wellington Streets in 1890 as the first beginnings of a Chinese neighbourhood. Approximately twelve years following the arrival of the first Chinese in the city, this small cluster of a few laundries, miscellaneous shops and residents represented a significant percentage of the 33 Chinese[9] living in Toronto at the time.

The reason for this initial concentration, as Mah and Thompson concur, lay in the close proximity of transportation to the York-Wellington vicinity. The York-Wellington proto-community was situated near the railroad: the entry point for many of Toronto's first Chinese. Living in close proximity to the railway station (not far from today's Union Station) became important to the early Chinese in Toronto, as it was a convenient link to friends and relatives in other cities. In many early settlements across North America, the Chinese remained close to their location of first settlement due to "language and ethnic barriers" that restricted their movement within the city and kept them close to their initial transportation.[10]



Northward movement of the community, 1885 to 1915.

Regardless of its location however, the York-Wellington neighbourhood would not provide the early Chinese in Toronto a stable, permanent community. Due to their lower social status, early Chinese residents in Toronto were easy targets for eviction, resulting in several forced relocations and a transient population. Usually, several Chinese men had to group together to rent one house.[11] This resulted in the Chinese inhabiting overcrowded, low-rent houses, some of which had been rented to the Chinese in unfit conditions--many already condemned.[12] Other ethnic groups who previously inhabited most of these houses, such as Irish or Jewish immigrants, could now afford to move to better parts of the city. The Chinese, as the second or third ethnic group to occupy this kind of run-down housing, found themselves trapped through their poor social status, predestined to occupy slum areas already regarded by the city as an eyesore.

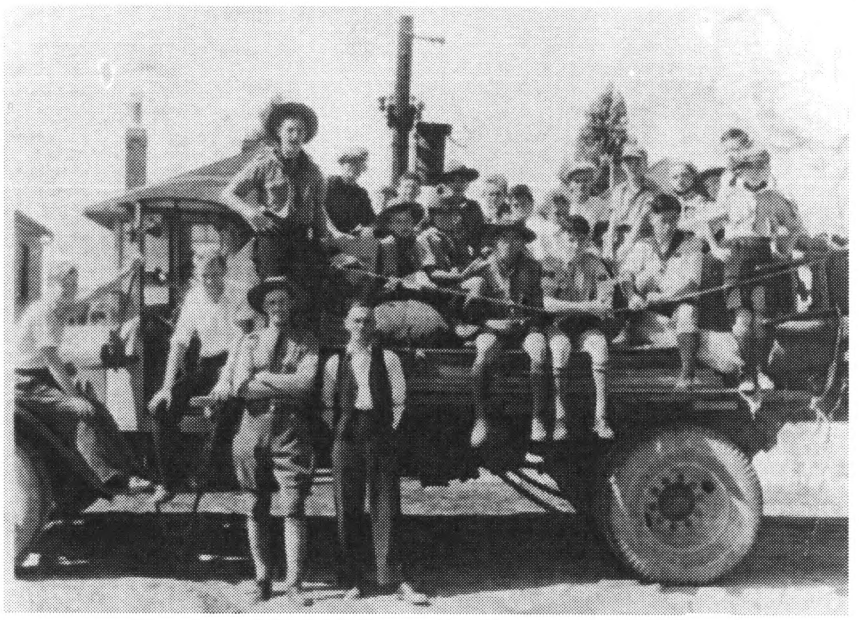
To complicate matters further, anti-Chinese sentiment, rampant in the U.S. and British Columbia, seemed to follow these Chinese newcomers into the city. Newspapers such as the *Toronto Telegram*, *Toronto World*, and the *Toronto Globe* began to carry anti-Chinese editorials,[13] mirroring growing racism against the Chinese in other parts of North America. In 1907, the magazine, *Toronto Saturday Night,* congratulated Toronto and its police force on the success of the plan to

Toronto, c. 1930s. Courtesy of Mrs. George Lee Collection

"keep the yellow men moving on" so there could be no "Chinese quarter" established in the city.[14] Toronto's *Jack Canuck*, a newspaper devoted to scandal and controversy, lamented Chinese residences and businesses "so thickly abounding on King, Queen and York Streets" and that the "Yellow Peril" had finally come to Toronto.[15] Public opinion labelled Chinese areas as ethnic ghettos, slums, and civic embarrassments, calling for the eviction of "John Chinaman" from Toronto.

Anti-Chinese rhetoric moved from the media to the institutional level as bias against the Chinese found its way into civic legislation of the time. Laundries were threatened by a Bill passed in 1902 "to license and regulate laundry and laundry companies and for inspecting and regulating laundries."[16] Labour organisations also rallied the public to stop patronising Chinese laundries. One common piece of propaganda alleged that Chinese laundrymen, most (if not all) of whom were "married bachelors" due to the fact that they were unable to bring their wives and children from China, were stealing work from "poor white women" who had families to support.[17] Citizen and government alike called for a solution to the city's "Chinese problem."

The booming Toronto economy at the turn of the century, combined with the prime city core and railway location of the York-Wellington area, made the nascent Chinese community easy prey for city developers. Approximately twenty years after the beginnings of the York-Wellington proto-community, the area was claimed for redevelopment. As redevelopment began in the York Street district during 1910, Chinese Torontonians were forced to move from their York-Wellington neighbourhood, many settling in low-rent housing on the south side of Queen between York and Elizabeth Streets.[18]

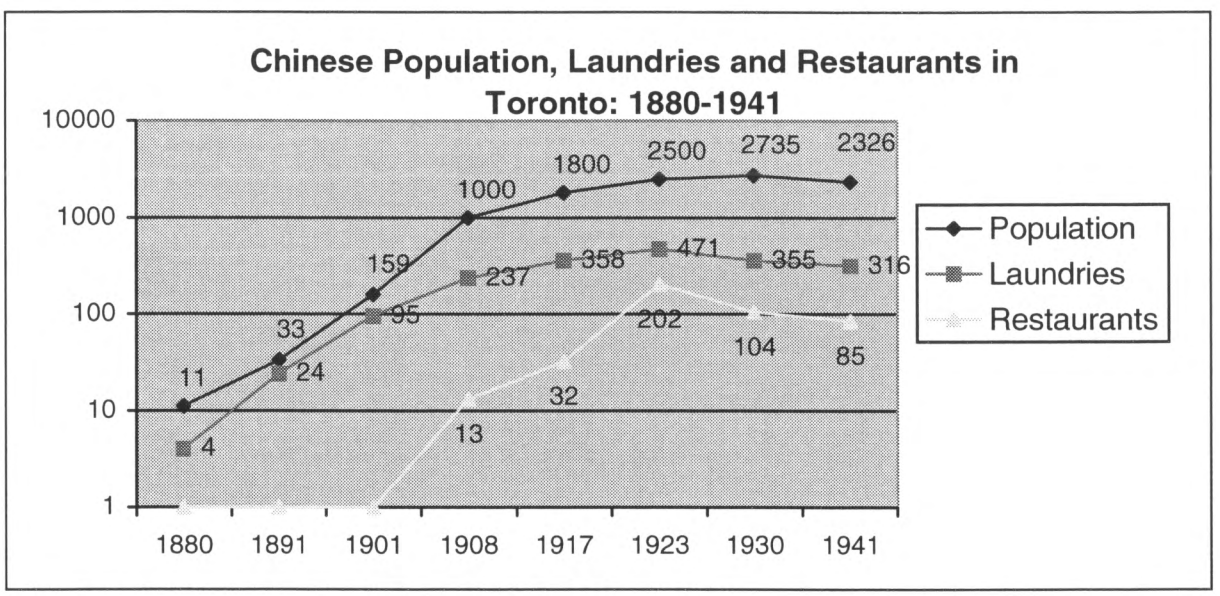


With the trend towards civic beautification at the time, this second

concentration became even less permanent than the first, as the south side of Queen Street was redeveloped less than ten years later[19] (much for the same reasons as York-Wellington). Chinese Torontonians were once again forced to relocate, shifting to the north side of Queen, moving up Elizabeth Street into former Jewish neighbourhoods.[20] This trend towards relocation actually served to create a more consolidated and cohesive Chinese community as growing numbers of Chinese, forced to move by civic redevelopment, simultaneously relocated into new areas. As the twenty-five year old proto-community moved its residents, a distinct neighbourhood was created and began to expand and grow at an increasing rate -- not only in resident population, but in businesses as well. After

restaurants (471 and 202 respectively) were not surpassed for many years.[21] As laundries and restaurants multiplied, other Chinese businesses such as grocery and fruit stores began to appear in the new Chinatown. Census data show that the number of Chinese grocery stores and other businesses nearly doubled between 1908 and 1917.[22]

Ironically, while the 1920s were the years in which Toronto's Chinatown began to stabilize itself after its previous decades of upheaval, they also embodied the period of Canada's greatest institutional racism against the Chinese. The *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1923 (popularly known as the Chinese Exclusion Act), effectively limited Chinese immigration into Canada



several relocations, this new area, Elizabeth Street from Queen Street to Dundas Street, could serve as the germinating point for a more stable, distinct community -- what the City of Toronto would later define as 'Chinatown Proper', and which today is referred to as "old Chinatown".

The early 1920s can be looked upon as the formative years of Toronto's first Chinese community in and around Elizabeth Street. The number of laundries and

and had an oppressive effect on Toronto's new community, stifling the inflow of new immigrants and contributing to the steady ageing of the population. Since many of the inhabitants of Chinatown were males who had left their wives and children in China, the neighbourhood could not sustain its population without new immigrants. From its peak in the early 1920s, the Elizabeth Street community began to slowly decline, decreasing in population, laundries and businesses.[23] Chinatown's lifeline was

slowly being asphyxiated: as Toronto progressed into the depression of the 1930s, the community further shrank and aged under the strain of institutional, economic and social hardships.

While Toronto's early Chinese community was stifled soon after its creation due to economic difficulties and institutional racism, the hardships during the 1920s and 30s did have some unforeseen, positive benefits. With the threat of the "Yellow Peril" diminished and the Great Depression vexing the city, the Chinese community had time to further situate itself in a permanent setting. Due to the economic restraints of the era, the threat of development no longer shadowed the community and, while times were difficult, the Chinese found themselves able to establish a cohesive neighbourhood with its own internal organisation and support systems. At the same time, opposition to the Chinese in Toronto declined. Other citizens worried more about the economic situation, and believed that the dwindling Chinese population in St. Patrick's no longer posed a threat.

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[1] Chinese labour did not work on the CPR until 1880. For further information see Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983).
[2] Dora Nipp, "The Chinese in Toronto" in Robert F. Harney, ed. *Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto 1834-1945* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985), 149.
[3] Valerie Mah, "The 'Bachelor' Society: A Look at Toronto's Early Chinese Community from 1878-1924," (Unpublished paper, Toronto, 1978), 7.
[4] Lee Wai-Man, "Dance No More: Chinese Hand Laundries in Toronto" *Polyphony* 6, No. 1 (1984): 32.
[5] The map is a combination of information taken from Mah, "The 'Bachelor' Society" and Nipp, "The Chinese in Toronto" and plotted.
[6] Valerie Mah, "An In-depth Look at Toronto's Early Chinatown," (Unpublished paper, Toronto, 1977), 15.
[7] Mah, "The 'Bachelor' Society," 17.
[8] Richard H. Thompson, *Toronto's Chinatown: The Changing Social Organisation of an Ethnic Community* (New York: AMS, 1989), 394.
[9] Mah, "The 'Bachelor' Society," 17.
[10] Several researchers, including Mah and Thompson, cite Rhoads Murphey. "Boston's Chinatown". *Economic Geography* 28, No. 3 (1962): 247, on the relation between North American Chinatowns and the railway.
[11] Due to economic and social conditions, combined with the fact that early Chinese immigration was linked to contract labour, almost all Chinese in Toronto were male. For further information see Chan, *Gold Mountain*, Chapters 3 & 4.
[12] Mah, "The 'Bachelor' Society," 38.
[13] Nipp, 151.
[14] "The Front Page", *Toronto Saturday Night* 20, No. 32, (25 May 1907): 1-2 as quoted in Jimao Peng, "Community in Motion: The Development of Toronto's Chinatown and Chinese Community, 1947-1981" (Unpublished Graduate Thesis, University of Guelph, 1994), 26.
[15] Harry Con et al., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 93.
[16] Lee, 32.
[17] Ibid., 32.
[18] Keith Lew, *Chinatown Study* (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, 1973), 13.
[19] Ibid., 13.
[20] Nipp, 150.
[21] Thompson, 41.
[22] Ibid. 41.
[23] This figure was derived from combining charts in Thompson, pp. 41 and 44, and logarithmically plotted. Business values after 1923 have been approximated for 1931 and 1941, based on numbers from 1930 and 1943. Again to preserve logarithmic integrity 1 was entered where no data existed (Restaurants data in 1880, 1891, and 1901). Spacing on the year axis is not drawn to scale.

Power in the 1950s Toronto Chinese Community:
In-groups and Outcasts

Paul Levine

Introduction: Today

Toronto's Chinese community has undergone great changes over the past fifty years. Successive waves of immigration from all over the Chinese-speaking world, and from places outside of it, have created a dynamic diverse society. Kosher Chinese restaurants and Chinese-run Indian restaurants, to name but two obvious symbols of the new diversity, abound. There is little doubt that this infusion of new immigrant blood has benefited the community at the same time as it has created new factions, political and social groupings. It wasn't always like this.

Today, driving from Mississauga on the western edge of Metropolitan Toronto, northward and eastward through Richmond Hill and Markham, one can notice a feature of the modern, urban-satellite, suburban sprawl -- the many roadside malls and shopping centres that have sprung up. Commonly seen, but little thought about, are the marquees, signboards and neon signs of the stores in these shopping malls. They proclaim loudly what business is being done, in both English and any other language used by whatever ethnic group runs these businesses, from mobile phones and restaurants to magazine and bookstores and supermarkets that supply hard-to-find specialty foods to the surrounding communities.

In these self-sufficient islands exist the successors to the history of Chinatown and the Chinese community in Toronto, as the new centres for community social and economic networks and as reminders of places left behind by the new immigrants. With names like 'Times Square' and 'Mongkok', these malls evoke familiar visions of home, in Hong Kong or elsewhere. Visitors outside of the Chinese community sometimes patronize these malls as well. They wander around them, curious as to what all of the unfamiliar, urecognisable items are, feeling that the culture displayed around them is "exotic" and "strange," or even feeling they "stick out" a bit in these unusual surroundings. But, to many or even most of the patrons, the stores and what they contain are signs of the usual, the "familiar." This is one thing that has not changed over the history of the Chinese community in Toronto, or elsewhere, for that matter.

Perspective: Snippets of early history

The Chinese migrated into Toronto during the nineteenth century after the construction of the trans-Canada railroad and possibly came up from the U.S. as well. Through the 1920s and '30s, these migrants, overwhelmingly single males, were from two different classes, either the working class or merchant/small-business class. Even though Toronto, earlier in the century, had played host to such famous revolutionary figures in Chinese modern history as Kang You-wei and Sun Yat-sen for short periods of time, most of the long-term immigrants were workers who came from the west coast, through the introductions of friends. They settled downtown, on or near the site of the present-day City Hall between Queen and Dundas Streets.

In fact, it is no accident that the City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square were built on this site, the locus of a long historical relationship. Toronto's Chinatown was near railroad connections (Union Station) and bus connections, a convenient junction for most

migrants to access. These environs became the centre of community life from the first decades of the 1900s until the 1960s, when the community changed with the arrival of

The Old Kuomintang Building, Toronto.
E.C. Mark Family Collection, n.d.

new, well-educated and self-sufficient immigrants who moved outside the downtown core. The building of the new City Hall in the 1960s was done over the pre-existing Chinatown, which conveniently provided land for a new city centre.

The early working-class and small-business/entrepreneur immigrants, like their counterparts in other North American Chinese communities, came from rural regions such as Toisan, Sze-yap (Taishan, Siyi) or other areas in the Pearl River Delta area of Guangdong province. This region was the gateway to foreign emigration for young, single, farmers' sons escaping from Qing dynasty inquisitions against the Taiping rebels, or those trying to better themselves economically in a time of burgeoning population growth.

Migration meant borrowing money to buy passage over on a boat and repaying it through work overseas. This, of course, often resulted in long-term indebtedness, on the part of either the migrant or his family. Paying back these debts through remittances often took a long time, leaving the immigrant worker relatively poverty-stricken in Canada. Most of these migrants hoped to find their fortunes, buy land and move back to their home villages; instead they often had to live out most of their lives abroad without returning. They married in China, when possible, but most did not have the resources to bring their brides over, or assumed they would return to their home village one day in the future after their Canadian sojourn, buy land and settle down.

The pattern of the evolution of the Toronto Chinese community reflected internal dynamics as well as external relations with the white community at large. Most single migrants were situated in the downtown core. They rented rooms in boarding houses owned or rented by *hui guan*, *tong* (local geographical or surname-based associations) or by the wealthier merchants who were able to purchase property and rent it out to the single, working-class men. From the 1920s onward, relations with the white community were, for the most part, patterned along unequal lines due to restrictive laws (mostly repealed in 1947) and linguistic barriers, as well as bad publicity.

Community relations: Internal organization and power

Internally, during the 1930s and 1940s the community was organised into surname and

geographical associations divided along class lines that were arranged in a political hierarchy, at the top of which certain families became major players and "community representatives" because they could communicate with the white community at large on behalf of the community. Thus arose the informal office later called by the Toronto political establishment the "Mayor of Chinatown." Such organizations as the Lum Si Ho Tong, a surname-based, mutual-aid organization, and The Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA), which claimed to represent the entire Chinese community, were integral parts of this power structure.

external mediator for the single, migrant workers who needed some representatives to help negotiate with the city government and police. This area was the centre of power in the old Chinatown and the Chinese community.

The Chinese Benevolent Association, which was primarily composed of merchants, had its own newspaper, *Chung Hsing Yat Pao*. This newspaper was a major source of news and communication in the community from the 1920s through the 1960s.

The CBA was created not only to meet

Brockville, c. 1930s. Courtesy of Agnes Lor.

The headquarters of the Chinese Benevolent Association is located in the downtown core on Hagerman and Elizabeth Streets, just behind the new City Hall, a sign of the close association in the past between the old community power structure and the city government. The CBA was the major

the needs of Chinese in Ontario, but more in response to changes in the Chinese political climate during the late Qing dynasty. Initially, it was an overseas political organization[1], but later became an important nexus between the white political establishment and the Chinatown political and economic elite.

During the 1920s, there were struggles for the political and economic control of Chinatown. By the 1930s, the CBA had achieved complete control as well as political and diplomatic access. Through these extraordinary connections, it exercised *de facto* control over the entire community.

Under the CBA umbrella organization, at the top, were many smaller organizations, as previously mentioned, based on surname and geographical affiliations. Joining these was compulsory for individual migrants and they had to pay dues to support the *tong* or *hui* that they joined. These smaller organizations served as temporary hotels, and social, educational and recreational centres for the single men who supported them. Monies collected were passed along to the CBA at the top of the pyramid. The *tong* and *hui* were ultimately responsible to the CBA and carried out commands from those at the top. This pyramid of power lasted until the 1960s. In fact, from the 1920s until the early 1950s, the CBA was allegedly so powerful that it could summarily deal with those who did not obey its rules by administering severe punishments, seizing assets and even threatening families far away in China through overseas Kuomintang (KMT) connections. Thus, the power structure that existed in Toronto's Chinese community in the 1950s reflected not only the needs of the local community, but also political and social change in China through structures that were built up during the first several decades of Chinese settlement in the city.

Social life in the 1950s and the beginning of political change

The average Chinese worker in Toronto could be found in diverse occupations: doing heavy labour, working in laundries and restaurants, on the railroads, in stores, businesses and farms both in and outside of Toronto, working as hired labourers and day-labourers. Whatever their occupations, these men worked long hours for others and then used the money they made to pay debts, support themselves and their families in China, buy brides and land, and pay their upkeep while in Toronto.

Some of these working men were able to work their way up in the society and start their own businesses, including small restaurants, laundries and stores. They learned to communicate well enough in English to be able to carry on their trade, settle down and, after the 1947 repeal of legal restrictions on bringing over family members, bring their wives to Canada and raise a family. As a result, their children were able to attend Canadian schools and become part of Canadian society. Until the 1960s, however, these men tended to be in the minority.

The majority did not accumulate enough money to bring over family members. They lived in boarding houses, *tong* and *hui guan*, had little to do with the outside society and socialised within the confines of Chinatown. For a good number of these single working men, the major recreation was gambling. As an illegal activity, gambling was subject to police raids, rigging and the whims of those running the games. Police raids on the Chinatown organizations that ran games were quite frequent from the 1930s onward. Those men who were charged often had arrest records which further isolated them from the outside society.

During the early 1950s changes in China saw the beginning of a split in the Toronto Chinese community. With the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in China and the Kuomintang's losing power and fleeing to Taiwan, a group of patriotic Chinese switched their allegiance from the old KMT--the Chinese Nationalist Party, and its local representatives--to the new government in China, with Mao Zedong and the Communist Party as the rightful government rather than

the elite that had centred itself around the old KMT forces in Chinatown. Many of these supporters were members of smaller *tong* and *hui* who did not like what they felt was the dictatorial rule of the CBA/KMT elite. They broke with the power structure and set up their own organizations including their own bookstores and their own newspaper. On October 1st they would hold appropriate ceremonies to celebrate the founding of the People's Republic of China.

However, the elite did not take this challenge passively. In fact, violence and verbal abuse were directed at the dissidents who were being patriotic, but to the new government in China. Although there is no documentation to show what happened, from scattered evidence it seems that some of the dissidents were driven out of the community, while others were forcibly silenced. Unfortunately, much of the evidence pertaining to the actual struggles during the mid-1950s and early '60s is not publicly available.

Toronto: The centre of the Ontario Chinese community in the 1950s

Imagine a network of villages in rural China centred around the largest marketing and administrative city in the locality. This was very much the relationship between other parts of Ontario where Chinese settled during the last half-century and Toronto's Chinatown. The network was kept together by the transportation system that linked, for examples, the Niagara valley and northern Ontario to Toronto by bus, rail and truck.

These links were important to Chinese migrant workers and their families who sold their labour or operated businesses in suburbs and distant areas, because they depended upon the larger Chinatown as a marketing and social centre to keep abreast of political events. Once a week, individuals and families would journey to Chinatown in downtown Toronto, to pick up various supplies and Chinese-language newspapers.

Social and political functions were held in Chinatown and Chinese from all over Ontario were often asked to contribute to these functions. Festivals, national Chinese holidays and religious or social occasions were usually the times when extended community ties were promoted publicly and donations were made for various community causes. Every festival was used to promote community solidarity, from the lunar New Year to the founding of the Republic of China on the 10th of October of each year. Community-wide organizations benefited from these festivities that were open to the public as well. This tradition helped to raise money for China-related causes and welfare-oriented fund-raising for indigent members, and often functioned, as well, to keep the community together.

Public activities included not only the members of the CBA and related organizations, but also non-Chinese, including Toronto city government representatives and others. Relations with the city government helped the CBA maintain its role as mediator for the entire Chinese community to the point where it had official ties with the Toronto city council. Political connections also helped foster vested interests inside the community. Individuals and families who were looked to as leaders of the community were honoured, both in ceremonies in Toronto and also through Taiwan-based overseas Chinese organizations. All of these ties were reinforced by the organizations that had been pulled under the CBA after the 1930s. Only a few dissident groups were outside of this.

Major dialects heard inside the community included Toishan and Sze Yap, as well as other common variants of Cantonese. Mandarin was only used infrequently in the community. Movies came from Hong Kong and Taiwan and were watched by all, old and young. In fact, the

language barrier between those inside and outside of Chinatown made those who lived in Chinatown dependent upon persons who could speak English well. Of course, for others who lived outside of Toronto, communication with the white Canadian community was essential and they were better able to cope. Life was hard for these immigrants, but the sense of community was strong. In fact, inter-marriage between the sons and daughters of families who had migrated to different parts of Ontario made for close community ties. Later, in the 1960s with an influx of new migrants, these ties were to lessen.

All in all, the Toronto community had much in common with other Chinese communities in North America during the 1950s. Community solidarity was reinforced by a hierarchy of power that was set up in the 1920s and 1930s and was only just in the 1950s beginning to unravel.

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[1]The CBA was allied with the Xing Zhong Hui, the "Raise China Society", later to become the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang).

Political and Community Activism in Toronto: 1970-2000

Tam Goossen

Introduction: Contrasting images

In August of 1999, the usual summer calm of Canada's lakefront cottage holidays was jolted by two events that catapulted the Chinese Canadian community into the limelight. The first was the arrival of "illegal" Chinese migrants by rusty and rickety boats off the West coast; the second the appointment of well-known broadcaster Adrienne Clarkson, a Chinese Canadian born in Hong Kong, to the ultimate position of symbolic authority, the Governor General of Canada. Public reaction to both events was swift and dramatic. The arrival of the boat people elicited a public backlash that put a lot of pressure on the newly minted federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to review and tighten the process for refugee claimants. Reaction to Ms Clarkson's appointment was more mixed: ironically, Preston Manning, the leader of the Reform Party, who had objected to the appointment of her predecessor, Romeo LeBlanc, endorsed her while a noted Chinese Canadian journalist attacked her for being the "wrong kind" of role model.

For me, these contrasting images of the sophisticated urban intellectual Ms Clarkson and the hapless boat people from rural China, more than any others in recent memory, brought into sharp relief a whole range of issues dealing with our identity as Chinese Canadians and the complexity of our relationship with the broader community. Talk about history repeating itself right in front of our eyes!

This article is my personal attempt to review and evaluate some of the events that have taken place in the Toronto Chinese community over the last 30 years, since 1970, the year when I arrived in Toronto from Hong Kong. Mine is a mixed approach: historical and political. It also contains a personal aspect, since I was an active participant in some events and a keen observer of others. It goes without saying, however, that the complexity and the importance of the issues involved cry out for a much fuller examination than the present space permits.[1]

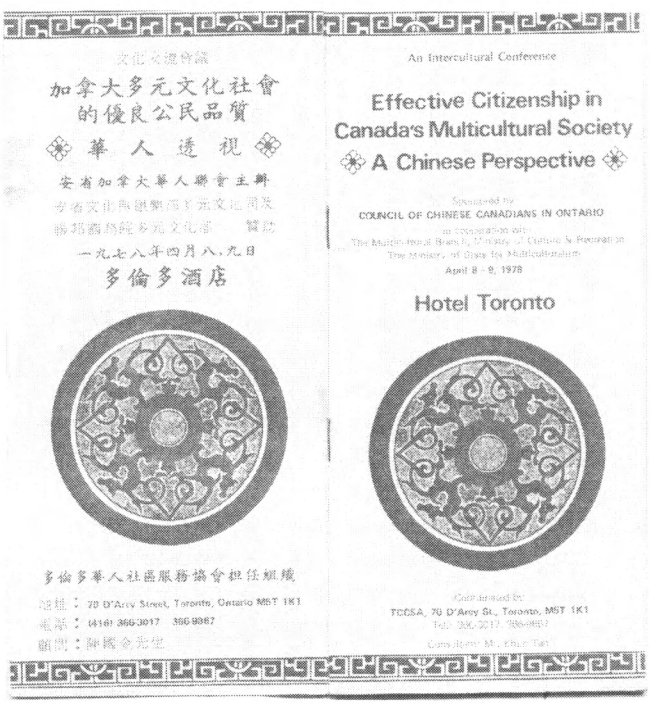
I was one of 5,377 immigrants of Chinese origin who came to Canada in the year 1970. [2] Although my family's roots are in Canton, we are not from the Sze-Yap area whose young men were the first to arrive in Canada in the late 19th century as laborers. I was able to immigrate to Canada as an "independent" under the newly devised points system, a direct result of the liberalized immigration regulations that took effect in 1967. Before then, Canada simply did not want to admit people like myself who are from African and Asian countries. Much later, I was to find out that without the leadership, organizational ability and tireless efforts of many people, both in and outside the community, who lobbied the federal government to reform the earlier racist immigration laws, a whole lot of us from Hong Kong, Taiwan and other parts of China who wished, for whatever reason, to leave our birth-places, might have ended up being illegal immigrants to this land.

Tradition of community activism and political leadership

The Toronto Chinese community, at the time of my arrival, had already developed a rich tradition of community activism. Without going into the complicated political history of the community during and immediately after

the Second World War (taken up elsewhere in this volume), it is clear from extant records that the degree of commitment, energy and manpower which was required to launch the campaign in 1946 to repeal the "Exclusion Act" (enacted in 1923 by the Canadian government to replace the "head tax", with the explicit purpose of prohibiting virtually all Chinese from entering Canada as immigrants) necessitated the cooperation of many groups of different, and oftentimes opposing, political and social affiliations.

This united community effort was to repeat itself in the 1960s when the existence of the old Chinatown, centered around Dundas, Elizabeth and Chestnut Streets, was threatened by the construction of the new City Hall and a large hotel and, later, the proposed widening of Dundas



Street. A "Save Chinatown" campaign was launched with the encouragement of reform-minded municipal politicians who had spearheaded a new period of civic activism in Toronto. [3] In fact, this pattern of activism which saw Chinese residents and businesses fight developers and urban sprawl was repeated in other areas in downtown Toronto, where many immigrant and other groups were successful in laying a sound foundation for the city to preserve the integrity of local neighbourhoods, and forestall the creation of inner city ghettoes. It is important to note that by this point Toronto's Chinese Canadians had already developed a political leadership capable of balancing opposing interests in the community and negotiating with different levels of government and the political parties. [4]

Newcomers with new issues

One of the direct results of Canada's more relaxed immigration policy was the growth of the size and diversity of the Toronto Chinese community. With the influx of new immigrants, many of whom were professionals, white-collar workers and university students from urban centres like Hong Kong, different skills and orientations entered the community. New social organizations were formed with markedly different memberships and goals than those of the traditional associations that had formed the establishment of the old Chinatown. Inevitably, differences arose which led to frustrations on both sides. In the end, despite a multitude of conflicts and confrontations, the newcomers and the old establishment came to recognize the need for peaceful coexistence.

Heritage language and parent activism

An issue that captured the community's attention from early on was the teaching of Chinese language and culture in the public schools. Two schools in Chinatown, Ogden and Orde, had student populations which were 90% Chinese, most of whom came from recently arrived, working-class immigrant families. Parents grew increasingly concerned that, although their children were acquiring English quickly, they were fast losing not only their ability in Chinese, but also their respect for their family elders and Chinese culture itself. To

remedy this situation, parents felt that an obvious solution would be to have a Chinese language and culture program at the school as part of the curriculum.

A group of parents came together and in 1973 they formed the Chinese Parents' Association of Ogden and Orde Schools. They solicited help from other community members, went door to door in their neighborhood to solidify support, petitioned the school trustees, contacted the media, and presented their case effectively before the school board. Their success in persuading the Toronto Board of Education to implement a Chinese language program at the two schools was also due to the federal government's new Bilingualism with a Multicultural Framework policy (instituted in 1971) and the active encouragement and support of a couple of reform-minded public school trustees.[5]

The impact of the activism of these parents turned out to be quite far-reaching. On the strength of the program they had helped create, a movement was started to expand similar programs to other schools. In 1977, Ontario Premier Bill Davis announced the Tory government's recognition of a heritage language program and offered limited support for its maintenance, a policy that was expanded by the following Liberal administration to cover all school boards in Ontario. [6] In short, despite their lack of English and formal education, these determined parents set a pattern of proactive parent involvement that the Toronto School Board could only ignore at its own peril. At the same time, parents and other advocates of heritage languages became a definite political force at the grassroots level, especially at election times.

Demonstration against CTV's W-5 Programme, Toronto, 1979. Lee Wai Man, "Portraits of a Challenge", CCCO.

Demonstration against "Campus Giveaway", Toronto, 1979. Courtesy of Winnie Ng.

The late 1970s and early '80s was marked by a series of events that sparked more community activism and helped produce an even more complex network of affiliations. Increasingly, factors like socio-economic class became predominant in influencing perceptions of what the interests of the Chinese community should be.

The shift of power

As the hub of Chinatown activities moved west from Dundas and Elizabeth Streets to Spadina and Dundas, area residents began to feel the pressure of large-scale developments proposed and financed by Hong Kong businessmen. In early 1977, one specific project to develop a multi-million-dollar commercial/residential complex at the southwest corner of Spadina and Dundas became particularly controversial. Residents in the neighbourhood, a few of whom were veterans of earlier battles to stop the Spadina Expressway and other "development versus neighbourhood" issues, organized themselves into the Grange Community Coalition, which brought together Chinese and non-Chinese residents, student activists, garment factory workers and other concerned citizens determined to fight the proposed development. The developers also swung into action, quickly forming a rival group made up exclusively of business and older cultural groups from the Chinese community.[7] Months of fierce politicking by both sides ensued. While the business-led group appealed to the Chinese-ness of the community to augment its "what's good for business is good for the community" argument, the Grange Community Coalition emphasized issues of potential job-loss for workers and destructive change to the entire neighbourhood which included Chinatown.[8] The conflict ended in a sort of

stalemate when Metro Council passed a compromise plan drawn up by city officials without securing the agreement of either group.

What distinguished this battle to define the character of the new Chinatown on Spadina and Dundas from the earlier Save Chinatown (Dundas and Elizabeth) campaign? Besides the passage of time, the "Hong Kong" factor figured significantly on both sides of the new Chinatown conflict. For not only was the businessman whose proposal sparked the conflict from Hong Kong, so were many of those in the opposing Grange Community Coalition, most specifically, student activists and social workers who were working with the workers and tenants in the neighborhood. Inevitably, some old-timers who felt alienated by both groups lamented the loss of "community", but the power shift had clearly taken place. [9]

Canada Day, 1983. Courtesy of Winnie Ng.

"Campus Giveaway" and the Anti-W5 campaign

This transformed sense of community was to get a tremendous workout in an event that started with the television broadcast of a CTV W5 program called "Campus Giveaway" on September 30, 1979.

The script and the visual imagery of this documentary program sent an unmistakable message to the unsuspecting national audience: foreign students were taking away the rightful places of Canadians in our universities, especially in the professional schools, and most of these foreigners were Chinese. [10] This reflected the fact that, in contrast to the new multicultural ideology of the federal government, many in Canada's establishment felt threatened by a multicultural and increasingly multiracial reality. To give but one example, as early as 1974 the president of the Canadian Medical Association had made a public statement which carried a similar message. [11]

Reaction to the national broadcast was swift. First, the six Canadian-born Chinese students whose faces had been used to illustrate the "foreignness" of the students filed suit against CTV. Then, in December, a well-attended community meeting was held in Toronto which led to the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee Against W5; this helped set up, in less than three months, a network of sixteen ad hoc committees across Canada. [12] Among its many goals, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to support the legal action of the students, file appeals to the Ontario and Canadian Human Rights Commissions, petition the Canadian Radio-television and Tele-communications Commission for a formal hearing, and lobby all levels of politicians. After rallies and demonstrations had been held in one city after another, CTV finally agreed to negotiate and made a public apology on April 18, 1980. Soon after, the national network of ad hoc committees against W5 transformed

themselves into The Chinese Canadian National Council for Equality.

The key organizers and volunteers of the Toronto Ad Hoc Committee were young professionals and university students as well as other community activists who cut across generational lines. Looked at today from a perspective of twenty years, the news coverage and the records of meetings show not only the palpable emotion of the times, but also the strength of the collective commitment to fight injustice. At times there were serious tactical disagreements amongst the Committee's leaders. Overall, however, their strong organizational ability, impressive communication skills (especially in dealing with the media and government officials), and strong belief in democratic ideals helped forge important partnerships within and without the Chinese Canadian community.

Just as important, the W5 program's blatant portrayal of Chinese Canadians as foreigners touched off deeply felt emotions within the community. One young Chinese Canadian woman who responded to the call and joined the W5 ad hoc committee in Vancouver commented later how excited she felt meeting people her own age who were interested in doing something for the community. Through this opportunity, they were also able to explore the issue of what it meant to be Chinese Canadian, and what it was that constituted Chinese Canadian culture.[13] Perhaps, in a sense, the W5 incident and the subsequent national campaign helped the community bring out in a public arena the issues that had pained them privately.

Moving beyond Toronto, new voices and bigger political dreams?

By most accounts, the W5 issue was resolved satisfactorily. A formal structure—the Chinese Canadian National Council for Equality (the last two words were later dropped), with a national network of local chapters—was set up with the objective to pursue strategies and actions to "promote the rights of all individuals, particularly that of Chinese Canadians, to participate fully and equally in our society". [14] In reality, this was very difficult work. With the steady influx of new, more middle-class immigrants, mostly from Hong Kong, to British Columbia and Ontario, the Toronto Chinese Canadian community expanded beyond the borders of the old city proper into the suburban areas of Scarborough, Mississauga, North York, Richmond Hill and Markham. In 1995, according to the National Council, the issues facing the community were: in Richmond, British Columbia, anti-Chinese immigrant graffiti in parking lots and apartment buildings; in Ontario, the deputy mayor of Markham's remark that the concentration of Chinese Canadians was " a threat of social conflicts and racism"; and restrictive planning by-laws in Richmond Hill aimed at Chinese-style business developments. In these and other cases -- like redressing the "head tax" and employment equity—the Council has encountered criticism from some corners of the community for going too far.[15]

Despite the criticism, however, the National Council has provided a vision and

Parents and children protesting the closure of an elementary school. Toronto, 2000.
Courtesy of Valerie Mah.

a strong voice on many social justice issues, a voice which was echoed by many others in different fields. Between the mid-80s and mid-90s, when first the Liberal then the New Democratic Party governed the province, the climate seemed to be more encouraging for people outside the establishment to aspire to political power. Political parties were also more conscious of reaching out to different communities. During this time, a number of Chinese Canadians did get to occupy high profile public positions, either through hard-fought elections or prestigious appointments. As well, others active in non-profit organizations were strong advocates on many social justice issues.

For those who wanted to move beyond influence to reach for real power, however, there was a sense of frustration that Chinese Canadians in Ontario could not push beyond the local municipal level to have any effective presence within the provincial or federal parliaments.[16] Today, with the number of elected positions being reduced at all levels, especially through the recent amalgamations of local school boards and municipal councils, there are indeed fewer opportunities for Chinese Canadians to seek political office. Perhaps that is all the more reason why we must double our efforts working within and without our community to make sure our voices are heard.

Conclusion

What can we glean from this brief and selective look at events that have occurred over the last 30 years? First of all, as I have attempted to show, we have developed a solid record of community activism and good political leadership. We are a people who do things and, contrary to some perceptions, we have almost always managed to speak up when things are done to us. [17] Equally important is the fact that we now appreciate and share Canadian democratic ideals like social justice, human rights, a sense of fair play, and due process, and have worked with others in the broader community to maintain and enhance those ideals.

Second, despite some high profile success stories like that of our new Governor-General, our community has not "arrived". In fact, I believe we are at a crossroads. The recent arrival of boat people from rural China, with their disturbing stories of poverty and exploitation by human smugglers and their hostile reception on Canadian soil, reminds us painfully of what our earlier settlers endured one and a half centuries ago, and challenges our sense of empathy and commitment to democracy and human rights.

In addition, as our community continues to grow and spread across the Greater Toronto area from working-class neighbourhoods in Toronto to million dollar homes in Markham, we will share fully in the growing disparity between downtown Toronto and the wealthy suburban areas.[18] While we must work hard to find common ground with other ethno-racial communities, we cannot underestimate the challenges facing all of us: can the sense of ethnic or racial solidarity overcome economic disparities? How could I, for example, as a downtown Toronto resident, persuade my friends in Markham that a tax cut is not worth supporting if it means a drastic cutback of social services for a more needy area like downtown Toronto? In this new era of government cut-backs and privatization of services, can the social services network that has been built up over the years in Toronto (and staffed mostly by Hong Kong-born and Canada-educated social workers) adjust to serving the needs of newcomers from rural China? What are the values and beliefs we wish to transmit to our youth? That we think it is important to fight to preserve the sense of social and economic justice in our society? Or that governments have no role to play in our lives and anyway, as Chinese Canadians, we will do just fine because we are smart

and hardworking and can look after ourselves?

At the risk of sounding unduly optimistic, the political person in me would like to think that we are not so alienated and self-centred. Many of us, I believe, will continue to work in the community and with the broader society to overcome the barriers facing us. As a student of history, I would suggest that the history of Chinese Canadians is full of examples of the community successfully rising to meet different challenges. What we need to do now is rediscover and value that history and draw strength from it.

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[1] In preparation for writing this article, I have benefited from discussions with a number of community members. I thank them wholeheartedly.

[2] Richard Thompson, *Toronto's Chinatown, The Changing Social Organization of an Ethnic Community* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 148.

[3] Jean Lumb, Interview by Jeff Watson, Toronto, 30 June 1998, unpublished transcript. The successful Save Chinatown Campaign in Toronto was also cited as an inspiration to the Montreal Chinese community in Kwok Bun Chan, *Smoke and Fire, The Chinese in Montreal* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), 307.

[4] Thompson, 139.

[5] Muriel Fung, "Beyond Bilingualism: Two Decades of Achievement of the Toronto Chinese Parents' Association in International Languages Education," in *Toronto Chinese Parents' Association 20th Anniversary* (Toronto: Toronto Chinese Parents' Association, April 1996), 12.

[6] In 1989 the provincial Liberal government extended government support for heritage languages programs to all elementary school children in Ontario. Memorandum to Directors of Education, Superintendents of Schools and Principals of Elementary Schools, from Bernard J. Shapiro, Deputy Minister of Education, 22 October 1988.

[7] For a thorough and interesting examination of this issue, see Thompson, chapter 6.

[8] Thompson, 356.

[9] Ibid., 274.

[10] Cheuk Kwan, "The Foreign Threat That Never Was!"; Alan Bass and Randy Johnston, "2000 demand CTV's apology" in *Rally & Picketing Against CTV-W-5 "Campus Giveaway"* (Toronto: Ad Hoc Committee of Council of Chinese Canadians in Ontario Against W5 Program, 1980).

[11] Randy Johnston and Alan Bass, "Dr. Stephenson's Skeleton," Ibid. Dr. Bette Stephenson, who became provincial minister of Education, Colleges and Universities at the time of the W5 incident, was outraged by the program's inaccuracies.

[12] Cheuk Kwan, "The W5 Legacy," *Chinese Canadian National Council 1999 Year Book* (Toronto: Chinese Canadian National Council, 1999).

[13] The Women's Book Committee, Chinese Canadian National Council, *Jin Guo, Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992), 176-177.

[14] *Chinese Canadian National Council for Equality Newsletter*, 8 February 1981.

[15] Alan Li, "CCNC's Role Most Critical Amidst Rising Anti-Chinese Sentiments," *Chinese Canadian National Council Newsletter*, 1995, citing Lisa Queen, "Ethnic concentrations causing conflict," The *Liberal*, Sunday, 25 June 1995.

[16] My personal observation at the National Forum on Political Participation of Chinese Canadians, organized by Chinese Canadian National Council, 10 April 1999.

[17] In her much praised installation speech, the new Governor-General said, "We must not see ourselves as people to whom things are done, but as people who do things," quoted in Richard Gwyn, "Trudeau's Truly Fine Legacy to Us", *The Toronto Star*, 17 October 1999, p. A13.

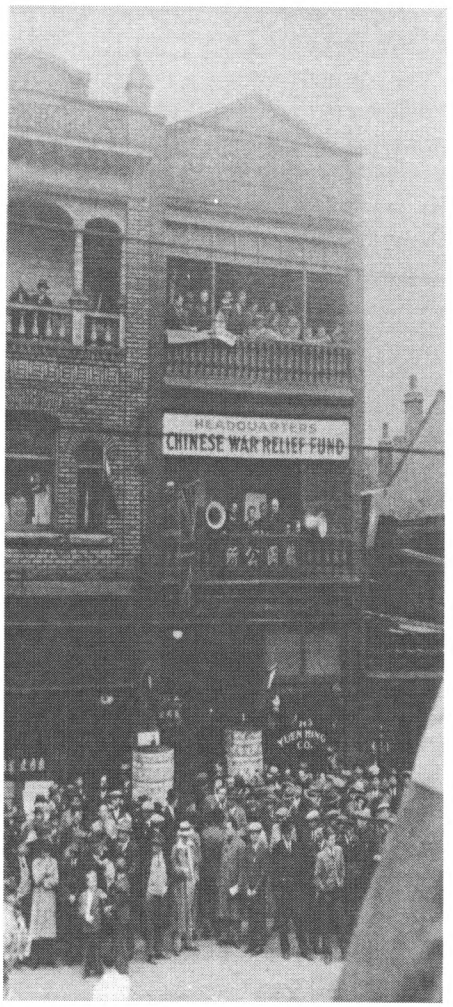
[18] Elaine Carey, "The 21st Century Belongs to Suburbia", *The Toronto Star*, Greater Toronto section, 22 January 2000, p. H6.

From Ontario to "Oblivion": War Veterans

Keith Lock and Dora Nipp

On July 1, 1923, the Canadian government enacted its harshest piece of legislation to date. The *Chinese Immigration Act, 1923*, effectively slammed the doors shut to Chinese immigration. For several years after, Chinese communities across the country refused to participate in "Dominion Day" celebrations in protest of the "43 harsh regulations" imposed by the Act. Within ten years, almost one-quarter of the Chinese in Canada had returned to China.

When it was introduced, the 1923 Act contained the following provisions: 1) the "head tax" was abolished; 2) students below university age were no longer admitted; and 3) only four classes of migrants were to be allowed to enter: university students, merchants (meaning those with substantial capital who were involved with China-Canada trade. Their wives and children could enter with the Minister's approval and only for a short period of time), native-born Canadian students returning from China and diplomatic personnel.



Toronto, c. 1940s. Courtesy of the E.C. Mark Family Collection.

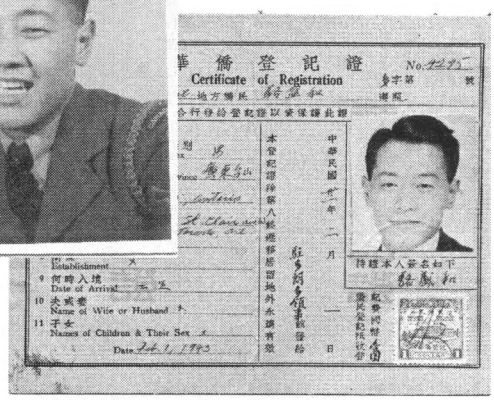
The communities were expected to wither and die. Instead, the period from 1923 to1947 ushered in a new era for the Chinese in Canada, in particular for the Canadian-born generation. While the numbers were declining, the communities were increasingly involved in social and political activities. When the Japanese invaded China in 1937 and entered the Second World War with the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, Canada and China became united as allies. Chinese communities across the country literally mobilized for action.

This was the second generation of Chinese to enlist. During the "Great War" (1914 - 1918) approximately 300 Chinese--Canadian-born and naturalized--enlisted in the Canadian army. British Columbia refused to allow Chinese to register so those interested went off to Ontario or Alberta. The 52nd Battalion (The New Ontario Battalion) was comprised mostly of Chinese and fought at Ypres in 1917.[1]

In Ontario, the Chinese Patriotic Federation linked all Ontario organizations. E.C. Mark served as secretary of the organization's Chinese War Relief Fund. The Fund was initiated by white Canadians and was subsequently authorized by the federal government under the War Charities Act.[2] Fund-raising events were held throughout the province. Chinese

communities contributed $5 million for the Chinese War Relief Fund and purchased over $10 million in Canadian Victory Bonds.

During this time, there was an ongoing debate within Chinese communities about military service. British Columbia and Saskatchewan had disenfranchised the Chinese. Politicians expressed concern that if the Chinese were called up for duty they would then demand the vote. In the minds of many Chinese Canadians of military age, compulsory service was intrinsically linked with obtaining the vote.



The Canadian government found different means to deny Chinese Canadians the call for active service. Beginning in 1940, the federal government would not call up the Chinese for military training in either of these two provinces and the extension of this ban by the Cabinet War Committee was then applied to all provinces. There was never a public announcement of the ban on compulsory military service for Chinese Canadians, but stories of young men of Chinese heritage who were turned away – because "Orientals" were not accepted – were common.

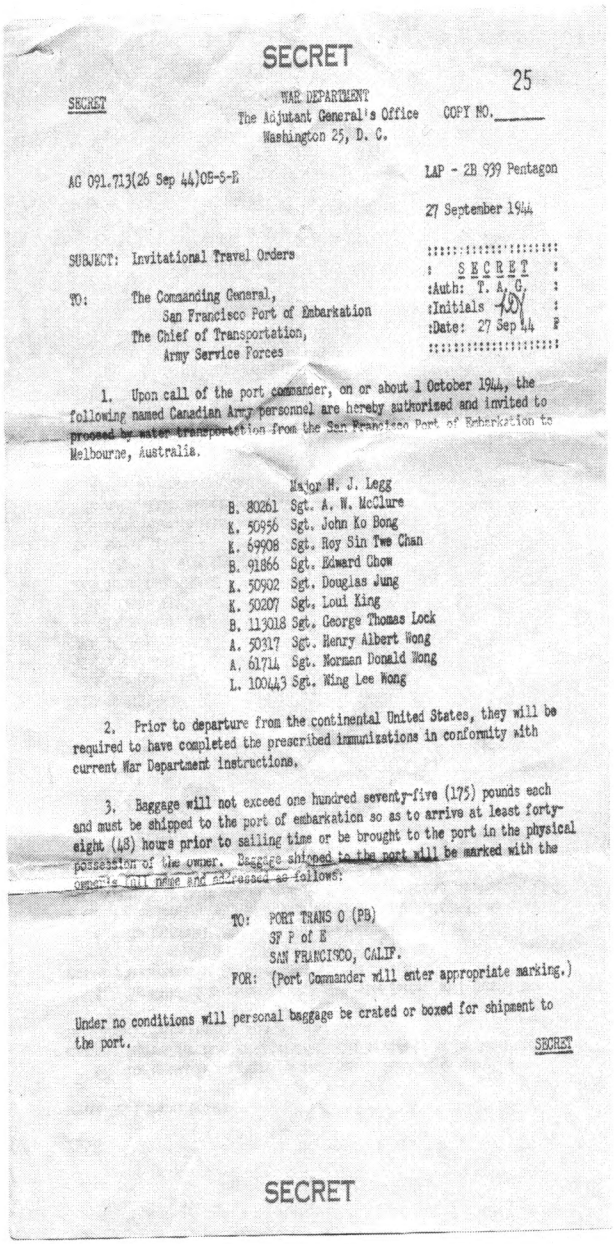
Despite the obstacles at home, some 500 Chinese Canadians enlisted, with some getting in at first as "non-active". Toronto-born Tom Lock, who later became the city's first Chinese pharmacist, was a member of the elite Chinese Canadian unit that operated under the code name "Operation Oblivion". Tom was living on Huron Street, in Toronto's "Chinatown" when the Second World War broke out and the young men of his age were enlisting in the Armed Forces. He learned that enlisting was one way to go to university. On March 12, 1942, when Tom reached the recruiting centre, he was asked what he wanted to be -- "a dentist", he replied. Tom began his distinguished military service in the non-active Dental Corps.

Pressure to permit Chinese Canadians to enlist for active duty came not from Canada, but from across the Atlantic. In March 1944, Britain's secret organization, "Special Operations Executive" (SOE) presented Canada with a request for Chinese Canadians "wanted for dangerous duties". The SOE, which was formed in 1940, trained its agents with special objectives: sabotage, subversion, and guerrilla warfare.[3] In Asia, the SOE was active in training guerillas and leading them against the enemy. On June 8, 1944, the army amended Secret Memorandum No. 1 -- the Canadian Army changed its position and allowed all Chinese, regardless of nationality, to enlist.

Tom Lock. Courtesy of Joan & Tom Lock Collection.

The first thirteen Chinese recruited by the SOE, for its China operation ("Operation Oblivion"), included: Sergeant George Thomas (Tom) Lock (Toronto); Norman Low (Vancouver), Raymond Lowe (Victoria), James Shiu (Saskatoon), Henry Albert (Hank) Wong

and his brother Sergeant Norman Donald Wong (London, Ont.), John Ko Bong (Victoria), Roy Chan (Victoria), Edward Chow (Vancouver), Corporal Douglas Jung (Victoria) and Louey King (Didsbury, Alberta). When Tom volunteered for the SOE, he was already a sergeant and one of the conditions of joining the SOE's clandestine missions in Japanese-held territory was that he keep his stripes.



SECRET

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SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
The Adjutant General's Office
Washington 25, D. C.

COPY NO._____

AG 091.713(26 Sep 44)OB-S-E

LAP - 2B 939 Pentagon

27 September 1944

SUBJECT: Invitational Travel Orders

: SECRET :
:Auth: T. A. G. :
:Initials :
:Date: 27 Sep 44 :

TO: The Commanding General,
San Francisco Port of Embarkation
The Chief of Transportation,
Army Service Forces

1. Upon call of the port commander, on or about 1 October 1944, the following named Canadian Army personnel are hereby authorized and invited to proceed by water transportation from the San Francisco Port of Embarkation to Melbourne, Australia.

Major H. J. Legg
B. 80261 Sgt. A. W. McClure
K. 50956 Sgt. John Ko Bong
K. 69908 Sgt. Roy Sin Twe Chan
B. 91866 Sgt. Edward Chow
K. 50902 Sgt. Douglas Jung
K. 50207 Sgt. Loui King
B. 113018 Sgt. George Thomas Lock
A. 50317 Sgt. Henry Albert Wong
A. 61714 Sgt. Norman Donald Wong
L. 100443 Sgt. Wing Lee Wong

2. Prior to departure from the continental United States, they will be required to have completed the prescribed immunizations in conformity with current War Department instructions.

3. Baggage will not exceed one hundred seventy-five (175) pounds each and must be shipped to the port of embarkation so as to arrive at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to sailing time or be brought to the port in the physical possession of the owner. Baggage shipped to the port will be marked with the owner's full name and addressed as follows:

TO: PORT TRANS O (PB)
3F P of E
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
FOR: (Port Commander will enter appropriate marking.)

Under no conditions will personal baggage be crated or boxed for shipment to the port.

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The men of "Operation Oblivion" received their training in Commando, British Columbia. Once in Asia, they were instructed "to arm and train anti-Japanese forces in China; attack Japanese communications; perform industrial and shipping sabotage in Hong Kong, the New Territories, and Canton areas; act as a fifth column; perform coast watching duties; and carry on anti-Japanese propaganda."[4]

On November 12, 1944, the troop arrived in Australia for further training in jungle warfare, small boat work and medical assistance. By mid-December, training was complete and the men were ready to board the submarine to infiltrate China. The China operation was suddenly cancelled, however, but the group remained in Australia continuing with conversion training in parachute jumping.

On May 17, 1945, Sergeant Tom Lock, who was not expected to return alive from military duty, married Joan Lim On, in Melbourne. On August 4, 1945, Sergeant H.A. Wong married Myrtle O'Hoy in Bendigo, Australia. The war brides travelled to Canada aboard the SS Monterey and arrived in 1946, entering at White Rock, British Columbia, while the Chinese Immigration Act, 1923, was still in force. For Joan and Myrtle, an Order-in-Council had to be issued to allow their "head taxes" to be waived.

The young Chinese Canadian men and women who enlisted in the armed forces played a pivotal role in the repeal of the 1923 "Exclusion Act." Not only had China been an ally during the war, but Canadians experienced first-hand how the war itself had been against unjust racist social policies of Nazi Germany. Other key factors included the issue that the 1923 Act was in direct conflict with the United Nations Charter, to which Canada was a signatory.

The Toronto-based Committee for the Repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act was formed in November 1946. The 1923 Act

was finally repealed in May 1947, but it was effectively replaced with P.C. 2115 that allowed only those who were Canadian


Toronto Greets First Australian War Brides

citizens to bring their families from China. The Toronto community kept up the pressure for greater equality in immigration, regularly sending delegations to Ottawa on the matter of family reunification, and Ottawa at last abandoned P.C. 2115 in 1956.

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[1] Marjorie Wong, *The Dragon and the Maple Leaf: Chinese Canadians in World War II* (London: Pirie Publishing, 1992), 3.
[2] Harry Con et al., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 192.
[3] Wong, 112.
[4] Ibid., 133-134.

Family, Work and Survival: Chinese Women in Ontario

Dora Nipp

Even today, the experiences of early Chinese women in Canada continue to be overlooked in the historiography of the community. Overshadowed by the male experience and traditional interpretations of history, and the lack of traditionally recognized sources such as memoirs, writings and records, women often still appear as footnotes or statistics. Archived at the Multicultural History Society are several hundred hours of interviews that were conducted with the Chinese women in Ontario. In addition to the Society's own collection, on deposit are the interviews that were incorporated into *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women.*[1] These tapes capture the richness of their lives and provide a glimpse into the world that was their reality. The following article draws on these voices, demonstrating that pioneer Chinese women were far from the stereotype of a disempowered and silent figure.

Throughout the generations of Chinese in Canada, Chinese women have played an integral role in the community's collective growth, development and integration into Canadian society. In 1860, the Victoria press[2] recorded the arrival of Mrs. Chong Lee, who was referred to by the name of her husband's prominent business, "Kwong Lee". This was an important milestone for the Chinese in Canada.

The emigration of Chinese to countries overseas on occasion, but not often, included women. In Canada, women were discouraged from joining husbands and fathers because of anti-Chinese legislation. For the largely "bachelor societies" that

Reverend Ma T. K. Wou and Anna Ma, 1914. Courtesy of Daniel Mah.

existed in urban centres and small towns across the country, the arrival of women, although in small numbers, shifted the social and organizational structure of these communities.

Although they were not significant in number, Chinese women had an important impact on Ontario's Chinese communities. With the arrival of women, social institutions were established, including church groups and schools, to meet the needs of young families. Women's roles as wives and mothers included child-rearing and other paid and unpaid work, and women played a vital role in their family's economic stability. They also passed on to their children the Chinese language, traditions and values. The children, in turn, learned to move comfortably between two cultures, speaking two languages, and attending Chinese and public schools.

The number of Chinese women in Ontario remained relatively small until after

the Second World War, and most were living in Toronto. By 1911, women comprised only 2.9% of the province's Chinese population. Within ten years, the number increased to 4.6%, which included many Canadian-born girls, but the male-to-female ratio was slow to balance out and would not approach equal proportions until the 1960s.

The "head taxes" were set at too high a price for labourers. Clergy and merchants, however, were exempted from paying these taxes and the financial barrier to sending for their spouse and children was therefore somewhat less substantial for them.

The experience of Chinese women in Ontario would be influenced by several factors that their sisters on the West Coast did not likely share. Anti-Chinese sentiment in Ontario did not reach the same hysteria as in British Columbia and far less anti-Chinese legislation was introduced. The Chinese communities of Ontario remained small and were viewed, therefore, as less of a threat. And most significantly, the role of the church and the large number of Chinese Christians were factors that influenced the shaping of the communities, effectively facilitating interaction with the larger Canadian society.

In Ontario, there were several missionaries who had worked in China. The China missionaries and Chinese graduates from mission schools in China were sent to work in Toronto. One of the missionary students, Anna Ma, was married to the first Chinese Presbyterian Minister in Ontario, Reverend T.K. Wou Ma. Anna Ma arrived in Toronto in 1914 to teach and outreach to the women. Together they set up a church, to serve Toronto's Chinese community, in a three-storey house that was located at 187 Church Street. The first Chinese Presbyterian Church had a modest congregation of twenty to thirty men. The third floor was used as the living quarters and the first and second floors were used for services, meetings, social functions and Chinese school.

By 1916, three women had joined the fledgling congregation: Mrs. W. L. Mark, Mrs. Lock Kwong and Mrs. Mark Park.[3] They were the founding members of the Women's Auxiliary and met regularly, without their husbands present, at the Knox Presbyterian Church, because at the time it was not acceptable for Chinese women to be seen in public.[4]

Anna Ma's children recall that their mother was constantly busy with church work, leaving little time for domestic responsibilities. For example, she did not cook; that was Reverend Ma's responsibility. Members of the congregation often came to the house to help mind her ten children.

Within two years, more women began arriving in Ontario, joining husbands who had settled in “small-town” Ontario. In Windsor, Mrs. Hong arrived to join her

Anna Ma and her Chinese language class for missionaries. Courtesy of Daniel Mah.

husband who had come in 1905. They ran the "Savoy", Windsor's first Chinese restaurant. Their daughter, Jean Lee, was born in 1919.

Another early mother, Mrs. Tam Young, lived in northern Ontario, at North Bay. What is known about her is that the Young family first settled in Montreal, then moved to North Bay in approximately 1910. She was twenty years younger than her husband, which was not uncommon. Men often worked for several years before they could afford to send for a wife.

The women mentioned above shared many commonalities -- they all worked and cared for their children. But, Anna Ma, Mrs. Young and Mrs. Lock also shared a similar loss when they became widows. Without the traditional extended family for support, they were left to their own resources after the death of their husbands. It is as single mothers raising their children that the strength of the pioneer Chinese woman stands out. Following Reverend Ma's passing, Anna Ma stated in her memoirs:

> I was left with nine children all still at school. Miss Mathew was in charge of the women's work. She came to visit me, and suggested I apply for welfare to which I replied, " I'd rather die than take charity". When the minister of Knox came to see me, he found I only had twenty-five cents in my purse. He gave me $3. At a further meeting, he handed me $20. Everyone was very kind. The church gave me $100; the relatives helped a bit. The Mission Department continued to pay my husband's salary and rent supplement of $140 for three months. When Reverend David Smith, who was in charge of the Chinese work across Canada, came on tour, he asked me to carry on the work for the next few months and he would pay me $45 a month.[5]

In North Bay, Mrs. Young was raising eight children when her husband suddenly died of a heart attack at the age of 51. Her youngest child was only eighteen months old. She opted to take her children back to China to her husband's village. However, as the second wife, she was not granted enough land to support her family. Mrs.

Mrs. Tam Young, Courtesy of Agnes Lor.

Young decided that she would enroll her children in the best school that she could afford. Mrs. Young was also a Christian, and she sent her children to the Anglican Mission School in Fat Shan. She came back to North Bay with her two youngest children and the eldest son to run a little laundry and restaurant. Despite her efforts, however, each of her children in China died of tuberculosis, and her eldest son was shot to death in a bungled robbery. Only her two youngest children grew up in Canada.

CHINESE WOMAN COMES TO TORONTO.

Lock Quong and his wife. As told in Saturday's Star, Mrs. L Quong arrived in the city on the forenoon of that day and passed through the Customs.

Lock Quong and Mrs. Lock, c. 1917

When Mrs. Lock lost her husband, she started up a small laundry in Toronto's St. Clair and Lansdowne area, with money borrowed from the informal, community "credit union". Several people put money into the pool and whoever needed start-up money bid for a loan and agreed to an interest rate.

Mrs. Lock kept the laundry open from early morning until late at night, serving mainly the neighbourhood families and single men and women who lived in the nearby rooms. Her son Earl picked up socks for mending from other laundries. Her second son, Tom, helped out front. Tom recalled:

> To make the linen white, we used to put the soiled clothing into a big square steel tank, 4' x 4' x 6' deep, on top of the coal stove. We would fill the tank using a hose and add bleach, stirring the washing with a big stick. After, Ma would stand on a stool, reach into the boiling water and drag out the clothes with a stick. She would then drop them in a pail and transfer them to the washing machine. She was less than five feet tall and her feet were once bound.[6]

As with many Chinese mothers in Toronto, Mrs. Lock also attended church on Sunday. The church continued to play an important role in the lives of the Canadian-born generation, making it possible for bright Chinese women to enter university and professions. For example, whereas British Columbia would not accept Agnes Chan to study nursing, with the assistance of the Women's Missionary Society in Victoria, she was able to complete her studies in nursing in 1923 at the Women's College Hospital in Toronto. Agnes Chan had been a ward of Victoria's Oriental Home and School. In the same year, Dr. Victoria Cheung was the first woman to intern at the Toronto General Hospital.

Agnes Chan, 1923.
Courtesy of Mary Ko Bong.

The 1920s and 1930's were challenging times for the Chinese in Ontario. When the *Chinese Immigration Act, 1923* (the "Exclusion Act") was introduced, it had a profound impact on all Chinese communities in the country. That year there

were 202 restaurants in Toronto; within ten years, the number dropped to 104. During the same period the number of laundries fell from 471 to 355.[7]

By 1933, there were only thirteen Chinese families recorded living in Toronto's Chinatown area.[8] The community refused to die. Since the "Exclusion Act" made it difficult to send children to China to study, the Canadian-born children of these families inspired the setting up of Chinese language schools in Toronto, Windsor and Hamilton.[9]

By the late 1930s, Ontario's dwindling Chinese communities benefited from an influx of Chinese migrating from the West Coast. Jean Wong, born in Nanaimo, British Columbia, boarded a train to Toronto in 1939 at the age of

sixteen, with her eight-year-old sister, Dorothy, in hand. She and her cousin promptly set up a grocery store in the city. At the age of nineteen, Jean Wong, who would become one of the city's most prominent citizens and advocate on behalf of Ontario's Chinese communities, married Doyle Lumb. Together Doyle and Jean (Wong) Lumb operated a Toronto landmark, the Kwangchow Restaurant.

With the arrival of Canadian and American-born Chinese women to Ontario, their new blood and energy revived the communities. The revitalizing of the spirit that typifies Ontario's Chinese communities characterized the pre-war years; and it was this era that inspired the role that the Chinese, women and men, would assume during World War II.

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[1] The Women's Book Committee, Chinese Canadian National Council, *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992).
[2] *The British Colonist*, 1 March 1860.
[3] S.S. Osterhout, *Orientals in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1929), 185.
[4] Anna Ma, Unpublished memoir, The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Toronto, 58.
[5] Ibid., 62.
[6] Tom Lock, interview by Valerie Mah, early 1980s.
[7] Richard Thompson, *Toronto's Chinatown: The Changing Social Organization of an Ethnic Community* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 42.
[8] Valerie Mah, "The Bachelor Society: a look at Toronto's early Chinese community from 1878–1924," (Unpublished paper, Toronto, 1978).
[9] Gordon Taylor, *Chinese Schools in Canada,* (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1933), 70.

The Organization of Chinese Restaurant Workers

Winnie Ng

In the late 19th century, Canada needed a supply of cheap workers to complete the western portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), so in 1881, it turned to Asia. The CPR first brought in 1,500 experienced Chinese railroad workers who had laboured on American rail lines. These men were brought to British Columbia on a trial basis. They proved to be highly skilled and efficient, and the CPR decided to recruit directly from Hong Kong and China. Over the next four years, approximately 15,000 Chinese laboured on the railway.

In 1884, with Canada now joined coast to coast by a national rail line, cheap Chinese labour was no longer needed and the workers were dispersed among the many small towns that popped up along the CPR or to the larger urban centres of Victoria and Vancouver. Drifting into various industries, the labourers turned to lumbering, fishing, salmon canning, mining and farming, provoking even greater anti-Chinese feelings.

Hoping that anti-Chinese sentiment would be less virulent in other provinces, many boarded the CPR and headed east, settling in the Prairies and Ontario. While anti-Chinese sentiment did not reach the heights of British Columbia, labour in Ontario made its objection to the Chinese known early on. On October 1, 1884, a mass labour meeting was held by the Knights of Labour in Hamilton. The meeting was followed by a march through the main streets of the city protesting against Chinese labourers in Canada, and violence broke out at Wah Lee's Laundry on James Street North. The procession included, "10 assemblies of the Knights of Labour, the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Boiler Makers' Union, the Cigar Makers' Union, the Amalgamated Engineers, Glass Blowers' Union, the Bricklayers' and Masons' Union", as well as "unorganized and other working men".[1]

By 1911, there were 1,099 Chinese in Toronto, 162 in Hamilton and 168 in Ottawa.[2] By 1921, there were also 210 Chinese in London. Canadian Census provide a breakdown by industry of the Chinese in Ontario from 1921 to 1941[3], as presented in Table 1.

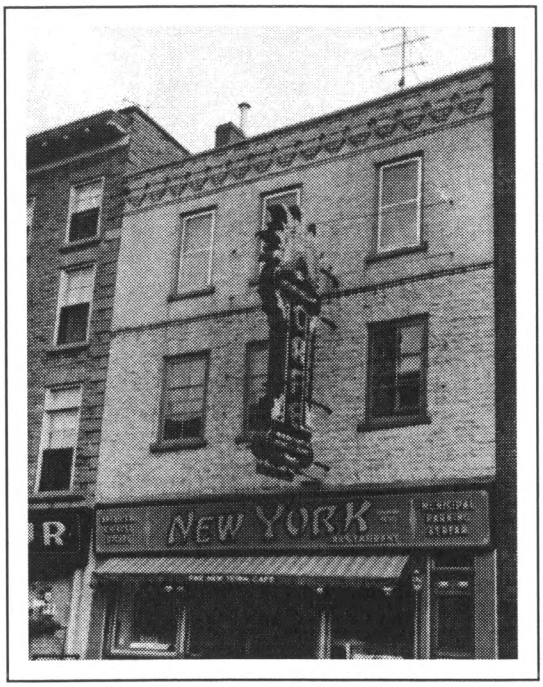
The figures below show that Ontario's Chinese were concentrated in the laundry and restaurant industries. As early as 1923, the first Western-style Restaurant Owners' Association was established in Toronto, with members in other cities and towns.[4] In the 1920s, when Ontario attempted to enforce legislation to prevent Chinese businesses from hiring white women, the Chinese community and members of this Association rallied against it.

From the war years until amendments to the Immigration Act in 1967, the Chinese

Year	Laundry	Restaurant	Retail	Labour	Agricultural	Professional	%Laundry	%Restaurant
1921	2,300	1,875	218	81	0	9	40%	33%
1931	2,508	2,722	95	122	105	4	40%	45%
1941	1,584	2,491	483	233	261	31	24%	33%

Table 1. Industries in which the Chinese in Ontario found themselves employed, by decade.

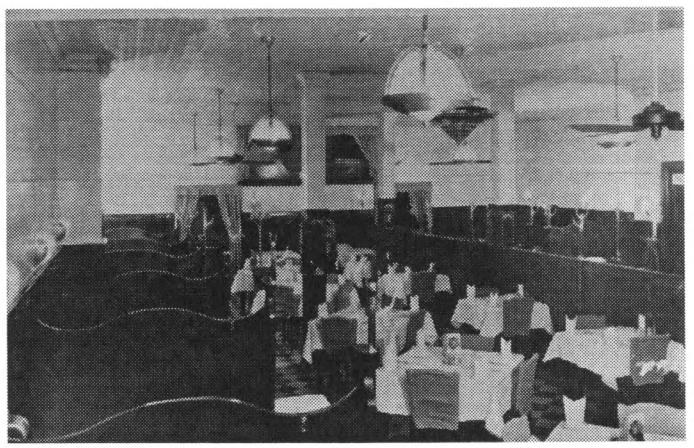
community's relationship with organized labour can generally be described as subdued. During this time, the community was trying to make up for years of economic, social and political loss as a result of a volley of anti-Chinese legislation at all levels of government. It would not be until the early 1970s that it came face to face with union organizers, but this time, the stakes were different and so were the actors. Chinese workers in Toronto turned to the unions to organize. As history would have it, the first attempts to organize in Chinatown were made by restaurant employees.



Brockville, Courtesy of Agnes Lor.

In the 1970s, the landscape of Ontario's Chinese community had changed dramatically. In 1967, amendments to immigration law allowed for a fairer assessment of immigrants and this coincided with social and political disturbances in Hong Kong and the subsequent influx of Chinese to Canada. With the arrival of these new immigrants, a number of whom were blue-collar workers, businesses in Toronto's Chinatown also underwent a transformation. These dynamics resulted in marked changes to established industries in Chinatown, in particular the time-honoured Chinese-Canadian family-operated restaurants and cafés.

The "International Chinese Restaurant" on Dundas Street in Toronto was the first Hong Kong-type establishment, operated by Hong Kong entrepreneurs. The International had a structured division of labour that included "captains" and a crew of more than 100 staff both inside and outside the kitchen. This was a dramatic departure from the early days when Chinese owners doubled as cooks, and when wait-staff were often white women.



Traditionally, Chinese restaurants that catered to the Chinese clientele and their predecessors, "cafes", demanded long hours and afforded little pay. Even into the 1970s, the wage scale and hours worked had not deviated from early years. If there were a choice, most would not work in the restaurant industry. The hours were long with split shifts and the income was unpredictable. A lack of English language ability and Canadian experience were barriers to finding work outside Chinatown and in other industries. It is not going too far to say that these aspects of the restaurant industry in Chinatown have not changed.

The Chinatown economy attracted the most vulnerable of the working class. Most of the staff at the International were new immigrants and "old timers": (professional waiters)[5] who had been in the industry for quite some time. Within the new immigrant category, there were also a few of those who were professionals in their home countries, but on arrival in Canada their qualifications and credentials were not recognized. With few employment options open to them, they had to rely on the Chinatown economy for work.

The workers at the International reflected a cross-section of newer immigrants. Some were sponsored relatives, others came under the "assisted relative" class. At that time, persons in this class were not entitled to subsidized English classes. Also included were older women who had come in the 1950's or 60's after the *Chinese Immigration Act, 1923* (the "Exclusion Act") was repealed in 1947. Many of these women were widows and constituted a fairly vulnerable group of workers who had to rely on the restaurant industry, and for them every penny counted.

Workers from Hong Kong, who had some education and who were accustomed to a more "industrial" setting, were also among International's staff. Their experiences in Hong Kong gave them an expectation of fairness in the workplace, and it was therefore natural for the workers in this group to initiate the organizing drive at the International.

The organizing drive at the International was sparked by a dispute over the division of tips. Those from Hong Kong were accustomed to the practice of pooling and dividing tips in a graduated manner. Basically, the waiters and the chefs got a larger percentage of the tips than the busboys, *dim sum* cart pushers, or the kitchen helpers. It was understood that management stayed away from that pot.

When management expressed an interest in a share of the tips and moved for a 15% cut of the portion, an uproar ensued. Three restaurant workers, new arrivals from Hong Kong who had previously worked in an industrial setting, were selected to look into the management's demand. The three decided, without prompting from or consulting with community advocates, to establish a union. They proceeded quietly, and selected three unions from the Yellow Pages that to them represented restaurant workers.

They made appointments with representatives of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and a third union. They settled on the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCWU) because it represented a number of hospital and nursing home workers and had a high percentage of Black members.

Initially, the UFCWU was somewhat apprehensive about the request, as this was the first time it had been approached directly by immigrant workers, not via interpreters or intermediaries. This was also the first time it had been approached by an "ethnic" restaurant. The stereotypical assumption that immigrant workers would not sign up to form a union was prevalent during that time. Yet, this perception has been proven wrong time and time again. If the working conditions are sufficiently exploitative, immigrant workers have shown that they will react.

Over 70% of the workers signed up and the signed cards were sent to the Labour Board. It was at that point that management began to panic, fearful that the system in which the International was supposed to operate was threatened. In response, management began to harass the three organizers. Management's legal counsel alleged that the restaurant workers signed

under coercion, that they did not know what they were signing because they were all Chinese workers, and that the decision to organize was not really what they wanted. The workers, however, who were subpoenaed before the Labour Board, stated that they knew exactly what they were doing and joined of their own free will. The Labour Board's decision was unanimous and it granted automatic certification.

The victory, however, was short-lived. For the next ten months, management continued to stall the bargaining process and this was possible for three reasons. At that time, there was no first contract legislation and this put a damper on the fledgling union. Second, management suddenly withdrew from the tip division system, and in that sense, the workers had won. Third, management targeted the three workers as ringleaders, harassing them -- within a year, two left.

Management quickly promoted the remaining organizer to the position of captain. At this stage, the workers were disillusioned with the contract negotiations because there had been no further discussions. The union did not seem to know how next to proceed and was at a standstill. The apparent apathy on the union's part to assist was sharply noted by the restaurant workers and it deepened their disappointment in the organizing process.

There were also other factors that contributed to the delay in contract negotiations. The three who pushed to unionize were now concerned about the very high price each would have to pay. They had won the battle because management had rescinded on the issue of the tips, but this weighed against a heavier concern that they would not be able to find work again in Chinatown. With these obstacles, it is likely that the three did not push as hard for contract negotiations, or with the same vigor, as the sign-up.

The union's seeming lukewarm interest in the International, together with the growing concern among the organizers for their livelihood, fuelled management to continue its campaign of harassment and stonewalling. [6] Instead of acquiescing, management began to set ultimatums, demanding that certain rules be followed, and refused to back down. The workers felt caught and without support. With this backdrop, soon after the certification, Chinatown's first union began a steady downhill spiral and it simply faded away.

While the International did not get beyond certification, it had an impact, albeit less forceful than at first anticipated. The

organizing efforts of the International signaled to immigrant workers that they had access to a weapon to be used against the employer when conditions worsened. It also highlighted the limitations of the law in terms of genuinely granting workers free choice to a union. Legislation still stipulated that workers were to be free of intimidation and so on, and could freely participate in union activities. The reality of the International was the opposite. On a daily basis, workers witnessed the three organizers being harassed and management's efforts to co-opt them. Moreover, the union's lack of action left the workers discouraged. Throughout the organizing, there was little communication between the union and the immigrant workers.

Another stumbling block at this time was that neither the union nor the restaurant workers were ready to acknowledge that the community could be an ally. Unlike the organizing of the cleaners in the Portuguese community, or the garment factory workers, there was little publicity over the International. The public was not aware of the organizing drive or of the negotiation.

While the restaurant workers did not reach out to the community, neither did the community offer any support. With better links, initiatives such as a boycott of the restaurant over the delay in negotiating the contract could have been organized, and the English language press kept informed.

For the reasons set out above, the International was a failed cross-cultural exercise in which the stakes were both contentious and high. It is an historical episode because, for once, the status quo within the community was challenged, with the impetus coming from the hitherto unfamiliar labour movement. In retrospect, neither group could anticipate the response of the other.

Several years later, University Settlement House, a downtown social service agency conducted an assessment of the situation of Chinatown's restaurant workers. Wary of what had happened with the International, social workers at the University Settlement House decided that collecting data through a non-threatening assessment would shed more light on the present situation. The assessment was prompted in part by the increased number of larger restaurants (with the same structure as the International). As well, restaurants that were opening and closing within six months suggested that many workers were still vulnerable to exploitation. The assessment looked at the extent of shift work, access to English language training, and health and safety concerns. Had this information been available during the organizing efforts of the International, it would likely have helped to garner the support needed from both the union and the public to make Chinatown's first unionized workplace a reality.

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[1] *A Report on the Development of the Chinese Community in Hamilton*, The Chinese Cultural Association of Hamilton, 1983, 5.
[2] *Census of Canada, 1911*, II, pp. 372-3.
[3] *Census of Canada, 1921*, V, pp. 656ff; *1931*, VII, pp. 430ff; *1941*, VII, 322ff.
[4] Harry Con et al., *From China to Canada: a History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 320.
[5] The trademarks of "professional waiters" were their waist-jackets, white shirts, black trousers and bow tie, and their unfettered courtesy. In Toronto, the last of this generation can still be found at the Sai Woo Restaurant on Dundas Street.
[6] For a short time, the workers were buoyed by the efforts of restaurant workers in New York, with information conveyed through the Chinese media. There was also organizing in San Francisco over the unsafe working conditions. *Dim sum* restaurants were using propane in the carts and several *dim sum* servers were severely burned.

The Chinese Communities of Toronto:
Their Languages and Mass Media

Bernard H.K. Luk

Language and ethnic boundaries

Language is both a tool of communication and a cement of identity. As a tool, it makes it possible for persons using the same language to communicate to one another their needs, concerns and aspirations, thereby to share something of themselves with one another. All this communication enables these persons to form a community, which would not be accessible (certainly not to the same extent) to other persons unable to use the language. The common language is one of the most important factors that hold the community together. Over time, this community would develop certain unique ways of seeing things, which become embedded in the language, and are a part of the literary, artistic and moral expression of the community.

When a speech community exists in isolation, its members usually are not self-conscious of the language they speak. But when they meet with speakers of other languages, such as in the case of migration or of a territory where different speech communities co-exist, language consciousness emerges. The use of the language then is not only instrumental, but also symbolic. It helps to identify group members to themselves, to one another, and to outsiders. It becomes one of the ways to draw the boundary lines between this community and other groups of humanity, in other words, the ethnic boundaries.

The same is true when speech communities of closely related languages live side by side. Each of the closely related but noticeably different languages (sometimes called 'dialects') serves to unite its own group and demarcate it from other communities. Groups speaking closely related languages ('dialects') might have more in common with one another than with not-so-related groups, but in so far as they are linguistically and culturally distinct, they are subdivisions or sub-ethnic groups. In a multiethnic society, language helps to form the ethnic as well as sub-ethnic boundaries. (The term 'dialect' is defined politically rather than scientifically, and is avoided by many scholars of sociolinguistics.)

In the case of the Chinese Canadians living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Chinese language use serves instrumental as well as identity functions, both for the ethnic and for the sub-ethnic communities. In other words, use of Chinese language is one of the ways to define Chinese ethnicity; and use of Cantonese rather than, say, Mandarin or Taiwanese demarcates sub-ethnic communities. According to the1996 Census, the aggregate Chinese communities constitute the second largest ethno-linguistic group in the GTA, after English. This is the result of decades of large-scale immigration from across the Pacific Ocean, and is manifested in the local mass media as well as numerous language-related industries.

Waves of Chinese immigration and linguistic variety

The Chinese population of Canada is linguistically and culturally diverse. At the turn of the millennium, it is made up of a minority of Canadian-born Chinese, and a majority of immigrants from China and the diasporan Chinese communities, including the People's Republic of China (PRC),

Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and other source societies. In the Greater Toronto Area,[1] these largely separate sub-ethnic communities remain distinct while overlapping with one another partially. While they live in peaceful coexistence, and have a certain amount of economic relations, their social and cultural ties and inter-communications are rather limited.

During the period before the Second World War, most Chinese immigrants in Canada had come from a rural or small town background in the Pearl River Delta and were rather homogeneous in language and culture. Almost all of them spoke one or another local variety of Cantonese. These varieties were audially distinct, but presented no real difficulty for communication. So a Toisan person meeting a Sunwui person in the streets of Toronto could identify one another's hometown from the 'accent', but would not find it hard to converse. They could be considered as members of the same speech community, although they belonged to two different hometown clubs in Chinatown. This community was known as Sze-yap, i.e., the 'Four Counties' of Sunwui, Toisan, Hoiping and Yanping in the Pearl River Delta. (In Hanyu Pinyin romanization of Mandarin, these names are spelt: Siyi, Xinhui, Taishan, Kaiping, and Enping.)

The new Chinese immigrants since the Second World War, especially since the late 1960s, came from diverse parts of the Pacific Basin and elsewhere, and are truly heterogeneous. The relatives of the pre-war immigrants who were allowed to join them in Canada after the lifting of Exclusion would be Sze-yap speakers. Today, Sze-yap (or Delta Cantonese) is still spoken in the Toronto Chinatown (centred on the Dundas-Spadina intersection) by the older immigrants and many of their younger relatives.

About two thirds of the post-war immigrants came from Hong Kong, where the lingua franca is Metropolitan Cantonese (or Kwong-fu, the speech of the major Pearl River cities of Canton, Hong Kong and Macau). When speakers of Metropolitan Cantonese (or of Mandarin, for that matter) first arrived in the Chinatowns of North America, the local Sze-yap speakers regarded them as aliens--"Chinese who can't speak proper Chinese." But Metropolitan and Delta Cantonese are sufficiently alike that there were no real, long-lasting difficulties for communication.

The Hong Kong immigrants arrived in the GTA in two major waves. The first wave was in the late 1960s, early 1970s, following the Communist Confrontation in Hong Kong and the adoption of the points system by Immigration Canada, both in 1967. The second wave was in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, in anticipation of the Handover of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China. Altogether, close to 200,000[2] Hongkongans are estimated to have settled in the GTA from the two waves. The sheer weight of numbers, the intensity of the influx, and the purchasing power of the newcomers, as well as the extraordinary cultural productivity of Hong Kong itself, have given Metropolitan Cantonese a large presence in Toronto and across Canada. This will become apparent in the rest of this essay.

Another major wave of Chinese immigration to Canada was part of the post-Vietnam War influx. Many of the war refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were ethnic Chinese from these countries, or had multiple ethnic identities. Among the nearly 100,000 Vietnamese Canadians in the GTA, it has been estimated that almost half also have Chinese ethnic identity. Many of them would speak one or another form of Chinese, such as Metropolitan or Delta Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien or Minnan. (The provenance of the last two is Fujian province.)

During the 1960s to 1990s, tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants have come also from Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and the Caribbean, as well as from China itself. While some kind of Cantonese is the mother tongue of many of them, the majority speak other regional varieties ('dialects') of Chinese. Hakka (from the hill country of south-central China) is the speech of many immigrants from China itself, from Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. Hokkien is also the speech of many people from Singapore or Malaysia, while many from Taiwan speak Minnan or Hakka.

Mandarin, based on a Beijing variety of Chinese and which was made the "national language" by the northern warlords in the early 1920s, is the native tongue of a small minority of Chinese Canadians. It is the native language of some immigrants from Taiwan, and all of them had their schooling in Mandarin. In fact, there were few northern Chinese immigrants in Canada until the aftermath of the Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing in 1989, when several thousand students from the People's Republic were allowed to settle in Canada, including many northerners. Since the mid-1990s, the People's Republic has become a leading source country of immigrants to Canada. These immigrants come from north and south, east and west China, adding even more varieties of Chinese (such as Shanghaiese) to the linguistic mix in Toronto. However, the numerical and economic preponderance of Cantonese remains, at least for the time being.

To simplify the discussion, most of this essay will focus on the three main source societies of Chinese immigration, namely, Hong Kong, Taiwan and PRC, which together account for over 80% of all Chinese-Canadians. For the majority of the Chinese Torontonians, who came from Hong Kong, the language for home and co-ethnic use is Cantonese, which is also the

language of some 90% of the broadcasting time of the Chinese electronic media in Toronto. For immigrants from Taiwan, the common language is Mandarin; but for many Taiwanese, Mandarin is a second language, acquired reluctantly at school; they prefer to speak Taiwanese with family members and co-ethnics. For immigrants from the north of PRC, the lingua franca is Mandarin (which they call Putonghua), but the home language could be any regional variety of Chinese. For those from the Pearl River Delta, whether the earlier settlers or their relatives who joined them more recently, the language is likely to be some form of Delta Cantonese.

On the map of the GTA in the 1990s, the Chinatowns in downtown Toronto (Dundas-Spadina and Broadview-Gerrard) are populated by speakers of Delta (Sze-yap) and Metropolitan (Kwong-fu) Cantonese, speakers of a variety of southern Chinese with Vietnamese or other Southeast Asian accents, and new arrivals from PRC speaking Mandarin with various eastern or northern Chinese accents. Metropolitan Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong are found in large numbers in the northern districts of the city, namely Agincourt and Willowdale, and in the northern suburban towns of Richmond Hill and Markham. Some newcomers from PRC speaking Mandarin and other northern or eastern regional forms of Chinese also have found their way there. Speakers of Mandarin and Taiwanese from Taiwan also concentrate in the north, especially around Willowdale, while pockets of speakers of all kinds of Chinese could be found in other districts such as Downsview, and in nearby cities like Mississauga and elsewhere throughout the GTA.

Inter-communication

While the various forms of the Chinese language are similar to one another (at least when they are compared to other languages like English, French or Japanese), they are not readily inter-communicable. In fact, some linguists consider the differences between, say, Cantonese and Mandarin to be as great as that between English and Dutch, or between French and Italian. The language attitudes between the speech communities are also not altogether amenable. Among Mandarin speakers, there is usually disdain for and unwillingness to learn Cantonese or other southern tongues such as Minnan or Hakka, so much so that one could live among Cantonese speakers for years, say, in the Toronto Chinatown, and remain unable to use the language of the majority. Cantonese speakers do not hold Mandarin in such disdain, but few have seen much need in learning it, and few understand or speak it with much fluency. For Chinese Canadians from Taiwan, the choice between Mandarin and Minnan (sometimes called Taiwanese) is often a personal and

social as well as a political one, bound up with attitudes towards the political future of Taiwan. Persons who grew up in Singapore or Malaysia could move with some ease among the varieties of Chinese, but they are a small minority in Toronto.

It is conventional wisdom that the varieties of Chinese exist only in speech while in writing it is all the same. That is not true, at least since the orthographic reform (the "simplified characters", *jiantizi*) introduced by the Communist government of the People's Republic in the 1950s. Lines separating the Chinese communities of Canada also exist in terms of written language. Immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan use the traditional forms of Chinese characters (*fantizi*), which is the form used in almost all Chinese print media or outdoor signage in Toronto. Immigrants from PRC, on the other hand, had learnt in school the simplified forms of the characters. (Younger Singaporeans also learnt a slightly different set of simplified characters.) With some training, the two forms are not mutually incomprehensible. But most Chinese readers prefer to stick to what is familiar rather than make the extra effort to learn to read the other communities' writing, unless there is a need to do so.

Apart from orthography, there are also important differences in writing style even when the writing is supposedly in "common" Modern Chinese. Orthographically, all three major Chinese-language newspapers published in Toronto are printed in traditional characters. Stylistically, the Taiwan-based *World Journal* uses diction which is closer to formal spoken Mandarin, but with many Minnan accretions. The Hong Kong-based *Ming Pao* and *Sing Tao*, on the other hand, use Modern Chinese with many accretions of Cantonese. There are also vocabulary differences which reflect the socio-political differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan. For example, when a news report refers to passers-by on the streets, a Hong Kong writer would use the term *shimin* ("citizens"), whereas a Taiwanese writer would use *minzhong* ("commoner masses"). (A PRC writer also would use *minzhong*.) Such differences in vocabulary abound, marking group boundaries and making it uncomfortable for a reader or writer to cross those boundaries. So immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong often find each other's newspapers difficult to read, and remain with their own.

PRC immigrants do not have a Toronto newspaper of their own; many of those from the north, being Mandarin speakers, would read the *World Journal*, while those from the south would read the Hong Kong newspapers. They do, however, have available to them the overseas editions of the *People's Daily* from Beijing and the *Yangcheng Daily* from Canton, both printed in simplified characters. But these PRC newspapers do not seem to be popular in Toronto.

Language maintenance and loss

Among many descendants of the earlier Chinese immigrants from the Pearl River Delta, or even among many of the offspring of the immigrants of the early post-World War II period, any form of Chinese is a faint memory, except for a few words related to food or family relations, and English is likely to be the only language in daily use. Indeed, Chinese Canadians who grew up in the assimilationist era before the 1970s were not much different from youngsters of other ethnic groups. It was an age when schoolteachers advised immigrant parents not to speak their native languages with their children for fear of impeding progress in school. The children were expected to grow up monolingually in English; and if the parents could not speak English fluently, there would be no common language, and very little inter-generational communication at home. The school, and Anglophone society at large, did not regard that as too high a price to pay by the immigrant family;

nor did they regard it as a loss of valuable linguistic resources for Canada. Beyond the schools, there was also a good deal of intolerance and discrimination against non-English languages on the streets.

The emergence of new Canadian values in the late 1960s, embodied in the terms 'multiculturalism' and 'Canadian mosaic', began to change things, at least in larger urban centres. In time, Toronto could claim to be the most multicultural city on the globe, where "everyone in the world has a friend or a relative". Toronto is proud of its multicultural and polyglot richness. The school boards provide heritage language classes in dozens of languages, as well as interpreter services at parent-teacher meetings, wherever the size of parental demand warrants the provision. In this context, the more recent waves of Chinese immigrants have been in a much more advantageous position for preserving their language in the next generation.

source society of the target pupils. For example, the Cantonese materials are printed in traditional characters and assume that character recognition is taught by aural-visual approach like in Hong Kong schools; some sets of Mandarin materials have separate traditional and simplified character versions, the former using *zhuyinfuhao* spellings alongside the characters like in Taiwan schools, and the latter have Hanyu Pinyin spellings along with characters like in PRC schools. The effectiveness of all these courses does not seem to have been formally evaluated.

At the high school level, there are credit courses in Chinese, designed by the school boards following the provincial curriculum guidelines for "International Languages". These are elective courses taught on Saturdays. Again, most of the offerings are in Cantonese; some are in Mandarin.

Students who complete these courses


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Section A

At the time of writing, the local school boards in Toronto offer Chinese heritage language classes for the elementary grades, on weekdays after hours, or on Saturday mornings. A few schools even have them as part of the school day program. A large majority of the classes are in Cantonese; some are in Mandarin, a few are in Taiwanese. The boards themselves devise the text materials used, and efforts have been made to adapt pedagogy to the

successfully receive credit towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

The Chinese languages courses offered by the school boards are free, and are designed and taught on the assumption that Chinese is a “second language” to the pupils whose “first language” is English. The assumption is valid for children born in Canada or who immigrated with their families in early childhood. But very often it is not valid for those immigrant children who already had several years of schooling in

Asia before coming to Canada. Hence, many parents would rather pay for their children to attend more "demanding" Chinese language classes offered by churches, voluntary organizations or commercial firms on Saturdays. Many of these schools use imported materials from Hong Kong or Taiwan, and aim to follow the curricula there, in order to provide some continuity for the emigrant children. Some Hakka families (mostly from the Caribbean Islands) prefer to organize their own Hakka heritage language classes within their community.

Whether or not these classes are effective, the proliferation of such schools testify to the determination of immigrant parents to preserve their language for their children. The *Chinese Consumer Directory of Toronto, 1997* lists more than one hundred schools. This is by no means an exhaustive listing, since many Saturday morning schools have very small weekday organizations, and advertise by flyers and word of mouth rather than in the yellow pages.

Language preservation is of course not only a matter of heritage language classes taught at an easier or more difficult level. Classroom use of language is usually artificial. It is when a language is used in a natural setting for real purposes in life that it has its full meaning for its users. That calls for a sizeable speech community with a range of institutions and functions where the community's language is respected and used for a broad range of real life functions. The

larger the community, the more 'institutional completeness' it enjoys, the more likely will its next generation learn naturally to use the language acquired at home or at school, cherish it, and pass it on to yet another generation. The Chinese communities of Toronto are better equipped in this regard than most other diasporan communities.

Courtesy of the Dora Yip Collection.

Institutional completeness

For an ethnic community within a multiethnic society, the term 'institutional completeness' is used to refer to the range of social institutions and services provided by co-ethnics within a society. [3] These ethnic provisions are especially attractive to co-ethnics because of the familiarity of language, contents, style, and sense of affinity. For purposes of language maintenance, they provide the real life occasions when the ethnic language is used.

In this sense, the institutional completeness of the Chinese communities of Toronto developed over several stages. A major leap forward happened when Exclusion was lifted and Chinese

Canadians were able to enter the professions during the 1950s as well as to engage in many more lines of business than Chinese restaurants and laundries. Then in the early 1970s, and again in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the rapid influx of Hongkongans[4] with their broad range of skills and qualifications brought in as immigrants with 'independent class' visas, further enhanced institutional completeness for themselves as well as for other Chinese communities. Institutions and services provided for Hong Kong Torontonians (whether the owners are Chinese or otherwise) are distinguished by spoken Cantonese and written Modern Chinese. They cover most aspects of urban life.

To begin with the economic sphere, the banks have numerous branches, in the districts of high Chinese concentration, which have Cantonese speaking staff (and sometimes, also, Mandarin speaking staff). Many branches also have automatic teller machines that give Chinese as one of the language choices, along with English and French. Some of the banks also have listed in the telephone directory special Chinese-speaking inquiry hotlines, which are primarily in Cantonese, but also have some Mandarin lines.

There are dozens of supermarkets and grocery stores that cater to the Chinese communities. They offer various ranges of goods imported from different parts of the Chinese-speaking world and of Asia, as well as supplies from North America. Typically, the staff speak Cantonese or other varieties of Chinese as well as some English, and the signage is in Chinese and English.

There are dozens of large and small shopping malls that contain predominantly Chinese-oriented stores, in Agincourt, Willowdale, Markham and Richmond Hill, as well as in the downtown Chinatowns. In these largely Chinese shopping malls, as well as in the areas of high Chinese concentration nearby, many other goods and services are also provided: from hairdressers to hardware stores, from tea merchants to computer shops, from video rental to patisseries, from travel agencies to bookstores, from doctors, dentists, pharmacists, physical therapists, herbalists, lawyers, and accountants to driving schools and many traditions of physical training. Most of the providers and consumers are Hong Kong immigrants, but there are also significant minorities from the other Chinese communities. Typically, the service providers are Cantonese-speaking; but some also speak Mandarin, Taiwanese or other kinds of Chinese.

And then, there are, of course, restaurants serving all kinds of Chinese cuisine where Cantonese, Mandarin and other varieties of Chinese are used. The supermarkets, shopping malls and restaurants are more than places of commerce, but also serve as community meeting places where Chinese Canadians, both old and young, can socialize in their own languages. Some of the larger shopping malls provide space for exhibitions and public forums to air various issues of community concern. Spoken and written Chinese (Cantonese and other varieties) covering all kinds of topics are used vigorously by people of different generations.

There are some two dozen Buddhist and Taoist temples; some originated from Hong Kong, some from Taiwan, some from Southeast Asia. The clergy may speak Cantonese, Mandarin or Taiwanese. There are also at least one hundred Catholic and Protestant churches.[5] Most of them hold their Sunday services in Cantonese, some in Mandarin, and a few in Taiwanese. In those instances where Cantonese-speaking Christians from Hong Kong and Mandarin-speaking ones from Taiwan worship at the same church, they work out arrangements to divide the hours between themselves.

The *Chinese Consumer Directory of Toronto, 1997* also lists 25 social service

organizations and 105 associations. These are not exhaustive, since some groups might not have bothered to advertise. All in all, a Cantonese-speaker living in Toronto in the 1990s should experience no difficulty meeting all essential needs in her or his own language. This is less true for speakers of other regional varieties of Chinese, but most still have available to them services in their own or other forms of spoken Chinese.

Mass communications and culture

In a modern society, the mass media provide information and entertainment. They play important roles in the shaping of tastes and opinions, and thereby build or maintain a sense of community among the recipients. The *Chinese Consumer Directory of Toronto, 1997* has the following listings in its print and electronic media sections:

Broadcasting and television	9
Newspapers and publishers	18
Bookstores	59
Theatres/Chinese cinemas	2
Videotapes & karaoke rentals	27
Laser disc rentals	10
Typesetting	13
Printers	57

Other language related businesses include:

Translators & interpreters	20
Sign makers	19
Paging services	8
Computers & software	97

These numbers, while not exhaustive, indicate the broad range of Chinese language use, not only in private transactions or meetings, but also in community-wide or society-wide situations, in full public view of all Torontonians. Some details will serve to illustrate.

Before the 1970s, the Chinese Canadian community of Toronto was small, and there was only one Chinese newspaper, the *Sing Wah Daily News*, which published editions of up to eight pages. With the growth of population after 1967, newspapers based in Hong Kong and Taiwan began to launch subsidiaries in Toronto for the Chinese-reading public of eastern Canada. At present, there are three major Chinese dailies, namely, the *Sing Tao*, the *World Journal* and the *Ming Pao*. The three Chinese newspapers have a combined circulation of some eighty thousand copies. They are not enclave newssheets, but full-fledged major metropolitan papers of some eighty pages everyday, with several pages each of news from Canada, Hong Kong, PRC, Taiwan, and the rest of the world, several pages of articles by columnists, as well as a great deal of advertising. They provide their readers with practically all the information needed to live as informed citizens of Canada and inhabitants of Toronto, and as members of the Chinese-speaking world.

In addition to the three major dailies, there are numerous magazines, newsletters, and occasional publications put out by many different kinds of community groups. The Canada-Hong Kong Resource Centre, operated jointly by York University and University of Toronto, has collected over a hundred titles of such serials. They testify to the active use of Chinese language by Chinese Canadians, to receive as well as to propagate ideas.

There are also two television stations and five radio stations which broadcast in Chinese, mostly in Cantonese. CFMT multilingual television broadcasts an hour of news in Cantonese every weekday evening (up from half an hour in the mid-1990s)[6], and several hours of movies and talk shows in Cantonese, and one hour in Mandarin, on weekends. The service is free, and is received by many Cantonese-speaking families in Toronto and other parts of southern Ontario. Fairchild TV is a subsidiary of Hong Kong Television Broadcast Ltd., the main commercial broadcaster in Hong Kong. It transmits more than twenty hours every day by cable to monthly subscribers. More than three-quarters of its programmes are in Cantonese, and the rest in Mandarin or by nicam in both Cantonese and Mandarin. Both stations present programmes made in Canada and in Asia. The five radio stations include one which is full-time, and the overwhelming proportion of the programming of each station is in Cantonese. All these broadcasting stations are staffed predominantly by Hong Kong immigrants.

Most of the movies shown in the Chinese cinemas were made in Hong Kong, and most of the video and laser stores rent or sell videotapes, laser discs, karaoke music, and audiocassettes made in Hong Kong with contents in Cantonese. Many stores would also carry a number of Taiwan- or PRC-made products in Mandarin, and a few of them specialize in Mandarin products. There is little evidence that adults from the three source societies engage very much in cross-language entertainment, but many young people from Taiwan, PRC, and Vietnam do seem to gravitate towards Hong Kong-style products like pop music and video movies, and learn Cantonese in tandem.

There are also a number of music clubs whose members practise traditional Chinese regional style singing and operas. From time to time they put on public performances, some of which are full-dress productions.

Chinese language in Canada and internationally

Immigration, integration and assimilation is a process that lasts over a few generations. In that process, the immigrant's native language very often is lost. Language retention usually is seen by the host society and even by many immigrants as an impediment to integration. This would be the case if the immigrant's language is used exclusively within the enclave for purposes of in-group communication, or for linkage with the source society, and if the contents of the communication are limited to the

enclave and the source society. The restricted use of the language inevitably causes it to atrophy, as the younger generations seek to break out of the ghetto. On the other hand, if the immigrant community itself is not ghettoized, and its language is used for the functions both of the community and of the broader society, then the language may in time develop the vocabulary, the contents and the embedded nuances native to the host society. That would enrich both the language and the society, not to say the ethno-linguistic community responsible for building the bridge. When that happens, the language brought by the immigrants will no longer be a foreign language to the host society, but will be one of the local languages in that society.

This has happened to various extents with many immigrant languages across the Americas, from Italian to Yiddish. As Chinese is used in cultural creativity and media production, Canadian content and style are gradually being infused into the language, just as the use of the language enriches the multicultural mosaic of Canada.

Chinese in all its varieties together has more native speakers than any other language in the world. Cantonese alone has more native speakers than the population of the British Isles; it is also geographically the most widespread variety of Chinese. The continued use of Chinese by Torontonians will help strengthen the ties of Toronto and Canada across the Pacific and around the world, to the cultural and economic enrichment of all.

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[1] The Greater Toronto Area is roughly equivalent to the Census Metropolitan Area of Toronto: the amalgamated City of Toronto and the surrounding built-up areas of the regional municipalities of York, Peel, and Durham. The 1996 Census counted a total population in the area of just under four millions, with 359,450 Chinese persons.

[2] A portion of them returned to Hong Kong, there is however no official figure for it.

[3] Raymond Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," *American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1964): 193-205.

[4] In other literature, "Hongkongese" or "Hongkonger" may be used to denote people from Hong Kong. "Hongkongan", a closer approximation of the Cantonese word for "Hong Kong people", is preferred.

[5] According to F. Lee, "Chinese Christian Churches in Metro Toronto," *Canada and Hong Kong Update* 11 (Winter 1994), there were ninety-seven Protestant churches and three Catholic churches at that time.

[6] The news is re-broadcast the following morning. The other Chinese television station, Fairchild, has similar practice.

Food as an Ethnic Marker: Chinese Restaurant Food in Toronto

Fatima Lee

Canada is a multiethnic society. Immigrants from different ethnic and racial backgrounds have found their home here. Unlike the "melting pot" ideal favoured south of the border, the multicultural policies introduced in Canada in 1971 is credited for the development of a "cultural mosaic", where each and every ethnic group is encouraged to maintain as much as possible their ethnic culture and identity while contributing to the richness and diversity of the whole.

Now ethnic identity and culture often reinforce one another. Alba describes their relationship as "synergistic -- each necessary for the other to contribute positively to ethnicity as a social form."[1]

Besides language, food is probably the most important element of an ethnic culture that distinguishes members of one ethnic group from another. "We are what we eat," writes Cheung. And to elaborate, he continues, "Food plays an important role in solidifying one's subjective sense of cultural identity and in creating, through the taste of the present, a nostalgia for a real or imagined cultural past."[2]

The Chinese have settled in Toronto for over a hundred years. Three waves of immigration could be roughly identified: the early settlers were mainly peasants from the Pearl River Delta region of China, who had to struggle to earn a living under rather harsh circumstances, not knowing much of Western language or culture. The second as well as the third waves of immigration took place after 1967 and 1985 respectively, with the majority of immigrants from Hong Kong, who were urban and much better educated; and both waves were triggered by perceived threats on the political future of Hong Kong.

This paper compares Chinese food as served in restaurants and food outlets in Toronto in the 1950s and 1990s, and argues that what is served in the restaurants is a reflection of the immigrant population and their identity; it is also reflective of the physical and human resources available to the group, the size of the group, and as well of the labour market possibilities available in the mainstream society.

Background

The five years preceding 1923, when the *Chinese Immigration Act* was introduced, had seen tremendous growth in the number of Chinese restaurants in Toronto. According to Thompson, the number went up from 32 to 202.[3]

It must be noted however that in the beginning, not all Chinese restaurants served Chinese food. "Most were small cafes and hamburger joints catering strictly to Canadian, not Chinese, tastes." [4] Their main attraction was their price. Restaurants and laundries were the two main niches that the early Chinese settlers found for themselves to earn a living. Both required little capital and a great deal of hard work -- long hours and many hands.

Gradually, along with the standard fare, these restaurants began serving chop suey and chow mein. When these latter dishes grew in popularity among the mainstream society, so did the number of Chinese chop suey restaurants.

Chinese Restaurants in the 1950s

Five restaurants advertised in the November 5, 1959 edition of the *Sing Wah Daily*, the major ethnic language newspaper of the Chinese community at the time.[5] They were Lichee Gardens, Kwongchow, Sai Woo, Golden Dragon, and Eastern.

Crowland, 1931. Courtesy of the Ing Look Family

Eastern, according to its advertisement, was new. Of course, there were already at this time in Toronto many Chinese restaurants, but we can assume that these five were probably the more outstanding. In contrast to the other four restaurants, whose advertisements gave long descriptions of the food they served -- banquets, noodles, or dishes – Lichee Gardens listed only its name under its parent company, the Mon Kuo Company.[6] Indeed, as various sources corroborate, the other four targeted an ethnic clientele.

C.L. Liu, who came to Toronto in 1953 as a student from Hong Kong, gave us a more concrete picture of the Chinese restaurant scene in the 1950s.[7] "Lichee Gardens and Nanking[8] catered mainly to the western clientele. Lichee Gardens, especially, was very classy." This coincides with Lee Dickson's observation "...Lichee Gardens, with its expansive ballroom-style dining room fitted with a grand piano, delicious ethnic food, and exotic drinks..."[9]

In his 46-year tenure at Lichee Gardens, Larry Wong, waiter turned night manager and then part-owner of Lichee Gardens, gave us an even closer glimpse of the restaurant.[10] This is how he describes the restaurant:

> Lichee Gardens opened in January 1948 and had been in its Elizabeth street location for 35 years, before it moved to the Atrium on Bay Street in 1983, and eventually to its present location on Eglinton two years ago [ca. 1998].
>
> When it opened, the Lichee had already a total seating capacity of about 300. Its hours were from 11 a.m. to almost 5 a.m. the following morning, with three shifts of waiters serving. It attracted mainly the office crowd as well as people going to the shows.
>
> There was a bar beside the main dining area. It was the second restaurant in Toronto to have obtained a liquor license.[11] The restaurant also provided live music. In fact, the band was with Lichee for over 20 years. Dinner for two was at

$3.25. A ride on a streetcar at the time would cost a quarter. Food served included the very popular egg rolls, as well as spare ribs, chop suey, chow mein and the like. At Lichee one could have an evening with good food, drinks, live music, and perhaps some dancing (before the dance floor was converted to provide more dining area). Business was so good that there were queues for dinner each day.[12]

The clientele, according to Wong, was 95% white. They would come to dinner all dressed up. Among its patrons were also tour groups from Japan and the Philippines.

United Appeal Tour of Toronto's Chinese community, 1958. York University Archives, *Toronto Telegram* Collection.

Also serving mainly the mainstream clientele was the Nanking. It opened a few months earlier than Lichee Gardens. As reported in the March 2, 1976 edition of the *Toronto Star*, its owner Bob Lee believed that the opening of Nanking and Lichee Gardens, in 1947 and 1948 respectively, marked key developments of Toronto's Chinatown. In fact, he was reported to have commented that "before these two big restaurants, Chinatown had only chop suey houses, seating no more than 20 people."[13] Indeed this was also how Peter Stollery described the then Chinatown, " [it] was a place of small cafes and sad old men waiting for women who would never arrive because of the racist immigration policies of the period."[14] Sai Woo was opened in 1957. In the beginning, it targeted mainly the ethnic customers. Later, with booming business, 80% of its clientele was Occidental.[15]

It must be remembered that all these developments took place in a neighbourhood where, as Harney described, an urban space was created "that was somehow different from the Toronto mainstream." Contributing to its creation were: "[t]he sense of fellow-feeling, the in-gathering for reasons of language, both out of pride of language and out of pain produced by *diglossia*, the need to maintain folkways and mores, the location of work, the price of housing and transportation, the need for coherence in the face of outside hostility".[16]

So by the late 1950s, Chinatown, located then at Dundas and Elizabeth, had gradually taken on a new face. Instead of the old and small restaurants, where owners toiled for umpteen hours a day, serving food where price was the main attraction for the mainstream market, we have the much more fancy restaurants like the Lichee Gardens, Nanking, and Sai Woo. The first two, as well as the later Sai Woo, catered mainly to a mainstream clientele.

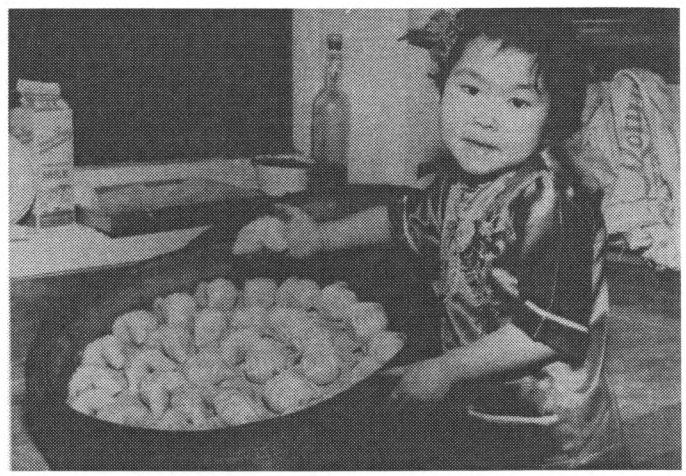
Unlike the decades preceding them, the late 1950s and 1960s gradually saw more Chinese coming to Toronto as university students. For those who were fluent in English, Chinatown no longer was a choice place of residence. Instead, they would move to various suburban areas upon graduation. Chinatown became for them a place where they could shop, during the weekends, for familiar Oriental groceries and vegetables as well as eat out.

According to Liu, "every weekend, we would go to Chinatown for *dim sum* [various kinds of snacks in the Cantonese tradition to go with tea, for breakfast or lunch].[17] Kwongchow at Dundas and Spadina would be the preferred restaurant. It served decent food. But shrimp dumplings would be in the size of an orange, with water chestnut, mushroom, and pork inside a thick wrapping." Of course, the *hagaau*, or shrimp dumpling, in its authentic Cantonese incarnation is the size of a dollar coin; containing predominantly shrimp, and very often a whole shrimp, wrapped in a fine thin layer of rice dough, so thin that it is almost transparent. It is interesting that Y.C. Yu, who came also as a student in the 1960's from Hong Kong, when describing in a collection of essays her experience of *dim sum* in Chinatown of the '60s, found her experience of shrimp dumplings most noteworthy as well. She writes, "For *dim sum*, the selections were few. The wrapping of the shrimp dumpling was thick, like that of the Chiu Chow dumpling. It was the size of an orange, the fillings were of diced mushroom, diced canned water chestnut, and minced pork. If one was lucky, one might find a bit or two of diced shrimp ..."[18]

Liu gave a poignant analysis of why *dim sum* was not as sophisticated as what she was used to back home, in her native Hong Kong, or in Canton where she studied. Most of the chefs in these Chinese restaurants were from the Toisan (Taishan) area, the rural district of the Pearl River Delta, who were not accustomed to the much more sophisticated forms of *dim sum* found in the cities.

There were other restaurants, like the Golden Dragon, Yeung Sing, and Ho Yuen, which Liu remembered.

The Breakthrough in the 1970s



Chinese New Years Dumplings, 1959. York University Archives, *Toronto Telegram* Collection.

The quality of Chinese restaurant food markedly improved in the early '70s. Canada's adoption of the point system as a selection criterion for immigrants in 1967, coupled with the political unrest in Hong Kong the same year, created the so-called "second wave" of Chinese immigration. This new wave of Chinese immigrants however, was very different from the first Chinese immigrants. They were educated, proficient in the English language, urban, and very often were professionals or skilled labour.

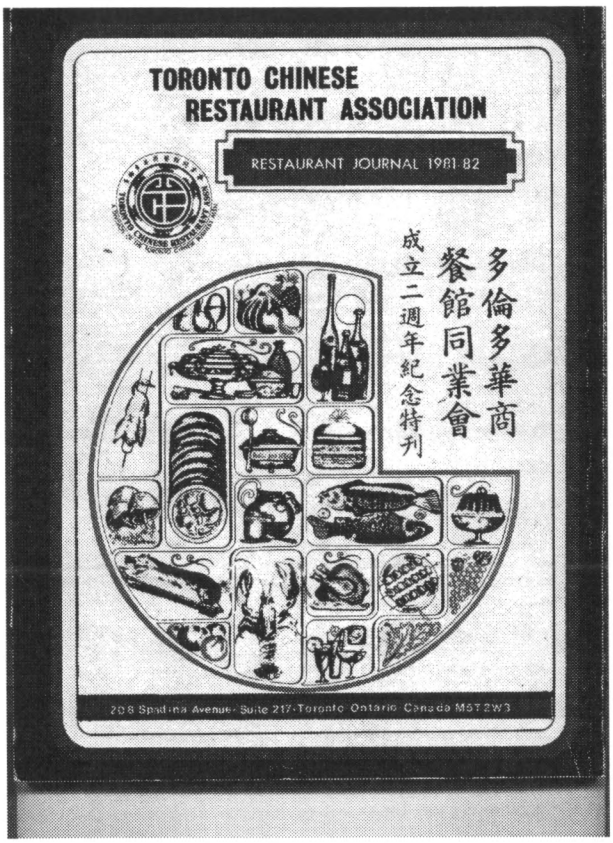
"It was after 1967 that we saw Chinese restaurant food flourish. We had more sophisticated cooks and a clientele that was much more discerning in their palate," remarked Liu. Jade Garden, Cathay, and International were some of the places that she remembered as serving good Cantonese food, i.e. *dim sum* in the daytime and various Cantonese dishes in the

evenings. It was also at this time that Chinatown moved west to Dundas and Spadina. "In the '70s, we also began to have very good restaurants serving Northern Chinese food, like Young Lok Garden and Champion House."

Hong Kong Food

The third wave of Chinese immigration was triggered by the uncertain political future of Hong Kong. In 1985, after years of negotiation, Britain agreed to hand over Hong Kong, its colony since 1842, to China. Now most of the population in Hong Kong were either refugees or children of refugees who had fled China and its Communist rule. Many decided to flee again. It was about this time that admission of independent immigrants to Canada, which had been frozen since 1982 due to a sluggish economy and high level of unemployment, resumed. The number of immigrants from Hong Kong to Canada increased threefold in 1987. And for the next few years, tens of thousands of immigrants from Hong Kong arrived in Canada. In the five-year period from 1986 to 1991, the size of the Chinese population in the Greater Toronto area doubled to 240,000. The influx of Hong Kong immigrants continued well into the years leading up to 1997.

One would expect that the size and cultural distinctiveness of a recent immigrant population would increase the demand for ethnic products,[19] as did the previous wave of Chinese immigration. This time, however, the way that demand was met was far beyond anyone's imagination. Canada experienced a severe economic downturn in the early '90s. It was extremely difficult for these new immigrants to find jobs under such labour market conditions. Labour market disadvantage was keenly felt. This, coupled with an abundance of human capital and physical capital brought along by this wave of Hong Kong immigrants, provided a steady stream of ethnic entrepreneurs.[20] Since food has always been an important component of social and cultural life in Hong Kong, the provision of ethnic foods became a natural channel for the capital of these entrepreneurs.



If one compares the restaurant listings in the *Chinese Business Telephone Directories* of 1989 and 1998, the number of Chinese restaurants in the Greater Toronto Area rose from 614 to 785. The entries are by no means exhaustive, so the real figures could only be higher. And such ethnic restaurants not only increased in number, their variety also multiplied.

In the past few decades, Chinese food served in Chinese restaurants in Toronto has been, with few exceptions, predominantly Cantonese. This Cantonese dominance still continues. *Dim sum* is now even more widely available, and is also of very high quality. Nouvelle Cantonese

cuisine, developed in Hong Kong in the early 1980s, which combines "exotic or expensive ingredients with new recipes, adventurous cooking techniques, and Western-style catering and ambience"[21] also found its way into Toronto.

Various regional foods of China including Shanghai, Peking, Szechuan and Chiu Chow could be found in much greater abundance in Toronto today. Some would boast of their Hong Kong connection. For example, Shanghai Po Kong, as well as Great Shanghai and Peking House, serve authentic Shanghaiese cuisine, but, in their advertisement, they emphasize that their chefs are from famous Shanghai restaurants in Hong Kong.

No doubt they target a Hong Kong clientele. One must bear in mind that Hong Kong itself is an immigrant society. The majority of its population were originally from the Pearl River Delta region, seeking Hong Kong as a haven from various political/economic turmoil. Hence it is predominantly Cantonese. But people from different regions of China, though in smaller numbers, also found their way to Hong Kong in their flight from China. There was especially a significant minority of Shanghaiese who had settled in Hong Kong in the early '50s, concentrating mainly in Tsim Sha Tsui on the Kowloon peninsula and North Point on Hong Kong island. Shanghaiese restaurants abound in these two areas. Some of these Shanghaiese eventually migrated to Toronto.[22]

In a very interesting twist, the Shanghaiese also brought to Hong Kong the Russian cuisine which Russian refugees first took to Shanghai after the 1917 Revolution. This particular culinary contact is indeed very significant for Hong Kong; for Russian borscht found its way into the general "western style restaurants" in Hong Kong. These are popular and reasonably priced restaurants frequented by many in Hong Kong, in contrast to the haute cuisine served in distinctly French or Italian restaurants.

In fact, we find in Toronto food that is being coined the "Hong Kong style Western cuisine" (*Gongsik saichaan*). Such cuisine would feature Russian borscht as a standard fare. Its other selections are a fusion of popularized British, French, Italian as well as Singapore/Malaysian cuisine, such as various kinds of pork chop, steak, fish, and Singapore/Malaysian style curries. One can also find the "Hong Kong style breakfast" (*Gongsik jouchaan*), its backbone being the British breakfast of hams, sausage and eggs, toast and tea; but almost always, it also has the offer of ham and macaroni in clear soup, whose origin is unclear. These are the standard breakfasts served in many extremely popular "tea-cafes" (*Chah chaan teng*) in Hong Kong. The popularity of such dishes rose even more when they were later adopted by fast-food restaurants all over the streets of Hong Kong. Worth mentioning too is the "Hong Kong style cream tea" (*Gongsik naaihchah*), as

distinguished from the British tea. Hong Kong style tea is made from a special brew of tea that is very strong and which originated, according to some, from open air street food stalls (*Daaih paaih dong*) in Hong Kong. In fact, one can buy tea leaves from specialty stores in Toronto under the rubric "Hong Kong style black tea".

【 生滾粥 CONGEE 】

21. 海鮮粥	Assorsted Seafood Congee.....	3.99
22. 鮮蝦粥	Shrimp Congee.....	3.99
23. 香菌皮蛋魚片粥	Preserved Egg/fish/Parsley Congee...	3.99
24. 艇仔粥	Lai Wan Style Congee.....	2.99
25. 明火白粥	Plain Congee.....	0.75
26. 豬潤粥	Pork Liver Congee.....	2.99
27. 豬腰粥	Pork Kidney Congee.....	2.99
28. 腰潤粥	Pork Kidney & Liver Congee.....	2.99
29. 牛肉粥	Slice Beef Congee.....	2.99
30. 免治牛肉粥	Minced Beef Congee.....	2.99

Indeed in the past fifty years, food in Hong Kong has taken on a very distinctive character of its own, partly from the immigrant nature of its population and partly from its cosmopolitan character.[23] It is such a style of food that the Hong Kong immigrant community has brought to Toronto in the past decade.

A Taste of Hong Kong Food in Toronto

In terms of residential location, the third wave of immigrants, like those of the second wave, did not confine themselves to the traditional Chinatowns. They are concentrated in areas in Scarborough, North York, and the newly developed municipalities of Markham and Richmond Hill.

A tour of one of the largest ethnic shopping malls in Markham might give us an idea of the variety of Hong Kong food. At the time of writing, in this mall alone, there are a total of 42 establishments listed in its directory under the restaurant/food category.

Eleven of these serve some variety of Chinese food, including two with nouvelle Cantonese cuisine, three with more traditional Cantonese, one Pekingese, one barbecued meat, one vegetarian, a congee place, as well as two that specialize in tea. There are nine snack shops, ranging from a shop that stocks more than 230 varieties of snacks of hard tofu, pickled olives and the like, to one that specializes in soya bean products, to another that sells goodies like *daan-gyun* (crispy cookies in the shape of small rolls), *gaidaanjai* (baked dough in the shape of small eggs), all handmade in traditional bakeware right before one's eyes, to yet another that sells fish balls, pork rind, *louseuidaan* (flavoured boiled eggs), as well as herbal teas that would cleanse one's digestive system of all its "heat" and restore it to a ideal balance.[24] These latter snacks are what one could only find from on-street food vendors in traditional Hong Kong. There is, in short, a combination of high cuisine and street vendors' fare, all within the shops in this one single mall.

To complement the variety, there are three "Hong Kong style Western food" restaurants as well as Japanese, Vietnamese, and Singapore/Malaysian restaurants. Even the food court, which houses eight food outlets, boasts an incredible variety of food: three Cantonese, one each of Northern Chinese (a combination of Pekingese and Shanghaiese), Hong Kong style Western, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Taiwan hot pot. With but few exceptions, owners as well as customers of these restaurants and food outlets are immigrants from Hong Kong.

But if one views this particular mall, The Market Village Mall, as but another commercial shopping mall, one probably would miss an important function that it

serves for the Toronto Chinese population. It is in many ways a "neighbourhood" in disguise. No doubt Chinese immigrants of today no longer face the same hostility from the society at large, and few are as limited by language, location of work or transportation as before. During the weekends however, the gathering crowd can eat, shop (for clothes, shoes, computer accessories, Asian food, etc.), rent Asian video tapes, avail themselves of services (for example from banks, doctors, dentists, hairdressers), meet acquaintances, and indeed feel comfortable in the distinctly Asian ambience -- a place where weekend ethnicity could be experienced. The pavilion in the centre of the mall, reminiscent of the pavilion at Victoria Park in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, serves as a focal meeting point. From the stage attached, there may be entertainment, as well as debates on socio-political issues, both Canadian and those related to the homelands. On weekdays, the mall becomes a magnet for older people, where they congregate, chat, eat, and spend the day.

There are other malls in Scarborough and Markham that may serve similar functions. Such malls are Chinatowns of varying sizes, not only in the commercial sense. Because of differences in accessibility and management policies, however, they vary in the degree of fulfilling a genuine neighbourhood function.

The Future

Co-incidental with this last influx of immigrants from Hong Kong, there was also an increase in the number of Chinese immigrants from Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, especially in the past decade. In recent years, PRC has ranked first as an immigrant-sending country to Canada. While they may all come under the category of "Chinese" in the reckoning of Statistics Canada, these three principal source societies of Chinese immigrants differ substantially in their culinary customs. They also differ in group resources. How the Chinese restaurant food scene will change in the years to come remains to be seen. There is an expectation that ethnic food may decline across immigrant generations, but the culture, size, as well as resources of the most recent immigrants will continue to affect the ethnic culinary expression.

[All Chinese food names referred to in this article, unless otherwise specified, are in Cantonese, since it is the spoken language in Hong Kong. They are transliterated using the modified Yale system.

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[1] Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 77.
[2] Sidney C.H. Cheung, "A Taste of Hong Kong: Food and Identity in a Changing Society," *The Yale-China Bulletin* 6 (Spring 1998): 7.
[3] Richard H. Thompson, *Toronto's Chinatown: The Changing Social Organization of an Ethnic Community* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 42.
[4] Ibid., 394.
[5] There were also numerous barbecue meat shops that advertised.
[6] At first sight, I found the absence of food description in Lichee Garden's advertisement rather puzzling. I thought perhaps it might be a very small restaurant. It was in the process of further research that the reason for the absence dawned on me – Lichee did not cater to an ethnic clientele, and would find little reason to advertise its food in an ethnic newspaper.
[7] Mrs. C.L. Liu, interview by author, Toronto, 14 January 2000.
[8] As mentioned, in contrast to other restaurants, Lichee did not spell out what kind of food it served in an advertisement taken out in an ethnic local newspaper of the time. Nanking did not advertise at all. Liu's comment that neither served an ethnic clientele probably offered an explanation for both absences.
[9] See Lee Dickson, "The Story of a Building in Old Chinatown" in *Lola* 5 (Winter 1999-2000): 16.
[10] Mr. Larry Wong, interview by author, Toronto,

31 January 2000.

[11] The first, according to Mr. Wong, was the Silver Rail.

[12] While Martyn Stoller gave an incredibly negative review of the Lichee Gardens, he nonetheless had to contend with a "presumption of excellence" which seemed to be prevalent among patrons, thus corroborating the description of Larry Wong. See Martyn Stoller, *Exploring Chinatown: A Complete Guide to Eating Excitement in Toronto's Chinatown* (Toronto: Tan-gent Publications, 1979).

[13] Bob Pennington, "Chinatown: It's moving to the west," *Toronto Star*, 2 March 1976.

[14] Peter Stollery, "The Emergence of the Chinese Establishment," *Toronto Life*, December 1976.

[15] As reported by Pennington in the same story.

[16] Robert Harney (ed.), *Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945* (Toronto: MHSO, 1985), 8.

[17] In fact, in Cantonese, while the snacks are called *dimsam* (more commonly transliterated as *dim sum*, which we use throughout this text), the eating of such snacks is often referred to as *yamchah* (drinking tea). The snacks are only there to complement the tea.

[18] Translated from Yuanzhi Yu, *Fengye ji yuan* (Hong Kong: Dangdai Wenyi Zhubanshe, 1997), 125.

[19] M.D.R. Evans, "Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Effects of Ethnic Market Size and Isolated Labor Pool," *American Sociological Review* 64 (1989): 950-962. The increase in size of an ethnic population, especially if the population is concentrated, also increases the likelihood of self-employment, see Janet Chan and Yuet-wah Cheung, "Ethnic Resource and Business Enterprise: A Study of Chinese Business in Toronto," *Human Organization* 44 (1985): 142-54, and Howard Aldrich et al., "Ethnic Concentration and the Protected Labour Market Hypothesis," *Social Forces* 63 (1985): 996-1009.

[20] See for example Kenneth L. Wilson and Alejandro Portes, "Ethnic Enclaves: A Comparison of the Cuban and Black Economies in Miami," *American Journal of Sociology* 88 (1980): 135-60.

[21] As defined by Sidney C.H. Cheung, 8.

[22] An article in *World Journal*, 6 June 1999, B1, confirms this observation. The author pointed out that ten years ago, Shanghaiese restaurants were almost unheard of in Toronto, but today they are numerous. It was also pointed out that other than Hong Kong style Shanghai food, there are also those of Taiwan style and "Shanghai" style. Owners and chefs of the Hong Kong and Taiwan style restaurants are Shanghaiese who migrated to Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively after the Communists took power in Mainland China, while owners and chefs of the "Shanghai" style Shanghaiese restaurants, in contrast, are recent direct immigrants from the PRC.

[23] For an excellent discussion of Hong Kong food and identity, see Cheung, "A Taste of Hong Kong", previously cited.

[24] For a good discussion of the "heating" and "cooling" effects of food, see E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 232-5.

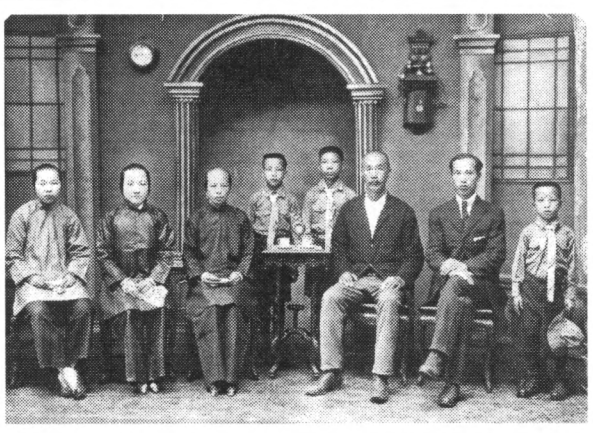
The Caribbean Chinese in Canada

Jean Forde

Introduction

In speaking of Canada's Chinese communities today, those of Chinese heritage from the Caribbean must be included.

The Chinese who emigrated from China to the Caribbean are mainly Hakka. Hakka literally translates as "guest family" and they are an ethnic branch of the Han. By the 4th century, the Hakka were migrating to different parts of China.[1] This group has several characteristics that are unique: regardless of where members of the group settled, they never lost their culture or language and, unlike other Chinese women, Hakka women did not bind their feet and were allowed to own land. The story of this adventurous people includes the story of their journey to the Caribbean.



Three generations of the Loui family lived in Trinidad, one of the non-Hakka families to emigrate to the West Indies. Zhongshan, China. c. 1940s. Courtesy of Winston Loui.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the British colonies -- Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana -- turned to Chinese labour to replace emancipated slaves. The recruitment from China was particularly evident in Trinidad and British Guyana, which had a shortage of labourers. John Gladstone, a British Guyanese planter and father of the future British prime minister, suggested that tapping the large populations of India and China could solve the labour problem and, in 1843, the British government approved immigration from China.

In addition to a demand for cheap labour, the political and social situation in southern China pushed the Hakka to go overseas in search of work. These two factors, when merged with the migratory nature of the Hakka people, explain what prompted the Hakka to journey to Hong Kong and, via Egypt and the Mediterranean, to the West Indies. [2]

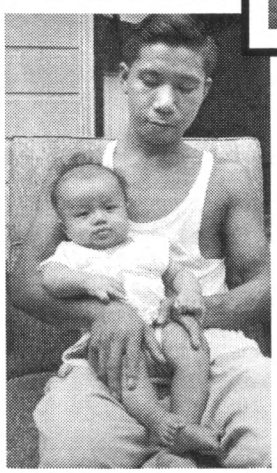
The migration of the Hakka

In 1850, Chinese, along with "natives from the coast, West Indians, English, Irish, Germans and coolies" were recruited by the Panama Railroad Company to build a line from Colón to Panama City.[3] The working conditions were harsh and the Chinese demanded to leave. In 1854, 195 went to Jamaica and others looked for work elsewhere in the West Indies.

Between 1859 and 1866, a thousand Chinese went to Trinidad and twelve thousand to British Guyana. The British were planning to populate its colonies with Chinese men and their families. Beginning in 1860, British agencies were set up in Fujian and Guangdong provinces to promote family emigration, to Trinidad, British Guyana and Jamaica.

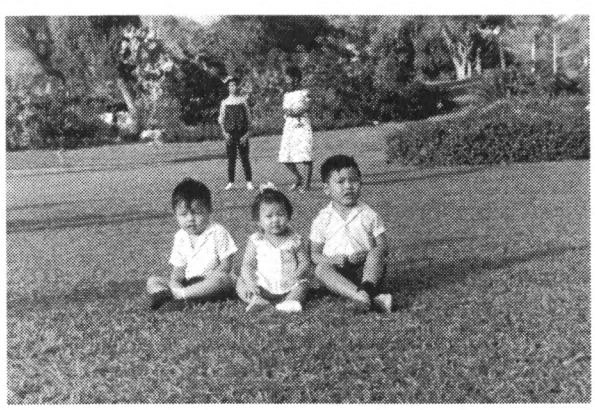
In the British Caribbean, the Chinese were recruited as indentured servants, along with South Asians, to work the sugar

and banana estates. [4] South Asians came to be the preferred workers, as they tended to remain on the estates when their contracts, set for periods ranging from three to seven years, expired. The Chinese favoured trade to fieldwork, and tended to leave the estates as soon as their term ended and they had saved enough to make a humble start.



Penal, Trinidad. Both photos courtesy of Winston Loui.

Immigration continued after the indenture system ended but tapered off and was stopped by the British government in 1931. Earlier the Chinese government had opposed overseas emigration and had made efforts to discourage its citizens from leaving the country. Most of the early Chinese set themselves up as grocers and soon came to dominate this trade. Their success has been attributed to two factors. First, they filled the position of middlemen between the wholesalers and the black urban and rural consumers. Secondly, they sold goods in small quantities, e.g., a penny's worth of sugar –which the majority of their customers could afford to buy – and kept their shops open seven days a week.



The Loui family emigrated to Toronto in 1975. Royal Botanical Gardens, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. c. 1965. Courtesy of Winston Loui.

Life in the Caribbean

Unlike Blacks and Indians, the Chinese did not come from a British colony and so in the British Caribbean they were classified as foreigners by both the government and society. They also saw themselves as a community in exile and referred problems to the Chinese ambassador in London. This and their lack of English hindered their integration into Caribbean society. In order to preserve their heritage, the Chinese would import wives from mainland China and Hong Kong and send sons back to China to learn the culture. Intermarriage with other ethnic groups is a recent occurrence and takes place on a small scale. Living as relatively isolated communities, the Chinese set up their own self-help institutions to take care of their needs. For instance, in Jamaica they set up the Chinese Benevolent Society (1891), the Chinese Public School (1927), a sanatorium (1929), a Chinese newspaper (1930), the Chinese Athletic Club (1937) and a home for the aged.

When the Communists took over as ruling party of China in 1949, many Caribbean Chinese cut the ties with their homeland. At the same time, Caribbean-born Chinese began to feel more Caribbean than Chinese. They were Christian, educated in local schools and they mixed with the local community; they had begun to intermarry and leave the family grocery for the professions and to operate bakeries,

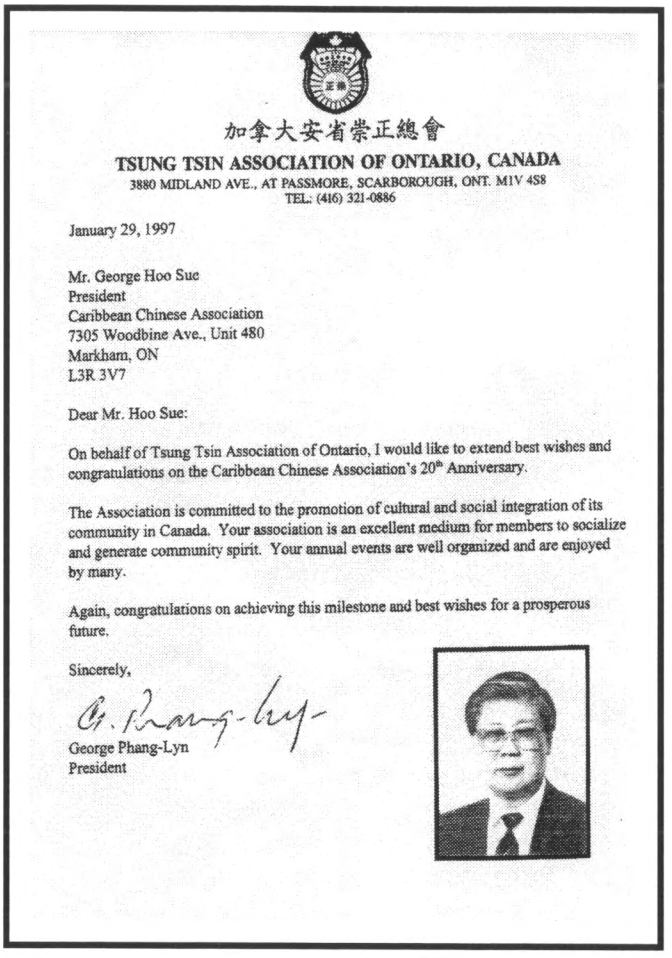
restaurants, soft-drink factories and supermarkets. Some employed in non-traditional occupations became, in a sense, path-breakers for their community. [5]

Immigration to Canada

There were a few Caribbean Chinese who came to Canada after World War II but the main inflow came during the 1960s when many of Britain's colonies sought independence. As a minority group in these countries, the Chinese felt uncertain about future conditions and prospects and many of those who could afford it looked for other places to settle, particularly with their children in mind. The 1960s also happened to be a time when immigration to Canada was easy and welcomed. After the initial batch of immigrants became established and adjusted to the cold climate, they became the pioneering models for others to follow. This combination of push and pull factors has now resulted in Canada having the largest number of Chinese from the Caribbean. Toronto was by then already Canada's largest English-speaking city and many of the initial immigrants were businessmen, merchants or academics who found the large city a more appealing environment for their own development and prospects.

As Jamaica and Guyana turned towards socialism in the 1970s and Trinidadian nationalists spoke of "Black power," some political leaders looked for scapegoats to explain why independence from Britain had not brought the promised prosperity to the masses. Sometimes the Chinese were depicted as outsiders and exploiters who had used the masses to gain a better life and a secure stake in their adopted countries. Fearful of the social unrest, which such rhetoric engendered, and feeling uncertain about their personal safety and economic future, many Caribbean Chinese considered emigration. These fears were reinforced by lingering memories of anti-Chinese protests and riots in the early years of the twentieth century during which some Chinese were robbed and murdered.

A large number of families immigrated to Canada and settled in the greater Toronto area. As they began to find employment and set up professional offices in Canada, it made sense to network with each other to facilitate their transition to a North American way of life and to develop a sense of community akin to what they had left behind. The average Caribbean Chinese did not speak Chinese. Nor had they visited China nor shared a common immigrant experience with the larger Chinese community already established in Canada, which had come directly from mainland China or Hong Kong and the majority of whom lived in Chinatowns. Their Anglo culture set the Caribbean Chinese apart and gave them a distinct presence.



加拿大安省崇正總會

TSUNG TSIN ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO, CANADA

3880 MIDLAND AVE., AT PASSMORE, SCARBOROUGH, ONT. M1V 4S8
TEL: (416) 321-0886

January 29, 1997

Mr. George Hoo Sue
President
Caribbean Chinese Association
7305 Woodbine Ave., Unit 480
Markham, ON
L3R 3V7

Dear Mr. Hoo Sue:

On behalf of Tsung Tsin Association of Ontario, I would like to extend best wishes and congratulations on the Caribbean Chinese Association's 20th Anniversary.

The Association is committed to the promotion of cultural and social integration of its community in Canada. Your association is an excellent medium for members to socialize and generate community spirit. Your annual events are well organized and are enjoyed by many.

Again, congratulations on achieving this milestone and best wishes for a prosperous future.

Sincerely,

George Phang-Lyn
President

A small group acted as a Steering Committee to establish the Caribbean Chinese Association (CCA) in 1977. While the CCA assists new immigrants with the transition to becoming new Canadians, the majority of its activities are social and cultural in nature. The CCA is recognized as a way to maintain family ties with year-round activities, to inform children of their parents' heritage and to make new friendships and renew old ones. Membership reinforces a sense of community by bringing members together several times a year for social events. The Association organizes an annual summer picnic, a year-end dinner/dance; a pageant called the Harvest Moon Festival and provides a bursary award for a first-year university student. The CCA also sponsors teams to enter the annual Toronto Dragon Boat Race on Lake Ontario and other sports activities, notably emphasizing family participation. Membership for the most part is Caribbean Chinese with the majority being immigrants from Jamaica. Some founding members are still very active serving on the Executive.

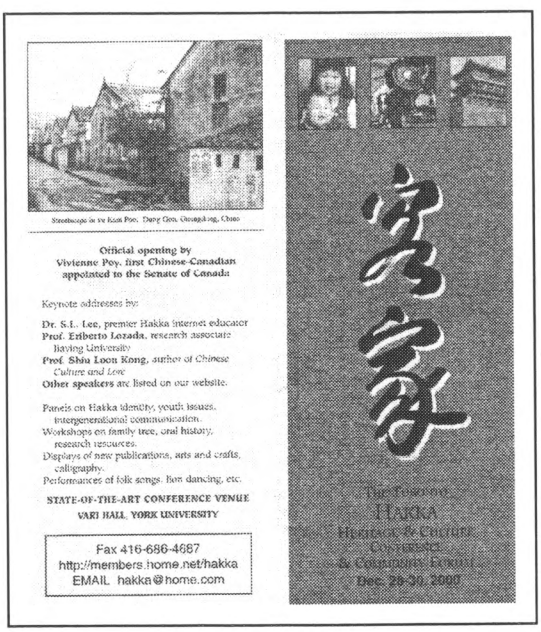
CCA fundraising activities also support other Chinese associations and their activities. The CCA contributed over $60,000 to the Yee Hong and Mon Sheong retirement and nursing homes. The CCA also sponsored the search for a bone-marrow donor for Elizabeth Lue, who incidentally was the granddaughter of Hubert Lue, the first president of the CCA in 1977. The campaign was met with overwhelming response from the Chinese Torontonian community. After Elizabeth's death in 1991, the Elizabeth Lue Memorial Fund was established.

Many of the older immigrants to Canada who were shopkeepers have retired or died. The younger immigrants are mainly involved in business or professions on an independent basis. Many are still very active in their high school alumni associations and send funds they have helped raise to Jamaica so that their schools, and their school's standards, are maintained. The Jamaican school system is based on the British; school loyalty and rivalry last beyond the school years.

An attachment to their heritage and their homeland is a characteristic of the Caribbean Chinese, combined with a tradition of community self-help. This has motivated them to assist the Caribbean region in times of natural disasters like the Trinidadian flood and the Hurricane Gilbert disaster in Jamaica in the 1980s, and to answer calls for help from Jamaicans needing medical treatment in Canada.

Older Caribbean Chinese who speak Chinese dialects like Hakka or Cantonese also join mainstream Chinese associations such as the Tsung Tsin Association of Ontario and the Fui Toong On Society and assist with fundraising for Canadian projects.

The children of Caribbean Chinese immigrants find themselves a part of three cultures. At home their parents eat more Caribbean cuisine than Chinese. Chinese meals are usually reserved for special family occasions or cultural celebrations like Chinese New Year. Many Caribbean restaurants in Toronto, providing authentic



island fare, are run by Caribbean Chinese. Although located in different Toronto neighbourhoods, they are well patronized. Wong's on Bathurst Street just north of Bloor has mostly black customers, while Lascelle Yap's Cravins on Woodbine Avenue caters to a diverse patronage. Bakeries, which are wholesale suppliers of Jamaican beef patties, are also Chinese operations. The three largest are Tastee, Non-Nissa and Fahmee Bakery. Nicey's is the largest supplier of Caribbean foodstuff.

It is not a coincidence that the names of businesses reflect the Jamaican dialect. Although present-day Caribbean Chinese in Canada are well educated and speak and write standard English, many have a strong emotional attachment to the dialect and accents of the peasants of the regions where they grew up. This is the English the first Chinese immigrants to the Caribbean learnt in the fields and which they required to do business in their shops. It was passed on to the next generation and gradually replaced Chinese as the language of the home. The Canadian-born speak the Canadian idiom outside the home but their ears are trained for the Caribbean lingo. Older Chinese, particularly those who were sent to China as children, still speak Hakka and other dialects. The younger generation understands Chinese and speaks a smattering of it. Beyond that, it is a heritage language which has to be learnt formally. For the Canadian generation, there is no everyday contact with Chinese culture and spoken Chinese is associated mostly with cultural events.

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[1] "The Hakka: Journey to the Caribbean," *The Caribbean Chinese Association Celebration 20 Yearbook (1977 -1997)*, 64.

[2] Ibid., 65.

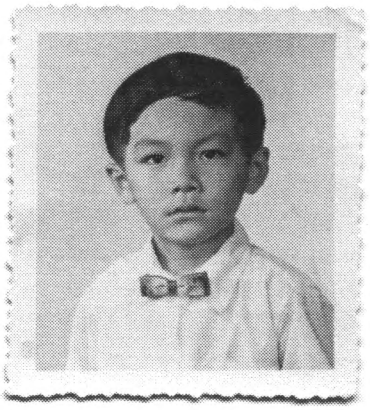
[3] Patrick Lee, *Jamaican, Canadian, Chinese 2000* (Toronto: Huntsmill Graphics Limited, 2000), 172.

[4] Like the Caribbean colonies, Cuba also looked to China for labourers. The first group of Chinese arrived aboard the Spanish frigate *Oquendo* in 1847, to work the sugar plantations. Between 1852 and 1874, the Spanish imported between 50,000 to 125,000 Chinese from Xiamen (Amoy) , Guangzhou (Canton) and Macao, as indentured labourers. Of these, some 13% died during the voyage. These labourers were indentured for 7 to 8 years, for which they received 8 pesos a month. Often, their indenture was renewed if at the end of the original contract the labourer was indebted to the plantation owner for food and clothes (excerpt from the Chinese Heritage and Cultural Program <http:..www.chcp.org>).

[5] Dr. Herman Lyn was one of the pioneers in dentistry and his two sons followed in his footsteps and they immigrated to Canada as a family. Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, with lead singer Keith Lyn, is the best dance band in the Caribbean. He is so in demand that he is constantly on tour; in recent years, Canada has become a regular stop on his circuit. Father Holung is Jamaica's best-known priest and has worked tirelessly to relieve the suffering in the slums of Kingston. He has brought his fundraising concerts to Toronto numerous times. In Trinidad, Sir Solomon Hochoy rose to the top of the society when he became the Governor-General.

From China to Jamaica to Canada: Guest People in Search of a Home

Tony Wong



Tony Wong, age 8.

The first Chinese arrived in the Caribbean and Latin America in the 1840's. They were really a small but important footnote to the larger exodus of Chinese leaving mainland China to other parts of the world. While there had always been a steady stream of migration to Southeast Asia, in the nineteenth century Chinese started to flock to the new worlds of Australia, the Americas, and strange sounding places like Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago.

Indeed, till 1860 there were actually more Chinese in the Caribbean than in all of North America. There were 34,834 Chinese in Cuba alone in 1861 versus 34,933 in the U.S.A., according to Walton Look Lai, a professor at the University of the West Indies who has documented Chinese history in the Caribbean.

How did it all start? The story of the Chinese in the Caribbean starts with the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Without a pool of cheap labour, rich planters needed to find an alternative source with which to work in the sugar cane fields. Inevitably they created a new form of slave trade, the indentured labourer. Much of the immigration came from the region surrounding Macao, Hong Kong, and Canton on the Pearl River Delta. The majority spoke either Cantonese or Hakka.

Conditions were tough for the early settlers and many died in exploitative conditions. Most contracts stipulated that Chinese labourers had to stay within a two-mile radius of their camp, essentially making them prisoners in their workplace. The Chinese government actually terminated the migrations to the British West Indies in 1866 because of a dispute with Britain and France. After five years of work, the Chinese were to be given free passage back to China, but this was not always honoured.

At the start of the 20th century, a second wave of migration from China occurred, this time of free immigrants. Most went to Jamaica and Trinidad with British Guyana and Suriname also on the list. By the late 1930's, Jamaica ended up with the second largest population of Chinese in the Caribbean, next only to Cuba. By 1960, Jamaica would have the largest Chinese population in the Caribbean by far. Still, at just over ten thousand, it was a drop in the bucket of the Chinese diaspora. But the waves of immigration to the Caribbean would eventually create a new and distinct hyphenated culture, the Chinese-Jamaican.

The story of my father begins in an area of China just across from Hong Kong called Pao On (Bao'an). Pao On was and still is a Hakka stronghold surrounded by Cantonese speaking communities. The Hakka have always been the migrants of China. Strong and fiercely independent, their dwellings were stone enclaves that defied invasion from warring Cantonese. No one knows exactly where the Hakka are from. Their name translates loosely into the "guest people", the people with no home. Hakka women did not bind their feet for purely

practical reasons. They worked in the fields, where they toiled side by side with the men. It was a rough, merciless equality.

Often unwelcome wherever they went, the Hakka needed exceptional survival skills. A thick skin certainly helped. Despite being a persecuted minority, many of the contemporary leaders of Asian countries are Hakka. I like to think they survived politically during turbulent times because their ancestors were also survivors. Former president of Taiwan Lee Teng-hui, the founder of modern Singapore Lee Kuan Yew, former president of the Philippines Corazon Acquino, and China's paramount leader, the late Deng Xiaoping are all said to be Hakka. Many of these leaders had their origins in impoverished villages, not unlike the one my father, Wong Kon Qui, was born in.

Lily and Lester Wong, September 1950.

My father grew up in a tiny village of farmers. He was the second oldest in a family of six, one of two brothers and four sisters. Like much of the farming community in southern China in 1918, he grew up impoverished, the son of farmers. For many years he would sleep in the village equivalent of the bell tower, because there was no room at home.

At the age of twelve, he left his village of Fu Hang to head for a place he had never heard of before. A distant uncle had promised to pay for the ticket. My father would take the three-week journey by boat to the island of Jamaica to work in a dog's ear of a town called Sandy Bay, about 15 miles outside the tourist centre of Montego Bay. It was 1930, the same year that my mother was born in Chun Len Ha, a village only an hour's walk from my father's.

During the day my father would work seven days a week helping his uncle David Wong manage a tiny grocery store. At night a tutor came by to teach him English, which he learned to read and write. A few years later he would move to the big city of Montego Bay to work with Henry R. Chin, who also hailed from the same area in China. Learning the grocery trade, my father eventually started his own business at the age of 20 in downtown Montego Bay, near the city centre roundabout and the post office.

Most Chinese in Jamaica were either grocers or ran pastry shops or other forms of retail. The second wave of free immigration, like many overseas Chinese in other countries, had quickly set up a retail backbone that would create a new prosperous middle class. The prosperity did have some setbacks: There were several race riots against Chinese owned stores in Jamaica, the first in 1918. Dozens of Chinese stores were burned or looted, and more than 400 arrests were made then. It was a pattern disturbingly similar to the experience suffered by other overseas Chinese in places such as Malaysia and Indonesia. After much hard work and sacrifice the Chinese became scapegoats

for those resentful of their growing affluence.

In 1950, my mother, after some matchmaking arranged by my father's younger brother in China, would arrive in Jamaica and eventually marry my father. The trip was arduous, she remembers, taking several weeks after travelling from China to Hong Kong by train, followed by ship to San Francisco. In San Francisco she remembers tasting an avocado for the first time, given to the Chinese passengers by passing American Chinese. "We didn't know how to eat it, so we peeled the skin and the filling and ate the pit, it was the worst thing I ever ate," she remembers laughing. It was a disappointing introduction to the food of the "New World." But things did improve.

From San Francisco the train took her to Miami where she boarded a plane for Jamaica and a new life. The wedding took place at the home of grocer Edward Chin, whose nine-bedroom home was big enough to accommodate fifty tables. Chin was the richest Chinese man in town at the time, with a supermarket that, while not much bigger than a local North American convenience store, created enough profit for him to live reasonably well. Dad had his first suit custom made. It was a snappy white wool, high-gorged three-button suit that he wore with a black tie. Mom had her dress, with a fairly elaborate headpiece made in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. The parish church was overflowing with people at the wedding, most of them uninvited. Many came to see what the fuss was about.

Wong's Grocery, 54 Jarrett Street, Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Before arriving in Jamaica, mother was a schoolteacher in China and had learnt a few words of English such as, "How are you?" and "Please sit down". She found much of the English she had learned to be useless in Jamaica, where the Creole dialect was frequently indecipherable. Years later, she would develop a skilful blending of the languages, able to speak in the broadest Jamaican accent while seamlessly mixing it in with Chinese. Her culinary achievements would evolve similarly, as she started to mix traditional Chinese wok cooking with plantain and yams.

Her new home she found to be even more primitive than living in China, where, as the older of two children, she had come from a relatively richer village than my father's. The stove in Jamaica, for example, needed charcoal and she lived upstairs from the grocery store in a tiny room.

Eventually, after five years they would move to new lodgings away from the city centre. It was a tiny grocery store on the outskirts of town beside a dead end. Costing a princely 2,500 pounds in 1955, they had become property owners for the first time. Eventually the grocery store grew, helped by the fortuitous intervention of the government who had decided that burgeoning Montego Bay needed a second post office and opened one up. They created the new post office by carving into the dead end in front of the shop. The post office created an immediate influx of business, which helped the family fortunes. It was not the first time. Dad's original store had been in front of number one post office, prompting friends to say they had had extraordinary luck. Eventually the children, Evelyn first, followed by

Cherry, then Victor, then Jennifer, then myself were born.

The Wong Family.

For relaxation, my dad would play mah jong on the floor of Edward Chin's grocery store on Sundays. A quiet, extremely shy man, he rarely talked and had few friends. As the youngest in the family, I remember my father as kind, gentle, bookish and reclusive. My older brothers and sisters remember him as a strict disciplinarian, who would lock them out of the house if they came home late from a party. I, perhaps luckily, never saw that side of my father.

I do know that he was a voracious reader. After reading the Chinese newspapers he would read my Hardy Boy books which I would borrow from the school library. After the Hardy Boy series ended, I started to purchase Nancy Drew. My father read those too. He even devoured Enid Blyton and C.S. Lewis. We never discussed the books themselves, and I wonder to this day what he took away from reading about Narnia.

As first generation Chinese unschooled in the language and customs of their new found land, my parents toiled mercilessly for a living, seven days a week. Apart from socializing with a few Chinese in Montego Bay, they rarely left the shop. Community life for the second generation centred around the badminton club in Montego Bay. It was a run down field where a slab of cement had been plastered down to make room for three badminton courts. Every Friday most of the younger Chinese community would converge on the courts to talk, play dominos or ping pong and badminton.

It was a luxury my parents would not allow for themselves. Too frivolous, they would probably say. After work they would bunker down at home, surrounded by concrete and steel bars, not unlike the architecture of the original Hakka homes they had left far behind. Ironically, they had travelled thousands of miles to find themselves guest people once more. It would be another generation or two before a newly distinct culture would form.

After several decades in their new home, fear once again swept my parents and many in the Chinese community. In the 1970s, then Prime Minister Michael Manley started to experiment with socialism, which many of the middle class equated to communism. Thousands of Chinese left the island along with a good portion of the middle class, the bulk of them to Canada, which welcomed people from another Commonwealth country. Toronto was the beneficiary of many of these Chinese-Jamaican-Canadians.

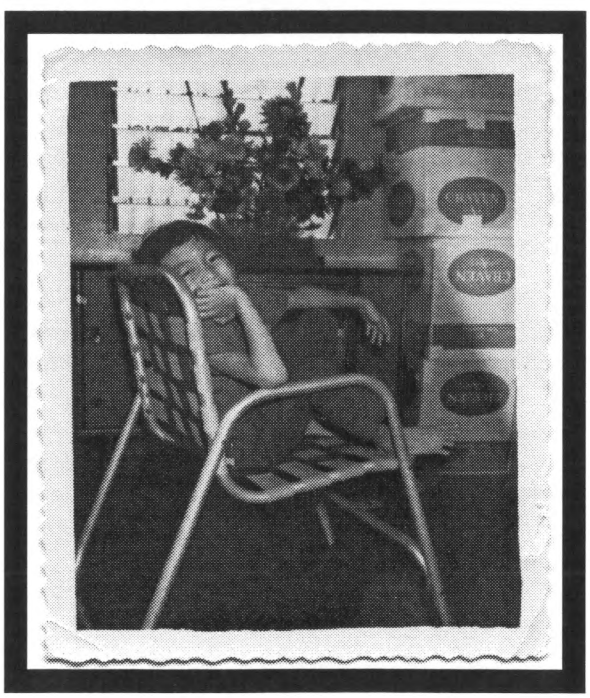
I arrived at the age of 11 to Canada, almost the same age as when my father emigrated to Jamaica. I also stayed with relatives, but did not have to slave away in a shop for a living. And unlike my mother and her avocado, this time there was not quite the culture shock. I readily adapted to the ten-channel universe and had my first taste of a Big Mac.

My father arrived shortly after. A heavy smoker, he spent several years in Canada before passing away of heart failure. He never got a chance to adapt to his new country, although he did devour the Chinese and English papers voraciously. Rarely leaving our house in Markham, he would spend hours reading. He would not even leave the house to borrow library books. I ended up going to the local library and dropping books into a gym bag to take home for him. Because I could not read Chinese, I would sometimes end up borrowing the same book. But they kept his imagination alive. He did not have to step foot outside the door, and he liked it that way.

My mother, the more social of the two, adapted much more easily. The beauty of Toronto, of course, is that it boasts Chinese from all over the world. The predominant dialect today is Cantonese, spoken by the majority of Hong Kong Chinese, although that may eventually give way to Mandarin speakers from mainland China if immigration patterns hold out. Hakka was always the Latin of Chinese dialects, obscure, guttural, and indecipherable to most. And there were the old prejudices. On her first trip to Hong Kong from China, my mother, a fiercely proud woman, remembers being teased mercilessly by Cantonese girls as that "Hakka hillbilly" girl. It was an image to which she was never quite reconciled.

While the old prejudices remained, mother knew the key to adapting was in the language. In Jamaica, she had taught herself to read and write English without the benefit of formal education. Cantonese was less of a challenge, but she was embarrassed to speak it aloud for fear that she would once again be ridiculed. But the Canadian ethnic infrastructure, with the ready availability of Chinese radio and television, allowed her a wealth of knowledge. Chinese senior support services with programs such as Tai Chi classes and subsidized tours for Chinese seniors also allowed her to socialize in a controlled environment. Gradually, she adapted, but it took many years.

My grandmother, on the other hand, didn't fare as well. As a female, she wasn't allowed the benefit of an education. She never learned to read or write and speaks only Hakka. Adapting has been much more difficult. For lack of choices, she watches Chinese television but has no idea what the characters are saying. My mother translates the programs from Cantonese to Hakka. She has had a more difficult time socializing as well with others in her seniors' apartment in the Toronto suburb of North York, because with the absence of schooling, she never really learned to socialize as a child with other children. As an adult, it has been a much more difficult road for her, as she takes a new route each day.



As for myself, I'm all of them, naturally. I ended up with my father's love of literature, my mother's bull-headedness and desire to succeed, as well as my grandmother's awkwardness and need for acceptance.

In the end, arriving in Canada via China and Jamaica means never quite belonging to one culture, but being a part of them all. The magic of the Chinese diaspora in the Caribbean happened by historical circumstance, equal helpings of fate and a good deal of courage. That's something that I'll be forever grateful to my parents for.

[Photographs courtesy of Tony Wong, all taken in Montego Bay, Jamaica]

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[Photographs courtesy of Tony Wong, all taken in Montego Bay, Jamaica]

Shared Immigrant Stories

Diana Lary

In the mid-1990s, Denise Chong's family history, *The Concubine's Children*, spent ninety-two weeks on the *Globe and Mail*'s list of best sellers, an almost unheard of length of time for any book. The life story of her grandmother, the concubine, and of her mother, the concubine's daughter, set in Vancouver's Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s, did not seem at first glance an obvious best seller, at least to some people in the book-selling industry, who assumed that a book about Vancouver's Chinatown would only appeal to people of Chinese descent.

The book got excellent reviews, but the public which reads book reviews in Canada is small, not large enough to explain the book's success. In fact the book seemed to sell itself, by word of mouth, by personal recommendations; it was requested in public libraries, and assigned for university courses and for book clubs.

How to explain this success? There is one quite simple answer: the book struck deep chords with large numbers of people, because it dealt with one of the fundamental Canadian experiences, the struggle of immigrants, and their transcendent triumph over hardship, discrimination and misunderstanding to establish a family in Canada. It is the classic immigrant story.

In writing the history of a particular ethnic group there is a natural tendency to focus on it with such a powerful spotlight that the world around it is cast in darkness. The history of Chinese Canadians is no exception. Many of the treatments of Chinese immigrants and their descendants in Canada start from an implicit assumption that they tell the story of a culturally bound people with characteristics so strong that they make them quite different from other ethnic groups.

This is not a false assumption. There is a strong element of truth to the assumption. Many of the Chinese-Canadian experiences, before and after migration, are not shared with other groups. At the departure end, Chinese migration has been greatly influenced by events in the Chinese world which no other immigrants experienced – the decline and fall of the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese invasion of China, the Communist takeover in 1949, and the retrocession of Hong Kong in 1997. On the receiving end, the migration of contract labourers to work on the transcontinental railways was virtually limited to Chinese immigrants. Chinese immigrants were singled out for massive discrimination in terms of access to Canada—"head taxes" from the late 19th century and the *Chinese Immigration Act* (more popularly known as the Exclusion Act) of 1923.

There are other aspects of the Chinese-Canadian experience which are classic immigrant experiences, shared with other immigrants, key parts of the whole experience of migration, and essential stages on the road towards acculturation and family formation in Canada. The Chinese immigrant experience and the universal immigrant experience are inextricably intertwined, but not equally visible; in particular contexts one tends to submerge the other. The universality of the immigrant experience is sometimes lost when an experience is essentialised as belonging exclusively to one group. Experiences that are shared with others are not recognised as such.

The obverse is also true. Sometimes the host society denies specific ethnic identities by not recognising differences between

immigrant groups. The late 1930s and early 1940s was a painful time for Chinese Canadians not only because of the discrimination they suffered at the time, but because they were frequently taken, in strongly hostile manner, to be Japanese, at the very time that Japan was attacking their native land. Physical similarities between people of Chinese and Japanese origin, combined with lazy thinking from members of the host society, produced a deeply offensive error of identification. Jews fleeing from Germany and Austria, talking either in their native German or in German-accented English, suffered denunciations as Nazis – the very people they had fled from.

United Way Appeal, Toronto, 1960. York University Archives, *Toronto Telegram* Collection.

This short paper identifies a few of the areas where Chinese immigrant experiences and concerns are quite similar to those of other immigrants. I have learnt about them less from academic research than from the comments of hundreds of students in courses on the history of migration, some of Chinese origin, some not. My aim is not to diminish any experiences but to show that both parts of the phrase 'Chinese immigrant' are important.

Children and education

Immigrants tend to be young people. Youth is the easiest stage of life to move, before people are too enmeshed in a particular world. Immigration policies discriminate in favour of the young, making it easier for them to qualify as immigrants than for older people. Some young people are already parents when they arrive, others become so soon after their arrival. Raising children in the new land becomes one of the key ties to it. The children become the *raison d'être* of the parents' migration. The justification for emigration becomes explicitly, and sometimes after the fact, to provide a better future for the children. The children also become the reason for staying in the new country and settling down there. It becomes impossible to uproot them from the place where they have spent their childhood.

Children are important to all parents, but to none so much as to immigrant parents. The children carry the hopes, and the load of the parents' hopes and sacrifices; their success justifies the upheaval of the immigrant process. The most obvious way to success is to rise through the education system, and move up the social and economic ladder. The focus of immigrant parents on education is true of peoples whose ancestral cultures value education

(Chinese, Jews) but it is also a characteristic of other immigrant groups. By and large the combination of free, compulsory education, and the promise of success, stimulates immigrant parents to push their children through the school and university system. There are celebrated counter-examples: for example, mid-19th century Irish famine immigrants, who were not encouraged by the priests who came with them to educate their children beyond the language levels they needed for religious observance.

Champlain, c. 1926. Courtesy of the Ing Look Family Collection.

Educational aspirations have a particular poignancy for the earlier generations of immigrants. For a long while success through education was denied to Chinese immigrants. Universities and professional training was closed to the disenfranchised – which included people of Chinese origin. One of the saddest parts of the *Concubine's Children* is when the concubine's daughter realizes she will effectively be barred from going to the University of British Columbia, as a Chinese Canadian. She got a delicate revenge many years later by making sure that all five of her children went to UBC. Other groups have suffered different forms of discrimination in education. Jews were effectively excluded from educational institutions with Christian connections – the majority in some parts of Canada. Once these barriers came down, the situation changed dramatically for Jews.

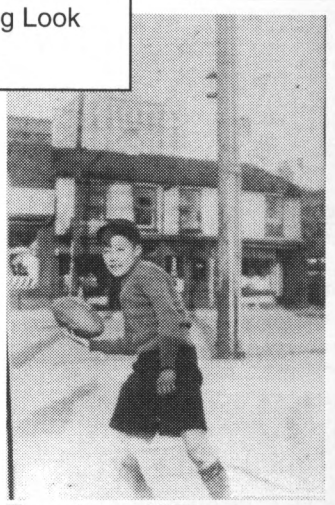
Today the children of immigrants dominate the lists of high achievers. The New Year's edition of *MacLean*'s magazine identified a hundred young Canadians with exceptional prospects. Though no formal identification was made of immigrants versus native-born, it was clear that a disproportionate number were the children of immigrants, or immigrants themselves.

The great value of immigration to Canada, and to other immigrant countries, is that it brings in people who are energetic, determined to establish themselves and to boost their children into full success.

Women's experiences

One universal immigrant experience is the change in status of women, from their place of origin to the new society. This change includes their social status and their position within their own family. Women immigrants in Canada tend to experience greater freedom and autonomy than they knew at home. Girls are required by law to go to school, and many go on to higher education, not an international norm.

Married women are likely to experience less pressure from their husband's extended family, and to be relieved of the care of their parents-in-law. They may have greater freedom to pursue their own interests and careers, in a society where women are expected to do this. At the same time, the economic expectations of them increase, because the costs of migration and settlement mean that most women will have to work. Women experience a whole range of changes in migration, some of them connected to the new country, others to the process of migration.



Toronto, c. 1930s. Courtesy of the Ing Look Family Collection.

Immigrant mothers share particular experiences whatever their origin. They are

on the front line of acculturation. Not only must they make their own adjustments, but they must also help their children through their own adjustments. They must he involved in the school and social life of their children, they must deal with teachers and with other mothers. They must make sure that their children have the right clothes, the right food to fit the new world. They learn about Canada through the eyes of their children.

Toronto, c. 1920s. Courtesy of the Reverend Ma T.K. Wou Collection.

Fathers are now involved in raising their children, but this is quite a recent innovation, and in the past (and often in the present) the mothers were responsible for making sure that the children did well at school, or making sure that the education of the children brought the success which would justify the migration. The stereotype of the implacable Chinese mother/educator, using an arsenal of techniques to help a child study, from cajoling, to bullying, to bribing, to cooking special foods might seem to be a unique cultural stereotype – were it not for the existence of almost identical supermums in other ethnic groups.

Immigrant women also experience changes in their married lives, in the nature of the relationship with their husband. The change may be a greater closeness and intimacy, born of the need for mutual support when the couple is cut off from the larger family. The marriage may become more solid, based less on the conventions of the country of origin and more on the idea of partnership. Women who work with their husbands in small businesses, all day every day (colloquially known as 24/7), are much closer to their husbands, and much more involved in the family fate, than they would have been at home.

The idea that migration may strengthen marriage is not the view most commonly presented. Migration is a very stressful process, and the anecdotal evidence suggests that it is often the last straw for a shaky marriage. There are many stories of marriage breakdown in the new land, of existing cracks widening, or wives suddenly finding the courage (in a new legal climate) to divest themselves of their husbands. There have been many such stories about "astronaut families" from Taiwan and Hong Kong. But these cases may be the exceptions which prove the rule, that the turbulent experience of migration often brings couples closer together.

Status dislocation

We mentioned just now that migration was a turbulent experience. It is also often painful. Some of the pain of migration is caused by discrimination and racism, some by factors connected to leaving home. One of the most painful is a decline in status. The decline may be concrete, the substitution of a respected position at home for an entry level position here. In Brian Moore's novel *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, the main character goes from being a

schoolteacher in Ireland to collecting dirty diapers in Montreal. One of the clerks at the 7-11 on 6th Avenue in Vancouver is a piano teacher from Beijing. Everywhere there are immigrants there are similar stories.

Immigrants usually think through the possibility of a decline in status before they leave home, and accept it in advance as part of the cost of migration. The 7-11 clerk's hope is to work there as long as it takes to establish his own piano school. Like countless immigrants before, he sees status dislocation as a temporary matter. The reality may be that the decline is prolonged.

What makes decline in status harder to accept is that it often seems to be based on arbitrary factors, such as the non-recognition of foreign qualifications and experience. Whatever the reasons, decline in status is probably one of the chief causes of bitterness and anguish amongst immigrants. It is easy to assume that the root cause is racism, that the host society is riven with systemic hostility – to Blacks, to Chinese, to Jews. This is a natural assumption, but it may be too simplistic. The root cause is that Canada, while welcoming immigrants, has seldom taken the necessary steps to help people to find employment suitable to their skills and training. Instead they are expected to start at the bottom, or set up their own business. This is a mind-set that has persisted for a long time, through successive governments.

Staggered migration

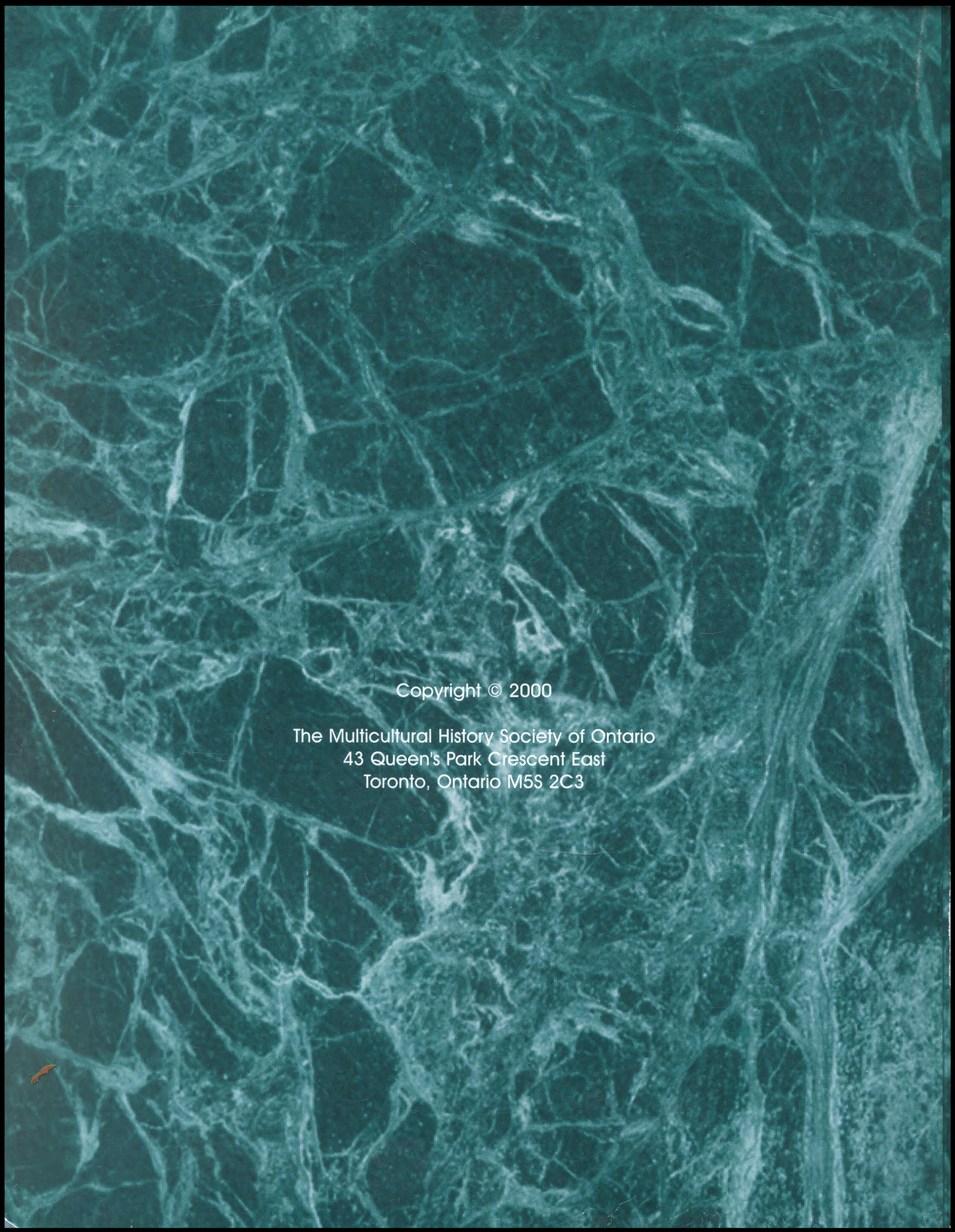
One characteristic shared by many communities in Canada is that migration has been staggered over long periods, in the case of migration from China over a century and a half. Canadians of Chinese origin may now be the fifth or sixth generation away from the point of migration, or just off the aeroplane. The designation 'Chinese' becomes problematic – like the word 'Irish', which encompasses the great-great-grandchildren of famine victims and people who have just arrived from Dublin.

People deemed to be of the same ethnicity are lumped together for various reasons – for the collection of census data, for community building, for political influence – but not always comfortably. Besides a common ethnicity, they may share little else. Few ethnic groups are cohesive; many are riven by divisions. Chinese are divided by time of migration, place of origin, dialect, and political persuasion.

While the insiders recognise these divisions, it is much more difficult for the larger society to see them. Staggered migration puts a special pressure on settled migrants and their descendants: are they obligated to help newcomers settle, to welcome them to the new land and help them get established? Some groups take this responsibility seriously. The Jewish Immigrant Aid Society helps newly arrived Jews, SUCCESS helps Chinese immigrants. Help does not mean that the established group will welcome all newcomers to whom they have a putative tie. The reaction to the arrival of refugee claimants from the People's Republic of China in 1999 showed this quite clearly. Some established Chinese felt deeply offended by the newcomers, saw them as queue-jumpers who could only diminish the standing of respectable Chinese Canadians.

Conclusion

I conclude this commentary where I began, with a salute to the courage and the tenacity, the willingness to keep going through hardship and rejection which were the hallmarks of the concubine and her children and grandchildren – and of so many other immigrants.



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